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10 ORIENTATION--information especially likely to be needed by users of a file as a frame of reference for understanding the materials classified elsewhere; organization of the file, special coding decisions, and evaluation of the file.

GUIDE TO THE MP5 AMHARA FILE

[This file focuses on the Amhara, the politically and culturally dominant ethnic group of Ethiopia. The Amhara are located primarily in the central highland plateau of Ethiopia, and comprise the major population element in the provinces of Begemder and Gojjam, and in parts of Shoa and Wallo. In terms of the total Ethiopian population, however, the Amhara are in a numerical minority. Within the last decade, the national population has usually been placed at between 14 and 22 million; it is also generally estimated that the Amhara, together with the closely related Tigre, constitute about one-third of this total population (cf. Lipsky, G.A., et al. Ethiopia: its people, its society, its culture, 1962: 31-34). One of the most recent estimates gives the number of native speakers of Amharic, the language of the Amhara, about 7,800,000 (cf. Bender, M.L., The languages of Ethiopia, Anthropological Linguistics, 13, no. 5, 1971: 217). But most of these population figures should be regarded as crude approximations since there has never been a comprehensive national census.

Amharic is classified as an Ethiosemitic language which has been influenced by indigenous Cushitic languages. It is the official language of Ethiopia, and as such, Amharic has been an important factor in the Amharization of other ethnic groups through its required use in schools and government offices (11: Levine: 2-3) 1965: 2-3).

Major cultural patterns of the Amhara include the plow cultivation of cereal grains, with teff (Eragrostis abyssinica) being the staple crop; animal husbandry important, but secondary to agriculture; the Ethiopic alphabet; Ge'ez

literature; Monophysite Christianity, which has been present since the fourth century; extended patrilocal, patrilineal family groups; a traditional polity organized as a "feudal" kingdom; and a complex system of social stratification dominated by the royalty and a landed "feudal" nobility and clergy, and including, until a generation or so ago, a substratum of slaves. This cultural system is now caught up in a process of change, with, for instance, new élites emerging to challenge the old hierarchy (cf. 1: Messing, p. 399, 408 ff; 11: Levine: 1-2, chap. 5), and with the recent deposition of the emperor.

The political dominance of the Amhara in Ethiopia is manifested in the preponderance of Amhara in top political offices, and in the perpetuation of the Amhara monarchy. In fact, all but one of the emperors of Ethiopia have been Amhara since the beginning of what is called the restored Solomonid Dynasty in 1270 A.D. (11: Levine: 2).

The Amhara file presently consists of 12 sources, all in English. 1: Messing is a comprehensive, basic ethnography, and probably still ranks as the principal modern source. The author used the Outline of Cultural Materials as a field guide, and an extensive range and quantity of data are presented. His treatment is especially thorough with regard to healing practices and cults. 2: Allen is a brief treatment of geography and history, with incidental remarks on customs; 3: Buxton is of a similar nature, but particularly concerned with the area immediately about the city of Debra Berhan. 4: Alvarez and 5: Bruce are excerpts from the writings of travelers in the early sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries, respectively, and provide comments on many aspects of Amhara culture which may be compared with modern patterns; both were concerned mainly with religious practices. 6: Messing presents a sampling of

humorous folktales, whereas 7: Perham is a detailed description of political history and organization to 1935, with notes on 1945 conditions, including added information on land tenure and tribute. 8: Rey comments on various cultural features, among which are the calendar, clothing, diet, and ceremonial activities. 9: Coon is a descriptive and comparative work on physical anthropology drawn from the author's book on European races, while 10: Barkhuus is a description of medical problems in the area. 11: Levine is a thorough historical, sociological, anthropological and psychological analysis of traditional and modern Amhara culture. 12: Young describes Begemder Amhara medical beliefs and practices.

This file now contains large amounts of data on religion, medical and cult practices, but information on various other subjects, including kinship and social structure, is less adequate. The file is generally adequate for comparative purposes, however. The file was processed between 1959 and 1973.]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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PART I : Land, History and People

1. General Orientation:

A. Definition of Terms:

The Amhara culture dealt with in this study is to a considerable extent identified with the culture formerly [177] referred to as "Abyssinian". Actually, the Abyssinian culture, heir to the cultural blending of ancient Semitic and African traits, has developed into several sub-cultures of which the Amhara culture is the major one. Another important sub-culture would be that of the Tigre-speaking population of Eritrea.

The term "Abyssinia", which was the official name of the country until the 20th century, is possibly derived from the name the centrally-located river Awash, which flows in the Rift Valley bisecting the country, losing itself in the eastern lowland desert on its way to the Red Sea coast. Another explanation derives it from the Habashat, one of the Semitic tribes from Hadhramaut, which crossed over the Bab El Mandeb about 500 B.C. A third explanation derives the name from the Arabic term signifying racial mixture.

The present Emperor preferred the official name Ethiopia, the political frontiers of which include the territory of non-Abyssinian peoples like the Galla, conquered by Abyssinia in the late 19th century. "Ethiopia", derived from the Greek term signifying "people with sunburned faces", was used in classical antiquity to describe all Africa south of the Sahara.

The religion of the Amhara and most other "Abyssinian" peoples is an early, Monophysite form of Christianity, often

referred to as "Coptic", although the Abyssinian Copts prefer the term "Towado" meaning Orthodox. The term Copt is derived from the Greek term for "Egyptian." Since the Coptic Metropolitan of Alexandria, Egypt, was also head of the Abyssinian Church and appointed all Abyssinian archbishops until recent years of the reign of the present Emperor, there is some justification for the use of the term Coptic. It will be so used in this study, to indicate the "Abyssinian Church of Ethiopia".

In books on Ethiopia, one often finds the term "Amhara" used in a broad sense as synonymous with Abyssinian Coptic. Christian. Although the Amhara in their ethnocentrism also use it in this sense, it is not good usage in the author's opinion. The Tigrinya-speaking peoples of the province of Tigre are also good "Copts", in religious belief and observance; however, they differ from the Amhara in many phases of culture, and, according to native opinion, in personality". Therefore, the term Amhara is used in this study only for the Amharic-speaking, Coptic population of the provinces of Begemdir(Gondar), Gojjam, and parts of Shoa. Formerly, all three provinces were included in a territorial unit called Amhara; hence the name.

B. Linguistic Definitions

There are three major linguistic families in Ethiopia: Cushitic, Semitic and Nilotic. Cushitic is predominant, roughly speaking, in the southern half of modern Ethiopia, including Galla, Somali, Sidamo, Agau, etc. Nilotic languages predominate along the northern and western escarp-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

A in the minds of most Amhara:

E 563 1. The Coptic Abyssinian, on which top level the Amharic-speaker and the Tigrina-speaker are equal except for the added Amhara prestige due to the "Solomonic Dynasty". Both consider themselves "attentam" (of noble bones). Both consider themselves superior to all other groups, notably the "conquered nations", infidels,"laboring classes" and "lower races". Both consider themselves the descendants of the Hadhrami invaders of the late pre-Christian era.

As conquerors, the Amhara believe in their superior toughness. The aphorism says:

A [539] "The aged Amhara is (powerful) like bärbärä
the aged Galla is (soft) like butter".

A [101] The word Amhara is itself derived from "amari", meaning one who is pleasing, agreeable, beautiful and gracious.

On the other hand, the services rendered by Galla cavalry to Menelik II (e.g. in his victory over the Italians at Aduwa) are well known and admitted. In reward, many of the Galla feudal nobles were permitted to retain in fief 1/4 of their land and its serfs, so that a Galla "Balbat" (landowner) class has arisen and prospered. They are in ostentatious presence at all national festivals in Addis Ababa, notably the annual coronation festival of Haile Selassie, when their young men are seen and heard, jumping with brandished spears or sticks, shouting the loyalty of the "Oromo" to "Addis Ababa" (symbolic for Menelik and Haile Selassie). Among the modern-educated Amhara, and even among many uneducated Amhara of Shoa province, intermarriage with Galla Balbat families is not rare, nowadays, especially if the Galla partner is wealthier than the Amhara, and if the Galla is the bride. This is still resis-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses. 175

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town. 632

The surrounding grassy *alms* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June. 133

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick. 491 [137] [136]

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people. 563 175

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups. 101 563

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion 101 144

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by The 794 those who are sick, or dying.

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a 292 white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar.

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the 796 church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married 784 are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Persons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the [846] church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first [304] day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occasions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment. [852]

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure 131 in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It 361 may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla 101 who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma;

[p. 57]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

101 and these Toluma come down to the Nile, and divide Walaka and Shoa from the Nile.

651 Agow-midre pays yearly to the king in all about 1000 ounces of gold; and 1000 dabras of honey, each dabra about 60 rotol. It pays also about 1000 or 1500 cattle. Ancasha, Azena, Quaquera, and Banja, pay their quota in honey; Banja, gold; Metchakel, Ayamico's country, gold; Zigam, gold, no honey. Danguiah, Dengla, and Saccala, all are called Ancasha. Dengla pays chiefly cattle, and a large kind of sheep called Macoot. Butter is no part of the meery, but is brought as a present on paying the meery. After passing the Kelti, on the right, by the Bronti, is Atchefer, after that Quaquera, then Dengla, then Banja, then Metchakel. Tembua belongs to the Ras, and the revenue is paid to him. The first heavy stroke the Agow received of late years was Waragna, father of this Fasil, bringing Galla from beyond the Abay, and wasting their country entirely. He burnt the houses and churches, and led away captive the women and children. Under the mild government of Casmati Eshte they began to revive, but now again under Fasil they are very low.

361 Metchakel is one long day's journey, I suppose 36 miles, from Boori (Bure); it is inhabited by Galla Djawi. After these are the Basso Gallo; and the Gooderoo Galla of Kasmati Boro. His place is called Hadis Amba. These border on Gojam, Damot, and Metchakel. Gafat is not one continued country, but villages here and there. Wumbarma is Gafat. Metchakel is, however, a much more considerable country. Beyond the Nile, west of Bure, the country for a considerable distance is dry, deserted, and uninhabited, the Galla living further into the territory. All the banks are there high, steep, and unwholesome, and full of trees. These Galla are Amoro Jidda. Guesgue belongs to the Iteghe, has a nagareet, and gives the title of Kasmati. It pays 1000 cloths, 50 oxen, and 100 wakeet.

The caravans of Egypt used to go from Aidab, or Gaidab, to Dahalac, in their way to Yemen, or Jidda, the port of Mecca. Souakin is seven days south of Gaidab.

101 The Galla, west of the Abay, say, that they are descended of a Gin or devil, and a woman of the tribe of Koreish.
563 They are always at war with the Nareans, Abyssinians, or

[p.58]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

Mahometans. They reckon about 12,000 horse of Galla 101
between the Nile and Narea. The tribes go every seventh 563
year to the reigning house, where the council debates on the duties of government. The points agitated are, how our fathers governed, what measures are to be taken with murderers and robbers on the high-ways, how merchants are to be dealt with, &c. The young then declaim in favour of violence and injustice; after which the elders, five in number, are asked. These decide in favour of equity. The king is afterwards chosen by a plurality of voices.

Waragna, father of Fasil, was converted to Christianity. His father was Wusho (signifying a dog), of the western Galla, of the tribe Jimmali. He was a merchant; but being remarked to be brave in a battle Bacuffa had with these Galla, he was invested with the caftan, and made commander of several places on the frontiers of Damot.

The Djawi Galla of Damot, Gafat, and Metchakel, as also the Galla of Maitsha, came there, in the time of Yasous Tallac. The Basso, and other Galla of Gojam, were brought there by Hatze Fasil; others say his son Hannes.

Maitsha, from the place the Abay comes out of the lake 361
to Courtohha, is $1\frac{1}{2}$ day's march, at a moderate pace, 6 hours a day; from Courtohha, the hither part, to Samseen, one long day's journey; and from the same part to the Abay at Goutta, a very long day's journey, at a brisk pace.

The Shankala entrench their huts against surprise, and 563
burn large fires. They wear a long shield, covering nearly the whole side, and five lances each, which they throw or stab with as needed. Bows and arrows are their chief weapons. They dig up gold among reddish earth, which they burn in the fire, and gather it as it runs out in small pieces like shot. They put it next in to a small purse, or other sort of bag. Every individual is free to search for it. They are flat-nosed and flat-lipped, very black, best shaped in the upper parts, but with bad knees and legs.

The Bure way to Narea is W. in the country south by A- 487
moro. The nearest way is by Gojam and Gooderoo, performed in 30 days with loaden asses, about eight or nine miles a-day.

Harar is a very large town, has five gates, and is constant- 361
ly at war with Habbesh, or the Galla. The ridge of hills

[p. 59]

9: Coon D-5 (1935 1939) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

(2) *The Sidamos:* The corresponding pre-Semitic agricultural population of the present Galla country, living in the midst of Galla tribal territories, and in small separate kingdoms of their own, in southwestern Ethiopia. The best known Sidamo state is that of Kaffa, whose name has been given to coffee. Throughout the Galla country, the numerous peasant class consists largely of linguistically altered Sidamos. 000

(3) *The Amharas:* This is a general name applied to the Ethiopians proper, members of the four kingdoms of Tigré, Amhara, Gojjam, and Shoa. The Guraghes, who live south of Addis Ababa, speak Amharic, as do all the others named except the Tigrés, whose language is a parallel derivative of Geez. These people are the descendants of the Hadhrami invaders of the late pre-Christian era, and were, until the Italian conquest of 1935–37, the dominant people of Ethiopia. A 101

(4) *The Gallas:* The inhabitants of most of southwestern Ethiopia, including the country as far north and east as Addis Ababa, are Gallas; descendants of a warlike confederation of nomadic tribes who invaded Ethiopia from the southwest in the sixteenth century. The original Gallas, who came in great numbers, were cattle people with the traditional East African dislike for agriculture or menial occupations, and settled down in their present territory as aristocrats. Galla society today is divided into four classes: the Oromo, or Galla proper, the aristocrats; the Tumtu or blacksmiths, the subservient class of artisans who are also farmers; the Faki, a low caste of tanners; and the Watta, outcaste hunters who live in separate villages. The Oromo have, for the most part, submitted to the pursuit of agriculture, while continuing at the same time their cattle raising. 000

(5) *The Somalis:* The whole Horn of Africa, including the three Somalilands and the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, is occupied by various tribes of Somalis, nomadic Hamites who profess Islam and claim descent from Arabian missionaries. Their origin is not clearly known, but it is evident that there must have been some Galla as well as Arabian mixture, grafted onto a local Hamitic population. S 101

(6) *The Danakil* (also called Afar): In southwestern Eritrea and adjacent parts of the desert of northeastern Ethiopia, as well as in part of French Somaliland, live the Danakil, tribesmen culturally related to the Somalis, who also claim Arabian ancestry. North of the Danakil in Eritrea live other tribes of the same general type. The Somalis, Danakil, and their northern relatives form part of a continuous belt of nomadic Hamites reaching from the Horn of Africa to Egypt; the northern representatives, however, from the Eritrean Beja to the Egyptian Bisharin, have been subjected to strong admixture with Sudanese negroes. 000

(7) *Negroes in Hamitic Territory:* In Eritrea the tribes of Baria and Cunama, in the midst of Hamitic-Tigré territory, probably represent, in

.11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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[P.11]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

I

INTRODUCTION

AMHARA TRADITION AND ETHIOPIA'S MODERNIZATION

THE FACT OF AMHARA DOMINANCE

Of the many traditions which are alive in the empire of Ethiopia—those of the nomadic Danakil and the sedentary Wollamo, the hippopotamus-eating Woyto and the ensete-eating Gurage, the age-graded Konso and the patrilineal Somali, the Judaic Falasha and the Muslim Bani 'Amer, and many others—clearly the dominant tradition is that of the people known throughout history to the outside world as the Abyssinians. Living on the temperate highland massif in the northern and central regions of the country, these people have gained their subsistence through the plow cultivation of cereal grains, have organized their polity as a feudal kingdom, and have remained steadfast in their Monophysite Christian faith since its introduction to the land in the fourth century.

The Abyssinians comprise two linguistic and geographical groups—the Amhara and the Tigre.* The Tigre inhabit the northern part of Ethiopia, above the Takazzē River; their lands fall in what are now the province of Tigre and the former Italian colony of Eritrea. Their language, Tigrinya, is

* Abyssinians object to the term "Abyssinian," since it has been used pejoratively by foreigners, even though they do use its indigenous counterpart, *"Hābashā,"* among themselves. The term apparently derives from the name of one of the South Arabian tribes which migrated to Ethiopia in antiquity—the Habashat. In deference to this objection, I shall use the compound "Amhara-Tigre" in place of "Abyssinian" wherever feasible. The name "Ethiopia" will be used consistently to refer to the national polity which, throughout its history, has included other peoples and traditions as well as the Amhara-Tigre.

1, [The Abyssinians, composed of Amhara and Tigre--Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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[P.ii]

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

MAP 2

THE MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS OF BEGEMDER PROVINCE

(Adapted from Simoons 1960: 22)

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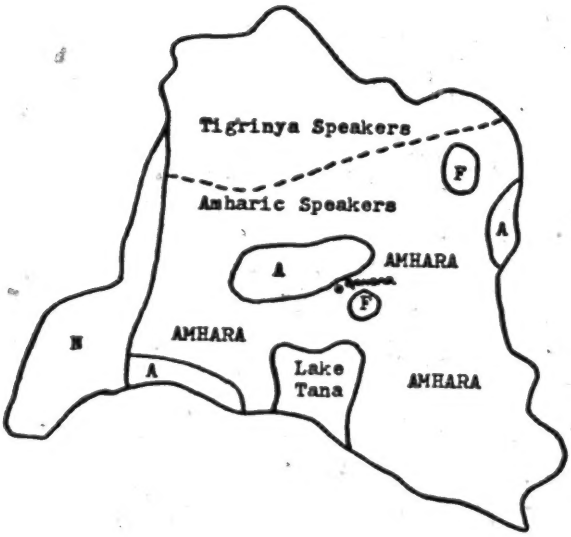

A: Agaw

F: Falasha

N: Nilotes

AMHARA: Abyssinian Muslims also dispersed throughout these areas

*753 grazing. Both highland zones are considered ideal for
131 human habitation. While residents of the dega zone oc-
133 casionally comment on what they regard as the uncomfor-
821 table summer heat of the weyna dega, at the same time it is acknowledged that the rainy season (kiramt) is more burdensome in the dega. The rains last from May to September and are marked by temperatures in the mid-thirties in dega lands and perhaps ten to fifteen degrees warmer in the weyna dega. This season is regarded as a particularly bad time for kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints) whose severity is considered greatest in the dega zone. Epidemiologically, the dega is also associated with a relatively high incidence of yinifas basiyta ("the wind disease"), an ailment described in Chapter One.

131 Although reliable population estimates are lacking,
* 101 the weyna dega and dega zones contain perhaps 85% of
161 Begemder's people. These rural highlands are occupied
197 by five ethnic groups, racially indistinguishable from
144 one another and, with an exception, now speaking a common Semetic language, Amharic. The Amhara are the most numerous of Begemder's highland peoples, and extend into the provinces of Gojam and Shoa, to the south. Within the Begemder highlands, they occupy the area south of latitude 13°30'. North of this line live the Tigre, a related people who speak a cognate language, Tigrinya.
101 Both Amhara and Tigre are Coptic Christians, and from
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12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

101 131 779 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries. [241] [463] [286] [443] [562] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farming and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssinian Jews following a Mosaic creed. [423] [326] [286] [162] A despised and humiliated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority of an area's residents. [361] Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

[2]

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Simplified Ethno-linguistic Map of Ethiopia [Roman No. 50]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[Facing page 2]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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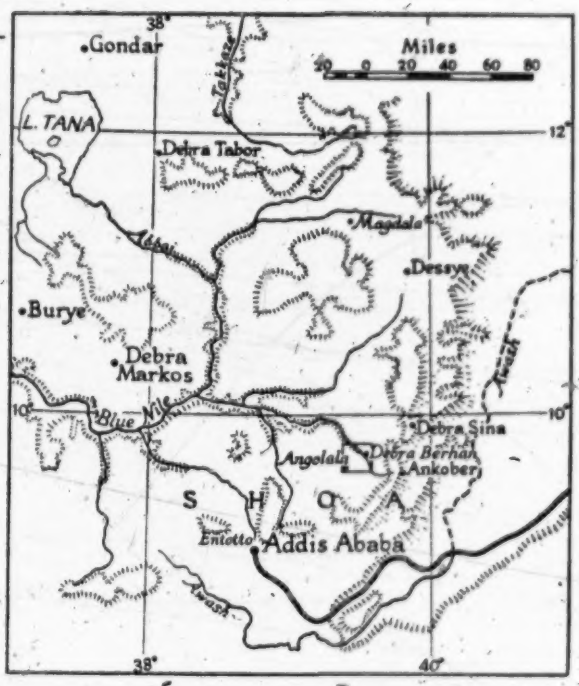


[Enl map 1]

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

MAP 1

ECOLOGICAL ZONES OF BEGEMDER PROVINCE

(After Simoons 1960: 5)

DEGA

WEYNA DEGA

KOLA

Woggera Traditional regions mentioned in the text

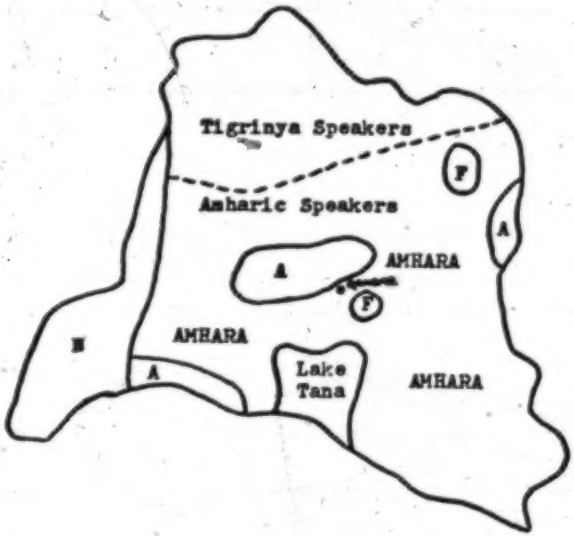
12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemdér

MAP 2

THE MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS OF BEGEMDER PROVINCE

(Adapted from Simoons 1960: 22)

101
102
131



A: Agaw

F: Falasha

N: Nilotes

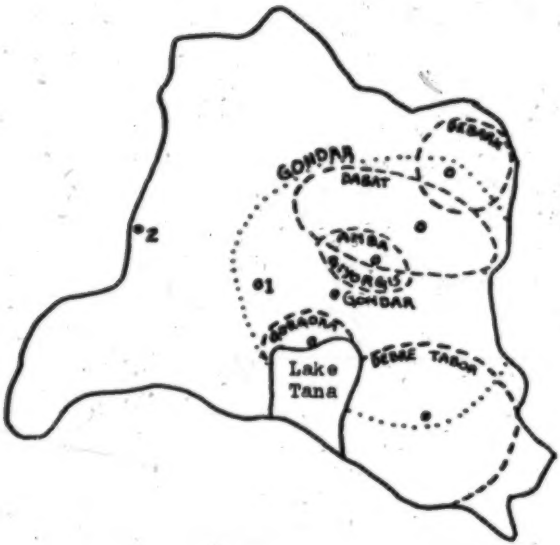
AMHARA: Abyssinian Muslims also dispersed throughout these areas

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

MAP 3

EXTREME DISTANCES TRAVELLED TO PRINCIPAL WEEKLY MARKETS OF HIGHLAND BEGEMDER PROVINCE

102
131
484



Distances from Gondar

Amba Giyorgis...	24 miles
Dabat.....	44 miles
Debark.....	61 miles
Debre Tabor.....	104 miles
Gorgora.....	40 miles
Chilga (1).....	45 miles
Metemma (2).....	140 miles

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint. Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns: an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputation of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north: Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

for, and, in the height of the rains when some crops are already up, deep furrows are made at regular intervals, and enlarged from time to time to carry away the surplus rain water. 244

Irrigation on the shelves of the gorges has already been referred to. But a more elaborate system, the extent of which is shown schematically on the map, has been developed along the river Beressa and its tributary the Maka, which both provide a small flow of water throughout the dry season. The whole enterprise is an interesting example of concerted effort and communal organization—in neither of which are the Amharas usually believed to excel. Its object is to ensure an early crop of barley, to be reaped before the onset of the main rains in June. 312 [476]

The irrigation system has to be partly rebuilt every dry season for the dams, which are constructed of stones and heavy sods, are swept away in the rains. From each dam the water is led off into a well-established furrow, which is carried down in a divergent line from the river and sometimes cut out of the rock on steep scarps. From it minor channels, which can be opened or blocked at will, branch off to irrigate the intervening lands. There are however more complicated systems; thus the dam near Dilila feeds two irrigation channels, one on either bank of the river. The right-bank channel receives its water direct from the dam, that on the left bank by means of an aqueduct carried across the main stream just below the dam and likewise constructed of stones and sods. The flow is not sufficient to feed both at once, so that the water is excluded from one or other branch on different days of the week; while if rain happens to fall the whole system is switched off. The left-bank channel, after running almost parallel to the Beressa for nearly a mile and a half, has to cross obstacles in the form of two tributary streams. The second tributary crossed is a large one, and the irrigation channel, in order to maintain its level, makes a big loop upstream and is then carried over the tributary by means of another wall-like aqueduct 8 or 10 feet high.

During the latter part of the dry season the brilliant green crops of the irrigated area make a striking contrast to the brown and withered aspect of the surrounding countryside. The district (known as Atakilt or "garden") takes its name from this characteristic feature. There are other minor irrigation schemes on the plateau, as on the Dalecha river in the east and the Angolala river in the west of the sheet, but nothing on so large a scale or so elaborately organized as the Beressa system. The Atakilt plains also have historic interest as the scene of the battle, already mentioned, which resulted in the emperor Theodore's annexation of Shoa and the capture of young Menelik. [103]

To conclude this brief account of the agricultural techniques of our area something must be said of terracing and its effect on the landscape. Nothing like the impressive and elaborate terracing practised in some eastern rice-growing countries is attempted in these parts. Many slopes are nevertheless unobtrustively terraced, both in the gorges and on the plateau, and it is not uncommon to see new terraces in process of formation. A wall (*gur*) is built on the lower side of the area selected for improvement, advantage being often taken of any natural flattening of the hillside. The *gur* has a vertical face on

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

173 175 deal with this matter present different pictures, however. Blättengētā Heruy and Guèbrè Sellassié telescope the genealogy: Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Nagāssi. Tādassa Za-Waldē, on the other hand, leaves the question open; he identifies Segew Qāl as one of Yā'qob's sons, and refers to Nagāssi as father of the Shoan Dynasty, but affirms nothing concerning a connection between Segew Qāl and Nagāssi.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that none of these versions was reported to European travelers in the nineteenth century prior to the ascendance of Menelik. According to information given Major Harris by Shoan informants in the 1840's, Nagāssi inherited royal blood through his mother, who was said to be a granddaughter of "a daughter of the House of Solomon." Four decades later Soleillet was told still another story, namely, that "the kings of Shoa are now of the House of David, heirs of Solomon, cousins of Christ" not through Nagāssi, but by virtue of the marriage of his great-great-grandson, Asfā Wassan, to a relative of the imperial family at Gondar. Cecchi, finally, mentions none of these legitimizing affiliations.

113 25. Heruy manuscript, p. 19.
26. The latter version is given by Cecchi.
27. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; London, 1790), III, 255–56.
28. Cecchi, *op. cit.*, I, 241.
29. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
30. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 9.
31. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
32. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 12.
33. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 301. Heruy's account of the rebellion of [114] Matako is considerably different. We are following Harris and Krapf here since they were virtually contemporaneous with the events, and would have no particular reason not to record them faithfully.
34. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 302.
35. Harris, *op. cit.*, II, 133.
36. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), p. 173.
[103] 37. The word "Manz" (or "Manzeh"), according to local clergy, stems from a Ge'ez expression which means "land on which Christ's blood was sprinkled."
38. Ludolphus, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
39. The architecture and layout of the imperial compound are described in Monti della Corte, *I castelli di Gondar* (Rome: Società Italiana Arti Grafiche, 1938).
40. On the role of the *abuna*, cf. below, chap. v.
41. C. Poncet, "A Voyage to Ethiopia," *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1949), p. 61.
42. This is what has been called an orthogenetic, as distinguished from a heterogenetic, pattern of cultural development. Cf. Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, III, No. 1, 53–73.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

An effort has been made to represent accurately all Ethiopian words used in the text—except for a handful of the most commonly encountered names of emperors, provinces, and ethnic groups—by means of a consistently applied system of transliteration. The system followed here is that used by the majority of English and Italian scholars.* 104

VOWELS

Order in Ethiopic Script	Symbol Used	Pronunciation
First	a	as in *c*are
Second	u	as in pr*u*dent
Third	i	as in ravine
Fourth	ā	as in f*a*ther
Fifth	ē	as in pr*ey*
Sixth	e	as in silent
Seventh	ĭ	as in *si*t
	o	as in *go*

CONSONANTS

Glottalized consonants are represented by q, ṭ, ṭs, çh, and ṗ. Geminated consonants are indicated by doubling the consonant.

* For the Amharic alphabet according to this system of transliteration, see I. Guidi, *Vocabolario Amarico-Italiano* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1953), pp. xiv–xv; or C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford, ed., *The Prester John of the Indies* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961), I, 24–25.

[P. 304 is blank]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

GLOSSARY

Abuna	አቡነ	Archbishop of the Ethiopian Church 104 •
Afa negus	አፈ ንጉሥ	Chief judicial magistrate (literally, "mouth of the king")
Agar	አገር	Country, homeland
Alaqā	አለቃ	Chief, commander
Aqābē sa'āt	ዐቃቤ ሰዓት	Title of the chief ecclesiastic at the imperial court in former times
Aquāquām	አቋቋም	Traditional religious dance performed by *dabtarā*
Azmāri	አዝማሪ	Minstrel
Bālābbāt	ባላባት	Local notable; one who comes from a distinguished family
Bālagē	ባለጌ	Rude
Bāla-selṭān	ባለሥልጣን	One who holds delegated political authority
Bānnā	ባና	A woolen blanket worn by people in Manz
Barnos	በርኖስ	A dark wool cape worn by people of high status
Bēt	ቤት	House, room, quarter
Budā	ቡዳ	A person believed to possess the "evil eye"
Çhawā	ጨዋ	Free-born; genteel

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

• 104 Çhĭqā shum	ቅቃ ሹም	Local headman
Çhĭqeçhĭq	ጥቅጥቅ	Bickering
Dābo	ዳቦ	A whole wheat bread
Dabtarā	ደብተራ	Literatus of the Ethiopian Church, functions as chorister, poet, scribe, herbologist, etc.
Dēgā	ዴጋ	Highland
Dulā	ዱላ	Wooden staff
Eçhagē	አጼጌ	Traditional title of administrative head of the Ethiopian Church
Eddīl	እድል	Fate
Eddīr	እድር	(Modern) voluntary welfare association
Engurguro	እንጉርጉሮ	Song genre used in times of grief
Equb	ዕቁብ	(Modern) form of credit union
Faranj	ፈረንጅ	Foreigner (esp. Western)
Gabbār	ገባር	One who pays tribute
Gannā	ገና	A hockey-like game played at Christmas
Gĭber	ግብር	Tribute; a large meal
Goramsā	ጎረምሳ	A virile youth
Guabaz	ጉበዝ	Brave, hardy
Gulammā	ጉለማ	Grain which a youth produces and keeps as his own; personal possession
Gult	ጉልት	Conditional rights to the tribute and corvée labor due from the peasants on a certain piece of land
Gurshā	ጉርሻ	A wad of food placed in someone's mouth
Ĭnjarā	እንጀራ	Staple food among Amhara and Tigre, a kind of pancake
Kāhenāt	ካህናት	Clergy
Kutā	ኩታ	A cotton toga of double thickness
Lālibalā	ላሊበላ	One who sings at night to ward off leprosy
Lēbā	ሌባ	Thief
Lĭjj	ልጅ	Child

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Māhebar	ማኅበር	Traditional religious fraternal association; now, any kind of voluntary formal association
Makuānnent	መኳንንት	Nobility
Mātab	ማተብ	A neckcord worn to symbolize membership in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church
Marīdāzmātch	መርዳዝማች	Honorific title peculiar to Shoa province
Mizē	ሚዜ	"Best man" at a wedding
Nagārit	ነጋሪት	Drum traditionally used by authorities to signal proclamations
Negusa nagast	ንጉሠ ነገሥት	Emperor (literally, "king of kings")
Qenē	ቅኔ	Religious poetry based on use of wax-and-gold figures
Qollā	ቆላ	Lowlands
Querbān	ቍርባን	Communion
Rīst	ርስት	Hereditary rights to the use of land
Sam-ennā warq	ሰምና ወርቅ	"Wax and gold." See text, chap. i
Saw	ሰው	Man; others
Seltānē	ስልጣኔ	Civilization, progress
Shammā	ሽማ	Light cotton toga worn by many Ethiopians
Shīftā	ሽፍታ	Rebel; outlaw
Shīllalā	ሽለላ	A genre of martial songs
Shumat	ሹመት	Appointment (to office)
Shum-shīr	ሹም ሽር	"Appoint-demote": refers to the traditional process of allocating political offices
Tābot	ታቦት	Holy ark
Ṭajj	ጠጅ	Honey-wine
Ṭallā	ጠላ	Barley-beer
Ṭanquāy	ጠንቋይ	Sorcerer, witch-doctor
Ṭayb	ጠይብ	Metalworker believed to possess the evil eye
Ṭēff	ጤፍ	An indigenous grass cultivated in Ethiopia as a cereal grain
Ṭegābaññā	ጥጋበኛ	One who has grown arrogant from a surfeit of food and drink
Tergum	ትርጉም	Interpretation

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Ṭiqem	ጥቅም	Personal advantage
Ṭimqat	ጥምቀት	Baptism; Epiphany
Wesṭa wayrā	ውስጠ ወይራ	"Inside of olive-tree." See text, chap. i
Zār	ዝር	A spirit which brings sickness
Zamad	ዘመድ	Kinfolk; close ones
Zēmā	ዜማ	Religious music

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

000 tire culture area.

104 There is a final, linguistic note. In describing Amhara medical beliefs, it has been necessary to employ a substantial number of Amharic terms. The more frequently used terms are included in the index, where each is followed by an English gloss. Within the text, these terms are used together with English, rather than Amharic, grammatical markers.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

G. Present Holdings and Problems of Amhara Peasants of Begemdir Province.

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423 Most of the Amhara peasants of Begemdir (and other provinces) live much as their ancestors have lived for centuries. They subsist largely on the products of their lands, needing relatively few goods and services from outside the province. They do not care for profit and loss accounting. Their social organization is built on visible human relationships. They do not welcome modern bookkeeping and registration, particularly with regard to land tenure, which the modern central government is gradually attempting to foist on them; adding, to the proud provincial Amhara mind, insult to disturbance by doing it through "Galla" clerks from Shoa province.

423 The basic land unit to which the Amhara peasant of Begemdir refers in transactions, is the "qada", usually a little less than half an acre. The average "gasha" may contain as many as 150 "qada", varying with the relative fertility of the soil. Several patrilocal hamlets, constituting a "mandar" (villageship) and supervised by one cheqa shum (headman), may control as many as 10 gashas, (about 500 acres.). The average farmer, supporting his family of procreation and an aged parent and aunt, may control, on the average, about 50 qada (about 20 acres), half of which he may leave fallow at any given time.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

I

INTRODUCTION

AMHARA TRADITION AND ETHIOPIA'S MODERNIZATION

THE FACT OF AMHARA DOMINANCE

Of the many traditions which are alive in the empire of Ethiopia—those of the nomadic Danakil and the sedentary Wollamo, the hippopotamus-eating Woyto and the ensete-eating Gurage, the age-graded Konso and the patrilineal Somali, the Judaic Falasha and the Muslim Bani 'Amer, and many others—clearly the dominant tradition is that of the people known throughout history to the outside world as the Abyssinians. Living on the temperate highland massif in the northern and central regions of the country, these people have gained their subsistence through the plow cultivation of cereal grains, have organized their polity as a feudal kingdom, and have remained steadfast in their Monophysite Christian faith since its introduction to the land in the fourth century.

The Abyssinians comprise two linguistic and geographical groups—the Amhara and the Tigre.* The Tigre inhabit the northern part of Ethiopia, above the Takazzē River; their lands fall in what are now the province of Tigre and the former Italian colony of Eritrea. Their language, Tigrinya, is

* Abyssinians object to the term "Abyssinian," since it has been used pejoratively by foreigners, even though they do use its indigenous counterpart, *"Hābashā,"* among themselves. The term apparently derives from the name of one of the South Arabian tribes which migrated to Ethiopia in antiquity—the Habashat. In deference to this objection, I shall use the compound "Amhara-Tigre" in place of "Abyssinian" wherever feasible. The name "Ethiopia" will be used consistently to refer to the national polity which, throughout its history, has included other peoples and traditions as well as the Amhara-Tigre.

1, [The Abyssinians, composed of Amhara and Tigre--Analyst]

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Identification

The Amhara are a Semitic-speaking people of highland Ethiopia, with somewhere between 3 and 5 million people. Kuo estimates the population of Ethiopia at 15, 000, 000 plus 1, 100, 000 (1950) in Eritrea living on 457, 000 sq. mi. (including Eritrea). Rey (1923) regards 9 to 10 million for Ethiopia alone as a reasonable estimate. DeCastro divides the population of Ethiopia as follows: 33% Semites, 42% Galla, 10% Western Cushites, 8% Somali and Afar, and 7% Negroids. Kuo estimates the Amhara alone at 2, 000, 000. In religion the Amhara belong to the Coptic Christian church. They are of medium height, bronze in skin color, with black hair. Ethiopia was known to the ancient Egyptians as Punt. It became an Egyptian province, at least in part, under the 18th dynasty, but became independent by 1000 B.C. In the late centuries B.C. immigrants from Arabia flowed into the country, largely displacing the Agau or Central Cushitic inhabitants. The main Semitic immigration came around the 7th century B.C. from Yemen, where a high agricultural civilization prevailed from 750 to 542 B.C. The Sabaean language became Geez in Ethiopia, later being differentiated into Tigre, Tigrinya, Amharic, Harari, and Gurage. The Gurage were an offshoot of the colonists of Harar, who were distinct from the group entering north Ethiopia. Archeology shows a Semitic civilization in the plateau of Eritrea and N Tigre from the 7th century B.C. on. Axum (in Tigrinya country) became the capital. The kingdom of Axum expanded from the 1st to 3rd century A.D. Yemen was conquered and ruled twice, first c. 300-378 A.D., second c. 524-590. Axum adopted Christianity before 400, but its great spread was much later (13th and 14th centuries). Axum disappears after c. 700. The rise of Islam now shut Ethiopia off from the Mediterranean world, with which it had long been in close contact. A new kingdom of Najashi appears by 872 in N. Abyssinia, its subjects being mixed Semites and Agau. In 1137 an Agau dynasty came to power at Roha, controlling Tigre and adjacent Lastra and Angot. East Shoa was converted to Islam in 1108, and Moslem expansion had begun to convert the Saho, Afar, and Somali by 1300 and the Ittu, Gurage, Tulama and Hadya (N Kambata) countries shortly thereafter. The Solomonid dynasty arose in 1270, and soon converted to Christianity the pagans of W Shoa and Damot. It reached its apex in 1468, immediately declining. In the early 16th century Moslem Somali overran the country, but were

defeated with Portuguese aid in 1543. After 1700, the rule shifted from Tigre to Amhara, where Gondar became the capital until replaced by Addis Ababa in 1892. King Theodore conquered Gojam, Tigre, and Shoa, establishing a unified kingdom in 1855. After a period of decline and conflict with the English, Menelik II, king of Shoa, again established a unified state in 1889. The Italians were defeated in the war of 1895-96, but conquered Ethiopia in 1934. Liberation came in 1941.

Basic Economy

Primarily agricultural, with use of ox-drawn plow and occasional irrigation. The staple crop is teff (Eragrostis abyssinica), followed by barley and durra (a grain sorghum). Other grains include eleusine (E. coracana), wheat, emmer, oats (rare), maize (not common), pearl millet (rare and only in lowlands), and rye (a little). Legumes include peas (Cicer arietinum), lentils, and "beans" (including Faba sp., Phaseolus sp., and possibly Dolichos sp.). Root crops include ensete (Ensete edulis, formerly Musa ensete), peanuts, and onions. Oil plants include flax, castor-oil plant (Ricinus sp.), nug (Guizotia oleifera), sesame (rare), "suf", and rape (perhaps recent). Condiment crops include coffee (the leading cash crop), sugarcane (rather recent), peppers (Capsicum sp.), and tobacco; Hildebrandt also mentions mustard, safflower, and purslane. Other crops include cotton, kat (Catha edulis), gourds, and grapes (formerly grown but practically extinct on account of disease).

Animal husbandry is of great though subsidiary importance. Domestic animals include cattle (mainly but not exclusively of zebu type), sheep (mainly fat-tailed hairy variety), goats, horses, donkeys, mules (greatly prized), dogs, cats, chickens (eggs not eaten), and bees, but no pigs. Cows, goats, and sheep are milked, and butter is made (as a cosmetic). Fishing is unimportant. Hunting (for large game) is a sport or a pursuit of professional hunters. A very little gathering is done. Trade is important, and there are markets.

Sex Division of Labor

Men hunt, fish, tend bees, and do most of the agricultural work. Women do the milking.

Property

Most land is owned by the Coptic church and by large landowners,

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members of the feudal nobility. There are few small independent farmers, most peasants being tenants with hereditary use rights, paying a fixed annual or semi-annual rent in money, produce, or services. There are also sharecroppers.

Inheritance is patrilineal. Land is divided equally among all sons, but movables are inherited by ElSo. Women do not share in inheritance.

Social Stratification

There is a complex social stratification into royalty, landed feudal aristocracy, a small middleclass, tenant farmers, outcaste groups (e.g., hunters), and hereditary slaves (war captives in origin).

Marriage

Marriages are arranged by parents. The sources mention gifts but not any form of true consideration.

Monogamy is officially absolute, but concubinage is not uncommon. Levirate permitted.

Family

Independent nuclear families, each occupying a compound, are the norm.

Residence

A married couple reside for a month or two in the house of HuFa, then move to a house of their own nearby. Neolocal residence is common in Addis Ababa and occasional elsewhere. Matrilocal residence is unheard of.

Kin Groups and Exogamy

There is a marked tendency toward local exogamy with respect to the village or hamlet.

Marriage is forbidden with any fourth cousin or closer kinsmen (formerly with anyone having a common ancestor within 7 generations). Kindreds are apparently present and functional.

Descent is apparently bilateral, though patri-lineages are possible, genealogies being kept for many generations in the male line. A son takes his father's first name as his own surname, but patronymy is absent.

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Kinship Terminology

Fa--abbat. Mo--innat. So--wundlij. Da--setlij. Hu--bali. Wi--misti. ElBr--gashe wundime. YoBr--wundime. Si(m.s.)--ihite. ElSi (w.s.)--talakihite. YoSi (w.s.)--tanashihite.

Avuncular terms are lineal, nepotic terms bifurcate collateral (see special kinship chart).

FaBrCh, MoBrCh--agotlij. MoSiCh, FaSiCh--akistlij.

Settlement Pattern

The Amhara live in compact hamlets, villages, or towns, usually with 50-80 inhabitants. Addis Ababa (c. 150, 000) is the only town larger than 10, 000. Wealthy people live in round one-story houses with walls of stone plastered with mud and thatched roofs, but poor people live in round huts with cylindrical walls of wattle and daub and conical straw-thatched roofs. A house and yard are normally enclosed by a wall of mud or stone.

Community Organization

Being normally exogamous, a village is perhaps a patri-deme. Both circumcision and clitoridectomy are practiced, and in some places also infibulation.

Local Government

There are village "mayors" (shum) and councils of elders.

State

The Amhara are ruled by a king, who is also emperor (negus) of the Ethiopian state. His power is theoretically absolute. He rules through feudal lords (ras), who are provincial governors, and an administrative hierarchy filled mainly by nobles. He is advised by a council of ministers, and derives his revenues from customs, dues, taxation (normally 10% of production), labor levies (one day in four for a man's overlord), and levies of food for troops. Succession is patrilineal.

Warfare

The Amhara have fought wars for territorial aggrandizement.

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Fleming, H.C. Unpublished data from two Ethiopian informants (1954).

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Rey, C.F. Unconquered Abyssinia. London, 1923. (A modest amount of data).

_____. The Real Abyssinia. London, 1935. (A slight revision of the above).

Stigand, C.H. To Abyssinia through an Unknown Land. London, 1910. (A very few items).

Trimingham, J.S. Islam in Ethiopia. Oxford, 1952.

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MP5 Amhara

1: Messing, Simon David. The Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia. A Dissertation in Anthropology Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Philadelphia: 1957.

Pp. 1, 715; index; 15 tables; 1 diagram; 1 map; bibliography.

Hraf copy (University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan, Copyflo edition)

/This work is an ethnographic monograph based on field research primarily in the district of Gondar, and supplemented by library research. A thorough and balanced description of Amhara culture is presented. The principal parts into which the study is divided are: Land, History and People, Utilization of Nature's Products, Social Organization, the Life Cycle of the Individual, Interpersonal Relations and Artistic Expression, Healing Body and Spirit, and Concluding Observations. The section on healing is especially extensive, dealing with various types of magical, medical, and mental therapy, spirit possession, sorcery and the cult activities which play a major role in Amhara Society. The author is at present Assistant Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Hiram College. --Analyst/

Field date: 1953-1954

Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5

Processed in 1959

2: Allen, W. E. D. Ethiopian Highlands. The Geographical Journal, Vol. 101, pp. 1-15. London: The Royal Geographical Society, 1943.

Yale: E 10. R81g. v. 101.

[This work is based on observations made while the author was a member of the military mission which restored Emperor Haile Selassie to the Ethiopian throne during World War II. The account is primarily a description of the geography of Ethiopia with remarks on the history of its people. Although some description of the Amhara and other ethnic groups and their culture is presented, it is summary in nature and adds little to the information in the source 1: Messing of this file. The author includes 17 photographs and 1 map. --Analyst]

Field date: 1941
Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Geographer-5
Processed in 1959

3: Buxton, D.R. The Shoan Plateau and Its People: An Essay in Local Geography. The Geographical Journal, Vol. 114, pp. 157-172. London: The Royal Geographical Society, 1949.
1 map.
Yale: E 10. R81g. 113-114

[As the title suggests, this article deals primarily with the geography of a limited area: in this case, a region about ten by eleven miles around the city of Debra Berhan, an important market town and district headquarters eighty miles northeast of Addis Ababa. The author describes in detail the geography of the region, and gives additional information on settlement patterns, agriculture and irrigation, the local market, and a description of several of the churches. Of particular interest is an original map of the area, which shows in detail topography, routes, settlements and other aspects discussed in the text.--Analyst]

Field date: 1946-1948
Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Educator-5
Processed in 1959

4: Alvarez, Francisco. Narrative of the Portuguese Embassy to Abyssinia During the Years 1520-1527. Translated by Lord Stanley of Alderly for the Hakluyt Society, Publication No. 64. London: 1881.

Pp. xxviii; 416; end map; index.

[Omitted from the files: Pp. ii-xxviii, 1-20, 66-400, 413-416.]

[This source relates the adventures and difficulties encountered by the Portuguese sent to contact "Prester John," (the ruler of Abyssinia). The author, a priest, gives details of the trip from the Red Sea to central Ethiopia. Most of the information on the Amhara is given in this section. The major portion of the material specifically identifiable as pertaining to the Amhara deals with religion and material culture. This source is the earliest account of European contact with Ethiopia.--Analyst]

Field date: 1520-1526
Analyst: James R. Leary

Evaluation: Missionary-5
Processed in 1959

5: Bruce, James. Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile, in the years 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1773. Vols. 5 and 7. Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1804.

Pp. ii, 512; iv, 436

Yale: Efbb 768Bb v. 5 and 7

/Only pp. 1-42 of vol. 5 and pp. 62-80 of vol. 7 (Vol. 7 has been given consecutive pagination following vol. 5) have been processed./

/The author, a famous early British traveler and natural scientist, gives a general picture of Amhara life, with the major emphasis being devoted to their religious observances. The account is valuable chiefly for historical reasons.--Analyst/

Field date: 1768-1773
Analyst: James R. Leary

Evaluation: Traveler - 5
Processed in 1959

6: Messing, Simon D. Ethiopian Folktales Ascribed to the Late Nineteenth Century Amhara Wit, Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna. Journal of American Folklore, Vol. 70, pp. 69-72. Richmond, Va.: The American Folklore Society, 1956.

HRAF Copy

[Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna was a popular wit in the court of Emperor Menelik and among the populace. His stories and witticisms have been transmitted orally from generation to generation. The stories in this article were gathered from the Amharic-speaking peasants and nobles in his native province.--Analyst]

Field date: 1953-1954
Analyst: Robert Lee

Evaluation: Ethnologist-5
Processed in 1959

7: Perham, Margery. The Government of Ethiopia. New York: Oxford University Press, 1948.

Pp. xxiv, 481; preface; 7 appendices; bibliography; index; genealogical table; 3 maps.

HRAF Copy.

[Only pp. 262-292 have been processed for the Amhara file.]

[This book is a general treatment of the government of Ethiopia, with special chapters on its various regions. Only three chapters, which have special bearing on the Amhara, have been processed for this file. One treats the provinces in general: provincial divisions before 1935 and the population. The others treat the Northern Provinces in particular: the emperor, the governor, and the village chief; and land tenure and tribute. The author has been especially concerned with presenting conditions as they were in 1935 prior to the Italian conquest, with additional data to bring her information up to 1945 conditions. Although only a portion of the book has been processed, the remainder is useful for its historical treatment of the political setting in which the Amhara are found. --Analyst]

Field date: no date
Analyst: George R. Bedell

Evaluation: Social Anthropologist-4
Processed in 1959

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8: Rey, C.F. The Real Abyssinia. 2nd edition. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1935

Pp. 291; 8 plates; end map.

[Pp. 1-57, 82-173, 198-291, have not been processed for the files.]

Yale: Bk31 4kb

[The writer, a British government official spent many years in Ethiopia during which time he traveled extensively in the country. Much of the book is devoted to political and historical matters concerning the contemporary Ethiopian state. These sections have not been processed for the Amhara file. The sections dealing specifically with the Amhara cover calendar, clothing, diet, ceremonial life, and miscellaneous aspects of Amhara culture.--Analyst]

Field date: 1910-1920
Analyst: James R. Leary

Evaluation: Government Official-5
Processed in 1959

MP5 Amhara

9: Coon, Carleton Stevens. The Races of Europe. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1939.

Pp. xvi, 739; 46 plates; 16 maps; glossary; bibliography; index.

HRAF Copy

[Only pp. 444-458 have been processed for the files.]

[This source is taken from the section on the Mediterranean race in East Africa in Coon's authoritative work on physical anthropology. The Amhara, Galla and Sidamo peoples of Ethiopia and the Somalis are the main physical types discussed here. The author concludes from the physical evidence presented that the partly negroid appearance of Ethiopians and Somalis is due to a mixture between whites and negroes, and that the Ethiopian cannot be considered the representative of an undifferentiated stage in the development of both whites and blacks as sone anthropologists had suggested. The author, an outstanding authority on race, is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. --Analyst]

Field date: 1933-1934

Evaluation: Physical Anthropologist-5

Analyst: Robert Lee

Processed in 1959

10: Barkhuus, Arne. Disease and Medical Problems of Ethiopia. Ciba Symposia, Vol. 9, No. 7, pp. 710-723. Summit, N. J.: Ciba Pharmaceutical Products, Inc., 1947.

Yale Medical Library

[Barkhuus was with the U.S. Technical Project in Ethiopia in 1944-45 when he collected materials for this and two other articles on Ethiopian public health and medicine which appeared in an issue of Ciba Symposia devoted to Ethiopian medicine. The other articles have not been processed because they are not specific enough or do not deal with the Amhara. In this article he describes briefly the medical facilities and public health situation in Ethiopia and then presents a discussion of diseases commonly found among the population. --Analyst]

Field date: 1944-45
Analyst: Robert Lee

Evaluation: Physician-5
Processed in 1959

11: Levine, Donald Nathan. Wax & gold; tradition and innovation in Ethiopian culture. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1965.

16, 315 p.: 37 photographs; 14 tables; map; glossary; index; bibliographical notes.

HRAF copy. DLC card no.: 65-18340.

[In this source, the author analyzes traditional and transitional Amhara culture from four different vantages: historical, sociological, anthropological and psychological. Each aspect of traditional culture touched on by the author is considered in light of Ethiopia's current transition to a modern state. The problems facing Ethiopia as a developing nation are pointed out and some suggestions are made concerning their solution. Examined in depth are the roles of Amhara peasants elites, intellectuals, adolescents, clergy and military. The education and socialization process and the political process are examined extensively to determine in what ways traditional patterns conflict with or contribute to the modernization process. In the last two chapters, the author delves into the psychological development of the Amhara personality. More specifically, these last two chapters are concerned with the personality factors which the author considers inhibitive of creative leadership, solidary action and social progress. Field methods included analysis of literary texts and oral traditions, use of questionnaires, projective tests, interviews and participant observation. The author spent from 1958 to 1961 carrying out field research, serving part of that time as a lecturer in the

11: Levine, Donald

University College of Addis Ababa. Bibliographic references are contained in the footnotes which can be found in category 116, pp. 287-302.

Field date: 1958-1961
Analysts: Helen Gunsher Bornstein, marker
John Beierle, checker

Evaluation: Sociologist-4, 5
Processed in 1972

12: Young, Allan Louis. Medical beliefs and practices of Begemder Amhara. Doctoral dissertation (anthropology)--University of Pennsylvania, 1970. University Microfilms, Publication no. 71-19, 303. Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1970 [1972].

20,257 l.; index; 8 tables; 3 maps; bibliography.

HRAF copy.

[This study is a description of ideas on diseases and therapies among the Amhara. The priest-healer, debtera, is given specific attention in this study. Differences between the herbalist and other secular healers (bone-setters, midwife, etc.) and their therapies and the debtera, who heals by calling on disease-causing spirits and by recital of scripture texts are discussed in detail.]

Field date: Jan.-Dec. 1966
Analysts: Sigrid Khera, marker
Sarah Bridges, checker

Evaluation: E-4, 5
Processed in 1972-1973

Coon, Carleton Stevens. Measuring Ethiopia and Flight into Arabia. London: Jonathan Cape, 1936.

Pp. 319; 8 plates

Yale: Efbb 933Cb

/This is an account of a trip to Addis Ababa and Arabia in 1933-1934. The author's purpose was to take physical measurements on a series of males in the highland plateau area of Ethiopia. While there is some incidental ethnographic information, the major portion of the book is an account of the author's trials and tribulations in attempting to carry out his fieldwork. He was able to measure some 100 men of the Emperor's army stationed in Addis Ababa. The results obtained from these measurements is reported in 9:Coon, this file. Therefore, this source was not processed for the Amhara file. ---Analyst/

Crawford, O.G.S. Ethiopian Itineraries circa 1400-1524 including Those Collected by Alessandro Zorzi at Venice in the Years 1519-24. Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, Second Series, No. 109. Cambridge: Published for the Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1958.

Pp. xxx, 232; 2 plates; 21 maps

Yale: E10.H15 II. 109

/This source is primarily concerned with the Ethiopian Itineraries collected shortly before 1524 by Alessandro Zorzi of Venice. They contain valuable information about the political geography of Ethiopia before the Galla invasions in the 16th century. Little in the way of ethnographic information specific to the Amhara of highland Ethiopia is to be found here. Therefore, this source has not been processed for the Amhara file. --Analyst/

Goadby, F. M. Legal Reform in Abyssinia. Journal of Comparative Legislation, Third Series, vol. 26, Parts III and IV, pp. 64-65. London: Society of Comparative Legislation, 1944.

Yale Law: P50

/This is a short article, largely of historical interest, discussing legal reform with respect to the treatment of foreign nationals in Ethiopia. It has not been processed for the Amhara file. ---Analyst/

Griaule, Marcel. Burners of Men: Modern Ethiopia. Translated from the French by Edwin Gile Rich. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1935.

Pp. 308; 16 plates; 1 map

Yale: Efbb 929 Gg

/This is a report on a journey from Addis Ababa to Lake Tana about 1930. It is by a professional ethnologist, the author of several books and articles in French on Abysinnia. Although it deals with the Amhara, the book contains very little specific ethnographic information. Therefore, it has not been processed for the Amhara file. -- Analyst/

Guthe, Thorstein. Venereal Diseases in Ethiopia. World Health Organization Bulletin Vol. 2 , Pp. 85-127. New York, 1949.

Yale: Medical Library

/This article by a medical specialist deals with the general problem of venereal disease in Ethiopia. The groups involved are not specified, so that inclusion of this article in the Amhara file was not justified. --Analyst/

MP5 Amhara

Hildebrandt, J.M. Gesammelte Notizen über Land wirthschaft und Viehzucht in Abyssinien und den östlich angrenzenden Ländern. Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, vol. 6 pp. 318-340. Berlin: Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie Ethnologie, und Urgeschichte, 1874.

Yale: Nk10 Z37 v. 6

/This article contains a discussion of agriculture and animal husbandry. These subjects are fully covered in 1:Messing, this file. Therefore, this source has not been processed for the Amhara file. ---Analyst/

Leiris, Michel. La Croyance aux Genies "zar" en Etiopie du Nord. Journal de Psychologie Normale et Pathologique, Vol. 1-2, Pp. 108-126. Paris: 1938

/This article reports on the Zar cult at Gondar on the Highland Plateau area of Ethiopia. The same cult was observed and reported at length by Messing (source No. 1, this file) in 1953-54. The source has not been processed because it duplicates the material by Messing. --Analyst/

Leiris, Michel. La Possession et ses Aspects Theatraux chez les Ethiopiens de Gondar. L'Homme, Cahiers d'Ethnologie, de Geographie et de Linguistique No. 1. Paris: Librairie Plon, 1958.

Pp. 103

/The subject matter of this book is psychological, but no tests were administered and the approach is ethnological. As the author stayed only three months in the field and did not learn the language, he depended largely upon information supplied by a Coptic priest hostile to the "Zar"cult in which possessions take place. Comparisons are made with a number of tribes, but the obviously related "Saka" cult of Kenya is not mentioned. This source has not been processed for the Amhara file because the specific ethnographic data is duplicated in 1:Messing. ---Analyst/

Leslau, Wolf. Preliminary Report on a Trip to Ethiopia. Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences, Series 2, Vol. 10, pp. 291-297. New York, 1948.

Yale: A53n 558 II. 10-11

/This is an interesting report of a trip in 1946-1947 to survey the various Semitic languages of Ethiopia although little in the way of ethnographic information is contained. There is some indication of the distribution and present-day conditions of various Semitic language speakers--Amharic, Tigre, Harari, Gurage, etc. Since so little information on the Amhara is presented, this source has not been processed for the Amhara file. --Analyst/

Leslau, Wolf. Report on a Second Trip to Ethiopia. Word, Vol. 8, pp. 72-79. New York: Linguistic Circle of New York, 1952.

Yale: F10 W89 8

/This is a report on the author's field trip to Ethiopia in 1950 in order to supplement data gathered during a first trip there in 1946-1947. It contains incidental information on the distribution of languages and way of life of various non-Amhara peoples in and around Addis Ababa. Since it contains little information on the Amhara, this source has not been processed for the Amhara file. ---Analyst/

Leslau, Wolf. A Year of Research in Ethiopia. Word, Vol. 4, pp. 212-225. New York: Linguistic circle of New York, 1948.

Yale: F10 W89 4

/This is another report on the author's trip to Ethiopia in 1946-1947, a report on which appeared also in the Transactions of the New York Academy of Science. Ser. 2, Vol. 10, pp. 291-297, 1948. The report in Word stresses the study of linguistics and contains many useful hints for the student intending to do field research in Ethiopia. There is little in the way of useful ethnographic information not contained in other sources processed for the Amhara file. ---Analyst/

Littman, Enno. Publications of the Princeton Expedition to Abyssinia. 4 volumes, Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1910-1915.

Yale: Foj7 P93 v. 1-4B

/Although entitled Abyssinia, the material in these volumes pertains to the As Sheikh, Maria, Mensa and other tribes of the Tigre nation in what is now Eritrea. These people speak a Semitic language (Tigre) akin to Amharic and Tigrinya (of Tigre province) in highland Ethiopia. The volumes consist of specimens of literature, songs and dirges, based on texts collected in the field and in Germany from a Tigre-speaking informant. The latter came from Geleb, in east-central Eritrea. There are some ethnological data included, particularly on pp. 101 ff. of Vol. 2. Since these volumes contain no information on the Amhara, they have not been processed for the Amhara file. ---Analyst/

Littman, Enno. Specimens of the Popular Literature of Modern Abyssinia. Jouranl of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 23, pp. 51-55. New Haven, 1902.

Yale: Fd12 Am35 23[1]

/This article contains some early specimens of Tigre texts, later expanded and added to in the author's Princeton Expedition publications. Since no information on the Amhara is presented, this source has not been processed for the Amhara file. --Analyst/

MP5 Amhara

Messing, Simon D. Changing Ethiopia. The Middle East Journal, Vol. 9, pp. 413-432. Washington: The Middle East Institute, 1955.

Yale: Bj59a M58 9

/This is an interesting article on present-day agencies of cultural change in Ethiopia, particularly in the Coptic Christian highland plateau area. The role of the Emperor, the Church, westernization, changing values, etc. are discussed. Practically all of this information is contained in the author's dissertation, 1:Messing, this file. Therefore, this article has not been processed for the Amhara file. ---Analyst/

MP5 Amhara

Messing, Simon D. Further Comments on Resin-Coated Pottery: Ethiopia. American Anthropologist, Vol. 59, p. 134./ Menasha: American Anthropological Association, 1957.

Yale: Nk10 AM37 II59

/This is a very brief article describing practices of pottery making; the source has not been processed for the Files because the subject was considered to be adquately treated in 1:Messing./

MP5 Amhara

Messing, Simon D. Group Therapy and Social Status in the Zar Cult of Ethiopia. American Anthropologist, Vol. 60, pp 1120-1126. Menasha: American Anthropological Association, 1958.

Yale: Nk10 AM37 II60

/This article is concerned with spirit healing practices, practioners, patients, and social status among the Amhara cults. The source has not been processed for the Files because the subject was considered to be adequately treated in 1: Messing. /

Messing, Simon D. Notes on the Role of Applied Political Science in Anthropological Field Work. Human Organization, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 31-33. Ithaca, New York: The Society for Applied Anthropology, 1958.

/This article is primarily concerned with methods of establishing rapport between the investigator and the native people, both on official diplomatic and informal local levels. The author draws on his own experiences in Ethiopia, and although some reference is made to local customs and the reception of alien persons, the information presented was not considered to constitute a significant addition to that contained in 1:Messing; consequently, the source has not been processed for the Files./

Mittwoch, Eugen. Popular Amharic Texts. Journal Royal African Society, "Africa" Supplement. Vol. 41. Pp. 260-261. London, 1942

Yale: Bk2 4 41

/This short collection of Amharic folk tales was collected by the author, "years ago," from unspecified informants at an undesignated location. In addition to several fables or folk tales, three children's games are described. Because of the uncertain nature of the material and the circumstances under which it was collected, this source has not been processed for the Amhara file. --Analyst/

Munzinger, Werner. East African Studies /Ostafrikanische Studien/. Schaffhausen: Fr. Hurtersche Buchhandlung, 1864.

Pp. viii, 584; end map.

Yale: Nkd78 864m

/This source, by a member of the German expedition of 1861, gives details of travel through Eritrea and the Sudan. The group did not penetrate as far south as the main Amhara area so that information on this group is scanty. The source has not therefore been processed for the MP5 Amhara file. --Analyst/

MP5 Amhara

Nadel, Siegfried Frederick. Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau. Africa, Vol. 16, pp. 1-23, 99-110. London: International African Institute, 1946.

Yale: Bk2 10 16

/This article contains a detailed discussion of the principles and problems of land tenure among the Tigrinya nation of northern Ethiopia (Tigre province) and adjacent Eritrea. This source contains information on a variety of customs which closely parallel those found among the related Amhara of highland Ethiopia. ---Analyst/

Parkyns, Mansfield. Life in Abyssinia; Being Notes Collected during Three Years' Residence and Travels in That Country. 2 Vols. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1854.

Vol. I, pp. 350, 5 plates, 1 text figure; Vol. II, pp. 355; 5 plates

Yale: Efbb 847Pb v. 1-2

/The author spent three years in the area of Axum in Tigre province in highland Ethiopia. Vol. 2, in particular, contains a wealth of first-hand information on the life and customs of the Tigrinya nation, a Semitic-speaking, Coptic Christian people closely related to the Amhara. This source offers eye-witness accounts (at an early date) of a variety of customs which closely parallel those found among the Amhara (e.g., those surrounding the bouda or "evil eye," litigation, etc.)---Analyst/

MP5 Amhara

Rohrer, Ernst Friedrich. Beiträge zur Kenntnis der materiellen Kultur der Amhara. Schönburg-Bern: Buckdruckerei Willi P. Wälchli, 1932.

Pp. 176; 14 plates; 30 text figures, incl. 1 mpa

Yale: Nkd78 A2 932r

/This is a doctoral dissertation based on an examination of specimens in ethnological museums at Bern, Basel, Stuttgart, Berlin and Paris. In addition, private collections were examined. There are complete descriptions of objects and techniques. Although the author generalizes about Amhara culture, the specimens examined include Galla, Somali, Gurage and other peoples in the area. Since 1:Messing, this file, covers the material culture of the Amhara, this source has not been processed for the Amhara file. ---Analyst/

Sanford, C. Ethiopia Under Haile Selassie. London:1946

/This source is a general survey of Ethiopia during the reign of Haile Selassie, before, during and after the Italian occupation and subsequent expulsion by British forces during World War II. Little specific information on the Amharic peoples is contained.--Analyst/

MP5 Amhara

Talbot, David Abner. Contemporary Ethiopia. New York: Philosophical Library, 1952.

/This source, by an American newspaper editor, is a general survey of the contemporary Ethiopian situation. The information included, while valuable as a background study of Ethiopia, is not sufficiently detailed to be of value in a file on the Amhara. -- Analyst/

MP5 Amhara

Walker, Craven H. The Abyssinian at Home. London: The Sheldon Press, 1933.

Pp. 220

Yale: Day Missions.

/This book deals with such subjects as marriage, the Church, the law, birth, inheritance, etc. The author, who was for many years with the Sudan Civil Service and later British Consul for Western Ethiopia (stationed at Goré), collected the information in the course of learning Amharic.

There is considerable information in this book and the researcher is advised to consult it as a supplement to such sources as 1:Messing in this file. The author's experience, however, was primarily in a Galla (non-Amharic) area and there is a strong probability that his data were derived from highly selected and relatively few individuals. For these reasons, this source has not been processed for the Amhara file.---Analyst/

MP5 Amhara

Woolbert, Robert C. The Peoples of Ethiopia. Foreign Affairs, Vol. 14, pp. 340-344. New York, 1936.

Yale: Oz10 F76 v.14

/This article is a short survey of linguistic groups in Ethiopia. A language map is included. Nothing of importance is contained that is not in sources already included in this file. Therefore, this source has not been processed for the Amhara file. --- Analyst/

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Basset, R. : Folklore d'Ethiopie. Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociology. Paris, 1911.

Beke, Charles T. : On the Origins of the Gallas. London, R & J.E. Taylor, 1848.

: A Statement of Fact relative to the Transactions between the Writer and the Late British Political Mission to the Court of Shoa. London, 1845.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Bent, J. Theodore : The Sacred City of the Ethiopians. London, 1903.

Bentwich, Norman : Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somaliland. London, Gollancz, 1945.

Berlan, Edouard : La Vigne en Ethiopie. Géographie Alpine, Paris, 1952, pp. 291-298.

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131 The fragment of country depicted by the map lies on the edge of an important section of the Shoan plateau which extends in the form of an elongated oval north-eastwards from Addis Ababa and forms the watershed between the drainage systems of the Awash and the Blue Nile. The Asmara road uses this 133 convenient high causeway from Addis Ababa to a little beyond Debra +91 Berhan, and would go on using it if this were possible, for the road was made to follow the plateau wherever it was flat enough. North of Debra Berhan, however, the country is tremendously cut up by deep ravines and no level plateau remains. The road is therefore forced down, at Debra Sina, to lower levels (as happens again in several places on the way to Asmara). The higher 133 portions of this plateau lie at well over 9000 feet and constitute an undulating tract, sometimes almost flat, sometimes rather hilly, where differences in level amount to a few hundred feet only. But, on both sides, the plateau breaks up in the most spectacular fashion. To the north-west lie a series of gorges, all belonging to the Blue Nile system, opening up with extreme abruptness along an irregular front, as will be seen in the map. To the east, the plateau terminates in some places at the main escarpment which bounds the Danakil plains, an impressive drop of several thousand feet along a fault, well seen at Ankober and Debra Sina. But farther south the simplicity of this escarpment is disguised by certain tributaries of the Hawash system which, eating their way into the plateau, have formed gorges as striking as those of the Blue Nile system. These gorges, cutting back continually, must in time complete the destruction of the plateau, and produce, by the interdigitation of their deeply entrenched headstreams, the confused type of scenery already observable farther north.

The geological structure of the plateau, on which the local landscape, and especially the peculiar type of gorge developed, directly depends, seems to be extremely simple and almost the same as that which occurs over vast areas of central and northern Ethiopia. As long ago as 1870 the step-like hill sides and tremendous gorges of the Magdala area were well described by Blanford,[1] who had accompanied the Napier Expedition. He compared Abyssinian scenery with that of the western Deccan and the Western Ghats of India, but remarked that in the case of Abyssinia the special features of this type of landscape were exaggerated. He drew attention to the hill-forts or "ambas" of Abyssinia, closely corresponding to features which had likewise been used in India as forts.

Writing of the Jitta gorge near Magdala, Blanford says:

> ". . . we came suddenly on the brink of the mighty chasm in which the Jitta river runs, and to which all the minor valleys converge. Of all the grand scenery met with in Abyssinia, none equalled this wonderful gorge. It is 3500 feet deep, and looks scarcely a mile across. The sides are extremely steep, in places nearly perpendicular. The horizontal beds on both sides appear to correspond exactly; half-way down there is a well-marked terrace, evidently formed by the same bed, on both sides of the river. The bedding is very distinct.

It is to be regretted that all those geologists who disbelieve in the power

[1] Blanford, 'The Geology and Zoology of Abyssinia,' p. 86, London, 1870.

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Ababa and Debra Berhan remains Galla country. The Amharas have re-occupied the region immediately around Debra Berhan, their southern limit corresponding roughly with the edge of the sheet; but the churches built to meet their needs (including the new St. Gabriel already once mentioned) are comparatively few and far between, a confirmation of the recent date of the re-colonization. 175 563

The Gallas remained in possession of the plateau country until the early nineteenth century when Sahele Selassie, king of Shoa, began to push them back. The half-dozen hill-top forts shown on the sheet almost certainly date from this time, or were reoccupied then. The capital of Shoa since the eighteenth century had been Ankober, on the edge of the great eastern escarpment, some 20 miles east of Debra Berhan. But Sahele Selassie, as part of his anti-Galla campaign founded, in about 1830, a new capital at Angolala in the midst of Galla country. He thereafter divided his time between Angolala and Ankober. A largely disused track, still well-defined in most parts, is shown crossing the sheet from Angolala in an easterly direction; this was evidently an old route joining the two capitals. Harris,[1] who conducted a British Mission to Sahele Selassie in 1841–42, visited Angolala which then contained four or five hundred huts. He also describes Sahele Selassie's two-storied "palace," built by an Albanian[2] visitor, standing on an eminence—which however the king would not inhabit, from fear of earthquakes. Angolala continued to be used by Sahele Selassie's son, king Haile Malakot, and the great Menelik, who was Haile Malakot's son, had been born here in 1843—just after the time of Harris's visit. 175 [563] [712] [487] [644]

Not much remains now to show that Angolala was so recently the twin capital of Shoa; but the site of Sahele Salassie's house, an artificial mound crowning the ridge, is easily identified and commands a fine view of the countryside. Inside the mound is a vaulted cellar, its masonry showing clear signs of European workmanship, as also does the central stone-built element of the local church of Kidane Meheret. This work is now exposed to view as the church was burnt down during the Italian occupation. Angolala remains a well-populated area, but only a very few huts now stand among the remains of defensive walls near the old royal residence. 172 177

The young Menelik, up to the age of twelve, must have known all this country well. But at that time (1855) the newly crowned emperor Theodore, whose ambition was the unification of Ethiopia after a century and a half of anarchy and internal strife, came down from the north with the object of subjecting Shoa to his personal rule. He defeated king Haile Malakot on the plains of Atakilt, the irrigated area just south-east of Debra Berhan. Haile Malakot died immediately after the battle, and Menelik was carried away captive by Theodore—who, however, afterwards treated him as a son rather than a prisoner. For some years Menelik followed in the emperor's train, moving with him from Gondar to Debra Tabor and then to the hill-fortress of Magdala, Theodore's last capital and later the scene of his undoing. Several years before Napier's siege of 1868 Menelik had escaped from Magdala during, it is said, one of Theodore's periodic orgies. A youth in 175

[1] Harris, 'The Highlands of Aethiopia,' London, 1844.

[2] It is much more likely that Harris meant an Armenian.

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whom many hard things have been said by prejudiced travellers, play so essential a part in almost every aspect of rural life that the community simply cannot be imagined without them. Christenings, funerals and periodic commemorations of the dead are ceremonies of enormous importance which must, of course, be conducted by priests, and their presence is deemed desirable at the higher forms of civil marriage. The *mahabar* or Private Communion, an old social institution deeply rooted among these people, cannot be held unless priests are present, nor can oaths be sworn, or public inquiries made, without them. The traditional customs of the Ethiopian Church, based on those of the Copts but strongly influenced by Judaistic practices, still retain their hold, some would say a strangle-hold, over the rural population. Many long fasts are rigorously observed, besides weekly ones on Wednesdays and Fridays; so are a multiplicity of feast-days when no work may be done, though Saturday is not always observed, as it used to be, as a workless day equivalent to Sunday.

I have already spoken of the large number of churches scattered over this area, especially in the northern half of the sheet, among the gorges. When first wandering about the district I had no idea they were so numerous. But while making the survey I continually came across new ones, and the last two, those nearest the north-east and north-west corners of the sheet, were discovered only while filling in the final detail. They brought the total for this small area up to twenty. They are not elaborate buildings, nor do they conform to the ordinary western conception of a church. They are indeed round huts, quite uninfluenced by the rectangular form (deriving from a very ancient tradition) which exists in the northern part of the country.[1] Some are built in masonry, some in mud-and-stick, and the slightly more pretentious have an outer colonnade of wooden uprights supporting the edge of the roof. Inside one finds two concentric passages surrounding the *makdas*, or Holy of Holies, which only priests may enter. In the distance one can usually recognize a country church by its fine conical thatched roof, which is much bigger than that of any ordinary hut, and is crowned by a sort of double cone carrying a complicated cross, often ornamented with ostrich eggs.

Of the twenty churches, seven were dedicated to the Virgin Mary (Mariam), four to St. George (Ghiorghis), and three to the Archangel Michael, and these are, in general, the most popular dedications. The principal church in Debra Berhan was a Selassie (Trinity), that of Angolala a Kidane Meheret (Covenant of Mercy). There was one St. John, one St. Gabriel, and one each dedicated to the most famous of Ethiopian saints—"Abo" and Tekla Haymanot. Splendid sites have been chosen for most of these churches, the chief consideration having been, it would seem, visibility from afar. The plateau churches are invariably raised on a conspicuous ridge or hill-top. Many are beautifully situated on the shelves in the gorges, or overlooking these. Some again are placed on the extreme edge of a gorge—such are Saria Mikael in the north-east of the sheet and the old St. George, just north of Debra Berhan, now unfortunately moved nearer the town (both sites are marked on the map).

Perhaps the most striking of all these sites is that of Iteghe Mariam, to the

[1] D. R. Buxton, "The Christian Antiquities of Northern Ethiopia," *Archaeologia*, 92 (1947) 1–42.

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the linguistic sense at least, an eastward thrust of Sudanese negroes. In Ethiopia proper many Shankalla, negroes brought as slaves from the Blue Nile country, have propagated both as a slave population and through mixture. In Italian Somaliland, it is said that some of the slave tribes subservient to the Somalis speak Bantu. The speech of the Wattas may also be neither Hamitic nor Semitic.

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The study of the physical anthropology of this ethnologically and historically complex region may be said to have barely begun; nevertheless it has progressed far enough to warrant reasonably accurate statements as to the racial characters of the more numerous and better known peoples.[60] Before proceeding further, it may be well to state that all of the peoples of this "Hamitic" area, whether Hamitic or Semitic in speech, represent a blend in varying proportions between Mediterraneans of several varieties, especially of the tall, Atlanto-Mediterranean group, and negroes. Other elements include, of course, the Veddoid brought in solution from southern Arabia; there is also a possibility of traces of dilute pygmy and Bushman blood in southwestern Ethiopia and Somaliland, although neither of these has been proved. Needless to say, the Gallas and Amharas have mixed with each other greatly in the regions in which they have been in contact; both the Amharas and Gallas have absorbed the earlier Cushitic agricultural peoples in great numbers. The most important single influence has been the infiltration of negroes, through the slave trade, into the entire Ethiopian plateau region. So extensive has this infiltration been that it is unlikely that a single genetic

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[60] The principal works on the physical anthropology of the living in this region are:
Castro, L. de, *Nella Terra dei Negus*, vol. 2, pp. 342–477.
Frasetto, F., **AnthPr**, vol. 10, 1932, pp. 161–187.
Garson, J. G., Appendix to Bent, T. J., *The Sacred City of the Ethiopians*, pp. 286–296.
Klimek, S., **APA**, vols. 60–61, 1930–31, pp. 358–381.
Koettlitz, R., **JRAI**, vol. 30, 1900, pp. 50–55.
Lester, P., **Anth**, vol. 38, 1928, pp. 61–90, 289–315.
Leys, N. M., and Joyce, T. A., **JRAI**, vol. 43, 1913, p. 195.
Puccioni, N., **APA**, vol. 41, 1911, pp. 295–326; vol. 47, 1917, pp. 13–164; vol. 49, 1919, pp. 41–223; vol. 53, 1923, pp. 25–68; *Anthropologia e Etnografia delle Genti della Somalia*
Radlauer, C., **AFA**, vol. 41, 1914, pp. 451–475.
Verneau, R., Appendix in Duchesne-Fournet, *Mission en Ethiopie*.
In addition to these, the author has used, in the following exposition, a MS. of his own, awaiting publication, and entitled: *Contribution to the Study of the Physical Anthropology of the Ethiopians and Somalis*, based on a series of 100 Ethiopians and 80 Somalis measured in 1933–34.
Principal works on the craniology of this region are:
Castro, L. de, **APA**, vol. 41, 1911, pp. 327–339.
Cipriani, L., **APA**, vol. 53, 1926, pp. 11–24.
Sergi, S., *Crania Habessinica*.
Verneau, R., **Anth**, vol. 10, 1899, pp. 642–662.
Works on the Danakil, Baria, Cunama, and Beja are listed later.

10: Barkhuus D-5 (1944-1945) 1947 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[p. 728]

[pp. 724-728 are omitted]

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NOTES

CHAPTER 1: *Introduction*

1. E. Ullendorf, *The Semitic Languages of Ethiopia* (London: Taylor's [Foreign] Press, 1955), p. 25. 113
2. Elsewhere I have discussed the specific question of the influence of Amhara culture on Ethiopian national politics. Cf. "Ethiopia: Identity, Authority, and Realism," *Political Culture and Political Development*, ed. Lucien Pye and Sidney Verba (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).
3. Augustus Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia* (London: Methuen and Co., 1901), p. 3.
4. Cf. Abbā Yā'qob Gabra Iyasus, *Matsehāfa Sawāsew Za-Ge'ez* (Asmara: Tipografia Francescana, 1920 E.C.*), pp. 288 ff.; Mars'ē Hāzan Walda Qirqos, *Yāmāriññā Sawāsew* (Addis Ababa: Artistic Press, 1948 E.C.), pp. 215–18; Alamāyhu Mogas, *Maik'a Ityopyā* (Asmara: Kokaba Ṭsebāh Press, 1952 E.C.), pp. 10 ff.

   For an introduction to the European literature on *qenē*, cf. M. M. Moreno, *Raccolta di Qenē* (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1935); also Enrico Cerulli, *Storia della letteratura etiopica* (Milan: Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1956), pp. 154–56, 226–32.
5. Alamāyhu Mogas, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
6. Cerulli, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
7. Alamāyhu Mogas, *Sawāsew Ge'ez* (Addis Ababa: Tasfā Press, 1950 E.C.), p. 117.
8. Alamāyhu Mogas, *Malk'a Ityopyā, op. cit.*, p. 7.
9. This subject is treated at greater length in D. Levine, "Ambiguity and Modernity" (paper presented at the Fifth World Congress of Sociology, Wash-

* E.C. refers to the Ethiopian calendar dating, which runs seven or eight years behind the European calendar.

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• 113 ington, D.C., September 7, 1962; printed in the *Journal of the Ethiopian Students of North America*, IV, No. 1, 3–20).

10. H. Nakamura, *The Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples* (Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, 1960), p. 484.
11. On the concept of primordial sentiments cf. Edward Shils, "Primordial, Personal, Sacred, and Civil Ties," *British Journal of Sociology*, VIII (June, 1957), 130–45; and Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," *Old Societies and New States*, ed. C. Geertz (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 105–57.
12. G. Almond, "A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics," *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, ed. G. Almond, J. Coleman, and L. Pye (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), esp. pp. 36–38.
13. *Op. cit.*, pp. 17–21.
14. Richard Weaver, "Individuality and Modernity," *Essays on Individuality*, ed. Felix Morley (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), p. 77.

CHAPTER 2: *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

1. Stephen Wright, "Ethiopian Literature," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. More detailed descriptions of the literature of the period may be found in Enrico Cerulli, *Storia della letteratura etiopica* (Milan: Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1956), chaps. iii–vii; and Jean Doresse, *L'empire du Prêtre-Jean* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1957), II, chaps. xii, xiv.
2. Cf. Otto Jäger, *Aethiopische Miniaturen* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1957); and *Ethiopia: Illuminated Manuscripts* (Paris: UNESCO, 1961).
3. A revised edition of the English translation of Alvares' valuable manuscript has recently been published, and will be the text referred to in later references: *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. W. B. Huntingford (2 vols.; Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1961).
4. Job Ludolphus, *A New History of Ethiopia*, trans. J. P. Gent (2d ed.; London, 1684), p. 189.
5. Cf. Richard Pankhurst, *An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia* (London: Lalibela House, 1961), p. 406.
6. Carlo Conti-Rossini, ed. and trans., "Iyāsu I, Re d'Etiopia e martire," *Rivista degli studi orientali*, XX, 107.
7. [538] This disparaging image of Dāwit III has been perpetuated in the contemporary verse drama, *Selāsāwi Dāwit*, by the Shoan author Makonnen Endālkātchaw.
8. Sir Wallis Budge, *A History of Ethiopia* (2 vols.; London: Methuen and Co., 1928), II, 453.
9. This translation was made from the Italian translation in Cerulli, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–32.
10. Ababa Ayçhēh, *Bileçho* (Addis Ababa: Tensā'ē Za-Gubā'ē Press, 1948 E.C.).

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11. The letter was made available to the author through the courtesy of an Ethiopian informant. The text paraphrases Psalm 79. 000 [27]
12. This and the following section draw in part on material which has been published elsewhere, together with other material on Manz not included here. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, IX (Spring 1964), 204–11. [27] [113]
13. The boundaries of Manz proper include the Mofar River in the south, the Adabāy and Wānchet rivers in the west, the Qechenē River in the north, and in the east a long chain of mountains which pour forth the waters that drain across Manz and which divide it from the lowlands of Efrātā, Gedem, and Qawat. Accurate maps of Manz and its boundaries are not yet available.
14. Their itineraries are described in Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals* (London, 1843); and Paul Soleillet, *Voyages en Éthiopie* (Rouen, 1886). 113
15. A. Caquot, "L'homélie en l'honneur de l'archange Raguel," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 91–122.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
18. Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *Ya-Ityopyā Tārik Ka-Aṭsē Lebna Dengel Eska Aṭse Tēwodros* (Addis Ababa: Tensā'ē Za-Gubā'ē Press, 1949 E.C.), p. 20.
19. Cerulli, *op. cit.*, pp., 101–3.
20. Doresse, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
21. Chahab ad-Din Ahmad, *Futuh el-Habacha*, trans. D'Abbadie and Paulitschke (Paris, 1898), p. 342.
22. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *op. cit.*, p. 208.
23. This account of Nagāssi, like the accounts of his descendants which follow, has been constructed from a variety of sources, which, while differing in details, agree on the essential points presented here unless otherwise indicated. Oral traditions were obtained from Amhara informants in Manz and Addis Ababa. The chief written sources consulted include: Heruy Walda Selassie, an unpublished and untitled manuscript on the history of Ethiopia (part of which was published in his *Wā-Zēmā* [Addis Ababa, 1923 E.C.]); Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *op. cit.*; Tādassa Za-Waldē, *Ya-Abētohun Yā'qob Tewel-dennā Aṣher Tārik* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1948 E.C.); Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du Règne de Ménélik II* (2 vols.; Paris: Librairie Orientale et Américaine, 1930–32); Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa* (3 vols.; Rome, 1886–87); Major W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844); Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*; and Soleillet, *op. cit.* [173] [115]
24. The related claim set forth by his dynasty—that Nagāssi was in the direct line of descent from Lebna Dengel—is less universally acknowledged by Ethiopians. It is still a controversial question whether or not Nagāssi was actually related to Lebna Dengel and, if so, by what route. 173 175

The official genealogy traces the descent line as follows: Lebna Dengel—Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Warada Qāl—Lebsa Qāl—Nagāssi. This is the account set forth in Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā's history. The other Shoan authors who

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173 175 deal with this matter present different pictures, however. Blāttēngētā Heruy and Guèbrè Sellassié telescope the genealogy: Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Nagāssi. Tādassa Za-Waldē, on the other hand, leaves the question open; he identifies Segew Qāl as one of Yā'qob's sons, and refers to Nagāssi as father of the Shoan Dynasty, but affirms nothing concerning a connection between Segew Qāl and Nagāssi.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that none of these versions was reported to European travelers in the nineteenth century prior to the ascendance of Menelik. According to information given Major Harris by Shoan informants in the 1840's, Nagāssi inherited royal blood through his mother, who was said to be a granddaughter of "a daughter of the House of Solomon." Four decades later Soleillet was told still another story, namely, that "the kings of Shoa are now of the House of David, heirs of Solomon, cousins of Christ" not through Nagāssi, but by virtue of the marriage of his great-great-grandson, Asfā Wassan, to a relative of the imperial family at Gondar. Cecchi, finally, mentions none of these legitimizing affiliations.

113 25. Heruy manuscript, p. 19.
26. The latter version is given by Cecchi.
27. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; London, 1790), III, 255–56.
28. Cecchi, *op. cit.*, I, 241.
29. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
30. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 9.
31. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
32. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 12.
33. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 301. Heruy's account of the rebellion of Matako is considerably different. We are following Harris and Krapf here since they were virtually contemporaneous with the events, and would have no particular reason not to record them faithfully. [114]
34. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 302.
35. Harris, *op. cit.*, II, 133.
36. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), p. 173.
37. The word "Manz" (or "Manzeh"), according to local clergy, stems from a Ge'ez expression which means "land on which Christ's blood was sprinkled." [103]
38. Ludolphus, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
39. The architecture and layout of the imperial compound are described in Monti della Corte, *I castelli di Gondar* (Rome: Società Italiana Arti Grafiche, 1938).
40. On the role of the *abuna*, cf. below, chap. v.
41. C. Poncet, "A Voyage to Ethiopia," *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1949), p. 61.
42. This is what has been called an orthogenetic, as distinguished from a heterogenetic, pattern of cultural development. Cf. Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, III, No. 1, 53–73.

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43. E. Combes and M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (4 vols.; Paris, 1843), III, 342, call Gondar "une ville de plaisirs." Eduard Rüppell, *Reise in Abessinien* (2 vols.; Frankfurt am Main, 1838–40), II, 190, speaks of the Gondarēs' "grenzenlosen Liederlichkeit." 113
44. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 104.
45. Rüppell, *op. cit.*, II, 132.
46. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
47. "Menelik's conquests," of course, were won for the most part by trusted generals, who were men from all parts of Ethiopia. 000
48. The figure is from a local census made by the Gondar Public Health College around 1958.
49. The Ethiopian Election Board listed 88,000 families and a registration of 35,000 voters in Manz in 1957. The figures are probably exaggerated.
50. The regional association will be discussed further in chapter vii.
51. "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," *Old Societies and New States*, ed. C. Geertz (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 105–57. 113
52. "Ansprache an die Mitglieder des Vereins B'nai B'rith," *Gesammelten Werke*, XVII, 51–53.
53. *Ibid.*, and *Collected Papers*, V, 174.

CHAPTER 3: *The World of the Amhara Peasant*

1. Ernest Luther, *Ethiopia Today* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958).
2. The general methodological problem involved here is discussed in Hugo Engelmann, "The Activity Bias of Ethnography and the History of Society," *Anthropological Quarterly*, XXXIII (July, 1960), 158–63.
3. The TAT cards designed for use in Ethiopia were originally prepared by Dr. Edith Lord, US/AID, in connection with her own research there. The data on which the present study draws were obtained by administering twenty-five cards to a sample of twenty young Amhara in Manz—seventeen males and three females—ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-five years. 121 125 565
4. Cf. Samuel Alamayahu, "The Game of Gänna," *University College of Addis Ababa Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 9 (1959), pp. 9–28. 113
5. Cf. Akalou Wolde Michael, *"Buhe," UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 7 (1957), pp. 57–64.
6. Simon Messing, "Group Therapy and Social Status in the Zar Cult of Ethiopia," *American Anthropologist*, LX (December, 1958), 1120–26. More extensive discussion of the *zār* may be found in Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1957), and Michel Leiris, *La possession et ses aspects théâtraux chez les Éthiopiens de Gondar* (Paris: Plon, 1958).
7. This section draws on material previously published in D. Levine, "On the

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• 113 Conceptions of Time and Space in the Amhara World View," *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi etiopici* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1960), pp. 223–28.

8. Cf. Allan Hoben, "The Role of Ambilineal Descent Groups in Gojjam Amhara Social Organization" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1963), pp. 140 ff.
9. *Ibid.*, chaps. ii and v.
10. On Amhara attitudes toward nationhood cf. D. Levine, "Ethiopia: Identity, Authority, and Realism," *Political Culture and Political Development*, ed. L. Pye and S. Verba (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).
11. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," pp. 63–67, presents a detailed analysis of the ethnic hierarchy in Ethiopia "as it exists in the minds of most Amhara." Briefly summarized, this hierarchy consists, in order of descending status, of the (Christian) Tigre; Christianized Galla; Muslim and pagan Galla, and other sedentary Cushitic-speaking peoples who were self-governing prior to Menelik's conquests (Kaffa, Wollamo, etc.); peoples identified chiefly as manual laborers (Falasha, Gurage); and occupational hunters, pastoral nomads, and Negroid ex-slaves.

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113 12. This subject is discussed in greater detail in D. Levine, "Ethiopia: Identity, Authority, and Realism," *op. cit.*
13. Marcel Griaule, "Le travail en Abyssinie," *Revue internationale du travail*, XXIII (February, 1931), p. 8.
14. This ideal is discussed at greater length in D. Levine, "The Concept of Masculinity in Ethiopian Culture" (paper presented at the Fourteenth Annual Symposium of the Committee on Human Development, The University of Chicago, May 11, 1963: to be published in the *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*).
15. *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1954), chap. iv; and *The Little Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), chap. vi.
16. Cf. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," p. 540.

000 17. Harris observed that "the Abyssinian scribe does not hold the pen of a ready writer; and the dilatory management of his awkward implement is attended with gestures and attitudes the most ridiculous." Also, "Few of the priesthood understand the art of writing, and all regard the exercise of the pen as shameful and derogatory." *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; London, 1844), III, 15, 182.

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18. Cf. Benjamin Paul, ed. *Health, Culture, and Community* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1955).
19. See a series of articles beginning in the *Ethiopian Herald*, Addis Ababa, June 27, 1960: "Let the Victim Speak of the Magnitude of Ethiopian Medicine."

000 20. A long-term study of this and related problems is currently being carried out under the supervision of the US/AID Public Health Section in Ethiopia.

113 21. For general analyses of the nature of political life which support this assertion, cf. Edward Shils, *The Torment of Secrecy* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956);

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and Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1963), esp. chap. ii. 113

CHAPTER 4: *The Emerging Adolescent*

1. Cf. Richard Pankhurst, "Menelik and the Foundation of Addis Ababa," *Journal of African History*, II, No. 1 (1961), 103–17.
2. Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth: the Religious Meanings of Initiation in Human Culture* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1958).
3. For illustration of this phenomenon in a wide variety of societies as well as a highly advanced interpretation of it, cf. S. N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation: Age Groups and Social Structure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956). For additional examples cf. H. Ammar, *Growing Up in an Egyptian Village* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954); and J. Stoetzel, *Without the Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955).
4. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1957).
5. *Ibid.*, p. 436.
6. In addition to Messing, the literature on betrothal and marriage among the Amhara includes Abebe Ambatchew, "Betrothal among the Säwan Amharas," *UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 5 (June, 1956), pp. 5–12; J. I. Eadie, *An Amharic Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), pp. 75–79; C. H. Walker, *The Abyssinian at Home* (London: Sheldon Press, 1933).
7. Messing, *op. cit.*, pp. 459–60.
8. The conceptualization of "identity" used here follows the work of Erik Erikson, cf. "The Problem of Ego Identity," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, IV (January, 1956), 58–121; reprinted in *Identity and Anxiety*, ed. M. Stein, J. Vidich, and D. White (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960).
9. Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 247.
10. Tadesse Tereffe, "Progress, Problems and Prospects in Ethiopian Education," *Ethiopia Observer*, VIII, No. 1 (1964), 12.
11. In response to which, the government adjusted the passing grade so as to permit a larger number of students to pass the examination. 000
12. The exact composition of this sample was as shown in the tabulation on page 294.
13. Haile Fida, "High School and Educational Complications," *Ethiopian Herald* (Addis Ababa), August 2, 1960. 113
14. Thus, one American school director was celebrated by an Ethiopian student during the graduation ceremonies one year as follows: 000

    "When we came here, we were Tigreans, Gallas, Amharas, and so forth. Now, thanks to the director, we leave as Ethiopians, and as alumni of this school."
15. Perham, *op. cit.*, p. 256. 113

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Name of School[a]	Enrolment[b]	Grades Surveyed	No.		
			Total	Male	Female
I. Tafari Makonnen School	320	11th and 12th	60	60	0
II. Haile Selassie I Secondary School	230	12th	47	47	0
III. Menelik II School	245	12th	15	15	0
IV. General Wingate Secondary School	325	12th	58	58	0
V. Madhane Alem School	160	12th	21	21	0
VI. Empress Mennen School	220	12th	19	0	19
VII. The English School[c]	.....	11th and 12th	9	7	2
VIII. Madhane Alem School (Harar)	450	12th	23	23	0
IX. Haile Selassie I School (Gondar)	135	11th	45	45	0
X. Theological Academy	100	12th	13	13	0
XI. Commercial School	335	12th	42	31	11
XII. Technical School	420	12th	57	57	0
XIII. Social Work Training Program[d]	12	12th	11	3	8
XIV. Teacher Training School (Harar)	278	12th	51	51	0
XV. Agriculture School (Ambo)	120	12th	29	29	0
Total secondary schools	3,350	.....	500	460	40
XVI. University College	420	3d and 4th	44	.....	.....
XVII. Engineering College	100	3d and 4th	31	.....	.....
XVIII. College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts (Alemaya)	172	3d and 4th	49	.....	.....
XIX. Haile Selassie I Military Academy (Harar)	138	3d[e]	38	.....	.....
XX. Public Health Officers Training Program (Gondar)	60	3d and 4th	38	.....	.....
Total colleges	890	.....	200	.....	.....

[a] These schools include all but five of the government postelementary schools which were offering full four-year programs in 1959. Schools I–IX are listed as "academic secondary schools"; X–XV as "special schools"; and XVI–XX as "institutions of higher learning." Unless otherwise indicated, they are located in Addis Ababa.

[b] The enrolment figures are for the academic year 1959–60, except for Tafari Makonnen School, where a preliminary version of the questionnaire was used during 1958–59. In schools which include elementary grades as well, the figures refer only to the secondary level enrolment. The total universe of the grades surveyed in these twenty schools was 1,150.

[c] A very small private school, attended by several Europeans as well as Ethiopians. The entire Ethiopian group of the two highest classes responded.

[d] A two-year program organized with the assistance of UNESCO. The students surveyed were the equivalent of secondary school seniors.

[e] The terminal year.

113 16. Mulugeta Wodajo, "Postwar Reform in Ethiopian Education," *Comparative Education Review*, II (February, 1959), 27.

17. Cf. William Shack, "Organization and Problems of Education in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Negro Education*, XXVIII (Fall, 1959), 405–20.

18. *Youth's Outlook on the Future: A Cross-national Study* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1955), p. 9.

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19. Thus, an eighth-grade student in Manz explained the popularity of the Jimma Agricultural School by saying, "The boys all want to go there because it is run by the Americans, and a school run by Americans means that everything is done right—food and clothes are properly distributed, and so on."
20. Shack, *op. cit.*, p. 417. 113
21. In response to a question on their attitudes toward the priests, sixty juniors and seniors of Tafari Makonnen Secondary School replied as follows (1959): 40 per cent were unequivocally proclerical; 22 per cent were ambivalent, expressing awareness of both good and bad elements in the clergy; and 18 per cent were primarily anticlerical, calling the priests "incompetent," "opposed to modernization," and "not supported by the people." (The rest were no answers or noncommittal.) 883* 771 178 829
22. Edith Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-scientific Beliefs in Ethiopia," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XLVII, Second-Half (May, 1958), 339–54. 113
23. Cf. Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (rev. ed.; Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954), chaps. vii and xiv.
24. Cf. chap. iii, p. 89, and note 19.
25. Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-Scientific Beliefs," typescript version, pp. 6–7.
26. A sophisticated expression of this approach to Ethiopian painting has been published by an Ethiopian student in France. Cf. Berhanu Abbaba, "La peinture éthiopienne: point de vue d'un Éthiopien," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, II, No. 1 (1961), 160–65.
27. For a brief account of this historic event cf. Lipsky *et al.*, *Ethiopia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962), pp. 210–12.
28. Edgar Z. Friedenberg, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).
29. *Diagnosis of Our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), chap. iii.

CHAPTER 5: *The Old and New Elites*

1. C. Conti Rossini, "La regalità sacra in Abissinia," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, XXI (1948), 12–31.
2. A. Vasiliev, "Justin I (518–527) and Abyssinia," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXXIII (1933), 67–77; *Justin the First* (Harvard, 1950), pp. 299–302.
3. A. Caquot, "La royauté sacrale en Éthiopie," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 205–19.
4. F. Alvares, *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford (2 vols.; Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961), I, 122.
5. "The Chronicle of the Emperor Zara Yaqob," *Ethiopia Observer*, V, No. 2 (1961), 153.
6. J. Varenbergh, *Studien zur äthiopischen Reichsordnung* (Strassburg, 1916), p. 3.
7. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; Edinburgh, 1790), III, 237.

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• 1138. *Op. cit.*, p. 214.
9. Gebre-Wold Ingida-Worq, "Ethiopia's Traditional System of Land Tenure and Taxation," *Ethiopian Observer*, V, No. 4 (1962), 309–11.
10. Alvares, *op. cit.*, II, 445.
11. R. Pankhurst, "Status, Division of Labour and Employment in Nineteenth-Century and Early Twentieth-Century Ethiopia," *UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, II, No. 1 (1961), 30–34.
12. For an enumeration of many of these changes cf. S. Messing, "Changing Ethiopia," *Middle East Journal*, IX (Autumn, 1955), 413–32.
13. The sociological definition of elite assumed here is most fully articulated in S. F. Nadel, "The Concept of Social Elites," *International Social Science Bulletin*, VIII, No. 3 (1956), 413–24.
14. Bruce, *op. cit.*, III, 280.
15. *The Government of Ethiopia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), pp. 71–76.
16. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Queen of Sheba and Her Only Son Menyelek* (London: Medici Society, 1922), p. 64.
17. Afevork, *Grammatica della lingua amarica* (Rome, 1905), p. 264.
18. W. E. Conzelman, ed., *Chronique de Galawdewos* (Paris, 1895), p. 149.
19. J. Baeteman, *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* (Dire Dawa: Saint Lazare, 1929), p. 629.
20. Māhtama-Selassie Walda-Masqal, *Zekra Nagar* (Addis Ababa: Naṭsānat Press, 1942 E.C.), chap. xx.
21. W. Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia* (London, 1868), p. 139.
22. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), pp. 374–75.
23. Lieutenant Collat, *L'Abyssinie actuelle* (Paris, 1906), p. 28.
24. Varenbergh, *op. cit.*; Gebre-Wold Ingida-Worq, *op. cit.*
25. Ignazio Guidi, ed. *Annales Iohannis I, Iyāsu I et Baḳāffā* (Paris, 1903), pp. 144–51.
26. On the ranks and perquisites of dignitaries at the court of a *dajāzmātch* in the 1840's cf. d'Abaddie, *op. cit.*, pp. 336–37.
27. The order of precedence set under Iyāsu I is reproduced in Alvares, *op. cit.*, II, 560–61; that of the Ethiopic work *Ser'āta Mengest* in Varenbergh, *op. cit.*
28. Māhtama-Selassie, *op cit.*, chap. ii.
29. E. Almeida, "The History of High Ethiopia," in *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593–1646*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford (London: Hakluyt Society, 1954), pp. 72–73.
30. Plowden, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
31. Almeida, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
32. An autobiographical account of an instance of such nobility at the court of Menelik appears in Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Malḳām Bēta Sabotch* (Addis Ababa, 1949 E.C.).
33. Some of the dynamics of this process are described by an Ethiopian novelist in Rās Imru Haile Selassie, *Fitāwrāri Belāy* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā

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Salām Press, 1948 E.C.). This has been translated by Tadesse Tamrat in *Ethiopian Observer*, V, No. 4, 342–60. 113

34. Cited in R. Pankhurst, *An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia* (London: Lalibela House, 1961), p. 168.
35. Cf. Lloyd Fallers, "Despotism, Status Culture, and Social Mobility in an African Kingdom," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, II (October, 1959), 11–32.
36. Alvares, *op. cit.*, I, 17–22. Cf. R. Pankhurst, *op. cit.*, pp. 131–32.
37. E. Cerulli, "Punti di vista sulla storia dell'Etiopia," *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi etiopici* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1960), p. 8.
38. Plowden, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
39. B. Vèlat, "Une grande dignitaire de l'Église Éthiopienne," *Les Cahiers Coptes*, No. 4 (1953), pp. 13–20.
40. Alvares, *op. cit.*, II, 560; Varenbergh, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
41. On the secular attainments of an *aqābē sa'āt* cf. Bruce's vignette: "[He is] the third dignity of the church, and . . . the first religious officer in the palace. He had a very large revenue, and still a greater influence. He was a man exceedingly rich, and of the very worst life possible; though he had taken the vows of poverty and chastity, it was said he had at that time above seventy mistresses in Gondar. His way of seducing women was as extraordinary as the number seduced . . . when he had fixed his desires upon a woman, he forced her to comply, under pain of *excommunication*." *Op. cit.*, III, 201. 000
42. Plowden, *op. cit.*, p. 88. 113
43. Alvares, *op. cit.*, II, 354.
44. Assafā Gabra Māryām, *Enda Watatch Qaratch* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1943 E.C.), p. 84.
45. E. Combes and M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (Paris, 1843), pp. 199–200.
46. C. H. Walker, *The Abyssinian at Home* (London: Sheldon Press, 1933), p. 113.
47. W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844), II, 304.
48. Baeteman, *op. cit.*, p. 908.
49. E. Cerulli, "Gli abbati di Dabra Libānos," *Orientalia*, XII (1943), 249.
50. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 308.
51. R. Pankhurst, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
52. C. Poncet, "A Voyage to Ethiopia," *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1949), p. 123.
53. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
54. Plowden, *op. cit.*, p. 457.
55. *Oriente moderno*, VII (1927), 39.
56. J. E. Baum, *Savage Abyssinia* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1927), pp. 40–41.

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113 57. *Oriente moderno, loc. cit.*

58. "La naissance d'une littérature imprimée en Amharique," *Journal Asiatique*, CCVI (1925), 348–63.

59. This mode of conceptualization has been stimulated and influenced by the theoretical discussions found in W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant*, Vol. II, Part IV, Introduction; Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, chap. vii; and Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, rev. ed., chaps. iv and v.

60. John and Ruth Useem, *The Western-Educated Man in India* (New York: Dryden Press, 1955).

61. "Ka-ïj Āyshāl Domā," *Voice of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa), September 16, 1957.

62. Cf. Edward Shils, *Political Development in the New States* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1962), p. 7.

63. The conceptual scheme assumed here is articulated in Talcott Parsons, "A Revised Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification," in *Class, Status, and Power*, ed. S. M. Lipset and R. Bendix (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1953).

64. *The Ethiopian Herald* (Addis Ababa), March 21, 1960.

65. *Ibid.*, September 12, 1959.

66. As a possibility inherent in the situation of the developing nations, this alternative has been discussed by R. F. Behrendt, "The Emergence of New Elites and New Political Integration Forms and Their Influence on Economic Development," in *Transactions of the Fifth World Congress of Sociology* (Louvain: International Sociological Association, 1962), pp. 3–32.

67. *Op. cit.*, p. 89.

CHAPTER 6: *Orality and the Search for Leadership*

000 1. A formulation concerning Amhara "social character," however, is presented in chap. vii.

113 2. E. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (rev. ed., 1963; New York: Norton & Co., 1950), chap. ii.

3. Cf. W. Plowden's observation: "It is a saying in Abyssinia, that a chief or master is a child—signifying that it is his servants' duty to soothe him, to pet him, to advise him, to answer him, and to understand all his actions." *Travels in Abyssinia* (London, 1868), p. 61.

4. J. Baeteman, *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* (Dire Dawa: Saint Lazare, 1929), pp. 643–46.

5. Afawarq Gabra Yesus, *Ṭobiyā* (Addis Ababa: Cooperative Education Press, 1958), p. 30.

6. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), p. 41.

7. W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844), II, 40.

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8. A. A. Brill, "Poetry as an Oral Outlet," *Psychoanalytic Review*, XVIII (October, 1931), 358. 113
9. W. E. Conzelman, trans., *Chronique de Galawdewos* (Paris, 1895), p. 121.
10. From an article in the *Tafari Makonnen Ensign* (Addis Ababa), April 12, 1951.
11. Carl O'Nell, "Manifest Orality, Hunger and Thirst in Dreams: A Cross-cultural Study of Oral Frustration" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1964). A fourth group in this study consisted of a sample of Muslim Nigerians who, because of their fasting at the time of Ramadan when the dreams were obtained, presented a significantly higher proportion of respondents with dreams showing manifest orality (55 per cent) than did the non-Muslim Nigerians. O'Nell hypothesized that the Ethiopians would reveal manifest orality with greater frequency than both the non-Muslim Nigerians and the Americans, and these hypotheses were both confirmed ($p < 0.005$ and $p < 0.001$, respectively). 000 [113]
12. Personal communication from Allan Hoben.
13. John Whiting and Irvin Child, *Child Training and Personality: A Cross-cultural Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 194. 113
14. This and a subsequent reference to folk tales is based on an unpublished analysis of Ethiopian folk tales originally collected by Russel G. Davis, formerly of AID/Ethiopia. The sample contains some Galla as well as Amhara folk tales, but these are not distinguished in the analysis. The author of that study, completely independent of the present author, arrived at a conclusion concerning Abyssinian personality that exactly parallels the formulations of this chapter: "In short I would say that the Abyssinian personality centers around the oral-receptive and oral-sadistic orientations with an ambivalent regressive variant." 000 [127]
15. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Life of Takla Haymanot, The Miracles of Takla Haymanot*, and *The Book of the Riches of Kings* (London: W. Griggs, 1906), p. 349. 113
16. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
17. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (London: W. Griggs, 1900).
18. Assafā Gabra Māryām, *Enda Watatch Qaratch* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1946 E.C.), p. 142.
19. *Tetāyaq* was outlawed, the author was told, because it led to betting on the participants, and because modern legal procedure requires that everything be written down. 000
20. See note 14 above.
21. Woodruff and Hoerman, "Nutrition of Infants and Preschool Children in Ethiopia," *Public Health Reports*, LXXV, No. 8, 728. 113
22. Cf. Erikson, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

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CHAPTER 7: *Individualism and the Quest for Social Progress*

000 1. This is a theme that runs through a century of social theory from Henry Maine and Ferdinand Tönnies to Robert Redfield and Louis Wirth. The explicit discussion of this theme in terms of the concept of individualism was perhaps most pronounced in the writings of Georg Simmel. More recently, sociologists like Karl Mannheim and David Riesman have refined the argument by viewing modern individualism as a transitional phenomenon, midway between the communalism of traditional society and the collectivism and "other-direction" of advanced industrial society.

113 2. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), pp. 72, 91, 114, 120.

3. Marcel Cohen, "Individu et société en Abyssinie," in *Cinquante Années de recherches* (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1955).

000 4. A condition marked by the absence or loss of shared social norms. The concept was established in the literature of sociological theory by Émile Durkheim in *Suicide*.

113 5. W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844), III, 12.

6. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (2 vols.; New York: Vintage Books, 1954), II, 104.

7. Georg Simmel, "Individualismus," in *Brücke und Tur*, ed. M. Susman and M. Landmann (Stuttgart: G. F. Koehler Verlag, 1957), pp. 251–59.

8. Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (London: Phaedon Press, 1951), p. 82.

000 9. *Tiqem* is thus comparable to the Italian notion of *interesse*, defined by Banfield as "material, short-run advantage for the individual," though the Amhara tend to emphasize increments of prestige as much as increments of income. Since Banfield's case is that of a peasant culture that has been eroded by industrialization of the larger society, and hence presents to some extent an instance of anomic individualism, his Montegrano is not strictly comparable to the Amhara. Even so, a comparison of the two cases may be instructive; cf. E. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958). [113]

10. Author's field notes.

[113] 11. J. Baeteman, *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* (Dire Dawa: Saint Lazare, 1929), p. 288.

12. See quotation from Harris in chap. vi, p. 223.

13. See above, chap. iii, p. 83, and note 14.

113 14. Cf. Simon Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; University of Pennsylvania, 1957), p. 439.

15. Messing, "Ethiopian Folktales Ascribed to the Late Nineteenth Century Wit, Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna," *Journal of American Folklore*, LXX, No. 275 (January–March, 1957), 70.

000 16. Author's field notes; from an interview with an Amhara schoolteacher.

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17. On the permeation of Amhara social relationships by the demand for guarantors, cf. Giovani Masucci, *Il garante nelle consuetudini etiopiche* (Rome, 1941). 113
18. Wolf Leslau, "An Ethiopian Merchant's Argot," *Language*, XXV (1959), 22–28; "An Ethiopian Argot of People Possessed by a Spirit," *Africa*, XIX (1949), 204–12; "An Ethiopian Minstrel's Argot," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXXII (1952), 102–9.
19. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," p. 445.
20. Tilahoun Paulos, "Forms of Greeting and Other Signs of Respect in Ethiopia," *UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 5 (1956), pp. 25–32.
21. Cf. J. I. Eadie, *An Amharic Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), pp. 39–46.
22. Mähtama-Selassie Walda-Masqal, *Amarïññä Qenē* (Addis Ababa, 1948 E.C.), p. 53.
23. For an extended discussion of begging cf. Walter Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia* (London, 1868), pp. 404–8. On the student mendicants cf. Teshager Wube, "The Wandering Student," *UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 9 (1959), pp. 52–60.
24. "Il est à noter que pratiquement chaque maître a sa méthode d'enseignement qui lui est propre et qu'il considère comme un veritable monopole." Abbé Bernard Vélat, "Les Debtara Éthiopiens," *Les Cahiers Coptes*, V (1954), 26.
25. On the Amhara military ethos and behavior during campaigns cf. Harris, *op. cit.*, II, 162, 203 ff.; Plowden, *op. cit.*, 51 ff.; L. Sambon, *L'esercito abissino* (Rome, 1896).
26. Tadesse Liban, "Tïnnïshu Lïjj" ("The Little Boy"), in *Maskarām* (Addis Ababa: Artistic Press), pp. 110–18.
27. "From the adults (children) take both ideas and hand-me-down objects that have been used, worn-out and discarded, for their play activities . . . for adults rarely produce a toy for children nor give them any new, unused object." Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," p. 435. 000
28. Cf. chap. iii, p. 62, and note 4.
29. "En Abyssinie," *La Géographie* (November–December, 1930), p. 10. Cf. also his *Silhouettes et Graffitti Abyssins* (Paris, 1933). 113
30. Eugen Mittwoch, "Die Angeblichen Abessinischen Philosophen des 17 Jahrhunderts," *Abessinische Studien*, ed. E. Mittwoch (Berlin and Leipzig, 1934), pp. 1–18.
31. *The Oral Tradition, the Written Word, and the Screen Image* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Antioch Press, 1956), p. 13.
32. Cf. Enrico Cerulli, *Storia della letteratura etiopica* (Milan: Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1956), chap. ii.
33. Thus Hans Jenny speaks of the Amhara's *erstarrte Kultur*, in *Äthiopien: Land im Aufbruch* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1957), pp. 123–26; and Ernest Luther generalizes that "the Ethiopian people have shown themselves to be remarkably uncreative," in *Ethiopia Today* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958), p. 36.

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113 34. A. Klingenheben, "Zur Amharischen Poesie," *Rassegna di studi etiopici*, XV (1959), 5–20.

[173] 35. Clyde Kluckhohn's statement that "Where dependence on memory exists, there seems to be an inevitable tendency to emphasize the correct perpetuation of the precious oral tradition," reflects, if the Amhara case is at all typical, an exaggerated view of the rigidity of the oral tradition that is shared by many students. *Mirror for Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949), p. 30.

36. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

37. Stories with this theme numbered 27 per cent; the next highest category was only 9 per cent. The data are reported in Edith Lord, *Culture Patterns in Ethiopia* (Washington, D.C.: International Co-operation Administration, 1959), p. 28.

38. Cf. Immanuel Wallerstein, *Africa: The Politics of Independence* (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 134.

39. Cf. Richard Pankhurst and Endreas Eshete, "Self-help in Ethiopia," *Ethiopia Observer*, II, No. 11 (December, 1958), 354–64.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 356.

41. Besides Pankhurst and Eshete, cf. Asfaw Damte, *"Ekub," UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 8 (1938), pp. 63–76.

42. Luther, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

43. On the inhibition of individuality as a generic problem among the new nations cf. Edward Shils, *Political Development in the New States* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1962), pp. 37–38.

44. The classic response of the European mentality to this trait appears in Plowden's famous remark: "Once vanquish [the Abyssinians'] idea that they are perfect, that they are the favoured people on earth, and that nothing can be taught them, and they will be quick and intelligent to learn and to imitate"; *op. cit.*, p. 396.

45. William Seed, "Censorship in Ethiopia," *Manchester Guardian*, Oct. 7, 1954.

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Introduction: Thematic Synopsis

121 On the fertile highland plateau of the "horn of Africa" and straddling the Great Rift Valley, ancient Abyssinia culturally bridges the Middle East and Africa. Here, the peasant society of the Amhara, despite a very primitive technology, enjoys a complex spiritual culture. Amhara culture is the subject of this report.

[114] Most of the material to be presented was gathered by the author during field work in Ethiopia in 1953-54, after brief, though intensive study of the Amharic language. The district of Gondar, north and northeast of Lake Tana, was chosen for intensive study because it was never conquered by the culturally more African Galla tribes, when they overran and populated most of old Abyssinia in the sixteenth-nineteenth centuries A. D. The fierce pride of the "Gondarey" has caused him to preserve the old culture more than have inhabitants of other districts.

In organizing and analyzing the data, the author's purpose has been:

1. To regard the web of activities with reference to ecology, division of labor, and standards of living.

2. To pay great attention to historical depth and local involvement with other ethnic groups. Historical considerations cannot be ignored in a study of Abyssinian culture; and consideration of ethnic relationships is, if for no other reason, necessitated by the ethnic division of labor in the

x794 198 e.) The "Zar Language": Origin and Diffusion of the Zar Cult.

The "zar language" is used by professional zar doctors not only furing the cult services themselves, but also in daily like, e.g. in response to a greeting; whenever they wish to establish a situation of separateness. Lay Amhara believe that the "zar language" is a completely different, esoteric language. They do not recognize that [797] it is mainly deformed Amharic, plus paraphrases, and loanwords, often similarly deformed, from Arabic, Galla and other geographically neighboring languages. The zar doctors pretend that even they themselves, (mere "horses"), do not understand the zar language, but that it is the zar possessing them who speaks through them in this case, not wanting to be understood by mere humans. Some zars make more frequent use of their esoteric language, notably the "wereza", a group of minor zars.

x794 198 114 Among foreign scholars who have examined the "zar language" the most notable is Dr. Leslau [103], who calls it an "argot":

"Abstract ideas are expressed by concrete words.....

Deformation of the root, either by replacing a consonant or by lengthening of the whole root, is used.....

Some words are taboo, such as salt, the tray on which cups of coffee are served, the plant chat, the horse, etc.....

The morphology of the argot is Amharic throughout....

"addam" (man or woman possessed by a spirit) becomes "addamit"; rain is referred to as "urine of the clouds"; "täqway", sorcerer, becomes "mangway".....

103. Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People possessed by a Spirit. Africa, Vol. 19, pp. 204-212. London, July 1949.

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"Arabic loanwords include:

Alla (h) - master, God, heaven
Awleya - (from Arabic "awliya", plural of waliy, saint), chief zars
Kafir - Arabic term for the Christian Ethiopians
Qwaha - coffee (from Arabic qahwa; Amharic uses "bunna"); coffee and perfume are taken over from Arabs, and are essential parts of the Zar ceremony.

Galla loanwords:

farda - Galla for horse, here meaning slave possessed by a zar; "färäs", Amharic for horse, is taboo.
waqiyë yemmäsgän - Waq is Galla for "God", yemmasgan is Amharic for "be praised." Total means: thank you.

There are also Woyto loanwords.

It is natural that an argot of a professional language should borrow expressions from another language with which it comes in contact....The (zar) belief might have originated with the autochthonous population of Ethiopia - the Woyto probably belong to this population - and the Amhara might have taken it over from them together with some expressions....."

x 794
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One might add to these conclusions by Dr. Leslau that in recent years Arabic loanwords are increasingly being used in the zar argot, perhaps due to the improvement of trade routes to the Sudan. Also, the poet who must compose somewhat new poetry for special occasions in the zar cult, is the prime agent for the introduction of Arabic loanwords and usages such as addressing a powerful make zar spirit as "Prophet" (in imitation of Muslim usage).

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174

Problems of the distribution of the "zar" and simlar cults in Africa and the Middle East, such as questions as to the origin and the diffusion of the cult, are more difficult and complex.

Some linguists believe that the term "zar" is of Cushitic origin (Dr. Leslau, would seem to agree with this). This would antedate the

x 174 171 174 Hadramauti (South Arabian) colonization of Abyssinia about 2500 years ago. According to this view, the term is derived from the supreme divinity of the "pagan" Cushites, the God-heaven called "Jar" (pronounced djar) in Agau, the old-Cushitic language of Western Ethiopia [104].

The term for the zar ceremony, "wädaja" (lit. love feast) evidently is derived from the Amharic stem "wäddädä" (lit. he loved; to love), unless one concludes that both Amhara and Galla peoples derive the concept from an ancient, common Cushitic origin, the opinion of Dr. Michel Leiris [105].

The bulk of evidence would indicate a "Cushitic" origin for the zar cult. Indeed, the distribution of it and closely related cults is found most intensely in the geographical areas in which Cushitic is spoken.

[114] Among the Cushitic-speaking Galla tribes of southern Ethiopia, Dr. Cerulli [106] found a cult of worship of similar "nature spirits", upon which the God of the conquering Abyssinians was placed later, and he infers that the same happened to the one-time sky-god of the Agau, pre-Semitic inhabitants of Cushitic-speaking northern Ethiopia. As a result, when northern Ethiopia became Christianized, the "zar", the former sky god, was demoted to a possessive spirit. Diffusion of the zar cult, Dr. Cerulli believes, was then carried by Abyssinian slaves into the Arab countries such as Egypt, the Hidjaz of Arabia and Oman, where the zar cult survives under its original name, "zar" or "sar".

104. Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People Possessed by a Spirit; also Cerulli; "Zar" in Encyclopedia of Islam, 1933, p. 1217

105. Leiris, M: L'Afrique Fantôme. Paris 1934, pp. 336-7, 440.

106. Cerulli, E: Etiopia Occidentale, Vol 2, p. 35

171 It is a family or communal prayer-gathering which is accompanied by a feast of bread or roasted coffee and corn, beer or hydromel, a portion of which is offerred to Waqä, the sky-god. Often a sheep is sacrificed. The term "wadaja" is also used by the Wollo and Raya tribes of Galla for their "Islamic evening prayer".

The cult among Islamized Galla was witness by another observer:

> "The Muslim sorcerers have their own 'society'. If anyone wishes to obtain a favor or draw down a curse upon his enemies, he invites several old men of the village, buys them Kat (note: the drugleaf chat, or qat) and passes the whole night with them singing, praying and cursing if it is an enemy, or blessing if it is a question of benediction. This is called making wädaja. The interested party seats himself in the middle of the kabiras who spit kat on his head, crying "yaklum" - "may it be fulfilled." (Note: compare with "yehun" of Amhara). In general, the wädaja lasts the whole night"..... 110

Southeast of Galla territory, among the Somali people, Dr. Cerulli observed "ceremonies intended to procure the incarnation of the genius to force the evil spirit to enter the bodies of initiated persons" 111

In the eastern lowland of Ethiopia, among the Afar people (also called Danakil), Dr. Thesiger observed the following:

> "The 'Afar Asa Mara, who unlike the Somali do not have a wide range of dances, perform an oracle dance called the jenile. The jenile, who may be man or woman, is an ordinary member of the community who is able to fall into a trance and deliver oracles. For its performance the men form a close circle and chant and clap their hands until the jenile, who is seated nearby covered with a shamma, enters the circle. Then the dancers, without moving their feet, bend forward chanting faster and faster until the jenile in a trance answers their questions....."

> "The southern Afar localize a spirit on Mount Ayelu, an isolated volcano in the south of Afar land dominating Badhu. On its summit is a rectangular walled enclosure which they visit on pilgrimage after the rains, sacrificing sheep, and pray for the fertility of their animals and success in war...." 112

110. Zervos A: L'Empire d'Ethiopie. 1935. p. 93
111. Cerulli, E: Etiopia Occidentale, Vol. 2 p.35
112. Thesiger, W.G.: The Awash River and the Aussa Sultanate. Geographical Journal. Vol. 85, 1935. p. 8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 The same observer reports that the silver baton of the former Sultan
171 of Aussa in this area was regarded as a magical object, enshrined, and confided to enboys on special missions. (Note Ber Alänga on zar list of Amhara).

X794 Diffusion of the zar cult from these areas to neighboring lands
177 is the general consensus of most scholars who have occupied themselves
171 with the problem. This would center the origin of the zar cult in Ethiopia. The name itself was noted among the Islamized Somali by Cerulli:

● [114]

> "As a remainder of paganism may be regarded the ceremony of the sar, perhaps an ancient sacred dance. Natives crown in a circle and the chorus begins to sing on a special rythm. One or many among the singers fall fainting away to the ground. The others "beat the sar" by singing and striking the hands or clattering with the feet or striking drums or kettle drums. Then the person who has fainted rises little by little from the ground, takes in his hands a dagger, and dances in the circle with the dagger drawn out, til he falls again in a faint; but immediately rises fully recovered, The sar is danced also with a burning brand instead of the dagger; among the Sab the dancer goes out of the circle, runs in the jungle nearby and then comes back showing with loud cries his dagger sprinkled with blood of the genius he has killed..." 113

X794 Diffusion of the zar cult into the Sudan from Abyssinia is conclud-
171 ed by Trimmingham in his recent book "Islam in the Sudan".
114 What seems to be a form of the zar cult was observed among the Swahili of coastal East Africa, where it was called "Ngoma ya Pepo", according to Skene. 114

In predominantly Islamic areas, it seems that the zar is classified as an evil spirit, similar to the jinn. This is the how orthodox Muslims are enjoined to regard all pre-Islamic "pagan" deities, according to the Quran, (Sura 37, verse 158).

113. Cerulli: Somali, Encyclop. of Islam 1908, p. 487
114. Skene: Arab and Swahili Dances. Journal of the Royal Anthrop. Instit., 1917, pp. 420-434.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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In the Hidjaz, the zar cult was observed by the scholar Hurgronje. He noted that it was especially widely diffused among women of Mecca and other towns, the same pattern as in Egypt. The woman chief who conducted the ceremonies held the title "shekha", and attempted to ascertain the nationality of the zar by questioning him either in "vulgar Arabic" or in "zar language" known only to initiated persons.[115] (Note the close similarity to the female doctor - dominated zar cult, and similar procedure of diagnosis and zar language as among the Amhara!).

In the Oman, Cerulli believes the zar arrived carried by slaves imported from Ethiopia. There the spirit is referred to in the plural, "ziran".[116]

In Egypt, many observers in the 19th century and up to the present time have reported zar ceremonies. Kahle, observing it there almost half a century ago, concluded that the cult had arrived in Egypt, by distribution from Abyssinia, for the following reasons:

(1) Because the Amharic name "zar" had carried over;

(2) because of the exorcistic character of some of the ceremonies;

(3) because of the history of its spread in the 19th century when contact between Abyssinia and Egypt became much closer;

(4) because the ceremonies are conducted by a woman.

He reported that this woman was called "sheikha" or "'arifa alsikka", and that she treated each spirit differently according to his place of origin, sometimes from Upper Egypt, sometimes from Lower Egypt, the Sudan, etc. In this differentiated treatment she was careful to use

115. Hourgronje, S: Mekka. 1889, Vol. 2, p. 124-8
116. Cerulli: Zar. Encyclopedia of Islam, 1908, p. 1218

the proper melody, song, individual clothing required by the zar. The chants were accompanied by small drums and by dances. A sacrifice of fowl was usually offerred. The ceremonies lasted sometimes many nights in succession.[117]

In 1890, pamplets condemning the zar cult were printed in Cairo. They complained that the ceremonies "speculate on the ignorance and stupidity of the women of Cairo"; "the dangerous spreading of this lucrative swindle and the concern this is causing noble-minded and intelligent menfolk". Letters were cited that had been written to the editors of Cairo newspapers, quoting the Quran in protest against the zar cult, and stating that the zar cult "celebrates his triumphs especially in the houses of the richest, socially most prominent Turkish families residing in Cairo". One modern-educated, sophisticated and worried Egyptian even sent his wife to a zar ceremony to study the details of it, at the suggestion of a German scholar named Vollers, who then published a brief description in the original Arabic. In the cult, the term "minzar" was used to indicate a woman possessed by the zar, and the term was increasingly used for epileptic attacks, the sufferers of which were being taken to the zar ceremonies.[118]

It would be interesting to make a study of the influence of the zar cult on Islamic societies, perhaps along the lines indicated in Zwemer's "Influence of Animism on Islam"[119]. Such a study would be obverse to Joseph Greenberg's "Influence of Islam on a SudaneseReligion".[120]

117. Kahle, Paul: Zar Beschwörungen in Egypten. Der Islam, III, 1912, p. 1-41, 189-190.
~~112~~. Littman, Enno: Arabische Geisterbeschwörungen Aus Egypten (Zar). Leipzig, 1950.
118. Vollers, Karl: Noch einmal der Zar. Zeitschrift Deutsch. Morgenl. Ges, 45, Leipzig, 1891, pp. 343-351
Walker, J: Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt. London 1934, p. 64-7
119. Zwemer, S.M.: The Influence of Animism on Islam. 1920.
120. Greenberg, J.: Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion. New York, 1947

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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ETHIOPIAN HIGHLANDS

W. E. D. ALLEN

Meeting of the Society, 18 January 1943

114 THIS lecture does not pretend to be a serious study of any geographical aspect of Ethiopia. It is rather a record of impressions gained during a year spent in Ethiopia in various jobs ranging from the care of a park of derelict mules to that of Intelligence Officer to the newly formed Ethiopian Army.

Unluckily I was posted away from Addis Ababa at short notice, and my reference books in Italian and Italian photographs of ethnological interest which I had collected should now be in Nairobi, if they have not been lost. Many of the photographs used as illustrations were taken in the field by Captain Mark Pilkington, the Life Guards, a very gallant officer who distinguished himself in the guerrilla fighting round Lake Tana and who was killed in action in Libya, just two months ago.

With the possible exception of parts of the Shankalla wilderness, which is the Abyssinian extension of the Sudan plain between the western bend of the Blue Nile and the Escarpment, it cannot be said that any large areas of the Ethiopian Empire had remained unvisited by Europeans prior to the Italian War of 1935–36 and the campaign of 1941. I have however come across no account of the remarkable massifs of Dungwur and Belaia which rise out of
133 the Shankalla plain to the east of the Escarpment. On the tableland of Belaia, well within the nominal Italian frontier, an advance base for the supply of the Patriot forces was established in January 1941 and in February the Emperor set up his headquarters there.

These twin mountain masses rise out of the Shankalla plain to an altitude
[137] of about 7000 feet above sea-level. They are covered with rich forests and watered by fast-running streams. Dungwur was uninhabited and visited
[361] only from time to time by stray bands of Abyssinian hunters. But there are flourishing villages and ancient churches on Belaia. It was a weird experience to reach these strange islands of luxuriating nature after the long camel trek across the burnt-out Shankalla wilderness. From a day's march away we

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

186 The great weakness of the Ethiopians, their inveterate regionalism, arises, like other aspects of their life and history, from the peculiar conditions of their geography. The four historic Kingdoms of Tigrai and Amhara, Shoa and Gojjam, cover the plateaux divided by the canyons of the Blue Nile and [132] the Takkaze and their lateral rifts. During four months of the year, the season of the Great Rains between July and October, Gojjam is entirely cut off from Shoa and Amhara by the floods of the Blue Nile. Only recently has the construction of the bridge over the Blue Nile at Shafartak, a major engineering undertaking, made continuous contact possible. The violent regionalism of the Gojjam has been a disastrous factor in internal Ethiopian history which will doubtless tend to decline with the modern development of communications.

114 175 The Gojjam, scene of the guerrilla campaign of 1941, has been described by Major Cheesman, formerly H.B.M. Consul in Dangila, in several articles in the Society's *Journal*, and in his standard work on the province, 'Lake Tana and the Blue Nile.' Cheesman's work was in fact the basis of knowledge which made practical the organization of the expedition to reinforce the Patriot groups which were in the field against the Italians at the moment when Italy declared war on Britain. His exploration of the gap up the Escarpment, the fruit of an arduous excursion described in his book, enabled the Frontier Battalion of the Sudan Defence Force with their camel convoys of supplies and arms to make a rapid deployment on to the Escarpment.

175 The least-known part of the Gojjam province is probably the region of the Choké Mountains which rise to the north of Debra Markos. In an effort to hold down this very wild bit of country the Italians had built forts at Mota [491] and other points and a passable dirt road had been constructed linking Debra Markos *via* Mota with Bahrdar—the Italian strong point at the southern tip of Lake Tana. After the capture of Debra Markos in April 1941, it proved necessary to make contact with the small group of Patriots and one company of Sudanese with some British officers and non-commissioned officers who were containing the very considerable Italian force still in the field round the south-east shore of Lake Tana. At Debra Markos we were very short of troops. Further, scarcity of mules made it necessary to try the experiment of taking camels over the pass which runs under the peaks of Choké at an altitude indicated on Italian maps at rather over 13,000 feet. Kit had to be limited to one ground-sheet and one blanket each for all ranks and the plain-bred Sudanese, many of whom were already lame with jiggers, suffered from cold and mountain-sickness particularly in the hail blizzard which struck the force on the bare ridge of the Choké Pass. Nevertheless this one company of Sudanese covered the 70 odd miles in just under three days, and Colonel Boustead bluffed the Italian battalion in Mota into surrender within forty-eight hours of opening fire with his solitary mortar.

I was following along in the rear with the camel *hamlia* and on reaching base camp in front of Mota was met with orders to about turn and take the animals back to Debra Markos. I thus crossed the Choké Mountains twice [114] in one week. With amateur medical and veterinary duties and a driving mist at the higher altitudes alternating with rain, sleet, and hail, I had little opportunity for geographical observation

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

174 travellers in the region of the southern lakes.[1] Other and earlier cultures may well have percolated into the Highland by the same routes along the ridges which are established for the mediaeval Copto-Ethiopian culture.

I am afraid I have put before the Society some rather hazardous lines of inquiry, with implications which necessarily impose a great deal of comparative study before they can be established or disproved. My excuse in these days when no one has the leisure to pursue exacting studies is that it is worth putting on record lines of inquiry which some of us may be able to turn to at a later date.

All photographs, unless acknowledged, were taken by the late Captain Mark Pilkington.

DISCUSSION

114 Before the paper the PRESIDENT (the Rt. Hon. Sir GEORGE CLERK) said: Captain Allen has been well known to us in the past as an authority on Georgia and as the author of an excellent history of the Ukraine. Military duty took him to Ethiopia for the operations which restored the Emperor Haile Selassie to his throne and capital—operations in which others of our Fellows, particularly Colonel Orde Wingate, Major Hugh Boustead, and Mr. Wilfred Thesiger, took a prominent part. Some day when the war is over I hope that the story of the Abyssinian campaign will come out, because not only is it in many ways a fantastic story, but it makes a very fine chapter in our annals.

It has been a little difficult for Captain Allen to prepare his paper for this evening, first of all because nearly all his photographs were left behind in Africa, and secondly, because his military duties have given him very little time to get his paper into shape. We look forward to hearing the impressions which the country and people of the Ethiopian Highlands have made upon him in the course of his military duties.

Captain Allen then read the paper printed above

137 The PRESIDENT: The lecture this evening has stirred memories of forty years ago. The lecturer talked about those miles of red-hot pokers. I have always held that if you give Nature a chance she is the best gardener in the world. I came once over a plateau in Abyssinia, a bit of waste country where no white man had ever been before, and there I found a great sheet of red-hot pokers and rosemary: the masses of orange-scarlet flowers backed by the grey-mauve of the rosemary were wonderfully beautiful. It finished in a sort of marsh in which there were immense stretches of white and scarlet arum lilies, inconceivably spectacular.

The lecturer has described the good manners and charm of the Shoan Abyssinians, but it is true that they are very quick to take offence as well as to show affection; they are very volatile. What he said about the Tigraians was also true; they are the tough northerners, more dependable, but not so easy to get on with. I will give you an instance of the funny though rather charming ways of the Abyssinians. Forty years ago I was on a certain expedition with a so-called Abyssinian army: two thousand scallywags, with two thousand small boys to carry their rifles, and two thousand unfortunate second wives to carry their food. We descended the escarpment to the west, and came into populated country. The Abyssinian soldiers were living on the country, and here they started to be extremely tiresome. I had to chase them off the inhabitants and

[1] See 'Africa Orientale,' Italiana Guida, published by Touring Club Italiana, 1939.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE SHOAN PLATEAU AND ITS PEOPLE: AN ESSAY IN LOCAL GEOGRAPHY

D. R. BUXTON

114 DURING THE FIFTEEN months from October 1946 to January 1948, I was working in an educational centre near Debra Berhan, an important market town and district headquarters 80 miles north-east of Addis Ababa on the Asmara road. The district was historically interesting as the hub of the old kingdom of Shoa, and it was still an important centre of Amhara population. Moreover I soon found that it contained some very remarkable topographical features. I therefore decided to devote my leisure to a detailed study of the area, which I expected to help in my educational work and also to furnish (as such studies had never, as far as I knew, been made in Ethiopia) material of some geographical interest and novelty. Unfortunately I had to leave the district before finishing what I had intended to do. But I was able to complete a large-scale compass-survey covering about a hundred square miles, working out from the village of Tebasse where I lived. This paper deals chiefly with the area shown on the map, and its Amhara population. Something will be said of the traditional ways of these people, but the formidable problems of the present day are left out of account.

The map was made, on the scale of 1: 50,000, entirely by triangulation with the prismatic compass based on points along a 5-mile section of the Italian motor-road, which runs in straight lines and is conveniently marked out with stones at 50-metre intervals. The first stage was to cover the area with a sufficient number of principal fixed points, which were mostly conspicuous trees and hill-tops. The second stage, which occupied the week-end walks of nearly twelve months, was to follow all the principal mule-tracks and streams, and all the edges of the gorges, fixing points at intervals by resection; at the same time I tried to fix all the churches accurately, but a few were missed. A comprehensive framework was thus built up, all plotting being done at home. Finally I walked all over the area again, taking with me tracings of the framework on which the remaining detail required—hill-slopes, habitations, etc.—was inserted by eye. The method gave most satisfactory results, for the area was small (only about ten miles by eleven) and the base-line relatively very long. The only serious difficulty—bewildering until I realized its cause—was the falsification of compass readings (occasionally by as much as 15°) by magnetic rocks. One could sometimes avoid this by climbing into a tree, but bearings simply could not be taken from some points which would otherwise have been most useful.

[133]

128 To indicate relief I decided to use hachures rather than form-lines, real contouring being out of the question with the means, and in the time, at my disposal. The hachures seem to me to give a true impression to the eye of the peculiar character of this piece of country, for they bring out the contrast between the relatively slight relief of the plateau and the sudden, sensational depths of the cliff-bound gorges.

[p. 157]

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 When miffed, or in temporary disgrace, he would request permission to return to his native
159 Gondar. Subsequently he would send excuse after excuse to the capital for refusing to go back there, until he felt that he had been sufficiently coaxed to assuage his pride as a scholar and that further hesitation might result in serious difficulties, even for him. Empress Taitu was a very powerful figure and often protected him when he had gone too far with Emperor Menelik (her fifth husband).

Although the following stories have no titles except "Story of Alāqa Gābre-Hanna,"
[114] I have given them names to point up the major emphasis. This material was gathered orally from Amharic-speaking peasants and nobles in the Gondar region (during my field trip to that area in 1953-54 on a grant from the Ford Foundation).

539 *The Wit And The Nitwit.* AG-H didn't like the rumor going around that he had become a snob, that he didn't greet common people politely any more. One day, accompanied by his usual retinue of friends and admirers, he was greeted effusively with deep bows by a certain donkey-
[516] driver who was known as none too bright. In return, to quash the nasty rumors, AG-H bowed just as deeply, from the hips, instead of the usual nod from one of his station in life. But, unable to resist the temptation for a witticism, he greeted the donkey-driver with the words *"Endēt ad-derachuh? 'How are ye?'"*

Unaware that the second person plural had been used, the proud donkey-driver was soon boasting at the nearest barley-beer hut of the honor he had received. His cronies made him repeat the exact remark, suspecting some twist. They quickly convinced the poor fool that the greeting had included him in the same class with his donkeys, and the simpleton slunk away in shame.

Another version of the story: But the donkey-driver was, after all, a proud Amhara. Realizing that he had been made a fool of, he took his walking stick, went to the house of AG-H, and beat him unmercifully. This was one time that his wit struck back at him.

Good Eating Comes First. Though greatly honored at the court of Emperor Menelik in newly-built Addis Ababa, AG-H was once again homesick for his native Gondar. Finally, he was granted permission for a leave home.

He promptly organized his small caravan and was about to mount his mule when he noticed two fat cows being taken to slaughter. Thinking of the long trip ahead without fresh beef, he decided to wait around and obtain a good share of the meat which was being rapidly parcelled out. The meat had to be washed down with a huge jugful of barley-beer and honeymead, and so the day passed with pleasant feasting. It was late afternoon when it happened that Emperor Menelik came riding by. Surprised to see the homesick scholar still in the capital, the Emperor addressed him: "I gave you permission to go, and you are still here?"

But, as usual, his wit did not fail AG-H. *"Lam gäb* 'the cows were entering,' your Majesty," he replied. (The phrase is used to indicate dusk, when the cows come home, too late to start on a trip. The cows had indeed "entered," i.e., into the stomach of AG-H; and no one could accuse him later of having told a lie to the Emperor.)

Pride Of A Man From Gondar Province. The next time AG-H became homesick occurred in the middle of the long Lenten fast. The housewives of Gondar were famous for their many spicy recipes for cooking fish in that season, and when AG-H thought of these his mouth watered and nothing pleased him any more in Shoa province.

One day he was invited to dine at the house of a noble of Shoa. The odor of fish being cooked attracted him to the cooking hut. It seemed to him that the woman cook had not properly cleaned the fish and had added too much water. He began to moan and groan.

"What's the matter?" asked his host.

Pointing to the watery fish stew, AG-H replied: "The fish are better off than I. They are *in their native state,* but I am so far from mine!"

Safety From Robbers. Once again the long rainy season was over, the rivers had receded, and the trails were passable again. AG-H managed to obtain a generous purse of Maria-Theresa thalers from the Empress and was on his perennial way back to Gondar.

He was just emerging from the lowland valley of the Abbai (Blue Nile) to climb up the escarpment of the dangerous province of Gojjam, which he had to traverse. Suddenly one of his companions spotted a band of robbers waiting at the top of the upland trail.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE AND TRIBUTE

THE GABAR

It is impossible to go any further with this discussion of provincial 423
administration without some understanding of the Ethiopian methods of land tenure. The three strands, administration, tribute, and tenure, were closely twisted together and with them the fourth strand of military service, which we have already endeavoured to study separately. Unfortunately the whole subject is extremely complex. A [114]
few investigations have been made especially by Italian scholars, whose work has been mainly in the old Tigré province, part of which became Eritrea, but, as there are very wide varieties even within the northern provinces, seeming inconsistencies occur between the authorities.[1] The situation was at least as intricate as in early medieval England while

[1] Among the chief authorities upon this subject are:
1. P. Soleillet, *Voyages en Ethiopie*, Rouen, 1886.
2. E. de Felcourt, *L'Abyssinie*, Paris, 1911.
3. Rossini.
4. Cerulli.
5. Guèbrè Sellassié, especially Appendix xi by M. de Coppet, 'Landed Property in Shoa'.
6. A. Pollera, *Le popolazioni indigene dell'Eritrea*, Bologna, 1935.
7. de Castro, *L'Etiopia*.
8. G. P. Veroi, *Caratteri generali dell'economica dell'Impero*, Rome, 1937.
9. V. L. Grottanelli, *Missione di Studi al Lago Tana*, 2 vols., Rome, 1939.
10. J. Kalmer, 'The Return of Haile Selassié', *Contemporary Review*, vol. 159, pp. 290–4.
11. L. Meri, *Problema fondiario*, Rivista delle Colonie, Rome, 1937.
(For nos. 3, 4, and 5, see list of abbreviated references.)
In addition to these modern authors who give special consideration to land tenure, nearly all the travellers have something to say of the subject. While use has been made of these authorities, some of the information in this and the next chapter is based upon evidence collected directly from Ethiopians by F. de Halpert.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

651 661 had been removed, leaving the heads of villages and districts in direct contact with the Italian resident.

114 Our third example comes from Eritrea. No excuse is needed for this excursion beyond the present borders of Ethiopia, since the Eritrean plateau was until fifty years ago a part, and one of the oldest parts, of the Ethiopian state, and this region may again revert to its former status. In addition, however, we have the great advantage that Dr. Nadel, an anthropologist of experience and authority, has had the opportunity in this region under the British military administration to make a thorough investigation of a land tenure closely resembling that of northern Ethiopia.[1]

621 614 On the Eritrean plateau the most characteristic unit was the *enda*, a number of families which claimed to have descended from a single ancestor. This group was not static; it might decline or be dispersed, or it might thrive and reach a size when it became necessary to break up and form new *endas*. It was not an administrative unit, but in certain matters it acted as a unity through meetings of its elders. The administrative unit, the village, generally covered several *endas*, though these may have all descended from a parent *enda*. The village unit might also cut across *endas*.

423 651 [631] Above the village administrations, in the days before the Italian conquest, came the hierarchy of the Emperor, his governors and deputy governors. These were often strangers from the south though local chiefs might be promoted to imperial positions. The imperial taxation had to be delivered to these officers, and the Emperor might arbitrarily cut out estates in *gult* for their support, or for that of monasteries or colonies of soldiers posted in these outlying regions to support the Emperor's power.

423 These rights may be regarded as extraneous to the underlying customary tenures which are divided by Dr. Nadel into three, ownership by the individual (which generally meant the individual family); by the kindred, or *enda*, and by the village. The first two types of ownership might, owing to the blurring of the edges between the three groups by growth or decline, shade off into each other.

In his discussion of family ownership Dr. Nadel gives us an authoritative definition of *resti*, which may cover ownership ranging from that of an individual to that of a large kinship group. This tenure was held by the people to be the most fundamental and sacred, and its characteristics were firstly its relative absoluteness; secondly its hereditary nature,

[1] Nadel, S. F., 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau', *Africa*, vol. 16, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 1–22, 99–109. The succeeding pages are closely based on this concise report.

114 ETHIOPIA has attracted travelers from the earliest days of African exploration. Disease often played an important rôle in the success or failure of such travelers, and a considerable amount of information with regard to nosography may be gathered from their writings. As early as 1855 Meyer-Ahrens published a nosography of Ethiopia based on the information gleaned from travel books then available, and much of this information is still of considerable importance. Other early attempts at a nosography of this region, not covered by Meyer-Ahrens, may be mentioned: Courbon's (1861) thesis, which is very superficial, and Blanc's *Medical History of a Journey in Abyssinia* (1869). Blanc was attached as physician to the expedition sent to relieve a British Consul kept prisoner by King Theodore. Theodore had sent a letter to Queen Victoria and another to Napoleon III asking for an embassy. When both letters were ignored, all Europeans in Ethiopia were imprisoned in 1866. Blanc, although imprisoned for two years, had opportunity to act as physician to Theodore and other important Ethiopians and has given a very interesting, although under the circumstances quite naturally a somewhat prejudiced, account of diseases and customs among the Ethiopians.

175 In 1889 Menelik proclaimed himself Emperor of Ethiopia. The years that followed brought Ethiopia into bitter conflict with Italy. A treaty was signed between the two countries at Ucciali in 1889, and Menelik's cousin, Ras Makonnen, father of the present Emperor, was sent on a mission to Rome to obtain a loan for which the whole province of Harar was offered as security. Soon difficulties broke out again and in 1894 Menelik denounced the treaty of

[p. 710A]

744 during the Italian occupation, 1936 to 1941. The first year of the "conquest" was considered "a period of orientation and preparation." Demobilization of the Italian military sanitary service was carried out, while the civilian organization had not as yet been completed.

743 In the whole of East Africa, the Italians had a medical staff of approximately 1,000 men. The provinces comprising Italian East Africa were: (1) Eritrea somewhat larger than before, (2) Somalia, (3) Shoa, (4) Harar, (5) Amara, and (6) Galla and Sidamo. The Italians had the problem of making the country safe for their own people. A large number of hospitals, dispensaries and mobile sanitary units were set up. The plan called for a large (at least 600 beds) regional hospital in each of the six regions. None of the regional hospitals in Ethiopia were finished, but some, like the one in the Galla Sidamo region (Jimma), were already partly in use at the time of the Italian defeat. The Italians have made much capital out of the "civilizing effort in the field of medicine." It is true that the figures for treatment of sick persons supplied by Italian medical authorities, indicate a great deal of interest in the native population. This interest must, however, be taken with a grain of salt on the basis of actual findings on the spot. For example, it is indicated almost constantly that a very much larger number of natives received hospital treatment than did Italians. When the U. S. Technical Project examined the hospital in Jimma, it was, however, discovered that, while a grandiose hospital had been under development for the Italians, no real hospital existed for the Ethiopians, apart from some temporary, insanitary buildings. These barracks carried a magnificent name and figured with a large number of beds for natives in the Italian reports, but the obvious fact was that essentially nothing had been done for the native population.

114 Much nosological work was prepared by the Italians in the different regions of

[p. 712 A]

114 Ethiopia. Eritrea and especially Italian Somaliland had been used by the School of Tropical Medicine in Bologna as a study ground, and to this was now added the much more varied and interesting field of Ethiopian nosography. The Italian studies, amounting to over 500, have been carefully analyzed by the U. S. Technical Project in Ethiopia. With few exceptions, especially in the field of malariology, the Italian work was careless, inexact, with a tendency to unwarranted generalizations.

While a number of excellent Italian physicians worked in East Africa, it would seem that, on the whole, publication was not encouraged unless it would further the Fascist cause. It would thus not be justified to judge Italian medical work here solely on the writings of the more politically minded party members. It does, however, remain a fact that, considering the very large group of medical men who worked in Ethiopia for over five years, we have precious little exact medical information about this country.

744 759 Today, the medical services of Ethiopia are being reorganized. The Government is attempting to obtain the necessary medical personnel, build hospitals and carry out public health programs. It is still too early to judge any achievements. The problems are many and the Ethiopian Government is handicapped through the complete lack of native Ethiopian physicians. Such physicians will not be available for at least another decade.

114 During and after World War II, military authorities had reason to take an interest in Ethiopian nosography and a number of articles were published in this field; prominent among these was Manson-Bahr's "The Prevalent Diseases of Italian East Africa" (1941). The U. S. Technical Project had opportunity to make a number of its own studies and much of the following information is based on this work.

164 If one may speak of social diseases in the sense of diseases of immediate impor-

[p. 712 B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

volve the sympathetic analysis of problems created by the great transition to modernity. 121

In the case of Ethiopia the temptation is particularly compelling. The literature on Ethiopia is conspicuous for the absence of thoughtful social analysis. With few exceptions it is divided between the esoteric treatises of specialists and the insipid blandishments of partisans.* I have therefore offered certain analyses and suggestions regarding Ethiopia's dilemmas, not on the presumption that they are in every case the most sound, but with the aim of raising questions and formulating issues in public which heretofore have been politely overlooked or furtively concealed, or of promoting their discussion in a more exploratory manner than has previously been the practice. [114]

In so doing I trust that my words will not be taken as the preachings of an omniscient Westerner to a backward congregation. On the contrary, I am fully aware that the problems faced by Ethiopia today are simply variants of the basic problems faced by all of us throughout the world, problems which stem from the accelerated rate of historic change in our time and the persisting difficulties of institutionalizing a rational civilization in any human society. If I have sought to throw light on the dilemmas facing Ethiopians, it has been in part with the end of providing a mirror against which the dilemmas of Western societies might also be viewed.

For this and other reasons, our discussion touches now and then on matters of more universal concern. I have done this by means of allusion either to the comparable experience of other societies or to more abstract ways of conceptualizing the phenomena under consideration. Such references to comparative sociology or social theory represent the intrusion, beyond aesthetic interest and practical concern, of a purely intellectual impulse. I have, in other words, permitted myself to linger awhile with certain questions which emerged in the course of my work on Ethiopia—such as the nature of ambiguity, the functions of oral literature, or the concept of individualism—for their intrinsic theoretic interest.

In a way, this type of digression, more than any specific proposals set forth herein, embodies the chief message I would wish to convey to those now shaping the fate of developing nations. The upheavals of our time do not only confront us with dilemmas of action and moral emergencies; they and the work of scholars who study them also afford great opportunity for the cultivation of those faculties of "sociological imagination" and "sociological sensibility" which can enrich our lives as we live them, here and now, from day to day. To readers who may be offended by parts of this book which may seem critical, I can only say that to be modern means—for all of us—to be joined to

* The chief exception is Margery Perham's book, *The Government of Ethiopia*, which remains far and away the best general introduction to contemporary Ethiopian society.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic
*565 and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[2]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom
[128] and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—
[114] with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our
[12] account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry, using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[3]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

*565
592 The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara
[342] peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round
[343] structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land
[423] worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by
[427] hereditary right (*rĭst*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the
[556] household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

621 At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number
602 of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the
[592] father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

173 175 deal with this matter present different pictures, however. Blāttēngētā Heruy and Guèbrè Sellassié telescope the genealogy: Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Nagāssi. Tādassa Za-Waldē, on the other hand, leaves the question open; he identifies Segew Qāl as one of Yā'qob's sons, and refers to Nagāssi as father of the Shoan Dynasty, but affirms nothing concerning a connection between Segew Qāl and Nagāssi.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that none of these versions was reported to European travelers in the nineteenth century prior to the ascendance of Menelik. According to information given Major Harris by Shoan informants in the 1840's, Nagāssi inherited royal blood through his mother, who was said to be a granddaughter of "a daughter of the House of Solomon." Four decades later Soleillet was told still another story, namely, that "the kings of Shoa are now of the House of David, heirs of Solomon, cousins of Christ" not through Nagāssi, but by virtue of the marriage of his great-great-grandson, Asfā Wassan, to a relative of the imperial family at Gondar. Cecchi, finally, mentions none of these legitimizing affiliations.

113 25. Heruy manuscript, p. 19.
26. The latter version is given by Cecchi.
27. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; London, 1790), III, 255–56.
28. Cecchi, *op. cit.*, I, 241.
29. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
30. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 9.
31. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
32. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 12.
33. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 301. Heruy's account of the rebellion of [114] Matako is considerably different. We are following Harris and Krapf here since they were virtually contemporaneous with the events, and would have no particular reason not to record them faithfully.
34. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 302.
35. Harris, *op. cit.*, II, 133.
36. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), p. 173.
[103] 37. The word "Manz" (or "Manzeh"), according to local clergy, stems from a Ge'ez expression which means "land on which Christ's blood was sprinkled."
38. Ludolphus, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
39. The architecture and layout of the imperial compound are described in Monti della Corte, *I castelli di Gondar* (Rome: Società Italiana Arti Grafiche, 1938).
40. On the role of the *abuna*, cf. below, chap. v.
41. C. Poncet, "A Voyage to Ethiopia," *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1949), p. 61.
42. This is what has been called an orthogenetic, as distinguished from a heterogenetic, pattern of cultural development. Cf. Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, III, No. 1, 53–73.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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Haile Selassie I University.

This study would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Imperial Ethiopian Government. In particular, I would like to thank the administration of Haile Selassie I University.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Roberta, for her assistance during both fieldwork and the preparation of this dissertation.

114

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

townspeople of highland Begemder.

Field research was concentrated in the vicintiy of Gondar, the largest of the province's towns, and imperial capital during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Today, it is the provincial capital and an important ecclesiastical center, housing several famous churches and reknowned ecclesiastical academies. The town is also the home of many of the province's most famous healers. Extended research was also conducted in the Woggera region north of Gondar, in the rural hamlets discussed in Chapter Three. The division of research efforts between town and countryside reflects the important urban and rural aspects of Amhara medical practices with regard to the distribution of practitioners.

Through observation and inquiry, this field research sought, first, to elicit a description of the social and natural environments in which Amhara perceive pathogenic, prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic forces to operate. A second concern was to examine how Amhara select elements from these environments, and arrange them into etiologies with which to explain particular disease episodes. On the one hand, this meant collecting abstract, conscious etiological models used by Amhara; on the other hand, it meant recognizing etiologies that are constructed pragmatically and piecemeal, in the course of prophylactic and therapeutic failures and successes. Fi-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

121 nally, data were gathered relating to the modes of acquiring, exercising, validating, and conserving powers of prophylaxis, diagnosis, and therapy. Here, as in the other areas of data gathering, a necessary distinction was made between the perceptions of practitioners and those of their clients.

*793 869 75 197 539 While the secular medical traditions of Ethiopia are exclusively oral, powerful cleric healers known as debteras have traditionally employed diagnositc, prophylactic, and therapeutic texts written in Ge'ez, the language of the Church, and in the vernacular. Numerous *793 • 114 127 debtera texts gave been collected in the libraries of Europe and the United States, and valuable translations, most notably by Marcel Griaule, Deborah Lifchitz, and Stefan Strelcyn, have been published. These published translations, together with translations made in the field with the assistance of clerics, have been utilized in the writing of those sections of Chapter Four dealing with the debtera's medical texts.

121 171 Although the focus of this dissertation is limited to the region in which field research was conducted, it should not be overlooked that the Amhara share important cultural affinities with peoples, now largely Islamic, occupying lands extending from the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.

000 The highlands of Begemder, Tigre, and Eritrea form

x794 756 relations with the priests of the Abyssinian Coptic church; e.g. by whispering to her when to give them private feasts, and how to guide observant Amhara clients - married couples in domestic strife - so as not to come into conflict with the "mänfäs gubaē" (lit. soul father, confessor, who would normally arbitrate such a case for the church).

Another of her powerful zars teaches her medicine, and specializes in the diagnosis of difficult cases of possession. Still another is a specialist on what the other zars prefer as sacrifices, taboos, poetry, and how to negotiate with each of them; (i.e. he teaches her how to function like a priestess).

Another of her zars specializes in business advice: when to buy and sell what; when and how to invest in caravans, or invest in construction of town houses. Occasionally she also takes incidental advice from low-status spirits such as Shanqit, who gives her money hints on how to be a good hostess when entertaining a "telleq säw" (great man) who comes to her in secret; and on how to manage her large household.

Lady Sälämtu's posture, when not undergoing possession herself, is one of benign self-assurance, not unlike the calm, almost phlegmatic composure of Amhara nobles who act as if everything must come to them. For Lady Salamtew appears sincere and certain of being able to draw on her private reservoir of protective zar spirits almost any night she chooses.

x794 756 123 115 The writer's negotiations with her were conducted through his guide, himself a native of the Addis Aläm section of Gondar, and who, though young, occupied some status as "educated" (seven grades of modern elementary school). Moreover, he was not unknown to Lady Salamtew, for his father, a well-known "wogäsha" doctor in Gondar, had often referred

794 patients to her when his organic medicines had not helped. It was this
756
123 guide who hit on the idea of flattering Lady Salämtew by notifying her
[116] that the foreigner was sick, suffering from severe headaches, sleeplessness and chronic intestinal cramps - (all common ailments in her practice), and that he would trust only her for treatment. Whether or not Lady Salamtew believed this, it indicated to her that the foreigner would fit himself into the framework and procedures of her zar cult, and not become a disturbing element that might "offend" her zar spirits.

The guide had taken the further precaution of negotiating with her through her brothers, who were willing to encourage her to accept, in the hope of gifts and rewards. As a result, Lady Salamtew accepted in principle; but in line with the unhurried dignity of her position she had the foreigner informed that he should se d the guide again at a later time when she would make known the conditions under which he might attend the "amat bal" convention. In appreciation for having reached this point in the negotiation, the guide left her brothers with some "etan gänzäb" (money for frankincense).

The next step was reached when Lady Salamtu expressed the wish to have the foreigner appear before her, some days before the convention, so that she could look him over.

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756
123
361
[342]
Her house, a semimodern affair of hard-mud walls, is reached by a steep downhill trail from the Gondar town market. On the lower level (the old section of Gondar called "Addis Alam") many houses and huts are built on the foundations of stone houses destroyed by the dervishes in the late 19th century. This section, once restricted to Muslim and other non-Coptic minorities, is now largely inhabited by Muslim Ethiopian weavers and retail traders, many ex-slaves of Sudanese or part-Shanqalla

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

11. The letter was made available to the author through the courtesy of an Ethiopian informant. The text paraphrases Psalm 79. 809 [27]
12. This and the following section draw in part on material which has been published elsewhere, together with other material on Manz not included here. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *Journal of Semitic Studies,* IX (Spring 1964), 204–11. [27] [113]
13. The boundaries of Manz proper include the Mofar River in the south, the Adabāy and Wānçhet rivers in the west, the Qeçhenē River in the north, and in the east a long chain of mountains which pour forth the waters that drain across Manz and which divide it from the lowlands of Efrātā, Gedem, and Qawat. Accurate maps of Manz and its boundaries are not yet available.
14. Their itineraries are described in Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals* (London, 1843); and Paul Soleillet, *Voyages en Éthiopie* (Rouen, 1886). 113
15. A. Caquot, "L'homélie en l'honneur de l'archange Raguel," *Annales d'Éthiopie,* II (1957), 91–122.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
18. Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *Ya-Ityopyā Tārik Ka-Aṭsē Lebna Dengel Eska Aṭse Tēwodros* (Addis Ababa: Tensā'ē Za-Gubā'ē Press, 1949 E.C.), p. 20.
19. Cerulli, *op. cit.*, pp., 101–3.
20. Doresse, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
21. Chahab ad-Din Ahmad, *Futuh el-Habacha,* trans. D'Abbadie and Paulitschke (Paris, 1898), p. 342.
22. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *op. cit.*, p. 208.
23. This account of Nagāssi, like the accounts of his descendants which follow, has been constructed from a variety of sources, which, while differing in details, agree on the essential points presented here unless otherwise indicated. Oral traditions were obtained from Amhara informants in Manz and Addis Ababa. The chief written sources consulted include: Heruy Walda Selassie, an unpublished and untitled manuscript on the history of Ethiopia (part of which was published in his *Wā-Zēmā* [Addis Ababa, 1923 E.C.]); Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *op. cit.*; Tādassa Za-Waldē, *Ya-Abētohun Yā'qob Teweldennā Açher Tārik* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1948 E.C.); Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du Règne de Ménélik II* (2 vols.; Paris: Librairie Orientale et Américaine, 1930–32); Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Cafja* (3 vols.; Rome, 1886–87); Major W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844); Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*; and Soleillet, *op. cit.* [173] [115]
24. The related claim set forth by his dynasty—that Nagāssi was in the direct line of descent from Lebna Dengel—is less universally acknowledged by Ethiopians. It is still a controversial question whether or not Nagāssi was actually related to Lebna Dengel and, if so, by what route. 173 175

    The official genealogy traces the descent line as follows: Lebna Dengel—Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Warada Qāl—Lebsa Qāl—Nagāssi. This is the account set forth in Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā's history. The other Shoan authors who

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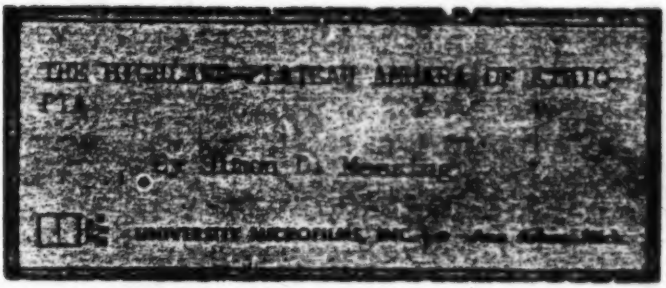

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THE HIGHLAND-PLATEAU AMHARA OF ETHIOPIA

Simon D. David Messing

A DISSERTATION

in Anthropology

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

1957

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Note on Methodology

121 The methods of ethnography, which constitute the basic method
123 used in gathering the data for this report, had to be followed with considerable discretion, while in Ethiopia. Care had to be taken to avoid misunderstandings and loss of confidence among the inhabitants who view study by outsiders with misgivings.

132 Careful preparation by the author included brief but intensive study of the Amharic language, including writing and grammar; letters of introduction from a scholar who has the confidence of the emperor; lengthy procedures in governmental offices in Addis Ababa to obtain permission and passes to travel to the hinterland where the old culture is little changed by modern contacts.

121 In planning the field project under such circumstances, the author deemed it advisable to formulate his objectives in general rather than specific terms; to assume a flexible and patient attitude; to do what was possible; to establish a base-line of ethnographic information and initial analysis.

122 Procedures in the field included travel by mule to various rural hamlets. This was necessary due to regional differences in culture traits, notably in the ethnic division of labor. Travel is possible only in the dry season, October to mid-June. A guide-interpreter was
123 secured in the town of Gondar, where English is taught in the new
124 elementary school. His services became increasingly valuable in interviewing, checking observations and information for reliability and validity; and, by no means least, in establishing rapport with people in the region, most of whom knew his father well. For the guide's father was the local "woggäsha" (native surgeon-herbologist-empiricist).

Finally, the author checked his own results against the work of

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Finally, the author checked his own results against the work of

127 other observers, past and present, in the English, Franch, German and Italian languages. He has consulted, in addition to three American libraries (University of Pennsylvania, New York Public, Library of Congress), the British Museum, the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, Bern University, libraries in Florence, Rome, and the small but increasingly valuable library at the University College of Addis Ababa. He has secured offprints of articles on the subject, published in obscure publications, from Orientalists such as Paul Geuthner, in Paris. He has brought back from Ethiopia about a thousand Kodachrome and black-and-white photographs, and pottery, musical instruments and other artifacts, to add to the documentary evidence.

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Table 14: Chronology of Ethiopian History

Historical Beginnings in the Area : Early Contacts

2900 B.C.	Region of Nubia conquered by Pharao Zoser, 3rd Dynasty of Egypt. He imports gold and copper from "Punt" (apparently Somaliland).
2625 B.C.	Troglodyte (cave-dwelling) trubes expelled by rulers of the Egyptian 6th Dynasty, from the edge of the "eastern desert"; recorded by the Palermo stone.
1500-1000 B.C.	Nubia under Egyptian Dynastic rule.
1000 B.C.(about)	Many Egyptian priestly families flee southward after an unsuccessful revolt against the 21st Dynasty of Egypt. They carry the worship of Amon from Thebes to Nubia, now independent, and into Ethiopia proper, attempting to reproduce the Amonite Theocracy in their new home.
950 B.C.	Approximate period of visit of the legendary Queen of Sheba To King Solomon in Jerusalem, according to the Abyssinian Royal Chronicles which link this to the Biblical account.
750 B.C.(about)	Full development of the Nubian Kingdom of Napata, site of the former Egyptian frontier station for trade with the Sudan. The local dynasty of kings probably descended from the priestly refugees from Thebes.
722-663 B.C.	Kings of Napata rule over Egypt as the 25th Dynasty of Egypt Greek writers refer to this Napata Kingdom as the "Ethiopian Theocracy".
670-622 B.C.	Assyrian kings conquer Egypt, force out the Nubian Dynasty. As a result, Napata Kingdom moves southward to a new capital known as Meroe, withdraws from northern contacts.
599 B.C.	Cyrus II is enthroned, and later takes Egypt, Arabia, and penetrates to the borders of Abyssinia, establishing trade routes and contacts that outlast his conquests.
525 B.C.	Cambyses fails to conquer Kingdom of Meroe. End of Direct Persian contacts with Ethiopia.

Origin and Development of the Abyssinian Kingdom of Axum (Aksum).

1300 B.C.	Approximate period of the development of civilizations in the Hadhramaut and neighboring areas of southwest Arabia: Irrigation of fields, dams; spice trade to Egypt; the Himyarite written alphabet "musnad"; religious temple worship to the Moon god with the motif of crescent and disk. Kingdoms of Saba, Ma'in, Qataban, Ausan, and later, Marib.

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500 B.C.(about) Beginning of series of invasions and colonization of northern Abyssinia by Geez-speaking Himyarites from the Hadhramaut. They introduce the scratch plow, stone Cisterns, stone houses, and the spice trade. Later, to carry spices from the Abyssinian upland through the desert to the Red Sea port of Adulis (the modern Zula), the Himyarites introduce the camel.

247-223 B.C. Ptolemy Euergetes of Egypt extends his Graeco-Egyptian empire southward along the Red Sea as far as Adulis (Zula). Greek inscriptions found later at this Abyssinian port recount his campaigns.

80 A.D. Continued contact with the Greek and Roman Mediterranean through ships plying the Red Sea, reported by Periplus, Alexandria merchant.

200-300 A.D. Hadhramaut motherland of the Abyssinian colonists comes under the dominance of the Kingdom of Saba. The colonists set up own capital at Axum, in northern Abyssinia.

270 A.D. Axumite Abyssinians invade the mother country in Arabia Felix.

330 A.D.(about) Syrian Christian missionaries reach the court of Axum and convert the royal family and some nobles to Christianity. Abyssinian tradition of St. Frumentius, who was appointed "Abuna", Bishop of Abyssinia, with the title "Abba Salama" (Father of Peace) by the Metropolitan of Alexandria, Egypt.

378 A.D. With the zeal of new converts, the Axumites invade Arabia Felix once again, to "protect opressed Christians" there, but are driven back by the rulers of Yemen. Christianity at Axum receives a setback.

450 A.D.(abt.) Inscriptions in the Axumite Kingdom of this period record that King Tzana (or Tazana) began his rule as a worshipper of Astar and of Mahrem, but ended as a Christian. He is referred to as the Constantine of Abyssinia.

449 A.D. The Monophysite Doctrine (Christ's nature one) forms at Council of Ephesus, in contradiction to the earlier Nicene Council. The next year, at the Council of Chalcedon, the Monophysites break away and form a separate church. The Abyssinian church, as branch of the Coptic church of Alexandria, joins the Monophysites, breaks contact with the Roman church.

500 A.D.(abt.) Arrival in Abyssinia of the legendary "nine saints", probably Syrian monks, who reinforce Christianity at Axum. They are referred to in Abyssinian literature as "Qedusan Romaweyan" (lit. Roman Saints), but were apparently Monophysites. The Bible is translated from Greek into Geez, for although Greek was the court language at Axum, the people still spoke Geez, even most of the nobles.

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525 A.D. With renewed Christian zeal, the Axumite King Kaleb invades Yemen to "protect opressed Christians", and defeats King D'hu Nuwas of Yemen. Returning Abyssinian soldiers carry much booty from Yemen to Abyssinia, but in return introduce the coffee bean and the drug leaf qat (çhat) into Yemen, where both are soon planted and become popular.

550 A.D.(abt) Travels and writings of Cosmas, who finds the old Greek inscriptions at Adulis. Greek and Roman ships ply the Red Sea.

570 A.D. Christian Abyssinians have reached the outskirts of Mecca, but are defeated there and finally driven out of Asia for the last time.

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687 A.D. War between Abyssinia and Nubia.

644 A.D. Alexandria, spiritual center of Monophysite Copts, conquered by the Muslims. Because Monophysites had protected early Muslim refugees, Mohammed had promised them protection. Therefore, though cut off from the Mediterranean by the Muslim tide for the next millenium, Christian Abyssinia remains under the spiritual jurisdiction of Alexandria.

950 A.D.(abt) Gradual breakup of the Kingdom of Axum, due to regional rebellions and movements for local independence, sometimes motivated in part by religious differences. Abyssinian Royal Chronicles record uprising of the exiled Falashas (who follow Mosaic Judaism) under their Queen Judith, which lasted 40 years.

990-1260 Christian Warlord Zagwe and his dynasty rule from new capital at Lasta. There, King Lalibäla builds the remarkable rock-hewn churches existing to this day. Zagwe kings compromise with the Coptic church by permitting foreign (Egyptian) Abuna as its head in Abyssinia. But the so-called "Solomonic line" claiming descent from Axum and favored by the Abyssinian church continues somewhat further south in Abyssinia, as the Kingdom of Shoa.

1177 A.D. King of Abyssinia known in the Western world as "Prester John" is asked by Pope Alexander III to participate in the attempt to conquer Jerusalem. But the Muslim area in between makes this impossible.

<u>Hegemony of the "Solomonic Line" of the Kingdom of Shoa; the Amhara empire.</u>

1260 A.D. The "Solomonic" King of Shoa, Yekuno Amlak, becomes "King of Kings" of Abyssinia, with aid of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia. The head of the church, Abuna Takla Haymanot, receives one-third of the land of the empire as reward to the church, and proceeds to build monasteries, notably the (still existing) one at Däbra Libanos in Shoa. Zealous monks accompany troops in regional warfare and force conversions in some instances. Amharic, the language spoken by the people of Shoa as vulgate of Geez and Cushitic,

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supplants Geez as the spoken language of Abyssinia.

1314-1344 King 'Amda Sion rules Abyssinia, during a period of increasing contact with Arab neighbors: militarily hostile, but enriching the literature of Abyssinia. The Arabs gain footholds in Somaliland in the South, with the Dankalia in the east, and Sudanese and Nilotic tribes to the northwest. Meanwhile Arabic and Coptic translations into Geez include the Book of Adam and Eve. To link the Shoa Dynasty directly to the "Solomonic Dynasty" of Solomon and Sheba, the book "Kebra Nagast", (Glory of the Kings) is composed during this period. Translations from Arabic include epics, liturgies, fables, romances; some via the Coptic church in Alexandria which is now Arabic-speaking.

1434-1468 Rule of King Zar'a Ya'Qob. Continued intermittent warfare against Muslim pressure at the borders, also against Shanqalla tribes and Falashas, to safeguard holy manuscripts against burning by Muslims, Copic monks hide many on islands in Lake Tana, e.g. on Daga Estefanos. Translations from the Arabic include "Tamra Maryam", Miracles of Mary. Contact with Arabs brings luxury items such as perfumes in glass bottles and marroquin leather (hence "arabena" for leatherworker).

1468-1478 Rule of King Baede-Mariam. Royal Abyss'nian Chronicles report continued intermittent warfare.

1478-1494 Rule of King Eskender. During his reign a second Portuguese Delegation arrives and finds the leader of the first Delegation, Pedro de Cavilham (sent some decades earlier by Prince Henry the Navigator to the "cinnamon and like spices" land of "Prester John") still alive, though aged. He had been hospitably received, but not been permitted to return home, and had taken an interest in Abyssinian church paintings.

1508-1540 Rule of King Lebna Dengel. Hard-pressed by Muslim invasions from the southeast, the king manages to send the Armenian Mathaeus to Portugal, asking for help. The messenger reaches Portugal in 1513.

1520-1527 Portuguese embassy arrives in Abyssinia, led by Father Alvarez. Portuguese begin attempts to convert the royal court to Roman Catholicism. Upon return to Portugal in 1527, Father Alvarez writes his memoirs, describing the culture of Shoa and Axum, the tent-city capital of the King and his nobles.

1530-1540 Invasion of Abyssinia by the Emir of Harrar, Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, better known as "Grañ" (left-handed). With the aid of a new weapon, Turkish firearms ("turk basha"), he overruns most of Abyssinia, burning monasteries and churches, sacking Axum, and killing King Lebna Dengel in battle in 1540.

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Nomadic, islamized Galla tribes settle in Shoa, take up agriculture. They also take up the habit of coffee-drinking, which Mecca had declared permitted ("hallal") in 1510. Coffee penetrates into Arabia from Abyssinia, through a Sufi Muslim brotherhood.

1540-1559 Rule of King Galaudewos, son of Lebna Dengel. The Chronicles refer to him as Asnaf Sagad I. He barely defends the mountain plateau near Lake Tana, all that is left.

1542 Portuguese aid finally arrives at Massaua harbor under Dom Christofo da Gama, with 400 musketeers. This turns the tide. In 1543, Mohammed Gran is slain in battle. The Portuguese are greatly honored; some settle down and begin families with native girls. Portuguese castles are built at Gorgora, on the northern bank of Lake Tana, also stone bridges over rivers to permit traffic in the rainy season.
Portuguese Jesuits accuse King Galaudewos of "non-Christian" religious customs, but he tolerates their efforts at conversion.
Counter efforts by the coptic clergy lead to regional rebellions.

1545 The Galla tribes use this to invade once more from the southwest but are finally halted. In 1557 the Turks attack from Massaua to Debra Demo.

1559-1563 Rule of King Minas (Wanag Sagad II). Continued internal and external tensions.

1563-1597 Rule of King Sarsa Dengel (Malak Sagad I). Religious polemics between Copts and Catholics stimulate Geez literature. The king sponsors translations of religious novels from the Arabic, (Balaam and Josaphat), and of the "World History" of Abu Shakir, utilizing Yemenites as translators. Original Abyssinian compositions of this period include the work "Hatata" (Researches) by the "lone thinker" Zara Yaqob, son of a poor peasant near Aksum, who developed a theistic religious philosophy after having retired to a cave to think things out. The Coptic clergy condemned the philosophy of this self-taught thinker as "babble", but he became tutor to the son of a nobleman, and his pupil later collaborated with him on this book. Zara Yaqob also wrote some poetry and satire on the polemics of his day (See Littman, 1907, pp. 219-224; Bent, 1903, p. 449).
By 1579 the king feels secure enough to have himself crowned King of Kings at Axum, after halting another Galla invasion in Dembeya. The king reconstructs the Coptic church at Axum. Warfare against the Falashas breaks out in 1581-2, when they are led by Radai, then Kaleb, in Semien province, and in 1585, when Sarsa Dengel defeats their chief, Gushen, at Warq-Amba in Semien and in Woggera province.

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1597-1607 Interregnum follows the death of Sarsa Dengel; there are several contenders for the throne, including ZaDengel, a nephew of the last king, who has become a Catholic. Finally, first with aid of some loyal Galla troops and then with aid of the Portuguese, another descendant of Lebna Dengel, by name of Susneyos, wins.

1607-1632 Rule of King Susneyos. In 1626 the king reluctantly converts to Roman Catholicism, pressed by the impatient Father Alfonso Mendes, who has replaced the patient Father Paes. Civil wars break out immediately, some against the Coptic clergy, some against Falashas upon whom conversion was being urged since they inhabited the area north of Lake Tana to which the center of the kingdom had shifted after the Galla devastation and conquest of Shoa.

The Amhara Center at Gondar.

1632-1667 Rule of King Fasilidas, at Gondar, north of Lake Tana. Immediately upon ascending the throne, this son of Susneyos reversed his father's religious acts, banished all Portuguese from his realm, re-established the power of the Coptic Abyssinian clergy, and thus ended the civil war. Workmen trained by the Portuguese built Fasil's castles further north, at Gondar, and a masonry-enclosed royal pathway to the huge fig tree, under which he regularly judged the people, in Solomonic style. Although he ruled from Gondar, he acknowledged the state religion by being crowned King of Kings at Aksum. He used his military power to subject some of the Galla. His son and successor, Tsadequ Yohannes, built his own castle at Gondar, and that of his Prime Minister is also preserved to this day. He had to subjugate an Amhara rebellion in Gojjam province.
Fasil's grandson, King Yadem Segadiyasus, added his own castles at Gondar, and built many churches in the area, some in Qemant country. He was the last castle builder, for the trained masons had died and their art was gradually fading away.

Modern Western Contacts

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1684-1704 The German Scholar Hiob Ludolphus compiles a History of Abyssinia and a Geez dictionary, with the aid of a converted Abyssinian scholar, Abba Gorgoryos, whom he encountered in Rome. Among Portuguese introductions to Abyssinia during their century of residence there, he records manufacture and growing of wine (grape) for the Mass (later lost in Abyssinia).

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1768-1773 James Bruce travels about in Abyssinia, and finds the King of Kings still resident at Gondar, the capital. On his return, Bruce carries with him the manuscript "Kəbrä Nägäst" (Kebir Zanegusta, Glory of the Kings), which recounts the story of the "Solomonic Dynasty".

1813 (about) Breakup of the Abyssinian Empire, end of Gondar as the nation's capital. There are six provincial kings who recognize no king of kings. Local and regional chiefs and warlords are divided along feudal lines.

1855-1868 Rule of a commoner usurper, warlord Kassa, who has himself crowned Emperor Theodore (Tewodros) at Gondar. He recognized the need to modernize his country, invited German technicians, welcomed British Protestant missionaries. He realized that he could not modernize his country without first centralizing it. He planned to turn his feudal lords into salaried officials, abolish feudal armies and feudal land tenure, limit tolls, limit the temporal power of the church; and gain the respect of the European world by abolishing the slave trade and enforcing Christian (Western) monogamy. However, he could not carry out any of these plans in face of the opposition of the feudal lords and the clergy. Becoming more bitter, dictatorial, frustrated, violent and cruel, especially after the death in battle of his British advisor and friend, Mr. Bell, he sacked Gondar town, where the British Consul Plowden had been murdered by bandits, and later imprisoned British Protestant missionaries. When Lord Napier landed and attacked the fortress Magdalla in Tigre Province where Theodore had organized his defense, Emperor Theodore committed suicide. Shortly before that, the young King of Shoa, Menelik II, held hostage by Theodore, escaped home to Shoa.

1868-1889 The King of Tigre province is crowned King Johannes (John IV), of Abyssinia, with the aid of the Coptic clergy, and the silent acquiescence of Britain which had withdrawn its troops.

1884-1889 The "Derwishes" attack from the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, sack Gondar, and kill King John IV in battle. The troops from Shoa arrive too late to save him.

<u>Amhara Rule from Addis Ababa</u>

1889-1913 Rule of Menelik II. He consolidated Abyssinia beyond its old boundaries, conquered all Galla provinces and enclisted them as his loyal troops, especially cavalry, armed with spears and Italian rifles, in addition to his Amhara troops. This army defeated the Italian invaders at Adua in 1896. As a result, many European powers sent diplomatic missions to Addis Ababa, the newly built capital on the Shoa plateau. There, some centralization and modernization began.

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1906	The United States of America establishes a Legation at Addis Ababa.
1913-1916	Rule of the young king Lidj Yasu, grandson of Emperor Menelik II. A playboy king, he annoyed the Coptic clergy by close ties to Muslims, and annoyed the British by his friendship with Turkish agents at the time of World War I. Deposed by the clergy and feudal lords.
1916-1929	Ras (Duke) Tafari Makonnen, whose father had conquered the province of Harar for his relative, Emperor Menelik II, becomes Regent of Abyssinia under the formal rule of Empress Zawditu, daughter of Menelik II. Modern-minded and with a French education, Ras Tafari introduced gradual modernization in Addis Ababa and parts of Harar, including elementary and high schools, prohibition of the slave trade, and as much centralization as his limited power then permitted.
1930	Upon the death of Empress Zawditu, Ras Tafari is crowned King of Kings Haile Selassie. His power and proclaimed changes in administration gradually grow. He proclaims a constitution, changing his actually absolute monarchy into a nominally constitutional one; the new Parliament is appointed, with the expressed hope that some day it can be elective. The emperor changes the name of Abyssinia, officially to Ethiopia.
1936-1941	Italian invasion and occupation. The major change made by the Italians was the building of a network of roads. Their treatment of the Ethiopians was confused, largely because of ambivalent orders from Rome. Amhara guerilla resistance continued in the mountains, and in 1937 an assassination attempt against Marshall Graziani led to a massacre, especially of educated Ethiopians.
May 1941	Return of Emperor Haile Selassie, with greater power than ever before. Centralization of the country proceeds more widely than before, and modernization gradually follows.
1951	Long an advocate of "collective security" in international affairs, Emperor Haile Selassie sends two battalions of his own bodyguard to join the U.N. forces in Korea. The previous year Ethiopia had signed an "umbrella agreement" with the American Point-Four program, for aid in education and agricultural training.
1954	Visit of Emperor Haile Selassie to the U.S.A.
1955	Liberalization of the Ethiopian Constitution by Imperial proclamation. But the modern-educated are still a very small percentage of the population, and the old cultures in the rural areas are still little changed. The nation is still far from homogeneous, though tending in that direction.

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Table 15: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Amhara

Month: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Months: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau	Annual Cycle of Amhara Ecological Activities (Economics, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Coptic-Abyssinian Amhara.	Cycle of Amhara Social Events	Syncretism	New, Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1 to Mäskäräm 30	Sept. 11 to Oct. 10	receding flood after rainy season; yellow "mäsqäl" daisy carpets land; spring ("t'ädays").	place beehive basket-work in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ("gai").	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ("yäMäsqäl Bäal")- public rejoicing around bonfire (dammära). Minor: 1st Mäskäräm is St. John's Day. 11th: "Arafa" - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	Kin visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ("enqut'atash") on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive promise of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		"Mäsqäl" is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
Ṭäqemt 1 to Ṭäqemt 30	Oct. 11 to Nov. 9	sunny growing & ripening season (äkäräma sega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ("gebs"), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ("t'älla"); sell honey to make mead ("Ṭäj"); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Ṭäqemt: St. Michael's Feast "Mikael"; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 5th: pilgrimage to "tebel" holy wells and waterfalls of Zäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus (Abo).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ("gurmarenosh") to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving "from Jarusalem".		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Ṭäqemt 23rd).

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Hedar 1 to Hedar 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "työff" for bread; "nug" and "talba" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Hedar: "Mikael" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Qwusqwam"- clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Hien" Festival at Aksum; Nuns' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikael": fresh togas, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). 21st: Church student holiday.		
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 8	Summer ("balg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate scorched landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "tyeff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus" coming), esp. at Gulubi near Dire Daua. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Ledät", or "Gänna"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Gänna") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).		19th: Emp. Haile Selassi travels to Gulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional toga and Jodphurs.
Ter 1 Ter 30	Jan. 9 Feb. 7	Height of dry summer ("bälg"). Some sluggish rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shembera), plant (gomän) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ter is "Temqät"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially created pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Gesrät"(Circumcision of Jesus). 18th: "Gäyergis" (St. George) 21st: "Astäryo Maryam" (Mary)	Taxgatherers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("gugs") women are coiffured, henna-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary Pentecost ("mayrär") among Falashas as harvest secondary	On Epiphany, Jan. 19th (11th Ter), Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in fest. 12th traditional costume.

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Yäkatit I to Yäkatit 30	Feb. 8 to Mar. 9	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adja gebs") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before lenten season) 11th-20th ("ebed amus").	Lenten Fast "kudade" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tom" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day fast of Niniwah ("Tsome Nänïwe"). 16th is feast "Kedana Mehrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and spices, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 16th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
Mägabit I to Mägabit 30	Mar. 10 to April 8	dry; burning of bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, because of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 19th "Debrä Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Aläm" -(Savior)	Youngsters pasturing cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
Miyazya 1 to Miyazya 30	April 9 to May 8	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bäga"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron plowpoints and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("hamamat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent,"seqlät" Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services eve of the 17th, Fassika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qetäma") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tensäe") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season from Easter to heavy rains, so unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palms, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("qenchebt") games.	17th: Muslims (on Easter) celebrate "Sheykh Abader" water saint.	27th:(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("Hamälas Bäal") entry into Addis Ababa

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Genbot 1 to Genbot 30	May 9 to June 7	light rains; spots of fresh, green grass (for pasturage nearer home). Storks fly northward.	Women prepare fuel for rainy season: deadwood; piles of sun-dried cowdung, coated with layer of mud. Caravans hurry home from Sudan, etc. Fish "senro" caught in rivers.	1st: Ledata (Birthday of Virgin Mary): After services, last, large, outdoor picnic, under "dass" shelter 24th: "Täklä Haymanot" day, pilgrimage to his holy well at Däbrä Libanos. Children sing of country's well-being to storks.	1st: Men and women celebrate outdoor picnic separately, but young folk meet while older ones feast on meat and barley beer.	
Säneye 1 to Säneye 30	June 8 to July 7	Heavy rains, winter "Keremt" begin: fogs, storms, cold rain. Fishing season. Children are taught to swim before rivers are dangerous.	Intensive plowing of softened soil, seeding by broadcasting: barley, then teff, wheat. Beans and other garden crops are seeded and fenced. Fish is plentiful and cheap.	9th: Resumption of Wednesday and Friday "Fast of the Salvation" recessed since Easter. Clergy: "Paräqlitos" 6th-feast; 7th "tsomä hawaryat" - 1 month Fast of Apostles.	Master gives feast to retainers for plowing, "erf mäday", with fried fish, beer, "asmari" music, and "hetu" dance. Mutual aid in hut repair.	
Hamlä 1 to Hamlä 30	July 8 to August 6	Heavy monsoon rains, sometimes tornadoes. sheets of rain almost daily. Cold	Indoor work; some minor hut repairs.	Intensive church school for boys, who are not needed at this season for any other work. Clergy: 5th: Fast of Peter and Paul ends month Fast of Apostles.	Standstill (e.g. of visiting) due to swollen brooks and washed-out paths.	16th(July23) Birthday ("Ledät") of Emp. Haile Selassie; praise hymns changed in churches.

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Mäḥaṣē 1 to Mäḥaṣē 30	August 7 to Sept. 5	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some sow a bit of ṭyäff and "Adja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Salassye"); parade, despite rain, with "tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Buhe", "Debrä Taboṙ) feast, with torch-light parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeraf") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger children badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his namesake; flags, etc.
Pagumeḥ 2 3 4 5	Sept. 6 7 8 9 10	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Wägadras" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "lefafa sedeq", scroll; bathe.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	

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102 Simplified Ethno-linguistic Map of Ethiopia [Roman No. 50]

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Introduction: Thematic Synopsis

121 On the fertile highland plateau of the "horn of Africa" and straddling the Great Rift Valley, ancient Abyssinia culturally bridges the Middle East and Africa. Here, the peasant society of the Amhara, despite a very primitive technology, enjoys a complex spiritual culture. Amhara culture is the subject of this report.

[114] Most of the material to be presented was gathered by the author during field work in Ethiopia in 1953-54, after brief, though intensive study of the Amharic language. The district of Gondar, north and northeast of Lake Tana, was chosen for intensive study because it was never conquered by the culturally more African Galla tribes, when they overran and populated most of old Abyssinia in the sixteenth-nineteenth centuries A. D. The fierce pride of the "Gondarey" has caused him to preserve the old culture more than have inhabitants of other districts.

In organizing and analyzing the data, the author's purpose has been:

1. To regard the web of activities with reference to ecology, division of labor, and standards of living.

2. To pay great attention to historical depth and local involvement with other ethnic groups. Historical considerations cannot be ignored in a study of Abyssinian culture; and consideration of ethnic relationships is, if for no other reason, necessitated by the ethnic division of labor in the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Amhara area, and also by the fact of considerable regional cultural variation among the Amhara people.

3. To describe culture traits and social institutions as they function, and also to show how the Amhara people themselves feel about them; how they see themselves in relation to neighboring groups and in relation to the human and non-human environment in general.

The author will also offer some tentative conclusions about ethos, cultural foci, and the dynamics of Amhara culture.

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PART I : Land, History and People

1. General Orientation:

A. Definition of Terms:

The Amhara culture dealt with in this study is to a considerable extent identified with the culture formerly [171] referred to as "Abyssinian". Actually, the Abyssinian culture, heir to the cultural blending of ancient Semitic and African traits, has developed into several sub-cultures of which the Amhara culture is the major one. Another important sub-culture would be that of the Tigre-speaking population of Eritrea.

The term "Abyssinia", which was the official name of the country until the 20th century, is possibly derived from the name the centrally-located river Awash, which flows in the Rift Valley bisecting the country, losing itself in the eastern lowland desert on its way to the Red Sea coast. Another explanation derives it from the Habashat, one of the Semitic tribes from Hadhramaut, which crossed over the Bab El Mandeb about 500 B.C. A third explanation derives the name from the Arabic term signifying racial mixture.

The present Emperor preferred the official name Ethiopia, the political frontiers of which include the territory of non-Abyssinian peoples like the Galla, conquered by Abyssinia in the late 19th century. "Ethiopia", derived from the Greek term signifying "people with sunburned faces", was used in classical antiquity to describe all Africa south of the Sahara.

The religion of the Amhara and most other "Abyssinian" peoples is an early, Monophysite form of Christianity, often

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referred to as "Coptic", although the Abyssinian Copts prefer the term "Towado" meaning Orthodox. The term Copt is derived from the Greek term for "Egyptian." Since the Coptic Metropolitan of Alexandria, Egypt, was also head of the Abyssinian Church and appointed all Abyssinian archbishops until recent years of the reign of the present Emperor, there is some justification for the use of the term Coptic. It will be so used in this study, to indicate the "Abyssinian Church of Ethiopia".

In books on Ethiopia, one often finds the term "Amhara" used in a broad sense as synonymous with Abyssinian Coptic Christian. Although the Amhara in their ethnocentrism also use it in this sense, it is not good usage in the author's opinion. The Tigrinya-speaking peoples of the province of Tigre are also good "Copts", in religious belief and observance; however, they differ from the Amhara in many phases of culture, and, according to native opinion, in personality". Therefore, the term Amhara is used in this study only for the Amharic-speaking, Coptic population of the provinces of Begemdir(Gondar), Gojjam, and parts of Shoa. Formerly, all three provinces were included in a territorial unit called Amhara; hence the name.

B. Linguistic Definitions

There are three major linguistic families in Ethiopia: Cushitic, Semitic and Nilotic. Cushitic is predominant, roughly speaking, in the southern half of modern Ethiopia, including Galla, Somali, Sidamo, Agau, etc. Nilotic languages predominate along the northern and western escarp-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

197 ment leading to the Sudan, including Baria (the term for slave in Amharic), Kunama, etc. Semitic languages spoken in Ethiopia (mainly in the northern half of the country), are referred to by linguists as "Ethiopic", and are derived from the Geez language which entered Ethiopia in the first half of the first millenium B.C.

Geez ceased to be a spoken language in the 14th century A.D., though it survives in the Abyssinian Coptic liturgy to this day, and was the language of religious, historical and grammatical documents almost until the present generation.

Of the daughter-languages of Geez, Tigrē, spoken in Northern Eritrea, remains the closest to the mother tongue. Its literature is recent, much of it due to the efforts of Swedish missionaries since the 19th century. The same can be said of the literature of the nearest linguistic relative, Tigrinya, spoken in southern Eritrea and in the Ethiopian province of Tigre. These linguistic and territorial names should not be confused.

Amharic, the present national language of Ethiopia, has
191 been important since the 14th century A.D. when the earliest
197 available Amharic document, "Songs of the Kings," was written.
538 The first scientific grammar of Amharic was written in the 17th century by a European scholar, Ludolf. Not until the 20th century has literature in Amharic slowly developed. Amharic is partly derived from Geez, but contains a strong substratum of Cushitic (Leslau, 1945 a). Amharic predominates on the plateau of northwest-central Ethiopia.

191 Other spoken languages partly derived from Geez are now
197 spoken only by small groups of the population, and are disap-

pearing more or less rapidly, mostly in favor of Amharic. 6 191
They include Argobba, Adare or Harari, Gurage, Gafat. 197

2. The Land.

A. Geographical Location.

The Empire of Ethiopia(south of Eritrea) is located in 131
the northeastern part of Africa, roughly between 5° and 15° north latitude, and 33° -43° east longitude. Prior to the federation of Eritrea in 1952, which added about 45,000 sq. miles and brought access to the Red Sea, Ethiopia had 350,000 sq. miles of landlocked territory. It was roughly the size of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

It is a mountainous kingdom, separated from the Red Sea 133
and the Gulf of Aden on the northeast and the Indian Ocean on the southeast by hot lowland deserts; a steep escarpment borders all along the western area down to the hot lowland of the Sudan. This mountain fortress type of landscape has enabled the plateau people to retain their independence against would-be invaders.

Today the political territory of Ethiopia is divided into 631
12 administrative provinces (Taqlai Gezat), each under a Governor-General appointed by the Emperor. Each province is subdivided into several(usually six) sub-provinces (Awrajja Gezat), ruled by a governor similarly appointed.

Three of the 12 provinces are Amharic-speaking; the 191
national language has recently become the lingua franca for the larger centers of population in the other provinces also.

B. Climate, Climatic Zones, and Topography. 132

Climate and topography are closely inter-related in

Ethiopia. The uplands, even though they lie close to the 7 132
equator, are pleasantly cool at night during the long dry season, and abundant monsoon rains from the Indian Ocean pour down between June and September.

Rainfall averages approximately 47 inches annually at Addis Ababa[1] and considerably more in the area around Lake Tana. An average of 81% of the rain falls during the three-month rainy season, and about 13% during the irregular light [312]
rains in April and May.[2] The water-table remains high during most of the dry season, even when most rivers have dried up, so that irrigation and terrace farming are possible. Both have been practiced, though neither extensively nor intensively, since ancient times.

The Amhara divides the climatic year into the long dry 184
season, Bälg, which lasts until the beginning of the "little 805
rains", and the 3 to 4 month rainy season, kerämt, which the modern-educated Amhara translates as "winter". Terms subdividing these seasons differ locally, which is not surprising considering the extent to which climate is dominated by local topography.

While the long dry season is climatically monotonous, 132
the rainy season is in daily, dramatic flux. It is the season of tornadoes, often dangerous. On a relatively dry day during the rainy season, usually in the early afternoon, a whirlwind (called Täro) may occur which can even

1. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No.12, May 1947, 4 pp.
2. Hann, Julius: Handbuch der Klimatologie, 1908-1911, Vol.2, p. 181.

132 take the corrugated iron roofs off urban houses. Most tornadoes do not hit the ground, but if they do there is destruction. Usually such a cyclone precedes a heavy rainstorm.

The fog in the rainy season, called "gum", is cold and thick and covers the countryside. On the other hand, the fog that precedes the light rains of April and May, called gag or tegag, is milky, light, and causes very humid heat. Metereologists believe that it is the result of the sand raised by the hot "simoun" wind blowing from Arabia and the eastern lowlands of Ethiopia.

821 The importance of "rain in season" is of course an urgent concern of people living in a primarily agricultural economy. An unseasonal fall, which occasionally arrives after the end of the rainy season, when the grown grain begins to ripen, is called sabbiya, and is highly unpopular. The proverb, to indicate "all things in their proper time", refers to seasonal rains:

"In (the month of) Hamlē, beating-down rain;
in (the month of) Sänyē, fine drizzle."

At the beginning of the rainy season, in Sanye, the farmer wishes for constant drizzle, wetting the ground just enough to enable him to make headway with his scratch-plow and to seed in the previously sunbaked soil; in Hamlē, he wishes for plentiful rain so that the sprouting grain will grow fast and tall.

132 The Abyssinians themselves long ago recognized three dis-
137 tinct climatic zones in their country:
241

132 Dega - more than 8,000 feet above sea level; cold, with
137 average temperatures of 50° - 61° F. The dega
241 is primarily prairie grassland, strewn with many medium-sized wooded areas of the high mountain type. The area is particularly adapted for raising livestock, but also suitable for growing barley, wheat, tieff (a variety of millet), beans flax, and temperate fruit, which are gathered wild not long after the end of the rains. Trees include the wild olive (Olea chrysophylla), juniper (Juniperus procera), the medicinal Kosso tree (Hegenia abyssinica).

Woyna Dega - between 6,000 and 8,000 feet: temperate to warm, with average temperatures of 61° - 68° F. This climatic zone includes the greater part of the plateau country, and most of the populated and cultivated lands. This is the zone where most cereals are grown, including soft grains, barley, tieff, maize. Here coffee grows wild. Forests, where they occur, are thicker, but spiny bushes are more prevalent. At the lower levels there are thick stands of bamboo (Podocarpus) and
[361] East African hardwoods; at the higher levels are juniper varieties. Most Amhara live in this zone.

132 Qolla - below 5,000 feet: hot. with average temperatures
137 in the 70's, 80's and 90's F. The qolla includes the arid lowland zones, as well as tropical forest; river valleys like that of the Awash; and most border areas of the country.

137 most border areas of the country. This is the zone of desert and thorn shrub vegetation; flora include the tamarind, giant sycamore, acacia, myrtle and zizygium, "Insett" (musa ensete or "Koba"), euphorbia, depending on availability of water. Crops include cotton, tobacco, dura, sugar cane. Poisonous snakes, leopards, malarial mosquitoes are common, and therefore the qolla is avoided by upland peoples like the Amhara. The qolla is loosely populated by hardy nomads like the feared Danakil in the east, and by Nilotic-speaking and negroid peoples like the Shanqalla in the western lowland.[3]

133 Much of Ethiopia is a subtabular plateau about 7,000 feet high, bisected north and south by a sector of the Great Rift Valley of East Africa with an average width of 30 miles. Rivers such as the Blue Nile have cut deep gorges breaking the highland into many isolated parts. Above the plateau rise higher mountains, the highest of which is 14,500 feet--Ras Dashan(Bejeda).

487 133 The many steep canyons which break up the plateaus have made Ethiopia almost inaccessible in the past. There are only three possible routes of access, an important consideration when one tries to reconstruct the ethnic prehistory of this area:

(1) The Eritrean gateway, where the highland approach

3. See Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook, 1954, pp. 127-8; KUO, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons 1951, p. 63

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the sea. It is here, as C. S. Coon points out,[4] that all the historic traffic between the Ethiopian highlands and Yemen has taken place; here lie all the ancient cities and holiest places. Semitic-speaking influences came this way.

(2) Sailing down the Nile with the north wind, and continuing south past the gorges of the Blue Nile. Despite the hardships of this route, Egypt has often been a source of cultural influence on Ethiopia, and once an Ethiopian dynasty reigned over Egypt. Today, Nilotic-speaking tribes live on this gateway.

(3) A route from the south, at the place where the highland of Ethiopia connects with the grasslands and parklands of Kenya and Uganda. Here we find a continuum of flora and fauna, and a human ethnic continuum. Cushitic-speaking peoples have entered this way, probably for ages past.

C. Soil and Minerals

134 The soil of Ethiopia can be roughly divided into three major types:

(1) Decomposed volcanic rock on the central plateau. This is very fertile, of black or dark brown color.

(2) Alluvial soil on the flood plains of streams. This is derived mainly from the decomposed volcanic rock, washed out of the plateau soil during the rainy season, and is very fertile. Muddy in color, the rich overflow of Lake Tana is

4. Coon, C. S.: Horn of Africa. Unpublished.

134 carried down the Blue Nile into Egypt. In Ethiopia, irrigation canals make use of it.

[311] (3) The remaining, eroded, red loam soil, of little fertility. This is left to the bush or is used for grazing.[5]

135 There is little information on the mineral wealth of Ethiopia, since whatever there is, particularly gold, has been kept from the knowledge of outsiders. The Italians had merely begun their surveys when they had to leave the country. Salt has always been a major item of import from the border lowlands in the east to the highland plateau. Numerous volcanic mineral springs, used for healing since ancient times, exist in many plateau districts.

[326] Since ancient times, gold from the sand gravels of Wollega and southern provinces was sold in small nuggets, or fashioned by goldsmiths into rings and sold by weight. It is now a monopoly of the central government; goldsmiths have been drawn to Addis Ababa, where they now use modern methods.

D. Flora, Fauna: their significance in Ethiopian Ecology.

137 The generosity of nature on the highland plateau has provided a basis for human subsistence with little effort. In addition to a healthful climate and fertile soil, resources of vegetation and animal life are abundant.

137 Economic botanists have conducted studies which indicate
241 that the highlands of Ethiopia contain a number of indigenous varieties of cultivated cereals and legumes. Some are of the opinion that these highlands even formed one of the PRIMARY

5. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia, 1954, p. 127-8.

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137 centers of old world agriculture in which the Neolithic
241 economy originated, possibly contributing to the initial development of ancient Egyptian civilization. Like the highlands of Yemen, the highlands of Ethiopia seem to represent ancient centers of TERRACED AGRICULTURE. It was in the Kaffa province of Ethiopia that coffee originated. It was carried to Yemen, planted there, and exported from coastal harbors (like the town of Mocha) through the Red
439 Sea into the Mediterranean. Coffee is still Ethiopia's most important export. Other major exports include sundried hides, sheep and goat skins, cereals, edible oils, and gold.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that major imports consist primarily of items not of major importance in subsistence, but which reflect secondary needs: cotton sheeting (abujedid), cotton yarn, cotton piece goods, raw cotton, naphtha. The major exception is salt, still a major import.[6]

137 Many varieties of wild fruit and vegetables are eaten
262 only in small quantities, especially by the Amhara, partly because of the abundance of cereal crops and legumes, partly because of a cultural attitude that despises "wild food" fit for use only in case of crop failure, famine due to warfare, and for outcasts.

Another group of highly useful plants which grow wild in Ethiopia are the oilseeds. A number of these are planted and used in the diet.

137 In the lower regions of the plateau, mainly south of
241 the Amhara area, a "false banana" fiber crop called muz or
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6. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No12, May 1947, 4pp.

137 241 [248] koba (Musa ensete) is grown. This is used for making ropes of all kinds and bags for grain. In the south, the roots and inner parts of the plant are also used to make flour for 262 186] food; but the Amhara despise this, considering it "food of slave peoples".

137 Vegetation is dense in the valleys, and the forests contain many valuable trees, including the Natal yellow pine. But in spite of the high yearly rainfall the northern plateau is comparatively little wooded. Foresters estimate that only 2.8% of Ethiopia is forest-covered, although they believe that it was once well forested. They ascribe this denuding to centuries of uncontrolled grazing and periodic burning-over. The best hardwoods that remain are usually in the least accessible spots, lowlands and gorges.[7]

137 The two most important trees of the highlands are the 313 Ṭed and the Zegba. The Ṭed, a juniper (Juniperus procera) sometimes referred to as "pencil cedar" (or Juniperus phoenicoea), is fine-grained, easy to split, aromatic, durable (even when exposed to moist conditions in the rainy season), and termite-resistant. It is popular for beams in the better houses of chiefs, and for the simple native furniture. The Zegba(Podocarpus gracilor), also an evergreen, is found in the warmer parts of the plateau. The wood is soft, easy to split, subject to decay when exposed to moisture, and thus more popular in drier areas. Non-resinous and tasteless, it is useful as a container for food, but is mainly used for construction and furniture. On the higher plateau

7. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia 1954, pp. 127-8; Auo: Ethiopia, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons:Global Epidemiology, 1951, p.63.

137 areas, the wild olive, wäyra, is preferred, because it is
313 available, a hardwood, yet not difficult to split. Ease of splitting is always a most important consideration because of the population's simple tools and disinclination to expend effort to change what nature provides. Another olive, the wanza (Cordia abyssinica, a coarsely porous light wood), is popular for smoking out beer jars and other pottery before and after use. The yellow, cherry-like olive is one of the available wild fruit trees.

On lower levels of plateau elevation, the acacia known as grar is found in many varieties, often as the "umbrella tree". Generally the wood is hard, used in construction, and even more popular as fuel, especially as charcoal for firing pottery. Lowland trees include the termite-resistant Natal yellow pine, the giant sycamore, mimosa(also called grar), gum trees, lemon, and a small size banana.

137 One of the most popular trees, especially in the larger
824 centers of population on the plateau, was imported by Em-
177 peror Menelik II about half a century ago: the odoriferous, water-holding eucalyptus, called bahēr zaf (lit. the tree from overseas). Although there are no real forests of it, it is the most noticeable tree in Ethiopia, planted around houses, in wooded clumps between urban sections, towering above the native plateau trees. It grows so fast that in some areas it can be "harvested", primarily for construction purposes, after only five years.

137 A common sight on lower slopes is the euphorbia, qul-
278 qual, which resembles an immense, spiny chandelier with
824 multiple branches. Its milky sap is used in some native

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137 remedies. The nutmeg tree, tosiya, is also medicinal, and
824 the Kosso tree is widely used against tapeworm. Common sights include the reddish ret, a cactus; and just as soon as the rainy season ends, the yellow daisy, adäy abäba carpets the landscape, heralding the masqal holiday. Hence it
136 is also called mäsqäl abäba. A study of the FAUNA connections between Ethiopia and surrounding areas contributes significantly to the understanding of Ethiopia's cultures from ancient times to the present.

The last remnant of the prehistoric belt of tropical forest that once stretched from Africa to India, is found today in Dhofar, Southern Arabia. There, in the Gara mountains, Bertram Thomas collected fossil fauna which is definitely Ethiopic and which also evidences links to southern India.[8] Animal husbandry in Yemen in prehistoric times was apparently based on hump-necked cattle of Indian origin. This cattle complex reached Africa late, probably as late
[231] as 1000 B.C.[9] To this day, the cattle of Ethiopia is hump-necked, though cave paintings clearly show domestic cattle without humps.

171 Social and religious regulations associated with the
231 cattle complex among the Cushitic-speaking tribesmen of southern Ethiopia, are very similar to sets of the same regulations among the Gara tribesmen of Dhofar. Both despise hunters and artisans, but also consider agriculture a most ignoble occupation.

8. Coon: Southern Arabia. Papers of the Peabody Museum, Vol.20, 1943, p. 209.
9. Ibid.

224 One of the traits the Amhara shares with the older culture pattern mentioned above is contempt for those who live by hunting; though he is proud to show his prowess against major wild fauna such as the elephant, lion, leopard, rhinoceros ("awraris"), and, of course, human enemies. There is no pride in hunting gazelle and other food animals. They are left to lowland peoples or low-class ethnic groups [563] like the Woyto, who hunt the hippopotamus ("gummarēy") along the gorges of the Blue Nile (and formerly also on Lake Tana).

Hunting, in the mind of the Amhara, is connected with such low-elevation jungle areas as Wolkait, on the northwestern escarpment, where the ecology differs considerable from the highland. Here are thick forest stands, many wild fruits (such as the wild orange), much wild coffee. Cotton is one of the few crops grown there.

Until the reign of the present Emperor, decorations were given to heroes who had killed big game. In fact, up to the end of the 19th century one of the flattering terms of address to the king was "zehon", elephant, considered the king of beasts. (This has since been replaced by the address "Germawi hoy", "Oh Majesty").

224 Other game hunted in jungle-forest areas such as Wol-
136 kait include:

Greater Kudu ("agazän"), one of the largest antelopes in existence, described by Amhares as having the size and shape of an ox. European hunters have measured it as 60" at shoulder height.

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Northeastern Buffalo ("gosha"), fairly small in size, in wet lowlands.

Hartebeest ("tora"), a tall, slimmer antelope with inward-turned horns which the Amhara describes as being big as a zebra, dangerous, but becoming rare.

Wildcats ("demmat"), including the serval cat ("dēro"), hunted for their skins.

Civet cat ("terīñ"), of the mongoose family, trapped for its musk gland.

Leopard ("nābber"), whose beautifully spotted skin is an export item.

Colobus monkey ("gurēza"), now one of the protected animals, but still hunted freely in remote jungle areas for its black-and-white coat, sold freely even in the streets of Addis Ababa. From its tail hair the famous "ṭhera" flyswitch is made for the nobles who can afford to pay for it, instead of the horsetail substitute. This coat is also exported.

823 The jungle is regarded by the Amhara as the place of refuge of dangerous bandits, outcasts, and rebels against noble chieftains and kings; also, as the place inhabited by socially inferior ethnic groups; and, spiritually, as the [776] place inhabited by many powerful "zar" spirits (see Part VI, Section 2.). who "ride" leopards and lions and "milk" female elephants.

136 The lowland is also the habitat of poisonous snakes, rare on the upland. They are usually lumped under the name "yäqolla ebäb" (lowland snake), and include the very poisonous cobra ("funjit"). This species is avoided, but the large, non-poisonous python ("zändo") is prized for its skin and is an export item sought out by some hunters.

136 364 A second category of fauna are the animals sometimes referred to by foreigners as the "sanitation squad". They protect the health of the population by cleaning up carcasses of donkeys left dead in their tracks; leftovers from butchering, etc. No one ever hunts these animals, though everyone is familiar with them, as they or their traces are common sights in urban as well as rural areas. It is only since the increase in motor traffic that hyenas no longer penetrate at night into the heart of Addis Ababa itself. These animals include:

136 [825] Hyena ("djebb"), spotted, often quite large, feeds mainly on carrion but on occasion attacks domestic animals, small children, and even shepherds [754] sleeping in the open. In black magic, the hyena is "ridden" by the buda spirit, and many Amhara believe that they can distinguish the call of a real hyena from one into which a blacksmith has turned himself. This is why no one will open his hut at night to a strange. Hyena holes are also found in potter's fields, where the poor and strangers are buried outside churchyards, for hyenas smell out and eat recently buried corpses. Passers-by piously try to fill the holes with stones to prevent the hyenas from returning.

136 Jackal ("qäbbäro"), common north of Lake Tana, near Gondar and in most other parts of Ethiopia. Its nocturnal habits are similar to those of the hyena, and it also burrows into graves.

Vultures ("amora"), This term includes all carrion-eating birds, and other birds of prey. Among Carrion-eaters are: the ever-present, sharp-eyed fork-tailed hawk ("ṭenb amora") which will swoop down and steal meat away from a man in the middle of the town if he is not quick to protect it; a white-bodied water-bird (näch amora) (including the "shemäla", a kind of heron) who competes with fishermen in the rainy season; "warda", the blackbird (merle) that cleans up after human feasts.

Crow ("qura"), named after its cry. This bird is most often seen in back yards or cleaning up the market area after a market day. Thus, a day when no market takes place, is called "Day of the Crow's market" ("yäqura gäbäya"). Pious individuals remember the crow as one of Noah's pets and call a variety that has a white spot on its head, "Noah's crow" (yänoa qura).

[825]

136 241 A third category of wild animals includes those that endanger the crops. The farmer sends his children to watch for these from the tops of umbrella trees, and the boys use their fiber-and-pebble slingshots against them. These include:

Baboon ("zendjäro"), very unpopular because a troop can

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destroy the crops of a village in a week. Shouting is not sufficient to scare them off when there are many. When the small baboon families held off by the boys threaten to grow into a troop, farmers use their rifles.

Hare ("ṭenchäl") is also called the "enemy of tïff" because it likes to feed on that main crop of the farmer. It is a nocturnal animal, perhaps because of its natural enemies, the ever-present birds of prey.

Yellow Sparrow ("mänäkusit"), lit. "little monk", be-
[712] cause its yellow coloring resembles the saffron toga formerly worn by monks.

Flax snake ("yätalba ebäb") is of the light-brown color of flax-seed, on which it likes to feed. It is also called "kurfafeya", because when disturbed, it makes a sound like "fuff". Its bite is con-
[825] sidered mildly poisonous by the Amhara but requiring the services of a native "wogäsha" (surgeon), who thus acquires a reputation for his "cure" against this actually non-poisonous snake.

Locust (anbäṭa), occurs less often than the other dangers, but when it comes, in huge swarms of a 3-inch species, the results are devastating, causing major famines. (The usual route of the locust is arrival from the lowland eastern border, through the Great Rift valley (Awash), up the plateau, in January, just after the main harvest. It withdraws to the dry lowlands for egg-

136 241 laying during the little and big rains. But there are many variations.) When it comes, the farmer tries to scare it away by setting fire to fallow fields, stubble, bush and trees.

136 Other wild creatures familiar to the Amhara are Migrating birds which fly north (to "Jerusalem" in the popular mind, actually to Europe) in March and return in October, including the "zorit", a white-bellied, black-backed, red-winged bird, and a variety of stork, called "asa leqami". The Nile Monitor, ("ardjano"), a huge lizard is found along larger rivers, often not far from villages and even towns, and easy to hunt. With its scaly skin and often large size, it resembles a crocodile, with dark stripes and spots on a very white underside. 281 The skin is used to cover better utensils and is exported as "crocodile leather" for bags and shoes. Actual crocodiles are much harder to hunt, in less accessible river gorges in the lowlands. The Guenon Monkey (Tota) is common on lower 231 elevations(where it is also a danger to crops). Its young are sometimes made pets.

136 Insect life is abundant in Ethiopia, varies in type according to elevation, and bears considerable significance to ecology.

136 164 Flies - abundant everywhere, transmitting intestinal and skin infections. They are not interfered with beyond swishing with the fly-switch which, if kept in constant motion, chases out does not kill them.

Fleas ("qunechcha") are very common on humans. Everyone has them most of the time, even in the city.

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They are considered a minor irritation, and are caught and crushed between the finger nails. Sometimes, fleas are carriers of typhus, causing epidemics.

Lice - are not as common on humans, and are associated, in the Amhara view, with unusually insanitary conditions, such as prisons.

Bedbugs ("tenkushit"), of the bloodsucking variety, are very common.

Ticks and mites - are more common and more dangerous in the lowlands, but are also found on the plateau where they cause relapsing fever, endemic in many areas. Ticks also bear typhus.[10]

Mosquitoes ("chenqello", or, "tenen") include 22 species of the Anopheline variety in Ethiopia, are abundant below 4,000 feet, in river valleys and along flooded margins of lakes, where serious fatal malaria epidemics occur from time to time. Thousands died just north of Lake Tana within a few weeks after the rainy season of 1953. The Amhara describes the mosquito as a little insect with a big head; it flourishes at the end of the rainy season.

136 Ants: "gundan", black ant with painful bite;
"gäbrä gudan", black field ant which eats grain but does not sting;
"zämämit", small red ant with painful sting;

10. Simmons, op. cit., 1951, pp. 62-73.

136 "meset", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses, does not live in colonies. It makes honey which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "tenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens.

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Scorpion ("gint"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice.

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Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins.

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13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

231 556 Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of

231 livestock he own, and he prefers to keep it or dole it out
[556] to his children on their marriages, rather than sell it. Practically everyone has a few sheep and goats, possibly also a donkey and a horse, and, if richer, a mule, some cows and a team of two oxen.

The cattle population of Ethiopia is estimated at 18 million, or 1.2 head per person, comparable with New Zealand and Argentina.[11] However, an estimated million or more cattle die each year of rinderpest, anthrax, tick fever, etc. This limits the exportation of meat surplus almost as much as does difficulty of transportation to world markets.

492 According to the United Nations estimate, Ethiopia in
494 1950-1951 had 1 million horses, 1 million mules, 3 million donkeys. These provide the bulk of transportation, except for the few hundred heavy trucks (trente-quatros) which
491 operate on the few Italian-built roads. This modern road network has been badly damaged by the annual rains, by the overloading of trucks, and by inadequate (though improving) repairs.

241 The estimated agricultural production of Ethiopia in
493 1954 included:-

Maize - 150,000 metric tons,
Barley - 600,000 metric tons,
Linseed - 50,000 metric tons,
Coffee - 45,800 metric tons,[12]

11. RuO, 1955, 4pp.
12. U. N. Secretariat, Statistical Office: Statistical Yearbook 1955, tables 29, 14, 15, 20, 25.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Prehistoric Ethiopia MP4

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Since all other production, apart from skins and gold, was negligible by comparison, the ecology of Ethiopia can be characterized as predominantly agricultural and pastoral.

3. History

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A. Prehistory to 500 B.C.; early trade routes; "iron age" in Ethiopia; colonization.

Very little reliable data is available about the prehistory of Ethiopia, since archeological excavations were prohibited until recently. Some prehistory inferences have already been drawn in this study from the geographic position, topography, and linguistic groupings in Ethiopia in historic times.

In reconstructing what is known of Ethiopian prehistory and what tentatively can be inferred and projected backward from earliest historic sources, three procedures can be followed: Interpretation of surface archeological sites; following ancient trade routes; linguistic analysis.

Rock paintings, particularly common on the eastern high plateau of Ethiopia, running from north to south, resemble those found in Lybia.[13] Other rock paintings (some of which were photographed by the author of this study), repeatedly show cattle without humps. This would indicate an early Hamitic population of cattle breeders. Moreover, other rock paintings indicate that the breeders of humped cattle entered via the Bab el Mandeb from Yemen.[14]

13. Barton, G. A. : Hamitic and Semitic Origins. 1934
14. Rhotert, Hans: Lybische Felsbilder. 1952

174 The phallic stones in southern Ethiopia also date from the earlier, Hamitic era, but the elaborate obelisks of Aksum, 90-100 feet tall, with false doors and windows (which have counterparts in ancient Yemen) seem to fall into the Semitic, pre-Christian period of about 500 B.C. - 300 A.D. The obelisks at Aksum are particularly significant because one finds there a gradation from a rough, unhewn stone to the sophisticated, carefully carved 90-foot obelisks. One might add that rock paintings and obelisks indicate an early, probably Hamitic-speaking, culture area that included Yemen, Ethiopia, and Egypt, uniting the Middle East and Africa as if they were one continent.

174 439 487 Certain basic trade routes have not changed between Ethiopia and surrounding areas in thousands of years, as Wainwright has pointed out,[15] in relation to the import of iron. Salt had to be brought in from the coast of the Red Sea; frankincense from the hilly groves of the plateau; the ruling class and clergy derived imports of silks and velvets; ivory, gold and slaves were brought from the south and the African interior, and transported to the coast of the Red Sea to pay for the imports. The same trade routes brought wild coffee from the Ethiopian province of Kaffa to the Yemenites and brought the humped zebu cattle to Ethiopia. Trade routes within Africa probably had an even earlier ecological significance. Some ecologists believe with Vavilov that some millets, especially the "guinea corn" (the "mashella" of the present Amhara) originated on

15. Wainwright: Early Records (in) Man. July-August, 1942 pp. 84-88.

174 the West Ethiopian plateau and spread westward at an early
439 period; while the plantain banana (musa) spread from East
487 Africa eastward to the East Indies, and a type of yam was brought back in return.

Some of these trade routes are indicated by Leakey,[16] who points out that about 850 B.C. traders from Abyssinia sold Tel-er-Amarna type glass beads and iron to the more primitive southern peoples of the Gumba Neolithic culture, and obtained ivory and gold in exchange. The Badarians who lived in upper Egypt,[17] probably navigated up the Nile as early as 4000 B.C. Coon[18] believes that foreign trade was given great impetus when the camel was introduced to those Ethiopian areas too dry for donkeys, which enabled the frankincense growers to carry their products from the hilly groves to the sea. But the camel was probably a late improvement in trade, occuring here after 100 A.D.

The kingdom of Napata, located between Ethiopia and Egypt, was founded about 900 B.C., when a Lybian family seized the roads leading southward from Egypt to the gold mines. Driven further southward, the kingdom, which included an earlier, local, non-Negroid population, held its own territory until about 470 B.C. It was then supplanted by its own southern branch at Meroe, more fertile in agriculture and cattle, which persisted for another 650 years.[19]

Leakey:
16. Journal of East African Natural History Society. 1936, p.70.
17. Lorant: Biometrika, 1927, pp. 293-309
18. Coon, C.S.: Horn of Africa. Unpublished manuscript.
19. Reisner: Pyramides at Meroe. Sudan Notes and Records, 5, 1922, pp. 133-196.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
Prehistoric Ethiopia MP4
Ancient Ethiopia MP3

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As Wainwright points out,[20] both Nubia and Ethiopia have supplies of iron ore lying on the surface suitable for reduction in bloomeries such as were used in ancient times, and timber for charcoal, but that knowledge of iron as a metal (not yet iron-smelting) was probably introduced into Ethiopia by Asian mercenaries in the 6th century B.C. In 480 B.C. Herodotus reports the "Ethiopians" as still without iron weapons. The first iron smelting in this region occurred at Napata in the early 4th century B.C., and the full iron age, when iron became the normally used metal, only in 300 to 600 A.D., with iron ingots being transported. Thus it can be seen that the problem of "iron age" is not a simple one. In fact, iron weapons may have become available in limited quantities and localities, when Ptolemy II (283-245 B.C.) organized hunting expeditions for the capture of elephants.[21] It was his successor, Ptolemy III (245-222B.C.) who left a Greek inscription at the Ethiopian port of Adulis, recording that he captured elephants. These hunting establishments lasted until Ptolemy V (203-181 B.C.), and may have constituted the first center of nearby Aksum before it became the capital of a new kingdom. For it was the same Ptolemy III, called Euergetes, who left an inscribed block of stone at Aksum with magical hieroglyphs (against wild animals?) later known as "cippi" of Horus.

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About 250 years after the shutting down of these Ptolemaic hunting establishments, the document by Periplus, the

21. Wainwright: Early Records. Man, July-Aug., 1942.pp.84-88.
20. Wainwright : Iron in the Napatan and Meroitic Ages. Sudan Notes and Records, 1942, Vol. 25, pp. 5-36.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
Ancient Ethiopia MP3
Ethiopia MP1

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famed Greek-speaking merchant of about 60 A.D. at the port of Adulis (near the modern Massaua), records the importation of iron ore and the production of spears used against elephants and other wild beasts; also the importation of ready-made iron axes, adzes and swords, some from India, Aeizana, King of Aksum, vanquished the Nubians in 350 A.D. and carried off the iron and bronze of Meroe island. In 522 A.D., Cosmas reports iron imported into Ethiopia, loaded on oxen that also carried salt, and taken to the Agau (Cushitic-speaking) country in western Ethiopia, where it was sold to the natives for gold. This was carried out in silent, "dumb trade" transactions in which the participants withdrew from the scene after leaving the amount they wanted to sell; the other trading party then would place what they considered the equivalent.

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As late as the 18th century A.D. iron was still imported by the Agau and sold to the more primitive Shanqalla people of Fazoqli, in southwest Ethiopia, in exchange for gold pellets, as reported by Bruce.[22] Iron was brought from as far as Kordofan, via Senaar in the Sudan, and even in the 19th century was so rare at Fazoqli that it was used for making ornements, while hoes for digging remained of wood. They did not smelt it, merely smithed it, and this way of working iron is still the predominant pattern among even the comparatively more sophisticated Amhara today.

An 173

Consideration of the "prehistoric" period of Ethiopian history may also take into account the Abyssinian tradition

22. Bruce: Travels between the Years 1733 and 1765. Vol. 2, p. 432; Vol. 3, p. 737.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara

Ancient Ethiopia MP3

173 referring to the foundation of the "Solomonic Dynasty" of Abyssinia, in accordance with which the present Emperor and his predecessors carry the title "Lion of Judah". The details are set down in the Ethiopic (Geez) book "Kebra Negast" (Honor of the Kings), the national epic of present Ethiopia. Accor- to it, the first emperor of this dynasty was Menelik I, who ruled about 975-950 B.C., and who was the son of Makeda (Bilqis in Arabic lore), the ruling Ethiopian "Queen of Sheba", and of King Solomon; conceived during the visit she paid him (which visit is in the Bible but without mention of any offspring). The book further relates that young Menelik I, grown to manhood, went to Jerusalem to see his father for the first time, was received with joy, and was educated there. Then he returned to rule his Ethiopia, accompanied by a thousand first-born of each of the twelve tribes. One of the young men was the son of Zadok, the high priest, who stole the treasured Ark of the Covenant from the Holy of Holies in the temple, and brought it to Aksum (all Abyssinian Coptic churches have a sacred tablet in their Holy of Holies). After Menelik I, according to official tradition, 159 sovereigns of this "Solomonic line" ruled until, in 927 A.D., the line was interrupted by 11 sovereigns of the Zagwe line, for a period of 333 years. In 1260 it was restored and the present Emperor Haile Selassie I is the 66th sovereign since the restoration.

174 This tradition links the Abyssinian culture of Ethiopia to Semitic origins. It is known that the area that later became Aksum was settled by Semitic-speaking peoples from Saba and Hadhramaut prior to 500 B.C.

I: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
Ancient Ethiopia MP3

174 When these colonizers arrived they found a Cushitic-
[177] speaking people already settled. Cushitic is one of the three families of Hamitic (the others being Berber and Egyptian) to which Professor Greenberg adds a fourth, the Chad-Ham. These Cushites were non-Negroid farmers; some nomadic cattle-breeders; mountaineers; or hunting tribes.

174 There is valid historical evidence for the coloniza-
177 tion. Besides linguistic evidence, there are inscriptions at Adulis (the present Zula near Annesley Bay), and at Aksum. The newcomers, often called Himyarites because of the section of Southern Arabia from which most, though not all, of them had come, brought a comparatively complex civilization. Four kingdoms (Saba, Ma'in, Qataban, Ausan) had flourished in Southern Arabia as far back as 1300 B.C. Perhaps compelled by warfare at home and attracted by new land in Ethiopia, they began to drift across the Red Sea, through the Eritrean gateway and started colonizing the northern highlands. They made gardens out of the bush through irrigation techniques, and grew wealthy by trade with East India.[23] It was probably they who later imported the camel, for overland trade across deserts. When the Sabeans conquered the three neighboring kingdoms, the Hadhramauti immigrants settled in Ethiopia permanently. They built stone houses, dams, huge stone cisterns (one constitutes the only available reservoir at Aksum today!), and introduced the written Geez alphabet still, with some modifications, in use today

23. Coon: Horn of Africa. Unpublished manuscript.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
Ancient Ethiopian Mts

174 (This was a modification of "musnad", the Himyarite alphabet).
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B. The Aksum Kingdom: Cultures in contact; a millenium of isolation.

The culture patterns that shared predominantly in the creation of Aksum were threefold: the Himyarite, the Egyptian and the Greek, in that order of importance. There was also the Cushitic substratum, and a somewhat later influence from Jews and Syrians.

From South-Semitic Himyar came such culture traits as the alphabet and writing, artificial irrigation with considerable complexity, water dams, the spice trade, temples to the moon god Ares with the motif of crescent and disc, stone houses, the scratch plow and, later, the camel for long-distance transportation across lowlands.

From Egypt, probably via the Egyptian hunting and trading stations, came the knowledge of trade routes into the Sudan and interior of Africa, iron weapons, inland water transportation, the "horus lock" - a coxcomb on the otherwise shaven head of boys (still worn by the Amhara today). Egyptian, Aksumite, and Amhara women of today all follow the method of grinding millet with a backward and forward, rather than circular motion. With Egypt, Aksum carried on trade in incense, gold, ivory, ebony, leopard skins and slaves. Later, the Funj kingdom of Senaar, in the Sudan, continued this trading contact.

From the Greek-speaking world, mainly via Alexandria, Aksum was affected by both trade and linguistic influences. Periplus of Alexandria has already been mentioned. Greek became the court language at Aksum. Greek and Roman ships

174/177 arrived at the port of Adulis (Zula). There, an inscription from the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes (247-233 B.C.) in Greek has been found. A later inscription, from the first century A.D. is that of an Aksumite king who describes his conquests and gives thanks to his "mighty god Ares, who begat me" and also offers thanks and sacrifices to Zeus and Poseidon.[24] These discoveries were made by the Greek mapmaker from Alexandria, Cosmas Indicopleustes, in 550 A.D.[25]

It seems clear that the Greek influence was the thinnest of all, affecting only the thin upper stratum of the ruling class, through the Greek literature which only they could read, and possibly through the "wholesale trade". For when Aksum was converted to Christianity, the New Testament had to be translated from Greek into Geez as late as the end of the 5th century A.D. The people still spoke Geez, and in the centuries of isolation that followed the Islamic conquest, the stone memorials of Aksum and the culture associated with them fell into disuse and became a source of wonderment to the later generations there, much like Mayan ruins to the modern descendants of their builders. There was much "culture loss".

174 By 200 B. C. the Kingdom of Aksum, on the northeast highland, seems solidly organized. In 270 A.D. the Aksumites invaded their mother country in Arabia Felix for the first time, and continued doing so from time to time until shortly before the rise of Islam.

Probably through the Greek-speaking contacts, a Mosaic, non-Rabbinic form of Judaism, similar to that practiced by

24. Blackman: The Fellahin of Upper Egypt. 1928, p.444.
25. Dillmann; Zur Geschichte des Axumitischen Reiches im 4. bis 6. 1880, p. 8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara

Ancient Ethiopia MP3

174 a section of Egyptian Jewry long before the destruction of the second Temple of Jerusalem, reached sophisticated Aksum. Converts were made also, perhaps later, as far west as the Agau, a Cushitic-speaking people west of Lake tana, from whom the present Falasha are probably descended. Since Falasha means "exile", it is possible that Aksumites who refused to accept Christianity when it came to Aksum, were exiled to the Agau country, then beyond the borders of Aksum.

174 There are many questions and little valid history of
177 this influence. But some Jewish patterns are retained in the Christianity of Abyssinians today. Pork is considered forbidden, and not raised; circumcision of boys takes place usually a week after birth; priests on a higher level consider Saturday a day of rest (non-labor) second only to Sunday; churches are still built on the basic pattern of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem; the official position of the "Solomonic Dynasty" maintains that the first Emperor of Ethiopia and other pre-Christian rulers were of the Jewish religion.

Greek-speaking Syrians converted Aksum to Christianity in the 4th century A.D. According to the romanticised Abyssinian account, a Syrian trader named Meropius was shipwrecked, His nephews, Frumentius and Aedesius, survived and, escaping slaughter at the hands of the coastal people, made their way to Aksum where they became courtiers. Frumentius taught the king's son. Since the brothers were Christians, they spread this influence, especially after the king's death, and, in 326 A.D., Frumentius was consecrated Bishop of "India" (since Europeans still believed India and South

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
Ancient Ethiopia MP3
Medieval Ethiopia MP2

A 174 177 Africa to be part of one continent) by Archbishop Athanasius of Alexandria. This was the beginning of the ecclesiatic rule of Alexandria over Abyssinia, which ended only after world War II.

Frumentius was given the Abyssinian titles "Abba Salama" (Father of Peace) and "Abuna" (archbishop), titles which continue today.

At the Council of Ephesus, the Alexandrian clergy took the view that Christ's nature was one, rather than two as maintained by the developing Nicene creed of Rome. As a result, at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., the "Monophysites" of Alexandria, including the Abyssinians, broke away from the European church (though probably organizational and national jealousies were also involved) and were henceforth often referred to as "Copts".[26]

M 173 The tie between Alexandria and Aksum was continued even after Islam conquered Alexandria in 644 A.D. The spread of Islam cut off European contacts from the 7th to the 16th century and thus atrophied the Mediterranean influence in Aksum. The first contacts with Islam had not been unfriendly. During Mohammed's lifetime, his persecuted followers found refuge in Aksum, and its ruler, according to Muslim tradition, was the only king who replied to Mohammed's announcement of his mission (although in the negative). Later relations grew more hostile.

A M 174 Meanwhile Coptic Christianity was spreading from Aksum. Part of this process can be traced by means of historical records. There are two stone inscriptions at Aksum

26. Leipoldt: Texte und Untersuchungen zur Altchristlichen Literatur, n.s., V.10, pp. 1-213, 1934.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
Ancient Ethiopia MP3
Medieval Ethiopia MP2

A M 174 dated circa 450 A.D.[27] Both deal with King Ezana (or Tazana), the first royal convert. In the first inscription he dedicates his throne to Astar (heaven), Baher (sea) and Kedr (earth), and gives thanks to Mahrem (or Ares), the War God. In the second, the king worships the Christian God, Egziabeher.

A [177] About 550 A.D. Syrian missionaries arrived, the "Nine saints from Rum" (actually Byzantium) in Abyssinian tradition, who displayed great energy. They, perhaps, brought the beginning of Byzantine-type church painting found to this day even in remote, wattle-and-mud churches.

About this time another war effort was made by the Aksumites against Dhu Nuwas, King of Saba, where, according to Abyssinian tradition, "fellow-Christians" were being persecuted.

M 538 From the 7th century, when European contact atrophied for a 1000 years, there was much literary activity in Aksum. The Octateuch, consisting of the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges and Ruth, were translated from Greek to Geez. Also popular were the Apocrypha, including the Book of Jubilees, Enoch, Ascension of Isaiah, Baruch, the 3rd and 4th Books of Ezra. Later, translations from the Arabic were added, e.g. the Books of Adam and Eve.[28] Later, translations of romances of Alexander, and "Miracles of Mary" ("tamra maryam") were translated from the Arabic of Alexandria into Geez.

M [178] Thus Geez, which had been the vulgate during the Greek period, was elevated to a holy language associated with the Coptic religion.

27. Black: Op. cit., p. 445.
28. Littmann: Geschichte der Christlichen Literaturen des Ostens, VII, 2. 1907, p. 227.

175 439 Arab merchants took over the Red Sea trade and the supply of luxuries to the court of Aksum: swords, damask cloth, perfumes, marroquin leather. (All oriental imports are termed "arab", to this day.)

175 648 In the 9th and 10th centuries, the power of Aksum began to wane. According to the sparse Abyssinian Royal Chronicles, there were wars with Nubia, and with the Falashas, who were growing in power. There is a letter addressed by Aksum to the King of Nubia, asking for help against a Falasha queen Judith, who was credited with having helped to establish a rival dynasty, the Zagwē[29] in 928 A.D., in Lasta, south of Aksum. Warfare is said to have begun about 950 B.C. and to have lasted 40 years. What remained of the "Solomonic Dynasty" had to abandon Aksum and take refuge southward, in the Lānz district of Shoa, which then became the residence of the aristocracy of Shoa (still the aristocratic residence of the Amhara, though now much blended with Galla).

175 On the other hand, in its attempt to win the loyalty of the Aksumite and other Abyssinian peoples, the Zagwe Dynasty had to abandon its Falasha coalition and compromise with the powerful Coptic church. The Zagwe king Lalibela built the famous monolithic churches at Lasta, which are still unique.

It was not until 1260 A.D. that the "Solomonic Dynasty" was restored, through a coalition with the church, which negotiated the peaceful abdication of the Zagwe dynasty and received one-third of the fertile territory, in feudal fief as reward. The "Solomonic Dynasty" remained in Shoa, to

29. Black: Op. cit., p. 445.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
Medieval Ethiopia MP2

175 rule from there, while the town of Aksum was included in the church territory and is ruled by a monk.

C. The Kingdom of Shoa; emergence of the Amhara.

With the establishment of the Solomonic Dynasty in Shoa, the King Yekuno Amlak gave himself the title "Negusa Nägast za-Ityopya", King of Kings of Ethiopia. He extended his realm over neighboring, non-Christian provinces in all directions, including some Muslim areas in Cushitic-speaking lands to the south and east, and Falasha territory to the west.

Now that Geez had become the holy language of the church, and was understood only by the literate few, he recognized, as the official language, the vulgate Amharic, a blend of Semitic and Cushitic, which had gradually arisen.

Thus the King handed the Aksumite, Himyarite, Greek and Egyptian past over to the realm of the church, while expanding his Amhara culture deeper into the more African parts of Ethiopia. Contact with the Mediterranean was maintained by the church, through Alexandria and through the small group of Abyssinian monks in Jerusalem. In this way the Western world continued to hear intermittent rumors of a "Prester John", the Christian king on the other side of the Muslim world.

The Abyssinian church flourished. The Abuna who had negotiated the accession took the appellation Täklä Haymanot (lit. Plant of Faith), and he is now regarded as the foremost national saint by his church. With the vast number of serfs on the feudal church territories newly at his disposal,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
Medieval Ethiopia MP2

175 he built churches and monasteries, the latter on strategic mountain peaks or easily defensible locations, including the still existing monastery of Debra Libanos, in Shoa. A renaissance of church literature began which lasted almost 200 years: the "Kebra Negäst" (Magnificance of the Kings) was compiled to prove descent of the Shoan kings from the Solomonic line, and inheritance of ecclesiastic rights of the Abyssinian clergy from the son of the High Priest Zadok.[30] While part of the Queen of Sheba tradition was probably taken from an earlier Arabic elaboration of the Biblical story, this period also saw numerous original writings in Geez, mostly romances on historical, military, and religious themes such as hagiology.

This renaissance ended as civil wars broke out between the Amhara and the people of Tigre, who, as Coptic Christians speaking a language that had remained closer to Geez, and living in and near Aksum, considered themselves the rightful heirs of Aksum and were jealous of the new dominance of the Amhara.[31] This rivalry, starting at about the reign of the powerful, expansionist Shoan King Amda Sion I (1314-1344) continued in the form of Tigre separatist movements and rebellions until the return of Haile Selassie in 1941.

An even greater danger was building up from the Muslim world, until, in 1430, the ring around Abyssinia was complete with the Muslim conquest of Somaliland. Allied with superficially islamized and pagan semi-nomadic Galla tribes, the Muslims invaded from the south, through the Rift Valley, burning churches and monasteries. King Zar'a Ya'qob (1444 -

30. Littman, op. cit., pp. 227-246
31. Ibid, p. 197

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
Ethiopia MP1
Medieval Ethiopia MP2

M 175

1468) slowly retreated before the onslaught, and, deeply religious, ordered manuscripts and church paintings hidden at the other end of his realm, on islands of Lake Tana (e.g. on the island Daga Estefanos) where some survive today, jealously guarded by monks. In 1427, Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal had sent Pedro da Covilham to seek out "Prester John", his Christian brother-king, and to find there, as he hoped, new sources of cinnamon and other spices. Don Pedro, though treated hospitably, was not permitted to leave. He was an old man when seen again by a second delegation of his countrymen, who arrived during the more modest reign of King Eskender (1478 - 1494), while another Galla invasion from the south was in progress. The old man had become interested in Abyssinian painting, and was too old to return home.

E 175

Turkish firearms (turk baaba) in a quantity of several hundred, supplied by the Muslims to the Galla invaders during the reign of the Shoan King Lebna Dengel (1508-1540), caused the invasion to be renewed with greater fury than ever. In his desperation, the king remembered the Portuguese visitors and their firearms, and sent a young Armenian named Matthew through the Muslim encirclement to solicit aid.[32] A Portuguese embassy arrived in 1520, led by Father Alvarez, who, after his return to Portugal in 1527, wrote down his observations of the culture of Shoa and Aksum, and the tent-city capital of the king and nobles. Almost at the same time, in 1528, the leader of the Islamized Galla, Mohammed Gran (the "left-handed), who had become Emir Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, attacked with Arabs from Yemen, Somalis, and Dankelis. He overran nearly all

32. Vilma: Haile Selassie. 1936, p. 83.

175 defenses, proceeded as far north as Aksum, which he razed, and killed King Lebna Dengel in battle in 1540, after he had retreated to the district of Amara Saint in Shoa (almost as aristocratic an area as Menz). Shoa was completely overrun by Galla, who settled there, learned agriculture, and today make up most of the population of Shoa. Churches and monasteries of Shoa were sacked and razed, The children of the king and the clergy took refuge on and north of Lake Tana (the later Gondar area).

From there, the slain king's son Galaudeos (Claudius) fought on, and a year later, in 1541, the Portuguese aid arrived. Dom Christofo Da Gama landed at Massaua with 450 musketeers. Although he died fighting, the tide was turned; and in 1543, Gran was defeated and fell in battle.

Since Shoa had been destroyed, the king's tent city remained at Gondar. The Portuguese built bridges in the area, which are still in use. They built castles on the north shore of Lake Tana, and Jesuits began the attempt to convert the king and the people to Roman Christianity. The king and the Abyssinian clergy debated with them, but they were tolerated since the Portuguese enjoyed great prestige as saviors of the country. They learned and used the Amharic language.

The soul-searching of this period produced a revival of Amharic literature, as religious apologias in defense of the Monophysite faith, and in opposition to the Catholic church calendar. Both religious groups published prayers in the Amharic language. The period also produced a native literary figure, Zara Yaqob (no relation to the earlier

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
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175 king), the son of a simple peasant, born near Aksum.[33] In true eastern tradition, he retired to a cave to think. When he emerged he had worked out a Theism on a rationalistic basis. The Abyssinian clergy of his time dismissed his writings as "babble", and he earned his living as tutor to the son of a nobleman. This pupil later collaborated on his philosophic work "Hatata". He also wrote secular prose and some poetry, occasionally in a satirical vein.[34]

Father Paes, the first Jesuit leader to attempt to convert the king, had not been able to make much headway in the endless religious debates, and had devoted much time to writing his observations. His successor, less diplomatic and more zealous, was Alfonso Mendes. He realized that the Amhara people could not be converted unless the king and the top hierarchy had been converted, much as Frumentius had done. King Za Dengel was the first royal convert, but when the king encouraged his subjects at the court to follow suit, the Coptic clergy organized a quiet rebellion, and the king was removed, possibly assassinated. His successor, King Susneos (also called Malak Sagad) (1607-1632) was privately converted in 1626, but he was more careful and did not urge conversion on his subjects. Alfonso Mendes, who acted as the King's Confessor, criticized him severly for it, until Susneos acquiesced. Then began a series of rebellions, religious wars against his own subjects. During these internal wars, the Falashas were defeated in battle, and their remnants, having lost inde-

33. Littman: op. cit., pp. 219-224.
34. Bent: The Sacred City of the Ethiopians. 1839, pp. 449.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
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175 pendence forever, retreated to the mountains.[35] The Coptic clergy excommunicated the King and encouraged rebellions. It is said that he repented shortly before his death, for he did revoke his earlier proclamations, and declared religious liberty for all his subjects. Broken in spirit, he died in 1632.

D. The Amhara Center in Gondar

A new era began that year, for Abyssinia, the Abyssinian church, the Amhara, and for Gondar. The new King Fasilidas (1632 - 1667) expelled all Portuguese, re-established the privileges of the clergy, and cut the country off from further European influence. The Amhara culture pattern turned inward. The term for European, "ferenj" (i.e. Frank) became a term of opprobium, synonymous with christian infidel.

The Gondar branch of the Solomonic (Ag'azian) Dynasty was now established. The seat of the government remained in Gondar until the reign of Takla Giyorgis in the 18th century. The workmen trained by the Portuguese were utilized by King Fasilidas, his son Tsadequ Yohannes, grandson Yadem Segadiyasu and their Prime Ministers to build large stone castles for them, north of the Portuguese area, a day's journey north of Lake Tana, on higher ground (just above the malaria belt). Here the town of Gondar was built, on a flat hilltop, a town of wattle-and-mud huts surrounding the towering royal castles ("gemb"). and palaces (gebbi). Special walled paths shielded the royal

35. Littman, op. cit., p. 221; Leslau: A Falasha Religious Dispute. Ancient Jewish Research, 16, pp. 71-95; quoting Solomon of Vienna who visited in the area in 1626; 1947.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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E 1975 family from common sight. The King judged cases brought before him as he sat under a huge, broad fig tree. A stone-lined waterpool was constructed under the King's balcony, and a mausoleum entombing his favorite horse. All this remained; but after three generations the skills of stonemasonry were gradually lost.

1975 1977 This "culture loss" was the fate also of other arts which the Portuguese had introduced. When Gondar was later abandoned, the kings returned to their military tent-cities, and titles such as "commander of the right flank" are still given to sons of nobility. One of the highest is "Dejazmach" (lit. "commander of the entrance to the ruler's tent"). Viticulture was another art introduced by the Portuguese, and the vines grew well on the "woyna dega", the middle elevation. But it too was gradually lost in the 18th century, and today raisins are imported by the clergy to produce sacramental wine. The Portuguese are also believed to have introduced the orange, which shared the same fate. At least one 262 of the spices still used in the Abyssinian pepperred meat stew (wot) may have been introduced by the Portuguese from Central America, capsicum Americani KN.

A 1954 Gondar continues as a place of high prestige among the Amhara. Even noble families from Wanz and Amhara Saint in Shoa try to trace their ancestry to the royal branch of Gondar.

E 1975 The Gondar kings did not try to regain the territory lost to the Galla, but they did fight occasional Galla uprisings, and rebellious usurpers. Also, rival kingdoms within Coptic Abyssinia were often at war with each other, and in rebellion against the Gondar King of Kings.

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175 Gondar had been abandoned by the Solomonic line, when, in 1855, the chieftain Kassa, son of a poor commoner widow (so poor that she had to gather Kosso bark in the dega for a living) had himself crowned King Theodore at Gondar. He avoided Adsum, the usual place of coronation, since he did not wish to emphasize the power of the clergy. They were still sympathetic to the Solomonic line now limited to Shoa. Theodore brought Gondar and Gojjam under his rule, but Tigre resisted. While on this campaign, Gondar rebelled, the Amhara nobles of that city considering Theodore an upstart. In revenge, he called it a city of thieving traders, and sacked it. To strengthen his claim to the throne, he married the daughter of Ras Ali, a Galla ruler, hoping to bring the Galla under his rule. He defeated the king of Shoa, and took the dynastic heir, the boy Menelik II, hostage.

Theodore was more farsighted, and, for a long time, more statesmanlike than the usual provincial warlord. He realized the urgency of uniting all the ethnic groupings of his country into a nation, to keep Ethiopia from losing her independence at the hands of European colonial powers. To learn news of the outside world, he at first welcomed visitors from abroad, British and Swiss Protestant missionaries whom he permitted to convert the non-Coptic sections of the population, German technicians, etc. He made plans to modernize Ethiopia. He was interested in the American Civil War and the weapons used, since he had to fight civil wars almost incessantly. He became very attached to his British advisor, Bell, who accompanied him in battle. Mr. Bell had married a native princess and held the rank of

1; Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
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175 of "liqamakwas" (marshall).

Theodore's plans for modernization were far ahead of his time for his country; his proclamations were therefore unpopular. He tried to turn the feudal chiefs into salaried officials; abolish the slave trade; abolish private feudal armies; replace the soldier's reward of fiefs (gult) with a centralized army budget; limit tolls on traffic; enforce Christian monogamy and declare "damoz" (a type of concubinage) illegal; suppress blood feuds between clans; regulate and limit the temporal power of the church, particularly over land fiefs. (Most of this was achieved only 80 to 90 years later).

Theodore's courtiers bowed to him but his chiefs balked him quietly. He had not been trained in the patient diplomacy of the Amhara noble. His reactions were spontaneous, direct, and, especially later, violent and cruel. After his friend Bell had fallen in battle, Theodore ceased to exercise any restraint. In 1866 he jailed and chained British missionaries who had displeased him. As a result, two years later Lord Napier's fleet landed a British-Indian army, and was greeted as liberator by the population of Tigre province. Instead of massacring the train of elephants carrying cannons through mountain passes, the Tigreans acted as guides and allies. Soon the fort of Magdalla, which Theodore had armed with Turkish cannon, fell, and he committed suicide (a very rare practice among Amhara). Lord Napier thereupon quickly withdrew his forces from the country.

One of the immediate results of these events was that the Tigre Copts won a temporary ascendency in their old

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
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rivalry against the Amhara, and a Tigrē chief, of extremely conservative, Coptic leanings, was crowned King Yohannes, or John IV. He honored Aksum by having himself crowned there, bringing to an end the hegemony of Gondar. He established his capital within Tigrē province, at Ḥāqēle (Makalle). He urged and sometimes forced islamized Galla chiefs of neighboring Wollo province to accept Coptic Christianity. He had no interest in world affairs, and when the British needed his help to evacuate British garrisons in Eritrea threatened by the Mahdi, they had to promise him part of Eritrea as an adjunct to his Tigrē province. In 1889 the Mahdi ("dārbush", i.e. dervishes in Amharic) attacked Abyssinia from the northwest and razed Gondar, much more thoroughly than Theodore had done. The people of Gondar never rebuilt their stone houses, and the city, with the exception of the castle, is today a town of shacks made of wood, hardened clay, and corrugated iron. King John IV fell in battle just outside Gondar town.

E. Amhara rule from Addis Ababa

The Shoan heir to the "Solomonic Dynasty" had grown to manhood while the hostage of Theodore, and had managed to escape home to Shoa. Menelik II was as interested in world affairs as Theodore had been, and knew that Abyssinia could not isolate itself any longer without grave danger in an Africa that was being carved up by European colonial powers. But he had the personality of the typical Amhara noble, and proceeded diplomatically, patiently and persistently.

He equipped his forces with firearms, many obtained

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
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175 from the Italians. Under his rule, many Galla chiefs learned to speak Amharic well enough to be more easily controlled by him. For while he wanted the Amhara to dominate, he realized the importance of welding all Ethiopia into a nation, in which the Galla would play an important role. Moreover, as an Amhara from Shoa, he was much better acquainted with and less contemptuous of his Galla neighbors and subjects than the distainful Amhara of Gondar.

It is typical of Menelik's pattern of procedure that he never rebelled against King John IV during his reign, but rather negotiated an agreement with him, according to which King John IV and the Tigreans would recognize Menelik as successor to the throne in return for loyalty during King John's lifetime.

Thus, Menelik II became Emperor of Abyssinia in 1889, and began to expand his realm until it included the territoy of present Ethiopia. He did this sometimes by treaty, sometimes by treaty, sometimes by moving his troops in a particular direction and obtaining vassalage of nearby chiefs, sometimes by actual warfare. If there was any doubt in the mind of any Coptic "Ras" (lit. "head"; actually, in his time, semi-independent feudal chief of a province and heir to provincial dynasty, with own army)[36], or Galla chief about the dominance of Menelik II, it was dispelled after his amazing victory over the invading Italians in 1896, at Aduwa.

After this, it seemed improper for the Emperor to remain in his tent-city capital at Ankober in Shoa, located on the cold "dega". Empress Taitu, who had ridden into battle along her husband, was a heavy woman (in the pre-

36. roughly equivalent to the medieval European "Duke".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara
Ethiopia MP1

175 ferred style of Amhara noblewomen) and liked the hot mineral springs on the "woyna dega". Menelik had agreed to build his capital there, although it was a Gall-speaking district of southern Shoa. He named his capital Addis Ababa, the "new flower", which term henceforth became symbolic for the new Ethiopia, and for the rule by the family of Menelik II.

Expansion of this rule brought diverse territories, tribes, linguistic and racial groups, into the political boundaries of Ethiopia: the hardworking, Semitic-speaking, people of Gurage, and their fertile country; the slave-trading islamized Galla rulers of independent Kaffa and Jimma; the disunited Galla kingdoms of semi-nomadic as well as agricultural Arussi, Limmu, Gera, islamized Harar, etc.; Nilotic and negroid border peoples like the Shangalla and Guma; Somali-speaking tribes of Ogaden, and Wollamo and Sidamo peoples in the far south.

Some territories whose rulers had submitted without a fight were granted local autonomy: the Wollamo kings until 1903, and Jinna even longer. In all other lands, the usual fate of Amhara conquest was meeted out: The "rope was thrown",[37] the land divided into "gasha" units varying in size according to estimated fertility, and most of the land was allocated to officers and soldiers in lieu of payment for services. The former inhabitants could remain as tenants. But the Galla chiefs and some others were permitted to retain from 1/4 to 1/3 of their former lands as their own fiefs and rule them as "balbat" (landlords); some were given additional lands further south in reward for military services. Thus the southern Amhara and northern Galla moved closer to each

37. This is the traditional method of measuring land.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara
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175 other in patterns of living.

The Coptic church was also given land in all conquered territories, partley to reward the military chaplains, partly to sustain the churches built in "pagan" and "islamized" areas.

175 648 Foreign consuls and ambassadors began to stream into Addis Ababa in the years that followed the victory at Aduwa. Italians and Czarist Russians built hospitals in Addis Ababa, and the French in Harar. Missionaries from Europe, of all denominations, were permitted to work in "non-Copts". The empress had a hotel built in Addis Ababa (primarily for foreign visitors) , managed by Greeks and Armenians.

175 177 Expanding Addis Ababa threatened to exhaust local fuel and water supplies. Menelik ordered the importation of the fast-growing eucalyptus tree and by proclamation encouraged its planting by all his subjects. When they realized that the tree grew faster than any native tree during each rainy season, they planted it even in remote areas where royal commands were sometimes ignored.

175 177 439 Cotton was imported in large quantities, for even the commoner in Addis Ababa wanted to wear the white jodphurs and long white shirt with the narrow sleeved ("edj tebab") of the Amhara noble, under the universal toga ("shamma"). When this fashion spread to the countryside, especially during Haile Selassie's reigh, the "educated" citizen of Addis Ababa began to wear a military-type loose khaki jacket under a lighter and finer shamma.

175 [439] Iron scrap was imported from Eritrea in larger quantities and gradually became cheaper even in the rural areas.

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175 Ownership of the sun umbrella, once the privilege of the
[554] king ("jan - tela), became the ambition of every Addis Aba-
ba housewife. Little china coffee cups ("fenjal") followed
along the expanded trade routes replacing the unglazed clay
cups. Menelik's victories were taken personally and even
the Amhara serf felt a little nobler. All of Abyssinia was
now literally "swearing by" by the Emperor, saying "Menelik
[195] yemut" ("may the emperor die, if I lie") on oral private
contracts, marriage agreements, etc.

Emperor Menelik II sickened and died in 1913, leaving as his successor his daughter's son Lij (Prince) Yassu, then a young man of 17. The prince was fond of drink and disinterested in government. But it was his favoring of the Muslim Galla nobility, to whom he was related on his father's side which led to his being deposed in 1916. The Coptic church took the initiative and found allies among rebellious nobles of the old school; among some persons interested in continued modernization; and British agents who did not like the increasing influence of Turkish, Muslim agents who were their rivals (World War I was raging in Europe).

Another daughter of Menelik, Empress Zauditu, occupied the throne, while the actual administration was given over to a regent -- a second cousin of Menelik, the young Ras (Lord) Tafari Makonnen (now known as Emperor Haile Selassie). The new heir to the throne had received a modern French education in his paternal fief of conquered Harar, and was the leader of the modernizers in Addis Ababa, though not yet 20 years old at the time.

It clearly had been a political compromise, for the established Rases at first retained their power, and for a

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175 long time continued to show their faith in the continuation of the old patterns by such actions as eschewing the automobile, riding their mules through Addis Ababa with huge military escorts of their own retinues, and expecting their provincial subjects to "swear by" them, rather than by Tafari Makonnen (Haile Selassie). The actions of the new regent in freeing of slaves, lightening the exploitation of the "gabbar" (serf) and education on his own fiefs did not impress the feudal lords as worthy of imitation. As far as the Coptic church was concerned, the regent was careful to be seen often at prayer and he also ordered the building of a new stone church in semi-European style in Addis Ababa.

Amond feudal rebellions the most serious were those of Ras Hailu, the Amhara lord of Gojjam, who even freed Lij Yassu from imprisonment; Ras Seyum of Tigre (descendent of King John IV), and, as late as 1929, no less a power than the husband of Empress Zauditu, Ras Gugsa Wallie, who had aroused the Azebu Galla tribe as an ally. All these Tafari Makonnen vanquished, sometimes in battle, but more often with calm diplomacy, even when he lacked sufficient military power.

Upon the death of Empress Zauditu, the regent was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia on November 2, 1930, now a major annual holiday. He had joined the League of Nations in 1923, had outlawed the slave trade, and had invited a Belgian military mission to train his army. One of his first acts as Emperor was to grant his subjects a written Constitution (further liberalized in 1955), changing the the traditional absolute rule to a constitutional monarchy, at least

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175 in theoretical structure.[38]

The Emperor had also strengthened his internal position by allying himself, through his second marriage, with the ex-Muslim Galla king of Wollo province, King Mikael, whom John IV had forcibly converted to Coptic Christianity and who had since become a zealous Cop. This is the present Empress Menen, mother of the heir-presumptive.

The Italian occupation, 1935/6 to 1941, was too brief to make lasting changes, but it acted as a catalyst, hastening the changes that Haile Selassie had begun. These, particularly education, modernization, centralization of power, Amharization and Ethiopian nationalism, he resumed with greater determination and power than ever before, upon his return in 1941. Now everyone "swears by" him, even in remote areas. Improvements in communication, by means of the Italian-built roads, telegraph, telephone, even the Ethiopian Airlines, have vastly increased, and provincial officials can no longer procrastinate as easily as before against unpopular or "strange" orders from the capital.

The Amhara culture pattern is gradually assuming, through imitation of Amhara culture traits and subtle attitudes, an ever greater significance for Ethiopia at large.

161 4. The Peoples of Ethiopia

162 A. The Demographic pattern; density; rural-urban distribution; migration.

38. For details see Messing, S.D.: "Changing Ethiopia", (in) The Middle East Journal, Autumn 1955.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
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161 There has never been a complete Ethiopian population
162 census. An Official United Nations estimate cites 15,000,000 population prior to the federation with Eritrea, which added another million.[39] This estimate is probably arrived at by averaging the usual estimates which run from 9 million to 20 million.

Most estimates of the ethnic distribution of the major groups in Ethiopia are based on the figures of Montandon in 1923; he established the nine million estimate for the total.[40] He estimated the major identities as follows:

Abyssinians (Ambara, and less numerous Tigre	3 million
Galla (recent "Hamitic")	3 million
Cushites ("old-Hamitic", e.g. Agau)	1 million
Somali and Danakil (coastal Hamitic)	1 million
Shanqalla (incl. Nilotic and negroid lowlanders)	1 million
total Ethiopia	9 million

161 It is clear that this estimate, which is considered the best even though conservative in the quantities, constitutes a medley of linguistic, tribal, territorial and racial configurations. But in actual practice, in Ethiopia, it is almost impossible to do much better prior to a reliable modern census. For identities are so complex and overlapping in the actual life of the peoples concerned, that to unscramble and reassemble them for the purpose of scientific neatness would seem an arbitrary procedure.

39. U.N. Statistical Yearbook. 1955.
40. Montandon, G.: L'esclavage en Abyssinie, 1923, pp. 30.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara
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161 In the following pages an attempt of this sort will be made, for purposes of orientation, but it must be considered tentative, until better data becomes available.

Estimates of the density of the population vary. A recent geographer estimated the average density of Ethiopia (without Eritrea) as 36 persons per square mile, based on a population of 15 million. But he admits that the "qolla" area is much less densely populated.[41] Personal observation by the present writer indicates that even fertile areas are not densely populated, probably due to centuries of warfare, resulting local food shortages, and continuing high infant mortality. It was particularly the fertile highlands that historically were most affected by endemic warfare.

161 Ethiopia is essentially a rural country. Not over
162 200,000 of the population live under permanently urban
369 conditions, and few towns have a permanent population in excess of 10,000.[42] At market time and certain seasons population figures usually double and even triple. Some urban figures include villages within a day's march (e.g. in case of Gondar town). Thus, the population of Addis Ababa ranges from 150,000 to 500,000; of the coffee city of Harar from 20,000 to 50,000. Figures for the other two main urban centers give high estimates: 30,000 for the railroad junction town of Dire Dawa, through which the only rail line passes (about halfway between the capital and the coast); and 22,000 for Gondar, old caravan town on the way from the highlands to the Sudan.[43]

41. Kuo, Ethiopia. Amer.Geogr.Society of New York, Focus, June 1955, pp.1-2.
42. Simmons, et. al, 1951, p. 64.
43. The Statesman's Yearbook, 1955 (ed. Steinberg), pp.956-962

367 Thus, in the traditional pattern of behavior a town was
563 regarded merely as a market-place, and only in exceptional
[632] cases did historical events lead to the founding of permanent towns, such as Gondar, through foreign stimulation. Towns are regarded as the places where one will encounter foreigners and foreign products: Arabs and East Indians in provincial town, Armenians and Greeks in the capital; all following occupations of commerce, especially wholesale trade, of
1162] which they have monopolies. Each of these four groups numbers several thousand. They have been resident in Ethiopia for up to a century. In addition there are now several thousand Italians whose services as truckdrivers, auto mechanics, construction, water and electrical engineers are so urgently needed that they were permitted to remain after the Italian occupation ended.

The urban Arabs have the pattern of building their mosques and Quran schools just behind the major urban markets. It is there that their population is densest, in a kind of self-made ghetto. One never finds Muslim villages in predominantly Coptic areas, for no one would sell or rent them land in the past. Now lowland Muslims (Sudanese or ex-slaves) are beginning to imitate their Arab correligionists preferring urban residence. They have taken over much of the retail trade (e.g. in Gondar).

Urban Amhara are nearly always part-time farmers, with fields nearby.

167 Migration in the past was usually caused by the shifting of military and political power, in accordance with the historical events described earlier. New fiefs would be taken up by the victors and their "skilled" workmen. The

166 court of the king attracted ambitious young men, many of whom would settle in the vicinity. Presently, the major sin-
167 gle trend of migration is immigration of skilled Eritreans into the Coptic provinces of the Amhara, and Tigre-speaking areas where they are urgently needed as hospital "dressers" and pharmacists, teachers, specialized clerks, construction engineers, and in a wide gradation of other modern skills. They are not only attracted to Ethiopia because of the jobs open there, but are almost compelled to leave Eritrea because the sharp shrinking of the more modern economy there since 1952 has taken from many of them the means to a livelihood.

166 Meanwhile, clerks and officials from the central govern-
369 ment in Addis Ababa are fanning out to each of the 12 provincial capitals of Ethiopia, all of which are in the process of becoming urban centers, even though , especially in the south, they had only recently been mere market villages.

163 Very little is known about the <u>vital statistics</u> of Ethiopia. Registration of birth and death is not required by the government, and is therefore avoided, since it might bring the evil eye. Observation indicates that infant mortality is very high and is the major single factor limiting family size and population increase. One observer has suggested that the average life span does not exceed 45-50 years.[44] If one were to take into consideration the infant mortality, the figure would probably be even lower, although occasionally one finds a man, more rarely a woman, in the eighties.

44. Simons et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951, pp.62 - 73.

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162 B. Distribution of the Population by region, language and religion; ethnic stratification.

The division of Ethiopia into twelve administrative provinces has led to the availability of official estimates of population by the present government, which needs such information to strengthen central control from Addis Ababa. The information must be fairly accurate, offering another approach to the study of distribution of population.[45]

45. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia, 1954, pp. 390-406.

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Table 1. Population Estimates of the 12 Ethiopian Provinces

Administrative Province	Area in Square Kilometers	Official estimate of population 1954	Ethnic Preponderance (author's comments) Language	Religion	Additional Remarks
Begemder	78,200	1,800,000	Amharic	Coptic	some border Muslim and highland Falashas.
Gojjam	62,900	1,600,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Agau (old Cushitic)speakers
Shoa	78,700	2,100,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Gurage-speakers
Tigre	67,000	1,000,000	Galla, Tigrina.	Coptic	
Wollo	78,700	1,000,000	mostly Galla	Coptic	some Amharic
Wollega	67,200	1,000,000	Galla,Amharic	Coptic	some border Shanqalla(negroid, Nilotic-speaking)
Arussi	36,000	1,000,000	Galla	Muslim-"pagan"	
Hararge	404,000	1,600,000	Galla, some Somali	Muslim-"pagan"	some Somali semi-nomad tribes
Ilubabor	50,000	1,300,000	Galla, Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"	many border Shanqalla & other negroids
Kaffa	49,000	1,200,000	Galla,Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"-Muslim	many border negroid
Gemu-Gofa	39,000	900,000	Sudanese,Galla	"pagan"	border negroids
Sidamo	102,000	1,250,000	old-Cushitic (Sidamo,Wollamo)	"pagan"	some nomadic border tribes
	1,110,000	15,750,000			
(Eritrea, federated 1952)	119,000	1,100,000	Bedja(Cushitic) Tigre(Semitic) Nilotic	Muslim Coptic	

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On the basis of these figures and interpretations, little over half the population of Ethiopia proper (not including Eritrea) is Coptic and can be regarded as "Abyssinians proper". Also, of the total population of Ethiopia, about 5 million, or 1/3, are native Amharic speakers, and constitute, especially in matters of governmental administration, a sort of upper class. However, there are several qualifications that should be added to these overall conclusions.

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Until the reign of the present emperor, and during much of it, the predominant and typical division of the population was into ethnic groups, and the resulting social hierarchy was largely based on what a particular group had experienced in the wars of Menelik II: whether they were among the victors, or among the vanquished. The upper class status of Amhara, was shared by landlords, chiefs, or poor tenants, once they reached conquered territories, and was rivalled only by the other Coptic Abyssinians from Tigrīña-speaking Tigrē. In general, the Coptic religion itself constituted upper class membership in the hierarchy, and non-Coptic speakers of sister-languages of Amharic, such as the Gurage, did not share in this status and during that generation remained haulers of water and hewers of wood. The Galla were the largest of the subjected peoples. It mattered little to the Amhara whether the Galla were "pagan" or thinly islamized. The Coptic Priesthood did not try to "raise them to Christianity" (in the Amharic phrase).

Each of these ethnic entities had its own hierarchy

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of status and prestige. The Galla had originally been cattle breeders who had taken to horses, had invaded Abyssinia and had settled there in the 17th century A.D. Their famous "gada" age-grading determined much of social status of the individual during his life cycle. Today all Galla prefer the name "Oroma" for their ethnic identity -- the term formerly used for the aristocratic class which had originally done only cattle herding and had despised even skilled labor. The Tumtu class did blacksmithing, housebuilding and weaving; lived scattered; and were more mixed with negroid slaves physically. The next lower, 3rd class, was that of the tanners, who remained "pagans", were not even thinly islamized, and are regarded by some scholars as indigenous Africans, with their round conical-roof dwellings reminiscent of Negro Africa.[46] The lowest class was that of the hunters who dwelt in their own communities under their own chiefs, along streams and lakes.

The Somalis had a material and social organization somewhat similar to the early Gallas. Physically resembling the Masai, they lived as semi-nomads, but bred camels as well as cattle. They still roam the lowlands on the southeastern border of Ethiopia. In the border lowland below the eastern escarpment live the Danakil, a feared Hamitic-speaking desert people, probably of ancient residence, pushed to this ecologically marginal territory by later invaders. Related to them, linguistically, are peoples on the western border of Ethiopia, living right on the escarpment, the Agau-

46. Coon: Measuring Ethiopia. 1935, p.10; and Coon: Horn of Africa.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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speaking people of Quara province who once extended at least as far into the country as Lake Tana. Below the western escarpment live Nilotic and Sudanese-speaking tribes. Perhaps the most negroid group among them are the Shangalla, on the west-southwest[47] who live in hot, moist lowlands. They once had their own African royal hierarchy. But they were preyed upon by Arab slave merchants in the past who stimulated slave raids by their neighbors. They were sold in slavery far and wide to Galla, to Amhara, etc., causing negroid strains in all Ethiopia due to the traditional concubinage. Since the present emperor has stamped out the slave trade in Ethiopia, this process is no longer repeated.

The Cushitic-speaking Wollamo (province of Sidamo) underwent a similar experience. They had their own kings until the time of Menelik II, in the very southern part of the highland. Some of this group were sold into slavery, about the turn of this century. They are dark, slender, non-negroid people with "pagan" worship in tree groves and phallic stone statuary.

Even under Menelik II some of this hierarchy began to change. As empire-builder, he rewarded, with lands and associated status, those subject peoples and chiefs who fought for him in his subsequent wars.

Out of this complex medley, the present ethnic stratification retains much of the old, Amharic-Coptic pattern, with a number of new sub-patterns, which, moreover, differ in emphasis from region to region. The following general ethnic hierarchy can be indicated, at least as it exists

47. Coon: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p.73.

A in the minds of most Amhara:

E 1. The Coptic Abyssinian, on which top level the Am-
563 haric-speaker and the Tigrina-speaker are equal except for the added Amhara prestige due to the "Solomonic Dynasty". Both consider themselves "attentäm" (of noble bones). Both consider themselves superior to all other groups, notably the "conquered nations", infidels,"laboring classes" and "lower races". Both consider themselves the descendants of the Hadhrami invaders of the late pre-Christian era.

As conquerors, the Amhara believe in their superior toughness. The aphorism says:

A [53] "The aged Amhara is (powerful) like bärbärä
the aged Galla is (soft) like butter".

A [101] The word Amhara is itself derived from "amari", meaning one who is pleasing, agreeable, beautiful and gracious.

On the other hand, the services rendered by Galla cavalry to Menelik II (e.g. in his victory over the Italians at Aduwa) are well known and admitted. In reward, many of the Galla feudal nobles were permitted to retain in fief 1/4 of their land and its serfs, so that a Galla "Balbat" (landowner) class has arisen and prospered. They are in ostentatious presence at all national festivals in Addis Ababa, notably the annual coronation festival of Haile Selassie, when their young men are seen and heard, jumping with brandished spears or sticks, shouting the loyalty of the "Oromo" to "Addis Ababa" (symbolic for Menelik and Haile Selassie). Among the modern-educated Amhara, and even among many uneducated Amhara of Shoa province, intermarriage with Galla Balbat families is not rare, nowadays, especially if the Galla partner is wealthier than the Amhara, and if the Galla is the bride. This is still resis-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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ted among Amhara of Begemdir (Gondar) who refer, in consequence, to any new, unknown Shoan visitor (clerks, administrative officials) as a "Galla". But Amhara from Gondar will not be ashamed to marry a Coptic girl from Tigre.

2. Conquered peoples who are largely non-Coptic (Muslim, semi-Muslim, "pagan").

Certain distinctions are made within this second group. Full Muslims, especially merchants living in market towns, enjoy a somewhat higher prestige, as a respected minority whose leaders are received by governors and even the emperor. (Haile Selassie in recent years, has gone so far as to build mosques, e.g. in Eritrea for them, something which would have cost an earlier emperor his throne.)

At the feast of Ramadan, Muslim leaders, led by their "Cadi" (ecclesiastic judge) call on the emperor to receive his good wishes. In Harar city, where Arabic is known to some of the local Muslims, they listen to Arabic radio broadcasts from the public loudspeakers outside their coffee houses on the marketplace.

The predominant Muslim rite is Melekite, but the majority of thinly islamized Galla know little about such distinctions.[48]

The Galla are the largest group in this category, but, as mentioned before, an important distinction is made between Balbat-families and others. Furthermore, the Galla of Shoa and Wollo provinces, because of their long association with Amhara, enjoy higher prestige than the Galla of Arussi and

48. Liebesney, H. J. : Literature on the Law of the Middle East. The Middle East Journal, October 1949, pp.461-9.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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other southern provinces, who are considered more "primitive" in their material culture, and many of whom are "pagan".

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Emperor Haile Selassie has urged the Coptic clergy to "raise to Christianity" even peoples despised as "unworthy" in the old pattern. As a result, peoples like the Agau (incl. the Qemant) who have long been neighbors to the western Amhara, and the laboring Gurage near Addis Ababa, have been converted and occupy status somewhere between level 1. and 2., depending on the wealth they have been able to accumulate by past labors. The Qemants have become favorites of the clergy at Gondar because of their generous donations to the local Coptic churches.

AE 563 [826]

The people of coffee-rich Jimma, in Kaffa province, enjoy respect within level 2. because they had been left with internal autonomy during the rule of Menelik II; and because they are believed to be a slightly higher physical type than other infidels (they are considered "wammate", people with wrinkles at the corner of the mouth). Perhaps due to their old wealth based on coffee, slave and gold trade, they are envied; but they are regarded as "people of dissolute moral habits" by the Amharas.

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3. Laboring peoples and classes; non-Coptic; despised, in the old patterns of behavior.

This includes all occupational groups that did or do the ironsmithing, leather tanning, skilled or non-skilled manual labor. Among them are the lower classes of the Galla (mentioned before); the non-Coptic Gurage; the Falasha who live in small rural communities in Begemdir province, who do most of the ironsmithing and pottery-making there, and who practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

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practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

4. Occupational hunters: lowland border peoples; negroid ex-slaves; all non-Coptic.

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The occupational hunting tribes are considered the most primitive, as pre-agricultural and even pre-pastoral subsisters on the bush, jungle, river gorges and deserts. Among them are the Woyto, the hunters of the Hippopotamus, which is considered by the Coptic clergy especially unclean because of the similarity to the pig. Jungles like Wolkait, in northwest Begamdir, contain such despised and feared hunters, as does the eastern lowland desert of the Danakil (Afar).

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Considered on a somewhat higher level within these groups are the pastoral nomads like the Somali, some of the Borana, and other southern tribes who, when they are better known to settled neighbors, are equated with class 2. When less well known, they are classed not much above hunters, and it does not matter to the Amhara that the pastoral nomads in turn look down on settled peasants.

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The lowest on level four are the ex-slaves, who are referred to as Shancalla if they look negroid, or the more general "barya", i.e. slave (name of a Sudanese border tribe). Only a very poor person, possibly an outcast, cripple, etc., of the two upper classes would consider marrying a Shanqalla. Nevertheless, because of the aforementioned concubinage with female slaves, there are Shanqalla outcrops among even the Amhara of Gondar. An offspring of such a union not infrequently does marry a Shanqalla woman, after converting her to Coptic Christianity. This is pos-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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sible in modern times, though the conversion is solemnized shamefacedly by the minor clergy and with very little ado. The racial distinctions between "persons of dishonorable ancestry" are expressed in the following Amharic aphorisms:

> "(One) of unknown father
> (Two) wellaj (i.e. father Amhara, Mother Shamqalla:
> (Three) barya (i.e. full-blooded slave);
> (Four) gabecha (any half-breed, incl. half-Italian)."

In setting them side by side without distinction, the aphorism warns the hearer to look well into the ancestry of a prospective mate, for he or she may be descended from any of these classifications.

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European foreigners are not included in these classifications, especially if they belong to nationalities of recent contact with Ethiopians. But the Armenians, in contact for many centuries, appear in the upper infidel group (the term "arämani" had the connotation of "idolator, hence Cruel"). Today some of the modern Ethiopian nationalists pretend to despise them as "moneybags", while actually envying their commercial and professional talents. The term "arab" has long meant trader, caravan importer, slave dealer. The term for Protestant, probably of 19th century origin, means "enemy of Mary", because that is what impressed the Coptic Amhara most when the missionaries preached to them at that time. The old term "färänj (Frank), foreigner, is still in use, and in rural spots children will still sometimes run after a foreigner pointing fingers as if he were a strange, hence inferior, animal. But in urban usage, especially in Addis Ababa, the term is now applied officially without any derogatory connotations.

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C. Racial characteristics and affiliations of the peoples of Ethiopia.

The terms used in this section refer to physical types only, and are not to be confused with linguistic or regional concepts carrying the same name. For not only is there a lack of statistical data on the physical anthropology of Ethiopia, but no new terms have been coined to describe physical types there, so that linguistic and regional names have been borrowed. While not good practice, in this case it is unavoidable.

The two most common physical types in Ethiopia are the "Mediterranean" and the "Hamite". These types have been best defined by Coon, Garn, Birdsell:[49]

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"Mediterranean" - medium to skinny in build.
generalized to intermediate in pigmentation.
medium to heavy in beard and body hair with a minority of blond forms, particularly in the iris;
medium in head size, with a minimum of paleanthropic features of the skull and face;
small faced, prominent nosed, small jawed, often small toothed;
medium to small extremities.

"Hamite" - Some of the peoples of East Africa and the Sudan seem to be skeletally Mediterranean but dark skinned; they have low to medium frequencies of spiral hair, thick lips, and other Negro features. The body build is extremely skinny."

The latter seems to be a very ancient East African type, according to the excavations in Keyna by Leakey, and the present Somali seem closest to it. Coon[50] points out that this type shows extreme narrowness of head and face, straight

49. Races, 1950, pp. 127, 129.
50. Races of Europe, 1939, Plate 20.

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nasal profile, non-negroid prominence of chin, curly but not frizzly hair, and black skin; thus constituting a borderline between the "Mediterranean race" and the African Negro.

Another ancient skeletal type, excavated in upper Egypt, is very similar to some northern Ethiopians (Abyssinians), according to the findings of C. M. Morant[51]. He took measurements of skulls and skeletal parts at Badari in upper Egypt, of a people who lived there about 4,000 B.C. Because of the extreme dryness of the region, he was able to determine that their skin was brunet - white, their hair black and wavy. He found that the Badarian cranial type was similar to that of the northern Ethiopian of today.

This type does occur among Amhara and Tigre peoples, but wavy hair is in a minority, sufficiently rare to cause comment. The author personally observed two individuals with distinctly soft, wavy hair, both from aristocratic Amhara families taking great pride in their unblemished ancestry.

The findings of Leakey and Morant, just beyond the southern and the northern borders of Ethiopia, would suggest that Ethiopia contained physical types of "Hamite" and "Mediterranean" characteristics long before the invasion of Semitic-speaking Hadhramautis, about 500 B.C.

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The <u>Amhara</u> is basically a Mediterranean type much like some Bedouin tribesmen, with oval face, keen nose, relatively thin or average lips which do not curl up, a type most frequently found in the Amharic-speaking provinces. The hair is often curly but not frizzly, and

51. Morant, G. M.: A Study of Predynastic Egyptian Skulls from Badaria. 1927, pp. 293-309.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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A E 142 rises about the head like a halo, hiding a long, narrow, delicately modelled cranium.[52] A highbridged nose is regarded as a mark of beauty, and the chin is sometimes so sharply pointed that it recalls the features of Tel-El-Amarna. Skulls piled under cave ledges at the Amhara monastery of Debra Libanos (they may not be touched) appear to be dolichocephalic. Stature is medium. Musculature is not pronounced on sight, but Amhara peasants can perform great feats of endurance in walking uphill and for long distances. As a mark of the upper class female, women of nobility accumulate obesity by a rich diet and abstinence from any work. But the average Amhara is usually so narrow-boned that it is impossible for most adult Europeans to wear the cotton jodphurs in sizes made for Amhara.

The Galla have larger, well-built bodies, rounder faces, straigher noses and darder skins than the Amhara.[53]

The Shangalla along the western border and inland, evidence all the more typical negroid characteristics.

A E 144 When surveying the complexities of the many intermediate racial and sub-racial strains in Ethiopia, the question arises whether the Ethiopians might not be considered representative of an undifferentiated stage in the development of both whites and blacks. Coon[54] thinks not and points out that, on the whole, the white strain is much more prevalent and much more important metrically,

52. Coon: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p. 75.
53. Yilma, Asfor: Haile Selassie 1936, p. 23.
54. Coon: The Races of Europe. 1954, p. 457.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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while in pigmentation and in hair form the negroid influence is seen. His studies of Ethiopians and Somalis have led him to emphasize the principle that metrical similarities of a racial order have little reference to soft parts, since Somalis and Norwegians may be closely related in measurements, yet fall at world extremes in pigmentation and hair form.[55]

This leaves only the alternate conclusion, that all the peoples of this "Hamitic" area, whether Hamitic or Semitic in speech, represent a physical blend in varying proportions between negroes and Mediterraneans of several varieties.[56]

This conclusion is based on comparisons and correlations between the four major ethnic units of this area(from a physical standpoint): Amhara, Galla, Sidamo, Somali, to which a fifth, the Agau, may be added.[57] The following seem the most important features:[58]

55. Ibid.
56. Ibid, p. 448.
57. Ibid, p. 449.
58. Ibid, pp. 450-457

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Table 2: Major Physical Characteristics of Numerically Large peoples in Ethiopia

	Amhara	Galla	Sidamo	Somali	Agau
Skull	dolicho-meso	meso	meso	meso	mesocephalic
Nose	leptorrhine	leptorr.	mesorrhine (near negroid)	leptorr.	
Skin	brunet-white (lightest) (mostly Lushan No. 21-25; range No.13-34	chocolate brown (mostly No.22-29; range darker	dark brown to black (darker than No.30)	dark brown glossy (mostly No.29; range No. 27-30	
Hair (form)	60% frizzly 40% curly or wavy	30% have non-negroid hair		86% have non-negroid hair	
Hair color	black among all, no difference head or beard.				
(pilous system)	non-negroid: frequent baldness, often heavy beards; even minority with heavy body hair	less bearded, less hairy	less bearded less hairy	beards like southern Arabs; almost glabrous on body	
Eye (color)	47% dark brown 11% light brown 39% mixed	same as Amhara	mostly dark-brown, some black	56% dark-brown 32% black	
Lips	10% thin	no thin	no thin	no thin	
Nose	straight profile, high root and bridge flaring nasal wings, excavated nostrils.	similar but more broad and flaring	low root and bridge, thick tips (resembles hybrid negro-white, as in American negroes)		

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART II: Utilization of Natures Products by the Amhara

177 Part I established the basis for examination of the culture
183 of the Amhara of Abyssinia and Ethiopia, and the elements included in the long blending process which created Amhara culture. The original, native, Cushitic-speaking culture patterns were based on the geographical milieu, influenced by topographical and climatic conditions of the highlands. On these were superimposed several ancient cultural influences from abroad. The Amhara thus appears as a "semiticized Hamite".

The results of this blending of autochthonous African culture traits and Mediterranean-Asian traits are apparent in both their material and non-material culture. Much survives in Amhara culture of the ancient South Arabian culture pattern: agricultural patterns, occupational divisions, dress, written language, customs and beliefs. Finally, the
[184] cultural configuration which had long been the privilege of the Amhara ruling class has in recent historical times become shared by all Amhara; and, still more recently, due to imitation, prestige, conquests, etc, by ever-increasing numbers of the original, formerly Cushitic-speaking sections of the indigenous population.

[123] While Part I was concerned largely with dimensions of Time and Space, Parts II and III will be more concerned with
181 the dimension and the use of Energy. In both material and non-material culture the Amhara pattern has remained, at first glance, strikingly "early medieval." Ingenuity with regard to material culture has gone into the utilization of the products of nature, including farming and animal hus-

181 bandry, to achieving maximum benefits with a minimum of original invention. Similarly, in non-material culture, a minimum of effort has gone into the elaboration, amendment or improvement of institutions of social organization, but a great deal of ingenuity has gone into spiritual elaborations such as the Zar-cult.

Such a disposition of human energy seems strange and out of balance particularly to the Western mind. How can it be explained?

Perhaps the major clue is contained in the Amhara proverb:

[539] "From cleverness of hand, (you get) serfdom;
from cleverness of mouth (you become) boss."

461 This has long been a basic Amhara attitude, even a
554 world view for them. The Amhara has seen much justification for associating skill of hand with slavery and near-slave status, while associating mental and spiritual skills with leadership: as military officer, judge, bishop, or zar-doctor.

If he becomes impoverished, an Amhara will go to a district where he is not known (in order not to shame his family) to work at some unskilled labor. He is then less despised than if he were to learn a skilled manual trade. For while the first can be excused as a temporary mishap, or smiled off as a lark, the latter, by his painstaking application to a manual skill, indicates a permanent association with the psychological and social patterns in the "slave category". Moreover, he may, in his apprenticeship, become associated not only with the occupation and socially lower status of his teacher, but, since the latter is

461 often a member of a socially lower ethnic group (see sec-
554 tion B), such an Amhara would become "detribalized", suspected of having learned occult powers (e.g. in smithcraft), and suspected of being no longer an observant and
563 believing Copt. As a result of his ostracism, he may then
461 very likely marry a girl from the socially lower ethnic
554 group, and his children would be social halfbreeds. If that ethnic group were Shanqalla (negroid, ex-slave), his children would also be racially, as well as socially, mixed, and be relegated to the servant class. Thus the prediction of the proverb would have come full cycle. This process can be observed in Gondar, Addis Ababa, and wherever a market town develops out of the more conservative, rural milieu.

566 Before the abrogation of the major feudal privileges
463 by the present emperor, the feudal lord could and did put skilled specialists to work without specific wages or limit of service. Moreover, the skilled specialist would often be worse off than the unskilled serf. For while the latter would at least be permitted, usually, to remain at his place of origin, the skilled specialists were very often required to accompany the feudal troops and resettle in an alien province, cut off from their kinfolk.

Smiths had to produce and repair weapons, masons to build churches, weavers to make togas and adornments, brewers of honeywine and musician-bards to prepare feasts and entertainments, etc. The chief quartermaster and "treasurer" carried the title "bajirond" and was usually a skilled and trusted master craftsman himself. In reward, he and some of the other skilled specialists might be allocated new

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
463 favor, permitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qämis"
under the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
[292] rowing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the
prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled crafts-
men never rose that high but spent their lives accompany-
ing troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup
fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and em-
broiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing
183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and
specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
[754] nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also
the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoub-
tedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of
maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of
invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other
elaborations of culture.

1. Living Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("tis", or,
if several on one large hill, "mëndär"), rather than a vil-
lage. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts,
with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus
the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-
isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the
other side of the same hill.

other side of the same hill.

361 Four factors seem to determine where a hamlet is likely to be formed: (1) Ecological considerations (water within a women's walking distance; pasturage for the flock); (2) kinship consideration - for all persons within a hamlet are nearly always closely related and form a family community; (3) administrative considerations - inherited family ownership of land, or tenancy on land of feudal lord or in a fief of the church, when an agreement for settlement can be negotiated. This latter type is often found among the older hamlets, placed where some historical or legendary event occurred (e.g. a miracle recognized by the local Coptic church; or a military event). When a new church is built in an untenanted area, there are usually several extended families needing land, who negotiate a sharecropping agreement with the chief priest of the local church. (4) Ethnic consideration. Because of the individualism of each residential family group, two hamlets are rarely close to one another. Since they are built on or near hilltops to avoid flooding in the rainy season, there is usually a valley in between where brooks or irrigation canals form borderlines for planted fields. The hillsides, if they are not terrace-farmed, provide common pasturage for all hamlets on the hill. Not only sheep and goats, but even cows are quite used to climbing over fairly steep bushy hillsides to feed. Carrying water is a woman's job; but a hamlet may be located several hours climb from the nearest all-year water supply. Wind protection, i.e. location of the hamlet in a spot below the top of the hill, for fear of

361 tornadoes in the rainy season, is another ecological consideration.

591 [621] The hamlet is always a kinship unit, usually patrilocal and patrilineal. When a young man marries, his father will give him a cow or two, as he will to his daughter. But only the son will receive the use of part of his father's rented (or owned) fields to support his new family. Thus he will usually build his hut near his father's, father's brother's, and paternal grandfather's. In exceptional cases, when no land is available at his father's, the bridegroom may agree to establish himself at his wife's hamlet, but this is rare since the feeling is that he will always remain a subjugated, barely tolerated, henpecked and ill-treated figure. A proud Amhara male, even a "gabbar" (peasant ex-serf), would not agree to such a condition and insists on patriarchal status at least within his own biological family of creation. He would much rather continue to obey his father than his new father-in-law. [608] Consanguinal kinship feelings are so strong that it is a common assumption that no in-law could really mean well and be unselfishly well-disposed to the newcomer. Only when warfare has killed off the adult males in a hamlet, male inlaws move in.

592 Each hut is inhabited by a biological family, usually father and mother, about three children who have survived infant mortality, and perhaps an aged parent or old, widowed kinswoman of the husband's.

602 Patrilineal kinship relations are often related also to administrative considerations. On church-owned land, the peasants who live on the hillside below the church, who

602 farm the land and use church pasturage in the valley, are often the sons of the brothers of the priest, if not his own sons--an Amhara form of nepotism.

417 231 Each hamlet is usually fenced in ("jägol"-thorny fence) against night-roving hyenas, and may contain, besides living huts and store huts, a cattle corral ("magwa") though at least the calves and the family mule are taken into the living hut at night. The kitchen garden may also have an enclosure of cut thornbushes, protection against ravages by domestic cattle; and ther usually is at least one fierce reddish-brown dog (with white underside). Solid fences of stakes fixed straight in the ground ("gäräggärä") are usually used only around churches.

632 622 While the head of each hamlet is the head of the residential, extended family, the administrative head of a series of hamlets is appointed by the governor of the province (formerly by the feudal lord). This appointed headman, chega shum (lit. "appointed one over the soil") may administer as few as two hamlets, or as many as fifty, with the mode about 8 to 10. In sparsely populated, less fertile or very mountainous territory his domain may be greater, but in most cases his area is within sight so that he can even maintain contact during the rainy season. His area is properly called "mändär" and constitutes the nearest approach to the village concept. If his territory is on church land, it is referred to as "And debber agär" (lit. land in support of a certain holy place) since very often this land has been donated for that purpose in the last will of a pious elderly landowner, and is something like parish

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622 land. When a person is asked where he is from, he will often give the local name for his "and debber agar" of origin.

634 The cheqa shum, village headmen, are supervised by the district chief, "worada shum", who is also appointed by the
625 governor. The district chief in turn appoints his own police, called "näch lëbash" (lit. "thiefcathers in white"), who wear no special uniforms, merely the usual white togas, and carry rifles, in the use of which they are expert. They are used not only against petty thieves but against more dangerous bandits also. Their efficiency is commonly regarded as far superior to that of the uniformed urban police. Usually there is one näch lëbash per half-district ("meketl worada") or two per district, unless an increase in banditry ("shifta") requires more.

651 Taxes, paid often in produce but increasingly in cash, are collected from each cheqa shum, but not by the district chief himself. For this task the governor has appointed a lieutenant, "mislanë", per district ("worada"), who ranks equal with the worada shum and expects aid from the latter. Usually the mislanë is a stranger to the district and himself a sort of glorified retainer and account-keeper from the court of the governor of the sub-province ("awraja") who has appointed him; while the district chief is a local man who may conspire with his village headmen to keep local prosperity from the knowledge of the governor's central office. The latter therefore has to rely on the cleverness of his lieutenants, the "mislanë".

622
651 The administrative pyramid rests squarely on the shoulders of the cheqa shum. He collects local dues for

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622 both the central government and the local church. Where
651 the land has not been officially measured, which is the usual case in old Amhara territory, the mislane must rely on him for imformation necessary to the assessment of taxes. The cheqa shum is expected also to supervise customs evasion
622 when caravans or smugglers move through his territory. He
692 mediates between landlord and tenant in their endless little disagreement. In fact, his activities resemble those of an Elizabethan "Justice of the Peace".

He decides local disputes, in civil cases; officiates at the most common type of marriage, the "semanya" (an agreement between two kinship groups); he reads out government proclamations and decrees of the emperor at the nearest rural market place, including the call to arms in case of war. He can also indict a criminal and bring him before the "danya" the judge of the nearest market town, or to the "judges on circuit" accompanying the governor on his annual inspec-
622 tion tour during the dry season. Usually the cheqa shum is a local landlord himself, unless he has been given the post as a special favor for services rendered to the governor.

[701] Until the diminution of feudal privileges during the past decade, the cheqa shum was also responsible for providing the military-feudal chiefs and their troops with provisions when they were on march, making it unnecessary for
[485] them to depend on supply lines. Now that army troops receive regular salaries, he still has to play host to travelling officials for their personal needs, since there are no rural hotels. They do not pay him except by promises of future favors.

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622 This chenge has also lightened the burden on the "gab-
485 bar", the tenant sharecropper. In the past it was the gab-bar who had to supply the "feast" (called "gebber", with ironic truthfulness regarding the provider) for feudal troops on march, in addition to all his other burdens. The cheqa shum was responsible for its collection, for only he knew how much produce, goats, sheep, honey, etc., the peasant had left after the heavy sharecropping rent to the landlord and the "tithe" ("asrat") which is still payable to the central government (formerly to the district feudal lord).

651 There is now a new tax, the "education tax" payable even in rural areas where no government schools exist as yet, and payable in cash only, not in produce as in case of "asrat". This tax, too, is collected by the cheqa shum and delivered to the mislanē who must now issue a receipt and forward the money to the central treasury.

563 Ethnic considerations in the location of a hamlet in
361 Amhara territory apply to hamlets of scattered Falashas, ironsmiths who observe Mosaic Judaism, and hamlets of the Fagi, Cushitic-speaking tanners who were "Pagan" but have recently accepted the Coptic faith and the Amharic language. Since their services are required, they are often permitted to rent land on a hill, the other side of which may contain a Coptic Amhara hamlet. Relations between these hamlets, beginning on strictly economic terms, often become as friendly as the difference between religions, low status of skilled smiths and tanners, and old supernatural
[622] suspicions permit. In case of such residence, one cheqa shum may have an ethnic variety of hamlets under his domain, and may know far more about their "strange" inhabitants and their customs than the average Amhara.

tants and their customs than the average Amhara.

571 Thus, the officials with whom the average Amhara has
624 to deal are the headman (cheqa shum), the district tax-col-
566 lector, the thiefcatcher-in white, and the judge of the nearest market town; also, the priest and/or new, young teacher of written Amharic and arithmetic for the first and second grade. Very often, the governor, who is usually a former feudal lord himself, may grant the posts of district chief (worāda shum) and lieutenant (mislanē) to the lower nobility, or their sons; while they in turn draw on their loyal retainers for the more local jobs of headman and thiefcatcher-in-white. In this manner the former feudal structure of human relationships is retained in the old Amhara provinces, despite the official breakup of the system at the top levels. The former feudal chief may even still be addressed by his old title, which has been officially transformed from a military to a civilian significance, but he is still the "telleq sāw" ("great man" and conservative pacesetter.

443 This pattern of residential kin-hamlets and feudal
369 relationships changes only in the urban centers which grow out of permanent market spots. The market area is usually located on a little hill, called "arada". Soon a church is built there, and a public area below the hill is cleared of bush to serve as a camping place for caravans, and as a race course for the young Amharas' horse games on Christmas, Epiphany and other feast days. On the hill, the district chief or governor builds his "palace", with a large courtyard for his retainers and office-seekers. The local judges gradually graduate from their table-beneath-the-cy-

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443 369 press to more permanent quarters. Arabs set up more permanent stalls at the market. Girls "between marriages" set up their "hotel services" in makeshift shacks, featuring an imported double bed, and foods like the housewife makes at home, including daily fresh beer. A bizarre variety of trade goods pours in, of foreign or domestic origin. Finally, the government sets up an elementary school-- the most recent development, usually post-1942.

B. Shelter: The Amhara Hut.

342 The Amhara circular hut of wattle and daub, with its overhanging roof to carry off the rains, is called "tuqul" (now more often "sar Byet", i.e. thatched house; in some districts, "gojo"). It does not differ basically from the typical habitation of the Cushitic-speaking Galla, of central Ethiopia. But further south several distinctly different types are encountered, following ethno-linguistic and tribal lines.

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The "tuqul" may contain one room or two, through an interior separation or special elevation. It usually houses both the biological family of procreation and their more important livestock which are brought in at night for fear of hyenas. Tuquls in more elaborate hamlets include special storage tuquls, a kitchen tuqul, and even a guest tuqul which may double as extra storage space for the largest beer jars. During the rainy season, when temperatures, especially at night, drop considerably, the family huddles closely around the central fireplace inside the tuqul, and in that 3-month season the tuqul can be considered overcrow-

342 ded and especially unsanitary. But during most of the year nearly all activities during the 12 to 13 hours of daylight are carried on outside. After each rainy season the roof and walls are inspected for damage from heavy rain, hail and tornadoes, and, with repairs, a good tuqul can last twenty years.

The hut-building season begins usually a few months after the rainy season is over, in the month of Hedar, after the major harvest of cereals has been gathered and threshed. A tuqul is usually built in stages, interrupted by other chores. Since there is no danger of rain, the beams, saplings, withes, thatch grass can be selected from forest and bush at leisure, and left on the spot selected. But when a marriage approaches, especially during the main "mar-
[476] riage season", the entire process can be speeded up to little over a week; and if there are not enough hands in one hamlet, other kinsmen and friends can be invited to the hut-building-party, the host supplying daily spiced meat stew, barley beer, etc., thus attracting as many as twenty men.

[361] The first step is to select a location that will blend into the landscape and thus be best protected from wind, driving rain, tornado twisters. Cypresses, which always surround a church on the hilltop, are utilized as partial windbreaks for tuquls of a hamlet just below.

The circular ground floor for the hut, usually about 20 feet in, is measured off by means of a central stick and a rope. The stick indicates where the central, roof-supporting post will be, and the circle indicates the walls. Both the selection of location and the measuring of the ground is done by a semi-specialist, an Amhara who acts

342 as "consultant" and is therefore treated with honor, which would not be the case if he were a fully specialized craftsman. He may be the local saddlemaker who furnishes the wooden framework but will not touch any leatherwork; very likely he is the local weather-expert; he may be the one who understands the qualities of certain woods at a glance. He is rewarded with gifts of beer, chickens, etc.

Once he has marked out the ground plan, the team uses hoes to dig a circular ditch on the circle, about a foot deep, as foundation for the walls. Strong saplings of hard woods are set upright in the trench to form the backbone of the wall, measuring, above ground, to a height of at least 74 inches. The top of the roof will measure another 70" from the top of the wall (measured from the center pole). A gap is left for the doorway. The saplings forming the wall are set so close that they touch each other, but, since there is no "carpentry", no fine trimming or straightening, the saplings remain in the shape in which they grew.

When all the poles of the wall are in place, thinner but strong and elastic withes resembling willow branches are intertwined through the wall saplings, until they form hoops running horizontally through the entire wall. They are tied in place, usually leaving a thumbwidth of space between each hoop. Now mud mixed with straw is plastered thickly to the walls, both inside and out, and pressed into the framework, in a process called "yacheqa margacha". In case of an especially well-built hut three plaster coats of clay are later added to the outside ("märräga, lässänä, lägällägä"), and each is permitted to dry almost to the hard-

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342 ness of cement. At this point there is usually a pause and a feast.

The next job is the preparation of a framework for the roof. First the central pole is set in place, preferable a straight, heavy pole with a natural fork at the top. In this fork is placed the strong horizontal beam, "walta" (or "gedgeda") which forms a transversal across the entire diameter of the hut, its ends resting directly on the wall which is reinforced on these two spots by special poles. This horizontal beam later becomes the dividing line for interior partitions, and the base for horizontal storage facilities for gesho (hops), maize, and pre-baked ingredients of barley beer which must be on hand every day.

The men go to the forest or bush to select and cut slender but strong rafters, elastic but strong hoops for the roof, etc. Since churches have the best roofs, a däbtära (scribe-chorister attached to the church) is often invited to supervise the roof-building and thatching. A church roof or that of a well-to-do farmer is thatched with a strong, brownish reed-grass called "kedän" (lit. covenant); another good sort is "sänbälät".

A kind of cupola ("gulelat") is made of wooden rafters (mägär) long enough to sit on the walls and even project, while converging to a point on top. During the preparation, the cupola is placed upside down on the ground, and the rafters are tentatively tied in place. The cupola is now set on the "walta" beam, and centered on top of the center pole of the hut. Many more rafters are tied onto the cupola. Paired hoops of vine-like branches of strength and elasti-

342city ("chemchem") are woven into and across the rafters or tied to them, all the way up to the top of the roof; Sometimes, instead of in parallel rings, the hoops are wound to the top in spiral, seashell-type windings (bat). Near that lower border, where the rafters are farther apart, additional shorter sticks ("mäqa" bamboo) are shoved in between, so that no large gaps are left in the roof frame. Everything is tied in place, and a strong roof results.

Thatching is done by the master of the new tuqul, with the aid of men who are considered good at this. They work up from the edge of the roof to the top, then a second layer is laid and tied to the first, then a third to the second. At the top the thatch is tied to the top of the center pole, or to a stick firmly planted into the top of the hut's center pole. This is reinforced from the inside. The outside peak of the thatched roof forms a tuft called "qunçho" (lit. crest of hair), or "sebsab". Near trade routes, imported heavy glass bulbs or oriental perfume bottles are often fitted upside down on this tuft, for functional reasons they hold better against rain and as ornament. Falasha potterymakers create a small tower-like outer dome ("gullelat") over the tuft. A well-made roof may last 10 to 30 years, with repairs.

[354] There is no opening for a chimney. The smoke from the daily cooking fire escapes through the door, and in time through cracks in the walls, blackening the inner rafters with soot. Three stones are placed near the center of the hut, to serve as the fireplace.

A door is now made of wooden planks for a good hut or a church, or of bamboo sticks "mäqa" for an ordinary

342 hut. The door is equipped with projecting pivots on top and bottom, the ends turning in two troughs carved into the door-frame.

The overhanging roof protects most of the wall from being damaged by driving rain, and the darkness inside is also a protection against the sun-loving flies. The average hut needs re-thatching every 5 to 8 years, and an additional coating of clay plaster mixed with straw every 2 to 3 years. Old huts, abandoned due to fire, war, death [777] by sickness, etc., are considered unlucky and are not rebuilt. Sometimes their remaining walls are used as windbreaks for garden crops.

Interior architecture consists of the following:

(1) a high-fencelike partition of bamboo ("mäqa") to give privacy to the master and his wife, usually center-right from the door, with a special high elevation on which the bed of the couple is set; another high partition, usually to the left of the door or toward the rear, for nighttime shelter for calves, goats or the family mule. This fencelike, permanent partition is called "get" or "gedgedda";

352 (2) a solid clay bench which runs along half the interior of the walls, on one or both sides of the door, about 16 inches high, called "mädäb", usually covered with sheepskins. On this clay bench men sit during the day with visitor, while sipping barley beer, and at night the children sleep on them, covering themselves with the sheepskins;

(3) on top of a center-rear elevation of rock and clay, up to 42" high, rests the "alga", the master's bed, 15"-30" high. It consists of a wooden frame on four wooden

352 legs; thongs of sundried oxhide interlace the wooden frame diagonally giving the bed a springy quality. In case of great poverty, wooden slats are used instead of oxhide, and a cowskin is placed on top. The leather alga seems to resemble the leather thong bed of ancient Greece.

354 (4) The fireplace set up front of center, 5 of 3 cornerstones ("medeja", or, "gulcha"), so that the broad baking-pan and clay cooking pots are well supported.

352 (5) From the center pole to the rear are various clay bins
[251] ("riq", made of a frame of willow branches, cowdung and mud)
[415] holding threshed grain. Behind the fireplace is the "gu-
rej", the storage space for plow, axe, adze, beer and water
[482] pots, skin sacks for transporting grain to market; sometimes a litter ("qarēza") used for transporting rocks, beams, sick or dead persons, the wounded in war, and formerly an indispensable equipment for corvée. Also behind the cen-
[251] ter pole is the indoor grain bin made of concentric rings of clay and fine straw, dried outside, and inside assembled to a height of 60".

(6) In front of the center pole stands the portable "mäs-sob", the table woven tightly of reeds in the shape of a round breadbasket, on which the daily bread, "enjara" is served. A small massob may have a diameter at top of 18" and may be 20" high. The height would come from a triangular leg of 7", on which an inverted, triangular leg faces upward 10" in the manner of an hourglass; and another 3" from the height of the top tablet. The hollow leg tapers to a waist, then widens again toward the top. It has a depression in the center, so that the spiced meat stew can

[352] accumulate there when poured over the limp sheets of bread.

251 (7) Food staples must be stored out of reach of domestic animals, on horizontal slats fastened between the horizontal beam and walls. On these slats lie flat cakes of "abshelo" (pre-fermented and baked hops), bunches of sorghum, husks of maize, etc.

352 To provide additional privacy, togas can be hung across. This was done in the past particularly at dinner [754] time, to protect the eaters from the "evil eye" in the [609] presence of non-kinsmen, and is still done in some remote areas, unless the peasant prefers to postpone his meal until the stranger has gone away, so as not to offend him.

342 The tuqul is regarded as a good, sound habitation by the Amhara. It is compared to the round tent of the king and duke ("ras") which not so long ago was the center of activities (if not the actual capital) of the province and [554] country. On the other hand, reactangular or square huts, "säqäla", are regarded as carrying low prestige, little more than temporary lean-to's of hunters. The proverb indicates [539] this low regard of a säqäla:

"Of children, the worst is the bastard;
of foods, the hardest is beans;
of clothing, the poorest is nätäla (half-toga);
of housing, the poorest is säqäla."

Response: "(but) from enemy, the bastard son will defend you;
toward better days the bean will let you survive;
in (warm) daytime, the nätäla will clothe you;
till a better is built, the säqäla will shelter you".

There are special tuquls of varying degrees of sturdiness:

342 sega byet - where meat is stored after sundrying in strips;

wät byet - the kitchen hut;

gemja byet - the "treasury" house, general storehouse of tools and weapons, drums, decorations.

tej byet - honeymead brewery; talla byet - beer brewery, worked by women.

engeda byet- guest hut;

adarash - reception hut, larger, less solid, used for banqueting;

mänyeta byet - (lit. bedroom house), the master's bedroom hut;

"mad byet" - dining hut for daily dining.

565 The noble also has carpets ("sägaja") to sit on or,
352 in feudal tents, to use as tapestry. These are carried from long distances, where specialists live, or are imported. He also has hardwood stools ("dekkwa") to sit on, cut out of solid tree trunks. In a wooden storage box he has one or several burnos, and one or several "kaba" (a dark, woolen mantle). Guests receive their coffee in small imported glazed china cups instead of clay ones, and the reed table is a "massob wor", with dyed braids of imported dyes, in geometric designs.

824 C. What Nature Provides: Lumbering, Hunting, Fishing,
461 Collecting

Much of what little ingenuity goes into Amhara material culture is applied to the direct exploitation of natural resources. He would rather spend days and weeks

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824 searching for suitably shaped hard or soft saplings and
461 other woods and certain herbs, than perform carpentry or much transplanting. Apart from saddle-making, the alga-bed, and simple musical instruments, one can hardly speak of any carpentry.

824 In preparation for housebuilding and other activities
313 connected with lumbering, the timber provided by nature is divided, in the Amhara view, into two major categories: Male, i.e. hard wood or strong wood; Female or soft, less consistent, or easily pliable woods. Heaviness or lightness are not major categories (as in Western countries).

Male woods ("wandē enchāt") and their uses include the following:

Wild Olive Tree ("wāyra") (olea chrysophylla), one of the hardest; often heavy and massive, found on the edge of forests, brown-black in color, quite oily. Used for construction on plateau, e.g. as saplings for walls, rafters, etc. The small twigs
[515] are in common use as "toothbrushes". They are chewed and used to clean teeth and polish gums, as a leisure-time activity after meals.

"Wanza" (Cordia abyssinica), a light but hard wood which is found very commonly and is therefore popular; used to make the yokes of oxen, saddles, low, round chairs and other equipment that takes much punishment in use, such as riflestocks when the original has broken.

"Wulkeffa" (Dombeya Bruceana), very hard, used for clubs, e.g. as pestle in the women's crushing of barley.

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"Balla", after weeks of searching, a strong tree trunk is selected, after weeks of searching, to serve as center port for the new tuqul.

"Tequr enchät" (Pygeum Africanum), actually light red (lit. black wood), a porous hardwood, commonly available, which seasons well.

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Rosewood, "Kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica) the search for which is a major occupation and livelihood of poor widows, since the bark and twigs are consumed against tapeworm. It is a heavy wood which can take a fine polish, thus more commonly used in noble homes. It is commonly available, at edge of "dega" upland forest.

"qarqaha", a bamboo of river valleys, can grow up to 5" in diameter, commonly used as major posts in tents of feudal lords during their military campaigns.

"yäbäräha shemäl" (bambusa abyssinica), lit. "bamboo of the jungle", a strong bamboo from the qolla lowland, traded from there in former times to serve as a staff for the spear; now used by shepherds as staff, and to fend off dogs, also for some simple furniture.

Male wood is also called "täbot enchät" because hard-
[778] wood is used to make the tabot, the sacred tablet inscribed with the name of a church, placed in the inner sanctum, symbolizing the Ark of Moses in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem.

824 313 Female woods ("enest enchat") are preferred and much more used than hardwoods, if the purposes permit, because they are more easily worked:

"Ted" (Juniperus Procera), or (Juniperus Phoenicoea) pencil cedar, is popular as a tall conifer, easy to split, moisture-resistent in rainy season, termite-resistent. It is one of the most important woods, and the only one of the traditional woods that is actually planted and protected by cut thornbushes against goats (which like to feed on the nursling). The grown tree resembles the cypress, and is the landmark of churches, churchyards and church schools. Thus the tree assumes a kind of sacredness, perhaps since pre-Christian times. In the tuqul it is often used as the horizontal, transversal beam. [778]

"Zigba" (Podocarpus elongata, or, Podocarpus gracilor) is a tall conifer of similar properties, with stringy, tough wood, used to make the alga bedsteads and other furniture.

"Ketketta" (Dodonea viscosa) is used for small carpentry, walking sticks; due to its slightly resinous but long-lasting qualities for torch parade at Masqal or wedding festivities. The leaves have household used. [313]

"Qwara" (Erytrina tomentosa), used for slats in simple carpentry.

824 313 417 "Kenchub" bush, which resembles the euphorbia but grows at higher altitudes and is tougher, is cut and

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placed on the outside of garden or hamlet-fences, to discourage hyenas, to keep livestock inside -- a natural barbed wire.

Eucalyptus tree ("bahēr zaf") has become thoroughly rooted in Ethiopia. It is used in construction, especially of the more urban dwellings, as urban fuel, and its blue smoke and aroma is an early morning and evening feature of every town and market-town, where it is a major trade item. During the rainy season it grows so fast that a mature tree can be "harvested" 5 years after the nursling stage. Since it sells for $3-5 Ethiopian, (US $1-2) it is the most planted tree in Ethiopia today. The peasant also likes to use the odoriferous branches and leaves to cover the "dass" the festivity-shelter on marriages, etc., and the leafy branch as chera, flyswitch. Entire hillsides may be seen planted with this tree.

Female woods are also used for other indispensable products:

[386] Ink - is made from the fruit of the "tämbälal" (Jasminum floribundum) tree, and its timer is used
[534] for the stock of the single-string violin, the masenqo. (But imported blue ink called "nil" is preferred by däbtära scribes.)

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Fibre - for basketry, roof-hoops, etc. is obtained from the "wärqē" (musa ensete) (also called "enset") at lower altitudes, used especially for cords. Rope "gämäd" is made from the bark cut

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[283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called
[324] "aräg", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and
[293] grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

[372] Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

[386] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

[222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by <u>collecting</u>, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Sircunia Abyssinica).

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281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[251] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

[263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshäm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

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wild blueberry - "agam", very common; with thorny twigs, resembling the sloe tree; found not far from rivers, on the woyna dega.

wild fig tree - "shola", or "warka", giant tree (ficus sycomorus) with small but very sweet fruit.

"qamma" - fruit resembling raisin, turns brown when ripe, sour, consumed as mild laxative.

mushroom - "enguday", or "anguday", with white bottom. Rarely eaten.

"awut" - common, reddish or white fruit of a nettle bush, of very low prestige and consumed only in time of famine; gathered in early dry season (Läskäräm to Ter).

Only lemons are consumed publicly without shame. They are purchased on the market. Bananas from the lowlands are also available to urban people, or "great men" who can afford them. Observers have suggested that the common nose-bleeding of Amhara may result from a Vitamin C deficiency, due to little fruit consumption.

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Collecting also provides such necessities as wild cotton in more remote areas (e.g. the Magoza district of Wolqait). Every housewife uses leaves of the "lola" bush in which to bake the festive bread "dabbo".

Wild honey is obtained from the wild bee called "tazzema" (Apis africans miaia), and used against colds as well as "heart ailments". More commonly, honey for making the alcoholic drink "tej", is obtained from a small, tiny-stinged bee (Apis dorsata), but since many of the bees are killed when they are smoked out, this process, too, is one of collecting rather than bee culture.

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245 Planting of fruit is done largely in the qolla, outside Amhara areas: bananas, the large citrus("trengo"), mango, guava ("zäytun"), custard apple ("gishta") shaped like an artichoke. Cactus fruit grow wild up to the woyna dega.

226 [554] Fishing, interestingly enough, is not despised, because it is not considered a full-time occupation. It is limited largely to the 3-month rainy season, when rivers are full and fish is plentiful. The fisherman has another source of livelihood the rest of the year, and fishes to sell at the next market or merely to increase the family food supply.

Fishing is also much easier in the rainy season because the water is muddy and the fish cannot see the fisherman--who is clearly visible in the calm, clear waterholes during the dry season. A day's catch of 30 to 50 fish in the rainy season is not rare; in the dry season the fisherman may well come home empty handed. Therefore, in the dry season the occasional fisherman who does try, often uses fish intoxicants called "yasa maskäriya", especially the dried and ground "berberra" seed (Berebera ferruginea). Fishnets, "mäyaza", are used primarily. There is no concept of fishing for sport.

224 In hunting, when it is not done for major livelihood, the c ncept of sport does exist in Amhara tradition. The pride of the hunter who has overcome a major, dangerous game, has already been mentioned. The young sons of nobles were expected to prove their mettle against this big game, if no war-raid was currently available. Before

224 Before
535 going on an elephant hunt, for example, he performed the "boasting dance", "fukkara", largely with his shoulders and upper arms, predicting his feats; and his retainers honored him by declaring their confidence in his prowess, jumping up and down in the "hota" dance, chanting repeatedly:

[539] "Elephant-killer, (to) your home-
elephant-killer, take him home".
(Hunter:) Elephant-killer (I am), to home (I'll take him)."
(Retainers:)" When it (the elephant) will be moving,
he will kill it!"

224 The elephant-killer, considered braver than the lion-
554 killer, was called "addo" and given a special decoration to wear on forehead and upper arm by the king or feudal lord. A warrior who had killed a human enemy was called "geday" (lit. killer) and held prestige equal to the elephant-killer. Now that rifles are used in place of spears, such heroes have become more common and decorations among the Amhara have fallen into disuse.

224 Besides the big-game, edible jungle animals mentioned
825 before under "fauna", there are numerous wild game, mainly gazelles and partridges, hunted near human habitations to increase the food supply and for occasional sport:

Ethiopian duiker - "midaqwa", very common near habitations on the woyna dega, an antelope the size of a small goat, often approaching ham-
[782] lets at dusk. It is considered the "cattle" of the zar spirits, and sacrifice to them is thus called "midaqwa".

Bushbuck - "demula", similar but medium-sized ante-

224
825 lope, reddish, more shy.

Ethiopian klipspringer - "sässo", a little mountain antelope resembling the European chamois, with soft, smooth skin. The Amhara is amused by the curious habit of this sociable animal of mixing with herds of tame goats and grazing in their midst, when goats are taken to upper hillsides for pasturage in the rainy season.

[233]

Waterbuck - "defassa", large antelope resembling European red deer in build. Brown color; hers of 5 to 10 usually contain only one old bull. Common near Lake Tana.

Reedbuck - "behor", golden-colored antelope, in bush near water. They like to inhabit a specific small territory, in herds of 5 to 10.

Ethiopian ibex - "walya", very wild, red-speckled, on the dega steep mountains of Senyen subprovince. Not common elsewhere.

825 Francolins - "qoq" is the generic name for this family of common wild fowl of the woyna
223 dega; resemble the partridge. Boys are adept at hunting them with slingshot and pebble and run after them until both are exhausted.

[411
867]

Guinea fowl - "zegra" or "jegra", black, lean, fast runner, found near water.

Partridge - "sərän", common on woyna dega. Wild

825 goose "yebra" (anas aegyptiaca).

223 Quail - "derchet" Perhaps the most common wild fowl very near habitations, but rarely hunted because very small. It is considered a nuisance and a danger because of its habit of hiding in flocks in the tall grass and starting up suddenly, scaring horses and even mules, which is dangerous especially on steep hills. [59]

411 Spears, slingshot, and now rifles are used in part-
184 time or sport hunting. Traps ("atmad") and snares are used only by occupational hunting populations living in jungles such as Wolqait and whose pattern of living differs from that of typical Amhara.

222 A noteworthy Amhara exploitative activity is the col-
[412] lecting of pumice rock in riverbeds during the dry season, and thus called "yabaher dengay" (river rock). It is used
135 in grinding and husking. Gold comes mostly from south of old-Amhara territory, where it is found in sand gravels and has been sold in nuggets since ancient times.

241 D. Food Production and Consumption

a.) Agricultural production

In agriculture in general, there are two major variables: environment, and degree of sophistication - i.e. power and its application.

The ecology of Ethiopia's highland plateau, where

59. The English equivalent terms have been taken from Van Rosen, Björn: Game Animals of Ethiopia. 1953.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

244 topography provides for a variety of climate at a minimum of distance, is very favorable to diversified agriculture. But, as indicated before, the uses of power have not developed in millenia. Much land is permitted to lie fallow, and slash-and-burn methods are used when old soil becomes exhausted and new lands are needed. Therefore, apart from market villages, no settlements remain on the same spot for as much as a century, usually. The fields are not fertilized; manure from cattle is used as fuel. However, irrigation, though not intensive; terrace farming since ancient times; and the use of a wooden scratch plow with iron tip, give the Amhara agricultural picture an old-Middle Eastern character. Also Middle Eastern is the fact that among the Amhara and other north Abyssinians cereals are the most important field crops.

Ninety-five percent of the population of Ethiopia depends on farming and stock raising.[60] European estimates [134] indicate that half the land territory of Ethiopia is arable. Despite much erosion, the depth of the subsoil is regarded as unusually deep. But much good land is left fallow, be- [311] cause there is enough land for the low density of the population; and because life is fairly comfortable at the old standards of living, especially now that ravaging armies of hungry soldiers seem a thing of the past. Thus, there is little urge for increased production, except by proclamation from the central authority from Addis Ababa which has tried to stimulate it with only modest success. The reason for this lack of success is that the farmer argues, with

60. Underhill, C.T.: Industry in Ethiopia,1950, p. 21.

271 considerable justification, that even if he raised larger and more diversified crops, they would not find a ready sale (due to undeveloped lines of transport to world markets). Thus the old pattern of not raising more crops than one's family can consume in one year, and for taxes and tribute, continues, especially among the Amhara; consequently fields do not become exhausted as quickly as they would in intensive agriculture.

[427] Another factor was (and is to some extent) the insecurity of tenure. The sharecropping "gabbar" was little more than a serf, who did not know from year to year what treatment he would receive from the next (often absentee) feudal landlord to whom his land might be assigned the next year. This was not conducive to the growth of much sentimental attachment to any particular plot of soil.

[311] Among the Amhara, only about 20% of the potentially fertile area available in a neighborhood ("And debber agär") is usually under cultivation in any one year. On exposed parts of the plateau the crops are usually barley, broad beans, some bearded wheat, and linseed. In more sheltered spots, lentils, chick peas, and a legume called "gwayo" used as cattle fodder (but feared by Amhara because walking in it or lying in it is supposed to cause softening of the human bones). Barley is planted almost the whole year round, starting early with the "light rains", and irrigated in the dry season. In valleys of the plateau, where fields are warmer and more protected, as well as better watered, the major crop of tïff, a grass-like

241 cereal, as well as other crops already mentioned are grown. The lowest and warmest spots of the plateau are usually used for various types of millet-sorghum, gesho (hops). Coffee grows wild or is purchased on the market, as are bananas from the lowland. After a few years of cultivation, a field may be left fallow for five or more years.

[171] The Amhara's irrigation and terrace farming resemble
[462] those of Yemen, not of Africa. Farming is man's work, not
[231] woman's. The one-handed plow is drawn by a yoke of two oxen, encouraged by a long fibre whip. The Amhara rerely uses other animals for drawing the plow.

Fallow land or new bush is broken during the dry season. A heavier-than-usual iron plow point is purchased from the Falasha ironsmiths, affixed to the scratch plow, and the area, after preliminary burning, is scratched many times at right angles. The stubble and weeds are then piled and burned. But for the actual plowing and seeding, the beginning of the rains is awaited.

312 Irrigation canals are completely washed out in the rainy season, and must be rebuilt in each dry season. Terracing is less common than irrigation, but on occasion mountain farmers of long residence do build low walls of rock and mud on hillsides to prevent severe washouts and landslides during the rainy season.

243 Tyēff (Eragrostic abyssinica; Poa abyssinica) deserves the latter Latin name, for it is the mainstay staple of Abyssinia, except in the south. It is an annual indigenous grass with seeds of pinhead size, cultivated

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

243 as a cereal grain in Abyssinia since ancient times. It is known in the USA as "teff lovegrass" and is sometimes grown for hay or pasture. In Abyssinia it is the most important cereal.

Tyēff seeding takes place, by broadcasting, at the beginning of the rainy season in June; it is ready for harvest in October-November. Sheep are driven over after the seeding to cover the seeds and thus insure maximum germination. Harvesting is done by hand cutting. The grain is made into sheaves about 6 inches thick. Sickles [412] made by the Falasha ironsmiths are simple affairs, a quarter-circle of toothed iron blade fitted into a wooden handle. Tyēff flour is made by the housewives, who grind it on a stone mill (wofcho) by hand on the mano-matate principle.

There are tow major kinds of sorghums (durra) grown as staple cereals, "mashella" and "zengada"; a third, "dagussa" is used more for making beer and in poor times. Many of these are sown when the early light rains come in March-April. The stalks of mashella are used to build simple temporary huts; other stalks become fodder. As [857] soon as the heavy rains are over, boys with slingshots and whips are stationed in the fields ~~and on~~ lookout posts atop the "umbrella tree" to fight off the birds who are very fond of sorghum, especially the "mashella".

Mashella (Andropogon sorghum) is of yellowish-white color, and the most desired of this family. The seed is much bigger than tyēff. It is often ground and mixed with it for injāra-baking. Known in other parts of Africa as

243 "Kaffir corn", in Abyssinia it is the second most important cereal. Interestingly enough, the Amhara has a form of crop insurance, by sowing mashella with "bahēr mashella" (lit. the sorghum from overseas), possibly imported by the Portuguese. In Shoa province, it is called "boqolo". A whitish type of mashella called "tenqesh" is liked for its stalk, which is eaten like sugar can, offerred to a special friend or as an honor.

Zengada (also called "bulē mashella") is a reddish, darker variety of mashella, grown as crop insurance for birds do not like it as well. (Zengada is Eleusina multiforma).

Dagussa(Eleusine coracana or Eleusine tocusso) is a very dark millet, grown as an emergency crop and used as an ingredient in beer. Poor people mix it with tyeff for injara.

Maize (Zea mays), the "bahēr mashella" already mentioned, is often grown also in the same field as cotton (gossypium) on lower elevations of the plateau to "keep the cotton warm and protected from wind", according to the Amhara. Maize kernels, since they are biggest, are boiled with peas to make a filling meal in the lenten season.

Wheat (Triticum spp) called "sendē" is considered a luxury grain (e.g. to make wafers for the church eucharist). It is grown on higher altitudes, in smaller quantities than the other cereals mentioned, and is seeded and harvested somewhat late. A special dark rich soil called "walka" is considered necessary; also plowing 4-5 times.

Barley (Hordeum spp), called "gebs", one of the major

243 crops, and the only one grown all year, thus the most often irrigated. It grows well even on semi-eroded soil, unlike wheat. It is consumed in emergencies, and more usually used in making beer, despite its comparatively poor malting [231] qualities. It is provided as fodder for the mule, the most important animal for human transportation, to give it "strength". Barley becomes more important for human consumption when the rainy season has been shorter than usual. In that case, the grain is soaked in water and then crushed with wooden mortar and pestle to remove the husks without reducing the grain to flour. After drying in the sun, the broken grain called "gebs qolo" is roasted and eaten Some is always in the hut, in case guests should come. The same crushing procedure is followed for preparing malt for barley beer. Late, irrigated barley called "aja", is considered tough but "giving strength", though dishonorable for a guest, and also causing complaint from women that it is "hard to pound" and "good only for mules".

Oats and rice as special crops are almost unknown to the Amhara. Oats ("gēnçha", "arämamo", "qwa"), considered wild, are gathered with barley and used in beer.

In view of the importance of cereal crops, it is not surprising that the farmer refers to them collectively as "teru", which means "good", while garden crops ("debäla") which enjoy a lesser appreciation, are not included in this concept.

[427 Rent, tribute and taxes were paid per "madiga", the 804] clay water pot used to measure it. Although this procedure is no longer followed, rent is still quoted in terms of "madiga".

243 of "madiga".

[311] The term "ṭyēff" also has a projection. Good, fertile, fat land is still classified as "lämm tyēff", in distinction to "ṭyēff" land, meaning average usable land for cereals.

Mashella is used as a concept in the following proverb:

[539] "(Both) the seed of mashella
and the stalk, are good"

This is to say that if the parent had good qualities, the son will be a "chip off the old block."

Numerous distinctions are made in the types and qualities of each of the cereals. Among ṭyēff the farmer distinguishes "bunnen" which grows and matures rapidly even in Mäskäräm immediately on the end of the rainy season. In barley, the "aja" is disliked because of its coarseness, but its green fields, irrigated, stand out among the sun-yellowed stubble in the dry season and provide a pleasant sight, as well as year-round crops. "Ferey gebs" is a fine choice barley, and "sänäf qolo" (a long-eared variety) is roasted as a daily condiment.

248 Cotton, called "ṭeṭ", is grown in lowland areas. To separate the husks, a roller of scrap iron is preferred; it is worked on a rock. When rain has occurred during the maturing of cotton, its quality is lowered. The typical Amhara prefers to buy his raw cotton on the market and have his wife or female servant clean, card and spin it. Then he calls in the weaver or takes the spun cotton to him, to make a toga.

000 make a toga.

221 241 Since agriculture is a major concern, much of the annual cycle of activities is centered around it. With the onset of the light rains, fields left fallow the years before are redistributed among the members of the extended family of those who work the land. Fathers allocate fields to their newly married sons or to those who have an added child. The matted grass is plowed before the rains start--"tärättärä--plowing to kill the weeds in the sun; then a second, third, fourth time at right angles--"gämmäsä", "däggämä", "sällässä". Then the turf is piled, dried and burned. The land is now ready, "masa" land", and when puffy clouds appear over the horizon in the morning, the farmer takes his plow to the field for rains will surely follow in the afternoon.

241 407 The plow is one-handed, derived from the ancient Middle East. The yoke, about 5 feet in length and 3-4" thick ("qämbär") is lowered behind the humps of two oxen. The plowpoint, held in place by two vertical wedges, is attached to the central stick, "manäqo". At first this plow, which is little more than a converted digging stick dragged at an angle, penetrates less than 6 inches, but after about 5 replowings, as deeply as one foot. The plowpoint is flat and cannot turn the earth.

241 Major procedures fall into the following categories:

preliminary plowing - "tällämä", cutting field into furrows, preparatory to seeding. Plow is led around large rocks and ignores small ones, so that

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very few need to be removed by hand; "fär" is the first furrow in a field.

deep plowing - "shärakkätä", in order to raise good soil.

final plowing - "zärrä", just before or after seeding.

134 Numerous distinctions are made between types of soil,
823 so that every member of the extended family receives his share of both good or poor soil. Fertility is basically categorized into the aforementioned "lam tyeff" and "tyeff" types. Finer distinctions show awareness of conservation needs:

male soil ("wände märet") - any heavy, humus-rich, fertile soil.

female soil ("yete märet") - any light, especially sandy soil. Less fertile.

dark soil - "walka", used for luxury grain such as wheat.

sandy soil - "mwaçhçhärä", must be lightly plowed so as not to blow away.

mobile soil - "lel märet", easily eroded, often left fallow for that reason.

poorly draining soil - "rankwa märet", or "ambaza", gets muddy easily and then becomes difficult to plow.

eroded land - "borbor märet", with many crevasses, "eaten by water" during the rainy season.

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823

alluvial soil - "borbwara märēt", rich silt carried by rivers and brooks.

infertile soils - "qoda märēt" dries too quickly after rains;
"arbacha märēt", reddish, after erosion, infertile mounds;
"gebgaba märēt", harvest withers at stalk before maturity;
"gergera märēt", useless to plow, better leave for wild fruit.
"fech märēt", abandoned land, leave for pasturage.

hard-to-penetrate - "gewchacha märēt", plow cannot penetrate readily,
"gombore märēt", sandy but very rocky, hard to plow,
"chancha märēt" rocky terrain, where rain does not penetrate well.

[132
82] The preferred early rain is the light, intermittent but penetrating "zeg yalä zenāb", not the heavy continuous downpour that occurs later. Fast-growing barley, called
243
251 "bällega" after the "bälg" season, is sown first, during the light rains of March, for it can be harvested 3 months later, just before the heavy rains, to help tide the people over until the main harvests. This is very important because of the traditional hesitancy of the farmer to store crops. Historically, he would rather have it almost ready on the stalk, and would rather risk a crop failure than

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251 expose a full granary to the mercy of the feudal lord and passing soldiers.

Before threshing can begin, about a month after the end of the rainy season, a flat, circular area is marked out with rocks. Cowdung is stamped into the wetted floor, and the sun hardens the ground into cement-like consistency in one day. This threshing floor, called "awdema", is usually big enough to accommodate at least 4 oxen that are now driven over the grain, abreast but not tied, walking in a steady circle all day long, a procedure called "mabärayät". On the third day, winnowing (called "mäshin") takes place, by means of wooden pitchforks cut from a hardwood bush without carpentry (thus usually two-pronged), and a semi-circular winnowing fan about 2 feet long and not quite as wide, made of oxhide that has been stretched on a wooden, semi-circular frame. The threshed grain is covered overnight with branches, to protect it from wind.

On the fourth day, the grain is swept up with simple whiskbrooms made of stalks (e.g. those of wild oats). All these procedures are done as quickly as possible, partly to protect the crop during this stage of maximum vul-
754 nerability from birds and baboons, partly because of fear
609 of the evil eye. If an unrelated stranger passes at this time, the farmer sprinkles him with water to avert the possible evil eye. Formerly spitting was the procedure.

In that season many small threshing grounds dot the landscape, especially on river flood plains. Here the plots are usually not more than 100-200 yards long. A minimum team of three men can usually do the job described in four days. Only one person is needed to drive the

243 patient oxen. If the farmer has no ex-slave retainers, his wife may help in the harvest. Even young boys help, particularly in protecting crops. The direction of the breeze [461] is carefully observed before winnowing. Work proceeds from sunrise to sundown (from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.), with a rest from noon to 3 P.M., the hottest time of the day. At that [263] time the women bring barley beer, enjara bread, and a special condiment prepared from crushed "nug" oilseeds called "anäbabär".

Threshing by sticks instead of oxen is done in harvest of the "nug" and this may require some additional helpers.

241 Oil plants are cultivated and of considerable impor-
262 tance in the diet. They are considered field crops rather than garden crops:

"nug" (Guizotia abyssinica), the black Niger Seed, which is the most used vegetable oil of the Amhara. Travellers take it along, mixed with spices, as a staple. It is used in many items of diet. After crushing, the oil cakes are used for fuel (not fodder).

Flax seed (Linum usitatissimum), called "talbä", the second most common oilseed, of light brown color, consumed in similar ways and in drinks. It is not raised for the fiber, which is considered fodder or fuel.

Castor bean (Ricinus communis), called "gulqwas" or "qachma". This is not a field crop as much as
[281] nug and talba, and not as much of a staple. Tanners use it for lubrication of skins. The emperor has urged increased production, but there

241 262 are no ready markets.

Sesame seed (Sesamum indicum) called "selit", is rather rare, and, as the name indicates, not originally native to Abyssinia. The Amhara, finding it difficult to grow, consider it an expensive and delicious delicacy, and consume the oil only as a rare treat.

Sunflower seed (Heliantus annuus), called "suf" is not a field crop, only occasionally planted, often semi-wild.

244 Vegetables are considered garden crops, and are planted near the hamlet on the hillside, while field crops are in the valley and river flood plains. Apart from kitchen gardens, which are considered necessities because of the spices that are consumed daily, other vegetables, particularly cabbage (gomän) are despised as poor food (food of p poor people or in times of famine). Consequently the Amhara raises few vegetables and small quantities.

Cabbage (gomän), and a white variety, "aydärgē", resistant to climatic change.

[252] Chick-Peas, "shembera" (Cicer arietum), the most common, generally eaten roasted, but also boiled in the lenten season, and baked into bread to stretch tyeff in case of crop failure. Shembera is the proverbial staple, even in war and famine, never expected to fail. The proverb says:

244 539 "She who has not born, will never carry her load;

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[539]

(but a fallow) shembera (field) will bear (next year)".

meaning that a barren woman will never carry a child in womb, but a shembera field will bear again and again. The Amhara realizes that this legume improves the soil. It will grow in poor soil, resist drought. The harvest is late, usually February.

Peas, called "atär" are also grown in quantity, for similar reasons: they grow well in poor soil, and are especially important in lent.

"meser" The collective term for lentils.

Broad bean, "bagella" also grows in poor and eroded soil, and is much planted. It is then roasted, or boiled, or mixed in curry (wot).

[252]

Onions and garlic, the latter called "white onion" are grown in kitchen gardens as ingredients of wot.

Grey bean called "adängwarä", planted at beginning of heavy rains as fenced-in garden crop, eaten raw, considered semi-wild, and not prestige food.

Gourds, "qël", e.g. "dubba", pumpkin-type (Cucurbita maxima), are grown inside hamlets and boiled and cut into strips in wot (curry-type stew).

Some gourds are planted in dug holes, others grow on vines to the height of roofs, on which they rest for support.

Roots, similar to potatoes, called "dennech" are grown in Shoa, but are of minor importance

244 in northern Abyssinia.

[263] Bärbärä is the generic name for the red spicy pepper, a major ingredient of woṭ, and the most important item in the kitchen garden. The strongest kind is called "miṭmiṭṭa" or "säṭiṭa" and because it is grown in Begemdir it is often called "Gondar bärbärey". The smaller the pod, the stronger the pepper.

Gesho, the leaf used as fermenting agent in beer and mead, grows on a bush which is a garden crop.

Ades, another leafy garden crop is grown in a wind-

[302] protected area, fenced in; used to purify butter in boiling, especially for use in women's hairdo, for they believe the odor of it is irresistible to men.

Gwaya, a major forage crop of the legume family, is grown as scarcity fodder but contact with it is believed dangerous to humans.

245 Lemons, very small, are grown in a scattered fashion, the only fruit so raised.

Viticulture is a riddle. Grape growing is not in evidence any more among Amhara peasants, but there are local traditions that up to a century ago grapes were grown, e.g. in the worädä (district) of "yäkämkäm qäroda", east of Lake Tana. The name "woyna dega" is derived from the wine-growing, intermediate level of topography. It may have been imported by the Portuguese, or may have been much older. Nowadays

273 Nowadays the Coptic priests prepare wine for the eucharist in great secrecy, locked up in the beyta-lehem", the storehouse of the church, but it is believed that they use raisins purchased from Arab traders.

b. Animal Husbandry

233 The raising of livestock among the Amhara is not directly related to available pasture. The two factors that stand out are the importance of cattle for prestige and expression of wealth; the interrelatedness of livestock with the agricultural ecology and land use.

In the rainy season the valleys are usually waterlogged, and armed peasants take the cattle to the "dega" upland for several weeks of grazing. Obversely, in the dry season when the uplands and hilltops are parched, the cattle is taken to the valley to graze in and alongside riverbeds. Pasturage, "sed", is free--by agreement, usually within the "bota", somewhat vague territorial area belonging to the local church, feudal lord, etc. During the rainy season, the trek upland assumes semi-nomadic proportions at times, ("zallan"), for the peasants may take their wives, bigger children, and households along. Generally, if the fields are very fertile, the pasturage will be more distant from the hamlets. The dry season sometimes causes such severe drought that after the cattle has eaten the stubble off the harvested fields, the growth of calves comes to a temporary stop, there is no mating, and milk is reduced even to cessation. Fortunately

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are permitted to use it. Milking is done in a very tightly woven 231 415 reed container ("gerera") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwacha" or "chocho").

233 Sometimes a large extended family will try to en-
423 close a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock
691 markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Menz district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary 251 yoke. The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya
262 läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

61. Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

231 [262] the "great man" (feudal lord) and to warriors at rural, traditional feasts.

The cattle is not fat, since there is no intensive feeding. Even bulls are so patient that children can herd them, and cows are accustomed to walking home unescorted even through urban streets -- including Addis Ababa. With its broad forehead, long narrow skull, well-developed horns, the Abyssinian cattle still bears some resemblance to Primigenius, the cattle of Egypt and Nubia, and probably of Ethiopia prior to 500 B.C.[62]

232 Cattle is slaughtered for meat only in case of a barren cow and when the ox becomes too old to pull the plow. The male ancestry of a calf is given little attention, because it is not always possible, under the relaxed manner of breeding, to identify the paternal animal. Bulls are gelded by having their testicles crushed between rocks, and an ox so treated is called "wäräm" or "mäsina". Since the testicles are not cut, this primitive operation is not infrequently unsuccessful, and such a bull is then referred to as "amälät" and is troubled no further since it is believed that he is so virile that his virility cannot be taken from him without killing him. Bulls are gelded not to prevent them from begetting offspring, but to prevent them from "dissipating their energies" in sexual activity when it is needed for plowing. A rare secondary reason would be to fatten them for sale in preparation for slaughter.

Fully grown steers are fattened by feeding them chäw bälē, a mineral salt, for two years, or, where mineral

62. Ibid.

232 springs ("ambo") exist, by taking them to water there("Hora"). This is done also to increase the milk supply of cows. "Rejuvenators" ("gēbäzayähu) consisting of large pieces of mineral salt are fed to them for this purpose, also. Whenever possible, cows are taken to spots where the light rains have sprouted fresh grass ("chälē"). If the unreliable light rains fail to appear, the cattle is taken to "chäqäçhi", lit. muddy places, i.e. brooks and river beds that retain some moisture and grass, when meadows are yellow, dry, and even crabgrass is wooden and nearly useless.

234 A cow will not let herself be milked, despite the remarkable patience of this cattle, unless a calf stands close or in front of her. But the Amhara find it sufficient, when no calf is available, to prop up a stuffed calfskin in front of the cow. The milking period lasts from 2 - 8 months. While at the climax the cow can be milked several times a day, this is reduced to only once a day toward the end. The calf takes most of the mother's milk during the first month. Then milking is begun gradually, first 1/4 udder, until, at the end of the 3rd month, the entire udder. Italian estimates of the milk production during the entire lactation period vary from 200 to 450 kilos, the average being 300 kilos.[63]

232 A calf weighing 15-25 kilos at birth reaches no more than 80-100 kilos at the end of the year. Both male ("bäre") and female ("lam") cattle reach their full height at seven years, and are almost never slaughtered before then. Despite the slow growth and the small milk supply,

63. Ibid.

232 these cattle are resistant to diseases that killed off European cattle brought to Ethiopia by Point IV. This immunity includes poisonous grasses as well as ticks. They are resistant to changes in temperature between day and night, thrive on natural fodder of little nutritive quality, and even old cows continue to have calves for a considerable period.

233 Several factors characterize the Amhara attitude as agricultural rather than pastoral, in addition to the emphasis on the hump and the geldin-for-strength instead of for breeding. Herding is not considered a suitable occupation for a grown Amhara adult; there is no cowboy pattern at all, and cattle herding is usually assigned to boys under 12 years of age while sheep-and-goatherding is often assigned to a dimwitted simpleton. The corral is not of strong stakes, but of light, loose thornbushes.

231 556 On the other hand, cattle, especially cows, play an important role in social organization and other human relations among the Amhara. The terms for cattle and for wealth are synonymous. In marriage agreements, the kinfolk on both the bride's and the groom's side promise to contribute an equal number of cows. This means that the child of a poor farmer cannot hope to marry the offspring of a wealthy farmer, under the usual circumstances, unless the rich partner restricts his contribution to what the poor can afford, or unless the poorer manages to borrow enough cattle from a wider range of kinfolk.

To overcome boundaries of social stratification, cattle enables a peasant to present an "entrance gift"

231 [556] ("agäbba") to an important "great man", perhaps to become a "client" in his retinue for protection.

[775] In religious life, the old peasant can arrange for the peace of his soul after death by giving a cow to his Confessor or to the "qēs gabaz" the administrative priest of the parish church, to have masses recited. In criminal [682] law, a murderer in the remote rural areas can still save himself and even prevent a long and bloody feud between families, if he can borrow enough cattle, in addition to his own, to pay "blood-money", in cows, to the kin of the victim, the agreement witnessed by the presence of a "che-qa shum", a judge, or a priest, preferably all three. Thus there are some aspects of the cattle pattern that are reminiscent of a tribal, semi-nomadic, rather than settled territorial social organization. This becomes emphasized during the upland trek in the rainy season.

233 Though entrusted to youngsters, care of cattle is obviously a task requiring responsibility. Cattle is not taken out until one hour after sunrise, about 7 A.M., when the dew has dried. During the hot dry season, cattle rest under umbrella trees and other shade from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., so that the grazing period away from the hamlet is not long. Before dusk, by 6 P.M., they are taken into the hamlet enclosure or corrall, or even into the hut, for hyenas may come early.

The cash value of cattle is low, primarily because of the distance and poor transportation to world markets. [281] The hides, a major export item, are of low cash value because this type is not tanned, merely sundried, and "book-folded" for export.

233 folded" for export.

Sheep are raised primarily for meat. They do not figure in social organization except as minor gifts (including entrance gifts). They are small in stature, and so inexpensive that the sheepskin can often be sold for 1/3 the cost of the entire animal. The woolly skins are used as cloaks, bedcovers, etc. The sheep is not bred for wool, only for meat, especially for the fattail ("lat") which is as prized as in other Middle Eastern areas. The wool (yə̈-bäg ṭägur) is not very long, and is used to stuff pillows in urban areas. Wool weaving is a local specialty of re-
[286] mote districts, now dying out due to competition of modern, imported blankets, but formerly used to make the black, Arab-type "burnos".

Goats as well as sheep are usually entrusted to an ex-slave or a simpleton, or very small children, when on pasture. Domestic goats ("feyäl") are raised because of
[281] the cheapness of their meat, and the skin which is tanned by the Faqi, and made into parchment for church literature,
[232] etc. To fatten rams, their testicles are crushed between rocks, and the resulting animal is called "qeṭqeṭ".

231 Horses are small, wiry and very enduring. They are the animal of the young aristocrats in warfare, in games showing prowess. Mules, small, wiry, and intelligent, cost at least twice as much as horses. They are preferred by travellers and older persons, and are used as the animal of honor ridden by the veiled bride when she is taken to her bridegroom's hamlet. If they can at all afford it, a Senaar mule is preferred, and for the bridal

231 party preferably a white one. Senaar mules are as big as Ethiopian horses, being the offspring of a large Arabian male donkey and an Ethiopian mare (horse). A good Senaar mule may cost twice the price of an Ethiopian mule, especially when actually imported from the Senaar (Sudan). Its strong but ambling gait ("tëkolkoloch" or"sëggärä") is due to the work of the expert trainer. A donkey is the cheapest of all animals of transportation, very small in stature, and never ridden except in jest by very small children. All these Ethiopian animals are surefooted on steep hills, the Ethiopian mule most of all.

232 Many Livestock diseases are endemic. The more common are:

Mouth disease of cattle - "maz" (Shoa "qefd"), transferred by licking. Treatment is often the same as that traditionally given humans for syphilis, including bathing in hot springs.

Wasting disease - "gordëbeta", or "gorba" for short, which affects cattle and other horned animals; believed caused by evil eye (buda).

Broken-windedness of horses - "nedfat" (lit. pricked), believed caused by evil spirit who has"pricked the animal" and is drinking its strength.

Dizzy spinning on one spot - "azwarit", believed caused by demon.

If the disease is of physical origin, a "wogëshä" surgeon-herbologist may be called in. Sores on the backs of mules and other livestock are cauterized with a "guba", a hot iron rod about two feet long, with a bent tip. If

232 the sickness is believed of magic origin, a dabtara may be called, or a zar doctor consulted. One often sees large nicks cut out of the ears of livestock, especially cows, where pieces have been excised and fed to the spirits on the principle of "pars pro toto".

235 Chickens ("doro") are small, look undernourished, and lay very small eggs. Little clay henhouses are built for them. They are cooked in "doro wot" (chicken curry--Abyssinian style) in a golden reddish sauce, but do not occupy a highly honored spot in the diet, and at feasts are prepared merely to add variety to the menu. Until recently eggs were not sold but given away. Even now they are very cheap. No attempt is made to breed fowl.

231 Beekeeping is one of the few ways the farmer has to obtain some ready cash income. As soon as the rainy season is over, and fragrant wildflowers carpet the landscape, the time for swarming has arrived. The farmer prepares a hollow cylindrical reed basket (called "qafo"), with one end narrower. This he places in the fork of a tree. Sometimes it is made from the bark of the "elol" or "lol" tree. It has an exit, "fenchu". Sometimes the farmer will capture the queen bee ("awura neb", lit. vulture bee) in a little box and place her inside the basket, so that the worker bees, called "virgin bees" ("dengel neb") because they do not lay eggs, will swarm after her. He is not afraid of stings which are small, cause only a little pimple and heal rapidly. Next to the reed basket he often builds a smaller hive of sticks and mud ("gushgusha"), so that the bees will not have far to go when they decide to break up the colony

23 and form a new one. If he re-uses an old basket, he first sweeps out the larvae (ech) remnants, wax, etc., with the "nebasel" plant which the bees are said to like.

Sometimes as rapidly as six weeks later, the honey is ready for collecting. The hive is smoked out, and many bees perish. Some of the honey is retained at home and mix-
[272] ed with water to make non-alcoholic "berz" when honored
[373] guests come. The wax, to which some of the honey still adheres, is rolled over strong cotton or fiber thread and the resulting long thin candle is used in church to illuminate the readings and the processions.

Most of the honey is sold on the big "Saturday market", or directly to the woman in the nearest town who operates a "tedj byet", a mead house. To make it worth his while, a farmer should have at least five skeps-hives, from which he can realize 50 kilos of honey annually, for which he can obtain about $20. A very big keeper may have as many as 50 skeps, bringing him U.S. $200. for the honey.
[275] But the real profit is made by the woman owner of the tedj byet, who pays little for this honey, for gesho (fermenting agent) and for a big barrel to brew mead in, and then, after some months, sells her product, "tedj", a wine-like alcoholic drink, at a price that only noblemen, clerks, town officials, and Muslim traders can afford.

[278] The honey of the wild bee, "terb", is used against trachoma and other eye diseases. But "shame" forbids the eating of such wild honey.

Civet cat has been "farmed" by some in certain districts for centuries, and the musk taken regularly from the

231 gland of the animal was packed in cowhorns, and exported as a fixer for scents and perfumes. But the average Amhara farmer does not keep civet cat (zebāt).

Livestock is perhaps even more important economic property than land. Since land tenure is uncertain and complicated and since the produce from land is usually consumed by rent, taxes, obligations, and food for the family, any capital surplus and private property is largely expressed in livestock, particularly in the absence of valuable tools. [42] Also, land is at best owned by a man's kin, while livestock is personal property.

231 436 Livestock prices at the rural and provincial-urban markets are still quoted in Mariah Theresa Thalers, although the actual coin is now illegal and may not be used in transactions. The compromise that has developed is to quote MT thalers for livestock only, and to pay in paper or coins of the present legal Ethiopian currency at the rate of Ethiopian $1.50 per MT 1. --(U.S.$0.60). MT Thalers are quoted for sale only, because of the significance of such a transaction, while rent is quoted in modern Ethiopian dollars.

231 583 Cattle: An Amhara peasant may own from 1 to 150 cows, mean about 5. A rich peasant may own about 50 cows, a few bulls, a dozen oxen, 5 mules, over 50 sheep and and goats. In giving his daughter in marriage he may pridefully give her 20 cows, especially if the groom contributes an equal number. A poor peasant may be hard put to give his daughter 3 cows, which is a respectable minimum, and may have to borrow two cows to fill that, but he can hold off fulfillment of the contribution until a few

231 [589] months after the wedding, when it seems certain the marriage will last.

231 435 A good, milk-giving cow is worth 50 MT, but an old cow ready for slaughter brings only 15 MT. A farmer needs at least 2 oxen for plowing, and a well-to-do farmer may have about 8. Oxen are not contributed in marriage, but are loaned or given to the groom by his father at the time land is allocated to him for plowing. A good, strong ox is worth 40 MT, but hardly ever is such a one for sale; instead, he is more commonly traded for two male calves. An old ox for slaughter can be bought for 15 MT, and if the skin is still good it may be sold in turn for up to four MT. Thus beef is much more expensive than sheep or goat meat, and is reserved for feasts.

Mule: The average peasant may own one mule, or none at all, since even a small Ethiopian mule costs 40 MT, and a Senaar mule as much as 80 MT. Feudal lords have several. Mules are rented to caravans for ETH$1.-per day; double that if the borrower is a foreigner. Relatives borrow free of charge.

Sheep: These bring from ETH$3 - $6 depending on season more than on quality, though a heavy fattail helps. The sheepskin alone can be resold for ETH$1.50, so that the meat is very cheap and within reach of almost everyone's pocketbook. The average farmer keeps perhaps a dozen sheep used

231 435 for his family's consumption, guests, and gifts, but not larger flocks, conserving grass for cattle.

Donkeys: The average peasant may have 2, to carry goods to and from the market. A good donkey may bring as much as 12 - 15 MT, but an average donkey no more than 8 MT out of season (when no caravans are about to leave. They are not usually rented, but are lent to friends and kin more freely than mules, without charge.

[234] Butter: This is sold to urban people and at big markets, wrapped in leaves. Milk is sold only by personal arrangement, directly to the house.

235 435 Chicken: These bring as little as ETH$0.50, or even $0.25, depending on season and quality. All meat prices rise sharply at the end of the lenten season. Otherwise the peasant does not bother to sell chickens to towns unless he lives very close.

Eggs: These sell for as little as ETH$0.01 a-piece, sold only since Italian occupation, and only in towns. Otherwise the peasant gives them away, or boils them in the wot.

231 435 Honey: Perhaps less than a quarter of all peasants bother to sell honey. Much depends on whether there are bees in the immediate neighborhood, and whether a town with tedj-byets (mead houses) is nearby. On the average he may put up at least 5 skeps, realize at most 10 kilos of honey from each, and obtain a maximum of ETH$50. --(US$20.) at the market.

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435 Thus, the capital of our hypothetical "average" freehold farmer would total as follows:

3 good cows	150 MT	(ETH$225.-)
2 old cows	30 MT	45.-
2 strong oxen	80	120.-
2 old oxen	30 MT	45.-
2 donkeys	15 MT	22.-
1 mule	40 MT	60.-
6 sheep		30.-
3 goats		15.-
	Total ETH$562.-	(US$230)

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[231] Sales from livestock and livestock produce, in one year, by the average freehold farmer would be about as follows, providing ready cash:

2 old cows	ETH$45.-
1 old ox	20.-
3 sheep	15.-
10 chickens	3.-
300 eggs	3.-
50 kilos honey	50.-
Milk	5.-
	ETH$141.-

With this cash he would buy salt, raw cotton, a toga, some imported spices, coffee, and pay certain cash taxes such as the education tax. These would all be necessary expenditures. The rest would go for other items.

It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-

423 It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-
435 rate and reliable survey of "capital" and expenditures--due to concealment of property for fear of taxes. As for the value of their own land, this cannot even be estimated by observation, for not even the owners know the value of their own land. For fear of alienation, and possible higher taxes on land found to be more fertile than declared, they actually do not want to know. Most Amhara land is not even measured, and most have no clear titles, except by local "custom". The value of the tuqul hut cannot be estimated since it is not a cash item and utilizes only the raw products of nature. The same is true of utensils and equipment. Even the plowpoint is bartered rather than purchased.

C. Dietary habits

252 The diet in general is low in proteins and vita-
262 mins, but otherwise not inadequate.[64]

The mainstay of the Amhara is a round, thin, limp, slightly sour bread "enjāra", made largely from tyēff grain. After the grain has been handground by the housewife, she mixes the flour with water and lets it stand about three days. Then she pours the thickish liquid on a clay plate (called "metād") about 2 feet in diameter, covers it with a high lid of tight reeds or clay which leaves much air space. The bread is thus baked for about four minutes on top of the triangular stone hearth. The result is a leavened, spongy-surfaced but flat-bottomed limp bread about 1/4 inch thick, and about 2 feet in diameter. The meat-curry is

64. Simmons, et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. p.64.

252 262 poured over several layers of it; or spiced butter is smeared; or, especially in the fasting season or while travelling, condiments such as nug-paste or talba-paste are smeared. Variations in the preparation of enjara include some kneading during the fermentation process, adding some old enjara to aid in leavening, polishing the plate with oilcake of nug or talba to prevent sticking, using straw for the fire so heat will be spread evenly and uniformly.

Unleavened bread, "qitta", is baked mainly as a staple for travelling. The flour may be of other grains (e.g. wheat) or of a mixture of sorghum, barley, dagussa, even shembera. The flour is allowed to remain in water a maximum of 5 hours. If even less time, it is called "afla qitta", doubly unleavened. This bread is also baked when in great hurry to leave, as in warfare, and the Falashas believe that this was the "unleavanede bread" baked by the ancient Israelites on their Exodus from Egypt.

Another travel mainstay, elaborate to prepare, is a soggy, but not liquid, mixture of enjara and wot meat-stew, called "fetfet". It is carried in a reed basket which has been covered by a finely tanned morocco skin.

Another type of bread, thicker, more consistent, and resembling European varieties, is collectively called "dabbo". It is baked only for rare occasions, such as religious feasts, e.g. "masqal", the Feast of the Cross. Therefore, it is usually made from the luxury grain, wheat, and only the poor add barley or tyeff; to stretch the wheat. The grain is first softened in water; then husked in a wodden mortar; then ground into fine flour. This is then knea-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Page 135 lacking in numbering only.

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252 262 ded, with water, in a wooden bowl, "gäbätä". Various spices and condiments are added. The dough is left to rise at least 5 hours, and the meted plate is preheated. Leaves of "koba", or the large leaves of the "embush" plant are spread on the meted plate (preferable banana leaves when available). After the clay plate has been rubbed with "ketketa" leaves (Dodonea viscosa), and the dough is evenly spread on the leaves, and covered with more leaves, a clay lid is sealed around the edges with mud. Wood from the hearth is now placed on top of the lid, until only glowing embers are left underneath. With a properly smoldering fire the dabbo can be baked in two hours; but for flavor the dabbo is left sealed for some hours more. The result is a massive bread, about 2 inches thick, 2 feet in diameter, with distinct crust, and very tasty. Only in the wealthier monasteries, where it is referred to as "dabyä" is it a daily staple. (e.g. in Däbra Libanos it is cut into four quarters, and each monk receives a specific number of quarters according to his rank) Variations of baking include pouring the dough in more liquid form, or baking the leaves filled with heavy dough in hot ashes rather than in the clay plates.

The second most common item of food is the "wot", a peppered spiced sauce which may or may not contain meat. Innumerable variations exist: this is usually the only dish in which the housewife has the opportunity to develop her own recipes, by adding certain spices, etc. Some of these spices are even imported from Yemen and are for sale at all major markets, even remote ones, although most spices

252 262 are raised in the housewife's kitchen garden. Every husband of pride claims to be able to distinguish the wot of his wife. Among spices used are:

263 [278] Ethiopian spices, raised by Amhara:

"Tena Adam" (lit. health of Adam), very aromatic. Important medicine against buda spirit (evil eye). This is Rue (Ruta graveolens, Ruta hortensis).

Fenugreek (Trigonella Foenumgroccum), called "Abush"

Coriander (Coriandrum sativum), "dembelal". Cheaper than "bärbärē and used to replace it.

Sweet Basil (Ocinum Basilicum), called "bäsobela" or "zäqa qebye"

Bärbärē, the all-important red peppery major garden crop.

Ginger, called "zendjebel". It is used unscraped.

[273] Caraway seed (Carum carvi) called "enselal", also used to make "araqi" intoxicant drink.

"Abusda", a dark seed resembling nug. Also called "tequr azmud".

Mustard seed, called "shenfa", ground to condiment.

Thyme, called "azmud", in light and dark varieties. Wild Thyme, "tosen".

Garlic, called "näch shenkurt" (lit. white onion).

Spices used by Amhara, but bought on market, including those of Yemen importation:

Cardamon, called "korärima". (Elettaria paradise).

Saffron (Crocus sativus), called "erd", used to add golden orange color to reddish "wot".

Cumin (Cuminium cynisum), called "kamun".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

263 "afär kochär" resembling nutmeg.

Capsicum (Cayenne pepper), possibly introduced by the Portuguese. Called "qundo bärbärē".

252 262 263 A number of these spices are pre-mixed, some added later to the woṭ. A mixture of bärbärē powder, a salt called "duddus", and garlic, called "awazē", is kept as a staple and also carried by travellers. Vegetables such as cabbage ("gomänzär") and pumpkin slices ("dubba)" are boiled in the "wäṭ". Sesame seed ("sälit", Sesamum indicum) add purplish spots of oil content to the woṭ. Aroma is added by "senbul" (Spica celtica), expensive and therefore rare.

The most common woṭ is "qay wät". Chick-peas are pre-fried with red onion. Water, mashed red pepper ("delleh") and butter are added, stirred and heated. Finely sliced meat is then added, and black spice (tequr azmud) is sprayed over the boiling mixture. More water is added and stirring continues. . Some add a bit of barley beer, others pea flour.

When fresh beef is used on Sundays or at special feasts, the red pepper woṭ is called "zegen woṭ". The meat is lightly boiled, and minced; onions are minced and slowly roasted, and the whole is boiled with pre-roasted fenugreek spice, and with red barbare pepper. Then butter is added. When this is well cooked, and the host can afford it, the following spices are added: white azmud ("näch azmud"), black azmud (both thyme); ginger; sweet basil; cardamon seed. After cooking, capsicum is sprinkled over the settling stew, and other spices according to individual preference.

252 262 For the less well-to-do, the cheapest meat is chicken, and this red pepper stew is called "qëy-doro wät". Slaughtering, even of chicken, must be done by men. The pious pronounce the invocation, "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity"(because of the Monophysite faith). Then the housewife takes over, removes the feathers in boiling water, singes the skin, inflates the outer skin by blowing into the cut skin near the throat. She then cleans the chicken and rubs it with pea flour. Inner organs and wings and legs are washed with salt and lemon juice, then lightly roasted. In another pan, minced red onion, red pepper and other spices are fired in butter, water is added and stirred, ground salt is powdered over it. Then boiled, shelled eggs are added. Now all chicken parts are boiled with this prepared mixture, in a deeper clay pot.

Whenever any of these vegetable or meat stews is boiled without red pepper, the stew is called "alecha", and, unless this dish is added to the menu for variety, it [758] is considered a poor substitute. It is given to very young infants and to persons with intestinal ailments, and so [576] constitutes a symbol for weakness. (It is a major insult to call a man "alecha", because the term also means "impotent".)

Most often alecha is boiled with chicken, "yädoro alecha". Red onion is preferred in butter, in a clay pot ("dest"). Peeled vegetables such as tomatoes (in urban areas) and water are added. The chicken, disjointed, washed and dried, is boiled in this. Powdered ginger, cloves, green pepper without seeds, sweet basil are added,

252 262 the last a few minutes before the wot is ready. Some add capsicum at the same time.

Liver and stomach, especially of sheep and goat, are eaten, but spleen and milt are considered hard to digest and are given to dogs. In general, interior organs are not prestigeful.

Raw beef, "brundo", is still featured at special feasts such as weddings, religious feasts like "täzkär", [164] as it was featured at feasts of warriors in the past. This brings much tapeworm infection, but the risk is taken because it is believed that "brundo" makes strong like no [755] other food. The painful purgative cure is undergone every two months with "kosso", still a major institution among the Amhara.

To cool the palate linings and tongue from the bärbärē, curdled milk, "ergo", is consumed right afterwards. [515] Hands are carefully washed, for touching the eyes with fingers stained from the spiced stew makes them smart.

Fish, much eaten only in the rainy season, is also boiled in wot, often after slight prefrying in talba (linseed oil); lentils (mesr) are often added.

Lentils become very important in the long lenten season and on every Wednesday and Friday, when the average [784] Amhara still abstains from meat, milk, eggs and other animal products, for religious (Coptic fast) reasons. The staple food during these periods is a porridge called "shero": mashed peas seasoned with spices, onion and vegetable oil.

Another vegetarian staple is "nefro", consisting of peas, chick peas, sorghum, all boiled and eaten as ker-

252 262 nels, or crushed and baked into a cake with nug or linseed oil. The porridge of non-fast times is called "genfo". It is made of crushed wheat, barley, butter and curdled milk. In fast times nug and linseed are substituted for the forbidden butter and milk. A fast drink consists of [272] tyeff flour boiled in salt water, called "hug".

Other religious food taboos include the pig, which is never raised, except for European's use. This taboo dates back to Judaism and the Old Testament.

Every householder usually has a supply of roasted kernals "qolo" available in case unexpected guests or kin come to visit, a frequent occurrence. The pattern of "qolo" is very similar to that of a linguistically equivalent concept in Yemen. The Amhara makes it mostly of barley, "gebs qolo", but also of shembera and of maize.

[263] Condiments taken along on trips include an oily paste made of nug or linseed. When this is also spiced, salted, or mixed with honey, it is called "chelqa". It [272] resembles a gummy porridge. The traveller can mix it with water and instantly have a drink which is regarded not only as thirst-quenching, but also as strength-giving, however, no one claims that the taste is good.

264 There are two major meals per day: midday lunch, a light meal, though it may feature both "enjära" and "wot"; and the heavier supper, "erät", the main meal consumed in the cool of the early evening around the hearth of the hut, with bread, meat stew, barley beer and condiments. Breakfast as such is not eaten, except for a handful of roasted barley, and, if the household can afford it, black coffee.

252 Butter is made in a large gourd ("gurna"), plugged with a wooden prop. The housewife shakes this back and forth, much like Middle Eastern nomads shake it in skins. The butter that results resembles Indian ghee, and is called, at this stage, "gorännä". For human consumption it is then usually boiled with spices, especially bärbärē, but not with salt. To cure it further in order to make it sweet, delay rancidity, etc., butter (qebyē) is further boiled with one or several of the following spices in the process known as "yäqebyē mantäriya", "yäqebyē anätatär":

263]

bark of ginger	- quaräfa zenjebel
cardamon seeds	- korärima
thyme	- azmud
garlic	- näch shenkurt
sweet basil	- bäsobela
saffron	- erd
wild thyme	- tosen

302] Since most of these spices are expensive, butter intended for ornamental pomade of women's hair is boiled instead with leaves of the "ades" bush, which grows wild.

This process is "ades qernefad".

273 The most important, daily drink is talla, the barley beer brewed by the housewife. It is little different, basically, from other African barley beers. Men almost never drink water (though the barley beer may be very weak), partly due to their fondness for "sweet", i.e. only slightly fermented beer. After three days of storage, the Amhara begin to complain that it is "too bitter", and let the women drink it up.

273 The preparation proceeds in steps at long intervals (up to a year), but the final stage takes 1-2 days only, to prevent "bitter" taste. There is nearly as much discussion over which women brews the best t̄alla as of who makes the best wot, though the opportunity for individual recipes is much more limited.

In most cases, the fermenting agent is "gēsho" (Ziziphus mitis), the leaf of a bush that is semi-domesticated, grown inside or near the hamlet. The shiny green leaves are dried. Then the housewife washes the big beer jars, dries them, fumigates them with olive wood for at least 15 minutes. She prepares the malt, "beqqel", by fermenting barley in water for 3 days, while in another jar she mixes sorghum varieties, dagussa, or zengada (Eleusina multiforma) with water, and lets it also ferment for 3 days. Then she dries and bakes the malt into bricklike consistency, and stores this "abshello" on the horizontal rafters of the hut, ready for quick use.

When consumption time nears, she breaks up some bricks of abshello into another freshly fumigated jar, adds gesho and some fresh "beqqel", and wets the mixture slightly. After 3 days it is ready for use. The morning of each day she takes some of it, places it in a big pot, and fills it with water taken from the river. After 6 hours of settling, the beer is ready for consumption. Leftovers (e.g. from feasts) begin to carbonize a bit after 3 days, and, just when the European begins to enjoy the slightly alcoholic drink, the Amhara declares it "bitter" and unfit.

Variations include: The use of other grains, even

273 wheat, in place of barley, after roasting, grinding and baking. "ḳitta" leftovers may be used in place of abshello. A rich man may add honey at the final stage to increase the sweetness of the "tälla". To increase alcoholic content, mashella can be added. But for the average peasant it is more important to find ways of stretching the daily beer by watering it down, resulting in "asser weha", or "qerrara". A poor man who has no gesho plants and cannot afford to buy the leaves at the market, can gather leaves of the "qäčhämo" or "gerawa" plants which grow wild; also the root and bark of "tädjo" (Rhamnus straddo), but this is of low prestige. Interestingly enough, Muslim neighbors who are religiously forbidden alcohol, dispense with gēsho or other hops, and brew a light drink in similar fashion, called "bebun" or "qärbäbbo".

Much more alcoholic is mead made from fermented honey, "tädj" (which may possibly derive its name from the [554] wild hops). It is the drink of prestige, regularly consumed only by feudal lords, and available to peasants only for feasts. While barley beer is drunk from a cow's horn, [445] mead is imbibed from a widespread, imported "berelle", a small, long-necked, decanter-shaped glass bottle which first entered this area in the last century containing Turkish perfume, traded by Arabs for the ladies of "great men". It has practical advantages: the small opening lets wax and dead bees float to the surface where a flick of the thumb can remove them; and it is much harder for the ever-present flies to enter the bottle, especially since the tip of the thumb can seal it.

273 Since fermenting mead is too specialized for the
[272] ordinary housewife and it must usually be bought, the peasant consumes his honey-drink more often as "barz", unfermented honey water, and this is what he offers an honored guest, in addition to barley beer. If the peasant consumes mead, he usually does it away from home, at the nearest big market or town where he has gone to sell his products. For two liters of mead he has to pay as much as he receives for an entire kilo of honey (ETH$1.- or US$0.40). He cannot usually afford more and leaves after one bottle.

In the fermentation of mead, "gēsho" or other hops mentioned are used. Six or seven parts of water to one part of honey, plus gesho, are stirred in a huge barrel or large imported tin can. This permits the tapping of the finished product at the bottom, as a jar would not. The first, lightly fermented mead is called "bätäha". Mead fermented several months to a year, more expensive and of higher prestige is "däräq" (lit. dry), a strong intoxicant.

272 Coffee is served black, after roasting, crushing and boiling in front of an honored guest. Salt may be added, African style, but never sugar (which, however, is added to imported tea drunk in towns). Milk is never added, but sometimes butter, even spiced butter. Coffee may grow wild, or may be purchased at the market: longberry from Harar, or from Jimma.

576 A significant culture trait is connected with the serving of any drink. The servant who pours, or the host himself in case of an honored guest, pours a small mouthful into his own cupped hand and drinks it publicly. This

576 is called "qämmash", an important etiquette. Its origin may stem from the well-known oriental pattern of protecting an important personage from being poisoned, and since the feudal lord is still imitated among the Amhara, even by peasants, the custom is still prevalent in rural areas, provincial towns, and even in Addis Ababa.

E. Utensils and Tools.

322 Whenever possible, the Amhara likes to utilize direct products of nature, such as natural shape of branches, branch forks, branches at the right angle (e.g.for adzes), gradual thickening of a branch of hardwood (e.g. for ax handles). Much time is spent in the bush looking for the right wood, for there is no carpentry on any developed level. Sawing is unknown. So is splitting of wood to prepare boards, so that laborious chopping away at a log from both sides would be necessary. Nailing and gluing is still not done in rural areas. To drill a hole in wood, the blacksmith is called and burns a hole with an iron poke. Oxhide strips are used for fastening.

442 415 Therefore there are very few wooden utensils. Spoons and forks are not used by the Amhara. During dinner, pieces of enjärä are ripped from the edge, to serve as spoon and fork. Then the piece is used to fish out a morsel of meat and some of the sauce of the "wot". Iron knives are used at dinner time only at a feast of "brundo", raw beef, when a red morsel is cut off just in front of the teeth.

442 415 463 Preparations of tools and utensils fall into four categories of division of labor: (1) Work done by special-

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps [321] because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. Ornamen- [531] tation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric nature, in the wood. Wooden combs together with their [303] handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. Wood- [412] en mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. On [354] occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back- [407] rest of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint [231] firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 Horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

321 The Amhara warrior sought to have at least one very large
415 horn containing mead (cattle was sometimes bred for large horns or bought from Galla), and smaller ones for gunpowder or for the staple mixture of salt and barbare, or nug paste. The narrow end is sealed with a wooden plug. In the past they were sometimes of buffalo horn, but now mostly of cow's horn. One observer noticed a striking similarity between this container and ancient Egyptian ones of smaller size, used to contain antimony for eye toilette.[65]

Perhaps this may give a clue as to why the drinking utensils made of horn look so strikingly European, amid the other Amhara containers which are more African than Middle Eastern. Nearly every Amhara peasant has at least one large drinking cup of horn; besides the usual clay cups used for coffee. The large horn cup is used by the head of the house for barley beer. Churches usually have several, especially the "tewa" used at church feasts or memorial feasts such as tazkar. An average-sized one measures about 4-1/2 inches high, has a 5 inch diameter at the top, but only 1-1/2 inche diameter at the bottom. A church which has a large working retinue of däbtära and hangers-on, acolytes, etc., often makes a practice of giving one as a courtesy gift to deserving peasants at plowing time, with the blessings of the church for a good harvest.

324 The main stone utensil that men make for the house
412 is the mano-type stone called "mäj", usually selected from a river bed and further shaped so that the bottom is flat and the rounded top fits comfortably into the palm of the housewife when she grinds the grain. She does this by a forward and backward motion, not the more advanced rotary

65. Cohen, Marcel: Flagon Abyssin en corne...Tr, Paris 1920, pp.265-6.

324 motion, and the rotary quern of ancient Rome and Alexandria
412 is of course entirely unknown.

251 Bins for storage of grain are also made by men. The
333 two major types are the "gota", made of rings of sundried mud and straw, which are built up later inside the hut; and the "gotera" bin, made of a barrel-like skeleton of sticks, plastered with mud and left to harden in the sun. The former can, of course, be built higher, as much as 7 feet tall, while the latter is limited to the size of the door of the tuqul.

415 Gourds are widely raised as utensils, in line with the pattern of using natural products directly. Sometimes the gourds ("qel") grow on vines supported on the roof of the tuquol. When at full size, some are cut lengthwise so that each half represents a drinking cup with its own natural handle affixed. Travellers always carry these. They also carry gourds used as waterbottles ("wamara") with the top cut off and refixed to serve as a removable plug. Or, the narrowing top of a gourd is cut off and used by women while carding raw cotton on a bowstring. Artists of chiefs and feudal "great men" paint designs and scenes on gourds ("ankola") belonging to their patrons.

285 Basketry can be made by either men or women, often
415 by servants and ex-slaves, but since it is not considered specialized, there is no shame attached to this work. Both coiling and weaving techniques are used, the latter more often. Noteworthy is the frequent close weaving which results in watertight containers, further secured with hot milk and fumigating with gum woods. This method,

285 415 especially the use of milk (also found in pottery), is typically African.

Reeds, fibers (including the musa ensete and baobab), and grasses already mentioned are used to produce many types of articles, equal in variety only to pottery, and in numbers even exceeding.

285 415 352 The reed table, "mäsob" is one of the most noteworthy, for every household has several, in different sizes, and usually one with ornamental geometric designs woven into it by means of dyed reeds. In principle it is a combination breadbasket and table, for by lifting the lid the former turns into the latter. The diameter at the top may be as much as 2 feet, just high enough to be comfortable for eating while seated on a mat on the ground. Thus the cylindrical, almost hourglass-shaped leg of the same tightly woven reeds, may be from 1 foot to 2 feet high. The lid fits tightly inside, so that flies and even ants cannot enter; it is of the same type found in the Sudan and parts of North Africa.

285 293 The next most noteworthy item of woven fiber is the famous sun umbrella, "jan ṭela" (lit. the emperor's shade, from "zehon", elephant). Formerly a royal prerogative, then a feudal one, it is now owned by every peasant housewife, and in provincial towns purchasable at the big market for ETH$2.-(US$0.80). This umbrella is unfoldable, made of strong ribs of split bamboo (called "qerqaha"), bent almost semi-circular; the central wooden stick ending in a woven plate above the shade itself; the sections woven tight enough to keep out the sun, though not watertight.

285 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large bas-
415 ket of withes, "qerchat", used to measure 25 kilos of pin-head-grained tyëff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqa-ha"), or of a variety of reeds ("säbäz", "geramta", "akär-ma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofada") made by shep-herding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by morocco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agälgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("mu-day") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("qwacha")

285 There is also a purely <u>ornamental</u> fiber plate, en-
[531] tirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, most-ly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wänchär")
411 of a strong fiber ("nacha"). When completed, it has a
857 loop on one end to hook over a finger. A pebble is pla-ced in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end released at just the right speed and direction. It can
[244] stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

439 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the
412 Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight ra-zor, "arab melach", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

439 412 perhaps replacing obsidian blades. They are now in turn being replaced by European safety razor blades even on remote rural big markets. These are called "lesa melaçh" 439 although very commonly still sold by an Arab trader. The 415 small glass drinking bottle called "berellē", used in place of a cup for mead, has been brought by caravans from the Middle East since the Ottoman Turkish period. The European drinking glass, "berçheqo" is still rare in rural areas.

F. Clothing

291 There is a substratum of wearing skins in all of Ethiopia, sheepskin particularly and even leopard skin. Among the Amhara this appears among poor wandering church students, and in the fact that certain textile articles, notably the "lämd", symbolize the leopard skin of the warrior which he still wore at the time of the accession of the present emperor. This type of clothing is in the African tradition.

But the clothing of the Amhara today is largely of cotton, plus a wool cape for the feudal "great men" or [17] landowning farmer. Both have come to Abyssinia from the Middle East areas: the long shirt, "gämis" probably came during the 19th century, together with the white Indian jodphurs (that some trace as late as Lord Napier's campaign); the wool burnus is believed to have entered as long ago as the 5th century A.D., together with Coptic Christianity.[66]

66. Mohrer, E.F.: Beiträge Zur Kenntnis der materiellen Kultur der Amhara. Bern, 1932, p. 19.

291 [437] Raw cotton and cotton sheeting have long been imported, and still are, but the toga (shamma), probably the oldest of the Abyssinian cotton garments, is made domestically, from cotton spun by the housewife and woven on the handloom of the weaver.

The cotton clothing now considered "traditional" is [765] always white. The explanation given by the pious is that white is the expression of mourning, because of the passing from the earth of Jesus Christ.

[294] Tailoring is done by poor semi-specialized Amhara men at "big markets". Garments are made with great care, to follow the traditional style and also fit well. There are no new fashions in these costumes, for the prevalent pattern is conservative: to be properly dressed for the occasion, in the style of one's forebears. Variety exists in trousers: the jodphurs which reach to the bare feet, as former clothing of feudal lords, are more prestigeful than the wide peasant trousers that narrow to the leg just below the knee. The shirt, worn kneelength above the trousers, similarly narrows on the forearm, and is therefore called "ej ṭebab" (lit. narrow-sleeve) in the vernacular, instead of "qāmīs", the proper name (possibly from French chemise, though no Amhara would admit this foreign name for his "traditional" shirt). The only untailored garment is the toga, but this is used for expression of moods and situational conditions (see "language of the shamma").

296 Laundering is done in or near riverbeds, or brooks, by women, housewives or female ex-slaves, using the dried

296 and crushed, potash--containing saponaria seed called "endod" (Phytolacca abyssinica) which grows wild, but the locations of which are carefully remembered for "harvest". The crushed seed is mixed with cold water on the slightly concave top of a rock, or in a cowskin. The cloth is kneaded, stamped on with feet, until a good foam develops. This is done several times; then the garment is rinsed, and bleached by the sun. In time the cloth does become grayish, particularly the peasant trousers which are used more than the festive shirt and jodphurs, but the native soap-plant is kinder to the material than the coarse European laundry soap now available at big markets.

291 There is little basic difference between the garments worn by the sexes. Jodphurs may be worn by travelling ladies of feudal lords, since there is no side-saddle, but the peasant woman never wears trousers. Also, instead of the shirt, women generally wear a long loose heavy cotton gown from shoulder to feet, though formerly the peasant women used to leave the upper body bare, as a symbol of "respect" (as peasant males used to do on most occasions), and for comfort. Above the tied waist, this garment is [853] still loose, and two-year old infants not yet weaned can walk up to their seated mothers and help themselves to nourishment and comfort by simply pulling the unobstructed breast out. Women wear the toga just as men do, but drape it differently on certain occasions.

The old type of trousers, wide at the hips and tapering to leg size just below the knee ("bat tähulät") has survived the introduction of white jodphurs ("surri") only

291 among peasant's weekday wear, and on the occasion of a peasant woman riding a mule (e.g. the bride being carried to the groom's hamlet). In the latter, somewhat tighter variety, it is called "lebaleba". Very recently, Sudanese-imported khaki shorts, British-type, have become popular
294 among peasants for workaday wear, and are mass-produced by foot-operated Singer sewing machines at "big markets" of provincial town, This has changed the status of the male tailor to a full-time, urban occupation, carried on by a poor Amhara and only when he is far from the district of his own kinfolk, to avoid shaming them.

292 The wearing of the kneelength cotton shirt, formerly also of imported silk, the "qämīs", was a special privilege granted by the King to his chief courtiers and feudal governors and lords. This meant that they did not have to bare the upper body even to their superiors, and could, when travelling, demand food supplied from any peasant for themselves and their troops. Now called "ej täbab" (narrow-sleeve) it is urban wear for the commoner, and even the peasant wears it when he is not at work as well as on festive occasions; It is always of cotton. The term "qämīs" is now used only for the full-length, wider-sleeved gown of women, who like to have it emboroidered with green, flowery designs on chest and back ("telf qämīs"). Unlike the male shirt, it is worn all the way to the feet, and is tied around the waist with a thin strip of cloth,

[83] The "qämīs" of women is almost untailored, for emphasizing body contours would be "shameful". It is full-

291 skirted, one-piece, and in rural areas of coarse, heavy cotton cloth made by the weaver (shammani); while the "ejtebab" of men is of imported cotton sheeting (abujedid) of fine quality. Jodphurs (surri) are of heavier, but also imported cotton. The Coptic priests in rural areas also wear a type of "qämīs" resembling that of women, but without embroidery, and much more wide-sleeved, thus called "ejsäfi".

291 In very recent times city women of the younger gen-
177 eration in Addis Ababa have compromised with modernity by wearing a "qämīs" of light, imported, white rayon, thus bringing the development full circle. It is, however, still ankle-length, and the upper part of the body still covered in addition by a light version of the traditional shamma. Even modern-educated husbands who, as clerks or teachers wear European suits themselves, insist on their wives wearing some type of "qämīs" plus shamma. Male wearing of the wide-cuffed European trousers ("bolalē") has taken hold only in Addis Ababa and among modern-educated clerks and teachers. The nobility takes pride in resisting and in wearing jodphurs; and rural teachers still imitate them rather than modernity (much as they teach that the world is round without believing it themselves.).

291 The jodphurs, wide at the waist, are held by a cloth belt, "tebtib". This narrow belt of heavy cotton is used also for other trousers, and for the belt around the "qämīs"
[843] of women. Pregnant women wear a long cotton girdle, 6 inches wide, beneath the qämīs, ("mäqännät"), for support, and use it also at night or during the rainy season, for warmth.

291 it also at night or during the rainy season, for warmth. Old men use it for the latter reason, (but call it "deg", to differentiate it from the girdle of pregnancy).

The most important, and most varied, traditional garment of both sexes and all social levels among the Amhara, is the cotton toga, "shamma". It is made from cotton spun at home and then fashioned by the weaver. It is untailored, but draped with care.

In addition to the average shamma, there is a double shamma (called "kutta") for warmth and longer wear; and a half-shamma, usually of finer weave, for prestige (called "nätäla") used only for daytime wear. Size specifications vary between rural and urban usage, and between districts and provinces.

A full size rural shamma measures about five feet
294 by 10 feet, when finished, To achieve this size, the weaver produces a piece of cloth 2-1/2 feet x 20 feet, cuts it in half, places the borders together, and sews lengthwise. This is the most common garment of the peasant during the work-week, in the dry season, day or night, male and female, It usually has a simple, narrow, dyed border, which is colorfast only in cold, water.

The "kutta", when completed, is usually 6 feet wide and up to 15 feet long, cut and sewn in similar fashion,
291 and of coarse, tightly woven cotton. It is worn at night,
513 especially in the rainy season, and by travellers, for it can also be used as a blanket. Today, even in the center of Addis Ababa, one sees peasants curled up head to foot

291 [613] in this kutta, resembling a motionless sack, stirring only when the rays of the sun begin to warm.

The "nätäla" is more loosely woven and about half the size of a "kutta". Because it was quickly made, used little cotton, and was therefore much cheaper, it was the dress of the poor and consequently despised. But in very recent times it has been finely made, some even in a factory in Dire Dawa city, and it is now finely embroidered near the border where the dyed strip used to be.

291 531 "Jano" or "jano kuta", as the name indicates, was the fine shamma of royalty, in chich case warmth was no consideration, and border emoroidery was of purple, green gold and other colored silken thread, in various designs. "Ṭebäb" or "derb jano" was embroidered with arabesques, and nowadays has often been changed to diamonds in the national colors of Ethiopia; green, yellow, red. Now urban women wear it, and it is becoming festive dress even for peasant women.

291 The roughest, coarsest and most durable workaday shamma of the peasant has no border ("goda"). Sometimes the "ämis" of the peasant woman is made of this tightly woven material. In the old times it had a very broad red border (a foot wide) and since it was worn by the freehold farmer, it was a garment of honor among the peasantry, even in the time of Menelik II. Now it has lost prestige, except among the more remote rural landholding kin, and it is not produced any more.

The "burnos" hooded cape of wool, is an ancient garment worn by Amhara feudal lords and royalty, both men

291 and women, as protection from rain and cold in the rainy season. Finely embroidered, it was also a garment of high prestige, since the king himself presented it to his liege lords from his own royal workshop, frequently made by imported artisans from the Middle East and their Abyssinian [439] apprentices, often slaves. It is still worn by feudal lords in remote rural areas, but has to be bought from caravan traders who import it, though there are rumors that they were until recently still produced in the district of Bäjä-da in remote, mountainous Semyen sub-province.

292 The old prestige of the "burnos" lives on in the "kabä", the royal (hoodless) cape or mantle, of dark wool with embroidered stiff collar and borders, draped over the shoulders, and reaching to the ankles. This garment is still the prerogative of royalty, of nobility on festive occasions, and of priests. It was the garment seen in western newsreels at the time Emperor Haile Selassie wore it in Geneva and London, even with his European suit.

286 During the time of the roving Amhara feudal chiefs, even in Menelik's time, when capitals were no more than tent cities, carpet making was extensive. Some were used as tapestry, by the nobility. The best were imported, but there was considerable domestic production. A type called "kozä" was woven, surviving for a while in remote areas such as the aforementioned "Bäjäda" district in Semyen, but not of any economic significance. It died out as an art, with the death of the old craftsmen, increase in imports, and the end of the tent cities. Cheap rugs have replaced the carpets, just as imported black chintz has replaced

286 the expensive, woolen, hand-made "kabe", among the common priesthood.

291 Headdress, except for the cap ("qob") of monks and nuns, and the turban of priests, is not worn by the Amhara. Only in the cold upper "dega" do the shepherd make a kind of helmet of reeds or plaited wool, covering the ears. The first breach came about a generation ago when some of the [177] nobility began to wear European hats of soft felt, with wide brims. More recently, the tropical helmet of British and Italians has become popular among educated clerks, teachers and provincial judges, and even commoners of distinction are beginning to weave an imitation tropical helmet of reeds, to serve as a miniature, personal sun umbrella. But the vast majority still use no headgear, and protect themselves from the hot sun by wrapping a portion of the shamma around the skull. The shamma thus provides protection from cold, heat, dust, rain--and shields the bashful (see language of shamma).

Most Amhara still go barefoot. Sandals used to be the prerogative of royalty, and though this prohibition no longer exists, leather sandals, or rubber sneakers from Egypt are still only in limited use, mainly in towns. Shoes imported from Europe are expensive and are worn only by highly educated individuals, officials in Addis Ababa, etc. The average Amhara, including some rural nobility, prefers to continue barefoot. Rural nobles even ride barefoot using the traditional stirrup with an iron ring for the big toes. Sandals made of leather were used by travellers. They

291 are only of the last items to increase in prestige in very recent years, due to growing imitation of living patters of Addis Ababa. Coptic churches still require removal of footgear.

G. Sanitation.

515 Two traditional traits of health care and sanitation have already been mentioned in connection with the direct use of natural products: polishing teeth, and washing clothes.

[824] Hardwood twigs such as wild olive (Olea chrysophylla) called "wäyra", or of the "ahya" or "ächema" bush (also softer ones of the type that Somali use in lower elevations) are held between the lips, by men or women, after meals. Even old men (in rural Ethiopia this means men over fifty) have most of their teeth as a result, with little sign of wear or decay. Much of this is due to this habit of polishing teeth and gums at odd moments, much as an American might chew gum. Before this polishing, the end of the twig to be used is masticated thoroughly, and the fibrous ends are then used. The Amhara belief is that this keeps the teeth in sharp condition--they do not do it with the idea of cleaning food remnants out of the mouth. The mental association is than of a bird sharpening its beak.

[296] Already noted also is the use of the potash content
[824] of the seed of the "endod" bush (Hircunia abyssinica, or, Phytolacca abyssinica), for laundering and washing.

Little more positive statements can be made about sanitation. When water is short in the dry season, which

515 may last 9 months, there is very little bathing, and only hands are washed, in muddy water brought from the river or
514 brook, before and after meals. There are no latrine ditches. Feces are deposited behind thorny bushes 1/4 mile from the hamlet at most, while urination at night proceeds within the hamlet. This practice is followed even in towns and in Addis Ababa. Fortunately the strong sun carbonizes the feces in the dry season, and the strong rain in that season sweeps it away. There is no caste of sweepers, and no attention is paid to human or animal feces, except for the manure of oxen and cows. The latter is hand-pressed into cakes and used as fuel.

364 Hyenas, jackals and vultures are not interfered
825 with, as their services in removing carcasses of animal origin are well appreciated.

165 Abundant sunlight during 9 months of the year, coupled with the scanty clothing of small children, probably gives them their best chance of survival in addition to the long breast-feeding. Nevertheless infant mortality is very high, and in an average family half the babies born die before reaching the age of 5.

164 Flea infestation of humans can be described as
136 complete. This opens the way to flea-born typhus, especially on the highland plateau. Lice are somewhat less general, since they are not regarded by the Amhara as inevitable as fleas. Thus, an Amhara whose hair is infected
136 with lice (e.g. during a stay in prisons which are always
164 lice-infected), he may shave his hair. But louse-born re-
744 lapsing fever epidemics recur from time to time, and the

136
164 government has now made free injections available at "big
544 markets" of provincial towns, Bedbugs are also prevalent, of the bloodsucking variety. They are considered a nussance by the Amhara, but all that is done is to air the "alga" bed in the sunlight, which merely reduces the infestation temporarily. Flies are also abundant and very aggressive, so that a flyswitch ("chera") is kept in motion for comfort. Contagious diseases spread readily. Just after each rainy season, malarial mosquitoes have caused epidemics up to levels of 5,000 feet, on the shore of overflowing lakes and rivers.

511 In the majority of cases, some livestock is taken
23 into the living hut (tuqul) everynight. The tuqul has, of course, an unwashable mud floor, no windows or chimney, soot-blackened ceiling, cobwebs in corners. There is no change of clothing at night, merely an added "kutta" or sheepskin, against the cold. Aside from drinking cups, there are no individual utensils.

164 Towns, including provincial towns, are centers for
548 the spread of syphilis and other venereal diseases, due to the existence of entire streets of "women in-between mar-
759 riages" who act as restauranteurs-prostitutes. When surface lesions appear, the native "wogäsha" is consulted; or since the Italian invasion made the "needle" popular, the modern government medical personnel is approached. But patients usually cease to continue treatment when surface lesions disappear.[67]

Eating "brundo", raw beef, at feasts, almost always leads to tapeworm and other taenia infestation. Fortunately

67. Guthe, Th: Venerial Disease in Ethiopia. W.H.O.Bulletin, Vol.2, 1949, pp. 85-138.

164 this is limited to occasional feasts due to the comparatively high cost of beef, and the "kosso" cure does seem to work. Dysentery kills many infants; amoebic dysentery sickens and kills adults also, especially near towns where the population is denser. The opening and increase in trade route communications since the Italian occupation has led to an increase in tuberculosis epidemics.[68]

312 164 Brooks, rivers and wells become increasingly more polluted as each dry season proceeds, and just after the flooding during the rainy season. Water carried long distances in skins is not safe either. The housewife, trying to manage as best as she can under the circumstances, carefully covers containers of food and drink, even of water stored overnight.

H. Mutual Aid

476 The simple living standard of the Amhara is somewhat improved by traits of mutual aid.

These may be listed in four categories, according to Amhara attitude:

(1) Mutual aid within the territorial or kinship unit, usually the hamlet;

(2) between neighboring hamlets that may or may not be kinfolk;

(3) within the religious sodality, the "mähabär";

(4) between individuals.

68. Simmons et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. pp.62-73

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

476 The reasons for such mutual aid, generally called "wänfäl" or "wämfäl", may be of time, space, economics, energy. The time element enters when a task requires completion within a specified period such as harvesting, threshing and winnowing. This is usually done withing the hamlet extended family, aided by other kinfolk. No remuneration is asked, but return services and a feast are expected. The energy element enters in such tasks as hut-building and roof-thatching ("wämfäl awätta", lit. he left to do mutual aid). This too is done within category (1), or with additional help from (2). The space element usually involves neighboring hamlets, on such tasks of common interest as digging an irrigation canal, called "bringing home the bread" ("däbbo awwälä"). Also, category (2) may be involved in the common pasturage, "adäbay" or"adäbabay", used by several hamlets, which includes the right to take water from the same brook, collect deadwood, cut branches and reeds for numerous usages. As a result of toleration and cooperation in category (2), ethnic lines may be crossed, for the neighboring hamlet may be of an ethnic occupation class, and/or of another religion, which often astonishes the urban Amhara and even the provincial one.

The factor of economics may affect all four categories, usually in the sequence of 1 - 4. A farmer may lend his team of oxen for plowing or threshing, to a neighbor who has none or has just lost an ox, in exchange for help with his harvest or other service, such as using a donkey or a mule.

476 Consumption, beyond the territorial kinship group, often takes place within category (3). By way of extension, the"drinking together" of members of the religious sodality known as "mähabär", who also take communion together in apostolic imitation, and who are usually of the same age groups and sex, leads to mutual trust in common purchases for consumption. Most common is the mutual purchase of an old cow or old ox for beef. This would otherwise be too expensive, and it must be distributed and consumed quickly due to the absence of any means of preservation(aside from drying). This mutual sharing agreement is called "qerchan", and is even more common in towns than in hamlets, because category (1) is absent and the need is felt for some near substitute, for mutual cooperation. They also share in the money realized from the sale of the skin, after the slaughtering.

Finally there is the economic partnership between individuals, ("wel"), resorted to usually after possibilities in categories (1),(2),(3) have been exhausted. It is more common in towns than in rural districts. But even among rural neighbors, two individuals may aid each other in clearing fallow land or new bush, or sell each other's produce on the market, particularly if they have quarrelled with their kinfolk. But such partnerships are usually of brief duration, while the first three categories of mutual aid are far more enduring.

2. The Division of Labor.

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462 Besides the dimensions of time and space, the factor of the use of energy is important in material culture. The Amhara of Ethiopia still uses the force of their own muscles as the primary source of industrial power, and their material culture has thus remained basically unchanged, especially in the aspect of human organization of labor.

There is sharp seasonal division of labor among the Amhara, already described in connection with agriculture, the major occupation. This is largely determined by the climate, the heavy rains and little rains, the long dry season; and the very limited conquest of nature by the people in this area, which does not go beyond occasional irrigation ditches. As a result, the seasonal division of labor follows every minute change in the ewather, differs womewhat from year to year depending on early or late onset of the rains. The human organization aspect of agriculture and feasts remains ruled by the weather, which dominates the ecological and religious calendar of activities.

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463 Human organization of labor among the Amhara seems
596 to follow two major principles: (1), Extension of the family organization. The extended family is self-sufficient in most needs for food, shelter, and the spinning of cotton for clothing. Salt and raw cotton are the only basic purchases, and only the services of smith, potter, tanner and weaver are actually essential, though there are a few other cultural elaborations. The extended family is also the major producing unit, in agriculture and animal husbandry. It has traditionally limited its own production

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[596] because the often arbitrary, confiscatory taxation have lain heaviest on the producer of the most abundant harvest.

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554 (2) The attitude despising labor as an activity for slaves or lower-class ethnic groups, especially if the labor is skilled. Acquisition of special labor skills led to enforced migration, serfdom close to slavery, as has been described. Shame is attached to it, by the Amhara. For him, only agriculture, settled animal husbandry, warfare and spiritual activity in church or healing are acceptable. Even in this group of non-ignoble occupations, there are limitations. A farmer who would try to improve the quality of his land on any but a year-to-year basis, would be very unusual and an object of ridicule. For such land would arouse the evil eye, or the envy of the feudal lord, who would increase his tribute or, in case of family freeholds("rest"), increase his extortion of services. Even though a formal "corvee" has very recently been declared illegal, the local rural statute labor cannot be changed much by the central government, especially since it usually appoints former feudal lords to administrative positions in rural districts.

Principle (1) dominates the division of labor by sex, and to some extent by age. It also sets the pattern [633] for the need for and existence of market-places that become urban centers, places where specialist not found among the scattered hamlets can be encountered: in entertainment, in treding goods brought by caravan, in higher justice, higher church, better medicine, and recently, in the availability for some of the 8-year elementary school.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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463 The rural extended family is also the residential unit, the
596 hamlet, and this principle affects the rural residence of the ethnic specialists: the Faqi tanners occupy their own hamlets, Falasha smiths theirs, and, within each ethnic hamlet, the specialists are related by kinship, usually patrilocal as well as patrilineal.

463 Principle (2) here creates the basis forthe ethnic
563 division of labor. The concern of the Amhara is not the time and effort saved by each group doing a specialized task, it is to retain prestige by not working at a skilled manual task but having social inferiors do it for them. Time is not much concern in this culture, for labor is paid by the job, not the hour. Labor is cheap, and since the material culture is relatively undeveloped technically, the work does not require the close synchronization of modern, Western factories. Thus, as long as the primary source of power consists of muscular force and simple technology, the old ethnic division of labor remains satisfactory to the Amhara, and often even to the ethnic specialists whose livelihood is assured.

The Amhara has more confidence that an iron plow-point or pot made by the Falasha is well-made, or that a toga woven by a Muslim will give long wear, than he exhibits if a poor Amhara has learned the crafts and tries to sell him his products. For, he reasons, has not the ethnic workman learned his craft since childhood, from his father, who in turn has practiced and perfected it for countless generations? The Amhara purchaser suspects that a new

463 563 non-ethnic (Amhara), supplier may have done a slovenly job to pick up some quick money, even if he knew the craft. Moreover, the Amhara is convinced that the craft of the ethnic workman, especially the Falasha, is connected with black magic ("buda"), and therefore strong, though evil; while another Amhara individual who may have persuaded or hired a Falasha to teach him his craft (which occasionally has happed in very recent years), will never be taught the magical power connected with ironsmithing, not even from his own father-in-law if he intermarries into a Falasha family (which is also beginning to happen, in towns). Therefore, the product will not be "strong": if a pot it will break; if a plowpoint it will dull soon.

463 563 466 Thus, the ethnic craftsmen retain their patrons, a relationship reinforced also by the personal factor: for the Amhara customer who has established or inherited the habit of trading with a particular Falasha hamlet, where confidence has developed and even personal idiosyncrasies are known, prefers to continue to deal on this personal (or family) basis. This is particularly true since in rural areas the work done is paid for in produce, or in lieu of rent payable by the Falashas for land farmed by them and belonging to the Amhara landholding family. The limitations of this economic, or at best inter-personal relationship are mutually recognized , for neither group would mix socially or intermarry, in the rural district. The boundary line is one of religion as well as occupation and social status. As in most parts of the Middle East, the blacksmith remains an outsider. This is also true of the tanner, in Amhara society.

000 the tanner, in Amhara society.

463 563 565 The values that dominate the division of labor in Amhara territory are closely connected with social stratification, which has been described. While hunters would be at the bottom of the scale, they do not actually have much share in the economic organization. The ethnic occupation class is in the second or third class from the top, depending on how much change has taken place in the local status of "conquered populations" since the 19th century Amhara victories. Actual ex-slaves, usually negroid, are below this level, usually sharing the same status as hunters. The Coptic Amhara, who is occupationally limited occupies the top class, subdivided into feudal lords and sharecropping peasants, with landholding families in between.

But this is a division into classes rather than into castes. For, although occupations tend to be hereditary, and most individuals follow the ethnic specialty of their fathers, they are not under a strict obligation to do so. Emperor Theodore was a usurper of commoner origin, whose mother made a living by gathering bark of the Kosso tree, the lowest occupation of an Amhara. The ethnic classes are more strictly divided by religious identification. In the rural districts there is still no intermarriage between religious or racial groups. In town, persons of the same socio-economic level do intermarry, e.g. "woyto" hippopotamus hunters or ex-hunters, and Shangella ex-slaves. Both are likely to work as unskilled servants or laborers, in a town such as Gonder. In general, the class system of Amhara territory is somewhat sharper than in most Middle

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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563 East countries, but it is not the elaborate caste system of
[565] India.

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438 Regional division of labor plays only a small role. When it does occur, as in case of the "burnos"-weaving and carpet-making of spots in Semyen, which survived until recently, it is a case of local survival of a craft that has experienced culture loss, fallen into disuse elsewhere. This is also believed to be true with regard to viticulture which seems to have been lost during the 19th century southeast of Lake Tana. It is the story of ancient Aksum all over again, where a 1700-year old stone cistern is to this day the major water supply and a marvel to the present inhabitants, as are the obelisks, stone steps, etc. Where regional specialization does play some role, it is in a very limited sense. Certain districts of Begemdir province, for example, are more inhabited by Falashas than others, and the iron plowpoints and pottery may be preferred from there, especially in the dry season when travel is possible. The better togas are made by Muslim Ethiopians in suburban Gondar town. Hamlets of tanners are also encountered more often in the vicinity of a town like Gondar. Since so many basic crafts are handed down only in the family system, modern changes de-emphasizing the family economy, plus importation via Italian-built roads, will increasingly cause culture loss, especially in the rural districts. Already the contemptuous reference to "balagar sera" (rustic workmanship) are beginning to heard among urban Amhara (e.g. in connection with the plow and pottery).

463 561 Division of labor by age is not elaborate in Amhara culture, and will be mentioned in connection with the life cycle. Children perform useful work from the age of seven on. Boys watch cattle, and the harvest against birds and baboons. Girls help in the house and take care of younger siblings. Both do the milking. Adults exercise authority and supervise the community. Elders (anyone 50 or over) are respected and do no hard work. They may supervise harvesters from high points, warn of fire or locusts because of life-long experience, reprimand shepherds. Widows very often become nuns, more often than widowers become monks. For old nuns can still do cooking and baking in monasteries, while old men would not be economically useful there, and usually are too old and illiterate to join the clergy even as acolytes. However, priests who have become widowers very often become monks and continue their former activities.

[885] Girls are considered adults, for work and marriage, at 12-12; Boys usually 4-5 years later. Sons of priests and feudal families usually begin to attend church school at seven. Even today, in places where modern-type elementary schooling has become available, this pattern continues, and the sons of peasants, if they live near a town and have a chance to be entered at all, at least for the first 3 grades, are usually 11 years old in the first grade, and have already served their parents for 5 years in pastoral and harvest occupations.

Among the ethnic specialists, the harder physical labor is done by male adults in their prime, and lighter tasks allocated to children, elders and women. Thus (e.g., within one Falasha hamlet) one will usually see the adult

463 561 males in their prime occupied, in teams of five, at smithing a plowpoint; while the elder weaves a toga at his handloom, as fast or as slowly as his physical condition or pride permit. [462] Pottery is made by the Falasha womenfolk, and men do not participate other than to load finished pottery on donkeys for transportation to the customer.

A. Division of Labor by Sex.

462 Whenever uses of energy are not developed technologically, there is usually a sharp division of labor by sex, in which the routine everyday labor is largely left to women. This is true in Amhara society. Women are tied to household tasks and babies, and therefore tasks that are bound to a fixed time are usually left to women. By extension, since water-carrying is the woman's task, pottery-making is done by women of the ethnic specialist class, usually Falasha. On the other hand, tasks involving tools rather than utensils, and tasks not bound to a fixed daily routine, are usually male occupations in Amhara society.

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Table 3: Division of Labor by Sex

Male occupations	Female occupations	Both
agriculture	kitchen work(except slaughter)	sale of products on market,
animal husbandry	grinding, crushing, husking grain	servants
slaughtering	carrying water from valley	beggary
civil administration	fetching firewood or dung	musician-singer
military	gardening	
religious occupations	spinning cotton thread	
healers	manual labor for church	
scribes, amulet writers	pottery-making (ethnics)	
church painters	restaurateur-prostitute	
weavers	tatooer and hairdresser	
smiths	mead-brewer(urban)	
leatherwork		
hornwork		
porterage charcoal making		
hunting		
teaching		
judges		

The male occupations have already been described in "material culture"or will be dealt with in relation to their significance in "social organization", sinne they are usually more specialized and more inter-related to other aspects of Amhara culture. This is less true of most female tasks, so that most of them, except for "ethnic" and urban occupations, have been mentioned under "dietary habits"

462 or will be described under "division of labor by sex".

462 The hardest daily work of the female is the pounding
252 and/or grinding of grain. Sorghum(mashella), barley, even shembera peas and pepper, are dehusked by pounding with an up-and-down motion in a hollow wooden tree-trunk, with a stout wooden pestle. After that, the grains are usually left overnight in water for softening. The next day they, as well as the common tyeff grain, are hand-ground on an inclined flat stone, by use of a smaller stone of different type, weighing as much as 4-5 kilos, with the same back-and-forth motion of ancient Egypt, rather than rotary. To produce flour for the entire family takes the better part of each day.

316 The woman carries water from the valley every morning,
462 sometimes several kilometers, in a heavy earthenware pot
[482] tied to her upper back. It weighs 20 kilos when full. Only during the 3-months rainy season can she use nearby brooks and temporary watercourses. This female task makes it possible to locate hamlets on or near hilltops, far from water in the dry season, but safe from flooding in the rainy season.

462 Kitchen duties of the female, besides cooking and
251 daily baking of "enjara" bread, includes also the processing of meat for later use. After slaughtering, done by men because of the religious significance of this duty from which women are excluded, she cuts the meat into thin strips, called "zelzel", dries them in the sun to leather-like toughness, then stores them in the hut for the next feast, for use in the stew called "zelzel wot". Food -

462 processing tasks of the women also include the prepara-
25 tion of staples of the pantry, to be ready for immediate use when her other taks have left her no time. The red pepper ("bärbärä") is preserved and readied in the form of a paste, by grinding it, adding water and salt, plus a bit of onion. This paste, called "delleh"or "delleha" can then be used in wot, or to spice butter to be smeared on "enjära" bread, or mixed with oily nug paste and carried as a condiment and staple on travel. Another pre-
[x3] pared spice condiment used by travellers is a dry mixture of spices, salt and "shero" (ground peas), called "meten". Butter may be processed by boiling it with pepper, or with the small yellow root of a rhubarb called "mäqmäqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), which is also used as a medicine against tuberculosis.

462 Fetching and producing materials for fuel is a major
237 female occupation, though left to young girls when avail-
572 able. A special supply of dried cowdung is prepared for the rainy season, beginning right after Easter when the intermittent light rains are expected soon. Donkey and horse manure, "fanday", are not used by the proud Amhhara, but cattle dung is flattened between the palms of women, dried in the sun, piled into tall heaps right next to the hut, then covered with a protective mask of mud and fresh dung. It is also women's task to watch the hearth fire in the evening, to check that it is covered with hot ashes over glowing embers, so that it will not go out and leave the hut chilly, on the one hand, but not burn so brightly that it might set fire to the hut.

373 Little clay oil lamps are a luxury, since the fuel, often kerosene, must be bought at the market. Only churches and landowning farmers can afford it on occasion. In the church, beeswax candles, made by the women auxiliaries of the church from cotton thread and beeswax, serve for illumination at the early masses, and are surprisingly non-dripping.

372 Modern matches, made in Ethiopia under a government monopoly, are how cheaply available at all great markets, and have replaced earlier methods of making fire. The old method is still folowed in remote jungle areas such as Wolqait. There, fire is produced by friction, using a big, soft, bottom piece of "wanza" or "gerawa wood", and a branch or piece of hardwood, such as wild olive ("woyra") as the twirling or rubbing top piece. It sometimes takes an hour of effort. Even in the hamlets, where matches are available, they are saved by transporting fire from hearth to hearth in a broken potsherd (gel). Charcoal ("käsäl") is a luxury item, used sparingly only in pottery-making, occasionally to boil coffee if in a hurry or tea in urban places.

462 252 Baking is a female occupation, but becomes a source of income only in urban centers or temporarily at great markets, where restorateur-prostitutes engage in this work or hire less attractive women to do it for them. A woman who specializes in baking and selling "enjära" and other breads is called a "gagari". It is one of the very few 462 252 554 money-producing occupations in which a Coptic Amhara woman can engage. But it is low prestige, and no self-respecting

462 252 [554] pater familias, certainly not a feudal "great man" or official will buy from her, and a lazy housewife, even an urban one, would be sharply criticized, even divorced, if she bought the product of the "gagari". For it is believed that her baking is carelessly done, that sand and dirt have not been picked out carefully before and during grinding, and the product is "fit only for Shanqalla" ex-slaves. One thin, round, two-foot pancake of "enjära" costs 5 Ethiopian cents (US$0.02); dabbo bread of course costs considerably more but customers are less frequent than for the daily "enjära" bread.

283 462 Spinning is the task of the housewife and of all women attached to a household, be it a hamlet kin group, or an all-female zar society (see chapter on spiritual healing). On her wedding day, the bride brings with her a small, ornamented reed basket, called "muday", in which she carries her own personal little distaff, some cotton thread on a reed bobbin that she has made, together with personal [885] ornaments and tattooing dyes. This symbolizes that she is ready for adult womanhood and marriage, though she may be only 13 or 14 years old.

Carding of the raw cotton is also done by women. They beat it, pick out the husks, then place the cotton balls on the string of a bow called "dägan", tense the string with a stick, then agitate the string with the neck cut off a gourd (called "qel angät"). This loosens the cotton so that it can be cleaned and completely dehusked.

Every afternoon the housewife takes up her spinning, unless some special task takes her time. The distaff "enzart" consists of a round, solid reed or thin round

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wood about 10 inches long, crowned near the tap end by a round, wooden disk about 1-1/2 inches in diameter. The reed penetrates it through a hole in the center of the disk, and the top of the reed has a small wire hook (called "qwanṭa") attached. The spinner uses this hook to rip out a bit of raw cotton, rapidly twirls the reed in vertical position, pulling thread after thread ("der") from the ball of cotton, and wrapping the thread on the reed below the disk. During this process, the balls of cotton are held in her left palm, the twirling of the distaff is done by her right hand, while the thumb and index finger of the left hand undo knots in the thread and generally straighten it out. The motor habit of this makes it possible to work very rapidly, the thread accumulating on the reed below the disk.

It is now taken off and rolled and connected in two possible ways. Some are rolled directly onto small reed bobbins 3-1/2 inches long, hollow, with outside diameter of 3/8 inches, called "qälämm" ("qäsäm" in Shoa province). These are later placed in the shuttle of the weaver for the weft. Cotton for the warp requires firmer consistency and more preparation. After spinning, it is either rerolled onto the sorter end of a partitioned distaff-shaped but much firmer wooden stick that may be as much as 2 feet long and 1/4 inch thick, called "mädäwäriya". This rolling is done horizontally, on the upper thigh, in the privacy of the hut, or by an ex-slave Shanqalla servant woman in similar fashion. The other method which may follow this or serve as alternative, is the rolling of the

283 thread onto a warping reel in rough basket shape and size,
462 called "mäzäwär". It is a kneehigh frame of branches set on the ground, with a somewhat narrower waist. Several s skeins of cotton thread are thus connected and rolled into long, firm strands to serve as warp.

Sometimes it takes several months for a housewife to prepare enough cotton thread for the warp and woof of a single toga ("shamma"). But a diligent woman, if she has little else to do, can prepare enough for half a dozen
[286] or more togas a year. The cotton thread is now given to the male weaver "shamani" who is to weave the toga. He may set up his loom in the back yard of the customer, or work near his own hut.

462 Skilled occupations for single women, e.g. "women between marriages" who often go to urban centers, are few. The brewer of mead and owner of the "tej byēt", described under entertainment, usually employs several women as waitress-prostitutes.

462 There is another occupation, the woman beautician.
305 She may be specialized as a tatooer of women, "täqwari",
304 usually a Coptic Amhara woman, who is kept busy especially
[796] before great church holy days such as the Feast of the True Cross ("Mäsqäl"), Christmas ("Gänna") and Epiphany ("Temqät"). Hercustomers are more often divorcees "between marriages "(who can afford it because of earnings as restaurateur-prostitutes or beer and mead brewers), than young girls or married women, who have no cash. As the name indicates ("tequrat" means blackening), one of her jobs is to darken the gums between the teeth, to heighten

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305 the effect of their whiteness. She also tatoos the women's
304 necks up to the cheek, in the shape of concentric necklaces, to make the neck appear longer, a mark of beauty.

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305 The hairdresser, "ras särï" is a woman who operates
302 a traditional beauty parlor. She braids the women's hair front to back in as few as 12 or as many as 32 braids, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Her best-paying customers are divorcees looking for husbands, especially during the marriage season that follows the major harvest early in the dry season. A full two-hour job with a maximum of fine braids costs ETH$1.00 (US$0.40), while a simple job producing only few and thick braids, costs only a quarter of that. Many peasant women, and women unwilling to go to this expenditure, usually let their hair grow to a huge bushy crop, halo-like surrounding the skull, occasionally anointing it with butter boiled with "ades" leaves. But divorcees have the expensive hairdo done over as often as once every two months, and have it thoroughly washed during the process, so that their hair is much cleaner than that of married women.

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533 Another occupation of women is that of "azmari",
535 musician-singer-dancer, who performs at more elaborate, wealthier, rural weddings, and nearly all urban ones. This will be described under entertainment. She is often accompanied by a male azmari, who plays the single-string violin or the banjo-type instrument, and who may alternate with her in singing rhymes, but who does not dance.

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B. THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR.

Division of labor according to the ethnic origin of of the worker is the most distinctly organized division among the Amhara. This is based on the attitude of the Amhara that labor (especially skilled labor and manual labor) is dishonorable. This attitude is reinforced by the close kinship ties which prevent a cultural deviant from shaming the members of his family by working in the district where they are known. It also reinforces the the ethnic boundary lines, and forces the non-Amhara, non-Coptic, working ethnic groups to live within the circle of their own kinfik, religious groups, and hamlets.

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One of the most despised is the class of the Faqi, the tanners, who speak old-Cushitic languages such as Agau, are considered "pagans" in religion, and are associated by their trade with the hunters, the lowest class.

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On a slightly higher level are the ironsmiths, usually of Falasha, who practice Mosaic Judaism, used to speak Quarinya, an old-Cushitic language, but use the same Semitic Geez language as the Copts in their religious worship and biblical liturgy.

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This use of Geez by the Falasha is puzzling to the Coptic priests, and brings about a sort of grudging respect for the Falasha, which somewhat elevates their status above that of the tanners. But they are suspected of practicing black magic in connection with their smithing of iron. Patrons take magic precautions to counteract all sorts of magic bewitchment by the Falashas whenever they have contact with them.

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463 They are especially afraid of the "buda", evil eye concept,
754 of which Falashas are believed especially capable; also of
326 their supposed ability to turn themselves into real and magic hyenas at night.

This magic power, however, is believed to make their
[323] tools "strong", and the pottery of the Falasha womenfolk "hard to break", so that their wares are preferred by the Amhara, creating a monopoly for Falasha iron tools and pottery wherever Falasha hamlets are within a day's walking distance. In some areas there are itinerant Falasha smiths, whose womenfolk make pottery at the same time. They will live in a special guest hut at the edge of an Amhara hamlet.

463 Weaving is also done by Falashas, but they have no
563 monopoly on it, as Muslim Ethiopian weavers are believed
286 by the Amhara to turn out togas that are just as good. For many centuries Muslims were permitted to reside only in segregated sections of towns, such as "AddisAlam" of
[361] Gondar town. Though this prohibition has been lifted, most Ethiopian Muslims still reside in special quarters of towns, rarely in a rural hamlet on the Amhara plateau. They were not permitted to own land and no one would rent them any.

They see much more of the country trade routes, since it is they who do much of caravan trading, acting as guides, quartermasters and retail traders for Arab coreligionists who are the wholesalers, usually on routes leading to the Sudan, to Eritrea and to Somaliland. The Coptic Amhara consider the Ethiopian Muslims almost as foreign as the Arabs, even the descendants of Amhara who were forcefully

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286 converted to Islam by the invading Mahdi in the late 19th century, some of whom never reconverted to Christianity after the end of the invasion. This latter group speaks Amharic, but the Coptic Amhara refuse to call them Amhara. In turn, the Muslims call the Copts "Kaffir", infidels, which is considered an insult. Though socially segregated, Muslim weavers are often called to make shammas in the back yard of a Coptic Amhara house, returning to their own homes at dusk.

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464 In the province of Shoa, and the southern, non-Amhara provinces, the Amhara conquered much land in the late 19th century, acquiring millions of Galla and other "gabbar", sharecropping peasants with a status somewhat resembling that of medieval European serfs. They still constitute an important category of labor, though they can leave the land if they are willing to abandon everything (which they rarely do). During the reign of the present emperor their lot has improved, and it is the Galla who are at present experiencing the most remarkable mobility in occupation of any group in Ethiopia. The numbers affected by the change are small, but the principle of this mobility cannot be exaggerated. Even Menelik II, conqueror of the Galla, had noticed how easily he could win them over to serve under his military banner, partly because of their in-tribal dissention, partly due to their fierce loyalty to any chief to whom they have sworn allegiance. Today a number are in positions of the central government, and many Galla officials and clerks are sent out to the old Amhara provinces, even to Gondar, to govern and administer
their erstwhile conquerors

463 563 their erstwhile conquerors.

The majority of the Galla are still primitive, dress in skins, use iron spears since they have few rifles, and are "pagan" or slightly islamized, in provinces south of the Amhara provinces. Their participation in the economy is largely agricultural and pastoral, both honorable occupations in the Amhara view. Their low (though rising) social status is due to their conquest, the African living patterns in their home provinces, the difference in religion and in language, but not to their occupation.

The following crafts fall under the ethnic division of labor:

563 323 [462] A. Pottery-making

This occupation can also be classed under Division of Labor by Sex, since only women, mostly Falasha women, engage in it. In the provinces where no Falasha women are available, pottery is made by Gurage or by Galla women. The only time a Coptic Amhara woman prepares a rough utensil she fashions an unsymmetrical container cut of mud coarsely mixed with straw or cowdung and left to dry in the sun without firing. Compared with that, the pottery made by women of the other ethnic groups, is indeed "professional".

323 But in fact even the best pottery made by the craftswomen must be considered primitive. It belongs to the category referred to by archeologists in other areas as "women home industry". The firing is of the "first level", i.e. below 600° Centigrade. No potter's wheel is used. Glazing and waterproofing are minimal and primitive; only

303 the beginning of a slip appears.

There are several puzzles in this situation. In ancient Yemen and Hadhramaut, whence much of Abyssinian culture came, pottery was made with a true slip. The potter's wheel was known from ancient times in many parts of Asia and later in much of North Africa, both areas of ancient contact with and influence on Abyssinia. Yet pottery-making even of the craftswomen in Abyssinia has [462] remained African to this day: it is considered an extension of preparation of food and therefore a strictly female occupation. However, one of the most primitive African methods, e.g. of some Nilotic tribes, who shape pottery from a crude lump of mud, is not used by the craftswomen, though the aforementioned Coptic Amhara housewife may use this method, considered unskilled, and therefore not ignoble.

The first step in pottery-making is the selection of different types of raw material. Three types are usually selected and blended in different proportions for the right consistency and, occasionally, color: Red clay "färäfär", often containing iron ochre; sandy, fine clay from soil too poor for farming, "chencha", which is sometimes fired, ground, kneaded with water, dried and broken before use; black soil from fertile topsoil ("lämm") called "walka", often containing graphite. These are kneaded together with gradual additions of water. Next the woman selects a flat round plate of wood or metal to serve as the bottom support, outline and protection from dirt, for the pot about to be made.

323 The method of building up the pot is the spiral-coiling technique (resembling somewhat that of the Choctaw American Indians), strips coiling upward from the botton, as if in imitation of basketry. The woman rolls a thick sausage of the prepared clay between her palms, and presses each tightly, building up the sides of the pot in a spiral. Then she smoothes the sides with a small piece of bamboo, wood, wet corncob, leather rag or sherd of clay. Decorations are by simple incision of lines (if at all), parallel strokes made with a piece of wood or iron spike while the clay is still damp, after burnishing and rubbing has produced a tight and slightly shiny surface. The pottery is then dried in the sun, for 3 days.

The attempt at glazing of some pots, bowls and pitchers to be watertight when used in cooking, sometimes begins even before firing. Such a pot may be burnished with sundried dung, a process called "tärättärä", which produces a thick and sticky surface, almost like a slip.

Firing is usually done not more than once a week. In preparation, some of the larger and deeper pots, where the sun does not penetrate well enough, may be pre-heated with hot charcoal ("kässäl"), placed inside the jar. Then all pottery is washed, dried again, and leaned neck on neck. After the big beer jars, the next biggest bowls, "daka", (used for fermenting tyeff flour in water) are stacked around them, then the cooking pots "dass"(for "wot" stew) which are smaller, and pitchers and drinking cups, if the space is not needed for the larger water-carrying pots. There are usually no more than 4 of the

323 largest, thigh-high beer jars included in one such heap of pottery to be fired, but a dozen smaller pots may be included. Dry cowdung and branches of hardwood are stuffed in between the pottery and all around. Wind direction and strength is calculated from experience and observation, and when deemed right, the heap is fired. Sometimes the firing lasts only 1 to 2 hours, sometimes longer.

The finished product may be burnished smooth, in case of cooking pots, with the necklace of imported blue glass rings called "doqa". There are several methods of waterproofing pottery ("mamuashät"). The pot may be reheated on the hearth for 1/2 hour, then placed on the ground and cold milk quickly poured in and swished around for several minutes until the pot is cold. The milk is then thrown away. The silicon that has adhered to the heated cooking pot thus provides a partial, interior glazing. This glazing by animal product is considered better, by the craftswoman, than vegetable glaze. The latter is done by using yeast ("teffin") on a heated pot in place of milk. The large baking plate for enjara, the "megogo", is burnished with the caked remains of crushed nug-seed after the oil has been pressed out, the mass of compressed seed referred to as "yäqebye ar" (lit. excrement of butter). Before actual use, the megogo is further rubbed, this time by the housewife, with leaves of the "ketketa" bush (Dodonea viscosa).

Another method of the craftswomen is to paint on the resinous juice of the euphorbia (Euphorbia candelabrum trem), but this is done only at lower elevations.

323 The result of all of these methods is not a true glaze, rather a dull one of only partial efficiency.

It is interesting that these attempts at glazing are also used on tightly woven reed baskets, "qwaçha", waterproofed with "wägämit", skimmed milk, then smoked with "abalo" wood, or the odoroferous "matänya" wood. This smoking out is also done to pottery, not only cooking pots but also the beer storage jars, "gan", and the waterpot, "madiga", though the wood used is "wanza". But this smoking out is the work of the housewife, not the craftswoman, for the purpose is to kill the sour smell rather than to aid the glazing. Amhara housewives do not glaze any pottery.

When a pot breaks it is no great calamity, for the pieces are ground up and mixed with raw clay in kneading to give the next pot a greater chance. The life of a pot may range from 2 weeks to 5 years, in the opinion of the craftswomen, who admit that no one can predict the life of a pot even in ordinary usage.

Two craftswomen usually work as a team. One, usually the younger, stronger but less experienced kneads the clay in a squatting position, while the older woman squats in the sun building up the pot or stands bent over, burnishing it. A big beer jar, the work of 2 days prior to firing, brings from 50 Ethiopian cents to Eth$1.-, depending on locality. The lesser price is more common in trade between hamlets that have long-established trade connections, while the higher price is common at big markets. The same price applies to 3 to 4 smaller pots.

Pottery is made during the entire dry season, from the months of Teqemt to Senye, interrupted only by the

323 harvest in the first month. Cash income from this occupation in the case of a diligent craftswoman can amount to Eth$50.-per year, which means at least 50 large beer jugs or at least 150 smaller kitchen pottery. Such a craftswoman is called "antäränya" or the general term for craftsman, "kayla" (which, however, is often considered an insult). She may be freed from other labors, particularly spinning, in her own household. But in general she considers it a sideline, for some cash income, or to please the landlord by supplying his household and tenants with pottery at very low prices.

323 443 Most Falasha craftswomen do not like to sell on the big market, despite the much better prices there. The reason they give is that they may face insults during the usual dickering that precedes purchase, and also that they do not wish to arouse the envy of their Coptic Amhara neighbors by accumulating wealth. Another reason is that the big markets take place invariably on Saturday, on which day the Sabbath-observing Falashas cannot go to market or trade, and the Muslim middleman would absorb the extra profit that comes from trading at the market. However, Falasha men do follow the latter alternative with their plowpoints.

323 This disinterest of Falasha craftswomen in developing their economic potentials has led to conservatism in regard to modern change. Though very curious about European pottery brought in the Italian occupation, particularly about shape and glazing, they did not adopt European methods, partly because of technical limitation of power and fuel as well as techniques, partly for the

323 aforementioned social reasons. They can bake fired bricks, "shehla", but have no use or orders for them, and do not make them at present. They apply their artistic talents [344] to a tower-like crown, "gulelat", which they place on the top of the thatched roof of the Falasha synagogue, the "mesgid" (which has also the practical effect of preventing the penetration of water during the rain storms).

415 The vast majority of clay utensils produced by the craftswoman is used in the household. Many of them are small, not over 12 inches in diameter or height. Round forms predominate, especially spherical or semi-spherical bowls with a long or short neck. Nearly all have two handles on the side, for grasping and for pulling a rope through.

The simple baking plate for the daily enjara bread, the "megogo", in town called "metad", has already been [354] mentioned. Placed on the hearth of three stones, it forms a simple stove, and itself is topped by a somewhat conical ("moged") lid which fits snugly. 20" in diameter, 1-1/2" high, 1" thick, grain is also roasted on it.

There are numerous varieties of water pitchers, mostly pear-shaped, with long, stout necks. When full (about 15 liters), the Amhara women carry them on the back, and therefore a special loop is added by the craftswoman on the base of the neck, so that the rope can be drawn through it and around the chest, for added support. The most common, big water-pitcher of this kind is the "madiga", with a height of 20" of which 5" are spout, 14" at its greatest width, and a 5" width of the spout. It is

415 It is used for the last stage in beer making, when the talla and fresh gesho are mixed with water. It was also used in many such annual transactions to avoid arguing and litigation.

A smaller version which is more often used as a water pitcher is the "mänqäl", only 14" high of which 4" are spout, 10" diameter at the widest, 7" bottom diameter, and a spout width of 4". It usually contains 6 - 10 liters of water. The "mänqäl" is also used to store smaller quantities of mead("tej").

For final preparation and short-time storage of barley beer (tälla), on feast occasions rather than for daily use, a huge jar called "gan" is used, with a capacity of about 150 liters. Several men are needed to tilt it so that beer can be poured into the smaller madiga. The shape is more like an amphora, with two side handles and almost round bottom. It can also be used to store grain. For safety's sake, the bottom half may be buried in the soil. In Amhara terms, the average "gan" holds more than 100 "berelle" (glass bottles used as mead cups). The spout may be 9" wide, 6" long. Two "gan" are usually sufficient for the average country feast or "tafkar", unless it continues for more than a full day. A "gan" with a shorter spout is called "masäro". Special straps are used for inclining it, called "maweräja" or "mangächa".

Cooking pots and bowls are usually small. The "wachet", a small variety, is preferred in urban areas. It is about 13" in diameter but only 3" high, with a thickness of 3/4" to 1". It is covered with a straw lid. Rural

415 housewives prefer a much larger variety, "mägäfäl", for the family "wot", or, for small-scale cooking the common "dest", or "mamwashät". This is 4-1/2" high, sometimes with two vertically separated compartments for different foods, e.g. peppery meat stew and vegetables. It is usually the blackest in color of all pots. A similar small pot, "mächit" is used for cooking fish.

The traditional coffeepot, called "kuskus" or "kuskushet" (onomatopoetic), is shaped like a madiga, but less than half its size, and has a short and narrower spout. Another pitcher does resemble a European bowl-coffee pot in shape, with a long, bent, narrow spout. This is the one-handled "manqurqoriya" (onomatopoetic), called "jäbäna" in Shoa and "gämbo" in Cushitic, used to pour barley beer into individual cups, holding at most 15 berelle. This pouring was the special occupation of servants called "gämbonya" in elaborate feudal households, and he did nothing else but carry the "gambo" or barley beer on military expeditions with his master. This special occupation has recently fallen into disuse but is well remembered by the nostalgic.

B. Smithing

326 Of all specialized, manual occupations, smithcraft involves the largest team, five able bodied men who, however, can interchange their roles. A team of five is necessary because of the greater use of musclepower and greater need for cooperation is this occupation. But, apart from the former specialist in weapon-making, the technological

326 achievement even of the smith remains comparatively primitive and not only is there no further sub-specialization, but the smith also does whatever carpentry is tangential to his occupation.

The following roles are involved:

2 men to hold the piece of hot iron ("berät") with iron tongs ("fächäl"),

1 man to hammer the iron into shape with a heavy iron hammer,

1 man to operate the twin bellows of goatskin ("wänäf"), one hand moving away from the fire and the other going down,

1 man to coordinate, supervise, and relieve one of the others if he tires, so that the operation is not interrupted.

In some parts of Ethiopia where iron ores occur, the ore was smelted and resmelted to a slaky, spongy, carbon-poor raw material that must be hammered and heated many times before use. This has become rarer until today all the iron used by ironsmiths is scrap, formerly imported from Eritrea and the Sudan, but now available in large quantities where Italian military and civilian machinery remained behind and is being used. Even the anvil, formerly a flat rock, is now often an iron European one, as are the heavy hammers, tongs, etc. Only the bellows is still traditional. It is of the hose type, consisting of a complete goatskin tied up at head and 3 legs, with a lengthy slit on 1 rear quarter (or the legs are tied up and the slit used at neck). When the bellows is extended, air enters into the spread slit. This is closed by hand

326 during the downward stroke, the compression, when the air is pressed through the built-in pipe(or a horn inserted in the neck) into the nozzle to the fire at the other end. There are two such bellows in the operation, one being extended while the other is being compressed with the other hand.

412 Agricultural tools are the major products of the smith. Sickles ("maṣhed") resemble European ones but are smaller and not curved as far. They are teethed somewhat roughly. In case of thick, wooden stalks such as mashella (sorghum) maize and other tall stalks, the sickle is used at the bottom, while other grains, whose stalks are more useful for thatching, etc. are cut at the top just beneath the ear. To cut branches off trees, etc., a billhock, machete-type ("gajam") hacking knife is used, which resembles an oversize sickle but has no teeth.

A big axe ("fas") is used to cut trees, but a more common, smaller hatchet, "mäträbiya", is used to cut deadwood for fuel and other uses. When this grows dull, the owner takes it to the smith who cuts it down and makes an adze of it, after seeking a properly-shaped, angle-formed wooden handle with a knoll at the elbow, to fit the iron adze-blade into. This adze is much used in digging, scraping, hoeing and harrowing the soil after seeding.

The smith also makes the sharp iron point for the digging stick used on steep slopes, especially on the "dega" upland where terrace farming is impractical, or to help break up new or long-fallow soil, using the digging stick as a lever. It is called "ankasē" or "doma". On

412 lower, muddy terrain, e.g. in the "Lazaga" district of the Wolkait jungle border, digging sticks are used to prepare small holes for mashella seed. But the Amhara peasant prefers to use the plow, even on contours of hills, since the use of the stick is hard labor, requiring several men working in unison. Often the stick must be weighed down with heavy rocks against the sun-baked soil in the dry season.

412 407 The scratch plow probably evolved as an elaboration of the digging stick by fixing it at an angle to a long beam pulled forward by the yoke of two oxen, thus substituting animal muscle power for human energy. Among the Amhara, the bottom tip of the plowpoint is almost always strengthened and protected by an iron plowpoint purchased from an ethnic (Falasha) smith. The sharp angle biting into the soil can be adjusted by means of a suspension binding strap of hippopotamus skin, and two small wedges. The farmer merely has to guide the digging-stick part of the plow, and encourage the oxen with his long fiber whip.

412 303 Knives for kitchen use very in length usually from 8 to 12 inches, are curved, with the cutting edge on the curved side which comes to a point. The blade is set in a wooden handle. These knives are also used for circumcision. The old razor blade usually was of similar shape, about 6 inches long, and used primarily for shaping head head hair. It is now replaced by imported European blades. Pincers, 4-5 inches long, are carried on trips to remove thorns from the bare feet. Little ear spoons are suspended from the neck-cord and used to remove earwax, especially by the ladies. [515]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

412 ly by the ladies. An awl ("wäsfe") is used in basket-making and umbrella-weaving. A small chisel ("mesar") may be a more recent introduction, but, like the awl and larger items, is nonetheless made by the (Falasha) smith. [232] Burning irons for burning out sores on the backs of mules and donkeys are also made by the ironsmith.

326 The ironsmith, usually Falasha in ethnic identification, does not usually do silversmithing. This is done in urban areas or big markets usually by Muslim silversmiths. The silver is smithed from Maria Theresa thalers, and the smith may keep as much as 2/3 of the "raw material" for himself. As in the case of most other marketable tools and utensils, the product of the silversmith is made on order only, though increasingly there are traders with chests full of silver filigree earspoons, crosses, rings, etc., ready for sale to officials, travellers, and others with ready cash. In the past, silversmiths using imported coins, and goldsmiths using Ethiopian mined gold nuggets, were to found primarily attached to the tent city of the king at his capital. Casting is done on the principle of cire perdue, a form of wax in clay.

411 Weapons were made also in connection with the feudal military organization, which required the craftsman to follow wherever the armed bands of the warlords went in raids or new settlements, serving as a kind or ordinance, and always on call. Rifles in Abyssinia date back over 300 years, handed down as family property, the stocks replaced time and again with tough, white wood, "wanza" (Cordia abyssinica). Each soldier carried gunpowder in

411 a cow's horn and had to manufacture his own cartridges. European cartridges, since the late 19th century have become prized items and are traded, though not illegally, at all big markets, sometimes in lieu of cash. However during all this time, until the present decade, spears were the primary weapons, for rifles were in short supply, out of date, and often in poor condition. The Galla and other south Ethiopians still use the spear almost exclusively.

Among the Amhara, as in most of Africa, the spear ("ṭor") rather than the also available saber or sword symbolized warfare ("ṭorät"). It still is kept, as a festive ornament and as a symbol of individual liberty and manly courage. There were numerous types and sizes, blades ranging most often from 12 to 20 inches, some lances used for throwing, some as hand spears, some two-pronged. Some were used in battle as late as the Italian invasion in 1935/6.

The saber was considered much less significant. It was curved toward the blade like an oversized kitchen knife, and fitted snugly into a scabbard. The main defensive protection was the round shield of rhinocerous or buffalo hide. It was not very large, 18 to 24 inches in diameter, height of curvature about 8 inches. It was often richly decorated with metal, silver, and even gold in case of the highest ranks. Daggers ("chubbä") were curved among the Amhara, but straight among other groups, for daggers, too, were regarded by the Amhara merely as adaptations of the kitchen knife.

411 A safer version of the throwing spear, with dull or no point, is used by the young men during their mock battle and chase at the "gänna" feast (Christmas).

326 435 The economic aspects of smithcraft could provide the smith with considerable income, since the Amhara peasants are in regular need, and since the Falasha smiths have a monopoly due to the suspicions of the magic correlation which keep Amhara from the craft. But in fact the income is not large. A team of rural smiths, 5 men, receive only Eth$1.50 for their labor in making a plowpoint, if the customer brings his own scrap, double that if the smiths have to supply it. The somewhat bigger "summer plow" costs somewhat more. The customer usually waits in a special hut of the hamlet of the smiths, and must be provided with grain and other necessities, meanwhile. Thus, while an individual smith may earn as much as Eth$400.- from his craft in a year, the additional food bill may be Eth$300.-, and most of the earnings will go to pay the rent on his land, of which he farms less than the average peasant.

Even a well-made plowpoint dulls after about 10 years. Then it is brought back and the smith cuts it down to an axe ("läterabiya") for only 50¢ Eth. When that dulls, he cuts it down further to a slightly smaller adze ("läqofariya") for half that sum.

326 563 The human organization of smithcraft, particularly in the Amhara area where the Falasha are the smiths, presents peculiar problems and patterns. Where no Falasha hamlets are near, the smithing is done by itinerant Fa-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

326 lasha smiths, whose women make pottery at the same time.
563 This arrangement is not liked by the Falasha because of their religious obligations, even though they reside in a special guest hut, slaughter their own sheep and use their own utensils while at work for a distant Amhara hamlet. For they rest on Saturday, work on Sunday, and the [783] more traditional among them have to undergo elaborate purification ceremonies upon their return home.

This alternate,itinerant pattern probably developed during recent centuries when feudal warlords forced them to accompany their troops as ordnance, at any time, often during their entire lifetimes. This continued as late as the 1920's, when Ras Gugsa still ruled the province of Begemdir (Gondar). Since Menelik's conquest of distant Galla lands, in the late 19th century, Falasha smiths have been carried off farther than ever, and sometimes never again seen by their families. Ras Gugsa wanted to please Menelik in his Amharization program in the south, and ordered Coptic churches built by the Falashas in "pagan" or Muslim Galla areas, when their wartime duties were largely over. Some were given Shanqalla females to replace their own distant families. A few rose to the position of "bäjirond" (treasurer) and were given land property in lieu of salary. Thus an exception was made for these individuals, for Falashas were not permitted to purchase land, on condition that their offspring carry on the same services in the feudal armies. Now that these services have been abrogated, there are still a few landholding Falasha families, the descendants of army-ordnance Falasha smiths.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

326 523 [443] Another difficulty is that the Falasha, observing Sabbath on Saturday when the big markets are in operation, cannot market any surplus of iron products directly, even if they wanted to, and must use a middleman, usually a Muslim, who absorbs any extra profit that might accrue in town. Thus the economic significance of their craft remains entirely in the old pattern, and is not developing in a modern direction, which it might have as a result of recent Western contact, stimulation and tools. The Falasha are recasting every part of their own rifles except the barrel, and their womenfolk have attempted to make glass out of sand (with little success) and modern Yemenite clay incense burners (with more success).

C. Carpentry.

322 Carpentry has already been characterized as minimal, incidental, merely semi-occupational among the Amhara, and as a tangential task of the ironsmith toolmaker. At best, the carpenter ("tarabi") is a part-time specialist.

The riflestock, of wanza wood, made by the ironsmith, often leads to his being asked to do other special woodwork, e.g. saddlemaking. If he becomes proficient in it, he may do nothing else during part of the year, and then send the finished, wooden saddle to the faqi tanners for a leather cover. For his own labor he may charge as much as Eth$8.- a better profit than that achieved by the average ironsmith. Wanza wood (Cordia abyssinica) is also used for the legs of the "alga" bed, so that the

I; Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

322 saddlemaker is usually an expert at lumbering. A well-made "korecha", wooden, skin-covered saddle, with adornements, made to order, may cost a total of Eth$25.-

D. Tanning

281 The consumption of leather articles among the Amhara is tremendous for a settled agricultural people. It is reminiscent of Hamitic-speaking tribes whose ecology is based on animal husbandry, and the technology of tanning and manufacture of leather articles is linked with that of North Africa. The ethnic group that does this specialized work in Amhara territory, the Faqi, were Cushitic (Hamitic) - speaking, and probably constitute an early group in residence in Ethiopia. Products consumed include cooking utensils especially for travelling, riding equipment, scabbards, shields, and formerly skin clothing (now worn only by itinerant monks).

281 563 797 The Faqi live in scattered hamlets of their own, the size of which is usually like the smaller Amhara ones: patrilocal residence, 5 to 6 huts at most, each occupied by a biological family. Until very recently, none of them were Coptic Christians since the Coptic priesthood considered these "pagans" on the same level as occupational hunters, too low to be "raised to Christianity". They spoke old-Cushitic languages such as Qemant and other Agau tongues, and gathered in remote tree-groves on top of hills for occasional religous worship similar to that of the "pagan" Galla. Now most of them speak or at least understand Amharic, and since 1942 some have become con-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

281 563 [797] verted to Christianity due to the influence of the Emperor's wishes. Socially they are now considered on a level above the hunters, and, after adopting Christianity almost on a level with other non-ethnic craftsmen. Though largely endogamous within their own Faqi class, they used to take half-Shanqalla wives, or "woyto" (hippopotamus hunters), but near urban places such as Gondar they now marry poor Amhara of doubtful ancestry, after having become Christians. They are still considered "rustic" by the Amhara townsmen, since the Faqi, like the Falasha, do not like to live in town, to avoid negative human relations and insults based on their occupation ("You Faqi").

The Faqi do not like to be called by that name and prefer the term "arabannya", which has a connotation of someone skilled in something imported, of prestigeful origin. This is perhaps well-founded for some of their finer products resemble morocco leather.

The Faqi farm little, less than the Falasha, but keep kitchen gardens. They usually do not own land- unless a family acquired some as a reward for ordnance services rendered accompanying the troops of Menelik II. The cash obtained from their products goes largely to pay rent for the land, similar to the Falasha. The Faqi try to [231] keep as much cattle as they can afford, for the skins are valuable to them, and cow's urine is used in the process of tanning.

The basic team need not exceed three ablebodied, experienced tanners, but there are numerous little jobs for boys and older men.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

281 The raw material, sometimes bought from the place of slaughtering, sometimes brought by the customer, consists largely of skins of cattle, goats and sheep. Goat and sheepskin are worked to finely tanned leather often of reddish color and are used for ornaments, or covers for food baskets and other utensils. Cow or ox skins are used to make rougher leather such as saddlecovers, household utensils, or simply covers for nighttime sleeping. Skins of horses, mules and the multitude of cheaply available donkeys, are not used.

Of wild animals, skins of buffalo (Bos caffer aequinoctialis) and of rhinoceros (Rhinoceros africanus) were used to make shields while antelope skin is still tanned in a fashion similar to that of goats. Skins of oxen and cows are often simply dried in the sun and sold on the market. Thence much of it is exported to foreign countries and made into cheap shoesoles. This method is also followed with crocodile skins, leopard skins and the skins of the Colobus ("gureza") monkey. For simple sun drying, skins are scraped on the inside with knives to remove all remnants of flesh and ligaments, then stretched tight in the sun. The fibers in the skin become glued together to a strong, hard surface. This method is followed by the rural Amhara householder, the hunter who has no skill or experience in tanning.

The Faqi tanner follows two major methods, sometimes both, in the preparation of a skin for specific products: The producing of chamois-type skin by means largely of fats, a method widespread in inner Africa; and tanning by means of tannin-containing plants, a method known in Asia and

281 Egypt since ancient times. Dyeing usually red, by means of native plants, accompanies the tanning process, for any good skin that is to be further manufactured.

Depilation is achieved by exposing the skin to a carefully controlled "sweating" process of natural putrefaction. A cowskin ~~is~~ soaked in water for 3 days, then dried and soaked in cow's urine for 3 days. The hair is thus loosened, the skin softened, so that it responds to easy depilation by rubbing with astringent plants:

[824] "embwacho" - (Solanum margitanum)

"embway" - (Rumex alismafolius), a thistle, the crushed yellow fruit of which also acts as a preservative for the skin, since it contains tannin.

Then the skin is stretched tight on wooden pegs, to dry in the sun for one day. It is then rubbed with a stone for one day, which removes the last remaining hair except for a hairline or raised skin which is purposely left to indicate the pattern for the cutting that will take place later. The skin is then rubbed for one day with lemon (which is commonly available) for a pickling effect.

It is now ready for dyeing. Sometimes, especially in the case of smaller (e.g. goat) skins, the dye is first prepared by boiling the plants in clay pots (the bark of the "qerate" or other bush, or "enqoy" seed mixed with lemon juice), and then soaking and drying the skin several times after the dye has cooled. Cowskins are more often dyed by leaving them stretched and rubbing with the bark of the "beshesha" tree or leaves of the "arat" (or "qerate") bush, for one day.

281 Fats, usually of plant origin, either wild or domestic, are then used to lubricate and soften the skin. This is hard manual work, lasting sometimes several days. Most commonly preferred is the castor oil bean, called "qaçhma" or "gulqwas". The skin may now be kneaded or stamped by feet, to work the fats in and render the skin soft for the cutting and fashioning of objects, which now follows.

282 411 The shield was formerly one of the major products of the Faqi, but now is made rarely and only for ornamental use. The rhinoceros or buffalo skin is cut circular, placed over a wooden stake in the ground, the rim pegged down, to prepare the cupola shape. The skin is then depilated, dried, smeared with oils to expand again. It is beaten to increase its resistance. Incised decorations and the pulling through of the leather handle, are done before the shield is entirely hard and dry. Metal decor is added later, by the smith, after the Faqi has delivered his product.

282 More common products, still made today, are: half-sack, "ënqälba", for carrying the baby on the mother's [354] back, with straps and a bottom tied to the mother's shoul- [415] ders, chest and waist; full sacks, "aqomda", for transporting grain to market, tied with strips (these are also used for various storage in the better Amhara huts); [253] straps cut of poor skins in all kinds and sizes, "qeralla", some for tying loads onto donkeys, some to serve as more springy diagonal straps of the better "alga" bed; a fine, tanned cowskin used as blanket; "jändi", cover

282 over the "alga" bedstead.

Sheepskins ("debdeb") are used as upholstery over the solid clay bench that runs along the inside of the Ambara hut, as cover for the children at night, or to protect a mule from chafing by placing the sheepskin under
[291] the saddle. Other sheepskins, "agoza" or "dabälo", are worn by church students too poor to own a good toga. Several skins make a coat for an adult itinerant monk and, formerly, for the warriors.

[415] Goatskins, when little-worked, are used for water carrying ("qärbäta") on travel, or to store butter in.
[512] The bladder is made into a little bag. But goatskins carefully and at length scraped and tanned are made into parchment for amulets and books, especially psalteries for the church. These yellow-brown parchments ("beranna") with religious or warrior-king texts were rolled into a goatskin cover. Since contact with European missionaries in the mid-19th century, the custom has been to sew parchment pages together on one side with a twisted gut, bind the book in this fashion within two wooden covers covered with a red, tanned goatskin, on which a cross with even branches is impressed with a hot iron.

[531] In the same fashion scabbards of daggers are covered and ornamented with impressed, geometric lines. The tanned tailskin of a cow is used to cover a better walk-
[534] ing stick, on which it gradually dries fast. Drums for use in church (and formerly for royal proclamations) are made by tanned cowskins stretched over both ends of the wooden body. Finely tanned skins are used to cover the

282 aforementioned foodbasket for travel (the "agelgel"). Drinking horns and cups of "great men" (feudal lords) and landholding Amhara peasants are sometimes similarly covered by ornamental skins.

282 492 The saddle, "korecha", is still an important product of the Faqi, after the carpenter-smith has prepared its wooden basis. It has a high front pummel of wood, and a high wooden backrest, both held together by the saddle-tree of two wooden planks at a wide angle to each other. This is covered by the Faqi with a very thick, strong, parchment-like cowskin, sewn carefully and tightly through holes drilled in the wood, and ornamented with line de-
[386] signs, often after dying the skin black with soot obtained from the "qäntätef" creeper vine.

Saddlemaking, like shield-making, caused much displacement of the Faqi during the long periods of warring chieftains and their armies. The great pride of an Amhara horseman was to have well-made and ornamented leather equipment for his horse, on its head, chest and back. Here the tanner often had to work in close cooperation with the smith. The iron ring of the stirrup (still in use); ornamental metal discs; the iron mouth pieces which resemble the Arab type and press tongue to mandible so that the horse reacts painfully to the slightest direction of the little finger, were common and still are in many districts. Gold or silver ornaments for the horse were important decorations for bravery given by the king especially to officers of high Amhara nobility. They are still honored as family heirlooms.

E. Weaving

286 Most weaving is of cotton (Gossypium arboreum), grown in the lowlands of Ethiopia. It is of shorter staple but stronger than the Egyptian, imported from the Sudan.

286 563 [42] Weaving is man's work, and in Amhara territory is an "ethnic occupation" carried out either by Falashas or by Muslim Ethiopians. Emperor Menelik II tried to change this by encouraging Amhara men to take part in this basic and increasingly necessary activity, not only for the traditional shamma, but also for the spreading use of "qāmīs" shirt and jodphur trousers. But he had little success with it. Only very poor, "detribalized" Amhara (who have intermarried with socially lower ethnic groups) weave shamma togas, and cotton sheeting imports have increased steadily since Menelik II for other garments. One can therefore state that weaving remains an ethnic occupation.

286 There are two basic types of materials for shammas woven on the traditional handloom. The more prevalent is the peasant-type, thick, warm, soft, tight-knit and sturdy, heavy material, that will last long; the other is thinly woven, almost like a muslin, and is preferred in towns, especially by the women who use it like a long shawl above a long dress. The latter type is more richly embroidered at the narrow borders.

When the housewife has cleaned, carded, spun and rolled the cotton thread for the warp on a warping reel,

286 and the thread for the woof is rolled on reed bobbins, the weaver is called, if he does not insist at doing the work in his own courtyard (on which the rural Falashas particularly usually insist). He brings the portable comb "mäncha", which consists largely of fairly light hardwood bars with neat rows of thin reeds, "ters" (lit. teeth) fixed horizontally between them; also the heddling arrangement which consists of a few neat sticks and cords, and the small canoe-shaped shuttle, "mäwärwärya" made of smooth hardwood and pierced by a hole through which the cotton thread from the bobbin inside the shuttle can later be drawn during wefting. This is the basic, personal equipment of the weaver, referred to as "shamani eqa".

At his place of work, a horizontal beam and bar are set up on sturdy stakes, high enough so that they will be above his head when he is in sitting position. A hole, "masraya", is dug so that he can place his feet from the knees down in it and yet have another foot of leeway at bottom. This is important for the heddling arrangement, the device of raising and lowering alternate strands during wefting by means of a treadle which consists simply of strings attached to the big toes, so that each foot moving up and down creates a shed and countershed, up above.

The fixed part of the loom is set up on stakes about 2 yards from each other, the horizontal bar about 2-1/2 yards high. The portable comb is about 1-1/2 yards long and is suspended by 2 ropes about 1-1/4 yards long from

286 the top, so that it hangs about 20 inches above ground and can be operated comfortably. The shuttle is about 8 inches long, canoe-shaped, with its inside carved out to interior length of 5-1/2 inches, 1-1/4 inches inside width, and by means of a lengthwide strong reed a bobbin 2-1/2 inches long is suspended within it.

The loom mounting now takes place. The warp is stretched lengthwise in front of, over and behind the weaver, hitched firmly to a wooden post in front of him ("yäfit gend"), after being laid out over a horizontal beam on top and in front of him so that on that beam the warp is laid out, bothllengthwise and parallel. Usually there are 8 packthreads ("mäzärazär").

The operation consists principally of putting the waft between the warp as quickly as possible by throwing the shuttle across horizontally from one hand into the other, through the passageway("wärrawärrä"), which constitutes the picking part of the wefting. At the same time he operates the warp or comb by means of a long, arched stick of hardwood ("mäwätäriya") to smooth the edges of the material and prevent puckering by stretching it. From time to time he lets on and takes off, by unknotting and loosening the bundle of thread and retightening (this may be done by his junior assistant-apprentice). When finished, the weaver carefully knots the ends together, and sews the lengthwise ends of the shamma ("mäsad") by hand with a strong thread, now often an imported one.

286 An experienced weaver can throw the shuttle as quickly as every 1/2 second, which would mean 120 picks a minute. It is a one-man operation, and the junior helper is employed primarily to carry the portable comb hand bobbins and make fastenings as indicated. An average, simple shamma takes about two days of work, but cases have been known when an experienced weaver in the prime of life, working uninterruptedly for 12 hours from sunrise to sunset, without rest and withour mishap, did it in one day, because of the pressure of an approaching marriage. The marriage months following the harvest are the busy season, ending at the approach of the light rains. Often a weaver takes 3 days for an average shamma, with long rests during the work day; a "kutta" toga maywell take a week.

Weavers usually work by special order only and do not store any products for more advantageous sale, for the "season". They are craftsmen, not traders, particularly the Falashas, and they employ no middleman. Thus the transaction is on the interpersonal level. This is even true in the provincial towns. Only in Addis Ababa can a market section be found where traders store and sell readymade shammas, but nearly always they are of the muslin, cheesecloth-type variety, with a selection of colorfully embroidered, narrow borders.

286 386 439 Traditional dying is rarely of the cloth, but mostly of threads which are then used in embroidery. In the past many of these red and blue dyes were imported from the coast, from India, or colored threads

286 pulled from imported cloth. Now most of these dyes are
386 imported from Europe, and many are colorfast only in
[439] cold water (which causes little difficulty as most washing is in cold water). Such embroidery must be paid for extra, but the simple, narrow, single-colored border of the shamma, of the rural type, is included in the price.

286 For such a peasant shamma, the weaver receives
434 from Eth$5 to 8.- depending on whether or not the customer supplied all the prepared cotton. An average, experienced weaver can usually get enough orders to earn about Eth$200.- per year, in the rural area. If he does no farming other than gardening, his food cost may be Eth$140.- per annum. The average weaver is left with more cash than the farmer, who rarely has more than Eth-$30.- left in cash at the end of the year. More often the weaver also farms, since his "season" does not conflict with the major active farming season. A hard-working weaver of solid reputation has the opportunity to accumulate comparative wealth, at least theoretically, but since most rural ethnic specialists, including the Falashas, are not much concerned with commercial profit, few do. It occurs more often among Muslim town weavers.

286 The social position of the weaver, apart from his
554 ethno-religious affiliation, gives him a high place among working specialists, almost equal to that of the musician (if it were not for the fact that the weaver is usually non-Coptic). He is above the status of a smith, and there is no suspicion of black magic attached to the

286 weaver's occupation. If the weaver were to become a Copt
554 and live among Copts, he would be on a social level equal to a poor, laboring Amhara.

C. Semi-specialized and unskilled.

463 The present division of labor is still based on
563 the former feudal structure of the Amhara economy and human organization. Specialized skills are left to other ethnic groups, and, apart from non-ignoble occupations such as war, church, agriculture, healing, the Amhara reserve to themselves semi-specialized occupations and part-time labor traditionally carried out by household retainers.

The latter type of labor, dealt with in this section, can be roughly divided into three categories: (1) labor arising out of the feudal lord-peasant relationship; (2) semi-specialization "that anyone can learn", in the attitude of the Coptic Amhara; (3) temporary la-
[465] bor, for which specified wages based on Time and Energy are agreed upon, called "damoz" (a contraction of "dämä-wäs", lit. "blood-and sweat" compensation). This term is even used for temporary marriage, during which the woman acts as cook and travelling companion.

466 The first category arises out of the obligations
[566] owed by the sharecropping "gabbar" to his feudal lord or landowning church: the former statute labor, when everyone would come with his own tools and construct a

466 house, a church, a simple bridge, help in harvest, make charcoal and gather incense for the church, conduct pack animals on military expeditions, function as guard or sacristan, Amhara labor thus includes the agricultural worker of many semi-skills, who usually hires on in March when the little rains launch the plowing season, and who must furnish a "wās", a personal guarantor who will be responsible for the employee's conduct, and agree on time, energy to be expended and wages to be received.

465 At present the wage is about Eth$30.- per month for full-time labor, 6 days a week, sunrise to sunset (12 hours, less about 3-5 hours rest); plus free food (usually simple) and a place to sleep inside a hut or temporary shelter; clothing is at the employee's expense. Important church holidays are observed, and leave is usually granted to take care of personal affairs, in the case of an Amhara -Coptic employee. The master may not beat or haze the employee, on penalty of a fine levied by the "cheqa shum".

464 Thus, even the poor Amhara laborer retains his pride, but causes the employer to look for labor among socially lower ethnic groups or even Shanqalla ex-slaves who have remained, largely in Amhara territory after liberation. The employer pays these less, works them more, even on church holidays since many of them are still non-Christian. In proud Begemdir (Gondar) province, where no Galla or Gurage ethnics are available for labor (as they are in Shoa), unskilled labor is a

464 real problem, and for modern tasks has to be brought from southern provinces, or Eritrea (as the Italians, as well as Point IV have found out).

566 466 701 The pattern in the former feudal military service was one of greater pride and prestige even for the poorest Amhara. The feudal-military chief had to clothe, house and feed his men, and could never use them for hard labor, such as agriculture--especially plowing--even when he had no temporary work for them. They were quartered with peasants whom they exploited like serfs, and since the chief paid no wages, he assigned his soldiers "gult" land, often on a temporary basis, which included the peasants who usually were non-Copts and did not have the protection of either church or cheqa shum.

567 797 Though actual slavery has now been abolished, its recent existence still affects the pattern of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and introduces an important element which differs from the otherwise similar picture of early post-feudal Europe. Most of the slaves were Shanqalla (negroid) or Barya (Nilotic); plus some Galla and other south Ethiopian, more-African groups. Since they could not be sold if baptized Christian, the master was not interested in their conversion; the church despised these different lowlanders as unfit to be "raised to Christianity", in the Amhara phrase. If a master desired to free a loyal slave, the method was to have him baptized, on which occasion he would acquire a Christian godfather who would henceforth protect him from sale

567 and insist that he be declared and remain free. Until

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

567 then a slave had no legal personality and his master was responsible for any damages or crimes he might commit.

Though it was illegal, no one interfered with a master who killed his non-Christian slave. The offspring of an Amhara father and slave mother had full legitimacy and rights of inheritance, but the child of a free woman and a male slave--a rarity--remained a slave and belonged to whoever had rights over her, i.e. her husband, or her parents if whe was unmarried. In the province of Godjam a slave could own his own skins, till allocated field of his own in own spare time, and trade his grain on the market, so that he resembled a serf of medieval Europe, but belonged to his master, not to the soil

164 567 Much of the labor available today in the rural Amhara provinces, especially Begemder, is of Shanqalla or semi-Shanqalla and half-Barya origin (i.e. with an Amhara father and ex-slave mother). There are many of these half-negroids because of generations of concubinage, and because of the simplicity of the ecological life of the Amhara which can be regarded as a levelling factor, and good harvests or wartime famines were almost equally enjoyed or suffered by master as well as slave. Free Amhara peasant women and slave women did the same type of work, even crushed barley together at the same time in the same hollow treetrunk (a frequent scene in paintings). Liberation, in the past, of individual slaves, was rare, for not only was it a loss to the master equal to 3 pairs of oxen, or 2to3 good huts, or

464 an entire harvest, but the slave would suddenly find
567 himself without a protector, without food and shelter, separated from his own (Shanqalla) people since birth and not knowing their language or their customs.

When liberation was decreed by Emperor Haile Selassie in 1941/2, many ex-slaves remained with their old masters or attached themselves as retainers to a new one, to have a basic livelihood and protection in court against hurt or insult from strangers. The fact that slave trading had been forbidden by Haile Selassie since 1924, and been gradually enforced since then, had increased the personal attachment of slaves not only to the master but to his entire extended family from which they could no longer be sold. After 1942, those ex-slaves who did leave their former masters often settled in makeshift shacks in towns, usually in the section formerly assigned to Muslims, and they now constitute an important potential labor supply in the towns.

463 The second category[1] includes semi-specializations
464 of some poorer Coptic Amhara who, in addition to some farming, do such work as making charcoal ("käsäl" or "dengay Käsäl"), as soon as the major harvest is over. They then move in small teams, usually kinfolk, into the drying river valleys where suitable wood is more plentiful, and later sell their product in towns, to restaurateurs, on the big and little markets, or to smiths and potters. Since this trade is "one that anyone can learn", non-occult, there is nothing slavish about it to the mind of the Amhara, and the loss of

[1] [of part time labor (see p.215, cat. 116).-Analyst]

463 prestige involved is slight--occurring only if there is
464 kinfolk nearby shamed by such manual labor. It is on a social level with the gathering of kosso-bark by a poor Amhara woman.

463 Some farmers have a part-time specialty of fashion-
[324] ing the stone used as mano by the housewife when she grinds grain. They are called "wäqari". No shame is involved; it is considered like a hobby, like whittling away at wood.

[693 Some heads of farming families are adept at "talk-
554] ing well in court" for which they achieve great prestige--the major method of achieving prestige. They are called "täbäqa" lawyers, and not full-time specialists since all they can expect, if they win the case, is a bellyful of barley beer or an occasional gift, but they are guests of honor at the victory feasts and "men of reknown".

A large number of semi-specialists fall into the
[23] category of caretakers, "täbäqi". Cowherds and shepherds, if they are grown men not useful at anything else, are included in this category.

463 Part-time employment is found by the former feudal
265 chamberlain, "agafari", at big weddings of landholding peasants or in towns. They act as caterers, order the bread, meat, beer, mead, etc. They are experts at headwaiting, and know just whom to seat at what table or around which "mäsob", according to rank, and they indicate to each servant to whom to serve beer and to whom the more expensive and more noble mead. This was

463 once a noble profession, requiring much intelligence
265 and training, but now a handsome cash gift, partly for the wedded couple and partly as a tip, can introduce a non-prestigeful guest to the table of the nobles. The profession has thus dropped to the level of the itinerant musician, the "azmari", and brings neither prestige nor any particular shame.

463 A still honorable semi-specialization is that of
532 the painter of religious or religious-royal themes in the church, the "seel-sali". He is often a layman loosely attached to the church, who learned his craft while attending church school and then apprenticed himself to a master painter. He is often hired by an individial landlord or well-to-do, often aging, pious Amhara man or noble lady, who wish to make this gift to the church and often order the painter to paint in a small, modest likeness of themselves or their recently departed parents. (See section of art).

464 The third category of "damoz"[1] labor is traditionally found in the rural areas primarily in the case of the temporary marriage. The availability of ex-slaves rarely makes it necessary to hire on any but temporary agricultural labor, for it would be too expensive and difficult to hire Amhara labor. There is, however, a type of day laborer, "mwayatänya", or simply "seratänya" (worker), who is now paid about Eth$1.- a day, and can be hired for some temporary job without the other involvements sich as leave for church holidays and kin-visiting. A poor Amhara will sometimes hire on for some ready cash,

1 [i.e. "temporary"—see p.215, cat.116. -Analyst]

464 and be willing to forego his usual demands, temporarily. During the caravan season, some will hire on as mule-drivers for a round trip. Otherwise the day laborer is rare among rural Amhara, and met more often only in provincial capitals and the few cities.

D. Labor and the market-town.

464 Laborers hiring on in the towns for temporary work (e.g. in construction) do so usually through a labor broker. There are no organized factories in the provin-
[467] cial towns, only a few small ones in the main cities, and there is not yet such a modern development as a labor union. Child and female labor is widespread and almost entirely
[465] unskilled. A laborer's daily wage was equated with 25¢ Ethiopian, by clause 6 of the Penal Code of 1930, but the present rate actively paid for urban labor of Amhara is Eth$1.-per day. The Emperor's factory proclamation of 1944 authorized the Ministry of Commerce to regulate hours and conditions of labor, but this actually anticipates future conditions and finds little application at present.

357 466 The household servant in the town usually hires out on a monthly basis. The traditional, personal guarantor and 2 witnesses of wage agreement are still necessary. The salary may now be as high as Eth$40.-. The servant is also fed and housed, and if he stays some months may keep any clothing given him. Moreover, his

357 his task is fixed in advance and if an Amhara he will
466 usually refuse to carry out any work for which he was
[E62] not engaged. Women servants usually receive half the salary of a male servant. Thus only officials and relatively high-income urbanites can afford Amhara servants; servants of socially lower groups can be hired for considerably less, if themaster is willing to forego the prestige of having Amhara servants.

The urban householder, who is not surrounded by kinfolk in his residence, usually must hire a night watchman, "zebanya", who sleeps huddled in coarse shammas in front of the house or behind the outer gate. They receive the wage of day laborers. Often they are old veterans of former feudal soldiery, too decrepit for any other work, yet still fierce-looking and fierce-tongued enough to discourage thieves.

265 Urban teahouses, coffeehouses and mead-houses
+66 employ waiters, "asalafi", who do not have the specialization of the more prestigeful "agafari", but who have steadier jobs. Their pay is not above that of the day laborer, but they can accumulate cash more readily.

[463] During the present generation a new wlement of
875 modern-educated clerks, teachers, hospital "dressers" and
871 government officials is gradually entering the occupational pattern of the town, though still in very small percentages. A graduate of the traditional church school of the rural areas is considered to have only the equivalent of 2 grades of elementary school. All towns now have at least one modern elementary school with 8

875 grades, in the Amhara areas, sometimes also in the south.
871 Most elementary school teachers in the provincial capitals are East Indians, except that Amharic and Coptic religion are taught by Amhara. A graduate of an elementary school can take a job as a teacher himself and begin with a wage of Eth$125.-a month; or as a municipal clerk with about equal income, which places them in the upper income group. Even a graduate of the 5th grade can earn Eth$50.- as a clerk on the bottom rung of the "educated". Or he may secure a teaching job in a church school near his home, and then go to the court of the bishop and wait about ("daj tena") until the great man notices him and confirms him in his job.

871 In view of the high cash value of modern education, almost everyone wishes to enter, though fathers are still reluctant to part with the services of their sons, in cattle herding and harvest-watching, until the boys are 11 years old, so that graduates of elementary schools are frequently 19 years old. The elementary schools are still so few (though increasing) that only the sons of influential "great men" usually manage to be admitted. Secondary schools are available primarily in Addis Ababa, not in provincial Amhara capitals, and there nearly all the teachers are Europeans. Graduates of secondary schools become upper-level government officials.

464 The preference of Amhara individuals to hire on
632 only for temporary labor, if at all, finds its expression and variation in the market town. Here many events that bring variety into his fairly monotonous rural life,

464 632 happen and can be talked about. Here caravans arrive with all kinds of trade goods, and though the Amhara is not a trader in his culture pattern, he does hire on as transportation helper, and will have his own donkey carry some goods for sale.

443 There is a small daily market in each town. Where no town is near, one day a week a small rural market takes place (e.g. every Tuesday at Maqwamiya in the district of Seqelt) so that farmer and trader can meet Monday through Friday, at these markets set up at crossroads, in a grove of trees, or near a church center.

The big Saturday market takes place in a town terminal of caravan routes; nowadays at the end of an Italian road, also, e.g. at Qolarba in Dembea, where Italian trente-quatro trucks carry imports and exports to Asmara, Eritrea, and the coast, while caravans carry goods from and to the Sudan. Gondar town is an older and bigger Saturday market. To these markets are brought surplus farm products. All routes lead to it, and the well-to-do ride there on mules, their servants beating out a road for them among pack donkeys and pedestrians. In return, Ethiopian retailers (often Muslim) sell goods bought from Arab wholesalers.

While there is some duplication of items of sale at these markets, the daily markets specialize in items used by or obtained from the household: fresh butter sold on a leaf, to put on the hair; melted butter for cooking in "wot"; red bärbärē pods of varying strength,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

443 or green ones for "alecha" meat sauce; tyeff grain; imported and native spices; linseed and nug oil seeds; firewood; chickens; donkeys and sheep and goats, but no more expensive livestock. Approaching feasts, fasts and rainy season change the emphasis and veriety of products and activities.

438 The big Saturday market emphasizes items of long-distance trade such as salt, from the lowland plain of Areho, in Danakil, bordering on French Somaliland. Bricks of this coarse-grained salt "Amolye" were formerly used as money, their value increasing with the distance from the place of origin. This has been gradually discontinued during the reign of the present Emperor, and salt is now also imported in crushed pebbles from the Sudan, called "Senar" after the area of origin. The big bar has become rare, is called "lemadaw", and costs from Eth$4.- for a big one to Eth 50¢ for a little one.

438 439 Coffee comes from Jimma. Raw cotton is sold by weight, from the Matamma border of the Sudan, brought on camel back. Spices (e.g. abusda) and incense come from as far as Yemen. Razor blades come from England. Imports from the Sudan include much cotton cloth: "abujedid" for shirt-making, more expensive cotton "stock" material, and now also khaki cloth for shorts and modern bush jackets.

439 [65] Import duty is high, as much as Eth$9.- per "taqa", about 45 meters. Some raw cotton is domestic, from the Setit market of the Wolkait jungle border. "Taqa"

439 bales of finished material include white khaki, "mä-bruq"; a thinner and cheaper quality, "mahmädi"; and colorful prints, sometimes of rayon and even silk, "bala mänäṭer", used by the Coptic clergy to wrap the tabot in, or to make colorful umbrellas for processions.

In the past, most imports were for the top feudal chiefs and the clergy (e.g. chintz for the mantle
439 replacing some uses of the older burnos). Now every
291 Amhara, even if poor, wants to own a pair of white Jodphurs, for going to town, to church and to special feasts. In the cities, the semi-educated now also sport a long-sleeve, khaki bush jacket, the "duba", worn usually under a light shamma instead of a peasant one, and only fully educated top officials have gone over to full
439 European dress. This has steadily increased imports of cotton cloth, ever since Menelik's victories made even
[293] the poorer Amhara feel "noble". The sun-umbrella once reserved for the king, "jan ṭela" became the ambition of every peasant housewife. Little porcelain cups, "fenjal", are often the only item of foreign origin, besides cotton cloth, found even in remote hamlets, for the use of honored guests.

The drawing power of the big markets was increased still more when the Italians built roads to some of them during 1936-1940. Their heavy trente-quatro trucks bring imported items mostly from Asmara and the Red Sea coast: blankets, wood or glass beads for necklaces, sandals, Egyptian rubber sneakers, Yemen incense and

439 some spices, English razorblades, sewing needles, safety pins, Lux soap in hotelroom size, laundry soap cake, [442] kerosene, etc. The wholesalers, usually Arabs, buy these [443] and sell them to Muslim Ethiopian retailers. Sometimes, in bigger towns, Arabs open regular stalls and even stores to sell these items daily, as well as special luxuries such as chocolate, hard candy, and products of the central Ethiopian government such as matches (a government monopoly), cigarettes for Muslims (also a government monopoly), school notebooks with the picture of the Emperor on the title page, pencils, imported readymade eyeglasses, etc. On their return trips the trente-quatro trucks are heavily laden with produce such as tyeff, nug, linseed, peas, beans, honey, sheepskins, cowhides, and in some areas musk from the civet cat, and coffee.

438 The purchases of the farmer consist in greater part of items from other areas of Ethiopia, notably, salt, coffee, spices, some of the raw cotton and matches. Much of this is still carried by traditional caravan, where no roads exist or where they have been washed out. Caravans form after the middle of the dry season, and return just before the rainy season, so that the farmer can stock up on staples.

435 To pay for these purchases and for some of the imported items such as razor blades, the farmer brings his produce, but prices fluctuate between seasons, with every arrival or departure of caravans (or trucks), and with distance. For example, 1 quintal (100 kilos) of

435 tyeff in Gondar brings as little as Eth$10.- but in Addis Ababa Eth$30.- and more. Nug seed bring as much as Eth$30. per 100 kilos even at the Gondar market, a rural production area. Gesho, hops, brings as much as Eth$1.- per kilo; some semi-urban farmers grow it as a parttime cash crop (also the drug plant "chat" chewed by Muslims). Other products sold by the farmer include honey, peas, beans, maize, sorghum, dagussa, spices, beeswax, chickens brought by farm women, and recently also eggs; milk, butter, livestock big and small, goat-gut ("jemat") for cordage and the "qrar" banjo. Big livestock (cows, oxen and mules) are traded only at big Saturday markets, also the fat-tailed sheep or old cow for the Sunday dinner. At the end of long fasts edible livestock is in much demand [497] and prices may double. It is also noteworthy that despite the poor roads, modern truck transportation is so efficient economically in comparison with traditional caravans, that prices for comparable imported and long-distance domestic products are on the same scale at the big Saturday markets.

443 [492] The big market is also an important governmental administrative center, especially the judicial organization. From ancient times this has been the location of the formally appointed judge, the "dayna", to arbitrate disputes that the curbstone judge has not settled, and to hear cases against accused thieves. Here the 443 651 governor's trade chief, the "nägad-ras", acts as collector of revenue and supervisor of trade practices. He fixes and alters tolls on trails and river crossings,

443 and observes the travelling traders, the "mängädänna".
651 Both chiefs, especially the danya, sit under broad, sha-
696 dy trees on the market. Nearby is the gibbet, from which criminals were publicly hung until less than a decade ago. Recent additions to the market scene include a few modern tables and chairs at which treasury clerks from Addis Ababa receive import and other duties; and, within
758 a barbed wire fence, government "dressers" of the health department from time to time, especially in epidemics, give free typhus and other injections to anyone applying and diagnosed sick.

437 Trade practices of the Amhara differ from much of the Middle East, especially from the Arab, The Amhara is too proud to badger a customer, and the profit motive is not as storng--he is not concerned with financial gain. The Amhara is not concerned at monetary loss in a trade transaction but his temper is aroused if he fears that he has been bettered, outwitted and made the laughing stock of others. If he has sold to a foreigner at only a little above the usual price instead of double or triple, his competitors at the market will jeer at him. In this case he will try to undo the trade, claiming linguistic misunderstanding.

As a result of this fear of being shamed, producers of native articles will not bring manufactured goods to market unless they have a previous firm order, after which the customer has to wait. It is craftsman's trade rather than commercial. This is even true of members of ethnic low-class producers, tanners, saddlemakers, smiths,

437 weavers, potters, etc. They, particularly tanners, may bring finished products to market but only for "show", claiming these items are ordered and merely waiting for the customer to come and fetch.

Even semi-specialists of light-weight products such as umbrella makers and weavers of baskets and mäsob table follow this practice or bring only as much as they feel sure will sell, even at the risk of having to turn away customers. For the ultimate shame would be to have to carry unsold goods back home. This is avoided by selling very cheaply just when the market closes at dusk. The proverb advises the buyer, therefore, as follows:

[539]

"To church (go) early,
to market (go) late."

To avoid being outwitted, the Amhara seller usually begins the transaction by asking the buyer to suggest a price he is willing to pay. If the amount is within reason, and if the purchaser is on the same economic level, they will agree on the spot, without haggling. Doubts and dickering occur only when the customer is a stranger or a foreigner, since then the seller has to guess how high he can go, and how much he must charge to avoid being mocked. Such a price increase is called "waga asarrara". If there is no immediate agreement, the Amhara tries to disconcert his customer, or supplier, by indirect insults such as:

"I'm not expecting a hyena as my guest" ("yäjeb engeda yälläbän"), meaning, the animal you are trying to sell me is so lean that it is close to death and soon will be food for the hyena.

437 If bettered in trade, he will try to even the score, both in his heart and before his peers, with veiled insults within hearing of the other party, such as "my mother was not a pottery-maker", alluding to the low-class origin of the seller who has charged too high a price.

Housewives shopping at the market are conscious of "nuisance value". Before going home, if it is early, they loiter at the stall of the Arab merchant toying with the displayed merchandise while he nervously watches, until he gives them little gifts so that they go away, "ayn mämälasha" (lit. turning the eye away, i.e. homeward). The young women receive this with glee at having outwitted the shrewd Arab, and dance away.

When two Amhara have concluded an agreement, they touch each other's outstretched palms while standing very close to each other, and, in the presence of witnesses, swear "Haile Selassye yemut" (lit. may the emperor die, i.e. if the swearer breaks his agreement). This procedure is not followed in little transactions, but in the case of major livestock, because of the family and other social significance.

443 177 The Saturday market in a long-settled town ("qedamye gäbäya") has long been the entrance gate for diffusion of foreign goods, ideas, and ethnic groups. The Muslim mosque is usually very close, even at the edge, its minaret overshadowing the market. The teahouses, "shay byet" are of longtime, Arab introduction, usually operated by Ethiopian Muslims who import the tea and know how to prepare Arab delicacies. It is patronized by Arab whole-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

443 177 salers, and other Muslim retailers. Here they discuss caravan trade, import and export, and local business. These Arabs speak enough Amharic for their purposes, but cannot read or write it, so that they employ temporary services of Amhara clerks, graduates or upper classmen of elementary schools, to translate and write documents relating to transactions, taxes and loans. It is these Arab traders who constitute most of the customers of provincial branches of the new State Bank of Ethiopia. Only rarely does a foreign company like Besse have a local branch, operated by East Indian managers. This is recent, while the Arab traders are the successors of former Arab slavetraders, an ancient but now abolished occupation in Ethiopia. Arab traders also serve as personal bankers to Amhara.

The broker, "mäden", may be an Amhara. This is especially true if he is the aforementioned labor broker. He acts as negotiator for business transactions, and (e.g. in the sale of major livestock) personally guarantees that the object sold was not stolen; he is required to make good the loss if it is not so. This is an important form of insurance, for which the broker may charge as little as 1%, payable usually in cash; he is also given a barley beer dinner after the transaction. He, in turn, may employ Amhara loiterers to gather around during transactions and contribute their wit to urge the buyer to close the deal.

563 443 554 The Muslim Ethiopian retailer, unlike the Arab trader, carries little prestige among Amhara. His com-

563 parative wealth may be envied, but his religion, and
443 his habit of taking several wives from ex-slave (Barya),
554 Sudanese, lowland females, places him on a level with the upper ethnic craftsmen class. The fact that his labor is not manual elevates him a bit. The full Arab from Yemen or Arabia is regarded as a foreigner, and there is little concern about him since he does not participate in the social hierarchy of the Coptic Amhara.

436 Silver coinage for major transactions, until recently, was the Maria Theresa Thaler, bearing the year 1780, even if coined much later, imported, and sometimes referred to as "machedo", sickle. The recent laws of the present emperor provide for confiscation and punishment for possession of this now illegal currency, but peasants and townsmen have them hidden and silversmiths can still obtain them with little difficulty. The habit of burying coins for safekeeping has carried over to modern paper money. Every year cases of buried paper money that decayed in the rainy season become the talk of the town. The former MT Thaler was divided as follows:

1 MT Thaler = 16" temun" silver coins of Menelik; the term "temun" is now used for silver ornaments, though the new Ethiopian 25¢ piece is actually used in exchange, or even in ornaments.

= 16 "gresh", the Egyptian-Turkish piastre coined in 1899, no longer used, and rarely seen.

436

= 2 "alad", Menelik half-thaler, no longer used.

= 4 "rub", quarter MT Thalers, no longer in use, but still occasionally quoted.

The term "gresh" is still used in its probable derivative, the well-known "gursha", meaning tip given to a servant, etc., apparently replacing an earlier term. Also, it is interesting that Gresham's Law functions also in Ethiopia: The new coinage, once accepted (rather than fear of prosecution) drove the old MT Thaler out of circulation. Furthermore, from time to time certain items of the new coinage become particularly popular for some temporary reason, and then are hoarded and absent from circulation.

471 In traditional Amhara material culture there is an absence of such processing industries, (except for specializations mentioned), as soap factories, flour mills, brick factories, textile factories, timber mills, sugar industries, power industries (no windmills), though the [648] essentials for such industries exist. Foreigners have, in recent decades, built a few small ones at major centers of population, since Menelik and the present Emperor began handing out concessions. There are economic and national reasons, e.g. the law that foreigners may only rent but not buy real estate. The present government of Ethiopia has a monopoly on and produces matches and cigarettes. Whether private or public, processing industries can be expected to increase gradually and bring about

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

gradual changes in the technology and, eventually, in the division of labor.

6

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART III: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

171 Some aspects of the social organization of the Amhara resemble those of medieval Europe at early and middle periods; others the ancient and not so ancient Middle East; still others, perhaps a smaller part, parallel patterns in other parts of Africa. It is an "old-world" pattern of human relationships, both in structure and function, and the noteworthy fact is that much has survived, due to comparative isolation, that has changed elsewhere.

186 Amhara attitudes, concomitant with their social organization, recall the attitude of the "Neolithic pattern of human relations" in Coon's terminology.[69] This pattern is characterized by the attitude: "You stay in your village, and I stay in mine. If your sheep eat our grass we will kill you. Anyone who tries to change our ways is a witch and we will kill him."

In Amhara rural areas--and most Amhara are rural--this attitude still seems to dominate human relations, be they structured as territorial, class, military, legal, ethnic, religious or racial. Feuds between kin groups often last for several generations; loyalties are intensely regional and ethnocentric.

178 While all this can still be observed, change in the direction of modern occidental patterns has begun to seep in very recently, affecting various phases of social organization in varying degrees. Sometimes the structure

69. Coon: The Story of Man. 1954.

178 is more affected because of orders sent with increasing rapidity and urgency from the central government at Addis Ababa. Sometimes the central government itself gives conservative lip service to some old structure, while quietly modernizing the function.

1. Land Tenure

A. Political Aspects of the Old Tradition:

631 For many centuries Abyssinia was a confederation of states governed by princes, who recognized the superiority of one of them--the "king of kings"; except for occasional centralization of power in the hands of a particular monarch. Only in very recent times, since the late 19th century, does centralization seem to have developed with greater permanency.

631 423 As a result of this social structure, every subject is in some way a functionary of the ruling power. This may infringe on his private property at any time, and he is bound to various labors and obligations. In principle, all land is considered the ultimate property of the power ruling at the top of the social pyramid.

423 All land tenure is therefore considered subject to the final approval of the "king of kings". This [671] principle was recognized in the ancient law code "Fetha Nagast", which, however, formally recognized the principle of private land property, to be expropriated only in case of rebellion. Private land property was further reaffirmed by clause 9 of the Penal Code of 1930, and

423 the Constitutions of 1931 and 1955.

The two basic forms of land tenure are called "rest" and "gult". "Rest" comes as close to private property, particularly agricultural real estate, as is possible under these circumstances. It is inheritable, and in principle authorities are not to interfere in the enjoyment of it except in case of rebellion or in case there are no heirs. Most land of this type is found in the old Amhara provinces. "Gult" is land controlled by the governing power, which concedes temporary title to officers of the state, in lieu of salary, particularly to military officers and soldier veterans. Resident peasants who occupy and work the land are usually passed on with this grant(resembling some of the nature of a medieval European fief, or a Spanish encomienda), particularly since the grant is usually continued to the following generations for equal services. These services vary in regions, details, peacetime, wartime, etc., but may include taxes, deliveries of produce, personal services to feudal lords, supplies of grain, charcoal and incense to parish churches, conducting own mules as pack animals during military expeditions, feeding travellers who are "guests of the king", and in general carrying out any new obligation the feudal lord of the region has promised the king.

On the other hand, for every one of these services the "gultenna" could claim land, on the principle that for every function there ought to be a rewarding piece of land. This land was then given the name of the function.

566 [423] At the bottom of the social pyramid of land tenure was the "gabbar", the peasant, whose status resembled that of the medieval European serf. In the final step of passing tasks along, he was responsible for carrying them out, though he could shift some manual labor to the slaves under his constant supervision. The gabbar owed regular statute-labor (called "kudād" or "hudād", literally painful labor), resembling the medieval European corvee, and could also be called out for any special labor. At any moment, authority could decree that a bridge was to be built, a church to be constructed or repaired, at an appointed time and place. Thereupon every gabbar would have to appear, carrying his own tools, to work under the direction os the feudal officer, governor, or his lieutenants ("mislanē"). Heavy fines punished failure to appear for this labor.

It is peculiar, perhaps, how this system was internalized by the gabbar. If he was not on good enough terms with his neighbors to call on them for mutual aid, e.g. in housebuilding or harvesting, perhaps due to a quarrel between kin units, he could demand such aid by appealing to the "cheqa shum" (village headman) or governor's lieutenants, who would then proclaim the work as an official [689] task. The penalty for failure to appear, however, was milder; the offender was sentenced to donate a great feast to all the other participants.

566 794 Another noteworthy traditional task emphasized the feudal structure of the church. A priest in charge of periodic services, the "master of the chant", could de-

566 mand of the feudal lord that deacons, choir-boys with
794 good voices, be supplied to him. The "gultänna" could be made responsible for this, and would search the countryside for likely peasant boys. For his service in acting as music critic in examining the boys, and as their trainer, the "master of the chant" would receive a specified number of baskets of grain from the feudal lord, who, of course, passed this extra expense on down the line until the bill was finally footed by the peasant gabbar.

566 The term "gabbar" itself is closely related (perhaps derived from) "gebber", feast (especially feasting of guest by noblemen, or soldiers after victory). Indeed, it is the gabbar who supplies the materials for the feasts.

[242] In view of this regular as well as irregular exploitation, it is not surprising that the gabbar did not try to improve the land he worked, and to this day leaves more fields fallow than he works in any given year. A rank above him, the "gultanna" suffered from insecure tenure. Above him loomed the authority of the feudal warlord ("färäsänya") and the shadow of landowning monasteries and parish churches. Their power, in turn, varied inversely with the power, or weakness, of the "king of kings".

B. Private Property - "rest".

423 "Rest", at least since the days of the Fetha Nägäst and probably earlier, is a form of freehold, with rights and privileges resembling those of a medieval European entail. It is inherited. It is normally free from any statute-labor, It can be expropriated only for rebellion, or certain segments for a public utility such as roadways. The owner has to pay land taxes and a tithe on produce, but can and does pass them on to his tenant.

423 614 The most important factor regarding "rest" is that it is usually owned by a kinship group, predominantly the patrilineal-patrilocal kin. Land of such a kin group is often referred to as "yäwel märät" (lit. partnership land), and this has led some foreign observers mistakenly to regard Amhara land tenure as communal property. It is that only in a very restricted sense. An individual whose kin have died becomes sole proprietor. At the other extreme, if the next generation has become too numerous, a process of "sharing out" can take place, in which new kinship units "bud off" after the death of a patriarch.

Every few years the elders of a patrilocal kin group allocate land to individuals and to biological (nuclear) families, according to their manpower and to their needs. A father, on the marriage of his son, allocates him some of the kin's "rest" land that he individually holds at the time, so that the son can enjoy the produce of his own labors. In some ways this form

423 of land settlement resembles the Middle Eastern (Arab) "mus-
614 ha's" land tenure.

No individual or nuclear family can sell, or otherwise alienate, "rest" land belonging to the kin group. He may ask them for permission to do so, but in Amhara provinces this is usually refused. On the other hand, if he moves to a different province (which has happened particularly since Menelik's borderland conquests), his kinfolk will hold his claim in trust so that a returning grandson can claim his rights in full. He can even do this, in some cases of particularly strong and proud families, if the inheritance is on his mother's side.

It is interesting that the Biblical principle of the kinsman-redeemer of the land is still in force among the Amhara, in the same spirit. Cases of this kind have arisen increasingly in the past decade, because of the emperor's efforts to settle landless squatters, who have worked fallow land and have paid tithe for several years, If such formerly fallow land belonged to "rest" kin groups, they try to evict the squatters through legal(or sometimes illegal) means, thus "redeeming the land" for the kin group.

423 For purposes of inheritance, landholding kin usual-
428 ly include all descendants to the "fourth house", i.e. the
614 great-grandsons. After that, disputes usually arise. If no kin survives-- a very rare occurrence--the partners of the "mahabber" sodality to which the deceased belonged, have a final claim, before the land reverts to the regional authority. Affinal relations, except for the mate who shares equally with children of the deceased, are not considred kin for purposes of inheritance of land. If there are no children,
[584] the wife has user claims up to half the estate, which would have been her portion in case of divorce.

423 have been her portion in case of divorce. If the deceased
428 left an infant, the widow is expected to remain with the kin
614 group of the deceased until the child is reared to adulthood. Then she may leave, taking movable belongings that are her share, but, of course, foregoing any claims on real estate. The same procedure is followed in case of her marriage again.

[848] Illegitimate sons, including children of ex-slave concubines, also have the right to inheri their share of "rest", unless the presumed father has publicly rejected them as offspring. Girls who leave the kin group upon marriage, have claims only on movable property, not land. However, if the bridegroom settles on land belonging to the bride's kin, as happens in a minority of cases, the elders will allocate him land, and the male offspring will share in the inheritace.

[852] Allocations of land by the elders to the various biological families used to be made into great events and festivities particularly for the children. This was the only time children were singled out for attention, in this adult-cantered culture. Thus the purpose of firmly impressing the event on their minds, to be always remembered and defended in the future, was achieved. In the absence of written legal titles, this procedure was necessary, and is still followed in some rural districts.

C. Semi-private Real Estate--"gult".

423 For many centuries past, land, with the peasants
566 occupying it, has been assigned to feudal officers and soldiers, similar to fiefs of medieval Europe. These "gult" lands also resemble in principle the "miri" state lands of

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 566 the Middle East; particularly of the Ottoman empire, where they were also refered to as "çiftliks" (peasant estates that had passed into the possession of soldiers, "siphhi", who in turn constituted fiefs assigned to officers as personal estates.[70]

423 566 701 The process which created "gult" land can be clearly observed intthe history of Abyssinia toward the end of the 19th century. Soldiers and officers in the armies of Menilek II were assigned conquered Galla lands in lieu of salary. They were free from land tax, but obliged to pay "asrat" (tithe) on produce, which tax they of course passed on to the Galla "gabbar". The sons of these veterans usually assumed the same military responsibilities when they came of age, so that the lands passed on to them on the same terms. These lands were referred to as "mädariya" lands, and

70. Inalcik, Halil: Land Problems in Turkish History. (in) Muslim World, July 1955, pp. 221-8.

423 the plots carried names adsociating them with the speci-
566 fic services owed by the holder of the homestead:
701

"land for the rifleman" (infantry)

"land for the guard of prisoners" (military police)

"land for the bearer of the tent" (standard bearer)

"land for the shield-bearer" (bodyguard)

"land for the forager" (quartermaster)

"land for the left flank" (i.e. platoon attacking on the left column); etc.

The "gultenna" homesteader was always on call for a new military campaign. His land was regarded as his for enjoyment of produce only, like land allocated by a father to his son upon marriage. The size of "gult" land could vary from one gasha (usually about 50 acres) for a soldier-veteran of long service, to as much as 1000 gasha for a high officer of feudal nobility. The latter could, and usually did, set aside part of his "gult" land as endowment for a monastery or church, and the gabbar on such land passed to the control of the church.

There is very little "gult" land in old-Amhara provinces dating from this period of Menelik II. If found there, it is usually older, since his conquests were farther south, southwest and southeast.

On his long and distant campaigns, Menelik II thus found his supply lines assured, for the "gultenna" was obliged to feed passing armies and to aid the military foragers. He had also to act as host to any passing "nagadras" (treasurer, customs agent) of Menelik during intervals of peace.

423 If these interludes of peace lengthened greatly,
566 the feudal knight ("färäsenya") would often conclude a
701 contract with his "gulteñnas", which gave both parties
some security in what they could expect of each other in
services and privileges. This contract usually took the
[427] form of "siso" (lit. one-third). The "gulteñña" thus
became a sharecropper, paying 1/3 of his produce to the
feudal lord after each harvest, working statute-labor
for him one day in three, making his team of oxen avail-
able on a basis of one day in three, Sometimes the "gul-
teñña" thus became a sharecropper and little better off
than the "gabbar", especially if no war service inter-
rupted the arrangement for many years. Though he could
pass on much of the labor to his own gabbars, he himself
sometimes became so debt-ridden to the feudal landlord
above him that his status resembled that of a Mexican
peon. "Siso" contracts were rare in Shoa, where the
"gulteñña" was frequently called to war, and his status
as honorable and free soldier-veteran thus never faded
away.

The fortunes of war ruled the life of the "gulteñña"
much more than the owner of "rest" property. For if the
Ras (feudal top nobility) of his province, under whom
the gulteñña was fighting, lost in a war or in a rebellion,
the gulteñña found himself under a newly-appointed Ras
who might ignore customary relaxation of burdens, who
might even confiscate the "gult" lands and make the home-
steaders "gabbar" serfs, leaving them only the alternative
of escaping into the bush. Outside of Shoa, (where fertile
land is more expensive and more closely guarded), the

423 "gultenna" and his family might try to become squatters,
566 "chesanna", on someone's fallow land, and risk being cha-
701 sed away by a kin unit claiming that territory. Or, permitted to remain on his old lands, a "gultenna" might suddenly find that the new feudal lord of the province was enclosing ("kelkel", declared forbidden) land formerly used as pasturage or for agriculture, to give to his own successful soldier veterans, and exacting quotas of oxen, mules and honey from the former "gultenna".

178 As long as the "gabbar" system was still in full
423 force, the "gultenna" at least had someone to exploit in turn, to ease his own burdens. Now that the present emperor has declared the "gabbar" system ended (though much of it survives), even this relief is passing. Furthermore, the new army is salaried, so that the basic function of the "gult" system has already disappeared. The only hope the sons of "gultennas" have is to have their lands declared "rest", private property, for otherwise they will become landless. This means that they must work the land themselves and pay tithe on the produce; otherwise squatters can alienate it from them.

D. Endowed Lands -- "rest-gult".

423 The many variations of regional "rest"and "gult" lands sometimes crystallize to a combination type referred to as "rest-gult".

423 Such types of land tenure arose in the past when a king awarded land for personal service, or in gratitude, as "gult" land, without specifying the conditions under which such land might pass to the heirs of the recipient.

423 794 Land donated to the church, in areas far from a monastery or parish that could easily administer it, sometimes belong in this category. In gratitude for victory, a king would sometimes establish ecclesiastical fiefs, "rim", for the support of officiating priests and boy deacons. The most famous endowment of this kind occurred in 1270 A.D., when archbishop Täklä Haymanot received 1/3 of the land of Abyssinia from the "Solomonic Dynasty" he had helped to restore. The archbishop immediately founded monasteries to administer the property and to supervise the "gabbar on it. Priests and monks since [713] then have served in functions similar to chaplains, and have carried the "tabot" representing the sacred ark, into battles, much like the priests of the ancient Israelites. Endowments have continued to add land to the church, "mäsqäl märet" (lit. lands of the cross), and a priest is usually sent to act as local administrator, "alaqa" (lit, chief). He also supervises the functioning of a church built on land not given to the church, and often acts as if the surrounding land were "gult" land belonging to the church.

The moral power of the church in many localities is so strong that the borderlines between "rest" and "gult" may become hazy. Aging persons often try to

423 donate some plots to the church as "sämonanya", to have
794 masses read for their souls after their deaths. Widows, who often take vows as nuns, try to endow the church if they can. Sometimes, "gultännas" threatened with expropriation, sought the protection of the church, so that
423 they could remain on their lands. Sometimes parish priests
793 practice nepotism by inviting their nephews or other kinsmen to settle on endowed land surrounding the parish church, without paying rent or performing heavy labors. In return, this arrangement serves the local priests as life insurance and income-insurance, for they will always be certain of supplies of produce, beer, meat, incense, clothing, etc., from their grateful kinfolk, for themselves and their offspring.

The local priest then also acts as patron of his kinfolk against the regional administration, interceding for them when they become involved in litigation, acts as their "guarantor" ("was") when they apply for jobs or seek more land from the governor or neighboring landlord. This nepotism actually seems on the increase, since the present emperor abrogated the feudal rights of all church lands in 1942 (though reinstituting some in exchange for services such as education, a few years later). Now that the church has lost the right to charge feudal rent, parish priests are more eager than ever to have kinfolk settle around them, to avoid dependence on payment from parents whose boys are enrolled in the church school.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

E. Some Regional Variations, in Amhara provinces.

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The sharpest regional variations are between the old-Abyssinian, Coptic north, and the areas conquered by Menelik II to the south. But variations exist to considerable degree among the northern provinces also.

Shoa, particularly the old-Amhara sections, enjoyed many exemptions from burdens which have been mentioned. "Siso" peonage was almost non-existent, and "gultennas" were involved in warfare so much that they enjoyed a maximum of "gult" exemptions. In the past they felt as secure in their tenure as "restenyas". The highest Amhara nobility came from the Shoa districts of "Manz" and "Wanchit", where their lands had actually been "rest" property for centuries. However, in much of Shoa the old kinship holdings had broken up in consequence of the Galla invasion prior to the 19th century. When Menelik II reconquered these areas they became "gult" though under most favorable conditions for "gultennas".

In Gojjam and Begemdir most of the land remained "rest", since Galla invasions did not reach that far to any great extent. This land has remained unmeasured to this day, despite the efforts of the present emperor to ascertain titles to land, replace traditional "status" with "contract", and provide for fixity of tenure. Provincial Amhara resistence to this change is still strong, and the residents have been permitted to continue to pay the low land taxes of 1927 for the time being. In Gojjam, during the rule of the provincial dynasty of Ras Hailu,

184 which ended with his unsuccessful rebellion of 1929,
423 much land was "rest-gult", and there were many kinds of tax exemptions for heirs of veterans, who often paid only the tithe on grain and a small tax on cattle.

In Begemdir province (capital: Gondar), most of the land also remains unmeasured, for the same reason. Much of the land is "rest" owned by kin groups who guard it jealously against alienation; and the old church lands are are regarded as "rest". In the southwestern, lower, section of Gondar town and some nearby rural land, "rest" is owned by Ethiopian Muslims, mostly traders, who purchased it from the church, long ago. In scattered rural areas some families of ethnic specialists like the Falasha smiths own land considered "rest-gult", given to their ancestors in reward for services rendered Menelik's armies in the 19th century. This process has been discontinued (artisans are now in business for themselves and are supposed to pay a trade tax to the central government), and most Falashas live under very uncertain terms of tenure, paying tithe and other taxes, which worries the Amhara claimants to this territory.

F. Crown Lands and Efforts to Centralize Land Tenure.

423
656 In the old tradition of land tenure, the king held some very personal land, inherited or conquered, for the support of the royal household, "mād-bēt". He added to it by confiscating land of unsuccessful feudal rebels.

423 He could do with "mäd-bet" lands as he pleased, without
656 interference from kin groups, the church, or other local-feudal dynasties.

654 Thus the present emperor, when he was still merely
656 regent, and a young man in his twenties, began his pro-
423 gram of modernization and centralization in his own "mad-bet" in Harar province. He organized the coffee-growing of that area as a cash crop for export, and, more significantly, reduced the burdens on the "gabbar", improved security of tenure, appointed supervisors to see that matters would not slip back, and instructed them to report to him as the central power. He also set up elementary schools in several locations. At regular intervals he toured his lands personally. As a result, "gabbar" from neighboring feudal estates were eager to have the protection of his "mäd-bet".

423 These efforts were a departure from the traditional
656 pattern of high feudal nobles on their "mäd-bet" (though, on the other hand, no one could criticize him for doing as he pleased on his own "household land"). The others appointed trustees, "täwälaj", usually 12, to administer their land, while they remained absentee landlords at the court of the "king of kings". These trustees were u usually appointed from patriarchal elders and lowest nobility, and were responsible for the support of the parish churches of their area, with priest, deacons, däbtära (scribe-choristers), etc.

423 In the traditional pattern there was another means
651 of exercising some central control, through the collection

423 of land taxes and tithe, provided these were not entirely
651 claimed by powerful local feudal nobility or the church. These tax-collectors, who often lived dangerously, were given land as reward for services; this land was called "mälkäña" land. They also acted as overseers of stature-labor, "hudäd". They were usually free from both land tax and tithe on their own territory, and, although their sons could inherit the job and the land that went with it, their security of tenure was even weaker than that of the "gultäñña". Partly this was due to the ever-shifting power factors, for, when the central power was weak or distracted by a distant war, the tax-collector might find himself working as a provincial functionary, intermediate between the cheqa shum (headman) and the provincial feudal lords.

423 When central power was greatly strengthened in
656 the days of Menelik II, there was a considerable increase in "malkana" lands. This was particularly the case in lands he had conquered from the Galla landlords ("balbat"). He expropriated 3/4 of their lands for distribution among his military veterans, but in consolation granted the balbats the remaining 1/4 as "mälkäña" land. This freed them from taxes, enabled them to pass their remaining landholdings on to their sons, and turned them into loyal subjects of the central power which alone could protect their tenure from future expropriation. The outcome of this amazingly Solomonic solution of an age-old problem of land tenure in a feudal country has turned the Galla balbats today into the most reliable

423 656 supporters of the central government.

The descendants of these balbats, now educated in 423 the high schools of Addis Ababa, are being sent into even 647 the old-Amhara provinces at present, by Emperor Haile 651 Selassie, to act as salaried collectors for the central treasury ("Gemja-Bet") (so that the function of the former malkana has again come full circle, though the term is no longer used for the office). In fact, the new centralized tax-gathering has ended the office of the old, provincial "mälkäña", and they, much like the "gultäñña", can only hope to have their lands affirmed as "rest". This they can hope to achieve only if they work the lands themselves and pay tithe on produce, otherwise it may be lost to squatters. Their final security of tenure, by contract instead of vague status (they have lost the latter), will come only when the lands are measured and modern titles issued, which has not yet happened in the old-Amhara areas that resist this. The non-resistant Galla balbats of Shoa province are thus more secure in tenure, and will remain so as long as the central govern- is strong.

423 Measurement of land is called, traditionally, "throw- 804 ing the rope" ("yase gäñäd"). This rope may be made of cordage, plant fibers, traditionally 40 elbow lengths long. In northern districts it is sometimes made of plaited oxhide, and called "qälad".

423 The "rope was thrown" widely in Galla lands conquered by Menelik II, Three-quarters of these lands were then divided into gashas of 80-100 acres each, and

423 the peasants occupying them were allocated as "gabbar" to soldiers and officers. A soldier-veteran who had family might have received 2 to 5 families "gabbar"; officers 7 to 10, district commanders 30 and more "gabbar" families, governors hundreds of gabbar. From the gabbar's point of view, this constituted little change in his lot, for he had served the Galla balbat in similar ways. Gabbar were also allocated to the Coptic churches built on the new territories. Menelik II regarded these new parishes and buildings as permanent outposts of Amhara society in the Galla south.

423 651 The first emperor to strengthen central power, in modern times, and to begin land reforms, was Emperor Theodore. In the 1850's and 1860's he instituted a new office, still retained. This was the appointment of trusted lieutenants, "mislanē", to act as tax-collectors, in place of the uncertain "malkana" who were always being subdued by regional feudal powers. He appointed as "mislanē" persons from different regions, who would own no fealty to local lords, and could be relied upon to owe personal loyalty directly to the central power that had appointed them. This was the first type of officer not rewarded by land grants, but receiving salary out of the taxes he had collected. At present, a century later, the office of "mislanē" is little changed, except that he is now directly responsible to the provincial governor who is himself an appointee of the Emperor and who is frequently shifted to another province to prevent him from growing local roots.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

G. Present Holdings and Problems of Amhara Peasants of Begemdir Province.

105 423 Most of the Amhara peasants of Begemdir (and other provinces) live much as their ancestors have lived for centuries. They subsist largely on the products of their lands, needing relatively few gooda and services from outside the province. They do not care for profit and loss accounting. Their social organization is built on visible human relationships. They do not welcome modern bookkeeping and registration, particularly with regard to land tenure, which the modern central government is gradually attempting to foist on them; adding, to the proud provincial Amhara mind, insult to disturbance by doing it through "Galla" clerks from Shoa province.

423 The basic land unit to which the Amhara peasant of Begemdir refers in transactions, is the "qada", usually a little less than half an acre. The average "gasha" may contain as many as 150 "qada", varying with the relative fertility of the soil. Several patrilocal hamlets, constituting a "mandar" (villageship) and supervised by one cheqa shum (headman), may control as many as 10 gashas, (about 500 acres.). The average farmer, supporting his family of procreation and an aged parent and aunt, may control, on the average, about 50 qada (about 20 acres), half of which he may leave fallow at any given time.

423 The richest farmer in the rural vicinity of Gondar,
427 a member of the Qemant (Cushitic-speaking) ethnic group, owns 8 gasha (about 400 acres), which is considered fabulous wealth by his Amhara neighbors. However, with the aid of his sons and servants, he cultivates only one gasha at any given time. He parcels out the remaining 7 gasha, except for some fallow land, to landless tenant farmers, many of them ex-slaves, usually in plots no bigger than 10 qada (about 4 acres), which is considered the limit one man can plow and seed without help. The rent they pay him consists of one "madiga " of tyeff grain (about 25 kilo); payable by each. Each also pays him 1/2 madiga of barley, referred to as "qolo", tribute to his "household". His agents also collect the 10% tithe, in produce, which he is expected to pass on to the government, and the new Eth$4.- education tax. He invest part of his profits in cows for his increasing herds.

423 For purposes of taxation, of peasants, the govern-
651 ment treasury must rely on the judgment of the headman, ("cheqa shum"), who is difficult to check because the land is unmeasured and a "gasha" is a flexible concept. Therefore, his supervisor, usually the mislane, can only base a check on past, customary payments.

[602] Taxcollectors are known to be generous when deal-
423 ing with even distant kinfolk, or with priests and
651 their relatives, and to even out the receipts by pres-
653 sure on low-class ethnic minorities, justifying this by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income from their handicrafts.

423 by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income
651 from their handicrafts. Among the methods of this
663 extortion is the "initiation fee" of as much as Eth$3.- per qada, when freshly cleared from the bush. Another impressment consists of "voluntary" supplies regularly paid to the Coptic parish church in the locality, by non-Coptic ethnics. Also, the feudal landlord usually asks them for a special "pasturage fee"--as much as Eth$2.- per qada of fallow land--with the further condition that no more than two oxen (or cows) graze on each qada. Where a Coptic farmer may pay perhaps Eth$10.- tithe on his semi-fertile 50 qada, the non-Coptic farmer may be made to pay double to four times that for similar produce on an equivalent plot of land. While
[871] the new education tax is the same, the non-Coptic artisan finds it very difficult to enroll his boy in the overcrowded elementary school in the provincial capital.

423 The average "rest"-owning farmer working 10 qada
651 every year, may harvest about 50 madiga of tyeff grain,
511 selling it for Eth$150.-(In the rainy season it would bring twice that); plus 30 madiga barley, Eth$60.- plus some honey, if he has it.

If the tax-collector is his friend, his tithe may amount to as little as Eth$5 to 10, his education tax Eth$2 to 4. His land tax based on the rate of 1927 will be very low, and his pasturage, as Coptic non-artisan, free.

511 Thus he has enough for his basic needs including the purchase of a new toga (shamma) per year, and perhaps a new donkey. However, he cannot normally afford

511 prestige items of luxury, such as a mule, a fine saddle, and he would not want to "waste" his money on imported snadals. His expenses for shelter and furnishings are almost nil in terms of cash, and even a beer jar can be purchased for Eth$1.- in rural areas.

423 His basic needs filled with a minimum of labor,
578 and his wants few, the "rest"-owning Amhara farmer views modern land measurement with suspicion. He fears that disputed land with vague boundaries will be declared government land and be redistributed. In the absence of written deeds; dependence on remembered local traditions and natural landmarks; and the practice of letting fallow land revert to bush to be cleared anew every few years, disputes are many at any time. Rumors from southern areas where courts have for several years now recognized tithe receipts as evidence of ownership, reinforces these fears. Alienation of any part of one's land is strongly objected to as loss of prestige and weakening of kin bonds. As a result, there is little appreciation among "rest"-holding Amhara of Begemdir for the efforts of the emperor, to replace vague "status" of land tenure with assured "contract", to have real estate deeds issued and registered, to end the tax exemptions of feudal lords and the church, to institute uniform land taxes, etc. Any general change, they feel, is bound to raise the socio-economic level of non-Coptic ethnic minorities and depress their own.

423 Several land laws were included in the Penal

423 Code of 1930 of the central government. "Rest" land was protected by a provision that it could not be sold without permission of the district judge. This assured that the transaction would be public, enabling the kinfolk to protest. In the provinces of Begemdir, Semyen and Gojjam, where land was considered plentiful, most land consisted of freehold "rest", which remained unsurveyed, and in practice virtually unsaleable. In Shoa province, much land formerly held by veterans and officials ("gultennas") has reverted to the government. But most "gabbar" tenants still owe the 2/3 of produce previously paid. The tenants of the descendants of "gultennas" can become owners only by purchasing the land; meanwhile their income goes to pay the rent, the tithe, etc., leaving no capital to accumulate.

423 651 Under this Code the church was still exempt from land tax on its huge holdings. The laws of 1944 abrogated this exemption, but the amendment of 1947 partially restored the right of the church to claim "voluntary contributions" locally, from recipients of benefits such as education. The law of 1944 was a victory for the resisting provincial Amhara peasants, in that it limited, temporarily, the land taxes of Begemdir, Semyen and Gojjam (also the Coptic province of Tigre) to the low rate of 1927. The tithe could continue to be on an "estimated" basis. All taxes permitted "scaling" according to fertility.

Thus the old immunities and inequalities in

423 [651] taxation of landholdings have been only partially swept away. Enforcement in the old-Amhara provinces is lax. The "gabbar" system, abolished by decree after the emperor's return in 1941, continues as the broad basis of land occupancy, and as a major pillar of social structure, with only little, gradual change.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 ## 2. The Military Camp and its Significance in Amhara Social Structure.

The preceding section on land tenure contained a number of references to the traditional military organization and function among the Amhara. This was inevitable, for the traditional army, particularly the military camp, constituted one of the most significant pillars of Amhara social structure. Even now, when Amhara children cannot see it any more, the military [554] camp lives on as "normal social organization" in the minds of the middle-aged, and in the titles of nobility still being bestowed several times a year by the emperor.

For, as recently as 1929, it flourished in full flower, e.g. at the headquarters of the provincial dynastic head of Gojjam, Ras Haylu, and, somewhat less flagrantly, at the provincial court of the lord of Gondar (Begemdir Province), Ras Kassa.

A. The Structure and Function of the Military Camp.

701 703 The number of individuals directly involved in the totality of the pattern of the military camp was never fixed. On the contrary, the quantity involved was extremely fluid, there was much joining and deserting, and no commander ever seemed to be able to force any but his closest retainers to remain against their will. Historians believe that the army even of

701 as great a military figure as Emperor Menelik II was
703 close to falling apart at the time of his great victory over the invading Italians in 1896. The Amhara resists discipline except for short-lived adulation of a military hero who inspires him; he comes to fight, not to wait; even today, in the modern army, Ethiopian officers characterize the Amhara soldier as fearless, brave, but unwilling to take orders and having a tendency to act as an individual in battle. He is characterized as almost opposite from the patient Galla soldier who takes orders and cooperates smoothly with his military outfit, but rarely takes initiative.

[578] Regional clannishness, easily stirred by news from the home district, was another motive that could cause large segments of a traditional Amhara army to vanish almost overnight. A third development that would whittle away an army gradually was the almost inevitable outcome of having been stationed in one vicinity too long. In this case, the countryside was soon stripped bare by the military foragers, the "gabbar" was suffering famine himself, as if a vast cloud of locusts had nibbled away every leaf ("gonäqhchäfä"). A fourth
[727] motive, related to the first, might be loss of confidence in the strength and wisdom of their chief, in which case the soldiers not wanting to return home without glory took to the woods and became bandits ("shefta"). The latter were a major problem after every war. Even a biberal statesman like Ras Imru, as governor of Gondar after the liberation of the country in World War II, found harsh measures the only remedy.

701 found harsh measures the only remedy.

With these qualifications, the quantity involved in a military camp of a provincial "Ras" (lit. head, actually marshall of high nobility as well as traditional leader of military forces of a province) would consist of several thousand soldiers; plus a huge ring of huts of camp followers, artisans, impressed local gabbar", their womenfolk serving as combination cook-concubine, and thornbush corrals for pack mules and donkeys. It resembled a medieval European army encamped, but with Middle Eastern and African overtones.

For example, the Ras himself would have to make frequent personal inspection tours of storehouses and major activities, if he did not want disorganization. In his presence, his men would fall all over themselves, running to carry out his orders instantly, to curry his favor. In his absence, his officers and men would relax after the fashion of free men, to their way of thinking. A chief, asked about the number of men under his command, would reply "many", not so much for reasons of concealment and pride (i.e. "the number of my men is without end"), but because he often did not know, nor care. However he knew exactly how many rifles he had in his command.[72]

712 The inner center of the camp contained the big, round tent ("das", tent of joy) of the "ras"; a guest and banquet tent for noble visitors ("adarash"); the tent of the sacred "tabot" (wooden tablet from the Holy of Holies of a church) and the chief

72. Grieule, M.: Le Travail en Abyssinie. Revue Internat. du Travail, 23, Fev. 1931, p.5.

712 clergy; storehouse for the best military and civilian equipment ("eqa byet"); and the separate food establishments of the household of the ras: meat hut ("sega byet"), mead hut ("täj byet"), cooking hut ("woṭ byet"); and the baking hut ("enjära byet").

712 701 In front of this center, the bodyguard was encamped, led by the "däjazmach" (lit. guardian of the gate), the highest rank after the "ras", usually a young nobleman aspiring to the higher rank upon the death of the "ras" who was usually his kinsman, sometimes his own father. To the right of the center camped the "qänyazmach" (lit. guardian of the right), the next highest rank, who, in battle, commanded the right flank of the attacking army. To the left of the center camped the "gerazmach" (lit. guardian of the left), next in rank, commander of the left flank of the attacking army.

701 All these commanders belonged to high nobility, in this order, and were granted conquered lands, quantity and quality of the land being allocated as fiefs in the order of rank. Sometimes "battlefield commissions" would reward an individual military officer of commoner origin, and elevate him to "gerazmach", with rights to an appropriate fief. More often the gerazmach was a distant kinsman of the ras, perhaps a "poor relation".

Each of these nobles commanded a division that included cavalry, which consisted of "färäsenya" (lit. horsemen, i.e. knights), whose services were usually

701 rewarded by a "gušteñña" fief. Their immediate commander in frontal attack was a military officer, "fitawrari" (lit. advance guard), a high rank of military nobility, and the starting rank of all young nobles upon reaching military age. Common soldiers, who did not own a horse and a rifle necessary to elevation to knighthood, made up the infantry. They were the last to benefit from the division of lands.

701 712 In camp, the cavalry usually ringed the center of feudal nobility and bodyguard. Outside this ring were the numerous lean-to huts ("gojo") or somewhat sturdier "zäqäla" huts of the common soldiery, their hearths of rocks, and their concubine-cook womenfolk. Each minor chieftain imitated his superiors by grouping retainers around his tent, with himself at the top of a little social, hierarchical pyramid. He acted the "telleq säw" (lit. great man), generous in his rewards, but terrible in his anger. He might wear a lion mane.

Thus the camp consisted of three concentric rings, much as did the church, which may or may not have been a coincidence, but which to this day dominates the traditional Amhara view of feudal organized society. In fact, the "tabot" from the Holy of Holies, inner sanctum of the church, was physically represented inside the innermost center of encampment, serving as militaryChapel.

Special privilege characterized the second circle, much like the "mäqdäs" of the church reser-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 712 ved to the priesthood. Within the second circle of military encampment, protected by the ring of cavalry, were housed the "bajirond" (treasurer-quartermaster-ordnance), scribes, artisans of all kinds, chamberlains ("aggafari") serving the high nobles, the military police ("zäbäna", lit. watchmen), the thornbush corrals of battle horses and the horse watchmen, cookhouses, and latrine areas for the privileged centers.[72]

The rear of the camp, as well as the rear guard during march, (called the "däjän sefra"), was usually commanded by the most trustworthy, noble councilor of the king or ras; his title was "Blatengēta" (lit. Councilor), a semi-civilian title about equivalent to Dejazmach. But unlike the latter, it was usually held by an older, wiser, less tempestuous, slow-moving gray-bearded friend of the commander-in-chief.

701 566 B. Social and Psychological Roles in Military Life: Noble Officers and Common Soldiers.

The location in camp of military officers and men thus indicated the social position of feudal nobles, soldier fief-holders, and "gabbar"-sharecroppers in civilian life. The rank-order can be listed, with some simplification, as follows:

72. Griaule, M.: Un Camp Militaire Abyssin. Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Tome IV, 1934, pp. 117-122.

Table 4: Feudal Nobility: Title, Hierarchy, Military Rank and Function, Land Tenure

Title	Military Rank	Military Function	Land-Tenure Reward	Hierarchy of Nobility
farasenya (lit, knight on horseback)	basic in officer class	cavalry	gult fief	may be elevated to nobility, and get rest land.
balambaras (lit. lord of mountain-fortress	basic in officer class	various, active battle duties; e.g. chief of shield bearer("gasha Jägrē aläqa")	gult fief	basic rank in low nobility of owners of rest lands.(Baron).
gorazmach (lit. commander of left flank)	(lieutenant or captain)	command left flank of an army division	rest lands	basic rank of aspirants to higher nobility
ñäñazmach (lit.commander or right flank)	(major, in European equivalent)	command right flank of an army division	rest lands	next higher rand, permanent, usually inherited nobility
fitawrari (lit. commander of advance guard)	(colonel, in European equivalent)	command frontal attack of massed army division	rest lands	next higher rank. Basic rank of teen-age royalty
däjazmach (lit. commander of the gate)	(General. Duke, in Feudal Europe)	commander of army division; commander of bodyguard in camp.	rest lands	next higher rank. Rank of young royalty on reaching manhood.

701
566

ras (lit.head)	(Marshall.Archduke in Feudal Europe)	commander-in-chief of an entire army	rest lands	next higher rank. Head of provincial dynasty. Adult royalty prior to becoming king.
negus (king)	----	commander of several armies	rest provinces	formerly independent king. No longer in existence
lej(lit."Childe")	(may be appointed Däjazmach or Fitawrari as he grows up)			title of infant son of king or of ras. title of sons of emperor
lul (Royal Prince)	----(usually appointed to Ras, as he grows to manhood)			title of sons of emperor
negusä nägäst or negus negusti (lit. king of kings)	----	commander-in chief of all armies	rest of home province (mad-byet); ruler of entire country.	assumes highest nobility on coronation.

701 It is noteworthy that the military ranking of the com-
554 moner-soldiery, which made up the rank and file of the fighters on foot, was not nearly so formal. The fortunes of war, if they did not leave him dead or maimed, could move him upward to lower nobility. Failing to achieve that, veterans could still hope for a modest fief of "gult" land, enabling him to play the "telleq saw" (great man) role over some hapless "gabbar" peasants. Meanwhile, pseudo-"telleq säw" behaved much like the proverbial sergeant of any army, making his men fear him more than any enemy, rewarding them with feasts, in this case of raw beef and medium-alcoholic mead. The only way he could maintain his following of individual-minded Amhara soldiers, each one of whom wanted to be a hero himself, was by continous personal bravery coupled with cleverness in military tactics. But here the similarity ends, for the non-noble chief of Amhara warriors had no pride of a non-commissioned officer; his ambition was to become a real "telleq säw", a minor nobleman owning "rest" lands.

782 Personal bravery was expressed and recalled in
726 formal boasting, a tradition that survives to this day
521 even for such civilian occasions as weddings. Prior to
535 battle each potential hero would go into a personal song and dance called "fukkara". The ceremonial dance accompanying his boast proceeded as follows: Spear, or rifle, held horizontally behind head, just above shoulders; the head moves in increasingly rapid motion from right to

782 left, while boasts are shouted rythmically. Personal
726 boasts are interspersed with shouts of loyalty to the
521 emperor ("Addis Ababa! Addis Ababa!"), or recalling
535 past loyal bravery in the service of a provincial chieftain. Fukkara is performed also before the military games of "ganna" on Christmas, and outside the church on Epiphany (Temqät), to express the readiness of the young warriors to defend the faith, and on weddings to boast of warrior ancestors and so impress the in-laws.

The song and dance is also referred to as "dan-
[533] kira " (stomping); to distinguish it from the tamer entertainment song, "zafan" performed by female "azmari" who perform accompanied by a violin ("masenqo") or banjo ("qrar"), often recounting tales of renown in ballad form. The "fukkara" in military life takes place before the "joy tent" ("das") of the king, before the "denkwan" (from diwan, round cotton or hair tent) of feudal lords on the march; or, in honor of a successful "killer" ("gedday") of a lion, rhinoceros, elephant or human enemy, in presence of the trophy.

[72] The dance after the victorious battle is called "hoto". It is a simple jumping up and down, brandishing spear, rifle or stick vertically, reminiscent of the Central and West African dancing to exhaustion. It is accompanied by refrains, shouted frequently in response to impromptu poetry made up to celebrate the event, such as "yebahalal jebo" (the hyena will swallow him, i.e. the slain enemy). This refrain is also used before the battle, to defy the enemy and pretend that victory

782 is already assured. It is also performed on Epiphany,
726 to defy human as well as spirit enemiesoof the Faith.
521
535 Before battle, it was the response of the simple soldiers, ("wätadär") to the pep-talk ("arraga") given them by the commander, encouraging them to stand their ground.

727 After thevictorious battle, the soldier could look
554 forward to taking part in the royal feasting, the "gabber", and to lording it over the local "gabbar" peasant who had to supply the means and the womenfolk. It is at least part of the basis of the pride (critics say false sense of their own worth) of the free Amhara over subject peoples, enabling evan the simplest soldier to feel that he belongs to the proprietory class. Back home, he therefore despises manual labor, and even in going into battle he used to conscript peasant boys to carry his heavy rhinoceros-hide shield ("gasha"). These boys often became replacements for slain warriors when they could secure weapons, and, in turn, recruited servants for themselves.

41! The typical weapon was the spear (the word "ṭor" means both war and spear) until replaced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by rifles, though late-medieval muskets and Ottoman firearms were available to a few from the Portuguese period in the 16th century. The spear, some in use as late as the Italian invasion of 1935/6, sometimes had two or three prongs. Sabers were rare, and available mostley to noble officers. They were of the curved, Damascene type. Daggers of

various shapes were somewhat more common. Long lances and shorter throwing spears, both with fine, long iron heads, were in use. Round rhinoceros shields belonging to officers were often ornamented carefully with brass or even silver or gold plates arranged in geometric patterns; circles; colorful velvet embroidery, granted as reward gifts for special bravery. Crown-like bands worn around forehead and skull, of gold, silver or lion-mane, were given to officers as decorations for bravery.

More lasting awards were available only in the form of "gult" fiefs.

Table 5: Land Tenure of Artisans and Chaplains.

Title and Rank	Function	Reward in Land Tenure
bajirond (lit. treasurer)	(ethnic-origin) quartermaster, chief of artisans	"rest-gult" lands, inheritable.
qēs (priest)	army chaplain, carrier of sacred "tabot" (representing home church, and symbolizing the ark of the ancient Israelites.	"rest-gult" land, given to parish church.

The Amhara army on the march (or any Abyssinian army) has been described as resembling a migrating people rather than a disciplined-looking army. Supplies and equipment crawling over the landscape on donkey or human carriers, might amount to two-thirds of the army. Servants, priests, women and children, household utensils, cattle and sheep, huge jars of beer, etc., seemed to surround the main military caval-

725 ry and footsoldiers and main tents in all directions.[73] But there was a central structure, and well-understood functioning of parts.

725 701 Only officers from the dejasmach upward could announce the signal for mobilization and decampment, through the sound of drums and bugles. The time and place of assembly would be announced beforehand. The Council of War would meet and decide strategy as well as tactics: Who should fight where, and what secret signals were to be used. This Council usually consisted of the king, the ras commanders of armies, the dejazmach commanders of main divisions, and the blatengeta of the rear guard. After that, the young commanders of the advance guards, "fitawrari", who understood tactics, received their orders, and were sent two to three days ahead of the main body, for reconnaissance or to maintain contact with the enemy. The cavalry would protect the right and left flanks of the main body, commanded by appropriate gerazmach's, qanazmach's and fitawraris.

The main body, "gädam ṭor", was directly commanded by the king. In his absence, a temporary commander-in-chief was elected by the Council of War, with the title "abägaz", or "yäṭor täqlay" (lit. war chief). The main body also included the stores ("eqa"), the quartermaster ("bajirond") and his artisans, and the priests with the tabot. Finally, the rear guard protected from unexpected enemy attack, buried the dead, picked up the weary and wounded, and was itself organized into right

73. Rohrer: Beiträge.... 1932, p.117.

725 and left flanks.
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Fanning out in all directions, detachments of light cavalry and foragers on foot, "fano", could destroy and plunder enemy land to do as much damage as possible while on the march. When re-encampment was ordered, the tent of the king or field commander was set up first, and the army divisions and followers, seeing this, grouped themselves accordingly and settled in their proper locations, distances, areas and relative positions. The quartermaster thereupon took over the functions of maintenance and supplies.[74]

[554] This pattern of "relative positions" and functions carried over into civilian life, and dominated land tenure, administration, law, social structure, organized religion, the life cycle, artistic expression, and a multitude of human relations.

C. Significance of the old Military Organization in Modern Change.

178 The spear, the rhinoceros shield and armies paid by land grants have now become memories of the past,
[554] though recent past. Yet most of the attitudes and many of the roles that accompanied the old military organization still linger and dominate social organization.

[423] Much of the old land tenure is still little changed in the old-Amhara provinces, as has been pointed out.

74. Sadie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, pp. 86-7.

554 Most of the old military titles of nobility are still awarded several times each year by the present emperor, though these titles no longer have military, but only civilian, honorary, semi-administrative significance. This is partly due to the fact that the old titles, though not abrogated, have to be reaffirmed for individual members of each succeeding generation that has inherited only the moral but not the legal right to these titles. This enables each emperor to use the titles to reward, stimulate, needle and punish (through delay or withholding), a subtle weapon too pleasant for even the present liberal emperor to disavow. The only title no longer in use is that of king ("negus"), but even this had been offerred to the present Crown Prince in lieu of the future crown (he refused it to maintain his claim).

There has been a gradual increase in awarding titles to commoners, as high as "dǎjazmach", e.g. to reward deserving directors-general and ministers of the central administration (or, in some cases, to subdue their criticism of indolent fellow-officials of noble birth). The old semi-civilian title "blatengēta" or, "blatta", has become fully civilian, and is given to scholarly councilors who are trusted by the emperor. A famous example was "Blatta" Herouy, who served the emperor in international diplomacy at the time of the Italian invasion. Another title of warm, even more personal, appreciation, is "bitwǎdded" (lit. the Beloved).

554 635 Considerable reduction has been the lot of the title "ras", which in the past stood for not only military marshall, but often dynastic head of a province with private armies loyal only to him, and therefore often in competition with the throne. Of the old dynastic nobilities, the following heads still hold the title "ras":

Ras Kassa and Ras Imru, both kinsmen of the present emperor; Ras Haylu of the provincial dynasty of Gojjam, who is under close supervision; Ras Seyum of the provincial dynasty of Tigre, also under close control; Ras Gäbre Haywot of Dessie province, a kinsman of the present empress. A non-member of the old dynasties has been advanced to "ras" for loyal service: Ras Abebe, war hero and now minister of war.

[554] 552 Young noblemen who have mastered the art of horsemanship, as they are expected to, still assume a "war name", called "<u>färäs sem</u>" (lit. horse name), and name their favorite steed accordingly, much like medieval knights. For example, Emperor Menelik II could be politely addresses as "Abba Dañño" (lit. Father of Judgment, his horse name) which he had assumed as a young man, after which his battle horse "dañño" was named, and which flattered him both by emphasizing his position as the country's supreme ruler and judge, and by referring to his admired record as victor in many difficult battles. Emperor Haile Selassie I assumed the horse name "Abba Taqlay" (lit. he enveloped, i.e. the enemy) when a young nobleman, but no longer uses it.

552 A favorite horse name was "Abba Dulla" (lit. father of a tough weed), named after a weed that is difficult to uproot, and that regrows despite efforts to the contrary.

714 Although rhinoceros shields have not been used for at least 20 years and with them has gone the job of the personal shieldbearer, the term "gashay"(my shield) is still used appealingly toward any male protector or paternal figure, especially by young men or by women of any age. Conversely, an older man may refer to his junnior trusted aide as "gasha jägrey", my shieldbearer.

579 Banditry (shefta), much reduced in recent years by harsh measures requiring the use of the army and capital punishment, still appears occasionally as a form of social protest. In the past, when a minor nobleman felt unjustly treated by a feudal superior, e.g. passed over in promotion, he would often "take to the bush" with his retainers, pillaging and even murdering, hoping that his ferocity would either intimidate the ruler of the province to negotiate with him, or arouse his desire to re-enlist so brave a bandit. Guerilla activities during the Italian occupation by these Amhara "arbänoch" (lit. patriots, self-styled), led the Italians to attempt negotiations on several occasions. It was difficult to demobilize some of the disappointed, irregulars, some of whom turned shefta after the war. Since then, peasants short of cash or unhappy about parting with much produce at tax-paying time, sometimes turn into highwaymen temporarily. It is the duty of the rural, non-uniformed police ("näch lebash), the "thiefcatchers-

579 in-white", to control this. Sometimes these resort to the old-fashioned and officially illegal "afarsata" collective arrest of a series of suspected hamlets.

644 701 Another old pattern that survives is the personal bodyguard of the supreme ruler, i.e. the emperor, which has now increased to a size equal in manpower to the Ethiopian army itself, and is reputed to be far better trained and equipped. Centered at the capital and a few strategic spots, with greater mobility than the army, and battle experience gained in Korea, it contains much of the Galla "balbat" element directly loyal to the present royal family. The regular army is scattered throughout the country, and is utilized against periodic uprisings in the border lowlands and escarpments, such as the desert Danakil, the Issa and the Raya Galla of the eastern escarpment who occasionnally go on the warpath after the harvest season.

554 625 701 The attitude of the common people who admire an individual hero but mock uniformed dandies, still persists, much to the annoyance of the uniformed police of the provincial towns, and of the soldiers. The non-uniformed "näch lēbash" are far more respected, and their bravery is acknowledged.

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3. Public Administration and Territorial Organization

The social structure supported by the pillars of traditional land tenure and feudal army organization, is maintained by a third pillar, public administration and the old territorial organization. However, all three are now in process of gradual, and uneven, transition, partly resembling analogous developments in Europe at the end of the feudal Middle Ages.

A. Rural Administration

622 Much as the hierarchical pyramid of land tenure and the old army of the Amhara rested on the broad back of the "gabbar", so does rural organization still rest ultimately on the broad base of the rural official known as "ḉheqa shum" (lit. appointee over the soil). He might be regarded as village headman, though in view of the residential pattern of scattered hamlets ("ṭis"), his area includes a collection of them, collectively known as "mändär" (village). This may coincide, in the old-Amhara provinces, with the church parishes known as "ānd debber agär".

Although appointed by the governor of the province, and supervised by the intermediate district chief ("worädа gäj", or "worädа shum", or "mislanē", i.e. governor's deputy, or lieutenant), the cheqa shum is regarded as the agent of the highest administrative power, formerly the "ras" of the province; or the king ("negus"); now the emperor. In thetraditional pattern

622 he has been able to accuse the governor himself when called before the uppermost ruler, e.g. after an unsuccessful rebellion, thus freeing himself from any involvement in the guilt. It is he who orders a crier 203 to proclaim the latest decrees of the emperor at the big marketplace within his area.

His function has been likened to those of an Elizabethan Justice of the peace, and there are indeed partial analogies. Among the duties of the ḉheqa shum are:

Proclamation of imperial decrees; including call to arms in case of war;

Officiating at weddings ("semanya", outside church) arranged between kin groups;

Presiding over the village Council of Elders(chilot);

Supervising local "gabbar" on their statute-labor and impressments;

Aiding the "mislanē" in collection of taxes;

Assisting the local priests in collection of dues on church lands;

Estimating the fertility of land, in assessments of land tax;

Mediating between landlord and tenant in case of disagreements (basing himself largely on local custom and unwritten law);

Facilitating efforts of "näch lēbash" police in pursuit of bandits (shefta);

Arresting local criminals and bringing them before the "danya"(judge) at the nearest market

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 center of town;

Acting as host to travelling officials and guests of the government (usually taking the supplies from local peasants);

Collecting government revenues on caravan trails passing through his area, especially import and exe port duties, and passing them on to the "nägadras" (lit. officer over commerce).

Assisting the "nägadras" in collection of various market dues, on honey, togas ("shamma"), sale of domestic animals, pottery, pepper, spices, etc., if sold at the formal market.

The ḉheqa shum is thus available for any additional services the central government wishes to apply to the grassroots of the population, and this perhaps explains why the position of the ḉheqa shum is the least changed of all traditional appointments to office.

He still receives no salary, but enjoys the traditional benefits of his office: Freedom from land tax; actual, though not legal near-freedom fromthe "asrat" produce tax; (he is freed from taxes because he is said to pay taxes "with his legs" in carrying out orders); withholding part of his collections; customary, though illegal, "kickbacks" from his activity in assessing land for taxes; small gifts for officiating at "semanya" weddings; rewards for arbitrating cases by retaining the "wager" of the loser; participating, with his household, in feasts arranged for passing government officials and

622 guests; small gifts from Muslim traders at the big market in his domain; etc.

It is still customary that a son of the cheqa shum be appointed to his father's post after him, unless there is some specific reason for deciding otherwise. Thus the ḉheqa shum has been a major stabilizing factor in Amhara history, surviving warlords, feudal families, rebel governors, provincial dynasties. When Menelik II conquered Galla lands, he found it useful to appoint similar village headman, "qoro", from among the Galla. The Italians, too, during their brief conquest, maintained the office of the ḉheqa shum, to avoid chaotic conditions, only occasional and tangential reference is made to the ḉheqa shum, which in practice confirms him in his customary role.

Since the ḉheqa shum usually owns land in his domain, sometimes a woman, sole survivor of the family, is appointed cheqa shum, especially if she is a generous donor to the local church and thus has a powerful ally. In this case she will hold her office in "honorary" capacity, appointing a man to represent her when making the tours and in dealings with menfolk. But she will usually not appoint her own husband, because their private property is regarded as potentially separate (e.g. in case of ultimate divorce).

631 As indicated before, several cheqa shum, of a half-district (yämeketl wäräda) or a district (wäräda) are supervised by their superior, the lieutenant of the governor, often called "mislänä". These district super-

631 visors are in turn responsible to the governors of the sub-province, the "awraja gaj". It is customary that these officials be appointed from provincial nobility, of the lower grades, and this custom is still followed in the old-Amhara provinces, though not in Shoa where the central government has managed to place officers with modern elementary school education regardless of commoner origin.

[622 554] Even the çheqa shum, who is always a commoner--though owner of freehold "rest" land--has a claim to being regarded as a "telleq saw", a great man, in the local social sphere. For the higher officials and absentee landlords know that their administration and territorial organization are ultimately dependant on him, and they refrain from undermining his authority.

B. Urban Organization

632 The word for "town", "kätäma", really means "permanent camp", and points directly to its origin in the feudal social organization. When a feudal lord (high level, e.g. a "ras") became attached to one place, and was at peace for any length of time, he would order a large church to be built, creating or enlarging a church parish. Trails leading there would expand into caravan routes, and a large and varied "Saturday market" would develop. This would attract Muslim or even Arab wholesalers, who would be segregated or segregate themselves

632 not far from the market. A smaller daily market for retail items would develop, so commerce proceeded even on a daily basis. A larger church school, to include some higher grades, would be set up by priests and Däbtära (scribe-choristers).

632 712 On account of the floods in the rainy season, most of this town would be on a higher level, preferably a butte overlooking a river valley from which drinking water could be brought every day. On this fertile flood plain, just below the town, there would be some grass even at the gheight of the dry season, so that the cows owned by urban citizens would always find some pasture. [423] On this floodplain a "commons" was set aside, which no [485] one could "enclose" for private use. It was called "addäbabay" or even "yähezb addäbabay", and served as camping place for caravans, for temporary storage space of their goods and their mules, donkeys or camels, prior to the slow climb up the butte to the Saturday market. This arrangement also had the advantage of military security for the town, protecting it from sneak attack of an enemy under guise of a caravan, which was not permitted to proceed upward into town until dawn. For the Amhara town, unlike the Muslim towns in the south, were not walled.

632 651 This arrangement also permitted the "nägadraa", the collector of duties for the central power of the province, to keep control of the merchandise entering and leaving the market.

632 Contact with feudal land tenure was maintained
566 by requiring the "gultenna" of the district to come to town every three months, for a one-month statute labor, then called "wär tära", for the feudal lords now residing in town, if no war was in progress. Of course the actual labor was done largely by the "gabbar", but the gultenna was responsible. The domain of the feudal lord was called "gezat" (lit. acquisition, possession), and while this statute labor has now been abrogated, the term survives to mean "province".

632 The feudal chief of the province, imitating the
692 king, would "sit in judgment" in Solomonic grandeur, usually twice a week, under a broad, shade-giving sycamore, in front of his "palace". The latter could range from a spacious tent to a stone house of round design in the ancient style (or a Portuguese-type castle of the 17th century). Surrounded by courtiers and would-be courtiers, eager to proclaim the boundless wisdom of the lord, he would also appoint smaller judges, "danya", to hear more toutine cases brought in from the countryside by the cheqa shum officials. The town thus became a place where even thesimplest peasant could, at least theoretically, seek relief from excessive opression.
[625] The bodyguard of the lord of the town, commanded by a "shalaqa" (lit. chief over 1000 men), could detail his men for duty as "nebanya" watchmen, of specific spots, especially near the market, and this force thus formed a kind of city police.

000 Since the town attracted the most clever "dabtära",

632 Since the town attracted the most clever "dabtara",
[759] many of whom were herbologists, it was also a center where "medical aid", sometimes quite effective, could be obtained, and attracted patients from far and wide.

[463] Ethnic craftsmen would settle in hamlets within walking distance of the town, to provide iron tools, tanned leather, sun umbrellas, etc., without, however, exposing themselves to mockery, insults and occasional assaults by living in the town itself.

632 517 The town developed as a social center, and center for entertainment, almost inevitably. First, religious feasts such as the Epiphany parades and the tournaments on the public commons on "ganna" (Christmas) attracted the populace; and youngsters as well as adult loafers found themarket scenes fascinating. Secondly, the Arab traders liked to discuss business and news over tea or coffee. So "teahouses " (shay bet") sprang up near the [265] Saturday market, serving snacks also to many a male at odds with his wife, and excluding all womenfolk. Con-
632 648 versely, the mead house, ("tej bet") provided evening
588 entertainment with female singers and dancers (azmari) for the all-male clientele, and waitresses easily available for sexual entertainment. Moreover, every town had at least one "street of unattached women", who catered to travellers or visiting peasants as innkeepers, restaurateurs, and as temporary wives; they were usually divorcees, who hoped to find another husband, and to settle down again to regular married life.

632 178 Except for some of the feudal arrangements, most of this town pattern of social organization is still

632 little changed. Modern developments are merely super-
[178] imposed on this pattern, mostly due to recent decrees
633 of the central government at Addis Ababa. This city had itself grown out of a modest village on top of Entoto mountain in the 1880's, when Menelik II transferred it to the hilly floodplain just below because the population flocking to his court soon after his early military victories had caused a severe fuel and water shortage on the hilltop. The fondness of the empress for the hot volcanic springs at the somewhat lower water table were another reason for the transfer.

The old title of "kantiba", mayor, was given only to those of most important urban centers, notably Addis Ababa and Gondar, and this traditinn has also been maintained. Although the mayors are now supervised by a young, modern-educated "Director of Municipalities" located in the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa, who may visit them or call them in for conferences and instructions, the appointment to "kantiba" is still made directly by the emperor.

[625] The urban chief of police is still called "ahalä-qa after the former title of the chief of bodyguard, and his subordinate officers are called "shambäl", the title used by Emperor Menelik II for the chief of his most select bodyguard("zebäña") of 300 men.

The kantiba can convene a traditional council of elders, called "chilot" (now often referred to as "commissions", after the Italian occupation), which includes the chief of police and top judges, to hear and discuss

633 such modern problems as : increase in the number of hours of daily electricity; extension of city boundaries to include many scattered hamlets (e.g. of ethnic artisans) so as to be given to the rural "näch lebash" (thiefcatchers in white) with regard to the latest reawakening of an old family feud (däm mällässä) that threatens bloodshed; to increase municipal tax revenues; what to do about accompanying official visitors, nosy foreigners, visiting dignitaries, etc.; whether to abandon the insect-infested olf prison or try to rebuild it; etc.

[643] Once or twice a year the emperor himself can be expected, with his retinue, requiring careful preparations and bringing much tension in advance to the urban officials. Sometimes he may address the people at large on the old "yähezb addäbabay", which must be marked out and cleared. If the town is also the provincial capital, the emperor can be expected to examine not only that office, but the heads of the sub-provinces, judges, elementary school, the provincial hospital; etc.

633 798 Religious tolerance, decreed by the emperor, now permits such ethnoreligious minorities as the Muslims to reside wherever they please. In the past they were restricted to a section of the town, usually the part between the floodplain and the big market. For example, in the old city of Gondar, this section, locally called 633 "Addis Äläm" (lit. New world) was assigned them. Despite its name, this is the oldest section, and was probably named so over a century ago because it was newer than

633 the old Portuguese-type castles, even then in ruins.
[346] The new mosque, built through Italian encouragement during the occupation, overshadows both the big market and the old Muslim "ghetto" with the old mosque, at lower elevation.

563 The local Muslim "Qadi", ecclesiastical Muslim judge,
624 regarded as their procvincial temporal chief, calls on the governor-general every Tuesday. Most Muslims have not moved far from their old section, partly because it is near the big market which is their economic as well as social gathering place, partly because they, almost as much as the ethnic artisans, wish to avoid insults, mockery, and quarrels with young members of the dominant majority.

759 In addition to being a center of public announce-
743 ments, and the table of the judge for petty crimes, the market now also serves as center for the activities of modern "dressers". These medical auxiliaries set up their tables under one of the shady trees, their bottles, hypodermic needles, cotton wool, etc., clearly visible, with chairs for several patients, set apart by an enclosure of barbed wire. When an epidemic threatens, and
[731] during and after it (e.g. typhus or spotted fever), the public can obtain free injections there, or call a dresser to come to their home for a small fee.

633 Each town is divided into administrative wards, sometimes called "qäbälä", but almost invariably named after the church located in it. Thus a person will say "I am from Medhanä Aläm" (church of the "Savior of the

633 world", i.e. Jesus Christ), indicating the section of the town in which he lives.

C. Appointment to Office and Decision-Making.

566 The feudal social structure led almost invariably to paternalistic attitudes in appointment to office and in decision-making. This attitude continues in remote rural districts as well as in the most modern-appearing state offices in Addis Ababa.

661 644 The feudal lord, having conquered new lands, usually rewarded his most trusted followers with fiefs and connected privileges. For example, the newly-appointed "mälkäña", who may have previously served merely as military orderly to the warlord, as cupbearer and meatcarver, could be appointed to act as liaison officer and administrator of Galla lands, allocating 1/4 of the land to the old Galla "balbat" as "mälkäña" land of their own, and keeping the rest as his own fief. He would continue to make himself useful as tax-collector, foreman on statute-labor for the lord, as general spy for the ear of the Lord, available for any special service at any time. But he had little security of office or of land tenure, both being at the mercy of any caprice of the lord. It was therefore essential for him to spend much time at the court of the feudal lord, bowing and scraping, ever fearful that some competitor, perhaps the former "läfäri" the herald who announced decrees and public inquiries,

661 644 might gain in favor and edge him out with contrived accusations.

This pattern can still be observed, from the modest court of the sub-provincial governor and local judge, to the palace courtyard of the emperor himself. It is called "dä̈j tenāt" (lit. waiting by the gate). The frequency of appearance, in order to remain in good graces, is usually twice a week; more often if a special favor is sought. The place is preferably within a few yards [576] of a spot where the lord (or emperor) will pass. When this takes place, the courtier bows from the hips, very low. This will usually be acknowledged with a small nod. The procedure is considered essential by the aspirant for office, and by the office-holder, for these reasons:

Positive Reasons:

Reaffirmation of continued loyalty;

To indicate readiness to receive orders, pass messages, give information;

To enable the lord to play his paternalistic role (i.e. the lord can and periodically does ask whether the courtier is happy in his job or [576] wishes a new one; ettiquette requires a response of happiness at least for six months after having received a job, even if it was a demotion or an unpleasant task).

Negative Reasons:

To counteract rumors of disloyalty spread by rivals;

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this would almost certainly happen in case of repeated absences;

To prevent the ruler from forgetting, or to pretend having forgotten, a position of favor promised to the applicant. This follow-up also indicates tenacity, a positive point.

To keep the ruler from thinking that the office-holder has become so proud and independent that he has forgotten the "father" from whom all good things come.

To counteract plots being hatched in his absence, which would not benefit him.

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Another old requirement in appointment to office, which now is in force primarily in the district capitals and rural areas only, is the gift, "shum gänzäb" (lit. money for appointment), paid to the chief at the time of application.

Until very recently , the newly-appointed governor-general of a province would decree a "shum shir", a general, automatic abrogation of all office holdings left by the preceding regime; this enabled the new governor to appoint his own followers, courtiers, retainers, poor relations, etc., in office; but in practice he usually reappointed most of the former officials, down to the many "cheqa shum" headmen, on payment of an appropriate "shum gänzäb". In recent years this practice has been curtailed at the upper levels; for both the director-general of the province, and the secretary-general are now appointed by the central government in Addis Ababa.

But on lower levels the old practices continue, though more subtly and through indirect negotiations.

In decision-making, nothing seems to have changed. The paternalistic attitudes continue, and only very few of the modern-educated young aspirants really hope for and expect a modernization in the direction of greater efficiency. Only European advisors are outspoken on the subject, among themselves. Ethiopian students who return from university study abroad, return immediately to the "däj tenat" pattern. Twice a week they bow before the emperor as he leaves the High Court. Very kindly he greets them, usually by name, asks each after his well-being and that of his family. Later when a job has been assigned them, he asks whether they are satisfied, sometimes even inviting them to tell him if they are worried about something. The "fathar" role is taken literally on both sides.

Office-holders rarely make even petty decisions themselves. Instead, they take the matter to their superior, who is thus swamped with little details which waste his time. But it enables him to keep control through frequent personal contact and reaffirmation of the superordinate-subordinate relationship, and he in turn does "däj tenat" to his superior.

Office-seekers in the provincial capital maintain a grapevine service for information on the infrequent return of the governor-general from residence or "conferences" in Addis Ababa. Then they besiege his head-

661 quarters by the hundreds, employing messengers to spy
642 out his daily movements and private life that might develop some entrance to him. They even do this when the job has already been given them by a lower officer, for the positive and negative reasons mentioned above. Court orders are usually unobtainable, even by such highly-placed officials as the modern-educated manager of the provincial branch of the State Bank of Ethiopia, without the personal intervention of the governor-general.

Both rural and urban administrations are considerably slowed by this pattern of appointments and decision making, but the old patterns of human relations, and values accompanying and often determining the social organization, can be expected to continue for some time in the future. In this case resistance to change seems complete.

D. The State and the Crown

643 The emperor, "Negusä Nägäst (lit. King of Kings, in the Geez language), used to be primus inter pares, one of several kings whom they had chosen as their superior, or whose military might left no doubt as to his supremacy. At present there is no "negus", and even the "ras" have lost their power together with their private armies. The monarchy thus reigns supreme, theoretically limited only by the voluntary Constitutions granted by

643 Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1931 and 1955.

His "Solomonic Dynasty" claims descent from the Biblical Queen of Sheba, known to Abyssinian tradition as "Makeda", or "Azeb", and her son, Menelik I. The proper reference to the emperor is "Atse", to the empress, "Itēgē" (lit. Master, Mistress, i.e., of the country), used before the name. If no name follows the designation, the title "jan" is used (possibly from the Geez "dayyana", he judges, or from the Cushitic "zehon", elephant, king of beasts). In address, the appelation used for the emperor is "Germawi hoy!" (Oh, Magnificence), formerly "Jan hoy!" (Oh, Elephant).

645 The Council of Elders, "chelot", referred to in village and town, also applies to the Crown Council of State. It consists, in addition to the emperor, of the Abuna, the archbishop of the State; those "ras" who have survived the centralization of recent years, notably the conservative kinsman of the emperor, Ras Kassa, and his liberal kinsman, Ras Imru; the powerful, reputedly chauvinistic, Minister of the Pen, Wolds Giyorgis; and several cabinet Ministers included more for decoration than expected contributions. Next to the emperor himself, this is the highest policy-making body at present, dominating, on important issues, the legislative, judicial and executive framework of the bicameral Parliament and cabinet. Serious problems discussed in the Crown
212 Council have ranged from disaffection in high places, to the question of whether or not the old Geez-Amharic alphabet of 276 and more syllables should be simplified

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

212 to facilitate the teaching of Amharic to non-Amharic Ethiopians, illiterates, and for typing.

642 779 This latter change has not been made largely because of theopposition of the Abyssinian church. The Emperor is officially "Defender of the Faith". His connection with the church follows Old Testament patterns during the reigns of David and Solomon. The "tabot " (ark), which Emperor Menelik I supposedly spirited away from the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem to its secret place at Aksum, is regarded as guarding the liberty of the countryto this day. Church and State are thus intimately connected, and when Mussolini threatened Ethiopia, the Emperor and his chieftains swore to defend the "tabot" with their lives. After liberation, the Coptic Abyssinian church was reaffirmed as the State church, though weakened in its temporal powers(esp. feudal land tenure). When the last link with Alexandria was severed a few years ago, the Abyssinian church became fully the established state church.

173 The traditional epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty", the book "Käbrä Nägäst", is still honored officially, and taken literally by the people. It contains an extension of the Biblical story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to the court of King Solomon, and claims she conceived a son, Menelik I, the first Abyssinian ruler of the Solomonic Dynasty. The book may possibly date from the 13th century, justifying the resumption of this dynasty.

E. Administration and Tax Structure in Transition.

65 Imposition of tributes and taxes is the traditional yardstick by which the central power of Middle Eastern as well as African rulers has been measured, in their eyes and those of their subjects! On the basis of this yardstick the old Abyssinian rulers, even including the mighty Menelik II, enjoyed very little permanent central power, and their administrative decrees rarely outlasted their individual careers.

Repeated attempts have been made by the present ruler of Ethiopia to establish some uniform tax structure, replacing old feudal tributes. Some progress has been painfully made, but it seems that this particular phase of administration will long remain among the most change-resistent. Much of the tax system and enforcement can be described as chaotic, and this is particularly true in the proud, old Amhara provinces.

The first attempt of the central government to impose a direct tax on the individual citizen occurred in 1934, requiring every adult to pay a minimum of Eth$1.- per year, with income taxes as high as 20% on all cash salaries and feudal dues. The tax was highly unpopular, and hardly enforced. After return from exile, when his power was greater, the emperor resolved to take the administration of tax-collecting out of the hands of the provincial governors and to entrust the task to officials of the central Ministry of Finance. Collection houses of the central treasury, "zemia byet" were set up in

65 modern structures abandoned by the Italians in provincial capitals, were carefully guarded by military police, and placed in charge of treasury clerks from Addis Ababa who had a modern high school education. This form of administration continues at present.

The attempt was made by the central government, at about the same time (1942/1943) to set up a system for the land tax, based on fertility, which, it was hoped, would be more acceptable to the traditional-minded rural population. This tax was Eth$15.-for "lämm"(fat, i.e., fertile); Eth$10.-for semifertile ("Lämm tyeff"), and Eth$5.- for relatively poor but still usable agricultural land ("tyeff"); per "gasha" (80-100 acres). But the old-Amhara provinces resisted the measurement of their lands for this purpose, and in 1944 the amended decree permitted a different, lower,(older) rate of taxation, both in land tax and in produce tax ("asrat"), to apply to the old-Amhara provinces. Even this, however, is only partially enforced, snce it is difficult to collect from the more remote, mountainous, rural districts where the feudal kin groups and local churches jealously guard their old vested interests. Moreover, the"Galla"clerks sent from Addis Ababa rarely dare to go far beyond the provincial capitals, leaving rural collections to the old "mislane".

As a result, the tax structure in the old-Amhara provinces is a medley of the old and the new, often in accordance with the distance from the provincial capital, Land rents and tithes still pass into and through

651 the hands of the feudal landlords, mostly in produce, though the new Education Tax is paid in cash. The sales tax on horses, mules, donkeys and cattle, collected at the big markets by the old "nägadras" is now supposed to be accumulated at the "gemja bet" of the provincial capital, to be forwarded to Addis Ababa once every month, sometimes after deduction of expenses incurred locally by the central government. The same procedure is followed with income taxes, which, in a provincial capital such as Gondar, are stated officially as averaging Eth$1.50 per taxpayer per year.

651 441 [494] The highest local income tax is paid by the local branch of the widespread trading company of Besse Co., which has a monopoly on gasoline sales, and does trucking, imports and wxports from the provinces, and which pays Eth$750.-per annum in Gondar, a very small percentage of its actual income. [505] The next-highest local taxpayer is Navigatana Co, formerly of Italian origin, which controls the diesel boats which monopolize modern traffic across Lake Tana. [494] The third-highest local taxpayer is an Arab wholesale merchant, who operates at irregular intervals in import, export, and trucking, westward to the Sudan and eastward to Eritrea, on the Italian-built roads.

651 But in the strictly rural, agricultural environment, tributes and taxes are still measured per "madiga" (lit. potful) of tyeff grain, received by the feudal landlord ("balbat") or landowning local church. The amounts are largely determined by local custom and tra-

651 dition; with fertility of soil, size of plot, size of harvest in a given year, constituting merely secondary
651 considerations. For the tribute is regarded as payment
427 also for the right to squat on the land, to gather deadwood and cowdung for fuel, wood and nature-grown fibers for utensils, pasture cattle and donkeys, build a hut, use the water in the brook. Consequently, a greedy landlord parcels out his land in smallest possible plots, to receive as much profit as possible, and he is aided and abetted in this by the poor tenants who are so jealous of each other that they complain if their neighboring tenant has been granted more land than he can farm without servants. The tribute for such a minimum plot to the landlord thus takes the form of a "quitrent" (now that the statute-labor has been abrogated officially, though not always actually):

1 madiga of grain (usually tyeff), referred to as "amsho"

plus 1/2 madiga of "qolo" (usually barley, for roasted condiments or beer-making).

651 Only in export duties and import tariffs does the
439 central government have full control. Export taxes, ranging usually from 28 - 50% on coffee, the major valuable export, are levied and collected by the Ministry of Finance. This product comes from the southwest, Jimma sub-province, or Harar, in the southeast, both areas conquered by Menelik II from the Galla, and therefore under more unchallenged central administration.

651 Import duties are collected on the relatively limited
439 routes of access to the country, e.g. on cotton sheeting, and on modern "luxury" items imported for Europeans in Addis Ababa.

202 Communications were recognized by both Emperor Menelik II and Haile Selassie I as one of the foremost bottlenecks. At the turn of the present century and in some areas even later, messages and orders from and to provincial administrators were still carried by the traditional runner on horseback, carrying the message wedged in the top of a cleft stick, which assured safe conduct even through valleys dominated by bandits. Menelik
206 II introduced telegraph and telephone service at least to the major provincial capitals, and this has been improved since, though the rural district headquarters often still are without either form of modern communication, not to speak of the rural hinterland.

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635 Provincial administration can be summarized as follows:

Table 6: The New, Centralized, Provincial Administration.

Location:	Administrator:	Staff:	
Provincial Capital-urban-center of province.	"ṭäqlay gäj" (Governor-general) appoints lower office-holders; often absent, at court of Emperor.	Director-General, appointed by cent. govt.; always in residence.	Secretary-general "wana ṭsähafi" appointed by central govt.; always in residence. Does most of routine adminis.
Administers mostly from provincial capital	"awraja gäj" governor of sub-province (e.g. 6 in Begemdir province) Appointed by Governor-general.	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from District capital.	"wäräda gäj", district chief. (24 in Begemdir province) sometimes old "mislanē". Appointed by Governor-general	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from District capital.	"yäameketl wäräda gäj" chief of about 1/10 of the district. (255 in Begemdir province). Position must be confirmed by Governor-general, through "däj tenat"	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from own village.	"cheqa shum" headman of "mändär" or "ānd debber agär". Confirmed by Governor-general.	Can improvise unpaid staff.	

631 It is noteworthy that in this structure the Gover-
635 nor-general of the province is the only administrator
178 permitted to appoint the next two highest officers of his own staff (since 1942). This is in line with the consistent development since 1916, when the present emperor, then regent, began the process of sweeping away the power of the top of the feudal-provincial pyramid. The "ras" gradually lost their private armies, and were expressly forbidden, by decree in 1942, to make treaties between provinces regarding boundaries or political or military matters.

[648] Contact with foreigners was also taken out of the exclusive jurisdiction of the Governor-general of the province, since foreigners going to the provinces require permits issued by the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa; these permits have to presented to the provincial administrators before local travel is allowed . Even the control over the "Kantiba", the mayors of the major towns, was taken from the Governor-general of the province, and invested, by decree of 1942, in the "Director of Municipalities" in the Ministry of Interior. This central control over municipalities was evident in 1953, when mayors were called to Addis Ababa by the Director of Municipalities, for a reprimand from the emperor for having permitted his boarding establishments at elementary schools, intended for war orphans, to become filled with the sons of well-to-do feudal nobility.

631 The feudal nobility, though much less powerful
565 than in the past, plays a more informal, but still

631 dominant role in the rural administration. Most of the
565 "awraja gäj" and "worädä" chiefs are from medium and lower provincial nobility. In Addis Ababa, the "Senate"
646 or Upper House of the Parliament instituted by Emperor
565 Haile Selassie, is appointed from the higher nobility, the "Mäkwonent", while the Deputies of the Lower House are selected, with imperial approval, from the lower country gentry, largely from the Amhara, Tigre, and Shoa areas.

643 Many special privileges of regional nobility have
631 been abrogated by the present Emperor: The Wag Shum",
178 hereditary ruler of the sub-province of Wag since the
565 Zagwe dynasty of the 13th century, has been abrogated by him; also the "Behär Nagash", the "King of the Sea", hereditary ruler of the Red Sea coast, was abrogated; also the Muslim Ethiopian dynasty of Jimma, which Menelik II had permitted to continue in accordance with the treaty of peaceful surrender (ostensibly because the present heir had joined the Italians).

The least changed position in the structure of administration is that of the cheqa shum, who forms its broad base.

4. Customary Law and Justice

671 The foremost characteristics of traditional Abyssinian law and justice seem to be that they are based on the power hierarchy of social structure; that they permit and even encourage considerable subjective inter-

671 pretation of the part of the judge; and that they make no sharp distinctions between civil and criminal legal procedures--perhaps because both cases are considered equally disturbing to the society.

A. Abyssinian Law Codes.

The legal patterns of behavior that one can observe in actual practice seem often based on considerations of an unwritten kinship common law reminiscent of the Arab bedouin; at other times of the prestige-power of medieval feudal lords or of African chiefs who "can do no wrong". This pattern was probably little challenged until the 13th century A.D., when the power of the church increased so vastly with the resumption of power of the "Solomonic Dynasty".The earlier pattern was one of absolute power, quick decisions, swift punishment, Much of it remained until the 20th century, and, in remote old-Amhara areas, to this day. It is referred to as "Sebewi beg" (Man-made Law).

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627 To this older, unwritten code belongs the practice of "blood money", payable to the kinfolk of the murder victim, provided they are willing to accept payment in place of bloody revenge. A weaker kin group usually accepts, but a stronger would be ashamed to take money in place of a life, and resulting feuds, taking dozens of lives, have been known to continue for half a century in remote rural areas. The old price used to be the "semanya" (lit. 80, i.e. 80 Maria Theresa Thalers), as much as a common man could be expected to

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

671 [627] accumulate in a lifetime. The present price is usually Eth$1000.-.

[696] This practice is so strong that even at present a judge of a semi-modern court in Addis Ababa will suspend a prison sentence for involuntary manslaughter on condition that the murderer accumulate this sum and pay it to the victim's kinfolk--a wise decision preventing a new chain of murders. Recently a uniformed policeman in Addis Ababa, who was under this sentence for just that crime, made his tour among resident Europeans in the business district, begging money, with a letter in English explaining his need, signed by his own superior officer!

635 692 The absolute powers of the "ras" or "negus" in the past were limited only by the geographical boundaries of their effective military and administrative realms. All of them sat in judgment of their subjects, and combined legislative, judicial and executive powers in their persons. But each subject had the right to appeal directly to this highest authority against unjust treatment by a lower officer, provided he could throw himself in the path of the ruler and catch his attention. This right to "abyet" ("Hear me") continues to this day.

697 Nearly all "ras" and "negus" of the past maintained political prisons for their noble relatives who might become contenders to the throne. These prisons were not walled, but located on inaccessible mountain tops, "amba", and sometimes referred to as "wäheni". One such "wäheni" was located at a place called Gechan, in the old, smaller, Begémdir district, and was used by the kings of Gondar

697 from the 16th-17th centuries. When this area, which had been a sort of frontier area, became too settled, the political prison was transferred farther northwest to the edge of the escarpment leading down to the Sudan, between Chelga and Metemma.

671 175 779 A formal, written law code was superimposed on the earlier unwritten one in the 13th century, when the Abyssinian church extended its ecclesiastical code to cover also the temporal judicial behavior of lords as well as commoners, in all phases of life. This is referred to as "yäbaherya heg" (lit. the Law from Overseas), regarded as including "Moral Law" (i.e.Church Law).

This code, called the "Fetha Nägäst"(Law of the Kings) was basically derived from Roman Canon Law of Constantine, formulated at the Coptic Synod in Egypt in the 9th and 10th centuries, then translated in 1239, by Al-Safi Abu Al-Fada'il, into the Arabic language which the Copts of Egypt had by that time adopted for their own worship also. The code was a blend of Canons of the Coptic church councils, the Justinian Code, and theBible.

It was brought to Abyssinia during the reign of King Zera-Yaqob, and translated into Geez, then in its final stages as a spoken language, by the Abyssinian priest Petros Gäbre-Egzer. The Fetha Nägäst" became the official supreme law of the land when Bishop Takla-Haymanot resurrected the "Solomonic Dynasty" about that time. Of course the Abyssinian church officially believes that the "Fetha Nägäst" is much older, and that it has never been altered.

671 779 The Code consists of 51 chapters, of which 22 deal with

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

671 church rules and 29 with civil and criminal law, without
779 any distinctions between these categories:

Table 7: The Old Abyssinian Law Code: Civil-Criminal and Ecclesiastical Content.

Ecclesiastical Content:	Civil-Criminal Content:
Duties of the Church	The Sick
Divine Literature	Food, Clothing, Dwelling, Occupations, suitable for the faithful.
Christening	Marriage, Dowry; Prohibition of Concubinage
Patriarchs, Bishops, Priesthood	Loans free from interest; Mortgage; Bail
Deaconship and Under-Deaconship	Deposit; Power of Attorney
Commandments for all Believers	Liberty; Slavery; Emancipation
The Confession of Faith	Guardianship
Circumcision and other Religious customs	Society; Community of the faithful
Monks and Nuns	Constraining a Person by Force
Martyrs; Confessors; Renegades	Lost and Disappeared Property
Mass; Eucharist; Prayer; Fasting	Judge and Witnesses
Endowments and Pious Foundations	Worshippers; Blasphemers; Sorcerers; Murderers
The Holy Days	Thieves; Drunkards; Usurer
Alms	The Disobedient Son
The Tithe; First Fruits	Sexual Relations
Administration and Income of the Church.	The Abused
	Tenancy and Land Serfdom
	The Will and Inheritance
	Public Roads; Plots; Buildings; Water.

671 Despite its apparent and proclaimed orthodoxy, occasional amendments, either in theory or practice or both, have been made through royal decrees or common-law usage. For example, concubinage has long been practiced, [588] sometimes in the form of "damoz" marriage, which evades the Fetha Nagast by giving the woman the status of "hired servant" receiving a periodic "wage", and in this form the practice is at present legally recognized even in the new, modern laws decreed by the present emperor.

In fact, the "Fetha Nagast" contains an "elastic clause", which has been rediscovered under the present regime, and is cited as justification for the new, European-patterned laws which upset the ultra-conservatives. This clause advises: "Act according to your observation of the c nditions of times and seasons". This was quoted in the new Penal Code of 1930.

681 However, in the past, the draconic aspects of the criminal law in particular were most literally interpreted by many kin chiefs and feudal lords up to the beginning of the present emperor's regime. The hand of a thief was cut off, and in case of armed robbery both a hand and a foot. Rebels were similarly punished. If a person took the usual oath, "by the life of the King" and was found to have perjured himself, his tongue could be cut out. An insult to the king could be punished by blinding. A father had the right of life and death over [543] [567] his children--but not over his Christianized slaves. The latter were further protected against being sold, the penalty for which offense could be the hanging of the master.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

681 master. Such verdicts were still carried out during the reign of Emperor Menelik II who died in 1913, though he tried to reduce the literal enforcement of the more draconic parts of the Code.

It is noteworthy that the application of the "Fetha Nägäst" was supposed to be based on the biblical principle of Luke, that punishment should be applied according to the knowledge of the offender, not according to the seriousness of the offense. This was reaffirmed in the Penal Code of 1930 (though in effect this new code abrogated much else of the Fetha Nägäst), as follows:

672 692 The following are degrees of relative culpability, in accordance with which degrees of punishment are to be determined on a declining scale:

The man who knows the law
the forgetful person (unstable personality)
the "balagär" (rustic peasant)
the (otherworldly) monk
the poor and ignorant person (illiterates)
the stranger
the ignorant woman
the imbecile or invalid
the Ethiopian from a non-Amharic-speaking province
the child below age 12.

The judge was also permitted and encouraged to take the emotional personality of the offender into consideration(without indicated scale) , such as:

The oppressive person
the lawless
the proud
the envious
the treacherous
the revengeful
the intemperate
the quarrelsome
the careless
the bullying

671 The intent of these guiding principles and defini-
696 tions were to aid the judge to arrive at a just verdict, preferably a "Solomonic" one. Guides were considered desirable, perhaps due to the absence of the principle of any law of precedence. The emphasis was on the "Code", and this was reinforced by the culture pattern of "literalness", in behavior.

In effect, however, these guides have enabled both draconic or bribed (and therefore lenient) judges to interpret the law with considerable subjectivity. Clever talkers-in-court never fail to use their ability to sway the public audience, which usually has a tremendous effect on the judge.

671 The effect of the "Fetha Nägäst" was to link the
777 church and state. There were usually 12 provincial chief justices, "wombär", in allusion, apparently, to the 12 apostles. The "Fetha Nagäst" ruled all marriage, even
586 the non-ecclesiastical "semanya" marriage outside the
684 church premises. Divorce proceedings in the old-Amhara areas still can be carried through only with agreement of the "mänfäs agway", the soul-confessor, one of the priests of the parish, although no divorce is possible in a church marriage.

This "mänfäs agway" receives a small salary from the state; he can summon local state police if the accused mate has refused to appear, to bring him by force. If the divorce is granted, the "mänfäs agway" usually sentences both mates to a fine of Eth$5.- payable to him, on the grounds that both are technically lawbreakers for

586 684 having "torn the marriage agreement". Furthermore, the woman can bring religious pressure to bear on the "manfas agway" if he hesitates in granting the divorce, by publicly ripping off her blue neckcord, the "mätäb", symbol of Christianity, thus threatening to run off to the Muslims because her mistreatment has become completely unendurable. Since the "Fetha Nägäst" also covers Guardianship, the "mänfäs agway" decides to whom children of a broken marriage are to be assigned: usually children under 7 years of age go to the mother, but an older child may be asked to indicate a choice. Boys over 10 usually are given to the father.

671 The new law codes of Emperor Haile Selassie I are patterned after European, modern codes and are in the process of more comprehensive codification at present. What has been done so far will be described later.

675 B. Contracts, Oath, and the Legal Person, in Abyssinian Traditional Law.

A contract, called "kedan" (the same word is used for "Testament" in Biblical reference), does not have to be written, and usually is not. But it must be witnessed, preferably by more than one reliable person, preferably male. The contracting parties formally announce their agreement, then touch their palms lightly, [428] (ej mätta). If the contract is a last will and testament, the Confessor ("mänfäs agway") holds the thumb of the testator while the will is formally spoken aloud.

695 The traditional oath, "May the ruler die" (If I lie), is still in full use. This oath is called "semanya". As mentioned above, perjury was once a very serious offense, even a capital one, later was penalized by substitution of "blood money", i.e. 80 Thalers fine. Until recently, provincial farmers still invoked the name of the head of their old provincial dynasty in this oath, the "ras", or the name of the long-dead Menelik II. Since 1941, however, the name of the present emperor is [643] universally used, "Haile Selassie yemut". It is in a very real sense a form of acknowledgement of the supreme power of the ruler, whose supreme power over and above the feudal system is regarded, traditionally, as a protection from chaos, lawlessness and uprisings that destroy and cause suffering. The proverb says:

[539] "When the emperor dies,
with whom will there be judging?".

The oath "Haile Selassie yemut" is used also to arrest lawbreakers, much as English police might arrest "in the name of the king".

672 Another old legal tradition still in full force is that of the "wäs", the personal guarantor. To obtain a loan or a job, the applicant must always present at least one reputable guarantor, who is then personally responsible for making up any default or damage or misbehavior, and who can even be jailed in case the culprit escapes. He acts as personal bondsman for a defendant, to avoid his being held for trial in jail. This "wäs"

672 agreement must be before witnesses, again with use of the oath "Haile Selassie yemut" (May the emperor die, if I break my word). Often a judge will not release the loser of either a criminal or civil case unless he can produce a personal guarantor who will guarantee that the damages or fine will be paid.

562 672 Women, under the traditional laws, were considered legal persons but to a lesser degree than men. They could act as witnesses only of what they had actually seen or heard, and were warned not to "interpret" their testimony. Sometimes there were threatened with jail if their testimony seemed contradictory and not entirely useful. On a lower level were slaves, who were not le-
567 672 gal persons, but whose testimony on what they had directly witnessed could be heard in court, subject to evaluation by the judge.

C. Judicial Personnel

693 694 (1) The Curbstone Judge. He is sometimes referred to as "yäqälate danya" (lit. delegate judge). Two persons having a quarrel may stop a respected passerby whom they consider a peer, often a bearded "shemagalye" (elder), to arbitrate their quarrel. They stop him in his tracks by calling out "Haile Selassie yemut", or if they or he are very old fashioned and dignified, in the Geez version of the oath "Be-Hayle Selassie Amlak" ("in the name of the God of Haile Selassie").

693 694 If the quarrel is a civil matter, the curbstone judge usually acts merely as arbitrator ("agoran"). He is rewarded by the loser, who has forfeited his "wager", usually with several "berellē" (glass bottles) of beer.

If, however, personal injury or some other criminal matter seems involved, or if no mutually satisfactory adjustment can be reached, the arbitrator may tie their togas together with a knot, and refer the matter to the chega shum.

693 622 The latter then sits as informal judge, to decide whether the matter should be referred to a regular formal judge, the "danya". Meanwhile he tries to arbitrate the case, with the power of his office as village headman lending him added prestige. In church-owned territory he may be a priest. Sometimes he is one of the local Confessors ("mänfäs agway"), particularly if it is a marital quarrel. Each of these offices lends the chega shum added prestige, for there is no formal sep-
[779] aration of church and state organization at the base of the social pyramid.

693 694 (2) The Indicting, Examining Judge. He is called "atbiya danya" (lit. handwashing judge), and his functions are broad, and vary between rural and town locale and between districts and regions. Sometimes the chega shum performs this function himself. In town, the atbiya danya may sit under a sycamore at the market, so that any tradesman or purchaser can complain to him about unfair weights or attempted theft. He can issue an immediate "fetem", an injunction to cease and desist.

693 He can summon an offender for later, formal trial be-
694 fore the "danya", and can also summon witnesses to appear. He can order the market police to arrest offenders, or fine them on the spot (up to Eth$25.-). His position somewhat resembles the Arab Bedouin Arifa local judge.[75]

693 In recent years, the "atbiya danya" is sometimes a very young man who is semi-educated, graduate of an 8-year modern elementary school of the provincial capital, who is familiar, or expected to be, with all the latest decrees of the emperor. He thus becomes an "agent of change". But since he has never lived outside the province, he still follows the old pattern of literal interpretation of decrees, with little or vague awareness of thespirit or intent of the new laws. Often he is overzealous, with the brashness of an adolescent promoting half-understood modernization, which annoys or amuses the older, often less modern-educated "danya". Sometimes he functions as police magistrate.

(3) The formal Judge, "dānya". The threat of legal prosecution, "bādanya fit"(before the judge) is often heard in ordinary quarrels, which, however, rarely get this far. The "danya" is appointed by the "awraja shum", the administrative head of the sub-province, in most cases, and he now receives a modest salary. Formerly his income was entirely dependent on the "wagers" placed by plaintiff and defendant, which they had to enter in order to have their case heard at all, and which

75. Bouvat, L.: Le Droit Coutumier des Tribus Bedouines de Syrie. Revue du Monde Musulman, 1921. Tome 43, pp.27-45.

693 was forfeited by the loser. Under the old system a poor man who could not, even with the aid of kinsmen, raise his bet to equal that of his richer opponent, had little recourse to justice except the "abyet".

[661] The old system also left wide opportunities for bribing of judges, for the borderline between a public "wager" and private bribe was thin. In rural areas the pattern of "wager" still persists. But most danya now officiate in the towns, in a "ferd-byet" (lit. Judgment-House), often an Italian-built administrative building; and the court procedure has taken on a more modern pattern, through the gradual effect of the pressure in this direction from Addis Ababa. His fines may range from [681] Eth.$25.- to Eth.$500.-; prison sentences from one month to one year.

The "danya" is a regular judge in that he sits in judgment all year long, at regular intervals. Wednesdays and Fridays are preferred, because they are light "fast-days", on which the "mind is not weighted down with food", according to the traditinnal attitude. Thus, time and place and frequency of function of the "danya" are formally established in the judicial structure, and form the broad base of this part of social organization.

(4) The Appeals Judge, "wombär" (or, "wänbär", or "wänbär", lit. seat), does not sit as regularly in the "ferd-byet". Several times a year (at least once) he travels on a judicial circuit, and also accompanies the governor-general on his inspection tours. Tradi-

693 tionally the country of Abyssinia had 12 wombär, possibly in allusion to the 12 apostles (as in the "mähabbär" sodality). In the past the wombar were appointed by the "ras" or the"negus". At present they are still usually appointed by the governor-general of the province, who is their immediate superior, and whom they besiege in "daj tenat" for this high office. The old "ras" or "negus" usually had two wombar sit at each side of the throne, but the one sitting at the lord's right, the "qän wombär", outranked the one sitting at his left ("gera wombär"). This seniority in seating is still followed at the court of the modern-attired governor-general. The latter usually reappoints new wombar when he is himself assigned to another province, and since the wombar resides in the provincial capital, he is a permanent part of his official retinue during his tour of office there.

The wombar usually goes on circuit after the main harvest, and "sits" at major market towns to hear appeals. Formerly, the provincial "ras" would sit under the old fig tree, flanked by his wombars, and hold court even on capital punishment cases. The latter are now referred to Addis Ababa, to the High Court. But the wombar is [681] now empowered to assess damages or fines up to Eth$2000.-, to pass prison sentences up to 5 years, and lashes up to 25 (the latter usually in assault cases).

694 Though the principle of "habeas corpus" did not exist in the traditional law, kinfolk of the accused being held by a danya a long time without trial could go to the wombär's court in the town he resided in, and by

694 appearing regularly, early and late, for many days, bowing before him in "dăj tenat", call his attention to the injustice, whereupon he would usually order the negligent or wicked danya to produce the prisoner and to explain the evidence against him. But a prisoner without the protection of kinfolk or of priests of the church, who could intercede in this fashion, was in a helpless situation. This in part explains the cnntinuing emphasis on and power of kinship relationships and of the church, in all phases of life and social organization.

692 (5) The High Court of the central government, in Addis Ababa, combines the features of the traditional private court of the king, sometimes called "chelot" (Council), and of a modern Supreme Court. Nowadays, several of the judges are European jurists of considerable experience. Capital punishment cases, e.g. murder, slave trading, armed banditry, are heard before this court, since thr right to capital punishment has been taken from the "ras". This court is public or semi-public, and its decisions are often publicly announced. However, there is also a secret "Crown Council" (also called "chelot"), which convenes at the invitation and order of the emperor, usually on state matters affecting the monarchy, such as cases of treason.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

D. Traditional Methods of Investigation of Crimes.

694 [789] Two factors are noteworthy in the traditional method of investigating crimes. One is the use of the supernatural in tracing the criminal's trail; the other is participation of the Coptic church, once the suspect is caught. While recent, modern instructions from the central government try to suppress the former, neither factor has lost much of its power over the attitudes and beliefs of nearly all rural Amhara, even townspeople.

625 691 a) The thiefcatcher, "lēbashay", recently outlawed officially, was a hereditary office, passed from father to son, thus entrusted only to Amhara (or other Abyssinian Branches). This inheritance, however, much like inheritance of feudal fief ("gult"), had to be re-acknowledged in every generation. The heir, grown to maturity, would take his father's medicine bag, "korojo", travel to the head "lebashay" at the capital (of the province or country), and request renewal of license. This license could be withdrawn at any time, on complaints from the local headman, the cheqa shum, that the thiefcatcher had become corrupt, e.g. that he was in league with thieves and was so unsuccessful that he must be using fake medicine.

789 694 The magic involved in the procedure was "sympathetic magic", for the effort made was one of acting out all of the movements of the thief, from re-enactment of the crime itself, on the spot where it was committed, tracing his trail of flight, eating where he ate, and even resting in a state of sleep to indicate when and

789 where the thief had slept, until he was caught.
694 The thiefcatcher directed this procedure, but did not drug himself. For that puppose he selected a boy about the age of a deacon, i.e. 10 to 15, for it was believed that puberty spoiled the sensitivity and "unblemished innocence" of the boy. This boy was never taught the secret of his power. Often he was a young slave (more recently ex-slave), who had been selected on account of his particular suggestibility. It was be-
[276] lieved that years of this repeated drugging made him a permanent addict, slowed his mental functions and even sent him occasionally into raving fits; so that a person who had served as "tracer" for the lebashay could not be a witness in court.

When complaint of a theft reached the lēbashay from within his "territory", he went to the ḉheqa shum or other local administrative official, and asked permission to begin his investigation. Together, they as well as the local "ṯhiya danya" judge and witnesses (if it was grand larceny) went to the place where the crime had been committed. The boy, young enough never to have had manly sexual intercourse with a woman, was now given the drug to drink. The lēbashay tied the boy's waist with a girdle, leaving 3 to 4 yards hanging down, (to be used later to maintain control like a chain in curbing a dog).

The boy was now given a hornful of milk to drink, in which a black powder from the medicine bag had been dissolved. It did not take long before the boy began

789 to make jerky motions, increasing in speed, acting "hot
694 on the trail", whereupon the lēbashay seized the loose end of the girdle. The boy pulled in one direction, and the group followed. When he entered a house, he re-enacted the activities of the thief in complete detail, including sleeping in his bed, until the lebashay prodded him to "awake" and continue the trail, saying 3 times "aderas" (get going, arrive). The boy jumped up, roughly pushed anyone in his way regardless of the normal respectful etiquette of behavior toward a "great man", and continued the chase. When he entered a hamlet or compound, everyone had to "sit", no one could leave. The boy would approach every individual, make magic contact with him by pushing him with the knee (regarded as the seat of manly power). If he seemed distracted, the lebashay might slap the boy, much as one would an unruly dog. In crossing brooks, the boy was carried across, since water was believed to draw away the power from the medicine, making him lose his "scent". If water did inadvertently splash on him, another boy had to be drugged to continue the trail. Lemons were also believed to affect the power of the medicine.

685 When the thief was found, and confessed, he had
696 to pay the fee of the lebashay, fixed during Emperor Menelik II restraining laws to a maximum of Eth$6.-; the thief also was to post two personal guarantors to guarantee that he would return the stolen item and appear in court. The lēbashay could decide to accept these conditions and release him, or turn him over to

685 the "danya". Interestingly enough, if the thief did
696 not have money on hand to pay the fee of the lēbashay, it was the responsibility of the victim who had originally requested his services to pay him on the spot, and try to collect later from the thief. This had the effect of eliminating complaints of petty theft from setting this costly process in motion.

694 It seems that amateur thieves were often caught
789 by this process, and usually confessed, feeling helpless when confronted with such "powerful" means of detection. Professional thieves, particularly in the towns, who were known to have evaded detection, were and are believed to have obtained a powerful magic antidote from a dabtara semibe.

694 When all methods of detection have failed, the
787 distraught victim has a last resort. He may go to the nearest "tänkwa", a practicer of black magic, and ask him to divine by throwing his bones. This , too, is now prohibited, but still goes on, though not as openly as before. Failing even in this, the victim may go to the Coptic church and there, having purchased incense
[754] and given a gift, pronounce a solemn curse, "säbätē masdäfat", on the thief.

171 The pattern of the lēbashay has been traced by
694 some observers to ancient Greek parallels, by others to the Arab bedouin "djirra" or "kassas" thiefseeker who also tracks murderers in tribal feuds. The tankwas seem of more typically African witchcraft pattern.

694 (b) Collective arrest, "afärsata" was officially
672 discontinued only furing the past decade, and may well be re-established in any local emergency. It is usually applied only in cases of murder. The district administrator or governor could order the judges to arrest an area, then fence in all the men, and decree that "not a cow be milked nor a baby suckled", in the traditional phrase, until the investigation is completed. Every person was interrogated individually, and made to swear, before priests brought from the Coptic church, the oath of excommunication, "aggäzazät": "May He (i.e. God), perforate me as the Cross" ("endä mäsqälu yebäsasan"), if thefull truth be withheld.

When the culprit finally confessed, due to the tremendous social pressure on him, he was chained and sometimes throwm into a dungeon until trial. The cheqa shum was made responsible for guarding him, and could be assessed heavy damages, even full blood-money, if the murderer escaped. If the murderer was not found, the entire hamlet or territory under collective arrest could be sentenced to pay the "blood-money", unless they could prove that the murderer must have been a "passing bandit". Even then the cheqa shum might be fined for not having been watchful enough. At present he is somewhat relieved from this duty by the local officer, a semi-feudal "farasanna", whose only job is to look out for bandits and prevent anyone from shooting off his rifle, lest a bloody feud break out and everyone become trigger-happy. This
625 is in rural areas. In towns, the police, uniformed in

625 khaki shorts and with shoes, are now made responsible for guarding the peace.

E. Litigation

691 The Amhara, especially the male, is trained not to suffer any injustice silently (unless temporarily powerless before a "great man"). No matter how lowly his socio-economic class status, he loves to engage in litigation. Observers have sometimes described it as a national pastime. Even children at play argue (fictional) cases, with enthusiasm, debating their cause before their own "judges", draping and undraping a rag from their shoulders, much like adults do their toga, in this activity.

A man is proud to be regarded as one who "speaks well in court". Therefore, he will be ashamed to let another speak for him, and the legal profession flourishes only in Addis Ababa before modern courts, in which modern laws are involved, using European (Greek, Armenian, etc.) lawyers. However, a woman or a timid man, or a timid ex-slave could hire a man who "speaks well in court".

[693]

This debate is followed in both civil and criminal cases, before the "danya" or "wonber", and every individual involved, including the gurarantor "(was"), chełe shum, lebashay, etc., have an opportunity to argue as well as testify.

691 Typical cases most frequently heard are debts, small thefts, improper measures at the market, plowing across a neighbor's border ("wäsän gafi", i.e. border-pusher), grain eaten by a neighbor's cow, and the severity of mutual insults that had been exchanged during a hostile argument. Details argued about are often petty, such as: how good was the fence; just how much grain was eaten; how much was actually consumed?

[579] More serious is the loss incurred from the outlaw bandit, traditionally called "bär zägi", (lit. the one who shut the gate), or "dur gäbba" (the one who fled [685] to the bush). The most frequent case involves debtor and creditor. Until very recently, the creditor could chain the debtor to him, and in rural areas one sometimes still sees their togas knotted together. This was uncomfortable for the creditor who had to feed the debtor. Even now that chaining is not permitted, a plaintiff still has to feed the defendent he has caused to be placed in jail (e.g. for theft) while awaiting trial. While he feeds him little and often spoiled food, he must keep him alive, and this acts as a deterrent against light accusation, except on the part of a wealthy "great man" accuser.

695 701 Special gestures, bodily motions, and drapings of the toga are still followed in the traditional way when going "bedanya fit", before the judge. The toga is draped ready for action, so that the accuser, or witness, can hold one corner at arm's length, step forward with heavy tread, and wave the bunched end of the em-

695 broidered edge of the Shamma toward the face of the
701 accused, or even toward the face of the judge; shouting, in the latter case: "May He (God) make you see clearly! (Egziabhēr yasaywo). While he waves his right hand forward, his right foot thunders forward also, maintaining his position by leaning on the staff with his left arm. Meanwhile, the adversary leans mutely on his staff, as if he were in church leaning quietly on his "maqomya", but indicated nonchalance and indifference toward the raving of the accuser. A method of the defendant to influence the judge with his sincerity, in the traditional way, is to throw his pre-arranged toga off his shoulders, baring them in the middle of arguing his defense, to indicate that he surrenders his shoulders to the flogging that the judge might order, in complete confidence that his innocence must be evident to the judge.

695 Until very recently, and in remote rural districts
661 even today, the wager, or bet on the outcome, was an essential factor in legislation. It took the place of court fees, for the loser forfeited his bet to the judge. This was the salary of the judge. Without this wager, it was not possible to go to court. The poor man was at a great disadvantage since he could not, even with help of his kinsmen, keep raising the bets to equal those of his wealthier adversary. To limit such judicial excesses, Emperor Menelik II decreed that wagers had to consist of tangible items such as honey, horse, mule, with a fixed cash equivalent (Eth$1.-, $10.-, $20.- in this order), and judges were urged to exercise fairness. Prohibition

695 of the practice now often leads to more secret and sub-
661 tle bribing of the judge. For the old wager was open to the public, and a great source of public recreation and entertainment, accompanied by great noise and flashes of wit.

The danya would gravely enter every wager in his register. While the case was in progress, bets could be raised by signalling from the audience (partly consisting of interested kinfolk) instead of shouting them out, which was not always preferred:

"I agree to be his guarantor" - point finger at accused and strike own breast;

"I bet honey against him" -point finger at adversary and lick palm;

"I bet a horse" - wave both extended hands as if gallopping;

"I bet a mule" - hold hands near ear, moving up and down.

The judge had to take into consideration not only the winnings he would take, or the secret reward from the winner of the case, but also the shifting views of the audience. Thus the participating, arguing audience formed a sort of informal jury. Sometimes the danya might actually recess the court and call upon several elders from the audience to consult privately with him, or to help him assess the amount of damages to be awarded.

If dissatisfied with the outcome of the case, the loser might shout his protest "yegbäñ" (lit. enter me, i.e. on another trial), usually taking it to a high-

695 661 er court, if he felt he had the means. In this case the judge might sometimes not appropriate the wager for fear of having to surrender it again later.

539 691 There are numerous proverbs characterizing roles in litigation, and counseling behavior and decisions to be made in certain situations:

"The young lawyer,
in the beginning he acclaims to heaven;
later on, he will look to the ground"
(Moral: always choose an old, experienced lawyer, with many reserve tricks up his sleeve).

"Don't seize the tail of the leopard;
but if you did, don't let go."
(Meaning: Don't go to court against a good talker, or "great man", or wealthy adversary; but once started, fight as hard as hard as you can, or else he will ruin you).

"Even if you know how,
against the judge do not debate".
"Judge, why your partiality?
the loser must pay you (anyway)".

"One witness need not make you tremble,
(just as) a one-eyed (person)cannot dance well."

[17] The pattern of the wager resembles, in part, that of the "khabdh" of Arab bedouin.[76]

76. Ibid.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

F. Law and Justice in Transition.

178
671 Emperor Menelik II had tried to limit what Europeans considered draconic penalties and procedures. Emperor Haile Selassie I continued to adjust tribal law to modern conditions, and, as his power increased, expressed the principle, in the Penal Code of 1935: "By learning European practice, (the people) may attain to higher degrees of knowledge, because the basis of our code of laws in many places fits with the European code". Both emperors, while introducing modern acculturation in law and justice, quite consciously, did not, it is clear, abrogate the old tradition. They could not have done so in practice, despite the growing power of the central monarchy. For the traditional values and attitudes, particularly among the Amhara, are still largely intact.

The transitinn can be analyzed as proceeding in four phases: (a) The abrogation of draconic penalties and procedures; (b) continuing customary law and justice, (officially and unofficially); (c) Modernization from the top down; (d) Sectarian privileges to resident minorities.

681
178
671 (a) During the reign of Menelik II enforcement of the old draconic penalties continued. The hand of a thief was cut off, and he was thereafter called "dush" (lit. stump). Cattle rustlers, "dandi", were punished the same way. It was not rare to see mutilated persons, hand or foot or both, in those days. It was not until the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie I that the Penal Code of 1930 could have been decreed and enforced.

681 178 671 According to this change, mutilation of thieves was forbidden; the chaining of debtor to creditor was abrogated; flogging was reduced in frequency and quantity; the area that could fall under collective arrest, "afärsata", was limited; the legal validity of evidence from the "lebāshay" was indirectly abrogated. In 1933, the emperor further limited days, hours, and distances of the "afärsata". Capital punishment had been centralized in 1930.

It is noteworthy that in several cases old practices were for the first time acknowledged in writing, despite the continuing hesitancy to admit publicly any practice that European observers might regard as primitive. Thus, blood-money in place of blood-feud was decreed legal in 1930

426 671 178 Liberalization was also legalized by regarding civil law. In 1923 the Law of Loans fixed maximum interest at 9%. As usual , this was found to be too far a departure from practice for enforcement, and it was later raised to 12%. One of the last decrees prior to Italian hostilities, provided, in May 1935, for the abrogation of statute-labor, permitting the tenant (gabbar) to make a small payment (resembling a quitrent) instead.

694 661 178 (b) The pattern of judges riding circuit continued unabated, from the end of the harvest in the month of Tahsas (about November) until Easter. Sometimes judicial councils, "cubaē" were available in towns for appeals. But the old custom of bringing a gift to the "great man" to interest him in the indivi-

694 dual's case, the "gubba" gift, continued, and it is often
[667] identical with a bribe. At the same time, the old cus-
178 tom which served as a last resort to a poor person to
have his injustice rectified, by appearing with a heavy
stone perched on the back of his neck almost crushing
him, was abrogated because Europeans looked on this as
primitive. The poor man thus has lost his few safeguards,
and now is losing evan the right to beg and to create a
traffic hazard by throwing himself before the vehicle of
[171] the great man and shouting "abyet". (The practice of
carrying the rock resembles that of innocently accused
Arab Beduin who appear pressing a blade against their
necks to demonstrate and shout their innocence.

178 Transition thus proceeds in unequal shifts, with
671 many culture lags. Modernization of law and justice
643 proceeds from the top, Addis Ababa, down the pyramid.
One of the reasons for the circuit-riding of the emperor
himself is to remind the chiefs of his realm of his
all-seeing and all-hearing power, just as was done in
the past. He acts as inspector-general.

The Emperor and his High Court in Addis Ababa stil
give lip service to the Fetha Nägäst Code. But in prac-
tice, this amounts to little more than rationalization
for the benefit of the ultra-conservative Amhara nobles.
693 The position of the "afä negus" (lit. Mouthpiece of the
King), who traditionally was the guardian of theFatha Nä-
gäst code, has now become honorary in practice. In the
past he was the second-most powerful person in the realm,
trusted partly because he was not of the ruling family

693 and thus not a contender for the throne. He was the chief justice, for he could hear appeals even from the highest court in the land, and act as arbitrator and judge in high-level quarrels between feudal lords and even involving the king himself. His role as chief counselor of the king has now been taken by the "Tsahafi" (lit. scribe), who has risen to that position from that of long-time private secretary, at present Wolda-Giyorgis.

692 The present High Court has original and appellate jurisdiction over all cases in Ethiopia, criminal as well as civil. Majority opinion of the judges prevails. In 1942 a Supreme Imperial Court was appointed to hear appeals from the High Court, but it convenes only intermittently. A secret Crown Court is called together in special treason cases affecting the old nobility, or the officers of the new army.

671 177 A new Civil Law Code is still being worked out, by a series of European jurists invited for that purpose. Meanwhile new decrees are published intermittently in the official "Negarit Gazeta" (lit. the drum gazette), in both Amharic and English. The Attorney-General is a foreigner (for some time Mr. Nathan Marein), but the Minister of Justice, the Legislative Consultative Committee and the President of the High Court are Ethiopians, with a range of modern education from very little to average.

642 The Constitution of 1931, further liberalized in 1955, was a free-will gift of the Emperor. It established a Parliament of two houses, the upper directly appointed,

642 the lower indirectly appointed. No elections have been held; they have been postponed to the day when "education shall have been increased". In actual practice the monarchy thus remains absolute in function, and even legislation that is not directly urged by the emperor requires his signature and cannot be overridden.

563 (d) A problem of law that did not concern the old Amhara legislative authorities but that has become, though still dormant and in abeyance, a problem in recent years, is that of juridicial privileges of sectarian minorities, particularly Ethiopian Muslims.

In the past, Muslims lived there much as they did under the "Millet" system of Ottoman Turks, i.e. under their own religious jurisdiction in all internal affairs such as personal status, inheritance, marriage, divorce, endowments, etc. In Amhara areas, the Muslim ecclesiastical judge, the "Qadi" performs the functions of the "chcqa shum" and the "atbiya danya" judge for the Muslim population of his sector. He also heads their own school system of Quran schools, much as the Coptic priests head the local church schools.

563 692 There was no central Muslim organization, beyond this local structure. As part of modern centralization, the present emperor issued the "Qadi's Court Proclamation" in 1942 and 1944. It created a "Naibas" Council in Addis Ababa, to function as a traditional Muslim "Sharia" Court of Appeals above the local decisions of the Qadis. This structure, in turn, is supervised by the (Coptic) Minister of Justice of the central govern-

563 692 ment, who approves appointment to Sharia and Qadi positions.

5. Structure and Function of the Coptic Church among the Amhara.

795 The importance of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia on the life of every Amhara, of all classes, rural or urban, can hardly be exaggerated. To the Amhara, "Amhara" is synonymous with Abyssinian Christian; and the [198] liturgical language used in the church, "Geez", with "language of the free". The term used for their religion is "täwahedo", often shortened to "towado", meaning "orthodox".

To the Amhara, his church is so closely connected with his attitudes to his country, his nation, his ethnocentrism, that the severance of ties with the mother Coptic Church of Alexandria, in 1948, passed almost [779] unnoticed. Only church scholars are aware that, as part of the larger Coptic church, the break with the Western church occurred after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., ostensibly because the Copts insisted on complete fusion of the person of Christ, refusing to accept the "union, but not fusion of Deity and human spirit" of the non-Monophysite faith in the formula he pronounces when [788] slaughtering a sheep or ox: "In the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost, one divinity." The pious [224] hunter will hasten to the wounded gazelle to pronounce the formula before the animal expires, then finish it off by cutting its throat

795 off by cutting its throat.

It may be that the use of the formula became emphatic centuries ago, as an equivalent-though-distinctive [17] counterpart to the Muslim formula "Iin the name of Allah the all-merciful, and Muhammad hid his prophet". Another such distinction is almost certainly the blue neck- [293] cord, "mätäb" which both male and female Abyssinian Capts wear to distinguish them from Muslims. But their other [784] religious laws and taboos seem to date back to the Old Testament observances of Judaism, notable the taboo on the pig, which is not even raised outside European Addis Ababa.

795 As a consequence of the religiosity of the peo-
779 ple, the rules of the church have the force of law, unchallenged especially in the rural areas. Even the more modernized administration and new legislation has made little change in the close inter-relation of church and state functions, at the grassroots level. This inter-relation is even closer in the form of social pressure. Foreign observers have remarked that without this church organization the social structure of the country would fall to pieces and lose its coherence.

795 Another significant factor is the large number of persons consecrated, or partly consecrated to the church service. Besides priests, monks and nuns there are boy deacons and church students, chorister-scribes, and other semi-laymen attached to the church, whose total number has been estimated at from 10% to 20% of the population, particularly the male population.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

A. The Structure of Church Organization.

346
778 a) The Church buildings and design.

The traditional church building is round, designed on a pattern of three concentric circles. This combines the round pattern of the African hut, though much larger in this case, with the functional design of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. Like the latter, each church has a Holy of Holies ("qeddesta qeddusan"), a closed inner sanctum, which may be entered only by upper priesthood
[782] or the day's officiating priest. He carries burning and smoking incense in a metal or clay censer, while he marches around the sacred wooden tablet, the "tabot", located there. On the tabot, which may not be seen by layman's eyes, are inscribed, in Geez, the name of the saint to whom the particular (parish) church is dedicated, plus magical names of angels and geometric symbolism and phrases from both the Old and New Testament. The "tabot" represents symbolically the Ark of Moses kept by the ancient Israelites in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem

346 The second circumference, the "mäqdäs", can be
[788] seen from the outside through several doorless openings. Here the priests perform the eucharist, hidden from the public gaze by portable white linen screens. The "maqdas" is restricted only during services.

796 Within the third, walled-in circumference, the
346 "taza", called also "qeñe mahlēt" (lit. reciting-place of devotional poetry), the chorister-scribes ("dābtära") congregate while they chant devotional poetry and other

796 liturgy, swaying and dancing to the rythm of their raised
346 voices, the beat of huge drums, and the tinkling of sistra.

Laymen may also occupy sections within this third enclosure, mostly near the northern end. There is no seating. Standing is required during the long services
[481] that begin just before dawn and last many hours. Therefore, priests and chanters lean on "maqomya", strong bamboo crutches equipped with iron or even silver concave tops. These are also used as they sway with the rythm when the dancing is in progress. These crutches may be privately owned; but many churches own simpler ones as church utensils. When important visitors, "great men" and their guests attend, without maqomyas of their own, the chief priest usually takes those owned or used by the lesser priests to supply the Very Important Persons, to the barely disguised displeasure of the regular users.

346 Women are not admitted even into this third out-
562 er enclosure. They must remain outside the church building, in the yard, or leaning against the hard-mud wall, or, at a more pretentious church, under the outer collonade of wooden posts which support the overhanging edge of the roof. The roof, usually thatched, but of imported corrugated iron in better urban churches, is usually ornamented with an iron cross adorned with wooden or metal ostrich eggs.(This custom may be of older, African, origin.)

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

b) Parish Organization.

423
795 In many districts of the oldAmhara provinces, the church has owned much feudal land (it was given 1/3 of the land in the 13th century). Endowments from the wills of pious persons have been adding to this.

This land, which is regarded as "rest", freehold real estate, in the traditional land tenure, is administered in divisions,called "däbber", that somewhat resemble medieaval European parishes. The population of such an area, which directly or indirectly supports the local church, through tithes, rents, services, periodic supplies, memorial gifts, etc., refers to "ānd däbber agär" (lit. one particular countryside) as its home district; much as an Italian refers to "mi paese".

793 The priests attached to this church (often for long periods) usually attempt to create a residential kinship unit for themselves, similar to the residential hamlets of freehold families, inviting their nephews and other young-married kin, both patrilineal and matrilineal, to settle near the church. A priest thus closely surrounded by kin becomes the local patriarch, and his personal economic future, as well as his leadership are assured. The priest locally appointed by higher church authorities ato act as administrator is the sacristan, "gäbäz", or "gēs"(priest) gobäz", who is respectfully addressed and referred to as "aläca" (lit. chief).

793
795 The number of clergy attached to an old-established, local church, often includes, besides the "gobäz"

793 priest, seven other priests of varying seniority, 12
795 deacons, a head deacon, a chamberlain, at least a dozen "dabtara" chorister-scribes, several aged monks, and elderly widows who have taken vows as nuns. The latter do much of the baking and beer-brewing for the local church. But if a poor church, "gätär" is founded by and dependent on a landholding kin group not on church land, it may have merely two priests and 3 deacons, so that on its special saint's day dabtara have to be invited from other churches, to perform the proper chants, dances, and chorus of chanting.

c) Personnel of the Church Institution, and Church Education.

793 The ordinary parish priest, "qes" does not need to be verylearned or even very ascetic, but he is expected to live a holy life in accordance with all the rules of the church, observe even minor fasts, and to be married in the eucharistic, "qurbān" marriage. He is identified by the headcovering which he wears even in church, consisting of thin muslin wrapped around a cylindrical white cap. If his wife dies, he cannot marry again, and in order to continue functioning as a priest, he is expected to take monastic vows, putting on the "qob"(white cap) of the monk, without muslin turban.

One of the duties of the priest is to perform the eucharist on Sunday for persons considered living a Christian life, i.e. married in church (a minority).He

793 also performs masses on specific occasions, including memorials and holy days, chants part of the liturgy, reads (but usually does not know how to translate) biblical portions from both New and Old Testament in the Geez language. Before performing the eucharist, the officiating priest is expected to abstain from sexual intercourse for 1 to 3 days, for this is regarded as polluting him (an Old Testament survival). Before such occasions he takes care to sleep on the mudbench of his hut, rather than on his "alga" bed. This procedure is followed Saturday night, before a baby's babtism, before giving ritual ablution to the dying, etc. He is also expected to wash his body before giving the eucharist (but in the dry season this is often overlooked).

[183]

A learned priest, more scholarly than the parish administrator or guardian of his flock, is given the special title "mämhär" (roughly, "professor"). He is usually an expert on the hymn book "degwa", and is employed in teaching it to upper grades in church school. When he becomes a monk, he is oftenappointed to "abbatachen" (lit. our father), abbot of a monastery, where his mild disposition enables him to keep the peace among hotheaded, ambitious monks, some of whom regard monasticism as a career. If the "mamher" continues to advance his knowledge of church literature and history and legends (e.g. the life of the saints), he receives the title "liq". He is usually one of the few Amhara who really know and understand Geez well, including the subtle shades of meaning of the many diverse grammatical forms;

[192]

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793 and he may also know grammatical Amharic, which has been
198 mastered by only a few hundred contemporary Amhara (including the present emperor). This grammar is called "sowasso", and contains subtle factitives, frequentatives, etc.

793 In the higher clergy of church administration, a combination of some scholarly accomplishment and political astuteness is necessary. This next higher title is "liqä kähänät" (lit. head ecclesiastic). Given a temporal bishop's territory, he is named "päpäs" (evidently a Greek derivation); or, if his new post is within the spiritual, monastic system, "qomos", who "blesses the cap of the monk" (i.e. can accept and supervise monastic vows of lower-status ecclesiasts). This high clergy is usually found at provincial capitals or nearby monasteries.

Above this level is the very highest leadership of the church, several "liqä päpäs", archbishops, of noble ancestry, who are in line for the position of head of monasteries and temporal church lands and properties, the "echäge". This was traditionally the highest Abyssinian church officer (Amhara or Tigre). Until 1948, his only superior, the "Abuna" (Patriarch), was a foreigner, usually an Egyptian Copt sent from Alexandria. In 1948, when this tie was severed, Echäge Basilios became almost automatically the first native Abuna of Ethiopia. A younger, somewhat more modern-minded element in the high clergy is headed at present by Bishop (Papas) Theophilos, who may be next in line for the highest office.

794 Local personnel in the parish church included boys from 10 to 15, who are usually more reliable church students, dressed in fine church garments, with good voices and the ability to memorize liturgy. They carry the cross and other utensils in parade, and act as ritual aides in many capacities. They are called "diyakon" (deacon). When they reach puberty, indicated as soon as their voices break and they become awkward adolescents, the possibility of sexual involvement automatically cancels their position (and the gifts from the priests).

Because of the sacerdotal emphasis, worship is performed in a temple atmosphere, churches are open only during services, and there is no preaching. Thus church officials are absent from the building most of the time, leaving the key to the heavy wooden door in charge of a semi-lay caretaker.

793 He is often a däbtära, who can be regarded as semi-clergy, though he has neither ecclesiastical recognition nor tenure of office. Yet his function in the church, as scribe, translator of Geez to Amharic, chorister of devotional poetry ("qäne"), religious poet, herbologist and physician of sorts, writer of amulets, etc., renders his participation as essential to the formal clergy as to the common people.

He must have a good voice capable of endurance, ecstatic pitch, rythm and melody. He must be more intelligent and learned than the priest, so that he can understand and explain and translate what he reads in Geez and Amharic. He has no salary and no right to the tithe, but the priest may allocate a portion to him. Often

Often
793 most of his income is derived from writing "ketäb", amu-
lets on goatskin parchment, worn by ailing persons on
their neck-cord, or by women, in leather containers fas-
tened to belt straps around the waist. The priest do
forbid this amulet-writing activity, which is sometimes
(not without reason) suspect not only of "white" magic,
but also black magic. Yet the priests ignore and over-
look this, as they have done for centuries, perhaps be-
cause in this way they obtain the "dabtara's" other ser-
vices free of cost.

The däbtära is often feared by the common people because of his power, both medical and supernatural. In recent years, with the suppression of the "tänkway" witch-doctor, the clientele of the debtara has actually increased, for now there is no one but the dabtara to exorcise "buda" (magic hyena, werewolf) possession, to protect from the evil eye, or to curse and capture thieves, Moreover, it is respectable to go to the däbtära, who operates in the shadow of the church, who associates with holy priests and even drinks beer with them at feasts. No gossip can attach to a man seen entering the hut of the dabtara, for his errand may be decent and even sacred.

[66] Most däbtära reap full benefits from the awe in which they are held. They even transgress etiquette when it suits their purposes. If uninvited at a wedding or other festivity, they often "crash" the party, and expect to be and are given seats of honor and the choicest food and mead.

793 Parish priests, (unlike mämhär scholars) are also
[66] not bashful about demanding their due (produce tithe, sheep, honey, even cash) from their tenants of church land. Sardonic peasant humor expresses this in the proverb:

[539] "The bashful priest,
the blind donkey,
(are one)" . (i.e. both would be helpless and starve to death).

532 Among artisans who do specialist work for the
346 church is the artist of church paintings, usually highly colorful and realistic scenes from the suffering of the saints in morbid and gory detail; the beauties of heaven and the trinity; the horrors of hell ruled by a chained, soul-munching Satan; etc. These religious and semi-religious story illustrations and legends are painted on canvas and then attached to the inside of church walls.

874 Church students are usually boys 10 years or over (never girls), who at first learn the Geez-Amharic alphabet, reading Geez without translating, beginning with the Epistle of the Apostle John. They are taught by rote, memorizing by chanting the portions out loud. There is very little writing in the early grades, and experimentation is traditionally discouraged, for fear that the boys might use their new-won learning to write magic amulets. Before examinations, church studetns stimulate
874 their mental processes by eating the leaf of a Datura
276 weed resembling Jimson weed called "astänager" (lit. to stimulate talk) which is also used by däbtära in exor-

874 [270] lising the bewitched, and which seems to have an effect similar to benzedrine.

Examinations include fluency in reading Geez and in reciting by heart Gospels, Lives of Saints, and Ethics ("sirak"), the last particularly in the upper grades. In still higher grades they learn devotional poetry ("qene"), including composition, and "zäma", church liturgical music in correct tones and notes.

874 792 For more advanced study, the boys interested in a career in the church have to go to monastery schools. At the old and famous Amhara monastery of Dabra Libanos the number of students may reach 500 at any given time. They earn their keep by serving the monks, begging in the vicinity, and eating as much as they can when a noble family arrives to give a memorial feast, "täzkar", in honor of a departed soul. Often the students do not possess a good shamma, and therefore have adopted the ancient clothing of sheepskins over their rags, to keep themselves warm and to be identified more easily when they go begging. Begging, they carry a small basket on the left arm and, leaning on a maqomya stick with the right, chant ecstatic church melodies until the housewives fill the baskets with enjara or parched barley ("qolo").

Those who serve the monks, carrying water, washing their clothes, carrying their food, water, etc., receive part of the monk's daily ration("dergo"). The 874 students usually graduate by age 18 to 20, and then decide whether to take monastic vows or return home to

874 utilize their learning in other capacities. The sons of former feudal nobles or of priests usually secure administrative positions or judgeships without difficulty; those of undistinguished birth could become dabtara; or locate a vacancy as teacher in a parish school--then "dej tena" the regional bishop to confirm them in the appointment.

872 538 Methods of the church school were followed, for centuries, for all those boys who attended the local school, which was in reality a lower-grade church school itself. The initial process of learning to read was called "guter" (lit. number), "counting" letters. The second stage was called "Geez", for then they learned the seven syllabic variants of each Geez consonantal letter. The third stage, "werd nebab", had the pupils read the entire syllabic alphabet up and down until completely memorized in sequence. In the fourth stage, "abugida", the order of the syllabic alphabet is mixed up and the pupil must place each syllabic letter in proper order. In the 5th stage, he reads, in a sing-song which varies from province to province, the first chapter of the Epistle of St. John, first letter by letter, then word by word, finally phrase by phrase, a repetition of the first four stages. This musical singsong "malakta yohanesa hawareya" symbolizes what ABC does in the West. Then follow readings from the New Testament, Psalms of David ("dawit"), then any text "on sight" in Geez or Amharic. Liturgical songs and poetry most often learned by heart are: "Mediase Maryam", "Anqasa Berhan", "Malka

872 Maryam", "Mälka Iyasus". All of these are basic devotion-
[538] al liturgy.

[212] It is noteworthy that there is usually no formal training in writing at all, for fear of misuse. Individual students can take the initiative of finding a private tutor for writing.

At this point the local schooling ended, usually after about three years. In the past, only church students travelling to centers of learning went beyond that level. Only they learned to understand what they were reading.

874 On this higher level, church students read Geez
538 literature such as Miracles, Lives of Saints, "Gädel", "Tamarä Maryam", "Gänzät", "Mar Yes-haq", and Ethics, "sirak". Also church homilies, "dersan", containing doctrine, "dersät", composed by a saintly author, "Därasi". Important is the book "bal abäw" a combination of homilies of Greek, Coptic, and Syrian church Fathers, probably translated from Arabic to Geez in the mid-15th century under Emperor Zara Yaqob.

874 Those proceeding still further divided into specializations (sort of electives). Some specialized in devotional poetry, including compositions, for about 3 years--"qeñe". Others specialized in "zema", for which they had to be talented with a musical ear to distinguish the musical notation of "degwa", "somä degwa", "me'raf", "mäwasat", "zenmarä qeddasä säatat". Still others specialized for a minimum of three years in religious philo-

874 sophy, "mäṣehäf" (lit. book), interpretation of Old and New Testament, and writings of Coptic Church Fathers.on
538 the subject. Also studied are the "Käbrä Nägäst" (epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty") and the "Fetha Nägäst", law code.

e Examinations are held orally, usually on the saint's day of the institution, which thereupon becomes graduation day. The oral degrees given are termed, "qenē", "zēma", "mäṣehaf", according to the individual's specialization, much as Western colleges grant Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, etc. degrees. Receipt of the degree is regarded only as a commencement in scholarship, for a real "mämhēr" requires 20 to 40 years of study, to complete all these branches of religious education, in view of the Amhara themselves.

872 Since little girls receive no formal education,
562 they cannot be taught nearly as much as boys, when, later in life, females aspire to become active nuns in nunneries. At most they are taught Geez prayer, with difficulty and by rote, and do nto go beyond what is taught little boys at the local parish schools.

792 --onks usually reside in landowning monasteries, except for former priest who have taken monastic vows and return to their parishes. Monasteries are headed by the "abbatachen" (lit. our father), whose official co-administrator is called "Säbate". In personality he is usually dominant andcommanding, unlike the mild, otherworldly abbatachen; though on occasion the same person can hold both positions. Each large monastery has a

792 council of elder monks

If a nunnery is attached to the monastery (e.g by common ownership of land), they are separated by riverbeds, steep hill, etc., and have their own pasturage meadows, and their own chapels.

262 792 465 The staple foods are beans and peas, consumed in large quantities, usually boiled as "nefro" (the staple hot dish of fasting periods), and a specially thick, nutritious bread, "dabove". The latter is at least 1-½ feet in diameter, at least half an inch thick. It is cut into quarters, and each monk receives a specified number of quarters according to his monastic rank. Thus, older, high-level monks who need less food have much surplus with which to engage the services of church students, or even trade with peasants for occasional chickens, honey, spices, etc. The range is from a mere one-quarter for the lowliest monk to 12 quarters for the head of the monastery, plus proportional distribution of "nefro".

Barley-beer is also similarly rationed out, on permitted occasions. Cotton cloth (abujedid) and shamma or natala togas are distributed once a year, preferably in time for the masqal holyday.

792 The chanting of prayers and poetry permeates the atmosphere, from 3 A.M. when the monk supervisor of the day enters the kitchen, humming the pre-dawn chants, to long after nightfall when students still practice for exams.

792 Nunneries are similarly organized, headed by an abess, but the average age is much higher, since becoming a nun is far less a career than becoming a monk, and typically chosen by women who have been unhappy in marriage or have been widowed. Virgin nuns are extremely rare.

There are also laywomen who serve as volunteers and for the occasional spiritual and temporal benefits that result from association with a large nunnery-monastery, which still represents a major business organization, trading post, produce and commodities exchange, etc. "Gabbar" sharecrop tenants supply cereals, services, etc.

[292] The baking is done largely by nuns and laywomen, who also cook and brew barley beer, and milk cows. The last is particularly essential on non-fast periods when milk consumption is permitted. Monastic rules are so severe, that no female animals are permitted inside the monk's area; no cows, mares, bitches, etc. This is the literalness with which the separation of the sexes is enforced!

Finally, there is a non-functional clergy, a relatively small number of hermits. They usually live under cave-ledges, near brooks, in forest land near monasteries. The monks come daily to bring them food, leaving it at a respectful distance. These hermits, called "bahetawi", are paradoxically regarded as "loving mankind", as praying for the well-being of all "orthodox"

792 believers, but as quick in anger when a human face disturbs their solitude. Legends tell of hermits who, receiving a "call", returned to the temporal world as prophets and leaders of men. But this is regarded as rare. During their lifetime the hermits are held in awe, and even after their death they are believed to haunt their earthy cave-ledges, so that passers-by talk in whispers only, and fear to come too close.

(d) Utensils of the Church.

793 The headgear of the priests, "mätämtämiya", is a
292 turban-like affair, basically a white muslin wrapped around the head or the cylindrical cap ("qob"). Monks wear the "qob" without the muslin, and, in many monasteries, used to dye their "qob" as well as their robes
[827] yellow. In recent years the yellow color is falling into disuse, and white--believed to be the color of mourning for the passing of Christ, is worn alternately with black caps and capes. Black is evidently due to acculturation. It first entered in the form of imported chintz capes for the bishops and upper clergy in the time of Menelik II, and has spread, due to the Italian occupation.

Like noblemen, middle and higher clergy wear the kaba, the heavy , woolen, sleeveless cape, and carry an especially good "çhera" (flyswitch) of guresa-monkey hair. Priests wear the narrow white jodphurs at all times,

793 beneath kneelength shirt ("qämis") and shamma; often
292 they wear sandals. They usually let a full beard grow
[293] as richly as it will. Another private symbol of priestly nobility is an abbreviated "maqomya" leaning staff, shorter, without crutch, topped by an ivory knob and equiped as a walking stick, called "sände kahanat", with an iron point at the bottom.

In church parades, priests and deacons add colorfully embroidered garments of imported and embroidered velvet, rayon, silk, brocade, etc., often cut like the ancient leopard-skin in sleeveless capes which hang from the shoulders over front and back. If of domestic origin, the holy day garments are dyed black or red. Embroidery is of gold or silver thread, and sometimes includes gold or silver filigree plates in geometric patterns (e.g.the
[293] sun). On such occasions the ordinary sun umbrella ("jantela") of reeds gives way to a colorful umbrella of imported cloth, in which red and gold predominate. It is now often attached to the ribs of a modern umbrella. The black cape ("kaba") is held across the chest with a metal (often silver) clasp or chain.

293 On such holy day parades, clergy and upper-class
778 persons married in a eucharistic ceremony ("qurban"), wear the metal crown, "akläl". This is one of the most valuable of each church's possessions, always locked in the church when not in use, usually donated by noble sponsors. They are usually made of silver, or at least of brass, and the older more traditiona ones are shaped in tiered stories of circles narrowing toward the top

295 story. Later ones imitate European crowns.
778 In parades tall crosses of bright metal are carried, Like most Abyssinian priestly hand crosses, they are so ornamented with further cross designs that they appear to the Abyssinian as "perforated"; hence the common expression "perforated as the cross" (where a Westerner would use the symbol of the sieve). Priests and monks always carry a handcross, which they hold out to a passing acquaintance to kiss, theproper greeting toward clergy, even on ordinary days. Smaller crosses are [789] used by the public as amulets against evil spirits. The larger crosses, with their ornamental supports, forming perforated circles and squares, sometimes contain engraved verses. [325] The method of casting is the"cire perdue", which is also used to cast the concave tops of the "ma- [534] qomya" crutch. In front of old churches, resonant stones are suspended from poles, and when struck, act as bells to summon for the service.

778 Other metal church utensils include the censers in which incense is burned during the services, swung by the officiating priest. They may be of brass, silver, iron, even clay in poorer churches. They are often equipped with numerous small bells. Very common is [534] the sistrum, called "sänässel" (onomatopoetic), a rattle instrument reminscent of ancient Egypt, usually of brass, 8 inches long, with a straight wooden handle, the metal frame cast in "cire perdue", often by Falasha smiths. The frame is perforated like a cross. The tinkling disks, [177] which glide along the cross-wire between the sides of the frame

778 the frame, are now often cut from modern tin cans.

The ceremonial drinking cup used in the eucharist is the "ṭewa", usually made of metal. But if used in the "mähabber" communal sodality outside the church, it is often of horn or clay, about 4½ inches high, 5 inches diameter at top, 1½ inches at bottom. On the latter occasion it is filled with barley beer or "berz" (honey-water). This is given the peasant at plowing time to [788] confer blessing upon him, thus called "maras baggo" (for spring plowing).

Other equipment belonging to the church may be a wooden pulpit for reading (not preaching), some tin [373] oil-lamps or the old wick-like candles (called "twäf"). 778 Very important are the drums, huge affairs carried by 534 the younger dancers during worship, suspended from shoulder straps. The barrel-like "nägarit", of which the average church has three (or must borrow them), usually has a height of at least 30 inches, a diameter of 15 inches. It is made of "wanza" wood (olive or other hardwood), with tanned oxhide moistened and stretched tightly across both ends. The drummer operates it with the flat of his fingers and top of flat palm. Another type is the "kabaro" drum, in which one end is bigger than the other. The drums and the swaying maqomya sticks keep time during the chanting. Trumpets are used only for parades, to herald the march, but not in accompaniment.

778 When not in use, most of these utensils are loc-
346 ked in a little treasure house, called "bätalehem" (in
251

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

778 Geez). Here the bread and wine used in the eucharist are
346 prepared and stored with great secrecy. The utensils of
251 the nearby cooking hut, the baking pan "metad" and large clay jars for barley beer, are also stored here. Supplies of tyeff, barley, wheat, beans, peas, may also be stored.

779 In recent years, church parades feature prominent-
186 ly the flag of the nation, the red-green-yellow of the central government, emphasizing in modern ways the close union of church and state that has long been traditional in Abyssinia.

(e) Worship and Devotional Poetry.

533 The musical chants and notations studies formally
796 have already been outlined in connection with church education.

Church hymns, including devotional poetry, are called "qene" in a generic rather than specifically accurate sense. A collection of them is contained in the book "gubae qana", and they are sung in a special mode. The chief mode is called "selt". It has three variations:

(1) "geez" - short tones, dedicated to the "Father";

(2) "ezel" - mournful tones in minor key, dedicated to the "Son" 's passion;

(3) "araray" - long, drawn-out tones, dedicated to the "Holy Ghost".

These variations are interlaced, for special results, and for specific occasions. The mass, "qeddede" (lit. sanctification) is chanted in a mode bearing the

533 same name. "Saatat", the midnight chant, has a special
796 mode. "Dawit", the Psalms of David, are chanted in their characteristic mode, as is the "Addis Kidan" (New Testament).

On other occasions, not only does the musical composer have the opportunity to improvise, but the lyrical poetry, "qené", can be varied. In rural districts, priests who can only recite Geez but not compose in it, because they don't understand it, even compose "qené" in Amharic. For example:

[539] "How are you, earth? How are you, world?
Even though I love you (my home soil), I wish not to come.
Even if I hated you--how shall I stay away?"

This poem, chanted as part of a church service, is not strictly liturgical, varies from district to district, and can express a wide variety of philosophical emotions, including the weltschmerz motive illustrated here. The peasants appreciate this unofficial, Amharic addition to Geez liturgy, and often mutter under their breath "Aiyye! what good words!".

(f) Heretical Movements.

795 Like any old church, the Abyssinian Coptic church has had heretical movements within it, but none of them have ever been able to split the church into sharply divided sects. Instead, heretical sects seem to follow

715 the usual Amhara (and Tigre) pattern of regional divergence.

Thus, in the Amhara province of Godjam, where separatist regionalism is strong, there survives traces of an heretical movement from centuries ago when waves of theological debates followed the split of the Monophysites, and whenever contact with European Christians awakened the old debates. Now dormant, though not forgotten, and still quietly followed by some is the movement referred to as "tsega", or, "tsēga lej". Their enemies in the leadership of the Abyssinian "towado" (orthodox) church say that this movement dates to the influence of the Portuguese Jesuits in the 17th century. It is passed on in some regional church schools. To counteract this and brand it as heretical, the orthodox church requires every priest to take an oath, before ordination, that he does not hold with this or any other heretical sect.

In the Amhara province of Behemdir (Gondar) there survive traces of a sectarian movement which is regarded as diametrically opposed in dogma to the aforementioned, leaving the orthodox view somewhere in the middle. This movement was the "oebat". It held the most absolute of the Coptic doctrine of Monophysitism, emphasized the person of Jesus, and deplored the widespread worship of saints. It is somewhat more respectable in the orthodox church than the other sect, but appeal to saints is too popular to give this sectarian view much future.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

779 B. The Functions of the Church in the Life of the Lay Public.

a) Sacerdotal Emphasis.

From the structure of the Abyssinian Church, the sacerdotal emphasis is evident, and even more so in the function and routines affecting the lay public. Church worship is regarded as a "temple" worship of the deity and saints, rather than as congregational worship. The latter idea seems entirely absent.

Discussions of religious philosophy, even of ethics, is limited to the higher grades of church schools, particularly monasteries. The view seems to regard such knowledge as confusing to the lay mind, even dangerous: the layman had far better listen and obey what filters down to him. There is no tradition of sermon or preaching. The ordinary parish priest usually knows barely enough liturgy for regular services, leaving occasional translations up to the dabtara. Nevertheless, the priest is supposed to influence the public indirectly, through living a holy life. Often he is the only local Christian who has married by "qurban" and is thus on good, eucharistic terms with the church, while the layman is technically excommunicated for having married by Zsemanya". More directly, he exerts influence as the arbiter of domestic quarrels, etc. He lends dignity to life through the rites of passage, particularly the series of memorial ("täzkar") feasts.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

779 The sacerdotal emphasis is so strong that efforts of the emperor to introduce preaching(of ethics, restraint in mourning, etc.) have been quietly ignored by the church, except for some polite and occasional attempts to please the emperor in Addis Ababa by fulfilling his wish in his own church.

b) The Annual Cycle of the Church Calendar, and its function.

805 The calend ar of Abyssinia is based on the Julian calendar of Rome, but the year begins September 11th, following the ancient Egyptian usage. The year has 12 months of 20 days each, plus 5 or 6 intercalar days at the end (the extra day once every 4 years). Historically this calendar probably came to Abyssinia from Alexandria, early in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. However, Syrian usage was followed by the Abyssinian church in the practice of establishing feast and fast days in commemoration of martyrs under Diocletian and Syrian bishops of that period.

After Islam conquered Egypt, ecclesiastical computations continued to arrive, though often interrupted, through the Coptic Abuna sent from Alexandria, These computations arrived in the Arabic language, were translated into Geez, and collectively called "Abushaker" (Father of the Moon), after the book originally compiled by the author Demetros, who claimed to have received them by revelation from the Holy Ghost.

This calendar is about 7 to 8 years behind the

805 Gregorian, so that, prior to September 11th, the Western 1956 A.D. corresponds to the Abyssinian 1948 A.M., "amätä mehrät" (year of grace). The same year is regarded by the Abyssinian church as 7448 "amäta aläm" (year of Creation); and 1672 "semaëtat amät" (era of martyrs). There is a 4-year cycle of apostles, so that 1954 A.D. (1946 A.M.) was the year of Lark, "zämmänä marqos wängelawi".

796 805 In the annual cycle of religious events, the dates of each holy day are further commemorated by monthly repetition of a shadow-like minor holyday. Christmas is commemorated every month on the 29th, because it falls on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This reminder is utilized also in everyday layman's temporal affairs, and the agreement to meeti is expressed by individuals as "I shall meet you on Täklä Haymanot", since everyone knows this means the 24th day of the month. The following religious dates are commonly utilized by the laymen for secular purposes:

Table 8: Dates of the Religious Calendar Utilized for Secular Purposes.

796 805 116

1st day of the month	- "Ledäta", birthday of the Virgin Mary.
5th	- "Abbo", or "Gabra Manfas Qeddus". Both important saints, whose actual anniversaries fall in the rainy season.
12th	- "Mikaël", as a reminder of the miracles ascribed to this arch-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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angel. On his actual day, a popular public picnic is held--a major social event.

16th - "Kidanä Mehrät" (Covenant of Mercy). This is a preferred monthly day on which mahabber sodalities like to gather for private group communion.

19th day of the month- "Tahsas Gabriël". Reminder of the miracles ascribed to this archangel.

21st - "Sionä Maryam". Reminder of the annual event of the revelation of Mary after her death.

23rd - "Giyorgis". St. George's day.

24th - "Täklä Haymanot". Abyssinian head of church, now sainted, who re-established the "Solomon Dynasty."

27th - "Medhane Aläm" (Redeemer of the World), i.e. Jesus.

28th - "Emmanuel". Another reference to Jesus.

29th - "Bäala Egziabhär" (Festival of God), or, "Balä Wold", festival of the birth of Jesus, monthly reminder of Christmas.

796 When the floods of the rainy season recede in early September, the yellow daisy carpets the pasture and the tall green grain begins to mature, the new year begins, with the month Mäskäräm. This heralds the first

796 holy day of the year, "Mäsqäl", Feast of the Cross, on the 17th, and all who can prepare new garments. The countryside is freshly washed from 3 months of rains, and the sun is welcomed. It seems as if nature herself is beginning a new year, another annual cycle.

From St. John's Day, the first day of the year, children begin to gather the plentiful wildflowers, and to bring them to kinfolk across brooks which are again [824] passable. These bouquets of daisies, "Mäsqäl abäba" i.e. Mäsqäl flower, are considered "enqutatash" (lit. take this tribute). This symbolism is linked to the first plant brought by the dove to the ark ofNoah after the floods, which plant is said to have been the flower "engecha"; others say it is because King Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba a pearl of the type "enqwe".

In return, the children expect promises of gifts of new clothing for the Masqal feast. Even adults give "gursha" gifts to each other, of food or other items, and the increasingly generous sunshine and raised level of emotion inclines to generosity. Elders and old women who have turned nun bless every visiting kinsman withthe [788] formula:

> "Blessed be He, (who) from time to time (one year to the next) has let you pass (in good fortune)."

796 The "Mäsqäl" Feast of the Cross, in Abyssinian 776 church tradition, dated back to an early Christian Queen "Eleni" (Helena) who sponsored an expedition to Palestine to seek the true cross of the curcifixion. When she found it, she decided to announce the joyous news to her

796 own people and to the Christians of Constantinople.
[779] Therefore, she ordered that a tall pole be erected, crowned with a burning torch, called "dämmärä". The present procedure re-enacts this traditional tale, for on the afternoon preceding the 17th huge poles are stacked up, parades circle them, and in the evening the stacks are set afire, lighting up the landscape.

In preparation, some days before Masqal, peasants and townsmen go to the bush to cut long sticks, so that they will be dry in time. Pious persons touch them to the hearthstone and pray that the harvest will be good,
[292] so that they will not have to subsist on cabbage (the food of poverty). Even the poorest can bring the plentiful yellow "masqal" daisies, tied to the top of the poles. The stacks are formed on public areas, such as a marketplace, in front of the church, etc. Adults and children parade around them at least 3 times, wearing their best new garments and trinkets, This is an occasion for girls to be seen at their prettiest, and for young braves to boast.

Some of the young men form into groups and dance
[535] the "hoya-hoya", refrains of past or future brave deeds. Warriors perform the loyalty jumping-dance shouting "Addis Ababa". Sometimes, when the resinous torches are lit, mock battles develop. Little girls dance rings-around-the-rosy, while little boys may take the occasion to burn scars on their forearms as proof of courage and to be "strong". Pious elders take a brand from the lit bonfire and rekindle their home hearths, in the hope of

796 transferring the blessing of the true cross to their homes.

[184 565] All classes participate in the parade, the bonfire and the worship. There is complete cultural continuum. Even Emperor Haile Selassie parades around the stake three times, accompanied by highest dignitaries of church and state. In the village, the ceremony awaits the arrival of the local cheqa shum and "great men". Old warriors come dressed in their lion-manes and carry the rhinoceros shields of their youth; they boast heroic deeds in the "fukkara". Priests bless the scene and the people, waving cross and incense burners, "blessing the land", so that the harvest will be rich (much as the water is blessed on Epiphany).

Women, as usual, form their own groups, in impromptu singing and rythmic handclapping. The men do not overlook them, bringing them ashes and charcoal from the blessed bonfire, from which the women make a paste with butter and smear the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

Children rise early on the day of "dämmära" to collect their promised gifts. In groups they go from house to house, chanting:

"Let husband and wife consult with each other,
and give us gifts".

Feudal nobles used to take this occasion to acknowledge the knighthood name, the "färäs sem" of young nobles. They also gave a raw beef, "brundo" feast, to their retainers, and a big "gebber"(feast) consuming huge jars full of barley beer, pitchers of mead, and bottles of "araqi" (distilled).

796 While some of this feasting is now less orgiastic than in the past, "azmari" musicians still pass among the feasters, singing praises to the host and noble guests, [534] to the accompaniment of the single-string "masenqo" of male singers, and the banjo-like "qrar" fingered by women azmari. Torchlight parades, both of men and of women, leave the bonfire later, wind toward the nearest river or brook (still full though no longer raging) to enjoy the pleasure of bathing at its best, before the brooks dry to a trickle.

796 Thus the first church function of the year is an 182 important factor in unifying this society: significant for all ages, both sexes, all classes; sets a time and place for rites of passage in the life cycle; renders visible paternalistic feudal patterns of human relationships; reopens the annual cycle of economic endeavors (caravans, weaving, etc.); reopens the pattern of kin visiting after the hibernation of 3 months; and reinforces the traditional religious as well as national values and attitudes.

796 In the months that follow there are several religious festivals, which also have social significance. Named after special saint's days, they vary from region to region.

The next widely observed holy day is Christmas, on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This does not nearly approach the significance it has in the Western 796 world, nor the Masqal feast just described. In fact, 526 Christmas, "Ledät" (lit. birthday) is more often refer-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[529]

red to as "gänna", the name of the hockey-like game played by the young men on this day, and for the next two weeks. It is a sacerdotal holy day with little social significance. The priests congregate in the church of the district that bears the name "Iyasus" (Jesus). Services begin at midnight the eve before and end with chanting and dancing inthe sunshine at 9 A.M. when the clergy parades in the churchyard.

Old Testament survivals are indicated by one of the many minor church celebrations, the feast of "gezrat" (circumcision), celebrating the circumsision of Jesus Christ a week after birth, on the 6th day of the month of Ter. It is held entirely within the church, especially monasteries.[77]

More important than Christmas is Epiphany, "Tamgät", on the 11th of Ṭer. In the late afternoon preceding this day, the "tabot" are carried out of all churches, swathed in imported silks and borne on the heads of priests, in vast ceremonial parades that stop frequently for chanting and ceremonial dancing, until the procession, which includes national vlags, arrives at the water. There a solid, large tent hasbeen erected to house these sacred objects.

Evening chants and dances are continued to the beat of drums and tinkle of sistra, until the last light fades. The faithful surround the tent all night long as guard of honor, while feasting and drinking onntinues.

77. The circumcision of Jesus is also celebrated by the Christian Alaouites, in Syria. See-Janot, E.: La Famille Alaouite. Les Missions Catholiques, 65, Paris, Aout 1933, pp. 381-384.

796 After dawn, the priests are again ready, awaiting only the arrival of the bishop, the governor and other officials, before resuming the services which this time include the re-baptism of the populace. Lighted candles are set afloat on the pond, and the bishop, after reciting blessings over the water and the future light and heavy rains, dips the cross in the water and sprinkles it over the governor and other "great men"; then lesser priests take over until every man is sprinkled. Very pious and rustic peasants jump into the water, younger boys strip and swim in the pond usually filled for this occasion. Amidst further chants and dancing, the procession slowly winds its way back, stopping at crossroads to take leave of the various "tabot" returning to their own churches. Only the "tabot" of "Mikael" remains at the water, for the following day belongs to that archangel.

The same ceremony as in villages, is followed in the capital. In national sports, the "gänna" season (hockey) ends that day, and the "guks" season of horsemanship and lance-throwing in mock pursuit, begins. The latter name is therefore closely connected with Ṭemqät.

[262] Among the many minor feasts and fasts that follow, another Old Testament survival stands out. It stands out as a 3-day fast--no animal products, and no food before noon), from the 8th to the 10th of Yäkatit, called "tsomä Mänäwe", reminiscent of the Fast of Nineveh mentioned in the Bible. It is observed only by church students and clergy, but is more widely known than "gezrat".

796 262 As soon as this is over, a period of intensive meat-eating begins, similar to European carne-vale (carnival), for the same reason: the long lenten period is approaching, and in Abyssinia this means also abstention from eggs, cheese, milk, and other animal products (some even avoid fish), just as on any Wednesday and Friday; and no food before noon, for the strictly observant. The fast is obeyed by nearly everyone, in all classes. This fast begins on the 22nd day of Yäkatit, and is called "kudade" (lit. suffering) to indicate both the suffering of Jesus and of the faster. It is also referred to as "arba tom"(lit. 40-fast) though in fact the fast lasts 55 days. Women prepare a variety of vegetable and grain dishes, to substitute for the absence of more solid food.

796 [71] Finally, on the 17th day of the month of Miyazya, the long-awaited Easter, "Fassika" (related to the Hebrew Passover, "Pessah" etymologically), occurs.

It is the climax of a week of preparations during which the lenten "hudadey" sharpens. This week is called "hemamat" (passion, extreme suffering), and no work is done, symbolizing the sympathy withthe weakness and suffering of Jesus. Even the Saturday market is cancelled--the only time this happens.

[443] Purchasers of meat and supplies for Easter must do their shopping on Thursday, when a special big market is held. The price of sheep, etc., goes up sharply, even doubles, in anticipation of the feast. Even tyäff and pepper (bärbärä) become more expensive. Ethnic craftsmen take this opportunity to bring their products,

796 selling plowpoints for the plowing that will soon begin when the light rains have softened the ground.

[262] On this Thursday, the pious begin a 3-day fast, taking only dry peas and water after the noon hour. Good Friday, called "seqlät", is on the 15th of Miyazya. Chil-
796 857 dren, too young to fast, are given special privileges of impertinence that day. (For are not all rules suspended now that the Savior himself is dying?). From sunrise on, boys and girls knock at doors of huts and houses, chanting:

[539] "Musha-musho, (nonsense rhyme, meaning lamentation, funeral chant)
we come for your crucifixion (Oh Christ);
Fill (our hands) with flour (ye women),
we are many as fleas".
Musho-musha,
May He (God) give ye fat cattle,
children in your womb;
give us gifts!"

They are given freshly-baked bread being prepared for the Easter feast, but they keep on demanding, making the most of this rare freedom, insulting and mocking the stingy hosts. They may carry an effigy corpse of the latter, as if to his funeral, weeping and lamenting his "lekso" (funeral eulogy). Some boys dress as priests, the girls imitating hysterical women relatives, until they bury him with full ceremonials on the market place, to the great amusement of the adult audience.

796 Adults on this Friday rise early for morning wor-

796 ship, perform the "segdat" (prostration) many times. This signifies the climax of lenten suffering. Toward evening, when Christ is presumed to have died on the cross, the pious are of good cheer, for He has descended to purgatory, has tied the devil hand and foot, and has liberated all the souls to paradise.

796 At earliest dawn Saturday morning, about 5:30,
793 priests and deacons put on their best garments, including "kapa" (cape) and "lämd", carry their colorful sun umbrellas as if in procession, and pass through the streets with parade cross, bell, incense burners, and armsful of yellow-green palm strips called "qetäma". They stop before every house or hut, ringing the bell. The sleepy owner answering the call is given the reed to wind flat around his forehead, and he will wear it all day. The priest sings out: "Oh, master, Jesus Christ has been found! The devil is chained!". In appreciation of the good news, the head of the house gives the priest some money, and receives a blessing in return. This ceremonial interchange is called "Gebra salam" (serving the greeting).

796 Sometime before midnight, the church services begin, with alternately mournful and hopeful liturgy. When the night is about to end, at cockcrow Sunday morning (about 4 A.M.) the resurrection, ("tensaē") is loudly declared amidst shouting and ringing of bells.
[262] The pious now break fast with crushed linseed ("talba") mixed with honey, and pronounce the blessing of having been permitted to reach this day. All rush out of the

796 smoky, incense-filled church, to reach home and begin the feasting on meat. Sheep are rapidly slaughtered all over the area, fires are lit, pepper stew is boiling everywhere, and the vast jars of barley beer, injära, coffee, and milk and butter are consumed. This feasting, often ruinous to the digestion, continues for some time, for the Wednesday and Friday fasts are abrogated for the next 50 days.

With regained strength, fired by good food and [526] beer, the young men begin games of javelin throwing. Ball games ("qenchebtE") continue the entire following week, when the heavy feasting still keeps work to a minimum.

The last outdoor picnic before the rains takes place occurs on the 1st day of the month of "Genbot", when the "Ledäta" (birthday) of the Virgin Mary is celebrated. The leafy outdoor shelter, "dass", is erected for this occasion. Both women and men take part, though [789] in separate groups. At the end of the day, some women "clean house" of evil spirits, to keep them away while shut in during the rainy season. This is done by casting boiled "nefro" porridge into the bush, telling the personified sickness to go after it.

[262] During the next church holydays, fish, particularly the "senro", become staples of the menu of priests and others, since rivers begin to fill with water and fish are more plentiful. There is a church festival "räbbä kahnat" (lit. inventory of the priests), a purely internal affair,

796 The holy day which now symbolized most strongly the union of church and state occurs just after the climax of the rainy season. On the 7th day of the monthe of Nahase occurs the feast of the Trinity, "Selassyē", which the present emperor adopted as his imperial name at coronation. On this day, the "tabot" from the local "Selassyē" church is taken on a colorful, though usually rain-drenched parade. In some regions this feast is called "Abba Abraham", because it is believed that the day also commemorates the Old Testament event when 3 angels [186] visited Rather Abraham. The parade includes also many national flags of the (secular) state, and photographs of the bearded emperor, carried by deacons. Loyalty shouts of "Addis Ababa" are frequently heard.

The last important socio-religious holy day is "Buhē", the Transfiguration of Jesus, on the 13th of the same month. It is also called "Dabra Tabor", because it is believed to have taken place on Mt. Tabor in ancient Palestine. Again a church bearing that name is chosen as center of the celebration. Buhe is also a feast of lights, perhaps to symbolize the hope that the rainclouds will soon part and let the sun be seen [373] once again. There are torchlight parades, the torches made from braided, resinous barks, carried on the way to the church just before sunrise. All shout "Buhe, Buhe" on many occasions on this day. It is a family holiday remembered all through life by the children. On this day the hearths are brightly lit, and mothers bake a special wheaten bread for the children. Even

796 the youngest are lifted to see the parade. Boys and
[857] girls age 7 to 15 go from hut to hut starting in the early morning, chanting "Buhe, Buhe", "hoyyä, hoyyo, ho", and verses:

[539] "All shout 'Buhe!, children all!
Give us what (you have) prepared; Do not change (your mind)! "

"When the rooster has crowed, night is gone;
After Buhe, the winter(rainy season) is gone".

796 Long whips, mostly of finely braided fibre, of
526 tree bark or "tucha" grass, are made before Buhe, and
[411] young men practice with them until they can hit even small targets easily. On Buhe afternoon, two groups of contestants face each other, often across a swollen brook, and line up so that each individual faces an opponent of equal skill and strength. They come armed with the whips, and begin to warm up by hurling insults at each other, addressing each other in the female gender. Soon the game of aiming at the face and ducking the adversary's whip begins. The whip has a short wooden handle, but the strap may be as long as 15 feet. Sometimes this opportunity is taken to work out grudge fights. For, traditionally, any wounds incurred, even the loss of an eye, cannot be taken to court or cause a feud, as the result of this ritual battle. No other weapons may be used. The losers flee, are pursued to their huts, and the victors are entitled to all the

796 food of the feast prepared by the losing side.
526 In the evening "fires of joy" are lit, where the rain-drenched, weary and sore contestants and others can dry out, drink barley beer, and are supposed to forget and forgive the hostilities. Some may still boast of individual feats of heroism, in Amhara warrior style; others will sulk. But generally the day ends in harmony, after the excitement which itself was a welcome break in the monotonous hibernation of the rainy season.

796 The end of the annual cycle coincides with the end of the rainy season. The last 5 days (in leap years 6 days) are added after the end of the last month, and are called "Pagumēn" or "Qwagmē". On the 3rd day the [776] annual festival of St. Raphael, called "qeddus Rufaēl", the water saint, takes place. The rain, which still falls [821] heavily that day, is considered "ṭebel" (holy water) and to have the power to dull the poison of snakes so [787] that their bites will not be fatal. Much rain during Pagumēn is taken as an omen that the crops will be good.

796 This day is final examination day for the boys 874 who have attended church school long enough to be promoted to "deacon". They are examined in correct chanting of liturgy and prayers. To be mentally wide awake they often go to the dabbara beforehand, and, for a small gift, obtain the stimulating herb "esa fars" (lit. Persian wood) or drink boiled "astänagär" (lit. the plant that makes to talk), which also helps to overcome stage-fright.

796 The younger children go from hut to hut, chanting:
857 "In the name of Rufael,
539

796 857 [539] from the bin of peas
fill me up."

Thereupon the householder gives them a handful of shembera peas, which they roast to "qolo", and this symbol, too, is considered to invite a good crop.

796 805 The 5th or last day of Pagumēn is the annual feast day of St. John. The "tabot" from his church is carried to water very early in the morning, and the men bathe in the river. The old year is symbolically buried, in some regions, by ceremonial burial of the book "Lefafa Ṭsedeq" (Scroll of Righteousness) which resembles in part the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. The day is traditional-
[65] ly also the end of the fiscal budget year, on which the nagadras, the appointee over commerce, had to pay the feudal tribute to his lord (at least a large jar of beer and 20 enjara breads) in addition to squaring his accounts.

That evening torches are lit, for this is the beginning of a new year.

c) The Religious Life Cycle of the Lay Individual.

852 Baptism usually occurs after 40 days for boys, still later for girl babies, sometimes as long as 80 days. This practice is based on Old Testament patterns, and more directly, on the period of 40 days that the Virgin Mary herself had to segregate herself from the Temple after the birth of Jesus. (The Falasha Jews of Abyssinia is concerned less that a baby might die

852 unbaptized during this period of ritual impurity.

852 304 Another Old Testament survival, which is considered more customary than religious, is circumsision. Boys are circumcised about a week after birth, but not usually on Wednesday or Friday fast days. In some regions, notably Gojjam, girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed by a woman in a strictly female gathering, so that the girl will not become a "selfish" wife, and will be happy in marriage. After these operations, the babies may be blessed by a priest. However, when an adult person becomes Christian, circumcision or clitorectomy are not performed, since they are not required.

293 At baptism, the baby receives the blue neck-cord, 852 553 the "mätäb", which forever after distinguishes him from a Muslim. The priest gives or confirms the Christian name of the child, usually one that places the child under the protection and guidance of a saint or archangel, such as "Gäbre-Mikaël" (Servant of Michael). However, in later life, most children will use and be called by the "world name" given them by their mothers at time of birth, such as "Taamrat" (miracle, e.g if the husband suddenly returned from a distant and dangerous trip at the time) for a boy, or "almaz" (diamond) or other sparkling name for a girl. The Christian name may be used later in life if the person becomes a priest or monk or nun, or participates in "qurban" (eucharistic marriage in church).

608 852 Every baby baptized, also every new adult convert, is given godparents. When a slave was baptised (prior

608 to the abolition of 1942), the godparents usually ob-
852 tained his freedom, The relationship is one of artificial kinship. To symbolize this literally, the godfather and godmother clasp the right thumb of the baby and swear by the Trinity that they will not distinguish between their own children and the godchild.

783 At first baptism, baby or adult, the entire body is immersed or bathed in holy water. Every year, on the festival of "Ṭemqät" (Epiphany), the sprinkling of the crowd with baptismal water is considered re-baptism, to wash away any breach with Christianity during the year. A woman who has had sexual intercourse with a Muslim must undergo complete baptism, otherwise the neighbors and the church will ostracize her. A person severely ill and considered possessed by demons is rebaptized.

872 At five, boys and girls begin useful functions in the family economy, and therefore boys are often 10 years old before they begin to go to church school. This schooling takes place under the shady cypress trees in the churchyard, under the direction of a young priest or däbtära. The method is rote learning of Geez and Amharic reading, and liturgy, beginning with the Gospel of St. John: "mäläktä yohanesä hawareya". Usually neither translation from the Geez liturgical language nor writing are taught. Graduates of this 3-year school qualify to serve as deacons. In recent years, they may then enter the 3rd grade of a government elementary school. Even church students now use the one-page printed "fidäl" (alphabet) in Geez-Amharic script, which, in addition,

872 has the photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie and the traditional Gospel of St. John in Geez. Priests now often teach the beginnings of basic arithmetic, in church schools.

783 In adult life, the church affects the layman less through participation in worhhip than through his individual confessor, the "näfs abbat", (lit. soul father). Each person is supposed to see him at least once a month, and he soon becomes a personal advisor, confidante, marriage counselor, etc. Therefore, even when a person changes residence, he often maintains this relationship to his "näfs abbat". If he were to take on a new one, the penalty assigned for sins (which the confessor keeps as a sort of fee) would be higher. His regular confessor, who knows his financial condition, asks little beyond the seasonal and festival gifts considered his due. In time of trouble, the regular confessor will appear as a character witness in court, or as "wäs" (guarantor) to help him obtain employment or to keep him out of jail pending trial.

585 Most laymen, are not married by eucharistic marriage in church (the "qurban"). There is no social or religious stigma to marrying outside the church; in fact the priest comes to the secular ceremony ("semanya") to bless the couple. But it does mean technical excommunication, and the couple cannot wear the "aklil" crown at church festivals and parades.

763 As a further result, such a couple cannot receive full last rites, though the confessor-priest will come

763 to hear confession and pray at the bedside. To become eligible for full last rites, elderly pious persons often take vows as monks or nuns.

764 If the deceased was a priest or monk, the arms are tied across the chest in the sign of the cross. For a lay person they are tied across the middle of the body. Eyes and mouth are closed. The corpse is tied in a mat. No permanent gravestones are set in the churchyard where most members of the congregation are buried (poor non-
[765] members are buried in the bush). In the case of a "great man", the grave is sometimes marked for some years, and the skull and bones later sent to a sacred monastery for storage under a cave-ledge. In a few years the place of burial is usually obliterated by the rains, unless rocks have been gradually piled on it as a memorial.

At the burial, the priest chants from the book "mäsehafä genzät", the funeral book which begins with
[766] the "fetät", the prayer for absolution of sins. For a priest or monk, the parchment "lefafä sedeq" (Band-let of Righteousness) is spread over the body. It is an early Coptic Book of the Dead, containing spells and formulae that apparently originated in Egypt, dating partly to early periods.

The confessor-priest prays for the ascension of the soul, as the body is lowered into the grave. Neighbors express condolence to the kinfolk wishing that no further tribulations hit them. This is returned with the wish "May you have a burier in your old age, who will give "täzkar" for you". The confessor inherits

764 personal belongings such as shamma, horncup, oxhide bed-cover.

765 The tazkar is the memorial feast 40 days after death, on which, under favorable conditions, the soul is believed to be freed from purgatory. Preparations for this feast are made almost as soon as the funeral is over. Kinfolk and neighbors bring food and drink, but despite that, tazkar feasts are often costly, far beyond the economic means of poorer families. Money must be given to the priests who recite the "fetät", the prayer for absolution. It is the responsibility not only of direct descendants, but of the entire kinfolk to arrange for a "tazkar", and it is a great shame when a person has no tazkar. No tazkar is made for unbaptized babies; for violaters of the fasts of Wednesday, Friday and lent; for suicides. Also, when a person dies what is considered a particularly unnatural death, by drowning, fire, lightning, etc., the priests have to decide whether a tazkar can be held, or whether the death was some special punishment for some great capital crime that had gone undetected.

d) "Saluting the church", and Private Communion.

788 Though lay individuals do not usually participate in church worship, going to the "betä kristyan" (church) is a formal affair. The shamma is redraped when entering the churchyard, so as to form a cross-wise fold over

788 the chest. The church is then "saluted" by kissing the wall, a ceremony called "sälam" in Geez. If the person wears sandals, he must remove them before entering the church itself.

[211] On the path near the church, or leading to it, there is often a conical pile of small rocks. This may indicate a church on a nearby hilltop, and this pile, "mäsalämiya", functions then as a poster of salutation. If the passerby is in a hurry on another errand, he may simply bow deeply in the direction of the church instead of going there to kiss the wall. In modern times truck-drivers will bow in that direction without stopping.

794 The individual layman usually belongs to a private sodality that holds private communion together. But he may, more informally, invite some personal friends on his personal Saint's day, especially his namesake's. Since this informal private communion is cheaper, costing only the price of a jar of beer and some roasted grain, it is more popular among the poor than the formal "mähabber" sodality. The informal private communion, called "zekert", is shared only by men, uses no drummer, no expensive wheat bread, no collection for a common purse, and usually only the personal confessor is invited from among the priesthood. But the zekert cannot be used as a means of gaining social prestige.

[554]

795 e) Religious Syncretism.

Surrounded by Muslim and "Pagan" religions, and

795 led by a comparatively tolerant and rarely learned clergy, even loyal and observant Abyssinian Christians frequently follow practices of other religions without being ostracized or even criticized.

755 In the middle of the preparations for "Mäsqäl", the Feast of the Cross, emotionally ill or despondent patients believed to be possessed by an "evil" Zar or "Buda" spirit, are taken by their relatives into the incipient sunshine and deposited at a spot where trails form a crossroad. A doctor of the "Zar" religious cult (see later description) performs incantations, using incense to lure the Zar. Then a chicken is slaughtered, with the Christian formula pronounced over it. This cure is believed to be particularly effective if the Zar spirit is a Coptic Christian himself, who will then feed on the properly slaughtered chicken and leave the patient alone.

796 795 On Fassika, the Coptic Easter, Ethiopian Muslims living in Coptic provinces have an equivalent feast, in which many Coptic Christian women andd small children passively participate only a few hours after they have returned home from all-night prayers at the church. Even more curious is the fact that this particular Ethiopian-Muslim holy day celebrated near Gonder the day of a Muslim saint called "Sheykh Abäder", is celebrated according to the Coptic, not the Muslim, calendar. (There is a parallel to such calendar syncretism in Egypt, where the founder of a dervish order, Ahmed il-Badawi, is celebrated at his tomb according to the Coptic calendar.[78]

78. Littmann, E.: Ahmed il-Badawi, Islam auf den Ägyptischen Nationalheiligen. Akad. Wiss. u. Lit., Mainz, 1950, No. 3.

796
795 On Easter, the Muslim worshippers of Saint Sheykh Abader leave Gondar town beginning at dawn, for a hill about half an hour's walking distance to the east, bringing with them about 100 live sheep, each donated by a faily. This is the hour when the Christians still feast on meat and beer. The hill is far enough away so that the rival religions do not annoy each other, but in the belief of the worshippers, the miracle of a water spring [312] will recur on this particular hill on this saint's day, despite the seasonal dryness which is then at its height making water a valuable and much desired commodity.

The Muslim men seat themselves on one side of the hill, the Muslim women, their hair covered with colorful red kerchiefs, on the other. Some erect shelters against the mounting sun. The men proceed to slaughter the sheep, away from the groups, with the formula "In the name of Allah the all-merciful and Muhammad his prophet". The meat is well roasted, then passed around in baskets, the pieces already cut to individual portions. There is plenty for everyone. There is also wheat bread ("qitta").

The Muslim leader meanwhile has proceeded half way up the hill, at a spot midway between the men and the women, and has begun to dig a hole about three feet deep. The water table is sufficiently high here so that muddy water begins to accumulate in the hole gradually. He digs another few inches, and more water accumulate. A half-gourd, sliced lengthwise, is brought and he reaches into the hole and begins to pass up the water. When the silt has settled in the bottom of the gourd, it is

776 held high, and everyone acclaims the miracle. Every-
775 one tries to obtainssome of the water to drink; the bottom of the hole keeps filling up for some time. Later, mud from the hole is passed around on green leaves, [751] and many, especially women, smear it on their foreheads, against sickness, demons, and barrenness which afflicts many of the townswomen. Some older Muslims recite prayers. The mood is generally gay, and the women banter happily from an hour after sunrise to high noon, when the feast is over, Then all begin to return to Gondar town, after pledging gifts for the next celebration of the saint's day, provided he has fulfilled their prayers.

Meanwhile, Copts, mostly women, including many barren ones, have joined the Muslim women on the hill. No special notice is taken of them; they are tolerated, and not insulted as they would be on other occasions. The Copts bring their own live sheep and the few Coptic men present slaughter them apart from the Muslims, so that their formula "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, One Divinity", is not heard. The Christian women and children also smear some of the saint's mud on their foreheads, and also vow donations to the next Sheykh Abader feast if their prayers are fulfilled. They bear the tell-tale marks until they reach their [783] own homes in Gondar, and are not punished for what otherwise might at least require re-baptism. Like Muslims, they even bring mud, rocks, and water from the saint's hill to their ill kinfolk. Coptic men do not flaunt their participation so freely. The Coptic priests, who of

796 795 course know what is going on, ignore the whole matter, just as they ignore the Zar worship.

795 788 Parallels to such religious syncretism are found not only in Egypt, but also in Syria, where Christian women go on short-range pilgrimage to the tomb of "weli" saints and smear mud from holy springs on their faces on a certain day of the Christian religious calendar.[79] This takes place in rural areas of Homs, but even near Damascus Muslims take part in celebrating the day of the Feast of the Cross in September.[80] Just as in visits to the tomb of water saints in Muslim Algeria,[81] the pilgrimage to Sheykh Abader is believed to bring on the light rains, which usually begin about that time, making early plowing and a good harvest possible. This is equally desired by both Muslims and Copts, just as individual good health is desired by both. Perhaps this unexpressed recognition explains the paradox of this religious syncretism.

f) The Church and the Present National State.

774 659 Three phases can be distinguished in the recent relations of the Abyssinian church and the Amharic "Solomonic Dynasty" which the church returned to power in the 13th century but which now attempts to modernize

79. Gaulmier, J.: Pélérinages Populaires à Hama. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, 1931, Vol.1, pp.137-152.
80. Tresse, R.: Usages Saisonnières. Revue d'Etudes Orientales 1937, pp. 1-4; Lecerf & Tresse: Les Arada de Damas. BEO, 7-8, pp.236-264.
81. Probst-Biraben, J.H.: Pour La Pluie de Printemps en Algerie. En Terre d'Islam, 22, 1942, pp. 264-272.

779 the nation in Western patterns.
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(1) The use of the church in promoting Amhara-
[721] dominated Ethiopian nationalism. This was recognized and promoted by Emperor Menelik II who had priests carry the "tabot" into newly conquered Galla, Sidamo and other pagan and semi-Muslim areas of his new empire, giving his
[566] military conquests the character of a crusade. Churches were built in these areas, guarded by troops of occupation, made permanent by feudal grants under which the local population, made "gabbar" serfs, was permitted to remain on the land as sharecroppers and peons of the feudal church.

This use of the church has been continued, though with reduced feudal emphasis, by the present emperor.
[212] The Geez alphabet of the church, modified in Amharic usage, is the only alphabet even non-Amharic-speakers may use, if they wish to write their languages, particularly in
[643] print. By taking on the name "Haile Selassye" (Power of the Trinity), upon coronation, the present emperor re-emphasized the power of the church. Finally, on November 4th 1955, when the new liberalized Constitution of 131 articles was proclaimed, it reaffirmed that the Ethiopian "Orthodox" Church, founded in the 4th century on the doctrines of St. Mark, is the established church of the state.

659 Phase (2), begun by the present emperor as his
178 power increased, was a concurrent weakening of the temporal power of the church. At first this was gradual. In

659 In 178 many criminal cases, culprits who had sought asylum [696] from the police of the state by entering a churchyard and sounding the resonant stone bells to announce to the pursuers that they had placed themselves under the protection of the church, were taken away by force, despite the protests of the priests. This so deteriorated some of the temporal power of the church that persons involved in kin bloodfeuds were also no longer safe in [688] church confines. Conversely, the traditional request of priests to law enforcement agencies of the state to arrest violaters of church rules (e.g. adulterers) now go unheeded except in remote rural areas, and even there such a prisoner is no longer held and sentenced to an [688] indefinite term on such a charge. Fines and imprisonment for violation of the Sabbath or for working on a saint's day, also are no longer enforceable.

An official extreme in this direction was reached in 1942, when, a year after his victorious return, Emperor Haile Selassie issued a series of decrees stripping the church of all feudal power, and most of its temporal power, except in the town of Aksum. Under these decrees, church land could henceforth be taxed by the state, though the taxes were to be used to administer church maintenance and education; church courts could levy only spiritual penalties, not money fines; the Central Treasury of the state was to administer rents from church lands. All statute-labor ("gabbar") rights of the church over sharecropping peasants living on its former feudal estates were abrogated.

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178 It took two years for the leadership of the church to recover from this shock and to bring pressure on the emperor, through his kinsman, the aging but still powerful Ras Kassa. In 1944 further decrees partly returned certain limited temporal rights of the church (such as the right to ask sharecroppers on church land for food supplies, fuel, repair of the local churches) in return for religious services and church education. Little actual change has taken place in the rural, old-Amhara provinces, but even there the priests now enforce their demands in subtler fashion, usually making heavier demands on recent peasants in their areas rather than on old-established families.

Thus, in effect, the state now rules the church from the top. Both Emperors Menelik II and Haile Selassye I refused to be crowned in the church capital, Aksum, preferring their own state capital, Addis Ababa.

Phase (3) represents the more subtle handling of the relations with the church by the present emperor, to utilize the church's structure and function to promote his policies of centralization and modernization.

Already mentioned, the request of the emperor to the sacerdotal church to copy from the Western church the function of preaching ethics to the common lay people, has had little effect. Somewhat more successful has been his repeated request, passed informally through the church hierarchy by word of mouth rather than published decree, to restrain the excesses of the "täzkar" memorial feast. These excesses include both the public

659 spectacle of self-abandon of the mourners, who scream,
178 roll on the ground, cut themselves bloody, etc.; and the financial burden of excessively elaborate memorial feasts which were and sometimes still are ruinous to the families involved. To teach by example--a most effective way in a country where everyone imitates the "great man"" --the emperor himself ordered that no memorial feast be given for his own daughter who died in 1933; just some money donations were made to the priests reciting prayers for her soul.

[874] More recently, the emperor founded the Theological College of Addis Ababa, headed by an Egyptian Coptic president and some faculty members from among Egyptian Copts, to modernize the curriculum of the future leaders of the church among whom he hopes, for the first time, to find allies rather than permanent foes. The probable successor to the present Abuna (archbishop) of Ethiopia, Theophilus, is believed to share the emperor's views and has already travelled abroad several times. The emperor wishes the younger clergy to become more learned and to be able to translate the Bible from
[198] Geez into Amharic for the lay populace. He has promoted the printing of bibles in Amharic, rather than Geez, thus using religion to promote the official, national language of the state.

6. The Fraternal Association called "mähabbär".

575 This "voluntary" association of individuals, growing out of the "private communion" of the Abyssinian

575 church, fills several voids in Amhara social organization, and establishes links of human relationships which otherwise leave little choice to the individual of any age and sex beyond his assigned roles in the feudal system, church, and family.

Perhaps this is why there are so many facets to the "mähabbär" association, and why it is called upon by its members to fulfill so many functions that in many other human societies take separate forms. To a considerable extent the mahabbar maintains an elastic equibrium between the individual and the society. For in this association he can exercise a personal choice; he can cross boundary lines of age and sex, and occasionally even of class; here he has the rare opportunity of new experience in interpersonal relations; here he finds economic as well as emotional security; recognition of his status in a highly respectable association; the response of life-long personal friends.

575 796 The mähabbär in Abyssinia may be as old as Coptic Christianity itself in that country. It is based on the "private communion", one of the few instances in which the sacerdotal church concerns itself with the layman, probably because the time and place of mahabbar meeting leave them remote from the ritually sacred precincts of the church buildings. By the same token the mahabbar enables the church to extend a broad control over its lay members.

The religious basis of this private communion rests on the monthly meeting of its members for worship, in the hut of one of them (they take turns as hosts).

575 796 The preferred number of charter members is 12. The reason is not certain, but some ascribe it to the 12 apostles, some so that each member has the duty and privigele of acting as host once a year. The evening itself, within each month, is preferably the host's. The host asks his confessor-priest to officiate furing the religious part of the meeting. Part of the worship always includes ceremonial drinking from a special clay cup called "ṭuwa", or "ṣuwa", which is dedicated to a saint or archangel, and from which the particular mähabbär takes its name (e.g. the "ṭuwa-ef-Gabriel mähabbär). The host has prepared a large "gan" (largest clay jar) of barley beer, which is blessed by the officiating priest. There is also ceremonial breaking of bread, the well-baked kind usually called "dabye", preferably of wheat, and half an inch thick, which, on this occasion, is referred to as "ṭadiq" (lit. offering of righteousness), or as "shellemlämi" (a reference to the cross). This bread is sometimes adorned with incised geometric designs. A poor host may substitute the common limp enjära bread, but that would lower his prestige. A rich host or one trying to gain prestige will have carpets spread on theddirt floor, and even the poorest can spread odoriferous grasses and leaves, to give the hut a clean and festive atmosphere.

[531] [554]

The members congregate at dusk, some a bit earlier because of the Amhara aversion to travel after sundown. When the confessor-priest is seen to approach, the members rise and redrape their shammas in the symbol

575 of going to church. The priest brings the holy water,
796 sprinkles the inside of the hut, and intones prayers. At the proper moments, the members prostrate themselves before the "ṭuwa" cup containing specially blessed barley beer. The "ṭadiq" bread is placed on the wicker worktable ("mäsob"), and is then divided by the confessor-priest among the members; the leftovers go to the host's wife who had baked it but who remains modestly in the background. Some of this blessed delicacy is given to the poor. The confessor absolves all present from sins, then passes the "tuwa" around so that everyone can drink from it. Then lots are drawn by means of sticks to see who the next host will be for the "ṭuwa" and "ṭadiq". The ceremonial phase is now over.

[554] Roasted barley ("qolo") and peppery stew ("woṭ") are served in as many varieties and quantities as the host can afford, and many go beyond their means to gain prestige. Drummers and chanters ("azmari") are often hired, and the noisy entertainment is heard in s a wide area, attracting many uninvited guests who sit outside the hut and hope to share in some way in the food or entertainment.

575 Women usually have their own mahabbar sodalities, and usually name them in dedication to some event in the life of the Virgin Mary ("Maryam"). But sometimes women attach themselves to a male mahabbar as a kind of auxiliary, sitting on a mat by themselves in a corner, and tolerated because of their services in preparing beer, bread and stew, or even honored if they are heir-

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575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men "brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship relation which is taken very literally by the more pious. Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahabbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry the widow of a mahabbar "brother", for this would be "levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church as a prechristian custom.

575 According to traditional law, the mähabbär in-
[428] herits any property left by a deceased member who leaves no blood kin (consanguinal) , in preferance to any rela-
[426 476] tives he might have by marriage (affinal). The mahabbar acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker, making loans to members in financial need by raising internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "tazkar" memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his
[608] family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and personal problems of all kinds are discussed among "brothers" and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements between extended families having eligible youngsters are often first informally broached by women "sisters", who then agree to ask their husbands to act as intermediaries.

575 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys
561 above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind of junior mähabbär by older boys; girls above 10 years of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

575 mahabbar is first founded, the usual pattern of an age
561 group is generally followed, so that young-marrieds, middle-aged, and elders have their own. But since there is great prestige in being admitted to a mahabbar of older persons, partly because of the honor of associating with respected elders, partly for direct economic advantages of belonging to an old, well-endowed mahabbar, boundaries of age do not last long. Elders, on their part, desire to replace vacancies left by deceased members with younger persons, whom they can dominate.

575 Some persons belong to more than one mahabbar,
[566] but generally only the relatively well-to-do freehold landowners and traders can afford the expense. It is possible to transfer to another mahabbar, but it is usually not in a person's interest to sever established relationships; human, economic and legal. In case of any difficulty, he has ready bondsman to act as "wās" (guarantors). Most of all, the rare opportunity to express individual preference in a formal "we-group" creates personal, psychological ties that the average Amhara does not like to forego.

One of the most noteworthy and socially significant aspects of the mähabbär association is the wide variety of functions for which it can be adapted, despite--or perhaps because of--its simple structure. This is in almost complete contradistinction to most other Amhara patterns, which usually evidence a complex hierarchical structure and very specifically regulated functions. In comparison, the mahabbar is little structured.

7. Family and Kinship in Social Organization.

602 The emphasis on the extended family and kin relations among the Amhara can hardly be exagerated. In all problems of life the Amhara first turns to family and kin. While the partilineal-patrilocal extended family is considered of first importance, consanguinal kinfolk on themother's side rank only slightly less in obligation and duties owed by the individual, and in benefits for which he can appeal. In contrast, affinal relationships are regarded as considerably less important in obligations and benefits,. This attitude is reinforced by the traditional law which emphasized inheritance in consanguineal relationships, even distant ones, over closer affinal relatives; and by the relatively easy divorce from the common "semanya" marriage.

[428] [584]

602 539 Proverbs emphasizing various aspects of kin relations abound and are constantly cited as advice in problems, and in "socializing " and "enculturating" the young:

"The liar to win over,
to his brother and sister appeal",

(i.e., do not appeal to the judge, whom the liar may fool; but to his siblings, whom he cannot fool).

"Quarrels within the kinfolk,
(are like) insects on cabbage",

(i.e. they do not strike at the root, are not really destructive).

"Relatives and medicine,
in days of trouble seek them."

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539 "When kinfolk aid each other,
no trouble can sever them".

"The needle does not see her own hole
yet it serves her so well",

(said of a man, who, as is common, is generous to his brothers and sisters, yet stingy to his wife and even children).

"When the nose is hit,
the eye begins to weep",

(i.e when one relative is hurt, the others suffer with him).

602 Kin relations give the individual his greatest source of security, psychological and economic, to the Amhara mind, and protect him from the world outside. [574] Therefore, regular and frequent visiting of kinfolk is emphasized; it is one of the most frequent causes of absentiism of Amhara employees. Events of the life cycle (marriages, memorial feasts, etc.) require such visiting. The end of the rainy season is another stimulus. No other association seriously challenges the predominance of kin relations in Amhara society.

A. The Extended Family and Kinship Terms.

596 The extended patrilocal, patrilineal family usually inhabits its own hamlet, farms its own land, allocating it to its biological-nuclear families. Patriarchal elders form an informal council that can be convened in any case of need. This extended family is most typically found among owners of "rest" land

596 (private freehold), most common in the old-Amhara pro-
[428] vinces (and in Tigre). "Rest" land is inherited only by sons, not by daughters, except in the relatively rare case when a family short of young men permits a son-in-law to settle in its hamlet, whereupon some land may be inherited by the daughter who is consanguinal kin. Daughters may inherit movables such as cows, sheep, some personal belongings of their mother or father (of the father if there are no sons).

601 Kinship terms do not often differ between terms of address and reference, but often between formal and informal terms which are applied in a variety of ways ranging from authoritarian familiarity to endearments. Differences of gender are also expressed.

The generic term for kinfolk is "zämäd". Consanguinal kinfolk, on both the father's and mother's side, are called "wägän", and if they reside far away and are rarely seen the kinship is re-emphasized by the term "yäsega zämäd" (lit. kinship of one flesh). Consanguinal families sharing the same residential hamlet
[178] are called "betä zämäd" (lit. kinfolk of the house). It
[572] is noteworthy that in very recent times, in urban areas where kinship functions are somewhat attenuated, the term "zamad" has become extended to include a close personal, though not related, friend.

The affinal relationship is generically called "amachenät", a male affinal relative is addressed and referred to as "amach", a female as "ancha"; whether ego is male or female.

Table 9: Kinship Terms of Special Significance

Formal Term(address&reference)		Informal Address	Function
abbat	father	baba (endearing) (original babytalk)	protective; used also to address elders who are non-related, to beg protection(like a helpless baby).
ennat	mother	tatay (endearing, originally babytalk)	respectful; used also to address unrelated women, to indicate respect by placing them in senior position.
"yännat lej" (lit. my mother's child)	uterine brother		to stress, in reference, the uterine sibling, from among other siblings.
		amatey (lit. my elder mother)	"tatey" can always be used toward consanguinally related women, but an unrelated woman who is married and has born a child should be addressed as "amatey".
ayyat -- ayyay	grandfather		respectful; used also by juniors in addressing elder brother, father, father's brother, mother's brother; also by long-time servant retainers to the master; or to respectfully endear oneself to an unrelated elder.
amita	grandmother	tatay	respectful and endearing; related to "amatey". tatay used only in consanguinal address.

qedem ayyat	great-grandfather (lit. before grandfather)		respectful; usually used only in reference to patrilineal line, or to an unusually famous person in the matrilineal line.
zär	ancestor	term of reference to	consanguineal ancestor, especially male.
warsa	brother's wife		used by male ego, whom she calls the same. The term indicates mutual inheritance, and "levirate", ~~but~~ a warsa woman who has born sons and becomes a widow, remains in residence and is thus "inherited" together with her cows.
goban	co-wife, rival (reciprocal term)		used by Muslim Amharic-speakers, to whom polygyny is permitted.

601 Cousins are simply addressed and referred to as "uncle's child" or "aunt's child", and there is no terminological difference between paternal and maternal uncles. But the informal terms mentioned above are extended to these consanguineal kinfolk for special emphasis of endearment, respect and protection. For the latter, the address "gashey" is used commonly, and a rarer, more poetic and somewhat archaic term of address would be "ambayë" (my mountain fortress).

Familiarities, teasing or endearing, in address to siblings include "abäba" (flower) for endearment to an older girl (sister); "anchi" (Thou, feminine) in teasing address of a girl to a younger, male sibling, otherwise considered an insult; "antä ", (thou, male), in teasing address to a younger sister.

B. Affinal Kin ("amachenät") and Residence.

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574 Affinal relatives, especially the male ego's parents-in-law, must also be visited regularly, at least once every two months in the dry season, or, if they reside too far away, at least twice a year. Gifts, (e.g. a fat sheep) must be brought, and hospitality and a feast can be expected in turn.

606 In popular Amhara opinion, the affinal villain is not so much the mother-in-law, as the step-mother-in-
[601] law. Both are addressed respectfully as "amatey" (lit. my elder mother). But it is believed that a mother, desiring her daughter to be happy in marriage, will

606 instruct her to be a good wife; while a stepmother is assumed to have no such desire, and is likely to tell her stepdaughter not to"make so much fuss"over her husband. If the latter were to follow such advice, she would soon be criticized by her husband's parents whose residential hamlet she usually shares. Stepmothers are very common due to the frequency of divorce and the shorter lifespan of women.

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606 628 Affinal relatives are expected to come to a person's aid if he becomes involved in a blood feud, particularly if his consanguinal kin are few or weak. Since there is no pattern of individual duelling, even distant kin become involved readily, as a point of honor.

591 Residence of male persons is usually patrilocal-patrilineal, i.e. in the consanguinal line. But if a young bridegroom finds that his own father has little good land to allocate him in his parental hamlet upon his marriage, he may elect to seek better facilities by establishing residence at the bride's patrilocal hamlet. She is usually very happy about this latter residence, for her kin will protect her even if she wrongs her husband (e.g. by taking a lover in subsequent years). Conversely, thehusband tries to avoid such a situation, for reasons of happiness as well as prestige.

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C. Artificial Kinship.

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In view of the emphasis of seeking security in the kinship relation, it is not surprising that Amhara society has formalized several ways of establishing artificial kinship, a process called "zämäd honä".

Adoption is permitted, regulated, mediated, and even encouraged by the church, provided the person or child to be adopted is both Abyssinian Christian, and "aṭṭenṭam" (lit. of good bones; ie. not a negroid Shanqalla or some other foreign race).

There are two degrees of adoption: "breast-parenthood", the complete adoption; and "bread-parenthood" by step-parents.

Full adoption provides a "breast-father" (yäṭuṭ abbat), or a "breast-mother" ("yäṭuṭ ennat"), or both. In the traditional, provincial, public ceremony of adoption, this expression was literally enacted. In the presence of the elders of the kin group, the Confessor, and the ḉheqa shum, the new parent (male or female) coated his or her nipples with honey and simulated breast-feeding, even if the child was already in adolescence. The adoptee was then referred to as "yäṭuṭ lej" (lit. breast child). At the ceremony the new parents swear to make no distinction in treatment between the adopted and the consanguinal children; and the adoptee, if old enough "for reason" (about ages 7 to ten and over), swears to obey his new parents, tend them in sickness, and bury them as would a son.

Reasons forthe adoption of a "breast-child" may

608 597 be the "mother's" barrenness, or a man's wish to be taken care of in his old age, or both. Obversely, an adolescent orphan may himself take the initiative in selecting a prospective breast-parent, attaching himself to him, ingratiating himself with gifts of honey, etc. After adoption, the "breast-child" is literally considered like a blood relative, and may not marry his new "sibling" -by-adoption.

This prohibition does not apply to the "bread-parent" relation. A bread-father ("anjara abbat"), and bread-mother ("enjara ennat") are considered not truly "artificial kinship" of permanence. It is a step-parent relationship, arising out of divorce and remarriage of parents, or a man's last will asking a close friend tottake care of his children, in war or famine, or sickness. Youngsters do not often take the initiative to establish this relationship, for it does not usually provide the security of the breast-parent-hood. The proverb says:

[539] "Bread-mother, what will move you?
(you are tough) like a gut!".

608 Another, mild, form of artificial kinship is established to give security and guarantee against ill-treatment to the bride, in the persons of the "mizē", two kinsmen of the groom who take an oath to regard and protect her like a sister in her new residential hamlet.

In the broadest sense, kinfolk also includes the retainer, usually a landless peasant, who has pla-

608 ced himself under the protection of a landowning kin group, and injuries inflicted on him thereupon can lead to a blood feud as much as if he were a consanguinal relative.

All these attempts to establish artificial kinship are motivated by the attitude that kinship, even at geographical distance, is greater security than close relations with neighbors even of the same district. The proverb says:

[539] "Your (home) country, where is it?
(It is) Mary's water. (i.e. the womb).
You are my kinfolk!"

8. Attitudes based on Social Stratification

56 Social stratification among the Amhara, as has been shown, is based on land tenure and feudal relations between nobles and peasants; on the temporal as well as spiritual power of the Coptic Abyssinian church; on the ethnic division of skilled labor; on the conquest of border areas and the past subjugation of other ethnic and racial groups; to a lesser degree on age and sex.

565 184 Analysis of the human relations and attitudes arising out of this social stratification can be expressed in terms of class; sometimes approaching caste, because very little social mobility has been "open" to ethnic specialists in skilled labor and to

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565 184 [563] racially enslaved groups; there was, and to a considerable degree there still is, a cultural continuum among Coptic Amhara that is shared by all classes, (with the partial exception of ethnic and racially-separated groups).

A. Class Stratification.

a) Regional Distinction and Feudal Nobility.

Regional distinctions are emphasized by both nobles and peasants. The nobles from the old-Amhara districts of Amara Saynt, Käntz (both in Shoa province) and of the later developed Gondar district (Gegemdir province) c nsider themselves an upper-upper class even among nobility. At least part of this status is ascribed not only to a local history of "old-nobility" contrast with "new-nobility", but totthe supposed fact that these districts were the only Amhara districts not overrun by the Galla in the 16th century.

The class of nobility is controlled, but also perpetuated, by the emperor. In every generation he gradually raises the young nobles to the rank of their fathers, as each individual advances in age. Usually it is only when the father dies that the son is appointed to full rank. He is not usually raised above it except for unusual service to the emperor. Com oners may be given modest ranks in nobility for special service, thus entering, as "new-nobility", upon the social ladder.

565 In the past, the traditional desire for personal independence of the Amhara, particularly the Amhara noble, led him to prefer residence in his own province or district, where he could rule from the apex of local hierarchy. There he imitated the emperor as much as his means permitted.

565 854 Children of nobles imbibed the tremendous pride of Amhara nobility from the time servants carried them about so that their noble feet would not be dirtied by walking, or else had their hands and feet washed by servants regularly. Boys, at about 7, would be given a private tutor, usually a young priest. At 10, when other boys are still in rags or at most wear tattered shorts, the young "balaw" (aristocrat) already was wearing full, white jodphurs.

565 178 In the provinces this pattern is still largely unchanged. But with the increase in central government power, feudal nobles find it advisable to spend the greater part of the year in Addis Ababa--more than the emperor himself desires. Young nobles who graduate from the provincial elementary schools, where their Indian teachers deferred to them as much as their Amhara teachers, have a considerable adjustment to make when they enter High School in Addis Ababa, where the European instructors grade them on individual merit alone.

b) The Peasant Class.

565 In the peasant class there is a wide distinction between the landowning ("rest") peasants who are freemen

565 ("chäwa") of Amhara ancestry ("attentam"); and the "gabbar" sharecropper on feudal land, who is regarded as of doubtful ancestry (part-slave, or part-Galla ethnic), who is referred to as "rustic" ("balagär). While the former, usually descended from warriors who were given land many generations age, considers himself inferior only to nobility and higher church officials, the latter occupies the broad bottom base of the Amhara social pyramid. The proverb says of the rustic "gabbar":

[539] "He who honors a gabbar
will be despised by him ".

In fact there are not many who might honor a gabbar, except for some ethnic laborers and ex-slaves, both of whom occupy somewhat of an outcast position.

c) The Ethnic Classes

563 463 565 The ethnic skilled-labor class does not usually consider itself inferior to the gabbar class. This is especially true if the particular ethnic group has a non-material culture or subculture of its own, notably the Falashas who observe Mosaic Judaism.

The factor of fear of a skilled occupation, the practitioners of which are called "täbib" (lit. "knowing one ", i.e to whom secrets are revealed), enters into the class stratification. It attaches an aura of untouchability to certain occupational classes, especially if reinforced by ethnic or religious difference.

563 326 754 This combination of factors applies to the smithcraft, the "kayla", who are suspected of witchcraft, of being

563 326 754 able to turn themselves into "buda" hyenas, and of having learned their craft from the "buda" evil spirit. Since the smiths in the old-Amhara areas are mostly Falashas, whose formal religious worship is never observed by Coptic Amhara, the Falasha smith is feared and [412] suspected of black magic. At the same time, the iron tools produced by the Falasha are much prized, not only on account of their material utility but on account of their supposed supernatural strength, endurance and "secretly revealed" workmanship. Even today, the provincial peasant will insist on obtaining his plowpoint or adze from a "real" Falasha.

563 326 The Falashas practice endogamy, as do the Coptic Amhara. But in the towns where increased contact occasionally begins to attenuate the old rules, individuals of low prestige in both groups do sometimes marry, which [797] usually results in the conversion of the Falasha partner to the majority religion. Also due to modern contact, it is beginning to happen that a Falasha teaches his craft to a non-Falasha, but the peasants often reject the output of the latter on the grounds that it isn't a "really strong, genuine Falasha article".

563 281 Somewhat similar untouchability attaches to the tanners, who are usually of local pre-Amharic, (Cushitic, e.g. Agau) descent, often still speak their ancient tongues, and until recently were never converted to Coptic Christianity. As traditionally "conquered" peoples, they are not "attentam", and Amhara endogamous rules prevail against them. The stigma against them seems to

563 rest not on any supposed supernatural powers of their
281 craft, but on theoccupation which requires them to deal with carcasses regularly, and places them in a class with the "Woyto" hippopotamus hunters of Lake Tana. However, the tanned skins produced by these "Faqi" tanners, prepared through a primitve version of making "mofocco" leather, ismuch appreciated as "best workmanship" by the rural as well as town Amhara.

Like the Falasha, the "Faqi" live in hamlets of their own, usually within half a day's waling distance of a big market. They are regarded by Amhara as pagans; they gather under large trees in remote areas for their nature worship on several occasions each year. In very recent years, the urgings from the emperor and the example of Protestant missionaries have stimulated the Coptic clergy to admit them to Christianity, but, as
[97] in the case of converted Falasha, the social stigma remains attached to the convert, even if he changes his occupation. Socially he is then worse off than before, for as an outcast from his own group he feels the barbs of social discrimination more than ever. In the past, the "Faqi", like the "Falasha" did not concern themselves much about this stigma, but now the "Faqi" insist on the polite address "arabeñña" --which refers to the tanner workmanship (lit. the one who creates Arab-like, i.e. imported luxury, articles.).

[463] Occupations that can be readily learned by anyone, or that require talent rather than skill, do not connote
533 low class. A musician, "azmari", male or female, who may or may not play an instrument for accompaniment, is

[533] usually a Coptic Amhara, of more talent than skill.
286 The weaver, "shamani", though usually a Ethiopian Muslim (or Falasha), carries on his work in theopen, and anyone may learn it. It is only because it requires consistent manual labor that most Amhara shun it.

d) Religious Minority.

794 The foremost religious minority in Amhara provinces is that of the Ethiopian Muslims. Most of them live in towns, and in the past were residentially segregated to the older parts of town, near caravan trails andbig markets. Even today, their social associations are almost exclusively with other Muslims, e.g. traders from the Sudan. Both are regarded as low-class not only by the Amhara but also by the handful of Arab wholesale traders from Yemen. As a result, negroid and semi-negroid ex-
[79] slaves (Shanqalla), especially women, often become converted to Islam in order to marry Ethiopian Muslims or Sudanese, who, as retail traders, are economically better off. The Muslim veneer of these women is very thin, and they are among the most ardent followers of the "Zar" cult.

e) Racial Minority

563 Shanqalla slaves were, [redacted], entirely below
567 the social scale, and treated as a separate caste. They were brought or purchased from the Shanqalla, negroid, people on the southwest escappment, or from Nilotic

563 "Barya" people below the northwest escarpment, so that
567 both terms became synonymous with "slave". Because of the negroid features of the former, and the very black skin of both, they had high visibility, and did not have to be guarded closely as they could hardly escape. In view of the widespread illiteracy, manumission was almost never practiced, and such a document would be ignored by a slave trader or any Amhara who wanted to re-enslave a manumitted Shanqalla or Barya. Until slave-trading was prohibited by the present emperor, negroid slaves were still brought from the Gumuz tribe of Quara sub-province, just below the western, old-
[588] Amhara escarpment. But concubinage was so widespread that today there are more half-Shanqalla than full-blooded wx-slaves. Freed only since 1942, little change has so far taken place in their social status. In rural areas most remain with their old masters as
[464] servants or sharecroppers. In towns, they form a pool ofuunskilled labor, employed only briefly from time to time, subsisting on very little, residing in the oldest parts of theold Muslim ghetto. Some of their women have
[357] managed to raise their economic status by becoming house-maids, espceially serving the women on the "street of unattached girls", or by mar ying ploygynous Muslims.

563 The Coptic church had not interested itself in
567 the status of slaves, for according to its rules a
797 Chriatian could not be kept in slavery, and therefore no attempt was made to convert Shanqalla or Barya slaves.

563 The racial objection to "raising them to Christinaity"
567 (as it was called) was expressed on the principal of
797 "atteätam" (of good, i.e. Amhara or Tigre physical stock). These objections still hold, but ex-slaves attached as servants to a Coptic Amhara household are now more often "raised to Christianity" if they desire it, and can then legally marry other Coptic Christians, which, however, is rare, in practice.

567 Plantation slavery was never widespread, except in the lowland, "Läzäga" district of Wolqait sub-province, where cotton and vegetables were raised on a relatively larger scale and most plateau landowners, especially feudal ones, preferred the plentiful "gabbar" services and well-established arrangements. The "gabbar" were rooted to the soil and had more to lose by leaving their birthplace than slaves would have.

The legal position of slaves, who were almost always non-Christianized gave them no protection. They were legal persons, and could not, in theory, own property, nor contract debts. In practice, some occasionally did manage to accumulate some small cattle and raise their local economic level through interpersonal contact. Slave concubines and the children they bore were usually kept in the household like family retainers, or at most given to another kinsman or to a newlywed couple, within the kin group.

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565 f) The Servant Class and Economic Considerations

The servant class, "ashkär", is employed in the

557 household both in rural areas or towns, also to do
565 plowing for the freehold farmer and help in the harvest. Servants are usually permanently employed, and therefore do not usually leave even if the employer is behind in his monthly wage payments. Salary and food are received with a bow and cupped hands. The servant addresses the master with the extra polite "gëtoch" (lit. masters, i.e. plural), walks in front of the master's mule to make way, slightly behind him when both are on foot, and never lets his master carry anything.

Long interpersonal relations usually improve the position of the servant to master, and it is not in the servant's interest to change jobs, or to go to another area where he is unknown, A landless "gabbar" may try to attach himself to a well-to-do household as "retainer ("zëga"), without wages, doing a servant's work in the hope of occasional, seasonal gifts, a share of the produce, or, in town, a share in trade. For, a servant or retainer who is Amhara "attentam" and Coptic Christian becomes like a member of the extended family. The proverb says:

[539] "When (women) grind (grain) together,
there is no mistress".

556 Economic wealth enables each of these social
565 classes to achieve some upward social nobility, within limits. But there are not many opportunities to accu-
[441] mulate much wealth. Traders can raise their status
294 in towns, despite doubful ancestry. The same is true
565 of tailors, a very recent occupation in town, where foot-operated Singer sewing machines have enabled men

294 to set up shops along the main street leading to the
555 market, or at the market itself, manufacturing khaki shorts and jackets, But this is still considered shameful manual labor by the Amhara, so that he will pursue it only in another province where it does not shame his kinfolk.

556 A rich man, whose low ancestry may be whispered behind his back, is nevertheless usually treated with honor by Amhara commoners. The proverb says:

[539] "He who falls in a shallow place"
hurt will not come to him", (i.e. a rich man, even if he falls drunk in a gutter, will not be molested by ruffians, who will instead take him to his house, expecting a reward).

[539] "The water of (the rainy month) Nähasse is good,
yet no one will drink it;
the word of the poor man may be fruitful,
but no one will listen to him" (i.e.he is not appreciated, no matter how wise).

B. Age Stratification.

561 Age stratification among the Amhara ranks in emphasis between class stratification andsex stratification.

561 The social relation of old toward the young is
882 often likened by the Amhara to that of master to servant. Indeed, a young man between puberty and marriage is addressed as "ashkär", (lit. servant). A young girl of the same age is addressed and even referred to as "leja märäd"(lit. servant maid, handmaiden).

561 The functions of the young literally follow these
882 terms. Even boys attending church school do pasturing of the flock before and after their lessons, and school is recessed during plowing and harvesting seasons. Elder brothers may and do discipline their juniors, despite the superficial "joking relationship" between siblings of the same sex. As "ashkär", the young bachelor is constantly at the beck and call of his father and other elders of the extended family. At feasts, the father may show affectionate approval by feeding his son hand-to-mouth, the "gursha", also given to servants and other social inferiors.

The proverb admonishes the young man to respect age, and family patriarchs watch jealously a personal friendship developing between any young man with another outside the family:

[539] "More than a trusted companion, who is unlearned, the old teacher is better".

561 Age stratification outranks sex stratification even in matters of religion. An old woman is sometimes permitted to enter the church building, especially if she
[565] has taken vows as a nun and wears the "qob". Though the church would like to promote it, social attitudes criticize as ostentatious a young couple of undistinguished, commoner ancestry, who marry by "qurban" (eucharistic marriage) and wear the bright metal crown("aklil"). But a middle-aged couple, long married by "semanya", may take this honorable step without being criticized.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

C. Stratification by Sex.

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Stratification by Sex among Amhara affects women of nobility often differently than women of the commoner class, but in some ways it affects both.

Well-remembered and not atypical for noblewomen is the example of Empress Taitu, who married Emperor Menelik as her 5th husband, and who led her own feudal troops into the Battle of Adua in 1896. Such deeds of noblewomen occur often in Abyssinian history. This is not surprising, for the daughters of noblemen are raised by servants with as much deference and prestige as are the sons, and consequently develop equal and even occasionally dominating personalities. Concomitant with the usual literalness in Amhara culture, a noblewoman who fulfills a male function may be addressed in the male gender. The memorial feast ("täzkar") of a noblewoman is as elaborate as that of a nobleman.

A noblewoman is exempt from many disabilities of her sex. She regularly rides a mule, using a man's saddle, and in this case wearing a man'sjodphurs under her long cotton skirts. Unlike other women, she does not have to redrape her shamma respectfully when meeting a man of equal rank, only when going to church or before a judge. When she enters court, the commoner judge rises to greet her. When she approaches the church, the priest bows before her, and may even permit her to stand just inside the door of the outermost enclosure, usually reserved for nuns. A landowning woman-

562 which happens among middle and upper feudal nobility--
565 may herself become the founder ansponsor of a church. In this case she usually appoints a male administrator from among her kinsmen, or a local cheqa shum headman, to supervise the sharecropper gabbar supplying her church. She then would also exercise direct or indirect control over the qēs gobāz, the administrating priest.

A commoner or peasant woman is much more exposed
585 to the inferior legal status of womwn. According to traditional law, the "semanya" bond with the formula of the oath "May the Emperor die" (e.g. Hayle Selassye
675 yemut"), is not legally valid, and her contractual function has to be performed through a male kinsman. Nevertheless, her legal position is by no means as
586 weak as that of the Muslim woman. The Amhara woman may take half of her husband's movable possessions upon divorce, i.e. thecows she brought into her marriage and half theincreade of any pooled property. To protect her somewhat from wilful mistreatment at the hands of her husband, a bride is given two male protective "best men", the "mizēn- but they are kinsmen of the bridegroom's!

Social inferiority of a commoner woman is also associated with her manual and menial labor, as hauler of water and hewer of wood or collector of cowdung.for fuel, and similar servant-like chores inside and out-
854 side the hut. The baby which she carries on her back and breast-feeds for two years renders her physically dirty and often smelly. The commoner woman may not

562 The commoner woman may not
565 carry a "ḉhera" flyswitch of monkey-hair or horse-
293 hair, otherwise she will be criticized as "rudely presumptuous" and "proud". Commoner women therefore drape the shamma over their heads to be somewhat protected from flies, or cut a small branch off a eucalyptus tree. Noblewomen may carry a ḉhera, and indicate by their heavy weight that they have a houseful of servants to perform every menial task.

562 With advancing age, past menopause, the social
888 position ofthe commoner woman steadily improves. She now lords it over the younger women in the household who have taken over the menial tasks. If she has remained married to the same husband for a number of years, she is respectfully addressed as "emmä bet" (lit. mother of the house). If she is widowed, she gains prestige by taking vows as a nun. A woman who marries a priest shares some of the social dignity of his position; she is referred to as "qesenna" (from "qes", priest). Women listening to the church service have the privilege of gaining merit by shouting the shrill joyshout "ellel" at the proper times in the liturgy.

562 Kinship ties remain a strong protection to
602 women even after marriage and residence away from the parental hamlet. She is often reminded not to forget her kinship ties when she marries:

562 "The killer? (It was) your husband;
602 The victim? (It was) your brother.
[539] Great is your pain,
never will it leave your house"

(said to a woman who promoted her husband's interests, e.g. in competition for a position with the feudal lord, over that of her brother).

562 Psychological inferiority is ascribed to all women, by Amhara men, regardless of social rank. Her weakness is regarded as biological, intellectual and moral. It is regarded as proverbial:

[98] "Vulgar Language" - "yäsyet qwanqwa" (lit. woman's language)

"Polite Language" - "yäwänd qwanqwa" (lit. man's language); modest, correct, pure, elegant language. Also called "yäwond amarena" (lit. man's Amharic).

[195] "syeto" - insult to a talkative man. (lit. womanish

"syete" - (lit. female) - said of timber or soil that is feeble, soft, of little resistance.

[539] "Woman and donkey
(must be trained) with a stick."

"Even if a woman has knowledge,
(only a) man knows how to hold on to it."

562 While Amhara men consider women inferior in theory, Amhara women do not necessarily accept this judgement; and, in the case of upper class or advanced age females, men admit that this judgement does not necessarily hold validity in practice.

PART IV : The Life Cycle of the Individual

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Like many other societies with a tradition-directed culture, the individual passing through the age-grades of life is taught well in advance what his duties and privileges are at each stage.

The age-grades, though strongly emphasized in Amhara human relationships, are not as detailed nor as sharply divided from each other as in the case of the Galla of Southern Ethiopia (the "gada" age grades).

[854] The two-year breast-feeding period is the happiest of the stages for the baby. Infancy and childhood, for both sexes, are carefree periods of experimentation, which is sharply abrogated as adolescence, a period of authoritarian obedience, approaches. [582] Even the first marriage of an individual, taking place at the very beginning of adulthood (even earlier for girls), permits only a [586 587] minimum of individual choice. Unhappy first marriages are common, and so is divorce. But after this, the fully adult man or woman can assume a freedom of choice not known since childhood. They may seek second mates, change residence, join a different "mähabbär", etc., and the grip of extended family on the individual is somewhat [885] relaxed by the short life-span of the "elder" grade. This in turn permits the middle-aged adult to be regarded and respected as an elder himself, who not only is permitted a maximum of own choice, but who can and does rule the younger grades.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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TABLE 10: Age-Grade Terms and Functions, Male and Female

Terms relating to age grades have the following connotations:
(Unless otherwise stated, terms are both address and reference).

Stage	Age	Male	Female
nursling	0 - 2	reference: "chaqela", or "gelgdl"; address: "end ferey lej" (lit. one fruitful child), or "betsan" (Geez for "baby")	Same
infant	3 - 6 (post weaning)	"lej" (boy) "kutara" (unthinking urchin)	"leja" (girl)
child	over 7	same as in age past weaning (duties: herd cattle, watch harvest)	"leja-gared" (little servant maid) (duties: watch babies, fetch wood).
adolescent	14-20	"ashkär" (lit. servant) (address) (duties: run errands, carry tools, plow, care for cattle)	"genjo" (lit. beautiful). (chiefly address) (age of serious flirting, braiding of hair, first marriage, first motherhood).
young adult	18-30	address of honor ("robäg" (handsome young warrior) ("kobalo" (powerful warrior) (duties: clear bush; defend kin)	
	15-25	"gorämaa" (lit. neighbor, mate) vulgar reference to "mate of vulva"; male at peak of sex desire	"korada" - joking (not very polite) reference to female at peak of sex desire.
adult		"säw (man)	"syet" (woman)
elder	over 40	"shemagelrē" (elder, old man, serious, wise)	"baltet" (greying woman past menopause; age of widowhood; By extension - nun)

1. The Beginning of Life.

842 A. The Desire for Children: adoption.

Children are greatly desired by the Amhara, and a childless home is regarded as under a heavenly curse. Children are regarded as continuing the "byet", the residential extended family; as a source of riches from childhood on when they begin economic tasks; as a source of comfort and security in old age; as defenders in feuds and wars; even after the death of parents, children help them into heaven by means of "täzkar".

[588] When a woman is barren, and amulets have proven no cure for her, she may give her husband a concubine, "ärräd" (lit. servant maid), so that he will not feel deprived of fatherhood and begin

597 to hate her. Or she may adopt a child, preferably an orphan of kinfolk or a well-known family, by taking the child to the confessor-priest and swearing the oath of ecclesiastical adoption, whereupon the child becomes "yägal kidan lej" (lit. contract-child). This may include the ceremony of "breast-mother", "yätut ennat", previously described. Less fortunate is the foster child, not formally adopted, who lives with the foster parents, guards the crops and herds the cows, but is more completely dependent on the good will of the "bread mother", "enjära ennat".

593 Fathers, whether natural or adopted, expect complete obedience from their children, particularly after they have arrived at the "age of reason". Fathers feel defensively obliged to maintain their authority; as the proverbs say of a father addressing the

593 son:

539 "Sheep! If I do not eat you, you would devour me", said the hyena". (meaning: perhaps you'd

593
[539]

like to order me about?).

"He who talks before his father does,

his mouth will become like that of a leper".

Older brothers may discipline younger siblings, but there is less emphasis on the privileges of the first-born than in Arab countries. The Amhara is aware that younger brothers may often become more honored, richer and wiser later in life:

[539]

"Formerly, he (the older) pulled his (the younger's) ear, later on, the horn of the other (the younger) became bigger".

586 In case of divorce, which is frequent, children not staying with one of the parents are quickly taken by kinfolk. Thus, children are often raised by their grandparents, paternal or maternal, who often are young enough to have small children of their own. It is not even rare to see children of a divorcee by her first marriage may be raised by the family of her second husband even after she has divorced and left him also. This is more likely to happen in a town, where the consanguinal kin ties are weakened due to absence of the factor of kin residence, than in the residential kin hamlet. (Foreign observers have paraphrased an old English saying and adapted it to this situation in Abyssinia:

B. Pregnancy, Birth, Circumcision.

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According to popular observation, 25% of all women, especially in the towns, are barren, and another 25% have frequent miscarriages. There are many precautions taken against these mishaps. A pregnant woman may wear extra cowrie shells, "zacol"; in addition to amulets written against the evil spirit "tela" (lit. shadow, an envious female spirit) which brings miscarriages, kills babies at

842 birth, or later by causing its joints to swell.

843 It is considered impossible for a woman to conceive while still breastfeeding a baby. This belief is so strong that no precautions are taken, coitus proceeds as usual after the first few months, and when a pregnancy does occur it is regarded as a freak of nature and misfortune.

841 These physical matters are more discussed by women than by men. Menstruation is differentiated in several ways: "tärakkäsä" - she has become impure; "räggäma" - the (monthly) curse is on her; "edef" - the discharge of menstruation; "bädäm nat" (lit. she is in blood). Husbands are expected to shun "the dirt" and avoid sex relations during that time.

843 As a pregnancy advances, women wrap a long cotton girdle around the belly and waist, "näcänät", for support, and continue this some time after childbirth.

843 574 844 About two months before a woman is about to give birth, ("ergüz" - woman in advanced pregnancy), she often leaves her husband and goes to the hamlet of her parents'. There she knows she will be taken care of, fed, constantly attended, treated by the local experienced woman who acts as midwife, and not be expected to follow any of her housewifely duties such as fetching water, cooking, brewing beer, gathering fuel, etc. After birth she will usually remain at her parents' for some months, until her childbed, "aras" period (usually 80 days) is over. During this time, circumcision and clitorectomy are performed. For even good husbands are regarded as so habituated to the wifely services that they become impatient with the wife at this time.

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844 During parturition, the midwife usually sits on the ground in such a position that the baby will drop into her lap. The mother usually kneels. Sometimes incense is lit to lure the baby out, and to attract protective "zar" spirits. It is believed that both embryo and placenta consist of menstrual blood that has not come out and become coagulated like buttermilk; fermented with the male semen, like yeast. The placenta, "adär" (discharged dirty part), also called "yäengedä lej" (lit. host of the child), is buried out of sight. The baby is immediately fed butter, anointed with butter, and wrapped loosely in a warm toga. Meanwhile the mother is tightly bound in the long cotton [789] girdle, "lest her back hurt". In some areas, iron tools or weapons are placed close to her, to frighten off demons which fear iron.

[842] If the baby is a boy, women emerge from the huts shouting "ellel". The father, usually waiting nearby, is summoned. There is merriment and drinking and "fukkara" dancing among men in the evening.

304 852 Circumcision ("gezrat") of boys takes place a week after birth, and is of less religious significance than the baptism which follows some weeks later. It is a simple operation of removal of the foreskin, usually carried out by a "wogäsha" (native herbologist-surgeon) or other skilled man. Uncircumcised persons, e.g. Shanqalla from the lowlands, are insulted as "arotam" (sheathed); even the Italians were referred to as "wäshäla", a reference to having foreskins; less insulting is the factual ter "qurzam" (uncircumcised).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

304 852 Although Amhara often deny the religious aspect of their circumcision, it is recalled by the more learned that Jesus Christ was circumcized on the 6th day of the month Ṭer. Also, the confessor is invited to circumcisions, and blesses the baby, sprinkles the hut with blessed water, waves the cross about to exorcise lingering demons who have waited for the kill like vultures. He blesses the entire family; May God rear up the baby for you, that he be your support in old age, and carry you to your burial". He is rewarded with a small feast and as much barley beer as he can drink.

In some regions of Begemdir province girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed without ceremony by the midwife, without any religious connotation. Usually the operation is a simple cut, a "clitorotomy". The purpose is to prepare the girl baby for future marital happiness by reducing the egotistical part of her sensuality. It is believed that Amhara women of the province [831] of Gojjam, where clitorectomy is not practiced, are very difficult to satisfy sexually, that they are more concerned with their own sexual gratification than with that of their husbands', and even become unfaithful because of this. At least this is the belief of Amhara of Begemdir province. The term "wäshäla" is also used for an "uncircumcised" woman.

845 It is considered a great calamity when twins are born. They are referred to as "ïnta" (from "amïïnta", undecided, not knowing which to accept). Everyone wonders "who will feed and carry the 845 539 twin"? The proverb says:

"The mother of twins,

845 [539] (because of what she carries) on her back, she dies."

It would indeed be difficult for her to suckle two babies for two years, and to carry them on her back while fetching water and deadwood and doing all her other chores. Very likely, the weaker of twins is neglected, which greatly increases the higher natural mortality of twins. The observable fact is that one never seems to encounter adult Amhara twins.

C. Naming the Baby.

553 Since Amhara fathers pay little attention to details concerning the unweaned baby, the task of naming the baby, giving it the "world name", usually falls to the mother. She does not usually prepare a name during pregnancy. Instead, she awaits the momentuous event of birth, then decides on a name based on her predominant emotion at that time, or on a significant event occurring at the same time, or on the special wish she has for the personality or the future of her baby. All classes follow this practice, but among nobles there is an additional pattern of naming the baby after a deceased ancestor, particularly in the direct patrilineal line.

551 Common "world names" given by mothers include:

Boys

"Taamrat" - (lit. miracle), e.g. if the mother barely survived the parturition, or some other miraculous deliverance took place.

"Mällässä"- (lit. he returned), e.g. if the baby's father had been away, and the mother was overjoyed to see him return just at the time the baby was born.

551 "Metekēy" - (lit. my substitute), e. g. if the mother had lost a previous baby, especially of the same (male) sex.

"Seyum" - (lit. the one appointed to dignity), e.g. if the mother has ambitions for the boy. Common among nobles.

"Dästa" - (lit. joy).

Girls

"Almaz" - (lit. diamond)

"Mänän" - (lit. excellent, exquisite, magnificent). Common to nobles.

"Tsädal" - (lit. splendor, luster). From the Geez language.

Baptismal names, described earlier, are given by the confessor, sometimes based on the name of a deceased ancestor - especially among nobility - but are not usually used in later life unless or until the person marries by "qurban" ecclesiastical marriage, or becomes a monk or nun. Typical baptismal names are (for boys):

"Gäbrä-Mäsqäl" - (lit. Servant of the Cross)

"Gäbrä-Egziabhēr"- (lit. Servant of God).

D. The long, happy nursling stage.

854 Despite the many physical ailments that endanger the life of a baby in this materially undeveloped country, the nursling stage is one in which it receives more care than at any later period.

[853] The long, 2-year breastfeeding, for both boys and girls, gives them some resistance to the effects of malnutrition, vitamin shortage, diarrhea, and infections of all kinds from which older children suffer. The nursling is never out of touch with the body of the mother, or other woman or older sister. Most of the time the baby

854 is carried about on its mother's back, riding spread-legged in a half-sack. Other women and older sisters are about, eager to cuddle and handle the baby ("dällälä") to console, comfort, caress). In doing this they bend down to the baby, or pick it up, but rarely grasp it to kiss it. Fathers rarely fondle the baby until it is weaned. They often have to take a special count when asked how many teeth the baby has.

The term for nursling, "gelgäl", may be extended to animal nuralings as a compliment, but not vice versa, for this would be an insult. When the baby can sit or stand, mothers hold it by the hands and coo babytalk to it, e.g. "tatu segra" (lit. - footsie), encouraging it to take first steps, or warning it not to touch a dangerous thing, such as fire, by designating it as "kaka". The 853 baby learns to walk during the second year, long before it is weaned. Thus a baby with a nearly full set of teeth can be seen walking up to its mother, groping for the breast inside the dress or toga, pulling it out, and beginning to take nourishment while squeezing a side of the breast with the full hand. The mother will rarely push it away, until it has had its fill and lingers dreamily, and she has other work to do. In this case the mother may push the baby away gently, without sign of annoyance. Inside the hut, women are not bashful about their breasts being partly exposed during feeding, but in sight of a stranger they may cover [854] the process of the baby's taking nourishment for fear of evil-eye spirits to which every eater is vulnerable and which might dry up the milk (out of envy and meanness).

803 Toilet training begins gradually after weaning, i.e. after the age of two, when the mother has resumed full wifely duties and

803 does not wish to be dirtied all the time. Misbehaving, relapsing infants are punished by pinching.

2. The Age of Experimentation: Infancy and Childhood.

855 The years after weaning, until about the age of seven can be described as years in which the attitude of Amhara parents and society toward the small children is "laissez-faire". This is partly due to the attitude that views childhood as a state of imperfection, letting the children grow with little supervision until they are old enough to perform economic tasks, but later training them in an authoritarian fashion, to make them grow into adults as quickly as possible, without an intervebing playful adolescence.

A. The Stage of Infancy.

854 Once the mother has resumed wifely duties, infants are often cared for by their older sisters, who attend to their food, carry them, fondle them, but leave them considerable freedom to roam around the outside of the huts and nearby brooks, hills, fields, etc. They are permitted to get as dirty as they like, and are dressed in a single shift of threadbare rags which conceal nothing. They are not scolded for experimentation with objects, be they animate, inanimate, or their own bodies; unless they get in the way of adults and annoy them, whereupon they are simply pushed away. They are rarely punished, for they are regarded as not having attained the "age of reason", as "not yet trainable", as "urchins" ("kutara"), lighthearted infants.

Parents do fondle them, but not as regularly as before. It

854 is a special occasion when father lets the infant ride on his shoulders ("ashkokko alä", lit. rode like a marmoset monkey) while going to visit another hamlet. Men do not carry children on their [165] backs, women's fashion. But parents, particularly fathers, do not take infants too seriously for an additional reason, that of infant mortality which is still high at this stage.

857 Socialization and enculturation begin through the peer-group of playmates, with whom infants have the most frequent, lengthy, and intensive contacts. They tease each other and scold each other into what they, in their playful, experimenting fashion, regard as "proper" behavior; and penalize, haze and discipline each other in the same way. From the adults they take both ideas and hand-me-down objects that have been used, worn-out and discarded, for their play activities, organize them experimentally into child-culture version of their own; for adults rarely produce a toy for children nor give them any new, unused object.

854 There is a cooperative side to this apparently random play
357 activity, leading to the beginning of useful economic activities.
861 Older children teach the younger ones, e.g., to make little whisk-brooms ("wof ger", lit. bird's foot) out of reeds, for which they are rewarded by their mothers with a thick, cake-like bread(similar to "dabye" of monks), which carries the same name, "wof ger". On certain church holidays, particularly "Buhe", younger children accompany older ones on their gift-begging tours.

857 Their powers of observation, active, free and relatively un-
867 structured prior to later discipline, imitate, in their play activities, the social relations, including the family and sexual-social relationships of their elders. When about five years old,

857 boys and girls - for the sexes are not yet separated up to that
867 time - play "house" with considerable sophistication. For example, when they play "marriage", the "father" of the "bride" goes to the "elders" to inquire about the character of the "groom", after the groom's father has initiated the negotiations on the groom's request. They build a "marriage hut", and play at heavy drinking of barley-beer and honey-mead. The "bride" demands a gift from her new "husband", and enters into his "residence". After they have been in there a while, the two best-men, the "mizē", who had been duly sworn to protect her even against her husband, go off to the bride's parents to announce loudly and joyfully that the girl had proven a virgin! Whereupon the "mizē" are feted.

B. The Stage of Childhood, "Reason" Incipient Discipline.

857 There is no special rite of passage that marks entry into the
868 next stage, at about 5 for girls, about 7 for boys. But there is
855 recognition, at this point, that the girls mature faster and are economically useful at a younger age than boys. Henceforth, girls
[891] play with girls, follow their mothers in their duties, (watch babies, fetch wood) and wear a more complete shift that covers them better; while boys play in boys' groups, follow their fathers, have regular duties assigned them such as taking cattle to and from pasture, and guarding the harvest against birds and baboons. Girl-children are addressed and referred to as "lēja-zäräd" (servant maid) for their duties are even more regular than those of
[858] the boys. Both sexes can now be asked in court to choose sides when their parents are being divorced and the guardianship is in question. For they have entered the "age of reason".

855 Neglect of duty is therefore punished, and a father may fly into a sudden rage, beat the child without waiting for an excuse, even hurl a firebrand at the offending boy, so that considerable injuries sometimes occur. Mothers discipline the girls in similar temperamental fashion. But the rage, in either case, is quickly forgotten. There is no pattern of cold discipline, no "woodshed" punishment, rather hot-tempered, quick retribution.

857 Play activity and imitation of adults continues, but it takes on more seasonal and constructive characteristics. This is partly due to the seasonal pattern of the economic activities of boys age 7 to 11 and girls 5 to 14. Formal education in church school rarely begins before 11 in the rural areas, whereupon their play activities become more "extra-curricular".

[526] The seasonal games include the ball game after the harvest is completed, known as "gencheb" or "kwas", and seasonal construction and repair activities. On the church feast of Mikael, little boys have their own outdoor party, eating barley roasted on the stalk, and watching the flirtatious play of adolescent boys and girls.

291 Boys 7 to 11 still wear the tattered, knee length cotton shift, as their basic garment in rural areas, but beg a new one from relatives once a year, for the holy day of "Masqal", or "Timqat". But they are increasingly self-conscious about nudity, and if the tattered shift reveals the pubic area, other boys will haze and playfully beat the offender, saying:

[539] "My father told me not to let a snake warm itself in the sun".

865 In summary, parental discipline in this age group is specific,
867 work-oriented and intermittent; while experimentation with, and

855 socialization by the peer group continues more regularly and fre-
867 quently and on a broader range of activities.

C. Training through the Peer-group; Patterns of Hazing.

867 Parental training during childhood is minimal, and much of enculturation is left to the peer-group which proceeds to function in little-structured fashion, largely through hazing.

Differential behavior of the sexes is largely taught this way. Little boys haze any boy who cries, or seems soft, "qeltan", by darkly hinting that he "lacks something" ("täqämättälä"); and, if he is shy in talking and defending himself with his sharp tongue, "qämtalla", effeminate. To prove their physical bravery, boys burn scars ("tässasa") in their own forearms, saying that this will make them "strong", and believing that this will immunize them from showing pain or softness in public. An aggressive, clever
[562] tongue, capable of a wide repertoire of insults that will shatter the adversary's composure, and also include appropriate milder and semi-strong insults, is regarded as male behavior, as "strong" or stronger than brawn. This makes a "known man" ("yätäwäqa säw"). The proverb says:

[539]

> "The son of man, by what is he respected?
> by his seat (position)?
> Not by his seat -
> by his lip. (i.e. cleverness in argument)".

Boys are hazed by other boys for picking on little girls. Hazing is sometimes physical, sometimes by mockery, often both. If physical, it consists of shoving, wrestling, in spontaneous manner, almost never with cold formality. A boy who wants to grow up too fast beyond his peers, i.e. by showing too much preference for the company of elders, is criticized with the proverb:

867 "He, before becoming old,
[539] wants to be serious".

(This is also said of a young man who saves gifts for a bride before he has chosen a girl).

When the adolescent boys take part in the aforementioned ritual mock-battles, younger boys imitate them by staging similar hazing-battles among their age peers.

Little girls are encultured in somewhat similar fashion by peers of their own sex, but more often including some older girls who patronize the younger. Girls are not taught any social graces among commoner Amharas, so that they sit shyly and wordless when in the company of men. Any girl who shows signs of daring is mocked and hazed as "gobba" (daring, enterprising female). Generally the activities of girls are less violent,. At times when boys fight their ritual mock-battles, girls dance rounds and sing in unison.

Both boys and girls are taught to be right-handed, and a
[264 "lefty" is extremely rare. They are taught to eat with the right
576] hand, shake hands with the right, and use the left for wiping
514 themselves with leaves after defecating. But the prohibition against use of the left hand on other occasions is not as severe as among Arabs.

[754] Both sexes fear the supernatural "buda" spirit, also in the shape of human sorcerer and magical hyena. Older boys claim they can distinguish the cry of a real hyena from that of a magical one, and sometimes scare younger children by imitating the howl.

867 Sex differentiation among children is expressed in the hair
302 style. Boys wear a single coxcomb hairlock, girls a ring of hair around the shaven skull which sometimes may contain a center hair-

867 [300] lock in addition. But boys never wear the ring of hair, which would be insulting to them.

864 When sex differentiation becomes more emphasized in the culture, at about seven, sex talk and sex play goes on primarily within the peer group of the same sex. The invitation to do this is "enkä säläntiye", (lit. let us play at guessing impolite matters). They play hide and seek, whisper, re-enact what they have observed their parents do at night in the hut, and phantasy experimenting with sexual possibilities. Children observe a lot in the quiet of the night in the hut, but are careful not to be seen watching. They misunderstand and are greatly puzzled, since no elder will explain "impolite matters" to them. It is impolite even to mention the names of genitals and reproductive organs, such as "kola" for penis, and "ems" for vulva, so they are merely whispered about. In church school, boys are puzzled by overt references to "Mary's womb" and "God's seed", but questions are rejected as "rudeness". Youngsters in town have broader information, because there they hear "rude" talk more often among adults.

D. Toys and Games.

857 524 The economic activities of children in the fields, where they spend much time in guarding but do little intensive labor, is regarded by them more in the nature of play. It is fun to throw rocks at thieving baboons and shoot pebbles at birds, with slingshots made of "nacha" fiber.

The boys also make a bullroarer, "mät", to scare birds away from seeds and mature crops. This instrument is also called, onomatopoetically, "ruremremosh" (from "täwerämärrämä", to

857 grumble, growl, snarl). It consists of a stick of wood, a foot
524 long, 1/2 inch thick, notched at the thinner end, to which a cord of twisted fibre is attached. This is swung horizontally, above the head, to produce what is regarded as a terrifying sound. It is even used in shepherding, since boys believe it frightens away hyenas and the occasional leopard. During the rainy season, boys play it indoors to amuse each other and haze-tease younger siblings, who are frightened by it.

At the beginning of the light rainy season, when the storks and other birds fly north, children especially girls, form circles and dance rounds, chanting to the flocks of birds:

[539]

"Stork, our country is well;
the woman who baked <u>gitta</u> (luxurious wheat bread)
has died swallowing <u>gitta</u> (i.e. luxury is plentiful).

[825] At harvest time, in November, similar greetings are sung to the birds when they return from the north, from "Jerusalem" in popular belief. The Falashas children express this by singing to departing storks:

[539]

"How are you?
The people of Jerusalem (Falashas) are well)."

The Coptic Amhara hold the same belief as to the destination of the birds.

Winter games, i.e. in the rainy season, when children are restricted to the hamlet, include building of makeshift huts, in which they play "man and wife". The girls gather leaves, roll red mud inside, and "bake" cakes. Boys mimic the farmer, weave a hood of reeds, and just as he walks in the rain broadcasting his seeds, so boys broadcast pebbles.

Swimming is a favorite sport of children in the rainy season,

857 when even brooks are swollen, but rivers soon become too dangerous.
524 During the first season, when they learn to swim, a rope is tied
868 around the child's waist and held by an adolescent or young adult. At this time boys make waterpistols, "tiggosh" with a bamboo syringe; also peashooters shooting small pebbles with a bamboo strip acting as spring. Boys also make panpipe flutes from stout reeds, in preparation for "spring".

E. Formal Education and Extra-curricular Activities.

872 Basic education, already described in connection with the church, now falls into two types: the traditional church school; and the modern-style elementary school. Overlaps are beginning to appear.

Until a generation ago, the traditional church school had a complete monopoly on education, and for the vast majority of all children this is still true at this writing. It resembles in structure and function the "kuttab" school of the Muslims. Boys of peasant parents usually do not enroll before the age of 11, for until then their economic services are utilized fully, and only when they approach adolescence are the needs for their education felt by parents.

874 Most of the boys attend church school for only three years, for if they wish to study beyond what the village priest can teach them they must leave home for another district or province, e.g. a monastery school. Since the peasant family usually cannot or does not wish to sponsor this, the boy who insists becomes a "wandering" student, begging his way. Usually he goes for "zēma"

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874 studies to places in Begemdir province (Gondar), for "genye" to Gojjam province. He stays there until he receives his certificate, to work as a "dabtara" scribe; if a persistent student he may try to obtain ordination into the priesthood, or, if lackadasical, make it a life-long occupation to go from school to school, begging his way, learning how to pursuade village women to give him food for a "blessing", and how to fend off dogs with a stout staff. Sometimes, when free food is scarce, he works at semi-skilled occupations such as basket-weaving and weaving sun-umbrellas, selling them at the market. Parents, fearing that this might be the outcome of his "education", discourage boys from leaving home and field.

872 874 The 3-year attendance at the local church school is regarded as highly desirable by both parents and the church, and most boys - but no girls - attend it. When the boy enrolled there has learned to read portions of liturgy or the Bible in the Geez language, chanting psalms and gospels out loud, the father rewards the priest-teacher by sending him a sheep or a goat, sometimes even an aged cow or old ox. The priests often charge their older students with teaching the younger ones, in exchange for special privileges.

855 Boys misbehaving, such as making errors or not fully participating in the chanting in unison, or asking questions considered impious, are punished immediately by twisting of the ear or slaps on the head.

The methods of teaching are frequent repetition of lessons, learning by rote, chanting of memorized lessons. Translation into Amharic is rarely taught at this level, and writing almost never (until very recently in some locations under central government influence). The priest-teacher usually exerts greater efforts toward

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872 children of generous parents, and punishes and quite overtly
874 neglects children of poorer parents. Probably not more than 20% of the boys attend with regularity, but absentees may be punished.

872 The modern elementary school is available only at provincial capitals, and the nation's capital (the latter contains also high schools and a college). The curriculum of the elementary schools is now patterned after the American model, with Amharic and religion taught by Amhara teachers and priests, and other subjects, including English from the 3rd grade on, taught by imported teachers from India (also Europeans in Addis Ababa itself). Equipment includes blackboard ("sälēda") and chalk, but few printed books.

During the past decade, overlaps have been developing. Some church schools now also teach elementary arithmetic and Amharic writing, which the new law requires, though most in a minimal fashion or not at all. Arithmetic uses Amharic numerals, and more recently, also Arabic numerals. The first steps in this modernization had been ordered by Menelik II, but the change is still far from complete. Conversely, the students enrolling in elementary schools of provincial capitals are usually not younger than 11, as in the old tradition. Graduates of the 3-year village church school may enter in the 3rd grade of the modern elementary school, but are usually older than their classmates, so that they are 20 years old at graduation. This is often found in provincial capitals.

Only during the past decade have several girls' elementary schools been founded in some provincial capitals.

872 Since elementary schools, though increasing in number, still
565 constitute the major bottleneck in education, demand exceeding supply, (while high schools are more nearly sufficient because of fewer applicants), some of officeholders and feudal lords find it

872 easier, in practice, to gain admittance. The efforts of the em-
565 peror to give opportunities to the rural sons of poor orphans of soldiers who died fighting for their country, by opening boarding houses for them, attached to elementary schools, were defeated by the provincial feudal lords and townspeople, who managed to have their sons quartered in them instead.

Thus, traditional social stratification, both class and ethnic, affects even the modern elementary schools. In 1952 about 60,000 children, 10% girls, attended modern elementary schools in Ethiopia,
[563] and far more than half this number was Amhara. Ethnic minority groups find it very hard to have their children admitted, because the school administrators are usually Amhara. Thus, the Qemants of Gondar, for example, have found it easier to enroll their sons in the Catholic mission school operated there by Tigrean(Eritrean) priests. Other ethnic minorities have enrolled children in 7th Day Adventist and other mission schools.

871 In Addis Ababa itself the situation is quite different, however,
184 Here, traditional social stratification has far less effect, partly
565 because of the closer supervision by more modern officials of the central government, partly because the teachers in the high schools, and even in part in the elementary schools, are Europeans or Americans who emphasise social equality among students, pay no attention to family nobility, and reward only merit. Here, the son of the illiterate peasant, or occasionally even ex-slave negroid Shanqalla, may sit next to the son of an Amhara duke or a Galla "balbat". After graduation, they may be sent abroad for college or post-graduate training, based on merit, regardless of parental rank; though in social and family life the traditional social cleavages
prev!

prevail.

871 Most elementary school graduates from the provincial capitals
465 do not continue to Addis Ababa for a high school education, for they can obtain good and honorable positions, paying ETH$125.- (US $50.-) per month in the same town, as teachers, municipal clerks, with a good chance to be appointed to judgeship soon if they cultivate the right persons in power with "daj temat". Even Students who "flunk out" in the 7th or 8th grade can earn ETH$100.- as teachers of lower grades, or as low-grade clerks.

872 One old tradition which has broken down in the modern elemen-
212 tary schools but not in most church schools, is the prohibition of
178 extra-curricular writing. In the higher church grades, in which students' piety was already confirmed, especially in the monastery schools, copying psalms, gospels, (and by extension, government documents), was permitted, practiced, even regarded as praiseworthy. But there was, and in rural areas still is, fear that less pious students would use their knowledge of writing to experiment with magical formulae, doodlings, etc., creating dangerous mischief.

Therefore, parchment goatskins and writing equipment were carefully kept away from students of village church schools, and they were not taught to write. Thus, achievement of the skill of a scribe, "dabtara", required considerable individual initiative and study away from home.

212 However, boys at the "experimental" age of childhood, would
857 amuse themselves with the forbidden game of writing and doodling in secret, and they still do. Their work can be seen scribbled even on the outside walls and posts of some churches, a daring prank, sometimes in imitation of the church painter. More often

212 boys playing in the bush write on broad leaves; or on the sun-
857 bleached shoulder blades of dead oxen or donkeys cleaned up by hyenas, vultures and ants; or even scratch letters on their own dark skins with a thorn, preferably on the underside of the arm where it can be hidden more effectively. Sometimes rocks, charcoal and iron scrap provided tools or background for writing experiments.

Boys are very proud of this achievement, and tease illiterates, particularly shepherds who have not attended school, by writing or
[524] speaking phrases of Geez. Sometimes schoolboys use riddles, which they have memorized in school to memorize arithmetic, such as:

"(Question) What is two?
(Reply) Udder of female donkey;
(Question) What is four?
(Reply) Udder of cow."

[198] In reply to this teasing, illiterate shepherd boys make up "secret languages" of their own, by interlacing letters between syllables and speaking rapidly (much as zar doctors in the zar cult).

3. The Age of Obedience: Adolescence.

882 The age of experimentation, in which liberties taken by youngsters are often condoned, comes to an end as soon as puberty is reached. Parental authority, particularly that of the father, is more frequent and intense over the activities of the adolescent than over the peer-group child. The sexes are more sharply divided, no longer engage in experimental play activities in groups, and the patterns of flirting become more culturally structured, less random, and more personal. The adolescents are made to feel more "rule" conscious. With the awkwardness of adolescence comes a sudden shyness,

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882 broken by bursts of frenzied activity. This is utilized by the adults both to enculturate them and bend them to their will in "training" and "service", and to use the boundless physical energy of adolescents for considerable chores of physical labor.

The adolescents do not resent this most of the time, for they accept it as flattery and acknowledgement of their growing strength; enjoy the increased attention given them in the family as full-fledged, if subordinate members; appreciate the higher status that comes with advancing age, symbolized by the obedience they themselves can command at this stage from their younger siblings who follow them like retainers follow a feudal lord.

A. The Male Adolescent: Service and Young-Warrior.

882 561 The terms of address at this stage symbolize his position exactly, and are far more significant than in reference. Terms of address used in everyday life are: "ashkär" (lit. servant), to call a young man to duties ranging from running errands to doing most of the plowing. First used as flattery for boys of about 14, it becomes exactly descriptive and in everyday use as he matures to full stature power. When this happens, at about age 18, he may be flatteringly addressed as "gobäz", signifying "handsome young warrior". (footnote 79).

883 Duties at this stage, under supervision of the father or other male kinsman, include responsible and hard work in agriculture,

[71] Footnote 72: "gobäz" in Amharic has similar connotation to "bahurim" in Hebrew: the identification of the concept of young man with young warrior (Isaiah 31:8, Jeremiah 18:21, Amos 4:10). This is pointed out by Ullendorffe: The Obelisk of Matara, p. 31.

883 pasturing, housebuilding, packing and unpacking of mules on trips to the market and caravans. Able-bodied and semi-skilled, he is at the beck and call of any male kinsman, whenever the call "antä gobäz" (thou, warrior) resounds.

882 But he is still considered "half-baked", not fully skilled, strong but not wise, capable of carrying out orders but not of giving them because impatient and unable to foresee all consequences. The proverbs say:

[539] "The heart of the gobäz is in his chest" (meaning he is brave but does not reflect, in his head, the consequences of his deeds).

"A village full of young men
in one year it will become a desert".

"A young chief;
fog in (the month of) Hedar; (harvest month in dry season) (both) ruin the country".

[583] In return for his services, the young man hopes that his father will be generous in allocating a large and fertile plot of land to him upon marriage; also many cows, so he can ask an equal number from the bride's family.

883 In these services, particularly in transportation of goods and in housebuilding, he may be working in a team with other young men, his former playmates. But hazing is rare at this stage and considered childish, as is unrestrained shouting and pushing, especially within sight and hearing of full adults.

882 Sexual activities after puberty are much more secretive than
831 before, go on at night rather than in daytime, and are discussed only in whispers. Puberty is called" skalä mätän därräsä (lit. he

882 has arrived at the age of making full use of the sexual organ), an
831 expression not considered polite. So is the term "gorämsa", (lit. neighbor) when used to refer to a young buck at the peak age for continuous sex desire, for it signifies the male sexual organ next to its female "zate".

883 At the end of adolescence, the honorific address is "kobäle"
[561] (powerful warrior), in some regions. In the old feudal tradition, this was the age when the young man could be called to war, at about 18 to 20 and beyond, for as long as he retained his physical strength as well as skill of hand and eye. Even today, at church festivals, the "gobäz" - "kobälo" category of men perform the "hotu" and "fukkara" jump-dance and military boast, shouting "Addis Ababa" to signify loyalty, and "yebalahal jebe" ("The hyena will swallow him", i.e. any enemy), (or "wardaw shebo" crow's beak) symbolizing
883 their readiness to defend the sacred "tabot" of the church. On the
526 "Temqät" festival, the young "gobäz" assemble in teams of individuals on the public plain and the church parades stop to watch their game of "guks" (or gugs), a kind of tournament fought on horseback with blunt, wooden, straight lances. They race at each other at full speed, throwing the spearlike missiles at each other at close range, and ducking at the last moment. Sometimes rhinoceros shields were used for protection, but it is considered more clever to duck. Occasionally serious wounds result, and an overeager young warrior having repeatedly caused them is prevented from taking part in the future (losing his license for recklessness, so to speak).

Usually each participant has singled out a personal opponent. They are conscious that not only the eyes of the elders, priests and feudal lords are on them, but also those of the girls who follow

883 the turn of their fortunes with excited comments whispered in their
526 own groups. They know that the game will be discussed in individual terms until late into that night, for this is the month of intensive flirting and marriage.

At Christmas, the hockey-like game called "gänna" is played, where the team is emphasized over the individual, unlike "guks". In fact, Christmas derives its popular name, "Gänna", from the game, rather than the proper "Ledät" (lit. "birthday" of Jesus). The "fukkara" boasting, accompanied by chant and little jig-dance while holding a spear or rifle horozontally over the shoulders, is a major kin event, performed by respected and fully-grown "gobäz" at weddings and other formal family events, to recount the past heroic deeds of members of the extended family.

All these roles played by the male adolescent as he approaches and reaches young manhood complete his individual socialization, and reward him with the full attention and acknowledgement given him by his society.

B. The Adolescent Female: Informal Courtship in the Annual Cycle.

882 From puberty until she has settled as a housewife and mother, the female adolescent is addressed as "oonjo" (lit. beautiful), a flattering and honorific address used in everyday language, much as "gobaz" for young men. This address designates her new status, the attention given by all to her blossoming out, her increased status in the family as a young person, and her duties of responsibility rather than mere menial routine labor of the younger "leja-gärad". If the latter term is still used, it is often in opprobium, or in reference if she is not present.

883 The random play activity of younger girls gives play to more structured activities. Girls still work and play in groups but seek to meet groups of young men somewhat older than themselves. Flirting becomes patterned and self-conscious, and behavior in the presence of elders more subdued. Aggressive playfulness, disregarded often before puberty, is severely criticized henceforth.

883 584 Saturday afternoons are preferred times for the gathering of "qonjo" girls, for they then go greater distances into the bush to fetch firewood for Sunday. Usually the girls, age 13 to 16, sing loudly so as to attract the group of young men, age 15 to 20, who thereupon follow them at a certain distance. From time to time, the girls, leading the boys on, stop, and dance around like playful little girls, alternately holding each other by the hand, or spinning like a top. This is a signal to the boys to approach, as if by accident, and couples begin to break off from the group to go for a "shershsher", a promenade, while still gathering deadwood. Since the boys are from nearby hamlets, the youngsters and their parents know each other.

584 796 In the annual cycle of events, three occasions are utilized as landmarks of opportunity in serious flirting, informal courtship, leading to the rapidly ensuing first marriage of the adolescent girl.

The first occurs on "Mikaël", St. Michael's day, on the 12th day of the month of Hedar, which is celebrated as a kind of Thanksgiving day, for it falls just after the major harvest is completed, in late November. For all ages it is a day of picnics, out in the open, under a bright sunny sky in the first part of the dry season, before the green grass is entirely scorched yellow. Togas have been

584 796 freshly washed. The day begins with chanting in the church at dawn, parading of the local "tabot" of Mikaël, accompanied by the "ellel" joyshout of the women. Large shelters ("dass") are set up in the open, about noontime, and feasting and beer drinking continues until the late evening.

This day is awaited and prepared for by the adolescent girls who have just concluded their task of watching the harvest from elevated platforms guarding the maturing crop. On this day they use the platforms as shelters, under which they invite their boy friends. The girls bring live chickens, the boys kill them, pronouncing the religious formula over the chickens. The girls then cook them in earthenware pots with appropriate spices and pepper, thus advertising their abilities in cooking and housewifely arts. The girls wear a fresh hairdo, often pomaded (sometimes for the first time) with "ades" - boiled and perfumed butter; their palms reddened with "ensosela" like a grown woman, and lemons and "ades" odorific branches in the folds of their freshly washed heavy cotton frocks. Prepared in this fashion, they begin to attract the boys even while the elders are still in church during morning services. A group of girls will gather within sight of the churchyard, shouting "ellel" at the proper times, dancing their girlish rounds. As soon as they can, the young men thereupon detach themselves from the churchyard or outer enclosure, surround the girls, and feel out their individual popularity by teasing and tickling their chosen girls with olive branches. If a girl agrees to consider a boy, she gives him a lemon or an "ades" branch, which invites him to a "shershsher" at her platform-shelter.

The second annual occasion presents itself on the biggest out-

584 door event of the year, the church parades on Epiphany ("Temqat"),
796 in connection with the "guks" tournament of the young men. Dressed up in holiday fashion, the "qonjo" girls eagerly follow the fortunes of their preferred boy friends. When no elders are within hearing, some girls direct teasing shouts of encouragement at the young men, even occasionally "ellel" (reserved for church ritual earlier that day). This day is the climax of the informal courtship - serious flirting season, in mid-January.

The third and final occasion occurs on Easter, "Fassika", at the very end of the dry season, just before social activities move indoors. For this holy day, the girls have once more washed their
[302] garments despite the shortage of water, reddened their palms, prepared the hairdo. Everyone is in a happy mood, for the long lenten season is over, and meat is consumed in greater quantities than at any other time. There is an element of urgency in social relations, for this is the second and final marriage season, and soon all social life and kin visiting comes to an end for four long,dreary, rainy, chilly months.

It is on the basis of such informal courtship, climaxed on these three annual occasions but continuing in-between, that a young man requests his father to initiate negotiations for marriage by sending an intermediary to the girl's family. If the match seems suitable to the elders, negotiations begin.

4. Adulthood and Marriage: Dominance of the Kin.

582 A girl's first marriage nearly always takes place before she is fully adult, physically as well as in maturity of character; while the bridegroom, though also young, is physically adult and in

582 his late 'teens. The difference in what is considered "suitable age" is thus five or more years, for the girl may be as young as 13 or 14 in the still prevailing (though officially now outlawed) tradition. The reason is not only the earlier maturing of the girl, but partly the emphasis of protecting her virginity until marriage, partly the attitude that the groom must "tame" his bride - and the younger the better.

597 Consanguinal ties continue stronger, after marriage, than
608 conjugal ties. The "artificial kinship" created at this period of the life cycle is that of the bride's "best man" ("mizē") who is sworn to protect her even against her husband, and who is in a good position to do so as a residential kinsman of the husband. This emphasis on consanguinal ties even after marriage is similar to other parts of the Middle East (footnote 80), and also Africa.

885 A fully adult man ("säw") and woman ("syēt") are honorifically addressed, e.g. in church usage, as "agmä adam" for man (from Geez "Adam"), "agmä hawwa" for woman (from Geez for "Eve"), and the connotation is that they have passed the hot-blooded "gobäz" and "qonjo" stage and have become reasonable, calm, responsible persons who know the etiquette of their culture and have become fully cognizant of proper behavior at all forseeable events in the life cycle.

583 A. Marriage Patterns
585 There are three predominant types of marriage:

Footnote 80: Patai, Raphael: Relationship Patterns among the Arabs. Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. 2, May 1951, pp. 180-5

583 585 1) the eucharistic church marriage, "gurban", engaged in only by a minority, such as some of the nobility, some of the older persons, and all of the priesthood; 2) the kin-negotiated ("civil") marriage, "semanya", sworn before the cheqa shum headman, and most [588] common; 3) the temporary marriage, for which the man engages to pay regular housekeeping wages, "demoz", especially common among those who travel to markets.

585 "Semanya" literally means "80", and is thus also called the "eighty-bond marriage". This refers to the oath which includes the phrase "May the Emperor die", perjury against which used to be penalized by what was then the enormous sum of 80 Maria Theresa Thalers. It is also called "bäserat", by"contract"). This is the most common form of marriage, dominated by a complexity of kinship arrangements (described in detail below), and divorce is possible through similar negotiations and "parcelling out" of both goods and children. There is a minimum of individual emphasis in this marriage negotiation, especially in a first marriage, for the kin of both sides must be satisfied and "honored", though there is some element of original choice through informal courtship. The church takes cognizance by sending a priest to [illegible]s the couple.

"Qurbān" marriage is not urged by the church on laymen, partly because of the sacerdotal character of the church, partly because the eucharistic sacraments are considered so holy that only serious, [586] mature, fully adult persons are advised to engage in it, and divorce cannot be granted. At this sacrament, the couple is rebaptized, and [587] may, on all church holy days, wear the "aklil" crown. Widows and widowers may remarry, but a priest who becomes a widower is expected to assume monkhood. The priest who blesses a "semanya"

585 bride and groom merely expresses the prayerful wish that "God will show the way" to the lay couple toward "qurban", in time. In fact, middle-aged couples who have gone through several divorces and have finally decided definitely to spend the rest of their days together, may take the "aklil" in "qurban". Qurban for lay people, e.g. deacons, is performed usually only 40 days after their "semanya", to make certain that their marriage bond is strong and real and that no rift has arisen (e.g. if the bride had been found not a virgin).

588 487 "Damoz" marriage (lit. wage) is what the term implies. Most commonly the arrangement is from month to month, but may be for longer or shorter periods, such as the duration of a caravan trip, or an extended stay at a major market, where the "damoz" wife offers the best and often the only available hotel and restaurant services. (She is similar to the Biblical lady in the city of Jericho). The term is a contraction of "dammwas" (lit. "blood - and - sweat") [465] compensation. Her wages vary greatly from region to region, and have considerably increased in recent years, for even the new, modern law recognized her claim. In the past she did well if she received ETH$5.-per month in addition to housekeeping expenses, but [675] now some obtain ETH$20.- from traders. The agreement is made orally but before witnesses, so that she can go to court if the man defaults on his payments. If they separate at the expiration of the contract, she has no right to half his property as does the semanya [428] wife, but if there are children conceived during her contract, the children can make a claim for part of the father's inheritance should he die.

588 The "damoz" temporary wife is usually recruited from a lower class than that of the man, of landless family. But often she is merely a divorcee, who "lives alone" in a street inhabited by women of similar status in the town, who are in-between marriages, and make a living serving transients with bed and board, giving them the comforts of home, cooking, baking, cleaning. They are not considered good-time prostitutes of the mead-houses ("tej-byet"), and are therefore much more respected. [548]

588 487 178 Respectably-married ("semanya") men would, in the past, take on a "damoz" wife to accompany them on caravan trips, to spare the "semanya" wife the discomforts and perils of the journey. Now that trucks travel comparatively fast from province to province, the travelling "damoz" wife has become rare, but the residential "damoz" wife continues in the towns much as before, and "semanya" wives are therefore not as tolerant of them as they once were when they appreciated their husbands' efforts to spare them discomfort. For, they reasoned, "who else will cook for him, how will he eat?".

588 848 The "damoz" wife's children are fully legitimate. She is far higher in status than the simple concubine ("<u>yechen garad</u>"), lit. the servant-maid of the thigh), who was and is often a permanent member of the household, often of doubtful or half-Shanqalla ancestry, who has no damoz rights, and whose children have no rights of recognition beyond what the master cares to give them. (The concubine is also called "tara" or "tarata" in some districts).

588 171 The respectability or semi-respectability of the "damoz" wife compares to the Persian "ssighe", and the Arab Muslim temporary wife permitted in the Quran (IV:28 - "And in so far as you have derived pleasure from these women for a stipulated time, give them their

588 rewards as agreed upon") practiced by the Shi'ites in particular.
171 (footnote 81). The Abyssinian Coptic "Fetha Nägäst" forbids concubinage; but the custom has long been widespread. "Damoz" is even recognized in the modern law of Emperor Haile Selassie.

551 Individual arrangements are freest in "damoz", also in "qurban"
585 though sometimes less so, and least in "semanya". But in all three forms of marriage, the wife retains her maiden name and does not assume that of her husband. Even Empress Menen continues her old name. Sometimes the husband's mother may try to symbolize her authority - or even affection - by giving a new name to her new daughter-in-law living in her hamlet, but the bride's kinfolk and
[602] peers will continue to use her old name. This is another, unconscious, emphasis of kinship relations over affinal ones.

588 The "damoz" is not considered contradictory to monogamy, which may explain her respectability despite prohibition of concubinage in the "Fetha Nägäst" code. Religious persons will explain the paradox away by quoting from Genesis "be fruitful and multiply".

583 In rural districts there is sometimes found a 4th form of
184 marriage, which indeed is re-enacted in some wedding ceremonies of "semanya". This form is bride capture, especially found among families too poor to defray the expenses of a wedding and cows that must be given the "semanya" couple. To cover up the shame and the poverty, the bride is "captured" and "pursued", by pre-arranged collusion. While she ostensibly goes, alone, to fetch water or gather deadwood, the groom's "mize" appear suddenly, preferably on horseback, and carry her off into the bush, while she, though ex-

Footnote 81: Donaldson, D.M.: Temporary Marriage in Iran. Moslem World, 1936, pp. 358-364. Smith, W. Robertson: Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia, 1885.

583 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official.
184 After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the cheqa shum present.

[589] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these
656 traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in
[584] the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

178 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among
871 young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage
581 with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

178 581 871 husbands "Who are you to give me orders - I can read as well as you". Therefore such girls are avoided as brides.

But fully educated young men, in Addis Ababa, especially those who have returned from abroad with graduate degrees, complain that there are not enough educated girls for them to marry. There is now a girl's high school in Addis Ababa, but the supply of educated girls is still far below the demand by educated men who do not wish their wives to sit shy and wordless in modern-urban, international social gatherings.

Another modern difficulty arises in cases where the modern-educated young man is the son of an illiterate peasant, or a "rustic" one, and is ashamed to ask his father and similar kinfolk to negotiate the marriage. For even in the city the traditional "semanya" is the basic and most common form of marriage.

584 a) "Semanya" Marriage Negotiations.

Sometimes the young man decides on a girl and asks his father to begin negotiations. Or the parents, feeling that the time has come, begin to send out feelers. In either case, it is the young man's father who initiates formal negotiations with the father and kinfolk of the bride; though not, at first, directly.

The father of the young man may gather his "enjärä"-friends, "who dine at each other's table", or kinsmen, or both, and appoint a "näggär abbat" (lit. father of the affair) as intermediary.

Before matters go further, the kin group tries to find out and examine three factors of the prospective match:

1) Health of the family, such as absence of leprosy, venereal disease and other diseases belived to be inherited; 2) Land property -

584 preferably "rest" freehold, size of kin group and their relations and reputation, and cattle that might be asked for to match the contributions of the groom's kin; 3) "attentam" (lit. of good bones) - the question whether the kin are of "good stock", and not in part descended from non-Amhara, especially not from slave stock such as Shanqalla or Barya.

Once this is ascertained to satisfaction, the "naggar abbat" embarks on a series of visits to the house of the bride's father, speaking with great politeness, some flattery, putting him in a good mood, speaking in general terms, making philosophic observations, quoting appropriate proverbs in the conversation.

After this visit has been repeated, without any specific request, the host begins to realize that a very serious matter is at hand. He usually guesses what it is, but waits until the visiter, who is usually accompanied by one or two kinsmen or close friends, says: "We came to ask a serious matter; if you permit us, we shall speak of it". Permission granted, the "naggar abbat" continues: "We came to seek your kinship, your daughter and our son, so-and-so". Since it is impolite to refuse outright, and, on the other hand, not "proper" to give one's child away too readily, the host replies: "Let me consult with my kinsmen". Later, he can refuse or procrastinate by saying: "She is yet too young". When they come again the next year, he can say: "Someone else has preceded you, and I have accepted the initial gift". The latter is a small token of little value, serving mainly to indicate symbolically that the girl is spoken for.

If the kinsmen on both sides agree to the match, the "naggar abbat" and companions, on succeeding visits, begin negotiations

584 about the economic arrangements to which both sides contribute equally, for "honor"; for setting up the couple on a sound economic basis; and to assure property to the bride in case of divorce or widowhood. "Semanya" marriage among Amhara usually begins on an economic basis of half-and-half ("bal ekkul") contributions from both kin groups. The kinsmen of the bride would be ashamed to accept more of dowry (macha) for her than they are able to contribute, lest she be treated disrespectfully by the groom's kinfolk later on who might say: "She was bought like a "damoz", whenever there is a wu[illegible]. For there is no lobola custom in the one-sided African way. Conversely, a man who marries for cows is mocked:

[539] "Seeing her cattle, he married a bad one;
when the cattle died,
his trouble was double".

583 Cows are usually the major item of discussion of property changing hands at marriage. Negotiations finally fix the number of cows each will contribute ("kābetesh bākābtē") (lit. "your property is mine"), usually payable gradually as down payment and in installments, as a further guarantee that the marriage is working out and that there are no complaints (e.g. that the bride actually proved to be a virgin as promised).

Even a poor peasant will try to beg and borrow among his kin, lest he be shamed, so that he can match the dowry of the in-laws with 3 to 5 cows. A rich farmer may give as many as 30 cows to his child, thus requiring the in-laws to match this. A stubborn father can use this means to discourage a match that his youngster has set his heart on; knowing full well that the in-laws, if not rich

583 enough to match him, will be ashamed and cancel the match at this point to save face, while no one can really blame the "generous" father. As a result, most weddings take place on the same economic level.

A really kind father can, however, reduce the number of cows he officially promises, to enable the poorer in-laws to match it. A desparate youngster running up against a stubborn father sometimes appeals to the kinfolk of his or her mother for cows, but this is usually more difficult to obtain, for cows contributed by the patrilineal-patrilocal kin remain in the same hamlet while matrilineally contributed cows are taken out of the hamlet.

Other gifts set down in the dowry, before witnesses or in writing, include new shammas (togas), new jodphurs("surri"), perhaps some donkeys, and a mule. In the case of noblemen, gifts include embroidered shirts, silver crosses for the bride's necklace, gold and silver rings, silver hairpins, a "burnos" (hooded, black woolen coat), a kaba (mantle of woolen or imported chintz cloth), an imported, foldable umbrella. In the past, gifts to the groom included a fine rhinoceros shield with gold-plated ornaments, spears, a rifle, oxen, a good horse, slaves (before abolition), mules, embroidered garments, embroidered saddle, etc. Since then, some of these tradional gifts have been replaced by city and imported items, bought in the Armenian and Greek shops of Addis Ababa, but provincial Amhara are resisting some of these intrusions, (pushed by traders), saying that it should not appear that the bride is bought.

584 While kinship prestige and economic arrangements are considered of primary importance in the "semanya" marriage, once these nego-

584 tiations are concluded, preparations are made to ensure the spiritual and emotional well-being of the couple. A bridegroom is warned to study the character of his prospective mother-in-law, for it is believed that her daughter will take after her:

"Observe her mother,

before you let the daughter enter (the house)."

584 But the importance of the sworn best men, the "mizē", in protecting
608 the bride after the marriage, is considered even more important, due to the patrilocal residence. They are called the protectors of her "teeth and arms", ready to rush to her aid even against the husband when she shouts for help. On the other hand, to balance the situation, they are chosen from among the groom's closest relatives, e.g. first cousins (patrilineal), so that they won't be likely to seduce the girl. The two "mize" have to take the vow of excommunication before the "mönfäs gubaē" (lit. soul counsel) priest, in front of the parents of the girl and the groom, that they will regard her as a sister, that they will treat her as their own sisters, that they will come night or day when she calls. This formal, literal bond of artificial kinship is strong, and the bride affectionately addresses the "mize" as "gashey" (lit. my shield, i.e. by protector) much as she would an uncle or other grown kinsman. The proverb says:

[539]

"For confession - go to the priest,

for (selfless) love - go to the mize".

These "mize" become protectors not only of the bride, but, in consequence, of the marriage of the couple. For, if the groom needs a "wās", a personal guarantor-bondsman for employment or if in legal trouble, the mize can hardly refuse this service as they are now doubly bound. The mize pattern thus increases security and stability

584
608 for all concerned, and is reinforced by the public social sanction given the "swearing - in".

b) "Semanya" Wedding Procedure

585 The wedding consists largely of a formal recapitulation of all the negotiations in public, by the two kingroups involved, sometimes at considerable length, confirmed in a monosyllabic expression from bride and groom. The other major activities are feasting in both hamlets involved, a re-enactment of bride capture at nightfall, and the signs of virginity signifying that the "fortress is just taken".

The preferred day for weddings is Sunday, so that the deflowering, taking place after nightfall which is considered part of Monday, will not take place on the Lord's day. (footnote 82). For the same reason, weddings do not take place on Saturday; nor in lent, a period of mourning; nor on Wednesday or Friday fast days.

Preparations for feasting and gathering are made at both hamlets involved. At both places a "dass" shelter is erected on a square staked out with tall saplings, covered with leafy branches against the sun, with fragrant grasses on the ground. Relatives are invited, but strangers are kept away for fear of the evil eye.

The wedding guests among peasants begin to arrive about noon, Sunday, and are received, at the hamlet of the groom, under the men's "dass". The women occupy a neighboring "dass", busily cooking the meat sauce "wot". The groom remains inside a hut and does not appear until shortly before he has to leave for the hamlet of the

Footnote 82: Sunday is also wedding day of Christians of Lebanon. See - Regnali, Michel: La Famille Catholique au Liban. RETP, 6, pp. 291-308, Paris, 1925.

585 bride. Each guest brings a number of "enjärä" breads, perhaps a dozen, and they leave cash contributions with the host, at least ETH$1-3. The afternoon is largely spent consuming barley-beer ("talla") of which the women have previously brewed huge jarsful. Particularly the "mizē" and the young men who will soon race across the countryside to fetch the bride, drink their fill to "be strong" and light and gay on their feet later on. The groom has been fed on meat and butter, to be strong; while the bride fasts to be "weak". The more old-fashioned elders, especially those not kinsmen, sit in a corner, and eat and drink there, draped off by spread-out tofas.

585 864 Sex information for the groom is one of the duties of the "mizē", who are usually older than he and married, but not of his parental generation, (particularly the older chief mize of the two, the "ser mizē", though sometimes the second "mize", called "golgel mizē"). If necessary, they are even expected to assist in the deflowering of a recalcitrant bride who suffers last-minute fright, by holding her down so that the groom can consumate the marriage that night. The bride is given no such outright information, and can only guess what will happen to her from whisperings of other girls and from what she has observed in the hut at night of intimacies of the parents on the raised "alga" bed. She may well be confused and frightened, but this is regarded as praiseworthy, as virtuous. Her nails are trimmed down to the skin just before the wedding, so that she cannot scratch, then placed in hot butter to heal and be smooth.

585 About three hours before nightfall, about 4PM (unless the bride's hamlet is too far away, in which case earlier), the groom appears before the "dass" of his patrilineal kin, dressed in a new, well-

585 made, blue-bordered "kuta" (double toga). His hair has been trimmed short, so that he will not appear like a rustic woodsman. His mize flank him, and henceforth never part from his side during the wedding proceedings. All three approach the groom's father, bow from the hip in greeting. A patrilineal elder addresses the groom in serious tones, reminding him that his obligations to his father continue although he will now be founding a house of his own. Then the father addresses his blessing to him, more briefly. In reply, the son makes the motion of kissing the father's feet, which the latter deftly prevents by tucking him under the chin so that the kiss lands on the knee. He also kisses the knee of the [826] elder (the knee is regarded as the seat of strength). Then the groom and mize sit down about a minute, to symbolize having taken part in the initial festivities.

492 Meanwhile the escort saddle the biggest mule, preferable a 585 strong, huge, "Senaar" mule. The groom bids farewell to the father and elder kinsmen, most of whom remain behind, though at least one elder kinsman rides along to act as spokesman, usually the "näggär abbat" who can best recapitulate the negotiations. The young "gobäz" escort run along on foot, brandishing their long sticks (formerly spears), shouting war shouts. A Senaar mule can go at a fast trot, so that the men on foot must keep on a run. The elder kinsman rides a smaller, Ethiopian mule.

585 Like a fast-moving army on the attack, the group crosses fields, trails, hills, valleys, finally stops in the valley below the hill on which the bride's hamlet is located. Here they catch their breath, shake off the dust, arrange their togas in "outgoing" fashion, go behind a bush to satisfy the call of nature after so much beer-

585 drinking. The "naggar abbat" now ascends the hill alone, to announce the peaceful intent of the arrived party. The bride's kin take formal cognizance of the arrival, but act as they did not know what the matter is all about. This initiates the formal recapitulation of the main points of the negotiation.

Permission is given for the party to climb up, and they stop before the "dass" shelter of the bride's family where a similar gathering of elders, kinfolk, males, females, are seated and drinking beer, in their separate groups. The groom is hidden by the mise who step in front of him within the groom's crowd standing in front of the shelter. The bride is still hidden in her parental tent.

In the presence of the cheqa shum, sometimes also the confessor-priest, the seated elder of the bride's asks: "Why have you come, my friends?". The groom's elder kinsman replies: "To ask for your girl so-and-so, to marry a son of our clan".

Question: "Who will the groom be?"

Reply: "So-and-so, son of so-and-so".

Question: "What have you in your hands?"

The reply enumerates the conomic agreements of the previous negotiation, and often a dabtara writes it all down. Finally, the bride's elder pronounces "Eshshi" (O.K.), and invites the groom's party in, without however seating them or offering drink. For first the young couple has to ratify the agreement. The groom is now revealed and takes the solemn oath, "May the Emperor die", such-and-such a girl is henceforth my wife". This is the "Semanya" oath. The groom's elder kinsman affirms: "Hayle Selassie yemut". The bride's kinsmen affirm: "Hayle Selassye yemut".

By this time night has fallen, little lamps are lit, and the

585 heavily veiled bride, unable to see through the heavy toga over her head and figure, is led to the center of the "dass" before the elders, to shouts of "ellel" by the women. For in rural areas it is still considered shameful to take the bride away in daylight. Her kinfolk say to her: "Say that so-and-so is your husband". She is expected to whisper it shyly, so that her words are repeated by witnesses that she, too, has taken the "Semanya" oath. This is greeted by "ellel" joyshout of the women.

Next, the "mizē" are sworn in. The bride's father or elder say to the bridegroom: "Call for us two guarantors for her eyes, head and teeth". Whereupon the "mizē" step forward and take the oath.

Now the groom's party is invited to sit down, room is made for them, and beer and meat stew are passed to them.

The formal boasting, the "fukkara" dance and chant, is begun by the bride's kinsmen, then quickly taken up by the groom's kinsman. Each side recites feats of bravery, renown, warriors, holy priests, "great men" in the ancestry and kin of the side to which it belongs. Spears or firearms are brandished, held behind the neck, while epic battles are recited in poetic form and exaggeration. Each tries to surpass the other in this friendly contest, (footnote 83), but mock each other's deficiencies in composition of verses or recitation.

The groom affirms by oath that he will "do good and not evil" to his bride, that they will live together: "I, by my shield, she

[17] Footnote 83: Similar boasting contests are common in the Middle East.

585 by her spindle" ("bägashay bäenzert"), with their pooled property and strength. In front of the confessor-priest, the groom extinguishes a light, saying: "May God extinguish me like this flame, if I break my oath to her". He gives the mize, if he can afford it, a neck-cord with a silver cross or ring on it, which the latter places around the bride's neck. For the groom does not touch the bride at her parental shelter.

Permission is finally given by the bride's elders to leave, and her spokesman proclaims: "Our daughter we herewith give to your son. Haile Selassye yemut".

The Senaar mule is quickly saddled, and after the groom has mounted, the heavily veiled bride is lifted behind him by the mize, so that she clasps the groom's waist. She is wearing jodphurs as noblewomen do when riding. Waving sticks and shouting war cries, the escort runs before and on both sides of the couple, lighting the way with resinous torches.

Arrived at the "dass" of the groom, the bride sits with him in a corner, flanked by the everpresent "mizä", while loud boasting, "hotu" jumping, "fukkara" boasting, beer-drinking and feasting continue until about 3A.M. About an hour before that, the section in which the bride and groom are sitting is curtained off by means of togas, so that they can sleep together in privacy. Gradually the other celebrants drop off to sleep, heavy with beer, around the fire, all over the "dass", like a guard of honor for the bridal couple. Some of the young men, "gobaz" amuse themselves with
585 831 teasing games, such as "mock-court" in which the loser is fined beer or honey or a goat (footnote 84); or with sexual buffoonery

Footnote 84: In Harar, southwest Ethiopia, a mock-lawsuit is held in which the loser must provide the drinks for a week after the wedding. See- Leslau: A Wedding Lawsuit in Harar. (Bibó)

585 [831] such as imitating the coitus of a donkey by holding a stick between the legs like a donkey's penis, and two other sticks held vertically to symbolize the vulva, teasing the bridegroom with enacted awkwardness until the actors find the "entrance". But finally the young men follow their elders in deep sleep.

The bride is expected to be, in fact contracted for, a virgin, "dengel". If she is not, there are several possibilities. The groom may lover her so much, or may be so ashamed, that he will keep silent. If he complains, the marriage can be forthwith annulled, in front of witnesses. In this case the shame is great for the bride, and she might be severely beaten. The "signs of virginity" are called "kebber" (lit. honor). The groom or the mize have the right to examine the clothing for blood, and the mize sometimes wave the trophy with glad shouting "The fortress is broken", even take the trophy with them 3 days later on their visit to the bride's family to bring the glad tidings, which honor the bride's kin, and collect their reward.

Since the bride is usually very young at her first marriage, she often suffers considerable pain. Usually she sits up quietly the next morning, in the corner of the "dass", with a serious face, while husband appears gay as the "victor". She is usually ashamed to cry out at night, among these strangers. When the sun rises, the groom and his friends walk some distance away to fulfill calls of nature, and discuss the "victory". When they return, the bride goes with some of the girls, but quietly and without boasting.

The following two or three nights, the bride and groom will have more privacy in a newly-built hut of their own, the "chagola" of "tusherra" (honeymoon hut), because, as the saying goes, "the

585 bride will cry out for many nights because of the pain". But is is also believed that this painful initiation into marriage bodes well for marital happiness, for, if later the husband neglects or mistreats her, she will remind him of his victory: "Remember you were my first, you were the one who hurt [illegible]".

184 585 In towns, several different customs prevail, and modern change, partly in imitation of nobility, partly in imitation of the Italians during their brief occupation, has seeped in, through eager, though partial, imitation.

In town the wedding ("serg") is more elaborate. Instead of the "dass" shelter, a large canvas tent is borrowed. Men and women still occupy separate tents. But the wedding takes place in daylight, in mid-afternoon, after which the unveiled bride, seated next to the groom, is driven in a rented automobile through the town, followed by other celebrants in varying conveyances or on foot. Before that, there is less boasting by kinsmen warriors and more by hired "azmari" minstrels, male or female, who entertain the wedding guests. If male they often accompany their impromptu verses with the single-string "masenqo" violin; if female, with the native banjo, the "qrar". They permit themselves such liberties as nudging the guests, singing flirtatiously, even aggressively at them, singing praises to rich individuals, the bride and groom, and kinsmen, to extort cash gifts from them.

There are tables and benches inside the tent at which guests are seated by the clever ushers, the hired "assafari" (lit. chamberlain), according to social status and official position in town. The ones of high status, including Europeans, are seated at the host's table (usually the groom's), and are served honey-mead ("tej")

184 instead of barley-beer, and the best of available meat dishes.
585 In return, the wealthier guests are expected to leave larger cash gifts as they leave. It is in this tent that the "semanya" marriage is performed, and the bridal couple blessed by the "mänfäs gubaé" priest, who will later watch over their marriage. His blessing is the same as that in the rural hamlet:

[539]

> "May God make you capable of begetting, of conception, for office-holding, for honor, for the communion and the flesh of the Lord. May God guide you to truth and make you kin with Abraham and Sarah".

Though the bride in town may be called out from the women's tent, and thus be the only female eating with the men, seated next to the groom, they still act shy with each other in public. Men like to believe that, though there are no tears in public, brides weep silently, out of fear; - the "vanquished sex". But the groom does not yet patronize her in public with the "gursha", hand to mouth feeding, as he will starting some weeks after.

c) Post-Wedding Adjustments and Kin Relations.

585 After the traditional rural wedding, the "dass" remains standing for a week, in both the groom's and the bride's hamlets, to shelter visitors. After two full days of marriage have passed, the mize go to the bride's hamlet to report on her well-being, adjustment and good treatment. They are feted and sleep in the "dass". The next day they return, carrying an invitation to the bridal couple and a specified number of companions (which is usually exceeded!) to come to the bride's hamlet for a 3-day visit, the "mäla".

585 [574] Three-day visiting is the pattern in kin visiting, for it usually takes one day for initial greetings and exchange of news, slaughtering and preparation of a sheep; a second day for feasting and talks with the neighbors; a third day for preparation of leave-taking.

After one week, the "dass" are torn down. A "great man" who is father of the bride, will usually send his daughter several donkeyloads of household staples, including lentils ("shure"), peas cooked with salt, pepper, and spices, so that she will be honored and well treated by the women under whose jurisdiction she has come. Then, after a month, he will send a messenger to ask how she is habituated to the new life. If the reply is favorable, another load of grain, butter, spices, flaxseed oil are sent.

512 The adjustment of the bride may not be easy. The night she leaves her parental roof, she takes with her, besides her skin-mat, a little basket of dyed reeds, containing her personal little distaff, spindle, and glass necklace used in scouring pottery. After a week or a few weeks of honeymoon, she is expected to participate in the women's household tasks: fetching water and fuel, baking "enjara" daily for her husband, cooking "wot", to her husband's tastes, crushing barley, grinding "tyeff", brewing beer. If she complains too soon, the womenfolk will quote the proverb:

[539]

> "Hardly arrived have you, young bride,
> (but) already you crunch shembera (peas)"
> (meaning: lazily pick at peas, instead of
> doing the regular, harder work).

606 [591] The couple is expected to remain in patrilocal residence at least a year, so that the bride can be taught, by her mother-in-law, how

606 to be a "good wife", to do "everything right", to learn what her husband likes. If she does not obey her mother-in-law, she is criticized as "rude", and the women say that the groom will "divorce her soon".

423 596 After the marriage, and especially after she bears children, a wife is regarded as a charter member of her husband's "byet" (lit. house), his family of procreation, continuing his patrilineal kinship unit, regardless of whether they move to residence elsewhere or not. Nevertheless, it is the "byet" that is the landholding unit among most "rest"-owning Amhara, and each biological unit within it receives an allocation of land for usufruct; the limit of one able-bodied plowman is regarded as 5-10 "qada". Thus, the biological family of procreation does not own land, nor does it control it, until, with the death of elders and advancing age, it becomes the "family of orientation" to which a succeeding generation must give obedience.

596 422 Meanwhile, however, the biological family unit does own the cattle and other mobile goods with which they started their married life, and the increase therefrom. This gives them some partial economic independence.

[731] 423 166 361 When, due to war, epidemics (e.g. malaria), or famine (erosion), a "byet" decides to abandon, for the time being, the ancestral lands, and migrates to another district, it usually huddles together in one or a minimum of residential hamlets, sometimes for several generations, until times are better. Then it buds off so rapidly that soon only a few huts remain on the location of the original hamlet of refuge. Thereupon kinsmen may claim "betäna" rights of usufruct from more distant kinfolk who had remained be-

423 hind on the ancestral lands.

166 This succession of events has taken place so often in Amhara
361 history, that very few old settlements have remained on the same
[591] spot for even a century. As a result, many regional varieties of "patrilocal residence" have developped, and even "matrilocal residence" is not excluded, though most bridegrooms would shun such a fate. Also, the land tenure of the Amhara has become complex and replete with litigation, because of the amorphous definition of "byet", which sometimes emphasizes the consanguineal aspect, sometimes the residential, of kinship after marriage.

B. Problems of the Married Couple and Divorce.

586 When a couple has remained married for a number of years, people say they are "rägga" (lit. coagulated), stuck on each other. For divorce of a first marriage is common as the partners mature.

If her husband neglects her, wanders off, is a drunkard, or beats her too often, a woman may decide to initiate divorce proceedings. A man may do so if she is disobedient, e.g. wanders off to town without his permission.

587 If a man takes a "damoz" wife in addition to his "semanya" wife, the latter has no recourse in court. But if he takes another "semanya" wife, she can have him arrested, if she can locate him, for breaking his oath. She then angrily accuses him of doing a stupid thing, "you married one ox hump (shanna) above the other". He may be fined, but his first marriage may still remain valid. If a "semanya" wife hears that her husband has a previous wife, she often laughs, flattered, mocking the other woman by saying: "I married on top of her and not below" - for evidently, the man,

587 knowing both, has preferred her!

[588] A deserted wife, angry that her husband has found another, will often take a lover to buy her "a sheep for Epiphany", butter for her hair, and cotton for her distaff.

578 The following relationships are called "gobban", rivals, to
587 each other:

"Semanya" versus "damoz" wife;

Man A, whose divorced wife lives with man B. The men are "gobban".

Woman X, whose divorced husband lives with, or married, woman Y.

"Semanya" and "damoz" wives, versus new concubine, "gärad", fearing permanency.

One "gärad" against another, (also called "wushemma").

But only "semanya" wives are regarded as legal rivals.

842 When a woman is barren, she may follow the biblical example
586 and ask her husband to take a servant girl, "gärad" to have children with her. A "semanya" wife may be divorced on grounds of barrenness, but "with honor", taking half of their communal property with her. Amhara peasants believe that women become barren in the towns be-
[588] cause of "loose living". A woman divorced on grounds of barrenness will often have sexual intercourse with many men, hoping that she will conceive and thus have the blame of barrenness taken from her.

848 A bastard, "diogla" has full inheritance rights if his father acknowledges him. Bastards are believed to be of violent tempers, like "Muhammad Gran" (the Galla Muslim chief who devastated much of Ethiopia in the 16th century, reputedly a bastard).

586 When suing for divorce, either partner appeals to the "manfas muhär" (colloquially "mädäs amway"), the "soul-counselor" priest, who has jurisdiction even over "semanya" marriages. Only he can

586 issue the traditional divorce, "mäftat" (lit. freeing, i.e. to marry another) dissolving "semanya" marriages. But before doing so he tries to reconcile the couple, quoting proverbs, calling on kin elders, postponing the case time and again to let them "cool off". One mate can summon the other before him by appealing to the "manfas gubae" to issue a summons, and if the mate refuses to come, police can be sent to bring him by force.

A desperate wife can bring pressure on the "mänfäs gubäe" by appealing to him as a priest, tearing off her "matab" neckcord signifying Coptic faith, and threatening to turn Muslim. This is interpreted to signify that she is "nearly out of her mind with suffering".

If the divorce is granted, each mate must pay a fine of ETH$5.-, for technically they have "torn the marriage oath". The divorce is witnessed by the mizö, the kin of each mate, and the cheqa shum. Half the husband's property goes to her, particularly of their communal property and its increase, except items called "gil" which they had agreed in writing not to divide and retain as individual property. Unweaned babies remain with the mother, also, usually, children below the "age of reason" (ages 7 to 10). The husband will often take older children, especially sons. If he permanently has injured his wife's eye, or hand, he must pay her damages, even if there is no divorce. The formula of divorce, pronounced by each mate, is "May the Emperor die, I have divorced you".

586 548 In rural areas and in the past, a woman almost always returned to her kinfolk. But since the growth of towns, many divorced women have been drawn to the easier livelihood of the "street of single girls" in towns, where they live in shacks, and serve as short-term

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

586 "damoz" wives and innkeepers, offering bed, board and home comforts
548 to traders and transients. By treating some customers well, they hope to find another husband. When no clients are available, they still earn some income by brewing beer and selling it. They wash themselves and their clothing far more often than peasant women, and pay servants to do the heavy labor and cleaning for them. They leave their children with their kinfolk, sometimes sending money. If she were to remain with her kinfolk herself, family pressure would be great for her to remarry quickly, very likely a more undesirable husband than the first.

587 If and when she does remarry, she usually has few of the social safeguards of her first, virgin marriage. There are no "mizē" to protect her, the "mänfäs gubaē" will not be as sympathetic in marital disputes, and the new husband may take her far away from her kinfolk. But by this time she has matured, at least in experience, and is far more capable of protecting her own interests, economically as well as emotionally, than in her first marriage.

5. The Age of Dominance: The Elder:

888 The term "shemagelyē" signifies an elder; serious, wise, past the prime of physical strength but more energetic and persistent in determining and commanding human relations, particularly within the residential kin group, than ever before. He is treated with great respect.

887 He is one of the dominant elders who rule the kin group, parcel out land for usufruct to biological family units, make decisions in marriage negotiations and other personal affairs involving the family. In town, they act as judges on higher levels. Among the

887 nobility they have moved as high in position as their inherited potential allows.

886 In appearance he usually grows a chin beard, which comes late, usually not before the age of thirty, and is greying when a man becomes a "shemagalyē" at about 40. At that time he is usually a grandfather.

As ruler at the apex of his own social pyramid, he is limited only by direct physical strength, in which no one expects him to excel. But if a former warrior, he may be vain and not admit his fading physical strength, and try to show that he can still hold up against young men in warlike games. This is the only time when an elder is occasionally mocked, as "wäbärra" (lit. he struts).

888 Dependency in old age is no problem among rural kin groups living on settled land, whether their own or rented. Even in senility, the elder is respected and cared for; even when, as he himself admits, he is "good only for guarding chickens" (tertes alä" - became senile).

888 792 However, dependency of an old woman is a more difficult problem, though she, too, is generally cared for. But since she has no functions of leadership, her status lacks the positive, if she becomes a widow, and is too weak to perform the household labors [145] of women. Also, woman fade physically more rapidly than men. As a result, the "mäbälät" or "baltēt", a greying woman past menopause, or widow of serious mind and spirit, often takes vows as a nun, wears the "qob" of a nun though continuing in her old residence, and spends much time in the churchyard, working in the "betelehem" hut where beer and bread for church use are prepared. Nuns are always old women, partly because it is not considered proper for a

888 young, "not-yet-serious" young woman, partly because there is no
792 career involved, as there is in case of young men who become monks. Though there are usually fewer widows then widowers (due to the mortality in connection with childbirth), the lot of a widow is not a happy one. The proverb says:

[539] "Now that my fortune (husband) has died,
what will my mother-in-law give me?"

888 Without the kin group, an aging man, especially if sick, blind
735 or crippled, has little protection. The church is not eager to have
[792] him as a monk, for it can recruit younger men for its service, as a career, and an old man is much less useful in the churchyard than an old woman. He may, especially if landless, or in town, be reduced to beggary. There he sits at the approaches to the churches, repeating his demanding, ceaseless litany: "Selä Medhane Aläm, selä Maryam, selä Giyorgis" (For sake of the Savior, of Mary, of St. George), stretching out an open hand. Sometimes he may send out a child to beg for him, either because he is too bashful, or is using it as a technique. Little boys will thus attach themselves to a potential donor, repeating "babba, babba" (babytalk for "daddy").
608] They have already learned the concept of artificial kinship to establish human relationships.

6. The End of Life: Eulogy; Memorial Services and Feasts.

763 When an elder is close to death, other elders from among his nearest kin come with his confessor, and say to him: "Confess yourself". When he has done so, they ask him for his last will: "What do you give to your children, and for your soul (i.e. to the church, through the confessor, to the poor)". While fields and cattle are given to the descendants, (the former only in patrilineal descent), personal belongings such as oxhide mats, shamma

763 (togas), horncups, etc, usually are given to the confessor, also some cash. In return, the confessor gives last rites, absolving the dying from sin, and, after death, assigns a burial place in
764 the churchyard if the deceased was a member of the parish. A circumference of rocks is set around the grave, but no permanent gravestones, so that after a few years the growth of bush and the rains have obscured the spot. Exceptions are only in case of noblemen, "telleqsäw", (great men) where markings are remembered long enough to permit digging up the bones if they wanted them sent to some holy monastery, such as Dabra Libanos. Non-members of the parish, especially if poor, are buried in the bush some distance from the residential area.

[763] The confessor stays with the dying, praying until the last moment. When death sets in, the eyes and lips are closed, the corpse is washed, the big toes and thumbs are tied, the arms folded in a cross, so that the hands cover the sexual parts. The body is wrapped in a shamma, and tied in a mat of palm branches or broad reeds, (called "säläyän"); tied on top of the head, across area of the eyes, neck, biceps, forearm, waist, thigh, below knee, and over the heel. The corpse is placed on the bed ("alga", carried to church, entering at the north gate as "salute" to the church, the mass is chanted, incense is burned in raising clouds, then the corpse is buried in a comparatively shallow grave which is covered with earth and then rocks. It is usually not marked with a name.

765 The moment death has set in, women run screaming out of the hut to announce their grief, wailing loudly and incessantly. In some areas they still scratch and cut themselves till blood flows, though the emperor's urging of restraint is reducing this. The

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765 hands are thrown into the air in a gesture of loss and abandonment in grief, and the mourners leap into the air, dancing about in semi-formal style, as if suffering such intense inner pain that they cannot stand in one place. Some roll on the ground, some hit themselves with rocks.

Men wail and dance in somewhat more restrained fashion, which soon turns into a more formal eulogy. Whenever another kinsman or neighbor arrives on the scene, both men and women fall on each other's necks (mostly of the same sex), in a gesture of mutual condolence. Both men and women break into semi-chanted eulogies, praising the goodness of the departed, recalling past bereavements, even the deaths of saints and great warriors not related to them.

This more formal funeral chant, impromptu though it is, is called "ergedo". It consists of plaintive chants in the mode called "märäged zema", is accompanied by slow rythmic dance movements in which the knees are raised high, by refrains, rythmic handclapping, and, in case of a "great man", even by drums. The funeral chant is repeated when the corpse is carried in farewell procession around the church, and for many days thereafter as kinsmen arrive from afar for condolence.

Professional weepers, "algash", who are always female, are employed only by families of "telleq säw" (great men). They are adept at impromptu composition of poetry, as well as equipped with powerful and trained lungs.

Endowments and bequests to the church, by noblemen, are handled by the "gäs gobäz" of the nearest church, but if no large, well-organized church is near, the governor of the province may appoint a local "cheqa shum", or a higher state officer, to handle the bequest.

000 bequest.

765 Mourning is well organized and elaborate. Women shave their heads in many regions. Their shammas are dyed black, or at least dirtied, or, in towns, worn upside down with black borders. Even women calling on a mourner disarray their togas in sympathy before entering. Since it is considered shameful to mourn alone, kinfolk come from afar, and they as well as neighbors, bring enjara, barley beer, meat stew, coffee, even cash to contribute to the fee of the priests and expenses of "täzkar" (memorial services and feasts). Thus the mourning turns into a feast, which in turn attracts large numbers of people, including non-relatives, free-loaders and multitudes of beggars.

The biggest formal "täzkar" is held on the 40th day after death, when the soul is believed to have its earliest opportunity to be freed from purgatory. Masses are chanted in the church, and priests and chanters are rewarded with money, barley-beer, and a place of honor at the big feast. The rectangular shelter, "dass" (used in weddings), is erected once again, of young treetrunks, covered with the branches, and odoriferous grasses are spread on the ground. Women sit in their own groups; and the odors of their spiced pepper stewpots, and the large quantities of barley beer consumed, soon give both men and women, kinfolk and visitors, an atmosphere of a feast rather than that of mourning.

At the "tazkar" for a deceased noblewoman held on the meadows of the monastery of Dabra Libanos, more than 5,000 peasants were feasted. Even peasants in modest circumstances fete more than 100 persons, slaughter about 5 sheep and two old oxen, contribute dozens of huge jarsful of barley-beer, hundreds of enjara breads. As a

765 result, the "tazkar" is the greatest single economic consumption in the life cycle, and not infrequently brings economic ruin, so that measures to restrain it have often been urged. But since everyone wants to imitate the "great man" (noble) and no one wants to appear to mourn too lightly, tazkars continue elaborate. They are also major social events.

Lesser tazkar memorial services and feasts are observed, especially by the noblemen and well-to-do, on the 7th day after death, and on the 12th and 30th days, 6 months, one year, and 7 years after the passing. Upon leaving, the condolents say to the mourners: "May God give rest to his soul".

Even in more modern Addis Ababa, little has changed in the tazkar pattern, except that the aforementioned physical violence is now reduced.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART V : INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

156 Social stratification and kinship relations dominate interpersonal relations in Amhara society, and, though they put their stamp also on segments of the Amhara cultural pattern, they do not limit the corresponding artistic expression as much as one might expect. Thus, while Amhara artistic expression shares much of the "formality" of the rest of the culture, it evidences considerable potentialities for individual initiative, particularly in non-material expression such as games of intellect.

538 Material culture has not been much developed among the Amhara; artistic expression also has many of the usual characteristics of a [217] non-literate society, since literacy has traditionally been limited to a small minority of the population. This has led both to a reinforcement of formality in literature, and to a playfulness in oral artistic expression which remained unfettered.

1. Communication and Interpersonal Relations.

203 Communication "by grapevine" is still the major method of dissemination of news, rumor, and entertainment. Feudal lords in the past would even make use of "musical signatures" which identified the sender; to prove that a message was actually sent by the sender, the messenger was taught a secret musical note like a code, which identified the master. There was considerable suspicion about interference with 212 203 messages by enemies, who might alter them, so that, when messages were written, the scribe was careful not to leave a margin at the bottom, lest an enemy intercepting the message might add harmful statements falsely reflecting on the sender (e.g. his loyalty). Since most writing was done by formal, professional scribes, and Geez square writing was used, handwriting was not considered sufficient safeguard for identification. This pattern of leaving no margin persists to this day.

203 Transportation of messages, until the recent installment of telegraph, was by messenger, and still is to a considerable extent. In the past, the king or governor would send an official messenger, ("melekt ätta") with the message wedged tightly in a cleft stick carried above the head while running, which assured safety to the runner.

Proclamation of decrees was and sometimes still is drumned out at the public market place, and only in the capital are public radio loudspeakers utilized. These decrees are heard in respectful silence, though unpopular decrees might, among Amhara, be followed by a delayed "murmuring", which, in the past, often led to local rebellions. Spies [208] of the government listen on such occasions to learn public opinion (astäyäyät") in time.

211 Landmarks "for memory" are encountered frequently, and they partly take the place of inscribed monuments of cultures of greater literacy. Commemorative monuments in the countryside, called "mäsalänäya", take the form of conical piles of rocks, to which passersby add small rocks, so that one grows sometimes until no one remembers what the original event was. It may have been a battle, or the resting place of a saint. There are no name inscriptions, this being sometimes purposely avoided to prevent an evil spirit such as buda from fastening onto the name and doing harm.

212 To insure precision of communication in matters of culture focus, e.g. in religious communication, a combination of pictures and written words is used. This has developed the ancient comic-strip-type of illustration of religious scenes, mainly biblical, hagiological, and Abyssinian-National, found in canvas paintings on the walls of churches. The words spoken by the character are written into the empty space near the mouth. The scenery is starkly realistic. The style shows fierce concentration on the event depicted, without irrelevent background scenery; naivete, but body positions shown with realistic gusto.

212 Communication among the Amhara can be said to be formal on all
195 matters of culture focus. Writing is regarded by the Amhara as relegated to formal use, and schoolboys were penalized for experimenting with it informally. Language, however, being oral and thus less controllable, compensates for this; and artistic expression and experimentation make free and often playful and inventive use of the lexical, grammatical, and syntactical raw material of language.

A. The Raw Material of the Amharic Language Put to Use.

a) Historical Development

197 Much of the lexical matter and most of the grammar of the Amharic language, also the basis of the alphabet that it uses, are derived from Geez, one of the South Arabian languages of about 500 B.C. The term "Lisana Geez" the language of the Geez, has, among Abyssinians, the connotation of "language of the free men", i.e. conquerors. Linguistic scholars have raised the question whether one single language, Geez, was imported from Southern Arabia about that time, or whether different, possibly related, languages came from there via separate channels at different times. The latter theory seems more likely, and Amharic may owe the Semitic part of its character to a sister language of Geez, rather than to Geez itself (footnote 85). But the Amhara firmly believe in the derivation from Geez itself - and directly.

197 Whether directly or indirectly derived originally, certain it is
192 that for many centuries and quite consciously even today, the Amhara have been borrowing freely and proudly from the Geez language any term useful particularly to express abstract concepts, in which Amharic is

Footnote 85 - Theory of Professor Marcel Cohen, quoted by Leslau Archaic Features in South Ethiopia. (See Bibliography).

197 sometimes poor, but Geez very rich. In fact, linguistic purists among
192 modern-nationalistic educated Amharas, urge rejection of foreign loan-words in favor of continued and even revived borrowing from Geez cognates.

212 The Amharic script, largely derived from ancient Sabean characters, is, unlike other Semitic scripts, written from left to right. The characters are syllabic, based on 26 consonants from Geez, plus 4 labiovelar diphthongs, plus 7 additional consonants added in Amharic and called "vaarab fidil" (lit. the Arabic alphabet). These 37 consonants in Amharic are always written in syllabic form, combined with one of 7 vowel orders, so that students must learn a syllabic alphabet of 259 characters. There are also 20 symbols for numerals, which are still taught, and even printed in the modern press, and not replaced by the simpler Arabic numerals; though the latter have been recently taught. These characters and numerals are now printed on a sheet that also includes the Gospel of St. John, in Geez, and a photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie; pasted on a cardboard, this sheet is now carried to school by the young students.

197 Amharic also derives a considerable part of its raw material from
192 Cushitic languages spoken in Ethiopia prior to (and after) the Semitic colonization, perhaps more so than any other Abyssinian language (footnote 86). From these Cushitic sources Amharic obtains part of its vocabulary (especially most of its terms relating to concrete matters),

Footnote 86 - Leslau: Southeast Semitic
Leslau: Observations on Gurage Documents
Leslau: Review of Cohen's Nouvelles Etudes d'Ethiopien Meridional
Cohen, M.: Traité de la Langue Amharique
Houghton: Aspects of Amharic

197 most of its syntax, morphology (such as the "frequentative"), phonology
192 such as considerable onomatopoetry and monosyllabic words (though some of these may have been carried in Geez also). The result of this linguistic blend is a number of expressive choices somewhat analogous to the choice in English between Anglo-Saxon cognates and Latin-French cognates: e.g. the word "sun" can be expressed as "sahay" (from Geez) or "jembar" (from Cushitic). Amhara people use these alternates in many ways: to emphasize distinction between "sacred" and "profane", between the philosophic and the prosaic.

578 For, to the mind of the Amhara, Geez and its derivatives are
197 spiritually connected with the church liturgy, with philosophy. Even
186 in the present situation of change, feudal conservatives and the church have banded together most strongly against the suggested simplification of the Amharic alphabet (which is recommended for quicker learning, expecially by illiterate adults of other ethnic groups in Ethiopia; and for devising typewriters). This traditional, religious conservatism is now being reinforced by the new and incipient group of nationalistic, linguistic purists, who bemoan the introduction of more and more European cognates. But the latter group is still small and does not have nearly the political power of the old-style religious conservatives.

197 Finally, the often-repeated qualification with regard to the effect of regional differences applies to linguistic matters also. In different regions, derivations from different Cushitic languages affect all phases of the language, particularly the lexical.

192 b) Lexical, Grammatical and Syntactical Phases.

The Amharic vocabulary is rich in onomatopoetic terms which have been formalized:

192 "kul kul" - to call the chickens. (Footnote 87)

"fwa fwa" - cascade, waterfall.

"täb alä" - drop by drop ("alä", lit. he went, is the common auxiliary).

"täf täf alä" - poured liquid from a narrow-necked bottle.

"twa alä" - water falling on fire.

"cha alä" - became silent, tranquil, calm; hence - deserted village (!)

"chechch alä" - began to chant; hence - birds in the morning (Twitter).

"gwawqa alä" - knocked loudly at door

"kof kof alä"- marched with gravity (sound of shoes).

"encheq alä" - (sound of) picking feet from muddy place.

"agurämarräma" - murmured (sound of large drum), hence - rolling thunder, and incipient rebellion.

"anchabächchäba" - clapped hands rythmically, to keep time for music, or to greet a "great man" (Africa style).

"andagaddaga" - made gluglu (water through pipe).

193 Grammar, called "<u>sosso</u>" or "<u>sämasew</u>", is mastered only by the
195 traditional-educated church scholars ("mämhär") and a few members of
554 noble families. Perhaps only a few hundred individuals master all its intricacies. Emperor Haile Selassie's speeches strike the average

[192] Footnote 87 - Other calls to animals include:
"Kulel Kulel" - to call lost donkey at night.
"Kes Kes" - (or "cheg") to drive sheep on
"Kis Kis" - to drive calves on.
"Buch Buch" - call to dogs.
"Wush" - to drive loaded donkeys from path, so the master can ride through
"Che" or "Mach" - to get a horse or mule started when riding it.

193 Amhara layman as esoteric and hard to understand - which causes them to
195 be respected all the more. "Soasso" literally means "ladder" in the
554 Geez language, and the study of grammar is regarded as "uplifting", steps on the ladder of knowledge, achievable fully only by the few, but respected almost as an end in itself.

193 Special features of this grammar are the following: There is no present tense, and the future tense is used also to indicate the present, as in other Semitic languages. A completed action, in the sense of a "present that has become a past" is expressed by a gerund compound tense. Frequentatives, i.e. reduplicated syllables, are much used to indicate reiterative, intensive, augmentative and attenuative action; foreign scholars believe them to be of Cushitic origin (Footnote 87). Possessive pronouns often take the form of infixes. Among noteworthy absences in this grammar are: No male or female genders, though sex distinctions are made even in concepts of inanimate objects.

There are no "cases" in the Latin sense. There are no subjunctives. The passive and reciprocal voices take the same form, though the meanings are distinguished. A complexity that never fails to complicate matters for non-Amharic speakers (other Ethiopians as well as foreigners) is the gemination, the duplication of a number of consonants, "lala", which gives the word another meaning entirely because it changes the basic stem. The basic stem of verbs is most often a Semitic "triliteral", but through loss or gain is often changed to a "biliteral" or "quadriliteral".

The syntax of Amharic is regarded by foreign scholars as basically Cushitic, much like the vocabulary, and unlike its grammar (Footnote 88).

Footnote 87 - Leslau: Le Thème Verbal Frequentative dans les Langues Etiopiens.
Revue des Etudes Semitiques, I, PP. 15-31. Paris, 1939.

Footnote 88 - Leslau: The Influence of Cushitic on the Semitic Languages of Ethiopia. (in) Word, 1945, pp. 54-82.

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193 (E.g. instead of "the man who came", Amharic constructs the sentence "who came the man".)

212 Orthography shows considerable ambivalence of choice, perhaps due to the later influences of Arabic and to the Amharic additions to the Geez alphabet. Thus, interchanges of "q" and "g", "t" and "t", "m" and "n" are common among consonants; "ä" and "i"; "e" and "e" and "a" somewhat less commonly exchanged among vowals. This confuses the root, vowel and tense indications for the foreigner, and even Amharic-speakers when discussing a matter not commonly discussed, may misunderstand each other because of these interchanges, especially if they come from different regions.

c) Regional Variations.

197 Part of the wide variety of regional linguistic differences among Amharic-speakers is due to the long, conservative, provincial semi-isolation. Some of this is not much different from provincialisms in rural Europe; so that the pronounciation of even common words such as "aydollämm" (he isn't here) identifies the Amhara from Shoa, "aydällämm" from Begemdir province (Gondar). But a much greater part of the regional differences is due to the fact that for many centuries, perhaps millenia, the Amharic speakers of Begemdir (Gondar) and Gojjam provinces have been exposed to "old-Cushitic" languages such as Agau, while the Amhara of Shoa province has been exposed to "new-Cushitic" languages such as Galla.

The Abyssinian of Tigre province, whose "Tigre" or "Tigrinya" language may be a closer derivative of Geez than Amharic, has long maintained Semitic ties through continued influence of developing Arabic from Yemen and the Red Sea, and has in turn affected the inland Amharic of Semyen-Begemdir, whose people shared Abyssinian religion and culture. Western Amharas, e.g. in Gojjam province, but also in the trading center of Gondar, have been affected by vulgate Arabic spoken

197 in the neighboring Sudan, for Muslim traders even today mix more Arabic loanwords into their Amharic than do Amharas. Areas conquered by slightly islamized Galla and held from the 16th to the 19th centuries were affected to varying degrees by several Galla (Cushitic) dialects.

196 Semantic drift is now in the direction of the Amharic speech pattern of Shoa province, which replaces the dominance of former aristocratic Gondar, thus introducing many more Galla traits into the language. This change is concomitant with the increasing political [191] dominance and centralization of the Shoan dynasty and power. Proclamations emanate from Addis Ababa in Shoan Amharic, and schoolchildren are increasingly taught this "standard" Amharic. Old terms of other provinces are often falling into disuse.

Sometimes this process is conscious, particularly in matters of national pride. Thus, the old word "tuqul" for the primitive, round, thatched, wattle-and-mud hut, is now replaced, through influence directed from Addis Ababa, by "sar byet" (lit. thatched house), considered more polite, for it denotes a house not yet covered by a corrugated iron roof, without the connotation of the mud walls; or, for similar reasons, by "goja" (lit. simple residence).

The use of the call "Gurage" for laborer has been expressly forbidden, because it is now considered insulting to that hardworking ethnic group, and the call "coolie" has been purposely imported. Furthermore, increased use is made in Shoan Amharic of Geez abstracts for modern purposes, such as the suffix "nät", which can be attached [178] to any Amharic verb to render it into an abstraction. Modernization, which has recently introduced such new cultural phenomena into Addis Ababa as the adult, unmarried "Miss", has, within the past decade, amended an old term to describe the new phenomenon: the old "wozäro" (married, noble lady; Mrs.) is amended to the new concept "wozarit" (adult though unmarried Miss). This term is still unknown in the rural

196 Amhara provinces, but is entering through the provincial capitals, such as Gondar, at the present time. Semantic drift can be traced along these lines.

d) Literature; Special Argots.

538 The religious character of most of the traditional Amharic-Geez literature has already been described in connection with the church.

Some of the material of liturgy finds its way into lay usage. Rhymes, "qetem", originally composed for devotional poetry, have long found their way to chants of praise sung to warlords, feudal nobles, the king, and by extension, philosophic-sentimental poetry in general.

Folk literature, which is oral, contains numerous stories resembling Aesop's fables, in which witty repartee among or with animals is featured (Footnote 89).

538 Individual poets and other authors, if they existed in number,
522 have largely been forgotten, because of the cultural prohibition against writing down any but sacred matter, and the restricted literacy. But a fortunate exception exists in the person of an Amhara wit named Alaqa (lit. chief, an honorific title) Gabre-Hanna, who was a contemporary of Emperor Menelik II in the late 19th century. (Footnote 90) He, too, apparently did not write down any of his many witticisms, but since he lived fairly recently, commuting between his home in Gondar and the then incipient city of Addis Ababa, he is still popularly as well as officially identified with his stories in both localities, and some of the anecdotes even tie his person to historical events.

Footnote 89 - Courlander & Leslau: The Fire on the Mountain, 1950

Footnote 90 - Messing, S. D.: Ethiopian Folktales ascribed to the 19th Century Wit, Alaqa Gabre-Hanna. (in) Journal of American Folklore, Jan - March 1957, pp. 69-72.

538 He was a master of "sowasso"; of the pun which utilizes gemina-
522 tion and other grammatical possibilities to make an ironic observation and befuddle the unwary, so that they become public laughing stocks. Sometimes the joke was on his own Rabelaisian appetites in food and sex. More often he spoofed the pompousness of feudal and even royal powers, their love for amassing rules and regulations for their courts; and the pretended puritan piety of the priests, behind which facade he recognized witty insight into the minds of men, whose salty comments and behavior in private life he liked to burlesque. For example:

[539]

> "One day the servant of a witty priest suffered from a chigger (sandflea) embedded in his foot. The priest pried it out with a pin and threw it into the fire. A friend, watching this, objected jokingly, saying: "Why did you do this? May it not multiply in the fire?" Replied the priest: "It may be warmed, but not 'done up' ("yäzäraw" - also means begotten through sexual intercourse)."

Amhara listeners find such "impolite" stories extremely amusing.

195 The Amhara people recognize the esoteric use that can be made of
198 their language, and they utilize this. Hence the expression "he is talking Amarinya", meaning "he is speaking in esoteric ways", with double meanings, hidden meanings, to becloud his real purpose so that he cannot be accused of lying and can say later that he meant something else. For example, the verb "qanna" can have the following meanings:

> was right, direct, correct
> was honest, just
> succeeded, prospered
> became jealous, envious
> became zealous, fanatic, intolerant.

198 Certain occupational specialties have traditionally made use of

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198 this esoteric raw material to develop special argots. The most notable ones are those used by traders; in magic; and by minstrels.

A merchant's argot (Footnote 91) uses Arabic loanwords, and also transforms the meaning or form of Amharic words, especially those that can have many alternate meanings. Trade routes travelled by merchants also carry distant lexical matter from Galla and Gurage - speaking provinces. Merchants utilize this argot as secret business codes.

Among practitioners of magic, the most famous argot is the "Zar" language (described in the section on "healing the spirit"). Like the other argots, this "language" has a solidly Amharic base, but this fact is not recognized by the Amharas themselves and has been discovered only by foreign linguistic scholars (Footnote 92). The "zar doctors" are of course careful to keep this fact a secret, for they claim that this language is not only "revealed" to them by the spirits, but that t he spirit "talks through them", so that they themselves are free of responsibility for what they are saying while in a state of possession. Actually, the "zar language" contains purely grammatical Amharic, coded Amharic, transformed lexical matter, and loanwords. Scribes, "dabtara", who perform amulet magic, impress their clients with a seemingly unintelligible, esoteric Amharic called "yadabtara qwanqwa", (the language of the scribe), which often makes use of sowasso (grammar).

The argot of the minstrel, of the "azmari", is a professional code used to communicate with other members of the troupe, e.g. to point out at which guest to direct songs of praise to obtain a reward, without letting the audience become aware of this collusion (footnote 93)

Footnote 91 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Merchant's Argot - Language, 1949 pp. 22-28, Vol. 25, No. 1.

Footnote 92 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People possessed by a Spirit. Africa, July 1949, pp. 204-212

000 letting the audience become aware of this collusion. (footnote 93).

B. Interpersonal Etiquette and Relationships.

571 Interpersonal etiquette among the Amhara governs particularly
576 those relations that can be described as "secondary group", for relations
[602] within the "primary group" are governed largely by specific kinship or religious rules of behavior.

It is a rare case - and considered very sad - if a person has no kin, and must base most of his human relations on secondary- group affiliations. The latter relationship includes most prominently the "agär" (lit. country, i.e. home district). Sometimes this refers only to the immediate parish, sometimes to the "meketl worädä" sub-district; but if a person finds himself in another province he may include the entire district, "worädä"; though the concept of "agär" does not usually extend beyond this territory in any real meaning of secondary group. If a person has no kin to turn to for aid in legal trouble, or needs a "was" guarantor to secure a job, he may seek out a man from his "agär". For this reason there is motivation to observe rules of etiquette particularly with individuals in the "agar" secondary group, such as visiting or inviting them, bring them "enqutatash" gifts and flowers (through children) at New Year and "Masqal" festivals, etc. Such gifts are not given to complete strangers from a more distant territory, who are called "bada" (slightly derogatory term, with connotation of "rustic").

576 Interpersonal etiquette within the secondary group may lead to
572 closer personal relations between two individuals, taking certain

Footnote 93 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Minstrel's Argot. Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1952, Vol. 72, No. 3 pp. 102-109

576 572 specific forms. This relationship is mostly that of the "balenjära" (lit. mutual breadgivers), who enjoy the privilege of visiting each other without formal prearrangement; who may call upon each other to stand personal bond ("wäs"); who are likely to ask each other to act as negotiator for the marriage of a son or daughter before the affair becomes a formal kinship matter.

The very absence of a kinship tie makes it possible for "balenjara" to negotiate arbitration of blood-money to end or prevent a bloody feud between kin groups. The intenseness of the "balenjära" relationship may range from the trusted, though casual companion, "gorätsa", usually an age-mate, with whom interpersonal relationships are frequent and regular, but not intense; to the more intense but less frequent and less regular relationships with the "wädaj", a warm friend, "tebeq wädaj", the intimate confidante, so that the two individuals become "mestirana" (mutual bosom pals) to each other. "Balenjära" address each other with "antu" (the more polite form of "thou"; and other "thou", "antä", being used for children and inferiors mostly). When walking or standing and talking to each other, "balenjära" (and also other acquaintances, if on the same social level) interlace one or two of their fingers, loosely, but enough to remain in physical communication. Like kinsmen, "balenjära" men kiss each other on t he neck when they meet after not having seen each other for some weeks. Women may also establish "balenjära" relations with other women, and go on picnics together after the harvest in the dry season, especially on church holidays, but Amhara men believe that women do not form long-lasting friendships as often as men do.

[203] Dissemination of news and rumors through the "grapevine" occurs frequently through the channel of the "balenjära", who utilize the occasion of a bit of news as justification to drop in on each other, and to share barley beer and "enjära" bread (hence the term).

576 [572] Apart from this interpersonal relationship of choice, in which two individuals establish psychological response to each other (and mutual aid) outside the kinship group, most other forms of interpersonal etiquette are patterned so formally that they can be readily learned (even by outsiders). The vagueness and ambivalence of shifting etiquette of the Western world of modern times has not yet affected Amhara culture. Even modern-educated Amhara continue to fall back to the established pattern of traditional etiquette as soon as they return to their own country.

576 a) Formal Expressions of Status of Class, Age, Sex.

In formal expression of status, be it of class, age or sex, Amhara etiquette differentiates most sharply the dominant role from the role of the subordinate.

The most dramatic expression of this is the "gursha". It is enacted by the status superior toward the status inferior, a symbolic giving of food, money, wages, or other gifts. Thus, the master who wishes to indicate fondness and favor to the servant, will stuff some morsels of food into his mouth, publicly, while at dinner. A father will do it to his children, or to his wife. A chief may do it to a visiting "great man" of inferior or equal status, but never to a superior. However, a wife who has been married for some time and feels secure enough in her status to demonstrate equality, may jokingly return the favor and feed "gursha" to her husband, but only after he has initiated the activity.

[465] Servants, when receiving wages, receive them with both hands raised above the head, with bowed head and downcast eyes, and must never look at the money, much less count it in presence of the employer; for etiquette requires that wages be regarded as "gursha". (In recent years, the term "gursha" has become used in the sense of "tip", gratuity, baksheesh.)

576 Politeness is not considered "common", but differentiates most sharply between the behavior and expected behavior of the noble "great man" (telleq säw) and the rustic (balagär). The "great man", noble is expected to show graciousness, noblesse oblige. When a social inferior tries to kiss his feet, it is gracious to chuck him under the chin so as not to let him reach the feet, so that the kiss lands on the [593] master's knee. Fathers or mothers imitate this same etiquette when their sons, arriving or departing, try to kiss their feet in symbolic etiquette of subordination. The motion is smooth and evidently routine and well-practiced.

195 Stylistic distinctions in the speech pattern also differ between expected etiquette of a noble and rustic. It is noble to talk slowly, softly, choosing words with unworried deliberation, which indicates to the listener that the noble, a man of few and calm words, is secure in his rank and position, and does not have to worry about possible results of poor communication. A noble uses soft-and-polite language (a unified concept to the Amhara), called "yäcätalanät negeger", showing good judgement and taste ("yelumeta"). But his softness of speech has a firm and impressive quality, referred to as "läza mälkäm" (lit. good tongue).

576 It is the mark of a social parvenue of "low" ancestry, if he struts ("tälattätä") with an upward-turned face, and is too proud to reply politely when addressed politely. A true noble, though he will not dismount from his mule when greeted by a commoner on foot (as he would to a social equal or superior), will raise his hat a bit, or raise his toga a bit, in reply to a greeting, in which the commoner has removed from his head his toga protection from the sun.

A social inferior may not sit down in the company of seated "great men" until invited to do so twice. He is expected to be ready to join

576 the retinue of the great man, to serve as messenger, whenever the "great man" decides to go anywhere. When the great man graciously extends his hand in greeting, the social subordinate takes it lightly into his two cupped hands as if it were a precious gift, a "gursha", and permits the hand to be withdrawn soon; for the extended handholding is limited to social equals. The great man is addressed as "getoch" (lit. "masters", using the plural). When appearing before a great man, the toga ("shamma") is redraped in the fashion of appearing before the feudal lord or king, leaving the upper part of the body bare (or nowadays, covered by another garment) in a gesture of self-abasement. Bowing is from the hip, both in case of individuals and by the population at large when the "great man" passes in public.

However, self-abasement among the Amhara is not supposed to be carried to extremes, in their opinion. It does happen that an old rustic ("balagär") will show great servility (resembling that of Uncle Tomism of American Southern states). But this is quietly mocked by other onlooking Amhara commoners. Such a "balagär" may, e.g. throw his toga off his own shoulders and spread it on the ground for a bishop or other great man to walk on, later treasuring the footprints. But it is considered etiquette, especially by young church students and other youngsters, to carry the sandals of adults or priests when they are taken off before entering church.

576 195 It is the mark of the rustic (illiterate) if he is careless in the requirements of polite etiquette, for while the speech pattern of the noble is not expected of him (and would be considered affected, and is therefore never used), he is expected to remember that even he is an Amhara, and therefore somewhat "noble". He will be mocked and criticized for frequent impoliteness, such as using the term "enja" (lit. I don't know) which has the connotation of "... and I don't care", instead of the polite "alawqum" (lit. "it has not entered me", i.e. I don't

576 therefore, know). Abusing people with vulgar insults ("läddäfä")
195 tends to reflect on the abuser, so that he is considered "belgena", a rude person. Such a person speaks in high-pitched, strident style, to commoners; while to social superiors he fawns and wheedles, using baby-talk such as "abbabba" (daddy) to a lord and "ammamma" or "tatay" (mummy) to a lady, in mournful tones of self-abasement and utter helplessness, begging paternal protection and forgiveness as if he were an infant that had not yet reached the "age of reason".

576 This is mocked, for the Amhara distinguishes between such servility and non-servile gestures of subordination, such as the "gursha", the bowing from the hip, and the walking backwards when departing from
[466] the king. Servants and other employees may indicate dissatisfaction at being short-changed, by bowing not quite so deeply the next time, whereupon a wise lord or employer will take a cue, increase the wage, and see it acknowledged by a specially deep bow or knee-kiss. Otherwise, protest will take the form of "murmuring", a semi-articulate protest which may lead to open rebellion.

576 Kinship terms are sometimes employed, outside the kin context,
601 to communicate respective positions in a situation of differential social status. Thus, it is respectful to address a status superior as "ayma" (lit. "my dear elder"), used to the father or elder brother. The extension of this term is fairly recent, in line with improved communication and transportation, but the rustic still uses the more ancient version, "ayya", (which has the same meaning). Because of this, a wit who does not want to address a rustic as "ato" (Mister), sometimes addresses the ignoramus, in mock respect, as "ayya". (This cheats him out of his "entitles", reminiscent of the use of the address "Doc" by Southern Whites to Negroes, avoiding "Mister")

576 The speech pattern and etiquette to be expected from women,
195 nearly all of whom are illiterate and have no formal education, is
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562 classified by Amhara men in the category of the "balagär"; as high-pitched, strident, alternately vulgar and wheedling. The term for female, "syät", also means inconsistent. A woman's voice is not regarded as "soft", which concept is regarded as identical with "polite" and associated with "noble". Noblewomen are considered exempt from this rustic pattern of womanhood, and are expected to behave in accordance with "nobility".

b) Greetings and Address.

576 Formality in interpersonal relations is emphasised in greetings, forms of address, postures and gestures, sometimes in considerable detail and variety, since formal politeness is a culture focus among the Amhara.

Distinctions are made even in familiar address. Thus there are two ways of saying "thou": "antä" - to a child, social inferior, or semi-jokingly to emphasize intimate friendship to a social equal;

"antu" - polite "thou", used to older sibling, or by wife to respected husband.

The polite form utilizes the plural in address; and, in the case of pronouns, the third person plural. Hence :

"gätoch" - (lit. masters), polite address to employer

"antu" - (thou) polite-familiar address.

"ersu" or "erswo" - (lit. he), polite "you" (singular) to male.

"erswa" - (lit. she) " " " to female.

"ersachäw" - (lit. they) " " (plural), but also used as extremely polite singular address to lord.

The use of the plural communicates that the person addressed is worth several times as much, in material or spiritual worth, as an average person.

576 The master-servant relationship terms are utilized in polite address, to indicate real or pretended servility, or simple politeness:

"gēta"! (lit. master) call to stranger on the road.

"yäne gēta"! My Master! Address to one's father, priest, great man.

The feudal terms of address have so expanded in use during the past generation, that in recent years some have come to be used as terms of politeness even to respected commoners:

"emmēte" - "Milady!" Formerly used to address noble lady, now polite - warm address to respected woman.

"atō" - (derived from "abyeto", with connotation of "at your service"), once used in address to princes and high feudal lords, then to respected male heads of households, now simply used as "Mister".

"woyzäro" - lady. Term of polite reference formerly reserved for royalty, then extended to wives of all nobility, now used in reference to any married woman, who is mistress of a household.

Feudal terms used derivations of adjectives, but the only one still in official use is "Germawi Hoy" (Oh Magnificence), the proper address to the emperor.

The use of kinship terms toward non-relatives, when seeking kin-like protection, has already been described: e.g. "tatsy" ("mummy"), babytalk used by adults as endearing-polite address to a woman of child-bearing age; also, by extension, as polite-jocular address to a young girl soon to approach marriage age, e.g. by a teasing young man.

Religious terms are used on many occasions in daily life, as common etiquette, often without conscious awareness that they are religious terms: When two persons meet, the common greeting is as follows:

A: "endemin allu", or "endemin nawo" (polite) -"How are you?".

B: "egzēr yemäsgän, dähna nan"- "God be praised, I am well."

This interchange is repeated several times before both are assured.

576 When they have seen each other too recently to require this assurance, the greeting is simply "tenä-stellen" - Hello! (lit. "May he, i.e. God, give you health in my stead"). When spelled out, this form becomes "egziabher yestellen" (May God reward you for me), which simply means "Thank you!". When someone sneezes, others say to him "yemar" (lit. May He have mercy), to which the sneezer replies "yemarow" (May He be merciful unto you); if the sneezing continues, the interchange is reinforced with "Amen".

Other terms of politeness are:

"yeqerta" or "yeqerta bälun" - "Excuse me", e.g. when stepped on toes.

"ebakwo" - "Please" (lit. I beg you).

When asking a person, e.g. a visitor, to take a seat, five gradations of politeness can be used to indicate the level of respect:

"quch bäl" - "Sit down (somewhere)", used to young person, (utilizing the imperative grammatical form as well as the familiar singular).

"quch bälu" - "(please) sit down", (using the plural imperative to single visitor), used in inviting adult neighbor to sit.

"täqämätu" - "(Kindly) take a seat" (using plural of another verb).

"nor" - (lit. "Reside"). Very polite invitation, accompanied
"yenoru" (plural) (by low bow, to invite a great man, or long-absent friend of status; sometimes re-enforcing it further by use of the plural.

The polite reply, in acceptance to the invitation, is "bäegziabher"- (lit. Since God wills it).

It is never polite to say "no", to reject an invitation or negotiation outright. In negotiations, discouragement in a gradual manner is used to communicate politely a negative attitude; e.g. in marriage negotiations already described, in which procrastination is used. In order to avoid the impolite "yällän" (no), the Amhara prefers to say "nagä" (tomorrow), or, even more politely, "eshshi nagä" (allright, tomorrow). When refusing to see a visitor, or rejecting an invitation to come to a feast, the standard form of polite rejection

576 is to excuse oneself as indisposed due to "having drunk kosso", the bitter medicine against tapeworm, which medicine indeed incapacitates the patient for several days, and which is taken frequently and even regularly. He may send a written note of apology:

> " Yaderas kakebur (May this reach the Honorable....):
>
> " I have received your esteemed invitation to dinner. Thank you very much for having (thus) honored me. Having travelled, I have drunk medicine and am unable to come. I beg you not to be annoyed with me for remaining away under those circumstances (lit. in such a difficulty)". (footnote 94)

Gestures in greeting must indicate warmth, to be polite. In shaking hands, one does not withdraw one's hand soon, but keeps holding on loosely for several minutes, while talking. Men do this, also women to women, but a man will not hold a woman's hand in greeting unless she is close blood-kin, such as sister or daughter. Men (or women to women) who have not seen each other a long time, fall on each other's necks and kiss each other on both cheeks. The principle of indicating warmth in greeting overcomes the principle of the separation of the sexes in public, so that, especially in the rural areas and the commoner class where expressive behavior in public is more tolerated than in the upper class of nobility, men may cheek-kiss women in greeting, though not in flirting which must be private.

584 In spite of many other changes, it is still considered highly improper for a young man and young girl to hold hands when walking on a "shershera" (promenading). Not even the foreign-educated Amhara dare do this, not even in the modern center of Addis Ababa.

Footnote 94 - Endie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, p. 276.

c) Visiting

574 Visiting kinfolk regularly, during the nine months of the dry
602 season, is a prime requirement. This includes, in this order of emphasis and frequency: patrilineal kin, matrilineal kin, affinal kin.

574 Visits to affinal kin are less frequent and more formal. When
606 visiting one's parents-in-law, usually twice during the dry season, the man is not supposed to come empty-handed, but should bring a sheep as a gift. He waits outside the in-law hamlet, just beyond the thornbush enclosure, and asks the children whether his father-in-law is at home. When the latter appears, the visitor enters and approaches the hut. He enters only upon invitation. There is no mother-in-law avoidance as such, but contact is reduced to a minimum, between son-in-law and mother-in-law, to achieve maximum privacy for both.

602 Flouting kinship obligation is regarded as a shameful deviation, indicating an evil character. Kinship relations represent much security for the individual, but also involve him in serious obligations, such as aiding kinsmen in blood-feuds and reprisal-raids ("bäqäl"). A person who wanders away from the kin hamlet, or from kin obligations, when his mood or irresponsibility carry him, is called "läqo" (after the soft reed that grows rapidly at the least rain, but drops when grown to maturity).

574 Visitors, particularly strangers, must observe certain taboos,
754 lest they be suspected of bringing the evil eye. They should not ask the number of children, nor praise their health or good looks aloud. This is considered dangerous, because the "buda" spirit is always on the lookout for fat, juicy children so that he can magically "drink
[164] their blood" and make them waste away. (Children are vulnerable to many communicable diseases).

574 When visiting the sick, the visitor, especially female visitors,
576 are expected to express their sympathy in unmistakeable tones. The

574 visitors screw up their faces as if in great agony, even despair, and
576 utter the long, subdued wail "eyye". Religious expressions on such occasions are "erziabher yatnawo" (May God give you health), or "egzer yemarewo" (May God be merciful to you).

574 d) Hospitality and Dining.
539 Hospitality to kinfolk, members of the secondary group, and other travellers, in that sequence of emphasis, is a major culture focus. Numerous proverbs are often quoted, governing this behavior:

Even a poor man is expected to give what he can, even if he can offer little more than a pleasant face:

"More than his food,
his face pleased me."

Refusal of hospitality for the night is castigated:

"He has let me be eaten by the hyena" (at night).

A stingy host, who could well afford generosity, is mocked:

"He goes about, attended by 90 retainers;
but in his house famine reigns".

A host is advised to make his invitation specific as to the day:

"A dog, called for the right day,
arrives on his own feet".

574 A host is expected to urge the guest to take freely of prefferred
262 food and drink. An invitation to "take coffee" is frequently the formula introducing a complete dinner. Staples readily available, unlike dinners that require preparation, include barley beer ("tella"), roasted barley grains ("rebs golo"), roasted peas ("shembera golo"), boiled corn grains ("mashella"), milk, eggs, limp bread ("enjira"), and except among the very poor, coffee beans, which are roasted, crushed and boiled in front of the guest.

Dinner is regarded as a Feast ("dorges" or "gebber") and should include meat and butter, so that it is impolite to invite anyone on

574 Wednesday or Friday when no animal products can be consumed; the months
262 of lent also interrupt the frequency of visiting.

To honor a "great man" ("telleq sew") the host presents him with a live sheep, select, with a heavy tail, then has it slaughtered and cooked in a spicy and peppery sauce ("wot"). In place of barley beer he will offer honeywater ("bers") or even honeymead ("tej"); the bread will be served smeared with spiced butter. A poor man, forced to substitute chicken for sheep, can at least indicate that he honors the guest by giving him the choice morsel - the wing: The proverb says:

[539] "The chicken wing
joy brings to the face".

264 Etiquette in eating follows these procedures: The hands are washed prior to consuming bread or meat (though often with not very clean, muddy river water poured from a clay pot); and washed again after the meal to remove pepper stains of the "berbere wot" from the fingers, lest absentminded rubbing of the eye cause painful stinging. Only the right hand is used in eating, for the left is used in the toilet. The right hand is used to rip off a piece of the limp "enjera", dip it into the meat stew, close the piece of pancake-like bread around some morsel and fish it out for immediate consumption. A knife is used only when eating "brundo" (raw beef), at a special feast, to cut off a piece held between the teeth (now, at city feasts, brundo is served pre-sliced into cubes).

Noisy eating ("gorddima") is permitted in the old tradition as indicative of he-man behavior, but smacking of lips and ceremonial belching, though not criticized, are not emphasized. It is an old custom of Amhara hosts, still followed in rural areas, to pour a mouthful of a profferred drink into their own cupped hands and consume it, before passing the cup to the honored guest or "great man" ("ejun digne betta"- lit. he received (cup) with hands (under chin) and drank). This

264 procedure, also called "gämäsä" is in imitation of procedure at the court of nobles, and it is known that kings have always had their special cupbearers ("gänash") who tasted the drink against possible poison, and who also removed any floating debris ("gäffäta") such as beeswax from the drink.

574 575 The hospitality group on non-kin members which meets most regularly, once a month, is the "mähabbär" association, already described. Based originally on religious private communion, each member plays host once a month to drink from "Mary's cup" ("yäMaryam sewa"), to feast, for chant and dance ("zäfän") and less formal gossipy entertainment and conversation ("tächäwäta").

C. Verbal Expression: Formalities; Wit; Pedagogic Riddles.

192 Emotional exclamations in everyday use are highly formalized:

Pain - "häyy häyy" (also if a painful truth "sinks in"; astonishment).

Fear - "woy" (especially by women, just before a fearful event happens).

Fearful surprise - "oyyi" (e.g. when someone stumbles, or has an accident).

Alarm - "erriii" - (cry of alarm; also of great sorrow as in death of kin).

Skeptical surprise - "errä" ("you don't say?!"); Reply: "nut" (abbreviated from "yemut", lit. "May (the emperor die) if this is not true").

Pleasure - "essäy" (to indicate comfort, e.g. when sitting down after having climbed a long, tiring hill).

576 514 192 Formal politeness in etiquette always considers the social status of the person addressed. Thus, there are six ways of informing an inquirer that the person he seeks has gone out to defecate or urinate:

Impolite, though not vulgar: "weha afässäsä" - (lit. he poured water).

Polite: "der wätta" - (lit. he went to the bush).

Polite: "däj wätta" - (lit. he went out the door).

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576 Very Polite: "shängo wätta" - (lit. he went to a meeting).
514 Extremely Polite: "gwäro zorä" - (lit. he left home).
192 Extremely Polite: "shershär wätta" - (lit. he went for a walk).

522 Wit, used in court or by homespun philosophers to entertain their friends, compensates for the many formalities in this culture and society. The famous wit, Äläqa Gäbre-Hanna has already been cited.
538 Proverbs, "tärät" and riddles may be used to make a comment of esoteric meanings, understandable only to one's initiates. Proverbs fulfill a social function, beyond mere entertainment, for even philosophy, being utilized to begin any negotiation, such as for marriage. This is emphasized in proverbs on proverbs:

[539]

"Like Hallelujah before the chanting (in church),
(begin with) a proverb before the discussion".
"(to drink) mead, (first get) a container,
to talk, (begin with) a proverb".

538 Proverbs and riddles used by parents, teachers and leaders of
593 society have a pedagogic function, and can be used to reprimand and
[861] instruct. Conflict between father and son, the complexities involved, and the possibility that contrary to the major cultural assumption of parental superiority, the son may sometimes have logic on his side, is indicated by the following:

[539] "(Says the father):

"Your Father you cannot accuse (e.g. in court, shaming yourself)
nor plow the sky,
nor roast water".

"(Replies the son):

"The father, by his own shame he will stand accused;
the sky, by lighting it is plowed;
water, in a pot it is steamed".

524 Boys, from the "age of reason" onward, tease each other with riddles in endless inventive games, such as:

[539] "(Question)":

"In its youth, white hair,
in its maturity, brown,
in its old age, red.
What is it?"

"(Reply)": "Wot". (Red-golden peppersauce).

538 Like medieval bards, Amhara entertainers (azmari) and talented individuals tell of incredible and wonderful happenings of all kinds, stories called "tarik" (synonymous, in Amharic, with history). Often these use as their base historical or pseudo-historical events, and expand on them, experimenting with persons, plots, additional details, etc. Very popular bases are the Royal Chronicles of Abyssinia, "tarik nägäst", fanciful stories about Alexander the Great, and Biblical plots, especially Apocryphal.

D. Artistic Expression: The Art of Insult and Mockery.

195 A person who is clever at the art of insult is given grudging
578 admiration even by his opponents, and is called "bämälasy lachä" (lit. one who shaves with his tongue). He can insult or mock so subtly that he may leave non-initiates in doubt, yet have full effect on the victim. On the other hand, a coarse person who insults people indiscriminately, regardless of propriety of person or circumstance, is despised ("ärta af").

Mockery is sometimes used for positive as well as negative purposes, especially in pedagogy, but insults are always more or less negative. Mockery, if used to teach a lesson, often employs proverbs;
578 using metaphors, so that the person criticized must think - which
195 might lead to his mending his ways:
539 To mock a useless act: "(it is like) a co[illegible] on a shaven head,
(like) trousers to carry [illegible] in".

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To mock false pride:

"A blind man, when he became (too) proud, (to accept help) on his toga defecated".

To mock aggressiveness beyond social station, especially in a young man:

"The mouse that wants to die,
goes to touch the nose of the cat".

Insults, however, do not have this benevolent, educative quality. Instead, they are antagonistic - though in carefully differentiated degrees. In general, an insult may be extremely severe, severe, medium severe, or light, in degree. Insults are considered of greater weight when directed at persons of higher status, (more severe).

There are two major categories of insults:

a) Insults directed at the group to which the insulted person belongs: his racial (usually slave-descent); religious (non-Coptic); ethnic (linguistic-regional) stereotype.

b) Insults directed at his individual personality shortcomings, intended to shame him for having failed to measure up to what is expected of him in society.

Racial insults commonly include:

"shembora ras" (lit. peahead, i.e. peppercorn hair) or "barya täqur" (slave hair), both severe insults referring to slave ancestry, by reference to hair typical of the Shanqalla (negroid tribe in the border lowland). This is now a jail offense.

"täqwara" (lit. dark one). Light insult directed at Shanqalla ex-slave, teasingly.

"wellaj" (half-slave). Severe insult directed at a person of doubtful ancestry.

Religious insults; often involved also in ethnic insults:

"afotam" (lit. sheathed, encased) - uncircumcised. Directed at "pagan" lowlanders, and lower ethnic castes such as the "Faqi" tanners. Medium severe.

195
578 "kaffir" (infidel). Insult used by islamized Abyssinians and Arabs against Coptic Abyssinians. Severe insult which may lead to bloodshed.

"kamto" - has the connotation of "one who will eat anything". Refers to the hippopotamus hunters on Lake Tana and the lower Blue Nile. Medium severe insult. (People who subsist on hunting are despised.)

There is also a whispered insult relating to supernatural black magic, "buda", used against persons accused of descent from ironsmiths (e.g. Falasha).

b) Insults directed against individual shortcomings include:

Weak, soft, womanish (directed at a man):

"syëto" - womanish. Directed at chattering male. Medium severe.

"lëmata syët" (lit. begging woman). Severe. Directed at flatterer and feigner.

"dumetan" (lit. full of flour), suggesting that he is a coward, who would prefer woman's work, such as grinding, to male behavior.

Generally unsteady character:

"ëlëbabeda" - unsteady person. Severe insult.

"jebrarra" - childish, silly jabberer, or a drunk. Severe insult for a man.

"bäsedeb zärrätta" - speechless, e.g. man who cannot reply to insult.

"arho" (lit. wandering minstrel woman), prey to many evils. Medium severe.

"ëzzrätta" - vagabond, loafer. Medium severe.

Mannish (directed at a woman):

"ëndëmënda" - Severe insult directed at a shrewish, aggressive woman.

Stupidity:

"dängworo"(lit. deaf). Fool. Frequently used. Medium to severe.

"dengay ras" (lit. stone head). Slow-witted person. Light insult if directed at a youngster, medium toward low-prestige adult, severe toward other adult males.

Laziness:

"zefeq" - Medium severe insult, directed at woman who evades her chores, and who dresses in her best embroidered toga on a weekday.

Hypocrisy:

"semban ïeba" (lit. thief with eyes full of flies): Directed at cunning man who pretends not to see but looks out to take what he should not; like a "blind" thief in the night. Medium severe.

"wälmatta" - vain flatterer, good-for-nothing. Severe insult.

Bastard:

"men abbatu" (lit. who is his father). Very frequently used especially by lower class, even against balky mules to "let off steam", but nevertheless considered very severe insult.

Crossness:

"wähanus feträt" (lit. Creature of Thursday; i.e. the day the animals were created). Directed at animal-like behavior. Severe insult.

Supernatural insult:

"ganänam" - full of evil spirits. Severe insult.

Insults of category a) may lead to serious brawls, even kin feuds, for insults against the group are regarded as affecting also the following generations:

[539] "(If the father is hated), the child will not be kissed, when he (the child) speaks, no one will smile".

195 578 Insults of category b) however, may be noisy, sound violent, involve much high-pitched repartee, with the adversaries screaming at each other. But since such individual insults are regarded as a "battle of wits", they rarely even lead to fisticuffs, though, to foreign observers, such encounters seem only a hair's breadth removed from serious bloodshed, and the adversaries seem to lean against each other physically (though now actually). For, even a severe insult is not regarded as a "fighting word", rather as an almost theatrical, almost ceremonial exchange. There may be much waving of a corner of a toga in the opponent's face, as in court. The exchange may end in mutual exhaustion, physically and nervously. The entertainment aspect is not lost on the onlookers, who thoroughly enjoy this and egg on [692] the adversaries. Sometimes curbstone arbitrators ("astaraqi") are appointed to act as "peacemakers".

[554] A person of nobility is not supposed to engage in such public battles of insult, rather employs subtle means of implied antagonism. Even a commoner Amhara may imitate the indirect behavior pattern in a situation of antagonism, e.g. to indicate to a neighbor that he is not wanted, yet without letting the public know it (thus saving face for the neighbor). He may invite him, greet him politely, ask him to wait (standing) while stools "will be brought". When no stools are brought, after some time, the neighbor leaves, never to return. The proverb says:

[539] "So that he will not talk (against us), invite him;
(yet) so that he will not eat, move him about".

In this manner, polite antagonism is indicated, without making a public enemy.

E. Gestures and Postures.

201 Meaningful gestures accompany speech quite often among Amhara, occasionally substitute for speech, though not often. Amhara is too proud of ability for self-expression to forego speech in any but sharp dominance-subordination situations, in which case he may resort to non-verbal signs.

Gestures may take the form of signs, signals or symbols, and often emphasize status domination, e.g. noble versus commoner peasant; or patriarchal versus younger generation; or master toward servant.

To symbolize affect, the dominant person may lift part of his toga off his own body and cover the head and shoulders of the subordinate, e.g. a younger person, or a female. This gesture symbolizes protection, shielding, expressed as "gashey" (my shield). Affect can also be symbolized by the "gursha" (described earlier).

201 695 Formal antagonism appears most clearly in court "before the judge" ("bädänya fit"). When appearing on the stand, the speaking adversary folds his toga so that he has an ample piece of cloth available to wave in the face of the silent adversary, and, to emphasize his protest and revolt against injustice, even in the face of the judge until restrained. He may raise his "wager" to emphasize the justice of his case and his certainty as to the outcome; using the following signals:

"I bet honey" - by licking his palm,

"I bet a horse" - extending arms and waving hands to imitate gallop,

"I bet a mule" - by raising hands to ears, indicating long ears of a mule, and moving them up and down.

The judge carefully notes the wagers in his book, since he will receive the wager of the loser, and, except for a "tax" to the governor, can keep most of it, in the old tradition.

201 675 196 Symbolism in commerce serves to give legal validity to a trade agreement, since bystanders thus become witnesses. When buyer and seller agree, the right hands are waved up and down, which attracts attention, then palm touches on palm (with fingers stretched away). This may or may not be reinforced by the verbal oath "Hayle Selassye yemut" (May the emperor die, if I lie). This commercial symbolism is followed especially in important transactions, such as livestock.

201 196 Symbolism in political life takes the form of rythmic handclapping, ("anchchätächchäbä"), not to be confused with Western applause. It is performed as a greeting, as acknowledgement of superordination. It does not follow public proclamation. These are greeted with respectful silence, but women may indicate actual or pretended joy with their joyshout "ellel". Amhara public opinion ("astäyäyät") sometimes signals negative reaction to official proclamations by "murmuring" in a delayed stage-whisper, and though officialdom traditionally pretends to ignore public opinion, it usually employs paid listeners who mix with the public to trace any "murmuring" to its sources. For, in the past, ignored murmurings frequently led to rebellions.

Anger, whether silent or accompanying verbal battles, is signalled by wide opening of the eyes ("afättätä"), or a furious, intent stare ("täfattätä").

201 Directional signs are made by moving eyelids and eyelashes, particularly by nobles or persons imitating their subtle ways. To communicate "get rid of this person", I want to talk to you alone", the eyelids wink up and down ("taqqäsä"); to signal "come out of the hut, I want to talk to you outside", the pupils and eyelashes work in the direction of the door. Men may give such signals as frequently as women.

201 177 The signal of expressing desire to enter consists of knocking with the entire fist ("koräkkomä" - onomatopoetic). Finger-knocking

201 [177] has been introduced only since the Italian occupation.

The gesture indicating sour-bitter taste (which are not differentiated; and collectively called "ärärara"), consists of slowly shaking the head sideways ("täräshäggäshä"); sometimes reinforced by the verbal exclamation of pain, "ayye" or "hayy!".

516 Postures differentiate between the status of the master and that of the servant. The master indicates his "free" status by sitting way back on the stool or bench, straight, in a position which would require special effort to rise and therefore emphasizes that he does not expect to have to jump up at anyone's command. A servant may not sit in presence of the master, or must sit lightly so as to be ready to perform any duty for which he may be called upon at any moment. To indicate respect, a servant carries out his duties on the run (as "on the double" in the Western armies), while the master is present.

The correct posture in sitting is called "kurkum alä", sitting "folded up"; the legs bent at the knees, the feet far back and partly hidden, since it is "rude" to sit with legs stretched out beyond the knee. But the thighs may be spread, especially when seated on a mat on the ground, even in the case of peasant women who wear the anklelength, heavy cotton gown. To sit with legs crossed (Turkish fashion) is frowned upon as the posture of "barya", the Muslim or "pagan" ex-slaves from the Sudan; considered a rude and lazy position by the Amhara. The proper posture of the Amhara, if seated on the ground, is a squatting position, on the hips, never on the heels; feet flat on the ground, knees high and spread, the toga arranged so as to cover the knees and shins even when jodphurs are worn.

201 554 Facial expression of a high-status Amhara (noble, priest, elder) assumes a stoic appearance. The jaw muscles are relaxed, the mandible slightly dropped, the eyes half-closed but alert, breathing very quiet, [195] the voice in even tone (in contrast to the strident whine of the argumentative peasant-gabbar).

201 argumentative peasant-gabbar). The body expresses almost the permanence
554 and immobility of a status, as if the high-status person could not be surprised or dismayed by anything, certain that all things due him will come to him.

516 The famous "Nilotic stance", stork-like, in which the person stands on one leg, resting the foot of the other against the inner knee of standing leg, is found in the Amhara only among young boys, and an occasional, low-class adult.

554 In walking, nobles of the old school walk slowly, somewhat heavily,
481 as if in formal procession. Members of their retinue carry their cane, overcoat, etc. By contrast, laborers carrying heavy burdens walk catlike, largely on the instep, and fairly fast.

F. The Language of the Toga ("shamma").

201 The toga is used in so many different, formal ways by the Amhara to
291 express moods, occasion and social status in the presence of persons of differing social status, that the language of the shamma has been likened to the "language of the buffalo robe" of the Plains Indians of America (footnote 95).

The most common way of draping this usually 6 ft. long, 2-1/2 ft. wide garment can be described as "out-going"; called "tälabbäsä": The toga is draped around the upper body so that it gives a turtleneck effect, the embroidered border extends from the shoulder to the waist. This may indicate that the young wearer is in an out-going, expansive mood, considers himself a gay blade going into town in a holiday mood; when worn this way by an older man, it expresses that he is a sober, respectable citizen, in an optimistic mood, going to meet persons of equal status.

Footnote 95 - Coon, C. S.: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p. 116.

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291 To express a sad mood, the toga is not draped, but let hang full length, a corner even trailing in the dust, another corner slung across the front over the opposite shoulder, and the wearer walks with eyes sadly downcast. This way of wearing it is called "ashnäffäta", cloaking the body from the neck down. The method of careless cloaking symbolizes that the wearer is unhappy, depressed, overcome with the sadness of life.

To express reserve, the person who feels himself superior in the presence of people whom he considers inferior, or strangers, can emphasize his dignity by lifting the turtleneck effect of his draped toga to cover his mouth. This form is called "genteb täkänannobä", connoting pride, so that persons who act proud beyond their station are criticized by this term. But in the presence of strangers, who might be carriers of "buda" (evil spirits, evil eye), which might penetrate into the body through the mouth, this is considered excusable.

To emphasize an even greater degree of reserve, the top part of the toga may be lifted further to cover the nose also. This is called "kofännänä", and a man who makes too frequent use of it is criticized as "abba kofenanä" (lit. father of too much pride); it is also called "täshkärakkärä" (lit. veiling), for only the eyes are left free. This prevents evil spirits from entering through the nostril, while the eyes are regarded as potentially offensive weapons, not vulnerable. This form indicates great superiority, and is therefore limited to men; an occasional woman doing this would be sharply mocked as "mentally unbalanced", unless she walks with her husband who is thus attired, imitating him, e.g. while passing through a strange neighborhood, draped for protection ("tïgonattäfä"). It signals "keep your distance", "don't touch me".

To express great respect, when in the presence of a "great man", (e.g. when appearing formally before a feudal lord, in the old days,

201 among rustics still today), the toga is draped so that the upper part
291 of the body is bare or at least not covered by the toga, while the corner flaps may rest on the slightly raised forearms, possible accompanying the begging gesture of the outstretched palms; this is called "awwärärräda" (possibly from "wor̈ada", district lord to whom one reports). Combining respect with utility, dancers (azmari) often drape this way, since much of the Amhara dance is upper-body, thus left disentangled, and enabling the dancer to lift the loose corners while swaying in tempo of the musical accompaniment.

Before the judge ("bädänya fit"), the toga is partly draped as in respect, with the difference that one corner is left as large as possible; to enable the wearer to shake an accusing toga-corner in the face of the adversary while on the witness stand, or in protest toward the judge while loudly praying that heaven may give "light" to the judge, or while raising one's wager as to the outcome.

When going to church ("beta kristyän") the toga flaps are draped across the chest so that, in crossing to the opposite shoulder, they form the sign of the cross. When on the way to the house of the great man, this drape is used, for then the flaps can be dropped on the forearms, in the gesture of respect, without draping.

Women usually drape the toga so that part of the shamma acts as a skirt-apron ("sherret"). When in an "out-going" mood, the other part of the shamma covers one arm (usually the left) and the other shoulder. When at work, the top flaps are slung over the chest, leaving both arms completely free for work ("asharräti").

291 Besides these expressive drapes of "language of the shamma", there are several utilitarian ways of draping it which communicate merely the work being done at the time, or represent mere patterns of draping for comfort:

291 Men doing physical labor - "boddïna" - lift toga above shoulders to free arms;

- "adägäddäga" - knot toga across chest; wrap-around. (also to tie shammas of debtors to creditors, or prisoners to guard's).

[411] To parry blows - "mäkäta" - wrapping toga around left forearm, as shield.

Preparing for battle - "adägäddäga" (see above): knotting shamma across chest, after wrapping it tightly around the waist.

When cold - "zeqzeq läbbäsä" - doubling a heavy shamma (called "kuta" or "derreb") to wrap oneself in completely, even covering covering head, at night.

When hot - a light shamma of muslin ("nätäla") may be rolled around the head - "tämättämä". Hence, the turban of priests is called "mätämtämiya", a tight wrap-around of the head by muslin.

[535] When dancing - before "däbtära" (scribe-choristers) begin to dance, in church, they first drape the toga tightly ("shäbäsh-häbä"), so that the flaps will not drop from the shoulders during the motion.

[765] In mourning - while dancing the funeral motion, accompanying the improvised eulogy, women approach each other holding their own togas outward and horizontal, like huge wings, (as if they were holding a spear like men dancing the "fukkara" boast dance).

201 291 178 685 Some of these expressive ways of draping the shamma are falling into disuse in the towns where the people are more affected by what passes as "modern dress". However, an interesting increase in one way of draping the shamma can be noticed in recent years: Now that debtors are no

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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291 longer chained to creditors, more frequent knotting-together of the
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685 shamma is taking place, instead.

G. Dance, Chant, Musical Instruments.

535 Amhara dancing falls into three categories: religious dancing, military dance, and the entertainment dance performed by professionals. The first type has already been described in the section on the church.

Military dancing falls into two main categories: the "fukkara" boasting dance accompanied by boasting chant; and the "hotu" loyalty dance accompanied by shouts.

The "fukkara" is the war-boast, before or after battle, and on other occasions, of the individual warrior boasting of himself, sometimes of his kin group. It used to be danced with a spear, now with a stick or rifle. This is held horizontally over the shoulders. During the dance the head moves sideways, right and left. Defiance is shouted at the enemy, be it human, animal, or a supernatural spirit.

In the zar cult, the victory dance ("gurri") of the spirit just after he has entered the body of the possessed, is regarded so much as the "fukkara" type of dance, that the zar gives his identity away by his own version of "boasting" - whereupon the "disease" is diagnosed.

The hotu loyalty dance, by contrast, is a collective dance, most often a jump-dance, in which the multitude of warriors, brandishing their weapons, try to cast fear on the enemy by numbers, sound, and expression of intense loyalty to their common leader. The name itself is composed of "ho", onomatopoetic for shouting, "ta" signifying the collective suffix (all together). The following are common variations:

"Cho - cho" - simple shouting in unison, ("qärärto").

"Yebahalal Jeb-o" - "The hyena will swallow him (i.e. the enemy)."

"Wärdaw sheb-o" - "crow's beak" (i.e. the vultures will feed on the enemy).

"Addis Abäba" - (lit. "New Flower", name of capital) - shout of

loyalty to the central government, since the late 19th century.

"Aya-ho-ho, mätä näw deley" - (lit."Ayahoho, tonight will be my victory), signifying "we'll win yet"; also sung teasingly at weddings.

The "hotu", though a strictly male dance, is often accompanied by the rythmic handclapping ("anchäbächchäbä") of the women; also the female joyshout "ellel"; sometimes also by the "käbäro" drum.

While the individual dance, "fukkara" is most often used at weddings, the collective "hotu" is performed at public occasions such as church parades on Tenqät (Epiphany), St. George's day, etc; also on some of the new civil holidays such as the annual coronation anniversary.

Some observers have regarded the "fukkara" boast dance as more Middle Eastern, and the "hotu" (including the possible equivalent "dankira" leap of the zar cult) as more African. But it is doubtful whether such a distinction can be made.

The entertainment dance, "eskesta", is a shoulder dance performed by either a man or woman, recently more commonly by women. Of all the dances, it seems the most typical Amhara, for the performer if too proud to use hips or legs as southern Ethiopians would. It is performed by "azmari" or similar professionals, wherever crowds gather, e.g. at "inns" near a marketplace. In the dance, the shoulders are moved rapidly in a variety of motions, often circular, with intermittent forward and backward jerks, to the beat of a drum. A teasing element is sometimes introduced by women performers, who thrust their breasts forward and make the cross suspended from the matab neckcord dance on and off the bulging breasts. The performer accompanies the motion with audible gasps of air drawn through the teeth, producing sounds like "hs,hssess,hst,hssessess", hence the name "eskesta". The audience, when moved, loosens up in the

535 shoulders and hisses along ("tekäsha wärräda"). This dance, therefore is often used to warm up an audience before the next performer begins the "zäffän" chant, the high-pitched wailing song of the women.

533 The "zäffän" chant is accompanied by less frenzied shoulder movements, the head raised forward, and the singer chanting "up" at the sky, not forward toward the audience. This gradually changes the performance from the sensual to the spiritual. There are several variations of "zäffän":

"zäffän awärräda" - loud, strident, high-pitched chant, mostly performed by women in public entertainment, in which the audience soon participates as chorus; accompanied by shoulder dance.

"zäffän engorgorra" - softly hummed chant, expressing philosophical sadness. Frequent at portions of the funeral chants and at ecclesiastical chanting of poetry ("genyé") performed by male dabtara.

Professional entertainment singers may be recognized "azmari" hired e.g. for weddings, when they also play such musical instruments as the "masenqo" (single-string violin) and "qrar" (banjo). Or they may be wandering minstrels ("hamina").

The "qena" sung in church by the "däbtära" choristers are rhymes that follow pattern and content of the psalms. Young dabtara compete with each other both as composers and as performers, for their careers depend on the critiques of the old connoisseurs. Little boys begin to chant the syllabic alphabet, as soon as they go to church school, and this pedagogic recitation is called "meleket" or "yäzema melekt" (Geez "malekta"), which may originate from the word for "psalm", or the word for "trumpet" ("mäläkat"). Chants taken from the church are sung by children in a similar manner as Western Christmas carols; "Säba sägäl" (three wise men), "Ähe balu" (let all say Ähe), etc.

533 To European ears the music of the Amhara sounds like a continuous cacophony, like the tuning up of a Western orchestra. But once accommodated to it, the sentiments expressed in the high-pitched chanting, the ecstatic pitch of emotions of the priests and däbtära, is recognized, when they sing for hours the chants they know so well by heart.

One foreign musicologist characterizes the timbre of voice in some Abyssinian chants as "harsh, forced and strident, unlike the singing in Negro Africa which is usually soft and rounded" (footnote 96). But he appreciates the artistry by which boy singers change the register, dropping from the usual falsetto to chest voice, and octave below, then move back into the falsetto; also, the interesting polyphonic technique, in which the second voice sings the melody introduced by the first voice, in the same pitch, but with delayed entry, so that a "canon" or "round" results, which is abandoned toward the end, the two voices ending in unison. Thirds seem to be preferred, though fourths and fifths occur among the voices.

Debtara are always at work experimenting with minor alterations, which may in time accumulate. Furthermore, certain regional specializations exist: Arabic music affects Abyssinian music wherever Muslims live in sizeable numbers, especially in Tigre province, and near the Sudanese border. Here the wailing Arabic chant that breaks off abruptly, has infiltrated.

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533 178 Modern, national Ethiopian music dates only to the 1920's. It includes the modern national anthem and other patriotic songs such as "Lion of Judah". The music, often composed on order, by foreigners or

Footnote 96 - George Herzog, quoted by Leslau: Chansons Harari. Rassegna di Studi Etiopici VI, p. 161, Rome 1947.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

533 resident Armenians, ranges from vague "oriental" melodies to European
178 melodies of the marching variety. But secular songs, grassroots folk-songs, are increasing with the use of public loudspeakers and growing up of a somewhat more modern educated generation singing love songs with less restraint than in the past, such as "yänne shega, yänne qonjo" (my peach, my beauty).

534 Musical instruments are largely divided into two categories in the mind of the Amhara; those used for the church service, notably percussion instruments; and those used for entertainment, notably string instruments, and wind instruments. Drums are used in both categories, however.

The reason percussion instruments predominate in church, is that musical instruments used in church have the role of marking time, in the chant-dances. Moreover, there is no independent instrumental music in the Abyssinian tradition, not even in organized entertainment.

Percussion instruments include the following:

Drum - "nägarit", the huge, barrel-like symmetrical drum over which skins are stretched at both ends, made to accompany rythmic (church) dances. It has a wooden body, 3' to 5' in length. It is considered the aristocratic drum, for in the past it was beaten to assemble the population for war or to hear a royal proclamation. (The modern government publication printing decrees is appropriately called "Nagarit Gazetta"). In the past it was carried on muleback in military expeditions, and preceded the entry of a governor into a province. Since it is heavy, it is suspended from a shoulder strap and carried by the younger men. It is beaten by the flat fingers and half the palm, while the drummer keeps time by swaying his upper body.

534 Kettledrum - "kəbäro", somewhat smaller drum, made of wooden bowl with a skin stretched over the mouth. It takes a variety of shapes, but unlike the nägarit it is not symmetrical, one end being smaller than the other. Sometimes it is a frame with beatable skins at both ends. It is used both in church and for less aristocratic occasions, such as entertainment dances, chants of warriors. Usually it fits into niches used as windows in church, or hangs under the overhanging roof of a private hut.

Sistrum - "sänasel" (onomatopoetic) resembles the ancient Egyptian variety. It is usually cast from brass through the cire perdue method. The sides are then perforated many times. Round, resonant metal discs glide on wires that connect the two sides. They are made of sheet metal, now often cut from tin cans. The grip is of brown or black wood. The whole instrument does not usually exceed 8".

Gongs - "däwäl", traditionally were of phonolithic stone suspended in front of churches, used as church bells to call to services. They are beaten with another rock or batter of iron, either called "däwäl mäncha". The Falashas, being ironsmiths, possess a flat iron disc almost a foot in diameter, which they suspend from a string from a finger, and beat with an iron spike, achieving a distinct gong sound.

String instruments used in public entertainment, include:

Lyre - "qerar" or "kerar", banjo-like, with 5 or 6 cords made of prepared goatgut (hence the name, from "kurrara", stretched). It takes various forms and sometimes

resembles a guitar. It is the most common string instrument in Abyssinia. Some observers think it recalls the antique Mediterranean lyre. The sound chamber consists of a wooden basin (sometimes a castoff Italian pot), over which goatskin is stretched. This instrument is usually played by women, accompanying ballad-like love songs, etc. All the strings are struck at the same time, with a small, hard, thin, flat piece of leather, giving a harmonious sound. The instrument is used at weddings, or to attract customers to inns - for it is a "female instrument. It is also common in the Sudan.

Single-string violin, or "spike fiddle" - "masengo". The sound chamber consists of a diamond-shaped wooden frame, over which a specially tanned goatskin ("mälägoniya goda") is stretched tight. The wood is preferably from the jasmin tree ("tänbälal") (jasminum floribundum, the berries of which are used to make ink). The semicircular bow is spanned with black horsehair ("chera"), hence playing this instrument is called "chera tächäwwätä", shortened to "cherawwata". Only males play the masenqo, usually male professional azmari, to accompany singing. At big feasts, as many as a dozen may play together. The music played on it is usually very high-pitched, accompanying female or male singers. Subject matter includes Songs to the Emperor, feudal war songs, etc. It is considered by the Amhara, more typically Amhara than the kerar. It actually does resemble the Arab "Rabab" (footnote 97).

Footnote 97 - Rohrer: Beiträge zur Materiellen Kultur der Amhara, 1932, p. 157.

534 Harp - "bäganna", has 10 to 12 cords, played with a soft stroke and special fiddlestick ("yäbäsenna mäncha") of horny skin. It is reserved for rare and important occasions, when it is played before high clergy on religious occasions, or before royalty. Identified with King David, it is used to accompany spiritual and philosophical chants and laments. But in recent years it has been used more often in public entertainment in larger cities.

Wind instruments are not much used in organized fashion.

Fife - "washint", is a simple affair of bamboo, about 20 inches long, usually with four holes, producing as many tones. They are made and played by boys guarding cattle. The music has a bubbling quality that is believed to sound like running water, hence is attractive to the cattle and sheep. "Shäbäqo" bamboo is preferred. Sometimes an impromptu orchestra is formed by boys, when some bring drums to play in accompaniment.

Fife - "embilta", a larger, thicker fife of bamboo pipes, employing no stops, played by blowing strongly across a mouth hole (similar in principle to the Western pipe organ). Each pipe gives a single, true, tone, determined by its dimensions. Three or four different pipes are usually used together - though several blowers are then necessary. This creates a polyphony of high-pitched tones, very popular, used in accompanying chant-dances in public entertainment. It is widespread in the lowlands also, of Tigre and Eritrea.

Trumpet - "källäkat" is relatively little used. Made of horn or wood, it blows long, solemn tones, used by cattle herders to call the flock, or, by an occasional rustic individual to lead

534 a cross-country church procession on a saint's day. But modern (leftover Italian) brass trumpets are replacing it for the latter use.

2. Play and Entertainment.

A. Games and Leisure-time Activities.

524 Games are differentiated largely on the basis of age: little boys' games are largely of a hazing type or of imitation of adult behavior; adolescents' games are predominantly competitive; adult games are largely leisure pastimes. In this adult-centered culture, children's games are at the same time freely experimental and directed toward growing up as fast as possible; while an adult would be ashamed to continue playing childish games or to compete with adolescents.

Small children, especially boys, are involved in hazing activities, [865] "bedder", early in life. If they suffer a relapse into "Bedwetting", they are publicly shamed by the older children, and made to urinate publicly into a little trench. Small children are sometimes frightened by older ones with the bullroarer, ("zezzeta" - onomatopoetic), or by imitation of the sound of the hyena at night. Frequency of contact between older and younger children is especially prevalent during the "shut-in" rainy season. At this time, boys age 5 to 12 fight battles, sometimes using waterpistols ("tiqqosh") made of bamboo, with a wooden syringe. When the game gets rough ("entush") they knock each other down with knees (the seat of strength in Amhara opinion) and feet.

Boys of 8 or 9, who aspire to deaconhood at the next New Year holy days, are mock-examined by older boys who have achieved that status. The candidate must carry each of them several times around the churchyard, and must recite and chant liturgical prayers for them for hours. The candidate is punished for any disobediance by being pinched, tied up and otherwise abused.

Little girls play milder games, such as dancing rounds with other

524 girls, or two girls holding each other by the hand and spinning like a top. Sometimes somewhat older girls meet boys with whom they have established an experimental "joking relationship" ("tawaza"), and play house, building little huts out in the fields during the dry season, within the hamlet in the rainy season. This free experimentation comes to an end just before adolescence, when their relationships become more formal and more supervised.

Imitations of parental activities fill much of children's playtime. Little boys play "farmer", weave rainhoods of reeds and "broadcast" seeds (actually pebbles). Little boys begin to practice the "art of insult" (brain, not only brawn) e.g. such ethnocentric insults as the following:

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	Question: "Where are you from?"
Reply: "Begemdir",	Response: "Land of shysters and quibblers."
"Shoa",	"Land of liars and traitors."
"Gojjam",	"Land of sorcerers (buda)."
"Gondar",	"Gossipers and blabbermouths."
"Curagē",	"Land of tricksters."
"Tigrē",	"Land of hotheads."

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The culture's fear of black magic, especially "buda", is reflected in children's games, such as:

A: "Buda, buda, what do you eat?"

B: "Meat" (or, imitating the sorcerer's hidden language, "cakes").

A: "What do you drink?"

B: "Blood" (or, paraphrased, "pure water"). Whereupon boy B howls like a hyena (the "horse" of buda), sprints toward boy A, who flees.

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When no adults are present, boys play games imitating the sex life of animals, sometimes highly imaginary, e.g. the "coitus of baboons" ("ätota beddesh"):

Seated and facing each other, two boys lift each other with their feet,

524 and rock back and forth. This is largely a projection of human
831 activities, in their minds, for they have all seen actual sexual intercourse among domestic animals.

The puzzle of human sexual activities is reflected in boys' riddles:

Question: "On a precipice, two large gourds hang down, What are they?"

Reply: "Woman's breasts."

Question: "A little goatskin bottle, with mouth and fur.(What is it?)"

Reply: "Vulva ("ens").

Question: "In a porridge of sorghum, a potato expands?"

Reply: "Vulva and penis."

Question: "Hardwood that does not break, skin bottle that is not worn out?"

Reply: "Penis and vulva."

524 Since toys are almost never made for children, they must rely on
533 older children for any that they cannot make themselves, e.g. slingshots.
534 The aforementioned flute, "washint", is made by boys age 11 to 12, of a hollow light bamboo into which four holes are bored. The flute is blown into from the right corner of the mouth. The following sounds are distinguished:

a) to keep the cows calmly grazing: extended high-pitched sound (dadada dididi).

b) to keep away the leopard: lower-pitched sounds. (A variation is believed useful to attract the leopard to lure him into a covered pit, onto which the flute is then thrown).

c) to accompany the azmari singer, e.g. at a wedding: high-pitched sound in somewhat minor key, as in wooing chants, to suggest emotion.

d) to accompany the "hotu" jump-dance, eg. on holy days as Temqat: a hacked, staccato sound is produced (dada'dodo dada).

526 Organized teams and organized competition characterizes the games of adolescents, especially boys. In ritual battles (aforementioned) and in the "ganna" game, team-moieties ("buden") are formed ("tabmaddäna" - divided into teams), but every participant usually tries to select a personal opponent ("budäna") in the opposite team.

The "gänna" game, played on Christmas, at the public racecourse or meadow, is played with bent, hockey-like sticks ("ganna"), which are used to try to knock a baseball-sized ball, made of skins or linen, beyond a line. The ball may be picked up, thrown in the air and caught at the same spot, to confuse the opponents. The art of insult is freely practiced at the same time, such as: "cho - you play like a castrated ox". The game may last for 2 or 3 days, being resumed every morning.

The "kwas" game, played by boys throughout the dry season, somewhat resembles baseball. The ball is made of goatskin strips, sometimes with mule dung placed inside "to give it bounce". Two teams are formed, with equal distribution of big boys and little boys on each side. The goalkeeper can stop the ball only with his hips, so that he must twist his body so he can see where the ball is coming from. The ball is knocked with a stick, and there is running from base to base. The game is often accompanied, preceded and concluded with formal "boasting", in imitation of the adult, "fukkara", but differentiated as "chäwata" (play). Shouts of "zärraf" (lit. pillage, the traditional shout of conquering soldiers entering a village), encourage the attacking team. There is also an umpire ("achawach": lit. master of ceremonies).

In preparation for ritual mock battles, e.g. on the Feast of the Cross, and on Transfiguration (see section on religious calendar), teams of adolescents gather, with their long whips. On less formal occasions, battles can begin with dirty looks, jostling, insults, leading to

526 organized battles similar to the "rumble" of Western culture; but Amhara adolescents are not marked as delinquents, by such activities, especially on the ritual occasions.

The "guks" game of horsemanship, on the feast of Temqat enables late adolescents and young men to show their prowess, on a ritual occasion; this is socially approved, for in gallopping and throwing the imitation lances, in their military maneuvers, they symbolize their readiness to defend their society, their kinsmen, their district, and the Coptic Abyssinian church, i.e. the "faith". The game itself has been likened to the "jarid" game of Arab culture (footnote 98).

524 Among leisure-time games, played by adults of either sex, and also by adolescents, the most popular is the pebble game called "gäbäta". It is played with a single partner, and there is little intensity to try to win, rather pleasure in shared activity, in a leisurely fashion: Two parallel rows of grooves are carved into a flat rock, 6 grooves in each row. The two players place 4 pebbles in each hole, so that each owns 24 pebbles in 6 grooves at the start. The game consists of passing the little pebbles ("gebeta") from hole to hole ("gudagwad").:

Illustration 1: Positions in the Pebble Game "gäbäta".

Player:

A	o o o o o o	⟵ direction of play
	1 2 3 4 5 6	
B	o o o o o o	⟶ direction of play

B begins by removing one pebble from position B6, palms it in his hand. He then takes one pebble from the opponent's position A6, placing it into the A5 groove; he then takes from A4, places pebble in A3
A2, " A1
B1, " B2
B5, " B6 ;

then he completes position A6 by placing in it the originally palmed

Footnote 98 - Dawson: The Date and the Arab. Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, 1950, p. 37

524 pebble, thus becoming "owner" of position A6.

Now it is the turn of player A, who can begin anywhere he likes, palming one of his own pebbles, and proceeding as above until he conquers one opponent's position, alway proceeding counterclockwise. There are many variations to this basic procedure. E.g. it is possible to become "partial owner" of a position, in which case the dispute is settled by chance, e.g. by hiding a pebble in one hand and letting the other guess which hand hides it. The player who wins all the grooves wins the game. The loser is called "ayt bälla" (lit. the rat ate him).

This game is regarded as harmless, unless a person becomes so addicted to it that he wastes all his time at it.

273 517 Entertainment of adults, especially in the towns, often involves considerable consumption of barley beer, fermented honeymead, and even "araqi". The proverb interprets stages of behavior, in drinking, as follows;

"First cup : Rat", (When one drinks eagerly, like a rodent);

"Second cup : Bee", (When there is buzzing among pleasantly agitated drinkers);

"Third cup : Monkey", (Grimacing, laughing foolishly, sweeping arms);

"Fourth cup : Dog", (When drunkards howl, without control, or depressed).

275 487 There are three types of public facilities for relaxation, found in the market-towns; The teahouse, the beer-house, and the mead-house, all of which are sharply differentiated:

The teahouse ("shay bēt") is fully respectable; it is for men only, no women are supposed to enter it, and even the waiters are male. It is patronized by traders, clerks, minor officials (for high officials and nobles would not want to be seen consuming food or drink in public), police detectives, etc. Talk is largely of business matters and events of the day. The tea is consumed with a great deal of sugar dissolved in it, and a sweet condiment called "fūl", probably of Arab introduction,

275 is served with it. Traders and travellers often stop by during the day,
487 and the place usually closes not long after sundown.

275 The barley-beer house ("talla byet") is still fairly respectable
487 for people of commoner and lower classes, but not for respected elders
265 or priests. It is operated by women, either matronly married women or "unattached girls", i.e. divorcees. It serves not only as dispenser of beer, but also serves full meals, so that the travelling trader is dependent on it. For as little as Eth. $0.25 (U.S. 10 cents) the patron may obtain a minimal meal of enjara bread, 2 liters of talla beer, and all the roast chickpeas and roasted barley ("qolo") he can eat; meatstew costs more. Often such a restaurant contains an extra room with a bed for the weary traveller to sleep in, and such an inn is then called "meshta byet" (lit. accommodation house, from "mesht" or "mest", meaning wife), for the traveller has no difficulty in securing a temporary wife for the duration of his local stay, among the divorcees.

275 The mead-house ("taj byet") does not even have the minimal
548 respectability of the talla byet. It is operated strictly for entertainment, i.e. drinking and sexual pleasures. For the owner, usually a clever, middleaged townswoman, it represents one of the few ways of amassing capital and becoming one of the wealthiest local citizens. She controls her waitresses much as a madam would. To protect herself from brawls, which are not infrequent, she also employs, - though they are kept out of sight so as not to frighten off customers, - one or several husky bouncers. The proverb says:

[illegible]

"In the prostitute's house,
all the time a scuffle."

For, even in prostitution a pretense of "temporary wife" is made.

275 Even a prostitute would be ashamed to engage in one-night affairs, to
548 engage in sexual activities coldly without at least some minimal affect. She is paid for her services after consumption, or tries to take the man's money while he is asleep, but will not aggressively demand advance payment. Therefore, customers who may develop an interest in the same waitress-prostitute, not rarely fight for her affection, temporary though it is. No prostitute would take more than one man in one night, not only because this would be very shameful, but also her competitors would beat her for such unethical behavior. In the past the "täj bet" was publicly advertised by a red cross painted on the outside wall. During the Italian occupation, protests of the International Red Cross caused removal of this sign, but one still encounters it in remoter areas.

273 The use of an even stronger drink, "arägi" (arrak), the only
[77] distilled drink among traditional beverages, is very likely of Arab introduction; It is on the increase in towns because of exposure to strong European liquor during the Italian occupation, but is not made or consumed in the rural hamlets, not even on feasts. In the towns it is made, usually to fill specific orders, by the wives of soldiers or policemen, to add to the meager income of the husbands, whose salary of Eth$20 - 25 is lower than that of the unskilled laborer (Eth$30 - per month). It is produced from "enselal" caraway seeds, gesho (leaf f[illegible] fermentation), semi-fermented barley ("beggel") and dagussa grain, [illegible] of which are crushed, mixed with water, dagussa plant is added, and the fermented mixture is boiled for 10 hours, distilled through a [illegible]anbo reed. The finished product is carried, in a European glass bottle, to the customer directly, e.g. the owner of the "täj bet", and is consumed, because of the higher price, by semi-educated clerks and officials with good salaries, or travelling traders or army or

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

273 police officers. The visiting peasants, who have just sold the harvest, stick to mead, which, for their taste, is alcoholic enough and expensive enough.

The person who pays for a round of drinks is loudly lauded as "elephant", king of African animals. The "taj bet" is usually the gayest place in town, well-lit, open until very late at night, equipped with nimble waitresses who, contrary to the usual pattern of female behavior, lightly flirt with the customers, in a semi-childish (therefore subordinate) way.

273 177 In recent years, exposure to European alcoholic beverages in the cities had led to attempts to replace thehoney used in "taj" with cheaper sugar, and to add other ingredients to raise the alcoholic content. This is done in many mead-houses in Addis Ababa, but is rejected by the traditional conoisseur, especially in provincial towns like Gondar. Even in the city this is regarded as dangerous, for no one knows just what the experimenter may have added. One common police case is the adding of gasoline to city barley-beer or mead, which competitors sometimes have placed into the competitor's brew so as to ruin her business. An early effect of the exposure to European alcoholic beverages was reported humorously in the 1920's, when the private brewer of the powerful provincial lord Ras Hailu of Gojjam attempted to champagnize the traditional mead (footnote 99).

276 Consumption of tobacco ("tembaho"), which is called "drinking tobacco" if smoked, is still regarded as forbidden by the Abyssinian Coptic clergy, and is therefore rare among Amhara, except for those modern-educated individuals who have been abroad. The latter smoke cigarettes turned out by Ethiopian government monopoly in Addis Ababa.

Footnote 99 - Griaule, M.: D'un Mode Aberrant de Conservation de l'Hydromel au Godjam. Journal de la Societe des Africanistes, IV, Fasc 2, pp. 278-284, Paris, 1934.

276 The Muslims, who smoke freely, even in the provincial towns, especially in the Arab or Muslim-operated teahouses, follow a variety of ways of consuming tobacco. Some use a brown snuff tobacco, "senqan" or "surat"; a few even chew "chat", a stimulant drug chewed in the original leaf, which is far more common in southern Ethiopia. This is held in low prestige by the Amhara, who associate the consumption of traditional tobacco and chat with the customs of Shanqalla and Sudanese ex-slaves. In the 1870's the fanatically orthodox Emperor John, who later died fighting the invading Muslem Mahdi, even forbade the raising of tobacco, but since then it is grown again in small patches in and near towns.

517 The high point of traditional entertainment and recreation is still the traditional feast, the "deges" (or "gebber"), featuring special material enjoyments such as raw beef and fermented honeymead; and such emotional enjoyments as watching amari performers do their shoulder dance, their high-pitched song-chants, to traditional musical accompaniment; and, perhaps, receiving a "gursha" from the "great man" (telleq säw). On less intense occasions, picnics in the countryside and recreational promenading ("shershér"), are still the major forms of adult recreation in the long dry season.

275 Not only shame, but also fear, keep many peasants and townsmen out of the "täj-bet". Many a peasant, intending merely to take one drink, stays until after dark, then, fearing robbery on his way home or the sharp tongue of his wife, succumbs to the "consolation" of the waitresses; and wakes up the next morning without any of his harvest money. Therefore, travellers prefer to lodge with an "unattached woman", whom they may encounter at a beer-house (tälla bet) and who will serve as temporary wife.

B. Sex in Amhara Culture.

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548 The extension of the concept of "temporary wife" to prostitution has already been touched upon in connection with the entertainment aspect of sex. It is this extension which imposes on this activity a characteristic culture pattern, involving the "unattached woman's" hoping to find another husband, and meanwhile serving transient travellers with food, shelter, and even some wifely affect. In return for this partial constraint, the culture pattern rewards the "unattached woman" prostitute with certain minimal respectability. She may actually break the curse of barrenness of a first marriage by bearing a child, and thus finding it easier to find another husband. She also has the chance to experiment in sex, learning from travellers, and teaching the local townsmen and peasants. Most terms meaning prostitute are therefore matter-of-fact, and not insulting ("shärmuta" - the most polite reference, regarded as an Arabic loanword; "galänota"; "amänzera" (lit. recipient of the seed); "lagärbaga" (lit. "to the whole country", public woman). However, references to "loose personality, e.g. "mäsessenya syet" are insulting.

834 A strong constraint placed on the temporary wife - prostitute, as on any other Amhara, is against her sexual intercourse with a Muslim. Infraction of this rule would bring immediate and severe ostracism. Since many of her potential clients are travelling traders, many of whom are Muslims, the temptation is strong to ignore that rule. But if she does, she can seek reinstatement in Amhara-Coptic society, which she is considered to have renounced in consummating a union with a Muslim, by appealing penitently to her confessor, who may then agree to re-baptize her, which is considered necessary.. This will lift the ban of ostracism against her, on her social level.

This religious ban against sexual intercourse with a non-Copt

834 occasionally affects non-prostitutes also. Arab traders, particularly, like to joke with Coptic Amhara women when the latter come to their stores; such as teasingly to refuse to hand over goods after purchase has been made, or, if the customer finds the price on a desired item too high, suggesting that payment might be made "another way". These fixed stores, located near the daily or Saturday markets, feature luxuries rather than what are considered necessities; e.g. sandals, tea, sugar, raisins, necklaces, imported chocolate, etc. A woman deserted by her husband, or divorced, might succumb. On the other hand, Muslim women are much more segregated from menfolk, so that there is little opportunity for an Amhara male to break the rule with a Muslim female.

836 Virginity ("dengel") is expected of girls at first marriage, which occurs about the age of 14 or 15. If she is found by the husband not to be a virgin, and he feels sure of it and insists on his rights, he can divorce her, or go to court against her kinfolk claiming damages as high as Eth$200 - 300. This is rare, however, for at that age most girls are too young to have had much opportunity for complete sexual

584 intercourse. The courtship, apart from the above-described occasions during watch in the fields and on festives - when they are very formal -, consists of what adults condescendingly and smilingly refer to as "addarrat", love-whisperings, considered adolescent, during which the boy and girl alternate between childish whisperings and playful hitting at each other. The term is not used for love-making of adults or married couples.

587 Very different is the courtship of the girl after her first divorce, which frequently occurs when her personality matures, often while she is still in her twenties. She prefers an experienced lover.

587 The proverb says:

[539] "He who knows not how to kiss,
his nose he will blow on you."

The divorcée often develops strategy and techniques to win a man of her choice: She may give him a ring to remind him of her when he is away from her; when he visits her, she feeds him "ergo" (thick buttermilk), so he will be sleepy and remain at her house, rather than go to his men friends to gamble. Women have a proverb about men:

[539] "Like a child, (he is attracted) by the ring,
like a cat, (he is attracted) by milk."

If she has a mother who is a good cook, the divorcee will employ this attraction, saying:

[539] "More than the flesh of the daughter,
(he is attracted by)
the butter (i.e. cooking) of the mother."

[832] When this fails, she may enlist the supernatural aid of love amulets, "mäsläfaqer", purchased from the däbtära scribe with the man's name inscribed, to inspire love for her in him; and in addition to the fee, may treat the dabtara to beer and sweets to enlist his greatest power on her behalf.

588 If her lover is already married, she may nevertheless establish a "sweetheart" ("mushemma") relationship with him, though she has no claim on "damoz" wages or recognition of this temporary wifehood. This is also one of the few cases in which a woman will try not to have children.

548 588 However, a divorcee who was divorced largely on account of her barrenness - and about 25% of the townswomen are barren at least for some years - will try to have a child, even out of wedlock. She will then very likely join the "unattached women" in the streets inhabited

548 588 by them in the towns. Divorcees who are young and still attractive often do not want to return to their kinfolk, especially if they have seen town life and the kin life in remote rural hamlets. Like men doing manual labor, she may go to another district or even province to avoid shaming them. On this street she will usually begin by brewing daily barley beer, or even expand this to a small restaurant-inn performing the housekeeping tasks which she has been taught since early childhood and which are the only trade she knows. Occasionally she will then take in a travelling trader for 3 days or more, cook and bake and brew beer for him, also sleep with him if he desires. She hopes, not rarely with success, that one or the other will make the relationship permanent.

831 Men take great pride in virility, but also in sexual technique. They liken the activity to expertly "riding a horse" ("afärräsä" lit. [842] he rode her like a horse, is used for "defloration"). Men believe that it is frequency of intercourse, each night or several times each night, that brings conception. The popular, vulgar name for coitus is "bädda" (related to "bädäbbädä", he beat, whipped; shock with fever). Variations in sexual technique are referred to as "mett" (lit. hits). An impotent male is mocked as "alecha" (lit. sauce without pepper).

There is a sharp distinction between references that are "rude", consisting of direct references to sexual organs and activities; and veiled language used to refer to such matters, if at all, before an elder, priest, or upper-class person. The former is referred to as "äafär gal" (lit. light matters), connoting "shameful matters". This includes such direct names as "gela" for penis ("jälla" is even more vulgar), "äägela ferey" (lit. fruit of the penis) for testicles, "ems" for vulva. Curiously enough, overt loud expression of these terms are heard only from little boys, e.g. when, during the rainy season, they

831 run to women, carrying ferns (symbolic of the vulva), and tease them with shouts of "ems anqetqet" (quivering vulva).

Polite references to sexual matters usually employ biblical terminology, requiring at least some formal, traditional education. They include such terms, wholly or partly from the old Geez language still used in liturgy, as "abalä zär" (lit. master of the seed) for male genital organs in a generic sense; "bellet" (lit. divisions) for differences between male and female sex; "akalat" (lit. part of body) for male and female, or "affärät sega" (lit. flesh of modesty).

[793 834] Coptic priests are not supposed to indulge in sexual intercourse even with their wives the night before they are to officiate in church, and they therefore avoid sleeping on the same "alga" (bedstead) that night.

834 Modesty of body exposure, particularly of women, is the general pattern, though children may be barely clothed in ragged shifts leaving much skin bare (see life cycle, etc.). In fact, deliberate exposure of the body is regarded as a sign of madness, and this is the popular reaction to Western pictures of "bathing beauties" in swim suits. When bathing, persons will join members of their own sex and go to secluded places in the river. On the feast day of Temqät, (Epiphany), some rustic men strip and swim in the pool blessed by the priests, but women do not. Breasts may be visible during nursing, but if there are strangers around, they will be covered to prevent any possible evil eye from drying them up.

832 Love magic is widely and strongly believed in, particularly since it is supplied by the quasi-church functionary, the däbtära scribe. He is first called upon to write amulets, which are still respectable and, can be worn in outwardly visible containers, by women, for no one can know that the amulet is not directed against the devil. But the magic activities of the däbtära, secretly, go far beyond that.

832 Men, particularly young men, are also among his loyal customers.

The dabtara may be called upon to embark upon a magic strategy designed to bewitch a person of the opposite sex so as to fall in love with the client, and also to render the beloved impotent or frigid to all rivals. On a moonlit night, or when unobserved, the dabtara will go to bush or field to seek a certain root, then write the magic bann on a piece of linen, including the names of the persons to be joined in the love bewitchment. This bann is then read over the root as many as 49 times. The root is then chewed, and the masticated paste is carefully preserved for application as soon as possible, to the skin and clothing of the beloved. To do this, tactics such as feigning anger at the beloved and spitting the paste at her so she will not suspect, may be resorted to.

To render a beloved faithful and thoroughly frigid to all rivals may require an even more difficult strategy. The ideal method is to wipe her vulva, preferably the vagina, with the cloth that contains the magic bann, on the pretext of cleaning her after coitus. Conversely, a woman employing this magic may use the cloth to wipe his genitals after coitus, to render him impotent with other women. If the bewitched finds the cloth, he or she can break the spell by washing it in a running river that contains fish. Even if not all of the ink or dye comes off, if fish can nibble at it, it is believed that the spell is broken and carried off.

There are many variations of this basic procedure. Some dabtara "prove" their power to sceptical clients by "testing" the efficacy of the bann and the paste. They may agree to try it out on one of the "unattached women" that earn a living by brewing daily barley beer. They enter her "talla byet", order beer, and the dabtara, apparently
55 chewing on an olive twig preparatory to polishing his teeth with it, which is general common procedure, spits out what the woman believes

832 to be ends of the twig, actually magic paste, "accidentally" hitting her. They pay for their beer, and leave. The next day, the dabtara takes his skeptical client past the same beer-hut, and lo and behold, the woman calls out an invitation to them, and refuses payment for the beer consumed. The client is now convinced.

This love magic is done secretly because it is considered highly unethical. At least the dabtara is expected to "release" the person "helplessly bewitched" after a while, and not leave the victim in this condition forever.

The dabtara is believed to know, from books on magic, not only the efficacy of barns and plants, but also of animals. His favorite animal is believed to be the chameleon ("zalabada"), particularly in love magic, ordered by women. The animal is dried, crushed to powder, and the woman then mixes this with her urine. She must read the formula out loud, containing her name and the name of her husband or the man she wishes to hold against all rivals, then throw the mixture in the air - to be carried by the winds and spirits.

751 The dabtara is believed also to have medicinal magic. Some "careful" men, before going to the adventures of the mead-house ("tej-bet"), go to his house to drink a magic potion to protect them from venereal disease that night.

828 When a woman consistently acts like a man, or a man like a woman,
838 it is believed that there is some biological "mistake of God". In the case of a woman, she is likely to be blamed and even insulted, called "mannish" ("wandawande"). This term is used if she acts independent, takes interest only in masculine weapons and activities, and speaks in hard, insubordinate ways. If she is physically a tall, powerful virago, she is called "wandarad" (lit. male-female), a female with too much

828 838 masculinity.

Male transvestites are more often pitied than blamed, for the populace feels even more certain that this is a biological "mistake of God". For, they argue, a woman might try to fool people and assume male prerogatives, but what male would want to surrender the privileges of being a man? He is called "fenafent" (lit. hermaphrodite) and his male organs are believed to be sadly deficient in structure, despite visible male secondary sex characteristics.

This transvestite usually dresses in a woman's embroidered cotton dress or skirt, drapes his toga (shamma) like a woman, likes to work at embroiding the green adornment of a woman's dress, does women's chores, following them at their daily occupations and social gatherings. He dislikes the company of men. Transvestites are relatively rare, and they live as individuals, not forming a society of their own, for they are tolerated. Only their kinfolk are ashamed of them, so they leave them and go to live in another province, (like a tailor unwilling to shame his kin by doing manual labor). Women tolerate a transvestite "like a brother"; men are not jealous of him even though he spends all his time with the womenfolk. Often the transvestite is an unusually sensitive person, quick to anger but intense in his personal likings, sensitive to cultural diffusion from the outside world, expecially those carried by Arab traders; and Muslim Arab traders are often the only male social contacts he tolerates.

3. Expressive Physical Arts.

531 Physical arts, like their material culture, are little developed among the Amhara, compared to their elaborate spiritual culture. If their life cycle gives any clue, it seems that the explanation lies at least in part in the end of free experimentation at the onset of adolescence, after which the experimentation is fettered into lines ordained by the Coptic church. Especially fine art, is considered exclusively within the domain of the church. This leaves little beyond body care and ornamentation for expression of physical arts, and even [302] this is partly dedicated to religion, such as the rationalized plucking of pubic hair of the woman, and the fullest expression of body arts on the occasion of church festivals.

171 It is also interesting to observe how patterns of the Middle East and of Africa are so evidently drawn from and synthesized in the traditional Amhara pattern of expressive physical arts, particularly in body care and ornamentation.

A. Body Care and Ornamentation.

515 [312] Washing in the dry season is difficult, since water is scarce and there are no wells. However, with some little effort, water can even then be obtained by digging in the riverbed, since the water table is high; this is what travellers do. Near towns the latter effort develops into a business, for water carriers, employing women as cheap labor to carry the water in their clay pots uphill to the town, charge 5¢ [548] (Ethiopian) per potfull of water. Only the "unattached woman" who has a cash income from beer-brewing or temporary wife - prostitution, can afford this, and usually buys a potfull of this muddy water every day during the long dry season, to wash herself and her clothing regularly and frequently, at a time when the fully respectable Amhara housewife goes unwashed (except for hands and private parts). Divorcees looking for husbands and professional women alone feel the need for daily

515 washing of the body and frequent washing of clothes, and an individual housewife who takes it upon herself to wash more than expected is noticed as different and suspected as possibly being not as respectable and innocent as she might like to appear.

388 In washing, especially of clothes, a soapwort ("endod") (pircunia abyssinica) is gathered from wild bushes the location of which is carefully remembered, for they are not planted. The yellow fruit is dried and crushed, on a flat rock above the river or in it when the water is shallow. It is mixed with water, so that a greenish-white foam results. The fingermarks, resulting from the mixing and gathering of the foam, can be seen on rocks where the sun has dried the remnant.

[574] Dry grass is used as toilet paper, usually held in the left hand.

515 302 Women fumigate their bodies frequently, in the dry season because water is short and hard to come by; in the rainy season, after bathing in the brook or river, to "get rid of the river odor". For, especially at the beginning of the rainy season, the rivers are muddy and carry much smelly debris.

There are 3 different, major kinds of fumigation wood ("wätis enchät"); Domestic incense gathered in the woods by commoner women are "abalo" and "täjo" (Rhamnus straddo); noblewomen and wealthy women aiming at prestige despise domestic woods, and insist on imported incense, primarily "etan" (frankincense), more expensive but freely purchasable on all markets because it is used regularly in the church, during services.

302 Plucking out of pubic hair, by means of ashes held between the fingers, was considered one of the most important duties of feminine hygiene. Men might shave, though not pluck, their pubic hair, if they desired to do so for special "cleanliness". This procedure of plucking

302 was required of females past puberty, i.e. women of marriage age, and they were not supposed to substitute the less efficient method of shaving. The proverb says;

[539]

"To a man who plucks out,
to a woman who shaves (pubic hair),
forgive He (God) will not."

However, in the recent change situation, possibly since the spread of the European razor blade, plucking is becoming a lost art among the younger generation; and, while women now shave their pubic hair, men let it grow naturally as most of them apparently have always done.

515 The continuous polishing of teeth ("mewachä") has already been mentioned. This is one of the few activities of body care in which even men indulge as continuously as women. The reason is that it is not regarded as "for cleanliness" (which is considered less necessary for men, in a culture which regards women as "dirty"), but as "polishing" and "sharpening" this equipment of nature for powerful use, much like birds whet their beaks, readying them for action. The polishing is done with a hardwood twig, the ends of which are masticated first, and and motion is upward and downward, so that the upper gums receive considerable massage also.

302 Nails are given little attention, except in the case of the bride, whose nails are trimmed usually a day before the wedding, so that she will not be able to scratch the bridegroom when he has to use force to deflower her. Her nails are cut so short that not infrequently the skin is cut, and hot butter is applied, to heal them and also render the fingers caressingly smooth.

Reddening of palms, fingers and soles of feet is feminine procedure in preparation for holy days and festivities. The most common cosmetic used for this purpose is called "ensosella" (Impatiens tinctore), a

302 golden red stain obtained from the root of this bulbuous plant which grows wild. This is done by young girls and respectable married women, as well as "unattached women".

Shadowing of eyelids, however, is the specialty of divorcees and "unattached women". It is done by means of antimony ("kull"), mixed in powdered form with vegetable oil, and applied with a simple grass brush (much as in ancient Egypt).

304 Tattooing ("neqsat") is also a special attraction made use of almost exclusively by divorcees who want to attract another husband; as they themselves say "for beauty's sake". Since it is a mark of [826] beauty to have a long neck, tattooing aims at emphasizing this feature, and a concentric series of necklaces is carefully tattooed on the neck from ear to ear and from the collarbone until part of the way up the cheek. Seven hatched lines of this tattoo can cost as much as Eth$3-4, even in the less expensive provincial towns. The work is done by a professional woman tattooer, and takes several hours. There is pain for about a week thereafter, so that a divorcee usually has it done about two weeks before one of the major holy days in the year which also serve as climaxes of the flirting season, notably Epiphany (Ṭemqat) and Mikael. The freshly applied tattooing will then be noticed as an innovation by men looking over the eligible women, and as conversation piece invite the approach of the male. Tattooing fades, especially on dark skin.

Tattooing of the gums is also popular among divorcees, to heighten the whiteness of the teeth, and is curiously called "ṭers ṭequrat" (lit. blackening of the teeth), (also "guramayle"). Unlike neck tattooing, in which the dye used is usually blue, blackening of the gums, between and just above the teeth, done with soot, achieves a much darker effect.

000 and just above the teeth, done with soot, achieves a much darker affect.

302 Women's coiffure is more elaborate and more regularly attended to than any other part of body care, not only by divorcees, but also by respectably married Amhara women; though the former have it done more often and more elaborately. The work is done by a woman beautician, whose biggest season is before religious holy days. The hair is braided front to back; and the finer the braid the more numerous the braids, the more prestigeful, and the more expensive. The thickest and cheapest braiding costs 25 ¢ Ethiopian, ("nätäla shämo", lit. a half-done hairdo); a medium job costs 50 ¢ ("derb"); a fairly good job alternating one thick with one thin braid, called "sereng" costs 75 ¢; the thinnest, finest braids, "gechen", in which no fluffy hair is left between or above the braids, costs Eht $1.- (in Gondar), and takes several hours. Sometimes a slight variation of this hairdo leaves a horizontal, thin braid of hair across the upper forehead. The hair at the end of the braid, sticking out over the base of the skull, is left fluffy, ("jofiofe"), because the men like to caress the nape of the women's neck, and the hairdo carefully leaves this area free.

Butter boiled with the "ades" leaves is placed on the hairdo, and the smell of this is believed by the women to attract the men. When butter is put on unbraided hair, the hair is covered with a cloth. If [301] the hair is braided, a thick ribbon of cotton, sometimes dyed green by a divorcee who wants to advertise that she is available, is tied around the forehead, to catch the flow of butter when it melts in the heat of the day. This ribbon, ("gardaba", or "gälbe", or "mälayo") formerly represented decorations given by their warlord commander to men who served as soldiers, but now women have taken it as their fashion, particularly the divorcees who can experiment more freely than wives, without being criticized. Well-to-do women or divorcees will

302 have their braids undone every two months or so, so the hair can be washed, and then re-braided.

A woman who cannot afford even the minimal hairdo; or one who is in mourning; or one who is being possessed by a jealous "zar" spirit who has forbidden her to braid her hair the usual way may, on the occasion of an approaching holy day, have a single, horizontal, thick braid surround the head, called "zurosh".

Adolescent girls and poor unattached women, on the occasion of an approaching holy day, sometimes give themselves a simple hair innovation by shaving a circle in the center of the skull, leaving a ring of hair; or, as a compromise, shave the rear half of the skull, ("sadulla" or "gamē"). A partly braided skull is the frequent symbol of the adolescent girl, also of the bride; but if a married matron and mother of children were to resume it, she would be criticized for "light conduct" and suspected of immorality. However, zar doctors may order women clients to do this, as the expressed desire of a jealous zar spirit.

Little boys wear a coxcomb of hair (already described in section on the life cycle), called "quncho", resembling the Horus lock of ancient Egypt. Girl children wear, with or without the center lock, a ring of hair symbolic of their sexual differentiation.

Warrior males in the old tradition would wear their hair standing up as stiffly as possible ("anchäbärrärä"), often by means of grease, since this symbolized both ferociousness and disinterest in the finer arts of body care. This is still found in the Wolkait jungle area populated by hunters, and the refuge of bandits.

Beard comes somewhat late to men, usually not before the age of 25, so that a man waits till he is in the thirties and forties before

302 attempting to grow a rich one. This rich beard - though really a full goatee - is called "tïïa aron" (lit. beard of Aaron) in Geez, and is worn with the pride of the elder. Hair is also left on the upper lip, but usually does not grow very long or rich.

301 Ornaments are worn almost exclusively by women, and often include items that also have utility; the metal or wooden pin ("walaba" or "wolba") that is stuck in the tight hair and also used to scratch; an earwax spoon of metal, suspended from the matab neckcord on which are also suspended a small cross, amulets, (keys in modern situation), etc. Necklaces ("qwad") may be of wooden beads. In recent years country women have become very fond of a necklace of imported bluish glass rings ("deba"), which can do double duty in scouring and burnishing the clay pottery. A necklace of 150 of these rings costs 50 ¢ (Ethiopian). Also widespread is the use of a beaded strap with a large button-like center ("shotïïalay") which is worn on the forehead as an amulet, e.g. by women who have sufferred several miscarriages. A metal bracelet, ("ambar") was formerly given to soldiers as decoration, but has now become a women's fashion, worn on upper arms or legs.

B. Fine Arts

531 Artistic expression in the fine arts bears the stamp of the
[566] feudal lord, who alone was in a position to order, encourage and reward individual craftsmen and their apprentices; and of the Abyssinian Coptic church.

The feudal lord commanded decorative arts relating to warfare, such
[282] as the previously described rhinoceros shields. Another common object is the saddlecover ("degus"), made by experienced tanners out of leather, with geometric designs impressed by hot irons; fine leather stitching; and metal ornaments fastened on by the smiths. These designs and ornaments are still found, e.g. on leather cases containing the "dawit" (Psalter) written on parchment made of tanned goatskin.

532 For it is in connection with the church institution that most of the limited Amhara decorative arts received their reason for tolerated existence and even encouragement. The most famous development of these arts are the Abyssinian Coptic churchpaintings. While writing and doodling and drawing is discouraged among the mass of church students because of the fear of misuse of black magic; skilled and supervised artists working within the framework of the church are freed from this suspicion by the sanctity of the church.

The skilled painter of church art, ("se'el sāli") may receive a commission for a specific painting from the priests or from a lay sponsor who may have himself or his deceased parents memorialized by ordering the artist to paint pictures of the sponsors into corners of the saint's painting, though in modestly smaller scale. Some artists have even painted themselves into a corner.

Most paintings are on canvas, in very vivid colors, and are affixed to the hard mud-and-wattle walls inside the church. Apprentices are drawn from upper students in church school, and first practice on silhouettes (footnote 100): Some of these incipient doodles can be seen on the whitewashed outer walls of some of the sturdier churches, e.g. at monasteries. They practice realistic drawings such as saints on horseback, daily life, games and animals, though their paintings will all be realistically portrayed religious scenes. Ink used is often [586] made from the black fruit of the "tämbälal" tree (Jasminum floribundum), but dabtara scribes often use imported blue ink called "nil". A quill ("be'er") was traditionally used for writing and drawing.

Footnote 100 - Griaule, M.: Silhouettes et Graffiti Abyssins. Paris, 1935

532 The actual church paintings are in oils, and they are the most amazing products of Abyssinian art. They are highly formalized compositions, which is the chief concern of the artist, but accuracy of significant detail, expression and action, is also important. (To the foreigner the scenes and persons portrayed at first look naive and childlike.) Some scenes, if showing continuous developments of the story told, are arranged in strips like American comic strips, with the words spoken by the characters written in Amharic near the mouth of the speaker; names of sacred figures are written in Geez, so that no one can misread the story portrayed.

Among frequent subjects are scenes from the Bible, especially New Testament, portrayed realistically even to teardrops and drops of blood; and the lives of saints. Thus, the Abyssinian saint Takla Haymanot is shown one-legged, for he lost the other on a mission. Biblical characters are portrayed as light or light-brown of skin, and [776] God is shown as a long-bearded Mediterranean-or-European-Looking elder. Abyssinians are shown as brown in coloring, other Africans as black with peppercorn hair. One of the most frequent strips is the subject of the voyage of the Queen of Sheba to the court of Solomon, the conception of the prince Menelik I, and his miraculous return after reaching adulthood. This is semi-religious, but acceptable because of the "Solomonic Dynasty" acting as defender of the faith. By extension however, battle scenes showing Abyssinians defeating the Italian invaders in 1896, also "heathen" Shanqalla and Danakil, are occasionally seen and have become common for the tourist trade.

One of the noteworthy symbolisms in these oil paintings is the traditional portrayal of infidels, evil beings, demons, sinners, and torturers of Christian saints - in profile. By contrast, all good Christians are painted full-face. In profile, only one eye is shown, which may be one of the possible explanations - reduction of the power

532 of the evil eye. Another possible explanation is that centuries ago this symbolism was adopted from Armenian paintings; which is not surprising in view of early, though interrupted contacts between Byzantine and Coptic church art, and later on even Persian and Indian contacts (footnote 101). The amazing realism of natural objects may possibly be of ancient origin, and has survived the emphasis on highly formalized composition enforced by the church.

Scenes depicting everyday life ("abore"), or the famous motif showing the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon (mentioned in the Bible), are also painted on gourds, the useful utensil with the smooth surface. But only the well-to-do or noble families can afford this; (also the tourist). Sometimes the secular motifs show figures of famous military warlords and provincial dynastic heads of the past; and simple, incised geometric figures pleasing to the traditional feudal lord whose appreciation of art wanted direct, simple, and realistic portrayal.

4. Amhara Ideas about Nature and Mankind.

887 While his material culture is limited, speculation about the
812 structure, function, and most of all meaning, of the non-material world ranges unfettered in the Amhara culture pattern. Moreover, it is freely expressed, evidencing deep thought, but primarily a wonderment. Often there is a sensitivity that resembles Weltschmerz. This wondering out loud affects most Amhara men when they reach the "shemagalye" (elder) stage, and is one of the most frequently and intensely expressed subjects of their conversation; while at younger ages they are too

Footnote 101 - Nollet, G.: Note (in) Aethiopica, Vol. 3 pp. 191-2 New York, 1935.

887 812 preoccupied with the immediate demands of life. The culture pattern encourages the shemagalye to give much time and effort to this wonderment, for it belongs to his prime role and social duty at this stage: the accumulation of wisdom. The church does not interfere with this wonderment and its expression, partly because it has not bothered to establish dogma on many subjects.

A. The Natural Universe.

821 [[7]] In many ways the Amhara concept of the universe resembles that of early medieval Europe, plus understandable similarities to the Middle East and Africa. Some conceptualizations are elaborations from the Biblical universe, readily recognizable because almost always the Geez language is used to express them. Other conceptualizations are animistic, and usually employ Cushitic terminology.

The universe is regarded as a Ptolemaic system, with the earth as the fixed center around which the sun turns. A distinction is made between the physical world, called simply "arät mazän" (lit. the 4 corners); and the world populated by all creatures, "aläm" (lit. world, in the Geez language). The persistence of this traditional view of a flat earth is so great that even Amhara schoolteachers in the modern elementary schools in the provinces, who are required to teach a spherical earth, privately admit that they don't believe it themselves!

Heavenly bodies and metereological phenomena are interpreted as directly related to human events. Venus is called "astärboshäsh" or "astäryo", (lit. the one who gives hunger and then flees), because the planet appears in the very brief dusk, when the heat of the day is over and one gets hungry. Because Venus is "fleeing and inconstant like a woman", she is given the feminine gender.

821 243 Considerable attention is given to the moon ("chäräqa"), for it is believed to cause the ripening of the grain after the sun has

821 caused the tender plant to sprout; therefore, cereal grains just
[243] beginning to sprout are called "charäqwa". Full moon is a good time
[484] to travel, avoiding the heat of the day especially in the hot lowlands where travel in daytime is almost impossible; also it is safer since approaching or ambushing bandits can be more readily seen than earlier or later in the lunar cycle.

Dawn is personified, regarded as a young day being suckled ("täbba") by the warm and expansive sun, after chill of the night on the plateau.

787 However, the working out of astrological systems is left to the däbtära, who collects his knowledge from "secret" books (in Geez), more often actually from apprenticeship and extracurricular activities while in church school, and uses it in writing especially powerful and expensive amulets.

821 The various kinds of rain are almost as important to the Amhara as snows to the Eskimo and sands to the desert Arab. For the Amhara with his primitive plowing, has to wait until the right kind of light rain loosens the sunbaked soil; and his simple hut is little protection from the heavy rains. He therefore studies clouds and wind direction in relation to topography. The fine and penetrating rain ("zeg yalä zenab") permits the use of the common scratch-plow, and seeding. The heavy rainy season brings downpours, and is also accompanied by strong gusts of wind ("wächafo") and tornadoes. When the thunderstorm ends and a rainbow appears, it seems as if the earth had been reprieved, so that the rainbow is called "maryam mäcäbät" (lit. the jealousy of Mary; i.e. her intercession, in the Geez language). However, when a rainbow occurs while it is still raining, the interpretation is more animistic, for it is regarded as an unnatural event, heralding the moment at which wild

821 animals and evil spirits give birth. It is called "näber wäldalächh" (lit. the leopard has given birth), or "jeb wäldach", (lit. the hyena has had a litter).

823 Volcanic activity, which occurs not infrequently in these mountains that are of young geological age, is interpreted as a threatened repetition of the Biblical event that swallowed Sodom, and is indeed called "Sodom" (another connotation is "greedy").

Geographical directions are taken either from the Gees, e.g. "me'erab" for west (lit. where the sun sets), and "mesraq" for east; or the location of Abyssinian provinces is used: "Semyen" for north, "Azeb" for wouthwest. South is "däbub" (probably Cushitic).

821 Daytime and nighttime are regarded as two very different phases of the universe, altering radically behavior of natural phenomena, [829] animals, plants, even human behavior. The phrase "the night belongs to the hyena" refers not only to the nightly roaming of that animal, but also to the roaming of evil spirits at night, as well as dangerous strangers and actual bandits. As a consequence, even the hospitable, outgoing householder of the daytime changes to sullen and suspicious behavior if strangers suddenly arrive after dark. When he must leave the hut, he carries a weapon, in the rural areas. Even in Addis Ababa, the official curfew at midnight is little resented by the average Amhara, because of this traditional pattern.

574 576 The period of a week is regarded as a time unit with regard to the primary group and kin visiting. When two members of these groups have not seen each other for more than a week, they greet each other with "endemen sänebätu" (lit. how did you spend the week away).

776 825 The world of the spirits, who also inhabit the universe in large numbers, is believed to be in close relationship with the animal

776 kingdom. The hyena ("jeb") is regarded as acting sometimes as the
825 "horse" of the evil spirit or human sorcerer, sometimes as a werewolf-
like creature, when the evil spirit or human sorcerer assumes its form
at night, or makes use of its powerful, hypnotic eyes to "draw the
[155] blood" magically from the living victim. The concept of the magical
hyena is much used in diagnosis and treatment of mental ailments. It
is the most common wild animal, seen and heard at night, and the holes
it burrows under fresh human graves are regarded as visible evidence
of the character of the hyena. The fear in which the spiritual world
is held is symbolized in the hyena; it is whispered about in connection
with suspected ethnic craft groups such as the smiths; or shouted out
loud in military unison ("yabahalal jebo") in challenge.

825 Aspects of the animal world which cause great "wonderment" among
homespun Amhara "shemagalye" philosophers are types of animal behavior
that seem so human. "Bird language" is given a variety of popular
interpretations (footnote 102). Baboons, which are a constant
annoyance and therefore familiar, are wondered about in part because
of their human-like social organization headed by "great man" chiefs
("gämärä").

But it is a great insult to call a person a "creature of Thursday"
(when animals were created, according to the Bible).

186 B. Amhara Ideas about Human Races and Amhara Ethnocentrism.

829 The dualism of the Amhara culture pattern rules also their view
of the human races with which they are familiar, and their own

Footnote 102 - Leslau: Popular Interpretations of Bird Sounds in Ethiopia.
Journal of American Folklore, 1952, Vol. 65,
pp. 361-4.

186 ethnocentrism: "We" includes the brunette racial features of the
829 Mediterranean world, particularly if accompanied by Abyssinian-Coptic religion, for to the Amhara the name "Amhara" is synonymous with Christianity of their own denomination. "They", in their mind, refers to the black peoples of Africa whom they enslaved; but also to "infidel", particularly the Muslims with whom they have been at war so often. They draw many lines within these major ethnocentric divisions, racial, religious, ethnic-occupational and linguistic.. But, in the Amhara attitude, racial differences are among the most fundamental.

829 The skin color of most Amhara is regarded by them as brown
822 ("täym"), considered better looking than the black of negroid peoples, and reflecting "better character". Black color is regarded as symbolic of anything unpleasant, spiritually impure, ("täggorä" connotes "he became shadowed, sad, depressed"). It is a (mild) insult to call a very dark person "täggwara" (lit. "darkie"). European skin color is regarded as "red" ("ogy") - a common African attitude. The concept of "white" coloring connotes paleness ("nätta" (lit. he became pale), undernourishment, sickness, insipid weakness.

822 Color symbolism is followed in dress: The Amhara wear white
291 togas, without coloring more than the border, because the concept white also connotes spiritual purity (by extension of the concept of the absence of physical strength). Yellow ("wäyba") is the traditional color of special mourning, worn only by monastic monks who regard themselves as in a state of perpetual mourning for the passing of Christ from the earth (the dye is made from the bark of the "wayba" tree, hence the name). Green and blue are collectively called "arängwadä", and are not sharply differentiated.

826 Racial ideas also dominate the Amhara concepts of physical

826 beauty: The comparative gerontomorphy of Amhara facial features, even in the case of females, is regarded by them as a mark of beauty, e.g. a long, high bridged nose, which denotes "nobility" and absence of strong negroid strains. In contrast, a flat nose with depressed root and broad nostril is called "kurfäd", which is also used as an insult. The thick lips of the negroid Shanqalla ex-slaves ("känfäräm", lit. full lower lip), especially if at the same time everted ("aheya länboch" lit. donkey lip; or "läm̄bocham̄") are considered marks of ugliness in both men and women. The rare light eyes that crop up among the Amhara are not regarded as special marks of beauty, but as [186] outlandish ("baher̄ ayn", lit. eyes from overseas), for Amhara ethnocentrism is directed also at foreignisms other than negroid traits. [171] The bulging almond eyes popular in other parts of the Middle East are regarded as marks of feminine beauty and feminine "nobility" by the Amhara also.

The spiral peppercorn hair ("barya täsur", lit. slave hair; or "kordada"), of the subjected negroid races is regarded as ugly by the Amhara. Conversely, their own helical hair ("zoma täsur", i.e. hair that stands up thick and rich in a bushy halo, or thick curls) is considered beautiful and indicative of "good racial stock ("attentam"). Outcrops of soft, wavy hair ("lähucha", light hair that falls down), which is more frequent than light eyes, is regarded as outlandish, but accepted with a smile, as of no great significance.

Similar attitude rules the beauty of the ear. The medium-sized ear of most Amhara is preferred. The round, curved, small negroid ear ("coraf joro") is considered ugly; but the other extreme, the big elongated ear that stands out like a donkey's ("cärbaba joro"), found

826 in many Europeans, is not considered a mark of beauty either.

186 Amhara ethnocentrism rules over their attitudes to the other two
828 major ethnic groups that inhabit Abyssinia: The Coptic Tigrē peoples who are accepted as "ethnic cousins"; and the Muslim and "pagan" Galla, somewhat more African but not negroid, who occupy a middle social position above that of the Shanqalla. The Amhara stereotype as to the personality of these different groups is:

Amhara - "noble", slow of speech, subtle, patient, slow to anger.
Tigrē - shrewd, fast in thought and action, "light" in temper, impatient.
Galla - coarse, shameless (e.g. willing to do manual labor), dull-witted.

An interesting application of this stereotype has arisen in recent years in the discussions about these "national temperaments" by Amhara officers of the modern Ethiopian army, who are concerned with the performance to be expected of the diverse ethnics in battle; important considerations in a country where emotional differences along tribal lines are still strong:

Amhara soldier:

Proud of individual feats; good fighter when his individual pride has been challenged and aroused.

Hates to take orders; difficult to discipline.

Loves to give orders, to act as "great man"; objects to being hurried.

Explosive in temperament, when startled.

Rarely tenaciously energetic; but if he possesses this quality, he is excellent potential leadership material.

"If you treat him as a friend, he thinks he can be your master."

Galla soldier:

Easy to discipline; will take orders and carry them out, without tricks.

186 828 Pride in group, military unit; less emphasis on individual heroism.

Steadier temperament; endurance rather than burst of energy.

"If you treat him as a friend, he will serve you faithfully."

186 779 The religious ethnocentrism of the Amhara is based on their belief that their nation, ruled by the "Solomonic Dynasty", became heir to the "Chosen People" ruled by the House of David, when the latter refused to accept Christ. This is not always clear to the illiterate Amhara, but even he emphasizes this intertwined ethnic and religious principle of his ethnocentrism when he regards the name "Amhara" as signifying both, as he always does.

[304] While the Amhara no longer regards circumcision ("zezrat") as the symbol of entering the Covenant of the Faith, as does the Old Testament and the Jewish religion, he does follow this procedure a week after birth; and an uncircumcised man ("lembut") is called several insulting names and regarded as almost on a level with African Shanqalla slaves who are also uncircumcised. Circumcision therefore has an intertwined ethnic and religious significance.

671 Amhara legal philosophy, guarded by the church, and expressed therefore in the Geez terminology, analyses the universe as follows:

Natural Law - "tabayawi heg"

Man-made Law - (similar to common law) - "sabawi heg"

Moral Law (particularly Coptic law) - "yabaherya heg" (lit. Law from overseas).

186 Ethnocentrism of the Amhara has for several centuries been consciously directed particularly against the attacking Muslims. The "mätäb" neckcord is believed directly the result of one such purposaful development. Numerous proverbs emphasize the stereotype of the Muslim as the breaker of Amhara religious order as well as social order, and the promoter of lawlessness. Even proverbs such as the following,

186 quoted to praise farming as the best and most typical Amhara occupation, casually refer to the Muslim as a person not bound by social ethics:

[539] "He traded - (then he) cheated;
he was appointed (official) - he began (to act) like a Muslim;
(but) he (who) was a farmer - and became a king!"

[177] Nevertheless, the influence of Islam, probably by slow diffusion, has been considerable on Abyssinian Christianity through the centuries. Their avoidance of "unclean, forbidden things" ("erm"), such as pork, though officially based on the Old Testament prohibitions, was probably reawakened or reintroduced and emphasized through the pressure of Muslim ideas, geographically so close.

[532] The Amhara paint an infidel, like any evil person, with one eye, in profile, for "he has only half a soul, is only half-born, sees only half the truth." The outsider is regarded as automatically of evil personality.

C. Amhara Ideas about Body and Personality.

826 Not all Amhara ideas about human beauty are dominated by racial criteria. A long, lean face ("fit sälkakka") is considered handsome in a man, while a broad face ("fit mäda") is considered ugly; this may bear some relation to the gerontomorphic preference over the pedamorphic.

[304] A long neck ("angät") is a mark of beauty, in both sexes, but noted especially in the woman who therefore may have a series of necklaces tattooed on to her neck. The beauty of the long neck is referred to in the following proverb:

[539] "The neck of the dead child
is longer (than ever);
(meaning, "a good thing that came when of no use).

The forehead is considered the location of good fortune, and a large forehead is considered a mark of beauty in men.

826 Projecting teeth, especially incisors ("gätätä") are considered ugly, wild animal-like, and it is an insult to call such a person [302] "tersam" (lit. toothy). Hair is grown long and standing up stiff by warriors who wish to appear ferocious. The hairdoes of women are diverse. Baldness ("tämällätä") is relatively rare, and if at all, comes very late. Big hips, though covered, are considered an important mark of beauty in a woman, while little attention is paid to the breasts which lose their youthful shape early in life due to prolonged breastfeeding. The ideal feminine body is a fairly short, hippy woman ("täfär wägäb") with high-bridged nose and bulging eyes. On the other hand, a woman with small or lean hips, called "dog hips" ("wesha wägäb"), whose hips are sharply outlined ("wägäb araqi"), is considered deficient in feminine allure. The proverb says:

[539] "(strong) child from hippy woman;
(good) grain from lower terrain (more fertile)."
"A short man is like a monkey,
(but) a short woman like a noblewoman."

The seat of strength in a man is not considered to be in the biceps, but is believed located in the knee ("gulet"). This is examined when hiring a laborer (formerly also in a soldier), perhaps because t he physical type of most Amhara is slender, and their legs have little visible musculature - though much endurance. It is still considered praise to call a young man "gulnasa" (powerfully kneed), and the Amhara take great pride in being able to walk long distances without a rest; flexing the tendon behind the knee ("gwänja"). The elbow is the next place ("kendam" man with powerful elbow) of strength. Bowlegs ("waraha") are considered the result of riding too much, and are not regarded as a special mark of ugliness.

826 A very thin person ("jemmatam") is regarded as being full of tendons, nerves and veins, all of which are generically called "jemmat"; they are conceived as running through the body like the fibers of a tree.

The beard comes late, and since a good chin whisker is rare before the age of 30, it is regarded as a sign of maturity. The proverb says:

[539] "Beard, lacking to the teacher;
cypress, lacking to the church; (i.e. symbol of the churchyard) (are one)." (i.e. neither will be fully respected.)

[779] The dichotomy of the human body, in the religion, considers the upper part holy; and the lower part, which serves sex and defecation, as profane. To illustrate one who serves two masters, the proverb says:

[539] "Above the hips - the tabot (sacred tablet of the church),
below the hips - idols."

No distinction is made in body hair, whether it is usually scanty underarm hair ("cheggum") or pubic hair, except that the latter was supposed to be plucked out by women. Despite the distinction of sacred and profane body parts, this distinction does not apply to archangels and saints, every part of whose body is lauded in some of the liturgy, e.g. in the book "Malek Mikael" which eulogizes also the body of this archangel.

Abnormalities of the human body are attributed to the effect of the supernatural. In the case of a new-born child, abnormality of body is attributed to an evil spirit, especially a male "zar" who has magically possessed the mother and who is jealous of the human husband whom he regards as his rival. In case of transvestites, who are always believed to be hermaphrodites ("fenafel"), the abnormality is actually referred to as a "mistake of God".

827 Seven senses are distinguished by the Amhara, each centered in an organ:

1. Seeing - "ayn" (lit. eye)
2. Hearing - "jor" (ear)
3. Smelling - "afencha" (nose)
4. Tasting - "af" (mouth)
5. Feeling - "ej" (hand)
6. Walking - "eger" (leg, foot)
7. Sex sense - "abalä zär" (lit. male genital organs; polite term).

[51] The sense of taste is noteworthy because the Amhara often does not distinguish bitter ("märara") from sour taste ("homtata"), which the Westerner does quite readily; the Amhara regards both as "märara" (bitter). However, the Amhara distinguishes a "soft taste" ("tefet"), typified by "bers" (honeywater).

828 While these seven senses are located physiologically in corresponding organs, psychological states are regarded as located in the belly or the heart, but in different ways than the Westerner might expect.

The belly ("hod") is considered the seat of emotions:

magnanimous emotions - "hod chäräca" (lit. belly lit up like the moon);

fear - "hod babba" (lit. trembling of the belly);

forgetfulness - "hod räbba" (lit. the belly swallowed it, i.e. the thought).

The heart ("leb") is considered the seat of the presence or absence of wisdom:

good judgement - "leb ber" (lit. with a silver heart);

inventive - "leb wäläd" (lit. child of the heart; invention);

inactive - "leb mut" (lit. whose heart is dead);

828 imbecility - "leb defen" (lit. whose heart is stopped up).

828 201 Certain emotions are expressed by certain patterned physiological signals, often unconsciously:

Anger may be expressed unconsciously by biting the lower lip, or one's finger. Also by knitting the brow ("fir kosättälä"), from the painful expression that results from drinking the purgative drug kosso, so that a person who perpetually goes about with a frown is said to have a face "as if he had eaten kosso", a "kosso face" ("kosso fit"). Melancholy is expressed in a wrinkled facial expression ("fit chändadda").

The symbolic significance of the eye has been referred to in a number of connections. Timidity, and respect in the young, is expressed by "turning the eyes to the dust" ("ayn afar"). Impatience, by shifting the glance rapidly ("gärämmätä"), without making impatient body movements which would be "lower class". Directional signals may be consciously given ("ayn ataqqäsä") by eye movements already described; and observation out of the corner of one's eye ("ayn tägärämmätä") is [754] a finely developed Amhara subtlety. The sorcerer's eye ("yäsäw ayn" lit. "the man's eye," to avoid the sinister name of the "buda" evil spirit) is greatly feared; particularly when it stares and seems to pop ("ayn tägolaggälä").

The "left" position is considered the embarassing side ("gera äräbba") (perhaps because the right side is always the honorable, or because it would be embarrassing to place someone so that he would have to take food with the left hand which is used in the toilet). Left-handedness is extremely rare. When some undertaking turns out badly, the saying is "The matter has turned left" ("nägär gera honä").

827 Physiological functions carried out without repression are considered low-class and low-ethnic by the Amhara. Only a low-class

827 person would use direct terms relating to certain body functions: "ar" (fecal matter), "shänna" (he urinated), etc. Polite circumscription is well developed. But the actual carrying out of basic body functions is merely channelled, not repressed, even in "polite society". Farting, e.g., which is almost inevitable after consuming the daily "qolo" (roast peas or barley), is channelled as expressed in the following proberb:

[539] "The Abyssinian is clever;

bowing low (before the great man), he (silently) farts".

Spitting is the inevitable result of masticating the end of the twig used as a toothbrush; but it is not nearly as voluminous as the low-class spitting ("tiq alä", or "entef alä", both alliterations) of the Sudanese ex-slaves (Barya) and Muslim Abyssinians who hold a wad of tobacco between lower lip and gum, chew, and spit.

828 157 In the conceptualization of human personalities, the Amhara take subject matter also from physiological functions and from the ethnic and other divisions of the class structure:

The Rustic (esp. peasant):

"balagär" (lit. man of the rural country), also "balage".

Unpolished, impolite, vulgar.

"wetter" - ignorant person who asks embarassing questions to "inflate his own belly".

The Simple-minded: "yäwäh" - simple, good, modest, honest, frank, sincere.

"wedeqät" - (lit. young bull) - simpleton, who causes damage without meaning to; e.g. who cannot hold his tongue.

The Fool: "dongworo" (lit. deaf; deaf-mute) Stupid person whose mind nothing seems to penetrate.

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"tärzazza" - proud person, e.g. who does not reply though called twice.

"afä adatär" (who let slip from the mouth) what he didn't mean to reveal. Also "sat alä" (let slip) like ax, when working.

The Immature Personality: "gäbre hasanat" (lit. Slave of the nursling stage).

The Effeminate Male: "gärtalla" - a delicate man, who cannot argue aggressively even if there is good reason for it.

"bukkän" - a fat, short male, who cannot walk long distances or march into battle; hence, a coward.

The Insane: "enäf" - idiot, (also insult for a fool).

"wäfäftänä" - violently insane person (insult for a quarrelsome person).

"wedeqät" - epileptic, who falls down.

"ebd" - person who runs amok (believed possessed by "ganyen" evil spirit).

The Clever Person: "balä ej" - who is skillful with his hands, e.g. a surgeon ("wogasha").

"däleddel säw" - poised person, who can face and solve some direct, physical problem.

"tebäb" or "täbib" - skilled craftsman, trained artisan (includes the respectable dabtara scribe as well as ethnic smiths and sorcerers).

The Wise Person: "Balä meker" - Man of counsel, prudent, judicious.

"Awaqi" (lit. knower) - one whohas accumulated knowledge with or without books.

"chemmet" - calm, softspoken, modest, tranquil, sedate, serious.

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"qaleb" - one who shines with intelligence;

"qalbam" - Person full of reason, discretion, intellectual beauty.

812 It is clear from the last two personalities that a distinction is made between the merely clever (e.g. in material things) and the wise person. Wisdom is stressed in numerous proverbs:

[539] "A king who has no wise councillor,
not one year will he reign".

Many Amhara desirous of reputation, emulate the Biblical wisdom of King Solomon, a wise judge whom "no one could fool". Anecdotes of this type of wisdom are told far and wide, of kings and of rulers of provinces. Even at present, some of these anecdotes are told of rulers still living, including of Emperor Haile Selassie. The following two anecdotes, which may well be factual, are told in Gondar about Ras Imru, who ruled as governor-general of Begemdir province just after the liberation from Italian occupation, when banditry was a major problem:

539 812 1. Two bandits accused of robbery-murder were placed in separate confinement. They had refused to confess, and the time of the murder could not be ascertained. One bandit was taken to the place of the crime, on orders of Ras Imru, and told that his partner had confessed; then, that the time of the crime had been such-and-such. Eager to argue against such an error, the bandit momentarily overlooked the fact that by correcting the time element he was giving himself away. Whereupon both were convicted and hanged.

2. One day, while riding through the market, Ras Imru was halted when a woman threw herself before his horse, shouting "abyet", the traditional appeal of the oppressed. She accused one of Ras Imru's soldiers of having consumed a large pitcher of milk she had for sale, without payment. The soldier denied it, and there were no witnesses

812 willing to testify against him. Ras Imru ordered that he be made to
[539] vomit, and on the basis of this evidence convicted him on the spot.

While the clever arguer in court, who is acclaimed, may be merely "clever", the truly wise man is conceived as one whose words are few but weighty:

[539] "Man, by what can he be valued?
by his speech can he be valued".

Hence, in the games of growing children, the hazing pattern is gradually replaced by verbal contests, and the winner or "better man" is not necessarily the physically stronger but he who can out-insult and out-argue the other.

However, individualistic non-conformity in ordinary persons is criticized, and regarded as rendering such persons shiftless, unstable and impermanent.

Finally, different regions of Amhara-populated areas are believed to be specialized in specific types of personalities; e.g. the dabtara scribes of Entoto, where the capital of Addis Ababa is located now, have long had the reputation of special cleverness, speaking in riddles which make understanding painful, when they deign to converse at all with ordinary Amhara commoners:

[539] "The wise men of Entoto,
talk just once a year,
(and then) always (bitingly) bitter".

[770] Special skill of hand or mind is generally believed, for good or ill, to come from the world and functions of the spirits.

PART VI: HEALING BODY AND SPIRIT

753 177 The "living museum" aspect of Abyssinian culture is perhaps nowhere so evident as in Abyssinian medicine. Both basic concepts and practical functions recall much that has been derived with little change (though much culture loss) from ancient Egypt, the ancient Near East, ancient Greek culture, plus regional ecological developments in Abyssinia itself.

753 756 Many ailments are regarded by the Amhara as closely interwoven in the body and spirit of the patient, and in fact, frequently no sharp distinction is made between bodily and spiritual ailments; so that the same illness may sometimes be treated by the surgeon-herbologist ("woggesha"), and if not successfully cured, by the practitioner of exorcising magic, the "dabtara" scribe; or the practitioner of sympathetic magic, of the "zar" cult; or even the sorcerer, the "tänqwar". Only the latter is considered illegal. However, a fairly clear distinction is made between organic ailments and functional ailments, and on the basis of whichever preliminary diagnosis is made, it is decided which practitioner to call in first.

756 The association of the dabtara with the church has increased his activities in recent years from that of amulet-writer and herbologist to many of the functions of outright magic, particularly since the tanqway has become illegal. The dabtara always seems to have enjoyed the highest respectability and trust of any of the practitioners, for, as in ancient Greece, his activity in the official religion is believed to extend over the ills of the body and over the world of the spirits.

753 There is no philosophical basis for the development of medical systems among the Amhara, no reasoned system. Their medical concepts are pre-Galen, at most Aristotelian. The dabtara have, or, in some cases claim

756 to have, books handed down from past centuries, containing secret formulae, recipes, pharmacopeia of an intermingled empirical and magical nature. They warn inquirers that the public revelation of th these secrets would create great social dangers at the hands of the irresponsible.

171 In the days of ancient Egypt, Abyssinia was a supplier of materials for embalming, such as incense, myrrh, etc. It is therefore little wonder that much of Abyssinian medicine resembles that of ancient Egypt, e.g. the strong emphasis on purgatives used regularly.

753 The Amhara shares with peasants in many other parts of the world his belief in "strong" medicine, powerful in taste or heroic in effect or both. Since the Italian invasion, his belief in injections, which bring such miraculously quick results, has assumed magical proportions. Generally he distrusts and fears new medicines.

1. Healing the Body

A. The Surgeon-Herbologist-Empiricist ("woggesha"): Utilizing Nature.

759 Unlike the other medical practioners mentioned earlier, the woggesha does not try to dominate nature; he specializes in utilizing what nature provides and in lending a helping hand. He is most often the first consulted, a kind of general practitioner, family doctor; and since he refrains from magical undertakings, he is neither feared nor suspected of witchcraft, which the other practioners, even the dabtara, often are.

Like the dabtara, the woggesha is often an expert herbologist, called "agabi seray" (lit. who knows the work of nature). While walking in the bush, along brooks in the valley or in the "dega"

759 upland, he notices and remembers the location of plants and roots, which supply him with much of his pharmacopeia. His sense of direction is trained and therefore seems uncanny to the layman. Moreover, not infrequently he actually transplants certain wild plants, so that he can always find them; sufficiently far from residential habitations so that they are not easily found or consumed by cattle or playful boys. A good rule for distance is how far the crowing of a rooster can be heard - for some plants are believed to lose their magical power if disturbed by this sound.

[825 824]

The "woggesha" usually learns his craft from his father, while serving him as apprentice. But at present the most popular "woggesha" in the town of Gondar is a well-known former bandit, who has gained an enviable reputation as a skilled surgeon. The "woggesha" is usually a diplomat in his human relations, much like the old-time Western family doctor. He usually tries to remain on good terms with the local church, and often invites the local dabtara to dinner at his house, especially on saints' days, to avoid their competitive hostility and to discuss some cases on a "professional" level.

In his capacity as surgeon, the "woggesha" sets fractures, cuts abscesses, pulls teeth (now with European pliers). But some of his practices are severely condemned by European doctors who object particularly to the woggesha's frequent ripping out of part of the soft palate to cure tonsilitis and chronic sore throat, often causing blood poisoning. Nevertheless, the present government still permits the woggesha to function "in his own district", for otherwise most people would be left without any medical empiricist.

[757]

757 The pulse is of no interest to the woggesha (unlike ancient medicine in Asia). He relies as heavily on violent purgatives as the ancient Egyptians, and on cauterization (much in the ancient Hippocratic tradition).

The enema, widespread in Asia, is not used. But the intestinal [278] purgatives against tapeworm, especially the famous "kosso" (Quassia abyssinica), have been developed to complex sequences in medical cure. Butter is used as an ointment and mild laxative, sometimes boiled with specific herbs.

The instruments used by the "woggesha" are very simple: a sharp knife, simple forceps or pliers, wire for ripping (e.g. the soft palate), the horn of a cow or antelope or zebra (called "wäïmt") for cupping ("äggärä"). The latter procedure is not used often, it is tried primarily to cure a chronic headache, by shaving an area on the rear of the skull, making a small incision, and drawing the blood by means of the horn. Artificial nosebleeds are also occasionally produced ("ärräsärä"). But drawing blood is done in great secrecy, for the patient is ashamed to have it become known that his "blood is bad". Instead of applying leeches, some patients are taken to a waterhole or lowland lake known to contain leeches, where they expose the sick part of the body in the water, waiting for the leeches to fasten themselves.

752 Some "woggesha" have a great reputation for having saved patients bitten by snakes. The fact is that most Amhara, living on the highland plateau, rarely encounter a really poisonous snake, and suffer most often from the harmless (though painful) bite of the "talba" snake. The patient would recover anyway in due course.

000 The patient would recover anyway in due course.

758 The therapeutic value of convalescense ("gäggam alä") is recognized, and patients are told to bask in the sunshine.

562 Men are more likely to let themselves be treated by the "woggesha";
756 women, who suffer more frequently from functional ailments, approach
757 the "dabtara" or "zar" doctor more often and request magical aid.

844 When birth approaches, the midwife is called, almost never the woggesha. If he is, he may not touch the genital parts of the woman, and merely advises the midwife. When labor pains begin, the patient is given a drink of mashed linseed to "relax the birth tract" and to "lessen the pain". The newborn baby is annointed with butter (often rancid), and fed some of it.

759 Other medical helpers, apprentices, or modern "dressers" may be referred to as "healers" ("äwash"), "balä mädanit" (lit. medicine man, who knows empirical drugs and cures), "caretaker" ("astabaqi"), male nurse ("mogzit"), modern "dresser" ("astamami"). None of these are respected professions, for they are regarded as too close to manual labor, and such practitioners usually go to other provinces where their work will not shame the family. In recent years, the more skilled ones have been coming from Eritrea.

178 Modern change has been largely indirect and partial. The new
757 laws still permit the "woggesha" to function. Penicillin and other antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription at the big "Saturday markets", for as little as ETh$2.50 (US$1.-), and the patient simply buys it, takes it to a "dresser" in the nearest town, whom he pays 1/2 dollar Ethiopian (US 20 cents), to give the injection. When symptoms disappear, e.g. in syphilis, he believes himself cured.

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178 This attitude is of course deplored by the Western physicians who know
757 of it. But modern medical treatment is still little available outside the major towns. Patients come to hospitals often only as a last resort, fearing to be separated from kinfolk and exposed to treatment by strangers, so that mortality in hospitals is high, which reinforces
[743] the fears. At present there are probably no more than 50 hospitals in all Ethiopia, and only a few hundred Western physicians. Both are heavily concentrated in Addis Ababa, so that the field of the "woggesha" has not shrunk at all.

164 B. Common Ailments and their Treatment.

757 The more common ailments and procedures followed by the "woggesha"
756 and "dabtara", (practitioners who occasionally overlap in specialties
755 but almost never in treatment), include the following (see next page):

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Table II: Bodily Ailments, Symptoms, Practitioners, Diagnoses, Treatment.

Ailment	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Diagnosis or Symptoms	Treatment
snakebite	"obab"(snake) "gämit", very poisonous but rare; "täwarwari ebab", lowland cave snake (also "asil"), very poisonous, but rare on plateau. "talba ebab" brownish flax-snake, common, not poisonous, but believed to be. "zändo" (large python), not poisonous, infrequently encountered.	woggesha däbtära: prevents snakebite by writing amulet "Abuna Batra Maryam", and wrapping it in "tänätla" (mistletoe) leaves that keep snakes away. In presence of snake, lets shadow fall on it to immobilize it, saying: "He is born of virgin, without conception by a father, a and He has saved us; but it, that has misled Eve, the snake..."(which scares the snake away).	fang marks	cuts wound with razor (arab melach), also may cut flesh away. No sucking of blood for fear of poison. Stop bleeding with "let" leaves. Smears oily "nug" - cake on, for healing.
tonsilitis, chronic sore throat	"angar", or "entel" (lit. uvula)	woggesha	pain in throat, regarded as "sick uvula"	rips out part of soft palate with wire.
toothache	"lemam yazä" (lit. the rot has seized it).	woggesha	toothache	"kills the demon that bites" by inserting a caustic medicine that eats into the gum; (actually a counter-irritant).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
Ear infection	"qenqen" or "qetqet"	woggesha	diagnosed as "buzzing insect that got into patient's ear".	"kills insect in ear" by caustic drops; (actually a counter-irritant)
cough (human) (donkey)		woggesha		drink expectorant made from aloes ("erä"). feed donkey roasted "qärcho", a yellow thistle weed that grows in plowed fields.
tuberculosis (esp. pulmonary). 30% incidence estimated by Italians.	"mäggäñä" (Galla: "arwe karhamu)	däbtära	coughing blood, leaving patient limp. Diagnosed as "threshhold demon named 'mäggäñä', who entered patient in early morning", or "red snake in belly".	Purgative, made of root of rhubarb "mäqmäqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), boiled in butter. Magic "sacrifice of threshhold" of chicken or goat, and fumigation of hut with "woggärt". Spraying of holy water. If all are dead, abandon the hut. (Also, cauterization with hot pin).
tapeworm (taenia saginata) Very common.	"wäsfat"	woggesha	noticed in stool; or, prophylactic after every "brundo" (raw beef) feast; or every 2 months.	Purgative (Vermifuge) made of "kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica, Quassia amara), prepared from the dry flowers, bark and twigs of this rosacious highland tree, while swallowing a dozen "enqoqo" seeds like pills. Produces a 3-day painful diarrhea.

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
bacterial dysentery. Very common.		woggesha	diarrhea	Only black tyeff grain may be eaten. If not cured, drink boiled leaves of "särch embway" thistle (Solanum marginatum).
dysentery. Very common, esp. in market towns	"teqmat" (lit. what makes to sit down)	woggesha	diarrhea with blood	Purgative made of hottest "bärbärä" pepper called "mitmitta" (Capsicum abyssinicum) with smallest pods, taken in the evening together with raw beef ("brundo") after a day of complete fasting; the next morning, drink purgative kossq with engoqo pills.
intestinal disturbances colic	angorba	woggesha	pains, much salivation	drink tea of "teferendo" bush, or of "tembälal" (Jasminum floribundum); or of "amorra" root (used also in tatooing as astringent). In mild cases, chew leaf of "tena adam" garden plant and swallow the juice.

(constipation, etc., is treated with mineral salt "aghal chäw," now with "English salt" (Epsom).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
heart ailment. occasionally.	"leb bäsheta" (lit. heart sickness)	woggesha	pains in heart region	antispasmotic drink made of honey of the wild bee "tazzema" (Apis Africana miaia).
conjunctivitis, trachoma, ophthalmia, eye diseases Very common.	"Nädära" or "Aynät" (female demons)	dabtära	eye inflammation, pain, incipient blindness	apply juice of "Ketketa" flower (Dodonea viscosa) by means of cotton cloth; then take vapor bath. Or use juice of aloes ("rät"). Rub wrinkled leaves of "käsyē" (resembles thyme). Wear amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of the demon.
headache, migraine, neuralgia. Very common.	"feltät"	woggesha dabtära		Inhale fumes of burning leaves of "woggärt" plant or "gizewa" bush(which resembles elderberry). Shave area in back of head, make small incision with horn, sucking the blood. On Mary's birthday, leave chickpeas or other food for the birds.
hemorrhoids. common.	"kentaret"	woggesha	pains, (mostly in adults)	Astringent shrinks piles; made of the juice of certain secret roots, applied daily for a week.

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
bleeding from wounds		woggesha		apply rolled and crumbled leaf of "let" plant to wound, to stop bleeding. apply aloes ("rōt") to promote formation of scar tissue.
excessive menstrual bleeding	"yädam abennät"	woggesha dabtara	diagnosed as female demon "Werzelya"	Hang magic root under garment. Root bears name of illness, drives it away. Amulets.
miscarriage	"yädam ṭerät"	dabtara	demon Werzelya	Peel this root and wear it. Amulets
barrenness Incidence as high as 25%	"yädam ṭefat"	dabtara	demon Werzelya, believed to have "stopped patient's menstruation."	Specially written amulet, referring to King Susneyos' formula, hung on the neckcord.
chigger, sandflea infection. Common, esp. in dry lowland.	"moyalē"	woggesha		Pick out whole organism with needle, without breaking it.
muscular dystrophy, & other paralytic diseases.	"gwaya ankätäkkätäw" (lit. the gwaya plant has broken him).		diagnosed as due to "having walked through a field of this plant", or "having spilled water in which it was boiled, on one's leg". Symptoms: cross legged, pigeontoed walk.	No certain cure. Sometimes treated like the "mech" disease (general functional ailment).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
paralysis	"sefat"	woggesha dabtara	stroke, often fatal	No certain cure, Amulets.
struck by lightning	"mäbräq	woggesha dabtara	found unconcious diagnosed as "struck by thunder".	Carried to fireplace, kept warm. If patient dies, regarded as heavenly punishment, for hidden crime.
visible syphilis (early stage). Incidence syphilis 50-80% estimated by Italians.	"qiten"	woggesha dabtara	syphilitic sores	1st stage of treatment: Smear resin on sores, or "käbrē" (sulphur). Intensive eating of bärbärē pepper (Capsicum abyssinicum) in order to salivate, for the disease is believed to come out with saliva; also the purgative kosso (as in cases of tapeworm), for same reason.

(Magic): sacrifice male, black goat (to demon), drink its blood and eat it, for this omnivorous animal has eaten a variety of herbs that may help. Then purge 4 months. 2nd stage: Sweatcure at hot springs("filowa"), dedicated to a saint, for 40 days. Refrain from salt, drink much water. In some cases, drink sarsaparilla root (Smilax mauritanica) - (possibly recent diffusion).

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Ailments	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
chronic syphilis (including "benign syphilis" resembling Arab "bejol"; neuroe syphilis extremely rare. Chronic and inherited syphilis believed common by physicians.	"verdē"	dabtāra woggesha		Prophylactic treatment obtained by some from dabtāra before exposure to syphilis is kept secret, Cures include crushing of "bessana" root with Kosso, ratio 1 : 2, which is dissolved in pure barley beer "talla gebs". This purgative is believed to bring out germ with diarrhea or vomiting.
gonorrhea (common - esp. in market towns)	"chābet" or "chebet" (lit. it squeezes me)	woggesha	believed caused from having urinated in sunshine. Symptom: pain and urinating with difficulty.	Same cure with "bessana" root purgative as in chronic syphilis.
smallpox other pox (occasional epidemics, now rarer)	"fantata" "litē"	woggesha	believed caused by morning-threshhold demon "maggāñā" (See tuberculosis)	Vesicant to "bring out the rash" by rubbing "kābrē" (sulphur) on sores, or, if unavailable, saffron. Patient must not touch water until healed. Neighbors wait until after 7A.M. to brink cakes of food, so that they will not encounter the morning demon "maggāñā" on threshhold.

Variolation with "kuffēñ" (mild pox or chicken pox, or taken from pus of sick person) especially in epidemics; sores are rubbed with honey.

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
abscess or running sore	"quncher"	woggesha	believed caused by urine of certain moth.	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur or resin. Ointment made from leaves of "emogo" bush used as anti scabies. Purgatives made from "bessana" leaves or from juice of euphorbia candelabra ("golqwal"), drunk in fresh barley beer.
impetigo	"chefē"	woggesha	believed caused by washing in "bad water"	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur.
white sore on hand; itch.	"lekäft"	woggesha	believed caused by having left water uncovered over-hight, and washing hand in it the next morning. Pain, tendons affected. Believed non-contageous.	apply astringent leaf-compresses, e.g. from the "darch embway" flower with the little red fruit; or of the "embway" (yellow thistle).
other sore on hand	"chäfē"	woggesha	believed contageous form of "lekaft"; much feared.	Cover sore with nug oil paste, and salt, to keep it from spreading.
scrofula	"näqärsa"	woggesha	symptoms on neck	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur.

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Ailments	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
leprosy (occasionally).	"lefē", "qomaṭa", "läms"	woggesha	discoloration of skin, loss of nails, etc.	Combination of treatment of other sores. (Now treated by WHO with injection of sulphetrone, etc.).
scarlet fever (rare)	"lash"	woggesha dabtära	Peeling skin, sometimes falling hair, in children. Believed caused by female demon that specializes in hurting children.	"bring out rash" by applying sulphur to the itchy skin. Dabtara provides prophylactic as well as curative amulet against this demon.
typhus fever; If epidemic: "tässebo" (common in highlands)	"tälalafi bäsheta", "yänäfs bäsheta"	dabtära	Believed caused by certain demons.	Amulets. (Now free injections and immunization by government "dressers" at town markets).
relapsing fever (Fatality higher than typhus; louse-born in highland, tick-born in lowland).	"mech" or "mechdär"	dabtära woggasha	Patient believed struck by the demon of "hot fog", ("mech gittaw"). Same term used for sunstroke, and pneumonia. Symptoms include headaches, vomiting, violent fever, soon fatal. Illness believed brought on by sunstroke or eating spicy foods or green corn without washing mouth.	Febrifuge prepared from roasted "halgab" plant (which resembles mint), collected with great secrecy in the bush. "Mech mädhänit" (lit. Mech medicine) also uses other plants, the leaves of which are squeezed, and the juice is drunk, sniffed, and rubbed over body, with formulas being pronounced (magic)

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
malaria (common below 5000 ft. endemic below 3000 ft; epidemics in lowland market towns.	"nedad" (lit. burn) "tekwesat" (fever, generic) "woba" (boil)	woggesha	fever	Patient drinks febrifuge made from min-like herbs boiled in butter. Band with cold water placed on head.
rheumatism (common)	"qerṭemat"	däbtära	believed caused by "buda" evil spirit	Drive evil spirit away with disagreeable odor of "chegguñ" plant stuffed in nose.
		zar doctor	if believed due to possession by "lazy zar"	Bribe the "adbar" outdoor zar spirit or the "qolä" zar with sacrifice of food.
arthritis or deforming rheumatism	"rih"	priest		Rebaptize patient at holy well ("täbäl"); or advise him to go to a hot mineral spring dedicated to a saint ("filowa") for sweat cure.
rickets	"ṭela"	däbtära	swelling of bony joints; believed caused by demon of evil eye.	Amulet.
yellow jaundice	"wof zorräbbat" (lit. the bird turned directions over him	däbtära	skin discoloration, thick urin.	Amulet.

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
puerperal fever	"tekwesat" (generic, fever)	dabtära	believed caused by female, jealous, demon "Karina".	Amulet reciting victory of Solomon over Karina.
delirium	"buda" (evil spirit)	dabtära	believed due to "buda" possession.	Intoxicant drug "astänager" Thornapple Jimsonwee (Datura stramonium) (lit. that which makes to talk) is drunk by patient so that he reveals the name of the specific evil spirit; then it can be exorcised.
epilepsy	"yäbarya bäsheta" "yabuda basheta" (evil spirit disease) (haut mal) "ganyän yazä (lit. the djinn have seized him) "ebd" (have enslaved him) (St. Vitus) "nägärgar", or naqatqat"	dabtära	spasms, convulsions.	Same treatment as in delirium and rheumatism, or both.
			running amok, violent	Cast out "ganyän" by spells and exorcism. Or eat intoxicant paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha) root. Exorcism of "buda" or "ganyen".

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
hysteria	"zar" (spirit, benign or evil)	zar doctor	(see zar cult) and "buda"	(see zar cult); Stimulant "asē faris" (stramoine datura) (lit. wood of Persia) is often preliminary treatment. The effect is agitated somnambulism, enabling patient to see the future, and the (evil) spirits that have attached themselves to him; esp. the "aynā tela" (lit. shadow eye), usually in shape of a woman, who spoils well-laid plans. Once her name is revealed, dābtāra throws cold water on patient to reawaken.
chronic apathy (catalepsy)	"Tegerteya" (female demon)	zar doctor dābtāra	(see zar cult) and "buda"	(see zar cult) and "buda"
insanity	"Waddegeni" (female demon)	zar doctor	(see zar cult)	(see zar cult)
amok			(see "ganyen")	

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753 An important part of diagnosis is the decision whether an ailment is contagious ("fera") or not, and whether it is inherited, congenital ("qurānna") or not. If inherited, marriages with such families are despised as not "attentam" (good stock), the same term used for descent from slaves or other "race" or both.

759 In general, the woggesha is most often called in organic ailments;
757 shares with the "dabtara" the practice of functional ailments; while the latter shares with the "zar" doctor the treatment of mental ailments.

2. Healing the Spirit

A. The "Zar" cult of supernatural spirits, its institution and cosmology.

x794 755 One of the most complex developments of Amhara non-material culture, to which a great deal of mental ingenuity is devoted, is the healing of mental ailments. But this goes far beyond treatment and cure. The "zar" doctors do not limit themselves to treating some of the aforementioned mental ailments. They organize the afflicted, before, during and after "cure", into "zar" societies, which bear the earmarks of a religious cult, and to which the individual belongs henceforth until his or her (more often her) death. Here he finds the warm companionship of the fellow-afflicted; opportunity for expressive behavior; the religious feeling of having been of service; the personal attention of a personal possessive and protective spirit; and the visible leadership of the "zar" doctor who heads the organizational unit.

x794 756 The zar doctor often a matriarch, differs only in degree from her flock; for she, too, must be possessed, must be forever afflicted by spirits. But she has managed to learn to control them, call upon her more powerful protective spirits to aid her against evil spirits,

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X794 756 more tricky but less powerful than hers. This enables her to relieve the sufferings of her clients; without, however, curing them. For a possessive spirit can be turned into an asset - into a protective spirit once the spirit's demands are known and regularly fulfilled. Why should anyone wish to reject such a protective spirit who helps solve the problems of life and even "beautifies the face" with an inner glow? Only a few hopelessly evil demons, mostly female, need to be exorcised.

X794 562 Women, otherwise limited in cultural participation among the Amhara, particularly in the church institution where their expressive behavior and opportunity for service are almost entirely rejected, constitute a considerable majority in the zar societies, even in the top leadership; so that many men think of the zar cult as predominantly feminine, and consult zar doctors by stealth only, at night. Men have ambivalent feelings about their wives attendance: they are often jealous of the "possessive" spirit; object to the financial outlays demanded by the "zar" spirit on pain of "relapse" into the patient's catatonic, schizoid or hysterical state; object to their wives being at the doctor's hut all night during worship-sessions; but admit that their wives are thereafter easier to live with, indeed more beautiful when the "wechi" (inspiration) "is on their face".

[182] Thus the "zar" institution affects many other Amhara institutions: Marriage and the Family; Religion; Economics; Ethnic Relations; and even linguistics.

X794 755 [832] The psychological attitude in Amhara culture which emphasizes the aspect of possession in love, and in other intense human relations, has already been pointed out in connection with "love magic", which attempts, instead of arousing love in the partner, to render him or her submissive.

x794 755 In the zar cult, there is no attempt to win the love of the spirit, or to love him or her in turn; rather it is a game of cajoling, tricking, bribing the patient out of the condition of total submission into one of partial control; and then forever renting one's mortgaged mental health through permanent financial payments. But there is the added recompense of gaining an invisible protector, who, as financial partner, has a permanent interest in the success of the partnership; plus the recompense of the human fellowship.

x794 773 776 According to the mythology of the "zar"cult, the "zar" spirits originated in the Biblical Garden of Eden at the same time man was created. They assumed physical form when Eve began to bear children. Eve is believed to have had 30 children. One day, when God the Creator came to visit, and began to count the children, Eve (evidently fearing the evil eye), hid the 15 most beautiful ones. God, being all-knowing, realized this, and became angry. As punishment, He decreed that the 15 hidden children always remain hidden, invisible, night creatures, for all eternity. The present-day zar spirits are believed descended from them. The "zar" spirits are more powerful and more beautiful than man, know remedies for all ailments, but envy their uglier and weaker human brothers and sisters who are "daytime" children of the light. Some "zar" spirits have thus become malevolent, though many can be cajoled and bribed into "forgiveness" (a word much used in the cult ceremony). Others are inclined to be benevolent, and, if their pity is touched, may reveal secret remedies, in dreams or during possession, e.g. to a mother for her sick child.

X 794 776 753 There are male "zars" and female ones. The latter are considered more dangerous and more difficult to placate. Usually a "zar" spirit prefers to "possess" a human of the opposite sex, which results in a magical coitus, and cuases epilectic seizures or catatonic states. In the latter case, usually a woman being "slept with" by a jealous make "zar", she seems drowsy and "turned within herself", disinterested in the environment, forgetting to eat. In the former case, the magical coitus sends her into orgasms of twisted arms and legs; or sometimes, twirling frenziedly; sometimes moving on all fours, emitting raucous sounds, biting the unwary, while being "ridden like a horse" by the "zar".

X 794 776 823 The "zars" of today are regarded as having geographical homelands. In abyssinia their central location is believed to be in the province of Tigre, where they prefer woodland grottoes on the highland plateau, and where, if taken off guard under certain circumstances, they can become temporarily visible. Some zar doctors even narrow this central headquarters to a locality known as "Halawel" near the existing town of Makalle. On occasion the "zar" spirits there are believed to hold dances, even orgies. But most often they live in families, much like human Abyssinians, though on a superhuman level. They can ride elephants, [825] lions, etc, to whom they refer as "farasey" (lit. my horse), the same term they use to humans whom they "ride" during possession. But they despise the hyena, which is the "horse" of the evil "buda" spirit. The "cattle" of the zar spirits consists of wild gazelles, antelopes - the wild relatives of cattle domesticated by humans. Zar spirits are fond of peppery sauce ("wot") and "enjara" bread much like Abyssinians. Tree stumps serve them as tables. They like the flowers and green

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woods of the Abyssinian highlands very much, being of lowland desert origin themselves.

They can fly, dive, have hands that are strong as iron, and are wiser than humans. But their social institutions are not much better than man's. Their children must go to school to learn, just like human children. Their social hierachy is much like that of Abyssinia, with kings, chiefs, chamberlains, and a servant class. They have wars among themselves in which they can be killed by other, stronger and shrewder zars. Even their individual personalities may have serious shortcomings: generally a distinction is made between small-statured, evil, ignorant, very dark-skinned zars, and tall, noble, educated, light-skinned zars. The latter resemble their ancestors, while the others have degenerated. The zars are divided into ethnic groups and religions, so that there are Christian, Muslim, Falasha and pagan zars. They are curious about humans of other religions, e.g. a Christian zar may "possess" a human who is Muslim and make him act and dress like a Christian (and vice versa). Diseases, especially functional and mental ailments, emanate from the zars, but so do the remedies.

The superhuman attributes of the "zar" spirits are largely in achievements of material culture, in which the human Achara is so little developed; in non-material aspects of culture, such as governing society, and in personality, no greatly superior level is visualized.

[164] No human being is considered entirely invulnerable to "zar" possession, not even foreigners. Moreover, "mild possessions" hit every human some time during a lifetime, though this may pass with relatively little notice.

x794 776 755 Every zar has an individual name and personality. Thus, one of the first tasks of the "zar doctor" is to diagnose. This is done in a variety of complex procedures: "Playing along" with the spirit's desires expressed through the mouth of the actions of the possessed; or, in case of intermittent possession, a cult session during which the "zar" is lured to re-possess and re-inhabit the body of the patient, in public, where the zar doctor can observe every phase of the sequence of possession, and thus, on the basis of long experience, detect the peculiarities of the particular "zar" spirits. Once identified, gradual and limited "control" of the particular spirit can then be established, and a "modus vivendi" created.

a) <u>The "Zar" doctor: patients; procedures of healing; basic "zar" personalities.</u>

x794 755 The work of the "zar" doctor consists of three parts: identifying the spirit who "rides" the patient "like a monkey" (the same metaphor used by drug addicts in Western countries, e.g. in the movie "Man with the Golden Arm"); after this diagnosis follows the "cultivation", negotiation, establishment of friendly relations with the spirit (treatment); finally the establishment of life-long protective cult relationships (prognosis; socio-mental hygiene).

x794 756 The boundary line between the chronic "zar" patient and the "zar" doctor is regarded as a thin one. Both are referred to as "bala zar" (lit. mastered by the zar). Both are equally "possessed", by one or several spirits, but the healer has turned his weakness into a profession, by learning more and more about the various spirits; the types of patients; how to achieve some control over the situation instead of being controlled by it or even destroyed by it. The doctor

K794 756 must have a talent for this work, and learn it through long apprenticeship, while serving an experienced "zar" doctor as monitor in the cult. In time, a "zar" doctor will identify his own personality more and more with the most powerful of the spirits that possess him, or the one that possesses him most habitually, and will even derive his professional name from that individual "zar", e.g. "balä qolē" (lit. possessed by the non-dancing household-protective "zar" named "qolē"; hence - Doctor Qolē).

Much as in other skilled occupations among the Amhara, the "zar" doctor is regarded as particularly capable if he has inherited his profession, preferably from his mother. After apprenticeship, the new doctor receives his power by contagion, i.e. from his mother or older zar doctor who place the hands on the head of the graduate. In many cases this enables the "zonkey" to slide from the teacher to the "zar" graduate, especially if the teacher is the mother, so that the new doctor can start out with a protective spirit of high calibre. Zar doctors lacking this inheritance sometimes claim that they have derived their extraordinary powers from having been kidnapped by a zar in early childhood (which zar spirits are fond of doing for the pleasure that looking at a "visible" child is said to give them); and having retained the power and privilege of communicating with his erstwhile foster-parent even after his release. This claim is more often made by male zar doctors than by female ones, for the latter usually inherit the profession from their mothers.

A zar doctor, especially a male one, is regarded as particularly arrogant in personality. When walking on a trail, he walks in great strides. His hair stands up stiff like that of a warrior, or, if his

X794 756 "zar" is a Muslim, is covered with a flaming-colored turban. Unlike other Amhara men, he wears an ear-ring, of bright metal, in one ear. He seems absent-minded, distracted inward-looking, greets no one. However, when greeted, he may reply with a tirade, in "zar" language. Sometimes he claims to have just returned from a magical voyage, e.g. to have just visited the home country of a visiting foreigner, so that he knows all about it.

X794 756 755 Male zar doctors often develop a sharp, staring or shrewd Mephistophelian look, so that their effect on a patient who generally fears the evil eye is almost hypnotic even when the doctor is not in a trance. As a result, even stubborn patients in the grip of a new hysteria stop their shrieking when startled by the appearance of such a figure in the hut. Without saying a word, the doctor grasps the upper arm of the patient (for male "zars" attack the shoulders first, squatting on the back of the patient like a baby on the mother's back). When the patient, usually a woman, has been sufficiently subdued by the stare, the doctor loosens his grip and lightly begins to caress the upper arm and shoulder. This shows that he is unafraid to make contact with the spirit and that the situation is well in hand.

X794 756 A male zar doctor had, in the recent past, a place of honor at the table of feudal chiefs who often consulted them - perhaps more because of the doctors' knowledge of humans and public opinion than because of their spirit world. Even today, the social status and income of a zar doctor in rural areas and provincial towns is high, and he can afford such expensive European attire and apparel as a folding umbrella, laced shoes, a ring of silver or gold, etc. He may break rules of politeness, even utter mild insults and commit familiarities without

X794 756 repression and penalty, for no layman can know whether or not it is the spirit who speaks through the doctor in any given situation.

X794 164 The most frequent types of mental afflictions which the "zar" doctor is called upon to treat are forms of hysteria (mostly in women), catatonic states (also mostly in women), and violent forms of possession including epileptic states (mostly in men). But he also treats some functional ailments, notably rheumatism, which is believed to have been caused by a "lazy zar" who wants his "horse" to stay in one place.

X794 776 753 Though every person is considered a potential "horse" for a zar, certain personality types are considered particularly vulnerable to possession by evil zars: persons with sad, returing, melancholic natures; women who feel unloved and neglected by their husbands and thus offer little resistance to a male "zar lover"; persons who wish to escape, e.g. chronic drunkards.

X794 753 758 Apathy, leading to catatonic states if not treated, indicates incipient possession by an evil zar. The patient, often a woman, withdraws into a corner, sits there huddled up, refuses to accept food. Until a zar doctor can be persuaded to come and take on the case, family and friends try to give the patient first aid. For, if she were to remain long in this state, it is believed that her "zar" could "ride" her to death. Therefore, relatives and neighbors come quickly, sing to the patient, entertain her, promise her whatever her heart desires, and generally try to create a merry atmosphere. Finally they try to lure the patient into watching them dance, and try to raise the patient playfully, so as to join them. The patient is never left alone until the doctor comes.

X794 164 753 Psychotic cases among women usually assume a domineering male personality, such as believing themselves to be the ruthless Emperor Theodore, or the bloody Ras Mikael of Tigre. The zar doctor, however, elicits the confession of a "zar", so that he can treat the case.

Hysteria is believed mostly due to possession by female zars, who are more mischievous, silly and irresponsible than evil. If such a female zar possesses a male patient, he will manifest characteristics regarded as feminine, such as silly gaiety, and teasing behavior. If [838] not "awakened" quickly, such a state may become chronic and gradually destroy his masculinity. More common is hysteria among women, in which case the possession manifests itself as reversion to infantile behavior: the patient talks babytalk, skips about like a young goat and shamelessly demands little gifts even from strangers and passers-by. The patient must be humored, given gifts or at least promises, for the zar, speaking through the patient, may say: "If you don't give me this, I will kill my horse" (the patient).

Violent forms of possession may manifest themselves by aggression directed against the patient himself, such as beating himself, hitting the head against the wall, eating dirt, trying to climb the wall, wanting to run out at night to roam with hyenas. In some cases, if accompanied by nosebleed, or "weeping blood", this is diagnosed as "buda" and becomes a case for the dabtara practitioner. In cases of running amok, with aggression directed against others, it may be diagnosed as "ganyen" (djinn) and be treated either by the dabtara, zar doctor, or tanqway sorcerer.

X794 776 753 The most common form of possession, particularly in women, begins with a kind of incubation. The male zar possessing her is jealous of her human husband, wants her to obtain a divorce and join a zar society

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cultivating the spirit. If she is already pregnant, the zar may cause a miscarriage; either because he wants his human mate "pure", or to take revenge on the husband for miserly refusal of a chicken or young goat requested by the wife for the "zar" sacrifice - which may cause the zar to take the fetus as his "mäqwädäsha" (lit. love gift).

When a male zar appears to a human female in a dream, he takes the form of a husband visiting his wife, if he is in a benevolent mood; if angry, he takes the form of a black dog (though Ethiopian dogs are reddish) or of a snake. The actual possession, in this relationship is a magical coitus, expressed in the violently sensuous "gurri" dance. Some women possessed by a male zar drape their shamma (toga) in male fashion; some even put on ornaments of oldtime male warriors (lion mane, leopard skin), male jodphurs - all at the request of her male "zar", in which case she is actually "dressing" him.

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A woman who sleeps alone risks being struck by a male zar, and even neighbors sometimes admit having heard a "spirit visitor" at night. When a baby is born deformed, it is regarded as the result of a magical coitus. Male zar spirits avoid menstruating women, and during this period they may not sit on the skin of an animal that has been sacrificed to the zar. Male zar prefer to possess beautiful human females, and add to their beauty; so that some male connoisseurs of female beauty claim that a woman's glowing charms leave her when her protective zar ("weqabi") leaves her. Therefore, there is some ambivalence in the hostility of human husbands to the possession of their wives by male zars; which may contribute to the frequency of such possession. For, at least, the neglected wife is then no longer ignored and may even become the center of attraction.

[845] [844] [832]

X 794 776 [83] 753 Possession of a man by a female zar occurs less often but is much more difficult to treat. Magical coitus in this case may render him impotent with human females. In some cases it manifests itself in nocturnal emissions of semen (wet dreams). It is believed that if a zar doctor (or a male patient) is possessed by a female zar at a young enough age, prior to puberty (which is very rare), he will develop female secondary sex characteristics, such as incipient breasts; some even say menstruation. Only zar doctors feel they have sufficient control over the situation to invite female zars to possess them, for the value of a few protective female zars as revealers of occult secrets is great.

Female zars are regarded as "uneducated" and "undisciplined"; none of them are believed to have "studied in Jerusalem" where many wise male zars are believed to have gone to school. Many female zars therefore never can become protective spirits. At most they can be flattered by special chants, and bribed to remain inactive, i.e. seated on the back of the "horse". More female than male zars are downright evil.

[753] This is especially true when a female zar possesses a human [843] female. This is most often due to jealousy, and is so diagnosed if a woman suffers a series of miscarriages. For, while male zars are regarded as "striking the shoulder", female zars immediately" strike at the genitals".

One of the basic relationships with a zar spirit of the opposite sex, the "magical coitus", is solemnized by the zar doctor in a "marriage communion". The possessed is then referred to as "musharra" (newlywed), and is attended by two "mizē" (best men, like in a human wedding) from among the circle of the society of the possessed, who ever thereafter are in attendance every time another possession occurs,

X794 so that the patient "does not get hurt" in the violent twirling
776 (much as "mizē" protect a wife against her husband). The zar spirit appreciates these acknowledgements and is thus open to negotiations, especially during the "honeymoon".

Only rarely does a male zar "possess" a male human. In this case it is considered not very difficult to come to terms with him and turn him into a protective spirit, through regular financial sacrifices, special attire, and other physical adjustments. Zar doctors seek out powerful male zars whom they need as protective and guiding spirits in their profession. Powerful warriors who have seemed to have a charmed life are believed under such protection - which makes a male more
[674] masculine. Consistently successful thieves who always seem to elude capture are believed to be under such protection. This is said to frighten even the police (or at least offers a ready alibi).

X794 A patient under active treatment by a "zar" doctor is called
755 "tamami" (lit. the one being cared for). The first step in the procedure is the diagnosis, i.e. the identification of the specific zar personality that has possessed the patient. This is usually done at night, for the "zar" hide in daytime and roam at night - their element.

When darkness has fallen, the patient is brought to the hut of the zar doctor. Here the zar disciples, mostly women, are assembled, seated quietly, perhaps talking in subdued tones, or spinning cotton thread. Incense is burning, there is a low, rythmic drum beat, occasionally broken by chants accompanied by rythmic handclapping. Member after
X794 member rises individually, "when the spirit moves her" and begins to
755 perform her "gurri", with slight variations according to her particular
535 zar. The "gurri" is a movement that begins with the shoulders (typical

794 of Amhara dancing), while the performer is yet seated, and continues
755 while she rises. Head and shoulders move forward and backward, sometimes
535 in horizontal direction, sometimes rotating clockwise, sometimes counterclockwise. Nearing the orgiastic climax, the possessed proceeds to twirl like a top, faster and faster, until she drops in a heap. Habitues can go on for 20 minutes, and be ready for another movement an hour later.

While watching this over and over again, the patient may herself in time be moved to do likewise, though at first clumsily. This is a good sign, for it means that her zar has consented to dismount from his "riding" position, and is beginning to "descend" into the possessed person itself. The "gurri" is regarded as the "victory dance" of the zar, much like a hunter who has wounded and felled his deer. There is a strong element of struggle in the "gurri" dance, like the frantic death-
[831] throes of an animal about to surrender its individual existence. It is also the climax of the magical coitus (much like the bride who is "conquered" on her wedding night).

794 The patient is now in a trancelike state, considered in communica-
755 tion and partly identified with the zar, but yet open to urgings by the doctor. More incense is burned, close by, to make the new and as-yet unidentified zar feel cozy and put him in a benevolent, cooperative mood. Great care must be taken prior to the diagnosis. For this reason no poetry is sung to him and no gift given as yet, for the wrong king might insult him - he insists on his own, individual cult. When the patient dances subsequent "gurri", the zar doctor becomes increasingly certain whether the zar is male, or female, evil or mischievous, "neglected" or offended.

X-794 755 535 The specific personality and identity of the zar is revealed later during the course of the diagnosis, when the zar, using the body of the patient, dances the "fukkara" dance. This is considered the equivalent of the "boasting dance" of the Amhara warrior on the eve of battle, which goes by the same name. Thus the zar reveals his "faräs sem" (war name; lit. horse name, i.e. knighthood name), much like an Amhara feudal knight. Since formal "boasting" is highly individualistic, this means that the zar has come out of hiding, like a warrior who emerges from ambush. The dance itself is just as individualistic and irregular, therefore called "dankira", and may include the brandishing of sticks (as if they were spears) or jumping up and down.

X-794 755 Once the patient has proceeded to such expressive behavior, the zar doctor claims that he "knows" the identity of the zar. The doctor now asks the zar a series of leading questions, and the patient usually does not fail to respond with the "truthful" answers. Finally the name of the zar is openly proclaimed. Certain zars are stubborn, hide their identity in various subterfuges, so that the battle of wits between the zar doctor and the zar is a lengthy and difficult one. But the former nearly always wins out and announces his diagnosis.

Thereupon the zar doctor proceeds to decide what course of treatment [762] to follow. The zar is asked, through the mouth of the patient, what offense has been committed against him; what he would like to receive as "mïqwädäsha" love-gift in order to "pardon" the iniquity, or as damages for the "insult" or "neglect". Finally the zar is asked what he will demand in regular offerings in order to remain on good terms with the possessed, to plague her less and only at regular intervals, and, perhaps, to become her protective spirit. On the basis of the replies, the patient is

X794 assessed membership fees in the zar congregation headed by that parti-
755 cular zar doctor. The patient thus becomes a devotee of the zar ("yäzar
welaj").

X794 Demands of the individual zars range from very simple to very com-
782 plex. If he is a light-colored zar, he may demand the annual sacrifice
755 of a light-colored goat; if dark, of a black goat. Frequently the
776 demand includes personal attire for the possessed, such as certain
trinkets, glass bead necklaces, metal hairpins, specific hairstyles -
all of them attention-getters. The zar warns that he will come and
check on the observance of these demands from time to time, and
punish any shortcomings with severe suffering.

Sacrifices, "derka", in which a goat or a chicken is slaughtered,
are at least partly consumed by the patient (through whom the zar
consumes the donation). Sometimes several sacrifices have to be
observed as part of one "mäqwädäsha", to appease weaker zar spirits that
linger about the more powerful ones, awaiting a vulnerable moment in which
to pounce upon the patient, unless pacified.

Some zars are vegetarian, require ablutions in vegetable water, in
which mashed vegetables and chewed "chat" ("qat", a drugplant) have been
mixed; others perversely like the bitter vermifuge plant kosso and insist
that it be placed in the coffee consumed by the possessed patient; still
others have made the lemon or the sycamore their symbol.

More zars are carnivorous. One whose symbol (resembling a totem)
is a lion, will demand the sacrifice of a tawny-colored goat, or demand
X794 that one of that color be kept in sight at all times so that he can
776 "look" at it. For zars are very fond of using their sight. The wild
~~755~~
825 animals of the bush are considered the "cattle" of the zar, and some

794 776 755 [825] specialize in "drinking" magically the milk of the lioness or female elephant, etc. When zars appear in dreams, cats and jackals often represent female zars, snakes male zars. But the animals are merely forms which the zars assume temporarily, while the zar spirits themselves retain their demanding-protective identity permanently.

[756] Some zar doctors are considered far more experienced, clever, or specialized than others, so that stubborn cases are referred to them. One of the most stubborn is the zar of epilepsie, called "barya" (lit. Barya tribesman, hence, slave). This zar is believed to have his home in the Nilotic lowlands below the northwest escarpment, a desert and near-desert area inhabited by the Barya people. There this zar is believed in contact with "ganyen" (djinn), from whom he has acquired his evil character. Prognosis in this case is more limited, and all the zar doctor can do is to negotiate an agreement with "barya" to afflict the patient less frequently. Even the diagnosis is difficult, for the patient often has to be restrained, even tied up, and special herbs and procedures are required.

Another difficult case is the patient possessed by several different zars at the same time, which confuses the diagnosis. In this case, the cleverness, experience and diplomacy of the diagnostician are severly taxed, to unravel the tangle, and treat each zar without insulting and neglecting any of the others. The usual procedure is to appease the most powerful one, e.g. "awolye", first, and enlist him as guardian spirit against the others. A really powerful and arrogant zar doctor can go so far as to attempt to treat the personalities of the minor zars themselves. Thus he may give them a severe talking to

X794 (actually directed at the patient), and "train" the minor zars to do
776 their individual "gurri" somewhat differently, more "correctly".
755 This "training" may include occasional beating of the "horse" of the zar (the patient).

Another advanced and complicated technique used by highly experienced zar doctors, in certain stubborn cases, is to transfer a stubborn zar from one patient of the zar congregation to a "stronger" member, so that the effect will be more controllable. This transfer is made on the principle of contagion. But a zar doctor is not supposed to inoculate a person with a really evil zar, for that would make him a sorcerer and set both the chief zar doctors and mankind in general against him.

Only in case of such a completely evil zar does the zar doctor attempt complete exorcism, considered a very dangerous form of spiritual surgery. During a somber ceremony, which lacks the gaiety of the usual
[782] zar society, a black hen is killed, the evil zar is lured to feed on the body of the bloody animal, and the cadaver is quickly thrown in the bush, a thicket, or the river. This transfer is called "danqara", is tangential to the zar cult, and more related to "buda" and "tänqway" complexes (described later).

[787] Occasionally an old and experienced zar doctor, especially if a man, is asked to perform divination. If his personal zar happens to be "adept at prophecy", especially if he has been "educated at Jerusalem", the zar doctor may agree to put the question before him.

X794 Seasonal variations are considered very important in treatment pro-
776 cedures, for the zar spirits are regarded to be as much dominated by the
821 climate as are humans. They are dormant or inactive during the 3-month

X794 776 821 rainy season, when they hover in the confinement of their grottoes just as Abyssinians in their huts. Like humans, zar spirits become active soon after the rains, when the "Mäsqäl" feasts approach, the yellow flowers carpet the landscape and the green grain begins to mature. The favorite time for zar spirits to strike is between midnight and about 3 A.M.; but some individualistic spirits specialize in the hour of sunset, and some even midday.

X794 Belief in the curative powers of the zar doctors is still widespread and strong among the Amhara. Only in the city of Addis Ababa has the present government tried to subdue it, so that devotees have to travel away from the city, for their major reunions. Many men do not like X794 562 to admit their belief in the zar spirits or that they themselves consult zar doctors. This is because of the feminine emphasis of the zar cult. Women are more often possessed, and do not hesitate to admit it; they often seem to look forward to cult membership. Grown men, however, unless afflicted with an ailment as obvious as epilepsy, are ashamed to be seen in a cult group, especially when the cult doctor is a woman. The major exceptions are the brothers of the woman zar doctor, who are often almost as pixilated by inheritance and contact with their mother as the doctor herself; the zar poet and hymn-composer who is usually a man; and the hired drummer.

b. Characteristics and Attributes of Male and Female "Zar" Spirits.

X794 776 552 The organization of the male zar spirits is more complex than that of the female ones. Moreover, several male zar spirits arrogate names to themselves that otherwise are generic: e.g. "Gurēza" - usually generic for all male zars; "Weqābē"- usually generic for all protective spirits;

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"Wadaj" for male zars that specialize in possessing women; "Wureza" for subordinate zars. Female zars are regarded as "undisciplined" and rarely organize.

The names are often personalizations of characteristics and attributes of the zars. Others are terms of flattery designed to render the zar benevolent; or based on the home region of the zar. In some cases a zar spirit has "ordered" concealment of his real name, so that a new name has had to be abstracted from Amharic, or Geez, or Arabic, or a syncretic mutilation of all three languages. Some zars prefer to be addressed by their "farās sem" (knighthood name). Some zars, of Galla Muslim or Amharic Christian affiliation, insist that their name indicate their religious and ethnic identification. Sometimes the meaning of the name is lost, or cannot be traced readily because it is in "zar language" - itself largely a mutilation of Amharic, though this is not admitted. Finally, the poet who performs in the zar cult may think up new adjectives to describe the hoped-for benevolence of the zar, whereupon the zar spirit, pleased, adopts the adjective as a byname, or name, decreeing that henceforth he be addressed this way.

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Table 12: The Zar Spirits: Their Powers, Social Status, Personalities, Specializations.

Male Zars

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Weqābē (also generic for all protective zar spirits); addressed "bärsäwo Weqābē" - (polite, "by your protection, guiding spirit).	great	high; "educated".	some regard him as originally Galla, But "later educated"	protective	beard; manly beauty so male devotees don't shave.	protects; brings beauty to face of possessed women. Brings "luck". Can predict the future.
Gurēza (lit. colobus monkey), generic name of all male zars; addressed as "mushirra" (lit. bridegroom, Sire).	medium to great	varies with his role.	undefined	mischievous-playful.	monkey	can be turned into a protective spirit, if sufficiently catered to with gifts, and flattery.
Wädaj (lit. lover) also generic for male zars that specialize in possessing women	subordinate to powerful zars.	mostly Muslim		fickle and promiscuous	"çhat" leaf (typically chewed by Muslims)	most common protective Zar of possessed women, who are married or divorced.

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult.	Attributes; Major Concerns Specializations
Wurēza (also Werēza, generic for subordinate zars, those serving as pages to powerful zars or still "students")	little power	low; (but some have potentialities).	often Coptic Christian.	resembles adolescent boys and young-warrior personalities.		immature in development, but getting "educated" and therefore potentially of value as protectors.
Weliya (from Arabic "waliy" - Saint) (sometimes generic adjective)	great	high	unlimited; regional center at Gondar (town).	tough; can be made protective; generally irascible.	lioness, female elephant, his "cattle".	At present the chief zar possessing Lady Salāmtu, chief zar doctor in Gondar (Begemdir).
Sayfu Changär (lit. sword, whipping stick; Arabic). Brother of evil, powerful female zar Rahēlo.	great	High nobility (Commander of Right Guard of zars).	Coptic Christian, friend of Ethiopian Saint Gābre-Mānfās-Qeddus.	"educated at Jerusalem" can be powerfully protective.	the lemon tree; his "gānda" (mystic coffee tray symbolizes the "tabot" of the church.	Adept at medicines, therefore powerful protector; also as commander over many "wädaj" zars whom he can restrain, and to whom he allocates gifts of incense, etc.
Mälak (lit. angel, from Geez language)	medium	medium	of Geez (Semitic) affiliation, hence Coptic Christian	mystic; has veiled original identity	horse (his old name "Färäs", horse, is tabooed by his own order.	appears in dreams in the shape of a horse.

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult	Attributes; Major Concerns Specializations
Abba Yosef	great but vulnerable to Coptic religious appeal	medium	religious Copt; in company of Säyfu Čhängär, hence "educated".	very jealous; purist. Can be made protective, (even restrained through amulet of dabbärä, since he is religious Copt)		causes miscarriages in married women out of jealousy for husband and as "purist". Undergoes baptism every Tämqät (Epiphany), blesses the pool of water like bishop.
Adbar (supposed to mean "protect me") in zar language; "guardian" in Galla language)	medium	medium	religious Copt of ancient times. Dwells in shady churchyards.	outdoor spirit but lazy. Educated, but old and inactive. Can become protective.	trees that give shade.	causes rheumatism, to "keep his horse from moving". Requires sheep sacrifice under shady tree consecrated to him.
Rom-Näddad (lit. flame from Rome; also: malaria (fever)	medium	medium	Christian; in company of Säyfu Čhängär.	educated in Jerusalem; when made protective, teaches use of medicinal herbs.	flame, fire, fever.	regarded as having taught mankind the use of fire and cooking, from his own flame on a rock in the Red Sea. Can make fire by striking his forehead with a finger.
Abba Qwasqas	med.	med.	Coptic Christian	when made protective, inspires success in business caravans, mead houses, construction, real estate.		likes to possess women who have masculine tendencies whom he makes wear jodphurs. (Devotees of this zar are often women operators of mead houses).

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Sayd Qadr	med.	med.	Christian	rarely protective; easily angered.	noon	causes indigestion; esp. at midday, when he likes to "descent" into his possessed (this is the hour when food is first taken on "fast days").
Qalē	great	high	believed to be of Galla ethnic origin, lowland jungle region.	terrible when angry; stubborn, does not perform "gurri" easily. When made protective, spirit of "hearth and home"; and aids hunters, by "laming" the game.		neglect causes him to destroy harvests, kill cattle, abort women, bring locusts; at other times he is "lazy zar" causing rheumatism. Requires animal sacrifice under sycamore.
Barya (lit. slave)	sometimes great	low	believed from Nilotic Sudan of "Barya" (negroid) people, whence he has come to wreak vengeance for the enslavement of his people by the Amhara.	evil, very stubborn, never protective; at most agrees to plague the patient less. Sometimes attacks in group, led by their chief "Legewon", like a tornado, who has red eyes.	tornado	causes epilepsy ("hemama barya") especially in men, whom he prefers to posses. The convulsions are his orgies. But he is vulnerable to spellbinding formulae of däbtära.

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "Zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Ganyu (lit. tonsure) addressed as "Dämmänä"- cloud	med.	low	home in bamboo forest of Western escarpment near Metemma (Sudan border); Galla.	Can be made protective spirit.	cloud ("Dämmänä") also bamboo.	feeds on bamboo; only plagues on occasion, especially caravans passing through his district.
Qallechcha	med.	low	Galla Muslim, from Wollega province.	Rarely protective, but has power only in limited regions. When protective, teaches rare medicines and healing.		requires offerings under special trees consecrated to him: is fond of blood esp. of chickens.
Gran Sellatä (lit. left-handed hen).	medium	low	"pagan"	when protective teaches effective healing. Considered wise.		specialist on desires of other zars, expert on their animal sacrifices. Can aid zar doctors in their negotiations with other zars.
Shäh Anbäso (sometimes synonym for Aweliya) (lit. lion)	great	high	Muslim, but with Christian relatives.	rarely protective. Considered negative side of Aweliya zar.	lion	requires tawny goat as sacrifice, to symbolize lion. Was husband of "Rahälo. Commands 98 zars of the "house of the left guard".

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations.
Shēh Ebābe (lit. Chief Snake)	med.	med.	Muslim	rarely protective	snake	appears in dreams by his symbol, the snake.
Wäyane	med.	low		evil spirit		inspires rebellion among warriors against chiefs; among feudal lords against king.
Weshenger	med.	low		mischievous, but not evil		likes to cause sudden, violent rain, rendering caravans helpless in the mud.
Kābrä (lit. glory, honored one)	med.	med.	believed to have his home in Tigrē province.	protective spirit for hunters.		hunting
Gommari (lit. the proud, vain, defiant	med.	low	lives in bush	can become protective	big male of baboon family-"gämäre"	warlike and leadership qualities.
Ber Alänga (lit. silver whip)	med.	med.		very greedy; rarely protective except for very rich patients.		interested in economic exploitation. The "rich man's zar".

X-774
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Name	Power	Social Status of the "Zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major concerns/ Specializations
Azzaj Deha (lit. Commander of the poor)	med.	low	lives in ashes and dirty hovels	very distrustful; will not negotiate unless guarantor ("was") has been posted whom he will plague in case of non-payment. Can become protective.		the "poor man's zar".

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Female Zars

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations.
Rahēlo	very great, Chief female zar.	high	once carried off by the "ganyēn" (djinn) to the Blue Nile, but saved by her brother Sāyfu Čhängär; however, impregnated in the rape, she gave birth to the evil "zars of the left guard". Christian, yet was married to Muslim Šhēh Anbäso.	evil, never becomes protective.	lemon tree (like her brother).	causes miscarriages, preferably in rich or noblewomen, for she is a snob. Amulets and formulae of dābtära may have power against her.
Shanqit	med.	low; servant of Rahelo	Shanqalla (lowland negroid tribe below southwest border). Considered "pagan".	fickle like all female zars, but can become protective.		possesses only ex-slave and very low-class women. If protective, will teach how to be a good hostess, which Shanqit has learned while serving Rahelo.

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations.
Shotälay	great	med.	no special affiliation; ranges unlimited.	very evil, never protective.		renders women sterile and barren, even kills babies. Drinks blood magically, causing victim to waste away (like "buda"). Hence zar doctors try to exorcise her completely, by transferring the possession onto a chicken, killing it in the open, throwing it away.
Äynä Ṭela (lit. shadow eye. Hence-evil eye).	med.	low	no special affiliation.	evil, never protective, but not very powerful when alone. Parasitic zar, waiting for the spoils left by other zars.		general troublemaker. Tries to prevent patient from entering trance properly, confusing the "diagnosis", confusing other zars when about to reveal their names. Likes to attack men that have been attacked by other zars and thus weakened.

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Sawbädayt	little	low	regional in watercourses and lakes and the sea.	regarded as mermaid, as half-fish, as result of intercourse she had with Gedewon, king of the sea.		occasionally endangers people crossing streams or exposed to drowning.
Teggerta (also called Waddegeni)	great	med.	considered universal	evil, but can be cajoled by continuous attention and cultivation. Treated also by amulets of däbtära.		causes apathy, depression, datatonic states, esp. in women, esp. after childbirth. Patient must be coaxed with delicacies, bright ornaments, music and dancing. Also causes psychotic delusions, in either men or women.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 776 From this complex array of the plaguing - but often also protective-spirit world, it becomes clear that there is a great deal of significance in the zar cult beyond mere healing of mental ailments; even beyond the organizing of patients into groups of devotees - a kind of group therapy with religious overtones. There is an extension of the acquired "protection" so that some zars become not only protective spirits of individuals, but patron saints of certain social groups in Amhara society, e.g. some specialize in the rich and noble, some in the poor or low-class; some in hunters and warriors; etc. But although religious affiliations are usually identified sharply, there is considerable crossing of the lines in the spirit world so that Coptic Christian spirits may have Muslim names, and even practice [812] religious intermarriage. Another important contribution made by the zar cult is that it orders nature, explains nature to the Amhara mind, yet allows enough flexibility (e.g. in regional variations, and the continuously increasing and decreasing power of individual zars) to admit new information, new revelations, to be fitted into the traditional construct. For example, in the 1930's the dominant zar spirit in Gondar was Sayfu Changar (ascertained by a French expedition); in 1953/1954 it was Aweliya. Since zar spirits can have successful and unsuccessful careers, so can humans; hence, new ideas, even modern ones, can be fitted into the spiritual world.

But the major character of the "zar" complex is that of a healing cult.

X794 756 796 c. <u>The Annual Convention ("amat bal") of the "Zar" Doctors; Voluntary Possession in the "Zar" Cult.</u>

On the 23rd night of the month of Yakatit, the day before the beginning of the Coptic Christian lent, the "zar" doctors of Gondar held

X794 their annual convention,("amat bal", lit. the annual event). This is
756 about the time when the rest of the Christian world celebrates its
796 mardi Gras, Carnevale, Fasching. The timing of the convention is probably no accident, for there be, as, the day after the noisy Convention, the period of "kudadē" (lit. suffering) in the life of Christ, priests would hardly permit the noisy and gay celebration during lent.

The convention takes place in Addis Alām (lit. new world), the oldest section of Gondar town, once restricted to Muslims and other non-Copts.

Unlike Western Conventions of doctors and scientists, the zar Convention does not consist of calm, objective, sometimes mononotous and even icy presentations. Instead, in the convention of "zar" doctors new techniques are subjectively demonstrated on participant zar devotees who are chronically possessed; diagnostic aids are utilized in actual treatment of actual patients; new poetry to cajole specific spirits is recited in ecstatic chants to the beat of the drum, while the audience joins in with refrain-chanting and rythmic handclapping. It is a super - "wādāja" (lit. love-feast) of the zar cult, bigger and better than ordinary zar cult activities, and introducing new experience, but in principle follows the same basic procedures of luring protective zars into public "possession" of the afflected, and enlisting them in the diagnosis and treatment of ailments caused by evil or mischievous zar spirits.

X794 In view of the esoteric elements in the zar cult, it is little
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123 wonder that the "amat bal" is restricted to zar doctors and permanent
796 devotees. Therefore it was not easy for a "European" observer like the

X794 present author to be permitted to attend this all-night session.
756 Careful negotiations through a trusted intermediary person had to be
123 arranged ahead of time. For at any time the chief of the zar doctors
796 could end the negotiations on the ground that some of the "zar" spirits would be offended or repelled, and refuse to come into full possession of their "horses" in the presence of a stranger. An additional antagonistic element was fear of the local police detectives, who, though they do not interfere with the zar cult, have orders from the self-concious central government not to let foreigners witness it.

X794 The chief zar doctor of Gondar in the present generation is the
756 Lady (woyzäro?) Salämtew. She is renowned even outside the entire province (Begemdir-Semyen), as far as Tigre province and even in Addis Ababa. This is perhaps more due to her position than her own initiative, for Gondar has long been considered the city of powerful spirits and traditions. She leaves most healing activities to her disciple "balä zar", except for very stubborn cases. More often she is busy as "consultant", for many clients, even non-devotees of the zar cult, bring their family or business or litigation problems to her. She herself is possessed by several powerful, protective male zars, to whom she ascribes her various powers, from whom she receives inspiration, the spirit of enterprise, courage to experiment in perfect comfort and security without the fear of the evil eye which hampers other individuals engaging in anything new.

She is not afraid of the pinpricks of medium and minor "zar" spirits, for her whole like is devoted to the service of the most powerful ones. One of the latter has strong Coptic Christian affiliations and learning, and guides her in her cautious and unofficial

X794 756 relations with the priests of the Abyssinian Coptic church; e.g. by whispering to her when to give them private feasts, and how to guide observant Amhara clients - married couples in domestic strife - so as not to come into conflict with the "mänfäs gubaē" (lit. soul father, confessor, who would normally arbitrate such a case for the church).

Another of her powerful zars teaches her medicine, and specializes in the diagnosis of difficult cases of possession. Still another is a specialist on what the other zars prefer as sacrifices, taboos, poetry, and how to negotiate with each of them; (i.e. he teaches her how to function like a priestess).

Another of her zars specializes in business advice: when to buy and sell what; when and how to invest in caravans, or invest in construction of town houses. Occasionally she also takes incidental advice from low-status spirits such as Shanqit, who gives her moner hints on how to be a good hostess when entertaining a "telleq säw" (great man) who comes to her in secret; and on how to manage her large household.

Lady Säläntu's posture, when not undergoing possession herself, is one of benign self-assurance, not unlike the calm, almost phlegmatic composure of Amhara nobles who act as if everything must come to them. For Lady Salamtew appears sincere and certain of being able to draw on her private reservoir of protective zar spirits almost any night she chooses.

X794 756 123 115 The writer's negotiations with her were conducted through his guide, himself a native of the Addis Aläm section of Gondar, and who, though young, occupied some status as "educated" (seven grades of modern elementary school). Moreover, he was not unknown to Lady Salamtew, for his father, a well-known "wogäsha" doctor in Gondar, had often referred

794 patients to her when his organic medicines had not helped. It was this
756 guide who hit on the idea of flattering Lady Salämtew by notifying her
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[116] that the foreigner was sick, suffering from severe headaches, sleeplessness and chronic intestinal cramps - (all common ailments in her practice), and that he would trust only her for treatment. Whether or not Lady Salamtew believed this, it indicated to her that the foreigner would fit himself into the framework and procedures of her zar cult, and not become a disturbing element that might "offend" her zar spirits.

The guide had taken the further precaution of negotiating with her through her brothers, who were willing to encourage her to accept, in the hope of gifts and rewards. As a result, Lady Salamtew accepted in principle; but in line with the unhurried dignity of her position she had the foreigner informed that he should send the guide again at a later time when she would make known the conditions under which he might attend the "amat bal" convention. In appreciation for having reached this point in the negotiation, the guide left her brothers with some "etan gänzäb" (money for frankincense).

The next step was reached when Lady Salamtu expressed the wish to have the foreigner appear before her, some days before the convention, so that she could look him over.

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[343] Her house, a semimodern affair of hard-mud walls, is reached by a steep downhill trail from the Gondar town market. On the lower level (the old section of Gondar called "Addis Alam") many houses and huts are built on the foundations of stone houses destroyed by the dervishes in the late 19th century. This section, once restricted to Muslim and other non-Coptic minorities, is now largely inhabited by Muslim Ethiopian weavers and retail traders, many ex-slaves of Sudanese or part-Shanqalla

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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descent, and a few poor Amhara Coptic families, as well as some Amhara who do business there, such as the "wogasha" doctor. Various elements which do not wish to be under too close scrutiny by the church or the police prefer to live in this section. Here the "zar" societies can pound their drums as loudly as the cult requires, for only muffled sounds will rise to the Coptic part of the town.

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After stooping to pass through the somewhat low entrance to the house of Lady Salämtew, the visitor finds himself in a room larger than he had anticipated. He is told to remove his shoes, (as if this were a church or mosque). The room is lit by numerous little clay oil lamps even in daytime - a considerable luxury, - for windows have been carefully avoided or boarded up to assure privacy. On the mud-benches around the wall sit a number of women; others sit on mats on the hard-mud floor. An Amhara male visitor in European type suit, who has just consulted the Lady Salamtu, leaves hurriedly. Lady Salamtu is seated on a raised platform at the far end of the room, behind a curtain, and another area in front of her stage is marked off by a long, thin wooden beam embedded in the floor. The women devotees in the room are busily spinning cotton with their little distaffs, and, since it is still afternoon and not yet "zar time", whisper and gossip with each other freely. Some take time out to suckle their babies, often without rising.

Someone has gone behind the curtain and whispered to her that the foreigner and his guide have arrived. She promptly pulls the curtain aside, but pretends to pay no special attention to the visitor. Her active zars have not possessed her at this time, and she therefore appears absent-minded. She sits on a slightly raised seat on the small

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stage, her legs crossed almost Turkish fashion, very unlike the usual Amhara posture. She is in her late forties, a rather stocky, powerful woman. Her features are heavy, and she seems at least half-Sudanese. She reinforces the non-Amhara, alien aspects of her appearance by wearing large, yellow, metal bracelets and anklets, and a Muslim-type deep red print cloth over her hair and shoulders. The dirt floor of her platform is covered with sheepskins. Whoever rises is careful not to turn her back to Lady Salamtu. Whenever she moves, there is an attentive hush in the whisperings. In the far corner the smoke of incense rises slightly and blends with the light smoke of the oil lamps.

The only males in the room are the two brothers of Lady Salamtu, and it is with them that the guide begins his whispered negotiations. The visit is brief. Before leaving, the guide advises the foreigner to leave Lady Salamtew some "frankincense money." The foreigner understands that he is to give it to her directly - which is a faux pas - and crosses over the separating beam to place the money in her hand. Only after deveral days does he learn that this was a breach of protocol, for by touching her hand he might have removed one of her valuable zars "by contagion".

Some days later the negotiators make known their conditions for permitting the foreigner to witness the "amat bal" annual convention. He is to send: three dollars worth of imported incense including frankincense, sandalwood, also sesame seeds; one dollar's worth of coffee beans; a small amount of gunpowder which is pleasing to one of her zars; one bottle of "araqi" (arrak) distilled liquor. The foreigner is forbidden to take any written notes (which a foreign missionary had one done) on the grounds that this is displeasing to the zar. He is warned

X794 not to cross the boundary in front of the stage again. He is not to
756 approach the house until well after nightfall, and is to come by a
123 back trail, so as not to be seen by passersby.

X794 Thus, after nightfall on the 23rd of the month of Yäkatit, he
796 climbed over eroded back trails down to the "Kokit" section of Addis
123 Aläm and approached the house of Lady Säläämtu where her devotees were assembled. It was 7:30 P.M. More oil lamps had been lit. There were about 20 women, but a male zar doctor with talents in poetry and chanting sat near the stage, wearing a white turban much like a Coptic Abyssinian priest. A powerful male drummer had been hired for the occasion.

X794 Lady Säläämtew still took no official notice of the foreigner, for
796 her zar had not yet "descended", and without that she was just a hollow
[123] shell, a mute "horse". One of her brothers motioned the foreigner politely to a seat on the mudbench that ringed the wall. There was much subdued whispering, as if a momentous event was about to take place. The hairdo of several of the women devotees and doctors had
[302] been specially arranged to honor their individual zars: those not permitted to cut their hair had plaited it into a braid ("zurosh") surrounding the skull; others had shaved a circle in the middle (called "gucho"), like a little girl.

X794 Other preparations and paraphenalia included the ritual coffee
796 trays ("gända"), which symbolized the wooden"tabot" (sacred tablet)
778 of the holy Coptic city of Aksum, and which were dedicated to several zars including Säyfu Čhängär and Rahölo. The ancient mother of many zars, named "Werär" was believed to have stolen the original "tabot"

×794 796 778 from Aksum (just as Menelik I is regarded by the Coptic Abyssinians to have brought it to Aksum from Solomon's Holy of Holies at the temple in Jerusalem). But the tabot of the zars also symbolized the outdoor tree stump which serves the invisible zar spirits as a table. Thus, partaking of refreshments from the coffee trays constituted a kind of communion with the zar spirit to whom the tray was dedicated, although this was done only during intermissions of the cult services. On one tablet, the "araqi" supplied by the foreigner stood ready.

×794 796 782 In the corners, more types of incense were burning than before. In addition to "ṭan" (frankincense), the domestic Ethiopian "bukbuka" was sending up clouds of perfumed smoke. Leaves of "wogart", believed pleasing to the zar that causes headaches and neuralgic pains, were occasionally placed on the clay incense burners. From time to time, some imported pebbles of yellow sulphur ("kabrē" or "din") sent up acrid smoke. But the sweet odor of most types of incense predominated most of the time.

×794 796 756 781 [533] About 8:30, the drummer brought his heavy drum down from beneath the solidly built roof, and began to drum slowly, rythmically, still subdued. The curtain was lowered, but the shadow of Lady Salamtew behind it could still be vaguely seen. Suddenly raucous grunts began to be heard from behind the curtain, emanating from Woyzärö Sälämtew. This meant that her first major zar had arrived, and was beginning to descend into her, performing the magical coitus. Her joyshouts became louder, higher-pitched, turning to shrieks, quicker and quicker. She was beginning to perform the "gurri" victory dance of the zar who had conquered her.

Immediately the women devotees began to handclap rythmically, gradually quickening their tempo, in time to the twisting and turning

X794 of Lady Salamtew's body. The twisting began like an embrace, with her
796 head thrown back, rotating movements of the chest, followed by a
756 rythmic forward bump of belly and hips. Her ecstatic shrieks varied
781 from pain to exultation (like the "ellel" of women in the Coptic church service). Encouraging shouts came from individual women in the audience, and some raised their holiday - reddened palms in prayerful joy. As the climax approached, the jerky twisting of Lady Salamtew's body gradually changed to smoother movements of the limbs. She was now well in tune with her zar, and he was comfortable within her. The excitement in the audience changed to warm and glowing emotion at the same time. Then Lady Salamtew emitted a loud scream, and dropped in a heap. The drum stopped abruptly. There was a sudden hush in the audience. The strong sweet odor of generously burned incense pervaded the consciousness and its smoke leisurely curled upward.

X794 It was only a matter of minutes before Lady Salamtew recovered.
756 Her brother pulled the curtain to one side. Her eyes were bright with
796 curiosity as she glanced about the house as if she had just arrived. She had lost her absent-minded appearance, for now the zar acted and spoke through her. Suddenly she appeared to notice the foreigner for the first time, smiled and waved a friendly greeting. Her voice was still husky, but warm, as she called out "how are you" in understandable Amharic, rather than her esoteric "zar language"; this was a courtesy, though
[195] she used the female familiar gender (the zar often uses the inverted
[123] genders in address). She further inquired whether the foreigner was sitting in comfort, and how his health was today (hinting at the "ailments" he had used as a pretext). Then she ordered the handmaidens to offer the foreigner tella (barley beer), and coffee, on one of the zar coffee trays.

X 794 She then proceeded to greet the individual zar doctors and devotees
786 as if she had been absent a long time. Each rose and bowed deeply to
796 her. Barley beer was now passed around freely, while coffee beans were being roasted and crushed, in preparation for the next intermission.

X 794 Refreshed and heartened, the male zar doctor serving as poet now
782 began to chant the hymns he had composed in honor of "aweliya" the
796 chief male zar of Lady Salamtew. The rythm was as formal as the hymns
[533] chanted by the dabtara in the Coptic Abyssinian church, but contained Arabic loanwords borrowed from the traders' vernacular. The audience quickly leaned the response and accompanied the responsive chant with rythmic handclapping:

Poet: "Salaam" (lit. "Peace", greeting; similar in Geez and Arabic languages).

Crowd: "Salaam Alēkum" (lit."Peace be with you", in Arabic).

Poet (continuing in Amharic): "Enter, warrior; enter warrior! "

Crowd: (repeats the same words).

Poet: "Lord Aweliya, what have I given to him (polite address) that he may be merciful to me?"

Crowd: (repeats same chant in more wailing pitch).

Poet: "Flower (synonym for youth), oh zar, flower!"

Crowd: (repeats)

Poet: He is Lord of Sera, Lord of Mora is he". (Polite address).

Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "He, bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Crowd: "Bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Poet: "Like a lion, like a leopard, when he roars!"

Crowd: (repeats).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 Poet: "My witness (also can mean "faith"), Aweliya; my witness!"
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796 Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "May it be, to be healed, let me be!"

Crowd: (repeats)

Poet: "My prophet, my prophet, peace be with you".

Crowd: (repeats).

Now that Aweliya has been greeted and his protection invoked, individual "balā zar" (zar doctors as well as chronically possessed patient-devotees) can invite and lure their individual zars to take public "possession" of the devotee, who then dances the individual "gurri" victory dance of the particular zar. In luring the zar, they invite him with incense that he likes and with poetry composed by the zar doctor who serves as the poet of the convention.

It is now 9:30 P.M. Now that Sweliya, a Coptic zar is present, the poet invites Galla zar spirits from the Raya and Azabo territory of eastern Ethiopia:

Poet (chanting): "Aweliya, you are merciful, merciful you are;
my Lord, you are merciful".

Crowd: "Yehun" (lit. "May he be", polite address; this is a frequent refrain).

Poet: "If we believe in you, if we have faith, Aweliya, you will be merciful!"

Crowd: "Amēn".

Poet: "Hear, oh prophet, we greet you; hear, oh prophet, we greet you!"

Crowd: "May you be" (greeted).

Poet: "The coffee has boiled,
the pilgrimage has been fulfilled;
hear, oh prophet, we greet you".

x 794 Crowd: "Amān".

782 796 Poet: "Raya, Raya, we are calling;

Azābo, Azābo, we are calling!"

Crowd: "May you be".

Poet: "This will bring him to me;

now it will entice him!"

Crowd: "Amān".

Poet: "Azābo ! Raya ! I am calling!"

x 794 781 796 When he stops there is an expectant hush. A woman zar doctor seated on a mat amid the crowd begins to sway backward and forward, still in a sitting position. All eyes turn to her, for this is the beginning of the "gurri" of her zar, and the spirit is beginning to move her. She begins to rise, still swaying. Her neighbors hold her lightly for a moment and remove her long necklaces which have metal objects attached that might hurt her or someone else in the spinning movements that are to follow. Now fully on her feet, the possessed begins to twirl, omitting hoarse shrieks. She spins faster and faster, like a top. Several times she slows a little, raises her arms rythmically, and contorts head, then chest, belly and hips, while her zar descends into magic coitus with her. Each time she spins again, to the ever faster tytha of the drum and the rythmic handclapping. The other women encourage her on to the orgiastic climax with shouts of "ahun" (now) and "yehun" (let it be). Her shrieks turn to long whines. After about 15 minutes of this "gurri", she falls in a heap, suddenly, exhausted, shouting "ahun" (now) herself with her last effort, then lies silent and motionless.

x794 782 796 The poet now lures the "pagan" zar Gamyu, whose home is in a bamboo forest in the Metemma lowland of the eastern escarpment of Ethiopia.

Poet: "Tall bamboo you (lit. he) will eat; bamboo you will devour;
Lord, named "Dämmäna" (lit. cloud), from where you devour bamboo;
Gamyu, Gamyu, Gamyu, pure honey (flattering syncnym for healer) I
dance eyaho, eyaho dance, Oh Gamyu!"

Thereupon one of the women devotees who has shaved a tonsure in the center of her skull ("Gamyu" comes from "gamye", meaning tonsure), which is the visible requirement he makes of those whom he "possesses", begins to rise. The "gurri" she dances differs only in details from the one performed for the Galla zar spirits.

It is now 11:00 P.M. The various male zars expected on the program for the evening have now "descended". It is time for the female zars to begin making their descent, which is safe, now that many protective male zars are about.

x794 796 781 Word is whispered around that a male and a female zar who "will bite" are about to attack some of the possessed. Everyone rises and crowds close to the wall, leaving the hearth and the center of the room [124] free. Only Lady Säläntew seems unafraid. She calls out a warning to the foreigner, in her husky voice but in friendly tone, advising him to stand on the bench so as not to be bitten. "Ayzäw" (be well, be of good courage, be of good cheer) she calls out to the foreigner, using the [195] polite address, and forgetting to use the familiar 2nd person singular feminine, which is her privilege.

This time the possession begins differently. Two women detach themselves from the frightened crowd almost simultaneously. Both

x794 women cower on all fours, snarl at each other, snort like angry
796 leopards, showing their teeth. They crouch like wildcats about to spring
781 at each other, their faces turned to the ground, and eying each other only intermittently. A shallow, large clay dish filled with barley beer is set on the floor for them, and the two antagonists compete with each other in lapping up the drink like cats.

One of the women is possessed by an evil female zar, the other by a mean male zar. The male zar snaps at the female zar, who is of equal power and status. Appearing stimulated by the drink, they chase each other about the room, still cowering, snorting, attacking, retreating, finally grasping each other in a battle clinch, and actually nipping at each other. When this happens, the Lady Salamtu rises quickly, and descends into the arena wielding a thick leather strap. The contestants roll on and off one another and begin to bite seriously, but before damage is done, Lady Salämtu swishes her strap, pulls them apart or separates them with light blows.

This battle is accompanied with drumbeat and rythmic handclapping by the crowd. The contestants do not rejoin battle but roam very rapidly as if blind and lost, sniffing the ground as if they depended on the sense of smell, until they fall exhausted in a heap. But a few moments later they run to Lady Salämtew, kiss her hand, and prostrate themselves before her on the dirt floor in front of the platform. Thus the female and minor zars pay homage to the powerful male zars that possess Lady Salamtew, and acknowledge that they have learned to keep within bounds and not do very severe damage.

x794 It is now 11:30 P.M. and a brief recess is announced. A young,
796 part-Sudanese servant woman, and ex-slave, serves coffee, barley beer,
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x794 796 262 araqi, and also round, solid wheat discs (Qitta")- the unleavened bread of travelers, expensive when made of wheat.

x794 781 [782] About midight, the convention proceeds, with the poet intoning the call for the female zar "Shazqit (see table for her characteristics):

Poet: "Dance, round and round, brave one;

Shanqit, we are calling; brave one".

Both men and women clap more fiercely than over, in quick rythm Suddenly the servant woman who had served the latest refreshments stiffens with a jerk, screams, and lets the tray slide from her hand. She is about to be possessed by the female zar of her class and occupation. This "gurri" is infantile in character. The young woman begins to skip about the room like a young goat or an overly gay little girl. She teasingly pokes at the men, again and again, until a few copper coins are given her. When this happens, she jumps high with glee. But a moment later she is back, pouting, demanding some sweets, asking for honey. Given some, she devours it, and dances a victory dance, flipping about on tiptoe. The drumbeat quickens. Finally she falls exhausted, her zar now in full possession of her.

x794 796 688 There is another hush, awaiting further demonstrations. But there is an unscheduled interlude which reinforces discipline. The woman who had danced the "pagan" gurri had left shortly afterward, ostensibly for a call of nature, but had not returned until now, far too long an absence without permission. Seeing her enter, Lady Salamtew rises, shouting angrily, walkes toward her and heats her on the upper back with the heavy strap, several times, rather hard. The victim stands with bowed head, not stirring under the punishment, evidently

X794 realizing that her "zar" had insulted the powerful one of Salamtew.
796 Back on her throne, Lady Säläm̈tew harshly admonishes the audience for
[688] dozing, for whispering, for laughing, and some for having taken food and drink during the previous "gurri". This inattentiveness is an insult to her zar, and she threatens to recess the convention if it continues. But then she sugarcoats the threat by calling for another round of refreshments.

[853] Some of the babies in the rear had cried, and were nursed by their mothers. This had also been done by some of the possessed women previously, sometimes within half an hour after the exhausting "gurri". Motherhood and zar devotion evidently did not conflict.

[123] Lady Säläm̈tu used this intermission to send the foreigner word promising "I shall appoint you a zar as your weqabi (protective spirit)". When she saw that he had drunk some of the barley beer which she had ordered to be served on the tablet of her zar. This time she addressed him in the female gender again, just as she had used a male gender in addressing her female devotees. The zars are believed to enjoy playing their game of turning nature upside down.

X794 About 1A.M., everyone rose, except the poet and the drummer.
535 Fresh incense was heaped on the burners. Tired and partly intoxi-
796 cated members of the audience were shaken awake. For now they were to witness the "fukkara", the individualistic "boasting dance" of Lady Säläm̈tew's zar. It was a spastic bobbing up-and-down dance, similar to the "hotu" dance of warriors. The drum beat faster and
[293] faster, Lady Säläm̈tew seemed to forget her dignity, but still waved her strap, the symbol of her seniority, while the devotees shouted

X794 536 796 "ellel" as shrilly as they do outside church during Coptic services. Exhausted, the powerful woman finally collapsed, and the curtain was quickly drawn to hide her during her recovery.

X794 796 Several other zar doctors demonstrated their individual "fukkara" activities. But more and more participants grew inattentive, and some began to doze. Lady Salämtew declared the session ended at about 3 A.M. [513] The women bedded down right on the floor or the mud bench, while the men who lived nearby went home, and others rolled up in blankets and skins just outside the house, under the overhanging roof. It was a cold night, usual during cloudless month of Yäkatit.

The season of the roaming zar spirits had once again been concluded, not to revive in full vigor until after the rainy season half a year later. At the convention much protection had been gained, and old protection reinforced against the many mischievous zars that might plague people in the meantime.

d) Social Aspects of the Zar Cult.

X794 608 The groups of chronically possessed persons who meet regularly as devotees of the zars, in the "wädaja" (lit. love feast), constitute what are called "aqwädash" (sometimes "aqtacha"), face-to-face societies. Their interpersonal relationships soon become social, much like the mähabbär communal worship society of the church. Both establish bonds which, to the Amhara mind, become "artificial kinship". Not infrequently this leads to the establishment of bonds of actual affinal kinship (as described earlier).

X794 772 The parallel can also be applied to an understanding of the leadership involved. Much like the mähabbär is led and blessed by the priest-confessor, so the zar society is led and blessed by the

×794 zar doctor, preferably a woman like Woyzäro Salämtew. The zar complex,
772 to the Amhara mind, represents the shadow side of the visible human
world, making it complete. Hence, just as the Coptic Christian (and
[562] also the Muslim) church emphasizes the male-dominated, patriarchal
side of society, so does the zar complex represent the obverse, the
female-dominated, matriarchal side of society.

×794 This is further reinforced by the subordinate socio-psychological
562 position of the Amhara woman. She may not enter the church. Her
daily labors are largely limited to routine, manual, monotonous tasks.
[565] Only noblewomen are exempt from this social position of the "commoner"
female, and therefore are not found in the zar cult - which therefore
has a lower-class connotation in the basically two-class Amhara society.

Socially undistinguished, "commoner" Amhara women who chafe under
[164] their social inferiority, including women of potential talent repressed
in their culture, are likely to develop ailments such as melancholia.
apathy, catatonic states, migraine, or hysteria. Thus the zar doctor
is called in and the patient enters the zar society.

The socio-psychological improvement, even apart from medical
[755] considerations, which the woman experiences as member of a zar -
devotee society, is considerable. Once her individual "zar" has been
diagnosed, she has acquired an individual "self" which is respected,
acknowledged, at first within, and finally even outside the zar
society. For the zar society emphasizes individualism, free expression,
individual enterprise; as against the outside Amhara world which sup-
presses it in commoners, especially in the Amhara woman. The business
enterprise of the female zar doctor and many devotees has already been
described.

x 794 562 Some women with hysterical tendencies revert to infantile behavior. In the zar society they can act this out, while protected and disciplined by the matriarchal zar doctor. Others, with a father-complex, join zar societies headed by male zar doctors. In either case they enjoy recreation and amusement with the "sibling"devotees, with whom they can gossip and enact sibbling roles, such as playfully accusing each other of minor oversights in the service of the zar; (it often takes this form).

Even her life outside the zar society becomes changed. For she is now considered as guided by a protective zar who can extend his protection to other members of the family. Her husband, even if he [826] objects to the zar, often will admit the radiant beauty of her face and her bearing, due to the "weqabi" (protective zar). As a result of her exposure to businesswomen, the menfolk in her family will not shunt her aside when talking business, or legal or kin matters. Some women devotees whose bent is more feminine, become midwives, "experts" in domestic obstetrics and primitive gynecology. There are many ways in which the woman's social status improves. No longer is she a mere hauler of water and hewer of wood. This change usually relieves her mental ailment - and this cure is ascribed to the zar doctor and the zar complex.

x 794 562 776 As a result, a good, protective zar is valuable, and a mother will try to pass it on to her daughter, or her own sibling, or other members of the family. To do this, the zar doctor must be consulted and a special gift given "to the zar". But a person having a protective zar is regarded as having an optional right to pass the zar on through biological inheritance and transfer for seven generations. The "zar"-

x794 possessed mother thus becomes THE representative of her family toward
562 the zar. If someone in the family sickens, her zar is consulted. Her
776 zar has become the guardian of hearth and home. This is all the more
[591] significant since the Amhara woman has usually arrived as a stranger in her husband's patrilocal hamlet, when a very young bride.

x794 It is little wonder that many husbands object to their wives'
562 joining a zar society. For the wife thus becomes psychologically
593 more and more independent of the husband's control. For one thing, the wife can absent herself from the hut and even hamlet at almost any time with the excuse that her zar requires her attendance at an all-night worship meeting, lest she suffer another "attack".. Under such circumstances it is impossible to keep a wife under surveillance. More frequently zar-possessed women go to the house of the "balä zar", who may be male, in daytime, to consult him on various matters, and on their return home they extort garments and trinkets from the husband, Ffor the zar".

x794 Many "jealous" zar spirits, interpreted by the zar doctor,
562 actively intrigue against the husband, against the wife's catering
593 to his wants and comforts, obedience and respect, and teach the wife
684 how to extort the most from him. Moreover, husbands often suspect their wives' behavior under the influence of the possession by the zars. From possession by a spirit-lover to possession by a very human lover, the husbands reason (not without justification in some cases) it is only a small step. If caught, the woman might claim that she had been "under possession", and had mistaken the human lover for her spiritual "wädaj", especially in the darkness of the night. Women have been known to give this excuse brazenly when hauled before the (mänfäs gubaä" (priest in charge of domestic affairs).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Some women, particularly those possessed by the female zar Shanqit, learn to solicit money from strangers (as described during the convention). Some women thus gradually enter the path to prostitution, while others become independent businesswomen.

The atiitude of husbands of zar-possessed wives varies and often is ambivalent. A rustic balagär often fears that if he refuses the time and money and sacrifices demanded by his wife for her zar, the neglected zar will take worse revenge (e.g. on his cattle) or will send locusts to eat his grain, or so distract his wife that she will set fire to the hut. He knows also that if he divorces her, half his cattle and other movable property will be taken by the wife. Thus it is cheaper to let her take an occasional chicken or, more rarely, a ylung goat to the zar. Some men, especially in town, are ashamed to admit that their wives frequent the house of the zar. Semi-educated men, who might themselves consult the zar doctor on some matter of business, forbid their wives to go there. This is more to protest a blow to their prestige than out of modernism, but they will divorce her if she persists.

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A chronically unhappy marriage not infrequently ends in divorce by way of the zar cult. The "mänfäs gubaë" is placed in an awkward position when the husband or the wife sue for divorce from their "semanya" marriage on the grounds of zar possession. For while as priest of the Coptic church he cannot admit the reality of the zar world, there is sufficient overlap between that and the world of evil spirits in which the priest does (unofficially) believe and against which he may himself, as däbtärä, have written amulets. This explains at least in part why the Coptic church ignores the zar cult, and thus

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X 794 [798] tolerates it, as long as the residential location of the zar house is sufficiently beyond hearing distance of the church.

[562] Men are often ashamed to admit that they themselves are zar-possessed devotees. If possessed by a feminine zar, considered more stupid and ignorant than a male zar, in most cases, it is considered [782] possible to "outwit" her. A clever zar doctor may negotiate with a female zar to accept a consecrated hen, never to be slaughtered for her, merely to be looked at. The owner of the hen can then sell the eggs, and has a (totemically?) protected hen!

[787] More often, men consult zar doctors on business - though by stealth. In the town of Gondar, e.g., a man wishing to find a job for his nephew might present the problem to Lady Salamtew, who would listen quietly, accept his "frankincense money", and tell him to return on a certain day for her advice.

X 794 782 443 The economic significance of the zar cult varies, but can be considerable especially in the provincial towns. Most zar spirits, especially the powerful and clever ones, like "generosity" in sacrifices, are pleased by voluptuousness, insist on healthy animals for sacrifice, neat gifts and attire of their "horses" (a woman who is a clotheshorse would certainly be regarded as possessed), incense that has been imported from Yemen, aromatic herbs, imported perfumes, European utensils and alcoholic beverages (distilled arrak). Retail traders know this and encourage women to buy "nice things for the zar". It is well known that many women are "struck" by the spirit for the first time just after having visited ("window shopped" in the modern equivalent) a big market. No wonder zar doctors are popular with the Muslim Ethiopian retail traders, who not infrequently let them take some pancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission!

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some fancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission. Some zar doctors are very exacting with their regular patient-devotees, and therefore, by local standards, are quite rich. They invest in real estate such as semi-modern shacks of the "street of single girls". Many female zar doctors and some of the clever devotees own the profitable mead houses ("täj bït") described before. On the other hand, a great zar doctor is expected to show generosity and distribute part of the income to followers and assistant zar doctors, just as feudal Amhara chiefs distribute loot to their retainers, and as great zar spirits offer commensal rights to the little zars.

Because of the greed of the zar spirits, a kind of evil eye in itself, many "possess" hide their property from the zar doctor as well as the zar spirits. It is believed that their demands are never satisfied, that the more they are given the more they want, in "äqwädäsha" (lit. that which makes to love) gifts. Some zar spirits possessing a poor person are regarded as always on the lookout for "entagion" with a rich person, for, by putting a "touch" on him they can change "residence". Zar doctors competing with each other sometimes lure a zar away from another doctor on purpose, so that they can advertise, through the grapevine of the possessed, that a great protective zar has changed residence, thus increasing the fame and income of the ambitious zar doctor. It is well known that in times of scarcity there are few new "possessions" by the zar, while in times of abundance there are many.

A poor person, who is struck, usually by a low-status "poor man's zar", and approaches a zar doctor for treatment of his ailment, is treated but must work off the "gifts" in service, through labor. A poor man will act as a servant, run errands, weave reed baskets, etc.

X794 A poor woman will perform work such as serving coffee, sweeping,
756 fetching water and fuel, cooking, baking, brewing beer, and spinning
556 cotton thread in the house of the zar doctor.

X794 The contract arranged by the zar doctor with the zar spirit for
675 each patient devotee is regarded as having legal validity. In exchange
776 for regular gifts and services the zar spirit promises limited repossession, at regular intervals only, and self-restraint in contagion of other members of the family of the patient at least until after her death. After that event the zar spirit may pass on to the next generation to assure himself continuation of the proferred gifts.

X794 Complications are explained away on the grounds that there has been
776 some trifling oversight in payment of dues or in respect; or on the grounds that another, evil, zar has "stolen" the dues in order to make trouble. The zar doctor never admits to error; instead, he restores the contract by instructing the possessed to dance the "gurri" of atonement ("yäbaṭer gurri") (lit. of the stick) if guilty; or the "yämehrat gurri", dance of mercy and acquittal, in case of slight
[691] oversight. Some zars are as fond of litigation as most Amhara. One zar spirit is nicknamed "wäs aggach" because he always requires a personal guarantor, "wäs", whom he will "possess" in place of the patient in case of default in payments.

X794 Even the judicial authorities, the provincial judges among the
694 Amhara, will occasionally recognize zar possession as a valid excuse for violations of the law, or at least as a mitigating circumstance. Failure to appear in court to answer a summons may be forgiven on the grounds of "agorra" (lit. he roared, shrieked, i.e. is under possession) that particular day. The only other equally strong excuse would be that the person summoned had just taken kosso purgative.

X 774 771 The religious and ethnic syncretism of the zar cult is evident from the descriptions given above. This is not too surprising, partly because of the great age of the cult, partly because of the emphasis on "free enterprise" in the zar cult.

X 774 776 The cosmology of the zar spirits themselves indicates considerable crossing of boundary lines. Some live in regions other than their ancestral homes. Some have "married" zar spirits of other religions, or have produced "offspring" of mixed "ethnic ancestry". But despite this crossing, most zar spirits are identified with a specific religious, or ethnic, or religious affiliation.

X 774 776 781 The human patients, however, are not bound to join a zar spirit of their own affiliation. Very often they do not. This is one of the forms of "free experimentation" - though not on purpose, and unconscious in most cases. A mistreated Amhara wife often joins a predominantly Muslim zar society because "possessed by a Muslim zar"; yet continues as a Coptic Christian in ordinary life. Christian Amhara people believe that Muslim girls about the age of puberty very often become zar possessed, not infrequently by a Coptic zar. Some Coptic zars are believed to take special interest in religious festivals, and if they possess a Coptic woman they may "inspire" her to dance in public outside the church on Tenqat (Epiphany).

Several of the more powerful, male, Coptic Christian zars are regarded as "educated in Jerusalem". Their demands are more subtle: e.g. in place of the unimaginative staple demand of pagan zars for a chicken sacrifice, Christian "Jerusalem-trained" zars may require the purchase of a coffee cup of a certain specified color, from which the "possessed" alone may drink.

×794 776 781 177 771 Yet despite this hierarchy of spirits, in the static construct of the zar cosmology, the factor of syncretism dominates the dynamic functions. As a result, a Coptic woman possessed by a Muslim zar may wear the colorful print head shawl of the Muslim woman; and even a Falasha woman, living in a semi-isolated Falasha hamlet, may suddenly refuse to shave her head (which is required of wives by Falasha religious law) and will braid it in the fashion of a Coptic Amhara woman without serious ostracism by her kinfolk which would be her punishment otherwise. At the wadaja ceremony, like the one at the convention, Coptic women and doctors chant hymns modelled after Muslim worship, refer to the zar as "prophet", and use Arabic loanwords, to flatter and cajole a Christian zar !

×794 776 771 Finally, religious syncretism in the zar cult is often intertwined with Christian cosmology and hagiology. Thus, Zar Sayd-Qadr, of Muslim origin, has become synonymous with Jesus Christ; The legendary Amhara Christian saint Gäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus is believed to have been an ally and advisor of the powerful Zar Säyfu Čhängär. The archangels Mikaël and Gabriël, who are given feasts on taskar memorials for Coptic Christian departed souls, are regarded in the zar cult as "commander of the right house" and "commander of the left house" of zars (patterned on the human, tradional Abyssinian army). The Christian zar Abba Yosef if believed to join other Copts in bathing in the river to celebrate Temqät (Epiphany). Christian zar spirits remain dormant diring the lenten season.

[798] In view of this, it is perhaps not too surprising that the Coptic Church of Abyssinia remains passive, in effect tolerant by default, toward the zar cult and its social institution.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 198 e.) The "Zar Language": Origin and Diffusion of the Zar Cult.

The "zar language" is used by professional zar doctors not only furing the cult services themselves, but also in daily like, e.g. in response to a greeting; whenever they wish to establish a situation of separateness. Lay Amhara believe that the "zar language" is a completely different, esoteric language. They do not recognize that [197] it is mainly deformed Amharic, plus paraphrases, and loanwords, often similarly deformed, from Arabic, Galla and other geographically neighboring languages. The zar doctors pretend that even they themselves, (mere "horses"), do not understand the zar language, but that it is the zar possessing them who speaks through them in this case, not wanting to be understood by mere humans. Some zars make more frequent use of their esoteric language, notably the "wereza", a group of minor zars.

X794 198 114 Among foreign scholars who have examined the "zar language" the most notable is Dr. Leslau [103], who calls it an "argot":

"Abstract ideas are expressed by concrete words.....

Deformation of the root, either by replacing a consonant or by lengthening of the whole root, is used.....

Some words are taboo, such as salt, the tray on which cups of coffee are served, the plant chat, the horse, etc.....

The morphology of the argot is Amharic throughout....

"addam" (man or woman possessed by a spirit) becomes "addamit"; rain is referred to as "urine of the clouds"; "tänqway", sorcerer, becomes "manqway".....

103. Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People possessed by a Spirit. Africa, Vol. 19, pp. 204-212. London, July 1949.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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"Arabic loanwords include:

Alla (h) - master, God, heaven
Awleya - (from Arabic "awliya", plural of waliy, saint), chief zars
Kafir - Arabic term for the Christian Ethiopians
Qwaha - coffee (from Arabic qahwa; Amharic uses "bunna"); coffee and perfume are taken over from Arabs, and are essential parts of the Zar ceremony.

Galla loanwords:

farda - Galla for horse, here meaning slave possessed by a zar; "färäs", Amharic for horse, is taboo.
waqiyä yemmäsgän - Waq i s Galla for "God", yemmäsgan is Amharic for "be praised." Total means: thank you.

There are also Woyto loanwords.

It is natural that an argot of a professional language should borrow expressions from another language with which it comes in contact....The (zar) belief might have originated with the autochthonous population of Ethiopia - the Woyto probably belong to this population - and the Amhara might have taken it over from them together with some expressions....."

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One might add to these conclusions by Dr. Leslau that in recent years Arabic loanwords are increasingly being used in the zar argot, perhaps due to the improvement of trade routes to the Sudan. Also, the poet who must compose somewhat new poetry for special occasions in the zar cult, is the prime agent for the introduction of Arabic loanwords and usages such as addressing a powerful make zar spirit as "Prophet" (in imitation of Muslim usage).

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Problems of the distribution of the "zar" and similar cults in Africa and the Middle East, such as questions as to the origin and the diffusion of the cult, are more difficult and complex.

Some linguists believe that the term "zar" is of Cushitic origin (Dr. Leslau, would seem to agree with this). This would antedate the

x 174 171 174 Hadramauti (South Arabian) colonization of Abyssinia about 2500 years ago. According to this view, the term is derived from the supreme divinity of the "pagan" Cushites, the God-heaven called "Jar" (pronounced djar) in Agau, the old-Cushitic language of Western Ethiopia [104].

The term for the zar ceremony, "wädaja" (lit. love feast) evidently is derived from the Amharic stem "wäddädä" (lit. he loved; to love), unless one concludes that both Amhara and Galla peoples derive the concept from an ancient, common Cushitic origin, the opinion of Dr. Michel Leiris [105].

The bulk of evidence would indicate a "Cushitic" origin for the zar cult. Indeed, the distribution of it and closely related cults is found most intensely in the geographical areas in which Cushitic is spoken.

[114] Among the Cushitic-speaking Galla tribes of southern Ethiopia, Dr. Cerulli [106] found a cult of worship of similar "nature spirits", upon which the God of the conquering Abyssinians was placed later, and he infers that the same happened to the one-time sky-god of the Agau, pre-Semitic inhabitants of Cushitic-speaking northern Ethiopia. As a result, when northern Ethiopia became Christianized, the "zar", the former sky god, was demoted to a possessive spirit. Diffusion of the zar cult, Dr. Cerulli believes, was then carried by Abyssinian slaves into the Arab countries such as Egypt, the Hidjaz of Arabia and Oman, where the zar cult survives under its original name, "zar" or "sar".

104. Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People Possessed by a Spirit; also Cerulli; "Zar" in Encyclopedia of Islam, 1933, p. 1217

105. Leiris, M: L'Afrique Fantôme. Paris 1934, pp. 336-7, 440.

106. Cerulli, E: Etiopia Occidentale, Vol 2, p. 35

X 774 171 Cerulli differentiates the "zar" cult from other beliefs in possession by genies found, eg. in the "buri" cult of Nigeria and Tripolitania, and the "amok" of Malaya, which do not have the Abyssinian idea that the zar can be forced to go out of the body of the possessed through the performance of a special rite. [107]

Even earlier students of the zar cult among the Galla reported many phenomena identical to zar "worship" among the Amhara, as well as significant differences in detail. The Galla have a stronger element of worship in sacred groves than do the Amhara, who prefer the incense-filled hut as the center for public possession, diagnosis, treatment and social life. Emphasis on groves is also found in northern Ethiopia, among the Cushitic - speaking Qemants. Such grove worship venerates sycamore trees most often, but also junipers. Cotton thread, food, clothes and honey is offerred to them. Among the Yeju tribe of Galla, the Protestant missionaries Isenberg and Krapf observed the following in the mid-19th century:

> "They pay great respect to certain trees.... My people, desiring to sit down under its shadow, were immediately driven away, lest the Adbar should be angry (zar). Adbar means keeper or watchman. They grease this tree, and perform religious ceremonies under it. Nobody dare touch or damage the tree without risking a severe punishment....." [108]

The Galla of Harar province, in the 20th century, call their chief religious worship "wädaja" (the same term as the Amhara in the zar cult), described by the Catholic missionaries Azais and Chambard [109]).

107. Cerulli, E.: Zar (in) Encyclopedia of Islam 1908, p. 1217

108. Isenberg, Krapf: Journals 1843, p. 439-440.

109. Azais & Chambard: 5 Années de Recherches Archéologiques en Etiopie. Paris, 1931, pp. 109-112.

Y-114 171 It is a family or communal prayer-gathering which is accompanied by a feast of bread or roasted coffee and corn, beer or hydromel, a portion of which is offerred to Waqä, the sky-god. Often a sheep is sacrificed. The term "wadaja" is also used by the Wollo and Raya tribes of Galla for their "Islamic evening prayer".

[114] The cult among Islamized Galla was witness by another observer:

> "The Muslim sorcerers have their own 'society'. If anyone wishes to obtain a favor or draw down a curse upon his enemies, he invites several old men of the village, buys them Kat (note: the drugleaf ḉhat, or qat) and passes the whole night with them singing, praying and cursing if it is an enemy, or blessing if it is a question of benediction. This is called making wädaja. The interested party seats himself in the middle of the kabiras who spit kat on his head, crying "yaklum" - "may it be fulfilled." (Note: compare with "yehun" of Amhara). In general, the wädaja lasts the whole night"..... 110

Southeast of Galla territory, among the Somali people, Dr. Cerulli observed "ceremonies intended to procure the incarnation of the genius to force the evil spirit to enter the bodies of initiated persons" 111

In the eastern lowland of Ethiopia, among the Afar people (also called Danakil), Dr. Thesiger observed the following:

[114]

> "The 'Afar Asa Mara, who unlike the Somali do not have a wide range of dances, perform an oracle dance called the jenile. The jenile, who may be man or woman, is an ordinary member of the community who is able to fall into a trance and deliver oracles. For its performance the men form a close circle and chant and clap their hands until the jenile, who is seated nearby covered with a shamma, enters the circle. Then the dancers, without moving their feet, bend forward chanting faster and faster until the jenile in a trance answers their questions....."

> "The southern Afar localize a spirit on Mount Ayelu, an isolated volcano in the south of Afar land dominating Badhu. On its summit is a rectangular walled enclosure which they visit on pilgrimage after the rains, sacrificing sheep, and pray for the fertility of their animals and success in war...." 112

110. Zervos A: L'Empire d'Ethiopie. 1935. p. 93
111. Cerulli, E: Etiopia Occidentale, Vol. 2 p.55
112. Thesiger, W.G.: The Awash River and the Aussa Sultanate. Geographical Journal. Vol. 85, 1935. p. 8.

X794 The same observer reports that the silver baton of the former Sultan
171 of Aussa in this area was regarded as a magical object, enshrined, and confided to enboys on special missions. (Note Ber Alänga on zar list of Amhara).

X794 Diffusion of the zar cult from these areas to neighboring lands
177 is the general consensus of most scholars who have occupied themselves
171 with the problem. This would center the origin of the zar cult in Ethiopia. The name itself was noted among the Islamized Somali by Cerulli:

[114]

> "As a remainder of paganism may be regarded the ceremony of the sar, perhaps an ancient sacred dance. Natives crown in a circle and the chorus begins to sing on a special rythm. One or many among the singers fall fainting away to the ground. The others "beat the sar" by singing and striking the hands or clattering with the feet or striking drums or kettle drums. Then the person who has fainted rises little by little from the ground, takes in his hands a dagger, and dances in the circle with the dagger drawn out, til he falls again in a faint; but immediately rises fully recovered, The sar is danced also with a burning brand instead of the dagger; among the Sab the dancer goes out of the circle, runs in the jungle nearby and then comes back showing with loud cries his dagger sprinkled with blood of the genius he has killed..." 113

X794 Diffusion of the zar cult into the Sudan from Abyssinia is conclud-
171 ed by Trimmingham in his recent book "Islam in the Sudan".
114 What seems to be a form of the zar cult was observed among the Swahili of coastal East Africa, where it was called "Ngoma ya Pepo", according to Skene. 114

In predominantly Islamic areas, it seems that the zar is classified as an evil spirit, similar to the jinn. This is the how orthodox Muslims are enjoined to regard all pre-Islamic "pagan" deities, according to the Quran, (Sura 37, verse 158).

113. Cerulli: Somali, Engyclop. of Islam 1908, p. 487
114. Skene: Arab and Swahili Dances. Journal of the Royal Anthrop. Instit., 1917, pp. 420-434.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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In the Hidjaz, the zar cult was observed by the scholar Hurgronje. He noted that it was especially widely diffused among women of Mecca and other towns, the same pattern as in Egypt. The woman chief who conducted the ceremonies held the title "shekha", and attempted to ascertain the nationality of the zar by questioning him either in "vulgar Arabic" or in "zar language" known only to initiated persons.[115] (Note the close similarity to the female doctor - dominated zar cult, and similar procedure of diagnosis and zar language as among the Amhara!).

In the Oman, Cerulli believes the zar arrived carried by slaves imported from Ethiopia. There the spirit is referred to in the plural, "ziran".[116]

In Egypt, many observers in the 19th century and up to the present time have reported zar ceremonies. Kahle, observing it there almost half a century ago, concluded that the cult had arrived in Egypt, by distribution from Abyssinia, for the following reasons:

(1) Because the Amharic name "zar" had carried over;

(2) because of the exorcistic character of some of the ceremonies;

(3) because of the history of its spread in the 19th century when contact between Abyssinia and Egypt became much closer;

(4) because the ceremonies are conducted by a woman.

He reported that this woman was called "sheikha" or "'arifa alsikka", and that she treated each spirit differently according to his place of origin, sometimes from Upper Egypt, sometimes from Lower Egypt, the Sudan, etc. In this differentiated treatment she was careful to use

115. Hourgronje, S: Mekka. 1889, Vol. 2, p. 124-8
116. Cerulli: Zar. Encyclopedia of Islam, 1908, p. 1218

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

the proper melody, song, individual clothing required by the zar. The chants were accompanied by small drums and by dances. A sacrifice of fowl was usually offerred. The ceremonies lasted sometimes many nights in succession. [117]

In 1890, pamplets condemning the zar cult were printed in Cairo. They complained that the ceremonies "speculate on the ignorance and stupidity of the women of Cairo"; "the dangerous spreading of this lucrative swindle and the concern this is causing noble-minded and intelligent menfolk". Letters were cited that had been written to the editors of Cairo newspapers, quoting the Quran in protest against the zar cult, and stating that the zar cult "celebrates his triumphs especially in the houses of the richest, socially most prominent Turkish families residing in Cairo". One modern-educated, sophisticated and worried Egyptian even sent his wife to a zar ceremony to study the details of it, at the suggestion of a German scholar named Vollers, who then published a brief description in the original Arabic. In the cult, the term "minzar" was used to indicate a woman posessed by the zar, and the term was increasingly used for epileptic attacks, the sufferers of which were being taken to the zar ceremonies.[118]

It would be interesting to make a study of the influence of the zar cult on Islamic societies, perhaps along the lines indicated in Zwemer's "Influence of Animism on Islam" [119]. Such a study would be obverse to Joseph Greenberg's "Influence of Islam on a SudaneseReligion".[120]

117. Kahle, Paul: Zar Beschwörungen in Egypten. Der Islam, III, 1912, p. 1-41, 189-190.
~~118.~~ Lifman, Enno: Arabische Geisterbeschwörungen Aus Egypten (Zar). Leipzig, 1950.
118. Vollers, Karl: Noch einmal der Zar. Zeitschrift Deutsch. Morgenl. Ges, 45, Leipzig, 1891, pp. 343-351
Walker, J: Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt. London 1934, p. 64-7
119. Zwemer, S.M.: The Influence of Animism on Islam. 1920.
120. Greenberg, J.: Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion. New York, 1947

754 B. Evil-Eye Sickness ("Buda") and its Healing.
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Even "zar" spirits are considered vulnerable to the evil-eye sickness, the most feared of all ailments. The human patient must either be cured or will die. The evil spirits, collectively named "buda" - though that name is taboo - are never benign, and must be exorcised. Buda possessions are less common than "zar". The most common method of the "evil-eye buda is to "drink the blood" of his victim, magically, so that he will slowly waste away. The buda spirit does this by draining the victim through the magic power of the evil eye.

a) Basic Concepts of "buda".

"Buda" is the personification of the evil eye, a concept that includes the evil spirit itself; the sorcerer, regarded as most commonly a male member of the professional, ethnic ironsmith caste passing on the power of the evil eye from generation to generation; and the "magical hyena" which serves the sorcerer as his favorite "horse", but into which he can also change himself at night. The hyena is, of course, the most typical and most active night-animal, and its habit of digging into fresh graves to consume the corpses, which can be observed almost daily, seems to confirm the connection in the Amhara mind.

[17] The foreign observer is reminded of the similarity to the were-wolf concept of medieval Europe, which was also regarded as personified in some ethnic minority; and the common evil-eye concept still casting fear all over the Middle East. [121]

121. Eisler, R.: Man into Wolf. London 1951
Jaussen, J.A.: Le Mauvais Oeil. Revue Biblique, 33, Paris 1924, pp. 396-407

754 The actual name, "buda", is considered taboo, for it is dangerous
776 and might attract him, when uttered aloud. Since this spirit is
[784] always male, his name is paraphrased as "the man's eye" ("yäsäw ayn"), "shadow eye" (aynä ṭela); and a victim is paraphrased "the man's victim" ("yäsäw gällabä"). Even the term "smith" is used, sometimes indirectly, for further security. Thus, to accuse someone of sorcery, a security-minded Amhara says pointedly, in his presence: "As for me, I am not the son of a smith".

754 The first attitude toward strangers is therefore one of caution,
609 lest he be a carrier of "buda". The suspicion is confirmed if the stranger has intelligent eyes, darting eyes, shining eyes, or if he stares curiously without saying much. It is confirmed if he seems skilled manually, for then he may be a "ṭabib" (lit. trained person, technologically wise), hiding the fact that he was born into the ironsmith caste. It is less disturbing if he openly reveals himself as an ironsmith, for then he lives segregated in a hamlet of his own ethnic group, and when contact must be established for trade (purchase of iron tools and pottery), certain "precautions" against being struck by the evil eye can be taken; extra-vulnerable persons such as pregnant women can be kept from contact; and all transactions will be carried on in full daylight.

754 The "buda" is regarded as preferring to strike and feast on
776 women, especially beautiful ones, and to feed, cannibal-style, on
[609] fat, beautiful children. The stranger therefore should never praise the health or beauty of children, or of women, out loud. Mothers
[851] hide their children at the approach of a stranger. Nice new garments
[164] on a child also attract the buda, and this is one reason why children under 5, when infant mortality is highest, are given only rags to wear, and are permitted to be dirty most of the time.

754 776 and are permitted to be dirty most of the time. As for males, the buda also likes to feast on healthy-looking, fat, handsome warriors [753] and chiefs. "Buda" is the general diagnosis when a person always known as healthy suddenly sickens and dies. Therefore it is feared even by the bravest warriors.

754 776 178 Even at present, when "modernization" is proceeding from the central government, "buda" belief has not shrunk. It has simply expanded to take in modern attractions. Thus, police officers in the provincial towns are believed to have attracted "buda", who has developed a taste for officers in nice, new uniforms; and is believed to be "greedy" for healthy-looking boys doing modern gymnastics in their new elementary schools, eager to consume their physical prowess and grace. Even rich, strong, fat, gay, well dressed Europeans are regarded as vulnerable, but less so because "they do not fear him". Fear attracts him too.

"Buda" is most active in August, at the height of the rainy season. [821] His favorite time to strike is just after a heavy thunderstorm, when tornado-like gusts of wind seem to pull up the hut and try to pull the roof off. This would enable "buda" to "see" his victims better, and cannibalize them.

751 754 776 Many ways of trying to prevent victimization by "buda", or at least of reducing one's vulnerability, have been devised over the centuries. To reduce vulnerability, one should not appear too happy, too gay. One should not become an object of open admiration, or of envy and jealousy. One should further paraphrase the tabooed word "buda", by saying "watch your eyes". Newlyweds, who are very vulnerable, should cover their glowing faces for ten days, to keep

751 their happiness from showing. Eating and drinking in the open makes one
754 extremely vulnerable, because this arouses buda's greed, and at the
776 same time makes it easier to penetrate the victim's body, through the wide open mouth and unguarded nose. Therefore, old-time Amhara cover their faces when eating in front of strangers.

751 This attempt to reduce vulnerability is closely related to some
754 of the "language of the shamma" (toga). In the presence of strangers,
291 this can be draped in the fashion that indicates "reserve" - covering the mouth, or even nose and mouth, with the front section of the toga, which has been draped in a turtleneck. When travelling in strange districts, which are doubly dangerous because of cast-out buda spirits hidden by exorcisers along trails, a strong-smelling
[824] herb pushed in the nostril, is often used as a prophylactic. The most commonly used of these herbs is "tena adam" (lit. health of Adam, i.e. mankind). The mouth should be kept closed, or covered. In a fearful situation, he may say "shadow, may it not fall on me". Touching iron, considered specially "strong", also helps. Children are warned to stay away from strangers, and never to leave a baby unattended, lest "buda will eat you". The term "eat" is regularly used for buda possession (not for zar possession), for it indicates consumption.

751 Typhus ("tälalafi bäsheta") and severe epilepsy ("yäbuda bäsheta")
754 the latter literally ascribed to buda (lit. buda disease) are the most
174 common ailments promptly diagnosed as "buda" "eating". Evidently
[164] Amhara doctors long ago observed that covering the mouth and nose and staying away from possibly infected strangers reduced the exposure to certain contagious diseases; they then proceeded to envelop this observation in the culture pattern, including the draping of the toga and stopping up the nose, and not eating uncovered in the presence of strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

776 Certain districts are regarded as "breeding places" of the buda;

754 the entire province of Gojjam is so regarded by Amhara of Gondar and other areas. The "buda" spirits are believed to have their headquarters in Gojjam, their schools where they study techniques of finding and trapping victims, and new methods to resist interrogation by the exorcists who try to induce the "buda" to reveal his name, i.e. that of the human sorcerer through whose body the "buda" makes contact and "eats" (sometimes through initiative of the buda, sometimes called through the ill-will of the sorcerer for a certain human victim). The people of Gojjam (even the Amhara there!) are considered "educated" buda, more sophisticated and less crude, but more dangerous because more clever (note: equivalent to "Jerusalem-educated" zar!). The Gojjam "buda" can "eat" even at long idstance, and are not hampered by the dimension of time. Thus, a visitor from Gojjam who has been offended (e.g. by not having been offerred a seat or a drink or by having been refused hospitality) on his return home, months later, may "eat" the offender at long distance. Even years and oceans can be crossed by a sufficiently "educated" buda; even the foreigner, years later and across the sea, may be affected, according to Amhara belief.

In the Galla provinces, the "buda" are believed by the Amhara to be crude and uneducated. The Amhara does not fear the Galla on this score, as much as he would fear a strange Amhara from Gojjam or a Falasha ironsmith. But the "buda" of Galla areas are believed to turn themselves into hyenas at night and to eat corpses of humans more often; and if they capture a live Amhara stranger, force him to remain as a servant, drugged (like a zombie)/

776 754 The same "methods" are ascribed to Falasha ironsmiths who live in their own hamlets in the Amhara regions. The Falasha, who are regarded as having some secret "education" of their own (actually Mosaic Judaism), are believed to be able to turn a victim into a donkey and make him do a donkey's work, then turn him back to a human in their own hamlet, and make him do a servant's work. In case rescue nears, the Falashas are believed to be able to turn him into one of the many large pots that always lie about a Falasha hamlet where the woman make pottery for sale.

Thus the buda complex contains many facets: medical-regional-ecological (Gojjam's Blue Nile is a major caravan route that can bring infectious diseases) - ethnic - religious - Middle Eastern evil eye complex - African fear of the ironsmith. All this is fitted into the Amhara cosmology of the supernatural.

Though closely interconnected in the Amhara mind, some of these facets will be considered in separate detail.

754 158 b. Symptoms of "buda" disease.

The classic symptoms of "buda" disease follow the following sequence. The victim, usually a young woman between the age of 15 and 30, complains of utter fatigue and a heavy head. An hour or so later, she breaks out in hysterical frenzy, wild laughter, stares with wild, empty eyes, moves about restlessly as if driven by some inner demon. An hour or so later, she complains of intestinal cramps, and cringes under the violence of the pain. Her fingers are clenched so that the thumbs are not visible - (regarded as sure sign of the "buda"). For, it is believed, her thumbs have been grasped by the buda that is eating her and he won't let anyone else see them lest his "food" be taken from him. This is called "tänäbbäzä", stolen by force, for the buda is robbing the victim

754 158 of her blood, her health, life itself. The eyes of the victim are glazed, the nostrils distended, the face may wear a ghastly smile, and the body may be inflexible, or else in a nervous tremor. Relatives and "bread-companions" become terrified and run to the exorciser, often a dabtara, bringing him a gift called "ageba" (lit. entrance, i.e. visiting fee). By the time he arrives, the victim may be in contortions on the ground - being eaten by the buda. Some patients may try to hurt themselves, though others do not. When restrained, the patient may fight against the restraint, and women patients bite and scratch the restrainers.

Another classic case is total apathy, refusal to eat, and resistance even to the zar doctor, followed by sudden revival at night and the urge to run out and roam with the hyenas. Zar doctors explain this as a "zar being attached by a buda". An exorciser is then called in.

A common symptom of less violent character is nosebleed, which is very common. Persons vulnerable to this take care to stuff smelly plants into the nose when on the trail. Such pro- [824] tective plants are collectively called "yäbuda reyan" (smells against the buda).

[851] Boys, when hazing the children of an ironsmith or suspected sorcerer sometimes force garlic ("chequn") into the nose of the child with such force as to cause nosebleed, saying "now give up the blood you have stolen". Garlic is believed to have the power 754 824 to stop a buda and is therefore buried under the door of a suspected sorcerer, e.g. an itinerant smith travelling his circuit of customers; this is believed toprevent the buda from going out at night "to feed".

754 [164] Spitting or coughing blood (which may be tuberculosis?) is regarded as another sure sympton of buda, especially the demon "mäggäna". The buda is believed to cause widespread epidemics, if he is powerful and many vulnerable victims are in the area.

776 754 Certain buda are believed to have very specialized "educated" tastes. One likes to rob the voice of dabtara choristers who chants harmoniously in church (perhaps in revenge for the same dabtara's part-time, extracurricular activity as exorciser), whereupon the voice will begin to croak and steadily grow worse, until the singer cannot even carry a tune. When a cow gradually [825] stops giving milk, despite a big udder, this is ascribed to the special taste of an "educated" buda.

e. Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis

755 [753] Sometimes the victim declares that he has had a dream in which a certain suspected person, e.g. an ironsmith, has been "eating" him. This can become very dangerous for the accused.

The question which diagnosis has to solve is not "what's eating you?", but "who is eating you?"; for the buda spirit and sorcerer are one person.

When the exorciser appears, the "buda" reacts violently. Even apathetic patients suddenly break out in violent peals of laughter, howl like a hyena, crawl about on all fours. The exorciser begins to question the "buda" to find out his personal identity. The "buda" replies through the mouth of the victim, in a hoarse voice, which is attested by all Amhara onlookers as "not the normal voice of the victim". The diagnostic procedure is a battle of wits between the exorciser and the "buda". The

35 latter tries to evade, first through deliberate misinformation, then by removing himself physically. He does this by calming his victim, who says that there is nothing wrong with him, that he merely wants to go out a moment. But everyone knows this is just to lure the victim outside, make him stumble in the darkness and, brought to a fall, devour him at leisure. Consequently, the patient is tied up "to prevent escape of the buda". But every time a hyena howls, the patient tries to break loose to join his "brethren".

Forceful means in the diagnosis may include nearly choking the patient to put pressure on the buda to reveal himself or risk the premature death of his victim. A smoky fire is made of mule dung, the patient is held over it, togas are piled on top of him to prevent the smoke from dissipating. Naturally, the patient begins to choke and cough, but he is not released until he begs cessation of this ordeal with Christian formulae such as "sela Maryam" (for Mary's sake). This indicates that the buda is surrendering and ready to cooperate. To quelch the spirit even more, strong herbs are smelled and the exorciser may insult the buda in the most vulgar and obscene terms. This rattles the buda ("aalärfälärä", lit. he talked disconnected nonsense), so that he cannot develop a defensive strategy. Finally, at the threat of further punishment, the buda gives a name.

The treatment consists of negotiation to cast the buda out entirely. The buda is asked what his demands are. The first request is usually something very difficult to obtain, or something very filthy, e.g. "food" consisting of dung of donkey or even hyena.

755 Serious cases sometimes evidence utter self-abasement, but this impresses the audience as a sign of a genuine, sincere case. Finally, the exorciser negotiates a date at which the buda will leave, usually not more than a week later. Unlike the zar, the buda is made to swear that he will not return.

The next step in treatment is to make certain that the buda [703] will not return. Often the sacrifice of a black chicken is made. the animal, still alive, is turned around the head of the victim, until the greedy buda enters the body of the chicken. Then the chicken is rapidly smashed to the ground. If it dies at once, it is a good omen that the buda has accepted the transfer, the substitute, and is leaving. Another good omen is the release of the exorciser is a dabtara, he says:

> "I command you, buda, in the name of the holy Trinity, the 12 apostles and the 318 bishops of the Council (of Nicea) to leave this person".

If the buda responds, he leaves with a flourish, such as showing his strength for the last time by causing his victim to pick up a huge rock, which would normally take several men to lift; then leaving the victim in a faint. To scare the buda further off, rifles may be discharged at this time. Often the patient is beaten severely, even wounded in the hip with a spear, "to let the buda escape"; this also makes things unpleasant and prevents a renewed attack.

When the victim recovers from his faint, he is asked his name, and gives his usual name. This is proof that he is "himself again". He claims to have no memory of what went on during the attack. As further proof of recovery the patient may be asked to pronounce

755 certain Christian words which the buda fears. Some also slaughter a sheep or fowl, eat it roasted, then burn the bones so as not to attract the buda again.

Sometimes a reluctant buda is transferred bodily to a spot on a trail outside the hamlet. There a root of a bush is twisted - the signature of the buda and expression of his greedy intent. Whoever passes unprotected is pounced on by the hungry buda.

755 789 Written amulets (ketab") are hung on the neckcord or around the waist to assure successful prognosis. The writing and sale of these amulets is one of the most common extracurricular activities of the dabtara scribe and often his most lucrative income-producing work. Hence the dabtara is feared, for he can use his power for good or ill. The amulets contain such formulae as "besem Aw, Wold, M'ānfās Qeddus" (In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Ghost); mystic names of archangels; formulae in Amharic, Geez, even Arabic of sorts. Church scholars with the title "mäm̄hēr" (professor) are believed to be able to write even more powerful amulets, for it is believed that God gave 1000 special "medicines" to Jesus on Christmas (a sort of birthday gift) and that Jesus and the angels taught these "medicines" to the mäm̄hēr. Another advantage of their amulets is that the mamher are never suspected of using their power for ill. In either case, the name of the person to be protected is written in the amulet; so that it cannot be transferred or sold without erasure and the new name.

159 754 As noted, women in the age group 15 to 30 are the most often struck. The following case was observed by the author in the town of Gondar. The patient was a 27 year old married woman, Zawditu Bogale (her first name meant "Queenie"). She was the mother of

159 T54 two children, both beyond the infant stage. She lived in one of the typical town structures of wooden posts, hard-mud walls, dirt floor, and corrugated iron roof.

During the night when she was first "struck", she screamed that she was being eaten by a buda. She howled like a hyena and wanted to run outside. Her husband and neighbors tied her up and feared that she was going to die. She threw herself on the ground and seemed in great inner pain. Her husband ran to the Addis Alam section, in the middle of the night, despite curfew and dangers, to fetch the woggesha doctor, to obtain strong smelling herbs. The woggesha came as soon as dawn arrived, for he had had some experience with buda cases. The woman patient spoke with a convincing male voice. Finally she revealed the name of the sorcerer who had placed the spell on her. She accused an Arab merchant, one of several who operated permanent stalls at the daily market. She exclaimed: "I am Abdulla Abdul Hijazi". She (correctly) identified his residence as the 3rd shop from the left corner". She boasted, still in male voice: "I am drinking her blood with my golden teeth".

As it turned out, there was indeed an Arab merchant by that name at that location, who had his two incisors capped with gold crowns, a rarity so far inland where no dentist offices existed, but common enough on the coast among Arabs of means.

The day before the attack, the woman had been shopping for sandals at this Arab's shop and several others, but had made no purchase since the prices were too high for her.

Once the patient had revealed the identity of the sorcerer, she was untied. Early in the morning the husband and his brother set out to look for the accused Arab, located his place, but could

1:59 754 not find him. They vowed to waylay him some night and beat him bloody, but bystanders felt that they would cool their tempers and perhaps try to get the merchant into trouble with the local police by planting stolen goods on him - a common procedure, in the towns.

Later the same day, the Arab merchant was conducting business as usual. The rumor did not seem to have hurt him, but local grapevine had it that husbands would restrain their wives from shopping there, though they would risk sending servants. Abdulla had nothing devilish about him, except the distinguishing mark of the capped incisors. He was medium-sized, slender, calm, without any stare that might have frightened the woman. His goods were the usual town goods, ranging from imported eyeglasses to notebooks for school children, and cheap beads.

By this time the woman patient was seated on the dirt floor of her house, looking tired, worn out and dejected. She had no longer a headache, of which she had complained, but claimed to have "heartache" and swelling of the left breast. A neighboring woman was brewing coffee. Her husband's brother, who was also present, [1:24] asked my advice. I gave him some aspirin for her. She forgot her apathy for a moment and gratefully and politely nodded. Later she refused to take that strange medicine of the foreigner.

d. Ethnic Caste under Suspicion of Sorcery

754 563 The Falasha ethno-religious group has been described in connection with the division of labor, for they are the ironsmiths and potters in the Amhara regions, especially in the province of Begemdir (Gondar).

754 The Amhara belief in buda has been very troublesome for the
563 Falashas, for they are believed to have inherited the practice of sorcery from their fathers along with the craft of ironsmithing. Thus, the Falashas are blamed for individual cases of magical "eating" as well as for epidemics. Such accusations have repeatedly led to "sorcerer-killings". When an Amhara patient dreams that a certain Falasha is "eating" him, he sometimes gathers his kinfolk for a sudden attack on a Falasha hamlet, demanding that the particular "sorcerer" be handed over to them. In 1936, when the country was in turmoil following the Italian invasion, Falashas of one district were so plagued by buda persecutions that they evacuated their hamlets there and moved closer to the town of Gondar, though keeping a half day's distance from the town itself in line with their tradition of self-segregation(based on their religious particularism). Even now Falashas in their hamlets keep loaded rifles handy all night.

326 What happens when a non-Falasha learns the trade of ironsmithing,
563 e.g. a Gurage, which happens near Addis Ababa where no Falasha hamlets exist? He dies not become a "kayla" (ironsmith; this term is considered insulting); he is not regarded as a potential buda, because he has not inherited the trade. But, his handiwork is suspect as "unprofessional"! It is called "yärägä sera" (work of a "räga", unprofessional), which indicates that his customers are likely to hold a low opinion of the quality of his product and the endurance of his tools in those areas where Falasha-made articles are readily available. The latter is not true where no Falasha hamlets exist, so that Gurage work is appreciated near Addis Ababa.

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What happens when a Falasha gives up his Judaic religion and converts to Christianity? Does that free him from being suspected of buda? Only to a slight degree, for his Amhara neighbors refuse to forget his ancestry. In case of conversion, the Falasha becomes an outcast from his own people and usually moves to town. Only an ex-slave or a very poor Coptic woman will marry him. In the latter case, his in-laws believe that his kinship ties are still stronger than his new religion. Thus, if they have him teach them his ironsmithing trade, they believe he will not teach it properly to his affinal relatives. He can never become deacon or priest.

The buda-ironsmithing syndrome of the kayla seems based, in the Amhara mind, on the idea that a very strong power, namely the evil eye spirit, is necessary to accomplish sound work in ironsmithing. To remain powerful, the buda-ironsmith is regarded by the Amhara as requiring blood from time to time, otherwise his product, the iron plowpoint, will not stand wear and tear and the spear will break.

What happens to a Falasha who gives up his kayla trade? The stigma will remain on him, where his family is known. Therefore, some Falashas have migrated and tried to change their trade. This avoidance has not helped at all as long as they remain Falasha in religion. Those who have taken the step of conversion (e.g. as result of Protestant missionary activity in the lat 19th century) are still whispered about as Falashas by their Amhara neighbors and their social and marital associations are largely limited to other ex-Falasha, ex-ironsmith people. Assimilation has not solved the problem of ridding themselves of buda suspicion by the Coptic Amhara, though it has reduced direct, individual accusations of sorcery.

578 In the new courts established by the central government in
689 the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

326 How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda -
754 Falasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting
563 that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Falashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despising of this manual craft onto the Falashas and believe that Falasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passersby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces
[71] of the supernatural. This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Amont the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous. Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

e. "Buda" doctors past and present

756 While the aforementioned dabtara is the most commonly
793 called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

158 Sometimes cases of buda possession are brought in to the
[159] government hospital at Gondar where two European physicians are in charge. They have diagnosed the shrieking, wildly beating type of case as "hysteria"; and the apathetic type of buda case as "catalepsy". In the latter case they have observed absence of reflex responses on eye and knee, almost no pulse, faint heart-beat, low blood pressure; sometimes a stupor in which the patient has no control over bowel movements and urinating. In severe cases of this kind there is a suspension of sensation and will, and muscles are so rigid that limbs keep any position they are placed in by the doctor.

755 In one memorable case, a hysteria patient, a man, had been gradually quieted by a Coptic Amhara priest called in by the European doctors at the hospital, who knew the effectiveness of this from past experience. All the priest had done was to hold the hand of the patient and quietly recite prayers in the Geez language, (which the lay patient could not understand). When the priest tired of this, the regular hospital priest was called in to continue this "treatment". But at sunrise the next morning the patient had disappeared out the window. The hospital "dressers" (male, semi-trained nurses) explained that the patient probably would go a long distance from this area, to escape the severe beating his kinfolk would give him - the "post-operative" treatment meted out to patients recovering from buda possession to "discourage the buda from returning".

755 In the rural areas the "tänqway" is still sometimes called
756 in to treat buda cases, though this is not his major specialty. He is what has been called a "witch-doctor", professional sorcerer, and diviner. He usually treats the patient by frightening the

755 buda out of him: seating the patient in ashes - the natural
756 abode of the buda - to entice the evil spirit to leave through the anus. The latter is regarded as the preferred pathway of the buda - the opposite principle of the soul which is believed to leave through the head. Sometimes the tanqway orders that the person accused of buda sorcery be brought before him and made to spit upon the patient, which breaks the spell if he has actually
[689] cast it. Since 1942 the government has branded the "tänqway" as a fraud. As a result, the business of the still respectable däbtära and also the woggeshä has increased in treating cases of buda.

C. Evil-Spirit Disease ("ganyän") and the diviner ("tänqway")

756 While the aforementioned tänqway is, or used to be, called in
776 occasionally to exorcise a buda, his major specialties are the exorcising of "ganyän" evil spirits who have a very different character, and the divining of lost or stolen goods.

Of all spirit doctors, the tänqway occupies the lowest social position. He is "uneducated" for he uses no books and in fact is almost always illiterate. His methods are nearly identical with those of African "witch-doctors" and include such methods as throwing of bones and animal parts, for divining.

776 The major principle of both the tänqway diviner and the ganyän
777 spirits he specialized in, seem to be regional; the activity one of geographical orientation. For the ganyän, considered inferior to zar and buda spirits in power, are localized, evil genies. The term itself is etymologically related to the Arabic "djinn", local evil genies, though actually derived from the Geez "janyen"), and the concept is also similar: most ganyen are either water-spirits or fire-spirits.

776 It is therefore likely that the ganyēn idea was brought to the
177 Abyssinian highlands from Southern Arabia about 500 B.C., superimposed on the earlier "buda" and "zar" beliefs, but reduced to the bottom scale of the spirit world with the coming of Coptic Christianity in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D.[122]

776 The ganyēn are considered by the Amhara wholly evil. In personality they are choleric, male quickly aroused to aggressive rage. They are believed to be of dark complexion. They are so tough "they can eat stones". They attack men far more often than women and in daylight rather than at night, (exact opposite of the zar). They cause neither hysteria nor apathy, rather they cause their victim to run amok.

682 As a result, the legal significance of the ganyēn possession
754 in Amhara society is considerable. Almost every apprehended murderer claims that the ganyen "pushed his hand". He thus "was not himself". In the old tradition, if evidence for actual ganyen possession was deemed sufficient, the excuse brough sufficient mitigation so that the kin of the murdered individual could accept blood-money from the murderer and his kin without a blood-feud and without losing prestige. In such a case, the priest-confessor or "mänfäs gubaē, acting as intermediary, would go to the bereaved kin and beg forgiveness for the crime. If they agreed, the "danya" (judge) would set the "semanya", (the amount of blood-money); formerly a minimum of 80 Maria-Theresa Thalers (now Eth$1000 = US $4000).[1/2] It is noteworthy that this tradition is so strong that even the modern Ethiopian court in Addis Ababa often sets the damages for

122. See MacDonald, D.D.: "Djinn", (in) Encyclopedia of Islam, pp. 1045-1046, and Trimmingham: Islam in Ethiopia, p. 260.

1/2 [valuation given here is not in agreement with that given elsewhere — probably should read "US $460)."—Analyst]

682 754 manslaughter of an average citizen, killed e.g. in an automobile accident, or by a trigger-happy policeman, at "semanya" on its present monetary level.

755 Other types of ganyen disease are forms of epilepsy, "haut mal", referred to by the Amhara as "ganyēn yazä" (lit. the ganyen has seized him; plural is "aganent". In this case, a dabtara is often called in and tries to exorcise the evil spirit with magic formulae; sometimes the woggesha doctor tries to intoxicate the patient with [278] a paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha), which drug finally lets him have some rest. In contrast, the method of the täqway is literally a bag of tricks.

755 756 789 In his role as magician, the täqway is called "qumma" (from "qomä", he stood up), for he tries to identify the personality of the evil spirit from his abode; e.g. in the water of a brook, or a waterhole in the river, or under a certain tree, etc. The magician is also considered an expert on fire and lightning. When a person is struck by lightning, "mäbräq" (lit. Thunder), [761] the priests consider it heavenly punishment and in the past even refused to bury the victim in the churchyard; thus the täqway is called in. His treatment consists of moving the victim quickly to the fireplace - for he regards fire and warm ashes as the counteracting principle. If a house is on fire in town, it is still believed that the magician, standing on the roof of a neighboring house with a mirror, can prevent the spreading of the fire by causing the flames to recoil.

Cases of drowning are his specialty also. This too is considered by the church a heavenly punishment for hidden crimes, for the victim is regarded as having been surrendered to the "demons";

755 and the worst and most numerous ganyen are regarded as water spirits,
756 e.g. at the Blue Nile and everywhere also during the long rainy
789 season.
[776]

After diagnosing the identity and origin of the specific
755 ganyen, the ẗänqway tries to exorcise the demon by treating him
776 with contempt (exactly opposite to treatment given the "zar").
Instead of feeding the spirit a succulent "mäq̈wäd̈äshä" (love gift),
the ganyän - possessed person is fed a lunch of ashes. For a ganyen
that is a fire-spirit, is attracted by ashes, his element, and may
thus be induced to leave the body of the patient in order to feast.
The ẗänqway follows this method even in cases of buda as indicated
before.

The next step in treatment consists of "fixing" the ganyän
somewhere else, so that he will not return into the body of the
victim. This is done by the scapegoat technique; e.g. by fixing the
demon into the body of a chicken, killing it, throwing the carcass
away where the hyenas will eat it; or transferring the water-spirit
to another locality.

756 Besides his role as a healer of ganyän, the major activity
[787] of the ẗänqway is as diviner of lost or stolen goods. It is not
polite to use the term "ẗänqway" in his presence, instead he is
politely addressed as "awaqi" (lit. knower, wise man). Since he
usually makes it his business to know what goes on among professional
thieves, his insight into such matters is sometimes indeed consider-
[694] able; but also contributes to his bad social reputation. In "diag-
nosing" the case, the tanqway acts as detective, studies the place
of the crime, investigates neighbors and finally draws seashells
(zagol Lebsu") and bones from his bag and throws them, to read
additional information from their driection and mutual position.

756 His clientele in this role consists largely of women, who often come to him with petty problems, whom he can charge little for his services, but who provide him with a regular, though modest, income. A ṭänqway, unlike zar doctor or dabtara, never becomes rich. Also, both peasant women and townswomen go to him to have their personal fortunes told. He sympathizes with them in their marital quarrels, encourages them to be disobedient to their husbands and to bring him money and gifts withheld from the husband. Consequently, men consider the ṭänqway a wrecker of marriage, and so does the church. The proverb says:

[539]

"Lying ṭänqway,
the house he destroys".

Men do consult him on the occasion of stolen property, but are ashamed to be seen going to his house. They go secretly.

There is a significant element of competition between the ṭänqway and the däbtärä, though the latter is considered far superior, "educated", and is now actually driving the ṭänqway out of much of his business.

In the popular Amhara mind, the ṭänqway is regarded as fearful of the däbtärä. For the latter can undo the success of the former through magic formulae written in Geez, copies from secret Geez books. With such a formula, the däbtärä can go to the river, call the ganyen water-spirits and instruct them to steal the "bag of tricks" of the ṭänqway, or to refuse to come when called by the ṭänqway. The dabtara disdains to use the bag of tricks, regarded as primitive and when he captures it will destroy it. Conversely, if a dabtara has "charmed" a thief by giving him a specially written amulet against capture by the police, nothing the tanqway can do

756 will trace the thief or the stolen goods. Also, the active intercession for a better future, which the dabtara can achieve to some extent by appealing to saints and angels whose secret names he knows from his books in Geez, is considered far superior to the mere fortune-telling of the ṭänqway.

D. The Scribe (däbtärä) as Healer

795 a. Summing up the position of the däbtärä

756 In many ways the social position and activities of the dabtara symbolize the syncretic character of Amhara culture. His official function is that of semi-lay staff of the Coptic Abyssinian church. He serves as scribe, chorister, translator from Geez to Amharic; the church could not do without him. His official rewards are meager, mostly a parceling out of what the priests receive. Thus his major income comes from his unofficial, extracurricular activities as healer. The copyist of church works logically becomes the writer of amulets. This brings him in touch with the cosmology of supernatural spirits, some of which are considered in the realm of zar, buda, ganyän and with doctors ranging from the empiricist woggesha to the exorciser-sorcerer ṭänqway. It may seem surprising that there is not more competition between these specialist. The fact is that the däbtärä, enjoying the greatest respectability among healers because of his association with the church, can afford to be and is generous to all except the ṭänqway, and in fact enjoys his position as uncrowned hing of healers. He is the only healer, apart from the empiricist-surgeon "woggesha", to whose house men clients and patients walk publicly in broad daylight without fearing loss of prestige.

795 His social status compares to that of a "great man" (telleq säw),
756 but much of this is due to the fear in which he is held, because of his power over the supernatural world, in Amhara belief. There is fear that if someone were to offend him, he might use his powers to do evil - though black magic is not his usual metier. (The "love magic" of the däbtära has been described in relation to sex).

[539] "of insects, the worst is the scorpion;
of men, the worst is the däbtära".

[574] For the dabtara are unabashed in inviting themselves to feasts, weddings and any distribution of goods (e.g. parcaling out of meat as soon as an ox has been slaughtered). In fact, they often act as if the host owed them an apology for not having sent an official invitation. Therefore, dabtara are usually invited to family feasts even if they are not kin.

795 The däbtära learns his craft through apprenticeship, beginning
756 when in the upper grades of church school. To achieve this, he
874 must be "ättäntäm" (of unmixed Amhara or Tigre stock), have a good chanting voice and musical ear, be good in school, and find a. däbtära-teacher willing to impart his knowledge to him. At this stage in church school he begins to be permitted to learn to write; and is not punished for doodling - forbidden at lower grades for fear a student might stumble on a formula and misuse a powerful spell.

795 There is even one priestly function which the däbtära occasionally
756 carries out. That is "re-baptism". He may re-baptize a patient vic-
[168] timized by ganyäm, sometimes also cases of buda, as part of exorcism.

795 Some dabtara have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
556 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually
[386] made of soot, charcoat, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre-
[716] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susnecs, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female
[56] of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay themurderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

773 On the way he found an old witch. Interrogating her, St. Susneyos
789 learned that Werzelya had gone into a garden. Finally, he found the demon sitting under a tree. He speared and mortally wounded her. Before expiring she promised never to afflict anyone who carried the inscribed name of Saint Susneyos.

The effectiveness of the amulet lies therefore in reminding the female demon of her promise to Susneyos.

789 Other common designs include angels with fiery swords (sometimes seen also incised upon wooden church doors); the cross over sun and moon; and the evil eye, sometimes oval, sometimes in profile, but often round with a red iris (symbolizing the magic drinking of blood).

A typical formula against the demon of epilepsy, "barya", reads as follows:

> "You (actually "he", polite), Barya, who steals the heart of man (i.e. renders insane),
> who darkens the eye,
> who comes as shadow by nighttime,
> I put a spell on you, and curse you by ...(name of saint or angel)."

776 There are three common categories in the cosmology of demon
753 diseases treated by amulets:
755

(1) General evil-eye disease, referred to generically as "buda" - particularly in cases of puzzling functional and mental ailments - or identified and diagnosed by the name of a demon - particularly in fevers and paralysis.

(2) The demons of epilepsy, "Barya".

(3) Gynecological ailments, ascribed to specific female demons.

Amulets are collectively referred to as "ketab" (lit. writings, in Geez).

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Table 13: The Scribe as Healer: Demons, their Individual Specialties, Exorcism.

category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Buda"	evil eye	fevers (mech mättaw); functional ailments; hysteria, catalepsy	eye with bloody-red iris; ironsmith ethnics		powerful amulet; Christian re-baptising of patient: exorcism
(1)	"Ägäna"	threshhold demon in early mourning	spitting blood (tuberculosis) through "red snake in belly". Amebic dysentery.		Buda	amulet of St. Sebastian as prophylactic smoke of "wogärt" plant which snake hates, in hut. Carry dead through hole in wall (in Gojjam), so demon cannot find way back to infect others in family. Spraying with holy water.
(1)	"Dänqara Mätal"	household demon	infectious disease, highly contageous within hut. (Endangers travellers.)			amulet as prophylactic. Lure demon out of the hut through trail of chicken feathers, lemons and perfume, onto trail, where it is transferred to travellers.
(1)	"Nädara", "Aynät"	evil eye, female demon	eye diseases, esp. ophthalmia	red eyes	Buda	amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of this demon

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteractin principle
(1)	"Ayna Tela" (lit. Shadow Eye)	evil eye, famale demon	blocks projects; blocks learning of students; causes sleepwalking; likes to attack men. Confuses protective zar spirits so they cannot help.		Zar	amulet "temherta hebuat". intoxicant plant "esk fars" (see Zar).
(1)	"Eqabe Seray"	evil eye, male demon	Various mischief; can turn himself into human figure	Non-Copt neighbors; Barya, ironsmith ethnics	Buda	Christian amulet.
(1)	"Dabbas"	Household demon	undefined illness and death; "aroused when thirsty"			Christian amulet.
(2)	"Barya"	dancing demons; their chief "Legowon" has red eyes and is "buda"	epilepsy, haut mal ("hemama barya"), esp. in male victims.	Barya tribe of Nilotic lowlands. Symbol: tornado	Zar, Buda	Amulet with angel of fiery sword (Christian).
(2)	"Tegrida"	restless demon	epilepsy, petit mal; causes "falling-down sickness"			Christian amulet.

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	affiliation of demon's; or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(3)	"Werselya"	female demon	attacks women: barrenness through stopped menstruation which "prevents conception", 'yädam tefat); bleeding from uterus (menorrhagia); miscarriage.	Barya tribe negress		amulet with legend of her promise to Saint Susneyos. It is suspended from the Christian neckcord "mätäb".
(3)	"Karina"	female demon	attacks women who have just given birth (puerperal fever).			amulet recalling her defeat at the hands of King Solomon.
(3)	"Shotälay"	female demon, subordinate.	causes stillbirth		Zar	exorcism
(3)	"Tegertoya", "Teggerta", "Waddegeni"	female demon	attacks women after childbirth through puerperal fever or catalepsy (postnatal depression).		Zar, Buda	prophylactic amulet; quiet cooperation with Zar doctor who tries cajoling the spirit through the patient (See zar).

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c. Summary of the dabtara's syncretism in healing the spirit.

It is clear from the above that a number of ancient spirit cosmologies have contributed to, and survived in, Amhara healing practices: Ancient Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Arab, Christian, and African. In fact, the syncretism has been so complex, for so many centuries, that it would be impossible to trace all the roots, with any degree of valid certainty. However, several traces do stand out and their etiology bears significantly on present function.

The book "Lefafa Tsedeq" of the Coptic Abyssinian Church (lit. Book of Righteous Life, in Geez), contains spells and formulae attributed to Jesus Christ and Mary, but actually showing influences [764] from the Egyptian "Book of the Dead". Its function among the Amhara is entirely in the context of funerals and funeral mass during memorial services.

Much of the Greek-Byzantine influence may have entered directly at the time Abyssinia was christianised; but more came via Arabic, later. This includes patches of Greek mythology, legends in connection with the New Testament, and traces of the astrological work of claudius Ptolemy (about 150 A.D. in origin), known in the West as Almagest". 123

Hebrew influence is most commonly encountered with reference to the mystic powers of King Solomon, who occupies about the same role in Amhara spirit cosmology as in Jewish mythology (Kabala). Amhara amulets refer, e.g. to the "fishnet of Solomon", in wich he could catch demons as readily as a fisherman catches fish in the rainy season. The powers of archangels, e.g. Fenuēl, Gabriēl, etc., are very similar to Jewish cabalistic ideas, 124

123. See Strelcyn, S: Un magicien grec en Ethiopie. Journal Asiatique, 1951, p. 175-192
124. Walker, John: Folk Medicines in Modern Egypt. London 1934.

177 The "seal of Solomon" (actually the 6-pointed star of David) often
755 appears on Amhara amulets (e.g. against Karina). Even Hebrew-
789 appearing characters are found on amulets (a widespread custom in the Middle East.) [125] As might be expected, Hebrew traits are even more emphasized among the Falashas, who begin every amulet with: "Blessed be the God of Israel, God of all Creatures; prayer against.....".

Arabic influence has served primarily as a carrier. Directly derived from the Arabs are the 12 signs of the Zodiac, found on Abyssinian amulets. Carried was the "seal of Alexander".

Christian mythology and hagiology predominates in the cosmology of the amulets of the dabtara. Many of them begin with the formula: "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity; prayer against.....". Deniers of Christ who are suspected as sorcerers, are often personified in these amulets as Falasha or Barya. Christian martyrs and saints, Abyssinian or "from Jerusalem", are appealed to for intercession against demons. The following are frequently encountered in amulets:

776 Abuna (bishop) Batra Maryam, Abyssinian saint, against snakebite (pro-
177 phylactic); St. George, "Qeddus Giyorgis", shown spearing a monster
755 (an old idea possibly dating to the Bel-Marduk battle among ancient Babylonians, and Ra and Horus in ancient Egypt).

St. Sebastian is often depicted in drawings, and appealed to against the Kagana and other threshhold demons. To keep out disease and
[751] evil, this amulet is often placed above the entrance to a hut; but not in the doorway itself, if someone inside is already sick, for this would block the exit of the demon.

125. Reich, Sigismund: Quatre Coups Magiques. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, Vol. 7-8, pp. 159-175. Institut Francais de Damas, 1937-8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus (lit. Saint Servant-of-Soul), an Amhara saint from the province of Shoa, who was a saint from birth, and who, instead of dying the usual way, entered heaven in bodily shape.

Täklä Haymanot, the foremost Abyssinian saint, and an actual historical figure. An Amhara bishop from Shoa province, he lived in the 13th century and founded the still existing monaster of Dabra Libanos. He too is regarded as a saint from birth. His sacred spring at the monastery is regarded as powerful holy water, and those who cannot make the pilgrimage, as far as Addis Ababa (about 150 kilometers away), have water brought in Chianti bottles. The bones of important persons are sometimes unearthed and sent to rest under cave ledges at this monaster. Many austerities, miracles, conversions of heathens, and even temporary conversion of the devil himself are ascribed to him. On church paintings and amulets, Haymanot is depicted with one leg missing, lost during a martyrdom, but with wings which protected him from falling down the steep mountains of Abyssinia.

Tewodros (St. Theodor), regarded as the founder of the Abyssinian monastery of Dabra Maryam. But the name is also used as a synonym for another Messiah, who, according to a 14th century Abyssinian book "Feqqärä Iyasus" (lit. Love of Jesus) will some day come from the east, conquer the world, usher in a long period of peace and prosperity, preceding the final catastrophy. (Probably with this tradition in mind, the usurper Kassa had himself crowned Emperor Theodore, in 1855).

Jesus Christ himself is regarded as a powerful magician, more powerful than the powerful magicians Moses and Solomon, over animate as well as inanimate matter. The curative spells used by Jesus are

177 [776] contained in the aforementioned book "Lefafa Tsedeq".

African cosmology underlies much of this syncretism. Some is probably old-Cushitic, antedating the Geez-speakers. Some evidently has been carried into Ethiopia by the Galla. Caravan routes and the slave trade have long maintained contact with Central Africa, and some amulets resemble the "grisgris" of West Africa.[126]

756 [177] The dabtara thus has many tools and sources for his trade. He can use the books of the church, in Geez which he alone understands; saints, angels and martyrs; translated Arabic myths - including many of Graeco-Christian origin; cabalistic Hebrew cosmology; he can call on the mystical elements of nature: fire, water, earth, and air, without knowing that ancient system.

No wonder that some dabtara specialize and work out syncretic systems of their own. The more esoteric the source and the manner and atmosphere of writing, the more admiration and faith does it call forth. Some dabtara secretly cooperate with zar doctor colleagues. Some develop rituals of their own, such as writing amulets only on specified days of the week. Some go so far in their syncretism as to invite (secretly of course) a non-Copt, such as a Muslim or a Falasha, to write certain texts for him, on the amulets; or the interfaith colleagues exchange their handiwork! For the efficacy of the esoteric is regarded as double. Amulet-writers of the three faiths are curious about each other's magical powers, and while the ordinary individual will shun and fear such "comparative religion", the doctors feel protected sufficiently to risk such "free enterprise" contact.

126. See Lifscyz: Amulettes Ethiopiennes. Minotaur, Vol. 2, 1934, p. 71-73

776 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often
174 wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the
797 pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, demoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyen"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits. [127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised tänqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only
[182] exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who hold the people in terror and exercise political power. [128]

[794 While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of
562] members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria. [129]

171 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and
754 other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

171/754 Amhara, and evil witchcraft feared by the geographically close Nilotic Azande. This is not surprising, since contact with the "Barya" people of the Nilotic Sudan is well known. In Azande society, persons who are "socially undesirable" are suspected of sorcery, but never the nobles and the rich.[130] Among the Amhara, too, [554] no "tellaq sew" (great man, noble, rich) is likely to be accused as a "buda" sorcerer, while socially low-class groups doing the despised work of ironsmithing are immediately suspected when a "buda" case arises. In both societies, Azande and Amhara, such suspicion leads to prompt interrogation of the suspect, and revenge by the kinfolk of the victim. In this type of magic, social significance, i.e. ethnic relations in Amhara territory, is considerable.

177/755 Amhara healing of the spirit is psychological, in the first place of significance. In the second place of significance is the enormous syncretism, among linguistic, ethnic, religious and racial components of the art of healing. It presents one of the few outlets for "free enterprise" available in the Amhara tradition. It is this cultural syncretism over the centuries, which, despite the political isolation of Abyssinia, has maintained and developed the spirited character of the Amhara peasant.

130. Evans-Pritchard, E.E.: Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande. London 1937.

1: Messing E. 5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

P A R T VII: Concluding Observations about Amhara Culture and Society.

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1. Predominant Ecological Characteristics: Peasant Folk Society.

Parts I and II of this study have shown how the Amhara people on the highland plateau of Northern Ethiopia utilize their generous physical environment to fulfill their ecological needs, with a minimum of tools and considerable reliance upon the ethnic division of labor.

Their ecology is primarily that of an agricultural peasantry. They share with peasants the world over certain near-universal characteristics, in the sense of Redfield's definition of a peasant as a person who controls land and practices agriculture as a way of life, not as a business for profit (footnote 131).

182 They also share certain characteristics of cultural integration with other folk societies. With regard to the latter, Kroeber remarks:

> "Folk societies .....belong to that group of societies which identify themselves with their locality, in contrast to the sophisticated city dwellers who float without roots but take pride in living in their era and day and are therefore subject to the play of fashion".
>
> (footnote 132)

This explains, at least in part, the strong regional emphasis, (down to small sub-districts) among the Amhara, indicated many times in this study.

The historian might approach analysis of Amhara culture by totalling its material and non-material traits. This might then appear to be an unbalanced conglomerate. But it seems supremely

Footnote 131: Redfield, Robert: Peasant Society and Culture. 1956
Footnote 132: Kroeber: Anthropology. 1948. p. 282

182 coherent and integrated to the Amhara. Such a point of view is not unique, as has been pointed out by Kroeber:

> "...most of what is in any culture was produced outside of it, but the highly composite product nevertheless is regularly felt as something coherent and integrated, and normally accepted as 'right'.
> ...the average individual (is) so molded by it in growing up...that even incoherences and contraditions are taken for granted as if they were logically sound and a-priori evident...
> ...(He) accepts the surrounding atmosphere as a fish accepts water. What is 50 years old in this culture and what is 3000 years old touch him alike and affect him alike. So do elements that the culture originated and elements which were introduced into it."
> (footnote 133)

From a sociological point of view, one might describe Amhara society as "tradition-directed" in the terminology of David Riesman (footnote 134). Certainly their old norms are still intact. Even the recently "modern-educated" minority has not yet experienced "anomie".

2. How Amhara Culture functions in Amhara Society.

181 How Amhara culture fulfills the non-material needs of Amhara society, may be summarized under three headings: A. Ethos and major values; B. specific culture foci; C. summary of psychological considerations predominant in Amhara culture.

A. Ethos and Major Values: the Possessor and the Possessed.

Ethos and systems of values have been variously defined; e.g.

"..the direction in which the culture is oriented...

"It is evident that the ethos of culture is pretty close to what

Footnote 133: ibid, pp. 286-8.
Footnote 134: Riesman, David: The Lonely Crowd. 1950.

181 a philosopher or a historian might call its system of values...Values...might be informally defined as those things - cultural products, standards or ideas - which men living in societies prize and hold as having high importance, for them, for their group and decendants..."
(footnote 135)

Amhara culture is oriented to maximum use of what nature provides, but not to alteration of nature. Even the spirit-healers, who enjoy a relative maximum of "free enterprise" in Amhara culture, merely try to understand nature, in order to adjust better to it, to come to terms with it. With great patience and complex rituals, they try to negotiate a reduction in the frequency of the disturbance, to convert a handicap into an asset. Even the power of the written word, personified in the "dabtara" scribe, attempts merely to manipulate what already exists in the natural or supernatural world, without changing any basic characteristics. No "zar" doctor would attempt to change a spirit that is wholly evil into a "protective" one.

The ecological reliance of the Amhara upon the ethnic division of labor is a complex that has been described in this study in context with material culture, Amhara ethnocentrism, and sorcery. Whatever the historical origins of this complex, it is a major characteristic of Amhara ethos. In the Amhara attitude toward the ironsmith, emotional involvement is clearly evident: fear - because the ironsmith who must have derived his amazing craft from evil supernatural forces and hence must be a sorcerer; and pride - that the Amhara is not himself performing such manual labor.

The result of these cultural orientations is an Amhara national

Footnote 135: Kroeber: Anthropology, 1948, pp. 293-295.

181 character that has self-assurance without self-reliance. The trade goods of the foreigner have been received for centuries without hesitation - almost as if they were tribute; but only members of the ethnic laboring groups (Gurage, Falasha women, etc.) evidence curiosity and initiative in reproducing some of the tools and utensils of the foreigner. The Amhara themselves are smugly content to remain consumers.

Amhara culture divides the social universe into two: master and servant; the possessor and the possessed. This dichotomy dominates ethnic relations, spiritual relations, etc. In their tradition of government, one is either a "great man" or at best a retainer. Nobles have often rebelled against Amhara kings - but only to be kings themselves, not to set up a Magna Charta.

This ethos is not discussed, not articulated by the Amhara themselves. However, there are several "culture foci" that the Amhara are aware of and discuss in certain contexts. These will be considered next.

B. Culture Foci: Land, Kin, Rustic vs. Noble, Government Hierarchy, Authoritarian Literalness, the Cultural Uses of Intelligence.

The concept "culture focus" is here used in the definition of Herskovits:

> "A people's dominant concern may be thought of as the focus of their culture; that area of activity or belief where the greatest awareness of form exists, the most discussion of values is heard, the widest difference in structure is to be discerned."
>
> (Footnote 136)

Among the Amhara, notable culture foci of this sort are found in their attachment to the land - not surprising in a peasant folk society;

Footnote 136: Herskovits, M.: (in Linton, The Science of Man in the World Crisis, 1945, pp. 164-5).

181 the emphasis on frequency and intensity of kin relations; the dichotomy between "rustic peasant" and "great man - noble" personality (the latter constituting a culture goal; Amhara concepts of government administration; religious fundamentalism and literalness; and last, healing of "spirit ailments" outside the officially dominant religion.

181 Attachment to the land is a major preoccupation of all Amhara:
423 Nobles and "gabbar" serfs, men and women, old and young, priest and
571 student, even of the townspeople. The complexity of land tenure (i.e. the varieties of "rest" and "gult" land) is closely connected with the social status of the residential kin group; the life cycle of the individual is largely determined by the land tenure of his family, beginning with the very kind of education he is likely to receive. By extension, a person's secondary social group consists largely of persons inhabiting or stemming from the same "agärey" (lit. my countryside), the sub-district where his family owns land or works on it.

181 Attachment to one's kin group is nearly as strong on the in-
602 dividual's maternal side as on the paternal. The greater emphasis
[591 on the latter is largely due to the predominantly patrilocal resi-
611] dence, and on patrilineal descent. Kin visiting is a primary social duty, on both the individual's paternal and maternal sides, with equal frequency and intensity. By extension, though with lesser frequency and intensity, visiting of affinal relatives, notably the wife's parents who nearly always live in another hamlet, is considered an important social duty.

Kin feuds often last for generations, particularly between land owning ("rest" tenure) kin groups. The fear of shaming ("harerät")

181 one's kin by doing manual labor, made necessary in some cases by
602 poverty, leads to outmigration from the district and often even from the province. Nepotism in obtaining good positions is the norm to such an extent that failure to act in this manner would be severely criticized by the traditional Amhara as the utmost in meanness. In fact, when an Amhara wants to make a particularly derogatory remark about another ethnic group, he says that they are mean to their own kin and quarrelsome within the kin group.

[476] Cooperation and mutual aid, teamwork in agriculture, hut building, etc., are largely centered on the residential kin unit, notably the patrilocal hamlet.

554 A major culture goal in Amhara society is the assumption of the status personality of the "great man - noble" ("telleq säw"), in contra-distinction to the rustic peasant ("balagär"). However, this ambition is usually frustrated because social status is primarily inherited, along with "rest" land and the expectation of re-appointment to one's father's position and rank of nobility in the hierarchy. The door to advancement has traditionally been only through feudal warfare: loyal support of one's feudal lord was rewarded with "rest" land and higher rank. Even today a young nobleman must await formal promotion to his father's rank by the emperor, and this still contains an element of personal reward and punishment.

157 The personality of the rustic Amhara peasant is extroverted,
554 not burdened with the considerable self-restraint expected of the Amhara noble. The peasant is quick to express mirth, anger, and other emotions. He is not stodgy and slow in conversation like the proverbial peasant of Europe. In fact, because of the relative

157 absence of self-restraint, he can give free rein to the typical
554 Amhara fondness for rapid and noisy argumentation, quoting witticisms, puns and proverbs. He does not have to control his typical Amhara curiosity about non-material objects and human behavior, and can stare freely and openly. Even his servility to the noble is
[576] only formal and not internalized, for, while he bows deeply from the hips, his eyes are raised to observe every detail of the situation (especially to see whether some reward can be wheedled).

The Amhara noble, however, is required to be at least outwardly, an introverted personality. This is expressed in formal dignity, a partly withdrawn and meditative manner, a serious (though not severe) mien. His bodily movements must be slow and deliberate; his pattern of speech must be the same. Most of the time he remains pokerfaced. He has been trained to observe by moving only his eyes,
[152] not his head. He does not express his basic emotions directly, except with social equals under proper circumstances. He must appear too proud to show curiosity, even for interesting and strange articles brought by the foreigner; he accepts them with just a dignified and appreciative nod of the head.

152 There is the principle of "noblesse oblige". The noble be-
554 haves as if his due will certainly come to him - he does not have to go and seek it. When a servant has angered him, the noble does not fly into a rage publicly, though he may have him routinely flogged later on. It is noteworthy that even the womenfolk among the nobles share this personality training. Although hysteria is
152 very common among Amhara women, it is rare among noblewomen. Even
554 in case of great emotional distress (e.g. if a child has died)
158 [304] when commoner Amhara women wail loudly, scarify themselves, and roll

152 on the ground, Amhara noblewomen weep silently or go into states
554 of apathy. This is a more common mental ailment among nobles than
158 hysteria, and may lead to chronic depression and even catalepsy (see Part VI).

157 However, both the peasant and the noble share certain common
554 Amhara personality characteristics. Both take great pride in being
186 able to "speak well in court". Homesickness is strong among both, and is very widespread. Kings and emperors, until very recently, had great difficulty in sending and keeping ambassadors abroad, for the diplomat regarded his foreign assignment as "exile". Both classes share great pride in their highland plateau, defended for many centuries against all comers. This national vanity is at least in part due to long ignorance of the world beyond (sometimes hardened into xenophobia); pride in their ancient religion and in the national epics like the Solomon-Sheba-Menelik. These are shared by Amhara of all classes.

829 Amhara concepts of government administration are aristocratic: ruled by the noble "great man", who is usually descended from a feudal warlord of past centuries. The military camp and its direct significance for traditional Amhara social structure and government has been described in Part III. At the top of the hierarchy is the king or emperor (King of Kings). At the Amhara grassroots is the peasant, who seeks justice by attaching himself to a "great man" as retainer, so that he too will be treated "with honor" by reflection. From the bottom to the top of the hierarchy of government, persons on every level perform the ceremony of "dāj tenat" (lit. waiting by the gate) to obtain jobs, maintain positions, or merely to prevent doubts about personal loyalty from arising through absence. This

829 pattern continues in full force even at present. As a result, the high official is as hesitant about delegating authority downward (which might build up a potential rival), as the inferior in the hierarchy fears to accept delegated authority (lest the superior repent of his grant and suspect rebellion). In consequence, daily problems, even routine ones, are regularly referred for decision to the superior in the hierarchy of government.

812 The authoritarian "literalness" which characterizes so many Amhara attitudes may at least in part be the effect of religious fundamentalism. Until recently, the "Fetha Nägäst" criminal and [681] civil code was literally enforced, including the cutting off of hands for theft and of feet for rebellion. Biblical passages are interpreted literally, by the priests. In monasteries, the monks exclude the presence of even female animals such as cows.

[779] The church, sacerdotal in its concepts and rituals, does not feel that it owes an explanation to anyone; and "literalness" has remained unchallenged (except during the relatively brief Portuguese episode). In the Amhara view, there is a direct and unilateral connection between cause and effect, and paradoxes that result from such oversimplifications are ignored: e.g. the tallest obelisk at Aksum, which has fallen and broken into several large pieces, is claimed to have been "pushed" over by the Falasha Queen Judith, despite the fact that another, almost as tall, still stands nearby. [682] Homicide, especially if accidental, is blamed on the "ganyän" spirits who pushed the murderer's hand.

647 Literal obedience dominates the governmental administration, for no subordinate would arrogate to himself the privilege of "interpret" the spirit of the law handed down by the official of superior status.

000 status.

181 The Amhara concern with spirits seems motivated not by the
776 negative emotion of fear, but toward an understanding of the universe; toward healing; toward patterns of individual free enterprise under the guidance of protective spirits (regarded by the "zar" doctors and "zar" societies somewhat as patron saints).

181 Inventive intelligence, constrained in Amhara culture from developing material objects, applies itself to nonmaterial culture goals: to etiquette and other fine points of human relations; to speaking well in court; witticisms and proverbs; to entertaining with homiletic and riddles ranging from the ribald to the philosophic; to the development of special argots for the professions
[871] of minstrelsy, medicine and commerce. Education is regarded by they Amhara as a highly desirable means to (non-material) achievement. The desire to be regarded as intelligent is even greater than the profit motive, in Amhara culture; so that there is greater fear of being mocked at than being bested in a trade exchange. Producers would rather undersupply a market than risk having to carry any goods back home. The worst mockery and insult is to be regarded as intellectually inferior.

855 C. Some Psychological Consideration; arising from the Life Cycle.

Infancy and childhood, until adolescence, are years of free experimentation for the young Amhara, years with a minimum of supervision by adults, and maximum exposure to training by the peer-group and slightly older youngsters. The child does not live in a world of giants, but learns to handle his (not very complex) universe
000 through the give-and-take of his age-mates. Until weaning, at the

854 Until weaning, at the
[853] age of two, the child is never removed from contact with the body of the mother or other female relative caring for him. After
857 weaning, childhood is an age of roaming over the countryside during the long dry season and of performing such useful tasks as protecting the harvest by shooting pebbles from slingshots at birds and baboons.

855 The pattern of punishment is dominated by spontaneity, during childhood as well as adolescence. A suddently enraged parent (father or male elder) may hurl a firebrand at a child, or cuff him roughly about the head and shoulders for as long as the rage lasts. Sometimes real injury results, but there is no planned, coldly calculated punishment, and the anger is usually quickly forgotten. The youngster is never left in doubt when he has transgressed. Retribution comes within a split second. Parents do not hesitate to exercise their authority and to impose their wills, when angered. The youngster soon has a clear conception of what kind of behavior it would be wise to avoid. Thus the youngster is presented, gradually, with a set of values which early become rooted in his personality, and help him to remain, later in life, in tune with his social group and culture pattern.

554 Individuals who chafe at the status quo, notably women and/or
562 individuals of either sex who have a talent and urge for individual enterprise, often find their way into the "zar" cult. Cultural participation of the female is so restricted during her life cycle, that many emotional outlets are denied her. Monotonous daily routines of manual labor; two years of breastfeeding after every birth; denial of active participation in the church; deregatory views of female intelligence on the part of the males; etc., limit the Amhara women

562 [554] to an almost sub-culture. The result is at least one real sub-culture, that of the "zar society". Many women find their way to it either through introduction by a female friend, or, if the husband forbids it, through actual or simulated hysteria or catalepsy.

888 Psychological problems of the aged have not as yet become significant in Amhara society. The male elder, and also the old woman, are respected and cared for even in senility - a stage which only a small minority reach because of the comparatively brief life span.

3. Culture Change and Amhara Society: Inertia versus Modernization; the "Change Agent"; the Amharization of Ethiopia; the New Elite; Old Values; Outlook.

178 In view of the traditional hierarchy of government among the Amhara, any major culture changes could be effectively introduced only from the apex downward. This has been the experience during the reigns of the present Emperor Haile Selassie and of his predecessor, Emperor Menelik II; One might even include the unlucky Emperor Theodore. All three recognized the role of the emperer (King of Kings) as "change agent" in culture change. In Ethiopia it has not been the dissatisfied elements who have acted for change.

The forces resisting culture change in that society were and are powerful, not because they have consciously and purposefully banded together in opposition, but by the resistance of inertia. The silent but fierce opposition, notably from the old feudal nobility, the old and dominant heads of the Abyssinian Coptic church, and the rural elders, has long constituted an ultra-conservative immovable object: self-satisfied, fundamentalist, proud of having defended their mountain plateau for centuries, distrustful of foreign innovations.

178 With the gradual increase in their personal and military power, the imperial "change agents" have been able to introduce certain modern reforms. Their direct orders have been fulfilled in haste, as long as they supervised them personally. This was and is in accordance with the old concept of the government hierarchy, according to which the "great man" at the apex must be quickly obeyed as long as he is on the spot. The moment his attention is turned to some other matter, and he is not physically supervising the change, the status quo is largely resumed. In this connection Chapple and Coon's definition of equilibrium is apt:

> "Equilibrium is that state of a system...such that, when a small force is impressed upon it, a change takes place within it, and once this force is removed, the system returns to approximately its previous state."
> (Footnote 137)

Foreign educated students are largely descendants of the Amhara ruling nobility; although they have been motivated toward certain specific reforms, they fall back into their old noble-family patterns soon after their return.

178 643 In order to modernize the country, the Imperial "change agent" is faced with the task of establishing centralized control. For he is not only King of the Amhara, but "King of Kings" of all Ethiopia, a nation still far from homogeneous. Emperor Menelik II started to link the heterogeneous country through military conquest of the Galla and other ethnic entities, and, farsightedly, through the establishment of telegraph and telephone communication with at least his major provincial captials. Emperor Haile Selassie has continued this process, not only through direct orders and proclamations, but by means of the cultural Amharization of Ethiopia.

Footnote 137: Chapple & Coon: Principles of Anthropology, p. 704

563 178 [643 797] Wherever Emperor Menelik II conquered new areas, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he ordered the local people to build Abyssinian Coptic churches, and the Coptic priests who accompanied the troops with the sacred "Labot", consecrated the new local church and parish. These became centers of political and educational Amhara activities. Amharization was advanced not through large scale direct conversion of what was considered by the Amhara clergy a "lower" ethnic group, but through the establishment of a local, administrative, Amhara hierarchy, which the other ethnic peoples found it in their interest to emulate. They soon learned (particularly the old Galla nobility) that they could advance in the Amhara feudal-army system and regain feudal-land-tenure through loyal military service.

[554] By assimilating to this Amhara pattern, young Galla of the old nobility or of the modern-educated élite have found that they can rise in the hierarchy, and, after conversion to the Coptic Abyssinian faith, even intermarry with the ruling class.

At the same time, ethnic particularism and tribal expression of the subject ethnic groups, including the large Galla population, have been consistently discouraged by the ruling Amhara. Even [797] foreign missionaries, who are still forbidden to convert Abyssinian Copts, but may work on Muslims, "pagans", etc, have been pressed into the work of Amharizing Ethiopia. For they must preach in the Amharic language, and can distribute Bibles only in the Amharic language, even in provinces where the vast majority still understands very little or no Amharic. If they break this law, missionairies can be promptly deported.

000 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-
645 larly since his return from exile in 1941, has proceeded to build
[643] a base for the modernization of his country through the creation of a modern-educated new élite. The only portfolio he holds personally in his own cabinet is that of Minister of Education (though the other ministers ask his guidance on even the most minute matters). It is this group which is beginning to bridge the gulf between the ethnic cleavages, and which is trying to enlarge Amhara loyalty to an Ethiopian nationalism. Its members give lip service to the still powerful Coptic church: they smoke publicly, but they will break the lenten fast only in secret, eat pork only when not in the public eye, and still refrain from walking arm-in-arm with a female in public. But when sent to the provinces to modernise the administration, they quietly make gradual but cumulative inroads against the temporal power of the church and against the feudal landowning gentry, on the basis of imperial proclamations and numerous directives. (Footnote 138)

643 This change is only in the initial stages. Some of the most
178 fundamental decisions by the present emperor, notably the abolition
779 of the "gabbar" (serf-like) system, and the measurement and registration of the land, have been most strongly resisted in the old-Amhara provinces, where these edicts have still not been enforced.

As a result, the emperor has often tried to proceed by indirect means. Just as he has utilized the foreign missionaries in his Amharization program, so has he tried to utilize the Abyssinian clergy in his modernization program. He has appointed an Egyptian Coptic clergyman-educator to head the new Theological College of

Footnote 138: For details see: Messing, Simon D.: Changing Ethiopia (in) The Middle East Journal, vol.9, no.4, Autumn 1955, pp. 413-432.

643 Addis Ababa. He has repeatedly urged the Abyssinian clergy to
178 take up the practice of preaching in church, on such subjects as
779 reduction of the violent mourning for the dead and the ruinous "tazkar" memorial feasts; and admission of women into the church building. In Addis Ababa, a few modern-style churches have agreed to do this out of respect for his presence. But the provincial churches have retained their sacerdotal character and have not, except on occasions of brief imperial visits, adopted these innovations. The clergy has also resisted (by means of the "inertia" previously described) the urgings of the emperor to convert masses
[797] of the "lower" ethnic groups to Coptic Abyssinian Christianity. Only sporadically have small-scale conversions taken place. The emperor seems to recognize the value of expanding the nominal State Religion, Coptic Abyssinian Christianity, to a real national church, as a pillar of national solidarity and national loyalty.

178 The new élite, small in number, but actively supporting the
212 emperor's policies, and even occasionally beginning to become impatient with the circumspection and quiet, indirect, subtlety of Emperor Haile Selassie, has for some years raised the issue of the simplification of the Amhara alphabet. They had assumed that there would be much less opposition to such a worthwhile change than to big issues like abolition of the "gabbar" and changes in land tenure. The present alphabet, which consists of 259 syllables composed of 37 consonants and a minimum of 7 vowels, makes it difficult to teach writing to illiterate adults, children, and non-Amharic speakers, or to design typewriters. But the new, young, modern elite could not have been more mistaken in their optimism. The matter became a cause celebre, despite the fact that the proposal, published in 1948 in an Amharic booklet "Reform of the Alphabet",

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 212 and signed modestly and anonymously "The Friends of Knowledge", had been published under the auspices of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. It had been authored by the Amhara (modern-minded) noble, Ras Imru (later ambassador to the USA), the Amhara historian-grammarian Blatta Marse Hazen, and a Western scholar affiliated with the American National Council of Churches of Christ.

The conflict arose largely from the fact that most Amharic letters are directly derived from the old Geez, considered sacred because church liturgy and literature are written in it. Therefore, the Abyssinian church rejected the idea of alphabet reform as sacrilegeous. The emperor decided to postpone action indefinitely. (footnote 139).

178 563 It is this opposition, concentrated in the old Amhara nobility and clergy that has given opportunity to the loyal Galla to affiliate themselves more closely with the central government. Their modern-educated sons serve in high positions in the imperial bodyguard, army, and provincial administration. By affiliating themselves with the central government, the Galla obtain protection against the exploiting rural Amhara gentry. From the point of view of the modern central government such loyal support is greatly needed. From the point of view of the provincial, traditional Amhara, however, every young modern official sent from Addis Ababa, is now nicknamed "Galla", even if he is an Amhara.

181 178 Meanwhile the new elite has itself developed an indirect means to introduce a new value complex, at least in Addis Ababa. This is called "<u>geltaney</u>", which formerly meant politeness, refined and re-

<u>Footnote 139</u>: Leslau, Wolf: La Réforme de l'Alphabet Éthiopien. (in) Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, vol.12,1953,pp.96-106. Rome.

181 strained behavior, civilization, but which now has assumed the con-
178 notation of "modern" in the Western sense. It includes the improved
[562] status of the woman, no longer a mere hewer of wood and hauler of water; and it even became formalized in 1942 when an imperial proclamation, in establishing a Consultative Committee on Legislation, gave instruction to draft new laws that would be "not repugnant to natural justice and humanity".

178 But many old values still persist even at the apex of the
576 hierarchy where the prime "change agent", the emperor, resides. Most
644 notable, to foreign observers, is the continuation of the "daj tenst" (faire l'antechambre: lit. waiting at the gate). This is the traditional palace courtyard ceremony of bowing to the emperor at least twice a week. Emperor Haile Selassie has permitted this institution to continue. Every governor-general has his own "daj tenst" court when he returns to his provincial capital; and so on down the line.

195 The traditional oath on the king's life, sworn even in petty matters and everyday affairs ("Hayle Selassye yemut", lit. May the emperor die; i.e. if I lie) is still in common use and no attempt has been made to suppress or reduce its usage. Haile Selassie well remembers that during the first half of his reign his Amhara subjects still used to swear by the name of the dead Menelik or by provincial dynasts such as Ras Ougsa.

178 Outlook: the "culture lag" between material and non-material culture that has created so many social problems in so many parts of the present-day world has not yet taken place in this society. The old attitude of accepting and enjoying trade goods without trying to reproduce what the foreigner has created, still persists. Direct exploitation of what nature provides still fills most physi-

178 cal needs, and the comparatively rich and complex non-material culture satisfies the need for interpersonal relations and expression. The returning foreign-educated students are still few compared to the size of the population, so that they immediately obtain high positions commensurate with their training, and are therefore generally well satisfied. Until the industrial age brings a cash economy and a modern appreciation of mechanical skills to Ethiopia, Amhara culture will probably remain in its present equilibrium. Meanwhile, however, the Amharization of all Ethiopia is continuing gradually, and can be expected eventually to attain the goal of a culturally homogeneous, predominantly Amhara, nation.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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ETHIOPIAN HIGHLANDS

W. E. D. ALLEN

Meeting of the Society, 18 January 1943

114 THIS lecture does not pretend to be a serious study of any geographical aspect of Ethiopia. It is rather a record of impressions gained during a year spent in Ethiopia in various jobs ranging from the care of a park of derelict mules to that of Intelligence Officer to the newly formed Ethiopian Army.

Unluckily I was posted away from Addis Ababa at short notice, and my reference books in Italian and Italian photographs of ethnological interest which I had collected should now be in Nairobi, if they have not been lost. Many of the photographs used as illustrations were taken in the field by Captain Mark Pilkington, the Life Guards, a very gallant officer who distinguished himself in the guerrilla fighting round Lake Tana and who was killed in action in Libya, just two months ago.

With the possible exception of parts of the Shankalla wilderness, which is the Abyssinian extension of the Sudan plain between the western bend of the Blue Nile and the Escarpment, it cannot be said that any large areas of the Ethiopian Empire had remained unvisited by Europeans prior to the Italian War of 1935–36 and the campaign of 1941. I have however come across no account of the remarkable massifs of Dungwur and Belaia which rise out of
133 the Shankalla plain to the east of the Escarpment. On the tableland of Belaia, well within the nominal Italian frontier, an advance base for the supply of the Patriot forces was established in January 1941 and in February the Emperor set up his headquarters there.

[137] These twin mountain masses rise out of the Shankalla plain to an altitude of about 7000 feet above sea-level. They are covered with rich forests and watered by fast-running streams. Dungwur was uninhabited and visited
[361] only from time to time by stray bands of Abyssinian hunters. But there are flourishing villages and ancient churches on Belaia. It was a weird experience to reach these strange islands of luxuriating nature after the long camel trek across the burnt-out Shankalla wilderness. From a day's march away we

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 could see the forests blazing on the flanks of Belaia from the bombs dropped by the Savoias in their unsuccessful attempts to search out the Emperor's camp.

The wooded flanks of the Western Escarpment of the Ethiopian plateau overlook the plains of the Sudan. The top of the Escarpment is 4000–5000 feet above sea-level, and the gap opposite Mambuk village which we climbed is about 2000 feet above the level of the Shankalla plain, which rises steadily in a series of low rocky corrugations all the way from the Dinder river some 100 miles to the west. From the top of the Escarpment the fertile plains of Gojjam stretch for another 100 miles to the canyon of the Blue Nile. There is a fall of about 5000 feet to the great ravine with its subtropical vegetation from the dusty upland round Debra Markos. From the western edge of the Blue Nile Scarp it is a whole day's march down to the river for loaded animals, and more than a day's march up the eastern bank on to the Salale plateau at Shafartak.

The Ethiopian Highland is a series of plateaux separated by deep canyons such as that of the Blue Nile. The eastern edge of the Highland is the western edge of the great African rift. There is a parallel rift from lake Tana along the canyon of the Blue Nile to the Southern Lakes of Ethiopia and it is continued through the East African lake system down to lake Tanganyika. A series of north–south and east–west faults divide up the Ethiopian highland into separated plateaux. The Awash valley, running west–east, and really connecting the north–south rifting with the Red Sea basin, flows in the most notable of these. The different plateaux are sometimes connected by narrow necks of land or panhandles: for instance the neck connecting the plateau of Debra Zebit with that of Debra Tabor is hardly more than 100 yards across with a sheer drop south-west to the ravine of the Bashilo and north to that of the Gash or Takkaze.

133 These peculiar geographical conditions explain much in Ethiopian history.
177 The great line of the Escarpment, overlooking the Red Sea depression on the east and the Sudan plains to the west, has protected the population of the
648 uplands from penetration by foreign armies until modern times. The only successful conquest of Ethiopia was that of Muhammad Gran, the "left-handed," a Somali chieftain who is reputed to have had an Ethiopian father. The Somali-Arab armies which were really the spearhead of Turkish imperialism on the Red Sea in the great days of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, penetrated the Ethiopian Highland by the Awash valley in a series of campaigns which lasted for about half a century. In the end the great altitudes and the inclement rainy seasons probably restored their independence to the Ethiopians. In general, it may be said that the Highlanders have never been able to conquer and hold the hot lowlands of the Red Sea and the Arabs and Somalis have never been able to maintain themselves on the upland plateau. Only in the subtropical region of the southern lakes as far as the Dadessa valley and Jimma has there been any important penetration of Islamic influences.

133 Foreign influences, Semitic and that peculiar early Ethiopian or Eritrean
177 civilization known as Aksumite, have come in from the north over the easier

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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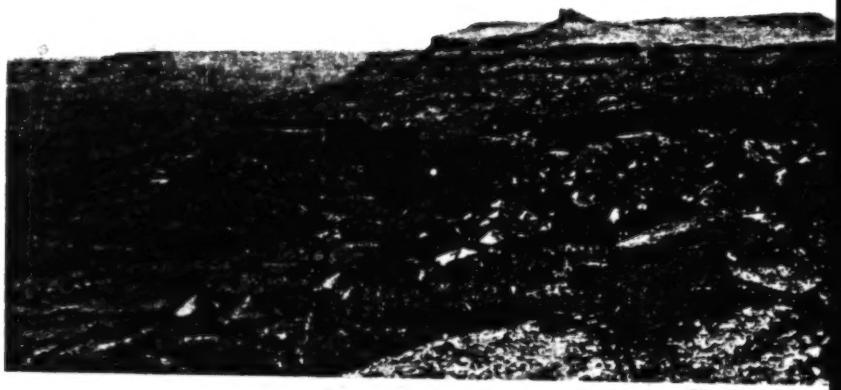
Fudi, near Njabara, Gojjam



Phot. L. V. Bentinck

Debra Libanos, 1928

[Facing p. 3]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

grade from the Eritrean plateau. All civilization in Ethiopia has penetrated from north to south along the great dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment, where the so-called Strada Imperiale now runs from Asmara to Addis Ababa. 133 177 [491]

Along this line have been concentrated the successive Ethiopian capitals with the exception of Gondar, which was chosen far to the north-west as a refuge from the ruinous wars with the Moslems and the Gallas. And along this line, due south from Aksum and Aduwa, were the great centres of the Copto-Ethiopian culture of the Middle Ages, places like Lalibala and the monasteries on lake Haik and the traditional centre of the Coptic Church at Debra Libanos. 361

From this dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment Ethiopian culture, and it was a very real culture in its heyday, spread westward into Gojjam and southward to the region of the lakes. Luca di Sabelli in his recent 'Storia di Abissinia' has shown that Coptic-Ethiopian missionaries were active as far south as Madagascar and the Mozambique coast. 177 [797]

Ethiopian Coptic culture drew its nurture from the powerful Coptic Church in Cairo, from the Crusading civilization in Palestine, and from the Byzantine Empire. Just as the establishment of the Turks at the exit from the Black Sea brought about the decline of the East Christian cultures in the Caucasus and the Balkans, so the Turkish control of the Nile valley and the Red Sea slowly strangled the Coptic Ethiopian culture of East Africa. The Ethiopian rulers, pressed by the invasions of Muhammad Gran, were well aware of their mortal danger and it is a curious fact that kings in Georgia and Ethiopia appealed to the rising power of Spain in the Western Mediterranean at about the same time. The Portuguese episode in Ethiopia was a delayed response to the appeal made to the Catholic powers. 175

The extraordinary tenacity of the Ethiopians to the western tradition is a remarkable characteristic of their historical development. The Aksumite kingdom, for all its Semitic appearance, was essentially a projection of Hellenism, and the Aksumite kings remained the traditional allies of the Byzantine Emperors in their struggle with the Persian Sasanids for the control of the Red Sea—an episode which was parallel in time with the conflict between these same two "world powers" for mastery of the Black Sea. The Coptic Church and Christian civilization in East Africa proved more enduring than the once powerful Nestorian Church in Asia, with which it may in some ways be compared. The later Ethiopian Kingdom played the same role in the struggle between Turks and Portuguese for control of the Red Sea and for the trade of the Indian Ocean as the Aksumites had a thousand years earlier in the rivalry between Byzantines and Persians. But they showed the same persistent antagonism to the Roman Church as the East Christians had displayed towards the Crusaders and the Papacy. In the end the Ethiopians expelled the Portuguese from Abyssinia and managed to maintain their own independence against their Moslem neighbours, until in the last decade it was suppressed by a professedly Christian power.

The Ethiopians are a remarkable phenomenon in the East African world and with their tenacity and their undoubted natural intelligence they are destined to have no little influence on the future course of history in that area.

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Gojjam

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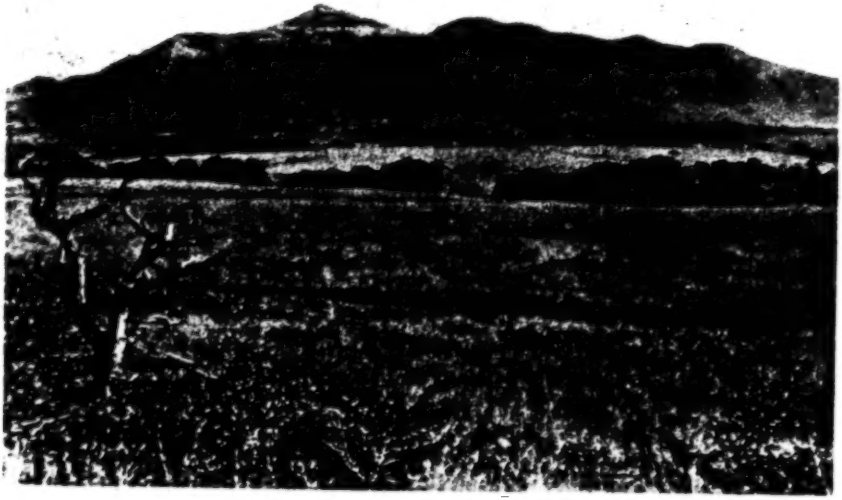

Camp at Matakal, Gojjam, complete air cover for standing camp along wooded wady

[Facing p. 4]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

186 The great weakness of the Ethiopians, their inveterate regionalism, arises, like other aspects of their life and history, from the peculiar conditions of their geography. The four historic Kingdoms of Tigrai and Amhara, Shoa and Gojjam, cover the plateaux divided by the canyons of the Blue Nile and [132] the Takkaze and their lateral rifts. During four months of the year, the season of the Great Rains between July and October, Gojjam is entirely cut off from Shoa and Amhara by the floods of the Blue Nile. Only recently has the construction of the bridge over the Blue Nile at Shafartak, a major engineering undertaking, made continuous contact possible. The violent regionalism of the Gojjam has been a disastrous factor in internal Ethiopian history which will doubtless tend to decline with the modern development of communications.

114 The Gojjam, scene of the guerrilla campaign of 1941, has been de-
175 scribed by Major Cheesman, formerly H.B.M. Consul in Dangila, in several articles in the Society's *Journal*, and in his standard work on the province, 'Lake Tana and the Blue Nile.' Cheesman's work was in fact the basis of knowledge which made practical the organization of the expedition to reinforce the Patriot groups which were in the field against the Italians at the moment when Italy declared war on Britain. His exploration of the gap up the Escarpment, the fruit of an arduous excursion described in his book, enabled the Frontier Battalion of the Sudan Defence Force with their camel convoys of supplies and arms to make a rapid deployment on to the Escarpment.

175 The least-known part of the Gojjam province is probably the region of the Choké Mountains which rise to the north of Debra Markos. In an effort to hold down this very wild bit of country the Italians had built forts at Mota [491] and other points and a passable dirt road had been constructed linking Debra Markos *via* Mota with Bahrdar—the Italian strong point at the southern tip of Lake Tana. After the capture of Debra Markos in April 1941, it proved necessary to make contact with the small group of Patriots and one company of Sudanese with some British officers and non-commissioned officers who were containing the very considerable Italian force still in the field round the south-east shore of Lake Tana. At Debra Markos we were very short of troops. Further, scarcity of mules made it necessary to try the experiment of taking camels over the pass which runs under the peaks of Choké at an altitude indicated on Italian maps at rather over 13,000 feet. Kit had to be limited to one ground-sheet and one blanket each for all ranks and the plain-bred Sudanese, many of whom were already lame with jiggers, suffered from cold and mountain-sickness particularly in the hail blizzard which struck the force on the bare ridge of the Choké Pass. Nevertheless this one company of Sudanese covered the 70 odd miles in just under three days, and Colonel Boustead bluffed the Italian battalion in Mota into surrender within forty-eight hours of opening fire with his solitary mortar.

I was following along in the rear with the camel *hamlia* and on reaching base camp in front of Mota was met with orders to about turn and take the animals back to Debra Markos. I thus crossed the Choké Mountains twice [114] in one week. With amateur medical and veterinary duties and a driving mist at the higher altitudes alternating with rain, sleet, and hail, I had little opportunity for geogeaphical observation.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Ambara MP5

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The Emperor and Colonel Wingate at Debra Markos, April 1941

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Household Cavalry

Patriots entering Debra Tabor, July 1941

[Facing p. 5]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic.[1] Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend.

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile.

There were only two or three villages along the track[2] which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district.

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May.

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to

[1] [i.e., in the Choké Mountains. -Analyst]

[2] [i.e., between Debra Markos and Mota. -Ana.]

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Camels flattening landing ground at Matakal

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Captain Pilkington's Wallos on parade, October 1941

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Men of Gaint [Facing p. 6]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor
[491] road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada
Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here
Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint.
[132] Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or
eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's
[361] capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns:
an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and
[231] dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputa-
tion of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

175 Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the
[103] Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem
[632] father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to
[563] internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north:
[578] Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean
[635] border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support
[662] of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Mule and Hotchkiss gun crossing Blue Nile

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Gojjamis, Matakal

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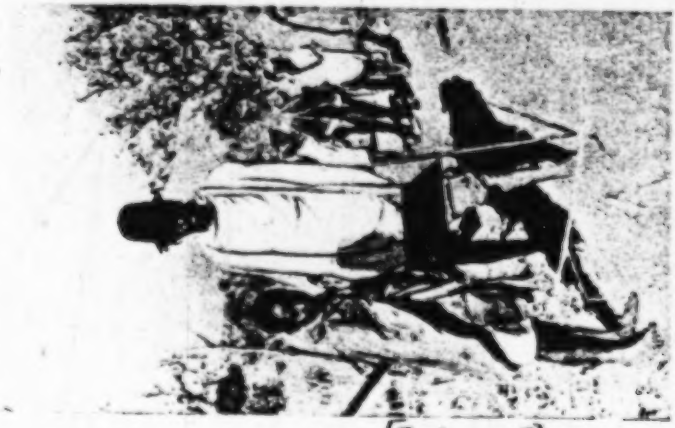

Gojjam notable and boy learning trade of war by carrying weapons

(Facing p. 1)

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses. 175

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town. 632

The surrounding grassy *alms* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June. 133

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick. 491 [137] [136]

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people. 563 175

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups. 101 563

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion 101 144

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 20 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather [516] delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word [145] fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the [302] women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Falasha MP9

A [157]

irony. They are a happy people with a deep love of the natural world around them.

A 563

The Tigraians of the north are different. There is something hard and seasoned about a Tigraian which makes him easily distinguishable from an Amhara. The Tigraian is rather the yeoman type. The sharper drier climate of the borders of Eritrea gives him something which recalls a little the ruggedness and shrewdness of the Castilian. There is a determined look in the Tigraian eye which contrasts with the wild and passionate glance of the Amhara. The Amhara and the Tigraians, with the kin Hadendoa of Eritrea, represent varying degrees of mixing of the Hamitic and Semitic stocks.

A 563 F 105

The Agau, on the other hand, are said to be the descendants of the pure Hamitic stock—believed to be aboriginal to the Ethiopian Highland. They may well be "the blameless Ethiopians" of the ancients. The judaised mountaineers of the Simen mountains speak an Agau dialect. There are islands of Agau in Gojjam, particularly along the line of the Western Escarpment. To the best of my knowledge these people together with the neighbouring negroid Gumuz of the Shankalla wilderness, another very primitive stock, have never been seriously studied. The language and customs of the Agau must be of considerable interest from the aspect of comparative linguistics and folklore.

The Agau villages through which we passed between the Escarpment and Njabara were miserably poor in the midst of an often fertile countryside: goitre, elephantiasis, and leprosy were rife. The people have long been a serf population under Amhara overlords; but in the tenth century they threw up the brilliant Zagwe dynasty which ruled Ethiopia for more than three centuries. The Zagwe episode in Ethiopian history seems to have represented some reaction of the older people of the Highland against the Amhara elements intruding from the north.

It may be of interest to refer here, in connection with the Agau, to the so-called Falashas or Black Jews. The main centre of the Falashas, who are Agau-speaking, has been in the Simen Mountains, but during the last century they have become scattered about all the north of the Ethiopian Highland. The religious practises of the Falashas are stated by people who have studied them to be those of the Jewish faith before the Babylonian captivity. The Falashas may therefore represent a remnant of a very old Jewish dispersion, or at least an early penetration of Jewish influences into the Ethiopian Highland.

A 173

Again it has been pointed out by Luca di Sabelli, Conte Rossini, and others that the ritual of the Coptic Church in Ethiopia retains a number of practises which were a part of the Jewish religion before the Captivity.[1] These cultural remnants from the past have a bearing on the tenacious tradition in Ethiopia that the Royal House is descended from Menelik (=ibn el-Hakim="son of the doctor" or "the sage") who was reputed to be a natural son of Solomon and Balkis (Arab) or Makeda (Ethiopian) Queen of Sheba. If this legend is rationalized it may be postulated that folk traditions of early Jewish associations were given literary form, in the early centuries of the Christian era, by Coptic monks familiar with Old Testament history.

[1] Luca di Sabelli, 'Storia d'Abissinia,' vol. 1.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Tulama MP25

A 177

In terms of historical probability it should be emphasized that at many periods during the millennium before the Christian era Jewish influences waxed strong in the interior of Arabia and along the eastern coast of the Red Sea. There was regular intercourse between the two coasts of the Red Sea and the Aksumite kingdom on the borders of Eritrea, and the Ethiopian Highland emerged as a city-state similar in character to the city-states along the Arabian coast, and in culture more than half Semitic.

600

To the north of the Syrian area the tradition of descent from the House of Solomon grew up in the royal houses of Armenia and Georgia, after the conversion of those two countries to the Christian faith. At the same time there were very ancient colonies of Jews in Georgia and Dagistan which may well have dated back to the period of the Babylonian conquest of Israel. A later spread of Jewish influences and even of Jewish elements which may be checked historically from the works of Arab geographers took place in the ninth century A.D. among the Khazars—a Turki people who had founded a state in the northern Caucasus and along the Volga.

A 174

A similar spread of Jewish influences to the Ethiopian Highland in an earlier epoch is historically no more improbable and, in terms of geography, would have been a much easier process. The fact that the present-day Falashas are Agau-speaking indicates that the Jewish infiltration, if it took place, was at a period when Agau was generally spoken on the Ethiopian Highland.

A 563 T 105

The Gallas.—The origin of the Gallas is another of the curious mysteries of African history and the Gallas themselves remain the most significant problem of the inner politics of Ethiopia. They first appeared in Ethiopia towards the end of the sixteenth century. The country had been depopulated by the long Somali wars and by the following conflict between Catholic and Coptic Orthodox arising out of the Portuguese intervention.

During the next two centuries the Gallas swarmed over all the countryside of Ethiopia. They settled in the region of the southern lakes, which at an earlier date had been colonized by the Ethiopian Kings. They reached the Escarpment overlooking the Awash valley and the neighbourhood of Harar on the borders of the Somali country. Like the Amhara they seemed to prefer the Highland and they spread over Shoa up to the canyon of the Blue Nile and north along the ridge of the Eastern Escarpment into Amhara.

In Shoa, the Imperial province of Ethiopia, people speaking Galla represent about half the population; and over Ethiopia as a whole they probably outnumber all the other racial groups.

In the eighteenth century Galla troops proved the decisive factor in the dynastic wars which covered the period of the final disintegration of the mediaeval Empire. Galla chieftains lorded it at the decadent court of Gondar; they made and unmade Emperors and married their daughters to them. But coming as invaders, the Gallas settled as peasants. In contrast with the indolent Amhara squireens, the Gallas are industrious farmers and labourers.

At the same time the Gallas had, and have, little political consciousness or racial coherence. When, in the course of the nineteenth century, Ethiopian

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Tulama MP25

T 105 T A 563 175

imperial power revived, Emperors like Theodore and, later, Menelik, re-established Amhara rule first over the central highland and later over all the Galla lands of the south. The most formidable resistance encountered by Menelik was from the Moslem Galla Sultan of Jimma. From time to time certain Galla districts resented the corrupt or vicious government of individual Amhara officials and revolted; but these revolts were the common phenomenon of a feudal state of society rather than the beginnings of a conscious Galla movement against an alien Amhara rule. In fact in the Galla countries of the south the rule of the Amhara central government has proved more stable than in the north where it had to meet the challenge of powerful Amhara lords. During the dangerous revolt of Ras Gugsa Wolye it was probably the Galla contingents which saved the throne for Haile Selassie. During the campaign of 1941 thousands of Galla guerrillas took the field against the Italians, while the northern leaders, the great Amhara aristocrats, were inclined to wait on the winner.

T 105 A 563 [198]

Gallas are everywhere in Ethiopia and there are probably few Amhara nobles who have not a strong tinge of Galla blood in their veins. Most Amhara have some knowledge of Galla (although many will not own to it), and Galla is popularly supposed to be the "love language" of Ethiopia.

I had little opportunity for investigating the subject, but I do not believe that all Galla-speaking tribes are racially Galla. In the belt of savannah country between the Mussolini Pass and Dessie I met the two sons of a Wallo Galla headman who were a pair of the most beautiful human beings I have ever seen. Copper-skinned and lithe, clad in panther pelts and leaning on their spears, they seemed apparitions out of the Bronze Age. These boys were of pure Hamitic type, rather resembling some of the fine-featured Shluh of the Moroccan Atlas. Yet, in Harar, where I had to disband a battalion of Galla Patriots who had come in from the south, I found stocky square-headed men with heavy jowls, with a fair proportion of negroid types. Incidentally they were reported to show excellent form as soldiers. They were mostly Borana and other southern Gallas.

The variety of physical types among the Gallas adds to the mystery of their origin before the sixteenth century. Some tribes have the tradition of having arrived on the east coast of Africa from over the sea, and one theory postulates the coming of the Galla from Madagascar and attempts to correlate their migration with the intrusion of Malay elements into that island. At present the origin of the Gallas remains one of the most interesting problems of African history.

A 633

Harar itself has, since mediaeval times, enjoyed the situation of a city-state. The emirate of Harar was brought within the Ethiopian Empire only by Ras Makonnen, the father of the present Emperor. It has since remained a favourite city of the Imperial family and a stronghold of their interest. On the edge of the Somali and the Galla country and commanding the way down over the lip of the Southern Escarpment into the Awash valley Harar is a meeting place for all the tribes of Ethiopia and the Arabian coast. The old walled city with its narrow crowded streets and occasional mosques and *turbês* has all the characteristics of an Arabian town, as contrasted with the open settlements of huts, gardens, and plantations which pass for towns in

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Phot. W. Thesiger

Awash river, Northern Aussa

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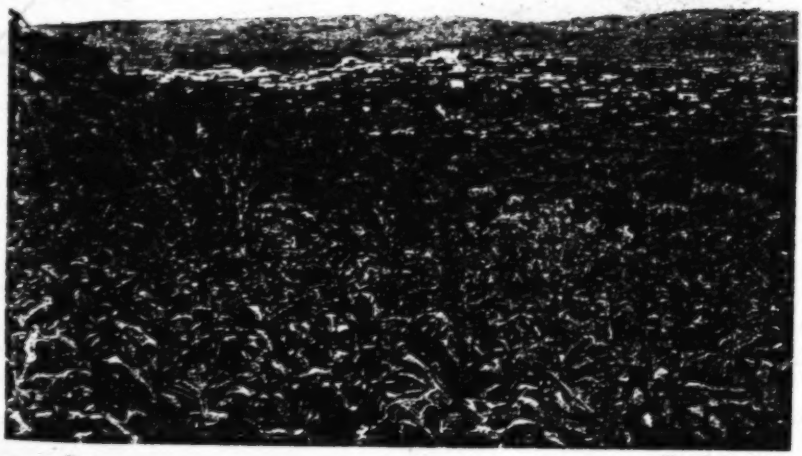

Phot. F. D. Corfield

[Facing p. 12] *Harar*

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

633 Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society
[191] has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and
Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and
[563] Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the
uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the
frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and,
[142 although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms
291] exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a
beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wander-
[245] ing among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous
for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudo,
231 which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

487 The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men: the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

174 The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally
been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up
[563] into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to
believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

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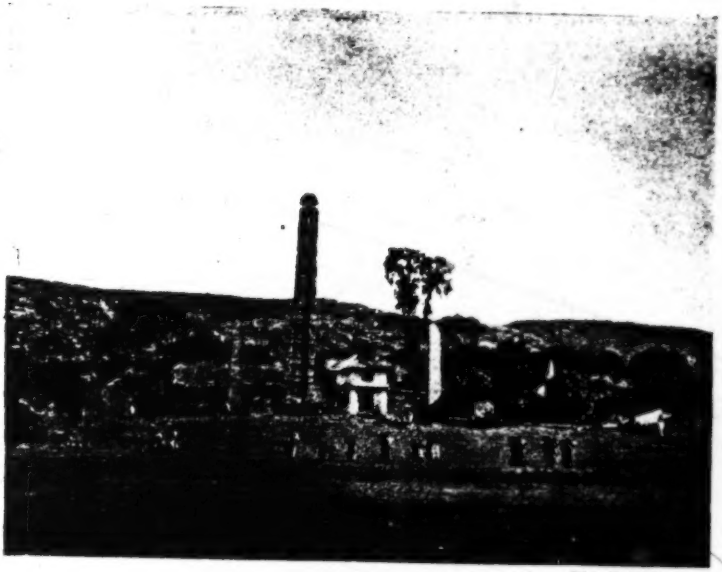

Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, monoliths

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Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, King's coronation throne and four pillars, Abunas' throne in background

[Facing p. 19]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

speaking peoples, who have contributed such an important element to the populations of the Mediterranean basin.[1] 174

I believe that the early civilized world of the valleys: Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus, which has been revealed by the researches and explorations of the last century had its background in the great ranges from which its peoples came. Professor Toynbee has pointed out that the regions of the Nile and the Mesopotamian valleys must have been areas of unhealthy swamp and wilderness when men first settled there.[2] Such terrain would not produce the conditions necessary to stimulate the multiplication of an indigenous stock. A terrain of this type would rather need clearing and developing by immigrants forced to find their living there after having been driven down from mountain areas by the pressure of increased numbers on food, which we have seen is a common characteristic of mountain economy. But just as the Highland migrant working in the field of American industrialism soon acquires new techniques and develops a higher standard of material culture than his brother who remains a crofter in Scotland, so the colonists of the Nile and Mesopotamian valleys far outpaced in material culture the inhabitants of the remote highlands of Ethiopia or of the Zagros and the Taurus. 121

There is one last point: the eighteenth-century prejudice against mountains, which influence still remains, tended to an exaggeration of the difficulties of mountain travel in primitive times. Yet the higher ridges of mountain chains often are the easiest lines of movement for men on foot. It makes possible the avoidance of forested valleys and ravines blocked by undergrowth and full of fevers. In England even our earliest forebears kept to the Downlands and trudged along the ridges to keep clear of the thick undergrowth and swamps of the low ground. And the so-called Alpine peoples kept to the mountain belt as they penetrated westward into Europe from the Highlands of Asia Minor through the Balkans to the Alps and the Pyrenees.

In this connection it is possible to appreciate the essential importance of Aksum as an early cultural centre. Aksum is at the northern head of the route along the great Eastern Escarpment which leads into the heart of the Ethiopian Highland; at the same time Aksum is within easy reach of the Red Sea and the affluents which lead down to the Nile valley. There is a theory that the monoliths at Aksum are in fact the remains of a great Megalithic centre; the historic Aksumites merely made their own sculptural additions to the stone monuments which they already found in situ.[3] If we accept this theory we can see Aksum as a great centre of early megalithic culture having its connections with the reputed megalithic remains noted by recent Italian travellers in the region of the southern lakes. 174 211 [48]

[1] Abbé Morié, 'Histoire de l'Ethiopie,' vol. 1. Ethiopia was a term applied by ancient writers loosely and varyingly to all the northern half of Africa between the Atlantic and the Red Sea, and the term was even extended to Caucasian Colchis and to India. In fact mythical Ethiopia covered all that width of Africa and Asia where the Neolithic cultures first appeared. In classical times the name Ethiopia was applied to Nubia and the Sudan and it was only in post-Christian times that it was limited to the Highland area of modern Ethiopia.

[2] A. Toynbee, 'The study of history,' vols. 1/2.

[3] Sir E. H. W. Budge, chapter on Aksum in vol. II 'History of Ethiopia.'

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

174 travellers in the region of the southern lakes.[1] Other and earlier cultures may well have percolated into the Highland by the same routes along the ridges which are established for the mediaeval Copto-Ethiopian culture.

I am afraid I have put before the Society some rather hazardous lines of inquiry, with implications which necessarily impose a great deal of comparative study before they can be established or disproved. My excuse in these days when no one has the leisure to pursue exacting studies is that it is worth putting on record lines of inquiry which some of us may be able to turn to at a later date.

All photographs, unless acknowledged, were taken by the late Captain Mark Pilkington.

DISCUSSION

114 Before the paper the PRESIDENT (the Rt. Hon. Sir GEORGE CLERK) said: Captain Allen has been well known to us in the past as an authority on Georgia and as the author of an excellent history of the Ukraine. Military duty took him to Ethiopia for the operations which restored the Emperor Haile Selassie to his throne and capital—operations in which others of our Fellows, particularly Colonel Orde Wingate, Major Hugh Boustead, and Mr. Wilfred Thesiger, took a prominent part. Some day when the war is over I hope that the story of the Abyssinian campaign will come out, because not only is it in many ways a fantastic story, but it makes a very fine chapter in our annals.

It has been a little difficult for Captain Allen to prepare his paper for this evening, first of all because nearly all his photographs were left behind in Africa, and secondly, because his military duties have given him very little time to get his paper into shape. We look forward to hearing the impressions which the country and people of the Ethiopian Highlands have made upon him in the course of his military duties.

Captain Allen then read the paper printed above

137 The PRESIDENT: The lecture this evening has stirred memories of forty years ago. The lecturer talked about those miles of red-hot pokers. I have always held that if you give Nature a chance she is the best gardener in the world. I came once over a plateau in Abyssinia, a bit of waste country where no white man had ever been before, and there I found a great sheet of red-hot pokers and rosemary: the masses of orange-scarlet flowers backed by the grey-mauve of the rosemary were wonderfully beautiful. It finished in a sort of marsh in which there were immense stretches of white and scarlet arum lilies, inconceivably spectacular.

The lecturer has described the good manners and charm of the Shoan Abyssinians, but it is true that they are very quick to take offence as well as to show affection; they are very volatile. What he said about the Tigraians was also true; they are the tough northerners, more dependable, but not so easy to get on with. I will give you an instance of the funny though rather charming ways of the Abyssinians. Forty years ago I was on a certain expedition with a so-called Abyssinian army: two thousand scallywags, with two thousand small boys to carry their rifles, and two thousand unfortunate second wives to carry their food. We descended the escarpment to the west, and came into populated country. The Abyssinian soldiers were living on the country, and here they started to be extremely tiresome. I had to chase them off the inhabitants and

[1] See 'Africa Orientale,' Italiana Guida, published by Touring Club Italiana, 1939.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

their cattle, and I was not popular with them. I had forty or fifty of my own servants, and I always made one of these come along with me with a spare mule and a rifle in case I saw something to shoot on my daily expeditions. It was not until the expedition was over and I was back again in Addis Ababa that it came out quite casually that every night over a camp fire the "victim"—that is to say, the particular servant who was to go with me next day—was compelled solemnly to make his will and divide his miserable property, with the rest of the servants as witnesses, because they were convinced that it was only a question of time before I was slaughtered by the Abyssinian army, together with the servant who would be with me. These people had no particular cause to love me, but they never complained and never refused to go.

I remember the Emperor Haile Selassie when he was a small boy in the entourage of Menelik. He and his cousin Lej Iyasu, the emperor whom in due course he deposed, were there with other small boys, and they used to wear those black satin cloaks, such as you have seen in the Emperor's portraits, with little gold or brass buttons, a very fine white scarf showing, and beautifully white cotton trousers. In their efforts to please the Emperor Menelik the Europeans used to send all sorts of consignments of our goods. One consignment which came along was a whole case of gibus or opera hats. Some enterprising man had made these of a kind of patent leather. The ordinary opera hats of silk were rather dull in appearance, but the new patent leather hats did not catch the fashion in Paris or London, and so they were shipped to Abyssinia. I gave them to Menelik, whereupon he made all these small boys in the court wear these shiny opera hats. In the result, although many would think they looked ridiculous, they appeared to me extraordinarily like the small boys of my own school so far as headgear was concerned, and I thought they suited them perfectly well.

The Abyssinians were beautifully mannered, they were very receptive, and, as exemplified by their present Emperor, many of them have all the best instincts of civilization in them. Helped as they have been by the very remarkable individuals whom Captain Allen has mentioned: Boustead, Pilkington, Thesiger, Sandford, and others, they have done great things for their country, and will do yet more; and that is one of the good results that has come out of this war.

In your name I wish to thank our lecturer of this evening for his very delightful lecture.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[Title page]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE SHOAN PLATEAU AND ITS PEOPLE: AN ESSAY IN LOCAL GEOGRAPHY

D. R. BUXTON

114 DURING THE FIFTEEN months from October 1946 to January 1948, I was working in an educational centre near Debra Berhan, an important market town and district headquarters 80 miles north-east of Addis Ababa on the Asmara road. The district was historically interesting as the hub of the old kingdom of Shoa, and it was still an important centre of Amhara population. Moreover I soon found that it contained some very remarkable topographical features. I therefore decided to devote my leisure to a detailed study of the area, which I expected to help in my educational work and also to furnish (as such studies had never, as far as I knew, been made in Ethiopia) material of some geographical interest and novelty. Unfortunately I had to leave the district before finishing what I had intended to do. But I was able to complete a large-scale compass-survey covering about a hundred square miles, working out from the village of Tebasse where I lived. This paper deals chiefly with the area shown on the map, and its Amhara population. Something will be said of the traditional ways of these people, but the formidable problems of the present day are left out of account.

The map was made, on the scale of 1 : 50,000, entirely by triangulation with the prismatic compass based on points along a 5-mile section of the Italian motor-road, which runs in straight lines and is conveniently marked out with stones at 50-metre intervals. The first stage was to cover the area with a sufficient number of principal fixed points, which were mostly conspicuous trees and hill-tops. The second stage, which occupied the week-end walks of nearly twelve months, was to follow all the principal mule-tracks and streams, and all the edges of the gorges, fixing points at intervals by resection; at the same time I tried to fix all the churches accurately, but a few were missed. A comprehensive framework was thus built up, all plotting being done at home. Finally I walked all over the area again, taking with me tracings of the framework on which the remaining detail required—hill-slopes, habitations, etc.—was inserted by eye. The method gave most satisfactory results, for the area was small (only about ten miles by eleven) and the base-line relatively very long. The only serious difficulty—bewildering until I realized its cause—was the falsification of compass readings (occasionally by as much as 15°) by magnetic rocks. One could sometimes avoid this by climbing into a tree, but bearings simply could not be taken from some points which would otherwise have been most useful.

[133]

128 To indicate relief I decided to use hachures rather than form-lines, real contouring being out of the question with the means, and in the time, at my disposal. The hachures seem to me to give a true impression to the eye of the peculiar character of this piece of country, for they bring out the contrast between the relatively slight relief of the plateau and the sudden, sensational depths of the cliff-bound gorges.

[p. 157]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Gorges of the Kassam river from the Shoan plateau

[facing p. 158]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

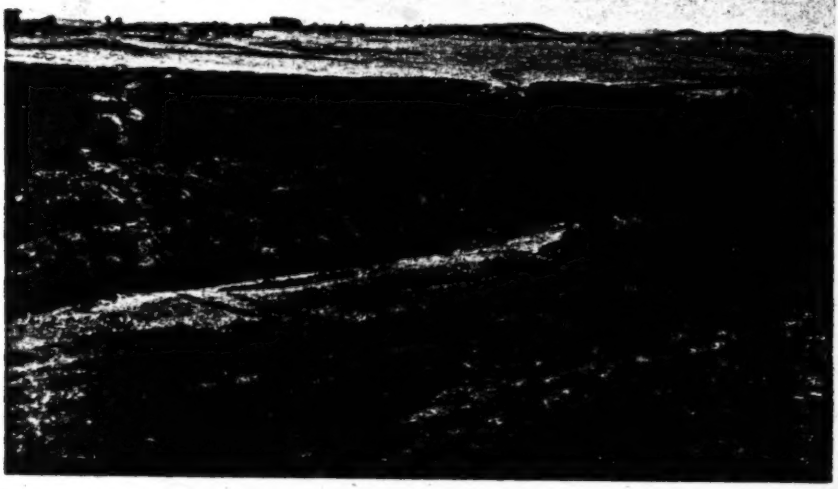
131 The fragment of country depicted by the map lies on the edge of an important section of the Shoan plateau which extends in the form of an elongated oval north-eastwards from Addis Ababa and forms the watershed between the drainage systems of the Awash and the Blue Nile. The Asmara road uses this 133 convenient high causeway from Addis Ababa to a little beyond Debra Berhan, and would go on using it if this were possible, for the road was made 491 to follow the plateau wherever it was flat enough. North of Debra Berhan, however, the country is tremendously cut up by deep ravines and no level plateau remains. The road is therefore forced down, at Debra Sina, to lower levels (as happens again in several places on the way to Asmara). The higher 133 portions of this plateau lie at well over 9000 feet and constitute an undulating tract, sometimes almost flat, sometimes rather hilly, where differences in level amount to a few hundred feet only. But, on both sides, the plateau breaks up in the most spectacular fashion. To the north-west lie a series of gorges, all belonging to the Blue Nile system, opening up with extreme abruptness along an irregular front, as will be seen in the map. To the east, the plateau terminates in some places at the main escarpment which bounds the Danakil plains, an impressive drop of several thousand feet along a fault, well seen at Ankober and Debra Sina. But farther south the simplicity of this escarpment is disguised by certain tributaries of the Hawash system which, eating their way into the plateau, have formed gorges as striking as those of the Blue Nile system. These gorges, cutting back continually, must in time complete the destruction of the plateau, and produce, by the interdigitation of their deeply entrenched headstreams, the confused type of scenery already observable farther north.

The geological structure of the plateau, on which the local landscape, and especially the peculiar type of gorge developed, directly depends, seems to be extremely simple and almost the same as that which occurs over vast areas of central and northern Ethiopia. As long ago as 1870 the step-like hill sides and tremendous gorges of the Magdala area were well described by Blanford,[1] who had accompanied the Napier Expedition. He compared Abyssinian scenery with that of the western Deccan and the Western Ghats of India, but remarked that in the case of Abyssinia the special features of this type of landscape were exaggerated. He drew attention to the hill-forts or "ambas" of Abyssinia, closely corresponding to features which had likewise been used in India as forts.

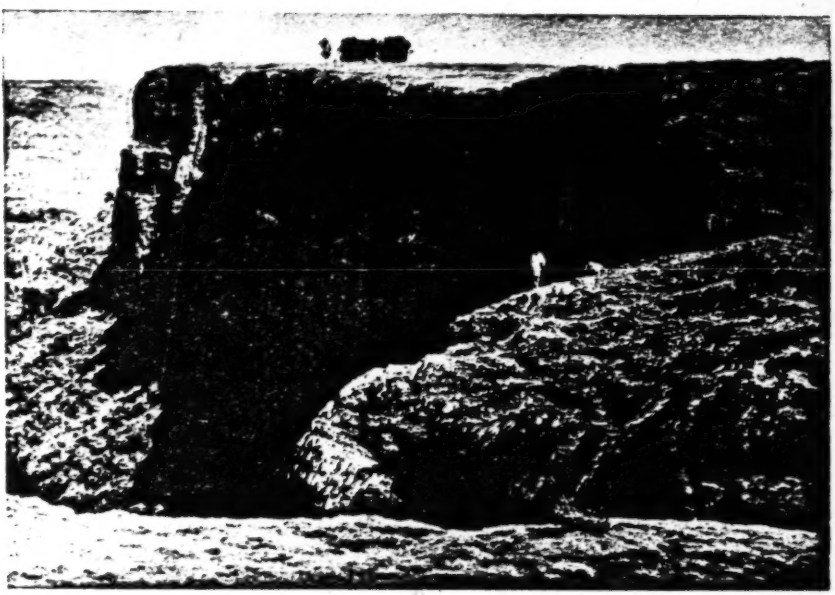
Writing of the Jitta gorge near Magdala, Blanford says:

> ". . . we came suddenly on the brink of the mighty chasm in which the Jitta river runs, and to which all the minor valleys converge. Of all the grand scenery met with in Abyssinia, none equalled this wonderful gorge. It is 3500 feet deep, and looks scarcely a mile across. The sides are extremely steep, in places nearly perpendicular. The horizontal beds on both sides appear to correspond exactly; half-way down there is a well-marked terrace, evidently formed by the same bed, on both sides of the river. The bedding is very distinct.
>
> It is to be regretted that all those geologists who disbelieve in the power

[1] Blanford, 'The Geology and Zoology of Abyssinia,' p. 86, London, 1870.



The head of the Chacha gorge



Basalt cliffs, Chacha gorge [Facing p. 159]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of translation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth." 133

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of *Rocher d'Hericourt*, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans. 132 [134] 137 [177] [372] 361 311 [231] 241 311

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow 137

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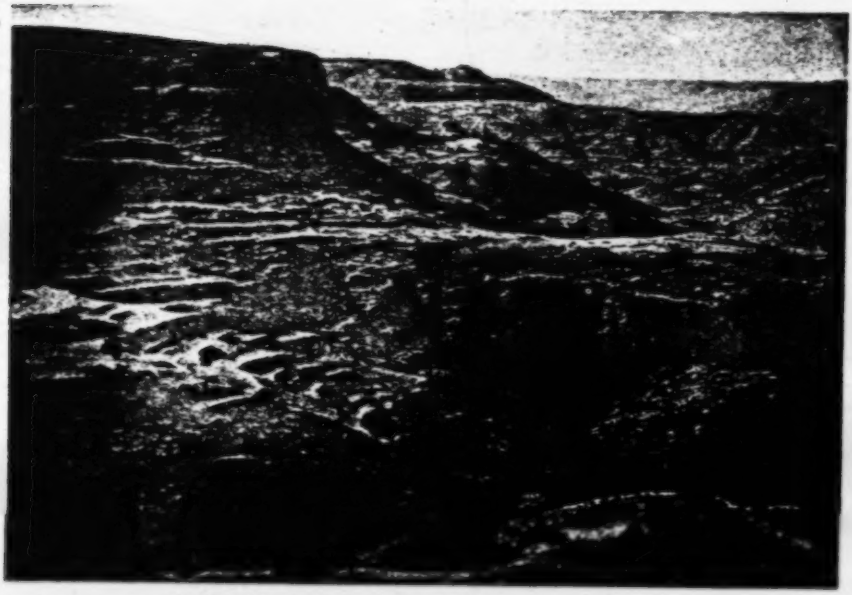

Artificial terraces and natural shelves, Dalecha gorge

133

[Facing p. 160] *Shelves at two levels, Chacha gorge*

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 *Buddleia*, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

133 The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has [49] naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being [231] swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used [311] for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the [135] north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of *magnetic iron*. A hundred years ago, as several [325] travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated [712] long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high [346] point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

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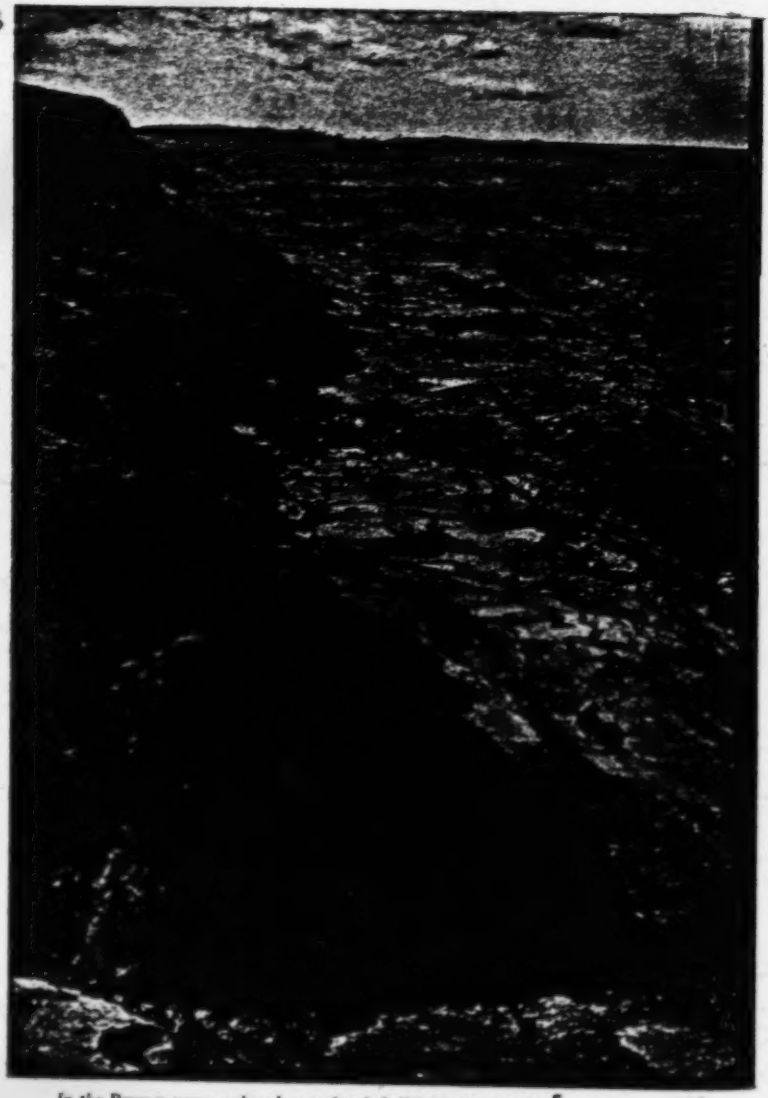

In the Beresua gorge, a densely populated shelf below basalt cliffs [Facing p. 161]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

[33] developed. I was interested to find, when first exploring this piece of country, that the shelves were well populated, intensively cultivated, and provided [361] with a quite surprising number of churches; facts, as pointed out below, of some historical significance.

After completing the framework of the map I made several calculations of depth in the Beressa gorge. An Abney level was used and as high angles were involved I think the results are trustworthy. They showed a depth of 1808 feet at the point marked *a*, just under 3 miles from the head of the gorge; 1985 feet at point *b*, 4 miles down; and 2170 feet at *c*, not quite 6 miles down. The average gradient from *a* to *b* was therefore about 2½ per cent., from *b* to *c* about 2 per cent. The depths were measured from three points (marked 1–3), all at practically the same level, on the edge of the gorge, the height of which can be taken as about 9300 feet. The absolute level of point *c* is therefore about 7130 feet, and this is almost the lowest point on the sheet. Measurements show that the depth of this gorge, enormously impressive though it is, is not more than one-fifth of its breadth. Although relatively deeper ones no doubt exist, I cannot help being highly sceptical of Rocher d'Hericourt's report of a ravine "14 leagues north-west of Angolala" which he alleged to be 1254 metres deep and only 800 broad!

Four separate gorges figure on the map. The two middle ones, formed by the Beressa and Dalecha rivers, which enclose between them the cliff-encircled plateau of Choli, can be seen to join within 4 to 5 miles of Debra Berhan. It might be supposed that the other two gorges were destined to join the same system within a short distance, but this does not happen. If the small-scale Italian map is to be trusted, the Gunagunit (north-east corner of the sheet) joins the Beressa system some 20 miles away, and the Chacha (of which the north-western gorge is a tributary) nearly 30 miles away. These junctions are approximately north of Debra Berhan; afterwards the river bends away north-westwards to join a main tributary of the Blue Nile. As might be expected, these independent gorge-systems running approximately parallel to each other proved most confusing. Between the adjacent systems one sees long, narrow strips of residual plateau, perfectly flat-topped, sometimes so narrow as to stand up like a wall between one valley and the next. The Tallak Amba plateau, partly shown in the north-west of the sheet, is an example. On the other side of the sheet a still narrower neck, followed by the [407] Tegulet path, separates the Beressa and Gunagunit systems. Following this route to the north, off the sheet, one finds that for some distance the plateau has been cut right away: one descends about 600 feet to a point where the shelves in two adjacent valleys practically coalesce, being separated only by a rocky barrier a few feet high. Then one climbs again to a narrow slip of [346] plateau on whose summit, flat as a table-top, stands an important church (Zendegur Ghiorghis). Still farther north this narrows down to a sinuous rampart between the valleys, and eventually broadens once more to form a substantial isolated plateau, which appeared in the distance to be almost inaccessible. Another remarkable feature, jutting out between the Dalecha and the small tributary which next joins the Beressa, is shown near the northern border of the sheet and will be described later.

This region is the heart of the old Shoan kingdom and many places included

[i.e., the RIVER gorges. —Analyst]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 on the sheet, or not far from it, have historical associations. Tegulet, a little to the north, was the home country of Yikuno Amlak, the Shoan prince in whose person the Solomonian line was restored to the throne of Ethiopia in the thirteenth century. Debra Berhan itself, now a rather sordid settlement on the Asmara road, is of ancient foundation, for the emperor Zar'a Yakob made it his capital in the fifteenth century. Although a somewhat cold and inhospitable place it has an obvious advantage as commanding what must always have been an important focus of routes. Even in modern times it was [491] inevitable that the Asmara road should be brought through this easy passage, avoiding the impassable gorges on the one hand and the much broken country of the higher plateau on the other.

349 Although there is no proof, and apparently no relevant tradition, I should be inclined to attribute to Zar'a Yakob some curious caves excavated in one end of a high hogsback 2 miles south-east of Debra Berhan. Unfortunately I inspected them only once and rather casually and found no opportunity to come again. There are at least two very elaborate excavations, besides some rougher ones, now partly inhabited. The two principal caves are very similar in lay-out. Entering by a roughly rounded lobby, one passes through a small hole in the rock, which admits scarcely any daylight, into the principal interior space. This is approximately circular and perhaps 25 feet in diameter. On the far side, opposite the entrance, it communicates with a smaller chamber semi-circular in form. From the main space a passage leads off, in the first cave to the right, in the second to the left; these receive no daylight at all. In the first cave the passage (which was half under water) turned twice to the right and was thus bent back on itself. It opened into several miniature cells, in shape an erect oval and only big enough for a man to stand in, each of which appeared to have opened through a small hole at the top into an upper space of some kind. The passage belonging to the second cave had basin-shaped excavations in its floor opening through small holes into spaces below. I therefore conjectured that I had here got into an upper passage such as apparently existed above the other system. Possibly these were underground chapels inspired by rock-excavated churches of the Lalibela school. As to the passages and the small spaces leading off them, with what seemed to be their ventilating arrangements, they might have been stores of some kind, or burial chambers, or special places of devotion, or hermits' cells—but these are speculations. If the mud which chokes these caves were removed something definite might be found out about them. They found a use quite recently, for at the time of the Italian invasion *tabots* and other church valuables were said to have been hidden in them.

175 In the first half of the sixteenth century the Shoan plateau, in common with a large part of Ethiopia, was occupied by Galla tribes invading from the 563 south. These Gallas were essentially horsemen and herdsmen, and it seems that, while they occupied the entire plateau, they did not seriously attempt to penetrate the gorges, into which even a mule descends with difficulty. I believe that the Amhara population became forcibly concentrated in the upper reaches of the gorges at this time, and that the dense population which resulted explains the extraordinary number of churches which came to be built there. Even to-day the greater part of the plateau between Addis

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ababa and Debra Berhan remains Galla country. The Amharas have re-occupied the region immediately around Debra Berhan, their southern limit corresponding roughly with the edge of the sheet; but the churches built to meet their needs (including the new St. Gabriel already once mentioned) are comparatively few and far between, a confirmation of the recent date of the re-colonization. 175 563

The Gallas remained in possession of the plateau country until the early nineteenth century when Sahele Selassie, king of Shoa, began to push them back. The half-dozen hill-top forts shown on the sheet almost certainly date from this time, or were reoccupied then. The capital of Shoa since the eighteenth century had been Ankober, on the edge of the great eastern escarpment, some 20 miles east of Debra Berhan. But Sahele Selassie, as part of his anti-Galla campaign founded, in about 1830, a new capital at Angolala in the midst of Galla country. He thereafter divided his time between Angolala and Ankober. A largely disused track, still well-defined in most parts, is shown crossing the sheet from Angolala in an easterly direction; this was evidently an old route joining the two capitals. Harris,[1] who conducted a British Mission to Sahele Selassie in 1841–42, visited Angolala which then contained four or five hundred huts. He also describes Sahele Selassie's two-storied "palace," built by an Albanian[2] visitor, standing on an eminence—which however the king would not inhabit, from fear of earthquakes. Angolala continued to be used by Sahele Selassie's son, king Haile Malakot, and the great Menelik, who was Haile Malakot's son, had been born here in 1843—just after the time of Harris's visit. 175 [563] [712] [487] [644]

Not much remains now to show that Angolala was so recently the twin capital of Shoa; but the site of Sahele Salassie's house, an artificial mound crowning the ridge, is easily identified and commands a fine view of the countryside. Inside the mound is a vaulted cellar, its masonry showing clear signs of European workmanship, as also does the central stone-built element of the local church of Kidane Meheret. This work is now exposed to view as the church was burnt down during the Italian occupation. Angolala remains a well-populated area, but only a very few huts now stand among the remains of defensive walls near the old royal residence. 172 177

The young Menelik, up to the age of twelve, must have known all this country well. But at that time (1855) the newly crowned emperor Theodore, whose ambition was the unification of Ethiopia after a century and a half of anarchy and internal strife, came down from the north with the object of subjecting Shoa to his personal rule. He defeated king Haile Malakot on the plains of Atakilt, the irrigated area just south-east of Debra Berhan. Haile Malakot died immediately after the battle, and Menelik was carried away captive by Theodore—who, however, afterwards treated him as a son rather than a prisoner. For some years Menelik followed in the emperor's train, moving with him from Gondar to Debra Tabor and then to the hill-fortress of Magdala, Theodore's last capital and later the scene of his undoing. Several years before Napier's siege of 1868 Menelik had escaped from Magdala during, it is said, one of Theodore's periodic orgies. A youth in 175 [113]

[1] Harris, 'The Highlands of Aethiopia,' London, 1844.
[2] It is much more likely that Harris meant an Armenian.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 his early twenties, he found his way back to Ankober and assumed his rights as king of Shoa.

Menelik, who was a restless and imaginative character as well as a great soldier, soon began the series of vast conquests in the southern Galla lands which were to double the size of Ethiopia. It is therefore not surprising that he should have abandoned Ankober in favour of a capital within easier reach of his newly acquired territories. He first reverted to Debra Berhan, then made a new temporary capital at Liché, a few miles to the north-east. Here, [172] at one end of a long, low hill are various remains of massive dry-stone walls as at Angolala, and the raised platform, only about 20 feet across, on which stood Menelik's personal dwelling. But the site is now uninhabited. In the 1880's Menelik, his southern conquests rapidly extending, moved his capital south-westwards to Entotto, in the midst of country newly retrieved from the Gallas. This was a magnificent site, 10,000 feet high and overlooking the plain and the splendid circle of mountains which form the setting of the present capital. Entotto was, however, unsuitable as the site of a permanent [312] city. It is said, also, that Menelik's wife Taitu craved for a warmer residence and especially for the curative waters of the hot springs (the present Fil Wuha baths) on the edge of the plain below. So in 1889, the year in which he was crowned emperor in succession to John IV, Menelik moved down, and Addis Ababa was founded at the foot of the hills, 1500 feet below.

This digression completes our brief review of the historical associations of the area represented on the map. The remainder of this paper will deal with the present inhabitants, their distribution and their way of life.

361 It has already been said that the population of the area is greater than at first sight appears. The small, stone-built huts are inconspicuous objects, especially as they are seldom massed together to form a village but are widely scattered in small groups. Moreover the motor-road follows for the most part an exposed tract which carries less than the normal population. Travellers driving through therefore carry away a false impression: they can see little of the more populated areas, nothing of the gorges, and not a single one of the numerous churches of the region, except those of Debra Berhan itself.

I attempted to mark every inhabited place on the map. In very many cases the single dot indicates several households, and may be taken to represent, on 162 an average, two households of five to six persons each or eleven souls. On 361 this basis the population of the whole area of 102 square miles comes to about 15,500 or 152 per square mile—a high average by African standards. (This excludes Debra Berhan itself which would add a further 2000 or so.) The population is not, however, evenly distributed, and the area may be divided into three parts which, with their areas and population densities (again ignoring Debra Berhan) are as follows:

General plateau: 60 square miles—116 per square mile.

Plateau between or within 1 km. of gorges: 22 square miles—240 per square mile.

The gorges themselves: 20 square miles—162 per square mile. (This indicates a very high concentration on the "shelves" and a few other favoured spots, for a great part of the gorge area is, of course, uninhabitable.)

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

These figures show that the gorges, together with the adjoining and intervening plateau, carry a considerably higher population than the rest of the plateau, the combined average being over 200 per square mile. The figures for population per church are also interesting. The gorges and the adjacent parts of the plateau contain no fewer than thirteen churches and they serve an average population of only some 650 souls each. On the other hand the churches of the general plateau, not counting those of Debra Berhan, which chiefly serve the townspeople, number only four. They must cater for about three times as many people each, and until recently many more for two of them are recent foundations.

The higher population of the gorge region is attributable to two causes: the greater productivity of the land there, and the historical fact, already referred to, that the Amharas were long forced to live in the gorges, and have re-emerged only in recent times. This is confirmed by the evidence of the churches which, in such numbers, are sure evidence of a long-established Christian population. The oldest ones are among those in the depths of the gorges; sites on the edges of gorges seem to be more recent. The few plateau churches are all relatively modern and bespeak the re-occupation by Amharas; two of them were indeed founded within the last fifteen years, and one as recently as 1945.

As can be seen from the map, sites chosen for dwellings are usually on the higher ground. The favourite sites, of which many examples can be seen on the sheet, are rocky ridges and the tops or upper slopes of hills and minor plateaus. A high place with an outlook, together with reasonable proximity to permanent water, seem to be the conditions sought after. Even the most elevated and exposed hill-tops are generally inhabited, whereas nobody tries to live on the plains near the main streams, which become very swampy in the rains. The ordinary family, together with its domestic animals, lives in a small, irregular cluster of round huts, which in this area are built of stone cemented with mud and carry a conical thatched roof. They are surrounded, as a rule, by a dry-stone wall, which may be shared by several households. Richer people may have an ornamental gatehouse at the main entry, with a little watchman's room over the gate; but such ostentation was not common.

Disregarding some of the Debra Berhan people, almost the entire population is engaged in farming which, here as elsewhere in Ethiopia, is the mainstay of existence. Some possess their own land; others hold their plots, in return for a proportion of the produce (but without any security of tenure), from absentee landowners. There is also a landless element, greatly increased through the disturbing influence of the Italian occupation, who hire themselves out as ploughmen and labourers. I had intended to measure some typical holdings in order to estimate the area actually required to support a family, but my time in the area was cut short and I never did so. As a very rough estimate I think that about 15–20 per cent. of the area is under cultivation in any one year, which would indicate an average per family of something like 4 acres. This does not include fallow land which, once re-grown with grass, cannot be distinguished at a glance from permanent pasture.

The most exposed parts of the plateau near Debra Berhan will grow two crops only, barley and broad beans, but a limited amount of wheat (a bearded

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

241 variety) and linseed is grown in most parts of it. Where more shelter exists lentils and chick-pea are also planted, and another low-growing leguminous crop called *gwayo*, which is used only as a cattle fodder as it is believed to [824] cause softening of the bones in man! The barley is planted early and the other crops late in the main rainy season (June–September). Barley is sometimes also planted in the early rains, which are very uncertain here but usually begin in February or March. In this area however the early crop rarely gives a good return and sometimes fails completely. The plateau land, after being cultivated for a few years (often until it shows obvious signs of exhaustion), is fallowed for a period which varies widely according to the type of soil, but may be as long as five or seven years.

Down in the gorges, where the climate is appreciably milder, and where a primitive sort of irrigation can be practised on the level shelves, both chick-pea and lentils flourish. Some *teff* (a grass-like cereal greatly favoured for making the local bread) can be grown, as well as wheat and barley. Shelf cultivation seems as a rule to be continuous, perhaps because of the fresh sediment spread annually over the fields by rain and irrigation. In the lower parts of the gorges some maize and millet (*Sorghum*) can be found, but almost the whole of the area included on the map is too high for these crops. Other gorge products, unknown on the plateau, are tomatoes, chillies, coffee and *gesho*—a shrub whose leaves are used for fermenting the local beer (*talla*) and honey-wine (*tej*). Bananas, for no obvious reason, are not grown, but are brought to Debra Berhan market from the low country beyond the eastern escarpment.

The agricultural methods of the Ethiopians are far more advanced than those of any surrounding territory and do not belong to Africa. They can be paralleled among the west-Asian peasantry, and a close comparison with the methods of the Yemen mountain people might be especially fruitful. It was from this latter region that the Ethiopians' ancestors emigrated, before the [177] Christian era, and it is extremely probable that they brought with them both implements and a knowledge of techniques. Hence perhaps the use of the plough, universal [illegible]ng highland Ethiopians, and their skill in irrigation and terracing.

[462] Farming in Ethiopia is primarily the man's and not the woman's work, the standard female occupation, apart from household cares, being spinning. [283] (Cotton is widely grown in the lowlands.) The farmers spend most of their lives at the plough, a one-handled variety drawn by a yoke of oxen. In their [231] right hand they carry a whip with a short handle and long, heavy thong which they continually whirl and crack above the heads of the oxen, to whom, at the same time, they address an endless succession of strange howls and shouts, curses and imprecations. New or long-fallowed grassland is broken in with the plough in the dry season. This complicated process (known as *gai*) involves first scratching the ground in several directions to dislodge the turf, next gathering the sods into numerous heaps, then setting fire to these so that grass and weeds are gradually burnt out, and finally spreading out the soil again. But the great time for ploughing comes after the main rains have reduced the countryside to a sea of soft, dark mud. At this season the fields are peppered with ploughmen. Each successive sowing must be prepared

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

for, and, in the height of the rains when some crops are already up, deep furrows are made at regular intervals, and enlarged from time to time to carry away the surplus rain water. 244

Irrigation on the shelves of the gorges has already been referred to. But a more elaborate system, the extent of which is shown schematically on the map, has been developed along the river Beressa and its tributary the Maka, which both provide a small flow of water throughout the dry season. The whole enterprise is an interesting example of concerted effort and communal organization—in neither of which are the Amharas usually believed to excel. Its object is to ensure an early crop of barley, to be reaped before the onset of the main rains in June. 312 [476]

The irrigation system has to be partly rebuilt every dry season for the dams, which are constructed of stones and heavy sods, are swept away in the rains. From each dam the water is led off into a well-established furrow, which is carried down in a divergent line from the river and sometimes cut out of the rock on steep scarps. From it minor channels, which can be opened or blocked at will, branch off to irrigate the intervening lands. There are however more complicated systems; thus the dam near Dilila feeds two irrigation channels, one on either bank of the river. The right-bank channel receives its water direct from the dam, that on the left bank by means of an aqueduct carried across the main stream just below the dam and likewise constructed of stones and sods. The flow is not sufficient to feed both at once, so that the water is excluded from one or other branch on different days of the week; while if rain happens to fall the whole system is switched off. The left-bank channel, after running almost parallel to the Beressa for nearly a mile and a half, has to cross obstacles in the form of two tributary streams. The second tributary crossed is a large one, and the irrigation channel, in order to maintain its level, makes a big loop upstream and is then carried over the tributary by means of another wall-like aqueduct 8 or 10 feet high.

During the latter part of the dry season the brilliant green crops of the irrigated area make a striking contrast to the brown and withered aspect of the surrounding countryside. The district (known as Atakilt or "garden") takes its name from this characteristic feature. There are other minor irrigation schemes on the plateau, as on the Dalecha river in the east and the Angolala river in the west of the sheet, but nothing on so large a scale or so elaborately organized as the Beressa system. The Atakilt plains also have historic interest as the scene of the battle, already mentioned, which resulted in the emperor Theodore's annexation of Shoa and the capture of young Menelik. [103]

To conclude this brief account of the agricultural techniques of our area something must be said of terracing and its effect on the landscape. Nothing like the impressive and elaborate terracing practised in some eastern rice-growing countries is attempted in these parts. Many slopes are nevertheless unobtrustively terraced, both in the gorges and on the plateau, and it is not uncommon to see new terraces in process of formation. A wall (*gur*) is built on the lower side of the area selected for improvement, advantage being often taken of any natural flattening of the hillside. The *gur* has a vertical face on

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

312 the downward side but is sloped on the up-hill side and therefore triangular in section. The filling-up of the empty space behind the wall, to the new terrace level, may be partly accomplished by hand but tends to be left to nature. During the rains, especially on the steeper slopes, there is a continuous downward movement of soil, which is arrested by the terrace walls and the pockets above them gradually fill up. In the course of centuries an immense amount of simple terracing of this kind has been done, the effect being to accentuate the existing irregularities of the steeper slopes. The landscape has certainly been greatly modified in this way, but it is often impossible to tell at first sight whether a given feature is natural, or partly or wholly due to terracing. It is obvious that such terracing has not only provided additional acreage for agriculture but also served the useful purpose of saving many steep slopes from excessive erosion. In several parts of Ethiopia, including this area, I have seen slopes under cultivation which were so steep that the soil, when loosened and disturbed, would slide away downhill. At first sight one would suppose that such slopes must be completely denuded after a few seasons' rain. The fact that this does not happen is due, I believe, to the vast abundance of stones in these soils, every one of which acts as a minute barrier arresting the flow of water and silt. Nevertheless such slopes, unless terraced, clearly cannot survive indefinitely under cultivation.

443 Surplus produce is brought in to the big weekly market at Debra Berhan
[487] which is both the commercial and the social centre of the whole district; all the main routes radiate from it. Every Saturday morning these routes are thronged with market-goers, who can be seen moving along in an almost continuous stream, the well-to-do mounted on mules, the majority on foot, some driving laden donkeys and pack-mules. The products of this countryside are few, and there is little food surplus, but some wheat and barley come to market, also eggs and chickens and a good deal of butter. Some honey (used in making the local mead or *tej*) comes in, and beeswax is collected for export. Firewood, a scarce commodity on the plateau, is carried in in quantity. *Gesho*, the fermenting agent, comes up from the gorges. There is plenty of earthenware, made on the plateau nearby. From the district of Menz to the north come excellent felt blankets and burnouses. Traders from farther afield bring salt from the desert, partly in the bars which used formerly to pass as currency, and raw cotton and spices from the eastern plains. Textiles and other imported goods now find their way to this market by lorry.

When, in the course of the afternoon, the market crowds begin to stream homewards, one may identify the few simple wares they have bought or bartered. Some have a bag or a bar of salt, some raw cotton for spinning or a piece of cotton cloth, some a fresh supply of coffee-beans, some a bottle of kerosene or a cake of soap. Many have acquired earthenware water-pots or
[323] cooking vessels; the large round platters (*matad*) 18 inches across, on which
[482] the local bread is baked, stand out conspicuously for they are always carried, for safety, on the head.

It still remains to describe the most potent of the influences which shape
771 the life of the country-bred Amhara—that of the Church. The priests, of

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

whom many hard things have been said by prejudiced travellers, play so essential a part in almost every aspect of rural life that the community simply cannot be imagined without them. Christenings, funerals and periodic commemorations of the dead are ceremonies of enormous importance which must, of course, be conducted by priests, and their presence is deemed desirable at the higher forms of civil marriage. The *mahabar* or Private Communion, an old social institution deeply rooted among these people, cannot be held unless priests are present, nor can oaths be sworn, or public inquiries made, without them. The traditional customs of the Ethiopian Church, based on those of the Copts but strongly influenced by Judaistic practices, still retain their hold, some would say a strangle-hold, over the rural population. Many long fasts are rigorously observed, besides weekly ones on Wednesdays and Fridays; so are a multiplicity of feast-days when no work may be done, though Saturday is not always observed, as it used to be, as a workless day equivalent to Sunday.

I have already spoken of the large number of churches scattered over this area, especially in the northern half of the sheet, among the gorges. When first wandering about the district I had no idea they were so numerous. But while making the survey I continually came across new ones, and the last two, those nearest the north-east and north-west corners of the sheet, were discovered only while filling in the final detail. They brought the total for this small area up to twenty. They are not elaborate buildings, nor do they conform to the ordinary western conception of a church. They are indeed round huts, quite uninfluenced by the rectangular form (deriving from a very ancient tradition) which exists in the northern part of the country.[1] Some are built in masonry, some in mud-and-stick, and the slightly more pretentious have an outer colonnade of wooden uprights supporting the edge of the roof. Inside one finds two concentric passages surrounding the *makdas*, or Holy of Holies, which only priests may enter. In the distance one can usually recognize a country church by its fine conical thatched roof, which is much bigger than that of any ordinary hut, and is crowned by a sort of double cone carrying a complicated cross, often ornamented with ostrich eggs.

Of the twenty churches, seven were dedicated to the Virgin Mary (Mariam), four to St. George (Ghiorghis), and three to the Archangel Michael, and these are, in general, the most popular dedications. The principal church in Debra Berhan was a Selassie (Trinity), that of Angolala a Kidane Meheret (Covenant of Mercy). There was one St. John, one St. Gabriel, and one each dedicated to the most famous of Ethiopian saints—"Abo" and Tekla Haymanot. Splendid sites have been chosen for most of these churches, the chief consideration having been, it would seem, visibility from afar. The plateau churches are invariably raised on a conspicuous ridge or hill-top. Many are beautifully situated on the shelves in the gorges, or overlooking these. Some again are placed on the extreme edge of a gorge—such are Saria Mikael in the north-east of the sheet and the old St. George, just north of Debra Berhan, now unfortunately moved nearer the town (both sites are marked on the map).

Perhaps the most striking of all these sites is that of Iteghe Mariam, to the

[1] D. R. Buxton, "The Christian Antiquities of Northern Ethiopia," *Archaeologia*, 92 (1947) 1–42.

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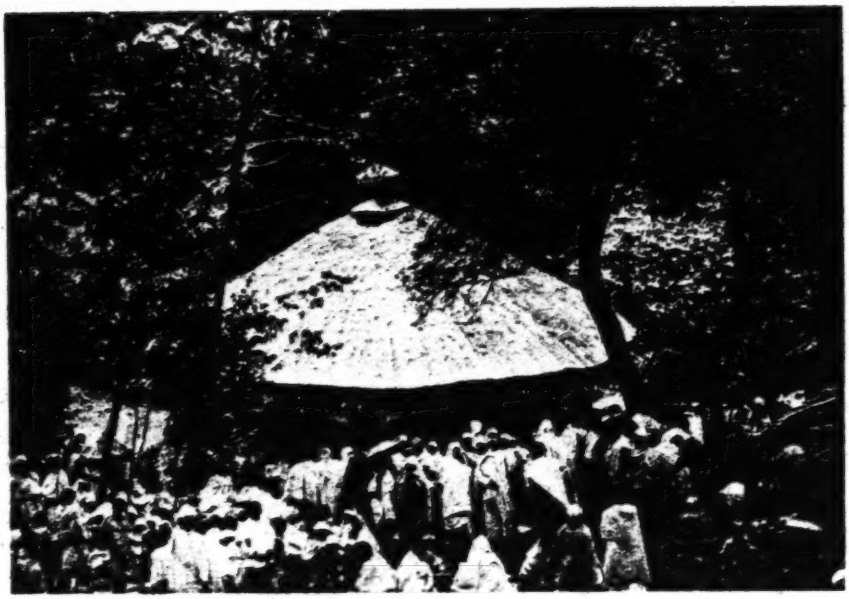

346
291

Church at Abo, Baressa gorge

291
778
793

Monk and deacon receiving offerings [Facing p. 170]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

north-west of Zanjira near the upper margin of the sheet. The church clings to the side of a steep little hill which stands almost isolated among vast gorges and commands the grandest panorama imaginable of this tormented country. The hill is joined to Zanjira by a narrow causeway little lower than the general plateau, flat on top and dropping away in cliffs on either side, so regular that it almost seems artificial. Harris records a saying which evidently refers to this place: "from Iteghe you can see the Echeghe" (*i.e.* the chief of the monks, who then lived in Gondar). To be sure, one does seem to overlook a great part of the world from this point of vantage.

Every church is the centre of a radiating system of small paths (not shown on the map) chiefly used by people coming to service. There are of course regular Sunday services, but these are not very well attended. More important are the special festivals observed on certain dates of the Ethiopian month, which may fall on any day of the week. In this area the monthly festivals universally observed, on which no work could be done, were those of St. Michael, St. Mary, and St. George, on the 12th, 21st, and 23rd respectively, as well as "Bal Wold," a commemoration of the Birth of Christ, on the 29th of each month. Of still greater significance in the life of the people are the annual festivals, falling on the same day of the month as the monthly ones but in certain months only. On these annual festivals nearly the whole population makes its way to the churches dedicated to the particular saint commemorated. Often they will visit the local *tebel* or Holy Water and bathe there early in the morning before service. Going on to the church, all remain outside, for there would be no room for such a crowd within the cramped passages of the church itself. In the middle of the morning the *tabot* or ark is brought out and ceremonial dances held before it. Finally, before the service ends, it will be carried three times round the church in procession, attended by magnificent crosses and gaudy umbrellas. These are occasions of great popular excitement and rejoicing, and the congregations are often enormous. The long service over, they break up into gossiping groups, and go back to social lunches in each other's huts.

Enough has been said to show how large a part is played among these people by the Church and its priesthood. The country has indeed been described as priest-ridden, the people as over-dominated or even enslaved by the Church. If so, this servitude, at least in the country, is still a willing and unquestioned one. It is also true to say that without the Church the social structure of this countryside would fall to pieces, and life would lose not only its coherence but nearly all its variety and colour.

It was mentioned above that, to meet the needs of an increasing plateau population, several new churches had been founded in recent times in the area covered by the map. Two of these were established by "division" of a church which already existed in the gorge. Each original church had two *tabots* one of which was removed for the new foundation, for no church can exist without a *tabot* or altar-slab, this being the only part of the church which is consecrated. Thus the Mariam of the Tallak Amba plateau was derived from the Mariam half-way down the cliff about a mile to the north-east; and similarly a new Ghiorghis of the plateau, just east of Daloti, from the Ghiorghis in the gorge below. Of these "divisions," both of which took place

133
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Irrigated land, Atakilt

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481
796

The ceremony of Timkat (Epiphany), near Debra Berhan

[Facing p. 171]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

shortly before the Italian invasion of 1935, the first was accomplished peacefully; but not the second. According to the story told me, the *tabot* of the lower Ghiorghis had been borrowed and carried in solemn procession on the plateau in order to ward off a swarm of locusts which were damaging the crops there. This measure was successful, and the plateau people determined to keep the *tabot* which had proved itself so powerful. The people of the gorge would not agree, and tried to recapture their *tabot*. The plateau party however successfully defended it by force of arms, and later built a little church to house it. It was not unusual to attribute specific powers to *tabots*: for instance, that of Dimbaro Mariam (a little east of the north-east corner of the sheet) used to be carried to war by the emperors, attended by a retinue of priests and scribes, to bring success in battle.

The last church to be founded in these parts was the new St. Gabriel, on a prominent hill-top in the district of Dilila near the south-east corner of the sheet. I came upon it when first following the upper course of the Beressa in December 1946. As I approached the foot of the hill I learnt from passers-by that a new church had been built upon it, and that the foundress herself, a certain great lady from Addis Ababa, was at that moment on the hill. Climbing a rocky track to the top, I saw a cluster of new huts and the still unfinished building of the church. Nearby was a large canvas awning stretched rather clumsily between rough stone walls. Under the awning I found the lady herself, short and stout and genial, sitting on a camp chair; around her, squatting on the ground, was a deferential assembly of local dignitaries, personal retainers and priests. After the fluster caused by my unexpected arrival had died down, I had a talk with the worthy lady who, having just presided at a mid-day meal, now plied me with very welcome refreshment. She had been born and bred in this very place. Having spent most of her life elsewhere, and somehow acquired a certain amount of wealth, she had returned in later life to her place of birth and founded this church only the year before my visit. It met a need, she said, for the area lacked a church, and no other St. Gabriel existed anywhere in the neighbourhood. As it chanced, I had come on the day after St. Gabriel's annual festival (which is the 19th of Tahisas, or, in European style, the 28th of December). She expressed great regret that I had not been present at the festival itself, when big crowds had come from Debra Berhan and from all the surrounding country.

This incident seemed to me interesting as demonstrating the tenacity of the local religious tradition in Ethiopia. After all the upheaval and disruption of Italian occupation and the Second World War, the hold of the ancient Church over the Amhara people seemed unweakened. The Church was able to extend its influence in an area not yet well served as readily as ever. It was still an appropriate act for a pious person to found a new church in a lonely place. Perhaps these things are not surprising, for the Church has been the main support and inspiration of Ethiopian unity since the earliest Christian times. It has always been the focal centre of the national sentiment, the fount of renewed resistance to aggression, the main force, in fact, which has maintained Ethiopia's independence and made of it, as Menelik himself once said, an island of Christianity in the great Islamic sea.

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361 I have tried to describe a small section of the old Shoan people in their geographical and historic setting. But this small community, living along the broken edges of the Shoan plateau, typifies the much larger unity of the Amhara nation. Mostly they live in country which resembles either the plateau or the gorges, for they are a mountain people and will not live in the low country; and over most of the Ethiopian highlands their way of life, while varying in detail, is fundamentally the same. Everywhere outside the 181 towns the force of tradition is incomparably stronger than any modern influence, so that life remains, in essentials, what it has been for centuries. I have never come across such a staunch (not to say arrogant) conservatism—a conservatism centred mostly round the old Church which, now as ever, organizes the life of the community. The manifestations of modernity and progress, which now attract some attention in the larger towns, hardly affect the rural picture, and the rural population is content without them. I myself was content without them too, for I valued very highly the experience of sharing the life of a community whose customs, founded on the most ancient traditions, belong essentially to an earlier and to me a congenial age. This [609] was one of the compensations for living in a country where life is necessarily a strain, since the inquisitive foreigner is not really welcome.

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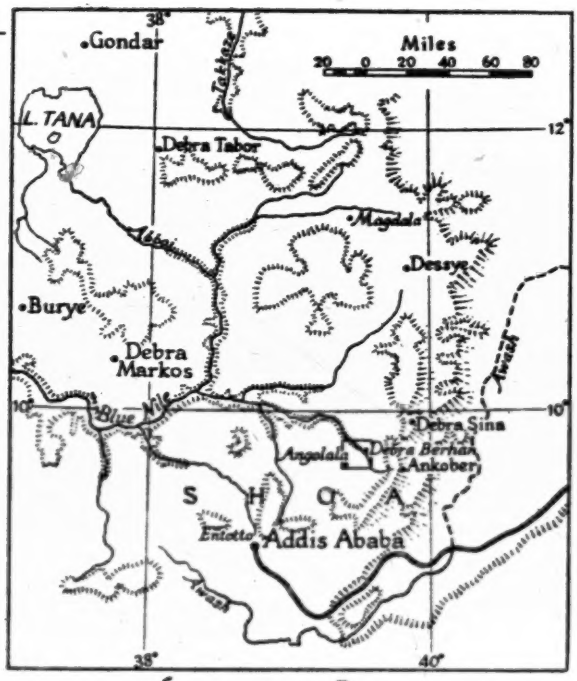

[Enl map I]

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Published by the Royal Geographical Society

[End map II-A]

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[End map II-B]

SHOAN PLATEAU
Buxton

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

NARRATIVE

OF THE

PORTUGUESE EMBASSY

TO

ABYSSINIA

DURING THE YEARS 1520-1527.

BY

FATHER FRANCISCO ALVAREZ.

TRANSLATED FROM THE PORTUGUESE,

AND EDITED,

With Notes and an Introduction,

BY

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY.

LONDON:
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MDCCCLXXXI.

[Title Page]

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[pp. 1-20 have not been processed for the files.—Analyst]

CAP. XI.—*Of the fashion and situation of the monasteries and their customs, first this of St. Michael.*

346 The manner of these monasteries as to their sites and
361 customs: all are situated on the greatest and highest cliffs, or the deepest they can find. This one of St. Michael is situated on a very steep rock at the foot of another very high rock, where no one can ascend. The stone of which these rocks consist is of the grain of the walls of the port of Portugal.[1] They are very great rocks. The land around
137 these rocks is all covered with very great forests, and besides wild olive trees and high grass between them, in which there is much basil. The trees which are not wild olive trees are not trees known to us; all are without fruit. In the narrow valleys which belong to this monastery there are orange trees, lemon trees, citron trees, pear trees and fig trees of all kinds, both of Portugal and India; peach trees, cabbages, coriander, cardamine, wormwood,[2] myrtle and other sweet-smelling and medicinal herbs, all ill profited by
[461] because they are not good working men: and the earth produces these like wild plants, and it would produce whatever was planted and sown in it. The monastery house
346 looks quite like a church building, constructed like ours. It has around it a circuit like a cloister, covered above in the same manner as the body of the monastery. It has three entrances, as ours are, one principal one, and two side ones. The roof of the church and of its cloisters is of wild straw, which lasts a man's life: the body of the church is built with naves very well constructed, and their arches are

[1] Oporto. [p.21] [2] Alosna.

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346 very well closed; all appears to be vaulted. The church has a chancel and a transept, in the centre transept are curtains from end to end; and there are other curtains before the side doors, from wall to wall. They are curtains of silk: the entrance through these curtains is in three places, they are open in the middle, and they reach one to another, also they can be entered close to the walls. In the said three entrances there are little bells suspended to the curtains themselves, and nobody can enter by any part without these bells ringing. Here there is not more than one altar, which is in the chancel: this has a stand on four props, and the altar reaches to these four props. This stand is covered over above as though with a vault, and there is an altar stone which they call *tabuto*. Upon this altar stone there is a basin of copper, very large and flat below, and with low sides. This basin also reaches to the supports of the stand, which are disposed in a square. Within this large basin there is another smaller one. This stand has curtains hanging down from it to the ground, that is, at the back and sides, which screen the altar, except that in front it is open. One can go all round the altar. The bells are of
534 stone, and in this manner: long thin stones, suspended by cords passed through them, and they strike them with sticks made for the purpose, and they make a sound as of cracked bells heard at a distance. Also at festivals they take the basins from the altar and strike them with sticks, and they help to make a sound. They have also other iron bells, not round, but with two sides, they have a clapper which strikes first on one side and then on the other, and it makes a noise as of helving a mattock. They also have other small ill-made bells, which they carry in their hands at processions, and they ring the whole of them at the festivals. On other days the bells of stones and iron are
782 used. In all churches and monasteries they ring for matins
796 two hours before dawn. They say the prayers by heart and

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They say the prayers by heart and
without light, except in the lamps or chandeliers, for they 796 782
have not got lamps. They burn butter in these chandeliers, [373]
for they have not got oil. They pray or chaunt very loud, [354]
without art of singing, and they do not recite (alternate) [237]
verses, but all sing straight on. Their prayers are psalms, and
on feast days besides psalms they recite prose, according as [533]
the feast is so is the prose. They always stand in the
churches; at matins they only say one single lesson: this
is said by a priest or a friar, rather shouted than intoned,
and he reads this lesson before the principal entrance.
When this lesson is finished, on Saturdays, Sundays, and 792
feast days, they make a procession with four or five crosses 796
on their poles, and a cross not so much raised as carried
like a stick in the left hand, because they carry a thurible
in the right hand, since as many as carry a cross carry a
thurible, there are always as many thuribles as crosses.
They wear some silk cloaks, not well made, because they [292]
are not wider than the width of a piece of damask, or other
silk from top to bottom. Before the breast, a cross piece to
the flanks on each side, of any other stuff and of any colour,
even though it should not match the principal part, and of
this principal part a good ell hangs behind dragging on the
ground. They make this procession through the circuit,
which is like a cloister. This being ended, on the said
Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts, he who has to say mass
enters with two others into the chancel; they bring out an [778]
effigy of Our Lady, which they have in ancient pictures in all
churches and monasteries. He who has to say mass places
himself in the centre of the transept with his face towards
the principal entrance, and the image in his hands held
before his breast: and those who stand by his sides hold
lighted candles in their hands, and all the others commence
a chaunt like prose, and all walk, shouting and leaping as if
dancing[1], they hold hands and go round, before the

[1] *Como em chacota*, dancing and singing, *i.e.*, not reverentially.

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796 image,[1] and at the sound of that chaunt or prose which they sing, they also ring the little bells and sound the cymbals to the same tune. Each time that they pass before the image they make a great reverence to it. Certainly it has a good appearance and causes devotion, from being a thing done for the praise of the Lord God. There also proceed crosses and thuribles in this feast as in the procession. When this is ended,
796 which lasts a good while, they put by the picture and go to
782 a small building which is on the North side, and of the gospel according to our mass; and outside the covered circuit, where they make the bread which they call *corbom*, and we *hostia*. They carry cross, thurible, and bell, and bring thence the bread of wheat flour, and without leaven, made at that moment, very white and nice, of the size and roundness of a patena, in this monastery in which are few people. In other monasteries and churches, where there are many people, they make large loaves, and many of them according to the people, because all are communicants who go to the church. According to the width of the bread they make its thickness, from half a finger's breadth to an inch, or larger. They bring this loaf in a small vase, which is one of those of the altar, covered with a cloth, and with the cross and thurible, sounding a bell. Behind the church, that is, behind the chancel,[2] in that circuit which is like a cloister, nobody must remain unless he were in holy orders, and all the others must be before the principal entrance in another large circuit, which all the churches have; for near this, which is like a cloister, anybody who likes may stand. Whilst bringing the bread, as many as are in the church or in its circuit, when they hear the bell, bow their heads until the bell is silent, which is when they place the wafer on the altar with the small vase in which they brought

[1] *Como quem anda per mãos diante da imagem.* According to the Spanish translation of Miguel de Salves. Saragossa, 1561.

[2] *Oussia.*

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it. They place this vase in the other larger one, and cover the bread with a dark cloth, after the fashion of a *corporale*. They have a silver chalice in this monastery, and so in all honourable churches and monasteries there are silver chalices, some have them of gold: in poor churches, which they call churches of *Balgues*, that is, of rustics, there are copper chalices. The vases are very wide and ill made, and they have not got patenas. They put into the chalice wine of raisins, in large quantities, because as many as partake of the communion of the body also partake of the blood. He who has to say mass begins it with Hallelujah in a loud voice, rather shouted than sung; all respond and continue the chaunt. He of the mass is silent and continues his benedictions, which he does with his small cross, which he holds in his hand. Those who are outside sing as well as those who are inside the church and cloister, up to a certain distance. Here one of those who is at the altar, takes a book and goes to read the epistle at the principal door of the church. When it is ended, he who read it at once begins a chaunt as a response; those who are at the altar, or in the church, follow him. This ended, he who says the mass takes a book from the altar, and gives it to him who has to read the gospel, and he bows his head and begs a blessing. After he has received it he goes to the place where the epistle was read, and with him two others, one with a cross and thurible, the other with a bell. They read the gospel, and likewise the epistle, fast and loud, as much so as the tongue can speak and the voice be raised. Returning to the altar, on the way another chaunt commences, and those that accompany them join in it. On reaching the altar they give the book to kiss to him who says the mass, and they deposit the book in its place; because at the altar they say nothing from a book. Then he who says mass takes the thurible, or they give it into his hand, and he incenses the altar above it, and then takes

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796 several turns round it, giving incense. When these circuits
782 and incensing are ended, he turns to the altar and gives many blessings with the cross, and then uncovers the bread which was covered up, and which is for the sacrament: they take it with both hands, and let go the right hand and it remains in the left hand: with the thumb of the right hand he makes five marks like little hollows, that is to say, one in the upper part, one in the middle, another at the lower part, another on the left, and another on the right hand, and then he consecrates in his language, and with our own very words, and does not elevate it. He does as much with the chalice, and says over it our own very words, in his language: and again covers it, and takes the sacrament of the bread in his hands and divides it in the middle, and of the part which remains in his left hand, from the top of it he takes a very small portion, and places the other pieces one upon another. The priest takes this small portion for himself, and also takes a portion of the sacrament of the blood. After that he takes the vase with the sacrament covered up and gives it to him who read the gospel, and likewise takes the chalice with the sacrament and gives it to him who read the epistle. He then administers the communion to the priests who are near the altar, taking the sacrament in very small portions from the vase which the deacon holds in his right hand, and as often as he administers it the sub-deacon takes of the blood with a spoon of gold, or silver, or copper, according to the church, and gives a very small quantity to the person who has received the body. There is also on one side another priest with a ewer of holy water, and the person who has received the communion puts out the palm of his hand and he pours some of that holy water, and with it he washes his mouth and swallows it. This being done all go to the altar with this sacrament before the first curtain, and in this manner they give the communion to those that are there, and thence to

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those who are at the other curtain, and thence to the 796
secular people who are at the principal door, both men and 782
women, if it is a church to which women come. At the giving of the communion, and likewise at all the offices of the church, all are standing up. When they come to receive the communion, all come with their hands raised before their shoulders, and the palms forward. As soon as each one receives the sacrament of the blood he takes the said water as has been said, and so generally as many as are communicants. Before mass they wash their hands with the water which is in all the churches and monasteries. The priest who said the mass, and those who stood with him at the altar, when the communion is ended, return to the altar, and wash the vase in which the sacrament was, with the water which remains in the ewer, which they say is blessed, this water they pour into the chalice, and the priest who said mass takes it all. This done, one of these ministers of the altar takes a cross and a bell, and beginning a low chaunt goes to the principal entrance, where the epistle and gospel were read, and the administering the communion ended, and as many as are in the church, and outside of it, bow their heads, and go away in peace. They say this is the blessing, without this no one goes away. On Saturdays and Sundays, and feast days, in all the churches and monasteries, blessed bread is distributed. The method which they have in this small monastery, which will not [192]
have more than 20 or 25 friars, is that which is followed in all the monasteries and churches, great and small. The office of the mass, exclusive of the processions, is short; and the mass on week days is quickly finished.

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CAP. XII.—*Where and how the bread of the Sacrament is made, and of a Procession they made, and of the pomp with which the mass is said, and of entering into the church.*

782 The making of this sacramental bread is in this manner.
252 The building in which it is made, in all churches and
[346] monasteries, is, as I said above, on the gospel side, outside of the church and its circuit, which is like a cloister, in the space contained by the other outer circuit, which is not covered in, which space serves for a churchyard. All the churches and monasteries have such a building, and it does not contain anything else except what is requisite for this purpose; that is to say, a mortar for pounding wheat, a machine for making very clean flour, and such as is required for such a purpose, for they do not prepare this sacrament from flour or wheat on which women have laid their hands. They have pots for preparing the paste, which they make thicker than ours. They have a furnace, as for distilling water, and upon it a plate of iron, and in some churches of copper, and in other poor churches of clay. This plate is round and of a good size; they place fire underneath it, and when it is hot clean it with a waxed cloth, pour on it a portion of paste, and spread it out with a wooden spoon of such size as they intend to make the bread, and they make it very round. When it is set they take it off and place it on end, then they make another in the same way. When this second one is set, they take the first and place it upon it, that is to say, the side of the first which was uppermost they put upon the top of the other, fresh with fresh, and so the bread remains one whole one; and they do nothing more than make it round and turn it from one side to the other, and move it about on the plate, that it may bake on both sides and on the circumference. In this manner they make one or as many as they wish. In this same
[273] house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a machine for pressing.

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house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a 782
machine for pressing. In this same house the blessed 796
bread is made which is given away on Saturdays and Sundays and feast days; and on great feasts, such as Christmas, Easter, Our Lady of August, etc., they carry this bread of the sacrament with a pallium,[1] bell, and cross devoutly. Before they enter the church with it they go round the church by the circuit like a cloister; when it is not a feast they enter the church at once and without the pallium. On a Saturday before Ascension these friars made a procession; and from being in a new country it seemed to us very good, and they did it in this way. They took crosses, and the altar stone covered with a silk cloth, a friar carried it on his head, which was also covered with the said cloths; and they carried books and bells, and thuribles, and holy water; and all went chaunting to some millet fields: there they made their devotions and cries after the fashion of litanies, and with this procession they returned to the monastery. We asked why they did that, and they said that the animals ate their millet, and so they went to pour out holy water and pray God to drive them out. In this country he that says 793
the mass has no other difference from the deacon and sub- 292
deacon in his vestments than a long stole with an opening 796
in the middle to allow the head to pass through; before and behind it reaches to the ground. The friars say mass [302]
with hair on their heads; the priests do not wear hair, and are shaven and so say mass. Also, both friars and priests say mass barefooted, nobody enters the church with his feet shod, and they allege for this what God said to Moses: "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for thou art on holy ground."

[1] Under a canopy.

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CAP. XIII.—*How in all the churches and monasteries in the country of Prester John only one mass is said each day; and of the situation of the monastery of Bisam where we buried Mattheus; and of the fast of Lent.*

796 In the monastery of St. Michael, where we were staying, we said mass each day, not in the monastery, but in the circuit which is like a cloister. In this country they do not say more than one mass in each church or monastery. The friars came to our mass with great devotion, as it appeared; and they supplied a thurible and incense, because we had not brought any with us, and they do not think mass is properly said without incense; and they said that they approved of all, except that we had only one priest to say mass; because among them not less than three, five, or or seven stand at the altar to say mass. They also were surprised at our coming into the church with our shoes on, and still more at our spitting in it. In this manner we said
796 mass every day up to Trinity Sunday, and when we in-
784 tended to say mass on the following Monday they did not allow us to say it, at which we were much scandalised and aggrieved, and it seemed to us that they had some evil suspicion of us, not knowing why they so acted. Later we learned how they preserved some things of the Old Law together with the New; such as that of the fast of Lent, which they began on Monday after Sexagesima Sunday, that is, ten days before the beginning of our Lent; and so they make fifty days of Lent. They say they take these days in anticipation for the Saturdays when they do not keep the fast. When they fast they eat at night, and because all fast they say mass at night, because all have to take the communion. Likewise, as they take fifty days' fast in Lent, so they take as many days after Easter which are not fast days. Then, when there is no fast, they say mass in the morning. This secret we did not know, and

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we had no one to explain it to us: as soon as their liberty not 796
to fast had ended, their mass could not be said, except at 784
night, and so they did not consent to our saying it; thus we felt aggrieved without cause. This time having ended and Trinity passed by, all priests and friars are obliged to fast every day except Saturdays and Sundays. They keep this fast up to Christmas Day, and as all fast they say mass at night. They allege for this the supper of Christ, when He consecrated His true Body, having been a fast time, and almost night. The general people, that is secular men and women, are obliged to fast from Trinity to Advent, Wednesdays and Fridays of each week, and from Christmas day to the Purification of Our Lady, which they call the feast of Simeon,[1] they have no fast. The first three days after the Purification, not being Saturday or Sunday, are great fast days for priests, friars, and laymen. They say that in these three days they do not eat more than once: it is called the penitence of Niniveh. At the end of these three days, up to the beginning of Lent, they again fast as from after Trinity. During Advent and the whole of Lent, priests, friars, lay friars, men and women, small and great, sound and sick, all fast. Thus from Easter to Trinity, and from Christmas to the Purification, they say mass in the morning, because there is no fast, and all the other time at night, because they are fasting. Where we buried Matthens is a 346
great and honourable monastery, which is named Bisam, and its patron, Jesus. From the monastery where we stayed to this is a league of very precipitous country. It is on a very high rock, and looking round all sides of it there appear like the depths of hell. The monastery house is very large in bulk, and larger in revenues, and this monastery is very well fitted. The fashion of this house is of three large and beautiful naves, with their arches and vaulted roofs. They appear to be of wood, and because all

[1] *Symam.*

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346 is painted, it is not certain whether it is stone or wood. It has two sets of cloisters round the body of the church, both 346 covered in, and much painted with figures of apostles, 532 patriarchs, prophets, and many things of the Old Law, and 353 many angels, and St. George on horseback, who is in all the churches. This monastery also possesses a great cloth, like a piece of tapestry, on which is the crucifix and effigy of Our Lady and the apostles, and other figures of patriarchs and prophets, and each one has his Latin name written, so that no man of the country made it. It has many small and ancient pictures, not well made, and they are not upon the altars, for it is not their custom: they keep them in a [212] sacristy, mixed up with many books, and they bring them out on feast days. There is in this monastery a very large kitchen and bakehouse, also a very large refectory, in which 792 they eat. They mostly eat three and three[1] in a large dish, 262 it is not deep, but flat like a tray, and their food is very [264] poor. The bread is of maize and barley, and other grain which they call *taffo*,[2] a small black grain. They make this bread round, and of the size and roundness of a citron,[3] and they give three of these to each friar: to the novices they give three loaves to two of them, it is a matter of amazement how they can maintain themselves. They also give them a few vegetables, without salt or oil. Of this food they send to a great many old pensioners, who do not come to the refectory. Besides seeing these things when we 792 buried Matthews, I saw them many times, because I came there to pass time with the friars, principally on feast days, when we were near there. In this way I learned about them and their property, and revenues and customs. In my opinion there were generally always a hundred friars in this

[1] By threes.

[2] Mansfield Parkins calls it teff, the species of corn most esteemed in this country.

[3] Zamboa, not referred to in Selves' translation.

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monastery, most of them old men of great age, and as dry 792
as wood; very few young men. This monastery is entirely
surrounded by a wall, and this wall is closed with two [346]
gates, which are always locked.

CAP. XIV.—*How the monastery of Bisan is the head of six monasteries, of the number of the brothers, and ornaments, of the "castar"*[1] *which they do to Philip, whom they call a Saint.*

This monastery is the head of six monasteries, which are 792
around it in these mountains; the furthest off is at a 793
distance of three leagues from it, and all are subject to it, and are governed and ruled by it. In each of them is a David, that is a guardian appointed by the Abbot or provincial of this monastery, who is also David under the Abba. I always heard say that there were in this monastery
three thousand friars, and because I doubted it much I 792
came here to keep the feast of our Lady of August, in order to see if they would come together. Certainly I rejoiced to see the riches of this monastery, and the procession which they made: in my judgment the friars did not exceed three hundred, and most of them were very old. There is a circuit to this monastery which surrounds the two
which are like cloisters covered in, and this one which is not [346]
covered in was on that occasion all covered in with brocades and inferior brocades, and velvets of Mekkah, all long pieces, sewn one to another in order that they might shelter the whole circuit. They made a very beautiful
procession through this canopied circuit; all wore cloaks of [292]
the same stuffs, brocades, and velvets of Mekkah, badly made as I mentioned above. They carried fifty small crosses of silver, of bad workmanship, and as many

[1] Should be *teskar*.

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792 thuribles of copper. When mass was said, I saw a great gold chalice and gold spoon, with which they administered the communion. Of the three hundred friars who came to this monastery, very few were those that I knew as belonging to it: and I asked some of my friends how it was, that with so large a number of friars in the monastery as they said, they were not present at such a feast. They told me that even though there were more than they had said, that they were scattered about in these monasteries and churches, and markets, to seek for their living, because that could not be in the monastery whilst they were young men; and when they were old men, and could not walk, they came to die in the monastery. On that day I saw the habit put on seventeen young men. There is a tomb in this
778 monastery which they say is of an Abba or provincial of
776 this monastery who is named Philip, and they give him the merits of a Saint, saying that there was a King Prester John who commanded that Saturday should not be observed in his kingdoms and lordships, and this Abba Philip went to that King Prester with his friars, and undertook to show how God had commanded that Saturday should be kept, and that whoever did not keep it should die by stoning, and that he would maintain this before all the fathers of Ethiopia: and he made it good before the King. Therefore
796 they say that he was a Saint for making Saturday to be
782 kept, and they treat him as a Saint, and they hold a feast for him every year, in the month of July, which they call *Castar* Philip, which means funeral or memorial of Philip.[1] On this account the people of this monastery are the most Judaizing of all the kingdoms of Prester John. I came twice to this Castar of Philip, at which they did me much honour, and they kill many cows at this feast. In one year they killed thirty, and in another year twenty-eight, and in

[1] *Castar* should be *Teskar*; Mansfield Parkyns calls it a sort of funereal feast, where charities are bestowed on the poor and the priests.

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each of the years that I came there they gave me two 796
quarters of the fattest cow that was killed. This flesh is 782
distributed amongst the people who come to the Castar, and
the friars have none because they do not eat meat. And [784]
these cows are all brought as offerings by their breeders in
the district, who vow them to Philip. This monastery, and
the others that are subject to it, have this rule in addition,
that no females enter them, that is to say, neither women,
nor she-mules, nor cows, nor hens, nor anything else that is
female. And these cows which they kill are killed a long
way from the wall, and when I came there they came to the
distance of a cross-bow shot to take my mule, and they
took her away to their farm of Jamgargara, where Mattheus
died.

CAP. XV.—*Of the agriculture of this country, and how they preserve themselves from the wild beasts, and of the revenues of the monastery.*

The friars of this monastery, and of the other monasteries 241
subject to it, might do good works by planting trees and [792]
vines, and making gardens and orchards for their exercise;
and they do nothing. The country is ready to produce
everything, as is seen from that which is uncultivated: they
do not plant or grow anything except millet and bee-hives. [231]
When it is night, neither they nor anybody else go out from
their houses from fear of the wild beasts that are in the
country, and those who watch the millet have very high
resting places upon the trees, in which they sleep at night.
In the district of this monastery there are, in the valleys 231
between the mountains, very large herds of cows, kept by 563
Arab Moors, and there go with each herd forty or fifty
Moors, with their wives and children: and their headman is

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231 a Christian, because the cows that they keep belong to
563 Christian gentlemen of the country of the Barnagais. These Moors have nothing else for their labour than the milk and butter which they get from the cows, and with this they maintain themselves and their wives and children. On some occasions it happened to us to sleep near these Arabs, they accosted us to ask if we wished to buy cows, and for the price allowed us to choose them. They say that these
[484] Moors, and headmen who go with them, are all robbers under the favour of the lords to whom the cows belong, and so only large caravans travel. The revenues of this
792 monastery are very large; those which I saw and heard of
631 are, chiefly, this mountain in which the monastery is situated,
361 of an extent of ten leagues, in which they sow much millet,
[243] barley, rye, and all these pay dues to the monastery, and they are also paid on the herds. On the skirts of this mountain there are many large villages, and most of them belong to the monastery, and at a distance of one or two days' journey an infinite number of places belonging to the monastery, and are called *Gultus* of the monastery, which means *coutos* or *celeiros*,[1] according to our Portugal. Don Rodrigro the ambassador and I were going on the road to the Court, a good five days' journey from this monastery, and arriving at a town which is named *Caina* we kept Saturday and Sunday in a small village which might contain twenty people, and they told us they belonged to the monastery of Bisan. Besides that town there were a hundred villages all belonging to the monastery, and that in which we halted was one of them. We were also shown
651 many of the others, and they told us that every three years
631 they paid a horse to the monastery, and that each village
792 did this, which makes thirty-three horses every year. And in order to be certain of this I went to ask it of the *Alicaxi* of the monastery, which means the auditor or major-domo,

[1] *Couto*, an asylum, an enclosure; *celeiro*, a granary.

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because he receives, and does justice: he told me that it was 651
true that they paid the said horses. I asked why the 631
monastery wanted so many horses, since they did not ride 792
on them. He told me that they were obliged to pay horses, but that they did not give him horses, but paid fifty cows for each horse, and that this due of horses was so because these were villages of the King which paid him this due, and as he had endowed the monastery with these villages, between the monastery and the villagers this due of horses had been transmuted into cows. And over and above these dues of cows they also pay dues on fruits. Besides, at fifteen days' journey from the monastery, in the kingdom of Tigre mahom, there is a very large town belonging to the monastery named Aadete, which may be a large dukedom. This pays every year sixty horses, and an infinite number of dues and customs. In this district there are always more than a thousand friars of the monastery, because there are many churches in it, and the monastery is much favoured there. Of these friars some are very good, honourable, and devout, and others are not such. Besides these dues of horses paid to this monastery and to others, there are many villages belonging to the King which pay dues of the said horses, because this is always his due, and there are villages neighbouring to Egypt in which are large and good horses, and others near Arabia in which they are very good, but not so much so as those of Egypt.

CAP. XVI.—*How the friars impeded our departure, and of what happened to us on the road.*

Returning therefore to our journey; whilst we were still 484
at the monastery of St. Michael there arrived the man sent by the Barnagais to take us away, and with him two of our Portuguese, on the fourth day of the month of June; and he

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484 brought a few oxen and men to carry our baggage. The said man who had thus come went off at once to the mountains to fetch more oxen and people, and he came back with them. Whilst our baggage was out in the road for our departure, and the men and oxen ready, the friars came and talked so much to the people without their understanding us that they disarranged our departure, so that we again took in our baggage, and the ambassador again sent another time to the Barnagais, and Joan Escolar the clerk went thither with the man of the Barnagais, and they remained there six days. They came with orders and equipment for our departure, that is to say, that they were to conduct us and our goods, and to give us as many oxen and mules as we had need of. Even then the friars were set on impeding us greatly, as though they wished us evil. We left this monastery of St. Michael on the 15th day of June, and because there was detention in loading the baggage, on account of the oxen only coming in a few at a time, and there not being mules enough for all of us, and some having to go on foot, and also because there were few people to carry the baggage which could not go on the oxen where the country was precipitous, the bombards and four barrels of powder remained behind. Not very far from the monastery, half a league at most, the ambassador came up, and those that had remained with him, and we found all the baggage unloaded. Not being able to understand the cause for their having done it, we made them load it again; and not having yet started it all, a rumour arose amongst the negroes who were carrying our baggage, and they said that there were robbers there who were waiting for us in the road. Nevertheless we did not on that account desist from making the baggage go on in front through the bushes, because the road was narrow. The ambassador and all those that were with him determined to die upon the King's goods. The negroes were much amazed at the courage of

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ten or twelve men, who did not fear passing such steep 484
mountains, where it was said that there were multitudes of robbers. Thus we went away, divided, with the oxen and negroes, with their burdens in front of us, going forward on our course. We travelled through very wild mountains, 133
over ascents and descents, and very bad stony road. Most [491]
of the woods of these mountains are very large wild olive [137]
trees, from which good olive trees could be made. Issuing from these mountain ranges we entered into dry channels, which in winter time are great rivers, that is to say, as long as the showers last. As soon as the shower is finished the river is dry. These channels have on each side of them very high mountains, as rugged as those we had left behind. In these river beds there are large clumps of unknown trees, amongst which, near the rivers, there are a few wild [137]
palm trees. We slept this night in a river bed with little water in it.

CAP. XVII.—*How we passed a great mountain in which there were many apes, on a Saturday, and on the following Sunday we said mass in a village called Zalote.*

On the following day we again crossed another very high and rugged mountain ridge, over which we could not make our way, either on the mules or on foot. In this mountain 136
there are many animals of different species, and an infinite quantity of apes in herds: and they are not generally spread over the mountain, but only where there are clefts and holes in the rock; they are not found in quantities less than two or three hundred, and beyond that number. If there is any flat ground above these precipices, that is their promenade, and no stone remains that they do not turn, and they scrape the earth so that it looks as though it were tilled. They are very large, the size of sheep, and from the middle upwards hairy like lions.

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000 574 middle upwards hairy like lions. We passed the mountain, and went to sleep at the foot of a village called Zalote. There will be about four or five leagues from this place to the monastery from which we set out. We halted by a running river of very good water, and when our baggage had been unloaded we went to the said village to see a very honourable gentleman, the headman of it—a very old man, who was lodged here very honourably. He gave us a very [262] hospitable reception, giving us many fowls cooked in butter, and much mead, and he sent us a very large fat cow to the place of our halt. On the following day, which was Sunday, we went to say our mass at the church of the village, which is called St. Michael, a poor church, both the fabric and the ornaments. There are in this church three 793 married priests and three others, deacons,[1] that is to say, of 796 the gospel, and all are necessary, for no less can say mass. This honourable captain I met with later as a friar in the monastery of Bisan, and he left his condition and revenues to his sons, who were honourable persons; and I saw him stand at the gate outside, and he did not enter within the monastery, and there he received the communion with the novices, and when the offices of the church were ended he remained in honour with the provincial. On this Sunday we set out again in the afternoon, because the country 133 people who conducted us wished it so. Here we began to travel through flat country fallows and tillage, in the fashion of Portugal, and the bushes which are between the tilled lands are all wild olives, without other trees. We slept by some running streams, between many good villages.

[1] *Zagonaes.* Ethiopian corruption of *diakonos.*

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CAP. XVIII.—*How we arrived at the town of Barua, and how the Ambassador went in search of the Barnagais, and of the manner of his state.* 648

We reached the town of Barua,[1] which will be three leagues from the village of Zalote, on the 28th day of June. This town is the chief place of the country and kingdom of the Barnagais, in which are his principal palaces, which they call Beteneguz,[2] which means house of the king. On this day that we arrived here the Barnagais departed hence, before our arrival, to another town, the chief place of another district, which is named Barra, and the town is called Çeruel. It seemed to us that his departure was in order not to have to receive us, and some told us that he had gone away with pain in his eyes. We were very well lodged for this country, in good large houses of one story, terraced above. On the third day of our arrival, Don Rodrigo the ambassador determined on going to see the Barnagais; and we went with him, five of us on mules, and reached the place where he was staying at vespers. The distance to this place from that at which we were halting might be three and a half or four leagues, and we went to dismount before his palace, close to the door of a church, where we offered our prayers. Then we went our way to the palace, or Beteneguz, as they call it, thinking that we should at once speak to him; and they did not allow us to enter, saying that he was sleeping. And although we waited a good bit we had no means of speaking to him. We went to rest in a goat shed, in which we barely found room; and they gave us two ox-hides with the hair on to sleep upon, and for supper bread, and wine of the country in abundance, and a sheep. On the following day we waited a long time for them to call us, and a message came for us to come. Then in the outer gate we found three men like porters,

[1] *Dibarua*, hillock seen from afar. [2] *Bait en-neyus.*

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648 each one with his whip[1] in his hand, and they would not let us enter, saying that we should give them some pepper, and they kept us for a good while at the gate. Passing through this gate we arrived at another, at which stood three other porters who seemed more honourable persons; these made us wait more than half an hour standing on a little straw, and the heat was so great it killed us. Upon this the ambassador sent to say that he should bid us come in or he would return to his abode. Then the message went by one who seemed to be of higher position, and word came that we should enter. The Barnagais was in this manner, in a [342] large house of one story (for in this country there are not [352] houses of several stories), sitting on a bedstead, as is their custom, fitted with poor curtains; he had sore eyes, and his wife was sitting at the head of the bedstead. Having made our obeisance, the ambassador offered him a *master* to cure him; and he said that he had no need of him, as though he did not thank him for it. Upon this the ambassador asked him as a favour, and required on the part of Prester John, that he should order equipment to be given us for our journey, assuring him how much service he would be doing in this way to the king of Portugal, which would be well repaid to him by the King and by his Captain-major; and he, the ambassador, would tell Prester John the honour and favour which he received from him. The Barnagais asking what it was that we required, the ambassador said he wanted oxen and asses for baggage, and mules for the Portuguese. To this the Barnagais replied that he could not give any mules, and that we might buy them ourselves; that he would give orders for the rest, and would send a son of his with us to the court of Prester John, and with that he gave us our dismissal.

[1] *Azorague*, a kurbach, or whip of hide, *cravache*.

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CAP. XIX.—*How they gave us to eat in the house of the Barnagais, and how in this country the journeys are not reckoned by leagues.* 648

When we were out of the house where the Barnagais was, they made us sit down in the receiving room of another [264] house on mats on the ground, and they brought here a large trencher of barley meal, but little kneaded, and a [262] horn of mead. And, since we had not seen such food, we would not eat it; but when we were more accustomed to the country we ate it readily. Without eating of this, we arose and came to our resting-place and then set out. This might be at two hours before midday. Having gone on our road half a league or more there came to us a man running and telling us to wait; that the mother of the Barnagais was sending us food, and took it as a misfortune our coming away without eating and not accepting the food they gave us, which was that customary in the country. We waited, and the food came to us, that is to say, five large rolls of wheat bread and a horn of mead. Let not anyone be [415] amazed who hears of a horn of wine, because for the great lords and Prester John cows' horns are their cups for wine, and there are horns holding five or six canadas.[1] Besides this, the mother of the Barnagais sent us some of the same [262] kneaded flour, and now we ate some of it. This meal is of parched barley, made into flour, and they mix it up with very little water, and so eat it. After this banquet we made our way to the town of Barua, where our goods and companions had remained. In this country, and in all the 804 kingdoms of Prester John, there are no leagues, and if you ask how far it is from this place to such a place, they say: If you depart in the morning at sunrise, you will arrive when the sun is in such a place; and if you travel slowly you will arrive there when they shut up the cows, that is at

[1] A Portuguese measure equal to about three pints.

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804 night. And if it is distant they say, you will arrive in a *sambete*, that is a week, and so they define it according to the distances. When I said that from Barua to Barra there
484 were from three and a half up to four leagues, that was according to our opinion, and it would not be more. We afterwards travelled there many times, and we started from one town and dined at the other, and did our business and returned to the town we had started from by daylight. The people of the country reckon this as a day's journey, because they travel very slowly. Between these two towns
[241] there is very remarkable country, tilled fields of wheat, barley, millet, pulse, lentils, and all other sorts of vegetables which the country possesses unknown to us. From the
[361] road from one place to the other more than fifty towns are to be seen: I say large towns and very good ones, all on
224 heights. In these plains and fields there are herds of wild cattle, forty or fifty in a herd. It is a chase that is very pleasant for the Portuguese, but the country people are able to do them little hurt, although they receive from them much injury to their crops.

CAP. XX.—*Of the town of Barua, and of the women and their traffic, and of the marriages which are made outside of the churches.*

621 This town of Barua in which we were staying, and where later we passed more time, may have three hundred hearths and more, a great part of them belonging to women, because this is like a court in many respects. One is that people of the Prester's court never go from here, and as many as come are not without wives. The other is because this is the residence and seat of the Barnagais, and there are continually in his house three hundred mounted men and upwards, and as many more who come every day for

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business of petitions, and few are without wives. This 621
causes many single women to live here, and when they are 443
old they have another resource, for in this town every Tuesday there is a great market or fair at which three or four hundred persons are brought together; and all the old women and some young ones have measures to measure wheat and salt, and they go to the market to measure and gain their living; they give hospitality to those that sleep there that day, and also take care for them of what remains to be sold for the next market day. There is another 595
reaaon why there are many women in this town, it is 688
because the men who have plenty of food to eat keep two or three wives; and this is not forbidden to them by the King nor by their magistrates, only by the Church. Every man who has more than one wife does not enter the church, nor does he receive any sacrament: and they hold him to be excommunicated. For a year and a half a nephew of mine and I lodged in the house of a man named Ababitay, and he had three wives still alive and acquaintances of ours, friends in honourable friendship: they said that he had had seven wives and thirty children of them. Nobody forbade them, except the Church, as has been said, which did not give them the benefit of the sacraments; and before our departure, he put away from him, and from intercourse with him, two wives, and remained with one, that is to say, the one he had last, who was the youngest, and already they gave him the sacraments, and he entered the church like anybody else, and as though he had not had more than one wife. On this account there are many women in this town, because the men are well off and are like courtiers: and they take two or three, or more if it pleases them. In this [586]
country marriages are not fixed, because they separate for any cause. I saw people married, and was at a marriage 585
which was not in a church, and it was done in this manner. On the open space before some houses they placed a bed-

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585 stead, and seated upon it the bridegroom and the bride, and there came thither three priests, and they began a chaunt with Hallelujah, and then continued the chaunt, the three priests walking three times round the bedstead on which the couple were seated. Then they cut a lock of hair from the head of the bridegroom, and another from the head of the bride. They wetted these locks with mead, and placed the hair of the bridegroom on the head of the bride, and that of the bride on the head of the bridegroom, on the place from which they had cut them, and then sprinkled them with holy water: after that they kept their festivities and wedding feasts. At night they put them in a house, and for a month from that time no one saw the bride, except one man only whom they call the best man,[1] who remains all this month with the married couple, and when this month is ended the man or best friend goes away. If she is an honourable woman she does not go out of the house for [784] five or six months, nor remove a black veil from her face: [843] and if before that she becomes pregnant she removes the veil. When these months are ended, even though she is not pregnant, she removes the veil.

CAP. XXI.—*Of their marriages and benedictions, and of their contracts, and how they separate from their wives, and the wives from them, and it is not thought strange.*

I saw the Abima Marcos, whom they call Pope, giving blessings in the church, that is to say, before the principal door; the bride and bridegroom were also seated on a bedstead, and the Abima walked round them with incense and cross, and laid his hands on their heads, telling them to observe that which God had commanded in the gospel; and that they were no longer two

[1] *Padrinho.*

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separate persons, but two in one flesh; and that so in like 585
manner should their hearts and wills be. There they remained until mass had been said, and he gave them the communion, and bestowed on them the blessing. And this I saw done in the town of Dara, in the Kingdom of Xoa.[1] I saw another performed in the town of Çequete, in the Kingdom of the Barnagais. When they make these marriages they 586
enter into contracts, as for instance: If you leave me or I [675]
you, that one that causes the separation shall pay such a penalty. And they set the penalty according to the persons, so much gold or silver, or so many mules, or cloths, or cows, or goats, or so many measures of wood. And if either of them separate, that one immediately seeks a cause of separation for such and such reasons, so that few incur the penalty, and so they separate when they please, both the husbands and the wives. If there are any that observe the marriage rule, they are the priests, who never can separate, and cultivators, who have an affection for their wives because they help them to bring up their sons, and to harrow and weed their tillage, and at night when they come to their house they find a welcome reception: thus in effect or perforce they are married for the whole of their lives. As I said that they imposed penalties at marriages, the first Barnagais that we knew, whose name was Dori, separated from his wife, and paid her the penalty of a hundred gold ounces, which were a thousand cruzados, and he married another woman. And the wife that he separated from married a noble gentleman who was named Aaron, a brother of the said Barnagais. Both the brothers had sons, known to us, of this woman, and these were, or are, great lords, both are brothers of the mother of Prester John, whom all of us knew. All of us who were there knew Romana Orque,[2] sister of the Prester John, who is a noble lady married to a great lord, a noble young gentleman. In our time she

[1] Shoa. [2] *Rumanâ Wark*, the golden pomegranate.

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586 separated from this husband and married a man more than forty years of age, who is one of the great lords of the court; the title of this one whom she married is Abuquer, and his father Cabeata. This is the greatest lord there is in the court. Thus I saw and knew many of these separations; I have named these because they are of great personages. [587] And because I said that Aaron married the wife of his brother, let not him that reads it be amazed, because it is the usage of the country. They do not think it strange for [607] a brother to sleep with the wife of his brother. This Aaron moreover had sons of her who had been the wife of his brother, and he left her and married another to whom he is now married.

CAP. XXII.—*Of the manner of baptism and circumcision, and how they carry the dead to their burial.*

304 Circumcision is done by anybody without any ceremony, only they say that so they find it written in the books, that God commanded circumcision. And let not the reader of this be amazed—they also circumcise the females as well as the males, which was not in the Old Law. Baptism they do 851 in this manner: they baptize males at forty days, and females at sixty days after their birth, and if they die before they go without baptism. I, many times and in many places, used to tell them that they committed a great error, and went against what the Gospel says: Quod natum est ex carne caro est; et quod natum est ex spiritu spiritus est. They answered me many times that the faith of their mother sufficed for them, and the communion which she received whilst in a state of pregnancy.[1] They perform this baptism

[1] This opinion of the Abyssinians appears to have anticipated the Sorbonne judgment of 1733, given in the 20th chapter of *Tristram Shandy*.

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in the church, with water which they keep in a vase, and 851
which they bless, and they put oil on the forehead and on the breasts and shoulder-blades. They do not put ointment,[1] nor do they have it, nor the oil of extreme unction. This office of catechism which they celebrate seems to me to be much the same form as the Roman, and at the time of pouring the water on the child they do it in this way. One who is the godfather takes the child from the hands of the woman that has it and raises it, holding it under the arms, and holds it suspended; and the priest who baptizes, with one hand holds the vase and pours the water over the child, and with the other washes it all over, saying in his language the words which we say, that is: I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. They always perform this office on a Saturday or a Sunday, and it is done in the morning at mass, because every child that receives baptism receives the communion, and they give it in very small quantities, and cause it to be swallowed by means of water. With regard to this, also, I used to tell them that this communion was very dangerous, and in no wise necessary. As I said that they put oil on the forehead, 851
you should know that every child comes to baptism shaved 304
with a razor, and the scars or marks which they bear on the nose, between the eyes, and at the corners of the eyes, are not made by fire nor for anything of Christianity, but with cold iron for ornament, and because they say that it is good for the sight. There are here women who are very skilful at making these marks. They make them in this manner: they take a clove of garlic, large and moist, and place it on the corner of the eye; with a sharp knife they cut round the garlic, and then with the fingers widen the cut, and put upon it a little paste of wax, and over the wax another paste of dough, and press it down for one night with a cloth, and there remains for ever a mark which appears like a burn, because their color, *Crisma*, is dark.

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000 764 a burn, because their colour is dark. On the occasion of death, I never saw great personages borne away; but of small people, and of others rather better, an infinite number. Their burials are in this manner. They do not use candles after death, but much incense. They carry them away wrapped up[1] in a shroud, and some of the more honoured have over the shroud tanned ox-hides, and are placed on trestles. The priests come for them, and pray shortly, and then set out at once with them on the way to the church, with cross, thurible, and holy water, running so that a man cannot catch them up. They do not bring the dead man into the church, but place him close to the grave; they do not use our office for him, nor do they recite psalms, neither do they say anything from the Book of Job. I asked what it was that they prayed; they told me that they read the Gospel of St. John all complete. And so they give him to the grave with their incense and holy water, and they do not say mass for the defunct, nor of devotion for any living person, nor more than one mass a day in each church; and all are communicants, as many as go to it.

CAP. XXIII.—*Of the situation of the town of Barua, chief place of the kingdom of the Barnagais, and of his hunting.*

361 This town of Barua is very good, and it is situated on a very high rock above a river, upon which are situated the king's houses, which they call Beteneguz, which means houses of the king. They are well situated in the manner of a fortress. All the rest is a great plain and an infinite number of large villages at the extremities of the [231] fields. There is much breeding of all sorts of flocks, cows, goats, and sheep, and of much game of all sorts

[1] *Encorilhados* for *enrodilhados*.

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goats, and sheep, and of much game of all sorts. In the 000 136 river there is much fish, and many wild ducks of different kinds,[1] and on land much game of all kinds, such as wild cattle; in the plains hares in great quantity, so that every day we killed twenty or thirty of a morning, and that without dogs, but caught with nets. There are partridges of three kinds, which do not differ from ours, except in size and the colour of their legs. There are partridges like big capons of the same colour and fashion as ours, except that their beaks and feet are yellow. There are others the size of hens; these have red beaks and feet like ours. There are others the size of ours, not different in colour or in anything else, except that their beaks and feet are grey. To the taste all are very good partridges, as they are good in colour. They do not frighten them to the earth.[2] Wild hens cover the ground, quails are in infinite numbers, and so of all other birds that can be mentioned, such as parrots and other birds not known to us, great and small, and of many shapes and colours; birds of prey, such as royal eagles, falcons, hawks, sparrow hawks, blue herons, and river cranes, and all other sorts that can be mentioned. In the mountains are many hogs, stags, antelopes, gazelles, deer. It will be said, how is it that there is so much game on the land and fish in the river, when the country is so populous? I say that nobody hunts or fishes, nor have they engines [224] nor devices, nor the will to do it; on this account the game [226] is very easy to kill, because it is not pursued by the people. There are many wild beasts—lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, foxes, jackals, and other animals not known to us. I never heard that these wild beasts did any harm, although the people are in great fear of them; only in one place which is called Camarua, and which is about half a league from

[1] *Adens* and *marrecas*.

[2] *No las assombram a terra*: perhaps this means with a paper kite. This passage is omitted in Selve's translation.

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136 this town of Barua, a man was lying asleep at night at the door of his enclosure, and his little son was with him, keeping his cows, and a lion came and killed this man without anyone perceiving it, and he ate his nose and opened his heart, without touching the child. The people of the country were greatly afraid, and said that he would remain with a taste for man's flesh,[1] and that no one would escape from him. The Lord was pleased that he never did any more harm. We used to go hunting at that time near this place, and we never found any lion, but we found ounces and tigers; we did them no harm, neither did they do us any.

CAP. XXIV.—*Of the lordship of the Barnagais, and of the lords and captains who are at his orders and commands, and of the dues which they pay.*

643 The lordship of the Barnagais is in this manner: its title
631 is that of King, because nagais means King, and bar means sea, so Barnagais means King of the Sea. When they give him the rulership they give it him with a crown of gold on his head, but it does not last longer than what the Prester John pleases. For in our time, which was a stay of six years, there were here four Barnagais, that is to say, when we arrived Dori was Barnagais; he died, and at his death the crown came to Bulla, his son, a youth of ten or twelve years of age, by order of the Prester John. When they crowned him he was at once summoned to court, and while he was at the court Prester John took away his sovereignty and gave it to a noble gentleman, who was named Arraz anubiata. This man held it two years, and they took from him this lordship and made him the greatest lord of the court, which is Betudete,[2] and the lordship of Barnagais was given to

[1] *Cevado*, literally, allured.

[2] The favourite or preferred, *Bitwaddad*, because he was liked.

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another lord, who was named Adiby, who was now Bar- 643
nagais. Beneath the Barnagais are some great lords whom 631
they call Xuums, which means captains; and these are, first, Xuum Cire, a very great captaincy, he is now married to a sister of Prester John. We never went to this country and Xuumeta because it is distant and out of the way. There 643
is another Xuumeta named Ceruil. We knew this lordship, 701
and they say that its Xuum brings into the field fifteen 631
thousand spearmen with shields and archers. Also Xuum Cama, and Buno Xuum, and Xuum bono. These Xumetas had been one, and on account of its being large, and the Prester having misgivings that they might set themselves up against the Barnagais, he made it into two, and even yet each of them is very large. They say that this lordship which is now two was the dominion of Queen Candace, without having been larger in her time. She was the first Christian that there was in this country, and whom the Lord called powerful. Also two other captaincies, one is named Dafilla, the other Canfila; these two border on Egypt, and their captains are like lords of the marches. All these captains before mentioned are of kettledrums, [534]
which nobody except great lords can carry: and all these serve with the Barnagais in wars when he goes to them, and wherever he may go. They have other great gentlemen under their command who are called Arraz,[1] which means heads. We knew one of these, who was named Arraz Aderaan, he is head over fifteen thousand men at arms, whom they name chavas. I saw this Arraz Aderaan twice at the court, both times I saw him before the gate of the [292]
Prester John going without a shirt, and from his waist downwards a very good silk cloth, and on his shoulders the skin of a lion, in his right hand a spear, and in his left hand [411]
a shield. I asked how it was so great a lord went about in that manner, they told me that the greatest honour

[1] *Ar-ras.*

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643 he had, since he was Arraz of the Chaufas, that is, head or
701 captain of the men at arms, was to go about like a man at
631 arms. In the fashion that he went, there followed behind him twenty or thirty men with spears and bucklers, so that he goes about the court like a provost with his men. I knew another Arraz Tagale, and Arraz Jacob, lords of large lands, and many other Xuums, lords of lands, but without titles. Thus the Barnagais is the lord of many
643 lords, and of many lands and people, and so he and all
631 these lords that have been mentioned are subject to the
651 Prester John, and he removes and appoints them as he
439 pleases: so they pay to him large dues. As all these lords and their lordships are on the side of Egypt and Arabia, from whence come the good horses, and the brocades and the silks, they pay in these same goods: that is to say, horses, brocades, and other silks. They come to the Barnagais with all these dues, and the Barnagais to Prester John, and pays for himself and for the others, in each year, a hundred and fifty horses; as to the brocades and silks, it cannot be known how much they amount to, only I heard say that they were many; I also heard that they pay a large sum of cotton cloths from India for the customs which they levy in the port of Arquiquo.

CAP. XXV.—*Of their method of guarding their herds from wild beasts, and how there are two winters in this country: and of two churches that are in the town of Barua.*

[621] The settlement of this town of Barua and of those
231 adjoining it, is this. There are ten, twelve, or fifteen houses, and one walled and closed yard, served by a gate: in this yard they shut up their domestic cows which they use for their milk and butter, and also small flocks, and mules and asses. They keep the gate well fastened, and a great fire,

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and men who sleep there to watch, from fear of the animals 231
that roam about the villages all night: and if they did not
keep this watch nothing alive would remain which they
would not devour. The people who go to sow millet in the 241
mountains of Bisan belong to this country and the neigh- 221
bouring towns. The reason why they go and do it is this. 132
Here there are very numerous grain crops of every kind
and nature that can be mentioned, as I have already said;
and because it is near to the sea, by which go all the
provisions for Arabia, Mekkah, Zebid, Jiddah, and Toro,[1]
and other parts; and they carry the provisions to the sea to
sell them. And because in this country the winters are
divided into seasons, and the seed crops do not grow
except with the rains, they go to sow these millet
fields at the mountain of Bisan, where it is winter in the
months of February, March, and April. There is this same
winter in a mountain called Lama, in this kingdom of the
Barnagais, which is fully eight days' journey from the
mountain of Bisan. In another country, which is named
Doba, and which is quite a month's journey from this lord-
ship of Lama, there is winter in these same months. As
for these millet fields, they require rains, and as these win-
ters happen out of season, they go and sow them where it
rains, and so profit by both winters. In this town of 346
Barua are two churches with many priests, one close to the 562
other, one is for men, the other for women. The men's
church is called St. Michael, that of the women is named
after the apostles Peter and Paul. They say that a great
lord, who was then Barnagais, built the men's church, and [644]
gave it the privilege that no woman should enter it, except
only the wife of the Barnagais, with one damsel, whenever
she went to take the communion, and even she does not
now enter the church, but takes the communion at the
door in the inner circuit with the laity, and so the

[1] Mount Sinai.

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346 other women do in the church of the apostles, who take it
562 in its place. I always saw the women of the Barnagais go
[644] to the women's church to take the communion with the other women, and I did not see them use the privilege which they say they have, of taking the communion, with one damsel, in the church of the men. The circuits of the churchyards join to one another; they are of very high
796 walls. They make the sacramental bread for both churches in one building, and they say the masses in both churches at the same time, and the priests who serve in one church serve also in the other; that is two thirds of the priests in the men's church, and one third in the women's church, and so they are distributed. These churches have not got tithes, but they have got much land belonging to the priests, and they put it out to profit and divide the revenues of the lands among themselves: the Barnagais gives what is necessary to the churches, such as ornaments, wax, butter, incense in sufficient quantity, and he supplies them with
[792] everything. There may be in these churches twenty priests and always twenty-two friars. I never saw a church of priests which had not got friars, nor a monastery of friars which had got priests; because the friars are so numerous that they cover the world, both in the monasteries as also in the churches, roads, and markets: they are in every place.

CAP. XXVI.—*How the priests are, and how they are ordained, and of the reverence which they pay to the churches and*
793 *their churchyards.*

684 The priests are married to one wife, and they observe the
587 law of matrimony better than the laity: they live in their houses with their wives and children. If their wife should die they do not marry again; neither can the wife, but she

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may become a nun or remain a widow as she pleases. If a 793
priest sleeps with another woman whilst his wife is alive he 684
does not enter the church any more, nor does he enjoy its 587
goods, and remains as a layman. And this I know from
having seen a priest accused before the patriarch of having
slept with a woman, and I saw that the priest confessed the
offence, and the patriarch commanded him not to carry a
cross in his hand, nor to enter a church, nor to enjoy the
liberties of the church, and to become a layman. If any
priests after becoming widowers marry, they remain laymen,
As it happened to Abuquer, who married Romana Orque,
sister of Prester John, who I have already said was a priest,
chief chaplain of Prester John, and he was disordained[1] and
made a layman. He no longer enters the church, and
receives the communion at the door of the church as a
layman, and among the women. The sons of the priests 793
are for the most part priests, because in this country there
are no schools, nor studies, nor masters to teach, and the [871]
clergy teach that little that they know to their sons: and
so they make them priests without more legitimisation,
neither does it seem to me that they require it, since they
are legitimate sons. All are ordained by the Abima Markos,
for in all the kingdoms of Ethiopia there is no other bishop
or person who ordains. The orders are given in two stages,
as I will relate further on. I with my own eyes saw them
given many times. In all this country the churchyards are
inclosed by very strong walls, that the wild beasts may not [764]
disinter the dead bodies. They show them great reverence,
no man riding on a mule passes before a church, even [576]
though he is going in a great hurry, without dismounting,
until he has passed the church and churchyard a good bit.

[1] *Foy desordenado e feito leigo*; not a correct expression.

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CAP. XXVII.—*How we departed from Barua, and of the bad equipment we had until we arrived at Barra.*

648

We were at Barua the first time, without their giving us equipment for our departure, for eleven days; we departed on the 28th day of June 1520, joyful and contented, because we were travelling on our way; and those that conducted us went with our baggage a distance of half a league, saying that their bounds went no further, and that another town had to take us further on. As I said, it was in June, in the force of the winter of this country, and they set us down, and our goods, in a plain, and very heavy rain. The ambassador and three of us went on the road to Barra to speak to the Barnagais, the factor and clerk and the other Portuguese remaining with our goods. As soon as we arrived we went to the palace of the Barnagais to tell him what his vassals were doing to us. They did not give us an opportunity to speak to him that day. On the following day we did not sleep in the morning, and went to speak to him: as soon as we spoke to him he told us he would at once send for the goods. He ordered it to be brought a distance of a league and a half, in which it passed through three districts, by reason of the great population which is in that country, and they came and placed the baggage in another plain, where they let it remain four days in the rain and storms. In these days the ambassador and those that were with him were not quiet: at one time we went to the baggage, which was a league and a half off from us, at other times at our resting place, at others in the house of the Barnagais, to require him to send for these goods which belonged to the King, and were going to Prester John, or to tell us that he did not choose, and we would have it set on fire, and go our way disembarrassed. His speech was always fair, but the fruits of it never came. When four days were completed he sent for the goods.

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CAP. XXVIII.—*How the goods arrived at the town of Barra, and of the bad equipment of the Barnagais.*

On the 3rd day of July of the said year, '20, our baggage 648
arrived at the town of Barra, where we were. We hoped to start at once, and went to speak to the Barnagais requiring him to despatch us. We met with good words from him. On the following day a gentleman from the court of Prester John arrived, and the Barnagais gave him such a reception that he forgot us. When this gentleman arrived the Barnagais went out of the town to receive him at a small hill near the houses; and there went out with him many people, and he was naked from the waist upwards. The gentleman placed himself on the highest spot above the rest, and his first words were: the King sends to salute you. At these words all went with their hand upon the ground, [576]
which is the courtesy and reverence of this country. After that, he spoke the message which he had brought, and when he had finished hearing it the Barnagais clothed himself with rich garments, and took the gentleman to his house. It is the usage of this country to hear the words which the [203]
Prester sends outside the house, and on foot, and he to whom they are sent has to be naked above the waist until they have been delivered, and if the message is one of satisfaction on the part of Prester John, as soon as it is given he at once dresses himself: if it expresses his dissatisfaction, he remains naked as when he heard it. This Barnagais is brother of the mother of Prester John. After this the ambassador, and we with him, came to speak to the Barnagais, and he sent us away saying that for the love of God we should leave him, that he was sick. When we came they did not allow us to enter, saying that he was sleeping. So much passed of this sort that the ambassador said that he ill remembered what he had sworn and promised to the Captain-major of the King of Portugal, that is to say,

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648 to assist us and order equipment to be given us for our journey, that he forgot all this, and also that he was not mindful of the friendship which they had established and sworn, since he did so little for the affairs of the King of Portugal. Neither on this account did he make any more haste, but always excused himself with his guest, and with being ill. On the 6th of July seven or eight horsemen arrived, very gaily caparisoned, these were Moors, and seemed to be honourable persons, they came from other countries, and brought many very beautiful horses, which they were bringing to pay as tribute which they owed to Prester John and the Barnagais. As the arrival of the Moors redounded to his profit, neither his guests nor his sickness impeded him. The great reception and honour which the Barnagais paid to these Moors gave us great trouble. The ambassador had told him that he wanted
648 twelve mules, and asked him to order them to be lent: he
661 said that he could not lend them, and that we should buy them. When we wished to buy these mules which the people of the country were selling to us, the servants of the Barnagais came and interrupted the purchase, telling the vendors not to sell them, and that if they sold them they would be punished, and the gold would be taken away from them, for in this country money is not current. This happened in such manner that the rumour of it spread throughout the country, and the people told us that even if they wished to sell to us they did not dare, from fear of the Barnagais, because he wished to sell his own mules, and therefore forbade their selling them. (He has another method with
436 the people of his country.) In all the kingdoms of Prester John money is not current, but only gold by weight, and the principal weight is called *ouquia*,[1] and this, which is an ounce, makes in weight ten cruzados, and for change there is a half ouquia, and from twelve drachms to ten make

[1] A gold coin in some parts of Africa.

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an ouquia. This Barnagais forbade the people in his country having any other weights except his own, and they had to ask the Barnagais or his factors for the weights whenever they had to sell or receive gold, so that he had knowledge of what was in the country, and he takes it when he pleases, according to what his country people say, who must know it well. 436

CAP. XXIX.—*Of the church of the town of Barra, and its ornaments, and of the fair there, and of the merchandise, and costumes of the friars, nuns, and priests.*

In this town of Barra there is a church of Our Lady, large, new, very well painted and well built, and handsomely ornamented with many brocades, crimson silks, and Mekkah velvets, and red camlets. The church in this town is served like that at Barua, only that the offices are more solemnized because the Barnagais resides here, and because here there are more clergy and an infinite number of friars. The church is managed by priests. I saw them make a procession round the church in the greater circuit, which is of the churchyard. In it there were many priests, friars, and men and women, because in this church the women receive the communion in the place where the laity do so. In that procession I saw the ornaments which I have mentioned: they must have taken quite thirty turns round the church chaunting like a litany, and sounding many drums and cymbals, as they sound them when they make a procession before the effigy of Our Lady on Sundays and feast days; and they sing and celebrate a feast; and likewise when they give the communion on feast days. They said that this procession was made in supplication to God for rain for their sowing. The bells are of stone, like those of other churches, and the bells badly made. In this town there is a great fair like that of Barua, and so likewise in all the 346 796 443

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443 places which are chief towns of districts, every week. The fairs consist of bartering one thing for another, as for instance, an ass for a cow, and that which is of least value gives to the other two or three measures of bread. By means of bread they buy stuffs, and with stuffs they buy mules and cows, and whatever they want, for salt, incense, pepper, myrrh, camphor, and other small articles.[1] They buy fowls and capons, and whatever they need or want to buy is all to be found at these fairs in exchange for others, for there is no current money. The principal merchants 792 292 at these fairs are priests, friars, and nuns. The friars are decent in their habits, which are full, and reaching to the ground. Some wear yellow habits of coarse cotton stuff, others habits of tanned goat skins like wide breeches,[2] also yellow. The nuns also wear the same habits; the friars wear, besides, capes of the fashion of Dominican friars, of the same yellow skins or stuffs, they wear hats; and the nuns wear neither capes nor hats, but [302] only the habit, and are shaven with a razor; and they wear a leather strap wound or fastened round the head. When they are old women they wear fillets[3] round their heads over their tonsures. These nuns are not cloistered, nor do they live together in convents, but in villages, and in the monasteries of the friars, on account of belonging to those houses and order. The order is all one, and the nuns give obedience where they receive their habits. With regard to entering churches and monasteries, the nuns do not enter except as other women do. There is a great multitude of nuns, as well as of friars; they say that some of them are very holy women, and others are not so. The priests show very 793 302 little difference from the laity in their dress, because all wear a good cloth wrapped round, like smart men, and their [292] difference is that they carry a cross in their hand, and are shaven, and the laity wear long hair. The priests also have

[1] *Bechugarias.* [2] *Zafoens* or *Safoens.* [3] *Tufas.*

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this, that they do not cut their beard, and the laity shave 793
below the chin and the throat. There are other priests, [302]
whom they call Debeternas, which means canons; these
belong to great churches, which are like their cathedrals or
collegiate churches, and are not monasteries. These are
very well dressed, and at once appear as what they are:
these do not go to the fairs and markets.

CAP. XXX.—*Of the state of the Barnagais and manner of his house, and how he ordered a proclamation to be made to go against the Nobiis,*[1] *and the method of his justice.*

The service of this Barnagais is very poor in state, although he is a great lord and has the title of king. As many times as we spoke to him we always found him seated on a bedstead beneath a coverlid, and himself covered with hairy cotton cloths which they name *basutos*; they are good for the country, and there are some here of a high price. Behind the sides of the bedstead, walls, without anything except four swords hung each on a pole, and two great books, also suspended on poles. In front of the bedstead, mats on the floor, upon which sit those who come; the houses rarely swept, his wife always seated on a mat near the head of the bedstead, many people always before him, the great people seated on mats. In sight of his [231]
bedstead stand four horses, one always saddled, and the
others covered, not caparisoned for war, but as horses are
in the stables. In these houses of his are two inclosures,
and each one has its gate, and in it porters with whips in
their hands, and in the one nearest to him are smarter porters. Between these gates, the inner one and the outer 693
one, is always his Alicaxi, which means his judge, hearing
causes and administering justice. If the cause is important,

[1] Nubians.

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693 he hears the parties until he has determined upon it, and then he goes and relates the cause to the Barnagais, who gives the sentence: if it is a small cause, or if the parties wish it, the Alicaxi gives sentence, and the cause is concluded. Moreover, in all judgments, whether the Barnagais or the Alicaxi judges, there must be present an honourable man, whom they call by the name of his office Malaganha, who is like a tabellion or notary of Prester John, and if either of the parties wishes to appeal, he requires from this man the certifying of the cause for Prester John and his judges. All the lords of the countries of any of the kingdoms of Prester John have an Alicaxi and a Malaganha appointed by the Prester; so also have the captains subject to the Barnagais and to the other great lords. The gentlemen who are about the house of the Barnagais, and other grandees who come on business, have this manner of coming from their abodes. Whilst at the place he is living at he mounts his mule, seven, eight, or ten men on foot go before him as far as the first gate, and there he dismounts. If he is a person of greater importance, he takes seven, eight, or ten mules, or else three or four, according as the person is. So he dismounts at the first gate, and arrives at the second, after that, if they are bidden at once to enter, they go in, if not, they sit outside like beehives in the sun, without any other pastime. All these honourable persons wear sheep skins at [292] their necks or on their shoulders, and he who wears the skin of a lion, tiger, or ounce, is more honourable. When 576 they come before the lord they take off the skin, as we take off our caps. Whilst we were in this town of Barra on a 721 market day, they made a solemn proclamation that the Barnagais intended to make war on the Nobiis, five or six days' journey from the limits of his country, towards Egypt, neighbouring to the countries of Canfilla and Dafolha,[1] which are subject to the Barnagais, as I have before mentioned.

[1] Dafilla.

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These Nobiis are neither Moors, nor Jews, nor Christians. 721
It is said that they had been Christians, and had lost their faith, and are thus without any faith. They say that there is among these Nobiis much fine gold. They said that but a short time ago they had killed a son of the Barnagais, and that he wished to go and avenge his death. I heard say that in the frontier districts of these Nobiis there were four or five hundred horsemen, very great warriors, and that it is a country very well supplied with provisions, and it cannot be otherwise because it is on this and the further side of the Nile, which they say is a very fertile country. The proclamation said that he would set out in fifty days from that time: but up to this there had been no muster nor movement of arms. This would be because in the country there are not many, and few people possess them except the Chavas, who are the men at arms. These [411] men have javelins, bows and arrows. These great lords have a few swords, hangers, and shirts of mail (not many of [714] them). On the occasion of this little revolt, the Barnagais asked the ambassador for swords, and the ambassador gave him his own, which he wore on the road, and which was very good, and he still persistently begged another rich sword with ornaments which he carried with him, saying he wanted it for the war he was going to make, and the ambassador not being able to excuse himself, it suited him to buy another from his companions with gilt ends and a velvet scabbard, which he gave him instead of his own. And in the house where we kept our goods, and where our Portuguese slept, which was a house without doors, on the following night they stole from them two swords and a helmet. All this would be on account of the war.

[pp. 66-400 have not been processed for the files.-Analyst]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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CAP. IX.—*Of certain questions which the Archbishop of Braga put to Francisco Alvarez, and the answers which he gave.*

000 While we were at the Court in the city of Coimbra, no long time elapsed before the King, our sovereign, departed with his Court to Almeirim, where on some occasions I reminded his Highness about sending me to carry out the journey which I had promised and sworn to Prester John to make, namely, to carry his letters and a cross of gold and his obedience to the Holy Father in Rome. His Highness told me that he was fully mindful of this, but that the roads did not give an opportunity for this, on account of the wars with France. From Almeirim His Highness departed with his Court for the city of Lisbon, where, in the manner above mentioned, I reminded His Highness of my despatch to Rome. He gave me the same answer as before. Upon this, Bras Neto was named ambassador; it was not said to what place. He, Bras Neto, begged me to ask the King to send me with him. I begged of the King the favour to send me with Bras Neto, since he was going to Rome. His Highness told me that Bras Neto was going to the emperor and not to Rome, and that he well remembered about sending me, but that I could not go except when Don Martinho went, and that he would soon despatch him. At this time a benefice becoming vacant in the archbishopric of Braga, His Highness did me the favour to bestow it on me, and, with his presentation, sent me to the archbishop, for him to confirm me in it. Whilst I was with his lordship, he never ceased asking me about the affairs of Prester John. I answered him truly, as I knew them very well, and his lordship ordered everything to be written down, and the questions and answers are the following:

Questions which Senhor Don Diogo de Sousa, archbishop

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000 of Braga, put to Francisco Alvarez, chaplain of the king our sovereign, respecting some particulars of the country of Prester John, beyond those which the said Francisco Alvarez has written in his book; the said Francisco Alvarez having gone to the said Prester in the company of Don Rodrigo de Lima, who went as ambassador to the said Prester, on account of the death of Duarte Galvam, who was sent there by the King Don Manuel, may he be in holy glory; which persons reached the port of Masua, an island in the Red Sea, close to the town of Arquico, country of the Prester, on the 27th day of April 1520, and they passed six[1] years in the said country and lordships of the Prester, and they returned to embark at the said port of Masua, close to Arquico, in the year 1526 on the 28th day of April; and the said Francisco Alvarez came to this city of Braga to be confirmed in the benefice which the King our sovereign gave him. He remained in it some days, and the said Francisco Alvarez reached this city of Braga on the 30th July, of the year 1529.

264 He[1] said that usually the people do not eat only once a
262 day, and this at night, and that the monks and clergy fast
784 strictly during Lent, so that many only eat three times in the week, namely, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, that they do not drink wine of grapes nor of honey, and that they drink other beverages which are made of other vegetables.

In Lent they eat neither meat not milk, nor eggs nor butter, even though they are near dying, they eat vegetables and some few fruits which are in the country. All the men and women, great and small, fast all the Wednesdays and Fridays in the year; this is not to be understood from Christmas to the Purification of Our Lady, nor from Easter to Trinity, when there is no fast. Friars, priests, gentlemen and noblemen, fast all the week excepting Saturday and Sunday.

[1] Should be seven years.

1 [the author, i.e., Alvarez]

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He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that 681
they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of
others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality
the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he
was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester 793
John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is
nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester
who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means em- 643
peror, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some 752
sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, 757
they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein,
and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw
blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure
themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thou- 621
sand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and 361
there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without num-
ber. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and 342
all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and court-
yards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others 352
on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table.
They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without 415
napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black 264
earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for
drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others 262
eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, 252
and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is 373
much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make
candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which 314
they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like
Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 000

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

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136 is no fish there except very little from the rivers; There from the sea none.

795 There are no monasteries except of St. Anthony, and
792 not of any other order, as some friars say who come from there.

291 The gentlemen, monks, canons, and priests are clothed; most of the other people are bare from the waist upwards, and a sheepskin on the shoulders, with the front and hind feet tied together.

792 Most of the monasteries are situated on high mountains,
346 or in great ravines; they have large revenues and juris-
[262] diction. In many monasteries they do not eat meat all the year, and fish very few times, as they have not go it in the country. The services of these monasteries are psalms and prose, and so it is done in the churches of the canons.

796 Every church has two curtains, one on this side of the altar with little bells, and no one but priests enter inside this curtain; and another curtain in the middle of the church. And no one but persons in orders enter the church, and many gentlemen and honourable persons are ordained in order to enter the church. They go to the door of all the churches and monasteries to read the epistles and gospels, and they say them rapidly, and there they give the communion to the people.

The priests consecrate at the altar, and do not show the sacrament. When the priest who says mass comes to take the communion, he takes a particle from the top, and the other two large parts he leaves for the communion of the people. All the people who come to the church have to receive the communion every day, or else not come to church. When the communion is ended, they give them a little blessed water with which they wash their mouths.

Nobody sits down in the church, nor do they enter it shod; they do not hem or spit, nor do they let any dog or other animal come into the church. They confess standing,

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and so receive absolution. They pray in the churches of 796
the canons as in those of the friars. Friars do not marry, [782]
canons and priests do so. When the canons live together 793
in the circuit they eat in their houses, and the friars eat in
community. The chiefs of these churches are called Lica-
canate. The wives of the canons have houses outside of the
circuit, where they go to live with them: the son of a
canon remains a canon, and the son of a priest not, except
he chooses later to become one. No tithes are paid to any
church, they live on the large properties which the churches
and monasteries possess. Complaints against the clergy [694]
are dealt with before the secular justice.

The vestment is made like a shirt, and the stole with a 292
hole in the middle, and put over the head; they have no
maniple, nor amice, nor girdle; priests and friars all have
their heads shaved, and the beards not. The friars say [302]
mass with their hats on their heads, and the priests with
their heads bare.

In no church is more than one mass said, and no mass is 794
said for alms, not even for the dead. When any person dies,
the priests come with cross and holy water and incense,
and recite certain prayers for him, and carry him off to
burial very hurriedly: next day they bring offerings: the
churchyards are all closed, so that nothing can enter them.

Prester John has no determined place of abode, he 643
always goes about the country in tents, and he will always
have in his camp five or six tents among good and common
ones: and there will always be at Court of people for the 644
horses and mules from fifty thousand upwards.

The kitchen of Prester John is a good crossbow shot
behind his quarters, and they bring his food in this manner:
all that he has to eat comes in porringers and dishes of
very black earthenware on wooden trays, and pages bring
them, and above the pages come a pallium of silk, which
covers them so that these viands come with reverence.

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643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well
532 made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
491 in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John
[563] are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

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which we call of Guinea, there they are called zegra, quails, 136
pigeons, turtles, hawks, falcons, kites, eagles, thrushes, sparrows, swallows, nightingales, larks, wild ducks, of different kinds,[1] and other waterfowl, herons, cranes, *hemas*, and all other birds that may be in the world, and not known to us; and there are all in this country except magpies and cuckoos, which I never saw, nor heard of their being there.

There are so many apes, that in the kingdom of the Barnagais, in a town which is named Ceroel, at the time the harvest is ripe, they pursue them till they make them pass a mountain; and they keep guard over them in a pass by day, because at night they do not move about, and they give a certain provision to two men who keep guard over them until the corn is gathered in, when they let them loose, or leave off keeping watch over them.

There is much basil in the thickets, and there are none 137
of our trees except cypresses, plumtrees, and willows by the rivers; there are no melons, cucumbers, nor horse-radish.

In the country there is no gold or silver money, and pur- 436
chases are made by exchange of one thing for another, principally salt, which is current throughout the country as money.

There is linen there, but it gives no fibre, and no stuff is 248
made with it; there is much cotton, and stuff made of it; there is much coloured cloth, and there is a very cold country where they wear serge.

The churches there are well built, but the walls are not 346
well wrought, and they do not place anything upon them; they pitch [the roof] upon props, which reach from the ground upwards.

In the country there is gold, silver, copper and tin, but 135
they do not know how to get it out of the mines.

[1] *Adens, marrecas.*

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164 There are many lepers in this country, and they do not live separated from the people, they live all together; there are many people who, out of their devotion, wash them, and tend their sores with their hands.

231 There is a great quantity of honey in all the country, and the bees are not in hives, but inside the houses, where the cultivators live, clinging to the walls on the inside, where they have a mode of egress outside, and also inside they surround the house: but they do not on this account desist from dwelling in the house, because the bees go outside. There are a great number of these swarms of bees, chiefly in the monasteries, there are also many in the woods and mountains, and the men put hives near the trees and fill them with bees, and bring them in them to the houses.

346 Since no one sits in the churches, at their doors outside of them, and within the circuit, there are always a great quantity of staves with cross pieces like a .....[1] or cripple's crutch, and each one takes his staff and leans upon it as long as he is at the offices of the church. In the churches there are many effigies painted on the walls. Effigies of [532] our Lord and our Lady, and of the apostles and patriarchs, and prophets and angels, and in all the churches St. George. They have not got solid images. There are many books in [212] the churches all written on parchment, because there is no [191] paper there, and the writing and language is Tigray,[2] which is that of the first country in which Christianity began.

In this country they are not accustomed to write to one another, neither do the officers of justice write anything. All the justice that is done, and what is ordered, is by messengers and speech. I say only that I saw the property of Prester John written down on being delivered up and received.

554 There would be much fruit and much more tillage in the country, if the great men did not ill treat the people, for

[1] *Taku.* [2] *Tigia.*

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they take what they have, and they do not choose to pro- 554
vide more than what they require and is necessary for them.

In no part that he went about in were there butchers' 253
shops, except at the Court, and no person of the common people may kill a cow (even though it is his own) without leave from the lord of the country.

The people speak the truth little, even when they make 695
oath, unless they swear by the head of the King. They much fear excommunication, and if they are ordered to do [688]
something, and that it be to their prejudice, they do it from fear of excommunication.

The oath is administered in this manner. They go to the door of the church with two priests, and they have there incense and embers, and he who has to swear puts his hands upon the church door, and one the priests tells him of the oath to speak the truth, and that if he speaks falsely, that as the lion swallows his prey in the woods, so may his soul be swallowed by the devil; and as the wheat is broken between the stones, so may his bones be ground by the devils; and he who swears, at each thing answers Amen; and as the fire burns wood, so may your soul be burned in the fire of hell and made dust. He says Amen. And this if you do not speak truth; he says Amen. And if you speak truth, may your life be prolonged with honour, and your soul in paradise with the blest. He says Amen. And this ended, he gives his testimony.

He says that the movable feasts, Easter, Ascension, Pen- 796
tecost, are celebrated on the same days and seasons that we 805
celebrate them. The birth of Christ, Circumcision, Epiphany, and other feasts of saints also agree with us, and others not. The year and months begin on the 29th day of August, on which was the beheading of St. John, and the year is of twelve months, and the month of thirty days. When the year is ended, there are five days over, which they call pagomen, which means fulfilment of the year, and in the bissextile year there are six days over; so they keep with us.

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784 He says that during all Passion week they are dressed in black or blue, and do not speak to one another for grief, saying that Judas by a kiss of peace betrayed his Lord.

532 Although there are in the churches effigies painted on all
784 the walls, and also crosses, nevertheless on no cross is a crucifix painted, neither have they any of solid carving; because they say they are not deserving to see Christ crucified.

792 All the priests, friars, and gentlemen carry crosses in their
778 hands, both on foot and on horseback; and the laymen of the people and lower people carry crosses round their necks. Every priest and friar carries a little horn of copper with holy water, and the hosts where they arrive beg of them water and a blessing, and they give it. Before they eat they throw drops of water on the food, and also in the drinking vases.

411 Their arms are assagays, few swords, a few shirts of mail, long and narrow; our Portuguese say that they are not of good mail.

There are many bows and arrows, they have no feathers like ours; there are very few helmets and casques. Those that there are have come since they have had intercourse with the Portuguese. There are plenty of strong bucklers;
713 there are no cannon, except two swivel guns which we brought them. At our departure there were fourteen muskets at Court, which they bought from the Turks who come there to trade. The Prester ordered whatever they asked to be given for them, and ordered men to be taught to shoot.

534 There are trumpets, but not good ones; there are many drums of copper which come from Cairo, and others of wood which have leather on both sides; there are tambourines like ours, and large cymbals which they sound. There are flutes and some instruments with chords, square like harps, which they call David moçanquo, which means the harp of David. They play these to the Prester, and not well.

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In this country there are in some parts very flat lands, and in others mountainous; and altogether they are fruitful lands. There are no snowy ranges, but withal severe frosts, especially in the flat lands. In all the lands there is great breeding of cattle. 133 [231]

He says that he did not see the river Nile, and he reached to two days' journey from it, and the days' journey which they went were small ones, namely, four or five leagues, a little more or less. But some of those in his company reached its source, and they say that it rises in the Kingdom of Gojame, and its source is in great lakes, and where it rises there are islands, and thence it commences its course and goes to Egypt.

The time when the Nile rises in Egypt is (as they say) from the 15th day of September and later, and in all October; and the reason of this is, because the winter of Ethiopia begins from the middle of June to the middle of September, and on account of the great rains which take place in it without this winter ever changing, the Nile overflows in Egypt at that time.

It is the general custom of Prester John and all the people for no man on horseback to pass a church, but before they reach it they dismount, and so pass it, and lead their beasts by the bridles, and after passing they mount. 492 576

When Prester John and all his people travel, the altar and the altar stone on which mass is said, all goes on the shoulders of the priests as on a litter, and there go eight priests with each altar by turns, that is, four and four: and a priest goes in front of them with a thurible, and further in front a zagonay ringing a bell, and all the people go away from the road, and those that are on horses dismount, and show reverence to the altar stone or altar. 484

There is no grape wine there, more than in two houses, where it is made publicly, namely, in the house of Prester John and the house of the Patriarch Abima Marcos; and if 273

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273 any other is made, it is secretly. The wine with which mass is said in all the churches and monasteries is made in this manner. They take raisins which they have stored in the sacristies and they put them to soak in water for ten days, and they swell, and they let them dry, and they crush them and press them in a cloth, and with that wine which comes out they say mass.[1]

231 The horses, natives of the country of Prester John, are many and not good, for they are like Gallician beasts; those which come from Arabia are very good, like Moorish horses; those from Egypt are much better, very tall and big and handsome. Many lords breed horses from the mares they get from Egypt in their stables. In this manner, namely, when they are born, they do not suck the mother more than three days, and they at once put the mares to the horses[2]; and they tie up the little colts somewhat apart from the mothers, and they keep for them many milch cows, and give them their milk to drink.

DEO GRATIAS.

[1] The Malabar Christians had the same custom. See Duarte Barbosa.

[2] *As mais acavalamas logo.*

[pp. 413-416 have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

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TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE,

IN THE YEARS

1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, & 1773.

BY

JAMES BRUCE OF KINNAIRD, ESQ.
F. R. S.

THE SECOND EDITION,

CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

VOL. V.

——————— Non fabula mendax
Ausa loqui de fonte tuo est: ubicunque videris,
Quaereris; et nulli contigit gloria genti,
Ut Nilo sit laeta suo; tua flumina prodam,
Quà Deus undarum celator, Nile, tuarum
Te mihi nosse dedit.

LUCAN.

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Title Page

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TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

BOOK V.—CONTINUED.

CHAP. XII.

State of Religion—Circumcision, Excision, &c.

346 THERE is no country in the world in which there are so many churches as in Abyssinia. Though the country is very mountainous, and consequently the view much obstructed, it is very seldom you see less than five or six churches; and, if you are on a commanding ground, five times that number. Every great [83] man, that dies, thinks he has atoned for all his wickedness if he leaves a fund to build a church, or has built one in his lifetime. The king builds many. Wherever a victory is gained, there a church * is erected in 346 727 the very field, stinking with the putrid bodies of the slain. Formerly this was only the case when the ene-

* The oldest churches in Habbesh are those in the province of Tigre. Axum, now in ruins, possessed many before the Adelan war. A list of these is given in the Appendix of Kebir Neguste, or Chronicle of Axum; and of the lands which they possessed, as given by several kings. r.

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346 my was Pagan or Infidel; now the same is observed
[727] when the victories are over Christians.

346 The situation of a church is always chosen near
running water, for the convenience of their purifica-
351 tions and ablutions, in which they observe strictly the
[783] Levitical law. They are always placed upon the top of some beautiful, round hill, which is surrounded entirely with rows of the oxycedrus, or Virginia cedar, which grows here in great beauty and perfection, and is called Arz *. There is nothing adds so much to the beauty of the country as these churches, and the plantations about them.

In the middle of this plantation of cedars is interspersed, at proper distances, a number of those beautiful trees called Cusso, which grow very high, and are all extremely picturesque.

346 All the churches are round, with thatched roofs; their summits are perfect cones; the outside is surrounded by a number of wooden pillars, which are nothing else than the trunks of the cedar-tree, and are placed to support the edifice, about eight feet of the roof projecting beyond the wall of the church, which forms an agreeable walk, or colonade, around it in hot weather, or in rain. The inside of the church is in several divisions, according as is prescribed by the law of Moses. The first is a circle somewhat wider than the inner one; here the congregation sit and pray. Within this is a square, and that square is divided by a veil or curtain, in which is another very

* Ludolf, in his dictionary, says, this word, in Hebrew, signifies any tall tree. In this, however, he is mistaken. The translators did not, indeed, know what tree it was, and so have said this to cover their ignorance; but Arz is as exclusively the oxycedrus, as is an oak or an elm when so named. Arz is indeed a tall tree, but every tall tree is not Arz, which is the Virginia berry-bearing cedar.

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small division answering to the holy of holies. This 346
is so narrow, that none but the priests can go into it. You are bare-footed whenever you enter the church; and, if bare-footed, you may go through every part of 783
it, if you have any such curiosity, provided you are pure, i. e. have not been concerned with women for 24 hours before, or touched carrion, or dead bodies (a curious assemblage of ideas); for in that case you are not to go within the precincts, or outer circumference of the church, but stand and say your prayers at an awful distance among the cedars.

All persons of both sexes, under Jewish disqualifications, are obliged to observe this distance; and this is always a place belonging to the church, where, unless in Lent, you see the greatest part of the congregation; but this is left to your own conscience; and, if there was either great inconvenience in the one situation, or great satisfaction in the other, the cause would be otherwise.

When you go to the church, you put off your shoes 782
before your first entering the outer precinct; but you must leave a servant there with them, or else they will be stolen, if good for any thing, by the priests and monks before you come out of the church. At entry you kiss the threshold, and two door-posts, go in and say what prayer you please; that finished, you come out again, and your duty is over. The churches 532
are full of pictures, painted on parchment, and nailed 346
upon the walls, in a manner little less slovenly than you see paltry prints in beggarly country ale-houses. There has been always a sort of painting known among the scribes, a daubing much inferior to the worst of our sign-painters. Sometimes, for a particular church, they get a number of pictures of saints, on skins of parchment, ready finished from Cairo, in a style very little superior to these performances of

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346 their own. They are placed like a frize, and hung in
532 the upper part of the wall. St George is generally there with his dragon, and Demetrius fighting a lion. There is no choice in their saints; they are both of the Old and New Testament, and some that might be dispensed with from both. There is St Pontius Pilate and his wife; there is St Balaam and his ass; Samson and his jaw-bone; and so of the rest. But the thing that surprised me most was a kind of square-miniature upon the front of the head-piece, or mitre, of the priest, administering the sacrament at Adowa, representing Pharaoh on a white horse, plunging in the Red Sea, with many guns and pistols swimming upon the surface of it around him.

Nothing embossed, nor in relief, ever appears in any of the churches; all this would be reckoned idolatry, so much that they do not wear a cross, as has been represented, on the top of the ball of the sendick, or standard, because it casts a shade; but there is no doubt that pictures have been used in their churches from the very earliest age of Christianity.

793 The Abuna is looked upon as the patriarch of the Abyssinian church, for they have little knowledge of the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria. We are perfectly ignorant of the history of these prelates for many years after their appointment. The first of these mentioned is Abuna Tecla Haimanout, who distinguished himself by the restoration of the royal family, and the regulations he made both in the church and state, as we have seen in the history of those times. A very remarkable, but wise regulation was then made, that the Abyssinians should not have it in their power to choose one of their own countrymen as Abuna.

Wise men saw the fallen state of literature among them; and unless opportunity was given, from time to time, for their priests to go abroad to Jerusalem for their instruction, and for the purpose of bringing the

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Abuna, Tecla Haimanout knew that very soon no set 793
of people would be more shamefully ignorant than those priests, even in the most common dogmas of their profession. He hoped, therefore, by a considerable stipend, to tempt some men of learning to accept of this place, to give his countenance to learning and religion among them.

The Arabic canon*, which is preserved by the 793
Abyssinian church, and said to be of the council of 175
Nice, should certainly be attributed to this Abuna, 779
and is a forgery in, or very soon after, his time; for, it is plain this canon took place about the year 1300, that it was lawful to elect an Abuna, who was a native of Abyssinia before this prohibition, otherwise it would not have been applied. Abuna Tecla Haimanout was an Abyssinian by birth, and he was Abuna; the prohibition, therefore, had not then taken place: but, as no Abyssinian was afterwards chosen, it must certainly be a work of his time; for it is impossible a canon should be made by the council of Nice, settling the rank of a bishop in a nation, which, for above 200 years after that general council, were not Christians.

As the Abuna very seldom understands the lan- 793
guage, he has no share of the government, but goes to the palace on days of ceremony, or when he has any favour to ask, or complaint to make. He is much fallen in esteem from what he was formerly, chiefly from his own little intrigues, his ignorance, avarice, and want of firmness. His greatest employment is in ordinations. A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand, from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who these are? and they tell him that they want to be deacons. On this, with a small iron cross in his hand,

* See Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 2. No. 17.

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793 after making two or three signs, he blows with his mouth twice or thrice upon them, saying, "Let them be deacons." I saw once all the army of Begemder made deacons, just returned from shedding the blood of 10,000 men, thus drawn up in Aylo Meidan, and the Abuna standing at the church of St Raphael, about a quarter of a mile distant from them. With these were mingled about 1000 women, who, consequently, having part of the same blast and brandishment of the cross, were as good deacons as the rest.

The same is performed with regard to monks. A crowd of people, when he is riding, will assemble within 500 yards of him, and there begin a melancholy song. He asks, who these men with beards are? they tell him they want to be ordained monks. After the same sign of the cross, and three blasts with his mouth, he orders them to be monks. But, in ordaining priests, they must be able to read a chapter of St Mark, which they do in a language he does not understand a word of. They then give the Abuna a brick of salt, to the value of perhaps sixpence, for their ordination; which, from their present given, the Jesuits maintained to be simoniacal.

The Itchegue is the chief of the monks in general, especially those of Debra Libanos. The head of the other monks, called those of St Eustathius, is the superior of the convent of Mahebar Selasse, on the N. W. corner of Abyssinia, near Kuara, and the Shangalla, towards Sennaar and the river Dender. All this tribe is grossly ignorant, and through time, I believe, will lose the use of letters entirely.

The Itchegue is ordained by two chief priests holding a white cloth, or veil, over him, while another says a prayer; and then they lay all their hands on his head, and join in psalms together. He is a man, in troublesome times, of much greater consequence

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than the Abuna. There are, after these, chief priests 793
and scribes, as in the Jewish church: the last of these, the ignorant, careless copiers of the holy scriptures.

The monks here do not live in convents, as in Europe, but in separate houses round their church, and 793 794
each cultivates a part of the property they have in land. The priests have their maintenance assigned to them in kind, and do not labour. A steward, being a layman, is placed among them by the king, who receives all the rents belonging to the churches, and gives to the priests the portion that is their due; but neither the Abuna, nor any other churchman, has any business with the revenues of churches, nor can touch them.

The articles of the faith of the Abyssinians have 175
been inquired into and discussed with so much keen- 779
ness in the beginning of this century, that I fear I should disoblige some of my readers were I to pass this subject without notice.

Their first bishop, Frumentius, being ordained about the year 333, and instructed in the religion of the Greeks of the church of Alexandria by St Athanasius, then sitting in the chair of St Mark, it follows, that the true religion of the Abyssinians, which they received on their conversion to Christianity, is that of the Greek church; and every rite, or ceremony, in the Abyssinian church may be found and traced up to its origin in the Greek church, while both of them were orthodox.

Frumentius preserved Abyssinia untainted with heresy till the day of his death. We find, from a letter preserved in the works of St Athanasius, that Constantius, the heretical Greek emperor, wished St Athanasius to deliver him up, which that patriarch refused to do: indeed, at that time, it was not in his power.

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175 Soon after this, Arianism, and a number of other
779 heresies, each in their turn, were brought by the monks from Egypt, and infected the church of Abyssinia. A great part of these heresies, in the beginning, were certainly owing to the difference of the languages in those times, and especially the two words Nature and Person, than which no two words were ever more equivocal in every language into which they have been translated. Either of these words, in our own language, is a sufficient example of what I have said; and, in fact, we have adopted them from the Latin. If we had adopted the signification of these words in religion from the Greek, and applied the Latin words of Person and Nature to common and material cases, perhaps we had done better. Neither of them has ever yet been translated into the Abyssinian, so as to be understood to mean the same thing in different places. This for a time was, in a certain degree, remedied, or understood, by the free access they had, for several ages, both to Cairo and Jerusalem, where their books were revised and corrected, and many of the principal orthodox opinions inculcated. But, since the conquest of Arabia and Egypt by Sultan Selim, in 1516, the communication between Abyssinia and these two countries hath been very precarious and dangerous, if not entirely cut off; and now, as to doctrine, I am perfectly convinced they are in every respect to the full as great heretics as ever the Jesuits represented them. And I am confident, if any Catholic missionaries attempt to instruct them again, they will soon lose the use of letters, and the little knowledge they yet have of religion, from the prejudice only, and fear of incurring a danger they are not sufficiently acquainted with to follow the means of avoiding it.

779 The two natures in Christ, the two persons, their unity, their equality, the inferiority of the manhood,

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doctrines, and definitions of the time of St Athanasius, 779
are all wrapt up in tenfold darkness, and inextricable from amidst the thick clouds of heresy and ignorance of language. Nature is often mistaken for person, and person for nature; the same of the human substance. It is monstrous to hear their reasoning upon it. One would think, that every different monk, every time he talks, purposely broaches some new heresy. Scarce one of them that ever I conversed with, and those of the very best of them, would suffer it to be said, that Christ's body was perfectly like ours. Nay, it was easily seen, that, in their hearts, they went still further, and were very loth to believe, if they did believe at all, that the body of the Virgin Mary and St Anne were perfectly human.

Not to trouble the reader further with these uninteresting particulars and distinctions, I shall only add, that the Jesuits, in the account they give of the heresies, ignorance, and obstinacy of the Abyssinian clergy, have not misrepresented them, in the imputations made against them, either in point of faith or of morals. Whether, this being the case, the mission they undertook of themselves into that country, gave them authority to destroy the many with a view to convert the few, is a question to be resolved hereafter; I believe it did not; and that the tares and the wheat should have been suffered to grow together till a hand of more authority, guided by unerring judgement, pulled them, with that portion of safety he had pre-ordained for both.

The Protestant writers again unfairly triumph over their adversaries, the Catholics, by asking, Why all that noise about the two natures in Christ? It is plain, say they, from passages in the Haimanout Abou, and their other tracts upon orthodox belief, that they acknowledge that Christ was perfect God and perfect

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719 man, of a rational soul and human flesh subsisting, and that all the confessions of unity, co-equality, and inferiority, are there expressed in the clearest manner as received in the Greek church. What necessity was there for more; and what need of disputing upon these points, already so fully settled?

This, I beg leave to say, is unfair; for, though it is true, that, at the time of collecting the Haimanout Abou, and at the time when St Athanasius, St Cyril, and St Chrysostom wrote, the explanation of these points was uniform in favour of orthodoxy, and that while access could easily be had to Jerusalem, or Alexandria, then Greek and Christian cities, difficulties, if any arose, were easily resolved; yet, at the time the Jesuits came, those books were very rare in the country, and the contents of them so far from being understood, that they were applied to the support of the grossest heresies, from the misinterpretation of the ignorant monks of these latter times. That the Abyssinians had been orthodox availed nothing: they were then become as ignorant of the doctrines of St Athanasius and St Cyril, as if those fathers had never wrote; and it is their religion at this period which the Jesuits condemn, not that of the church of Alexandria, when in its purity under the first patriarchs; and, to complete all their misfortunes, no access to Jerusalem is any longer open to them, and very rarely communication with Cairo.

On the other hand, the Jesuits, who found that the Abyssinians were often wrong in some things, were resolved to deny that they could be right in any thing; and, from attacking their tenets, they fell upon their ceremonies received in the Greek church at the same time with Christianity; and, in this dispute they shewed great ignorance and malevolence, which they supported by the help of falsehood and invention.—

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I shall take notice of only one instance in many, because it has been insisted upon by both parties with unusual vehemence, and very little candour. 779

It was settled by the first general council, that one baptism only was necessary for the regeneration of man, for freeing him from the sin of our first parents, and listing him under the banner of Christ; "I confess one baptism for the remissions of sins," says the Symbol. Now, it was maintained by the Jesuits, that in Abyssinia, once every year, they baptized all grown people, or adults. I shall, as briefly as possible, set down what I myself saw while on the spot. 783 796

The small river, running between the town of Adowa and the church, had been dammed up for several days; the stream was scanty, so that it scarcely overflowed. It was in some places three feet deep, in some, perhaps, four, or little more. Three large tents were pitched the morning before the feast of the Epiphany; one, on the north, for the priests to repose in during intervals of the service, and, besides this, one to communicate in: on the south there was a third tent for the monks and priests of another church to rest themselves in their turn. About twelve clock at night the monks and priests met together, and began their prayers and psalms at the water-side, one party relieving each other. At dawn of day the governor, Welleta Michael, came hither with some soldiers to raise men for Ras Michael, then on his march against Waragna Fasil, and sat down on a small hill by the water-side, the troops all skirmishing on foot and on horseback around them.

As soon as the sun began to appear, three large crosses of wood were carried by three priests dressed in their sacerdotal vestments, and who, coming to the side of the river, dipt the cross into the water, and all this time the firing, skirmishing, and praying went on to-

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783 gether. The priests with the crosses returned, one
796 of their number before them carrying something less than an English quart of water in a silver cup, or chalice; when they were about fifty yards from Welleta Michael, that general stood up, and the priest took as much water as he could hold in his hand, and sprinkled it upon his head, holding the cup at the same time to Welleta Michael's mouth to taste; after which the priest received it back again, saying, at the same time, "Gzier ybarak," which is simply, "May God bless you." Each of the three crosses was then brought forward to Welleta Michael, and he kissed them. The ceremony of sprinkling the water was then repeated to all the great men in the tent, all cleanly dressed as in gala. Some of them, not contented with aspersion, received the water in the palms of their hands joined, and drank it there; more water was brought for those that had not partaken of the first; and, after the whole of the governor's company was sprinkled, the crosses returned to the river, their bearers singing hallelujahs, and the skirmishing and firing continuing.

Janni, my Greek friend, had recommended me to the priest of Adowa; and, as the governor had placed me by him, I had an opportunity, for both these reasons, of being served among the first. My friend, the priest, sprinkled water upon my head, and gave me his blessing in the same words he had used to the others; but, as I saw it was not necessary to drink, I declined putting the cup to my lips, for two reasons; one, because I knew the Abyssinians have a scruple to eat or drink after strangers; the other, because I apprehended the water was not perfectly clean; for no sooner had the crosses first touched the pool, and the cup filled from the clean part for the governor, than two or three hundred boys, calling themselves *deacons*,

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plunged in with only a white cloth, or rag, tied round 783
their middle; in all other respects they were perfectly 796
naked. All their friends and relations (indeed everybody) went close down to the edge of the pool, where water was thrown upon them, at first decently enough, by boys of the town, and those brought on purpose as deacons; but, after the better sort of people had received the aspersion, the whole was turned into a riot, the boys, muddying the water, threw it round them upon every one they saw well-dressed or clean. The governor retreated first, then the monks, and then the crosses, and left the brook in possession of the boys and blackguards, who rioted there till two o'clock in the afternoon.

I must, however, observe, that, a very little time after the governor had been sprinkled, two horses and two mules, belonging to Ras Michael and Ozoro Esther, came and were washed. Afterwards the soldiers went in and bathed their horses and guns; those who had wounds bathed them also. I saw no women in the bath uncovered, even to the knee; nor did I see any person of the rank of decent servants go into the water at all, except with the horses. Heaps of platters and pots, that had been used by Mahometans or Jews, were brought thither likewise to be purified; and thus the whole ended.

I saw this ceremony performed afterwards at Kahha, near Gondar, in presence of the king, who drank some of the water, and was sprinkled by the priests; then took the cup in his hand, and threw the rest that was left upon Amha Yasous *, saying, "I will be your deacon;" and this was thought a high compli-

* Prince of Shoa, often spoken of in the sequel.

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783 ment, the priest giving him his blessing at the same
796 time, but offering him no more water.

I shall now state, in his own words, the account given of this by Alvarez, chaplain to the Portuguese embassy, under Don Roderigo de Lima.

The king had invited Don Roderigo de Lima, the Portuguese ambassador, to be present at the celebration of the festival of the Epiphany. They went about a mile and a half from their former station, and encamped upon the side of a pond, which had been prepared for the occasion. Alvarez says, that, in their way, they were often asked by those they met or overtook, "Whether or not they were going to be baptized?" to which the chaplain and his company answered in the negative, as having been already once baptized in their childhood.

"In the night," says he, "a great number of priests assembled about the pond, roaring and singing with a view of blessing the water. After midnight the baptism began. The Abuna Mark, the king and queen, were the first that went into the lake; they had each a piece of cotton cloth about their middle, which was just so much more than the rest of the people had. At the sun-rising the baptism was most thronged; after which, when Alvarez * came, the lake was full of holy water, into which they had poured oil."

It should seem, from this outset of his narrative, that he was not at the lake till the ceremony was half over, and did not see the benediction of the water at all, nor the curious exhibition of the King, Queen, and Abuna, and their cotton cloths. As for the circumstance of the oil being poured into the water, I

* Vide Alvarez's narrative in his account of the embassy of Don Roderigo de Lima, page 155.

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will not positively contradict it; for, though I was 783
early there, it might have escaped me if it was done 796
in the dark. However, I never heard it mentioned as part of the ceremony; and it is probable I should, if any such thing was really practised; neither was I in time to have seen it at Kahha.

"Before the pond a scaffold was built, covered round with planks, within which sat the king, looking towards the pond, his face covered with blue taffeta, while an old man, who was the king's tutor, was standing in the water up to the shoulders, naked as he was born, and half dead with cold, for it had frozen violently in the night. All those that came near him he took by the head and plunged them in the water, whether men or women, saying, in his own language, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Now Shoa, where the king was then, is in lat. 8° N. and the sun was in 22° south declination, advancing northward, so the sun was, on the day of the Epiphany, within 30° of the zenith of the bathing-place. The thermometer of Fahrenheit rises at Gondar about [132]
that time to 68°, so in Shoa it cannot rise to less than 70°, for Gondar is in lat. 12° N. that is 4° farther northward, so it is not possible water should freeze, nor did I ever see ice in Abyssinia, not even on the highest or coldest mountains. January is one of the hottest months in the year, day and night the sky is perfectly serene, nor is there a long disproportioned winter night. At Shoa the days are equal to the nights, at least as to sense, even in the month of January.

The baptism, Alvarez says, began at midnight, and the old tutor dipt every person under water, taking him by the head, saying, "I baptize thee in the name

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783 of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
796 It was most thronged at sun-rise, and ended about nine o'clock; a long time for an old man to stand in frozen water.

The number (as women were promiscuously admitted) could not be less than 40,000; so that even the nine hours this baptist-general officiated, he must have had exercise enough to keep him warm, if 40,000 (many of them naked beauties) passed through his hands.

The women were stark naked before the men, not even the rag about them. Without such a proper medium as frozen water, I fear it would not have contributed much to the interests of religion to have trusted a priest (even an old one) among so many bold and naked beauties, especially as he had the first six hours of them in the dark.

783 The Abuna, the king, and queen, were the three
796 first baptized, all three being absolutely naked, having
291 only a cotton cloth round their middle. I am sure
831 there never could be a greater deviation from the manners of any kingdom, than this is from those of Abyssinia. The king is always covered; you seldom see any part of him but his eyes. The queen and every woman in Abyssinia, in public and private, (I mean where nothing is intended but conversation) are covered to the chin. It is a disgrace to them to have even their feet seen by strangers; and their arms and hands are concealed even to their nails. A curious circumstance, therefore, it would have been for the king to be so liberal of his queen's charms, while he covers his own face with blue taffeta; but to imagine that the Abuna, a Coptish monk, bred in the desert of St Macarius, would expose himself naked among naked women, contrary to the usual custom of the celebration he observes in his own church, is monstrous, and

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must exceed all belief whatever. As the Abuna 783
Mark too was of the reasonable age of 110 years, 796
he might, I think, have dispensed at that time of [298]
life with a bathing gown, especially as it was frost. [831]

The old man in the pond repeated the formula, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in his own language; and Alvarez, it is plain, understood not one word of Abyssinian. Yet, on the other hand, he speaks Latin to the king, who wonderfully understands him, and answers as decisively on the merits of the dispute as if he had been educated in the Sorbonne. "Confiteor unum baptizma," says Alvarez *, was a constitution of the Nicene council under Pope Leo. Right, says the king, whose church, however, anathematized Leo and the council he presided at; which both the king and Alvarez should have known was not the Nicene council, though the words of the symbol quoted are thought to be part of a confession framed by that assembly.

"Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit salvus erit," says Alvarez. "You say right," answers the king, "as to baptism; these are the words of our Saviour; but this present ceremony was lately invented by a grandfather of mine, in favour of such as have turned Moors, and are desirous again of becoming Christians."

I should think, in the first place, this answer of the king should have let Alvarez see no baptism was intended there; or, if it was a re-baptism, it only took place in favour of those who had turned Moors, and must therefore have been but partial. If this was really the case, what had the king, queen, and Abuna,

* Vid. Alvarez, hoc loco. Ramusio. Viaggi. p. 254.

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783 to do in it? Sure they had neither apostatized, nor
796 was the company of apostates a very creditable society for them.

Alvarez, to persuade us this is real baptism, says that oil was thrown into the pond before he came. He will not charge himself with having seen this, and it is probably a falsehood. But he knew it was an essential in baptism in all the churches in the East; so indeed is salt, which he should have said was here used likewise: then he would have had all the materials of Greek baptism; and this salt might have contributed to cooling the water, that had frozen under the rays of a burning sun.

Alvarez must have seen, that not only men and women go to be washed in the pool, but horses, cows, mules, and a prodigious number of asses. Are these baptised? I would wish to know the formula the reverend baptist-general used on their occasion.

There is but one church where I ever saw sacred rites, or something like baptism, conferred upon asses; it is, I think, at Rome, on St Andrew's or St Patrick's day. It should be St Balaam's, if he was in the Roman kalender as high as he is in the Abyssinian. In that church (it is, I think, on Monte Cavallo) all sorts of asses, about and within Rome, are gathered together, and showers of holy water and blessings rained by a priest upon them. What is the formula I do not know; although it is a joke put upon strangers, especially of one nation, to assemble them there; or whether the two churches of Rome and Abyssinia differ so much in this as in other points of discipline, I am not informed; but the rationality and decency of such a ceremony being the same in all churches, the service performed at the time should be the same likewise.

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I will not then have any scruple to say, that this whole account of Alvarez is a gross fiction; that no baptism, or any thing like baptism, is meant by the ceremony; that a man is no more baptised by keeping the anniversary of our Saviour's baptism, than he is crucified by keeping his crucifixion. The commemoration of our Saviour's baptism on the epiphany, and the blessing the waters that day, is an old observance of the eastern church, formerly performed in public in Egypt, as now in Ethiopia. Since that of Alexandria fell into the hands of Mahometans, the fear of insult and profanation has obliged them to confine this ceremony, and all other processions, within the walls of their churches, in each of which there is constantly a place devoted to this use. Those that cannot attend the ceremony of aspersion in the church, especially sick or infirm people, have the water sent to them, and a large contribution is made for the patriarch, or bishop; yet nobody ever took it into their heads to tax either Greek or Armenian with a repetition of baptism.

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Monsieur de Tournefort *, in his travels through the Levant, gives you a figure of the Greek priest, who blesses the water in a peculiar habit, with a pastoral staff in his hand.

But, besides this, various falsehoods have likewise been propagated about the manner of baptism practised in Abyssinia; all in order to impugn the validity of it, and to excuse the rash conduct of the Jesuits for re-baptising all the Abyssinians, as if they had been a Jewish and Pagan people that never had been baptised at all. The violation of this article of the creed, or confession of Nice, was a cause of great offence to the

* Tournef. tom. i. p. 111.

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783 Abyssinians, and of the misfortunes that happened
796 afterwards. The whole of the Abyssinian service of baptism is in their liturgy. The Jesuits had plenty of copies in their hands, and could have pointed out the part of the service that was heretical, if they had pleased; they did not pretend, however, to do this, and their silence condemns them.

As for the idle stories that are told of the words pronounced, such as,—" I baptise you in the name of the Holy Trinity,"—" In the name of Peter and Paul,"—" I baptise you in the water of Jordan," —" May God baptise you,"—" May God wash you," and many others, they are all invented by the Jesuits, to excuse the repetition of baptism in Abyssinia, which there was no sort of occasion for, as they might have examined the words and form in the liturgies, which are in every church; and I must here only observe, that if, as the chaplain Alvarez says, the priest in the pool, on the festival of the Epiphany, was so fond of the proper words, as even at that time, to say " I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," the words he quotes to shew that this immersion in water on the Epiphany is a real baptism, I cannot comprehend why they should vary them to other words, when nothing but baptism is meant. But this I can bear evidence of, that, in no time when I was present, as I have above a hundred times been, at the baptism both of adults and infants, aye, and of apostates too, I never heard other words pronounced than the orthodox baptismal ones, " I baptise thee in the name of " the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," immerging the child in pure water, into which they first pour a small quantity of oil of olives, in the form of a cross.

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The Abyssinians receive the holy sacrament in both kinds, in unleavened bread, and in the grape bruised with the husk together as it grows, so that it is a kind of marmalade, and is given in a flat spoon. Whatever they may pretend, some mixture seems necessary to keep it from fermentation in the state that it is in, unless the dried cluster is fresh bruised just before it is used; for it is little more fluid than the common marmalade of confectioners; but it is perfectly the grape as it grew, bruised stones and skin together. Some means, however, have been used, as I suppose, to prevent fermentation, and make it keep; and though this is constantly denied, I have often thought I tasted with a flavour that was not natural to the grape itself. 796 782

It is a mistake that there is no wine in Abyssinia; for a quantity of excellent strong wine is made at Dreeda, south-west from Gondar about thirty miles, which would more than supply the quantity necessary for the celebration of the eucharist in all Abyssinia twenty times over. The people themselves are not fond of wine, and plant the vine in one place only; and in this they have been imitated by the Egyptians, their colony; but a small black grape, of an excellent flavour, grows plentifully wild in every wood in Tigre. 273

Large pieces of bread are given to the communicants, in proportion to their quality; and I have seen great men, who, though they open their mouths as wide as conveniently a man can do, yet from the respect the priest bore him, such a portion of the loaf was put into his mouth, that water ran from his eyes, from the incapacity of chewing it; which, however, he does as indecently, and with full as much noise, as he eats at table. 796 782

After receiving the sacrament of the eucharist in

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782 both kinds, a pitcher of water is brought, of which
796 the communicant drinks a large draught; and well he needs it to wash down the quantity of bread he has just swallowed. He then retires from the steps of the inner division, upon which the administering priest stands, and, turning his face to the wall of the church, in private, says some prayer with seeming decency and attention.

The Romanists doubt of the validity of the Abyssinian consecration of the elements; because in their liturgy it is plainly said, "Lord, put thy hand upon this cup, and bless it, and sanctify it, and purify it, that in it may be made thy holy blood;" and of the bread they say, "Bless this saucer, or plate, that in it may be made thy holy body." And in their prayer they say, "Change this bread, that it may be made thy pure body which is joined with this cup of thy precious blood." The Jesuits doubt of the validity of this consecration, because it is said, "this *bread* is my body;" and over the wine, "this *cup* is my blood;" whereas, to operate a true transubstantiation, they should say over the bread, "this is my body."

For my own part, I leave it to the reverend fathers, who are the best judges, what is necessary to operate this miracle of transubstantiation. The reality of the thing itself is denied by all Protestant churches, has been often doubted by others, has been ridiculed by lay-writers, and can never be a matter, I believe, of thorough conviction, much less of proof, to any. The dignity of the subject, on which it touches nearly, as well as tenderness for our brethren on the continent, an article of whose faith it is, should always screen it from being treated with pleasantry, whatever we believe, or whether we believe it or not.

M. Ludolf thinks, that the words I have set down are a proof the Abyssinians do not believe in transub-

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stantiation. For my part, from those very words, I cannot think any thing is clearer than that they do; the bread is upon the plate; they pray that the plate may be blessed, "That in it the bread may be made God's holy body*;" and of the wine they say, "That it may be made thy holy blood:" and in their prayer they say, "Change this bread, that it may be made thy body;" and again, "May the Holy Ghost shine upon this bread, that it may be made the body of Christ our God, and that this cup may be changed and become the blood, not the *symbol*, of the blood of Christ our God." With all respect to Mr Ludolf's opinion, I must think that, though the benediction prayed upon the patine, spoon, and chalice, is but an aukward expression, yet, if I understand the language, *converte* and *immutetur* are literal translations of the Ethiopic, and seem to pray for a transubstantiation as directly as words will admit, whether they believe in it or not; nor, as far as I know, can any stronger or more expressive be found to substitute in their place.

I shall finish this subject (which is not in my province, and which I have mentioned, because I know it is a matter which some of my readers desire information upon) by an anecdote that happened a few months before my coming into Abyssinia, as it was accidentally told me by the priest of Adowa the very day of the Epiphany, and which Janni vouched to be true, and to have seen.

The Sunday before Ras Michael's departure for Gondar from Adowa, he went to church in great pomp, and there received the sacrament. There happened to be such a crowd to see him, that the wine, part of the consecrated elements, was thrown down

* See the Ethiopic liturgies passim. Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 5.

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796 and spilt upon the steps whereon the communicants
782 stood at receiving. Some straw or hay was instantly gathered and sprinkled upon it to cover it, and the communicants continued the service till the end, treading that grass under foot.

This giving great offence to Janni, and some few priests that lived with him, it was told Michael, who, without explaining himself, said only, "As to the fact of throwing the hay, they are a parcel of hogs, and know no better." These few words had stuck in the stomach of the priest of Adowa, who, with great secrecy, and as a mark of friendship, begged I would give him my opinion what he should have done, or rather, what would have been done in my country? I told him, "That the answer to his question depended upon two things, which, being known, his difficulties would very easily be solved. If you do believe that the wine spilt by the mob upon the steps, and trod under foot afterwards, was really the blood of Jesus Christ, then you was guilty of a most horrid crime, and you should cry upon the mountains to cover you, and ages of atonement are not sufficient to expiate it. You should, in the mean time, have railed the place round with iron, or built it round with stone, that no foot, or any thing else but the dew of heaven, could have fallen upon it, or you should have brought in the river upon the place that would have washed it all to the sea, and covered it ever after from sacrilegious profanation. But if, on the contrary, you believe (as many Christian churches do), that the wine (notwithstanding consecration) remained in the cup nothing more than wine, but was only the symbol, or type, of Christ's blood of the New Testament, then the spilling it upon the steps, and the treading upon it afterwards, having been merely accidental, and out of your power to prevent, being so far from your wish

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that you are heartily sorry that it happened, I do not 796
reckon that you are further liable in the crime of sa- 782
crilege, than if the wine had not been consecrated at all. You are to humble yourself, and sincerely regret that so irreverent an accident happened in your hands, and in your time; but as you did not intend it, and could not prevent it, the consequence of an accident, where inattention is exceedingly culpable, will be imputed to you, and nothing further."

The priest declared to me, with great earnestness, that he never did believe that the elements in the eucharist were converted by consecration into the real body and blood of Christ. He said, however, that he believed this to be the Roman Catholic faith, but it never was his; and that he conceived the bread was bread, and the wine was wine, even after consecration. From this example, which occurred merely accidentally, and was not the fruit of interrogation or curiosity, it appears to me, whatever the Jesuits say, some at least among the Abyssinians do not believe the real presence in the eucharist; but further I am not enough informed to give a positive opinion. To follow this investigation more curiously would have been attended with a considerable degree of danger; and therefore I have stated my only means of knowledge, and leave my readers entirely to the freedom of their own opinion, and to after inquiry and information.

The Abyssinians are not all agreed about the state 764
of souls before the resurrection of the body. The 775
opinion which generally prevails is, that there is no third state: but that, after the example of the thief, the souls of good men enjoy the beatific vision immediately upon the separation from the body. But I must here observe, that their practice and books do both contradict this; for, as often as any person dies, alms are given, and prayers are offered for the souls

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764 of those departed, which would be vain did they be-
775 lieve they were already in the presence of God, and in possession of the greatest bliss possible, wanting nothing to complete it. "Remember," says their liturgy, "O Lord! the souls of thy servants, our father Abba Matthias, and the rest of our saints, Abba Salama, and Abba Jacob." In another place, "Remember, O Lord! the kings of Ethiopia, Abreha, and Atzbeha, Caleb, and Guebra Mascal." And again, "Release, O, Lord! our father Antonius, and Abba Macarius." If this is not directly acknowledging a separate state, it can have no meaning at all.

304 I have already said, that the Agaazi, the predeces-
171 sors of those people that settled in Tigre from the mountains of the Habab, were shepherds adjoining to the Red Sea; that they speak the language Geez, and are the only people in Abyssinia in possession of letters; that these are all circumcised, both men and women. The former term, as applied to men, is commonly known to every one the least acquainted with the Jewish history. The latter is, as far as I know, a rite merely Gentile; although in Africa, at least that part adjoining to Egypt and the Red Sea, it is much more known and more universally practised than the other. This I shall call *excision*, that I may express this uncommon operation by as decent a word as possible. The Falasha likewise submit to both.

These nations, however they agree in their rite, differ in their accounts of the time they received this ceremony, as well as the manner of performing it. The Abyssinians of Tigre say, that they received it from Ishmael's family and his descendants, with whom they were early connected in their trading voyages. They say also, that the queen of Saba, and all the women of that coast, had suffered excision at the usual time of life, before puberty, and before her journey to Je-

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rusalem. The Falasha again declare, that their circumcision was that commonly practised at Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, and in use among them when they left Palestine, and came into Abyssinia. 304 171

The circumcision of the Abyssinians is performed with a sharp knife, or razor. There is no laceration with the nails, no formula or repetition of words, nor any religious ceremony at the time of the operation, nor is it done at any particular age, and generally it is a woman that is the surgeon. The Falasha say, they perform it sometimes with the edge of a sharp stone; sometimes with a knife or razor, and at other times with the nails of their fingers; and for this purpose they have the nails of their little fingers of an immoderate length. At the time of the operation, the priest chants a hymn, or verse, importing, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast ordained circumcision!" This is performed on the eighth day, and is a religious rite, according to the first institution by God to Abraham.

The Abyssinians pretend theirs is not so; and, being pressed for the reason, they tell you it is because Christ and the apostles were circumcised, though they do not hold it necessary to salvation. But it is the objection they constantly make against eating out of the same plate, or drinking out of the same cup, with strangers, that they are uncircumcised; while, with the Egyptians or the Cophts, though equally strangers, they make no such difficulty. In the time of the Jesuits, when the Roman Catholic religion was abolished, and liberty given them to return to their old worship, their priests proclaimed a general circumcision; and the populace, in the first days of their fury, or triumph, murdered many Catholics, by stabbing them with a lance in that part, as they met them, repeating, in derision, the Jewish hymn, or ejacula- 304 609

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304 tion, "Blessed is the Lord that hath ordained circum-
609 cision!" so that, I believe, their indifference in this article is rather owing to not being contradicted; just as they are careless about every other part of religion, unless such as have been revived in their minds by disputes with the Jesuits, and kept up since, in part, among their clergy. But none of them pretend that circumcision arises from necessity of any kind, or from any obstruction or impediment to procreation, or that it becomes necessary for cleanliness, or from the heat of climate.

304 None of these reasons, constantly alleged in Europe, are ever to be heard of here; nor do I believe they have the smallest foundation any where: and this, I think, should weigh strongly in favour of the account Scripture gives of it. Examining the origin of this ceremony, independent of this revelation, I will never believe that man, or nations of men, rashly submitted to a disgraceful, sometimes dangerous, and always painful operation, unless there had been proposed, as a consequence, some reward for submitting to, or some punishment for refusing it, which balanced in their minds the pain and danger, as well as disgrace, of that operation.

All the inhabitants of the globe agree in considering it shameful to expose that part of their body, even to men; and in the East, where, from climate, you are allowed, and, from respect to your superiors, the generality of men are forced to go naked, all agree in covering their waist, which is called their *nakedness*, though it is really the only part of their body that is covered. We see even that there a curse * at-

* Gen. chap. ix. ver. 22.

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tended the mere seeing that part of the body of a parent, and not instantly throwing a covering over it. 304

I do not propose discussing at large the arguments for or against the time of the beginning to circumcise. The Scripture has given such an account of it, that, when weighed with the promise so exactly kept to the end, seems to me to be a very rational one. But, considering all revelation out of the question, I think there is no room to institute any free or fair inquiry. I give no pre-eminence to Moses, nor his writings. I suppose him a profane author; but, till those that argue against his account, and maintain circumcision was earlier than Abraham, shall shew me another profane writer as old as Moses, as near the time they say it began as Moses was to the time of Abraham, I will not argue with them in support of Moses against Herodotus, nor discuss who Herodotus's Phenicians, and who his Egyptians were, that circumcised. Herodotus knew not Abraham nor Moses, and, compared to their days, he is but as yesterday. Those Phenicians and Egyptians might, for any thing he knew at his time, have received circumcision from Abraham or Ishmael, or some of their posterity, as the Abyssinians or Ethiopians, whom he refers to, actually say they did, which Herodotus did not know, it is plain, though he mentions they were circumcised. This tradition of the Abyssinians merits some consideration from what they say of it themselves, that they were, in the earliest time, circumcised before they left their native country, and settled in Tigre. From this they derive no honour, nor do they pretend to any. It would have been otherwise, if the era fixed upon had been the reign of Menilek, son of Solomon, when they first embraced Judaism under a monarch. This would have made a much more brilliant epoch in their history, whilst it was probable, that they adopted circumcision under

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304 the countenance of Azarias, the son of Zadok, the high priest, and the representatives of the twelve tribes who came with him at that time from Jerusalem.

304 171 It seems to me very extraordinary, that, if circumcision was originally a Jewish invention, all those nations to the south should be absolutely ignorant of it, while others to the northward were so early acquainted with it; for none of those nations upon the Nile (excepting the Shepherds), either know or practise it to this day; though, ever since the 1400th year before Christ, they have been in the closest connection with the Jews. This would rather make me believe, that the rite of circumcision went northward from the plain of Mamre; for it certainly made no progress southward from Egypt. We see it obtained in Arabia, by Zipporah *, Moses's wife, circumcising her son upon their return to Egypt. Her great anxiety to have that operation immediately performed, shews that her's was a Judaical circumcision; there was no sin that attended the omission of this operation in Egypt; but God had said to Abraham †, "The soul that is not circumcised shall be cut off from Israel."

The Tcheratz Agows, who live between Lasta and Begemder, in an exceedingly fertile country, are not circumcised; and, therefore, if this nation left Palestine upon Joshua passing Jordan, circumcision was not known there; for the Agows, to this day, are uncircumcised. The same may be said of the Agows of Damot, who are settled at the head of the Nile. It will be seen by the two specimens of their different languages, that they are different nations, as I have alleged. Next to these are the Gafat, in a plain open country, who do not use circumcision; none of them

* Exod. chap. iv. ver. 25.
† Gen. chap. xvii. ver. 14.

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were ever converted to Judaism, and but few of them 304
to Christianity. The next are the people of Amhara, 171
who did not use circumcision, at least few of them, till after the massacre of the princes by Judith, in the year 900, when the remaining princes of the line of Solomon fled to Shoa, and the court was established there. The last of these nations that I shall mention are the Galla, who are not circumcised; of this nation we have said enough.

On the north, a black, woolly-headed nation, called the Shangalla, already often mentioned, bounds Abyssinia, and serves like a string to the bow made by these nations of the Galla. Who they are we know perfectly, being the Cushite Troglodytes of Sofala, Saba, Axum, and Meroe; shut up, as I have already mentioned, in those caves, the first habitations of their more polished ancestors. Neither do these circumcise, though they immediately bordered upon Egypt; while the Cushite, adjoining to the peninsula of Africa, certainly did. As, then, so many nations contiguous to Egypt never received circumcision from it, it seems an invincible argument, that this was no endemial rite or custom among the Egyptians, and, I have before observed, that it was of no use to this nation; as the reasons mentioned by Philo, and the rest, of cleanliness and climate, are absolute dreams, and now exploded; and that they are so is plain, because, otherwise, the nations more to the southward would have adopted it, as they have universally done another custom, which I shall presently speak of.

Circumcision, then, having no natural cause or advantage, being in itself repugnant to man's nature, and extremely painful, if not dangerous, it could never originate in man's mind wantonly and out of free-will. It might have done so indeed from imitation; but with Abraham it had a cause, as God was to make his

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304 private family in a few years numerous like the sand
171 of the sea. This mark, which separated them from all the world, was an easy way to shew whether the promise was fulfilled or not. They were going to take possession of a land where circumcision was not known; and this shewed them their enemy distinct from their own people. And it would be the grossest absurdity to send Samson to bring, as tokens of the slain, so many foreskins, or prepuces, of the Philistines, if, as Herodotus says, the Philistines had cut off their prepuces a thousand years before.

304 I must here take notice, that this custom, filthy and barbarous as it is, has been adopted by the Abyssinians of Tigre, who have always been circumcised, from a knowledge that the nations about them were not circumcised at all. It is true they do not content themselves with the foreskin, and I doubt very much if this was not the case with the Jews likewise. On the contrary, in place of the foreskin, they cut the whole away, scrotum and all, and bring this to their superiors, as a token they have killed an enemy.

Although it then appears, that the nations which had Egypt between Abraham and them, that is, were to the southward, did not follow the Egyptians in the rite of circumcision; yet in another, that of excision, they all concurred. Strabo * says, the Egyptians circumcised both men and women, like the Jews. I will not pretend to say that any such operation ever did obtain among the Jewish women, as Scripture is silent upon it; and, indeed, it is nowhere ever pretended to have been a religious rite, but to be introduced from necessity, to avoid a deformity which nature has sub-

* Lib. xvii. p. 93[illegible].

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jected particular people to, in particular climates and countries. 304

We perceive among the brutes, that Nature, creating the animal with the same limbs, or members, all the world over, does yet indulge itself in a variety, in the proportion of such limbs or members. Some are remarkable for the size of their heads, some for the breadth and bigness of the tail, some for the length of their legs, and some for the size of their horns*. There is a district in Abyssinia, within the perpetual rains, where cows, of no greater size than ours, have horns, each of which would contain as much water as the ordinary water-pail used in England does; and I remember, on the frontiers of Sennaar, near the river Dender, to have seen a herd of many hundred cows, every one of which had the apparent construction of their parts almost similar with that of the bull; so that, for a considerable time, I was persuaded that these were oxen, their udders being very small, until I had seen them milked.

This particular appearance, or unnecessary appendage, at first made me believe that I had found the real cause of circumcision from analogy; but, upon information, this did not hold. It is, however, otherwise in the excision of women. From climate, or some other cause, a certain disproportion is found generally to prevail among them. And, as the population of a country has, in every age, been considered as an object worthy of attention, men have endeavoured to remedy this deformity by the amputation of that redundancy. All the Egyptians, therefore, the Arabians, and nations to the south of Africa, the Abyssinians, Gallas, Agows, Gafats, and Gongas, make

* Some of these large horns are in Mr Bruce's collection of natural history, &c., at Kinnaird. E.

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304 their children undergo this operation, at no fixed time indeed, but always before they are marriageable.

When the Roman Catholic priests first settled in Egypt, they did not neglect supporting their mission by temporal advantages, and small presents given to needy people, their proselytes; but mistaking this excision of the Coptish women for a ceremony performed upon Judaical principles, they forbade, upon pain of excommunication, that excision should be performed upon the children of parents who had become Catholics. The converts obeyed, the children grew up, and arrived at puberty; but the consequences of having obeyed the interdict were, that the man found, by choosing a wife among Catholic Cophts, he subjected himself to a very disagreeable inconveniency, to which he had conceived an unconquerable aversion; and therefore he married a heretical wife, free from this objection, and with her he relapsed into heresy.

The missionaries, therefore, finding it impossible that ever their congregation could increase, and that this accident frustrated their labours, laid their case before the college of Cardinals *de propaganda fide*, at Rome. These took it up as a matter of moment, which it really was, and sent over visitors skilled in surgery, fairly to report upon the case as it stood. They, on their return, declared, that the heat of the climate, or some other natural cause, did, in that particular nation, invariably alter the formation, so as to make a difference from what was ordinary in the sex in other countries; and that this difference did occasion a disgust, which must impede the consequences for which matrimony was instituted. The college, upon this report, ordered that a declaration, being first made by the patient and her parents, that it was not done from Judaical intention, but because it disappointed the ends of marriage, "Si modo matrimonii fructus impediret id omnino tollendum esset:" the

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the imperfection was, by all manner of means, to be 304
removed; so that the Catholics, as well as the Cophts, in Egypt, undergo excision ever since. This is done with a knife, or razor, by women, generally when the child is about eight years old *.

There is another ceremony, with which I shall close, 304
and this regards the women also, and I shall call it *in-* 765
cision. This is an usage frequent, and still retained among the Jews, though positively prohibited by the law: "Thou shalt not cut thy face for the sake of, or on account of, the dead †." As soon as a near relation dies in Abyssinia, a brother or parent, cousin-german or lover, every woman in that relation, with the nail of her little finger, which she leaves long on purpose, cuts the skin of both her temples, about the size of a sixpence; and therefore you see either a wound or a scar in every fair face in Abyssinia; and in the dry season, when the camp is out, from the loss of friends, they seldom have liberty to heal, till peace and the army return, with the rains.

The Abyssinians, like the ancient Egyptians, their 805
first colony, in computing their time, have continued the use of the solar year. Diodorus Siculus says, "They do not reckon their time by the moon, but according to the sun; that thirty days constitute their month, to which they add five days and the fourth part of a day, and this completes their year.

These five days were, by the Egyptians, called Nici, and by the Greeks, Epagomeni, which signifies, days

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* The reader will observe, by the obscurity of this passage, that it is with reluctance I have been determined to mention it at all; but as it is an historical fact, which has had material consequences, I have thought it not allowable to omit it altogether. Any naturalist, wishing for more particular information, may consult the French copy.

† Deut. chap. xiv. ver. 1.

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805 added, or superinduced, to complete a sum. The Abyssinians add five days, which they call Quagomi, a corruption from the Greek Epagomeni, to the month of August, which is their Nahaasse. Every fourth year they add a sixth day. They begin the year, like all the eastern nations, on the 29th or 30th day of August, that is, the kalends of September, the 29th of August being the first of their month Mascaram.

It is uncertain whence they derived the names of their months; they have no signification in any of the languages of Abyssinia. The name of the first month, among the old Egyptians, has continued to this day. It is Tot; probably so called from the first division of time among the Egyptians, from observation of the heliacal rising of the dog-star. The names of the months retained in Abyssinia are possibly in antiquity prior to this; they are probably those given them by the Cushite, before the kalendars at Thebes and Meroe, their colony, were formed.

The common epoch which the Abyssinians make use of, is from the creation of the world; but in the quantity of this period they do not agree with the Greeks, nor with other eastern nations, who reckon 5508 years from the creation to the birth of Christ. The Abyssinians adopt the even number of 5500 years, casting away the odd eight years; but whether this was first done for ease of calculation, or some better reason, there is neither book nor tradition that now can teach us. They have, besides this, many other epochs, such as from the councils of Nice and Ephesus. There is likewise to be met with in their books a portion of time, which is certainly a cycle; the Ethiopic word is kamar, which, literally interpreted, is an arch, or circle. It is not now in use in civil life among the Abyssinians, and therefore was mentioned as containing various quantities, from 100 years to 19;

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and there are places in their history where neither of these will apply, nor any even number whatever. 805

They constantly make use of the golden number and epact in all their ecclesiastic computations: the first they call Matque, the other Abacte. Scaliger, who has taken great pains upon this confused subject, the computation of time in the church of Abyssinia, without having succeeded in making it much clearer, tells us, that the first use or invention of epacts was not earlier than the time of Dioclesian; but this is contrary to the positive evidence of Abyssinian history, which says expressly, that the epact was invented by Demetrius[1], patriarch of Alexandria. "Unless," says the poet in their liturgy, "Demetrius had made this revelation by the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, how, I pray you, was it possible that the computation of time, called Epacts, could ever have been known?" And, again, "When you meet," says he, "you shall learn the computation by epacts, which was taught by the Holy Ghost to father Demetrius, and by him revealed to you." Now Demetrius was the twelfth patriarch of Alexandria, who was elected about the 190th year of Christ, or in the reign of the emperor Severus; consequently long before the time of Dioclesian.

It seems the reputation of the Egyptians had, from very old time, for their skill in computation and the division of time, remained with them late in the days of Christianity. Pope Leo the Great, writing to the emperor Marcian, confesses that the fixing the time of the moveable feasts was always an exclusive privilege of the church of Alexandria; and, therefore,

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[1] Encom. 12th. October. Od 3. tom. 1. Ann. Alexan. p. m 263.

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805 says he, in his letter about reforming the kalendar, the holy fathers endeavoured to take away the occasion of this error, by delegating the whole care of this to the bishop of Alexandria; because the Egyptians, from old times, seem to have had this gift of computation given them; and when these had signified to the apostolic See the days upon which the moveable feasts were to happen, the church of Rome then notified this by writing to churches at a greater distance.

We are not to doubt that this privilege, which the church of Alexandria had been so long in possession of, contributed much to inflame the minds of the Abyssinians against the Roman Catholic priests, for altering the time of keeping Easter, by appointing days of their own; for we see violent commotions to have arisen every year upon the celebration of this festival.

The Abyssinians have another way of describing time peculiar to themselves; they read the whole of the four evangelists every year in their churches. They begin with Matthew, then proceed to Mark, Luke, and John, in order; and when they speak of an event, they write and say it happened in the days of Matthew, that is, in the first quarter of the year while the gospel of St Matthew was yet reading in the churches *.

They compute the time of the day in a very arbitrary, irregular manner. The twilight, as I have before observed, is very short, almost imperceptible, and was

* This is not correct, at least with regard to written history; for whatever books they read in the quarters, it is uniformly the practice to denote the whole year by the name of an evangelist. The days of Matthew make one year, the days of Mark a second, of Luke and John a third and fourth, and so on in rotation. The four evangelists make a period of four complete years. R.

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still more so when the court was removed farther to the southward in Shoa. As soon as the sun falls below the horizon, night comes on, and all the stars appear. This term, then, the twilight, they choose for the beginning of their day, and call it Nagge, which is the very time the twilight of the morning lasts. The same is observed at night; and Meset is meant to signify the instant of beginning the twilight, between the sun's falling below the horizon and the stars appearing. Mid-day is by them called Kater, a very old word, which signifies culmination, or a thing's being arrived or placed at the middle or highest part of an arch. All the rest of times, in conversation, they describe by pointing at the place in the heavens where the sun then was, when what they are describing happened. 805

I shall conclude what further I have to say on this subject, by observing, that nothing can be more inaccurate than all Abyssinian calculations. Besides their absolute ignorance in arithmetic, their excessive idleness and aversion to study, and a number of fanciful, whimsical combinations, by which every particular scribe or monk distinguishes himself, there are obvious reasons why there should be a variation between their chronology and ours. I have already observed, that the beginning of our years are different; ours begin on the 1st of January, and theirs on the 1st day of September, so that there are 8 months difference between us. The last day of August may be the year 1780 with us, and 1779 only with the Abyssinians. And in the reign of their kings they very seldom mention either month or day beyond an even number of years. Supposing, then, it is known that the reign of ten kings extended from such to such a period, where all the months and days are comprehended, when we come to assign to each of these an

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805 equal number of years, without the correspondent months and days, it is plain that, when all these separate reigns come to be added together, the one sum-total will not agree with the other, but will be more or less than the just time which that prince reigned. This, indeed, as errors compensate full as frequently as they accumulate, will seldom amount to a difference above three years; a space of time too trivial to be of any consequence in the history of barbarous nations.

However, it will occur, that even this agreement is no positive evidence of the exactness of the time; for it may so happen that the sum-totals may agree, and yet every particular sum constituting the whole may be false; that is, if the quantity of errors which are too much exactly correspond with the quantity of errors that are too little. To obviate this as much as possible, I have considered three eclipses of the sun, as recorded in the Abyssinian annals. The first was in the reign of David III. the year before the king marched out to his first campaign against Maffudi the Moor, in the unfortunate war with Adel. The year that the king marched into Dawaro was 1526, after having dispatched the Portuguese ambassador, Don Roderigo de Lima, who embarked at Masuah on the 26th of April on board the fleet commanded by Don Hector de Silveyra; and the Abyssinian annals say, that, the year before the king marched, a remarkable eclipse of the sun had happened in the Ethiopic month Ter. Now, in consulting our European accounts, we find that, on the second of January, answering to the 18th day of Ter, there did happen an eclipse of the sun, which, as it was in the time of the year when the sky is cloudless both night and day, must have been visible all the time of its duration. So here our accounts do agree precisely.

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The second happened on the 13th year of the reign of Claudius, as the Abyssinian account states it. Claudius succeeded to the crown in 1540, and the 13th year of his reign will fall to be in 1553. Now we find this eclipse did happen in the same clear season of the year, that is, on the 24th of January 1553; so, in this second instance, our chronology is perfectly correct. 805

The third eclipse of the sun happened in the 7th year of the reign of Yasous II., in Magabit, the seventh month of the Abyssinians. Now Yasous came to the crown in 1729, so that the 7th year of his reign will be in 1736, and on the 4th day of October, answering to the 8th day of the month Tekemt, N .S. In that year, we see this eclipse observed in Europe.

As a further confirmation of this, we have stated the particulars of a comet which, the Abyssinian annals say, appeared at Gondar in the month of November, in the 9th year of the reign of Yasous I.; and as this comet was observed in Europe to have come to its perihelion in December 1689, and as that year, according to our account, was really the 9th of that king's reign, no further proof of the exactness of our chronology can possibly be required. By means of these observations, counting backward to the time of Icon Amlac, and again forward to the death of Joas, which happened in 1768, and assigning to each prince the number of years that his own historians say he reigned, I have, in the most unexceptionable manner that I can devise, settled the chronology of this country; and the exact agreement it has with all the remarkable events, regularly and sufficiently vouched, plainly shews the accuracy of this method. If, therefore, in a few cases, I differ two or three years from the Jesuits in their first account of this country, I do not in any shape believe the fault to be mine; be-

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805 cause there are, at all these periods, errors in point of fact, both in Alvarez and Tellez, much more material and unaccountable than the mistake of a few years; and these errors have been adopted with great confidence in the Hispania Illustrata, and some of the best books of Portuguese history which have made mention of this country.

[pp. 43-end not processed for the files.- (vol.5) Analyst]

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TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE,

IN THE YEARS

1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, & 1773.

BY

JAMES BRUCE OF KINNAIRD, ESQ.
F. R. S.

THE SECOND EDITION,
CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

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[pp. 1-62, Vol. 7 have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

APPENDIX

TO

BOOKS VII. AND VIII.

No. I.

Detached Articles from the several Journals and Common-place Books, containing additional information respecting Abyssinia *.

175 YASOUS TALLACK (the Great) subdued Lasta, and obliged it to pay 1000 ounces of gold per annum in tribute. It continued to pay till the war between Mariam Barea and Ras Michael, when each pretending to it, it became independant, and continues so at this present day, April 1770.

Harar is four days journey from Shoa, and seven from Aussa. It is farther inland, and a plain country. The chief has the title of Emir; and is frequently at war with Amha Yasous in Shoa, who is independant. The people are all Mahometans, called Turks by the Abyssinians.

317 Gold is found in the Shangalla's country in small lumps, is by them put into quills, and carried to Damot fair. This, at least, was the ancient custom when these barbarians sold their gold as necessity required. Since that time they have got scales and weights, and know, in general, the value.—The Agows are the purchasers, and adulterate it with silver;

* The paragraphs marked with N. B. by the Editor.

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317 one ounce to ten of gold, which gives it a very pale colour.

703 N. B. This observation is sufficiently confirmed by the colour of those links that still remain of the honorary gold chain conferred on Mr Bruce by the king of Abyssinia. These links are of a paler hue than a common guinea, rather coarsely made, and unpolished. Gold chains, called in Habbesh sunsulé, are a mark of dignity bestowed by the sovereign on the most meritorious persons in his army. It is usual to give a splendid suit of clothes at the same time, an Egyptian and Persian custom; vide Genesis, xli. 42. and Esther, viii. 15.

651 Wechne, in Belessen, is about 34 or 35 miles, a long day's journey from Emfras. There is paid, to maintain the royal family on the mountain, 250 ounces gold, and 730 cloths (this means webs of cotton cloth, called shuma). This is an old establishment. None are permitted to go up but the women carrying water. There was formerly a cistern, but it is now in ruins, and useless. There are near 300 persons there; and all the exiles are allowed to marry. Bacuffa escaped by help of his sister.

793 Extreme unction is unknown in Abyssinia; that is, the anointing with oil. However, when a person is attacked
792 with sickness, which threatens death, he often puts on a monk's hood, as a token that in case of recovery, he will abandon the world, and then receives the last sacrament, or rather he does so before putting it on; and it is generally the custom to distribute all his moveables to the churches, which the priests appropriate. These are traces of extreme unction. The great men ofen renounce the hood, and return to their former life.

792 N. B. The Abyssinian MS. histories are full of these instances, in which the great men, when disappointed in politics, retire to Waldubba, or other deserts, to live as monks. The distribution of goods and money made by the kings, when sick, to the churches, occurs in almost every reign. Before Yasous II. died, the Chronicle says, that he had given away every thing he had, in this way, except the crown on his head. When Joas was proclaimed, the Iteghe his grandmother wished to give a present to the poor, as usual at the begin-

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ning of a reign; which she could not do, until one of the nobles supplied her with a sum of money. There were only a few derims left in the treasury. 792

Abyssinian Harvests. They first sow barley from the end of April to the beginning of May, or later; that is, towards the first rains. This ripens in the rains in June; and is carried off the fields into the house, that it may not rot. Then they sow fitches, which likewise ripen in the rains after. In September they sow wheat, or teff, which is cut down in December; and, if they have water, they sow barley, or fitches, again in January. In Woggora (a very fertile province), there is seed-time, and harvest, and plowing, in every month in the year; water being easily diverted to the grounds. The rent paid to the king for the ground is one-tenth of what they reap, yet, with all this, they are all poor; for a harvest, at a medium, is about twenty after one; and they sometimes, nay, very often, scarce reap the seed. They never manure the ground; and there are great quantities of rats, and innumerable ants, that consume their corn at different, nay, at all periods of its growth. All their five harvests do not, in produce, equal one Egyptian one; and they are at five times the labour. In the several villages, living, in general, is very miserable; and, in general, people of consideration scarcely know any other diet than teff bread and bouza. Whether this teff is black, or white, is the whole difference between the diet of master and servant. 241 [511] [262]

Abyssinian Dress. The principal part of the dress of the natives is a large cotton cloth, 24 peek (cubits) in length, and one and a half in breadth, with a blue and yellow stripe round the bottom of it. This blue is not dyed; but the Surat blue cloths are unravelled and woven for this purpose; and the yellow they dye with sûf, the yellow thistle. The best for ordinary wear costs 10 salts, or 1¼ pataka, about 6s. 6d. English. It is called Kuara, as probably coming from that province. They are very beautiful and light. The other pieces of dress are breeches, which reach to their mid-thighs; and girt with a white girdle of cloth to the common people; but the better sort have red Indian cotton cloths for breeches; and silk, or worsted coloured girdles from the Levant. When they ride, they only hold their stirrups between their great and 291 [435] 492

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492 second toes. Even the king rides bare-footed; and being used chiefly to mules, they are far inferior horsemen to the Arabs.

Price of Gold. Gold, at a medium, sells for 10 pataka
436 each wakea; or 10 derims, salt, at a medium 8 per pataka.
435 The piece (of salt), speaking of it identically, is called Kourman, but in estimation, or such a thing costs so many salts, they are called Amooli. These are the ordinary currency for the necessaries of life. For considerable purchases, gold is used; and there is great loss in cutting the wakea into derims, at least one in ten. The gold is got by
[316] washing the earth in water, in wooden dishes. The grains, that remain behind are put into a quill, melted down, and
[325] alloyed, probably by the Shangalla; for it is pale, and is never brought to market in its first form, but melted down into small rods, or ingots. In Joas's time a wakea was valued only at 8 patakas. Yasous Tanush, or the II. turned round, and reduced the Sennaar Shangalla; but they are now quite independant of Habbesh. Their fair is held at Buré in Damot.

804 *Weights and Measures.* The wakea (or ounce), in Abyssinia, is considered as 10 derims, or drams, and 12 ounces
436 make a litir, or rotol (pound). At Gondar, the capital of all Abyssinia, the wakea is 6 drams, 40 grains, Troy weight English, and divided into 10 drams of 40 grains. The small money is salt bricks, dug out of the mines at Dancali, near the myrrh country. Every wakea, in ordinary times, gives from 72 to 76 salts. In 1769, the wakea was 80 salts, and June 15th, 1771, the wakea sold at 34, but there was a great difference in the size of the bricks. These are little or not at all liable to waste, as M. Montesquieu supposes. Abyssinian gold at Mocha is 15 or 16 patakas when the Sennaar gold is 22, because the Agows, &c. alloy it with silver.

At Masuah, the current money is the Venetian sequin, the pataka, or queen's dollar, and half-dollars. For small money are used grains of glass, called borjook, three of which make a chebir (Vid. Book V. Chap. ii.)

Corn sold at Masuah for four patakas the ardep, which
436 contains about 24 measures of the country. Coffee, six ro-
804 tol per pataka, sometimes ten, or even 15 rotol. Honey,

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four cuba for a pataka, each cuba about two rotol, or somewhat less. Butter, 20 rotol, for 1½ pataka, and 3½ harf. Civet, 1¼ pataka the wakea. Wax, 4 patt. the faranzola. Elephants teeth, 35 rotol for 18 patt. Water, 1½ paras the smallest jar, and 3 paras the largest. Abyssinian gold dust, 15 patt. per wakea, at Mocha. Dora, 12 measures for a pataka. The Venetian sequin goes for 2¼ patakas. 435 804

The Abyssinian grain measure is the ardeb, which, at Gondar, contains 10 measures, called Madega, each equal to 12 ounces, Cairo weight. An ardeb of grain costs 2 derims, or 2 patakas; an ardeb of teff, the same; 6 or 8 ardeb of tocusso pay an ounce (wakea) of gold, or 10 derims.

Servants Wages at Gondar *. At Gondar a maid-servant receives 15 salts per annum, and is fed in the house. A man-servant is paid 4 pataka yearly, which correspond to four wakea, or ounces of gold, Abyssinian weight, and receives besides two loaves, or cakes of teff, for his support daily. If his master is good, he sometimes gives him a little flesh, lentils, or vetches. He is not obliged to clothe him, but he sometimes gives him a pair of trowsers, which consist of about one-fourth of a yard of white cloth. 465 357

With respect to carriage, &c. three bundles of wood, which are brought from Tchagassa, three hours walking, cost a salt. The carriage of a jar, or manteca, full of wine, or honey, from Emfras, eight hours journey, pays a salt, of the weight of 3 faranzala, or so. 435 482

Thirty-three teff bread cost a salt; the loaves are about 3 lines thick, and 18 inches diameter. A pair of shoes (pantufle) cost a salt. 8¼ peeks of cloth is the least gift that can be offered in the country. 435

Bouza. Manner in which the Abyssinians make a kind of beer, that, in their language, is called bouza. 273

To make this, they use tocusso simply; but sometimes they mix it with grain (wheat), or dora, or all three together; but in ordinary tocusso is best. A jar of tocusso, or of the three sorts of grain, contains as much as is sufficient to make two loaves, that are a tenth part of the whole jar; besides which, they use about half a rotol of Ghesh leaves.

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* From this, to the 29th line of page 68, is a translation from the Italian of L. Balugani.

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273 The first part of the process is to grind the tocusso, after which they take a fourth part of it, and knead it with water and leaven, as if to make bread. This they put in a jar to ferment for two days, at the end of which they make a good many thin large cakes, and dry them on the fire till they become as hard as a stone, then break them down into crumbs, and put them in a large vessel full of water, capable of holding six times the volume of the grain; or for one jar of grain, the vessel holds five of water, and one for the quantity of grain. At the same time that they put in the bruised bread, as above-mentioned, into that quantity of water, the other things should be got ready to go in also. The grain ought to be fermented for two days, then dried in the sun, and afterwards ground into meal. The Ghesh leaves are ground likewise. The remainder of the meal, or those three-fourths that were not used to make the bread, must be put into a hollow oven, over a fire, with a small quantity of water, and constantly stirred with a stick, until it become a paste; and when the water is dried up, more is put in, constantly stirring the mass until it become black like a coal. The whole so prepared, the crumbs, the mass, and the leaves, are put together into the large jar, and let alone for a day, after which it is poured off, and preserved in jars well stopped. At the end of seven or eight days this liquor begins to be too strong, and is best when fresh, two or three days old.

584 [581] *Marriage.* Marriage is not considered in Abyssinia as a sacrament, yet the church ordains some rules to be observed, in order that the man and the woman may be faithful towards one another. The ordinary method of marriage among people of condition, and among those who most fear God, is the following: The man, when he resolves to marry a girl, sends some person to her father to ask his daughter in marriage. It seldom happens that she is refused; and when she is granted, the future husband is called into the girl's house, and an oath is taken reciprocally by the parties, that they will maintain due fidelity to one another. Then the father of the bride presents to the bridegroom the fortune that he will give: it consists of a particular sum of gold, some oxen, sheep, or horses, &c. according to the circumstances of the people. Then the bridegroom is obliged to find surety

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for the said goods; which is some one of his friends that presents himself, and becomes answerable for him in case he should wish to dismiss his wife, and be not able, through dissipation, or otherwise, to restore all that he has gotten. 584

Further, at the time when they display the fortune of the bride, the husband is obliged to promise a certain sum of money, or an equivalent in effects, to his wife, in case he should chuse to abandon her, or separate himself from her. This must also be confirmed by an oath of the future husband, and of his surety. A certain time, of twenty or thirty days, is determined also by a reciprocal oath, that on the last of these they will go together to church, and receive the sacrament. When all these matters are concluded, the future spouse appoints the marriage-day, and then returns home. When that day arrives, the intended husband goes again to his bride's house, where she appears, and shews him her moveables (mobiglia), or clothes; and he must promise and swear a-new the fore-mentioned articles; and that he will use his wife well; never leave her without meat, or cloathing; keep her in a good house, &c. all which his surety must confirm. When this is over, the bridegroom takes his lady on his shoulders, and carries her off to his house. If it be at a distance, he does the same thing, but only goes entirely round about the bride's house; then sets her down, and returns her into it. After this ceremony, a solemn banquet takes place, consisting of raw beef and bread, and honey-wine, or hydromel, or another beveridge from grain, called bouza, a sort of beer very sour and disgusting. The feast being ended, the parties mount each a mule, and ride to the bridegroom's house, where is concluded all the ceremony necessary to marriage before they live together. When they have lived together during the appointed term of twenty or thirty days, they must both appear at church, and declare before the priest that they are husband and wife, and that they are come to receive the sacrament. The priest, without more ado, celebrates mass; they communicate, and return home. 585

After some time, although both have sworn to live all their life faithful to one another, they take the liberty to separate; if it is the husband who wishes to get off, he, or his surety, must pay the wife that which she brought, and 586

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586 likewise the sum stipulated in case of separation. If they have had children, the boys always go with the mother, even if there were but an only child; if there be no boys, she takes none of the girls. When the separation comes from the lady, the husband is liable to no restitution, provided he has been always faithful to the married state, as promised; but if it is on account of his bad conduct, or irregular life, that she forms this resolution, he is always subject to his promise and the above-mentioned articles.

It sometimes happens that the husband and wife, mutually, without any cause of ill-will, agree to part; in this case, the effects brought by the wife are united with the sum stipulated by the husband; then divided into equal shares, of which the parties take each one, and return to their former places of abode.

585 This is the established form of those marriages which are said to be celebrated justly, and according to the church. But, with regard to inferior people, these seldom take place; in proof of which I can mention what a person of credit asserted, who had lived twenty-five years in this country. He affirmed, that in all that time he had not seen, nor known, of a marriage at the church, in the places where he lived, except one single instance. I may add to his the testimony of a priest in Tigre, who swore solemnly, that in all Addua, the capital of that province, he was the only man who was married according to the church, that is, in the forementioned manner.

The ordinary way of marrying is this: When two persons ****. Here the MS. breaks of; L. Balugani having been either interrupted, or weary of the subject. It is to be regretted, that he has not given the manner in which the bulk of a nation, very little influenced by Christianity, perform one of the most essential ceremonies in life. His account of the marriage of the church is confirmed by Gregory of Hagara-Christos, in Ludolph's Abyssinian History and Commentary.

It may be gathered from various hints in Mr Bruce's papers, that the Abyssinian peasants and soldiers marry in a few minutes. No settlement, portion, or surety, being necessary, they eat an ox, or two or three sheep raw; the favourite method of cutting pieces from them, while alive, being

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preferred; a great deal of bouza is drunk on the occasion; 585
dancing, shouting, and various kinds of licentiousness, are practised; if a priest be near, he sprinkles them with holy water, and repeats a hallelujah. The company join in the benediction; and no delicacy of manners constrains either the parties, or the guests. The bride does not appear abroad till about ten days after her marriage. These connections are easily dissolved; but the king's judges, and the governors of provinces, take care that the children shall be maintained by their parents, or others. Judgment is given in all matters by the civil courts; nothing being left to the clergy but the decision of matters fixed by the canons (kanoun), or positive law of the church.

The sons of the royal family confined in Wechne are allowed to marry, but it is only by connivance. No persons of rank give their daughters to these exiles. On the other hand, the Ozoros, or princesses, are given away to every great man in the kingdom, and their marriages and divorces are scandalously frequent. The ceremony at the marriage of a prince, or princess, is as follows *: The match having been settled previously, according to the views of the court, preparations are made for the festival, which is generally held during the rainy season, while the country is secure and abandoned to pleasure. The king being seated on the throne, in the large hall of audience, the parties are introduced before him, with their respective attendants. After kissing his hand, they are all magnificently clothed in dresses of brocade, or other rich stuffs, with presents of knives, &c. corresponding to their habits. The crown is sometimes set on their heads; they receive the benediction of the kees hatse, or king's almoner; after which they retire clothed with the caftan, and mount horses given them by the king, on which they ride in great state, in the midst of acclamations of joy and prosperity, to the house of the bridegroom. A banquet, or dinner, is prepared there; in the course of which, many oxen are slaughtered at the door, in order to furnish *brind*, which is served up, reeking from the animal. Deep drinking then commences; in which the ladies and gentlemen indulge together to a degree incredible, because it is un-

* Introd. to the small MS. Chronicle.

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585 known, in Europe. These marriages are, by no means, permanent: Many of the Ozoros, who always rule their husbands, marry as often as they please; dissolving the marriage preceding at the dictates of convenience, or fancy. But notwithstanding the general licentiousness, there are found several faithful wives and mothers, who are content to deviate from the common example.

766 When any of the king's children dies, it is the custom to hang the audience-chamber with tapestry and curtains, and spread carpets on the floor. The king, having entered, sits on the throne, and the *iteagerd*, a set of professed mourners [167] of the female sex, along with the nobles and household-servants, attend. One of the licaonte, a priest, reads over a list of the former kings with great solemnity, adding, after every name, "May the Lord have mercy on his soul, even to the fifth generation." The assembly reply, "Amen, ycoune, so let it be." At last he says, "Greatly may the Lord have mercy on the soul of ***, who died this day;" on which the Ozoros and their women, the mourners, the household, and the nobles, all set up a loud and general cry of lamentation, and weep for some time. If the person has died in the camp, or city, the coffin is brought before the king, but if not, he performs the ceremony without it. It is afterwards carried out with sendic and nagareet, and buried by the Betwudet, or Billetana-gueta dakakin, in the manner which shall be afterwards mentioned.

361 Koscam * is the richest church in Abyssinia; it is situated on the banks of Kahha, below a ruinous palace, or house, of the king. There are about 40 houses in the village, all belonging to the principal Kuaragna, the party of the queen. All the Kuaragna, Eshte, Eusebius, and the rest, had their troops drawn up to attack Michael when called to Gondar by Joas, at the advice of Lubo. They designed to engage him on the Angrab, but failed completely. The residing people at Koscam, after Joas's death, were in great fear of Michael, and wore a hood, or cowl, like the monks. Gondar is 2¾ miles, perhaps 3, at its greatest length, and nowhere above a mile broad. The palace is in the centre. Below the town, on the S. W. at the conflux of

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From this to the end, wholly in the words of Mr Bruce.

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the Angrab and Kahha, is the Mahometan town. These rivers inclose the town on its N. and S. sides, and join on the W. On the S. E. part of it is the church of Debra-berhan. On the N. E. is Kedus Gabriel. Two suburbs above Kedus Gabriel, is Anta Naggar, the hill, where, till Yasous's time, the Tigre, in consequence of a proclamation, were obliged to halt, and not allowed to enter Gondar. 361

In Abyssinia there remains not a shadow of the hospitality, which is said to be a trait in the character of barbarous nations. 574

They divide the day into five parts (humisi). From the twilight, which is here short, it is nagga; about nine it is called selest, or the third hour; mid-day is kutter; three o'clock, tessaat; and sun-set, serk. They judge by the height of the sun, having neither clocks nor watches. The other hours mentioned in their books are counted 1, 2, 3, &c. after dawn, sun-rise, or sun-set. 805

There are two kinds of monarchy; one is absolute, where there are no written laws, but the will of the prince carried into effect by his command and force; another is, where there are laws and restraints, but these occasionally broken through. The Abyssinian government is neither of those. There are no laws: the lives of the king's subjects and their lands are *de jure* his; he is absolute and sole master of their lives and property: Yet he has no military force; this is all in the hands of the governors of provinces, whose safety lies in keeping the prince in want of every thing. It is a monstrous kind of monarchy, and to this are owing the continual wars and rebellions. While the districts were small, these were prevented; but minorities, weak reigns, &c. have united them into great ones, each of which are more than a match for the sovereign; indeed, the forty-four nagareets of Tigre united are more than a match for all Abyssinia. Damot and Agow-midre, joined to Maitsha, when they please, starve the capital, and leave the king not only without army and provisions, but even meat and clothes for himself. The Turkish and Galla wars have accelerated this state of affairs. Each of the governments have become a kind of fiefs, very rarely not granted to the family of the deceased, and that one of it most likely to be serviceable. 642 631

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644 *King's Household.* The Serachmasery is Yesous Alaka*; he anoints the king at the coronation, and has ten ounces of gold for his salary. The Licaonte vote standing before the King and the Ras, but before the Billetana-gueta dakakin, and other meconem, sitting. Four licaonte and four azajes only vote before the king. The Palambaras was of old, in Tigre, called Lik sof. The Baal-magwass goes immediately before the king, dressed as the king, and his face, as the king's, half-covered. All his actions are imputed to the king; and when he kills an enemy in fight, it is said the king killed him. Shalaka are the heads of the king's soldiers, who are called by respective names, as Gimja-bet, Werk-saccala, &c. Azaje are officers over the king's household and revenues. The servants of the Licaonte are called Firaje and Baalheg; they vote with the Licaonte, and before them in civil causes. Rakmasery is superintendant of the bread, and the Shum mes of the wine, or hydromel. The Tersemba Azaje is the judge, or, as it is called, Dabna of the Wezizir, or nobles; Dimshas is an officer under him. Of the officers called Hadug, there are two; these are the king's wakeels, in the Abuna's house, and have one-third of his revenues.

Gera and Kanya wust-Azaje. He is the person, who, in capital crimes, accuses for the king; and is always one of the Licaonte, the most remarkable for his experience and discernment. Debena-bet haits is the person that executes, by his servants, all criminals at Debabay; he has the guard there at night, and, about three in the morning, gives the signal of the approach of day to the officers of the king's house by about 30 smacks of a whip, to drive away the hyænas and beasts of prey, that come to Debabye, the place of execution, in search of carcases. He has also the right of sending expresses to Gondar of the king's victories, and brings with him the heads, pudenda, &c. of traitors, which are exposed on the tree at the place of execution; at which time the merchants, both Mahometan and Christian, give presents, which, on great occasions, amount to 10 wakeas from each Moslem, and the same from the Atary, or Christian merchants. The viceroy, or kasmati of Ti-

* A church within, or near the palace.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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gre, drinks out of a golden cup, as keeper of the law at Axum. There are 12 nagareets in Tigre, and forty-four persons are invested with the Ras-werk. 644

Church affairs. The Abuna is appointed by proclamation of the king, and is deposed at his pleasure. He holds of no other person. He ordains priests and deacons within the kingdom, consecrates churches, altars (tabot), &c. His revenue was once very considerable, esteemed one-third of the revenues of the kingdom; but as those princes, who made the grants, resided in Shoa, or in the south of Tigre, the principal lands are in those provinces, adjoining to the royal residence. Now, the southern provinces are all in the hands of the Galla, as well as part of Tigre, and the governor, or Ras, has assumed the rest; so that of 400 oz. of gold once paid by Tigre, the Abuna, in my time, got only twenty-five, one-third of which went to the king's wakeel in his house. The Abuna appoints no officer, civil, or ecclesiastical; the king, or governor, does all. The king appoints officers, called Alaka, who administer in all cases the revenue of churches and convents; and this person is the judge of differences and suits among the priests and monks of his church, or fraternity, from whom lies no appeal but to the King, or to the Ras, who is understood to represent him. This Alaka is, or is not, a monk, or priest, at the king's pleasure. Of those who are called monks, are the communities of Debra Libanos, or Azazo, as it is now called, Waldubba, Werkleva, Damo, Mahabar Selasse, &c. These live in villages in these places, and reside or not as they please. The rest of that name are those who are ordained on any illness, disappointment, or advanced in life. The monks are ordained by the Itchegue, the others by any ordinary priest. Neither take any vow. The women of Waldubba are of the first kind, and all women past pleasure compose the second. There are many instances of both orders renouncing and marrying. 793 794

All persons, as well ecclesiastical as civil, are subject to the same laws, judgment, and tribunal, without exception, be the cause of whatever nature it may be. The Abuna, or Itchegue, have none of them a tribunal, nor can they take cognizance of any cause; especially the Abuna, who has, as I have said, an officer in his house appointed by the king, who pu- 692

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692 nishes all persons by that authority, even those of the Abuna's family, without any sort of deference paid to him; and this, as appears by the judges, or king's records, is of very ancient standing. The king calls an assembly of the clergy when he pleases, generally with the advice of the Abuna, and there is none considered legal if he is not present, if in the kingdom.

[682] Welled Hayrat (Ras Michael's son) was excommunicated for killing a refugee at the Abuna's feet, in consequence of which he confiscated the Abuna's villages in Tigre, nor was the curse ever taken off *. The Itchegue, or prior of the 693 monks, if he be chosen a lay-man, must be ordained by the 793 Abuna. He is named by the king, who nominates all superiors of monasteries. The Lika-cahanat, or chief of the priests, is ordained by the Abuna and Itchegue, who both hold a corner of a scarf put upon him. He is an inquisitor of morals among the priests, and has so much salt and cloth from each district. A priest at his ordination pays three salts to the Abuna. He comes to the house of the latter, enters, and kisses the threshold. The Abuna, sitting on a sofa at one end of the room, reads the Scriptures to himself. Then having paid his salt, the person retires and kisses the threshhold, returning without imposition of hands, or any ceremony. Old men are made priests, and young men deacons by a simple jussit. More probable accounts say, that there is only one salt paid, that the person stands at the door, while the Abuna, having made the sign of the cross, holding it in his hand, says, "I have ordained you a priest." The person then enters the room, kisses the cushion of the sofa, and retires. Many are ordained that can neither read nor write.

[764] The Abyssinians have an office for the dead; and worship 778 pictures of saints, even such as are not consecrated. This we had an opportunity of seeing, every time we were obliged to draw some Madonna. All those that saw it, kissed the 000 ground before it, with their foreheads on the earth. The

* The Abuna's house is a kind of sanctuary, in which criminals are protected from massacre, not from trial. They are sometimes tried there by the royal judges, or dragged from it to the tribunal.

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principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by 794 The
those who are sick, or dying.

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a 292
white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar.

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephiac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the 796
church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married 784
are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Per- [846]
sons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the [841]
church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is perform- [304]
ed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first [852]
day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occasions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment.

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure 131
in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It 361
may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla 101
who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma;

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101 and these Toluma come down to the Nile, and divide Walaka and Shoa from the Nile.

651 Agow-midre pays yearly to the king in all about 1000 ounces of gold; and 1000 dabras of honey, each dabra about 60 rotol. It pays also about 1000 or 1500 cattle. Ancasha, Azena, Quaquera, and Banja, pay their quota in honey; Banja, gold; Metchakel, Ayamico's country, gold; Zigam, gold, no honey. Danguiah, Dengla, and Saccala, all are called Ancasha. Dengla pays chiefly cattle, and a large kind of sheep called Macoot. Butter is no part of the meery, but is brought as a present on paying the meery. After passing the Kelti, on the right, by the Bronti, is Atchefer, after that Quaquera, then Dengla, then Banja, then Metchakel. Tembua belongs to the Ras, and the revenue is paid to him. The first heavy stroke the Agow received of late years was Waragna, father of this Fasil, bringing Galla from beyond the Abay, and wasting their country entirely. He burnt the houses and churches, and led away captive the women and children. Under the mild government of Casmati Eshte they began to revive, but now again under Fasil they are very low.

361 Metchakel is one long day's journey, I suppose 36 miles, from Boori (Bure); it is inhabited by Galla Djawi. After these are the Basso Gallo; and the Gooderoo Galla of Kasmati Boro. His place is called Hadis Amba. These border on Gojam, Damot, and Metchakel. Gafat is not one continued country, but villages here and there. Wumbarma is Gafat. Metchakel is, however, a much more considerable country. Beyond the Nile, west of Bure, the country for a considerable distance is dry, deserted, and uninhabited, the Galla living further into the territory. All the banks are there high, steep, and unwholesome, and full of trees. These Galla are Amoro Jidda. Guesgue belongs to the Iteghe, has a nagareet, and gives the title of Kasmati. It pays 1000 cloths, 50 oxen, and 100 wakeet.

The caravans of Egypt used to go from Aidab, or Gaidab, to Dahalac, in their way to Yemen, or Jidda, the port of Mecca. Souakin is seven days south of Gaidab.

101 The Galla, west of the Abay, say, that they are descended of a Gin or devil, and a woman of the tribe of Koreish.
563 They are always at war with the Nareans, Abyssinians, or

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Mahometans. They reckon about 12,000 horse of Galla 101
between the Nile and Narea. The tribes go every seventh 563
year to the reigning house, where the council debates on the duties of government. The points agitated are, how our fathers governed, what measures are to be taken with murderers and robbers on the high-ways, how merchants are to be dealt with, &c. The young then declaim in favour of violence and injustice; after which the elders, five in number, are asked. These decide in favour of equity. The king is afterwards chosen by a plurality of voices.

Waragna, father of Fasil, was converted to Christianity. His father was Wusho (signifying a dog), of the western Galla, of the tribe Jimmali. He was a merchant; but being remarked to be brave in a battle Bacuffa had with these Galla, he was invested with the caftan, and made commander of several places on the frontiers of Damot.

The Djawi Galla of Damot, Gafat, and Metchakel, as also the Galla of Maitsha, came there, in the time of Yasous Tallac. The Basso, and other Galla of Gojam, were brought there by Hatze Fasil; others say his son Hannes.

Maitsha, from the place the Abay comes out of the lake 361
to Courtohha, is 1½ day's march, at a moderate pace, 6 hours a day; from Courtohha, the hither part, to Samseen, one long day's journey; and from the same part to the Abay at Goutta, a very long day's journey, at a brisk pace.

The Shankala entrench their huts against surprise, and 563
burn large fires. They wear a long shield, covering nearly the whole side, and five lances each, which they throw or stab with as needed. Bows and arrows are their chief weapons. They dig up gold among reddish earth, which they burn in the fire, and gather it as it runs out in small pieces like shot. They put it next in to a small purse, or other sort of bag. Every individual is free to search for it. They are flat-nosed and flat-lipped, very black, best shaped in the upper parts, but with bad knees and legs.

The Bure way to Narea is W. in the country south by A- 487
moro. The nearest way is by Gojam and Gooderoo, performed in 30 days with loaden asses, about eight or nine miles a-day.

Harar is a very large town, has five gates, and is constant- 361
ly at war with Habbesh, or the Galla. The ridge of hills

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36 continues from Masuah to Cape Gardefan. Harar, Adel, and the Gibbertis, all hate Franks and Christians. Their prince is an Imam. The road north to the Toluma Galla is nearest by Harar; to the Woolo by Aussa. There runs the large river Hawash. There is no communication with the sea at Harar, which is surrounded on the south and east by multitudes of Galla through all that country to the interior of the continent of Africa.

From the Toluma Galla, which is one day south of Amhara to Gurague, is seven days of an ass from morning to night, I suppose 15 to 16 miles per day. From Gurague to Narea, 4 days; in their way they pass the Bashilo, but not the Kibbee, which passes through Narea. The Bashilo falls into the Abay before they pass Angheree, and they meet with it past Gerramidre before they enter Gurague.

From Raheeda to Aussa, 5 or 6 days. From Aussa to Harar, 6 days moderate journey; in 4 a strong man can accomplish it. From Raheeda to the Woolo, 15 days; from these to Amhara, 8 days. From Raheeda to Woolo all the country is plain; the journey is performed with camels, I suppose 10 miles per day. They carry water with them in girbas, and at one time are three or four days without any other supply. Aussa is now no separate kingdom, but dependant on Harar; the race of people was from Harar, and therefore they are not subject to strangers. They are called Mellassua, and still preserve their language, which is the same with that of the Gibbertis. They count up 317 kings. From this city was Mahomet Gragne. The whole country is Adel; from Zeila to Harar is 8 days journey; but Zeila is now little inhabited, on account of the faithlessness of the natives in robbing the Jelalib. Soomal is governed by a chief at peace with Adel. Harar, the capital of Adel, has 99 villages, all governed each by a vizir, and pay tribute.

Goutta is not in Damot, though depending on it. A small peaked hill, pointed with rock, is called Geesh, or Gutch. Southward, scarce a quarter of a mile from the fountains of the Nile, the plain ends in a precipice, planted with very tall sambucs, and other trees. In this is a cavern called Washa, which they say communicates with the fountains, and that when it rains violently the water overflows and comes in hither. The Shum Kefla Abay told me, that in the constant

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rains of Naasse and Hamlie, it never overflows at the springs, nor do the fountains seem larger. He remembered the accession of Hatze Yasous to the throne, and was about 80 years old. The east side of the Nile is less barren than the west side. Aformasha is not barren. 361

Singular custom. The Betwudet (in Habesh), upon the death of any Wiziro, is obliged to pay the expences of the ceremony, called Misle, which amounts to 100 oxen, 3000 loaves of wheat bread, 20 jars hydromel, wood, &c. the whole about 60 ounces of gold. The ceremony is this: A sort of figure, resembling the defunct, is placed upon horseback, in his usual dress, and so carried in procession about the outer court of the palace, with the royal standard (sendick) carried before it, and the nagareet beating. This is called, in this country, "burying with sendick and nagareet;" for which the Betwudet has 1200 ardeb of wheat yearly out of the Attekolla. 651 766

The route of the Islam merchants, S. is by two ways, with loaden asses, 8 or 9 miles per day. The way by Gojam is performed in 30 days to Sebou, and thence for other 10 to Narea. The Kibby, or Zebee, rises in Narea. Coffee, of different kinds, grows there in abundance, and the Galla feed on it. They use the lex talionis, but their internal justice is strict. They are very scrupulous of oaths: Wauke Laftan, by heaven and earth, is one of the most solemn. There are three races of Galla, the Guangoul in Angot, north-east of Begemder; Mahomet Ali, another farther west than the Guangoul, towards Amhara; and a third, Mahomet, brother of Lubo, west of Amhara. The rest are pagans; but when converted are said to be better Christians than the native Abyssinians. 487

Mahabar Selasse is four commodious days journey from Gondar, in the line of Tchemmera and Tenkel. Near it pass the rivers Shimfa and Gandova, the last of which has several very high cataracts; it joins to the Shankala, and is about two days journey from Tchemmera. Both rivers fall into the Nile. 133

The river Bashilo separates Amhara from Begemder; the Mashilla, a river of Gojam, and the river Nefasse, fall into the Nile at the same place. In the country of the Galla west of Damot, across or west of the Abay, there is little

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133 water, and near the banks of the river the country is desert.

Damot pays 800 ounces (wakea) of gold; formerly 1000.
651 Gojam 80 ounces, and 70 mules. Lasta 1000 ounces; these last years it pays no more, being at present annexed to Begemder. Tigre pays 400 ounces in salt and cotton cloths. Walcait 1500 ounces in cotton cloths.

131 The latitude of Adderghey is 13° 24′ 56″; of Macara, on
361 Lamalmon, 13° 6′ 8″; of Gondar, 12° 34′ 30″; of Emfras, 12° 12′ 38″; of the fountains, 10° 58′ 58″.

Note at Lebeia.—The Arabs are fond of music, especially
000 vocal; for they have no instruments but a kind of flute, of the size of a German flute, which gives a wild and not unmelodious sound, and the cymbal or drum, with ten pieces fixed to its sides, which is chiefly used in cadence in dancing, or for symphonies. Their vocal music, or songs, are upon first hearing disagreeable; but it rarely happens that one who has a good ear is not soon fond of them. They are all upon love; at least I never heard any that had war for their subject; some have religion, and are sung by their Shekhs, or saints. The former have effects upon their hearers nearly as extravagant as the ancient music produced. They have no music in parts, and have absolutely no idea of harmonical composition.

[pp. 81-end have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

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191 Ethiopian Folktales Ascribed to the Late Nineteenth Century Amhara Wit,
212 Alāqa Gābre-Hanna:—Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia today, is gradually be-
538 coming the *lingua franca* of the empire. Until recently it was spoken mainly on the fertile highland plateau of central and northwestern Ethiopia, in part of what was formerly known as Abyssinia. Predominantly Coptic Christian, the Amhara people have sacred writings in Ge'ez, old Ethiopic. Amharic has adapted this ancient script to its own use. The folklore of the Amhara is mainly oral (except for religious texts) and represents a crosscurrent of Mid-
[565] dle Eastern and African cultures. Traditionally, Amhara society was one of priests, feudal lords, and peasants. Lower on the social scale were non-Coptic ethnic groups who performed such important economic functions as ironsmithing and pottery-making.

538 This is reflected in the folklore. On non-religious, everyday subjects, the wit of the Am-
522 hara is peasant-like, earthy, full of tales of Rabelaisian appetites and sly solutions to human
193 problems. The Amharic language lends itself readily to puns and hidden meanings, since many verbs can have double or triple interpretations due to the hidden variations in the basic verbal stem and the absence or presence of gemination of some consonants. The listener must pay close attention. If he misinterprets the context and fails to discern the pun, he is often made the butt of the next tricky joke by those who have heard it before. The more a storyteller and wit masters the *sowaso* 'grammar' of the Amharic language, the better he can manipulate this humor.

538 A master of this art was *Alāqa* 'Chief' (an honorary title) Gābre-Hanna, a contem-
159 porary of Emperor Menelik just before the end of the nineteenth century. As far as is known, he never put into writing any of his stories, witticisms, linguistic gymnastics, and philosophical puns. But to this day the peasants and even the nobles remember his stories well and tell them so often that a number of versions have developed.

He was a native of Gondar and had all the provincial pride of the "Gondarey" in the one-time greatness of this town and district that is now back country. He lived at the time the present capital, Addis Ababa, was being built and the King of Shoa had become Emperor of Abyssinia. Like many another "Gondarey," Alāqa Gābre-Hanna pretended to disdain the newfangled importations of Emperor Menelik and the growing employment of subjugated Galla tribal chiefs at the imperial court. Jokingly, he took the liberty of referring to the Emperor's home province, Shoa, as "that Galla province." (Even today much
[191] Galliña is spoken there, a result of the sixteenth century conquest of the area by Galla tribes.) No one else would have dared such a remark, but he was popular with Emperor Menelik and especially with the Empress Taitu, and could tell them certain frank truths and tease them with irony in a semi-polite manner. However, he was not a court jester.

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538 When miffed, or in temporary disgrace, he would request permission to return to his native
159 Gondar. Subsequently he would send excuse after excuse to the capital for refusing to go back there, until he felt that he had been sufficiently coaxed to assuage his pride as a scholar and that further hesitation might result in serious difficulties, even for him. Empress Taitu was a very powerful figure and often protected him when he had gone too far with Emperor Menelik (her fifth husband).

Although the following stories have no titles except "Story of Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna,"
[114] I have given them names to point up the major emphasis. This material was gathered orally from Amharic-speaking peasants and nobles in the Gondar region (during my field trip to that area in 1953-54 on a grant from the Ford Foundation).

539 *The Wit And The Nitwit.* AG-H didn't like the rumor going around that he had become a snob, that he didn't greet common people politely any more. One day, accompanied by his usual retinue of friends and admirers, he was greeted effusively with deep bows by a certain donkey-
[576] driver who was known as none too bright. In return, to quash the nasty rumors, AG-H bowed just as deeply, from the hips, instead of the usual nod from one of his station in life. But, unable to resist the temptation for a witticism, he greeted the donkey-driver with the words *"Endēt ad-derachuh? 'How are ye?'"*

Unaware that the second person plural had been used, the proud donkey-driver was soon boasting at the nearest barley-beer hut of the honor he had received. His cronies made him repeat the exact remark, suspecting some twist. They quickly convinced the poor fool that the greeting had included him in the same class with his donkeys, and the simpleton slunk away in shame.

Another version of the story: But the donkey-driver was, after all, a proud Amhara. Realizing that he had been made a fool of, he took his walking stick, went to the house of AG-H, and beat him unmercifully. This was one time that his wit struck back at him.

Good Eating Comes First. Though greatly honored at the court of Emperor Menelik in newly-built Addis Ababa, AG-H was once again homesick for his native Gondar. Finally, he was granted permission for a leave home.

He promptly organized his small caravan and was about to mount his mule when he noticed two fat cows being taken to slaughter. Thinking of the long trip ahead without fresh beef, he decided to wait around and obtain a good share of the meat which was being rapidly parcelled out. The meat had to be washed down with a huge jugful of barley-beer and honeymead, and so the day passed with pleasant feasting. It was late afternoon when it happened that Emperor Menelik came riding by. Surprised to see the homesick scholar still in the capital, the Emperor addressed him: "I gave you permission to go, and you are still here?"

But, as usual, his wit did not fail AG-H. *"Lam gäb* 'the cows were entering,' your Majesty," he replied. (The phrase is used to indicate dusk, when the cows come home, too late to start on a trip. The cows had indeed "entered," i.e., into the stomach of AG-H; and no one could accuse him later of having told a lie to the Emperor.)

Pride Of A Man From Gondar Province. The next time AG-H became homesick occurred in the middle of the long Lenten fast. The housewives of Gondar were famous for their many spicy recipes for cooking fish in that season, and when AG-H thought of these his mouth watered and nothing pleased him any more in Shoa province.

One day he was invited to dine at the house of a noble of Shoa. The odor of fish being cooked attracted him to the cooking hut. It seemed to him that the woman cook had not properly cleaned the fish and had added too much water. He began to moan and groan.

"What's the matter?" asked his host.

Pointing to the watery fish stew, AG-H replied: "The fish are better off than I. They are *in their native state,* but I am so far from mine!"

Safety From Robbers. Once again the long rainy season was over, the rivers had receded, and the trails were passable again. AG-H managed to obtain a generous purse of Maria-Theresa thalers from the Empress and was on his perennial way back to Gondar.

He was just emerging from the lowland valley of the Abbai (Blue Nile) to climb up the escarpment of the dangerous province of Gojjam, which he had to traverse. Suddenly one of his companions spotted a band of robbers waiting at the top of the upland trail.

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

AG-H quickly ducked behind a bush. He placed the purse in his *gābāte*, the lengthwise half of a gourd which all travelers carry for mixing their ration of crushed linseed (called *tālba*) with water. He wrapped this in a piece of colorful imported silk that he had bought as a gift for his home church. Flattening the package as much as possible, he placed it on his head in the manner of the Abyssinian priests when they carry the *tabot*, the sacred tablet which is taken from the inner sanctum of the church to a pool of water on the day of the saint after whom the church is named. With his free hand he quickly folded his daytime toga in the manner of one going to church and borrowed the largest cross his companions were carrying. Holding it before him like a weapon, and looking serious, holy, and unafraid, AG-H led the caravan as he climbed up the trail in a slow, dignified manner. 539 [4,5] [778]

When the bandits drew near, they bowed politely. AG-H stopped and gave them the cross to kiss. They asked respectfully to which saint his *tabot* had been consecrated. He replied with the most common one, *Qeddus Giyorgis* 'St. George.' Then they wanted to know which parish church it was from. By this time the old wit had returned to AG-H, and he answered: *"Yätalba masha Giyorgis"* 'St. George of the linseed-paste.'

The bandits nodded gravely and escorted him all the way up the escarpment, explaining that the area was dangerous and full of organized bandits. Some days later they learned how they had been fooled, and forever after they were on the lookout for AG-H on the banks of the Blue Nile.

Poetic Revenge. AG-H had spoken a candid truth once too often and was in official disgrace with Emperor Menelik. As usual, when miffed, he retired to Gondar.

But this time, having left Addis Ababa unofficially and quickly, his finances were low. Adding to his discomfiture was the news, brought to him by a friend from the capital some months later, that Menelik was amusing himself by telling stories of the misdeeds and follies of AG-H.

An idea of poetic revenge came to him. He instructed his friend to go to the Emperor and report that AG-H had died and that his kinsmen in Gondar were too poor to hold a fitting *tāzkar*, a big memorial feast held forty days after death.

Empress Taitu was first to hear of the sudden death of her favorite. She promptly stormed into the chambers of Emperor Menelik, much as she had stormed into the battle of Adua against the Italians shortly before, riding with the troops of her own province. "You murderer," she shouted at the Emperor, "you broke his heart, you banned him from the court." She threw up her hands in misery, wailed as if a close kinsman had died, moving back and forth, chanting aloud about the goodness of the deceased. After a while this began to affect even the iron Menelik. At this point the messenger brought up the rest of his news, the *tāzkar* problem. Menelik promptly gave him the huge sum of ten thousand thalers, to assuage his own feelings of guilt and to calm the Empress.

For a while AG-H enjoyed the fruits of his revenge back in Gondar. But he knew that he could not hide forever. Moreover, his generosity to kinsmen, neighbors, and transient monks was such that before long his money was gone.

So one day he reappeared in Addis Ababa. When he first approached the Empress, the stout woman almost fainted. She immediately sent a messenger to the Emperor. Unwilling to believe the news, he sent the messenger back to ask whether the Empress was feeling well. Thereupon, she took AG-H by the hand and stormed into Menelik's chamber. The Emperor was too shocked and surprised to be angry. He managed to inquire, "How is it that the dead arise from the grave?"

With a deep bow, AG-H replied: "Your Majesty, it is not uncommon in our Christian religion to arise from the dead" [alluding to the resurrection of Jesus].

Another version: While in disgrace, and living in Gondar, the newly-rich AG-H neglected his field, wasted his money and, toward the end of the rainy season, his wife and children were starving. So he sent his long-suffering wife to Addis Ababa with the false story of his death and need for *tāzkar* money. Explaining his reappearance later, AG-H said, "Your Majesty, I so longed to see the faces of your Majesties again that I was not at peace in the earth and had to return."

A third version: "Your Majesty, they had so many rules and regulations up there [pointing to heaven] that I preferred to return and live under the rules of Your Majesty."

Sex On The Hill. Women are forgetful creatures. Sometimes they don't even remember that they don't wear trousers under their cotton skirts. One day AG-H was climbing up a steep trail in the company of men and women. A connoisseur of female flesh, he kept behind the women

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539 and was always looking up intently and with concentration. One of his friends asked him, "What are you looking for?"

"*Mäwča*," replied the wit in his classic manner. [The literal meaning is "exit," i.e., either the exit from the trail on the tiring climb, or "the place where we emerge" from the female body.]

The Wit At Home. Home in his hut in Gondar, AG-H was one day at dusk lying on his bed. [56] His wife had gone to the river to wash her private parts, as is the custom of the Amhara women at nightfall. Tired from the uphill climb from the valley, she rested before the hearth to dry herself, but dozed off. Soon AG-H heard a cannonade of farting, issuing from his half-conscious wife. He called out to her, "Where are you? Come to bed!"

Awakening, she said dazedly, "I am just drying myself."

To which he replied, "You are drying yourself so much that you are cracking apart."

[302] *A Woman's "Way."* [In accordance with ancient custom, women used to pluck out their pubic hair, rubbing ashes between their fingers to get a good grip while plucking.]

One day a girl student of AG-H was late for her lesson. Taking a quick short-cut across the back yard, she tumbled into the ash heap, soiling her lower toga and her legs with the ashes. She excused her appearance to her teacher, saying, "Oh, Master, I was so eager to come quickly, and now I have dirtied myself with ashes all over."

"That is *your way*," nodded AG-H.

Only much later did the girl learn that he had meant not only the wrong way she had come, but was referring to the fact that being smudged with ashes was the natural "way" for a woman.

[564] *The Pot Of Caste*. [The women of the Falasha caste are makers of pottery, a despised occu-
[323] pation among the Coptic Amhara, though much appreciated by the Amhara, who buy all their better pots from them.]

The wife of AG-H, quarreling with a certain woman, accused her of being of Falasha ancestry and that her mother had been a pottery-maker. One day that woman returned from the river valley, carrying a large, full pot of water on her back. She saw AG-H sitting in front of his hut, and decided to take the opportunity to complain to him about the taunts of his wife.

AG-H disliked being involved in the petty quarreling of the womenfolk, but he listened quietly. As she took leave, he patted her full clay pot and said, "*This* is your work."

She thought that he meant she should not quarrel with his wife, should instead attend to her tasks of fetching water, cooking, etc. But on further reflection what had he meant? Had he accused her of being a pottery-maker herself?

Jealousy Is Dangerous. AG-H was also notorious for his prowess in bed and his fickleness in love.

One day his wife had to go far down to a valley to fetch water, since the dry season had left only water holes in the river bed. She left him in charge of their baby. Taking the baby with him, he went to the hut of his current girl friend and spent the afternoon making passionate love. As it happened, this woman also had a baby about the same age. Dusk came rapidly, and AG-H knew that his wife would soon be back. In the hurry, he took the wrong baby.

A moment after his return his wife arrived, laden with water pot and firewood. When she beheld the baby of her current rival, she became very angry and said, "This thing is not my baby! Shall I throw it in the fire?"

Calm as ever, AG-H replied: "There is a fire also in the house of his mother."

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THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

by

MARGERY PERHAM

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE PROVINCES: GENERAL

PROVINCIAL DIVISIONS BEFORE 1935

635 Ethiopia has been presented hitherto from the centre and the provinces have been viewed outwards from Addis Ababa, the headquarters of the Emperor and the main scene of his reforms. To understand the difficulties that lay, and that still lie, before him in extending these reforms, it is necessary, in so far as the scanty and capriciously distributed information allows, to make some general study of provincial administration. The judicial and military aspects have already been discussed. As the conditions in the conquered provinces of the south differ in important features from those of the north, they will be treated separately, though it should be remembered that the north, as the ancient realm of the governing people, provides the dominant type of provincial administration and that the south represents a modification of this rather than an independent system.

For administrative purposes the country was divided into a large number of provinces and districts. The distinction between the two was not always clear, and their numbers and boundaries seem to have been altered frequently. The units were of uneven size and some of them appear to have followed either historical or geographical divisions or lines of tribal distribution. The great traditional northern divisions were modified by the later arrangements, but they were not obliterated to the same extent as were the old French provinces under Napoleon's administrative pattern.[1] Shoa, Gojjam, and Tigré, with its peculiar language, stood out from the rest for their size and importance, but

[1] No official maps of Ethiopia before 1935 are available, and map 1 has been made by F. de Halpert. It was necessary to include this in addition to the map of the 1945 divisions, not only because of its historical interest, but also because it contains some names of historical or tribal importance which have been dropped out of the new, simplified map.

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many of the smaller units retained, like them, much of their old historical 635
and cultural identity.

The provinces do not fall very easily into administrative categories. 175
The deepest distinction is that which has just been mentioned between
the dominant Christian provinces of the old Ethiopia and those of the 563
south which were, in the main, conquered by the Shoan dynasty during 635
the second half of the last century. The dividing line runs approximately along the Blue Nile and across the middle of the modern Shoa, a little to the north of the capital. The region around the capital, though it lay just south of this line, may be regarded as having, since the reign of Sahla Selassié (1813), been progressively assimilated to Amharic society. In the vast area north of the line, below the structure of imperial power and that of the dominating and shifting ruling families there lay, still largely intact, the variegated social design of the Tigré and Amhara groups, closely interwoven with that of the ancient church and sanctioned by long custom. South of this line were Muslim and pagan people, many newly conquered, some of them partially disintegrated and dispossessed by their conquest, and all subject to a far more direct rule under the Shoan Emperor and his agents than was possible in the north. In both groups of provinces there were exceptional areas such as those of the northern Gallas, but it will be more convenient to give the Gallas a chapter to themselves as part of the south. The non-Galla southern provinces must be sub-divided into three groups, the Sidamo Hamites, the negro, and those Danakil and Somali regions, where the semi-desert nature of the country and the nomadic life of the tribes frustrated effective control by the Amharas. The northern provinces are sufficiently homogeneous for us to consider them, in very general terms, as a whole. A discussion of the administration of the provinces must be preceded by an attempt to assess the numbers and distribution of the people.

The main facts of the ethnology of the region have appeared in their 175
place in the historical introduction, but it may be useful to bring
together here some of these scattered facts. We saw that a mainly 563
Hamitic (or Cushitic) population, with negro fringes and pockets, was dominated in successive southward moving stages by those northern groups which had been mastered and stimulated by Semitic emigrants from Arabia, and how this mixed Semitic-Hamitic people had gradually spread its domination over the northern half of the present boundaries to make the Ethiopian state and nation. It has been recounted how Christianity came in the fourth century and how the great movement of Galla peoples from the east and south-east, aided by the Muslim invasions of the sixteenth century, flooded into large areas of Ethiopia.

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THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

175 In the nineteenth century, as will be recounted in some detail in the
563 chapter on the southern provinces, the Ethiopians, and especially the Shoans, struck back and overran an immense area inhabited by Gallas, Somalis, non-Semiticized Hamites, and negroes in the south.

THE POPULATION

162 No census has ever been taken in Ethiopia and we cannot, therefore, know either the total of population within her boundaries or how to allocate the numbers to the several races, religions, and regions. All estimates are therefore nothing better than more or less informed guesses. To show the divergences in these guesses, a well-informed British consul writing in 1932 gave 5,500,000 as his figure,[1] whereas, since the liberation, a semi-official Ethiopian journal claims 12,000,000 to 13,000,000. A recent official statement by the ecclesiastical authorities claims 10,000,000 Ethiopian Christians.[2]

Special attention must be paid to the estimates of the Italians. As neighbours, adversaries and, for a short time, rulers of Ethiopia, they have had more reason and opportunity than other people to attempt such calculations.

The following estimates, obviously in very round numbers, are the official Italian figures. They cover the whole of Italian East Africa and it will therefore be necessary to consult Map 2 at the end of the book in order to see the relationship of this area with Ethiopia proper.

Province.	Population
Shoa	500,000
Eritrea	1,000,000
Amhara	1,000,000
Harar	1,600,000
Galla-Sidamo	1,600,000
Somalia	1,300,000
	7,000,000[3]

The following figures for the same area, published in the *Guida* of 1938, give the racial distribution.

[1] Makereth, p. 5. [2] *Herald*, 1 July 1946.
[3] *Annuario dell'Africa Orientale Italiana*, Rome, 1938–9, p. 597.

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	Population
Abyssinians (including Agau and Beja)	2,400,000
Gallas	2,350,000
Somalis	1,400,000
Sidamo groups	1,400,000
Afar-Saho (of Danakil districts)	150,000
Negroes	1,000,000
Asiatics and Europeans	100,000[1]
	7,600,000

From both these sets of figures the relatively accurate figures for Eritrea of 757,000,[2] and for Italian Somaliland of 1,000,000,[3] may be deducted, leaving a total for Ethiopia proper of 5,243,000 according to the *Annuario* and 5,843,000 according to the *Guida*.

The British Military Administration in Ethiopia gave the number of 7,000,000 for the total population but did not say upon what calculations this figure was based.[4]

Zoli gives the following classifications for language and race for Ethiopia alone.

[563]

Language		Race	
Amhara	1,900,000	Abyssinian	2,100,000
Tigré	400,000	Galla	2,350,000
Oromo (Galla)	2,000,000	Somali	450,000
Somali	450,000	Sidamo	200,000
Sidamo	200,000	Afar	50,000
Afar (Danakil)	50,000	Negro	850,000
Miscellaneous	1,000,000		
	6,000,000		6,000,000[5]

One point of interest in comparing these latter is that they give an estimate—a highly speculative one—of the degree to which the Gallas have become assimilated to the Amharic culture as shown by their adoption of this language. We may note that Zoli estimates that forty different languages are spoken in Ethiopia, but most of these belong [191]
to very small groups in the south-west.

[1] *Guida*, p. 400. [2] Longrigg, *op. cit.*, Appendix C.
[3] This estimate was taken from *Whitaker*. [4] Cmd. 6589/1945.
[5] Zoli, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–13.

THE PROVINCES: GENERAL

162 to very small groups in the south-west. His figures for the religions of the country have already been given.[1]

A very rough regional distribution by another Italian writer is as follows:

The original Ethiopian provinces	2,500,000–2,800,000
Galla and Sidamo areas	1,500,000–2,000,000
Harar	1,000,000
Somaliland	300,000
Danakil region	50,000
The non-Amharic north-west	100,000
The south-west (negroid regions)	600,000

This gives us a total of between 6,000,000 and 7,000,000.[2] But Almagia, like other authorities, offers this estimate in very tentative terms.

Finally, we may give de Castro's estimate of racial percentages.

[563]

Ethiopians	32·6
Gallas	42·7
Sidamo and Arab-crossed people of the south-western highlands	10·1
Somalis	6·0
Negroid and Nilotic negroes	6·6
Danakil groups	2·0
	100·0[3]

Three main points arise from a study of these various estimates.

One is that the Italian figures for the total population are very much lower than those recently mentioned by Ethiopians. An application made by the writer for the official Ethiopian figure produced a negative reply. This demographic difficulty may be one, among others, which has held up the publication of a long-promised official handbook for Ethiopia.

A second interesting feature of the estimates is that the true Ethiopian stock is almost certainly in a minority and that it is most likely to strengthen its position further, at least as the first stage, by continuing the assimilation of the Gallas which has already begun.

Thirdly, the figures repeat the impression given by the Geographical Survey of the concentration of the population upon the highlands, and the numerical insignificance of the groups inhabiting the low-lying regions of the east and south-east.

[1] See above, p. 103. [2] Almagia, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–7.
[3] de Castro, *L'Etiopia*, p. 301.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: GENERAL

THE EMPEROR AND THE GOVERNOR

In the fifth chapter of this book some description was given of the character of the Ethiopian monarchy. This survey was made, as it were, from the throne. To complete the picture it is necessary to review the imperial power from the standpoint of the provinces. 643

We have seen that the Emperor, however low his authority may have fallen in fact from time to time, was always recognized in theory as absolute, the King of Kings, the supreme leader of the army, the head of the church, and the disposer of all lands and offices. It is this last facet of the kingship that must now be examined: it should give further insight into the manner in which the rulers of Ethiopia were able to rise to the high eminence reserved for them by this conservative and religious people. It was the periodic assertion of the royal power under strong rulers which prevented the rise of anything approaching the powerful hereditary lordships of medieval Europe.

It is, indeed, remarkable that this should have been so. It was the primitive economy which in medieval Europe made it difficult for a king to accumulate and control the material resources required for the upkeep of a central army and a central bureaucracy. Yet, in Ethiopia, this condition was greatly aggravated by geography and was prolonged by her political isolation right into this century. This meant that, although the Ethiopian provincial rases were never able to establish for long their position as over-mighty subjects, the Emperors upon their side were unable to consolidate, century after century, the authority of the imperial government. The two elements remained in a permanent tension; the balance swayed from one decade to another, and through

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643 the 600 years or more of which we have reliable knowledge, neither side until this century seems to have gained upon the other.

635 The crucial question was the appointment of the provincial governor. In theory his position was entirely dependent upon the Emperor. In all polities to which the word feudal can, in however general a sense, be applied, land tenure and land tribute were closely allied with the holding of office. It was the constant effort of the Emperors to insist both upon this connection and upon their right to grant and to withdraw both office and tenure. It is more convenient, however, so long as the complementary nature of the two is borne in mind, to deal first with the office of provincial governor and then with land-tenure and tribute.

Most European kings of the middle ages were obliged to recognize the right of great feudal nobles to the hereditary succession of large territorial lordships which were sometimes linked with high central offices and were, in practice, impossible to divide from great provincial powers. In Ethiopia, by contrast, few instances could be quoted in which provincial governors succeeded in passing on their positions and the lands which went with them for more than three or four generations. The most striking exception—one that goes far to prove the rule—was that of the ruler of Wag who, retaining in this conservative country something of the divinity which once had hedged his family, that of the original Zagwé dynasty which ousted the Solomonian line from its imperial authority, was allowed very special privileges. It is probable that with most ruling families, the laxity with regard to marital relations and legitimate succession, which, as we saw, obscured the imperial genealogy, was a deterrent to the building up of strong lineages.

The keynote is struck in one of the earliest examples, that given by Alvarez, of the great office of *Bahr-nagash*, ('king of the sea', i.e. the northern marches province near the coast). 'For in our time, which was a stay of six years', he writes, 'there were here four *Barnagais*, that is to say, when we arrived Dori was *Barnagais*; he died, and at his death the crown came to Bulla, his son, a youth of ten to twelve years of age, by order of the Prester John.[1] When they crowned him he was at once summoned to court, and while he was at the Court Prester John took away his sovereignty and gave it to a noble gentleman. . . . This man held it two years, and they took from him his lordship and made him the greatest lord of the Court . . . and the lordship of *Barnagais* was given to another lord. . . .'[2] And again, 'The Prester John deposes them and appoints them whenever he pleases, with or without cause. . . . I saw great lords turned out of their lordships, and others put into them,

[1] I.e. the Emperor. [2] Alvarez, pp. 52–3.

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and I saw them together, and they appeared to be good friends. (God knows their hearts.)'[1] 'And it is so usual', wrote d'Almeyda in the next century, 'for the Emperor to chop, change, and take . . . the lands any man has and to bestow them on another, that it is never thought much of, and very often one plows, another sows, and a third reaps.'[2] Yet practice was never quite the same as theory. The Emperor's claim to make grants of land and office depending solely upon his will waxed and waned according to the changing balance of the social and political forces. Thus we find Ludolphus, while stating the general rule, remarking that there were some prefectures which the Emperor would have to bestow upon another member of the same family. He names six of these, including that of the *Bahr-nagash* and the *Wag-Shum*. Ludolphus has more to tell of the Emperor's views on this question. 'Moreover they presume that Hereditary Dignity is an obstacle to Virtue; that Men are more certainly made, than born great; and that they will prove more faithful, whom they have raised from the Dust, than such as claim their fortunes from their Ancestors.'[3]

To trace the changing movements in this tug-of-war would require a recapitulation of the involved internal struggles, battles of kites and crows, which fill the chronicles and the political details of which are no more interesting than those of our Wars of the Roses. Only a few important phases need be picked out. From d'Almeyda and Ludolphus we must pass on to the eighteenth century, when the royal power fell very low. Ras Mikael of Tigré, who dominates Bruce's story as Satan dominates Paradise Lost, was not a man an Emperor could dismiss; on the contrary he himself dismissed, and, indeed, murdered, more than one Emperor. At this time, even the Gallas of Damot could insist upon the son of the former Galla governor succeeding to the governorship and they killed the Emperor's uncle who was sent to take over the province.[4] The kingdom of Shoa, as we saw in the historical introduction, was all but independent, and though its rulers paid lip service to the King of Kings in Gondar, none of these dared challenge the solid power and hereditary succession of this dynasty.

The Galla mayors of the palace at Gondar struggled to raise the power of the decadent Solomonian rulers. One of these attempts to curb the growth of hereditary succession to offices and lands and to make a bid for the favour of the people against their lords, is of special interest in our context. Ras Gugsa passed the following decree in 1800:

'The land belongs to God. Man has only its usufruct. He fertilizes it by his labours: he passes: it swallows him and grows green again in

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 93. [2] Tellez, p. 63. [3] Ludolphus, p. 235.
[4] Jones and Monroe, pp. 122–3.

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175 the sun. Who then dares to call himself the owner of something stronger than himself? Holders of fiefs: lords of Provinces, listen: there is no more hereditary suzerainty. God alone has possession always. He gives sovereign right to whom he pleases. He has given it to me. . . . I am master of the soil. . . . Noble ladies and lords, holders of fiefs, present yourselves! I give rank and investiture. . . . Labourers, labour! Merchants, continue your traffic! It is I who am your might and your strength.'[1] It is said that the immediate effect of this decree was to turn most of the lesser nobility into soldiers of fortune, but this might have happened in any case in the disorders of the early nineteenth century.

Ras Ali, whom Plowden found in power, ruling with a puppet king, showed the monarchy at its weakest; Ras Oubié of Tigré was at least his equal and brooked no interference, though he sent in a token tribute. Even Ras Ali, in the Emperor's name, still claimed 'the right of appointing all other chiefs of provinces and officers of every kind at his will and pleasure'.[2] But many great families, his equals by birth, had their own armies, and in appointing a governor of a province he was obliged to be attentive to the claims of great families who, from hereditary influence, must be either rulers or rebels in their respective districts.[3]

After the disorders and decline of nearly a century, Theodore tried to revive the imperial authority. His methods were characteristic; they showed the vigour and genius which was so tragically ruined by his violence. 'The arduous task', wrote Plowden, 'of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task in Europe achieved only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous. . . . He has placed the soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish; thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains more proud of their birth than of their monarchy, and organizing a new nobility, a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen especially for their daring and fidelity.'[4] Even the *Wag-Shum* was not spared from seizure.

Theodore's successor, John, for all his great military ability, had at times to treat the kings of Shoa and Gojjam almost as equals. Menelik, though never so violent as Theodore, was able in his prime—but only then—to exert his authority over the provincial governors. An official report of 1906 states that he could at any moment take away the territory of the highest ras and put him in chains without giving any reasons for his action. The extent and also the limits of his power in relation to the great ruling families of the north were shown in his treatment of

[1] Salviac, M. de, *Les Galla*, Paris, 1902, p. 37.
[2] Hotten, p. 116. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 181. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: GENERAL

Gojjam when its king, Takla Haimanot, died in 1901. He wished to break up this large kingdom, but he did so only partially, leaving the eastern part to the son of the dead king. He also made it a habit to keep powerful chiefs waiting about at court, a favourite method of French kings and one that Theodore had applied to him in his own youth. The *Wag-Shum* was again deprived of his ancient hereditary succession by the Empress Taitu, in favour of her own nominee; but the *Shum* was later restored. As Menelik's physical power declined, so did his control until, during his last years, the provincial governors again became largely independent. Imperial authority over the governors declined still further under the unstable Lij Yasu, and was only very gradually restored in a new form by Haile Selassié. 175

We have seen that even the present Emperor had to pay some attention to the hereditary position of great families in those northern regions which had a traditional jealousy of Shoa and in which opposition and rebellion were most likely to appear. In his early days as Regent the provincial governors still remained very independent. Ras Hailu, for instance, did not come near the capital for years. Provincial tribute was very low. Chiefs were allowed to rule the country with which their family had been associated until some misdeed or act of disloyalty brought deposition. Hence Haile Selassié confirmed Ras Hailu in his father's position in Gojjam, and punished his contumacy with disinheritance and imprisonment only later when he was strong enough for this action. Similarly he felt obliged to confirm Ras Seyum in his ancestral lordship of Tigré. It was the decision to grant Ras Seyum, at the expense of his cousin *Dejazmach* Haile Selassié Gugsa, the lion's share of the family lands, which threw the latter into the arms of the Italians in 1935. Ras Gugsa Wallié's position in the provinces of Lasta and Bagemdir was based upon family connections, and when he was killed during his rebellion in 1930 the substitution of Ras Kassa was appropriate because of his connection with the former rulers of Lasta through his mother. Ras Kassa's son was made governor of Bagemdir in 1942 in recognition, presumably, of the family connection.

The present Emperor himself might be given as the representative of a branch of the royal line which has held the great province of Harar since his father Ras Makonnen conquered it and was confirmed in its lordship by his cousin Menelik. The lands and governorship of this province were inherited by Makonnen's eldest son and, upon his death, went to the younger brother, Tafari. Though Lij Yasu, when he came of age, transferred this potential rival to a south-west province, Tafari had left behind him in Harar an army that was loyal to his house, and when the clash came it rallied to him and Lij Yasu lost his throne. 643 [635]

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[643] Harar is now ruled over by the Emperor's second son. While it is
635 clearly difficult to deduce constitutional rules from conflicts at this level, turning our glance to a lower one we may note that in addition to the few examples of continuity, many others could be given of frequent changes of governorship, even in the north, by both Menelik[1] and Haile Selassie. These would illustrate their ability to act upon these rights in this way, at those times in their reigns when they were strong enough to do so.

It is interesting to consider more closely the exact position as to the distribution of governorships on the eve of the Italian invasion. For convenience the south, which must be discussed in somewhat more detail later, has for this purpose been included with the north. According to an authoritative Italian writer, the number of provinces was thirty-two; of these, six might be regarded as being headed by governors of local hereditary status. They were Wag, Tigré (divided between two local notables), Wallaga, the small region of Beni-Shangul under local Muslim governors, and Salale under Ras Kassa. Eastern and southern Shoa was a royal dominion; Wallo, Harar, and Ogaden were also personal fiefs of the Emperor governed by his sons. The remaining twenty-one provinces were all under the Emperor's men, governors appointed by him from among his closest relatives and supporters, including a few of the 'new' younger and more progressive officials.[2] This analysis would suggest that, by the end of the first part of his reign, Haile Selassié, as far as appointments of governors were concerned, had succeeded in controlling very directly some two-thirds of the country.

Mr. de Halpert, however, in information supplied to the writer, is
631 critical of these categories as being too exact. He points out that in the
635 Ethiopia of 1935 it was almost impossible to say which division was a province and which a district. Tigré, Shoa, and Gojjam, as ancient kingdoms, were really subdivided into a number of administrative districts. He would also dispute the exact significance of some of the appointments. Without discussing these points in further detail, it may at least be assumed that the provinces and districts could be roughly divided into those that were more and those that were less closely under imperial control and that the former were the more numerous and were upon the increase.

THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR

635 The governor then, according to theory, was appointed and dismissed

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 487.

[2] Zoli, 'L'Impero Italiano dell'Africa Orientale', *Bollettino della R. Societa Geografica Italiana*, series VII, vol. 1, no. 8, pp. 473–84.

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by the Emperor and was his representative in the province. His exact 635
title varied. He might rise to the height of that of *Negus*; he might be a ras. More frequently in recent years he held the next title in rank, that of *dejazmach*. He was the general of the provincial army, the judge and the administrator. He was paid no salary. He paid himself, his entourage, and his soldiers from the tribute of the province. On the pecuniary side, in addition to the tithes and other tribute, he collected [651] the profits of justice and the tolls on the borders of his province. The tolls being collected from the merchants would be one of his few sources of cash, especially before this century.[1]

It has already been said that no estimate is possible of the propor- 651
tion of tribute passed on by the governors to the Emperor. It seems probable, however, that where any tribute was paid the amount varied according to the arrangements made between the Emperor and the governor and probably also, from time to time, according to the needs and the power of the Emperor and the advisability of appeasing him with tribute. It is certain that large caravans taking rich gifts of cloth, horses, mules, and gold ceased long before this century to come in to the Emperor from any of the northern provinces.[2]

The governor, especially if he were a local grandee, was a very great 635
man. The Ethiopians, like many other peoples, love the trappings of power. It was the ambition of most men to wear fine clothes and to 661
have at least one or two slaves or servants to run beside the stirrup. The governors naturally aimed at reproducing as far as they could the style of the Emperor's palace. They lived at the highest level they could afford, each with a court of his own and a circle of officials of his own appointment, whose titles were current only in the province. When they gave out lands and offices to their followers they tried, like the Emperor, to prevent these becoming hereditary and aimed at unsettling their holders from time to time.[3] Ethiopians tended to gravitate round the households of a great man with its hospitality, its atmosphere of movement, of security and opportunity. The governor's headquarters would be crowded with supporters, suitors, the soldiers of his personal bodyguard, priests, musicians, jesters, servants, and slaves. Upon festivals he kept open house and like his Emperor gave great feasts of raw meat and mead. A description of the lavish hospitality of the Ras of Angote given in the sixteenth century[4] reads almost word for word the same as those of the entertainments described by other travellers 400 years later.

When a governor travelled, especially upon taking up or leaving his appointment, it was a serious affair for the country upon which he

[1] Rüppel, E., *Reise in Abessinien*, Frankfurt, 1838–40, vol. 2, p. 35.
[2] See above, pp. 191–3. [3] Hotten, pp. 145–6. [4] Alvarez, pp. 136–7.

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635 661 lived in passing and upon which he could levy purveyance. His passage was an affair of pomp, in which important ladies had to be considered and a retinue taken, which might swell to many hundreds of soldiers and servants with all their families, slaves, and transport animals. Such journeys were veritable expeditions, not to be undertaken lightly. A journey right across the country might take several weeks, and in parts the rains made travel laborious or impossible for some five months of the year. The difficulty of communication gave the governor an independence of which he made full use. Governors of ancient divisions with a tradition of autonomy and governors from the royal family were generally allowed to rule with little interference. In this century [177 206] the main provincial capitals were connected with Addis Ababa by telephone and this, with aeroplanes, which were just beginning to come 507 into use before 1935, were the first threats to the isolation of the governors, which has since, in most parts, been so greatly diminished by the Italian roads. The Emperor had his agents who kept a watch upon governors and reported upon their doings; this kind of espionage was a highly developed system in Ethiopia. The governors on their side kept representatives in the capital. But this did nothing to overcome what several observers have remarked as the besetting sin of Ethiopian administration, the refusal to take any constructive responsibility. Governors of the old school were mainly concerned with the conservation of their own power, the collection of their tribute, and the fulfilment of their military duties. It would have been quite outside their range of thought to initiate new ideas of reform or to put down time-honoured abuses. Some of the governors spent much of their time at Addis Ababa and their deputies tended to be even more conservative in their use of authority than their masters.

635 Although the emphasis here is upon administration, it must not be forgotten that the governor was historically and in Ethiopian eyes primarily a high military officer and his civil duties were no more than the necessary accompaniment of his command. He had—as was shown anew in 1935—to raise and lead his provincial army in war. Some description has, however, already been given of the army, and there will be no need to discuss it further in this chapter except in the next section in relation to land tenure.

622 THE VILLAGE CHIEF

We have seen that by 1935 it was rare for a great local landed potentate to hold the highest provincial office; in most instances this was held by the Emperor's nominees. But this was not the only link the Emperor

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claimed with the provinces. It was at a lower level that his official hierarchy was, in theory, in continuous contact with the regional and hereditary element. The governors' deputies and their assistants in the still smaller districts might or might not be local men, but when we come to the heads of villages or groups of villages we find that the leader and representative of the people and the lowest agent of the Emperor and his governor were united in the person of the *chiqa-shum*. 622

This officer was universal in Tigré, Amhara, and most of Galla country though in the latter this title was not always used. Because of his close association with the customary agrarian societies there were local variations in his status and duties. In general character and importance, even though the analogy is not exact, the *chiqa-shum* occupied something like the position of the Elizabethan justice of the peace. In his office central and local authority met. He was responsible to the governor's district chief for the proper performance by his own community of their duties and especially for their payments to the proper authorities of tithe and tax and of dues in kind and labour. He was the judge to whom, if wayside arbitration failed, the litigants would first apply. He would be present at local weddings; would preside at meetings of the village council, and would be especially concerned with all transfers or allocations of land and disputes about it. He would see that orders from the higher authorities were proclaimed by a crier in the village. [692] [203]

According to an Ethiopian account he is 'the officer of the district, living upon the soil as one joined to it'.[1] He is the agent of the Emperor. 'He will be an Amhara and may accuse even the Governor. If a man touches or strikes him, he (i.e. the striker) will not pay compensation, but all his goods will be confiscated.'[2] Coulbeaux defines him as 'le maire de la commune . . . tuteur, père même'. He manages the affairs of the village like his own, and his patriarchal authority is sacred. He is generally the genealogical chief of the community, and calls the village council together under a tree.[3] Certainly these village chiefs, representing continuity of tradition and the sedentary agricultural life, were the stabilizing factor in a system in which changing governors, roving armies, and a distant Emperor played the more dramatic, but often the more superficial, parts. This especially struck Plowden. 'There is in each village', he wrote, 'one hereditary officer that cannot be displaced on any pretence; and it is this institution alone that preserves some appearance of order in the absence of all written documents, amidst the whirl of revolutions and the rapid succession of dynasties and gover- [687]

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 42. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 184. [3] Coulbeaux, vol. I, pp. 35–6.

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622 nors.'[1] An interesting confirmation of this comes from a later date: the British minister in 1939 reported that after two years of bitter experience the Italians found they could not run the country without the co-operation of the Ethiopians at the village level, and were trying to restore the village organization.

The Emperor claimed to appoint the *chiqa-shum* but we may assume that in this and in the other matters discussed in this chapter he intervened to do so when and where he had the power. The *shum* was generally too small a man to attract imperial attention and a strong governor would, without doubt, play his part in the matter. According to Krapf the *shum* was appointed by the governor at the request of the villagers [435] and paid twenty pieces of rock salt, then valued at one dollar, for the appointment which he held only for a year.[2] The choice, whether made by Emperor or governor, was clearly limited by the character of the office; its value depended upon the local status and representative capacity of the holder. In some communities the appointment might be for a period or even for life, but it was also a widespread custom in the north for the office to rotate yearly amongst the leading men of a few families, generally those whose prestige rested upon their descent from the family which founded the group. There were, of course, a number of privileges and perquisites in the form of gifts for the *shum*. There were differences in his official rewards; in some areas he got no more than exemption from taxes. In a vivid Ethiopian comment, 'he . . . pays tribute only with his legs, running up, and down to carry the orders of the Government'.[3] In other parts, however, it appears that he retained some proportion of the taxes he collected for the government. It would be very valuable if further investigation could be made into this obscure but all-important office and into the position which, after all that has happened since 1935, it holds to-day.

[1] Hotten, p. 157.
[2] Krapf, J. L., and Isenberg, C. W., *Journals*, 1843, p. 280.
[3] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE AND TRIBUTE

THE GABAR

It is impossible to go any further with this discussion of provincial 423
administration without some understanding of the Ethiopian methods of land tenure. The three strands, administration, tribute, and tenure, were closely twisted together and with them the fourth strand of military service, which we have already endeavoured to study separately. Unfortunately the whole subject is extremely complex. A [114]
few investigations have been made especially by Italian scholars, whose work has been mainly in the old Tigré province, part of which became Eritrea, but, as there are very wide varieties even within the northern provinces, seeming inconsistencies occur between the authorities.[1] The situation was at least as intricate as in early medieval England while

[1] Among the chief authorities upon this subject are:
1. P. Soleillet, *Voyages en Ethiopie*, Rouen, 1886.
2. E. de Felcourt, *L'Abyssinie*, Paris, 1911.
3. Rossini.
4. Cerulli.
5. Guèbrè Sellassié, especially Appendix xi by M. de Coppet, 'Landed Property in Shoa'.
6. A. Pollera, *Le popolazioni indigene dell'Eritrea*, Bologna, 1935.
7. de Castro, *L'Etiopia*.
8. G. P. Veroi, *Caratteri generali dell'economica dell'Impero*, Rome, 1937.
9. V. L. Grottanelli, *Missione di Studi al Lago Tana*, 2 vols., Rome, 1939.
10. J. Kalmer, 'The Return of Haile Selassié', *Contemporary Review*, vol. 159, pp. 290–4.
11. L. Meri, *Problema fondiario*, Rivista delle Colonie, Rome, 1937.
(For nos. 3, 4, and 5, see list of abbreviated references.)
In addition to these modern authors who give special consideration to land tenure, nearly all the travellers have something to say of the subject. While use has been made of these authorities, some of the information in this and the next chapter is based upon evidence collected directly from Ethiopians by F. de Halpert.

423 here there is no Domesday Book to give a clear point of departure and none of the successive unravellings of generations of scholars to help the inquirer. Any attempt at the simplification of the evidence must to some extent be a distortion.

Two preliminary generalizations may help to clarify the picture.

[556] Firstly it is important to remember that in Ethiopia, as in all economically backward countries where industry is negligible, almost all material wealth was the direct produce of the herdsman or the man who worked on the land with his plough and his hoe.

423 Ethiopia shared with the rest of tropical Africa a primitive peasant
466 agriculture; the difference was that there stood upon this basis a large
651 hierarchical structure of government. This meant that the cultivator
241 must, as the Ethiopians themselves express it, 'carry upon his shoulders' all that very large proportion of the population which had withdrawn themselves from work on the land. This included the Emperor; all his officials, central and provincial, great and small; the vast hierarchy of the church and the large armies of soldiers. As a result of the undeveloped economy and communications of Ethiopia, the services of the agriculturalist had for the most part to be used directly by the contribution of part of the crops or cattle from his own land or by the use of his labour upon that of another. While slave labour was widely used for domestic purposes, especially in the houses of the rich, it was not in the north used very extensively in the fields, and the main support of Ethiopian state and society was not the slave but the theoretically free cultivator, the *gabar*. The elaborate systems of land tenure and of tribute with all their provincial variations represent only the different means by which his services and produce were utilized by the government and by other classes. It was not the land but the labour of the *gabars* on the land which provided the support for provincial as well as imperial administration. Hence the importance of the forms of tenure and tribute.

423 The word *gabar* has been used as a term of reproach against Ethiopia.
466 At the end of these chapters on the provinces the reader will be in a
651 better position to judge how far this charge was just, and especially how far it accumulated evil association by the forms it assumed in the conquered south. Here the position of the northern *gabar* must be defined in its simplest terms. In theory and, at its best, in practice, the status was not synonymous with slavery or even with oppression. Literally it means one who pays *gibr* or tribute. 'There is no shame in the word "gabbar"' was the general Ethiopian opinion recorded by an observant British consul.[1] As tribute was in theory based upon land

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

not the person, it has been said that high notables and the Emperor himself might, in strict technicality, be called *gabars*, since they might hold land burdened with some *gabar* service. Moreover—again in the theory—*gabars* were not, like the serf, tied to the soil; they could leave their land and seek a new holding elsewhere. 423 466 651

The position can be put in another way. The Ethiopian, like the Englishman, owed dues to the central government or to its representative; firstly, he owed the Emperor tribute and tithe for his land; secondly, he owed the equivalent of local rates, and, thirdly, when he was a tenant, he owed rent. The only difference, it might be said, was that the Ethiopian paid all these dues in grain, honey, firewood, stock, or labour instead of in money. The difference was, however, fundamental. In the absence of central control or uniformity and in situations where the *gabar*, the man who provided all this tribute in kind with his own hands, happened to be in a weak position, the form of payment opened the way to all kinds of extortion.

Mrs. Sandford, who with her husband ran a farm for many years in Galla country near the capital and was therefore in a position to provide very authoritative evidence upon this subject, gives the following account of the *gabars*, presumably those in her district. They owed the governor or soldiers to whom they were allotted both produce and services: these might be one day's labour out of three, eight or ten days; the provision of timber for building the master's house and grass for its thatching; firewood and one fifth of the grain crop in addition to the Emperor's tenth. This, she concludes, might have been reasonable especially if the *gabars* could have dared to use their right of appeal. 'But in fact the abuse proved stronger than the system.' The masters exacted more than their due 'and the system was in practice as extortionate as those of old Roman days. Officer and soldier were equally rapacious, . . .' The *gabar* dared not appeal. Coming from a witness of such experience and of such devotion to Ethiopia, this evidence carries weight.[1] 661 651 423 466

The tithe of grain was owed to the Emperor by every subject unless he were exempted on account of his other services to state or church. This grain was collected on the threshing floors and stored in the governor's official granaries; it was used mainly for the sustenance of the soldiers. Since such a bulky product could hardly be carried far in Ethiopia there was very little market in cereals. Pastoral tribes were expected to pay their tithe in stock. There was also a tribute of produce or labour, or both, which was nearly always taken by the governor or his representative and there were further dues or presents to the sub- 651

[1] Sandford, pp. 48–9.

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651 ordinate officials which varied from province to province. There were also the heavy dues of purveyance to passing officials, soldiers and even private travellers, whose records are full of evidence of the readiness with which through the centuries this burdensome obligation was accepted. Some of these dues were not easily to be distinguished from the further requirements in kind and in labour which a tenant might owe, in addition, as rent to a private landlord.

THE EMPEROR AND THE LAND

423 From the *gabar*, who formed the basis of the system of land tenure, we return to the Emperor at its apex. The conflict as to whether provincial office was held personally and terminally at the royal will was reproduced in the closely complementary question of the usage and ownership of land and its dues by which alone office could be supported. Here, in theory as well as in practice, the Emperor was less successful in maintaining his claims. It was true that land and office generally went together, but land-holding was wider than office-holding; it was more complex and it affected more people. Moreover, while office was highly desirable, the earth, meeting all necessities, was the main object and, once acquired, was held with the utmost tenacity.

423 643 The theory maintained by the Emperors was that they owned all the land in the country and that it was therefore all held at their will. 'He takes and gives all lands at pleasure' we read in Tellez.[1] 'The King's authority is so unlimited', wrote Lobo, 'that no Man can in this country be called with Justice Proprietor of anything, nor doth any Man when he Sows his Field know that he shall Reap it.'[2] Numerous authorities follow these early observers in this view. The assumption was that no land could be private property and therefore heritable. The most authoritative challenge to this theory was to be found in the ancient *Fetha Nagast* itself: in this, private property was formally recognized.[3] Turning to the latest age we find that a clause (article 27) of the constitution of 1931 runs as follows: 'Except in cases of public utility determined by law, no-one shall be entitled to deprive an Ethiopian subject of the movable or landed property which he holds.' Between these dates stretches the long struggle of the crown to counter these rights and to retain control over the lands granted out on various terms to the several categories of subjects.

[1] Tellez, p. 53.

[2] Lobo, J., *A Voyage to Abyssinia* (translated by Mr. Le Grand), 1735, p. 263.

[3] Guidi, p. 361. Quoted by M. de Coppet in Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

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THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE

According to one legend, when Menelik I returned from his visit to his father Solomon, he divided the land into three parts, one for the crown, one for the church and the other for the laity. Certainly, as regards the first part of the division, the Emperors retained vast estates as the royal domain. These tended to be most numerous in the region of the imperial headquarters and became less so towards the periphery of the country. We saw in the chapter upon public finance that the estates from which it was possible to supply the royal household with grain, honey, *tej*, etc., were known as *mad-bet*. These estates included also wide pastoral areas which carried the royal herds. There were numerous large estates scattered about the country which the Emperor had granted to members of his own family and so long as these remained closely bound to him they were, politically, as useful as his personal domain. 423 643

From his royal domains the Emperor took all the produce that could be delivered to him. With the conquest of the southern lands and the arrival of the railway he was able to grow and to sell coffee. Outside his domains, in spite of his frequent claims, the Emperor was only able to make effective claim to waste, lapsed, conquered, and confiscated lands. Sometimes individuals or groups, holding private heritable land, would ask the Emperor to take it over as royal land in order to protect themselves from the rapacity of some local lord or the claims of some other group. In Dembea the people did this because the Emperor was allotting so much of their land to the churches against their will and they felt that if it was royal land he would not be so generous with it.[1] An unsuccessful rebellion would give an excellent opportunity for him to regain some of his lost land by means of confiscation. What he resumed with one hand he was always giving away with the other into what was in fact, if not in theory, private ownership. He still retained over this, of course, his rights to taxation. This consisted, as we have seen, in the tithe, a tenth of the produce, which was generally confined to grain, and to a land-tax which varied in amount and character from time to time and from place to place. He also reserved the right to make special levies. [651]

Within the vast terminology referring to Ethiopian land tenure there are two terms which must be defined and kept before the reader. The one is *rest*, which means hereditary ownership, and the other is *gult* which describes land in which the Emperor had granted away some or all of his rights to tribute. (There is a conflict of authorities as to whether the Emperor had ever granted away his tithe as well as his tax upon *gult* land.) Clearly either of these kinds of tenure was very desirable; 423

[1] Rossini, pp. 104–5.

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423 when combined they represented the most coveted of all tenures as well as the one most weakening to the imperial authority.

From the different kinds of grant made to the various classes, the governors, the churches, the soldiers and others, for various purposes, arose the many categories of land tenure.

THE GOVERNOR AND THE LAND

635 651 661 423 The position of the provincial governor was relatively simple. He collected the whole of the Emperor's tribute within the province (in so far as this had not already been granted away by a process which will be examined presently), and he used it for the support of his administration, which meant of himself, his deputies, judges, messengers, and above all, the soldiery. As we have seen in the chapter upon public finance, it is impossible to generalize upon the proportion of tribute which the governor sent on to his Emperor except that it varied with the distribution of power at any given time between the two of them, and in the north might range from the refusal by a distant and almost autonomous governor to send anything but perhaps a token payment to the large tributes in kind and in money which are described by observers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It is frequently stated in the European accounts of Ethiopia that the office of governor, like all other offices, was sold by the Emperor and by this method, injurious as it was, he would be sure of at least some return. He would also have an interest in frequent changes of office; the governor's interest would consequently be in extorting all he could from his province as rapidly as possible. 'They are generally more like robbers than governors', was the conclusion of one witness.[1] 'The governors purchase their Commissions, or to speak properly their privilege of pillaging the Provinces" concludes another.[2] 'You are governor of Ras el Feel', the Emperor's secretary announced to Bruce. 'I hope you will never see it. It is a hot, unwholesome country, full of Mahometans, but its gold is as good as any Christian gold whatever.'[3]

That these exactions continued into Haile Selassié's day was shown by the measures he took in his endeavours to reform the provincial administration. These exactions would certainly be less in the northern provinces where the governor was dealing with an ancient society, that of his own people, in which all relationships and tributes were sanctified by long established custom.

The governor would parcel out the tribute he controlled amongst his many lieutenants in the districts and amongst his own and the Emperor's

[1] Tellez, p. 53. [2] Lobo, *op. cit.*, p. 263. [3] Bruce, vol. 3, p. 365.

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THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE

soldiers. He would also have, like the Emperor, official estates set aside 635
for the upkeep of his large household and it would be these he would 651
be most anxious to retain if he lost his governorship. For these estates 661
he could call up the labour of soldiers and *gabars*.[1] Parkyns recorded 423
in the mid-nineteenth century that for his estates the governor could
exact one day's work for clearing, one for sowing, two for cleaning,
and two for harvesting, and this was still the custom in this century.[2]
Instead of cultivating his estates directly by using labour in this way, [427]
the governor might lease his land to tenants who would pay him a stated
proportion of the crop as rent. According to one authority in the north,
governors claimed that one tenth of all privately owned land should also
be cultivated for him and he would himself choose the lands. Where,
as in Tigré, the governorship tended to remain for a period in the same
family this was not so grave an injury to the province, but if a governor
from outside were sent in the people might not dare to demand back
the lands from the local family and were obliged to set aside new lands
for their new governor.[3] Besides the governor's estates there would be
others attached to the various offices of his assistants.

In addition to their more regular dues from the people it was customary for governors and their assistants to demand special gifts from time to time, such as a sheep from each village at Easter and at the festival of the true cross.

THE CHURCH AND THE ARMY

The Emperors were always extremely generous to the church, even if 794
they had not gone so far as to allocate that third of the original legend 423
which the famous cleric Takla Haimanot claimed in 1270. Every priest, 651
monk, *debtera*, and deacon, in so far as he was excused from the work
of the fields, required that land furnished with slaves or *gabars* should
be set aside for his support. A vast total of land was burdened with
this service. The piety of Emperors warred here with their political
interests—at one moment they were moved to give, at another to resume
their gifts. But it was not easy to assert the royal claim against monasteries which were undying corporations or against churches which needed permanent endowment and were, moreover, served by priests determined to pass on their lands with their offices to their sons. Moreover, the very character of the grants protected them. Their most

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–91.
[2] Parkyns, M., *Life in Abyssinia*, 1853, vol. 2, p. 230. Also Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
[3] Rossini, pp. 107–8.

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frequent form was that of *samonanya*, lands given to support the service of the mass. The Emperors had granted much *gult* to the churches and thus gave them the power to keep all the royal tribute from it and even to administer justice and to retain its proceeds. Even where this grant had not been made as *rest-gult* it was not easy to regain control of it and the convention was that, when such land was taken back by the Emperor, an equivalent estate should be granted.[1]

It should be remembered that land was not held collectively by the church but, as in England, by the individual 'parish' churches or monasteries or by the Abuna and the *Ichegé*, who between them held very large estates, and by other ecclesiastics.

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Military service, regarded in this chapter from the aspect of land tenure, was a universal obligation upon land unless the land was held by the church and specially exempted. The obligation was on the land rather than on the person, so that if a woman held a piece of land which had to supply soldiers it was her duty to raise and equip them. There were many different kinds of military tenure because each type of service was attached to special pieces of land and called by different names which need not be listed here. There was, for example, land which supplied the following services—the fusilier, the artilleryman, the muleteer, the porter transporting baggage, the bearer of the red tent or the Emperor's tent poles, the makers of gunpowder, the quartermaster, the forager, and many other military needs. It was even specially laid down for each piece of land whether its soldiers should fight in the centre or the left or right wings of the army.[2]

Estates would have to give the service of soldiers in varying numbers from the single man to a thousand or more. Those who owed these large numbers were, of course, very important people, and in Shoa at least it was probable that the man liable for a thousand would be a holder of *gult* over a considerable area.[3] Parcels of land might be allotted to 'regular' soldiers to support them while on service, or given as a reward for service, generally with a continuing obligation to provide a soldier of some special type.

It will be seen that there was no uniform system for the raising or support of the soldiers, especially as these were serving different masters. Thus in one province there might be part of the Emperor's army as well as the governor's provincial army, while both the latter and his district governors would have their personal bodyguards. Though in the north the serving soldiers were generally supported out of the tithes, they might be quartered directly upon the people or given lands of their

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, pp. 611–13. [2] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–90.
[3] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 612; also de Castro, pp. 281 ff.

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own. The soldier was generally freed from all taxes except the tithe and this might be excused where he provided his own horse and weapons. 701 [651]

Not only was there great variety in the arrangements but they were by no means static even in the conservative north. An example of this may be given from Gojjam. Here under Ras Hailu and his father, the *Negus* Tekla Haimanot, the soldiers were simply local men who, being exempted from tithes and other dues to the government, cultivated their own land and did three months' service a year at the governor's headquarters. After Ras Hailu's rebellion and his deposition in 1932 on grounds of misrule, Ras Imru, the Emperor's kinsman, was sent in his place. Although he was said to be a much more enlightened governor, the people murmured because he brought with him his 'foreign' Shoan army which oppressed the *gabars* who had to support it. This is an example of how, in the face of the complexities of the social situation, an ostensibly reforming measure might be frustrated.

PRIVATE TENURE

The main forces by which land and tribute were held by what may be called the public elements of the national life of Ethiopia, the Emperor, the church, the governor and his assistants, and the soldiers, have been very briefly indicated. The picture, even in this outline form, would not be complete without some reference to tenure by private persons, especially by those small farmers and peasant cultivators by whose work the rest were nourished. 423

The position of the *gabar* has been defined in relation to the rest of the community. When, in the northern provinces, we examine this class in their own right we find that it presented the most enduring strands in the texture of Ethiopian society and that its composition leads us back to the tribal past.

Over large parts of the northern provinces, especially those that were not too seriously disturbed or overlaid by Galla invasions, the land was held by groups of peasant holders, generally under the leadership of one or more families, and any inquiries about their origin would lead almost at once to romantic personal stories that may date, or appear to date, from some centuries before. These stories would explain how that group had come to be where it was and how its forefathers had first occupied the land. 423 621

These groups held by *rest*, that is, by hereditary right. They held as a group which had preserved some of the close ties of an original kinship group even though in the course of time it had absorbed many

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423 'foreigners', and even though, within the group ownership, there was
461 individual and family ownership of the land.

The allocation of and the succession to the land was governed by ancient custom. This custom varied greatly because, as d'Abbadie said, 'In Ethiopia one of the despairs of the traveller, who thinks he knows the country, is to discover, sometimes by chance, that such and such a community, comprising a family, a part of a village, or district is of a different origin from the population which surrounds it.' In internal land and family matters, it would keep its own private law.[1] In some communities there were meetings at fixed intervals of three to seven years according to the region and at which the reallocation between families of the different types of land, which was in several categories according to its fertility, was arranged. Apart from these adjustments by agreement, land went from father to son. Land transac-
[217] tions were announced by the public crier and registered, generally by entry in a Bible or other book, in the 'parish' church. The penal code
[687] of 1930 decreed up to three years' imprisonment for failure to register transactions in hereditary land,[2] but this decree may not have been fully effective in the provinces by 1935. Transactions were always carried out before witnesses. These sometimes included young children who might
[262] be given a feast of the delicacy of fried grain in order to fix the event in their memories.

Landmatters, indeed, were settled within such land-holding groups with little intervention from higher authority so long as all its members gave what was due to the government or to the representative of the government. Their relations with this representative would be through their family and the heads of their family group and it is obvious that a community with this degree of autonomy in the vital matters of land and tribute, in addition to the minor legislative and judicial powers already described,[3] might be regarded as largely self-governing in local matters. Such *restenya*, or hereditary land-holders, were further fortified in their position by the recognition of private property in the *Fetha Nagast*. In Menelik's later days, his council confirmed this position by a decree in which it was promised that except in cases of rebellion and treason even criminals should not be dispossessed from such tenure.[4] This provision was repeated in clause 9 of the penal code of 1930. It is probable that it was unbroken settlement by an Amhara tribal community which alone could offer effective resistance to royal and other pressure.

423 The Emperor would, however, seize every opportunity of breaking

[1] d'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 90. [2] Clause 458. [3] See above, p. 142.
[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

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down the resistance of the undisturbed customary societies in favour of his own centralized control. Thus in Wallo, an ancient Galla region, the people had been organized into seven districts under the rule of seven of the original families. When Menelik first wrested its allegiance from John he had to conciliate these local leaders, but later, when he became stronger, he weakened them and had the land measured and more evenly distributed. In 1916 when the *Negus* Mikael was defeated after an attempt to rebel, Wallo was parcelled out under generals, and soldiers were put in by the central government. 423

MEASUREMENT AND INHERITANCE

Before concluding this general account some answer must be given to the questions as to whether there was any survey and registration and what were the rules of inheritance? 423

There was, of course, no survey as the term is understood in England. There was a measurement, a *gasha*, which was the equivalent of 80 to 100 acres, and in some parts of the country and notably, as we shall see, in parts of the conquered south the land had been measured. In Ethiopian terms, 'the cord had been thrown', sometimes once and sometimes a second time, with more accuracy, after the land had been cleared and farmed. Measurement of the land gave the Emperor and his officers greater control over it and its resources and the prime mover in this process had been Menelik. [804]

In the north, measurement has been by no means universal. In Gojjam, most stubborn and independent of provinces, and in Bagemdir there was no general measurement of land. In other northern provinces it appears that when estates were granted in recent times by the Emperor, especially those in *rest-gult* tenure, they were measured and registered. Small estates and the lands held by groups of *restenyas*, divided and at times redivided, were distinguished by natural landmarks and registered in men's minds or they might be entered into parish registers. The new land-tax of 1944 was based upon the unit of the *gasha*, but it is very doubtful whether measurement had been sufficiently carried through by this date to make it possible to execute the law upon this basis. [651]

With regard to inheritance, we have seen that this was only held to be permissible for *rest* land though in fact it was far more widely applied. It was not permissible to leave land away from the family or the group, or equally to give or sell it, without the permission of those chiefly interested. In leaving land the owner could allocate as much as two thirds to his favourite child—and in some parts this could be a daughter—while the rest was divided equally between the other children. 423 428

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THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

THREE LOCAL EXAMPLES OF TENURE

423 634 Three local examples will illustrate tenure. The first is from Gojjam under Ras Hailu.[1] The province was divided into fourteen districts. Most of these were in turn divided into two or three sub-districts. In each of the fourteen districts was a district governor (*abagaz*), who generally bore the title of *dejazmach*, and an assistant or deputy (*Mislané*). These men, appointed solely at the governor's will, were in general charge of the administration and jurisdiction of the district. Beside them functioned the *gulta gaji*, who was always a local man whose title was hereditary in certain families. He oversaw the collection of taxes, settled small cases between the *gabars*, and acted as liaison between the government and the people. He appointed as assistants a *chiqa-shum* for each village-group, an office which was held for a year and rotated among heads of families.

651 The list of the tributes paid to the various officials is very indefinite as to the amount and is of value only as indicating very generally the complexity of the system rather than the exact weight of the burden carried by the peasantry or the proportions taken by the different officers. Taxes and payments were divided as follows between the various authorities.

Government	Tithe in grain.
	Tax of $2 on each pair of oxen.
	afarsata fines.[2]
	Tax of $1 on each hut.
Abagaz (district governor)	Court Fees.
	Labour dues.
	Dues for use by men and cattle of warm mineral springs.
Mislané (deputy)	*Irbo* (a proportion of the government tax paid in kind).
	A proportion of the court fees paid to the *abagaz*.
	Labour dues.
Gulta gaji (hereditary chief)	A proportion of the grain crop of his district.
Chiqa-shum (village head)	His reward was exemption from taxation during year of office.[3]

[1] From information obtained locally by F. de Halpert. [2] See p. 149.

[3] It may be of some slight help in interpreting the money payments to note that the penal code of 1930 equates a quarter of a dollar with one day's work of an unskilled labourer. (Clause 6.)

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THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE

The taxation in Gojjam was probably lighter than elsewhere, since, as has just been explained, soldiers were paid here by means of exemption from taxation. 651 184

In a study of the system round Lake Tana, mainly in Bagemdir, an Italian writer notes how, side by side with the groups of *restenyas* tracing their hereditary occupation to the first settlements, probably in the fifteenth century, other tenures had grown up. One was that of the *farasenya*[1] to whom the Emperor had made grants of certain privileges and payments amounting generally to about a tenth of the produce of the *restenya* and also the right to exact labour for his land and house and collective gifts upon important feast days. Similar rights, but not including administrative powers, were given to *gultenyas* who, while collecting all the dues owed to the government, had to pay to it an agreed quota of oxen, mules, honey, etc. Thirdly there were the grants of *maskal mariet* (lands of the cross) to the church. In all these cases the rights were often given over the heads of the *restenyas*, who would continue to cultivate their lands as before. As there might be superimposition of new rights over old at the top, there might also be added lower stages by the leasing of land by *restenyas* and others to tenants who would have to pay rent as well as tax. 661 [554]

Side by side with these holders of what may be regarded as private rights would be the hierarchy of the governor. The private rights might cut like islands into the administrative area of his district governors or these might be the *gultenyas* or *farasenyas* themselves and so eliminate the dualism. The *chiqa-shum* who collected the tax would thus pay it either to the *Mislané*, the *gultenya*, the *farasenya* or the *alaqa* (head) of the church. The writer condemns the cumbrousness of this method, with its encouragement of peculation and exactions. The original tax of the people was one tenth of their crop, but the feudal organization had resulted in a multiplication of intermediaries whose great object was to pass on less than a tenth to the government and to exact more than a tenth from the people, enriching themselves on the margin of differences. Those who suffered most were some of the *gabars* who had to support both the church and the *farasenyas*. 651 661

An Italian writing of Ethiopian abuses and Italian reforms in 1937 is not likely to underrate the vices of the old system, but there is plenty of comparative evidence, as well as the laws of probability, to suggest that he has not greatly darkened his picture. He states that under the Italian Government, after the conquest, the upper part of the structure[2]

[1] Literally 'horseman' and corresponding, apparently, to the early English 'knight'.

[2] Grottanelli, *op. cit.*, vol. 2. pp. 14–15, 105–12.

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651 661 had been removed, leaving the heads of villages and districts in direct contact with the Italian resident.

114 Our third example comes from Eritrea. No excuse is needed for this excursion beyond the present borders of Ethiopia, since the Eritrean plateau was until fifty years ago a part, and one of the oldest parts, of the Ethiopian state, and this region may again revert to its former status. In addition, however, we have the great advantage that Dr. Nadel, an anthropologist of experience and authority, has had the opportunity in this region under the British military administration to make a thorough investigation of a land tenure closely resembling that of northern Ethiopia.[1]

621 614 On the Eritrean plateau the most characteristic unit was the *enda*, a number of families which claimed to have descended from a single ancestor. This group was not static; it might decline or be dispersed, or it might thrive and reach a size when it became necessary to break up and form new *endas*. It was not an administrative unit, but in certain matters it acted as a unity through meetings of its elders. The administrative unit, the village, generally covered several *endas*, though these may have all descended from a parent *enda*. The village unit might also cut across *endas*.

423 651 [621] Above the village administrations, in the days before the Italian conquest, came the hierarchy of the Emperor, his governors and deputy governors. These were often strangers from the south though local chiefs might be promoted to imperial positions. The imperial taxation had to be delivered to these officers, and the Emperor might arbitrarily cut out estates in *gult* for their support, or for that of monasteries or colonies of soldiers posted in these outlying regions to support the Emperor's power.

423 These rights may be regarded as extraneous to the underlying customary tenures which are divided by Dr. Nadel into three, ownership by the individual (which generally meant the individual family); by the kindred, or *enda*, and by the village. The first two types of ownership might, owing to the blurring of the edges between the three groups by growth or decline, shade off into each other.

In his discussion of family ownership Dr. Nadel gives us an authoritative definition of *resti*, which may cover ownership ranging from that of an individual to that of a large kinship group. This tenure was held by the people to be the most fundamental and sacred, and its characteristics were firstly its relative absoluteness; secondly its hereditary nature,

[1] Nadel, S. F., 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau', *Africa*, vol. 16, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 1–22, 99–109. The succeeding pages are closely based on this concise report.

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and thirdly its derivation from the rights of some forefather who first took possession of the land. 423

Where the *resti* land was still held by a large kindred group, the individual family had a secondary or derived ownership of a piece of land adequate to meet its needs. When a son married and set up house he applied through his father to the council which allocated a plot to him within the kindred land. Thus the hereditary right was to land within that of the *enda*, not necessarily to a particular piece of land. Sons and, in certain conditions, daughters would inherit their father's rights. Before a man could give or sell his share of land he must offer it first to members of his *enda* and then to those of his village, and this restriction might apply to a subsequent sale of the land. It seems that in some parts the control of the *enda* council was even stricter and that the individual had no more than a very restricted usufruct, with frequent reallocation by lot. 423 428

The complexities of land tenure have only to be defined in these general terms to make it necessary to list numerous qualifications and apparent inconsistencies. These cannot all be given here. Mention must, however, be made of the system of village ownership, which, as a result largely of later immigration and of heavy pressure upon the land, had in some parts overlaid or ousted the *enda* ownership and the principle of *resti*. In these units (the development of which, though not begun by the Italian Government, was encouraged by it), the village council made an equal division of its lands, which were allocated by lot in three categories according to fertility, to all inhabitants of the village, whether *restenyas* or not. There was a redistribution at periods ranging from three to seven years. Village ownership appears to have been more just and flexible than that of the *enda*, though it is not clear how it dealt with improvements and permanent crops. 423

From the social aspect it is interesting to learn that everywhere, even where village ownership had deprived the *restenyas* of their special privileges with regard to land, their personal prestige remained. The *restenyas* were the people of superior status who, however small their holdings, could claim to belong to families which descended from the first family to hold the land. This gave them a peculiar status; it endowed them with a primacy in the local councils and even, in some parts, with certain small dues and privileges; it is from their ranks alone that the village chief, the *chiqa-shum*, was chosen. 423 554

In addition to these main forms of ownership the *restenyas* could create subsidiary forms by leasing or lending their land or, especially in the case of large and absentee landlords, by introducing a number of tenants to farm their land and pay with their services, the landlord 427

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427 paying the tribute for these *gabars*. (This method was also very common in Ethiopia proper.) There might also be forms of métayer contract. It need hardly be said that, after very long tenure, a tenant would try to claim that his land was *resti*, and that, with the growing shortage of land, numerous disputes resulted.

427 177 One of the main interests of Dr. Nadel's valuable analysis of Eritrean land tenure is that it shows the Ethiopian system as it was after half a century of Italian rule and as it is now under a British administration. The Italians swept away the upper parts of the structure except in so far as they allowed favoured chiefs to hold their old large estates, but at a lower level the system has been little changed. British administrators—who, of course, must act with the restraint of temporary caretakers—found their main problems arising from the intense, indeed passionate, competition for the inadequate amount of land which leads to numerous and long-drawn-out disputes. The Eritreans are proud of their land law, but to the European observer the lack of finality in their disputes and the great difficulty of obtaining any implementation of the decisions either of arbitrators or of native courts are great obstacles to the proper development of the land. But the difficulties with regard to tenure are, in all probability, much wider than legal questions and arise from the strain which the changing use of land is putting upon all customary African tenures.

423 Another most interesting conclusion drawn by Dr. Nadel is that the stubborn pride and conservatism of the *restenyas*, who cling to all their privileges with a fierce tenacity, represent a social evil. He speaks of the narrow exclusiveness of the system and its rigid political and economic privileges. 'It excludes large sections of the population permanently from a share in the administration of their own communities and keeps them in a state of dependence and economic insecurity. . . . To-day we are facing not merely the economic system of *resti* but a *resti* mentality.'[1] If this is true of that part of Ethiopia where both migrations and Italian policy have weakened this system, it is likely that in northern Ethiopia the problem is presented in even more rigid and difficult terms. But this, again, is only one illustration of the widespread African problem of harmonizing the existing tenurial rights of the original land-holders with the interests of the population as a whole.

[1] *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 108.

[pp. 293 ff. not processed]

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THE REAL ABYSSINIA

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[pp. 1-57 have been omitted from the files,- Analyst]

CHAPTER IV

SOME OF THEIR HABITS AND CUSTOMS

197 REFERENCE has already been made to the number of languages spoken in the country. Of these, the principal is Amharic, and of the Semitic languages of the world it is, according to Mr Armbruster, spoken by a greater number of people than any other, with the 212 exception of Arabic. Its difficulty may be gauged by the fact that there are over two hundred letters in the alphabet, and consequently the number of guides to the language guaranteed to teach it in half a dozen lessons by correspondence is limited.

I am bound to say, however, in mitigation of this apparently insurmountable barrier to learning Amharic, that these characters represent syllables and not letters, and are variations of about thirty-seven root characters.

197 The next most important language is Galla, a Hamitic tongue which is spoken and understood by all the different branches of Galla throughout the various districts inhabited by them; in addition Tigré is spoken in Eritrea, and Tigréin in the province of Tigré; both of these are Semitic languages, as is also the ancient Geze or Geuze tongue, which is to the Abyssinians much as Latin was to the English people in the Middle Ages.

805 But if their language is difficult their calendar is simpler than ours, for instead of having months of differing lengths, they divide the year into twelve

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months of thirty days each and a thirteenth month of five days, called Quagme, (or Pagme), adding a sixth day to Quagme in leap year. 305

Their year starts on the 1st day of Maskaram, which normally corresponds to our 11th September; it is on and from that day up to the end of our year seven years behind the European date; on and after the 1st January, until the 5th Quagme (our 10th September), it is eight years behind.

But in endeavouring to translate dates from Abyssinian to European computation bad snags await the unwary. In the first place the introduction of the 6th Quagme in their leap year throws all the dates between September and the following February back a day. The Abyssinian year following their leap year (which incidentally precedes ours!) begins on our 12th September instead of 11th September and continues a day behind time until our 29th February, when it is automatically readjusted. And if the translator wishes to compare dates prior to the present century he will find further joys in store for him. For the Abyssinians have counted as leap years the three years we do not (though they are properly leap years), viz.: 1700, 1800, and 1900. Nor do they take account of the additional day we dropped in 1800, nor, I think, of the ten days omitted from our calendar in 1582. So they gradually picked up fourteen days out of the seven (or eight) years that they were (and are) behind. This probably explains why their year starts on 11th September instead of 29th August, as in the case of most Eastern nations.

The difference in the number of years between their computation and ours is possibly due (i) to their

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adoption of the Alexandrian era recognizing 5500 years from the creation to the birth of Christ, which was placed three years *before* that given by the Dionysian era (*i.e.* 5502 B.C. 29th August); and (ii) to their adoption of the Diocletian era, which dropped ten years out of the calendar in A.D. 284. Thus they lost ten years and gained three or two according to the date to be computed.

A similar result would have been attained had they adopted, in lieu of the above, the calculation made by the Egyptian monk Ponodorus who (*circa* A.D. 400) struck ten years off the age of the world and placed the Incarnation three years after the then accepted date, thus forming the "mundane era of Antioch" which was adopted by the Christians of Syria. It is possible that this was the era adopted by the Abyssinians; it is so stated to be in some of their old manuscripts.

Abyssinian				European	
A.M.	A.D.	Month	Days	Months and Days	A.D.
7427	1927	Maskaram	1st to 30th	11 Sept. to 10 Oct.	1934
"	"	Tekemt	"	11 Oct. " 9 Nov.	"
"	"	Hidar	"	10 Nov. " 9 Dec.	"
"	"	Tasas	"	10 Dec. " 8 Jan.	1935
"	"	Tirr	"	9 Jan. " 7 Feb.	"
"	"	Yakatit	"	8 Feb. " 9 March	"
"	"	Magabit	"	10 March " 8 April	"
"	"	Mazya	"	9 April " 8 May	"
"	"	Gimbot	"	9 May " 7 June	"
"	"	Sane	"	8 June " 7 July	"
"	"	Hamle	"	8 July " 6 Aug.	"
"	"	Nahasse	"	7 Aug. " 5 Sept.	"
"	"	Quagme	1st to 6th	6 Sept. " 11 Sept.	"
7428	1928	Maskaram	1st to 30th	12 Sept. " 11 Oct.	"
"	"	Tekemt	"	12 Oct. " 10 Nov.	"
"	"	Hidar	"	11 Nov. " 10 Dec.	"
"	"	Tasas	"	11 Dec. " 9 Jan.	1936
"	"	Tirr	"	10 Jan. " 8 Feb.	"
"	"	Yakatit	"	9 Feb. " 9 March	"

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The Abyssinian calendar for *their* current year (leap year for them) accordingly compares with ours as shewn on the previous page; and in the last month given, the calendar resumes its normal correspondence with ours as, owing to the occurrence of our leap year, February has an extra day in 1936. 805

Apart from their language, there are many customs and practices amongst the Abyssinians which differentiate them sharply from most of the other peoples of Africa, and not the least interesting of these are clearly traceable to their ancient connection with Israel, of which they speak with pride in their old records. 171

For example, much of their religious pageantry, which is described in detail elsewhere, is undoubtedly a remarkable survival of rites which must have been introduced by the earliest Jewish arrivals, such as the Dance of the Priests, their ceremonies connected with the Tabot, and many others. Similarly, their method of slaughtering cattle for food, the division of animals into clean and unclean, etc., are all indications pointing in the same direction.

Their dislike of Jews to-day is accordingly the more remarkable, and must be due to the sanguinary wars which took place from the fourth to the tenth centuries between the newly-converted Christians and those who remained Jews. 609

Among other customs which are peculiar and interesting, pride of place must surely be given to their fondness for raw meat or *broundo*. This form of diet is preferred to any other by the mass of the population, and indeed by practically all sections thereof, beef being liked better than mutton. 262

When we were on trek our men could be given no

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262 greater treat than an ox, and within an hour of the purchase of the animal it was killed, skinned, cut into joints and divided amongst the tents, and our followers were busy gorging themselves on the still warm flesh. [25] What the twenty men could not eat in the day was 136 never cooked, but was cut into long thin strips and hung on ropes to dry in the sun and wind for the morrow's meal—a tempting bait for the vultures, hawks, and carrion crows that used to collect in their hundreds and make frantic dives for the tempting morsels, occasionally picking up a piece from the line in their claws to the intense disgust of the men. It was fascinating to watch the daring swoops and dips of the circling birds, and so reckless did they become that one day whilst we were at lunch a hawk, baulked of his craving for raw meat by the watchfulness of its guardians, actually swooped down on our luncheon table and snatched from the plate on my wife's knees the wing of a duck that she was about to operate on, brushing her face and knocking her knife out of her hand with his powerful wings; and at the same moment another bird lifted a cutlet from a dish which our "boy" was carrying from the cook's tent to our table. The "boy's" expression of indignation and helplessness was most comical to watch.

262 But to revert to the practice of eating raw meat. Early travellers to Abyssinia have not only commented on this, but have gone even further, and have stated that meat is cut and eaten *from the living animal.* Bruce describes two separate and distinct instances of this practice, which he stated occurred frequently. The first was that of three soldiers whom he saw driving along a cow, and on arriving at a halting-place they tied it,

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threw it down, cut steaks from it which they devoured 262
rapidly, and then drove the cow on again, plastering up the wound with mud. The second (which is given with a wealth of detail too revolting to repeat) was at a regular banquet at which a live cow was brought in and strips cut from it by all the guests until the animal died, which took some time.

Salt states that Pearce actually saw an example of the first instance quoted above, which he says is by no means uncommon, but he disbelieves the second instance. No other writer that I am acquainted with recounts any such instance *of his own knowledge*, and the suggestion that such a practice ever existed is hotly denied in the country. Nor could I find any evidence of the existence of such a habit either as to the present or the past. Personally I am inclined to disbelieve the stories or to regard them as gross exaggerations, or possibly as isolated instances.

Be that as it may, the raw meat dietary, however, 262
is undoubtedly very popular to-day, and it may be of 574
interest if I give an extract from my diary describing a great *Gebur*, or banquet given at the Feast of Maskal, which we attended, and at which no fewer than 15,000 soldiers and 2000 or 3000 palace retainers were fed in four relays in the great hall. This is the more interesting in that for some years past Europeans have not been admitted to the *Gebur*, and although one was held on our last visit we were not present.

The *Gebur*

"We were received by the Court Chamberlain on 574
the large stone terrace outside the *aderatch*, and after a 264

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short interval led through rooms wrapped in darkness to the banqueting hall, at one end of which was a large raised platform shut in by closely drawn white curtains. Here, seated on a dais, was the Empress, surrounded by Abyssinian notables, and after paying our respects to Her Majesty, Ras Tafari, and others, we were conducted to the table prepared for Europeans on one side of the platform—there were about fifteen of us. At the opposite side of the platform the Ras and the principal chiefs sat down at another table, whilst in the middle green silk curtains were drawn round the Empress' dais, so that she should be hidden from the vulgar eye whilst eating; a constant stream of attendants bearing every conceivable kind of receptacle, from beautifully wrought gold dishes to enamelled iron mugs, passed in and out of her little tent.

"After we had had an excellent, if somewhat lengthy, meal, consisting of a mixed assortment of European and Abyssinian courses, the white curtains by which the platform was shut in were pulled back, shewing the hall packed with long low tables as closely as they could be got in, the tables being covered with slabs of Abyssinian bread enclosing quantities of cooked cut-up meat.

"To the sound of bugles and trumpets the main doors were opened and in poured the chiefs with their soldiery, who had come up to Addis Ababa for the feast from all over the country; the organization was admirable, and though some 5000 men filled the hall there was no sort of scrambling or disorder whatever.

"They set to work at once on the *hors-d'œuvres*, and then the *pièces de résistance* arrived. Hundreds of pairs of men came in, each pair carrying between them a long

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stout pole, from which hung huge pieces of red raw meat, covered with strips of red and gold cloth. 574 264

"These men stood closely together all along the tables and one on each side, so that the meat hung down from the poles over the tables just in front of the diners. The guests produced knives, and feeling the joint with their fingers to pick out a tender bit, rapidly sliced off strips of meat, which they put into their mouths, cutting off what would not go in quite close to their lips, an operation which, from personal experience, I know demands great skill if one's nose is not to suffer—as the cut is always made upwards.

"After ample libations of *tej* and *araki* (native mead, or hydromel and spirit) the diners filed out in perfect order, and the stage was cleared for the next party.

"The whole function had lasted nearly four hours and the Ras must have been heartily glad when it was over, for he had previously dined one instalment of 5000 warriors, and two more were to follow—between 17,000 and 18,000 in all partaking of the royal hospitality."

Broundo may be a nourishing form of diet tending to the development of warlike qualities, but its consumption has one serious drawback at all events, in that it is the cause of taenia (or tapeworm), a disease which is almost universal in the country. So much is this the case indeed that it is a recognized practice for all, high and low, to take monthly as a "taenicide" a dose of a plant known as *kousso*, which is so violent in its effects as to incapacitate the patient from work or occupation for the day. 164 757

Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by 000

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Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by
784 one of themselves, nor will Moslems eat any which has
795 been killed by a Christian. We had one Moslem with us when we were on trek, and as he would not eat the ox which my other men had killed he bought a whole sheep for himself, and killed and ate it himself; none of the other men would touch an atom of it, even when their own supply ran out and they had no meat at all.

262 Of course the comparatively high price of meat (for
252 an Abyssinian) prevents the too frequent consumption of *broundo* amongst the people, and their tastes in everyday food are simple. Bread is their mainstay. This is found in many varieties; some of it soft, slightly sour in taste, and pale brown in colour; the most popular is of flour made from *teff* or millet seed, mixed to a thick paste with water and then poured into a large rough slightly concave iron receptacle and cooked over an open fire, without grease or fat of any kind. When finished this bread takes the form and aspect of large pancakes, twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, and is very good, especially when eaten with jam or butter; we always ate it ourselves when on trek. The native eats with it a kind of mash of lentils or dried peas, ground and cooked, and mixed with butter and a very hot red sauce which is produced from the chilli; this latter is very widely cultivated in several varieties all over the country.

263 The amount of pepper that is put into their cooked dishes is as a rule disastrous to the European palate at the first time of trying, and how they can swallow the fiery compounds that they do passes my comprehension —their tongues and palates must be made of leather.

264 All food, including meat, is eaten with the fingers amongst all classes, a piece of bread being broken off,

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wrapped round the portion of other foodstuff to be 264
eaten, and the whole put bodily into the mouth.

I happened on one occasion to call on an Abyssinian chieftain, a ruler of a distant province who was visiting Addis and who was a particular friend of mine, just as he was sitting down to a late lunch in his *tukul* surrounded by his principal vassal chiefs. I had to sit down on the divan next to him; and as he was of course eating *à l'Abyssine* his cook kept on rolling up succulent morsels of terrifically hot curry or stewed meat or raw flesh in bread with his fingers, and pressing them on my jaded palate. Any of his chiefs whom he desired to honour was similarly distinguished, that is to say, he would select a tit-bit, give it to the cook who doctored it up and passed it to a slave, who conveyed it to the fortunate recipient, who ate it with great gusto. And fingers all round all the time!

Except for some few individuals who have acquired 276
the habit in Europe or from Europeans, smoking, curiously enough, is practically non-existent among Abyssinians although the tobacco plant grows freely, and the Gallas make a sort of rough coarse tobacco which is possible, though hardly pleasant. The practice was somewhat drastically discouraged by the late Emperor Johannes (Theodore's successor), who is said to have punished smoking by cutting off the offender's lips, and snuffing by removing his nose. I was unsuccessful in ascertaining the cause of their objection to smoking, one of the various obviously inadequate reasons being that the use of tobacco was condemned because the plant was supposed to have grown originally out of the tomb of the heretic Arius! A more probable explanation is that the practice was regarded as a

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276 Moslem one and was accordingly originally condemned by the Church.

On the other hand they make up for this privation
273 by a pretty free indulgence in their own home-made hydromel (*tej*), beer (*talla*), and spirits (*araki*), and also in fearsome alcoholic preparations distilled by some of the small Greek traders in Addis.

Tej, their principal drink, is home-made by nearly every family; this is manufactured from honey, which is to be found in great quantities in most parts of Abyssinia, and is fermented by means of an evergreen plant called *guecho* or *geshu*. When well made and matured it is a very pleasant beverage; to the native it is an intoxicant, and during the feast days one meets many who have partaken well but not too wisely of it.

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CHAPTER V

SOME OF THEIR HABITS & CUSTOMS—(*continued*)

As the people are Christians they are of course monogamists, but though they have only one wife at a time, they often have, unfortunately for the race, many wives one after the other, and as a natural corollary the women have a series of husbands. This is due to their appallingly lax marriage laws and to the ridiculous facilities for divorce, advantages which do not apply to the Gallas, who "enjoy" two or three or more wives at a time, but then they are not Christians. 587 586

Marriage amongst the Abyssinians exists in three forms. Firstly, the man selects a bride, and without any form of ceremony they live together, he supplying her with small amounts of money in addition to a home and the necessaries of life, and when either of them so desires they come to a mutual agreement and separate as easily as they united. 583 586

Secondly, there is the civil marriage. In this case there is a contract made before the *Shum* (or "Mayor") when the properties of the would-be bride and bridegroom are specified, and an arrangement is made as to division in case of divorce, though usually they agree to divide things equally. In the event of divorce this division is carried out to the letter, and should there, for example, be amongst other things only one cooking pot, this is halved. When a woman has been "married"

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583 and divorced in this manner two or three times she is
586 considered rather a "catch", on account perhaps of her worldly possessions which she has acquired from her previous matrimonial ventures. Then if she does not retire from the world and become a kind of nun she often indulges in the third form of marriage, a solemn religious ceremony which is really binding; it is as a general rule confined to the better class of Abyssinians.

Women, some of whom are attractive and even
562 pretty, have, speaking generally, little or no position. There are of course exceptions to this rule, and I have known cases where a wife has by her influence over her husband acquired a certain status for herself. But this is rare, and by a general though not universal rule women are even supposed to eat separately.

Nevertheless the higher-class woman manages to
562 hold her own, and if badly treated by her husband has
586 the right of appeal to the Church. And so far as I can gather the woman of any class can divorce her husband as easily as he can divorce her, which gives her a certain protection in itself.

In spite of the facility of divorce—possibly to some
562 extent because of the mutual power to exercise it—the
462 lot of women is not at all what one might expect; they
357 are by no means the hewers of wood and drawers of water that one finds so extensively in Africa. They do little or no work, neither washing nor mending their husbands' clothes nor cooking; all this is done by Gourages or others of whom one or more is to be found in almost every household—other than the very poorest —and even amongst one's own servants, acting as "gentlemen's gentlemen".

562 Women of the upper classes are still to some ex-

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tent secluded and when they go out they ride mules 562
astride, are completely veiled or rather covered up in their *chammas* and are accompanied by an escort on foot, one or two of whom walk or trot by the side of the mule holding the lady in position.

Getting on to the mule is an operation that must by 492
no means be witnessed by the profane masculine eye; 576
I remember on the occasion of the first visit paid to my wife by an Abyssinian lady of rank I went to the entrance to speed the parting guest. To my surprise a number of members of the escort took off their *chammas* and held them all round the mule so that their mistress could climb into her saddle in complete seclusion.

But rigid as may be the rules of privacy governing 562
the lives of women, there are no harems, and no guard 644
of eunuchs to watch over them as in Moslem countries.

Nevertheless other Eastern customs are practised, 304
such as circumcision among men and a mild form of 171
clitoridectomy among women; this custom, be it observed, is not as is often supposed of Jewish origin, but probably of much more remote antiquity, and is further evidence of the Hamitic descent of the Abyssinians; according to Gibbon circumcision had been practised "by the most ancient Ethiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness" and presumably not therefore as a religious rite.

The nation as a whole has not adopted European 291
dress, although it is worn to some extent in Addis 177
Ababa, and by individuals who have been to Europe. They are proud of their national dress and the Emperor still encourages its use at court functions and receptions at the palace.

The distinctive feature of the dress is the *chamma*, 291

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291 which is worn by both men and women of all ranks; and by the beauty of the *chamma* can as a rule be judged the position or state of purse of the wearer. It consists of a piece of material about three yards in length and from two to four yards in width according as to whether it is doubled or not.

291 286 The more beautiful specimens of these are hand-woven from native cotton, spun and prepared by the Abyssinian women. These are usually edged with red or mixed coloured silks, and those worn by the high priests, great chiefs, and princes and princesses have a very handsome border varying from twelve to eighteen inches wide, carried out in silks of vivid colours woven into an artistic design. They are as fine as gossamer, though large and warm; they are not as a rule sold, but if ever obtainable by Europeans cost from 200 to 500 dollars.

The more ordinary *chammas* are also woven by hand, but of imported cotton, and by comparison are of a much harder and coarser character, though still nice to look at. Natives who cannot afford the hand-woven shawl make use of a length of *abougedid* or cotton sheeting for the same purpose.

291 The *chamma*, which is not unlike the old Roman toga, is draped round the shoulders, often being brought up over the head to the eyebrow and again over the lower part of the face and nose, leaving but the eyes [576] visible. It is always lowered from the face and head as a mark of friendliness or respect, and generally when passing Europeans, though I have known Abyssinians of the anti-foreign old régime to cover up their faces more closely when passing the *Frangi*. At court those in attendance twist the garment round the waist and

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throw the end over the right shoulder from back to 291
front. As a general rule, however, women turn them up on the left shoulder, whilst men free their right arm and shoulder. They make, floating in the breeze, a very picturesque addition to the costume of the wearers.

Very little difference is apparent in the dress of the Ethiopian men and women of any class. This is made of imported white cotton materials of varying design and quality, and consists of roomy trousers tied round the waist and tightened in from calf to ankle, and a loose shirt reaching below the knee. The latter is worn longer by the women, with some coloured silk embroidery round neck and cuffs; this embroidery is also carried out round the bottom of the trousers, which are tightly fastened at the ankle with tiny silver or gold buttons. The shirts of both men and women have very close-fitting sleeves from elbow to wrist, which are also buttoned, the men's shirts being finished with high tight neck-bands which give them a clean, smart appearance.

Sometimes I have seen, though rarely, the shirt and trousers, and even the *chamma*, worn in pink or blue or [765] even yellow. This is a sign of mourning—white is otherwise the universal rule.

Most Abyssinians wear a head-covering of sorts. In the case of the people this generally consists of a piece of white muslin twisted round or tied over the head; I have also, though rarely, seen them wearing straw hats of native manufacture, and, still more rarely, a sort of brown woollen cap with a tuft, not unlike a fez in shape. The better-class Abyssinian, of both sexes, sometimes affects a wide-brimmed soft grey or black felt hat of European manufacture.

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291 The Abyssinian lady and gentleman are frequently to be seen with a black satin three-quarter mantle, ornamented by a little gold braid round the neck and generally a coloured silk lining. In the rainy season a black woollen-hooded cape or *burnous* is donned by all classes, women wearing the hood at the back, and men sporting theirs on their left shoulder. The *burnous* is also a sign of mourning, for which purpose people of every class wear it.

765 515 296 A further, and less pleasant, sign of mourning is for the bereaved one to refrain from washing his clothes; but I only observed this practice in connection with servants and persons of humble position. Ordinarily they are very keen on washing their white garments, and even on trek there was a great "clean-up" whenever we stayed in camp for an extra twenty-four hours. The day before our return into Addis was always the occasion for the most lavish use of soap and water, and the *safari* on arrival looked really quite smart, the men all having donned spotless white *chammas*, shirt, and trousers for the occasion, when, I am bound to say, they looked externally a good deal cleaner than our travel-stained garments allowed us to do.

293 A cartridge belt of various colours and designs, from the plain native leather to the gold and silk embroidered specimen, is more or less generally worn by the men, and its value is also often an indication to the position or means of the wearer. In its place women use a girdle of some sort, to which is attached their keys, ear-cleaners, head-scratchers, and small silver ornaments. Parasols of neatly plaited grass, intermixed with coloured cottons, are carried frequently by both sexes in all seasons. These are quite picturesque, and no doubt serve their

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main purpose, but of course they cannot be closed up. 293
Ordinary umbrellas are never used by the Abyssinians, though huge and brilliant coloured umbrellas are used by priests and other important personages on ceremonial occasions.

On feast days the chiefs and other functionaries at 292
Court change their cotton shirt for one of silk or satin, gorgeously embroidered in gold and silver, and in various colours. And finally a pelerine of bright-coloured cloth of velvet, or, better still, of lion or black leopard skin ornamented in silver and silver-gilt, is permitted to be worn by those only whom it is desired to distinguish on account of specially meritorious conduct, generally in war.

The full-dress costume of a Ras or Dejazmach, with 293
bristling lion's mane head-dress, velvet cape with lion's mane collar, embroidered in gold and silver-gilt, and gala shield and sword-scabbard covered with velvet and embossed with silver-gilt ornamentation, is a really magnificent one, and the appearance of Dejazmach Nado, the envoy to King George in 1919, at Buckingham Palace in this dress caused quite a sensation.

Mention must also be made of one article which is 301
an indispensable adjunct to the dress of every Christian 778
Abyssinian, and that is the *matab*, a silken cord carrying an amulet or charm, which is worn round the neck as the badge of their faith.

The gentler sex affect as much jewellery of all sorts, 301
bracelets, rings, anklets, necklaces, earrings, etc., as they are able to procure; these are of native make as already described. As a general rule they have extraordinarily small *attaches*, and of all the native bracelets that we collected in and round Addis Ababa none

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301 would meet round the wrist of any of our English friends.

302 The fashion amongst the women of wearing the hair, which is jet black, varies, and sometimes it is left about two or three inches long, curling and waving, thus forming a becoming frame to the face. More common, perhaps, is the style of doing up the hair into dozens of tiny plaits taking the form of the head, the ends being loosely tied together on the neck and left to hang; some affect a parting down the middle of their heads, puff the hair out at the sides, and do it up in a chignon at the back like many Europeans. Amongst the lowest classes one finds perhaps most frequently in both sexes the head shaved, the hair being allowed to grow till uncomfortable and then shaved again. This shaving appears to us a somewhat painful process, and to be an apt illustration of the dictum that *il faut souffrir pour être beau*; for one frequently sees the operation in progress, two forms squatting on the ground, one shaving the other with a bit of broken glass-bottle.

Children as a general rule also have their heads shaved, but a tuft of hair is often left on the crown of the head, or a fringe round their forehead, and young boys frequently have the head bare except for a strip of hair extending from the back of the neck to the forehead over the centre of the head, which gives the appearance of a cock's comb and is most comical.

The Abyssinians of the people are also addicted to buttering their heads, of which unpleasant (though fortunately not universal) practice I have been given three explanations. The first is that it is done for purposes of adornment, which is understandable; the

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habit is not confined to Abyssinia! The second, 302
which is more curious, is that of protection against the sun's rays. In this connection it is interesting to recall that Mr Mansfield Parkyns, who spent three years in Abyssinia, used no head covering of any sort at any time other than a coating of butter, which he says he found as effective as any hat.

The third (and most frivolous) reason is that 302
butter in the hair hampers the free movement (and 515
consequent irritation) of the little creatures that live there. There is possibly something in this, as a "head-scratcher", in the form of a blunt silver or wooden [301]
pin, is a general ornament, as incidentally is also an "ear-cleaner" which resembles a small salt-spoon.

In some parts of the country where the hairdressing mode is of an elaborate character, the women, 352
when lying down to sleep, use wooden head-rests for 513
their necks, made of a slightly curved piece of wood supported on a sort of foot, the whole being a few inches high. Some of these are quite elaborately carved or coloured; but however pleasing they may be to the eye—and I have seen some very pretty ones—they must make exceedingly uncomfortable pillows, and the use of them appears to argue an even greater interest in personal appearance than European women display. These head-rests are of very ancient origin; they are curiously similar to the one discovered in Tutankhamen's tomb.

The more wealthy Abyssinians are very partial to 302
scents and scented hair oils; the strength of the scent is more important to them than its quality, and the shops in Addis Ababa do a brisk trade in inferior

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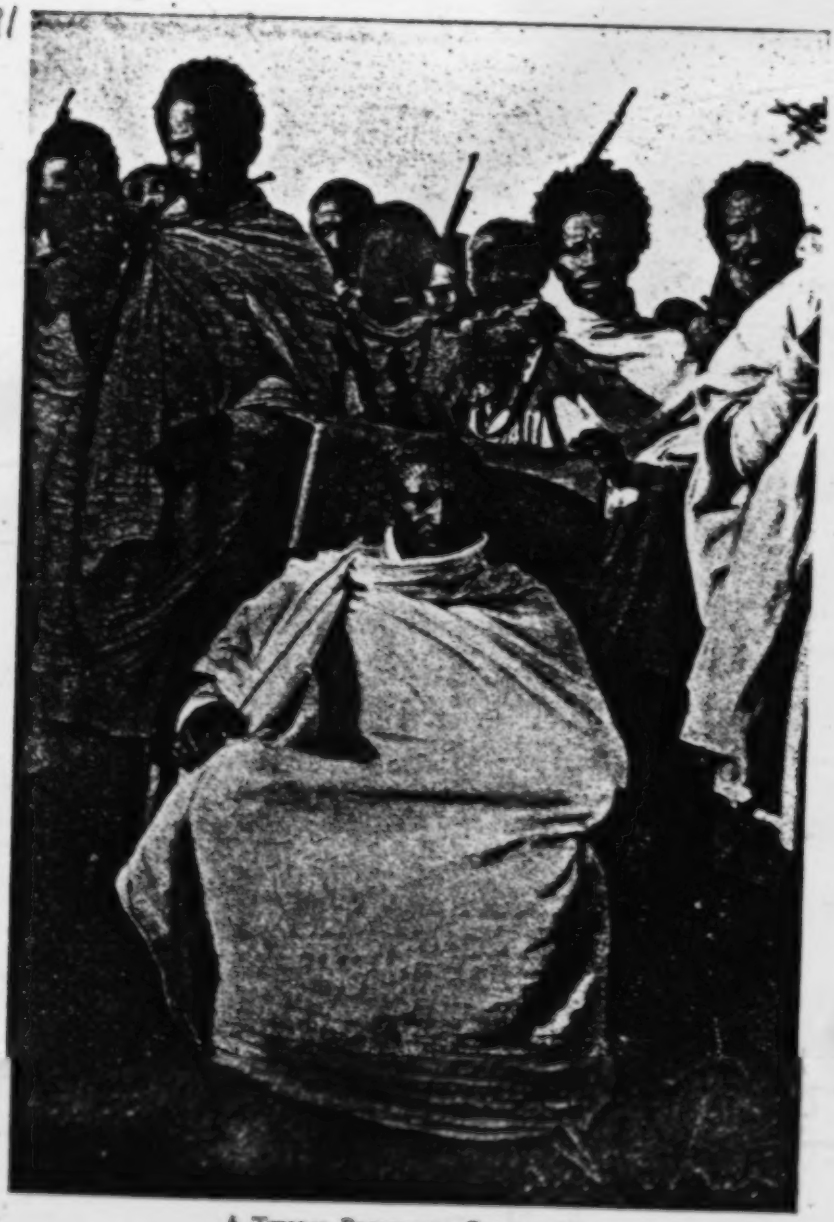

A Typical Provincial Governor.

This Provincial Governor is wearing the National Dress known as the "Chamma."

[facing p. 78]

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302 imported toilet requisites of this kind, and charge fabulous prices for them.

The curious custom of stopping up the nostrils is still met with, though I imagine it is becoming less and less common; but one still constantly sees natives on their way to market with a piece of green leaf, or a flower petal, protruding from their noses, and I remember on one occasion when an Abyssinian lady, who had been paying us a visit, was leaving the house, she produced some cotton-wool and stuffed it carefully in both nostrils.

181 Their love of pageantry, display, and functions is quite Oriental, and is well exemplified by the splendour of some of their religious and Court ceremonies.

521 Amusements are few. The people seem to prefer to sit and chatter; they are great talkers, and whether in the servants' quarters in a house or round their fires on trek, one hears the clatter of their tongues almost incessantly.

492 All Abyssinians can ride more or less, and they are on the whole good horsemen, though indifferent horse-masters. Except in war, or on the occasion of a fantasia, they seldom ride horses; for purposes of daily use mules are almost universally preferred; all but the poorest women also ride mules for getting about.

The Abyssinian saddle is of wood with a pommel back and front and a sheepskin and some padding in the middle, the whole covered with a brightly embroidered saddle-cloth. The stirrups are round and very small, as the Abyssinian inserts only his big toe therein. The bits are horrible instruments, consisting of a ring round the lower jaw and a spike which, when the reins are pulled, sticks into the roof of the animal's

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492 mouth and causes it to bleed freely; in spite of, or perhaps because of this, I never came across an Abyssinian pony with a hard mouth; indeed, they can nearly all be ridden on a snaffle.

Their mules are so covered with many-hued trappings that sometimes they leave very little of the beast to be seen. These trappings are made of several thicknesses of native-dyed coloured leathers sewn together, machine-embroidered in silks of many colours, and covered with metal ornaments.

On special occasions the Abyssinians of rank cover their mules with extra gorgeous drapings in vivid colourings of velvet or silk, decorated with handsome embossed silver or silver-gilt ornaments. The men themselves on these occasions bring out their best sword and buckler, the latter being made of stretched and shaped rhino hide, covered with velvet and ornamented with silver and gilt mountings.

342 The houses of the wealthier people are constructed of stone (of which ample supplies are available almost everywhere), plastered together with a sort of mortar called *chika*, mostly mud and water; the roof is either of corrugated iron or is thatched. They are as a rule one-storied buildings, though I have been in one or two that had an upper story surrounded by a verandah and reached by an outside staircase, but these have generally been acquired from Greeks. In these cases [231] the ground floor is frequently used as stabling for the mules and ponies (even amongst Greeks and Armenians), a state of affairs which can hardly be regarded as sanitary.

513 In the peasants' *tukuls* in the country, men, women, and children, mules, ponies, and other animals sleep

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513 all together in their single room; if to the aroma arising from this combined population be added the acrid [372] smoke from a fire made of dung-cakes, and a plentiful accompaniment of fleas and other insects, the joys of a night's shelter in such quarters may well be imagined.

351 The house nearly always stands in a very large piece of ground surrounded by a mud and stone wall. It is a curious habit of theirs that in building the wall they generally start with the gateway. Occasionally, for one reason or another, the wall-building suffers a hitch, and one sees the quaint spectacle of a gateway (sometimes with a gate), a few yards of wall, and then nothing to impede general ingress. Some of the chiefs, 342 however, are now building themselves better places, especially those that have been on missions to Europe. But even among these an ordinary *tukul* sometimes suffices, and most of the important chiefs I met in Abyssinia were content with most primitive installations.

The *tukuls* of the poorer class are mostly constructed in a circular form of sticks plastered inside and out with mud. The roof, which is made separately and put on last, is cone-shaped, made of sticks or cane bound strongly together with strips of bark and then thatched: the latter is an art in which the Abyssinians particularly excel. The roof extends two or three feet from the walls; thus the torrential rains run off easily and leave the hut perfectly dry.

342 Inside, a part is usually divided off by a length of sheeting suspended on a string, behind which, on a 352 raised platform, the family sleep on couches or beds made of wood and grass and covered with skins; blankets are uncommon, and the *chammas* in which

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they are rolled form their only covering apart from the clothes which have been worn during the day. The remaining part of the hut is used for everything—living, cooking, eating, and also spinning in the rainy season—but of course in the dry weather much work is done outside. Apart from one or two rough wooden stools, furniture is rare or non-existent in these huts. In most of them, however, there are one or more wooden packing-cases containing the owners' most precious possessions, and fastened with a padlock and key; the remainder of their worldly goods are hung on hooks or put in niches in the walls. A form of basket-table is used at meal-times as both dish and plate, and drinking-cups made of horn are still to be seen in the provinces, though imported cups are now fairly common in Addis. A draught of mead from a cow's horn a couple of feet long is delightfully reminiscent of the pictures of the Danish and Norse invaders of England in the distant past.

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[pp. 82-173 have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

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CHAPTER XV

THE NATIONAL CHURCH & RELIGION OF ABYSSINIA

171 Few institutions of a religious character could be more picturesque than the National Church of Abyssinia, but when that has been said little more can be advanced in its favour. It has been alleged by a recent visitor to the country that "Ethiopian Christianity is of a kind which Dean Stanley described as hardly capable of going lower without ceasing to be Christianity", and I am not prepared to quarrel with the statement.

Yet, such as it is, it is exceedingly rich and powerful and its influence is still very strong to-day; and great as is the part played by various forms of religious belief in shaping the destinies of many countries in the world, few I think can have affected a country's history as much as in Abyssinia.

There is little doubt but that that country owes the maintenance of its position of independence for so long largely to the fact that, one of the first of the peoples of Africa to embrace Christianity, it has maintained a form of that faith for nearly 1600 years. This fact added to the impregnable nature of its mountain fastnesses, and the warlike character of its people,-has caused the country to be regarded somewhat differently to the bulk of the nations of Africa, and has contributed to its escape up till now from the fate of partition amongst European powers which has overtaken the rest of the continent.

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That the whole fabric of the original tenets of their Church is overlaid with a mass of gross superstition is unfortunately only too obvious; it is due, doubtless, to the vicissitudes through which the Church has passed, to the perpetual and invincible ignorance of the bulk of the priesthood, and to the composite nature of their Church tradition, consisting, as it does, of a pagan, Egyptian, Jewish, Coptic, and Latin evolution. That elements of all these forms of worship enter into their present-day religion cannot be doubted by those who have witnessed their ceremonies, examined their ecclesiastical robes and furniture, and studied their customs. And, indeed, it would be strange if it were not so, for this ancient people are themselves a combination of a number of different strains and races, drawn from both Asia and Africa, combining to form not only an interesting historical study, but a curious and baffling modern problem in the world of to-day, into which they have only comparatively recently emerged.

Originally pagan of course, the country adopted Judaism nearly 1000 B.C., and about the time of the birth of Christ the mythological beliefs of Greece appear to have been introduced, without, however, effecting the supersession of the Jewish faith.

It was in the early part of the fourth century (A.D. 330 is the generally accepted date) that the conversion of Ethiopia from Judaism to Christianity is reported to have been effected as the result of the visit to that country of some shipwrecked Christians. Being successful in converting the sovereign and the Court, they aspired to extend their sway over the whole country, and accordingly one of them returned to Egypt, obtained the assistance of the Alexandrian authorities, was

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nominated Bishop of Ethiopia, and induced the Abyssinian people to join the Alexandrian or Coptic branch of the Church.

According to Abyssinian tradition the first introduction of Christianity took place at an even earlier date. It is alleged that Matthew the Evangelist visited the northern districts of the country about A.D. 30 and attempted the conversion of the people; apparently, however, he made only few converts to the new doctrines and was eventually turned out. A further slight extension of the new faith is claimed to have been made a few years later; indeed Alvarez, writing in 1527, refers to Ethiopian books and traditions which describe Candace as the first Christian queen of the country and as having had her principal residence near Axum. Her conversion was alleged to have been due to a eunuch in her service who was sent by her to Jerusalem, and there met with Philip and was baptized by him as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles. This would be about A.D. 34, or some three hundred years before the generally accepted date.

I do not propose to enter into the merits of this latter claim, nor even into the claim that Abyssinia became christianized by divine inspiration during Christ's childhood without the aid of any missionaries (!); nor is it my purpose to trace the history of the Church from its inception up to now. Suffice it to say that it has passed through many vicissitudes, and that for hundreds of years the Abyssinians had to fight for the maintenance of their religion against external and internal foes. The main attacks were the great Moslem invasion of 1528 which swept over the country and all but engulfed it, followed by the invasion of the pagan

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Galla, which came very near to being successful and which would in that event have resulted in blotting out Christianity in the country. And finally, the third attack on their particular form of Christianity, though not on Christianity itself, came from the Portuguese missionaries, who, arriving towards the middle of the sixteenth century, produced a good deal of effect on the religious life of the country. They actually succeeded in inducing one king to renounce the Alexandrian doctrine, to profess publicly his belief in Roman Catholicism, and to proclaim this faith as the national religion. But the success was short-lived; public opinion, bitterly outraged, would not tolerate the supersession of the old doctrines, and the king was compelled to restore the national faith by public proclamation. His son, who succeeded him shortly afterwards, completed the work by expelling the Jesuits.

In spite of these attacks the Abyssinians retain their faith unaltered to this day, though owing to their later conquests their rule extends over a larger number of non-Christian subjects than there are Abyssinians. The Somals, Danakil, and some of the Galla (in Harrar and Djimma) are Moslems; the Shankala and other Galla (in Boran, Arussi and Walega) are pagan, the latter believing in a form of supreme deity they call *Wak* or *Wakwe*, and a number of minor spirits or *Sarosh*. The Falasha are Jews.

Many of the Galla (in Wollo for example) were converted to Christianity by the Emperor Menelik, but his methods hardly seem to have been such as to inspire the converts with any profound or reasoned conviction of the merits of that faith. When he conquered a Galla country the inhabitants had to become Christians lest

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175 worse should befall them, and the process was rapid and
771 simple—immersion in the nearest stream, circumcision, and generally the tying of a piece of blue silk cord round the neck.

779 The form of Christianity professed by Abyssinia is the monophysite, which was condemned as a "heresy" by the Council of Chalcedon in 450. This doctrine recognizes only one nature in Christ, against the view which has maintained itself as orthodox that the divine and human natures co-existed in him. But in spite of the thunders of Chalcedon the Abyssinians have held to their doctrine, although controversies as to a single, dual, and even threefold nature have raged in the country right up to the time of Theodore, who possessed decided views on the subject, and exercised drastic methods in giving effect to them.

793 The Church is to all intents and purposes an independent one, its only link with the Coptic Church in Egypt, on which it is nominally dependent, being the appointment by Alexandria of the Archbishop, or Abouna: he is an Egyptian, and once appointed he is supposed never to leave the country.

Tradition relates that the appointment of a foreign Abouna was laid down as a cardinal principle by the great Abyssinian ecclesiastic and national saint, Tekla Haimanot, in the thirteenth century in order to maintain connection between Abyssinia and the outside world, and to avoid internal rivalry in the nomination to the headship of the Church. Be that as it may, the Abyssinians attach considerable importance to their connection with the Alexandrian Church through their Abouna; this may be gauged from the fact that the Treaty between England, Egypt, and Abyssinia, made

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by Admiral Sir William Hewett with King John in 1884, expressly provides that "H.H. the Khedive engages to grant all the facilities which H.M. the Negusa Negus may require in the matter of appointing Abounas for Ethiopia". 793

His is the power to crown kings, and no priest can be ordained without him. He officiates at all the big religious festivals, and his influence in the councils of state is reported to be considerable.

Mr Winwood Reade, in his book *The Martyrdom of Man*, states that "by way of blessing he (the Abouna) spits upon his congregation, who believe that the episcopal virtue resides in the saliva and not as we think in the finger-ends". I am bound to say we never saw or heard of this particular form of benediction while we were there, but even if it were so, it would not be so very surprising in view of the fact that, as everyone knows, at the baptism of children Roman Catholic priests to this day moisten their thumbs with their saliva and touch the child's nostrils therewith when they are baptizing it. 788

Up to the time of King Abreha, when the conversion of the country to Christianity took place, the head of the then existing religion was in accordance with Mosaic practice the High Priest. The nomination of a Bishop or Abouna followed, and functions were divided between the two, the Abouna being regarded as the chief in matters of religion proper, settling all questions of dogma and theology, whilst the High Priest controlled the Church staff and property. A further functionary known as the *Itcheque* was created in the thirteenth century, and duties were divided amongst these three up to the time of the Emperor 793

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793 Menelik, who made the Abouna supreme head of all matters; the *Itcheque* second with residence at the great national monastery of Debra Libanos; and the High Priest third in the hierarchy.

794 The wealth and influence of the Church are enorm-
793 ous, a state of affairs due to the prescience of Tekla
792 Haimanot, to whom reference has already been made. This remarkable man is supposed to have negotiated the restoration of the Solomonean line after three hundred years of deposition, and his modest price seems to have been a perpetual grant to the Church of one-third of the country. As a result the extent of the Church lands is tremendous: not only do monasteries, convents, and churches cover the country but great areas belong to them, and the revenues accruing therefrom are utilized to maintain an almost unbelievable number of monks, priests, and *debtera*. The numbers of these people were given to me by Abyssinians as over a million—this is of course absurd—but I was assured on good authority that over a quarter of the male population are included in these categories of parasites. And parasites they are, for they serve no useful purpose and exist on the taxes raised from the people working on the land: they do no work themselves and are even exempted from military service. They are on the whole ignorant and illiterate, for while some of them can read, very few indeed can write.

793 Monks are not supposed to marry: priests are
792 allowed to marry once, and in fact do so: *debtera* are free as laymen; but I do not think that the lives of many of them could profitably be held up as examples for the people to follow.

793 No examination and little or no preparation seem

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to be necessary for ordination: payment of moderate 793
fees ranging up to $5 (about 10s. to-day) appears to be all that is required. In this direction matters do not seem to have progressed much since Bruce wrote in 1790 giving the following description of an ordination:

"A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who they are, and they tell him they want to be deacons (*debtera*). On this with a small iron cross on his hands after making two or three signs, he blows with his mouth twice or thrice upon them, saying, 'Let them be deacons'. I saw once all the army of Begemder made deacons, just returned from shedding the blood of 10,000 men, thus drawn up in Aylo Meidan, and the Abouna standing at the Church of St. Raphael, about a quarter of a mile distant from them. With these mingled about 1000 women, who consequently, having part of the same blast and brandishment of the Cross, were as good deacons as the rest."

It is highly regrettable in the interests of Abyssinia 793
that the priesthood, being what they are, should exercise so much power and influence. This is no doubt 693
attributable to a variety of causes, to tradition, wealth, land ownership, and also to the fact that they (or some of them) are the only persons in the country who understand the ancient Geze language in which the Code of Law (the *Fetha Nagast*) and other similar [671]
works are written. This gives them a great "pull", and one result is that they are an indispensable adjunct to all the judges, who are very much in their hands.

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793 They have always been bitterly opposed to pro-
176 gress and to innovations, more so as regards changes in their own Church than as regards the introduction into the land of alien religions, strange to say. Thus for example a learned individual, a very religious layman whom I knew, had been accused by the priests of expounding the Gospels in a manner somewhat different to that generally accepted, and as a result he was imprisoned for three years. His views on the subject of his own Church were instructive!

On the other hand they are by no means so in-
793 tolerant to other religious beliefs and efforts in the
609 country; they are not fanatical, and if left alone and not interfered with are not markedly anti-foreign. Individually I have always found them quite pleasant and friendly, and I am bound to say that Mr Wylde, who met a great many of them in various parts of the country, seemed vastly to prefer them to European missionaries. But as a body I think they are—to put it mildly—an unfortunate institution, and so far as their possessions are concerned, treatment on the lines adopted by our Henry VIII would seem to be overdue.

609 Moslems, Jews, and others practise their religion
795 in peace. I have seen religious processions of the followers of Islam on their feast days pass through the streets shouting and singing completely free from molestation, and on the occasion of my last visit I saw a mosque which was on the verge of completion being constructed in one of the principal streets of Addis Ababa.

It is rather remarkable that in spite of the bitter religious warfare in which they have been engaged for centuries Abyssinians should be so tolerant of their

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age-long enemies and should allow them to profess their faith openly as they do, when one considers the havoc wrought by Moslem invasions and Galla inroads.

Even the Falasha Jewish ironworkers in the north, who are doubly regarded with dislike and suspicion as being Jews and as being possessed of supernatural powers, are treated with tolerance, though avoided.

No doubt this happy result is contributed to so far as Moslems are concerned by the fact that in Abyssinia they do not appear to be strict or fanatical—in pleasing contrast to their behaviour elsewhere. Mr Wyman Bury tells a delightful story in exemplification of this latter frame of mind. A pilgrim to Mecca, a plump and prosperous Moslem merchant at Aden in ordinary life, was gazing from the deck of the ship in rapt enthusiasm at Jeddah, which against the sun-scorched country beyond looked like a stale bridecake on a dust-heap. "Oh, the sacred land," he crooned "the blessed land, where pigs and Christians cannot live."

The Abyssinians still have a church in Rome, a monastery in Jerusalem, and monasteries and Ethiopic texts were discovered in the Libyan desert by the German explorer Falls.

The Abyssinian Church endeavours to maintain friendly relations with the other Christian communities: interesting examples of this are the missions sent to the Pope by the Emperor Menelik in 1906 and by the late Empress in 1921. A mission was also in Jerusalem at the close of 1922 in connection with some ancient rights of the Abyssinian Church regarding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other holy places; under the Turkish régime these rights had been transferred to the

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194 Coptic community. The present Emperor himself
448 visited Jerusalem recently.

191 Possibly owing to ignorance and lack of education, the Church does not make any missionary efforts of its own amongst its subject races of Moslems and pagans, and up to recent years it did not tolerate, or at all events welcome, such efforts on the part of others. This is perhaps hardly surprising, for much of the missionary enterprise known to the Abyssinians had mingled politics with religious efforts, and had interfered in matters which had better have been left alone.

191 The Jesuits were expelled in 1633, and some who would not go were killed. The Protestant missionaries
198 were expelled in 1838. Theodore can hardly have been said to have welcomed missionaries, though so far from expelling them he chained them up and would not let them go. King John expelled them again in 1886, and Menelik barely tolerated them, although a French mission has been established continuously in Tigré for a good many years.

191 But quite recently more missionaries have been allowed to start operations, especially in the Galla districts, and the Americans are particularly to the fore in this work in Addis Ababa and elsewhere. In addition, there is a French mission at Harrar and a convent at Addis Ababa, mainly educational and non-proselytizing, and a Swedish mission at the latter town of a similar character.

So far I do not think there is much trace of success by any of these institutions, but on the other hand there is evidence to shew (and my impressions are confirmed by American, Swedish, and French writers) that Islam, as in other parts of Africa, is making progress among

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the subject races in the country, both pagan and christianized Gallas reverting to the faith of Mahomet in appreciable numbers. As is well known, practically every Moslem immigrant is a missioner, and I think this is a real danger to the peace and stability of the country. 191

It would be a remarkable happening if the ancient Abyssinian Church that has resisted attacks on its faith of so violent a character for so many years should succumb to the "peaceful penetration" of Moslem teaching at this stage of its history.

Such an event is not however likely to occur in the immediate future, for their religion seems sufficiently strongly implanted to hold its own among the Abyssinians, and even to sway the national policy. For example, it was the late Emperor Lej Yasu's leanings to Islam, rather than his other manifold failings, that caused his downfall in 1916. He was undoubtedly popular with the rank and file of the army and with a certain section of the people, but when the national institution was in danger concerted action drove him from power.

But in all essentials, in constitution and in doctrines, the National Church of Abyssinia remains to-day as it has so often been described in the past—unchanged, unprogressive, reactionary; such a position cannot be retained for ever in a modern world, and sooner or later, if it persists in its present attitude, it must fall—with what results none can foretell.

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CHAPTER XVI

THE NATIONAL CHURCH AND RELIGION OF ABYSSINIA (*continued*)

346 771 BRUCE wrote that there was no country in the world where there were so many churches, and I have seen an estimate which I should think was well under the mark —of 3000 for Shoa, 1100 for Gojam, and 2600 for the districts of Gondar and Axum. For even small villages have two or three churches each, and it is a popular axiom that he who has erected a church has atoned for every sin. And to each of this legion of churches are attached many priests who live in remarkably simple—to put it mildly—accommodation in the precincts.

346 The buildings themselves are quite unpretentious, being small circular erections built of the stone that abounds everywhere in the country, covered with pointed thatched roofs surmounted by a cross on the points of which ostrich eggs are generally impaled. The Abyssinians show a considerable measure of reverence to their churches, outwardly at all event. I have [788] frequently seen men of importance stop their retinue when passing the church, dismount, and kiss the earth.

The principal modern church in Abyssinia is that of St. George, the patron saint of Abyssinia, at Addis Ababa. It is a stone-built edifice, octagonal in shape, surmounted by a large central dome; it is of no particular style of architecture, though it approximates to the Greek, and externally it is not very pleasing to

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the eye. Its beauty was not increased by the addition 346
of a corrugated iron annexe for the purpose of seating some of the foreign guests at the Emperor's coronation.

The Abouna was good enough to arrange for us to visit the church, and we were received with ceremony by a number of priests, who were exceedingly kind and enabled us to make a thorough inspection, and even allowed us to take some photographs (which unfortunately, owing to the bad light, did not come out). They showed us everything with great enthusiasm and begged us to return "when a great feast was in progress". The building consists of three portions, a sort 346
of outer gallery, an inner court, and finally the Holy 778
Place or Holy of Holies, an inner chamber in the centre of the building in which rests the *Tabot* or representative of the Ark of the Covenant to which only the priests are allowed access.

The priests threw open the doors of the Holy Place 778
for us to see in; it contained a kind of altar where the 788
Sacraments are kept, and was surrounded by priests in very gorgeous vestments, burning incense and holding big crosses and crucifixes.

In one of the galleries a service was proceeding. 796
Two priests were beating with their hands very big 534
drums made of wood and hide; many others were shaking their curious little brass cymbals; and all were chanting, swaying their bodies, and slowly waving their praying-sticks. The time was really good, and the chant was rhythmic and tuneful, and not at all unmelodious.

The galleries were profusely decorated with huge 353
life-size paintings depicting mainly scenes from the 532
Scriptures, scenes from the life of Christ, the miracles, etc.; one dreadfully realistic picture of the Massacre

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353 of the Innocents was very striking. There was also a
532 portrait of the Emperor Menelik, and of other noted characters in Abyssinian history; the likenesses of royal and other famous persons are frequently to be found on the walls or among the possessions of the principal churches.

In this connection an amusing incident is told by
778 Stern. King Sehala Selassie had been given by Captain Harris' mission to the Court of Shoa, a portrait of Queen Victoria. This had been carefully guarded for many years amongst his treasures until his death, some time after which his successor, King Haile Malekot, presented it to the principal church at Ankober where the people used to flock on grand festivities to worship it as the representation of the Virgin Mary!

The *Tabot*, to which reference has been made, is the object of much veneration and has to be blessed or consecrated prior to being used in the particular church to which it is allocated. In one case the priest in charge of the church had committed a murder, and the *Tabot* had to be sent up to Addis to be reconsecrated before it could be used again.

The most prominent features of the practice of their
796 religion are the fasts, feasts, and pageants; and each
785 of these is sufficiently remarkable. A very large part of the year—about 150 days—falls under the category of fast or feast, and both are strictly observed. During their fasts they are forbidden not only meat, but also butter and milk and eggs, and it is really surprising to see to what an extent this rigid abstinence is followed, especially as the fasting periods are lengthy, that prior to Easter lasting forty days.

For a day or so immediately prior to the main feast,

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that is, at the end of a long period of fasting, they eat nothing at all, and so far do they carry this rule that sometimes one or two of our older servants have become so weak that they have had to go home and remain in bed, so exhausted were they. 796 785

On Wednesdays and Fridays they eat no meat, and wherever they are or whatever they are doing they adhere firmly to this rule. I was immensely struck by this when on trek; for example, one day we had bought an ox for our men and on Thursday they had had a great raw meat banquet. The next day being Friday they would not touch an atom of the quantities of raw meat hung round the camp, though they had had a long and tiring march and had nothing else to eat. One of the men, who was really ill, would not drink a drop of the fresh milk we had prescribed for him, though he was excessively weak and could not retain anything else.

Their feasts are observed just as whole-heartedly, and obviously with more enthusiasm, inasmuch as much eating and drinking and no work are the order of the day. Their main feasts are New Year, the Feast of the Cross or *Maskal*, *Temkat* (Epiphany), and Easter. 796 527

Their New Year's Day, the 1st Maskaram, falls on the 11th September (or the 12th in the European year preceding our Leap year) and is a great feast, and of course a general holiday, the religious side of which is strongly marked, the Empress and the Court attending the Church of St. George in state.

No work is done, and there is much eating, an oasis of plenty in the desert of fasting which starts again on the day after New Year's Day, and continues until the end of the month. Bands of grown-up people and groups of children wander round serenading the differ-

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ent houses, and although their intentions are doubtless of the best, the sounds they produce leave much to be desired from the point of view of harmony.

At the end of September is held the Feast of *Maskal*. There are three separate functions during the week in this connection, firstly the Dance of the Priests, 21st September, then the Dance of the Cross, 27th September, which includes a fantasia in which thousands of mounted troops take part, and finally the great *Gebbar* at which 17,000 to 18,000 men are fed (28th September).

On the day of the Dance of the Cross, after dinner we could see from our verandah the whole country for miles in every direction dotted with bonfires—a wonderful sight. Every Abyssinian must light something on this night, and they seemed to have done it pretty thoroughly; even high up in the mountains far away one could see the little points of light everywhere.

The Feast of the *Maskal* itself, which took place on the next day, is mainly remarkable for the great banquet; this I have described elsewhere, and though it is held on a religious festival the religious nature of it is less apparent.

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Temkat (18th, 19th, and 20th January) is perhaps the most beautiful and remarkable of their various pageants, and I will accordingly endeavour to give some idea of this ceremony, unique as it probably is.

It is difficult in mere words to do justice to the really wonderful pageantry attendant on these religious festivals. Their historical significance alone is worthy of the pen of a Gibbon, for they are probably some 3000 years old in some of their features, and half-

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closing one's eyes it is possible to imagine the picture 796
before one to be that of David, his priests, and his courtiers dancing before the ark, as the priests in their centuries-old vestments sway and swing before the modern representation of the Ark of the Covenant. And the colouring—the gorgeous medley of crimson and purple and yellow and green cloaks of the priests, their gold and silver croziers, crowns, and censers, the soft thrumming of the huge old drums, the feathery spirals of sweet-smelling incense curling lazily up into the air—all framed in a grand setting of green trees and running water, while above out of a brilliant blue sky the blazing African sun sparkles and glitters on all the medley of gold and silver and colour below, and—strange contrast—farther off, on the rifles of the thousand watching troops and their loose white toga-like *chammas*.

Especially do these considerations apply to the second day of *Temkat*, the blessing of the waters. On the first day the *Tabot* is borne from the Church of St. George in the midst of an immense procession of chiefs, priests, soldiers, banner-bearers, and musicians, through the town to the spot by the river which has been selected for the ensuing day's ceremony. The procession itself is sufficiently remarkable, and the inhabitants of the city crowd the roads to watch the brilliant stream of colour flow past, their shrill, tremulous "*el-el-to*" sounding to our ears a strange substitute for the cheers of a crowd in our own countries.

The procession winds its way through the town and beyond it to the river, and there tents are pitched, the *Tabot* is deposited within one of them, priests take up their quarters in others, soldiery in yet others, and with

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thousands of Abyssinians spend the night on the spot in readiness for the morning's function, which, commencing soon after daybreak (between 6 and 6.30), lasts well on to noon.

The spot seemed to have been chosen so as to lend additional enchantment to the ceremony. The river shrunken to a stream now in the middle of the dry season flowed smoothly over huge rocks and boulders round a curve, on between high banks sloping for several hundreds of yards upwards and away. Part of the stream had been dammed so as to form a pool just by a natural platform of grass and trees on the very edge of the waters, and here the principal actors were grouped, whilst above and around them thousands and thousands of spectators in rank after rank seemed but to act as a conductor to focus the eye on to the scene being enacted below. Here was Ras Tafari in his robes of state under a magnificent gold-fringed umbrella; here were the great officers of State with their velvet and silk cloaks, their silken shirts, and their great curved gold-scabbarded swords. And here were the priests dazzling one's eyes by the brilliance of their apparel and their accessories.

Standing a little way up the river-bank amid a small knot of Europeans lost in the sea of Abyssinians, it was almost hypnotizing to watch the scene. The drums beaten softly with the palms of the hands accompanied the low chanting of the priests and the rhythmical waving of their praying-sticks, while the fumes from the incense burners crept upwards to mingle with the almost mysterious mistiness of the early morning sunlight.

The water was eventually blessed, and some of it

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in a great gold dish carried to the Ras, who was sprinkled with it—rebaptized in fact—with many rites and much ceremony. Other notables were similarly honoured, and then water was thrown over the nearest of the waiting thousands. Those beyond surged forward to receive their share, and the pressure of the immense multitude must have been enormous, but their orderliness was no less remarkable, and no untoward incidents occurred.

With some further chanting the first portion of the ceremony came to an end, and the scene was changed to the great open plain between the town and the Foreign Legations, which is used as review ground, polo field, and racecourse. In solemn procession, ruler, courtiers, priests, and soldiers wended their way up from the banks of the little stream, up through rocky paths and grassy slopes towards the centre of the plain, whilst thousands and thousands of the people poured in a great stream all round them to take their share in the further pageantry. On our sure-footed little ponies we were swept along in the moving masses, all cheery and good tempered, dressed in their clean white *chammas*, which had been washed for the occasion in the river the day before. With the help of a *balderabba* we were able to take a short cut to the scene of the next step in the proceedings, and seated on chairs round beautifully coloured Persian and Indian rugs in front of a silk-lined tent which sheltered the throne from the fast warming rays of the sun, we watched amid the waiting multitudes the arrival of the royal procession and of fresh throngs, not the least remarkable members of which were a mounted band of wild-looking men clothed in scarlet robes and playing strange instru-

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796 ments, whilst their shaggy little ponies curveted and plunged like mad things.

Dressed in his magnificent Abyssinian robes, carrying a modern rifle, and mounted on a wonderfully caparisoned black mule, Ras Tafari rode slowly up to the tent and took his seat on the throne surrounded by hundreds of gorgeously clad notables, and facing what was perhaps the most striking contingent of all, the priests, ranged on three sides of a square in front of the throne. Those on the opposite side of the square were all in white; those on the right and left wore robes of such dazzling colouring that in the sun's bright rays it almost hurt one's eyes to look at them. Red, blue, green, orange, purple, every imaginable colour, thickly covered with heavy gold and silver embroideries, and gold ornaments and head-dresses. And as if this orgy of colour were not enough, servants held scores of gaudy coloured gold-embroidered and much befringed and tasselled umbrellas over them.

796 Many of the priests carried magnificent crosses of
778 gold and silver, others their long silver or ivory-handled
534 praying-sticks, whilst some held various musical bell-like instruments, and about half a dozen managed large drums—things about three feet high made of silver with copper bands. Particularly striking were the dresses of ten young boys bearing golden crowns, symbolical of the ten commandments; while the *Tabots* brought from the neighbouring churches were very gorgeously bedecked. It was a wonderful and barbaric sight.

796 And then the Dance of the Priests began. Low
535 chanting without music at first, followed by slow graceful movements of all their hundreds of arms in fine

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time to the rhythm, then the little bell cymbals joined in, and finally the big drums. 796 535

All this time the long lines of priests were advancing and retiring, turning this way and that, their bodies swaying to the music. The time got quicker and quicker, others joined in, their movements became accentuated and their voices rose to a climax; then quite suddenly sound and movement ceased and the long lines were quite still.

After this, passages were read from enormous silver-covered Bibles, and with a final boom of the drums it was all over—a morning's journey back through the centuries, probably unique in the world in its character. 796

The Abyssinian Easter falls a week later than our own and is the occasion of great feasting; much rifle firing takes place the night before (or used to two years ago when ammunition was more plentiful), and much eating and drinking, on the day itself. And I am bound to say they must need it, for they have been fasting for forty days, and for the two previous days have eaten nothing at all. 796 527

Bands of priests visit the principal houses, soliciting alms, and I find the following description of one of these visits in my diary:

"Soon after breakfast a party of about five priests accompanied by attendants came up the drive, stationed themselves in front of the house, and began to sing and ring bells to wish us a prosperous Easter. Some of the priests wore their gorgeous vestments, and all had brilliant green or red silk parasols fringed with gold braid. We sent them out a small offering, which appeared to please them very much.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

796 "Then they blessed a lot of long grass they had, and
527 gave it to us and we distributed it amongst the staff. Every servant there tied his piece of grass tightly round his head and wore it all day—they all seemed highly delighted."

111 But in spite of their strict observance of feasts and their pride in the fact of their being Christians, I cannot really think that they could in any sense of the word be described as a really religious people, their lives being in no way a reflection of their theoretical beliefs. Their religion is overlaid with a thick layer of superstition, some of which is merely curious, but some apt to have dangerous results. Thus they wear their charms and amulets suspended round their necks by a silken cord (never leather, which is used by Mohammedans for this purpose); they have a strong belief in the power of the "evil eye"; they will not look at a person eating, they will not start on journeys on certain days, and they believe that certain houses are inhabited by evil spirits and will not live in them.

787 We came across some curious examples of this latter superstition. Two important Abyssinian nobles had built in their grounds quite nice stone and mortar houses in the European style. These houses were lying empty, and their owners were living in native built *tukuls*, for the reason that their tame priests had told them that evil would befall them if they moved into their new residences.

Another and more serious example was that of a chief who was very ill with pneumonia. He was just getting over it when in the middle of one night his priest told him that he had had a vision to the effect that if he

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did not move at once into his other house some miles 187
away he would die. So on a bitterly cold night the poor old gentleman was removed to his other place, a course of action which, needless to say, resulted in his death.

They still believe in the efficacy of writing the sick 155
person's name on a certain kind of tree; and one of our friends told me that his own "boy" had done this when he (my friend) was ill, and attributed his recovery entirely to this cause. Another European who was very ill was cured (so said his "boy") by the latter obtaining from a native priest a piece of paper upon which the sick man's name was written. The "boy" had actually paid the priest the (for him) very large sum of three dollars for the paper.

And yet another example that came to my notice was that of a "boy" in the employ of a friend of mine who was suffering from lung trouble and was being attended, quite successfully, by a European doctor. As the "boy" did not think he was getting well fast enough he called in his priest, who advised him to swallow a cupful of petrol! Needless to say, the result was death.

So that in point of fact the Abyssinian priest does not appear to differ very much from the South African witch-doctor, and indeed of the two I should be inclined to give pride of place to the latter, so far as medical practice is concerned at all events.

[pp. 198-end have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

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Somali MO4

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The Races of Europe

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[p.444]

(8) THE MEDITERRANEAN RACE IN EAST AFRICA

000 In the present section we shall consider what is today a second southern periphery of the white racial stock; peripheral in this case to the world of the African Negro. East Africa, with its highland plateaux of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Kenya, and with its treeless grasslands, forms an environmental zone suitable for the economies of highland agriculture and of pastoral nomadism. Its early connections lie with the north and east, with Egypt and Arabia, rather than with the equatorial forests to the west.

The highlands of Ethiopia, according to studies conducted by economic botanists, seem to contain a number of indigenous varieties of cultivated cereals and legumes.[55] It is possible, but by no means established, that these highlands formed one of the primary centers of Old World agriculture, in which the Neolithic economy originated. It is also possible that part of the agricultural impulse which initiated the high civilization of ancient Egypt was derived from this source.

Later than the development of highland agriculture in East Africa was the introduction and diffusion of pastoral nomadism. The cattle complex, with its elaborate set of social restrictions and of social differentiation on the basis of wealth in herds, was introduced from India by way of southern Arabia, along with the humped zebu, at some none too distant period, probably as late as the first millennium B.C. Its diffusion passed southeastward into the Lake Region, where it was taken up by Bantu peoples and spread, in modern times, as far south as the Cape of Good Hope, where an earlier version of the same complex had already arrived, in the hands of the Hottentots.

In the Horn of Africa region, however, and northward into Egypt, the humped cow is replaced by the more thirst-resisting camel; camel nomads are found in all regions in which agriculture is impractical. The antiquity

[55] Vavilov, N., *Studies on the Origin of Cultivated Plants.*

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
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of camel nomadism in East Africa is unknown, but it cannot be as old as in Arabia, for the camel is an Asiatic animal.[56] Camels did not appear in any numbers in North Africa east of the Nile before 300 A.D., but they must have been earlier than that in East Africa, having been introduced, at some unknown period, from Arabia by way of Suez, of the Bab el Mandeb, or simply across the Red Sea.

The living peoples with whom this section is concerned live by all three economies mentioned—highland agriculture, cattle nomadism, and camel nomadism. They are the whites and near-whites who live east of the equatorial forests, of the Nilotic swamps, and of the deep escarpment of the Blue Nile. They are the Gallas, the Somalis, the Ethiopians, and the inhabitants of Eritrea. They speak languages of two stocks—Hamitic and Semitic. Of the two, Hamitic is the older, for Semitic speech was introduced by colonists from the Hadhramaut only a few centuries B.C.

The Hamitic linguistic stock is divided into three families of languages: (1) Libico-Berber, (2) Ancient Egyptian and its derivative Coptic, (3) Cushitic. These families seem to be nearly as closely related to Semitic as they are to each other,[57] so that a Semito-Hamitic superstock has been postulated, with Semitic as the fourth branch. Ancient Egyptian, according to a recent analysis,[58] may have been merely a blend of the other three. The East African Hamites, however, all speak languages of the Cushitic family, and the word Hamitic, when applied to East Africans, is equivalent to Cushitic.

Our knowledge of the racial history of East Africa in antiquity is limited to the southern frontier of the present Hamitic linguistic area. Excavations in Kenya and Tanganyika have uncovered remains of a tall, extremely long-headed, Mediterranean racial type, with a tendency to great elongation and narrowness of the face, in pre-Neolithic times. In Mesolithic times, if not earlier, some of these Mediterranean skeletons show evidence of negroid admixture.[59] The country east of Lake Victoria may be taken as the southern boundary of the area occupied by this race, since to the south all known *sapiens* skeletal remains belong to the ancestors of Bushmen. The center of this area, and its northern boundary, are unknown, owing to the lack of archaeological work in Ethiopia and the eastern Sudan. The present distribution of a similar and without doubt derivative racial type coincides with that of Hamitic languages, and for that reason the term "Hamitic Race," has been frequently employed.

[56] Asiatic in the sense that it must have been domesticated in Asia, where wild camels are still found. It evolved, of course, in America.

[57] Meillet, A., and Cohen, M., *Les Langues du Monde; Langues Chamito-Semitiques*, pp. 81–151.

[58] Information given me by Professor O. Menghin.

[59] See Chapter II, pp. 44–46; Chapter III, pp. 57–59.

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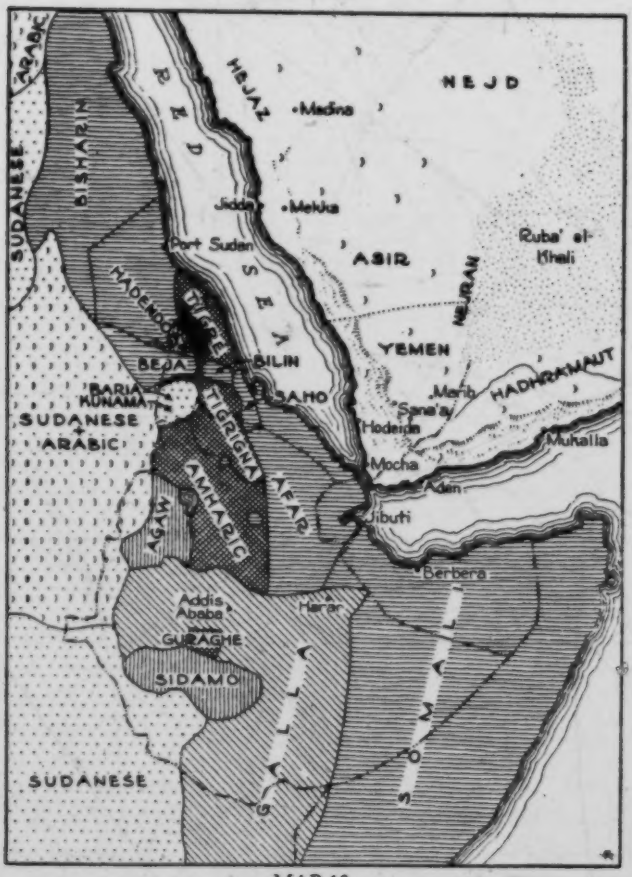

MAP 13

LINGUISTIC MAP OF THE EAST AFRICAN HAMITIC AREA

The Cushitic languages of East Africa and of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan are shown in parallel line representation. The Semitic languages of this region which are derived from Geez are designated by cross-hatching. It should be noted that Tigrigna is the language of Tigré Kingdom; the Tigré language, however, is a related coastal speech. Sudanese Negro languages are shown by means of large dots, Arabic by means of vertical crescents. (Adapted from Meillet and Cohen, *Les Langues du Monde.*)

000 The living inhabitants of the Abyssinia-Somaliland-Eritrea area may be divided into the following groups:

(1) *The Highland Cushites:* Descendants of the pre-Semitic agricultural population of the northern Ethiopian plateau, speaking early Cushitic dialects. The most numerous and best known of this scattered group are the Agaus, peasants and agricultural serfs living mostly in the kingdom of Gojjam, in the Lake Tsana country.

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(2) *The Sidamos:* The corresponding pre-Semitic agricultural population of the present Galla country, living in the midst of Galla tribal territories, and in small separate kingdoms of their own, in southwestern Ethiopia. The best known Sidamo state is that of Kaffa, whose name has been given to coffee. Throughout the Galla country, the numerous peasant class consists largely of linguistically altered Sidamos. 000

(3) *The Amharas:* This is a general name applied to the Ethiopians proper, members of the four kingdoms of Tigré, Amhara, Gojjam, and Shoa. The Guraghes, who live south of Addis Ababa, speak Amharic, as do all the others named except the Tigrés, whose language is a parallel derivative of Geez. These people are the descendants of the Hadhrami invaders of the late pre-Christian era, and were, until the Italian conquest of 1935–37, the dominant people of Ethiopia. A 101

(4) *The Gallas:* The inhabitants of most of southwestern Ethiopia, including the country as far north and east as Addis Ababa, are Gallas; descendants of a warlike confederation of nomadic tribes who invaded Ethiopia from the southwest in the sixteenth century. The original Gallas, who came in great numbers, were cattle people with the traditional East African dislike for agriculture or menial occupations, and settled down in their present territory as aristocrats. Galla society today is divided into four classes: the Oromo, or Galla proper, the aristocrats; the Tumtu or blacksmiths, the subservient class of artisans who are also farmers; the Faki, a low caste of tanners; and the Watta, outcaste hunters who live in separate villages. The Oromo have, for the most part, submitted to the pursuit of agriculture, while continuing at the same time their cattle raising. 000

(5) *The Somalis:* The whole Horn of Africa, including the three Somalilands and the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, is occupied by various tribes of Somalis, nomadic Hamites who profess Islam and claim descent from Arabian missionaries. Their origin is not clearly known, but it is evident that there must have been some Galla as well as Arabian mixture, grafted onto a local Hamitic population. S 101

(6) *The Danakil* (also called Afar): In southwestern Eritrea and adjacent parts of the desert of northeastern Ethiopia, as well as in part of French Somaliland, live the Danakil, tribesmen culturally related to the Somalis, who also claim Arabian ancestry. North of the Danakil in Eritrea live other tribes of the same general type. The Somalis, Danakil, and their northern relatives form part of a continuous belt of nomadic Hamites reaching from the Horn of Africa to Egypt; the northern representatives, however, from the Eritrean Beja to the Egyptian Bisharin, have been subjected to strong admixture with Sudanese negroes. 000

(7) *Negroes in Hamitic Territory:* In Eritrea the tribes of Baria and Cunama, in the midst of Hamitic-Tigré territory, probably represent, in

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000 the linguistic sense at least, an eastward thrust of Sudanese negroes. In Ethiopia proper many Shankalla, negroes brought as slaves from the Blue Nile country, have propagated both as a slave population and through mixture. In Italian Somaliland, it is said that some of the slave tribes subservient to the Somalis speak Bantu. The speech of the Wattas may also be neither Hamitic nor Semitic.

A S 144 The study of the physical anthropology of this ethnologically and historically complex region may be said to have barely begun; nevertheless it has progressed far enough to warrant reasonably accurate statements as to the racial characters of the more numerous and better known peoples.[60] Before proceeding further, it may be well to state that all of the peoples of this "Hamitic" area, whether Hamitic or Semitic in speech, represent a blend in varying proportions between Mediterraneans of several varieties, especially of the tall, Atlanto-Mediterranean group, and negroes. Other elements include, of course, the Veddoid brought in solution from southern Arabia; there is also a possibility of traces of dilute pygmy and Bushman blood in southwestern Ethiopia and Somaliland, although neither of these has been proved. Needless to say, the Gallas and Amharas have mixed with each other greatly in the regions in which they have been in contact; both the Amharas and Gallas have absorbed the earlier Cushitic agricultural peoples in great numbers. The most important single influence has been the infiltration of negroes, through the slave trade, into the entire Ethiopian plateau region. So extensive has this infiltration been that it is unlikely that a single genetic

A 113

[60] The principal works on the physical anthropology of the living in this region are:
Castro, L. de, *Nella Terra dei Negus*, vol. 2, pp. 342–477.
Frasetto, F., **AnthPr**, vol. 10, 1932, pp. 161–187.
Garson, J. G., Appendix to Bent, T. J., *The Sacred City of the Ethiopians*, pp. 286–296.
Klimek, S., **APA**, vols. 60–61, 1930–31, pp. 358–381.
Koettlitz, R., **JRAI**, vol. 30, 1900, pp. 50–55.
Lester, P., **Anth**, vol. 38, 1928, pp. 61–90, 289–315.
Leys, N. M., and Joyce, T. A., **JRAI**, vol. 43, 1913, p. 195.
Puccioni, N., **APA**, vol. 41, 1911, pp. 295–326; vol. 47, 1917, pp. 13–164; vol. 49, 1919, pp. 41–223; vol. 53, 1923, pp. 25–68; *Anthropologia e Etnografia delle Genti della Somalia*
Radlauer, C., **AFA**, vol. 41, 1914, pp. 451–473.
Verneau, R., Appendix in Duchesne-Fournet, *Mission en Ethiopie*.
In addition to these, the author has used, in the following exposition, a MS. of his own, awaiting publication, and entitled: *Contribution to the Study of the Physical Anthropology of the Ethiopians and Somalis*, based on a series of 100 Ethiopians and 80 Somalis measured in 1933–34.
Principal works on the craniology of this region are:
Castro, L. de, **APA**, vol. 41, 1911, pp. 327–339.
Cipriani, L., **APA**, vol. 53, 1926, pp. 11–24.
Sergi, S., *Crania Habessinica*.
Verneau, R., **Anth**, vol. 10, 1899, pp. 641–662.
Works on the Danakil, Baria, Cunama, and Beja are listed later.

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line in the entire Horn of Africa is completely free from negroid admixture; but individuals may be found among the Amharas, Gallas, and Somalis who show no visible signs of negro blood. These individuals are extremely rare. On the whole the negroid element in the Hamitic area cannot be much more than one-fourth of the whole, but it has penetrated every ethnic group and every social level. Just when this penetration had become complete we do not know, but one suspects that it had already occurred by the sixth century A.D., when the Ethiopians ruled the Yemen. The Gallas, despite their tradition of descent from white men, were already partly negroid at the time of their arrival in Ethiopia. A S 144

Despite this negroid penetration, and despite a mixture between non-negroid elements, the four ethnic units of Amharas, Gallas, Sidamos, and Somalis are all statistically distinct from each other.[61] What evidence we have for the Agaus suggests that this people constitutes a fifth anthropometric entity. As one would expect, the more purely Hamitic peoples, such as the Agaus, Gallas, and Somalis, are taller than the Amharas. All of these three have stature means ranging from 169 to 174 cm., while 172 cm. seems to be the central mean for all of them. The Semitic speakers range from a mean of 164–167 cm.[62] for the Tigré, the most nearly Arabian of the four main groups, to 167–169 cm. for each of the other three, while a series of varied Ethiopians, mostly from Shoa, and measured in Addis Ababa, rose to the mean of 169 cm. This latter figure may reflect Galla mixture—for Addis Ababa is in Galla territory—or selection. The Sidamos, in contrast to the Agaus, are apparently short (164 cm.). A S 141

In bodily build and proportions, all groups are much the same. The predominant type is leptosome, with a relative sitting height index of 50 to 51, a relative span of 103, and a relative shoulder breadth of 21. Long legs and relatively short arms, narrow shoulders, and even narrower hips, are the rule. Few Ethiopians of any category are thick-set, and what little corpulence is seen hangs ill on fine-boned frames. The hands and feet of all but the palpably negroid are small and extremely narrow, the lower legs and wrists usually spindly and ill-muscled. This attenuation of the distal segments of the limbs reaches its maximum among the Somalis. The Sidamos, who are by far the most negroid of the Ethiopian peoples, have the broadest shoulders in proportion to their height, and the narrowest hips. A S 142

There can be no doubt that the tall stature of the Gallas, Somalis, and Agaus is an old Hamitic trait, since both the negroid Sidamos and the Semites of Hadhramauti origin are much shorter. The tallness of this S 141

[61] From statistical analysis of author's unpublished material.
[62] From several different series.

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Somali MO4

S 141 East African Mediterranean strain stands in contrast to the moderate stature of the Mediterranean Arabs across the Red Sea, and constitutes a characteristic difference between them. The bodily build of the East African Hamites is typically Mediterranean in the ratio of arms, legs, and trunk, but the special attenuation of the extremities among the Somalis is a strong local feature,[63] which finds its closest parallels outside the white racial group, in southern India and in Australia.

A 141 The different groups studied in Ethiopia share a tendency to dolichocephaly or mesocephaly, and to a narrow face form. In the measurements of the head and face, all are fundamentally Mediterranean, and the negroid traits manifested in the soft parts do not reveal themselves in the measurements, except in nose breadth and in the biorbital and interorbital diameters. The heads are larger than those of the Yemeni Mediterraneans; Amharas (in the sense of Semitic-speaking Abyssinians) have vault dimensions of 194 mm. (length) by 150 mm. (breadth) by 127 mm. (height); these figures could apply as well to Nordics as to Abyssinians. The mean cephalic index of 77 or lower [64] for Amharic speakers is in the dolichocephalic to low mesocephalic class; the smaller diameters and higher index of the present-day Hadhramaut population seem to have yielded to the greater size and dolichocephaly of the indigenous Hamitic farmers, as far as the total group is concerned. There is, however, some evidence that while the Tigré people are strongly dolichocephalic, brachycephaly may be common in the kingdoms of Gojjam and Amhara.[65]

000 The Gallas are on the whole smaller headed than the Amharas, but also mesocephalic. Mesocephaly is also the prevalent head form of both Agaus and Sidamos; among the latter the mean cephalic index is 78, and there is a definite brachycephalic minority. So far the inhabitants of the Abyssinian plateau, whatever their speech and ethnic origin, are dolichocephalic or mesocephalic, and comparable to Mediterraneans elsewhere, especially, as we shall later see, to North African Berbers, as well as to North European Nordics. Among the Sidamos, however, the vault is lower (124 mm.) than among Amharas and Gallas. The Somalis,

[63] Schlaginhaufen, O., **AJKS**, vol. 9, 1934, pp. 265–273.

[64] Verneau's mean is 75.

[65] De Castro, in his 1915 study of Ethiopians, gives cephalic index means of 73.9 for Tigré, 75.4 for Shoa, 80.7 for Amhara, and 83.2 for Gojjam. The Amhara series is represented by 50 men, the Gojjam series by 47. Garson finds a mean C. I. of 81.4 for 12 Amhara men measured by Bent. Against these positive evidences of brachycephaly stands the fact that in none of the composite series of Amharic-speaking Ethiopians, which include Gojjam and Amhara men, are brachycephalic individuals found in sufficient numbers to support these figures. Verneau, out of a series of 83, of which 29 are Gojjamites, finds a mean C. I. of 74.9, and a range of 67–82. In my own smaller series the highest C. I. is 81; C. I.'s of 4 Gojjam men were 74, 76, 77, 80. Both Frasetto (1932) and Klimek (1930–31) fail to find brachycephaly in composite Abyssinian series. At present it is impossible to confirm or refute de Castro's figures.

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as contrasted with the highland bloc, are smaller headed and purely dolichocephalic, with vault dimensions of 192 mm. (length) by 143 mm. (breadth) by 123 mm. (height), and a mean cephalic index of 74.5. In this they resemble closely the finer Mediterranean type in Yemen, and some of the northern Bedawin.

The Somalis S 141

Facially this division between highlanders and Somalis is accentuated. The highlanders have minimum frontal means of 104 mm. to 106 mm.; the Somalis of 102 mm. The bizygomatics of the first group fall at 134–136 mm., of the Somalis at 131 mm. The bigonials of the highlanders have means of 101–102 mm., of the Somalis, 96 mm. All are narrow faced, but the Somalis approximate a world extreme. The forehead is in all groups notably wider than the jaw, which reaches a record in narrowness among the Somalis. In face breadths as in vault dimensions the less extreme highland Ethiopians might as well be Nordics as negroids.

The total face heights of the four groups under consideration range from 122 mm. to 124 mm.; the upper face heights from 71 mm. to 74 mm. It is interesting to note that the Sidamos, who are the most negroid, have the broadest foreheads, bizygomatics, and bigonials, the longest menton-nasion heights, and by far the longest upper face heights, of the entire group. It is the Somalis whose upper face height is shortest. All four are leptoprosopic and leptene, the Somalis hyperleptoprosopic.

The noses of Somalis, Amharas, and Gallas are leptorrhine, with nasal indices of 66, 68, and 69, respectively. This regression indicates with some accuracy the relative amounts of negro blood. The Sidamos, with an index of 71, are mesorrhine and the most negroid. In accordance with the principle that the most negroid have the longest as well as the broadest faces, the Sidamos have the longest and broadest noses, with a mean height of 55 mm., and breadth of 39 mm. The Somalis, whose noses are narrowest, also have the smallest, 52 mm. by 34 mm. A [141]

In the measurements of the external eye the Somalis differ again from the highlanders; their mean interorbital diameter of 31 mm. is narrow, while that of the highlanders, 34–35 mm., approximates a negroid condition. In the biorbital, the distance between the outer eye corners, the Somalis are narrowest, with 91 mm.; the Sidamos the broadest with 96 mm.

Our survey of the metrical characters of the inhabitants of the Hamitic racial area has brought several facts to light; the agricultural population of the Ethiopian highlands, both indigenous and imported from Arabia, belongs to a tall, dolichocephalic to mesocephalic, leptoprosopic, moderately leptorrhine race, which is Mediterranean in metrical position and cannot be distinguished, on the basis of the more commonly taken measurements, from blond and brunet Mediterraneans of Europe and North Africa. A 141

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000 S 141 Africa. The Somalis, on the other hand, belong to an extreme racial form; extremely linear in bodily build, extremely narrow-headed and narrow-faced, with a special narrowness of the jaw. The relationship of the Somalis, on metrical grounds, is with some of the peoples of India as much as with the Mediterraneans elsewhere. The leptosome tendency, and the narrowness of the face, remind one of the same tendency found among the mixed Bedawin group of the Hadhramaut. It cannot be attributed to negro-white mixture, for that phenomenon, as witnessed among the Sidamos, has produced a heaping of characters, resulting in an enlargement of both sagittal and lateral diameters of the face, in some cases in excess of either the Hamitic white or the negroid parent. Upper face height and nose height are especially affected. The Somali face and nose are not long, they are merely narrow. The extremely long faces and noses found among the Ba-Hima, the noble class of the Baganda, and supposedly of Galla origin, have acquired a social value, and far exceed those of the Somali. In this tendency to attenuation of the face, we are reminded of Oldoway man and some of the Elmenteita skeletons. This tendency is an extremely old one in East Africa.

A 142 In the skin color of the Arabs, however dark the exposed and tanned parts might be, the unexposed epidermis was always considerably lighter. A fundamental difference between Arabs and Ethiopians is seen in this feature, for the latter are usually the same in skin color all over. In fact, the foreheads of Ethiopians are in some instances lighter than their shirt-protected bodies. In the three highland groups of Amharas, Gallas, and Sidamos, the Amharas are lightest skinned, with the majority of shades concentrated in the medium brown category, between von Luschan #21 and #25; individually the series runs as light as #13, a brunet-white, which is approximately the color of the former Emperor, Hailie Selassie. At the other extreme it reaches #34, which is almost jet black, nearer the color of the great Emperor Menelik II. Thus among the Amharas almost the entire range of human skin color intensity is covered, with the exception of rosy or pinkish-white, which probably does not exist among Ethiopians. The Gallas run somewhat darker, with their concentration in the medium to chocolate-brown class, between #22 and #29; their range is somewhat less than that of the Amharas, and the rare brunet-white of the former is in some cases replaced by a yellow of Bushman intensity. Most of the Sidamos are darker than #30, and are thus really dark brown or black.

S A 142 So far, the progression in skin color has followed that of relative amounts of negro blood, with an immense range covered; the inheritance of skin color in the Ethiopian highlands is not strictly Mendelian in a simple sense, nor is it by any means a case of ordinary blending. If there was

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ever a rosy-white shade in the non-negroid element, it has long since disappeared. Among the Somalis, however, an entirely different situation is found, for the majority are lumped around the von Luschan #29. Numbers 27 and 30 account for most of the others; hence there is a single and characteristic Somali color, which is a rich, glossy, chocolate-brown, which accounts for seven-eights of the entire Somali group. A very few are darker, and individuals are as light as light brown, in a very few cases as light as Arabs. The contrast between highland Ethiopians and Somalis in skin color is so great that one must postulate that the original non-negroid narrow-bodied and narrow-faced strain which the living Somalis represent was not white skinned in any sense of the word, for the Somalis are the least negroid people in East Africa. S A 142

The Ethiopians themselves are extremely conscious of differences in skin color, and divide themselves into four groups: "Yellow," "Yellow-Red," "Red," and "Black." These groups do not correspond very well with the von Luschan scale, but represent the product of centuries of local experience, and are perhaps more significant from the genetic standpoint. A jury of Amharas and Gallas called 20 per cent of the former "Yellow," as against 8 per cent of the latter; only 2 per cent of either was "Black." In both, the "Red" class was the most numerous, with 47 per cent of Amharas, and 70 per cent of Gallas. Most of the few Sidamos studied are evenly divided between "Red" and "Black." This system could not be applied to the Somalis, whose characteristic hue defied classification. A 142 826

In hair form the Ethiopians also have their own system, which hardly agrees with ours. It has three divisions; *lüchai*, meaning "straight," *gofari*, meaning "curly," and another term which signifies extremely negroid, or peppercorn. Actually, no single highland Ethiopian with straight hair was measured in the author's series, although one apparently straight-haired Agau was seen. Among the Amharas, 80 per cent were called "curly," and the rest "straight," according to native terminology; among the Gallas the same 20 per cent of "straight" were found, while among the Sidamos this rose to 30 per cent. Actually, the *gofari* class included both curly hair in a Hadhramaut sense, and frizzly hair of a negroid character. Hair which the Ethiopians themselves considered negroid was confined to a few individuals who were to all purposes pure negroes, and undoubtedly slaves.

According to our own classification, 40 per cent of the Amharas have non-negroid, wavy or curly hair,[66] and the rest frizzly; the non-negroid A S 142

[66] According to Fischer's findings, our "curly" could be called a negroid-white mixed form.

Fischer, E., *Die Rehobother Bastards.*

9: Coon D-5 (1933-19-4) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
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class among the Gallas is 30 per cent, among the Somalis 86 per cent. Some of the Somalis actually have straight hair. Although our series of Sidamos is too small to be reliable, it indicates that these people are not as frequently negroid in hair form as are the Amharas.

The latter, however, show their predominantly non-negroid character in the distribution of the pilous system; they have the most frequent baldness, beards which are often heavy, and a strong minority of heavy body hair; while the Gallas and Sidamos are less bearded and less hairy, and the Somalis, with beards comparable to those of southern Arabs, are almost glabrous on the body. Black hair is, of course, characteristic of all groups; a sporadic individual with dark brown or red-brown hair may be found, however, among all of them. The beard shows no difference from the head hair.

In eye color mixtures between several brunet strains are apparent. The Amharas have 47 per cent of dark brown and 11 per cent of light brown irises, with 39 per cent of mixtures between these two, with a light brown iridical background overlaid by rays of zones of dark brown; among the Gallas the same proportions of the same types are found. Among the Sidamos, black eyes begin to appear, and the dark brown shade is in the great majority, while among the Somalis 32 per cent are black and 56 per cent dark brown. In all groups an occasional case of mixed blond eyes occurs, with a green-brown or gray-brown mixture, but these form no more than 2 per cent of the whole.[67] They indicate the persistance of the minority tendency to eye blondism endemic in the Mediterranean racial stock, rather than any northern admixture.

The external eye form varies between the different groups in proportion of negroid blood; the Amharas and the Somalis have few eyefolds, little obliquity, a medium to slight opening height; among the Gallas and Sidamos, the pseudo-mongoloid[68] negroid internal fold is occasionally seen, and a strong minority has oblique and wide open eye slits. Similarly, the eyebrows are thickest and most concurrent among Amharas and Somalis.

Browridges are moderate, in a western European sense, or heavy, in over half of the Somali series; the Amharas are slight to moderate, the Gallas and Sidamos slight or absent. Foreheads are usually high among Amharas, and progressively lower among Gallas and Sidamos; the slope is most variable among the Amharas, among whom all forms are frequent; least variable among the Somalis, among whom it is usually slight. On the whole the more negroid have the greatest slopes.

[67] Higher percentages have been reported among Amharic speakers in some of the northern kingdoms.

[68] Seligman, C. G., and B. Z., *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, p. 20.

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

Considerable differences are seen in nose form between the different peoples; the most European forms are found among the Somalis and Amharas, while the Sidamo nose is for the most part negroid in morphology. The Somali noses, although they vary between an extremely leptorrhine and a negroid extreme, assume a normal distribution when tabulated by individual criteria. The mean is a moderate root height, narrow to medium root breadth, moderate bridge height, narrow to moderate bridge breadth, a straight profile, a thin tip, which is inclined slightly upward, medium wings, with thin to medium, slightly oblique nostrils. Although individual Somalis are beaky in nasal appearance, the impression of the group as a whole, and especially of the least negroid element, is that of a straight profile and moderate bridge height; in other words, of a classic Mediterranean nose form. A S 142

The noses of the Amharas, while very variable, are as a rule higher in root and bridge, and at the same time broader, thicker tipped, and often inclined downward, with a tendency to flaring nasal wings, and highly excavated nostrils. The Amharic nasal profile is again usually straight. The Galla noses are like those of the Amharas, with a slightly higher ratio of broad and flaring forms. Among the Sidamos, thick tips, flaring wings, and low roots and bridges are actually in the majority, although convex profiles are more frequent than among the less negroid groups. The Sidamo nose is morphologically as well as metrically a hybrid negro-white organ, such as is frequently seen among American negroes. A 142

In all groups, including the Somalis, thick lips are more numerous than thin ones, both integumentally and membranously; lip eversion is also characteristically great in all of them, as is a prominent lip seam. Really thin lips exceed 10 per cent only among the Amharas. All of the groups show some degree of prognathism; facial prognathism is approximately 10 per cent in all but the Sidamos, among whom it is greater; alveolar prognathism is present among all but Sidamos, to the extent of 25 per cent; among the Sidamos almost half are prognathous. The chin is as prominent as among most white men in over 60 per cent of all but Somalis, among whom it is characteristically receding. Frontal projection of the malars is slight in all groups; lateral projection is often pronounced among the Gallas and Sidamos, seldom so among Amharas and Somalis. Prominence of the gonial angles is most frequently marked among Amharas, never among Somalis. A S 142

Negroid traits are seen sometimes in the ear—among Sidamos the most and Amharas the least. The negroid ear has a small, soldered lobe, and an excessive roll to the helix. It rarely slants, while the ears of Amharas and especially of Somalis are characteristically set at an angle to the vertical.

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

A S 142 Among all of these peoples differences in racial as well as constitutional type is seen, even among the relatively homogeneous Somalis. Here the bulk of the population gravitates between two end types. The more numerous of these two is typified by a long, thin, bodily form with extremely narrow hands and feet, with thin, gracefully built bodies which, among the women, attain a degree of beauty seldom seen in Europe, with high, conical breasts in the women, totally unlike the pendulous negroid udders so common among Gallas and Amharas, and with the characteristically narrow faces and noses typical of the Somali. The other end type is an ordinary prognathous, thick-nosed, wide-eyed negro. About one Somali out of five seems to have a strong strain of negroid blood; in the others it is for the most part dilute. A few individuals among the Somali * are lighter skinned, brachycephalic, curly S 144 haired, and identical in almost all respects with the typical Hadhramis of southern Arabia. They undoubtedly represent the strain of the missionaries who converted the Somalis to Islam, and who founded the present tribes and families. They are, needless to say, rare.

A 142 144 Among the Amharas there is one very impressive type with a relatively light skin color, a high, wide, sloping forehead, very frizzly hair, a high-bridged nose with a thick, depressed tip, and a long, rather bony face. The total effect is incipiently Papuan, and one feels that a veddoid-negroid cross is indicated, in combination with various amounts of both Arabian and Ethiopian varieties of Mediterranean. The linkage in this type of frizzly hair with these exaggerated facial characters seems to show a genetic realignment of some interest. This type is rare among Hamitic-speaking Ethiopians, who conform for the most part to Mediterranean or negroid facial patterns, in various degrees of solution and in various combinations.

A S 142 Except for the peculiar behavior of the frizzly hair form among the Amharas, white racial traits, on the whole, seem to be linked together. Among the Somalis, straight or wavy hair is usually fine, inclined to baldness on the head, moderate to heavy on the beard and present on the body; frizzly or woolly hair is of medium texture and scanty on beard and body; curly, Hadhramaut-style hair is often coarse, but is intermediate between white and negroid hair in quantity and distribution. Among both highland Hamites and Somalis, the lighter skins usually go with narrower noses, and straighter hair; dark brown eyes are strongly associated with narrow noses, black eyes with broad ones.

A S 144 On the basis of these correlations, it is evident that the partly negroid appearance of Ethiopians and of Somalis is due to a mixture between whites and negroes, and that the Ethiopian cannot be considered the

* I measured but one, Puccioni gives photographs of several.

9: Coon D-5 ( ) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

representative of an undifferentiated stage in the development of both whites and blacks, as some anthropologists would have us believe. On the whole, the white strain is much more numerous and much more important metrically, while in pigmentation and in hair form the negroid influence has made itself clearly seen. This study of Ethiopians and Somalis has served to bring out the principle that metrical similarities of a racial order have little reference to the soft parts, since Somalis, Gallas, Arabs, Berbers, Norwegians, and Englishmen may all be closely related in measurements, and at the same time fall at world extremes in pigmentation and in hair form. Within the Mediterranean racial family there is every variation in these external features between a Nordic and a Somali.

The northern relatives of the Somalis, the Afar or Danakil, seem to resemble them closely both metrically and morphologically.[70] If one may hazard a guess from inadequate material, they are even less frequently negroid than are the Somali. The Baria and Cunama, the Sudanic-speaking tribes of Eritrea, are of moderate stature, and are small headed; they are a negroid-Hamitic mixture in which the old Sudanese negroid element is strong.[71]

Of great importance from the standpoint of the history of Hamitic-speaking peoples in North Africa are the various tribal divisions of the great Beja people, who live to the east of the Nile from Eritrea north into Upper Egypt. Some of them now speak Tigré, others Arabic, but their original speech is Cushitic, and their racial relationship seems to be with the Somalis and Danakils for the most part. Some of them, such as the Haddendoa, have been largely mixed with Sudanese negroes; the less mixed, such as the Beni Amer in northern Eritrea, and the Bisharin in the Egyptian desert, represent a fairly uniform type which Seligman compares to the predynastic Egyptians.[72]

This type is, in its least negroid form, of moderate stature, with tribal means ranging from 164 to 169 cm., and comparable in head dimensions and in facial and nasal breadths with the Somalis, although some tribes are smaller headed. The characteristic narrow jaw of the Somalis is also typical here. The skin color is usually somewhere between a bronze-

[70] Bouchereau, A., **Anth**, vol. 8, 1897, pp. 149–164.
Santelli, **BSA**, Paris, ser. 4, vol. 4, 1893, pp. 479–501.

[71] Pollera, A., *I Baria e I Cunama*. Pollera's data make both Baria and Cunama leptorrhine, a supposition which his photographs belie. His nasal breadth technique, and his bizygomatic, are both obviously erroneous.

[72] Seligman, C. G., **JRAI**, vol. 43, 1913, pp. 593–705.
See also:
Chantre, E., **BSAL**, vol. 18, 1899, pp. 138–141. Also, résumé in **Anth**, vol. 13, 1902, pp. 122–123.
Murray, G. W., **JRAI**, vol. 57, 1927, pp. 39–53.

9: Coon D-5 (1932-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

like reddish-brown and a light-chocolate, probably in the lighter part of the rather narrow Somali range; the hair, when not frizzly, is sometimes straight but is usually curly or wavy; and the nasal profile is, like that of the Somalis, usually straight. The physical type of the present-day northern Beja of the Egyptian desert does not exactly fulfill the specifications of the peoples who, as we shall see shortly, must have brought Hamitic speech and Hamitic culture into North Africa in antiquity, but it approximates the general racial position of these Hamitic culture bearers. The presence of the Beja and their apparent antiquity indicate that the desert country east of the Nile and west of the Red Sea has long been a corridor for northward movements by people adapted to desert living, just as the Nile Valley itself, in its reaches below Khartum, may have been a corridor for early agriculturalists.

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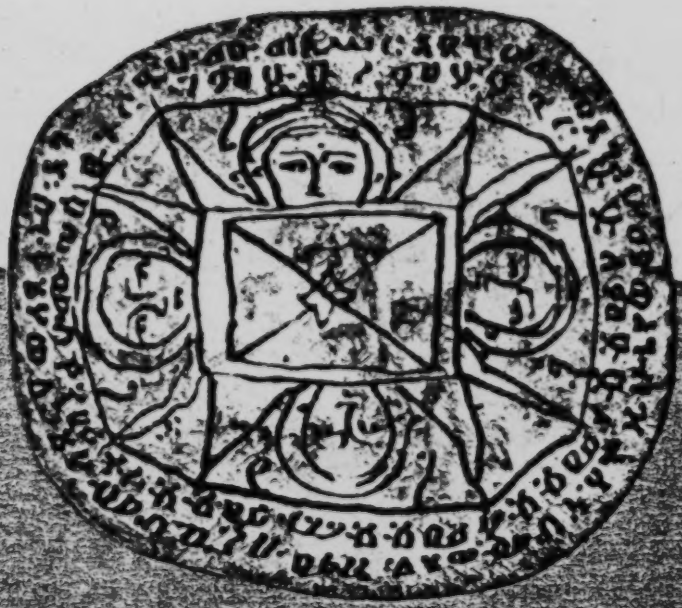

Medicine in Ethiopia

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DISEASES AND MEDICAL PROBLEMS OF ETHIOPIA

ARNE BARKHUUS, M.D.

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114 Ethiopia has attracted travelers from the earliest days of African exploration. Disease often played an important rôle in the success or failure of such travelers, and a considerable amount of information with regard to nosography may be gathered from their writings. As early as 1855 Meyer-Ahrens published a nosography of Ethiopia based on the information gleaned from travel books then available, and much of this information is still of considerable importance. Other early attempts at a nosography of this region, not covered by Meyer-Ahrens, may be mentioned: Courbon's (1861) thesis, which is very superficial, and Blanc's *Medical History of a Journey in Abyssinia* (1869). Blanc was attached as physician to the expedition sent to relieve a British Consul kept prisoner by King Theodore. Theodore had sent a letter to Queen Victoria and another to Napoleon III asking for an embassy. When both letters were ignored, all Europeans in Ethiopia were imprisoned in 1866. Blanc, although imprisoned for two years, had opportunity to act as physician to Theodore and other important Ethiopians and has given a very interesting, although under the circumstances quite naturally a somewhat prejudiced, account of diseases and customs among the Ethiopians.

175 In 1889 Menelik proclaimed himself Emperor of Ethiopia. The years that followed brought Ethiopia into bitter conflict with Italy. A treaty was signed between the two countries at Ucciali in 1889, and Menelik's cousin, Ras Makonnen, father of the present Emperor, was sent on a mission to Rome to obtain a loan for which the whole province of Harar was offered as security. Soon difficulties broke out again and in 1894 Menelik denounced the treaty of

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175 Ucciali. A wave of patriotism swept the country and armies were gathered to meet the Italian invasion. On March 1, the Italians were practically annihilated by a vastly superior Ethiopian Army.

Ethiopia had been put on the map.
177 Menelik was interested in getting foreign help in a number of technical fields, and among the many technical experts traveling in the country during the next twenty years there were also a goodly number of physicians. The different diplomatic missions in the new capital, Addis Ababa, often had their own physicians and with Russian assistance the Emperor founded the first small hospital in the capital. Among the medical writers of this period were Chabaneix (1901), the well-known British medical historian, Charles Singer (1905), who traveled through southwestern Ethiopia to Addis Ababa in 1904, and the French Railway physician, Doreau (1909).

Mission societies sent medical mission-
797 aries to Ethiopia during the following years,
743 and French and Greek physicians, particularly, settled more and more in the capital and in Dire-Dawa, the French railroad town on the Addis-Ababa-Jibuti line. The French Government opened a hospital in Harar and the Italian Government at first kept a clinic in Addis Ababa which, in the early thirties, was enlarged to "The Italian Hospital." Ras Tafari, who had governed as a regent, with Menelik's widow, Zauditu, as Empress, was crowned Emperor in 1930, under the name Haile Selassie I. During his reign Ethiopia slowly has been emerging as a modern state. He early realized that the health of his people was of vital importance for the future of the country. In 1924, he founded the Beit Saida Hospital, which he entrusted to the Swed-

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797 ish surgeon, Kurt Hanner. In 1927, the American Presbyterian Mission opened a
743 100-bed hospital at Gullale on the outskirts of the capital. This hospital was staffed with American Mission doctors. In 1934 the "Zauditu Memorial Hospital" was founded by the Government. This hospital was run by the Seventh-Day Adventists chiefly as a maternity hospital. Helped by the American Society for Lepers, the Sudan Interior Mission and the Ethiopian Government, in 1934, founded a leprosarium at Akaki, near Addis Ababa. In
[874] 1935, the beginning of a school for "Medical Assistants" was set up in the Menelik Lycee, but this work was interrupted by the war. In the interior of Ethiopia medicine had also progressed. There were a number of mission hospitals, of which the most important were the Swedish Mission Hospital (Tafari Makonnen) in Harar and another Swedish Mission Hospital in Lekemti. The French Railroad had its own hospital in Diredawa.

744 Public health work was still very primitive. A public health committee, consisting of three physicians and a pharmacist, had been set up in Addis Ababa as the "Commission de l'Hygiène Publique." This com-

[p. 711a]

744 mittee was presided over by the Minister of the Interior and a number of public health laws had been issued.

It will thus be seen that in the short period of his reign from 1930 to 1935, when the Italo-Ethiopian War broke out, Emperor Haile Selassie I had achieved considerable improvement in the medical situation. It has often been stated by Italian writers that Ethiopia had no medical facilities whatsoever. Comparisons are constantly being made with what Italy had to offer its citizens in the medical field, not with what was offered at this period to Africans in the surrounding countries.

During the Italo-Ethiopian War, medical services in Ethiopia were found totally inadequate to help the country in its defense. An appeal went out through the International Red Cross, and a large number of countries contributed Red Cross ambulances with medical staffs to Ethiopia. Foremost among these were Great Britain, Holland, Sweden and Norway. After the defeat of the Ethiopian forces, most of this foreign personnel had to leave and the Italians set up a new medical organization.

It is not necessary to discuss here in any detail the medical services in Ethiopia

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Typical huts for lepers at the Akaki Leprosarium near Addis Ababa.

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744 during the Italian occupation, 1936 to 1941. The first year of the "conquest" was considered "a period of orientation and preparation." Demobilization of the Italian military sanitary service was carried out, while the civilian organization had not as yet been completed.

743 In the whole of East Africa, the Italians had a medical staff of approximately 1,000 men. The provinces comprising Italian East Africa were: (1) Eritrea somewhat larger than before, (2) Somalia, (3) Shoa, (4) Harar, (5) Amara, and (6) Galla and Sidamo. The Italians had the problem of making the country safe for their own people. A large number of hospitals, dispensaries and mobile sanitary units were set up. The plan called for a large (at least 600 beds) regional hospital in each of the six regions. None of the regional hospitals in Ethiopia were finished, but some, like the one in the Galla Sidamo region (Jimma), were already partly in use at the time of the Italian defeat. The Italians have made much capital out of the "civilizing effort in the field of medicine." It is true that the figures for treatment of sick persons supplied by Italian medical authorities, indicate a great deal of interest in the native population. This interest must, however, be taken with a grain of salt on the basis of actual findings on the spot. For example, it is indicated almost constantly that a very much larger number of natives received hospital treatment than did Italians. When the U. S. Technical Project examined the hospital in Jimma, it was, however, discovered that, while a grandiose hospital had been under development for the Italians, no real hospital existed for the Ethiopians, apart from some temporary, insanitary buildings. These barracks carried a magnificent name and figured with a large number of beds for natives in the Italian reports, but the obvious fact was that essentially nothing had been done for the native population.

114 Much nosological work was prepared by the Italians in the different regions of

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114 Ethiopia. Eritrea and especially Italian Somaliland had been used by the School of Tropical Medicine in Bologna as a study ground, and to this was now added the much more varied and interesting field of Ethiopian nosography. The Italian studies, amounting to over 500, have been carefully analyzed by the U. S. Technical Project in Ethiopia. With few exceptions, especially in the field of malariology, the Italian work was careless, inexact, with a tendency to unwarranted generalizations.

While a number of excellent Italian physicians worked in East Africa, it would seem that, on the whole, publication was not encouraged unless it would further the Fascist cause. It would thus not be justified to judge Italian medical work here solely on the writings of the more politically minded party members. It does, however, remain a fact that, considering the very large group of medical men who worked in Ethiopia for over five years, we have precious little exact medical information about this country.

744 759 Today, the medical services of Ethiopia are being reorganized. The Government is attempting to obtain the necessary medical personnel, build hospitals and carry out public health programs. It is still too early to judge any achievements. The problems are many and the Ethiopian Government is handicapped through the complete lack of native Ethiopian physicians. Such physicians will not be available for at least another decade.

114 During and after World War II, military authorities had reason to take an interest in Ethiopian nosography and a number of articles were published in this field; prominent among these was Manson-Bahr's "The Prevalent Diseases of Italian East Africa" (1941). The U. S. Technical Project had opportunity to make a number of its own studies and much of the following information is based on this work.

164 If one may speak of social diseases in the sense of diseases of immediate impor-

[p. 712.B]

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Syphilis with marked skin lesions in a woman.

tance, that is, having direct influence on the social development of a country, Ethiopia has at least six such social diseases: malaria, syphilis, tuberculosis, leprosy, typhus fever and relapsing fever.

Malaria

Malaria, or "fever," has been known to occur in Ethiopia as far back as we have any descriptions from this country. Bruce encountered this disease, as did Rochet d'Hericourt (1841), who described the diseases of Shoa, and also Aubert-Roche (1845-46). Ferret and Galinier wrote graphically

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164 in their *Voyage en Abyssinie:*

> "vers la fin de la saison des pluies, l'atmosphère humide, la terre détrempée et féconde en miasme pernicieux, font du pays un séjour funeste . . . " (Tigre and Lake Tsana).
>
> (Toward the end of the rainy season, the humid atmosphere and the soil, which is soaked and productive of a pernicious miasma, turn the country into a fatal region.)

Blanc (1869) states that Massawa is almost uninhabitable because of malaria, and that this is true, too, of the narrow, densely wooded and damp river valleys in the interior of the country. He gives the Takazze Valley a particularly bad reputation. It was known before the arrival of the Italians that most places below an elevation of 6,000 feet, especially river valleys, were likely to be malarious.

164 742 The Italians were primarily interested in settling a large group of small farmers in Ethiopia. It was, therefore, of paramount interest to them to find places where malaria would not interfere with agricultural development. A number of surveys were undertaken by first rate Italian malariologists beginning with the investigation by Lega, Raffaele and Canalis in 1936, which covered the Asmara-Addis Ababa road, the railway line from Addis Ababa to Diredawa, and parts of Italian Somaliland. In the following years intensive malarial surveys were made. Through the Malaria Institute "E. Marchiafava" in Rome, research centers were set up in Agordat and Diredawa. Much of the work was carried out under the leadership of Corradetti, who personally covered large parts of northern and northeastern Ethiopia. The British malariologist, Bagster Wilson, has recently published the results of his experiences in Ethiopia.

164 Summing up, it may be said that below 3,000 feet, near permanent collections of water, malaria is endemic. It becomes epidemic during the rainy seasons: the "big" rains from July to October, and the "small" rains in February and March. In the semi-

[p. 713 B]

164 arid area of Ogaden and in the Danakil Desert, malaria is found to be endemic near permanent water, and epidemic malaria has more than decimated the populations in certain regions during the rains. Between 3,000 feet and 4,500 feet most of the malaria is seasonal with two epidemic seasons, April to June and September to November. Spleen rates up to 90 percent are by no means rare in this zone. Between 4,500 and 6,000 feet endemic malaria occurs to a lesser degree, and above 6,000 feet malaria is extremely rare, although cases have been reported.

In the northern highland *Plasmodium vivax* is the most common form, while in the southern and eastern part of the country *Plasmodium falciparum* accounts for about two-thirds of the cases. *Plasmodium malariae* has been found at least once, but is of no importance. Raffaele and Lega claim to have found a special form of *P.* 164 *falciparum* which should constitute a subspecies var. *aethiopium*. *Anopheles gam-* 136 *biae*, *A. funestus* and *A. pharoensis* the most important vectors, but a number of other anophelines are under suspicion. *Anopheles gambiae* is, as elsewhere in Africa, by far the most serious vector. Due to its ability to breed under the most varied conditions, puddles, shallow ponds, pits, animal footprints, ditches, seepages, and borders of lakes and swamps, it is extremely difficult to eradicate.

164 Malaria annually takes a great many lives in Ethiopia, but even more important, it debilitates the population in the regions where it is prevalent, and many deaths from intercurrent diseases are primarily due to a chronic malaria.

The Italians undertook a quinine prophylaxis on a very large scale. At the time of their defeat, over 15 tons of quinine were found in the Italian medical stores in Ethiopia.

Venereal Diseases

There can be no doubt that syphilis is an old disease in Africa. There is a descrip-

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Syphilitic papulae of the face and the axilla.

tion of this disease from the dark continent by Leo Africanus as early as 1515. It is not known how early syphilis appeared in East Africa, but there is every reason to believe that it has been there for centuries. Due to the apparent mildness of clinical cases and the lack of neuro-syphilis, it has been suggested, among others, by Naegelsbach (1926), that there is a relation between this "exotic" syphilis and the "bejel" from Arabia described by Hudson.

[177] It is most likely that syphilis was brought to Ethiopia by the Portuguese in the middle of the 16th century. Most of the early travelers had noticed its presence. Thus, Rochet d'Hericourt (1841) states that: "Although there are no prostitutes in Shoa, the venereal diseases are common, but not in a very malignant form." Blanc (1869) gives an interesting description of syphilis in the northern highland. Ninety percent

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164 of the persons treated by him suffered from syphilis. It is peculiar that he saw little of what he calls "skin syphilis," which is now extremely common. Hirsch (1886) thinks that while the northern highland was infected early the disease most likely did not reach Shoa until the 19th century. He states that at the time of Rigler's travels (1852) it had apparently not yet reached the Galla country.

Today syphilis is common all over Ethiopia. It is estimated that from fifty to eighty percent of the population suffers from this disease. It would seem that the rate is lowest in Somalia and highest in Gojjam and in Addis Ababa. Little exact information is available. The U. S. Technical Project, however, was able to confirm the extremely high rates in a survey of three villages, where from 50 to 85 percent of the population was found to suffer from syphilis.

Tertiary lesions are rather rare, most likely due to the fact that life expectancy is so low, but the secondary symptoms of the skin and viscera are very common. The general manifestations are more or less pronounced. Rashes are seen of macular, papular acneiform, varicelloid, or impetiginous form. Primary syphilitic ulcers are often associated with other venereal ulcerations. Mixed infections are far more common than in Europe.

Of the other venereal diseases, gonorrhea is extremely common, as is also soft chancre. Lymphogranuloma inguinale is seen now and then, but is not important.

164 As elsewhere, the venereal problem in Ethiopia is intimately linked to the general
548 social life of the people. It would seem that sex morals, as understood by occidentals, have never been particularly strict among the Amharas. It is stated by local missionaries that already at the age of sixteen the young Amhara used to begin visiting prostitutes, and that it, therefore, was quite common to find, when he was ready for marriage, at about 18, that he had acquired both syphilis and gonorrhea. While it should be pointed out that the present gov-

[P 715 A]

164 ernment under Emperor Haile Selassie is
548 acutely aware of the seriousness of this problem, and seeks to educate the people to understand its dangers, corrective efforts have been severely handicapped so far by lack of trained educators and physicians.

We are dealing with two forms of syph-
164 ilis in Ethiopia. In the urban districts and along the main highways we have an "epidemic" form, a syphilis which is being spread at a great rate of speed up and down the lines of communication. In the more isolated parts of the country the disease is also present, but in what might be called an endemic form, the larger part of the population suffering from congenital syphilis, with some imported fresh cases.

One of the most surprising facts about this congenital syphilis is that it does not seem to show up in early childhood. Among 10,000 children examined by the Italians, no clinical case of syphilis was seen, although at least 60 percent of the children's parents were syphilitic.

During the Italian occupation the venereal situation grew still worse, notwithstanding an extensive medical service. This was due to the general war conditions in the country with the constant movement from one place to another. Castellani's fantastic statements on the efficiency of the Italian preventive system have been adequately discussed by Manson-Bahr (1941). The large Italian labor forces introduced for road building were an important factor in the spread of the disease. The considerable development of the road net has been a factor of extreme importance.

Tuberculosis

There has been considerable discussion of the age of tuberculosis in Ethiopia. The earlier writers, like Bruce (1790), and Courbon (1861), either do not mention the disease, or, like Rueppell (1840) and Kirk (1843), their descriptions are so vague that no definite conclusions can be drawn. Blanc (1869) states that at Magdala scrofula, consisting of severe inflammation of

[p. 715 B]

164 the lymphatic glands with fistulae, was very common. He makes a point of having seen only one case of pulmonary tuberculosis. Merab (1912), physician to Menelik, does not think ten persons died yearly of this disease in Addis Ababa, while two decades later, Borra (1930) was much impressed with the amount of tuberculosis in the capital.

Little definite information is available today about tuberculosis in Ethiopia. Tuberculin tests (Mantoux) showed in the last year of the Italian occupation 35 percent positives in Shoa, 30 percent in Harar, 28 percent in Amara, and 25 percent in Galla Sidama. Of urban regions Diredawa

An Ethiopian patient exhibiting a typical case of Pott's disease.

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164 was highest with 72 percent, followed by Addis Ababa with 52 percent. The actual number of persons tested is not known, but it was at least several thousand.

Unfortunately, there can be no doubt that pulmonary tuberculosis here, as elsewhere in Africa, is on the increase. The opening up of the country, the movement of the population during the war, and the arrival of many Europeans without proper health examination has furthered this increase, which will continue with the beginning of industrialization in the urban regions unless far-reaching measures are taken at a very early time.

The U. S. Technical Project had opportunity to observe numerous cases of open pulmonary tuberculosis, not only in the larger towns, but also in remote villages. So far there are no facilities for dealing with these sources of danger to the community. Left to itself, tuberculosis is likely to become the most important health problem in Ethiopia within the next decade.

Leprosy

Leprosy is an old disease in Ethiopia. It is mentioned by almost all the early writers. Rueppell (1840) saw it in Gondar; Rochet (1841) describes it as due to the climate; Aubert-Roche (1845-46) found it extremely common in Ethiopia; and Kirk (1843) treated 23 lepers in Ancober in 1842. Finding a number of lepers at Lake Tsana, Blanc (1869) revived the old "fish theory."

The exact number of lepers present in Ethiopia today is difficult to estimate, but is likely to run into several thousands. [743] There is a leprosy camp in Harar with about 150 lepers, and it is likely that there are about as many left in Harar town. Addis Ababa has about 300 lepers under treatment in a leprosarium, and another 200 living in a community on the outskirts of the city. No satisfactory control, however, is possible at the moment. Most of the leprosy seen is of the nodular and mixed form, but macular-anaesthetic cases are not rare. Leprosy does not endanger

[p. 716B]

164 the country at the moment. It should, however, be kept in mind, that with the opening of communication lines and increased traffic and travel, leprosy must be controlled, otherwise it will increase.

Typhus Fever

Typhus fever is known to occur in at least three forms. Classical louse-borne typhus is endemic on the high plateau. Major Ecke of the American Typhus Commission visited Ethiopia in 1944 and found that, while the occurrence of murine typhus has not been scientifically proved, it is extremely likely that this form plays an important rôle. Recently a number of cases of tick typhus have been reported from southern Ethiopia.

The Central Laboratory in Addis Ababa
164 has isolated four local strains of rickettsia.
742 One of these has been constantly orchitic for 52 passages through guinea-pigs, while the other three were non-orchitic.

Cases fall clinically in two main groups.
164 One has a fulminant course with a very high mortality; the other is extremely mild. The high mortality among Italian laborers in the early days of the occupation (sometimes reaching 20 percent) was no doubt due to louse-borne typhus. Fatality in hospitals in Addis Ababa ranged from five to thirty-five percent. Typhus occurs in Ethiopia in the cold, wet months of July, August and September. Surveys have shown that lousiness is almost universal.

During the Italian occupation a large
751 scale vaccination campaign with Weigl vaccine was undertaken. This vaccine has recently been replaced by American vaccine, and large scale vaccination has been carried out since 1945.

Relapsing Fever

164 In 1868, relapsing fever broke out in India and Hirsch (1886) states that it may have been introduced by Napier's soldiers returning from Ethiopia. The disease is no doubt old in Africa, where it occurs in both louse-borne and tick-borne forms.

[p.717A]

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Advanced case of nodular leprosy. Total alopecia of face, no loss of hair on head.

It is likely that all relapsing fever in the highland is of the louse-borne variety. Naegelsbach (1934) points out that the Amhara seldom knew the word for tick unless he had traveled to the lowland. Considerable epidemic outbreaks of louse-borne relapsing fever have been described from northern Ethiopia around Adua, Axum, Macalle, Adigrat and Debra Tabor. I had the opportunity to observe a small epidemic a few miles outside Addis Ababa. About 75 to 100 deaths had occurred in a village before rumors of the disease reached the capital. The fatality from this disease among the untreated, badly nourished population is very high indeed, and even in hospitals in Addis Ababa it is found that the fatality is generally higher than that of typhus. The largest number of cases are admitted to the hospital in Addis Ababa from July to September.

Relapsing fever of the tick-borne variety is endemic in the Diredawa region. *Ornith-*

[p. 717B]

164 *odorus moubata* and *O. savignyi* are both common here. Much scientific research is needed on the relapsing fevers of Africa, and Ethiopia would offer a particularly rich field.

Of special interest in the study of the nosography of any country is the presence or absence of the important communicable diseases: plague, cholera, yellow fever and small-pox.

Plague

From Ethiopia proper only a few doubtful cases have been reported. Most of the Italian writers state that they have never seen a case of plague here. Immediately after the entry of British troops into Addis Ababa there was a report of a case of plague, but it seems now that the diagnosis was not too certain. A survey was made immediately, however, and a total of 3,000 rats were examined in the capital. At the same time 16,000 fleas were identified. It was found that the necessary carrier and carrier hosts were present in abundance. One would most likely find infected rats, if a real search was made on the Kenya border. Thus, the fact that there is no plague at the moment in Ethiopia, should not serve responsible authorities as an excuse from guarding against the disease for which the meteorological conditions are optimal over wide areas.

Cholera

Cholera came early to Ethiopia. Hirsch (1886) writes (Vol. I, page 403):

> "The outbreak in 1837 was probably the continuation of a pestilential progress from Egypt through Tripoli and Tunis, the wider ramifications of which may be seen in the epidemics that prevailed at the same time in Abyssinia, on the East Coast of Africa from Somaliland to Zanzibar, and in the Sudan countries, Khartoum, Kordofan, Darfur and Waday."

Meyer-Ahrens (1855) mentions two epidemic periods, one in 1830-31 and the other in 1836. Hirsch continues (Vol. I, page 423):

[p.718A]

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164 "The outbreak on the coast of Abyssinia on October, 1865, is probably connected with the epidemic in Nubia; according to information derived from the English missionaries, who were kept in captivity by King Theodore, the disease committed great ravages in the following year (1866) in the district of Tigre and still farther into the interior of Abyssinia; and it is this epidemic that appears to have been the point of departure, as we have seen for the extension of cholera to the country of the Gallas."

There seems to have been an outbreak along the River Setit in Eritrea in 1891, and it is stated that there was cholera in Ethiopia in 1892-93, but no details on this outbreak are available.

Since 1900, no occurrence of cholera in Ethiopia is mentioned, but the country is obviously exposed to it, especially through members of its Moslem population who make pilgrimages to Mecca.

Yellow Fever

The presence of persons with sera giving positive mouse-protection tests in the area

Leprosy: nodular form with mutilated hands.

[p.718B]

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Elephantiasis with secondary fungus and bacterial infection.

around Massawa (Eritrea) was shown early in the war by Mahaffy and Sams. Too little work has so far been done in Ethiopia to express any definite opinion on the occurrence of yellow fever in this country. A series of sera taken in the Jimma region proved negative, but recently a case has been described from the Dagobur region (Ogaden), and a few positive sera have been found. For practical purposes Ethiopia is in the yellow fever area of Africa.

Smallpox

164 751 Smallpox is an old disease in Ethiopia. It is possible that an outbreak of smallpox in 370 A.D. in Arabia was connected with the Abyssinian invasion of this country. Hirsch (1886) states that one of the most intense foci of smallpox is found on African soil in the countries of the Nile basin, Egypt, Nubia, Kordofan and the Abyssinian Highlands. Rochet d'Hericourt (1841) describes the variolation practised in Shoa at the time of his visit:

> "They take pus from a sick person and make an incision on the leg of the person to receive the variolation. The virus is introduced into the incision, which is then covered with cotton."

[p. 719A]

164 Aubert-Roche (1845-46) also describes smallpox as an important disease and Courbon (1861) states that few Abyssinians are seen without smallpox scars.

The Italians undertook large scale vaccination and smallpox began to disappear. In 1937, 200,000 vaccinations were given in and around Addis Ababa as a small epidemic had occurred among the people living near the aerodrome. (In 1944, I saw a small outbreak at Sire, near Lekemti.)

Smallpox vaccine is being prepared in Addis Ababa, but until an adequate health service can be established this disease will continue to be a menace both to the Ethiopians and their surroundings.

Helminthic Diseases

The classical disease of Ethiopia is infection by the tapeworm *Taenia saginata*. All the old travelers have detailed descriptions of the eating of raw meat (*brindo*) and the ensuing tape-worm infection. Courbon's (1861) statement is a typical example:

> "Men and women, all and sundry, in this country, have the entozoon; and they take some *kouzzo* regularly every two months to prevent the more serious derangements, which it might cause."

Detailed descriptions of the special Ethiopian anti-helminthic, the so-called *kousso*, have been given in every book on Ethiopia, up to the latest. The professional medical writers have shown the same picture of the omnipresent tapeworm. I had long been skeptical about the frequency of tapeworm. Very little meat, raw or pre-
[262] pared, is eaten by the average Ethiopian, for the simple reason that he cannot afford it. The older travelers were describing special festivals in connection with arrival at distant places. At such occasions meat would be eaten. In a survey of three Ethiopian villages the U. S. Technical Project found tapeworm to be a comparatively rare disease, *Ascaris lumbricoides* being by far the most common helminthic parasite. Conditions are in most places favorable for the embryonation of the ova. The soil is heav-

[p. 719 B]

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A characteristic case of elephantiasis vulvae.

ily polluted, and as no intermediary host is needed the infection is widespread. *Trichiuris trichiura* does not seem to be particularly common in Ethiopia. I found it in about 13 percent of stools in one of the villages examined. *Enterobius vermicularis* seems to be comparatively rare. *Trichinella spiralis* has not been reported from Ethiopia.

Hookworm Disease: So far little actual survey material is available. Naegelsbach (1934) states that hookworm infection is common in Gore. The disease is rare in the northern highland and seems also to be rare in Ogaden. The U. S. Technical Project found no hookworm in Ambo village at an elevation of 9,000 feet. In Shabe (elevation 6,000 feet), 26.6 percent of stools were found to contain hookworm. It is likely that the disease is most widespread in southwestern Ethiopia.

Schistosomiasis: While this disease is quite common in Italian Somaliland, where *Schistosoma haematobium* has been found over a wide geographic range, it is extremely localized in Ethiopia. *Schistosoma haematobium* and *Schistosoma mansoni* infection were described in 1938 from Tigre and one case of *Schistosoma mansoni* infection was described in 1938 from Harar. The disease is rare in Ethiopia.

Fasciola hepatica is common in animals,

T.P. 720 (1)

164 but so far has never been found in human beings. The Echinococcus has been described by the Swedish physician, Dr. Hanner, in two cases from the hospital in Addis Ababa.

FILARIASIS: A considerable amount of filariasis has been described from Ethiopia and the illustration shows a typical clinical case. So far, nobody has been able to prove the presence of *Wuchereria bancrofti* although whole villages have been examined by day and by night. Much of the "elephantiasis" is no doubt surgical, but a large number of clinically typical cases of filariasis are found. *Loa loa* has not been described from Ethiopia. *Dracunculus medinensis* has only occurred where it was introduced from Arabia by traders and has not established itself in Ethiopia.

ONCHOCERCA VOLVULUS: In 1937-38, Giaquinto made a study of the insects of medical importance in Ethiopia. He re-
[136] ported the presence of *Simulium damnosum* in several localities in Galla Sidamo and suggested that onchocercosis might be present here. An expedition conducted by Giaquinto confirmed this. I studied this region in 1944 with Giaquinto and numerous cases of onchocerciasis were disclosed in a survey of the village of Shabe. Photophobia and diminished sight were common and the parasite was found in tumors that were removed. It is likely also that Gore, Lekemti, and Gardulla are endemic regions.

A case of Onchocerca volvulus tumor.

[p. 720B]

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Onchocerciasis which has led to ocular involvement.

Diseases of the Skin

Diseases due to fungi are extremely common. Ringworm has been constantly described by Italian workers and was found by the U. S. Technical Project to be very common in children. A typical case of Achorion schoenleini is shown on this page.

Maduramycosis has been described by a number of writers. While there is no doubt as to the presence of a foot infection showing nodules on the external surfaces connecting up with granulomatous lesions of the interior of the foot, etiological work is so far not satisfactory in this field, and it is doubtful whether the organisms giving rise to mycetoma and to actinomycosis should be classified in one or two genera.

Tropical Ulcer: This is one of the most important of all the diseases in Ethiopia. It is the most common pathological entity, and it is likely that over 50 percent of the population suffers from this disease. It is therefore surprising to find that next to no work has been done on the etiology of this condition as seen in East Africa. There is an almost general agreement that it is an infectious condition in which spirochetes and fusiform bacilli are often found, and now and again "environmental conditions" are mentioned. The U. S. Technical Proj-

[p. 72, A]

164 ect came to the conclusion that tropical ulcer in Ethiopia must be classified as a "social disease." Filth, overcrowding and malnutrition are important factors, but even more decisive has been the displacement of tens of thousands of young Ethiopians by the Italian authorities during the occupation. It has been found that cases treated in hospitals will heal quickly, but when released to look out for themselves the patients soon "relapse." Vigorous attempts are now being made to achieve a simultaneous solution of both the medical and social problem.

Two parasitic skin diseases are extremely common. Scabies is almost universal and may be taken as an indication of the poor general hygiene. Chiggers have spread little by little over the whole of Ethiopia. The Ethiopians claim that the parasite was introduced into Ethiopia from Kenya over Moyale, the frontier village. In Ethiopia the disease is called "moyale."

Gastro-intestinal Disturbances

Both amebic and bacillary dysentery are common in Ethiopia. It is, however, surprising that so few amebic abscesses are found in this country. The illustration on p. 722 represents the only fair-sized amebic abscess the author saw during a year's survey. *Endamoeba histolytica* is endemic in

Infection with Achorion schoenleini (favus).

[p. 721 B]

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An Ethiopian suffering from amebiasis with liver abscess.

[A722 A]

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large parts of Ethiopia, but many cases of so-called amebic dysentery are no doubt bacillary. Fundamental work is urgently needed in this field as gastro-intestinal disturbances are extremely common in Ethiopia. In most of the cases seen in Europeans no amebae were found. The *typhoid-paratyphoid* group of organisms seems to be of extremely little importance in Ethiopia. This is all the more peculiar as most water supplies are heavily polluted. Surveys have shown extremely low titres in Widal reactions for this group.

Dysentery due to *Giardia lamblia* has been described by Italian writers, but it would seem that only the simultaneous presence of diarrhoea and the parasite has been proved. The occurrence of "hill diarrhoea" was suggested by Singer in 1905. Izzo, in 1938, attempted to make a case for this sprue-like disease which he claims to have found in the "Ambas," the high, isolated plateaus.

Eye Diseases

Eye diseases are mentioned as important in all the older descriptions of Ethiopia. Conjunctivitis is no doubt one of the most common ailments in this country. Due to the lack of hygiene, especially in sandy regions, infected lesions of serious nature are not uncommon. Senile cataracts are common and many eye diseases are caused

[p 732B]

10: Barkhuus D-5 (1944-1945) 1947
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164 by syphilis. It is not possible to estimate the amount of blindness due to gonorrhoeal infection, but it must be considerable. Trachoma is no doubt common in Ethiopia. It would, however, seem that the clinical forms are milder than those seen in Tunisia, Egypt, or the Balkans. It responds surprisingly well to treatment, but as treatment is hardly available outside the capital, complications of trachoma are seen all over the country.

Rarer "Tropical" Diseases

Leishmaniasis: Kala-azar no doubt occurs in Ethiopia along the Sudan-Ethiopian border. During the war it was found necessary to evacuate Galabat, and move the population of the border town elsewhere due to the occurrence of kala-azar. This disease has recently been described from the region just north of Lake Rudolph. Oriental boil (caused by *Leishmania tropica*) has been described from a number of places in Ethiopia, among these: Tigre, Gore, Gimbi, Lekemti, Jimma, Dalle, Diredawa and Harar.

Framboesia

Yaws is not a common disease of Ethiopia, while it is extremely common in Italian Somaliland. It has been described from the extreme western part of the country and quite recently (Cupi, 1943) from Amara.

[p722 C]

164

Case of cutaneous leishmaniasis in South West Ethiopia.

No case has been described from Shoa or Harar. Italian reports state that there were 180 cases in Galla Sidama in 1937-38.

Trypanosomiasis

Although the appropriate glossinas are known to occur in the Omo and Didessa valleys, no cases of trypanosomiasis in human beings have been described. The disease in animals is a serious economic problem.

Non-Tropical Diseases

Most of the common non-tropical diseases occur in Ethiopia. In the highlands pneumonia is one of the most frequent causes of mortality. There is reason to believe that whooping cough is common, but little information is available. Varicella is quite common, while the reports on measles are conflicting. Naegelsbach (1934) declares that this disease is well recognized by the native population under the name *kufun*. I never saw a case or met anyone who had seen one. Scarlet fever does not seem to occur. Hardly any work has so far been done on brucellosis, but the U. S. Technical Project found indications that this disease most likely occurs among cattle in the Danakil region. No human case has been reported.

[p.723A]

164 The epidemiology of diphtheria in Africa is still little known. Schick tests have shown high immunity among Ethiopian children, but the occurrence of cases of clinical diphtheria in the native population is unknown.

Every year rabies has claimed a large number of Ethiopians. Until 1927 no treatment was available nearer than Cairo. [744] Since then, treatment has been given in Addis Ababa. The number of rabid dogs in Ethiopia is very large, but little is known of the number of persons bitten outside the capital. It is estimated that approximately 100 persons receive treatment in Addis Ababa every month.

Dengue is common in the northern part of the Harar plateau. It was found quite commonly among Italians at Diredawa and I can remember several fellow travelers coming down with this disease after a night spent in that town. Some control has been attempted since 1943, but until a health service is organized, effective control will not be possible.

Disease terms in Amharic:

164 192 A number of diseases have clear terms in the Amharic language. Of the venereal diseases, syphilis is referred to as *kitigne* in its early form while later manifestations are called *worde*. The rheumatic pains, *kurtemaat*, so frequently complained of, are often syphilitic. Gonorrhoea is generally called *chapto* (actually to squeeze, or it squeezes me). The word for malaria is *wobah* (r). *Nidad* (i.e., it caught fire) is also used, but may be used for several types of fever. Relapsing fever is called *mitch* and is generally differentiated by the population from typhus fever which is called *tessibo*. Smallpox is called *fantata* and chicken-pox is recognized as a distinct disease called *kuffin*. Diarrhoea is called *tekmat*, which literally means "what makes to sit down." In asking a patient whether he has fever, the word *tekusat* is used. The patient with fever will generally have put a band dipped in cold water around his head.

[p 723 B]

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TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN ETHIOPIAN CULTURE

Donald N. Levine

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To the proud Ethiopians of the past and
the creative of the present

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PREFACE

This book is the outgrowth of a relatively uninhibited encounter of a mind 121
bearing some of the ideas and methods of contemporary social science with the dominant traditional culture of a developing nation. As a result it embodies a variety of interests which, in more conventional work, would be pursued through separate writings. Broadly speaking, *Wax and Gold* is animated by three different forms of curiosity, each of which moves to the fore at different times. Proceeding first of all as an empirical social scientist, I have been curious about the nature of traditional Amhara culture. Shifting at certain junctures to the viewpoint of the social analyst, I have been concerned with examining the situation of action faced by thoughtful Ethiopians today. And throughout I have been moved, as a sociological theorist, to raise questions and suggest hypotheses regarding the more general significance of the phenomena examined in the course of my Ethiopian studies. If the book is therefore somewhat disjointed at moments, I hope the reader will be compensated by sharing some of my satisfaction in refusing to suppress one or another of these interests.

The motive which lies behind any scholar's effort to characterize an exotic culture is ultimately aesthetic. I freely admit to having been seduced by the charm of traditional Amhara life. Played out by an extraordinarily handsome people in a setting of great natural beauty and a climate often called "idyllic," it offers a gate through time to a state of being that is richly medi-

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121 eval. Such sights and sounds! A minstrel singing his subtle lyrics as he bows a one-stringed fiddle; in the dark interiors of church, barefoot deacons holding beeswax candles and swinging vessels of smoking incense; the pomp of a nobleman moving cross country with his crowded entourage; a young girl washing the feet of her father's guest; warriors boasting with their martial chants; the stately rhythms of clergy chanting and dancing under the mid-day sun; the open marketplace, offering all manner of livestock, grain, and spices; the counsel of an elder, resolving a dispute; the simple dignity of the bow when two men meet.

The scholar's job is of course to transcend such a medley of impressions and to discern the patterns of order through which such details are bound together in a living whole. In carrying out this task I have not imposed any one methodological framework on my materials. Rather, as the reader of Robert Redfield's methodological handbook, *The Little Community*, will readily appreciate, I have sought to organize these materials in terms of half a dozen of the more common viewpoints used in the study of human com-
121 munities. Roughly speaking, I have looked upon Amhara culture as a history
128 (chapter ii), an outlook on life (chapter iii), a way of growing up (chapter iv), a social structure (chapter v), a kind of psychological orientation (chap-
12 ter vi), and as "a combination of opposites" (chapter vii). The observational techniques employed in the course of this study have been accordingly diverse, ranging from the analysis of literary texts and oral traditions to the use of questionnaires, projective tests, interviews, and participant observation.

121 Yet however gratifying the contemplation of a traditional culture may be, the student of traditional societies today finds it difficult to remain aloof from the historical changes which now permeate the world. As he talks with the bright young men of the cities, he finds considerable ambivalence regarding the value of traditional ways. He finds Ethiopians acutely conscious that their traditional life, for all its charm, has been chronically afflicted with war, pestilence, famine, and disease, and that their traditional social order has encouraged the many to toil and the few to live in idle luxury. He sees them bitter that Ethiopia has remained backward—"*wäda hwäla qäratch!*"—and isolated from the great advances of the human spirit achieved elsewhere. They are anxious to enter the modern world.

And thus the aesthetic impulse is joined by the moral. The sociologist feels drawn to contribute what he can to elucidate the sometimes desperate problems faced by societies trying to make a rapid transition to modernity. In this he is inspired in part by the history of his discipline. The contrast between traditional and modern society has constituted the central substantive problem in sociology since Auguste Comte named the discipline well over a century ago, and some of the foremost proponents of sociology—notably, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Mannheim—have understood their calling to in-

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volve the sympathetic analysis of problems created by the great transition to modernity. 121

In the case of Ethiopia the temptation is particularly compelling. The literature on Ethiopia is conspicuous for the absence of thoughtful social analysis. With few exceptions it is divided between the esoteric treatises of specialists and the insipid blandishments of partisans.* I have therefore offered certain analyses and suggestions regarding Ethiopia's dilemmas, not on the presumption that they are in every case the most sound, but with the aim of raising questions and formulating issues in public which heretofore have been politely overlooked or furtively concealed, or of promoting their discussion in a more exploratory manner than has previously been the practice. [114]

In so doing I trust that my words will not be taken as the preachings of an omniscient Westerner to a backward congregation. On the contrary, I am fully aware that the problems faced by Ethiopia today are simply variants of the basic problems faced by all of us throughout the world, problems which stem from the accelerated rate of historic change in our time and the persisting difficulties of institutionalizing a rational civilization in any human society. If I have sought to throw light on the dilemmas facing Ethiopians, it has been in part with the end of providing a mirror against which the dilemmas of Western societies might also be viewed.

For this and other reasons, our discussion touches now and then on matters of more universal concern. I have done this by means of allusion either to the comparable experience of other societies or to more abstract ways of conceptualizing the phenomena under consideration. Such references to comparative sociology or social theory represent the intrusion, beyond aesthetic interest and practical concern, of a purely intellectual impulse. I have, in other words, permitted myself to linger awhile with certain questions which emerged in the course of my work on Ethiopia—such as the nature of ambiguity, the functions of oral literature, or the concept of individualism—for their intrinsic theoretic interest.

In a way, this type of digression, more than any specific proposals set forth herein, embodies the chief message I would wish to convey to those now shaping the fate of developing nations. The upheavals of our time do not only confront us with dilemmas of action and moral emergencies; they and the work of scholars who study them also afford great opportunity for the cultivation of those faculties of "sociological imagination" and "sociological sensibility" which can enrich our lives as we live them, here and now, from day to day. To readers who may be offended by parts of this book which may seem critical, I can only say that to be modern means—for all of us—to be joined to

* The chief exception is Margery Perham's book, *The Government of Ethiopia*, which remains far and away the best general introduction to contemporary Ethiopian society.

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121 a world-wide dialogue about the limitations and potentialities of human experience. For by any reckoning, a key defining characteristic of modernity is the prominence of education; and education in its truest sense, as Robert Redfield has put it, is "conversation about the meaning of life, as each sees some part of it, on behalf of everyone."

000 It is in the spirit of Robert Redfield that this book was conceived. I should like to place this remembrance of him at the head of the list of acknowledgments which follows. The debt owed by those who had the fortune to study the art of questioning with him is not to be measured.

There are numerous other debts I wish to acknowledge as the author of this book, with the regret that they cannot all be identified individually. I am 122 deeply grateful to:
128

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D. N. L.

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Tigre MN9

I

INTRODUCTION

AMHARA TRADITION AND ETHIOPIA'S MODERNIZATION

THE FACT OF AMHARA DOMINANCE

Of the many traditions which are alive in the empire of Ethiopia—those of the nomadic Danakil and the sedentary Wollamo, the hippopotamus-eating Woyto and the ensete-eating Gurage, the age-graded Konso and the patrilineal Somali, the Judaic Falasha and the Muslim Bani 'Amer, and many others—clearly the dominant tradition is that of the people known throughout history to the outside world as the Abyssinians. Living on the temperate highland massif in the northern and central regions of the country, these people have gained their subsistence through the plow cultivation of cereal grains, have organized their polity as a feudal kingdom, and have remained steadfast in their Monophysite Christian faith since its introduction to the land in the fourth century.

The Abyssinians comprise two linguistic and geographical groups—the Amhara and the Tigre.* The Tigre inhabit the northern part of Ethiopia, above the Takazzē River; their lands fall in what are now the province of Tigre and the former Italian colony of Eritrea. Their language, Tigrinya, is

* Abyssinians object to the term "Abyssinian," since it has been used pejoratively by foreigners, even though they do use its indigenous counterpart, *"Hābashā,"* among themselves. The term apparently derives from the name of one of the South Arabian tribes which migrated to Ethiopia in antiquity—the Habashat. In deference to this objection, I shall use the compound "Amhara-Tigre" in place of "Abyssinian" wherever feasible. The name "Ethiopia" will be used consistently to refer to the national polity which, throughout its history, has included other peoples and traditions as well as the Amhara-Tigre.

1, [The Abyssinians, composed of Amhara and Tigre--Analyst]

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related to Ge'ez, the ancient and liturgical language of Ethiopia, much as Italian is related to Latin.[1] It was in Tigre country that, during the first seven centuries A.D., the kingdom of Aksum reached heights of civilization never again attained in Ethiopia's history. Because of the antiquity of their region and the glory of their past, the Tigre are to some extent the cultural aristocrats of Ethiopia.

The Amhara inhabit vast areas of what are today the provinces of Bagemder, Gojjam, Wallo, and Shoa. Their language, Amharic, is the official language of Ethiopia.* Since the beginning of what is called the restored Solomonid Dynasty (1270), all but one of the emperors of Ethiopia have been Amhara.† The exception was a Tigre, Emperor Yohānnes IV (1872–89), though he sojourned for many years at Dabra Tābor in Amhara country, and Amharic was commonly spoken at his court.

The differences between Amhara and Tigre culture have not yet been studied systematically. Even so, one can say that their differences are not nearly so great as what the two groups have in common. Language forms the chief difference. Like Ge'ez and Tigrinya, Amharic is a Semitic language, ultimately descended from old South Arabic, but Amharic has been molded to a greater degree by indigenous Cushitic tongues. Other differences relate to minor variations in custom, greater communal orientation in some Tigre areas, and differences in temperament. But the two groups share the legacy of Aksum, the Ethiopic alphabet, Ge'ez literature, Monophysite Christianity, similar political and social institutions, and the same style of life. One would be justified in treating their traditional Abyssinian culture as a unity, as virtually all authors have done in the past.

In this book, however, I have chosen to focus on Amhara culture as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia. This has been done, first of all, because of my limited competence to deal with Tigre materials, since I am neither familiar with Tigrinya nor fortunate enough to have done field work in Tigre areas. But a less fortuitous reason is that any serious account of contemporary Ethiopia must begin with the fact of Amhara dominance. With respect to numbers, true, the Amhara are in a minority: Amhara probably comprise no more than one-quarter of Ethiopia's total population (now estimated at around twenty-two million). Their dominance is to be measured, rather, in political and cultural terms. On the political side it is manifest in the perpetuation of the Amhara monarchy and the preponderance of Amhara in top political offices. On the cultural side it appears in the spread of Amhara customs throughout the empire by officials, soldiers, settlers, and teachers, and in

* English is the second official language.

† A number of Amhara emperors since the mid-eighteenth century were partly of Galla stock, however.

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Ethiopia MP1

the continuous Amharization of the peoples of the empire through the required use of Amharic in schools and government offices and through the substitution of Amharic names for indigenous place-names in many parts of the country. If the national institutions and culture of Ethiopia are essentially Abyssinian, more particularly they are Amhara.[2]

The domination of Ethiopian national life by the Amhara, and the related fact that the modern Ethiopian nation was the creation of the Amhara and not of European colonists, are characteristics which distinguish Ethiopia from all other African societies. For Ethiopia is the only country in Africa with a large number of ethnic groups where one of these groups has imposed its rule and its language over the rest and has preserved indigenous national institutions, elites, and culture patterns from displacement by Western forms and authorities.

This condition has imparted a basically conservative tone to the character of public life in Ethiopia, especially when compared to the new nations of sub-Saharan Africa. Because Ethiopians did not have to participate in the postwar struggle for independence, they did not experience the rise of agitational politics or the related phenomenon of political parties or movements. As a corollary of this, the Ethiopian populace was not exposed to oratory promising dynamic social and economic changes, and therefore developed no mass base of support for populist leaders who might seek to promote more rapid forms of change.

Yet if modernization has proceeded more slowly in Ethiopia than elsewhere in Africa—and speed in such matters has at times been associated with recklessness—the pattern of virtually unbroken Amhara rule for at least seven centuries stands in refreshing contrast to the somewhat anguished struggle for nationality within the new nations. Elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa no indigenous cultural tradition exists at the national level. There are many degrees to this cultural fragmentation. At one extreme are countries such as the Ivory Coast which, with some sixty disparate tribal groups in a population of about three million, can as yet appeal only to French culture as a basis for unity at the national level. Somewhat less fragmented are the nations, like Nigeria, in which a small number of important tribal traditions dominate the national scene. Still more consolidated is Uganda, whose kingdom of Buganda has long supported a strong quasi-national tradition, but whose non-Baganda tribes have remained largely outside the pale.

In Ethiopia, by contrast, Amhara rule has long provided a minimal basis for national unity. While this rule has been secured by coercive means, it has accustomed the various tribes in Ethiopia to live under a common sovereignty and to some extent has enabled their leaders to communicate with one another by means of a common native tongue.

One need not be blind to the drawbacks of Amhara dominance to recog-

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E 175 nize in it these and other important advantages for Ethiopia. These draw-
563 backs have been those of any imperialism. During the great Amhara expan-
A 175 sion under Menelik (1889–1913), many peoples were maltreated. Independ-
648 ent tribesmen were reduced to slavery; unique cultures were decimated; proud kings were dragged in the dust. Those who held down the Amhara position in these occupied territories seized land from the indigenous peoples and exploited them much as would any invader. The unfavorable reputation of the Amhara in the non-Amhara provinces has been due largely to the example of these governors and soldiers whose worst impulses were at times allowed free play.

One can scarcely single out the Amhara for criticism because of their imperialistic behavior in the past. Nor is it fair to judge the Amhara people as a whole by the character of their provincial officials in conquered areas, any more than one may judge the British, French, Portuguese, or Russian people by the behavior of certain imperious and sadistic colonial administrators. This distinction was self-evident to more discriminating observers of the Ethiopian scene like Augustus Wylde, who wrote in 1901:

A [565] [701] [157]

> There is no harder worker than the Abyssinian peasant, and no more harmless and hospitable person when left alone and properly treated; and no more truculent, worthless, conceited, lazy and useless individual than the Abyssinian soldier, who formerly did nothing but prey upon the defenceless cultivator.[3]

Indeed, if any imperialism of modern times should be granted special consideration, it might be that of the Amhara. The Amhara were to some extent merely reconquering lands that had been taken from them in earlier centuries. Furthermore, they needed additional strength to help withstand threats to their own independence. Finally, it can also be argued that if the Amhara had not conquered the other peoples now within the Ethiopian boundaries some European power might have colonized them instead.

E However one may assess the fact of Amhara dominance in Ethiopia, it is
563 a given of the present situation. It is a fact that leads naturally to two out-
A standing questions. One concerns the relations between the Amhara and the
648 non-Amhara peoples of the empire: is it possible for the latter to be integrated more effectively and justly into the texture of a common national life? If not, the present state of tribal calm may prove to be but a long prelude to a wasteful storm. The question demands serious and sustained inquiry by a number of scholars, Ethiopians and foreigners alike.

E The other question concerns the nature of Amhara culture, as the dominant
563 tradition in Ethiopia, and its implications for the processes of Ethiopia's mod-
178 ernization now at work and yet to come. To this question we now direct our
121 attention.
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5 / *Tradition and Modernization*

THE GENIUS OF AMHARA CULTURE

The Amhara as a whole are not much given to aesthetic concerns. They are 181
practical-minded peasants, austere religionists, and spirited warriors. Their [517]
interests and achievements as a nation are chiefly in the spheres of military
activity and government. And yet, if we seek some theme with which to gain 181
an entree into the spirit of their society and culture, we will do well to attend 538
to the sphere of poetry. For it is a poetic phenomenon—that represented by
the title of this book—which constitutes both a key to the genius of Amhara
culture and a highly distinctive Amhara contribution to Ethiopian culture.

Sam-ennā warq ("wax and gold") is the formula used by the Amhara to 538
symbolize their favorite form of verse. It is a form built of two semantic
layers. The apparent, figurative meaning of the words is called "wax"; their [196]
more or less hidden actual significance is the "gold."

In its generic sense, the expression *sam-ennā warq* refers to a number of poetic figures which embody this twofold meaning. The use of such figures distinguishes the Amhara equivalent of true poetry from ordinary verse, in which everyday language is merely embellished with rhyme and rhythm. In [197]
the genre known as *qenē*, the original and more elegant kind of *sam-ennā warq* poetry, the lines are composed in Ge'ez and depend primarily on religious symbolism. But *sam-ennā warq* constructions also appear in some types of secular verse in the vernacular Amharic and, indeed, at times inform Amharic conversation.

Masters of the art of *qenē* composition have analyzed these poetic figures 538
into about a dozen different types.[4] *Sam-ennā warq* in its more specific sense 19
refers to one of these types of figures—the prototype of them all. It consists of an explicit comparison in which the subjects being compared—the wax and gold—are presented in apposition, while their predicates are rendered jointly by a single verb which carries both a wax and a gold meaning. (This [325]
terminology is derived from the work of the goldsmith, who constructs a clay mold around a form created in wax and then, draining the wax, pours the molten gold into that form.) So, for example, if the poet's aim is to praise a hero like Emperor Menelik, he creates a wax model, like "the lion," in terms of whose actions the gold, Menelik, is depicted: "The lion Menelik crushed the wolf Italy."[5]

Keeping this dual imagery consistent throughout the stanza is a primary rule of wax-and-gold composition. A poet who mixes his metaphors is sometimes rebuked with the epithet "hermaphrodite." The following example presents an Amharic couplet which properly embodies the *sam-ennā warq* [539]
figure:

Eṭsa balas balto addām ḳanfareshe
Madhānē alam lebē tasaqala-leshe.

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538 Since Adam your lip did eat of that Tree
539 The Savior my heart has been hung up for thee.
19

In this couplet the wax of Adam's sin and Christ's crucifixion in his behalf has been used as a form in which to pour a love message. A literal translation of the wax of the couplet is:

Because Adam ate of the apple from the Tree of Knowledge
The Savior of the World has been crucified for thee.

To savor the gold of the couplet fully, one must know that the verb meaning "was crucified," *tasaqala,* may also signify "is anxious to be near." So a literal translation of the gold would be:

Because of your [tempting] lips
My heart is anxious to be near thee.

538 In other more commonly used figures, the duplexity of the message be-
19 comes less explicit. In figures known as *hĭber and merĭmer,* the wax and gold are combined in the same word or phrase instead of being put side by side. These figures thus correspond to the English pun. In verses which employ these figures the wax is often but a contrived and transparent excuse for getting to the real point, which appears only in the pun line. Such verses are
[522] highly prized, however, for the Amhara tends to regard the pun as a very high form of humor. Here are two examples of Amharic couplets based on
538 simple puns:
539
522
19

(1) *Ya-mĭn ṭĭqem ṭallā ya-mĭn ṭĭqem ṭajji*
Tallāt sishañu bunā adargaw enji.

Of what use is *ṭallā,* of what use is *ṭajji?*•
When seeing an enemy off, serve him coffee.

(2) *Yābbāt eddā la-ĭjj yebāl nabar dero:*
Bāyāt eddā gabāhu ennē-mā zandero.

In olden times a father's debt was passed down to his son;
But here I have a debt today by grandfather begun.

The pun in the first example lies in the phrase *bunā adargaw* ("serve him coffee"), which by elision becomes *bun adargaw* ("reduce him to ashes"). In the second couplet the pun hinges on the word *bāyat,* which signifies "grandfather" but may also be understood to represent *bāyhuāt* ("because I saw her"). The gold meaning of this couplet is thus: It used to be said that one inherited the debt of one's father, but in my case it was the sight of her that put me into debt.

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[273] • *Ṭallā* is a kind of beer made from barley. *Ṭajj* (pronounced *ṭajji* here for the sake of rhyme) is mead.

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Ethiopic verse becomes most obscure in the figure known as *wesṭa wayrā* ("inside of olive tree"). Here only the wax is given, and the listener must work to unearth the gold. Often this can be done only when the circumstances under which the verse was made up are known. The author of a *wesṭa wayrā* often refuses to reveal anything that may help the listener to grasp its hidden meaning. 538 19

The expression *wesṭa wayrā* alludes to the fact that the inner core of the olive tree is a hard substance encased by bark of a different color. The implication is that the inner sense of a *wesṭa wayrā* poem is concealed by a veneer which conveys a quite different sense and is difficult to penetrate. This figure is thus especially suitable for expressing insults in a safe way and for esoteric philosophical or religious message. Here is an instance of the latter usage: [182] 538 539 19

Ya-bāhetāwi lijj sifalleg le'ullennā
Ya-ḳristosn mesht talānt washamā-nnā
Qeṭal betābalaw hono qarama-nnā.

The son of a hermit, high rank to display,
Made love with Christ's wife yesterday;
When she fed him leaves he wasted away.

The surface meaning of this tercet describes an ambitious man who had relations with "Christ's wife" in order to raise his status, for in Ethiopia having relations with a woman of high rank is one way to gain prestige. Instead of advancing his position, however, this man lost all his power when the woman fed him (medicinal) leaves. The esoteric meaning, on the other hand, refers to the experience of a hermit. His "son" is intended to symbolize his hunger, and "Christ's wife" symbolizes fasting. The "inside" meaning, the gold, is therefore that the hermit's hunger is heightened by its relations with fasting, but it diminishes when he is fed leaves, the hallowed diet of a hermit.

The mode of the various poetic figures collectively designated as *sam-ennā warq* is intellectual rather than sensuous. The chief delight of Ethiopic poetry is to attain a maximum of thought with a minimum of words. This effect is reached, as we have seen, through subtle allusions and plays on words. The point may be a serious moral comment, the understanding of which requires one to decipher hidden references to biblical passages or sacred legends; or it may be a jest about love based on a pornographic pun. In any case, the more ingeniously compact and obscure the construction of the verse, the more pleased will be the poet and his audience. Weighty (i.e., mysterious) verse is the ideal, for as the Amhara say, "weighty verse, like heavy clothing, warms the insides." 538 19

The creation of the wax and gold figures was an integral part of the development of *qenē*, the genre of verse composed to be sung at the conclusion of devotional services in the church. And *qenē* appears to be a specifically 538 19 174

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538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[175] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).* Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[173] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in
[874] Gojjam in the fourteenth century.[7] The important schools of *qenē* have al-
ways been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
538 delā, Wāsharā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre
19 have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use
[171] of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than
in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some
Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is
well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre
are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be
ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in
the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara
discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation
of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethio-
pia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only
in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.[8] They further maintain that
Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in
this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propae-
deutic to the study of religious texts.* Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar,
which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught
only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is
that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and there-
by enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method
of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized
by the formula *sam-ennā warq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara
life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

538 * The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by
running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by
example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of
the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student
goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him
all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

11:Levine Z 4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

words often carry *double-entendre* as a matter of course; when he listens, he is ever on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. As one of my Ethiopian colleagues has said: "Wax and gold is anything but a formula—it is a way of life." 538 181

In essence, wax and gold is simply a more refined and stylized manifestation of the Amhara's basic manner of communicating. This manner is indirect, often secretive. Amharic conversation is larded with vague remarks like *Mīn yeshāllāl?* ("What is better?") when the speaker has failed to indicate what is the issue at hand, or *Tādyās!*, an interjection which can mean almost anything. Often, when the speaker is then quizzed about the issue at hand, he will give an answer that does not reveal what is really on his mind at all, and even when he does, the person with whom he is talking is likely to interpret his response as a disguise. 195 521 538

Wax and gold embodies this fundamental indirection in speech by means of the studied use of ambiguity. Apart from its literary and religious manifestations, wax and gold appears in the common life of the traditional Amhara on a variety of occasions and serves a number of diverse functions. 195 182 538

It provides the medium for an inexhaustible supply of humor, among a wry people who prefer the clever, double-edged remark to comic actions or incongruous situations. This includes the wit of daily life—the invention of puns and sly retorts, the telling and retelling of good anecdotes and famous lines—as well as the more formalized humor on festive occasions, where minstrels sing the *sam-ennā warq* verses extemporized by the guests. 538 195 182 522

It provides a means for insulting one's fellows in a socially approved manner, in a culture which requires fastidious etiquette in social relations and punishes direct insults by heavy fines. *Sam-ennā warq* insulting, too, has its more stylized expressions, as at the drink-house, where one may find persons competing in a prolonged exchange of more or less disguised insults, or in time of political or military conflict, when opposing lords were wont formerly to satirize one another with ambiguous couplets. 538 195 182 578

It provides a technique for defending the sphere of privacy against excessive intrusion, in a social order that thrives on rumor and gossip and puts most of its people at the mercy of superiors. While vague and evasive responses often suffice to dampen the enthusiasm of the tax collector or the curious neighbor, *sam-ennā warq* constitutes another potent weapon of self-defense. 538 195 182 571 [521]

Finally, it provides the one outlet for criticism of authority figures in a society which strictly controls every kind of overt aggression toward authority, be it parental, religious, or political. Thus it has been a safety valve for certain social tensions, enabling, for example, witty individuals to satirize the monarch himself and still live to repeat the witticism—so long as its subject was himself duly appreciative of the cleverness of the lines. 538 195 182 578 571 [687] [522]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

TRADITION AND MODERNITY

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Insofar as Ethiopia is committed to the pursuit of modernity, she cannot fail to be embarrassed to some extent by the wax-and-gold complex. For nothing could be more at odds with the ethos of modernization, if not with its actuality, than a cult of ambiguity.[9]

It is true, of course, that cultural formations analogous to wax and gold in their exploitation of ambiguity have been prominent throughout the history of the West, not to mention the whole non-Western world. The Christian tradition has always made much of parables and allegories. The classical teaching of rhetoric, following Cicero, placed great stress on the use of paradox; and a major philosophical tradition, stretching from Plato to Marx, has been founded on a logic which assumes that reality can be known only by combining opposite concepts and that any single term is subject to dual interpretation. The flowering of symbolist literature, to take a more recent example, created an audience as partial to subtle allusion and *double-entendre* as the most obscurantist proponent of *wesṭa wayrä*.

Yet there can be little doubt that the pace-setting spirit of modern Western culture rests on a commitment to unambiguous communication. It is predicated on the proposition that A must be A or not be A. It was no accident that one of the more characteristic philosophical movements of the present century, logical positivism, should have had as its primary motif the desire to maximize precision in the use of language. For the decisive institutions of the modern world—technologies based on logico-experimental science, rational legal systems, and bureaucratic organizations in government, commerce, and industry—depend intimately on the unambiguous definition of terms and the utmost clarity of expression. Whether the task be one of constructing a legal contract, outlining a job description, designing a nuclear reactor, classifying genera and species, or defining variables and their interrelations, these characteristic modern activities are informed by the need and intention to eliminate, as far as possible, all traces of linguistic ambiguity.

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The incorporation of these aspects of modern culture into Ethiopian life must inevitably produce a certain amount of strain in a culture which makes such thoroughgoing use of analogy and equivocation. Indeed, tension generated by this issue has been manifest in a variety of ways. Among the modern-educated Ethiopians, one finds demands for greater clarity in the specification of responsibilities in administration. One finds increased impatience with the devious, equivocal talk involved in joint action of any sort. One finds a slowly growing disposition to structure and fulfil expectations in literal terms, and occasional outbursts of protest against the vagueness and the conspiratorial mentality of those schooled only in the traditional way. In order to escape what they feel are the burdensome subtleties of Amharic,

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some Ethiopians prefer to speak in English in their offices. An alternative solution is proffered by those Amharic writers and journalists who have attempted to adapt Amharic to the modern idiom, replacing the florid, intricate sentence of yore with short, simple, straightforward declarative sentences —an effort that parallels changes in other countries, such as Japan, where an intrinsically more ambiguous language than Amharic in the traditional culture has been revised to facilitate more precise modes of expression.[10]

The opposition between the wax-and-gold complex and the rationalistic aspects of modern culture which some Ethiopians now seek to assimilate is of interest here as an instance of the more general phenomenon toward which this book as a whole is oriented. It is the dilemma posed in all the nations of Asia and Africa by the confrontation of their traditional cultures with their rather recently activated modernist aspirations. To study what is transpiring in these nations in terms of the encounter between tradition and modernity, rather than in terms of the more bland and less biased category of social change, is to focus our attention on a very important aspect of their actual situation: many members of these societies have suddenly been forced to grapple with a number of intellectual and moral dilemmas of great magnitude. The concepts of tradition and modernity are symbols to which they are more or less passionately attached. All of them have concepts symbolizing the sanctity of tradition, like the Amharic *hāymānot abāw* ("faith of the fathers"); and all have concepts symbolizing the goal of modernity, like the Amharic *selṭānē* ("civilization"). And in all these nations the conflict between the two sorts of orientation has produced acute forms of disorientation, on the one hand, and extraordinary challenges to creativity, on the other.

Adopting this perspective for the study of "transitional" societies probably opens the door more widely than usual for the intrusion of the biases of the observer. For the observer's own attitudes regarding tradition and modernity naturally affect the order of questions he will ask and the kinds of data he will examine in making his analysis of the "actual situation." They influence, for example, how much attention he pays to the weakening of norms governing traditional kinship systems and whether he views this primarily as a form of social disorganization or primarily as a precondition for more effective societal organization. Accordingly it is fitting that we introduce the analyses to be presented below with a brief statement of the philosophy which guides the author's approach to these questions. This may be done most effectively by surveying the range of positions that might be taken. In considering the encounter between traditional and modern culture patterns currently experienced in acute form in most nations of the world, one may discern, at a high level of abstraction, these five positions: (1) the Traditionalist, (2) the Modernist, (3) the Skeptic, (4) the Conciliatory, and (5) the Pragmatist.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 The Traditionalist may be defined as one who is oriented to the maximization of traditional values. What these values are of course varies considerably from culture to culture, but in all cases they include the values of kinship and religion. The Traditionalist sees modernization in general as a radically demoralizing force, yet may favor those elements of modern culture which serve to strengthen traditional patterns: modern military techniques to defend the nation's integrity, modern media to propagate inherited beliefs and values, etc. The questions inspired by this approach would be: What are the traditional values? In what ways are they threatened by modernization, and how may they be saved?

The Modernist is, in one form or another, a child of the Enlightenment. He asserts the superiority of reason over mere custom and locates the most important human values in the effort to subject man's physical and social environment to rational control. The Modernist views traditional patterns instrumentally, as potential aids or obstacles to modernization. The main questions he asks are: What are the modernizing elements in the society? What potentially useful resources are latent in the traditional system? What are the traditional obstacles to modernization, and how can they be overcome?

The Skeptic feels that no really worthwhile values can be realized in transitional societies, since their traditional orders have been fatally undermined and yet they are incapable of sustaining a modern institutional order. The reality alluded to here has been depicted in Colin Turnbull's poignant book, *The Lonely African*. Turnbull sees the urban, modern-educated Africans as adrift, accepted neither by the Western masters of modern culture nor by their own people, and the rural traditional people as no less vulnerable because they have lost the power and isolation necessary to sustain the ancient ways. This condition is regarded by some observers as justification for a position of skeptical detachment. Their commitment is to orders of integral value impossible in a society so disrupted, and their intellectual interest in transitional societies is, to paraphrase Max Weber, to see how much they can bear.

The position I have labeled "Conciliatory" stresses the minimization of tension and violence rather than the maximization of values, traditional or modern. The Conciliatory sees the transitional situation as one inherently fraught with increased conflict, and he is concerned more with the maintenance of security and order than with the quality of life in the social order involved. Insofar as he sees modernization as desirable, his main concern is that it be gradual. Questions natural to this approach include: What are the main lines of cleavage in a transitional society? What are the tendencies toward radical polarization between traditionalist and modernist elements in the society, and what conditions promote the reduction of such polarization?

The Pragmatist position differs from the Skeptic and the Conciliatory chiefly in its more affirmative emphasis. The Pragmatist is committed to the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

optimum realization of *all* values possible in a given historic situation. He 121
affirms the human values of modernization, yet conceives of modernity not as of a single, fixed nature but as relative to the cultural context in which modernization takes place. Given the commitment to modernization he would sustain traditional values wherever possible; would modify them where feasible; and would reject them where necessary. The chief questions raised from this point of view will be outlined presently, since it is the approach we ourselves shall be following.

All of the intellectual positions just identified have been taken by respectable thinkers. All are to be found among the members of the transitional societies, distributed according to the individual's position in the social structure and, secondarily, according to his psychological makeup. Within the social sciences, moreover, the subject matters of the various disciplines incline them to one or another of these positions. Roughly speaking, one may say that heretofore the anthropologist has tended to take the Traditionalist position; the economist and the Marxist sociologist have been Modernists; the political scientist has leaned toward the Conciliatory position; while sociologists have been oriented as Skeptics and Pragmatists.

THE QUESTIONS OF A PRAGMATIST

Our intention in this book is to analyze a number of aspects of the confrontation between Amhara tradition and Ethiopia's quest for modernity from the viewpoint of a Pragmatist. Three general questions express the main concerns of this viewpoint: (1) What is the nature of the traditional culture, and what are its more enduring beliefs and values? (2) What aspects of modern culture are of interest to the society, and what are the processes by which they are introduced and institutionalized? (3) Given this interest in modernization, in what ways has it been frustrated by certain features of the traditional culture?

These three questions divide the following chapters into three pairs. Chap- 121
ters ii and iii attempt a sympathetic understanding of some aspects of Am- 128
hara culture and an assessment of their positive relevance for Ethiopia in transition. Chapters iv and v deal with aspects of Amhara culture which have been found inadequate for modernization and with the natural processes by which they have been replaced in part by modernizing structures. Chapters vi and vii then explore aspects of the traditional Amhara culture which appear to be obstacles to the realization of the modernist goals.

We shall begin by exploring one of the traditional bases of cultural identity among the Amhara, one of those primordial sentiments whose integrity is a condition of vitality for a traditional people.[11] Vis-à-vis outsiders, the Amhara [186]
identify strongly with their religion, language, and racial characteristics, though not so fanatically as to preclude their toleration of other groups as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 part of a common nationality. Among themselves, however, the Amhara
128 place great stress on region of origin. Deeply sentimental about their home-
[186] lands, they regard those whose families have long dwelt in the same area almost as kinsmen vis-à-vis Amhara from other regions. In chapter ii, two of these areas which hold a special place in Ethiopian history are explored in some detail. The history, ethos, and cultural significance of Manz and Gondar are discussed, partly to provide an introduction to Amhara culture that has some historical depth, and partly as background to the general question of the place of primordial sentiments like regionalism in a modernizing society.

Chapter iii proceeds to examine the matrix of Amhara culture, the world of the peasant. Its rhetorical aim is chiefly to bring the little-known peasant into sharper focus, to reaffirm the peasant world as one worthy of attention and respect. This will be done, first, by describing the social setting of peasant life, and the main events which make up the daily round and annual cycle of the typical Amhara. Then we shall explore the world view of the Amhara peasant, the main ideas and attitudes through which he interprets his experience. In conclusion, we shall discuss the relation of some aspects of this world view to certain aspects of modern culture.

Chapter iv proceeds from the fact that the skills and values needed for effective participation in a modernizing society cannot be imparted by the traditional processes of socialization during adolescence. With the establishment of a government school system a new and separate pattern has come into being that exists largely, though not wholly, in isolation from the traditional agents and mechanisms of secondary socialization. The subject of this chapter is thus the contrasting conditions in which an Amhara youth is brought up in the traditional and modernizing sectors of Ethiopian society. This account is followed by a portrayal of the outlook of Ethiopian students today, with emphasis on the question of the continuity and discontinuity of their beliefs, tastes, and values with those of traditional Amhara culture.

In chapter v our attention shifts to the elite structure of Amhara-Tigre society. In this sphere modernization has proceeded, not by the addition of a novel structure as in the case of secondary socialization during adolescence, but through a process of differentiation within the existing order and deliberate co-ordination by the sovereign. We shall discuss, first, the traditional elites of monarchy, nobility, and clergy; and then the changes in the status of these elites and the emergence of the new elites of government officials and a modern-educated "intelligentsia."

A key question to emerge from this chapter concerns what appears to be the relative ineffectuality and passivity of the modernizing intelligentsia as a whole. This is a complex and difficult question, only partly to be explained by the political conditions which are referred to in the chapter. We shall sug-

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FIG. 1.—*School of qenè (Wâshârâ Mâryâm monastery, Gojjam)*

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[P. 14-A]

FIG. 2.—*Nagâsi's church, Agântchâ, Manz*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

FIG. 3.—*Fāsil's castle, Gondar*

FIG. 4.—*Two Manzā elders*

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FIG. 5.—*Manz: the sale of* bānnā

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gest that it also reflects certain psychological and social characteristics deeply 121
rooted in the culture of the land of wax and gold. These characteristics will 128
be the subject of analysis in the two concluding chapters, which deal, respectively, with the phenomena of orality and of individualism in Amhara culture.

It should be evident from the foregoing that I have refrained from attempting a comprehensive assessment of the relationship between Amhara tradition and Ethiopia's modernization. By limiting myself to problems for which I had both prior theoretical interests and data obtained at first hand, I have sought to gain in accuracy of detail and depth of understanding what I might lose in breadth of coverage. It is hoped, moreover, that these studies may stimulate other scholars to extend this mode of analysis into such crucial areas as law, economic behavior, family life, religion, and military institutions.

On the other hand, by treating the relation between tradition and moder- 121
nity as it appears in a variety of social and cultural phenomena rather than by concentrating on a single problem, I have found it easier to articulate some of the complexities of that relation. For traditional patterns and modern aspirations are related in many ways. Oftentimes they are fully compatible, the traditional either positively supporting the modern or else presenting no conflict with it. When conflict does obtain, on the other hand, it may work toward resolution in a number of different ways. One alternative is straightforward displacement of the old by the new, through a varying combination of coercive and persuasive measures. Another alternative is through structural differentiation, as mentioned above, either through the incorporation of a novel form from outside or through processes of internal differentiation. Still another way is through a subtle transformation of traditional forms so that they continue to be meaningful but are redefined to fit the modern situation. In its most creative outcome, the conflict may involve so genuine a dialogue between traditional and modern patterns that novel values emerge and authentic variants of modern culture are developed.

Perhaps the most important insight in this connection is that while traditional patterns may stand in conflict with modernity in some respects, the same patterns may support modernity in other respects. It is to this sort of complex relationship that the Pragmatist is most likely to draw attention. Theoretically the relationship follows logically from the realization, hard won by sociologists during recent decades, that no modern society can exist without substantial reliance on patterns which must be regarded as traditional and not rational. For a concrete example of this dual relationship, let us turn once more to the phenomenon previously discussed, that of wax and gold.

We have argued that the ambiguity and equivocation symbolized by the 121
Amharic formula wax and gold stands in opposition to the semantic dimen- 195
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sion of modernization which, because of the ascendance of technology, contractual relations, and bureaucratic organization places great stress on the unambiguous use of language. Yet we may now argue that the intellectual habits associated with the wax-and-gold pattern are also valuable assets in Ethiopia's pursuit of modernity.

The experience of history has demonstrated the futility of attempting the revolutionary implementation of a clear and distinct ideal in human society. No matter how bold and sweeping the program, traditional patterns persist tenaciously. The only real alternatives are whether they are to be maintained in isolation from the modern culture, or whether traditional and modern patterns can be fused sufficiently to produce a relatively homogeneous sort of culture. As Gabriel Almond's analysis suggests, the latter alternative appears to be conducive to stability and effectiveness in modern political systems.[12] For that to take place, however, traditional symbols must be interpreted with sufficient ambiguity as to permit their fusion with modern ones. The problems of "cultural management" faced by the elites of the transitional nations can only be handled in the long run by a deliberate effort to exploit the ambiguity of traditional symbols.

Enrico Cerulli's interpretation of the Aksumite inscriptions provides an interesting precedent for such manipulation of language in the service of induced culture change in Ethiopia.[13] Cerulli has remarked on the cautious and ambiguous language with which Emperor Ēzānā recorded his conversion to Christianity in the fourth century. For example, Ēzānā refers to his new deity, not as "God of the Christians," but with the traditional pagan symbolism, "God of the Heaven" and "God of the Earth"; and he attaches to his new God the same epithet—"Who has not been conquered by enemies"—which traditionally belonged to the pagan god Mahrem. So interpreted, Ēzānā's inscription may be seen as an antique expression of that cultural disposition which centuries later the Amhara were to crystallize in the canons of *sam-ennā warq* poesy. At the same time it illustrates how the sacred symbols of a traditional culture may be used to facilitate radical innovation.

What is true at the level of national leadership is no less true for the leadership of less inclusive social systems. Wise politicians at all levels have always been aware that to gain support and preserve solidarity it is not advisable to adhere scrupulously to a single literal interpretation of any system of beliefs or code of norms. This perception has been affirmed by recent sociological investigations, which show that the most effective administrators of complex organizations are those who have a high tolerance of ambiguity and who are skilled in the use of ambiguous language for the purpose of reducing interpersonal tensions.

In addition to serving these instrumental functions, the ambiguous use of language belongs in the most modern of cultures because it is the foundation

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of a humane literary style. The rationalist emphasis on clear and distinct ideas and the puritanical emphasis on honest, straightforward, and plain talk are indispensable in running the machinery of modern society but by themselves are insufficient to represent the savor of human experience. The ascendance of unambiguous communication in American culture has resulted in the triumph of "a journalese," which is characterized, as one critic has put it, by "words of flat signification . . . and with none of the broadly ruminative phrases which have the power to inspire speculation." As he further observes:

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> The essential sterility of such a style is one of the surest signs we have that modern man is being dessicated. For the "modern" style is at once brash and timid: brash enough to break old patterns without thinking, and timid before the tremendous evocative and constructive powers immanent in language.[14]

If the aim of modern culture is a fuller life for man, it neglects its ends if strictly cognitive and instrumental considerations become so dominant that its very matrix becomes flat and dry. For modernity to be complete, the tremendous evocative powers immanent in language must also be unleashed.

The distrust of ambiguity arises in a modernizing society because those processes most obviously associated with the culture of modernity—chiefly those having to do with rational mastery over the environment and the rational co-ordination of human activities—take place in contexts where unambiguous communication is imperative. The successful development and operation of institutions in these areas do require, as we have suggested, the setting-aside of devious and equivocal habits of mind. But in those areas involving the creation of solidarity, the management of tensions, and the expression of intuition and sentiment, criteria of effectiveness would seem to permit, indeed to require considerable reliance on the uses of ambiguity. From this it follows that the wax-and-gold mentality should be regarded not only as an obstacle to Ethiopia's modernization but also, by virtue of its contribution to the continuing effectiveness of her social organization and the continuing richness of her expressive culture, as a beneficial agent.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

2

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

THE AMHARA DRAMA

*175 The six centuries of Ethiopian history that end with the conquests of Menelik —a historical unity which circumscribes the matured Amhara culture—may be divided into three main episodes: synthesis (1270–1527), in which the might and Christian culture of Ethiopia were consolidated and expanded; shock (1527–1633), in which the Ethiopian body politic was dealt a series of severe blows; and recovery (1633–1900), in which Ethiopia labored to resurrect itself —first through Gondar, then Tigre and Shoa—until its ancient order began to be threatened by the demands of a modern world.

Synthesis

Following the ascendance of the Shoan Amhara in 1270, Amhara-Tigre society attained a kind of medieval prosperity. Monophysite Christianity, incorporating many features of indigenous animist cults, was increasingly diffused among the peoples of the land. Though Amharic advanced as a vernacular tongue, Ge'ez was understood by the learned of both the Amhara and Tigre regions, and served as a ready medium for expressing the piety and fantasy of the age. The clergy were fruitful and multiplied, and produced sufficient heresies to keep the fires of theological disputation well fueled.

A hereditary line of Christian monarchs, claiming descent from King Solomon, had been made secure. The armies of the emperors and their powerful governors were active and usually successful. Though intrigue and revolt at

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

times brought dissension to the state, the legitimate Crown was triumphant most of the time. 175*

In the history of Ethiopian literature the period has been called a Golden Age.[1] The important works composed during this time include *The Glory of Kings,* which contains the story of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon, and their offspring, Menelik I, legendary first king of Ethiopia; *The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth,* a compilation of occult theology and numerology, with a Miltonic account of the struggle between Michael and Satan; *The Christian Romance of Alexander the Great,* a fantastic portrayal of Alexander as a Christian hero who traverses the Land of Darkness and the miraculous Land of the Living; the moralizing tracts of the greatest emperor of the period, Zar'a Yā'qob; as well as numerous lives of saints and translations of Christian writings from Arabic. 175* 538

Connoisseurs of Ethiopian art attribute the most original and refined paintings to the latter part of this period. Using translucent colors and austere shapes and design, Ethiopian monks brought to expression an intense spirituality in the form of miniatures in illuminated manuscripts.[2] 175* 532

At the same time this was the Heroic Age of Ethiopian warfare. Amda Ṭseyon vanquished sixteen Muslim chiefs to the south and west; the valor of Sayfa Ar'ed was celebrated in medieval Arab tales of chivalry; Dāwit I pushed his victories against the Muslims as far as Zeila on the Gulf of Aden. Improved military equipment and organization under Yeshāq brought the imperial forces to a new level of discipline and power, which Yeshāq used to establish his authority in many southern areas. Zar'a Yā'qob, famous for endowing churches and monasteries and for encouraging literature and art, was a successful warrior in his own right. 175* 648

A close-up of Ethiopia at the height of its medieval synthesis is provided by Father Francisco Alvares, Portuguese emissary to Abyssinia during the years 1520–27.[3] We see a prosperous kingdom, its far-flung dominions headed by hereditary rulers and royal appointees, all of whom pay tribute in kind to the emperor. The tribute consists of horses and mules, blankets and cloths, silk stuffs and gold, all in impressive amounts. The provincial heads, and the armies they must make available, live off the land they govern. The numerous priests and monks are supported by lands granted them by the king. Justice is administered at three levels, with the possibility of appeal from the local judge, to the provincial governor, to the royal court itself. The king's mobile camp, large as a town, is his capital, so that he spends his years marching about from one corner of his domain to another. 175* 64 631 [651] [69]

The monarch at the time of Alvares' visit was Lebna Dengel (1508–40), a man of pride and temper. He refused to heed counsel that the kingdom was imperiled by threats from the outside. Indeed, legend has it that he was discontented with the prevailing civil harmony and begged God to send an ad- 175* 643

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 643 versary, so that his people might be roused from their peacetime habits and the nation could have a chance to prove its might. Ethiopia never fully recovered from the shock that came in the middle of his reign.

*175 648 *Shock*

Amhara-Tigre society was convulsed by one disaster after another during the succeeding century. In 1527 began a series of conflicts with the Muslim kingdom of Adal led by a fearful warrior, Imam Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi, surnamed Grāñ. Equipped with firearms from the Ottoman Turks and hordes of Somali soldiers, Ahmad Grāñ proceeded to overrun Ethiopia, causing destruction and massacre wherever he tread. Only after most of the country had been laid waste, its inhabitants forced to embrace Islam, its churches looted and burned, was Ahmad Grāñ at last killed. His troops were routed by an Ethiopian force that had been revived by the expedition of Portuguese match-lockmen under Christopher da Gama.

The wars with Ahmad Grāñ left the country impoverished and disorganized. In this state it lay vulnerable to another shock: the massive tribal movements of the Galla from the south. The Galla advanced through periodic invasions of their warrior age groups. Coming first in furtive raids, then concerted warfare, finally by slow migration, these hardy nomads managed to penetrate deeply into Amhara lands. By 1563 the Galla had invaded over a third of the empire.

Ethiopia was further shaken in 1557 when the Ottoman Turks occupied the port of Massawa. This action introduced a problem that was to harass Ethiopia intermittently until the present: the danger of occupation by European powers. The Ethiopians were able to repulse the Turkish invader as he pushed farther inland, but Massawa remained in foreign hands until 1941.

*175 648 797 643 In seeking to recover from the destruction wrought by Grāñ's holy war, a number of emperors turned to European Christian powers for religious support as well as for political and technical assistance. Some of them became converts to Catholicism and, encouraged by Portuguese Jesuit missionaries, attempted to promote the new faith among their subjects. The outcome was only further bloodshed. Emperor Za Dengel's conversion in 1603 aroused civil strife and led to his downfall at the hands of nobles who did not share his Catholic sympathies. More serious trouble appeared during the reign of Susneyos (1607–32). He, too, adopted the Roman faith, and allowed one of the more impetuous Jesuits, Alphonzo Mendez, to direct a number of reforms in the Ethiopian Church. Mendez insisted that all priests be reordained by himself, that the population be rebaptized, and that the liturgy be rewritten. He forbade circumcision, and defined the previously unknown crime of witchcraft. Such measures antagonized the populace and provoked "horrid uproars, bloody wars, and the slaughter of many great Personages," as Lu-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

dolphus put it.[4] At length, unable to witness the further decimation of his people because of religious controversies, Susneyos abdicated in favor of his son Fāsil. Fāsil lost little time in deporting the Jesuits and restoring the Orthodox status quo. 175* 648 797 643

Recovery

In the wake of all these collisions, Ethiopia made two valiant attempts to regain equilibrium and glory: through the splendor of Gondar in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and through the force of three emperors of the nineteenth century—Tēwodros II, Yohānnes IV of Tigre, and Menelik II of Shoa. 175* 648 643

Gondar was founded as a new and stationary capital by Fāsil. It served as imperial headquarters for many generations. Later, the kingdom of Tigre knew a resurgence of power that led to control of the empire under Yohānnes (1872–89). His castle at Makalle symbolized one last rally for the north—after an interregnum of a thousand years—before being eclipsed by the Shoan throne.

The shock which began with the invasions of Ahmad Grañ shattered Ethiopia's medieval synthesis once and for all. The political consequence of those disruptions was an increase in provincialism, reaching its climax in the famous "Age of the Princes" (1755–1855) when each province had its own sovereign and for all practical purposes was a polity unto itself. The Solomonic line, the matrix of Ethiopian political unity, was splintered in several directions, leaving contenders in each of the provinces. Though the official imperial line remained at Gondar, Tigre was able to reassert its ancient claims and Gojjam recurrently voiced its separatism, and what may be called the "House of Manz" came to compete with Gondar as a center of national consciousness. 175* 178 635

This political division was accompanied by a peculiar cultural bifurcation. Elements of the national culture that had been rather evenly distributed before Ahmad Grāñ now became relatively specialized in Gondar and Manz. The recovery of Ethiopia produced a geographical division of manners and morals as well as several lines of Solomonic royalty. 175* 184

HISTORICAL PROFILES

The Role of Gondar 175* 633

Gondar is the only city in Ethiopia with charm and character expressive of Amhara culture. Even today, despite modern accretions, the remnants of its castles, walls, bridges, and sanctuaries transmit a stately calm, redolent of past nobility and African grandeur.

The town is situated on a flat volcanic ridge at seven thousand feet above 175* 361

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*175 361 sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

[132] Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most [312] pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā [132] [241] twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, some-

*175 643 TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāssi (Nagāssē Kristos)	Abēto	169?–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebstē (Sebstyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbiyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Takla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwoflos	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yosṭos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāhla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	***		***
		Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

*175 361 [132] [241] [231] times three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and livestock are produced in abundance.

The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's *175 633 time of power.[5] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The towns-[162] people of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, [463] and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he [193] was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose [36] name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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the proximity to water, the protective rings of mountains, and the healthy distance from Galla tribes. 175* 633 361

When Fāsil arrived at Gondar, then no more than an insignificant village, he pitched his tent near a large sycamore. This magnificent tree, one of the landmarks of Gondar, became the site of popular celebrations on holidays. Not far from this tree Fāsil decided to construct his castle, the largest and best preserved of the castles of Gondar. Thus began an ambitious program of building, which included the construction of seven churches, a number of bridges over the streams around Gondar, and a large bath, next to which Fāsil placed a three-story pavilion. In the course of the following century Fāsil's successors added many more buildings, including a total of twenty-one additional churches. Of the secular buildings, the castles of Bakāffā and Empress Mantuāb and the "Recreation Hall" of Dāwit III were the most outstanding. 175* 633 361 643

In their political endeavors, Gondar's monarchs began by upholding the Abyssinian tradition of a warrior king. Though unable to secure definitive victories over his enemies, Fāsil was continually joining battle with them. He spent all but five of his thirty-five years of rule on the warpath. The reign of Yohānnes the Pious was marked more by religious than military preoccupations, but warfare on a small scale was carried out during half the years he ruled. Yohānnes' son, Iyāsu the Great, seized the spear with renewed vigor and brought Gondar to the pinnacle of its might. Iyāsu's campaigns carried him to far parts of the empire, some of which were not again to be visited by a triumphant Amhara king until two centuries later. 175* 643

On Iyāsu's return from one of his famous field tours, Gondar suffered a misfortune that ushered in a long era of political disorganization. Learning that his favorite concubine had died and been buried while he was away, the grief-stricken Iyāsu withdrew to one of the monastic islands of Lake Ṭānā. His son, Takla Hāymānot, took advantage of the situation to have himself proclaimed emperor; and shortly after, probably encouraged by those of the clergy who mistrusted Iyāsu's sympathy for Catholicism, he had his father assassinated on the isle.

The next four emperors had short and brutish reigns. Takla Hāymānot, Tēwoflos, and Yosṭos were occupied mainly with the quashing of conspiracy and rebellion. Even so, they had time for the favored sports of hunting wild animals and raiding Galla and Negroid tribes. Dāwit III, it seems, did not even accomplish that. The chief slaughter in his reign was of the local clergy; he brought Muslim Galla to massacre hundreds of the monks and priests of Gondar, for they had opposed his theological views. All four emperors ended ignobly. Takla Hāymānot was stabbed to death; Tēwoflos was probably poisoned; Yosṭos, not of the Solomonic line, was forcibly deposed; and Dāwit III was poisoned. Bakāffā was more careful to protect himself from pretend-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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*175 643 ers than were his predecessors. He spent his days breaking the power of the feudal lords and strengthening the hand of the monarchy, and died a natural death.

Iyāsu II was the last of the Gondar emperors to rule with full power. He, too, had to spend much of his military energy suppressing conspirators. One pretender maintained a long siege of Gondar, and although his troops never succeeded in storming the castle, they destroyed much of the capital. After checking the rebels, Iyāsu II withdrew from the political affairs and became absorbed in private pursuits. Later, stung by the popular ridicule of his inactivity, he launched a major campaign against the Fung kingdom of Senaar. The net result of that venture was eighteen thousand dead and the depletion of his treasury. The subsequent subdual of Lāstā, a rebel region for generations, and Iyāsu's raids against tribes in the Atbārā district were not sufficient to redeem that defeat or restore the force of Gondar.

The political history of Gondar after the assassination of Iyāsu the Great is that of a fairly steady decline. The power of the monarchy was weakened by frequent coups d'état: no fewer than twenty-five emperors were deposed in the century and a half between Iyāsu I and Tēwodros. The power of central government was weakened by the increased strength of the nobles, each pursuing his personal interests. The power of the Abyssinian nation was weakened by the influx of Galla, who entered Gondar as prisoners and mercenary troops and finally, with the marriage of Iyāsu II to the daughter of a Galla chieftain, reached the royal court itself. The succession of emperors after Iyāsu II is largely a list of figureheads, living their brief spells in the dreary pomp into which the court had fallen, while the real power was wielded by independent lords throughout the land.

*175 643 633 517 The history of Gondar, however, is more than a chronicle of military expeditions and political intrigues. It is above all a history of the Amhara's most concentrated attempt to cultivate their religious and aesthetic culture, some aspect of which stimulated most of Gondar's sovereigns.

Fāsil, we have seen, was greatly interested in architecture. In addition to his many constructions in and around Gondar, he rebuilt the old cathedral at Aksum, which had been in ruins since the pillage of Ahmad Grāñ. Fāsil's interest in religion, moreover, extended beyond the building of churches. He sought to promote the integrity of the Ethiopian Church by expelling the Jesuits, and assisted its restoration by fixing rules for the ministration of church services.

Yohānnes the Pious was devoted to the furtherance of religious studies. He built a library to house religious manuscripts, as well as two new churches. Possessed of an unusual decorative bent, he had the walls of the library covered with a yellowish plaster and raised designs in stucco, and he himself painted miniatures on some of the manuscripts. His queen, Sebla Wangel,

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sponsored the translation of works from Arabic. Among these were *Laws of the Kings,* a collection of civil and canon laws which became the official basis for judication, and a penitential manual, *Spiritual Medicine,* the last major production in Ge'ez literature. 175* 643 517 [633]

Yohānnes also continued Fāsil's work of "purifying" the church. He decreed that descendants of the Portuguese must leave Ethiopia unless they joined the Orthodox Church and that Muslims must reside apart, either in their own villages or in ghettos. Ordained as a priest before becoming emperor, Yohānnes followed keenly the theological disputes of his day. Toward the end of his reign he convoked a synod in Gondar to discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit in Christ, the chief theological question in Ethiopian history. [798] [793] [779]

Iyāsu I, like many of Ethiopia's rulers, appears to have been moved by deep religious feeling. Describing Iyāsu's religiosity, one of the priests of Gondar wrote an eulogy a few years after his death: 175* 643 781

> The king used to stand at the window of his palace . . . and listen from his tower on high to the singing of the priests and learned men, to their gentle hymns which moistened the bones by their exceeding tenderness. When their offerings pleased him greatly he was pierced with affection for them and drawn by the harmony of their heavenly peace. For this reason . . . he would prepare for them dinners filled with delights, and bid them eat with him in his royal chambers, ornamented all about with the beauty of pure gold and wrought silver. He would take off his gold necklace and present it to them. He adorned them with garments of purple and of staffs interwoven with gold from the treasury of his kingdom. . . . None of the kings before him had done such as he, and none of the clergy of yore had been treated as were his priests and learned men. After the dinners, the king and his priests together sang hymns of joy and jubilation all night long in the palace—in their time of pleasure, in the sweetness of divine ministry.[6]

Iyāsu the Great did much to establish Gondar as the most important center of religious culture in Ethiopia. To this end he brought outstanding priests and learned men from all over the country to his capital. From Gojjam, for example, he brought the great master of religious verse, Kĭfflē Yohānnes, whose lines are remembered even today. The number of teachers in Gondar in his time exceeded five hundred; there were one hundred and fifty at his church Dabra Berhān Selassie alone.* It was under Iyāsu I that the classic subject matter of the higher religious studies in Abyssinia—*zēmā* ("religious 175* 643 633 517

* Dabra Berhān Selassie, one of the two churches built by Iyāsu I, is the only one of the original churches of Gondar which survived later conflagrations of the city. The original paintings which covered its walls have been preserved, as well as the remarkable ceiling from which rows of wide-eyed angels look down from between wooden beams. The church provides separate places for nobility and commoners, and a balcony for the emperor. [346]

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*175 643 633 517 chant"), *qenē,* and *tergum* ("interpretation")—is said to have received its definitive organization.

Dāwit III appears to have had a pronounced interest in Amharic folk song, for the more perfect enjoyment of which he built a special hall in the imperial compound. Because of this he has been called "Dāwit the Singer"—no term of praise in a land where minstrelsy is looked down on and where serious deportment is expected of royalty. Actually, this epithet, with its connotation of "playboy," was not deserved. Dāwit was a religious man, and in his brief reign built two churches. Knowledgeable Gondarēs today insist that, at first, even the priests were happy to join him in the amusement hall to listen to the one-stringed fiddles and the witty songs. Only after Dāwit's partiality to the [798] Unctionist doctrine (that the humanity of Christ was made divine through the unction of the Holy Spirit) led him to persecute the Unionist clergy (who hold that humanity and divinity are blended in the single nature of Christ) did they abuse his music hall and tarnish his name.[7]

[341] Interest in architecture was revived by Bakāffā. He constructed a long U-shaped castle which, together with the new castle of his Empress Mantuāb, completed the major complex of buildings in Gondar. Mantuāb's castle is [532] noted for bas-reliefs of the Ethiopian Cross, while her other castle at nearby Qusquam is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting saints and animals as well.

The tastes of Iyāsu II were especially refined. He cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He built a large and handsome church. He began to construct a palace, in the lavish [344] decoration of which he took a personal interest. Budge writes of this:

> A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the walls of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts . . . with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. . . . Iyāsu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen.[8]

*175 633 517 The decline of imperial power at Gondar after Iyāsu II did not produce a slackening of the cultural activities that had been concentrated there. During the reign of Takla Hāymānot II (1769-77), for example, when the actual [543] power at Gondar was in the hands of a lord from Tigre, seven more churches [874] were built. One of these, Ba'ātā Māryām, eventually became one of the most famous schools for the teaching of *aquāquām* ("religious dance"), and in its heyday boasted 276 masters. Another, Abi Egzi, became noted for instruction in *tergum,* and is still a leading school for such studies.

[538] The composition of verse, in forms which had become canonized during the early Gondar period, continued to flourish. As political turmoil often

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth century: 175* 633 517 538 [539]

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts. 175* 633 517 53

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā*, or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā*. 175* 159 793 633

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām*, the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere. [535] [178]

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā [214] [538]

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*175 633 left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor Menelik.

[159] [793] Alaqā Gabra Hānnā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army, turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar.* The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar during his few years in power (1869–72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

*175 633 643 [648]

*175 633 The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum,* though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā.* The civil order, however, was thoroughly demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces.

[166]

*175 633 643 648 At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance from the old capital—began as follows:

> O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.[11]

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

131 133 Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the northeast horn of Shoa Province.[12] It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.[13]

* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

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29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
tēff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181]
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

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*175 Gondar has been described at first hand by numerous travelers and scholars, from the time of Poncet (1699) to the present day, only two foreign authors had penetrated Manz prior to my field trip there, and then hastily—the British missionary Krapf, for two days in 1842, and Soleillet, a French explorer (and friend of Rimbaud), for two days in 1882.[14]

Nevertheless, two circumstances of the era of recovery give Manz a special historical significance. First, since Manz was practically the only part of Shoa not overrun by the Galla, it was able to provide a base from which an Amhara offensive to reconquer the south was launched. It is for this reason that Shoans sentimentalize Manz as *ya-amāra mĭnçh* ("the Amhara's source"). Second, Manz was the birthplace of a line of rulers which culminated in the present imperial family of Ethiopia.

Both of these circumstances have been endowed with supernatural significance by latter-day supporters of the Shoan throne, much as *The Glory of Kings* added religious sanction to the Shoan Dynasty of the thirteenth century. In *Darsāna Rāguēl,* a homily in honor of the archangel Raguel which came to light during the early part of Menelik's reign, they are made the subject of a prophecy of Emperor Lebna Dengel.[15] In this homily Lebna Dengel, overcome by the destruction wrought by the forces of Ahmad Gragn, prays to the Virgin Mary for seven days. When Mary at last appears, she rebukes the king for forsaking the piety of his fathers and urges him to repent. She is followed by the angel Raguel, who announces to the humbled king what is to be the fate of his country and his children. "For two hundred and fifty years there will be many pagans throughout the land of Shoa . . . but not in Manz, for it is the land guarded by Uriel, the angel who gathered the pure blood from the side of Christ."[16] As for the sons of Lebna Dengel, Yā'qob—who is said to have sojourned in Manz during and after the time of Grāñ, and from whom the House of Manz claims descent—"will dwell in your land, in peace and safety. . . . Among the children of the king Yā [the prophecy alludes to persons and places by their initial syllables] one will remain in Manz, by the will of our God, for this son of Yā will love the angel Uriel. . . . The King beloved by the angel Uriel and issue of the house of Yā will govern Shoa."[17]

To some extent, moreover, Manz is noted for its connection with important events and sovereigns of earlier centuries. According to Ethiopian tra- [173] dition, Manz was the refuge of the sole survivor of Aksumite royalty, Anbasā Wedem, who is believed to have fled south to Manz when Aksum was sacked in the tenth century.[18] Manz was the object of some attention under Emperor Zar'a Yā'qob (1434–68), who established a monastery at Ferkutā in eastern Manz, and during whose reign was written a biography of the "apostle of Manz," Yohānnes the Oriental, who converted wild beasts and overcame the dragon.[19] His successor, Ba'eda Māryām (1468–78), made his camp

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

for a while at Masala Māryām in Manz. His sojourn there, remembered to this day, is recorded in the amusing rhymed formula with which he exacted tribute from the various districts near his camp: 175* [539]

> From Agāntchā/fifty *ḳoretchā* ("saddles"); from Hulu Dehā/fifty *dehā* ("servants"); from Aftanaṭ/fifty *naṭ* ("rugs"); from Godambo/fifty *gambo* ("jars of drink").

It was from Manz that Ba'eda Māryām brought priests to officiate at his coronation in Djagno.[20] According to Shoan beliefs, finally, Manz also served as a refuge during the invasions of Aḥmad Grāñ for the fourth son of Lebna Dengel (1507–40), Yā'qob, who is said to have fled there with the royal raiments and received succor from the local inhabitants.

According to *Futuḥ el-Habacha,* Manz was ravaged by the forces of Grāñ in 1531.[21] Scarred timbers identified as pillars of churches burned during that invasion may be seen there today. Local legends concerning the history of Manz relate for the most part to the miraculous feats of strength which Grāñ is said to have performed there and to the resettlement of Manz after Grāñ. These legends speak of the "founding" of Manz by three men—Māmā, Lālo, and Gērā—who were sent by one of the emperors to settle and govern that territory. As the story goes, the emperor offered each of them as much land as he could cross in a single day. They set out from the Adabāy River, today a western boundary of Manz, and the result of their long day's journey was the present tripartite division of Manz into Māmā Meder, Lālo Meder, and Gērā Meder. This explains why Gērā Meder is the largest of the three districts—for Gērā's horse was the strongest! 175* 178

Although their deeds are recorded only in the form of legends, Māmā, Lālo, and Gērā were historical personages. They appear to have lived in the latter part of the seventeenth century.[22] Gērā was the most powerful of the three, as the legend of his horse suggests. He controlled most of the land of Manz, including Afqārā, an impregnable mountain fortress which was used for generations as a garrison for political prisoners. He set aside a large stretch of grassland to be used by local people for grazing cattle and providing thatch for roofs, where still today it is forbidden to plow or build houses. 175*

Not these three lords, however, but one of their rivals—Nagassē Kristos Warada Qāl, commonly known as Nagāssi—put Manz on the map. Nagāssi was born to a wealthy proprietor in the district of Agāntchā. As a young man he showed outstanding valor and skill at arms. His success in battle won him many followers, who helped him advance from enlarging his possessions at the expense of his neighbors to the conquest of Galla territories southeast of Manz.

Nagāssi's ambition was fed by his victories. He proclaimed himself ruling prince of Shoa, and vanquished those who disputed this claim, including the

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*175 mighty Gērā, in a long series of skirmishes. At length, around 1700, he proceeded to Gondar to gain official recognition from the emperor, then Iyāsu the Great. After presenting tribute from his area Nagāssi told the emperor of his achievements in Shoa, where he had established settlements and churches in lands taken back from the Galla. Pleased by such good news, Iyāsu agreed to award Nagāssi a title and a seal.[23]

For this accomplishment Nagāssi is generally acknowledged to be the founder of the modern ruling family of Shoa.[24] Nagāssi did not live to enjoy his long-sought investiture on Shoan soil; before he was able to return home he died of smallpox. He was buried with great honors at one of the churches built by Fāsil, Fit Abbo, where his grave—as well as the field he camped on, Nagāssi Mēdā—remain objects of historical interest today.

In the will proclaimed before he died, Nagāssi bequeathed his "throne" to Akāwā; his spear, silver cutlass, and gilded shield to Sebstē; and his land and money to his five other sons. As Akāwā began to rule, however, Manz was afflicted by drought and famine. Blaming this misfortune on their new ruler, the nobility deposed Akāwā and installed Dāñā, another of Nagāssi's sons, in his place.

Meanwhile Sebstē, dreading the fraternal conflict he knew would arise over the succession, had fled to the lowlands of Merhābētē, where he attached himself to the local governor. He served well; on one occasion he reportedly saved his liege's life by a brave thrust of his spear at an onrushing wild buffalo. Yet the governor feared Sebstē as the son of his father, and such bravery only alarmed him all the more. He decided to do away with Sebstē before he became too powerful and laid plans to have him seized during the next feast. In the meantime Dāñā was beginning to suffer losses. Sebstē's relatives sought a way to lure him back to Manz, for they needed his leadership in combatting their enemies and, no doubt, they feared for his safety in Merhābētē. They sent a messenger to tell him that his mother was sick and he should return to Manz at once. The message arrived the day that Sebstē was to have been killed. The ruse worked. Unwilling to mar the festivities by announcing his departure, the unwitting Sebstē slipped away without bidding farewell.

After a few seasons the superiority of Sebstē over his brother Dāñā became clear. Sebstē's victories over the Galla brought him much wealth, which enabled him to acquire his own followers. A showdown with Dāñā was inevitable, and Sebstē won. He decided that the meaning of Nagāssi's bequest to him was "Rise and rule." To confirm his new position Sebstē called an assembly of all his kinfolk and countrymen from all parts of Manz and adjacent regions, ostensibly to hold a day of mourning in honor of his father. When the mourning ritual was over, Sebstē proclaimed to the assembly:

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"People of Manz, follow me! Henceforth my title shall be *marĭdāzmātch*.* Whosoever does not call me Marĭdāzmātch Sebstē in the future I shall punish severely."[25] 1954

The succession question was thus settled. After Sebstē the Shoan chieftaincy passed from father to son for seven generations without serious contests. The next question was how to increase its power.

Sebstē proved himself worthy of Nagāssi's mantle. He conquered most of the province of Yefāt and there securely established his authority. His reign was terminated by a curious accident. Sebstē's son Abbĭyē, eager to replace some of the churches destroyed by Gragn, decided to build a church in honor of St. Michael in the town of Doqāqit. To this end he brought by stealth the holy ark of St. Michael from Aynē, where Sebstē was living. Sebstē could only conceive of this action as an expression of disloyalty, and set out with some troops to capture Abbĭyē and reprimand him. In the ensuing encounter, to Abbĭyē's dismay, one of his servants killed Sebstē.

Abbĭyē thereupon became the new ruler of Shoa. Though his reign began on a note of insecurity he was able to pursue successfully the goals of his father: strengthening control of the Amhara districts of Shoa, conquering and resettling lands occupied by the Galla, and asserting Shoan independence vis-à-vis Gondar.

Despite Nagāssi's efforts to unite the Amhara enclave in northern Shoa, it was still broken up into a number of petty independent districts. Manz was no exception. Now that Nāgassi's line had established its headquarters in the lowlands southeast of Manz, some of the lords of Manz refused to live in subordination to it. Gērā had been defeated, but his grandson Golē still claimed independence. One of Abbĭyē's achievements was to defeat Golē and so bring Manz once again under a regional authority. Abbĭyē also moved further into Galla territory. He pushed beyond Doqāqit to Hār Ambā where he built a town. After a reign of twenty-five years he met his death on the battlefield fighting the Karayu Galla.

The novel feature of Abbĭyē's reign was his relationship with Gondar. Sebstē had not gone to Gondar bearing tribute, for he declined to acknowledge the supremacy of the emperor. When Sebstē died, the emperor, then Iyāsu II, sent an expedition to Shoa to collect tribute. According to the Shoan historians, Abbĭyē defeated the expedition; according to other sources, Abbĭyē was spared by the intervention of the emperor.[26] In any case, his attitude toward the men who came on the expedition was conciliatory. He bade the Gondarē lords teach him the ways of Gondar's court and administration, and even made one of them a district governor. He ordered the Falasha artisans

* *Marĭdāzmātch* is an honorific title that was formerly used in the province of Shoa.

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*175 who trailed the Gondar camp to make spades and plowshares, spears and swords, and so improved the quality of agriculture and warfare in Shoa.

The reign of Abbĭyē's son Amhāyas was long and prosperous. New lands were conquered, new settlements founded, new churches built. Amhāyas seized the strategic mountain of Ankobar, to which the mountainous plateaus of the north and the vast plains to the south were equally accessible, and set up his official residence there. The last of Shoa's princes to pay his respects to the court at Gondar, he was received there as an emissary of his father with great honors and treated more like a sovereign ally than a vassal.[27] When Amhāyas died, he left for his son Asfā Wassan what had by then become the vast principality of Shoa.

Asfā Wassan's youth was spent in a monastery in Manz, where he became proficient at composing *qenē* under the tutelage of a master from Gondar. As a ruler he resembled many of Gondar's monarchs, preferring to spend his time in religious pursuits and the embellishment of his capital (Ankobar) than on the warpath. The actual business of warfare he entrusted to his generals, who in a string of victories subjected dozens of Amhara and Galla districts to his authority. Nevertheless, when forced to fight, he lost no time in showing who was *marĭdāzmātch*. When two of his generals rebelled, he defeated them in what Cecchi called "the most terrible and bloody battle which the Shoans remember."[28]

Asfā Wassan deserved his name, which means "Expand the Border." He brought nearly all the petty states of Shoa under his rule, by alliance or by
*175 conquest. A famous exchange of couplets between Asfā Wassan and Ṭedu,
539 governor of Morat, formed the prologue to one instance of this expansion. Ṭedu, fearing the absorption of his territory, made the following rhyme:

Asfā Wassan Yefāt ṭanḳeraw yerrasu
Morat ṭeduāl belaw ḳamamalālasu.

O Asfā Wassan, stoutly plow Yefāt
Rather than eye what's baking in Morat.

*175 There is gold in the verb in the second line, *ṭeduāl*, which may signify not
538 only "is baking" but also "Ṭedu is there." The couplet may thus be read:
539
195 O Asfā Wassan, stoutly plow Yefāt
Rather than think about Ṭedu in Morat.

Upon hearing this couplet Asfā Wassan composed the following reply:

Lə-moſar lə-qanbar yamihonaññen
Sälquarṭaw alqerem zandro ṭedun.

To get me yokes and plowbeams in this year
I will not fail to cut the juniper.

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[MANZ]

The pun here is on the word *Ṭedu,* for the name of Asfā Wassan's adversary means "the juniper." Morat soon began to pay him tribute.[29] 175* [538] [539] [195]

Asfā Wassan also accomplished much in the field of administration. He organized his realm into four large provinces, which were in turn subdivided into thirty-nine districts—half Amhara lands, half lands taken from the Galla. He improved the laws and introduced a more orderly system of finance. He supported agriculture and encouraged trade.

Such prosperity could scarcely be viewed with indifference by Gondar. Takla Giyorgis I (1779–84), who was trying vainly to restore imperial authority at Gondar, marched to Shoa with a large force. Asfā Wassan, not ready for an open clash with the emperor's troops, handled the situation with characteristic Shoan adroitness. He heaped gifts upon the emperor and his lieutenants. Protesting his fealty, he noted that if he had extended his own dominions, it had been at the expense of their common enemy, the Galla. Finally, he said he was willing to pay tribute to the emperor, but at the same time was ready if necessary to meet him in battle. The lords who accompanied Takla Giyorgis sympathized with the Shoan, and the emperor was not strong enough to prevent their defection.

Worried by a monkish prophecy that his life would be short, Asfā Wassan emptied the state coffers in order to subsidize churches and monasteries. He lived to fill them time and again, during a reign that lasted thirty-three years. Throughout that time he never forgot his church schooling, and frequently invented *qenē* to be repeated in the churches on holidays. But Asfā Wassan was a true son of Manz, and left the memory, as Harris noted, of "a great Nimrod and an unparalleled warrior."[30]

The next ruler, Wassan Sagad, was the offspring of a fortuitous union between Asfā Wassan and Woizero Atmotch Hono, a relative of the imperial family at Gondar and owner of vast properties in Wallo. En route from Manz to Ankobar at the end of his student days, Asfā Wassan was given hospitality at the home of this genteel woman. Not aware that the lady had in fact been brought by his father with the hope of siring offspring from her, Asfā Wassan spent the night with her. When she bore a son, and Asfā Wassan learned who she really was, he fled in terror to the monastery of Ferkutā. After sending scouts to all the monasteries in the area, Amhāyas had his son brought back and granted him pardon.

Wassan Sagad was thus kin to the highest nobility through his mother as well as his father. His noble blood, haughty disposition, and clever mind moved him to great ambitions. He convoked a large assembly of Amhara and Galla, and proclaimed himself Rās of Shoa.* Then he sent word to Rās Gugsa, power behind the throne at Gondar, that he was coming to fight, "for

* *Rās* is the highest ranking secular title in Abyssinia after *negus* ("king"). Cf. chap. v, p. 158. [554]

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*175 I am the descendant of Nagāssi, and who put you, a Galla, on the throne of my fathers?"[31] He began his campaign by sending an expedition against the Wallo Galla, who were dependents of Rās Gugsa. But before he was able to persuade the reluctant Shoan nobility to venture forth against Gondar, Wassan Sagad's ambitions were cut short, in the fifth year of his reign, by the dagger of a slave.

The assassination of Wassan Sagad brought Shoa a moment of anarchy. In the absence of central authority, vicious passions were unleashed—"at Debra Libanos alone there fell no fewer than eight hundred victims to private animosity, of whose murder no account was ever taken."[32] The Galla burned hamlets over a wide area; they captured the heir apparent and prevented him from reaching the Shoan capital, then at Qundi. At this point Sāhla Selassie, younger son of the late *rās,* left the seclusion of his studies and presented himself to the Shoan nobility. His daring and quick wit won their consent. They named him Rās of Shoa at eighteen years, and he soon began to style himself as king (*negus*) of Shoa as well.

In the ensuing decades Sāhla Selassie completed the process of conquering and consolidating Shoa that his father had initiated. His rule was strong and beneficent, though tribes which did not pay tribute were shown no mercy. He led forays into Galla country three times a year, during which delinquent or independent settlements suffered sudden and total devastation.

*175 648 [669] A major crisis during the reign of Sāhla Selassie was the rebellion of one of his commanders, a man named Matako. Matako had risen to high position from that of minor retainer by dint of his fighting ability, but he antagonized the king by requesting that the king's daughter be married to his son. This was a double breach of etiquette, for the king's daughter would normally be given only to someone from a high-ranking family, and in any case the request should be tendered by some mediating elders, not in person. In the wake of the tension that ensued, Sāhla Selassie had Matako imprisoned. Matako escaped, however, and raised an army of Galla tribesmen to fight his campaign for revenge. The royal forces were in serious trouble. Sāhla Selassie sent a desperate message to the people of Manz: "My brothers, my relations, come and help me!"[33]

Such help could not be taken for granted. The men of Manz were then, as ever, fiercely independent, unwilling to subordinate themselves to distant authorities. At the time of Sāhla Selassie, in fact, Krapf observed that

> [His Majesty's] power and influence in that part of his dominions is very limited and loose. The Mansians openly declare, "We know little about Sahela Selassieh." Nobody would venture to say so in Efat.[34]

Still, the Shoan line had been infused with new Manzē blood by the marriage of Sāhla Selassie's father to Zanaba Warq, the grand-daughter of Golē,

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[MANZ]

grandson of Gērā. Thanks to the intercession of his mother, Sāhla Selassie was able to reach his truculent kinsmen. In response to his appeal for help against the Galla forces, the Manzēs came in great numbers and saved the day. A vivid reconstruction of the final battle is provided by Harris: 175* 648

> [Matako] and his gallant sons were everywhere in the thickest of the fight. His shout, rising high over the storm, animated the faint-hearted, and his presence roused to new life and exertion the successful partisan. Many of the Amhara bands were already reeling from the repeated shock of the wild riders of the Hawash [the Galla horsemen], when suddenly, in the very heat of the action, a large body of warriors, clothed in black mantles, and armed with long heavy spears, rushed down the hill on foot, and, prostrating themselves as they passed the royal unbrellas, descended fresh into the arena. The fierce inhabitants of Mans had sped to the rescue from their hereditary estates, and their savage ferocity and reckless bravery was well known throughout the land. The relations and the household retainers of the rebel attempted to breast the storm, but they were scattered like autumnal leaves before the angry blast; and the chief arrived to the succour only to behold the spot strewed with the bodies of his stoutest partisans. . . . A panic seized the pagans; and, dismayed and brokenhearted, they fled tumultously in every direction.[35]

Of the arts of peace, Sāhla Selassie was particularly absorbed in the development of manual crafts. He brought masons and carpenters from Gondar and took a personal interest in the work of his metalsmiths. He was eager to learn of European technical skills and showed much hospitality to missions from the British and French governments, with whom he concluded treaties of friendship and commerce. 175*

In Gondar, Sāhla Selassie's province was known as "the most populous and most wisely governed" in the country.[36] His assumption of the title of *negus* had been urged by some of the Gondar nobility and clergy, for they looked to him for help in combatting the spread of Islamic influence by the Muslim Galla chief, Rās 'Ali. Sāhla Selassie needed little urging; his sights were set on the highest title of all—*negusa nagast* ("king of kings," or "emperor"). Yet he, like his father, was premature. Two more generations were to be needed before that triumph. 175* 643

Abyssinia could not wait. The dissolution of imperial power and the inroads of Islam had proceeded too far. Unification of the country under a powerful monarch was the obvious need of the day. The process was begun by a rebel from Qwārā, who vanquished in turn the Rāses of Gojjam, Bagemder, and Tigre, and proclaimed himself emperor in 1855 as Tēwodros II.

Shoa could not long remain untouched by Tēwodros. The successor to Sāhla Selassie, his son Haile Malakot, tried to save Shoa's autonomy by leading an expedition to fight Tēwodros in Wallo, but found his camp impreg-

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*175 643 nable. As the rainy season was approaching, Haile Malakot retreated to Shoa, where he fell sick and died. For the first time since Nagāssi, Shoa was left without an effective leader. Tēwodros marched into Manz from Wallo, and Shoa capitulated with little struggle. Eleven-year-old Menelik, son of Haile Malakot, was taken hostage.

Ten years later Menelik escaped from the camp of Tēwodros and regained Shoa. Slowly and carefully he built up his power. Tēwodros' reign raced to its tragic end. Takla Giyorgis II reigned briefly at Gondar, the last emperor to sit there. Yohānnes IV of Tigre governed the country for seventeen years. When Yohānnes died, Negus Menelik was forty-five and ready. Nagāssi's seed, eight generations later, reached the throne of all Ethiopia on November 3, 1889.

CULTURAL PROFILES

The Manzē Ethos

*175 185 The goals of Nagāssi and his descendants, apart from simple increase of power, were to recover the lands taken from their fathers and to stiffen the authority of Christianity in Shoa. Their success was virtually unbroken by [181] reason of exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance. These are ideals and qualities embodied par excellence in the people of Manz.

423 Sanctity of *rist*, or land inherited from one's parents, is a cardinal value in 181 the Manzē scheme of things. Such land must not be given or sold to anyone who is not a close relative. People generations removed from actual residents [428] of Manz still retain claims to family land there, still cherish the idea that if they so desired they could go back and live on it. As an urbanized Manzē once told his nephew in Addis Ababa: "No matter how far you travel abroad, no matter how long you stay away, you will always be able to think of your [539] family land in Manz as your true home." This sentiment is expressed in a proverb:

> *Ya-Manz rist be-shi amatu/la-bālabētu.*
> Manz *rist* to the thousandth year/belongs to the owner.

A squatter may fight to keep his land from falling to some stranger who claims it as having belonged to his grandfather, but in his heart he respects the values that support such a claim.

[577] By Manzē standards the good man is thus one who defends the land of his fathers, seeing that it is not sold to outsiders or that foreigners do not come to [685] take it. If someone plows another's land without permission, he must be punished. If the matter can be settled through litigation, well and good; if it requires recourse to violence, so be it. To let such an offense go unavenged [691] would be the worst sort of shame. Grievances concerning their "hereditary

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423
estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly 181
a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rĭst.* 691

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their 771
land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts 181
are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially 771
hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the 773
angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder [823]
is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short 181
notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to chil- 181
dren in Manz express this determination: 551

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Çhafçhefē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

181
A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about 411
three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many pur- 481
poses—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs 482
when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or [599]
standing at the long church services.

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411 standing at the long church services. Above all it is a weapon of offense and
181 defense, and every Amhara male is supposed to be skilled in its use. When the *dulā* is so employed in Manz, the *bānnā* blanket is usually wrapped around the left arm to form a quick shield, the *dulā* raised high with the right to bring down on the adversary's cranium. The blows are sometimes fatal. The Manzēs are proud of their facility with the lethal stick, and nearly every district in Manz boasts that it is real "*dulā* country."

726 The Manzēs also excel at *shillalā*, the Abyssinian war chant. This is a
533 form of boastful verse—partly intoned, partly shouted—which is declaimed by
181 warriors to "heat their blood" before hitting the warpath. Children in Manz start practicing *shillalā* almost as soon as they leave the breast. The following
[539] is a good specimen of Manz *shillalā:*

> *Agarātchn Māmā agarātchn Lālo wanzātchn Dangazē;*
> *Mān abātu yāzzāl imbi senīl gizē.*
>
> Our land is Māmā, our land is Lālo, our stream the Dangazē;
> What father will order us when *imbi* we say!

Imbi is an interjection used by children to express "No!" There is a double pun in this couplet. *Mān abātu* ("Who is the father?") is a profane idiom meaning "bastard." "To say *imbi*" is another idiom, meaning "to refuse." The second line may thus be also rendered as:

> What bastard dare shove us around when we tell him to keep off our lands!

181 The Manzē code asks that a man be ready to defend his land and church
865 by force. It does not approve wanton aggression. But the Manzē's disposition
152 is notoriously aggressive, for his emotional life is relatively devoid of warmth
[577] and, on the other hand, fighting is so highly rewarded. Children are urged to be adept with the *dulā*. Their temper tantrums are welcomed as signs that they are brave. As a result the men of Manz are often overcome by the impulse toward physical aggression; assault and murder are recurrent events on their fields and trails and at their marketplaces. The discrepancy between the *norm* of physical bravery, which is operative *in certain specified circumstances*, and the *general character trait* of aggressiveness comprises a major theme in their emotional life: they feel obliged to look for justification for the aggressive actions which they have been conditioned to want to carry out. This disposition is illustrated in the words of the Manzē youth who said:

> I want very much to kill somebody. The only problem is I'm not strong enough. Perhaps one day I will be. Why is it all right to kill? People kill sheep, don't they? And sheep are innocent, they don't know anything, don't do any wrong. But man knows, he knows much, and still he does wrong: every man is bad. I wouldn't kill everybody, only the bad ones. If I had an enemy, I would kill him. Maybe I will become a soldier, and kill my country's enemies.

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Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē.

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna,* an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables.

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the

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streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter.

Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat*, or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which contrast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen*, meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā*, land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rīst*.

The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[43]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amharā culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 633 [67] flux of many Muslims and Galla, a migration favored by its urban situation. Manz, surrounded by hostile Galla, was forced for survival to cultivate its fighting powers, and for ultimate security to reconquer the surrounding areas. *175 181 It was aided in this by whatever special geographical and cultural factors helped to produce the peculiarly militant and defiant character of the Manzē. But because of the annihilation of most of Shoa's churches and monasteries in the sixteenth century, and the isolation of Manz from the renascence of Amhara culture at Gondar, it was left illiterate and culturally impoverished. Its religious life remained limited to a narrow adherence to the ritual requirements of Ethiopian Christianity.

*175 181 184 The dispersion of the Solomonic line over the several provinces was thus accompanied by the formation of distinct mores for Manz and Gondar. There is evidence that the differences were quite pronounced by the early nineteenth century. Just a few years before the fierce inhabitants of Manz sped to the rescue of Sāhla Selassie against the rebel Matako, Gondar was similarly threatened by a rebel band under a man named Mersu. Compare Rüppell's account of the behavior of the Gondarēs:

> In this general alarm the pitifulness of the local inhabitants was all too conspicuous. Far from uniting to defend their property with arms against the dreaded plunder—which would have been easy, in as much as there were at least four hundred rifles in Gondar, while not a single one of Mersu's men possessed a firearm—instead they carried the rifles into the churches, in order to keep them from being plundered along with the other booty.[45]

The distinction between Manz and Gondar suggested here is drawn in terms of "ideal types"—generalized dispositions which will, of course, not be true in every case and which will be found elsewhere in Ethiopia to a greater *175 829 181 184 or lesser degree. It is interesting to note that in their own stereotypes, Ethiopians tend to view the Manzēs as fighters, the Gondarēs as literati, but not vice versa. Thus, an officer of the Imperial Bodyguard who commanded Ethiopian troops in the Korean War has said:

> The Manzēs were excellent soldiers. They were independent, not so ready to obey commands as the Galla, but they had good ideas about fighting and were very brave in the battlefield. The soldiers from Gondar tended to be independent and insubordinate, too, but they were not very good soldiers, either.*

On the other hand, Ethiopians commonly consider Manz as much a land of the backward as they regard Gondar the home of the learned. Krapf observed

* This stereotype of the Gondarē is combatted by Garimā Tāfara's book, *The Gondarē with His Shield* (*Gondarē Ba-Gāshāw* [Addis Ababa: Tasfā Gabra Selassie Press, 1957]), which records in great detail the contributions of individual Gondarēs to the fight against the enemy during the Italian occupation.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

over a century ago that the people of Manz had the reputation of being "brave, daring, and ignorant."[46] The caricatures of the typical Manzē usually have to do with his *qilnat* ("stupidity"), such as the old story about the Manzēs at the bottom of a hill who were warned about some rolling boulders and replied: "That's all right, we'll just put our heads under the blanket and then we won't see the stones." As one Manzē himself put it: "We look to Gondar as our older brother. We know we are ignorant and illiterate."

Although in each other's eyes the Gondarē may be arraigned as haughty and cowardly and the Manzē berated as ignorant and hostile, a comparative view enables one to see the differences between Manz and Gondar as complementary, representing a specialization of interest and function within a common culture. An Amhara priest expressed this idea to me by saying: "The people of Gondar and Manz are really the same. Only Gondar is the head, and Manz the foot." (In Amharic thought the leg symbolizes force.) The pursuit of different interests and the perfection of different functions led to the cultivation of different virtues and, by the same token, the indulgence of different faults. The result was what might be called a moral division of labor along a geographical axis.

The primary axis of this division of labor in Amhara culture was vocational. The separate virtues of soldier and cleric were cultivated through distinct roles, pursued part or full time by two different sets of individuals. This permitted both sets of values to be realized without arousing the cultural and psychic conflicts that would inhere in their joint cultivation by the same persons.

It was by historical accident that Manz and Gondar came to provide an additional axis for this division of labor. At Gondar, through the political circumstances described above, the military function withered away, while the religio-literary culture was enabled to flourish. In Manz, the latter was destroyed and never recovered, while the energies of her people were consumed in fighting.

The historical advantage of this was that the Amhara thereby found the occasion for a massive revitalization of their religious culture through the facilities at Gondar, yet were able to accumulate a military momentum, through the years of incubation in Manz, that favored a political comeback which put them in a position to assert their might over an area larger than ever before in Ethiopian history. The moral consequence was that the Gondarē and the Manzē developed in pronounced form the virtues of the literatus and the soldier, respectively. The total culture was perhaps thereby enriched. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, cultivated literatus, was in a sense the epitome of the Gondarē ethos, just as Menelik II, determined fighter as well as shrewd politician and tactful diplomat, was morally as well as genealogically akin to the men of Manz. The imperial court at the end of the nineteenth century,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax
18 and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

633 *Gondar Today*

177 A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was
648 made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

633 After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953
[874] with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college.
[648] The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utili-
ties as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty
[162] thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

633 With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a
871 modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aquāquām*
178 and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

633 Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine
771 church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other
793 cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 6.—*The Amhara countryside*

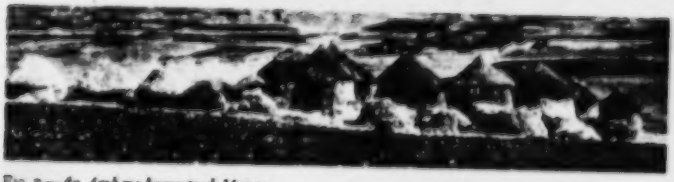

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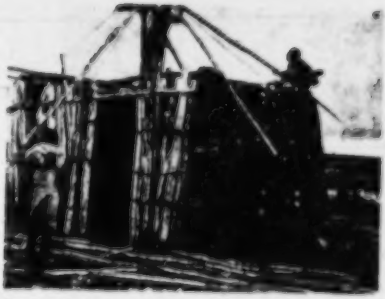
FIG. 7.—*An Amhara homestead, Mous*



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[D-46-A]

FIG. 8.—*Building a house*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 9.—*The weekly market*

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[P.46-B]

FIG. 10.—*The market: weighing cotton*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national government, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his successors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 right to a direct audience at any time. The Emperor is known to glow with
571 pleasure when a subject with whom he is speaking reveals that he comes from Manz. The Manzēs, for their part, proudly refer to their area as *ya-negus agar* ("king's country"). They are perhaps the most devoted of all Ethiopians to the present Crown. However, many stories are told to show that this loyalty has not dissolved their intractable spirit. For example, when asked to select a representative for Ethiopia's first elected parliament in 1957, some of them were indignant: "We already have *our* representative in the capital, and if he isn't able to do the job himself, let him step down and hand it to somebody else."

871 Despite their expressed loyalty to Haile Selassie, the Manzēs stubbornly
658 oppose the program with which he is publicly most associated and whose portfolio he has retained, as Minister of Education, from 1943 to the present day. The adults of Manz object to having their children attend the government schools. In many cases where a child has elected to attend school on his own, his parents have cut off all support. The four schools in Manz thus have
[162] an enrolment far below capacity, totaling (as of 1960) less than four hundred in this area of perhaps fifty to sixty thousand families.[49] Those hardy youngsters who do attend school often do so in rags and with an empty stomach.
[857] One reason for this determined opposition to the government schools is the obvious economic one: children must stay at home to tend the herds. This is a problem all over rural Ethiopia, but still the schools in many other areas are overcrowded. Another reason is that, as we have seen, Manz was not interested in education in the old days. Few Manzēs learned to read in the church schools. When a boy showed unusual talent and interest in traditional studies he had to travel to Gondar, which often meant running away from Manz.

871 The crux of Manzē defiance of the new educational system, however, is
658 cultural fundamentalism. The Manzēs keep their children away from the
186 government schools because they fear that the students there are learning
829 something that threatens the old ways. In particular, they do not like their children to learn the language of the *faranj* ("European") or to be exposed to Ethiopians who have been taught by *faranj* and thereby infected by alien ideas. Tending the farm, keeping the fasts, defending land and self—that is the sum and substance of Manzē education, beyond which there is nothing a boy needs to learn.

829 Undoubtedly part of this dread of *faranj* learning is based on the Manzēs'
648 one experience with the white man: the Fascist occupation. As one of the
186 strongholds of patriotic resistance to the occupation, Manz and the Manzēs became the object of the invader's unyielding fury. Over miles and miles of Manz not a home or church was spared. The inhabitants were either killed, or fled to safer areas in Galla country, or joined the underground opposition—

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in such numbers that "Manzē" virtually became a synonym for "underground patriot." 829 648

After the liberation, as after the routing of Ahmad Grāñ's forces, the Manzē once again returned to redeem a ravished land. Slowly, the houses were rebuilt, the land was plowed once more. Churches which had been rebuilt after Grāñ's destruction only to be razed by the Italians were again put into place. Tough in his spiritual as in his physical life, the Manzē doggedly re-established the culture of his own. Now as before the occupation, a man of Manz sits on the throne, promising to let no foreigner take his country's land,* while the young braves celebrate the royal line in their festive boasting: 186 [539]

Ya-Manz ababā, ya-Manz ababā! Yābbabāl genā!
The flower of Manz, the flower of Manz! It will bloom yet again!

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

Thus far the significance of Manz and Gondar has been discussed from the point of view of an outsider. We have attempted to assess, on the basis of the best available evidence, the respective historical and cultural roles of these two noted Amhara regions. We turn now to a different though related question, namely, the significance of these two places in the minds and feelings of Ethiopians themselves. 121

Two kinds of reaction are conspicuous. To the Ethiopian Modernist, Manz and Gondar are seen primarily as outlying pockets of conservatism. Their commitments to the past move them to resist certain changes promoted by the national government, with Manz protesting modern education and Gondar defending itself against nationalist centralization. They are regarded as backward areas, representative of the many forces that are "holding Ethiopia back," and to a certain extent are disdained.

To their inhabitants, on the other hand, these places are objects of intense loyalty. For differences of identity among the Amhara are defined chiefly in terms of their *agar*, or "home country." The size of one's *agar* is relative; it depends on the context in which the symbol is used, and may be as small as a district or as large as a province. Whatever the referent, one's *agar* signifies more than a place of residence or provenience. It means "home," and all those whose families live there are regarded with special affection, while those out- 121 186 823

* On certain festive occasions the following antiphonal chant is declaimed in praise of "Ṭaqel" (the affectionate, "horse" name of Haile Selassie): [533] [539] [551]

[Leader:] *Mīn āla ṭaqel mīn āla?*
[Chorus:] *Agarē la-saw agarē la-saw alsaṭem ala!*
[Leader:] What did Ṭaqel say, what did he say?
[Chorus:] "My country to outsiders, my country to outsiders, I will not give!" said he.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 side are regarded with reserve and suspicion, if not hostility. For this reason
186 the word of native local authorities has always carried more weight than that
823 of imported or distant authorities. For this reason the names of bars and cafés around Addis Ababa today are to a large extent place names. For this reason
[575] the type of voluntary association which has aroused the most enthusiastic interest in Addis Ababa in recent years is the association based on a membership drawn from the same *agar*.[80] Regionalist sentiments are so intense in connection with these groups that some members of the Manz association, for example, have asserted that they would not admit to membership a person whose family originated in a district only a few kilometers outside the boundaries of Manz.

121 This type of orientation to Manz, Gondar, and the many other regions in Amhara country may be regarded as an instance of the more general phenomenon referred to above as "primordial sentiments." These are sentiments which are based on the awareness of certain given qualities shared by the members of a group, qualities such as race, language, religious affiliation, tribal affiliation, as well as region of origin. The primordial sentiments account for much of the cohesion and much of the vitality among the members of any traditional society. How these allegiances are affected in the course of modernization has considerable bearing on the future shape of the rapidly developing nations.

A number of factors inherent in modernization work to erode the primordial sentiments. Increased physical and social mobility tend to uproot the individual from the settings of family and home community in which these sentiments are produced and reinforced. Occupational position comes to replace membership in primordial groups as a primary determinant of status and identity. Secondary education, military training, and the development of national institutions and symbols promote the sentiment of nationalism to which these narrower allegiances are subordinated.

Other aspects of modernization, however, work in the opposite direction to intensify primordial sentiments. The education of members of minority groups gives them both a heightened sense of grievance and a voice with which to protest. The creation of new forms of wealth and power provides new bases for competition and conflict, processes which tend to be structured along lines already laid out by cleavages based on primordial differences. The insecurity aroused by the threat to tradition inherent in modernization also produces defensive reactions which often take the form of heightened allegiance to such groups.

This intensification of primordial loyalties during modernization presents a problem which, for all their differences, nearly all the nations of Africa and Asia have in common. Whether the critical differences revolve about language, as in India; religion, as in Lebanon; geography, as in Indonesia; or

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tribal affiliation, as in sub-Saharan Africa—the passions spent in the conflict 121
of primordial groups have impeded the development of a civil society at the national level. The problem is of such moment that Clifford Geertz has defined the nature of the effort required to cope with it as of a revolutionary order.[51]

Because of the disintegrative implications of primordial loyalties, so conspicuous in transitional societies, the ideas usually set forth for dealing with them have a tendency to reflect what we have called the "Conciliatory" perspective. On the one hand are those who conceive of tribalism or its counterparts as a major obstacle to the development of a national community, and see the chief hope for transitional societies in the effort to promote symbols and situations which excite the sentiment of nationalism as a substitute for primordial loyalties. On the other hand are those who appreciate the psychological advantages of retaining primordial identifications, and look rather for political and social mechanisms which will keep under control the explosive aspects of primordial loyalties.

Without denying the practical importance of such ideas, we would like to suggest an alternate emphasis, an emphasis on the positive aspects of traditional patterns—on their potentialities for reformation rather than for elimination or control. There is advantage in defining the durable aspects of tradition. The vitality of a people springs from feeling at home in its culture and from a sense of kinship with its past. The negation of all those sentiments acquired in childhood leaves man adrift, a prey to random images and destructive impulses. The only plausible alternative for a society which has been so uprooted is an order based on a rigid ideology and secured by a high degree of coercion. The most productive and liberating sort of social change is that built on continuity with the past.

This assumption may be elucidated by considering the nature of personality development. The human ego grows by incorporating new elements, discarding some old ones, and constantly reorganizing what it retains. The strongest egos, however, are those which have retained some solid identifications from childhood. The man with a strong ego may have substituted new religious, political, and occupational values for those of his father, but he has kept some general sense of oneness with his father, or original father-figures, all his life.

It is with respect to such general, archaic identifications that traditional primordial sentiments can be of positive use in times of rapid change. The specific content of early identifications can be replaced without sacrificing the deeply rooted, vitalizing sense of oneness with the original objects. In the Amhara case, Manz, Gondar, and other regions constitute such objects of identification: widely diffused symbols whose content must be modified with the times but which can endure as sources of inspiration in a changing society.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 In what ways may the content of a primordial symbol be revised to benefit the developing national society? One way is through enlarging the scope of the referent. This is particularly feasible in the case of regionalist sentiments among the Amhara, for their concept of *agar* is, as we have seen, highly flexible. A native of Agāntchā, for example, may think of his *agar* now as Agāntchā, now as the sub-district of Gērā Meder, now as the district of Manz, now as Shoa Province, or even as Ethiopia as a whole. In each case, a feeling of inclusiveness would attach to anyone within the boundaries of the region in question, and he would be defined accordingly as *yāgarē saw* ("my countryman"). Thus a focus on the more inclusive reference of *agar* in the mass media and in educational institutions may serve to diffuse the libido invested in regional symbols and so expand, rather than destroy, the psychologically integrative functions of regional identifications.

A different process of reorientation is that which, instead of broadening the object of the particularistic attachment, focuses on aspects of the culture of the primordial group which are valuable in terms of universalistic criteria. One remains attached to the symbols of one's primordial groups, not because it is uniquely "chosen" in some way, not only because of the accident of birth and upbringing, but also because it embodies certain qualities which are intrinsically valuable according to the beliefs of the larger culture and/or which relate to some special function performed in behalf of the larger community. It involves a process of redefinition that might be termed a "rationalization" of primordial sentiment.

This process was exemplified, with an understandably high degree of self-awareness, in the personal experience of Sigmund Freud. Cosmopolitan though he was, Freud had a very intense primordial attachment to the Jewish people. As is well known, he rejected the particularistic beliefs of the Jewish tradition, both the religious mythology of Judaism and the chauvinistic concept of a Jewish nation. Yet throughout his life he maintained, and drew strength from, a lively sense of his identity as a Jew. In his own words, he was attracted to the symbolism of Jewish identity by "many obscure emotional forces, the more powerful as they are ineffable" and by "the clear consciousness of an inner identity, the secret of sharing the same type of soul."[52] In addition, he thanked his Jewishness for two qualities which he found of essential importance in his career: freedom from prejudices which hamper the full use of the intellect, and the readiness to accept a position of solitary opposition.[53]

In Freud's assessment of what it meant for him to be a Jew, we find an articulation of the three elements which constitute this process of rationalization of primordial sentiment: (1) rejection of exclusivist, particularistic be-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

liefs and values, (2) retention of the basic emotional tie and identification with the group in question, and (3) elaboration of the virtues of the group in terms of universalistic criteria. 121

This is a type of orientation to the primordial sentiments which has the effect of maximizing both traditional and modern values, for it retains the sources of security and identity provided by tradition yet defines them in ways that promote national solidarity and the creative resources of the national culture. It is an approach which may be illustrated, in concluding this chapter, by the cases of two modern-educated Amhara who identify themselves, in part, as a Manzē and a Gondarē.

"Balātchaw" is an American-educated official of the Ethiopian government. Born and raised in Addis Ababa, his family originated in Manz, and he still has relatives who reside there. He is an ardent modernizer, anxious to see progressive leadership and the expansion of educational facilities provided in the provinces; yet he is also very sentimental about Amhara traditions and, in particular, his *agar* Manz. 121 159 829 823

To Balātchaw, Manz symbolizes hard-core loyalty to blood and to land. It also symbolizes the will to fight stubbornly for one's rights and for what one thinks right. He sees the government's keen concern for its territorial boundaries as a direct reflection of the Manzē's determination to retain and acquire land. Balātchaw gets much pleasure out of telling stories about the Manzē's almost foolhardy bravery in combatting the Italian invader. He reveals a "clear consciousness of an inner identity" with the Manzē in this regard, and says of himself: "You know, even as a child, and ever since, I have not been afraid of anybody."

"Makonnen" is a government official who was trained in western Europe. His family lives in Gondar, though he spent little time there after leaving for secondary school in Addis Ababa. In the course of his studies abroad, he had become estranged from the traditional ties and symbols of his Gondar-Amhara background. And yet now he speaks with great respect of the virtues of Gondarēs, their cultivated manner in personal relations, and their pride and wit in the use of language. The meaning of Gondar came to him almost in the manner of a revelation:

> In the midst of my studies in Western Europe I had the chance one summer to visit a number of West African countries and then to return home and spend some time in Gondar. I had not thought very highly of my people before that trip, and what I experienced was a great surprise. What I found—what we have, that I did not find in the African countries I visited—is a special sort of dignity of manner. When I talked with the elders at Gondar I was moved to tears. That is something priceless; that is a great and irreplaceable national resource.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 It is spare vision to regard the Ethiopian past only as a source of obstacles to modernization, or as a matrix of primordial loyalties whose only issue can be discord and disruption. It is likewise constricting for Ethiopians to regard their past as useful only as a façade for exacting admiration from outsiders. The Ethiopian past can be, as the cases of Balātchaw and Makonnen demonstrate, a source of identifications which are associated with specific virtues of national significance, and which Ethiopian cultural leaders can draw upon to help define for their country its unique composite character in the company of transitional societies.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

3

The World of The Amhara Peasant

The life of the peasantry has been a constant setting for the Amhara drama. It is the faithful pedal point against which the ups and downs of Ethiopian history have been played. We cannot savor that history fully without becoming closely acquainted with the peasant himself.

A 121 565*

If understanding the peasantry is important for a truer picture of the Abyssinian past, it is indispensable for a sensible approach to Ethiopia's future. Ethiopia is and will remain for a long time a predominantly agricultural nation, one whose exports—chiefly coffee, skins, and oilseeds—depend almost exclusively on rural output. The one economist to have discussed the problem at any length in print maintains that agriculture is the one area in which Ethiopia can reasonably expect significant economic development in the foreseeable future.[1] Conscious efforts to stimulate peasant productivity, however, may issue in stagnation or even setbacks if they are not based on a realistic understanding of the peasants' own attitudes and conditions of life.

A E [433] [439]

Ethiopians who are striving to modernize their country have for the most part lost touch with the peasantry. If they were born and raised in one of the cities, they may have had no direct contact with the peasantry at all. If their origins are rural, they have been oriented all their school days toward gaining a modern education and tend, wittingly or not, to ignore what they can of their past. Nor are they helped much in this regard by foreign technical experts, who tend to have a modernist bias and typically know still less about the indigenous peasantry. Understanding of the peasantry by scholars, on the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic
*565 and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[2]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom
[128] and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—
[114] with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry,
[12] using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[3]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

*565
592 The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara
[342] peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round
[343] structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land
[423] worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by
[427] hereditary right (*rist*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the
[556] household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

621 At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number
602 of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the
[592] father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chĭqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chĭqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chĭqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chĭqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chĭqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chĭqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 794

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 ### *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] 231 [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭĕff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā,* literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā,* preparing *ṭallā,* spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

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*565 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap,
512 and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He
462 returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At
[854] home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they
[853] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the breast whenever it cries.

*565 The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā*
512 or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they
233 enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from
857 somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped
[262] if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces
[291] about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on
512 roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking
[264] and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, supper is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or
[182] children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening
[513] prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children
[352] settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in
512 each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest,
527 women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered.
512 Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to
527 church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours
462 are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds
[524] must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

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games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories.

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense.

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.)

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver.

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression.

The Yearly Cycle

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after

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*565 796 the long rains. Children go singing from house to house in small bands, or take bunches of wild flowers to relatives, in hopes of getting a bit of *dābo*. In most homes an animal is slaughtered—in some areas superstition decrees that it be a white-headed lamb or a red chicken—and there is much eating and drinking, the basic activity of every holiday.

A little more than two weeks later the much more important festival of Masqal is observed, celebrating the discovery of the true Cross by Empress Helena. By this time the heavy rains have subsided, and the air is filled with [132] something of the spirit of spring. (Although Ethiopia lies north of the equator the summer rainy season is known as "winter" because of its coldness.) The landscape is colored by acres of yellow wildflowers, which are cut and fastened to the poles each family brings to a central clearing where a huge bonfire is built. In late afternoon, after the tepee of poles has been con- [554] structed, the priests begin the ceremony by intoning appropriate chants. Then each status group circles the poles three times, in honor of the Trinity—first the local lord, then the clergy, the lesser nobility, the peasant men, women, and finally the children. In the evening the festival takes a more secular turn. The bonfire is lit, and the young braves dance around it shouting their war chants. As the fire blazes on, these fellows seize burning brands and playfully hurl them at one another.

In November the monthly St. Michael's Day is honored with special cele- [778] brations. The peasants travel distances to attend the ceremonies at any church consecrated to "Mikā'ēl." Holy water and hot springs sanctified by Mikā'ēl's name are drunk and bathed in by those with many kinds of disease. The rituals involve carrying the Mikā'ēl *tābot* ("holy ark") out of the church and elaborate chanting and dancing by the clergy. After the *tābot* has been returned, in a procession in which the laymen follow shouldering their rifles (undoubtedly spears in older times), folk dancing and singing go on until late [584] afternoon. This provides an occasion for the more enterprising adolescent male to spot a potential bride, about whom he may diffidently ask his father to make inquiries.

*565 796 526 Christmas, celebrated in early January, is marked chiefly by the playing of secular games. The common word for Christmas, *gannā*, is actually the name of an outdoors game played with sticks and a wooden puck. Played by boys, young men, and occasionally elders on the afternoon of Christmas Day, *gannā* is marked by a spirit of aggressive license. Accustomed norms of deference are held in abeyance. The game is played in so rough and disorderly a manner that it often results in broken limbs and scarred faces. Staged by two teams made up on the spot, *gannā* is concluded at dusk by volleys of abusive limericks with which the victors revile their adversaries.[4]

*565 796 This is the season for special festivities on saints' days. St. Gabriel is particularly honored in December, as are St. Mary, St. George, and again St. Michael

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in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭīmqat,* means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭīmqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā,* grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household.

The program for Ṭīmqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized.

By noon on Ṭīmqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭīmqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter.

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings.

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and

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*565 796 [164] [785] hazardous. Moisture and chill lower the resistance of man and beast to respiratory infections. The weekly fasting schedule is resumed, and the more devout observe the thirty-day fast of the Disciples. In August, finally, the sixteen-day fast in honor of the Assumption of Mary is observed by everyone older than six or seven years.

*565 796 526 On the thirteenth day of that fast occurs the strange holiday of Buhē. Before and during this day, which is marked by the baking of special *dābo* for the shepherds, the countryside crackles with the reports of shepherds' whips. In this season when the humid air lends an explosive sound, the shepherds crack their whips for fun; but older boys and men join in great whipping battles on Buhē,* in which two teams lash each other until the members of one can stand it no more. On the evenings of Buhē, small bonfires are lit all over the countryside, and more *dābo* is eaten and whips cracked.[5] A few days later the fast of the Assumption is over. Young and old look forward to the end of the rains and the festivities that commence with the new year.

*565 These are the days and years of the Amhara peasant. Some other aspects of his life that come to the fore when more analytic perspectives are applied will be discussed in later chapters. But this calendar of activities forms the immediately observable setting for the "inner world" of the Amhara peasantry: those ideas, sentiments, and values which constitute its outlook on life.

THE WORLD OF MEANING

The Natural Universe

*565 772 [538] The Amhara peasant is not familiar with most of the cosmological notions found in the Great Tradition of Abyssinian culture, as transmitted through books like *Qalamsis* and *Aksimareos* and the oral traditions of learned churchmen. It is unusual for him to have a precise image of the layers of water, fire, and air beneath the earth, and it is still less likely for him to be familiar with the complicated hierarchy of invisible worlds, watery skies, and seven "real" heavens which are enumerated in the Abyssinian cosmology. He [821] believes that stars influence human affairs, but leaves the possession of astro- [756] logical knowledge to the *dabtarā*. The presence of cultural specialists who know about such matters has relieved him of the burden of dealing with ideas about the cosmos, ideas which are more widely diffused in more homogeneous societies.

The peasant's working conception of the cosmos is thus a very simplified version of that of his Great Tradition, together with certain pagan notions. Like his more learned countrymen, he divides the universe into two main parts: the world, *alam*, consisting of the earth, sun, moon, and stars; and

[178] * This custom is now extinct in many Amhara areas.

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heaven, *samāy*, the abode of supernatural beings and the souls of the dead. 565* The earth is seen as flat, though some believe its shape to be square, others 772 think it is round like a disc, and still others imagine it to extend without limit. [823] That the terrain of Ethiopia is so obviously not flat is explained by reference to the great flood, after which the parts which dried quickly became high- [773] lands (*dēgā*), the parts slow to dry becoming lowlands (*qolā*). The peasant [821] explains the greater heat of the lowlands by saying that they receive less wind than the highlands.

Beneath the earth's surface is an obscure area called *maq*, a depth to which [775] the bodies of evildoers drop after burial. There is also a large subterranean ocean, *weqniyānos*, into which all the rivers and lakes on earth descend. The [823] earth itself is held up, according to some, by a Y-shaped piece of wood; accord- [539] ing to others, by two serpents; still another view is that no support is needed other than the will of God, as the saying indicates:

> Ay, My God! Lord who stretched forth the heavens without a pillar, and the earth without tent-pegs.

The rotation of the sun *above* the earth causes the alternation of night and 565* day. The imagery of this rotation is that of someone going home at night and 821 coming out in the morning. Attitudes toward the sun are quite ambivalent. The sun is appreciated for dispersing the morning chill and for causing seed to germinate, but it is feared as a source of sickness and death.*

The moon is highly regarded, which is probably a vestige of pre-Christian [174] moon worship. At the Ethiopian latitude the moon is functional, for its bright [484] illumination facilitates night travel, especially desirable in the hotter regions. Beyond this, the moon is considered a powerful agent. It is chief of the sky, commander of an army of stars and it is the force which causes crops to grow after the sun has brought forth seedlings.

In the heavenly realm there are two regions located on either side of God's 565* dwelling-place. To the right is an area where good souls repair for an eternity 772 of ease after being judged shortly after the death of their bodies. Known both 775 as the "kingdom of heaven" and "paradise"—terms which refer to quite different spheres in the Orthodox cosmology but are fused in the vulgar mind —it is regarded as a home where food and clothes are plentiful and freely distributed. To the left is the place where wicked souls are taken by the devil to be scorched eternally in the fire of Gehenna, also called *Si'ol* (again a fusion of concepts which are distinct for the learned). This treatment of the damned is made worse by alternate dippings in icy water, though some believe that the wicked souls get a respite from their tortures on weekends.

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* The TAT's revealed a great dread of the sun; nearly every respondent interpreted one or another [125] of the cards in terms of the sun's dangerousness.

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772 As for the beginning and end of the world, all Amhara believe that the
[184] world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium
[773] arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside
[775] down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

*565 The Amhara peasant's view of nature is matter-of-fact. There are a few
82 traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy
[778] places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration
[241] of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.*

[192] The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws
[784] of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and
[241] they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

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[125] [157] * All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge overlooking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

drastic changes on the familiar natural order. Insofar as there is a special affect regarding nature, it takes the form of a sentimentalization of the useful—as in the great respect felt for young cattle, the thrill aroused by the sight of newly sprouted grain, and the deep nostalgia about one's land. 565* 82

The Supernatural

The peasant's conception of God is closer to that of the learned clergy than is his cosmology, since the Abyssinian clergy have tended to avoid systematic theology, believing that to probe too deeply into the nature of God verges on blasphemy. Abyssinians view God above all as *mystery*. 565* 776 [793] [779]

Nevertheless, they do have a sense of the various attributes of their God. God is the creator of the world. He is, as the name *Egziābhēr* signifies, Lord of the earth; and He is Lord of the seas, Lord of the King of Kings, and Lord of the angels. He is eternal and possesses knowledge without limit.

The Amhara peasant has a keen awareness that wherever one goes, God is there. "If you say no one is looking," goes an Amharic saying, "still God will see you." This consciousness of God's presence is reflected in the habit of referring to God scores of times every day. A number of common expressions contain references to God:

For greeting and farewell	"May He give you health for me."
For showing gratitude	"May God give you for me."
For responding to queries about one's health	"God be praised!"
For thanksgiving after meals	"Be praised, my Lord!"
For swearing by a statement that has been challenged	"By God! By the Savior!"

Prayers to God are spoken on numerous occasions. God's blessing is sought when an animal is slaughtered, when a group of people sits to eat, when a new house is begun, and when it is completed. Each day begins with a prayer something like this: "May He cause me to spend the day in peace. May He keep trouble from me. May He pardon my sins." When the peasant begins planting, he also prays: "God bless the seed; feed me, keeping birds away from it; bless it for the mouth of man." 565* 782 776

It is probably the attribute of God's omnipotence, however, that appears most vivid to the Amhara mind. Everything that happens reflects His active will. The thunder expresses His anger, a flood the visitation of His wrath upon the sinful. He is ever active, bringing births and deaths, prosperity and hunger, leading one traveler to safety and another to disaster. He controls the homeliest details of everyday life. One boy, troubled that he was not selling his goods in the market, confessed that God must be angry with him about something. Another, asked what he wanted to do the following year, replied: 565* 776

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*565 776 "If God wants me to, I may go to school; but it is hard to know what God will want."

*565 782 776 As a corollary of this outlook, the main way for man to achieve anything on earth is to pray to the Almighty. If one prays properly, God's power can be invoked to punish one's foes. In former times at least, the peasant went to church and prayed for vengeance, then expected his enemy to fall sick or die. If he could not pray effectively himself, he would give money to a priest and the latter would do the job for him. It is commonly believed by the Amhara peasantry today that their praying and fasting were a major factor in ridding the country of the Italian invaders.

*565 776 This conception of deity is at heart that of the early Old Testament, a powerful Lord who punishes, rewards, and avenges. But it is suffused with the pagan feeling for a plurality of deities. The Amhara is constantly aware of a number of supernatural beings other than *Egziābhēr* who affect his life for better or for worse.

Some of these are the simple agents of God in everyday affairs. Each individual receives at birth a pair of guardian angels of his own sex, one for daytime and one for night. They serve to protect him from accidents, sickness, and enemies. When some misfortune befalls a person, it is because God has ordered his guardian angels to neglect their duties.

More important are the many supernatural beings with wills of their own. Among the benevolent spirits the main figures are:

Miḳā'ēl	The archangel Michael
Gabre'ēl	The archangel Gabriel
Giyorgis	St. George
Madhānē Alam	Savior of the World
Selassie	Trinity
Māryām	St. Mary
Abbo	Gabra Manfas Qeddus, an Abyssinian saint
Taḳla Hāymānot	Another Abyssinian saint

Most Amhara are particularly devoted to some one of these sacred figures. Partiality to one or another may be due to the fact that it is the patron saint of one's father, or represented in one's Christian name, or commemorated by the church in one's area. In time of sickness, a man will drink holy water [782] from the church of a certain saint, and make a vow, for example, "If Giyorgis cures me, I will give money to the church in his name, I will kill a lamb for him, and I will drink in a Giyorgis *māhebar* ("religious fraternal association") every month thereafter."

*565 778 These sacred figures are represented by numerous holy arks, or *tābot*. A *tābot* is a hollow oblong box containing some sacred script. It is identified

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with the saint for whom it has been named, and personalized. The extent to which the ark is regarded as human is shown by the following remark of a peasant who looked at the picture of a church on a TAT card and explained: "When the ark has been given incense, it will be happy. . . . If this church is given a new roof, the ark will be very happy and give *ĭnjarā* to the people." 565* 778

The saints and the *tābot* which represent them are the objects of much veneration and prayer. They figure so prominently in the Amhara's outlook that at times they appear to be on a par with *Egziābhēr* himself. Two differences may be noted, however. The saints do not take the initiative in interfering in human affairs, as does *Egziābhēr,* but intervene only when appealed to. Their function, moreover, is that of protecting and healing spirits; it is not their portion to administer the punishments which *Egziābhēr* inflicts on those who disobey the religious laws, though they may mete out punishment to someone who breaks a vow he has made to them. 565* 776 778 782

Malevolent spirits, on the other hand, do intervene in human affairs without being invited. Of the evil spirits, the devil—known as *Diabolos, Sayṭān,* or *Agannent,* which are names of different spirits to the learned but counted the same in the peasant's mind—is the most powerful. He is imagined as a dark, Negroid type, the least favored sort of racial stock in Ethiopia. He dwells in deep waters, woods, and caves, and likes to roam about at noon and at midnight, especially near dirty places. Amhara avoid going near a lake or pool known to harbor the devil, for fear of being pulled in and drowned. They likewise stay away from dirty places at noon, for fear that he will make them sick. The devil brings epileptic fits. He tries to push people into fire. He also tries to harm human beings by tempting them to some misdeed—stealing, murder, getting drunk—and then have them suffer the consequences. Finally, when the human soul appears for judgment after death, he strives to gain possession of the soul and put it into the fire. Sometimes he is pictured as chewing the souls he manages to obtain. 565* 776 [829] [823] [828] [775]

Despite his inimical gestures toward the human race, the devil is respected as well as feared, for he has much power. Many peasants pray to him for this reason. In time of sickness some choose *Sayṭān,* rather than (or in addition to] *Giyorgis* or *Māryām,* as the one to whom they pray and make promises. On New Year's Day, Christmas, and Easter, prayers to *Sayṭān* are surreptitiously repeated in many quarters. One of these prayers runs: "My lord, bring me through the year. Guard me. If you keep me this year in peace and bring me through the year, I will give you more." Certain individuals are on especially good terms with the devil. They pray to him often, and he visits them from time to time and does favors for them; they are his "friends." When such a person dies, his son often continues the relationship. 565* 776 782

Another kind of spirit producing ill effects is the *zār. Zār* spirits are of 565* 776

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*565 776 many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

*565 776 753 [828] [845]

Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[6]

*565 776 [562]

Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

*565 754 787

The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

*565 754 [262] [189] [323] [326] [554]

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

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world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

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771 776 805 Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci for the organization of time and space.

*565 805 In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes. Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *hăbashā qaṭaro* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amhara peasant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

*565 805 829 Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Amhara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

*565 538 829 When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

*565 805 796 [787] With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year. A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*) [576] representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

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"May He bring you safely from the year of Mark to the year of Luke!" 565*
Nearly every day of the month, moreover, is dedicated to some holy figure, 805
the main ones being: 796
[576]

Day of Month	Name	Meaning
1st	*Ledatā*	Birth of Mary
5th	*Abbo*	St. Gabra Manfas Qeddus
7th	*Selassie*	Trinity
12th	*Mikā'ēl*	St. Michael
16th	*Kidāna Maherat*	Covenant of Mercy (for Mary)
19th	*Gabre'ēl*	St. Gabriel
21st	*Māryām*	St. Mary
23rd	*Giyorgis*	St. George
24th	*Takla Hāymānot*	St. Takla Hāymānot
27th	*Madhānē Alam*	Savior of the World
29th	*Bāla Wald*	Festival of the Son

This schedule is well implanted in the peasant's mind, so much so that the names of these holy days come to take the place of calendar dates. Thus, instead of saying "He fell sick on the fifth" or "He is due to come on the twelfth," the Amhara normally says "He fell sick on Abbo" or "He is due to come on Mikā'ēl."

Time for the Amhara is thus not a morally indifferent and qualitatively [822]
undifferentiated continuum. It is a series of occasions with more or less sacred significance. These occasions are arranged in the form of cycles. In contrast to the Catholic calendar with its different saint for each day of the year, every month in Abyssinia repeats the same set of saints' days. Each year, of course, repeats the same cycle of annual holidays. The years themselves do not run on continuously, but follow the cycle—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—again and again. For the more learned, finally, there is a twenty-eight-year cycle which must elapse before the same year begins on the same day of the week again.

The Amhara's experience of time is thus essentially cyclical. The religious 565*
calendar, the most important dimension of time for him, consists of a series 805
of epicycles, in which the monthly rounds play themselves out within the 822
larger circles of annual and quadrennial rounds. Historical events are at best 796
secondary: the seasons come and go, generations come and go, but there is not much new under the sun. The better-known prophecies foretell the return of some state of things that obtained in the past. Kassa chose the [787]
throne name of Tēwodros II because of the prophecy that a king with that name would arise to repeat the mythically fortunate reign of Tēwodros I of the fifteenth century. In this century has arisen the prophecy of another Tēwodros to come. Still another prophecy—of a short-lived invasion of Ethio-

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*565 805 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode.
796 Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world
822 as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history
787 will begin again.

822 Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continu-
um to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be
[423] bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling
line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and
the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make
exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is
conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no
street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain
823 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with diffi-
822 culty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are
words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down"
serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of
822 various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several
346 churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a
[823] given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives
below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in
space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time,
*565 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year
346 are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the
778 countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there
796 is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of
Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that
822 of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical
[181] organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center
surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of
Amhara life.

*565 It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round,
342 with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle.
341 This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and get-
181 ting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from
822 sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which
[417] the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a
[351] boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside
world.

*565 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like
181 the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The
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holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services.

565* 346 841 181 796 822 [778]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery.

565* 822 181 361 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order.

565* 822 181 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities.

565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable

565* 156 157 [577]

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*565 156 157 man, as we shall see in more detail below, includes the quality of leaving others alone.

[577] This strong sense of self is confirmed and symbolized by two conspicuous *565 156 411 Amhara customs: carrying staves and going on trips. A staff, like a pipe, affirms the ego in two ways. As a piece of personal property right at hand, it stimulates a sense of pride of ownership; as something external yet confronting the person, it makes the ego more conscious of its bounded reality. Such sensations are daily experiences for the Amhara peasant, who is rarely separated from the staff in one form or other. When he leaves his homestead he normally carries the hard *dulā*, a potential weapon of defense that likewise affirms his ego by bolstering self-confidence in a dangerous world. He braces the *dulā* against his back as he treks along, or holds it against the [481] front of his shoulder like a rifle. Older men walk using it as a cane. A special kind of staff made of softer wood (*zang*) is carried by pious and elderly [481] men. Participants in devotional services lean on still another type of staff (*maquāmiyā*) which is distributed in the church for that purpose.

*565 156 484 Traveling is another custom which affirms the ego, at least when one travels spontaneously and not in organized company. As the individual moves past various stimuli, his self-consciousness is heightened by the contrast between a persisting ego and a constantly changing environment. As a traveler par excellence—and a lone traveler, unless social rank requires the presence of retainers—the Amhara peasant frequently removes himself from familiar home settings and confronts an outside world. He loves to go on the road and will travel at the slightest provocation. For him a distance of two or three hours by foot is like the American's trip to the corner drugstore. Whether to visit relatives or pay respects after death, to go to market or to court, to get holy water at a distant church, or to look after land in a far away district, the Amhara peasant is on the move dozens of times each year, often for trips involving two or three days of travel.

*565 156 829 602 609 Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and culture, one may for the moment say that the personal ego is the central object in the Amhara peasant's view of society. Exactly what might be meant by this statement and in what respects it needs qualification are questions that will be taken up in the concluding chapter. If it is so, certainly the next most prominent social object in his world is the circle of close ones, or *zamad*. *Zamad* refers in the first instance to consanguineal kin, and is distinguished from the category of those who are strangers, or *bā'ed*. This is perhaps the most important of all the sociological distinctions made by the Amhara: the former, *zamad*, are seen as entitled to the warmest hospitality, while toward *bā'ed* indifference and suspicion are appropriate responses.

*565 156 602 This does not mean that the kin group is a corporate entity whose interests and identity transcend that of the individual. On the contrary, the notion of

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zamad is highly subjective, and all constellations of *zamad* reflect the interests and affections of ego. For the quality of kinship can be attributed to persons who are not consanguineal relatives, and this is done without resorting to fictions of affiliation. The term *wandam*, for example, meaning "brother," is simply applied to any male person of about the same age to whom one feels closely attached. The term *zamad* itself is applied to anyone to whom one feels a close personal tie—even to a mere fellow-countryman whom one happens to meet in a distant region. It is thus not taking too great a liberty to translate the term *zamad* as "close ones."

The primarily subjective nature of the circle of *zamad* derives not only from the fact that it includes friends as readily as actual blood relatives. Within the bounds of consanguinity, the composition of the kin group with which a person identifies fluctuates according to his current needs, particularly with respect to land use rights. As Allan Hoben has demonstrated, corporate descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; but the fact that in this ambilineal descent system each individual may claim multiple active affiliations, and enjoys a relatively wide range of choice, means that the particular corporate descent group with which an individual affiliates in order to claim his rights varies according to what land is subject to disputation. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mothers' rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors.[9]

The next most inclusive sociological concept beyond the ego-oriented circle of *zamad* is that of *agar*, or "homeland."* The co-residents of one's *agar*, like those who comprise one's circle of *zamad*, are regarded as forming an important "in-group," outside of which all other persons are a priori rejected. Yet the Amharic concept of homeland, like that of kin, does not refer to a fixed social entity; its referent varies according to the context in which the individual chooses to use it. Thus, as we have seen, the concept of *agar* may be used to refer to one's parish, district, province, or even nation.

A more specialized dichotomy of some prominence in the outlook of the Amhara peasant hinges on variation in the altitude of homelands. Inhabitants of lowlands (*qolaññā*) and dwellers of higher regions (*dēgaññā*) tend to be conceived as polar cultural types. Different sets of habits and traits are attributed to them. Thus, according to one set of stereotypes, the *qolaññā* is viewed as a heavy drinker and hot tempered, while the *dēgaññā* is viewed as a heavy eater and inclined more to litigation than to violence. Again, the

* The less prominent category of *wagan* is intermediate between these two. *Wagan* has a primarily political connotation; it consists of one's consanguineal and affinal kin, friends and close retainers, all who may be mobilized in the event of political or military competition.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 157 823 referents are relative: a man living at 7,500 feet may be considered *qolaññā* by one living at 10,000 and *dēgaññā* by one living at 6,000 feet.

The broadest membership circle that the Amhara peasant normally thinks *565 186 619 in terms of is that of the ethnic group consisting of all Amhara.[10] The ethnic self-conception of the Amhara is one which stresses certain physical and cultural characteristics, thanks to which he regards himself as superior to all non-Abyssinian groups in Ethiopia as well as to all non-Ethiopian nationals. With regard to race, the Amhara consider themselves distinctly more handsome than both the white man and the Negro man, to both of whom they apply derisive epithets. Their cultural identity is defined chiefly with respect to religion and language.

186 771 To all Amhara except a small minority who are Muslim, the name of their ethnic group is synonymous with "Christian." The term signifies Ethiopian Orthodox Christian; for the Amhara peasant, "Catholic" and "Protestant" are equivalent to "Muslim" and "pagan" as terms designating so many kinds of heathens. And being an Ethiopian Christian is to the Amhara a mark of superiority in at least two respects: it means belonging to a chosen people, heirs to the Jews and sole bearers of authentic Christianity; and it means being an adept in praying and fasting, which to the Amhara are peculiarly Abyssinian arts. This orientation has motivated a certain amount of exclusion-[798] ism vis-à-vis non-Christian Ethiopians. The latter are disdained because they are not Christian, while at the same time the particularistic cast of Abyssinian Christianity has made the Amhara somewhat reluctant to proselytize and 186 admit non-Abyssinians to the fold. A similar exclusiveness colors the Amhara's sentiments about his language. Knowledge of Amharic is considered another index of superiority, and the Amhara look down on Ethiopians who do not speak Amharic or who speak it with an accent.

The Amhara claim superiority over other Ethiopian peoples in connection with certain other aspects of culture besides religion and language, although most Amhara peasants have very little knowledge about the other ethnic groups in the country.[11] Occupational hunters and pastoral nomads are ridiculed, for example, because of their ignorance of the arts of farming and of eating *ĭnjarā*. Vis-à-vis Europeans, on the other hand, the Amhara's self-image tends to stress qualities of bravery and toughness. Insofar as he has had contact with foreigners, the Amhara has become self-conscious about his rugged way of life—his hot foods, endurance on trips, courage in revenge, and virile longevity—and looks down on the softness of the European.

Being an Amhara is thus belonging to a superior category of human beings. This is not simple ethnocentrism; it reflects rather a basically aristocratic orientation that is repeated within the Amhara fold. It is not only members of other ethnic and religious groups who are considered inferior,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 11.—*The market: buying honey*

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FIG. 12.—*The market: inspecting pottery*

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FIG. 13.—*The market: selling salt bars*

[P.78-A]

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FIG. 14.—*A group of shepherds*

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FIG. 15.—*Threshing time*

[P.78-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, 186
and social position.

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance 562
rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly
held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the [565]*
wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must
still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course
for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the [539]
proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is
referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar
and trivial talk.

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time
is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of
trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells [539]
us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including
those connected with the saintly figures of Eçhē Yohānnes and Takla
Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues
and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by [841]
womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden.

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance 858
and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and [864]
cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably.
After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged
copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He
comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first
"age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges
of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders.

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each
of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. 882
The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing
after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches 885
forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This
is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is
not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age
of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and
wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. 888
Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults,
pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon [867]
learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson
was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become
when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder."

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*565 571 Still another invidious distinction of considerable importance in the Amhara outlook is that between the "big man" (*ṭillīq saw*) and the commoner (*terā saw*). "Bigness" may be measured in terms of political power, economic wealth, ecclesiastical status, or any combination thereof. Though the peasant frequently has little affection for the big man, he customarily treats him with the greatest show of deference. No matter how unfamiliar a big man may be or from what part of the country he comes, the Amhara peasant sees him as entitled to unquestioning courtesy and obeisance. Analogous distinctions discriminate between the wealthy (*hābtām*) and the poor (*dehā*), and between the genteel (*çhawā*) and the rude (*bālagē*).

192 828 Yet if the Amhara takes a dim view of women, youth, and poor folk, as well as non-Amhara and non-Christians, he suffers from no illusions about homo sapiens at his best—unless they are dark illusions. The generic word for "man" in Amharic, *saw*, is the subject of a number of negative associations and idiomatic uses.[12] At its worst, the word is found in an idiom that signifies the evil eye (*ya-saw ayn*), literally: the "eye of man" (or, more idiomatically, "the eye of others"). At its best, when used to signify a fully formed human being, the word *saw* characteristically appears in the plaintive saying, *Saw yallam* ("there is no human being"); in other words, an individual who fully embodies the concept of humanity does not exist. In general, one may say that the Amhara's view of human nature is dominated by his perception of man's inherent aggressiveness and untrustworthiness.

828 [861] The Amhara believes that unformed human nature is poor raw material, and that without strict punishment throughout childhood a person will grow up to be rude and offensive toward others. As an adult, moreover, he must constantly be kept in check. The rationale commonly given for the extensive [785] schedule of fasting is that man's nature is wicked, and only by weakening himself in this manner will he be turned away from some act of aggression against others.

828 261 273 The Amharic concept of *ṭegābaññā* illustrates this view. *Ṭegābaññā* literally carries the meaning of one who has been sated with food and drink, but is normally taken to mean someone who begins to insult and pick fights with others. In their use of this and related words the Amhara express the belief that aggression is the usual consequence of being sated. Insubordinate behavior on the part of a servant or political appointee is usually explained as a result of his having been too well fed. "When a peasant gets sated he hits with his stick. . . " is the first line of a number of couplets I collected among rural Amhara. The specific effect of drinking alcoholic beverages is believed to release, not Eros, but the aggressive instincts. An Amharic proverb about [539] *ṭallā* states this directly: "One [glass] whets the appetite; two quenches it; three heats one up; four makes one quarrel; five brings fighting; six causes killing." Contrary to the view that world peace depends chiefly on filling

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war. 828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance. 565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā*, or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin." 565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz*, a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days. 565* 461 [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[13] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

*565 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but
461 acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one
461 moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that
181 while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing
577 one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obliga-
183 tions toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level
[423] he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the
78 fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also
181 important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple
183 neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited
[262] and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be
[301] neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good
577 works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms
181 to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who
183 is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in
*565 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code
577 of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very
673 worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shame-
181 ful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect to-
183 ward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby
[626] stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

*565 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus
57 kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors
181 and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived
183 within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz,* brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad,* or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 121 82 771

ment on the subject, by following some of the suggestions advanced by Robert Redfield for the comparison of world views.[15]

"What does a people confront as it looks out on the world?" Redfield asks. After proposing a triangle of general objects confronted by all peoples—man, nature, and God—he goes on to suggest two specific questions: (1) Are these objects viewed as parts of a common matrix, each infusing the other, or are they viewed as separate and distinct entities? (2) Are they viewed as equally significant, or is special attention paid to one at the expense of the others?

As a point of departure for discussing the world view of the Amhara peasant as a whole, we may consider Redfield's characterization of the "primitive world view." In his account of a generalized primitive world view, Redfield posits that man, nature, and God are perceived as parts of an indissoluble unity, lacking really distinct identities. In the primitive outlook nature is personalized; the supernatural infuses the natural; and man's actions and traits resemble those of the deities. If this is so, then one may say that the Amhara peasant has passed beyond this primitive conception in the direction of differentiating man, nature, and God; but he has not proceeded very far. His God is conceived as a transcendental, self-sufficient Being, abstracted from particular earthly manifestations, and dwelling only at the crown of heaven. He sees nature as having a character and imposing demands of its own, not as a bearer of divine and human properties. He sees man as lacking the powers and virtues of divine beings and at the same time different in kind and higher in status than anything which exists in nature. Yet while these three objects are endowed with distinct identities and autonomous natures, they are conceived as closely and continuously interdependent. Much of what takes place in nature, such as a flood or a bad harvest, is attributed to divine agency, and the character of certain natural objects, like groves of trees and pools of water, is colored by associations with the supernatural. In human affairs, supernatural beings of various sorts are constantly active, and in the case of the *tābot,* the holy ark, a divine object has been thoroughly personalized. Man's life, moreover, is seen as intimately bound up with the vicissitudes of nature, and a personal relationship subsists between man and his friends and enemies in the animal world. In short, the Amhara looks on man, nature, and God as *separate but closely interconnected entities.*

[181] While each of these three entities is an object of great significance to the Amhara peasant, moreover, it may be said that man is regarded as the most significant of the three; and in particular, the problem of *human aggression* may be identified as the dominant theme in the Amhara peasant's outlook on life.

Nature, to the Amhara peasant, presents no outstanding challenge, no perplexing problem, no compelling attraction. Nature is to be adjusted to carefully and quietly. God and other supernatural beings become crucial objects

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in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [791]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shīllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [677]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 183]

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MODERNIZATION AND THE PEASANT

*565 121 At the beginning of this chapter we alluded to stereotyped views of the peasantry held by modern-educated Ethiopians who have no meaningful communication with them. It may be fruitful at this point to consider the relationship between the peasant's world and Ethiopia's quest for modernity in the form of a series of critical responses to these stereotypes.

Three views of the peasantry are of particular relevance. One sees the peasant as exploited, hence potentially progressive; one sees the peasant as uneducated, hence reactionary; and a third sees the peasant as traditionalist, hence irrelevant to Ethiopia's modernizing culture. In responding to these opinions we shall discuss, first, the peasant's conservatism; second, areas of the peasant's receptivity to change; and, finally, aspects of peasant culture which may have a positive value for Ethiopia in transition.

Peasant Conservatism

Those who eulogize the simple integrity of peasant life and regret the peasant's suppressed condition in a social order pejoratively termed "feudal" at times maintain that with a radical change of leadership in the government the peasantry would respond with renewed economic initiative and progressive orientation. Given leaders they can trust, it is argued, the Amhara peasants would support radical efforts to restructure their lives and would participate meaningfully in democratic political procedures designed to promote social change.

*565 121 178 181 This view overlooks the fact, which has impressed travelers of many centuries in Ethiopia, that the Abyssinian peasant clings to his traditional ways with unruffled tenacity. The flavor of his conservatism may be illustrated by the following conversation with an unusually open-minded peasant in Manz. The man was complaining about the dangers presented by a little stream between his home and the local church during the rainy season. "If you can't put up some kind of bridge," I suggested, "why do you not stretch a heavy rope across it so people can hold on to something and not be swept away?" "That is a good idea," he replied, "but we just do not do that sort of thing around here."

Such behavior has been explained by many observers, Ethiopians and foreigners alike, as due to simple laziness. No peasant can afford to be simply lazy, however. The roots of this inertia go deeper. They touch a number of fundamental features in Amhara peasant culture which orient the peasantry against the introduction of novelty.

*565 121 777 178 One of these is the concept of fate (*eddil*) which the Amhara invoke to account for the ups and downs of their lives. *Eddil* appears to signify the working of God's will insofar as it affects human purposes, and is to be re-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

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* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

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been employed as a medium for promulgating new ideas or discussing contemporary problems. Another feature of Amhará culture that helps to account for the mental inertia of the peasantry is its emphasis on the value of deference and obedience to authority. The Amhara typically rely on legitimate authority figures to define appropriate responses to new situations, and regard the delegation of powers as a diminution of the status of such authorities. The peasant has thus refrained from initiating changes in the public domain because the prerogative of taking initiative is generally reserved to ecclesiastical and political authorities.

Receptivity to Change

Consideration of the peasant's readiness to follow the lead of legitimate authorities already points to an inadequacy of the second stereotype we have mentioned: that which sees the peasant as hopelessly ignorant and backward, hence intractable from the viewpoint of a program of modernization. For while the Amhara peasant is likely to resist the efforts of some unknown official from Addis Ababa to introduce change in his local environment, he does tend to follow the directives and imitate the example of the local authorities whom he knows and who shape the course of decisions and sanctions at the local level. Thus it is, for example, that the eucalyptus tree—imported by Emperor Menelik, taken to the provinces by nobles, and eventually planted by individual peasants—has come to dot the Amhara countryside. How quickly such change can take place is shown by the recent acceptance of photography in many provincial regions. In 1950, peasants in many Amhara areas strenuously objected to having their pictures taken, in part at least for fear of the camera as bearer of the evil eye. By 1960, visitors to some of these same areas were being deluged with requests for photographs. In the interim these peasants had been exposed to numerous photographs of the Emperor and high government officials and had observed their local authorities seizing every chance they could to be photographed.

Yet it is clear that the Amhara peasant will not imitate everything that is accepted by his traditional authorities. When a new custom strikes him as too outlandish his resistance can become adamant, as was abundantly demonstrated when the court of Susneyos carried out its ill-fated conversion to Catholicism. In analyzing the peasant's receptivity to change it is important to distinguish as independent variables: (1) the degree of acceptability of the *agents* of change, and (2) the extent to which the proposed change is congruent with traditional beliefs and values.

The whole question of the nature of peasant opposition and receptivity to modernizing programs may be discussed most realistically by focusing on a concrete area of attempted change. The material I have assembled is most detailed for the case of public health, an area to which the government has

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paid increased attention in recent years. A new phase of public health endeavor in this decade was marked by the imposition of a nationwide health tax in 1960. 565* 121 177 178

Health has become a prime objective in Ethiopia's modernization program because of a growing realization that the wide prevalence of malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, intestinal parasites, syphilis, trachoma, leprosy, and other diseases continues to sap the vitality of the nation's productive forces and to visit misery on countless peasant families. The public health forces in Ethiopia (Ministry of Public Health, WHO mission, and AID Public Health Division) have long understood that Ethiopia's health needs cannot be met by piecemeal therapy. They have undertaken a program of preventive measures by preparing public health teams in the medical college at Gondar. The college trains health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians within a common framework, so that when they go into the field they will understand each other's tasks from the start. The first public health center employing such a team was opened in the late fifties; Ethiopia's Second Five-Year Plan envisions one such center for every fifty thousand people by 1967. 744 [651] [764] [648] [874]

The objective of these public health workers is to transmit a number of instructions—concerning personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, early care for illness, and isolation of contagious diseases—which are at variance with customary beliefs and practices. Experience with comparable programs elsewhere suggests that the success of such health teams is by no means assured.[18] What are the forces working for and against the acceptance of these new instructions by the Amhara peasantry? Both negative and positive factors may be identified with respect to each of the three general categories previously referred to: the general outlook regarding change; attitudes toward the agents of change; and degree of compatibility between the new cultural items and the old.

The Amhara peasant's general resistance to change may be presumed operative here as elsewhere, particularly since health practices are often associated with religious beliefs and sentiments. Defense of indigenous therapies has in fact become a significant channel for the expression of traditionalist sentiment, a channel that has even been utilized on occasion in the Addis Ababa newspapers.[19] And a general posture of resistance to changes in the field of health is supported by the interests of traditional practitioners, *dabtarā* and *ṭanquāy*, who are in danger of losing clientele if modern-trained health workers come to win their allegiance. 565* 121 177 178 75

Counter to this conservative drag, on the other hand, is the peasant's powerful desire for one basic change in his life circumstances, namely, the reduction of morbidity and mortality. Despite his idyllic conception of paradise and his frequent contention that life on earth is something of little value, the Amhara wants to avoid death. Even from the religious point of view he is [061]

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*565 motivated to live as long as possible: the monk wants to live longer in order
121 to get closer to God by prayer, and the worldly man wants to live long enough
177 to atone for his sins so that he may enter paradise. Health thus rates as one of
178 the most important values. The expressions for greeting and farewell stress
75 health. Most of the prayers and vows offered have to do with achieving health.
761 Long, painful pilgrimages are made for cures, and much money is spent for the remedies of native practitioners and for amulets to ward off illness. This powerful desire for health and life operates as a lever to overcome the resistance to change.

*565 Toward the bearers of new ideas designed to satisfy this desire for reduced
121 morbidity and mortality, however, the peasant's stance is suspicious and un-
177 sympathetic at the outset. He regards Ethiopians who have been educated by
829 Westerners as contaminated by alien norms and beliefs. They appear to him as Ethiopians, but also as strangers—as "black *faranj*"—with their European clothes and their unorthodox eating and smoking habits. He tends to distrust their motives, to suspect them of being out to take advantage of him in some way. And he resents their overt or implicit disparagement of his way of life, particularly his practices in so sensitive an area as sanitation.

*565 Against such obstacles one cultural factor that serves to present the health
121 worker as an acceptable agent of change is the Amhara peasant's deference to
177 the man of learning. The public health worker is in a position to inherit some
744 of the awe felt for the learned *dabtarā*, especially since the health teams
[554] operate out of centers which provide therapy as well as instruction, which gives them the benefit of association with the quasi-magical powers attributed to one who performs successful treatment. In addition, he can be aided by the Amhara peasant's personal devotion to someone who has helped him and won his confidence. Whether this devotion can be stimulated depends, in the last analysis, on the character and resourcefulness of the public health workers themselves. Those who are able to communicate in a dignified manner with the peasants, who avoid dealing with them as an inferior and backward people, who refrain from flaunting the most important local norms, and who are on good terms with local authorities and respected men, have a substantial chance of being accepted after an initial period of suspicion and alienation. Thus it was that a Gojjami peasant, asked why some of the local people were hearkening to the advice of the public health team at Dabra Marqos, explained: "We have come to realize that what you tell us to do is for our own advantage, not yours." Elsewhere in Gojjam, a similar response was the eventual issue of a more pronounced initial rejection of public health workers. In the village of Dajan doors were closed against a venereal disease team which was taking blood samples of the entire population for Kahn test analysis. Popular suspicion was voiced in a number of ways; the health workers were accused of selling blood, of being missionaries, and of otherwise trying

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to cheat the locals. The health officer in charge of the team then brought some of the objectors to the mobile laboratory, patiently explained what was going on, and how it would benefit the people. Before long word got around that these outsiders were not so evil after all, and the doors of Dajan opened. 565* 121 177 744

Given the possibility that the Amhara peasant may come to acknowledge the public health worker as a legitimate agent of change, what about the discrepancy between the ideas advanced by the public health workers and the ideas of his traditional culture? The conception of the causation of illness is radically different in the two cultures. Since the peasant views the etiology of disease as a function of the will of supernatural beings, on what grounds could he adhere to prophylactic measures based on naturalistic conceptions? 565* 121 177 753 744

Valid though our characterization of the peasant's concept of causation may be, it is nevertheless a very simplified one. It is unlikely that any world view is totally devoid of some sort of naturalistic explanations, just as, conversely, well-educated moderns often cling to residues of "superstition." Though the Amhara's general framework for understanding causation is not naturalistic, he does possess a number of specific notions which can be interpreted as naturalistic or protonaturalistic. Here are some examples:

(1) The belief that an excessively dirty house brings sickness (even though in practice animals are permitted to urinate and defecate indoors and strings of soot to hang from the rafters). [231]

(2) A vague notion that the daily washing of hands, mouth, and feet is related to health. [515]

(3) The concept of *metch*, an ailment involving fever and pains, believed to come from exposure to dirty places as well as excessive exposure to the sun (though the devil is often thought to be the conveyer of the ailment).

(4) The concept of *gershā*, a notion that a convalescent is liable to relapse unless he refrains from eating unaccustomed foods, resumes work slowly, stays out of the sun, and washes his body and clothes. [758]

(5) A latent concept of contagion, found in: (a) the belief that smelling the urine of another will give one a cold, (b) the belief that the breath of a typhus patient will communicate his disease, and (c) the custom of referring to all diseases which can be given by one person to another as "*zār* sickness."

Even when the explanations set forth by the health workers deviate too much from what the peasant can possibly conceive as plausible, there may still be grounds to justify his accepting some strange advice through an appeal to more familiar beliefs and interests less directly related to the matter at hand. Thus, while peasants have been reluctant to accept the sanitarian's argument that diseases will be prevented by sanitizing the water supply through building wells, they have often been persuaded to build wells by the prospect of securing a more convenient source of water.

Measuring the relative strength of forces supporting and opposing change 565* 121 177

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among the peasantry in public health and other fields of planned development is a task that requires intensive empirical studies.[20] But it should be sufficiently clear from the foregoing that the view of the Amhara peasantry as incorrigibly recalcitrant and reactionary is a rather shallow one. Amhara peasant culture contains potentialities for change that are as real as its most rigid beliefs and its substantial antipathy to change. The challenge to social statesmanship and social science alike is to understand the peasant's world in a more analytically precise way so that the diverse potentialities for change can be identified, but in the context of the total structure of peasant life.

The Legacy of Peasant Culture

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Our discussion so far has treated the peasant as a wholly passive entity in contemporary Ethiopia. Whether the emphasis has been on the peasant's resistance to innovation or on his receptivity to change, he has been considered from one point of view: that of the Modernist anxious to transform Ethiopian society according to secular ideals. Common to both the modern-educated Ethiopians, who consider the peasant primarily an object for manipulation and coercion, and to those who think more in terms of providing friendly leadership and perhaps securing future political support, is the assumption that they really have nothing to learn from peasant culture, that peasant culture has nothing of substance to contribute to an Ethiopia in transition.

Whether this assumption is just or not can only be decided by Ethiopians themselves. Ironically, it is easier for an outsider to question it and to search for aspects of peasant culture that might contribute to a more meaningful national experience during the coming decades of transition. The type of possible contribution to be explored here concerns the mode of defining and responding to the situation of rapid change which Ethiopia has entered.

The social environment of contemporary Ethiopia is very tense and affords few outlets for the constructive release of tensions. The discrepancy between the growing desire for aspects of modern culture and the persistence of many old customs and problems has generated much impatience, anxiety, and ennui among the modern-educated. Their sense of inadequacy vis-à-vis Western "metropolitan" standards is no less painful for their having escaped a long heritage of colonial domination, and combined with a sense of failure to move rapidly toward aspired goals has created in many of the modern-educated marked self-destructive tendencies. Insofar as this destructiveness has not turned inward it has been projected outward against other elements inside Ethiopia and without.

One of these targets is the uneducated mass of the people, who, as we have seen, are often regarded as so backward that the only way one can bring progress to them is through coercion and authoritarian manipulation. Another target, naturally enough, has been the higher officials of the govern-

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ment. Of particular interest here is the fact that these officials have frequently been condemned in total terms for their alleged "selfishness" and "hypocrisy." Indeed, one of the outstanding characteristics of the modern-educated is a highly moralistic disposition which leads to a constant evaluation, and unmasking, of everyone within the broad orbit of Ethiopian political life in morally uncompromising terms. 565* 121

The sources of this disposition are complex and not fully to be explained here. One factor would seem to be the ascendance of a concern for rationality and its related insistence on integrity, in opposition to the traditional patterns of deviousness and equivocation symbolized by wax and gold. Another would seem to be a growing Rousseauan concern for the "natural rights" of the people, and the related view of the powers supporting the *ancien régime* as selfishly and hypocritically depriving the people of these rights. What the consequences of this disposition may be is a question of greater urgency. For it leads to the insistence on purity of heart as the essential political virtue, a demand which necessarily results in demoralization of public life and political fanaticism.[21]

While this sort of disposition is natural to the situation of the modern-educated, hence not simply to be wished away, it is clearly out of touch with the traditional Amhara mentality. Insofar as the modern-educated may seek alternatives to a purist, sentimental, and somewhat hysterical approach to politics, they may find themselves nourished by contact, through personal communication or through the medium of literature, with the "cooler" approach of the Amhara peasant. 565* 121 181 571 828

A feature of Amhara peasant culture discussed earlier in this chapter is the centrality of its orientation to man and to the phenomenon of human aggression in particular. To know the Amhara peasant at all closely is to appreciate how cautious he is about the intentions of others. He does not assume that he can count on others, though they may make promises. Before engaging in any secular transaction, such as lending money to a neighbor, entering into litigation, or taking on a servant, he insists on securing a guarantor (*wäss*) who agrees to make good for damages caused by the man he is backing. He does not assume that others may be benevolently disposed toward him; he suspects that behind every protestation of admiration and fealty lurks some quest for personal advantage. He does not assume that superior social status entails superior moral worth. Wryly commenting on his ambivalence toward superiors toward whom he shows such deference, he describes his posture as one of "bowing in front, and passing gas in the rear." In short, he is on guard at all times, coping with the presumed selfishness and hypocrisy of others and pursuing his own interests in a very sober and manipulative way.

At the same time the Amhara peasant's low estimate of man's potential does 565* 121 181 828

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not bring him to a position of rejecting man. On the contrary, man is accepted, with all his frailties, for what he is. The Amhara's patterns of life are shaped, neither to overwhelm man with guilt for his shortcomings, nor to pressure him into personal or social reform, nor to deprive his worldly existence of all enjoyment and significance; but rather to accommodate human realities and transcendent values to one another in such a way that neither is seriously compromised. He honors the value of non-violence, but indirectly, by relegating its observance to a morally differentiated role, the priest. He honors the value of marital fidelity, embodied again by the priest; but he lives comfortably, following the inclinations of the old Adam, in a status defined as technically excommunicate. He accepts the reality of hostility in human relations and adjusts to this reality by encouraging it where socially useful, curbing its socially disruptive aspects through fasting, and by channeling its expression where possible through litigation before judges, argumentation before elders, and games on festive occasions.

The Amhara peasant's outlook is both realistic and humanitarian. He does not expect political leaders to be morally pure, for he understands that all men are imperfect; *saw yallam*. He is not upset by the "selfishness" and "insincerity" of *Realpolitik*—awareness of which has sometimes been a demoralizing factor among the masses in Western countries—because *Realpolitik* is the stuff of his daily life. At the same time he seeks practical arrangements whereby human interests can be furthered and human conflicts can be contained. Insofar as this characteristic orientation of Amhara peasant culture comes to permeate the outlook of Ethiopia's modernizers—and it has never been wholly absent—it may help to reduce the intensity of those unrealistic demands and inhumanitarian impulses which are endemic in a society in transition to modernity.

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The Emerging Adolescent

While it is clear, as we have argued thus far, that a modernizing society 121
stands to benefit from retaining or redefining many aspects of its traditional culture, it is also clear that in certain areas discontinuity is indispensable if significant change is to be brought about. Just what these areas are is something which presumably varies from nation to nation, though cross-cultural regularities may perhaps be uncovered in the course of further research. In the 121
case of Ethiopia's incipient modernization, at least two subsystems of the 178
traditional social system of the ruling Amhara have already undergone some 86
sort of structural change: that of "secondary socialization," the complex of 554
processes whereby skills and values necessary for adult life are imparted to adolescents; and that of the stratification system—the complex of arrangements whereby status is allocated to members of a society in accord with the various values upheld by the society.

An important precondition for the changes which have taken place in both 121
of these areas was the establishment of a permanent capital: Addis Ababa, 178
founded by Menelik in 1887[1] and now home for nearly half a million Ethio- 177
pians. Menelik's institution of the first government school in Addis Ababa in 633
1908 marked the beginning of a slow but steady process of introducing some [871]
of Ethiopia's youth to the novel skills and norms of modern Western culture.
The concentration of power in Addis Ababa through the reign of Haile 121
Selassie has diminished the status of the traditional Amhara elites and brought 178
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to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to

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Egyptian mosques; youth dormitories and community houses in certain tribes in India; the academic and athletic youth organizations of ancient Athens and Sparta; not to mention the numerous teen-age associations of modern Western society.[8] 883* 561

Here again, the adolescent Amhara is not involved in any such social forms. The advent of puberty is associated with the growing up and out of childhood groups, the gangs of shepherds who spend their days together in work and play. The girl of eleven or twelve is expected to spend all her time at home, under careful supervision. The boy of thirteen or fourteen has abandoned the shepherd's life for farming, in the company of older relatives, and soon becomes increasingly preoccupied with his private economic and erotic interests. His family elders are likely to warn him not to make friends with other youths outside the family.[4] For a number of adolescent boys to get together outside of festive occasions is, to the traditional Amhara mind, a sign that something wrong is afoot.

The absence of adolescent rites and age groups reflects the individualistic character of Amhara social organization, a subject to which we shall turn in chapter vii. Nevertheless, Amhara society catches young people in its grasp and guides them to adulthood just as firmly and surely as does a society which has many collective arrangements for its adolescents. It does this by means of a well-ordered program for growing up. The road from childhood to adulthood is one series of informal, unproblematic stages through which the growing person adjusts to progressively increased responsibilities and progressively detailed norms. After infancy, there is normally no break in continuity in the whole process. 121 88 182 85 [561] [181]

Toward Adult Work Roles

Following a long and indulged infancy, the Amhara child is early taught the rudiments of work responsibility. At the age of three or four, children are given simple chores, such as shooing chickens from grain drying in the sun or collecting bits of firewood. Somewhat older children are expected to protect the crops against birds, farm animals, and baboons. The Amhara becomes apprenticed in the main vocation of his childhood—tending the herds—almost as soon as he can run about, and six-year-old shepherds play a crucial part in the Amhara economy. 857 868 [855] [867]

Boys retain the responsibility for tending the herds at least until the age of twelve, but by then they have already been initiated into a number of adult work activities. At about eight or nine years the Amhara boy begins to do his share of the harvesting, sickling the wheat, barley, *tēff*, or beans and loading the crops in piles he will help transport to the threshing place. He becomes adept at directing the cattle round and round the threshing floor and at winnowing the grain from the chaff. At times he helps with the weeding.

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*883 857 868 Somewhat later, when he reaches ten or eleven, the Amhara boy begins to accustom himself to the plow, perhaps trying his hand at it from time to time while his father rests for lunch. Intermittently his ability increases, and by the age of fourteen or so—earlier if the family is short of help—he is given a regular share of the plowing. This may be limited to one or two hours a day at first, but before many seasons elapse he is ready to undertake a full day's work, along with his older relatives.

*883 868 In his mid-teens the Amhara boy is normally given a small part of his father's land to use for himself. The boy has full charge of plowing and harvesting this land and selling the crops at market. The crops or money he [434] earns thereby is referred to as *gulammā* ("private possession") and is set aside for helping him to get started on his own later on. Eventually the *gulammā* will be used to purchase new clothes, an ox, and presents for his bride. Year by year the father may add a bit more land for the boy's private management, though all together it does not often amount to a very large quantity; he may produce, say, 150 to 200 liters of grain for his *gulammā* in a year (in the Amhara system of measures, about 2 *dāwlā*). When he has saved enough [582] grain to fill a *riq*, a large wicker storage bin plastered inside with cow dung, he is considered ready to get married and strike out on his own.

By the time a boy begins to accumulate his *gulammā* he has learned nearly everything he needs to know for performing the work which will be expected of him as an adult. In his late teens the education is completed, through the mastery of such special techniques as fashioning the yoke and wooden attachments for the plow, and constructing the walls and roof for a house.

The work life of the Amhara peasant is thus a simple continuation of activities with which he has long been familiar. The same is true, *mutatis* [463] *mutandis*, for those who, following their fathers' footsteps, become priests or sorcerers, governors or warriors, artisans or traders. In these cases, moreover, the foregoing pattern applies to a great extent, since the latter roles are often combined with an agricultural economic base and way of life. (Special aspects of some of these variant patterns will be discussed below.)

857 868 This pattern of gradually increased work responsibility is conspicuous in the case of girls. While shepherding and other childhood tasks are shared by both sexes, the Amhara girl begins to do distinctively female work at about six or seven. First she learns to clear seeds from cotton, and to spin, by hand. Later on she is introduced to the more taxing female chores, like fetching water and grinding grain. The progressive increase of the girl's work load is visibly illustrated by the graduated sizes of clay jugs used for carrying [415] water. When she begins to fetch water, the young girl carries a tiny jug, called a *gambo*. As she becomes older and stronger she is given a larger size, a small *enserā*. Finally, the mature female carries the large *enserā*, a jug that holds as much as twenty liters.

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and 857
for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly 868
useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *ĭnjarā.* [252]
Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make [262]
good *doro wat,* a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of
an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to 883*
manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is 868
often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside [582]
her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the 885
assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous 883*
throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter 857
of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through 867
virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, 836
a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin 183
at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to [357]
provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys.

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836 peers with the insulting term *šlb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that
183 comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsā*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain
572 in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *goramsā* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to
[837] aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsā* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the husband or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with
836 a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets
572 difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible
578 females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsā* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulā* fights.

836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquering" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding
[585] night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time
582 to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On the latter occasions, especially Masqāl and Ṭimqat, the girl may make some
[832] effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair, and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a
[584] chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

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may ask around to learn the identity of her father and then present the matter hopefully to his own father. 883* 584

Despite this possibility of concession to the boy's amorous desires, the interests of the father are decisive in the selection of a marriage mate, and traditionally the boy has not even known what his bride looks like until the wedding itself. The boy who dares to choose a wife on his own commits an offense for which the father has the moral right to curse and disinherit him. Marriage is regarded as a bond between families, not individuals, and the families of prospective brides are carefully inspected before the father agrees to a contract of betrothal. In making his choice, the father looks for a family whose economic level is at least as high as, if not slightly higher, than his own. He makes certain that the family does not have members who are leprous or who practice the manual crafts associated with the evil eye. He sends a messenger to visit the family on some pretext, for the purpose of determining the character of the girl and her parents. If there is any consanguine relation between the two families, he makes sure that the prospective bride and groom are separated by more than seven generations; that is, they must not have a common great-great-grandparent. A further consideration might be whether there has been any strife or rivalry between the two families, in which case the father may want to try to resolve it by means of a "political" marriage. 584 584 [582]

Once the father has decided upon a suitable mate for his son, with the advice of the mother and perhaps other relatives, he sends one or more intermediaries, usually elders, to speak on his behalf with the girl's father. The interview is conducted with considerable circumlocution, the petitioners veiling their true purpose until late in the conversation and the girl's father displaying reluctance to grant their request. Often no agreement is reached at this meeting, and the petitioning party must wait to ask a second time. If the girl's father is unwilling to give her hand, he will beg off with some polite excuse, such as that the girl is too young or that he has already promised her to someone else. If he is willing, a date for a formal betrothal is set, at which time the boy and his father together with a group of elders and other relatives repair to the home of the girl's father. After the boy gives presents to the girl's parents, the two fathers discuss their respective contributions of land, cattle, and other goods to the prospective household. When these economic arrangements are settled, a contract for marriage is sworn before witnesses and a date for the wedding is agreed upon, leaving ample time for the two families to vie in preparing sumptuous feasts for the occasion. If the girl is quite young, as long as two or three years may elapse between engagement and marriage. 584

The wedding festivities commence at the home of the girl's father. After 585

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 a certain amount of ritualized delay, the groom and his party are admitted. The groom is not supposed to have seen his bride previously, and is at first shown only a number of similarly dressed maids, among whom sits his fiancée. The maids are then concealed by a curtain or in another room while one of the best men, called *mizē*, determines through various ruses which of the girls is the bride. She is revealed to the groom by being carried out on the back of the *mizē*.

The civil service itself is quite simple, consisting of an oath in the name of the emperor or of some deity that "she is my wife" and "he is my husband," the latter often uttered in so faint a voice that it must be interpreted by one of the bride's relatives. After the oaths and a certain amount of feasting, the couple and the groom's party depart for the home of the groom's parents, where another celebration is under way.

After the festivities the bride and groom retire to a hut which has been set aside for them for the first week or so of their marriage. The experience of the wedding night cannot be very pleasant for the bride. For the first time in her life she is far from the familiar setting of her parental home. She [864] has had little or no sexual instruction, other than the knowledge that sexual [831] matters are "rude" and that she is supposed to resist her husband's advances as fiercely as possible. The groom, on the other hand, has been taught to regard the nuptial night as a battle in which the bride must be forcibly overcome. If somewhat anxious himself, he at least has the moral, and sometimes the physical, support of his two or three *mizē*. If he is unable to accomplish the defloration, he may call in the first *mizē*—usually a married relative or friend with some experience—who will perform the task. When at last the bride has been conquered, the *mizē* take the bloodstained cloth as proof of the girl's virginity. Their triumphant chant—*ber ambār sabara-lewo*, "he has broken the silver bracelet for you" (for the bride's parents)—is the signal for further rejoicing and revelry among the wedding guests. On the morrow groom and friends discuss the conquest with masculine glee, and the bride remains embarrassed and cowed.

[831] The trauma of the wedding night does not appear to do irreparable damage to the girl, however, for Amhara women have the reputation for enjoying sexuality as fully as the men. Indeed, some Amhara maintain that the girl will respect neither her groom nor herself if she does not put up a fight 585 until subdued. With the consummation of her marriage, moreover, the 885 Amhara girl has become a woman, a *sēt*. This represents a considerable elevation of her status and permits her to acquire certain distinctively adult possessions, usually presented to her by the groom. Traditionally these have included a dress, a double-layered toga (*ḳutā*), a headband, a mirror, a leg bracelet, a ring, an umbrella, and, in wealthier families, a colored silk robe.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

For the groom, too, marriage means a gratifying boost toward adult status, 585
symbolized by his receiving from the bride's parents distinctively adult male 885
possessions—a *kutā*, perhaps a *barnos*, and a rifle if they can afford it.

Such is the basic pattern of betrothal and marriage among the Amhara, 583
though many of the details vary from province to province.[6] There are, in 585
addition, certain traditional alternatives to this standard procedure. One of 184
these involves the solemnization of the marriage oath by taking Communion, a rite necessary for a marriage to be counted as legal by the Church, and followed by the ordained clergy and the most pious families. Another form requires no oath at all; the husband is simply expected to provide a salary and clothes for his wife. This procedure is followed chiefly by soldiers and traders, and by those who are marrying for the second time.

Still another type of marriage is that known as *qoṭ assīr* ("ten beds") in which the boy goes to live with the girl's family while both are quite young. In this case the boy has his work apprenticeship under the girl's father. After several years, when the girl reaches puberty, a second wedding ceremony will take place—this time at the home of the groom's parents—and the union will be consummated. This type of arrangement tends to be made when the boy's family is too poor to provide enough to get him started on his own, or if the girl's father has no son to help him with the work.

There is, finally, a form of marriage by abduction. If the girl's father does not grant the request of the emissaries of the boy's father, and if the boy's father is still interested, the boy may go with two or three friends to capture her when she is on the way to market or fetching water. When this happens, the couple will approach the girl's parents after they have been married for some time and seek a reconciliation. Occasionally poor families have deliberate recourse to this form of marriage, arranging in advance a bride capture so as to avoid having to prepare the expensive wedding feasts.[7]

Although marriage marks the termination of childhood for the Amhara, 591
it does not by itself signify the full attainment of adulthood. The newly wed 585
couple lives at first in the home of the boy's father, and to truly "arrive" [885]
they must establish their own separate household. If the boy's family is wealthy, he may have his own house ready by the time of the wedding. More often, the couple spends a certain amount of time—a few months, or in some cases as much as two or three years—living in the home of the groom's father until their own house is built. To tarry unduly in the father's house, however, is considered a mark of laziness and a great shame.

Furthermore, because of the somewhat arbitrary manner in which the 585
spouses are chosen for each other, there is often a serious problem of post- 606
marital adjustment, a problem not rendered any less difficult by the proximity of the girl's mother-in-law. The divorce pattern is well known among 586

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought
885 into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have re-
[851] sulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or
[586] else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a com-
[587] plete adult, a *mulu sēt* or *mulu saw*.

From Generation to Generation

867 Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

[577] The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profes-
[779] sion of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

867 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central
779 symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern
785 a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout matura-
262 tion. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early
577 age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

867 At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction
779 of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or
793 confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may
577 either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her
[785] husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing
[688] penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bälagē* ("rude"), a trait which [861]
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [155] [671]

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838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having
831 their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
(834) particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters
[570] are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat*, is synonymous with *guabaznat*, or "bravery.")

*883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often
[141] carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
463

a different identity. Religion and warfare were the two spheres most likely to 156
attract him. Although trade and manual arts were possibilities for those whose 554
industry exceeded their status-consciousness, they were considered the busi- 463
ness of other ethnic groups and normally rejected by a self-respecting Am- [461]
hara. When the Amhara youth left home for a new life, he was usually heading either for the school of some church teacher or the quarters of some chieftain.

Today, as in former times, the role of priest is known from childhood as 793
a possible model for the peasant boy. He and his companions often imitate 554
the clergy and their ceremonies in their play. The wish to become a priest 156
is kindled by a number of interests—desire for the material benefits accorded [178]
the clergy; curiosity about the mysteries of the church; envy of the great prestige of the clergy; hope for a better chance of going to heaven after death.
During adolescence the outlook of the boy who seeks to become a priest [883]*
deviates from that of the *goramsä* described above. Instead of the shrill, blood-heating *shillala* war chants he prefers the gentle hymns of the church; instead of the frenzied dancing and singing of the young braves he prefers the schooled dance of the clergy; instead of pursuing women, he is inclined to turn his head the other way when a girl appears.

The military alternative does not seem to be an ideal of Amhara children. 701
They rarely see soldiers; and when they did in former times, it was usually 156
in the unhappy circumstance of seeing the family's reserves plundered. It is 554
not until the time of puberty and after that the great upsurge of aggressive instinct has turned the thoughts of many an Amhara youth to fighting. Chafing under parental domination or bristling with resentment because of being an illegitimate offspring or a stepchild, he may be anxious to turn his hostility against some enemy. He may imagine the free life of a soldier more attractive than the drudgery of the peasant's lot. In the days of feudal armies, he may have heard news about some warlord on the rise and thus have hopes, by attaching himself as a follower, of winning booty and the laurels of a hero, perhaps eventually the powers of a chieftain.

Whether the peasant boy chooses church school or the warpath, his move 565
has frequently been an all-or-none move. The peasant boy can do nothing 593
without the consent of his father, and normally his father will not permit him 463
to do anything except carry on the farmwork and prepare himself to care for 156
his parents in their old age and to inherit the family land. If there should be some sign that the son does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, the latter will do everything he can short of disinheritance—and ofttimes that—to persuade him otherwise.

And so, some restless day, eyes fixed on some alluring goal, the Amhara youth might run away and not be seen again. If he should return, it would

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or
593 official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In
463 either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely pre-
156 paring himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which
[181] the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

882 The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of
184 Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing
871 up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adoles-
178 cence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

871 *The Welfare School*

175 Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in govern-
[797] ment provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

[648] During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

872 The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

second four in English, although Ethiopian teachers often continue to teach 872
in Amharic in the latter years.* This standard curriculum is supposed to be followed by all schools in the country—church, mission, and private schools, as well as those staffed by the government. In practice, a scarcity of teachers and materials in the provincial schools means that the curriculum is followed less closely there than in Addis Ababa. (The exceptional case of Asmara, capital of Eritrea which federated with Ethiopia in 1952 after sixty-two years under Italian administration, will not be considered here.) This elementary program culminates with a general examination that covers the five main fields of Amharic, English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Successful completion of this exam has been required for virtually every type of training beyond the elementary level.

At the secondary level, by contrast, the Ethiopian student faces a bewilder- 873
ing array of educational programs. As listed in the flow chart of the Ministry 874
of Education, they include theological secondary, academic secondary, elementary teacher training, handicraft teacher training, commercial school, technical school, agricultural secondary school, nurses training, community nurses training, sanitarians, naval cadet training, air cadet training, civil aviation, and inservice technical training. Admission of students to these schools is the responsibility of the individual directors, who take into account the students' own preferences when feasible.

A similar procedure obtains at the college level, for which successful completion of the secondary school-leaving examination has in most cases been mandatory. During the 1950's a number of schools were opened at the post-secondary level: the Arts and Science Faculties of the University College of Addis Ababa, the Agricultural College, the Engineering College, the Public Health College, the Building College, and the National Defense Colleges. Some of these have now been combined into a single institution, the Haile Selassie I University.

For students who have gone as far as the upper grades of elementary 883*
school, the desire to get into one of the secondary level schools—no matter 872
which one—has usually become the uppermost concern in their lives. They 873
have become obsessively aware of the "value" (*ṭiqem*) of further schooling, namely, as the surest way to a job that pays well. Perhaps they have become fired with idealism to help advance their country and hope to gain some special competence that will enable them to do so. Until 1962, moreover, the rewards of being a secondary school student included material fringe benefits that gave many a powerful motive for prolonging their education. Above all, [178]

* In 1963–64 the system was changed to one with six years of elementary education followed by two years of junior secondary education.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 872 873 178 they have come too far along the road of modernity to return to what they regard as the hard and thankless lot of the traditional adolescent, and so are forced to find some place in the modernizing sector of society. Since Ethiopia's modernizing sector has so far provided only the secondary school system as a means of integrating its youth, the eighth-grade examination certificate constitutes a ticket to the future which must be obtained at all costs.

*883 873 At the same time that this examination was acquiring its momentous significance in the lives of Ethiopia's youth, the proportion of students who passed it was becoming progressively smaller. By 1959, efforts by Ministry of Education officials to raise academic standards and to adjust the number of eligible students to the number of openings in secondary schools resulted in the failing of some sixty per cent of those who took the examination, a situation which provoked nearly riotous protests by students in Addis Ababa.[11]

Such conditions have laden the eighth-grade examination with more awesomeness and terror than a puberty rite. Worries about the exam preoccupy most seventh and eighth graders, and their anxiety is compounded by the attitudes of their school directors, for whom the proportion of passing students has tended to become the primary index of success. The weeks before the exam are filled with frantic cramming on the part of teachers as well as students. It is no wonder that such pressures have on occasion led students to purchase actual or alleged copies of the exam in advance from ministry employees or their go-betweens, an offense which has been sternly dealt with by the ministry.

*883 882 873 178 Those students who do not pass the eighth-grade exam or who, because of family pressures, low ability, or other reasons, leave school before completing the eighth grade, move to the margin of Ethiopian society. If attendance at a secondary school or beyond may be taken as the defining characteristic of a "modern adolescent" in Ethiopia, since that signifies their participation in the one institutionalized pattern of secondary socialization in the modern sector, these young people are neither traditional adolescents nor fully modern, but fall in an interstitial category. Having caught a glimpse of some brave new world in their early schooling, they find themselves cast adrift, in the prime of their adolescence, in a no-man's region between traditional society and the promised land. In some cases they manage to make a rapid adjustment; more often, only their youthful energy saves them from total despair.

*883 882 178 These marginal adolescents normally drift to Addis Ababa, if they are not already there, and lead the most precarious sorts of lives. They live as loiterers on the streets and byways of the capital. They go from school to school, begging for a place; or from office to office, looking for some sort of work, which they are unlikely to find if they do not have a relative in an influential position. It is so hard to find employment without at least an eighth-grade certifi-

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 16.—*The procession on Timqat Day*

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FIG. 17.—*Timqat procession: detail*

[P. 110-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 18.—*Ten-year-old boy plowing*

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FIG. 19.—*Mother and daughter carrying water pots*

[P. 110-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cate that boys sometimes borrow the certificates of more successful friends 883*
and enter jobs under those assumed names. Often they live for many months 882
with no livelihood at all. Eventually, some find work as houseboys, shine 178
shoes, or peddle merchandise on the streets; others, on an impulse, sign up for [464]
life in one of the military services. Still others are reduced to begging, or stealing, or concocting stories with which to extract help from sympathetic foreigners.

The lives of such boys, whose number is large and steadily growing, are among the chief casualties of Ethiopia's transition to date. As they increase, their misery will become more vocal, and they may constitute an element of political unrest. Whether or not they become a political problem, they are already a social problem.

The modern adolescents, by contrast, comprise a small and determinate 883*
number.* In 1958–59, the year in which my research on them began, there 178
were all together about 3,900 students in the academic secondary schools, 873
3,350 in other special schools at the secondary level, and 760 students at the post-secondary level. One source of information on these students was a [125]
questionnaire which was completed by 700 students: 500 at the secondary level, including 40 female students, in a total of 15 schools, and 200 male students in five colleges.[12] Some of the findings from this survey will be woven into the following text where appropriate.

Compared to the rest of their countrymen, and certainly those of the same age, the modern adolescents have lived in luxury. Most students at the secondary level, and all those at the college level, have been boarding students. At no cost to themselves or their parents, they have received full board and room, a token allotment of clothes, and their books. Day students have received instead a monthly allowance of Eth$20,† approximately the same [434] amount that unskilled laborers earn for full-time work. Tuition is also free for all full-time Ethiopian students at all levels.

These "welfare school" conditions were designed to make further education attractive and possible for Ethiopian students, nearly all of whose families either can not or are unwilling to support their children for many years in school. In this, the parents are following long established Amhara custom, for in the traditional society boys who went off to church schools often did so, as we have seen, without the support of their parents, and in any case were expected to gain their livelihood by begging. Nowadays, if their children are admitted to one of the government secondary schools, even tradition-minded

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* And one that grows steadily. In 1958 there were twenty-eight government secondary schools in the empire. By 1964 the number had increased to forty-seven.

† One Ethiopian dollar is equal to (U.S.) forty cents. [436]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 178 873 parents who may have objected to their children's spending so many years in elementary school are not a little proud to have them in so prestigious an institution, and are delighted to have them so well financed by the Ministry of Education.

*883 873 Needless to say, the students who make the grade into one of the secondary schools are jubilant. The relative hardship of their elementary years gives way to an easy and stimulating life. For those who grew up in provincial schools, the move to Addis Ababa has been an especially exciting prospect—so much so that when secondary schools were newly established in some of the provincial capitals in the late 1950's, a number of students who were supposed to attend them preferred to stop their education instead.[13]

*883 882 178 The pattern of adolescence embodied in the government schools differs from that in traditional Amhara society in two fundamental respects. In the traditional pattern, adolescence is a time when the Amhara are subjected to the strictest controls by their parents. At the same time, they are expected to prepare for independence by assuming increasing amounts of responsibility. In the modern pattern, the welfare school has the effect of removing the student as far as possible from parental controls. At the same time, it puts him in a more passive and irresponsible role than ever. He is given virtually everything he needs and obliged to do nothing in return. He is asked only to prepare himself to serve his country well later on. This obligation is in fact firmly implanted in the minds of many students, who acquire the sense of a personal debt to the government which they want to repay in later years. Ethiopian society is not yet organized, however, in a way that will bring such motives to realistic expression. During and after his school experience, little opportunity is provided for the student to mature out of an essentially passive, receptive, dependent posture. Critical of this state of affairs, one Ethiopian college student was moved to declare in an oratorical contest: "Ethiopian students are like college students the world over, with two differences—they get everything free, and their selfishness is pushed to frightening exaggeration."

Be that as it may, modern adolescence in Ethiopia does provide the essential minimal conditions for fulfilling its function. It is a moratorium for the young, in which relative freedom from traditional controls and a relatively carefree existence facilitate the acquisition of habits, beliefs, and values which their fathers never knew.*

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[873] * The above description applies only until 1961–62, after which secondary students no longer received room and board or stipends and Addis Ababa College students were no longer housed in dormitories. Some implications of this change are considered in the concluding section of this chapter.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— 86
parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, 178
by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their rôle as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part [87]
by teachers and peers in the government schools.

Schools at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly 875
by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, 177
England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing 873
number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization.

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on 177
the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has 178
occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative 557
of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to- 555
day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied with- 829
out regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affilia- 883*
tions.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of uni- 87
versal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead.

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian 873
nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to 177
associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post- 178
elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with mem- 186
bers of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of 883*
the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic [872]
pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115]

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

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TABLE 2 [P. 114]

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ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF ETHIOPIAN SECONDARY AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ethnic Group	Percentage	Religious Group	Percentage
Amhara	55	"Orthodox"	67
Tigre	22	"Protestant"	6
Galla	15	"Catholic"	5
Gurage	4	"Christian"	15
Others*	4		
		Total Christian	93
		Muslim	4
		Others†	3

* Adari, Somali, Danakil, Wollamo, Kambata, Mensa, etc.
† Baha'i; agnostic; "no religion"; etc.

COMMENTS:

E A [125] [128]

1. The ethnic figures must be regarded with some caution, since as many as 17 per cent of the 700 respondents failed to answer the question. It is difficult to know whether this is due primarily to the reluctance of non-Amhara students so to identify themselves, even anonymously; to the general sensitivity about mentioning anything directly related to the "tribal question"; or simply to misunderstanding of the question. I suspect that the first-named factor may not be the most important. At any rate, if one compares the secondary school replies, in which 20 per cent failed to indicate their ethnic identification, with the college replies, in which only 10 per cent failed to do so, the greater percentage of response among the latter is accompanied by a slight *increase* (53.3 to 56.7 per cent) in the Amhara category.

   The figures on religious affiliation are more reliable, since only 3 per cent of the entire sample failed to answer that question.

2. Fifteen per cent of the students who indicated their ethnic affiliations are the offspring of mixed marriages, nearly two-thirds of which were between Amhara and Galla. These students were entered in the above classification according to the ethnic group of the father.

3. The students were also asked to indicate whether their own religion differed from that of their parents. *Ten per cent indicated such a change.* Of these, 28 per cent became agnostic or indicated "no religion"; 25 per cent converted to Protestantism; 17 per cent to Catholicism; 18 per cent went from "Orthodox" to "Christian" (which probably means to Protestantism in most cases); and 7 per cent changed to Baha'i.

E 563 873 872 162 A 872 873 162 E A 162 795

4. A comparison with the ethnic and religious composition of the country as a whole naturally suggests itself. Unfortunately, national figures have not yet been calculated to any comparable degree of reliability. If one refers to the crude estimates in common currency, certain disproportions are readily apparent.

   Thus, the Amhara proportion of the national population has been estimated at 25 to 30 per cent. It is clear that they are disproportionately represented in the school system; but not so greatly as has been at times alleged. In view of the statistics and considerations presented above, it would seem that 50 per cent is the upper limit of enrolment by "pure Amhara" in the post-elementary schools.

   The disproportions with regard to religious affiliation speak for themselves. The most recent published estimates are: Ethiopian Orthodox, 35 per cent; Muslim, 35 per cent; pagan, 25 per cent; other, 5 per cent. (Lipsky, *Ethiopia* [New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962], p. 101.)

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the students. Rivalries and hostilities tend to get channeled along these lines, 883*
particularly along the Amhara-Tigre axis, and petty fights have erupted from 873
time to time among groups of students so divided. The Amhara students, 177
moreover, tend to interpret their numerical majority in school as self-evident 178
justification of their political superiority in the country, an interpretation sul- 186
lenly rejected by non-Amhara students who tend to be more aware of the Amhara's much smaller percentage of the national population. However, the students are regarded by their teachers, not as members of tribes, but as Ethiopians. The school authorities thus act as a countervailing force in behalf of national symbols, and their effect is considerable.[14] While entering students naturally tend to identify in the first instance with their tribes, sixty per cent of the secondary school seniors and seventy-five per cent of the college students questioned about political identifications indicated that they considered themselves Ethiopians before they considered themselves members of tribes.

The teachers also provide practical information of various sorts to assist the 883*
acculturation of their charges. They teach the etiquette of modernity, includ- 875
ing the importance of punctuality and the keeping of promises. The objects 177
and events in their own lives quietly demonstrate to the students much about 178
modern Western culture, while their use of English in and out of class accus- [576]
toms the students to the use of their country's official European language. Thus, besides promoting respect for impersonal standards and the sense of [554]
Ethiopian nationalism, the teachers fulfill a third extracurricular function of [871]
some importance: that of making the schools a vehicle for social mobility, a place to acquire that minimum of European habits which is essential for attaining high status in a modernizing society.

The total accomplishment of the teachers, however, falls short of giving the 883*
modern adolescents a coherent orientation to life. The cultural lessons they 871
transmit are neither consistent among the various schools nor closely related 177
to the situation of changing Ethiopia. The organization of education, as of everything else in Ethiopia, reflects the abiding anxiety of the government about permitting any one foreign nation to gain a monopoly in any sphere of activity. Each secondary school and college has heretofore been virtually autonomous, pursuing those policies and teaching those lessons which best fit its point of view, a point of view now guided by British culture, now by American, now by Swedish, now by French, now by Jesuit. As Margery Perham long since observed, this created a situation in which Ethiopian students have gotten "fragments from the experience and ideals of each [nation] without getting the fullest and best influence from any one national tradition."[15]

Another shortcoming of the educational program has been the relative 871
paucity of materials relating to Ethiopian realities. As one Ethiopian educator has written: "School children are at times more familiar with the history of

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871 Rome and the life of Abraham Lincoln than with the geography of their immediate community or the history of their own native country."[16] While a certain amount of concentration on remote matters may be essential for introducing modern adolescents to the substance and background of modern culture, it is doubtful whether they are being prepared to relate meaningfully to the society of their adulthood if that society is not made a subject for careful consideration during their schooldays.

875 829 191 Still another limitation on the effectiveness of the teachers stems from a quite different problem, the Ethiopian's ambivalence toward foreigners. This will be overcome with the gradual Ethiopianization of the teaching force, but that cannot be achieved for at least another generation. One area in which this problem manifests itself is linguistic nationalism. English, the official language [873] of all post-elementary instruction, is still regarded as an outsider's tongue in Ethiopia, unlike other African countries where the European language in question serves the native peoples as a *lingua franca;* and many Ethiopians hope that the day will come when it will be replaced by Amharic as the medium of instruction.[17] Due to their ignorance of Amharic or other Ethiopian languages, foreign teachers are rarely able to gain the sort of closeness to their students that promotes the more profoundly beneficial sort of relationship. Because of this and a tradition of suspiciousness regarding foreigners, all but the radically Westernized students maintain a lingering mistrust of the teacher *qua* foreigner.

* 883 178 The gaps in the socialization of the modern adolescent left by the nature of his teachers and their teaching are filled to some extent by his peers. In this respect, too, modern adolescence contrasts with the traditional pattern: not only has the role of mentor and model been taken over by foreign teachers in place of the parents, but also the modern adolescent has become dependent on his peers to a degree unthinkable in traditional Amhara society.

It has been natural that the modern adolescent turn to those his own age for moral support. However much they may support the idea of his going to school as a means to a higher salary, his parents have little understanding of the new directions inherent in modern education. His foreign teachers are, at worst, preoccupied with their own narrow interests or else, at best, out of tune with the Ethiopian ethos and mentality. Older modernized Ethiopians, who should be the most sympathetic, are usually too preoccupied with their own adjustment problems to pay much attention. His schoolmates thus become his only reliable allies in the battle of growing up.

[561] Association with age-mates is informal for the most part. There have been [573] almost no formal youth associations or clubs in Ethiopia. The teen-age gang, with its sharp boundaries and tight controls, has scarcely come into being. [572] Relations with peers thus takes the form of small groups of friends. More

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than half the secondary students questioned, and well over a third of the college students, stated that the number of their friends was only one, two, three, or four. 883* 178 572

Almost all the students indicated that they prefer close, intimate, and enduring friendships to casual, impersonal, and frequently changing relationships. There is thus something of the traditional *goramsā*'s companion about these relations, in that these boys define their friends as confidants, as individuals with whom they can disclose "secrets" and discuss personal problems. But the modern relationship is much broader, for it also includes such activities as studying together; going on walks; playing athletic games; going to the movies; visiting the brothels; talking about education, life, and the future; seeing the sights around town.

The great sociological significance of these small clusters of companions, or *bālīnjarā* as they are called, is that they play a crucial part in mediating the transition from a childhood that is essentially traditional, despite exposure to certain modern subjects in school, to an adulthood that will be lived essentially in the modern sector. At the same time that they help the newcomer adjust to each local school community, they are helping him adjust to the broader subculture of modernizing Ethiopia—explaining the strange things and ideas he encounters; correcting his behavior, for example, by showing the proper use of silverware at the table; and refining his language, when necessary, from that of the rustic to that of the urbanite. Their creative function is no less important. Through countless conversations, some idle and some intense, they work to interpret and integrate stimuli coming from many sources—from movies; magazines; the example of Europeans living in Ethiopia; the behavior of government officials, as well as from their teachers—and thus form a sort of buffer between the lone adolescent and the various authoritative influences in his life. 883* 178 572 182

Despite the radical changes in the position of the Amhara adolescents described above—their complete dependence on the government school system, their tutelage under foreign instructors, and their great reliance on age-mates—the traditional pattern of adolescent submission to parental authority still runs strong. Even though most students live as boarders or in rented quarters, they maintain contact with their parents on occasional visits or at vacation time. However far removed, they remain deeply attached to their families and sensitive to the wishes of their parents. How to acquire money to send to their families is often a dominant concern in their lives. Though in most cases the parents can not provide meaningful orientation regarding adjustment to changing conditions in Ethiopia, they do give advice about how their children should behave and try to keep them faithful to traditional norms. The fact 883* 178 593

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for consider-

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(396)	(40)	(197)

able strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

society: to create engineers and mechanics, doctors and nurses, economists and educators. With regard to the familiar occupations of the old order, the schools' task is to engender a new breed of practitioner—farmers versed in modern methods of agriculture, soldiers disciplined and geared to modern techniques, clergy cognizant of ecumenical Christianity, clerks who can type and take shorthand, and government officials with some modern education.

What is most revolutionary is that the schools introduce not only new subject matters for careers, but the very notion of vocation itself—of life work as

TABLE 4

SOURCES OF FUTURE SATISFACTION CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS*

Source from Which Students Expect Most Satisfaction in Life	Secondary School				College Males (per cent)	
	Males (per cent)		Females (per cent)			
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Career or occupation	34	12	30	9	44	17
Improvement of local community	30	27	16	36	22	28
Religious beliefs and activities	13	20	16	21	5	7
Participation in national and international affairs	10	24	13	20	8	26
Family relationships	8	10	20	9	17	14
Leisure-time, recreational activities	5	7	5	5	3	8
Number	(394)		(40)		(195)	

* Based on question 27 in the Gillespie-Allport questionnaire.

something which one *chooses,* trains for in a specific manner, and derives satisfaction from pursuing.* This orientation departs radically from the traditional expectation of inheriting the work of one's father as a matter of course. Whereas, as we have noted, the Amhara son traditionally carried on his father's work, except in rare cases where there were special reasons for not doing so, only *seven per cent* of the boys in my sample indicated that

* When asked what they expected to give most satisfaction in their lives, the students most frequently named "career or occupation" (out of six alternatives). When asked what they considered most desirable in choosing an occupation, they named "work that is really interesting" most frequently (out of six alternatives). See Tables 4 and 5.

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463 they expected to enter the same occupation as their fathers. This figure is
178 much smaller than that obtained from a cross-cultural study of youth by
593 James Gillespie and Gordon Allport, who found that "approximately a third of the male students in all our samples [a total of 1,168, drawn from the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, Egypt, Mexico, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, and Israel] expect to enter the same occupations as their fathers, or ones closely related."[18] In part, the Ethiopian figure simply reflects the preparation for types of work which did not exist for previous generations.

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TABLE 5

OCCUPATIONAL CONDITIONS MOST DESIRED BY STUDENTS

Conditions Which Students Consider Most Desirable in Choosing Future Occupations	Secondary School				College Males (per cent)	
	Males (per cent)		Females (per cent)			
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Interesting work	56	24	63	17	63	18
Job security	19	26	23	11	14	31
Chance to acquire much money	12	11	3	11	10	16
Prestige	7	9	8	17	7	5
Pleasant work companions	4	26	3	30	3	27
Good boss	2	4	0	14	3	3
Number	(325)		(40)		(113)	

463 But since it also represents numerous cases where the boy's occupational
178 interest is a traditional one—where, in other words, one finds sons of soldiers
593 and government officials planning to become farmers, sons of farmers planning to be teachers, and sons of priests and teachers planning to be soldiers and administrators—this figure may be interpreted as indicative of a very general rejection of parental influence with respect to occupational choice.

Parents of the modern adolescents are unhappy about this diminution of their traditional authority, especially so when their children opt for some of the more "outlandish" modern occupations. Their disapproval sometimes takes the form of urging their children to quit school and get married. Often it is expressed in the form of direct criticism of the occupation in question. Nearly two-fifths of the secondary school males questioned about this indicated that their parents did not approve of the occupation they wished to enter. As

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

might be expected, the incidence of disapproval was highest among the students of the Gondar secondary school (fifty-eight per cent), whose parents are presumably more traditionalist than those of the Addis Ababa boys, and the students of the technical school (fifty-six per cent), whose occupational interests, involving manual labor and technical skills, are felt to resemble those artisan pursuits traditionally disesteemed by the Amhara.

Time is on the side of the students. As Ethiopia develops and education spreads, the advantages of prolonged training and modern occupations will become increasingly apparent to the parents. For some time to come, however, their resentment of the dependence of youth on foreigners and Western-educated Ethiopians for occupational guidance will continue to generate social tensions and impede the socialization process.

The harmonious pattern of preparation for adult work roles found in traditional Amhara society has been further disrupted under the new school system at at least two points: the point at which occupational commitments are made, and the point of entry into the work force.

The modern adolescent is supposed to choose which of several kinds of schools, representing a variety of vocational commitments, he wishes to enter upon successful completion of the eighth-grade exam. Quite often his choice is dictated by wholly irrelevant factors. For example, it may be made on the basis of which of the available schools promises the best standard of living.[19] Or it may be made for him by the school system, for one finds cases where the student's preferences are disregarded and he is placed in whatever school and vocational program happens to be able to accommodate him.

Even when the student's choice is relatively free from such extraneous determinants, however, it is usually difficult for him to make a meaningful decision. Eight grades of a rudimentary curriculum is hardly an adequate basis for choosing from a variety of unfamiliar vocations. So it is "fate" that guides most youngsters into one or another of the secondary school programs. The problem of choice recurs, for a much smaller number, when commitments are again required for entrance into the colleges. At this point meaningful decisions are often made, but perhaps more often they are spun from a skein of bewilderment. One secondary school graduate summed up the situation by saying, "Foreigners frequently ask young educated Ethiopians, 'What do you want to become?' How do we know? This whole business of *choosing* is entirely new to us, and we know very little about the alternatives that we have now. It is all very confusing."

So far the modernizing sector has provided little, beyond vocational pamphlets in the school libraries and an occasional school debate on the respective values of different occupations, to help orient the students on these matters.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

883 Programs of vocational guidance and counseling have not yet been instituted.
463 Students who manage to form clear and definite ambitions also suffer for
873 want of help, if for some reason they have been shunted away from the appropriate training program, or have been deprived of opportunities to prepare adequately for the vocations to which they aspire. Two research findings bear on this. In one study it was found that "few secondary school administrators when questioned are aware of the ambitions and desires of their students," and that less than twenty per cent of the group of secondary school students surveyed felt they had received training "suitable to their ambitions."[20] In my own survey it appeared that fewer than twenty per cent of the secondary school students expect to enter the occupation they actually want to.

*883 In addition to this discontinuity between childhood experience and the
178 hitherto unknown necessity of making some sort of vocational choice, modern
464 adolescence also involves a sharp break between the experience of post-elementary school and the process of getting on a payroll. Here the Ethiopian youth faces the problems of students everywhere as they leave school for the "real world." In at least two respects, however, his dilemma is more acute than that of his counterpart in Western societies. Because virtually all jobs are controlled
[557] by the government, and because the government is still organized along traditional lines, the Ethiopian graduate must suddenly forget the universalistic criteria of school and acclimate himself to the traditional pattern of ingratiating oneself with those in positions of power—a pattern referred to as *daj ţenāt* —if he is to gain and retain a decent job. For many graduates there is no machinery that might assist them in locating a job: no job advertisements, employment bureaus, not even effective personnel departments in most quarters.

87 The school system itself, however, does manage in certain cases to find
464 jobs for its graduates. For the foreign-educated returnees a special placement board was set up within the Ministry of Education. The locally educated are placed, if at all, by their individual schools, depending on the policy of the school, the resourcefulness of its director, the demands of the market, and current political emphases.

The outlook for graduates of the various specialized vocational programs has been in recent years as follows. A consistently high demand for teachers has assured jobs for graduates of the various teachers training programs. Graduates of the commercial school have been in great demand because of the increasing bureaucratization of government and the slight expansion of commerce. The public health college had great difficulty in the placement of its

* Since this was written the University's Department of Education has begun to produce a series of career pamphlets for secondary school students.

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graduates in the late fifties, but the government's implementation of a program of public health centers has opened up increasing opportunities for their employment. Graduates of the school of social work have been placed in positions with little difficulty. 87 464

On the other hand, in those areas in which the government has shown little or no interest the school authorities have been hard put to find employment for their graduates. This was shown most dramatically in the case of the now defunct community development training project at Majete, whose graduates were allowed to drift into oblivion due to the absence of an effective community development program in the country. Those who have completed courses of study in agriculture have not been extensively employed by the government because of chronic disorganization and neglect in the Ministry of Agriculture, while lack of capital and know-how has tended to keep them from private agricultural enterprise. Graduates of the technical and engineering schools have been having some difficulty in entering the work force due to the slow pace of Ethiopia's industrial development. Graduates of general academic programs, finally, and those who drop out before completing some course of study, tend to be left to their own devices.

While the modernizing sector, then, has introduced the revolutionary notion of vocation and has institutionalized means of training young Ethiopians for modern work roles, it has not yet provided adequate mechanisms either for guiding them into and through the training programs or for employing them properly once they are trained. 178 463 464

Preparation for Marriage

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Conditions of growing up in the modernizing sector have disrupted the harmonious pattern of Amhara adolescence also with respect to entrance into adult family roles. Conflicts arise both from postponement of the normal age for marriage and from radically new ideas about the nature of marriage. [582] [581]

The modern adolescent typically expects to marry at an age that is at least eight to ten years older than his traditional counterpart. While Amhara girls have traditionally married in their early teens, girls in the senior class of secondary school now say they expect to marry in their early twenties. Amhara boys have traditionally married around the age of twenty, but those in post-elementary schools now expect to marry in their late twenties or early thirties. 883* 178 582

This shift is due to a desire to attain as much education as possible, and above all, for the boys, to the precarious economic position of modern adolescents. While living on his father's farm an Amhara boy could marry early with the assurance of having enough land to work to support his family at least at subsistence level. The modern boy who finishes secondary school or [871]

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*883 178 582 college, however, has no assets beyond his diploma in most cases. He must wait a number of years to achieve the beginnings of financial stability.

*883 178 581 584 The students' conception of marriage, moreover, reflects a still more profound change. They are no longer content to regard the selection of a mate as a matter to be arranged by parents in accord with their own interests and standards. They reject the old-fashioned Amhara marriage in which romantic love plays no part and divorce is common. Most of them insist on the right to choose their own spouses, and they tend to approach that choice with criteria

TABLE 6

QUALITIES MOST DESIRED BY STUDENTS IN A FUTURE WIFE OR HUSBAND*

Quality	Per Cent Checking Quality as Either First or Second Choice		
	Secondary Schools		College Males
	Males	Females	
Educated	48	75	41
Shares my opinions and beliefs	44	48	43
Religious	34	25	19
Good companion	25	30	45
Beautiful	15	0	22
Kind and generous	15	13	9
Wealthy	4	2	5
Will impress my friends socially	3	2	2
Number	(385)	(39)	(191)

* Related to Gillespie-Allport question No. 17.

which differ from those of their parents. Instead of following such traditional criteria as good upbringing, family background, and wealth, a number of modern adolescents aspire to find spouses who, above all else, are educated, who share their opinions and beliefs, and who will be good companions. (See [582] Table 6.) Even such strong aversions as those against tribal and religious exogamy have receded somewhat before the new ideal of marriage founded on romantic love.* The figures in Table 7 are indicative of the diffusion of this ideal as well as of the growth of a sentiment of Ethiopian nationality.

* Although Amhara men have customarily had sexual relations with non-Amhara women and produce countless offspring from them, the latter have not been considered appropriate choices for marriage, except in very high strata where the marriage served a purpose primarily political.

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These changes in the definition of marriage have produced tremendous tensions and heartache in the relations between generations. Deprived of authority in the occupational sphere, parents of modern adolescents cling with all the more pride to their traditional rights and obligations in the sphere of getting their children properly married. They often nag their children to leave school and get married while young. They stand determined to select their children's mates. If they do admit some consideration for their children's desires on the matter, they insist that any prospective spouse measure up to traditional criteria. As a result, disagreements between students and their parents revolve around the subject of marriage more frequently than anything else.

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TABLE 7

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DISPOSITION OF STUDENTS TOWARD TRIBAL AND RELIGIOUS EXOGAMY

		Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
		Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Willingness to marry a person of a different religion	Yes	29	33	60
	No	71	67	40
Willingness to marry a person of a different tribe	Yes	64	73	84
	No	36	27	16
Number		(392)	(40)	(194)

Modern adolescents, however, have by no means wholly rejected traditional attitudes and sentiments concerning marriage and courtship. Although a number of students say they want to marry for the modern reason of finding personal happiness through a satisfying love relation, many more indicate that they are chiefly inspired by the traditional motives of wanting to beget children. Most of them wish to continue the custom of having large families, the most frequently mentioned numbers of children desired being "four" and "more than six."*

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The modern boys still widely share the traditional expectation that their

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* The mean number of children desired by the college students in my sample is 4.23. This figure exceeds those of all the national college groups reported by Gillespie and Allport except Egypt and South African Bantu.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 brides be virgin. Related norms greatly restrict their quest for romantic love.
178 Since Ethiopian society still expects its maidens to be shy and retiring, and to
581 avoid social relations with boys outside their families, the boys find few
*883 opportunities for getting to know members of the opposite sex. Even in those
834 few situations where sociability between the sexes is publicly permitted, in-
178 grained tendencies to segregate the sexes persist. The most liberal context for such sociability, the University College campus, has witnessed relatively little interaction between male and female students. In spite of their occasional resolutions to act more boldly, the college boys have in the past tended to shy away from the co-eds except during such rare formal events as a college dance or off-campus parties.

*883 This is not to say that modern adolescent males have no opportunity for
836 premarital sexuality. On the contrary, their opportunities in this regard are
178 perhaps better than ever. The proliferation of brothels in Ethiopia's urban
548 centers makes sexual initiation easy, almost a routine event.* Students also
834 frequent these houses for social entertainment, dancing to swing and Latin rhythms, and sipping beer or soft drinks. Thus the continued sanctions against social intercourse in more respectable forms work to sharpen the Amhara dichotomy between decency and sexuality, and leave modern boys with a double standard that separates the marriageable girls from the enjoyable ones.

*883 The idea that marriage should be founded on romantic love has brought
178 greater anxiety as well as hope into the lives of Ethiopian adolescents. This
581 anxiety is due in part to the above-mentioned inhibitions against that easy
584 commerce of the sexes which so facilitates the discovery of a suitable love
[152] object. It also reflects a certain ambivalence toward the new ideal, based on a lingering attachment to the authority of the old system. This was manifest, for example, in the response to a college debate on the topic, "Resolved: that the custom of letting the parents choose a spouse for the children should be maintained," that took place in 1959. Although on anonymous questionnaires *90 per cent* of the college students said they will probably decide whom to marry themselves, and only 3 per cent said the decision would be made by parents or other relatives, in voting on the matter after the debate the students (in contrast to the judges who awarded the negative debaters) publicly declared themselves 42 per cent affirmative, 41 per cent negative, with 17 per cent abstaining.

*883 Anxiety regarding the new conception of marriage, finally, is also con-
178 nected with a new-fashioned fear of divorce. The mind of the modern adoles-
581 cent vacillates between the ideal of an abiding marital relationship based on
586

152 * Due perhaps to the greater importance of their peers, sexual accomplishments have now become a frequent topic of conversation and a matter for boasting among modern adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

love and the image of the traditional Amhara marriage, likely as not to end in divorce. This sort of concern was expressed in a revealing way in the following statement by a twenty-year-old college student: 883* 581 586 178 [152]

> The main thing I want in my wife is good character. Beauty is not so important. Of course she will be an excellent cook. But mostly I am concerned that she be the *right* one for me; I do not want to get divorced. But you can't really know if she is the right one until after ten years of married life. If after having about five or six children it turns out troublesome, I will have to leave her. A person cannot go on living that way.

In some instances, ironically, this quest for the perfect marriage leads to a rejection of the very institution of marriage itself. Seven per cent of the students questioned indicated that they do not want to get married eventually—either because they "could never afford it," they "would be happier living single," or they just *"do not want to enter a relation that will end in divorce."* Thus at a time when the stability and warmth of family life are needed more than ever, the very possibility of family is doubted. 883* 178 581 589

Some Ethiopian students blame the deteriorated family and an alleged increase in divorce in their country on the impact of Western civilization. True, the introduction of the Western concept of marriage and of the rudiments of a modern occupational system have dislocated the traditional arrangements for marriage; and other related problems, to be discussed in the next chapter, plague the Western-educated elite. But Western civilization has also developed resources to begin to cope with analogous problems in its own societies, and perhaps it is not too soon to acquaint Ethiopia's youth with some of these: for example, the recent developments in man's understanding of the dynamics of marriage as well as more sophisticated conceptions of the ideal and importance of family life in modern society. 581 177

CULTURAL ORIENTATION

A generational conflict manifests itself further with respect to questions of belief, taste, and value. Because of differences on such issues, students and their parents have grown far apart. The more traditionalist of the older generation refer to the modern youth as *ya-sĭmmĭntaññā shi lĭjjotch* ("children of the eighth millennium"); that is, of that corrupt time the Amhara believe will precede the destruction of the world. The latter, in turn, refer to the old-fashioned as ignorant, uncivilized, sometimes even "savage." 561

Yet, as we have been suggesting, this conflict is by no means total. Amhara adolescents are too deeply attached to many aspects of their traditional culture to engage in wholesale rebellion. Because of strict childhood training they remain basically respectful toward their elders. In addition, they often prefer to champion their own traditions in the spirit of a freshly excited nationalism. 883* 561 178

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding [882] detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indica- [128] tion of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

*883 *Religion.*—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian 771 students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "reli- 178 gion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

795 Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as 771 permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches 178 and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

883 It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the 771 cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether. 178 Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer de- [771] pendent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to [771] adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of [795] the various missions in Ethiopia. In recent years a third alternative has fired

* In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the imagination of some other students: attempting to reform the Orthodox Church from within. This has been done within the framework of the Orthodox Students Association, which will be discussed further in chapter vii. 883* 771 795 178

Science.—Of all the aspects of Western culture to which they have been exposed, Ethiopia's students have been most receptive to the teachings of natural science. They tend to regard it as the most important single benefit which Ethiopia can gain from Western civilization. After religion, morals, and manners, "science" is the response students give most often to the question: "What specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?" 883* 177 815

TABLE 8 883* 771 178

EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS OBSERVE TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Practice	Secondary School (per cent)	College (per cent)
Follow the fasts:		
All the time	38	16
Most of the time	26	23
Sometimes	27	24
Not at all	9	37
Go to church (mosque):		
More than once a week	9	2
Once a week	59	40
Less than once a week	25	36
Not at all	7	22
Bow to church (mosque):		
Always	28	9
Some/most of the time	50	38
Not at all	22	53
Pray:		
Twice or more daily	64	40
Once a day	22	23
Once or twice a week	6	14
Once or twice a month	5	10
Not at all	3	13
Number	(485)	(195)

Disagreement on such questions as the nature of solar eclipses, the descent of man, and the etiology of disease is common between the modern adolescents and their own parents. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the scientific imagination has yet displaced traditional thought patterns in the minds of Ethiopian students, or that scientific beliefs have fully replaced [178]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 815 178 177 "superstitious" beliefs about the world. Concerning this latter issue we are fortunate to have a substantial study carried out by Dr. Edith Lord during 1956–57—a study of the beliefs of some 1,250 Ethiopian students and teachers.[22]

[125] The subjects of this study were asked to mark as true or false a list of 132 unscientific beliefs commonly held by Ethiopians. These beliefs dealt with nature and devils, health and disease, danger and death. In spite of a measurable trend toward increased disbelief in the unscientific statements as the level of schooling increased, it was found that a significant number of these statements were accepted by a majority both of the post-elementary students and of the Ethiopian teachers. Thus, 56 items were believed by half or more of the 451 secondary students in the sample; 34 items by half or more of the 96 teachers; 9 items by half or more of the 61 student nurses and first-aid workers; and 6 of the items by half or more of the 29 college freshmen. Table 9 shows some of those unscientific beliefs most commonly subscribed to by secondary school students. These particular items are of interest for two additional reasons. The first five of them were among the beliefs held by *a majority of the twenty-nine college freshmen.* The first and the last, moreover, are among those items which showed an *increasing* frequency of belief with an increase in education, from the first four primary grades, through the second four grades, to the secondary level.

TABLE 9

UNSCIENTIFIC BELIEFS ACCEPTED BY SECONDARY STUDENTS

Item No.	Belief	Percentage of Secondary Students Holding the Belief
53	Certain mineral waters can cure stomach trouble by causing a person to vomit worms, sometimes frogs or toads	88
35	There are some skillful persons who can summon the devil at will	87
102	Too much charity leads to madness	74
58	A child will grow better if the nerves are removed from under his back teeth	68
84	If you go into a room which has been closed for a long time, you will be attacked by Satan	57
78	A man who has skill in stopping rains must not eat or drink while he is performing the ceremony to stop rain, or he will be unsuccessful	64
	Number	(451)

[125] In my own questionnaire, administered three years after Dr. Lord's re-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

search and only to the highest grades of secondary school and college, three 883* questions regarding unscientific beliefs were included. In a pilot study of 815 sixty secondary school seniors and juniors, 42 per cent held the belief that "a 178 person can be made sick by the evil eye of a *budā*," and 33 per cent believed 177 that "too much learning results in madness." To the one question asked of 125 my entire sample: "Do you believe that some learned *dabtarā* can cause rain to fall or stop?," 16 per cent of 500 secondary and 7 per cent of 200 college seniors and juniors said "Yes."

This persistence among the educated youth of traditional beliefs which run 883* counter to the consensus of modern scientists has been attributed by Lord to 815 the inadequacies of the Ethiopian school system. This is as might be expected, 871 inasmuch as most Ethiopian teachers have had relatively little education 178 themselves and the curriculum has necessarily been somewhat improvised and 177 incomplete. Officials of the Ministry of Education have labored to overcome these deficiencies, and certain changes were in fact made in consequence of Lord's study which aim at combating the more dysfunctional of the prevailing superstitions.

It seems likely, however, that certain irrational dispositions are also in- 121 volved here, dispositions to maintain the unscientific beliefs in spite of im- 815 provements in teaching methods and materials. One would predict this on the 178 basis of general sociological understanding of the consequences of rapid social 177 change. The disruption of the traditional belief systems brought about by the sudden dissemination of scientific beliefs inevitably creates insecurity, and a common reaction to such insecurity is to cling with increased tenacity to some of the old-fashioned beliefs which are closely identified with the traditional culture.[23]

One area in which this defensive "revivalism" can be observed in Ethiopia 178 is that of medicine. Many Ethiopians who have received modern secondary 75 education maintain that Western medicine, while useful in many cases, repre- 815 sents only one possible approach to the problem of sickness and health.[24] 177 Thus, fifty-seven per cent of the secondary students questioned asserted that traditional Ethiopian medicines are effective all or most of the time, although such therapies include the eating of rancid butter to cure malaria or drinking holy water to cure serious functional disorders. Dr. Lord herself has reported an episode which throws much light on the psychology of this reaction:

> An Ethiopian colleague, a former teacher, warned me against drinking water in a certain provincial town on penalty of my catching malaria. He was challenged thus: "You are one of the better educated persons in Ethiopia; don't you know the cause of malaria?" He quickly, and eruditely, gave all the known scientific facts about malaria. Then he added, "You people from the United States (and the United Nations) think that this (the scientif-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians
815 know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the
177 water in places where the Anopheles breed."[25]
[175]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

*883 *Taste.*—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from ex-
177 treme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring
178 both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions.
[262] Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward
[272] Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages
[273] are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

*883 With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in
264 that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their
177 hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer
178 eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

*883 On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have
291 sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But
177 because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and
178 using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

*883 In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according
517 to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are pre-
53 ferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more
177 popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of
178
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Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[26] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 177 178 [535] [533] [276] cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

*883 177 184 Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

*883 517 178 177

AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women	85	15	0	(700)
Food	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry	67	26	7	(700)
Music	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†	40	58	2	(700)
Dance	38	56	6	(700)
Drink	24	56	20	(700)
Painting	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gurshá*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically identical.

*883 177 [184] school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

*883 577 178 *Morals.*—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

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the government schools. The weakening of family controls by the new school environment has slightly reduced the importance of loyalty to kin in the students' scheme of things, and has significantly reduced the moral authority of religious customs. A third sphere of norms—respect and obedience toward elders and persons of authority—is maintained by the hierarchical school system, officially headed by the Emperor himself. However, the ambiguous status of foreign teachers and their frequent inability or unwillingness to play the traditional authoritarian role tends to weaken this, for the possibility of informal, even joking, relations with foreign teachers gives Amhara students their first taste of a more relaxed relation to authority figures. (Unprepared by any other experience for such a relationship, their reaction tends to be one of exploiting the permissive teacher as much as possible while at the same time losing respect for him.)

Finally, the expectation of physical stamina and aggressiveness in the Amhara *goramsä* is carried over into the school setting but with definite modification. It prevails in the feeling that one must not tolerate insults or be cowardly. It also persists in altered form in the new pattern of athletic activities instituted by the schools. On the other hand, the greater camaraderie expected among schoolmates means that aggression must also be carefully controlled. An indication of the psychological difficulties to which the crowded yet sociable conditions of school life have given rise appears in response to the question: "What is the worst thing that could justifiably be said against you?" The most frequent sort of answer to this question relates to unchecked aggression: "Quick to anger," "quarrelsome," "ill tempered."

Of the new moral values inculcated by the school system, some of the main ones appear to be self-development via education; honesty; sportsmanship; and social responsibility.

Ethiopians often speak of the "value" (*ïqem*) of education, meaning thereby the path to a well-paying job and a higher standard of living. But one would be mistaken to suppose that this explanation exhausts the meaning that education has for the modern adolescents. The freeing of their imagination and the exercise of previously unknown intellectual capacities prove themselves thrilling experiences for each new class of students. And their most preferred pastime is "reading," their most popular films are educational ones. A number of students spontaneously declared, when asked about the real reason they go to school, "to learn about the world" and "to learn about humanity."

In the traditional culture of Abyssinia, learning was highly valued, to be sure. But its task was to produce a class of literati capable of transmitting the hallowed beliefs and symbols. Education for the sake of inquiry as such or for personal development was never permitted in its program. If the value of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 871 178 this new sort of education exists but dimly in the minds of the older students, that is largely because the school system has made grades and diplomas the end of scholastic activity.

*883 577 178 871 The fact that the value of truth is to some extent institutionalized in the schools—at least in the demand for correct answers to examination questions—gives honesty a novel importance for the modern adolescents. It does in fact appear that "honesty" is the most highly valued of the six character traits presented in the questionnaire. (See Table 11.) Numerous teachers, however,

*883 577

TABLE 11

QUALITIES PREFERRED BY STUDENTS AS REPRESENTING THE BEST KINDS OF CHARACTER

Quality	Per Cent Checking Quality as Either First or Second Choice		
	Secondary School		College Males
	Males	Females	
Honest	65	73	86
Polite	27	30	18
Smiling, sociable	26	43	28
Patriotic	22	10	19
Kind, generous	21	10	12
Humble, modest	10	15	21
Number	(390)	(38)	(190)

*883 577 178 871 report that the students tend to prevaricate on every convenient occasion. This tendency is the product of a tradition in which the culture hero is not George Washington, who "could not tell a lie," but Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, master of deceit, and of a life outside the classroom in which equivocation and deception are the rule. The effort of Ethiopian students to shake the legacy of wax and gold and incorporate the more austere ideal of truth for truth's sake is fraught with pathos. Some of them have frankly conceded that the task belongs to another generation, by naming "honesty" as the thing they want their children most to have that they did not have.

Another ideal which the Ethiopian students have adopted—slowly, but with growing success—is that of sportsmanship or fair play. In Amhara culture the goal, not the manner of fighting, is what is important. The government school system, however, has taught students to play fairly in accord with

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

fixed rules and to respect their opponents. Until a few years ago, the imperfect acceptance of these norms was shown by the frequent fights between opposing school teams following soccer and basketball games. But gradually a new tradition of athletic activity has been building up in the schools, and with it the related norms have started to gain greater acceptance. 883* 577 178 871

Still another value that the school experience has promoted is that of social responsibility. Most students are very grateful to the government for having provided them with schooling and related benefits, and they feel a keen obligation to show their gratitude by serving their country. They have also become conscious of the great needs of their people for economic and social development. In Amhara society, service was expected in behalf of the family and, except for mass levies in time of warfare, usually stopped there. The modern adolescents are still mindful of their obligations to their parents and siblings, but have now included broader ideals of social service in their moral orientation. When asked what they expect to bring most satisfaction in their lives, the students named "improvement of local community" more often than any other category except "career or occupation." (See Table 4.) When asked what they would do with a million dollars, more than a third answered in terms of purely social enterprises, such as building schools and hospitals, helping the poor and orphaned; and many others indicated private enterprises with specifically social purposes, such as improving agriculture and building factories to provide employment. 883* 641 577 185 [593]

It is difficult to determine how deeply the value of social responsibility has been internalized. In their public declarations, at any rate, the students wax eloquent in propounding ideals of good citizenship. They urge themselves to prepare for introducing modern ways to the uneducated; to return to the villages, integrate themselves with the old society, and lead them gently to better ways; to fight discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and social class; to solve the problem of corruption and bribery in the government; and to promote national solidarity.

Politics.—The Amhara adolescent has little occasion to develop specifically political attitudes, since his customary political world has been coterminous with subordination to legitimate local and national authorities, and defense of his country against invaders. Unless he was the son of a nobleman involved in struggles for power, there have rarely been any political issues to engage his attention. 883* 66

A host of issues, domestic and international, have by contrast been thrust upon the modern adolescent. Yet in comparison with students from the other countries of Africa and the Middle East, his political orientation is relatively undeveloped. Ethiopian students at regional or international gatherings of students have in the past tended to feel somewhat out of place, for the polit-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 66 ical wit and activism displayed by students from other countries has embarrassed their cautious dispositions.

There are three reasons for this relative lack of politicization of the Ethiopian students. One is that, having maintained her ancient independence [648] throughout the "scramble for Africa," Ethiopia entered the twentieth century as an independent nation; and five years of Italian rule were not sufficient to shake her spirit. Ethiopian students have thus not had to participate in the anti-imperialist movement, the great school for political activism in the colonial areas.

[571] A second factor is the deeply rooted habit of total subordination to any [157] legitimate authority. Because of this orientation there is a persisting disposition to relegate concern for all political questions to the highest authorities. [577] Nearly two-thirds of the secondary students and a third of the college stu- [829] dents maintain that one should always obey the order of a superior, arguing that "obedience is a virtue," "things would not go right otherwise," and "the Bible says so."

*883 66 641 The third reason for the almost apolitical posture of Ethiopian students has been the absence of opportunities for political expression in their country. African students from British colonies have in the past been surprised to find that their colonial situation admitted far more freedom of speech and press than Ethiopia. Teachers are expected to keep anything remotely connected with Ethiopian politics out of the classroom, and the editors are expected to keep them out of the newspapers. Nor have the students been permitted to form any kind of politically relevant associations. Even casual discussion of domestic political problems among friends has been curtailed because of the all-pervading fear of government informers.

*883 66 177 All this has not prevented Ethiopian students from being affected to a moderate degree by the libertarian and egalitarian ideals of the West. The teaching of European history in secondary school, evaluation of students' performance without respect to class or tribal affiliation, and the exercise of electing student officers in the colleges have acted to leaven the political imagination of the students. Many of them thus ventured a degree of political *883 66 829 criticism in their anonymous questionnaires. Forty-three per cent indicated disapproval of the existing differences between "big men" and the common people. Thirty-nine per cent were critical of the degree of control exerted by the government, of which group two-thirds felt that governmental controls are too strict (e.g., not permitting free expression), and one-third felt they were not strict enough (e.g., with respect to corruption and provincial administration).

*883 668 669 The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, jarred the Addis Ababa college students into an unprecedented state of political activity.[27] In response

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to the rebel leaders' appeal for a show of public support, hundreds of students 883* staged a demonstration on behalf of the coup. Except for occasional school 668 strikes in the past, this was the first time that Ethiopian students had ever 669 taken part in any sort of organized political process. The novelty of the experience was reflected in the confusion on many faces as they marched through the streets of the capital, chanting a militant refrain and carrying placards that celebrated "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" and "Our Country's Peaceful Change." For some, the experience was quite unreal; it was as though they were behaving thus because that is how one is supposed to behave at a time of revolution. Not a few of the participants actually regretted the coup but went along because, as one put it: "The coup has taken place; my friends are for it; so what is one to do?"

Even so, there was a moment of genuine political engagement for all when the student demonstrators proceeded to the army headquarters with the vain plea to forestall civil violence and join the new regime installed by the Imperial Bodyguard. Though they were turned away by bayonets, that moment gave the students the intoxicating taste of direct political expression. Subsequently, the army's abrupt suppression of the rebels left these students in an awkward position. All who took part in the demonstration were required to write letters of apology to the Emperor as a condition of being readmitted to study. They did so, and returned to school; but they have never been the same again. Though on the surface they appear to have reverted to the apolitical, passive orientation of the pre-coup days, occasional oratorical contests and poetry readings have given expression to a sharpened criticism of the government and greater restlessness in the student body.

Because of the relative absence of information and discussion pertaining to 883* domestic political questions heretofore, Ethiopian students have tended to 829 have slightly more knowledge and interest regarding international politics. 721 On the general question of war and peace they seem to be influenced by the high value given to warfare in traditional Ethiopia. As many as forty per cent of all the students consider war "sometimes a good thing." This sentiment is somewhat stronger among the secondary school students than among the college students, but even the latter show a higher percentage of choice for this response than any of the national groups in the Gillespie-Allport study—except perhaps Egypt. (See Table 12.)

In their attitudes toward the "big three" world powers, the Ethiopian stu- 883* dents seem to be most favorably disposed toward the United States, secondly 829 toward the Soviet Union, and thirdly toward Great Britain. (See Table 13.) The United States is liked because it "helps other countries," has a high standard of living, and is "advanced in civilization"; while it is disliked because of its color discrimination and its being "aggressive," "rude," "boast-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 829

ful," and "loud-mouthed." England is liked because it is "highly civilized" and has a "good form of government"; but it is disesteemed because of its waning power, on the one hand, and its "cunning" and "treachery," and being imperialist, on the other. Russia is admired because of its power, its achievements in science, and its rapid attainment of "civilization." It is disliked, on the other hand, for being "aggressive" and "fostering war," and because of its "bad form of government" and its "atheism."

*883 829 721 171

TABLE 12

ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS FROM ETHIOPIA AND SEVEN OTHER COUNTRIES TOWARD WAR*

Country	Institution	Sex	War Is			Number
			Needless and Preventable (per cent)	A Necessary Evil (per cent)	Sometimes a Good Thing (per cent)	
Ethiopia	Secondary schools	M	46	11	43	(392)
	Secondary schools	F	46	18	36	(39)
	Colleges	M	45	20	35	(199)
Egypt	Higher Training College	M	31	34	34	(29)
	Women Teachers' Institute	F	39	35	26	(31)
France	University of Bordeaux	M	65	26	9	(105)
		F	74	26	0	(23)
Italy	Catholic University of the Sacred Heart	M	61	26	13	(39)
		F	46	44	10	(37)
Japan	Secondary school and colleges, Kyoto	M	72	16	8	(95)
		F	58	37	4	(119)
Mexico	National University of Mexico	M	51	23	26	(106)
		F	58	24	18	(103)
New Zealand	Victoria University College	M	72	16	12	(74)
		F	72	12	16	(51)
United States	Miami University	M	69	22	9	(112)
		F	64	33	3	(91)

* The Japanese data appear in Stoetzel, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
For the data on the other countries I am greatly indebted to a personal communication from Professor James Gillespie.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

In these attitudes one may note the persistence of such traditional valuations as the esteem for power, the stress on religion, and the concern about polite and dignified behavior, alongside such modernist valuations as the esteem for civilization (*selṭānē*) and science. With regard to the emerging world power of Africa, however, the students have been rapidly coming to reject the traditional Abyssinian viewpoint, which looks with disdain upon the Negroid peoples of Africa as racially and culturally inferior.

As recently as a decade ago, a group of Ethiopian college students responded with ridicule and evident disdain to an illustrated ethnographic account of some East African tribes. But in the late 1950's, due to the growing

TABLE 13

ATTITUDES OF ETHIOPIAN STUDENTS TOWARD THE "BIG THREE" POWERS

Classification of Comments	England (per cent)	U.S.A. (per cent)	U.S.S.R. (per cent)
Positive.....	32	59	47
Negative.....	37	19	26
Neutral.....	11	5	6
No answer....	20	17	21
Number..	(640)	(700)	(662)

prominence of the African independence movement and the decision of the Ethiopian government to take more interest in African affairs, the pan-African sentiment began to invade the heretofore aloof highland plateau of Ethiopia. The attendance in Ethiopian colleges of students from other African countries and the growing number of pan-African meetings in Addis Ababa have promoted this trend. Consequently a number of Ethiopian students now follow with growing interest the developments in other African countries, and not a few indicated that their identification with Africa as a whole was stronger than their identification with Ethiopia. All but 8 per cent of the 700 students questioned: "What do you think about Africa?" had some response that showed concern, whether sympathy for African independence and getting rid of the Europeans (28 per cent), or sensitivity about Africa's "undeveloped" and "uncivilized" state and its need to work hard (33 per cent), or pride and confidence in Africa's resources and future (24 per cent).

So deeply rooted a sentiment as prejudice against Negroid Africans cannot quickly be willed away. It does seem, however, that the emergence of the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 829 186 178 new African nations is proving to be an effective agency for reducing such prejudices among the students. The broader political identity afforded by pan-Africanism may in turn be promoting a more genuine national feeling among the younger educated Ethiopians, a feeling of solidarity that begins to encompass all the ethnic groups in their land.

*883 829 Still another sphere in which the Ethiopian students have had some room for the development of political values has been the study of history. The students were therefore asked to name the persons in Ethiopian and in world history whom they most liked and disliked, and to explain why.

The three most liked figures in Ethiopian history were Haile Selassie, mentioned by 36 per cent of the respondents; Tēwodros (30 per cent); and Menelik (16 per cent). Named much less frequently were Yohānnes (mostly by Tigre students); military heroes of Menelik's day, and of the resistance during the Italian occupation; and church figures, especially Abuna Petros (the great Orthodox martyr of the occupation).

*883 829 643 The reasons given for naming Haile Selassie include the wide variety of respects for which his reign has been praised. He is liked for uniting Ethiopia, supporting education, fighting for the country's freedom, introducing modern civilization, and generally "helping the country." The reasons given extend to expressions of very personal attachment, such as "he gives me education," "he supplies everything," and "he is my guardian."

The reasons given for liking Tēwodros or Menelik best are more circumscribed, and they are balanced by a number of other responses in which these two emperors are named as the most *disliked* persons in Ethiopian history (Tēwodros, 7 per cent; Menelik, 4 per cent). Tēwodros is liked chiefly because of his bravery and his attempt to unite the nation, while he is disliked because of his cruelty. Menelik is liked chiefly because of his defense of the country at Adowa and his efforts to modernize Ethiopia and introduce education; and he is disliked for having sold parts of the country to Europeans. Yohānnes is mentioned about the same number of times in both categories (2 per cent): positively, for his courage in battle and his Christian zeal and, negatively, for his intolerance in persecuting non-Christians.

*883 829 Lījj Iyāsu (11 per cent) and Ahmad Grāñ (8 per cent) are the most disliked figures in Ethiopian history. They are associated with specific offenses: Iyāsu with being an "incompetent ruler," "encouraging Islam," and "chasing after women," and Grāñ with burning churches and massacring Christians. Three other persons in this category are Sultan Ibrahim (5 per cent), for selling the port of Assab; Dajāzmātch Haile Selassie Gugsa (4 per cent), for fighting on the side of the Italians in 1935; and Yodit (2 per cent), the legendary queen who is said to have sacked Aksum in the tenth century.

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FIG. 20.—*Traditional (church) school: student huts*

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FIG. 21.—*Traditional school: learning to read*

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FIG. 22.—*Traditional school: learning zémā from master*

[P 142-A]

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FIG. 23.—*Clergy and government school students observing national holiday*

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FIG. 24.—*Inside a secondary school library*

[P. 142-B]

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As many as 44 per cent of the students failed to name anyone they disliked in Ethiopian history. This may be attributed in part to their meager knowledge of Ethiopian history, perhaps still more to their fear of expressing themselves honestly on such a point even in an anonymous questionnaire. But doubtless another reason was that presented by the 2 per cent of the students who wrote: "[I dislike] none; all did good." 883* 829

If the responses on Ethiopian history are analyzed with respect to the qualities or achievements of the men concerned, we find that military virtue —expressed as "brave," "defeated many enemies," or "fought for Ethiopia"— is mentioned far more often than any other (27 per cent). In second place are actions related to the modernization of Ethiopia, and the third most frequent category is that of unifying the nation. The most frequently mentioned negative categories were anti-Christian actions (burning churches, converting to Islam), cruelty, treason, and selling Ethiopian territory.

A different pattern of response is apparent in the comments on world historical personages. The interest in military prowess is still there, but not as prominent (19 per cent). It appears chiefly in the preference for Napoleon and, occasionally, for Alexander the Great. Themes of national unification and modernization occur very rarely. It is the general category of humanitarian qualities and achievements that dominates these responses (40 per cent), expressed variously as "freeing the slaves," "promoting equality," "working for peace," showing kindness or generosity, possessing wisdom or creative genius. Thus it is that Abraham Lincoln stands out as the most admired figure in world history for the Ethiopian students (22 per cent), and that following him, Napoleon, and Peter the Great, Mahatma Gandhi stands in fourth place.

Responses concerning the most disliked figure in world history are consistent with this tendency to transcend the sentiment of militant nationalism. The main charges against the villains of world history have to do with cruelty, slaughter, provocation of war (including, of course, the attack on Ethiopia), and despotism, while vices related to betraying one's nation are scarcely mentioned. The names which dominate these replies are Hitler (22 per cent), Mussolini (21 per cent), Nero (8 per cent), and Stalin (2 per cent). It appears, then, that the study of world history may have the effect of strengthening the humanitarian side of the students' political orientation by exposing them to a different set of ideals and models.

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF MODERN ADOLESCENCE

883* 871 178

The pattern of adolescence described in this section came quickly into being and has already undergone some substantial changes. It is, in effect, the pattern of the 1950's. The educational system before and just after the occupation was, structurally, an extension of the old pattern of schooling sons of noble-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 871 178 men and outstanding commoners in the vicinity of the royal court. But with the importation of hundreds of foreign teachers, the establishment of an extensive system of secondary schools and colleges, and the provision of economic support for thousands of post-elementary students, a real structural change came about. Although the school system remained completely subordinate to the throne, it introduced a number of processes that had a dynamic of their own.

*883 121 178 As we have seen, these new socialization processes have subjected the modern adolescents to many sorts of conflict and strain. They have been placed in conflict with their parents, and hence within themselves, on the basic issues of work and, particularly, marriage. They have been subjected to the simultaneous appeal of traditional and modern patterns in virtually all aspects of culture. They have been forced to make choices in numerous areas, while their traditional counterparts have customarily been prevented from making any kind of choice at all.

It might seem that such a situation would breed a troubled generation, distraught and disoriented, knowing what we do about the psychological hazards of rapid culture change. And indeed, among the modern adolescents of the fifties, one might find classical cases of anomie and identity diffusion, boys who confess, "Nothing seems worthwhile to me . . . I am confused, being brought up as I was on the traditional beliefs without questioning and then suddenly being forced to ask questions," or, "The problem of choosing the work I should go into is my only real problem right now, but because of it I find it hard to make decisions about anything. If this suffering is the price of freedom, I am not sure it is worth the price."

Such cases, however, were the exception, not the rule. Most of the students were working hard to get ahead in the world or enjoying their newly acquired freedom and camaraderie. Almost all our respondents had ready answers concerning the sort of work they want to go into, and what they [828] would do if they could have any wish granted. Comparing themselves with their elders, they presented a positive self-image. They regarded themselves as more "civilized," "well built," and "generous" than their parents' generation, albeit somewhat lazier and less polite; and in comparison with Ethiopians a decade older, saw themselves as "better educated," "more clever," "more adventurous," and better able to "enjoy life." Nearly all of them (92 per cent) said that they felt either "enthusiastic" or "hopeful" about their [181] personal future. So one could characterize the Ethiopian post-elementary students of the fifties as relatively buoyant, clear-headed, self-confident, and enjoying their situation of culture contact and change far more than suffering it. How may this be explained?

[643] One great source of their strength was a sense of dependence on the Emperor. As founder of the Ethiopian school system, Haile Selassie has

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appeared to the students as the source of their new goods; of their learning, 883*
health, and well-being. Because of a feeling that "he supplies everything" 121
and "he is my guardian," students of all grades have been among the most 178
sincere and enthusiastic supporters of Haile Selassie. So their adoption of 643
Western patterns has from the outset been legitimated by the highest tradi- [177]
tional authority, and the harshness of the culture clash has been softened by the symbolization of both tradition and modernity in the Imperial Person. Here the traditional pattern of "functional deviance" re-asserts itself. The 883*
adolescent rebels against the traditional demands of his parents, but expends 121
that deviant energy on behalf of legitimate symbols of the national society. 178

Related to this was a strong sense of national purposiveness. *Agarēnennā* 883*
negusēn tammrē iredālhu ("Having studied, I will serve my country and 121
my king")—this was the motto of most Ethiopian students in the forties and 641
fifties. The conspicuous needs of their country provided clear goals in terms 178
of which students felt they were preparing themselves.

Still another motive force was the need for personal justification. The many 883*
students who in a sense deserted their home villages or families in order to 121
spend years in school carried with them an ambition eventually to show the 178
folks back home that they were right after all. This involved the conviction 871
that going to school was the right, at times the righteous, thing: a blind faith that simply by continuing along the road of education they would make good in the world and return home some day as a sort of hero. Here, too, is an echo of the old deviant pattern: the renegade returning home, after many years, as a successful churchman or warlord.

The economic situation, finally, was encouraging for students. It seemed [464]
for many years that advanced training, including study abroad, would be available for whoever qualified, and that the demand for educated personnel was so great that the job opportunities for students would be endless.

By 1961, however, all these sources of adolescent morale—royal legitima- 883*
tion, national purpose, personal justification, and economic opportunity—had 121
been to some extent undercut. Some of the changing circumstances have al- 178
ready been referred to. The effect of the rebellion of December, 1960, and its 871
aftermath was to weaken the tie between Haile Selassie and the post-elemen- 643
tary students. With his moral authority somewhat undermined, the students could no longer use him to symbolize a conflict-free transition to modernity. Nor could they any longer count on him to "supply everything" indefinitely: in the summer of 1962 the Emperor announced the immediate suspension of room and board benefits for the students of the University College.

The students' outlook has further been rendered less sanguine by the con- 883*
fusion attending the political crisis of the sixties. They no longer feel the 121
keen sense of national purpose, to serve "country and king." Their ideals in 178
this regard were already weakening before the rebellion by virtue of increased [641]

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*883 121 178 [871] [183] awareness of the political realities in the Ethiopian government. They had also begun to doubt the transcendent efficacy of the educational process itself after observing the behavior of those educated Ethiopians who went before them and inevitably became their ideals. The violation of various traditional and modern norms by the latter, and their evident demoralization, raised many questions in the minds of the students.

*883 121 178 871 464 Finally, the students were made more anxious by a general constricting of opportunity. Increased numbers in the school system meant a steady intensification of the competition to gain and hold on to a place in secondary school and college, particularly since 1959. The rapid filling of jobs by the educated youth and steadily growing numbers of unemployed youth began to create anxieties about finding work in the future.

*883 121 178 [873] [162] From the viewpoint of the modern adolescents, then, a very supportive and stimulating environment in the fifties has changed to a somewhat threatening and confused environment in the sixties. It is in this decade that Ethiopia's leaders of the future, that tiny fraction of one per cent of the population who reach secondary school, are coming to experience adolescence as a real normative crisis. At a time when, in the highly modernized society of the United States, observers like Friedenberg charge that the adolescent condition is becoming obsolete—that scope is no longer afforded the young person for exploration and discovery of an authentic self[28]—in the transitional state of Ethiopia this condition is being thrust on the youth. The decisions they make now, the identities they forge, will largely determine the extent to which reason and creativity will have a place in Ethiopia's future.

*883 871 121 178 The effort of the Ethiopian government to provide a modern education for some of Ethiopia's adolescents illustrates a principle discussed in another context by Karl Mannheim, namely, the characterization of youth as a latent sociological resource which must be mobilized when any social system seeks to change itself. It is a resource analogous to the latent energy reserves which are available to biological organisms when they must make a fresh adjustment to their environment.[29] Thus far the effort to mobilize the resources of Ethiopia's youth in behalf of modernization has proceeded chiefly through a pattern of increased *differentiation:* establishing a structure of secondary socialization separate from that of the traditional structures and thereby transmitting new beliefs, skills, and values to the youth. As yet, relatively little has been done with respect to the problems of devising modes of *integration* commensurate with these new differentiated patterns. The analyses of this chapter suggest the presence of what might be called "integration gaps" on at least three levels. On the level of the individual personality, there is the problem of synthesizing the various aspects of traditional and modern culture which have been transmitted to Ethiopian adolescents through diverse sources. Inasmuch as the external supports which cushioned these conflicts in the fifties are no

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longer so secure, the adolescent individual has been thrown more on his own. He can only be helped to work through these conflicts by a transformed educational program, one which educates for self-education and seeks to enlighten students concerning the complex realities of economic development and culture change. On the level of relating youth to a modernizing occupational system, there is the problem of guiding young people into and through the relevant educational programs and helping them to find appropriate work roles once trained. On the level of planning for the whole society there is the additional problem of relating the number of individuals being trained in various fields at any period to the priority requirements of a national development program.

883* 121 178 891

This last issue raises questions which for the most part lie outside the scope of this book. Yet there is one point concerning the orientation of Ethiopian students which is of immediate relevance: the disjunction between the aspiration of modern-educated Ethiopians to live in Addis Ababa and work in a government office, and the nation's needs for trained workers in more directly productive fields and for those who will work in the provinces. For at the same time that Ethiopia's youth are being trained in modern skills, they are being exposed to modern pleasures; and these—the enjoyment of modern amusements, the company of other educated people, and the excitement of proximity to centers of national power and international commerce—are concentrated in Addis Ababa. At the same time that they are being educated with modern beliefs, they are being primed for a new kind of social mobility; and this channel is concentrated in the governmental bureaucracy—the nesting ground of Ethiopia's new elites. Conflict between these new interests and the nation's deepest needs, endemic in all transitional societies, poses an integrative challenge of the highest order.

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The Old and New Elites

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that character-
177 izes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary
178 Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

[433] In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels: coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal [671] realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The govern- [64] mental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious [795] [794] institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

121 This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratifi-
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178 cation.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive framework of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest. 121 56 178 181 [571]

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars. 565 554 [463]

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the merchant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Lowest in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns. 565 441 463 [186] 565 567 554 463

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior. 565 [181]

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565 During the reign of Haile Selassie, the infrastructure of Ethiopian society
178 has become more differentiated. A large standing army, an air force, and a
463 small navy have been recruited and trained by foreign military missions. The
[701] modernization of transport and communication has produced a sizable class of semiskilled operatives—truck drivers, airline employees, telephone operators, typesetters, etc. The expansion of government has produced a legion of clerks. In the towns tertiary occupational roles, like salesmen and barbers, have come into being, and the establishment of factories has engendered a small industrial labor force.

All such people tend to differ from the traditional lower classes in their relative enthusiasm for *selṭānē* ("civilization"). Still more enthusiastic are those who have had more intimate and prolonged exposure to the fruits of *selṭānē:* domestic servants in *faranj* homes; students of the secondary schools and colleges; Imperial Bodyguard troops who served in the Korean campaign and recently in the Congo; and highland Eritreans, whose experience under sixty years of Italian colonial administration has rendered them far more modernized than people of other provinces.

178 Similarly, the reign of Haile Selassie has witnessed the emergence of new
571 elite groups. A "new nobility" of government officials and urban plutocrats
554 has taken place beside the old. In addition, a nascent intelligentsia has at-
565 tained a precarious high status, resting mostly on the esteem of students, some military officers, and resident Westerners. The integrative dilemma of Ethiopia today has more to do with conflicts among and within its various elites than with tribal enmities or masses in revolt.*

643 Hovering over these four groups, kindred with each but superior to all,
571 has been the personality of the present emperor. Indeed, the history of
565 Ethiopia in the last four decades has for the most part been the story of Haile Selassie's efforts to direct and control the destinies of the old and new elites. The considerable success with which he has done this is a tribute, not only to his own remarkable manipulative skills, but also to the majesty of the office which he possesses. The position of *negusa nagast* has traditionally monopolized the highest reaches of the Abyssinian system of social stratification; constituting, as it were, an elite of One.

THE TRADITIONAL ORDER

643 *The Lofty Throne*

The emperor comprises an elite in the original sense of the word, for to the Ethiopians he is Elect of God (*seyuma egziābhēr*) according to the conventional Ge'ez honorific.

* Although, as was suggested earlier, tribal and religious differences *may* generate new integrative crises in the future.

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conventional Ge'ez honorific. Sanctity of the imperial office is an antique theme, deriving apparently from pagan ideas of divine kingship which were transplanted from South Arabia in the first millennium B.C. along with other aspects of Sabaean culture.[1] But the working ideology which has upheld this conception during the period of Amhara hegemony draws on Semitic motifs of later origin, motifs which received their classic formulation in the fourteenth century national epic, *Kebra Nagast* (*The Glory of Kings*).

The effect of the *Kebra Nagast* is to make the Ethiopian emperor both physical descendant and spiritual successor to the kings of Israel. The genealogical tie is argued by the legendary union of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, whose offspring, Menelik I, is held to have fathered the line of royalty which allegedly ruled at Aksum and was restored in the thirteenth century. The transfer of religious mission is shown both in a prophetic dream attributed to Solomon, in which God's favor passes from Israel to Ethiopia, and in the story of Menelik's theft from Jerusalem of the most sacred symbol of the Judaic mission, the Ark of the Covenant.* Furthermore, while at the time the *Kebra Nagast* was written the Ethiopian monarch was presented as a friendly cousin of the "king of Rome"—an echo of the sixth-century alliance between Caleb of Ethiopia and Justin I of Byzantium[2]—thereafter he came to be regarded as successor to the latter as well, and hence the sole defender of the true Christian faith.

The Ethiopians have elaborated on this exalted conception of their monarchy in other literary forms.[3] In royal chronicles and hymns of praise which span seven centuries, the emperors are celebrated for superlative beauty and superhuman powers. In splendor of countenance they are likened to the sun; in awesomeness of power, to the lion; in religious character and divine force, to the kings of Israel and, at times, to God Himself.

In life as well as in literature the person of the emperor was clad with an aura of sanctity. Ethiopian subjects have had to prostrate themselves and refrain from lifting their eyes in his presence. An analogous show of deference was expected when they received royal messages from afar; the recipient had to hear the message outside his home, standing, and naked above the waist.[4] The emperors rarely permitted themselves to be seen in public, and were often secluded by curtains while eating or drinking. They were not addressed directly, but through an interlocutor. Zar'a Yā'qob, whose officers were said to have kissed the earth each time they heard the sound of his voice, carried the demand for social distance so far that pages attached to his court were not permitted to have contact with anybody from outside, and were put to death if they dared to fraternize with local inhabitants.[5]

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* The orthodox still maintain that the original ark containing the stone tablets of the Law is located at Aksum. It is symbolized by the *tābot* found in every Ethiopian church.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 17 Accession to the throne involved two rites, anointment by oil and bestowal of the crown. Authority to conduct these rites was vested in the Egyptian archbishop, the *abuna*. The formal coronation took place in a ceremony for which in former times it was expected that the parties repair to the ancient sanctuary of Aksum. The change in status brought about through [551] coronation was symbolized by the assumption of a new name, as, for example, Rās Tafari Makonnen became Haile Selassie I. The royal insignia included a ring, worn on the right ear; the royal flag, the staff of which bore a cross resting on a ball; and special drums, trumpets, and flutes.[6] Also included was a red silk parasol known as *zhān ṭelā* (origin of the present-day Amharic word for umbrella). When the emperor was in procession they included a white horse with small silver bells at his head, a silver shield, and a white headband of muslin or fine silk.[7]

Successors to the throne were not determined according to a fixed rule like primogeniture. Membership in the Solomonian line was normally a prerequisite, and the unsuccessful reign of Yoṣṭos (1711–16) demonstrates the hazards of rule when nc pretense to such affiliation could be maintained. Usually, however, there were several legitimate candidates for the position, and the absence of fixed procedures for choosing among them has meant that the death of an emperor was often a time of confusion and political improvisation. At times the monarch designated his successor and swore the grandees of the realm to an oath of support, as when Menelik named Līj Iyāsu; at times a single powerful lord, like Rās Mikā'ēl Sehul at Gondar, was the effective king-maker; at times the judgment and interests of a number of potentates, including on occasion the queen mother, were determinant.

The role of the emperor was largely symbolic, a quality which André Caquot has stressed.

> The king is guarantor of peace and prosperity for his entire country. Here the superhuman virtue attributed to the sovereign by the Ethiopian royal ideology manifests itself most clearly. It is not so much a question of his administering the country politically as it is that he guarantee order by his very presence and the virtue inherent in him.[8]

The idea that the mere presence of the monarch was a guarantee of civil order is reflected in the idiom *agara negus* ("country of a king"), which means a tranquil land. Related to this conception is the requirement that the body of the emperor be devoid of any physical defect or deformity, so that the well-being of the body politic may be properly symbolized.

But during most of Ethiopia's history the emperor was by no means merely an awesome figurehead, aloof from the works and turmoil of his realm. It was customary for him to serve the society actively in a number of ways. He had to organize the defense of the country and lead troops into battle—if

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

necessary, to die on the battlefield, as did Galāwdēwos, Yohānnes IV, and others. He had to maintain a minimum of political order, balancing off contending ambitions and subduing rebellious elements. Another important function was that of ultimate arbiter in judicial disputes.* As guardian of the church, moreover, he was active in endowing monasteries and churches and in resolving doctrinal disputes among the clergy.

To carry out these and related functions the emperor needed great wealth and political power. When the monarchy was intact he could command wealth from many sources: from the country-wide land tax (*gĭber*), in the form of honey, grain, or livestock, or such special fiscal assignments as saddles, plowshares, spears, ink, or tent pegs;* from assessed tithes on produce; in tribute from subject peoples, either in currency (gold, salt bars, etc.) or in kind; in revenues from traders; and from gifts from new appointees and hopeful office seekers. In theory, moreover, all the land of the empire belonged to its ruler; and, in fact, a good part of it was at his direct disposal, either for cultivation as royal estates or to distribute as compensation to those who served him.

The political power of the emperor was grounded in his command of troops supported by the royal bounty. In addition, he could command the troops of all the lords subject to his authority. Through frequent tours around the country he was able to reassert his hegemony from time to time in distant regions. But even from afar, a strong monarch could usually exert great control thanks to his authority to appoint or demote at a moment's notice any officer of the realm. As Alvares observed:

> No great lord of lands, if he is in them, can leave them, or set out for the Court on any account without being summoned by the [emperor]; and being summoned he will not fail to come for any reason. And when he sets out from the land of which he is the lord, he does not leave either wife or children or any property there, because he goes away in the expectation of never returning, since . . . [the emperor] gives when he pleases, and takes away when he pleases.[10]

The ideology of sacred monarchy served to legitimate theoretically boundless demands for wealth and power as well as to provide identity and morale for the body politic. It justified, too, occasional "deviant" behavior on the part of the monarch, virtually the only person with sufficient authority to innovate in this intensely conservative culture. The emperor has always been a primary agent of cultural innovation in Abyssinia, from the time of Ēzānā, who adopted Christianity in the fourth century; to Zar'a Yā'qob in the fifteenth

* To this day Haile Selassie devotes several hours a week to hearing court appeals in a session known as *chelot*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 century, who instituted a number of monthly holidays and prescribed new
17 liturgical texts; to Menelik, who introduced vaccination and the eucalyptus
[461] tree in the twentieth century. For more than a century now kings and emperors have attempted to combat the traditional Abyssinian repugnance for manual labor by themselves engaging in arduous physical work on numerous occasions.[11] Haile Selassie has followed a pattern with abundant precedents in introducing the many changes which have characterized his reign.[12]

As object of Abyssinia's highest esteem, symbol of its most cherished values, possessor of supreme wealth and power, and author of new norms, the emperor of Ethiopia thus qualifies as an elite in the more technical, sociological sense of the word as well as in its original sense of "being chosen."[13] Indeed, if more extreme interpretations of the emperor's significance are to be credited, he might even be viewed as the fountainhead of high status for all other elites. Thus Bruce, in a famous passage, declares:

> The Kings of Abyssinia are above all laws. They are supreme in all causes, ecclesiastical and civil; the land and persons of all their subjects are equally their property and every inhabitant of the kingdom is born their slave; *if he bears a higher rank it is by the king's gift; for his nearest relations are accounted nothing better.* [Italics mine.][14]

Such an interpretation, however, is more ideological than analytic. Throughout Ethiopian history one can discern definite limits to royal authority, and bases of elite status other than imperial favor.

121 It is true, as Margery Perham ably sets forth, that a primitive state of tech-
643 nology and severe geographical obstacles prevented the realization of imperial
17 power to the degree that the royal ideology would have permitted.[15] Yet this failure of the monarchy "to build up any kind of administrative framework through which to exercise the absolute powers with which, by tradition and consent, it was endowed" was not simply a matter of wanting techniques. It also reflected the importance of ultimate values other than that of anointed royalty in Abyssinian culture.

121 The primary sociological limit to imperial authority was the commitment
643 of the Abyssinian people to the tradition of their church. Religious conversion
17 was one change which, at least in the period of Amhara hegemony, could no
771 longer be tolerated. Za Dengel (1603–4) and Susneyos (1607–32) were brought down because of their forthright conversion to Catholicism, and the overthrow of Lĭjj Iyāsu in 1917 was legitimated on the alleged grounds that he had become a practicing Muslim. The decline in power of Tēwodros II (1855–68) was due in no small measure to the fact that his cavalier policy toward the clergy resulted in his being branded an enemy of the church.

121 A second limit on imperial authority lay in the perennial tendency of cer-
643 tain regional families to become endowed with an aura of legitimacy in their
17

own right. Indeed, the record of rebellions by nobility as well as clergy against 121
the emperors of Ethiopia bespeaks a persisting dualism in the Abyssinian's 643
disposition toward the monarchy itself. In principle, the emperor is reverenced. [17]
Widely held is the sentiment expressed in the *Kebra Nagast:* "It is not a good thing for any of those who are under the dominion of a king to revile him, for retribution belongeth to God."[16] But unquestioning deference is by no means necessarily coupled with unswerving loyalty. The Abyssinian pattern [17]
differs from the Japanese, in which total loyalty to the divine monarch calls for suicide in the wake of any disgrace one might have brought upon him. The norms of fealty to the emperor have not been so deeply internalized in Ethiopia, where the pardon and reinstatement of rebels has been a common occurrence. Among Abyssinians a veneer of genuine deference has often concealed an inner consciousness of disaffection, enabling the individual to act out rebellious wishes when the opportunity or need arises. Indeed, this ambivalence has been one of the traditional impulses behind the culture pattern of wax and gold.

The Old Nobility

The Abyssinians themselves acknowledge the existence of, in addition to 565
the emperor, two groups of persons with pre-eminent status. These are called, 571
both in Ge'ez and Amharic, the ***maḳuännent,*** or "nobility," and the ***ḳähenät,*** 554
or "clergy." While believing the presence of a king to be a precondition of civil order, they also regard the presence of these other elites as necessary for their good life. This attitude is expressed in the Amharic saying: "Fertility of the land [is] through the ***maḳuännent;*** the splendor of the church [is] through the ***ḳähenät.***"[17]

The term ***maḳuännent*** may be used to refer to all secular dignitaries be- 565
tween the emperor and the well-to-do landowning peasantry. In strict contem- 644
porary usage, however, the ***maḳuännent*** should be distinguished from two 554
other classes of personages, whom we may call the "royal nobility" and the "local nobility" or "gentry." The former consists of the immediate royal family (***negusäwi bëtasab***) and more distant royal relatives (***masäfent***). Because of their kinship with the Solomonic line these have at times been referred to as "chiefs of Israel."[18] Although it was customary for each new king to exile all male relatives who were potential candidates for the Crown to a high mountain fortress, more distant relatives might hold provincial governorates, and women of the royal family sometimes played an important role in court politics and provincial administration. Members of the royal nobility have normally been distinguished by special titles: ***äbëto*** (now vulgarized as ***äto,*** "Mister"), ***lëʿul,*** and ***lïjj*** for men; and ***emebët, lëʿelt,*** and ***wayzaro*** (now vulgarized in the sense of "Mrs.") for women.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 The local nobility, on the other hand, were eminences whose lives and reputations were bound to a more circumscribed locale. While the non-royal nobility, or *makuānnent* in the stricter sense, performed as high dignitaries at the imperial court and governors of large provinces, the local nobility were district chiefs and judges, or even simply wealthy landowners, who enjoyed considerable deference. Though they might not be known outside of their home regions, these men were, for the mass of the population, the lords of existence. *Ka-Gondar negus / yāgar āmbārās,* "the petty district chief [is obeyed] more than the Gondar king"[19] expresses folk wisdom on the subject. The Amharic terms which designate this class of men are *bālābbāt* and *shum,* terms we shall want to consider more closely below.

565 184 Despite these distinctions among members of the upper stratum of Abyssinian society, with respect to their general orientation and style of life they differed only in degree. They created and shared what might be called a "gentry subculture," even though it was not so differentiated from the general culture as was the case in Europe and China. In the present context, it will be meaningful to treat them as a single status group.

565 184 86 [576] Special manners and skills were self-consciously taught to children of the *makuānnent,* most of which remain part of the gentry subculture today. An etiquette of instinctual inhibition is taught. Some attention is given, for example, to toilet training, which is spontaneous among peasant children. Spitting in public is proscribed. Physical aggression is discouraged in favor of the more subtle forms of satire and patient manipulation of others. A quiet, reserved manner of speaking is stressed, in contrast with the less inhibited and cruder self-expression of the peasantry. Dignity of comportment is expected at all times; a noble should not, for example, express great enthusiasm or surprise over anything. Sobriety is inculcated as a virtue; alcohol is *la-çhawā lijj* [293] *mādasetchā / la-bālagē māzabābatchā* ("for the nobleman's son a stimulant, for the commoner an intoxicant"). In short, the gentry subculture stresses the general ideal of bringing a child up to be conspicuously genteel, or *çhawā.*

565 184 868 [871] [534] [883] Sons of the nobility have traditionally followed a privileged curriculum.[20] They were given lessons in horseback riding and weaponry at an early age. They were also taught how to swim, an uncommon skill among the Abyssinians. Reading would often be taught, for which schooling a man of the church might be brought in as a tutor, or the boy might be sent for a while to a monastery. He might also learn how to play the *baganā,* the ten-stringed lyre used to accompany certain forms of religious and plaintive secular songs. Instead of spending his teen-age years at the plow, which was regarded as beneath his dignity, the noble boy would follow his father to court and observe the ways of litigation and the manner of passing judgments; or he might be sent as a page to the court of the king or some great lord.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *çhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *ṭajj*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *ṭallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics. 565 184 868 [567] [273]

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dajāzmātch Hailu*, meaning "Dajāzmātch Hailu and his men." 565 576

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics. 565 [142]

Conspicuous consumption among the *makuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions: 565 592 357 556

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of
[644] course, the imperial court. The *makuānnent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discre-
[492] tion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shoul-
[231] dering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-
[273] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *ṭajj* pre-
[292] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos,* the dark wool cloak of the
[822] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-
[293] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abyssinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for
554 instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mäʿerg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The
554 *makuānnent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary
701 Amharic the term *makuānnent* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

rās	"head" (of an army)
dajāzmātch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitāwrāri**	"general of the vanguard"
qaññāzmātch	"general of the right wing"
gerāzmātch	"general of the left wing"
bālāmbārās	"commander of a fort"
bāshā†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shālaqā	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitāwrāri* ranked below the *gerāzmātch*.

[192] † *Bāshā* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

All these titles were conferred by the emperor. But, in addition, *makuānnent* with the rank of *rās* or *dajāzmātch* had the authority to appoint lesser officers under them. The number of troops commanded by these officers varied considerably according to circumstances. Among armies, moreover, there was great variability in status; the *fitāwrāri* of an emperor naturally enjoyed much more deference than the *fitāwrāri* of a provincial *dajāzmātch*.[23]

A number of other titles represented various civil functions. These included:

āfa negus	"mouth of the king" (lord chief justice)
āzāzh *liq* (Gondar) *wambar* (Shoa)	royal judges
naggādrās	"head of merchants" (customs collector and chief official over merchants)
ṭsahāfi lām *nagāsh* *shum* *ḳāntibā*	various titles given to provincial governors
malḳaññā *meslanē*	local representatives of the emperor or provincial governors

A further set of titles was that given to the functionaries of the royal court. These were given for all court posts, including such offices as Server of the Mead (*ṭajj āsālāfi*). Some of these titles were found exclusively at the court of the emperor; others were imitated in noble households across the land, though again, the same title naturally carried far less prestige in the provinces than when held at the imperial court. The list of court titles varied from region to region and century to century, both in its composition and its hierarchical order.[24] At any given time and place, however, a rank order was carefully respected, and confusion over protocol could provoke altercation, as was recorded in the Chronicle of Iyāsu I (1682–1706).[25]

Titles (and numbers) of the principal court functionaries, in the (descending) order of importance fixed at the time of Iyāsu I, were:

behtwaddad	chief counsellor and confidant (two)
blattēn getā	chief administrator of the palace (greater and lesser [two])
rāq māsarē or *west āzāzh*	majordomo, master of ceremonies
ṭsahāfi te'ezāz	royal scribe; keeper of the seal (two)
zhāndarabā āzazh	chief of the eunuchs

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565 *bajirond* — guardian of royal property, treasurer (two)
554 *liqa maḳuās* — king's double and keeper of the king's mule
644 *āggāfāri** — protocol officer, superintendent of banquets

The status of these dignitaries may have been particularly vulnerable, depending so closely as it did on the whims of the monarch. Nonetheless their proximity to the center of imperial power gave them unique advantages. They were in a position to receive many gifts for favors and influence, as well as to come by some part of the royal revenues and to attend the royal banquets. They were consulted, together with military commanders, provincial governors, and high ecclesiastics, on important matters of state. Lands granted to them for their services enabled them to support small retinues of their own, including, in some cases, military contingents. They were normally an important factor in promoting stability and continuity during the troubled moments that usually followed the death of an emperor.[26]

565 554 The above classification of titles is meant only to provide a quick overview of their variety; no such formal compartmentation existed in the Abyssinian perspective. All the titles converged into a single hierarchy.[27] What is more, titles were not strictly connected to offices or functions, so military titles were frequently given to court or civil functionaries. This was particularly true of [644] the court of Menelik, where, for example, the Superintendent of Royal Tents bore the title *bālāmbārās* and the Chief Hand-washer that of *gerāzmātch*.[28] [635] For centuries before, moreover, provincial governors were often known by military rather than civil titles, and men holding civil titles were liable to be called to take part in military campaigns by the sovereign.

565 The sociological reality underlying this overlapping of titles among the nobility was the essentially unspecialized nature of their role. The ideal type of the *maḳuānnent* was at once governor, soldier, and courtier. In time of war he set forth at his own expense, with his own troops, to support the cause of the emperor, or perhaps simply to defend his own regional interests. In time of peace he might sojourn, if permitted, at the court of his king or overlord, eating and drinking with his peers, giving counsel to his liege when asked, engaged in intrigue and otherwise seeking to improve his station.

[427] When not active in warfare or the affairs of court, the nobleman would repair to his lands to supervise the agricultural production and the collection [643] of rents from his tenants. The emperors rewarded nobles who served them [423] with grants of land. The higher chieftains in turn rewarded their own fol- [427] lowers accordingly. These estates were usually held *in absentia*, the peasants

* *Āggāfāri* is an important title in the courts of provincial lords but is not mentioned in the court list of Iyāsu I, nor in that of the *Seṭ'āta Mangest*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.*

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services.

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagārit,* a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area.

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[29]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement.

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagārit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gabbār,* would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dēgā* (high) land, while in certain *qolā* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 63 66 taxes collected in the name of the emperor. Concerning the imposts for which the peasants were liable, Plowden wrote in 1844:

[651] They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts—he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.[30]

Two centuries earlier, observing similar phenomena, Almeida had concluded that "generally speaking, they are all plunderers rather than governors."[31] The only restraints on their exploitative behavior have been an occasionally keen sense of Christian propriety and the limits to what an exasperated local populace will bear.

565 The existence of a predatory class who serve military functions and maintain a gentry subculture is a common enough feature of traditional agrarian societies. What is perhaps less common in the Abyssinian case is the constellation of factors relating to the recruitment of members into this elite.

High secular status in Abyssinia was dependent on a complex of possessions—land, political strength, and honorific titles—which tended to reinforce [423] one another. The possession of much land has always been a basis for con- [556] siderable deference in Abyssinia. As a source of produce, rents, and revenues deflected from the Crown, moreover, it was also a source of wealth to be used [662] in building up one's political strength by rewarding able soldiers and loyal [661] followers, and by making gifts to one's superiors. Political power was directly obtained through the acquisition of governorships. Such offices were a further [631] basis for much deference and, through the incumbent's access to tribute, customs fees, court fees, and gifts from his subjects, of much income as well. [554] Titles, finally, not only were universally esteemed but also entitled the bearers to a style of life which included a presumptive right to gifts and obedience from all inferiors as well as the consumption of much wealth and power.

565 643 For all these possessions, the Abyssinian noble was directly dependent on his king (or, in the case of a lesser noble, on his overlord). His dependence was twofold: land, political office, and titles came to him as gifts from the sovereign, and, what is more, their continued possession was contingent on [423] the sovereign's continuing favor. Abyssinian "vassals" had no legal rights to their "benefices," and lands granted them could be withdrawn and given to others as the emperor wished. At the death of a feudal beneficiary his lands

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

reverted to the Crown unless specifically reconveyed to the heir by royal proclamation. Political office was no less precarious. Governors were made and unmade—by the traditional process known as *shum-shĭr* ("appoint-demote")—in short periods of time. The powerful position of governor of the maritime province (*bāhr nagāsh*) changed hands four times during the six years that Alvares spent in Ethiopia. Even when tradition assigned a certain post to the descendants of a certain lord, the emperors were able to exert control by shifting their favor from one descendant to another from year to year. Titles, unlike land and office, were granted for life, as we observed; but they were in no case hereditary, and thus every Abyssinian's hope for a title, let alone a raise in rank, depended on the grace of the king or of his major appointees.

Given these conditions, it was not possible for the nobility to become a closed, hereditary estate, or to develop a corporate identity capable of confronting the imperial will. On the contrary, thanks to the emperor's freedom to ennoble anyone whom he chose, there was a relatively high degree of social mobility, and the ranks of the upper strata were continuously being reshuffled.

Outstanding personal properties of various sorts often enabled Ethiopians of low birth to rise to high positions. The emperors and great lords conferred honors on those who served especially well in military expeditions, whatever their origins. Menelik's promotion of two Galla prisoners to rank as his highest generals is a famous case in point. The royal favor occasionally smiled on low-born Ethiopians who excelled in such qualities as physical beauty or witty repartee.[32] Unquestionable personal loyalty was another quality in high demand; freed slaves were sometimes given offices and dignities, since their lack of ties to political families made them particularly trustworthy.

Abyssinians have thus cherished the idea that they could rise to a higher station in life than that to which they were born. Comparatively few ever tried to do so, probably, but ambitious souls were never wanting. Seeking some benefice, or the glory of a title, or a position of power that would permit them to help their kinfolk or avenge themselves for a wrong suffered at the hands of some superior, they would attach themselves to the lord whose fortunes seemed brightest at the moment and hope, by valorous service and God's favor, to arrive someday at an estimable position.[33]

Nevertheless, though ability and fortune might carry any man high in the political hierarchy, he would not thereby automatically be accepted as one of the *maḳuānnent*. A self-respecting man of noble family would resist marrying his daughter to a commoner or person of dubious parentage, no matter how high a rank the latter obtained. For the Abyssinian nobility did form a self-conscious status group with a certain hereditary base. Its members shared a sense of superiority, a consciousness of kind, and an attitude toward commoners such as that expressed by the governor Takla Giyorgis to the Jesuit

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565 Barradas: "Father, these villeins are like camels, they cry and groan when they
554 are loaded, but in the end they carry the load that is put on them."[34] They set themselves off from the commoners, not only because of their style of life and subculture, but also because they came from well-known families.

Such sentiments were shared by the commoners. They would much rather be governed by a man from a noted family than by a person promoted from
565 their own social level. The folkways expressed a disdain for the *nouvel arrivé*,
554 for example, by poking fun at the office of *liqa maḳuās* (the king's double in
644 time of battle). The *liqa maḳuās* was often a man from an unknown family, chosen because of his handsome features and resemblance to the king. The office permitted him to strut about in the king's clothes and inclined him to assume haughty airs. In some places it was customary to ridicule this upstart by referring to the minstrel, or *azmāri*, as *liqa maḳuās;* for the *azmāri*, too, was entitled to wear the kind of dress appropriate to the lord in whose banquet hall he performed, but the *azmāri* was a person of low prestige in Abyssinian society.

643 In other words: although the emperors could appoint and depose when-
565 ever they pleased, with or without cause; and though "the land and persons
554 of their subjects are equally their property, and every inhabitant of their kingdom is born their slave"; by itself the principle of royal favor is clearly inade-
[171] quate to explain the Abyssinian pattern of social stratification. For, unlike the neighboring kingdom of Buganda, Abyssinia was not a straightforward despotism in which the dispensation of a *ḳabaḳa* was sufficient to elevate a man into the highest social stratum.[35] The claims of a quasi-hereditary noble status group have also had to be satisfied.

565 How did this status group arise, and how have its claims been expressed and justified? What has been the history of its relationship with the mon-
[423] archy? The existence of this class is anchored in the actual tendency for lands,
[631] office, and titles to be given to members of the same families. In reality, the
[554] emperors frequently let such possessions pass from father to son, either because they were in too distant a region or because there was no good cause for taking them away, and on occasion drew up written charters assigning grants
[423] of land to a man and his future descendants.[36] Indeed, one form of land tenure, known as *rīsta-gult*, was precisely a sort of hereditary fief, given in
[631] exchange for military service over the generations. In certain areas, moreover, it was a matter of tradition that the governorship be given to members of a
[554] certain family. Finally, although no man inherited a title, as son of a noble-
[428] man he might inherit the culture and facilities that would give him a much better chance than any commoner to obtain a title of his own.

Two other aspects of Abyssinian society supported this tendency toward
[554] the development of what amounted to local dynasties of nobility. One was the prestige attached to the "chiefs of Israel," any of the nobility who could

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demonstrate some affiliation with the Solomonic line; the marriage of one of these into a local dynasty contributed an added buttress to its traditionalist claims. The other was what seems to be a still more deeply rooted disposition for decentralized hegemony based on the ancient character of the society. For, as Cerulli has recently suggested, the origins of the Ethiopian state were such as to lay the foundation for a persisting order of feudalism. The movement of South Arabs to the Eritrean coast and highlands took place, not through the conquest of an indigenous population by a united invader, as in the Norman Conquest of England, but by the intermittent emigration and settlement of distinct tribes from South Arabia into various parts of the African territory. Thus, Cerulli concludes, we see in Ethiopia "a feudalism expanded from the roots: a number of principalities or peoples which, independent on African land after their emigration, have finally been regrouped in a higher political unity, yet still conserving in the feudal system thus constituted part of their autonomy and their individuality."[37] If this is so, it would constitute an added traditional element in the sense of legitimacy of local dynastic interests.

All this suggests that we must look to two sources for the prestige of the *makuännent*—that recruitment into the secular elite came from "below" as well as from "above." These two bases of noble status are indicated by the etymology of two Amharic words commonly applied to the local nobility, *shum* and *bālābbāt*. *Shum* (or *seyum*) comes from a root which means to invest with high position. The emperor, as we have seen, is *seyuma egziābhēr* ("invested by God") and he in turn is the source of authority for investing other dignitaries. The status associated with the word *shum* is therefore based on the act of investiture by a sovereign. *Bālābbāt*, on the other hand, has the literal meaning, "one who has a father"; in other words, one who has a significant father, a notable ancestry. This status refers to claims to deference which are based on birth.

Claims based on birth, moreover, were closely tied to the ownership of land and supported by local territorial allegiances. This appears most strikingly in the office of *çhīqā shum*, the lowest level official, who is appointed, to be sure, but by the local people themselves from a small number of *bālābbāt* whose eligibility for the office rests on their inheritance of rights to certain specified pieces of land. Other local offices, like *malkañña* and *meslanē*, were normally given by regional governors to *bālābbāt* indigenous to the area. The sacred sentiment of fealty to a monarch, whose charisma rested both on membership in a hallowed dynasty and the hallowed act of coronation, thus competed in Abyssinian souls with deeply felt sentiments of attachment to members of noted families who symbolized local rights and traditions. Abyssinian political structure at any given time was determined by the relative strength of the forces supported by these two principles of legitimacy.

Neither principle was ever realized in pure form. No matter how great his

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642 authority, the emperor could never afford to ignore the hereditary claims of
643 regional *bālābbāt* in dispensing favors and making appointments. He needed
565 a minimum of support from regional lords who commanded devoted followers, and he could not with impunity alienate any number of these at a given time. In practice, imperial favor was accorded *both* on the basis of personal loyalty and military ability, and of ascriptive claims to rank based on birth. The exercise of imperial authority was often a question simply of confirming the leadership of a locally successful *bālābbāt*.

565 With regard to regionally based strength, on the other hand, birth was not
554 a sufficient factor to assure a man a high position. (It was not even necessary, strictly speaking. Any man could attempt to build up a position of power by attracting followers. He had a much better chance, however—a chance to attain authority, and not merely force—if he came from a noted family.) If, as the son of an important lord, he inherited his father's position, he had to prove himself a suitable leader or risk being deposed by the men of the area. At the very least he had to withstand competition from his brothers. Thus, as we saw
[175] in the history of Manz, two of Nagāssi's sons were deposed before the men of Manz found in Sebstē a leader worthy of his father's mantle. Military ability, political shrewdness, and lavish generosity toward one's followers were the decisive characteristics which, together with strong ambition, could enable the son of a *bālābbāt* to attract followers and make claims of his own. With adequate forces, he could even depose a regional governor and take his place, so long as he took possession of the official drum (*nagārit*) of the office.[88] For complete legitimation, however, it was usually necessary to secure con-
[643] firmation of the rule of a locally successful *bālābbāt* by the emperor. This was the reason why Nagāssi is said to have journeyed to Gondar.

642 In terms of the distribution of political authority, then, Abyssinian history
643 may be viewed as an oscillation between the emperor's efforts to define local
565 nobles as his agents and their own efforts to attain continuity and autonomy.
175 The available sources concerning the emperors of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries suggest that their efforts were to a large extent successful. The ensuing "barbarian invasions" so weakened the empire that a more locally centered distribution of power became inevitable. At first only the scope of the monarchy was reduced, as the emperor came to govern a smaller area. In consequence, in outlying regions such as Manz, Gishē, and Merhābētē in northern Shoa, virtual sovereignty was wielded by the local *bālābbāt*. Nevertheless, for a good century after its founding Gondar served as a real imperial capital, and its emperors retained authority over the lords in their shrunken empire. Then, as the monarchy began its inexorable decline due to internal rivalries and the movement of Galla into court and capital, localism triumphed. Ethiopia's Age of the Princes (1769–1855) was as decentralized a political system as was twelfth-century France or fourteenth-century Japan.

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It was at this time that the *makuānnent* came into their own. More unabashedly than ever they constituted, not a hereditary aristocracy in corporate opposition to the king, but a plurality of proud centers of rank—partly inherited, partly achieved—enjoying virtual autonomy. To move toward a modern nation it would be necessary to brake their centrifugal force. 175 565 642

The Clergy

Like the nobility, the clergy may be divided into those who are significant at the national level and those who are primarily local dignitaries. The former reside close to the imperial court, while the latter are thickly distributed around monasteries, churches, and wildernesses all over the country. 793 792

The highest ecclesiastical authority in Abyssinia was the *abuna* who, from the time of Frumentius in the fourth century until the death of Abuna Qerlos in 1949, was with few exceptions an appointee of the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria. Chosen from the Egyptian monks of the convent of St. Anthony near the Red Sea, the *abuna* was brought, at great expense to the emperors, to live out his life in an alien land. Ignorant of the language and customs of the country, he played little part in the conduct of church affairs or in affairs of court; and when he did try to do so, his efforts were usually abruptly checked by jealous clerics and suspicious kings. His functions were purely ritual, but indispensable: he alone had authority to anoint and crown the emperor, to confer orders, and to absolve vows. From numerous revenues, rents, and fees, the *abuna* enjoyed a considerable income. Like the emperor, he was regarded as sacred because of the charisma of his office, and spent most of his time secluded from the public.[39]

Second in rank was the *eçhagē*, an appointment made by the emperor. This was the traditional title of the abbot of the convent of Dabra Libānos in Shoa, which in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gained hegemony over Abyssinian monasticism. The *eçhagē* served as administrative head of the church and had jurisdiction over all monks and monasteries. The most esteemed of the Ethiopian clergy, he tended to wield more actual power than the *abuna*. His provincial deputies, called *liqa kāhenāt*, controlled the secular clergy. This office was also bestowed by the emperor, and its functions included presenting candidates for ordination and deciding questions of protocol in connection with religious ceremonies.

In addition to these supreme dignitaries of the church, a small number of churchmen enjoyed pre-eminent status by virtue of their activities at the imperial court. These included the *aqābē sa'āt* ("guardian of the [canonical] hours"), the chief ecclesiastic at court, and during part of the reign of Zar'a Yā'qob the only official with unrestricted access to the king; the *qēs hāṭsē* ("king's chaplain"); the *liqa dabtarā* ("chief of the *dabtarā*"); and *liqa mammerān* ("chief of the learned men"). These four served as the four su- 793 644 [693]

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793 preme judges at the royal court, and the *aqābē sa'āt* ranked third—in some
644 lists, first—in the official order of precedence of all court dignitaries.[40]
[693] One other church dignitary, finally, was the *nebra ed,* chief of the sacred district of Aksum, who always enjoyed a high position at the royal court. When appointed by the emperor (instead of by the provincial governor who sometimes possessed that authority), the *nebra ed* enjoyed the rare privilege of being permitted to sit while speaking in the event of his involvement in litigation.

793 The status of the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries was based on approxi-
554 mately the same factors as those which determined the status of secular nobility: royal favor; family background, in the case of those whose fathers were important nobles or noted churchmen; and the possession of wealth, political power, and imposing titles.[41] The same was true of their regional counterparts, the *alaqā,* "chiefs" of large churches and monasteries, whose wealth, power, and leisurely mode of life gave them, in Plowden's opinion, "perhaps the most enviable position in Abyssinia."[42]

793 The status of the clergy as a whole, however, rested on three other prin-
792 ciples which are not affected by royal favor, birth, or worldly possessions.
554 These were: contact with the most sacred symbols of religious authority; ascetic piety; and religious learning. Broadly speaking, in Abyssinia these three principles have been embodied primarily in three distinct roles, namely, those of priest, monk, and *dabtārā.*

793 A normal preparation for these roles—necessarily so, in the case of the
794 priesthood—is service as a deacon. Ability to read is, now as before, a requisite qualification for the diaconate, but that requirement has in the past often been overlooked. More important has been the requirement of ordination by the *abuna.* Ordination formerly took place in the company of hundreds of other aspirants and, when there was uncertainty about the future availability of an *abuna,* even babes in arms were admitted.[43]

794 The traditional garb of the deacon is a yellowish cape made of sheepskins,
292 though on holidays the officiating deacons may be dressed in richly colored silk robes like the priests. The duties of the deacon—and they are accounted great and secret privileges—are to prepare the sacramental bread, fetch the holy water, and assist at the Mass (the performance of which normally requires two priests and three deacons).

793 On reaching puberty a deacon is no longer supposed to serve in the church,
794 for fear that he will become "impure." At that time he may decide to prepare for the priesthood. For this two qualifications must be met. He must have completed his study of reading and, ideally, of *zēmā,* the chants that are intoned in the liturgy of the Mass. These matters he may learn from the older clergy during his service as a deacon, or from his father, who, in many cases, is a priest himself. Otherwise, he goes off in search of a master. He

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builds a tiny thatch hut near the home of his tutor, wears ragged, unsheared 793
sheepskins, and gets his meals by begging. He lives thus for a year or two, 794
until he has mastered the fourteen varieties of chants used in the various masses, and perhaps special chants like the *Praise of Mary* (*Weddāssē Māryām*) which are sung on holidays.

The other, and more important, qualification for the priesthood is marriage according to the law of the church. After a deacon has been married in the customary manner and lived with his wife for at least forty days, their marriage must be solemnized by the celebration of the Eucharist. Thereafter he may not divorce her or remarry if she dies.

With these conditions satisfied, the candidate for priesthood may travel to 793
the *abuna* and be ordained. He acquires thereby the power to bind and to absolve, and is granted full knowledge of the mysteries of the *tābot*. The new priest attaches himself to a church, and is given his share of the monthly assignments for conducting the Mass. This is his main responsibility, though as he grows older he will also acquire confessants to whom he will give advice and assign penances.

Apart from these duties, the life of an Abyssinian priest in many ways resembles that of his lay neighbors. He plows his fields and harvests his crops. He may do business at the markets, or add to his income by weaving. Perhaps the chief difference in his manner of life is the habit of spending time in the "gate of peace," a little building near the church where the clergy assemble after services for hours of drinking *ṭallā* and idle conversation.

In reward for his services—and this is normally the chief inducement to become a priest—the priest is given a share of the revenues in kind brought in from lands owned and managed by the church. He may also be given some land owned by the church to cultivate for himself. In addition, he [431]
receives gifts in kind from his confessants periodically, is entitled to take part in the various feasts to which priests are regularly invited, and is likely to receive some bequest from time to time.*

The insignia of the priest are modest, but they suffice to inform the stranger 793
that here is a man to be shown special respect: a white turban wrapped 292
around the head and a cross carried in the hand, to be kissed by all comers. 293
Older priests often carry a fly-whisk made of horsehair, and a wicker sun 778
umbrella.

Though there are devout and kindly men among them, the Ethiopian 793
priests have never been particularly noted for their moral qualities. Often they are ungenerous and scheming, and ready to exploit their position at the expense of the laity. They are poorly educated in their own tradition, stuttering

* A sheep, or at least a sheepskin—insurance that the Memorial Mass will be properly performed on the fortieth day after the donor's death.

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793 and misreading sacred texts in a language they have never understood. They
[293] are notorious drinkers, so much so that a modern Ethiopian novelist has one of his characters, a priest, ask: "If one stops drinking, what else is left in this world?"[44]

Nevertheless, the prestige of the priests was unassailable in Amhara culture. Whatever their personal life, they represented the value of ritual sanctity, which made it possible for the Mass to be performed in the local churches. So long as they had been duly ordained and did not break their lawful marriage bond, they were part of a sacred class. Combes and Tamisier remarked upon this in the 1830's:

> Despite all their vices, these priests manage to make themselves respected; when they pass along the roads, the faithful bow deeply to them, and in no matter what gathering they appear, everyone rises and hurries to kiss their hands.[45]

793 Privileged contact with the sacred symbols of the church—ordination by the
798 sacrosanct *abuna*, exclusive access to the *tābot*, and officiation at the Eucharist —gave the priests an authority that was independent both of political dispensation and of personal accomplishment.

793 Other groups within the clergy have been highly esteemed for quite differ-
792 ent reasons. Those who become monks carry great weight because they embody the virtue of ascetic piety. The *dabtarā*, on the other hand, are respected for their erudition.

792 Monks usually come from two kinds of background: unwed deacons desiring to spend their lives as monks, and priests whose wives have died. But previous ecclesiastical connection is not necessary for the monastic calling, nor is the ability to read required. The essential qualification is the willingness to renounce the world. The word for becoming a monk (*manakwasā*) means to renounce earthly things. A prospective monk may be of the sort described by one of Walker's informants:

> An old man who has married many wives and divorced them one by one, may say, "Henceforth it suffices me! Let the world remain lost to me! I am to turn my face to God!"[46]

In earlier times the monastic life was sought by men from all walks of life, including lords, soldiers, even emperors, in consequence of some grievous affliction, or perhaps a vow made in time of trouble, or excessive *Weltschmerz*.

Heads of monasteries have the jurisdiction to confer the monastic status. One who desires this status bequeathes his worldly possessions and goes
[292] through a ceremony in the church in which his body is declared dead. The symbol of the monastic state is a little cloth skullcap (*askēma*). Once he has become a monk, an Ethiopian is a legal nonentity. This frees him from all

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tax obligations and any debts he may have incurred, for which advantage many have become monks for other than spiritual motives.[47] 792

No specific duties or obligations are required of a monk. Abyssinian monks have spent their years in a variety of ways. One extreme is anchoritism. Many have become hermits, feeding only on roots and herbs, and have sought even greater self-mortification by such practices as standing for long periods in icy water or wearing iron girdles lined with points. Others have lived somewhat closer to human society, wandering about the country as mendicants or making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Others have attached themselves, for shorter or longer periods, to monasteries, spending long periods in prayer and fasting and doing some humble work like collecting wood or, if formerly a priest, assisting at the Mass with the other priests. A few have proselytized in non-Christian areas. Some monks, on the other hand, have left the world only to rejoin it at a higher level. These become advisers to grandees or themselves serve as governors of districts. 792 785

Whatever the shortcomings of individual monks, the monastic calling as a whole has enjoyed the highest esteem in Ethiopia. Monks have exerted a great influence on the thinking and behavior of the people. Itinerant hermits have harangued the people to live more pious lives. The counsel of monks has been of help to rulers in time of trouble. The prophecies of monks have been influential in setting the pattern of hopes and fears about the future. 792

The role of the *dabtarā* is quite different. The *dabtarā*'s combination of functions is unusual—he is at once chorister, poet, dancer, herbologist, scribe, and wizard. It is also remarkable that so indispensable a functionary in the Ethiopian Church has no formal position in the church hierarchy. 793

With its characteristic forbearance toward human frailty, Amhara culture has established in the *dabtarā* a religious vocation in which special knowledge is required but holiness is not expected. The vocation is thus sought by those who do not care to be bound by the strict conditions of the priesthood, or by priests who have found these conditions too much to live with, so have been divorced or remarried. Recruitment into the role is informal: there are no rites of ordination, nor is there any particular point at which a man becomes or ceases to be a *dabtarā*.

Becoming a *dabtarā* mainly entails a course of study beyond that minimal level required for the priests. The full course of traditional studies includes the vast corpus of religious chants; *āquāquām* ("religious dance"); Ge'ez grammar and *qenē;* and study of some two dozen religious books. Mastery of the entire curriculum, which takes at least twenty to thirty years according to traditional methods of pedagogy, is rarely accomplished. In addition the student acquires other knowledge sub rosa from private tutors: knowledge of writing, preparation of magic formulae, and the use of herbs.

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793 The *dabtarā*'s way of life is more variable than that of the monk, his possibilities for income more diverse than those of the priest. He may be attached to a church as a chorister and receive a share of the church's revenues, as do the priests. Or he may donate his services to the church and earn his living [212] by secular employment. He may work as a scribe at the court of a king or nobleman. He may spend most of his time teaching, gaining support from some large church or monastery. Like many priests he may cultivate land. [434] In any case, he is likely to derive some income from the sale of amulets and from medical therapies. Some *dabtarā* are even said to have wandered about the country as hunters, performing magical services for clients as they go.

Dabtarā are not set off from the populace by special insignia. Some wind [292] a turban around their heads, as do many priests; but others may dress like ordinary peasants. If holding more prestigious posts they may be seen with fly-whisks or wearing a *barnos*. But they are known by the people, who fear [789] and respect them. They are feared because of their magical powers, which are believed capable of rendering bullets harmless and turning *ǐnjarā* to dust. [554] They are respected because of their learning, for they are the only educated status group in traditional Amhara society. If the commoner's relatively [195] impulsive *manner* of speaking is contrasted with the quiet reserve of the nobility, his relatively simple *language* is contrasted with that of the *dabtarā*, who is noted for a studied and circumspect use of language (*qāla-dabtarā*) and for larding his Amharic with literary (i.e., Ge'ez) expressions (*ya-dabtarā amārǐññā*).

793 554 183 In the case of the religious elite, then, status is in all cases achieved. While there is a natural tendency for sons of priests and *dabtarā* to follow their fathers' example, they arrive at the status in question only by fulfilling the same norms that are applied to the sons of laymen. These norms, however, differ among the different groups within the clergy. Investiture by an authority emanating from the seat of religious charisma, the Alexandrine Patriarchate, and the related ritual requirement of marriage with Communion, were the basis of priestly status, almost irrespective of the personal attainments of the candidate. Personal attainments were *all* that mattered, on the other [792] hand, in the case of monk and *dabtarā*, but they differed radically for the two statuses.

793 792 554 The qualifications and characters of monks and *dabtarā* are almost diametrically opposed. The monastic state is entered only by means of a sacred rite; the *dabtarā* is in no way ordained, and might even be a "defrocked" priest. The monk's life is normally given to sensual renunciation; the *dabtarā* is normally an acknowledged sensualist (as appears, for example, in the proverb *ḳa-mesā ya-talaya dabtarā / yādargāl serā* ["a *dabtarā* who is kept from lunch / will work intrigues"][48] and in stories which celebrate the *dabtarā*'s use of his knowledge for private erotic ends). In the monk the virtue

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of ascetic piety is stressed at the expense of knowledge. The monk need not 793
even know how to read, though if a lifelong monk he is likely to have de- 792
voted much time to traditional studies. The *dabtarā,* by contrast, lives by 554
his lore and his learning. At his best, the Abyssinian monk conveys a real sense of spiritual purity, of profound mystical bearing, of an utterly mild manner. The *dabtarā,* at his best, is a subtle conversationalist and an operator of wondrous effects.*

Thus, while the status of members of the old nobility was a compound resultant of simultaneously operating criteria—family and region, royal favor and accumulated power—the several criteria relevant to the status of the clergy operated more or less independently. This made the religious elite a more differentiated stratum.

This statement need be qualified only by the fact that, in addition to the considerations of ritual purity, ascetic piety, and traditional learning, a fourth factor influenced the status of the clergy, namely, royal favor as expressed in appointments to the high ecclesiastical offices. This factor crosscut the others, for such favor was dispensed to members of all three status groups. The *eçhagē* was always a monk; the *aqābē sa'āt* would seem to have been a *dabtarā;* the post of *alaqā* could be given to members of all three groups.

Just how these types of local clergy were related to the clergy at the na- 79
tional level in the traditional order is a question that is difficult to answer. 175
In any case, it is likely that there were conflicts among their representatives in the competition for royal favor. In the fourteenth century, the ecclesiastics of the royal entourage included only secular clergy, and their deportment was sharply criticized by Eçhagē Fileppos, who charged that "those who live in the dwelling of the Sovereign, go about proudly in subtle raiment and with ornaments of gold and silver—perishables—and are very arrogant."[49] However, once Zar'a Yā'qob had established the custom of bringing members of the convent of Dabra Libānos to the court, the monastic order was always well represented in the royal entourage as well. In the present period one sometimes hears of competition among the different groups for influence in

* The association of impious properties with the main representative of traditional religious 779
learning may be seen as an expression of the Abyssinian's ambivalence toward knowledge as 793
such. The whole tenor of Ethiopian Orthodox religion runs counter to ratiocination and inquiry. It stresses mystery and discourages curiosity with tales like that of the man who tried to probe the mystery of the Trinity and was swallowed up by the earth—a tale commonly told to students who are learning to read. For this reason Orthodox students have frequently been quite upset by the rational theodicy taught by the Jesuit fathers at the University College.

As observed in the previous chapter, moreover, it was traditionally believed that too much learning results in madness, a belief no doubt based on the fact that older church students often drink a certain medicine to quicken their mental faculties, which sometimes deranges them (as the author has witnessed). The *dabtarā,* for their part, would seem to have thrived on this belief, benefiting from the exclusive powers and privileges gained from their esoteric knowledge.

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the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis,* a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

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FIG. 25.—*Provincial nobleman and wife*

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FIG. 26.—*"Big men" journeying with retainers* [P.174-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[P.174-8]

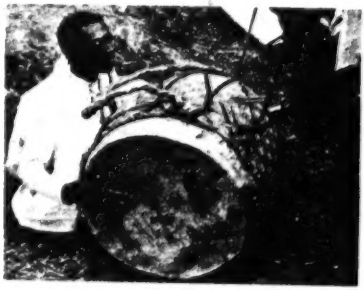

FIG. 27.—*A deacon*

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FIG. 28.—*Group of* dabtarā

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FIG. 29.—*An old priest*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amda Ṭseyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum.

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[51] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas.

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest.

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

792 did erupt between the secular and religious powers. In that event both groups
793 had recourse to powerful weapons: the former, violence; the latter, excom-
643 munication. The history of Ethiopia records numerous instances of the flog-
578 ging or execution of clergy by secular authorities. The action of Fāsiladas
[795] (1632–67), who reportedly "caused seven thousand priests to be thrown head-
long from the top of the mountain Balbau for having revolted against him,"[52]
would represent but one of the more extreme instances of such violent retri-
bution. Short of violence, the kings at least had other means at their disposal
for controlling the clergy: the power to withhold benefices, the right to
imprison church officials, the final authority on doctrinal questions, and the
ability to block a united front on the part of the clergy by pitting high
church officials against each other.

792 On the other hand, infringement on the rights of churches and monasteries,
793 gross civil injustice, or radical departure from religious tradition could on
578 occasion evoke surprisingly effective retaliation by the clergy. D'Abbadie
provides some extremely illuminating passages on this matter, from which
the following have been extracted:

> More than once have I been present at debates of this nature; I have seen these men of the church, weak and without arms amidst men of war, pleading in the name of the law, indicting the menacing covetousness of the surrounding soldiery, invoking eloquently reprobation against their powerful adversaries, and leading them to disavow themselves that force which constituted their pride. . . .
>
> In the case of an open violation of an asylum, the regular clergy got aroused; the most venerable monks abandoned their solitude, assembled the parish clergy, went into the camps, and generally they obtained justice. When the real culprit was the Dajāzmātch, they brought him to repentance, or else excommunicated him, threatened his servants with anathema if they continued to serve him, put the province under interdict and, aided by the monks of the neighboring provinces, stirred up national reprobation against him.[53]

792 The clergy had other resources which it could employ against the emperor
793 himself. It could influence royal policy through highly placed advisers.
578 Through the *abuna* it could exact certain promises from a prospective em-
643 peror as a condition of coronation. Perhaps most important, the clergy could,
through its hold over public opinion, turn the populace against the sov-
ereign. As we have seen, this power proved decisive in the encounters be-
tween church and monarch in the reigns of Za Dengel and Susneyos, and
contributed significantly to the downfall of Tēwodros and Lĭjj Iyāsu.

643 While therefore the emperor may well have been "supreme in all causes,
792 ecclesiastical and civil," he was far from being the sole, or even the decisive,
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

source of the influence enjoyed by the clergy. The latter constituted a largely autonomous status group which no emperor could afford to antagonize indefinitely. The attempt to build a more powerful central government and introduce cultural reforms thus required some alteration of their independent status as well as that of the old nobility.

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THE FEUDAL ORDER IN TRANSITION

The Decline of the Old Nobility

It must always have been the policy of the Ethiopian emperors, except for those few who did not relish the political side of their office, to seek to maximize their control over the regional nobility. They did this, we have seen, either by granting land, power, and rank to men who were completely dependent on them, or else by controlling, through military and diplomatic means, those lords whose birthright and regional strength gave them strong claims to their positions.

175 631 565 643 642

During the past century, however, the idea of subordinating regional nobles to imperial control has come to be conceived more radically and has become the core of a slowly emerging ideal of a modern nation-state. Some such vision was certainly behind the tortuous career of Tēwodros II, whose policy was a reaction against the desperate disunity which the Age of the Princes brought to Abyssinia and to the growing threat from foreign powers. In Plowden's official report to the British government in 1855, he described Tēwodros' work as follows:

> The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated. He has placed soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish: thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains, more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility—a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.[54]

The task of displacing the great feudal chiefs proved to be scarcely less arduous in Ethiopia than in Europe, however. Tēwodros' high hopes were shattered against the opposing forces of regional ambitions and clerical disaffection. The national unity he won through conquest and reform did not survive to the end of his reign.

Yōhānnes IV (1871–89) likewise aimed at uniting the nation, but was distracted from serious internal reform by the need to fight off the encroach-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 ments of Egyptians, Mahdists, and Europeans. His domestic policy was more
631 concerned with the imposition of religious uniformity than with political
565 transformation.
642
643 Menelik revived Tēwodros' policy of creating a band of generals loyal only to himself. He did this partly by raising capable men with no connections to high position: Rās Gobānā and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, two of his most important generals, were originally Galla prisoners. The power of the feudal chieftains he manipulated by traditional techniques, sending them to posts far removed from their home bases, and arranging political marriages. But Menelik did not decisively undercut the authority of the great provincial lords, and at his death the old political structure was still more or less intact.

The experience of these emperors was not forgotten by Haile Selassie, who seems to have made it his primary and unceasing ambition to assure his position by breaking down every sort of autonomous power where it previously existed or threatened to develop. Thanks to his policies of centralization and to modern means of transport and communication he was able to become more of an effective autocrat than any of his predecessors.

The main development during the period of his regency as Rās Tafari (1917–28) was the stiffening of his military posture. To start with he had the regional forces of Harar Province, formerly his father's governorship, which he had acquired through the favor of Empress Taitu (Menelik's wife) following Menelik's paralysis. He built up his strength by making improvements in Harar that increased his revenues and the number of his soldiers, and acquired fiefs elsewhere. Following the death of Empress Zauditu's commander of the imperial troops in 1926, he took command of these troops and brought some of his own forces into Addis Ababa. By 1928 he was strong enough to demand the title of *negus* from Zauditu and, as is well known, acceded as emperor upon her death two years later.

[204] During these years Rās Tafari was gradually promoting the idea of a transformation of the position of the old nobility. As early as 1926 a letter published in his weekly newspaper, *Berhānennā Salām,* suggested that the prevailing feudal system of provincial government be replaced by a system based on salaried administrators.[55] An actual change of that order was out of the question at that time. A contemporary American observer thus described some of the obstacles:

> Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Guksah, chief of Amhara, Dejasmatch Ayalu, powerful head of Simien, Dejasmatch Gabra Salassy of Tigre, and Ras Kassa of Shoa, are supreme lords in the rough highlands of the north country. Far removed from the central authority, thirty to forty days' journey, some of them, they are out of touch—living in a different world from that of Addis Ababa. Hundreds of lesser chiefs rally to their standards, each

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

> with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[56]

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The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, re-established after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete.

175 178 565 631 701

Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*ḳārnē*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers.

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureau-
178 cratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of
631 regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central gov-
642 ernment has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of
565 building up their positions, members of the most important noble families
631 have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of
642 Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of
646 high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as
631 regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to
693 Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the
578 behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov-
[465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the
565 aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the
554 eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national
[571] political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

directed peasantry, and suffer the consequences, no dynamic program of agricultural and social development can take place in Abyssinian areas that does not enlist the active cooperation of the local *bālābbāt* and *shum*.*

The Decline of the Clergy

Although the church was instrumental in bringing Rās Tafari to power—by relieving the nobles of their oath of allegiance to Lĭjj Iyāsu—it was as a whole not sympathetic to his policy once he began to rule. Foremost champions of tradition, the clergy viewed with suspicion Rās Tafari's interest in modern education and other reforms. So pronounced was their conservatism that his weekly *Berhānennā Salām* found it newsworthy to report the fact that the clergy of one important provincial church were actually reading the Addis Ababa newspaper each week.[57] He was wise to act gingerly at first, limiting ecclesiastical reform to such matters as publishing religious texts in Ge'ez and Amharic, and encouraging the work of foreign missionaries.

In the past three decades, however, changes of many sorts have had the effect of reducing the degree of independent authority which the clergy traditionally enjoyed. These changes included the achievement of independence from the Alexandrian Patriarchate; the weakening of the church under the Italian occupation; subjection of church administration to the central government; and competition from the secular government schools.

Rās Tafari initiated the policy of seeking independence from Alexandria in 1929, when he secured the investiture of five Ethiopian bishops. This gave indigenous clergy, for the first time, the right to ordain priests and deacons, although they remained subordinate to the Egyptian archbishop. In 1950 an Ethiopian bishop, the *eçhagē*, was consecrated as archbishop; and in 1958, culminating Haile Selassie's patient and skillful negotiations, complete autonomy from Alexandria was achieved.

The attainment of ecclesiastical independence has heightened the prestige of national church officials in Ethiopia. It has brought about a re-organization of the national church hierarchy, in which fifteen bishops now hold office, one for each of the fourteen provinces, and one in Jerusalem. At the same time it has reduced the effective freedom of the clergy as a separate status group. Deprived of the external source of legitimacy which the Egyptian *abuna* formerly provided, the clergy are now entirely subordinated to the power of the Emperor. This condition was formally articulated in the Constitution of 1955, which made the election and appointment of archbishops and bishops

* A potentially significant medium of communication between them and the central government is the Chamber of Deputies, which since 1957 has brought popularly elected notables from the provinces to Addis Ababa.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

648 795 793 [792] The general position of the church had already been weakened by the events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 795 793 [643] [651] Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 871 658 793 [465] The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever government schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full-time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 178 [554] [871] [658] Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite

[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Ya-dam Demṭs*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuānnent*, Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 royal will. A solid foundation for such a class was not possible, however, until
178 the central government had been sufficiently stabilized and expanded. These
565 conditions began to be met under Menelik, who established Addis Ababa in
642 the last decade of the nineteenth century and in 1907 created a number of
645 ministries. Housed in buildings inside the palace compound, the ministries were initially regarded as little more than an ornament to dress up the imperial court. Although men of some stature, like Afa Negus Nasibu and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, were named to the posts, the offices themselves did not acquire much prestige. It was no great matter when, five years after the death of Menelik, the ministers were turned out of office by a group of military officers at the instigation of Rās Tafari and sent home to their provincial estates.

175 After becoming emperor himself, however, Haile Selassie revived and en-
178 larged the ministerial system. Since the restoration, it has expanded into a
645 complex bureaucratic structure. In addition to some sixteen ministries, a
647 number of specialized government agencies have been formed, and the military and judicial hierarchies and the diplomatic corps have been considerably expanded. The rapid growth of the central government in the past two dec-
[652] ades is reflected in its budgetary expenditures, which went from about US$10 million in 1942 to an estimated US$110 million in 1962.

178 The growth of this governmental machinery has provided a new basis for
647 elite status in Ethiopia. Mobility channels now run in terms of appointments
571 in the government bureaucracy. The periodic announcement of appointments
554 by the Emperor has become the focus of public interest in Ethiopia since the
565 liberation. Every new list of appointments provides the occasion for intense gossip and *de rigueur* congratulatory parties at the homes of the favored.

178 The new class of high governmental functionaries under Haile Selassie may
565 be regarded as a transitional elite: partly traditional, partly modernizing.
571 With regard to basis of recruitment, values represented, and style of life, the new nobility present, on the one hand, a direct continuation of the old nobility; and, on the other hand, many features novel in Abyssinian society.

178 To some extent recruitment of members of the new nobility was not a
565 creation of new dignitaries, but rather an absorption of members of the old nobility into the new political organization. The recruitment of *maḳuānnent*
[646] into the senate, which after all is an organ of the central government, may be taken as an ambiguous instance of this. Some others were given important posts in the civil and military administrations. These include members of the princely families of Shoa, Tigre, Wag, Lasta, and Gojjam; the Bakere clan, royalty from the Galla province of Wallaga; and scions of the *maḳuānnent* who were important in Menelik's day or before, members of aristocratic clans which go by the names of Bēzā, Mojā, Sofanē, and Addisgē. Such persons are likely to have been awarded the old military titles for purely honorific pur-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

poses. They have been led to renounce extreme particularistic ambitions, 178 thanks to marital connections, intimidation, the lure of new benefits, and a 565 degree of nationalism, but to some extent they remain spokesmen for regional and para-dynastic interests.

Men who did not belong to the old nobility were recruited into the new 178 nobility on the basis of two criteria, loyalty and ability, with loyalty clearly the 565 more important of the two. Some men from very humble backgrounds have 554 been thus raised to the highest governmental positions through their "loyalty" to the Emperor, manifested in great part by their readiness to inform on the words and deeds of others and their obsequious and flattering manner. These have normally not been given the traditional military titles but only the titles of their office. In contrast with the carry-overs from the old nobility, still known as *masāfent* and *maḳuānnent*, these men have been called *bālaselṭān* ("holders of power"). They have included a number of men who were [648] active in the fight against the Italians, either through the Hagara Fiqer ("National Patriotic Association," a group organized in 1935 to promote Ethiopian unity and combat Italian propaganda) or as patriotic fighters in the resistance. The Emperor also promoted to high position some men who collaborated with the Italians, relying on their earlier record as an insurance against latter-day disloyalty, and using their antagonism against the patriots as a check against excessive ambitions of the latter.

On the other hand, the new nobility includes those who, whether from high [555] family background or not, are so placed because of outstanding ability. This consideration is no longer primarily a question of military ability, but of competence in dealing with technical modern subjects and with foreign diplomats. This group may be equated with the older generation of European-educated Ethiopians. The categories of adjusted aristocrats, ambitious parvenus, and intellectual bureaucrats have thus constituted a latent subdivision among the new nobility; and tensions have from time to time been expressed along those lines.

Despite the elaboration of modern governmental structures under Haile 178 Selassie, the dominant principle of the social order has been that of royal 64 sovereignty. The entire staff of government officials has been the direct sociological descendant of the traditional court retinue. This was conspicuous in [195] the titles given by Menelik to a number of the original ministers: *Aſa Negus* for Minister of Justice; *Azāzh* for Minister of Palace; *Bajirond* for Treasurer; and *Ṭsahāfi Te'ezāz* for Minister of Pen. These and other court titles remain in use today. The primacy of the court over all other functions appears in periodic audiences at the palace, when all high government officials and other notables are expected to pay their respects no matter what business may be pending in their offices. The chief value embodied in the status group of the new nobility as a whole has been that of loyalty to the sovereign.

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178 565 661 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 565 556 [241] [455] For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 565 556 472 [175] [648] Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families, Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *makuännent* and *bäla-selṭän*. They are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of [662] their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 565 369 177 [556] As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 565 554 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The

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The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shir*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

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178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shĭr* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt, The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court. 178 565 [643] [662]

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand. 701 [571] [625]

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time. 701 554 [578] [571]

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be 701 648

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701 more eager and impatient to modernize Ethiopia than do members of the
648 new nobility. This contrast was already apparent at the time of the Italian invasion, when Ethiopian officers were condemning the archaic practices of civilian officials who, they charged, were holding back the defense efforts. Yet the image of a progressive, solidary military elite in Ethiopia is justified no more than the image of a reactionary, solidary ministerial elite; nor should the military leaders be seen as standing in fundamental opposition to their civilian counterparts. There is much friendly intercourse between the two groups. Army officers are often related to civilian officials, by blood or by marriage. Military personnel have in a number of cases been assigned to civilian posts in the government. While the military carry on much of their social life among themselves, they also enjoy a good deal of interaction with civilians of high status at parties, dances, weddings, and funerals.

701 Like the new nobility, moreover, the military officers do not form a cohesive group with common interests and ambitions. The one group which did develop a high degree of solidarity, esprit, and common political goals—the Officers Corps of the Imperial Bodyguard—was dissolved in the wake of its defeat in the 1960 rebellion. The military men have been checked and balanced by much the same techniques as have the new nobility. As a whole, they are held together by little more than the institutionalized structure of the security forces. As such, they are in any event bound to play an important part in determining the character of the future government of Ethiopia as they are crucial now in upholding the present regime.

THE BIRTH OF AN INTELLIGENTSIA

571 The formation of a modern intellectual class in Ethiopia is still in its earliest
871 stages. Given the small number who have completed elementary school (a
162 number still under one per cent of the national population) all Ethiopians who have graduated from secondary school may for the time being be considered members of a secular educated elite, those with college and graduate degrees enjoying correspondingly higher status within this elite. The total number in this group reached an estimated six thousand in 1962, about one-fourth of whom held college degrees.

571 Equally indicative of the rudimentary condition of the Ethiopian intelligentsia is the poverty of its institutional facilities and of its means of communication, both internally and with the international intellectual commu-
571 nity. As of 1961, institutions with primarily intellectual purposes were lim-
873 ited to the small college of arts and sciences, four vocational colleges, two
874 small research centers (the Pasteur Institute and the Section d'Archéologie, both financed by France and staffed mostly by non-Ethiopians), the Haile

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Selassie I theater, and the secondary level art school.* Library facilities included the National Library, with some fifty thousand volumes; the University College Library, with about forty-five; and the reading rooms of the United States Information Service, the British Center, and the Soviet Information Service. The national library also contains a historical museum, and there is a handsome and well appointed archeological museum nearby, neither of which has so far been operated with a view to encouraging public attendance.

Except for occasional lectures sponsored by the national library and the University College extension program, none of the above institutions serves as a center for intellectual communication among adult Ethiopians. It was hoped by some that with the inauguration of the Haile Selassie I University, in December, 1961, a major new center of intellectual life would be created; but the government found it difficult to push ahead with its announced concept of an integrated institution which would operate autonomously and at a high standard.

Outside these institutions, moreover, there have been few channels of communication through which Ethiopian intellectuals can develop their minds and stimulate their imaginations. There are no periodicals to serve as a medium for such communication. One possibility, the *Ethiopian Observer*, is not quite an exception. Limited resources have kept it from operating at as high a level as available talent might permit, and its basically apologetic orientation renders implausible its claims to be "A Journal of Independent Opinion." The daily newspapers which feature contributed articles—the *Ethiopian Herald*, the *Addis Zaman*, and the Amharic sections of the *Voice of Ethiopia*—have tended to exclude pieces that have anything to do with highly controversial matters. Nor are there many social occasions for the serious discussion of intellectual matters. Professional associations, clubs devoted to intellectual matters, and even informal discussion groups exist not at all or else in a very haphazard form.

Contact with the intellectual world outside Ethiopia is almost as meager. Foreign-educated Ethiopians tend to become intellectually demoralized on returning home. The loss of a taste for reading has frequently been one of the first casualties experienced by Western-educated Ethiopians on return from abroad. Only a few hardy souls attempt to maintain some sort of link with the outside world, through subscribing to such magazines as the *New Statesman*, *Paris Soir*, or *New Republic*. For most of them, coming home means a cessation of the most elementary intellectual functions, other

* In 1963 an Institute of Ethiopian Studies was established at Haile Selassie I University, including a substantial Ethiopiana library and museum.

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than those necessary to perform their jobs. They do not attempt to maintain and build personal libraries, though there are a few exceptions to this. The three small bookstores in Addis Ababa offer only the most insubstantial fare.

Nor, finally, have more than a handful of private individuals taken upon themselves the charge of a scholarly or literary calling. Although Marcel Cohen heralded the birth of a printed literature in Amharic as early as 1925,[58] writing is still not very important on the Ethiopian scene.* The output of original books and pamphlets in Amharic averaged less than fifteen a year over the past two decades. The presses and bookstores distribute Amharic publications indifferently at best. Much of the literary impetus produced by the desire of many Ethiopians to write, and the obvious need for good writing that would address itself to the intellectual demands of the present generation, has been sapped by economic, political, and cultural factors.

The economic factors include the high cost of printing; the diminutive market; and the absence of publishing houses. If an author wants to be read, he must normally pay for publication himself. Those who cannot must either find a patron in the Crown—frequently a highly lucrative arrangement—or resort to mimeographic duplication, or else remain unpublished. The censorship system and anxiety about spontaneous expression of any sort which has been fostered by prevailing political conditions constitute additional obstacles to literary development.

The paucity of serious writing has been the result no less of prevailing cultural conditions. The low intellectual level of his potential audience, the absence of channels for criticism, and the dearth of precedent make it difficult for the Ethiopian writer to determine good standards of writing. The confused state of Amharic, owing to regional variations and the absence of consensus on neologisms and loan words for expressing modern concepts, poses many problems on the level of sheer vocabulary. The temptation to get into print quickly, if the financial and political barriers can be hurdled, exceeds the temptation to work long and hard on an opus of quality. The desire to pontificate frequently eclipses the quest for understanding.

Those conditions which have inhibited the growth of Amharic literature—poverty, governmental reluctance to provide sufficient freedom and support, the newness of the modernizing culture, and the motivational level of the intellectuals themselves—may be viewed more broadly as responsible for the relative barrenness of Ethiopian intellectual life as a whole. Insofar as these conditions change in the coming decades, a radical change in the quality and organization of Ethiopian intellectual life may be expected. As a sociological

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* This is no longer due, however, to the negative attitude toward writing as such which was discussed in chapter iii. That traditional inhibition has been largely removed—primarily, it seems, by the postwar requirement that all legal accusations and court proceedings be set down in writing.

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phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571
and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178
of political ***centralization***. The status of its members rests on their possession 565
of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554
ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642]
ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177]
rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556]
imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by
allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642]
growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647]
nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701]
force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178
Selassie's policy of technical ***modernization***. The status of its members rests 571
on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554
the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871
the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178
tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565
the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643]
political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178
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* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 [439]
million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

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178 past. The intellectuals are the product of a secular school system which is, as
571 we have seen, a structure foreign to Abyssinian tradition. Their members are
[177] drawn from all parts of Ethiopian society, and in almost no cases consist of
[871] Western-educated members of the old group of literati, the *dabtarā*. The question of their integration into what has remained an essentially traditional social system has thus been Ethiopia's main sociological dilemma during the present decade. We shall return to this question after considering the composition and general situation of the intellectual class.

571 Whatever his line of work, the Ethiopian intellectual tends to be employed
463 by the government, since employment opportunities in the private sector are
[464] still extremely limited; and where such exist, the government has often claimed priority over the intellectual's services by virtue of its having educated him. Many of the intellectuals work as public administrators, in the middle echelons of the government bureaucracy, with the titles of "assistant," "director," and "director general"; and there has been a growing tendency
[875] to appoint them in the higher levels, especially since 1961. Hundreds of them now work as teachers in the elementary and secondary schools,* and some six dozen teach at the college level. A small but growing number are employed as physicians, medical workers, engineers, and legal advisers in various government institutions. Still another group works in the small communications field—on the staffs of the various newspapers, the patriotic monthly *Menen,* and Radio Addis Ababa. The small group holding jobs outside the government works as engineers and bureaucrats in industrial firms, as employees of the Ethiopian Air Lines, or have small commercial or agricultural enterprises of their own.

571 With respect to interaction among the intellectuals, however, the most
871 important distinction among them has been the place where they received their education. Here we may speak of two main groups: those who received part of their education abroad, the "foreign-educated" or "returnees"; and those who received all their education in Ethiopia, the "local-educated" or "locals."†

The Returnees

Close to two hundred Ethiopians studied abroad prior to the Italian occu-
[177] pation. Since French was then the official European language in Ethiopia,

* About forty-five hundred Ethiopians, of varying levels of educational attainment, were teaching in government schools of all types in 1960–61, according to the Ministry of Education school census for that year.

† This term is used as a neutral descriptive category, free from any negative connotations it may have acquired when first coined by the returnees. More recently, the West African term "been-to" has been incorporated into Amharic for referring to the returnee.

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quite a few of these men went to school in France and Switzerland, while others studied in Egypt, England, the United States, and Italy. In general, this first group of returnees was enthusiastic and outspoken in their desire to modernize the country. They were emboldened by the feeling that Haile Selassie was their champion, though some of them, who took plans for a Young Ethiopia movement with them into exile during the occupation, felt a need for more radical reforms than the Emperor was willing to admit. 571 871 [177]

The pre-occupation intellectuals have no significant voice as such in Ethiopia today. Many of them were massacred by the Italians following the attempt on Graziani's life in 1937. Those who survived have been scattered, some being so thoroughly absorbed in the new nobility as to lose their identity as intellectuals, others tending to lead somewhat isolated and demoralized lives. Only the handful of older military officers, who were trained at the St. Cyr Academy in France, retain any semblance of common identity based on prewar study abroad. 571 [648]

In speaking of the returnees, then, we speak essentially of a group whose education abroad dates to the late forties and after. The typical postliberation returnee has studied from three to five years abroad in an English-speaking institution, under the sponsorship of the Ethiopian government; though there are many exceptions to this type. 571 871 177

As of June, 1959, the main countries in which some five hundred Ethiopians had studied since the mid-forties were: United States and Canada, 38 per cent; United Kingdom, 20 per cent; Lebanon (American University of Beirut), 17 per cent; Western Germany, 10 per cent; and India, 4 per cent. This pattern began to change somewhat at the end of the fifties as, in addition to these countries, Ethiopians in increasingly large numbers began to attend schools in Egypt, Italy, France, Israel, and Sweden. The subjects pursued by these students covered the whole academic spectrum—from dairying and forestry to languages and theology. Most of them, however, concentrated in one of four fields: social sciences, 30 per cent; engineering, 23 per cent; education, 12 per cent; and medical sciences, 12 per cent. Notably underrepresented in their studies were the fields of business and the natural sciences.

The length of time spent abroad varied considerably. Of the three hundred students who had returned by 1958 for whom complete information is available, 15 per cent studied abroad for only one year and 18 per cent for two years; 36 per cent were abroad from three to five years, 25 per cent from six to eight years, and 6 per cent for nine or more years. The education of about half of these students was paid for by the Ethiopian government itself. Others went on scholarships given by the United States government through AID (20 per cent); by other foreign governments, chiefly West Germany and [648]

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571 India (10 per cent); and by international organizations, chiefly WHO and
871 ICAO (8 per cent). The others were financed privately, either by their
177 families (8 per cent), or, in a few cases (3 per cent), by religious groups or
[648] business firms.

571 Given this variety of educational background, it is not surprising that the
829 experience of study abroad has had a variable effect on the returnees. Their
177 images of modernity are differently colored according to the country where they have received their higher education. Their archetypes for the modern component of language vary according to the language in which they have received their technical training.

Despite such variety—which may ultimately serve to enrich their cultural life more than to fragment it—several effects of the experience abroad appear common to nearly all the returnees. These include a radical broadening of perspective; the taste for a high standard of living; greater appreciation of political freedom; a heightened sense of Ethiopian identity; and an increase in nationalistic sentiment.

571 Because Ethiopian students are highly motivated to learn what goes on
829 about them in foreign countries, their travel abroad has tended to broaden
177 their outlooks rather than to confirm their prejudices. This expansion of per-
186 spective alters their attitude toward Ethiopia in two different ways. On the one hand, by enabling them to evaluate aspects of Ethiopian life they had previously taken for granted, it has made them more aggressively critical about conditions at home. On the other hand, it has given them a greater sense of pride about Ethiopia. They have noticed that, however advanced their host country, it had certain shortcomings of its own, a sort of observation which has tended to ease the sting of cultural inferiority inevitably felt during the stay in a more modernized society.

> Before going to the United States, I pictured it as the most perfect country on earth. We students in Ethiopia believed that everything good and beautiful comes from America. After studying there, I was disappointed in many ways. For example, I found the Americans to be hypocritical—they go to church, and don't care about religion; they talk about tolerance, and are still quite prejudiced. This was a great lesson for me. I can never be so romantic about a foreign country again, and can appreciate Ethiopia's strengths as well as its weaknesses better now.

Short travel tours sometimes had a similar effect:

> I spent several weeks in Yugoslavia. . . . And I must say—despite how backward we are here, we live much more happily than the Yugoslavs. The people themselves are wonderful—warm and generous; but their lives are miserable. That experience was really quite a surprise for me.

571 No matter what its shortcomings, the host country inevitably accustomed
829 Ethiopians abroad to a higher standard of living than they had known at
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home—except for the difficulty of having to do without servants. Those students whose rural background and limited intellectual experience had led them to consider Addis Ababa as one of the most advanced cities in the world were often shocked by the comparison. No less shocking was the moral climate, which permitted one to express oneself freely and honestly. The taste for intellectual freedom was added to that of political freedom, as students whose horizons were limited by the meager intellectual fare at home came into hungry contact with authors like Marx and Freud, Dewey and Russell. 571 829 177

However much the Ethiopian students abroad might seek to lose themselves in the host culture, they were not permitted to do so. In the mirror of foreigners' regards, their identity as Ethiopians took clearer shape, transcending narrower tribal identifications. Questions about Ethiopia by foreigners aroused greater interest in Ethiopia's history and contemporary problems. A number of students were thus moved to dip into the literature on their country produced by travelers and scholars in the past, and some of them came to write theses and dissertations on problems related to Ethiopia's development. 571 177 186

All of these factors—broadening of perspective, acquaintance with a higher economic standard, less inhibited discussions, and greater self-consciousness as Ethiopians—contributed to a spirit of nationalist dedication. This spirit was confirmed or aroused in all but two groups of the returnees. One, consisting of children of some wealthy members of the new nobility, went abroad chiefly for the prestige and pleasure involved. For them the experience was an extended holiday; they were playboys more than students. The other group consists of those who were abroad for too short a time to have a complete educational experience—in some cases, for as little as three months. These students have tended to use the tour abroad chiefly as a weapon with which to lord it over their peers on return and otherwise to serve narrow personal ambitions. Those students, however, for whom study abroad entailed a more or less serious encounter with higher education and a more modernized culture normally experienced a swelling aspiration to serve their country. They returned home deeply critical of the status quo and determined to contribute substantially to the modernization of their society. 571 177 186 829

Ostensibly, the returnees have been well situated for making such a contribution. Thanks to prudent government policy since the early fifties, they have been enabled to enjoy a minimally comfortable standard of living. Given a monthly allowance from the moment they step off the plane, they have been automatically salaried at a scale based largely on the academic degree attained, with A.B.'s starting at Eth$450 a month and Ph.D.'s at Eth$700. In addition, provisions have been made for them to borrow money from the government in order to finance heavy investments like furniture or, more usually, an automobile. 571 511 465 426

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571 automobile. All this permits returnees to live at a standard which, while clear-
511 ly inferior to what they enjoyed abroad, is well above that of all their countrymen except the higher nobility. Their income compares favorably
[465] with the prevailing monthly wages for policemen (Eth$25–$30) and district (*waradā*) governors (Eth$100), and not unfavorably with the salary earned by vice-ministers (Eth$1,000). Compared with the more sumptuous residences of the new nobility, their housing is threadbare, their staff of servants small; but usually their homes contain one or two modern appliances—a radio or phonograph, perhaps a refrigerator.

571 The returnees have, moreover, been shown deference from many quarters:
554 from the modernizing sector of the public which, in its growing esteem for education, has adulated them as the most educated Ethiopians and, in the early fifties, regarded them as something of national heroes; from resident Europeans and Americans, whose perception of shared understandings with the returnees has flattered them; and from the government, which at the least has shown consistent concern for their economic security and at best has given them responsibilities and status that they would not be granted in a more modernized society without considerably more experience.

Despite such apparent advantages, however, it must be said that the returnees as a whole have so far done little either to modernize their country or even to establish themselves as a self-respecting status group. Their failure to do so has become one of the most widely discussed questions in Ethiopia in recent years, both among the more self-critical of the returnees and among critical Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian observers. Instead of being leaders of the new era, they have been little more than misfits in the old. If the central quality of the life of the new nobility has been anxiety, that of the intellectuals has been frustration. In the passionate words of one of them: "There is a wound, a boiling within each and every one of the returnees." Theirs is the frustration of modernized individuals attempting to live meaningful lives in a society that has remained essentially traditional.

571 The ideological aspect of this dilemma is that no synthesis of traditional
829 and modern perspectives has yet been effected which has won the adherence of a sizable number of intellectuals and which could serve to energize their transformation of the status quo. Consensus exists only with regard to a vague sense of the inadequacy of the traditional system. There is no sense of direction. Partly this reflects deprivation due to maladjustment in personal areas, but it also represents a genuine cultural problem.

Foreign-educated Ethiopians return intellectually aware of the traditional nature of their society, but emotionally unprepared to cope with the tenacity of tradition or with the paucity of modern institutions and culture. The experience of culture shock seems greater when they return to Ethiopia than

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when they first went abroad. Then, they were taut with anticipation, eager to learn all they could and to enjoy life in a more modern society. On return, they were dismayed to find things so "backward": "I was struck at the airport by what I saw . . . the sadness in the people's faces, their undernourishment, their despair"—and plunged into a situation where their roles are ambiguous and their convictions are assaulted daily.

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The perspective acquired in the course of prolonged study and residence abroad usually generates a sharp critique of Ethiopian culture on the occasion of return. In some extreme cases, Ethiopian tradition appears devoid of any value.

> Everything in our past has been based on the oppression of the masses by the feudal lords. We must overthrow it all and start from scratch.
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> There is nothing in Ethiopian traditions that I find worth while. There has been no dynamic, no development, unless prodded from the outside or above. The music and poetry are repetitive; the social order is stagnant.

Most returnees, however, stop far short of wholesale condemnation of their traditions. They become aggravated by particular customs, such as *ĭshi naga* —Amharic for *mañana*—or certain requirements of etiquette. Nonetheless they have retained a basic attachment to their traditions which is re-awakened in the course of a somewhat painful re-adjustment.

> The main change since returning has been my education to be Ethiopian, to view things with the eyes of an Ethiopian. At first I expected things to be as we saw them in the United States; then I came to see the real concrete problems here, to be more understanding.
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> • • • •
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> The ideas I acquired abroad have not changed, only my vim and vigor. One comes to see the setbacks, the need to take two steps back in order to achieve one forward. . . . In the major areas, I identify with the old culture—in such matters as politeness, reserve, hospitality, and being concerned about one's relatives and close friends. In the minor respects, no. The elders carry some of these things to extremes. If someone dies, they go and sit for three days; we go to pay our respects for half an hour. There are a hundred and one customs that fall into this category.

A few returnees even come to acquire a nostalgic interest in the things of the old culture. They become eager to have Ethiopian history and culture studied by scholars. Some have expressed a desire to take up the study of Ge'ez and *qenē*.

All such resolutions of the cultural problem are highly personal syntheses. They remain stable only so long as the individual's life is satisfactory in other

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571 829 respects. They are not anchored in a *conscience collective*. They are islands of clarity in a sea of confusion that becomes evident in remarks like the following:

> While we were in high school here, we still followed the old beliefs. We went abroad and lost them all. Nothing has yet replaced them. We have no beliefs—in any sphere—religion, social, politics.
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> • • • •
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> We are all of us confused today. Perhaps it is that the change has come too fast. At any rate, we have lost our values. We don't know what is best for us to do.
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> I don't believe there is anyone in the entire country who knows where we are heading or where we should be heading.

This confusion is the confusion of all Ethiopia today, but because the returnees became so deeply involved in Western culture while abroad they alone have experienced it so acutely. Were they engaged in satisfying work and enmeshed in family obligations, moreover, such malaise would be reduced. Precisely in these fundamental areas, however, the returnees are typically frustrated.

571 464 The burden of the returnees' frustration in work has not been to locate employment, but to find meaningful employment. It is true that several of the foreign-educated have had to wait for months, in some cases for over a year, after returning to Ethiopia before they were actually given employment. With the establishment of a placement board for returned students in the Ministry of Education about 1955, this difficulty has been minimized. The more fundamental problem has been that the institutional system has been insufficiently modernized to make proper use of individuals who had acquired specialized training abroad. There has been great variability of experience in this regard. Many of the technical intelligentsia have found suitable positions, especially those in the fields of medicine and engineering, and have led quite productive and satisfying work lives since shortly after their return. Many others, however, have been demoralized by the experience of having to occupy simple administrative positions which anyone with a little common sense could handle, or by being saddled with purely administrative responsibilities even when initially placed in a technical job. In such circumstances they have found themselves forgetting most of what they learned while abroad and felt themselves not being used.

571 466 Even when located in work broadly commensurate with their training received abroad, the returnees have been frustrated by numerous hardships in the work situation and by the difficulties of reform. As might be expected, work facilities are generally inferior to those which the returnees became

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familiar with in more industrialized societies. Nor is there any disposition to improvise improvements with what facilities are available. Little attention is paid to the condition of offices, for example, which are normally located in dark, drab, depressing rooms. Furthermore, the operating procedures of Ethiopian administration are bound to frustrate those who have been conditioned to more rationalized systems of organization. Departments frequently operate with ex post facto budgets. Filing systems are hopelessly archaic. There is virtually no public consciousness of the importance of work *time.* 571 466 [47] 571 466 805

> Ethiopian persons are not geared to a timetable. I have to keep telling myself: "This is how we do it here." Seeing a ten-story building go up in a month, grass and all—that is not for here. . . . I get most annoyed when I cannot finish some matter as promised. Not wanting to reveal the name of my colleague or superior who is holding up the action, I have to make up excuses. Eventually I run out of excuses and this bothers me. . . . Sometimes I get angry and say: "I have given my word to someone, and must have the matter ready today; please sign it." And am told: "Oh, well, don't rush things so."

Work relationships have frequently exasperated the returnees. There has been little inclination to give technically competent employees proper jurisdiction over the personnel in their departments. Technically uneducated superiors have tended to make unrealistic demands—for example, requesting an immediate report on a complicated question that requires weeks to prepare. On the other hand, they have tended to assume that their age and experience are equivalent to the technical knowledge of the foreign-trained, so that technically warranted projects have been casually dismissed because they do not strike the fancy of the superior. 571 466

The returnees have not been so despondent about these conditions which, after all, could be changed—than they are about the apparent futility of trying to change them. Older employees are quick to resent alterations in the accustomed order. 571 466 178 829

> My efforts to reform are opposed by most of the men who run the [postal] system now. Some of them have been working there for forty years or so, and they want to keep things just the way they were when mail came in on camels, because they have always done it that way.

Such resistance to change at the workaday level is tacitly supported by those in the upper echelons of authority—the new nobility. In them the returnees have found their main antagonists and from them have received their most painful lacerations. [565]

The *shamäggelotch,* or "elders," as they are termed by the intelligentsia, have by no means presented a solidary front in opposition to the young modernizers. On the contrary, the attitude of the new nobility toward the 571 565 178 829

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571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

571 Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
584 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
834 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
178 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The tradition-al mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

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furniture, etc.—are equally burdensome investments if the returnee does not 571
possess them. Furthermore, the traditional large wedding is still expected in 585
most cases. In the city this involves an enormous expense—as much as 511
Eth$2,000-$4,000—which often puts the groom in debt for several years.*

There are many returnees for whom these factors are excuses more than in- 571
superable obstacles, or who frankly prefer the extended bachelordom made 582
possible by the greater freedom of the modernizing sector to an uncertain
match. If, as frequently is the case, they would marry only an educated wife, [581]
they may be discouraged by the shortage of educated Ethiopian women; or
beset by too much pride, if coming from a humble background, to ask for the
hand of an educated girl who is likely to come from an upper-class family.
They may be victims of the cycle of antagonism that has developed between [578]
educated men and women in Ethiopia, the former attacking the latter for de-
manding too much in the way of material things and being only superficially
modernized—"half-baked"—and the latter indicting the former for preferring
foreign girls and unjustly neglecting Ethiopian women.

But the root of the problem is often deeper (leaving aside, for this discus- 581
sion, characterological factors). It is entwined with a basic insecurity about 178
the whole idea of marriage in the transitional atmosphere of contemporary 177
Ethiopia. Perhaps nowhere in the minds of the returnees do traditional and 571
modern norms stand in such delicate counterpoise as with regard to the ques-
tion of the sort of wife one should marry and the proper type of relation to
have with her. Should he prefer the traditional woman, modestly dressed and
inconspicuous, or the Western ideal of a sexually attractive female? Should he
have a wife who stays at home all the time, or one whom he takes along to
social gatherings? Should he have a wife with whom to share interests and
discuss problems, or one to order about and keep in her place? The returnees
have normally been attracted by the Western marriage pattern while abroad,
but it is so out of place in the Ethiopian context that many are troubled by the
prospect on return. The foreign-educated man feels he should have an edu-
cated wife, but he also feels threatened by a woman who is independent,
especially if she is holding a job. Such ambivalence adds an additional dimen-
sion of vulnerability to the returnee's position.

In sum: the conditions of life receptive to a modernizing intellectual 121
stratum have not yet been established in Ethiopia. The personal frustrations 571
of the returnees are an inevitable consequence of their being the bearers of 177
modern culture in a traditional oligarchical order—especially one that has 178

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* A new custom has developed in response to this problem. It has become the practice in some [178]
offices for sheets of paper to be circulated prior to a wedding in the ministry or agency where
the groom is employed. Co-workers write the amount they wish to be deducted from their
salaries in their behalf. Most recently, modest weddings have started to become respectable.

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121 been affected by modernizing agents for but a relatively brief period and in
571 a relatively diluted fashion. The beliefs and values which the returnees
177 acquired while abroad concern national development, technical competence,
178 and individuality, while the norms of the social structure in which they must live are based on the values of loyalty to monarch, ascribed status, and authoritarian relations.

121 Of many possible types of response to such a situation of strain, four are
571 common among the Ethiopian intelligentsia. These we may designate by the
177 terms Opportunism, Withdrawal, Reformism, and Rebellion. With reference
178 to the three variables of commitment to modern goals and norms, acceptance of existing authorities, and the distinction between "activity" and "passivity,"
156 these patterns may be represented schematically as in Table 14.[59]

TABLE 14

MODES OF ADAPTATION OF ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES

	Commitment to Modern Values	Acceptance of Existing Authorities	"Activity"
Opportunism	−	+	+
Withdrawal	+	−	−
Reformism	+	+	+
Rebellion	+	−	+

Opportunism is the mode of adaptation in which the returnee's commitment to modern goals and norms is eclipsed by his passion for status, power,
[554] and income. He differs from the traditional aspirant for high position in Abyssinia in that two of his status qualifications are novel—residence abroad, and a university degree—and above all in that the pursuit of his personal goals entails a *renunciation* of nationalistic ideals and universalistic standards which were nurtured while abroad. For some opportunists this is no real problem: their study abroad was all along essentially a façade to be used in advancing their careers. But for the others the process of becoming an opportunist is a gradual one and attended by chronic self-recriminations, as the returnee finds himself compulsively agreeing with his superiors and flattering them on every occasion, and performing actions primarily for the sake of advancement rather than for the sake of doing a job well.

> It is impossible to go on pursuing progressive principles indiscriminately. I sometimes see my friends doing things now which we used to condemn

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when we were students abroad together. I wonder at times if I am losing sight of my principles altogether.

Withdrawal is the solution of those who have retained their principles at the expense of being effectual in action. The routes of escape are varied. One way is transferring attention to problems outside the country—to international relations, problems of pan-Africanism, or the gossip about London, Paris, and New York.

To me the independence of all African nations is more important than the progress of Ethiopia.

Some spend their energies in convivial relations with resident Westerners (diplomatic and technical assistance personnel, foreign businessmen) or in the traditional rounds of family visiting. Quite a few returnees lose themselves in card-playing or chess whenever they can, and a number have taken to heavy drinking. Often the returnee who withdraws shows no "symptoms" other than a general constriction of his life into narrow work routines and creature functions. At the same time he may be experiencing a fairly acute sense of estrangement.

Our generation is not really living. We are not "engaged." The simple weaver—most of the people in this country—are "engaged." We are not; we live from day to day. When I leave work I go to the Ras Hotel or somewhere else. I don't want to go home, there is nothing there for me. I have nothing to work for. I have no family, nor any interest in saving money.

The third type of response, Reformism, involves the attempt both to maintain principles and to be effective in action under the existing political order. This alternative places great demands on the personality system and might well be designated as the pattern of "moral heroism."

What we lack today is proper organization. In default of organization, we are forced to rely on morality.

The reformist returnee serves his country according to universalistic standards even though these norms are scarcely institutionalized; even though, in other words, he is likely to be criticized and even punished for maintaining standards in the face of demands by superiors and relatives to do otherwise, or for solving problems in a rational manner on his own initiative. Yet if he is officially disregarded or censured, his efforts do not go unnoticed by the patriotic modernizing elements of the population who, in a covert, informal system of communication, tend to establish severe judgments on the "bad guys" and the "good guys," and to idolize the latter as potential leaders.

In the case of Rebellion, finally, the attempt is made to be active in the pursuit of modern goals but in a spirit of basic alienation from the existing

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121 authorities. Except for a very few eccentric individuals who have seemed
571 oblivious to the dangers of speaking out their criticism of the status quo in
177 public, this has in the nature of current circumstances necessarily involved
178 clandestine activity. Returnees have been involved in small conspiratorial
156 groups since the mid-fifties. The December, 1960, coup d'état has been the
[669] most ambitious rebellious project to be acted out so far. Similarly motivated
[668] activities have included the duplication and distribution of subversive literature, and the formation of small groups as groundwork for an eventual political party.

Our data do not permit reliable estimates of the frequency of these different modes of adaptation among the returnees. It is important to note, however, that individuals often change from one mode to another in the course of their experience after return and that many follow more than one pattern at the same time. It is unlikely that the total number of returnees oriented primarily as rebels has ever exceeded two per cent. Most of them move in and out of phases of Reformism, Withdrawal, and Opportunism, depending to a large extent on the accidents of their appointments. A more concrete picture of their experience may be suggested by the following case study, that of a Western-educated Ethiopian who went from a phase of Withdrawal to one of Reformism tinged with Opportunism.

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The Adjustment of "Haile": Case Study of a Returnee

October, 1958. Haile has recently returned from four years of study in a Western country. He speaks very critically about the state of things in Ethiopia. He is particularly upset by the prevailing inefficiency, the lack of industriousness, and the interminable procrastination (*īshi naga*).

January, 1959. Haile seems deeply depressed. The ministry in which he has been placed affords him no opportunity to work effectively and the job he has bears no relation to what he was trained for. He has withdrawn more into himself, but to all outward appearances plays perfectly well, with great self-assurance, the role of the Amhara bureaucrat.

July, 1959. Now Haile is working in a different ministry, in a job somewhat more closely related to his training. He appears to feel productive and useful now, and his criticism is constructive. For example, he frequently compares the situation in the United States and Ethiopia, to show how the same sort of problem can be solved more readily in the U.S. because of its greater facilities. Though Ethiopia's comparative handicaps frustrate him, he talks of plans for the development of Ethiopia with some enthusiasm. . . . Haile complains of an

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FIG. 30.—*A widower who has become a monk*

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FIG. 31.—*A group of clergy*

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FIG. 32.—*Haile Selassie as a boy with his father, Ras Makonnen*

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FIG. 33.—*The Emperor attending a ceremony at the University College*

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overload of work, noting that he must not only do his own work but also rectify the mistakes made by others which are brought to him. In his whole branch of the ministry, he finds only two really effective workers besides himself, and they, too, are returnees. . . . He feels fortunate in having encountered no major opposition to the things he is doing in his work and points happily to the fact that his assistant minister has supported him throughout. 121 571 159 156

October, 1959. Haile now is saying that things are fine in Addis Ababa and stresses the great improvement that has been made during the past five years. He claims that he is getting along fine in his ministry, because his job is straight "busy work." Even so, he is not a pure "ritualist"; he has already negotiated a number of reforms in the operations of his office. His general outlook seems bright—partly, no doubt, because he is "arriving" (what with printed name-cards and a smoothly functioning job) but also because he has a pretty fiancée whom he plans to marry next year. . . . At another point, however, he shows great exasperation over the considerable conflict among factions within the ministry. He decries the nepotism practiced by the heads of these factions. He says that he tries to stay independent of their intrigues.

June, 1960. Recently Haile was given additional responsibilities in his ministry, and he expects a raise in salary soon. Although this new work is still further removed from the subjects he studied while abroad than was his previous job, he no longer complains about not being hired to do what he had been trained for or about not being used. He remains unhappy about his minister, who brings in his own men from the outside rather than promote men from the ranks—"or else I would have been a director general by now." On the other hand, he mentions with evident pleasure the fact that the Emperor sent over a gift at the time of his wedding. . . . Haile's wife is a simple, traditional sort of Ethiopian girl. He seems happy with her and with their home—an old, poorly built structure that is falling apart, but which she has taken pains to enliven with a few decorations, and has equipped with a radio. He looks forward to the prospect of building a house on their own land sometime in the future. Meanwhile, a baby is on the way. . . . The circle has come full swing. Haile talks proudly about his work, his family, and his country.

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The Locals

571 Ethiopians with only a secondary school education comprise a group which must be reckoned as part of a burgeoning intelligentsia. Relative to the mass of the population, their intellectual attainments are high indeed. Although their cultural level is usually lower than that of the returnees, they include a few extremely cultivated self-educated men, and others whose intense intellectual curiosity would put the average returnee to shame. Apart from such considerations, however, the fact that they are among the small number of bearers of modern culture in present-day Ethiopia suffices to justify considering them as part of a secular educated elite. The very small but growing number of graduates from Ethiopian colleges who do not go abroad for graduate study may for the present discussion be included in this group, though in some respects their situation is intermediate between the locals and the returnees.

The basic differences between the returnees and locals is that the latter never lost touch with Ethiopia. Their growth has been more closely in step with the growth of their nation. Not having been accustomed to the comforts of a more modern environment, they find it less trying to live with what Addis Ababa has to offer. Not having become so deeply attached to norms rooted in an alien culture, they need not rack themselves re-adjusting. They have been spared the extremes of "soaring and collapsing enthusiasm" which inform the experience of so many foreign-educated men in traditional societies.[60]

Their cultural orientation is far less anomic than it is patriotic. They have remained enmeshed in familiar personal nexuses, to kin and schoolmates, ethnic and regional confreres, which have minimized the disruptive effect of rapid culture diffusion. Because of their essentially particularistic orientation, they are far less perplexed about the problems of institutionalizing universalistic standards than they are enthusiastic about anything that represents indigenous achievement, such as the modern secular songs created and performed by talented members of the Imperial Bodyguard or the National Patriotic Association.

Their work life is often quite gratifying: it represents, in any case, the best that they have ever known at first hand. It is not so hard for them to get used to rudimentary facilities and procedures, or to lower standards of performance. They are supplely adaptive to the moods of their superiors and the nuances of domestic political intrigue, even though they may be moved periodically to denounce such intrigue.

The locals also tend to be more content in their sexual adjustment than the returnees. The local can live happily for a long time as a bachelor, maintaining polite and distant relations with the traditional girls and frequenting the

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brothels for dancing and more intimate relations. (Returnees normally do not have patience for the shy, traditional girls; and they are too concerned about public opinion to be seen visiting brothels. When they or the locals do visit the brothels, it is often by way of a backdoor entrance.) When they marry, the locals almost invariably choose a traditional type of wife with relatively little education and with whom they expect to have an authoritarian relationship.

In sum: the local is not so afflicted by those problems which derive from the central dilemma of the returnee—how to fulfil himself according to modern standards in an intractable, traditional environment. The local's dilemma typically lies in a different realm, that of economic and social mobility. Whereas the returnee has been given a comparatively high income and status almost as a matter of course, the local has normally started his work life with a relatively low salary and little prestige. If the returnee has felt deprived relative to the Westerners in whose society he has lived, the local has felt deprived relative to the returnee.

The local lives on a day-to-day basis at a relatively simple standard. Though he shares the returnee's passion for woolen suits and, in many cases, for a car of his own, he is not, like the returnee, preoccupied with the quest for housing that conforms to Western standards. Except for those with extraordinary talents and family connections, the locals have had difficulty locating jobs that they feel are not beneath their dignity and which pay salaries sufficient to cover their relatively modest needs. They customarily receive a starting salary in the neighborhood of Eth$150. The more ambitious and fortunate among them have, by changing jobs, manipulating superiors, and improving skills, worked their way up to salaries in the Eth$400–$500 category. Some have become provincial teachers for a while, in order to accumulate money on which to live while shopping for a position in Addis Ababa and with which to influence some higher official to grant it to them. There remains a hard core of locals who feel they are underpaid and live in constant resentment of this situation.

This resentment has produced a general sort of negativism which characterizes many of the locals, a negativism expressed in the form of backbiting and denunciation of the higher government officials and the nobility generally. They decry social injustice and the uses of nepotism. They moralize profusely against those whom fortune has shown greater favors. But not all their social criticism is born of resentment. There are also among the locals many young men who are comfortably situated but fired by patriotic fervor with a desire for social reform.

The local is as deeply concerned about asserting his status vis-à-vis the less educated as he is to advance his position in the hierarchy. Locals are extreme-

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571 ly meticulous about the state of their clothes. They have their shoes shined
156 several times daily, even when they are eating only one solid meal per day.
[554] They are intent on receiving the proper deference—for example, on being served properly in a hotel. This concern for status is projected in the form of
[186] an intense nationalism that considers the speedy displacement of non-Ethiopians holding important jobs in the country a more urgent need than the establishment of effective modern institutions and universalistic standards.

Some locals can be found, of course, whose problems and aspirations resemble those of the returnees, and vice versa. However, the characteristics here associated with the two types follow logically from their basic situation and have been observed sufficiently to justify this depicting of them in terms of ideal types. The distinction is further justified on the grounds that the two
[578] groups have developed a modicum of corporate identity and a degree of mutual antagonism which was particularly pronounced in the mid-fifties.

571 The returnees were at first inclined to regard their locally educated coun-
186 trymen with snobbish pride because of the keen sense of superiority which
578 study abroad conferred. It was natural, moreover, for the returnees to associate most closely with those who had shared the very important personal experience of living abroad, and so they tended to neglect their former schoolmates who never crossed the seas. At times, in fact, they scarcely bothered to exchange greetings with them.

The sense that they were being regarded as inferiors embittered the locals. At the same time they were jealous that they, too, had not had the opportunity to study abroad. These mutual incriminations were heightened by economic competition, the returnees claiming that those who stayed behind had the advantage of working their way up into significant and lucrative positions, the locals believing that a degree from abroad was an automatic entree to a good job.

The latent antagonism between locals and returnees came to a head in 1957, with the simultaneous publication in the *Voice of Ethiopia* of an article by a local criticizing returnee behavior[61] and the presentation of a play by the National Patriotic Association which caricatured them. The play, for example, showed a returnee entering the office of a minister, patting him on the back, puffing cigarette smoke into his eyes, sitting back with his feet up on the minister's desk and talking on and on disrespectfully. Another returnee was shown failing to recognize his own mother when she comes into his office, exclaiming: "Woman, get out of here!" A small group of returnees protested these insults with a petition to the Emperor, who is said to have brought some criticism to bear upon the authorities involved.

571 With the return of increasing numbers of Ethiopians from study abroad,
554 however, the prestige of a foreign degree has diminished, and the appearance of classes of locally educated A.B.'s, who have remained in the country to

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work, has further blurred the cleavage between returnees and locals. Finally, the returnees' growing awareness of their own "failure" has in many cases given them added sympathy toward the locals.

> The locals have as much right to live in the land as the returnees and as much duty to help the country. They should be given responsibility commensurate with what they are able to do. Doing serious work and being a leader do not require going abroad. We may find a leader in one of these kids. . . . In private life, I may not have much to do with them: I associate with a small group of friends, as does everyone; and you can't know everybody. But I have no contempt for the locals, and some of them are my best friends.
>
> • • • •
>
> The locals are the real patriots around here and the ones from whom real action will come.

The locals, in turn, seem to have become less suspicious that the returnees are looking down on them. Yet, in more recent years, they have found different grounds on which to be critical of the returnees. They see the returnees as alienated from Ethiopian life, withdrawn from public action, and consumed with private concerns, instead of living up to expectations and exercising dynamic leadership in the transformation of Ethiopian society.

> The returnees know nothing about Ethiopia when they leave, and when they come back they are just like the *faranj*. We, who have not studied much, cannot see far. We know little more than to do our daily routine. But they, who have the vision, don't do anything. They borrow thousands of dollars when they return, to buy furniture, rent a home, get a car, and so on; and that is all they think about.

The dissatisfaction of many locals with the returnees has in fact increased their own self-esteem and ambition to exert leadership themselves.

In terms of the total pattern of stratification in Ethiopia, however, the factors uniting locals and returnees outweigh those separating them. Despite differences of emphasis, they share a basic estrangement from the traditional masses and elites and a deep antagonism toward the government and most of the new nobility. They are unanimous in feeling that something is dreadfully wrong in the state of Ethiopia. Frequently they cannot articulate just what they object to, or else they seize upon some flagrant social evil as the bête noire: with the locals tending to be most outspoken against the widespread prostitution, or alcoholism, or the abuses of the courts, or the inequalities of wealth; and the returnees tending to single out inefficient practices in administration, or nepotism, or corruption in high places. Above all, perhaps, they share an increasing sense of *impatience,* a sense of being smothered in an archaic and stagnant social order, which they designate so expressively with

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the Amharic phrase *ya-ḳantu weddāsē zaman*—"the era of futile flattery."

For, whatever other aspects of modern culture they have identified with, the locals and returnees are seized with the promise of its first principle: dynamism.[62] Should they join forces, among themselves and with each other, they might create the effective intelligentsia which is indispensable for realizing this dynamism in action. They would play complementary, and equally necessary, parts; the locals contributing their greater drive and closeness to traditional society, the returnees their broader perspective and skepticism toward simplistic answers and total reforms.

There are numerous obstacles to such a progressive development. Some of them represent the persistence among the intellectuals of a number of traditional pan-Abyssinian characteristics which inhibit both the exercise of creative leadership and the capacity for solidary action. The traditional context of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters which follow. The most conspicuous obstacle, however, has been the manner in which the Ethiopian government has sought to integrate the intellectuals in the social system. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Role of the Government

In the hierarchy of values which sustained the traditional Abyssinian social order, that of the transcendental religious orientation represented by the Orthodox Church may be said to have held the paramount position. This is the sense in which, as has so often been remarked, religion has been Abyssinia's only truly unifying factor throughout the centuries. Religious charisma transferred from foreign sanctuaries—the mythical Ark of the Covenant brought from Jerusalem and the archbishop periodically imported from Egypt—provided the ultimate source of legitimacy in the society, upholding the authority of a sacred Christian monarch, church-defending warlords, and a numerous and functionally differentiated clergy. It so penetrated the social system that the basic unit of Abyssinian civil life was in fact a religious one, the parish.

In retrospect it would seem that the most profound aspect of Haile Selassie's accomplishment has been to dislodge the transcendental religious value from highest place and to replace it with the system-integrative value of loyalty to the emperor.[63] His mission has been above all a secularizing one. To accomplish it he has had greatly to increase his political and economic resources; but insofar as his regime has been accepted, and not based exclusively on sheer power—which to some extent is certainly the case—the paramount value in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie has become loyalty to the emperor as a symbol of the whole society. The autonomous significance of the church has been reduced; its extra-Ethiopian source of charisma has been cut off, and its func-

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643 tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the 181 Crown. 178 771

The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental 178 religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with 181 the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the 643 chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals 642 of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; 631 and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance 178 to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and 181 prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but inte- 565 grative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pur- 085 sued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, 178 a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient 181 technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor 571 and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard 871 of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relation- 178 ship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever 643 advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his 571 personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal 871 solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

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Thanks to the untiring endeavour of Your Imperial Majesty in the field of education, we now have not only elementary and secondary schools throughout the country but also different higher educational institutions providing the youth of our country with higher education. Besides this, competent students are selected and sent abroad for specialization, as a result of which the number of Ethiopian students in foreign countries is increasing. Those of us who are now standing before Your Imperial Majesty are only a few among those who have been given such an opportunity. . . .

Your Imperial Majesty's struggle is to enable Ethiopia to benefit from the advantages of modern education in order to improve the standard of living of Your people so that Ethiopia will play adequately its part in the international community. Consequently, the public services that are rendered in the reign of Your Imperial Majesty are enormously great compared with the past. This can be seen easily by the number of ministries and other government agencies established by Your Imperial Majesty. . . .[64]

[A reply by the Emperor]:

We have been deeply touched by what you have said on behalf of the returned students. From you, We expect devotion to your country and your Emperor. . . . Endeavour to profit your country from the fruits of your education. Men are in great need today. It is not enough to be labeled as "man"—one must be worthy of the name by being of use to the community. This is the real test of education.

You must get in intimate touch with the cultural heritage of your country. Familiarise yourselves with the modes of life from which you must have been estranged naturally by your absence. You must endeavour to purge yourselves gradually of alien influence in your daily lives, and so God help you.[65]

This sort of paternal relation has served not only to promote the loyalty of his educated "children" but also to check mild cases of dissidence. Grown men with sophisticated technical training who may have voiced some critical sentiments have been called in for mild reproof: "Why have you behaved thus? Did We not always bring you fruit and other things when you were at school?"

Such a policy was no doubt viable when Ethiopians with secondary education numbered in the hundreds, but it becomes increasingly implausible as the Emperor's family of educated youth multiplies into thousands. No less relevant to its long-run futility is the fact that knowledge, unlike wealth and political position, is an inalienable possession. Their knowledge gives Western-educated Ethiopians a kind of independence of the Emperor that is lacking in most of the new nobility, and that perhaps may be compared to the private armies of the feudal lords or the power of excommunication held by the church. It was awareness of this that prompted one returnee to say: "The Emperor will have to learn that our education is not a plaything he can turn on or off as he pleases."

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But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shïr* and *divide et impera*. "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

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people. He has been the procreator of much of what demand for modernization now exists in the country, although the Italian colonial administration must also be credited for a certain amount of this demand. By the fifties, however, the growth of the demand of modernization had become self-sustaining, if only in a relatively small part of the population. At that point Haile Selassie was unwilling, or at least unable, to take the next step, to raise national development higher in the societal value hierarchy than loyalty to the Crown. Thus, a traditional oligarchy has been maintained, in which the development of a self-respecting modern intelligentsia has been effectively restrained and its decisive ascendance as a new elite has been prevented.

The paramount sociological problem in Ethiopia in the coming decades concerns whether or not this pattern will be broken. There is no guarantee that it will be. It is highly thinkable that the opportunists among the intellectuals will be absorbed into the new nobility and that a new oligarchy will entrench itself and maintain its exclusive position by increased repression.[66] The number of young people being given secondary and college education will continue to be limited to a diminutive percentage, and the deeply rooted sentiments of the mass of the population for a regime of traditional oligarchy will not be offended. Economic development will proceed at a snail's pace, and what additional wealth is produced will flow into the pockets of a small minority. One possible outcome of such an eventuality would be that the modernizing infrastructure of the society would grow increasingly restless, culminating in a revolution which installed a modernizing oligarchy.

Alternatively, modernizing forces already unleashed in the country may gather momentum and sustain a gradual breakthrough of the new order. If one were to credit the reports of many who have spoken with the Emperor at first hand, this would be his desire. But far more than imperial approval of a distant ideal is required for it to become reality. Two conditions, above all, would be essential. One is that the systematic, if unwitting, demoralization of the intellectuals would have to be ended. Some sphere would have to be created in which universalistic standards have full sway, in which a modernizing intelligentsia can maintain and develop standards and transmit them to younger elements. The most obvious way to do this would be through a university which, by guaranteed financial support, independence from political pressures, and determined operation at a high standard, could provide the Ethiopian government and people with the technical and executive intelligentsia needed for effective modernization, and could provide an environment in which a corps of "custodians of the public good," loyal to the regime but free to express criticism, might be developed. The program for such a university was carefully drawn up by the planners of the Haile Selassie I University. It remains to be seen whether the opposition which muffled that program shortly after its inception, in the spring of 1962, was motivated primarily by

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personal antagonism toward some of the foreign academic officials intrusted with its implementation, or whether it primarily reflected natural political pressures against the establishment of an autonomous and vigorous university. Whatever the reason, the failure of the university to develop in the promising manner in which it had been conceived means that for some time to come only the continued sending of large numbers of Ethiopian students abroad will supply the intelligentsia required if modernization is to continue, and that their demoralization on return can only be reduced by instituting an effective civil service system and permitting them some degree of freedom in speech, press, and association.

The other condition is that the intellectuals themselves will have to break out of their posture of defeatism and negativism. They will have to abandon the delusive image implied by the intellectual who replied, when asked why he was sitting around in his office and doing no work: "I'm waiting until the government changes." The burden for the breakthrough rests upon them: upon their capacity to push forward in the light of developmental needs and technical requirements, maintaining a sense of affinity both with the government and with the traditional masses. Until the values of the intelligentsia are effectively institutionalized, they will get nowhere unless their ranks produce fewer "escapees" and more "moral heroes." The chances for the success of this elite would seem to rest in part on its mastery of those qualities which Edward Shils has described in analyzing the prerequisites for successful leadership in the new states—"on its capacity for self-restraint and its effectiveness in legitimating itself through modernizing achievement, through a due respect for the claims of traditional beliefs and through its recruitment of a stratum of intellectuals of intermediate level who can reinterpret traditional beliefs, adapt them to modern needs and translate them into a modern idiom."[67]

Are Ethiopian intellectuals capable of this? In the succeeding chapters we shall consider factors which work against their so doing. Yet there is no doubt that many educated Ethiopians have quietly been demonstrating such qualities for years now. Already numerous intellectuals, working as medical officers, teachers, agricultural extension workers, engineers, lawyers, journalists, and bureaucrats have shown great capacity for translating traditional Abyssinian reserve into self-restrained progressivism, and through diligent application to the task at hand and a sympathetic orientation to their tradition-minded countrymen have been laying the foundations for the great transformation. Whatever the pace and pattern of Ethiopia's political development, such work constitutes the indispensable raw material of her modernization.

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6

ORALITY AND THE SEARCH FOR LEADERSHIP

121 In the previous chapter we observed that modern-educated Ethiopians, par-
571 ticularly those who were educated abroad, acquired knowledge, skills, patriotic motivation, and social position with which they might conceivably have made substantial reforms and innovations in Ethiopia's institutions. And yet, in their own eyes as in the eyes of some high government officials and foreign observers, they have done relatively little. Their behavior has been marked by a conspicuous absence of creative leadership and solidary action.

Among many of the modern-educated this alleged sin of omission has, in turn, generated an underlying current of reproach against the government and at times against themselves. We have described some features of Ethiopia's domestic political situation which have limited the freedom of modern-educated Ethiopians to carry out progressive activities. A number of them have proceeded from awareness of those limitations to placing all blame on the government for Ethiopia's slow pace of development. Others, however, have turned some if not all of that reproach inward. "It is up to us," they say, "and we have done nothing. Why have we failed? Why have we no moral backbone, no character?"

121 This chapter and the next are concerned with the basis of this latter re-
128 proach, as well as with the more general task of enriching our understanding
571 of traditional Amhara culture. We shall proceed on the assumption that insofar as modern-educated Ethiopians have failed to take decisive steps in developing their country they have been held back by other constraints and

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limitations in addition to those imposed by the government. In the present 121
chapter we shall deal chiefly with factors which are inhibitive of creative 128
leadership, and in the chapter which follows chiefly with factors which affect 571
the capacity for solidary action.

One of the most honest and perceptive of my foreign-educated informants 571
had this to say about the absence of creative leadership among the returnees: 157

> Our maladjustment may be more our fault than that of the government. 121
> We have been led to expect everything from the government, and have become dependent to such a point that we can scarcely think or act for ourselves.

This is a remarkable and convincing piece of self-analysis. It falls short only 571
insofar as it implies that the posture of dependence on governmental author- 157
ity is something peculiar to the modern-educated. It is true that there have 181
been certain conditions such as the "welfare" character of the secondary 121
schools, which are specific to the experience of the modern-educated and which have accentuated a tendency to overdependence. But this tendency is endemic in traditional Amhara-Tigre culture, and those modern Abyssinians who exhibit it are following an inclination deeply rooted in the needs they have acquired and the culture they have internalized in their childhood.

There are various ways in which one might conceptualize this problem. 121
It is not unrelated to what other authors have referred to variously as lack 157
of achievement motivation or lack of innovational personality. The approach of this chapter will stress certain psychoanalytic concepts and insights. In so doing, it will not attempt to delineate an Amhara "basic personality," a task well beyond the scope of the present study.[1] Rather, we shall be concerned here solely with certain kinds of motivational orientation which are widely shared among the Amhara and which frequently inform their social behavior and their cultural symbolism.

Adopting the terminology developed by Erik Erikson,[2] we may rephrase 121
the point about Amhara overdependence by saying that *in Amhara action and* 155
fantasy the social modality of "getting" figures very prominently. The superior 571
is oriented chiefly to getting food, services, and deference from his inferior;[3] the inferior is oriented chiefly to getting favors from his superior. And most interaction among the Amhara is cast in the form of superior-inferior personal dyadic relations. The prominence of this modality reflects a fixation of libido on what Erikson calls a mode of approach to the environment that is "incorporative," and that originates in connection with the infant's experience with a particular part of his body, the oral zone. The central thesis of this chapter is that Amhara behavior and symbolism exhibit a very high degree of attachment of libido, not only to the organ *mode* of incorporation, but even more to the oral *zone*.

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THE PHENOMENA OF AMHARA ORALITY

155 Shortly after an Amhara child is born some butter is placed in his mouth. This
826 is done in the belief that it will keep his voice from becoming harsh. From
[856] that moment on, the mouth never ceases to be an organ of extraordinary
[192] importance in his life. Its cultural importance is reflected in the attention given to it in the Amharic vocabulary: Baeteman's *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* lists some sixty idioms built with the Amharic word for mouth, *af*, more than are listed for any other words in the language except "eye,"
[539] "heart," and "earth."[4] The organ is publicly celebrated in such proverbs as: "Cleverness of mouth, to the master; cleverness of hand, to the slave."

155 The oral zone is of course of universal significance. Some items of oral
826 imagery probably appear in most languages, and manifestations of oral libido
171 appear in many forms familiar to Westerners: the French love for gourmandism, the German passion for beer-drinking and singing, the American addiction to cigarettes, chewing gum, and "life-savers." Many of the less familiar phenomena to be related below in describing Amhara orality, moreover, are found in most of the cultures of Africa and the Middle East. But such phenomena often appear inconspicuously alongside other culturally patterned impulses and sublimations stemming from other phases of psychosexual development. What may distinguish the Amhara—and doubtless some other cultures—is the extent to which the oral zone is an object of attention and a source of behavioral modes and expressive symbolism. The Amhara, it appears, have a preoccupation with orality.

121 This preoccupation is manifest in three different kinds of phenomena.
155 There are, first of all, aspects of Amhara culture which express a strong positive attachment to the infantile experience of sucking, in pure and in numerous sublimated forms. These we shall designate as the phenomena of *oral erotism*. Second, there are the aspects of Amhara culture which express a
[152] strong positive attachment to the oral zone as a center for various aggressive activities—the modes which Erikson calls "incorporation by biting," "oral retention," and "oral intrusion." These we shall collectively designate as the phenomena of *oral sadism*. Finally, there are phenomena which express a conflict about the gratification of many of these oral desires; and these we shall refer to as the phenomena of *oral ambivalence*.

155 *Oral Erotism*

853 Feeding at the breast is a prominent and beloved experience in Amhara life. The Amhara infant is suckled whenever he wishes, at the slightest show of desire. Since he is rarely separated from his mother it is easy for him to satisfy himself at any time of day or night. Popular beliefs about breast-feed-

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ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes 155
to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the 853
negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for 853
a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. 862
Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If 155
another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-suck- 853
ing is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may 854
be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara 155
are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no mat- [856]
ter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting [125] the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on [753] the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who [776] may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional 155
atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and 855
punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his 853
earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional 853
security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary 152
symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." 155
The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly repli- 831
cate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

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853 155 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning 152 adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended 853 foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbät*, or breast- 155 father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbät*. Used 152 metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the 155 oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. 201 The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or [832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long 155 separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati- [431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout 155 Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the 538 Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant 832 intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The boundaries of your lips are like the sugar cane; 155
No matter how much one sucks them, one is never satisfied. 538 832

And in one of the few lyric passages in the first novel ever written in Amharic, the author resorts to the imagery of kissing in describing the beauty of an army camp at sunset: [539]

> The plain on which they had encamped was vaster than the mind's eye could measure. Except for that hill on which he stood, there were no elevations or declivities; no roots to trip or confound the foot; not a stone to discomfit the eye. It looked like a calm sea that every breeze had spared. The boundaries of heaven and earth were united by lips of love; lip to lip they were joined like the parts of fitted basketry. It appeared as though it would hurt them to separate, that they had entered a vow not to part.[5] [539]

Talking for the sake of talking is another oral outlet of which the Amhara is generally fond. "In every country," remarked Arnauld d'Abbadie, "the plowman is miserly and sly; but the Ethiopian is, in addition, particularly loquacious."[6] The simple greeting of acquaintances evokes a barrage of ritualistic conversation, a phenomenon which stunned the Englishman Harris: 155 521

> Even two old crones, who are obviously tottering on the very brink of the grave, and who are afflicted with every pain and with every sorrow entailed by the fall of our first parents, never meet in the street without indulging in a string of good wishes which are reiterated so long as their breath will permit. "How are you? How do ye do? How have you passed your time? Are you well? Are you very well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well? Are you not well?"—are questions which serve as the prelude to a thousand other interrogatories; and at each response the Deity must be invoked as to the unadulterated happiness and perfect felicity that has been unremittingly experienced since the last meeting.[7] [596]

A number of other conventions provide further opportunities for this pleasure in talking. Anecdotes and gossip are not merely reported, but are expounded at length with the aid of colorful expressions and gestures. Riddle games are enjoyed by adults as well as young people. Men vie with one another at length in a semiformalized kind of playful boasting. In the church schools all reading is done aloud, a habit which persists among many students of secondary schools when they study outside of class. [524] [876]

A related pleasure in making sounds for their own sake appears in the Amhara's delight in repeating the words or nonsense syllables of his folk songs. On a more refined level, there is his evident pleasure in lulling over and savoring the lines of a choice couplet. We have here for a whole culture an instance of what Brill has ascribed to the poets: 191 155

> Poetry is a sensuous or mystic outlet through words, or, as it were, through a chewing and sucking of nice words and phrases. The poet plays with the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfata*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor [539] Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 574 527 [575] [794] Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious fraternal association known as the *māḥebar*, is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māḥebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā*," literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Amharic proverb, and even the Emperor when visiting a school expects students to remain seated if they are at the dining table when he arrives. 155 261 [264]

Some indication of the comparative significance of this concern about eating and drinking in the Amhara psyche is afforded by a recent cross-cultural investigation of dreams. Obtained from samples of young male respondents in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the United States, the dreams were evaluated with respect to the presence or absence of themes of "manifest orality": scenes of someone desiring, looking for, or consuming food or drink. The proportion of Ethiopian respondents (mostly Orthodox Amhara from the Gondar area) who revealed manifest orality in their dreams was found to be *64 per cent*. By contrast, the proportion of those in a sample of non-Muslim Nigerians whose dreams showed manifest orality was 38 per cent, and that in the sample of Americans was only 22 per cent.[11]

The Amhara custom of giving *gurshā* plays up the erotic component of eating. *Gurshā* means "mouthful" and, as already noted, refers to a wad of food which one places in another's mouth, usually as a gesture of affection. *Gurshā* are exchanged between husband and wife and among relatives and friends. They are often given to children, especially in families of higher status, and to favored servants and retainers as well. The *gurshā* is of such meaning in Amhara experience that it is referred to in a number of Amharic idioms. First of all it means a present or a tip—literally, *pourmanger*. It also refers to the charge of a gun: the gun is a beloved object, and a *gurshā* is what one places in its mouth. In contemporary usage, it refers to flashlight batteries. 155 261 264 [196]

In connection with love and many other subjects, a good deal of the imagery of Amharic verse relates in one way or another to eating and drinking. The following sample of proverbs and couplets may convey some of the flavor of this phenomenon: 261 271 155 539

*Ṭajj** has no specks; a poor man has no friends.

• • •

[Use] proverbs in conversation; [drink] *ṭajj* in a carafe.

• • •

Hand and fly-whisk; mouth and *ĩnjarā*† [go together].

• • •

No matter how much one plows, nothing tastes so good as *goman*.‡

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* *Ṭajj*, it may be remembered, is the Ethiopian wine made of honey. [273]

† *Injarā* is the staple pancake. [262]

‡ *Gomān* is a kind of cabbage plant that requires no plow cultivation. [244]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
155
539

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "companion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering
[273] barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[776] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

574 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
[554] *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *Injarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training and Personality*. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[13] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formulation, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ǐnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution
789 of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of
261 eating something or presenting food to someone.[14] It is a theme conspicuous
173 in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85). According to *The Book of the*
[539] *Riches of Kings,* Yekuno Amlāk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zāgwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[15]

155 *Oral Sadism*

152 In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the envi-
201 ronment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When
155 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong
152 biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following
726 refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:
[539]

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[16]

155 The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagi-
266 nation. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the
773 story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater
[532] of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

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Mary intervened, placing on the empty side for good deeds a goblet of water which Balaya Sab had once given to a sick beggar out of pity; and the Eater of Men was saved. In the pictorial representation of this legend, Balaya Sab is portrayed cutting off pieces of human flesh with a curved knife in the manner in which raw beef is attacked at the Amhara table. 155 266 773

Most Amhara know some sort of tale about a cannibal. The topic is familiar enough that they are able to invent new ones. One boy told me he made up the following story to explain the nature of cannibals to his younger brother: 155 266 538

> Once there was a cannibal. He lived among many people. He had no food in his house; he was poor. But even if he had not been poor, he just liked to eat the flesh of man. In his house was a big hole which he covered with a carpet. He would invite somebody into his house and tell him to sit down on the chair over the hole. When the person sat down and fell into the hole, he would climb down by a ladder and eat him. In this way he ate all the people in his village one by one—about a hundred people. When he had eaten all the people in his village he returned to live in the forest, because there was nobody left to eat.

The cannibal motif appears in more subtle form in the parlor game known as *gabatā*, in which the aim is to accumulate as many pebbles as possible by moving them around a board with six holes on each side. In *gabatā* the active acquisition of pebbles is called "eating" and the passive acquisition is "drinking." Similarly, those who play chess or checkers refer to the process of taking a man as "eating" him. It is notable, moreover, that the Amhara version of the old riddle about how to transport a certain number of incompatible objects across the river in one boat is posed in terms of three human beings and three cannibals. 155 266 524

Oral sadism is further manifest among the Amhara by the nature of their speech. The Amhara are not only loquacious but also tend, both in manner of delivery and in content of conversation, to be biting and intrusive. Backbiting, insulting, arguing, and litigating are among their more characteristic modes of self-expression. 155 521 191

Backbiting and insulting, and the fear of being the victim of such activities, are the focus of much attention in Amhara culture. Concern about the former is expressed in a number of Amharic proverbs: 155 521 578 [539]

> If the mouth lacks work, it will backbite a friend.
>
> If you praise a man once, you will be in trouble if you backbite him later.
>
> If a man is a backbiter, listen for my sake when he talks to you.

Straightforward insults erupt the polite surface of Amhara social relations only under unusually heated circumstances, though it is customary for social superiors to direct a certain amount of abusive banter at their inferiors as

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155 a matter of course. In the more covert forms of expression, however, insulting
521 is a favorite practice among Amhara. Ambiguous language and obscure
578 allusion make possible a good deal of socially admissible, and admired, insult-
[195] ing. It is chiefly due to his mastery of this genre that the Amhara have come
to idealize Alaqā Gabra Hānnā who, in the words of a psychologically sophis-
[554] ticated Ethiopian informant, by "skillful use of 'wax and gold' has defiled everything that is sacred in Abyssinian tradition: this includes Mother, God, Emperor, and Patriarch, to say nothing of the ignorant clergy, peasantry, and slaves. Gabra Hānnā . . . is the summation of the oral aggressive trend in every Abyssinian, of which the *dabtarā* in the king's court and the singer in the drink-house are only mediocre representations."

155 Wax and gold is, furthermore, the vehicle for the mode of expression which
578 Erikson calls "oral retention." Just as the Amhara tends to be tight-lipped
[195] and evasive when confronted by questions he does not feel like answering, so he finds pleasure in stubbornly withholding his meaning from his audience through employing figures and allusions which no one can understand. This may be understood as a passive form of oral aggression. For the untutored, however, the active aggressive component is probably more satisfying. Most Amhara males look forward to occasions when they can insult with impunity, such as in victory after the games at Christmas or in the setting of a drink-house, where their skillfully improvised verses are repeated and sung by a minstrel. The oral sadistic spirit of this latter scene has been captured with great fidelity by a contemporary Amhara novelist. Describing the moment in a drink-house when the minstrel begins bowing his one-stringed violin and gets ready to accept verses from the crowd, he writes: "*And now every one of them prepares a bullet of verse, and gets cocked to fire veiled insults.*"[18]

155 Two-way communication among Amhara is frequently colored by a biting
521 and intrusive manner as well. Amharic conversation gravitates toward a highly argumentative style. Casual disagreement, or even neutral deliberation over a common problem, often engenders a kind of protracted bickering
[691] to which the Amhara have given an onomatopoetic name, "*çhīqeçhīq*." In its more institutionalized form, this argumentativeness becomes litigation, which has long been regarded as the national sport of Abyssinia.

691 As the primary means of distributing land-use rights and of reducing the
182 likelihood of resort to violence in personal disputes, litigation serves functions of unmistakable importance in Amhara society. Yet the frequency and intensity with which Amhara take part in litigation suggests that it is motivated by non-rational factors in good part. Litigants have often lost many times the original value of some item under dispute in the course of pursuing litigation over it through the courts for many years. The language and colorful gestures of the court may be observed among Amhara in their homes or

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at social gatherings in the course of discussions about nearly any subject. One 691
cannot but conclude that the Amhara litigate to a large extent because for 182
them it is an intrinsically pleasurable activity. At times, in fact, the forms of 517
litigation are acted out as in a game. *Teṭāyaq*, for example, analogous to the 524
Western process of cross-examination and a beloved feature of traditional 695
court procedure, is sometimes practiced at parties though it has been out- 178
lawed in modern courts.[19] Two men will face a "judge" and try to bedevil each other with sly questions and preposterous claims. The content of the dispute is of no matter; it may be sheer nonsense.

Amhara litigants are ingenious at expressing themselves. They do so with 155
gestures, intonation, and timing that achieve considerable dramatic effect. 537
They are delighted to perform at the slightest provocation. The following 691
incident, recorded during a morning at court in Manz, illustrates that dimen- 695
sion of Amhara litigation which consists of the inherently gratifying expression of oral aggression:

> The defendant had been accused of plowing the plaintiff's land without permission. In fact, however, the plaintiff had given the defendant previous permission to plow there—in front of a group of elders who testified accordingly. The judge therefore ruled against the plaintiff. The plaintiff said he would appeal this decision, because the permission he granted had not been registered in the governor's office and, besides, he had some other complaint to bring against the defendant.
>
> At this point someone in the audience rose and said: "That is all. The judge has ruled against you, and the case is finished." Whereupon the plaintiff told this speaker that he should keep quiet, that his speaking out was against the law, that he had bothered him when the case was tried before a lower level judge previously and should bother him no more. Instead of hushing up, the speaker left his position against the wall and stood next to the defendant, asserting that he would speak in behalf of the latter.
>
> The plaintiff then accused this man of talking out of turn. The judge acknowledged this accusation and called for witnesses. Instantly half a dozen or more men jumped to their feet, eyes bursting with excitement and pride as before a battle, and volunteered to witness against the speaker. One by one, with a great show of oratory, they said their pieces against the man who had spoken out of turn. More than once the judge had to urge these witnesses to stop talking after the evidence had been presented. By this time the substance of the original dispute seemed to have been completely forgotten.

Oral Ambivalence

Much as the oral zone is favored by the Amhara as a center for positive 155
gratifications, both of the passive-receptive and the active-aggressive sort, such

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155 gratifications are not enjoyed wholly without conflict. In actuality, traits which reflect anxiety about the prospect of oral gratification are no less conspicuous in Amhara culture than the phenomena we have just been discussing.

155 262 Negative attitudes regarding oral gratification appear, first of all, in the scope and variety of the restrictions placed on eating. From both their Judaic and their Christian traditions the Abyssinians have taken over nearly every restriction on eating available. The chief exception to this is the Judaic injunction against eating blood, which Abyssinian custom permits. But they have retained intact the Semitic ban on unclean animals—those which lack a split hoof, upper teeth, or do not chew the cud. Their dread of pork is so strong that to some extent they feel closer to Muslims, who also avoid pork, than to Western Christians.

155 785 They have likewise retained and elaborated on the norms concerning fasting found in early Christianity. With respect to the number and harshness of the fasts it prescribes, Amhara-Tigre custom is probably the strictest in the world. In the rigor of its fasting laws the Ethiopian Church surpasses its sister religions of Eastern Orthodoxy—the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, and Indian Orthodox Churches. On fasting days no food or drink is to be tasted before early afternoon. Thereafter, no sort of meat, fowl, milk, or eggs may be eaten, which reduces the Amhara's post meridiem diet on fasting days to grains and pulse.

Such fasting days occur on every Wednesday and Friday of the year, except those which come during the eight weeks after Easter. There are, in addition, many special fasts in the course of the year. Some of these, like the month-long fast before Pentecost and the two months prior to Christmas, are observed only by clergy and elders. Others must be observed by everyone, though children are led into them gradually. These universal fasts include the eight weeks before Easter, plus a three-day fast during the week before Lent; two days before Christmas; and sixteen days preceding the festival of the Assumption of Mary in August. Total abstinence is prescribed for a period of forty-eight hours before Easter. All together, the ordinary Amhara is supposed to fast 165 days each year; for the devout person the total approaches 250 days.

155 276 793 784 The taboo on the use of tobacco presents another area in which oral gratification is suppressed. Two myths are told to explain this taboo. One is that the tobacco plant originally grew out of the intestines of the heretic Arius. The other is that on the day of the Crucifixion all plants except tobacco withered and died. In any case, smoking is regarded as a grave sin among traditional Amhara, and one who has been suspected of using tobacco is not permitted to kiss the Cross.

121 784 785 155 One could argue that these taboos and fasting customs are simply cultural

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phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [262]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [754]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away [609]
from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well- [776]
known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *çhirāq* is some-
152 times evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still an-
[716] other figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away
[789] a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

121 Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions
155 of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted
[853] earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very
121 high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara
155 practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new
862 baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

121 Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of suck-
155 ing and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects
146 as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

121 The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible
155 area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discon-
858 tinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

consequence of substantial loss of accustomed mother love at the time of weaning—a mild but chronic state of mourning which gives a depressive undertone to the rest of life—is certainly one of the more evident characteristics of most Amhara.[22] At the same time the Amhara child is made anxious about his actual oral gratifications. He no longer eats whenever he wants to, but only after he has waited for the adults to finish their meal. He is no longer entitled to the choicest food, mother's milk, but to poorer food and leftovers. And he is made increasingly aware of the adult anxieties about eating connected with the fasting requirements, and with the food shortages of the rainy season.

Applying the Whiting-Child hypotheses in the light of these observations one may characterize the development of an ambivalent preoccupation with the oral zone by Amhara as follows: an initially very high level of oral satisfaction enjoyed during the nursing period makes oral gratification a particularly attractive source of pleasure as well as a desired refuge for the psyche under the pressure of later deprivations; while the emotional and nutritional deprivations which the Amhara child experiences toward the end of the nursing period and thereafter undermine the sense of security acquired during his indulged infancy and make him anxious about the fount of that security, oral gratification.*

Whatever the precise ontogenetic basis of this phenomenon may prove to be, the Amhara's ambivalent preoccupation with orality is projected at the *cultural* level in the form of two contrasting human ideals. The secular masculine ideal in Amhara culture is a hero of oral gratification and prowess. He is a man who eats much and drinks much, and who excels in litigation, in declaiming the martial chants, and in composing veiled insults. The religious ideal, on the other hand, is a hero of oral renunciation. The most devout Amhara are considered those who keep all of the fasts, even the esoteric ones; or even, as monks and ascetics, live on a fasting diet the year round—in the extreme case, feed on leaves as hermits. The association of religious virtuosity with oral renunciation reaches its logical climax in legends about Gabra Manfas Qeddus ("Servant of the Holy Spirit"), the most hallowed Amhara saint. In contrast with the normal Amhara boy who nurses for close to three years, Gabra Manfas Qeddus is said to have been at his mother's breast for only three months, when a bird swept down one day and carried him away.

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* While this formulation may leave more questions unanswered than it solves—a purely behaviorist formula inevitably neglects the dynamics of defensive operations and the significance of ambivalence—it carries us as far as our data permit and may provide a useful point of departure for further discussion and investigation of Amhara psychology.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ORALITY AND MODERNIZATION

121 155 571 The preoccupation with orality which appears in their traditional orientations has not disappeared among those Abyssinians who have acquired a modern education. In some respects, that experience has tended to intensify it. A state of prolonged dependence was institutionalized in the government school system. The hiring of most educated Ethiopians by the government has meant that most of them live in a position of waiting to receive their salary—or *ĭnjarā*, as they themselves put it—from the central authority. Thus the image of a bountiful father-figure has become the more firmly established. [643] While in his own person the Emperor has projected an image of vigorous leadership, he has at the same time taken pains to promote this old pattern of oral dependence, by sending gifts of food to students and of champagne to educated officials when they marry; by continuing to provide politically relevant feasts at the palace; and, like the traditional Amhara father-feeder, by frequently reminding his subjects that everything they have they owe to him. This pattern is replicated to some extent in the relations between members of the new nobility and their younger relatives and retainers.

Part of the self-reproach of some of the modern-educated Ethiopians is directed against this passive, receptive aspect of their motivational orientation. Their criticism says in effect: instead of drafting proposals to reform our departments, teaching or writing in order to educate our countrymen, or seeking to understand better the complexities of Ethiopia's current situation, we are far more likely to be found sitting about drinking coffee in our offices, sipping beer at some hotel, playing chess, savoring felicitous phrases, and going to parties where eating and drinking are invariably the main order of business.

Insofar as they are moved to take a more active approach to their situation, moreover, their effectiveness is blocked by a tendency to fall into the tradi- [578] tional oral aggressive patterns of behavior. Their manner of criticizing the government, or certain officials, is frequently one of wholesale insulting. When confronted by a difficult problem, whenever they do not fall back to [521] a posture of dependence on superiors, they incline toward argumentation, *çhĭqeçhĭq*, backbiting, and mutual incrimination. Experts in debate, they are unaccustomed to the arts of creative discussion.

121 155 It is not my intention to suggest that the phenomena examined in this chapter are in total conflict with the Ethiopians' search for leadership. Many aspects of Amhara orality are not in the least inconsistent with the demands of a modernizing culture. Many aspects of Amhara orality would appear to be of enduring value—the excellence in debate and the appreciation of literary subtlety, the preparation of fine feasts and the enjoyment of the table. And it is not necessary for a very large number of Amhara to change their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

orientations in this regard for creative leadership to be effective. What is suggested is: that by tending to relate to their environment either in a passive-receptive mode of getting, in an active-sadistic mode akin to infantile petulance, or in a state of guilt and anxiety concerning elementary gratifications—that minority of Amhara and other Ethiopians who are in a position to introduce constructive change follow a type of adjustment which is inadequate to the challenge of their present situation. Adaptive as these modes may have been in the past, they are archaic in the present. 121 155

The search for leadership in Ethiopia today is partly a search for new ego ideals. It is a search for persons and images embodying a more productive and procreative type of orientation, capable of inspiring a creative minority of Ethiopians to build on, not abandon orality, and to move beyond.*

* That this search goes on at a time when the epigones of modernity, living in an age of high mass consumption, appear to be relaxing into a more passive, incorporative mode—the mode of television-watching and supermarket shopping—is but one of the many manifestations of what is perhaps the central irony of the human condition at this point in history.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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INDIVIDUALISM AND THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS

*121 A deep-going process of individualization has commonly been regarded as one of the characteristic features of the early stages of modernization. Whether hailed as a basis for economic rationalism and the embodiment of libertarian ideals or decried as the solvent of communal solidarities and traditional identities, this emergent individualism tends to be viewed against the image of a base line traditional society whose members are enmeshed in various solidary associations, bound by collective obligations, and encompassed by communal restraints.[1]

*121 181 (156) While it is probable that such an image exaggerates the degree of corporateness that obtains in most traditional societies, in the case of Abyssinia it is demonstrably wide of the mark. A characteristic individualism has impressed more than one observer of Abyssinian society in the past. Perhaps not by accident, those who have been most responsive to this characteristic have been of French nationality. Arnauld d'Abbadie, writing more than a century ago, depicted the Abyssinian as an irrepressible foe of uniformity and despotism.[2] More recently the noted linguist, Marcel Cohen, in one of his rare but highly perceptive sociological essays, described the Abyssinian as "*membre d'une société individualiste.*"[3] In so doing he has suggested an interesting perspective from which to examine Amhara society as a whole, a perspective which may also throw some light on the previously raised question concerning the obstacles to solidary action among modern-educated Ethiopians.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

FIG. 34.—*Offering a* gurshā

FIG. 35.—*Singing out the master's* qenè

FIG. 36.—*Amhara litigants* [P. 238-A]

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FIG. 37.—*St. Gabra Manfas Qeddus* [P 238-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE CONCEPT OF INDIVIDUALISM

What does it mean to characterize Amhara society as "individualistic"? In its most general sense, the concept of individualism refers to a condition in which primacy is given to personal interests at the expense of collective concerns. In applying this concept to Amhara society, or to any other, certain refinements are clearly necessary. 121* 181

In the first place one must distinguish between individualism as the moral basis of a relatively integrated society and individualism as the consequence of social disintegration. In the latter sense it represents a breakdown in the customary standards of society and may be viewed as one form of anomie.[4] Anomic individualism may be seen as an underlying propensity in all societies against which moral sentiment and social institutions must constantly combat. It is liable to appear when any social order has been sufficiently corroded by economic want, warfare, cultural or political dislocations, or natural disaster. In Ethiopian history anomic individualism has often appeared at the death or absence of a ruler; for example, following the assassination of Wassan Sagad of Shoa in 1813,[5] and during the anarchic interval between the departure of Haile Selassie from Addis Ababa and the arrival of Italian troops in May, 1936.

In describing traditional Amhara society as an individualistic one, however, the intention is to evoke an image of a relatively stable social order that has been informed by an individualistic ethos. In this effort two further precautions are called for. There is, on the one hand, the danger that use of a general concept like individualism may obstruct our perception of areas in which the concept does not apply. No single abstraction does justice to the complexities of any society, and it is self-evident that no society can survive in which group interests are not granted priority over individual interests in certain minimal respects. Our aim, in other words, should not be to establish or refute the thesis that Amhara society is individualistic, but rather to determine in what respects it may properly be so regarded and in what respects not.

On the other hand, the concept of individualism as it pertains to a kind of moral order suffers from ambiguity. It has been used to refer to a variety of phenomena which *may* appear concurrently but which in reality are independently variable. These phenomena will be distinguished here in terms of three different usages of the concept: individualism as a psychological disposition, as a mode of social organization, and as a cultural value.

In the first sense of the term, individualism refers to a socially accepted disposition to pursue one's own goals without regard to the goals of society, whether the latter be defined in terms of collectivities or simply of one's fellow men.[6] This is the sort of individualism De Tocqueville had in mind

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*121 181 when defining it as the "feeling which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellows and to draw apart with his family and friends, so that after he has thus formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself."[6] In the more extreme instance of this disposition, feelings of attachment even to family and friends would be fairly tenuous. It is difficult to find a neutral term with which to designate this notion. The term *egoism* will be used here, with the understanding that it refers only to the primacy of the ego's personal interests and does not imply either self-conceit or a perverse selfishness.

The concept of individualism may also be used to characterize a type of social system, one which embodies the principle of laissez faire. It is a system in which social norms are directed primarily toward setting the minimal assurance of order and regulating the clash of individual interests and have little to do with promoting consensus and co-ordinating individual activities in behalf of collective goals. In this sense of the term, individualism is comparable to the concept of social freedom: the reduction of constraints on action due to external forces. The term *independence* will be used in this context to designate this sociological concept of individualism.

Taken as a cultural value, finally, individualism may be defined as a positive valuation of the individual as such, with special emphasis on the realization of his human potentialities. As Simmel has suggested, individualism in this sense may stress one of two forms: the attainment of personal distinction by virtue of excellence according to universal standards, or differentiation from others through cultivating and expressing qualities that are unique to oneself.[7] In either form this sense of the concept may be conveyed by the term *individuality*. Both these forms of individuality were described by Burckhardt in his famous discussion of the individualism of the Italian Renaissance.

While there may be a tendency for these three kinds of individualism to appear together in any historic situation, such an association is by no means necessary. A high degree of independence is compatible with a low degree of egoism; witness the case of liberal Quakers. Similarly, individuality may flourish when independence is sharply restricted, as Burckhardt himself suggested when observing that in despotic states "political impotence does not hinder the different tendencies and manifestations of private life from thriving in the fullest vigour and variety."[8] Again, individuality may be high even when egoism is low, as in cases when individuals are led to fulfil their unique selves with the primary aim of enriching the common life—the situation, for example, of certain artists and mystics.

We shall thus be well advised to pursue the analysis of individualism in Amhara society one step at a time. We shall proceed by examining in turn the prevalence of the three kinds of individualism just defined: in the first

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

instance, as contrasted with sentiments of mutuality and solidarity; in the second, as contrasted with a condition of numerous social obligations and constraints; in the third, as contrasted with anonymity and conformity. In so doing our attention will necessarily be directed to disparate orders of phenomena. The empirical referent of these three concepts of individualism will be studied as follows: 121* 181

(1) *Egoism.*—The degree of individualistic disposition among the Amhara will be examined in terms of two measures: the extent to which individuals are attached to collective symbols and interests, and the extent to which interpersonal relations take non-solidaristic forms.

(2) *Independence.*—The degree of individualistic social organization will be examined with reference to the different institutional foci of Amhara life, and measured by the extent to which role definitions are permissive rather than prescriptive; the possibility of voluntary as opposed to compulsory associations; and the possibilities for the protection of individual rights.

(3) *Individuality.*—The degree of individuality will be measured by the extent to which originality and heroic excellence are valued in the media of self-development and self-expression customary in Amhara culture.

EGOISM VERSUS SOLIDARISM

Self and Community

121* 181 619 186

To what extent are the Amhara bound to one another by a sense of community, and to what extent are their actions guided by a sense of identification with collective symbols and needs? One conspicuous area of such commitment lies in the realm of religious affiliation. The Amhara manifest a strong sense of solidarity with their coreligionists over against all those who do not wear a *mātab* and who have not been baptized. They are deeply attached to the several symbols of the church—the church building itself, the compound in which it is enclosed, the holy ark, and all representatives of ecclesiastical authority—and react to violations of the dignity and purity of their religious symbols as to a personal affront. On certain ceremonial occasions they march in procession around the church shouldering rifles and spears, indicating their determination to defend by force the integrity of their religious objects. In cases where church membership has been channeled along the lines of schismatic orders, the Amhara—particularly the monks—have defended their doctrines faithfully and have at times suffered martyrdom. 121* 181 771 186

With respect to their territorial and linguistic groups, the Amhara seem similarly attached to their collective symbols, if with somewhat less passion than in the religious case. As we have seen, the Amhara has a keen sense of identification with his native locale, or *āgar,* and is readily disposed to defend it against all comers. The expression *yāgarē lijj* ("child of my country" or 121* 181 186 619

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 186 619 *Landsmann*) regularly evokes considerable sentiment. There is also a strong sense of solidarity based on the use of Amharic—both among the Amhara as a whole vis-à-vis other Ethiopians who either do not know Amharic or speak it imperfectly, and among regional dialect groups. The people of Gojjam and of the Gondar area are particularly chauvinistic with regard to the quality of their Amharic.

*121 181 621 This attachment to symbols of religion, territory, and language is important in providing a basis for identity and morale. Yet these attachments are of relatively little import in shaping a self-transcending orientation in the day-to-day activities of the Amhara; for the crucial context of these activities is the local community, and in the civic sphere the Amhara manifest very little solidarity. Indeed, it may be said that the Amhara have virtually no sense of "community" at all, for the concept can scarcely be rendered in idiomatic Amharic.

*121 181 361 621 The absence of community sentiment among the Amhara is implied by their ecology. Not only did the Amhara fail to produce extensive and durable urban centers (with the limited exception of Gondar) but their country is even barren of that frequent cornerstone of peasant life, the village. The Amhara have distributed themselves thinly, scattering in groups of fours and fives up and down their mountains and plateaus. Larger aggregations are found on the estates of noblemen, but these constitute expanded private households rather than civic communities. The Amhara justify this dispersion of their population on the grounds that wide spaces are needed for the grazing of livestock and that a man needs to live on the land he farms. But herding and farming have been carried out well enough elsewhere by people living together in villages, and it is quite probable that this ecological pattern is due as much as anything else to the Amhara's preference for not having too much association with those outside his immediate kin group. In his own words, the Amhara prefers the kind of neighbor who "does not push the boundaries" (*wassan aynakām*), and believes, as noted earlier, that *bēt-ennā māqbar labetchāw naw* ("home and the grave are by oneself"). It is a preference manifest in such solitary living arrangements as that of divorced women who sometimes live by themselves in the country, eking out a living by spinning cotton or brewing spirits, and in the age-old predilection of Abyssinian monks for anchoritism.

*121 181 156 157 The moral counterpart of this ecological pattern is a preoccupation with private interests that leaves little room for the consideration of communal needs. According to the Amhara vocabulary of motives, social action is motivated first and foremost by the pursuit of *ṭīqem*, or narrowly conceived self-interest.[9] This matter-of-fact acceptance of egoistic motivation among the Amhara appears during what is a common occurrence: the shameless subversion of occasions which are set up to consider communal problems and to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

symbolize communal solidarities by the forthright assertion of individual claims and grievances. 121* 181

In virtually every instance of a consideration of communal projects or needs that the author observed or heard of, the dominant characteristic of the discussion was a vigorous and uncompromising assertion of individual claims. If it was a question of allotting spaces in a new marketplace, each discussant was vociferating that the portion allotted to him was insufficient. If it was a question of securing more land for various communal purposes, the various property owners involved orated against contributing a square foot unless reimbursed at some preposterous figure. If it was a scene in court or a police station, everyone with any personal grievance, real or imagined, felt it perfectly proper to interrupt at any point and give vent to his opinion. If it was a question of rebuilding a ravaged church or constructing a road, personal disputations undermined all efforts toward communal action. If it was simply a ceremonial occasion, the peaceful setting one might have expected was shattered by the airing of private disputes. 156 157

> Today a new church building was dedicated. It was built to replace one that had been destroyed more than two decades ago by the Italians. People from all over the area made the journey to attend this celebration. All night long and well into the morning the priests and *dabtarā* sang and danced, accompanied as usual by sistrums and drums. Later in the morning, after the church had been officially sanctified, everyone was assembled in the open space in the church compound to listen to some verses composed in honor of the event by one of the local *bālābbāt*, a man who had been a key figure in getting the church rebuilt. He had scarcely finished reciting his poem when a woman in the audience spoke up in anger, arguing that the new church would involve more taxes and in some way would affect her property rights adversely. While he was trying to pacify her, others interrupted and began airing grievances of their own. What was to have been the climax of an occasion for the expression of communal solidarity ended as a bedlam of argument.[10]

The one area in which communal sentiments have seemed fairly strong among the Amhara has been in connection with the pursuit of outlaws. It is customary—in some Amhara districts, at least—for the local inhabitants to band together in informal posses when threatened by the presence of one or more *shĭftā*, or "outlaws." Yet even here, in his attitudes toward the *shĭftā*, the Amhara reveals an ambivalence regarding the maintenance of civil order and security. 121* 181 156 157 674 627 [829]

The term *shĭftā* had, in former times, primarily a political connotation. It referred to someone who rebelled against his feudal superior and was applied only to persons of relatively high status.[11] More recently the term has been vulgarized and broadened to include any sort of outlaw in the rural areas. In 121* 674 [178]

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*121 674 any case the *shĭftā* is a man apart, who makes his home in uninhabited mountainous country or lowlands and lives by stealing cattle and robbing travelers. Some Amhara become *shĭftā* because of a passion for this way of life; this is particularly true of soldiers who, after a long campaign, prefer the continuation of a predatory and free existence to a return to the hard work of the fields. Others do so involuntarily, in order to escape punishment after committing some violence in the course of a personal dispute.

*121 674 829 554 The attitudes of civilian Amhara toward the *shĭftā* combine fear and dislike with a strong tendency toward idealization. The *shĭftā* is feared because he is a killer; if a person happens to witness him performing some act of theft or murder, he will usually keep quiet about it for fear of reprisal. He is disliked because he lives parasitically off the productive activities of others. But the *shĭftā* is widely admired, on the other hand, because he possesses a number of qualities that are dear to the Amhara. He is reputed to be an expert singer of *shĭllalā*. He is credited with unusually handsome features because, living at the expense of others as he does, he has plenty to eat and no [577] arduous work to wear him down. Above all he is *guabaz*, the great Amhara virtue that embodies bravery, fierceness, hardihood, and general male compe- [302] tence. This is symbolized by the *shĭftā*'s letting his hair grow to the proportions of a *gofarē*, the wildly thick hair style of the warrior.

*121 674 829 The Amhara's admiration for the *shĭftā* is reminiscent of American attitudes toward the outlaw in "western" films. In the Amhara case, however, this is not balanced by a corresponding idealization of a sheriff-figure as the representative of civil order. Although a feudal lord or governor who captures some *shĭftā* in his area may be admired, this admiration will be directed to his personal qualities of bravery or cunning far more than to his capacity as an agent of "law and order." There is no feeling among the Amhara that the *shĭftā* must be captured simply because he is an outlaw. Instead, a more pragmatic approach is taken: the *shĭftā* is acknowledged as a legitimate social type and is tolerated at a distance so long as his killing does not become [181] wanton or excessive. This approach, and what, in the idealization of the *shĭftā*, appears to be a tendency to identify with someone who openly flaunts the norms of civil society, bespeaks a relatively weak commitment to the value of civil order.

*121 181 186 619 The weakness of the Amhara's attachment to symbols of local community is paralleled by his parochialism with respect to more inclusive levels of community. This parochialism is manifest in diverse ways in the different social strata. Among the peasantry it appears, for example, as an aversion to arranging marriages and permitting land to pass to an Amhara from a different province. Among the clergy it has been expressed in terms of those regionally based doctrinal differences which have disrupted the church for many centuries. Among the nobility it has taken the form of incessant politi-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cal animosities which have weakened the nobility as a status group both in relation to the emperor and in relation to foreign countries. Another respect in which Amhara parochialism has been expressed is the addiction to regional stereotypes, according to which the Tigrean has been depicted as flighty, irresponsible, and "dry"; the Gondarē as intolerably proud; the Gojjami as sly and treacherous; and the Shoan as calculating and untrustworthy. Despite its long history as a nation, Ethiopia probably never experienced more than the dimmest stirrings of a truly national sentiment among its people; and more than once in the past century have regional lords strengthened the hand of European powers in Ethiopia by seeking their help in the combat against other local rulers.

121* 181 186 619 [829]

Self and Others

In addition to considering the extent to which the members of a society identify with the needs and symbols of their more inclusive collectivities, one may also define the individualistic disposition on the dimension of personal interaction. Egoism contrasts, in other words, not only with the disposition to perceive collective purposes as one's own, but also with the disposition to seek solidarity and mutuality in face-to-face relations.

121* 156 571

This aspect of egoism/solidarism is studied by surveying the more important forms of interaction that appear in a given society. In the survey of elementary social behavior among the Amhara now to be reported, two criteria were used to establish the importance of any given form: (1) the frequency with which it was observed, and (2) the extent to which it was stylized or "institutionalized." These criteria were not embodied in any systematic observational procedures; the only control over the observer's bias here is my own deliberate effort to present a balanced and accurate picture.

We may begin by considering the more solidaristic forms. Interaction among the Amhara is characterized, first of all, by a sort of *sensuous camaraderie*. The Amhara enjoy bodily contact. Members of the same sex customarily hold one another's hands for long periods while conversing, or embrace one another in casual fellowship. Crowds of commoners cheerfully huddle close to one another on the floor through the night when they have assembled for some social function and cannot return home the same day. Relatives and companions of the same sex incline to sleep in one another's arms, at least in the chillier altitudes.

121* 571 826 181

Both their style of dress and their manner of eating give the Amhara a ready way to express this comradely feeling. Their untailored cotton or wool cloth easily adapts itself to being shared. Except perhaps for individuals of high social status, the typical Amhara is ready to use his toga as a blanket-wrap for both himself and another whom he may scarcely know.

121* 571 181 291

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 571 264 181 [829] A similar spirit is observed in Amhara commensality. Meals are customarily eaten from a common *ĭnjarā* basket. The sauce is ladled onto the center of the *ĭnjarā*, and is consumed ensemble by those sitting around the basket as they dip into it with pieces of *ĭnjarā* broken off from the edges. Traditional Amhara scoff at what they regard as the excessively individualistic Western custom of sitting each person down to a separate place at the table and thus depriving the meal hour of what they feel should be its basically communal tone.

*121 574 571 181 At a more formal level of interaction this disposition is expressed in the form of *hospitality*. Amhara hospitality is luxuriously attentive and thoughtful. For example, if there is foreknowledge of a guest's arrival, he is awaited at some distance from his destination and escorted with much to-do into the home. His mule is at once unsaddled and given to feed. The guest is given a place of honor in the home, and a glass of *ṭallā* is immediately brought for him. Amhara etiquette prescribes, moreover, that a glass is not properly filled unless it overflows; and it is repeatedly filled to overflowing whenever the guest has drunk some portion of the beverage. As a gratuitous gesture of good faith, the host—or his wife, or servant—tastes some of the beverage first, a sign that no "medicine" has been added. Before long the wicker table is produced, and the guest and his party are served copiously—no matter what time of day they arrive (unless, of course, it is a fasting day). When the guest has eaten to satisfaction, the host will insist that he eat some more, by repeatedly issuing injunctions like *tegābazu* ("Help yourselves!"), *mokar* ("Try!"), or *āfar sehon* ("If I become dust!"—i.e., "If you do not eat you will be condemning me to death"). The Amhara host is also likely to insist that his guest spend the night. The guest's feet will be washed, and the host's bed will be given to him, or long grass will be cut for bedding on the floor. At the time of farewell, the host and his attendants follow the guest and his party a good distance along the road. The guest continually cries, "Return! Return!" and the host agrees but continues to serve as escort.

Such hospitality is not wantonly bestowed upon the casual wayfarer. Normally it is reserved for those who qualify as worthy guests: relatives, friends, [609] or persons of high rank. Nonetheless, there does exist among the Amhara some feeling that even the unknown stranger should be shown hospitality, for he is *ya-egziābhēr engedā* ("a guest of God"). Travelers are generally assured [485] that somebody somewhere will show them hospitality; there are no inns in traditional Ethiopia, for it is considered wrong to exchange food and lodging for money.

*121 576 571 181 Related to this pattern of hospitality is a delicate sense of *respect* that the Amhara displays toward all comers; often, even toward his enemies. When two Amhara pass each other anywhere, they are expected to bow slightly and say: "How did you pass the night?" or "How did you spend the day?" If they

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

have not seen each other for some time they will say: "How have you sojourned?" and kiss each other on both cheeks. Depending on the closeness of their relationship and the interval between meetings, this introductory question will be followed by a more or less lengthy series of other questions.[12] Even when one merely passes by the home of another, he is expected to cry out his greetings from afar. 121* 576 571 181

In a number of other ways, the rough edges of social life are softened by Amhara codes of etiquette. Custom prescribes that measures of grain must be filled to overflowing at the market. Grammatical forms indicating respect are used between people who are not on intimate terms. Uncovering one's head is another way of indicating respect during the greeting. Still another form is to rise whenever someone enters the room, and wait until the new entrant has pronounced "*Bezgiēr!*" ("By God!") and sits down before reseating oneself.

On more superficial levels of interaction, then, Amhara behavior is apparently not egoistic. In the more fundamental areas of work and serious communication, a different picture appears. 121* 571 181

Altogether there is little spontaneous *co-operation* in Amhara life. The Amhara prefers to work by himself, and, when he needs assistance, to order a subordinate to help him rather than to rely on friendly assistance from his neighbor. The distribution as well as the production of goods is carried out on an essentially individualistic basis. Each nuclear family takes care of its own provisions, even when the land being cultivated belongs to one of the parents and when more than one family lives within a single compound. (Even within the nuclear family, the proprietary sentiments of husband and wife regarding objects and land which each may own are rather lively.) 121* 181 571 476

There are exceptions to this general rule. In some Amhara areas certain co-operative work forms have become institutionalized, for example. One of these forms, called *wanfal,* is invoked when there is a considerable amount of plowing or harvesting to be done, and a group of men in a given area take turns working on each other's land. Another form of co-operative work, called *waffar,* is employed when there is some extraordinary job to be done—putting on a new roof or digging land that is too steep for plowing—which cannot readily be reciprocated. In this case a man sends word around that on a certain day those who live in the area should come to work at his place, in reward for which generous quantities of *ṭallā* and *dābo* will be given them.

Despite the existence of special forms like *wanfal* and *waffar,* co-operation is only a peripheral feature of Amhara work activity. These forms involve but a temporary coincidence of individual interests. They are not used because co-operation as such is felt to be an important and natural part of social life—as seems to be the case, for example, among the Galla of Ethiopia.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 571 [764] Spontaneous co-operation is most in evidence among the Amhara at times of crisis. When death is announced, relatives and friends promptly repair to the home of the deceased and offer their help. They build the coffin and construct a *dāss* (a temporary shelter near the house to accommodate all the expected visitors). They bring food and drink to help provide for the many who will come to pay their respects, and will similarly provide help on the occasion of the big memorial feasts to follow. Like assistance is rendered during other crises, such as prolonged illnesses or fire. Such forms of co-operation set another significant limit to egoistic orientation among the Amhara.

*121 181 156 571 578 691 It is in the realm of interaction involving serious interests, touching layers of the personality deeper than those required for the formalities of etiquette, that Amhara egoism is most conspicuous. Here everything seems to conspire against generous communication and concord of opinion. As we have already observed, the Amhara are quick to become argumentative in ordinary conversation. *Litigation* is one of the most prominent forms of interaction among the Amhara. One can scarcely spend a day in the Amhara countryside without encountering litigants, whether under a tree, at a marketplace, or in the courtyard of some lord. A nobleman can never travel about the country without being accosted on the way by litigants anxious to have him hear their stories.

*121 181 571 578 691 171 Litigation is, of course, an endemic feature of peasant civilizations. Yet there can be no doubt that for the Amhara this form embodies a basic psychological disposition that differs from that of the people of other peasant civilizations. In traditional China, to take a case of marked contrast, such interpersonal conflict, far from being relished, was deliberately avoided. The Chinese considered going to court to be an extravagance, and the village judge was one of the most underemployed members of the community. In China, parties to a dispute preferred to assemble at the teahouse and to seek a solution through *121 181 571 578 discussion and negotiation. The Amhara, on the other hand, seeks to maximize the opportunity for self-assertion through litigious disputes.* Ordinary sociability among the Amhara is saturated with references to litigation. Current court cases comprise one of the more common topics of conversation.

[69] [521] Beyond litigation, *conflict* is often expressed in more violent forms. Fights with the *dulā* erupt when altercation becomes too heated. Throwing stones is another accepted mode of combat, especially among youth. Protracted enmities tend to eventuate in such acts as house-burning, assault with swords or rifles, and (according to Amhara belief, at least) poisoning.

While it is true that Amhara culture provides means and a certain amount

* Some indication of the gross national significance of this phenomenon is afforded by the following comparison: twenty-seven high court judges are sufficient to handle the litigation for all of England and Wales; the corresponding number for Ethiopia is *one hundred and eighteen.*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of moral pressure for the reconciliation of conflict, it appears to place greater emphasis on the acting out of aggression. It does this, first of all, by defining a number of acts as offenses which justify violent retribution of some sort. Appropriation of one's land, seduction of one's wife, and injury of one's relatives are acts of this nature, and it is incumbent on the offended party to seek personal revenge or, as the Amhara put it, "to return the debt" (*bedder mammalas*). It is considered shameful to remain passive when so affronted, an attitude expressed in the following couplet:

Balaw ba-dimotfar daggmaw ba-wānzā,
Bābbāt rīstennā yallam bamīst wāzzā.

Shoot him with the dimotfar,* get him again with
a wanza,*
Taking your father's land or your wife away,
that is no joking matter.

Aggressiveness is further encouraged by the Amhara ego ideal of masculinity.[13] The identity of Amhara males is very much bound up with their capacity for aggressiveness, by both violent and verbal means. A man who has killed someone is regarded with a certain amount of veneration, and the act of killing is itself praised in verses such as:

Saw gadlu saw gadlu: saw magdal yebajāl,
Saw yālgaḍala saw sihēd yāngolājāl.

Kill a man! Kill a man! It is good to kill a man!
One who has not killed a man moves around
sleepily.

Similarly, verbal aggression is encouraged by the inclusion of excellence at litigation and insulting in the domain of proper male behavior.[14] The bestowal of insults is a rather stylized, if dangerous, procedure among the Amhara. According to Amhara customary law, insulting is a legal offense. The new criminal code provides for a gradation of penalties according to the seriousness of the insult, including fines which run from Eth$15 to as much as hundreds of dollars. The most serious insults include *bāryā* ("slave"); *ṭayb* ("evil-eyed artisan"); and *qomātā* ("leper"). Insults of lesser to medium degrees of seriousness include the following:

hodām	"greedy" (literally, "bellied")
wafrām	"fat"
sakārām	"drunkard"
quashāshā	"dirty"
amadām	"scaly-faced" (literally, "ashen")

* Types of rifles.

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*121	*arām*	"indolent" (literally, "full of feces")
181	*ya-dehā lijj*	"son of a poor man"
571	*ya-lēbā lijj*	"son of a thief"
578	*yat abātk*	"bastard" (literally, "where is your father?")
[673]	*waslātā*	"lazy no-good"

Other, less direct forms of insult are also widely employed. As was already mentioned, a major use of the wax-and-gold formula is to express insults in so veiled a manner that direct reprisal is unlikely. Another tactic is that of not showing someone the proper respect or in some way manipulating the forms of etiquette to his disadvantage. A favorite anecdote concerning Alaqā Gabra Hānnā illustrates the simultaneous use of both methods: the Alaqā once flattered a donkey driver by bowing quite low to greet him and calling, *Endēt adarātchu?* ("How did you spend the night?"). Only when the man proudly related the episode to his friends, so the story goes, was he made to realize that the greeting was expressed in the plural form (*-atchu*), implying that he and his donkey were being placed in the same category.[15] Still another mode of indirect insult is that known as *ashmur,* in which two friends insult each other vigorously at the top of their voices, the real object of their abuse being a third party who is within earshot.

If the Amhara is by disposition inclined to bestow insults, he is still readier
[865] to take offense at the slightest hint of one directed at him. One of the tasks of socialization among the Amhara is to sensitize the young person to the various types of insults and to motivate him to strike back when he is so offended. Insults are frequently part of a vicious circle which moves from petty disagreement to serious argument to litigation at court, *dulā* fights,
[576] and even premeditated murder. Breach of etiquette may lead to no less serious consequences. In one court case which the author observed, a man was accused and convicted for addressing his father-in-law, whom he normally addressed by the polite form *ersewo,* with the familiar form *anta* in a moment of anger.

Argumentation, litigation, insulting, and revenge comprise the hard core of social interaction among Amhara. While it is possible to exaggerate the significance of these forms in the total pattern of Amhara social life, there can be little doubt of a strongly dissentious disposition just below the surface, and often at the surface, of Amhara interpersonal relations. Still another axis along which this individualistic disposition tends to be manifest is that of deception and suspicion.

*121 The Amhara is a master at *deception*. With straight face and convincing
181 manner he will relate the most preposterous fictions. The Amhara themselves
571 tend to be aware that this is one of their characteristic activities. When, for
577 example, I replied to the query of an Amhara gentleman that some horn
[123]

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goblets (which I had purchased for one dollar) had cost five dollars each, he remarked: "Ah, I see you have learned this country's art of lying well." 121* 181

The phenomenon in question is not an unmixed expression of egoism. At times the Amhara employ deception chiefly for reasons of consideratenesss, not wanting to tell the other person something that will offend him. Thus a person will agree to honor a request made by his neighbor even though he has no intention in the world of doing so; his neighbor probably understands this but still prefers an insincere "Yes" to an out-and-out "No." 571 577 [123]

Most of the time, however, deception is obviously being used to further one man's interests at the expense of another's. A person seeking a favor will pretend to be in much poorer straits than he actually is.* A needy traveler may pretend to be an important personage or otherwise disguise his identity in order to secure lodging for the night. An artisan, in order to obtain business, will tell his prospective customer that a certain job will be finished in two days when he has no intention of completing the work within a fortnight. To refer once again to my own experience: when I once needed to rent a mule for a week, and it was felt that the local mule owners might be reluctant to rent one for more than two or three days, I was advised by some respected Amhara men in the area that the only thing to do was to say that the mule was wanted for a few days, then on return to say that unexpected factors prevented my getting back on time. Far more imaginative plays of deception are attributed, again, to Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, who is renowned for the episode of sending word to Menelik that he was dead so that the Emperor would send money on his behalf to Gondar.

Like the indirect forms of insulting, deception has its more subtle, passive forms; deceptiveness by omitting the truth rather than committing a falsehood. One might render the basic principle that informs communication among the Amhara as: *Avoid binding commitments; maximize the degrees of freedom left after any utterance.* Questions and answers are typically couched in extremely oblique language. Unless there is some overwhelming personal advantage to be obtained from providing information, the Amhara tend to give answers—when they do not pretend not to understand the question—in terms so ambiguous as to be worthless; for example, replying to a question about the location of a certain place or person with the word *mādo* ("yonder").

The natural complement of so much deception is pronounced *suspiciousness*. Amhara are constantly on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. 121* 571 181

* One Amhara priest, for example, showed me that he had no clothes other than his single blanket in order to gain sympathy and induce me to give him something. But when he learned I had a camera, he went home promptly to get dressed for a photograph. [123]

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*121 181 571

> Our people always speak indirectly, in secrets. For example, a man will come, asking for the glass he loaned another man. The debtor says he will bring it in a week, that it has been broken and he will send for a new one. The man may say: "Oh, never mind. It doesn't matter to me, don't bother." The debtor will then be scared; thinking that the owner of the glass is in his stomach quite angry and ready to kill him, he will take his gun and get the man first.[16]

The suspiciousness which so colors interaction among the Amhara has been viewed by some observers primarily as an adaptive response to some very real dangers with which Ethiopia has chronically been confronted: the threat of conversion to Western forms of Christianity by European missionaries, the threat of European imperialism, and the threat of encirclement and occupation by a militant Islam. These factors have undoubtedly intensified the apprehensiveness of Ethiopia's leaders and strengthened the much publicized xenophobic attitude of the Amhara people, just as the proliferation of security networks during the postliberation period has intensified the generalized distrust on the domestic scene. But these attitudes flourish as they do because they are nurtured on the soil of a basic disinclination to trust one another that is endemic in traditional Amhara culture.

That culture is marked, *au fond,* by a sense of despair about the possibilities of concord and enduring consensus among men, and, in more practical terms, by a realization that people who spend so much of their time deceiving one another are not to be trusted very much. *Sawen mämman baḳantu naw* ("it is futile to trust in man")—so runs an Amharic epigram sometimes woven ornamentally into wool rugs; and it carries a secular-practical as well as a religious-speculative meaning. This disposition is institutionalized in the custom of *wäss,* according to which any sort of civil transaction—hiring a man as a servant, or lending money, or litigating in court—involves as one of the first steps the securing of a *wäss,* or "guarantor," who agrees to make good for any damages caused by the man he is backing.[17] It also appears in the custom of continually challenging the assertions made by someone who is relating an episode, so that the speaker is forced to interlard his narration with oaths that swear by the truth of what he is saying. The Amhara tendency to "overinterpret" and impute deception appears in their conception of the very origins of their language, for informed traditional Amhara commonly believe that Amharic originated as a secret language during the reign of the legendary Falasha Queen Yodit.

[193]

*121 181 571 198

A penchant for *secrecy* is pronounced among the Amhara and constitutes still another aspect of the individualistic disposition. In culturally elaborated forms it appears in the predilection for employing secret languages, including the argots of merchants, minstrels, and *zär* victims,[18] and the secret language

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of shepherds,[19] as well as the secret formulae of magicians, the obscurantist constructions of wax and gold, and the use of Ge'ez itself in the presence of illiterates. Related to this is the great popularity of riddle games among Amhara. Personal relations, moreover, are consciously predicated on the harboring of secrets, or *mĭsṭir*. The Amhara assume that it is improper to reveal oneself fully, to disclose one's *mĭsṭir*, to anyone but a very close friend; and that, in fact, rarely happens. 121* 181 571 [198] [524]

Given the weakness of horizontal forms of cohesion among the Amhara—sociability at mealtime, stylized politeness among equals, and co-operation in time of crisis, important though they are, cannot contain the centrifugal forces just described—the dispositions which sustain a minimum of social order among the Amhara are expressed through vertical, hierarchical forms of interaction. Here both individualistic and solidaristic forms are in evidence, the latter in the forms of deference and begging, the former in the variety of authoritarian relationships.

Perhaps the most characteristic form of interaction among the Amhara is that of *domination*. The Amhara is at his happiest when he is in a position to order someone about. The sense of domination is marked not only in relations between nobles and commoners, officers and soldiers, masters and servants, but also between husbands and wives, and parents and children. Amhara children sometimes volunteer the explanation of their desire to have children when they grow up as based on the explanation that then *they* will have youngsters of their own to command.

Connected with the passion to dominate is a predilection for administering physical punishment. In all of the relationships just mentioned corporal punishment is an integral feature, particularly so on the domestic scene. With sticks or whips, masters beat servants, teachers pupils, husbands wives, and parents children. The complete acceptance of this pattern was shown by the fact that not a single Amhara TAT respondent objected to any of the corporal punishment cards. They all assumed that the punishment depicted, including that of husband against wife and mistress against servant, was deserved, proper, and would have a salutary effect. (One of the respondents even exclaimed when regarding one of the beating scenes: "What a beautiful punishment!") The only reservations expressed concerned the possibility that the punishment might be so severe as to wound fatally the person being punished, in which case the punisher would have cause for regret. 121* 181 571 152

Whatever the functions of such patterns in controlling antisocial behavior and securing adherence to the norms of the situation, the sentiment that underlies them is primarily egoistic. The superior is interested primarily in having his own way and gratifying his ego through the sheer exercise of his power; and the motivation of the punisher probably often contains a strong 121* 181 571

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*121 571 181 sadistic component—a component that gets thrown into relief in such phenomena as the Amhara compulsion to stone dogs and the occasional wantonly cruel behavior of Amhara soldiers.

*121 571 181 576 While hierarchical relations among the Amhara are upheld to a large degree by the subordinate's fear of physical punishment or some other deprivation, a complementary disposition of perhaps greater importance is the sentiment of *respect for figures of higher status.* Family, age, wealth, and political or ecclesiastical rank are all variables which evoke feelings and gestures of deference proportionate to the vertical distance between the two parties. Many of these gestures consist of elaborations on ordinary forms of etiquette used among peers. Thus, in greeting a superior one not only uncovers one's head but also leaves it uncovered as long as one remains in his presence. If kisses are exchanged in greeting, the superior kisses first, on the cheek, while the person of lesser status kisses the superior's foot or knee. The inferior never sits while the superior stands, and often he remains standing even when the latter is seated.

Other gestures of respect are peculiar to the inferior-superior relationship. If an inferior is seated, for example, he must rise to speak when addressed by a superior. If eating in the home of a superior, he must rise when water is brought to wash his hands. If riding a mule, he must dismount and bow when encountering a nobleman riding on the way. The ritual of respect performed when entering the house of a superior has been vividly described by an Ethiopian student in the following passage:

> When someone, let us say a man of a lower social rank, wishes to enter the house of a superior to greet him or to make some private appeal he must first of all take off his shoes and then give them to his servant if he has one with him; if not he leaves them outside in a safe place. Then he must twist his *šäma* [shammā] round his waist and holding the end in one hand enter the hall and crossing both arms at the lower chest, bow down very low to the ground before his host. Having done that he throws that end of his *šäma* which he is holding over the back of his right or left shoulder (depending on how he wears his *šäma*) and then remains standing near the wall until he is told to sit. When given permission to sit he must choose a lower place. He does not sit in any position he likes but must cross his legs, straighten himself and bow his head a bit looking most of the time at the floor.[20]

*121 181 571 576 554 Respect is further shown toward superiors through the use of special terms of reference and address. A superior is always referred to and addressed in the third-person-plural respect form. The term *gētotch* ("lordships") is often used instead of his name or rank in reference. In addressing a superior *gētāyē* ("my lord") may be used as well as *gētotch*. Superiors with titles are always addressed by their rank rather than by name. In addition, slightly

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older or more prestigious males are addressed as *gāshē* ("my shield"); the corresponding term for females is *etēyē* ("my sister"). Much older people are addressed by words signifying "father" or "mother."

It is true that the forms of respect toward superiors are often repeated mechanically and sometimes serve to cover up a distinctly hostile disposition toward certain superiors. They nevertheless do represent to some extent a genuine solidaristic sentiment—perhaps the most profound and influential social sentiment in the Amhara social system. It rests in the last analysis on the fact that the Amhara family develops a pronounced sense of filial devotion as well as habits of filial obedience. Amhara society can dispense with horizontal solidarities and communal attachments because it is held together, sufficiently for traditional purposes, at least, by an infinite network of "father-son" relationships.

The egoistic element in the hierarchical pattern is further modified by a sort of joking relationship that sometimes develops between inferiors and superiors. The harsh interrogation of inferiors at times shades into a sort of wry banter; sons or servants may be called "thief" or "scoundrel" in an undertone of unmistakable affection. At times, moreover, the direction of the jesting may be reversed. Amhara servants are noted for playing practical jokes on their masters, which the latter usually appreciate when the jests are clever.[21] Here again, wax and gold is the perfect medium—for expressing aggression against a superior while at the same time appearing to maintain the respect relationship. The following couplet, attributed to Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē, aptly illustrates this genre:

Ennānta maḳuānnentotch ba-mīn waṭ balātchu?
Eññām ba-shurwātchen ennāntam bāssātchu.

What sauce, my lords, was on your plate?
We had but peas; 'twas fish you ate.[22]

Here the poet appears to be complimenting the nobles on their more elegant cuisine at a banquet; but there is a pun on the word *bāssātchu*, literally "with your fish," for it may also be taken to mean "you took more than your share."

Within the hierarchical pattern, finally, one finds expressed a certain amount of generosity which, as we have suggested, is relatively uncommon in relations among peers. This appears in connection with the *begging* and *almsgiving* which occur in many sectors of Amhara society. For church students beyond the elementary level, begging is the primary means of livelihood. Youths who have left home to study *zēmā* or *qenē* with a master wander about today, as in former times, carrying small baskets and pleading: "For the sake of Mary! For the sake of God!" in order to get their daily morsels. The activity is so organized that when a large number of students

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*121 live near the same master, they divide up the neighboring countryside to
571 avoid duplication in their begging.
181 The ordained clergy are themselves given to begging, for items ranging
735 from contributions to the local church to petty personal effects. High-ranking
[193] visitors to their locale are customarily made the objects of such solicitations.
[533] Another type of begging is practiced by the minstrels who wander about the country with their one-stringed fiddles and fecund wit, coaxing contributions from any audience they can capture. In addition to these there are numerous professional beggars—the maimed, the diseased, and the poverty-stricken—who attach themselves to a well-attended church or monastery if they are unable to travel. The *lālibalā* is a notable type within this category of mendicants.[23]

[527] In addition to honoring the periodic appeals of beggars, "big men" are supposed to provide yearly feasts (*gĭber*) at which beggars of all the above descriptions are fed. In all these instances, the solicitation and bestowal of charity contributes a solidaristic element to the network of personal relations among the Amhara.

*121 The foregoing analysis of forms of interaction among the Amhara has
181 been undertaken in order to gain material for generalizing about a psycho-
156 logical disposition. Our unspoken, tautological assumption has been that the
571 ways in which individuals typically relate to social objects (i.e., other persons and collectivities) represent the sociologically relevant aspects of their psychology. Egoism and solidarism have been used here as concepts for depicting one dimension of "social character," using this term in the specific sense of comprising those aspects of personality which are both socially shared and constitutive of those actions that are oriented to social objects. We may now attempt to summarize the preceding discussion with the following definition of Amhara social character as it relates to the concept of individualism: The Amhara is primarily disposed to structure interaction in terms of self-assertion, dissension, and distrust, and to be indifferent to the concept of civil community. At the same time this egoistic orientation is blended with a warm and kindly sense of sociability, an occasional mood of generosity, and a refined sensibility regarding differences in status and the readiness to pay deference accordingly.

INDEPENDENCE VERSUS CONSTRAINT

*121 In the previous section we considered the nature of the individual's orientation toward others and toward collectivities in Amhara society. Our question now is the converse: what order of demands is made upon individuals by the institutions of that society? Specifically, we shall be concerned primarily with the degree to which the norms which govern institutional roles are

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permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkār*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [764] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [601]

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*121 602 601 shown by the vagueness of Amhara kin terminology. The term for brother, *wandam*, also applies to all the male relatives of one's generation and even to one's close friends. Similarly, the terms for uncle and aunt (*agot* and *akeste*) are sometimes used for nephew, niece, and cousin as well; and often these terms are simply replaced by the abstract generic word for kin, *zamad*.

*121 602 The extent of reciprocal obligations among kin outside the nuclear family is a function primarily of the amount of spontaneous affection that exists among the individuals concerned and how close they happen to live to each other. Relatives on good terms with one another normally take turns visiting one another and eating together on holidays. They help one another in the event of sickness, death, fire, litigation, and murder. Orphaned or economically burdensome children are often farmed out to the households of more successful relatives.

*121 602 593 These activities are based on voluntary reciprocity or good will. In its formal structure, the Amhara kinship system stresses the independence of the nuclear family. Although it occasionally happens that married brothers live in a single large compound under the moral authority of their father or an older brother, who is known as its *alaqā* and is responsible for the compound's payment of taxes, each nuclear family lives in separate quarters and produces and consumes its own supply of food by working its own separate acreage of land.

*121 594 421 Within the nuclear family itself, the ties that bind are limited by certain fundamental safeguards of individual rights. One is the institution of private property. The land which each partner brings into a marriage or later acquires through bequests remains his own until death. If they should separate, each takes his own land, and the goods acquired by the household during their marriage are divided equally between them. There is also the provision of *gīl*, a quantity of property that either or both of the spouses may designate, prior to getting married, as strictly private property and indivisible in case of divorce. In the event that a nuclear family enters one of the modern savings associations or *equb* (to be discussed below), husband and wife join as separate members.

*121 593 586 The possibility of divorce is another safeguard of individual rights within the nuclear family. Only in the *querbān* type of marriage is divorce forbidden. This form is normally restricted to priests and very devout, usually older, people; and even then divorces sometimes occur, the couple preferring the displeasure of the church to a life of continued antagonism. The standard [585] sort of marriage is the *samānya* or contract form, in which the equivalent of a simple "I do" concludes the match and a simple "I do not" legitimates divorce. The divorce may be initiated by either husband or wife. An Amharic

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

proverb which stresses the rights of women in this regard gives the following advice: 121* 593 586 [539]

> *Balāgar ṣiṭagab yematāl ba-degger;*
> *Tayawennā nay qitāwen yegāgger.*
>
> When a peasant gets sated he beats you with wood;
> Leave and come home, let him bake his own bread!

A couple who have firmly decided upon divorce need simply call in their relatives or go before the *çhīqā shum* in order to have their property properly divided. The only recourse to judicial process is when, as often happens, disputes break out concerning the division of property. In the *damoz* form of marriage, in which there is no civil oath, divorce is yet simpler. The wife is given certain presents and a monthly salary for the duration of the marriage. When the husband has to leave for another part of the country, or if the couple quarrel, they simply separate without further ado.

Despite its heavy claim on the energies of its members, then, the Amhara kinship system is such as to make members of the nuclear family relatively independent of extended relationships, and to give the individual marriage partners important areas of independence from each other. 121* 593 594

Religious Organization

Membership in the Monophysite Church is automatic for all Amhara except a small percentage who are Muslim. This membership is symbolized by the ceremony of baptism, performed for male infants on the fortieth day and for females on the eightieth. At that time the child receives a special Christian name in addition to his regular family name. 121* 795 794 [851] [553]

Certain obligations are incumbent upon every member of the church. Foremost among these is the requirement of fasting, which begins for children of both sexes at about the age of seven and introduces a considerable element of constraint into the lives of the Amhara. Second, there is the obligation to observe the Sabbaths and the main holidays by refraining from arduous physical labor on those days. In addition, each household is obliged to contribute a certain quantity of grain to the local church every year.* [785] [796]

Apart from the rigorous fasting requirements, and the injunction not to work on holy days—a dubious hardship—the individual is relatively free of ritual obligations. The rituals demanded by the church are so manifold, and so sacred, that responsibility for them is given to the clergy, and the laymen

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* In some areas this is a fixed amount per household (e.g., one or two *quana*); in others it is proportionate to the wealth of the family. It is collected by a lay official of the church, the *gend alaqā*, though sometimes by the *gabaz*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 794 795 are left free to a large extent. Since every day of the month except the thirtieth is sanctified by dedication to some saint, Mass must be performed virtually *121 79 every day, a norm which is actually fulfilled by churches which have a numerous clergy. The burden for individual clergymen is kept small by a system of rotation. The average parish church will have services perhaps ten to fifteen times a month, which is still too often for heavy popular attendance. Even on Sundays and the most important holidays, when the laity are expected to attend, their participation is excused by other considerations. Those who have eaten earlier in the day, who have had sexual relations the night before, or who are harboring a grudge in their "stomach" are not even supposed to come to church. If they do come, they sit outside the wall chatting with one another while the Mass is performed inside.

*121 794 795 783 Customs concerning Communion and Confession likewise give the individual a wide range of freedom. Partaking of the Communion is not required of anyone; the experience simply is available to those who are ritually pure (children, and those who have married by the *querbān*), if they are so inclined. Confession is not mandatory, but according to personal inclination. Every man has the right to choose his own personal confessor or "soul-father," though if satisfied with the one of his father, he may retain him. (A woman adopts the confessor of her husband.) The soul-father's advice may be sought when a problem arises. If a man sins—breaks the fast, works on a holiday, commits theft or murder—he is supposed to confess. If he chooses to do so, the soul-father will prescribe a certain penance—fasting an extra amount, sleeping on the floor for a period, giving something to the poor or to the church. But the initiative is entirely up to the sinner and probably more often than not he keeps the offense to himself. The proportion of Amhara who keep every fast strictly, go to church a few times a month, and confess their transgressions to the soul-father is small; in the estimate of one Amhara informant, less than five per cent.

*121 794 575 Still greater permissiveness may be observed in connection with the religious fraternal associations known as the *māhebar*. The *māhebar* consists of a group of people from the same general area, usually of the same sex, who meet once a month on the day devoted to the saint for whom the association is named. The place of meeting rotates among the homes of the members, and the soul-father of the host is always present to bless the occasion. The meetings consist of much eating, drinking, and conviviality. Membership in a *māhebar* is purely voluntary, and the individual who wishes to join one usually has a choice among several in a given area.*

For the Amhara laity, then, a few burdensome ritual and fiscal constraints

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[735] * There is a variant of the *māhebar* known as the *senbatē*, whose members take turns in providing food for the clergy and poor folk on Sundays.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

are balanced by a fairly permissive mode of organization. For the clergy, the constraints are heavier; the fasting requirements are increased, and the priesthood involves, as we have seen, strict marital fidelity. On the other hand, the individualistic organization of the clergy is most striking.

This individualism is conspicuous already in the church schools, which are organized not on a class basis but in a series of master-pupil relations. Students begin their courses of study whenever they arrive at the residence of the master, and proceed each at his own pace. The master spends the bulk of his time with more advanced students, who in turn are used to instruct the less advanced. The pupils are very much on their own, uncontrolled either by their families, with whom they no longer reside, nor by any formal institution. The same is true of the masters, who are not subjected to any sort of outside controls. Indeed, each teacher tends to develop his own unique method of teaching, regarding it as something of a personal monopoly.[24]

The ministrating clergy are likewise free from controls emanating from a broad ecclesiastical organization. Each parish church functions autonomously under the direction of a head (*alaqā*) chosen by the local clergy. (Heads of the most important churches have traditionally been appointed by the emperor.) The obligations of the priesthood are not very great. The chief duty of the priest is to take his turn in performing the Mass. His pastoral services are limited to occasional visits with his particular confessants, from whom he expects to receive regular rewards of food and drink. Otherwise, his life is much the same as that of his lay neighbors.

The role of the *dabtarā*, as we have seen, is still more flexible. *Dabtarā* who are associated with a parish church are expected to take their turns singing hymns and composing *qenē* in the outer ring of the church; but otherwise they exist as free entrepreneurs, and they need not be so attached unless they so desire.

The individualistic organization of the Ethiopian Church is most striking, perhaps, in the case of the monks, especially when compared with Christian monastic orders in the Western world. Ethiopian monks are bound by nothing other than the original conditions for assuming the role, namely, renouncing family ties and worldly possessions. The monk need not enter a monastery; he may continue to live in his old home or may take to the woods as a hermit. If he does go to live at a monastery, his life is not radically changed. The Ethiopian monastery is not an organized community, but a sacred place—the site of a large and important church, in the vicinity of which live numbers of individual monks. The monk comes and goes as he wishes, prays whenever he wants, and may live free of any obligations toward his fellow monastics and toward the rest of the society.*

* There are, however, some monasteries where a more organized and disciplined regime may be found.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[466] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, *121 such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation 641 for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms [701] under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not [689] respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the [626] barbs of public opinion.

*121 The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their 701 warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide [702] his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came [714] of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external 701 constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the 726 general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

structured. But the marching and fighting unit seems to have been, for all practical purposes, the individual soldier and his retainers. Battles were not fought in a disciplined manner; the outcome depended on the sheer numbers of troops, their state of morale, and the chance of catching the enemy off guard. Except for the large-scale deployment of troops in accord with the customary tactic of envelopment, there was little expectation of subordinating the impulses of individual soldiers to the needs of a "team"; for the prevailing military ethic stressed rather the heroism of the individual soldier and his drive to bring back a maximum of booty and trophies.[28]

The independent status of the common soldier in mass levies was based on the fact that he was primarily a peasant and thus expected to return to his fields as soon as a particular campaign was over. Nor were members of the more permanent armies of lords greatly constrained. Loyalty to one's lord was in many cases a lasting tie, and accounts for much of the stability that existed in such arrangements. But in general it appears to have been a factor of far less moment than was the case, for example, in feudal Japan. The Amhara soldier felt he was fighting for a lord by his own free will and, therefore, had every right to leave him when conditions justified a move. One such condition was when the lord did not reward his followers liberally enough. Another related condition was when the lord had a tendency to suffer defeat in battle. Indeed, it was not uncommon for soldiers to swarm from one side to the other during a battle when defeat for their side seemed imminent. Still another basis for deserting one's chief was the ambition of a vassal to acquire greater power, in which case he might rebel—become a *shĭftā*, in the original sense of the word—and build up a military force of his own in the hope either of impressing his erstwhile master sufficiently to be reinstated with greater honors, or of taking his place by vanquishing him in combat, or simply of carrying on as a free agent.

The civilian counterpart of the soldier's right of desertion or rebellion was the right of judicial appeal which belonged to every free Amhara. This pertained primarily to the area of property rights. A man who suffered some grievous injustice in a local court had the right of appeal, in theory at least and often in practice, to higher courts at the provincial and imperial level. There was, in addition, some possibility of relief from an inordinately oppressive governor. He might be removed accidentally by the emperor, in the continuous process of *shum-shĭr*; the people under his jurisdiction might secure his deposition through appeals to the emperor or his overlord; or they might take arms behind one of his rebellious subordinates and overthrow him by force. Traditional Amhara society thus provided significant areas of social freedom for its citizens despite the feudal obligations that lay heavy upon them.

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Synchronization and Privacy

*121 181 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is [476] scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [504] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 [591] [576] The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, [592] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters [342] (*ĭlfĭñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

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* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Ṭimqat day described in chap. iii.

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Although women and children do not have so much freedom, the adult male Amhara who chooses to go off by himself for some reason is not bothered. In at least two cases, moreover, the right to solitude is institutionalized: that of the monk or hermit, who is left to his meditation and prayers, and that of the student of *qenē*, who spends hour after hour in some lonely place composing his verse for the day. 121* 181 571 517 [562]

Privacy is further protected among the Amhara by the shared belief that others normally do not have a just claim to information about one's person. Even such superficial matters as one's place of origin or one's family connections are not readily disclosed on a first encounter. This differs markedly from the custom of some other groups in Ethiopia, such as the Borana Galla, among whom it is the first order of business in any conversation to identify the "vital statistics" of one another. 121* 181 571 576

The machinery of wax and gold, again, exists as a useful apparatus with which to protect one's private identity and desires. In authoritarian relations, where the superior questions the subordinate with impunity, this evasive and equivocal manner of response constitutes the latter's main defense against yielding the information sought by the questioner. The superior may feel that he has a right to the information he seeks, but, if he is a good Amhara, he understands that he may never be told the whole truth. 121* 181 195 571

Thus, viewed as a whole, Amhara society does not envelop the individual in a complex network of obligations and constraints. The institutional structure of the society is relatively thin. There are few collectivities to which the individual might belong, and fewer still to which he must belong. He can, if he chooses, live at the very periphery of society—as a hermit, a monk, a *shĭftā*, a minstrel, a beggar, or, if a woman, as a solitary householder. For the typical Amhara, the main obligations are to fulfil work responsibilities in behalf of the nuclear family, the parents, and to provide income and services for landlords and chieftains. Here, too, there are important degrees of freedom. An oppressive family situation may be readily relieved by divorce; an oppressive landlord or ruler may possibly be brought to justice over time, or in extreme instances fled from; and for the oppressed vassal or retainer, there is always the alternative of running away to another master or of turning to one's own devices. As a Christian, the Amhara is required to fast a good deal; but attendance at church and membership in religious fraternal associations are voluntary, and for the religious scholar there is considerable freedom of movement. 121* 181 571

It is difficult to assess the relative weight of the few but heavy constraints that do exist in Amhara social structure and of the many areas of real independence. But in view of the considerable latitude for unconstrained action that has been described in this section, it would seem valid to characterize 121* 181

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*121 Amhara society as marked by a moderately high degree of independence.
18 This is to say that Amhara society gives relatively wide rein to individual impulse in action. It is not to say that Amhara culture places a high value on the moral worth of the individual personality. That is a separate question, which we shall now proceed to explore.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS CONFORMITY AND ANONYMITY

*121 The extent to which individual personality is valued in a society is reflected
181 primarily in two aspects of its culture. One of these comprises its processes
156 of education, in the broadest sense of the term; the other, its forms of art. The character of these aspects of culture reveal, respectively, the degree of concern for the *development* of an individualized self and the degree of concern for the *expression* of an individualized self.

Education and Socialization

*121 Obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in bringing up children
155 among the Amhara. After a prolonged and indulged infancy, the Amhara
861 child from about three years on is subjected to a regime of discipline and
867 repression. He is taught to fulfill without question any request made by any
[854] older person. He is conditioned to stand quietly whenever guests are present and to stand facing the wall while his parents or guests eat their dinner. If addressed by elders, especially those outside his immediate family, he is expected to reply in a barely audible whisper—a norm that is sometimes adhered to with such pathetic faithfulness that it has become the object of gentle satire in a short story by the young Ethiopian writer, Tadesse Liban.[28] Children who are noisy and disrespectful are referred to contemptuously by the term *bālagē*, meaning "rude."

*121 The desires and interests of an Amhara child are not taken into account
155 by those who raise him. He is provided with a bare minimum of clothes,
855 and little effort is expended in procuring him playthings,[27] although in some
524 families little dolls made of rags (*ashāngulit*) are produced. Children have
*121 a rich play-life with their peers, but this consists mostly in imitating various
155 adult activities. Organized games occur very rarely, the chief one—*gannā*—
857 being played as a rule but once a year, on Christmas Day.[28] The traditional songs and dances are learned from other children while tending the herds, but children are not encouraged to perform them in front of adults. The
*121 opinions of children are never expressed, let alone consulted. Indeed, in some
155 commoners' families the children are treated little better than the farm ani-
855 mals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing
858 her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him

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 121* 155

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones. 855 858

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose. 121* 155 156 86

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development. 121* 876 155 121* 155 871 121* 868 565 554

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar. 121* 533 535 156 [176]

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is 121* 531 156 121* 532 156

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

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*121 532 156 further limited by a number of canons. For example, saints must have no shadows on their faces; "good" characters must be portrayed *en face*, "bad" ones in profile; and honored subjects must be portrayed on the right.* Virtually all aspects of the subject matter—dress, features, actions, symbolism—are prescribed by rigid conventions. That this degree of conformity reflects a cultural attitude and not a want of inventiveness on the part of Amhara artists is shown by the discoveries of Marcel Griaule, who collected hundreds of drawings in Gojjam in the form of silhouettes and graffiti, drawings based on direct observation and exhibiting an "astonishing diversity and revealing . . . a very great liberty of expression." Yet, Griaule observed, "these drawings are scorned by the people, who pay scarcely any attention to them; and by the artists themselves, who regard them as a sort of pastime of no importance, or as an activity reserved primarily for apprentices."[29]

In painting, as in the performing arts, individuality was suppressed not only by the pressure to conform to given models but also by the anonymity of the artists involved. This is more striking in the case of painting which, particularly in the form of miniatures, produced some exceptional works. But painting was carried out for the most part as a devotional activity, and its practitioners were apparently content to remain unknown.

The Written Word and the Oral Tradition

*121 156 538 The written literature of Ethiopia provides as little scope for individuality as does its painting. Like the painters, the authors of the Ethiopian manuscripts have for the most part remained anonymous. Their subject matter has been narrowly circumscribed by the force of tradition, and their genres have been just as narrowly conventionalized.

Ethiopian literature consists primarily of religious writings, in the first instance of free translations from Greek, Syriac, and Arabic texts. Where the writings are original they tend to be either expositions of traditional beliefs and rituals of the church, eulogies of saints, or expressions of pious fantasy on religious themes. The nature of this literature is to extol sacred objects, not to express individual personality. The *Investigations of Zar'a Yā'qob*, a very personal and imaginative critique of prevailing orthodoxies dated in the seventeenth century and reminiscent of the French *philosophes*, is the exception that proves the rule; for this manuscript has proved to be a forgery, the work of a Franciscan missionary to Ethiopia in the early nineteenth century.[30]

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[175] * The seriousness with which such conventions seem to have been taken is shown by the episode of Brancaleone, a Venetian painter who was in Ethiopia during the reign of Ba'eda Māryām (1468–78), who is said to have provoked an uproar by painting a Madonna with the child on her left arm instead of the conventional right.

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The effect of this literature has not been, as David Riesman suggests is true of the written word generally, an individualizing one. It did not serve to "help liberate the reader from his group and its emotions, and allow the contemplation of alternative responses and the trying on of new emotions."[31] It has served rather to buttress conformity, by rekindling identification with the sacred symbols of the society. Ethiopian religious literature does not invite introspection; it is a corpus to be venerated and solemnly rehearsed. When a devout Ethiopian reads his daily or weekly portion from some writing such as the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David) or the *Weddāssē Māryām* (*Praise of Mary*), he is said to be "repeating" the text—*Dāwit yedaggemāl*. Most of those who learn to read the words of these writings do not understand the Ge'ez in which they are composed. 121* 156 182 538

A similar function has been performed by the secular literature, which runs primarily in praise of royalty and thus has served to uphold the political status quo. The earliest Ethiopian writings are inscriptions of the Aksumite kings dating from the fourth century A.D. Here, in a style that is to persist through the ages, the royal deeds are recounted in meticulous detail and endowed with the highest morality.[32] Ge'ez chronicles were composed in this manner for most of the emperors after the thirteenth century. The earliest specimens of written Amharic consist of hymns in praise of the Emperor Amde Ṭseyon (1314–44). 121* 156 175 182 538

Two other written works put the capstone on this conservative structure. The *Kebra Nagast*, the Ethiopian national epic, has served chiefly to legitimate the royal line that came to power in the thirteenth century and to cement once and for all the union of monarchy and church. The *Fetha Nagast*, the traditional legal code based on various canon and civil laws compiled in medieval Egypt, has served not as a working code for the adjudication of court cases but as an embellishment of *de facto* decisions, imparting to the judge an increment of authority by virtue of his ritual of referring to them. 121* 156 182 538 671 177

Because of the relative sterility of Abyssinian written literature, art, dance, and music, many observers have concluded that Abyssinian culture provides no outlets for truly creative expression.[33] This judgment is not just. The Abyssinian genius freely discloses itself in the stories, verse, and proverbs that make up its very rich *oral* literature. Within this oral tradition, especially in its verse, a good deal of original expression and personalized commentary may be found. 121* 156 53 121* 156 538

Ethiopic verse comprises a wide variety of forms which differ according to subject and occasion. Classical *qenē*, Ge'ez verse in praise of some holy figure or political leader, is composed by *dabtarā* on certain religious or political holidays. More playful verses of praise are sung in Amharic by *dabtarā* or minstrels on festive occasions. In such verses the poet may in-

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*121 538 156 [126] sinuate insults through the ambiguities of his compliments, as was illustrated above. *Shillalā,* declaimed to arouse male courage before battle, is also heard at weddings and other festive occasions. Another type of exclamatory verse (*ho-berē*) is sung by the peasant at harvest time as he drives his cattle around the threshing floor. Verse of sorrow (*engurguro*) is intoned at time of bereavement or during moments of loneliness. Finally, in the conviviality of a drink-house enlivened by a minstrel, alone at work, or with a group of friends on various occasions, the Amhara finds that verse provides a medium for thoughts on almost any subject—people, places, animals, weather, love, work, and death. The following poem illustrates an important quality found in many of these verses, pessimism and irony, especially common in verses about love.

[539] Fish on the cliff, baboons in the sea;
The ass after honey, while hay draws the bee;
On a baking-pan of wax, butter to see;
Or a monk from Zegamel monastery
In the pagan land of Metcha to bury;
With an unsuited person in love to be;
Thus has it ended, my affair with thee.
Leave it, forget it, just let it rest—
A hapless ass at a hyena's breast.

[533] [534] These various sorts of verse may be either sung or spoken. The auditory effect is often enhanced by the accompaniment of musical instruments. When serious *qenē* has been recited by its author in church, it is usually repeated by a chorus of *dabtarā* singing to the slow beat of drums and sistrums. The sad strains of *engurgo* are sometimes accompanied by the mellow ten-stringed lyre, while an instrumental background for livelier subjects may be provided by the Abyssinian banjo or one-stringed violin.

Throughout these varieties of verse forms, certain conventions are followed. Most important, the lines are supposed to rhyme; that is, end with the same consonant-plus-vowel. Inferior poets achieve this rhyme at the expense of the words they use. In addition, proper rhythm must be maintained; the lines must not "break." This means that the flow of the line must be smooth and that the metrical pattern in one line—based on the number of accents, not syllables[34]—should be paralleled by the others. A poet who breaks his lines is satirized by being dubbed a "lion."

While observing these rules—and, in the case of *qenē,* the much more complicated rules pertaining to stanza forms and poetic figures—the Amhara poet *must also be original.* In the production of verse, individuality is explicitly emphasized. Poets who use verses composed by others—this is primarily true of students of *qenē*—are insulted with the term *lēbā* ("thief"). Similarly, a poet should not repeat himself. If he repeats the same word

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in a piece of verse, he is derided as an "ant." Once he has composed a certain verse, he is supposed to discard it and compose something new the next time. 121* 156 538

The composition of original verse is by no means restricted to a class of professional poets. Every good Amharā is more or less adept at it. Extemporizing verse is a favorite activity at feasts, weddings, and in the aimless camaraderie of the drink-house. Sometimes a minstrel is on hand to begin the entertainment, but the usual pattern is for him to be fed verses extemporized by others present which he then embellishes with music. Even currently, with popular culture being manufactured and distributed out of Addis Ababa, urbanized Amhara place great value on the invention of new lyrics to suit the most popular tunes of the day.

Such verses customarily have not been written down. When unusually clever verses were invented, they were transmitted by word of mouth through the country and over generations. Or some individual would be noted for "owning" some couplet he composed or memorized, and people would turn to him whenever they wanted to hear it. Only in recent decades have some Ethiopians sought to preserve these verses in more durable manner by committing them to print.

Thus it is that, contrary to Riesman's correlation of the spoken word with traditionalistic functions and the written word with individualizing ones, and contrary to the common conception of the oral tradition as inherently rigid and unchanging,[35] oral literature provides the sole area in Amhara culture where conformity to existing works is shunned and the highest premium is placed on individuality.

Cultural Heroes

The last dimension of individualism to be treated here concerns the extent to which a society is inclined to single out individual personalities for special renown. We have seen that Amhara culture places little value on the moral worth of the individual as such, in that—with the limited exception of poetry—it does not encourage the development and expression of a distinctive and authentic self. And it might seem, from a superficial reading of Ethiopian history and culture, that the pre-eminent position of the emperor precluded anything like a general tendency to glorify outstanding individuals other than the sovereign. Yet our picture of Amhara culture cannot be complete without acknowledging the substantial place it has traditionally given to what may be called a "cult of the individual." For, with respect to at least three different qualities—saintliness, bravery, and cleverness—the Amhara have a marked tendency to idealize and remember outstanding individuals. 121* 156 181

The idolization of saintly individuals has been an important part of 121* 156 776

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*121 Amhara religious experience. The favorite written literature consists of
156 those genres which glorify individual saints for their special powers and
776 great deeds. The *gadel* depicts the heroic struggles of saints against tempta-
*121 tions and persecutions; the *tāmher* relates their miraculous feats; and the
156 *malka*, a verse form of some fifty five-line stanzas, consists of a rhapsodic
538 description of the physical features and moral qualities of some saintly sub-
776 ject. The various *qenē* stanza types, moreover, serve largely to glorify individuals through the exotic use of religious symbolism—especially the nine-line *mawaddas*, which means "praise."

*121 While these literary genres are accessible only to the learned few, the
156 multitude also adores individual saints. Each of the saints has his particular
776 following in the population, his popularity varying according to region
*121 and to the powers for which he is famed. This idolization has been directed
156 not only to angels and legendary figures from the past, but also, to a lesser
554 extent, to contemporaneous religious virtuosi and outstanding masters of the religious books.

*121 Perhaps more prominent in Amhara life has been the glorification of brave
156 men. The Abyssinian military ethic took the form of a cult of the hero. Per-
703 sonal bravery—not discipline, training, honor, or self-sacrificing loyalty—
[554] was the paramount virtue in Abyssinian warfare. The *guabaz* warrior was rewarded by his chief, praised by the minstrel, and esteemed by the populace. His bravery was ranked according to the fearfulness of the enemy vanquished. Thus, in Menelik's day the fanciest headdress was given to a noble who killed one of the fierce Danakil, a less fancy headdress being awarded the killer of the tough Raya Galla. Such actions constituted the one area in which per-
[521] sonal boasting was permitted and, in fact, institutionalized in the genre known as *fukarā*.

We are indebted to Arnauld d'Abbadie for a firsthand account of the effect of this cult of the individual hero on the orientation of the Abyssinian warrior, in a passage so rare it is worth citing at length:

> The type of combat which [the Ethiopian] prefers over all others—because it gives him the most freedom to expand his personality—is that where, due to insufficiency of terrain or other circumstances, the chiefs can engage only a part of their forces. He loves to watch the skirmishers of the two armies spy out and accost one another while declaiming their martial themes. Joyously he throws off his toga to clad himself in some military ornament . . . and to mix himself in the widely spaced lines which follow one another and rise to the attack. He loves to comprehend the rationale of the manouvers of the two parties, to be able to judge the blows, to know under which hand the victims fall, to choose from among the enemy to avenge their death, to adapt his movements to the instincts which animate his companions, and to feel the earth tremble under the charges of cavalry which come as a squall

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to change suddenly the whole configuration of battle. He loves to hear, amidst the crackle of rifle-fire, the huzzahs, the shouts, the challenges, the injuries, the encouragements, the allocutions, the piercing voice of the troubadours, and the rhythms of the flutes alternating with the lugubrious wailing of the trumpets; to know, finally, that on the hills, behind their drummers who beat out the charge in place, the two rival chiefs and the two armies are following him with their eyes, and that he may at one moment or another, return to his lord and, hurling before him some trophy, tell him, at the end of his war chant: "There! This is what I know how to do!"[36] 121* 156 703

A cult of the individual obtains, in addition, with respect to the man with a genius for outsmarting others. Men who have beguiled their foes with particular cleverness, in litigation or in political intrigues, are scarcely less celebrated than religious virtuosi or heroic warriors. Anecdotes about great feats of shrewdness are the beloved stuff of Abyssinian folk history and are twice told around the fireplace.*[37] Some lords have enjoyed great reputations simply for being such successful and gifted scoundrels. 121* 156 554 [538]

Cleverness in words counts as much, if not more, than clever deeds. Here we confront once more the phenomenon of wax and gold, but appearing in this context as a sort of finesse in personal relations. It is a question here of individuals made memorable because of their memorable lines, their talent for swiftly and surely employing the ambiguities of Amharic to satirize, at the right moment, some personality, or social type, or aspect of the human condition. Military or political events are often remembered more for the witty verse composed by some personage on the occasion than for their historical significance. In the present century, Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē has been one of the most outstanding personalities of this sort, as was Alaqā Gabra Hānnā in the nineteenth century. [195]

INDIVIDUALISM AND MODERNITY

The Traditional Pattern

Our inquiry thus far has involved analysis of the various ways in which self-orientation is and is not manifest among the Amhara, in lieu of the more simplistic question of whether Amhara society is individualistic or not. Building on this analysis, we may now attempt a more integrated interpretation of traditional Amhara society. 121* 156

The predominant tendency in human relations among the Amhara is a disposition to seek, not unity based on affection, understanding, and/or responsi- 121* 156 181 571

* A recent study which analyzed 1,086 stories with identifiable themes, told or written by Ethiopian children in grades two through eight, revealed that "cleverness pays" was by far the most frequently recurring theme.

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*121 bility, but disunity based on the assertion of personal claims. This tendency is
156 to some extent contained by feelings of politeness—an aesthetic of propriety—
181 which are manifest in many ways. It is further contained by solidaristic senti-
571 ments closely tied to the feelings and experience of childhood: the euphoria of mealtime, on the one hand, and, on the other, a pervasive respect for figures of authority. But neither by virtue of identifying with social groups of any sort, nor through a sentiment of brotherhood with other men does the Amhara transcend an orientation that is directed to, and by, the narrower needs of the self.

Consistent with this type of subjective disposition, the organization of Amhara society does not rely to a significant extent on co-operative arrangements or the machinery of consensus. Nor does it involve, on the basis of either a division of labor or the sharing of diffuse obligations, the customary performance of numerous functions on behalf of territorial communities or other collectivities. Its main axis of organization, rather, is that of a highly personal relationship between superior and subordinate, with the subordinate existing essentially as an extension of the ego of the superior. This means that there is a marked discontinuity in the exertion of social constraints upon individuals. Within the segments of superior-subordinate relations—husband-wife, father-son, master-servant, teacher-pupil, confessor-confessant, lord-retainer, elder-youth—domination is virtually unlimited. Thus the main social restraints are in the form of repressive obligations—more or less "forced" labor, payment of heavy revenues, fasting—enjoined by figures of authority. Horizontally, however, there are very few obligations, and this accounts for the considerable amount of independence that appears among the Amhara. The demands of superiors, furthermore, are issued on a highly personal and spontaneous basis. They are not systematic, continuous, and detailed; the authority of superiors is not "rationalized." This accounts for the absence of discipline and synchronization, which is a further source of independence from external constraints.*

It is further consistent with the Amhara's egoistic orientation that objects which transcend the self—whether human communities or other groups or transcendent realities—are not greatly esteemed. With the exception, therefore, of those pious men whose paintings and religious studies served a truly devotional purpose, Amhara culture did not prescribe a desire for anonymity in behalf of transcendent values. On the contrary, it greatly valued the outstanding or heroic individual. In participating in this cult of the individual, the Amhara was not submerging his ego for the sake of broader realities but reasserting his ego through identification with the celebrated personality.

Yet for all this adulation of the individual, this substantial degree of social

* We may put all this another way by saying that while Amhara society is highly authoritarian, it is not at all totalitarian.

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freedom, and this assertion of egoistic claims, we have seen that the Amhara care very little for genuine individuality. With the limited exception of the sphere of oral literature, they do not cherish originality or creativity. With the exception of the sphere of litigation, where every man is accorded the right to speak his piece before a judge, they do not honor the dignity of the human person. Individuality as contrasted with conformity is not an Amhara value. 121* 156 181 571

The explanation of this seeming paradox is not far to seek. It is, to use the terms we have been employing here, that concern for genuine individuality is grounded on solidaristic sentiment. Respect for the autonomy and uniqueness of individual selves, including one's own self, is a cultural value that can only exist if supported by a socially shared disposition to respect the integrity and dignity of others. Egoism and individuality are not only independently varying aspects of individualism; they are, in the sense in which we have been construing the latter term here, largely incompatible.

The Challenge of Modernity

Characterization of traditional Amhara society in these terms leads naturally to two general questions concerning the relation between Amhara individualism and Ethiopia's quest for modernity. The first question concerns the relation between the individualistic aspects of Amhara society and the organizational requirements of national development; the second concerns the promotion of individuality. 121* 156 181

Whatever priority is given to the various goals more or less implicit under the rubric of "modernization," all of them entail a substantial increase in the mobilization of energies in behalf of societal ends. Whether the primary emphasis is placed on increasing per capita income, raising standards of health and education, building up military and diplomatic strength, or devising governmental institutions more responsive to popular sentiments and more efficiently run, an absolute increase in the available quantum of socially deployable human resources is indispensable.

Our analysis of Amhara society indicates that its traditions are not conducive to the mobilization of energies in behalf of communal goals. In this it differs from other African societies, such as those celebrated by the spokesmen for "African socialism"[88]—not to mention those of other peoples in Ethiopia like the Galla and the Gurage—where more "communitary" traditions would seem to provide a more viable basis for economic and social development at the community level. At the national level, where the developmental tasks are those of institution-building and education, the situation is no different. Here the need is for large numbers of people with modern education working to some degree in concert in behalf of national goals. But, as we have observed, the modern-educated Ethiopians have so far refrained from exerting them-

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*121 selves as a strong progressive force in the national life. This is due, we sug-
156 gested in the previous chapter, to a basic passivity related to the orality syn-
181 drome in Amhara culture. The considerations raised in this chapter seem no less relevant. The egoistic disposition and organizational laissez faire characteristic of traditional Amhara society affect no less their capacity for progressive action by inhibiting the uses of solidarity.

*121 The atomism of the Ethiopian intelligentsia has been a conspicuous feature
156 of their condition since they came into being. It is manifested in the basic dis-
181 trust in their orientation toward one another as well as toward the rest of
571 Ethiopian society. The regret of not being able to trust one's close friends is one of the more frequently heard confessions from their lips. The analysis presented in this chapter suggests that this reflects the attitudes and customs of traditional Amhara culture as much as it does the alleged saturation of the society with informers. That so few modern-educated Ethiopians have dared to break out of the vicious circle of distrust by daring to establish solidary relationships and to circumvent the prevailing fears and stagnation by establishing organizations of some sort is an illustration of the fact that, however much they may give lip service to the ideals of nationalism and populism, their hearts are primarily attached to winning new increments of prestige and income; in brief, to becoming director-generals.

*121 Yet the total picture is by no means only one of atomism and stagnation.
178 Some of the energies needed for Ethiopia's development can be, and have
181 been, obtained by extending the traditional principles of domination and
571 respect for authority into new areas of activity. Successful innovations in rural sanitation or agricultural practice, for example, have come about when local big men have been convinced of the desirability of the change and have then pressured the populace, by means of their authority and prestige, to implement the new measures. While the traditional authoritarian approach may for some time to come be the most ready method of mobilizing energies for social development, it alone cannot meet all the organizational needs of changing Ethiopia. One reason is that its effects are not continuous. To a large extent it depends on the whim and the physical presence of the relevant authority figure. It is common experience in Addis Ababa that particularly pressing problems are neglected for a long while, until the Emperor turns his attention to them; the matter then will be busily attended to for the moment, but is likely to be forgotten again when pressing matters turn the Emperor's attention elsewhere. This pattern is the model for most activity throughout the society where responsibility for specific problems is not carefully institutionalized.

*121 Another shortcoming of the traditional political pattern is that it does not
178 tap the potential energies now dormant in the population. Insofar as the mass of the people remain passive, involved in the developmental process only as

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objects of manipulation, their own creative energies will go unused. Only when their personal aspirations can be linked with co-operative endeavors or collective projects will their participation be sufficiently motivated to draw forth new sources of energy. 121* 178

The traditional approach, moreover, does not take into acount the available intelligence of the population. It neither takes advantage of the understanding of immediate problems possessed by those concerned nor responds to their pressing needs and interests. The result is failure to make improvements in areas ripe for change, and antagonism or frustration of the elements of the population involved.

Given the relative ineffectuality and unresponsiveness of traditional methods of mobilization, and the new demands for concerted action unleashed by the process of urbanization and the growth of modern aspirations, it is natural that new forms of association should emerge to fill the sociological vacuum. That these new associations have been late in coming merely reflects the tenacity of traditional habits and institutions, as well as the reluctance of the government to permit the formation of groups which might have any sort of political or parapolitical ambitions. But during the past decade, and particularly since the rebellion of December, 1960, a variety of novel associational forms have come into being or have significantly diffused throughout the country. These associations may be described under three general categories: (1) formal associations of indigenous inspiration, (2) formal associations of foreign inspiration, and (3) informal associations.

Formal Associations of Indigenous Inspiration

Eddīr.—Probably the oldest and most widely diffused of the modern associations in Ethiopia, the *eddīr* is a form of welfare institution. Its functions are primarily to help defray the cost of funerals; to assist families in the event of the death, illness, unemployment, or imprisonment of their breadwinners; and to help in the case of loss due to fire. Members of an *eddīr* are obliged to contribute to a common fund and to attend the funerals of other members. (Twenty-five cents a month is not an uncommon payment, although in rural centers the contributions are often solicited only in time of need.) The institution is said to have originated among the Gurage and to have become more widely adopted during the Italian invasion, when many people who were killed had no relatives to bury them. Since then *eddīr* have been established in towns all over the country, fulfilling the vital functions which were performed by kin in the traditional countryside. They are organized on a territorial basis, in villages, towns, and city quarters; on an ethnic basis, as among the Dorze and Wollamo peoples; and even on an institutional basis, as among the employees of some government ministries. Often considerable moral pressure is exerted on townsfolk to become members—the threat of having no one 747 178 [177]

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747 178 come to one's funeral is particularly potent—and the transactions of the *eddīr* are strictly governed by elected officers.[39]

454 178 *Equb.*—The *equb* is a form of savings association in which weekly or monthly payments of a fixed sum are exchanged for the privilege of receiving a large lump sum at some point in the life of the group. In addition to providing a means of forced saving, the *equb* offers a basis for sociability when the members come together to make their payments and are provided with food and drink. Like the *eddīr*, the *equb* is believed to have originated among the Gurage, and acquired wider popularity following the Italian invasion when many people needed large sums of money for rebuilding homes and purchasing livestock. The mode of operation of an *equb* has been described in the *Ethiopian Observer* as follows:

[571]

[177]

> A person desiring to start an Iqub will discuss the matter with his friends; if they agree a meeting will be called to discuss the rules and regulations of the proposed new society, and in particular the amount of money to be paid by each member, the frequency of payment and the time and place of meeting. A president, or dagna [literally, "judge"], and a money collector will be elected from among the most respected and reliable members of the group.
>
> The President then asks every member to bring one or two guarantors who will be responsible for payment in case of default for whatever reason it may be.
>
> On the appointed day all the members assemble and the secretary will call the roll. Any member unable to attend is expected to send his subscription in time. The specified sum is then handed by every member (or substitute) to the President. Any latecomer will be fined according to a pre-arranged schedule, this money being kept by the President until the end of the Iqub, when it is used for the common enjoyment of the members. The collected funds are drawn by lot, the winner receiving the total subscription of all the members. The lottery is normally effected by the members writing their names on small pieces of paper which are then placed in a hat, a blind-folded non-member then drawing out the name of the winner.
>
> After each draw, the winner is disqualified from taking part in further lotteries, but continues to pay his fee until every member has drawn his share. If he fails in this duty his guarantors have to pay.
>
> When all at length have been rewarded the time has come to set up a new Iqub.[40]

Equb have been established by members of virtually all low- and middle-income groups—clerks, merchants, servants, peasants, policemen. Their rapid increase, in response to the growing importance of money in Ethiopia's econ-

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omy during the past two decades, represents a significant growth of the capacity for voluntary formal organization in the modernizing sector.[41]

Māhebar (*Regional Associations*).—A type of formal association which has sprung up in Addis Ababa in recent years, becoming popular for the first time around 1960, is known as the *māhebar*. While its name is taken from the traditional Orthodox fraternal association, in aims and organization it is different from the religious *māhebar*. While the latter is devoted to honoring one of the saints and is convened primarily for feasting and sociability, the modern *māhebar* is organized on the basis of territorial or tribal bonds and is concerned with problems of social betterment. The first *māhebar* of this kind was established by the Gurage in the fifties.* Thereafter, the idea spread to members of other groups, and Addis Ababa residents originating in Gondar, Tigre, Harar, Manz, Tagulat, Fitche and elsewhere began to form *māhebar* of their own. The basic idea behind all these *māhebar* is to make some contribution to the welfare of the provinces through projects voluntarily financed and organized by fellow-countrymen living in the metropolis. These projects have included construction of roads, schools, and hospitals; supplying books for schools; and provision of facilities for assisting inhabitants of the provinces who come to the city. Members of the various *māhebar* convene weekly or biweekly, usually on Sunday in the vicinity of one or another of the Addis Ababa churches, to discuss their projects and make their financial contributions.

Formal Associations of Foreign Inspiration

Student Associations.—The Orthodox Students Association was founded in 1958 by a convention representing all the colleges and some of the secondary schools. Its successful establishment was due in large part to the efforts of an Indian Orthodox minister who at the time was one of the Emperor's private secretaries. There is some evidence that an earlier spontaneous effort to form such a group in the early fifties was checked by the government. Members of this association have been concerned with adapting the activities of the church to contemporary needs. They criticize the established church for its use of a dead language, excessive ritualism, and lack of teaching; and have proposed that the Orthodox Church should institute Sunday schools and

* The Gurage *māhebar* remains in a class of its own, with respect to size, wealth, and ambitiousness of program. The Gurage have also pointed the way to using the *māhebar* form in a way that transcends the narrow tribal or territorial passions which it has thus far tended to canalize. This has been done through the establishment of another, project-oriented *māhebar* concerned solely with building a road from Alam Gana to Wollamo Soddo, whose membership includes Galla and Wollamo as well as Gurage. This association has already collected well over a million dollars, and has completed the construction of a bridge. It is headed by a capable Gurage army general and its activities and collections are reported regularly in the Addis Ababa press.

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575 cultivate a missionary spirit in order to reach the non-Christian peoples of
794 Ethiopia. The association sponsors weekly religious services, featuring hymns
178 in Amharic and talks in Amharic on religious and moral questions, and publishes a monthly journal. The Orthodox Students Association stands out as the first nationwide voluntary association in Ethiopia. It holds an annual convention which draws some three hundred students from all parts of the country.

The Ethiopian College Students Association was established in 1960 after some years of patient maneuvering by officers of the various college student governments. It attempts to represent the interests and needs of students vis-à-vis the government and to handle relations with international student organizations.

A number of student clubs have appeared from time to time within the framework of the colleges. One of the most popular and productive of these has been the Ethnological Society of the University College, founded in the early fifties by a Polish member of the college staff. Over the years it has produced several issues of an ethnological bulletin. More recently, under the framework of the new university, dramatic and choral groups have been established as well as groups like the Education Students Association and the Economics Students Association. Graduates of some of the secondary schools and colleges, moreover, have formed a small number of alumni associations.

467 *Labor Unions.*—Although Ethiopia has for some time been a paying mem-
178 ber of the ILO, the government has until recently strongly opposed the estab-
[177] lishment of unions in the country. Nevertheless, due to the encouragement of labor representatives from Western and other African countries, as well as to the courageous efforts of a number of Ethiopians, several unions have at last been established and have won some degree of recognition from the government.* Trade unions were first attempted among employees of the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad and in Eritrea.[42] They now include employees of a num-
[357] ber of factories. Even household servants have formed associations that establish minimal conditions which members are obliged to demand from their employers.

814 *Professional Associations.*—The Ethiopian Teachers Association, with a
815 large paper membership but scarcely any activity, was the only professional
875 association in Ethiopia prior to the 1960 rebellion. If one may generalize from
178 the frustrated attempts of Ethiopian doctors to establish a medical association, it would seem that the government was attempting to discourage groups of this sort as well as trade unions. Since 1961, however, the picture has changed.
[159] There now exists not only a medical association, which publishes its own

* A law establishing a legal basis for labor unions was enacted by the Ethiopian parliament in 1962.

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journal, but also an engineers' association, a college teachers' association, and an Ethiopian writers' association. Earlier attempts to establish an organization of lawyers have not yet reached fruition.

National and International Service Organizations.—A final group of formal associations consists of those which include non-Ethiopian nationals as well as Ethiopians in their membership and which carry out welfare services of various sorts. The Ethiopian Red Cross, the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association, the YMCA, and the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa have been active for more than a decade. More recently, the International Christian Fellowship was formed with an eye to discussing ways of translating Christian principles into social action, and the Social Service Society has broken new ground in the welfare field with its ambitious program of relocating and rehabilitating Addis Ababa indigents.

Informal Associations

Another significant sociological development since the 1960 rebellion has been the blossoming of what might be called "mutual confidence groups." Although the public climate remains somewhat tense and generalized suspicion still prevails, a step has been taken away from the complete atomism of the pre-rebellion era. These groups consist of numbers of friends, bound by such factors as kinship, common ethnic background, relationships formed during study abroad, and occupational ties. Perhaps the most important single bond underlying these groups derives from friendships formed during the crucial experience of attending secondary school together. While for the most part these groups carry out no organized activities or structured discussions, they do provide a context in which any of the issues of the day can be discussed with fairly complete frankness and without fear of reprisal.

There are some progressive Ethiopians who would like to see these groups become the nuclei of action groups and political parties, even on an overt basis. The prevailing view among them, however, seems to be that this is as far as they can go under the present regime.

The efflorescence of voluntary associations in Ethiopia during the past half dozen years constitutes a remarkable thickening of the fabric of Ethiopian society. It may be seen as a vast, unconscious process of arousing and co-ordinating energies to meet the novel realities of Ethiopia's current historical situation. What relationship to this collective process have the individualistic features of Amhara character and society which were discussed above?

It may be observed that in virtually none of the cases cited above were the Amhara the initiators of the associational forms in question. The territorial and "project" *māhebar* were introduced into Ethiopian life by the Gurage; so, as far as present evidence indicates, were the *eddīr* and the *equb*. The labor

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*121 177 [467] The labor movement, limited as it is, has been in the hands of Eritreans on the one hand, and primarily non-Amhara workers in the south. Student associations have been formed chiefly at the instigation and under the aegis of foreign staff members; though here, as with the professional associations, modernized Amhara have sometimes played a leading role.

*121 177 178 Once the new associations had been introduced, the Amhara like other Ethiopians were quick to adopt and expand them. Their participation in these new associations, however, has been affected, as might be expected, by the intrusion of traditional behavior patterns. Three examples of such behavior patterns come readily to mind.

*121 452 454 178 (1) While the *equb* is conceived as a kind of credit union and as a focus for communal sociability, the *co-operative* sentiment tends to be lacking among members of Amhara *equb*, at least those of which the author has any knowledge. For example, in case of dire need, an *equb* member who desires the lump sum out of turn may be forced to *buy* the amount from the weekly winner, sometimes by forfeiting as much as ten or twenty per cent of the amount. By capitalizing on the crises of others, some enterprising *equb* members are able to sell their successful claims several times. Furthermore, in the early years of their existence, *equb* were frequently faced with the problem created by members who won the money early in the cycle, left town with the money, and did not return to pay their later installments. This difficulty has been met to some extent by the requirement of securing one or two guarantors for each person who enters an *equb*, but problems of this nature have led to altercations that have brought many *equb* members into court.

*121 178 575 794 (2) The behavior of members of Amhara territorial *māhebar* is essentially that of a traditional social or civil gathering. The big men are seated in places of honor; the rest of the people stand quietly by. After a protracted period of exchanging greetings and milling about, the crowd listens respectfully while one or more of the big men makes a statement, and perhaps exchanges a few words with the group's secretary; and then the gathering disbands. Although the *māhebar* is organized with respect to the attainment of specific goals, the substance of the meetings is instumental to a very slight degree. The assembly rarely involves a meeting of minds to discuss an issue or a common problem, or to work out a program of action; but exists primarily as an occasion for the resonance of primordial sentiments by virtue of shared territorial attachments.

121 571 156 (3) In all associations, finally, certain traditional characteristics which are incongruent with the optimum conduct of groups come to the fore. This is no less true of the modern-educated than of the traditionals. Members fail to come on time to arranged meetings or neglect to come altogether. They

* The *equb* has attempted to check this pattern by imposing fines on members who come late.

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resist taking responsibility and showing initiative. In general, they reveal little capacity for self-discipline in a collective setting. 121* 571 156

The need for what can be accomplished through the new associations, however, transcends the intermittent obstacles to their effective functioning posed by such individualistic behavior. As modernization proceeds and as Ethiopians gain experience in these associations, one may expect that the more disruptive aspects of such behavior will be transformed in the direction of greater compliance with the implicit norms of group functioning. Amhara in the modernizing sector have no choice now but to replace the ethos of the *shīftā*, the litigant, and the wandering student with that of the president, secretary, and treasurer if they are to remain true to the ambitions that have been awakened within them. 121* 181 571

There are, moreover, a number of respects in which adequate functioning in modern groups may be supported by behavioral traits inherited from the past. Three of these traits in particular deserve to be mentioned in this context. One is the fundamentally respectful orientation toward others. This serves to reduce the outbreak of dissension among group members, and in the attitude of respect and obedience toward figures of authority provides the basis, given capable and decisive leaders, for a significant amount of concerted action among group members. A second trait of some importance is the acceptance of conflict as a natural and not particularly threatening component of human relations. This means that group members are ready to admit and deal with such conflicts as do emerge in their ranks, and are experienced in the resolution of such conflicts through the agency of elderly mediators or the more formal processes of litigation. Finally, the Amhara sense of humor—wry, realistic, attuned to the ironies of existence—introduces a salutary leavening ingredient into group process. It provides an outlet for the release of tensions in group situations and adds a certain flavor to group experience that often more than compensates for the lack of a hyperinstrumental orientation. 121* 571 156 [578] [522] [154]

The Question of Individuality

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Although effective modernization is unthinkable without a significant increase in solidaristic sentiments and rationalized organization, in Ethiopia as elsewhere, the fate of the other aspect of individualism discussed in this chapter—individuality as a cultural value—poses a more controversial question. If the essence of modernity is the systematic effort to control rationally man's physical and social environment, then the society of *1984* may be claimed as a possible modern utopia no less than the society in which all children go to Montessori schools and all adults paint, undergo psychoanalysis, and study Great Books. The cultivation of individuality stands as but one of many pos-

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*121 sible values commonly subsumed under the notion of modernity and must compete with other values, like that of maximizing efficiency in production, which are indifferent or antagonistic to it. The modernizing elites are thus faced with the question, whether they confront it openly or not, of the extent to which their political and cultural institutions should be encouraged to emphasize the dignity, integrity, and creativity of individuals.

And yet it can be argued that individuality, while not a necessary constituent of modernity—if, from the author's viewpoint, an extremely desirable and plausible constituent—may be an indispensable means of accomplishing any of the goals aspired to by the modernizing elites. The argument is that informed and reliable leadership, on the one hand, and responsible and effective criticism, on the other, depend ultimately on the existence of at least a minority of persons who can think for themselves and can have confidence in their thinking and in the possibility of meaningful communication with others. In terms of the collective interests of the national society, one could maintain that a developed individuality is *more* important for the elite of a transitional society than of a highly modernized nation.

*121 156 181 The weight of Amhara tradition opposes the graceful emergence of such a minority in Ethiopia. The pressures toward conformity and the inhibition of self-expression in most areas of life are, we have seen, characteristic of that tradition. The surly use of authority, the subtle sense of fatalism, the adulation of rank rather than human qualities, the distrust of innovation, the drabness of subsistence, the authority of conventional styles, the narrowness of outlook maintained by mass illiteracy and religious fundamentalism, the interpersonal aspects of the ethos of wax and gold (deception, insult, and intrigue)—these and related aspects of Amhara culture are formidable obstacles to the development of individuality among Ethiopians.[43]

Such a development is further impeded by two characteristics of Ethiopia's contemporary situation: the fear of criticism and the new "cult of personality." Given the Amhara emphasis on the deserts of status and the formalities of social intercourse, it is natural that the uses of honest criticism should have been kept to a minimum in their traditional social order. And thus it is that, from want of public habits of constructive criticism, traditions of self-examination have never emerged; rather, the ego has ever been first and foremost on the defensive to ward off all real or alleged slights to its dignity.[44] Altercation among Amhara has frequently arisen from a characteristic incapacity to accept advice and counsel, let alone criticism. This difficulty has been compounded by Ethiopia's present circumstance, for she finds herself, after centuries of living as she pleased with a mode of adjustment fairly well suited to the realities of traditional life, suddenly forced to acknowledge the inadequacy of her culture for purposes of living in the modern world. This situa-

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tion has prompted the hasty erection of new self-justificatory defenses and an extreme touchiness about being considered "primitive" or "backward." This sensitivity has been exacerbated by the fact that European politicians in pursuit of their colonial interests, and foreign journalists in pursuit of sensational stories, have shown no compunctions about dwelling on and exaggerating some of the more unflattering aspects of Ethiopian culture. In such an emotional climate, the attempt to be objective about one's country and one's self, to engage in self-examination that is both sympathetic and critical, can be carried out only by efforts that are profoundly heroic.

The situation has scarcely been improved, moreover, by the form taken by the "cult of the individual" in contemporary Ethiopia. The centralization of power has been accompanied by a radical centralization of prestige. The cult of personality occasioned by the ascendance of Haile Selassie overshadows all public life in Ethiopia. It is manifest in the ubiquitous photographs; the naming of countless streets, plazas, schools, and other institutions after him; and in the unremitting praise and adulation accorded him in all public speeches and mass media. Other individuals have normally been accorded recognition only by virtue of their proximity to him, while individuals possessing attainments in their own right, and thus some claim to public attention, have deliberately been kept in the shadows. Domestic news conveyed through the press and radio has largely consisted of the minutiae of the Emperor's daily activities, including such matters as the exact time at which he performs any public function and all the words he speaks on any occasion. This cult of personality has further been advanced in the Ethiopian press by its adherence to a number of conventions respecting the person of the Emperor, such as that of placing the name of the Emperor at the beginning of any article in which he is mentioned; capitalizing all references to the Emperor, including all pronouns; and attributing all developments and progress reported in the newspapers to the initiative and foresight of the Emperor and his government.[45]

The political implications of this phenomenon need not concern us here. Whether the monopolization of prestige as well as power by the Emperor may have a primarily beneficial effect, through providing an authoritative symbol that can link the multifarious elements of the Ethiopian state; or whether, as was the case with Bismarck, the elimination of other possible pre-eminent personalities is laying the basis for a leadership vacuum for which the coming generation may pay dearly, is a question that cannot yet be answered. In this context we are concerned only with establishing the point that the ascendance of a cult of personality such as now obtains in Ethiopia eliminates not only the bestowal of public esteem for authentic individual performance, but also deprives the people of exercise in a crucial prerequisite

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*121 181 156 643 of individuality—loyal criticism toward the government, one's friends, and one's self.

Besides the efforts of those courageous Ethiopians who, in exile abroad or living in inner exile at home, have steadfastly worked to develop their powers *121 873 of integrity and their capacities of independent judgment, there is but one force that holds any promise of increasing the scope of personal autonomy and creativity in Ethiopia, and that is education. The fate of Ethiopia one and two generations hence is linked, more closely than members of large, industrialized societies can readily appreciate, with a single small institution: the Haile Selassie I University. As pinnacle of the country's educational system, it sets the standards, prepares the teachers, and devises many of the innovations to be used throughout the nation's schools. No less important, its relative independence from the national government gives it a certain leeway to pursue policies based primarily on academic considerations. The Ministry of [647] Education, which administers all other secular schools in the country, is necessarily more subjected to the routine pressures of domestic politics. The university, on the other hand, by virtue of its many expatriate staff members and its dependence on outside financial help, is more intimately tied to international academic standards and practices. While a growing number of qualified Ethiopians have joined its staff, for some time to come the University will necessarily be greatly dependent on assistance from academic men from other countries. In any event, it is likely to remain in continuous contact with the outside world by virtue of its participation in the international community of scholars. This condition may give it a degree of autonomy and insulation that can but further the patient development of Ethiopia's most sorely needed asset: cadres of individuals who can resist the facile slogans of the day and work to provide for Ethiopia's great transformation the benefits of enlightened aims and realistic practices.

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NOTES

CHAPTER 1: *Introduction*

1. E. Ullendorf, *The Semitic Languages of Ethiopia* (London: Taylor's [Foreign] Press, 1955), p. 25. 113
2. Elsewhere I have discussed the specific question of the influence of Amhara culture on Ethiopian national politics. Cf. "Ethiopia: Identity, Authority, and Realism," *Political Culture and Political Development*, ed. Lucien Pye and Sidney Verba (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).
3. Augustus Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia* (London: Methuen and Co., 1901), p. 3.
4. Cf. Abbā Yā'qob Gabra Iyasus, *Maṭsehāfa Sawāsew Za-Ge'ez* (Asmara: Tipografia Francescana, 1920 E.C.*), pp. 288 ff.; Mars'ē Hāzan Walda Qirqos, *Yāmāriññā Sawāsew* (Addis Ababa: Artistic Press, 1948 E.C.), pp. 215–18; Alamāyhu Mogas, *Malk'a Ityopyā* (Asmara: Kokaba Ṭsebāh Press, 1952 E.C.), pp. 10 ff.

   For an introduction to the European literature on *qenē*, cf. M. M. Moreno, *Raccolta di Qenē* (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1935); also Enrico Cerulli, *Storia della letteratura etiopica* (Milan: Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1956), pp. 154–56, 226–32.
5. Alamāyhu Mogas, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
6. Cerulli, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
7. Alamāyhu Mogas, *Sawāsew Ge'ez* (Addis Ababa: Tasfā Press, 1950 E.C.), p. 117.
8. Alamāyhu Mogas, *Malk'a Ityopyā, op. cit.*, p. 7.
9. This subject is treated at greater length in D. Levine, "Ambiguity and Modernity" (paper presented at the Fifth World Congress of Sociology, Wash-

* E.C. refers to the Ethiopian calendar dating, which runs seven or eight years behind the European calendar.

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113 ington, D.C., September 7, 1962; printed in the *Journal of the Ethiopian Students of North America*, IV, No. 1, 3–20).

10. H. Nakamura, *The Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples* (Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, 1960), p. 484.
11. On the concept of primordial sentiments cf. Edward Shils, "Primordial, Personal, Sacred, and Civil Ties," *British Journal of Sociology*, VIII (June, 1957), 130–45; and Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," *Old Societies and New States*, ed. C. Geertz (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 105–57.
12. G. Almond, "A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics," *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, ed. G. Almond, J. Coleman, and L. Pye (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), esp. pp. 36–38.
13. *Op. cit.*, pp. 17–21.
14. Richard Weaver, "Individuality and Modernity," *Essays on Individuality*, ed. Felix Morley (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), p. 77.

CHAPTER 2: *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

1. Stephen Wright, "Ethiopian Literature," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. More detailed descriptions of the literature of the period may be found in Enrico Cerulli, *Storia della letteratura etiopica* (Milan: Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1956), chaps. iii–vii; and Jean Doresse, *L'empire du Prêtre-Jean* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1957), II, chaps. xii, xiv.
2. Cf. Otto Jäger, *Aethiopische Miniaturen* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1957); and *Ethiopia: Illuminated Manuscripts* (Paris: UNESCO, 1961).
3. A revised edition of the English translation of Alvares' valuable manuscript has recently been published, and will be the text referred to in later references: *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. W. B. Huntingford (2 vols.; Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1961).
4. Job Ludolphus, *A New History of Ethiopia*, trans. J. P. Gent (2d ed.; London, 1684), p. 189.
5. Cf. Richard Pankhurst, *An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia* (London: Lalibela House, 1961), p. 406.
6. Carlo Conti-Rossini, ed. and trans., "Iyāsu I, Re d'Etiopia e martire," *Rivista degli studi orientali*, XX, 107.
7. [538] This disparaging image of Dāwit III has been perpetuated in the contemporary verse drama, *Selāsāwi Dāwit*, by the Shoan author Makonnen Endālkātchaw.
8. Sir Wallis Budge, *A History of Ethiopia* (2 vols.; London: Methuen and Co., 1928), II, 453.
9. This translation was made from the Italian translation in Cerulli, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–32.
10. Ababa Ayçhēh, *Bileçho* (Addis Ababa: Tensā'ē Za-Gubā'ē Press, 1948 E.C.).

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11. The letter was made available to the author through the courtesy of an Ethiopian informant. The text paraphrases Psalm 79. 000 [27]
12. This and the following section draw in part on material which has been published elsewhere, together with other material on Manz not included here. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, IX (Spring 1964), 204–11. [27] [113]
13. The boundaries of Manz proper include the Mofar River in the south, the Adabāy and Wānchet rivers in the west, the Qechenē River in the north, and in the east a long chain of mountains which pour forth the waters that drain across Manz and which divide it from the lowlands of Efrātā, Gedem, and Qawat. Accurate maps of Manz and its boundaries are not yet available.
14. Their itineraries are described in Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals* (London, 1843); and Paul Soleillet, *Voyages en Éthiopie* (Rouen, 1886). 113
15. A. Caquot, "L'homélie en l'honneur de l'archange Raguel," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 91–122.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
18. Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *Ya-Ityopyā Tārik Ka-Aṭsē Lebna Dengel Eska Aṭse Tēwodros* (Addis Ababa: Tensā'ē Za-Gubā'ē Press, 1949 E.C.), p. 20.
19. Cerulli, *op. cit.*, pp., 101–3.
20. Doresse, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
21. Chahab ad-Din Ahmad, *Futuh el-Habacha*, trans. D'Abbadie and Paulitschke (Paris, 1898), p. 342.
22. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *op. cit.*, p. 208.
23. This account of Nagāssi, like the accounts of his descendants which follow, has been constructed from a variety of sources, which, while differing in details, agree on the essential points presented here unless otherwise indicated. Oral traditions were obtained from Amhara informants in Manz and Addis Ababa. The chief written sources consulted include: Heruy Walda Selassie, an unpublished and untitled manuscript on the history of Ethiopia (part of which was published in his *Wā-Zēmā* [Addis Ababa, 1923 E.C.]); Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *op. cit.*; Tādassa Za-Waldē, *Ya-Abētohun Yā'qob Teweldennā Aḉher Tārik* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1948 E.C.); Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du Règne de Ménélik II* (2 vols.; Paris: Librairie Orientale et Américaine, 1930–32); Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa* (3 vols.; Rome, 1886–87); Major W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844); Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*; and Soleillet, *op. cit.* [173] [115]
24. The related claim set forth by his dynasty—that Nagāssi was in the direct line of descent from Lebna Dengel—is less universally acknowledged by Ethiopians. It is still a controversial question whether or not Nagāssi was actually related to Lebna Dengel and, if so, by what route. 173 175

    The official genealogy traces the descent line as follows: Lebna Dengel—Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Warada Qāl—Lebsa Qāl—Nagāssi. This is the account set forth in Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā's history. The other Shoan authors who

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173 175 deal with this matter present different pictures, however. Blāttēngētā Heruy and Guèbrè Sellassié telescope the genealogy: Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Nagāssi. Tādassa Za-Waldē, on the other hand, leaves the question open; he identifies Segew Qāl as one of Yā'qob's sons, and refers to Nagāssi as father of the Shoan Dynasty, but affirms nothing concerning a connection between Segew Qāl and Nagāssi.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that none of these versions was reported to European travelers in the nineteenth century prior to the ascendance of Menelik. According to information given Major Harris by Shoan informants in the 1840's, Nagāssi inherited royal blood through his mother, who was said to be a granddaughter of "a daughter of the House of Solomon." Four decades later Soleillet was told still another story, namely, that "the kings of Shoa are now of the House of David, heirs of Solomon, cousins of Christ" not through Nagāssi, but by virtue of the marriage of his great-great-grandson, Asfā Wassan, to a relative of the imperial family at Gondar. Cecchi, finally, mentions none of these legitimizing affiliations.

113 25. Heruy manuscript, p. 19.
26. The latter version is given by Cecchi.
27. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; London, 1790), III, 255–56.
28. Cecchi, *op. cit.*, I, 241.
29. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
30. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 9.
31. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
32. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 12.
33. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 301. Heruy's account of the rebellion of [114] Matako is considerably different. We are following Harris and Krapf here since they were virtually contemporaneous with the events, and would have no particular reason not to record them faithfully.
34. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 302.
35. Harris, *op. cit.*, II, 133.
36. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), p. 173.
[103] 37. The word "Manz" (or "Manzeh"), according to local clergy, stems from a Ge'ez expression which means "land on which Christ's blood was sprinkled."
38. Ludolphus, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
39. The architecture and layout of the imperial compound are described in Monti della Corte, *I castelli di Gondar* (Rome: Società Italiana Arti Grafiche, 1938).
40. On the role of the *abuna*, cf. below, chap. v.
41. C. Poncet, "A Voyage to Ethiopia," *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1949), p. 61.
42. This is what has been called an orthogenetic, as distinguished from a heterogenetic, pattern of cultural development. Cf. Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, III, No. 1, 53–73.

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43. E. Combes and M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (4 vols.; Paris, 1843), III, 342, call Gondar "une ville de plaisirs." Eduard Rüppell, *Reise in Abessinien* (2 vols.; Frankfurt am Main, 1838–40), II, 190, speaks of the Gondarēs' "grenzenlosen Liederlichkeit." 113
44. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 104.
45. Rüppell, *op. cit.*, II, 132.
46. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
47. "Menelik's conquests," of course, were won for the most part by trusted generals, who were men from all parts of Ethiopia. 000
48. The figure is from a local census made by the Gondar Public Health College around 1958.
49. The Ethiopian Election Board listed 88,000 families and a registration of 35,000 voters in Manz in 1957. The figures are probably exaggerated.
50. The regional association will be discussed further in chapter vii.
51. "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," *Old Societies and New States*, ed. C. Geertz (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 105–57. 113
52. "Ansprache an die Mitglieder des Vereins B'nai B'rith," *Gesammelten Werke*, XVII, 51–53.
53. *Ibid.* and *Collected Papers*, V, 174.

CHAPTER 3: *The World of the Amhara Peasant*

1. Ernest Luther, *Ethiopia Today* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958).
2. The general methodological problem involved here is discussed in Hugo Engelmann, "The Activity Bias of Ethnography and the History of Society," *Anthropological Quarterly*, XXXIII (July, 1960), 158–63.
3. The TAT cards designed for use in Ethiopia were originally prepared by Dr. Edith Lord, US/AID, in connection with her own research there. The data on which the present study draws were obtained by administering twenty-five cards to a sample of twenty young Amhara in Manz—seventeen males and three females—ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-five years. 121 125 565
4. Cf. Samuel Alamayahu, "The Game of Gänna," *University College of Addis Ababa Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 9 (1959), pp. 9–28. 113
5. Cf. Akalou Wolde Michael, *"Buhe," UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 7 (1957), pp. 57–64.
6. Simon Messing, "Group Therapy and Social Status in the Zar Cult of Ethiopia," *American Anthropologist*, LX (December, 1958), 1120–26. More extensive discussion of the *zār* may be found in Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1957), and Michel Leiris, *La possession et ses aspects théâtraux chez les Éthiopiens de Gondar* (Paris: Plon, 1958).
7. This section draws on material previously published in D. Levine, "On the

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113 Conceptions of Time and Space in the Amhara World View," *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi etiopici* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1960), pp. 223–28.

8. Cf. Allan Hoben, "The Role of Ambilineal Descent Groups in Gojjam Amhara Social Organization" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1963), pp. 140 ff.
9. *Ibid.*, chaps. ii and v.
10. On Amhara attitudes toward nationhood cf. D. Levine, "Ethiopia: Identity, Authority, and Realism," *Political Culture and Political Development*, ed. L. Pye and S. Verba (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).
11. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," pp. 63–67, presents a detailed analysis of the ethnic hierarchy in Ethiopia "as it exists in the minds of most Amhara." Briefly summarized, this hierarchy consists, in order of descending status, of the (Christian) Tigre; Christianized Galla; Muslim and pagan Galla, and other sedentary Cushitic-speaking peoples who were self-governing prior to Menelik's conquests (Kaffa, Wollamo, etc.); peoples identified chiefly as manual laborers (Falasha, Gurage); and occupational hunters, pastoral nomads, and Negroid ex-slaves.

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113 12. This subject is discussed in greater detail in D. Levine, "Ethiopia: Identity, Authority, and Realism," *op. cit.*
13. Marcel Griaule, "Le travail en Abyssinie," *Revue internationale du travail*, XXIII (February, 1931), p. 8.
14. This ideal is discussed at greater length in D. Levine, "The Concept of Masculinity in Ethiopian Culture" (paper presented at the Fourteenth Annual Symposium of the Committee on Human Development, The University of Chicago, May 11, 1963: to be published in the *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*).
15. *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1954), chap. iv; and *The Little Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), chap. vi.
16. Cf. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," p. 540.

000 17. Harris observed that "the Abyssinian scribe does not hold the pen of a ready writer; and the dilatory management of his awkward implement is attended with gestures and attitudes the most ridiculous." Also, "Few of the priesthood understand the art of writing, and all regard the exercise of the pen as shameful and derogatory." *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; London, 1844), III, 15, 182.

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18. Cf. Benjamin Paul, ed. *Health, Culture, and Community* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1955).
19. See a series of articles beginning in the *Ethiopian Herald*, Addis Ababa, June 27, 1960: "Let the Victim Speak of the Magnitude of Ethiopian Medicine."

000 20. A long-term study of this and related problems is currently being carried out under the supervision of the US/AID Public Health Section in Ethiopia.

113 21. For general analyses of the nature of political life which support this assertion, cf. Edward Shils, *The Torment of Secrecy* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956);

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and Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1963), esp. chap. ii. 113

CHAPTER 4: *The Emerging Adolescent*

1. Cf. Richard Pankhurst, "Menelik and the Foundation of Addis Ababa," *Journal of African History*, II, No. 1 (1961), 103–17.
2. Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth: the Religious Meanings of Initiation in Human Culture* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1958).
3. For illustration of this phenomenon in a wide variety of societies as well as a highly advanced interpretation of it, cf. S. N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation: Age Groups and Social Structure* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956). For additional examples cf. H. Ammar, *Growing Up in an Egyptian Village* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954); and J. Stoetzel, *Without the Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955).
4. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1957).
5. *Ibid.*, p. 436.
6. In addition to Messing, the literature on betrothal and marriage among the Amhara includes Abebe Ambatchew, "Betrothal among the Säwan Amharas," *UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 5 (June, 1956), pp. 5–12; J. I. Eadie, *An Amharic Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), pp. 75–79; C. H. Walker, *The Abyssinian at Home* (London: Sheldon Press, 1933).
7. Messing, *op. cit.*, pp. 459–60.
8. The conceptualization of "identity" used here follows the work of Erik Erikson, cf. "The Problem of Ego Identity," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, IV (January, 1956), 58–121; reprinted in *Identity and Anxiety*, ed. M. Stein, J. Vidich, and D. White (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960).
9. Margery Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), p. 247.
10. Tadesse Tereffe, "Progress, Problems and Prospects in Ethiopian Education," *Ethiopia Observer*, VIII, No. 1 (1964), 12.
11. In response to which, the government adjusted the passing grade so as to permit a larger number of students to pass the examination. 000
12. The exact composition of this sample was as shown in the tabulation on page 294.
13. Haile Fida, "High School and Educational Complications," *Ethiopian Herald* (Addis Ababa), August 2, 1960. 113
14. Thus, one American school director was celebrated by an Ethiopian student during the graduation ceremonies one year as follows: 000

    "When we came here, we were Tigreans, Gallas, Amharas, and so forth. Now, thanks to the director, we leave as Ethiopians, and as alumni of this school."
15. Perham, *op. cit.*, p. 256. 113

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873
874
162

Name of School[a]	Enrolment[b]	Grades Surveyed	No.		
			Total	Male	Female
I. Tafari Makonnen School	320	11th and 12th	60	60	0
II. Haile Selassie I Secondary School	230	12th	47	47	0
III. Menelik II School	245	12th	15	15	0
IV. General Wingate Secondary School	325	12th	58	58	0
V. Madhane Alem School	160	12th	21	21	0
VI. Empress Mennen School	220	12th	19	0	19
VII. The English School[c]	.....	11th and 12th	9	7	2
VIII. Madhane Alem School (Harar)	450	12th	23	23	0
IX. Haile Selassie I School (Gondar)	135	11th	45	45	0
X. Theological Academy	100	12th	13	13	0
XI. Commercial School	335	12th	42	31	11
XII. Technical School	420	12th	57	57	0
XIII. Social Work Training Program[d]	12	12th	11	3	8
XIV. Teacher Training School (Harar)	278	12th	51	51	0
XV. Agriculture School (Ambo)	120	12th	29	29	0
Total secondary schools	3,350	.....	500	460	40
XVI. University College	420	3d and 4th	44	.....	.....
XVII. Engineering College	100	3d and 4th	31	.....	.....
XVIII. College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts (Alemaya)	172	3d and 4th	49	.....	.....
XIX. Haile Selassie I Military Academy (Harar)	138	3d[e]	38	.....	.....
XX. Public Health Officers Training Program (Gondar)	60	3d and 4th	38	.....	.....
Total colleges	890	.....	200	.....	.....

[a] These schools include all but five of the government postelementary schools which were offering full four-year programs in 1959. Schools I–IX are listed as "academic secondary schools"; X–XV as "special schools"; and XVI–XX as "institutions of higher learning." Unless otherwise indicated, they are located in Addis Ababa.

[b] The enrolment figures are for the academic year 1959–60, except for Tafari Makonnen School, where a preliminary version of the questionnaire was used during 1958–59. In schools which include elementary grades as well, the figures refer only to the secondary level enrolment. The total universe of the grades surveyed in these twenty schools was 1,150.

[c] A very small private school, attended by several Europeans as well as Ethiopians. The entire Ethiopian group of the two highest classes responded.

[d] A two-year program organized with the assistance of UNESCO. The students surveyed were the equivalent of secondary school seniors.

[e] The terminal year.

113 16. Mulugeta Wodajo, "Postwar Reform in Ethiopian Education," *Comparative Education Review*, II (February, 1959), 27.

17. Cf. William Shack, "Organization and Problems of Education in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Negro Education*, XXVIII (Fall, 1959), 405–20.

18. *Youth's Outlook on the Future: A Cross-national Study* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1955), p. 9.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

883* 178 463 87 829 113 883* 771 178 829 113

19. Thus, an eighth-grade student in Manz explained the popularity of the Jimma Agricultural School by saying, "The boys all want to go there because it is run by the Americans, and a school run by Americans means that everything is done right—food and clothes are properly distributed, and so on."
20. Shack, *op. cit.*, p. 417.
21. In response to a question on their attitudes toward the priests, sixty juniors and seniors of Tafari Makonnen Secondary School replied as follows (1959): 40 per cent were unequivocally proclerical; 22 per cent were ambivalent, expressing awareness of both good and bad elements in the clergy; and 18 per cent were primarily anticlerical, calling the priests "incompetent," "opposed to modernization," and "not supported by the people." (The rest were no answers or noncommittal.)
22. Edith Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-scientific Beliefs in Ethiopia," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XLVII, Second-Half (May, 1958), 339–54.
23. Cf. Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (rev. ed.; Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954), chaps. vii and xiv.
24. Cf. chap. iii, p. 89, and note 19.
25. Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-Scientific Beliefs," typescript version, pp. 6–7.
26. A sophisticated expression of this approach to Ethiopian painting has been published by an Ethiopian student in France. Cf. Berhanu Abbaba, "La peinture éthiopienne: point de vue d'un Éthiopien," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, II, No. 1 (1961), 160–65.
27. For a brief account of this historic event cf. Lipsky *et al.*, *Ethiopia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962), pp. 210–12.
28. Edgar Z. Friedenberg, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).
29. *Diagnosis of Our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), chap. iii.

CHAPTER 5: *The Old and New Elites*

1. C. Conti Rossini, "La regalità sacra in Abissinia," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, XXI (1948), 12–31.
2. A. Vasiliev, "Justin I (518–527) and Abyssinia," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXXIII (1933), 67–77; *Justin the First* (Harvard, 1950), pp. 299–302.
3. A. Caquot, "La royauté sacrale en Éthiopie," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 205–19.
4. F. Alvares, *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford (2 vols.; Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961), I, 122.
5. "The Chronicle of the Emperor Zara Yaqob," *Ethiopia Observer*, V, No. 2 (1961), 153.
6. J. Varenbergh, *Studien zur äthiopischen Reichsordnung* (Strassburg, 1916), p. 3.
7. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; Edinburgh, 1790), III, 237.

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1138. *Op. cit.*, p. 214.
9. Gebre-Wold Ingida-Worq, "Ethiopia's Traditional System of Land Tenure and Taxation," *Ethiopian Observer*, V, No. 4 (1962), 309–11.
10. Alvares, *op. cit.*, II, 445.
11. R. Pankhurst, "Status, Division of Labour and Employment in Nineteenth-Century and Early Twentieth-Century Ethiopia," *UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, II, No. 1 (1961), 30–34.
12. For an enumeration of many of these changes cf. S. Messing, "Changing Ethiopia," *Middle East Journal*, IX (Autumn, 1955), 413–32.
13. The sociological definition of elite assumed here is most fully articulated in S. F. Nadel, "The Concept of Social Elites," *International Social Science Bulletin*, VIII, No. 3 (1956), 413–24.
14. Bruce, *op. cit.*, III, 280.
15. *The Government of Ethiopia* (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), pp. 71–76.
16. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Queen of Sheba and Her Only Son Menyelek* (London: Medici Society, 1922), p. 64.
17. Afevork, *Grammatica della lingua amarica* (Rome, 1905), p. 264.
18. W. E. Conzelman, ed., *Chronique de Galawdewos* (Paris, 1895), p. 149.
19. J. Baeteman, *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* (Dire Dawa: Saint Lazare, 1929), p. 629.
20. Māhtama-Selassie Walda-Masqal, *Zekra Nagar* (Addis Ababa: Naṭsānat Press, 1942 E.C.), chap. xx.
21. W. Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia* (London, 1868), p. 139.
22. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), pp. 374–75.
23. Lieutenant Collat, *L'Abyssinie actuelle* (Paris, 1906), p. 28.
24. Varenbergh, *op. cit.*; Gebre-Wold Ingida-Worq, *op. cit.*
25. Ignazio Guidi, ed. *Annales Iohannis I, Iyāsu I et Baḳāffā* (Paris, 1903), pp. 144–51.
26. On the ranks and perquisites of dignitaries at the court of a *dajāzmātch* in the 1840's cf. d'Abaddie, *op. cit.*, pp. 336–37.
27. The order of precedence set under Iyāsu I is reproduced in Alvares, *op. cit.*, II, 560–61; that of the Ethiopic work *Ser'āta Mengest* in Varenbergh, *op. cit.*
28. Māhtama-Selassie, *op cit.*, chap. ii.
29. E. Almeida, "The History of High Ethiopia," in *Some Records of Ethiopia, 1593–1646*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford (London: Hakluyt Society, 1954), pp. 72–73.
30. Plowden, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
31. Almeida, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
32. An autobiographical account of an instance of such nobility at the court of Menelik appears in Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Malḳām Bēta Sabotch* (Addis Ababa, 1949 E.C.).
33. Some of the dynamics of this process are described by an Ethiopian novelist in Rās Imru Haile Selassie, *Fitāwrāri Belāy* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā

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Salām Press, 1948 E.C.). This has been translated by Tadesse Tamrat in *Ethiopian Observer*, V, No. 4, 342–60. 113

34. Cited in R. Pankhurst, *An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia* (London: Lalibela House, 1961), p. 168.
35. Cf. Lloyd Fallers, "Despotism, Status Culture, and Social Mobility in an African Kingdom," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, II (October, 1959), 11–32.
36. Alvares, *op. cit.*, I, 17–22. Cf. R. Pankhurst, *op. cit.*, pp. 131–32.
37. E. Cerulli, "Punti di vista sulla storia dell'Etiopia," *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi etiopici* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1960), p. 8.
38. Plowden, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
39. B. Vèlat, "Une grande dignitaire de l'Église Éthiopienne," *Les Cahiers Coptes*, No. 4 (1953), pp. 13–20.
40. Alvares, *op. cit.*, II, 560; Varenbergh, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
41. On the secular attainments of an *aqābē sa'āt* cf. Bruce's vignette: "[He is] the third dignity of the church, and . . . the first religious officer in the palace. He had a very large revenue, and still a greater influence. He was a man exceedingly rich, and of the very worst life possible; though he had taken the vows of poverty and chastity, it was said he had at that time above seventy mistresses in Gondar. His way of seducing women was as extraordinary as the number seduced . . . when he had fixed his desires upon a woman, he forced her to comply, under pain of *excommunication*." *Op. cit.*, III, 201. 000
42. Plowden, *op. cit.*, p. 88. 113
43. Alvares, *op. cit.*, II, 354.
44. Assafā Gabra Māryām, *Enda Watatch Qaratch* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1943 E.C.), p. 84.
45. E. Combes and M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (Paris, 1843), pp. 199–200.
46. C. H. Walker, *The Abyssinian at Home* (London: Sheldon Press, 1933), p. 113.
47. W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844), II, 304.
48. Baeteman, *op. cit.*, p. 908.
49. E. Cerulli, "Gli abbati di Dabra Libānos," *Orientalia*, XII (1943), 249.
50. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 308.
51. R. Pankhurst, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
52. C. Poncet, "A Voyage to Ethiopia," *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1949), p. 123.
53. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 145.
54. Plowden, *op. cit.*, p. 457.
55. *Oriente moderno*, VII (1927), 39.
56. J. E. Baum, *Savage Abyssinia* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1927), pp. 40–41.

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113 57. *Oriente moderno, loc. cit.*

58. "La naissance d'une littérature imprimée en Amharique," *Journal Asiatique*, CCVI (1925), 348–63.

59. This mode of conceptualization has been stimulated and influenced by the theoretical discussions found in W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant*, Vol. II, Part IV, Introduction; Talcott Parsons, *The Social System*, chap. vii; and Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, rev. ed., chaps. iv and v.

60. John and Ruth Useem, *The Western-Educated Man in India* (New York: Dryden Press, 1955).

61. "Ka-ïj Āyshāl Domā," *Voice of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa), September 16, 1957.

62. Cf. Edward Shils, *Political Development in the New States* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1962), p. 7.

63. The conceptual scheme assumed here is articulated in Talcott Parsons, "A Revised Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification," in *Class, Status, and Power*, ed. S. M. Lipset and R. Bendix (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1953).

64. *The Ethiopian Herald* (Addis Ababa), March 21, 1960.

65. *Ibid.*, September 12, 1959.

66. As a possibility inherent in the situation of the developing nations, this alternative has been discussed by R. F. Behrendt, "The Emergence of New Elites and New Political Integration Forms and Their Influence on Economic Development," in *Transactions of the Fifth World Congress of Sociology* (Louvain: International Sociological Association, 1962), pp. 3–32.

67. *Op. cit.*, p. 89.

CHAPTER 6: *Orality and the Search for Leadership*

000 1. A formulation concerning Amhara "social character," however, is presented in chap. vii.

113 2. E. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (rev. ed., 1963; New York: Norton & Co., 1950), chap. ii.

3. Cf. W. Plowden's observation: "It is a saying in Abyssinia, that a chief or master is a child—signifying that it is his servants' duty to soothe him, to pet him, to advise him, to answer him, and to understand all his actions." *Travels in Abyssinia* (London, 1868), p. 61.

4. J. Bacteman, *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* (Dire Dawa: Saint Lazare, 1929), pp. 643–46.

5. Afawarq Gabra Yesus, *Ṭobiyā* (Addis Ababa: Cooperative Education Press, 1958), p. 30.

6. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), p. 41.

7. W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844), II, 40.

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8. A. A. Brill, "Poetry as an Oral Outlet," *Psychoanalytic Review*, XVIII (October, 1931), 358. 113
9. W. E. Conzelman, trans., *Chronique de Galawdewos* (Paris, 1895), p. 121.
10. From an article in the *Tafari Makonnen Ensign* (Addis Ababa), April 12, 1951.
11. Carl O'Nell, "Manifest Orality, Hunger and Thirst in Dreams: A Cross-cultural Study of Oral Frustration" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1964). A fourth group in this study consisted of a sample of Muslim Nigerians who, because of their fasting at the time of Ramadan when the dreams were obtained, presented a significantly higher proportion of respondents with dreams showing manifest orality (55 per cent) than did the non-Muslim Nigerians. O'Nell hypothesized that the Ethiopians would reveal manifest orality with greater frequency than both the non-Muslim Nigerians and the Americans, and these hypotheses were both confirmed ($p < 0.005$ and $p < 0.001$, respectively). 000 [113]
12. Personal communication from Allan Hoben.
13. John Whiting and Irvin Child, *Child Training and Personality: A Cross-cultural Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 194. 113
14. This and a subsequent reference to folk tales is based on an unpublished analysis of Ethiopian folk tales originally collected by Russel G. Davis, formerly of AID/Ethiopia. The sample contains some Galla as well as Amhara folk tales, but these are not distinguished in the analysis. The author of that study, completely independent of the present author, arrived at a conclusion concerning Abyssinian personality that exactly parallels the formulations of this chapter: "In short I would say that the Abyssinian personality centers around the oral-receptive and oral-sadistic orientations with an ambivalent regressive variant." 000 [127]
15. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Life of Takla Haymanot, The Miracles of Takla Haymanot*, and *The Book of the Riches of Kings* (London: W. Griggs, 1906), p. 349. 113
16. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
17. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (London: W. Griggs, 1900).
18. Assafā Gabra Māryām, *Enda Watatch Qaratch* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1946 E.C.), p. 142.
19. *Tetāyaq* was outlawed, the author was told, because it led to betting on the participants, and because modern legal procedure requires that everything be written down. 000
20. See note 14 above.
21. Woodruff and Hoerman, "Nutrition of Infants and Preschool Children in Ethiopia," *Public Health Reports*, LXXV, No. 8, 728. 113
22. Cf. Erikson, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

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CHAPTER 7: *Individualism and the Quest for Social Progress*

000 1. This is a theme that runs through a century of social theory from Henry Maine and Ferdinand Tönnies to Robert Redfield and Louis Wirth. The explicit discussion of this theme in terms of the concept of individualism was perhaps most pronounced in the writings of Georg Simmel. More recently, sociologists like Karl Mannheim and David Riesman have refined the argument by viewing modern individualism as a transitional phenomenon, midway between the communalism of traditional society and the collectivism and "other-direction" of advanced industrial society.

113 2. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), pp. 72, 91, 114, 120.

3. Marcel Cohen, "Individu et société en Abyssinie," in *Cinquante Années de recherches* (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1955).

000 4. A condition marked by the absence or loss of shared social norms. The concept was established in the literature of sociological theory by Émile Durkheim in *Suicide*.

113 5. W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844), III, 12.

6. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (2 vols.; New York: Vintage Books, 1954), II, 104.

7. Georg Simmel, "Individualismus," in *Brücke und Tur*, ed. M. Susman and M. Landmann (Stuttgart: G. F. Koehler Verlag, 1957), pp. 251–59.

8. Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (London: Phaedon Press, 1951), p. 82.

000 9. *Tiqem* is thus comparable to the Italian notion of *interesse*, defined by Banfield as "material, short-run advantage for the individual," though the Amhara tend to emphasize increments of prestige as much as increments of income. Since Banfield's case is that of a peasant culture that has been eroded by industrialization of the larger society, and hence presents to some extent an instance of anomic individualism, his Montegrano is not strictly comparable to the Amhara. Even so, a comparison of the two cases may be instructive; cf. E. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1958).

[113]

10. Author's field notes.

[113] 11. J. Baeteman, *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* (Dire Dawa: Saint Lazare, 1929), p. 288.

12. See quotation from Harris in chap. vi, p. 223.

13. See above, chap. iii, p. 83, and note 14.

113 14. Cf. Simon Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation; University of Pennsylvania, 1957), p. 439.

15. Messing, "Ethiopian Folktales Ascribed to the Late Nineteenth Century Wit, Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna," *Journal of American Folklore*, LXX, No. 275 (January–March, 1957), 70.

000 16. Author's field notes; from an interview with an Amhara schoolteacher.

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17. On the permeation of Amhara social relationships by the demand for guarantors, cf. Giovani Masucci, *Il garante nelle consuetudini etiopiche* (Rome, 1941). 113
18. Wolf Leslau, "An Ethiopian Merchant's Argot," *Language*, XXV (1959), 22–28; "An Ethiopian Argot of People Possessed by a Spirit," *Africa*, XIX (1949), 204–12; "An Ethiopian Minstrel's Argot," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, LXXII (1952), 102–9.
19. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," p. 445.
20. Tilahoun Paulos, "Forms of Greeting and Other Signs of Respect in Ethiopia," *UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 5 (1956), pp. 25–32.
21. Cf. J. I. Eadie, *An Amharic Reader* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), pp. 39–46.
22. Māhtama-Selassie Walda-Masqal, *Amarīññā Qenē* (Addis Ababa, 1948 E.C.), p. 53.
23. For an extended discussion of begging cf. Walter Plowden, *Travels in Abyssinia* (London, 1868), pp. 404–8. On the student mendicants cf. Teshager Wube, "The Wandering Student," *UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 9 (1959), pp. 52–60.
24. "Il est à noter que pratiquement chaque maître a sa méthode d'enseignement qui lui est propre et qu'il considère comme un veritable monopole." Abbé Bernard Vélat, "Les Debtara Éthiopiens," *Les Cahiers Coptes*, V (1954), 26.
25. On the Amhara military ethos and behavior during campaigns cf. Harris, *op. cit.*, II, 162, 203 ff.; Plowden, *op. cit.*, 51 ff.; L. Sambon, *L'esercito abissino* (Rome, 1896).
26. Tadesse Liban, "Tīnnīshu Lījj" ("The Little Boy"), in *Maskarām* (Addis Ababa: Artistic Press), pp. 110–18.
27. "From the adults (children) take both ideas and hand-me-down objects that have been used, worn-out and discarded, for their play activities . . . for adults rarely produce a toy for children nor give them any new, unused object." Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," p. 435. 000
28. Cf. chap. iii, p. 62, and note 4.
29. "En Abyssinie," *La Géographie* (November–December, 1930), p. 10. Cf. also his *Silhouettes et Graffitti Abyssins* (Paris, 1933). 113
30. Eugen Mittwoch, "Die Angeblichen Abessinischen Philosophen des 17 Jahrhunderts," *Abessinische Studien*, ed. E. Mittwoch (Berlin and Leipzig, 1934), pp. 1–18.
31. *The Oral Tradition, the Written Word, and the Screen Image* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Antioch Press, 1956), p. 13.
32. Cf. Enrico Cerulli, *Storia della letteratura etiopica* (Milan: Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1956), chap. ii.
33. Thus Hans Jenny speaks of the Amhara's *erstarrte Kultur*, in *Äthiopien: Land im Aufbruch* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1957), pp. 123–26; and Ernest Luther generalizes that "the Ethiopian people have shown themselves to be remarkably uncreative," in *Ethiopia Today* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958), p. 36.

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113 34. A. Klingenheben, "Zur Amharischen Poesie," *Rassegna di studi etiopici*, XV (1959), 5–20.

[193] 35. Clyde Kluckhohn's statement that "Where dependence on memory exists, there seems to be an inevitable tendency to emphasize the correct perpetuation of the precious oral tradition," reflects, if the Amhara case is at all typical, an exaggerated view of the rigidity of the oral tradition that is shared by many students. *Mirror for Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949), p. 30.

36. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

37. Stories with this theme numbered 27 per cent; the next highest category was only 9 per cent. The data are reported in Edith Lord, *Culture Patterns in Ethiopia* (Washington, D.C.: International Co-operation Administration, 1959), p. 28.

38. Cf. Immanuel Wallerstein, *Africa: The Politics of Independence* (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 134.

39. Cf. Richard Pankhurst and Endreas Eshete, "Self-help in Ethiopia," *Ethiopia Observer*, II, No. 11 (December, 1958), 354–64.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 356.

41. Besides Pankhurst and Eshete, cf. Asfaw Damte, *"Ekub," UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 8 (1938), pp. 63–76.

42. Luther, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

43. On the inhibition of individuality as a generic problem among the new nations cf. Edward Shils, *Political Development in the New States* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1962), pp. 37–38.

44. The classic response of the European mentality to this trait appears in Plowden's famous remark: "Once vanquish [the Abyssinians'] idea that they are perfect, that they are the favoured people on earth, and that nothing can be taught them, and they will be quick and intelligent to learn and to imitate"; *op. cit.*, p. 396.

45. William Seed, "Censorship in Ethiopia," *Manchester Guardian*, Oct. 7, 1954.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

An effort has been made to represent accurately all Ethiopian words used in the text—except for a handful of the most commonly encountered names of emperors, provinces, and ethnic groups—by means of a consistently applied system of transliteration. The system followed here is that used by the majority of English and Italian scholars.* 104

VOWELS

Order in Ethiopic Script	Symbol Used	Pronunciation
First	a	as in *care*
Second	u	as in *prudent*
Third	i	as in *ravine*
Fourth	ä	as in *father*
Fifth	ë	as in *prey*
Sixth	e	as in *silent*
	ï	as in *sit*
Seventh	o	as in *go*

CONSONANTS

Glottalized consonants are represented by q, ṭ, ṭs, çh, and p. Geminated consonants are indicated by doubling the consonant.

* For the Amharic alphabet according to this system of transliteration, see I. Guidi, *Vocabolario Amarico-Italiano* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1953), pp. xiv–xv; or C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford, ed., *The Prester John of the Indies* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961), I, 24–25.

[P. 304 is blank]

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GLOSSARY

Abuna	አቡነ	Archbishop of the Ethiopian Church 104
Afa negus	አፈ ንጉሥ	Chief judicial magistrate (literally, "mouth of the king")
Agar	አገር	Country, homeland
Alaqā	አለቃ	Chief, commander
Aqābē sa'āt	ዐቃቤ ሰዓት	Title of the chief ecclesiastic at the imperial court in former times
Aquāquām	አቋቋም	Traditional religious dance performed by *dabtarā*
Azmāri	አዝማሪ	Minstrel
Bālābbāt	ባላባት	Local notable; one who comes from a distinguished family
Bālagē	ባለጌ	Rude
Bāla-selṭān	ባለሥልጣን	One who holds delegated political authority
Bānnā	ባና	A woolen blanket worn by people in Manz
Barnos	በርኖስ	A dark wool cape worn by people of high status
Bēt	ቤት	House, room, quarter
Budā	ቡዳ	A person believed to possess the "evil eye"
Çhawā	ጨዋ	Free-born; genteel

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104 Çhīqā shum	ቀቃ ሹም	Local headman
Çhīqeçhīq	ጥቀጥቀ	Bickering
Dābo	ዳቦ	A whole wheat bread
Dabtarā	ደብተራ	Literatus of the Ethiopian Church, functions as chorister, poet, scribe, herbologist, etc.
Dēgā	ዴጋ	Highland
Dulā	ዱላ	Wooden staff
Eçhagē	ኤጫጌ	Traditional title of administrative head of the Ethiopian Church
Eddīl	እድል	Fate
Eddīr	እድር	(Modern) voluntary welfare association
Engurguro	እንጉርጉሮ	Song genre used in times of grief
Equb	ዕቁብ	(Modern) form of credit union
Faranj	ፈረንጅ	Foreigner (esp. Western)
Gabbār	ገባር	One who pays tribute
Gannā	ገና	A hockey-like game played at Christmas
Gīber	ግብር	Tribute; a large meal
Goramsā	ጎረምሳ	A virile youth
Guabaz	ጉበዝ	Brave, hardy
Gulammā	ጉሰማ	Grain which a youth produces and keeps as his own; personal possession
Gult	ጉልት	Conditional rights to the tribute and corvée labor due from the peasants on a certain piece of land
Gurshā	ጉርሻ	A wad of food placed in someone's mouth
Ĭnjarā	እንጀራ	Staple food among Amhara and Tigre, a kind of pancake
Kāhenāt	ካህናት	Clergy
Kutā	ኩታ	A cotton toga of double thickness
Lālibalā	ላሊበላ	One who sings at night to ward off leprosy
Lēbā	ሌባ	Thief
Lījj	ልጅ	Child

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Māhebar	ማኅበር	Traditional religious fraternal association; now, any kind of voluntary formal association 104
Makuānnent	መኳንንት	Nobility
Mātab	ማተብ	A neckcord worn to symbolize membership in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church
Marīdāzmātch	መርዳዝማች	Honorific title peculiar to Shoa province
Mizē	ሚዜ	"Best man" at a wedding
Nagārit	ነጋሪት	Drum traditionally used by authorities to signal proclamations
Negusa nagast	ንጉሠ ነገሥት	Emperor (literally, "king of kings")
Qenē	ቅኔ	Religious poetry based on use of wax-and-gold figures
Qollā	ቆላ	Lowlands
Querbān	ቍርባን	Communion
Rīst	ርስት	Hereditary rights to the use of land
Sam-ennā warq	ስምና ወርቅ	"Wax and gold." See text, chap. i
Saw	ሰው	Man; others
Selṭānē	ስልጣኔ	Civilization, progress
Shammā	ሽማ	Light cotton toga worn by many Ethiopians
Shīftā	ሽፍታ	Rebel; outlaw
Shīllalā	ሽለላ	A genre of martial songs
Shumat	ሹመት	Appointment (to office)
Shum-shīr	ሹም ሽር	"Appoint-demote": refers to the traditional process of allocating political offices
Tābot	ታቦት	Holy ark
Ṭajj	ጠጅ	Honey-wine
Ṭallā	ጠላ	Barley-beer
Ṭanquāy	ጠንቋይ	Sorcerer, witch-doctor
Ṭayb	ጠይብ	Metalworker believed to possess the evil eye
Ṭēff	ጤፍ	An indigenous grass cultivated in Ethiopia as a cereal grain
Ṭegābaññā	ጥጋበኛ	One who has grown arrogant from a surfeit of food and drink
Tergum	ትርጉም	Interpretation

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Ṭiqem	ጥቅም	Personal advantage
Ṭimqat	ጥምቀት	Baptism; Epiphany
Wesṭa wayrā	ውስጠ ወይራ	"Inside of olive-tree." See text, chap. i
Zār	ዛር	A spirit which brings sickness
Zamad	ዘመድ	Kinfolk; close ones
Zēmā	ዜማ	Religious music

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[For a theoretical discussion on individualism as a psychological disposition, as a mode of social organization, and as a cultural value among the Amhara, see category 116, pp. 238-286.]

11: Levine MP5 Amhara MP5

19

[For additional information on the "wax and gold" poetic formula, see categories 195, 196 and 538.]

11: Levine

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[For historical profiles of two regions of Ethiopia, Gondar and Manz, both significant in Amhara history, see category 116, pp. 18-46.]

11: Levine

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[For information on the "wax and gold" poetic formula, see categories 19, 195 and 538.]

[For information on the eddǐr (a form of welfare association) and the equb (a savings association) see categories 747 and 454 respectively.]

11: Levine

MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For a detailed discussion on the world of the Amhara peasant, see category 116, pp. 55-94.]

[For the secular activities of the dabtara such as chorister, poet, dancer, herbologist, scribe, and wizard, see also categories 212, 756, 754, 759, 538, 533, and 535.]

11: Levine

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726
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[For historical information on the region of Manz in Shoa Province, along with its succession of leaders, its warfare with the Galla, and internal strife, see category 175.]

11: Levine

MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For information on Amhara adolescents, see category 116, pp. 96-147 and 295, especially pp. 96-101, 106, and 109-147.]

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[For the religious functions of the dabtara in the Ethiopian church, see category 793.]

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[For additional information on the "wax and gold" poetic formula, particularly for information on its uses in other modes of communication, see categories 19, 195, and 196.]

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[Introductory p.i]

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[Introductory p.ii]

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MEDICAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF BEGEMDER AMHARA

ALLAN LOUIS YOUNG

000

A DISSERTATION

in

ANTHROPOLOGY

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

1970

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PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

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townspeople of highland Begemder.

Field research was concentrated in the vicintiy of Gondar, the largest of the province's towns, and imperial capital during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Today, it is the provincial capital and an important ecclesiastical center, housing several famous churches and reknowned ecclesiastical academies. The town is also the home of many of the province's most famous healers. Extended research was also conducted in the Woggera region north of Gondar, in the rural hamlets discussed in Chapter Three. The division of research efforts between town and countryside reflects the important urban and rural aspects of Amhara medical practices with regard to the distribution of practitioners.

Through observation and inquiry, this field research sought, first, to elicit a description of the social and natural environments in which Amhara perceive pathogenic, prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic forces to operate. A second concern was to examine how Amhara select elements from these environments, and arrange them into etiologies with which to explain particular disease episodes. On the one hand, this meant collecting abstract, conscious etiological models used by Amhara; on the other hand, it meant recognizing etiologies that are constructed pragmatically and piecemeal, in the course of prophylactic and therapeutic failures and successes. Fi-

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121 nally, data were gathered relating to the modes of acquiring, exercising, validating, and conserving powers of prophylaxis, diagnosis, and therapy. Here, as in the other areas of data gathering, a necessary distinction was made between the perceptions of practitioners and those of their clients.

*793 869 75 197 539 While the secular medical traditions of Ethiopia are exclusively oral, powerful cleric healers known as debteras have traditionally employed diagnositc, prophylactic, and therapeutic texts written in Ge'ez, the language of the Church, and in the vernacular. Numerous *793 114 127 debtera texts gave been collected in the libraries of Europe and the United States, and valuable translations, most notably by Marcel Griaule, Deborah Lifchitz, and Stefan Strelcyn, have been published. These published translations, together with translations made in the field with the assistance of clerics, have been utilized in the writing of those sections of Chapter Four dealing with the debtera's medical texts.

121 171 Although the focus of this dissertation is limited to the region in which field research was conducted, it should not be overlooked that the Amhara share important cultural affinities with peoples, now largely Islamic, occupying lands extending from the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.

000 The highlands of Begemder, Tigre, and Eritrea form

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17 The highlands of Begemder, Tigre, and Eritrea form

the nucleus of Coptic Abyssinia. During the first millenium B.C., the indigenous Hamitic people of the cool plateau were repeatedly invaded from across the Red Sea, by pagan and Jewish immigrants from South Arabia. Within a millenium, the influence of these Semites spread over the northern highlands, producing a cultural synthesis more obviously Semitic than African.

In the fourth century, missionaries of the Syrian Christian Church arrived in the Kingdom of Axum. Axum, located near present-day Asmara, was then the greatest Abyssinian state, linked by trade with the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf, and by military expeditions with the Arabian peninsula. The Syrians converted the Axumite court to Christianity, an example which was subsequently followed by most people of the northern highlands. After the great schism at Chalcedon, the Ethiopian Church continued its ties with the Orthodox faction, as a dependency of the Coptic See of Alexandria.

In the seventh and eighth centuries, however, Islamic conquest of Egypt and Nubia severed Ethiopia's commercial and ecclesiastical links with the Mediterranean world. Then, with the establishment of Muslim states, on the Red Sea littoral, Coptic Abyssinia became completly isolated from world Christendom. Thenceforth, the Christians of Abyssinia shared their greatest cultural intimacy, albeit often antagonistic, with the Muslim

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17 peoples who penetrated deep into the highlands, making many converts among the Christians. Even after the defeat of the Muslim armies in the sixteenth century and the subsequent rennaisance of the Ethiopian polity, relations with the Islamic world persisted, augmented now by the presence of Abyssinian Muslims permanently settled in the highlands.

*755 Within the context of Ethiopian medicine, these
*787 widespread cultural affinities are most obvious in the
*793 works of the cleric healer (the debtera), and in the
177 practices of the zar possession cult. For example, in their numerological operations, the debtera's divinatory texts repeat the gematria manipulations of the Kabbalah, while the ideology which rationalized these formulations clearly reiterates the astrological lore of Islamic sa-
777 vants. Similarly, affinities are obvious between Ethio-
778 pian and Islamic amulets, in their construction, in the design of talismanic devices, and in the ends for which
*757 they are manufactured. Nor is evidence of the translation of Islamic medical treatises into Ge'ez and Amharic
177 lacking. Here, however, these works, particularly re-
539 garding humoral theory, have enjoyed only a very limited diffusion, and have been subordinated to indigenous medi-
*787 cal notions. Finally, the zar cult, in whose coteries many of Begender's women belong, is no local phenomenon, but appears in one form or another throughout this entire culture area.

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000 tire culture area.

104 There is a final, linguistic note. In describing Amhara medical beliefs, it has been necessary to employ a substantial number of Amharic terms. The more frequently used terms are included in the index, where each is followed by an English gloss. Within the text, these terms are used together with English, rather than Amharic, grammatical markers.

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CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF AMHARA DISEASE BELIEFS

128 This chapter describes the "natural" environment in which the Amhara set their system of disease beliefs. The description is in five steps, opening with an account of human physiology as it is conceived by the Amhara. This is followed by an enumeration of the agencies held responsible for transforming the man of good health into a sickman. Each pathogenic agency is described in terms of its physiological effects and symptomatic expressions. As its third step, this chapter considers these symptoms from a nosological point of view, that is, with regards to the rules by which symptoms are grouped under specific disease names, and by which these classifications are related to one another to form a disease-name taxonomy. [753] The Amhara disease-name taxonomy is simple, and by itself reveals relatively little about the system of disease beliefs of which it is a part. For this, a fourth step is required. Here, the specific disease-names are considered from an etiological perspective, in terms of the explanations associated with the onset of various ailments. In the text, a typology of five etiologies is described. The etiologies are unnamed, but implicit throughout the range of Amhara prophylactic,

128 diagnostic, and therapeutic practices. The final step of the chapter compares these etiology types with the strategies used by healers for countering the effects of pathogenic agencies.

76 827 Amhara healer and layman use common sets of physiological and pathological notions; neither physiology nor pathology is conceived as a coherent body of knowledge in its own right, however. The Amhara does not often verbalize these notions, and, when he does, it is in ad hoc contexts, generally intrinsic to the selection of prophylaxis or the administration of therapy. Thus, set down on the following pages as discrete subjects, Amhara physiology and pathology appear as collections of relatively simple notions, and of limited explanatory power when compared with the medical systems of other historical civilizations. Unlike those systems, the organization of Amhara medical beliefs and practices is dominated by concepts of practitioner power, its sources [128] and its therapeutic and prophylactic expressions. Those subjects are dealt with in the remaining chapters of this dissertation

AMHARA PHYSIOLOGY AND PATHOGENIC AGENCIES

827 Although most Amhara can identify the grosser body organs by name, even the knowledgeable anatomist can as-

827 sign functions to only a few of these. Among these organs, the heart is considered primary. First, it inspirits and regulates all other organ activity by means of the vital heat which it pulsates and radiates through-
*753 out the body. While pulsing within normal frequencies,
827 sufficient heat is generated to sustain good health
*[192] (tena); more rapid pulsing produces excessive heat which is perceived externally as fever (tukusat). When cardiac hyper-activity is of great intensity and persistence, the heart's ability to exert its authority over the subordinate organs is progressively reduced; this is expressed
827 symptomatically as chronic fatigue and lassitude. In ad-
*[192] dition to this vitalizing function, the heart controls body movement through the jimat cords, a term including veins, arteries, tendons, and ligaments. The heart is also capable of limited movement downward, backward, and
[763] can spin in place. These movements have no febrile effect but since the heart is the seat of the intellect, these motions often lead to mental disorientation and confusion.

Heart and blood share no special tie, nor is the
*[192] latter's vascular confinement appreciated. Anatomically, the blood is instead associated with a reservoir organ (yidem sir, "blood's root") located at the base of the
[841] skull. Functionally, the blood's most specific association is with procreation, for maternal blood is necessary to nourish the homonculus to infancy. Because the re-

827 quired amounts of blood are continually renewed in fer-
[841] tile women, menstrual effluence is necessary to shed
* [192] blood not needed between pregnancies. Hence, the cessa-
tion of menstrual bleeding at menopause (arowgey) indi-
[842] cates the loss of fertility. Arowgey is only one form
* [192] of infertility, however, since a woman may be infertile
through magical causes even though she continues to men-
struate (makan).

[825] The stomach is described as an inert organ housing
a colony of wosfat worms. These are usually identified
with ascariasis and are believed to transform food and
drink into waste. For the host's well-being, their num-
bers must be sufficient to consume all ingested food;
should they become over-abundant, however, hunger and a
quarrelsome disposition will drive them to viciously at-
tack accessible body organs.

*[192] Beyond these few naturalistic descriptions of organ
functioning, the Amhara invokes Divine Providence (yi-
Igziyabiher ara) to explain physiological processes, such
as the renewal of menstrual blood and the source of vital
heat. God further provides that, in the absence of in-
trusive influences, the parts of the body will function
together to maintain a state of harmonious well-being
(tena), devoid of pain and characterized by the vigor and
physical control commensurate with the individual's age.

000 Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal,

*753 776 Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal, are in abundance; however. Of these, the zar and ganel spirits are regarded with the greatest interest and concern. On the one hand, zars and ganels cause a great variety of ailments, often mortal ones. On the other hand, they are intelligible beings, each organized into socially structured communities of confreres and, most important to humans, they are willing to communicate information of therapeutic significance.

*753 *787 776 562 Zars select their victims carefully, most often choosing girls and women. Typically, this choice is signalled by the onset of chronic stomach pain, persisting headache, and arthritic complaints, although powerful zars are capable of sending any ailment. Once selected by a zar, a host can expect the subsequent attentions of other zars. Periodically, each of these will dramatize his domination over the human partner by sickening him and demanding tribute in the form of clothes, jewelry, and specially prepared food. Zars are visible only during the dreams of their human partners; in addition, they frequently speak through their hosts. From these sources, it is known that the zars have human forms and live in a bisexual and culturally pluralistic society which duplicates that of traditional Abyssinia. The means by which zars cause sickness is not known to humans, however.

*753 776 782 *[192] Measles (ankalis) and smallpox (wateto) are attributed to eponymous spirits who are customarily pro-

* 753 776 782 # [755] * [192] pitiated with zar-favored foodstuffs. Because of this, they are loosely associated with the zars. Unlike the latter, however, they are vague phantoms with whom no communication is possible; their demands are known from convention and, once satiated, leave the sickman permanently.

776 779 Zars contrast with ganels in several significant respects. The zar lives in a world which parallels but is distinct from man's own; it is a world whose existence, together with that of the zars themselves, is denied by * [192] the Coptic Church. The ganel's existence is entirely earth-bound, and he is identified by the Church as the Abyssinian satan (seytan). Whereas it is the zar which initiates ties with his human host, the ganel is forced into such relationships by his human partner. The zar's host may be anyone, the ganel's partner is always a male ecclesiastic who possesses a store of esoteric knowledge.

* 753 776 [539] * [192] The ganel's appearance is known from scriptural references and, in addition, they are infrequently seen. When visible, the ganel appears as a tall and thin blackman, Nilotic except for certain details. Descriptions by laymen are generally hearsay, since madness (ibidet) strikes the unprotected human who looks on a ganel; if the glance is returned, the effects are mortal. So dangerous is the ganel's person that even contact with his shadow leaves the victim stammering and given over to

undefineable fear and anxiety (*ayni tila*); the *ganel*'s shadow is sufficient to render the constitutionally frail child feeble-minded (*muñ*). Although *ganels* in nocturnal ambush sometimes strike blows resulting in epileptic seizures or apoplexy, and although their human partners may oblige them to send almost any ailment, most *ganel*-caused sicknesses result from indirect contact with their malignant persons (*likift*).

Likift refers to the transformation of innocuous substances into morbid or corrosive stuffs, through contact with certain agents. The ganel is the most virulent of these agents, and the most serious form of *ganel-likift* results from the ingestion of food which has been tasted by him. Frequently, this is food which has been left uncovered overnight. Once in the stomach, the *likift*-substance interferes with digestion and produces acute diarrhea. Simultaneously, it washes up to affect the contiguous heart, which reacts to this irritant
*[192] with rapid pulsations and pain. The sickman (*himemteña*) becomes greatly fatigued by this cardiac activity and finds it particularly difficult to breathe; the combination of pain, fatigue, and *wosfat* attrition leads in turn to anorexia. Since the *likift*-substance works on contact, washing with *ganel*-touched water results in a variety of skin ailments---septacemia, hemorrhagic and acute ulcers, scabies, scrofula and, infrequently, lep-

*753 776 rosy.

*753 825 Likift-powers are also associated with crawling insects, spiders, lizards, and the infrequent highland snake. As with the ganel, these creepers are innately contaminating, either through direct contact with their persons, or indirectly through media which they have touched---such as clothing and water---or which they have *[192] expelled---such as uring and saliva. This likift results in ringworm, varioloid and exzemoid skin diseases; because of their inherent toxicity, these creatures are also frequent ingredients in poisonous infusions (yijeseb).

*753 776 825 Sometimes, it is problematic whether the conditions which attract the attentions of ganel and creeper are not themselves sufficient to produce certain syndromes. For example, serious stomach pain, bloat, and feverish coughing are linked to the consumption of stale food or soured talla beer; these substances are, in turn, favorites of ganels. Similarly, the stench of bodily filth appeals to ganel and creeper, and is a common precursor to scabies and various rashes. However, both spoiled foodstuffs and filth are believed noxious enough to produce these ailments, without requiring the assistance of ganels or creepers.

*753 821 The notion of contact-pathogenicity which characterizes likift is also associated with a sun-borne agency known as gerifta. There is an important difference be-

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821

tween the two agencies, however. With likift, the pathogenic source is known to be the inherently contaminating persons of various corporeal beings. With gerifta, disease-causing powers are only circumstantially associated with the sun, and emphasis is focused on the conditions under which contact with direct sunlight is potentially dangerous.

The sun is regarded with no awe, nor is it personalized in any way. Moderate exposure to its rays threatens no special danger; choice of daily dress, for example, is determined by considerations of comfort and propriety, rather than prophylaxis. When, however, sunlight falls upon an unclean body part---a perspiring torso, a diner's unclean mouth, a nursing breast---or upon a body emerging naked from a toga's cool confines, gerifta threatens. Although symptoms vary according to the area of the body which is affected, such gerifta ailments begin with a surface irritation. If untreated, the symptoms intensify producing scabies, furuncles, mastitis, and bothersome rashes.

Even in the absence of special conditions, prolonged exposure to the sun of certain body areas can produce painful body compalints, such as headache, and conjunctivitis, blindness, earache, tonsillitis, and toothache. Lastly, gerifta-mists are created when sunlight falls on soil recently moistened by showers or urine.

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*753 Here, again, the consequent ailments are caused by contact-irritation. Although urine-mists can cause pubic sores, more frequently gerifta-mists are inhaled, to affect the body internally. In this role, the mist may irritate the walls of the respiratory tract, causing sneezing and coughing, and penatrate to the heart, where it induces severe local pain, rapid pulsation and its attendant effects.

*753 Some humans also possess illness-causing abilities.
*278 Laymen often know recipes for poisons which can be added
752 to a victim's food and drink. Although the inventory of such recipes is great, the poisons' effects tend to be uniform, differing mainly in the rapidity with which death is brought about: Once ingested, the toxin agonizes and destroys the digestive wosfat; simultaneously, it wahses up to chafe the heart into intensive overactivity. Symptomatically, the victim experiences nausea, vomiting, lassitude, and---owing to the heart's cognitive function---severe disoreintation. When a poison fails to produce a rapid and painful death, the victim's demise is preceeded by several weeks of indiscriminate and aggressive anti-social behavior as a consequence of the heart's deterioration.

*753 Amhara sorcerors can cause a great variety of ail-
754 ments, as well as other misfortunes not directly affecting the victim's physical well-being. Knowledge of

*755 *793 ensorcelling spells and rituals is mainly limited to certain debteras, the Coptic scholars among whom the *755 ganel's human intimates are also found. Since laymen 539 are generally illiterate and unfamiliar with the litur- [212] gical language (Ge'ez) in which spells are composed, they are unable to master the long lists of magical names and injunctions which are associated with powerful spells. Consequently, although laymen occasionally own ensorcelling spells and rituals, these spells are generally abbreviated and invariably weak. In addition, lay-owned spells and rituals are usually obtained from questionable sources, since the layman is unlikely to possess a medium appropriate for "purchasing" such knowledge.

*753 754 Human illness-causing powers may be inherited or congenital, as well as learned. In Begemder Province, inherited powers are limited to budas, Falasha wer-hyenas. The buda's dangerous abilities reach full potency after pubescence, when the hyenas' nocturnal cries compel him to spend the night with them feasting upon disinterred human cadavers. At dawn, the buda returns home, assuming a benign demeanor until his morbid attentions are [826] fixed upon a living victim. Many of these are persons *[192] of "good blood" (tiruw dem sew), individuals who have inherited the light and unblemished complexion favored by Amhara, although other attractive physical features

*763

754 also excite the buda's interests. The buda's remaining
[826] victims are people he sees eating ordrinking in public,
[264] particularly while the buda himself is hungry or thirsty. In all cases, the buda concentrates upon the part of his victim's anatomy that initially attracted him, and through it introjects his invisible buda aspect into the victim's abdomen. Unknown by the victim, the buda sets about dining on the latter's viscera; only later that day do the initial symptoms---nausea, vomiting, torpor---become evident. By nightfall, the unique symptoms of buda possession begin. The victim no longer complains of nausea, and vomiting ceases; now oblivious of his surroundings, he alternates periods of vacant staring with violent frenzies, during which he attempts to tear off his clothes and seeks reunion with the roaming hyenas. If forcibly restrained, he grits his teeth edge-to-edge, rigidly holds his flexed limbs close to his body, and compresses fingers against palms, thumbs inward; to onlookers, he appears as a human hyena. At dawn, the victim's frenzy dissipates, and he lies abed, greatly fatigued by the nocturnal exertions and severly weakened by the buda's feasting. At nightfall, the frenetic drama is repeated, and, unless the buda is exorcised soon, the victim's death becomes certain.

*[192] Yisew ayn ("the person's eye") shares important similarities with buda powers. It is exercised involun-

754 tarily, and, in the case of yisew ayn, this power is usually unknown to its possessor. The victim of yisew ayn may have "good blood" or, more frequently, he may have been observed while eating or drinking (milk being the most commonly mentioned beverage). Like the buda, the bearer of yisew ayn stares intensely at his victim, who subsequently develops symptoms of chronic fatigue, abdominal cramps, headache, and occasional vomiting. These similarities are attended by important contrasts: Yisew ayn is congenitally acquired, and is not limited to any segment of the population. Its victims are sometimes people whose finery, rather than physical attractiveness, has drawn the yisew ayn's interest. Although its pathogenic mode is only vaguely understood, there is [261] no agent introjection. Lastly, it is considerably less serious than buda possession; there are no nocturnal seizures alternating with diurnal lassitude, and child victims often experience an eccentric syndrome---eating ashes, clay, and charcoal---for which there is no buda possession analogy.

*753 Certain ailments result from contagion (telalafiy), *[192] that is, the transmission of a disease substance (basiyta) from a sickman to another human recipient, without need for a mediating agent. Telalafiy is linked to dermatological symptoms (septacemia, hemorrhagic ulcer, scrofula, carbuncles, venereal chancre, shenkroid, gonorrhea,

*753 measles, and smallpox), whooping cough, and occasionally
[843] mumps. Pre-natal contagion, in which a homonculus receives a paternal baǰiyta or a fetus contracts a maternal baǰiyta via the blood nutriment, is responsible for childhood syphilis and ayni tila. Rabies is the only example of animal-human contagion, the baǰiyta being carried by the dog's saliva. Neither likift nor the causation of jaundice through contact with bat urine are examples of telalafiy, since in neither case is the disease agent itself a victim of the ailment.

*753 The body's normal functioning is also disrupted by
825 deviations from acceptable limits of diet, physical acti-
827 vity, and emotion. Digestive wosfat, for example, are
*(192) angered by insufficient food, or food which is stale (injera bread), spoiled (soured talla beer), or improperly prepared (wot stew lacking the customary cayenne). In return, the wosfat rise up to bite the stomach itself, causing pain, bloat, and diarrhea; if these conditions persist, the wosfat will chew their way to the heart, pro-
*753 ducing great local pain, fever, and lassitude. Exces-
827 sive physical exertion is associated with local com-
[828] plaints: Extended walking may dislocate a jimat from its assigned channel (sprain); prolonged weeping can cloud the eye (trachoma and cataracts); extended and arduous thinking produces confusion; much hard labor results in arthritic and rheumatoid complaints. Intense emotions

*753 827 828 exercise the heart severely and, if prolonged, portend serious consequences. Deep sorrow, fear, and anger---particularly in response to personal insult---stoke the cardiac fires, whose heat radiates to the lungs where it produces coughing and difficulty in breathing, to the stomach whose aroused wosfat cause pain and vomiting, and to the blood whose smoldering darkens the complexion. Under these circumstances, the heart cannot function effectively for long; clear thinking becomes difficult and, as the heart dissipates its energies, the body trembles. If these effects continue unabated, cardiac deterioration leads to madness and, eventually, death.

*753 82 *[192] Two illnesses are explainable only epidemiologically: The hot, Sudanic borderlands are associated with malaria, and the damp, cold Semyen heights are linked to a "wind disease" (yinifas basiyta), characterized by shortness of breath, chest pains, excessive saliva, fatigue, and joint pain.

*753 Lastly, the appearance of certain ailments is related to prodromal complaints: Epilepsy preceeds madness; poxes before blindness; catarrh leads to diptheria; syphilis results in blindness, rheumatism, miscarriage, chronic back pain, weak heart (chronic fatigue), and scrofula; measles brings deafness. Although it is frequently assumed that the prodromal essence (basiyta)

*753 causes a secondary ailment by lacerating the victim's heart, equally often no specific pathogenic mechanism is specified for the prodrome.

TAXONOMY AND ETIOLOGY

*753 A "disease name", to use Frake's definition, is a
*192 minimal, meaningful answer to the question, "What is the
196 name of the illness?", in Amharic, "Baǰiyta simmu min
[121] yibbaalaal?". If none of the linguistic components of a description of an illness can by itself describe that ailment (baǰiyta), then the entire description is a disease name, and labels a single diagnositc category. Not all episodes of illness can be diagnosed by a single disease name, of course, since distinguishable ailments may co-occur, or one may be a prodrome of another (Frake 1961:126).

Disease names thus differ from designations of kinds of symptoms, although the names of certain symtpoms are also used to denote specific ailments. For example, "bird" refers to "chills", but "yibird baǰiyta" (lit., "the chill disease") refers specifically to "malaria". The same is generally true regarding the use of the names of pathogenic agents. For example, the literal meaning of "yibariya baǰiyta" is the "ganel's disease" ("bariya", meaning slave, is often used as a euphemism for "ganel");

*753
*192 in practice, it is used to denote only "epilepsy", one
196 of the several ailments with which the ganel is associated.

Each disease name has, as its diagnostic criteria, perceptible symptoms and a particular etiological context. Etiological information includes the agents, acts, environmental circumstances, substances, and physiological processes which explain the onset of the symptoms. Two disease names contrast if only one is said to diagnose correctly a particular set of symptoms in a specific etiological context. Two contrasting disease names can, then, refer to the same set of symptoms, if at the same time each denotes a different etiological context. For example, the ailments referred to as "migaña" and "kureyña", are characterized by a common set of symptoms (sustained, acute pain in the lower abdomen). The ailments are distinguished etiologically, however, according to different causal agents (non-zar versus zar) and environmental circumstances.

Sometimes, more than one disease name is considered equally appropriate for the same set of symptoms in the same etiological context. Frake (1961:117) suggests that two explanations are possible for this. First, the disease names may be referential synonyms, and mutually inclusive. For example, they may be dialect variants or variants appropriate to different kinds of

discourse. Thus, leprosy is properly referred to as "kontina". This term is rarely used by many women, however; to do so, they believe, exposes the speaker to leprosy in some unknown way. Instead, the ailment is referred to as "yimimat basiyta" ("the disease that takes the skin off").

The second possibility is that the terms are located at different levels of a taxonomic hierarchy. Along the vertical dimension, the Amhara disease-name taxonomy employs only three successive levels of specificity. At the most general level, all human disease names are subsumed by the term "basiyta". At the next level, ailments are divided into "serious" and "non-serious" varieties. Serious ("kobode": "weighty", or "hayleña": "powerful") diseases includes those which are potentially mortal, or severely and usually permanently debilitating, or grossly disfiguring. The third taxonomic level is that of greatest specificity, at which ninety-two disease names were recorded. A minor exception at this level is the use, by some informants, of the term "fantata" to subsume three, contrasting named poxes.

In terms of linguistic criteria, then, the Amhara disease-name taxonomy is relatively simple. When observed from a therapeutic perspective, however, an additional level of discrimination, based on etiological criteria, can be discerned.

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Amhara construct disease etiologies by selecting from five categories of information: The pathogenic agent (which may be purposive or non-purposive), the relationship between the pathogenic agent and the victim (which may be adventitious or deliberate), a variety of pathogenic acts, the pathogenic substance (which may be therapeutically homogeneous or heterogeneous), and the morbid physiological processes (which may be known or unknown).

1. "Pathogenic agent" refers to beings who, without the help of other agents, can cause physical ailments in human in human victims. Agents such as the zar, buda, sorcerer, and poisoner are 'purposive' when causing illness. That is to say, each is a self-conscious being, of human or near-human intellect, and each is conscious of his ability to cause ailments. Although purposive agents generally afflict victims of their own choosing, the sorcerer and ganel can also be persuaded or compelled by an interested human party to attack victims of the latter's choice. In contrast to these purposive agents, there are other agents, such as the bearer of the evil eye (yisew ayn) and likift-bringing creepers, that are unaware of their illness-causing powers.

2. The relationship between the pathogenic agent and the victim is "adventitious" when the agent, a buda for example, performs a pathogenic act compulsively and immediately after observing an aspect of the victim's

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*163

person or certain ofhis personal activities. The contrasting relationship is "deliberate". Here, the pathogenic act, such as sorcery, is a premeditated response to some inter-personal behavior of the victim or a member of his immediate family.

3. Pathogenic acts are divided into five etiologically significant classes. Most common of all are acts which introduce pathogens into the victim's body, either through ingestion of inanimate pathogens or the introjection of spirit aspects of pathogenic agents. Acts which distribute inanimate pathogens (such as likift water) onto the victim's person are also included in this category. A second class of pathogenic activities is composed of simple assaults by ganels (resulting in epilepsy or apoplexy), with which no pathogens are associated. Ensorcelling by means of sympathetic magic constitutes a third class. A fourth class includes acts whose performance is assumed, but whose precise character is unknown (for example, the sickness-causing activities of zars). Finally, there are commonplace activities which, if performed to excess, may lead to physical affliction.

4. A pathogenic substance is assumed to produce predictable and more or less uniform symptoms (so long as etiological circumstances are the same). Most pathogenic substances are also considered homogeneous regarding their susceptibility to therapeutic agents. For ex-

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ample, washing with likift water results in scabies (ikek); a therapy found effective in one case of likift-produced scabies should be effective in all other cases. Mers (poison) is a conspicuous exception, since it subsumes a variety of distinctive formulae, sharing symptomatic and etiological identities, but not therapeutic ones.

5. Once it is localized within an individual, a basiyta progresses by mechanisms which are either known or unknowable. There are three known mechanisms: Consumption of viscera (for example, by the cannibal buda), irritation and corrosion (as with likift), and the disruption of homeostasis. No one of these is exclusive of the others, however. Consumption of viscera and organ irritation usually upset homeostasis, and the prolonged disruption of homeostasis, whatever its origins, has physically degenerative consequences, particularly for the heart. The physiological processes by which ganel-caused and zar-caused ailments progress are considered unknowable.

From this information, the Amhara derive the typology of unnamed etiologies outlined in Table 1, below.

Informants sometimes differ over the etiological details by which the appearance of a specific named ailment is explained. Not infrequently, even a single individual knows more than one acceptable etiology for an ailment. These conflicting explanations are generally

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TABLE 1

TYPES OF AMHARA ETIOLOGIES

AGENT	AGENT-VICTIM RELATIONSHIP	PATHOGENIC ACT	MORBID PROCESSES	EXAMPLE
A (absent)	(absent)	commonplace activity	known	setir
B non-purposive	adventitious	introjection or contact with a homogeneous inanimate pathogen	known	likift-caused ailments
C purposive	adventitious	introjection of an animate pathogen	known	yibuda basiyta
D purposive	deliberate	introjection of a heterogeneous inanimate pathogen	known	poison
E purposive	deliberate	either magical or unknown but assumed	unknown	sorcery

*753

limited to positing rival pathogenic agents which are consistent with a single type of etiology. For example, although informants differ as to whether scabies (ikek) is produced by gerifta or likift, there is agreement that the ailment is explained by an etiology of type 'B'.

*753 Such differences of opinion are generally of little
*756 consequence, for they have neither real therapeutic sig-
*759 nificance nor importance in non-medical contexts. Practitioners are chosen on their record of success (as well as their availability and cost), rather than according
*[192] to any 'theoretical' criteria. Thus a scabies sufferer may obtain the services of a yimic medhaniyt korac (lit., "medicament cutter for gerifta") even though he believes, in the abstract at least, that the ailment is produced by likift. Most herbalist-names signify only the ailment which the therapist treats (e.g., the yianfula medhaniyt korac, treats anfula), and the client may not know the specific etiological details to which the prac-
*753 titioner subscribes. There is, however, an exception to the one etiology-one disease name identification: Almost any ailment can be explained as the result of ganel or zar attentions (etiology of type E), particularly if it is serious, chronic, unyielding to treatment, or exhibits aberrant symptoms. Some ailments (e.g., apoplexy) are explained only by reference to this type of etiology.

*753 From a medical point of view, etiologies exist to
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*753 *755 *757 provide information from which therapeutic strategies can be tailored. Amhara use four broad strategies, each linked to a specific etiological context.

752 The first of these therapeutic strategies seeks a remission of symptoms by returning the body's parts (generally the limbs and extremeties) to their appro-
*[192] priate positions. For example, excessive walking may dislocate jimat cords of the lower leg from their channels, producing painful lameness (setir, "sprain"). Blood flows into the empty channels, preventing the jimat from returning to their customary locations. Therapy begins with the removal, by cupping, of intrusive blood. An herbal bath is then applied locally to "soften" muscle and jimat, and the latter are then massaged into the now unoccupied channels. This strategy coincides with the afflictions characterized by etiology A, and includes broken bones and muscle paralysis as well.

*753 A second strategy calls for the excision of cer-
752 tain body parts. Excision is limited to diseased tonsils, uvula, and teeth; conditions which are explained by an etiology of type B. These ailments are most often caused by gerifta which has fallen onto the afflicted region. Unlike the situation with other gerifta-caused ailments, there is no other effective therapeutic strategy here, and a reasonably good post-operative prognosis can be assumed.

*753 *757 A third strategy is associated with etiologies B, C, and D. Remission of symptoms is obtained by removing the pathogenic substance from contact with the sickman's person. If a homogeneous and inanimate pathogenic substance has been ingested by the sickman (etiology B), the therapeutic strategy is to expel it physically through one or more of the sickman's body orifices. Most often, an emetic or purge is used, although inhalants and fumitories are also employed and diaphoretic *[192] effects are sometimes sought. A few pathogenic substances, such as that associated with anfula (an influenza-like ailment), are removed with the blood, by cupping over the area of the body which the pathogen is known to favor. Where the pathogenic substance has been in contact with the sickman's skin rather than being internal, lustrations, poultices, ointments, and medical powders are applied.

*753 *755 Where the introjected pathogen is the self-conscious agent found in etiology C (i.e., the buda), the strategy remains essentially the same. However, the practitioner must, in dialogue with the disease agent, convince the buda to quit the sickman. To this end, the practitioner 752 uses a fumitory offensive to the introjected agent. Ailments of type D etiology (i.e., mers, poison) impose a special requirement on the therapist. There are numerous toxic formulae, and, although all produce similar symp-

752 tomatic effects, each is believed to be complemented by a unique antidote. Cure therefore demands that the poison be identified in order for the antidote to be obtained.

*753 A fourth therapeutic strategy is directed against
*755 ailments of etiology E, where ganel and zar have caused ailments by unknown means. Here, a remission of symptoms is sought by convincing (a zar) or forcing (a ganel) to moderate or relinquish his influence over the sickman.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE SECULAR HEALERS: HEALER AND SICKMAN

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*756 The Amhara use a set of twenty-one, non-redundant
*759 names to categorize traditional practitioners of disease
196 prophylaxis, diagnosis, and treatment. These names are
*(192) listed in table 2. The most general term employed is "Habeša hakiym" ("Abyssinian healer"), and is used to designate traditional curers as a class by distinguishing them from practitioners working in Western techniques---European physicians, Ethiopian health officers, and local injectionists. The Habeša hakiyms can be sorted into three mutually exclusive categories, each defined analytically, according to shared professional titles.

Category 1. Physical manipulation of the sickman's person is dominant, and the employment of materia medica is either absent or subordinated to these physical manipulations. These healing powers are compatible with the first and second therapeutic strategies discussed in
*[192] Chapter One. Any therapist of this category, with the exception of the awalaj (midwife), can be referred to as
[562] "wogeyša". The exclusion of the midwife is probably a
*[192] sexual one, since practitioners known as wogeyša are almost invariably male, while the awalaj is always a woman. Operationally, healers of the first category are distinguished from one another by their different organ do-

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TABLE 2

AMHARA PRACTITIONER TITLES

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Practitioner Category	Practitioner Title		
3	Balazar	Awakiy	Tonkway
	Debtera-Ganel Gelaa		
	Debtera-Meshav Gelac (Tinis Debtera)		
	Atmakiy		
2	Medhaniyt Korad		Wogeysa[2]
	Yi_Medhaniyt Awakiy		
	Yi_Med. Korac / Yi_Med. Kabiy / Yi_Kitab Kitabiy		
	Yi_Medhaniyt Ateci		
	Yi_Medhaniyt Seci		
1	Tagañ	Wogeysa[1]	
	Ankar Korac		
	Yiters Medhaniyt Awlakiy		
	Awalaj		
	Agamiy		
	Tokwariy		

*192
*756 mains---bone and jimat, teeth and jaws, tonsils and
*759 uvula, womb and associated organs.

*192 Category 2. Therapeutic success relies on the use
196 of medicaments; practitioners of this category utilize the third therapeutic strategy. Although no single term properly distinguishes these therapists from other categories of practitioners, they are, as a class, described by a common set of professional titles. Each title consists of three terms. The first indicates the name of the ailment for which the practitioner owns a therapy. Unlike other categories of practitioners, professional titles among these therapists are specific for single named ailments, rather than for a range of ailments. The second term is always the word "medhaniyt" ("medicament"). The maker of therapeutic amulets is the single exception to this (e.g., yidemaketir kitab kitabiy, "amulet maker for post-partum bleeding"). The final term indicates the format and "completeness" of the herbal therapy practiced. Thus, the "yianfula medhaniyt awakiy" is the "medicine expert for the ailment known as anfula".

[776] Category 3. Therapeutic success derives from the practitioner's intimacy with spirit beings (ganel, zar, or saint of the Church) and his familiarity with magic (asmat); he relies upon the fourth therapeutic strategy.
*[793] The term "tonkway" is sometimes used to denote the most prominant practitioners of this category, the debtera-

*756 and balazar-healers, but semantically that term tends
*759 to emphasize the practitioner's ability as a seer rather
*192 than as a therapist. Moreover, the atmakiy (annointer)
196 is never referred to as "tonkway", even though his powers are also derived from supernaturals. When, in conversation, it is necessary to distinguish this category of practitioner (including the atmakiy) from the "secular healer" (categories 1 and 2), the title 'wogeyša' is extended to subsume all of the latter as a class.

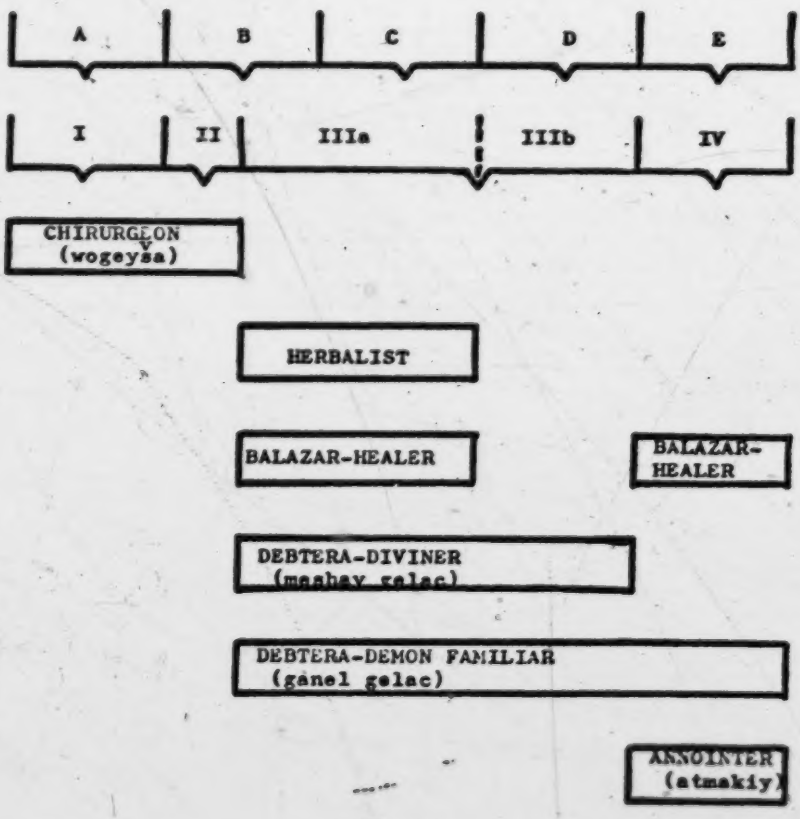
Table three outlines the semantic distribution of Amhara practitioner titles.

*756 It is the intention of this chapter to describe
*759 curerers of the first and second categories, from the
[128] perspective of the technical requirements of their respective therapeutic strategies. The chapter also considers two additional healers, the cupper (agamiy) and the tattooist (tokwariy). Like the practitioners of the first and second categories, both are "secular" healers, since their therapeutic strategies and the sources of their curing powers clearly exclude them from the third practitioner category (i.e., healers with supernaturally
[196] derived powers). However, neither cupper nor tattooist fits neatly, semantically or therapeutically, into one of the secular categories, but will be shown to share characteristics of both.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

TABLE 3

THE MEDICAL DOMAINS OF PRACTITIONERS



12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

TABLE 3 CONTINUED

75 Key to Table 3

ETIOLOGY TYPE (therapeutically significant feature)

A inappropriate alignment of body parts

B introjection or contact with inanimate pathogen

C introjection of self-conscious pathogenic agent

D introjection of heterogeneous inanimate pathogen

E magical or demonical causation

THERAPEUTIC STRATEGY (characteristic activity)

I physical manipulation of body parts

II excision of affected organ

IIIa expulsion or neutralization of the pathogenic substance

IIIb identification and expulsion of the pathogenic substance

IV persuade or compel the causal agent

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

THE WOGEYŠA (CHIRURGEON)

*757 Wogeyšas are divided into three named categories,
*759 the tagañ, the intil korac, and the yiters medhaniyt
*192 awakiy. Practitioners in each category diagnose a set of related ailments, perform therapeutic operations to remedy them, and administer prophylaxis to prevent the development of ailments to which the therapy makes the sickman vulnerable. Laymen have little difficulty in selecting an appropriate kind of wogeyša, since the ailments treated by each category of wogeyša are characterized by unambiguous syndromes which are easily identified by laymen. In addition, a wogeyša's range of medical competence is defined symptomatically; that is to say, his therapies are relevant to the entire range of etiological facts which can be associated with each syndrome he treats. This contrasts with herbalist therapies which are each tied to a specific pathogenic agent, so that often symptomatic information is of itself insufficient for determining whether the therapy of a particular category of herbalist is appropriate to the disease episode at hand. The following paragraphs describe the sequence of activities which characterize the professional activities of each category of wogeyša.

*759 For the layman, the symptoms of fracture (sebero)
752 and therapeutically related ailments are distinctive

enough to limit selection of a practitioner to the tagañ, bonesetter. Symptomatically, these ailments are experienced by the Amhara as 1) severe local pain and 2) the inability to move the affected areas (generally limbs, extremeties, and joints). As with other categories of wogeyša, the tagañ's range of competence, symptomatically defined, is clear cut from the layman's point of view. There are ailments not treatable by a tagañ, although characterized by one or the other of these symptoms. In these instances, however, the two symptoms do not appear in combination, but are accompanied by other symptoms which fall unequivocally beyond
*[192] the tagañ's competence. Kofa, for example, is an ailment not treated by the tagañ, although it is characterized by an inability to move the limbs. This syndrome includes, however, high fever and generalized pain, both beyond the tagañ's therapeutic powers. On his arrival at the sickman's, the tagañ conducts his own diagnosis, examining the affected area and looking for other relevant symptoms. His interest is not so much to confirm the generic character of the ailment, as to discover its specific nature (sometimes classifiable under a disease name with which laymen are unfamiliar), and to evaluate the complexities of the specific case. A fracture (sebero) always involves more than a broken

752 bone, for jimat cords in the area of the break are invariably stretched and malaligned. It is the twisted jimat, in fact, which prevent the sickman from moving the affected area, and whose effects the tagañ knows
*[192] to be symptomatically dominant. Thus, the tagañ seeks to learn whether a bone has actually been broken, whether only jimat are involved (a condition known as walemta), or whether an organ other than bone has distorted the jimat (for example, intrusive blood in an ailment known as setir).

The diagnosis and operation are conducted in the sickman's hut, away from the sun, and are attended by sufficient men---relatives and neighbors of the sickman, and companions of the tagañ---to restrain the sickman while the practitioner works over him. No anaesthetics
*[753] are used during any part of the treatment. Before his
*[192] diagnosis, the tagañ cleanses the affected area with water, since dirt is associated with both gerifta-caused effects and certain superficial infections, known as kusil, that often follow contusions and other injuries to
*[278] the skin. After cleansing, the area is massaged with an unguent, made of domestic oils or fat, into which the leaves of medicaments have been minced and mixed. This unguent softens muscle and jimat, allowing the tagañ to palpate the region for his diagnosis.

Most tagañs reckon the diagnostic massage also

capable of rendering bone and jimat supple enough to be manipulated into their appropriate positions. It is important that the bone be set precisely, for if improperly aligned it will stretch the jimat and cause them to twist once more, bringing a recurrence of the original symptoms.

[413] If palpation or visual inspection indicate that
[177] the bone has splintered, an incision is made over the break and the splinters are removed with an instrument specially brought for this purpose. These instruments are of European manufacture and exotic by local standards, ranging from cosmetic tweezers to surgical forceps. After the bone has been set and the jimat moved into their proper relationships, a wooden splint is secured over the fracture and is tied with strips of toga cloth.

*[757] When an incision is made, an herbal poultice is
*[278] placed over the cut and wrapped beneath the splint, as
*[192] a precaution against subsequent infection (kusil). Every tagañ owns a recipe for an unguent, and the medicaments used in it are kept a professional secret. However, not all tagañs have recipes for kusil prophylaxis. Without the latter, a tagañ who wishes to treat compound fractures must obtain the services of an herbalist whose specialty is the treatment of kusil. Similarly the tagañ who is able to treat compound fractures

*759 without the assistance of another practitioner is him-
752 self identifiable as a kusil herbalist (yikusil medhaniyt awakiy), a non-wogeyša professional identity.

752 While the splint is worn, the sickman is directed
262 to eat quantities of a restorative (atmit); for frac-
*[192] ture, this consists of fatty meats, which are believed conducive to the mending of bones. After the splint has been removed, the affected region is regularly massaged with the unguent compound which had been used during diagnosis and therapy. The massage aims to restore normal flexibility to the affected body part. Some therapists continue the atmit regimen during this period and even beyond it.

*759 Alone among Amhara secular practitioners, the
752 tagañ practices a therapy which immobilizes the sickman for an extended period. During recuperation, therapeutic massages must continue, and the instability of the sickman's jimat preclude his moving about. When a tagañ is famous for difficult therapies, such as breaking and resetting improperly set bones or treating paralyzed limbs, he attracts sickmen from great dis-
[758] tances. Since these sickmen cannot leave the tagañ until pronounced cured, they require access to local accomodations and the assistance of a relative or servant to prepare their meals and tend to other personal

*759
752
758

needs.[1]

*759 The wogeysa's remaining therapies---excision of
*753 tonsils (ankar) and teeth---are characterized by simpler
752 diagnosis and treatment than are the tagañ's works.
[843] Swollen and inflamed tonsils (komahaw) may be caused by
*[192] gerifta; in infants, however, the condition may be congenital, brought on by the over-exertions of the child's mother during pregnancy. It is considered a potentially mortal affliction, since the sickman is unable to swallow and loses weight rapidly; eventually the organ bursts and death follows. Tonsils are excised with the assistance of a reed through which a loop of horse
[413] hair has been slipped. With this, the offending organ
[177] is held fast, and excised by whatever type of blade the therapist regards as most efficacious (e.g., a razor, imported 'Arab' knife, or fragment of glass).[2] Kusil

[1]During 1966, the foremost tagañ of Begemder had the following sickmen living simultaneously in three huts which he had erected on his fields; 1) a woman from Woggera (see map 1), with a fractured clavicle, assisted by her daughter; 2) a four year old boy, with a shoulder injury, accompanied by both parents; 3) a woman with a broken fore-arm, from Belsea, assisted by a locally acquired servant; 4) a woman from Tigre, with an immobile right arm, assisted by a locally acquired servant.

[2]In the Gondar area, both tonsils and uvula are classified as 'ankar'. Elsewhere in Begemder, they are often distinguished as 'ankar' and 'intil'. Therapeutically, diseased tonsils and uvula are treated the same, and a wogeysa capable of treating one invariably treats the other.

*753 39
*759 is considered a potential, but not immediate danger
752 following excision. If an ankar korac ("tonsil cut-
*[278] ter") is also a kusil herbalist, he may smear a pro-
phylactic unguent over the face of the excision, but
*(192] prophylaxis is not generally given. Even when kusil
does occur (the syndrome known as yiankar mokusil),
it is expected to regress either without any treat-
ment, or by benefit of a commonly known herbal infu-
[855] sion. A young child is considered too small and
frail to endure this operation and the subsequent
period of increased vulnerability to gerifta and kusil.
*[278] In such cases, the child is given a palliative to drink;
in addition, a portion of the ingredients used in the
drink is prepared as an unguent, and rubbed onto the
affected area, against that time when the child will
be old enough to withstand the operation.

*[192] The dental wogeyša is known as a "yiters medhaniyt
awlakiy". As with other wogeyša-treated ailments, tooth-
ache can be traced to multiple causes, whose identifica-
tion is only marginally important to the practitioner.
Toothache is caused either by sun-borne gerifta or by
an intrusive worm whose presence is made apparent by
[413] the caries it bores out. The ultimate and most success-
[177] ful therapy of the yiters medhaniyt awlakiy is extrac-
*[278] tion, with the use of European dental pliers. Because
of the pain associated with this operation, laymen often

*753 *759 use local applications of commonly known palliatives, *278 until subsequent discomfort obliges them to consult a 752 *[192] tooth extractor.[3] In addition to simple toothache (yiters himem), gerifta may result in rheumatoid pain (kurtimat) in the cheek teeth and adjacent jaw, accompanied by swollen, itching gums. Although herbal poultices are available for this syndrome, only tooth ex- *759 traction promises permanent relief. The yiters medhaniyt 752 awlakiy also treats the newly irrupted teeth of year-old 846 infants. The upper lateral incisors are believed to often cause infants severe pain, resulting in incessant [413] crying, diarrhea and failure to suckle properly. To remedy this dangerous situation, the practitioner removes the offending teeth using an awl-like implement. In each of these dental operations, kusil is considered no real danger, and prophylaxis is not given.

*759 Toothache is perhaps the only ailment for which 752 wogeyša and herbalist (see below) both offer therapies. *[278] The differences here are illuminating: The dental wogeyša's therapy is only incidentally concerned with causes,

[3] In the abstract, these palliatives (distilled spirits known as arakiy and ginger root) are only effective against the intrusive worm, but in reality they are used even when evidence of the worm agent (til), i.e., caries, are not apparent.

*759 and his therapeutic domain is defined symptomatically
752 to include all tooth ailments; the herbalist's therapy
*[278] is limited to destroying the intrusive worm (by local application of the ember of a selected herbal) and removing it (with an herbal gargle).

*759 None of the three categories of wogeyšas (boneset-
*757 ter, tonsil excisor, tooth extractor) is graded internally with regard to therapeutic differences, as is the case with herbalists. There is sufficient technical uniformity among wogeyšas of each category so that laymen cannot distinguish the therapeutic procedures of, say, one ankar korac against those of another.

To be sure, there are some technical differences among the practitioners of a single named specialty---in the composition of medicaments (e.g., unguents), the instruments which are used, and the numerological content of therapies---but the advantage which any of these give a practitioner is in itself never sufficient to explain his record of therapeutic success. It is rather a wogeyša's manual skills as a manipulator of errant body parts or as an excisor of diseased ones which is believed to set him apart from his less successful colleagues.

The wogeyša's numerological information indicates optimal amounts of therapy, neither too slight to produce a remission of symptoms, nor so excessive that a new un-
[752] desireable condition is caused the sickman. In tagañ

*759 therapies, for example, some practitioners contend that
[752] the single diagnostic massage for fracture is insufficient for setting a broken bone. They claim that a massage on each of three successive days is required; two days massage will not soften the bone enough for proper ailgnment, while four days massage may distort it. Similar numerological considerations in tagañ therapies relate to the manufacture of medicaments, the duration of the splinting period, the number of days during which atmit is consumed, and the number of repetitions required by the final massage. Because these numerological elements are considered inextricably bound, sometimes diffusely, to one or more other components of a therapy, they cannot be freely inserted into the therapies of other tagañs.

THE HERBALIST

75 The Amhara herbalist treats ailments caused by the ingestion or introjection of pathogenic substances into a victim, and by his superficial contact with such substances. In this section, ailments characterized by ingested or introjected pathogenic substances will be considered first. The assumptions made by Amhara herbal medicine are relatively simple here: In order to obtain a remission of the disease symptoms, the responsible

75 pathogen must be first identified and then expelled physically through one of the body's orifices. Most often, an emetic or purge is used to this end, although some therapies remove the pathogenic substance with diaphoretics, diuretics, or a combination of these medicines.

Amhara Pharmacology

*757
*759 Living within the region served by the Gondar market, an area of perhaps 50 km radius from the town, there are found a collection of herbalists who, as a body, own therapies for every ailment the Begemder Amhara regard as treatable by herbal medicine. Moreover, for any one of these ailments, there are several local herbalists, each claiming a distinctive herbal therapy for the sickness. (The distribution of herbalists is the subject of the following chapter, and presupposes an acquaintance with herbalist nomenclature, which is considered later in this
*757 chapter.) From a pharmacological point of view, the ef-
*278 fectiveness of any one herbal therapy is the produce of the following: 1) the strength of each active ingredient included in the "primary medicine" (medhaniyt); 2) techniques of gathering, processing, and administering the primary medicine. In the following paragraphs, each of these considerations is discussed in turn.

*278 Materia Medica. 1) Nearly all primary medicines

*278 call for specific parts of named botanicals---either
root, leaf, stem, shoot, fruit, flower, seed, whole,
*[192] rind or juice. Botanical parasites (takiltila), identi-
fied in recipes by the plant upon which they grow, are
also frequent ingredients. 2) Typically, recipes combine
these herbal ingredients with foods. Virtually every
generic foodstuff is represented in some recipe---water,
dairy products, eggs, alcoholic beverages, honey, citrus
juice, cereal grains, spices, oil seeds, and meat. Often,
recipes set special requirements for these ingredients.
For example, animal products (flesh, organs, milk, butter,
whey) may be required from animals and fowls whose sex
(male, female, castrated) and coloring are designated in
the recipe (a desired color, combination of colors, or
color scheme shared by mother and offspring). Similarly,
recipes sometimes prescribe beer or bread which are made
of grains not locally grown (wheat, barley, red tef, white
tef, millet). 3) Lastly, some recipes require the sick-
man to consume ingredients which the Amhara regards as
*278 bizarre or repulsive. Included here are exotic substances
262 such as battery carbon, gasoline, and rust; ingredients
which are ordinarily forbidden to Christians,[4] such as

[4]Ethiopians, Copts, Muslims, Jews as well as Agaw pagans adhere to the injunctions of Leviticus regarding proscribed foods.

*278 262 pork, bat flesh, meat of wild birds, insects; and repulsive stuffs, such as cow or goat urine and donkey milk.

*278 222 Gathering, Processing, and Administering. The gathering of herbals for medicinal recipes assumes, first, accurate knowledge of their appearance and location. Many medicinals are exotics whose appearance and even whose names are unknown by most men; many of these must be searched out in distant and barely accessible corners of the highland plateau, others can be found only in the malarial lowlands. From the time an herbal is located until it is processed together with the remaining materia medica, it must be handled in a prescribed fashion. During gathering, while the herbal is being cut or pried from its natural surroundings, there is the danger that its latent curing powers will be lost. For leafy botanicals, particularly takiltila, precautions must be taken against diffusing these powers into the earth through some object simultaneously in contact with the botanical and the ground. Here, a weighted noose may be used. Many prescribed techniques of gathering are only loosely identified as precautionary, since the specific dangers each guards against are unknown. These techniques specify the equipment to be used, the quality of the gatherer, and circumstantial conditions. Thus, if a recipe requires that a branch be severed with a knife, it often adds that the instrument be unused, or made of a single piece of

*278 222 iron, or in the "Arab" style, or the product of Falasha smiths, that it be double-edged, or have a handle of horn or some exotic wood. Similarly, recipes requiring roots may state that they be dug with a spade of specified characteristics, or with a digging stick of special wood. As for the gatherer, in some recipes, he is a vir-
[801] gin boy, in others naked or facing east. Circumstantially, recipes established the day of the week on which the herbal may be obtained, and numerological details, such as the number of locations from which a particular herbal is to be gathered, and the number of samples to be taken from
[788] each place. Finally, the gatherer may be required to recite, and perhaps repeat, a designated common prayer before cutting or digging the botanical.

*278 824 Once gathered, medicaments must be processed using the equipment and following the procedures specified by the recipe as being necessary for releasing the healing powers from their botanical confinement and for guarding them from dilution or loss. Botanicals may be required fresh or dried, crushed or ground or whole, soaked or decocted or simply mixed with other medicaments, strained through cloth or not further refined. Occasionally, recipes direct that medicaments be cooked with mead or distilled spirits, but it is the liquid (or tincture) which is discarded. In other recipes, botanicals, particularly leaves, require no processing other than being chewed or

*278 824 rubbed across the palm (releasing the juices to be licked up). Other herbals must be burned or boiled before becoming therapeutically active, in smoke or vapor.

*278 801 804 Both absolute and relative measurements are used. Among the former are mentioned handfuls, finger-joint lengths, and weights equivalent to a small egg. Relative measurements are most common during decocting. Required ratios suggest a numerological component here, reduction from seven volumes to one being the most frequently used ratio. Numerological elements appear elsewhere during processing, as when a recipe required, as a final step in processing, that the preparation be rolled into seven portions, or that the materia medica be steeped for seven days.

*278 415 Equipment used for processing medicaments is of common domestic origin, sometimes specified unused (e.g., pots for decocting, cloth for straining), sometimes worn (e.g., pitted mortars for grinding). Generally, the containers used cannot be allowed to rest directly upon the ground, but must sit upon stones, whose number and provenience (usually riverine) are likewise specified by the recipe.

*278 In addition to preparations consumed orally, herbalists provide fumitories, inhalents, instillations, gargles, lotions, poultices, and therapeutic amulets.

*278 *767 Herbal therapies further indicate the appropriate

*278 *757 time of day during which the sickman is expected to consume the medicaments (often on rising, or before going to bed), the relevant numerological details (e.g., the medicaments are to be eaten seven times daily for seven *[192] days), and the manner of application. Therapies may establish that medicaments be consumed in a unitary form (e.g., eaten together with injera bread), in multiple forms (e.g., eaten with bread, drunk with talla beer, and washed with as with a lotion) and, if in multiple forms, whether applied at the same or different therapeutic sessions.[5]

758 Therapies also designate regimens to be followed once the pathogenic substance has been successfully removed [833] from the sickman. Frequently, regimens for convalescence *[192] following serious (kobode) ailments direct the recuperant to rest in some isolated place, away from any populated area, where he will be safe from the shadows of humans, particularly those fresh from coitus. Some regimens require him to sit in a darkened hut, others place him beside the hearth fire, while still others have him rest in

[5]Only therapy for buda possession (see below), requires the application of different, discrete medical preparations at the same therapeutic sessions.

758

751 the sunlight.[6] After the disease symptoms have disap-
758 peared, and the convalescent has regained his former vi-
tality, some precautions may still be followed to pre-
vent the return of the original syndrome, to which he
[262] may have developed a vulnerability. For example, the
former sickman may be forbidden to eat one or more of
the foodstuffs which were included among the materia
[778] medica of his cure. Often, an amulet containing dried
materia medica of the primary medicine is also worn.

*278 Pharmacological Combinations. In the abstract,
Amhara pharmacology can be considered as a corpus of dis-
crete and varied instructions for a) conserving the latent
healing power of botanicals, and b) converting this po-
wer into therapeutically effective agents. Seen from
this perspective, Amhara pharmacolog y has the potential
for a large number of logically possible combinations of
instructions, ranging from those with few directions of
any kind, to combinations with elaborate instructions in
each pharmacological category. Although, empirically,
Amhara herbal therapies probably fall short of the po-
tential number of combinations, the combinations charac-

[757] [834] [6]Primary syphilis, in particular, sets elaborate requirements---the removal of all hair from the body, head, and face; in addition, there is a period of abstinence from coitus.

*278 terizing actual therapies range along the entire continuum of pharmacological elaboration. Moreover, the position of any real therapy (and its pharmacological combination) on this continuum tends to be fixed. That is to day, once a man has inherited (or, rarely, purchased) a specific therapy, he generally regards its instructions for gathering, processing and applying medicaments as not amenable to further elaboration. In order to understand this tendency, two questions must be addressed: What are the "grammatical rules" by which discrete pharmacological elements are associated within real therapies? and, What inhibits an herbalist from "elaborating" his pharmacologically simple therapies?

In the context of Amhara herbal medicine, three kinds of pharmacological associations can be usefully distinguished. There are, first, those associations which are conventional (that is, the link between specific instrudtions cannot be further explained), and for [415] which no alternative associations seem probable. For example, mortars, when elaborated in real therapies, are always worn and pitted; cloth through which medicaments are strained is invariably elaborated as unused; therapies stipulating either new mortars or used cloth, in contrast, appear to be lacking. A second category of associations can also be characterized as conventional, but here alternative associations are possible.

*278
415 Thus, prescriptions for gathering herbals with either a Falasha knife or an Arab one, one with a bone handle or another with a wooden handle, appear to be randomly incorporated within the pharmacological instructions of Amhara herbal therapies.

*278
*759 The distinction between these two categories of conventional associations, between links which allow no alternatives and those which do, is by no means obvious to Amhara herbalists. To appreciate this distinction, a man must be acquainted with a substantial number of therapies and observe these regularities, for they form no part of the conscious pharmacological "theory" of the herbalist. Because the Amhara herbalist rarely owns more than three or four therapies, and, of these, perhaps only one or two contain any significant pharmacological elaborations, he is unlikely to recognize regularities of association from his own store of therapies. Nor does he receive any gratuitous information from other herbalists. Information regarding medicaments and techniques for gathering, processing, and administering them is professional secret of the owner. It is zealously guarded from public exposure, out of fear that this would dilute the therapy's healing power (although no mechanism can be suggested by which this might occur), and demean the herbalist's professional status through his abrogation of proprietary rights without recompense. Although pharma-

* 278
* 759 cological specifics are kept secret, herbalists are not always adverse to commenting in public on the type of specialized equipment or esoteric knowledge that they possess (that, for example, he obtains medicinal roots with a digging stick of a "certain" exotic wood). By these means, the categories of pharmacological elaboration enter into common knowledge, while the specifics are retained by their owners.

* 757 801 There is a third and final category of associations, numerological ones. Certain numbers (particularly three and seven) appear in therapies with greater frequency than do others. But this again represents only a statistical abstraction, largely unappreciated by the herbalist because of his familiarity with a very limited number of therapies. Here as in the other categories of pharmacological associations, the symbolism expressed by specific links is obscure and, so, unavailable to the herbalist for generating new associations. Thus, the combination of riverine stones, the number three, pitted mortars, and specific medicaments within a single therapy can only be "conventionally" explained by the herbalist.

* 759 754 The herbalist who would "elaborate" his therapy is confronted by more than technical obstacles, however. A secular healer who betrays a speculative interest in the regularities of Amhara pharmacology can only excite his fellows to compare him with the debtera, and inevitably

754 to circulate accusations of occultism (asmateña), of daemonic aspirations, and eventually of sorcery.

*278 A relationship between a therapy's pharmacological
*757 complexity and its therapeutic success is not always necessary. That is to say, therapies effective against serious ailments are generally assumed to be pharmacologically elaborate. However, some simple therapies, ones which cite only medicaments and the bare physical operations necessary for processing and applying them, are likewise entirely adequate for bringing about a remission in disease symptoms, although such therapies are limited
*[192] to non-serious ailments. For example, a widely-known therapy for dwarf tapeworm infestation (kowsol) prescribes that the herbalist obtain a quantity of enkowkow seeds, a medicament readily and inexpensively purchaseable from a medhaniyt korac (professional medicament gatherer) of the market place. These seeds the herbalist grinds, mixes with water, and gives to the sickman. Once the medicine's purgative effect has ended, the infusion is drunk again, for a total of four applications. Although pharmacologically simple, it is considered a certain cure for kowsol.

*278 In the end, the Amhara herbalist finds it incon-
*757 venient to consider any of his therapies as an amalgan
*759 of discrete manipulable elements. Instead, he considers pharmacological details to be diffusely integrated

*278 within the therapy, so that if any single element is
*757 deleted from a cure the effectiveness of the therapy
*759 cannot be predicted, and if any new detail is introduced to the cure its effect will be problematic and potentially counter-productive.

Herbalist Nomenclature

*278 Potential clients cannot depend on a direct know-
*757 ledge of a therapy's pharmacological complexity with which to evaluate the therapy. Such details are the secret of the therapy's owner and perhaps of a junior kinsman who is serving him as an apprentice. Instead, potential clients grade a therapy according to two sets of complementary observations. On the one hand, they consider its record of proven efficacy, and, on the other, they regard the following formal features of the therapy: 1) The strength of the therapy's "primary medicine", 2) the therapist's ability to control the potentially dangerous effects of this medicine, and 3) the "completeness" of the therapy. As the following paragraphs indicate, a potential client expects an effective therapy---particularly one directed against a serious ailment---to be relatively complete, and characterized by a strong primary medicine over which the therapist exercises adequate control. Where a therapy meets these criteria,

*278 *757 criteria which the potential client can verify for himself, the latter may further assume that the therapy is the product of a pharmacologically elaborate preparation.

*278 *[192] Medicines are divided into the primary medicine (yibaǰiyta medhaniyt) and the memeleǰa. Strong (hayleña) primary medicines are generally known by their violent effects, and this is particularly true of purges and emetics. In addition, strong medicines are usually characterized by pungent aromas and unpleasant tastes.

*278 *757 The Amhara herbalist recognizes that the physical condition of the patient he confronts is the product of the latter's age and the seriousness of his current affliction, and that these circumstances impose limits on how strenuous and prolonged a therapy the sickman can reasonably be expected to endure. Since treatment must be kept within these bounds, the practitioner is expected to stop the action of the primary medicine once the pathogen has been completely removed from the sickman's body, or after the sickman's condition allows no more purging and vomiting. In order to stop the action of this medicine, the sickman is gvien a counter-medicine, known as memeleǰa. The uncontrolled action of the primary medicine is sometimes compared with the effects of poison (mers), and, indeed, "memeleǰa" is also used as a gloss for "antidote".

In the absence of an appropriate memeleǰa, a strong

*278 *757 primary medicine is only potentially effective. Thus, an herbalist lacking a memeleša for a strong primary medicine can administer only relatively small quantities of the latter, for fear that its effects will *[192] prove fatal. From the perspective of his potential clients, however, the medicine will be perceived as minor or weak (tinišš). Weak medicines, medicines which do not produce violent effects, are generally associated with weak therapies, therapies with a poor record of permanent remissions. There are some effective herbal therapies practiced in the vicinity of Gondar which are not associated with violent primary medicines, but these are considered exceptional.

For each named ailment, there are a variety of rival primary medicines, each regarded as specific for that ailment. A memeleša is considered to be less specific; it may be appropriate for a number of primary medicines, and for more than a single ailment. No memeleša, however, possesses universal effectiveness.

A client's notion of a therapy's completeness is based on the therapist's demonstrated ability to process and administer (but not necessarily gather) his medicaments. It is mainly on the basis of the observable *278 *759 completeness of a therapy that the herbalist-owner is 654 given a practitioner title by his potential clients. That is not to say that completeness is, of itself, a

*759 sufficient condition fro grading herbalists by title.
554 Rather, it is the observed coincidence, within real therapies, of completeness together with a strong primary medicine and an effective memelesa that is relevant. This relationship will be made clear in the following paragraphs, which describe each named category of Amhara herbalist.

*[192] Medhaniyt Seci and Medhaniyt Ateci. An herbalist's professional title incorporates both the name of the ailment which he treats and the practitioner category (according to completeness of therapy) into which he fits (e.g., yianfula [disease name] medhaniyt awakiy [herbalist category]). The least of these categories is
*278 "medhaniyt seci". The medical activities of this prac-
*757 titioner are limited to gathering materia medica and presenting them to his client, together with information regarding the proper processing and administration of these ingredients. The processing required is invariably simple, involves no magical elements, often is vague about relative proportions, non-commital regarding dosages and may even lack details concerning the requisite number of repetitions. Generally, the therapist is not present during the administration of the medicaments. Before presenting the medicinals to his client, the herbalist alters the ingredients, by crumbling leaves or denuding sprigs, so that the client will be unable to

*278 *757 recognize them should he come across these botanicals in the wild.

*759 *[192] Another practitioner, the medhaniyt ateci, presents his client with fully processed medicaments generally in the form of infusion, and provides information only regarding their administration. Medhaniyt ateci therapies are considered, as a class, more powerful than therapies practiced by the medhaniyt seci, by virtue of professional processing (particularly in the measurement of ingredients).

*278 *757 *759 *757 Medhaniyt Awakiy. A third category of herbalist, the medhaniyt awakiy ("medicine expert") provides the most complete therapy, performing all relevant pharmacological activities himself. This class of therapies is associated with strong medicines, serious ailments, and the performance of a professional diagnosis. Diagnosis, in the sense of evaluating symptoms prior to the administration of therapy, takes place in the sickman's homestead, among kinfolk and neighbors, and before a therapist is consulted. The "completeness" of the latter's therapy determines whether there will be any further diagnosis. If he practices a complete therapy, the herbalist will perform a diagnosis after the primary medicine has been administered and its effect felt. Here, the therapist carefully examines the sickman's evacuae (feces and vomit), in order to assess the medicine's re-

*757 levance to the sickman's ailment and, if appropriate, its effectiveness in expelling the pathogenic substance. In the evacuae, the therapist looks for evidence of the pathogenic substance itself (now rendered into amorphous pieces), worms (tils) which the pathogen may have produces, and the wastes of internal organs ravaged by the pathogen. In this diagnosis, the therapist applies criteria of color (white, green, black, and blood-red) and consistency (liquid, viscous, solid). The expected combinations and the putative significance of each are known only to the therapist, and expected combinations have no obvious symbolic relevance beyond the specific therapeutic context.

*278 From a stridtly therapeutic point of view, a man's
*759 right to the title of "medhaniyt awakiy" is tied to the demonstrated ability of his therapy to bring about frequent remissions in the relevant symptoms. Because herbal therapies are considered specific for causal agents rather than for syndromes, because the syndromes which are treatable by herbalists can generally be caused by any one of two or more different agents, and because certain of these agents (notably the ganel, zar, and sorcerer) are invulnerable to herbalist therapies, herbalists---even of the expert category---are not expected to be able to cure all episodes of a particualr syndrome.

There are two further indices of an herbalist's

*278 *759 professional standing. First, public confirmation of an herbalist's professional claims is indicated by the distance from which his clients come, and, related to this, the professional title by which he is known in neighboring hamlets and parishes. Most herbalists are, in fact, either professionally unknown beyond their home parishes, or are assigned less prestigious professional titles by strangers than by kinfolk and neighbors at home. Seccondly, the medhaniyt awakiy's professional standing is communicated by the size of the fee which he demands and recieves for a successful cure. Client and herbalist agree to fees before therapy begins; the agreement is generally tacit, since the client is aware beforehand of the healer's customary charges. The size of the fee is determined by the seriousness of the ailment (discussed in chapter one), the ailment's reputed resistance to cure and the herbalist's professional standing. In the abstract, the herbalist is not paid for his time, but in recognition of the healing powers and professional knowledge that he has exercised on behalf of his client.

Often, an herbalist who is known by his therapeutic performances as a medhaniyt seci or medhaniyt ateci lays claim to the title of medhaniyt awakiy. He bases his claim on the grounds that it is the tedious and time consuming requirements of processing and administering his medicines that dissuade him from practicing a more com-

*278 *759 plete therapy. Sometimes the herbalist cites in addition the fees which he recives, as recognition of these "expert" abilities, and even of his client's satisfaction with the therapy. In practice, a nominal fee is almost always paid, whatever the therapy's success. The medhaniyt seci receives a token fee of perhaps E$.50 to E$1., and probably no more than three to five times that amount for a successful cure. Although the medhaniyt awakiy's token fee is no larger, he can expect five to ten times that amount for a successful cure. Actually, the medhaniyt seci and the medhaniyt ateci almost always offer weak primary medicines for serious ailments; when they do provide a strong medicine, it is generally for a non-serious ailment.

Beyond this, there is little non-medical behavior to set off one secular healer from another. The social identity of the secular healer is defined dyadically. The dyad includes only healer and client, and is generally contingent, lasting for the duration of the medical activities. Further, the recruitment of secular healers entails no other significant social identity. Behavior [576] between healer and client is commonplace but correct, *[192] generally without signs of special deference but with full measure of the elaborate greetings normatively given to men of respectability, indistinguishable from those exchanged between land-owning peasants (ristenas). Spe-

*278 cial deference, perhaps the consequence of a medhaniyt
*759 awakiy's magnaminity in freely reducing his fee for a
576 particular client, rarely extends to even addressing the healer by the mildly honorific title of "gita" in greeting.

*278 Medhaniyt Korac. Herbalists usually perform all
*757 activities associated with their therapies, except when
*759 processing and administration are delegated to their clients. This is not invariably the case, however.
*[192] There are a number of medicaments which are either used in widely-owned recipes for non-serious ailments (such as the enkowkow seeds used against tapeworm), or appear as common ingredients in a wide range of recipes. Frequently, an herbalist can more conveniently obtain such medicaments from a professional medicine gatherer (the medhaniyt korac) than he can gather and store them himself. Sometimes, an herbalist utilizes the medhaniyt korac's services because his therapy identifies a con-
*[192] stituent medicament only by its generic name; as a consequence of this, the herbalist does not know the names of the medicament's constituent botanicals (for example, the medicament known as sebat kelems, the "seven colors"). Similarly, the herbalist may be unfamiliar with the provenience or appearance of botanicals called for in his therapy. Strictly speaking, the medhaniyt korac offers no therapeutic assistance beyond providing medicaments.

*278 *759 874 [593] [604] [222] Occasionally, an herbalist, particularly a medhaniyt awakiy, will utilize an apprentice as his medhaniyt korac. This is usually a close kinsman, a son or nephew, who has been taken to gather medicinals on previous occasions, and is thus familiar with their appearance and location. As an apprentice, he relieves the herbalist of the burden of gathering botanicals, which often involves trips to the hot and malarial lowlands. At the same time, the apprentice gradually becomes acquainted with various pharmacological details of the therapy.

*278 *759 No terminological distinction is made between herbalists who rely on a medhaniyt korac and those who do not. The client, in fact, is usually unaware of the situation in specific cases.

*278 *759 778 *[192] Classed together with other herbalists is the maker of herbal amulets, the kitab kitabiy. In most cases, the herbal amulet (kitab) is part of a complex therapy which includes, as a final step, the presentation to the sickman of a leather pouch containing a sample of all or some of the ingredients of the primary medicine. The amulet is worn around the neck, on the girdle, or fastened beneath an armpit. In this context, the amulet performs a prophylactic function, for it protects the now vulnerable client against a recurrence of the ailment. Certain of these therapists also provide these prophylactic amulets to clients who have never ahd the ailment in

*278 question. Finally, herbal amulets are used in at least
*759 one context, to end excessive post-partuitive hemhorrha-
778 ging (dem iketir), as the sole therapy. In the abstract,
[846] at least, a yidemiketir kitabiy whose therapy had proven
*[192] efficacious could also be referred to as a yidemiketir medhaniyt awakiy.

*278 Herbalists are also grouped by means of a second
*759 series of descriptive nomers. These names ostensibly distinguish herbalists according to the botanical ingredients of their primary medicines. Thus, the ise korac is a "green stem cutter", and the medhaniyt (or sir) kofariy is a "medicine (or root) digger". The final label is yi (disease name) medhaniyt korac, "the medicine cutter for the (designated) ailment", and refers to herbalists whose recipes incorporate a variety of medicaments, including non-botanical ingredients. Any one of these three types of herbalists may also be described as either a medhaniyt seci or medhaniyt ateci, according to criteria already discussed. Only the yi (disease name) medhaniyt korac, however, can---if he practices an appropriate therapy---be referred to as a medhaniyt awakiy. The practice of medhaniyt (or sir) kowfariy and ise korac therapies, is characterized by weak medicines; strong primary medicines, when used, are directed against non-serious ailments for which effective therapies are relatively common. In both cases, the

*278 *759 herbalist's medicine is often composed of a single ingredient, requiring only the simple processing.

When an herbalist's proven ability to cure a serious ailment has spread beyond the bounds of his parish, he becomes identified exclusively as a medhaniyt awakiy, and yi (disease name) medhaniyt korac is no longer regarded as an appropriate frame of reference.

In general, the classifications discussed above are equally applicable to herbalists who treat ailments *[192] characterized by superficial stigmata. There is an additional term, medhaniyt kabiy ("medicine painter"), to describe the herbalist who applies his unguent or lotion to the sickman and evaluates its effects. Since the therapy practiced by the medhaniyt kabiy invariably includes processing and administering, the term can never be used interchangeably with "medhaniyt seci" or "medhaniyt ateci"; it may be used, however, as a more precise designation in place of other herbalist titles. The medhaniyt kabiy's therapy does not include a memeleša, and its strength is judged only by the therapy's ability to bring about a remission in the sickman's symptoms.

The formulae on page sixty-six summarize the preceeding discussion.

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TABLE 4

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THE MEANING OF AMHARA HERBALIST TITLES

1. Explanation of the notations used:

Gathering

G1: leafy ingredient(s) only

G2: root ingredient(s) only

G3: complex of ingredients

Processing

P1: processed by therapist

P2: processed by client

Administering

A1: therapist paints lotion

A2: therapist provides amulet

A3: therapist provides therapy other than lotion or amulet

A4: client administers therapy

Diagnosis

D: diagnosis integral to therapy (in addition to domestic diagnosis prior to therapy)

Professional reputation

R: therapist is professionally known beyond his home parish

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TABLE 4 CONTINUED

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2. Herbalist titles:

Ise Korac
(G1)

Sir Kofariy
(G2)

Yi (disease name) Medhaniyt Korac
(G3)

Medhaniyt Seci
(G1 or G2 or G3) and (P2)

Medhaniyt Ateci
(G1 or G2 or G3) and (P1) and (A4)

Medhaniyt Kabiy
(G3) and (P1) and (A1)

Kitab Kitabiy
(G3) and (P1) and (A2)

Medhaniyt Awakiy
(G3) and (P1) and (A1 and/or A2 and/or A3) and (D) and (R)

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Non-Professional Therapies

*757 In addition to therapies which are practiced by professional herbalists, a variety of "household therapies" are also used. These are common knowledge and never owned, and people performing them are not given practitioner titles simply by virtue of these activities. Amhara household therapies are either substitutes or supplements for professionally administered therapies, and are either directed against several ailments or are *[192] unique for a single ailment. In contrast, only yibuda basiyta among professional herbalist therapies involves a therapy applicable to a single ailment.

Cauterization is the most common household therapy, and is used an an inexpensive alternative to professional services, mainly against chronic and non-acute ailments. *[192] In particular, it is applied against rheumatoid complaints (kurtimat), localized pain (ruwgat), and swollen *278 tender lymph nodes (ferentit). A variety of cauteries *757 are used; metal implements such as umbrella staves are popular, but the roots and branches of medicinal plants are also used. Although many of these botanical cauteries are commonly known and easily available, there are some which must be obtained from a professional medicine collector (medhaniyt korac). Cauterization generally involves burning the affected area three times

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during a single session, and is performed by either the sickman himself or a local kinsman.

Unlike cauterization, other substitute therapies are unique for a particular ailment. For example, swollen lymph nodes are reduced by wrapping them with a heated cloth which has been used to clean and carry the flat pan in which injera bread is baked. Although the rising of the injera and the swelling of the lymph node may suggest to the observer a certain symbolic association between the two, it is not one which the Amhara consciously appreciates. In most cases, these household therapies amount to rote performances, in which the relationship between therapeutic behavior, materia medica, symptoms, and etiologies, cannot be articulated beyond an immediate, pragmatic context.

Serious ailments generally require professional cures. When such an ailment is linked to a purposive agent, however, a home therapy may be utilized simultaneously. Here, the common strategy is to draw the causal agent away from the sickman; techniques of execution are varied, however. In the most commonly applied of such therapies, a chicken is selected for its color, a simple recitation is made over it with the intention of propitiating the causal agent with the life of the bird, the chicken

*757 is then slain and thrown along the roadside or trail.[7] Chapter one describes an analogous therapy for ankalis (measles), involving the preparation of foodstuffs.

*759 Such offerings are more conspicuously a part of thera-
*793 pies performed by balazar-healers or directed by debtera-healers, since these therapists are able to determine the particular offering regarded as most desireable by the causal agent.

*757 Finally, two household techniques, supplementary to professional therapies, are each limited to a single disease agent, which is responsible for a single named ailment. In the first, an attempt is made to frighten away the introjected agent by exposing it to a substance
[752] that it abhors. Here, the sickman has been bitten or
*[192] slavered upon by a rabid dog (matfow wuwša). He must submerge himself in running water, lest he be later overwhelmed by this hydrophobic dog-like agent now within
*[192] him. The second household technique attempts to eject the introjected agent for jaundice (yililiyt bašiyta) by verbal means. Here, the sickman must, unawares, incorporate (i.e., eat) the physical aspect of the causal agent (a bat), and then expel its incorporeal aspect

[7] If the swollen nodes co-occur with other symptoms, such as superficial infection (kusil), professional therapy is simultaneously obtained for the latter ailment.

*757 by spontaneously shouting out the agent's name ("yi-
*[192] liliyt waf").

Narratives describing supplementary household therapies are included in Appendix A.

OTHER LAY THERAPISTS

*759 The Midwife. The midwife (awalaj) is always a woman, since it is forbidden for a man to look on, let alone
*759 handle, a woman's genitals. Towards the end of the
843 eighth month of pregnancy, counted from the cessation of menses, the parturient woman consults a midwife. The awalaj examines the abdomen from the perspective of size and shape, and listens to the abdomenal wall for sounds of life and other signs of fetal movement.[8] During the latter half of the hinth month, the midwife reckons the position of the fetus, and if this is found inappropriate she reaches into the vagina and attempts to manipulate the fetus into a desireable attitude. The session concludes with directions that the expectant mother must
844 henceforth sleep only on her back. Once labor pains begin, the midwife is called. With the assistance of the

[8] Failure to perceive signs of fetal life suggests the possibility of a zar-caused ailment.

844 woman's kinswomen who hold her down, the midwife repeatedly massages the woman's abdomen until the baby has emerged. The umbilical cord is knotted close to the baby and again near the mother, and then severed in the middle. The midwife then squeezes the woman's abdomen to eject the afterbirth, inserts her hand up the vagina to extract any remaining portion, and then passes the organ to an assistant who takes it outside
846 for burial. The midwife then turns to the infant, wahses it and carefully "shapes" its eyes, nose, and head into desireable conformations. Finally, the mother's body is washed.

*759 The midwife's therapy is conspicuously lacking
844 in the secret and magical elements characteristic of herbalist therapies. It is, in addition, the only Amhara medical specialty which can be acquired without formal tuteledge, by observing and assisting established midwives in delivering infants.

843 Pregnancy and childbirth are considered dangerous
844 experiences. Gerifta is a special threat: Nakedness
[821] under the sun may cause the fetus to turn in the womb and threaten breach birth, and urinating in the sun can
[845] induce premature labor. Childbirth is sometimes the setting for divine punishment by means of breach birth.
[776] The pregnant woman is also a favorite victim of ganela, typically, she experiences great hemorrhaging, severe

843 844 [176] pain, loss of her senses, inability to move her limbs in an often fatal ailment known as sarakian. The mid-*759 *793 846 wife is powerless in these contingencies; instead, it is the herbalist or debtera who must be consulted. Thus, [278] the sinj medhaniyt awakiy provides an infusion which the [778] post-partuitive mother drinks to eject a recalcitrant *[192] afterbirth (sinj), and the yidemaketir kitabiy provides an herbal amulet to be tied around the waist of the female suffering from post-partum hemorrhaging (demaketir).

*755 The cupper. The cupper (agamiy) assumes either of *756 two therapeutic strategies, depending upon the ailment *757 he is treating. Like the herbalist, he may attempt to *759 draw the pathogenic substance out from the sickman's *[192] body. For severe headache (ras mitat: literally, head-gerifta), he shaves a circle of one inch diameter on the sickman's occiput, makes a single incision with a razor or other favored knife, places his cup of horn over the incision, sucks out a required number of hornfulls (usually three) of blood, and pours the blood into a *[192] waiting basin of water. The extruded blood is then examined for clotting (tikur waha: dark water) which is regarded as evidence that the pathogenic substance is being removed. Later that day, the agamiy returns to repeat his therapy. The occiput is chosen for bleeding because of its proximity to the body's blood reservoir (yidem sir), located at the nape.

*755 This procedure, of three horn-fulls twice a day,
*756 is known as gomac, and is characteristic of all of the
*757 agamiy's cuppings. Cupping is also performed for anfula,
*759 an influenza-like syndrome. Here, the pathogenic sub-
*[192] stance (baǰiyta) is a moving target which must be followed over the sickman's trunk. Cupping begins over that side of the chest experiencing the greatest discomfort. The baǰiyta typically flees from the agamiy's horn to the other half of the chest; the sickman tracing its movement with his finger until the agamiy sees the impression of the baǰiyta, and recommences sucking. The baǰiyta's final flight always takes it over the sickman's upper back, where the agamiy cups for a third and final time. No incisions are made for anfula, and here the extruded blood is examined for evidence of white substances (being
[752] the baǰiyta), in addition to coagulated material. The cupper also treats snake bite, chronic pain (wuwgat), and tender swelling of the leg (igoribac).

*765 The agamiy's second therapeutic strategy is used
*764 while assisting the chirurgeon in drawing out intrusive
*757 blood responsible for distorting jimat cords (an ailment
*759 known as setir). Here, the chirurgeon selects the loca-
752 tion for the incision; the gomac procedure is followed,
*[192] and the extruded fluid is examined for evidence of the hardened intrusive blood (tikur waha), whose removal is necessary before the jimat can be properly aligned

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through the chirurgeon's massage.

Bleeding is regarded as a fatiguing experience for the client, and must be followed by a rest of two or three days. Bleeding for ras mitat is considered an exception, and no rest is required. However, the sickman is particularly vulnerable to gerifta during recuperation and, so, cannot leave his hut for fear of a relapse.

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*[192]

The cupper is unique among lay practitioners in several respects. First, he occasionally works under the direction of another category of practitioner, the tagan (wogeyša). Second, there are special physical requirements; the agamiy must have all of his incisors, and the upper and lower teeth must meet in an unbroken plane. Third, the agamiy exposes himself to certain dangers in the performance of this therapy. Because he must remove a pathogenic substance through the medium of the sickman's blood, there is the danger that, should any of the blood enter his own mouth, the agamiy may himself fall ill with the ailment he is treating. In addition, contact with this blood threatens those chronic ailments from which the sickman suffers (such as the rheumatoid pains associated with kitin, syphilis).

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The agamiy's cup is a short, hollow bovine horn, whose tip has been removed. Selected leaves, which have been dried and then steeped to make them pliable, are

*756 wrapped tightly around the narrow end of the horn. The
*757 leaves are rolled to form an air tight funnel ending an
*759 inch or so beyond the end of the horn. Through this herbal funnel, the agamiy sucks blood up into the horn, seals the vacuum by gripping the funnel between his incisors, and, with his lips upon the leaves, senses when the blood has risen beyond the tip of the horn. As with the midwife, the agamiy's therapy is founded on his physical skills and is devoid of professional secrets and
[602] magical elements. Unlike the midwife, however, the agamiy learns his trade through an intimate apprenticeship with a cupper-kinsman.

*756 The Tattooer. The tattooer (tokwariy) is generally
*759 a woman who performs both prophylactic and therapeutic
304 tattoos, and although she also performs purely decora-
[562] tive works, aesthetic considerations are usually compounded with medical ones. The tokwariy uses either ink or a paste of carbon mixed with domestic oil; into this, the tattooer mixes whatever ground medicinals she considers appropriate to the ailment against which she is working. The tattooer rarely collects the medicaments
*[278] herself. The tokwariy utilizes the services of a full-time medhaniyt korac (medicine gatherer) of the market place, for medicaments used in a wide variety of recipes (such as the sebat kelems, the "seven colors", used by the tattooer for ayni tila and yibuda baṡiyta). She pur-

*786 chases more exotic ingredients from an herbalist (in this
304 transaction, acting as medhaniyt korac) who is known to
treat the relevant ailment. Medicaments are mixed with
the tokwariy's ink for all instances of therapeutic tat-
*755 tooing. The decision to include medicaments in prophy-
+767 lactic tattooing reflects the tokwariy's alternative stra-
304 tegies. In the first of these, the tattooing aims to
drive away the pathogenic agent, by a combination of de-
*[278] signs. These designs are associated with the pathogen
in "conventional" or pragmatic terms only; the medica-
ments used in tattooing are derived from herbalist thera-
pies in which the medicament assisted in expelling the
pathogen from the sickman. The second strategy is direc-
ted against purposive agents, those responsible for yisow
ayn and yibuda baṽiyta (discussed in chapter one). Here
no medicaments are used, and the designs aim to distract
the agent's attention and his disease-causing eye from
vulnerable areas of the potential victim's body, particu-
304 larly away from his mouth. Children under ten are
302 rarely tattooed, but are protected from these agents by
751 bizarre haircuts (for example, three asymmetrically ar-
856 ranged patches of hair on an otherwise shaven skull, or
a single patch on the brow), likewise intended to draw
attention to less vulnerable body areas.

304 A variety of motifs are utilized by the tokwariy,
necklaces of "beads", geometric decorations, crosses, and

304 the names of saints. The client generally selects designs within the range appropriate to his needs, and women favor aesthetically attractive patterns. Only the gums are undecorated with designs, but are completely blackened; even here, however, the tattooing is regarded [55] as aesthetically pleasing. Men sometimes have their [608] godfather's names as well as their own (which incorpor- [764] ates the patronym) tattooed on their wrists, so that should they die in some foreign place, the local priests will regognize them as Christians and give them a proper burial.

Table 5 outlines the tokwariy's practice.

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TABLE 5

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THE TOKWARIY'S PRACTICE

Area Tattooed	Function		
	Prophylactic	Therapeutic	Decorative
forehead (female only)			exclusive
gums	e,f	f	present
throat (female only)	a		present
breasts (female only)			exclusive
upper arm (male only)	g	g	present
forearm	b,c*,d*	b	present
back of hand	b,c*,d*	b	present
shin to ankle (female only)	b,c*,d*	b	present

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TABLE 5 CONTINUED

Key

a: Inkert: goiter

b: Kurtimat: rheumatoid pain

c: Yisow Ayn: an ailment characterized by lassitude, nausea, headache, vomiting, bloody stools; in young children, the syndrome includes the eating of ashes, mud, and charcoal.

d: Yibuda Basiyta: buda possession

e: Yiters Himem: toothache

f: Yiters Kurtimat: chronic pain in teeth and adjacent jaw

g: Ayni Tila: an ailment characterized by irresolution in the presence of others; the sickman experiences impotency, an inability to reply coherently to questions, forgetfulness, and "free-floating" anxiety.

*: Medicaments are not mixed with ink.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE SECULAR HEALERS: HEALER AND CLIENT

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This chapter describes 1) the kinds of decisions which a client must make when choosing a secular practitioner to treat a specific disease episode, and 2) the kinds of information which are required by the client in order to make such decisions. The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first of these, non-herbalists (who are selected simply, by matching practitioner with ailment) are contrasted with herbalists (whose selection takes cognizance of differences in practitioner grades, as well as in ailment domains). The selection of herbalists is examined through the use of two formal descriptions. The first is an ideal description, and incorporates all selections that are rationally possible for any episode. This is then compared with a description which incorporates all empirically observed incidents involving the selection of herbalists. The section concludes with the description of a type of disease episode in which the sickman ultimately enters a medically self-sufficient healing coterie.

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The remainder of this chapter provides empirical data which quantify and otherwise annotate the analysis which precedes them. The second section describes the distribution of secular healers in a sample of rural

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*757
*759 hamlets and town wards. The healers are considered in
128 terms of 1) their disease-name specialties, 2) their professional grades, and 3) the geographical limits of their professional reputations. In order to place these practitioners in their social and professional milieux, this section begins with a description of relevant social and demographic characteristics of the parish and its hamlets, and of the varieties of urban wards found in the Begemder highlands.

SELECTING A SECULAR PRACTITIONER

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*759 It is clear from the preceeding chapter that 1) herbalists are distinguished from other secular healers by a distinctive classificatory system, and 2) this distinction can be functionally related to certain features of the healers' respective practices. Foremost among these features is the relative uniformity of healing powers of practitioners. While there is substantial uniformity within each named category of chirurgeon,[9] the herbalists working within any single disease-name specialty are arrayed along a wide range of powers and thera-

[9]For convenience, "chirurgeon" is used here to describe all secular practitioners who are not herbalists.

*278 *759 peutic effectiveness. The uniformity of the chirurgeons' healing powers can be traced to the fact that their operations are relatively simple and easily learn-
[602] ed. A man begins his apprenticeship while still a youth, under the tutledge of a senior kinsman. Generally, he does not assume professional status until his mentor has died or retired, or until he has moved beyond the natal parish and out of the range of possible competition with his healer-kinsman. In either event, the apprenticeship is lengthy enough to ensure technical mastery, within the limits set by the healer's natural abili-
[752] ties. The tagañ (bonesetter) is an exception, since his operations are by no means simple, and his natural skills more significantly affect his success as a therapist. Thus, there are more considerable differences in healing powers among tagañs than among other chirurgeons.

Second among these differences setting chirurgeon apart from herbalist are the criteria which healers each employ to decide whether a specific disease episode is appropriate to his therapy. The medical domain of a chirurgeon can be defined exclusively according to symptomatic criteria, grouped into unambiguous syndromes.
*278 Therapeutic failure can usually be explained only in
*757 terms of the chirurgeon's lack of competence. For the
*759 herbalist, symptomatic criteria, by themselves, are ambiguous. The symptomatic definition of each herbalist

12: Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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*278 disease-name specialty is distinctive enough to pre-
*767 clude confusing it with any other. Symptomatic criteria
*759 are, then, sufficient for comparing herbal specialties with one another, for deciding which ones are inappropriate for a particular disease episode, and which single specialty coincides symptomatically with the episode.
*[793] However, symptomatic criteria are not sufficient for deciding between an herbalist therapy and relevant therapies of category three healers; that is, for deciding whether an episode which is possibly appropriate to the therapy of an herbalist specialty is in fact treatable only by a debtera- or balazar-healer. For it is the etiology, in particular the causal agent, which is most relevant here, and this question of etiology can be resolved only through testing. Until the herbalist's therapy is completed and its effect known, both the herbalist and his client can only assume that the episode's etiology is appropriate to herbalist therapy. An herbal therapy which brings a successful remission of symptoms confirms the etiological assumption. An herbal therapy which fails to cure leaves the situation ambiguous: Either the original diagnosis (i.e., the etiological assumption) is incorrect and the ailment is not relevant to herbal therapy, or the diagnosis is correct but this herbalist's therapy is inadequate to this episode.

Diagnosis, then, is inseparable from the herbalist's

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therapy. The grading of herbalists according to quantitative differences in therapeutic power enables a client to proceed in a diagnostically rational manner.

The logically maximal chain. Using these grades, a client can construct "chains" of real herbalists, ranging from least to most powerful, in the relevant disease-name specialty. The following formula contains all logically possible herbalist chains. In this description, the symbol "-→" is used to indicate that "therapeutic failure by the antecedent practitioner is followed by consultation with the following practitioner".

(1)medhaniyt $seci_1$-→(2)medhaniyt $seci..._n$-→

(3)medhaniyt $ateci_1$-→(4)medhaniyt $ateci..._n$-→

(5)yi-medhaniyt $korac_1$--(6)yi-medhaniyt $korac..._n$-→

(7)medhaniyt awakiy of the client's parish-→

(8)medhaniyt awakiy of regional reputa-→

(9)healer of category three (debtera, balazar, atmakiy)

Three observations are relevant here:

1. Since the higher the grade, the more powerful the therapy, a therapeutically and diagnostically irrational move is from higher to lower grade (i.e.,-→).

2. Therapeutic failure at (1), (3), and (5) leaves the episode diagnostically ambiguous. Thus, subsequent consultations at a single grade (i.e., with (2), (4),

and (6) is not precluded.
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3. Because (8) is believed to practice the most powerful herbal therapy in a disease-name specialty, therapeutic failure here tends to be diagnostically conclusive and the chain of herbalists is forsaken for (9).

Empirically, the logically possible chain is abbreviated to the following maximal chain:

(1)medhaniyt seci or medhaniyt ateci-➤

(2)yi-medhaniyt korac or medhaniyt awakiy of client's parish-➤

(3)medhaniyt awakiy of regional repute and/or "weak" debtera-➤

(4)healer of category three

The shortest "chain" is composed of a single practitioner.

Real chains avoid consultations with more than one practitioner of the same or adjacent grades. This simplification results from a tendency of clients to generalize from an experience with a specific herbalist to all herbalists of that grade and disease-name specialty. The therapeutic failure of a weak therapy, one provided by a medhaniyt seci or medhaniyt ateci, indicates to the client that nothing short of a strong therapy will be effective in this episode. The client's freedom to generalize in this fashion is encouraged by several considerations. First, it is convenient for a client to treat all herbalists of the same grade as more or less pharmacological equals (vide supra). Second, in the

*278 *757 *759 case of serious and acute ailments, the exigencies of time force the client to seek rapid and efficient diagnosis as the prerequisite of an effective cure. To confine therapy to a single grade of herbalist is to minimize chances for an accurate diagnosis, since a second or third therapeutic failure at the same herbalist grade is diagnostically no more informative than the first failure. Even in the case of chronic ailments, it is unusual for a client to engage more than a single herbalist of the same grade. Instead, the client follows initial failure with therapeutic inactivity, which either remains permanent for the ailment in question, or is eventually ended by consulting a higher grade herbalist.

The relationship between practitioner, etiology, and syndrome is not always so clear-cut, however. Occaisionally, a client consults no herbalist at all, even though the syndrome at hand appears appropriate to an *756 *755 *793 *[278] herbalist specialty. The client, instead chooses a debtera (or, less often a balazar) as the initial healer in the episode. Like herbalists debteras are sorted into a graded series according to differences in healing power. In the abstract, the client arranges the two types of practitioners into parallel and mutually distinct series, according to the sources of their respec- *[278] tive healing powers. While the herbalist's powers derive from prosaically transmitted pharmacological infor-

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*793 mation, the debtera's powers are derived from his inti-
*[278] macy with spirit beings, the ganels.

[776] The therapeutic usefulness of the debtera's familiars is believed to be related to the ability of ganels
[753] to produce a wide variety of ailments. Some of these ail-
*[278] ments coincide symptomatically with ailments treatable
[776] by herbalists (although they are etiologically distinct), other of these ailments can be cured by herbalists' therapies, and yet other ailments caused by ganels are symptomatically distinct from any ailments treatable by herbalists. These relationships between practitioner, etiology, and syndrome are diagrammed and annotated in Table 6.

*755 From the perspective of the client, the debtera
*756 is therapeutically effective because he can force or ca-
*793 jole his familiars to communicate therapeutically signi-
776 ficant information (including pharmacological information) and to give other assistance. The debtera's power is conceived by the clients in terms of his ability to control his familiars. The most powerful debtera is the ganel gelac, a practitioner whose therapies the client can never divorce from direct associations with ganel familiars. For the "weaker" debtera, however, it is only in the abstract that clients posit a causal role for spirit familiars in any episode that such a debtera treats successfully. In the context of actual disease episodes,

*756 the connection between the weak debtera, his familiars,
*793 and his therapies is, at most, tacit, and unarticulated.
[776] More often, clients ignore the tie altogether, and conveniently assimilate this debtera into position (8) of the logically maximal chain.

The diagnostic significance of this move does not detain the client. Therapeutic success is in itself regarded as sufficient, and diagnostic speculation is not indulged. Therapeutic failure, likewise, tends to be interpreted in pragmatic terms only, indicating that the services of a more powerful healer must be obtained if
*[278] the sickman is to be cured. Probably, the choice will be a ganel gelac, but it is possible that even an herbalist of reknown will be chosen.

*278 Real herbalist chains are, then constructed by
*766 clients on an ad hoc basis. In constructing his herbal-
*759 ist chain, the client is dependent upon, first, the ac-
203 tual distribution of relevant practitioners within his environs, and, second, persons who can communicate this information to him. A client knows the herbal specialties of most residents of his own hamlet, and of the more prominent healers of the parish in which his hamlet is located. Beyond the parish, however, he knows the names of few secular practitioners, and these few are healers with whom he has stood previously as a client. To build his chain, he must often rely on information

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provided by kinsmen, neighbors, and lower grade herbalists who are familiar with the identity of professional colleagues in their own disease-name specialties. A client sometimes has difficulty finding local herbalists with which to staff a desired herbalist chain. The ("weak") debtera is often a "convenient" choice to fill this deficiency. He is a member of a class of practitioners who are famous for practicing therapies for a wide variety of ailments. Moreover, the debtera is conspicuous. In ecclesiastical performances, divination, and providing prophylactic amulets, he is observed and patronized by many residents of the district in which he lives. Thus, although potential clients may not know his therapeutic repertoire in detail, he is considered a potentially relevant practitioner about whom clients are always likely to make active inquiries.

The empirical chain is the product of non-medical as well as medical considerations. The client's non-medical interests include the cost of therapy, the discomfort associated with the therapy, and the distance which the client might have to travel to reach the therapist. Lower grade herbalists are always less expensive and generally less painful than higher grade ones, and the client is more likely to find a lower grade herbalist in his vicinity. So far as non-medical factors are considered in isolation, initial consultation with a

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lower grade herbalist is favored.

There are no obvious non-medical advantages, neither relative nor absolute, for the client who chooses a higher grade herbalist. An herbalist initiates the patient into no relationships which endure beyond the length of the therapy. The onset of a disease episode, particularly one characterized by a serious ailment, has important consequences for the relationships between the sickman and members of his household, and between him and other individuals to whom he is bound by important rights and obligations. These changes are generally perceived in terms of non-participation by the sickman, particularly in affective and subsistence contexts. However, consultation with an herbalist does not itself significantly affect the relationships. Submission to herbalist therapy, for example, does not validate a claim to a particular sickman state, since this is determined within the domestic unit, prior to professional consul-
*[753] tation. Repeated therapeutic failure, far from discrediting the sickman's claims, can only escalate the seriousness of the epidose, moving it etiologically to the domain of ganels and zars---agents more worrisome prognostically than those against whom the herbalist works.

*756 The Weak Debtera-Healer in Table 6. In the ab-
*793 stract, laymen define the medical identity of all
776 debtera-healers in terms of associations with spirit

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 93]

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TABLE 6

A TYPOLOGY OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SYNDROMES, AILMENTS, AND ETIOLOGIES RELEVANT TO THE HERBALIST CHAIN

AILMENTS WITH GANEL AS PURPOSIVE AGENT

X	Y
YIBARIYA BAŠIYTA	YIHOD BAŠIYTA

AILMENTS WITH OTHER ETIOLOGIES

A	B	C	D
YIHOD BAŠIYTA	CIFEY	GURMIT	AYNI ŠEFIN BAŠIYTA

SYNDROMES

1	2	3	4	5
epilepsy	stomach pain often w/nausea	scrofula	hemorrhagic ulcer	trachoma

PRACTITIONER CHAIN (real)

(3)	(1)→ (2)→ (3)	(1)→ (2)→ (3)	(1)→ (2)→ (3)	(1)→ (2)→ (3)

*756 *793 familiars, the ganels. Empirically, the association be-
*776 tween the weak debtera (tinis debtera or meshav gelac)
*[192] and spirit familiars becomes obscure and ignored altogether when the ailment that is treated by the weak debtera is only tenuously linked to a ganel causal agent. Under these circumstances, potential clients tend to "secularize" the healing powers of the weak debtera, and to distinguish him from herbalists according to non-medical criteria (in particular, their respective ties to the Coptic Church).

*753 Ganel and Ailment in Table 6. The associations between the above ailments and ganels range from obvious and necessary (ailment X), to tenuous and obscure (ailment D):

Syndrome 1: This syndrome is characterized by a single possible causal agent, the ganel.

Syndrome 2: Any one of the following etiologies is possible here: 1) There is no obvious spirit agent responsibility (e.g., the ailment is explained as the activities of wosfat which have been disturbed by the ingestion of stale food); 2) The activities of non-purposive causal agents (e.g., ganel-likift) are responsible; 3) The activities of purposive, non-adventitious spirit agents (e.g., ganel) are responsible. Therapeutic failure by a medhaniyt awakiy (highest grade herbalist) identifies the syndrome as ailment Y, rather

*753 than A.

Syndrome 3: This syndrome is caused by likift, and the ganel is considered a likely (non-purposive) agent.

*[192] Syndrome 4: This syndrome is produced by contact with dirty (kowšaša) objects or places (e.g., hearth ashes, excreta, filthy clothing). Association with ganels is at most implicit, since such places are considered favorite resting places of these beings.

Syndrome 5: The association with ganels is most
*[192] tenuous here. Ayni šefin bašiyta, for example, may be brought about by either an eye-lash which has taken root in the sickman's eye, or by over-exposure to the smoke of domestic fires. Ganels could be invoked to explain why this particular sickman was involved in this particular disease episode. Recourse to this explanation is unlikely, however, since the ganel characteristically acts as a purposive, non-adventitious agent in syndromes of types 1 and 2 (i.e., where the ganel is the sole or alternative causal agent whose disease causing is direct and unmediated through ganel-likift).

*753 The Strong Debtera in Table 6. To the potential
*756 client, the tie between a powerful debtera-healer (ganel
*793 gelac) and his ganel familiars is necessary and sufficient
776 to explain this debtera's therapeutic successes. Even syndromes of type 4, although not customarily linked to

*756 a ganel-agent, can be explained as ganel-caused if
*793 treated successfully by the following (real) practitioner
776 chains:

(1)-->(2)-->(3), or (2)-->(3)

Because of their substantial fees, clients generally limit therapy consultations with strong debteras to episodes involving serious ailments. Since such ailments are very frequently traced to ganel agents (syndromes of types 1 and 2), the diagnostic relevance of the strong debtera's cures tends to be reinforced empirically.

THE BALAZAR

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*756 A balazar ("zar bearer") is a man or woman who has
[562] been selected as a "mount" (feres) by a zar spirit. Most often, the zar signals his interest in an individual by producing a syndrome known as kureyña. At its simplest, the ailment is characterized by chronic stomach pain, generally accompanied by headache. Within the context of Amhara nosology, these are highly ambiguous symptoms,
*[192] and four alternative etiologies are possible. At its most innocuous, the ailment is classified descriptively as "hod himem ina ras mitat" (literally, "stomach ailment and headache"), and traced to gerifta and likift pathogens. The three other etiologies are sorcery (sray), divine displeasure (mekseft), and zar possession (kureyña);

*753
*756 all are indicative of serious ailments. In a typical episode involving this syndrome, the sickman initially diagnoses the least worrisome etiology, likift or gerifta. Secular therapies are then obtained, but when these fail, a choice must be made from among the remaining etiologies.

The sickman usually finds epidemiological indications sufficient to favor one of the three etiologies. [562] Zars, for example, are known to prefer post-pubescent fe- [602] males (constituting over 80% of zar mounts), and individuals who are the primary relatives of recently deceased balazars. Once an individual has been mounted by a specific zar, the bond between human and zar is almost always permanent. Over the years of their association, the zar becomes familiar with the constant companions of the host, particularly her children. With the death of the balazar, the zar characteristically desires to mount someone whom he already knows well. This epidemiological evidence is confirmed by divination and often by the appearance of additional symptoms (usually swooning, sleeplessness, langour, and depression) which are associated with zar involvement.

*755 If diagnosis indicates kureyña, the sickman seeks
776 therapy from the leader (awakiy balazar) of a coterie
787 (hadra) of zar-possessed folk. At their initial meeting, the awakiy balazar is mounted by one of his zars, who at-

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tempts to communicate with the sickman's supposed zar. The object of the dialogue is, first, to identify the sickman's zar by name. In the abstract, the zars are believed to be multitudinous, but in practice the members of a hadra will be acquainted with only a score or so of these spirits. Each of these zars is named, and recognized for his social identity (e.g., sex, age, occupation, religion), his characteristic attitude towards human mounts, and his ability to influence the conduct of other zars. The initial dialogue further attempts to learn what precisely the spirit wishes in return for ceasing to afflict his host. Often a sickman's zar is unresponsive, and the sickman must undergo a regimen, often lasting several weeks, at the home of the hadra leader. During this period, the sickman is induced to sleep for long stretches of time. During this period a decoction of cat (Catha edulis Forsk) is given the sickman to drink.[10] This regimen is maintained until the unruly zar has been "socialized" and is prepared to converse intelligibly (in zar argot) through his host. Conversely, some zars reveal their identities rapidly and explicit-

[10]Interestingly, when eaten fresh the leaves of cat appear to act as a wakefulness-producing stimulant (Hill 1965:17).

*755 776 787 ly, so that the sickman is afflicted with the kureyña symptoms for only a short time before the zar is successfully engaged in conversation.

*753 *755 *756 776 Zars demand periodic gifts (mainly jewlry and clothing), and regular attendance at the hadra of the awakiy balazar who first contacted the sickman's zar. At the hadra meetings, special foods favored by the zars are served, and members are mounted by their familiars. The zar who is neglected punishes his host with a recurrence of kureyña or some other ailment, until his requirements are fulfilled.

A hadra leader is frequently possessed by ten or more zars; characteristically, all are cooperative, and several are powerful zars, capable of influencing the behavior of weaker spirits. In contrast, other members of the hadra are each mounted by one or two less resolute and often capricious zars. The zars of the hadra leader are helpful in persuading the zars of hadra members to define what gifts they demand in return for a surcease in their pathogenic activities. Through his familiars, the awakiy balazar learns therapies for ailments with which hadra members are afflicted by their zars. These therapies are often necessary, but never sufficient, to bring about cures, since they remove only the immediate causes of the sickman's ailments. The awakiy balazar occasionally provides therapeutic services for individu-

*753 *755 als who are not members of his hadra, and, more fre-
*756 quently, provides divinatory services for clients.
776 For each of its members, the hadra, comprising its human and zar members, becomes the group within which her most important social relationships beyond the family are found. In a medical context, the hadra develops into an exclusive and self-sufficient group, in which the bala-zars trace all of their serious physical ailments to the displeasure of their zars, and find all necessary prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic assistance in the hadra leader.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN RURAL BEGEMDER

131 133 Within the 74,200 square kilometers of Begemder Province are found a diversity of physical conditions, from the hot and parched western lowlands, through the fertile and temperate highland plateau, ascending to the cold and empty mountain reaches of Ras Dashan. The people of Begemder divide its lands into three ecological zones, as indicated by map 1.

Kola lands are located between elevations of 600 and 1800 meters. The highlander considers kola to be a
*[192] disagreeable region; it is unhealthful because of malaria (often referred to as yisudan baṡiyta, "the Sudanese disease), and unpleasant in its excessive heat. Preferred

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 103]

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MAP 1

ECOLOGICAL ZONES OF BEGEMDER PROVINCE

(After Simoons 1960: 5)

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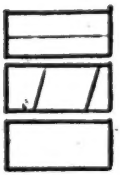

DEGA

WEYNA DEGA

KOLA

Woggera **Traditional regions mentioned in the text**

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MAP 2

THE MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS OF BEGEMDER PROVINCE

(Adapted from Simoons 1960: 22)

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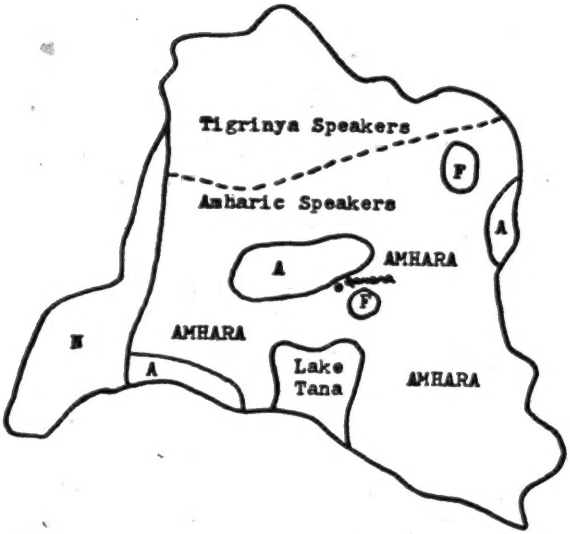

A: Agaw

F: Falasha

N: Nilotes

AMHARA: Abyssinian Muslims also dispersed throughout these areas

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MAP 3

EXTREME DISTANCES TRAVELLED TO PRINCIPAL WEEKLY MARKETS OF HIGHLAND BEGEMDER PROVINCE

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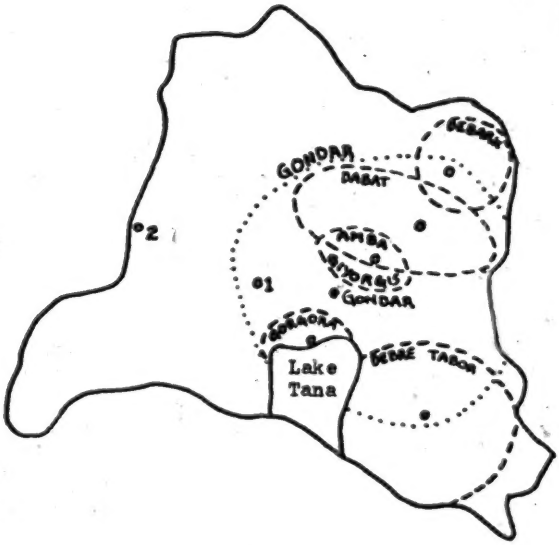

Distances from Gondar

Amba Giyorgis...	24 miles
Dabat.....	44 miles
Debark.....	61 miles
Debre Tabor.....	104 miles
Gorgora.....	40 miles
Chilga (1).....	45 miles
Metemma (2).....	140 miles

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[243] Preferred cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous, [635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse- [162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial [563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic [567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000 [136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano- [243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals, [231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which [243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes [233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.

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*753 grazing. Both highland zones are considered ideal for
131 human habitation. While residents of the dega zone oc-
133 casionally comment on what they regard as the uncomfor-
821 table summer heat of the weyna dega, at the same time
it is acknowledged that the rainy season (kiramt) is more
burdensome in the dega. The rains last from May to
September and are marked by temperatures in the mid-
thirties in dega lands and perhaps ten to fifteen degrees
warmer in the weyna dega. This season is regarded as a
particularly bad time for kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints)
whose severity is considered greatest in the dega zone.
Epidemiologically, the dega is also associated with a
relatively high incidence of yinifas basiyta ("the wind
disease"), an ailment described in Chapter One.

131 Although reliable population estimates are lacking,
101 the weyna dega and dega zones contain perhaps 85% of
161 Begemder's people. These rural highlands are occupied
197 by five ethnic groups, racially indistinguishable from
144 one another and, with an exception, now speaking a com-
mon Semetic language, Amharic. The Amhara are the most
numerous of Begemder's highland peoples, and extend into
the provinces of Gojam and Shoa, to the south. Within
the Begemder highlands, they occupy the area south of
latitude 13°30'. North of this line live the Tigre, a
related people who speak a cognate language, Tigrinya.
101 Both Amhara and Tigre are Coptic Christians, and from
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101 131 779 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries. [241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively [463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm- [286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga [443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of [562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin- [423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil- [326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields [286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha [162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority [361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

634 635 Parish and Hamlet. The highland zones can be divided along three complementary social dimensions---po-
*[192] litical, ecclesiastical, and economic. Politically, the province is divided into awraja (sub-province), warada (district of a sub-province), and meketel warada (sub-
632 district). The meketel warada consists of fifteen to
361 thirty parishes (deber). The parish, in turn, is com-
*[192] posed of three to ten hamlets (mender), each consisting
592 of ten to fifty households (bet). Most households consist of husband, wife, unmarried sons, and pre-pubscent daughters[11]; a minority of households consist of aged spouses only, or of widowed individuals living by them-
592 selves. Characteristically, the households of a hamlet
361 are dispersed, so that any one is perhaps 100 to 300 meters from its closest neighbors.

647 While officials of the provincial and sub-provincial governments are generally out-landers appointed by the central government, administrators of the warada and meketel warada are usually members of the local gen-
*[192] try. Within the parish, civil administration is in the hands of the ceka Ÿum, a petty administrator who imple-

[582] [591] [11]Since it is common for a girl to marry at 11 or 12, but to delay the virilocal move until age 15 or 16, the natal household may include a married daughter.

647 *[192] ments decisions that come down from the meketel warada or warada.[12] Incumbency tends to rotate among the senior 611 423 ristenas of the parish. Amhara trace genealogies ambilineally to the original recipients of primary land rights (rist) to local fields. Ambilineages are traced from these apical ancestory through those descendants (ristenas) who have made effective claims to the fields of the original estates. Over time, it is the genealogical links associated with land claims which tend to be [582] remembered, to the exclusion of other descent ties. Similarly, it is these links which are examined most carefully in deciding whether a proposed marriage would be properly exogamous (i.e., ideally excluding descendants of the sixth ascending generation).[13]

*793 From the perspective of the Amhara peasant, the ecclesiastical organization of Begemder consists of two levels, the bishopric (located in Gondar, the provincial

[12] A feresena, rural policeman, is also a resident farmer of the parish.

[13] Hoben (1963:116-117) considers these matters in detail, and notes that occasionally the boundaries of exogamous unions are contracted to include the descendants of the fifth and even fourth ascending generations.

*793 capital) and the parishes. The social identity of the
*793 parish tends to be defined in terms of the ties linking
794 its residents to the parish church. The church must be provided with sufficient clergy for the performance of the weekly Mass, as well as Masses on feast days and on occasions which mark a sacrament of the Church. This amounts to perhaps three Masses every week, each of which must be conducted by at least two priests (keys) and three deacons (diyakon). Ideally, these ecclesiastics are recruited from among the parish's risteñas, in return for the use of fields belonging to the parish church.
[776] The tie between residents of a parish and its eponymous church is further strengthened by the tendency of these people to confine their public ritual performances to the church, to favor the church's saint (reified in the arc, tabot) with private appeals for protection against illness and other misfortunes, to donate gifts to it when such appeals have been answered, to bury their dead in its churchyard, to pay towards the salary of a church teacher (astomariy) of the syllabary, and perhaps for a teacher (memher) of advanced Church subjects as well, and, lastly, to contribute in tithes (generally cereals and other foodstuffs) and labor towards the proper maintenance of the church.

443 Parish and Town. The highland zones can be concep-
632 tualized as a series of overlapping market spheres, each

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443
632 centered in a town and extending outward to include those areas from which peasants come to buy and sell.
[132] The size of the town's sphere contracts and expands sea-
[484] sonally, reaching its nadir furing the rainy season, when overland travel becomes difficult owning to deep mud and raging torrents. Then, travelling is infrequent and confined to the market town closest to a peasant's home parish. Although market trips are more frequent during the remainder of the year, most terminate at the closest market. These relatively short trips are favored when grain is brought to the mills located on the periphery
[796] of most market sites. The spheres of the larger towns (Gondar, Debre Tabor, Dabat) reach maximum size on the market days which preceed the great celebrations of the Coptic Church---Meskal (which celebrates the discovery of the True Cross, and follows the end of the rains), Michaelmas (November), Timkat (feast of the Epiphany, and preceeding the Lenten fast), and Easter. Map 3 indicates the extreme limits for market spheres of the towns of the Begemder highlands.

[491] The highland market towns are strung along the province's only all-weather motor road.[14] Each offers a

[648] [14]This road, built during the Italian occupation (1936-1941), runs north to Asmara (capital of Eritrea) and (since the 1960's) south to Addis Ababa (the national capital). A dry season road links the highland towns to Metemma on the Sudan border.

443
632 once-weekly market, staggered, so that the market days of over-lapping spheres do not coincide. Peasant exchange at these markets tend to be "sectional" in character; that is to say, producer-sellers bring regional specialties (such as cotton and high quality cayenne from kola lands; cereals, fresh vegetables, and livestock from highland farms), or occupational specialties (such as Falasha iron mongery and pots; the leather goods of the Fakiy, a largely endogamous artisan group). In addition to local products, peasants come to purchase imported goods (especially clothing) and the produce of distant parts of the Empire (such as salt bars from the Danakil Depression). The market is also the peasant's tie to the world market, to which he sends cattle and cattle hides.

The large market towns, with their numerous consumer crowds, offer important economic inducements to
[275] the peasant marketeer. Beyond these economic functions,
[548] the large town offers diversions and attractions unavailable in the peasant's home parish---exotic surroundings, the temporary fellowship and entertainment of beer houses and mead halls, and the sexual companionship of the town's numerous prostitutes.

632 The town also attracts peasant visitors on matters
796 unrelated to the market place. The monthly feast days of various saints of the Coptic Church are occasions for special celebrations, and these attract peasants, out of

632
[796] motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' epony-
[346] mic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "govern-
[691] ment" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means
[423] litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
[161] Total population	151	95
[592] Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by
[613] risteñas. These households are distributed among the
[592] hamlets' ambilineages as follows:
[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

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[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total risteñas households	31	21

[423] In each of the hamlets, there are two households be-
*[192] longing to Amhara tenant farmers (timeneña), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the risteñas
[779] whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two addition-
[433] al timeneña households, whose members are Muslims. These
[286] households are headed by brothers who supplement their
*[192] agricultural activities by weaving the šama (toga) for local Christians.

*793 Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are
361 believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the
423 use of such fields, known as yikeys mariet ("priest's
795 land"), is given to local priests in return for parti-
*[192]
[613] cipating in the Masses of the parish church. In practice, rist-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of yikeys mariet by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

361 members are unable to retain their claims to these
423 church lands (which are intimately linked to the ac-
613 quisition of leadership positions and prestige within
795 the parish) by providing priests from their own ranks. Consequently, substitutes from outside the parish must be obtained. Such is the case with ambilineage I today. According to current allocation of yikeys mariet in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, ambilineages I and V are each expected to provide three priests for the Mass. Ambilineage V currently provides its three from three ambilineage households of Lemmariet. Ambilineage I, however, currently provides only one risteña priest (a resident of Tikurmidir). Thus, members of ambilineage I using these fields have been obliged to invite two non-risteña priests to take up residence on a portion of these lands, in return for participation in the Mass.

361 Finally, these hamlets contain three female ser-
562 vants, unrelated to other residents of the parish. In
592 Tikurmidir, there is a single Amhara attached to a household of ambilineage I; in Lemmariet there is a "bariya" in a household of ambilineage I, and another in a household of ambilineage V.

*278 Herbalist Medicine in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet.
*757 The herbalist therapies of these two hamlets are descri-
*759 bed in Table 7. With the use of this information, the
613 following paragraphs will indicate that the professional

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therapies practiced in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet (like those of Begemder Amhara hamlets in general) are fairly evenly distributed among resident ambilineages and households. A significant consequence of this distribution is a general understanding by all residents of the pharmacological, therapeutic, and diagnostic notions of Amhara medicine, and the inhibition of separate professional and lay cultures, at least with regards to secular therapies. A second consequence is that the differential healing powers of herbalists are perceived in clients and herbalists in specific, symptomatically bound contexts, divorced from notions of diffuse and widely relevant healing powers.

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A majority of the herbalists of Tikurmidir and Lemmariet practice a single professional therapy:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total therapies:	26	20
Total herbalists:	20	16

No herbalist of these hamlets practices more than two professional therapies, thus there are ten herbalists practicing multiple therapies. The combinations of therapies practiced in these hamlets are as follows:

In Tikurmidir:

(Aynitila:Seci:k:T) and (Yibuda Basiyta:Seci:k:T+)

(Aynitila:Seci:k:I) and (Demikitir:Ateci:k:I)

(Nikersa:Kitabiy:A:I+) and (Kuntina:Kabiy:k*:I+)

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 119)

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TABLE 7

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A ROSTER OF SECULAR HERBALISTS OF TWO RURAL HAMLETS OF BEGEMDER

1. Explanation of the notations used:

Therapeutic notations:

Seci:	Medhaniyt Seci (provider of unprocessed medicaments)
Ateci:	Medhaniyt Ateci (provider of processed medicaments)
Kabiy:	Medhaniyt Kabiy (painter of processed medicaments)
Kitabiy:	Kitab Kitabiy (amulet maker)

Pharmacological notations:

i:	Ise Korac ("stalk cutter")
s:	Sir Korac ("root digger")
k:	Yi_Medhaniyt Korac ("medicine cutter for the_ailment")

Grade notations:

A:	Medhaniyt Awakiy ("medicine expert")
•:	Herbalist claims Medhaniyt Awakiy title, but is professionally unknown beyond the parish

Ambilineage notations:

I to IV:	ambilineage designation
T:	Amhara tenant farmer

Client notation:

+:	Clients are attracted from beyond the herbalist's own hamlet and immediate environs

For example, the notation "Seci/Ateci:k:I" signifies an herbalist who offers a therapy as either a Medhaniyt Seci or Medhaniyt Ateci, who is also known as a Medhaniyt Korac by virtue of the complex of ingredients used in his therapy, and who is a member of ambilineage I.

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TABLE 7 CONTINUED

*278 2. The roster:
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Disease-Name Specialty	Grade and Ambilineage of Herbalist	
	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Aynitila (chronic anxiety affecting ability to engage in ordinary social intercourse)	Seci:k:II+ Seci:k:T	Ateci:k*:II
Demiketir (profuse external bleeding)	Seci/Ateci:k:I	
Ibac (running sore, particularly on lower leg)	Seci/Kabiy:i:I	
Ikek (scabies)	Kabiy:k*:I Kabiy:k*:II	Kabiy:k*:I Kabiy:k*:I
Hod Himem (stomach ailment marked by local pain)	Ateci:i:I	Seci:i:I
Kosow (tapeworm)	Ateci:i:II Ateci:k*:I	
Koruba (small pox)	Seci/Ateci:i:I+ Seci/Ateci:i:I	Seci:i:I+ Seci:i:I
Kuntina (leprosy)	Kabiy:k*:I+	
Kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints)	Kabiy:k*:II	Kabiy:k*:V

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TABLE 7 Continued

Disease-Name Specialty	Grade and Ambilineage of Herbalist	
	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Kusil (infected cut)	Kabiy:k*:II+ Kabiy:k*:III+	
Mers (poison)	Ateci:k*:IV+	
Nic (bothersome skin inflammations and rashes)	Seci/Kabiy:i:I+	Seci:i:I
Nikersa (septicemia with a prodromal carbuncle)	Kitabiy:A:I+	
Ras Mitat (headache caused by gerifta)	Seci:s:I	Ateci:s:VI
Wosfat (wosfat biting stomach wall and adjacent organs)	Ateci:s:I Ateci:k*:I	Seci:s:II Ateci:i:III Ateci:i:III Ateci:k*:II
Wuwgat (localized body pain)	Ateci:s:T	
Yibuda Basiyta (buda possession)	Seci:k:T+	Ateci:k:IV
Yibt Wuwsa Basiyta (rabies)	Ateci/Kabiy:i:III[15] Ateci:k*:I	Ateci:k*:I

[15]This therapy also used for snakebite.

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TABLE 7 CONTINUED

*278 *753 *756 *759 613 Disease-Name Specialty	Grade and Ambilineage of Herbalist	
	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Yilfiyn Baǰiyta (swollen and painful extremeties following a prodromal cut; often pregangrenous)	Kabiy:k*:I	Seci/Kabiy:i:V
Yisaal Baǰiyta (sustained and severe coughing)	Ateci:k*:II+	Ateci:k*:II Ateci:k*:II Ateci:k*:II

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759 (Kusil:Kabiy:k:I+) and (Yilfiyn Basiyta:Kabiy:k*:I)
(Wosfat:Ateci:k*:I) and (Kowsow:Ateci:k*:I)
(Yisaal Basiyta:Ateci:k*:II+) and (Kurtimat:Kabiy:k*:II)
In Lemmariet:
(Koruba:Seci:i:I+) and (Mic:Seci:i:I)
(Koruba:Seci:i:I) and (Mic:Seci:i:I)
(Aynitila:Ateci:k*:II) and (Yisaal Basiyta:Ateci:k*:II)
(Wosfat:Ateci:k*:III) and (Yisaal Basiyta:Ateci:k*:III)
The combination of therapies owned by any one herbalist is recognized by Amhara as being entirely adventitious, although no secular herbalist is considered likely to own multiple therapies for a single disease-name specialty.

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[592]

Since three of Tikurmidir's herbalists are women, and two of them reside with herbalist spouses, the distribution of herbalists among households is as follows:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
[162] Household with one or more herbalists:	19	16
%of Amhara households with one or more herbalists:	56%	67%

The distribution of herbalist therapies in these hamlets is further characterized by a high degree of "redundancy", that is to say, the presence of two or more therapies directed against the same named ailment, but practiced by different herbalists:

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	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet	Inter-hamlet
Number of redundant herbal therapies % of total:	14 (54%)	13(65%)	40 (91%)

For most therapies, redundancy is accidental; herbalists practicing the same disease-name specialty simply happen to reside in the same hamlet and there is no (knonw) genetic link between their therapies. In the two hamlets, however, there are twelve therapies each of which shares a genetic tie with one or more other therapies.

[593] Most of these link father with son:

(Koruba:Seci:i:I+) with
(Koruba:Seci:i:I)

(Mic:Seci:i:I+) with
(Mic:Seci:i:I) (same herbalist as above entry)

(Wosfat:Seci/ateci:i:III) with
(Wosfat:Seci:i:III)

(Yisaal Basiyta:Ateci:k*:II) with
(Yisaal Basiyta:Ateci:k*:II)

The father in each of these cases is a relatively old man (late sixties, mid-fifties, and mid-sixties, respectively), and who no longer wishes to bother with collecting the medicaments necessary for his therapy. So, even though the father in each case is remembered as an herbalist in the disease name specialty, it is the son who has taken over the practice (an eldest sibling in these three cases). None of these therapies has an impressive reputation for effectiveness, a consideration

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*278
*757 which is mainly responsible for the junior wosfat
*759 therapist to limit his therapy to simply providing the unprocessed medicaments.

*278 One of the remaining redundant pairs,
*757 (Ikek:Kabiy:k':I) with (Ikek:Kabiy:k':I) links two
869 brothers of Lemmariet, who obtained the therapy from a
[602] member of their mother's natal ambilineage core. The remaining redundant therapies are all traced to a single individual, Asfow (now deceased):

Therapy notation	Asfow's link to herbalist
(Koruba:Seci/Ateci:i:I+)	FaFa, via Asfow's first Wi
(Koruba:Seci/Ateci:i:I)	MoFa, via Asfow's second Wi
(Koruba:Seci:i:I+)	SiHu, Si is Asfow's second Wi
(Koruba:Seci:i:I)	FaSiHu, Fa is preceeding entry

Only in a minority of cases is a professional therapy transmitted to two or more residents of a parish who may practice it in comeptition with one another. Asfow did this by transmitting his therapy to three individuals whose geneaological ties to one another proved remote enough to preclude the tacit agreement which might enable closer kinsmen to vest exclusive professional rights in a single individual. Asfow's actions can be traced to two considerations. First, this therapy has low commercial value; it has a poor reputation for effectiveness, and it addresses an acute ailment, koruba (a fatal pox). Because a kuruba episode is character-

ized by a duration of only twenty-four hours from first prodromes to its termination, clients can be expected only from the parish and its immediate environs. Since clients of the herbalist's own parish are rarely expected to pay for any but the cure of a Medhaniyt Awakiy, the practice of this koruba therapy is likely to amount to little more than a modest presentation given by the herbalist.

In contrast, Nikersa:Kitabiy:A:I is a valuable therapy directed against a serious but not acute ailment. [778] This therapy consists of an amulet containing a variety of exotic materials, and of instructions for washing the affected area. The therapy was brought to Tikurmidir by Berey, the second wife of Asfow. Once Berey's eldest son, Gitahun, reached adolescence, his mother used him as her medhaniyt korac for gathering the amulet materials and as her apprentice in the manufacutre of the "pharmacologically" elaborate amulet container. Later, when Gitahun's own eldest son, Ayialuw, reached adolescence, he replaced his father as Berey's medhaniyt korac. After Berey's death, Gitahun, then in his fifties, began his practice of the nikersa therapy, retaining Ayialuw as medhaniyt korac and apprentice. Had the therapy addressed a more common ailment, it is likely that Gitahun would have begun practicing it prior to his mother's death, initially serving neighbors and kinsmen, while

*757 his mentor restricted her professional services to
[869] clients from outside the parish.

Among the herbalist therapies practiced in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, there are, predictably, those which provide successful cures or satisfactory palliatives for certain non-serious ailments (particularly, wosfat, kosow, kurtimat, and wuwgat). Since this repertoire of disease-name specialties is found in most Amhara hamlets, a client generally need go no farther than a hamlet herbalist for treatment. Beyond these, the assortment of therapies
*[192] practiced in any hamlet is adventitious; for example, epidemiologically, pharmacologically, and prognostically it is no more explicable for kuntina (leprosy) and koruba (fatal pox) therapies to be practiced in Tikurmidir than for timan anise (elephantiasis) or weresiyn (typhus) to be found in their stead. The character of a particular assortment oftherapies within a region has important professional consequences for the herbalists of this area.
[628] Where an herbalist practices a therapy in the absence of redundant therapies, he can expect to attract clients from the entire area of his exclusive practice, even though his therapy may be a weak one. Thus, the contrast between a therapy serving only clients of the herbalist's hamlet and a therapy serving a wider population cannot always be explained on the basis of differences of healing power, but in many cases may also depend upon whether

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redundant therapies are present or absent in the surrounding area.

Of the forty-six therapies which are practiced in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, thirty-five (75%) attract clients only from the area of the herbalist's hamlet, as a result of redundancy within the hamlet itself or its environs. Of the eleven therapies of Tikurmidir and Lemmariet which attract clients from Kidus Yowhannis parish and its environs, ten are practiced in the absence of redundant therapies within this area; none of the ten is characterized by conspicuous therapeutic success. One of these, Mers:Ateci:k'aIV, is professionally known even beyond the parish's environs. Owing to the "heterogeneous" nature of the mers pathogen, the treatment of mers (poisoning beginning with nausea and vomiting and leading to madness, ibidet) is generally considered curable only by a debtera, and herbalist remedies are infrequent (see Table 1). In the case of this therapy, the herbalist's noteriety has been supported in part by the tendency of potential clients to associate his therapy with the practice of powerful debteras. This therapy's repute is further served, technically, by the presence of a pharmacologically complex memeleša. But here, again, the therapy is anamalous; for, according to the logic of Amhara medicine, a therapy against mers must consist of a memeleša alone. In such therapies,

*278
*757 the memeleša counters the effect of the poison, which
628 stands in the place that the primary medicine would in any other internally administered herbalist therapy.

The remaining therapy attracting clients from beyond the hamlet is Nikersa:kitabiy:A:I, and is the hamlet's best example of a therapy of medhaniyt awakiy grade. As an "amulet therapy", it has no memeleša, nor does it allow for a diagnosis to the administration of the therapy. The grading of such therapies is dependent upon criteria of efficacity and professional reputation; this nikersa therapy is regarded as relatively effective and it attracts clients from all Woggera, in spite of the presence of redundant therapies within this area.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN URBAN BEGEMDER

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632 Less than 5% of the province's people are classified
[369] "urban" by Government census.[16] Half of these townfolk live in Gondar, the provincial capital. Although Gondar is the administrative, ecclesiastical, and commercial center of Begemder, its demographic and social character-

[16] 56,000 out of a total of 1.24 million (EAS1965: 23-24).

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632 istics are, except for differences in scale, approximated by most of the other provincial towns situated in predominantly Amhara areas.[17]

632 The People of the Town. Approximately three-
463 quarters of Gondar's residents are Amhara, born in either Begemder or adjacent Gojam province. Most Amhara townsmen are government employees (clerks, messengers, teachers, and judicial functionaries); a lesser number enjoy some ecclesiastical identity, and others are local rentiers, often supplementing their incomes with government or Church employment. A smaller number work in miscellaneous, unskilled occupations, notably as watchmen (zibaña) at the households of affluent co-religionists.

162
632 Three quarters of Gondar's adult Amhara are women.
463 A minority of them are the spouses or dependents of lo-
433 cal Amhara townsmen, and confine their daily activities to domestic duties. A still smaller number are rentiers, or the recipients of stipends from mature sons living elsewhere. The remaining Amhara townswomen, perhaps 40%

[17]Thus excluding Chilga (urban center for the Kemant Agaw region) and Metemma (a border town of the Sudanese lowlands).

632 of the town's total population, support themselves by
433 working among the densely packed rows of beer houses
463 and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejora-
779 tively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the
563 former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically
[197] indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinc-
[167] tively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often
[142] light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian
[443] wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants
[442] (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people,
563 predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are
463 employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal
[197] makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics.
[562] Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

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632
563 bar maids.
[463]
[562] A third, numerically significant minority have come from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even
[144] though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly
[779] negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are
[647] non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations
[562] also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly
[464] by girls and women working as servants for the less af-
*[192] fluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Nilotes living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for
[326] sale in the town's daily wood market (sir gabiya). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

632 Ward and Town. Gondar's residents divide the town
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[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("bariya").

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621 into sixty-five named wards (sebekas). The social and demographic character of wards varies considerably, and it is useful to describe them in terms of two contrasting types. At one extreme, the ward resembles a kind
[241] of urban parish. It contains an eponymous Church; and
[423] a majority of residents are risteñas, members of landowning ambilineages who support themselves by farming and renting homesteads on their lands. But even these wards contrast with rural parishes on several counts.
*[192] The ward is generally compact in size, and internally
[463] undivided beyond the homestead (bet). Within it live out-landers who work outside the ward in exclusively non-agricultural occupations. Further, while the parish is administered in detail by residents, the ward relies upon non-resident agents of the municipality for its administration.

At the other extreme, are the town's "non-corporate"
[648] wards. During the Italian occupation, several of
[175] Gondar's parish-like wards were sequestered by the invaders as building sites. After liberation, the Imperial government divided each of these wards into tracts, which were deliniated according to the buildings upon them. Tracts were then given as grants (yaribeña mariet, "hero's land") to supporters of the government-in-exile, who were often non-residents of Gondar. In time, the pre-war boundaries of such wards were no longer regarded

632
621 relevant by townsfolk, and tracts, alone or in combination, came to be redesignated as "ward". Typically, the non-corporate wards encompass no agricultural lands, and includes no church within its boundaries. None of its resident families are risteñas or even related to one another, and each tends to associate itself with a church [779] according to cirteria other than residence. Indeed, in some, Muslims occupy homesteads within an otherwise Christian ward.

Most of Gondar's wards are today without any corporate identity, and serve simply as convenient place names or as occasional indicators of affluence and occupation. Although the meaning of many ward names is forgotten now, the names of others remain appropriately descriptive. Some denote the residents' occupation; * [192] (the "place of the superior beer", "encoye mosk", which is occupied by beer houses). Others retain the name of an eponymic church (as in Rufael sebeka).

Non-corporate wards are not a recent innovation. From its founding in the seventeenth century, Gondar has included such sebekas---given over to beer houses and mead halls, to liegemen and warriors, and to a variety of artisans. The last war and its aftermath have only extended such areas and have encouraged risteñas to build residences on their lands for out-landers unable to find housing elsewhere in town.

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621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by risteñas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [198] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Šankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibañas, eight as wood cutters,

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592 two as talla sellers, and one each as mat seller, carpen-
463 ter, day laborer, and pensioner.

*278 The practice of herbalist therapies in ward and
*759 town contrasts significantly with the situation in rural
369 hamlet and parish. The relatively dense population of the town has important consequences. In the countryside, the closest herbalist needed for a specific episode may be a day's walk from the client's home; in the town several may be found within an hour's walk. The increase in herbalist therapies is not directly proportional to the increased population of town over countryside, however.
*278 In Gabrael sebeka, for example, only eighteen households
*759 (41% of the total) contain one or more herbalists. Many
632 townfolk are forced to abstain from practicing herbalist therapies, because, as out-landers, they are unable or disinclined to locate needed botanicals. Also, significant numbers of townsfolk practice non-secular therapies, particularly as balazars.

*278 Further, although there are more redundant herbalist
*759 therapies potentially available to the townsman, he re-
369 mains ignorant of many of them. The peasant locates him-
203 self within a network of several core kinsmen and neigh-
602 bors upon whom he depends for information regarding herbalist chains. The townsman finds his place in a social matrix in which kinship ties are greatly diluted by dis-
632 tance. In Gabrael sebeka, for example, thirty-two house-
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holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town. In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-agricultural employment for their subsistence needs, there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

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*278 Kinship ties are an important means by which the
*759 peasant acquires and communicates information necessary
203 for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every
602 herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own
369 "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant
613 herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an
*278 agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like
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12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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*278 *759 203 369 the female moving away to her husband's parish, is generally cut off from this reputation. Thus, the herbalist in the town must most often establish this professional existence and reputation de novo. There is no way in which he can stimulate clients to come his way other than by empirical proofs. If his therapy is directed against an ailment for which even expert herbalist therapy promises success in only a fraction of cases, or an ailment which is epidemiologically infrequent, his difficulties are so much the greater. Thus, in spite of Gondar's relatively great population, the town contains only a handful of herbalists of provincial-wide fame. These same considerations dampen the herbalist's readiness to acquire new disease-name specialties. In addition to the difficulties already noted in Chapter 2, such a therapist would likewise be forced to establish his new professional presence de novo, even though he enjoyed an already established reputation against another ailment.

*278 *759 369 The contrast between the place of herbalist therapies in town and country has been most notably effected by the relative accessibility of non-herbalist therapies in the town. This is a result of the concentration of non-herbalist practitioners in towns, and of the relative affluence enabling townsmen to purchase more expensive therapies.

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*757 743 177 A government hospital, located on the edge of Gondar provides the most important non-traditional therapies. Most townsfolk regard hospital therapy with considerable apprehension, because of its strangeness and of numerous apochryphal tales describing its thera-
*757 177 178 pies. Nevertheless, the Amhara does not dispute the power of Western medicine, at least regarding some ailments. This respect is largely explained by the demonstrated successes of Western medicine, and the fact that, operationally, it coincides with certain traditional no-
*[192] tions of what powerful therpies should be like. In particular, the violent introjective mode associated with the most commonly experienced of hospital therapies, merify (injection), is regarded as consistent with notions of strong therapies. Moreover, the practitioner of Western medicine, like powerful traditional healers, is characterized by a general mastery over an extensive disease domain, through abstruse sources of power. Western therapy is not in general well integrated into traditional medical beliefs, but tends to be considered mainly from a pragnatic perspective. Thus, hospital therapy is a likely choice for ailments against which it has repeatedly demonstrated successful cures and against which traditional healers are predictably less successful. Conspicuous here are abscesses, ulcerations, and other superficial but potentially serious infections,

177 known as kusil and ibac. In addition, Western therapy
178 is sought for ailments which are serious and chronic, but for which traditional cures offer a poor prognosis or only palliatives. For these ailments (in particular, leprosy, kumtina; chronic coughing, yisaal basiyta, including tuberculosis, yilib basiyta; and a variety of stomach ailments, yihod himem and migaña), Western medicine is believed to offer prognosis equal to that of powerful traditional non-secular therapies, but not necessarily superior to them.

The injectionist's therapy is considered a variety of Western medicine. Injections are provided in the town's single pharmacia and by a handful of free-lance injectionists. All offer the same therapy, injection with what the client believes to be a uniform medicament, generally unidentifiable beyond "merify".[19] Injectionist therapy is favored for primary syphilis (kitin) and "fevers" (weba).

*278 The town herbalist's foremost traditional competi-
*759 tors are the weak debtera and the balazar. The relative
632 concentration of these therapists in towns is indicated by the following: In Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, there

[19] Most often, it is penicillin.

*278 *759 632 are no debtera therapists, and, although there are several women who are members of zar coteries (and are, thus, balazar) none publicly practiced therapies which might have been obtained from zars or fellow balazars. In contrast, the following non-secular therapies are practiced in Gabrael sebeka:

	Non-secular therapies	Herbalist therapies
Balazar 1	7	
Balazar 2	7	
Balazar 3	8	
Debtera 1	6	
Debtera 2[20]	10	
Total	40	31
% of all therapies of Gabrael sebeka	56%	44%

*278 *759 369 In summary, then, herbalists figure less prominantly in the town than in the countryside. The townsman more frequently omits them from relevant practitioner chains, or limits them to the initial consultation in such chains. 369 However, from the perspective of the system of Amhara 75 medical beliefs, this contrast between town and country

[20] In ecclesiastical terms, this man is not entitled to the title of "debtera".

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369 has no important consequences, and, in terms of Amhara
75 medical practices, the contrast is statistical rather than substantive.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEBTERA LIFE HISTORY

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*793 To his public, the debtera is most remarkable for his embodiment of so many significant contradictions. As an ecclesiastic, he is indispensible to the Church; he ensures its permanence by training boys for the priesthood, he enriches it with the fruits of his scholarly labors, and he sustains it by leading the performance of the Mass. Yet, he is often regarded by the laity as a breaker of priestly vows, an adulterer, and an intimate of the ganels against which the Church's existence stands opposed. He is a healer of the sick; he divines the future and provides an impressive variety of pro-
[754] phylaxes for clients. He is also the most notorious sorcerer in the land, and appears oblivious to the certain fate which satanic friendship and ensorcelling entail for him.

To explain these contradictions is to discover the sources of the debtera's reputation as the most powerful of Amhara healers, a reputation which he enjoys in spite of the fact that his therapies are pharmacologically little different from those practiced by secular herbalists. Becuase this observation depends upon familiarity with the debtera's professional life history, it is denied to the debtera's public, who only dimly perceive,

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*793 badly distort, and over-simplify the course of his career. For them, the contradictions are never reconciled, and remain a source of the awe with which they regard the debtera.

The debtera's career is, in fact, marked by years of deprivation and misery, of powerlessness and vulnerability before the forces of his social and physical environments. It is a life whose course is dominated by three interdependent interests. The first of these is the pursuit of the ecclesiastical goals which are the denotata of debtera-hood. The physical mobility and desperate insecurity which characterize the student's pursuit of the ecclesiastical goals eventually produce two valuable commercial assets for him---the acquisition of basic mercantile skills, and the willingness to face real dangers, both physical and moral. It is his capitalization of these assets that constitutes the second dominant interest. Ultimately, it is a life in which the pursuit and exercise of power, of the ability to control and influence the forces of his social and physical environments, that become dominant.

*756 In Ethiopian society legitimate power is descended
*793 from the Almighty, and mediated through the Emperor and
642 his designated officers. The mundane sources of such power are, first, the possession of rights to fields sufficient to attract and reward personal supporters,

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*756 *793 [642] and, second, the exercise of political prerogative, delegated by the state, with which to bestow favors and to direct sanctions. The debtera seeks power elsewhere, for he is a man without fields, kinfolk, or politically significant ties. It is in this quest, that he travels the path of apparent contradiction and real compromise, a path which ends in an attempt to wrest power from satanic sources, unmediated by any moral authority, and to legitimize it sui generis.

This chapter describes the debtera's life history, in terms of the sequence of recruitment criteria which an individual must meet before becoming a debtera, the decisions which he must make between alternative career paths, the knowledge, skills, and power which are acquired by the man who follows the path to debtera-hood.

Deferred to the concluding chapter is a comparison between the debtera-healer and the secular practitioner, and a description of the culmination of the debtera's quest for power, the satanic contract.

LEAVING THE PARISH

[869] * [192] Among the services provided at the parish church is instruction in the Amhara syllabary (fidal), and the ecclesiastical subjects required for ordination as a deacon (diyakon) and, subsequently, as a priest (keys).

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* 793 Literacy, per se, is not the goal of enrollment, but is
869 percieved rather as a pre-requisite for studying the
* [192] Gospels (wangel), the psalter (dawiyt), and a variety of prayers, pursuant to participating in the Mass (kidasiy) as an ecclesiastic of the parish.

621 Within a parish, only a minority of households send
869 boys to the church school; these are generally ristemma
* 793 households, each sending a single priest-candidate in
233 any one generation. Because attendance at the school
[602] precludes shepherding, the common lot of young boys, the student's family must find a substitute shepherd for him; a younger sibling is usually available for this task, but, if not, a collateral or even non-kinsman may be obtained. Indeed, the age at which a boy begins his studies (generally, between seven and thirteen years) is often determined by when this substitute can be found. The parish school is suspended, however, during periods of intensive agricultural activities, of harvesting, threshing, and winnowing.

* 793 Although considerations of piety influence a man to
423 seek ordination for his son, self-interest generally do-
593 minates. The achievement of priesthood validates a
621 family's claims to church lands (yimoskol mariet). If
554 the neophyte's father is himself a priest, his son's or-
* [192] dination means freedom from bothersome performances in the Mass. If the father is not a priest, but anyway

*793 423 593 621 554 holds priest land because he is a risteña of a founding ambilineage of the parish, his son's ordination means that the lands or payments until now turned over to a stranger priest (in lieu of a risteña priest) can be kept within the family.

*793 621 581 [839] *[192] [586] The durability of the ties which bind a priest to his natal parish are reinforced by his marriage. Most peasants are married in a "secular union" (yaluwkurban migabat), which excludes neither divorce not extramarital sexual adventures.[21] The priest, on the other hand, must be married, and it can be only as a "communion marriage" (bikurban migabat), an indissoluble sacrament of the Church which commits the spouses to sexual fidel- [572] ity and forbids even remarriage. Thus, the priest is cut off from carousing in the talla houses of the town. He must instead confine his comraderie to the courtyard of the parish church, separated from the persons and experiences which might otherwise lead him away from his parish fields.

*793 621 869 Thus enrollment in the parish school is conceived

[21] Two other forms of marriage, associated with a man on travels or living in town, are yidomoz migabat (which lasts for a contractual period) and yilijinat (providing only exclusive sexual rights to the woman).

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621 as a means for diousing and strengthening a risteña
869 family's economic and social interests within the parish.
241 There are two conspicuous exceptions. Should a boy bear
[732] a physical disability so severe that he will be unable to perform the basic subsistence activities of Amhara men, particularly plowing, he may be enrolled in the parish school as a prelude to a non-agricultural career beyond his natal parish. The alternatives are few.
[463] work as an artisan is appropriate for Muslim and Falasha,
[441] but shameful for an Amhara; while employment as a mer-
[563] chant is less objectionable, the peasant is generally without the necessary skills, contacts, and capital; military service is beyond his abilities; thus, only the Church and government remain. Regarding the Church, the priesthood is closed to him, since a priest must be physically whole, and capable of standing unassisted during
[647] the performance of the Mass. The remaining ecclesiastical and government career choices assume that a boy will achieve literacy at the parish school and subsequently
*793 depart from his natal community. The second exception
621 to the local focus of the parish school, is the small
869 number of boys who are offspring of debtera-teachers ser-
593 ving in parish churches. The ties of these men to their parishes-of-residence are usually only professional, and they are rarely risteñas, it is moreover their professional ethos which influences them to seek an extensive

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ecclesiastical education for their sons.

However, it is not only the cripple and blind, or the landless sons of full-time ecclesiastics who find in the parish school the means to leave the agricultural community. In reality, they constitute only a minority of the boys who leave the parish. For among those who are the physically-whole offspring of ristenas, there are some who find objectionable the prospect of a life-time as a farmer, subordinated to a father's wishes and inter-[illegible], and bound to a single woman. Where such inchoate dissatisfaction exists, it may be further stimulated by the parish teacher, particularly if he is a debtera.

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The teaching at the parish school is performed by a local priest or monk[22] who is competent in the required subjects. In the absence of a suitable local man, a stranger monk or debtera is employed. The debtera is a Church scholar of sorts, who also leads the chanting of the liturgy during the performance of the Mass. He is an important model for the restive student, for his life provides an alternative and challenge to the social

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[22] A "monk" (manakwosa) is a mature unmarried deacon, a widowed priest, or a layman who has renounced material acquisitions and has vowed celibacy. Only the first two are literate and, therefore, potential teachers. There are, in addition, anchorites (bahatawy).

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expectations that have gone unquestioned by other members of the boy's community. Significantly, the debtera is observed to enjoy a wide range of acquaintances beyond the peasants of the parish; he is a man known to have travelled throughout the northern highlands, to study at famous churches and monasteries, to visit great towns and markets. Beyond this, he is a man who has acquired power and prestige while free from the constraints of parental authority, as a member of an association of equals living beyond the bounds of the rigid status hierarchy of traditional Ethiopia.

For many students, it is the prospect of ending their studies rather than their wanderlust which they find discomforting. As a priest, a man is unlikely to progress in his knowledge of the liturgy and the scriptures, for he is neither likely to find a suitable teacher in his home region, nor are his agricultural, ecclesiastical and familial responsibilities likely to allow him the leisure to participate in such studies. What is more, the debtera-teacher, in casual remarks, paints the priesthood as a poor choice for the bright student; he is neither loath to comment upon what he considers priestly ignorance, nor is he reluctant to encourage his better students in the fulfillment of what he regards as their superior abilities.

The debtera provides a second service for the dis-

869 sident student by familiarizing him with the network of churches, monasteries, and academies which constitute the stations along which the student will progress once he leaves his natal parish.

*[192] The completion of psalter (dawiyd) is frequently considered a sign of the student's readiness to be tested by the local bishop (abuna) for certification as a deacon. The boy is fifteen or sixteen by this time, and the recipient of church fields in return for his performance in the Mass; with his marriage a few years later, he becomes a priest. The boy bent on a debtera career generally waits until he has been certified a deacon, since this is considered a prerequisite for enrollment in his first debtera school.

*793 With the exceptions already cited, a man is certain
869 to oppose his son's departure, since, sentiment aside,
621 the boy's move usually represents a significant economic
593 loss. When he leaves his natal parish, he does so sec-
166 retly, journeying to a distant debtera, in order to conceal his new residence from his father. Thus, he begins his debtera career without kinfolk or friends to protect him, without resources to meet his subsistence needs.[23]

[871] [23]Since liberation, government (secular) schools
[178] have offered an alternative to an ecclesiastical education
[369] pursuant to government employment. The effects of this have been limited, however, since only an estimated 3% pass beyond the eighth grade (ESA 1965:198). In addition children of townsmen and non-Amhara are disproportionately represented in these classes.

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THE STUDENT LIFE

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The debtera's ecclesiastical studies are divided into three broad categories: 1) Kiyne, versifications in the form of conundrums; 2) subjects relevant to the celebration of the Mass, such as zeyma (liturgical music), akwawkum (liturgical dance), and a variety of liturgical chants (e.g., soma digwa, songs and hymns of Lent); and 3) tergum, scriptural interpretation. Ideally, a student spends sufficient time under a master (memher) in each area to attain proficiency according to the standards of his mentor. In addition, a debtera is expected to acquire mastery of one subject so that he may, in turn, offer instruction in it.

The Kiyne Curriculum. Most often, these studies begin with kiyne. In the kiyne-drills, the student acquires the knowledge of Ge'ez, the language of the Church, and the parent tongue of Amharic and Tigrinya. In his ecclesiastical studies at the parish school, the student had learned a bit of Ge'ez vocabulary, but nothing of its grammar (irabata). Attendance at the kiyne school is believed to further instill habits of diligence and concentration, and the acuity of mind necessary for his later studies; further, kiyne studies are a prerequisite for versifications which the debtera performs during Church services.

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The routine of the kiyne school varies little from day to day. After the sun has set, the kiyne master comes before his students, who number between fifteen and forty; he extemporizes a kiyne, perhaps one praising the Almighty, or demeaning a ganel. This the student memorizes, and over the next twenty-four hours, he composes an original kiyne to match the intent and subtleties incorporated in the master's own. The next night, the master again engages his students, who offer up their kiyne for a critique by the master. Once more, the master provides a kiyne for emulation on the following night. Although kiyne can be composed in Amharic as well as Ge'ez, masters usually versify only in the liturgical language, which the student learns concomitant to the exploration of kiyne.

Anxieties and Dangers at the Kiyne School. During his stay at the kiyne academy, the student is faced with serious challenges to achieving professional goals and maintaining physical well-being. Students consider the kiyne curriculum to be very difficult, and even the most gifted student cannot attain acceptable proficiency in less than two or three years of continuous and conscientious application. The more ordinary student can look forward to five or more years at this particularly dif-

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ficult task.[24] In addition to the problem of mastering the subleties of kiyne (a problem often exacerbated by a master's indirection), the student is confronted with the prospect of memorizing the great amounts of scriptural and liturgical information.

Initially, the novice student is warmly received by his peers, who refer to him as "younger brother", and offer him assistance in establishing himself, and learning the curriculum. The atmosphere of helpfulness soon gives way to one of competition, as the established students come to regard the new boy as a rival for the master's personal instruction and encouragement. Although overt friendliness persists, the relations between a youth and most of his fellow students are underwritten by intense suspicion and rivalry.

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The master does not distribute his assistance equitably, but plays favorites, according to differences in students' abilities as well as personally conceived

[24] Kiyne students are, in general, drawn from among the most promising students of the parish school. Even so, the curriculum sometimes proves too difficult, and the students may seek out a kiyne master practicing an easier "school" of kiyne. Among kiyne students studying in Gondar, the gonj kiyne was reputed to be appreciably more difficult than wosera kiyne (both named after Ethiopian monasteries).

869 criteria. His personal interest means to the student
875 rapid advancement through the curriculum, dining at the master's table, and enjoying privileged information of a non-ecclesiastical nature. Without his patronship, a student is committed to years of uncertainty and physical misery, scraping to meet his subsistence needs, paying his "tuition" in demeaning services, such as gathering the master's wood and tilling his garden, and in deferential performances, particularly washing the master's feet and those of his visitors.

*793 The kiyne student is further troubled by the many
869 ailments which are his lot. He lives, with one or two
[342] of his mates, in a wretched lean-to of twigs and wild grasses, which proves to be poor protection against the
[291] cold winter rains. Often he owns only the toga on his
[515] back, and it, like him, remains unwashed for the dura-
[164] tion of the long dry season. Thus, ikek (scrofula) becomes his badge, and kurtimat (joint pains) and weba
[262] (fever) his recurrent companions. The student's diet
*[192] is his special concern, since it conspicuously lacks the combination of wholesome wot (stew) and injera (pancake-
[735] like bread) necessary to sustain good health. He ob-
[164] tains most of his food by begging in the town and local hamlets, where he generally receives scraps of stale injera bread, always inadequate and potentially pathogenic (i.e., likift bearing, threatening fever and

*793 869 severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably [262] the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based in- [164] gredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat. [735] His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals, *(192) and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain (kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent [164] wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints *(192) (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint (night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the context of the student's nocturnal activities.

[231] There is also danger from animals, the vicious and [735] often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs; [776] from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting [514] to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for nocturnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the exception of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's patronage, or who receive parental support, the young scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their [221] subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains [222] have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure, *(192) kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for

869 five weeks before it is ready to be woven into a tsifit,
222 a food hamper and table around which the Amhara meal is eaten. Because the students cannot afford so long a hiatus from their studies, the grasses are dried only a week or so, in order to lighten them for the trip back
[735] to the highlands. During their stay in the lowlands, the students support themselves by begging food from local farmers. Enterprising students often gather twice the amount of gramta they can carry, leaving the surplus to be taken up to the highlands in January.

*793 The gramta is brought to the student's hut at the
869 kiyne school for storage and drying. Although the stu-
[442] dents are anxious to sell immediately upon drying, both price and demand are low then, since the weavers, peasant
[286] women, have no leisure for tsifit making until March. In
*[192] the meanwhile, the student makes either traditional umbrellas of gramta for sale at the regional market, or seleyen, shrouds which he sells in the churchyard to mourners.

[434] Students also beg crops, a portion of which they consume and the remainder of which is sold at market. For a four week period, during October and November, the student begs a traditional double handful of pulses from farmers. During a two to three month period from February to April, students beg cereals and other crops (especially, cayenne). Because the amounts of produce

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obtained are often considerable (100 kilos and more), arrangements must be made for obtaining a donkey.

[735] However great his needs may be, a student cannot
[442] expect to participate in all of these activities, since this would leave insufficient time for his kiyne studies. However, gramta gathering and pulse begging are sometimes both engaged in during a single year.

Thus, the young debtera student finds himself transported from the benign enviornment of his natal parish to one in which only self-reliance and resourcefulness can secure his chosen goals and maintain his physical well-being. Ultimately, he must make a bitter choice
[442] between professional and material satisfaction. The
[735] profits from gramta sales, and the foodstuffs he has begged would much ameliorate his misery. Yet, in spite of his pressing subsistence requirements, the student sets aside only a minor portion of his profits for these needs. He exchanges most of these goods for money, which he retains as a fluid and durable capital with which to purchase necessary professional articles (mainly books) and to support his future commercial ventures. During the years of his kiyne studies, his assets accumulate at the rate of perhaps E$25. per annum.[25]

[25] A significant sum where per capita gross national product is E$116. (EAS:134); E$1.=U.S.$0.40.

441 The Alternative Career Paths. In choosing between
[869] material and professional interests, some men forsake
*[793] their erstwhile ecclesiastical goals altogether, to apply in secular occupations (particularly as scribes and merchants) the skills that they have acquired or perfec-
*[192] ted during their student days. Exemplary among these is the kibe (butter) merchant. Occasionally, profits accumulated by gathering and begging are invested in the purchase of lowland butter and the means for transporting it to highland markets. Profits earned from kibe trading are sometimes sufficient to promise a standard of living which exceeds that of the peasants with whom the student trades. The student who yields to the temptations of a full-time trading career generally establishes an annual cycle in which a portion of his kibe profits are reinvested in livestock for subsequent sale at regional markets.

*793 A second category of students reverses these priori-
869 ties, and disregards non-ecclesiastical goals altogether.
433 Such students believe that, for themselves, it is faith in the Almighty which must sustain them in their travail. Thus, even excursions into the lowlands are re-
*[192] placed by exclusively ecclesiastical activities. Subsistence needs are met by copying Church books for resale, participating in the Mass in return for a portion of the grain tithes given to the church, and dining at baptisms and annual memorial feasts (fehitat). In

*793 addition, he blesses houses against ganels with readings
869 from appropriate books of the Church, and sprinkles the
433 house with water he has sanctified with his reading and spittle.

*793 Finally, there is the largest category of students,
*756 those who choose the path of compromise and abinet. It
869 is from their ranks that the debtera-healer emerges.

THE ABINET WORKS: PROPHYLAXIS AND THERAPY

*787 Abinet are a class of recondite works directed at the satisfaction of some personal desire; their efficacy is obtained wholly or in large measure by invoking the assistance of super-humans (most often of the Church, but sometimes ganels), usually in contexts beyond those
*[755] permitted by the Church. Abinet subjects include thera-
[778] peutic performances (medhaniyt ina digam), and proph-
*(192] lactic amulets (kitab), divinatory texts (awdunigist), academic (timhirt) abinet, other inoffensive commercial works destructive works sending sickness and other misfortunes (kifat), and techniques for forcing the appearance and cooperation of ganels (ganel gelac).

Table eight indicates the constituent techniques of each category of abinet. The remaining paragraphs of this section consider those abinet works which address the therapeutic and prophylactic interests of the deb-

tera. They are described, in terms of their constituent elements and operational goals.

*193 "Herbal" therapies. Pharmacologically, the debtera's
*755 therapies are, with an exception, indistinguishable from
*278 those of the secular herbalists. Indeed, where possible,
[869] the debtera obtains new therapies from obliging secular
[539] therapists, setting them down in a book he keeps for this purpose (yisowat himem medhaniyt meshav, or hivri'i isowat). In contrast to the therapies practiced by secular herbalists, however, the debtera often supplements otherwise prosaic therapies with exotic, non-botanical ingredients (for example, owl's wing, hair from a lion's mane, blood of sheep's spleen), often employed in fumitories and libations.

*787
*755 Digam and Kitab. The digam is a syncretic invoca-
539 tion constructed from passages extracted from the Old
*[192] Testament (particularly Psalms), the New Testament (particularly the Gospels), zeyma (the litanies of the Mass), and devotional books dedicated to the saints (the lives of the Saints, the Images of the Saints); asmat, magical power derived from the secret names of Jesus and the Almighty; and requests for specific assistance.

From an operational point of view, each digam communicates five messages. 1) The digam indicates the supernaturals to whom the appeal is directed. An address

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to the Father, Son, Holy Spirit and their essential oneness[26] inevitably begins the text. Subsequently, Jesus, Mary, persons of the Old and New Testaments, and angels by name, singly or in combination, are cited. 2) The digam indicates the misfortune-bearing agent against which the assistance is sought. These are identified as either a category of agents (for example, ganels, budas, sorcerers), or as specific, named agents (generally individual ganels). The digam also frequently indicates specific misfortunes against which protection is asked. Although a causal link is assumed, between the agents and ailments mentioned in the digam, the link is made explicit in only a minority of cases, as, for example, when the ganel Šowtaley is associated with childhood aynitila (pica). 3) The digam further notes the power of the supplicant's supernatural protector to bring about the desired ends. This power, traced to the Almighty, is described in numinous allusions, each as "By the strength of Your names," "He who slays, heals, makes life," "Inextinguishable Light," "Omnipotent," "Fortress," "Conqueror of Evil". Similarly, this power may be associated with analogous precedents. For example,

[6]Reflecting the monophysite character of the Ethiopian Coptic Church.

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TABLE 8

ABINET CATEGORIES AND ACTIVITIES

1. Abinet Categories

Key:

x=always present (x)=frequently present o=absent

Abinet	"Herbal Therapy"	Digam Read	Digam Write	Telsem	Manipulation of text	Other
	CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS					
A. Debtera therapy (preparation)	x	x	o	o	o	o
B. Kitab amulet (preparation)	(x)	(x)	x	x	o	o
C. Awdunigist divination	o	o	o	o	x	o
D. Academic abinet	(x)	(x)	o	o	o	o
E. Other commercial, inoffensive works	o	x	o	o	o	x
F. Kifat destructive works	o	x	o	o	o	x
G. Ganel-calling	o	x	o	o	o	x

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TABLE 8 CONTINUED

*787 2. Abinet Activities

Letters refer to abinet categories, above

Providing disease therapy:	A, often followed by B C, then A, often followed by B G, then A, often followed by B
Providing personal prophylaxis:	B, alone C, then B
Divining:	C, alone G, alone
Assistance in learning, memory, extemporizing:	D, alone
Safeguarding property:	E, alone C, then E
Ensorcelling:	F, alone C, then F G, then F G, alone

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hemorrhaging is countered with the reference "As you curdled the might of the wind and hale," protection from the buda's eye is sought with "As you saved Joseph from the clutches of evil brigands," assistance in learning and memory notes "As You enlightened the heart (i.e., seat of the intellect) of Moses and loosened the bonds of his tongue". 4) The digam includes a petition for either an intrinsic improvement (e.g., "Illuminate my heart like the sun," "Uncover the eyes of my memory"), for his protection from external dangers ("Save me," "Conceal me"), or for the diminution of his oppressors (e.g., "Disperse my enemies," "Cast them out as anathema"). 5) Finally, the supplicant is identified as faithful to the Trinity, and abject but for the assistance he asks.

In the abstract, debteras consider a digam to be equally efficacious whether it is recited or written. In a practical context, however, the contrast between the written and recited digam is significant. Since the debtera's public is overwhelmingly illiterate, they are unable to read a digam, as the debtera does. The problem of memorizing even one lengthy digam, let alone the three, four or more that the peasant carries in his kitabs (amulets), makes memorization an unlikely alternative from the client's point of view. The debtera, for his part, sees the sale of a written digam as professionally a very different act from selling a text for

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recitation. The first is a professional service pro-
*755 vided for a client, the second marks a loss of profes-
*756 sional capital, since the erstwhile client would then be
539 free to transmit this knowledge to still other clients
*[278] of the debtera. Thus, it is only the debtera himself
who recites the digam; his recitations are generally ad-
juncts to the preparation of herbal therapies and the
gathering or processing of ingredients which will be in-
cluded in a kitab.

*787
*755 From a medical point of view, the contrast between
539 written and recited digam is equally important. First,
there is the matter of the duration of a digam's effec-
tiveness. In general, a recited digam must be spoken
aloud daily, lest its efficacy be interrupted. The ef-
fects of the written digam, on the other hand, are con-
tinuous, so long as the text remains legible and the
digam is renewed annually. Once a digam has been sewn
into its kitab, it cannot be removed without losing its
potency. Thus, the digam's legibility is known only in-
directly, and is assumed to remain legible unless made
wet; once exposed to water, it is considered no longer
effective. The owner of a kitab guarantees its continued
potency by burying it for a twenty-four hour period, be-
ginning on the eve of the new year, generally beneath his
threshhold. Necessary cautions aside, the effective life
span of certain kitabs is sometimes no more than seven

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or nine years, depending upon the debtera's recipe. Since a digam customarily includes the name of the supplicant, the usefulness of the kitab ends with the death of its owner.

Second, the recited digam derives its efficacy from a single, verbal, dimension. In contrast, the effect of a digam written into a kitab is amplified by a variety of non-textual elements. When written, the digam's script is most often set down from left to right, in the conventional direction of written Amharic and Ge'ez. Occasionally, however, a recipe indicates that the digam's effects can be better achieved if produced in another format, particularly a circular one. Another graphic device is the appearance of a telsem, a talismanic drawing appropriate to text, together with the written digam. The very materials which are used to set down digam and telsem are chosen and combined to maximize the achievement of the desired goal. The debtera must apply details regarding both the animal source of the parchment on which the digam is written (e.g., antelope, he-goat) and its dimensions, for it is often required that the parchment be tailored to the client's height. The composition and color of the ink used are a further concern. The text is generally copied in some combination of the sebat kolmat ("seven colors": pigments of red, blue, black, yellow, brown, new grass green, leaf green) which have

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been mixed together with other ingredients (such as sacramental oil, juice or sap, animal blood or urine). The recipe further states which segments of the text (e.g., asmat) are to be represented in a contrasting [824] color (usually red). Finally, the botanical variety of reed with which the text is written may be determined also.

Beyond the effects gained from the manufacture of the digam itself, the text's goals are further augmented by materials which are included in the kitab, together [237] with the digam. These include, as indicated by the debtera's recipe, botanicals, often together with such exotic ingredients as a designated number of hairs from a lion's mane. The outer cover of the kitab is made of leather, but a debtera must determine if it should come from a wild or domestic animal, and, if the latter, what its sex and color should be. The digam is sewn into this, but whether the stitch should be to the right or to the left, whether the thread should be cotton or silk, and what its color should be, must also be con- [801] sidered first. The number of stitches to be made is likewise relevant, for numerological considerations suffuse the entire process of making the kitab. Nor are the makers of the kitab neglected; whether the debtera should be sexually continent before writing the digam, whether the cord by which the kitab is worn should be

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*755 woven by a virgin or a post-menopausal woman, are fre-
539 quently relevant questions. Before giving the kitab to his client, the debtera may find it useful to recite a digam over it, perhaps accompanying this recitation with some activity, such as walking a designated numberof circuits around a church. Finally, the knowledgeable debtera can prescribe the part of the client's body where the kitab will work most effectively, on the arm, around the neck, at the groin or arm pit, whether right side or left.

782 Although laymen recite prayers which are analogous to the debtera's digams, they are exclusively verbal and without asmat. Amhara customarily pray on retiring and waking; there are also occasional prayers after meals. Prayers at home are always performed by individuals, and are directed to the Almighty, Jesus, Mary, and the saints of the Church. Prayers to the Almighty either thank Him for fulfilling requests made in previous prayers, or ask for special favors. The layman asks for protection from imminent danger and unknown enemies, for injury to those hostile to him, for wealth (especially land), good fortune, and long life; his most frequent request, however, is that his good health and that of other members of his household be maintained or restored. Prayers to saints are usually to Kidus Makael, Kidus Yowhanis, Kidus Gebre Menfis, and, particularly, the eponymous saint of the

782 supplicant's parish. Prayers to the saints ask intervention with the Almighty on the supplicant's behalf, and thank the saints for fulfilling previous requests. Although prayers are not formalized, a specific request often takes the form of a three-fold appeal during a single session, first addressing the appropriate saint, then Jesus, and finally the Almighty.

ACQUIRING ABINET

*787 *793 869 A boy rarely begins his debtera career with the conscious intention of learning abinet. His first studies are acquired almost inadvertently, ahd subsequent abinet are obtained only gradually. Yet, the types of abinet which he eventually acquires are never adventitiously determined. As he collects abinet throughout his professional career, the debtera is continually guided by the ways in which he perceives and weighs his instrumental and moral interests in these studies, and by the degree to which he is constrained by the character of his professional capital. Instrumentally, a distinction is made between abinet which directly satisfy some immediate personal needs of the debtera, and those works which enable the debtera to provide a service for others without transmitting technical knowledge of the abinet at the same time. Morally, abinet are

*787 judged directly according to their offensiveness to the
*793 Church, and indirectly according to the availability of
869 morally more acceptable alternatives. Professionally, the acquisition of abinet is guided by the quality and size of the debtera's capital, and of his ability to utilize abinet which are available to him.

*755 The First Abinet. With few exceptions, a student's
*787 first abinet acquisitions are herbalist therapies and com-
*793 plementary digams. These early therapies address the
869 most persistent threats of his environment, ikek (scabies), saal (cough), and kurtimat (joint pains). In addition, the student frequently obtains the recipe for a stimulant which ostensibly increases his acuity for learning kiyne.

*787 These first abinet studies are generally gifts,
*793 since a student rarely possesses anything beyond defer-
572 ence and abjectness with which he can appeal to a poten-
431 tial donor. He has two sources from which he can obtain
869 this knowledge. The first is a gwadeña or sympathetic balinjera. Among a student's fellows, he has a single special friend, whom he calls gwadeña. The gwadeña is his constant companion, who begs for ego when the latter is too sick to get his own food; he is completely trustworthy, and, with the exception of his money reserves gained from gramta sales and the like, whatever he possesses is at ego's disposal. The relationship is sym-

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metrical; it is also characteristically brittle, and rarely lasts beyond attendance at the kiyne school. A student's balinjeras are, literally, his mess-mates. They form an exclusive group of peers, reliable confidants pledged to cooperation. Beyond the circle of balinjeras, all students are implicitly towdaderiys (rivals). Between both gwadeñas and balinjeras favors are expected to be freely given and no formal accounting kept, although the latter are less committed to sharing than are the former. Because the new boy's gwadeña and balinjera are, like himself, in the first two years of the kiyne curriculum, the abinet repertoire of either consists of few studies, and these with little or no magical content. Ego's second source of abinet is an older, more knowledgeable student, who has been made aware of the novice's

*[192]

difficulties, and is willing to help. The relationship between the donor and recipient here is perceived as an exchange between radat (benefactor) and taraj (beneficiary). The new boy is abject, he is without power, and faces immediate dangers and difficulties. By his gift, the donor dramatizes a status difference between himself and novices in general, differences based on the culturally significant contrast between power and dependency. The recipient, by his deferential behavior, validates the donor's self-image.

*787 *793 869 Students who are more advanced in abinet studies consider the novice's acquisitions to be trivial and inocuous, because their goals are modest and they lack significant asmat. The young kiyne student, however, puzzles over whether these studies involve the coercion of supernaturals of the Church, instead of the humble and supplicatory attitude he wishes to express. Thus, the student often grows uneasy concerning these first acquisitions, and many, unable to reconcile their material and moral interests, go no further in their abinet studies. For the others, however, the pragmatic advantages of the abinet continue to stimulate their acquisitive interests. Once more, the student regards his powerlessness, his lack of mundane protectors and less controversial alternatives, to be particularly important; here, he considers it to legitimize the use of minor abinet. The student supports this perspective by emphasizing that the abinet are confined to his own immediate needs, and never used as a commercial service for others. Finally, by participating in the Mass and ecclesiastical scholarship, he expects to mitigate any taint acquired through these abinet activities.

*787 *793 *755 539 After one or two excursions into the lowlands, the young student who has already accomodated himself to the use of personal abinet comes to intensify his interest in prophylactic works, particularly digams. He seeks pro-

*787 tection against ganels (but as a category of agents,
*793 rather than as named individuals), against the shifta
539 bandit, and against the wild animals of the lowlands.
The prophylactic abinet that he acquires, although short on asmat, perhaps lacking telsem, and with few magical
[437] features of manufacture, he works into kitabs. While
[241] the student's initial stimulus for collecting these abinet is his own immediate needs, he is nonetheless aware of the commercial value of such abinet, in the form of commercial services for lowland peasants.

*793 Relatively few experienced debteras pay visits to
484 the kola lands. The lowlands, considered unhealthful and dangerous by highlanders in general, are still less appealing to the mature debtera. He deprecates them for the absence of ecclesiastical establishments, and fears them for what he believes to be the shifta's predilection
*755 for robbing and murdering debteras.[27] In lieu of more
*793 expert services, and attracted by the moderate costs, the
437 lowlander is often anxious to purchase kitabs from visit-
484 ing students. The students, in anticipation, prepare a
539 score or more of kitabs before traveling to the lowlands;

[27] Debteras attribute the shifta's murderousness to his fear of subsequent magical revenge by the debtera.

*755 *793 437 484 539 a blank space is left on each kitab, to be filled in later with the client's name. In general, the student initially sells kitabs to the lowlands to assist him in gathering agricultural products. The kitabs are purchased with either crops or services, and only infrequently with money. The peasant's services include recommending the student's kitabs to his neighbors, safe storage of the goods which the student has collected, and lending draught animals to bring the student's sacks up to the highlands. Sometimes, enterprising students arrange their visits in order to obtain payment in cotton, a relatively valuable product which debtera students are unable to obtain otherwise.

*793 *787 869 [437] The student's experience selling kitabs in the lowlands has a significant effect on the course of his subsequent abinet career. First, his abinet interests are redirected. His previous acquisitions were abinet which served an immediate personal interest, and whose commercial value was adventitious. These commercial successes, however small-scale, frequently stimulate the student to obtain abinet which have an exclusively commercial value. Interest in personally useful abinet by no means ends during this period, however; often it is accelerated by the student's changing attitudes to the practice of abinet. There is a tendency to now perceive his moral interests as less opposed to these works than he had pre-

*787 viously conjectured. Concomitantly, he renders these
*793 works morally acceptable by emphasizing their inoffen-
869 sive goals and the divine and untainted sources of their
abinet powers. Thus, he seeks more specialized academic
abinet, from among those studies which enable him to
learn quickly, or retain what he has learned, or extem-
porize well, or master any one of the ecclesiastical
subjects of the debtera's curriculum.

*787 Second, the student's commercial success often con-
*793 vinces him to give up entirely his earlier economic ac-
869 tivities. In part, he is persuaded by the economic re-
437 wards of writing kitabs, since the profits can equal
those obtained from selling kibe, while requiring neither
the great capital outlay nor capital risk which charac-
terizes kibe trading. Equally significant is the young
man's pride in his publicly acknowledged abinet powers.
He begins now to consciously assume a new identity as a
self-sufficient manipulator of human and supernatural
forces, a self-image which contrasts so obviously with
the mendicant and passive character of his earlier years.

Third, he is able to accelerate the accumulation of
a modest reserve of money. With this, he can purchase
relatively specialized abinet, generally from fellow stu-
*787 dents who already own important studies. Before this
*793 time, the student could obtain relatively valuable abinet
869 only from a knowledgeable debtera who was prepared to act

+793 as his radat. In practice, this debtera is usually the
869 student's memher (ecclesiastical teacher), since the stu-
*[192] dent cannot simultaneously serve two debteras, the memher and an abinet teacher, without offending the pride of both. Occasionally an enthusiastic collector of abinet may serve under a debtera in order to learn only abinet. Under these circumstances, both student and teacher maintain the pretext that the abinet collector is but another of the debtera's ecclesiastical scholars. In both situations, the abinet subject is learned only gradually, as the radat releases it, secret by secret, over a period of weeks or even months. The student, for his part, may be expected to provide confidential assistance in support of the debtera's abinet activities (sometimes involving kifat, offensive abinet), to act as his mentor's medhaniyt korac, or, less often, to provide substantial agricultural services, such as ploughing.

As a debtera student grows older and advances in his ecclesiastical studies, he finds it progressively
[484] easier to acquire new abinet studies. By then, he has travelled extensively over the network of monasteries and famous churches which are scattered over the northern plateau. In the course of these travels, he has made the acquaintance of many abinet-practicing debteras, and consequently a great variety of abinet studies have become potentially available to him. At the same time, he

*787 *793 869 *[278] is better able to obtain new abinet, since his own growing repertoire increases the possibility of arranging abinet exchanges with other debteras. Moreover he is better equiped to utilize them; he has learned much of the Ethiopian herbal pharmacopeia, and is able to identify botanicals by the Ge'ez nomers with which they are frequently designated in the recipes of abinet therapies [198] and kitabs. Similarly, his mastery of Ge'ez makes possible the acquisition of complex digams.

75 639 *[192] In addition to acquiring individual recipes, debtera-healers also seek out encyclopaedic treatices. These are inventories of recipes, bearing Ge'ez titles such as "book of medicine for diseases for all parts of the body" (metshafe medhaniyt lekwiylown deweyate akalat). In these books, recipes are grouped according to diseases; the diseases are, in turn, classified according to the part of the body that they affect, ar- [177] ranged from head to feet. Stefan Strelcyn (1965), after close examination of four such manuscripts, has commented on the substantial uniformity of their contents and the remarkable similarities which they share with the third and fourth books of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine.

*793 *765 *756 While such treatises contain hundreds of recipes, their significance for the practice of Abyssinian medicine is limited by the character of their pathogenic interests. As seen by his clients, the debtera's thera-

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*756 peutic forte is the treatment of serious, non-acute
*793 ailments which are traced to purposive causal agents, generally sorcerers and ganels. On the basis of Professor Strelcyn's description of encyclopaedic treatises, however, it appears that the overwhelming number of their recipes address ailments which are trivial or for which equally effective secular therapies are available. A commercially valuable recipe (one addressing an ailment for which the debtera's professional services are commonly obtained) is, then, generally acquired individually, often after its efficacy has been established to the satisfaction of the recipient (vide Chapter Five).

*756 Typically, the debtera's abinet repertoire expands
*787 to include representative studies from the entire range
*793 of commercially valuable and inoffensive abinet. Disease therapy and prophylaxis constitute only a portion of these works, although perhaps the greatest. These abinet include 1) therapies and prophylaxis, including digams against named ganels who are associated with specific ailments or specific pathogenic circumstances, 2) "academic" abinet, 3) protection against physical assault by human enemies, 4) safe guarding of agricultural interests, 5) countering the diminution of the client's property and fostering its legitimate increase, 6) gaining honor and respect (makver) for the client, 7) protecting the

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*756 client's conubial interests, and 8) enabling accurate
*787 divination through dreams.[28]
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DIVINING WITH AWDUNIGIST

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*787 More than anything, it is the ability to manipu-
*793 late awdunigist texts on behalf of a client that communi-
539 cates a man's transition from an amulet writing student serving lowland peasants with a few simple kitabs, to a weak (tinis) debtera providing services to a highland
*[192] public. According to those debteras who have not accompanied him along the abinet path, such a debtera has now become a "tonkway", a "seer" classified together with the heterodoxical and despised balazar, tarnished by the proscribed manipulation of supernatural powers. These clerics consider the use of awdunigist objectionable,

[178] [28]Written digams and kitabs are largely confined to contingencies for which the client carries the amulet on his person. A client's agricultural interests (for example, protection from locust, birds, and rodents), in contrast, are safeguarded otherwise. Here, the client's fields are often sprinkled with the debtera's infusion, over which digams have been read. In addition, a portion of the infusion is placed in a vessel and secreted among his fields, in order to secure sustained protection. Analogous abinet are worked for the client's other property interests (for example, safeguarding from theft).

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because it assumes that forces other than the Almighty can direct man's life on earth. In addition, assertions are sometimes made which link awdunigist to satanic origins and, with more justification, to offensive applications. The awdunigist-using debtera, however, generally ignores this theological question and regards these texts in an exclusively technical context.

During the years that a debtera accumulates the abinet works discussed in the preceeding section, he also acquires awdunigist texts. These texts are a variety of abinet, with which the debtera divines the client's real needs, present and future. Using awdunigist, the debtera is able to maximize his abinet resources, to select those works best suited to the client's revealed needs and most effective in concert with one another. Since the major part of the debtera's abinet services are prophylactic (mainly in the form of kitabs), and since the client's own divinatory techniques are relatively uninformative and often unreliable, it is the debtera himself who must generally prescribe prophylaxis. Thus, it is mainly through owning and manipulating awdunigist texts that the debtera enjoys the opportunity for the commercial exercise of his prophylaxes.

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Before describing the content and use of awdunigist texts, it is necessary to first consider lay divination through dreams, indicating both its practical limitations

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*793 and its complementary relationship to consultation with
539 the awdunigist-using debtera.

*787 The Hilimefoc. Dreams occur as either kijet or hilim. A hilim is an intelligible narrative whose prosaic events and recognizable persons, if properly interpreted, reveal useful information about the immediate future. In the kijet, bizarre happenings and strange actors frighten and distress the dreamer, and whose content yields no useful information. The lexicon of
*[192] hilims is public knowledge. However, older laymen of either sex, are considered more knowledgeable in this regard, and the title "hilimefoc" ("dream interpreter") is generally limited to them.

Hilims contain information about a variety of subjects, including prosperity or poverty, enmity and friendship, honor and respect, marriage and divorce, the birth of children, and changes in residence. Dominant among the themes appearing in hilims are questions regarding misfortune in general, and physical well-being in particular. A hilim message indicates, first, the character of the future event, and, second, the person to whom the message refers. Six specific events are relevant to an individual's medical interests: 1) specific ailment, 2) illness, 3) death by causes unspecified, 4) ganel-caused misfortune, 5) human danger, 6) unspecified misfortune.

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*787 In most hilims, the projected event is considered relevant to the individual who performs the characteristic activity in the dream, rather than to the dreamer *[192] himself. Thus, if Berey dresses her hair with kibe in Asfow's dream, it is Berey who is threatened with saal (cough) and gulnfan (catarrh). Only in the case of hilims projecting death, are dream motifs conventionally associated with a category of persons, regardless of who actually appears in the dream; here the predicted dead man may be the dreamer, his primary relative, or an unspecified kinsman.

A hilimefoc is consulted when the dream message is ambiguous in some way, or the layman wishes an expert opinion regarding the meaning of a series of messages ostensibly referring to a single individual. Since hilims frequently reveal a dreamer's vulnerabilities, the layman consults only a hilimefoc whom he trusts to respect his confidence. Inevitably the messages are very general, and frequently they contradict one another. Only a very small number of specific ailments are matched by specific hilim motifs. Moreover, these motifs are not nearly so well known as those for the more general prognostications of hilims, and are therefore likely to be passed over as meaningless by the dreamer. Thus, hilim messages are insufficient to designate specific prophylactic goals for the layman. Rather, they tend to pro-

*787 vide a stimulus for the layman to obtain the services of an awdunigist-using debtera; this is particularly true when messages are redundant or corroborated by other kinds of information. Appendix C provides examples of hilim motifs and messages.

*787 Infrequently, an ecclesiastical student who is beg-
*793 ging for food will deliver a spontaneous prediction (imeninant), before the house of a prospective donor.
*[192] These predictions duplicate the range of hilim messages, and refer to members of the household.

*787 The Awdunigist Texts. "Awdunigist" refers to a
*793 category of texts with which a debtera divines by means
539 of arithmetical calculations. Each text is divided into two parts. The first specifies information which is required for the debtera's calculations; the second contains the information which the debtera seeks, and is arranged as a series of numbered entries, only one of which is appropriate to the debtera's input information.

The categories of input information are:

*787 Names. Each letter of the Amharic syllabary is
*793 given a set numerical value, which like all input values,
539 remains constant for any awdunigist text used. Using
551 these numbers, the debtera converts each input name to the sum of the values of its constituent letters. Ego's autonym is almost always required; his father's autonym (which is ego's patrinym) and mother's autonym are fre-

*787 *793 539 [551] quently required. Depending upon the contingency being investigated, the names of other individuals may also be included; for example, in divination concerning litigation, the judge's name is asked.

[805] *[192] Dates. The Amhara group years into cycles of four, naming each year after one of the four evangelists. Thus, 1956 is the year (zemene), of Yowhanis, 1957 of Matiyows, 1958 of Markows, 1959 of Luwkows, 1960 of Yowhanis, and so on. Each year is assigned a numerical value (for example, zemene Yowhanis is two). Months, days, and diurnal count (day is six, night is fourteen) each are numbered.

[823] Directions. Each of the eight cardinal and intermediary points is numbered.

The numerical values of all required input information are totled, and this total is then divided by a factor indicated in the text. The debtera's goal is the numerical remainder of this division; it is this figure that indicates which of the text's numbered entires is relevant to the subject (that is, the person about whom the debtera is divining).

*787 539 *[192] Broadly speaking, there are two categories of awdunigist texts. The first consists of largely redundant "astrological" (kokob) texts. These texts are based on the assumption that the course of any person's life on earth can be revealed by learning with which of twelve

*787 539 stars his destiny is linked.[29] For this, the debtera must know the subject's autonym, the year (zemene) and month of his birth, and whether he was born during the day or night; division is by twelve. Here, the text indicates both the name of the subject's star, and a variety of information relevant to all people who are bound to *[753] this star. Among this information, the following medical data figure prominently: 1) Prophylactic and diagnostic notations specifying the ailments and pathogenic *[755] agents which threaten the subject; 2) prophylactic notations regarding the manufacture of the kitab, its appropriate digam (indicated by generic title), and the construction of an effective telsem most appropriate to the [782] subject; 3) therapeutic notations regarding pharmacology *[278] and the choice of suitable sacrifices (indicated in terms of color, combination of colors, animals, combinations of animals, substitute animals).

The text further stimulates and focuses prophylactic interests, by indicating the following concomitants of illnesses which threaten for the future: 1) The days,

[29] Stars one, five and nine are identified by name with fire; two, six, and ten with earth; three, seven and [173] eleven with air; four, eight and twelve with water. Debteras trace the origins of awdunigist variously to the court of Solomon and to certain monasteries of medieval Ethiopia.

months, and years (zemene) which are non-propitious for the subject's well-being, 2) the age to which the subject will probably live and the age (always markedly longer) to which he may live if appropriate prophylaxes are employed, 3) bad omens (often indicated as a color of men, animals, or land), 4) dangerous places and environmental conditions. (The text likewise indicated propitious dates, omens, and places.) In addition, the text describes the subject's social persona and the responses it will (eventually) elicit from the people with whom he interacts.

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While the kokob text addresses a variety of interests, the texts of the second awdunigist category are more specialized. From a medical point of view, these texts can be divided into the following six types, according to the services that each provides:

1. These are exclusively medical texts, providing detailed information of prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic utility, and coinciding with the range of medical interests considered by the kokob text. This information is relevant to the period specified by the debtera in his calculations.

[776] 2. These texts name the saints, angels, and biblical persons who are particularly disposed to assisting the subject. Although this information is not exclusively of medical relevance, it is useful for constructing the

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kitab and addressing personal petitions by the client.

3. These texts provide prognosis for the subject's (unspecified) ailments. Prognoses are generally given as combinations of the following oppositions: a)life : death, b)(if life,) complete recovery : lingering ailment or disability, c)(if complete recovery,) rapid recovery : slow recovery.

4. These texts indicate medical information, generally specifying pathogenic agents and named ailments, which threaten this subject during the period specified by the debtera in his calculations. The information is, however, cursory and often mixed with matters of no real medical significance.

5. These texts provide general indications of the dangers and misfortunes which threaten the subject, but fail to indicate whether these misfortunes affect the subject's health. Such texts enable the debtera to inquire about periods (year or month of a specific year) which are of special interest to the debtera and his client. Here, the debtera includes in his calculations the numerical values of the year or month and year about which the inquiry is being made. Often, these texts also indicate what segment of the specified period is particularly threatening.

6. These texts provide no information of likely medical importance, but consider matters such as propi-

*787 539 75 tious occupations, journeys and marriages (thus paralling information also given in the kokob text).

Appendix D provides illustrations of medically relevant information which can be obtained from awdunigist texts.

*787 *278 *755 *793 539 In the main, a debtera acquires awdunigist texts individually, just as he collects digams, kitab recipes, and herbalist therapies.[30] Awdunigist repertoires therefore vary in comprehensiveness from debtera to debtera.

*787 539 178 437 Moreover, "definitive" versions of awdunigist texts are unknown; whatever their common origins may have been, extant texts are probably unique products of many adventitious deletions and additions. Deletions are most likely when texts are transmitted from seller to buyer. At that time, details are sometimes withheld by the seller, in order to secure additional payments, or as a bond

[30] Over the last three decades, the accessibility of awdunigist texts has been affected by the publication, in Asmara, of a collection of these texts. Most are in Amharic, but perhaps a quarter are in Ge'ez entirely or in part. Although many debteras demean these texts, they are in fact used, particularly by "weak" debteras. Public illiteracy, ignorance of the book's existence, of where it can be obtained, of the precise manipulations it requires, together with the limited utility its contents hold for the layman, and the fear of putative satanic associations have prevented its diffusion to the debtera's public, however.

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against continued services from the buyer. This practice occurs, in fact, in the transmission of all categories of debtera works. For example, while relating therapeutic information, the seller may indicate that he has omitted an ingredient, or he may identify it with an ambiguous or obscure nomer. Should the would-be purchaser subsequently fail to satisfy the owner, the incomplete therapeutic notation must be deleted from the text. On the other hand, debteras frequently add information to texts, first inserting it as marginalia and then, once its efficacy has been accepted, including it within the text when recopying or transmitting it.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: THE POWER TO HEAL

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This chapter considers the attribution of differential healing powers to Amhara healers by their public. The analysis focuses on the awakiy debtera, as the Amhara model of a powerful healer, and the standard against which other practitioners are measured. The chapter is divided into three sections, each of which considers an aspect of the debtera's healing powers. The first section describes lay perspectives of the debtera-healer. Laymen trace the debtera's abilities to notions of generic power, ostensibly derived from ganel familiars. The second section considers the debtera's relations with ganels as he in fact experiences them. The significant technical and moral differences between the realties and those misconceived by laymen are indicated. The final section examines the real sources of the debtera's medical superiority, and finds them in the unique professional advantages which he enjoys.

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THE LAYMAN'S CONCEPTION OF THE DEBTERA'S HEALING POWER

Technical Considerations. The debtera's public explains his medical superiority over secular practitioners in terms of the technical differences which they perceive

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between the works performed by the two categories of healers.[31] Laymen conceive the debtera's healing powers as the product of his knowledge of asmat, possession of awdunigist, and intimacy with ganel familiars. Although the layman recognizes that his own knowledge of these matters is inexact, he assumes that the debtera's use of asmat, awdunigist, and familiars can be synthesized into an integral body of learning, skills, and practices. Two types of syntheses are believed possible. The first of these characterizes the "weak" (tinis) debtera, already discussed in chapter three. This debtera lacks demon familiars, but he can perform awdunigist calculations and he possesses sufficient asmat to provide prophylactic amulets and a number of therapies. However, his prophylaxes are easily breached by powerful sorcerers or determined ganels, and his therapeutic powers do not exceed those of secular herbalists. The second synthesis characterizes the awakiy debtera. Here, the debtera's professional title signals the possession of ganel famili-

[465] [31] The layman's belief in the medical superiority of the awakiy debtera is asserted verbally, in the context of herbalist chains, and in the impressive fees paid to the debtera (for therapy, ten times and more the amount paid to a secular healer; for prophylaxes, fees between E$50. and E$300. are not uncommon).

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ars. The weak debtera's asmat are finite, prosaically acquired, and mainly limited to prophylactic applications; the awakiy debtera, through his daemons, has unlimited asmat resources. These asmat are equally effective in meeting prophylactic, therapeutic, and offensive ends, and are well beyond the abilities of any secular persons. Thanks to his ganel-tutors, the awakiy debtera divines with precision and reliability much greater than those of his lesser colleagues. In addition to using ganel-taught asmat, the awakiy debtera can employ his daemons directly, particularly in offensive contexts.

Thus, the technical superiority of the tinis debtera over the secular healer is restricted to speculative readings for the future, and to prescribing and manufacturing prophylactic kitabs, since it is only in these areas that his ecclesiastical skills, awdunigist reckonings, and limited asmat provide him with a clear advantage. In contrast, laymen recognize the technical superiority of the awakiy debtera in diagnostic, prophylactic, pharmacological, and therapeutic contexts. The remainder of this section discusses the technical advantages which the layman believes the awakiy debtera enjoys over the secular healer.

Diagnosis by the secular healer is inevitably weak, since it tells relatively little about the sickman's ailment that is therapeutically useful, or that was unknown

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*756 prior to professional consultation. Rather, it comments
*793 incompletely on the appropriateness of a therapy already
*759 applied, choosing between "household diagnosis is correct", and "household diagnosis is possilby incorrect". On the other hand, the debtera diagnoses by means of awdumigist, and can provide information concerning the choice of an effective therapy. Moreover, the debtera is generally consulted for serious ailments, many of which are identifiable as cases of poisoning (mers) or sorcery (sray) which have been instigated by a human enemy of the sickman. Here, the debtera diagnoses not only the correct disease-name, but also indicates the
[751] probable identity of the malfactor.[32] Beyond its incidental therapeutic value, this is necessary for preventing the future occurence of this syndrome or an analogous one, by directing prophylaxis against the pathogenic agency and counter-measures (i.e., physical or magical assault, change of residence, or reconciliation) regarding the sickman's human persecutor.

*[787] Awdumigist addresses a client's congenital vulnera-
[539] bilities, whether or not these have been actually

[32] The debtera "assists" in identifying this individual, by indicating various characteristics, but does not actually name him.

*755 *756 breached. Thus, the information it provides regarding
*793 pathogenesis is equally relevant and detailed for pre-
*[787] scribing prophylaxis, as it is for selecting therapy.
[539] The secular healer, in contrast, is unequipped to pre-
scribe prophylaxis, except for the inconclusive and pre-
[751] liminary indications given by the hilimefoc. In addition
to prescribing prophylaxes, the debtera provides protec-
tive kitabs for a great variety of medical contingencies.
[304] Among secular healers, only the tokwariy (tattooist) is
[951] able to perform prophylactic works, and these provide
very imperfect protection against only a small number of
ailments.

*755 Laymen assess differences between their own medical
*756 procedures and those of debtera-healers most precisely
*757 with regards to the preparation and administration of
*759 therapy. Most details regarding the preparation and ad-
*793 ministration of the debtera's medical works are unavail-
able, directly at least, to the layman. In these areas,
he perceives the debtera's medical works by means of a
series of semblances, linking the "asmat" (magic) which
appear in secular therapies with the esoteric activities
the debtera is known or assumed to perform in his own
*[278] therapies. Among the important "asmat" of secular thera-
*[787] pies are the use of prescribed instruments for gathering
and processing of medicaments, the special condition of
the gatherer, the numerological content of pharmacology

*755 *756 *757 *759 *793 *278 *787 and therapy, the verbal elements of prophylaxis and therapy, the format of supplicatory prayers and the ends to which they are directed. Significantly, the debtera's entire public is familiar with these semblances, for Amhara society has not developed separate professional and lay cultures with regards to secular healing. Nearly every layman owns one or more professional therapies, or is familiar with the special pharmacological features of several therapies belonging to other laymen.

*757 *759 The attitude of the secular healer towards his therapy is essentially passive. From his perspective, the therapy is an immutable composition; its elements of asmat are individually unintelligible, and are sorted into combinations by rote. The layman's medical powers are specific, for they are limited to exclusively therapeutic applications; moreover, they are fixed, since they are relevant to a small number of named and etiologically unrelated ailments. In contrast, the debtera's attitude towards his repertoire of medical knowledge is recognized as active and manipulative. Through his daemons, he has access to unlimited asmat; what is more, he knows the lexicon of this magic and understands the syntax of therapeutic combinations. Thus, he is able to produce a great variety of therapeutic statements, each tailored to the specific vulnerabilities and needs of his client. The debtera is believed to own powers of very general

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*756 application. In a medical context, he is adept in all
*793 but the chirurgeon's domain, and his works are perceived as strong. In addition to therapy, he is an expert diag-
[754] nostician, and giver of prophylaxis. Finally, the debtera's medical powers are perceived as only an aspect of the more general powers he possesses, and which he displays in various non-medical works affecting property, interpersonal relations, and, importantly, the sending of illness.

*756 Reconstructing the Debtera's Biography. Laymen find
*793 confirmation of the putatively necessary ties which bind
732 debtera to ganel in the relatively high proportion of physically aberrant debteras. Laymen explain these disabilities as evidence of the mischief played by the capricious ganels on their debtera partners. While debteras constitute only a minute portion of the highland population, they are a highly visible one. Debteras, particularly abinet-practicing ones, tend to live in towns. There, they advertize their presence for the multitudes, during the performance of the Mass, in the churchyard conversing among colleagues, or as a center from which their students circulate on their daily begging. For the layman, the appearance of achondroplastic, pituitary, and tubercular dwarfs, of cripples with shrivelled limbs---all professional confreres and all living within the radius of two or three miles---bears impressive wit-

*756 *793 ness to the ganel-tainted character of the debtera.
732 The layman simplifies the debtera's career by sup-
*756 posing that most debteras (certainly the abinet-prac-
*793 ticing ones) are former priests, men who broke their priestly vows by committing adultery. Impelled by shame to leave the natal community along a path of increasingly sinful deeds, they are morally spoiled even before becoming debteras. In reality, only a very small proportion of debteras have been recruited this way, for such men are generally ill-suited in age, intellect, and temperament to the lengthy, arduous, and often demeaning apprenticeship required of the debtera. The breaking of priestly vows, is, in addition, a very serious matter, and few men would have the temerity to mock the supernaturals of the Church a second time.

TECHNICAL AND MORAL ASPECTS OF GANEL-DERIVED POWER

*756
*793 The layman's distinction between fragmented secular
*755 healing powers and the generic power of the debtera is
776 based on the misconception that the complicity of ganels stands behind the awakiy debtera's medical superiority. In reality, the debtera acquires his repertoire of herbal therapies, digams, kifat recipes, and awdunigist texts individually or in small numbers, from fellow practitioners. Further, although the ties between an awakiy

*756 *793 *755 776 debtera and ganels are real enough, they do not conform with the layman's notions of intimacy and friendship. Rather, they are either 1) specific and impersonal, in the case of offensive works (kifat), or 2) episodic and manipulative, in the case of ganel pulling (sabiy).

The following paragraphs of this section describe these abinet activities which involve the complicity of ganels and consider them in terms of instrumental value and moral significance to the debtera.

*753 764 *[192] Kifat Works. Kifat (literally "evil") works are abinet which send illness, death, and other misfortunes onto selected victims. Illnesses caused by kifat works are inevitably serious, and coincide symptomatically with ailments that have non-kifat work etiologies. They fall into three categories. The first includes ailments which are characterized by combinations of severe and prolonged stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, headache, diarrhea, fever, and kijet (nightmares); these ailments are difficult for the layman to diagnose correctly; they are resistant to secular therapy, and are all considered potentially mortal. Kifat works of the second category produce ibidet (madness), and are expressed symptomatically as compulsions to either wander about aimlessly, or to sit incoherently in a single place. Ibidet is also caused by mers (poison potions), for which kifat work

*753 754 owning debteras (as well as occasional laymen) possess recipes. The third variety of pathogenic kifat works [842] sends sexual maladies. Sterility, considered a very [833] serious ailment, is sent to women only. Impotency affects both sexes; it is experienced by women as uncontrollable crying when approached or touched by any man, and is often confused with aynitila.

754 The most commonly owned non-pathogenic kifat works belong to a category known as "amderab". These works enable the operator to send onto his victim's house and fields misfortunes of fire, water (as destructive hail and rain storms), earth (as rains of stones and clods), air (as destructive winds), and putrification (as noxious odors). Other non-pathogenic kifat works have a domestic aspect (e.g., prepared foods are continually spoiled, food stores are consumed at an unnatural rate, servants grow discontent with the master's household, and domestic animals wander away); a mercantile aspect (e.g., trading rivals find it difficult to sell their goods, rival talla sellers find their newly prepared beer turning to a pitch-like consistency); or bring misfortunes at the hands of other human agents (e.g., the victim's son is made a wastrel, kenezereña, the victim repeatedly and unintentionally incurs the enmity of people, the victim exposes himself to ambush by enemies).

At its simplest, a kifat work requires a recitation,

754 concomitant with the manipulation of prescribed materials. The recitation consists mainly of strings of ganel asmat names, repeated a prescribed number of times, in conjunction with the victim's name.[33] Significantly, the recitation includes no information about the operator (or his client), and is devoid of the supplication and contriteness which characterizes the digams of inoffensive abinet. The materials and accompanying activities of the kifat work replicate the familiar dichotomy between "contagious" magic (e.g., pathogenic kifat works often call for a sample of the victim's hair, clothing, or feces) and "sympathetic" magic (e.g., "Cut him as I cut this stalk," "Twist his guts as I twist this root).[34] Pathogenic kifat works are sent in either of two ways. In the first, a malady is sent from a distance, and the kifat work operation ends with the recitation and manipulation of the materials at the debtera's rooms. Such

[33] Frequently, this is a multiple of the numbers associated with the asmat names of inoffensive abinet (e.g., seven times seven repititions).

[34] Often, the symbolism of kifat works are more obvious to the operator, than is the case with inoffensive abinet.

754 kifat works require special conditions of the operator, generally that he remain chaste for a designated period prior to the operation, and often require that the kifat work is performed in a room where no sexual relations have taken place. In the second type of pathogenic kifat works, recitation and manipulation are followed by burying the materials (denkero) close by the victim's place of sleeping and eating, generally beneath the threshhold of his hut. Non-pathogenic kifat works are sent from a distance only.

*787 754 539 Competence in the use of awdunigist texts is considered a prerequisite for the effective use of kifat works, and laymen are well aware of the anti-therapeutic uses of these texts. If attack by a kifat work is to succeed, information must be obtained beforehand regarding the special vulnerabilities of the intended victim. For this information, the debtera turns to awdunigist, reading it just as he would for a client, noting periods of danger, ailments, misfortunes, and pharmacological information. This information is used to select an appropriate type of unhappiness; in addition, it indicates effective materials for the operation of the kifat works, particularly regarding characteristics of animals to be sacrificed or whose organs are to be used.

*756 *793 754 Acquiring and Using Kifat Works. The considerations which influence a debtera to acquire inoffensive abinet

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*756 *793 754 studies are likewise persuasive regarding the collection of kifat works: The debtera is threatened by serious dangers, and he lacks an effective, less controversial alternative. Thus, his early acquisitions of kifat works are intended to be an implicit threat against those student rivals (towdadariy), who would assault and ruin him by magical and mundane means. A man generally begins his repertoire of kifat works before leaving the kiyne school. Once begun, there are strong inducements to expand it, since a repertoire of kifat works can be effective, particularly against students knowledgeable in abinet, only if it includes works sufficiently varied to threaten the intended victim's prophylactic defenses. Subsequently, an extensive repertoire of kifat works remains a valuable asset for a debtera who is developing a commercially remunerative abinet practice. The threat of sanctions by kifat works is his ultimate guarantee for the honesty of other debteras during abinet exchanges. Similarly, the threat of kifat works guarantees payment [426] by laymen for the debtera's services. Often, these services extend beyond the performance of abinet and include the lending of money at interest.[35] Finally, kifat works

[35] Capitalizing on his cash reserves, awakiy debteras sometimes lend money, customarily at an interest rate of 30% for three months.

*793 are considered attractive increments to a man's abinet
754 repertoire, for subsequent exchanges with debteras, and as remunerative services for clients (although by no means all owners of kifat works offer them as a commercial service).

A user of kifat works identifies the potentially immoral aspects of such works as the invocation of ganels and sending of misfortunes. However, he perceives his own use of kifat works as morally neutral and pragmatically justified, analogous to more prosaic techniques, such as the use of firearms: The invocation of ganels is perfunctory, and implicates neither debtera nor client in any personal way. The debtera conceives kifat goals as either defensive or retributive, in either case legitimate. Where kifat works are offered as a commercial service, the debtera's perspective is confirmed in two ways. First, the client seeking his kifat services inevitably provides a self-seeking reconstruction of the difficulties that obliged him to seek this assistance. Further, debtera and client explicitly consider the degree of injury which would be commensurate with the offense of the chosen victim; whether it should be a mortal ailment, a painful lingering sickness, or a property loss; whether it should be visited on the principal offender, his

*756 *793 754 child, or his livestock.[36] (In reality, the client's selection is more likely to be determined by considerations of cost than of casuistry.) The debtera may further dissociate himself from the morality of a particular episode, by giving the client the sorcery bundle, with directions for its use. The debtera owning kifat considers the transmission of kifat knowledge during abinet exchange to be more fraught with moral danger than his use of it. To preclude this obstacle to the easy exchange of abinet, the recipient customarily foreswears the use of the kifat work unless he is pressed by persecutors and without alternatives.

*776 *[192] Pulling Ganels. Ganels are organized into a simple hierarchy composed of individually named commanders (azmac) and anonymous subordinates (tazaj). Supreme among ganels is the fallen angel Satanael. His several hundred lieutenants are divided into ganels responsible for sending specific ailments or misfortunes, and local commanders who repose in the lakes, rivers, and mountain tops of Ethiopia. The multitude of subordinate ganels are the immediate bearers of sickness and misfortune; their

[36] The debtera is not expected to provide any detailed information, such as the identity of the specific ailment of misfortune he intends to send.

776 work is done at the direction of the commanders, or is struck adventitiously as the opportunity arises.

*755 A debtera calls ganels to obtain either information
*756 or the promise of services. Only ganel commanders are
*793 summoned. In contrast to their ganel subordinates, they
754 are more difficult to call, and more cunning. However, they alone possess the therapeutically useful information which the debtera desires, whether for a specific disease episode at hand, or a disease category associated with ganel causal agents. The information which the debtera obtains supplements abinet that he already owns, and does not constitute complete therapies. The debtera also calls ganels to direct them to command subordinates to perform pathogenic works against persons he wishes to strike down, or to desist from afflicting the debtera's client.

*756 Ganel-calling abinet works consist of three sets of
*793 activities. First a specific, named commander is "pulled"
*787 from his repose into the debtera's presence (thus, the
*[192] title "ganel sabiy", "demon puller", by which such debteras are popularly known).[37] It is easiest to call a

[37]This title is interchangeable with "ganel aciwac" ("converser with the ganel"), and "ganel gelac" ("revealer of the ganel").

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*787 ganel out of doors, by the side of the lake or river in
*793 which he lives. When clients attend, however, the ganel is pulled in the debtera's room, since preparations for controlling the demon are easier to arrange, and a tedi-
[833] ous journey is avoided. The ganel puller is often required to observe a period of chastity prior to contacting the ganel, and if the ganel is called into a room, it must be a place where sexual relations are never had.

A ganel-calling session begins with the recitation of texts, composed mainly or exclusively of asmat words. Unlike abinot recitations in other contexts, the debtera's text is repeated until the desired effect is ob-
[782] tained (i.e., the ganel has been pulled). In addition to the recitation, an animal (most commonly a chicken) favored by the ganel is sacrificed. A debtera's initial attempt to pull a ganel often requires recitations over a week or more, until success is obtained. Once the ganel has been called successfully, subsequent sessions take less time. An experienced debtera can call a ganel familiar in less than an hour, although even he must expect lengthy recitations when attempting to reach a ganel with whom he has not yet conversed.

The debtera perceives these activities as a mixture of compulsion (through asmat) and blandishments (by the sacrifice), that oblige the ganel to assume a cooperative attitude. Once a ganel has responded positively to a

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specific debtera, he is less able to resist the debtera's subsequent calls.

During the second stage of the session, the ganel makes his presence known, and the debtera engages him in conversation. The commander ganel is always audible to the debtera, but whether he will be seen as well, and whether clients will hear or see him, is determined mainly by the abinet work which the debtera employs. Most frequently, he is audible to the debtera only, and invisible to everyone. The ganel's natural inclination is to strike down those he finds before him, but the debtera *[192] takes precautions to protect himself and his guests. For protection, each of those present holds the takiltila (parasitic plant) or digimt (prophylactic wood) which the debtera's abinet study indicates is effective against this ganel. In addition, Church incense is burned to weaken the ganel's ferocity and reduce his reluctance to give up information valued by the debtera. According to the abinet study that is used, additional precautions may be required, such as the burning of diyñ (sulphur) along with the incense.

Once the debtera has obtained the information or pledges he desires, the ganel is sent back to his abode. For this, more incense is burned, and the debtera commenses to read the liturgical texts or abinet digam addressed to the saints. Each commander ganel finds his

*756 *787 nemesis in specific saints, and a commander can be re-
*793 liably returned only if the appropriate saints are invoked. It is the debtera's abinet study which matches ganel to saint, and saint to digam and liturgical text.

Acquiring and Relinquishing Ganel Familiars. While the debtera maintains an active interest in acquiring and practicing most abinet studies throughout his career, his period of frequent and regular ganel pulling is short
*[192] lived, generally lasting no more than a few years. A man decides to pull ganels in order to demonstrate his abinet powers to colleague and client, to cow the one and convince the other, and to gain deference (makver) from both. In addition, he seeks in the ganels a means for accelerating the acquisition of an effective abinet repertoire. Typically, the debtera ends his ganel-pulling activities, or at least radically abridges them, once he realizes that his ties with ganels are intrinsically unstable, that they grow increasingly dangerous while providing him with progressively less important technical advantages.

The commander ganel finds the debtera's calls very unpleasant. He is prideful and imperious (kuruw), and resents being pulled from repose to suffer under painful restraints. The more frequently a debtera pulls a specific ganel, the more the demon's truculence and cunning threaten to maim the puller. A debtera finds evidence of this in his colleagues who bear the stigmata of apo-

* 787 plexy, the ailment with which ganels characteristically
* 793 choose to afflict burdensome callers. To avoid this, a
ganel puller typically enlarges his list of ganel fa-
* [192] miliars. In the end he succeeds only in increasing his
number of ganel antagonists and, through his continuing
familiarity with ganels, courts a sign of divine displeasure (mekseft).[38] Significantly, the ganel puller fears that participating in the Mass will be his ultimate affront to divine patience. Thus, he abstains from entering the church and deprives himself of the ecclesiastical identity which he prizes so much.

The debtera's decision to abandon his ganel familiars causes no fundamental disruption in his abinet career as less objectionable alternatives to ganel pulling become available. A man's reputation as a ganel sabiy generally places him in a favorable position in any exchange of abinet, for it tends to validate his claims regarding his own works, and guarantees him fair dealing by other debteras. Thus, the debtera continues to acquire abinet studies even while actively pulling ganels.

[539] [38] Additional familiars appear to be obtained through acquiring new abinet texts, or assembling (from a category of generic texts which describe the ganel commanders) combinations of data relevant to the pulling, interrogating, and sending of familiars.

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*787 By mid-way in a debtera's career, the capabilities of
*793 his abinet repertoire are sufficient to make the continued assistance of ganel familiars largely redundant. The loss of familiars does not affect the abinet powers which the debtera already holds. Most have been obtained without ganel complicity and do not rely on ganels for their effectiveness; others (kifat works) invoke ganels mechanically and do not require their good will; last, the abinet information already gained from ganels is unaffected by the loss of the daemons. The dissolution of this bond brings no special dangers; it instigates no retribution by the familiar, nor does it increase the debtera's vulnerability to ganel assaults. Finally, by utilizing his abinet repertoire to simulate ganel associations, the debtera is able to prevent public disclosure of the loss of real ties.

Moral Content of Debtera-Ganel Bond. The acquisition of ganel familiars represents an important technical discontinuity in a man's abinet career, since a purposively induced hallucinatory state is experienced
[792] in no other abinet work. In other contexts, ganels are also directly encountered, particularly by monks, but in no other encounter are preparations made beforehand for restraining the ganel once he appears, or for obtaining desired services from him during the meeting.

Morally, the discontinuity is not so great, at least

*756 *787 *793 from the debtera's perspective. Beginning with simple herbal remedies and ending with ganel pulling, the awakiy debtera's moral compromises are gradual and continuous. Although ganel pulling represents his only direct contact with demon helpers, his previous and continuing kifat performances make the debtera no stranger to the casuistry of ganel complicity. Beyond this, however, there is an important moral unity to the debtera's abinet works, whether they are produced by the power of divine beings or ganels. An abinet career is founded on a debtera's readiness to conceive of supernaturally derived power as a morally neutral commodity. As he exploits such power, he is constrained less by its intrinsic moral character than by its instrumental limitations. The debtera's accomplishment is to transmute the moral nature of the power he depends upon for his works. This he does by exerting his will over it, and directing it onto the objects and contingencies that he has selected.

*755 *793 778 792 823 *[192] Inviolability of Divine Power: The Atmakiy. The goodness (moges) of divine power is unblemished and its enjoyment is determined by divine will (yi'Igziyabiher yimozgin). The attitude of the pious man towards this will is supplicatory; towards this power, he is a passive recipient and a disinterested custodian. In a medical context, the atmakiy is exemplary. The atmakiy

*755 778 823 *[793] [792] ("baptizer") is a priest or monk who provides sanctified healing waters for sickmen. By reading from appropriate liturgical texts, any literate ecclesiastic can sanctify ordinary water drawn from a river, or the water of a spring (tebel) known to have divine curing powers. Sanctified common water is generally dispensed in the courtyard of a church, by a resident cleric serving as atmakiy for the occasion. No atmakiy has exclusive rights to the tebel at which he works, since he is only the representative of the church or monastery in whose parish the tebel is located. An atmakiy provides no medical services beyond dispensing sanctified water or overseeing the tebel. According to the atmakiy, as the sickman bathes, the divine fires of the water repel the ganels responsible for *[192] his ailment. The layman, however, does not conceive the effectiveness of these waters so narrowly, but sees them as the medium for a divine grace (moges) unbounded by specific etiological notions. Consequently, although sanctified waters are used most commonly against madness (ibidet) and epilepsy (ganel yazow), both caused by ganels, they are also applied against serious, chronic ailments with which ganels are not generally associated (e.g., leprosy). Usually the sickman turns to sanctified waters as a last resort, after he has exhausted all other therapies he can afford. A sickman continues to bathe with the waters of a single church or tebel, until he has

*755 obtained a remission of his symptoms, or concedes that
778 these particular waters are inadequate to his special
823 needs. Tebel waters are much stronger than ordinary water, therapeutic failure with common water is generally followed with baths at a nearby tebel. Should the sickman likewise fail to obtain a cure here, often he journeys out to test the famous tebel springs about which he learns along the way. Some springs are known to be particularly effective against specific ailments, but, laymen are generally uncertain whether the effects of sanctified waters are cumulative or whether it is the divine grace of a single tebel that a sickman must seek.[39]

*756 Manipulation of Divine Power: The Debtera. In con-
*793 trast, the debtera's attitude towards divine power and divine will is largely manipulative, in spite of his supplicatory recitations. He works to abstract this power (through the mechanical application of verbal formulae, augmented by asmat), concentrate it (though the non-verbal elaborations of his abinet), and direct it (according to the demands of commerce and the indica-

[39] Occasionally, the sickman responds to a tebel with convulsive behavior, as the ganel afflicting him agonizes about.

*766 *793 tions of awdunigist).

776 The destructive power of ganels is the shadow of di-
*[192] vine grace. Although the goodness of divine power is perfect, divine intentions are realized through the promise of sanctions (mekseft), as well as grace. The ganels are utilized for the operation of these sanctions.
*[192] Christians are each protected by a pair of angel guardians (malikat), in the command of the Almighty. Divine displeasure is expressed by removing these guardians from the principal or his children.[40] Once a breach is opened, ganels are certain to attack, for they pursue their destructive goals indiscriminately, striking where opportunity, rather than special interest beckons.[41]

[40] Not all cases of ganel assaults can be traced to divine motives, however. Occasionally, ganels are able to outwit or overwhelm an individual's angel guardians, particularly when a debtera forces them to attack a vulnerable target. The precise balance between a man's assets (guardian angels, kitab protectors) and deficits (vulnerabilities indicated by awdunigist, ganel sabiy influence on ganels) is never a matter of speculation in specific episodes, however.

[792] [41] Generally, very holy monks, in lives of seclusion and prayer given over entirely to the Almighty, are singled out by ganels, for physical assaults and temptations of the flesh.

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Treating with ganels involves the debtera in a grave moral offence (badal). However, this offence is not, as his public emphasizes, that he deals with power which pollutes and maims. In reality, he elicits ganel power as an abstract force, which he applies to ends of his choosing, to relieve suffering as well as induce it. Nor is the debtera's great sin to profane divine powers and ecclesiastical symbols, as many of his fellow ecclesiastics suggest. These powers and symbols he uses to restrain the ganel and force his cooperation, not in an act of renunciation. The sin of the awakiy debtera is neither to befriend or abet the enemies of the Church and the Almighty, but to emulate His works to the debtera's own ends.

PROFESSIONAL ASPECTS OF DEBTERA POWER

The layman's insistence on the technical superiority of the debtera over the secular healer is supported by his misconceptions of the debtera's career. By tracing the debtera's acquisition of abinet knowledge to a contract made with ganels early in the practitioner's career, the layman reverses the temporal and technic-l priorities of this career.[42]

[42] While the debtera's abinet knowledge is perceived as a consequence of ganel intimacy, in reality, most of this abinet is collected prior to contact with demons.

*756 *793 *[759] The debtera's advantages over the secular healer are real enough, but (with the exception of awdunigist) they are primarily professional, rather then technical. That is to say, a debtera acquires his extensive medical repertoire and utilizes it successfully as the result of experiences and opportunities that accompany his pursuit of the ecclesiastical denotata of debterahood, and of exchanges he makes with fellow debteras. Most important among the debtera's professional advantages, is his ability to 1) develop and use a highly fluid capital for acquiring medical and non-medical studies, and 2) communicate to his public his domains of competence and putative level of power.

*756 *787 *793 *[192] Abinet Capital. The debtera acquires abinet studies by 1) exercising the claims of friendship (gwadeña), 2) performing services (often combined with deferential behavior) for the abinet owner, 3) exchanging money for abinet, or 4) exchanging abinet for abinet. All, save the last, are relatively inefficient means for acquiring abinet, and are generally limited to the period of kiyne study, and perhaps the following two or three years.

[672] Friendship is the debtera's least fluid asset, since it limits ego to a single alter for an extended period, and to the acquisition of only one or two valuable studies. To "exploit" this asset, by a sequence of alters or by an effort to tap alter's abinet resources

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more completely, is to violate the conventions of the gwadeña relationship, and to close it off to ego altogether. Moreover, the intense gwadeña relationship, which binds pairs of kiyne students is typically brittle, and is infrequent in later years when commercially valuable abinet are being acquired. Finally the gwadeña relationship is antithetical to the independent and aloof (kuruw) character associated with the man who owns strong abinet.

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The exchange of labor for abinet is difficult to arrange. An abinet owner must be found who is disposed to such exchanges, and has not already obtained someone to fulfill his needs. For the recipient, the exchange means often demeaning work over an extended period of time, with a humiliating lack of an effective quid pro quo, in order to acquire a single abinet study.

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Debteras are not reluctant to price their abinet studies, in Ethiopian dollars, for prospective purchasers. Since a man's standing as a practitioner of abinet is intimately related to the effectiveness of his individual studies, the evaluation of his abinet against a nearly universal standard of value (Ethiopian dollars) is likely to be understood as an implicit personal challenge. Thus, the owner's evaluation of his abinet is inevitably greater than any amount likely to be paid. Prices range from E$50. to E$500., immense sums relative

*787 to the modest cash reserves of the potential purchaser
*793 whose money reserves are unlikely to exceed E$150.
435 There is no haggling, in the sense that the purchaser
437 offers a counter-price which is closer to the study's real value, for injury to the owner's pride would be
*[192] certain to end negotiations. Rather, the prospective purchaser asks for special consideration on the grounds that the seller is his wadajey ("friend", but not peer), and that his assistance is needed. If the abinet owner is amenable to the appeal, a price is set at one-half, one-quarter, or even less of the study's assessed value. Even so, the cost of abinet is sufficiently great to deplete the purchaser's reserves in short order should he persist with such purchases.

*756 Before a man can begin to exchange abinet for
*787 abinet, he must obtain a sufficient variety of valuable
*793 studies in order to interest other debteras in an ex-
437 change. Once acquired, an abinet repertoire proves itself a superior medium of exchange for acquiring more abinet. Unlike friendship, abinet are entirely liquid; unlike labor purchase, abinet exchange is neither demeaning nor time-consuming; unlike money pruchase, it involves neither principal in difficult price setting, and far from being exhausted, the abinet capital tends to grow the more a debtera "spends" of it.

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*787 A debtera is occupied by three concerns when ex-
*793 changing abinet subjects: First, he must be certain
437 that alter's study does not substantively duplicate, in whole or large part, abinet he already owns. However, a debtera does not exclude the acquisition of a study which duplicates the intention of one he already owns.

Second, he must learn whether alter's study is empirically effective or untested. A study's effectiveness is inferred from the owner's public reputation for achieving the designated ends; often, it is this reputation which first attracts the interest of a potential purchaser. Where this information is unavailable, the principals may agree to a test of the abinet; here, conditions relevant to the study's purported effects are simulated, often with the use of domestic animals in lieu of humans. Generally, such tests cannot be contrived for prophylactic or therapeutic works, however. When only the seller's assurance is available, the fear of punitive kifat works by the recipient provides an inducement for objectively evaluating the abinet's effectiveness. Finally, some studies are offered with the admission that they are untested. Proven works are considered far more valuable than untested ones, and each category tends to be exchanged within its separate sphere.

Third, the debtera's final concern is that the value of the studies he receives approximates the value of

*787 those he gives. The relative value of an abinet study
*793 is weighed against criteria recognized by both princi-
437 pals, although verbalized by neither during their nego-
tiations. These criteria refer to the study's goals,
its constituent elements, and its efficacy. 1) Criteria
regarding goals enable ego to assess the commercial
*[192] value of alter's study, if it is effective. Studies
whose goals involve issues of life and death, or serious
physical impairment, and studies with offensive intent
(kifat), are valued above those characterized by inessen-
tial or benign goals. A study whose goals are not or-
dinarily addressed by abinet or secular works is valued
over those made redundant by widely disseminated works.
A study which deals with a common interest of the deb-
tera's public is valued greater than one which addresses
an unusual concern. 2) Regarding constituent elements,
an abinet study is valued if its digam contains magical
names (asmat), but it is derogated if the digam simply
replicates materials available in ecclesiastical texts.
A study which calls for ingredients which are reasonably
accessible is valued more than one calling for rare items.
3) Finally, a study which works by true magic, asmat, is
valued over one which relies on mithat, a trick or illu-
*759 sion simulating the effects of asmat.

*756 Comparison with Secular Medical Capital. Rarely
869 does a layman acquire any disease name specialty beyond

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869 those few he inherits. Additional acquisitions are discouraged for several reasons. First, the exchange of medical knowledge with other healers is difficult to arrange. A layman is unlikely to find another secular healer whose medical specialty he desires and who desires [437] one of the few disease name specialties he owns. Thus, it is generally cattle or money which must be exchanged for medical knowledge. Such purchases are relatively expensive, since the gain is only a minor increment in prestige and the tenuous possibility of earning modest material rewards after an extended period of professional obscurity. Further, the layman has available to him alternative forms of investment (mainly land, labor, and livestock), whose utilization is more consistent with the ethos of the Amhara peasant, and more remunerative (in prestige and material rewards) than the practice of new therapies.

The secular healer (particularly the medhaniyt awakiy) is reluctant to part with professional knowledge, even when a reasonable price is offered. Unlike the abinet capital of debteras, medical capital dissipates
*756 as it is "spent". When debteras exchange subjects,
*793 neither considers the other a rival in the specialties
869 which they exchange. Eventually, their paths are bound to part, as one or the other continues his travels over the Coptic highlands. Moreover, a debtera is not known

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for specific works, since his public reputation rests upon his access to generic powers. Instead, he is recognized by his public as being either "strong" or "weak"; if he is reputed to be "strong", a potential client assumes that he is competent in a broad range of maladies. In contrast, the professional reputation of the lay healer is tied to a specific ailment, just as he himself is tied to a specific locality, as the sedentary cultivator of ambilineage fields. Since a layman's medical reputation is fixed in space, potential purchasers of his medical knowledge are drawn from among his potential clients. Thus, by sharing his medical knowledge with another secular healer, the lay practitioner establishes a potential rival and dilutes the economic and social advantages of his practice.

Communicating the Debtera's Power. When the secular healer inherits a therapy, he inherits a professional reputation along with it, as his public grows aware of the transmission of the disease name specialty and herbalist grade. For the debtera, the situation is very different; his abinet acquisitions are "anonymous". Without the kinship and parish networks that his secular counterpart enjoys, the debtera must establish his healing abilities for his public de novo. The first two or three decades of his professional life are characterized by continual changes of residence, as he pursues his studies

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*793 and moves from one unremunerative and confining eccle-
[869] siastical position to another. Only later does he settle down, after he has acquired a commercially adequate abinet repertoire, and has realized his ecclesiastical goals, as a memher with a following of students. It is, however, in the relative anonymity of a town that he inevitably establishes himself.[43] In the town, the debtera can maintain, with temerity, his identity as a ganel-puller, and can receive his clients in confidence, free from the conventional morality and inquisitive eyes of parish folk. Placed in the town, the debtera maximizes his public. First, he serves the relatively affluent townsfolk with important commercial services, enabling them to best rival tradesmen and talla houses or mead hall proprietors, to magically attract customers, and to beguile superiors. Second, he makes his services available to the thousands of peasants drawn to the town's weekly markets, its ecclesiastical institutions, and its fleshpots.

In the task of communicating his professional exis-

[43] In 1966, of the approximately forty-five debtera-healers residing in Gondar, four were awakiy debteras (two others had died during the preceeding four years). Beyond the Gondar enviorns, the closest awakiy debtera lived in Amba Giyorgis town.

*793 tence under these circumstances, the awakiy debtera is assisted by 1) the layman's perception of his power, and 2) the visibility that he enjoys as a result of his ecclesiastical identity.

*[759] The professional reputation of the secular healer is discontinuous, since his public considers his degree of success in any disease episode as the product of healing power relevant to that ailment only. On the other hand, the debtera's reputation is perceived in terms of generic power. Thus, each successful performance of a medical or non-medical work communicates his ability to accomplish other works not yet performed for his public; for example, a successful cure or prophylaxis against one named disease is regarded as evidence of his ability *[787] to successfully deal with other ailments. In reality, a debtera's medical abilities are dependent on the contents of his abinet repertoire. Early in his career, there are numerous ailments for which he owns neither therapy nor prophylaxis, or owns weak ones only. Later, with more active participation in abinet exchanges, he is able to fill these gaps with works proven to be effective. He acquires these medical studies speculatively, just as other abinet are collected, partly in the expectation of ultimately practicing them, partly as means for building an effective abinet capital for future trading.

Thus, while secular herbalists are distinguished

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*793 from one another along two dimensions (disease name specialty and healing power), debteras are distinguished along only one, differential power. This tends to have a conservative effect upon the layman's valuation of the medical abilities of awakiy debteras, relative to those
*756 of secular healers. That is to say, in any disease epi-
*793 sode, the prophylactic or therapeutic failure of one
754 awakiy debtera is perceived as evidence of the success of the kifat work of another awakiy debtera; the balance between the two is a matter of quantitative differences of power. This contrasts with the situation of secular herbalists, whose therapeutic failures eventually persuade the sickman to consult a class of practitioners whose healing powers are considered more effective than are theirs (vide the "herbalist chains" discussed in chapter three). On the other hand, therapeutic failure by an awakiy debtera generally leads to a search for a debtera more powerful than the kifat sender. Both laymen and debteras recognize that some ailments caused by kifat works can be lifted only by the sender of the kifat who must retrace the steps of his kifat performance.[44]

[44] For example, severe stomach pain is produced, inter alia, by inserting a copper wire into a cactus lobe; the pain persists until either the victim has perished or the wire has been removed.

*793 The debtera-healer faces two practical obstacles to obtaining public recognition of his power. First, [751] his most frequent works are prophylactic kitabs; however, prophylactic success can be assessed only over a period of many years.[45] Second, the overt expression of abinet powers is often prosaic, without visible signs *[787] of the extraordinary forces at work. These two diffi- [539] culties in communicating his power are met, in part, by the debtera's display of esoteria during diagnosis, when he manipulates awdunigist texts in the presence of his clients, and during the preparation of therapy, when the otherwise secretive debtera sends his client to obtain some exotic ingredient which is necessary for the work.

*756 Mithat. The debtera goes beyond these displays, *793 however, to simulate, through the use of mithat, dramatic *755 demonstrations of his putative magical powers (asmat). The debtera distinguishes mithat from other abinet subjects by the fact that mithat require no recitation or ritual beyond the spurious performances required to impress his public, and that the mundane materials used in the work are sufficient to produce the desired effects.

[434] [45] The sale of kitabs usually provides the abinet-using debtera with the greatest portion of his income.

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*793 Although some mithat are performed only as entertain-
ment (e.g.,"magically" uniting a severed cord, or turn-
ing paper into injera bread), most are integrated into
medical performances, where they are perceived by the
*[192] client as evidence of authentic asmat. For example, a
debtera uses the mithat which turns water into "blood"
as an ostensible diagnostic tool, or he solves an epi-
sode of feverish and painful nausea by "discovering" a
monkey skull denkerow (sorcery bundle) beneath the sick-
man's threshhold. Mithat are also used during the ad-
ministration of therapy. For example, an opened egg is
placed atop the sickman's head, and a spurious digam is
read. Subsequently, the egg boils over, freeing the
sickman from the pathogenic agency, evidence of which is
often found in the egg (e.g., insects=poisoning).[46] A
debtera never substitutes mithat for conventional works,
although the client is unaware of this. Thus, the egg
mithat is followed by an herbal infusion, which osten-
sibly removes the organ wastes remaining in the sickman's
body, but in fact performs the entire therapeutic func-
tion.

[46] This parallels a kitab which warns the owner of poisoned talla (favored medium), by causing the beer to boil. Here, the effect is produced by asmat.

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*756 Mithat works are particularly important for publicly
*793 validating the debtera's ability to tap ganel sources of power. Although a debtera may in truth renounce his familiars, he keeps this his professional secret. For his public, only the possession of ganel familiars validates an awakiy debtera's grade. Thus the awakiy debtera is committed to demonstrating the overt complicity of ganels in his works. He accomodates these expectations of his public by either simulating ganel cooperation, or employing a neutral medium for reaching the ganels. Here, as in his other diagnostic and therapeutic works, the debtera presents through artifice a public demonstration of healing power that is more convincing and manageable than reality would allow.

Laymen are uncertain whether an awakiy debtera need pull a ganel for each prophylactic, therapeutic, or pathogenic work that he performs, or whether the information he obtains at one session is relevant to similar episodes involving subsequent clients. In a specific episode, it is usually the debtera who determines whether a demonstration of ganel pulling is necessary. He is careful to learn his client's expectations in this matter. The debtera learns this implicitly, through the mechanism of
[435] fee setting. The calling of ganels is an expensive service, and agreement by the client to a fee of E$50. or more indicates that evidence of ganel complicity is expected.

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*756 pected. Clients are reluctant to have a ganel pulled in
*793 their presence, however, for they fear the demons greatly. Although the debtera's protective measures during the ganel pulling session are considered probably sufficient, there is the danger that the ganel will recognize the client on a subsequent occasion and strike him down. Further, the client fears that direct contact with ganels threatens him with moral perdition. Thus, the client accepts willingly, even gratefully, an alternative to direct visual and auditory contact with the debtera's familiar.

At the initial consultation, with the debtera, the client is told to return in three days, during which time the debtera ostensibly makes preparations for pulling the ganel. The debtera finds a variety of mithat useful for such sessions, often favoring works which leave some material evidence of the ganel's visit.[47] Although the client is familiar beforehand with the general course of

[47] For example, prior to the debtera's recitation, he places an ostensibly unmarked sheet of paper in the sunlight, outside his threshhold. The ganel is subsequently called, but directed to remain outside the room. The debtera directs questions to the ganel, who is then sent back. The client is asked to retrieve the paper, on which he now observes what is ostensibly the writing of the ganel.

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events characterizing a ganel-pulling session, he is often uncertain as to precisely how the ganel will make himself known on this occasion, and so the debtera enjoys substantial freedom of action in his use of mithat. Often ganel pulling with the use of a virgin boy is used in lieu of simulation through mithat. Here, the client must bring along a boy of his choice to the ganel-pulling session. The session is conducted as usual, but with the boy facing into a mirror.[48] As the debtera recites his asmat, the ganel appears in the mirror but is seen and heard by only the boy. The medium is supplied with questions by the debtera; these he relates to the ganel, whose replies he repeats back to the debtera. Often the replies are unintelligible to medium and client alike. Although the use of the boy medium is not an example of mithat, there is a degree of pretence involved in such sessions. Only subordinate ganels can be expected to appear under these conditions, and the information which they provide is generally useless to the debtera's work. To the client, who is unaware of the niceties of ganel social organization, the session appears as a bona fide

[48] Some debteras conduct this under conditions similar to those described for buda possession (vide Appendix B).

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*793 example of ganel calling.

*756 The Ecclesiastical Identity. While the secular
*793 healer is indistinguishable from other peasants, the debtera is conspicuous by his ecclesiastical identity, with his distinctive dress, liturgical performances at the Mass, and conversational presence in the churchyard.
*756 The memher teacher of kiyne is most visible of all deb-
*793 teras, not so much by his appearance as through all the
875 activities of his ubiquitous students. The services of these students are generally indispensible to establishing, and often maintaining, public recognition of the
[735] debtera's cliams to the "awakiy" title. These students depend on the charity of local folk for much of their sustenance. In order to avoid over-exploiting the generosity of one area, or neglecting another, the students customarily devise a circuit composed of town wards and surrounding hamlets, through which they systematically beg, in pairs of gwadoñas. Their visits, weighted in favor of the more affluent folk, serve the debtera memher's abinet practice in two ways. First, they advertise the debtera's presence and communicate information about his abinet services. Laymen are generally reluctant to approach a debtera directly, until learning whether he is capable of providing desired services and is also willing to do so. By posing questions to the mendicant students, the debtera's public obtains infor-

tion regarding the debtera's powers and accessibility.
875 Students generally feel great loyalty to their memher, and tend to be generous in describing his powers. Their reports are not much exaggerated, however, since a man does not become a memher until he has lived twenty or thirty years as a debtera, a period sufficient to acquire an effective abinet repertoire. Second, laymen regard the students as an indication of the debtera's reputability, and willingness to be held accountable for the effectiveness of his services. In this, they contrast him with the unscrupulous debteras[49] sometimes seen in talla houses, where they conspicuously display their white turbans and book satchels, perform gratuitous displays of magical works (in fact mithat), sell services which later prove ineffective, and disappear a week or so later.

CONCLUSION

*756 A debtera pursues the goal of becoming a memher
*793 because he desires to be a master of ecclesiastical studies, not because it will further his abinet interests.

*[192] [49] Known as mithanteña ("charlatan"), by other debteras.

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*793 Yet, once a memher, a man is not reluctant to exploit the commercial advantages that come his way. The debtera-healer's pursuit of memherhood is an example of a dialectic which underlies his entire career; one which matches ecclesiastical goals and moral constraints against the imperatives of pride and self-sufficiency; which matches freedom from the constraints of dealing in conventional power against the vulnerabilities that this freedom entails. The debtera himself percieves the individual conflicts and opportunities which are engendered in his career in terms of the particular and the contingent. For all his mithat and manipulation, he is no cynic. In the end, it is a life of compromise, not of fraud.

The social identity of the awakiy debtera, as he is perceived by his public, is influenced to no small extent by the moral content of his diagnoses. Once a client has decided that secular therapy is inadequate for a disease episode at hand, the services of an awakiy debtera may represent the morally correct choice among alternative non-secular healers.

In the abstract, an awakiy debtera can treat any ailment for which secular therapies are also practiced. In reality, there are certain ailments within his therapeutic powers that he is only infrequently asked to cure. Significantly, the moral consequences entailed by these

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ailments are limited to redefining the sickman's domestic responsibilities, and are traced mainly to a loss of vigor resulting from his malady.

*756 These ailments can be sorted into two catogories.
*793 Included in the first are all maladies whose physical
*753 effects are trivial, and most of those ailments whose effects are acute (whether serious, such as koruba pox, or non-serious, such as catarrh). These ailments are infrequently brought to an awakiy debtera, because either they are susceptible to effective and relatively inexpensive secular therapies, or they run courses too brief for a client to determine whether an awakiy debtera's services are necessary or to arrange for the administration of his therapy. The person who has been restored to health after such ailments returns to the personal and social states he enjoyed prior to the disease episode.

734 In the second category are chronic and serious ailments that are characterized by both visible physical destruction and poor prognosis (e.g., leprosy and elephantiasis). The person suffering such an ailment also experiences the progressive constriction of his social field, as the affects of his ailment prevent him from resuming his normal economic and social responsibili-
[735] ties. Where a family's resources are insufficient to maintain non-productive adults, the sickman must leave

734 his hamlet to become a mendicant, begging from alms-
[735] givers at the gates of large and famous churches. Even
[823] the sickman whose economic circumstances enable him to
[778] remain at home may depart, to seek an efficacious tebel spring, once locally available therapies prove ineffective.

*753 Among the ailments of this category, leprosy is
734 considered particularly loathsome. In the abstract, it is associated with a hereditary vector; in practice, the leper's neighbors fear contact with him, and the sickman who remains at home is physically segregated in a hut of
[582] his own, away from other residents of the hamlet. Be-
[166] cause marriages are difficult to arrange for the primary relatives of lepers, the son of a leper frequently chooses to move away from the paternal hamlet to some place where his family's affliction is unknown.

*753 The absence of more profound moral consequences for either category of ailment can be explained, first, by the fact that associations existing between the sickman and sanction-wielding supernaturals are unaffected by either illness or cure, since these maladies are linked to non-purposive pathogenic agencies, such as gerifta
* [755] and likift. Further, effective cures are either secular,
* [757] and thus require the therapeutic assistance of no
[778] sanction-wielding supernaturals, or, in the case of tebel therapies, rely on only the socially sanctioned supernaturals of the Church.

*753 supernaturals of the Church. The relevance of human culpability in such episodes is minor, since the responsibility of either ego or his intimates for bringing about such disease episodes is conceived as either accidental (e.g., straying into a gerifta mist) or unavoidable (e.g., carelessly leaving food uncovered, and thereby allowing likift contamination).

A third category of illness consists of serious ailments that are unaccompanied by visible destruction, but that are not acute. From a moral perspective, such ailments share two important characteristics that are uncommon among illnesses of other categories. First, they are generally traced to purposive causal agents, either to a human enemy (talat) who seeks to kill or maim ego or his children, to ganels, or to zars. Second, the remission of symptoms does not itself mean that the responsible pathogenic agent has also been neutralized.

*753 Where an ailment has been sent by, or on behalf of
*755 a talat, ego must obtain the services of a debtera-healer
*756 who (in cases of ensorcelling) is more powerful than the
*793 illness-sender or (in cases of poisoning, mers) is able
*[192] to diagnose precisely. Here, remission of symptoms leaves the ultimate pathogenic agent, ego's talat, unaffected and ready to again sicken or injure ego, once the latter's recovery is known. To escape his talat, ego must seek measures beyond therapy and amulet prophylaxes.

*753
*755 he must reorder his social environment. Preference is
*756 given to either killing his persecutor or frightening
*793 him away, through the use of sorcery or mundane violence. If ego is unable to accomplish this, he must himself move to some place where his talat can no longer affect him, or would no longer find it necessary to do so.

*753 With zar-caused ailments, the sickman can obtain a
*787 lasting remission of symptoms only by entering into a
776 permanent relationship with the pathogenic agent, rather than countering it. Here, the sickman withdraws from his existing moral milieu, and acknowledges, as a member of a hadra (zar coterie), a permanent dependence on the good will of the zars. Once the initial diagnosis has been confirmed and ego's zar has been successfully treated with, each succeeding disease episode binds ego still more closely to the society of zars and balazars.

[562] The social and moral consequences of accomodating zars are very different for men and for women. For women, who constitute over eighty percent of zar-possessed folk, zar familiars offer a degree of security that the host finds difficult to obtain in human society. In contrast to other purposive agents, the pathogenic motives of zars are at once transparent and manageable: Zars sicken their hosts in order to extort gifts of jewlery and clothes, and deferential performances at the

*753 *787 776 hadra meeting. While zars often cause painful and potentially mortal ailments, prognoses are favorable, since the zars' ultimate interests are served best by keeping their victims well enough to continue to meet their demands.

*753 *787 776 562 A woman who excludes zars from her disease etiologies assumes great vulnerabilities. Without zar familiars, she must build etiologies from the mortal intentions of sorcerers, poisoners, and ganels. Against these agents, a woman can generally afford to raise only weak prophylactic defenses, and the cost of expert therapy (by an awakiy debtera) is usually beyond her slender means. Unmarried townswomen are particularly vulnerable in this regard, since they are without interested mates to purchase necessary debtera therapy or to insist on etiologies consistent with the teachings of the Church.

For a man, zar possession is shameful, and the appearance of symptoms which might indicate a zar etiology (i.e., kureyña) are preferably traced to other pathogenic agents. While the hadra provides its female members with opportunities for self-assertiveness otherwise impossible, the man who accepts the suzerainty of the zars commits himself to performances and associations which contradict the customary social behavior of Amhara men. He is serateña (servant, usually female) or even bariya (slave) to zar whims, which cast him in demeaning

*753 and sexually ambiguous roles. The other, predominantly
*787 female, members of his hadra treat him as an equal,
776 rather than with the deference ordinarily shown men.
562 What is more, his shame is public, since the zars gener-
[292] ally demand as a sign of obeisance that a colored bor-
der be woven into the normally undecorated white toga
of Amhara men.

*753 The type of practitioner that a client consults
*755 influences the final etiology with which his disease epi-
*756 sode is finally rationalized. In the context of category
*793 three ailments, the awakiy debtera is a morally correct
choice for the male client, since his therapy is capable
of translating the disease episode into a confirmation
of the client's normative social state. Failing more
innocuous indications (generally involving ganels), the
debtera's diagnosis and cure are expected to support an
etiology of sorcery or poisoning. This marks the sick-
man as someone's talat; a man someone wishes to kill or
maim in retribution or fear; a man who has incurred a
talat's interest by demonstrating aggressive and proud
(i.e., masculine) behavior, by committing assault and
murder, by usurping land rights, or by contesting sexual
access to women.

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APPENDIX A

FOUR CLIENT NARRATIVES DESCRIBING HERBALIST THERAPIES

NARRATIVE 1

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Taamrat realized that he had contracted ceebt (gonorrhea), for the symptoms were unambiguous: Urination was difficult, he was unable to sit or walk about properly, and he could feel the burning sensation in his bladder caused by the gerifta which had lodged there. Taamrat consulted an herbalist living in an adjacent hamlet, who was known as a yiceebt medhaniyt awakiy by his neighbors. The herbalist prepared an infusion of roots and leaves, and gave this to Taamrat to drink. He also directed the sickman to drink much whey, so that the disease agent could be flushed from his body. The infusion was a strong purgative and diuretic, and the herbalist told the sickman that he could observe in Taamrat's urine the tiny eggs that the gerifta had produced in the bladder. In addition, evidence of blood in the urine also indicated that the disease agent's hold on Tamraat was being loosened. Taamrat was given a single dose of
[758] the infusion, but no memeleša. The therapy greatly fatigued Taamrat, and his wife was instructed to feed him quantities of chicken liver as a restorative (atmit). Taamrat believed that the therapy had severely strained

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*757 his heart, as evidenced by his pallor, langour and in-
*759 ability to move about; according to him, the therapeutic exertions had left him close to death. Taamrat recognized that the customary fee (in woggera) for such an herbalist is E$5., or its equivalent, in a sheep or a day's plowing in the herbalist's fields. When Taamrat subsequently offered to bring a sheep, the herbalist protested, saying that he had performed the therapy only to make Taamrat his friend (gwadeña), not to make money. Taamrat accepted the herbalist's generosity.

NARRATIVE 2

*278 Bogalec's nine year old son developed a pox. He
*757 was feverish, his body itched, soon tiny swellings appeared and these became inflamed, and dry and hard on top. Bogalec suspected that it was koruba. In her hamlet, it was common knowledge that koruba swellings can be individually burned with a root that grows locally and is easily found. However, Bogalec could not be certain that the ailment was in fact koruba and not some other pox, such as guwdif or kufen. If it proved to be guwdif, then the application of koruba therapy would be merely unnecessary, for guwdif is self-limiting and not serious. Kufen, like koruba, is a potentially mortal ailment; however, koruba therapy is ineffective against

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it. Bogalec decided to take the boy to a yikoruba medhaniyt seci who lived in a nearby hamlet, who was re-
*278 puted to be able to recognize koruba. The herbalist, a
*759 woman, was consulted within hours of the irruptions, for
*757 Bogalec knew that koruba advances rapidly and, after a day's time, is no longer susceptible to treatment. The herbalist examined the irruptions, diagnosed the ailment as koruba, and gave Bogalec a leaf with directions that it be ground, mixed with hydromel (birz) and given to the child in small increments. The infusion was a strong emetic and purge, and, since there was no memeleša, Bogalec had to watch the child carefully lest he be overcome by the therapy. After two applications, Bogalec stopped, for fear that a third would kill the child.
[758] The boy was afterwards fed a liver restorative. During his recuperation, Bogalec and her husband took care not to speak the word "koruba" before the boy; in addition, he was given no talla beer. Either action could have in-
[435] duced a fatal relapse.[50] The herbalist asked for and received a fee of E$1., but told Bogalec that the money would be given to the parish church, since she did not intend to profit from her curing.

[50] A similar injunction is followed for certain other ailments, even where there is no present danger, particularly "kuntina" (leprosy).

000 intend to profit from her curing.

NARRATIVE 3

*757 While out playing, ten year old Tesfahun and two
752 companions were bitten by a dog. After they returned to their ward, Tesfahun told his mother, Berey, what had happened; and the woman took him to a nearby stream. She directed him to wade into it, so that he would not develop the fear of water that is characteristic of the later stages of rabies (yimatfow wuwša bašiyta), when the introjected dog-like spirit agent begins to make its
*278 hydrophobic presence felt. In her village there lived
*757 a yimatfow wuwša bašiyta medhaniyt seci. From this her-
*759 balist, Berey received a root with the directions that, once it had been ground and mixed with water, it must be
*278 immediately consumed or would loose its potency. On the
*755 next day, before she had an opportunity to prepare the
*756 infusion, Berey fell into a conversation with a neighbor
*757 regarding the previous day's happenings. The neighbor,
*759 a Muslim, remarked that a fukura (here, a Muslim healer analogous to a "weak" debterá) living in another ward was famous for his ability to treat rabies. Tesfahun was taken to the fukura, who commanded him to undress and gaze into the practitioner's mirror. While the boy stared at it, the fukura, who was a blind man, did like-

*278
*755 wise. After a minute, the practitioner declared that
*756 Tesfahun had not contracted the ailment. The fukura was
*757 was paid E$1., and Tesfahun was given no therapy. His
*759 companions were later taken to this practitioner, who after diagnosis indicated that both had contracted rabies, and required therapy. None of the participants attempted to obtain an explanation for this epidemiological pattern. This consisted of herbals mixed with the milk of a cow nursing a calf of its own color. The infusion was a violent purgative, and a memeleśa permitted its safe application until blood had appeared in the evacuae. This was taken as a sign that the disease substance had been destroyed and was being eliminated. Although all of this had taken place within one week of the dog's attack, the principals were aware that the ailment can be treated successfully within four weeks of an attack. After that time, no therapy, however powerful it
[435] may be, can succeed. The fukura sold his therapy at the of E$10. for each boy. Although the fee was paid on receipt of therapy, this was not necessary; the payment could have been made to a third party (a gwadeña of the client), who would then transmit the money to the therapist once the therapy had proven itself effective.

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NARRATIVE 4

*278 *757 *759 *753 *[192]

Kassa's wife, Tuwagu, contracted yiliyt waf baǰiyta (jaundice), and the symptoms were unambiguous. The whites of her eyes yellowed, as did her nails; her urine turned a deep amber; she could not eat and fell into a dizziness (ras yazaral); her joints ached as with kurtimat. Kassa consulted a yiliyt waf baǰiyta medhaniyt seci, who provided him with a root which Kassa ground, mixed with water, and gave to his wife to drink. Soon violent vomiting and purging began; this was allowed to abate without a momoleǰa. This ailment is caused by contact with a flying bat, and Kassa knew that, for a complete therapy, he could have to snare a bat, cook the bat meat together with ordinary food-stuffs until it was rendered innocuous, and then serve the dish to Tuwagu, who would be unaware of the food she was eating. Kassa did this and, after Tuwagu had finished, revealed to her what she had eaten; she cried out in repulsion "yililyt waf!" ("bat"). With this the disease substance left her.[51]

[51]Therapy for jorogadif (mumps) also requires the sickman to call out the disease name. This is done at night; the sickman wakens another peasant with disturbing noises. When the second man emerges from his hut unawares, the sickman yells out "jorowgadif", and the ailment leaves him for the awakened man.

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*757 Kassa perceived the herbalist therapy as weakening the disease agent's ability to retain its position within Tuwagu.

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APPENDIX B

HERBALIST THERAPY FOR YIBUDA BAŠIYTA (BUDA POSSESSION)

754 The buda is a human, male or female, who shares a
[825] kinship of sorts with the hyena. When at night he hears their calls, he is irresistably attracted to run about with them. Like the hyena, he strongly desires to eat of human flesh and blood, but his cravings are not malevolent, and he often regrets this compulsion. The buda trait is most often passed down within families; in Begemder Province, it is limited to Falasha families.[52]
[856] The buda trait is present at birth, but like an individual's other capacities, reaches full potency at its bearer's physical maturity.

In his nocturnal guise, the buda bears his human
[302] face upon a hyena's body. The first time an individual runs with the hyenas, he (or she) is obliged to cut his hair short, in the fashion of Falasha women; the subsequent transition from wer-hyena form to human appearance is accomplished on the following morning with the aid of a secret medicine. The buda is, however, most dangerous, when in his prosaic human form, he produces the buda syn-

[52] Elsewhere in Ethiopia, buda accusations are directed against local endogamous iron working peoples.

754 drome in a victim.

[826] The buda is attracted to 1) persons of "good blood"
*[192] (tiruw dem sew: someone with a light, clear and unblemished complexion, or, by extension, with another particularly attractive, konjow, aspect of his body) and
[264] 2) persons observed eating or drinking, particularly when the buda is hungry or thirsty. While concentrating on that aspect of the victim which attracted him (e.g., the face of the child of good blood, or the diner's mouth), the buda introjects his invisible self into the victim's body. Once inside, he sets to eating the viscera, simultaneously laying eggs from which prodigious numbers of wosfat hatch out. About two-thirds of his victims are children of ten years or less.

*753 His victim is never aware of the disease act taking
754 place, and symptoms of the ailment appear only later in the day, as the wosfat hatched by the buda vent their rapacity on the sickman's stomach and heart. Thus, he experiences nausea, vomiting and fatigue. At nightfall the first of the ailment's dramatic symptoms appear, as the buda acknowledges his presence.[53] Complaints of nausea and stomach pain stop, as the sickman grows oblivious to

[53] Bibuda tabalac, "seized by the buda", is also a common nomer for this ailment.

*753 his surroundings, stares vacantly before him. It is now
754 that the buda cries out, through the sickman's lips, in a hyena call, and passivity gives way to vigorous attempts by the sickman to tear off his clothes and join the roaming hyenas once more. Now the sickman must be restrained forcibly, tied down if no longer a child. While restrained, he characteristically grits his teeth edge to edge, and presses fingers against palms, thumbs drawn inward, in facimile of a hyena; occasionally blood flows from his nose. Next morning, the sickman becomes more lucid but is greatly fatigued from the nightime exertions.

*278 The yibuda basiyta medhaniyt awakiy begins his
*755 therapy with an herbal inhalent against the introjected buda. The herbals are either ground and placed in a sachet, crushed in the therapist's fingers and stuffed into the sickman's nostrils, or made into an infusion in which a cloth is wetted and inserted into the nostrils. The inhalent torments the buda like fire; his struggles to escape it are reflected in the sickman's writhing and blathering. The buda is wily and tries to hide in an unaffected part of the sickman's body. The therapist holds the buda fast, by seizing the sickman's stiffened thumbs to which the buda customarily secures himself in order to better eat at the victim's viscera. Simultaneously, the therapist presses a piece of unfired iron

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*278 against each thumb.
*756 The buda is meanwhile addressed by the therapist: "What is your name?. What do you want?". In time the sickman's blathering gives way to a coherent response. At first the buda threatens the assembled people, particularly the therapist, and boasts of victims who have fallen to him in the past. While the buda struggles and threatens, the sickman is restrained and the inhalant in his nostrils is periodically replaced. If necessary, the inhalant is supplemented with an infusion, often containing the medicaments of the inhalant which the sickman is forced to drink.

At last the buda reveals his name, and the interrogation begins in earnest. The buda is asked his reason for attacking the sickman; is it his "good blood", or eating in public? The buda, prodded by the therapist, provides the relevant details, but couches his remarks in an esthetic rather than a social context (e.g., "the victim's blood is sweet"). The therapist then commands the buda to leave the sickman. The buda readily agrees, but it is frequently a ruse to avoid the inhalant. Thus, the effects of the inhalant are not allowed to wane until the therapist is convinced of the buda's sincerity. Frequently, the buda makes a final request before he agrees to leave. Most often he demands dirty things (e.g., dog or chicken feces). These are given to the sickman out-

*278 right, or quickly buried in the compound, into which
*755 the sickman is released in order to find and retrieve them; he then eats a portion.

Once it appears that the buda has indeed left, the sickman is given a very strong purge to reduce the wosfat in him to healthful limits; the purge is terminated by a memeleśa. The therapist inspects the evacuae for evidence of wosfat and partially consumed viscera. Some few practitioners also employ an "ash test"; here, hearth ashes are placed at the opening of the anus to be dispersed (via flatus) by the departure of the buda.

Following a successful cure, the sickman frequently learns that the foodstuff he had been eating at the time of the buda introjection is now an emetic for him. The consequences of a buda attack are generally less serious for a "good blood" victim; since his stomach was probably empty at the time of buda introjection, it provided the newly hatched wosfat with a less amenable environment in which to reproduce. Other former sickman, sometimes experience soreness in the area through which the buda introjected himself (e.g., if the calf, it will be stiffened after other symptoms have disappeared).

Inhalant therapy is not invariably successful, of course. A resolute buda can resist a weak inhalant; an inexpert interlocutor, particularly a non-professional recipient of a medhaniyt seci or ateci therapy, may be

*278 unable to move the buda beyond incoherent ramblings, or
*755 may be content to stimulate the buda to no response at all; or a wily buda may, in spite of an otherwise adequate therapy, retain his hold on the sickman. Any one reason is sufficient to explain either a failure to obtain even a temporary remission of symptoms or, what amounts to the same thing etiologically, a recurrence of symptoms. Success now may require a more powerful therapy, substituting a fumitory for the inhalant.

*[192] The sickman is restrained as before. A fumitory pot containing smoking herbals is placed before him, and a heavy toga (maviy) is thrown over both the sickman's head and the fumitory pot, in a tent-like fashion. The fumitory pot is replaced periodically so that the buda is given no respite. Even during interrogation he is not allowed to rise from the toga. Profuse perspiration is not uncommon, and is considered an indication that the disease substance is being driven out of the sickman's body. The format of interrogation is altered in that the buda's desires are no longer solicited; rather, his immediate departure is demanded upon threat of continued exposure to the fumitory. The buda's departure is followed by a strong purge, as before.

*755 If, in spite of all, therapy fails, the victim's
779 close kinsmen may seek out the responsible Falasha-buda. The buda's identity is known from the therapeutic inter-

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*755 779 rogation, or is perhaps provided by a professional diviner, or is reached through speculation and coincidence. Here, family and friends of the sickman threaten the unfortunate Falasha with his life should the sickman die; if the sickman is already dead, the suspect may be waylaid outright. Frequently, however, the identity of the buda is unknown; evidence may be circumstantial and inconclusive, or may point to a transient Falasha (from a distant and unidentified hamlet).

*755 Finally, therapeutic failure may have resulted from an inaccurate diagnosis, either cunningly manipulated by a zar or ganel, or the result of premature conclusions drawn from ambiguous symptomatic information.

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APPENDIX C

EXAMPLES OF HILIM (DREAM) MESSAGES AND MOTIFS

*787 *[192] A. The message refers to a specified ailment; the following hilim motifs are matched with the relevant ailments:

drinking talla beer=mers, poisoning (talla is a common vehicle for yijeseb, poison)

dressing hair with kibe=saal, cough, and gulnfan catarrh (kibe, butter, is a common prophylactic pomade for these ailments)

cooking maize-fantata, pox or kitin, primary syphilis

being stung by insect=kitin, syphilis

seeing hut burn with only framework standing=wererśiyn, typhus

B. The complete message indicates impending, but unspecified, illness. Hilim motifs include confrontation by many soldiers, temporary loss of property (e.g., the principal's ox is lost and refound), spinning at the distaff, wearing new clothes, giving birth, coitus.

C. The complete message indicates death, but does not indicate by what means. Hilim motifs include a new hut (=grave), new clothes, loss of property (e.g., the principal's ox is stolen), entry into hut of donkey bearing sacks.

D. The complete message indicates the death of a

*787 designated kinsman but does not indicate by what means. Hilim motifs indicating the death of parents or sibling include walking staff breaks, short haircut (mourning *[192] tonsure), arm is broken, tooth is broken or lost. The breaking of a mitad (plate for preparing staple injera bread) indicates death of husband.

E. The complete message indicates the death of an undesignated kinsman, but does not indicate by what means. Hilim motifs include dancing (associated with joyous occasions involving kinfolk), eating foods prepared from the stomach, lungs, and liver of cow, sheep or goat.

F. The complete message indicates the activities of ganels. Hilim motifs include goats, nocturnal travels (associated with ganel activity).

G. The complete message indicates danger from humans. Hilim motifs include being invited into someone's hut (who wished to slay the dreamer), being bitten by a black snake.

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APPENDIX D

EXAMPLES OF AWDUNIGIST DIVINATORY TEXTS

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A. The Twelve Stars. Required input is the subject's autonym, month, year (zemene) and diurnal phase of his birth; division is by twelve. The following is a translation of the medically-relevant information pertaining to men of the first star (i.e., remainder of one), Hamil Iysat ("intense fire"):

"The year of Matiyows is in general a bad time for him. Sickness will affect his stomach, head, and left leg during the month of Tekemt. If poison should be administered to him, it is certain to prove fatal. When fifteen and when twenty-two years old, he will be very sick. When he is fifty years old he will suffer serious misfortunes. During the months of Meskarum, Heydar, Negarid, Sañey of the year of Luwkows, he will be particularly susceptible to wuwgat (pain) and saal (cough). When he becomes ill, he should use the leaf of the zigba tree as a fumitory; in addition, the gum (muwca) which appears at the spot where the leaf was picked must be eaten. Ganels and lions are a special danger to the Hamil Iysat man. When sick, he should eat sesame, owl, and the rose; in addition, he should use the wing of an owl as a fumitory. Good days for him are Monday, Tuesday and Saturday. Bad days for him are Wednesday, Friday

*787 or Sunday. Should he fall ill on Wednesday, Friday or
539 Sunday, prescribed treatment should include a kitab of
*[192] Mofte Sray (counter charm) written upon the skin of a white Adal sheep or upon a white goat skin. For aynitila, the Merbite Selomon book should be employed for writing a kitab. Treatment for ganel-inflicted sickness should include the text of Seyfe Melicot and the sacrifice of white and red sheep, and red chickens with white markings. White clothes and white domestic animals will be good fortune for this man. He has enemies jealous of him who wish him harm. He may die when he is forty years old, but if he lives past this age, his life will be good and he will be prosperous. Red things are good for him, and he must live in a red (clay) land. Poison (yijeseb) administered to him by a woman will probably be fatal to him. He has many enemies, people who are jealous of him, and he must pray to the Almighty for pro-
*[192] tection. This man always wants to sleep with women, but kitin (syphilis), if contracted, will be likely to prove fatal. When he becomes ill, a sacrifice should be made of a brown and white sheep, or black sheep with white marking on its forehead; in addition, he should drink the blood found in the sheep's spleen. The Hamil Iysat man must be particularly careful of fires and of crossing, swimming, or coming into other contact with rivers or lakes. If he conforms to all of the above precau-

*787 539 tions, he will live until he is eighty-two years old."

B. Specialized Texts. Each of the following entries is representative of categories of awdunigist texts containing information of medical relevance. Each entry (with the exception of the last) is drawn from a different awdunigist text, and each is complete as it appears in the text.

I. An entry from a text indicating general dangers for a specified period:

"This month brings great danger, take care."

II. Entries from texts providing medical information which is cursory, often mixed with non-medical matters, and relevant for a specified period:

"Special dangers face you during the months of Ter and Magariyd. During that time, take care for thieves, misfortune and ganel-caused ailments."

"Be watchful during the first three weeks of the months of Magairyd, Soney, and Nahasiey. You will have an opp ortunity to defeat your enemies and to gain rank. If you are sick during these periods you will recover, but yihod basiyta (stomach ailment) will prove fatal."

"Take care until the fifteenth of the current month (i.e., the month for which the computation has been made), for great dangers face you. Your rival and
*[192] enemy will surely attempt to harm you. Be particularly watchful of denkera (ensorcelling medicine placed by the

*787
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roadside)."

III. An entry from a text providing exclusively medical information for a specified period:

"On Wednesday he contracted the sickness, while eating food or washing his body. This sickness was caused by a female ganel or a buda. Ego's head, stomach, heart are affected, and his lower back aches; his entire body has bird (chills) and kurtimat (rheumatoid-like pains), takimat (diarrhea), nisir (nosebleed), towkit (vomiting), and ibac (painful cutaneous swelling, generally of the limbs) over the body. These effects come and go; you will be very sick for the first twelve days; then ras yazaral (dizziness), kijet (nightmare) relating to day-time events will begin, together with more wuwgat (pain). After one and a half years of this he will die. Appropriate medicine is a yiseytan dorow (wild fowl); cook the meat and burn the feathers as an olficant. He will recover for a time. The red chicken, tan (daliyda) goat and sheep, red and gold breasted (libiwork) chicken, white and black (gebsima) chicken, black sheep with a white forehead (buwha) are appropriate sacrifices. Follow instructions noted under his star. All will then be well."

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IV. Entries from texts indicating which saints, angels, and biblical persons are disposed to assisting the subject:

*787
539 "Fear neither ganels nor evil men, for the angel Gabrael will be with you."

"Do not journey during the current month, for you will face death along the way. Death is coming to you; you must pray to Saint Mikael, and sacrifice a white sheep."

V. A complete set of entries from a single text providing prognostic information:

1. will die
2. will live, but never recover completely
3. will live without sickness
4. will die
5. a limb (or the use of a limb) will be lost
6. will suffer a chronic illness, but will eventually recover
7. will recover soon

12: Young MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For vocabulary words passim see category 116, pp. 5-75, 93-112, 123-157, 168-181, and 195-256.]

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[For information on use of pharmaceuticals, see category 116, pp. 10, 35, 39-69, 73 76-77, 81-90, 92, 113-125, 132-137, 157, 159, 162, 174, 182, 185, 192, and 237-249.]

12: Young MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For information on theory of disease, see category 116, pp. 5-26, 35-40, 91-99, 116-118, 182-183, 190, 195-196, and 231-246.]

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[For additional information on medical therapy, see category 757.]

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[For information on psychotherapists, see category 116, pp. xvi, 23, 27-30, 73-79, 87-99, 115-118, 139-142, 162, 174-179, 187-195, 198-236, and 240-241.]

12: Young MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For additional materials on medical practitioners, see category 759.]

12: Young MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For information on medical therapy, see category 116, pp. xix, 23-25, 33, 36, 41-43, 47-59, 62, 68-87, 113-115, 119-125, 135-136, 189-192, and 237-243.]

759

[For information on medical personnel, see category 116, pp. 23, 27-30, 33-43, 51-67, 70-92, 113-121, 132-137, 187, 191-193, 213, and 237-242.]

12: Young MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For information on revelation and divination, see category 116, pp. xix, 5, 156-186, 190-192, 198, 202-217, 221, 223, 234-236, and 251-257.]

12: Young MP5 Amhara MP5

793

[For information on priests as medical practitioners, see category 116, pp. xvii-xix, 11, 29, 70, 73, 84, 87-96, 107-108, 112-113, 139-159, 166-181, 185-195, and 198-236.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 eval. Such sights and sounds! A minstrel singing his subtle lyrics as he bows a one-stringed fiddle; in the dark interiors of church, barefoot deacons holding beeswax candles and swinging vessels of smoking incense; the pomp of a nobleman moving cross country with his crowded entourage; a young girl washing the feet of her father's guest; warriors boasting with their martial chants; the stately rhythms of clergy chanting and dancing under the mid-day sun; the open marketplace, offering all manner of livestock, grain, and spices; the counsel of an elder, resolving a dispute; the simple dignity of the bow when two men meet.

The scholar's job is of course to transcend such a medley of impressions and to discern the patterns of order through which such details are bound together in a living whole. In carrying out this task I have not imposed any one methodological framework on my materials. Rather, as the reader of Robert Redfield's methodological handbook, *The Little Community,* will readily appreciate, I have sought to organize these materials in terms of half a dozen of the more common viewpoints used in the study of human com-
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121 Yet however gratifying the contemplation of a traditional culture may be, the student of traditional societies today finds it difficult to remain aloof from the historical changes which now permeate the world. As he talks with the bright young men of the cities, he finds considerable ambivalence regarding the value of traditional ways. He finds Ethiopians acutely conscious that their traditional life, for all its charm, has been chronically afflicted with war, pestilence, famine, and disease, and that their traditional social order has encouraged the many to toil and the few to live in idle luxury. He sees them bitter that Ethiopia has remained backward—"*wada hwāla qaratch!*"—and isolated from the great advances of the human spirit achieved elsewhere. They are anxious to enter the modern world.

And thus the aesthetic impulse is joined by the moral. The sociologist feels drawn to contribute what he can to elucidate the sometimes desperate problems faced by societies trying to make a rapid transition to modernity. In this he is inspired in part by the history of his discipline. The contrast between traditional and modern society has constituted the central substantive problem in sociology since Auguste Comte named the discipline well over a century ago, and some of the foremost proponents of sociology—notably, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Mannheim—have understood their calling to in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic
*565 and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[2]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom
[128] and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—
[114] with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry,
[12] using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[3]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

*565
592 The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara
[342] peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round
[343] structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land
[423] worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by
[427] hereditary right (*rĭst*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the
[556] household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

621 At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number
602 of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the
[592] father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Note on Methodology

121 The methods of ethnography, which constitute the basic method
123 used in gathering the data for this report, had to be followed with considerable discretion, while in Ethiopia. Care had to be taken to avoid misunderstandings and loss of confidence among the inhabitants who view study by outsiders with misgivings.

122 Careful preparation by the author included brief but intensive study of the Amharic language, including writing and grammar; letters of introduction from a scholar who has the confidence of the emperor; lengthy procedures in governmental offices in Addis Ababa to obtain permission and passes to travel to the hinterland where the old culture is little changed by modern contacts.

121 In planning the field project under such circumstances, the author deemed it advisable to formulate his objectives in general rather than specific terms; to assume a flexible and patient attitude; to do what was possible; to establish a base-line of ethnographic information and initial analysis.

122 Procedures in the field included travel by mule to various rural hamlets. This was necessary due to regional differences in culture traits, notably in the ethnic division of labor. Travel is possible only in the dry season, October to mid-June. A guide-interpreter was
123 secured in the town of Gondar, where English is taught in the new
124 elementary school. His services became increasingly valuable in interviewing, checking observations and information for reliability and validity; and, by no means least, in establishing rapport with people in the region, most of whom knew his father well. For the guide's father was the local "woggäsha" (native surgeon-herbologist-empiricist).

Finally, the author checked his own results against the work of

1:.Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Introduction: Thematic Synopsis

121 On the fertile highland plateau of the "horn of Africa" and straddling the Great Rift Valley, ancient Abyssinia culturally bridges the Middle East and Africa. Here, the peasant society of the Amhara, despite a very primitive technology, enjoys a complex spiritual culture. Amhara culture is the subject of this report.

[114] Most of the material to be presented was gathered by the author during field work in Ethiopia in 1953-54, after brief, though intensive study of the Amharic language. The district of Gondar, north and northeast of Lake Tana, was chosen for intensive study because it was never conquered by the culturally more African Galla tribes, when they overran and populated most of old Abyssinia in the sixteenth-nineteenth centuries A. D. The fierce pride of the "Gondarey" has caused him to preserve the old culture more than have inhabitants of other districts.

In organizing and analyzing the data, the author's purpose has been:

1. To regard the web of activities with reference to ecology, division of labor, and standards of living.

2. To pay great attention to historical depth and local involvement with other ethnic groups. Historical considerations cannot be ignored in a study of Abyssinian culture; and consideration of ethnic relationships is, if for no other reason, necessitated by the ethnic division of labor in the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Amhara area, and also by the fact of considerable regional cultural variation among the Amhara people.

3. To describe culture traits and social institutions as they function, and also to show how the Amhara people themselves feel about them; how they see themselves in relation to neighboring groups and in relation to the human and non-human environment in general.

The author will also offer some tentative conclusions about ethos, cultural foci, and the dynamics of Amhara culture.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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speaking peoples, who have contributed such an important element to the populations of the Mediterranean basin.[1]

121

I believe that the early civilized world of the valleys: Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus, which has been revealed by the researches and explorations of the last century had its background in the great ranges from which its peoples came. Professor Toynbee has pointed out that the regions of the Nile and the Mesopotamian valleys must have been areas of unhealthy swamp and wilderness when men first settled there.[2] Such terrain would not produce the conditions necessary to stimulate the multiplication of an indigenous stock. A terrain of this type would rather need clearing and developing by immigrants forced to find their living there after having been driven down from mountain areas by the pressure of increased numbers on food, which we have seen is a common characteristic of mountain economy. But just as the Highland migrant working in the field of American industrialism soon acquires new techniques and develops a higher standard of material culture than his brother who remains a crofter in Scotland, so the colonists of the Nile and Mesopotamian valleys far outpaced in material culture the inhabitants of the remote highlands of Ethiopia or of the Zagros and the Taurus.

There is one last point: the eighteenth-century prejudice against mountains, which influence still remains, tended to an exaggeration of the difficulties of mountain travel in primitive times. Yet the higher ridges of mountain chains often are the easiest lines of movement for men on foot. It makes possible the avoidance of forested valleys and ravines blocked by undergrowth and full of fevers. In England even our earliest forebears kept to the Downlands and trudged along the ridges to keep clear of the thick undergrowth and swamps of the low ground. And the so-called Alpine peoples kept to the mountain belt as they penetrated westward into Europe from the Highlands of Asia Minor through the Balkans to the Alps and the Pyrenees.

174 211 [48]

In this connection it is possible to appreciate the essential importance of Aksum as an early cultural centre. Aksum is at the northern head of the route along the great Eastern Escarpment which leads into the heart of the Ethiopian Highland; at the same time Aksum is within easy reach of the Red Sea and the affluents which lead down to the Nile valley. There is a theory that the monoliths at Aksum are in fact the remains of a great Megalithic centre; the historic Aksumites merely made their own sculptural additions to the stone monuments which they already found in situ.[3] If we accept this theory we can see Aksum as a great centre of early megalithic culture having its connections with the reputed megalithic remains noted by recent Italian travellers in the region of the southern lakes.

[1] Abbé Morié, 'Histoire de l'Ethiopie,' vol. 1. Ethiopia was a term applied by ancient writers loosely and varyingly to all the northern half of Africa between the Atlantic and the Red Sea, and the term was even extended to Caucasian Colchis and to India. In fact mythical Ethiopia covered all that width of Africa and Asia where the Neolithic cultures first appeared. In classical times the name Ethiopia was applied to Nubia and the Sudan and it was only in post-Christian times that it was limited to the Highland area of modern Ethiopia.

[2] A. Toynbee, 'The study of history,' vols. 1/2.

[3] Sir E. H. W. Budge, chapter on Aksum in vol. II 'History of Ethiopia.'

• 121

[For a theoretical discussion on individualism as a psychological disposition, as a mode of social organization, and as a cultural value among the Amhara, see category 116, pp. 238-286.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

volve the sympathetic analysis of problems created by the great transition to modernity. 121

In the case of Ethiopia the temptation is particularly compelling. The literature on Ethiopia is conspicuous for the absence of thoughtful social analysis. With few exceptions it is divided between the esoteric treatises of specialists and the insipid blandishments of partisans.* I have therefore offered certain analyses and suggestions regarding Ethiopia's dilemmas, not on the presumption that they are in every case the most sound, but with the aim of raising questions and formulating issues in public which heretofore have been politely overlooked or furtively concealed, or of promoting their discussion in a more exploratory manner than has previously been the practice. [114]

In so doing I trust that my words will not be taken as the preachings of an omniscient Westerner to a backward congregation. On the contrary, I am fully aware that the problems faced by Ethiopia today are simply variants of the basic problems faced by all of us throughout the world, problems which stem from the accelerated rate of historic change in our time and the persisting difficulties of institutionalizing a rational civilization in any human society. If I have sought to throw light on the dilemmas facing Ethiopians, it has been in part with the end of providing a mirror against which the dilemmas of Western societies might also be viewed.

For this and other reasons, our discussion touches now and then on matters of more universal concern. I have done this by means of allusion either to the comparable experience of other societies or to more abstract ways of conceptualizing the phenomena under consideration. Such references to comparative sociology or social theory represent the intrusion, beyond aesthetic interest and practical concern, of a purely intellectual impulse. I have, in other words, permitted myself to linger awhile with certain questions which emerged in the course of my work on Ethiopia—such as the nature of ambiguity, the functions of oral literature, or the concept of individualism—for their intrinsic theoretic interest.

In a way, this type of digression, more than any specific proposals set forth herein, embodies the chief message I would wish to convey to those now shaping the fate of developing nations. The upheavals of our time do not only confront us with dilemmas of action and moral emergencies; they and the work of scholars who study them also afford great opportunity for the cultivation of those faculties of "sociological imagination" and "sociological sensibility" which can enrich our lives as we live them, here and now, from day to day. To readers who may be offended by parts of this book which may seem critical, I can only say that to be modern means—for all of us—to be joined to

* The chief exception is Margery Perham's book, *The Government of Ethiopia*, which remains far and away the best general introduction to contemporary Ethiopian society.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 a world-wide dialogue about the limitations and potentialities of human experience. For by any reckoning, a key defining characteristic of modernity is the prominence of education; and education in its truest sense, as Robert Redfield has put it, is "conversation about the meaning of life, as each sees some part of it, on behalf of everyone."

000 It is in the spirit of Robert Redfield that this book was conceived. I should like to place this remembrance of him at the head of the list of acknowledgments which follows. The debt owed by those who had the fortune to study the art of questioning with him is not to be measured.

There are numerous other debts I wish to acknowledge as the author of this book, with the regret that they cannot all be identified individually. I am 122 deeply grateful to:

128

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the Committee for the Comparative Study of New Nations, University of Chicago, for providing me the time to complete this inquiry as well as a stimulating seminar on kindred problems;

Lloyd Fallers and Morris Janowitz of the University of Chicago for invaluable practical assistance and moral support at times when work on the manuscript was jeopardized;

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my wife Joanna, for the generous use of her amazing talents both as a perceptive observer and as a literary critic;

and Ethiopians in many walks of life, whose sensitive hospitality and rewarding confidence it was our privilege to enjoy.

D. N. L.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

related to Ge'ez, the ancient and liturgical language of Ethiopia, much as Italian is related to Latin.[1] It was in Tigre country that, during the first seven centuries A.D., the kingdom of Aksum reached heights of civilization never again attained in Ethiopia's history. Because of the antiquity of their region and the glory of their past, the Tigre are to some extent the cultural aristocrats of Ethiopia.

The Amhara inhabit vast areas of what are today the provinces of Bagemder, Gojjam, Wallo, and Shoa. Their language, Amharic, is the official language of Ethiopia.* Since the beginning of what is called the restored Solomonid Dynasty (1270), all but one of the emperors of Ethiopia have been Amhara.† The exception was a Tigre, Emperor Yohännes IV (1872–89), though he sojourned for many years at Dabra Täbor in Amhara country, and Amharic was commonly spoken at his court.

The differences between Amhara and Tigre culture have not yet been studied systematically. Even so, one can say that their differences are not nearly so great as what the two groups have in common. Language forms the chief difference. Like Ge'ez and Tigrinya, Amharic is a Semitic language, ultimately descended from old South Arabic, but Amharic has been molded to a greater degree by indigenous Cushitic tongues. Other differences relate to minor variations in custom, greater communal orientation in some Tigre areas, and differences in temperament. But the two groups share the legacy of Aksum, the Ethiopic alphabet, Ge'ez literature, Monophysite Christianity, similar political and social institutions, and the same style of life. One would be justified in treating their traditional Abyssinian culture as a unity, as virtually all authors have done in the past.

In this book, however, I have chosen to focus on Amhara culture as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia. This has been done, first of all, because of my limited competence to deal with Tigre materials, since I am neither familiar with Tigrinya nor fortunate enough to have done field work in Tigre areas. But a less fortuitous reason is that any serious account of contemporary Ethiopia must begin with the fact of Amhara dominance. With respect to numbers, true, the Amhara are in a minority: Amhara probably comprise no more than one-quarter of Ethiopia's total population (now estimated at around twenty-two million). Their dominance is to be measured, rather, in political and cultural terms. On the political side it is manifest in the perpetuation of the Amhara monarchy and the preponderance of Amhara in top political offices. On the cultural side it appears in the spread of Amhara customs throughout the empire by officials, soldiers, settlers, and teachers, and in

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* English is the second official language.

† A number of Amhara emperors since the mid-eighteenth century were partly of Galla stock, however.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

the continuous Amharization of the peoples of the empire through the required use of Amharic in schools and government offices and through the substitution of Amharic names for indigenous place-names in many parts of the country. If the national institutions and culture of Ethiopia are essentially Abyssinian, more particularly they are Amhara.[2]

The domination of Ethiopian national life by the Amhara, and the related fact that the modern Ethiopian nation was the creation of the Amhara and not of European colonists, are characteristics which distinguish Ethiopia from all other African societies. For Ethiopia is the only country in Africa with a large number of ethnic groups where one of these groups has imposed its rule and its language over the rest and has preserved indigenous national institutions, elites, and culture patterns from displacement by Western forms and authorities.

This condition has imparted a basically conservative tone to the character of public life in Ethiopia, especially when compared to the new nations of sub-Saharan Africa. Because Ethiopians did not have to participate in the postwar struggle for independence, they did not experience the rise of agitational politics or the related phenomenon of political parties or movements. As a corollary of this, the Ethiopian populace was not exposed to oratory promising dynamic social and economic changes, and therefore developed no mass base of support for populist leaders who might seek to promote more rapid forms of change.

Yet if modernization has proceeded more slowly in Ethiopia than elsewhere in Africa—and speed in such matters has at times been associated with recklessness—the pattern of virtually unbroken Amhara rule for at least seven centuries stands in refreshing contrast to the somewhat anguished struggle for nationality within the new nations. Elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa no indigenous cultural tradition exists at the national level. There are many degrees to this cultural fragmentation. At one extreme are countries such as the Ivory Coast which, with some sixty disparate tribal groups in a population of about three million, can as yet appeal only to French culture as a basis for unity at the national level. Somewhat less fragmented are the nations, like Nigeria, in which a small number of important tribal traditions dominate the national scene. Still more consolidated is Uganda, whose kingdom of Buganda has long supported a strong quasi-national tradition, but whose non-Baganda tribes have remained largely outside the pale.

In Ethiopia, by contrast, Amhara rule has long provided a minimal basis for national unity. While this rule has been secured by coercive means, it has accustomed the various tribes in Ethiopia to live under a common sovereignty and to some extent has enabled their leaders to communicate with one another by means of a common native tongue.

One need not be blind to the drawbacks of Amhara dominance to recog-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

E 175 563 A 175 648

nize in it these and other important advantages for Ethiopia. These drawbacks have been those of any imperialism. During the great Amhara expansion under Menelik (1889–1913), many peoples were maltreated. Independent tribesmen were reduced to slavery; unique cultures were decimated; proud kings were dragged in the dust. Those who held down the Amhara position in these occupied territories seized land from the indigenous peoples and exploited them much as would any invader. The unfavorable reputation of the Amhara in the non-Amhara provinces has been due largely to the example of these governors and soldiers whose worst impulses were at times allowed free play.

One can scarcely single out the Amhara for criticism because of their imperialistic behavior in the past. Nor is it fair to judge the Amhara people as a whole by the character of their provincial officials in conquered areas, any more than one may judge the British, French, Portuguese, or Russian people by the behavior of certain imperious and sadistic colonial administrators. This distinction was self-evident to more discriminating observers of the Ethiopian scene like Augustus Wylde, who wrote in 1901:

A [565] [701] [157]

> There is no harder worker than the Abyssinian peasant, and no more harmless and hospitable person when left alone and properly treated; and no more truculent, worthless, conceited, lazy and useless individual than the Abyssinian soldier, who formerly did nothing but prey upon the defenceless cultivator.[3]

Indeed, if any imperialism of modern times should be granted special consideration, it might be that of the Amhara. The Amhara were to some extent merely reconquering lands that had been taken from them in earlier centuries. Furthermore, they needed additional strength to help withstand threats to their own independence. Finally, it can also be argued that if the Amhara had not conquered the other peoples now within the Ethiopian boundaries some European power might have colonized them instead.

E 563 A 648

However one may assess the fact of Amhara dominance in Ethiopia, it is a given of the present situation. It is a fact that leads naturally to two outstanding questions. One concerns the relations between the Amhara and the non-Amhara peoples of the empire: is it possible for the latter to be integrated more effectively and justly into the texture of a common national life? If not, the present state of tribal calm may prove to be but a long prelude to a wasteful storm. The question demands serious and sustained inquiry by a number of scholars, Ethiopians and foreigners alike.

E 563 178 121 A • 121

The other question concerns the nature of Amhara culture, as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia, and its implications for the processes of Ethiopia's modernization now at work and yet to come. To this question we now direct our attention.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

TRADITION AND MODERNITY

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Insofar as Ethiopia is committed to the pursuit of modernity, she cannot fail to be embarrassed to some extent by the wax-and-gold complex. For nothing could be more at odds with the ethos of modernization, if not with its actuality, than a cult of ambiguity.[9]

It is true, of course, that cultural formations analogous to wax and gold in their exploitation of ambiguity have been prominent throughout the history of the West, not to mention the whole non-Western world. The Christian tradition has always made much of parables and allegories. The classical teaching of rhetoric, following Cicero, placed great stress on the use of paradox; and a major philosophical tradition, stretching from Plato to Marx, has been founded on a logic which assumes that reality can be known only by combining opposite concepts and that any single term is subject to dual interpretation. The flowering of symbolist literature, to take a more recent example, created an audience as partial to subtle allusion and *double-entendre* as the most obscurantist proponent of *weṣṭa wayrā*.

Yet there can be little doubt that the pace-setting spirit of modern Western culture rests on a commitment to unambiguous communication. It is predicated on the proposition that A must be A or not be A. It was no accident that one of the more characteristic philosophical movements of the present century, logical positivism, should have had as its primary motif the desire to maximize precision in the use of language. For the decisive institutions of the modern world—technologies based on logico-experimental science, rational legal systems, and bureaucratic organizations in government, commerce, and industry—depend intimately on the unambiguous definition of terms and the utmost clarity of expression. Whether the task be one of constructing a legal contract, outlining a job description, designing a nuclear reactor, classifying genera and species, or defining variables and their interrelations, these characteristic modern activities are informed by the need and intention to eliminate, as far as possible, all traces of linguistic ambiguity.

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The incorporation of these aspects of modern culture into Ethiopian life must inevitably produce a certain amount of strain in a culture which makes such thoroughgoing use of analogy and equivocation. Indeed, tension generated by this issue has been manifest in a variety of ways. Among the modern-educated Ethiopians, one finds demands for greater clarity in the specification of responsibilities in administration. One finds increased impatience with the devious, equivocal talk involved in joint action of any sort. One finds a slowly growing disposition to structure and fulfil expectations in literal terms, and occasional outbursts of protest against the vagueness and the conspiratorial mentality of those schooled only in the traditional way. In order to escape what they feel are the burdensome subtleties of Amharic,

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some Ethiopians prefer to speak in English in their offices. An alternative solution is proffered by those Amharic writers and journalists who have attempted to adapt Amharic to the modern idiom, replacing the florid, intricate sentence of yore with short, simple, straightforward declarative sentences —an effort that parallels changes in other countries, such as Japan, where an intrinsically more ambiguous language than Amharic in the traditional culture has been revised to facilitate more precise modes of expression.[10]

The opposition between the wax-and-gold complex and the rationalistic aspects of modern culture which some Ethiopians now seek to assimilate is of interest here as an instance of the more general phenomenon toward which this book as a whole is oriented. It is the dilemma posed in all the nations of Asia and Africa by the confrontation of their traditional cultures with their rather recently activated modernist aspirations. To study what is transpiring in these nations in terms of the encounter between tradition and modernity, rather than in terms of the more bland and less biased category of social change, is to focus our attention on a very important aspect of their actual situation: many members of these societies have suddenly been forced to grapple with a number of intellectual and moral dilemmas of great magnitude. The concepts of tradition and modernity are symbols to which they are more or less passionately attached. All of them have concepts symbolizing the sanctity of tradition, like the Amharic *hāymānot abāw* ("faith of the fathers"); and all have concepts symbolizing the goal of modernity, like the Amharic *selṭānē* ("civilization"). And in all these nations the conflict between the two sorts of orientation has produced acute forms of disorientation, on the one hand, and extraordinary challenges to creativity, on the other.

Adopting this perspective for the study of "transitional" societies probably opens the door more widely than usual for the intrusion of the biases of the observer. For the observer's own attitudes regarding tradition and modernity naturally affect the order of questions he will ask and the kinds of data he will examine in making his analysis of the "actual situation." They influence, for example, how much attention he pays to the weakening of norms governing traditional kinship systems and whether he views this primarily as a form of social disorganization or primarily as a precondition for more effective societal organization. Accordingly it is fitting that we introduce the analyses to be presented below with a brief statement of the philosophy which guides the author's approach to these questions. This may be done most effectively by surveying the range of positions that might be taken. In considering the encounter between traditional and modern culture patterns currently experienced in acute form in most nations of the world, one may discern, at a high level of abstraction, these five positions: (1) the Traditionalist, (2) the Modernist, (3) the Skeptic, (4) the Conciliatory, and (5) the Pragmatist.

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121 The Traditionalist may be defined as one who is oriented to the maximization of traditional values. What these values are of course varies considerably from culture to culture, but in all cases they include the values of kinship and religion. The Traditionalist sees modernization in general as a radically demoralizing force, yet may favor those elements of modern culture which serve to strengthen traditional patterns: modern military techniques to defend the nation's integrity, modern media to propagate inherited beliefs and values, etc. The questions inspired by this approach would be: What are the traditional values? In what ways are they threatened by modernization, and how may they be saved?

The Modernist is, in one form or another, a child of the Enlightenment. He asserts the superiority of reason over mere custom and locates the most important human values in the effort to subject man's physical and social environment to rational control. The Modernist views traditional patterns instrumentally, as potential aids or obstacles to modernization. The main questions he asks are: What are the modernizing elements in the society? What potentially useful resources are latent in the traditional system? What are the traditional obstacles to modernization, and how can they be overcome?

The Skeptic feels that no really worthwhile values can be realized in transitional societies, since their traditional orders have been fatally undermined and yet they are incapable of sustaining a modern institutional order. The reality alluded to here has been depicted in Colin Turnbull's poignant book, *The Lonely African*. Turnbull sees the urban, modern-educated Africans as adrift, accepted neither by the Western masters of modern culture nor by their own people, and the rural traditional people as no less vulnerable because they have lost the power and isolation necessary to sustain the ancient ways. This condition is regarded by some observers as justification for a position of skeptical detachment. Their commitment is to orders of integral value impossible in a society so disrupted, and their intellectual interest in transitional societies is, to paraphrase Max Weber, to see how much they can bear.

The position I have labeled "Conciliatory" stresses the minimization of tension and violence rather than the maximization of values, traditional or modern. The Conciliatory sees the transitional situation as one inherently fraught with increased conflict, and he is concerned more with the maintenance of security and order than with the quality of life in the social order involved. Insofar as he sees modernization as desirable, his main concern is that it be gradual. Questions natural to this approach include: What are the main lines of cleavage in a transitional society? What are the tendencies toward radical polarization between traditionalist and modernist elements in the society, and what conditions promote the reduction of such polarization?

The Pragmatist position differs from the Skeptic and the Conciliatory chiefly in its more affirmative emphasis. The Pragmatist is committed to the

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optimum realization of *all* values possible in a given historic situation. He 121
affirms the human values of modernization, yet conceives of modernity not as of a single, fixed nature but as relative to the cultural context in which modernization takes place. Given the commitment to modernization he would sustain traditional values wherever possible; would modify them where feasible; and would reject them where necessary. The chief questions raised from this point of view will be outlined presently, since it is the approach we ourselves shall be following.

All of the intellectual positions just identified have been taken by respectable thinkers. All are to be found among the members of the transitional societies, distributed according to the individual's position in the social structure and, secondarily, according to his psychological makeup. Within the social sciences, moreover, the subject matters of the various disciplines incline them to one or another of these positions. Roughly speaking, one may say that heretofore the anthropologist has tended to take the Traditionalist position; the economist and the Marxist sociologist have been Modernists; the political scientist has leaned toward the Conciliatory position; while sociologists have been oriented as Skeptics and Pragmatists.

THE QUESTIONS OF A PRAGMATIST

Our intention in this book is to analyze a number of aspects of the confrontation between Amhara tradition and Ethiopia's quest for modernity from the viewpoint of a Pragmatist. Three general questions express the main concerns of this viewpoint: (1) What is the nature of the traditional culture, and what are its more enduring beliefs and values? (2) What aspects of modern culture are of interest to the society, and what are the processes by which they are introduced and institutionalized? (3) Given this interest in modernization, in what ways has it been frustrated by certain features of the traditional culture?

These three questions divide the following chapters into three pairs. Chap- 121
ters ii and iii attempt a sympathetic understanding of some aspects of Am- 128
hara culture and an assessment of their positive relevance for Ethiopia in transition. Chapters iv and v deal with aspects of Amhara culture which have been found inadequate for modernization and with the natural processes by which they have been replaced in part by modernizing structures. Chapters vi and vii then explore aspects of the traditional Amhara culture which appear to be obstacles to the realization of the modernist goals.

We shall begin by exploring one of the traditional bases of cultural identity among the Amhara, one of those primordial sentiments whose integrity is a condition of vitality for a traditional people.[11] Vis-à-vis outsiders, the Amhara [186]
identify strongly with their religion, language, and racial characteristics, though not so fanatically as to preclude their toleration of other groups as

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121 128 [186] part of a common nationality. Among themselves, however, the Amhara place great stress on region of origin. Deeply sentimental about their homelands, they regard those whose families have long dwelt in the same area almost as kinsmen vis-à-vis Amhara from other regions. In chapter ii, two of these areas which hold a special place in Ethiopian history are explored in some detail. The history, ethos, and cultural significance of Manz and Gondar are discussed, partly to provide an introduction to Amhara culture that has some historical depth, and partly as background to the general question of the place of primordial sentiments like regionalism in a modernizing society.

Chapter iii proceeds to examine the matrix of Amhara culture, the world of the peasant. Its rhetorical aim is chiefly to bring the little-known peasant into sharper focus, to reaffirm the peasant world as one worthy of attention and respect. This will be done, first, by describing the social setting of peasant life, and the main events which make up the daily round and annual cycle of the typical Amhara. Then we shall explore the world view of the Amhara peasant, the main ideas and attitudes through which he interprets his experience. In conclusion, we shall discuss the relation of some aspects of this world view to certain aspects of modern culture.

Chapter iv proceeds from the fact that the skills and values needed for effective participation in a modernizing society cannot be imparted by the traditional processes of socialization during adolescence. With the establishment of a government school system a new and separate pattern has come into being that exists largely, though not wholly, in isolation from the traditional agents and mechanisms of secondary socialization. The subject of this chapter is thus the contrasting conditions in which an Amhara youth is brought up in the traditional and modernizing sectors of Ethiopian society. This account is followed by a portrayal of the outlook of Ethiopian students today, with emphasis on the question of the continuity and discontinuity of their beliefs, tastes, and values with those of traditional Amhara culture.

In chapter v our attention shifts to the elite structure of Amhara-Tigre society. In this sphere modernization has proceeded, not by the addition of a novel structure as in the case of secondary socialization during adolescence, but through a process of differentiation within the existing order and deliberate co-ordination by the sovereign. We shall discuss, first, the traditional elites of monarchy, nobility, and clergy; and then the changes in the status of these elites and the emergence of the new elites of government officials and a modern-educated "intelligentsia."

A key question to emerge from this chapter concerns what appears to be the relative ineffectuality and passivity of the modernizing intelligentsia as a whole. This is a complex and difficult question, only partly to be explained by the political conditions which are referred to in the chapter. We shall sug-

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gest that it also reflects certain psychological and social characteristics deeply rooted in the culture of the land of wax and gold. These characteristics will be the subject of analysis in the two concluding chapters, which deal, respectively, with the phenomena of orality and of individualism in Amhara culture.

It should be evident from the foregoing that I have refrained from attempting a comprehensive assessment of the relationship between Amhara tradition and Ethiopia's modernization. By limiting myself to problems for which I had both prior theoretical interests and data obtained at first hand, I have sought to gain in accuracy of detail and depth of understanding what I might lose in breadth of coverage. It is hoped, moreover, that these studies may stimulate other scholars to extend this mode of analysis into such crucial areas as law, economic behavior, family life, religion, and military institutions.

On the other hand, by treating the relation between tradition and modernity as it appears in a variety of social and cultural phenomena rather than by concentrating on a single problem, I have found it easier to articulate some of the complexities of that relation. For traditional patterns and modern aspirations are related in many ways. Oftentimes they are fully compatible, the traditional either positively supporting the modern or else presenting no conflict with it. When conflict does obtain, on the other hand, it may work toward resolution in a number of different ways. One alternative is straightforward displacement of the old by the new, through a varying combination of coercive and persuasive measures. Another alternative is through structural differentiation, as mentioned above, either through the incorporation of a novel form from outside or through processes of internal differentiation. Still another way is through a subtle transformation of traditional forms so that they continue to be meaningful but are redefined to fit the modern situation. In its most creative outcome, the conflict may involve so genuine a dialogue between traditional and modern patterns that novel values emerge and authentic variants of modern culture are developed.

Perhaps the most important insight in this connection is that while traditional patterns may stand in conflict with modernity in some respects, the same patterns may support modernity in other respects. It is to this sort of complex relationship that the Pragmatist is most likely to draw attention. Theoretically the relationship follows logically from the realization, hard won by sociologists during recent decades, that no modern society can exist without substantial reliance on patterns which must be regarded as traditional and not rational. For a concrete example of this dual relationship, let us turn once more to the phenomenon previously discussed, that of wax and gold.

We have argued that the ambiguity and equivocation symbolized by the Amharic formula wax and gold stands in opposition to the semantic dimen-

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121 195 538 sion of modernization which, because of the ascendance of technology, contractual relations, and bureaucratic organization places great stress on the unambiguous use of language. Yet we may now argue that the intellectual habits associated with the wax-and-gold pattern are also valuable assets in Ethiopia's pursuit of modernity.

The experience of history has demonstrated the futility of attempting the revolutionary implementation of a clear and distinct ideal in human society. No matter how bold and sweeping the program, traditional patterns persist tenaciously. The only real alternatives are whether they are to be maintained in isolation from the modern culture, or whether traditional and modern patterns can be fused sufficiently to produce a relatively homogeneous sort of culture. As Gabriel Almond's analysis suggests, the latter alternative appears to be conducive to stability and effectiveness in modern political systems.[12] For that to take place, however, traditional symbols must be interpreted with sufficient ambiguity as to permit their fusion with modern ones. The problems of "cultural management" faced by the elites of the transitional nations can only be handled in the long run by a deliberate effort to exploit the ambiguity of traditional symbols.

Enrico Cerulli's interpretation of the Aksumite inscriptions provides an interesting precedent for such manipulation of language in the service of induced culture change in Ethiopia.[13] Cerulli has remarked on the cautious and ambiguous language with which Emperor Ēzānā recorded his conversion to Christianity in the fourth century. For example, Ēzānā refers to his new deity, not as "God of the Christians," but with the traditional pagan symbolism, "God of the Heaven" and "God of the Earth"; and he attaches to his new God the same epithet—"Who has not been conquered by enemies"—which traditionally belonged to the pagan god Mahrem. So interpreted, Ēzānā's inscription may be seen as an antique expression of that cultural disposition which centuries later the Amhara were to crystallize in the canons of *sam-ennā warq* poesy. At the same time it illustrates how the sacred symbols of a traditional culture may be used to facilitate radical innovation.

What is true at the level of national leadership is no less true for the leadership of less inclusive social systems. Wise politicians at all levels have always been aware that to gain support and preserve solidarity it is not advisable to adhere scrupulously to a single literal interpretation of any system of beliefs or code of norms. This perception has been affirmed by recent sociological investigations, which show that the most effective administrators of complex organizations are those who have a high tolerance of ambiguity and who are skilled in the use of ambiguous language for the purpose of reducing interpersonal tensions.

In addition to serving these instrumental functions, the ambiguous use of language belongs in the most modern of cultures because it is the foundation

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of a humane literary style. The rationalist emphasis on clear and distinct ideas and the puritanical emphasis on honest, straightforward, and plain talk are indispensable in running the machinery of modern society but by themselves are insufficient to represent the savor of human experience. The ascendance of unambiguous communication in American culture has resulted in the triumph of "a journalese," which is characterized, as one critic has put it, by "words of flat signification . . . and with none of the broadly ruminative phrases which have the power to inspire speculation." As he further observes:

> The essential sterility of such a style is one of the surest signs we have that modern man is being dessicated. For the "modern" style is at once brash and timid: brash enough to break old patterns without thinking, and timid before the tremendous evocative and constructive powers immanent in language.[14]

If the aim of modern culture is a fuller life for man, it neglects its ends if strictly cognitive and instrumental considerations become so dominant that its very matrix becomes flat and dry. For modernity to be complete, the tremendous evocative powers immanent in language must also be unleashed.

The distrust of ambiguity arises in a modernizing society because those processes most obviously associated with the culture of modernity—chiefly those having to do with rational mastery over the environment and the rational co-ordination of human activities—take place in contexts where unambiguous communication is imperative. The successful development and operation of institutions in these areas do require, as we have suggested, the setting-aside of devious and equivocal habits of mind. But in those areas involving the creation of solidarity, the management of tensions, and the expression of intuition and sentiment, criteria of effectiveness would seem to permit, indeed to require considerable reliance on the uses of ambiguity. From this it follows that the wax-and-gold mentality should be regarded not only as an obstacle to Ethiopia's modernization but also, by virtue of its contribution to the continuing effectiveness of her social organization and the continuing richness of her expressive culture, as a beneficial agent.

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in such numbers that "Manzē" virtually became a synonym for "underground patriot." 829 648

After the liberation, as after the routing of Ahmad Grāñ's forces, the Manzē once again returned to redeem a ravished land. Slowly, the houses were rebuilt, the land was plowed once more. Churches which had been rebuilt after Grāñ's destruction only to be razed by the Italians were again put into place. Tough in his spiritual as in his physical life, the Manzē doggedly re-established the culture of his own. Now as before the occupation, a man of Manz sits on the throne, promising to let no foreigner take his country's land,* while the young braves celebrate the royal line in their festive boasting: 186 [539]

> *Ya-Manz ababā, ya-Manz ababā! Yābbabāl genā!*
> The flower of Manz, the flower of Manz! It will bloom yet again!

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

Thus far the significance of Manz and Gondar has been discussed from the point of view of an outsider. We have attempted to assess, on the basis of the best available evidence, the respective historical and cultural roles of these two noted Amhara regions. We turn now to a different though related question, namely, the significance of these two places in the minds and feelings of Ethiopians themselves. 121

Two kinds of reaction are conspicuous. To the Ethiopian Modernist, Manz and Gondar are seen primarily as outlying pockets of conservatism. Their commitments to the past move them to resist certain changes promoted by the national government, with Manz protesting modern education and Gondar defending itself against nationalist centralization. They are regarded as backward areas, representative of the many forces that are "holding Ethiopia back," and to a certain extent are disdained.

To their inhabitants, on the other hand, these places are objects of intense loyalty. For differences of identity among the Amhara are defined chiefly in terms of their *agar*, or "home country." The size of one's *agar* is relative; it depends on the context in which the symbol is used, and may be as small as a district or as large as a province. Whatever the referent, one's *agar* signifies more than a place of residence or provenience. It means "home," and all those whose families live there are regarded with special affection, while those out- 121 186 823

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* On certain festive occasions the following antiphonal chant is declaimed in praise of "Ṭaqel" (the affectionate, "horse" name of Haile Selassie): [533]

[Leader:] *Mīn āla ṭaqel mīn āla?* [539]
[Chorus:] *Agarē la-saw agarē la-saw alsaṭem ala!* [551]
[Leader:] What did Ṭaqel say, what did he say?
[Chorus:] "My country to outsiders, my country to outsiders, I will not give!" said he.

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• 121 side are regarded with reserve and suspicion, if not hostility. For this reason
186 the word of native local authorities has always carried more weight than that
823 of imported or distant authorities. For this reason the names of bars and cafés around Addis Ababa today are to a large extent place names. For this reason
[575] the type of voluntary association which has aroused the most enthusiastic interest in Addis Ababa in recent years is the association based on a membership drawn from the same *agar*.[50] Regionalist sentiments are so intense in connection with these groups that some members of the Manz association, for example, have asserted that they would not admit to membership a person whose family originated in a district only a few kilometers outside the boundaries of Manz.

121 This type of orientation to Manz, Gondar, and the many other regions in Amhara country may be regarded as an instance of the more general phenomenon referred to above as "primordial sentiments." These are sentiments which are based on the awareness of certain given qualities shared by the members of a group, qualities such as race, language, religious affiliation, tribal affiliation, as well as region of origin. The primordial sentiments account for much of the cohesion and much of the vitality among the members of any traditional society. How these allegiances are affected in the course of modernization has considerable bearing on the future shape of the rapidly developing nations.

A number of factors inherent in modernization work to erode the primordial sentiments. Increased physical and social mobility tend to uproot the individual from the settings of family and home community in which these sentiments are produced and reinforced. Occupational position comes to replace membership in primordial groups as a primary determinant of status and identity. Secondary education, military training, and the development of national institutions and symbols promote the sentiment of nationalism to which these narrower allegiances are subordinated.

Other aspects of modernization, however, work in the opposite direction to intensify primordial sentiments. The education of members of minority groups gives them both a heightened sense of grievance and a voice with which to protest. The creation of new forms of wealth and power provides new bases for competition and conflict, processes which tend to be structured along lines already laid out by cleavages based on primordial differences. The insecurity aroused by the threat to tradition inherent in modernization also produces defensive reactions which often take the form of heightened allegiance to such groups.

This intensification of primordial loyalties during modernization presents a problem which, for all their differences, nearly all the nations of Africa and Asia have in common. Whether the critical differences revolve about language, as in India; religion, as in Lebanon; geography, as in Indonesia; or

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tribal affiliation, as in sub-Saharan Africa—the passions spent in the conflict of primordial groups have impeded the development of a civil society at the national level. The problem is of such moment that Clifford Geertz has defined the nature of the effort required to cope with it as of a revolutionary order.[51] 121

Because of the disintegrative implications of primordial loyalties, so conspicuous in transitional societies, the ideas usually set forth for dealing with them have a tendency to reflect what we have called the "Conciliatory" perspective. On the one hand are those who conceive of tribalism or its counterparts as a major obstacle to the development of a national community, and see the chief hope for transitional societies in the effort to promote symbols and situations which excite the sentiment of nationalism as a substitute for primordial loyalties. On the other hand are those who appreciate the psychological advantages of retaining primordial identifications, and look rather for political and social mechanisms which will keep under control the explosive aspects of primordial loyalties.

Without denying the practical importance of such ideas, we would like to suggest an alternate emphasis, an emphasis on the positive aspects of traditional patterns—on their potentialities for reformation rather than for elimination or control. There is advantage in defining the durable aspects of tradition. The vitality of a people springs from feeling at home in its culture and from a sense of kinship with its past. The negation of all those sentiments acquired in childhood leaves man adrift, a prey to random images and destructive impulses. The only plausible alternative for a society which has been so uprooted is an order based on a rigid ideology and secured by a high degree of coercion. The most productive and liberating sort of social change is that built on continuity with the past.

This assumption may be elucidated by considering the nature of personality development. The human ego grows by incorporating new elements, discarding some old ones, and constantly reorganizing what it retains. The strongest egos, however, are those which have retained some solid identifications from childhood. The man with a strong ego may have substituted new religious, political, and occupational values for those of his father, but he has kept some general sense of oneness with his father, or original father-figures, all his life.

It is with respect to such general, archaic identifications that traditional primordial sentiments can be of positive use in times of rapid change. The specific content of early identifications can be replaced without sacrificing the deeply rooted, vitalizing sense of oneness with the original objects. In the Amhara case, Manz, Gondar, and other regions constitute such objects of identification: widely diffused symbols whose content must be modified with the times but which can endure as sources of inspiration in a changing society.

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• 121 In what ways may the content of a primordial symbol be revised to benefit the developing national society? One way is through enlarging the scope of the referent. This is particularly feasible in the case of regionalist sentiments among the Amhara, for their concept of *agar* is, as we have seen, highly flexible. A native of Agāntchā, for example, may think of his *agar* now as Agāntchā, now as the sub-district of Gērā Meder, now as the district of Manz, now as Shoa Province, or even as Ethiopia as a whole. In each case, a feeling of inclusiveness would attach to anyone within the boundaries of the region in question, and he would be defined accordingly as *yāgarē saw* ("my countryman"). Thus a focus on the more inclusive reference of *agar* in the mass media and in educational institutions may serve to diffuse the libido invested in regional symbols and so expand, rather than destroy, the psychologically integrative functions of regional identifications.

A different process of reorientation is that which, instead of broadening the object of the particularistic attachment, focuses on aspects of the culture of the primordial group which are valuable in terms of universalistic criteria. One remains attached to the symbols of one's primordial groups, not because it is uniquely "chosen" in some way, not only because of the accident of birth and upbringing, but also because it embodies certain qualities which are intrinsically valuable according to the beliefs of the larger culture and/or which relate to some special function performed in behalf of the larger community. It involves a process of redefinition that might be termed a "rationalization" of primordial sentiment.

This process was exemplified, with an understandably high degree of self-awareness, in the personal experience of Sigmund Freud. Cosmopolitan though he was, Freud had a very intense primordial attachment to the Jewish people. As is well known, he rejected the particularistic beliefs of the Jewish tradition, both the religious mythology of Judaism and the chauvinistic concept of a Jewish nation. Yet throughout his life he maintained, and drew strength from, a lively sense of his identity as a Jew. In his own words, he was attracted to the symbolism of Jewish identity by "many obscure emotional forces, the more powerful as they are ineffable" and by "the clear consciousness of an inner identity, the secret of sharing the same type of soul."[52] In addition, he thanked his Jewishness for two qualities which he found of essential importance in his career: freedom from prejudices which hamper the full use of the intellect, and the readiness to accept a position of solitary opposition.[53]

In Freud's assessment of what it meant for him to be a Jew, we find an articulation of the three elements which constitute this process of rationalization of primordial sentiment: (1) rejection of exclusivist, particularistic be-

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liefs and values, (2) retention of the basic emotional tie and identification with the group in question, and (3) elaboration of the virtues of the group in terms of universalistic criteria.

This is a type of orientation to the primordial sentiments which has the effect of maximizing both traditional and modern values, for it retains the sources of security and identity provided by tradition yet defines them in ways that promote national solidarity and the creative resources of the national culture. It is an approach which may be illustrated, in concluding this chapter, by the cases of two modern-educated Amhara who identify themselves, in part, as a Manzē and a Gondarē.

"Balātchaw" is an American-educated official of the Ethiopian government. Born and raised in Addis Ababa, his family originated in Manz, and he still has relatives who reside there. He is an ardent modernizer, anxious to see progressive leadership and the expansion of educational facilities provided in the provinces; yet he is also very sentimental about Amhara traditions and, in particular, his *agar* Manz.

To Balātchaw, Manz symbolizes hard-core loyalty to blood and to land. It also symbolizes the will to fight stubbornly for one's rights and for what one thinks right. He sees the government's keen concern for its territorial boundaries as a direct reflection of the Manzē's determination to retain and acquire land. Balātchaw gets much pleasure out of telling stories about the Manzē's almost foolhardy bravery in combatting the Italian invader. He reveals a "clear consciousness of an inner identity" with the Manzē in this regard, and says of himself: "You know, even as a child, and ever since, I have not been afraid of anybody."

"Makonnen" is a government official who was trained in western Europe. His family lives in Gondar, though he spent little time there after leaving for secondary school in Addis Ababa. In the course of his studies abroad, he had become estranged from the traditional ties and symbols of his Gondar-Amhara background. And yet now he speaks with great respect of the virtues of Gondarēs, their cultivated manner in personal relations, and their pride and wit in the use of language. The meaning of Gondar came to him almost in the manner of a revelation:

> In the midst of my studies in Western Europe I had the chance one summer to visit a number of West African countries and then to return home and spend some time in Gondar. I had not thought very highly of my people before that trip, and what I experienced was a great surprise. What I found—what we have, that I did not find in the African countries I visited—is a special sort of dignity of manner. When I talked with the elders at Gondar I was moved to tears. That is something priceless; that is a great and irreplaceable national resource.

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• 121 It is spare vision to regard the Ethiopian past only as a source of obstacles to modernization, or as a matrix of primordial loyalties whose only issue can be discord and disruption. It is likewise constricting for Ethiopians to regard their past as useful only as a façade for exacting admiration from outsiders. The Ethiopian past can be, as the cases of Balätchaw and Makonnen demonstrate, a source of identifications which are associated with specific virtues of national significance, and which Ethiopian cultural leaders can draw upon to help define for their country its unique composite character in the company of transitional societies.

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The World of The Amhara Peasant

The life of the peasantry has been a constant setting for the Amhara drama. It is the faithful pedal point against which the ups and downs of Ethiopian history have been played. We cannot savor that history fully without becoming closely acquainted with the peasant himself.

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If understanding the peasantry is important for a truer picture of the Abyssinian past, it is indispensable for a sensible approach to Ethiopia's future. Ethiopia is and will remain for a long time a predominantly agricultural nation, one whose exports—chiefly coffee, skins, and oilseeds—depend almost exclusively on rural output. The one economist to have discussed the problem at any length in print maintains that agriculture is the one area in which Ethiopia can reasonably expect significant economic development in the foreseeable future.[1] Conscious efforts to stimulate peasant productivity, however, may issue in stagnation or even setbacks if they are not based on a realistic understanding of the peasants' own attitudes and conditions of life.

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Ethiopians who are striving to modernize their country have for the most part lost touch with the peasantry. If they were born and raised in one of the cities, they may have had no direct contact with the peasantry at all. If their origins are rural, they have been oriented all their school days toward gaining a modern education and tend, wittingly or not, to ignore what they can of their past. Nor are they helped much in this regard by foreign technical experts, who tend to have a modernist bias and typically know still less about the indigenous peasantry. Understanding of the peasantry by scholars, on the

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PREFACE

This book is the outgrowth of a relatively uninhibited encounter of a mind bearing some of the ideas and methods of contemporary social science with the dominant traditional culture of a developing nation. As a result it embodies a variety of interests which, in more conventional work, would be pursued through separate writings. Broadly speaking, *Wax and Gold* is animated by three different forms of curiosity, each of which moves to the fore at different times. Proceeding first of all as an empirical social scientist, I have been curious about the nature of traditional Amhara culture. Shifting at certain junctures to the viewpoint of the social analyst, I have been concerned with examining the situation of action faced by thoughtful Ethiopians today. And throughout I have been moved, as a sociological theorist, to raise questions and suggest hypotheses regarding the more general significance of the phenomena examined in the course of my Ethiopian studies. If the book is therefore somewhat disjointed at moments, I hope the reader will be compensated by sharing some of my satisfaction in refusing to suppress one or another of these interests. 121

The motive which lies behind any scholar's effort to characterize an exotic culture is ultimately aesthetic. I freely admit to having been seduced by the charm of traditional Amhara life. Played out by an extraordinarily handsome people in a setting of great natural beauty and a climate often called "idyllic," it offers a gate through time to a state of being that is richly medi-

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other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[2]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry, using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[3]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by hereditary right (*rist*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

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Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

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Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

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The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

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Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

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The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

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ment on the subject, by following some of the suggestions advanced by Robert Redfield for the comparison of world views.[15]

"What does a people confront as it looks out on the world?" Redfield asks. After proposing a triangle of general objects confronted by all peoples—man, nature, and God—he goes on to suggest two specific questions: (1) Are these objects viewed as parts of a common matrix, each infusing the other, or are they viewed as separate and distinct entities? (2) Are they viewed as equally significant, or is special attention paid to one at the expense of the others?

As a point of departure for discussing the world view of the Amhara peasant as a whole, we may consider Redfield's characterization of the "primitive world view." In his account of a generalized primitive world view, Redfield posits that man, nature, and God are perceived as parts of an indissoluble unity, lacking really distinct identities. In the primitive outlook nature is personalized; the supernatural infuses the natural; and man's actions and traits resemble those of the deities. If this is so, then one may say that the Amhara peasant has passed beyond this primitive conception in the direction of differentiating man, nature, and God; but he has not proceeded very far. His God is conceived as a transcendental, self-sufficient Being, abstracted from particular earthly manifestations, and dwelling only at the crown of heaven. He sees nature as having a character and imposing demands of its own, not as a bearer of divine and human properties. He sees man as lacking the powers and virtues of divine beings and at the same time different in kind and higher in status than anything which exists in nature. Yet while these three objects are endowed with distinct identities and autonomous natures, they are conceived as closely and continuously interdependent. Much of what takes place in nature, such as a flood or a bad harvest, is attributed to divine agency, and the character of certain natural objects, like groves of trees and pools of water, is colored by associations with the supernatural. In human affairs, supernatural beings of various sorts are constantly active, and in the case of the *tābot,* the holy ark, a divine object has been thoroughly personalized. Man's life, moreover, is seen as intimately bound up with the vicissitudes of nature, and a personal relationship subsists between man and his friends and enemies in the animal world. In short, the Amhara looks on man, nature, and God as *separate but closely interconnected entities.*

[181] While each of these three entities is an object of great significance to the Amhara peasant, moreover, it may be said that man is regarded as the most significant of the three; and in particular, the problem of *human aggression* may be identified as the dominant theme in the Amhara peasant's outlook on life.

Nature, to the Amhara peasant, presents no outstanding challenge, no perplexing problem, no compelling attraction. Nature is to be adjusted to carefully and quietly. God and other supernatural beings become crucial objects

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in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [791]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shĭllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 [183]

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MODERNIZATION AND THE PEASANT

*565 • 121 At the beginning of this chapter we alluded to stereotyped views of the peasantry held by modern-educated Ethiopians who have no meaningful communication with them. It may be fruitful at this point to consider the relationship between the peasant's world and Ethiopia's quest for modernity in the form of a series of critical responses to these stereotypes.

Three views of the peasantry are of particular relevance. One sees the peasant as exploited, hence potentially progressive; one sees the peasant as uneducated, hence reactionary; and a third sees the peasant as traditionalist, hence irrelevant to Ethiopia's modernizing culture. In responding to these opinions we shall discuss, first, the peasant's conservatism; second, areas of the peasant's receptivity to change; and, finally, aspects of peasant culture which may have a positive value for Ethiopia in transition.

Peasant Conservatism

Those who eulogize the simple integrity of peasant life and regret the peasant's suppressed condition in a social order pejoratively termed "feudal" at times maintain that with a radical change of leadership in the government the peasantry would respond with renewed economic initiative and progressive orientation. Given leaders they can trust, it is argued, the Amhara peasants would support radical efforts to restructure their lives and would participate meaningfully in democratic political procedures designed to promote social change.

*565 121 178 181 This view overlooks the fact, which has impressed travelers of many centuries in Ethiopia, that the Abyssinian peasant clings to his traditional ways with unruffled tenacity. The flavor of his conservatism may be illustrated by the following conversation with an unusually open-minded peasant in Manz. The man was complaining about the dangers presented by a little stream between his home and the local church during the rainy season. "If you can't put up some kind of bridge," I suggested, "why do you not stretch a heavy rope across it so people can hold on to something and not be swept away?" "That is a good idea," he replied, "but we just do not do that sort of thing around here."

Such behavior has been explained by many observers, Ethiopians and foreigners alike, as due to simple laziness. No peasant can afford to be simply lazy, however. The roots of this inertia go deeper. They touch a number of fundamental features in Amhara peasant culture which orient the peasantry against the introduction of novelty.

*565 121 777 178 One of these is the concept of fate (*eddīl*) which the Amhara invoke to account for the ups and downs of their lives. *Eddīl* appears to signify the working of God's will insofar as it affects human purposes, and is to be re-

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garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

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*565 • 121 178 181 [212] [577] been employed as a medium for promulgating new ideas or discussing contemporary problems. Another feature of Amhara culture that helps to account for the mental inertia of the peasantry is its emphasis on the value of deference and obedience to authority. The Amhara typically rely on legitimate authority figures to define appropriate responses to new situations, and regard the delegation of powers as a diminution of the status of such authorities. The peasant has thus refrained from initiating changes in the public domain because the prerogative of taking initiative is generally reserved to ecclesiastical and political authorities.

*565 121 177 178 *Receptivity to Change*

Consideration of the peasant's readiness to follow the lead of legitimate authorities already points to an inadequacy of the second stereotype we have mentioned: that which sees the peasant as hopelessly ignorant and backward, hence intractable from the viewpoint of a program of modernization. For while the Amhara peasant is likely to resist the efforts of some unknown official from Addis Ababa to introduce change in his local environment, he does tend to follow the directives and imitate the example of the local authorities whom he knows and who shape the course of decisions and sanctions at the [137] local level. Thus it is, for example, that the eucalyptus tree—imported by Emperor Menelik, taken to the provinces by nobles, and eventually planted by individual peasants—has come to dot the Amhara countryside. How quickly such change can take place is shown by the recent acceptance of photography in many provincial regions. In 1950, peasants in many Amhara areas strenuously objected to having their pictures taken, in part at least for fear of the camera as [illegible]er of the evil eye. By 1960, visitors to some of these same areas were being deluged with requests for photographs. In the interim these peasants had been exposed to numerous photographs of the Emperor and high government officials and had observed their local authorities seizing every chance they could to be photographed.

Yet it is clear that the Amhara peasant will not imitate everything that is accepted by his traditional authorities. When a new custom strikes him as too outlandish his resistance can become adamant, as was abundantly demonstrated when the court of Susneyos carried out its ill-fated conversion to Catholicism. In analyzing the peasant's receptivity to change it is important to distinguish as independent variables: (1) the degree of acceptability of the *agents* of change, and (2) the extent to which the proposed change is congruent with traditional beliefs and values.

The whole question of the nature of peasant opposition and receptivity to modernizing programs may be discussed most realistically by focusing on [744] a concrete area of attempted change. The material I have assembled is most detailed for the case of public health, an area to which the government has

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paid increased attention in recent years. A new phase of public health endeavor in this decade was marked by the imposition of a nationwide health tax in 1960. 565* 121 177 178

Health has become a prime objective in Ethiopia's modernization program because of a growing realization that the wide prevalence of malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, intestinal parasites, syphilis, trachoma, leprosy, and other diseases continues to sap the vitality of the nation's productive forces and to visit misery on countless peasant families. The public health forces in Ethiopia (Ministry of Public Health, WHO mission, and AID Public Health Division) have long understood that Ethiopia's health needs cannot be met by piecemeal therapy. They have undertaken a program of preventive measures by preparing public health teams in the medical college at Gondar. The college trains health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians within a common framework, so that when they go into the field they will understand each other's tasks from the start. The first public health center employing such a team was opened in the late fifties; Ethiopia's Second Five-Year Plan envisions one such center for every fifty thousand people by 1967. 744 [651] [764] [648] [874]

The objective of these public health workers is to transmit a number of instructions—concerning personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, early care for illness, and isolation of contagious diseases—which are at variance with customary beliefs and practices. Experience with comparable programs elsewhere suggests that the success of such health teams is by no means assured.[18] What are the forces working for and against the acceptance of these new instructions by the Amhara peasantry? Both negative and positive factors may be identified with respect to each of the three general categories previously referred to: the general outlook regarding change; attitudes toward the agents of change; and degree of compatibility between the new cultural items and the old.

The Amhara peasant's general resistance to change may be presumed operative here as elsewhere, particularly since health practices are often associated with religious beliefs and sentiments. Defense of indigenous therapies has in fact become a significant channel for the expression of traditionalist sentiment, a channel that has even been utilized on occasion in the Addis Ababa newspapers.[19] And a general posture of resistance to changes in the field of health is supported by the interests of traditional practitioners, *dabtarā* and *ṭanquāy*, who are in danger of losing clientele if modern-trained health workers come to win their allegiance. 565* 121 177 178 75

Counter to this conservative drag, on the other hand, is the peasant's powerful desire for one basic change in his life circumstances, namely, the reduction of morbidity and mortality. Despite his idyllic conception of paradise and his frequent contention that life on earth is something of little value, the Amhara wants to avoid death. Even from the religious point of view he is [061]

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*565 motivated to live as long as possible: the monk wants to live longer in order
• 121 to get closer to God by prayer, and the worldly man wants to live long enough
177 to atone for his sins so that he may enter paradise. Health thus rates as one of
178 the most important values. The expressions for greeting and farewell stress
75 health. Most of the prayers and vows offered have to do with achieving health.
761 Long, painful pilgrimages are made for cures, and much money is spent for the remedies of native practitioners and for amulets to ward off illness. This powerful desire for health and life operates as a lever to overcome the resistance to change.

*565 Toward the bearers of new ideas designed to satisfy this desire for reduced
121 morbidity and mortality, however, the peasant's stance is suspicious and un-
177 sympathetic at the outset. He regards Ethiopians who have been educated by
829 Westerners as contaminated by alien norms and beliefs. They appear to him as Ethiopians, but also as strangers—as "black *faranj*"—with their European clothes and their unorthodox eating and smoking habits. He tends to distrust their motives, to suspect them of being out to take advantage of him in some way. And he resents their overt or implicit disparagement of his way of life, particularly his practices in so sensitive an area as sanitation.

*565 Against such obstacles one cultural factor that serves to present the health
121 worker as an acceptable agent of change is the Amhara peasant's deference to
177 the man of learning. The public health worker is in a position to inherit some
744 of the awe felt for the learned *dabtarā*, especially since the health teams
[554] operate out of centers which provide therapy as well as instruction, which gives them the benefit of association with the quasi-magical powers attributed to one who performs successful treatment. In addition, he can be aided by the Amhara peasant's personal devotion to someone who has helped him and won his confidence. Whether this devotion can be stimulated depends, in the last analysis, on the character and resourcefulness of the public health workers themselves. Those who are able to communicate in a dignified manner with the peasants, who avoid dealing with them as an inferior and backward people, who refrain from flaunting the most important local norms, and who are on good terms with local authorities and respected men, have a substantial chance of being accepted after an initial period of suspicion and alienation. Thus it was that a Gojjami peasant, asked why some of the local people were hearkening to the advice of the public health team at Dabra Marqos, explained: "We have come to realize that what you tell us to do is for our own advantage, not yours." Elsewhere in Gojjam, a similar response was the eventual issue of a more pronounced initial rejection of public health workers. In the village of Dajan doors were closed against a venereal disease team which was taking blood samples of the entire population for Kahn test analysis. Popular suspicion was voiced in a number of ways; the health workers were accused of selling blood, of being missionaries, and of otherwise trying

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to cheat the locals. The health officer in charge of the team then brought some of the objectors to the mobile laboratory, patiently explained what was going on, and how it would benefit the people. Before long word got around that these outsiders were not so evil after all, and the doors of Dajan opened. 565* 121 177 744

Given the possibility that the Amhara peasant may come to acknowledge the public health worker as a legitimate agent of change, what about the discrepancy between the ideas advanced by the public health workers and the ideas of his traditional culture? The conception of the causation of illness is radically different in the two cultures. Since the peasant views the etiology of disease as a function of the will of supernatural beings, on what grounds could he adhere to prophylactic measures based on naturalistic conceptions? 565* 121 177 753 744

Valid though our characterization of the peasant's concept of causation may be, it is nevertheless a very simplified one. It is unlikely that any world view is totally devoid of some sort of naturalistic explanations, just as, conversely, well-educated moderns often cling to residues of "superstition." Though the Amhara's general framework for understanding causation is not naturalistic, he does possess a number of specific notions which can be interpreted as naturalistic or protonaturalistic. Here are some examples:

(1) The belief that an excessively dirty house brings sickness (even though in practice animals are permitted to urinate and defecate indoors and strings of soot to hang from the rafters). [231]

(2) A vague notion that the daily washing of hands, mouth, and feet is related to health. [515]

(3) The concept of *metch*, an ailment involving fever and pains, believed to come from exposure to dirty places as well as excessive exposure to the sun (though the devil is often thought to be the conveyer of the ailment).

(4) The concept of *gershā*, a notion that a convalescent is liable to relapse unless he refrains from eating unaccustomed foods, resumes work slowly, stays out of the sun, and washes his body and clothes. [758]

(5) A latent concept of contagion, found in: (a) the belief that smelling the urine of another will give one a cold, (b) the belief that the breath of a typhus patient will communicate his disease, and (c) the custom of referring to all diseases which can be given by one person to another as "*zār* sickness."

Even when the explanations set forth by the health workers deviate too much from what the peasant can possibly conceive as plausible, there may still be grounds to justify his accepting some strange advice through an appeal to more familiar beliefs and interests less directly related to the matter at hand. Thus, while peasants have been reluctant to accept the sanitarian's argument that diseases will be prevented by sanitizing the water supply through building wells, they have often been persuaded to build wells by the prospect of securing a more convenient source of water.

Measuring the relative strength of forces supporting and opposing change 565* 121 177

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*565 among the peasantry in public health and other fields of planned development
• 121 is a task that requires intensive empirical studies.[20] But it should be sufficient-
177 ly clear from the foregoing that the view of the Amhara peasantry as incorrigibly recalcitrant and reactionary is a rather shallow one. Amhara peasant culture contains potentialities for change that are as real as its most rigid beliefs and its substantial antipathy to change. The challenge to social statesmanship and social science alike is to understand the peasant's world in a more analytically precise way so that the diverse potentialities for change can be identified, but in the context of the total structure of peasant life.

*565 *The Legacy of Peasant Culture*
121 Our discussion so far has treated the peasant as a wholly passive entity in contemporary Ethiopia. Whether the emphasis has been on the peasant's resistance to innovation or on his receptivity to change, he has been considered from one point of view: that of the Modernist anxious to transform Ethiopian society according to secular ideals. Common to both the modern-educated Ethiopians, who consider the peasant primarily an object for manipulation and coercion, and to those who think more in terms of providing friendly leadership and perhaps securing future political support, is the assumption that they really have nothing to learn from peasant culture, that peasant culture has nothing of substance to contribute to an Ethiopia in transition.

Whether this assumption is just or not can only be decided by Ethiopians themselves. Ironically, it is easier for an outsider to question it and to search for aspects of peasant culture that might contribute to a more meaningful national experience during the coming decades of transition. The type of possible contribution to be explored here concerns the mode of defining and responding to the situation of rapid change which Ethiopia has entered.

The social environment of contemporary Ethiopia is very tense and affords few outlets for the constructive release of tensions. The discrepancy between the growing desire for aspects of modern culture and the persistence of many old customs and problems has generated much impatience, anxiety, and ennui among the modern-educated. Their sense of inadequacy vis-à-vis Western "metropolitan" standards is no less painful for their having escaped a long heritage of colonial domination, and combined with a sense of failure to move rapidly toward aspired goals has created in many of the modern-educated marked self-destructive tendencies. Insofar as this destructiveness has not turned inward it has been projected outward against other elements inside Ethiopia and without.

One of these targets is the uneducated mass of the people, who, as we have seen, are often regarded as so backward that the only way one can bring progress to them is through coercion and authoritarian manipulation. Another target, naturally enough, has been the higher officials of the govern-

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ment. Of particular interest here is the fact that these officials have frequently been condemned in total terms for their alleged "selfishness" and "hypocrisy." Indeed, one of the outstanding characteristics of the modern-educated is a highly moralistic disposition which leads to a constant evaluation, and unmasking, of everyone within the broad orbit of Ethiopian political life in morally uncompromising terms. 565* 121 •

The sources of this disposition are complex and not fully to be explained here. One factor would seem to be the ascendance of a concern for rationality and its related insistence on integrity, in opposition to the traditional patterns of deviousness and equivocation symbolized by wax and gold. Another would seem to be a growing Rousseauan concern for the "natural rights" of the people, and the related view of the powers supporting the *ancien régime* as selfishly and hypocritically depriving the people of these rights. What the consequences of this disposition may be is a question of greater urgency. For it leads to the insistence on purity of heart as the essential political virtue, a demand which necessarily results in demoralization of public life and political fanaticism.[21]

While this sort of disposition is natural to the situation of the modern-educated, hence not simply to be wished away, it is clearly out of touch with the traditional Amhara mentality. Insofar as the modern-educated may seek alternatives to a purist, sentimental, and somewhat hysterical approach to politics, they may find themselves nourished by contact, through personal communication or through the medium of literature, with the "cooler" approach of the Amhara peasant. 565* 121 181 571 828

A feature of Amhara peasant culture discussed earlier in this chapter is the centrality of its orientation to man and to the phenomenon of human aggression in particular. To know the Amhara peasant at all closely is to appreciate how cautious he is about the intentions of others. He does not assume that he can count on others, though they may make promises. Before engaging in any secular transaction, such as lending money to a neighbor, entering into litigation, or taking on a servant, he insists on securing a guarantor (*wäss*) who agrees to make good for damages caused by the man he is backing. He does not assume that others may be benevolently disposed toward him; he suspects that behind every protestation of admiration and fealty lurks some quest for personal advantage. He does not assume that superior social status entails superior moral worth. Wryly commenting on his ambivalence toward superiors toward whom he shows such deference, he describes his posture as one of "bowing in front, and passing gas in the rear." In short, he is on guard at all times, coping with the presumed selfishness and hypocrisy of others and pursuing his own interests in a very sober and manipulative way.

At the same time the Amhara peasant's low estimate of man's potential does 565* 121 181 828

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not bring him to a position of rejecting man. On the contrary, man is accepted, with all his frailties, for what he is. The Amhara's patterns of life are shaped, neither to overwhelm man with guilt for his shortcomings, nor to pressure him into personal or social reform, nor to deprive his worldly existence of all enjoyment and significance; but rather to accommodate human realities and transcendent values to one another in such a way that neither is seriously compromised. He honors the value of non-violence, but indirectly, by relegating its observance to a morally differentiated role, the priest. He honors the value of marital fidelity, embodied again by the priest; but he lives comfortably, following the inclinations of the old Adam, in a status defined as technically excommunicate. He accepts the reality of hostility in human relations and adjusts to this reality by encouraging it where socially useful, curbing its socially disruptive aspects through fasting, and by channeling its expression where possible through litigation before judges, argumentation before elders, and games on festive occasions.

The Amhara peasant's outlook is both realistic and humanitarian. He does not expect political leaders to be morally pure, for he understands that all men are imperfect; *saw yallam*. He is not upset by the "selfishness" and "insincerity" of *Realpolitik*—awareness of which has sometimes been a demoralizing factor among the masses in Western countries—because *Realpolitik* is the stuff of his daily life. At the same time he seeks practical arrangements whereby human interests can be furthered and human conflicts can be contained. Insofar as this characteristic orientation of Amhara peasant culture comes to permeate the outlook of Ethiopia's modernizers—and it has never been wholly absent—it may help to reduce the intensity of those unrealistic demands and inhumanitarian impulses which are endemic in a society in transition to modernity.

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THE EMERGING ADOLESCENT

While it is clear, as we have argued thus far, that a modernizing society stands to benefit from retaining or redefining many aspects of its traditional culture, it is also clear that in certain areas discontinuity is indispensable if significant change is to be brought about. Just what these areas are is something which presumably varies from nation to nation, though cross-cultural regularities may perhaps be uncovered in the course of further research. In the case of Ethiopia's incipient modernization, at least two subsystems of the traditional social system of the ruling Amhara have already undergone some sort of structural change: that of "secondary socialization," the complex of processes whereby skills and values necessary for adult life are imparted to adolescents; and that of the stratification system—the complex of arrangements whereby status is allocated to members of a society in accord with the various values upheld by the society.

An important precondition for the changes which have taken place in both of these areas was the establishment of a permanent capital: Addis Ababa, founded by Menelik in 1887[1] and now home for nearly half a million Ethiopians. Menelik's institution of the first government school in Addis Ababa in 1908 marked the beginning of a slow but steady process of introducing some of Ethiopia's youth to the novel skills and norms of modern Western culture. The concentration of power in Addis Ababa through the reign of Haile Selassie has diminished the status of the traditional Amhara elites and brought

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to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to

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Egyptian mosques; youth dormitories and community houses in certain tribes in India; the academic and athletic youth organizations of ancient Athens and Sparta; not to mention the numerous teen-age associations of modern Western society.[3]

Here again, the adolescent Amhara is not involved in any such social forms. The advent of puberty is associated with the growing up and out of childhood groups, the gangs of shepherds who spend their days together in work and play. The girl of eleven or twelve is expected to spend all her time at home, under careful supervision. The boy of thirteen or fourteen has abandoned the shepherd's life for farming, in the company of older relatives, and soon becomes increasingly preoccupied with his private economic and erotic interests. His family elders are likely to warn him not to make friends with other youths outside the family.[4] For a number of adolescent boys to get together outside of festive occasions is, to the traditional Amhara mind, a sign that something wrong is afoot.

The absence of adolescent rites and age groups reflects the individualistic character of Amhara social organization, a subject to which we shall turn in chapter vii. Nevertheless, Amhara society catches young people in its grasp and guides them to adulthood just as firmly and surely as does a society which has many collective arrangements for its adolescents. It does this by means of a well-ordered program for growing up. The road from childhood to adulthood is one series of informal, unproblematic stages through which the growing person adjusts to progressively increased responsibilities and progressively detailed norms. After infancy, there is normally no break in continuity in the whole process.

Toward Adult Work Roles

Following a long and indulged infancy, the Amhara child is early taught the rudiments of work responsibility. At the age of three or four, children are given simple chores, such as shooing chickens from grain drying in the sun or collecting bits of firewood. Somewhat older children are expected to protect the crops against birds, farm animals, and baboons. The Amhara becomes apprenticed in the main vocation of his childhood—tending the herds—almost as soon as he can run about, and six-year-old shepherds play a crucial part in the Amhara economy.

Boys retain the responsibility for tending the herds at least until the age of twelve, but by then they have already been initiated into a number of adult work activities. At about eight or nine years the Amhara boy begins to do his share of the harvesting, sickling the wheat, barley, *tëff*, or beans and loading the crops in piles he will help transport to the threshing place. He becomes adept at directing the cattle round and round the threshing floor and at winnowing the grain from the chaff. At times he helps with the weeding.

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that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for consider-

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(396)	(40)	(197)

able strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

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search and only to the highest grades of secondary school and college, three 883*
questions regarding unscientific beliefs were included. In a pilot study of 815
sixty secondary school seniors and juniors, 42 per cent held the belief that "a 178
person can be made sick by the evil eye of a *budā*," and 33 per cent believed 177
that "too much learning results in madness." To the one question asked of 125
my entire sample: "Do you believe that some learned *dabtarā* can cause rain to fall or stop?," 16 per cent of 500 secondary and 7 per cent of 200 college seniors and juniors said "Yes."

This persistence among the educated youth of traditional beliefs which run 883*
counter to the consensus of modern scientists has been attributed by Lord to 815
the inadequacies of the Ethiopian school system. This is as might be expected, 871
inasmuch as most Ethiopian teachers have had relatively little education 178
themselves and the curriculum has necessarily been somewhat improvised and 177
incomplete. Officials of the Ministry of Education have labored to overcome these deficiencies, and certain changes were in fact made in consequence of Lord's study which aim at combating the more dysfunctional of the prevailing superstitions.

It seems likely, however, that certain irrational dispositions are also in- 121
volved here, dispositions to maintain the unscientific beliefs in spite of im- 815
provements in teaching methods and materials. One would predict this on the 178
basis of general sociological understanding of the consequences of rapid social 177
change. The disruption of the traditional belief systems brought about by the sudden dissemination of scientific beliefs inevitably creates insecurity, and a common reaction to such insecurity is to cling with increased tenacity to some of the old-fashioned beliefs which are closely identified with the traditional culture.[23]

One area in which this defensive "revivalism" can be observed in Ethiopia 178
is that of medicine. Many Ethiopians who have received modern secondary 75
education maintain that Western medicine, while useful in many cases, repre- 815
sents only one possible approach to the problem of sickness and health.[24] 177
Thus, fifty-seven per cent of the secondary students questioned asserted that traditional Ethiopian medicines are effective all or most of the time, although such therapies include the eating of rancid butter to cure malaria or drinking holy water to cure serious functional disorders. Dr. Lord herself has reported an episode which throws much light on the psychology of this reaction:

> An Ethiopian colleague, a former teacher, warned me against drinking water in a certain provincial town on penalty of my catching malaria. He was challenged thus: "You are one of the better educated persons in Ethiopia; don't you know the cause of malaria?" He quickly, and eruditely, gave all the known scientific facts about malaria. Then he added, "You people from the United States (and the United Nations) think that this (the scientif-

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*883 871 178 men and outstanding commoners in the vicinity of the royal court. But with the importation of hundreds of foreign teachers, the establishment of an extensive system of secondary schools and colleges, and the provision of economic support for thousands of post-elementary students, a real structural change came about. Although the school system remained completely subordinate to the throne, it introduced a number of processes that had a dynamic of their own.

*883 • 121 178 As we have seen, these new socialization processes have subjected the modern adolescents to many sorts of conflict and strain. They have been placed in conflict with their parents, and hence within themselves, on the basic issues of work and, particularly, marriage. They have been subjected to the simultaneous appeal of traditional and modern patterns in virtually all aspects of culture. They have been forced to make choices in numerous areas, while their traditional counterparts have customarily been prevented from making any kind of choice at all.

It might seem that such a situation would breed a troubled generation, distraught and disoriented, knowing what we do about the psychological hazards of rapid culture change. And indeed, among the modern adolescents of the fifties, one might find classical cases of anomie and identity diffusion, boys who confess, "Nothing seems worthwhile to me . . . I am confused, being brought up as I was on the traditional beliefs without questioning and then suddenly being forced to ask questions," or, "The problem of choosing the work I should go into is my only real problem right now, but because of it I find it hard to make decisions about anything. If this suffering is the price of freedom, I am not sure it is worth the price."

Such cases, however, were the exception, not the rule. Most of the students were working hard to get ahead in the world or enjoying their newly acquired freedom and camaraderie. Almost all our respondents had ready answers concerning the sort of work they want to go into, and what they [828] would do if they could have any wish granted. Comparing themselves with their elders, they presented a positive self-image. They regarded themselves as more "civilized," "well built," and "generous" than their parents' generation, albeit somewhat lazier and less polite; and in comparison with Ethiopians a decade older, saw themselves as "better educated," "more clever," "more adventurous," and better able to "enjoy life." Nearly all of them (92 per cent) said that they felt either "enthusiastic" or "hopeful" about their [181] personal future. So one could characterize the Ethiopian post-elementary students of the fifties as relatively buoyant, clear-headed, self-confident, and enjoying their situation of culture contact and change far more than suffering it. How may this be explained?

[643] One great source of their strength was a sense of dependence on the Emperor. As founder of the Ethiopian school system, Haile Selassie has

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appeared to the students as the source of their new goods; of their learning, 883*
health, and well-being. Because of a feeling that "he supplies everything" 121
and "he is my guardian," students of all grades have been among the most 178
sincere and enthusiastic supporters of Haile Selassie. So their adoption of 643
Western patterns has from the outset been legitimated by the highest tradi- [177]
tional authority, and the harshness of the culture clash has been softened
by the symbolization of both tradition and modernity in the Imperial Person.
Here the traditional pattern of "functional deviance" re-asserts itself. The 883*
adolescent rebels against the traditional demands of his parents, but expends 121
that deviant energy on behalf of legitimate symbols of the national society. 178

Related to this was a strong sense of national purposiveness. *Agarēnennā* 883*
negusēn tammrē iredālhu ("Having studied, I will serve my country and 121
my king")—this was the motto of most Ethiopian students in the forties and 641
fifties. The conspicuous needs of their country provided clear goals in terms 178
of which students felt they were preparing themselves.

Still another motive force was the need for personal justification. The many 883*
students who in a sense deserted their home villages or families in order to 121
spend years in school carried with them an ambition eventually to show the 178
folks back home that they were right after all. This involved the conviction 871
that going to school was the right, at times the righteous, thing: a blind
faith that simply by continuing along the road of education they would
make good in the world and return home some day as a sort of hero. Here,
too, is an echo of the old deviant pattern: the renegade returning home, after
many years, as a successful churchman or warlord.

The economic situation, finally, was encouraging for students. It seemed [464]
for many years that advanced training, including study abroad, would be
available for whoever qualified, and that the demand for educated personnel
was so great that the job opportunities for students would be endless.

By 1961, however, all these sources of adolescent morale—royal legitima- 883*
tion, national purpose, personal justification, and economic opportunity—had 121
been to some extent undercut. Some of the changing circumstances have al- 178
ready been referred to. The effect of the rebellion of December, 1960, and its 871
aftermath was to weaken the tie between Haile Selassie and the post-elemen- 643
tary students. With his moral authority somewhat undermined, the students
could no longer use him to symbolize a conflict-free transition to modernity.
Nor could they any longer count on him to "supply everything" indefinitely:
in the summer of 1962 the Emperor announced the immediate suspension of
room and board benefits for the students of the University College.

The students' outlook has further been rendered less sanguine by the con- 883*
fusion attending the political crisis of the sixties. They no longer feel the 121
keen sense of national purpose, to serve "country and king." Their ideals in 178
this regard were already weakening before the rebellion by virtue of increased [641]

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awareness of the political realities in the Ethiopian government. They had also begun to doubt the transcendent efficacy of the educational process itself after observing the behavior of those educated Ethiopians who went before them and inevitably became their ideals. The violation of various traditional and modern norms by the latter, and their evident demoralization, raised many questions in the minds of the students.

Finally, the students were made more anxious by a general constricting of opportunity. Increased numbers in the school system meant a steady intensification of the competition to gain and hold on to a place in secondary school and college, particularly since 1959. The rapid filling of jobs by the educated youth and steadily growing numbers of unemployed youth began to create anxieties about finding work in the future.

From the viewpoint of the modern adolescents, then, a very supportive and stimulating environment in the fifties has changed to a somewhat threatening and confused environment in the sixties. It is in this decade that Ethiopia's leaders of the future, that tiny fraction of one per cent of the population who reach secondary school, are coming to experience adolescence as a real normative crisis. At a time when, in the highly modernized society of the United States, observers like Friedenberg charge that the adolescent condition is becoming obsolete—that scope is no longer afforded the young person for exploration and discovery of an authentic self[28]—in the transitional state of Ethiopia this condition is being thrust on the youth. The decisions they make now, the identities they forge, will largely determine the extent to which reason and creativity will have a place in Ethiopia's future.

The effort of the Ethiopian government to provide a modern education for some of Ethiopia's adolescents illustrates a principle discussed in another context by Karl Mannheim, namely, the characterization of youth as a latent sociological resource which must be mobilized when any social system seeks to change itself. It is a resource analogous to the latent energy reserves which are available to biological organisms when they must make a fresh adjustment to their environment.[29] Thus far the effort to mobilize the resources of Ethiopia's youth in behalf of modernization has proceeded chiefly through a pattern of increased *differentiation:* establishing a structure of secondary socialization separate from that of the traditional structures and thereby transmitting new beliefs, skills, and values to the youth. As yet, relatively little has been done with respect to the problems of devising modes of *integration* commensurate with these new differentiated patterns. The analyses of this chapter suggest the presence of what might be called "integration gaps" on at least three levels. On the level of the individual personality, there is the problem of synthesizing the various aspects of traditional and modern culture which have been transmitted to Ethiopian adolescents through diverse sources. Inasmuch as the external supports which cushioned these conflicts in the fifties are no

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longer so secure, the adolescent individual has been thrown more on his own. He can only be helped to work through these conflicts by a transformed educational program, one which educates for self-education and seeks to enlighten students concerning the complex realities of economic development and culture change. On the level of relating youth to a modernizing occupational system, there is the problem of guiding young people into and through the relevant educational programs and helping them to find appropriate work roles once trained. On the level of planning for the whole society there is the additional problem of relating the number of individuals being trained in various fields at any period to the priority requirements of a national development program.

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This last issue raises questions which for the most part lie outside the scope of this book. Yet there is one point concerning the orientation of Ethiopian students which is of immediate relevance: the disjunction between the aspiration of modern-educated Ethiopians to live in Addis Ababa and work in a government office, and the nation's needs for trained workers in more directly productive fields and for those who will work in the provinces. For at the same time that Ethiopia's youth are being trained in modern skills, they are being exposed to modern pleasures; and these—the enjoyment of modern amusements, the company of other educated people, and the excitement of proximity to centers of national power and international commerce—are concentrated in Addis Ababa. At the same time that they are being educated with modern beliefs, they are being primed for a new kind of social mobility; and this channel is concentrated in the governmental bureaucracy—the nesting ground of Ethiopia's new elites. Conflict between these new interests and the nation's deepest needs, endemic in all transitional societies, poses an integrative challenge of the highest order.

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The Old and New Elites

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that characterizes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary
177 178 Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

[433] In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels: coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal [671] realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The govern- [64] mental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious [795] institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Ortho- [794] dox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

121 This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratifi-
56 178 cation.

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cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a 121
society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by 56
that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive frame- 178
work of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are 181
embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is [571]
in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively 565
stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and 554
wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the [463]
statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the mer- 565
chant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the 554
small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was 441
accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an 463
Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be [186]
tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes 565
low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Low- 567
est in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from 554
the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), 463
and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced 565
sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values [181]
of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.

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643 century, who instituted a number of monthly holidays and prescribed new
17 liturgical texts; to Menelik, who introduced vaccination and the eucalyptus
[461] tree in the twentieth century. For more than a century now kings and emperors have attempted to combat the traditional Abyssinian repugnance for manual labor by themselves engaging in arduous physical work on numerous occasions.[11] Haile Selassie has followed a pattern with abundant precedents in introducing the many changes which have characterized his reign.[12]

As object of Abyssinia's highest esteem, symbol of its most cherished values, possessor of supreme wealth and power, and author of new norms, the emperor of Ethiopia thus qualifies as an elite in the more technical, sociological sense of the word as well as in its original sense of "being chosen."[13] Indeed, if more extreme interpretations of the emperor's significance are to be credited, he might even be viewed as the fountainhead of high status for all other elites. Thus Bruce, in a famous passage, declares:

> The Kings of Abyssinia are above all laws. They are supreme in all causes, ecclesiastical and civil; the land and persons of all their subjects are equally their property and every inhabitant of the kingdom is born their slave; *if he bears a higher rank it is by the king's gift; for his nearest relations are accounted nothing better.* [Italics mine.][14]

Such an interpretation, however, is more ideological than analytic. Throughout Ethiopian history one can discern definite limits to royal authority, and bases of elite status other than imperial favor.

121 It is true, as Margery Perham ably sets forth, that a primitive state of tech-
643 nology and severe geographical obstacles prevented the realization of imperial
17 power to the degree that the royal ideology would have permitted.[15] Yet this failure of the monarchy "to build up any kind of administrative framework through which to exercise the absolute powers with which, by tradition and consent, it was endowed" was not simply a matter of wanting techniques. It also reflected the importance of ultimate values other than that of anointed royalty in Abyssinian culture.

121 The primary sociological limit to imperial authority was the commitment
643 of the Abyssinian people to the tradition of their church. Religious conversion
17 was one change which, at least in the period of Amhara hegemony, could no
771 longer be tolerated. Za Dengel (1603–4) and Susneyos (1607–32) were brought down because of their forthright conversion to Catholicism, and the overthrow of Lĭjj Iyāsu in 1917 was legitimated on the alleged grounds that he had become a practicing Muslim. The decline in power of Tēwodros II (1855–68) was due in no small measure to the fact that his cavalier policy toward the clergy resulted in his being branded an enemy of the church.

121 A second limit on imperial authority lay in the perennial tendency of cer-
643 tain regional families to become endowed with an aura of legitimacy in their
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own right. Indeed, the record of rebellions by nobility as well as clergy against the emperors of Ethiopia bespeaks a persisting dualism in the Abyssinian's disposition toward the monarchy itself. In principle, the emperor is reverenced. Widely held is the sentiment expressed in the *Kebra Nagast:* "It is not a good thing for any of those who are under the dominion of a king to revile him, for retribution belongeth to God."[16] But unquestioning deference is by no means necessarily coupled with unswerving loyalty. The Abyssinian pattern differs from the Japanese, in which total loyalty to the divine monarch calls for suicide in the wake of any disgrace one might have brought upon him. The norms of fealty to the emperor have not been so deeply internalized in Ethiopia, where the pardon and reinstatement of rebels has been a common occurrence. Among Abyssinians a veneer of genuine deference has often concealed an inner consciousness of disaffection, enabling the individual to act out rebellious wishes when the opportunity or need arises. Indeed, this ambivalence has been one of the traditional impulses behind the culture pattern of wax and gold.

The Old Nobility

The Abyssinians themselves acknowledge the existence of, in addition to the emperor, two groups of persons with pre-eminent status. These are called, both in Ge'ez and Amharic, the *maḳuānnent,* or "nobility," and the *ḳāhenāt,* or "clergy." While believing the presence of a king to be a precondition of civil order, they also regard the presence of these other elites as necessary for their good life. This attitude is expressed in the Amharic saying: "Fertility of the land [is] through the *maḳuānnent;* the splendor of the church [is] through the *ḳāhenāt.*"[17]

The term *maḳuānnent* may be used to refer to all secular dignitaries between the emperor and the well-to-do landowning peasantry. In strict contemporary usage, however, the *maḳuānnent* should be distinguished from two other classes of personages, whom we may call the "royal nobility" and the "local nobility" or "gentry." The former consists of the immediate royal family (*negusāwi bētasab*) and more distant royal relatives (*masāfent*). Because of their kinship with the Solomonic line these have at times been referred to as "chiefs of Israel."[18] Although it was customary for each new king to exile all male relatives who were potential candidates for the Crown to a high mountain fortress, more distant relatives might hold provincial governorates, and women of the royal family sometimes played an important role in court politics and provincial administration. Members of the royal nobility have normally been distinguished by special titles: *ābēto* (now vulgarized as *āto,* "Mister"), *le'ul,* and *lījj* for men; and *emebēt, le'elt,* and *wuyzaro* (now vulgarized in the sense of "Mrs.") for women.

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the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis,* a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

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furniture, etc.—are equally burdensome investments if the returnee does not 571
possess them. Furthermore, the traditional large wedding is still expected in 585
most cases. In the city this involves an enormous expense—as much as 511
Eth$2,000–$4,000—which often puts the groom in debt for several years.*

There are many returnees for whom these factors are excuses more than in- 571
superable obstacles, or who frankly prefer the extended bachelordom made 582
possible by the greater freedom of the modernizing sector to an uncertain
match. If, as frequently is the case, they would marry only an educated wife, [581]
they may be discouraged by the shortage of educated Ethiopian women; or
beset by too much pride, if coming from a humble background, to ask for the
hand of an educated girl who is likely to come from an upper-class family.
They may be victims of the cycle of antagonism that has developed between [578]
educated men and women in Ethiopia, the former attacking the latter for de-
manding too much in the way of material things and being only superficially
modernized—"half-baked"—and the latter indicting the former for preferring
foreign girls and unjustly neglecting Ethiopian women.

But the root of the problem is often deeper (leaving aside, for this discus- 581
sion, characterological factors). It is entwined with a basic insecurity about 178
the whole idea of marriage in the transitional atmosphere of contemporary 177
Ethiopia. Perhaps nowhere in the minds of the returnees do traditional and 571
modern norms stand in such delicate counterpoise as with regard to the ques-
tion of the sort of wife one should marry and the proper type of relation to
have with her. Should he prefer the traditional woman, modestly dressed and
inconspicuous, or the Western ideal of a sexually attractive female? Should he
have a wife who stays at home all the time, or one whom he takes along to
social gatherings? Should he have a wife with whom to share interests and
discuss problems, or one to order about and keep in her place? The returnees
have normally been attracted by the Western marriage pattern while abroad,
but it is so out of place in the Ethiopian context that many are troubled by the
prospect on return. The foreign-educated man feels he should have an edu-
cated wife, but he also feels threatened by a woman who is independent,
especially if she is holding a job. Such ambivalence adds an additional dimen-
sion of vulnerability to the returnee's position.

In sum: the conditions of life receptive to a modernizing intellectual 121 •
stratum have not yet been established in Ethiopia. The personal frustrations 571
of the returnees are an inevitable consequence of their being the bearers of 177
modern culture in a traditional oligarchical order—especially one that has 178

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* A new custom has developed in response to this problem. It has become the practice in some [178]
offices for sheets of paper to be circulated prior to a wedding in the ministry or agency where
the groom is employed. Co-workers write the amount they wish to be deducted from their
salaries in their behalf. Most recently, modest weddings have started to become respectable.

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121 been affected by modernizing agents for but a relatively brief period and in
571 a relatively diluted fashion. The beliefs and values which the returnees
177 acquired while abroad concern national development, technical competence,
178 and individuality, while the norms of the social structure in which they must live are based on the values of loyalty to monarch, ascribed status, and authoritarian relations.

121 Of many possible types of response to such a situation of strain, four are
571 common among the Ethiopian intelligentsia. These we may designate by the
177 terms Opportunism, Withdrawal, Reformism, and Rebellion. With reference
178 to the three variables of commitment to modern goals and norms, acceptance of existing authorities, and the distinction between "activity" and "passivity,"
156 these patterns may be represented schematically as in Table 14.[89]

TABLE 14

MODES OF ADAPTATION OF ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES

	Commitment to Modern Values	Acceptance of Existing Authorities	"Activity"
Opportunism	−	+	+
Withdrawal	+	−	−
Reformism	+	+	+
Rebellion	+	−	+

Opportunism is the mode of adaptation in which the returnee's commitment to modern goals and norms is eclipsed by his passion for status, power,
[554] and income. He differs from the traditional aspirant for high position in Abyssinia in that two of his status qualifications are novel—residence abroad, and a university degree—and above all in that the pursuit of his personal goals entails a *renunciation* of nationalistic ideals and universalistic standards which were nurtured while abroad. For some opportunists this is no real problem: their study abroad was all along essentially a façade to be used in advancing their careers. But for the others the process of becoming an opportunist is a gradual one and attended by chronic self-recriminations, as the returnee finds himself compulsively agreeing with his superiors and flattering them on every occasion, and performing actions primarily for the sake of advancement rather than for the sake of doing a job well.

It is impossible to go on pursuing progressive principles indiscriminately. I sometimes see my friends doing things now which we used to condemn

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> when we were students abroad together. I wonder at times if I am losing sight of my principles altogether.

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Withdrawal is the solution of those who have retained their principles at the expense of being effectual in action. The routes of escape are varied. One way is transferring attention to problems outside the country—to international relations, problems of pan-Africanism, or the gossip about London, Paris, and New York.

> To me the independence of all African nations is more important than the progress of Ethiopia.

Some spend their energies in convivial relations with resident Westerners (diplomatic and technical assistance personnel, foreign businessmen) or in the traditional rounds of family visiting. Quite a few returnees lose themselves in card-playing or chess whenever they can, and a number have taken to heavy drinking. Often the returnee who withdraws shows no "symptoms" other than a general constriction of his life into narrow work routines and creature functions. At the same time he may be experiencing a fairly acute sense of estrangement.

> Our generation is not really living. We are not "engaged." The simple weaver—most of the people in this country—are "engaged." We are not; we live from day to day. When I leave work I go to the Ras Hotel or somewhere else. I don't want to go home, there is nothing there for me. I have nothing to work for. I have no family, nor any interest in saving money.

The third type of response, Reformism, involves the attempt both to maintain principles and to be effective in action under the existing political order. This alternative places great demands on the personality system and might well be designated as the pattern of "moral heroism."

> What we lack today is proper organization. In default of organization, we are forced to rely on morality.

The reformist returnee serves his country according to universalistic standards even though these norms are scarcely institutionalized; even though, in other words, he is likely to be criticized and even punished for maintaining standards in the face of demands by superiors and relatives to do otherwise, or for solving problems in a rational manner on his own initiative. Yet if he is officially disregarded or censured, his efforts do not go unnoticed by the patriotic modernizing elements of the population who, in a covert, informal system of communication, tend to establish severe judgments on the "bad guys" and the "good guys," and to idolize the latter as potential leaders.

In the case of Rebellion, finally, the attempt is made to be active in the pursuit of modern goals but in a spirit of basic alienation from the existing

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121 authorities. Except for a very few eccentric individuals who have seemed
571 oblivious to the dangers of speaking out their criticism of the status quo in
177 public, this has in the nature of current circumstances necessarily involved
178 clandestine activity. Returnees have been involved in small conspiratorial
156 groups since the mid-fifties. The December, 1960, coup d'état has been the
[669] most ambitious rebellious project to be acted out so far. Similarly motivated
[668] activities have included the duplication and distribution of subversive litera-
ture, and the formation of small groups as groundwork for an eventual polit-
ical party.

Our data do not permit reliable estimates of the frequency of these different modes of adaptation among the returnees. It is important to note, however, that individuals often change from one mode to another in the course of their experience after return and that many follow more than one pattern at the same time. It is unlikely that the total number of returnees oriented primarily as rebels has ever exceeded two per cent. Most of them move in and out of phases of Reformism, Withdrawal, and Opportunism, depending to a large extent on the accidents of their appointments. A more concrete picture of their experience may be suggested by the following case study, that of a Western-educated Ethiopian who went from a phase of Withdrawal to one of Reformism tinged with Opportunism.

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The Adjustment of "Haile": Case Study of a Returnee

October, 1958. Haile has recently returned from four years of study in a Western country. He speaks very critically about the state of things in Ethiopia. He is particularly upset by the prevailing inefficiency, the lack of industriousness, and the interminable procrastination (*ïshi naga*).

January, 1959. Haile seems deeply depressed. The ministry in which he has been placed affords him no opportunity to work effectively and the job he has bears no relation to what he was trained for. He has withdrawn more into himself, but to all outward appearances plays perfectly well, with great self-assurance, the role of the Amhara bureaucrat.

July, 1959. Now Haile is working in a different ministry, in a job somewhat more closely related to his training. He appears to feel productive and useful now, and his criticism is constructive. For example, he frequently compares the situation in the United States and Ethiopia, to show how the same sort of problem can be solved more readily in the U.S. because of its greater facilities. Though Ethiopia's comparative handicaps frustrate him, he talks of plans for the development of Ethiopia with some enthusiasm. . . . Haile complains of an

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overload of work, noting that he must not only do his own work but also rectify the mistakes made by others which are brought to him. In his whole branch of the ministry, he finds only two really effective workers besides himself, and they, too, are returnees. . . . He feels fortunate in having encountered no major opposition to the things he is doing in his work and points happily to the fact that his assistant minister has supported him throughout.

October, 1959. Haile now is saying that things are fine in Addis Ababa and stresses the great improvement that has been made during the past five years. He claims that he is getting along fine in his ministry, because his job is straight "busy work." Even so, he is not a pure "ritualist"; he has already negotiated a number of reforms in the operations of his office. His general outlook seems bright—partly, no doubt, because he is "arriving" (what with printed name-cards and a smoothly functioning job) but also because he has a pretty fiancée whom he plans to marry next year. . . . At another point, however, he shows great exasperation over the considerable conflict among factions within the ministry. He decries the nepotism practiced by the heads of these factions. He says that he tries to stay independent of their intrigues.

June, 1960. Recently Haile was given additional responsibilities in his ministry, and he expects a raise in salary soon. Although this new work is still further removed from the subjects he studied while abroad than was his previous job, he no longer complains about not being hired to do what he had been trained for or about not being used. He remains unhappy about his minister, who brings in his own men from the outside rather than promote men from the ranks—"or else I would have been a director general by now." On the other hand, he mentions with evident pleasure the fact that the Emperor sent over a gift at the time of his wedding. . . . Haile's wife is a simple, traditional sort of Ethiopian girl. He seems happy with her and with their home—an old, poorly built structure that is falling apart, but which she has taken pains to enliven with a few decorations, and has equipped with a radio. He looks forward to the prospect of building a house on their own land sometime in the future. Meanwhile, a baby is on the way. . . . The circle has come full swing. Haile talks proudly about his work, his family, and his country.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the Amharic phrase *ya-ḳantu weddāsē zaman*—"the era of futile flattery."

For, whatever other aspects of modern culture they have identified with, the locals and returnees are seized with the promise of its first principle: dynamism.[62] Should they join forces, among themselves and with each other, they might create the effective intelligentsia which is indispensable for realizing this dynamism in action. They would play complementary, and equally necessary, parts; the locals contributing their greater drive and closeness to traditional society, the returnees their broader perspective and skepticism toward simplistic answers and total reforms.

There are numerous obstacles to such a progressive development. Some of them represent the persistence among the intellectuals of a number of traditional pan-Abyssinian characteristics which inhibit both the exercise of creative leadership and the capacity for solidary action. The traditional context of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters which follow. The most conspicuous obstacle, however, has been the manner in which the Ethiopian government has sought to integrate the intellectuals in the social system. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Role of the Government

In the hierarchy of values which sustained the traditional Abyssinian social order, that of the transcendental religious orientation represented by the Orthodox Church may be said to have held the paramount position. This is the sense in which, as has so often been remarked, religion has been Abyssinia's only truly unifying factor throughout the centuries. Religious charisma transferred from foreign sanctuaries—the mythical Ark of the Covenant brought from Jerusalem and the archbishop periodically imported from Egypt—provided the ultimate source of legitimacy in the society, upholding the authority of a sacred Christian monarch, church-defending warlords, and a numerous and functionally differentiated clergy. It so penetrated the social system that the basic unit of Abyssinian civil life was in fact a religious one, the parish.

In retrospect it would seem that the most profound aspect of Haile Selassie's accomplishment has been to dislodge the transcendental religious value from highest place and to replace it with the system-integrative value of loyalty to the emperor.[63] His mission has been above all a secularizing one. To accomplish it he has had greatly to increase his political and economic resources; but insofar as his regime has been accepted, and not based exclusively on sheer power—which to some extent is certainly the case—the paramount value in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie has become loyalty to the emperor as a symbol of the whole society. The autonomous significance of the church has been reduced; its extra-Ethiopian source of charisma has been cut off, and its func-

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But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shĭr* and *divide et impera.* "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

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people. He has been the procreator of much of what demand for modernization now exists in the country, although the Italian colonial administration must also be credited for a certain amount of this demand. By the fifties, however, the growth of the demand of modernization had become self-sustaining, if only in a relatively small part of the population. At that point Haile Selassie was unwilling, or at least unable, to take the next step, to raise national development higher in the societal value hierarchy than loyalty to the Crown. Thus, a traditional oligarchy has been maintained, in which the development of a self-respecting modern intelligentsia has been effectively restrained and its decisive ascendance as a new elite has been prevented.

The paramount sociological problem in Ethiopia in the coming decades concerns whether or not this pattern will be broken. There is no guarantee that it will be. It is highly thinkable that the opportunists among the intellectuals will be absorbed into the new nobility and that a new oligarchy will entrench itself and maintain its exclusive position by increased repression.[66] The number of young people being given secondary and college education will continue to be limited to a diminutive percentage, and the deeply rooted sentiments of the mass of the population for a regime of traditional oligarchy will not be offended. Economic development will proceed at a snail's pace, and what additional wealth is produced will flow into the pockets of a small minority. One possible outcome of such an eventuality would be that the modernizing infrastructure of the society would grow increasingly restless, culminating in a revolution which installed a modernizing oligarchy.

Alternatively, modernizing forces already unleashed in the country may gather momentum and sustain a gradual breakthrough of the new order. If one were to credit the reports of many who have spoken with the Emperor at first hand, this would be his desire. But far more than imperial approval of a distant ideal is required for it to become reality. Two conditions, above all, would be essential. One is that the systematic, if unwitting, demoralization of the intellectuals would have to be ended. Some sphere would have to be created in which universalistic standards have full sway, in which a modernizing intelligentsia can maintain and develop standards and transmit them to younger elements. The most obvious way to do this would be through a university which, by guaranteed financial support, independence from political pressures, and determined operation at a high standard, could provide the Ethiopian government and people with the technical and executive intelligentsia needed for effective modernization, and could provide an environment in which a corps of "custodians of the public good," loyal to the regime but free to express criticism, might be developed. The program for such a university was carefully drawn up by the planners of the Haile Selassie I University. It remains to be seen whether the opposition which muffled that program shortly after its inception, in the spring of 1962, was motivated primarily by

personal antagonism toward some of the foreign academic officials intrusted with its implementation, or whether it primarily reflected natural political pressures against the establishment of an autonomous and vigorous university. Whatever the reason, the failure of the university to develop in the promising manner in which it had been conceived means that for some time to come only the continued sending of large numbers of Ethiopian students abroad will supply the intelligentsia required if modernization is to continue, and that their demoralization on return can only be reduced by instituting an effective civil service system and permitting them some degree of freedom in speech, press, and association. 121

The other condition is that the intellectuals themselves will have to break out of their posture of defeatism and negativism. They will have to abandon the delusive image implied by the intellectual who replied, when asked why he was sitting around in his office and doing no work: "I'm waiting until the government changes." The burden for the breakthrough rests upon them: upon their capacity to push forward in the light of developmental needs and technical requirements, maintaining a sense of affinity both with the government and with the traditional masses. Until the values of the intelligentsia are effectively institutionalized, they will get nowhere unless their ranks produce fewer "escapees" and more "moral heroes." The chances for the success of this elite would seem to rest in part on its mastery of those qualities which Edward Shils has described in analyzing the prerequisites for successful leadership in the new states—"on its capacity for self-restraint and its effectiveness in legitimating itself through modernizing achievement, through a due respect for the claims of traditional beliefs and through its recruitment of a stratum of intellectuals of intermediate level who can reinterpret traditional beliefs, adapt them to modern needs and translate them into a modern idiom."[67]

Are Ethiopian intellectuals capable of this? In the succeeding chapters we shall consider factors which work against their so doing. Yet there is no doubt that many educated Ethiopians have quietly been demonstrating such qualities for years now. Already numerous intellectuals, working as medical officers, teachers, agricultural extension workers, engineers, lawyers, journalists, and bureaucrats have shown great capacity for translating traditional Abyssinian reserve into self-restrained progressivism, and through diligent application to the task at hand and a sympathetic orientation to their tradition-minded countrymen have been laying the foundations for the great transformation. Whatever the pace and pattern of Ethiopia's political development, such work constitutes the indispensable raw material of her modernization.

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6

ORALITY AND THE SEARCH FOR LEADERSHIP

121 571 In the previous chapter we observed that modern-educated Ethiopians, particularly those who were educated abroad, acquired knowledge, skills, patriotic motivation, and social position with which they might conceivably have made substantial reforms and innovations in Ethiopia's institutions. And yet, in their own eyes as in the eyes of some high government officials and foreign observers, they have done relatively little. Their behavior has been marked by a conspicuous absence of creative leadership and solidary action.

Among many of the modern-educated this alleged sin of omission has, in turn, generated an underlying current of reproach against the government and at times against themselves. We have described some features of Ethiopia's domestic political situation which have limited the freedom of modern-educated Ethiopians to carry out progressive activities. A number of them have proceeded from awareness of those limitations to placing all blame on the government for Ethiopia's slow pace of development. Others, however, have turned some if not all of that reproach inward. "It is up to us," they say, "and we have done nothing. Why have we failed? Why have we no moral backbone, no character?"

121 128 571 This chapter and the next are concerned with the basis of this latter reproach, as well as with the more general task of enriching our understanding of traditional Amhara culture. We shall proceed on the assumption that insofar as modern-educated Ethiopians have failed to take decisive steps in developing their country they have been held back by other constraints and

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limitations in addition to those imposed by the government. In the present 121
chapter we shall deal chiefly with factors which are inhibitive of creative 128
leadership, and in the chapter which follows chiefly with factors which affect 571
the capacity for solidary action.

One of the most honest and perceptive of my foreign-educated informants 571
had this to say about the absence of creative leadership among the returnees: 157

> Our maladjustment may be more our fault than that of the government. 121
> We have been led to expect everything from the government, and have become dependent to such a point that we can scarcely think or act for ourselves.

This is a remarkable and convincing piece of self-analysis. It falls short only 591
insofar as it implies that the posture of dependence on governmental author- 157
ity is something peculiar to the modern-educated. It is true that there have 181
been certain conditions such as the "welfare" character of the secondary 121
schools, which are specific to the experience of the modern-educated and which have accentuated a tendency to overdependence. But this tendency is endemic in traditional Amhara-Tigre culture, and those modern Abyssinians who exhibit it are following an inclination deeply rooted in the needs they have acquired and the culture they have internalized in their childhood.

There are various ways in which one might conceptualize this problem. 121
It is not unrelated to what other authors have referred to variously as lack 157
of achievement motivation or lack of innovational personality. The approach of this chapter will stress certain psychoanalytic concepts and insights. In so doing, it will not attempt to delineate an Amhara "basic personality," a task well beyond the scope of the present study.[1] Rather, we shall be concerned here solely with certain kinds of motivational orientation which are widely shared among the Amhara and which frequently inform their social behavior and their cultural symbolism.

Adopting the terminology developed by Erik Erikson,[2] we may rephrase 121
the point about Amhara overdependence by saying that *in Amhara action and* 155
fantasy the social modality of "getting" figures very prominently. The superior 571
is oriented chiefly to getting food, services, and deference from his inferior;[3] the inferior is oriented chiefly to getting favors from his superior. And most interaction among the Amhara is cast in the form of superior-inferior personal dyadic relations. The prominence of this modality reflects a fixation of libido on what Erikson calls a mode of approach to the environment that is "incorporative," and that originates in connection with the infant's experience with a particular part of his body, the oral zone. The central thesis of this chapter is that Amhara behavior and symbolism exhibit a very high degree of attachment of libido, not only to the organ *mode* of incorporation, but even more to the oral *zone*.

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THE PHENOMENA OF AMHARA ORALITY

155 Shortly after an Amhara child is born some butter is placed in his mouth. This
826 is done in the belief that it will keep his voice from becoming harsh. From
[856] that moment on, the mouth never ceases to be an organ of extraordinary
[192] importance in his life. Its cultural importance is reflected in the attention given to it in the Amharic vocabulary: Baeteman's *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* lists some sixty idioms built with the Amharic word for mouth, *af*, more than are listed for any other words in the language except "eye,"
[539] "heart," and "earth."[4] The organ is publicly celebrated in such proverbs as: "Cleverness of mouth, to the master; cleverness of hand, to the slave."

155 The oral zone is of course of universal significance. Some items of oral
826 imagery probably appear in most languages, and manifestations of oral libido
171 appear in many forms familiar to Westerners: the French love for gourmandism, the German passion for beer-drinking and singing, the American addiction to cigarettes, chewing gum, and "life-savers." Many of the less familiar phenomena to be related below in describing Amhara orality, moreover, are found in most of the cultures of Africa and the Middle East. But such phenomena often appear inconspicuously alongside other culturally patterned impulses and sublimations stemming from other phases of psychosexual development. What may distinguish the Amhara—and doubtless some other cultures—is the extent to which the oral zone is an object of attention and a source of behavioral modes and expressive symbolism. The Amhara, it appears, have a preoccupation with orality.

• 121 This preoccupation is manifest in three different kinds of phenomena.
155 There are, first of all, aspects of Amhara culture which express a strong positive attachment to the infantile experience of sucking, in pure and in numerous sublimated forms. These we shall designate as the phenomena of *oral erotism*. Second, there are the aspects of Amhara culture which express a
[152] strong positive attachment to the oral zone as a center for various aggressive activities—the modes which Erikson calls "incorporation by biting," "oral retention," and "oral intrusion." These we shall collectively designate as the phenomena of *oral sadism*. Finally, there are phenomena which express a conflict about the gratification of many of these oral desires; and these we shall refer to as the phenomena of *oral ambivalence*.

155 *Oral Erotism*

853 Feeding at the breast is a prominent and beloved experience in Amhara life. The Amhara infant is suckled whenever he wishes, at the slightest show of desire. Since he is rarely separated from his mother it is easy for him to satisfy himself at any time of day or night. Popular beliefs about breast-feed-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 gratifications are not enjoyed wholly without conflict. In actuality, traits which reflect anxiety about the prospect of oral gratification are no less conspicuous in Amhara culture than the phenomena we have just been discussing.

155 262 Negative attitudes regarding oral gratification appear, first of all, in the scope and variety of the restrictions placed on eating. From both their Judaic and their Christian traditions the Abyssinians have taken over nearly every restriction on eating available. The chief exception to this is the Judaic injunction against eating blood, which Abyssinian custom permits. But they have retained intact the Semitic ban on unclean animals—those which lack a split hoof, upper teeth, or do not chew the cud. Their dread of pork is so strong that to some extent they feel closer to Muslims, who also avoid pork, than to Western Christians.

155 785 They have likewise retained and elaborated on the norms concerning fasting found in early Christianity. With respect to the number and harshness of the fasts it prescribes, Amhara-Tigre custom is probably the strictest in the world. In the rigor of its fasting laws the Ethiopian Church surpasses its sister religions of Eastern Orthodoxy—the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, and Indian Orthodox Churches. On fasting days no food or drink is to be tasted before early afternoon. Thereafter, no sort of meat, fowl, milk, or eggs may be eaten, which reduces the Amhara's post meridiem diet on fasting days to grains and pulse.

Such fasting days occur on every Wednesday and Friday of the year, except those which come during the eight weeks after Easter. There are, in addition, many special fasts in the course of the year. Some of these, like the month-long fast before Pentecost and the two months prior to Christmas, are observed only by clergy and elders. Others must be observed by everyone, though children are led into them gradually. These universal fasts include the eight weeks before Easter, plus a three-day fast during the week before Lent; two days before Christmas; and sixteen days preceding the festival of the Assumption of Mary in August. Total abstinence is prescribed for a period of forty-eight hours before Easter. All together, the ordinary Amhara is supposed to fast 165 days each year; for the devout person the total approaches 250 days.

155 276 773 784 The taboo on the use of tobacco presents another area in which oral gratification is suppressed. Two myths are told to explain this taboo. One is that the tobacco plant originally grew out of the intestines of the heretic Arius. The other is that on the day of the Crucifixion all plants except tobacco withered and died. In any case, smoking is regarded as a grave sin among traditional Amhara, and one who has been suspected of using tobacco is not permitted to kiss the Cross.

121 784 785 155 One could argue that these taboos and fasting customs are simply cultural

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [262]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [754]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away [609]
from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well-known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant [776]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *çhirāq* is some-
152 times evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still an-
[716] other figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away
[789] a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

121 Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions
155 of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted
[853] earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara
121 practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new
155 baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a
862 bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

121 Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of suck-
155 ing and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects
146 as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

121 The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible
155 area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discon-
858 tinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible

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consequence of substantial loss of accustomed mother love at the time of weaning—a mild but chronic state of mourning which gives a depressive undertone to the rest of life—is certainly one of the more evident characteristics of most Amhara.[22] At the same time the Amhara child is made anxious about his actual oral gratifications. He no longer eats whenever he wants to, but only after he has waited for the adults to finish their meal. He is no longer entitled to the choicest food, mother's milk, but to poorer food and leftovers. And he is made increasingly aware of the adult anxieties about eating connected with the fasting requirements, and with the food shortages of the rainy season.

Applying the Whiting-Child hypotheses in the light of these observations one may characterize the development of an ambivalent preoccupation with the oral zone by Amhara as follows: an initially very high level of oral satisfaction enjoyed during the nursing period makes oral gratification a particularly attractive source of pleasure as well as a desired refuge for the psyche under the pressure of later deprivations; while the emotional and nutritional deprivations which the Amhara child experiences toward the end of the nursing period and thereafter undermine the sense of security acquired during his indulged infancy and make him anxious about the fount of that security, oral gratification.*

Whatever the precise ontogenetic basis of this phenomenon may prove to be, the Amhara's ambivalent preoccupation with orality is projected at the *cultural* level in the form of two contrasting human ideals. The secular masculine ideal in Amhara culture is a hero of oral gratification and prowess. He is a man who eats much and drinks much, and who excels in litigation, in declaiming the martial chants, and in composing veiled insults. The religious ideal, on the other hand, is a hero of oral renunciation. The most devout Amhara are considered those who keep all of the fasts, even the esoteric ones; or even, as monks and ascetics, live on a fasting diet the year round—in the extreme case, feed on leaves as hermits. The association of religious virtuosity with oral renunciation reaches its logical climax in legends about Gabra Manfas Qeddus ("Servant of the Holy Spirit"), the most hallowed Amhara saint. In contrast with the normal Amhara boy who nurses for close to three years, Gabra Manfas Qeddus is said to have been at his mother's breast for only three months, when a bird swept down one day and carried him away.

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* While this formulation may leave more questions unanswered than it solves—a purely behaviorist formula inevitably neglects the dynamics of defensive operations and the significance of ambivalence—it carries us as far as our data permit and may provide a useful point of departure for further discussion and investigation of Amhara psychology.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ORALITY AND MODERNIZATION

121 155 571 The preoccupation with orality which appears in their traditional orientations has not disappeared among those Abyssinians who have acquired a modern education. In some respects, that experience has tended to intensify it. A state of prolonged dependence was institutionalized in the government school system. The hiring of most educated Ethiopians by the government has meant that most of them live in a position of waiting to receive their salary—or *ĭnjarā,* as they themselves put it—from the central authority. Thus the image of a bountiful father-figure has become the more firmly established. [643] While in his own person the Emperor has projected an image of vigorous leadership, he has at the same time taken pains to promote this old pattern of oral dependence, by sending gifts of food to students and of champagne to educated officials when they marry; by continuing to provide politically relevant feasts at the palace; and, like the traditional Amhara father-feeder, by frequently reminding his subjects that everything they have they owe to him. This pattern is replicated to some extent in the relations between members of the new nobility and their younger relatives and retainers.

Part of the self-reproach of some of the modern-educated Ethiopians is directed against this passive, receptive aspect of their motivational orientation. Their criticism says in effect: instead of drafting proposals to reform our departments, teaching or writing in order to educate our countrymen, or seeking to understand better the complexities of Ethiopia's current situation, we are far more likely to be found sitting about drinking coffee in our offices, sipping beer at some hotel, playing chess, savoring felicitous phrases, and going to parties where eating and drinking are invariably the main order of business.

Insofar as they are moved to take a more active approach to their situation, moreover, their effectiveness is blocked by a tendency to fall into the traditional oral aggressive patterns of behavior. [578] Their manner of criticizing the government, or certain officials, is frequently one of wholesale insulting. When confronted by a difficult problem, whenever they do not fall back to [521] a posture of dependence on superiors, they incline toward argumentation, *çhĭqeçhĭq,* backbiting, and mutual incrimination. Experts in debate, they are unaccustomed to the arts of creative discussion.

121 155 It is not my intention to suggest that the phenomena examined in this chapter are in total conflict with the Ethiopians' search for leadership. Many aspects of Amhara orality are not in the least inconsistent with the demands of a modernizing culture. Many aspects of Amhara orality would appear to be of enduring value—the excellence in debate and the appreciation of literary subtlety, the preparation of fine feasts and the enjoyment of the table. And it is not necessary for a very large number of Amhara to change their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

orientations in this regard for creative leadership to be effective. What is 121
suggested is: that by tending to relate to their environment either in a passive- 155
receptive mode of getting, in an active-sadistic mode akin to infantile petulance, or in a state of guilt and anxiety concerning elementary gratifications—that minority of Amhara and other Ethiopians who are in a position to introduce constructive change follow a type of adjustment which is inadequate to the challenge of their present situation. Adaptive as these modes may have been in the past, they are archaic in the present.

The search for leadership in Ethiopia today is partly a search for new ego ideals. It is a search for persons and images embodying a more productive and procreative type of orientation, capable of inspiring a creative minority of Ethiopians to build on, not abandon orality, and to move beyond.*

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* That this search goes on at a time when the epigones of modernity, living in an age of high mass consumption, appear to be relaxing into a more passive, incorporative mode—the mode of television-watching and supermarket shopping—is but one of the many manifestations of what is perhaps the central irony of the human condition at this point in history.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

43. E. Combes and M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (4 vols.; Paris, 1843), III, 342, call Gondar "une ville de plaisirs." Eduard Rüppell, *Reise in Abessinien* (2 vols.; Frankfurt am Main, 1838–40), II, 190, speaks of the Gondarēs' "grenzenlosen Liederlichkeit." 113
44. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 104.
45. Rüppell, *op. cit.*, II, 132.
46. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
47. "Menelik's conquests," of course, were won for the most part by trusted generals, who were men from all parts of Ethiopia. 000
48. The figure is from a local census made by the Gondar Public Health College around 1958.
49. The Ethiopian Election Board listed 88,000 families and a registration of 35,000 voters in Manz in 1957. The figures are probably exaggerated.
50. The regional association will be discussed further in chapter vii.
51. "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," *Old Societies and New States*, ed. C. Geertz (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 105–57. 113
52. "Ansprache an die Mitglieder des Vereins B'nai B'rith," *Gesammelten Werke*, XVII, 51–53.
53. *Ibid.*, and *Collected Papers*, V, 174.

CHAPTER 3: *The World of the Amhara Peasant*

1. Ernest Luther, *Ethiopia Today* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958).
2. The general methodological problem involved here is discussed in Hugo Engelmann, "The Activity Bias of Ethnography and the History of Society," *Anthropological Quarterly*, XXXIII (July, 1960), 158–63.
3. The TAT cards designed for use in Ethiopia were originally prepared by Dr. Edith Lord, US/AID, in connection with her own research there. The data on which the present study draws were obtained by administering twenty-five cards to a sample of twenty young Amhara in Manz—seventeen males and three females—ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-five years. 121 • 125 565
4. Cf. Samuel Alamayahu, "The Game of Gänna," *University College of Addis Ababa Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 9 (1959), pp. 9–28. 113
5. Cf. Akalou Wolde Michael, *"Buhe," UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 7 (1957), pp. 57–64.
6. Simon Messing, "Group Therapy and Social Status in the Zar Cult of Ethiopia," *American Anthropologist*, LX (December, 1958), 1120–26. More extensive discussion of the *zār* may be found in Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1957), and Michel Leiris, *La possession et ses aspects théâtraux chez les Éthiopiens de Gondar* (Paris: Plon, 1958).
7. This section draws on material previously published in D. Levine, "On the

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PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

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Begemder

townspeople of highland Begemder.

Field research was concentrated in the vicintiy of Gondar, the largest of the province's towns, and imperial capital during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Today, it is the provincial capital and an important ecclesiastical center, housing several famous churches and reknowned ecclesiastical academies. The town is also the home of many of the province's most famous healers. Extended research was also conducted in the Woggera region north of Gondar, in the rural hamlets discussed in Chapter Three. The division of research efforts between town and countryside reflects the important urban and rural aspects of Amhara medical practices with regard to the distribution of practitioners.

Through observation and inquiry, this field research sought, first, to elicit a description of the social and natural environments in which Amhara perceive pathogenic, prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic forces to operate. A second concern was to examine how Amhara select elements from these environments, and arrange them into etiologies with which to explain particular disease episodes. On the one hand, this meant collecting abstract, conscious etiological models used by Amhara; on the other hand, it meant recognizing etiologies that are constructed pragmatically and piecemeal, in the course of prophylactic and therapeutic failures and successes. Fi-

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121 nally, data were gathered relating to the modes of acquiring, exercising, validating, and conserving powers of prophylaxis, diagnosis, and therapy. Here, as in the other areas of data gathering, a necessary distinction was made between the perceptions of practitioners and those of their clients.

*793 869 75 197 539 While the secular medical traditions of Ethiopia are exclusively oral, powerful cleric healers known as debteras have traditionally employed diagnositc, prophylactic, and therapeutic texts written in Ge'ez, the language of the Church, and in the vernacular. Numerous *793 114 127 debtera texts gave been collected in the libraries of Europe and the United States, and valuable translations, most notably by Marcel Griaule, Deborah Lifchitz, and Stefan Strelcyn, have been published. These published translations, together with translations made in the field with the assistance of clerics, have been utilized in the writing of those sections of Chapter Four dealing with the debtera's medical texts.

121 171 Although the focus of this dissertation is limited to the region in which field research was conducted, it should not be overlooked that the Amhara share important cultural affinities with peoples, now largely Islamic, occupying lands extending from the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.

000 The highlands of Begemder, Tigre, and Eritrea form

*753 causes a secondary ailment by lacerating the victim's heart, equally often no specific pathogenic mechanism is specified for the prodrome.

TAXONOMY AND ETIOLOGY

*753 A "disease name", to use Frake's definition, is a
*192 minimal, meaningful answer to the question, "What is the
196 name of the illness?", in Amharic, "Baǰiyta simmu min
[121] yibbaalaal?". If none of the linguistic components of a description of an illness can by itself describe that ailment (baǰiyta), then the entire description is a disease name, and labels a single diagnositc category. Not all episodes of illness can be diagnosed by a single disease name, of course, since distinguishable ailments may co-occur, or one may be a prodrome of another (Frake 1961:126).

Disease names thus differ from designations of kinds of symptoms, although the names of certain symtpoms are also used to denote specific ailments. For example, "bird" refers to "chills", but "yibird baǰiyta" (lit., "the chill disease") refers specifically to "malaria". The same is generally true regarding the use of the names of pathogenic agents. For example, the literal meaning of "yibariya baǰiyta" is the "ganel's disease" ("bariya", meaning slave, is often used as a euphemism for "ganel");

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Note on Methodology

121 The methods of ethnography, which constitute the basic method
123 used in gathering the data for this report, had to be followed with considerable discretion, while in Ethiopia. Care had to be taken to avoid misunderstandings and loss of confidence among the inhabitants who view study by outsiders with misgivings.

122 Careful preparation by the author included brief but intensive study of the Amharic language, including writing and grammar; letters of introduction from a scholar who has the confidence of the emperor; lengthy procedures in governmental offices in Addis Ababa to obtain permission and passes to travel to the hinterland where the old culture is little changed by modern contacts.

121 In planning the field project under such circumstances, the author deemed it advisable to formulate his objectives in general rather than specific terms; to assume a flexible and patient attitude; to do what was possible; to establish a base-line of ethnographic information and initial analysis.

122 Procedures in the field included travel by mule to various rural hamlets. This was necessary due to regional differences in culture traits, notably in the ethnic division of labor. Travel is possible only in the dry season, October to mid-June. A guide-interpreter was
123 secured in the town of Gondar, where English is taught in the new
124 elementary school. His services became increasingly valuable in interviewing, checking observations and information for reliability and validity; and, by no means least, in establishing rapport with people in the region, most of whom knew his father well. For the guide's father was the local "woggāsha" (native surgeon-herbologist-empiricist).

Finally, the author checked his own results against the work of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 a world-wide dialogue about the limitations and potentialities of human experience. For by any reckoning, a key defining characteristic of modernity is the prominence of education; and education in its truest sense, as Robert Redfield has put it, is "conversation about the meaning of life, as each sees some part of it, on behalf of everyone."

000 It is in the spirit of Robert Redfield that this book was conceived. I should like to place this remembrance of him at the head of the list of acknowledgments which follows. The debt owed by those who had the fortune to study the art of questioning with him is not to be measured.

There are numerous other debts I wish to acknowledge as the author of this book, with the regret that they cannot all be identified individually. I am 122 128 deeply grateful to:

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D. N. L.

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Finally, the author checked his own results against the work of

X794 their annual convention,("amat bal", lit. the annual event). This is
756 about the time when the rest of the Christian world celebrates its
796 mardi Gras, Carnevale, Fasching. The timing of the convention is probably no accident, for there be, as, the day after the noisy Convention, the period of "kudadē" (lit. suffering) in the life of Christ, priests would hardly permit the noisy and gay celebration during lent.

The convention takes place in Addis Alām (lit. new world), the oldest section of Gondar town, once restricted to Muslims and other non-Copts.

Unlike Western Conventions of doctors and scientists, the zar Convention does not consist of calm, objective, sometimes mononotous and even icy presentations. Instead, in the convention of "zar" doctors new techniques are subjectively demonstrated on participant zar devotees who are chronically possessed; diagnostic aids are utilized in actual treatment of actual patients; new poetry to cajole specific spirits is recited in ecstatic chants to the beat of the drum, while the audience joins in with refrain-chanting and rythmic handclapping. It is a super - "wādāja" (lit. love-feast) of the zar cult, bigger and better than ordinary zar cult activities, and introducing new experience, but in principle follows the same basic procedures of luring protective zars into public "possession" of the afflected, and enlisting them in the diagnosis and treatment of ailments caused by evil or mischievous zar spirits.

X794 In view of the esoteric elements in the zar cult, it is little
756 wonder that the "amat bal" is restricted to zar doctors and permanent
●123 devotees. Therefore it was not easy for a "European" observer like the
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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

794 present author to be permitted to attend this all-night session.
756 Careful negotiations through a trusted intermediary person had to be
123 arranged ahead of time. For at any time the chief of the zar doctors
796 could end the negotiations on the ground that some of the "zar" spirits would be offended or repelled, and refuse to come into full possession of their "horses" in the presence of a stranger. An additional antagonistic element was fear of the local police detectives, who, though they do not interfere with the zar cult, have orders from the self-concious central government not to let foreigners witness it.

794 The chief zar doctor of Gondar in the present generation is the
756 Lady (woyzärö) Salämtew, She is renowned even outside the entire province (Begemdir-Semyen), as far as Tigre province and even in Addis Ababa. This is perhaps more due to her position than her own initiative, for Gondar has long been considered the city of powerful spirits and traditions. She leaves most healing activities to her disciple "balä zar", except for very stubborn cases. More often she is busy as "consultant", for many clients, even non-devotees of the zar cult, bring their family or business or litigation problems to her. She herself is possessed by several powerful, protective male zars, to whom she ascribes her various powers, from whom she receives inspiration, the spirit of enterprise, courage to experiment in perfect comfort and security without the fear of the evil eye which hampers other individuals engaging in anything new.

She is not afraid of the pinpricks of medium and minor "zar" spirits, for her whole like is devoted to the service of the most powerful ones. One of the latter has strong Coptic Christian affiliations and learning, and guides her in her cautious and unofficial

x794 756 relations with the priests of the Abyssinian Coptic church; e.g. by whispering to her when to give them private feasts, and how to guide observant Amhara clients - married couples in domestic strife - so as not to come into conflict with the "mänfäs gubaē" (lit. soul father, confessor, who would normally arbitrate such a case for the church).

Another of her powerful zars teaches her medicine, and specializes in the diagnosis of difficult cases of possession. Still another is a specialist on what the other zars prefer as sacrifices, taboos, poetry, and how to negotiate with each of them; (i.e. he teaches her how to function like a priestess).

Another of her zars specializes in business advice: when to buy and sell what; when and how to invest in caravans, or invest in construction of town houses. Occasionally she also takes incidental advice from low-status spirits such as Shanqit, who gives her moner hints on how to be a good hostess when entertaining a "telleq säw" (great man) who comes to her in secret; and on how to manage her large household.

Lady Sälämtu's posture, when not undergoing possession herself, is one of benign self-assurance, not unlike the calm, almost phlegmatic composure of Amhara nobles who act as if everything must come to them. For Lady Salamtew appears sincere and certain of being able to draw on her private reservoir of protective zar spirits almost any night she chooses.

x794 756 ●123 115 The writer's negotiations with her were conducted through his guide, himself a native of the Addis Aläm section of Gondar, and who, though young, occupied some status as "educated" (seven grades of modern elementary school). Moreover, he was not unknown to Lady Salamtew, for his father, a well-known "wogäsha" doctor in Gondar, had often referred

794 patients to her when his organic medicines had not helped. It was this
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123 guide who hit on the idea of flattering Lady Säläämtew by notifying her
[115] that the foreigner was sick, suffering from severe headaches, sleeplessness and chronic intestinal cramps - (all common ailments in her practice), and that he would trust only her for treatment. Whether or not Lady Salamtew believed this, it indicated to her that the foreigner would fit himself into the framework and procedures of her zar cult, and not become a disturbing element that might "offend" her zar spirits.

The guide had taken the further precaution of negotiating with her through her brothers, who were willing to encourage her to accept, in the hope of gifts and rewards. As a result, Lady Salamtew accepted in principle; but in line with the unhurried dignity of her position she had the foreigner informed that he should send the guide again at a later time when she would make known the conditions under which he might attend the "amat bal" convention. In appreciation for having reached this point in the negotiation, the guide left her brothers with some "etan gänzäb" (money for frankincense).

The next step was reached when Lady Salamtu expressed the wish to have the foreigner appear before her, some days before the convention, so that she could look him over.

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[342]
Her house, a semimodern affair of hard-mud walls, is reached by a steep downhill trail from the Gondar town market. On the lower level (the old section of Gondar called "Addis Alam") many houses and huts are built on the foundations of stone houses destroyed by the dervishes in the late 19th century. This section, once restricted to Muslim and other non-Coptic minorities, is now largely inhabited by Muslim Ethiopian weavers and retail traders, many ex-slaves of Sudanese or part-Shanqalla

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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descent, and a few poor Amhara Coptic families, as well as some Amhara who do business there, such as the "wogasha" doctor. Various elements which do not wish to be under too close scrutiny by the church or the police prefer to live in this section. Here the "zar" societies can pound their drums as loudly as the cult requires, for only muffled sounds will rise to the Coptic part of the town.

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After stooping to pass through the somewhat low entrance to the house of Lady Salantew, the visitor finds himself in a room larger than he had anticipated. He is told to remove his shoes, (as if this were a church or mosque). The room is lit by numerous little clay oil lamps even in daytime - a considerable luxury, - for windows have been carefully avoided or boarded up to assure privacy. On the mud-benches around the wall sit a number of women; others sit on mats on the hard-mud floor. An Amhara male visitor in European type suit, who has just consulted the Lady Salantu, leaves hurriedly. Lady Salantu is seated on a raised platform at the far end of the room, behind a curtain, and another area in front of her stage is marked off by a long, thin wooden beam embedded in the floor. The women devotees in the room are busily spinning cotton with their little distaffs, and, since it is still afternoon and not yet "zar time", whisper and gossip with each other freely. Some take time out to suckle their babies, often without rising.

Someone has gone behind the curtain and whispered to her that the foreigner and his guide have arrived. She promptly pulls the curtain aside, but pretends to pay no special attention to the visitor. Her active zars have not possessed her at this time, and she therefore appears absent-minded. She sits on a slightly raised seat on the small

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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stage, her legs crossed almost Turkish fashion, very unlike the usual Amhara posture. She is in her late forties, a rather stocky, powerful woman. Her features are heavy, and she seems at least half-Sudanese. She reinforces the non-Amhara, alien aspects of her appearance by wearing large, yellow, metal bracelets and anklets, and a Muslim-type deep red print cloth over her hair and shoulders. The dirt floor of her platform is covered with sheepskins. Whoever rises is careful not to turn her back to Lady Salamtu. Whenever she moves, there is an attentive hush in the whisperings. In the far corner the smoke of incense rises slightly and blends with the light smoke of the oil lamps.

The only males in the room are the two brothers of Lady Salamtu, and it is with them that the guide begins his whispered negotiations. The visit is brief. Before leaving, the guide advises the foreigner to leave Lady Salamtew some "frankincense money." The foreigner understands that he is to give it to her directly - which is a faux pas - and crosses over the separating beam to place the money in her hand. Only after several days does he learn that this was a breach of protocol, for by touching her hand he might have removed one of her valuable zars "by contagion".

Some days later the negotiators make known their conditions for permitting the foreigner to witness the "amat bal" annual convention. He is to send: three dollars worth of imported incense including frankincense, sandalwood, also sesame seeds; one dollar's worth of coffee beans; a small amount of gunpowder which is pleasing to one of her zars; one bottle of "araqi" (arrak) distilled liquor. The foreigner is forbidden to take any written notes (which a foreign missionary had one done) on the grounds that this is displeasing to the zar. He is warned

X794 756 123 not to cross the boundary in front of the stage again. He is not to approach the house until well after nightfall, and is to come by a back trail, so as not to be seen by passersby.

X794 796 123 Thus, after nightfall on the 23rd of the month of Yäkatit, he climbed over eroded back trails down to the "Kokit" section of Addis Aläm and approached the house of Lady Säläntu where her devotees were assembled. It was 7:30 P.M. More oil lamps had been lit. There were about 20 women, but a male zar doctor with talents in poetry and chanting sat near the stage, wearing a white turban much like a Coptic Abyssinian priest. A powerful male drummer had been hired for the occasion.

X794 796 [123] Lady Säläntew still took no official notice of the foreigner, for her zar had not yet "descended", and without that she was just a hollow shell, a mute "horse". One of her brothers motioned the foreigner politely to a seat on the mudbench that ringed the wall. There was much subdued whispering, as if a momentous event was about to take place. The hairdo of several of the women devotees and doctors had [302] been specially arranged to honor their individual zars: those not permitted to cut their hair had plaited it into a braid ("surosh") surrounding the skull; others had shaved a circle in the middle (called "gucho"), like a little girl.

X794 796 778 Other preparations and paraphenalia included the ritual coffee trays ("gända"), which symbolized the wooden"tabot" (sacred tablet) of the holy Coptic city of Aksum, and which were dedicated to several zars including Säyfu Čhängär and Rahelo. The ancient mother of many zars, named "Werär" was believed to have stolen the original "tabot"

X794 of Lady Salamtew's body. The twisting began like an embrace, with her
796 head thrown back, rotating movements of the chest, followed by a
756 rythmic forward bump of belly and hipsl Her ecstatic shrieks varied
781 from pain to exultation (like the "ellel" of women in the Coptic church service). Encouraging shouts came from individual women in the audience, and some raised their holiday - reddened palms in prayerful joy. As the climax approached, the jerky twisting of Lady Salamtew's body gradually changed to smoother movements of the limbs. She was now well in tune with her zar, and he was comfortable within her. The excitement in the audience changed to warm and glowing emotion at the same time. Then Lady Salamtew emitted a loud scream, and dropped in a heap. The drum stopped abruptly. There was a sudden hush in the audience. The strong sweet odor of generously burned incense pervaded the consciousness and its smoke leisurely curled upward.

X794 It was only a matter of minutes before Lady Salamtew recovered.
756 Her brother pulled the curtain to one side. Her eyes were bright with
796 curiosity as she glanced about the house as if she had just arrived. She had lost her absent-minded appearance, for now the zar acted and spoke through her. Suddenly she appeared to notice the foreigner for the first time, smiled and waved a friendly greeting. Her voice was still husky, but warm, as she called out "how are you" in understandable Amharic, rather than her esoteric "zar language"; this was a courtesy, though
[195] she used the female familiar gender (the zar often uses the inverted
[123] genders in address). She further inquired whether the foreigner was sitting in comfort, and how his health was today (hinting at the "ailments" he had used as a pretext). Then she ordered the handmaidens to offer the foreigner t̄alla (barley beer), and coffee, on one of the zar coffee trays.

X 794 realizing that her "zar" had insulted the powerful one of Salamtew.
796 Back on her throne, Lady Sälämtew harshly admonishes the audience for
[688] dozing, for whispering, for laughing, and some for having taken food and drink during the previous "gurri". This inattentiveness is an insult to her zar, and she threatens to recess the convention if it continues. But then she sugarcoats the threat by calling for another round of refreshments.

[853] Some of the babies in the rear had cried, and were nursed by their mothers. This had also been done by some of the possessed women previously, sometimes within half an hour after the exhausting "gurri". Motherhood and zar devotion evidently did not conflict.

[123] Lady Sälämtu used this intermission to send the foreigner word promising "I shall appoint you a zar as your weqabi (protective spirit)". When she saw that he had drunk some of the barley beer which she had ordered to be served on the tablet of her zar. This time she addressed him in the female gender again, just as she had used a male gender in addressing her female devotees. The zars are believed to enjoy playing their game of turning nature upside down.

X 794 About 1A.M., everyone rose, except the poet and the drummer.
535 Fresh incense was heaped on the burners. Tired and partly intoxi-
796 cated members of the audience were shaken awake. For now they were to witness the "fukkara", the individualistic "boasting dance" of Lady Sälämtew's zar. It was a spastic bobbing up-and-down dance, similar to the "hotu" dance of warriors. The drum beat faster and
[293] faster, Lady Sälämtew seemed to forget her dignity, but still waved her strap, the symbol of her seniority, while the devotees shouted

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121	*arām*	"indolent" (literally, "full of feces")
181	*ya-dehā lijj*	"son of a poor man"
571	*ya-lēbā lijj*	"son of a thief"
578	*yat abātk*	"bastard" (literally, "where is your father?")
[673]	*waslātā*	"lazy no-good"

Other, less direct forms of insult are also widely employed. As was already mentioned, a major use of the wax-and-gold formula is to express insults in so veiled a manner that direct reprisal is unlikely. Another tactic is that of not showing someone the proper respect or in some way manipulating the forms of etiquette to his disadvantage. A favorite anecdote concerning Alaqā Gabra Hānnā illustrates the simultaneous use of both methods: the Alaqā once flattered a donkey driver by bowing quite low to greet him and calling, *Endēt adarātchu?* ("How did you spend the night?"). Only when the man proudly related the episode to his friends, so the story goes, was he made to realize that the greeting was expressed in the plural form (*-atchu*), implying that he and his donkey were being placed in the same category.[18] Still another mode of indirect insult is that known as *ashmur,* in which two friends insult each other vigorously at the top of their voices, the real object of their abuse being a third party who is within earshot.

If the Amhara is by disposition inclined to bestow insults, he is still readier
[865] to take offense at the slightest hint of one directed at him. One of the tasks of socialization among the Amhara is to sensitize the young person to the various types of insults and to motivate him to strike back when he is so offended. Insults are frequently part of a vicious circle which moves from petty disagreement to serious argument to litigation at court, *dulā* fights,
[576] and even premeditated murder. Breach of etiquette may lead to no less serious consequences. In one court case which the author observed, a man was accused and convicted for addressing his father-in-law, whom he normally addressed by the polite form *ersewo,* with the familiar form *anta* in a moment of anger.

Argumentation, litigation, insulting, and revenge comprise the hard core of social interaction among Amhara. While it is possible to exaggerate the significance of these forms in the total pattern of Amhara social life, there can be little doubt of a strongly dissentious disposition just below the surface, and often at the surface, of Amhara interpersonal relations. Still another axis along which this individualistic disposition tends to be manifest is that of deception and suspicion.

*121 The Amhara is a master at *deception.* With straight face and convincing
181 manner he will relate the most preposterous fictions. The Amhara themselves
571 tend to be aware that this is one of their characteristic activities. When, for
577 example, I replied to the query of an Amhara gentleman that some horn
[123]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

goblets (which I had purchased for one dollar) had cost five dollars each, he remarked: "Ah, I see you have learned this country's art of lying well." 121* 181

The phenomenon in question is not an unmixed expression of egoism. At times the Amhara employ deception chiefly for reasons of considerateness, not wanting to tell the other person something that will offend him. Thus a person will agree to honor a request made by his neighbor even though he has no intention in the world of doing so; his neighbor probably understands this but still prefers an insincere "Yes" to an out-and-out "No." 571 577 [123]

Most of the time, however, deception is obviously being used to further one man's interests at the expense of another's. A person seeking a favor will pretend to be in much poorer straits than he actually is.* A needy traveler may pretend to be an important personage or otherwise disguise his identity in order to secure lodging for the night. An artisan, in order to obtain business, will tell his prospective customer that a certain job will be finished in two days when he has no intention of completing the work within a fortnight. To refer once again to my own experience: when I once needed to rent a mule for a week, and it was felt that the local mule owners might be reluctant to rent one for more than two or three days, I was advised by some respected Amhara men in the area that the only thing to do was to say that the mule was wanted for a few days, then on return to say that unexpected factors prevented my getting back on time. Far more imaginative plays of deception are attributed, again, to Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, who is renowned for the episode of sending word to Menelik that he was dead so that the Emperor would send money on his behalf to Gondar.

Like the indirect forms of insulting, deception has its more subtle, passive forms; deceptiveness by omitting the truth rather than committing a falsehood. One might render the basic principle that informs communication among the Amhara as: *Avoid binding commitments; maximize the degrees of freedom left after any utterance.* Questions and answers are typically couched in extremely oblique language. Unless there is some overwhelming personal advantage to be obtained from providing information, the Amhara tend to give answers—when they do not pretend not to understand the question—in terms so ambiguous as to be worthless; for example, replying to a question about the location of a certain place or person with the word *mādo* ("yonder").

The natural complement of so much deception is pronounced *suspiciousness*. Amhara are constantly on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. 121* 571 181

* One Amhara priest, for example, showed me that he had no clothes other than his single blanket in order to gain sympathy and induce me to give him something. But when he learned I had a camera, he went home promptly to get dressed for a photograph. [123]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Note on Methodology

121 The methods of ethnography, which constitute the basic method
123 used in gathering the data for this report, had to be followed with considerable discretion, while in Ethiopia. Care had to be taken to avoid misunderstandings and loss of confidence among the inhabitants who view study by outsiders with misgivings.

122 Careful preparation by the author included brief but intensive study of the Amharic language, including writing and grammar; letters of introduction from a scholar who has the confidence of the emperor; lengthy procedures in governmental offices in Addis Ababa to obtain permission and passes to travel to the hinterland where the old culture is little changed by modern contacts.

121 In planning the field project under such circumstances, the author deemed it advisable to formulate his objectives in general rather than specific terms; to assume a flexible and patient attitude; to do what was possible; to establish a base-line of ethnographic information and initial analysis.

122 Procedures in the field included travel by mule to various rural hamlets. This was necessary due to regional differences in culture traits, notably in the ethnic division of labor. Travel is possible only in the dry season, October to mid-June. A guide-interpreter was
123 secured in the town of Gondar, where English is taught in the new
124 elementary school. His services became increasingly valuable in interviewing, checking observations and information for reliability and validity; and, by no means least, in establishing rapport with people in the region, most of whom knew his father well. For the guide's father was the local "woggäsha" (native surgeon-herbologist-empiricist).

Finally, the author checked his own results against the work of

x 794 782 796 The poet now lures the "pagan" zar Gamyu, whose home is in a bamboo forest in the Metemma lowland of the eastern escarpment of Ethiopia.

Poet: "Tall bamboo you (lit. he) will eat; bamboo you will devour;
Lord, named "Dämmäna" (lit. cloud), from where you devour bamboo;
Gamyu, Gamyu, Gamyu, pure honey (flattering syncnym for healer) !
dance eyaho, eyaho dance, Oh Gamyu!"

Thereupon one of the women devotees who has shaved a tonsure in the center of her skull ("Gamyu" comes from "gamye", meaning tonsure), which is the visible requirement he makes of those whom he "possesses", begins to rise. The "gurri" she dances differs only in details from the one performed for the Galla zar spirits.

It is now 11:00 P.M. The various male zars expected on the program for the evening have now "descended". It is time for the female zars to begin making their descent, which is safe, now that many protective male zars are about.

x 794 796 781 Word is whispered around that a male and a female zar who "will bite" are about to attack some of the possessed. Everyone rises and crowds close to the wall, leaving the hearth and the center of the room free. Only Lady Säläntew seems unafraid. She calls out a warning to the [124] foreigner, in her husky voice but in friendly tone, advising him to stand on the bench so as not to be bitten. "Ayzäw" (be well, be of good courage, be of good cheer) she calls out to the foreigner, using the [195] polite address, and forgetting to use the familiar 2nd person singular feminine, which is her privilege.

This time the possession begins differently. Two women detach themselves from the frightened crowd almost simultaneously. Both

159 754 not find him. They vowed to waylay him some night and beat him bloody, but bystanders felt that they would cool their tempers and perhaps try to get the merchant into trouble with the local police by planting stolen goods on him - a common procedure, in the towns.

Later the same day, the Arab merchant was conducting business as usual. The rumor did not seem to have hurt him, but local grapevine had it that husbands would restrain their wives from shopping there, though they would risk sending servants. Abdulla had nothing devilish about him, except the distinguishing mark of the capped incisors. He was medium-sized, slender, calm, without any stare that might have frightened the woman. His goods were the usual town goods, ranging from imported eyeglasses to notebooks for school children, and cheap beads.

By this time the woman patient was seated on the dirt floor of her house, looking tired, worn out and dejected. She had no longer a headache, of which she had complained, but claimed to have "heartache" and swelling of the left breast. A neighboring woman was brewing coffee. Her husband's brother, who was also present, [124] asked my advice. I gave him some aspirin for her. She forgot her apathy for a moment and gratefully and politely nodded. Later she refused to take that strange medicine of the foreigner.

d. Ethnic Caste under Suspicion of Sorcery

754 563 The Falasha ethno-religious group has been described in connection with the division of labor, for they are the ironsmiths and potters in the Amhara regions, especially in the province of Begemdir (Gondar).

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

heaven, *samāy*, the abode of supernatural beings and the souls of the dead. 565* The earth is seen as flat, though some believe its shape to be square, others 772 think it is round like a disc, and still others imagine it to extend without limit. [823] That the terrain of Ethiopia is so obviously not flat is explained by reference to the great flood, after which the parts which dried quickly became high- [773] lands (*dēgā*), the parts slow to dry becoming lowlands (*qolā*). The peasant explains the greater heat of the lowlands by saying that they receive less wind [821] than the highlands.

Beneath the earth's surface is an obscure area called *maq*, a depth to which [775] the bodies of evildoers drop after burial. There is also a large subterranean ocean, *weqniyānos*, into which all the rivers and lakes on earth descend. The [823] earth itself is held up, according to some, by a Y-shaped piece of wood; accord- [539] ing to others, by two serpents; still another view is that no support is needed other than the will of God, as the saying indicates:

> Ay, My God! Lord who stretched forth the heavens without a pillar, and the earth without tent-pegs.

The rotation of the sun *above* the earth causes the alternation of night and 565* day. The imagery of this rotation is that of someone going home at night and 821 coming out in the morning. Attitudes toward the sun are quite ambivalent. The sun is appreciated for dispersing the morning chill and for causing seed to germinate, but it is feared as a source of sickness and death.*

The moon is highly regarded, which is probably a vestige of pre-Christian [174] moon worship. At the Ethiopian latitude the moon is functional, for its bright [484] illumination facilitates night travel, especially desirable in the hotter regions. Beyond this, the moon is considered a powerful agent. It is chief of the sky, commander of an army of stars and it is the force which causes crops to grow after the sun has brought forth seedlings.

In the heavenly realm there are two regions located on either side of God's 565* dwelling-place. To the right is an area where good souls repair for an eternity 772 of ease after being judged shortly after the death of their bodies. Known both 775 as the "kingdom of heaven" and "paradise"—terms which refer to quite different spheres in the Orthodox cosmology but are fused in the vulgar mind —it is regarded as a home where food and clothes are plentiful and freely distributed. To the left is the place where wicked souls are taken by the devil to be scorched eternally in the fire of Gehenna, also called *Si'ol* (again a fusion of concepts which are distinct for the learned). This treatment of the damned is made worse by alternate dippings in icy water, though some believe that the wicked souls get a respite from their tortures on weekends.

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* The TAT's revealed a great dread of the sun; nearly every respondent interpreted one or another of the cards in terms of the sun's dangerousness. [125]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

772 As for the beginning and end of the world, all Amhara believe that the [184] world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium [773] arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside [775] down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

565 82 The Amhara peasant's view of nature is matter-of-fact. There are a few traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy [778] places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration [241] of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.

[192] The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws [784] of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and [241] they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

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* [125] [157] *All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge overlooking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war. 828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance. 565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā*, or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin." 565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz*, a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days. 565* 461 [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[18] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

11:Levine Z-4;5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cate that boys sometimes borrow the certificates of more successful friends 883* and enter jobs under those assumed names. Often they live for many months 882 with no livelihood at all. Eventually, some find work as houseboys, shine 178 shoes, or peddle merchandise on the streets; others, on an impulse, sign up for [464] life in one of the military services. Still others are reduced to begging, or stealing, or concocting stories with which to extract help from sympathetic foreigners.

The lives of such boys, whose number is large and steadily growing, are among the chief casualties of Ethiopia's transition to date. As they increase, their misery will become more vocal, and they may constitute an element of political unrest. Whether or not they become a political problem, they are already a social problem.

The modern adolescents, by contrast, comprise a small and determinate 883* number.* In 1958–59, the year in which my research on them began, there 178 were all together about 3,900 students in the academic secondary schools, 873 3,350 in other special schools at the secondary level, and 760 students at the post-secondary level. One source of information on these students was a [125] questionnaire which was completed by 700 students: 500 at the secondary level, including 40 female students, in a total of 15 schools, and 200 male students in five colleges.[12] Some of the findings from this survey will be woven into the following text where appropriate.

Compared to the rest of their countrymen, and certainly those of the same age, the modern adolescents have lived in luxury. Most students at the secondary level, and all those at the college level, have been boarding students. At no cost to themselves or their parents, they have received full board and room, a token allotment of clothes, and their books. Day students have received instead a monthly allowance of Eth$20,† approximately the same [434] amount that unskilled laborers earn for full-time work. Tuition is also free for all full-time Ethiopian students at all levels.

These "welfare school" conditions were designed to make further education attractive and possible for Ethiopian students, nearly all of whose families either can not or are unwilling to support their children for many years in school. In this, the parents are following long established Amhara custom, for in the traditional society boys who went off to church schools often did so, as we have seen, without the support of their parents, and in any case were expected to gain their livelihood by begging. Nowadays, if their children are admitted to one of the government secondary schools, even tradition-minded

* And one that grows steadily. In 1958 there were twenty-eight government secondary schools in the empire. By 1964 the number had increased to forty-seven.

† One Ethiopian dollar is equal to (U.S.) forty cents. [436]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

TABLE 2 [P. 114]

E 563 873 795 A 873 795

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF ETHIOPIAN SECONDARY AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ethnic Group	Percentage	Religious Group	Percentage
Amhara	55	"Orthodox"	67
Tigre	22	"Protestant"	6
Galla	15	"Catholic"	5
Gurage	4	"Christian"	15
Others*	4	Total Christian	93
		Muslim	4
		Others†	3

* Adari, Somali, Danakil, Wollamo, Kambata, Mensa, etc.
† Baha'i; agnostic; "no religion"; etc.

COMMENTS:

E A [125] [128]

1. The ethnic figures must be regarded with some caution, since as many as 17 per cent of the 700 respondents failed to answer the question. It is difficult to know whether this is due primarily to the reluctance of non-Amhara students so to identify themselves, even anonymously; to the general sensitivity about mentioning anything directly related to the "tribal question"; or simply to misunderstanding of the question. I suspect that the first-named factor may not be the most important. At any rate, if one compares the secondary school replies, in which 20 per cent failed to indicate their ethnic identification, with the college replies, in which only 10 per cent failed to do so, the greater percentage of response among the latter is accompanied by a slight *increase* (53.3 to 56.7 per cent) in the Amhara category.

   The figures on religious affiliation are more reliable, since only 3 per cent of the entire sample failed to answer that question.

2. Fifteen per cent of the students who indicated their ethnic affiliations are the offspring of mixed marriages, nearly two-thirds of which were between Amhara and Galla. These students were entered in the above classification according to the ethnic group of the father.

3. The students were also asked to indicate whether their own religion differed from that of their parents. *Ten per cent indicated such a change.* Of these, 28 per cent became agnostic or indicated "no religion"; 25 per cent converted to Protestantism; 17 per cent to Catholicism; 18 per cent went from "Orthodox" to "Christian" (which probably means to Protestantism in most cases); and 7 per cent changed to Baha'i.

E 563 873 872 162 A 872 873 162 E A 162 795

4. A comparison with the ethnic and religious composition of the country as a whole naturally suggests itself. Unfortunately, national figures have not yet been calculated to any comparable degree of reliability. If one refers to the crude estimates in common currency, certain disproportions are readily apparent.

   Thus, the Amhara proportion of the national population has been estimated at 25 to 30 per cent. It is clear that they are disproportionately represented in the school system; but not so greatly as has been at times alleged. In view of the statistics and considerations presented above, it would seem that 50 per cent is the upper limit of enrolment by "pure Amhara" in the post-elementary schools.

   The disproportions with regard to religious affiliation speak for themselves. The most recent published estimates are: Ethiopian Orthodox, 35 per cent; Muslim, 35 per cent; pagan, 25 per cent; other, 5 per cent. (Lipsky, *Ethiopia* [New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962], p. 101.)

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 815 178 177 "superstitious" beliefs about the world. Concerning this latter issue we are fortunate to have a substantial study carried out by Dr. Edith Lord during 1956–57—a study of the beliefs of some 1,250 Ethiopian students and teachers.[22]

[125] The subjects of this study were asked to mark as true or false a list of 132 unscientific beliefs commonly held by Ethiopians. These beliefs dealt with nature and devils, health and disease, danger and death. In spite of a measurable trend toward increased disbelief in the unscientific statements as the level of schooling increased, it was found that a significant number of these statements were accepted by a majority both of the post-elementary students and of the Ethiopian teachers. Thus, 56 items were believed by half or more of the 451 secondary students in the sample; 34 items by half or more of the 96 teachers; 9 items by half or more of the 61 student nurses and first-aid workers; and 6 of the items by half or more of the 29 college freshmen. Table 9 shows some of those unscientific beliefs most commonly subscribed to by secondary school students. These particular items are of interest for two additional reasons. The first five of them were among the beliefs held by *a majority of the twenty-nine college freshmen.* The first and the last, moreover, are among those items which showed an *increasing* frequency of belief with an increase in education, from the first four primary grades, through the second four grades, to the secondary level.

TABLE 9

UNSCIENTIFIC BELIEFS ACCEPTED BY SECONDARY STUDENTS

Item No.	Belief	Percentage of Secondary Students Holding the Belief
53	Certain mineral waters can cure stomach trouble by causing a person to vomit worms, sometimes frogs or toads	88
35	There are some skillful persons who can summon the devil at will	87
102	Too much charity leads to madness	74
58	A child will grow better if the nerves are removed from under his back teeth	68
84	If you go into a room which has been closed for a long time, you will be attacked by Satan	57
78	A man who has skill in stopping rains must not eat or drink while he is performing the ceremony to stop rain, or he will be unsuccessful	64
	Number	(451)

[125] In my own questionnaire, administered three years after Dr. Lord's re-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

search and only to the highest grades of secondary school and college, three 883*
questions regarding unscientific beliefs were included. In a pilot study of 815
sixty secondary school seniors and juniors, 42 per cent held the belief that "a 178
person can be made sick by the evil eye of a *budā*," and 33 per cent believed 177
that "too much learning results in madness." To the one question asked of 125
my entire sample: "Do you believe that some learned *dabtarā* can cause rain to fall or stop?," 16 per cent of 500 secondary and 7 per cent of 200 college seniors and juniors said "Yes."

This persistence among the educated youth of traditional beliefs which run 883*
counter to the consensus of modern scientists has been attributed by Lord to 815
the inadequacies of the Ethiopian school system. This is as might be expected, 871
inasmuch as most Ethiopian teachers have had relatively little education 178
themselves and the curriculum has necessarily been somewhat improvised and 177
incomplete. Officials of the Ministry of Education have labored to overcome these deficiencies, and certain changes were in fact made in consequence of Lord's study which aim at combating the more dysfunctional of the prevailing superstitions.

It seems likely, however, that certain irrational dispositions are also in- 121
volved here, dispositions to maintain the unscientific beliefs in spite of im- 815
provements in teaching methods and materials. One would predict this on the 178
basis of general sociological understanding of the consequences of rapid social 177
change. The disruption of the traditional belief systems brought about by the sudden dissemination of scientific beliefs inevitably creates insecurity, and a common reaction to such insecurity is to cling with increased tenacity to some of the old-fashioned beliefs which are closely identified with the traditional culture.[23]

One area in which this defensive "revivalism" can be observed in Ethiopia 178
is that of medicine. Many Ethiopians who have received modern secondary 75
education maintain that Western medicine, while useful in many cases, repre- 815
sents only one possible approach to the problem of sickness and health.[24] 177
Thus, fifty-seven per cent of the secondary students questioned asserted that traditional Ethiopian medicines are effective all or most of the time, although such therapies include the eating of rancid butter to cure malaria or drinking holy water to cure serious functional disorders. Dr. Lord herself has reported an episode which throws much light on the psychology of this reaction:

> An Ethiopian colleague, a former teacher, warned me against drinking water in a certain provincial town on penalty of my catching malaria. He was challenged thus: "You are one of the better educated persons in Ethiopia; don't you know the cause of malaria?" He quickly, and eruditely, gave all the known scientific facts about malaria. Then he added, "You people from the United States (and the United Nations) think that this (the scientif-

ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes 155
to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the 853
negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for 853
a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. 862
Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If 155
another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-suck- 853
ing is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may 854
be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara 155
are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no mat- [856]
ter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting [125] •
the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on [753]
the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who [776]
may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional 155
atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and 855
punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his 853
earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional 853
security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary 152
symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." 155
The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly repli- 831
cate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

43. E. Combes and M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (4 vols.; Paris, 1843), III, 342, call Gondar "une ville de plaisirs." Eduard Rüppell, *Reise in Abessinien* (2 vols.; Frankfurt am Main, 1838–40), II, 190, speaks of the Gondarēs' "grenzenlosen Liederlichkeit." 113
44. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 104.
45. Rüppell, *op. cit.*, II, 132.
46. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
47. "Menelik's conquests," of course, were won for the most part by trusted generals, who were men from all parts of Ethiopia. 000
48. The figure is from a local census made by the Gondar Public Health College around 1958.
49. The Ethiopian Election Board listed 88,000 families and a registration of 35,000 voters in Manz in 1957. The figures are probably exaggerated.
50. The regional association will be discussed further in chapter vii.
51. "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," *Old Societies and New States*, ed. C. Geertz (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 105–57. 113
52. "Ansprache an die Mitglieder des Vereins B'nai B'rith," *Gesammelten Werke*, XVII, 51–53.
53. *Ibid.*, and *Collected Papers*, V, 174.

CHAPTER 3: *The World of the Amhara Peasant*

1. Ernest Luther, *Ethiopia Today* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958).
2. The general methodological problem involved here is discussed in Hugo Engelmann, "The Activity Bias of Ethnography and the History of Society," *Anthropological Quarterly*, XXXIII (July, 1960), 158–63.
3. The TAT cards designed for use in Ethiopia were originally prepared by Dr. Edith Lord, US/AID, in connection with her own research there. The data on which the present study draws were obtained by administering twenty-five cards to a sample of twenty young Amhara in Manz—seventeen males and three females—ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-five years. 121 125 565
4. Cf. Samuel Alamayahu, "The Game of Gänna," *University College of Addis Ababa Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 9 (1959), pp. 9–28. 113
5. Cf. Akalou Wolde Michael, *"Buhe," UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 7 (1957), pp. 57–64.
6. Simon Messing, "Group Therapy and Social Status in the Zar Cult of Ethiopia," *American Anthropologist*, LX (December, 1958), 1120–26. More extensive discussion of the *zār* may be found in Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1957), and Michel Leiris, *La possession et ses aspects théâtraux chez les Éthiopiens de Gondar* (Paris: Plon, 1958).
7. This section draws on material previously published in D. Levine, "On the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Finally, the author checked his own results against the work of

27 other observers, past and present, in the English, French, German and Italian languages. He has consulted, in addition to three American libraries (University of Pennsylvania, New York Public, Library of Congress), the British Museum, the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, Bern University, libraries in Florence, Rome, and the small but increasingly valuable library at the University College of Addis Ababa. He has secured offprints of articles on the subject, published in obscure publications, from Orientalists such as Paul Geuthner, in Paris. He has brought back from Ethiopia about a thousand Kodachrome and black-and-white photographs, and pottery, musical instruments and other artifacts, to add to the documentary evidence.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

11. The letter was made available to the author through the courtesy of an Ethiopian informant. The text paraphrases Psalm 79. [27]
12. This and the following section draw in part on material which has been published elsewhere, together with other material on Manz not included here. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, IX (Spring 1964), 204–11. [27] [113]
13. The boundaries of Manz proper include the Mofar River in the south, the Adabāy and Wānchet rivers in the west, the Qechenē River in the north, and in the east a long chain of mountains which pour forth the waters that drain across Manz and which divide it from the lowlands of Efrātā, Gedem, and Qawat. Accurate maps of Manz and its boundaries are not yet available.
14. Their itineraries are described in Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals* (London, 1843); and Paul Soleillet, *Voyages en Éthiopie* (Rouen, 1886). 113
15. A. Caquot, "L'homélie en l'honneur de l'archange Raguel," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 91–122.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
18. Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *Ya-Ityopyā Tārik Ka-Aṭsē Lebna Dengel Eska Aṭse Tēwodros* (Addis Ababa: Tensā'ē Za-Gubā'ē Press, 1949 E.C.), p. 20.
19. Cerulli, *op. cit.*, pp., 101–3.
20. Doresse, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
21. Chahab ad-Din Ahmad, *Futuh el-Habacha*, trans. D'Abbadie and Paulitschke (Paris, 1898), p. 342.
22. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *op. cit.*, p. 208.
23. This account of Nagāssi, like the accounts of his descendants which follow, has been constructed from a variety of sources, which, while differing in details, agree on the essential points presented here unless otherwise indicated. Oral traditions were obtained from Amhara informants in Manz and Addis Ababa. The chief written sources consulted include: Heruy Walda Selassie, an unpublished and untitled manuscript on the history of Ethiopia (part of which was published in his *Wā-Zēmā* [Addis Ababa, 1923 E.C.]); Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *op. cit.*; Tādassa Za-Waldē, *Ya-Abētohun Yā'qob Teweldennā Aṭcher Tārik* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1948 E.C.); Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du Règne de Ménélik II* (2 vols.; Paris: Librairie Orientale et Américaine, 1930–32); Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa* (3 vols.; Rome, 1886–87); Major W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844); Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*; and Soleillet, *op. cit.* [173] [115]
24. The related claim set forth by his dynasty—that Nagāssi was in the direct line of descent from Lebna Dengel—is less universally acknowledged by Ethiopians. It is still a controversial question whether or not Nagāssi was actually related to Lebna Dengel and, if so, by what route. 173 175

    The official genealogy traces the descent line as follows: Lebna Dengel—Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Warada Qāl—Lebsa Qāl—Nagāssi. This is the account set forth in Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā's history. The other Shoan authors who

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

8. A. A. Brill, "Poetry as an Oral Outlet," *Psychoanalytic Review*, XVIII (October, 1931), 358. 113
9. W. E. Conzelman, trans., *Chronique de Galawdewos* (Paris, 1895), p. 121.
10. From an article in the *Tafari Makonnen Ensign* (Addis Ababa), April 12, 1951.
11. Carl O'Nell, "Manifest Orality, Hunger and Thirst in Dreams: A Cross-cultural Study of Oral Frustration" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1964). A fourth group in this study consisted of a sample of Muslim Nigerians who, because of their fasting at the time of Ramadan when the dreams were obtained, presented a significantly higher proportion of respondents with dreams showing manifest orality (55 per cent) than did the non-Muslim Nigerians. O'Nell hypothesized that the Ethiopians would reveal manifest orality with greater frequency than both the non-Muslim Nigerians and the Americans, and these hypotheses were both confirmed ($p < 0.005$ and $p < 0.001$, respectively). 000 [113]
12. Personal communication from Allan Hoben.
13. John Whiting and Irvin Child, *Child Training and Personality: A Cross-cultural Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 194. 113
14. This and a subsequent reference to folk tales is based on an unpublished analysis of Ethiopian folk tales originally collected by Russel G. Davis, formerly of AID/Ethiopia. The sample contains some Galla as well as Amhara folk tales, but these are not distinguished in the analysis. The author of that study, completely independent of the present author, arrived at a conclusion concerning Abyssinian personality that exactly parallels the formulations of this chapter: "In short I would say that the Abyssinian personality centers around the oral-receptive and oral-sadistic orientations with an ambivalent regressive variant." 000 [127]
15. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Life of Takla Haymanot, The Miracles of Takla Haymanot*, and *The Book of the Riches of Kings* (London: W. Griggs, 1906), p. 349. 113
16. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
17. Wallis Budge, trans., *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (London: W. Griggs, 1900).
18. Assafā Gabra Māryām, *Enda Waṭatch Qaratch* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1946 E.C.), p. 142.
19. *Teṭāyaq* was outlawed, the author was told, because it led to betting on the participants, and because modern legal procedure requires that everything be written down. 000
20. See note 14 above.
21. Woodruff and Hoerman, "Nutrition of Infants and Preschool Children in Ethiopia," *Public Health Reports*, LXXV, No. 8, 728. 113
22. Cf. Erikson, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

121 nally, data were gathered relating to the modes of acquiring, exercising, validating, and conserving powers of prophylaxis, diagnosis, and therapy. Here, as in the other areas of data gathering, a necessary distinction was made between the perceptions of practitioners and those of their clients.

*793 869 75 197 539 While the secular medical traditions of Ethiopia are exclusively oral, powerful cleric healers known as debteras have traditionally employed diagnositc, prophylactic, and therapeutic texts written in Ge'ez, the language of the Church, and in the vernacular. Numerous *793 114 127 debtera texts gave been collected in the libraries of Europe and the United States, and valuable translations, most notably by Marcel Griaule, Deborah Lifchitz, and Stefan Strelcyn, have been published. These published translations, together with translations made in the field with the assistance of clerics, have been utilized in the writing of those sections of Chapter Four dealing with the debtera's medical texts.

121 171 Although the focus of this dissertation is limited to the region in which field research was conducted, it should not be overlooked that the Amhara share important cultural affinities with peoples, now largely Islamic, occupying lands extending from the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.

000 The highlands of Begemder, Tigre, and Eritrea form

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART II: Utilization of Natures Products by the Amhara

177 183 Part I established the basis for examination of the culture of the Amhara of Abyssinia and Ethiopia, and the elements included in the long blending process which created Amhara culture. The original, native, Cushitic-speaking culture patterns were based on the geographical milieu, influenced by topographical and climatic conditions of the highlands. On these were superimposed several ancient cultural influences from abroad. The Amhara thus appears as a "semiticized Hamite".

The results of this blending of autochthonous African culture traits and Mediterranean-Asian traits are apparent in both their material and non-material culture. Much survives in Amhara culture of the ancient South Arabian culture pattern: agricultural patterns, occupational divisions, dress, written language, customs and beliefs. Finally, the [184] cultural configuration which had long been the privilege of the Amhara ruling class has in recent historical times become shared by all Amhara; and, still more recently, due to imitation, prestige, conquest, etc, by ever-increasing numbers of the original, formerly Cushitic-speaking sections of the indigenous population.

123 While Part I was concerned largely with dimensions of Time and Space, Parts II and III will be more concerned with the dimension and the use of Energy. In both material and 181 non-material culture the Amhara pattern has remained, at first glance, strikingly "early medieval." Ingenuity with regard to material culture has gone into the utilization of the products of nature, including farming and animal hus-

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE SHOAN PLATEAU AND ITS PEOPLE: AN ESSAY IN LOCAL GEOGRAPHY

D. R. BUXTON

114 DURING THE FIFTEEN months from October 1946 to January 1948, I was working in an educational centre near Debra Berhan, an important market town and district headquarters 80 miles north-east of Addis Ababa on the Asmara road. The district was historically interesting as the hub of the old kingdom of Shoa, and it was still an important centre of Amhara population. Moreover I soon found that it contained some very remarkable topographical features. I therefore decided to devote my leisure to a detailed study of the area, which I expected to help in my educational work and also to furnish (as such studies had never, as far as I knew, been made in Ethiopia) material of some geographical interest and novelty. Unfortunately I had to leave the district before finishing what I had intended to do. But I was able to complete a large-scale compass-survey covering about a hundred square miles, working out from the village of Tebasse where I lived. This paper deals chiefly with the area shown on the map, and its Amhara population. Something will be said of the traditional ways of these people, but the formidable problems of the present day are left out of account.

The map was made, on the scale of 1 : 50,000, entirely by triangulation with the prismatic compass based on points along a 5-mile section of the Italian motor-road, which runs in straight lines and is conveniently marked out with stones at 50-metre intervals. The first stage was to cover the area with a sufficient number of principal fixed points, which were mostly conspicuous trees and hill-tops. The second stage, which occupied the week-end walks of nearly twelve months, was to follow all the principal mule-tracks and streams, and all the edges of the gorges, fixing points at intervals by resection; at the same time I tried to fix all the churches accurately, but a few were missed. A comprehensive framework was thus built up, all plotting being done at home. Finally I walked all over the area again, taking with me tracings of the framework on which the remaining detail required—hill-slopes, habitations, etc.—was inserted by eye. The method gave most satisfactory results, for the area was small (only about ten miles by eleven) and the base-line relatively very long. The only serious difficulty—bewildering until I realized its cause—was the falsification of compass readings (occasionally by as much as 15°) by magnetic rocks. One could sometimes avoid this by climbing into a tree, but bearings simply could not be taken from some points which would otherwise have been most useful.

[133]

128 To indicate relief I decided to use hachures rather than form-lines, real contouring being out of the question with the means, and in the time, at my disposal. The hachures seem to me to give a true impression to the eye of the peculiar character of this piece of country, for they bring out the contrast between the relatively slight relief of the plateau and the sudden, sensational depths of the cliff-bound gorges.

[p. 157]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 eval. Such sights and sounds! A minstrel singing his subtle lyrics as he bows a one-stringed fiddle; in the dark interiors of church, barefoot deacons holding beeswax candles and swinging vessels of smoking incense; the pomp of a nobleman moving cross country with his crowded entourage; a young girl washing the feet of her father's guest; warriors boasting with their martial chants; the stately rhythms of clergy chanting and dancing under the mid-day sun; the open marketplace, offering all manner of livestock, grain, and spices; the counsel of an elder, resolving a dispute; the simple dignity of the bow when two men meet.

The scholar's job is of course to transcend such a medley of impressions and to discern the patterns of order through which such details are bound together in a living whole. In carrying out this task I have not imposed any one methodological framework on my materials. Rather, as the reader of Robert Redfield's methodological handbook, *The Little Community,* will readily appreciate, I have sought to organize these materials in terms of half a dozen of the more common viewpoints used in the study of human com-
121 munities. Roughly speaking, I have looked upon Amhara culture as a history
128 (chapter ii), an outlook on life (chapter iii), a way of growing up (chapter iv), a social structure (chapter v), a kind of psychological orientation (chap-
12 ter vi), and as "a combination of opposites" (chapter vii). The observational techniques employed in the course of this study have been accordingly diverse, ranging from the analysis of literary texts and oral traditions to the use of questionnaires, projective tests, interviews, and participant observation.

121 Yet however gratifying the contemplation of a traditional culture may be, the student of traditional societies today finds it difficult to remain aloof from the historical changes which now permeate the world. As he talks with the bright young men of the cities, he finds considerable ambivalence regarding the value of traditional ways. He finds Ethiopians acutely conscious that their traditional life, for all its charm, has been chronically afflicted with war, pestilence, famine, and disease, and that their traditional social order has encouraged the many to toil and the few to live in idle luxury. He sees them bitter that Ethiopia has remained backward—"*wada hwâla qaratch!*"—and isolated from the great advances of the human spirit achieved elsewhere. They are anxious to enter the modern world.

And thus the aesthetic impulse is joined by the moral. The sociologist feels drawn to contribute what he can to elucidate the sometimes desperate problems faced by societies trying to make a rapid transition to modernity. In this he is inspired in part by the history of his discipline. The contrast between traditional and modern society has constituted the central substantive problem in sociology since Auguste Comte named the discipline well over a century ago, and some of the foremost proponents of sociology—notably, Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Mannheim—have understood their calling to in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 a world-wide dialogue about the limitations and potentialities of human experience. For by any reckoning, a key defining characteristic of modernity is the prominence of education; and education in its truest sense, as Robert Redfield has put it, is "conversation about the meaning of life, as each sees some part of it, on behalf of everyone."

000 It is in the spirit of Robert Redfield that this book was conceived. I should like to place this remembrance of him at the head of the list of acknowledgments which follows. The debt owed by those who had the fortune to study the art of questioning with him is not to be measured.

There are numerous other debts I wish to acknowledge as the author of this book, with the regret that they cannot all be identified individually. I am 122 deeply grateful to:

128

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D. N. L.

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Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

I

INTRODUCTION

AMHARA TRADITION AND ETHIOPIA'S MODERNIZATION

THE FACT OF AMHARA DOMINANCE

Of the many traditions which are alive in the empire of Ethiopia—those of the nomadic Danakil and the sedentary Wollamo, the hippopotamus-eating Woyto and the ensete-eating Gurage, the age-graded Konso and the patrilineal Somali, the Judaic Falasha and the Muslim Bani 'Amer, and many others—clearly the dominant tradition is that of the people known throughout history to the outside world as the Abyssinians. Living on the temperate highland massif in the northern and central regions of the country, these people have gained their subsistence through the plow cultivation of cereal grains, have organized their polity as a feudal kingdom, and have remained steadfast in their Monophysite Christian faith since its introduction to the land in the fourth century.

The Abyssinians comprise two linguistic and geographical groups—the Amhara and the Tigre.* The Tigre inhabit the northern part of Ethiopia, above the Takazzē River; their lands fall in what are now the province of Tigre and the former Italian colony of Eritrea. Their language, Tigrinya, is

* Abyssinians object to the term "Abyssinian," since it has been used pejoratively by foreigners, even though they do use its indigenous counterpart, *"Hābashā,"* among themselves. The term apparently derives from the name of one of the South Arabian tribes which migrated to Ethiopia in antiquity—the Habashat. In deference to this objection, I shall use the compound "Amhara-Tigre" in place of "Abyssinian" wherever feasible. The name "Ethiopia" will be used consistently to refer to the national polity which, throughout its history, has included other peoples and traditions as well as the Amhara-Tigre.

1, [The Abyssinians, composed of Amhara and Tigre--Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

optimum realization of *all* values possible in a given historic situation. He 121
affirms the human values of modernization, yet conceives of modernity not as of a single, fixed nature but as relative to the cultural context in which modernization takes place. Given the commitment to modernization he would sustain traditional values wherever possible; would modify them where feasible; and would reject them where necessary. The chief questions raised from this point of view will be outlined presently, since it is the approach we ourselves shall be following.

All of the intellectual positions just identified have been taken by respectable thinkers. All are to be found among the members of the transitional societies, distributed according to the individual's position in the social structure and, secondarily, according to his psychological makeup. Within the social sciences, moreover, the subject matters of the various disciplines incline them to one or another of these positions. Roughly speaking, one may say that heretofore the anthropologist has tended to take the Traditionalist position; the economist and the Marxist sociologist have been Modernists; the political scientist has leaned toward the Conciliatory position; while sociologists have been oriented as Skeptics and Pragmatists.

THE QUESTIONS OF A PRAGMATIST

Our intention in this book is to analyze a number of aspects of the confrontation between Amhara tradition and Ethiopia's quest for modernity from the viewpoint of a Pragmatist. Three general questions express the main concerns of this viewpoint: (1) What is the nature of the traditional culture, and what are its more enduring beliefs and values? (2) What aspects of modern culture are of interest to the society, and what are the processes by which they are introduced and institutionalized? (3) Given this interest in modernization, in what ways has it been frustrated by certain features of the traditional culture?

These three questions divide the following chapters into three pairs. Chap- 121
ters ii and iii attempt a sympathetic understanding of some aspects of Am- 128 •
hara culture and an assessment of their positive relevance for Ethiopia in transition. Chapters iv and v deal with aspects of Amhara culture which have been found inadequate for modernization and with the natural processes by which they have been replaced in part by modernizing structures. Chapters vi and vii then explore aspects of the traditional Amhara culture which appear to be obstacles to the realization of the modernist goals.

We shall begin by exploring one of the traditional bases of cultural identity among the Amhara, one of those primordial sentiments whose integrity is a condition of vitality for a traditional people.[11] Vis-à-vis outsiders, the Amhara [186]
identify strongly with their religion, language, and racial characteristics, though not so fanatically as to preclude their toleration of other groups as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 part of a common nationality. Among themselves, however, the Amhara
• 128 place great stress on region of origin. Deeply sentimental about their home-
[186] lands, they regard those whose families have long dwelt in the same area almost as kinsmen vis-à-vis Amhara from other regions. In chapter ii, two of these areas which hold a special place in Ethiopian history are explored in some detail. The history, ethos, and cultural significance of Manz and Gondar are discussed, partly to provide an introduction to Amhara culture that has some historical depth, and partly as background to the general question of the place of primordial sentiments like regionalism in a modernizing society.

Chapter iii proceeds to examine the matrix of Amhara culture, the world of the peasant. Its rhetorical aim is chiefly to bring the little-known peasant into sharper focus, to reaffirm the peasant world as one worthy of attention and respect. This will be done, first, by describing the social setting of peasant life, and the main events which make up the daily round and annual cycle of the typical Amhara. Then we shall explore the world view of the Amhara peasant, the main ideas and attitudes through which he interprets his experience. In conclusion, we shall discuss the relation of some aspects of this world view to certain aspects of modern culture.

Chapter iv proceeds from the fact that the skills and values needed for effective participation in a modernizing society cannot be imparted by the traditional processes of socialization during adolescence. With the establishment of a government school system a new and separate pattern has come into being that exists largely, though not wholly, in isolation from the traditional agents and mechanisms of secondary socialization. The subject of this chapter is thus the contrasting conditions in which an Amhara youth is brought up in the traditional and modernizing sectors of Ethiopian society. This account is followed by a portrayal of the outlook of Ethiopian students today, with emphasis on the question of the continuity and discontinuity of their beliefs, tastes, and values with those of traditional Amhara culture.

In chapter v our attention shifts to the elite structure of Amhara-Tigre society. In this sphere modernization has proceeded, not by the addition of a novel structure as in the case of secondary socialization during adolescence, but through a process of differentiation within the existing order and deliberate co-ordination by the sovereign. We shall discuss, first, the traditional elites of monarchy, nobility, and clergy; and then the changes in the status of these elites and the emergence of the new elites of government officials and a modern-educated "intelligentsia."

A key question to emerge from this chapter concerns what appears to be the relative ineffectuality and passivity of the modernizing intelligentsia as a whole. This is a complex and difficult question, only partly to be explained by the political conditions which are referred to in the chapter. We shall sug-

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gest that it also reflects certain psychological and social characteristics deeply 121
rooted in the culture of the land of wax and gold. These characteristics will 128
be the subject of analysis in the two concluding chapters, which deal, respectively, with the phenomena of orality and of individualism in Amhara culture.

It should be evident from the foregoing that I have refrained from attempting a comprehensive assessment of the relationship between Amhara tradition and Ethiopia's modernization. By limiting myself to problems for which I had both prior theoretical interests and data obtained at first hand, I have sought to gain in accuracy of detail and depth of understanding what I might lose in breadth of coverage. It is hoped, moreover, that these studies may stimulate other scholars to extend this mode of analysis into such crucial areas as law, economic behavior, family life, religion, and military institutions.

On the other hand, by treating the relation between tradition and moder- 121
nity as it appears in a variety of social and cultural phenomena rather than by concentrating on a single problem, I have found it easier to articulate some of the complexities of that relation. For traditional patterns and modern aspirations are related in many ways. Oftentimes they are fully compatible, the traditional either positively supporting the modern or else presenting no conflict with it. When conflict does obtain, on the other hand, it may work toward resolution in a number of different ways. One alternative is straightforward displacement of the old by the new, through a varying combination of coercive and persuasive measures. Another alternative is through structural differentiation, as mentioned above, either through the incorporation of a novel form from outside or through processes of internal differentiation. Still another way is through a subtle transformation of traditional forms so that they continue to be meaningful but are redefined to fit the modern situation. In its most creative outcome, the conflict may involve so genuine a dialogue between traditional and modern patterns that novel values emerge and authentic variants of modern culture are developed.

Perhaps the most important insight in this connection is that while traditional patterns may stand in conflict with modernity in some respects, the same patterns may support modernity in other respects. It is to this sort of complex relationship that the Pragmatist is most likely to draw attention. Theoretically the relationship follows logically from the realization, hard won by sociologists during recent decades, that no modern society can exist without substantial reliance on patterns which must be regarded as traditional and not rational. For a concrete example of this dual relationship, let us turn once more to the phenomenon previously discussed, that of wax and gold.

We have argued that the ambiguity and equivocation symbolized by the 121
Amharic formula wax and gold stands in opposition to the semantic dimen- 195
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121 other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic
*565 and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[2]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom
[128] and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our
[114] account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry,
[12] using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[3]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

*565
592 The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara
[342] peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round
[343] structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land
[423] worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by
[427] hereditary right (*rĭst*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the
[556] household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

621 At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number
602 of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the
[592] father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

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to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to

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TABLE 2 [P. 114]

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ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF ETHIOPIAN SECONDARY AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ethnic Group	Percentage	Religious Group	Percentage
Amhara	55	"Orthodox"	67
Tigre	22	"Protestant"	6
Galla	15	"Catholic"	5
Gurage	4	"Christian"	15
Others*	4		
		Total Christian	93
		Muslim	4
		Others†	3

* Adari, Somali, Danakil, Wollamo, Kambata, Mensa, etc.
† Baha'i; agnostic; "no religion"; etc.

COMMENTS:

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1. The ethnic figures must be regarded with some caution, since as many as 17 per cent of the 700 respondents failed to answer the question. It is difficult to know whether this is due primarily to the reluctance of non-Amhara students so to identify themselves, even anonymously; to the general sensitivity about mentioning anything directly related to the "tribal question"; or simply to misunderstanding of the question. I suspect that the first-named factor may not be the most important. At any rate, if one compares the secondary school replies, in which 20 per cent failed to indicate their ethnic identification, with the college replies, in which only 10 per cent failed to do so, the greater percentage of response among the latter is accompanied by a slight *increase* (53.3 to 56.7 per cent) in the Amhara category.

   The figures on religious affiliation are more reliable, since only 3 per cent of the entire sample failed to answer that question.

2. Fifteen per cent of the students who indicated their ethnic affiliations are the offspring of mixed marriages, nearly two-thirds of which were between Amhara and Galla. These students were entered in the above classification according to the ethnic group of the father.

3. The students were also asked to indicate whether their own religion differed from that of their parents. *Ten per cent indicated such a change.* Of these, 28 per cent became agnostic or indicated "no religion"; 35 per cent converted to Protestantism; 17 per cent to Catholicism; 18 per cent went from "Orthodox" to "Christian" (which probably means to Protestantism in most cases); and 7 per cent changed to Baha'i.

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4. A comparison with the ethnic and religious composition of the country as a whole naturally suggests itself. Unfortunately, national figures have not yet been calculated to any comparable degree of reliability. If one refers to the crude estimates in common currency, certain disproportions are readily apparent.

   Thus, the Amhara proportion of the national population has been estimated at 25 to 30 per cent. It is clear that they are disproportionately represented in the school system; but not so greatly as has been at times alleged. In view of the statistics and considerations presented above, it would seem that 50 per cent is the upper limit of enrolment by "pure Amhara" in the post-elementary schools.

   The disproportions with regard to religious affiliation speak for themselves. The most recent published estimates are: Ethiopian Orthodox, 35 per cent; Muslim, 35 per cent; pagan, 25 per cent; other, 5 per cent. (Lipsky, *Ethiopia* [New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962], p. 101.)

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that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for consider-

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(396)	(40)	(197)

able strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

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*883 So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding
[882 detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indica-
[128 tion of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

*883 *Religion.*—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian
771 students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "reli-
178 gion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

795 Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as
771 permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches
178 and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

*883 It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the
771 cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether.
178 Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer dependent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to
[790 adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of
[771 the various missions in Ethiopia.* In recent years a third alternative has fired
[795

* In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

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6

ORALITY AND THE SEARCH FOR LEADERSHIP

121 In the previous chapter we observed that modern-educated Ethiopians, par-
571 ticularly those who were educated abroad, acquired knowledge, skills, patriotic motivation, and social position with which they might conceivably have made substantial reforms and innovations in Ethiopia's institutions. And yet, in their own eyes as in the eyes of some high government officials and foreign observers, they have done relatively little. Their behavior has been marked by a conspicuous absence of creative leadership and solidary action.

Among many of the modern-educated this alleged sin of omission has, in turn, generated an underlying current of reproach against the government and at times against themselves. We have described some features of Ethiopia's domestic political situation which have limited the freedom of modern-educated Ethiopians to carry out progressive activities. A number of them have proceeded from awareness of those limitations to placing all blame on the government for Ethiopia's slow pace of development. Others, however, have turned some if not all of that reproach inward. "It is up to us," they say, "and we have done nothing. Why have we failed? Why have we no moral backbone, no character?"

121 This chapter and the next are concerned with the basis of this latter re-
• 128 proach, as well as with the more general task of enriching our understanding
571 of traditional Amhara culture. We shall proceed on the assumption that insofar as modern-educated Ethiopians have failed to take decisive steps in developing their country they have been held back by other constraints and

limitations in addition to those imposed by the government. In the present 121
chapter we shall deal chiefly with factors which are inhibitive of creative 128
leadership, and in the chapter which follows chiefly with factors which affect 571
the capacity for solidary action.

One of the most honest and perceptive of my foreign-educated informants 571
had this to say about the absence of creative leadership among the returnees: 157

> Our maladjustment may be more our fault than that of the government. 121
> We have been led to expect everything from the government, and have become dependent to such a point that we can scarcely think or act for ourselves.

This is a remarkable and convincing piece of self-analysis. It falls short only 571
insofar as it implies that the posture of dependence on governmental author- 157
ity is something peculiar to the modern-educated. It is true that there have 181
been certain conditions such as the "welfare" character of the secondary 121
schools, which are specific to the experience of the modern-educated and which have accentuated a tendency to overdependence. But this tendency is endemic in traditional Amhara-Tigre culture, and those modern Abyssinians who exhibit it are following an inclination deeply rooted in the needs they have acquired and the culture they have internalized in their childhood.

There are various ways in which one might conceptualize this problem. 121
It is not unrelated to what other authors have referred to variously as lack 157
of achievement motivation or lack of innovational personality. The approach of this chapter will stress certain psychoanalytic concepts and insights. In so doing, it will not attempt to delineate an Amhara "basic personality," a task well beyond the scope of the present study.[1] Rather, we shall be concerned here solely with certain kinds of motivational orientation which are widely shared among the Amhara and which frequently inform their social behavior and their cultural symbolism.

Adopting the terminology developed by Erik Erikson,[2] we may rephrase 121
the point about Amhara overdependence by saying that *in Amhara action and* 155
fantasy the social modality of "getting" figures very prominently. The superior 571
is oriented chiefly to getting food, services, and deference from his inferior;[3] the inferior is oriented chiefly to getting favors from his superior. And most interaction among the Amhara is cast in the form of superior-inferior personal dyadic relations. The prominence of this modality reflects a fixation of libido on what Erikson calls a mode of approach to the environment that is "incorporative," and that originates in connection with the infant's experience with a particular part of his body, the oral zone. The central thesis of this chapter is that Amhara behavior and symbolism exhibit a very high degree of attachment of libido, not only to the organ *mode* of incorporation, but even more to the oral *zone*.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF AMHARA DISEASE BELIEFS

128 This chapter describes the "natural" environment in which the Amhara set their system of disease beliefs. The description is in five steps, opening with an account of human physiology as it is conceived by the Amhara. This is followed by an enumeration of the agencies held responsible for transforming the man of good health into a sickman. Each pathogenic agency is described in terms of its physiological effects and symptomatic expressions. As its third step, this chapter considers these symptoms from a nosological point of view, that is, with regards to the rules by which symptoms are grouped under specific disease names, and by which these classifications are related to one another to form a disease-name taxonomy. [753] The Amhara disease-name taxonomy is simple, and by itself reveals relatively little about the system of disease beliefs of which it is a part. For this, a fourth step is required. Here, the specific disease-names are considered from an etiological perspective, in terms of the explanations associated with the onset of various ailments. In the text, a typology of five etiologies is described. The etiologies are unnamed, but implicit throughout the range of Amhara prophylactic,

128 diagnostic, and therapeutic practices. The final step of the chapter compares these etiology types with the strategies used by healers for countering the effects of pathogenic agencies.

75 827 Amhara healer and layman use common sets of physiological and pathological notions; neither physiology nor pathology is conceived as a coherent body of knowledge in its own right, however. The Amhara does not often verbalize these notions, and, when he does, it is in ad hoc contexts, generally intrinsic to the selection of pxphylaxis or the administration of therapy. Thus, set down on the following pages as discrete subjects, Amhara physiology and pathology appear as collections of relatively simple notions, and of limited explanatory power when compared with the medical systems of other historical civilizations. Unlike those systems, the organization of Amhara medical beliefs and practices is dominated by concepts of practitioner power, its sources [128] and its therapeutic and prophylactic expressions. Those subjects are dealt with in the remaining chapters of this dissertation

AMHARA PHYSIOLOGY AND PATHOGENIC AGENCIES

827 Although most Amhara can identify the grosser body organs by name, even the knowledgeable anatomist can as-

*756 and balazar-healers, but semantically that term tends
*759 to emphasize the practitioner's ability as a seer rather
*192 than as a therapist. Moreover, the atmakiy (annointer)
196 is never referred to as "tonkway", even though his powers are also derived from supernaturals. When, in conversation, it is necessary to distinguish this category of practitioner (including the atmakiy) from the "secular healer" (categories 1 and 2), the title 'wogeyša' is extended to subsume all of the latter as a class.

Table three outlines the semantic distribution of Amhara practitioner titles.

*756 It is the intention of this chapter to describe
*759 curerers of the first and second categories, from the
[128] perspective of the technical requirements of their respective therapeutic strategies. The chapter also considers two additional healers, the cupper (agamiy) and the tattooist (tokwariy). Like the practitioners of the first and second categories, both are "secular" healers, since their therapeutic strategies and the sources of their curing powers clearly exclude them from the third practitioner category (i.e., healers with supernaturally
[196] derived powers). However, neither cupper nor tattooist fits neatly, semantically or therapeutically, into one of the secular categories, but will be shown to share characteristics of both.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

CHAPTER THREE

THE SECULAR HEALERS: HEALER AND CLIENT

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*759
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This chapter describes 1) the kinds of decisions which a client must make when choosing a secular practitioner to treat a specific disease episode, and 2) the kinds of information which are required by the client in order to make such decisions. The chapter is divided *[278] into two sections. In the first of these, non-herbalists (who are selected simply, by matching practitioner with ailment) are contrasted with herbalists (whose selection takes cognizance of differences in practitioner grades, as well as in ailment domains). The selection of herbalists is examined through the use of two formal descriptions. The first is an ideal description, and incorporates all selections that are rationally possible for any episode. This is then compared with a description which incorporates all empirically observed incidents involving the selection of herbalists. The section concludes with the description of a type of disease episode in which the sickman ultimately enters a medically self-sufficient healing coterie.

The remainder of this chapter provides empirical data which quantify and otherwise annotate the analysis which precedes them. The second section describes the distribution of secular healers in a sample of rural

*757
*759 hamlets and town wards. The healers are considered in
• 128 terms of 1) their disease-name specialties, 2) their professional grades, and 3) the geographical limits of their professional reputations. In order to place these practitioners in their social and professional milieux, this section begins with a description of relevant social and demographic characteristics of the parish and its hamlets, and of the varieties of urban wards found in the Begemder highlands.

SELECTING A SECULAR PRACTITIONER

*278
*759 It is clear from the preceeding chapter that 1) herbalists are distinguished from other secular healers by a distinctive classificatory system, and 2) this distinction can be functionally related to certain features of the healers' respective practices. Foremost among these features is the relative uniformity of healing powers of practitioners. While there is substantial uniformity within each named category of chirurgeon,[9] the herbalists working within any single disease-name specialty are arrayed along a wide range of powers and thera-

[9]For convenience, "chirurgeon" is used here to describe all secular practitioners who are not herbalists.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: THE POWER TO HEAL

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*759
*793
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This chapter considers the attribution of differential healing powers to Amhara healers by their public. The analysis focuses on the awakiy debtera, as the Amhara model of a powerful healer, and the standard against which other practitioners are measured. The chapter is divided into three sections, each of which considers an aspect of the debtera's healing powers. The first section describes lay perspectives of the debtera-healer. Laymen trace the debtera's abilities to notions of generic power, ostensibly derived from ganel familiars. The second section considers the debtera's relations with ganels as he in fact experiences them. The significant technical and moral differences between the real ties and those misconceived by laymen are indicated. The final section examines the real sources of the debtera's medical superiority, and finds them in the unique professional advantages which he enjoys.

*756
*793
*759

THE LAYMAN'S CONCEPTION OF THE DEBTERA'S HEALING POWER

Technical Considerations. The debtera's public explains his medical superiority over secular practitioners in terms of the technical differences which they perceive

136 "meset", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses, does not live in colonies. It makes honey which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "tenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens.

[776 237]

Scorpion ("gint"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice.

[752]

Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins.

[241 251]

13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

231 556 Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Prehistoric Ethiopia MP4

A 13 Since all other production, apart from skins and gold, was negligible by comparison, the ecology of Ethiopia can be characterized as predominantly agricultural and pastoral.

3. History

P 74 A. Prehistory to 500 B.C.; early trade routes; "iron age" in Ethiopia; colonization.

Very little reliable data is available about the prehistory of Ethiopia, since archeological excavations were prohibited until recently. Some prehistory inferences have already been drawn in this study from the geographic position, topography, and linguistic groupings in Ethiopia in historic times.

In reconstructing what is known of Ethiopian prehistory and what tentatively can be inferred and projected backward from earliest historic sources, three procedures can be followed: Interpretation of surface archeological sites; following ancient trade routes; linguistic analysis.

Rock paintings, particularly common on the eastern high plateau of Ethiopia, running from north to south, resemble those found in Lybia.[13] Other rock paintings (some of which were photographed by the author of this study), repeatedly show cattle without humps. This would indicate an early Hamitic population of cattle breeders. Moreover, other rock paintings indicate that the breeders of humped cattle entered via the Bab el Mandeb from Yemen.[14]

13. Barton, G. A. : Hamitic and Semitic Origins. 1934
14. Rhotert, Hans: Lybische Felsbilder. 1952

pearing more or less rapidly, mostly in favor of Amharic. 6 191
They include Argobba, Adare or Harari, Gurage, Gafat. 197

2. The Land.

A. Geographical Location.

The Empire of Ethiopia(south of Eritrea) is located in 131
the northeastern part of Africa, roughly between 5° and 15°
north latitude, and 33° -43° east longitude. Prior to the
federation of Eritrea in 1952, which added about 45,000 sq.
miles and brought access to the Red Sea, Ethiopia had 350,000
sq. miles of landlocked territory. It was roughly the size
of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

It is a mountainous kingdom, separated from the Red Sea 133
and the Gulf of Aden on the northeast and the Indian Ocean
on the southeast by hot lowland deserts; a steep escarpment
borders all along the western area down to the hot lowland
of the Sudan. This mountain fortress type of landscape has
enabled the plateau people to retain their independence
against would-be invaders.

Today the political territory of Ethiopia is divided into 631
12 administrative provinces (Taqlai Gezat), each under a
Governor-General appointed by the Emperor. Each province is
subdivided into several(usually six) sub-provinces (Awrajja
Gezat), ruled by a governor similarly appointed.

Three of the 12 provinces are Amharic-speaking; the 191
national language has recently become the lingua franca for
the larger centers of population in the other provinces also.

B. Climate, Climatic Zones, and Topography. 132

Climate and topography are closely inter-related in

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

131 The fragment of country depicted by the map lies on the edge of an important section of the Shoan plateau which extends in the form of an elongated oval north-eastwards from Addis Ababa and forms the watershed between the drainage systems of the Awash and the Blue Nile. The Asmara road uses this 133 convenient high causeway from Addis Ababa to a little beyond Debra Berhan, and would go on using it if this were possible, for the road was made 491 to follow the plateau wherever it was flat enough. North of Debra Berhan, however, the country is tremendously cut up by deep ravines and no level plateau remains. The road is therefore forced down, at Debra Sina, to lower levels (as happens again in several places on the way to Asmara). The higher 133 portions of this plateau lie at well over 9000 feet and constitute an undulating tract, sometimes almost flat, sometimes rather hilly, where differences in level amount to a few hundred feet only. But, on both sides, the plateau breaks up in the most spectacular fashion. To the north-west lie a series of gorges, all belonging to the Blue Nile system, opening up with extreme abruptness along an irregular front, as will be seen in the map. To the east, the plateau terminates in some places at the main escarpment which bounds the Danakil plains, an impressive drop of several thousand feet along a fault, well seen at Ankober and Debra Sina. But farther south the simplicity of this escarpment is disguised by certain tributaries of the Hawash system which, eating their way into the plateau, have formed gorges as striking as those of the Blue Nile system. These gorges, cutting back continually, must in time complete the destruction of the plateau, and produce, by the interdigitation of their deeply entrenched headstreams, the confused type of scenery already observable farther north.

The geological structure of the plateau, on which the local landscape, and especially the peculiar type of gorge developed, directly depends, seems to be extremely simple and almost the same as that which occurs over vast areas of central and northern Ethiopia. As long ago as 1870 the step-like hill sides and tremendous gorges of the Magdala area were well described by Blanford,[1] who had accompanied the Napier Expedition. He compared Abyssinian scenery with that of the western Deccan and the Western Ghats of India, but remarked that in the case of Abyssinia the special features of this type of landscape were exaggerated. He drew attention to the hill-forts or "ambas" of Abyssinia, closely corresponding to features which had likewise been used in India as forts.

Writing of the Jitta gorge near Magdala, Blanford says:

> ". . . we came suddenly on the brink of the mighty chasm in which the Jitta river runs, and to which all the minor valleys converge. Of all the grand scenery met with in Abyssinia, none equalled this wonderful gorge. It is 3500 feet deep, and looks scarcely a mile across. The sides are extremely steep, in places nearly perpendicular. The horizontal beds on both sides appear to correspond exactly; half-way down there is a well-marked terrace, evidently formed by the same bed, on both sides of the river. The bedding is very distinct.
>
> It is to be regretted that all those geologists who disbelieve in the power

[1] Blanford, 'The Geology and Zoology of Abyssinia,' p. 86, London, 1870.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by The 794 those who are sick, or dying.

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a 292 white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar.

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the 796 church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married 784 are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Persons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the [841] church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first [304] day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occasions [852] they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment.

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure 131 in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It 361 may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla 101 who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma;

[p. 57]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

133 water, and near the banks of the river the country is desert.

651 Damot pays 800 ounces (wakea) of gold; formerly 1000. Gojam 80 ounces, and 70 mules. Lasta 1000 ounces; these last years it pays no more, being at present annexed to Begemder. Tigre pays 400 ounces in salt and cotton cloths. Walcait 1500 ounces in cotton cloths.

131 361 The latitude of Adderghey is 13° 24′ 56″; of Macara, on Lamalmen, 13° 6′ 8″; of Gondar, 12° 34′ 30″; of Emfras, 12° 12′ 38″; of the fountains, 10° 58′ 58″.

Note at Lobeia.—The Arabs are fond of music, especially 000 vocal; for they have no instruments but a kind of flute, of the size of a German flute, which gives a wild and not unmelodious sound, and the cymbal or drum, with ten pieces fixed to its sides, which is chiefly used in cadence in dancing, or for symphonies. Their vocal music, or songs, are upon first hearing disagreeable; but it rarely happens that one who has a good ear is not soon fond of them. They are all upon love; at least I never heard any that had war for their subject; some have religion, and are sung by their Shekhs, or saints. The former have effects upon their hearers nearly as extravagant as the ancient music produced. They have no music in parts, and have absolutely no idea of harmonical composition.

[pp. 81-end have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

[p. 62]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

E
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197
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A
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[P. 11]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

related to Ge'ez, the ancient and liturgical language of Ethiopia, much as Italian is related to Latin.[1] It was in Tigre country that, during the first seven centuries A.D., the kingdom of Aksum reached heights of civilization never again attained in Ethiopia's history. Because of the antiquity of their region and the glory of their past, the Tigre are to some extent the cultural aristocrats of Ethiopia.

The Amhara inhabit vast areas of what are today the provinces of Bagemder, Gojjam, Wallo, and Shoa. Their language, Amharic, is the official language of Ethiopia.* Since the beginning of what is called the restored Solomonid Dynasty (1270), all but one of the emperors of Ethiopia have been Amhara.† The exception was a Tigre, Emperor Yohānnes IV (1872–89), though he sojourned for many years at Dabra Tābor in Amhara country, and Amharic was commonly spoken at his court.

The differences between Amhara and Tigre culture have not yet been studied systematically. Even so, one can say that their differences are not nearly so great as what the two groups have in common. Language forms the chief difference. Like Ge'ez and Tigrinya, Amharic is a Semitic language, ultimately descended from old South Arabic, but Amharic has been molded to a greater degree by indigenous Cushitic tongues. Other differences relate to minor variations in custom, greater communal orientation in some Tigre areas, and differences in temperament. But the two groups share the legacy of Aksum, the Ethiopic alphabet, Ge'ez literature, Monophysite Christianity, similar political and social institutions, and the same style of life. One would be justified in treating their traditional Abyssinian culture as a unity, as virtually all authors have done in the past.

In this book, however, I have chosen to focus on Amhara culture as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia. This has been done, first of all, because of my limited competence to deal with Tigre materials, since I am neither familiar with Tigrinya nor fortunate enough to have done field work in Tigre areas. But a less fortuitous reason is that any serious account of contemporary Ethiopia must begin with the fact of Amhara dominance. With respect to numbers, true, the Amhara are in a minority: Amhara probably comprise no more than one-quarter of Ethiopia's total population (now estimated at around twenty-two million). Their dominance is to be measured, rather, in political and cultural terms. On the political side it is manifest in the perpetuation of the Amhara monarchy and the preponderance of Amhara in top political offices. On the cultural side it appears in the spread of Amhara customs throughout the empire by officials, soldiers, settlers, and teachers, and in

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* English is the second official language.

† A number of Amhara emperors since the mid-eighteenth century were partly of Galla stock, however.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 633 left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor Menelik.

[159] [793] Alaqā Gabra Hānnā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army, turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar.* The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar during his few years in power (1869–72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

*175 633 [648] The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum*, though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā*. The civil order, however, was thoroughly demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces.

*175 633 643 648 [166] At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance from the old capital—began as follows:

> O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.[11]

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

131 133 Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the northeast horn of Shoa Province.[12] It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.[13]

* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
• 131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

*753 als who are not members of his hadra, and, more fre-
*755 quently, provides divinatory services for clients.
*756 776 For each of its members, the hadra, comprising its human and zar members, becomes the group within which her most important social relationships beyond the family are found. In a medical context, the hadra develops into an exclusive and self-sufficient group, in which the bala-zars trace all of their serious physical ailments to the displeasure of their zars, and find all necessary prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic assistance in the hadra leader.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN RURAL BEGEMDER

• 131 133 Within the 74,200 square kilometers of Begemder Province are found a diversity of physical conditions, from the hot and parched western lowlands, through the fertile and temperate highland plateau, ascending to the cold and empty mountain reaches of Ras Dashan. The people of Begemder divide its lands into three ecological zones, as indicated by map 1.

Kola lands are located between elevations of 600 and 1800 meters. The highlander considers kola to be a
*[192] disagreeable region; it is unhealthful because of malaria (often referred to as yisudan baŠiyta, "the Sudanese disease), and unpleasant in its excessive heat. Preferred

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 103]

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

MAP 1

ECOLOGICAL ZONES OF BEGEMDER PROVINCE

(After Simoons 1960: 5)

102
• 131

DEGA

WEYNA DEGA

KOLA

Woggera Traditional regions mentioned in the text

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

MAP 2

THE MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS OF BEGEMDER PROVINCE

(Adapted from Simoons 1960: 22)

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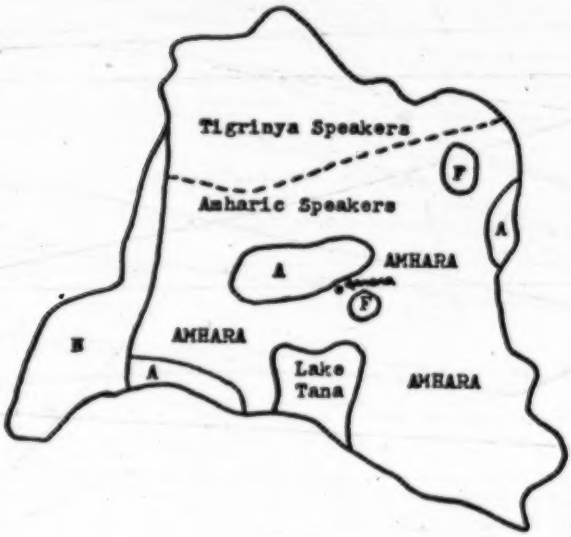

A: Agaw

F: Falasha

N: Nilotes

AMHARA: Abyssinian Muslims also dispersed throughout these areas

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Ambara MP5
Begemder

MAP 3

EXTREME DISTANCES TRAVELLED TO PRINCIPAL WEEKLY MARKETS OF HIGHLAND BEGEMDER PROVINCE

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Distances from Gondar

Amba Giyorgis... 24 miles
Dabat..... 44 miles
Debark..... 61 miles
Debre Tabor.....104 miles
Gorgora..... 40 miles
Chilga (1)..... 45 miles
Metemma (2).....140 miles

• 131
133

[243] cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous, [635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse- [162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial [563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic [567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000 [136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano- [243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals, [231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which [243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes [233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.

*753 grazing. Both highland zones are considered ideal for
• 131 human habitation. While residents of the dega zone oc-
133 casionally comment on what they regard as the uncomfor-
821 table summer heat of the weyna dega, at the same time it is acknowledged that the rainy season (kiramt) is more burdensome in the dega. The rains last from May to September and are marked by temperatures in the mid-thirties in dega lands and perhaps ten to fifteen degrees warmer in the weyna dega. This season is regarded as a particularly bad time for kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints) whose severity is considered greatest in the dega zone. Epidemiologically, the dega is also associated with a relatively high incidence of yinifas basiyta ("the wind disease"), an ailment described in Chapter One.

131 Although reliable population estimates are lacking,
101 the weyna dega and dega zones contain perhaps 85% of
161 Begemder's people. These rural highlands are occupied
197 by five ethnic groups, racially indistinguishable from
144 one another and, with an exception, now speaking a common Semetic languase, Amharic. The Amhara are the most numerous of Begemder's highland peoples, and extend into the provinces of Gojam and Shoa, to the south. Within the Begemder highlands, they occupy the area south of latitude 13°30'. North of this line live the Tigre, a related people who speak a cognate language, Tigrinya.
101 Both Amhara and Tigre are Coptic Christians, and from
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12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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131 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has
779 been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries.
[241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively
[463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm-
[286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga
[443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of
[562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin-
[423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil-
[326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields
[286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha
[162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority
[361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Table 15: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Amhara

Month: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Month: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau	Annual Cycle of Amhara Ecological Activities (Economics, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Coptic-Abyssinian Amhara.	Cycle of Amhara Social Events	Syncretism	New, Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1 to Mäskäräm 30	Sept. 11 to Oct. 10	receding flood after rainy season; yellow "mäsqäl" daisy carpets land; spring ("tsädaye").	place beehive basket-work in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ("gai").	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ("yäMäsqäl Bäal")- public rejoicing around bonfire (dämmära). Minor: 1st Mäskäräm is St. John's Day. 11th: "Arafa" - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	Kin visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ("enqutatash") on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive promise of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		"Mäsqäl" is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
Teqemt 1 to Teqemt 30	Oct. 11 to Nov. 9	sunny growing & ripening season (amänä sega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ("geba"), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ("tälla"); sell honey to make mead ("taj"); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Teqemt: St. Michael's Feast "Mikael"; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 5th: pilgrimage to "tebal" holy wells and waterfalls of Zäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus (Abo).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ("gur-amränosh") to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving "from Jerusalem".		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Teqemt 23rd).

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Hedar 1 to Hedar 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "tyëff" for bread; "nug" and "talba" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Hedar: "Mikael" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Qwusqwam"-clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Zion" Festival at Aksum; Nuns' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikael": fresh togas, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). 21st: Church student holiday.		
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 8	Summer ("balg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate scorched landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "tyeff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus' coming), esp. at Qulubi near Dire Daua. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Ledät", or "Gänna"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Gänna") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).		19th: Emp. Haile Selassi travels to Qulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional toga and Jodphurs.
Ter 1 to Ter 30	Jan. 9 to Feb. 7	Height of dry summer ("bälg"). Some sluggish rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shenbera), plant (gomän) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ter is "Temqät"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially created pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Gennät"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Giyorgis" (St. George) 21st: "Astärye Maryam" (Mary)	Taxgatherers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("guga") women are coiffured, henna-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary among Falashas as harvest fest. 12th Monday	On Epiphany, Jan. 19th Pentecost (11th Ter), ("mayrkr") Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in traditional costume.

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Yäkatit I to Yäkatit 30	Feb. 8 to Mar. 9	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adja gebs") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before lenten season) 11th-20th ("abed amus").	Lenten Fast "kudade" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tom" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day Fast of Niniweh ("Tsomä Nänäwe"). 16th is feast "Kedana Mehrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and spices, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 16th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
Mägabit I to Mägabit 30	Mar. 10 to April 8	dry; burning of bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, because of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 19th "Debrä Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Aläm" =(Savior)	Youngsters pasturing cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
Miyazya 1 to Miyazya 30	April 9 to May 8	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bäga"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron plowpoints and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("hamamat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent,"seqlit" Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services eve of the 17th, Fassika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qetäma") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tensaä") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season from Easter to heavy rains, so unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palms, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("qenchebt") games.	17th: Muslims (on Easter) celebrate "Sheykh Abader" water saint.	27th:(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("mänäläs bäal") entry into Addis Ababa

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Genbot 1 to Genbot 30	May 9 to June 7	light rains; spots of fresh, green grass (for pasturage nearer home). Storks fly northward.	Women prepare fuel for rainy season: dead-wood; piles of sun-dried cowdung, coated with layer of mud. Caravans hurry home from Sudan, etc. Fish "senro" caught in rivers.	1st: Ledata (Birthday of Virgin Mary): After services, last, large, outdoor picnic, under "dass" shelter 24th: "Täklä Haymanot" day, pilgrimage to his holy well at Dabrä Libanos. Children sing of country's well-being to storks.	1st: Men and women celebrate outdoor picnic separately, but young folk meet while older ones feast on meat and barley beer.	
Säne 1 to Säne 30	June 8 to July 7	Heavy rains, winter "Kerämt" begin: fogs, storms, cold rain. Fishing season. Children are taught to swim before rivers are dangerous.	Intensive plowing of softened soil, seeding by broadcasting: barley, then tyeff, wheat. Beans and other garden crops are seeded and fenced. Fish is plentiful and cheap.	9th: Resumption of Wednesday and Friday "Fast of the Salvation" recessed since Easter. Clergy: "Paräqlitos" 6th-feast; 7th "tsomä hawaryat" - 1 month Fast of Apostles.	Master gives feast to retainers for plowing, "erf mätay", with fried fish, beer, "azmari" music, and "hotu" dance. Mutual aid in hut repair.	
Hamlä 1 to Hamlä 30	July 8 to August 6	Heavy monsoon rains, sometimes tornadoes. sheets of rain almost daily. Cold	Indoor work; some minor hut repairs.	Intensive church school for boys, who are not needed at this season for any other work. Clergy: 5th: Fast of Peter and Paul ends month Fast of Apostles.	Standstill (e.g. of visiting) due to swollen brooks and washed-out paths.	16th(July23) Birthday ("Ledät") of Emp. Haile Selassie; praise hymns chanted in churches.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Nähase 1 to Nähase 30	August 7 to Sept. 5	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some sow a bit of tyäff and "Adja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Selassye"); parade, despite rain, with "tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Buhe", "Debrä Tabor") feast, with torch-light parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeraf") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger childred badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his namesake; flags, etc.
Pagumen1 2 3 4 5	Sept. 6 7 8 9 10	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Nägadras" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "lefafa sedeq", scroll; bathe.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	

pearing more or less rapidly, mostly in favor of Amharic. 6 191
They include Argobba, Adare or Harari, Gurage, Gafat. 197

2. The Land.

A. Geographical Location.

The Empire of Ethiopia(south of Eritrea) is located in 131
the northeastern part of Africa, roughly between 5° and 15°
north latitude, and 33° -43° east longitude. Prior to the
federation of Eritrea in 1952, which added about 45,000 sq.
miles and brought access to the Red Sea, Ethiopia had 350,000
sq. miles of landlocked territory. It was roughly the size
of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

It is a mountainous kingdom, separated from the Red Sea 133
and the Gulf of Aden on the northeast and the Indian Ocean
on the southeast by hot lowland deserts; a steep escarpment
borders all along the western area down to the hot lowland
of the Sudan. This mountain fortress type of landscape has
enabled the plateau people to retain their independence
against would-be invaders.

Today the political territory of Ethiopia is divided into 631
12 administrative provinces (Taqlai Gezat), each under a
Governor-General appointed by the Emperor. Each province is
subdivided into several(usually six) sub-provinces (Awrajja
Gezat), ruled by a governor similarly appointed.

Three of the 12 provinces are Amharic-speaking; the 191
national language has recently become the lingua franca for
the larger centers of population in the other provinces also.

B. Climate, Climatic Zones, and Topography.

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Climate and topography are closely inter-related in

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ethiopia. The uplands, even though they lie close to the 7 132
equator, are pleasantly cool at night during the long dry season, and abundant monsoon rains from the Indian Ocean pour down between June and September.

Rainfall averages approximately 47 inches annually at Addis Ababa[1] and considerably more in the area around Lake Tana. An average of 81% of the rain falls during the three-month rainy season, and about 13% during the irregular light [312] rains in April and May.[2] The water-table remains high during most of the dry season, even when most rivers have dried up, so that irrigation and terrace farming are possible. Both have been practiced, though neither extensively nor intensively, since ancient times.

The Amhara divides the climatic year into the long dry 184
season, Bälg, which lasts until the beginning of the "little 805
rains", and the 3 to 4 month rainy season, kerämt, which the modern-educated Amhara translates as "winter". Terms subdividing these seasons differ locally, which is not surprising considering the extent to which climate is dominated by local topography.

While the long dry season is climatically monotonous, 132
the rainy season is in daily, dramatic flux. It is the season of tornadoes, often dangerous. On a relatively dry day during the rainy season, usually in the early afternoon, a whirlwind (called Täro) may occur which can even

1. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No.12, May 1947, 4 pp.
2. Hann, Julius: Handbuch der Klimatologie, 1908-1911, Vol.2, p. 181.

132 take the corrugated iron roofs off urban houses. Most tornadoes do not hit the ground, but if they do there is destruction. Usually such a cyclone precedes a heavy rainstorm.

The fog in the rainy season, called "gum", is cold and thick and covers the countryside. On the other hand, the fog that precedes the light rains of April and May, called gag or tegag, is milky, light, and causes very humid heat. Meteorologists believe that it is the result of the sand raised by the hot "simoun" wind blowing from Arabia and the eastern lowlands of Ethiopia.

821 The importance of "rain in season" is of course an urgent concern of people living in a primarily agricultural economy. An unseasonal fall, which occasionally arrives after the end of the rainy season, when the grown grain begins to ripen, is called sabbiya, and is highly unpopular. The proverb, to indicate "all things in their proper time", refers to seasonal rains:

"In (the month of) Hamlē, beating-down rain;
in (the month of) Sänyē, fine drizzle."

At the beginning of the rainy season, in Sanye, the farmer wishes for constant drizzle, wetting the ground just enough to enable him to make headway with his scratch-plow and to seed in the previously sunbaked soil; in Hamlē, he wishes for plentiful rain so that the sprouting grain will grow fast and tall.

132 The Abyssinians themselves long ago recognized three dis-
137 tinct climatic zones in their country:
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132 Dega - more than 8,000 feet above sea level; cold, with
137 average temperatures of 50° - 61° F. The dega
241 is primarily prairie grassland, strewn with many medium-sized wooded areas of the high mountain type. The area is particularly adapted for raising livestock, but also suitable for growing barley, wheat, tieff (a variety of millet), beans flax, and temperate fruit, which are gathered wild not long after the end of the rains. Trees include the wild olive (Olea chrysophylla), juniper (Juniperus procera), the medicinal Kosso tree (Hegenia abyssinica).

Woyna Dega - between 6,000 and 8,000 feet: temperate to warm, with average temperatures of 61° - 68° F. This climatic zone includes the greater part of the plateau country, and most of the populated and cultivated lands. This is the zone where most cereals are grown, including soft grains, barley, tieff, maize. Here coffee grows wild. Forests, where they occur, are thicker, but spiny bushes are more prevalent. At the lower levels there are thick stands of bamboo (Podocarpus) and
[361] East African hardwoods; at the higher levels are juniper varieties. Most Amhara live in this zone.

132 Qolla - below 5,000 feet: hot, with average temperatures
137 in the 70's, 80's and 90's F. The qolla includes the arid lowland zones, as well as tropical forest; river valleys like that of the Awash; and
most border areas of the country.

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alluvial soil - "borbwara märet", rich silt carried by rivers and brooks.

infertile soils - "qoda märet" dries too quickly after rains;
"arbacha märet", reddish, after erosion, infertile mounds;
"gebgaba märet", harvest withers at stalk before maturity;
"gergera märet", useless to plow, better leave for wild fruit.
"fech märet", abandoned land, leave for pasturage.

hard-to-penetrate - "gewchacha märet", plow cannot penetrate readily,
"gombore märet", sandy but very rocky, hard to plow,
"chancha märet" rocky terrain, where rain does not penetrate well.

[132 82] The preferred early rain is the light, intermittent but penetrating "zeg yalä zenäb", not the heavy continuous downpour that occurs later. Fast-growing barley, called 243 251 "bällega" after the "bälg" season, is sown first, during the light rains of March, for it can be harvested 3 months later, just before the heavy rains, to help tide the people over until the main harvests. This is very important because of the traditional hesitancy of the farmer to store crops. Historically, he would rather have it almost ready on the stalk, and would rather risk a crop failure than

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

186 The great weakness of the Ethiopians, their inveterate regionalism, arises, like other aspects of their life and history, from the peculiar conditions of their geography. The four historic Kingdoms of Tigrai and Amhara, Shoa and Gojjam, cover the plateaux divided by the canyons of the Blue Nile and [132] the Takkaze and their lateral rifts. During four months of the year, the season of the Great Rains between July and October, Gojjam is entirely cut off from Shoa and Amhara by the floods of the Blue Nile. Only recently has the construction of the bridge over the Blue Nile at Shafartak, a major engineering undertaking, made continuous contact possible. The violent regionalism of the Gojjam has been a disastrous factor in internal Ethiopian history which will doubtless tend to decline with the modern development of communications.

114 The Gojjam, scene of the guerrilla campaign of 1941, has been de-
175 scribed by Major Cheesman, formerly H.B.M. Consul in Dangila, in several articles in the Society's *Journal*, and in his standard work on the province, 'Lake Tana and the Blue Nile.' Cheesman's work was in fact the basis of knowledge which made practical the organization of the expedition to reinforce the Patriot groups which were in the field against the Italians at the moment when Italy declared war on Britain. His exploration of the gap up the Escarpment, the fruit of an arduous excursion described in his book, enabled the Frontier Battalion of the Sudan Defence Force with their camel convoys of supplies and arms to make a rapid deployment on to the Escarpment.

175 The least-known part of the Gojjam province is probably the region of the Choké Mountains which rise to the north of Debra Markos. In an effort to hold down this very wild bit of country the Italians had built forts at Mota [191] and other points and a passable dirt road had been constructed linking Debra Markos *via* Mota with Bahrdar—the Italian strong point at the southern tip of Lake Tana. After the capture of Debra Markos in April 1941, it proved necessary to make contact with the small group of Patriots and one company of Sudanese with some British officers and non-commissioned officers who were containing the very considerable Italian force still in the field round the south-east shore of Lake Tana. At Debra Markos we were very short of troops. Further, scarcity of mules made it necessary to try the experiment of taking camels over the pass which runs under the peaks of Choké at an altitude indicated on Italian maps at rather over 13,000 feet. Kit had to be limited to one ground-sheet and one blanket each for all ranks and the plain-bred Sudanese, many of whom were already lame with jiggers, suffered from cold and mountain-sickness particularly in the hail blizzard which struck the force on the bare ridge of the Choké Pass. Nevertheless this one company of Sudanese covered the 70 odd miles in just under three days, and Colonel Boustead bluffed the Italian battalion in Mota into surrender within forty-eight hours of opening fire with his solitary mortar.

I was following along in the rear with the camel *hamlia* and on reaching base camp in front of Mota was met with orders to about turn and take the animals back to Debra Markos. I thus crossed the Choké Mountains twice [114] in one week. With amateur medical and veterinary duties and a driving mist at the higher altitudes alternating with rain, sleet, and hail, I had little opportunity for geogeaphical observation

tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic.[1] Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend. 137 [181]

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile. 136

There were only two or three villages along the track,[2] which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district. 361 [241] [231]

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May. 175 [132]

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to 133

[1] i.e., in the Choké Mountains. —Analyst]

[2] i.e., between Debra Markos and Mota. —Ana.]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor
[491] road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada
Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here
Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint.
[132] Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or
eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's
[361] capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns:
an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and
[231] dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputation of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

175 Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the
[103] Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem
[632] father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to
[563] internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north:
[598] Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean
[635] border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support
[662] of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of tranalation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth." 133

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of Rocher d'Hericourt, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans. 132 [134] 137 [177] [372] 361 311 [231] 241 311

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow 137

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and men who sleep there to watch, from fear of the animals 231
that roam about the villages all night: and if they did not
keep this watch nothing alive would remain which they
would not devour. The people who go to sow millet in the 241
mountains of Bisan belong to this country and the neigh- 221
bouring towns. The reason why they go and do it is this. 132
Here there are very numerous grain crops of every kind
and nature that can be mentioned, as I have already said;
and because it is near to the sea, by which go all the
provisions for Arabia, Mekkah, Zebid, Jiddah, and Toro,[1]
and other parts; and they carry the provisions to the sea to
sell them. And because in this country the winters are
divided into seasons, and the seed crops do not grow
except with the rains, they go to sow these millet
fields at the mountain of Bisan, where it is winter in the
months of February, March, and April. There is this same
winter in a mountain called Lama, in this kingdom of the
Barnagais, which is fully eight days' journey from the
mountain of Bisan. In another country, which is named
Doba, and which is quite a month's journey from this lord-
ship of Lama, there is winter in these same months. As
for these millet fields, they require rains, and as these win-
ters happen out of season, they go and sow them where it
rains, and so profit by both winters. In this town of 346
Barua are two churches with many priests, one close to the 562
other, one is for men, the other for women. The men's
church is called St. Michael, that of the women is named
after the apostles Peter and Paul. They say that a great
lord, who was then Barnagais, built the men's church, and [644]
gave it the privilege that no woman should enter it, except
only the wife of the Barnagais, with one damsel, whenever
she went to take the communion, and even she does not
now enter the church, but takes the communion at the
door in the inner circuit with the laity, and so the

[1] Mount Sinai.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

will not positively contradict it; for, though I was 783
early there, it might have escaped me if it was done 796
in the dark. However, I never heard it mentioned as part of the ceremony; and it is probable I should, if any such thing was really practised; neither was I in time to have seen it at Kahha.

"Before the pond a scaffold was built, covered round with planks, within which sat the king, looking towards the pond, his face covered with blue taffeta, while an old man, who was the king's tutor, was standing in the water up to the shoulders, naked as he was born, and half dead with cold, for it had frozen violently in the night. All those that came near him he took by the head and plunged them in the water, whether men or women, saying, in his own language, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Now Shoa, where the king was then, is in lat. 8° N. and the sun was in 22° south declination, advancing northward, so the sun was, on the day of the Epiphany, within 30° of the zenith of the bathing-place. The thermometer of Fahrenheit rises at Gondar about that time to 68°, so in Shoa it cannot rise to less than [132] 70°, for Gondar is in lat. 12° N. that is 4° farther northward, so it is not possible water should freeze, nor did I ever see ice in Abyssinia, not even on the highest or coldest mountains. January is one of the hottest months in the year, day and night the sky is perfectly serene, nor is there a long disproportioned winter night. At Shoa the days are equal to the nights, at least as to sense, even in the month of January.

The baptism, Alvarez says, began at midnight, and the old tutor dipt every person under water, taking him by the head, saying, "I baptize thee in the name

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 361 sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

[132] Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most [312] pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā [132] [241] twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, some-

*175 643 TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāssi (Nagāssē Kristos)	Abēto	169?–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebstē (Sebstyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbiyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Takla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwofīos	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yosṭos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāhla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	***		***
		Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

*175 361 [132] times three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and [241] livestock are produced in abundance.

[231] The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's *175 633 time of power.[5] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The towns- people of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, [162] and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more [463] conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he [173] was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose [361] name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geography than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in response to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones. 133 132 • [175]* [184]

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But *ṭēff*, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley. 241 262

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which ornament the homes of the well-to-do. 233 236 291 184 [262] [556] [286] [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural-colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural environment. 182 291 [386] 342 182 346 182

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses. 132 [165] [181]

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gondar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While 175*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories. 565* 512 527 462 [517] [521]

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense. 565* 512 181

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.) 565* 517 691

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver. 565* 517 443 [462] [437] [436] [178]

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression. 565* 527 796 [132]

The Yearly Cycle

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after 565* 796

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 the long rains. Children go singing from house to house in small bands, or take bunches of wild flowers to relatives, in hopes of getting a bit of *dābo.* In most homes an animal is slaughtered—in some areas superstition decrees that it be a white-headed lamb or a red chicken—and there is much eating and drinking, the basic activity of every holiday.

A little more than two weeks later the much more important festival of Masqal is observed, celebrating the discovery of the true Cross by Empress Helena. By this time the heavy rains have subsided, and the air is filled with [132] something of the spirit of spring. (Although Ethiopia lies north of the equator the summer rainy season is known as "winter" because of its coldness.) The landscape is colored by acres of yellow wildflowers, which are cut and fastened to the poles each family brings to a central clearing where a huge bonfire is built. In late afternoon, after the tepee of poles has been con- [554] structed, the priests begin the ceremony by intoning appropriate chants. Then each status group circles the poles three times, in honor of the Trinity—first the local lord, then the clergy, the lesser nobility, the peasant men, women, and finally the children. In the evening the festival takes a more secular turn. The bonfire is lit, and the young braves dance around it shouting their war chants. As the fire blazes on, these fellows seize burning brands and playfully hurl them at one another.

In November the monthly St. Michael's Day is honored with special cele- [778] brations. The peasants travel distances to attend the ceremonies at any church consecrated to "Mikā'ēl." Holy water and hot springs sanctified by Mikā'ēl's name are drunk and bathed in by those with many kinds of disease. The rituals involve carrying the Mikā'ēl *tābot* ("holy ark") out of the church and elaborate chanting and dancing by the clergy. After the *tābot* has been returned, in a procession in which the laymen follow shouldering their rifles (undoubtedly spears in older times), folk dancing and singing go on until late [584] afternoon. This provides an occasion for the more enterprising adolescent male to spot a potential bride, about whom he may diffidently ask his father to make inquiries.

*565 796 526 Christmas, celebrated in early January, is marked chiefly by the playing of secular games. The common word for Christmas, *gannā,* is actually the name of an outdoors game played with sticks and a wooden puck. Played by boys, young men, and occasionally elders on the afternoon of Christmas Day, *gannā* is marked by a spirit of aggressive license. Accustomed norms of deference are held in abeyance. The game is played in so rough and disorderly a manner that it often results in broken limbs and scarred faces. Staged by two teams made up on the spot, *gannā* is concluded at dusk by volleys of abusive limericks with which the victors revile their adversaries.[4]

*565 796 This is the season for special festivities on saints' days. St. Gabriel is particularly honored in December, as are St. Mary, St. George, and again St. Michael

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632 centered in a town and extending outward to include those areas from which peasants come to buy and sell.

[132] The size of the town's sphere contracts and expands sea-
[484] sonally, reaching its nadir furing the rainy season, when overland travel becomes difficult owning to deep mud and raging torrents. Then, travelling is infrequent and confined to the market town closest to a peasant's home parish. Although market trips are more frequent during the remainder of the year, most terminate at the closest market. These relatively short trips are favored when grain is brought to the mills located on the periphery
[796] of most market sites. The spheres of the larger towns (Gondar, Debre Tabor, Dabat) reach maximum size on the market days which preceed the great celebrations of the Coptic Church---Meskal (which celebrates the discovery of the True Cross, and follows the end of the rains), Michaelmas (November), Timkat (feast of the Epiphany, and preceeding the Lenten fast), and Easter. Map 3 indicates the extreme limits for market spheres of the towns of the Begemder highlands.

[491] The highland market towns are strung along the province's only all-weather motor road.[14] Each offers a

[648] [14]This road, built during the Italian occupation (1936-1941), runs north to Asmara (capital of Eritrea) and (since the 1960's) south to Addis Ababa (the national capital). A dry season road links the highland towns to Metemma on the Sudan border.

pearing more or less rapidly, mostly in favor of Amharic. 6 191
They include Argobba, Adare or Harari, Gurage, Gafat. 197

2. The Land.

A. Geographical Location.

The Empire of Ethiopia(south of Eritrea) is located in 131
the northeastern part of Africa, roughly between 5° and 15° north latitude, and 33° -43° east longitude. Prior to the federation of Eritrea in 1952, which added about 45,000 sq. miles and brought access to the Red Sea, Ethiopia had 350,000 sq. miles of landlocked territory. It was roughly the size of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

It is a mountainous kingdom, separated from the Red Sea 133
and the Gulf of Aden on the northeast and the Indian Ocean on the southeast by hot lowland deserts; a steep escarpment borders all along the western area down to the hot lowland of the Sudan. This mountain fortress type of landscape has enabled the plateau people to retain their independence against would-be invaders.

Today the political territory of Ethiopia is divided into 631
12 administrative provinces (Taqlai Gezat), each under a Governor-General appointed by the Emperor. Each province is subdivided into several(usually six) sub-provinces (Awrajja Gezat), ruled by a governor similarly appointed.

Three of the 12 provinces are Amharic-speaking; the 191
national language has recently become the lingua franca for the larger centers of population in the other provinces also.

B. Climate, Climatic Zones, and Topography. 132

Climate and topography are closely inter-related in

137 most border areas of the country. This is the zone of desert and thorn shrub vegetation; flora include the tamarind, giant sycamore, acacia, myrtle and zizygium, "Insett" (musa ensete or "Koba"), euphorbia, depending on availability of water. Crops include cotton, tobacco, dura, sugar cane. Poisonous snakes, leopards, malarial mosquitoes are common, and therefore the qolla is avoided by upland peoples like the Amhara. The qolla is loosely populated by hardy nomads like the feared Danakil in the east, and by Nilotic-speaking and negroid peoples like the Shanqalla in the western lowland.[3]

133 Much of Ethiopia is a subtabular plateau about 7,000 feet high, bisected north and south by a sector of the Great Rift Valley of East Africa with an average width of 30 miles. Rivers such as the Blue Nile have cut deep gorges breaking the highland into many isolated parts. Above the plateau rise higher mountains, the highest of which is 14,500 feet--Ras Dashan(Bejeda).

487 133 The many steep canyons which break up the plateaus have made Ethiopia almost inaccessible in the past. There are only three possible routes of access, an important consideration when one tries to reconstruct the ethnic prehistory of this area:

(1) The Eritrean gateway, where the highland approach

3. See Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook, 1954, pp. 127-8; KUO, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons 1951, p. 63

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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133

the sea. It is here, as C. S. Coon points out,[4] that all the historic traffic between the Ethiopian highlands and Yemen has taken place; here lie all the ancient cities and holiest places. Semitic-speaking influences came this way.

(2) Sailing down the Nile with the north wind, and continuing south past the gorges of the Blue Nile. Despite the hardships of this route, Egypt has often been a source of cultural influence on Ethiopia, and once an Ethiopian dynasty reigned over Egypt. Today, Nilotic-speaking tribes live on this gateway.

(3) A route from the south, at the place where the highland of Ethiopia connects with the grasslands and parklands of Kenya and Uganda. Here we find a continuum of flora and fauna, and a human ethnic continuum. Cushitic-speaking peoples have entered this way, probably for ages past.

C. Soil and Minerals

134 The soil of Ethiopia can be roughly divided into three major types:

(1) Decomposed volcanic rock on the central plateau. This is very fertile, of black or dark brown color.

(2) Alluvial soil on the flood plains of streams. This is derived mainly from the decomposed volcanic rock, washed out of the plateau soil during the rainy season, and is very fertile. Muddy in color, the rich overflow of Lake Tana is

4. Coon, C. S.: Horn of Africa. Unpublished.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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ETHIOPIAN HIGHLANDS

W. E. D. ALLEN

Meeting of the Society, 18 January 1943

114 THIS lecture does not pretend to be a serious study of any geographical aspect of Ethiopia. It is rather a record of impressions gained during a year spent in Ethiopia in various jobs ranging from the care of a park of derelict mules to that of Intelligence Officer to the newly formed Ethiopian Army.

Unluckily I was posted away from Addis Ababa at short notice, and my reference books in Italian and Italian photographs of ethnological interest which I had collected should now be in Nairobi, if they have not been lost. Many of the photographs used as illustrations were taken in the field by Captain Mark Pilkington, the Life Guards, a very gallant officer who distinguished himself in the guerrilla fighting round Lake Tana and who was killed in action in Libya, just two months ago.

With the possible exception of parts of the Shankalla wilderness, which is the Abyssinian extension of the Sudan plain between the western bend of the Blue Nile and the Escarpment, it cannot be said that any large areas of the Ethiopian Empire had remained unvisited by Europeans prior to the Italian War of 1935–36 and the campaign of 1941. I have however come across no account of the remarkable massifs of Dungwur and Belaia which rise out of
● 133 the Shankalla plain to the east of the Escarpment. On the tableland of Belaia, well within the nominal Italian frontier, an advance base for the supply of the Patriot forces was established in January 1941 and in February the Emperor set up his headquarters there.

[137] These twin mountain masses rise out of the Shankalla plain to an altitude of about 7000 feet above sea-level. They are covered with rich forests and watered by fast-running streams. Dungwur was uninhabited and visited
[361] only from time to time by stray bands of Abyssinian hunters. But there are flourishing villages and ancient churches on Belaia. It was a weird experience to reach these strange islands of luxuriating nature after the long camel trek across the burnt-out Shankalla wilderness. From a day's march away we

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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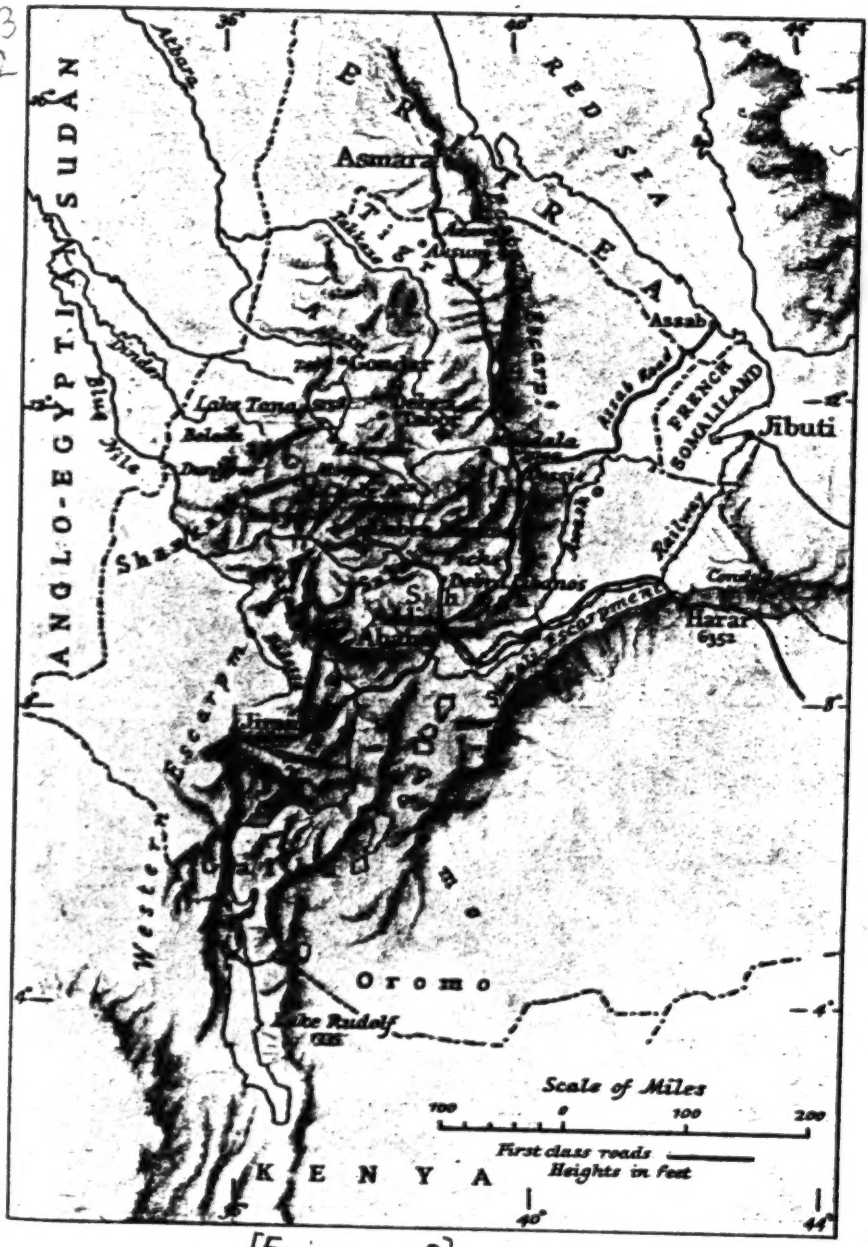

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2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 could see the forests blazing on the flanks of Belaia from the bombs dropped by the Savoias in their unsuccessful attempts to search out the Emperor's camp.

The wooded flanks of the Western Escarpment of the Ethiopian plateau overlook the plains of the Sudan. The top of the Escarpment is 4000–5000 feet above sea-level, and the gap opposite Mambuk village which we climbed is about 2000 feet above the level of the Shankalla plain, which rises steadily in a series of low rocky corrugations all the way from the Dinder river some 100 miles to the west. From the top of the Escarpment the fertile plains of Gojjam stretch for another 100 miles to the canyon of the Blue Nile. There is a fall of about 5000 feet to the great ravine with its subtropical vegetation from the dusty upland round Debra Markos. From the western edge of the Blue Nile Scarp it is a whole day's march down to the river for loaded animals, and more than a day's march up the eastern bank on to the Salale plateau at Shafartak.

The Ethiopian Highland is a series of plateaux separated by deep canyons such as that of the Blue Nile. The eastern edge of the Highland is the western edge of the great African rift. There is a parallel rift from lake Tana along the canyon of the Blue Nile to the Southern Lakes of Ethiopia and it is continued through the East African lake system down to lake Tanganyika. A series of north–south and east–west faults divide up the Ethiopian highland into separated plateaux. The Awash valley, running west–east, and really connecting the north–south rifting with the Red Sea basin, flows in the most notable of these. The different plateaux are sometimes connected by narrow necks of land or panhandles: for instance the neck connecting the plateau of Debra Zebit with that of Debra Tabor is hardly more than 100 yards across with a sheer drop south-west to the ravine of the Bashilo and north to that of the Gash or Takkaze.

133 These peculiar geographical conditions explain much in Ethiopian history.
177 The great line of the Escarpment, overlooking the Red Sea depression on the east and the Sudan plains to the west, has protected the population of the
648 uplands from penetration by foreign armies until modern times. The only successful conquest of Ethiopia was that of Muhammad Gran, the "left-handed," a Somali chieftain who is reputed to have had an Ethiopian father. The Somali-Arab armies which were really the spearhead of Turkish imperialism on the Red Sea in the great days of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, penetrated the Ethiopian Highland by the Awash valley in a series of campaigns which lasted for about half a century. In the end the great altitudes and the inclement rainy seasons probably restored their independence to the Ethiopians. In general, it may be said that the Highlanders have never been able to conquer and hold the hot lowlands of the Red Sea and the Arabs and Somalis have never been able to maintain themselves on the upland plateau. Only in the subtropical region of the southern lakes as far as the Dadessa valley and Jimma has there been any important penetration of Islamic influences.

133 Foreign influences, Semitic and that peculiar early Ethiopian or Eritrean
177 civilization known as Aksumite, have come in from the north over the easier

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Fudi, near Njabara, Gojjam

Phot. L. V. Bentinck

Debra Libanos, 1928

[Facing p. 3]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

grade from the Eritrean plateau. All civilization in Ethiopia has penetrated from north to south along the great dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment, where the so-called Strada Imperiale now runs from Asmara to Addis Ababa.

Along this line have been concentrated the successive Ethiopian capitals with the exception of Gondar, which was chosen far to the north-west as a refuge from the ruinous wars with the Moslems and the Gallas. And along this line, due south from Aksum and Aduwa, were the great centres of the Copto-Ethiopian culture of the Middle Ages, places like Lalibala and the monasteries on lake Haik and the traditional centre of the Coptic Church at Debra Libanos.

From this dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment Ethiopian culture, and it was a very real culture in its heyday, spread westward into Gojjam and southward to the region of the lakes. Luca di Sabelli in his recent 'Storia di Abissinia' has shown that Coptic-Ethiopian missionaries were active as far south as Madagascar and the Mozambique coast.

Ethiopian Coptic culture drew its nurture from the powerful Coptic Church in Cairo, from the Crusading civilization in Palestine, and from the Byzantine Empire. Just as the establishment of the Turks at the exit from the Black Sea brought about the decline of the East Christian cultures in the Caucasus and the Balkans, so the Turkish control of the Nile valley and the Red Sea slowly strangled the Coptic Ethiopian culture of East Africa. The Ethiopian rulers, pressed by the invasions of Muhammad Gran, were well aware of their mortal danger and it is a curious fact that kings in Georgia and Ethiopia appealed to the rising power of Spain in the Western Mediterranean at about the same time. The Portuguese episode in Ethiopia was a delayed response to the appeal made to the Catholic powers.

The extraordinary tenacity of the Ethiopians to the western tradition is a remarkable characteristic of their historical development. The Aksumite kingdom, for all its Semitic appearance, was essentially a projection of Hellenism, and the Aksumite kings remained the traditional allies of the Byzantine Emperors in their struggle with the Persian Sasanids for the control of the Red Sea—an episode which was parallel in time with the conflict between these same two "world powers" for mastery of the Black Sea. The Coptic Church and Christian civilization in East Africa proved more enduring than the once powerful Nestorian Church in Asia, with which it may in some ways be compared. The later Ethiopian Kingdom played the same role in the struggle between Turks and Portuguese for control of the Red Sea and for the trade of the Indian Ocean as the Aksumites had a thousand years earlier in the rivalry between Byzantines and Persians. But they showed the same persistent antagonism to the Roman Church as the East Christians had displayed towards the Crusaders and the Papacy. In the end the Ethiopians expelled the Portuguese from Abyssinia and managed to maintain their own independence against their Moslem neighbours, until in the last decade it was suppressed by a professedly Christian power.

The Ethiopians are a remarkable phenomenon in the East African world and with their tenacity and their undoubted natural intelligence they are destined to have no little influence on the future course of history in that area.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Gojjam

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Camp at Matakal, Gojjam, complete air cover for standing camp along wooded wady

[Facing p. 4]

tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic. Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend.

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile.

There were only two or three villages along the track, which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district.

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May.

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to

[i.e., in the Choké Mountains. -AWAKYSF]
[i.e., between Debra Markos and Mota. -AW.]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor
[491] road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada
Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here
Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint.
[132] Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or
eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's
[361] capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns:
an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and
[231] dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputa-
tion of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

175 Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the
[103] Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means
"my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably
beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem
[632] father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military
headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest.
Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern
Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation.
To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment over-
looking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the
turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to
[563] internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north
route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important
motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab.
During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor
had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less
fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara
country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north:
[578] Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum
of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean
[635] border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the
Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support
[662] of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses. 175

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town. 632

The surrounding grassy *alms* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June. 133

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick. 491 [137] [136]

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people. 563 195

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups. 101 563

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion 101 144

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Phot. W. Thesiger

Awash river, Northern Aussa

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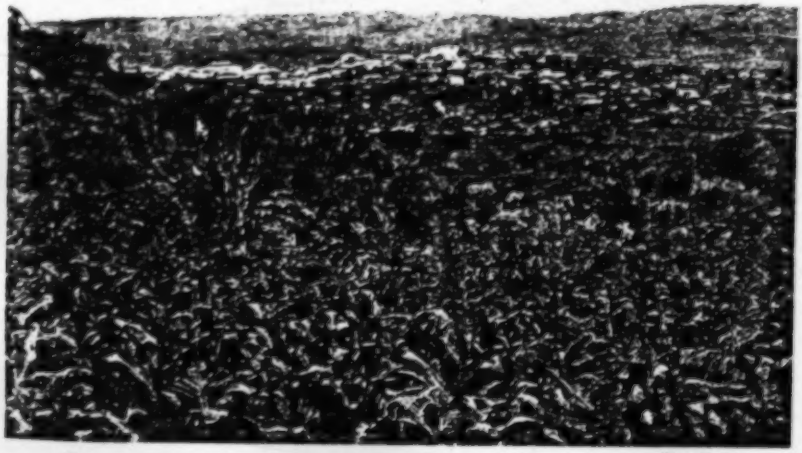

Phot. F. D. Corfield

[Facing p. 12]

Harar

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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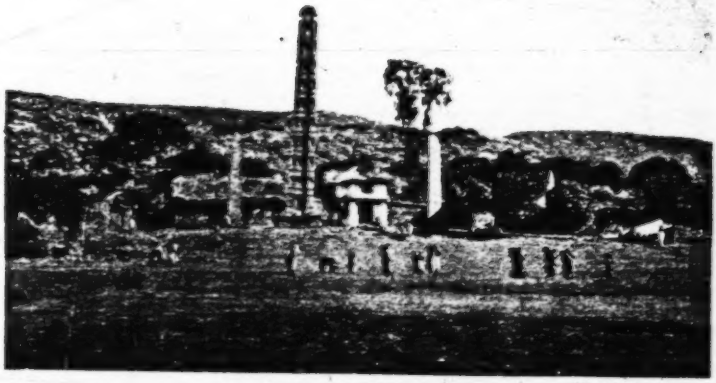

Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, monoliths

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Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, King's coronation throne and four pillars, Abunas' throne in background

(Facing p. 13)

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE SHOAN PLATEAU AND ITS PEOPLE: AN ESSAY IN LOCAL GEOGRAPHY

D. R. BUXTON

114 DURING THE FIFTEEN months from October 1946 to January 1948, I was working in an educational centre near Debra Berhan, an important market town and district headquarters 80 miles north-east of Addis Ababa on the Asmara road. The district was historically interesting as the hub of the old kingdom of Shoa, and it was still an important centre of Amhara population. Moreover I soon found that it contained some very remarkable topographical features. I therefore decided to devote my leisure to a detailed study of the area, which I expected to help in my educational work and also to furnish (as such studies had never, as far as I knew, been made in Ethiopia) material of some geographical interest and novelty. Unfortunately I had to leave the district before finishing what I had intended to do. But I was able to complete a large-scale compass-survey covering about a hundred square miles, working out from the village of Tebasse where I lived. This paper deals chiefly with the area shown on the map, and its Amhara population. Something will be said of the traditional ways of these people, but the formidable problems of the present day are left out of account.

The map was made, on the scale of 1 : 50,000, entirely by triangulation with the prismatic compass based on points along a 5-mile section of the Italian motor-road, which runs in straight lines and is conveniently marked out with stones at 50-metre intervals. The first stage was to cover the area with a sufficient number of principal fixed points, which were mostly conspicuous trees and hill-tops. The second stage, which occupied the week-end walks of nearly twelve months, was to follow all the principal mule-tracks and streams, and all the edges of the gorges, fixing points at intervals by resection; at the same time I tried to fix all the churches accurately, but a few were missed. A comprehensive framework was thus built up, all plotting being done at home. Finally I walked all over the area again, taking with me tracings of the framework on which the remaining detail required—hill-slopes, habitations, etc.—was inserted by eye. The method gave most satisfactory results, for the area was small (only about ten miles by eleven) and the base-line relatively very long. The only serious difficulty—bewildering until I realized its cause—was the falsification of compass readings (occasionally by as much as 15°) by magnetic rocks. One could sometimes avoid this by climbing into a tree, but bearings simply could not be taken from some points which would otherwise have been most useful.

[133]

128 To indicate relief I decided to use hachures rather than form-lines, real contouring being out of the question with the means, and in the time, at my disposal. The hachures seem to me to give a true impression to the eye of the peculiar character of this piece of country, for they bring out the contrast between the relatively slight relief of the plateau and the sudden, sensational depths of the cliff-bound gorges.

[p 157]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Gorges of the Kassam river from the Shoan plateau

[facing p. 158]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

131 The fragment of country depicted by the map lies on the edge of an important section of the Shoan plateau which extends in the form of an elongated oval north-eastwards from Addis Ababa and forms the watershed between the drainage systems of the Awash and the Blue Nile. The Asmara road uses this 133 convenient high causeway from Addis Ababa to a little beyond Debra Berhan, and would go on using it if this were possible, for the road was made 491 to follow the plateau wherever it was flat enough. North of Debra Berhan, however, the country is tremendously cut up by deep ravines and no level plateau remains. The road is therefore forced down, at Debra Sina, to lower levels (as happens again in several places on the way to Asmara). The higher 133 portions of this plateau lie at well over 9000 feet and constitute an undulating tract, sometimes almost flat, sometimes rather hilly, where differences in level amount to a few hundred feet only. But, on both sides, the plateau breaks up in the most spectacular fashion. To the north-west lie a series of gorges, all belonging to the Blue Nile system, opening up with extreme abruptness along an irregular front, as will be seen in the map. To the east, the plateau terminates in some places at the main escarpment which bounds the Danakil plains, an impressive drop of several thousand feet along a fault, well seen at Ankober and Debra Sina. But farther south the simplicity of this escarpment is disguised by certain tributaries of the Hawash system which, eating their way into the plateau, have formed gorges as striking as those of the Blue Nile system. These gorges, cutting back continually, must in time complete the destruction of the plateau, and produce, by the interdigitation of their deeply entrenched headstreams, the confused type of scenery already observable farther north.

The geological structure of the plateau, on which the local landscape, and especially the peculiar type of gorge developed, directly depends, seems to be extremely simple and almost the same as that which occurs over vast areas of central and northern Ethiopia. As long ago as 1870 the step-like hill sides and tremendous gorges of the Magdala area were well described by Blanford,[1] who had accompanied the Napier Expedition. He compared Abyssinian scenery with that of the western Deccan and the Western Ghats of India, but remarked that in the case of Abyssinia the special features of this type of landscape were exaggerated. He drew attention to the hill-forts or "ambas" of Abyssinia, closely corresponding to features which had likewise been used in India as forts.

Writing of the Jitta gorge near Magdala, Blanford says:

". . . we came suddenly on the brink of the mighty chasm in which the Jitta river runs, and to which all the minor valleys converge. Of all the grand scenery met with in Abyssinia, none equalled this wonderful gorge. It is 3500 feet deep, and looks scarcely a mile across. The sides are extremely steep, in places nearly perpendicular. The horizontal beds on both sides appear to correspond exactly; half-way down there is a well-marked terrace, evidently formed by the same bed, on both sides of the river. The bedding is very distinct.

It is to be regretted that all those geologists who disbelieve in the power

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[1] Blanford, 'The Geology and Zoology of Abyssinia,' p. 86, London, 1870.

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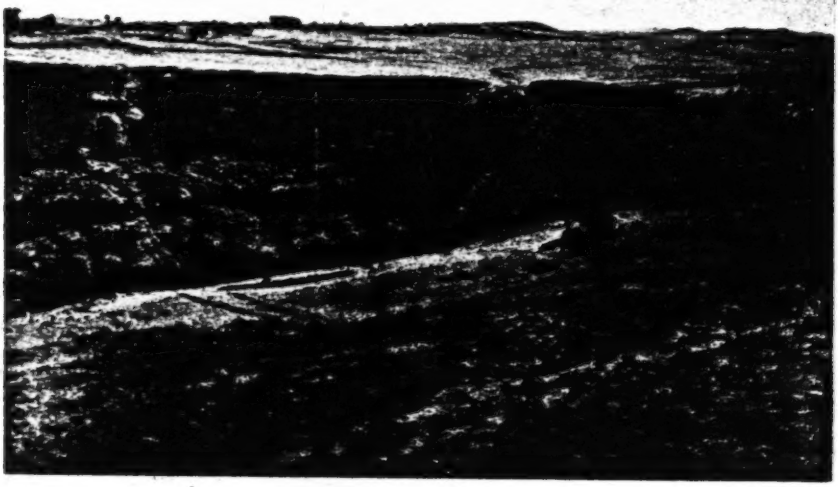
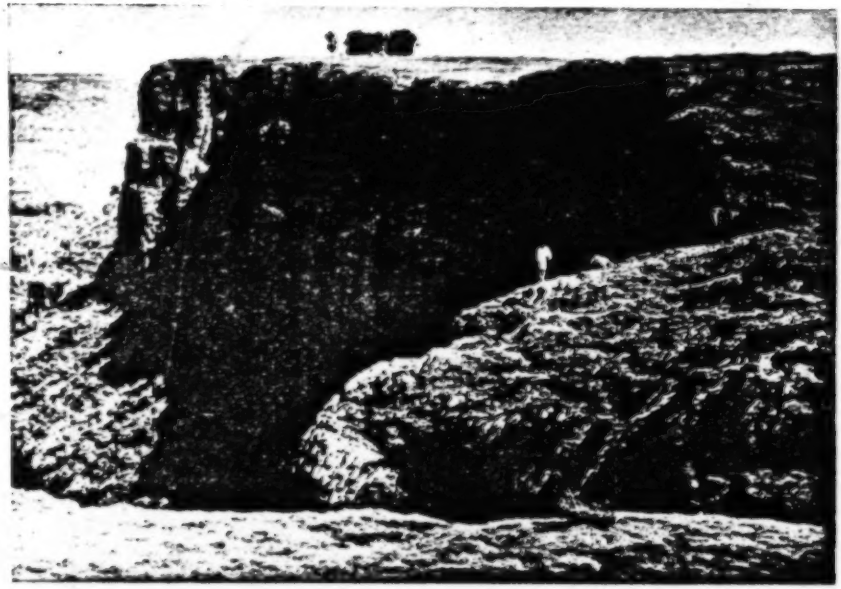


The head of the Chacha gorge



Basalt cliffs, Chacha gorge [Facing p. 159]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of translation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth." 133

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of Rocher d'Hericourt, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans. 132 [134] 137 [177] [372] 361 31 [231] 241 311

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow 137

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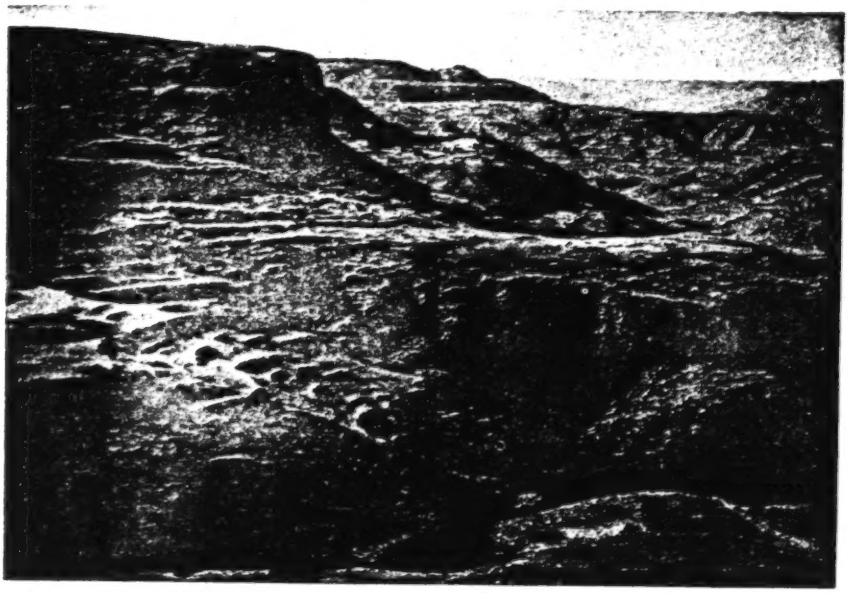

Artificial terraces and natural shelves, Dalecha gorge

133

[Facing p. 160] *Shelves at two levels, Chacha gorge*

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 *Buddleia*, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

133 The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has [139] naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being [231] swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used [311] for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the [135] north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several [325] travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated [312] long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high [346] point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

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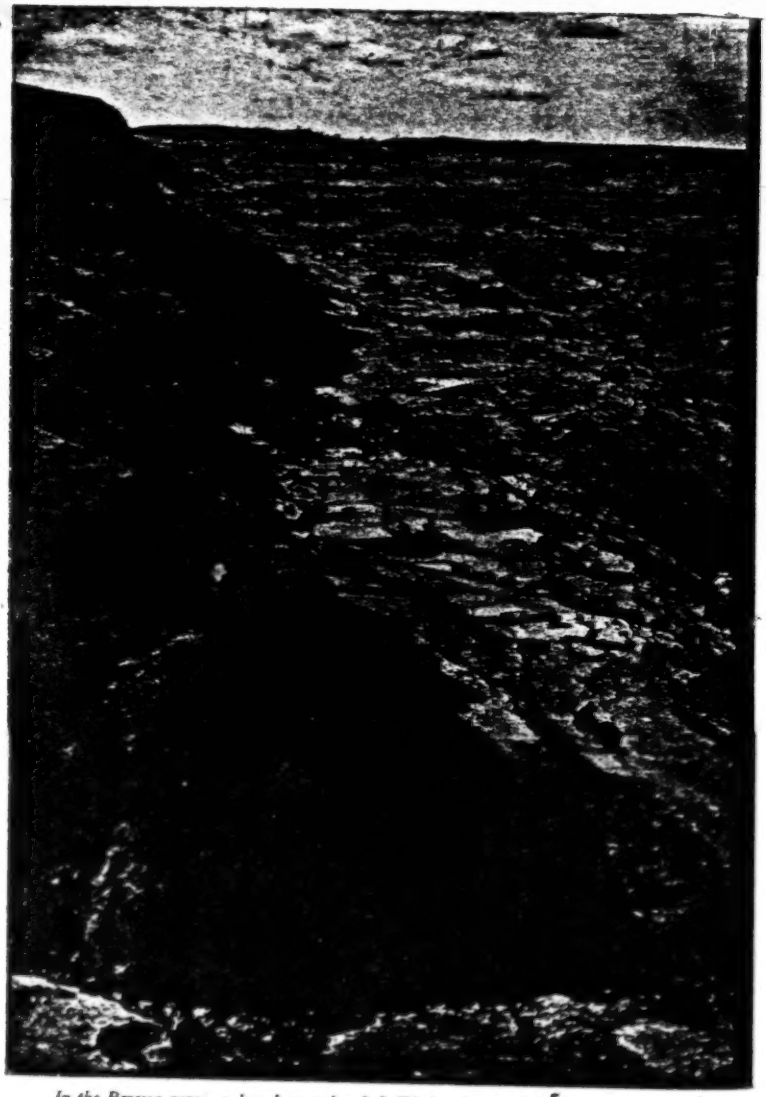

In the Beressa gorge, a densely populated shelf below basalt cliffs [Facing p. 161]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 developed. I was interested to find, when first exploring this piece of country, that the shelves were well populated, intensively cultivated, and provided [361] with a quite surprising number of churches; facts, as pointed out below, of some historical significance.

After completing the framework of the map I made several calculations of depth in the Beressa gorge. An Abney level was used and as high angles were involved I think the results are trustworthy. They showed a depth of 1808 feet at the point marked *a*, just under 3 miles from the head of the gorge; 1985 feet at point *b*, 4 miles down; and 2170 feet at *c*, not quite 6 miles down. The average gradient from *a* to *b* was therefore about 2½ per cent., from *b* to *c* about 2 per cent. The depths were measured from three points (marked 1–3), all at practically the same level, on the edge of the gorge, the height of which can be taken as about 9300 feet. The absolute level of point *c* is therefore about 7130 feet, and this is almost the lowest point on the sheet. Measurements show that the depth of this gorge, enormously impressive though it is, is not more than one-fifth of its breadth. Although relatively deeper ones no doubt exist, I cannot help being highly sceptical of Rocher d'Hericourt's report of a ravine "14 leagues north-west of Angolala" which he alleged to be 1254 metres deep and only 800 broad!

Four separate gorges figure on the map. The two middle ones, formed by the Beressa and Dalecha rivers, which enclose between them the cliff-encircled plateau of Choli, can be seen to join within 4 to 5 miles of Debra Berhan. It might be supposed that the other two gorges were destined to join the same system within a short distance, but this does not happen. If the small-scale Italian map is to be trusted, the Gunagunit (north-east corner of the sheet) joins the Beressa system some 20 miles away, and the Chacha (of which the north-western gorge is a tributary) nearly 30 miles away. These junctions are approximately north of Debra Berhan; afterwards the river bends away north-westwards to join a main tributary of the Blue Nile. As might be expected, these independent gorge-systems running approximately parallel to each other proved most confusing. Between the adjacent systems one sees long, narrow strips of residual plateau, perfectly flat-topped, sometimes so narrow as to stand up like a wall between one valley and the next. The Tallak Amba plateau, partly shown in the north-west of the sheet, is an example. On the other side of the sheet a still narrower neck, followed by the [497] Tegulet path, separates the Beressa and Gunagunit systems. Following this route to the north, off the sheet, one finds that for some distance the plateau has been cut right away: one descends about 600 feet to a point where the shelves in two adjacent valleys practically coalesce, being separated only by a rocky barrier a few feet high. Then one climbs again to a narrow slip of [346] plateau on whose summit, flat as a table-top, stands an important church (Zendegur Ghiorghis). Still farther north this narrows down to a sinuous rampart between the valleys, and eventually broadens once more to form a substantial isolated plateau, which appeared in the distance to be almost inaccessible. Another remarkable feature, jutting out between the Dalecha and the small tributary which next joins the Beressa, is shown near the northern border of the sheet and will be described later.

175 This region is the heart of the old Shoan kingdom and many places included

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[i.e., the River gorges. -Analyst]

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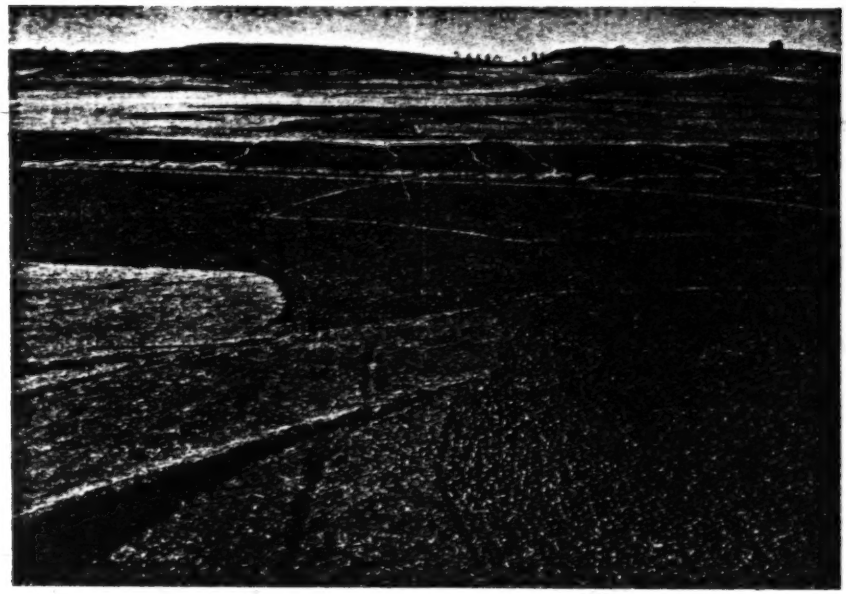

Irrigated land, Atakilt

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The ceremony of Timkat (Epiphany), near Debra Berhan

[Facing p. 171]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Published by the Royal Geographical Society

[End map II-A]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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187
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361
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[End map II-B]

SHOAN PLATEAU
Buxton

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

ten or twelve men, who did not fear passing such steep 484
mountains, where it was said that there were multitudes of robbers. Thus we went away, divided, with the oxen and negroes, with their burdens in front of us, going forward on our course. We travelled through very wild mountains, 133
over ascents and descents, and very bad stony road. Most [491]
of the woods of these mountains are very large wild olive [137]
trees, from which good olive trees could be made. Issuing from these mountain ranges we entered into dry channels, which in winter time are great rivers, that is to say, as long as the showers last. As soon as the shower is finished the river is dry. These channels have on each side of them very high mountains, as rugged as those we had left behind. In these river beds there are large clumps of unknown trees, amongst which, near the rivers, there are a few wild [137]
palm trees. We slept this night in a river bed with little water in it.

CAP. XVII.—*How we passed a great mountain in which there were many apes, on a Saturday, and on the following Sunday we said mass in a village called Zalote.*

On the following day we again crossed another very high and rugged mountain ridge, over which we could not make our way, either on the mules or on foot. In this mountain 136
there are many animals of different species, and an infinite quantity of apes in herds: and they are not generally spread over the mountain, but only where there are clefts and holes in the rock; they are not found in quantities less than two or three hundred, and beyond that number. If there is any flat ground above these precipices, that is their promenade, and no stone remains that they do not turn, and they scrape the earth so that it looks as though it were tilled. They are very large, the size of sheep, and from the middle upwards hairy like lions.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

000 574 middle upwards hairy like lions. We passed the mountain, and went to sleep at the foot of a village called Zalote. There will be about four or five leagues from this place to the monastery from which we set out. We halted by a running river of very good water, and when our baggage had been unloaded we went to the said village to see a very honourable gentleman, the headman of it—a very old man, who was lodged here very honourably. He gave us a very [262] hospitable reception, giving us many fowls cooked in butter, and much mead, and he sent us a very large fat cow to the place of our halt. On the following day, which was Sunday, we went to say our mass at the church of the village, which is called St. Michael, a poor church, both the fabric and the ornaments. There are in this church three 793 married priests and three others, deacons,[1] that is to say, of 796 the gospel, and all are necessary, for no less can say mass. This honourable captain I met with later as a friar in the monastery of Bisan, and he left his condition and revenues to his sons, who were honourable persons; and I saw him stand at the gate outside, and he did not enter within the monastery, and there he received the communion with the novices, and when the offices of the church were ended he remained in honour with the provincial. On this Sunday we set out again in the afternoon, because the country people who conducted us wished it so. Here we began to travel through flat country fallows and tillage, in the fashion of Portugal, and the bushes which are between the tilled lands are all wild olives, without other trees. We slept by some running streams, between many good villages.

[1] *Zagonaes.* Ethiopian corruption of *diakonos.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

In this country there are in some parts very flat lands, and in others mountainous; and altogether they are fruitful lands. There are no snowy ranges, but withal severe frosts, especially in the flat lands. In all the lands there is great breeding of cattle. 133 [231]

He says that he did not see the river Nile, and he reached to two days' journey from it, and the days' journey which they went were small ones, namely, four or five leagues, a little more or less. But some of those in his company reached its source, and they say that it rises in the Kingdom of Gojame, and its source is in great lakes, and where it rises there are islands, and thence it commences its course and goes to Egypt.

The time when the Nile rises in Egypt is (as they say) from the 15th day of September and later, and in all October; and the reason of this is, because the winter of Ethiopia begins from the middle of June to the middle of September, and on account of the great rains which take place in it without this winter ever changing, the Nile overflows in Egypt at that time.

It is the general custom of Prester John and all the people for no man on horseback to pass a church, but before they reach it they dismount, and so pass it, and lead their beasts by the bridles, and after passing they mount. 492 576

When Prester John and all his people travel, the altar and the altar stone on which mass is said, all goes on the shoulders of the priests as on a litter, and there go eight priests with each altar by turns, that is, four and four: and a priest goes in front of them with a thurible, and further in front a zagonay ringing a bell, and all the people go away from the road, and those that are on horses dismount, and show reverence to the altar stone or altar. 484

There is no grape wine there, more than in two houses, where it is made publicly, namely, in the house of Prester John and the house of the Patriarch Abima Marcos; and if 273

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

rains of Naasse and Hamlie, it never overflows at the springs, 361
nor do the fountains seem larger. He remembered the accession of Hatze Yasous to the throne, and was about 80 years old. The east side of the Nile is less barren than the west side. Aformasha is not barren.

Singular custom. The Betwudet (in Habesh), upon the 651
death of any Wiziro, is obliged to pay the expences of the 766
ceremony, called Misle, which amounts to 100 oxen, 3000 loaves of wheat bread, 20 jars hydromel, wood, &c. the whole about 60 ounces of gold. The ceremony is this: A sort of figure, resembling the defunct, is placed upon horseback, in his usual dress, and so carried in procession about the outer court of the palace, with the royal standard (sendick) carried before it, and the nagareet beating. This is called, in this country, "burying with sendick and nagareet;" for which the Betwudet has 1200 ardeb of wheat yearly out of the Attekolla.

The route of the Islam merchants, S. is by two ways, with 487
loaden asses, 8 or 9 miles per day. The way by Gojam is performed in 30 days to Sebou, and thence for other 10 to Narea. The Kibby, or Zebee, rises in Narea. Coffee, of different kinds, grows there in abundance, and the Galla feed on it. They use the lex talionis, but their internal justice is strict. They are very scrupulous of oaths: Wauke Laftan, by heaven and earth, is one of the most solemn. There are three races of Galla, the Guangoul in Angot, north-east of Begemder; Mahomet Ali, another farther west than the Guangoul, towards Amhara; and a third, Mahomet, brother of Lubo, west of Amhara. The rest are pagans; but when converted are said to be better Christians than the native Abyssinians.

Mahabar Selasse is four commodious days journey from 133
Gondar, in the line of Tchemmera and Tenkel. Near it pass the rivers Shimfa and Gandova, the last of which has several very high cataracts; it joins to the Shankala, and is about two days journey from Tchemmera. Both rivers fall into the Nile.

The river Bashilo separates Amhara from Begemder; the Mashilla, a river of Gojam, and the river Nefasse, fall into the Nile at the same place. In the country of the Galla west of Damot, across or west of the Abay, there is little

[p. 61]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

133 water, and near the banks of the river the country is desert.

Damot pays 800 ounces (wakea) of gold; formerly 1000.
651 Gojam 80 ounces, and 70 mules. Lasta 1000 ounces; these last years it pays no more, being at present annexed to Begemder. Tigre pays 400 ounces in salt and cotton cloths. Walcait 1500 ounces in cotton cloths.

131 The latitude of Adderghey is 13° 24′ 56″; of Macara, on
361 Lamalmen, 13° 6′ 8″; of Gondar, 12° 34′ 30″; of Emfras, 12° 12′ 38″; of the fountains, 10° 58′ 58″.

Note at Lobeia.—The Arabs are fond of music, especially
000 vocal; for they have no instruments but a kind of flute, of the size of a German flute, which gives a wild and not unmelodious sound, and the cymbal or drum, with ten pieces fixed to its sides, which is chiefly used in cadence in dancing, or for symphonies. Their vocal music, or songs, are upon first hearing disagreeable; but it rarely happens that one who has a good ear is not soon fond of them. They are all upon love; at least I never heard any that had war for their subject; some have religion, and are sung by their Shekhs, or saints. The former have effects upon their hearers nearly as extravagant as the ancient music produced. They have no music in parts, and have absolutely no idea of harmonical composition.

[p. 81-end have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

[p. 62]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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[P. ii]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

*175 633 left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor Menelik.

[159] [793] Alaqā Gabra Hānnā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army, turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar.* The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar during his few years in power (1869–72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

*175 633 643 The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum*, though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā*. The civil order, however, was thoroughly demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces.

[166]

*175 633 643 648 At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance from the old capital—began as follows:

> O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.[11]

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

131 133 Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the northeast horn of Shoa Province.[12] It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.[13]

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* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133 •
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
ṭēff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181]
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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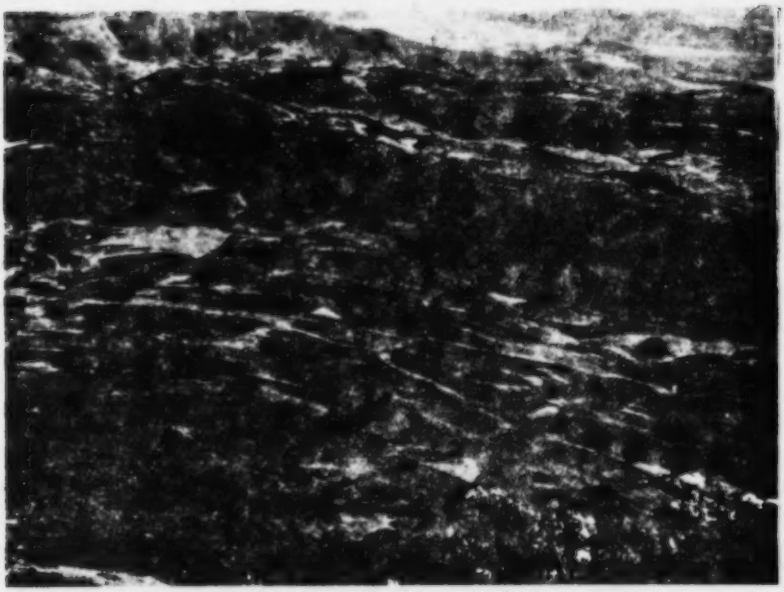

FIG. 6.—*The Amhara countryside*

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FIG. 7.—*An Amhara homestead, Manz*

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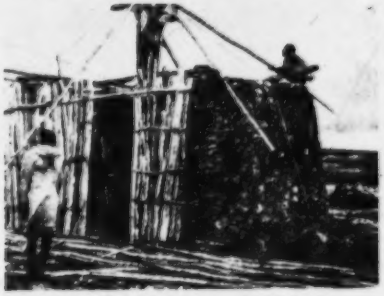

FIG. 8.—*Building a house*

[D-46-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 9.—*The weekly market*

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[P.46-B]

FIG. 10.—*The market: weighing cotton*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 14.—*A group of shepherds*

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FIG. 15.—*Threshing time*

[P.78-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

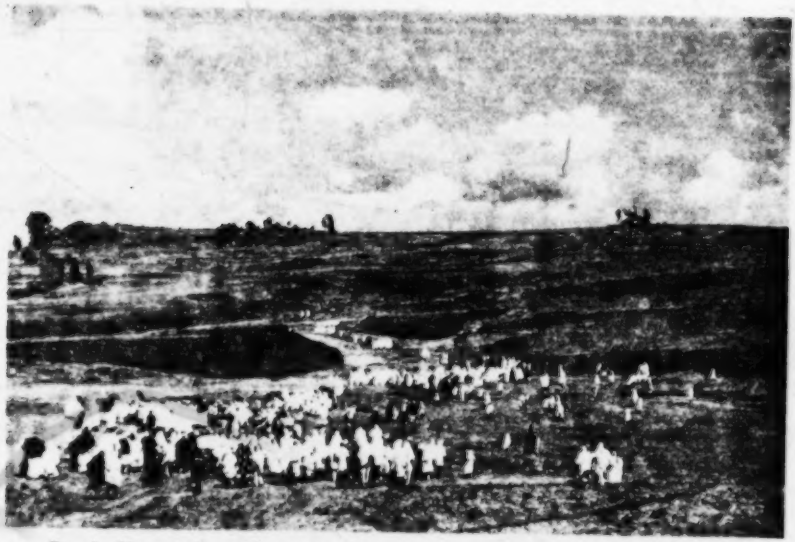

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FIG. 16.—*The procession on Tïmqat Day*

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FIG. 17.—*Tïmqat procession: detail*

[P. 110-A]

*753 *755 als who are not members of his hadra, and, more fre-
*756 quently, provides divinatory services for clients.
776 For each of its members, the hadra, comprising its human and zar members, becomes the group within which her most important social relationships beyond the family are found. In a medical context, the hadra develops into an exclusive and self-sufficient group, in which the bala-zars trace all of their serious physical ailments to the displeasure of their zars, and find all necessary prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic assistance in the hadra leader.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN RURAL BEGEMDER

131 Within the 74,200 square kilometers of Begemder
• 133 Province are found a diversity of physical conditions, from the hot and parched western lowlands, through the fertile and temperate highland plateau, ascending to the cold and empty mountain reaches of Ras Dashan. The people of Begemder divide its lands into three ecological zones, as indicated by map 1.

Kola lands are located between elevations of 600 and 1800 meters. The highlander considers kola to be a
*[192] disagreeable region; it is unhealthful because of malaria (often referred to as yisudan basiyta, "the Sudanese disease), and unpleasant in its excessive heat. Preferred

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 103]

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[243] cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous, [635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse- [162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial [563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic [567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000 [136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano- [243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals, [231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which [243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes [233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.

*753 grazing. Both highland zones are considered ideal for
131 human habitation. While residents of the dega zone oc-
• 133 casionally comment on what they regard as the uncomfor-
821 table summer heat of the weyna dega, at the same time it is acknowledged that the rainy season (kiramt) is more burdensome in the dega. The rains last from May to September and are marked by temperatures in the mid-thirties in dega lands and perhaps ten to fifteen degrees warmer in the weyna dega. This season is regarded as a particularly bad time for kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints) whose severity is considered greatest in the dega zone. Epidemiologically, the dega is also associated with a relatively high incidence of yinifas baŠiyta ("the wind disease"), an ailment described in Chapter One.

131 Although reliable population estimates are lacking,
101 the weyna dega and dega zones contain perhaps 85% of
161 Begemder's people. These rural highlands are occupied
197 by five ethnic groups, racially indistinguishable from
144 one another and, with an exception, now speaking a common Semetic languase, Amharic. The Amhara are the most numerous of Begemder's highland peoples, and extend into the provinces of Gojam and Shoa, to the south. Within the Begemder highlands, they occupy the area south of latitude 13°30'. North of this line live the Tigre, a related people who speak a cognate language, Tigrinya.
101 Both Amhara and Tigre are Coptic Christians, and from
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779

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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the sea. It is here, as C. S. Coon points out,[4] that all the historic traffic between the Ethiopian highlands and Yemen has taken place; here lie all the ancient cities and holiest places. Semitic-speaking influences came this way.

(2) Sailing down the Nile with the north wind, and continuing south past the gorges of the Blue Nile. Despite the hardships of this route, Egypt has often been a source of cultural influence on Ethiopia, and once an Ethiopian dynasty reigned over Egypt. Today, Nilotic-speaking tribes live on this gateway.

(3) A route from the south, at the place where the highland of Ethiopia connects with the grasslands and parklands of Kenya and Uganda. Here we find a continuum of flora and fauna, and a human ethnic continuum. Cushitic-speaking peoples have entered this way, probably for ages past.

C. Soil and Minerals

134 The soil of Ethiopia can be roughly divided into three major types:

(1) Decomposed volcanic rock on the central plateau. This is very fertile, of black or dark brown color.

(2) Alluvial soil on the flood plains of streams. This is derived mainly from the decomposed volcanic rock, washed out of the plateau soil during the rainy season, and is very fertile. Ruddy in color, the rich overflow of Lake Tana is

4. Coon, C. S.: Horn of Africa. Unpublished.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

134 carried down the Blue Nile into Egypt. In Ethiopia, irrigation canals make use of it.

[311] (3) The remaining, eroded, red loam soil, of little fertility. This is left to the bush or is used for grazing.[5]

135 There is little information on the mineral wealth of Ethiopia, since whatever there is, particularly gold, has been kept from the knowledge of outsiders. The Italians had merely begun their surveys when they had to leave the country. Salt has always been a major item of import from the border lowlands in the east to the highland plateau. Numerous volcanic mineral springs, used for healing since ancient times, exist in many plateau districts.

[326] Since ancient times, gold from the sand gravels of Wollega and southern provinces was sold in small nuggets, or fashioned by goldsmiths into rings and sold by weight. It is now a monopoly of the central government; goldsmiths have been drawn to Addis Ababa, where they now use modern methods.

D. Flora, Fauna: their significance in Ethiopian Ecology.

137 The generosity of nature on the highland plateau has provided a basis for human subsistence with little effort. In addition to a healthful climate and fertile soil, resources of vegetation and animal life are abundant.

137 241 Economic botanists have conducted studies which indicate that the highlands of Ethiopia contain a number of indigenous varieties of cultivated cereals and legumes. Some are of the opinion that these highlands even formed one of the PRIMARY

5. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia, 1954, p. 127-8.

244 topography provides for a variety of climate at a minimum of distance, is very favorable to diversified agriculture. But, as indicated before, the uses of power have not developed in millenia. Much land is permitted to lie fallow, and slash-and-burn methods are used when old soil becomes exhausted and new lands are needed. Therefore, apart from market villages, no settlements remain on the same spot for as much as a century, usually. The fields are not fertilized; manure from cattle is used as fuel. However, irrigation, though not intensive; terrace farming since ancient times; and the use of a wooden scratch plow with iron tip, give the Amhara agricultural picture an old-Middle Eastern character. Also Middle Eastern is the fact that among the Amhara and other north Abyssinians cereals are the most important field crops.

Ninety-five percent of the population of Ethiopia depends on farming and stock raising.[60] European estimates [134] indicate that half the land territory of Ethiopia is arable. Despite much erosion, the depth of the subsoil is regarded [311] as unusually deep. But much good land is left fallow, because there is enough land for the low density of the population; and because life is fairly comfortable at the old standards of living, especially now that ravaging armies of hungry soldiers seem a thing of the past. Thus, there is little urge for increased production, except by proclamation from the central authority from Addis Ababa which has tried to stimulate it with only modest success. The reason for this lack of success is that the farmer argues, with

60. Underhill, C.T.: Industry in Ethiopia,1950, p. 21.

241

very few need to be removed by hand; "fär" is the first furrow in a field.

deep plowing - "shärakkätä", in order to raise good soil.

final plowing - "zärrä", just before or after seeding.

134 823 Numerous distinctions are made between types of soil, so that every member of the extended family receives his share of both good or poor soil. Fertility is basically categorized into the aforementioned "lām ṭyēff" and "ṭyēff" types. Finer distinctions show awareness of conservation needs:

male soil ("wändē märēt") - any heavy, humus-rich, fertile soil.

female soil ("ṭyētē märēt") - any light, especially sandy soil. Less fertile.

dark soil - "walka", used for luxury grain such as wheat.

sandy soil - "mwaṭchärä", must be lightly plowed so as not to blow away.

mobile soil - "lel mārēt", easily eroded, often left fallow for that reason.

poorly draining soil - "rānkwa märēt", or "ambaza", gets muddy easily and then becomes difficult to plow.

eroded land - "borbor mārēt", with many crevasses, "eaten by water" during the rainy season.

134
823

alluvial soil -	"borbwara märēt", rich silt carried by rivers and brooks.
infertile soils -	"qoda märēt" dries too quickly after rains; "arbacha märēt", reddish, after erosion, infertile mounds; "gebgaba märēt", harvest withers at stalk before maturity; "gergera märēt", useless to plow, better leave for wild fruit. "fech märēt", abandoned land, leave for pasturage.
hard-to-penetrate -	"gewchacha märēt", plow cannot penetrate readily, "gombore märēt", sandy but very rocky, hard to plow, "chancha märēt" rocky terrain, where rain does not penetrate well.

132
821 The preferred early rain is the light, intermittent but penetrating "zeg yalä zenāb", not the heavy continuous downpour that occurs later. Fast-growing barley, called
243
251 "bällega" after the "bälg" season, is sown first, during the light rains of March, for it can be harvested 3 months later, just before the heavy rains, to help tide the people over until the main harvests. This is very important because of the traditional hesitancy of the farmer to store crops. Historically, he would rather have it almost ready on the stalk, and would rather risk a crop failure than

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of translation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth." 133

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of Rocher d'Hericourt, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans. 132 [134] 137 [177] [372] 361 31 [231] 241 311

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow 137

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

134 carried down the Blue Nile into Egypt. In Ethiopia, irrigation canals make use of it.

[311] (3) The remaining, eroded, red loam soil, of little fertility. This is left to the bush or is used for grazing.[5]

135 There is little information on the mineral wealth of Ethiopia, since whatever there is, particularly gold, has been kept from the knowledge of outsiders. The Italians had merely begun their surveys when they had to leave the country. Salt has always been a major item of import from the border lowlands in the east to the highland plateau. Numerous volcanic mineral springs, used for healing since ancient times, exist in many plateau districts.

[326] Since ancient times, gold from the sand gravels of Wollega and southern provinces was sold in small nuggets, or fashioned by goldsmiths into rings and sold by weight. It is now a monopoly of the central government; goldsmiths have been drawn to Addis Ababa, where they now use modern methods.

D. Flora, Fauna: their significance in Ethiopian Ecology.

137 The generosity of nature on the highland plateau has provided a basis for human subsistence with little effort. In addition to a healthful climate and fertile soil, resources of vegetation and animal life are abundant.

137 241 Economic botanists have conducted studies which indicate that the highlands of Ethiopia contain a number of indigenous varieties of cultivated cereals and legumes. Some are of the opinion that these highlands even formed one of the PRIMARY

5. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia, 1954, p. 127-8.

825 223 Quail - "derchet" goose "yebra" (anas aegyptiaca). Perhaps the most common wild fowl very near habitations, but rarely hunted because very small. It is considered a nuisance and a danger because of its habit of hiding in flocks in the tall grass and starting up suddenly, scaring horses and even mules, which is dangerous especially on steep hills. [59]

411 184 Spears, slingshot, and now rifles are used in part-time or sport hunting. Traps ("atmäd") and snares are used only by occupational hunting populations living in jungles such as Wolqait and whose pattern of living differs from that of typical Amhara.

222 [412] A noteworthy Amhara exploitative activity is the collecting of pumice rock in riverbeds during the dry season, and thus called "yäbahär dengay" (river rock). It is used in grinding and husking. 135 Gold comes mostly from south of old-Amhara territory, where it is found in sand gravels and has been sold in nuggets since ancient times.

241 D. Food Production and Consumption

a.) Agricultural production

In agriculture in general, there are two major variables: environment, and degree of sophistication - i.e. power and its application.

The ecology of Ethiopia's highland plateau, where

59. The English equivalent terms have been taken from Van Rosen, Björn: Game Animals of Ethiopia. 1953.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 *Buddleia*, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

133 The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has [437] naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being [231] swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used [311] for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the [135] north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several [325] travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated [712] long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high [346] point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

which we call of Guinea, there they are called zegra, quails, 136
pigeons, turtles, hawks, falcons, kites, eagles, thrushes, sparrows, swallows, nightingales, larks, wild ducks, of different kinds,[1] and other waterfowl, herons, cranes, *hemas*, and all other birds that may be in the world, and not known to us; and there are all in this country except magpies and cuckoos, which I never saw, nor heard of their being there.

There are so many apes, that in the kingdom of the Barnagais, in a town which is named Ceroel, at the time the harvest is ripe, they pursue them till they make them pass a mountain; and they keep guard over them in a pass by day, because at night they do not move about, and they give a certain provision to two men who keep guard over them until the corn is gathered in, when they let them loose, or leave off keeping watch over them.

There is much basil in the thickets, and there are none 137
of our trees except cypresses, plumtrees, and willows by the rivers; there are no melons, cucumbers, nor horse-radish.

In the country there is no gold or silver money, and pur- 436
chases are made by exchange of one thing for another, principally salt, which is current throughout the country as money.

There is linen there, but it gives no fibre, and no stuff is 248
made with it; there is much cotton, and stuff made of it; there is much coloured cloth, and there is a very cold country where they wear serge.

The churches there are well built, but the walls are not 346
well wrought, and they do not place anything upon them; they pitch [the roof] upon props, which reach from the ground upwards.

In the country there is gold, silver, copper and tin, but 135
they do not know how to get it out of the mines.

[1] *Aleus, marrecas.*

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 remedies. The nutmeg tree, tosiya, is also medicinal, and
824 the Kosso tree is widely used against tapeworm. Common sights include the reddish ret, a cactus; and just as soon as the rainy season ends, the yellow daisy, adäy abäba carpets the landscape, heralding the masqal holiday. Hence it
136 is also called mäsqäl abäba. A study of the FAUNA connections between Ethiopia and surrounding areas contributes significantly to the understanding of Ethiopia's cultures from ancient times to the present.

The last remnant of the prehistoric belt of tropical forest that once stretched from Africa to India, is found today in Dhofar, Southern Arabia. There, in the Gara mountains, Bertram Thomas collected fossil fauna which is definitely Ethiopic and which also evidences links to southern India.[8] Animal husbandry in Yemen in prehistoric times was apparently based on hump-necked cattle of Indian origin. This cattle complex reached Africa late, probably as late
[231] as 1000 B.C.[9] To this day, the cattle of Ethiopia is hump-necked, though cave paintings clearly show domestic cattle without humps.

171 Social and religious regulations associated with the
231 cattle complex among the Cushitic-speaking tribesmen of southern Ethiopia, are very similar to sets of the same regulations among the Gara tribesmen of Dhofar. Both despise hunters and artisans, but also consider agriculture a most ignoble occupation.

8. Coon: Southern Arabia.Papers of the Peabody Museum, Vol.20., 1943, p. 209.
9. Ibid.

224 One of the traits the Amhara shares with the older culture pattern mentioned above is contempt for those who live by hunting; though he is proud to show his prowess against major wild fauna such as the elephant, lion, leopard, rhinoceros ("awraris"), and, of course, human enemies. There is no pride in hunting gazelle and other food animals. They are left to lowland peoples or low-class ethnic groups [563] like the Woyto, who hunt the hippopotamus ("gummarēy") along the gorges of the Blue Nile (and formerly also on Lake Tana).

Hunting, in the mind of the Amhara, is connected with such low-elevation jungle areas as Wolkait, on the northwestern escarpment, where the ecology differs considerable from the highland. Here are thick forest stands, many wild fruits (such as the wild orange), much wild coffee. Cotton is one of the few crops grown there.

Until the reign of the present Emperor, decorations were given to heroes who had killed big game. In fact, up to the end of the 19th century one of the flattering terms of address to the king was "zehon", elephant, considered the king of beasts. (This has since been replaced by the address "Germawi hoy", "Oh Majesty").

224 Other game hunted in jungle-forest areas such as Wol-
136 kait include:

Greater Kudu ("agazän"), one of the largest antelopes in existence, described by Amharas as having the size and shape of an ox. European hunters have measured it as 60" at shoulder height.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Northeastern Buffalo ("gosha"), fairly small in size, in wet lowlands.

Hartebeest ("tora"), a tall, slimmer antelope with inward-turned horns which the Amhara describes as being big as a zebra, dangerous, but becoming rare.

Wildcats ("demmat"), including the serval cat ("dēro"), hunted for their skins.

Civet cat ("terīñ"), of the mongoose family, trapped for its musk gland.

Leopard ("näbber"), whose beautifully spotted skin is an export item.

Colobus monkey ("gurēza"), now one of the protected animals, but still hunted freely in remote jungle areas for its black-and-white coat, sold freely even in the streets of Addis Ababa. From its tail hair the famous "ṭchera" flyswitch is made for the nobles who can afford to pay for it, instead of the horsetail substitute. This coat is also exported.

823 The jungle is regarded by the Amhara as the place of refuge of dangerous bandits, outcasts, and rebels against noble chieftains and kings; also, as the place inhabited by socially inferior ethnic groups; and, spiritually, as the [792] place inhabited by many powerful "zar" spirits (see Part VI, Section 2.). who "ride" leopards and lions and "milk" female elephants.

136 The lowland is also the habitat of poisonous snakes, rare on the upland. They are usually lumped under the name "yäqolla ebäb" (lowland snake), and include the very poisonous cobra ("funjit"). This species is avoided, but the large, non-poisonous python ("zändo") is prized for its skin and is an export item sought out by some hunters.

136 364 A second category of fauna are the animals sometimes referred to by foreigners as the "sanitation squad". They protect the health of the population by cleaning up carcasses of donkeys left dead in their tracks; leftovers from butchering, etc. No one ever hunts these animals, though everyone is familiar with them, as they or their traces are common sights in urban as well as rural areas. It is only since the increase in motor traffic that hyenas no longer penetrate at night into the heart of Addis Ababa itself. These animals include:

136 [825] Hyena ("djebb"), spotted, often quite large, feeds mainly on carrion but on occasion attacks domestic animals, small children, and even shepherds [759] sleeping in the open. In black magic, the hyena is "ridden" by the buda spirit, and many Amhara believe that they can distinguish the call of a real hyena from one into which a blacksmith has turned himself. This is why no one will open his hut at night to a strange. Hyena holes are also found in potter's fields, where the poor and strangers are buried outside churchyards, for hyenas smell out and eat recently buried corpses. Passers-by piously try to fill the holes with stones to prevent the hyenas from returning.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

136 Jackal ("qäbbäro"), common north of Lake Tana, near Gondar and in most other parts of Ethiopia. Its nocturnal habits are similar to those of the hyena, and it also burrows into graves.

Vultures ("amora"), This term includes all carrion-eating birds, and other birds of prey. Among Carrion-eaters are: the ever-present, sharp-eyed fork-tailed hawk ("ṭenb amora") which will swoop down and steal meat away from a man in the middle of the town if he is not quick to protect it; a white-bodied water-bird (näch amora) (including the "shemäla", a kind of heron) who competes with fishermen in the rainy season; "warda", the blackbird (merle) that cleans up after human feasts.

Crow ("qura"), named after its cry. This bird is most often seen in back yards or cleaning up the market area after a market day. Thus, a day when no market takes place, is called "Day of the Crow's market" ("yäqura gäbäya"). Pious individuals remember the crow as one of Noah's pets and call a variety that has a white spot on its head, "Noah's crow" (yänoa qura).

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136 A third category of wild animals includes those that
241 endanger the crops. The farmer sends his children to watch for these from the tops of umbrella trees, and the boys use their fiber-and-pebble slingshots against them. These include:

Baboon ("zendjäro"), very unpopular because a troop can

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destroy the crops of a village in a week. Shouting is not sufficient to scare them off when there are many. When the small baboon families held off by the boys threaten to grow into a troop, farmers use their rifles.

Hare ("tenchäl") is also called the "enemy of tiff" because it likes to feed on that main crop of the farmer. It is a nocturnal animal, perhaps because of its natural enemies, the ever-present birds of prey.

Yellow Sparrow ("mänäkusit"), lit. "little monk", be-
[712] cause its yellow coloring resembles the saffron toga formerly worn by monks.

Flax snake ("yätalba ebäb") is of the light-brown color of flax-seed, on which it likes to feed. It is also called "hurfafeya", because when disturbed, it makes a sound like "fuff". Its bite is con-
[225] sidered mildly poisonous by the Amhara but requiring the services of a native "wogäsha" (surgeon), who thus acquires a reputation for his "cure" against this actually non-poisonous snake.

Locust (anbäta), occurs less often than the other dangers, but when it comes, in huge swarms of a 3-inch species, the results are devastating, causing major famines. (The usual route of the locust is arrival from the lowland eastern border, through the Great Rift valley (Awash), up the plateau, in January, just after the main harvest. It withdraws to the dry lowlands for egg-

136 241 laying during the little and big rains. But there are many variations.) When it comes, the farmer tries to scare it away by setting fire to fallow fields, stubble, bush and trees.

136 Other wild creatures familiar to the Amhara are Migrating birds which fly north (to "Jerusalem" in the popular mind, actually to Europe) in March and return in October, including the "zorit", a white-bellied, black-backed, red-winged bird, and a variety of stork, called "asa leqami". The Nile Monitor, ("ardjano"), a huge lizard is found along larger rivers, often not far from villages and even towns, and easy to hunt. With its scaly skin and often large size, it resembles a crocodile, with dark stripes and spots on a very white underside. 241 The skin is used to cover better utensils and is exported as "crocodile leather" for bags and shoes. Actual crocodiles are much harder to hunt, in less accessible river gorges in the lowlands. The Guenon Monkey (Ṭoṭa) is common on lower 231 elevations(where it is also a danger to crops). Its young are sometimes made pets.

136 Insect life is abundant in Ethiopia, varies in type according to elevation, and bears considerable significance to ecology.

136 Flies - abundant everywhere, transmitting intestinal and skin infections. They are not interfered with beyond swishing with the fly-switch which, if kept in constant motion, chases out does not kill them.

Fleas ("qunechcha") are very common on humans. Everyone has them most of the time, even in the city.

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They are considered a minor irritation, and are caught and crushed between the finger nails. Sometimes, fleas are carriers of typhus, causing epidemics.

Lice - are not as common on humans, and are associated, in the Amhara view, with unusually insanitary conditions, such as prisons.

Bedbugs ("tenkushit"), of the bloodsucking variety, are very common.

Ticks and mites - are more common and more dangerous in the lowlands, but are also found on the plateau where they cause relapsing fever, endemic in many areas. Ticks also bear typhus.[10]

Mosquitoes ("çhenqello", or, "tenen") include 22 species of the Anopheline variety in Ethiopia, are abundant below 4,000 feet, in river valleys and along flooded margins of lakes, where serious fatal malaria epidemics occur from time to time. Thousands died just north of Lake Tana within a few weeks after the rainy season of 1953. The Amhara describes the mosquito as a little insect with a big head; it flourishes at the end of the rainy season.

136 Ants: "gundan", black ant with painful bite;
"gäbrä gudan", black field ant which eats grain but does not sting;
"zämämit", small red ant with painful sting;

10. Simmons, op. cit., 1951, pp. 62-73.

136 "meset", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses, does not live in colonies. It makes honey which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "tenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens.

[776 237]

Scorpion ("gint"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice.

[752]

Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins.

[241 251]

13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

231 556 Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of

515 may last 9 months, there is very little bathing, and only hands are washed, in muddy water brought from the river or
514 brook, before and after meals. There are no latrine ditches. Feces are deposited behind thorny bushes 1/4 mile from the hamlet at most, while urination at night proceeds within the hamlet. This practice is followed even in towns and in Addis Ababa. Fortunately the strong sun carbonizes the feces in the dry season, and the strong rain in that season sweeps it away. There is no caste of sweepers, and no attention is paid to human or animal feces, except for the manure of oxen and cows. The latter is hand-pressed into cakes and used as fuel.

364 Hyenas, jackals and vultures are not interfered
825 with, as their services in removing carcasses of animal origin are well appreciated.

165 Abundant sunlight during 9 months of the year, coupled with the scanty clothing of small children, probably gives them their best chance of survival in addition to the long breast-feeding. Nevertheless infant mortality is very high, and in an average family half the babies born die before reaching the age of 5.

164 Flea infestation of humans can be described as
136 complete. This opens the way to flea-born typhus, especially on the highland plateau. Lice are somewhat less general, since they are not regarded by the Amhara as inevitable as fleas. Thus, an Amhara whose hair is infected
136 with lice (e.g. during a stay in prisons which are always
164 lice-infected), he may shave his hair. But louse-born re-
744 lapsing fever epidemics recur from time to time, and the

136 164 [544] government has now made free injections available at "big markets" of provincial towns, Bedbugs are also prevalent, of the bloodsucking variety. They are considered a nussance by the Amhara, but all that is done is to air the "alga" bed in the sunlight, which merely reduces the infestation temporarily. Flies are also abundant and very aggressive, so that a flyswitch ("cherä") is kept in motion for comfort. Contagious diseases spread readily. Just after each rainy season, malarial mosquitoes have caused epidemics up to levels of 5,000 feet, on the shore of overflowing lakes and rivers.

511 [231] In the majority of cases, some livestock is taken into the living hut (tuqul) everynight. The tuqul has, of course, an unwashable mud floor, no windows or chimney, soot-blackened ceiling, cobwebs in corners. There is no change of clothing at night, merely an added "kutta" or sheepskin, against the cold. Aside from drinking cups, there are no individual utensils.

164 [548] Towns, including provincial towns, are centers for the spread of syphilis and other venereal diseases, due to the existence of entire streets of "women in-between marriages" who act as restauranteurs-prostitutes. When surface lesions appear, the native "wogäsha" is consulted; [759] or since the Italian invasion made the "needle" popular, the modern government medical personnel is approached. But patients usually cease to continue treatment when surface lesions disappear.[67]

Eating "brundo", raw beef, at feasts, almost always leads to tapeworm and other taenia infestation. Fortunately

67. Guthe, Th: Venerial Disease in Ethiopia. W.H.O. Bulletin, Vol.2, 1949, pp. 85-138.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic.[1] Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend.

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile.

There were only two or three villages along the track,[2] which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district.

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May.

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to

[1] [i.e., in the Choké Mountains. —Analyst]
[2] [i.e., between Debra Markos and Mota. Ed.]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses. 175

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town. 632

The surrounding grassy *alms* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June. 133

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick. 491 [137] [136]

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people. 563 175

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups. 101 563

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion 101 144

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

ten or twelve men, who did not fear passing such steep 484
mountains, where it was said that there were multitudes of robbers. Thus we went away, divided, with the oxen and negroes, with their burdens in front of us, going forward on our course. We travelled through very wild mountains, 133
over ascents and descents, and very bad stony road. Most [491]
of the woods of these mountains are very large wild olive [137]
trees, from which good olive trees could be made. Issuing from these mountain ranges we entered into dry channels, which in winter time are great rivers, that is to say, as long as the showers last. As soon as the shower is finished the river is dry. These channels have on each side of them very high mountains, as rugged as those we had left behind. In these river beds there are large clumps of unknown trees, amongst which, near the rivers, there are a few wild [137]
palm trees. We slept this night in a river bed with little water in it.

CAP. XVII.—*How we passed a great mountain in which there were many apes, on a Saturday, and on the following Sunday we said mass in a village called Zalote.*

On the following day we again crossed another very high and rugged mountain ridge, over which we could not make our way, either on the mules or on foot. In this mountain 136
there are many animals of different species, and an infinite quantity of apes in herds: and they are not generally spread over the mountain, but only where there are clefts and holes in the rock; they are not found in quantities less than two or three hundred, and beyond that number. If there is any flat ground above these precipices, that is their promenade, and no stone remains that they do not turn, and they scrape the earth so that it looks as though it were tilled. They are very large, the size of sheep, and from the middle upwards hairy like lions.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

goats, and sheep, and of much game of all sorts. In the river there is much fish, and many wild ducks of different kinds,[1] and on land much game of all kinds, such as wild cattle; in the plains hares in great quantity, so that every day we killed twenty or thirty of a morning, and that without dogs, but caught with nets. There are partridges of three kinds, which do not differ from ours, except in size and the colour of their legs. There are partridges like big capons of the same colour and fashion as ours, except that their beaks and feet are yellow. There are others the size of hens; these have red beaks and feet like ours. There are others the size of ours, not different in colour or in anything else, except that their beaks and feet are grey. To the taste all are very good partridges, as they are good in colour. They do not frighten them to the earth.[2] Wild hens cover the ground, quails are in infinite numbers, and so of all other birds that can be mentioned, such as parrots and other birds not known to us, great and small, and of many shapes and colours; birds of prey, such as royal eagles, falcons, hawks, sparrow hawks, blue herons, and river cranes, and all other sorts that can be mentioned. In the mountains are many hogs, stags, antelopes, gazelles, deer. It will be said, how is it that there is so much game on the land and fish in the river, when the country is so populous? I say that nobody hunts or fishes, nor have they engines nor devices, nor the will to do it; on this account the game is very easy to kill, because it is not pursued by the people. There are many wild beasts—lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, foxes, jackals, and other animals not known to us. I never heard that these wild beasts did any harm, although the people are in great fear of them; only in one place which is called Camarua, and which is about half a league from

[1] *Adens* and *marrecas*.

[2] *No las assombram a terra*: perhaps this means with a paper kite. This passage is omitted in Selve's translation.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

136 this town of Barua, a man was lying asleep at night at the door of his enclosure, and his little son was with him, keeping his cows, and a lion came and killed this man without anyone perceiving it, and he ate his nose and opened his heart, without touching the child. The people of the country were greatly afraid, and said that he would remain with a taste for man's flesh,[1] and that no one would escape from him. The Lord was pleased that he never did any more harm. We used to go hunting at that time near this place, and we never found any lion, but we found ounces and tigers; we did them no harm, neither did they do us any.

CAP. XXIV.—*Of the lordship of the Barnagais, and of the lords and captains who are at his orders and commands, and of the dues which they pay.*

643 The lordship of the Barnagais is in this manner: its title
63 is that of King, because nagais means King, and bar means sea, so Barnagais means King of the Sea. When they give him the rulership they give it him with a crown of gold on his head, but it does not last longer than what the Prester John pleases. For in our time, which was a stay of six years, there were here four Barnagais, that is to say, when we arrived Dori was Barnagais; he died, and at his death the crown came to Bulla, his son, a youth of ten or twelve years of age, by order of the Prester John. When they crowned him he was at once summoned to court, and while he was at the court Prester John took away his sovereignty and gave it to a noble gentleman, who was named Arraz anubiata. This man held it two years, and they took from him this lordship and made him the greatest lord of the court, which is Betudete,[2] and the lordship of Barnagais was given to

[1] *Cevado*, literally allured.

[2] The favourite or preferred. *Bitwa-ldad*, because he was liked.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

136 is no fish there except very little from the rivers; There from the sea none.

795 There are no monasteries except of St. Anthony, and
792 not of any other order, as some friars say who come from there.

291 The gentlemen, monks, canons, and priests are clothed; most of the other people are bare from the waist upwards, and a sheepskin on the shoulders, with the front and hind feet tied together.

792 Most of the monasteries are situated on high mountains,
346 or in great ravines; they have large revenues and juris-
[262] diction. In many monasteries they do not eat meat all the year, and fish very few times, as they have not go it in the country. The services of these monasteries are psalms and prose, and so it is done in the churches of the canons.

796 Every church has two curtains, one on this side of the altar with little bells, and no one but priests enter inside this curtain; and another curtain in the middle of the church. And no one but persons in orders enter the church, and many gentlemen and honourable persons are ordained in order to enter the church. They go to the door of all the churches and monasteries to read the epistles and gospels, and they say them rapidly, and there they give the communion to the people.

The priests consecrate at the altar, and do not show the sacrament. When the priest who says mass comes to take the communion, he takes a particle from the top, and the other two large parts he leaves for the communion of the people. All the people who come to the church have to receive the communion every day, or else not come to church. When the communion is ended, they give them a little blessed water with which they wash their mouths.

Nobody sits down in the church, nor do they enter it shod; they do not hem or spit, nor do they let any dog or other animal come into the church. They confess standing,

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well
532 made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

491 In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
[563] in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

● 136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

which we call of Guinea, there they are called zegra, quails, 136
pigeons, turtles, hawks, falcons, kites, eagles, thrushes, sparrows, swallows, nightingales, larks, wild ducks, of different kinds,[1] and other waterfowl, herons, cranes, *hemas*, and all other birds that may be in the world, and not known to us; and there are all in this country except magpies and cuckoos, which I never saw, nor heard of their being there.

There are so many apes, that in the kingdom of the Barnagais, in a town which is named Ceroel, at the time the harvest is ripe, they pursue them till they make them pass a mountain; and they keep guard over them in a pass by day, because at night they do not move about, and they give a certain provision to two men who keep guard over them until the corn is gathered in, when they let them loose, or leave off keeping watch over them.

There is much basil in the thickets, and there are none 137
of our trees except cypresses, plumtrees, and willows by the rivers; there are no melons, cucumbers, nor horse-radish.

In the country there is no gold or silver money, and pur- 436
chases are made by exchange of one thing for another, principally salt, which is current throughout the country as money.

There is linen there, but it gives no fibre, and no stuff is 248
made with it; there is much cotton, and stuff made of it; there is much coloured cloth, and there is a very cold country where they wear serge.

The churches there are well built, but the walls are not 346
well wrought, and they do not place anything upon them; they pitch [the roof] upon props, which reach from the ground upwards.

In the country there is gold, silver, copper and tin, but 135
they do not know how to get it out of the mines.

[1] *Aleus, murrecas.*

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

262 greater treat than an ox, and within an hour of the purchase of the animal it was killed, skinned, cut into joints and divided amongst the tents, and our followers were busy gorging themselves on the still warm flesh. [257] What the twenty men could not eat in the day was 136 never cooked, but was cut into long thin strips and hung on ropes to dry in the sun and wind for the morrow's meal—a tempting bait for the vultures, hawks, and carrion crows that used to collect in their hundreds and make frantic dives for the tempting morsels, occasionally picking up a piece from the line in their claws to the intense disgust of the men. It was fascinating to watch the daring swoops and dips of the circling birds, and so reckless did they become that one day whilst we were at lunch a hawk, baulked of his craving for raw meat by the watchfulness of its guardians, actually swooped down on our luncheon table and snatched from the plate on my wife's knees the wing of a duck that she was about to operate on, brushing her face and knocking her knife out of her hand with his powerful wings; and at the same moment another bird lifted a cutlet from a dish which our "boy" was carrying from the cook's tent to our table. The "boy's" expression of indignation and helplessness was most comical to watch.

262 But to revert to the practice of eating raw meat. Early travellers to Abyssinia have not only commented on this, but have gone even further, and have stated that meat is cut and eaten *from the living animal.* Bruce describes two separate and distinct instances of this practice, which he stated occurred frequently. The first was that of three soldiers whom he saw driving along a cow, and on arriving at a halting-place they tied it,

164 arid area of Ogaden and in the Danakil Desert, malaria is found to be endemic near permanent water, and epidemic malaria has more than decimated the populations in certain regions during the rains. Between 3,000 feet and 4,500 feet most of the malaria is seasonal with two epidemic seasons, April to June and September to November. Spleen rates up to 90 percent are by no means rare in this zone. Between 4,500 and 6,000 feet endemic malaria occurs to a lesser degree, and above 6,000 feet malaria is extremely rare, although cases have been reported.

In the northern highland *Plasmodium vivax* is the most common form, while in the southern and eastern part of the country *Plasmodium falciparum* accounts for about two-thirds of the cases. *Plasmodium malariae* has been found at least once, but is of no importance. Raffaele and Lega claim to have found a special form of *P.*
164 *falciparum* which should constitute a subspecies var. *aethiopium*. *Anopheles gam-*
●136 *biae*, *A. funestus* and *A. pharoensis* are the most important vectors, but a number of other anophelines are under suspicion. *Anopheles gambiae* is, as elsewhere in Africa, by far the most serious vector. Due to its ability to breed under the most varied conditions, puddles, shallow ponds, pits, animal footprints, ditches, seepages, and borders of lakes and swamps, it is extremely difficult to eradicate.

164 Malaria annually takes a great many lives in Ethiopia, but even more important, it debilitates the population in the regions where it is prevalent, and many deaths from intercurrent diseases are primarily due to a chronic malaria.

The Italians undertook a quinine prophylaxis on a very large scale. At the time of their defeat, over 15 tons of quinine were found in the Italian medical stores in Ethiopia.

Venereal Diseases

There can be no doubt that syphilis is an old disease in Africa. There is a descrip-

[p. 714A]

164 but so far has never been found in human beings. The Echinococcus has been described by the Swedish physician, Dr. Hanner, in two cases from the hospital in Addis Ababa.

FILARIASIS: A considerable amount of filariasis has been described from Ethiopia and the illustration shows a typical clinical case. So far, nobody has been able to prove the presence of *Wuchereria bancrofti* although whole villages have been examined by day and by night. Much of the "elephantiasis" is no doubt surgical, but a large number of clinically typical cases of filariasis are found. *Loa loa* has not been described from Ethiopia. *Dracunculus medinensis* has only occurred where it was introduced from Arabia by traders and has not established itself in Ethiopia.

ONCHOCERCA VOLVULUS: In 1937-38, Giaquinto made a study of the insects of medical importance in Ethiopia. He reported the presence of *Simulium damnosum* in several localities in Galla Sidamo and suggested that onchocercosis might be present here. An expedition conducted by Giaquinto confirmed this. I studied this region in 1944 with Giaquinto and numerous cases of onchocerciasis were disclosed in a survey of the village of Shabe. Photophobia and diminished sight were common and the parasite was found in tumors that were removed. It is likely also that Gore, Lekemti, and Gardulla are endemic regions.

[136]

A case of Onchocerca volvulus tumor.

[p. 720B]

131
133

[243] Preferred cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous, [635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse- [162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial [563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic [567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000 [136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano- [243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals, [231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which [243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes [233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.

132 take the corrugated iron roofs off urban houses. Most tornadoes do not hit the ground, but if they do there is destruction. Usually such a cyclone precedes a heavy rainstorm.

The fog in the rainy season, called "gum", is cold and thick and covers the countryside. On the other hand, the fog that precedes the light rains of April and May, called gag or tegag, is milky, light, and causes very humid heat. Metereologists believe that it is the result of the sand raised by the hot "simoun" wind blowing from Arabia and the eastern lowlands of Ethiopia.

821 The importance of "rain in season" is of course an urgent concern of people living in a primarily agricultural economy. An unseasonal fall, which occasionally arrives after the end of the rainy season, when the grown grain begins to ripen, is called sabbiya, and is highly unpopular. The proverb, to indicate "all things in their proper time", refers to seasonal rains:

"In (the month of) Hamlē, beating-down rain;
in (the month of) Sānyē, fine drizzle."

At the beginning of the rainy season, in Sanye, the farmer wishes for constant drizzle, wetting the ground just enough to enable him to make headway with his scratch-plow and to seed in the previously sunbaked soil; in Hamlē, he wishes for plentiful rain so that the sprouting grain will grow fast and tall.

132 The Abyssinians themselves long ago recognized three dis-
●137 tinct climatic zones in their country:
241

132 Dega - more than 8,000 feet above sea level; cold, with
● 137 average temperatures of 50° - 61° F. The dega
241 is primarily prairie grassland, strewn with many medium-sized wooded areas of the high mountain type. The area is particularly adapted for raising livestock, but also suitable for growing barley, wheat, tieff (a variety of millet), beans flax, and temperate fruit, which are gathered wild not long after the end of the rains. Trees include the wild olive (Olea chrysophylla), juniper (Juniperus procera), the medicinal Kosso tree (Hagenia abyssinica).

Woyna Dega - between 6,000 and 8,000 feet: temperate to warm, with average temperatures of 61° - 68° F. This climatic zone includes the greater part of the plateau country, and most of the populated and cultivated lands. This is the zone where most cereals are grown, including soft grains, barley, tieff, maize. Here coffee grows wild. Forests, where they occur, are thicker, but spiny bushes are more prevalent. At the lower levels there are thick stands of bamboo (Podocarpus) and
[361] East African hardwoods; at the higher levels are juniper varieties. Most Amhara live in this zone.

132 Qolla - below 6,000 feet: hot, with average temperatures
137 in the 70's, 80's and 90's F. The qolla includes the arid lowland zones, as well as tropical forest; river valleys like that of the Awash; and most border areas of the country.

137 most border areas of the country. This is the zone of desert and thorn shrub vegetation; flora include the tamarind, giant sycamore, acacia, myrtle and zizygium, "Insett" (musa ensete or "Koba"), euphorbia, depending on availability of water. Crops include cotton, tobacco, dura, sugar cane. Poisonous snakes, leopards, malarial mosquitoes are common, and therefore the qolla is avoided by upland peoples like the Amhara. The qolla is loosely populated by hardy nomads like the feared Danakil in the east, and by Nilotic-speaking and negroid peoples like the Shanqalla in the western lowland.[3]

133 Much of Ethiopia is a subtabular plateau about 7,000 feet high, bisected north and south by a sector of the Great Rift Valley of East Africa with an average width of 30 miles. Rivers such as the Blue Nile have cut deep gorges breaking the highland into many isolated parts. Above the plateau rise higher mountains, the highest of which is 14,500 feet--Ras Dashan(Bejeda).

487 133 The many steep canyons which break up the plateaus have made Ethiopia almost inaccessible in the past. There are only three possible routes of access, an important consideration when one tries to reconstruct the ethnic prehistory of this area:

(1) The Eritrean gateway, where the highland approach

3. See Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook, 1954, pp. 127-8; KUO, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons 1951, p. 63

134 carried down the Blue Nile into Egypt. In Ethiopia, irrigation canals make use of it.

[311] (3) The remaining, eroded, red loam soil, of little fertility. This is left to the bush or is used for grazing.[5]

135 There is little information on the mineral wealth of Ethiopia, since whatever there is, particularly gold, has been kept from the knowledge of outsiders. The Italians had merely begun their surveys when they had to leave the country. Salt has always been a major item of import from the border lowlands in the east to the highland plateau. Numerous volcanic mineral springs, used for healing since ancient times, exist in many plateau districts.

[326] Since ancient times, gold from the sand gravels of Wollega and southern provinces was sold in small nuggets, or fashioned by goldsmiths into rings and sold by weight. It is now a monopoly of the central government; goldsmiths have been drawn to Addis Ababa, where they now use modern methods.

D. Flora, Fauna: their significance in Ethiopian Ecology.

●137 The generosity of nature on the highland plateau has provided a basis for human subsistence with little effort. In addition to a healthful climate and fertile soil, resources of vegetation and animal life are abundant.

137 Economic botanists have conducted studies which indicate
241 that the highlands of Ethiopia contain a number of indigenous varieties of cultivated cereals and legumes. Some are of the opinion that these highlands even formed one of the PRIMARY

5. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia, 1954, p. 127-8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 centers of old world agriculture in which the Neolithic
241 economy originated, possibly contributing to the initial development of ancient Egyptian civilization. Like the highlands of Yemen, the highlands of Ethiopia seem to represent ancient centers of TERRACED AGRICULTURE. It was in the Kaffa province of Ethiopia that coffee originated. It was carried to Yemen, planted there, and exported from coastal harbors (like the town of Mocha) through the Red
439 Sea into the Mediterranean. Coffee is still Ethiopia's most important export. Other major exports include sundried hides, sheep and goat skins, cereals, edible oils, and gold.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that major imports consist primarily of items not of major importance in subsistence, but which reflect secondary needs: cotton sheeting (abujedid), cotton yarn, cotton piece goods, raw cotton, naphtha. The major exception is salt, still a major import.[6]

137 Many varieties of wild fruit and vegetables are eaten
262 only in small quantities, especially by the Amhara, partly because of the abundance of cereal crops and legumes, partly because of a cultural attitude that despises "wild food" fit for use only in case of crop failure, famine due to warfare, and for outcasts.

Another group of highly useful plants which grow wild in Ethiopia are the oilseeds. A number of these are planted and used in the diet.

137 In the lower regions of the plateau, mainly south of
241 the Amhara area, a "false banana" fiber crop called muz or
248

6. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No12, May 1947, 4pp.

137 241 [248] koba (Musa ensete) is grown. This is used for making ropes of all kinds and bags for grain. In the south, the roots and inner parts of the plant are also used to make flour for 262 186] food; but the Amhara despise this, considering it "food of slave peoples".

137 Vegetation is dense in the valleys, and the forests contain many valuable trees, including the Natal yellow pine. But in spite of the high yearly rainfall the northern plateau is comparatively little wooded. Foresters estimate that only 2.8% of Ethiopia is forest-covered, although they believe that it was once well forested. They ascribe this denuding to centuries of uncontrolled grazing and periodic burning-over. The best hardwoods that remain are usually in the least accessible spots, lowlands and gorges.[7]

137 The two most important trees of the highlands are the 313 Ṭed and the Zegba. The Ṭed, a juniper (Juniperus procera) sometimes referred to as "pencil cedar" (or Juniperus phoenicoea), is fine-grained, easy to split, aromatic, durable (even when exposed to moist conditions in the rainy season), and termite-resistant. It is popular for beams in the better houses of chiefs, and for the simple native furniture. The Zegba(Podocarpus gracilor), also an evergreen, is found in the warmer parts of the plateau. The wood is soft, easy to split, subject to decay when exposed to moisture, and thus more popular in drier areas. Non-resinous and tasteless, it is useful as a container for food, but is mainly used for construction and furniture. On the higher plateau

7. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia 1954, pp. 127-8; Kuo: Ethiopia, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons:Global Epidemiology, 1951, p.63.

137 areas, the wild olive, wäyra, is preferred, because it is
313 available, a hardwood, yet not difficult to split. Ease of splitting is always a most important consideration because of the population's simple tools and disinclination to expend effort to change what nature provides. Another olive, the wanza (Cordia abyssinica, a coarsely porous light wood), is popular for smoking out beer jars and other pottery before and after use. The yellow, cherry-like olive is one of the available wild fruit trees.

On lower levels of plateau elevation, the acacia known as grar is found in many varieties, often as the "umbrella tree". Generally the wood is hard, used in construction, and even more popular as fuel, especially as charcoal for firing pottery. Lowland trees include the termite-resistant Natal yellow pine, the giant sycamore, mimosa(also called grar), gum trees, lemon, and a small size banana.

137 One of the most popular trees, especially in the larger
824 centers of population on the plateau, was imported by Em-
199 peror Menelik II about half a century ago: the odoriferous, water-holding eucalyptus, called bahēr zaf (lit. the tree from overseas). Although there are no real forests of it, it is the most noticeable tree in Ethiopia, planted around houses, in wooded clumps between urban sections, towering above the native plateau trees. It grows so fast that in some areas it can be "harvested", primarily for construction purposes, after only five years.

137 A common sight on lower slopes is the euphorbia, gul-
278 gwal, which resembles an immense, spiny chandelier with
824 multiple branches. Its milky sap is used in some native

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 remedies. The nutmeg tree, tosiya, is also medicinal, and
924 the Kosso tree is widely used against tapeworm. Common sights include the reddish ret, a cactus; and just as soon as the rainy season ends, the yellow daisy, adäy abäba carpets the landscape, heralding the masqal holiday. Hence it
136 is also called mäsqäl abäba. A study of the FAUNA connections between Ethiopia and surrounding areas contributes significantly to the understanding of Ethiopia's cultures from ancient times to the present.

The last remnant of the prehistoric belt of tropical forest that once stretched from Africa to India, is found today in Dhofar, Southern Arabia. There, in the Gara mountains, Bertram Thomas collected fossil fauna which is definitely Ethiopic and which also evidences links to southern India.[8] Animal husbandry in Yemen in prehistoric times was apparently based on hump-necked cattle of Indian origin. This cattle complex reached Africa late, probably as late
[231] as 1000 B.C.[9] To this day, the cattle of Ethiopia is hump-necked, though cave paintings clearly show domestic cattle without humps.

171 Social and religious regulations associated with the
231 cattle complex among the Cushitic-speaking tribesmen of southern Ethiopia, are very similar to sets of the same regulations among the Gara tribesmen of Dhofar. Both despise hunters and artisans, but also consider agriculture a most ignoble occupation.

8. Coon: Southern Arabia. Papers of the Peabody Museum, Vol. 20, 1943, p. 209.
9. Ibid.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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ETHIOPIAN HIGHLANDS

W. E. D. ALLEN

Meeting of the Society, 18 January 1943

114 THIS lecture does not pretend to be a serious study of any geographical aspect of Ethiopia. It is rather a record of impressions gained during a year spent in Ethiopia in various jobs ranging from the care of a park of derelict mules to that of Intelligence Officer to the newly formed Ethiopian Army.

Unluckily I was posted away from Addis Ababa at short notice, and my reference books in Italian and Italian photographs of ethnological interest which I had collected should now be in Nairobi, if they have not been lost. Many of the photographs used as illustrations were taken in the field by Captain Mark Pilkington, the Life Guards, a very gallant officer who distinguished himself in the guerrilla fighting round Lake Tana and who was killed in action in Libya, just two months ago.

With the possible exception of parts of the Shankalla wilderness, which is the Abyssinian extension of the Sudan plain between the western bend of the Blue Nile and the Escarpment, it cannot be said that any large areas of the Ethiopian Empire had remained unvisited by Europeans prior to the Italian War of 1935–36 and the campaign of 1941. I have however come across no account of the remarkable massifs of Dungwur and Belaia which rise out of
133 the Shankalla plain to the east of the Escarpment. On the tableland of Belaia, well within the nominal Italian frontier, an advance base for the supply of the Patriot forces was established in January 1941 and in February the Emperor set up his headquarters there.

[137] These twin mountain masses rise out of the Shankalla plain to an altitude of about 7000 feet above sea-level. They are covered with rich forests and watered by fast-running streams. Dungwur was uninhabited and visited
[361] only from time to time by stray bands of Abyssinian hunters. But there are flourishing villages and ancient churches on Belaia. It was a weird experience to reach these strange islands of luxuriating nature after the long camel trek across the burnt-out Shankalla wilderness. From a day's march away we

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic.[1] Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend.

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile.

There were only two or three villages along the track,[2] which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district.

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May.

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to

[1] i.e., in the Choké Mountains. —Analyst
[2] i.e., between Debra Markos and Mota. Ana.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses. 175

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town. 632

The surrounding grassy *alns* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June. 133

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick. 491 [137] [136]

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people. 563 175

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups. 101 563

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion 101 144

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

174 travellers in the region of the southern lakes.[1] Other and earlier cultures may well have percolated into the Highland by the same routes along the ridges which are established for the mediaeval Copto-Ethiopian culture.

I am afraid I have put before the Society some rather hazardous lines of inquiry, with implications which necessarily impose a great deal of comparative study before they can be established or disproved. My excuse in these days when no one has the leisure to pursue exacting studies is that it is worth putting on record lines of inquiry which some of us may be able to turn to at a later date.

All photographs, unless acknowledged, were taken by the late Captain Mark Pilkington.

DISCUSSION

114 Before the paper the PRESIDENT (the Rt. Hon. SIR GEORGE CLERK) said: Captain Allen has been well known to us in the past as an authority on Georgia and as the author of an excellent history of the Ukraine. Military duty took him to Ethiopia for the operations which restored the Emperor Haile Selassie to his throne and capital—operations in which others of our Fellows, particularly Colonel Orde Wingate, Major Hugh Boustead, and Mr. Wilfred Thesiger, took a prominent part. Some day when the war is over I hope that the story of the Abyssinian campaign will come out, because not only is it in many ways a fantastic story, but it makes a very fine chapter in our annals.

It has been a little difficult for Captain Allen to prepare his paper for this evening, first of all because nearly all his photographs were left behind in Africa, and secondly, because his military duties have given him very little time to get his paper into shape. We look forward to hearing the impressions which the country and people of the Ethiopian Highlands have made upon him in the course of his military duties.

Captain Allen then read the paper printed above

137 The PRESIDENT: The lecture this evening has stirred memories of forty years ago. The lecturer talked about those miles of red-hot pokers. I have always held that if you give Nature a chance she is the best gardener in the world. I came once over a plateau in Abyssinia, a bit of waste country where no white man had ever been before, and there I found a great sheet of red-hot pokers and rosemary: the masses of orange-scarlet flowers backed by the grey-mauve of the rosemary were wonderfully beautiful. It finished in a sort of marsh in which there were immense stretches of white and scarlet arum lilies, inconceivably spectacular.

The lecturer has described the good manners and charm of the Shoan Abyssinians, but it is true that they are very quick to take offence as well as to show affection; they are very volatile. What he said about the Tigraians was also true; they are the tough northerners, more dependable, but not so easy to get on with. I will give you an instance of the funny though rather charming ways of the Abyssinians. Forty years ago I was on a certain expedition with a so-called Abyssinian army: two thousand scallywags, with two thousand small boys to carry their rifles, and two thousand unfortunate second wives to carry their food. We descended the escarpment to the west, and came into populated country. The Abyssinian soldiers were living on the country, and here they started to be extremely tiresome. I had to chase them off the inhabitants and

[1] See 'Africa Orientale,' Italiana Guida, published by Touring Club Italiana, 1939.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of translation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth." 133

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of Rocher d'Hericourt, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans. 132 [134] 137 [177] [372] 361 311 [231] 241 311

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow 137

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 *Buddleia*, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

133 The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of [137] country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being [231] swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used [311] for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the [135] north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several [325] travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a [712] high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high [346] point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-20 have not been processed for the files.-Analyst]

CAP. XI.—*Of the fashion and situation of the monasteries and their customs, first this of St. Michael.*

346 The manner of these monasteries as to their sites and
361 customs: all are situated on the greatest and highest cliffs, or the deepest they can find. This one of St. Michael is situated on a very steep rock at the foot of another very high rock, where no one can ascend. The stone of which these rocks consist is of the grain of the walls of the port of Portugal.[1] They are very great rocks. The land around
137 these rocks is all covered with very great forests, and besides wild olive trees and high grass between them, in which there is much basil. The trees which are not wild olive trees are not trees known to us; all are without fruit. In the narrow valleys which belong to this monastery there are orange trees, lemon trees, citron trees, pear trees and fig trees of all kinds, both of Portugal and India; peach trees, cabbages, coriander, cardamine, wormwood,[2] myrtle and other sweet-smelling and medicinal herbs, all ill profited by
461] because they are not good working men: and the earth produces these like wild plants, and it would produce whatever was planted and sown in it. The monastery house
346 looks quite like a church building, constructed like ours. It has around it a circuit like a cloister, covered above in the same manner as the body of the monastery. It has three entrances, as ours are, one principal one, and two side ones. The roof of the church and of its cloisters is of wild straw, which lasts a man's life: the body of the church is built with naves very well constructed, and their arches are

[1] Qu. ato. [p.21] [2] Alosna.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well
532 made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
491 in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John
[563] are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

which we call of Guinea, there they are called zegra, quails, 136
pigeons, turtles, hawks, falcons, kites, eagles, thrushes, sparrows, swallows, nightingales, larks, wild ducks, of different kinds,[1] and other waterfowl, herons, cranes, *hemas*, and all other birds that may be in the world, and not known to us; and there are all in this country except magpies and cuckoos, which I never saw, nor heard of their being there.

There are so many apes, that in the kingdom of the Barnagais, in a town which is named Ceroel, at the time the harvest is ripe, they pursue them till they make them pass a mountain; and they keep guard over them in a pass by day, because at night they do not move about, and they give a certain provision to two men who keep guard over them until the corn is gathered in, when they let them loose, or leave off keeping watch over them.

There is much basil in the thickets, and there are none 137
of our trees except cypresses, plumtrees, and willows by the rivers; there are no melons, cucumbers, nor horse-radish.

In the country there is no gold or silver money, and pur- 436
chases are made by exchange of one thing for another, principally salt, which is current throughout the country as money.

There is linen there, but it gives no fibre, and no stuff is 248
made with it; there is much cotton, and stuff made of it; there is much coloured cloth, and there is a very cold country where they wear serge.

The churches there are well built, but the walls are not 346
well wrought, and they do not place anything upon them; they pitch [the roof] upon props, which reach from the ground upwards.

In the country there is gold, silver, copper and tin, but 135
they do not know how to get it out of the mines.

[1] *Adens, marrecas.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

ten or twelve men, who did not fear passing such steep 484
mountains, where it was said that there were multitudes of robbers. Thus we went away, divided, with the oxen and negroes, with their burdens in front of us, going forward on our course. We travelled through very wild mountains, 133
over ascents and descents, and very bad stony road. Most [491]
of the woods of these mountains are very large wild olive [137]
trees, from which good olive trees could be made. Issuing from these mountain ranges we entered into dry channels, which in winter time are great rivers, that is to say, as long as the showers last. As soon as the shower is finished the river is dry. These channels have on each side of them very high mountains, as rugged as those we had left behind. In these river beds there are large clumps of unknown trees, amongst which, near the rivers, there are a few wild [137]
palm trees. We slept this night in a river bed with little water in it.

CAP. XVII.—*How we passed a great mountain in which there were many apes, on a Saturday, and on the following Sunday we said mass in a village called Zalote.*

On the following day we again crossed another very high and rugged mountain ridge, over which we could not make our way, either on the mules or on foot. In this mountain 136
there are many animals of different species, and an infinite quantity of apes in herds: and they are not generally spread over the mountain, but only where there are clefts and holes in the rock; they are not found in quantities less than two or three hundred, and beyond that number. If there is any flat ground above these precipices, that is their promenade, and no stone remains that they do not turn, and they scrape the earth so that it looks as though it were tilled. They are very large, the size of sheep, and from the middle upwards hairy like lions.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 121 178 181 [212] [577] been employed as a medium for promulgating new ideas or discussing contemporary problems. Another feature of Amhara culture that helps to account for the mental inertia of the peasantry is its emphasis on the value of deference and obedience to authority. The Amhara typically rely on legitimate authority figures to define appropriate responses to new situations, and regard the delegation of powers as a diminution of the status of such authorities. The peasant has thus refrained from initiating changes in the public domain because the prerogative of taking initiative is generally reserved to ecclesiastical and political authorities.

*565 121 177 178 *Receptivity to Change*

Consideration of the peasant's readiness to follow the lead of legitimate authorities already points to an inadequacy of the second stereotype we have mentioned: that which sees the peasant as hopelessly ignorant and backward, hence intractable from the viewpoint of a program of modernization. For while the Amhara peasant is likely to resist the efforts of some unknown official from Addis Ababa to introduce change in his local environment, he does tend to follow the directives and imitate the example of the local authorities whom he knows and who shape the course of decisions and sanctions at the [137] local level. Thus it is, for example, that the eucalyptus tree—imported by Emperor Menelik, taken to the provinces by nobles, and eventually planted by individual peasants—has come to dot the Amhara countryside. How quickly such change can take place is shown by the recent acceptance of photography in many provincial regions. In 1950, peasants in many Amhara areas strenuously objected to having their pictures taken, in part at least for fear of the camera as bearer of the evil eye. By 1960, visitors to some of these same areas were being deluged with requests for photographs. In the interim these peasants had been exposed to numerous photographs of the Emperor and high government officials and had observed their local authorities seizing every chance they could to be photographed.

Yet it is clear that the Amhara peasant will not imitate everything that is accepted by his traditional authorities. When a new custom strikes him as too outlandish his resistance can become adamant, as was abundantly demonstrated when the court of Susneyos carried out its ill-fated conversion to Catholicism. In analyzing the peasant's receptivity to change it is important to distinguish as independent variables: (1) the degree of acceptability of the *agents* of change, and (2) the extent to which the proposed change is congruent with traditional beliefs and values.

The whole question of the nature of peasant opposition and receptivity to modernizing programs may be discussed most realistically by focusing on [744] a concrete area of attempted change. The material I have assembled is most detailed for the case of public health, an area to which the government has

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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Table 2: Major Physical Characteristics of Numerically Large peoples in Ethiopia

	Amhara	Galla	Sidamo	Somali	Agau
Skull	dolicho-meso	meso	meso	meso	mesocephalic
Nose	leptorrhine	leptorr.	mesorrhine (near negroid)	leptorr.	
Skin	brunet-white (lightest) (mostly Lushan No. 21-25; range No.13-34	chocolate brown (mostly No.22-29; range darker	dark brown to black (darker than No.30)	dark brown glossy (mostly No.29; range No. 27-30	
Hair (form)	60% frizzly 40% curly or wavy	30% have non-negroid hair		86% have non-negroid hair	

Hair color black among all, no difference head or beard.

(pilous system)	frequent baldness, often heavy beards; even minority with heavy body hair	less bearded, less hairy	less bearded less hairy	beards like southern Arabs; almost glabrous on body
Eye (color)	47% dark brown 11% light brown 39% mixed	same as Amhara	mostly dark-brown, some black	56% dark-brown 32% black
Lips	10% thin	no thin	no thin	no thin
Nose	straight profile, high root and bridge flaring nasal wings, excavated nostrils.	similar but more broad and flaring	low root and bridge, thick tips (resembles hybrid negro-white, as in American negroes)	

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

line in the entire Horn of Africa is completely free from negroid admixture; but individuals may be found among the Amharas, Gallas, and Somalis who show no visible signs of negro blood. These individuals are extremely rare. On the whole the negroid element in the Hamitic area cannot be much more than one-fourth of the whole, but it has penetrated every ethnic group and every social level. Just when this penetration had become complete we do not know, but one suspects that it had already occurred by the sixth century A.D., when the Ethiopians ruled the Yemen. The Gallas, despite their tradition of descent from white men, were already partly negroid at the time of their arrival in Ethiopia. A S 144

Despite this negroid penetration, and despite a mixture between non-negroid elements, the four ethnic units of Amharas, Gallas, Sidamos, and Somalis are all statistically distinct from each other.[61] What evidence we have for the Agaus suggests that this people constitutes a fifth anthropometric entity. As one would expect, the more purely Hamitic peoples, such as the Agaus, Gallas, and Somalis, are taller than the Amharas. All of these three have stature means ranging from 169 to 174 cm., while 172 cm. seems to be the central mean for all of them. The Semitic speakers range from a mean of 164–167 cm.[62] for the Tigré, the most nearly Arabian of the four main groups, to 167–169 cm. for each of the other three, while a series of varied Ethiopians, mostly from Shoa, and measured in Addis Ababa, rose to the mean of 169 cm. This latter figure may reflect Galla mixture—for Addis Ababa is in Galla territory—or selection. The Sidamos, in contrast to the Agaus, are apparently short (164 cm.). A S 141

In bodily build and proportions, all groups are much the same. The predominant type is leptosome, with a relative sitting height index of 50 to 51, a relative span of 103, and a relative shoulder breadth of 21. Long legs and relatively short arms, narrow shoulders, and even narrower hips, are the rule. Few Ethiopians of any category are thick-set, and what little corpulence is seen hangs ill on fine-boned frames. The hands and feet of all but the palpably negroid are small and extremely narrow, the lower legs and wrists usually spindly and ill-muscled. This attenuation of the distal segments of the limbs reaches its maximum among the Somalis. The Sidamos, who are by far the most negroid of the Ethiopian peoples, have the broadest shoulders in proportion to their height, and the narrowest hips. A S 142

There can be no doubt that the tall stature of the Gallas, Somalis, and Agaus is an old Hamitic trait, since both the negroid Sidamos and the Semites of Hadhramauti origin are much shorter. The tallness of this S 141

[61] From statistical analysis of author's unpublished material.
[62] From several different series.

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

S 141 East African Mediterranean strain stands in contrast to the moderate stature of the Mediterranean Arabs across the Red Sea, and constitutes a characteristic difference between them. The bodily build of the East African Hamites is typically Mediterranean in the ratio of arms, legs, and trunk, but the special attenuation of the extremities among the Somalis is a strong local feature,[63] which finds its closest parallels outside the white racial group, in southern India and in Australia.

A ●141 The different groups studied in Ethiopia share a tendency to dolichocephaly or mesocephaly, and to a narrow face form. In the measurements of the head and face, all are fundamentally Mediterranean, and the negroid traits manifested in the soft parts do not reveal themselves in the measurements, except in nose breadth and in the biorbital and interorbital diameters. The heads are larger than those of the Yemeni Mediterraneans; Amharas (in the sense of Semitic-speaking Abyssinians) have vault dimensions of 194 mm. (length) by 150 mm. (breadth) by 127 mm. (height); these figures could apply as well to Nordics as to Abyssinians. The mean cephalic index of 77 or lower [64] for Amharic speakers is in the dolichocephalic to low mesocephalic class; the smaller diameters and higher index of the present-day Hadhramaut population seem to have yielded to the greater size and dolichocephaly of the indigenous Hamitic farmers, as far as the total group is concerned. There is, however, some evidence that while the Tigré people are strongly dolichocephalic, brachycephaly may be common in the kingdoms of Gojjam and Amhara.[65]

000 The Gallas are on the whole smaller headed than the Amharas, but also mesocephalic. Mesocephaly is also the prevalent head form of both Agaus and Sidamos; among the latter the mean cephalic index is 78, and there is a definite brachycephalic minority. So far the inhabitants of the Abyssinian plateau, whatever their speech and ethnic origin, are dolichocephalic or mesocephalic, and comparable to Mediterraneans elsewhere, especially, as we shall later see, to North African Berbers, as well as to North European Nordics. Among the Sidamos, however, the vault is lower (124 mm.) than among Amharas and Gallas. The Somalis,

[63] Schlaginhaufen, O., **AJKS**, vol. 9, 1934, pp. 265–273.

[64] Verneau's mean is 75.

[65] De Castro, in his 1915 study of Ethiopians, gives cephalic index means of 73.9 for Tigré, 75.4 for Shoa, 80.7 for Amhara, and 83.2 for Gojjam. The Amhara series is represented by 50 men, the Gojjam series by 47. Garson finds a mean C. I. of 81.4 for 12 Amhara men measured by Bent. Against these positive evidences of brachycephaly stands the fact that in none of the composite series of Amharic-speaking Ethiopians, which include Gojjam and Amhara men, are brachycephalic individuals found in sufficient numbers to support these figures. Verneau, out of a series of 83, of which 29 are Gojjamites, finds a mean C. I. of 74.9, and a range of 67–82. In my own smaller series the highest C. I. is 81; C. I.'s of 4 Gojjam men were 74, 76, 77, 80. Both Frasetto (1932) and Klimek (1930–31) fail to find brachycephaly in composite Abyssinian series. At present it is impossible to confirm or refute de Castro's figures.

9: Coon D-5 (1953-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

as contrasted with the highland bloc, are smaller headed and purely dolichocephalic, with vault dimensions of 192 mm. (length) by 143 mm. (breadth) by 123 mm. (height), and a mean cephalic index of 74.5. In this they resemble closely the finer Mediterranean type in Yemen, and some of the northern Bedawin.

The Somalis S 141

Facially this division between highlanders and Somalis is accentuated. The highlanders have minimum frontal means of 104 mm. to 106 mm.; the Somalis of 102 mm. The bizygomatics of the first group fall at 134–136 mm., of the Somalis at 131 mm. The bigonials of the highlanders have means of 101–102 mm., of the Somalis, 96 mm. All are narrow faced, but the Somalis approximate a world extreme. The forehead is in all groups notably wider than the jaw, which reaches a record in narrowness among the Somalis. In face breadths as in vault dimensions the less extreme highland Ethiopians might as well be Nordics as negroids.

The total face heights of the four groups under consideration range from 122 mm. to 124 mm.; the upper face heights from 71 mm. to 74 mm. It is interesting to note that the Sidamos, who are the most negroid, have the broadest foreheads, bizygomatics, and bigonials, the longest menton-nasion heights, and by far the longest upper face heights, of the entire group. It is the Somalis whose upper face height is shortest. All four are leptoprosopic and leptene, the Somalis hyperleptoprosopic.

The noses of Somalis, Amharas, and Gallas are leptorrhine, with nasal indices of 66, 68, and 69, respectively. This regression indicates with some accuracy the relative amounts of negro blood. The Sidamos, with an index of 71, are mesorrhine and the most negroid. In accordance with the principle that the most negroid have the longest as well as the broadest faces, the Sidamos have the longest and broadest noses, with a mean height of 55 mm., and breadth of 39 mm. The Somalis, whose noses are narrowest, also have the smallest, 52 mm. by 34 mm. A [141]

In the measurements of the external eye the Somalis differ again from the highlanders; their mean interorbital diameter of 31 mm. is narrow, while that of the highlanders, 34–35 mm., approximates a negroid condition. In the biorbital, the distance between the outer eye corners, the Somalis are narrowest, with 91 mm.; the Sidamos the broadest with 96 mm.

Our survey of the metrical characters of the inhabitants of the Hamitic racial area has brought several facts to light; the agricultural population of the Ethiopian highlands, both indigenous and imported from Arabia, belongs to a tall, dolichocephalic to mesocephalic, leptoprosopic, moderately leptorrhine race, which is Mediterranean in metrical position and cannot be distinguished, on the basis of the more commonly taken measurements, from blond and brunet Mediterraneans of Europe and North Africa. A 141

162 632 433 463 of the town's total population, support themselves by working among the densely packed rows of beer houses and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 779 563 [197] [167] [142] Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejoratively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinctively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

[443] [442]

632 563 463 [197] [542] A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people, predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics. Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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C. Racial characteristics and affiliations of the peoples of Ethiopia.

The terms used in this section refer to physical types only, and are not to be confused with linguistic or regional concepts carrying the same name. For not only is there a lack of statistical data on the physical anthropology of Ethiopia, but no new terms have been coined to describe physical types there, so that linguistic and regional names have been borrowed. While not good practice, in this case it is unavoidable.

The two most common physical types in Ethiopia are the "Mediterranean" and the "Hamite". These types have been best defined by Coon, Garn, Birdsell:[49]

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"Mediterranean" - medium to skinny in build.
generalized to intermediate in pigmentation.
medium to heavy in beard and body hair with a minority of blond forms, particularly in the iris;
medium in head size, with a minimum of paleanthropic features of the skull and face;
small faced, prominent nosed, small jawed, often small toothed;
medium to small extremities.

"Hamite" - Some of the peoples of East Africa and the Sudan seem to be skeletally Mediterranean but dark skinned; they have low to medium frequencies of spiral hair, thick lips, and other Negro features. The body build is extremely skinny."

The latter seems to be a very ancient East African type, according to the excavations in Keyna by Leakey, and the present Somali seem closest to it. Coon[50] points out that this type shows extreme narrowness of head and face, straight

49. Races, 1950, pp. 127, 129.
50. Races of Europe, 1939, Plate 20.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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nasal profile, non-negroid prominence of chin, curly but not frizzly hair, and black skin; thus constituting a borderline between the "Mediterranean race" and the African Negro.

Another ancient skeletal type, excavated in upper Egypt, is very similar to some northern Ethiopians (Abyssinians), according to the findings of C. M. Morant[51]. He took measurements of skulls and skeletal parts at Badari in upper Egypt, of a people who lived there about 4,000 B.C. Because of the extreme dryness of the region, he was able to determine that their skin was brunet - white, their hair black and wavy. He found that the Badarian cranial type was similar to that of the northern Ethiopian of today.

This type does occur among Amhara and Tigre peoples, but wavy hair is in a minority, sufficiently rare to cause comment. The author personally observed two individuals with distinctly soft, wavy hair, both from aristocratic Amhara families taking great pride in their unblemished ancestry.

The findings of Leakey and Morant, just beyond the southern and the northern borders of Ethiopia, would suggest that Ethiopia contained physical types of "Hamite" and "Mediterranean" characteristics long before the invasion of Semitic-speaking Hadhramautis, about 500 B.C.

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The <u>Amhara</u> is basically a Mediterranean type much like some Bedouin tribesmen, with oval face, keen nose, relatively thin or average lips which do not curl up, a type most frequently found in the Amharic-speaking provinces. The hair is often curly but not frizzly, and

51. Morant, G. M.: A Study of Predynastic Egyptian Skulls from Badaria. 1927, pp. 293-309.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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rises about the head like a halo, hiding a long, narrow, delicately modelled cranium.[52] A highbridged nose is regarded as a mark of beauty, and the chin is sometimes so sharply pointed that it recalls the features of Tel-El-Amarna. Skulls piled under cave ledges at the Amhara monastery of Debra Libanos (they may not be touched) appear to be dolichocephalic. Stature is medium. Musculature is not pronounced on sight, but Amhara peasants can perform great feats of endurance in walking uphill and for long distances. As a mark of the upper class female, women of nobility accumulate obesity by a rich diet and abstinence from any work. But the average Amhara is usually so narrow-boned that it is impossible for most adult Europeans to wear the cotton jodphurs in sizes made for Amhara.

The Galla have larger, well-built bodies, rounder faces, straigher noses and darder skins than the Amhara.[53]

The Shangalla along the western border and inland, evidence all the more typical negroid characteristics.

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When surveying the complexities of the many intermediate racial and sub-racial strains in Ethiopia, the question arises whether the Ethiopians might not be considered representative of an undifferentiated stage in the development of both whites and blacks. Coon[54] thinks not and points out that, on the whole, the white strain is much more prevalent and much more important metrically,

52. Coon: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p. 75.
53. Yilma, Asfor: Haile Selassie 1936, p. 23.
54. Coon: The Races of Europe. 1954, p. 457.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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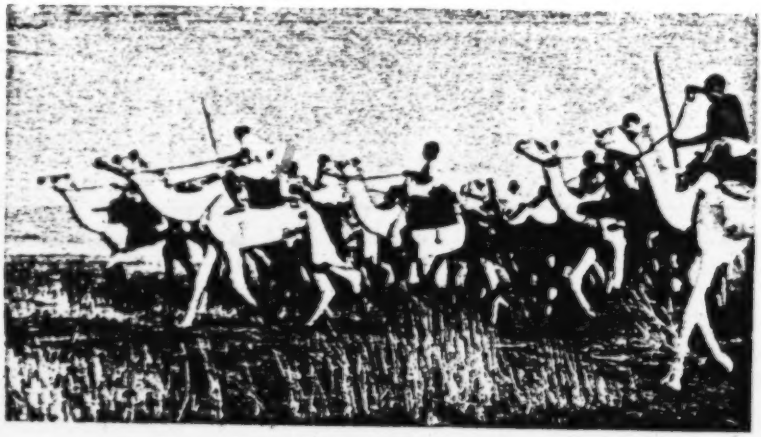
2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5



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Camels flattening landing ground at Matakal

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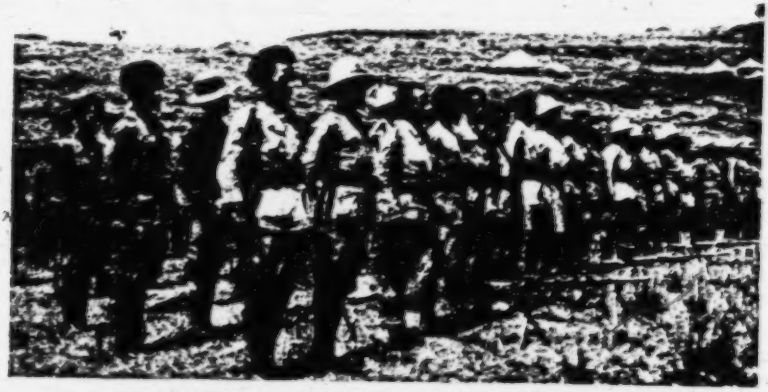

Captain Pilkington's Wallos on parade, October 1941

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Men of Gaint [Facing p. 6]

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 212 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner [516] gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. [145] Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This [302] gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

633 Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society
[191] has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and
Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and
[563] Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the
uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the
frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and,
[142 although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms
291] exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a
beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wander-
[245] ing among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous
231 for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudo, which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

487 The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men: the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

174 The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up
[563] into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

line in the entire Horn of Africa is completely free from negroid admixture; but individuals may be found among the Amharas, Gallas, and Somalis who show no visible signs of negro blood. These individuals are extremely rare. On the whole the negroid element in the Hamitic area cannot be much more than one-fourth of the whole, but it has penetrated every ethnic group and every social level. Just when this penetration had become complete we do not know, but one suspects that it had already occurred by the sixth century A.D., when the Ethiopians ruled the Yemen. The Gallas, despite their tradition of descent from white men, were already partly negroid at the time of their arrival in Ethiopia. A S 144

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[61] From statistical analysis of author's unpublished material.
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9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

000 S 141 Africa. The Somalis, on the other hand, belong to an extreme racial form; extremely linear in bodily build, extremely narrow-headed and narrow-faced, with a special narrowness of the jaw. The relationship of the Somalis, on metrical grounds, is with some of the peoples of India as much as with the Mediterraneans elsewhere. The leptosome tendency, and the narrowness of the face, remind one of the same tendency found among the mixed Bedawin group of the Hadhramaut. It cannot be attributed to negro-white mixture, for that phenomenon, as witnessed among the Sidamos, has produced a heaping of characters, resulting in an enlargement of both sagittal and lateral diameters of the face, in some cases in excess of either the Hamitic white or the negroid parent. Upper face height and nose height are especially affected. The Somali face and nose are not long, they are merely narrow. The extremely long faces and noses found among the Ba-Hima, the noble class of the Baganda, and supposedly of Galla origin, have acquired a social value, and far exceed those of the Somali. In this tendency to attenuation of the face, we are reminded of Oldoway man and some of the Elmenteita skeletons. This tendency is an extremely old one in East Africa.

A 142 In the skin color of the Arabs, however dark the exposed and tanned parts might be, the unexposed epidermis was always considerably lighter. A fundamental difference between Arabs and Ethiopians is seen in this feature, for the latter are usually the same in skin color all over. In fact, the foreheads of Ethiopians are in some instances lighter than their shirt-protected bodies. In the three highland groups of Amharas, Gallas, and Sidamos, the Amharas are lightest skinned, with the majority of shades concentrated in the medium brown category, between von Luschan #21 and #25; individually the series runs as light as #13, a brunet-white, which is approximately the color of the former Emperor, Hailie Selassie. At the other extreme it reaches #34, which is almost jet black, nearer the color of the great Emperor Menelik II. Thus among the Amharas almost the entire range of human skin color intensity is covered, with the exception of rosy or pinkish-white, which probably does not exist among Ethiopians. The Gallas run somewhat darker, with their concentration in the medium to chocolate-brown class, between #22 and #29; their range is somewhat less than that of the Amharas, and the rare brunet-white of the former is in some cases replaced by a yellow of Bushman intensity. Most of the Sidamos are darker than #30, and are thus really dark brown or black.

S A 142 So far, the progression in skin color has followed that of relative amounts of negro blood, with an immense range covered; the inheritance of skin color in the Ethiopian highlands is not strictly Mendelian in a simple sense, nor is it by any means a case of ordinary blending. If there was

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

ever a rosy-white shade in the non-negroid element, it has long since disappeared. Among the Somalis, however, an entirely different situation is found, for the majority are lumped around the von Luschan #29. Numbers 27 and 30 account for most of the others; hence there is a single and characteristic Somali color, which is a rich, glossy, chocolate-brown, which accounts for seven-eights of the entire Somali group. A very few are darker, and individuals are as light as light brown, in a very few cases as light as Arabs. The contrast between highland Ethiopians and Somalis in skin color is so great that one must postulate that the original non-negroid narrow-bodied and narrow-faced strain which the living Somalis represent was not white skinned in any sense of the word, for the Somalis are the least negroid people in East Africa. S A 142

The Ethiopians themselves are extremely conscious of differences in skin color, and divide themselves into four groups: "Yellow," "Yellow-Red," "Red," and "Black." These groups do not correspond very well with the von Luschan scale, but represent the product of centuries of local experience, and are perhaps more significant from the genetic standpoint. A jury of Amharas and Gallas called 20 per cent of the former "Yellow," as against 8 per cent of the latter; only 2 per cent of either was "Black." In both, the "Red" class was the most numerous; with 47 per cent of Amharas, and 70 per cent of Gallas. Most of the few Sidamos studied are evenly divided between "Red" and "Black." This system could not be applied to the Somalis, whose characteristic hue defied classification. A 142 826

In hair form the Ethiopians also have their own system, which hardly agrees with ours. It has three divisions; *lüchai*, meaning "straight," *gofari*, meaning "curly," and another term which signifies extremely negroid, or peppercorn. Actually, no single highland Ethiopian with straight hair was measured in the author's series, although one apparently straight-haired Agau was seen. Among the Amharas, 80 per cent were called "curly," and the rest "straight," according to native terminology; among the Gallas the same 20 per cent of "straight" were found, while among the Sidamos this rose to 30 per cent. Actually, the *gofari* class included both curly hair in a Hadhramaut sense, and frizzly hair of a negroid character. Hair which the Ethiopians themselves considered negroid was confined to a few individuals who were to all purposes pure negroes, and undoubtedly slaves.

According to our own classification, 40 per cent of the Amharas have non-negroid, wavy or curly hair,[66] and the rest frizzly; the non-negroid A S 142

[66] According to Fischer's findings, our "curly" could be called a negroid-white mixed form.

Fischer, E., *Die Rehobother Bastards.*

9: Coon D-5 (1933-19-4) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

A S 142

class among the Gallas is 30 per cent, among the Somalis 86 per cent. Some of the Somalis actually have straight hair. Although our series of Sidamos is too small to be reliable, it indicates that these people are not as frequently negroid in hair form as are the Amharas.

The latter, however, show their predominantly non-negroid character in the distribution of the pilous system; they have the most frequent baldness, beards which are often heavy, and a strong minority of heavy body hair; while the Gallas and Sidamos are less bearded and less hairy, and the Somalis, with beards comparable to those of southern Arabs, are almost glabrous on the body. Black hair is, of course, characteristic of all groups; a sporadic individual with dark brown or red-brown hair may be found, however, among all of them. The beard shows no difference from the head hair.

In eye color mixtures between several brunet strains are apparent. The Amharas have 47 per cent of dark brown and 11 per cent of light brown irises, with 39 per cent of mixtures between these two, with a light brown iridical background overlaid by rays of zones of dark brown; among the Gallas the same proportions of the same types are found. Among the Sidamos, black eyes begin to appear, and the dark brown shade is in the great majority, while among the Somalis 32 per cent are black and 56 per cent dark brown. In all groups an occasional case of mixed blond eyes occurs, with a green-brown or gray-brown mixture, but these form no more than 2 per cent of the whole.[67] They indicate the persistance of the minority tendency to eye blondism endemic in the Mediterranean racial stock, rather than any northern admixture.

The external eye form varies between the different groups in proportion of negroid blood; the Amharas and the Somalis have few eyefolds, little obliquity, a medium to slight opening height; among the Gallas and Sidamos, the pseudo-mongoloid[68] negroid internal fold is occasionally seen, and a strong minority has oblique and wide open eye slits. Similarly, the eyebrows are thickest and most concurrent among Amharas and Somalis.

Browridges are moderate, in a western European sense, or heavy, in over half of the Somali series; the Amharas are slight to moderate, the Gallas and Sidamos slight or absent. Foreheads are usually high among Amharas, and progressively lower among Gallas and Sidamos; the slope is most variable among the Amharas, among whom all forms are frequent; least variable among the Somalis, among whom it is usually slight. On the whole the more negroid have the greatest slopes.

[67] Higher percentages have been reported among Amharic speakers in some of the northern kingdoms.

[68] Seligman, C. G., and B. Z., *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, p. 20.

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

Considerable differences are seen in nose form between the different peoples; the most European forms are found among the Somalis and Amharas, while the Sidamo nose is for the most part negroid in morphology. The Somali noses, although they vary between an extremely leptorrhine and a negroid extreme, assume a normal distribution when tabulated by individual criteria. The mean is a moderate root height, narrow to medium root breadth, moderate bridge height, narrow to moderate bridge breadth, a straight profile, a thin tip, which is inclined slightly upward, medium wings, with thin to medium, slightly oblique nostrils. Although individual Somalis are beaky in nasal appearance, the impression of the group as a whole, and especially of the least negroid element, is that of a straight profile and moderate bridge height; in other words, of a classic Mediterranean nose form. A S 142

The noses of the Amharas, while very variable, are as a rule higher in root and bridge, and at the same time broader, thicker tipped, and often inclined downward, with a tendency to flaring nasal wings, and highly excavated nostrils. The Amharic nasal profile is again usually straight. The Galla noses are like those of the Amharas, with a slightly higher ratio of broad and flaring forms. Among the Sidamos, thick tips, flaring wings, and low roots and bridges are actually in the majority, although convex profiles are more frequent than among the less negroid groups. The Sidamo nose is morphologically as well as metrically a hybrid negro-white organ, such as is frequently seen among American negroes. A 142

In all groups, including the Somalis, thick lips are more numerous than thin ones, both integumentally and membranously; lip eversion is also characteristically great in all of them, as is a prominent lip seam. Really thin lips exceed 10 per cent only among the Amharas. All of the groups show some degree of prognathism; facial prognathism is approximately 10 per cent in all but the Sidamos, among whom it is greater; alveolar prognathism is present among all but Sidamos, to the extent of 25 per cent; among the Sidamos almost half are prognathous. The chin is as prominent as among most white men in over 60 per cent of all but Somalis, among whom it is characteristically receding. Frontal projection of the malars is slight in all groups; lateral projection is often pronounced among the Gallas and Sidamos, seldom so among Amharas and Somalis. Prominence of the gonial angles is most frequently marked among Amharas, never among Somalis. A S 142

Negroid traits are seen sometimes in the ear—among Sidamos the most and Amharas the least. The negroid ear has a small, soldered lobe, and an excessive roll to the helix. It rarely slants, while the ears of Amharas and especially of Somalis are characteristically set at an angle to the vertical.

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

A S 142 Among all of these peoples differences in racial as well as constitutional type is seen, even among the relatively homogeneous Somalis. Here the bulk of the population gravitates between two end types. The more numerous of these two is typified by a long, thin, bodily form with extremely narrow hands and feet, with thin, gracefully built bodies which, among the women, attain a degree of beauty seldom seen in Europe, with high, conical breasts in the women, totally unlike the pendulous negroid udders so common among Gallas and Amharas, and with the characteristically narrow faces and noses typical of the Somali. The other end type is an ordinary prognathous, thick-nosed, wide-eyed negro. About one Somali out of five seems to have a strong strain of negroid blood; in the others it is for the most part dilute. A few individuals among the Somali [69] are lighter skinned, brachycephalic, curly haired, and identical in almost all respects with the typical Hadhramis of southern Arabia. They undoubtedly represent the strain of the missionaries who converted the Somalis to Islam, and who founded the present tribes and families. They are, needless to say, rare.

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A 142 144 Among the Amharas there is one very impressive type with a relatively light skin color, a high, wide, sloping forehead, very frizzly hair, a high-bridged nose with a thick, depressed tip, and a long, rather bony face. The total effect is incipiently Papuan, and one feels that a veddoid-negroid cross is indicated, in combination with various amounts of both Arabian and Ethiopian varieties of Mediterranean. The linkage in this type of frizzly hair with these exaggerated facial characters seems to show a genetic realignment of some interest. This type is rare among Hamitic-speaking Ethiopians, who conform for the most part to Mediterranean or negroid facial patterns, in various degrees of solution and in various combinations.

A S 142 Except for the peculiar behavior of the frizzly hair form among the Amharas, white racial traits, on the whole, seem to be linked together. Among the Somalis, straight or wavy hair is usually fine, inclined to baldness on the head, moderate to heavy on the beard and present on the body; frizzly or woolly hair is of medium texture and scanty on beard and body; curly, Hadhramaut-style hair is often coarse, but is intermediate between white and negroid hair in quantity and distribution. Among both highland Hamites and Somalis, the lighter skins usually go with narrower noses, and straighter hair; dark brown eyes are strongly associated with narrow noses, black eyes with broad ones.

A S 144 On the basis of these correlations, it is evident that the partly negroid appearance of Ethiopians and of Somalis is due to a mixture between whites and negroes, and that the Ethiopian cannot be considered the

[69] I measured but one. Puccioni gives photographs of several.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

FIG. 3.—*Fāsil's castle, Gondar*

FIG. 4.—*Two Manzē elders*

FIG. 5.—*Manz, the tale of bāuna*

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[R14-8]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 9.—*The weekly market*

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[p.46-B]

FIG. 10.—*The market: weighing cotton*

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FIG. 11.—*The market: buying honey*

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FIG. 12.—*The market: inspecting pottery*

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FIG. 13.—*The market: selling salt bars*

[P.78-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 16.—*The procession on Tīmqat Day*

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FIG. 17.—*Tīmqat procession: detail*

[P. 110-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 18.—*Ten-year-old boy plowing*

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FIG. 19.—*Mother and daughter carrying water pots*

[P. 110-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *çhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *ṭajj*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *ṭallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics.

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dajāzmātch Hailu,* meaning "Dajāzmātch Hailu and his men."

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics.

Conspicuous consumption among the *maḳuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions:

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 25.—*Provincial nobleman and wife*

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FIG. 26.—*"Big men" journeying with retainers* [P.174-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[P.174-B]

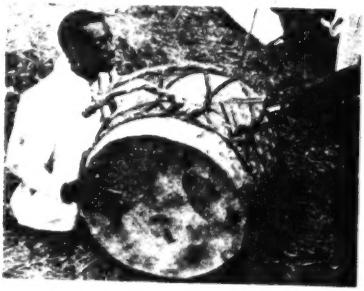

FIG. 27.—*A deacon*

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FIG. 28.—*Group of* dabtarā

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FIG. 29.—*An old priest*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 30.—*A widower who has become a monk*

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FIG. 31.—*A group of clergy*

[P. 206-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 32.—*Haile Selassie as a boy with his father, Ras Makonnen*

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FIG. 33.—*The Emperor attending a ceremony at the University College*

[P. 206-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 34.—*Offering a gurshâ*

FIG. 35.—*Singing out the master's qenê*

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FIG. 36.—*Amhara litigants* [P. 238-A]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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C. Racial characteristics and affiliations of the peoples of Ethiopia.

The terms used in this section refer to physical types only, and are not to be confused with linguistic or regional concepts carrying the same name. For not only is there a lack of statistical data on the physical anthropology of Ethiopia, but no new terms have been coined to describe physical types there, so that linguistic and regional names have been borrowed. While not good practice, in this case it is unavoidable.

The two most common physical types in Ethiopia are the "Mediterranean" and the "Hamite". These types have been best defined by Coon, Garn, Birdsell:[49]

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"Mediterranean" - medium to skinny in build.
generalized to intermediate in pigmentation.
medium to heavy in beard and body hair with a minority of blond forms, particularly in the iris;
medium in head size, with a minimum of paleanthropic features of the skull and face;
small faced, prominent nosed, small jawed, often small toothed;
medium to small extremities.

"Hamite" - Some of the peoples of East Africa and the Sudan seem to be skeletally Mediterranean but dark skinned; they have low to medium frequencies of spiral hair, thick lips, and other Negro features. The body build is extremely skinny."

The latter seems to be a very ancient East African type, according to the excavations in Keyna by Leakey, and the present Somali seem closest to it. Coon[50] points out that this type shows extreme narrowness of head and face, straight

49. Races, 1950, pp. 127, 129.
50. Races of Europe, 1939, Plate 20.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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nasal profile, non-negroid prominence of chin, curly but not frizzly hair, and black skin; thus constituting a borderline between the "Mediterranean race" and the African Negro.

Another ancient skeletal type, excavated in upper Egypt, is very similar to some northern Ethiopians (Abyssinians), according to the findings of C. M. Morant[51]. He took measurements of skulls and skeletal parts at Badari in upper Egypt, of a people who lived there about 4,000 B.C. Because of the extreme dryness of the region, he was able to determine that their skin was brunet - white, their hair black and wavy. He found that the Badarian cranial type was similar to that of the northern Ethiopian of today.

This type does occur among Amhara and Tigre peoples, but wavy hair is in a minority, sufficiently rare to cause comment. The author personally observed two individuals with distinctly soft, wavy hair, both from aristocratic Amhara families taking great pride in their unblemished ancestry.

The findings of Leakey and Morant, just beyond the southern and the northern borders of Ethiopia, would suggest that Ethiopia contained physical types of "Hamite" and "Mediterranean" characteristics long before the invasion of Semitic-speaking Hadhramautis, about 500 B.C.

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The Amhara is basically a Mediterranean type much like some Bedouin tribesmen, with oval face, keen nose, relatively thin or average lips which do not curl up, a type most frequently found in the Amharic-speaking provinces. The hair is often curly but not frizzly, and

51. Morant, G. M.: A Study of Predynastic Egyptian Skulls from Badaria. 1927, pp. 293-309.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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rises about the head like a halo, hiding a long, narrow, delicately modelled cranium.[52] A highbridged nose is regarded as a mark of beauty, and the chin is sometimes so sharply pointed that it recalls the features of Tel-El-Amarna. Skulls piled under cave ledges at the Amhara monastery of Debra Libanos (they may not be touched) appear to be dolichocephalic. Stature is medium. Musculature is not pronounced on sight, but Amhara peasants can perform great feats of endurance in walking uphill and for long distances. As a mark of the upper class female, women of nobility accumulate obesity by a rich diet and abstinence from any work. But the average Amhara is usually so narrow-boned that it is impossible for most adult Europeans to wear the cotton jodphurs in sizes made for Amhara.

The Galla have larger, well-built bodies, rounder faces, straigher noses and darder skins than the Amhara.[53]

The Shangalla along the western border and inland, evidence all the more typical negroid characteristics.

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When surveying the complexities of the many intermediate racial and sub-racial strains in Ethiopia, the question arises whether the Ethiopians might not be considered representative of an undifferentiated stage in the development of both whites and blacks. Coon[54] thinks not and points out that, on the whole, the white strain is much more prevalent and much more important metrically,

52. Coon: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p. 75.
53. Yilma, Asfor: Haile Selassie 1936, p. 23.
54. Coon: The Races of Europe. 1954, p. 457.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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while in pigmentation and in hair form the negroid influence is seen. His studies of Ethiopians and Somalis have led him to emphasize the principle that metrical similarities of a racial order have little reference to soft parts, since Somalis and Norwegians may be closely related in measurements, yet fall at world extremes in pigmentation and hair form.[55]

This leaves only the alternate conclusion, that all the peoples of this "Hamitic" area, whether Hamitic or Semitic in speech, represent a physical blend in varying proportions between negroes and Mediterraneans of several varieties.[56]

This conclusion is based on comparisons and correlations between the four major ethnic units of this area(from a physical standpoint): Amhara, Galla, Sidamo, Somali, to which a fifth, the Agau, may be added.[57] The following seem the most important features:[58]

55. Ibid.
56. Ibid, p. 448.
57. Ibid, p. 449.
58. Ibid, pp. 450-457

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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Table 2: Major Physical Characteristics of Numerically Large peoples in Ethiopia

	Amhara	Galla	Sidamo	Somali	Agau
Skull	dolicho-meso	meso	meso	meso	mesocephalic
Nose	leptorrhine	leptorr.	mesorrhine (near negroid)	leptorr.	
Skin	brunet-white (lightest) (mostly Lushan No. 21-25; range No.13-34	chocolate brown (mostly No.22-29; range darker	dark brown to black (darker then No.30)	dark brown glossy (mostly No.29; range No. 27-30	
Hair (form)	60% frizzly 40% curly or wavy	30% have non-negroid hair		86% have non-negroid hair	
Hair color	black among all, no difference head or beard.				
(pilous system)	non-negroid: frequent baldness, often heavy beards; even minority with heavy body hair	less bearded, less hairy	less bearded less hairy	beards like southern Arabs; almost glabrous on body	
Eye (color)	47% dark brown 11% light brown 39% mixed	same as Amhara	mostly dark-brown, some black	56% dark-brown 32% black	
Lips	10% thin	no thin	no thin	no thin	
Nose	straight profile, high root and bridge flaring nasal wings, excavated nostrils.	similar but more broad and flaring	low root and bridge, thick tips (resembles hybrid negro-white, as in American negroes)		

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses. 175

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town. 632

The surrounding grassy *alms* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June. 133

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick. 491 [137] [136]

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people. 563 175

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups. 101 563

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion 101 144

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 212 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

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147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

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9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

000 the linguistic sense at least, an eastward thrust of Sudanese negroes. In Ethiopia proper many Shankalla, negroes brought as slaves from the Blue Nile country, have propagated both as a slave population and through mixture. In Italian Somaliland, it is said that some of the slave tribes subservient to the Somalis speak Bantu. The speech of the Wattas may also be neither Hamitic nor Semitic.

A S 144 The study of the physical anthropology of this ethnologically and historically complex region may be said to have barely begun; nevertheless it has progressed far enough to warrant reasonably accurate statements as to the racial characters of the more numerous and better known peoples.[60] Before proceeding further, it may be well to state that all of the peoples of this "Hamitic" area, whether Hamitic or Semitic in speech, represent a blend in varying proportions between Mediterraneans of several varieties, especially of the tall, Atlanto-Mediterranean group, and negroes. Other elements include, of course, the Veddoid brought in solution from southern Arabia; there is also a possibility of traces of dilute pygmy and Bushman blood in southwestern Ethiopia and Somaliland, although neither of these has been proved. Needless to say, the Gallas and Amharas have mixed with each other greatly in the regions in which they have been in contact; both the Amharas and Gallas have absorbed the earlier Cushitic agricultural peoples in great numbers. The most important single influence has been the infiltration of negroes, through the slave trade, into the entire Ethiopian plateau region. So extensive has this infiltration been that it is unlikely that a single genetic

A 113

[60] The principal works on the physical anthropology of the living in this region are:
Castro, L. de, *Nella Terra dei Negus*, vol. 2, pp. 342–477.
Frasetto, F., **AnthPr**, vol. 10, 1932, pp. 161–187.
Garson, J. G., Appendix to Bent, T. J., *The Sacred City of the Ethiopians*, pp. 286–296.
Klimek, S., **APA**, vols. 60–61, 1930–31, pp. 358–381.
Koettlitz, R., **JRAI**, vol. 30, 1900, pp. 50–55.
Lester, P., **Anth**, vol. 38, 1928, pp. 61–90, 289–315.
Leys, N. M., and Joyce, T. A., **JRAI**, vol. 43, 1913, p. 195.
Puccioni, N., **APA**, vol. 41, 1911, pp. 295–326; vol. 47, 1917, pp. 13–164; vol. 49, 1919, pp. 41–223; vol. 53, 1923, pp. 25–68; *Anthropologia e Etnografia delle Genti della Somalia*
Radlauer, C., **AFA**, vol. 41, 1914, pp. 451–473.
Verneau, R., Appendix in Duchesne-Fournet, *Mission en Ethiopie*.
In addition to these, the author has used, in the following exposition, a MS. of his own, awaiting publication, and entitled: *Contribution to the Study of the Physical Anthropology of the Ethiopians and Somalis*, based on a series of 100 Ethiopians and 80 Somalis measured in 1933–34.
Principal works on the craniology of this region are:
Castro, L. de, **APA**, vol. 41, 1911, pp. 327–339.
Cipriani, L., **APA**, vol. 53, 1926, pp. 11–24.
Sergi, S., *Crania Habessinica*.
Verneau, R., **Anth**, vol. 10, 1899, pp. 641–662.
Works on the Danakil, Baria, Cunama, and Beja are listed later.

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

line in the entire Horn of Africa is completely free from negroid admixture; but individuals may be found among the Amharas, Gallas, and Somalis who show no visible signs of negro blood. These individuals are extremely rare. On the whole the negroid element in the Hamitic area cannot be much more than one-fourth of the whole, but it has penetrated every ethnic group and every social level. Just when this penetration had become complete we do not know, but one suspects that it had already occurred by the sixth century A.D., when the Ethiopians ruled the Yemen. The Gallas, despite their tradition of descent from white men, were already partly negroid at the time of their arrival in Ethiopia. A S 144

Despite this negroid penetration, and despite a mixture between non-negroid elements, the four ethnic units of Amharas, Gallas, Sidamos, and Somalis are all statistically distinct from each other.[61] What evidence we have for the Agaus suggests that this people constitutes a fifth anthropometric entity. As one would expect, the more purely Hamitic peoples, such as the Agaus, Gallas, and Somalis, are taller than the Amharas. All of these three have stature means ranging from 169 to 174 cm., while 172 cm. seems to be the central mean for all of them. The Semitic speakers range from a mean of 164–167 cm.[62] for the Tigré, the most nearly Arabian of the four main groups, to 167–169 cm. for each of the other three, while a series of varied Ethiopians, mostly from Shoa, and measured in Addis Ababa, rose to the mean of 169 cm. This latter figure may reflect Galla mixture—for Addis Ababa is in Galla territory—or selection. The Sidamos, in contrast to the Agaus, are apparently short (164 cm.). A S 141

In bodily build and proportions, all groups are much the same. The predominant type is leptosome, with a relative sitting height index of 50 to 51, a relative span of 103, and a relative shoulder breadth of 21. Long legs and relatively short arms, narrow shoulders, and even narrower hips, are the rule. Few Ethiopians of any category are thick-set, and what little corpulence is seen hangs ill on fine-boned frames. The hands and feet of all but the palpably negroid are small and extremely narrow, the lower legs and wrists usually spindly and ill-muscled. This attenuation of the distal segments of the limbs reaches its maximum among the Somalis. The Sidamos, who are by far the most negroid of the Ethiopian peoples, have the broadest shoulders in proportion to their height, and the narrowest hips. A S 142

There can be no doubt that the tall stature of the Gallas, Somalis, and Agaus is an old Hamitic trait, since both the negroid Sidamos and the Semites of Hadhramauti origin are much shorter. The tallness of this S 141

[61] From statistical analysis of author's unpublished material.
[62] From several different series.

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

A S 142 Among all of these peoples differences in racial as well as constitutional type is seen, even among the relatively homogeneous Somalis. Here the bulk of the population gravitates between two end types. The more numerous of these two is typified by a long, thin, bodily form with extremely narrow hands and feet, with thin, gracefully built bodies which, among the women, attain a degree of beauty seldom seen in Europe, with high, conical breasts in the women, totally unlike the pendulous negroid udders so common among Gallas and Amharas, and with the characteristically narrow faces and noses typical of the Somali. The other end type is an ordinary prognathous, thick-nosed, wide-eyed negro. About one Somali out of five seems to have a strong strain of negroid blood; in the others it is for the most part dilute. A few individuals among the Somali[*] are lighter skinned, brachycephalic, curly S 144 haired, and identical in almost all respects with the typical Hadhramis of southern Arabia. They undoubtedly represent the strain of the missionaries who converted the Somalis to Islam, and who founded the present tribes and families. They are, needless to say, rare.

A 142 Among the Amharas there is one very impressive type with a relatively light skin color, a high, wide, sloping forehead, very frizzly hair, a high-bridged nose with a thick, depressed tip, and a long, rather bony face. 144 The total effect is incipiently Papuan, and one feels that a veddoid-negroid cross is indicated, in combination with various amounts of both Arabian and Ethiopian varieties of Mediterranean. The linkage in this type of frizzly hair with these exaggerated facial characters seems to show a genetic realignment of some interest. This type is rare among Hamitic-speaking Ethiopians, who conform for the most part to Mediterranean or negroid facial patterns, in various degrees of solution and in various combinations.

A S 142 Except for the peculiar behavior of the frizzly hair form among the Amharas, white racial traits, on the whole, seem to be linked together. Among the Somalis, straight or wavy hair is usually fine, inclined to baldness on the head, moderate to heavy on the beard and present on the body; frizzly or woolly hair is of medium texture and scanty on beard and body; curly, Hadhramaut-style hair is often coarse, but is intermediate between white and negroid hair in quantity and distribution. Among both highland Hamites and Somalis, the lighter skins usually go with narrower noses, and straighter hair; dark brown eyes are strongly associated with narrow noses, black eyes with broad ones.

A S 144 On the basis of these correlations, it is evident that the partly negroid appearance of Ethiopians and of Somalis is due to a mixture between whites and negroes, and that the Ethiopian cannot be considered the

[*] I measured but one, Puccioni gives photographs of several.

9: Coon D-5 ( ) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

representative of an undifferentiated stage in the development of both whites and blacks, as some anthropologists would have us believe. On the whole, the white strain is much more numerous and much more important metrically, while in pigmentation and in hair form the negroid influence has made itself clearly seen. This study of Ethiopians and Somalis has served to bring out the principle that metrical similarities of a racial order have little reference to the soft parts, since Somalis, Gallas, Arabs, Berbers, Norwegians, and Englishmen may all be closely related in measurements, and at the same time fall at world extremes in pigmentation and in hair form. Within the Mediterranean racial family there is every variation in these external features between a Nordic and a Somali.

The northern relatives of the Somalis, the Afar or Danakil, seem to resemble them closely both metrically and morphologically.[70] If one may hazard a guess from inadequate material, they are even less frequently negroid than are the Somali. The Baria and Cunama, the Sudanic-speaking tribes of Eritrea, are of moderate stature, and are small headed; they are a negroid-Hamitic mixture in which the old Sudanese negroid element is strong.[71]

Of great importance from the standpoint of the history of Hamitic-speaking peoples in North Africa are the various tribal divisions of the great Beja people, who live to the east of the Nile from Eritrea north into Upper Egypt. Some of them now speak Tigré, others Arabic, but their original speech is Cushitic, and their racial relationship seems to be with the Somalis and Danakils for the most part. Some of them, such as the Haddendoa, have been largely mixed with Sudanese negroes; the less mixed, such as the Beni Amer in northern Eritrea, and the Bisharin in the Egyptian desert, represent a fairly uniform type which Seligman compares to the predynastic Egyptians.[72]

This type is, in its least negroid form, of moderate stature, with tribal means ranging from 164 to 169 cm., and comparable in head dimensions and in facial and nasal breadths with the Somalis, although some tribes are smaller headed. The characteristic narrow jaw of the Somalis is also typical here. The skin color is usually somewhere between a bronze-

[70] Bouchereau, A., **Anth,** vol. 8, 1897, pp. 149–164.
Santelli, **BSA,** Paris, ser. 4, vol. 4, 1893, pp. 479–501.

[71] Pollera, A., *I Baria e I Cunama.* Pollera's data make both Baria and Cunama leptorrhine, a supposition which his photographs belie. His nasal breadth technique, and his bizygomatic, are both obviously erroneous.

[72] Seligman, C. G., **JRAI,** vol. 43, 1913, pp. 593–705.
See also:
Chantre, E., **BSAL,** vol. 18, 1899, pp. 138–141. Also, résumé in **Anth,** vol. 13, 1902, pp. 122–123.
Murray, G. W., **JRAI,** vol. 57, 1927, pp. 39–53.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
• 144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

*753 grazing. Both highland zones are considered ideal for
131 human habitation. While residents of the dega zone oc-
133 casionally comment on what they regard as the uncomfor-
821 table summer heat of the weyna dega, at the same time it is acknowledged that the rainy season (kiramt) is more burdensome in the dega. The rains last from May to September and are marked by temperatures in the mid-thirties in dega lands and perhaps ten to fifteen degrees warmer in the weyna dega. This season is regarded as a particularly bad time for kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints) whose severity is considered greatest in the dega zone. Epidemiologically, the dega is also associated with a relatively high incidence of yinifas baṽiyta ("the wind disease"), an ailment described in Chapter One.

131 Although reliable population estimates are lacking,
101 the weyna dega and dega zones contain perhaps 85% of
161 Begemder's people. These rural highlands are occupied
197 by five ethnic groups, racially indistinguishable from
• 144 one another and, with an exception, now speaking a common Semetic languase, Amharic. The Amhara are the most numerous of Begemder's highland peoples, and extend into the provinces of Gojam and Shoa, to the south. Within the Begemder highlands, they occupy the area south of latitude 13°30'. North of this line live the Tigre, a related people who speak a cognate language, Tigrinya.
101 Both Amhara and Tigre are Coptic Christians, and from
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12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

632
563 bar maids.
[463]
[562] A third, numerically significant minority have come from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even
[144] though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly
[779] negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are
[647] non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations
[562] also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly
[464] by girls and women working as servants for the less af-
*[192] fluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Nilotes living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for
[326] sale in the town's daily wood market (sir gabiya). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

632 Ward and Town. Gondar's residents divide the town
621

[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("bariya").

887 nobility they have moved as high in position as their inherited potential allows.

886 In appearance he usually grows a chin beard, which comes late, usually not before the age of thirty, and is greying when a man becomes a "shemagalyē" at about 40. At that time he is usually a grandfather.

As ruler at the apex of his own social pyramid, he is limited only by direct physical strength, in which no one expects him to excel. But if a former warrior, he may be vain and not admit his fading physical strength, and try to show that he can still hold up against young men in warlike games. This is the only time when an elder is occasionally mocked, as "wäbärra" (lit. he struts).

888 Dependency in old age is no problem among rural kin groups living on settled land, whether their own or rented. Even in senility, the elder is respected and cared for; even when, as he himself admits, he is "good only for guarding chickens" (tertes alä" - became senile).

888 792 However, dependency of an old woman is a more difficult problem, though she, too, is generally cared for. But since she has no functions of leadership, her status lacks the positive, if she becomes a widow, and is too weak to perform the household labors [145] of women. Also, woman fade physically more rapidly than men. As a result, the "mäbälät" or "baltēt", a greying woman past menopause, or widow of serious mind and spirit, often takes vows as a nun, wears the "qob" of a nun though continuing in her old residence, and spends much time in the churchyard, working in the "betelehem" hut where beer and bread for church use are prepared. Nuns are always old women, partly because it is not considered proper for a

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 212 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

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The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

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153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

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222
554

wild blueberry - "agam", very common; with thorny twigs, resembling the sloe tree; found not far from rivers, on the woyna dega.

wild fig tree - "shola", or "warka", giant tree (ficus sycomorus) with small but very sweet fruit.

"qamma" - fruit resembling raisin, turns brown when ripe, sour, consumed as mild laxative.

mushroom - "enguday", or "anguday", with white bottom. Rarely eaten.

"awut" - common, reddish or white fruit of a nettle bush, of very low prestige and consumed only in time of famine; gathered in early dry season (Mäskäräm to Ter).

Only lemons are consumed publicly without shame. They are purchased on the market. Bananas from the lowlands are also available to urban people, or "great men" who can afford them. Observers have suggested that the common nose-bleeding of Amhara may result from a Vitamin C deficiency, due to little fruit consumption.

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146]

Collecting also provides such necessities as wild cotton in more remote areas (e.g. the Magoza district of Wolqait). Every housewife uses leaves of the "lola" bush in which to bake the festive bread "dabbo".

Wild honey is obtained from the wild bee called "tazzema" (Apis africans miaia), and used against colds as well as "heart ailments". More commonly, honey for making the alcoholic drink "tej", is obtained from a small, tiny-stinged bee (Apis dorsata), but since many of the bees are killed when they are smoked out, this process, too, is one of collecting rather than bee culture.

[278]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *çhirāq* is some-
152 times evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still an-
[116] other figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away
[189] a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

121 Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions
155 of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted
[853] earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara
121 practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new
155 baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a
862 bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

121 Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of suck-
155 ing and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects
• 146 as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

121 The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible
155 area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discon-
858 tinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible

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827 Seven senses are distinguished by the Amhara, each centered in an organ:

1. Seeing - "ayn" (lit. eye)
2. Hearing - "jor" (ear)
3. Smelling - "afencha" (nose)
4. Tasting - "af" (mouth)
5. Feeling - "ej" (hand)
6. Walking - "eger" (leg, foot)
7. Sex sense - "abalä zär" (lit. male genital organs; polite term).

[151] The sense of taste is noteworthy because the Amhara often does not distinguish bitter ("märara") from sour taste ("homtata"), which the Westerner does quite readily; the Amhara regards both as "märara" (bitter). However, the Amhara distinguishes a "soft taste" ("tefet"), typified by "berz" (honeywater).

828 While these seven senses are located physiologically in corresponding organs, psychological states are regarded as located in the belly or the heart, but in different ways than the Westerner might expect.

The belly ("hod") is considered the seat of emotions:

magnanimous emotions - "hod chäräca" (lit. belly lit up like the moon);

fear - "hod babba" (lit. trembling of the belly);

forgetfulness - "hod gäbba" (lit. the belly swallowed it, i.e. lost the thought).

The heart ("leb") is considered the seat of the presence or absence of wisdom:

good judgement - "leb ber" (lit. with a silver heart);

inventive - "leb wäläd" (lit. child of the heart; invention);

inactive - "leb mut" (lit. whose heart is dead);

157 absence of self-restraint, he can give free rein to the typical
554 Amhara fondness for rapid and noisy argumentation, quoting witticisms, puns and proverbs. He does not have to control his typical Amhara curiosity about non-material objects and human behavior, and can stare freely and openly. Even his servility to the noble is
[576] only formal and not internalized, for, while he bows deeply from the hips, his eyes are raised to observe every detail of the situation (especially to see whether some reward can be wheedled).

The Amhara noble, however, is required to be at least outwardly, an introverted personality. This is expressed in formal dignity, a partly withdrawn and meditative manner, a serious (though not severe) mien. His bodily movements must be slow and deliberate; his pattern of speech must be the same. Most of the time he remains pokerfaced. He has been trained to observe by moving only his eyes,
[152] not his head. He does not express his basic emotions directly, except with social equals under proper circumstances. He must appear too proud to show curiosity, even for interesting and strange articles brought by the foreigner; he accepts them with just a dignified and appreciative nod of the head.

152 There is the principle of "noblesse oblige". The noble be-
554 haves as if his due will certainly come to him - he does not have to go and seek it. When a servant has angered him, the noble does not fly into a rage publicly, though he may have him routinely flogged later on. It is noteworthy that even the womenfolk among the nobles share this personality training. Although hysteria is
152 very common among Amhara women, it is rare among noblewomen. Even
554 in case of great emotional distress (e.g. if a child has died)
158 when commoner Amhara women wail loudly, scarify themselves, and roll
[304]

152 554 158 on the ground, Amhara noblewomen weep silently or go into states of apathy. This is a more common mental ailment among nobles than hysteria, and may lead to chronic depression and even catalepsy (see Part VI).

157 554 186 However, both the peasant and the noble share certain common Amhara personality characteristics. Both take great pride in being able to "speak well in court". Homesickness is strong among both, and is very widespread. Kings and emperors, until very recently, had great difficulty in sending and keeping ambassadors abroad, for the diplomat regarded his foreign assignment as "exile". Both classes share great pride in their highland plateau, defended for many centuries against all comers. This national vanity is at least in part due to long ignorance of the world beyond (sometimes hardened into xenophobia); pride in their ancient religion and in the national epics like the Solomon-Sheba-Menelik. These are shared by Amhara of all classes.

829 Amhara concepts of government administration are aristocratic: ruled by the noble "great man", who is usually descended from a feudal warlord of past centuries. The military camp and its direct significance for traditional Amhara social structure and government has been described in Part III. At the top of the hierarchy is the king or emperor (King of Kings). At the Amhara grassroots is the peasant, who seeks justice by attaching himself to a "great man" as retainer, so that he too will be treated "with honor" by reflection. From the bottom to the top of the hierarchy of government, persons on every level perform the ceremony of "dáj tenat" (lit. waiting by the gate) to obtain jobs, maintain positions, or merely to prevent doubts about personal loyalty from arising through absence. This

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411 standing at the long church services. Above all it is a weapon of offense and
181 defense, and every Amhara male is supposed to be skilled in its use. When the *dulā* is so employed in Manz, the *bānnā* blanket is usually wrapped around the left arm to form a quick shield, the *dulā* raised high with the right to bring down on the adversary's cranium. The blows are sometimes fatal. The Manzēs are proud of their facility with the lethal stick, and nearly every district in Manz boasts that it is real "*dulā* country."

726 The Manzēs also excel at *shīllalā,* the Abyssinian war chant. This is a
533 form of boastful verse—partly intoned, partly shouted—which is declaimed by
181 warriors to "heat their blood" before hitting the warpath. Children in Manz start practicing *shīllalā* almost as soon as they leave the breast. The following
[539] is a good specimen of Manz *shillalā:*

> *Agarātchn Māmā agarātchn Lālo wanzātchn Dangazē;*
> *Mān abātu yāzzāl imbi senīl gizē.*

> Our land is Māmā, our land is Lālo, our stream the Dangazē;
> What father will order us when *imbi* we say!

Imbi is an interjection used by children to express "No!" There is a double pun in this couplet. *Mān abātu* ("Who is the father?") is a profane idiom meaning "bastard." "To say *imbi*" is another idiom, meaning "to refuse." The second line may thus be also rendered as:

> What bastard dare shove us around when we tell him to keep off our lands!

181 The Manzē code asks that a man be ready to defend his land and church
865 by force. It does not approve wanton aggression. But the Manzē's disposition
• 152 is notoriously aggressive, for his emotional life is relatively devoid of warmth
[577] and, on the other hand, fighting is so highly rewarded. Children are urged to be adept with the *dulā.* Their temper tantrums are welcomed as signs that they are brave. As a result the men of Manz are often overcome by the impulse toward physical aggression; assault and murder are recurrent events on their fields and trails and at their marketplaces. The discrepancy between the *norm* of physical bravery, which is operative *in certain specified circumstances,* and the *general character trait* of aggressiveness comprises a major theme in their emotional life: they feel obliged to look for justification for the aggressive actions which they have been conditioned to want to carry out. This disposition is illustrated in the words of the Manzē youth who said:

> I want very much to kill somebody. The only problem is I'm not strong enough. Perhaps one day I will be. Why is it all right to kill? People kill sheep, don't they? And sheep are innocent, they don't know anything, don't do any wrong. But man knows, he knows much, and still he does wrong: every man is bad. I wouldn't kill everybody, only the bad ones. If I had an enemy, I would kill him. Maybe I will become a soldier, and kill my country's enemies.

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in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [771]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shĭllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 [183]

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*883 178 581 brides be virgin. Related norms greatly restrict their quest for romantic love. Since Ethiopian society still expects its maidens to be shy and retiring, and to avoid social relations with boys outside their families, the boys find few *883 834 178 opportunities for getting to know members of the opposite sex. Even in those few situations where sociability between the sexes is publicly permitted, ingrained tendencies to segregate the sexes persist. The most liberal context for such sociability, the University College campus, has witnessed relatively little interaction between male and female students. In spite of their occasional resolutions to act more boldly, the college boys have in the past tended to shy away from the co-eds except during such rare formal events as a college dance or off-campus parties.

883 836 178 548 834 This is not to say that modern adolescent males have no opportunity for premarital sexuality. On the contrary, their opportunities in this regard are perhaps better than ever. The proliferation of brothels in Ethiopia's urban centers makes sexual initiation easy, almost a routine event. Students also frequent these houses for social entertainment, dancing to swing and Latin rhythms, and sipping beer or soft drinks. Thus the continued sanctions against social intercourse in more respectable forms work to sharpen the Amhara dichotomy between decency and sexuality, and leave modern boys with a double standard that separates the marriageable girls from the enjoyable ones.

*883 178 581 584 [152] The idea that marriage should be founded on romantic love has brought greater anxiety as well as hope into the lives of Ethiopian adolescents. This anxiety is due in part to the above-mentioned inhibitions against that easy commerce of the sexes which so facilitates the discovery of a suitable love object. It also reflects a certain ambivalence toward the new ideal, based on a lingering attachment to the authority of the old system. This was manifest, for example, in the response to a college debate on the topic, "Resolved: that the custom of letting the parents choose a spouse for the children should be maintained," that took place in 1959. Although on anonymous questionnaires *90 per cent* of the college students said they will probably decide whom to marry themselves, and only 3 per cent said the decision would be made by parents or other relatives, in voting on the matter after the debate the students (in contrast to the judges who awarded the negative debaters) publicly declared themselves 42 per cent affirmative, 41 per cent negative, with 17 per cent abstaining.

*883 178 581 586 Anxiety regarding the new conception of marriage, finally, is also connected with a new-fashioned fear of divorce. The mind of the modern adolescent vacillates between the ideal of an abiding marital relationship based on

152 * Due perhaps to the greater importance of their peers, sexual accomplishments have now become a frequent topic of conversation and a matter for boasting among modern adolescent boys.

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love and the image of the traditional Amhara marriage, likely as not to end in divorce. This sort of concern was expressed in a revealing way in the following statement by a twenty-year-old college student: 883* 581 586 178 [152]

> The main thing I want in my wife is good character. Beauty is not so important. Of course she will be an excellent cook. But mostly I am concerned that she be the *right* one for me; I do not want to get divorced. But you can't really know if she is the right one until after ten years of married life. If after having about five or six children it turns out troublesome, I will have to leave her. A person cannot go on living that way.

In some instances, ironically, this quest for the perfect marriage leads to a rejection of the very institution of marriage itself. Seven per cent of the students questioned indicated that they do not want to get married eventually—either because they "could never afford it," they "would be happier living single," or they just *"do not want to enter a relation that will end in divorce."* Thus at a time when the stability and warmth of family life are needed more than ever, the very possibility of family is doubted. 883* 178 581 589

Some Ethiopian students blame the deteriorated family and an alleged increase in divorce in their country on the impact of Western civilization. True, the introduction of the Western concept of marriage and of the rudiments of a modern occupational system have dislocated the traditional arrangements for marriage; and other related problems, to be discussed in the next chapter, plague the Western-educated elite. But Western civilization has also developed resources to begin to cope with analogous problems in its own societies, and perhaps it is not too soon to acquaint Ethiopia's youth with some of these: for example, the recent developments in man's understanding of the dynamics of marriage as well as more sophisticated conceptions of the ideal and importance of family life in modern society. 581 177

CULTURAL ORIENTATION

A generational conflict manifests itself further with respect to questions of belief, taste, and value. Because of differences on such issues, students and their parents have grown far apart. The more traditionalist of the older generation refer to the modern youth as *ya-sĭmmĭntaññā shi lĭjjotch* ("children of the eighth millennium"); that is, of that corrupt time the Amhara believe will precede the destruction of the world. The latter, in turn, refer to the old-fashioned as ignorant, uncivilized, sometimes even "savage." 561

Yet, as we have been suggesting, this conflict is by no means total. Amhara adolescents are too deeply attached to many aspects of their traditional culture to engage in wholesale rebellion. Because of strict childhood training they remain basically respectful toward their elders. In addition, they often prefer to champion their own traditions in the spirit of a freshly excited nationalism. 883* 561 178

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the government schools. The weakening of family controls by the new school environment has slightly reduced the importance of loyalty to kin in the students' scheme of things, and has significantly reduced the moral authority of religious customs. A third sphere of norms—respect and obedience toward elders and persons of authority—is maintained by the hierarchical school system, officially headed by the Emperor himself. However, the ambiguous status of foreign teachers and their frequent inability or unwillingness to play the traditional authoritarian role tends to weaken this, for the possibility of informal, even joking, relations with foreign teachers gives Amhara students their first taste of a more relaxed relation to authority figures. (Unprepared by any other experience for such a relationship, their reaction tends to be one of exploiting the permissive teacher as much as possible while at the same time losing respect for him.)

Finally, the expectation of physical stamina and aggressiveness in the Amhara *goramsä* is carried over into the school setting but with definite modification. It prevails in the feeling that one must not tolerate insults or be cowardly. It also persists in altered form in the new pattern of athletic activities instituted by the schools. On the other hand, the greater camaraderie expected among schoolmates means that aggression must also be carefully controlled. An indication of the psychological difficulties to which the crowded yet sociable conditions of school life have given rise appears in response to the question: "What is the worst thing that could justifiably be said against you?" The most frequent sort of answer to this question relates to unchecked aggression: "Quick to anger," "quarrelsome," "ill tempered."

Of the new moral values inculcated by the school system, some of the main ones appear to be self-development via education; honesty; sportsmanship; and social responsibility.

Ethiopians often speak of the "value" (*tïqem*) of education, meaning thereby the path to a well-paying job and a higher standard of living. But one would be mistaken to suppose that this explanation exhausts the meaning that education has for the modern adolescents. The freeing of their imagination and the exercise of previously unknown intellectual capacities prove themselves thrilling experiences for each new class of students. And their most preferred pastime is "reading," their most popular films are educational ones. A number of students spontaneously declared, when asked about the real reason they go to school, "to learn about the world" and "to learn about humanity."

In the traditional culture of Abyssinia, learning was highly valued, to be sure. But its task was to produce a class of literati capable of transmitting the hallowed beliefs and symbols. Education for the sake of inquiry as such or for personal development was never permitted in its program. If the value of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE PHENOMENA OF AMHARA ORALITY

155 Shortly after an Amhara child is born some butter is placed in his mouth. This
826 is done in the belief that it will keep his voice from becoming harsh. From
[856] that moment on, the mouth never ceases to be an organ of extraordinary
[192] importance in his life. Its cultural importance is reflected in the attention given to it in the Amharic vocabulary: Baeteman's *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* lists some sixty idioms built with the Amharic word for mouth, *af*, more than are listed for any other words in the language except "eye,"
[539] "heart," and "earth."[4] The organ is publicly celebrated in such proverbs as: "Cleverness of mouth, to the master; cleverness of hand, to the slave."

155 The oral zone is of course of universal significance. Some items of oral
826 imagery probably appear in most languages, and manifestations of oral libido
171 appear in many forms familiar to Westerners: the French love for gourmandism, the German passion for beer-drinking and singing, the American addiction to cigarettes, chewing gum, and "life-savers." Many of the less familiar phenomena to be related below in describing Amhara orality, moreover, are found in most of the cultures of Africa and the Middle East. But such phenomena often appear inconspicuously alongside other culturally patterned impulses and sublimations stemming from other phases of psychosexual development. What may distinguish the Amhara—and doubtless some other cultures—is the extent to which the oral zone is an object of attention and a source of behavioral modes and expressive symbolism. The Amhara, it appears, have a preoccupation with orality.

121 This preoccupation is manifest in three different kinds of phenomena.
155 There are, first of all, aspects of Amhara culture which express a strong positive attachment to the infantile experience of sucking, in pure and in numerous sublimated forms. These we shall designate as the phenomena of *oral erotism*. Second, there are the aspects of Amhara culture which express a
[152] strong positive attachment to the oral zone as a center for various aggressive activities—the modes which Erikson calls "incorporation by biting," "oral retention," and "oral intrusion." These we shall collectively designate as the phenomena of *oral sadism*. Finally, there are phenomena which express a conflict about the gratification of many of these oral desires; and these we shall refer to as the phenomena of *oral ambivalence*.

155 *Oral Erotism*

853 Feeding at the breast is a prominent and beloved experience in Amhara life. The Amhara infant is suckled whenever he wishes, at the slightest show of desire. Since he is rarely separated from his mother it is easy for him to satisfy himself at any time of day or night. Popular beliefs about breast-feed-

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ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes 155
to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the 853
negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for 853
a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. 862
Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If 155
another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-suck- 853
ing is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may 854
be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara 155
are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no mat- [856]
ter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a [125]
very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is [753]
he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on [776]
the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional 155
atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and 855
punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his 853
earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional 853
security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary 152
symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." 155
The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly repli- 831
cate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

853 155 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning
• 152 adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through
597 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended
853 foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbāt*, or breast-
155 father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbāt*. Used
152 metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the
155 oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their
[855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes.
201 The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or
[832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions.
576 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long
155 separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati-
[431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout
155 Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the
538 Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant
832 intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

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261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
155
539

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[776] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

574 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
(554) *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
152

[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *ĭnjarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training and Personality*. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[13] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formulation, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ĭnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution
789 of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of
261 eating something or presenting food to someone.[14] It is a theme conspicuous
173 in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85). According to *The Book of the*
[539] *Riches of Kings,* Yekuno Amlāk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zāgwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[15]

155 *Oral Sadism*

• 152 In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the envi-
201 ronment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When
155 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong
152 biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following
726 refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:
[539]

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[16]

155 The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagi-
266 nation. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the
773 story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater
[532] of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [262]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [754]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away [609]
from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well- [776]
known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *çhirāq* is some-
• 152 times evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still an-
[796] other figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away
[789] a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

121 Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions
155 of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted
[853] earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara
121 practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new
155 baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a
862 bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

121 Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of suck-
155 ing and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects
146 as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

121 The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible
155 area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discon-
858 tinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of shepherds,[19] as well as the secret formulae of magicians, the obscurantist constructions of wax and gold, and the use of Ge'ez itself in the presence of illiterates. Related to this is the great popularity of riddle games among Amhara. Personal relations, moreover, are consciously predicated on the harboring of secrets, or *mīsṭir*. The Amhara assume that it is improper to reveal oneself fully, to disclose one's *mīsṭir*, to anyone but a very close friend; and that, in fact, rarely happens. 121* 181 571 [198] [524]

Given the weakness of horizontal forms of cohesion among the Amhara—sociability at mealtime, stylized politeness among equals, and co-operation in time of crisis, important though they are, cannot contain the centrifugal forces just described—the dispositions which sustain a minimum of social order among the Amhara are expressed through vertical, hierarchical forms of interaction. Here both individualistic and solidaristic forms are in evidence, the latter in the forms of deference and begging, the former in the variety of authoritarian relationships.

Perhaps the most characteristic form of interaction among the Amhara is that of *domination*. The Amhara is at his happiest when he is in a position to order someone about. The sense of domination is marked not only in relations between nobles and commoners, officers and soldiers, masters and servants, but also between husbands and wives, and parents and children. Amhara children sometimes volunteer the explanation of their desire to have children when they grow up as based on the explanation that then *they* will have youngsters of their own to command.

Connected with the passion to dominate is a predilection for administering physical punishment. In all of the relationships just mentioned corporal punishment is an integral feature, particularly so on the domestic scene. With sticks or whips, masters beat servants, teachers pupils, husbands wives, and parents children. The complete acceptance of this pattern was shown by the fact that not a single Amhara TAT respondent objected to any of the corporal punishment cards. They all assumed that the punishment depicted, including that of husband against wife and mistress against servant, was deserved, proper, and would have a salutary effect. (One of the respondents even exclaimed when regarding one of the beating scenes: "What a beautiful punishment!") The only reservations expressed concerned the possibility that the punishment might be so severe as to wound fatally the person being punished, in which case the punisher would have cause for regret. 121* 181 571 152

Whatever the functions of such patterns in controlling antisocial behavior and securing adherence to the norms of the situation, the sentiment that underlies them is primarily egoistic. The superior is interested primarily in having his own way and gratifying his ego through the sheer exercise of his power; and the motivation of the punisher probably often contains a strong 121* 181 571

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 212 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner [516] gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. [145] Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the [302] women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

resist taking responsibility and showing initiative. In general, they reveal little capacity for self-discipline in a collective setting. 121* 571 156

The need for what can be accomplished through the new associations, however, transcends the intermittent obstacles to their effective functioning posed by such individualistic behavior. As modernization proceeds and as Ethiopians gain experience in these associations, one may expect that the more disruptive aspects of such behavior will be transformed in the direction of greater compliance with the implicit norms of group functioning. Amhara in the modernizing sector have no choice now but to replace the ethos of the *shiftā*, the litigant, and the wandering student with that of the president, secretary, and treasurer if they are to remain true to the ambitions that have been awakened within them. 121* 181 571

There are, moreover, a number of respects in which adequate functioning in modern groups may be supported by behavioral traits inherited from the past. Three of these traits in particular deserve to be mentioned in this context. One is the fundamentally respectful orientation toward others. This serves to reduce the outbreak of dissension among group members, and in the attitude of respect and obedience toward figures of authority provides the basis, given capable and decisive leaders, for a significant amount of concerted action among group members. A second trait of some importance is the acceptance of conflict as a natural and not particularly threatening component of human relations. This means that group members are ready to admit and deal with such conflicts as do emerge in their ranks, and are experienced in the resolution of such conflicts through the agency of elderly mediators or the more formal processes of litigation. Finally, the Amhara sense of humor—wry, realistic, attuned to the ironies of existence—introduces a salutary leavening ingredient into group process. It provides an outlet for the release of tensions in group situations and adds a certain flavor to group experience that often more than compensates for the lack of a hyperinstrumental orientation. 121* 571 156 [578] [522] [154]

The Question of Individuality 121*

Although effective modernization is unthinkable without a significant increase in solidaristic sentiments and rationalized organization, in Ethiopia as elsewhere, the fate of the other aspect of individualism discussed in this chapter—individuality as a cultural value—poses a more controversial question. If the essence of modernity is the systematic effort to control rationally man's physical and social environment, then the society of *1984* may be claimed as a possible modern utopia no less than the society in which all children go to Montessori schools and all adults paint, undergo psychoanalysis, and study Great Books. The cultivation of individuality stands as but one of many pos-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than
he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bālagē* ("rude"), a trait which [861]
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience
from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control
by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable
amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and
call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus
they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of
authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or
political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social
system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family,
such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to
mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155 •
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same
sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The
attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather
than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that
have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of
an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [155]
[671]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
831 particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the
(834) sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters
[577] are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat,* is synonymous with *guabaznat,* or "bravery.")

*883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often
[41] carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

• 155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
463

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

limitations in addition to those imposed by the government. In the present 121
chapter we shall deal chiefly with factors which are inhibitive of creative 128
leadership, and in the chapter which follows chiefly with factors which affect 571
the capacity for solidary action.

One of the most honest and perceptive of my foreign-educated informants 571
had this to say about the absence of creative leadership among the returnees: 157

> Our maladjustment may be more our fault than that of the government. 121
> We have been led to expect everything from the government, and have become dependent to such a point that we can scarcely think or act for ourselves.

This is a remarkable and convincing piece of self-analysis. It falls short only 571
insofar as it implies that the posture of dependence on governmental author- 157
ity is something peculiar to the modern-educated. It is true that there have 181
been certain conditions such as the "welfare" character of the secondary 121
schools, which are specific to the experience of the modern-educated and which have accentuated a tendency to overdependence. But this tendency is endemic in traditional Amhara-Tigre culture, and those modern Abyssinians who exhibit it are following an inclination deeply rooted in the needs they have acquired and the culture they have internalized in their childhood.

There are various ways in which one might conceptualize this problem. 121
It is not unrelated to what other authors have referred to variously as lack 157
of achievement motivation or lack of innovational personality. The approach of this chapter will stress certain psychoanalytic concepts and insights. In so doing, it will not attempt to delineate an Amhara "basic personality," a task well beyond the scope of the present study.[1] Rather, we shall be concerned here solely with certain kinds of motivational orientation which are widely shared among the Amhara and which frequently inform their social behavior and their cultural symbolism.

Adopting the terminology developed by Erik Erikson,[2] we may rephrase 121
the point about Amhara overdependence by saying that *in Amhara action and* 155
fantasy the social modality of "getting" figures very prominently. The superior 571
is oriented chiefly to getting food, services, and deference from his inferior;[3] the inferior is oriented chiefly to getting favors from his superior. And most interaction among the Amhara is cast in the form of superior-inferior personal dyadic relations. The prominence of this modality reflects a fixation of libido on what Erikson calls a mode of approach to the environment that is "incorporative," and that originates in connection with the infant's experience with a particular part of his body, the oral zone. The central thesis of this chapter is that Amhara behavior and symbolism exhibit a very high degree of attachment of libido, not only to the organ *mode* of incorporation, but even more to the oral *zone*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE PHENOMENA OF AMHARA ORALITY

155 826 [856] [192] Shortly after an Amhara child is born some butter is placed in his mouth. This is done in the belief that it will keep his voice from becoming harsh. From that moment on, the mouth never ceases to be an organ of extraordinary importance in his life. Its cultural importance is reflected in the attention given to it in the Amharic vocabulary: Baeteman's *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* lists some sixty idioms built with the Amharic word for mouth, *af*, more than are listed for any other words in the language except "eye," [539] "heart," and "earth."[4] The organ is publicly celebrated in such proverbs as: "Cleverness of mouth, to the master; cleverness of hand, to the slave."

155 826 171 The oral zone is of course of universal significance. Some items of oral imagery probably appear in most languages, and manifestations of oral libido appear in many forms familiar to Westerners: the French love for gourmandism, the German passion for beer-drinking and singing, the American addiction to cigarettes, chewing gum, and "life-savers." Many of the less familiar phenomena to be related below in describing Amhara orality, moreover, are found in most of the cultures of Africa and the Middle East. But such phenomena often appear inconspicuously alongside other culturally patterned impulses and sublimations stemming from other phases of psychosexual development. What may distinguish the Amhara—and doubtless some other cultures—is the extent to which the oral zone is an object of attention and a source of behavioral modes and expressive symbolism. The Amhara, it appears, have a preoccupation with orality.

121 155 This preoccupation is manifest in three different kinds of phenomena. There are, first of all, aspects of Amhara culture which express a strong positive attachment to the infantile experience of sucking, in pure and in numerous sublimated forms. These we shall designate as the phenomena of *oral erotism*. Second, there are the aspects of Amhara culture which express a [152] strong positive attachment to the oral zone as a center for various aggressive activities—the modes which Erikson calls "incorporation by biting," "oral retention," and "oral intrusion." These we shall collectively designate as the phenomena of *oral sadism*. Finally, there are phenomena which express a conflict about the gratification of many of these oral desires; and these we shall refer to as the phenomena of *oral ambivalence*.

155 *Oral Erotism*

853 Feeding at the breast is a prominent and beloved experience in Amhara life. The Amhara infant is suckled whenever he wishes, at the slightest show of desire. Since he is rarely separated from his mother it is easy for him to satisfy himself at any time of day or night. Popular beliefs about breast-feed-

ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes 155
to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the 853
negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for 853
a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. 862
Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If 155
another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-suck- 853
ing is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may 854
be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara 155
are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no mat- [866]
ter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a [125]
very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is [753]
he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on [776]
the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional 155
atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and 855
punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his 853
earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional 853
security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary 152
symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." 155
The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly repli- 831
cate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

853 155 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning
152 adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through
597 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended
853 foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbāt,* or breast-
155 father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbāt.* Used
152 metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the
155 oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their
[855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes.
201 The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or
[832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions.
576 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long
155 separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati-
[431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout
155 Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the
538 Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant
832 intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

> The boundaries of your lips are like the sugar cane; 155 •
> No matter how much one sucks them, one is never satisfied. 538 832

And in one of the few lyric passages in the first novel ever written in Amharic, the author resorts to the imagery of kissing in describing the beauty of an army camp at sunset: [539]

> The plain on which they had encamped was vaster than the mind's eye could measure. Except for that hill on which he stood, there were no elevations or declivities; no roots to trip or confound the foot; not a stone to discomfit the eye. It looked like a calm sea that every breeze had spared. The boundaries of heaven and earth were united by lips of love; lip to lip they were joined like the parts of fitted basketry. It appeared as though it would hurt them to separate, that they had entered a vow not to part.[5] [539]

Talking for the sake of talking is another oral outlet of which the Amhara is generally fond. "In every country," remarked Arnauld d'Abbadie, "the plowman is miserly and sly; but the Ethiopian is, in addition, particularly loquacious."[6] The simple greeting of acquaintances evokes a barrage of ritualistic conversation, a phenomenon which stunned the Englishman Harris: 155 521

> Even two old crones, who are obviously tottering on the very brink of the grave, and who are afflicted with every pain and with every sorrow entailed by the fall of our first parents, never meet in the street without indulging in a string of good wishes which are reiterated so long as their breath will permit. "How are you? How do ye do? How have you passed your time? Are you well? Are you very well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well? Are you not well?"—are questions which serve as the prelude to a thousand other interrogatories; and at each response the Deity must be invoked as to the unadulterated happiness and perfect felicity that has been unremittingly experienced since the last meeting.[7] [596]

A number of other conventions provide further opportunities for this pleasure in talking. Anecdotes and gossip are not merely reported, but are expounded at length with the aid of colorful expressions and gestures. Riddle games are enjoyed by adults as well as young people. Men vie with one another at length in a semiformalized kind of playful boasting. In the church schools all reading is done aloud, a habit which persists among many students of secondary schools when they study outside of class. [524] [876]

A related pleasure in making sounds for their own sake appears in the Amhara's delight in repeating the words or nonsense syllables of his folk songs. On a more refined level, there is his evident pleasure in lulling over and savoring the lines of a choice couplet. We have here for a whole culture an instance of what Brill has ascribed to the poets: 191 155

> Poetry is a sensuous or mystic outlet through words, or, as it were, through a chewing and sucking of nice words and phrases. The poet plays with the

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191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfata*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor [539] Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 574 527 [575] [794] Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious fraternal association known as the *māhebar,* is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māhebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā,*" literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

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Amharic proverb, and even the Emperor when visiting a school expects students to remain seated if they are at the dining table when he arrives.

Some indication of the comparative significance of this concern about eating and drinking in the Amhara psyche is afforded by a recent cross-cultural investigation of dreams. Obtained from samples of young male respondents in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the United States, the dreams were evaluated with respect to the presence or absence of themes of "manifest orality": scenes of someone desiring, looking for, or consuming food or drink. The proportion of Ethiopian respondents (mostly Orthodox Amhara from the Gondar area) who revealed manifest orality in their dreams was found to be *64 per cent*. By contrast, the proportion of those in a sample of non-Muslim Nigerians whose dreams showed manifest orality was 38 per cent, and that in the sample of Americans was only 22 per cent.[11]

The Amhara custom of giving *gurshā* plays up the erotic component of eating. *Gurshā* means "mouthful" and, as already noted, refers to a wad of food which one places in another's mouth, usually as a gesture of affection. *Gurshā* are exchanged between husband and wife and among relatives and friends. They are often given to children, especially in families of higher status, and to favored servants and retainers as well. The *gurshā* is of such meaning in Amhara experience that it is referred to in a number of Amharic idioms. First of all it means a present or a tip—literally, *pourmanger*. It also refers to the charge of a gun: the gun is a beloved object, and a *gurshā* is what one places in its mouth. In contemporary usage, it refers to flashlight batteries.

In connection with love and many other subjects, a good deal of the imagery of Amharic verse relates in one way or another to eating and drinking. The following sample of proverbs and couplets may convey some of the flavor of this phenomenon:

*Ṭajj** has no specks; a poor man has no friends.

• • •

[Use] proverbs in conversation; [drink] *ṭajj* in a carafe.

• • •

Hand and fly-whisk; mouth and *injarā*† [go together].

• • •

No matter how much one plows, nothing tastes so good as *goman*.‡

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* *Ṭajj*, it may be remembered, is the Ethiopian wine made of honey.

† *Injarā* is the staple pancake.

‡ *Goman* is a kind of cabbage plant that requires no plow cultivation.

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261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
• 155
539

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat*• to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[176] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

574 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
[554] *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[135] association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
152

[263] • *Wat* is the sauce in which the *ĭnjarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

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pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training and Personality*. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[13] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formulation, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ĭnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

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155 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution
789 of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of
261 eating something or presenting food to someone.[14] It is a theme conspicuous
173 in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85). According to *The Book of the*
[539] *Riches of Kings,* Yekuno Amlāk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zāgwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[15]

155 *Oral Sadism*

152 In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the envi-
201 ronment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When
155 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong
152 biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following
726 refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:
[539]

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[16]

155 The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagi-
266 nation. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the
773 story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater
[532] of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

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Mary intervened, placing on the empty side for good deeds a goblet of water which Balaya Sab had once given to a sick beggar out of pity; and the Eater of Men was saved. In the pictorial representation of this legend, Balaya Sab is portrayed cutting off pieces of human flesh with a curved knife in the manner in which raw beef is attacked at the Amhara table. 155 266 773

Most Amhara know some sort of tale about a cannibal. The topic is familiar enough that they are able to invent new ones. One boy told me he made up the following story to explain the nature of cannibals to his younger brother: 155 266 538

> Once there was a cannibal. He lived among many people. He had no food in his house; he was poor. But even if he had not been poor, he just liked to eat the flesh of man. In his house was a big hole which he covered with a carpet. He would invite somebody into his house and tell him to sit down on the chair over the hole. When the person sat down and fell into the hole, he would climb down by a ladder and eat him. In this way he ate all the people in his village one by one—about a hundred people. When he had eaten all the people in his village he returned to live in the forest, because there was nobody left to eat.

The cannibal motif appears in more subtle form in the parlor game known as *gabatā,* in which the aim is to accumulate as many pebbles as possible by moving them around a board with six holes on each side. In *gabatā* the active acquisition of pebbles is called "eating" and the passive acquisition is "drinking." Similarly, those who play chess or checkers refer to the process of taking a man as "eating" him. It is notable, moreover, that the Amhara version of the old riddle about how to transport a certain number of incompatible objects across the river in one boat is posed in terms of three human beings and three cannibals. 155 266 524

Oral sadism is further manifest among the Amhara by the nature of their speech. The Amhara are not only loquacious but also tend, both in manner of delivery and in content of conversation, to be biting and intrusive. Backbiting, insulting, arguing, and litigating are among their more characteristic modes of self-expression. 155 521 191

Backbiting and insulting, and the fear of being the victim of such activities, are the focus of much attention in Amhara culture. Concern about the former is expressed in a number of Amharic proverbs: 155 521 578 [539]

> If the mouth lacks work, it will backbite a friend.
>
> If you praise a man once, you will be in trouble if you backbite him later.
>
> If a man is a backbiter, listen for my sake when he talks to you.

Straightforward insults erupt the polite surface of Amhara social relations only under unusually heated circumstances, though it is customary for social superiors to direct a certain amount of abusive banter at their inferiors as

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155 521 578 [195] a matter of course. In the more covert forms of expression, however, insulting is a favorite practice among Amhara. Ambiguous language and obscure allusion make possible a good deal of socially admissible, and admired, insulting. It is chiefly due to his mastery of this genre that the Amhara have come to idealize Alaqā Gabra Hānnā who, in the words of a psychologically sophis- [554] ticated Ethiopian informant, by "skillful use of 'wax and gold' has defiled everything that is sacred in Abyssinian tradition: this includes Mother, God, Emperor, and Patriarch, to say nothing of the ignorant clergy, peasantry, and slaves. Gabra Hānnā . . . is the summation of the oral aggressive trend in every Abyssinian, of which the *dabtarā* in the king's court and the singer in the drink-house are only mediocre representations."

155 578 [195] Wax and gold is, furthermore, the vehicle for the mode of expression which Erikson calls "oral retention." Just as the Amhara tends to be tight-lipped and evasive when confronted by questions he does not feel like answering, so he finds pleasure in stubbornly withholding his meaning from his audience through employing figures and allusions which no one can understand. This may be understood as a passive form of oral aggression. For the untutored, however, the active aggressive component is probably more satisfying. Most Amhara males look forward to occasions when they can insult with impunity, such as in victory after the games at Christmas or in the setting of a drink-house, where their skillfully improvised verses are repeated and sung by a minstrel. The oral sadistic spirit of this latter scene has been captured with great fidelity by a contemporary Amhara novelist. Describing the moment in a drink-house when the minstrel begins bowing his one-stringed violin and gets ready to accept verses from the crowd, he writes: "*And now every one of them prepares a bullet of verse, and gets cocked to fire veiled insults.*"[18]

155 521 Two-way communication among Amhara is frequently colored by a biting and intrusive manner as well. Amharic conversation gravitates toward a highly argumentative style. Casual disagreement, or even neutral deliberation over a common problem, often engenders a kind of protracted bickering to which the Amhara have given an onomatopoetic name, "*çhĭqeçhĭq*." In [691] its more institutionalized form, this argumentativeness becomes litigation, which has long been regarded as the national sport of Abyssinia.

691 182 As the primary means of distributing land-use rights and of reducing the likelihood of resort to violence in personal disputes, litigation serves functions of unmistakable importance in Amhara society. Yet the frequency and intensity with which Amhara take part in litigation suggests that it is motivated by non-rational factors in good part. Litigants have often lost many times the original value of some item under dispute in the course of pursuing litigation over it through the courts for many years. The language and colorful gestures of the court may be observed among Amhara in their homes or

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at social gatherings in the course of discussions about nearly any subject. One 691
cannot but conclude that the Amhara litigate to a large extent because for 182
them it is an intrinsically pleasurable activity. At times, in fact, the forms of 517
litigation are acted out as in a game. *Teṭāyaq,* for example, analogous to the 524
Western process of cross-examination and a beloved feature of traditional 695
court procedure, is sometimes practiced at parties though it has been out- 178
lawed in modern courts.[19] Two men will face a "judge" and try to bedevil each other with sly questions and preposterous claims. The content of the dispute is of no matter; it may be sheer nonsense.

Amhara litigants are ingenious at expressing themselves. They do so with 155
gestures, intonation, and timing that achieve considerable dramatic effect. 537
They are delighted to perform at the slightest provocation. The following 691
incident, recorded during a morning at court in Manz, illustrates that dimen- 695
sion of Amhara litigation which consists of the inherently gratifying expression of oral aggression:

> The defendant had been accused of plowing the plaintiff's land without permission. In fact, however, the plaintiff had given the defendant previous permission to plow there—in front of a group of elders who testified accordingly. The judge therefore ruled against the plaintiff. The plaintiff said he would appeal this decision, because the permission he granted had not been registered in the governor's office and, besides, he had some other complaint to bring against the defendant.
>
> At this point someone in the audience rose and said: "That is all. The judge has ruled against you, and the case is finished." Whereupon the plaintiff told this speaker that he should keep quiet, that his speaking out was against the law, that he had bothered him when the case was tried before a lower level judge previously and should bother him no more. Instead of hushing up, the speaker left his position against the wall and stood next to the defendant, asserting that he would speak in behalf of the latter.
>
> The plaintiff then accused this man of talking out of turn. The judge acknowledged this accusation and called for witnesses. Instantly half a dozen or more men jumped to their feet, eyes bursting with excitement and pride as before a battle, and volunteered to witness against the speaker. One by one, with a great show of oratory, they said their pieces against the man who had spoken out of turn. More than once the judge had to urge these witnesses to stop talking after the evidence had been presented. By this time the substance of the original dispute seemed to have been completely forgotten.

Oral Ambivalence

Much as the oral zone is favored by the Amhara as a center for positive 155
gratifications, both of the passive-receptive and the active-aggressive sort, such

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155 gratifications are not enjoyed wholly without conflict. In actuality, traits which reflect anxiety about the prospect of oral gratification are no less conspicuous in Amhara culture than the phenomena we have just been discussing.

155 262 Negative attitudes regarding oral gratification appear, first of all, in the scope and variety of the restrictions placed on eating. From both their Judaic and their Christian traditions the Abyssinians have taken over nearly every restriction on eating available. The chief exception to this is the Judaic injunction against eating blood, which Abyssinian custom permits. But they have retained intact the Semitic ban on unclean animals—those which lack a split hoof, upper teeth, or do not chew the cud. Their dread of pork is so strong that to some extent they feel closer to Muslims, who also avoid pork, than to Western Christians.

155 785 They have likewise retained and elaborated on the norms concerning fasting found in early Christianity. With respect to the number and harshness of the fasts it prescribes, Amhara-Tigre custom is probably the strictest in the world. In the rigor of its fasting laws the Ethiopian Church surpasses its sister religions of Eastern Orthodoxy—the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, and Indian Orthodox Churches. On fasting days no food or drink is to be tasted before early afternoon. Thereafter, no sort of meat, fowl, milk, or eggs may be eaten, which reduces the Amhara's post meridiem diet on fasting days to grains and pulse.

Such fasting days occur on every Wednesday and Friday of the year, except those which come during the eight weeks after Easter. There are, in addition, many special fasts in the course of the year. Some of these, like the month-long fast before Pentecost and the two months prior to Christmas, are observed only by clergy and elders. Others must be observed by everyone, though children are led into them gradually. These universal fasts include the eight weeks before Easter, plus a three-day fast during the week before Lent; two days before Christmas; and sixteen days preceding the festival of the Assumption of Mary in August. Total abstinence is prescribed for a period of forty-eight hours before Easter. All together, the ordinary Amhara is supposed to fast 165 days each year; for the devout person the total approaches 250 days.

155 276 773 784 The taboo on the use of tobacco presents another area in which oral gratification is suppressed. Two myths are told to explain this taboo. One is that the tobacco plant originally grew out of the intestines of the heretic Arius. The other is that on the day of the Crucifixion all plants except tobacco withered and died. In any case, smoking is regarded as a grave sin among traditional Amhara, and one who has been suspected of using tobacco is not permitted to kiss the Cross.

121 784 785 155 One could argue that these taboos and fasting customs are simply cultural

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phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful physical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argument also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fasting prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are expressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Traditional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well-known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

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155 cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *çhirāq* is some-
152 times evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still an-
[116] other figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away
[189] a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

121 Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions
155 of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted
[853] earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara
121 practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new
155 baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a
862 bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

121 Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of suck-
155 ing and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects
146 as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

121 The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible
155 area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discon-
858 tinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

consequence of substantial loss of accustomed mother love at the time of weaning—a mild but chronic state of mourning which gives a depressive undertone to the rest of life—is certainly one of the more evident characteristics of most Amhara.[22] At the same time the Amhara child is made anxious about his actual oral gratifications. He no longer eats whenever he wants to, but only after he has waited for the adults to finish their meal. He is no longer entitled to the choicest food, mother's milk, but to poorer food and leftovers. And he is made increasingly aware of the adult anxieties about eating connected with the fasting requirements, and with the food shortages of the rainy season.

Applying the Whiting-Child hypotheses in the light of these observations one may characterize the development of an ambivalent preoccupation with the oral zone by Amhara as follows: an initially very high level of oral satisfaction enjoyed during the nursing period makes oral gratification a particularly attractive source of pleasure as well as a desired refuge for the psyche under the pressure of later deprivations; while the emotional and nutritional deprivations which the Amhara child experiences toward the end of the nursing period and thereafter undermine the sense of security acquired during his indulged infancy and make him anxious about the fount of that security, oral gratification.*

Whatever the precise ontogenetic basis of this phenomenon may prove to be, the Amhara's ambivalent preoccupation with orality is projected at the *cultural* level in the form of two contrasting human ideals. The secular masculine ideal in Amhara culture is a hero of oral gratification and prowess. He is a man who eats much and drinks much, and who excels in litigation, in declaiming the martial chants, and in composing veiled insults. The religious ideal, on the other hand, is a hero of oral renunciation. The most devout Amhara are considered those who keep all of the fasts, even the esoteric ones; or even, as monks and ascetics, live on a fasting diet the year round—in the extreme case, feed on leaves as hermits. The association of religious virtuosity with oral renunciation reaches its logical climax in legends about Gabra Manfas Qeddus ("Servant of the Holy Spirit"), the most hallowed Amhara saint. In contrast with the normal Amhara boy who nurses for close to three years, Gabra Manfas Qeddus is said to have been at his mother's breast for only three months, when a bird swept down one day and carried him away.

* While this formulation may leave more questions unanswered than it solves—a purely behaviorist formula inevitably neglects the dynamics of defensive operations and the significance of ambivalence—it carries us as far as our data permit and may provide a useful point of departure for further discussion and investigation of Amhara psychology.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ORALITY AND MODERNIZATION

121 155 571 The preoccupation with orality which appears in their traditional orientations has not disappeared among those Abyssinians who have acquired a modern education. In some respects, that experience has tended to intensify it. A state of prolonged dependence was institutionalized in the government school system. The hiring of most educated Ethiopians by the government has meant that most of them live in a position of waiting to receive their salary—or *ĭnjarā*, as they themselves put it—from the central authority. Thus the image of a bountiful father-figure has become the more firmly established. [643] While in his own person the Emperor has projected an image of vigorous leadership, he has at the same time taken pains to promote this old pattern of oral dependence, by sending gifts of food to students and of champagne to educated officials when they marry; by continuing to provide politically relevant feasts at the palace; and, like the traditional Amhara father-feeder, by frequently reminding his subjects that everything they have they owe to him. This pattern is replicated to some extent in the relations between members of the new nobility and their younger relatives and retainers.

Part of the self-reproach of some of the modern-educated Ethiopians is directed against this passive, receptive aspect of their motivational orientation. Their criticism says in effect: instead of drafting proposals to reform our departments, teaching or writing in order to educate our countrymen, or seeking to understand better the complexities of Ethiopia's current situation, we are far more likely to be found sitting about drinking coffee in our offices, sipping beer at some hotel, playing chess, savoring felicitous phrases, and going to parties where eating and drinking are invariably the main order of business.

Insofar as they are moved to take a more active approach to their situation, moreover, their effectiveness is blocked by a tendency to fall into the traditional oral aggressive patterns of behavior. [578] Their manner of criticizing the government, or certain officials, is frequently one of wholesale insulting. When confronted by a difficult problem, whenever they do not fall back to [521] a posture of dependence on superiors, they incline toward argumentation, *çhĭqeçhĭq*, backbiting, and mutual incrimination. Experts in debate, they are unaccustomed to the arts of creative discussion.

121 155 It is not my intention to suggest that the phenomena examined in this chapter are in total conflict with the Ethiopians' search for leadership. Many aspects of Amhara orality are not in the least inconsistent with the demands of a modernizing culture. Many aspects of Amhara orality would appear to be of enduring value—the excellence in debate and the appreciation of literary subtlety, the preparation of fine feasts and the enjoyment of the table. And it is not necessary for a very large number of Amhara to change their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

orientations in this regard for creative leadership to be effective. What is suggested is: that by tending to relate to their environment either in a passive-receptive mode of getting, in an active-sadistic mode akin to infantile petulance, or in a state of guilt and anxiety concerning elementary gratifications—that minority of Amhara and other Ethiopians who are in a position to introduce constructive change follow a type of adjustment which is inadequate to the challenge of their present situation. Adaptive as these modes may have been in the past, they are archaic in the present.

The search for leadership in Ethiopia today is partly a search for new ego ideals. It is a search for persons and images embodying a more productive and procreative type of orientation, capable of inspiring a creative minority of Ethiopians to build on, not abandon orality, and to move beyond.*

* That this search goes on at a time when the epigones of modernity, living in an age of high mass consumption, appear to be relaxing into a more passive, incorporative mode—the mode of television-watching and supermarket shopping—is but one of the many manifestations of what is perhaps the central irony of the human condition at this point in history.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 Amhara society as marked by a moderately high degree of independence.
18 This is to say that Amhara society gives relatively wide rein to individual impulse in action. It is not to say that Amhara culture places a high value on the moral worth of the individual personality. That is a separate question, which we shall now proceed to explore.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS CONFORMITY AND ANONYMITY

*121 The extent to which individual personality is valued in a society is reflected
181 primarily in two aspects of its culture. One of these comprises its processes
156 of education, in the broadest sense of the term; the other, its forms of art. The character of these aspects of culture reveal, respectively, the degree of concern for the *development* of an individualized self and the degree of concern for the *expression* of an individualized self.

Education and Socialization

*121 • 155 Obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in bringing up children
861 among the Amhara. After a prolonged and indulged infancy, the Amhara
867 child from about three years on is subjected to a regime of discipline and
[854] repression. He is taught to fulfill without question any request made by any older person. He is conditioned to stand quietly whenever guests are present and to stand facing the wall while his parents or guests eat their dinner. If addressed by elders, especially those outside his immediate family, he is expected to reply in a barely audible whisper—a norm that is sometimes adhered to with such pathetic faithfulness that it has become the object of gentle satire in a short story by the young Ethiopian writer, Tadesse Liban.[26] Children who are noisy and disrespectful are referred to contemptuously by the term *bālagē*, meaning "rude."

*121 The desires and interests of an Amhara child are not taken into account
155 by those who raise him. He is provided with a bare minimum of clothes,
855 and little effort is expended in procuring him playthings,[27] although in some
524 families little dolls made of rags (*ashängulit*) are produced. Children have
*121 a rich play-life with their peers, but this consists mostly in imitating various
155 adult activities. Organized games occur very rarely, the chief one—*gannā*—
857 being played as a rule but once a year, on Christmas Day.[28] The traditional songs and dances are learned from other children while tending the herds, but children are not encouraged to perform them in front of adults. The
*121 opinions of children are never expressed, let alone consulted. Indeed, in some
155 commoners' families the children are treated little better than the farm ani-
855 mals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing
858 her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART V : INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

156 Social stratification and kinship relations dominate interpersonal relations in Amhara society, and, though they put their stamp also on segments of the Amhara cultural pattern, they do not limit the corresponding artistic expression as much as one might expect. Thus, while Amhara artistic expression shares much of the "formality" of the rest of the culture, it evidences considerable potentialities for individual initiative, particularly in non-material expression such as games of intellect.

538 Material culture has not been much developed among the Amhara; artistic expression also has many of the usual characteristics of a [212] non-literate society, since literacy has traditionally been limited to a small minority of the population. This has led both to a reinforcement of formality in literature, and to a playfulness in oral artistic expression which remained unfettered.

1. Communication and Interpersonal Relations.

203 Communication "by grapevine" is still the major method of dissemination of news, rumor, and entertainment. Feudal lords in the past would even make use of "musical signatures" which identified the sender: to prove that a message was actually sent by the sender, the messenger was taught a secret musical note like a code, which identified the master. There was considerable suspicion about interference with 212 203 messages by enemies, who might alter them, so that, when messages were written, the scribe was careful not to leave a margin at the bottom, lest an enemy intercepting the message might add harmful statements falsely reflecting on the sender (e.g. his loyalty). Since most writing was done by formal, professional scribes, and Geez square writing was used, handwriting was not considered sufficient safeguard for identification. This pattern of leaving no margin persists to this day.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services.

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery.

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order.

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities.

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 156 157 man, as we shall see in more detail below, includes the quality of leaving others alone.

[577] This strong sense of self is confirmed and symbolized by two conspicuous *565 156 411 Amhara customs: carrying staves and going on trips. A staff, like a pipe, affirms the ego in two ways. As a piece of personal property right at hand, it stimulates a sense of pride of ownership; as something external yet confronting the person, it makes the ego more conscious of its bounded reality. Such sensations are daily experiences for the Amhara peasant, who is rarely separated from the staff in one form or other. When he leaves his homestead he normally carries the hard *dulā*, a potential weapon of defense that likewise affirms his ego by bolstering self-confidence in a dangerous world. He braces the *dulā* against his back as he treks along, or holds it against the [481] front of his shoulder like a rifle. Older men walk using it as a cane. A special kind of staff made of softer wood (*zang*) is carried by pious and elderly [481] men. Participants in devotional services lean on still another type of staff (*maquāmiyā*) which is distributed in the church for that purpose.

*565 156 484 Traveling is another custom which affirms the ego, at least when one travels spontaneously and not in organized company. As the individual moves past various stimuli, his self-consciousness is heightened by the contrast between a persisting ego and a constantly changing environment. As a traveler par excellence—and a lone traveler, unless social rank requires the presence of retainers—the Amhara peasant frequently removes himself from familiar home settings and confronts an outside world. He loves to go on the road and will travel at the slightest provocation. For him a distance of two or three hours by foot is like the American's trip to the corner drugstore. Whether to visit relatives or pay respects after death, to go to market or to court, to get holy water at a distant church, or to look after land in a far away district, the Amhara peasant is on the move dozens of times each year, often for trips involving two or three days of travel.

*565 156 829 602 609 Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and culture, one may for the moment say that the personal ego is the central object in the Amhara peasant's view of society. Exactly what might be meant by this statement and in what respects it needs qualification are questions that will be taken up in the concluding chapter. If it is so, certainly the next most prominent social object in his world is the circle of close ones, or *zamad*. *Zamad* refers in the first instance to consanguineal kin, and is distinguished from the category of those who are strangers, or *bā'ed*. This is perhaps the most important of all the sociological distinctions made by the Amhara: the former, *zamad*, are seen as entitled to the warmest hospitality, while toward *bā'ed* indifference and suspicion are appropriate responses.

*565 156 602 This does not mean that the kin group is a corporate entity whose interests and identity transcend that of the individual. On the contrary, the notion of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

zamad is highly subjective, and all constellations of *zamad* reflect the interests 565*
and affections of ego. For the quality of kinship can be attributed to persons 156 •
who are not consanguineal relatives, and this is done without resorting to 602
fictions of affiliation. The term *wandam*, for example, meaning "brother," 565*
is simply applied to any male person of about the same age to whom one feels 156
closely attached. The term *zamad* itself is applied to anyone to whom one 602
feels a close personal tie—even to a mere fellow-countryman whom one 572
happens to meet in a distant region. It is thus not taking too great a liberty to translate the term *zamad* as "close ones."

The primarily subjective nature of the circle of *zamad* derives not only 565*
from the fact that it includes friends as readily as actual blood relatives. With- 602
in the bounds of consanguinity, the composition of the kin group with which 572
a person identifies fluctuates according to his current needs, particularly with 423
respect to land use rights. As Allan Hoben has demonstrated, corporate 565*
descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use 602
are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; but 423
the fact that in this ambilineal descent system each individual may claim 611
multiple active affiliations, and enjoys a relatively wide range of choice, means that the particular corporate descent group with which an individual affiliates in order to claim his rights varies according to what land is subject to disputation. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mothers' rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors.[9]

The next most inclusive sociological concept beyond the ego-oriented circle 565*
of *zamad* is that of *agar*, or "homeland."* The co-residents of one's *agar*, like 571
those who comprise one's circle of *zamad*, are regarded as forming an im- 823
portant "in-group," outside of which all other persons are a priori rejected. Yet the Amharic concept of homeland, like that of kin, does not refer to a fixed social entity; its referent varies according to the context in which the individual chooses to use it. Thus, as we have seen, the concept of *agar* may be used to refer to one's parish, district, province, or even nation.

A more specialized dichotomy of some prominence in the outlook of the 565*
Amhara peasant hinges on variation in the altitude of homelands. Inhabit- 157
ants of lowlands (*qolaññä*) and dwellers of higher regions (*dēgaññä*) tend 823
to be conceived as polar cultural types. Different sets of habits and traits are attributed to them. Thus, according to one set of stereotypes, the *qolaññä* is viewed as a heavy drinker and hot tempered, while the *dēgaññä* is viewed as a heavy eater and inclined more to litigation than to violence. Again, the

* The less prominent category of *wagan* is intermediate between these two. *Wagan* has a pri- [602]
marily political connotation; it consists of one's consanguineal and affinal kin, friends and close [572]
retainers, all who may be mobilized in the event of political or military competition.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
831 particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the
[834] sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical
[577] courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat,* is synonymous with *guabaznat,* or "bravery.")

*883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often
[41] carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
• 156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
463

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

a different identity. Religion and warfare were the two spheres most likely to 156
attract him. Although trade and manual arts were possibilities for those whose 554
industry exceeded their status-consciousness, they were considered the busi- 463
ness of other ethnic groups and normally rejected by a self-respecting Am- [461]
hara. When the Amhara youth left home for a new life, he was usually heading either for the school of some church teacher or the quarters of some chieftain.

Today, as in former times, the role of priest is known from childhood as 793
a possible model for the peasant boy. He and his companions often imitate 554
the clergy and their ceremonies in their play. The wish to become a priest 156
is kindled by a number of interests—desire for the material benefits accorded [178]
the clergy; curiosity about the mysteries of the church; envy of the great prestige of the clergy; hope for a better chance of going to heaven after death. During adolescence the outlook of the boy who seeks to become a priest [883]*
deviates from that of the *goramsä* described above. Instead of the shrill, blood-heating *shillala* war chants he prefers the gentle hymns of the church; instead of the frenzied dancing and singing of the young braves he prefers the schooled dance of the clergy; instead of pursuing women, he is inclined to turn his head the other way when a girl appears.

The military alternative does not seem to be an ideal of Amhara children. 701
They rarely see soldiers; and when they did in former times, it was usually 156
in the unhappy circumstance of seeing the family's reserves plundered. It is 554
not until the time of puberty and after that the great upsurge of aggressive instinct has turned the thoughts of many an Amhara youth to fighting. Chafing under parental domination or bristling with resentment because of being an illegitimate offspring or a stepchild, he may be anxious to turn his hostility against some enemy. He may imagine the free life of a soldier more attractive than the drudgery of the peasant's lot. In the days of feudal armies, he may have heard news about some warlord on the rise and thus have hopes, by attaching himself as a follower, of winning booty and the laurels of a hero, perhaps eventually the powers of a chieftain.

Whether the peasant boy chooses church school or the warpath, his move 565
has frequently been an all-or-none move. The peasant boy can do nothing 593
without the consent of his father, and normally his father will not permit him 463
to do anything except carry on the farmwork and prepare himself to care for 156
his parents in their old age and to inherit the family land. If there should be some sign that the son does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, the latter will do everything he can short of disinheritance—and ofttimes that—to persuade him otherwise.

And so, some restless day, eyes fixed on some alluring goal, the Amhara youth might run away and not be seen again. If he should return, it would

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely preparing himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adolescence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

The Welfare School

Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in government provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 been affected by modernizing agents for but a relatively brief period and in
571 a relatively diluted fashion. The beliefs and values which the returnees
177 acquired while abroad concern national development, technical competence,
178 and individuality, while the norms of the social structure in which they must live are based on the values of loyalty to monarch, ascribed status, and authoritarian relations.

121 Of many possible types of response to such a situation of strain, four are
571 common among the Ethiopian intelligentsia. These we may designate by the
177 terms Opportunism, Withdrawal, Reformism, and Rebellion. With reference
178 to the three variables of commitment to modern goals and norms, acceptance
156 of existing authorities, and the distinction between "activity" and "passivity," these patterns may be represented schematically as in Table 14.[59]

TABLE 14

MODES OF ADAPTATION OF ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES

	Commitment to Modern Values	Acceptance of Existing Authorities	"Activity"
Opportunism	−	+	+
Withdrawal	+	−	−
Reformism	+	+	+
Rebellion	+	−	+

Opportunism is the mode of adaptation in which the returnee's commitment to modern goals and norms is eclipsed by his passion for status, power,
[554] and income. He differs from the traditional aspirant for high position in Abyssinia in that two of his status qualifications are novel--residence abroad, and a university degree—and above all in that the pursuit of his personal goals entails a *renunciation* of nationalistic ideals and universalistic standards which were nurtured while abroad. For some opportunists this is no real problem: their study abroad was all along essentially a façade to be used in advancing their careers. But for the others the process of becoming an opportunist is a gradual one and attended by chronic self-recriminations, as the returnee finds himself compulsively agreeing with his superiors and flattering them on every occasion, and performing actions primarily for the sake of advancement rather than for the sake of doing a job well.

It is impossible to go on pursuing progressive principles indiscriminately. I sometimes see my friends doing things now which we used to condemn

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> when we were students abroad together. I wonder at times if I am losing sight of my principles altogether.

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Withdrawal is the solution of those who have retained their principles at the expense of being effectual in action. The routes of escape are varied. One way is transferring attention to problems outside the country—to international relations, problems of pan-Africanism, or the gossip about London, Paris, and New York.

> To me the independence of all African nations is more important than the progress of Ethiopia.

Some spend their energies in convivial relations with resident Westerners (diplomatic and technical assistance personnel, foreign businessmen) or in the traditional rounds of family visiting. Quite a few returnees lose themselves in card-playing or chess whenever they can, and a number have taken to heavy drinking. Often the returnee who withdraws shows no "symptoms" other than a general constriction of his life into narrow work routines and creature functions. At the same time he may be experiencing a fairly acute sense of estrangement.

> Our generation is not really living. We are not "engaged." The simple weaver—most of the people in this country—are "engaged." We are not; we live from day to day. When I leave work I go to the Ras Hotel or somewhere else. I don't want to go home, there is nothing there for me. I have nothing to work for. I have no family, nor any interest in saving money.

The third type of response, Reformism, involves the attempt both to maintain principles and to be effective in action under the existing political order. This alternative places great demands on the personality system and might well be designated as the pattern of "moral heroism."

> What we lack today is proper organization. In default of organization, we are forced to rely on morality.

The reformist returnee serves his country according to universalistic standards even though these norms are scarcely institutionalized; even though, in other words, he is likely to be criticized and even punished for maintaining standards in the face of demands by superiors and relatives to do otherwise, or for solving problems in a rational manner on his own initiative. Yet if he is officially disregarded or censured, his efforts do not go unnoticed by the patriotic modernizing elements of the population who, in a covert, informal system of communication, tend to establish severe judgments on the "bad guys" and the "good guys," and to idolize the latter as potential leaders.

In the case of Rebellion, finally, the attempt is made to be active in the pursuit of modern goals but in a spirit of basic alienation from the existing

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121 authorities. Except for a very few eccentric individuals who have seemed
571 oblivious to the dangers of speaking out their criticism of the status quo in
177 public, this has in the nature of current circumstances necessarily involved
178 clandestine activity. Returnees have been involved in small conspiratorial
• 156 groups since the mid-fifties. The December, 1960, coup d'état has been the
[669] most ambitious rebellious project to be acted out so far. Similarly motivated
[668] activities have included the duplication and distribution of subversive literature, and the formation of small groups as groundwork for an eventual political party.

Our data do not permit reliable estimates of the frequency of these different modes of adaptation among the returnees. It is important to note, however, that individuals often change from one mode to another in the course of their experience after return and that many follow more than one pattern at the same time. It is unlikely that the total number of returnees oriented primarily as rebels has ever exceeded two per cent. Most of them move in and out of phases of Reformism, Withdrawal, and Opportunism, depending to a large extent on the accidents of their appointments. A more concrete picture of their experience may be suggested by the following case study, that of a Western-educated Ethiopian who went from a phase of Withdrawal to one of Reformism tinged with Opportunism.

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The Adjustment of "Haile": Case Study of a Returnee

October, 1958. Haile has recently returned from four years of study in a Western country. He speaks very critically about the state of things in Ethiopia. He is particularly upset by the prevailing inefficiency, the lack of industriousness, and the interminable procrastination (*ïshi naga*).

January, 1959. Haile seems deeply depressed. The ministry in which he has been placed affords him no opportunity to work effectively and the job he has bears no relation to what he was trained for. He has withdrawn more into himself, but to all outward appearances plays perfectly well, with great self-assurance, the role of the Amhara bureaucrat.

July, 1959. Now Haile is working in a different ministry, in a job somewhat more closely related to his training. He appears to feel productive and useful now, and his criticism is constructive. For example, he frequently compares the situation in the United States and Ethiopia, to show how the same sort of problem can be solved more readily in the U.S. because of its greater facilities. Though Ethiopia's comparative handicaps frustrate him, he talks of plans for the development of Ethiopia with some enthusiasm. . . . Haile complains of an

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overload of work, noting that he must not only do his own 121
work but also rectify the mistakes made by others which are 571
brought to him. In his whole branch of the ministry, he finds 159
only two really effective workers besides himself, and they, 156
too, are returnees. . . . He feels fortunate in having encountered no major opposition to the things he is doing in his work and points happily to the fact that his assistant minister has supported him throughout.

October, 1959. Haile now is saying that things are fine in Addis Ababa and stresses the great improvement that has been made during the past five years. He claims that he is getting along fine in his ministry, because his job is straight "busy work." Even so, he is not a pure "ritualist"; he has already negotiated a number of reforms in the operations of his office. His general outlook seems bright—partly, no doubt, because he is "arriving" (what with printed name-cards and a smoothly functioning job) but also because he has a pretty fiancée whom he plans to marry next year. . . . At another point, however, he shows great exasperation over the considerable conflict among factions within the ministry. He decries the nepotism practiced by the heads of these factions. He says that he tries to stay independent of their intrigues.

June, 1960. Recently Haile was given additional responsibilities in his ministry, and he expects a raise in salary soon. Although this new work is still further removed from the subjects he studied while abroad than was his previous job, he no longer complains about not being hired to do what he had been trained for or about not being used. He remains unhappy about his minister, who brings in his own men from the outside rather than promote men from the ranks—"or else I would have been a director general by now." On the other hand, he mentions with evident pleasure the fact that the Emperor sent over a gift at the time of his wedding. . . . Haile's wife is a simple, traditional sort of Ethiopian girl. He seems happy with her and with their home—an old, poorly built structure that is falling apart, but which she has taken pains to enliven with a few decorations, and has equipped with a radio. He looks forward to the prospect of building a house on their own land sometime in the future. Meanwhile, a baby is on the way. . . . The circle has come full swing. Haile talks proudly about his work, his family, and his country.

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brothels for dancing and more intimate relations. (Returnees normally do not have patience for the shy, traditional girls; and they are too concerned about public opinion to be seen visiting brothels. When they or the locals do visit the brothels, it is often by way of a backdoor entrance.) When they marry, the locals almost invariably choose a traditional type of wife with relatively little education and with whom they expect to have an authoritarian relationship.

In sum: the local is not so afflicted by those problems which derive from the central dilemma of the returnee—how to fulfil himself according to modern standards in an intractable, traditional environment. The local's dilemma typically lies in a different realm, that of economic and social mobility. Whereas the returnee has been given a comparatively high income and status almost as a matter of course, the local has normally started his work life with a relatively low salary and little prestige. If the returnee has felt deprived relative to the Westerners in whose society he has lived, the local has felt deprived relative to the returnee.

The local lives on a day-to-day basis at a relatively simple standard. Though he shares the returnee's passion for woolen suits and, in many cases, for a car of his own, he is not, like the returnee, preoccupied with the quest for housing that conforms to Western standards. Except for those with extraordinary talents and family connections, the locals have had difficulty locating jobs that they feel are not beneath their dignity and which pay salaries sufficient to cover their relatively modest needs. They customarily receive a starting salary in the neighborhood of Eth$150. The more ambitious and fortunate among them have, by changing jobs, manipulating superiors, and improving skills, worked their way up to salaries in the Eth$400–$500 category. Some have become provincial teachers for a while, in order to accumulate money on which to live while shopping for a position in Addis Ababa and with which to influence some higher official to grant it to them. There remains a hard core of locals who feel they are underpaid and live in constant resentment of this situation.

This resentment has produced a general sort of negativism which characterizes many of the locals, a negativism expressed in the form of backbiting and denunciation of the higher government officials and the nobility generally. They decry social injustice and the uses of nepotism. They moralize profusely against those whom fortune has shown greater favors. But not all their social criticism is born of resentment. There are also among the locals many young men who are comfortably situated but fired by patriotic fervor with a desire for social reform.

The local is as deeply concerned about asserting his status vis-à-vis the less educated as he is to advance his position in the hierarchy. Locals are extreme-

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571 ly meticulous about the state of their clothes. They have their shoes shined
156 several times daily, even when they are eating only one solid meal per day.
[554] They are intent on receiving the proper deference—for example, on being
served properly in a hotel. This concern for status is projected in the form of
[186] an intense nationalism that considers the speedy displacement of non-Ethiopians holding important jobs in the country a more urgent need than the establishment of effective modern institutions and universalistic standards.

Some locals can be found, of course, whose problems and aspirations resemble those of the returnees, and vice versa. However, the characteristics here associated with the two types follow logically from their basic situation and have been observed sufficiently to justify this depicting of them in terms of ideal types. The distinction is further justified on the grounds that the two
[578] groups have developed a modicum of corporate identity and a degree of mutual antagonism which was particularly pronounced in the mid-fifties.

571 The returnees were at first inclined to regard their locally educated coun-
186 trymen with snobbish pride because of the keen sense of superiority which
578 study abroad conferred. It was natural, moreover, for the returnees to associate most closely with those who had shared the very important personal experience of living abroad, and so they tended to neglect their former schoolmates who never crossed the seas. At times, in fact, they scarcely bothered to exchange greetings with them.

The sense that they were being regarded as inferiors embittered the locals. At the same time they were jealous that they, too, had not had the opportunity to study abroad. These mutual incriminations were heightened by economic competition, the returnees claiming that those who stayed behind had the advantage of working their way up into significant and lucrative positions, the locals believing that a degree from abroad was an automatic entree to a good job.

The latent antagonism between locals and returnees came to a head in 1957, with the simultaneous publication in the *Voice of Ethiopia* of an article by a local criticizing returnee behavior[81] and the presentation of a play by the National Patriotic Association which caricatured them. The play, for example, showed a returnee entering the office of a minister, patting him on the back, puffing cigarette smoke into his eyes, sitting back with his feet up on the minister's desk and talking on and on disrespectfully. Another returnee was shown failing to recognize his own mother when she comes into his office, exclaiming: "Woman, get out of here!" A small group of returnees protested these insults with a petition to the Emperor, who is said to have brought some criticism to bear upon the authorities involved.

571 With the return of increasing numbers of Ethiopians from study abroad,
554 however, the prestige of a foreign degree has diminished, and the appearance of classes of locally educated A.B.'s, who have remained in the country to

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INDIVIDUALISM AND THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS

*121 A deep-going process of individualization has commonly been regarded as one of the characteristic features of the early stages of modernization. Whether hailed as a basis for economic rationalism and the embodiment of libertarian ideals or decried as the solvent of communal solidarities and traditional identities, this emergent individualism tends to be viewed against the image of a base line traditional society whose members are enmeshed in various solidary associations, bound by collective obligations, and encompassed by communal restraints.[1]

*121 181 [156] While it is probable that such an image exaggerates the degree of corporateness that obtains in most traditional societies, in the case of Abyssinia it is demonstrably wide of the mark. A characteristic individualism has impressed more than one observer of Abyssinian society in the past. Perhaps not by accident, those who have been most responsive to this characteristic have been of French nationality. Arnauld d'Abbadie, writing more than a century ago, depicted the Abyssinian as an irrepressible foe of uniformity and despotism.[2] More recently the noted linguist, Marcel Cohen, in one of his rare but highly perceptive sociological essays, described the Abyssinian as "*membre d'une société individualiste.*"[3] In so doing he has suggested an interesting perspective from which to examine Amhara society as a whole, a perspective which may also throw some light on the previously raised question concerning the obstacles to solidary action among modern-educated Ethiopians.

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Landsmann) regularly evokes considerable sentiment. There is also a strong sense of solidarity based on the use of Amharic—both among the Amhara as a whole vis-à-vis other Ethiopians who either do not know Amharic or speak it imperfectly, and among regional dialect groups. The people of Gojjam and of the Gondar area are particularly chauvinistic with regard to the quality of their Amharic.

This attachment to symbols of religion, territory, and language is important in providing a basis for identity and morale. Yet these attachments are of relatively little import in shaping a self-transcending orientation in the day-to-day activities of the Amhara; for the crucial context of these activities is the local community, and in the civic sphere the Amhara manifest very little solidarity. Indeed, it may be said that the Amhara have virtually no sense of "community" at all, for the concept can scarcely be rendered in idiomatic Amharic.

The absence of community sentiment among the Amhara is implied by their ecology. Not only did the Amhara fail to produce extensive and durable urban centers (with the limited exception of Gondar) but their country is even barren of that frequent cornerstone of peasant life, the village. The Amhara have distributed themselves thinly, scattering in groups of fours and fives up and down their mountains and plateaus. Larger aggregations are found on the estates of noblemen, but these constitute expanded private households rather than civic communities. The Amhara justify this dispersion of their population on the grounds that wide spaces are needed for the grazing of livestock and that a man needs to live on the land he farms. But herding and farming have been carried out well enough elsewhere by people living together in villages, and it is quite probable that this ecological pattern is due as much as anything else to the Amhara's preference for not having too much association with those outside his immediate kin group. In his own words, the Amhara prefers the kind of neighbor who "does not push the boundaries" (*wassan aynakām*), and believes, as noted earlier, that *bēt-ennā māqbar labetchāw naw* ("home and the grave are by oneself"). It is a preference manifest in such solitary living arrangements as that of divorced women who sometimes live by themselves in the country, eking out a living by spinning cotton or brewing spirits, and in the age-old predilection of Abyssinian monks for anchoritism.

The moral counterpart of this ecological pattern is a preoccupation with private interests that leaves little room for the consideration of communal needs. According to the Amhara vocabulary of motives, social action is motivated first and foremost by the pursuit of *ṭīqem*, or narrowly conceived self-interest.[9] This matter-of-fact acceptance of egoistic motivation among the Amhara appears during what is a common occurrence: the shameless subversion of occasions which are set up to consider communal problems and to

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symbolize communal solidarities by the forthright assertion of individual claims and grievances. 121* 181

In virtually every instance of a consideration of communal projects or needs that the author observed or heard of, the dominant characteristic of the discussion was a vigorous and uncompromising assertion of individual claims. If it was a question of allotting spaces in a new marketplace, each discussant was vociferating that the portion allotted to him was insufficient. If it was a question of securing more land for various communal purposes, the various property owners involved orated against contributing a square foot unless reimbursed at some preposterous figure. If it was a scene in court or a police station, everyone with any personal grievance, real or imagined, felt it perfectly proper to interrupt at any point and give vent to his opinion. If it was a question of rebuilding a ravaged church or constructing a road, personal disputations undermined all efforts toward communal action. If it was simply a ceremonial occasion, the peaceful setting one might have expected was shattered by the airing of private disputes. 156 157

> Today a new church building was dedicated. It was built to replace one that had been destroyed more than two decades ago by the Italians. People from all over the area made the journey to attend this celebration. All night long and well into the morning the priests and *dabtarā* sang and danced, accompanied as usual by sistrums and drums. Later in the morning, after the church had been officially sanctified, everyone was assembled in the open space in the church compound to listen to some verses composed in honor of the event by one of the local *bālābbāt*, a man who had been a key figure in getting the church rebuilt. He had scarcely finished reciting his poem when a woman in the audience spoke up in anger, arguing that the new church would involve more taxes and in some way would affect her property rights adversely. While he was trying to pacify her, others interrupted and began airing grievances of their own. What was to have been the climax of an occasion for the expression of communal solidarity ended as a bedlam of argument.[10]

The one area in which communal sentiments have seemed fairly strong among the Amhara has been in connection with the pursuit of outlaws. It is customary—in some Amhara districts, at least—for the local inhabitants to band together in informal posses when threatened by the presence of one or more *shīftā*, or "outlaws." Yet even here, in his attitudes toward the *shīftā*, the Amhara reveals an ambivalence regarding the maintenance of civil order and security. 121* 181 156 157 674 627 [829]

The term *shīftā* had, in former times, primarily a political connotation. It referred to someone who rebelled against his feudal superior and was applied only to persons of relatively high status.[11] More recently the term has been vulgarized and broadened to include any sort of outlaw in the rural areas. In 121* 674 [178]

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cal animosities which have weakened the nobility as a status group both in relation to the emperor and in relation to foreign countries. Another respect in which Amhara parochialism has been expressed is the addiction to regional stereotypes, according to which the Tigrean has been depicted as flighty, irresponsible, and "dry"; the Gondarē as intolerably proud; the Gojjami as sly and treacherous; and the Shoan as calculating and untrustworthy. Despite its long history as a nation, Ethiopia probably never experienced more than the dimmest stirrings of a truly national sentiment among its people; and more than once in the past century have regional lords strengthened the hand of European powers in Ethiopia by seeking their help in the combat against other local rulers.

Self and Others

In addition to considering the extent to which the members of a society identify with the needs and symbols of their more inclusive collectivities, one may also define the individualistic disposition on the dimension of personal interaction. Egoism contrasts, in other words, not only with the disposition to perceive collective purposes as one's own, but also with the disposition to seek solidarity and mutuality in face-to-face relations.

This aspect of egoism/solidarism is studied by surveying the more important forms of interaction that appear in a given society. In the survey of elementary social behavior among the Amhara now to be reported, two criteria were used to establish the importance of any given form: (1) the frequency with which it was observed, and (2) the extent to which it was stylized or "institutionalized." These criteria were not embodied in any systematic observational procedures; the only control over the observer's bias here is my own deliberate effort to present a balanced and accurate picture.

We may begin by considering the more solidaristic forms. Interaction among the Amhara is characterized, first of all, by a sort of *sensuous camaraderie*. The Amhara enjoy bodily contact. Members of the same sex customarily hold one another's hands for long periods while conversing, or embrace one another in casual fellowship. Crowds of commoners cheerfully huddle close to one another on the floor through the night when they have assembled for some social function and cannot return home the same day. Relatives and companions of the same sex incline to sleep in one another's arms, at least in the chillier altitudes.

Both their style of dress and their manner of eating give the Amhara a ready way to express this comradely feeling. Their untailored cotton or wool cloth easily adapts itself to being shared. Except perhaps for individuals of high social status, the typical Amhara is ready to use his toga as a blanket-wrap for both himself and another whom he may scarcely know.

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*121 181 571 [764] Spontaneous co-operation is most in evidence among the Amhara at times of crisis. When death is announced, relatives and friends promptly repair to the home of the deceased and offer their help. They build the coffin and construct a *dāss* (a temporary shelter near the house to accommodate all the expected visitors). They bring food and drink to help provide for the many who will come to pay their respects, and will similarly provide help on the occasion of the big memorial feasts to follow. Like assistance is rendered during other crises, such as prolonged illnesses or fire. Such forms of co-operation set another significant limit to egoistic orientation among the Amhara.

*121 181 • 156 571 578 691 It is in the realm of interaction involving serious interests, touching layers of the personality deeper than those required for the formalities of etiquette, that Amhara egoism is most conspicuous. Here everything seems to conspire against generous communication and concord of opinion. As we have already observed, the Amhara are quick to become argumentative in ordinary conversation. *Litigation* is one of the most prominent forms of interaction among the Amhara. One can scarcely spend a day in the Amhara countryside without encountering litigants, whether under a tree, at a marketplace, or in the courtyard of some lord. A nobleman can never travel about the country without being accosted on the way by litigants anxious to have him hear their stories.

121 181 571 578 691 171 Litigation is, of course, an endemic feature of peasant civilizations. Yet there can be no doubt that for the Amhara this form embodies a basic psychological disposition that differs from that of the people of other peasant civilizations. In traditional China, to take a case of marked contrast, such interpersonal conflict, far from being relished, was deliberately avoided. The Chinese considered going to court to be an extravagance, and the village judge was one of the most underemployed members of the community. In China, parties to a dispute preferred to assemble at the teahouse and to seek a solution through discussion and negotiation. The Amhara, on the other hand, seeks to maximize the opportunity for self-assertion through litigious disputes. Ordinary sociability among the Amhara is saturated with references to litigation. Current court cases comprise one of the more common topics of conversation.

*121 181 571 578 [691] [521] Beyond litigation, *conflict* is often expressed in more violent forms. Fights with the *dulā* erupt when altercation becomes too heated. Throwing stones is another accepted mode of combat, especially among youth. Protracted enmities tend to eventuate in such acts as house-burning, assault with swords or rifles, and (according to Amhara belief, at least) poisoning.

While it is true that Amhara culture provides means and a certain amount

* Some indication of the gross national significance of this phenomenon is afforded by the following comparison: twenty-seven high court judges are sufficient to handle the litigation for all of England and Wales; the corresponding number for Ethiopia is *one hundred and eighteen*.

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of moral pressure for the reconciliation of conflict, it appears to place greater emphasis on the acting out of aggression. It does this, first of all, by defining a number of acts as offenses which justify violent retribution of some sort. Appropriation of one's land, seduction of one's wife, and injury of one's relatives are acts of this nature, and it is incumbent on the offended party to seek personal revenge or, as the Amhara put it, "to return the debt" (*bedder mammalas*). It is considered shameful to remain passive when so affronted, an attitude expressed in the following couplet:

Balaw ba-dimotfar daggmaw ba-wānzā,
Bābbāt ristennā yallam bamist wāzzā.

Shoot him with the dimotfar,* get him again with
a wanza,*
Taking your father's land or your wife away,
that is no joking matter.

Aggressiveness is further encouraged by the Amhara ego ideal of masculinity.[13] The identity of Amhara males is very much bound up with their capacity for aggressiveness, by both violent and verbal means. A man who has killed someone is regarded with a certain amount of veneration, and the act of killing is itself praised in verses such as:

Saw gadlu saw gadlu: saw magdal yébajāl,
Saw yālgadala saw sihēd yāngolājāl.

Kill a man! Kill a man! It is good to kill a man!
One who has not killed a man moves around
sleepily.

Similarly, verbal aggression is encouraged by the inclusion of excellence at litigation and insulting in the domain of proper male behavior.[14] The bestowal of insults is a rather stylized, if dangerous, procedure among the Amhara. According to Amhara customary law, insulting is a legal offense. The new criminal code provides for a gradation of penalties according to the seriousness of the insult, including fines which run from Eth$15 to as much as hundreds of dollars. The most serious insults include *bāryā* ("slave"); *ṭayb* ("evil-eyed artisan"); and *qomātā* ("leper"). Insults of lesser to medium degrees of seriousness include the following:

hodām	"greedy" (literally, "bellied")
wafrām	"fat"
sakārām	"drunkard"
quashāshā	"dirty"
amadām	"scaly-faced" (literally, "ashen")

* Types of rifles.

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*121 live near the same master, they divide up the neighboring countryside to
571 avoid duplication in their begging.
181 The ordained clergy are themselves given to begging, for items ranging
735 from contributions to the local church to petty personal effects. High-ranking
[793] visitors to their locale are customarily made the objects of such solicitations.
[533] Another type of begging is practiced by the minstrels who wander about the country with their one-stringed fiddles and fecund wit, coaxing contributions from any audience they can capture. In addition to these there are numerous professional beggars—the maimed, the diseased, and the poverty-stricken—who attach themselves to a well-attended church or monastery if they are unable to travel. The *lālibalā* is a notable type within this category of mendicants.[28]

[527] In addition to honoring the periodic appeals of beggars, "big men" are supposed to provide yearly feasts (*gĭber*) at which beggars of all the above descriptions are fed. In all these instances, the solicitation and bestowal of charity contributes a solidaristic element to the network of personal relations among the Amhara.

*121 The foregoing analysis of forms of interaction among the Amhara has
181 been undertaken in order to gain material for generalizing about a psycho-
• 156 logical disposition. Our unspoken, tautological assumption has been that the
571 ways in which individuals typically relate to social objects (i.e., other persons and collectivities) represent the sociologically relevant aspects of their psychology. Egoism and solidarism have been used here as concepts for depicting one dimension of "social character," using this term in the specific sense of comprising those aspects of personality which are both socially shared and constitutive of those actions that are oriented to social objects. We may now attempt to summarize the preceding discussion with the following definition of Amhara social character as it relates to the concept of individualism: The Amhara is primarily disposed to structure interaction in terms of self-assertion, dissension, and distrust, and to be indifferent to the concept of civil community. At the same time this egoistic orientation is blended with a warm and kindly sense of sociability, an occasional mood of generosity, and a refined sensibility regarding differences in status and the readiness to pay deference accordingly.

INDEPENDENCE VERSUS CONSTRAINT

*121 In the previous section we considered the nature of the individual's orientation toward others and toward collectivities in Amhara society. Our question now is the converse: what order of demands is made upon individuals by the institutions of that society? Specifically, we shall be concerned primarily with the degree to which the norms which govern institutional roles are

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*121 Amhara society as marked by a moderately high degree of independence.
181 This is to say that Amhara society gives relatively wide rein to individual impulse in action. It is not to say that Amhara culture places a high value on the moral worth of the individual personality. That is a separate question, which we shall now proceed to explore.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS CONFORMITY AND ANONYMITY

*121 The extent to which individual personality is valued in a society is reflected
181 primarily in two aspects of its culture. One of these comprises its processes
156 of education, in the broadest sense of the term; the other, its forms of art. The character of these aspects of culture reveal, respectively, the degree of concern for the *development* of an individualized self and the degree of concern for the *expression* of an individualized self.

Education and Socialization

*121 Obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in bringing up children
155 among the Amhara. After a prolonged and indulged infancy, the Amhara
861 child from about three years on is subjected to a regime of discipline and
867 repression. He is taught to fulfill without question any request made by any
[854] older person. He is conditioned to stand quietly whenever guests are present and to stand facing the wall while his parents or guests eat their dinner. If addressed by elders, especially those outside his immediate family, he is expected to reply in a barely audible whisper—a norm that is sometimes adhered to with such pathetic faithfulness that it has become the object of gentle satire in a short story by the young Ethiopian writer, Tadesse Liban.[26] Children who are noisy and disrespectful are referred to contemptuously by the term *bālagē,* meaning "rude."

*121 The desires and interests of an Amhara child are not taken into account
155 by those who raise him. He is provided with a bare minimum of clothes,
855 and little effort is expended in procuring him playthings,[27] although in some
524 families little dolls made of rags (*ashāngulit*) are produced. Children have
*121 a rich play-life with their peers, but this consists mostly in imitating various
155 adult activities. Organized games occur very rarely, the chief one—*gannā*—
857 being played as a rule but once a year, on Christmas Day.[28] The traditional songs and dances are learned from other children while tending the herds, but children are not encouraged to perform them in front of adults. The
*121 opinions of children are never expressed, let alone consulted. Indeed, in some
155 commoners' families the children are treated little better than the farm ani-
855 mals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing
858 her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

 121* 155

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones. 855 858

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose. 121* 155 156 86

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Ambhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development. 121* 876 155 121* 155 871 121* 868 565 554

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar. 121* 533 535 156 [176]

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is 121* 531 156 121* 532 156

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

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*121 further limited by a number of canons. For example, saints must have no
532 shadows on their faces; "good" characters must be portrayed *en face,* "bad"
• 156 ones in profile; and honored subjects must be portrayed on the right.* Virtually all aspects of the subject matter—dress, features, actions, symbolism—are prescribed by rigid conventions. That this degree of conformity reflects a cultural attitude and not a want of inventiveness on the part of Amhara artists is shown by the discoveries of Marcel Griaule, who collected hundreds of drawings in Gojjam in the form of silhouettes and graffiti, drawings based on direct observation and exhibiting an "astonishing diversity and revealing . . . a very great liberty of expression." Yet, Griaule observed, "these drawings are scorned by the people, who pay scarcely any attention to them; and by the artists themselves, who regard them as a sort of pastime of no importance, or as an activity reserved primarily for apprentices."[29]

In painting, as in the performing arts, individuality was suppressed not only by the pressure to conform to given models but also by the anonymity of the artists involved. This is more striking in the case of painting which, particularly in the form of miniatures, produced some exceptional works. But painting was carried out for the most part as a devotional activity, and its practitioners were apparently content to remain unknown.

The Written Word and the Oral Tradition

*121 The written literature of Ethiopia provides as little scope for individuality
156 as does its painting. Like the painters, the authors of the Ethiopian manu-
538 scripts have for the most part remained anonymous. Their subject matter has been narrowly circumscribed by the force of tradition, and their genres have been just as narrowly conventionalized.

Ethiopian literature consists primarily of religious writings, in the first instance of free translations from Greek, Syriac, and Arabic texts. Where the writings are original they tend to be either expositions of traditional beliefs and rituals of the church, eulogies of saints, or expressions of pious fantasy on religious themes. The nature of this literature is to extol sacred objects, not to express individual personality. The *Investigations of Zar'a Yā'qob,* a very personal and imaginative critique of prevailing orthodoxies dated in the seventeenth century and reminiscent of the French *philosophes,* is the exception that proves the rule; for this manuscript has proved to be a forgery, the work of a Franciscan mis.ionary to Ethiopia in the early nineteenth century.[30]

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[175] * The seriousness with which such conventions seem to have been taken is shown by the episode of Brancaleone, a Venetian painter who was in Ethiopia during the reign of Ba'eda Māryām (1468–78), who is said to have provoked an uproar by painting a Madonna with the child on her left arm instead of the conventional right.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The effect of this literature has not been, as David Riesman suggests is true of the written word generally, an individualizing one. It did not serve to "help liberate the reader from his group and its emotions, and allow the contemplation of alternative responses and the trying on of new emotions."[31] It has served rather to buttress conformity, by rekindling identification with the sacred symbols of the society. Ethiopian religious literature does not invite introspection; it is a corpus to be venerated and solemnly rehearsed. When a devout Ethiopian reads his daily or weekly portion from some writing such as the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David) or the *Weddāssē Māryām* (*Praise of Mary*), he is said to be "repeating" the text—*Dāwit yedaggemāl*. Most of those who learn to read the words of these writings do not understand the Ge'ez in which they are composed.

121* 156 182 538

A similar function has been performed by the secular literature, which runs primarily in praise of royalty and thus has served to uphold the political status quo. The earliest Ethiopian writings are inscriptions of the Aksumite kings dating from the fourth century A.D. Here, in a style that is to persist through the ages, the royal deeds are recounted in meticulous detail and endowed with the highest morality.[32] Ge'ez chronicles were composed in this manner for most of the emperors after the thirteenth century. The earliest specimens of written Amharic consist of hymns in praise of the Emperor Amde Ṭseyon (1314–44).

121* 156 175 182 538

Two other written works put the capstone on this conservative structure. The *Kebra Nagast*, the Ethiopian national epic, has served chiefly to legitimate the royal line that came to power in the thirteenth century and to cement once and for all the union of monarchy and church. The *Fetha Nagast*, the traditional legal code based on various canon and civil laws compiled in medieval Egypt, has served not as a working code for the adjudication of court cases but as an embellishment of *de facto* decisions, imparting to the judge an increment of authority by virtue of his ritual of referring to them.

121* 156 182 538 671 177

Because of the relative sterility of Abyssinian written literature, art, dance, and music, many observers have concluded that Abyssinian culture provides no outlets for truly creative expression.[33] This judgment is not just. The Abyssinian genius freely discloses itself in the stories, verse, and proverbs that make up its very rich *oral* literature. Within this oral tradition, especially in its verse, a good deal of original expression and personalized commentary may be found.

121* 156 53 121* 156 538

Ethiopic verse comprises a wide variety of forms which differ according to subject and occasion. Classical *qenē*, Ge'ez verse in praise of some holy figure or political leader, is composed by *dabtarā* on certain religious or political holidays. More playful verses of praise are sung in Amharic by *dabtarā* or minstrels on festive occasions. In such verses the poet may in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 538 156 [726] sinuate insults through the ambiguities of his compliments, as was illustrated above. *Shīllalā,* declaimed to arouse male courage before battle, is also heard at weddings and other festive occasions. Another type of exclamatory verse (*ho-berē*) is sung by the peasant at harvest time as he drives his cattle around the threshing floor. Verse of sorrow (*engurguro*) is intoned at time of bereavement or during moments of loneliness. Finally, in the conviviality of a drink-house enlivened by a minstrel, alone at work, or with a group of friends on various occasions, the Amhara finds that verse provides a medium for thoughts on almost any subject—people, places, animals, weather, love, work, and death. The following poem illustrates an important quality found in many of these verses, pessimism and irony, especially common in verses about love.

[539] Fish on the cliff, baboons in the sea;
The ass after honey, while hay draws the bee;
On a baking-pan of wax, butter to see;
Or a monk from Zegamel monastery
In the pagan land of Metcha to bury;
With an unsuited person in love to be;
Thus has it ended, my affair with thee.
Leave it, forget it, just let it rest—
A hapless ass at a hyena's breast.

[533] These various sorts of verse may be either sung or spoken. The auditory
[534] effect is often enhanced by the accompaniment of musical instruments. When serious *qenē* has been recited by its author in church, it is usually repeated by a chorus of *dabtarā* singing to the slow beat of drums and sistrums. The sad strains of *engurgo* are sometimes accompanied by the mellow ten-stringed lyre, while an instrumental background for livelier subjects may be provided by the Abyssinian banjo or one-stringed violin.

Throughout these varieties of verse forms, certain conventions are followed. Most important, the lines are supposed to rhyme; that is, end with the same consonant-plus-vowel. Inferior poets achieve this rhyme at the expense of the words they use. In addition, proper rhythm must be maintained; the lines must not "break." This means that the flow of the line must be smooth and that the metrical pattern in one line—based on the number of accents, not syllables[34]—should be paralleled by the others. A poet who breaks his lines is satirized by being dubbed a "lion."

While observing these rules—and, in the case of *qenē,* the much more complicated rules pertaining to stanza forms and poetic figures—the Amhara poet *must also be original.* In the production of verse, individuality is explicitly emphasized. Poets who use verses composed by others—this is primarily true of students of *qenē*—are insulted with the term *lēbā* ("thief"). Similarly, a poet should not repeat himself. If he repeats the same word

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in a piece of verse, he is derided as an "ant." Once he has composed a certain verse, he is supposed to discard it and compose something new the next time. 121* 156 538

The composition of original verse is by no means restricted to a class of professional poets. Every good Amhara is more or less adept at it. Extemporizing verse is a favorite activity at feasts, weddings, and in the aimless camaraderie of the drink-house. Sometimes a minstrel is on hand to begin the entertainment, but the usual pattern is for him to be fed verses extemporized by others present which he then embellishes with music. Even currently, with popular culture being manufactured and distributed out of Addis Ababa, urbanized Amhara place great value on the invention of new lyrics to suit the most popular tunes of the day.

Such verses customarily have not been written down. When unusually clever verses were invented, they were transmitted by word of mouth through the country and over generations. Or some individual would be noted for "owning" some couplet he composed or memorized, and people would turn to him whenever they wanted to hear it. Only in recent decades have some Ethiopians sought to preserve these verses in more durable manner by committing them to print.

Thus it is that, contrary to Riesman's correlation of the spoken word with traditionalistic functions and the written word with individualizing ones, and contrary to the common conception of the oral tradition as inherently rigid and unchanging,[35] oral literature provides the sole area in Amhara culture where conformity to existing works is shunned and the highest premium is placed on individuality.

Cultural Heroes

The last dimension of individualism to be treated here concerns the extent to which a society is inclined to single out individual personalities for special renown. We have seen that Amhara culture places little value on the moral worth of the individual as such, in that—with the limited exception of poetry—it does not encourage the development and expression of a distinctive and authentic self. And it might seem, from a superficial reading of Ethiopian history and culture, that the pre-eminent position of the emperor precluded anything like a general tendency to glorify outstanding individuals other than the sovereign. Yet our picture of Amhara culture cannot be complete without acknowledging the substantial place it has traditionally given to what may be called a "cult of the individual." For, with respect to at least three different qualities—saintliness, bravery, and cleverness—the Amhara have a marked tendency to idealize and remember outstanding individuals. 121* 156 181

The idolization of saintly individuals has been an important part of 121* 156 776

*121 Amhara religious experience. The favorite written literature consists of
• 156 those genres which glorify individual saints for their special powers and
776 great deeds. The *gadel* depicts the heroic struggles of saints against tempta-
*121 tions and persecutions; the *tāmher* relates their miraculous feats; and the
156 *malka,* a verse form of some fifty five-line stanzas, consists of a rhapsodic
538 description of the physical features and moral qualities of some saintly sub-
776 ject. The various *qenē* stanza types, moreover, serve largely to glorify individuals through the exotic use of religious symbolism—especially the nine-line *mawaddas,* which means "praise."

*121 While these literary genres are accessible only to the learned few, the
156 multitude also adores individual saints. Each of the saints has his particular
776 following in the population, his popularity varying according to region and to the powers for which he is famed. This idolization has been directed
*121 not only to angels and legendary figures from the past, but also, to a lesser
156 extent, to contemporaneous religious virtuosi and outstanding masters of
554 the religious books.

Perhaps more prominent in Amhara life has been the glorification of brave
*121 men. The Abyssinian military ethic took the form of a cult of the hero. Per-
156 sonal bravery—not discipline, training, honor, or self-sacrificing loyalty—
703 was the paramount virtue in Abyssinian warfare. The *guabaz* warrior was
[554] rewarded by his chief, praised by the minstrel, and esteemed by the populace. His bravery was ranked according to the fearfulness of the enemy vanquished. Thus, in Menelik's day the fanciest headdress was given to a noble who killed one of the fierce Danakil, a less fancy headdress being awarded the killer of the tough Raya Galla. Such actions constituted the one area in which per-
[521] sonal boasting was permitted and, in fact, institutionalized in the genre known as *fukarā.*

We are indebted to Arnauld d'Abbadie for a firsthand account of the effect of this cult of the individual hero on the orientation of the Abyssinian warrior, in a passage so rare it is worth citing at length:

> The type of combat which [the Ethiopian] prefers over all others—because it gives him the most freedom to expand his personality—is that where, due to insufficiency of terrain or other circumstances, the chiefs can engage only a part of their forces. He loves to watch the skirmishers of the two armies spy out and accost one another while declaiming their martial themes. Joyously he throws off his toga to clad himself in some military ornament . . . and to mix himself in the widely spaced lines which follow one another and rise to the attack. He loves to comprehend the rationale of the manouvers of the two parties, to be able to judge the blows, to know under which hand the victims fall, to choose from among the enemy to avenge their death, to adapt his movements to the instincts which animate his companions, and to feel the earth tremble under the charges of cavalry which come as a squall

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to change suddenly the whole configuration of battle. He loves to hear, amidst the crackle of rifle-fire, the huzzahs, the shouts, the challenges, the injuries, the encouragements, the allocutions, the piercing voice of the troubadours, and the rhythms of the flutes alternating with the lugubrious wailing of the trumpets; to know, finally, that on the hills, behind their drummers who beat out the charge in place, the two rival chiefs and the two armies are following him with their eyes, and that he may at one moment or another, return to his lord and, hurling before him some trophy, tell him, at the end of his war chant: "There! This is what I know how to do!"[36] 121* 156 • 703

A cult of the individual obtains, in addition, with respect to the man with a genius for outsmarting others. Men who have beguiled their foes with particular cleverness, in litigation or in political intrigues, are scarcely less celebrated than religious virtuosi or heroic warriors. Anecdotes about great feats of shrewdness are the beloved stuff of Abyssinian folk history and are twice told around the fireplace.*[37] Some lords have enjoyed great reputations simply for being such successful and gifted scoundrels. 121* 156 554 [538]

Cleverness in words counts as much, if not more, than clever deeds. Here we confront once more the phenomenon of wax and gold, but appearing in this context as a sort of finesse in personal relations. It is a question here of individuals made memorable because of their memorable lines, their talent for swiftly and surely employing the ambiguities of Amharic to satirize, at the right moment, some personality, or social type, or aspect of the human condition. Military or political events are often remembered more for the witty verse composed by some personage on the occasion than for their historical significance. In the present century, Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē has been one of the most outstanding personalities of this sort, as was Alaqā Gabra Hānnā in the nineteenth century. [195]

INDIVIDUALISM AND MODERNITY

The Traditional Pattern

Our inquiry thus far has involved analysis of the various ways in which self-orientation is and is not manifest among the Amhara, in lieu of the more simplistic question of whether Amhara society is individualistic or not. Building on this analysis, we may now attempt a more integrated interpretation of traditional Amhara society. 121* 156

The predominant tendency in human relations among the Amhara is a disposition to seek, not unity based on affection, understanding, and/or responsi- 121* 156 181 571

* A recent study which analyzed 1,086 stories with identifiable themes, told or written by Ethiopian children in grades two through eight, revealed that "cleverness pays" was by far the most frequently recurring theme.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 bility, but disunity based on the assertion of personal claims. This tendency is
• 156 to some extent contained by feelings of politeness—an aesthetic of propriety—
181 which are manifest in many ways. It is further contained by solidaristic senti-
571 ments closely tied to the feelings and experience of childhood: the euphoria of mealtime, on the one hand, and, on the other, a pervasive respect for figures of authority. But neither by virtue of identifying with social groups of any sort, nor through a sentiment of brotherhood with other men does the Amhara transcend an orientation that is directed to, and by, the narrower needs of the self.

Consistent with this type of subjective disposition, the organization of Amhara society does not rely to a significant extent on co-operative arrangements or the machinery of consensus. Nor does it involve, on the basis of either a division of labor or the sharing of diffuse obligations, the customary performance of numerous functions on behalf of territorial communities or other collectivities. Its main axis of organization, rather, is that of a highly personal relationship between superior and subordinate, with the subordinate existing essentially as an extension of the ego of the superior. This means that there is a marked discontinuity in the exertion of social constraints upon individuals. Within the segments of superior-subordinate relations—husband-wife, father-son, master-servant, teacher-pupil, confessor-confessant, lord-retainer, elder-youth—domination is virtually unlimited. Thus the main social restraints are in the form of repressive obligations—more or less "forced" labor, payment of heavy revenues, fasting—enjoined by figures of authority. Horizontally, however, there are very few obligations, and this accounts for the considerable amount of independence that appears among the Amhara. The demands of superiors, furthermore, are issued on a highly personal and spontaneous basis. They are not systematic, continuous, and detailed; the authority of superiors is not "rationalized." This accounts for the absence of discipline and synchronization, which is a further source of independence from external constraints.*

It is further consistent with the Amhara's egoistic orientation that objects which transcend the self—whether human communities or other groups or transcendent realities—are not greatly esteemed. With the exception, therefore, of those pious men whose paintings and religious studies served a truly devotional purpose, Amhara culture did not prescribe a desire for anonymity in behalf of transcendent values. On the contrary, it greatly valued the outstanding or heroic individual. In participating in this cult of the individual, the Amhara was not submerging his ego for the sake of broader realities but reasserting his ego through identification with the celebrated personality.

Yet for all this adulation of the individual, this substantial degree of social

* We may put all this another way by saying that while Amhara society is highly authoritarian, it is not at all totalitarian.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

freedom, and this assertion of egoistic claims, we have seen that the Amhara care very little for genuine individuality. With the limited exception of the sphere of oral literature, they do not cherish originality or creativity. With the exception of the sphere of litigation, where every man is accorded the right to speak his piece before a judge, they do not honor the dignity of the human person. Individuality as contrasted with conformity is not an Amhara value.

The explanation of this seeming paradox is not far to seek. It is, to use the terms we have been employing here, that concern for genuine individuality is grounded on solidaristic sentiment. Respect for the autonomy and uniqueness of individual selves, including one's own self, is a cultural value that can only exist if supported by a socially shared disposition to respect the integrity and dignity of others. Egoism and individuality are not only independently varying aspects of individualism; they are, in the sense in which we have been construing the latter term here, largely incompatible.

The Challenge of Modernity

Characterization of traditional Amhara society in these terms leads naturally to two general questions concerning the relation between Amhara individualism and Ethiopia's quest for modernity. The first question concerns the relation between the individualistic aspects of Amhara society and the organizational requirements of national development; the second concerns the promotion of individuality.

Whatever priority is given to the various goals more or less implicit under the rubric of "modernization," all of them entail a substantial increase in the mobilization of energies in behalf of societal ends. Whether the primary emphasis is placed on increasing per capita income, raising standards of health and education, building up military and diplomatic strength, or devising governmental institutions more responsive to popular sentiments and more efficiently run, an absolute increase in the available quantum of socially deployable human resources is indispensable.

Our analysis of Amhara society indicates that its traditions are not conducive to the mobilization of energies in behalf of communal goals. In this it differs from other African societies, such as those celebrated by the spokesmen for "African socialism"[38]—not to mention those of other peoples in Ethiopia like the Galla and the Gurage—where more "communitary" traditions would seem to provide a more viable basis for economic and social development at the community level. At the national level, where the developmental tasks are those of institution-building and education, the situation is no different. Here the need is for large numbers of people with modern education working to some degree in concert in behalf of national goals. But, as we have observed, the modern-educated Ethiopians have so far refrained from exerting them-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 selves as a strong progressive force in the national life. This is due, we sug-
• 156 gested in the previous chapter, to a basic passivity related to the orality syn-
181 drome in Amhara culture. The considerations raised in this chapter seem no less relevant. The egoistic disposition and organizational laissez faire characteristic of traditional Amhara society affect no less their capacity for progressive action by inhibiting the uses of solidarity.

*121 The atomism of the Ethiopian intelligentsia has been a conspicuous feature
156 of their condition since they came into being. It is manifested in the basic dis-
181 trust in their orientation toward one another as well as toward the rest of
571 Ethiopian society. The regret of not being able to trust one's close friends is one of the more frequently heard confessions from their lips. The analysis presented in this chapter suggests that this reflects the attitudes and customs of traditional Amhara culture as much as it does the alleged saturation of the society with informers. That so few modern-educated Ethiopians have dared to break out of the vicious circle of distrust by daring to establish solidary relationships and to circumvent the prevailing fears and stagnation by establishing organizations of some sort is an illustration of the fact that, however much they may give lip service to the ideals of nationalism and populism, their hearts are primarily attached to winning new increments of prestige and income; in brief, to becoming director-generals.

*121 Yet the total picture is by no means only one of atomism and stagnation.
178 Some of the energies needed for Ethiopia's development can be, and have
181 been, obtained by extending the traditional principles of domination and
571 respect for authority into new areas of activity. Successful innovations in rural sanitation or agricultural practice, for example, have come about when local big men have been convinced of the desirability of the change and have then pressured the populace, by means of their authority and prestige, to implement the new measures. While the traditional authoritarian approach may for some time to come be the most ready method of mobilizing energies for social development, it alone cannot meet all the organizational needs of changing Ethiopia. One reason is that its effects are not continuous. To a large extent it depends on the whim and the physical presence of the relevant authority figure. It is common experience in Addis Ababa that particularly pressing problems are neglected for a long while, until the Emperor turns his attention to them; the matter then will be busily attended to for the moment, but is likely to be forgotten again when pressing matters turn the Emperor's attention elsewhere. This pattern is the model for most activity throughout the society where responsibility for specific problems is not carefully institutionalized.

*121 Another shortcoming of the traditional political pattern is that it does not
178 tap the potential energies now dormant in the population. Insofar as the mass of the people remain passive, involved in the developmental process only as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The labor movement, limited as it is, has been in the hands of Eritreans on the one hand, and primarily non-Amhara workers in the south. Student associations have been formed chiefly at the instigation and under the aegis of foreign staff members; though here, as with the professional associations, modernized Amhara have sometimes played a leading role.

Once the new associations had been introduced, the Amhara like other Ethiopians were quick to adopt and expand them. Their participation in these new associations, however, has been affected, as might be expected, by the intrusion of traditional behavior patterns. Three examples of such behavior patterns come readily to mind.

(1) While the *equb* is conceived as a kind of credit union and as a focus for communal sociability, the *co-operative* sentiment tends to be lacking among members of Amhara *equb,* at least those of which the author has any knowledge. For example, in case of dire need, an *equb* member who desires the lump sum out of turn may be forced to *buy* the amount from the weekly winner, sometimes by forfeiting as much as ten or twenty per cent of the amount. By capitalizing on the crises of others, some enterprising *equb* members are able to sell their successful claims several times. Furthermore, in the early years of their existence, *equb* were frequently faced with the problem created by members who won the money early in the cycle, left town with the money, and did not return to pay their later installments. This difficulty has been met to some extent by the requirement of securing one or two guarantors for each person who enters an *equb,* but problems of this nature have led to altercations that have brought many *equb* members into court.

(2) The behavior of members of Amhara territorial *māhebar* is essentially that of a traditional social or civil gathering. The big men are seated in places of honor; the rest of the people stand quietly by. After a protracted period of exchanging greetings and milling about, the crowd listens respectfully while one or more of the big men makes a statement, and perhaps exchanges a few words with the group's secretary; and then the gathering disbands. Although the *māhebar* is organized with respect to the attainment of specific goals, the substance of the meetings is instumental to a very slight degree. The assembly rarely involves a meeting of minds to discuss an issue or a common problem, or to work out a program of action; but exists primarily as an occasion for the resonance of primordial sentiments by virtue of shared territorial attachments.

(3) In all associations, finally, certain traditional characteristics which are incongruent with the optimum conduct of groups come to the fore. This is no less true of the modern-educated than of the traditionals. Members fail to come on time to arranged meetings or neglect to come altogether.* They

* The *equb* has attempted to check this pattern by imposing fines on members who come late.

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resist taking responsibility and showing initiative. In general, they reveal little capacity for self-discipline in a collective setting.

The need for what can be accomplished through the new associations, however, transcends the intermittent obstacles to their effective functioning posed by such individualistic behavior. As modernization proceeds and as Ethiopians gain experience in these associations, one may expect that the more disruptive aspects of such behavior will be transformed in the direction of greater compliance with the implicit norms of group functioning. Amhara in the modernizing sector have no choice now but to replace the ethos of the *shĭftā*, the litigant, and the wandering student with that of the president, secretary, and treasurer if they are to remain true to the ambitions that have been awakened within them.

There are, moreover, a number of respects in which adequate functioning in modern groups may be supported by behavioral traits inherited from the past. Three of these traits in particular deserve to be mentioned in this context. One is the fundamentally respectful orientation toward others. This serves to reduce the outbreak of dissension among group members, and in the attitude of respect and obedience toward figures of authority provides the basis, given capable and decisive leaders, for a significant amount of concerted action among group members. A second trait of some importance is the acceptance of conflict as a natural and not particularly threatening component of human relations. This means that group members are ready to admit and deal with such conflicts as do emerge in their ranks, and are experienced in the resolution of such conflicts through the agency of elderly mediators or the more formal processes of litigation. Finally, the Amhara sense of humor—wry, realistic, attuned to the ironies of existence—introduces a salutary leavening ingredient into group process. It provides an outlet for the release of tensions in group situations and adds a certain flavor to group experience that often more than compensates for the lack of a hyperinstrumental orientation.

The Question of Individuality

Although effective modernization is unthinkable without a significant increase in solidaristic sentiments and rationalized organization, in Ethiopia as elsewhere, the fate of the other aspect of individualism discussed in this chapter—individuality as a cultural value—poses a more controversial question. If the essence of modernity is the systematic effort to control rationally man's physical and social environment, then the society of *1984* may be claimed as a possible modern utopia no less than the society in which all children go to Montessori schools and all adults paint, undergo psychoanalysis, and study Great Books. The cultivation of individuality stands as but one of many pos-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 sible values commonly subsumed under the notion of modernity and must compete with other values, like that of maximizing efficiency in production, which are indifferent or antagonistic to it. The modernizing elites are thus faced with the question, whether they confront it openly or not, of the extent to which their political and cultural institutions should be encouraged to emphasize the dignity, integrity, and creativity of individuals.

And yet it can be argued that individuality, while not a necessary constituent of modernity—if, from the author's viewpoint, an extremely desirable and plausible constituent—may be an indispensable means of accomplishing any of the goals aspired to by the modernizing elites. The argument is that informed and reliable leadership, on the one hand, and responsible and effective criticism, on the other, depend ultimately on the existence of at least a minority of persons who can think for themselves and can have confidence in their thinking and in the possibility of meaningful communication with others. In terms of the collective interests of the national society, one could maintain that a developed individuality is *more* important for the elite of a transitional society than of a highly modernized nation.

*121 • 156 181 The weight of Amhara tradition opposes the graceful emergence of such a minority in Ethiopia. The pressures toward conformity and the inhibition of self-expression in most areas of life are, we have seen, characteristic of that tradition. The surly use of authority, the subtle sense of fatalism, the adulation of rank rather than human qualities, the distrust of innovation, the drabness of subsistence, the authority of conventional styles, the narrowness of outlook maintained by mass illiteracy and religious fundamentalism, the interpersonal aspects of the ethos of wax and gold (deception, insult, and intrigue)—these and related aspects of Amhara culture are formidable obstacles to the development of individuality among Ethiopians.[43]

Such a development is further impeded by two characteristics of Ethiopia's contemporary situation: the fear of criticism and the new "cult of personality." Given the Amhara emphasis on the deserts of status and the formalities of social intercourse, it is natural that the uses of honest criticism should have been kept to a minimum in their traditional social order. And thus it is that, from want of public habits of constructive criticism, traditions of self-examination have never emerged; rather, the ego has ever been first and foremost on the defensive to ward off all real or alleged slights to its dignity.[44] Altercation among Amhara has frequently arisen from a characteristic incapacity to accept advice and counsel, let alone criticism. This difficulty has been compounded by Ethiopia's present circumstance, for she finds herself, after centuries of living as she pleased with a mode of adjustment fairly well suited to the realities of traditional life, suddenly forced to acknowledge the inadequacy of her culture for purposes of living in the modern world. This situa-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tion has prompted the hasty erection of new self-justificatory defenses and an extreme touchiness about being considered "primitive" or "backward." This sensitivity has been exacerbated by the fact that European politicians in pursuit of their colonial interests, and foreign journalists in pursuit of sensational stories, have shown no compunctions about dwelling on and exaggerating some of the more unflattering aspects of Ethiopian culture. In such an emotional climate, the attempt to be objective about one's country and one's self, to engage in self-examination that is both sympathetic and critical, can be carried out only by efforts that are profoundly heroic.

The situation has scarcely been improved, moreover, by the form taken by the "cult of the individual" in contemporary Ethiopia. The centralization of power has been accompanied by a radical centralization of prestige. The cult of personality occasioned by the ascendance of Haile Selassie overshadows all public life in Ethiopia. It is manifest in the ubiquitous photographs; the naming of countless streets, plazas, schools, and other institutions after him; and in the unremitting praise and adulation accorded him in all public speeches and mass media. Other individuals have normally been accorded recognition only by virtue of their proximity to him, while individuals possessing attainments in their own right, and thus some claim to public attention, have deliberately been kept in the shadows. Domestic news conveyed through the press and radio has largely consisted of the minutiae of the Emperor's daily activities, including such matters as the exact time at which he performs any public function and all the words he speaks on any occasion. This cult of personality has further been advanced in the Ethiopian press by its adherence to a number of conventions respecting the person of the Emperor, such as that of placing the name of the Emperor at the beginning of any article in which he is mentioned; capitalizing all references to the Emperor, including all pronouns; and attributing all developments and progress reported in the newspapers to the initiative and foresight of the Emperor and his government.[45]

The political implications of this phenomenon need not concern us here. Whether the monopolization of prestige as well as power by the Emperor may have a primarily beneficial effect, through providing an authoritative symbol that can link the multifarious elements of the Ethiopian state; or whether, as was the case with Bismarck, the elimination of other possible pre-eminent personalities is laying the basis for a leadership vacuum for which the coming generation may pay dearly, is a question that cannot yet be answered. In this context we are concerned only with establishing the point that the ascendance of a cult of personality such as now obtains in Ethiopia eliminates not only the bestowal of public esteem for authentic individual performance, but also deprives the people of exercise in a crucial prerequisite

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 •156 643 of individuality—loyal criticism toward the government, one's friends, and one's self.

Besides the efforts of those courageous Ethiopians who, in exile abroad or living in inner exile at home, have steadfastly worked to develop their powers *121 873 of integrity and their capacities of independent judgment, there is but one force that holds any promise of increasing the scope of personal autonomy and creativity in Ethiopia, and that is education. The fate of Ethiopia one and two generations hence is linked, more closely than members of large, industrialized societies can readily appreciate, with a single small institution: the Haile Selassie I University. As pinnacle of the country's educational system, it sets the standards, prepares the teachers, and devises many of the innovations to be used throughout the nation's schools. No less important, its relative independence from the national government gives it a certain leeway to pursue policies based primarily on academic considerations. The Ministry of (647) Education, which administers all other secular schools in the country, is necessarily more subjected to the routine pressures of domestic politics. The university, on the other hand, by virtue of its many expatriate staff members and its dependence on outside financial help, is more intimately tied to international academic standards and practices. While a growing number of qualified Ethiopians have joined its staff, for some time to come the University will necessarily be greatly dependent on assistance from academic men from other countries. In any event, it is likely to remain in continuous contact with the outside world by virtue of its participation in the international community of scholars. This condition may give it a degree of autonomy and insulation that can but further the patient development of Ethiopia's most sorely needed asset: cadres of individuals who can resist the facile slogans of the day and work to provide for Ethiopia's great transformation the benefits of enlightened aims and realistic practices.

827 person would use direct terms relating to certain body functions: "ar" (fecal matter), "shänna" (he urinated), etc. Polite circumscription is well developed. But the actual carrying out of basic body functions is merely channelled, not repressed, even in "polite society". Farting, e.g., which is almost inevitable after consuming the daily "qolo" (roast peas or barley), is channelled as expressed in the following proberb:

[539] "The Abyssinian is clever;

bowing low (before the great man), he (silently) farts".

Spitting is the inevitable result of masticating the end of the twig used as a toothbrush; but it is not nearly as voluminous as the low-class spitting ("tiq alä", or "entef alä", both alliterations) of the Sudanese ex-slaves (Barya) and Muslim Abyssinians who hold a wad of tobacco between lower lip and gum, chew, and spit.

828 In the conceptualization of human personalities, the Amhara take
● 157 subject matter also from physiological functions and from the ethnic and other divisions of the class structure:

The Rustic (esp. peasant):

"balagär" (lit. man of the rural country), also "balage". Unpolished, impolite, vulgar.

"wetter" - ignorant person who asks embarassing questions to "inflate his own belly".

The Simple-minded: "yäwäh" - simple, good, modest, honest, frank, sincere.

"wedeqät" - (lit. young bull) - simpleton, who causes damage without meaning to; e.g. who cannot hold his tongue.

The Fool: "dongworo" (lit. deaf; deaf-mute) Stupid person whose mind nothing seems to penetrate.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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"tärzazza" - proud person, e.g. who does not reply though called twice.

"afä adatär" (who let slip from the mouth) what he didn't mean to reveal. Also "sat alä" (let slip) like ax, when working.

The Immature Personality: "gäbrä hasanat" (lit. Slave of the nursling stage).

The Effeminate Male: "gärtalla" - a delicate man, who cannot argue aggressively even if there is good reason for it.

"bukkän" - a fat, short male, who cannot walk long distances or march into battle; hence, a coward.

The Insane: "enäf" - idiot, (also insult for a fool).

"wäfäftäna" - violently insane person (insult for a quarrelsome person).

"wedegät" - epileptic, who falls down.

"ebd" - person who runs amok (believed possessed by "zarzen" evil spirit).

The Clever Person: "balä ej" - who is skillful with his hands, e.g. a surgeon ("wogasha").

"däleddel säw" - poised person, who can face and solve some direct, physical problem.

"tebäb" or "täbib" - skilled craftsman, trained artisan (includes the respectable dabtara scribe as well as ethnic smiths and sorcerers).

The Wise Person: "Balä meker" - Man of counsel, prudent, judicious.

"Awäqi" (lit. knower) - one whohas accumulated knowledge with or without books.

"chemmet" - calm, softspoken, modest, tranquil, sedate, serious.

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"galeb" - one who shines with intelligence;

"galbam" - Person full of reason, discretion, intellectual beauty.

812 It is clear from the last two personalities that a distinction is made between the merely clever (e.g. in material things) and the wise person. Wisdom is stressed in numerous proverbs:

[539]

"A king who has no wise councillor,
not one year will he reign".

Many Amhara desirous of reputation, emulate the Biblical wisdom of King Solomon, a wise judge whom "no one could fool". Anecdotes of this type of wisdom are told far and wide, of kings and of rulers of provinces. Even at present, some of these anecdotes are told of rulers still living, including of Emperor Haile Selassie. The following two anecdotes, which may well be factual, are told in Gondar about Ras Imru, who ruled as governor-general of Begemdir province just after the liberation from Italian occupation, when banditry was a major problem:

539 812 1. Two bandits accused of robbery-murder were placed in separate confinement. They had refused to confess, and the time of the murder could not be ascertained. One bandit was taken to the place of the crime, on orders of Ras Imru, and told that his partner had confessed; then, that the time of the crime had been such-and-such. Eager to argue against such an error, the bandit momentarily overlooked the fact that by correcting the time element he was giving himself away. Whereupon both were convicted and hanged.

2. One day, while riding through the market, Ras Imru was halted when a woman threw herself before his horse, shouting "abyet", the traditional appeal of the oppressed. She accused one of Ras Imru's soldiers of having consumed a large pitcher of milk she had for sale, without payment. The soldier denied it, and there were no witnesses

181 one's kin by doing manual labor, made necessary in some cases by
602 poverty, leads to outmigration from the district and often even from the province. Nepotism in obtaining good positions is the norm to such an extent that failure to act in this manner would be severely criticized by the traditional Amhara as the utmost in meanness. In fact, when an Amhara wants to make a particularly derogatory remark about another ethnic group, he says that they are mean to their own kin and quarrelsome within the kin group.

[476] Cooperation and mutual aid, teamwork in agriculture, hut building, etc., are largely centered on the residential kin unit, notably the patrilocal hamlet.

554 A major culture goal in Amhara society is the assumption of the status personality of the "great man - noble" ("telleq säw"), in contra-distinction to the rustic peasant ("balägär"). However, this ambition is usually frustrated because social status is primarily inherited, along with "rest" land and the expectation of re-appointment to one's father's position and rank of nobility in the hierarchy. The door to advancement has traditionally been only through feudal warfare: loyal support of one's feudal lord was rewarded with "rest" land and higher rank. Even today a young nobleman must await formal promotion to his father's rank by the emperor, and this still contains an element of personal reward and punishment.

157 The personality of the rustic Amhara peasant is extroverted,
554 not burdened with the considerable self-restraint expected of the Amhara noble. The peasant is quick to express mirth, anger, and other emotions. He is not stodgy and slow in conversation like the proverbial peasant of Europe. In fact, because of the relative

157 554 absence of self-restraint, he can give free rein to the typical Amhara fondness for rapid and noisy argumentation, quoting witticisms, puns and proverbs. He does not have to control his typical Amhara curiosity about non-material objects and human behavior, and can stare freely and openly. Even his servility to the noble is only formal and not internalized, for, while he bows deeply from [57½] the hips, his eyes are raised to observe every detail of the situation (especially to see whether some reward can be wheedled).

The Amhara noble, however, is required to be at least outwardly, an introverted personality. This is expressed in formal dignity, a partly withdrawn and meditative manner, a serious (though not severe) mien. His bodily movements must be slow and deliberate; his pattern of speech must be the same. Most of the time he remains pokerfaced. He has been trained to observe by moving only his eyes, [152] not his head. He does not express his basic emotions directly, except with social equals under proper circumstances. He must appear too proud to show curiosity, even for interesting and strange articles brought by the foreigner; he accepts them with just a dignified and appreciative nod of the head.

152 554 There is the principle of "noblesse oblige". The noble behaves as if his due will certainly come to him - he does not have to go and seek it. When a servant has angered him, the noble does not fly into a rage publicly, though he may have him routinely flogged later on. It is noteworthy that even the womenfolk among the nobles share this personality training. Although hysteria is 152 554 very common among Amhara women, it is rare among noblewomen. Even 158 in case of great emotional distress (e.g. if a child has died) [304] when commoner Amhara women wail loudly, scarify themselves, and roll

152 on the ground, Amhara noblewomen weep silently or go into states
554 of apathy. This is a more common mental ailment among nobles than
158 hysteria, and may lead to chronic depression and even catalepsy (see Part VI).

157 However, both the peasant and the noble share certain common
554 Amhara personality characteristics. Both take great pride in being
186 able to "speak well in court". Homesickness is strong among both, and is very widespread. Kings and emperors, until very recently, had great difficulty in sending and keeping ambassadors abroad, for the diplomat regarded his foreign assignment as "exile". Both classes share great pride in their highland plateau, defended for many centuries against all comers. This national vanity is at least in part due to long ignorance of the world beyond (sometimes hardened into xenophobia); pride in their ancient religion and in the national epics like the Solomon-Sheba-Menelik. These are shared by Amhara of all classes.

829 Amhara concepts of government administration are aristocratic: ruled by the noble "great man", who is usually descended from a feudal warlord of past centuries. The military camp and its direct significance for traditional Amhara social structure and government has been described in Part III. At the top of the hierarchy is the king or emperor (King of Kings). At the Amhara grassroots is the peasant, who seeks justice by attaching himself to a "great man" as retainer, so that he too will be treated "with honor" by reflection. From the bottom to the top of the hierarchy of government, persons on every level perform the ceremony of "dej tenat" (lit. waiting by the gate) to obtain jobs, maintain positions, or merely to prevent doubts about personal loyalty from arising through absence. This

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 212 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather [516] delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. [145] Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the [302] women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This gives them a gollywog appearance.

157 The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 576 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Falasha MP9

A [157] A 563

irony. They are a happy people with a deep love of the natural world around them.

The Tigraians of the north are different. There is something hard and seasoned about a Tigraian which makes him easily distinguishable from an Amhara. The Tigraian is rather the yeoman type. The sharper drier climate of the borders of Eritrea gives him something which recalls a little the ruggedness and shrewdness of the Castilian. There is a determined look in the Tigraian eye which contrasts with the wild and passionate glance of the Amhara. The Amhara and the Tigraians, with the kin Hadendoa of Eritrea, represent varying degrees of mixing of the Hamitic and Semitic stocks.

The Agau, on the other hand, are said to be the descendants of the pure Hamitic stock—believed to be aboriginal to the Ethiopian Highland. They may well be "the blameless Ethiopians" of the ancients. The judaised mountaineers of the Simen mountains speak an Agau dialect. There are islands of Agau in Gojjam, particularly along the line of the Western Escarpment. To the best of my knowledge these people together with the neighbouring negroid Gumuz of the Shankalla wilderness, another very primitive stock, have never been seriously studied. The language and customs of the Agau must be of considerable interest from the aspect of comparative linguistics and folklore.

A 563 F 105

The Agau villages through which we passed between the Escarpment and Njabara were miserably poor in the midst of an often fertile countryside: goitre, elephantiasis, and leprosy were rife. The people have long been a serf population under Amhara overlords; but in the tenth century they threw up the brilliant Zagwe dynasty which ruled Ethiopia for more than three centuries. The Zagwe episode in Ethiopian history seems to have represented some reaction of the older people of the Highland against the Amhara elements intruding from the north.

It may be of interest to refer here, in connection with the Agau, to the so-called Falashas or Black Jews. The main centre of the Falashas, who are Agau-speaking, has been in the Simen Mountains, but during the last century they have become scattered about all the north of the Ethiopian Highland. The religious practises of the Falashas are stated by people who have studied them to be those of the Jewish faith before the Babylonian captivity. The Falashas may therefore represent a remnant of a very old Jewish dispersion, or at least an early penetration of Jewish influences into the Ethiopian Highland.

Again it has been pointed out by Luca di Sabelli, Conte Rossini, and others that the ritual of the Coptic Church in Ethiopia retains a number of practises which were a part of the Jewish religion before the Captivity.[1] These cultural remnants from the past have a bearing on the tenacious tradition in Ethiopia that the Royal House is descended from Menelik (=ibn el-Hakim="son of the doctor" or "the sage") who was reputed to be a natural son of Solomon and Balkis (Arab) or Makeda (Ethiopian) Queen of Sheba. If this legend is rationalized it may be postulated that folk traditions of early Jewish associations were given literary form, in the early centuries of the Christian era, by Coptic monks familiar with Old Testament history.

A 173

[1] Luca di Sabelli, 'Storia d'Abissinia,' vol. 1.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

E 175 563 A 175 648

nize in it these and other important advantages for Ethiopia. These drawbacks have been those of any imperialism. During the great Amhara expansion under Menelik (1889–1913), many peoples were maltreated. Independent tribesmen were reduced to slavery; unique cultures were decimated; proud kings were dragged in the dust. Those who held down the Amhara position in these occupied territories seized land from the indigenous peoples and exploited them much as would any invader. The unfavorable reputation of the Amhara in the non-Amhara provinces has been due largely to the example of these governors and soldiers whose worst impulses were at times allowed free play.

One can scarcely single out the Amhara for criticism because of their imperialistic behavior in the past. Nor is it fair to judge the Amhara people as a whole by the character of their provincial officials in conquered areas, any more than one may judge the British, French, Portuguese, or Russian people by the behavior of certain imperious and sadistic colonial administrators. This distinction was self-evident to more discriminating observers of the Ethiopian scene like Augustus Wylde, who wrote in 1901:

A [565] [701] [157]

> There is no harder worker than the Abyssinian peasant, and no more harmless and hospitable person when left alone and properly treated; and no more truculent, worthless, conceited, lazy and useless individual than the Abyssinian soldier, who formerly did nothing but prey upon the defenceless cultivator.[3]

Indeed, if any imperialism of modern times should be granted special consideration, it might be that of the Amhara. The Amhara were to some extent merely reconquering lands that had been taken from them in earlier centuries. Furthermore, they needed additional strength to help withstand threats to their own independence. Finally, it can also be argued that if the Amhara had not conquered the other peoples now within the Ethiopian boundaries some European power might have colonized them instead.

E 563 A 648

However one may assess the fact of Amhara dominance in Ethiopia, it is a given of the present situation. It is a fact that leads naturally to two outstanding questions. One concerns the relations between the Amhara and the non-Amhara peoples of the empire: is it possible for the latter to be integrated more effectively and justly into the texture of a common national life? If not, the present state of tribal calm may prove to be but a long prelude to a wasteful storm. The question demands serious and sustained inquiry by a number of scholars, Ethiopians and foreigners alike.

E 563 178 121 A 121

The other question concerns the nature of Amhara culture, as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia, and its implications for the processes of Ethiopia's modernization now at work and yet to come. To this question we now direct our attention.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

772 As for the beginning and end of the world, all Amhara believe that the
[184] world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium
[773] arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside
[775] down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

*565 The Amhara peasant's view of nature is matter-of-fact. There are a few
82 traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy
[778] places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration
[241] of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.*

[192] The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws
[784] of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or
[241] himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

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[125] * All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge over-
[157] looking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services. 565* 346 341 181 796 822 [778]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery. 565* 822 181 361 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order. 565* 822 181 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities. 565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable 565* 156 157 • [577]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 156 man, as we shall see in more detail below, includes the quality of leaving
• 157 others alone.

[577] This strong sense of self is confirmed and symbolized by two conspicuous
*565 Amhara customs: carrying staves and going on trips. A staff, like a pipe,
156 affirms the ego in two ways. As a piece of personal property right at hand,
411 it stimulates a sense of pride of ownership; as something external yet confronting the person, it makes the ego more conscious of its bounded reality. Such sensations are daily experiences for the Amhara peasant, who is rarely separated from the staff in one form or other. When he leaves his homestead he normally carries the hard *dulā*, a potential weapon of defense that likewise affirms his ego by bolstering self-confidence in a dangerous world. He braces the *dulā* against his back as he treks along, or holds it against the
[481] front of his shoulder like a rifle. Older men walk using it as a cane. A special kind of staff made of softer wood (*zang*) is carried by pious and elderly
[481] men. Participants in devotional services lean on still another type of staff (*maquāmiyā*) which is distributed in the church for that purpose.

Traveling is another custom which affirms the ego, at least when one
*565 travels spontaneously and not in organized company. As the individual
156 moves past various stimuli, his self-consciousness is heightened by the con-
484 trast between a persisting ego and a constantly changing environment. As a traveler par excellence—and a lone traveler, unless social rank requires the presence of retainers—the Amhara peasant frequently removes himself from familiar home settings and confronts an outside world. He loves to go on the road and will travel at the slightest provocation. For him a distance of two or three hours by foot is like the American's trip to the corner drugstore. Whether to visit relatives or pay respects after death, to go to market or to court, to get holy water at a distant church, or to look after land in a far away district, the Amhara peasant is on the move dozens of times each year, often for trips involving two or three days of travel.

*565 Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and cul-
156 ture, one may for the moment say that the personal ego is the central object
829 in the Amhara peasant's view of society. Exactly what might be meant by
602 this statement and in what respects it needs qualification are questions that
609 will be taken up in the concluding chapter. If it is so, certainly the next most prominent social object in his world is the circle of close ones, or *zamad*. *Zamad* refers in the first instance to consanguineal kin, and is distinguished from the category of those who are strangers, or *bā'ed*. This is perhaps the most important of all the sociological distinctions made by the Amhara: the former, *zamad*, are seen as entitled to the warmest hospitality, while toward *bā'ed* indifference and suspicion are appropriate responses.

*565 This does not mean that the kin group is a corporate entity whose interests
156 and identity transcend that of the individual. On the contrary, the notion of
602

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zamad is highly subjective, and all constellations of *zamad* reflect the interests 565*
and affections of ego. For the quality of kinship can be attributed to persons 156
who are not consanguineal relatives, and this is done without resorting to 602
fictions of affiliation. The term *wandam,* for example, meaning "brother," 565*
is simply applied to any male person of about the same age to whom one feels 156
closely attached. The term *zamad* itself is applied to anyone to whom one 602
feels a close personal tie—even to a mere fellow-countryman whom one 572
happens to meet in a distant region. It is thus not taking too great a liberty to translate the term *zamad* as "close ones."

The primarily subjective nature of the circle of *zamad* derives not only 565*
from the fact that it includes friends as readily as actual blood relatives. With- 602
in the bounds of consanguinity, the composition of the kin group with which 572
a person identifies fluctuates according to his current needs, particularly with 423
respect to land use rights. As Allan Hoben has demonstrated, corporate 565*
descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use 602
are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; but 423
the fact that in this ambilineal descent system each individual may claim 611
multiple active affiliations, and enjoys a relatively wide range of choice, means that the particular corporate descent group with which an individual affiliates in order to claim his rights varies according to what land is subject to disputation. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mothers' rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors.[9]

The next most inclusive sociological concept beyond the ego-oriented circle 565*
of *zamad* is that of *agar,* or "homeland."* The co-residents of one's *agar,* like 571
those who comprise one's circle of *zamad,* are regarded as forming an im- 823
portant "in-group," outside of which all other persons are a priori rejected. Yet the Amharic concept of homeland, like that of kin, does not refer to a fixed social entity; its referent varies according to the context in which the individual chooses to use it. Thus, as we have seen, the concept of *agar* may be used to refer to one's parish, district, province, or even nation.

A more specialized dichotomy of some prominence in the outlook of the 565*
Amhara peasant hinges on variation in the altitude of homelands. Inhabit- 157 •
ants of lowlands (*qolaññā*) and dwellers of higher regions (*dēgaññā*) tend 823
to be conceived as polar cultural types. Different sets of habits and traits are attributed to them. Thus, according to one set of stereotypes, the *qolaññā* is viewed as a heavy drinker and hot tempered, while the *dēgaññā* is viewed as a heavy eater and inclined more to litigation than to violence. Again, the

* The less prominent category of *wagan* is intermediate between these two. *Wagan* has a pri- [602]
marily political connotation; it consists of one's consanguineal and affinal kin, friends and close [572]
retainers, all who may be mobilized in the event of political or military competition.

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*565 referents are relative: a man living at 7,500 feet may be considered *qolaññā*
• 157 by one living at 10,000 and *dēgaññā* by one living at 6,000 feet.
823 The broadest membership circle that the Amhara peasant normally thinks
*565 in terms of is that of the ethnic group consisting of all Amhara.[10] The ethnic
186 self-conception of the Amhara is one which stresses certain physical and cul-
619 tural characteristics, thanks to which he regards himself as superior to all non-Abyssinian groups in Ethiopia as well as to all non-Ethiopian nationals. With regard to race, the Amhara consider themselves distinctly more handsome than both the white man and the Negro man, to both of whom they apply derisive epithets. Their cultural identity is defined chiefly with respect to religion and language.

186 To all Amhara except a small minority who are Muslim, the name of their
791 ethnic group is synonymous with "Christian." The term signifies Ethiopian Orthodox Christian; for the Amhara peasant, "Catholic" and "Protestant" are equivalent to "Muslim" and "pagan" as terms designating so many kinds of heathens. And being an Ethiopian Christian is to the Amhara a mark of superiority in at least two respects: it means belonging to a chosen people, heirs to the Jews and sole bearers of authentic Christianity; and it means being an adept in praying and fasting, which to the Amhara are peculiarly Abyssinian arts. This orientation has motivated a certain amount of exclusion-
[798] ism vis-à-vis non-Christian Ethiopians. The latter are disdained because they are not Christian, while at the same time the particularistic cast of Abyssinian Christianity has made the Amhara somewhat reluctant to proselytize and
186 admit non-Abyssinians to the fold. A similar exclusiveness colors the Amhara's sentiments about his language. Knowledge of Amharic is considered another index of superiority, and the Amhara look down on Ethiopians who do not speak Amharic or who speak it with an accent.

The Amhara claim superiority over other Ethiopian peoples in connection with certain other aspects of culture besides religion and language, although most Amhara peasants have very little knowledge about the other ethnic groups in the country.[11] Occupational hunters and pastoral nomads are ridiculed, for example, because of their ignorance of the arts of farming and of eating *ĭnjarā*. Vis-à-vis Europeans, on the other hand, the Amhara's self-image tends to stress qualities of bravery and toughness. Insofar as he has had contact with foreigners, the Amhara has become self-conscious about his rugged way of life—his hot foods, endurance on trips, courage in revenge, and virile longevity—and looks down on the softness of the European.

Being an Amhara is thus belonging to a superior category of human beings. This is not simple ethnocentrism; it reflects rather a basically aristocratic orientation that is repeated within the Amhara fold. It is not only members of other ethnic and religious groups who are considered inferior,

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*883 66 ical wit and activism displayed by students from other countries has embarrassed their cautious dispositions.

There are three reasons for this relative lack of politicization of the Ethiopian students. One is that, having maintained her ancient independence [648] throughout the "scramble for Africa," Ethiopia entered the twentieth century as an independent nation; and five years of Italian rule were not sufficient to shake her spirit. Ethiopian students have thus not had to participate in the anti-imperialist movement, the great school for political activism in the colonial areas.

[571] A second factor is the deeply rooted habit of total subordination to any legitimate authority. Because of this orientation there is a persisting disposi- [157] tion to relegate concern for all political questions to the highest authorities. [570] Nearly two-thirds of the secondary students and a third of the college students maintain that one should always obey the order of a superior, arguing [829] that "obedience is a virtue," "things would not go right otherwise," and "the Bible says so."

*883 66 641 The third reason for the almost apolitical posture of Ethiopian students has been the absence of opportunities for political expression in their country. African students from British colonies have in the past been surprised to find that their colonial situation admitted far more freedom of speech and press than Ethiopia. Teachers are expected to keep anything remotely connected with Ethiopian politics out of the classroom, and the editors are expected to keep them out of the newspapers. Nor have the students been permitted to form any kind of politically relevant associations. Even casual discussion of domestic political problems among friends has been curtailed because of the all-pervading fear of government informers.

*883 66 177 All this has not prevented Ethiopian students from being affected to a moderate degree by the libertarian and egalitarian ideals of the West. The teaching of European history in secondary school, evaluation of students' performance without respect to class or tribal affiliation, and the exercise of electing student officers in the colleges have acted to leaven the political imagination of the students. Many of them thus ventured a degree of political *883 66 829 criticism in their anonymous questionnaires. Forty-three per cent indicated disapproval of the existing differences between "big men" and the common people. Thirty-nine per cent were critical of the degree of control exerted by the government, of which group two-thirds felt that governmental controls are too strict (e.g., not permitting free expression), and one-third felt they were not strict enough (e.g., with respect to corruption and provincial administration).

*883 668 669 The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, jarred the Addis Ababa college students into an unprecedented state of political activity.[27] In response

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limitations in addition to those imposed by the government. In the present 121
chapter we shall deal chiefly with factors which are inhibitive of creative 128
leadership, and in the chapter which follows chiefly with factors which affect 571
the capacity for solidary action.

One of the most honest and perceptive of my foreign-educated informants 571
had this to say about the absence of creative leadership among the returnees: 157

> Our maladjustment may be more our fault than that of the government. 121
> We have been led to expect everything from the government, and have become dependent to such a point that we can scarcely think or act for ourselves.

This is a remarkable and convincing piece of self-analysis. It falls short only 571
insofar as it implies that the posture of dependence on governmental author- 157
ity is something peculiar to the modern-educated. It is true that there have 181
been certain conditions such as the "welfare" character of the secondary 121
schools, which are specific to the experience of the modern-educated and which have accentuated a tendency to overdependence. But this tendency is endemic in traditional Amhara-Tigre culture, and those modern Abyssinians who exhibit it are following an inclination deeply rooted in the needs they have acquired and the culture they have internalized in their childhood.

There are various ways in which one might conceptualize this problem. 121
It is not unrelated to what other authors have referred to variously as lack 157
of achievement motivation or lack of innovational personality. The approach of this chapter will stress certain psychoanalytic concepts and insights. In so doing, it will not attempt to delineate an Amhara "basic personality," a task well beyond the scope of the present study.[1] Rather, we shall be concerned here solely with certain kinds of motivational orientation which are widely shared among the Amhara and which frequently inform their social behavior and their cultural symbolism.

Adopting the terminology developed by Erik Erikson,[2] we may rephrase 121
the point about Amhara overdependence by saying that *in Amhara action and* 155
fantasy the social modality of "getting" figures very prominently. The superior 571
is oriented chiefly to getting food, services, and deference from his inferior;[3] the inferior is oriented chiefly to getting favors from his superior. And most interaction among the Amhara is cast in the form of superior-inferior personal dyadic relations. The prominence of this modality reflects a fixation of libido on what Erikson calls a mode of approach to the environment that is "incorporative," and that originates in connection with the infant's experience with a particular part of his body, the oral zone. The central thesis of this chapter is that Amhara behavior and symbolism exhibit a very high degree of attachment of libido, not only to the organ *mode* of incorporation, but even more to the oral *zone*.

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853 155 152 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 853 155 152 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbāt,* or breast-father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbāt.* Used metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 155 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 201 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or [832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 155 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati- [431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 155 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 538 832 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

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*121 181 186 619 *Landsmann*) regularly evokes considerable sentiment. There is also a strong sense of solidarity based on the use of Amharic—both among the Amhara as a whole vis-à-vis other Ethiopians who either do not know Amharic or speak it imperfectly, and among regional dialect groups. The people of Gojjam and of the Gondar area are particularly chauvinistic with regard to the quality of their Amharic.

*121 181 621 This attachment to symbols of religion, territory, and language is important in providing a basis for identity and morale. Yet these attachments are of relatively little import in shaping a self-transcending orientation in the day-to-day activities of the Amhara; for the crucial context of these activities is the local community, and in the civic sphere the Amhara manifest very little solidarity. Indeed, it may be said that the Amhara have virtually no sense of "community" at all, for the concept can scarcely be rendered in idiomatic Amharic.

*121 181 361 621 The absence of community sentiment among the Amhara is implied by their ecology. Not only did the Amhara fail to produce extensive and durable urban centers (with the limited exception of Gondar) but their country is even barren of that frequent cornerstone of peasant life, the village. The Amhara have distributed themselves thinly, scattering in groups of fours and fives up and down their mountains and plateaus. Larger aggregations are found on the estates of noblemen, but these constitute expanded private households rather than civic communities. The Amhara justify this dispersion of their population on the grounds that wide spaces are needed for the grazing of livestock and that a man needs to live on the land he farms. But herding and farming have been carried out well enough elsewhere by people living together in villages, and it is quite probable that this ecological pattern is due as much as anything else to the Amhara's preference for not having too much association with those outside his immediate kin group. In his own words, the Amhara prefers the kind of neighbor who "does not push the boundaries" (*wassan aynakām*), and believes, as noted earlier, that *bēt-ennā māqbar labetchāw naw* ("home and the grave are by oneself"). It is a preference manifest in such solitary living arrangements as that of divorced women who sometimes live by themselves in the country, eking out a living by spinning cotton or brewing spirits, and in the age-old predilection of Abyssinian monks for anchoritism.

*121 181 156 157 The moral counterpart of this ecological pattern is a preoccupation with private interests that leaves little room for the consideration of communal needs. According to the Amhara vocabulary of motives, social action is motivated first and foremost by the pursuit of *ṭīqem*, or narrowly conceived self-interest.[9] This matter-of-fact acceptance of egoistic motivation among the Amhara appears during what is a common occurrence: the shameless subversion of occasions which are set up to consider communal problems and to

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symbolize communal solidarities by the forthright assertion of individual claims and grievances. 121* 181

In virtually every instance of a consideration of communal projects or needs that the author observed or heard of, the dominant characteristic of the discussion was a vigorous and uncompromising assertion of individual claims. If it was a question of allotting spaces in a new marketplace, each discussant was vociferating that the portion allotted to him was insufficient. If it was a question of securing more land for various communal purposes, the various property owners involved orated against contributing a square foot unless reimbursed at some preposterous figure. If it was a scene in court or a police station, everyone with any personal grievance, real or imagined, felt it perfectly proper to interrupt at any point and give vent to his opinion. If it was a question of rebuilding a ravaged church or constructing a road, personal disputations undermined all efforts toward communal action. If it was simply a ceremonial occasion, the peaceful setting one might have expected was shattered by the airing of private disputes. 156 157

> Today a new church building was dedicated. It was built to replace one that had been destroyed more than two decades ago by the Italians. People from all over the area made the journey to attend this celebration. All night long and well into the morning the priests and *dabtarā* sang and danced, accompanied as usual by sistrums and drums. Later in the morning, after the church had been officially sanctified, everyone was assembled in the open space in the church compound to listen to some verses composed in honor of the event by one of the local *bālābbāt*, a man who had been a key figure in getting the church rebuilt. He had scarcely finished reciting his poem when a woman in the audience spoke up in anger, arguing that the new church would involve more taxes and in some way would affect her property rights adversely. While he was trying to pacify her, others interrupted and began airing grievances of their own. What was to have been the climax of an occasion for the expression of communal solidarity ended as a bedlam of argument.[10]

The one area in which communal sentiments have seemed fairly strong among the Amhara has been in connection with the pursuit of outlaws. It is customary—in some Amhara districts, at least—for the local inhabitants to band together in informal posses when threatened by the presence of one or more *shīftā*, or "outlaws." Yet even here, in his attitudes toward the *shīftā*, the Amhara reveals an ambivalence regarding the maintenance of civil order and security. 121* 181 156 157 674 627 [829]

The term *shīftā* had, in former times, primarily a political connotation. It referred to someone who rebelled against his feudal superior and was applied only to persons of relatively high status.[11] More recently the term has been vulgarized and broadened to include any sort of outlaw in the rural areas. In 121* 674 [178]

776 754 The same "methods" are ascribed to Falasha ironsmiths who live in their own hamlets in the Amhara regions. The Falasha, who are regarded as having some secret "education" of their own (actually Mosaic Judaism), are believed to be able to turn a victim into a donkey and make him do a donkey's work, then turn him back to a human in their own hamlet, and make him do a servant's work. In case rescue nears, the Falashas are believed to be able to turn him into one of the many large pots that always lie about a Falasha hamlet where the women make pottery for sale.

Thus the buda complex contains many facets: medical-regional-ecological (Gojjam's Blue Nile is a major caravan route that can bring infectious diseases) - ethnic - religious - Middle Eastern evil eye complex - African fear of the ironsmith. All this is fitted into the Amhara cosmology of the supernatural.

Though closely interconnected in the Amhara mind, some of these facets will be considered in separate detail.

754 158 b. Symptoms of "buda" disease.

The classic symptoms of "buda" disease follow the following sequence. The victim, usually a young woman between the age of 15 and 30, complains of utter fatigue and a heavy head. An hour or so later, she breaks out in hysterical frenzy, wild laughter, stares with wild, empty eyes, moves about restlessly as if driven by some inner demon. An hour or so later, she complains of intestinal cramps, and cringes under the violence of the pain. Her fingers are clenched so that the thumbs are not visible - (regarded as sure sign of the "buda"). For, it is believed, her thumbs have been grasped by the buda that is eating her and he won't let anyone else see them lest his "food" be taken from him. This is called "tämäbbäzä", stolen by force, for the buda is robbing the victim

754 158 of her blood, her health, life itself. The eyes of the victim are glazed, the nostrils distended, the face may wear a ghastly smile, and the body may be inflexible, or else in a nervous tremor. Relatives and "bread-companions" become terrified and run to the exorciser, often a dabtara, bringing him a gift called "ageba" (lit. entrance, i.e. visiting fee). By the time he arrives, the victim may be in contortions on the ground - being eaten by the buda. Some patients may try to hurt themselves, though others do not. When restrained, the patient may fight against the restraint, and women patients bite and scratch the restrainers.

Another classic case is total apathy, refusal to eat, and resistance even to the zar doctor, followed by sudden revival at night and the urge to run out and roam with the hyenas. Zar doctors explain this as a "zar being attached by a buda". An exorciser is then called in.

A common symptom of less violent character is nosebleed, which is very common. Persons vulnerable to this take care to [824] stuff smelly plants into the nose when on the trail. Such protective plants are collectively called "yäbuda reyan" (smells against the buda).

[851] Boys, when hazing the children of an ironsmith or suspected sorcerer sometimes force garlic ("chequn") into the nose of the child with such force as to cause nosebleed, saying "now give up the blood you have stolen". Garlic is believed to have the power 754 824 to stop a buda and is therefore buried under the door of a suspected sorcerer, e.g. an itinerant smith travelling his circuit of customers; this is believed toprevent the buda from going out at night "to feed".

158 Sometimes cases of buda possession are brought in to the
[759] government hospital at Gondar where two European physicians are in charge. They have diagnosed the shrieking, wildly beating type of case as "hysteria"; and the apathetic type of buda case as "catalepsy". In the latter case they have observed absence of reflex responses on eye and knee, almost no pulse, faint heart-beat, low blood pressure; sometimes a stupor in which the patient has no control over bowel movements and urinating. In severe cases of this kind there is a suspension of sensation and will, and muscles are so rigid that limbs keep any position they are placed in by the doctor.

755 In one memorable case, a hysteria patient, a man, had been gradually quieted by a Coptic Amhara priest called in by the European doctors at the hospital, who knew the effectiveness of this from past experience. All the priest had done was to hold the hand of the patient and quietly recite prayers in the Geez language, (which the lay patient could not understand). When the priest tired of this, the regular hospital priest was called in to continue this "treatment". But at sunrise the next morning the patient had disappeared out the window. The hospital "dressers" (male, semi-trained nurses) explained that the patient probably would go a long distance from this area, to escape the severe beating his kinfolk would give him - the "post-operative" treatment meted out to patients recovering from buda possession to "discourage the buda from returning".

755 In the rural areas the "tänqway" is still sometimes called
756 in to treat buda cases, though this is not his major specialty. He is what has been called a "witch-doctor", professional sorcerer, and diviner. He usually treats the patient by frightening the

157 absence of self-restraint, he can give free rein to the typical
554 Amhara fondness for rapid and noisy argumentation, quoting witticisms, puns and proverbs. He does not have to control his typical Amhara curiosity about non-material objects and human behavior, and can stare freely and openly. Even his servility to the noble is only formal and not internalized, for, while he bows deeply from
[57½] the hips, his eyes are raised to observe every detail of the situation (especially to see whether some reward can be wheedled).

The Amhara noble, however, is required to be at least outwardly, an introverted personality. This is expressed in formal dignity, a partly withdrawn and meditative manner, a serious (though not severe) mien. His bodily movements must be slow and deliberate; his pattern of speech must be the same. Most of the time he remains pokerfaced. He has been trained to observe by moving only his eyes,
[152] not his head. He does not express his basic emotions directly, except with social equals under proper circumstances. He must appear too proud to show curiosity, even for interesting and strange articles brought by the foreigner; he accepts them with just a dignified and appreciative nod of the head.

152 There is the principle of "noblesse oblige". The noble be-
554 haves as if his due will certainly come to him - he does not have to go and seek it. When a servant has angered him, the noble does not fly into a rage publicly, though he may have him routinely flogged later on. It is noteworthy that even the womenfolk among the nobles share this personality training. Although hysteria is
152 very common among Amhara women, it is rare among noblewomen. Even
554
● 157 in case of great emotional distress (e.g. if a child has died)
[304] when commoner Amhara women wail loudly, scarify themselves, and roll

152 554 158 on the ground, Amhara noblewomen weep silently or go into states of apathy. This is a more common mental ailment among nobles than hysteria, and may lead to chronic depression and even catalepsy (see Part VI).

157 554 186 However, both the peasant and the noble share certain common Amhara personality characteristics. Both take great pride in being able to "speak well in court". Homesickness is strong among both, and is very widespread. Kings and emperors, until very recently, had great difficulty in sending and keeping ambassadors abroad, for the diplomat regarded his foreign assignment as "exile". Both classes share great pride in their highland plateau, defended for many centuries against all comers. This national vanity is at least in part due to long ignorance of the world beyond (sometimes hardened into xenophobia); pride in their ancient religion and in the national epics like the Solomon-Sheba-Menelik. These are shared by Amhara of all classes.

829 Amhara concepts of government administration are aristocratic: ruled by the noble "great man", who is usually descended from a feudal warlord of past centuries. The military camp and its direct significance for traditional Amhara social structure and government has been described in Part III. At the top of the hierarchy is the king or emperor (King of Kings). At the Amhara grassroots is the peasant, who seeks justice by attaching himself to a "great man" as retainer, so that he too will be treated "with honor" by reflection. From the bottom to the top of the hierarchy of government, persons on every level perform the ceremony of "<u>dáj tenat</u>" (lit. waiting by the gate) to obtain jobs, maintain positions, or merely to prevent doubts about personal loyalty from arising through absence. This

755 certain Christian words which the buda fears. Some also slaughter a sheep or fowl, eat it roasted, then burn the bones so as not to attract the buda again.

Sometimes a reluctant buda is transferred bodily to a spot on a trail outside the hamlet. There a root of a bush is twisted - the signature of the buda and expression of his greedy intent. Whoever passes unprotected is pounced on by the hungry buda.

755 789 Written amulets (ketab") are hung on the neckcord or around the waist to assure successful prognosis. The writing and sale of these amulets is one of the most common extracurricular activities of the dabtara scribe and often his most lucrative income-producing work. Hence the dabtara is feared, for he can use his power for good or ill. The amulets contain such formulae as "besem Aw, Wold, M'änfäs Qeddus" (In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Ghost); mystic names of archangels; formulae in Amharic, Geez, even Arabic of sorts. Church scholars with the title "mämhär" (professor) are believed to be able to write even more powerful amulets, for it is believed that God gave 1000 special "medicines" to Jesus on Christmas (a sort of birthday gift) and that Jesus and the angels taught these "medicines" to the mämhär. Another advantage of their amulets is that the mamher are never suspected of using their power for ill. In either case, the name of the person to be protected is written in the amulet; so that it cannot be transferred or sold without erasure and the new name.

159 754 As noted, women in the age group 15 to 30 are the most often struck. The following case was observed by the author in the town of Gondar. The patient was a 27 year old married woman, Zawditu Bogale (her first name meant "Queenie"). She was the mother of

159 two children, both beyond the infant stage. She lived in one of
T54 the typical town structures of wooden posts, hard-mud walls, dirt floor, and corrugated iron roof.

During the night when she was first "struck", she screamed that she was being eaten by a buda. She howled like a hyena and wanted to run outside. Her husband and neighbors tied her up and feared that she was going to die. She threw herself on the ground and seemed in great inner pain. Her husband ran to the Addis Alam section, in the middle of the night, despite curfew and dangers, to fetch the woggesha doctor, to obtain strong smelling herbs. The woggesha came as soon as dawn arrived, for he had had some experience with buda cases. The woman patient spoke with a convincing male voice. Finally she revealed the name of the sorcerer who had placed the spell on her. She accused an Arab merchant, one of several who operated permanent stalls at the daily market. She exclaimed: "I am Abdulla Abdul Hijazi". She (correctly) identified his residence as the 3rd shop from the left corner". She boasted, still in male voice: "I am drinking her blood with my golden teeth".

As it turned out, there was indeed an Arab merchant by that name at that location, who had his two incisors capped with gold crowns, a rarity so far inland where no dentist offices existed, but common enough on the coast among Arabs of means.

The day before the attack, the woman had been shopping for sandals at this Arab's shop and several others, but had made no purchase since the prices were too high for her.

Once the patient had revealed the identity of the sorcerer, she was untied. Early in the morning the husband and his brother set out to look for the accused Arab, located his place, but could

1·59 754 not find him. They vowed to waylay him some night and beat him bloody, but bystanders felt that they would cool their tempers and perhaps try to get the merchant into trouble with the local police by planting stolen goods on him - a common procedure, in the towns.

Later the same day, the Arab merchant was conducting business as usual. The rumor did not seem to have hurt him, but local grapevine had it that husbands would restrain their wives from shopping there, though they would risk sending servants. Abdulla had nothing devilish about him, except the distinguishing mark of the capped incisors. He was medium-sized, slender, calm, without any stare that might have frightened the woman. His goods were the usual town goods, ranging from imported eyeglasses to notebooks for school children, and cheap beads.

By this time the woman patient was seated on the dirt floor of her house, looking tired, worn out and dejected. She had no longer a headache, of which she had complained, but claimed to have "heartache" and swelling of the left breast. A neighboring woman was brewing coffee. Her husband's brother, who was also present, [1·24] asked my advice. I gave him some aspirin for her. She forgot her apathy for a moment and gratefully and politely nodded. Later she refused to take that strange medicine of the foreigner.

d. Ethnic Caste under Suspicion of Sorcery

754 563 The Falasha ethno-religious group has been described in connection with the division of labor, for they are the ironsmiths and potters in the Amhara regions, especially in the province of Begemdir (Gondar).

191 Ethiopian Folktales Ascribed to the Late Nineteenth Century Amhara Wit,
212 Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna:—Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia today, is gradually be-
538 coming the *lingua franca* of the empire. Until recently it was spoken mainly on the fertile highland plateau of central and northwestern Ethiopia, in part of what was formerly known as Abyssinia. Predominantly Coptic Christian, the Amhara people have sacred writings in Ge'ez, old Ethiopic. Amharic has adapted this ancient script to its own use. The folklore of the Amhara is mainly oral (except for religious texts) and represents a crosscurrent of Middle Eastern and African cultures. Traditionally, Amhara society was one of priests, feudal
[565] lords, and peasants. Lower on the social scale were non-Coptic ethnic groups who performed such important economic functions as ironsmithing and pottery-making.

538 This is reflected in the folklore. On non-religious, everyday subjects, the wit of the Am-
522 hara is peasant-like, earthy, full of tales of Rabelaisian appetites and sly solutions to human
193 problems. The Amharic language lends itself readily to puns and hidden meanings, since many verbs can have double or triple interpretations due to the hidden variations in the basic verbal stem and the absence or presence of gemination of some consonants. The listener must pay close attention. If he misinterprets the context and fails to discern the pun, he is often made the butt of the next tricky joke by those who have heard it before. The more a storyteller and wit masters the *sowaso* 'grammar' of the Amharic language, the better he can manipulate this humor.

538 A master of this art was *Aläqa* 'Chief' (an honorary title) Gäbre-Hanna, a contem-
159 porary of Emperor Menelik just before the end of the nineteenth century. As far as is known, he never put into writing any of his stories, witticisms, linguistic gymnastics, and philosophical puns. But to this day the peasants and even the nobles remember his stories well and tell them so often that a number of versions have developed.

He was a native of Gondar and had all the provincial pride of the "Gondarey" in the one-time greatness of this town and district that is now back country. He lived at the time the present capital, Addis Ababa, was being built and the King of Shoa had become Emperor of Abyssinia. Like many another "Gondarey," Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna pretended to disdain the newfangled importations of Emperor Menelik and the growing employment of subjugated Galla tribal chiefs at the imperial court. Jokingly, he took the liberty of referring to the Emperor's home province, Shoa, as "that Galla province." (Even today much
[191] Galliña is spoken there, a result of the sixteenth century conquest of the area by Galla tribes.) No one else would have dared such a remark, but he was popular with Emperor Menelik and especially with the Empress Taitu, and could tell them certain frank truths and tease them with irony in a semi-polite manner. However, he was not a court jester.

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 When miffed, or in temporary disgrace, he would request permission to return to his native
159 Gondar. Subsequently he would send excuse after excuse to the capital for refusing to go back there, until he felt that he had been sufficiently coaxed to assuage his pride as a scholar and that further hesitation might result in serious difficulties, even for him. Empress Taitu was a very powerful figure and often protected him when he had gone too far with Emperor Menelik (her fifth husband).

[114] Although the following stories have no titles except "Story of Alāqa Gābre-Hanna," I have given them names to point up the major emphasis. This material was gathered orally from Amharic-speaking peasants and nobles in the Gondar region (during my field trip to that area in 1953-54 on a grant from the Ford Foundation).

539 *The Wit And The Nitwit.* AG-H didn't like the rumor going around that he had become a snob, that he didn't greet common people politely any more. One day, accompanied by his usual retinue of friends and admirers, he was greeted effusively with deep bows by a certain donkey-
[576] driver who was known as none too bright. In return, to quash the nasty rumors, AG-H bowed just as deeply, from the hips, instead of the usual nod from one of his station in life. But, unable to resist the temptation for a witticism, he greeted the donkey-driver with the words *"Endēt adderachuh?* 'How are ye?' "

Unaware that the second person plural had been used, the proud donkey-driver was soon boasting at the nearest barley-beer hut of the honor he had received. His cronies made him repeat the exact remark, suspecting some twist. They quickly convinced the poor fool that the greeting had included him in the same class with his donkeys, and the simpleton slunk away in shame.

Another version of the story: But the donkey-driver was, after all, a proud Amhara. Realizing that he had been made a fool of, he took his walking stick, went to the house of AG-H, and beat him unmercifully. This was one time that his wit struck back at him.

Good Eating Comes First. Though greatly honored at the court of Emperor Menelik in newly-built Addis Ababa, AG-H was once again homesick for his native Gondar. Finally, he was granted permission for a leave home.

He promptly organized his small caravan and was about to mount his mule when he noticed two fat cows being taken to slaughter. Thinking of the long trip ahead without fresh beef, he decided to wait around and obtain a good share of the meat which was being rapidly parcelled out. The meat had to be washed down with a huge jugful of barley-beer and honeymead, and so the day passed with pleasant feasting. It was late afternoon when it happened that Emperor Menelik came riding by. Surprised to see the homesick scholar still in the capital, the Emperor addressed him: "I gave you permission to go, and you are still here?"

But, as usual, his wit did not fail AG-H. *"Lam gāb* 'the cows were entering,' your Majesty," he replied. (The phrase is used to indicate dusk, when the cows come home, too late to start on a trip. The cows had indeed "entered," i.e., into the stomach of AG-H; and no one could accuse him later of having told a lie to the Emperor.)

Pride Of A Man From Gondar Province. The next time AG-H became homesick occurred in the middle of the long Lenten fast. The housewives of Gondar were famous for their many spicy recipes for cooking fish in that season, and when AG-H thought of these his mouth watered and nothing pleased him any more in Shoa province.

One day he was invited to dine at the house of a noble of Shoa. The odor of fish being cooked attracted him to the cooking hut. It seemed to him that the woman cook had not properly cleaned the fish and had added too much water. He began to moan and groan.

"What's the matter?" asked his host.

Pointing to the watery fish stew, AG-H replied: "The fish are better off than I. They are *in their native state,* but I am so far from mine!"

Safety From Robbers. Once again the long rainy season was over, the rivers had receded, and the trails were passable again. AG-H managed to obtain a generous purse of Maria-Theresa thalers from the Empress and was on his perennial way back to Gondar.

He was just emerging from the lowland valley of the Abbai (Blue Nile) to climb up the escarpment of the dangerous province of Gojjam, which he had to traverse. Suddenly one of his companions spotted a band of robbers waiting at the top of the upland trail.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth cntury: 175* 633 517 538 [539]

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts. 175* 633 517 53

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā*, or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā*. 175* 159 • 793 633

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām*, the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere. [535] [178]

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā [214] [538]

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 633 left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor Menelik.

• [159] [793] Alaqā Gabra Hānnā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly

175 633 643 miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army, turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar. The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gon-

[648] dar during his few years in power (1869–72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

*175 633 The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum*, though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā*. The civil order, however, was thoroughly

[166] demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces.

*175 633 643 648 At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance from the old capital—began as follows:

> O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.[11]

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

131 133 Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the northeast horn of Shoa Province.[12] It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.[13]

* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

liefs and values, (2) retention of the basic emotional tie and identification with the group in question, and (3) elaboration of the virtues of the group in terms of universalistic criteria.

This is a type of orientation to the primordial sentiments which has the effect of maximizing both traditional and modern values, for it retains the sources of security and identity provided by tradition yet defines them in ways that promote national solidarity and the creative resources of the national culture. It is an approach which may be illustrated, in concluding this chapter, by the cases of two modern-educated Amhara who identify themselves, in part, as a Manzē and a Gondarē.

"Balātchaw" is an American-educated official of the Ethiopian government. Born and raised in Addis Ababa, his family originated in Manz, and he still has relatives who reside there. He is an ardent modernizer, anxious to see progressive leadership and the expansion of educational facilities provided in the provinces; yet he is also very sentimental about Amhara traditions and, in particular, his *agar* Manz.

To Balātchaw, Manz symbolizes hard-core loyalty to blood and to land. It also symbolizes the will to fight stubbornly for one's rights and for what one thinks right. He sees the government's keen concern for its territorial boundaries as a direct reflection of the Manzē's determination to retain and acquire land. Balātchaw gets much pleasure out of telling stories about the Manzē's almost foolhardy bravery in combatting the Italian invader. He reveals a "clear consciousness of an inner identity" with the Manzē in this regard, and says of himself: "You know, even as a child, and ever since, I have not been afraid of anybody."

"Makonnen" is a government official who was trained in western Europe. His family lives in Gondar, though he spent little time there after leaving for secondary school in Addis Ababa. In the course of his studies abroad, he had become estranged from the traditional ties and symbols of his Gondar-Amhara background. And yet now he speaks with great respect of the virtues of Gondarēs, their cultivated manner in personal relations, and their pride and wit in the use of language. The meaning of Gondar came to him almost in the manner of a revelation:

> In the midst of my studies in Western Europe I had the chance one summer to visit a number of West African countries and then to return home and spend some time in Gondar. I had not thought very highly of my people before that trip, and what I experienced was a great surprise. What I found—what we have, that I did not find in the African countries I visited—is a special sort of dignity of manner. When I talked with the elders at Gondar I was moved to tears. That is something priceless; that is a great and irreplaceable national resource.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 authorities. Except for a very few eccentric individuals who have seemed
571 oblivious to the dangers of speaking out their criticism of the status quo in
177 public, this has in the nature of current circumstances necessarily involved
178 clandestine activity. Returnees have been involved in small conspiratorial
156 groups since the mid-fifties. The December, 1960, coup d'état has been the
[669] most ambitious rebellious project to be acted out so far. Similarly motivated
[668] activities have included the duplication and distribution of subversive literature, and the formation of small groups as groundwork for an eventual political party.

Our data do not permit reliable estimates of the frequency of these different modes of adaptation among the returnees. It is important to note, however, that individuals often change from one mode to another in the course of their experience after return and that many follow more than one pattern at the same time. It is unlikely that the total number of returnees oriented primarily as rebels has ever exceeded two per cent. Most of them move in and out of phases of Reformism, Withdrawal, and Opportunism, depending to a large extent on the accidents of their appointments. A more concrete picture of their experience may be suggested by the following case study, that of a Western-educated Ethiopian who went from a phase of Withdrawal to one of Reformism tinged with Opportunism.

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The Adjustment of "Haile": Case Study of a Returnee

October, 1958. Haile has recently returned from four years of study in a Western country. He speaks very critically about the state of things in Ethiopia. He is particularly upset by the prevailing inefficiency, the lack of industriousness, and the interminable procrastination (*Ïshi naga*).

January, 1959. Haile seems deeply depressed. The ministry in which he has been placed affords him no opportunity to work effectively and the job he has bears no relation to what he was trained for. He has withdrawn more into himself, but to all outward appearances plays perfectly well, with great self-assurance, the role of the Amhara bureaucrat.

July, 1959. Now Haile is working in a different ministry, in a job somewhat more closely related to his training. He appears to feel productive and useful now, and his criticism is constructive. For example, he frequently compares the situation in the United States and Ethiopia, to show how the same sort of problem can be solved more readily in the U.S. because of its greater facilities. Though Ethiopia's comparative handicaps frustrate him, he talks of plans for the development of Ethiopia with some enthusiasm. . . . Haile complains of an

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

overload of work, noting that he must not only do his own 121
work but also rectify the mistakes made by others which are 571
brought to him. In his whole branch of the ministry, he finds 159
only two really effective workers besides himself, and they, 156
too, are returnees. . . . He feels fortunate in having encountered no major opposition to the things he is doing in his work and points happily to the fact that his assistant minister has supported him throughout.

October, 1959. Haile now is saying that things are fine in Addis Ababa and stresses the great improvement that has been made during the past five years. He claims that he is getting along fine in his ministry, because his job is straight "busy work." Even so, he is not a pure "ritualist"; he has already negotiated a number of reforms in the operations of his office. His general outlook seems bright—partly, no doubt, because he is "arriving" (what with printed name-cards and a smoothly functioning job) but also because he has a pretty fiancée whom he plans to marry next year. . . . At another point, however, he shows great exasperation over the considerable conflict among factions within the ministry. He decries the nepotism practiced by the heads of these factions. He says that he tries to stay independent of their intrigues.

June, 1960. Recently Haile was given additional responsibilities in his ministry, and he expects a raise in salary soon. Although this new work is still further removed from the subjects he studied while abroad than was his previous job, he no longer complains about not being hired to do what he had been trained for or about not being used. He remains unhappy about his minister, who brings in his own men from the outside rather than promote men from the ranks—"or else I would have been a director general by now." On the other hand, he mentions with evident pleasure the fact that the Emperor sent over a gift at the time of his wedding. . . . Haile's wife is a simple, traditional sort of Ethiopian girl. He seems happy with her and with their home—an old, poorly built structure that is falling apart, but which she has taken pains to enliven with a few decorations, and has equipped with a radio. He looks forward to the prospect of building a house on their own land sometime in the future. Meanwhile, a baby is on the way. . . . The circle has come full swing. Haile talks proudly about his work, his family, and his country.

*753 grazing. Both highland zones are considered ideal for
131 human habitation. While residents of the dega zone oc-
133 casionally comment on what they regard as the uncomfor-
821 table summer heat of the weyna dega, at the same time it is acknowledged that the rainy season (kiramt) is more burdensome in the dega. The rains last from May to September and are marked by temperatures in the mid-thirties in dega lands and perhaps ten to fifteen degrees warmer in the weyna dega. This season is regarded as a particularly bad time for kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints) whose severity is considered greatest in the dega zone. Epidemiologically, the dega is also associated with a relatively high incidence of yinifas basiyta ("the wind disease"), an ailment described in Chapter One.

131 Although reliable population estimates are lacking,
101 the weyna dega and dega zones contain perhaps 85% of
• 161 Begemder's people. These rural highlands are occupied
197 by five ethnic groups, racially indistinguishable from
144 one another and, with an exception, now speaking a common Semetic languase, Amharic. The Amhara are the most numerous of Begemder's highland peoples, and extend into the provinces of Gojam and Shoa, to the south. Within the Begemder highlands, they occupy the area south of latitude 13°30'. North of this line live the Tigre, a related people who speak a cognate language, Tigrinya.
101 Both Amhara and Tigre are Coptic Christians, and from
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632 [796] [346] motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' eponymic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "government" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means [691] [423] litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

[161] [592]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total population	151	95
Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by [613] [592] [162] risteñas. These households are distributed among the hamlets' ambilineages as follows:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

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621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by risteñas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [178] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Šankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibañas, eight as wood cutters,

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Table 1. Population Estimates of the 12 Ethiopian Provinces

Administrative Province	Area in Square Kilometers	Official estimate of population 1954	Ethnic Preponderance (author's comments) Language	Religion	Additional Remarks
Begemder	78,200	1,800,000	Amharic	Coptic	some border Muslim and highland Falashas.
Gojjam	62,900	1,600,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Agau (old Cushitic)speakers
Shoa	78,700	2,100,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Gurage-speakers
Tigre	67,000	1,000,000	Galla, Tigrina.	Coptic	
Wollo	78,700	1,000,000	mostly Galla	Coptic	some Amharic
Wollega	67,200	1,000,000	Galla,Amharic	Coptic	some border Shanqalla(negroid, Nilotic-speaking)
Arussi	36,000	1,000,000	Galla	Muslim-"pagan"	
Hararge	404,000	1,600,000	Galla, some Somali	Muslim-"pagan"	some Somali semi-nomad tribes
Ilubabor	50,000	1,300,000	Galla, Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"	many border Shanqalla & other negroids
Kaffa	49,000	1,200,000	Galla,Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"-Muslim	many border negroid
Gemu-Gofa	39,000	900,000	Sudanese,Galla	"pagan"	border negroids
Sidamo	102,000	1,250,000	old-Cushitic (Sidamo,Wollamo)	"pagan"	some nomadic border tribes
	1,110,000	15,750,000			
(Eritrea, federated 1952)	119,000	1,100,000	Bedja(Cushitic) Tigre(Semitic) Nilotic	Muslim Coptic	

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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On the basis of these figures and interpretations, little over half the population of Ethiopia proper (not including Eritrea) is Coptic and can be regarded as "Abyssinians proper". Also, of the total population of Ethiopia, about 5 million, or 1/3, are native Amharic speakers, and constitute, especially in matters of governmental administration, a sort of upper class. However, there are several qualifications that should be added to these overall conclusions.

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Until the reign of the present emperor, and during much of it, the predominant and typical division of the population was into ethnic groups, and the resulting social hierarchy was largely based on what a particular group had experienced in the wars of Menelik II: whether they were among the victors, or among the vanquished. The upper class status of Amhara, was shared by landlords, chiefs, or poor tenants, once they reached conquered territories, and was rivalled only by the other Coptic Abyssinians from Tigrīña-speaking Tigrē. In general, the Coptic religion itself constituted upper class membership in the hierarchy, and non-Coptic speakers of sister-languages of Amharic, such as the Guragē, did not share in this status and during that generation remained haulers of water and hewers of wood. The Galla were the largest of the subjected peoples. It mattered little to the Amhara whether the Galla were "pagan" or thinly islamized. The Coptic Priesthood did not try to "raise them to Christianity" (in the Amharic phrase).

Each of these ethnic entities had its own hierarchy

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 his early twenties, he found his way back to Ankober and assumed his rights as king of Shoa.

Menelik, who was a restless and imaginative character as well as a great soldier, soon began the series of vast conquests in the southern Galla lands which were to double the size of Ethiopia. It is therefore not surprising that he should have abandoned Ankober in favour of a capital within easier reach of his newly acquired territories. He first reverted to Debra Berhan, then made a new temporary capital at Liché, a few miles to the north-east. Here, [172] at one end of a long, low hill are various remains of massive dry-stone walls as at Angolala, and the raised platform, only about 20 feet across, on which stood Menelik's personal dwelling. But the site is now uninhabited. In the 1880's Menelik, his southern conquests rapidly extending, moved his capital south-westwards to Entotto, in the midst of country newly retrieved from the Gallas. This was a magnificent site, 10,000 feet high and overlooking the plain and the splendid circle of mountains which form the setting of the present capital. Entotto was, however, unsuitable as the site of a permanent [312] city. It is said, also, that Menelik's wife Taitu craved for a warmer residence and especially for the curative waters of the hot springs (the present Fil Wuha baths) on the edge of the plain below. So in 1889, the year in which he was crowned emperor in succession to John IV, Menelik moved down, and Addis Ababa was founded at the foot of the hills, 1500 feet below.

This digression completes our brief review of the historical associations of the area represented on the map. The remainder of this paper will deal with the present inhabitants, their distribution and their way of life.

361 It has already been said that the population of the area is greater than at first sight appears. The small, stone-built huts are inconspicuous objects, especially as they are seldom massed together to form a village but are widely scattered in small groups. Moreover the motor-road follows for the most part an exposed tract which carries less than the normal population. Travellers driving through therefore carry away a false impression: they can see little of the more populated areas, nothing of the gorges, and not a single one of the numerous churches of the region, except those of Debra Berhan itself.

I attempted to mark every inhabited place on the map. In very many cases the single dot indicates several households, and may be taken to represent, on 162 an average, two households of five to six persons each or eleven souls. On 361 this basis the population of the whole area of 102 square miles comes to about 15,500 or 152 per square mile—a high average by African standards. (This excludes Debra Berhan itself which would add a further 2000 or so.) The population is not, however, evenly distributed, and the area may be divided into three parts which, with their areas and population densities (again ignoring Debra Berhan) are as follows:

General plateau: 60 square miles—116 per square mile.

Plateau between or within 1 km. of gorges: 22 square miles—240 per square mile.

The gorges themselves: 20 square miles—162 per square mile. (This indicates a very high concentration on the "shelves" and a few other favoured spots, for a great part of the gorge area is, of course, uninhabitable.)

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

These figures show that the gorges, together with the adjoining and intervening plateau, carry a considerably higher population than the rest of the plateau, the combined average being over 200 per square mile. The figures for population per church are also interesting. The gorges and the adjacent parts of the plateau contain no fewer than thirteen churches and they serve an average population of only some 650 souls each. On the other hand the churches of the general plateau, not counting those of Debra Berhan, which chiefly serve the townspeople, number only four. They must cater for about three times as many people each, and until recently many more for two of them are recent foundations.

The higher population of the gorge region is attributable to two causes: the greater productivity of the land there, and the historical fact, already referred to, that the Amharas were long forced to live in the gorges, and have re-emerged only in recent times. This is confirmed by the evidence of the churches which, in such numbers, are sure evidence of a long-established Christian population. The oldest ones are among those in the depths of the gorges; sites on the edges of gorges seem to be more recent. The few plateau churches are all relatively modern and bespeak the re-occupation by Amharas; two of them were indeed founded within the last fifteen years, and one as recently as 1945.

As can be seen from the map, sites chosen for dwellings are usually on the higher ground. The favourite sites, of which many examples can be seen on the sheet, are rocky ridges and the tops or upper slopes of hills and minor plateaus. A high place with an outlook, together with reasonable proximity to permanent water, seem to be the conditions sought after. Even the most elevated and exposed hill-tops are generally inhabited, whereas nobody tries to live on the plains near the main streams, which become very swampy in the rains. The ordinary family, together with its domestic animals, lives in a small, irregular cluster of round huts, which in this area are built of stone cemented with mud and carry a conical thatched roof. They are surrounded, as a rule, by a dry-stone wall, which may be shared by several households. Richer people may have an ornamental gatehouse at the main entry, with a little watchman's room over the gate; but such ostentation was not common.

Disregarding some of the Debra Berhan people, almost the entire population is engaged in farming which, here as elsewhere in Ethiopia, is the mainstay of existence. Some possess their own land; others hold their plots, in return for a proportion of the produce (but without any security of tenure), from absentee landowners. There is also a landless element, greatly increased through the disturbing influence of the Italian occupation, who hire themselves out as ploughmen and labourers. I had intended to measure some typical holdings in order to estimate the area actually required to support a family, but my time in the area was cut short and I never did so. As a very rough estimate I think that about 15–20 per cent. of the area is under cultivation in any one year, which would indicate an average per family of something like 4 acres. This does not include fallow land which, once re-grown with grass, cannot be distinguished at a glance from permanent pasture.

The most exposed parts of the plateau near Debra Berhan will grow two crops only, barley and broad beans, but a limited amount of wheat (a bearded

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

175 563 In the nineteenth century, as will be recounted in some detail in the chapter on the southern provinces, the Ethiopians, and especially the Shoans, struck back and overran an immense area inhabited by Gallas, Somalis, non-Semiticized Hamites, and negroes in the south.

THE POPULATION

162 No census has ever been taken in Ethiopia and we cannot, therefore, know either the total of population within her boundaries or how to allocate the numbers to the several races, religions, and regions. All estimates are therefore nothing better than more or less informed guesses. To show the divergences in these guesses, a well-informed British consul writing in 1932 gave 5,500,000 as his figure,[1] whereas, since the liberation, a semi-official Ethiopian journal claims 12,000,000 to 13,000,000. A recent official statement by the ecclesiastical authorities claims 10,000,000 Ethiopian Christians.[2]

Special attention must be paid to the estimates of the Italians. As neighbours, adversaries and, for a short time, rulers of Ethiopia, they have had more reason and opportunity than other people to attempt such calculations.

The following estimates, obviously in very round numbers, are the official Italian figures. They cover the whole of Italian East Africa and it will therefore be necessary to consult Map 2 at the end of the book in order to see the relationship of this area with Ethiopia proper.

Province.	Population
Shoa	500,000
Eritrea	1,000,000
Amhara	1,000,000
Harar	1,600,000
Galla-Sidamo	1,600,000
Somalia	1,300,000
	7,000,000[3]

The following figures for the same area, published in the *Guida* of 1938, give the racial distribution.

[1] Makereth, p. 5. [2] *Herald*, 1 July 1946.
[3] *Annuario dell'Africa Orientale Italiana*, Rome, 1938–9, p. 597.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

THE PROVINCES: GENERAL

162

	Population
Abyssinians (including Agau and Beja)	2,400,000
Gallas	2,350,000
Somalis	1,400,000
Sidamo groups	1,400,000
Afar-Saho (of Danakil districts)	150,000
Negroes	1,000,000
Asiatics and Europeans	100,000[1]
	7,600,000

From both these sets of figures the relatively accurate figures for Eritrea of 757,000,[2] and for Italian Somaliland of 1,000,000,[3] may be deducted, leaving a total for Ethiopia proper of 5,243,000 according to the *Annuario* and 5,843,000 according to the *Guida*.

The British Military Administration in Ethiopia gave the number of 7,000,000 for the total population but did not say upon what calculations this figure was based.[4]

Zoli gives the following classifications for language and race for Ethiopia alone.

[563]

Language		Race	
Amhara	1,900,000	Abyssinian	2,100,000
Tigré	400,000	Galla	2,350,000
Oromo (Galla)	2,000,000	Somali	450,000
Somali	450,000	Sidamo	200,000
Sidamo	200,000	Afar	50,000
Afar (Danakil)	50,000	Negro	850,000
Miscellaneous	1,000,000		
	6,000,000		6,000,000[5]

One point of interest in comparing these latter is that they give an estimate—a highly speculative one—of the degree to which the Gallas have become assimilated to the Amharic culture as shown by their adoption of this language. We may note that Zoli estimates that forty different languages are spoken in Ethiopia, but most of these belong to very small groups in the south-west. [171]

[1] *Guida*, p. 400.
[2] Longrigg, *op. cit.*, Appendix C.
[3] This estimate was taken from *Whitaker*.
[4] Cmd. 6589/1945.
[5] Zoli, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–13.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

162 to very small groups in the south-west. His figures for the religions of the country have already been given.[1]

A very rough regional distribution by another Italian writer is as follows:

The original Ethiopian provinces	2,500,000–2,800,000
Galla and Sidamo areas	1,500,000–2,000,000
Harar	1,000,000
Somaliland	300,000
Danakil region	50,000
The non-Amharic north-west	100,000
The south-west (negroid regions)	600,000

This gives us a total of between 6,000,000 and 7,000,000.[2] But Almagia, like other authorities, offers this estimate in very tentative terms.

Finally, we may give de Castro's estimate of racial percentages.

[563]

Ethiopians	32·6
Gallas	42·7
Sidamo and Arab-crossed people of the south-western highlands	10·1
Somalis	6·0
Negroid and Nilotic negroes	6·6
Danakil groups	2·0
	100·0[3]

Three main points arise from a study of these various estimates.

One is that the Italian figures for the total population are very much lower than those recently mentioned by Ethiopians. An application made by the writer for the official Ethiopian figure produced a negative reply. This demographic difficulty may be one, among others, which has held up the publication of a long-promised official handbook for Ethiopia.

A second interesting feature of the estimates is that the true Ethiopian stock is almost certainly in a minority and that it is most likely to strengthen its position further, at least as the first stage, by continuing the assimilation of the Gallas which has already begun.

Thirdly, the figures repeat the impression given by the Geographical Survey of the concentration of the population upon the highlands, and the numerical insignificance of the groups inhabiting the low-lying regions of the east and south-east.

[1] See above, p. 103. [2] Almagia, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–7.
[3] de Castro, *L'Etiopia*, p. 301.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 361 sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

[132] Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most [312] pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā [132] [241] twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, some-

*175 643 TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāssi (Nagāssē Kristos)	Abēto	169?–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebstē (Sebstyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbīyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Takla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwoflos	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yostos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāhla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	***		***
		Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

*175 361 [132] [241] times three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and livestock are produced in abundance.

[231] The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's *175 633 time of power.[5] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The towns- people of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, [162] and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more [463] conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he [173] was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose [36] name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax
18 and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

633 *Gondar Today*

177 A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was
648 made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

633 After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953
[874] with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college.
[648] The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utili-
ties as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty
[162] thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

633 With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a
871 modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has
178 necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aquāquām* and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

633 Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine
771 church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other
793 cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 right to a direct audience at any time. The Emperor is known to glow with
571 pleasure when a subject with whom he is speaking reveals that he comes from Manz. The Manzēs, for their part, proudly refer to their area as *ya-negus agar* ("king's country"). They are perhaps the most devoted of all Ethiopians to the present Crown. However, many stories are told to show that this loyalty has not dissolved their intractable spirit. For example, when asked to select a representative for Ethiopia's first elected parliament in 1957, some of them were indignant: "We already have *our* representative in the capital, and if he isn't able to do the job himself, let him step down and hand it to somebody else."

871 Despite their expressed loyalty to Haile Selassie, the Manzēs stubbornly
658 oppose the program with which he is publicly most associated and whose portfolio he has retained, as Minister of Education, from 1943 to the present day. The adults of Manz object to having their children attend the government schools. In many cases where a child has elected to attend school on his own, his parents have cut off all support. The four schools in Manz thus have
[162] an enrolment far below capacity, totaling (as of 1960) less than four hundred in this area of perhaps fifty to sixty thousand families.[49] Those hardy youngsters who do attend school often do so in rags and with an empty stomach.
[857] One reason for this determined opposition to the government schools is the obvious economic one: children must stay at home to tend the herds. This is a problem all over rural Ethiopia, but still the schools in many other areas are overcrowded. Another reason is that, as we have seen, Manz was not interested in education in the old days. Few Manzēs learned to read in the church schools. When a boy showed unusual talent and interest in traditional studies he had to travel to Gondar, which often meant running away from Manz.

871 The crux of Manzē defiance of the new educational system, however, is
658 cultural fundamentalism. The Manzēs keep their children away from the
186 government schools because they fear that the students there are learning
829 something that threatens the old ways. In particular, they do not like their children to learn the language of the *faranj* ("European") or to be exposed to Ethiopians who have been taught by *faranj* and thereby infected by alien ideas. Tending the farm, keeping the fasts, defending land and self—that is the sum and substance of Manzē education, beyond which there is nothing a boy needs to learn.

829 Undoubtedly part of this dread of *faranj* learning is based on the Manzēs'
648 one experience with the white man: the Fascist occupation. As one of the
186 strongholds of patriotic resistance to the occupation, Manz and the Manzēs became the object of the invader's unyielding fury. Over miles and miles of Manz not a home or church was spared. The inhabitants were either killed, or fled to safer areas in Galla country, or joined the underground opposition—

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

TABLE 2 [P. 114]

E 563 873 795 A 873 795

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF ETHIOPIAN SECONDARY AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ethnic Group	Percentage	Religious Group	Percentage
Amhara	55	"Orthodox"	67
Tigre	22	"Protestant"	6
Galla	15	"Catholic"	5
Gurage	4	"Christian"	15
Others*	4		
		Total Christian	93
		Muslim	4
		Others†	3

* Adari, Somali, Danakil, Wollamo, Kambata, Mensa, etc.
† Baha'i; agnostic; "no religion"; etc.

COMMENTS:

E A [125] [128]

1. The ethnic figures must be regarded with some caution, since as many as 17 per cent of the 700 respondents failed to answer the question. It is difficult to know whether this is due primarily to the reluctance of non-Amhara students so to identify themselves, even anonymously; to the general sensitivity about mentioning anything directly related to the "tribal question"; or simply to misunderstanding of the question. I suspect that the first-named factor may not be the most important. At any rate, if one compares the secondary school replies, in which 20 per cent failed to indicate their ethnic identification, with the college replies, in which only 10 per cent failed to do so, the greater percentage of response among the latter is accompanied by a slight *increase* (53.3 to 56.7 per cent) in the Amhara category.

   The figures on religious affiliation are more reliable, since only 3 per cent of the entire sample failed to answer that question.

2. Fifteen per cent of the students who indicated their ethnic affiliations are the offspring of mixed marriages, nearly two-thirds of which were between Amhara and Galla. These students were entered in the above classification according to the ethnic group of the father.

3. The students were also asked to indicate whether their own religion differed from that of their parents. *Ten per cent indicated such a change.* Of these, 28 per cent became agnostic or indicated "no religion"; 25 per cent converted to Protestantism; 17 per cent to Catholicism; 18 per cent went from "Orthodox" to "Christian" (which probably means to Protestantism in most cases); and 7 per cent changed to Baha'i.

E 563 873 872 162 A 872 873 162 E A 162 795

4. A comparison with the ethnic and religious composition of the country as a whole naturally suggests itself. Unfortunately, national figures have not yet been calculated to any comparable degree of reliability. If one refers to the crude estimates in common currency, certain disproportions are readily apparent.

   Thus, the Amhara proportion of the national population has been estimated at 25 to 30 per cent. It is clear that they are disproportionately represented in the school system; but not so greatly as has been at times alleged. In view of the statistics and considerations presented above, it would seem that 50 per cent is the upper limit of enrolment by "pure Amhara" in the post-elementary schools.

   The disproportions with regard to religious affiliation speak for themselves. The most recent published estimates are: Ethiopian Orthodox, 35 per cent; Muslim, 35 per cent; pagan, 25 per cent; other, 5 per cent. (Lipsky, *Ethiopia* [New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962], p. 101.)

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 121 178 [871] [183] awareness of the political realities in the Ethiopian government. They had also begun to doubt the transcendent efficacy of the educational process itself after observing the behavior of those educated Ethiopians who went before them and inevitably became their ideals. The violation of various traditional and modern norms by the latter, and their evident demoralization, raised many questions in the minds of the students.

*883 121 178 871 464 Finally, the students were made more anxious by a general constricting of opportunity. Increased numbers in the school system meant a steady intensification of the competition to gain and hold on to a place in secondary school and college, particularly since 1959. The rapid filling of jobs by the educated youth and steadily growing numbers of unemployed youth began to create anxieties about finding work in the future.

*883 121 178 [873] [162] From the viewpoint of the modern adolescents, then, a very supportive and stimulating environment in the fifties has changed to a somewhat threatening and confused environment in the sixties. It is in this decade that Ethiopia's leaders of the future, that tiny fraction of one per cent of the population who reach secondary school, are coming to experience adolescence as a real normative crisis. At a time when, in the highly modernized society of the United States, observers like Friedenberg charge that the adolescent condition is becoming obsolete—that scope is no longer afforded the young person for exploration and discovery of an authentic self[28]—in the transitional state of Ethiopia this condition is being thrust on the youth. The decisions they make now, the identities they forge, will largely determine the extent to which reason and creativity will have a place in Ethiopia's future.

*883 871 121 178 The effort of the Ethiopian government to provide a modern education for some of Ethiopia's adolescents illustrates a principle discussed in another context by Karl Mannheim, namely, the characterization of youth as a latent sociological resource which must be mobilized when any social system seeks to change itself. It is a resource analogous to the latent energy reserves which are available to biological organisms when they must make a fresh adjustment to their environment.[29] Thus far the effort to mobilize the resources of Ethiopia's youth in behalf of modernization has proceeded chiefly through a pattern of increased *differentiation:* establishing a structure of secondary socialization separate from that of the traditional structures and thereby transmitting new beliefs, skills, and values to the youth. As yet, relatively little has been done with respect to the problems of devising modes of *integration* commensurate with these new differentiated patterns. The analyses of this chapter suggest the presence of what might be called "integration gaps" on at least three levels. On the level of the individual personality, there is the problem of synthesizing the various aspects of traditional and modern culture which have been transmitted to Ethiopian adolescents through diverse sources. Inasmuch as the external supports which cushioned these conflicts in the fifties are no

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 more eager and impatient to modernize Ethiopia than do members of the
648 new nobility. This contrast was already apparent at the time of the Italian invasion, when Ethiopian officers were condemning the archaic practices of civilian officials who, they charged, were holding back the defense efforts. Yet the image of a progressive, solidary military elite in Ethiopia is justified no more than the image of a reactionary, solidary ministerial elite; nor should the military leaders be seen as standing in fundamental opposition to their civilian counterparts. There is much friendly intercourse between the two groups. Army officers are often related to civilian officials, by blood or by marriage. Military personnel have in a number of cases been assigned to civilian posts in the government. While the military carry on much of their social life among themselves, they also enjoy a good deal of interaction with civilians of high status at parties, dances, weddings, and funerals.

701 Like the new nobility, moreover, the military officers do not form a cohesive group with common interests and ambitions. The one group which did develop a high degree of solidarity, esprit, and common political goals—the Officers Corps of the Imperial Bodyguard—was dissolved in the wake of its defeat in the 1960 rebellion. The military men have been checked and balanced by much the same techniques as have the new nobility. As a whole, they are held together by little more than the institutionalized structure of the security forces. As such, they are in any event bound to play an important part in determining the character of the future government of Ethiopia as they are crucial now in upholding the present regime.

THE BIRTH OF AN INTELLIGENTSIA

571 The formation of a modern intellectual class in Ethiopia is still in its earliest
871 stages. Given the small number who have completed elementary school (a
162 number still under one per cent of the national population) all Ethiopians who have graduated from secondary school may for the time being be considered members of a secular educated elite, those with college and graduate degrees enjoying correspondingly higher status within this elite. The total number in this group reached an estimated six thousand in 1962, about one-fourth of whom held college degrees.

571 Equally indicative of the rudimentary condition of the Ethiopian intelligentsia is the poverty of its institutional facilities and of its means of communication, both internally and with the international intellectual commu-
571 nity. As of 1961, institutions with primarily intellectual purposes were lim-
873 ited to the small college of arts and sciences, four vocational colleges, two
874 small research centers (the Pasteur Institute and the Section d'Archéologie, both financed by France and staffed mostly by non-Ethiopians), the Haile

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Name of School[a]	Enrolment[b]	Grades Surveyed	No.		
			Total	Male	Female
I. Tafari Makonnen School	320	11th and 12th	60	60	0
II. Haile Selassie I Secondary School	230	12th	47	47	0
III. Menelik II School	245	12th	15	15	0
IV. General Wingate Secondary School	325	12th	58	58	0
V. Madhane Alem School	160	12th	21	21	0
VI. Empress Mennen School	220	12th	19	0	19
VII. The English School[c]	.....	11th and 12th	9	7	2
VIII. Madhane Alem School (Harar)	450	12th	23	23	0
IX. Haile Selassie I School (Gondar)	135	11th	45	45	0
X. Theological Academy	100	12th	13	13	0
XI. Commercial School	335	12th	42	31	11
XII. Technical School	420	12th	57	57	0
XIII. Social Work Training Program[d]	12	12th	11	3	8
XIV. Teacher Training School (Harar)	278	12th	51	51	0
XV. Agriculture School (Ambo)	120	12th	29	29	0
Total secondary schools	3,350	.....	500	460	40
XVI. University College	420	3d and 4th	44	.....	.....
XVII. Engineering College	100	3d and 4th	31	.....	.....
XVIII. College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts (Alemaya)	172	3d and 4th	49	.....	.....
XIX. Haile Selassie I Military Academy (Harar)	138	3d[e]	38	.....	.....
XX. Public Health Officers Training Program (Gondar)	60	3d and 4th	38	.....	.....
Total colleges	890	.....	200	.....	.....

[a] These schools include all but five of the government postelementary schools which were offering full four-year programs in 1959. Schools I–IX are listed as "academic secondary schools"; X–XV as "special schools"; and XVI–XX as "institutions of higher learning." Unless otherwise indicated, they are located in Addis Ababa.

[b] The enrolment figures are for the academic year 1959–60, except for Tafari Makonnen School, where a preliminary version of the questionnaire was used during 1958–59. In schools which include elementary grades as well, the figures refer only to the secondary level enrolment. The total universe of the grades surveyed in these twenty schools was 1,150.

[c] A very small private school, attended by several Europeans as well as Ethiopians. The entire Ethiopian group of the two highest classes responded.

[d] A two-year program organized with the assistance of UNESCO. The students surveyed were the equivalent of secondary school seniors.

[e] The terminal year.

113 16. Mulugeta Wodajo, "Postwar Reform in Ethiopian Education," *Comparative Education Review*, II (February, 1959), 27.

17. Cf. William Shack, "Organization and Problems of Education in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Negro Education*, XXVIII (Fall, 1959), 405–20.

18. *Youth's Outlook on the Future: A Cross-national Study* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1955), p. 9.

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[243] Preferred cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous, [635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse- [162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial [563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic [567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000 [136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano- [243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals, [231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which [243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes [233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.

101 131 779 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries. [241] [463] [286] [443] [562] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farming and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssinian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humiliated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields [423] [326] [286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2. [162] [361]

632 [796] [346] motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' eponymic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "government" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means [691] [423] litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

[161] [592]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total population	151	95
Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by [613] risteñas. These households are distributed among the [592] hamlets' ambilineages as follows: [162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

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• [162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total risteñas households	31	21

[423] In each of the hamlets, there are two households be-
*[192] longing to Amhara tenant farmers (timeneña), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the risteñas
[779] whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two addition-
[433] al timeneña households, whose members are Muslims. These
[286] households are headed by brothers who supplement their
*[192] agricultural activities by weaving the šama (toga) for local Christians.

*793 Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are
361 believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the
423 use of such fields, known as yikeys mariet ("priest's
795 land"), is given to local priests in return for parti-
*[192]
[613] cipating in the Masses of the parish church. In practice, rist-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of yikeys mariet by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

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(Kusil:Kabiy:k*:I+) and (Yilfiyn Baǰiyta:Kabiy:k*:I)
(Wosfat:Ateci:k*:I) and (Kowsow:Ateci:k*:I)
(Yisaal Baǰiyta:Ateci:k*:II+) and (Kurtimat:Kabiy:k*:II)
In Lemmariet:
(Koruba:Seci:i:I+) and (Mic:Seci:i:I)
(Koruba:Seci:i:I) and (Mic:Seci:i:I)
(Aynitila:Ateci:k*:II) and (Yisaal Baǰiyta:Ateci:k*:II)
(Wosfat:Ateci:k*:III) and (Yisaal Baǰiyta:Ateci:k*:III)
The combination of therapies owned by any one herbalist is recognized by Amhara as being entirely adventitious, although no secular herbalist is considered likely to own multiple therapies for a single disease-name specialty.

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[562]
[592]

Since three of Tikurmidir's herbalists are women, and two of them reside with herbalist spouses, the distribution of herbalists among households is as follows:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
[162] Household with one or more herbalists:	19	16
%of Amhara households with one or more herbalists:	56%	67%

The distribution of herbalist therapies in these hamlets is further characterized by a high degree of "redundancy", that is to say, the presence of two or more therapies directed against the same named ailment, but practiced by different herbalists:

*278
*757 the memeleša counters the effect of the poison, which
628 stands in the place that the primary medicine would in any other internally administered herbalist therapy.

The remaining therapy attracting clients from beyond the hamlet is Nikersa:kitabiy:A:I, and is the hamlet's best example of a therapy of medhaniyt awakiy grade. As an "amulet therapy", it has no memeleša, nor does it allow for a diagnosis to the administration of the therapy. The grading of such therapies is dependent upon criteria of efficacity and professional reputation; this nikersa therapy is regarded as relatively effective and it attracts clients from all Woggera, in spite of the presence of redundant therapies within this area.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN URBAN BEGEMDER

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[369]
Less than 5% of the province's people are classified "urban" by Government census.[16] Half of these townfolk live in Gondar, the provincial capital. Although Gondar is the administrative, ecclesiastical, and commercial center of Begemder, its demographic and social character-

[16] 56,000 out of a total of 1.24 million (EAS1965: 23-24).

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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632 istics are, except for differences in scale, approximated by most of the other provincial towns situated in predominantly Amhara areas.[17]

632 <u>The People of the Town</u>. Approximately three-
463 quarters of Gondar's residents are Amhara, born in either Begemder or adjacent Gojam province. Most Amhara townsmen are government employees (clerks, messengers, teachers, and judicial functionaries); a lesser number enjoy some ecclesiastical identity, and others are local rentiers, often supplementing their incomes with government or Church employment. A smaller number work in miscellaneous, unskilled occupations, notably as watchmen (<u>zibaña</u>) at the households of affluent co-religionists.

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632 Three quarters of Gondar's adult Amhara are women.
463 A minority of them are the spouses or dependents of lo-
433 cal Amhara townsmen, and confine their daily activities to domestic duties. A still smaller number are rentiers, or the recipients of stipends from mature sons living elsewhere. The remaining Amhara townswomen, perhaps 40%

[17]Thus excluding Chilga (urban center for the Kemant Agaw region) and Metemma (a border town of the Sudanese lowlands).

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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632 of the town's total population, support themselves by
433 working among the densely packed rows of beer houses
463 and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejora-
779 tively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the
563 former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically
[197] indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinc-
[167] tively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often
[142] light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian
[443] wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants
[442] (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people,
563 predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are
463 employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal
[197] makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics.
[562] Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

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laying during the little and big rains. But there are many variations.) When it comes, the farmer tries to scare it away by setting fire to fallow fields, stubble, bush and trees.

136 Other wild creatures familiar to the Amhara are Migrating birds which fly north (to "Jerusalem" in the popular mind, actually to Europe) in March and return in October, including the "zorit", a white-bellied, black-backed, red-winged bird, and a variety of stork, called "asa leqami". The Nile Monitor, ("ardjano"), a huge lizard is found along larger rivers, often not far from villages and even towns, and easy to hunt. With its scaly skin and often large size, it resembles a crocodile, with dark stripes and spots on a very white underside. [28] The skin is used to cover better utensils and is exported as "crocodile leather" for bags and shoes. Actual crocodiles are much harder to hunt, in less accessible river gorges in the lowlands. The Guenon Monkey (Ṭoṭa) is common on lower [23] elevations(where it is also a danger to crops). Its young are sometimes made pets.

136 Insect life is abundant in Ethiopia, varies in type according to elevation, and bears considerable significance to ecology.

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Flies - abundant everywhere, transmitting intestinal and skin infections. They are not interfered with beyond swishing with the fly-switch which, if kept in constant motion, chases but does not kill them.

Fleas ("quneḉhcha") are very common on humans. Everyone has them most of the time, even in the city.

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They are considered a minor irritation, and are caught and crushed between the finger nails. Sometimes, fleas are carriers of typhus, causing epidemics.

Lice - are not as common on humans, and are associated, in the Amhara view, with unusually insanitary conditions, such as prisons.

Bedbugs ("tenkushit"), of the bloodsucking variety, are very common.

Ticks and mites - are more common and more dangerous in the lowlands, but are also found on the plateau where they cause relapsing fever, endemic in many areas. Ticks also bear typhus.[10]

Mosquitoes ("çhenqello", or, "tenen") include 22 species of the Anopheline variety in Ethiopia, are abundant below 4,000 feet, in river valleys and along flooded margins of lakes, where serious fatal malaria epidemics occur from time to time. Thousands died just north of Lake Tana within a few weeks after the rainy season of 1953. The Amhara describes the mosquito as a little insect with a big head; it flourishes at the end of the rainy season.

136 Ants: "gundan", black ant with painful bite;
"gäbrä gudan", black field ant which eats grain but does not sting;
"zämämit", small red ant with painful sting;

10. Simmons, op. cit., 1951, pp. 62-73.

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wild blueberry - "agam", very common; with thorny twigs, resembling the sloe tree; found not far from rivers, on the woyna dega.

wild fig tree - "shola", or "warka", giant tree (ficus sycomorus) with small but very sweet fruit.

"qamma" - fruit resembling raisin, turns brown when ripe, sour, consumed as mild laxative.

mushroom - "enguday", or "anguday", with white bottom. Rarely eaten.

"awut" - common, reddish or white fruit of a nettle bush, of very low prestige and consumed only in time of famine; gathered in early dry season (Läskäräm to Ter).

Only lemons are consumed publicly without shame. They are purchased on the market. Bananas from the lowlands are also available to urban people, or "great men" who can afford them. Observers have suggested that the common nose-bleeding of Amhara may result from a Vitamin C deficiency, due to little fruit consumption.

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Collecting also provides such necessities as wild cotton in more remote areas (e.g. the Kagnza district of Wolqait). Every housewife uses leaves of the "lola" bush in which to bake the festive bread "dabbo".

Wild honey is obtained from the wild bee called "tazzema" (Apis africans miaia), and used against colds as well as "heart ailments". More commonly, honey for making the alcoholic drink "tej", is obtained from a small, tiny-stinged bee (Apis dorsata), but since many of the bees are killed when they are smoked out, this process, too, is one of collecting rather than bee culture.

[278]

252 262 the last a few minutes before the wot is ready. Some add capsicum at the same time.

Liver and stomach, especially of sheep and goat, are eaten, but spleen and milt are considered hard to digest and are given to dogs. In general, interior organs are not prestigeful.

Raw beef, "brundo", is still featured at special feasts such as weddings, religious feasts like "täzkär", [164] as it was featured at feasts of warriors in the past. This brings much tapeworm infection, but the risk is taken because it is believed that "brundo" makes strong like no [755] other food. The painful purgative cure is undergone every two months with "kosso", still a major institution among the Amhara.

To cool the palate linings and tongue from the bär-bärē, curdled milk, "ergo", is consumed right afterwards. [515] Hands are carefully washed, for touching the eyes with fingers stained from the spiced stew makes them smart.

Fish, much eaten only in the rainy season, is also boiled in wot, often after slight prefrying in talba (linseed oil); lentils (mesr) are often added.

Lentils become very important in the long lenten sea- [784] son and on every Wednesday and Friday, when the average Amhara still abstains from meat, milk, eggs and other animal products, for religious (Coptic fast) reasons. The staple food during these periods is a porridge called "shero": mashed peas seasoned with spices, onion and vegetable oil.

Another vegetarian staple is "nefro", consisting of peas, chick peas, sorghum, all boiled and eaten as ker-

515 may last 9 months, there is very little bathing, and only hands are washed, in muddy water brought from the river or
514 brook, before and after meals. There are no latrine ditches. Feces are deposited behind thorny bushes 1/4 mile from the hamlet at most, while urination at night proceeds within the hamlet. This practice is followed even in towns and in Addis Ababa. Fortunately the strong sun carbonizes the feces in the dry season, and the strong rain in that season sweeps it away. There is no caste of sweepers, and no attention is paid to human or animal feces, except for the manure of oxen and cows. The latter is hand-pressed into cakes and used as fuel.

364 Hyenas, jackals and vultures are not interfered
825 with, as their services in removing carcasses of animal origin are well appreciated.

165 Abundant sunlight during 9 months of the year, coupled with the scanty clothing of small children, probably gives them their best chance of survival in addition to the long breast-feeding. Nevertheless infant mortality is very high, and in an average family half the babies born die before reaching the age of 5.

164 Flea infestation of humans can be described as
136 complete. This opens the way to flea-born typhus, especially on the highland plateau. Lice are somewhat less general, since they are not regarded by the Amhara as inevitable as fleas. Thus, an Amhara whose hair is infected
136 with lice (e.g. during a stay in prisons which are always
164 lice-infected), he may shave his hair. But louse-born re-
744 lapsing fever epidemics recur from time to time, and the

136
164 government has now made free injections available at "big
[744] markets" of provincial towns. Bedbugs are also prevalent, of the bloodsucking variety. They are considered a nussance by the Amhara, but all that is done is to air the "alga" bed in the sunlight, which merely reduces the infestation temporarily. Flies are also abundant and very aggressive, so that a flyswitch ("chera") is kept in motion for comfort. Contagious diseases spread readily. Just after each rainy season, malarial mosquitoes have caused epidemics up to levels of 5,000 feet, on the shore of overflowing lakes and rivers.

511 In the majority of cases, some livestock is taken
[231] into the living hut (tuqul) everynight. The tuqul has, of course, an unwashable mud floor, no windows or chimney, soot-blackened ceiling, cobwebs in corners. There is no change of clothing at night, merely an added "kutta" or sheepskin, against the cold. Aside from drinking cups, there are no individual utensils.

164 Towns, including provincial towns, are centers for
[543] the spread of syphilis and other venereal diseases, due to the existence of entire streets of "women in-between mar-
759] riages" who act as restauranteurs-prostitutes. When surface lesions appear, the native "wogasha" is consulted; or since the Italian invasion made the "needle" popular, the modern government medical personnel is approached. But patients usually cease to continue treatment when surface lesions disappear.[67]

Eating "brundo", raw beef, at feasts, almost always leads to tapeworm and other taenia infestation. Fortunately

67. Guthe, Th: Venerial Disease in Ethiopia. W.H.O.Bulletin, Vol.2, 1949, pp. 85-138.

164 this is limited to occasional feasts due to the comparatively high cost of beef, and the "kosso" cure does seem to work. Dysentery kills many infants; amoebic dysentery sickens and kills adults also, especially near towns where the population is denser. The opening and increase in trade route communications since the Italian occupation has led to an increase in tuberculosis epidemics.[68]

312 164 Brooks, rivers and wells become increasingly more polluted as each dry season proceeds, and just after the flooding during the rainy season. Water carried long distances in skins is not safe either. The housewife, trying to manage as best as she can under the circumstances, carefully covers containers of food and drink, even of water stored overnight.

H. Mutual Aid

476 The simple living standard of the Amhara is somewhat improved by traits of mutual aid.

These may be listed in four categories, according to Amhara attitude:

(1) Mutual aid within the territorial or kinship unit, usually the hamlet;

(2) between neighboring hamlets that may or may not be kinfolk;

(3) within the religious sodality, the "mähabär";

(4) between individuals.

68. Simmons et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. pp.62-73

e) Visiting

574 602 Visiting kinfolk regularly, during the nine months of the dry season, is a prime requirement. This includes, in this order of emphasis and frequency: patrilineal kin, matrilineal kin, affinal kin.

574 606 Visits to affinal kin are less frequent and more formal. When visiting one's parents-in-law, usually twice during the dry season, the man is not supposed to come empty-handed, but should bring a sheep as a gift. He waits outside the in-law hamlet, just beyond the thornbush enclosure, and asks the children whether his father-in-law is at home. When the latter appears, the visitor enters and approaches the hut. He enters only upon invitation. There is no mother-in-law avoidance as such, but contact is reduced to a minimum, between son-in-law and mother-in-law, to achieve maximum privacy for both.

602 Flouting kinship obligation is regarded as a shameful deviation, indicating an evil character. Kinship relations represent much security for the individual, but also involve him in serious obligations, such as aiding kinsmen in blood-feuds and reprisal-raids ("bäqäl"). A person who wanders away from the kin hamlet, or from kin obligations, when his mood or irresponsibility carry him, is called "läqo" (after the soft reed that grows rapidly at the least rain, but drops when grown to maturity).

574 764 Visitors, particularly strangers, must observe certain taboos, lest they be suspected of bringing the evil eye. They should not ask the number of children, nor praise their health or good looks aloud. This is considered dangerous, because the "buda" spirit is always on the lookout for fat, juicy children so that he can magically "drink 764 their blood" and make them waste away. (Children are vulnerable to many communicable diseases).

574 576 When visiting the sick, the visitor, especially female visitors, are expected to express their sympathy in unmistakeable tones. The

178 This attitude is of course deplored by the Western physicians who know
757 of it. But modern medical treatment is still little available outside the major towns. Patients come to hospitals often only as a last resort, fearing to be separated from kinfolk and exposed to treatment by strangers, so that mortality in hospitals is high, which reinforces
[743] the fears. At present there are probably no more than 50 hospitals in all Ethiopia, and only a few hundred Western physicians. Both are heavily concentrated in Addis Ababa, so that the field of the "woggesha" has not shrunk at all.

164 B. Common Ailments and their Treatment.

757 The more common ailments and procedures followed by the "woggesha"
756 and "dabtara", (practitioners who occasionally overlap in specialties
755 but almost never in treatment), include the following (see next page):

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Table II: Bodily Ailments, Symptoms, Practitioners, Diagnoses, Treatment.

Ailment	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Diagnosis or Symptoms	Treatment
snakebite	"ebab"(snake) "gwämit", very poisonous but rare; "täwarwari ebab", lowland cave snake (also "asil"), very poisonous, but rare on plateau. "talba ebab" brownish flax-snake, common, not poisonous, but believed to be. "zändo" (large python), not poisonous, infrequently encountered.	woggesha dabtära: prevents snakebite by writing amulet "Abuna Batra Maryam", and wrapping it in "tonätla" (mistletoe) leaves that keep snakes away. In presence of snake, lets shadow fall on it to immobilize it, saying: "He is born of virgin, without conception by a father, a and He has saved us; but it, that has misled Eve, the snake..."(which scares the snake away).	fang marks	cuts wound with razor (arab melach), also may cut flesh away. No sucking of blood for fear of poison. Stop bleeding with "let" leaves. Smears oily "nug" - cake on, for healing.
tonsilitis, chronic sore throat	"angar", or "entel" (lit. uvula)	woggesha	pain in throat, regarded as "sick uvula"	rips out part of soft palate with wire.
toothache	"lemam yaza" (lit. the rot has seized it).	woggesha	toothache	"kills the demon that bites" by inserting a caustic medicine that eats into the gum; (actually a counter-irritant).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
Ear infection	"qenqen" or "qetqet"	woggesha	diagnosed as "buzzing insect that got into patient's ear".	"kills insect in ear" by caustic drops; (actually a counter-irritant)
cough (human) (donkey)		woggesha		drink expectorant made from aloes ("erä"). feed donkey roasted "qärcho", a yellow thistle weed that grows in plowed fields.
tuberculosis (esp. pulmonary). 30% incidence estimated by Italians.	"mäggäñä" (Galla: "arwe karhamu)	dabtära	coughing blood, leaving patient limp. Diagnosed as "threshhold demon named 'mäggäñä', who entered patient in early morning", or "red snake in belly".	Purgative, made of root of rhubarb "mäqmäqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), boiled in butter. Magic "sacrifice of threshhold" of chicken or goat, and fumigation of hut with "woggärt". Spraying of holy water. If all are dead, abandon the hut. (Also, cauterization with hot pin).
tapeworm (taenia saginata) Very common.	"wäsfat"	woggesha	noticed in stool; or, prophylactic after every "brundo" (raw beef) feast; or every 2 months.	Purgative (Vermifuge) made of "kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica, Quassia amara), prepared from the dry flowers, bark and twigs of this rosacious highland tree, while swallowing a dozen "enqoqo" seeds like pills. Produces a 3-day painful diarrhea.

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
bacterial dysentery. Very common.		woggesha	diarrhea	Only black tyeff grain may be eaten. If not cured, drink boiled leaves of "zärch embway" thistle (Solanum marginatum).
dysentery. Very common, esp. in market towns	"teqmat" (lit. what makes to sit down)	woggesha	diarrhea with blood	Purgative made of hottest "bärbärē" pepper called "mitmitta" (Capsicum abyssinicum) with smallest pods, taken in the evening together with raw beef ("brundo") after a day of complete fasting; the next morning, drink purgative kosso with engono pills.
intestinal disturbances colic	angorba	woggesha	pains, much salivation	drink tea of "teferendo" bush, or of "tembälal" (Jasminum floribundum); or of "angorra" root (used also in tatooing as astringent). In mild cases, chew leaf of "tena adam" garden plant and swallow the juice.

(constipation, etc., is treated with mineral salt "ashal chäw," now with "English salt" (Epsom).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
heart ailment. occasionally.	"leb bäshota" (lit. heart sickness)	woggesha	pains in heart region	antispasmotic drink made of honey of the wild bee "tazzema" (Apis Africana miaia).
conjunctivitis, trachoma, ophthalmia, eye diseases Very common.	"Nädara" or "Aynät" (female demons)	däbtära	eye inflammation, pain, incipient blindness	apply juice of "Ketketa" flower (Dodonea viscosa) by means of cotton cloth; then take vapor bath. Or use juice of aloes ("rät"). Rub wrinkled leaves of "käsyä" (resembles thyme). Wear amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of the demon.
headache, migraine, neuralgia. Very common.	"feltät"	woggesha däbtära		Inhale fumes of burning leaves of "woggärt" plant or "gizewa" bush(which resembles elderberry). Shave area in back of head, make small incision with horn, sucking the blood. On Mary's birthday, leave chickpeas or other food for the birds.
hemorrhoids. common.	"kentarot"	woggesha	pains, (mostly in adults)	Astringent shrinks piles; made of the juice of certain secret roots, applied daily for a week.

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
bleeding from wounds		woggesha		apply rolled and crumbled leaf of "let" plant to wound, to stop bleeding. apply aloes ("rät") to promote formation of scar tissue.
excessive menstrual bleeding	"yädam abennät"	woggesha däbtära	diagnosed as female demon "Werzelya"	Hang magic root under garment. Root bears name of illness, drives it away. Amulets.
miscarriage	"yädam terät"	däbtära	demon Werzelya	Peel this root and wear it. Amulets
barrenness Incidence as high as 25%	"yädam tefat"	däbtära	demon Werzelya, believed to have "stopped patient's menstruation."	Specially written amulet, referring to King Susneyos' formula, hung on the neckcord.
chigger, sandflea infection. Common, esp. in dry lowland.	"moyalä"	woggesha		Pick out whole organism with needle, without breaking it.
muscular dystrophy, & other paralytic diseases.	"gwaya ankätäkkätäw" (lit. the gwaya plant has broken him).		diagnosed as due to "having walked through a field of this plant", or "having spilled water in which it was boiled, on one's leg". Symptoms: cross legged, pigeontoed walk.	No certain cure. Sometimes treated like the "mech" disease (general functional ailment).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
paralysis	"sefat"	woggesha dabtara	stroke, often fatal	No certain cure, Amulets.
struck by lightning	"mabraq	woggesha dabtara	found unconscious diagnosed as "struck by thunder".	Carried to fireplace, kept warm. If patient dies, regarded as heavenly punishment, for hidden crime.
visible syphilis (early stage). Incidence syphilis 50-80% estimated by Italians.	"qiten"	woggesha dabtara	syphilitic sores	1st stage of treatment: Smear resin on sores, or "kabre" (sulphur). Intensive eating of barbare pepper (Capsicum abyssinicum) in order to salivate, for the disease is believed to come out with saliva; also the purgative kosso (as in cases of tapeworm), for same reason. (Magic): sacrifice male, black goat (to demon), drink its blood and eat it, for this omnivorous animal has eaten a variety of herbs that may help. Then purge 4 months. 2nd stage: Sweatcure at hot springs("filowa"), dedicated to a saint, for 40 days. Refrain from salt, drink much water. In some cases, drink sarsaparilla root (Smilax mauritanica) - (possibly recent diffusion).

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Ailments	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
chronic syphilis (including "benign syphilis" resembling Arab "bejel"; neuroe syphilis extremely rare. Chronic and inherited syphilis believed common by physicians.	"verdē"	dābtāra woggesha		Prophylactic treatment obtained by some from dābtāra before exposure to syphilis is kept secret, Cures include crushing of "bessana" root with Kosso, ratio 1 : 2, which is dissolved in pure barley beer "talla gebs". This purgative is believed to bring out germ with diarrhea or vomiting.
gonorrhea (common - esp. in market towns)	"čhābet" or "čhebet" (lit. it squeezes me)	woggesha	believed caused from having urinated in sunshine. Symptom: pain and urinating with difficulty.	Same cure with "bessana" root purgative as in chronic syphilis.
smallpox other pox (occasional epidemics, now rarer)	"ṣäntaṭa" "liṭē"	woggesha	believed caused by morning-threshhold demon "mäggäñā" (See tuberculosis)	Vesicant to "bring out the rash" by rubbing "kābrē" (sulphur) on sores, or, if unavailable, saffron. Patient must not touch water until healed. Neighbors wait until after 7A.M. to brink cakes of food, so that they will not encounter the morning demon "mäggäñā" on threshhold.

Variolation with "kuffēñ" (mild pox or chicken pox, or taken from pus of sick person) especially in epidemics; sores are rubbed with honey.

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
abscess or running sore	"quncher"	woggesha	believed caused by urine of certain moth.	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur or resin. Ointment made from leaves of "emogo" bush used as anti scabies. Purgatives made from "bessana" leaves or from juice of euphorbia candelabra ("golqwal"), drunk in fresh barley beer.
impetigo	"chefō"	woggesha	believed caused by washing in "bad water"	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur.
white sore on hand; itch.	"lekäft"	woggesha	believed caused by having left water uncovered overhight, and washing hand in it the next morning. Pain, tendons affected. Believed non-contageous.	apply astringent leaf-compresses, e.g. from the "darch embway" flower with the little red fruit; or of the "embway" (yellow thistle).
other sore on hand	"chäfō"	woggesha	believed contageous form of "lekaft"; much feared.	Cover sore with nug oil paste, and salt, to keep it from spreading.
scrofula	"näqärsa"	woggesha	symptoms on neck	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur.

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Ailments	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
leprosy (occasionally).	"lefe", "qomata", "läms"	woggesha	discoloration of skin, loss of nails, etc.	Combination of treatment of other sores. (Now treated by WHO with injection of sulphetrone, etc.).
scarlet fever (rare)	"lash"	woggesha dabtara	Peeling skin, sometimes falling hair, in children. Believed caused by female demon that specializes in hurting children.	"bring out rash" by applying sulphur to the itchy skin. Dabtara provides prophylactic as well as curative amulet against this demon.
typhus fever; If epidemic: "tässebo" (common in highlands)	"tälalafi bäsheta", "yänäfs bäsheta"	dabtara	Believed caused by certain demons.	Amulets. (Now free injections and immunization by government "dressers" at town markets).
relapsing fever (Fatality higher than typhus; louse-born in highland, tick-born in lowland).	"mech" or "mechdär"	dabtara woggasha	Patient believed struck by the demon of "hot fog", ("mech gittaw"). Same term used for sunstroke, and pneumonia. Symptoms include headaches, vomiting, violent fever, soon fatal. Illness believed brought on by sunstroke or eating spicy foods or green corn without washing mouth.	Febrifuge prepared from roasted "halgab" plant (which resembles mint), collected with great secrecy in the bush. "Mech mädhänit" (lit. Mech medicine) also uses other plants, the leaves of which are squeezed, and the juice is drunk, sniffed, and rubbed over body, with formulas being pronounced (magic)

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
malaria (common below 5000 ft. endemic below 3000 ft; epidemics in lowland market towns.	"nedad" (lit. burn) "tekwesat" (fever, generic) "woba" (boil)	woggesha	fever	Patient drinks febrifuge made from min-like herbs boiled in butter. Band with cold water placed on head.
rheumatism (common)	"qerṭemat"	däbtära	believed caused by "buda" evil spirit if believed due to possession by "lazy zar"	Drive evil spirit away with disagreeable odor of "chequn" plant stuffed in nose.
		zar doctor		Bribe the "adbar" outdoor zar spirit or the "qolä" zar with sacrifice of food.
arthritis or deforming rheumatism	"rih"	priest		Rebaptize patient at holy well ("täbäl"); or advise him to go to a hot mineral spring dedicated to a saint ("filowa") for sweat cure.
rickets	"ṭela"	däbtära	swelling of bony joints; believed caused by demon of evil eye.	Amulet.
yellow jaundice	"wof zorräbbat" (lit. the bird turned directions over him	däbtära	skin discoloration, thick urin.	Amulet.

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
puerperal fever	"tekwesat" (generic, fever)	dabtara	believed caused by female, jealous, demon "Karima".	Amulet reciting victory of Solomon over Karima.
delirium	"buda" (evil spirit)	dabtara	believed due to "buda" possession.	Intoxicant drug "astänaser" Thornapple Jimsonwee (Datura stramonium) (lit. that which makes to talk) is drunk by patient so that he reveals the name of the specific evil spirit; then it can be exorcised.
epilepsy	"yabarya basheta" "yabuda basheta" (evil spirit disease) (haut gal) "ganyen yazä (lit. the djinn have seized him) "ebd" (have enslaved him)	dabtara	spasms, convulsions.	Same treatment as in delirium and rheumatism, or both.
			running amok, violent	Cast out "ganyen" by spells and exorcism. Or eat intoxicant paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha) root. Exorcism of "buda" or "ganyen".
(St. Vitus)	"nägärgar", or naqatqat"			

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
hysteria	"zar" (spirit, benign or evil)	zar doctor	(see zar cult) and "buda"	(see zar cult); Stimulant "agē faris" (stramoine datura) (lit. wood of Persia) is often preliminary treatment. The effect is agitated somnambulism, enabling patient to see the future, and the (evil) spirits that have attached themselves to him; esp. the "aynā tela" (lit. shadow eye), usually in shape of a woman, who spoils well-laid plans. Once her name is revealed, dābtāra throws cold water on patient to reawaken.
chronic apathy (catalepsy)	"Ṭegerteya" (female demon)	zar doctor dābtāra	(see zar cult) and "buda"	(see zar cult) and "buda"
insanity	"Waddegeni" (female demon)	zar doctor	(see zar cult)	(see zar cult)
amok			(see "ganyen")	

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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woods of the Abyssinian highlands very much, being of lowland desert origin themselves.

They can fly, dive, have hands that are strong as iron, and are wiser than humans. But their social institutions are not much better than man's. Their children must go to school to learn, just like human children. Their social hierachy is much like that of Abyssinia, with kings, chiefs, chamberlains, and a servant class. They have wars among themselves in which they can be killed by other, stronger and shrewder zars. Even their individual personalities may have serious shortcomings: generally a distinction is made between small-statured, evil, ignorant, very dark-skinned zars, and tall, noble, educated, light-skinned zars. The latter resemble their ancestors, while the others have degenerated. The zars are divided into ethnic groups and religions, so that there are Christian, Muslim, Falasha and pagan zars. They are curious about humans of other religions, e.g. a Christian zar may "possess" a human who is Muslim and make him act and dress like a Christian (and vice versa). Diseases, especially functional and mental ailments, emanate from the zars, but so do the remedies.

The superhuman attributes of the "zar" spirits are largely in achievements of material culture, in which the human Amhara is so little developed; in non-material aspects of culture, such as governing society, and in personality, no greatly superior level is visualized.

[164] No human being is considered entirely invulnerable to "zar" possession, not even foreigners. Moreover, "mild possessions" hit every human some time during a lifetime, though this may pass with relatively little notice.

X794 repression and penalty, for no layman can know whether or not it is
756 the spirit who speaks through the doctor in any given situation.

X794 The most frequent types of mental afflictions which the "zar"
164 doctor is called upon to treat are forms of hysteria (mostly in women), catatonic states (also mostly in women), and violent forms of possession including epileptic states (mostly in men). But he also treats some functional ailments, notably rheumatism, which is believed to have been caused by a "lazy zar" who wants his "horse" to stay in one place.

X794 Though every person is considered a potential "horse" for a zar,
776 certain personality types are considered particularly vulnerable to
753 possession by evil zars: persons with sad, returing, melancholic natures; women who feel unloved and neglected by their husbands and thus offer little resistance to a male "zar lover"; persons who wish to escape, e.g. chronic drunkards.

X794 Apathy, leading to catatonic states if not treated, indicates
753 incipient possession by an evil zar. The patient, often a woman,
758 withdraws into a corner, sits there huddled up, refuses to accept food. Until a zar doctor can be persuaded to come and take on the case, family and friends try to give the patient first aid. For, if she were to remain long in this state, it is believed that her "zar" could "ride" her to death. Therefore, relatives and neighbors come quickly, sing to the patient, entertain her, promise her whatever her heart desires, and generally try to create a merry atmosphere. Finally they try to lure the patient into watching them dance, and try to raise the patient playfully, so as to join them. The patient is never left alone until the doctor comes.

X 794 ●164 753 Psychotic cases among women usually assume a domineering male personality, such as believing themselves to be the ruthless Emperor Theodore, or the bloody Ras Mikael of Tigre. The zar doctor, however, elicits the confession of a "zar", so that he can treat the case.

Hysteria is believed mostly due to possession by female zars, who are more mischievous, silly and irresponsible than evil. If such a female zar possesses a male patient, he will manifest characteristics regarded as feminine, such as silly gaiety, and teasing behavior. If [838] not "awakened" quickly, such a state may become chronic and gradually destroy his masculinity. More common is hysteria among women, in which case the possession manifests itself as reversion to infantile behavior: the patient talks babytalk, skips about like a young goat and shamelessly demands little gifts even from strangers and passers-by. The patient must be humored, given gifts or at least promises, for the zar, speaking through the patient, may say: "If you don't give me this, I will kill my horse" (the patient).

Violent forms of possession may manifest themselves by aggression directed against the patient himself, such as beating himself, hitting the head against the wall, eating dirt, trying to climb the wall, wanting to run out at night to roam with hyenas. In some cases, if accompanied by nosebleed, or "weeping blood", this is diagnosed as "buda" and becomes a case for the dabtara practitioner. In cases of running amok, with aggression directed against others, it may be diagnosed as "ganyen" (djinn) and be treated either by the dabtara, zar doctor, or tanqway sorcerer.

X 794 776 758 The most common form of possession, particularly in women, begins with a kind of incubation. The male zar possessing her is jealous of her human husband, wants her to obtain a divorce and join a zar society

×794 zar doctor, preferably a woman like Woyzäro Salämtew. The zar complex,
772 to the Amhara mind, represents the shadow side of the visible human
world, making it complete. Hence, just as the Coptic Christian (and
[562] also the Muslim) church emphasizes the male-dominated, patriarchal
side of society, so does the zar complex represent the obverse, the
female-dominated, matriarchal side of society.

×794 This is further reinforced by the subordinate socio-psychological
562 position of the Amhara woman. She may not enter the church. Her
daily labors are largely limited to routine, manual, monotonous tasks.
[565] Only noblewomen are exempt from this social position of the "commoner"
femle, and therefore are not found in the zar cult - which therefore
has a lower-class connotation in the basically two-class Amhara society.

Socially undistinguished, "commoner" Amhara women who chafe under
[164] their social inferiority, including women of potential talent repressed
in their culture, are likely to develop ailments such as melancholia,
apathy, catatonic states, migraine, or hysteria. Thus the zar doctor
is called in and the patient enters the zar society.

The socio-psychological improvement, even apart from medical
[755] considerations, which the woman experiences as member of a zar -
devotee society, is considerable. Once her individual "zar" has been
diagnosed, she has acquired an individual "self" which is respected,
acknowledged, at first within, and finally even outside the zar
society. For the zar society emphasizes individualism, free expression,
individual enterprise; as against the outside Amhara world which sup-
presses it in commoners, especially in the Amhara woman. The business
enterprise of the female zar doctor and many devotees has already been
described.

754 The actual name, "buda", is considered taboo, for it is dangerous
776 and might attract him, when uttered aloud. Since this spirit is
[784] always male, his name is paraphrased as "the man's eye" ("yäsäw ayn"), "shadow eye" (aynä ṭela); and a victim is paraphrased "the man's victim" ("yäsäw gällaḥ"). Even the term "smith" is used, sometimes indirectly, for further security. Thus, to accuse someone of sorcery, a security-minded Amhara says pointedly, in his presence: "As for me, I am not the son of a smith".

754 The first attitude toward strangers is therefore one of caution,
609 lest he be a carrier of "buda". The suspicion is confirmed if the stranger has intelligent eyes, darting eyes, shining eyes, or if he stares curiously without saying much. It is confirmed if he seems skilled manually, for then he may be a "ṭabib" (lit. trained person, technologically wise), hiding the fact that he was born into the ironsmith caste. It is less disturbing if he openly reveals himself as an ironsmith, for then he lives segregated in a hamlet of his own ethnic group, and when contact must be established for trade (purchase of iron tools and pottery), certain "precautions" against being struck by the evil eye can be taken; extra-vulnerable persons such as pregnant women can be kept from contact; and all transactions will be carried on in full daylight.

754 The "buda" is regarded as preferring to strike and feast on
776 women, especially beautiful ones, and to feed, cannibal-style, on
[609] fat, beautiful children. The stranger therefore should never praise the health or beauty of children, or of women, out loud. Mothers hide their children at the approach of a stranger. Nice new garments
[854] on a child also attract the buda, and this is one reason why children
[164] under 5, when infant mortality is highest, are given only rags to wear, and are permitted to be dirty most of the time.

751 their happiness from showing. Eating and drinking in the open makes one
754 extremely vulnerable, because this arouses buda's greed, and at the
776 same time makes it easier to penetrate the victim's body, through the wide open mouth and unguarded nose. Therefore, old-time Amhara cover their faces when eating in front of strangers.

751 This attempt to reduce vulnerability is closely related to some
754 of the "language of the shamma" (toga). In the presence of strangers,
291 this can be draped in the fashion that indicates "reserve" - covering the mouth, or even nose and mouth, with the front section of the toga, which has been draped in a turtleneck. When travelling in strange districts, which are doubly dangerous because of cast-out buda spirits hidden by exorcisers along trails, a strong-smelling
[824] herb pushed in the nostril, is often used as a prophylactic. The most commonly used of these herbs is "tena adam" (lit. health of Adam, i.e. mankind). The mouth should be kept closed, or covered. In a fearful situation, he may say "shadow, may it not fall on me". Touching iron, considered specially "strong", also helps. Children are warned to stay away from strangers, and never to leave a baby unattended, lest "buda will eat you". The term "eat" is regularly used for buda possession (not for zar possession), for it indicates consumption.

751 Typhus ("tälälafi bäsheta") and severe epilepsy ("yäbuda bäsheta")
754 the latter literally ascribed to buda (lit. buda disease) are the most
174 common ailments promptly diagnosed as "buda" "eating". Evidently
[164] Amhara doctors long ago observed that covering the mouth and nose and staying away from possibly infected strangers reduced the exposure to certain contagious diseases; they then proceeded to envelop this observation in the culture pattern, including the draping of the toga and stopping up the nose, and not eating uncovered in the presence of strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

754 Spitting or coughing blood (which may be tuberculosis*) is [164] regarded as another sure symptom of buda, especially the demon "mäggäna". The buda is believed to cause widespread epidemics, if he is powerful and many vulnerable victims are in the area.

776 Certain buda are believed to have very specialized "educated"
754 tastes. One likes to rob the voice of dabtara choristers who chants harmoniously in church (perhaps in revenge for the same dabtara's part-time, extracurricular activity as exorciser), whereupon the voice will begin to croak and steadily grow worse, until the singer cannot even carry a tune. When a cow gradually [825] stops giving milk, despite a big udder, this is ascribed to the special taste of an "educated" buda.

c. Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis

755 Sometimes the victim declares that he has had a dream in [753] which a certain suspected person, e.g. an ironsmith, has been "eating" him. This can become very dangerous for the accused.

The question which diagnosis has to solve is not "what's eating you?", but "who is eating you?"; for the buda spirit and sorcerer are one person.

When the exorciser appears, the "buda" reacts violently. Even apathetic patients suddenly break out in violent peals of laughter, howl like a hyena, crawl about on all fours. The exorciser begins to question the "buda" to find out his personal identity. The "buda" replies through the mouth of the victim, in a hoarse voice, which is attested by all Amhara onlookers as "not the normal voice of the victim". The diagnostic procedure is a battle of wits between the exorciser and the "buda". The

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Table 13: The Scribe as Healer: Demons, their Individual Specialities, Exorcism.

category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Buda"	evil eye	fevers (mech mättaw); functional ailments; hysteria, catalepsy	eye with bloody-red iris; ironsmith ethnics		powerful amulet; Christian re-baptising of patient: exorcism
(1)	"Mägäna"	threshhold demon in early mourning	spitting blood (tuberculosis) through "red snake in belly". Amebic dysentery.		Buda	amulet of St. Sebastian as prophylactic smoke of "wogärt" plant which snake hates, in hut. Carry dead through hole in wall (in Gojjam), so demon cannot find way back to infect others in family. Spraying with holy water.
(1)	"Dänqara Mätal"	household demon	infectious disease, highly contageous within hut. (Endangers travellers.)			amulet as prophylactic. Lure demon out of the hut through trail of chicken feathers, lemons and perfume, onto trail, where it is transferred to travellers.
(1)	"Nädara", "Äynät"	evil eye, female demon	eye diseases, esp. ophthalmia	red eyes	Buda	amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of this demon

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Aynä Tela" (lit. Shadow Eye)	evil eye, female demon	blocks projects; blocks learning of students; causes sleepwalking; likes to attack men. Confuses protective zar spirits so they cannot help.		Zar	amulet "temhertä hebust". intoxicant plant "esä fars" (see Zar).
(1)	"Eqabä Seray"	evil eye, male demon	Various mischief; can turn himself into human figure	Non-Copt neighbors; Barya, ironsmith ethnics	Buda	Christian amulet.
(1)	"Dabbas"	Household demon	undefined illness and death; "aroused when thirsty"			Christian amulet.
(2)	"Barya"	dancing demons; their chief "Legäwon" has red eyes and is "buda"	epilepsy, haut mal ("hemana barya"), esp. in male victims.	Barya tribe of Nilotic lowlands. Symbol: tornado	Zar, Buda	Amulet with angel of fiery sword (Christian).
(2)	"Tegrida"	restless demon	epilepsy, petit mal; causes "falling-down sickness"			Christian amulet.

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	affiliation of demon's; or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(3)	"Werselya"	female demon	attacks women: barreness through stopped menstruation which "prevents conception", 'yädam tefat); bleeding from uterus (menorrhagia); miscarriage.	Barya tribe negress		amulet with legend of her promise to Saint Susneyos. It is suspended from the Christian neckcord "mätäb".
(3)	"Karina"	female demon	attacks women who have just given birth (puerperal fever).			amulet recalling her defeat at the hands of King Solomon.
(3)	"Shotälay"	female demon, subordinate.	causes stillbirth		Zar	exorcism
(3)	"Tegertoya", "Teggerta", "Waddegeni"	female demon	attacks women after childbirth through puerperal fever or catalepsy (postnatal depression).		Zar, Buda	prophylactic amulet; quiet cooperation with Zar doctor who tries cajoling the spirit through the patient (See zar).

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

164 There are many lepers in this country, and they do not live separated from the people, they live all together; there are many people who, out of their devotion, wash them, and tend their sores with their hands.

231 There is a great quantity of honey in all the country, and the bees are not in hives, but inside the houses, where the cultivators live, clinging to the walls on the inside, where they have a mode of egress outside, and also inside they surround the house: but they do not on this account desist from dwelling in the house, because the bees go outside. There are a great number of these swarms of bees, chiefly in the monasteries, there are also many in the woods and mountains, and the men put hives near the trees and fill them with bees, and bring them in them to the houses.

346 Since no one sits in the churches, at their doors outside of them, and within the circuit, there are always a great quantity of staves with cross pieces like a .....[1] or cripple's crutch, and each one takes his staff and leans upon it as long as he is at the offices of the church. In the churches there are many effigies painted on the walls. Effigies of [532] our Lord and our Lady, and of the apostles and patriarchs, and prophets and angels, and in all the churches St. George. They have not got solid images. There are many books in [212] the churches all written on parchment, because there is no [191] paper there, and the writing and language is Tigray,[2] which is that of the first country in which Christianity began.

In this country they are not accustomed to write to one another, neither do the officers of justice write anything. All the justice that is done, and what is ordered, is by messengers and speech. I say only that I saw the property of Prester John written down on being delivered up and received.

554 There would be much fruit and much more tillage in the country, if the great men did not ill treat the people, for

[1] *Taku.* [2] *Tigia.*

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

stout pole, from which hung huge pieces of red raw meat, covered with strips of red and gold cloth. 574 264

"These men stood closely together all along the tables and one on each side, so that the meat hung down from the poles over the tables just in front of the diners. The guests produced knives, and feeling the joint with their fingers to pick out a tender bit, rapidly sliced off strips of meat, which they put into their mouths, cutting off what would not go in quite close to their lips, an operation which, from personal experience, I know demands great skill if one's nose is not to suffer—as the cut is always made upwards.

"After ample libations of *tej* and *araki* (native mead, or hydromel and spirit) the diners filed out in perfect order, and the stage was cleared for the next party.

"The whole function had lasted nearly four hours and the Ras must have been heartily glad when it was over, for he had previously dined one instalment of 5000 warriors, and two more were to follow—between 17,000 and 18,000 in all partaking of the royal hospitality."

Broundo may be a nourishing form of diet tending to the development of warlike qualities, but its consumption has one serious drawback at all events, in that it is the cause of taenia (or tapeworm), a disease which is almost universal in the country. So much is this the case indeed that it is a recognized practice for all, high and low, to take monthly as a "taenicide" a dose of a plant known as *kousso*, which is so violent in its effects as to incapacitate the patient from work or occupation for the day. 164 757

Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by 000

114 Ethiopia. Eritrea and especially Italian Somaliland had been used by the School of Tropical Medicine in Bologna as a study ground, and to this was now added the much more varied and interesting field of Ethiopian nosography. The Italian studies, amounting to over 500, have been carefully analyzed by the U. S. Technical Project in Ethiopia. With few exceptions, especially in the field of malariology, the Italian work was careless, inexact, with a tendency to unwarranted generalizations.

While a number of excellent Italian physicians worked in East Africa, it would seem that, on the whole, publication was not encouraged unless it would further the Fascist cause. It would thus not be justified to judge Italian medical work here solely on the writings of the more politically minded party members. It does, however, remain a fact that, considering the very large group of medical men who worked in Ethiopia for over five years, we have precious little exact medical information about this country.

744 759 Today, the medical services of Ethiopia are being reorganized. The Government is attempting to obtain the necessary medical personnel, build hospitals and carry out public health programs. It is still too early to judge any achievements. The problems are many and the Ethiopian Government is handicapped through the complete lack of native Ethiopian physicians. Such physicians will not be available for at least another decade.

114 During and after World War II, military authorities had reason to take an interest in Ethiopian nosography and a number of articles were published in this field; prominent among these was Manson-Bahr's "The Prevalent Diseases of Italian East Africa" (1941). The U. S. Technical Project had opportunity to make a number of its own studies and much of the following information is based on this work.

164 If one may speak of social diseases in the sense of diseases of immediate impor-

[p. 712B]

10: Barkhuus D-5 (1944-1945) 1947
MP5 Amhara MP5

•164

Syphilis with marked skin lesions in a woman.

tance, that is, having direct influence on the social development of a country, Ethiopia has at least six such social diseases: malaria, syphilis, tuberculosis, leprosy, typhus fever and relapsing fever.

Malaria

Malaria, or "fever," has been known to occur in Ethiopia as far back as we have any descriptions from this country. Bruce encountered this disease, as did Rochet d'Hericourt (1841), who described the diseases of Shoa, and also Aubert-Roche (1845-46). Ferret and Galinier wrote graphically

[p. 713 A]

●164 in their *Voyage en Abyssinie*:

> "vers la fin de la saison des pluies, l'atmosphère humide, la terre détrempée et féconde en miasme pernicieux, font du pays un séjour funeste . . . " (Tigre and Lake Tsana).
>
> (Toward the end of the rainy season, the humid atmosphere and the soil, which is soaked and productive of a pernicious miasma, turn the country into a fatal region.)

Blanc (1869) states that Massawa is almost uninhabitable because of malaria, and that this is true, too, of the narrow, densely wooded and damp river valleys in the interior of the country. He gives the Takazze Valley a particularly bad reputation. It was known before the arrival of the Italians that most places below an elevation of 6,000 feet, especially river valleys, were likely to be malarious.

164 742 The Italians were primarily interested in settling a large group of small farmers in Ethiopia. It was, therefore, of paramount interest to them to find places where malaria would not interfere with agricultural development. A number of surveys were undertaken by first rate Italian malariologists beginning with the investigation by Lega, Raffaele and Canalis in 1936, which covered the Asmara-Addis Ababa road, the railway line from Addis Ababa to Diredawa, and parts of Italian Somaliland. In the following years intensive malarial surveys were made. Through the Malaria Institute "E. Marchiafava" in Rome, research centers were set up in Agordat and Diredawa. Much of the work was carried out under the leadership of Corradetti, who personally covered large parts of northern and northeastern Ethiopia. The British malariologist, Bagster Wilson, has recently published the results of his experiences in Ethiopia.

164 Summing up, it may be said that below 3,000 feet, near permanent collections of water, malaria is endemic. It becomes epidemic during the rainy seasons: the "big" rains from July to October, and the "small" rains in February and March. In the semi-

[p. 713 B]

●164 arid area of Ogaden and in the Danakil Desert, malaria is found to be endemic near permanent water, and epidemic malaria has more than decimated the populations in certain regions during the rains. Between 3,000 feet and 4,500 feet most of the malaria is seasonal with two epidemic seasons, April to June and September to November. Spleen rates up to 90 percent are by no means rare in this zone. Between 4,500 and 6,000 feet endemic malaria occurs to a lesser degree, and above 6,000 feet malaria is extremely rare, although cases have been reported.

In the northern highland *Plasmodium vivax* is the most common form, while in the southern and eastern part of the country *Plasmodium falciparum* accounts for about two-thirds of the cases. *Plasmodium malariae* has been found at least once, but is of no importance. Raffaele and Lega claim to have found a special form of *P.*
164 *falciparum* which should constitute a subspecies var. *aethiopium*. *Anopheles gam-*
136 *biae*, *A. funestus* and *A. pharoensis* are the most important vectors, but a number of other anophelines are under suspicion. *Anopheles gambiae* is, as elsewhere in Africa, by far the most serious vector. Due to its ability to breed under the most varied conditions, puddles, shallow ponds, pits, animal footprints, ditches, seepages, and borders of lakes and swamps, it is extremely difficult to eradicate.

Malaria annually takes a great many
164 lives in Ethiopia, but even more important, it debilitates the population in the regions where it is prevalent, and many deaths from intercurrent diseases are primarily due to a chronic malaria.

The Italians undertook a quinine prophylaxis on a very large scale. At the time of their defeat, over 15 tons of quinine were found in the Italian medical stores in Ethiopia.

Venereal Diseases

There can be no doubt that syphilis is an old disease in Africa. There is a descrip-

[p. 714A]

●164

Syphilitic papulae of the face and the axilla.

tion of this disease from the dark continent by Leo Africanus as early as 1515. It is not known how early syphilis appeared in East Africa, but there is every reason to believe that it has been there for centuries. Due to the apparent mildness of clinical cases and the lack of neuro-syphilis, it has been suggested, among others, by Naegelsbach (1926), that there is a relation between this "exotic" syphilis and the "bejel" from Arabia described by Hudson.

[177] It is most likely that syphilis was brought to Ethiopia by the Portuguese in the middle of the 16th century. Most of the early travelers had noticed its presence. Thus, Rochet d'Hericourt (1841) states that: "Although there are no prostitutes in Shoa, the venereal diseases are common, but not in a very malignant form." Blanc (1869) gives an interesting description of syphilis in the northern highland. Ninety percent

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●164 of the persons treated by him suffered from syphilis. It is peculiar that he saw little of what he calls "skin syphilis," which is now extremely common. Hirsch (1886) thinks that while the northern highland was infected early the disease most likely did not reach Shoa until the 19th century. He states that at the time of Rigler's travels (1852) it had apparently not yet reached the Galla country.

Today syphilis is common all over Ethiopia. It is estimated that from fifty to eighty percent of the population suffers from this disease. It would seem that the rate is lowest in Somalia and highest in Gojjam and in Addis Ababa. Little exact information is available. The U. S. Technical Project, however, was able to confirm the extremely high rates in a survey of three villages, where from 50 to 85 percent of the population was found to suffer from syphilis.

Tertiary lesions are rather rare, most likely due to the fact that life expectancy is so low, but the secondary symptoms of the skin and viscera are very common. The general manifestations are more or less pronounced. Rashes are seen of macular, papular acneiform, varicelloid, or impetiginous form. Primary syphilitic ulcers are often associated with other venereal ulcerations. Mixed infections are far more common than in Europe.

Of the other venereal diseases, gonorrhea is extremely common, as is also soft chancre. Lymphogranuloma inguinale is seen now and then, but is not important.

164 548 As elsewhere, the venereal problem in Ethiopia is intimately linked to the general social life of the people. It would seem that sex morals, as understood by occidentals, have never been particularly strict among the Amharas. It is stated by local missionaries that already at the age of sixteen the young Amhara used to begin visiting prostitutes, and that it, therefore, was quite common to find, when he was ready for marriage, at about 18, that he had acquired both syphilis and gonorrhea. While it should be pointed out that the present gov-

[p. 715A]

●164 ernment under Emperor Haile Selassie is
548 acutely aware of the seriousness of this problem, and seeks to educate the people to understand its dangers, corrective efforts have been severely handicapped so far by lack of trained educators and physicians.

164 We are dealing with two forms of syphilis in Ethiopia. In the urban districts and along the main highways we have an "epidemic" form, a syphilis which is being spread at a great rate of speed up and down the lines of communication. In the more isolated parts of the country the disease is also present, but in what might be called an endemic form, the larger part of the population suffering from congenital syphilis, with some imported fresh cases.

One of the most surprising facts about this congenital syphilis is that it does not seem to show up in early childhood. Among 10,000 children examined by the Italians, no clinical case of syphilis was seen, although at least 60 percent of the children's parents were syphilitic.

During the Italian occupation the venereal situation grew still worse, notwithstanding an extensive medical service. This was due to the general war conditions in the country with the constant movement from one place to another. Castellani's fantastic statements on the efficiency of the Italian preventive system have been adequately discussed by Manson-Bahr (1941). The large Italian labor forces introduced for road building were an important factor in the spread of the disease. The considerable development of the road net has been a factor of extreme importance.

Tuberculosis

There has been considerable discussion of the age of tuberculosis in Ethiopia. The earlier writers, like Bruce (1790), and Courbon (1861), either do not mention the disease, or, like Rueppell (1840) and Kirk (1843), their descriptions are so vague that no definite conclusions can be drawn. Blanc (1869) states that at Magdala scrofula, consisting of severe inflammation of

[p. 715 B]

164 the lymphatic glands with fistulae, was very common. He makes a point of having seen only one case of pulmonary tuberculosis. Merab (1912), physician to Menelik, does not think ten persons died yearly of this disease in Addis Ababa, while two decades later, Borra (1930) was much impressed with the amount of tuberculosis in the capital.

Little definite information is available today about tuberculosis in Ethiopia. Tuberculin tests (Mantoux) showed in the last year of the Italian occupation 35 percent positives in Shoa, 30 percent in Harar, 28 percent in Amara, and 25 percent in Galla Sidama. Of urban regions Diredawa

An Ethiopian patient exhibiting a typical case of Pott's disease.

[p. 716 A]

●164 was highest with 72 percent, followed by Addis Ababa with 52 percent. The actual number of persons tested is not known, but it was at least several thousand.

Unfortunately, there can be no doubt that pulmonary tuberculosis here, as elsewhere in Africa, is on the increase. The opening up of the country, the movement of the population during the war, and the arrival of many Europeans without proper health examination has furthered this increase, which will continue with the beginning of industrialization in the urban regions unless far-reaching measures are taken at a very early time.

The U. S. Technical Project had opportunity to observe numerous cases of open pulmonary tuberculosis, not only in the larger towns, but also in remote villages. So far there are no facilities for dealing with these sources of danger to the community. Left to itself, tuberculosis is likely to become the most important health problem in Ethiopia within the next decade.

Leprosy

Leprosy is an old disease in Ethiopia. It is mentioned by almost all the early writers. Rueppell (1840) saw it in Gondar; Rochet (1841) describes it as due to the climate; Aubert-Roche (1845-46) found it extremely common in Ethiopia; and Kirk (1843) treated 23 lepers in Ancober in 1842. Finding a number of lepers at Lake Tsana, Blanc (1869) revived the old "fish theory."

The exact number of lepers present in Ethiopia today is difficult to estimate, but is likely to run into several thousands. There is a leprosy camp in Harar with [743] about 150 lepers, and it is likely that there are about as many left in Harar town. Addis Ababa has about 300 lepers under treatment in a leprosarium, and another 200 living in a community on the outskirts of the city. No satisfactory control, however, is possible at the moment. Most of the leprosy seen is of the nodular and mixed form, but macular-anaesthetic cases are not rare. Leprosy does not endanger

[p. 716B]

164 the country at the moment. It should, however, be kept in mind, that with the opening of communication lines and increased traffic and travel, leprosy must be controlled, otherwise it will increase.

Typhus Fever

Typhus fever is known to occur in at least three forms. Classical louse-borne typhus is endemic on the high plateau. Major Ecke of the American Typhus Commission visited Ethiopia in 1944 and found that, while the occurrence of murine typhus has not been scientifically proved, it is extremely likely that this form plays an important rôle. Recently a number of cases of tick typhus have been reported from southern Ethiopia.

164 742 The Central Laboratory in Addis Ababa has isolated four local strains of rickettsia. One of these has been constantly orchitic for 52 passages through guinea-pigs, while the other three were non-orchitic.

164 Cases fall clinically in two main groups. One has a fulminant course with a very high mortality; the other is extremely mild. The high mortality among Italian laborers in the early days of the occupation (sometimes reaching 20 percent) was no doubt due to louse-borne typhus. Fatality in hospitals in Addis Ababa ranged from five to thirty-five percent. Typhus occurs in Ethiopia in the cold, wet months of July, August and September. Surveys have shown that lousiness is almost universal.

751 During the Italian occupation a large scale vaccination campaign with Weigl vaccine was undertaken. This vaccine has recently been replaced by American vaccine, and large scale vaccination has been carried out since 1945.

Relapsing Fever

164 In 1868, relapsing fever broke out in India and Hirsch (1886) states that it may have been introduced by Napier's soldiers returning from Ethiopia. The disease is no doubt old in Africa, where it occurs in both louse-borne and tick-borne forms.

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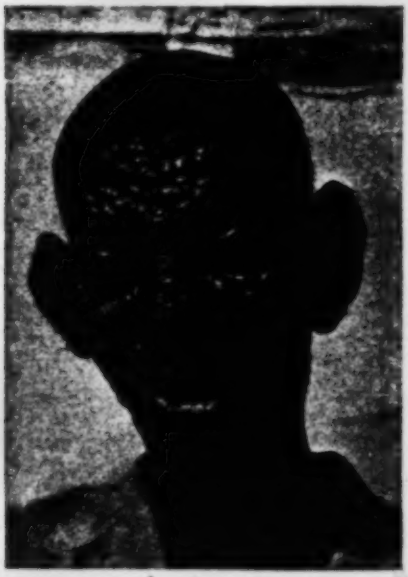
• 164



Advanced case of nodular leprosy. Total alopecia of face, no loss of hair on head.

It is likely that all relapsing fever in the highland is of the louse-borne variety. Naegelsbach (1934) points out that the Amhara seldom knew the word for tick unless he had traveled to the lowland. Considerable epidemic outbreaks of louse-borne relapsing fever have been described from northern Ethiopia around Adua, Axum, Macalle, Adigrat and Debra Tabor. I had the opportunity to observe a small epidemic a few miles outside Addis Ababa. About 75 to 100 deaths had occurred in a village before rumors of the disease reached the capital. The fatality from this disease among the untreated, badly nourished population is very high indeed, and even in hospitals in Addis Ababa it is found that the fatality is generally higher than that of typhus. The largest number of cases are admitted to the hospital in Addis Ababa from July to September.

Relapsing fever of the tick-borne variety is endemic in the Diredawa region. *Ornith-*

[p. 717B]

164 *odorus moubata* and *O. savignyi* are both common here. Much scientific research is needed on the relapsing fevers of Africa, and Ethiopia would offer a particularly rich field.

Of special interest in the study of the nosography of any country is the presence or absence of the important communicable diseases: plague, cholera, yellow fever and small-pox.

Plague

From Ethiopia proper only a few doubtful cases have been reported. Most of the Italian writers state that they have never seen a case of plague here. Immediately after the entry of British troops into Addis Ababa there was a report of a case of plague, but it seems now that the diagnosis was not too certain. A survey was made immediately, however, and a total of 3,000 rats were examined in the capital. At the same time 16,000 fleas were identified. It was found that the necessary carrier and carrier hosts were present in abundance. One would most likely find infected rats, if a real search was made on the Kenya border. Thus, the fact that there is no plague at the moment in Ethiopia, should not serve responsible authorities as an excuse from guarding against the disease for which the meteorological conditions are optimal over wide areas.

Cholera

Cholera came early to Ethiopia. Hirsch (1886) writes (Vol. I, page 403):

> "The outbreak in 1837 was probably the continuation of a pestilential progress from Egypt through Tripoli and Tunis, the wider ramifications of which may be seen in the epidemics that prevailed at the same time in Abyssinia, on the East Coast of Africa from Somaliland to Zanzibar, and in the Sudan countries, Khartoum, Kordofan, Darfur and Waday."

Meyer-Ahrens (1855) mentions two epidemic periods, one in 1830-31 and the other in 1836. Hirsch continues (Vol. I, page 423):

[p.718A]

164 "The outbreak on the coast of Abyssinia on October, 1865, is probably connected with the epidemic in Nubia; according to information derived from the English missionaries, who were kept in captivity by King Theodore, the disease committed great ravages in the following year (1866) in the district of Tigre and still farther into the interior of Abyssinia; and it is this epidemic that appears to have been the point of departure, as we have seen for the extension of cholera to the country of the Gallas."

There seems to have been an outbreak along the River Setit in Eritrea in 1891, and it is stated that there was cholera in Ethiopia in 1892-93, but no details on this outbreak are available.

Since 1900, no occurrence of cholera in Ethiopia is mentioned, but the country is obviously exposed to it, especially through members of its Moslem population who make pilgrimages to Mecca.

Yellow Fever

The presence of persons with sera giving positive mouse-protection tests in the area

Leprosy: nodular form with mutilated hands.

[p. 718B]

●164

Elephantiasis with secondary fungus and bacterial infection.

around Massawa (Eritrea) was shown early in the war by Mahaffy and Sams. Too little work has so far been done in Ethiopia to express any definite opinion on the occurrence of yellow fever in this country. A series of sera taken in the Jimma region proved negative, but recently a case has been described from the Dagobur region (Ogaden), and a few positive sera have been found. For practical purposes Ethiopia is in the yellow fever area of Africa.

Smallpox

164 751 Smallpox is an old disease in Ethiopia. It is possible that an outbreak of smallpox in 370 A.D. in Arabia was connected with the Abyssinian invasion of this country. Hirsch (1886) states that one of the most intense foci of smallpox is found on African soil in the countries of the Nile basin, Egypt, Nubia, Kordofan and the Abyssinian Highlands. Rochet d'Hericourt (1841) describes the variolation practised in Shoa at the time of his visit:

> "They take pus from a sick person and make an incision on the leg of the person to receive the variolation. The virus is introduced into the incision, which is then covered with cotton."

[p.719A]

● 164 Aubert-Roche (1845-46) also describes smallpox as an important disease and Courbon (1861) states that few Abyssinians are seen without smallpox scars.

The Italians undertook large scale vaccination and smallpox began to disappear. In 1937, 200,000 vaccinations were given in and around Addis Ababa as a small epidemic had occurred among the people living near the aerodrome. (In 1944, I saw a small outbreak at Sire, near Lekemti.)

Smallpox vaccine is being prepared in Addis Ababa, but until an adequate health service can be established this disease will continue to be a menace both to the Ethiopians and their surroundings.

Helminthic Diseases

The classical disease of Ethiopia is infection by the tapeworm *Taenia saginata*. All the old travelers have detailed descriptions of the eating of raw meat (*brindo*) and the ensuing tape-worm infection. Courbon's (1861) statement is a typical example:

> "Men and women, all and sundry, in this country, have the entozoon; and they take some *kouzzo* regularly every two months to prevent the more serious derangements, which it might cause."

Detailed descriptions of the special Ethiopian anti-helminthic, the so-called *kousso*, have been given in every book on Ethiopia, up to the latest. The professional medical writers have shown the same picture of the omnipresent tapeworm. I had long been skeptical about the frequency of tapeworm. Very little meat, raw or pre- [262] pared, is eaten by the average Ethiopian, for the simple reason that he cannot afford it. The older travelers were describing special festivals in connection with arrival at distant places. At such occasions meat would be eaten. In a survey of three Ethiopian villages the U. S. Technical Project found tapeworm to be a comparatively rare disease, *Ascaris lumbricoides* being by far the most common helminthic parasite. Conditions are in most places favorable for the embryonation of the ova. The soil is heav-

[p. 719B]

●164

A characteristic case of elephantiasis vulvae.

ily polluted, and as no intermediary host is needed the infection is widespread. *Trichiuris trichiura* does not seem to be particularly common in Ethiopia. I found it in about 13 percent of stools in one of the villages examined. *Enterobius vermicularis* seems to be comparatively rare. *Trichinella spiralis* has not been reported from Ethiopia.

Hookworm Disease: So far little actual survey material is available. Naegelsbach (1934) states that hookworm infection is common in Gore. The disease is rare in the northern highland and seems also to be rare in Ogaden. The U. S. Technical Project found no hookworm in Ambo village at an elevation of 9,000 feet. In Shabe (elevation 6,000 feet), 26.6 percent of stools were found to contain hookworm. It is likely that the disease is most widespread in southwestern Ethiopia.

Schistosomiasis: While this disease is quite common in Italian Somaliland, where *Schistosoma haematobium* has been found over a wide geographic range, it is extremely localized in Ethiopia. *Schistosoma haematobium* and *Schistosoma mansoni* infection were described in 1938 from Tigre and one case of *Schistosoma mansoni* infection was described in 1938 from Harar. The disease is rare in Ethiopia.

Fasciola hepatica is common in animals,

[p. 720A]

164 but so far has never been found in human beings. The Echinococcus has been described by the Swedish physician, Dr. Hanner, in two cases from the hospital in Addis Ababa.

FILARIASIS: A considerable amount of filariasis has been described from Ethiopia and the illustration shows a typical clinical case. So far, nobody has been able to prove the presence of *Wuchereria bancrofti* although whole villages have been examined by day and by night. Much of the "elephantiasis" is no doubt surgical, but a large number of clinically typical cases of filariasis are found. *Loa loa* has not been described from Ethiopia. *Dracunculus medinensis* has only occurred where it was introduced from Arabia by traders and has not established itself in Ethiopia.

ONCHOCERCA VOLVULUS: In 1937-38, Giaquinto made a study of the insects of medical importance in Ethiopia. He re-
[136] ported the presence of *Simulium damnosum* in several localities in Galla Sidamo and suggested that onchocercosis might be present here. An expedition conducted by Giaquinto confirmed this. I studied this region in 1944 with Giaquinto and numerous cases of onchocerciasis were disclosed in a survey of the village of Shabe. Photophobia and diminished sight were common and the parasite was found in tumors that were removed. It is likely also that Gore, Lekemti, and Gardulla are endemic regions.

A case of Onchocerca volvulus tumor.

[p. 720 B]

• 164

Onchocerciasis which has led to ocular involvement.

Diseases of the Skin

Diseases due to fungi are extremely common. Ringworm has been constantly described by Italian workers and was found by the U. S. Technical Project to be very common in children. A typical case of Achorion schoenleini is shown on this page.

Maduramycosis has been described by a number of writers. While there is no doubt as to the presence of a foot infection showing nodules on the external surfaces connecting up with granulomatous lesions of the interior of the foot, etiological work is so far not satisfactory in this field, and it is doubtful whether the organisms giving rise to mycetoma and to actinomycosis should be classified in one or two genera.

Tropical Ulcer: This is one of the most important of all the diseases in Ethiopia. It is the most common pathological entity, and it is likely that over 50 percent of the population suffers from this disease. It is therefore surprising to find that next to no work has been done on the etiology of this condition as seen in East Africa. There is an almost general agreement that it is an infectious condition in which spirochetes and fusiform bacilli are often found, and now and again "environmental conditions" are mentioned. The U. S. Technical Proj-

[p. 72/A]

164 ect came to the conclusion that tropical ulcer in Ethiopia must be classified as a "social disease." Filth, overcrowding and malnutrition are important factors, but even more decisive has been the displacement of tens of thousands of young Ethiopians by the Italian authorities during the occupation. It has been found that cases treated in hospitals will heal quickly, but when released to look out for themselves the patients soon "relapse." Vigorous attempts are now being made to achieve a simultaneous solution of both the medical and social problem.

Two parasitic skin diseases are extremely common. Scabies is almost universal and may be taken as an indication of the poor general hygiene. Chiggers have spread little by little over the whole of Ethiopia. The Ethiopians claim that the parasite was introduced into Ethiopia from Kenya over Moyale, the frontier village. In Ethiopia the disease is called "moyale."

Gastro-intestinal Disturbances

Both amebic and bacillary dysentery are common in Ethiopia. It is, however, surprising that so few amebic abscesses are found in this country. The illustration on p. 722 represents the only fair-sized amebic abscess the author saw during a year's survey. *Endamoeba histolytica* is endemic in

Infection with Achorion schoenleini (favus).

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10: Barkhuus D-5 (1944-1945) 1947 MP5 Amhara MP5

●164

An Ethiopian suffering from amebiasis with liver abscess.

[R722 A]

164 large parts of Ethiopia, but many cases of so-called amebic dysentery are no doubt bacillary. Fundamental work is urgently needed in this field as gastro-intestinal disturbances are extremely common in Ethiopia. In most of the cases seen in Europeans no amebae were found. The *typhoid-paratyphoid* group of organisms seems to be of extremely little importance in Ethiopia. This is all the more peculiar as most water supplies are heavily polluted. Surveys have shown extremely low titres in Widal reactions for this group.

Dysentery due to *Giardia lamblia* has been described by Italian writers, but it would seem that only the simultaneous presence of diarrhoea and the parasite has been proved. The occurrence of "hill diarrhoea" was suggested by Singer in 1905. Izzo, in 1938, attempted to make a case for this sprue-like disease which he claims to have found in the "Ambas," the high, isolated plateaus.

Eye Diseases

Eye diseases are mentioned as important in all the older descriptions of Ethiopia. Conjunctivitis is no doubt one of the most common ailments in this country. Due to the lack of hygiene, especially in sandy regions, infected lesions of serious nature are not uncommon. Senile cataracts are common and many eye diseases are caused

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10: Barkhuus D-5 (1944-1945) 1947
MP5 Ambara MP5

by syphilis. It is not possible to estimate the amount of blindness due to gonorrhoeal infection, but it must be considerable. Trachoma is no doubt common in Ethiopia. It would, however, seem that the clinical forms are milder than those seen in Tunisia, Egypt, or the Balkans. It responds surprisingly well to treatment, but as treatment is hardly available outside the capital, complications of trachoma are seen all over the country.

Rarer "Tropical" Diseases

Leishmaniasis: Kala-azar no doubt occurs in Ethiopia along the Sudan-Ethiopian border. During the war it was found necessary to evacuate Galabat, and move the population of the border town elsewhere due to the occurrence of kala-azar. This disease has recently been described from the region just north of Lake Rudolph. Oriental boil (caused by *Leishmania tropica*) has been described from a number of places in Ethiopia, among these: Tigre, Gore, Gimbi, Lekemti, Jimma, Dalle, Diredawa and Harar.

Framboesia

Yaws is not a common disease of Ethiopia, while it is extremely common in Italian Somaliland. It has been described from the extreme western part of the country and quite recently (Cupi, 1943) from Amara.

•164

Case of cutaneous leishmaniasis in South West Ethiopia.

No case has been described from Shoa or Harar. Italian reports state that there were 180 cases in Galla Sidama in 1937-38.

Trypanosomiasis

Although the appropriate glossinas are known to occur in the Omo and Didessa valleys, no cases of trypanosomiasis in human beings have been described. The disease in animals is a serious economic problem.

Non-Tropical Diseases

Most of the common non-tropical diseases occur in Ethiopia. In the highlands pneumonia is one of the most frequent causes of mortality. There is reason to believe that whooping cough is common, but little information is available. Varicella is quite common, while the reports on measles are conflicting. Naegelsbach (1934) declares that this disease is well recognized by the native population under the name *kufun*. I never saw a case or met anyone who had seen one. Scarlet fever does not seem to occur. Hardly any work has so far been done on brucellosis, but the U. S. Technical Project found indications that this disease most likely occurs among cattle in the Danakil region. No human case has been reported.

[p.723A]

164 The epidemiology of diphtheria in Africa is still little known. Schick tests have shown high immunity among Ethiopian children, but the occurrence of cases of clinical diphtheria in the native population is unknown.

Every year rabies has claimed a large number of Ethiopians. Until 1927 no treatment was available nearer than Cairo. [744] Since then, treatment has been given in Addis Ababa. The number of rabid dogs in Ethiopia is very large, but little is known of the number of persons bitten outside the capital. It is estimated that approximately 100 persons receive treatment in Addis Ababa every month.

Dengue is common in the northern part of the Harar plateau. It was found quite commonly among Italians at Diredawa and I can remember several fellow travelers coming down with this disease after a night spent in that town. Some control has been attempted since 1943, but until a health service is organized, effective control will not be possible.

Disease terms in Amharic:

164 192 A number of diseases have clear terms in the Amharic language. Of the venereal diseases, syphilis is referred to as *kitigne* in its early form while later manifestations are called *worde*. The rheumatic pains, *kurtemaat*, so frequently complained of, are often syphilitic. Gonorrhoea is generally called *chapto* (actually to squeeze, or it squeezes me). The word for malaria is *wobah* (*r*). *Nidad* (i.e., it caught fire) is also used, but may be used for several types of fever. Relapsing fever is called *mitch* and is generally differentiated by the population from typhus fever which is called *tessibo*. Smallpox is called *fantata* and chicken-pox is recognized as a distinct disease called *kuffin*. Diarrhoea is called *tekmat*, which literally means "what makes to sit down." In asking a patient whether he has fever, the word *tekusat* is used. The patient with fever will generally have put a band dipped in cold water around his head.

[p 723B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭimqat*, means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭimqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā*, grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household.

The program for Ṭimqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized.

By noon on Ṭimqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭimqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter.

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings.

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 • [164] [785] hazardous. Moisture and chill lower the resistance of man and beast to respiratory infections. The weekly fasting schedule is resumed, and the more devout observe the thirty-day fast of the Disciples. In August, finally, the sixteen-day fast in honor of the Assumption of Mary is observed by everyone older than six or seven years.

*565 796 526 On the thirteenth day of that fast occurs the strange holiday of Buhē. Before and during this day, which is marked by the baking of special *dābo* for the shepherds, the countryside crackles with the reports of shepherds' whips. In this season when the humid air lends an explosive sound, the shepherds crack their whips for fun; but older boys and men join in great whipping battles on Buhē,* in which two teams lash each other until the members of one can stand it no more. On the evenings of Buhē, small bonfires are lit all over the countryside, and more *dābo* is eaten and whips cracked.[5] A few days later the fast of the Assumption is over. Young and old look forward to the end of the rains and the festivities that commence with the new year.

*565 These are the days and years of the Amhara peasant. Some other aspects of his life that come to the fore when more analytic perspectives are applied will be discussed in later chapters. But this calendar of activities forms the immediately observable setting for the "inner world" of the Amhara peasantry: those ideas, sentiments, and values which constitute its outlook on life.

THE WORLD OF MEANING

The Natural Universe

*565 772 [538] The Amhara peasant is not familiar with most of the cosmological notions found in the Great Tradition of Abyssinian culture, as transmitted through books like *Qalamsis* and *Aksimareos*, and the oral traditions of learned churchmen. It is unusual for him to have a precise image of the layers of water, fire, and air beneath the earth, and it is still less likely for him to be familiar with the complicated hierarchy of invisible worlds, watery skies, and seven "real" heavens which are enumerated in the Abyssinian cosmology. He [821] believes that stars influence human affairs, but leaves the possession of astro- [756] logical knowledge to the *dabtarā*. The presence of cultural specialists who know about such matters has relieved him of the burden of dealing with ideas about the cosmos, ideas which are more widely diffused in more homogeneous societies.

The peasant's working conception of the cosmos is thus a very simplified version of that of his Great Tradition, together with certain pagan notions. Like his more learned countrymen, he divides the universe into two main parts: the world, *alam*, consisting of the earth, sun, moon, and stars; and

[178] * This custom is now extinct in many Amhara areas.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

paid increased attention in recent years. A new phase of public health endeavor in this decade was marked by the imposition of a nationwide health tax in 1960.

Health has become a prime objective in Ethiopia's modernization program because of a growing realization that the wide prevalence of malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, intestinal parasites, syphilis, trachoma, leprosy, and other diseases continues to sap the vitality of the nation's productive forces and to visit misery on countless peasant families. The public health forces in Ethiopia (Ministry of Public Health, WHO mission, and AID Public Health Division) have long understood that Ethiopia's health needs cannot be met by piecemeal therapy. They have undertaken a program of preventive measures by preparing public health teams in the medical college at Gondar. The college trains health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians within a common framework, so that when they go into the field they will understand each other's tasks from the start. The first public health center employing such a team was opened in the late fifties; Ethiopia's Second Five-Year Plan envisions one such center for every fifty thousand people by 1967.

The objective of these public health workers is to transmit a number of instructions—concerning personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, early care for illness, and isolation of contagious diseases—which are at variance with customary beliefs and practices. Experience with comparable programs elsewhere suggests that the success of such health teams is by no means assured.[18] What are the forces working for and against the acceptance of these new instructions by the Amhara peasantry? Both negative and positive factors may be identified with respect to each of the three general categories previously referred to: the general outlook regarding change; attitudes toward the agents of change; and degree of compatibility between the new cultural items and the old.

The Amhara peasant's general resistance to change may be presumed operative here as elsewhere, particularly since health practices are often associated with religious beliefs and sentiments. Defense of indigenous therapies has in fact become a significant channel for the expression of traditionalist sentiment, a channel that has even been utilized on occasion in the Addis Ababa newspapers.[19] And a general posture of resistance to changes in the field of health is supported by the interests of traditional practitioners, *dabtarā* and *ṭanquāy*, who are in danger of losing clientele if modern-trained health workers come to win their allegiance.

Counter to this conservative drag, on the other hand, is the peasant's powerful desire for one basic change in his life circumstances, namely, the reduction of morbidity and mortality. Despite his idyllic conception of paradise and his frequent contention that life on earth is something of little value, the Amhara wants to avoid death. Even from the religious point of view he is

*793 869 875 criteria. His personal interest means to the student rapid advancement through the curriculum, dining at the master's table, and enjoying privileged information of a non-ecclesiastical nature. Without his patronship, a student is committed to years of uncertainty and physical misery, scraping to meet his subsistence needs, paying his "tuition" in demeaning services, such as gathering the master's wood and tilling his garden, and in deferential performances, particularly washing the master's feet and those of his visitors.

*793 869 The kiyne student is further troubled by the many ailments which are his lot. He lives, with one or two [342] of his mates, in a wretched lean-to of twigs and wild grasses, which proves to be poor protection against the [291] cold winter rains. Often he owns only the toga on his [515] back, and it, like him, remains unwashed for the dura- [164] tion of the long dry season. Thus, ikek (scrofula) becomes his badge, and kurtimat (joint pains) and weba [262] (fever) his recurrent companions. The student's diet *[192] is his special concern, since it conspicuously lacks the combination of wholesome wot (stew) and injera (pancake- [735] like bread) necessary to sustain good health. He ob- [164] tains most of his food by begging in the town and local hamlets, where he generally receives scraps of stale injera bread, always inadequate and potentially pathogenic (i.e., likift bearing, threatening fever and

*793 869 severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably [262] the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based in- [illegible] gredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat. [illegible] injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals, [illegible] and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain (kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent [164] wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints * [192] (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint (night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the context of the student's nocturnal activities.

[231] There is also danger from animals, the vicious and [735] often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs; [776] from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting [514] to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for nocturnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the exception of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's patronage, or who receive parental support, the young scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their [221] subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains [222] have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure, * [192] kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for

515 may last 9 months, there is very little bathing, and only hands are washed, in muddy water brought from the river or
514 brook, before and after meals. There are no latrine ditches. Feces are deposited behind thorny bushes 1/4 mile from the hamlet at most, while urination at night proceeds within the hamlet. This practice is followed even in towns and in Addis Ababa. Fortunately the strong sun carbonizes the feces in the dry season, and the strong rain in that season sweeps it away. There is no caste of sweepers, and no attention is paid to human or animal feces, except for the manure of oxen and cows. The latter is hand-pressed into cakes and used as fuel.

364 Hyenas, jackals and vultures are not interfered
825 with, as their services in removing carcasses of animal origin are well appreciated.

165 Abundant sunlight during 9 months of the year, coupled with the scanty clothing of small children, probably gives them their best chance of survival in addition to the long breast-feeding. Nevertheless infant mortality is very high, and in an average family half the babies born die before reaching the age of 5.

164 Flea infestation of humans can be described as
136 complete. This opens the way to flea-born typhus, especially on the highland plateau. Lice are somewhat less general, since they are not regarded by the Amhara as inevitable as fleas. Thus, an Amhara whose hair is infected
136 with lice (e.g. during a stay in prisons which are always
164 lice-infected), he may shave his hair. But louse-born re-
744 lapsing fever epidemics recur from time to time, and the

606 instruct her to be a good wife; while a stepmother is assumed to have no such desire, and is likely to tell her stepdaughter not to"make so much fuss"over her husband. If the latter were to follow such advice, she would soon be criticized by her husband's parents whose residential hamlet she usually shares. Stepmothers are very common due to the frequency of divorce and the shorter lifespan of women.

597 588 165

606 628 Affinal relatives are expected to come to a person's aid if he becomes involved in a blood feud, particularly if his consanguinal kin are few or weak. Since there is no pattern of individual duelling, even distant kin become involved readily, as a point of honor.

591 Residence of male persons is usually patrilocal-patrilineal, i.e. in the consanguinal line. But if a young bridegroom finds that his own father has little good land to allocate him in his parental hamlet upon his marriage, he may elect to seek better facilities by establishing residence at the bride's patrilocal hamlet. She is usually very happy about this latter residence, for her kin will protect her even if she wrongs her husband (e.g. by taking a lover in subsequent years). Conversely, thehusband tries to avoid such a situation, for reasons of happiness as well as prestige.

854 is a special occasion when father lets the infant ride on his shoulders ("ashkokke alä", lit. rode like a marmoset monkey) while going to visit another hamlet. Men do not carry children on their [165] backs, women's fashion. But parents, particularly fathers, do not take infants too seriously for an additional reason, that of infant mortality which is still high at this stage.

857 Socialization and enculturation begin through the peer-group of playmates, with whom infants have the most frequent, lengthy, and intensive contacts. They tease each other and scold each other into what they, in their playful, experimenting fashion, regard as "proper" behavior; and penalize, haze and discipline each other in the same way. From the adults they take both ideas and hand-me-down objects that have been used, worn-out and discarded, for their play activities, organize them experimentally into child-culture version of their own; for adults rarely produce a toy for children nor give them any new, unused object.

854 There is a cooperative side to this apparently random play
857 activity, leading to the beginning of useful economic activities.
861 Older children teach the younger ones, e.g., to make little whisk-brooms ("wof ger", lit. bird's foot) out of reeds, for which they are rewarded by their mothers with a thick, cake-like bread(similar to "dabye" of monks), which carries the same name, "wof ger". On certain church holidays, particularly "Buhe", younger children accompany older ones on their gift-begging tours.

857 Their powers of observation, active, free and relatively un-
867 structured prior to later discipline, imitate, in their play activities, the social relations, including the family and sexual-social relationships of their elders. When about five years old,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geography than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in response to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones. 133 132 [175]* [184]

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But *ṭēff*, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley. 241 262

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which ornament the homes of the well-to-do. 233 236 291 184 [262] [556] [286] [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural-colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural environment. 182 291 [386] 342 182 346 182

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses. 132 [165] [181]

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gondar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While 175*

606 to be a "good wife", to do "everything right", to learn what her husband likes. If she does not obey her mother-in-law, she is criticized as "rude", and the women say that the groom will "divorce her soon".

423 596 After the marriage, and especially after she bears children, a wife is regarded as a charter member of her husband's "byet" (lit. house), his family of procreation, continuing his patrilineal kinship unit, regardless of whether they move to residence elsewhere or not. Nevertheless, it is the "byet" that is the landholding unit among most "rest"-owning Amhara, and each biological unit within it receives an allocation of land for usufruct; the limit of one able-bodied plowman is regarded as 5-10 "qada". Thus, the biological family of procreation does not own land, nor does it control it, until, with the death of elders and advancing age, it becomes the "family of orientation" to which a succeeding generation must give obedience.

596 422 Meanwhile, however, the biological family unit does own the cattle and other mobile goods with which they started their married life, and the increase therefrom. This gives them some partial economic independence.

[731] 423 166 361 When, due to war, epidemics (e.g. malaria), or famine (erosion), a "byet" decides to abandon, for the time being, the ancestral lands, and migrates to another district, it usually huddles together in one or a minimum of residential hamlets, sometimes for several generations, until times are better. Then it buds off so rapidly that soon only a few huts remain on the location of the original hamlet of refuge. Thereupon kinsmen may claim "betäna" rights of usufruct from more distant kinfolk who had remained be-

423 hind on the ancestral lands.

166 This succession of events has taken place so often in Amhara
361 history, that very few old settlements have remained on the same
[591] spot for even a century. As a result, many regional varieties of "patrilocal residence" have developed, and even "matrilocal residence" is not excluded, though most bridegrooms would shun such a fate. Also, the land tenure of the Amhara has become complex and replete with litigation, because of the amorphous definition of "byet", which sometimes emphasizes the consanguineal aspect, sometimes the residential, of kinship after marriage.

B. Problems of the Married Couple and Divorce.

586 When a couple has remained married for a number of years, people say they are "rägga" (lit. coagulated), stuck on each other. For divorce of a first marriage is common as the partners mature.

If her husband neglects her, wanders off, is a drunkard, or beats her too often, a woman may decide to initiate divorce proceedings. A man may do so if she is disobedient, e.g. wanders off to town without his permission.

587 If a man takes a "damoz" wife in addition to his "semanya" wife, the latter has no recourse in court. But if he takes another "semanya" wife, she can have him arrested, if she can locate him, for breaking his oath. She then angrily accuses him of doing a stupid thing, "you married one ox hump (shanna) above the other". He may be fined, but his first marriage may still remain valid. If a "semanya" wife hears that her husband has a previous wife, she often laughs, flattered, mocking the other woman by saying: "I married on top of her and not below" - for evidently, the man,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 633 left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor Menelik.

[159] [793] Alaqā Gabra Hānnā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army, turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar.* The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar during his few years in power (1869–72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

*175 633 643 [648]

*175 633 The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum*, though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā*. The civil order, however, was thoroughly demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces.

[166]

*175 633 643 648 At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance from the old capital—began as follows:

> O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.[11]

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

131 133 Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the northeast horn of Shoa Province.[12] It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.[13]

* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

869 sident student by familiarizing him with the network of churches, monasteries, and academies which constitute the stations along which the student will progress once he leaves his natal parish.

*[192] The completion of psalter (dawiyd) is frequently considered a sign of the student's readiness to be tested by the local bishop (abuna) for certification as a deacon. The boy is fifteen or sixteen by this time, and the recipient of church fields in return for his performance in the Mass; with his marriage a few years later, he becomes a priest. The boy bent on a debtera career generally waits until he has been certified a deacon, since this is considered a prerequisite for enrollment in his first debtera school.

*793 With the exceptions already cited, a man is certain
869 to oppose his son's departure, since, sentiment aside,
621 the boy's move usually represents a significant economic
593 loss. When he leaves his natal parish, he does so sec-
• 166 retly, journeying to a distant debtera, in order to conceal his new residence from his father. Thus, he begins his debtera career without kinfolk or friends to protect him, without resources to meet his subsistence needs.[23]

[871] [23]Since liberation, government (secular) schools
[178] have offered an alternative to an ecclesiastical education
[369] pursuant to government employment. The effects of this have been limited, however, since only an estimated 3% pass beyond the eighth grade (ESA 1965:198). In addition children of townsmen and non-Amhara are disproportionately represented in these classes.

734 [735] [823] [778] his hamlet to become a mendicant, begging from alms-
givers at the gates of large and famous churches. Even
the sickman whose economic circumstances enable him to
remain at home may depart, to seek an efficacious tebel
spring, once locally available therapies prove ineffec-
tive.

*753 734 Among the ailments of this category, leprosy is
considered particularly loathsome. In the abstract, it
is associated with a hereditary vector; in practice, the
leper's neighbors fear contact with him, and the sickman
who remains at home is physically segregated in a hut of
[582] his own, away from other residents of the hamlet. Be-
[166] cause marriages are difficult to arrange for the pri-
mary relatives of lepers, the son of a leper frequently
chooses to move away from the paternal hamlet to some
place where his family's affliction is unknown.

*753 The absence of more profound moral consequences for
either category of ailment can be explained, first, by
the fact that associations existing between the sickman
and sanction-wielding supernaturals are unaffected by
either illness or cure, since these maladies are linked
to non-purposive pathogenic agencies, such as gerifta
* [755] and likift. Further, effective cures are either secular,
* [757] and thus require the therapeutic assistance of no
[778] sanction-wielding supernaturals, or, in the case of
tebel therapies, rely on only the socially sanctioned
supernaturals of the Church.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[43]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 633 [67] *175 181 flux of many Muslims and Galla, a migration favored by its urban situation. Manz, surrounded by hostile Galla, was forced for survival to cultivate its fighting powers, and for ultimate security to reconquer the surrounding areas. It was aided in this by whatever special geographical and cultural factors helped to produce the peculiarly militant and defiant character of the Manzē. But because of the annihilation of most of Shoa's churches and monasteries in the sixteenth century, and the isolation of Manz from the renascence of Amhara culture at Gondar, it was left illiterate and culturally impoverished. Its religious life remained limited to a narrow adherence to the ritual requirements of Ethiopian Christianity.

*175 181 184 The dispersion of the Solomonic line over the several provinces was thus accompanied by the formation of distinct mores for Manz and Gondar. There is evidence that the differences were quite pronounced by the early nineteenth century. Just a few years before the fierce inhabitants of Manz sped to the rescue of Sāhla Selassie against the rebel Matako, Gondar was similarly threatened by a rebel band under a man named Mersu. Compare Rüppell's account of the behavior of the Gondarēs:

> In this general alarm the pitifulness of the local inhabitants was all too conspicuous. Far from uniting to defend their property with arms against the dreaded plunder—which would have been easy, in as much as there were at least four hundred rifles in Gondar, while not a single one of Mersu's men possessed a firearm—instead they carried the rifles into the churches, in order to keep them from being plundered along with the other booty.[45]

The distinction between Manz and Gondar suggested here is drawn in terms of "ideal types"—generalized dispositions which will, of course, not be true in every case and which will be found elsewhere in Ethiopia to a greater or lesser degree. It is interesting to note that in their own stereotypes, Ethiopians tend to view the Manzēs as fighters, the Gondarēs as literati, but not vice versa. Thus, an officer of the Imperial Bodyguard who commanded Ethiopian troops in the Korean War has said:

*175 829 181 184

> The Manzēs were excellent soldiers. They were independent, not so ready to obey commands as the Galla, but they had good ideas about fighting and were very brave in the battlefield. The soldiers from Gondar tended to be independent and insubordinate, too, but they were not very good soldiers, either.*

On the other hand, Ethiopians commonly consider Manz as much a land of the backward as they regard Gondar the home of the learned. Krapf observed

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* This stereotype of the Gondarē is combatted by Garimā Tāfara's book, *The Gondarē with His Shield* (*Gondarē Ba-Gāshāw* [Addis Ababa: Tasfā Gabra Selassie Press, 1957]), which records in great detail the contributions of individual Gondarēs to the fight against the enemy during the Italian occupation.

162 632 433 463 of the town's total population, support themselves by working among the densely packed rows of beer houses and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 779 563 [197] [167] [142] Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejoratively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinctively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian wives. [443] [442] Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 563 463 [197] [562] A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people, predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics. Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

conventional Ge'ez honorific. Sanctity of the imperial office is an antique 643
theme, deriving apparently from pagan ideas of divine kingship which were 17
transplanted from South Arabia in the first millennium B.C. along with other
aspects of Sabaean culture.[1] But the working ideology which has upheld [538]
this conception during the period of Amhara hegemony draws on Semitic
motifs of later origin, motifs which received their classic formulation in the
fourteenth century national epic, *Kebra Nagast* (*The Glory of Kings*).

The effect of the *Kebra Nagast* is to make the Ethiopian emperor both physical descendant and spiritual successor to the kings of Israel. The genealogical tie is argued by the legendary union of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, whose offspring, Menelik I, is held to have fathered the line of royalty which allegedly ruled at Aksum and was restored in the thirteenth century. The transfer of religious mission is shown both in a prophetic dream attributed to Solomon, in which God's favor passes from Israel to Ethiopia, and in the story of Menelik's theft from Jerusalem of the most sacred symbol of the Judaic mission, the Ark of the Covenant.* Furthermore, while at the time the *Kebra Nagast* was written the Ethiopian monarch was presented as a friendly cousin of the "king of Rome"—an echo of the sixth-century alliance between Caleb of Ethiopia and Justin I of Byzantium[2]—thereafter he came to be regarded as successor to the latter as well, and hence the sole defender of the true Christian faith.

The Ethiopians have elaborated on this exalted conception of their mon- 643
archy in other literary forms.[3] In royal chronicles and hymns of praise which 538
span seven centuries, the emperors are celebrated for superlative beauty and 17
superhuman powers. In splendor of countenance they are likened to the sun; in awesomeness of power, to the lion; in religious character and divine force, to the kings of Israel and, at times, to God Himself.

In life as well as in literature the person of the emperor was clad with an 643
aura of sanctity. Ethiopian subjects have had to prostrate themselves and 17
refrain from lifting their eyes in his presence. An analogous show of deference was expected when they received royal messages from afar; the recipient had to hear the message outside his home, standing, and naked above the waist.[4] The emperors rarely permitted themselves to be seen in public, and were often secluded by curtains while eating or drinking. They were not addressed directly, but through an interlocutor. Zar'a Yā'qob, whose [644]
officers were said to have kissed the earth each time they heard the sound of his voice, carried the demand for social distance so far that pages attached to his court were not permitted to have contact with anybody from outside, and were put to death if they dared to fraternize with local inhabitants.[5]

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* The orthodox still maintain that the original ark containing the stone tablets of the Law [778]
is located at Aksum. It is symbolized by the *tābot* found in every Ethiopian church.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 Accession to the throne involved two rites, anointment by oil and be-
• 17 stowal of the crown. Authority to conduct these rites was vested in the Egyptian archbishop, the *abuna*. The formal coronation took place in a ceremony for which in former times it was expected that the parties repair to the ancient sanctuary of Aksum. The change in status brought about through
[551] coronation was symbolized by the assumption of a new name, as, for exam-
ample, Rās Tafari Makonnen became Haile Selassie I. The royal insignia included a ring, worn on the right ear; the royal flag, the staff of which bore a cross resting on a ball; and special drums, trumpets, and flutes.[6] Also included was a red silk parasol known as *zhān ṭelā* (origin of the present-day Amharic word for umbrella). When the emperor was in procession they included a white horse with small silver bells at his head, a silver shield, and a white headband of muslin or fine silk.[7]

Successors to the throne were not determined according to a fixed rule like primogeniture. Membership in the Solomonian line was normally a prerequisite, and the unsuccessful reign of Yoṣṭos (1711–16) demonstrates the hazards of rule when no pretense to such affiliation could be maintained. Usually, however, there were several legitimate candidates for the position, and the absence of fixed procedures for choosing among them has meant that the death of an emperor was often a time of confusion and political improvisation. At times the monarch designated his successor and swore the grandees of the realm to an oath of support, as when Menelik named Lījj Iyāsu; at times a single powerful lord, like Rās Mikā'ēl Sehul at Gondar, was the effective king-maker; at times the judgment and interests of a number of potentates, including on occasion the queen mother, were determinant.

The role of the emperor was largely symbolic, a quality which André Caquot has stressed.

> The king is guarantor of peace and prosperity for his entire country. Here the superhuman virtue attributed to the sovereign by the Ethiopian royal ideology manifests itself most clearly. It is not so much a question of his administering the country politically as it is that he guarantee order by his very presence and the virtue inherent in him.[8]

The idea that the mere presence of the monarch was a guarantee of civil order is reflected in the idiom *agara negus* ("country of a king"), which means a tranquil land. Related to this conception is the requirement that the body of the emperor be devoid of any physical defect or deformity, so that the well-being of the body politic may be properly symbolized.

But during most of Ethiopia's history the emperor was by no means merely an awesome figurehead, aloof from the works and turmoil of his realm. It was customary for him to serve the society actively in a number of ways. He had to organize the defense of the country and lead troops into battle—if

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

necessary, to die on the battlefield, as did Galāwdēwos, Yohānnes IV, and others. He had to maintain a minimum of political order, balancing off contending ambitions and subduing rebellious elements. Another important function was that of ultimate arbiter in judicial disputes.* As guardian of the church, moreover, he was active in endowing monasteries and churches and in resolving doctrinal disputes among the clergy.

To carry out these and related functions the emperor needed great wealth and political power. When the monarchy was intact he could command wealth from many sources: from the country-wide land tax (*gĭber*), in the form of honey, grain, or livestock, or such special fiscal assignments as saddles, plowshares, spears, ink, or tent pegs;[9] from assessed tithes on produce; in tribute from subject peoples, either in currency (gold, salt bars, etc.) or in kind; in revenues from traders; and from gifts from new appointees and hopeful office seekers. In theory, moreover, all the land of the empire belonged to its ruler; and, in fact, a good part of it was at his direct disposal, either for cultivation as royal estates or to distribute as compensation to those who served him.

The political power of the emperor was grounded in his command of troops supported by the royal bounty. In addition, he could command the troops of all the lords subject to his authority. Through frequent tours around the country he was able to reassert his hegemony from time to time in distant regions. But even from afar, a strong monarch could usually exert great control thanks to his authority to appoint or demote at a moment's notice any officer of the realm. As Alvares observed:

> No great lord of lands, if he is in them, can leave them, or set out for the Court on any account without being summoned by the [emperor]; and being summoned he will not fail to come for any reason. And when he sets out from the land of which he is the lord, he does not leave either wife or children or any property there, because he goes away in the expectation of never returning, since . . . [the emperor] gives when he pleases, and takes away when he pleases.[10]

The ideology of sacred monarchy served to legitimate theoretically boundless demands for wealth and power as well as to provide identity and morale for the body politic. It justified, too, occasional "deviant" behavior on the part of the monarch, virtually the only person with sufficient authority to innovate in this intensely conservative culture. The emperor has always been a primary agent of cultural innovation in Abyssinia, from the time of Ēzānā, who adopted Christianity in the fourth century; to Zar'a Yā'qob in the fifteenth

* To this day Haile Selassie devotes several hours a week to hearing court appeals in a session known as *chelot*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 century, who instituted a number of monthly holidays and prescribed new
• 17 liturgical texts; to Menelik, who introduced vaccination and the eucalyptus
[461] tree in the twentieth century. For more than a century now kings and emperors have attempted to combat the traditional Abyssinian repugnance for manual labor by themselves engaging in arduous physical work on numerous occasions.[11] Haile Selassie has followed a pattern with abundant precedents in introducing the many changes which have characterized his reign.[12]

As object of Abyssinia's highest esteem, symbol of its most cherished values, possessor of supreme wealth and power, and author of new norms, the emperor of Ethiopia thus qualifies as an elite in the more technical, sociological sense of the word as well as in its original sense of "being chosen."[13] Indeed, if more extreme interpretations of the emperor's significance are to be credited, he might even be viewed as the fountainhead of high status for all other elites. Thus Bruce, in a famous passage, declares:

> The Kings of Abyssinia are above all laws. They are supreme in all causes, ecclesiastical and civil; the land and persons of all their subjects are equally their property and every inhabitant of the kingdom is born their slave; *if he bears a higher rank it is by the king's gift; for his nearest relations are accounted nothing better.* [Italics mine.][14]

Such an interpretation, however, is more ideological than analytic. Throughout Ethiopian history one can discern definite limits to royal authority, and bases of elite status other than imperial favor.

121 It is true, as Margery Perham ably sets forth, that a primitive state of tech-
643 nology and severe geographical obstacles prevented the realization of imperial
17 power to the degree that the royal ideology would have permitted.[15] Yet this failure of the monarchy "to build up any kind of administrative framework through which to exercise the absolute powers with which, by tradition and consent, it was endowed" was not simply a matter of wanting techniques. It also reflected the importance of ultimate values other than that of anointed royalty in Abyssinian culture.

121 The primary sociological limit to imperial authority was the commitment
643 of the Abyssinian people to the tradition of their church. Religious conversion
17 was one change which, at least in the period of Amhara hegemony, could no
771 longer be tolerated. Za Dengel (1603–4) and Susneyos (1607–32) were brought down because of their forthright conversion to Catholicism, and the overthrow of Lĭjj Iyāsu in 1917 was legitimated on the alleged grounds that he had become a practicing Muslim. The decline in power of Tēwodros II (1855–68) was due in no small measure to the fact that his cavalier policy toward the clergy resulted in his being branded an enemy of the church.

121 A second limit on imperial authority lay in the perennial tendency of cer-
643 tain regional families to become endowed with an aura of legitimacy in their
17

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

own right. Indeed, the record of rebellions by nobility as well as clergy against the emperors of Ethiopia bespeaks a persisting dualism in the Abyssinian's disposition toward the monarchy itself. In principle, the emperor is reverenced. Widely held is the sentiment expressed in the *Kebra Nagast:* "It is not a good thing for any of those who are under the dominion of a king to revile him, for retribution belongeth to God."[16] But unquestioning deference is by no means necessarily coupled with unswerving loyalty. The Abyssinian pattern differs from the Japanese, in which total loyalty to the divine monarch calls for suicide in the wake of any disgrace one might have brought upon him. The norms of fealty to the emperor have not been so deeply internalized in Ethiopia, where the pardon and reinstatement of rebels has been a common occurrence. Among Abyssinians a veneer of genuine deference has often concealed an inner consciousness of disaffection, enabling the individual to act out rebellious wishes when the opportunity or need arises. Indeed, this ambivalence has been one of the traditional impulses behind the culture pattern of wax and gold.

The Old Nobility

The Abyssinians themselves acknowledge the existence of, in addition to the emperor, two groups of persons with pre-eminent status. These are called, both in Ge'ez and Amharic, the *maḳuānnent,* or "nobility," and the *ḳāhenāt,* or "clergy." While believing the presence of a king to be a precondition of civil order, they also regard the presence of these other elites as necessary for their good life. This attitude is expressed in the Amharic saying: "Fertility of the land [is] through the *maḳuānnent;* the splendor of the church [is] through the *ḳāhenāt.*"[17]

The term *maḳuānnent* may be used to refer to all secular dignitaries between the emperor and the well-to-do landowning peasantry. In strict contemporary usage, however, the *maḳuānnent* should be distinguished from two other classes of personages, whom we may call the "royal nobility" and the "local nobility" or "gentry." The former consists of the immediate royal family (*negusāwi bētasab*) and more distant royal relatives (*masāfent*). Because of their kinship with the Solomonic line these have at times been referred to as "chiefs of Israel."[18] Although it was customary for each new king to exile all male relatives who were potential candidates for the Crown to a high mountain fortress, more distant relatives might hold provincial governorates, and women of the royal family sometimes played an important role in court politics and provincial administration. Members of the royal nobility have normally been distinguished by special titles: *ābēto* (now vulgarized as *āto,* "Mister"), *le'ul,* and *lijj* for men; and *emēbēt, le'elt,* and *wayzaro* (now vulgarized in the sense of "Mrs.") for women.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

• 17 The highlands of Begemder, Tigre, and Eritrea form

the nucleus of Coptic Abyssinia. During the first millenium B.C., the indigenous Hamitic people of the cool plateau were repeatedly invaded from across the Red Sea, by pagan and Jewish immigrants from South Arabia. Within a millenium, the influence of these Semites spread over the northern highlands, producing a cultural synthesis more obviously Semitic than African.

In the fourth century, missionaries of the Syrian Christian Church arrived in the Kingdom of Axum. Axum, located near present-day Asmara, was then the greatest Abyssinian state, linked by trade with the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf, and by military expeditions with the Arabian peninsula. The Syrians converted the Axumite court to Christianity, an example which was subsequently followed by most people of the northern highlands. After the great schism at Chalcedon, the Ethiopian Church continued its ties with the Orthodox faction, as a dependency of the Coptic See of Alexandria.

In the seventh and eighth centuries, however, Islamic conquest of Egypt and Nubia severed Ethiopia's commercial and ecclesiastical links with the Mediterranean world. Then, with the establishment of Muslim states, on the Red Sea littoral, Coptic Abyssinia became completly isolated from world Christendom. Thenceforth, the Christians of Abyssinia shared their greatest cultural intimacy, albeit often antagonistic, with the Muslim

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

17 peoples who penetrated deep into the highlands, making many converts among the Christians. Even after the defeat of the Muslim armies in the sixteenth century and the subsequent rennaisance of the Ethiopian polity, relations with the Islamic world persisted, augmented now by the presence of Abyssinian Muslims permanently settled in the highlands.

*755 Within the context of Ethiopian medicine, these
*787 widespread cultural affinities are most obvious in the
*793 works of the cleric healer (the debtera), and in the
177 practices of the zar possession cult. For example, in their numerological operations, the debtera's divinatory texts repeat the gematria manipulations of the Kabbalah, while the ideology which rationalized these formulations clearly reiterates the astrological lore of Islamic sa-
177 vants. Similarly, affinities are obvious between Ethio-
778 pian and Islamic amulets, in their construction, in the design of talismanic devices, and in the ends for which
*757 they are manufactured. Nor is evidence of the transla-
177 tion of Islamic medical treatises into Ge'ez and Amharic
539 lacking. Here, however, these works, particularly regarding humoral theory, have enjoyed only a very limited diffusion, and have been subordinated to indigenous medi-
*787 cal notions. Finally, the zar cult, in whose coteries many of Begemder's women belong, is no local phenomenon, but appears in one form or another throughout this entire culture area.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

101

PART I : Land, History and People

1. General Orientation:

A. Definition of Terms:

The Amhara culture dealt with in this study is to a considerable extent identified with the culture formerly referred to as "Abyssinian". Actually, the Abyssinian culture, heir to the cultural blending of ancient Semitic and African traits, has developed into several sub-cultures of which the Amhara culture is the major one. Another important sub-culture would be that of the Tigre-speaking population of Eritrea.

The term "Abyssinia", which was the official name of the country until the 20th century, is possibly derived from the name the centrally-located river Awash, which flows in the Rift Valley bisecting the country, losing itself in the eastern lowland desert on its way to the Red Sea coast. Another explanation derives it from the Habashat, one of the Semitic tribes from Hadhramaut, which crossed over the Bab El Mandeb about 500 B.C. A third explanation derives the name from the Arabic term signifying racial mixture.

The present Emperor preferred the official name Ethiopia, the political frontiers of which include the territory of non-Abyssinian peoples like the Galla, conquered by Abyssinia in the late 19th century. "Ethiopia", derived from the Greek term signifying "people with sunburned faces", was used in classical antiquity to describe all Africa south of the Sahara.

The religion of the Amhara and most other "Abyssinian" peoples is an early, Monophysite form of Christianity, often

referred to as "Coptic", although the Abyssinian Copts prefer the term "Towado" meaning Orthodox. The term Copt is derived from the Greek term for "Egyptian." Since the Coptic Metropolitan of Alexandria, Egypt, was also head of the Abyssinian Church and appointed all Abyssinian archbishops until recent years of the reign of the present Emperor, there is some justification for the use of the term Coptic. It will be so used in this study, to indicate the "Abyssinian Church of Ethiopia".

In books on Ethiopia, one often finds the term "Amhara" used in a broad sense as synonymous with Abyssinian Coptic Christian. Although the Amhara in their ethnocentrism also use it in this sense, it is not good usage in the author's opinion. The Tigrinya-speaking peoples of the province of Tigre are also good "Copts", in religious belief and observance; however, they differ from the Amhara in many phases of culture, and, according to native opinion, in personality". Therefore, the term Amhara is used in this study only for the Amharic-speaking, Coptic population of the provinces of Begemdir(Gondar), Gojjam, and parts of Shoa. Formerly, all three provinces were included in a territorial unit called Amhara; hence the name.

B. Linguistic Definitions

There are three major linguistic families in Ethiopia: Cushitic, Semitic and Nilotic. Cushitic is predominant, roughly speaking, in the southern half of modern Ethiopia, including Galla, Somali, Sidamo, Agau, etc. Nilotic languages predominate along the northern and western escarp-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 remedies. The nutmeg tree, tosiya, is also medicinal, and
824 the Kosso tree is widely used against tapeworm. Common sights include the reddish ret, a cactus; and just as soon as the rainy season ends, the yellow daisy, adäy abäba carpets the landscape, heralding the masqal holiday. Hence it
136 is also called mäsqäl abäba. A study of the FAUNA connections between Ethiopia and surrounding areas contributes significantly to the understanding of Ethiopia's cultures from ancient times to the present.

The last remnant of the prehistoric belt of tropical forest that once stretched from Africa to India, is found today in Dhofar, Southern Arabia. There, in the Gara mountains, Bertram Thomas collected fossil fauna which is definitely Ethiopic and which also evidences links to southern India.[8] Animal husbandry in Yemen in prehistoric times was apparently based on hump-necked cattle of Indian origin. This cattle complex reached Africa late, probably as late
[231] as 1000 B.C.[9] To this day, the cattle of Ethiopia is hump-necked, though cave paintings clearly show domestic cattle without humps.

171 Social and religious regulations associated with the
231 cattle complex among the Cushitic-speaking tribesmen of southern Ethiopia, are very similar to sets of the same regulations among the Gara tribesmen of Dhofar. Both despise hunters and artisans, but also consider agriculture a most ignoble occupation.

8. Coon: Southern Arabia. Papers of the Peabody Museum, Vol.20., 1943, p. 209.
9. Ibid.

241 cereal, as well as other crops already mentioned are grown. The lowest and warmest spots of the plateau are usually used for various types of millet-sorghum, gesho (hops). Coffee grows wild or is purchased on the market, as are bananas from the lowland. After a few years of cultivation, a field may be left fallow for five or more years.

[17] The Amhara's irrigation and terrace farming resemble [46] those of Yemen, not of Africa. Farming is man's work, not [231] woman's. The one-handed plow is drawn by a yoke of two oxen, encouraged by a long fibre whip. The Amhara rerely uses other animals for drawing the plow.

Fallow land or new bush is broken during the dry season. A heavier-than-usual iron plow point is purchased from the Falasha ironsmiths, affixed to the scratch plow, and the area, after preliminary burning, is scratched many times at right angles. The stubble and weeds are then piled and burned. But for the actual plowing and seeding, the beginning of the rains is awaited.

312 Irrigation canals are completely washed out in the rainy season, and must be rebuilt in each dry season. Terracing is less common than irrigation, but on occasion mountain farmers of long residence do build low walls of rock and mud on hillsides to prevent severe washouts and landslides during the rainy season.

243 Tyēff (Eragrostic abyssinica; Poa abyssinica) deserves the latter Latin name, for it is the mainstay staple of Abyssinia, except in the south. It is an annual indigenous grass with seeds of pinhead size, cultivated

321 415 The Amhara warrior sought to have at least one very large horn containing mead (cattle was sometimes bred for large horns or bought from Galla), and smaller ones for gunpowder or for the staple mixture of salt and barbare, or nug paste. The narrow end is sealed with a wooden plug. In the past they were sometimes of buffalo horn, but now mostly of cow's horn. One observer noticed a striking similarity between this container and ancient Egyptian ones of smaller size, used to contain antimony for eye toilette.[65]

[71]

Perhaps this may give a clue as to why the drinking utensils made of horn look so strikingly European, amid the other Amhara containers which are more African than Middle Eastern. Nearly every Amhara peasant has at least one large drinking cup of horn; besides the usual clay cups used for coffee. The large horn cup is used by the head of the house for barley beer. Churches usually have several, especially the "tewa" used at church feasts or memorial feasts such as tazkar. An average-sized one measures about 4-1/2 inches high, has a 5 inch diameter at the top, but only 1-1/2 inche diameter at the bottom. A church which has a large working retinue of dabtara and hangers-on, acolytes, etc., often makes a practice of giving one as a courtesy gift to deserving peasants at plowing time, with the blessings of the church for a good harvest.

324 412 The main stone utensil that men make for the house is the mano-type stone called "maj", usually selected from a river bed and further shaped so that the bottom is flat and the rounded top fits comfortably into the palm of the housewife when she grinds the grain. She does this by a forward and backward motion, not the more advanced rotary

65. Cohen, Marcel: Flacon Abyssin en corne...Tr, Paris 1920, pp.265-6.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART III: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

171 Some aspects of the social organization of the Amhara resemble those of medieval Europe at early and middle periods; others the ancient and not so ancient Middle East; still others, perhaps a smaller part, parallel patterns in other parts of Africa. It is an "old-world" pattern of human relationships, both in structure and function, and the noteworthy fact is that much has survived, due to comparative isolation, that has changed elsewhere.

186 Amhara attitudes, concomitant with their social organization, recall the attitude of the "Neolithic pattern of human relations" in Coon's terminology.[69] This pattern is characterized by the attitude: "You stay in your village, and I stay in mine. If your sheep eat our grass we will kill you. Anyone who tries to change our ways is a witch and we will kill him."

In Amhara rural areas--and most Amhara are rural--this attitude still seems to dominate human relations, be they structured as territorial, class, military, legal, ethnic, religious or racial. Feuds between kin groups often last for several generations; loyalties are intensely regional and ethnocentric.

178 While all this can still be observed, change in the direction of modern occidental patterns has begun to seep in very recently, affecting various phases of social organization in varying degrees. Sometimes the structure

69. Coon: The Story of Man. 1954.

685 the "danya". Interestingly enough, if the thief did
696 not have money on hand to pay the fee of the lēbashay, it was the responsibility of the victim who had originally requested his services to pay him on the spot, and try to collect later from the thief. This had the effect of eliminating complaints of petty theft from setting this costly process in motion.

694 It seems that amateur thieves were often caught
789 by this process, and usually confessed, feeling helpless when confronted with such "powerful" means of detection. Professional thieves, particularly in the towns, who were known to have evaded detection, were and are believed to have obtained a powerful magic antidote from a dabtara scribe.

694 When all methods of detection have failed, the
787 distraught victim has a last resort. He may go to the nearest "tänkwa", a practicer of black magic, and ask him to divine by throwing his bones. This , too, is now prohibited, but still goes on, though not as openly as before. Failing even in this, the victim may go to the Coptic church and there, having purchased incense
[754] and given a gift, pronounce a solemn curse, "säbätē masdäfat", on the thief.

171 The pattern of the lēbashay has been traced by
694 some observers to ancient Greek parallels, by others to the Arab bedouin "djirra" or "kassas" thifseeker who also tracks murderers in tribal feuds. The tankwas seem of more typically African witchcraft pattern.

695 661 er court, if he felt he had the means. In this case the judge might sometimes not appropriate the wager for fear of having to surrender it again later.

539 691 There are numerous proverbs characterizing roles in litigation, and counseling behavior and decisions to be made in certain situations:

"The young lawyer,
in the beginning he acclaims to heaven;
later on, he will look to the ground"
(Moral: always choose an old, experienced lawyer, with many reserve tricks up his sleeve).

"Don't seize the tail of the leopard;
but if you did, don't let go."
(Meaning: Don't go to court against a good talker, or "great man", or wealthy adversary; but once started, fight as hard as hard as you can, or else he will ruin you).

"Even if you know how,
against the judge do not debate".
"Judge, why your partiality?
the loser must pay you (anyway)".

"One witness need not make you tremble,
(just as) a one-eyed (person)cannot dance well."

[17] The pattern of the wager resembles, in part, that of the "khabdh" of Arab bedouin.[76]

76. Ibid.

694 dual's case, the "gubba" gift, continued, and it is often
[661] identical with a bribe. At the same time, the old cus-
178 tom which served as a last resort to a poor person to
have his injustice rectified, by appearing with a heavy
stone perched on the back of his neck almost crushing
him, was abrogated because Europeans looked on this as
primitive. The poor man thus has lost his few safeguards,
and now is losing evan the right to beg and to create a
traffic hazard by throwing himself before the vehicle of
[171] the great man and shouting "abyet". (The practice of
carrying the rock resembles that of innocently accused
Arab Beduin who appear pressing a blade against their
necks to demonstrate and shout their innocence.

178 Transition thus proceeds in unequal shifts, with
671 many culture lags. Modernization of law and justice
643 proceeds from the top, Addis Ababa, down the pyramid.
One of the reasons for the circuit-riding of the emperor
himself is to remind the chiefs of his realm of his
all-seeing and all-hearing power, just as was done in
the past. He acts as inspector-general.

The Emperor and his High Court in Addis Ababa stil
give lip service to the Fetha Nägäst Code. But in prac-
tice, this amounts to little more than rationalization
for the benefit of the ultra-conservative Amhara nobles.
693 The position of the "afä negus" (lit. Mouthpiece of the
King), who traditionally was the guardian of theFatha Nä-
gäst code, has now become honorary in practice. In the
past he was the second-most powerful person in the realm,
trusted partly because he was not of the ruling family

795 off by cutting its throat.

It may be that the use of the formula became emphatic centuries ago, as an equivalent-though-distinctive counterpart to the Muslim formula "Iin the name of Allah the all-merciful, and Muhammad hid his prophet". Another such distinction is almost certainly the blue neck-cord, "mätäb" which both male and female Abyssinian Copts wear to distinguish them from Muslims. But their other religious laws and taboos seem to date back to the Old Testament observances of Judaism, notable the taboo on the pig, which is not even raised outside (European Addis Ababa.

795 779 As a consequence of the religiosity of the people, the rules of the church have the force of law, unchallenged especially in the rural areas. Even the more modernized administration and new legislation has made little change in the close inter-relation of church and state functions, at the grassroots level. This inter-relation is even closer in the form of social pressure. Foreign observers have remarked that without this church organization the social structure of the country would fall to pieces and lose its coherence.

795 Another significant factor is the large number of persons consecrated, or partly consecrated to the church service. Besides priests, monks and nuns there are boy deacons and church students, chorister-scribes, and other semi-laymen attached to the church, whose total number has been estimated at from 10% to 20% of the population, particularly the male population.

796 262 As soon as this is over, a period of intensive meat-eating begins, similar to European carne-vale (carnival), for the same reason: the long lenten period is approaching, and in Abyssinia this means also abstention from eggs, cheese, milk, and other animal products (some even avoid fish), just as on any Wednesday and Friday; and no food before noon, for the strictly observant. The fast is obeyed by nearly everyone, in all classes. This fast begins on the 22nd day of Yäkatit, and is called "kudade" (lit. suffering) to indicate both the suffering of Jesus and of the faster. It is also referred to as "arba tom"(lit. 40-fast) though in fact the fast lasts 55 days. Women prepare a variety of vegetable and grain dishes, to substitute for the absence of more solid food.

796 [71] Finally, on the 17th day of the month of Miyazya, the long-awaited Easter, "Fassika" (related to the Hebrew Passover, "Pessah" etymologically), occurs.

It is the climax of a week of preparations during which the lenten "hudadey" sharpens. This week is called "hemamat" (passion, extreme suffering), and no work is done, symbolizing the sympathy withthe weakness and suffering of Jesus. Even the Saturday market is cancelled--the only time this happens.

[743] Purchasers of meat and supplies for Easter must do their shopping on Thursday, when a special big market is held. The price of sheep, etc., goes up sharply, even doubles, in anticipation of the feast. Even tyäff and pepper (bärbärä) become more expensive. Ethnic craftsmen take this opportunity to bring their products,

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882 broken by bursts of frenzied activity. This is utilized by the adults both to enculturate them and bend them to their will in "training" and "service", and to use the boundless physical energy of adolescents for considerable chores of physical labor.

The adolescents do not resent this most of the time, for they accept it as flattery and acknowledgement of their growing strength; enjoy the increased attention given them in the family as full-fledged, if subordinate members; appreciate the higher status that comes with advancing age, symbolized by the obedience they themselves can command at this stage from their younger siblings who follow them like retainers follow a feudal lord.

A. The Male Adolescent: Service and Young-Warrior.

882 561 The terms of address at this stage symbolize his position exactly, and are far more significant than in reference. Terms of address used in everyday life are: "ashkär" (lit. servant), to call a young man to duties ranging from running errands to doing most of the plowing. First used as flattery for boys of about 14, it becomes exactly descriptive and in everyday use as he matures to full stature power. When this happens, at about age 18, he may be flatteringly addressed as "gobäz", signifying "handsome young warrior". (footnote 79).

883 Duties at this stage, under supervision of the father or other male kinsman, include responsible and hard work in agriculture,

[[71]] Footnote 79: "gobäz" in Amharic has similar connotation to "bahurim" in Hebrew: the identification of the concept of young man with young warrior (Isaiah 31:8, Jeremiah 18:21, Amos 4:10). This is pointed out by Ullendorffs: The Obelisk of Matara, p. 31.

588 The "damoz" temporary wife is usually recruited from a lower class than that of the man, of landless family. But often she is merely a divorcee, who "lives alone" in a street inhabited by women of similar status in the town, who are in-between marriages, and make a living serving transients with bed and board, giving them the comforts of home, cooking, baking, cleaning. They are not considered good-time prostitutes of the mead-houses ("tej-byet"), and are therefore much more respected. [548]

588 487 178 Respectably-married ("semanya") men would, in the past, take on a "damoz" wife to accompany them on caravan trips, to spare the "semanya" wife the discomforts and perils of the journey. Now that trucks travel comparatively fast from province to province, the travelling "damoz" wife has become rare, but the residential "damoz" wife continues in the towns much as before, and "semanya" wives are therefore not as tolerant of them as they once were when they appreciated their husbands' efforts to spare them discomfort. For, they reasoned, "who else will cook for him, how will he eat?".

588 848 The "damoz" wife's children are fully legitimate. She is far higher in status than the simple concubine ("<u>yechen gared</u>"), lit. the servant-maid of the thigh), who was and is often a permanent member of the household, often of doubtful or half-Shanqalla ancestry, who has no damoz rights, and whose children have no rights of recognition beyond what the master cares to give them. (The concubine is also called "tara" or "tarata" in some districts).

588 171 The respectability or semi-respectability of the "damoz" wife compares to the Persian "ssighe", and the Arab Muslim temporary wife permitted in the Quran (IV:28 - "And in so far as you have derived pleasure from these women for a stipulated time, give them their

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588 rewards as agreed upon") practiced by the Shi'ites in particular.
171 (footnote 81). The Abyssinian Coptic "Fetha Nägäst" forbids concubinage; but the custom has long been widespread. "Damoz" is even recognized in the modern law of Emperor Haile Selassie.

551 Individual arrangements are freest in "damoz", also in "qurban"
585 though sometimes less so, and least in "semanya". But in all three forms of marriage, the wife retains her maiden name and does not assume that of her husband. Even Empress Menen continues her old name. Sometimes the husband's mother may try to symbolize her authority - or even affection - by giving a new name to her new daughter-in-law living in her hamlet, but the bride's kinfolk and
[602] peers will continue to use her old name. This is another, unconscious, emphasis of kinship relations over affinal ones.

588 The "damoz" is not considered contradictory to monogamy, which may explain her respectability despite prohibition of concubinage in the "Fetha Nägäst" code. Religious persons will explain the paradox away by quoting from Genesis "be fruitful and multiply".

583 In rural districts there is sometimes found a 4th form of
184 marriage, which indeed is re-enacted in some wedding ceremonies of "semanya". This form is bride capture, especially found among families too poor to defray the expenses of a wedding and cows that must be given the "semanya" couple. To cover up the shame and the poverty, the bride is "captured" and "pursued", by pre-arranged collusion. While she ostensibly goes, alone, to fetch water or gather deadwood, the groom's "mize" appear suddenly, preferably on horseback, and carry her off into the bush, while she, though ex-

Footnote 81: Donaldson, D.M.: Temporary Marriage in Iran. Moslem World, 1936, pp. 358-364. Smith, W. Robertson: Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia, 1885.

585 heavily veiled bride, unable to see through the heavy toga over her head and figure, is led to the center of the "dass" before the elders, to shouts of "ellel" by the women. For in rural areas it is still considered shameful to take the bride away in daylight. Her kinfolk say to her: "Say that so-and-so is your husband". She is expected to whisper it shyly, so that her words are repeated by witnesses that she, too, has taken the "Semanya" oath. This is greeted by "ellel" joyshout of the woman.

Next, the "mizē" are sworn in. The bride's father or elder say to the bridegroom: "Call for us two guarantors for her eyes, head and teeth". Whereupon the "mizē" step forward and take the oath.

Now the groom's party is invited to sit down, room is made for them, and beer and meat stew are passed to them.

The formal boasting, the "fukkara" dance and chant, is begun by the bride's kinsmen, then quickly taken up by the groom's kinsman. Each side recites feats of bravery, renown, warriors, holy priests, "great men" in the ancestry and kin of the side to which it belongs. Spears or firearms are brandished, held behind the neck, while epic battles are recited in poetic form and exaggeration. Each tries to surpass the other in this friendly contest, (footnote 83), but mock each other's deficiencies in composition of verses or recitation.

The groom affirms by oath that he will "do good and not evil" to his bride, that they will live together: "I, by my shield, she

[17] Footnote 83: Similar boasting contests are common in the Middle East.

3. Expressive Physical Arts.

531 Physical arts, like their material culture, are little developed among the Amhara, compared to their elaborate spiritual culture. If their life cycle gives any clue, it seems that the explanation lies at least in part in the end of free experimentation at the onset of adolescence, after which the experimentation is fettered into lines ordained by the Coptic church. Especially fine art, is considered exclusively within the domain of the church. This leaves little beyond body care and ornamentation for expression of physical arts, and even [302] this is partly dedicated to religion, such as the rationalized plucking of pubic hair of the woman, and the fullest expression of body arts on the occasion of church festivals.

●171 It is also interesting to observe how patterns of the Middle East and of Africa are so evidently drawn from and synthesized in the traditional Amhara pattern of expressive physical arts, particularly in body care and ornamentation.

A. Body Care and Ornamentation.

515 [312] Washing in the dry season is difficult, since water is scarce and there are no wells. However, with some little effort, water can even then be obtained by digging in the riverbed, since the water table is high; this is what travellers do. Near towns the latter effort develops into a business, for water carriers, employing women as cheap labor to carry the water in their clay pots uphill to the town, charge 5¢ [548] (Ethiopian) per potfull of water. Only the "unattached woman" who has a cash income from beer-brewing or temporary wife - prostitution, can afford this, and usually buys a potfull of this muddy water every day during the long dry season, to wash herself and her clothing regularly and frequently, at a time when the fully respectable Amhara housewife goes unwashed (except for hands and private parts). Divorcees looking for husbands and professional women alone feel the need for daily

887 812 preoccupied with the immediate demands of life. The culture pattern encourages the shemagalye to give much time and effort to this wonderment, for it belongs to his prime role and social duty at this stage: the accumulation of wisdom. The church does not interfere with this wonderment and its expression, partly because it has not bothered to establish dogma on many subjects.

A. The Natural Universe.

821 [[7]] In many ways the Amhara concept of the universe resembles that of early medieval Europe, plus understandable similarities to the Middle East and Africa. Some conceptualizations are elaborations from the Biblical universe, readily recognizable because almost always the Geez language is used to express them. Other conceptualizations are animistic, and usually employ Cushitic terminology.

The universe is regarded as a Ptolemaic system, with the earth as the fixed center around which the sun turns. A distinction is made between the physical world, called simply "arät mazän" (lit. the 4 corners); and the world populated by all creatures, "aläm" (lit. world, in the Geez language). The persistence of this traditional view of a flat earth is so great that even Amhara schoolteachers in the modern elementary schools in the provinces, who are required to teach a spherical earth, privately admit that they don't believe it themselves!

Heavenly bodies and metereological phenomena are interpreted as directly related to human events. Venus is called "astärboshäsh" or "astäryo", (lit. the one who gives hunger and then flees), because the planet appears in the very brief dusk, when the heat of the day is over and one gets hungry. Because Venus is "fleeing and inconstant like a woman", she is given the feminine gender.

821 243 Considerable attention is given to the moon ("chäräqa"), for it is believed to cause the ripening of the grain after the sun has

826 beauty: The comparative geromtomorphy of Amhara facial features, even in the case of females, is regarded by them as a mark of beauty, e.g. a long, high bridged nose, which denotes "nobility" and absence of strong negroid strains. In contrast, a flat nose with depressed root and broad nostril is called "kurfäd", which is also used as an insult. The thick lips of the negroid Shanqalla ex-slaves ("känfäräm", lit. full lower lip), especially if at the same time everted ("ahewa länboch" lit. donkey lip; or "länbochäm") are considered marks of ugliness in both men and women. The rare light eyes that crop up among the Amhara are not regarded as special marks of beauty, but as [184] outlandish ("bahär ayn", lit. eyes from overseas), for Amhara ethnocentrism is directed also at foreignisms other than negroid traits. [171] The bulging almond eyes popular in other parts of the Middle East are regarded as marks of feminine beauty and feminine "nobility" by the Amhara also.

The spiral peppercorn hair ("barya täsur", lit. slave hair; or "kordada"), of the subjected negroid races is regarded as ugly by the Amhara. Conversely, their own helical hair ("zema täsur", i.e. hair that stands up thick and rich in a bushy halo, or thick curls) is considered beautiful and indicative of "good racial stock ("attentam"). Outcrops of soft, wavy hair ("läbucha", light hair that falls down), which is more frequent than light eyes, is regarded as outlandish, but accepted with a smile, as of no great significance.

Similar attitude rules the beauty of the ear. The medium-sized ear of most Amhara is preferred. The round, curved, small negroid ear ("coraf joro") is considered ugly; but the other extreme, the big elongated ear that stands out like a donkey's ("ärbaba joro"), found

756 to have, books handed down from past centuries, containing secret formulae, recipes, pharmacopeia of an intermingled empirical and magical nature. They warn inquirers that the public revelation of th these secrets would create great social dangers at the hands of the irresponsible.

● 171 In the days of ancient Egypt, Abyssinia was a supplier of materials for embalming, such as incense, myrrh, etc. It is therefore little wonder that much of Abyssinian medicine resembles that of ancient Egypt, e.g. the strong emphasis on purgatives used regularly.

753 The Amhara shares with peasants in many other parts of the world his belief in "strong" medicine, powerful in taste or heroic in effect or both. Since the Italian invasion, his belief in injections, which bring such miraculously quick results, has assumed magical proportions. Generally he distrusts and fears new medicines.

1. Healing the Body

A. The Surgeon-Herbologist-Empiricist ("woggesha"): Utilizing Nature.

759 Unlike the other medical practioners mentioned earlier, the woggesha does not try to dominate nature; he specializes in utilising what nature provides and in lending a helping hand. He is most often the first consulted, a kind of general practitioner, family doctor; and since he refrains from magical undertakings, he is neither feared nor suspected of witchcraft, which the other practioners, even the dabtara, often are.

Like the dabtara, the woggesha is often an expert herbologist, called "sgabi seray" (lit. who knows the work of nature). While walking in the bush, along brooks in the valley or in the "dega"

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"Arabic loanwords include:

Alla (h) - master, God, heaven
Awleya - (from Arabic "awliya", plural of waliy, saint), chief zars
Kafir - Arabic term for the Christian Ethiopians
Qwaha - coffee (from Arabic qahwa; Amharic uses "bunna"); coffee and perfume are taken over from Arabs, and are essential parts of the Zar ceremony.

Galla loanwords:

farda - Galla for horse, here meaning slave possessed by a zar; "färäs", Amharic for horse, is taboo.
waqiyē yemmäsgän - Waq i s Galla for "God", yemmasgan is Amharic for "be praised." Total means: thank you.

There are also Woyto loanwords.

It is natural that an argot of a professional language should borrow expressions from another language with which it comes in contact....The (zar) belief might have originated with the autochthonous population of Ethiopia - the Woyto probably belong to this population - and the Amhara might have taken it over from them together with some expressions....."

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One might add to these conclusions by Dr. Leslau that in recent years Arabic loanwords are increasingly being used in the zar argot, perhaps due to the improvement of trade routes to the Sudan. Also, the poet who must compose somewhat new poetry for special occasions in the zar cult, is the prime agent for the introduction of Arabic loanwords and usages such as addressing a powerful make zar spirit as "Prophet" (in imitation of Muslim usage).

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Problems of the distribution of the "zar" and similar cults in Africa and the Middle East, such as questions as to the origin and the diffusion of the cult, are more difficult and complex.

Some linguists believe that the term "zar" is of Cushitic origin (Dr. Leslau, would seem to agree with this). This would antedate the

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Hadramauti (South Arabian) colonization of Abyssinia about 2500 years ago. According to this view, the term is derived from the supreme divinity of the "pagan" Cushites, the God-heaven called "Jar" (pronounced djar) in Agau, the old-Cushitic language of Western Ethiopia [104].

The term for the zar ceremony, "wädaja" (lit. love feast) evidently is derived from the Amharic stem "wäddädä" (lit. he loved; to love), unless one concludes that both Amhara and Galla peoples derive the concept from an ancient, common Cushitic origin, the opinion of Dr. Michel Leiris [105].

The bulk of evidence would indicate a "Cushitic" origin for the zar cult. Indeed, the distribution of it and closely related cults is found most intensely in the geographical areas in which Cushitic is spoken.

[114] Among the Cushitic-speaking Galla tribes of southern Ethiopia, Dr. Cerulli [106] found a cult of worship of similar "nature-spirits", upon which the God of the conquering Abyssinians was placed later, and he infers that the same happened to the one-time sky-god of the Agau, pre-Semitic inhabitants of Cushitic-speaking northern Ethiopia. As a result, when northern Ethiopia became Christianized, the "zar", the former sky god, was demoted to a possessive spirit. Diffusion of the zar cult, Dr. Cerulli believes, was then carried by Abyssinian slaves into the Arab countries such as Egypt, the Hidjaz of Arabia and Oman, where the zar cult survives under its original name, "zar" or "sar".

104. Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People Possessed by a Spirit; also Cerulli; "Zar" in Encyclopedia of Islam, 1933, p. 1217

105. Leiris, M: L'Afrique Fantôme. Paris 1934, pp. 336-7, 440.

106. Cerulli, E: Etiopia Occidentale, Vol 2, p. 35

Cerulli differentiates the "zar" cult from other beliefs in possession by genies found, eg. in the "buri" cult of Nigeria and Tripolitania, and the "amok" of Malaya, which do not have the Abyssinian idea that the zar can be forced to go out of the body of the possessed through the performance of a special rite. [107]

Even earlier students of the zar cult among the Galla reported many phenomena identical to zar "worship" among the Amhara, as well as significant differences in detail. The Galla have a stronger element of worship in sacred groves than do the Amhara, who prefer the incense-filled hut as the center for public possession, diagnosis, treatment and social life. Emphasis on groves is also found in northern Ethiopia, among the Cushitic - speaking Qemants. Such grove worship venerates sycamore trees most often, but also junipers. Cotton thread, food, clothes and honey is offerred to them. Among the Ieju tribe of Galla, the Protestant missionaries Isenberg and Krapf observed the following in the mid-19th century:

> "They pay great respect to certain trees.... My people, desiring to sit down under its shadow, were immediately driven away, lest the Adbar should be angry (zar). Adbar means keeper or watchman. They grease this tree, and perform religious ceremonies under it. Nobody dare touch or damage the tree without risking a severe punishment....." [108]

The Galla of Harar province, in the 20th century, call their chief religious worship "wädaja" (the same term as the Amhara in the zar cult), described by the Catholic missionaries Azais and Chambard [109]).

107. Cerulli, E.: Zar (in) Encyclopedia of Islam 1908, p. 1217

108. Isenberg, Krapf: Journals 1843, p. 439-440.

109. Azais & Chambard: 5 Années de Recherches Archéologiques en Etiopie. Paris, 1931, pp. 109-112.

X-114 171 It is a family or communal prayer-gathering which is accompanied by a feast of bread or roasted coffee and corn, beer or hydromel, a portion of which is offerred to Waqä, the sky-god. Often a sheep is sacrificed. The term "wadaja" is also used by the Wollo and Raya tribes of Galla for their "Islamic evening prayer".

[114] The cult among Islamized Galla was witness by another observer:

> "The Muslim sorcerers have their own 'society'. If anyone wishes to obtain a favor or draw down a curse upon his enemies, he invites several old men of the village, buys them Kat (note: the drugleaf chat, or qat) and passes the whole night with them singing, praying and cursing if it is an enemy, or blessing if it is a question of benediction. This is called making wädaja. The interested party seats himself in the middle or the kabiras who spit kat on his head, crying "yahsum" - "may it be fulfilled." (Note: compare with "yehun" of Amhara). In general, the wädaja lasts the whole night"..... 110

Southeast of Galla territory, among the Somali people, Dr. Cerulli observed "ceremonies intended to procure the incarnation of the genius to force the evil spirit to enter the bodies of initiated persons" 111

In the eastern lowland of Ethiopia, among the Afar people (also called Danakil), Dr. Thesiger observed the following:

[114]

> "The 'Afar Asa Mara, who unlike the Somali do not have a wide range of dances, perform an oracle dance called the jenile. The jenile, who may be man or woman, is an ordinary member of the community who is able to fall into a trance and deliver oracles. For its performance the men form a close circle and chant and clap their hands until the jenile, who is seated nearby covered with a shamma, enters the circle. Then the dancers, without moving their feet, bend forward chanting faster and faster until the jenile in a trance answers their questions....."

> "The southern Afar localize a spirit on Mount Ayelu, an isolated volcano in the south of Afar land dominating Badhu. On its summit is a rectangular walled enclosure which they visit on pilgrimage after the rains, sacrificing sheep, and pray for the fertility of their animals and success in war...." 112

110. Zervos A: L'Empire d'Ethiopie. 1935. p. 93
111. Cerulli, E: Etiopia Occidentale, Vol. 2 p.35
112. Thesiger, W.G: The Awash River and the Aussa Sultanate. Geographical Journal. Vol. 85, 1935. p. 8.

X 794 171 The same observer reports that the silver baton of the former Sultan of Aussa in this area was regarded as a magical object, enshrined, and confided to enboys on special missions. (Note Ber Alanga on zar list of Amhara).

X 794 177 171 Diffusion of the zar cult from these areas to neighboring lands is the general consensus of most scholars who have occupied themselves with the problem. This would center the origin of the zar cult in Ethiopia. The name itself was noted among the Islamized Somali by Cerulli:

[114]

> "As a remainder of paganism may be regarded the ceremony of the sar, perhaps an ancient sacred dance. Natives crown in a circle and the chorus begins to sing on a special rythm. One or many among the singers fall fainting away to the ground. The others "beat the sar" by singing and striking the hands or clattering with the feet or striking drums or kettle drums. Then the person who has fainted rises little by little from the ground, takes in his hands a dagger, and dances in the circle with the dagger drawn out, til he falls again in a faint; but immediately rises fully recovered, The sar is danced also with a burning brand instead of the dagger; among the Sab the dancer goes out of the circle, runs in the jungle nearby and then comes back showing with loud cries his dagger sprinkled with blood of the genius he has killed..." 113

X 794 171 114 Diffusion of the zar cult into the Sudan from Abyssinia is concluded by Trimmingham in his recent book "Islam in the Sudan".

What seems to be a form of the zar cult was observed among the Swahili of coastal East Africa, where it was called "Ngoma ya Pepo", according to Skene. 114

In predominantly Islamic areas, it seems that the zar is classified as an evil spirit, similar to the jinn. This is the how orthodox Muslims are enjoined to regard all pre-Islamic "pagan" deities, according to the Quran, (Sura 37, verse 158).

113. Cerulli: Somali, Encyclop. of Islam 1908, p. 487
114. Skene: Arab and Swahili Dances. Journal of the Royal Anthrop. Instit., 1917, pp. 420-434.

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In the Hidjaz, the zar cult was observed by the scholar Hurgronje. He noted that it was especially widely diffused among women of Mecca and other towns, the same pattern as in Egypt. The woman chief who conducted the ceremonies held the title "shekha", and attempted to ascertain the nationality of the zar by questioning him either in "vulgar Arabic" or in "zar language" known only to initiated persons.[115] (Note the close similarity to the female doctor - dominated zar cult, and similar procedure of diagnosis and zar language as among the Amhara!).

In the Oman, Cerulli believes the zar arrived carried by slaves imported from Ethiopia. There the spirit is referred to in the plural, "ziran".[116]

In Egypt, many observers in the 19th century and up to the present time have reported zar ceremonies. Kahle, observing it there almost half a century ago, concluded that the cult had arrived in Egypt, by distribution from Abyssinia, for the following reasons:

(1) Because the Amharic name "zar" had carried over;

(2) because of the exorcistic character of some of the ceremonies;

(3) because of the history of its spread in the 19th century when contact between Abyssinia and Egypt became much closer;

(4) because the ceremonies are conducted by a woman.

He reported that this woman was called "sheikha" or "'arifa alsikka", and that she treated each spirit differently according to his place of origin, sometimes from Upper Egypt, sometimes from Lower Egypt, the Sudan, etc. In this differentiated treatment she was careful to use

115. Hourgronje, S: Mekka. 1889, Vol. 2, p. 124-8
116. Cerulli: Zar. Encyclopedia of Islam, 1908, p. 1218

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the proper melody, song, individual clothing required by the zar. The chants were accompanied by small drums and by dances. A sacrifice of fowl was usually offerred. The ceremonies lasted sometimes many nights in succession.[117]

In 1890, pamplets condemning the zar cult were printed in Cairo. They complained that the ceremonies "speculate on the ignorance and stupidity of the women of Cairo"; "the dangerous spreading of this lucrative swindle and the concern this is causing noble-minded and intelligent menfolk". Letters were cited that had been written to the editors of Cairo newspapers, quoting the Quran in protest against the zar cult, and stating that the zar cult "celebrates his triumphs especially in the houses of the richest, socially most prominent Turkish families residing in Cairo". One modern-educated, sophisticated and worried Egyptian even sent his wife to a zar ceremony to study the details of it, at the suggestion of a German scholar named Vollers, who then published a brief description in the original Arabic. In the cult, the term "minzar" was used to indicate a woman posessed by the zar, and the term was increasingly used for epileptic attacks, the sufferers of which were being taken to the zar ceremonies.[118]

It would be interesting to make a study of the influence of the zar cult on Islamic societies, perhaps along the lines indicated in Zwemer's "Influence of Animism on Islam"[119]. Such a study would be obverse to Joseph Greenberg's "Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion".[120]

117. Kahle, Paul: Zar Beschwörungen in Egypten. Der Islam, III, 1912, p. 1-41, 189-190.
~~118.~~ Lilman, Enno: Arabische Geisterbeschwörungen Aus Egypten (Zar). Leipzig, 1950.
118. Vollers, Karl: Noch einmal der Zar. Zeitschrift Deutsch. Morgenl. Ges, 45, Leipzig, 1891, pp. 343-351
Walker, J: Folk Medicine in Modern Egypt. London 1934, p. 64-7
119. Zwemer, S.M.: The Influence of Animism on Islam. 1920.
120. Greenberg, J.: Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion. New York, 1947

754 B. Evil-Eye Sickness ("Buda") and its Healing.
776 Even "zar" spirits are considered vulnerable to the evil-eye sickness, the most feared of all ailments. The human patient must either be cured or will die. The evil spirits, collectively named "buda" - though that name is taboo - are never benign, and must be exorcised. Buda possessions are less common than "zar". The most common method of the "evil-eye buda is to "drink the blood" of his victim, magically, so that he will slowly waste away. The buda spirit does this by draining the victim through the magic power of the evil eye.

a) Basic Concepts of "buda".

"Buda" is the personification of the evil eye, a concept that includes the evil spirit itself; the sorcerer, regarded as most commonly a male member of the professional, ethnic ironsmith caste passing on the power of the evil eye from generation to generation; and the"magical hyena" which serves the sorcerer as his favorite "horse", but into which he can also change himself at night. The hyena is, of course, the most typical and most active night-animal, and its habit of digging into fresh graves to consume the corpses, which can be observed almost daily, seems to confirm the connection in the Amhara mind.

[17] The foreign observer is reminded of the similarity to the were-wolf concept of medieval Europe, which was also regarded as personified in some ethnic minority; and the common evil-eye concept still casting fear all over the Middle East.[121]

121. Eisler, R.: Man into Wolf. London 1951
Jaussen, J.A.: Le Mauvais Deil. Revue Biblique, 33, Paris 1924, pp. 396-407

578 In the new courts established by the central government in
689 the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

326 How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda -
754 Falasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting
563 that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Falashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despising of this manual craft onto the Falashas and believe that Falasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passersby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces
● [71] of the supernatural. This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Amont the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous. Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

e. "Buda" doctors past and present

756 While the aforementioned dabtara is the most commonly
793 called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

776 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often
174 wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the
797 pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, demoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyēn"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits. [127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised tänqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only
[182] exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who hold the people in terror and exercise political power. [128]

[794 While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of
562] members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria. [129]

171 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and
754 other African concepts of magic is between the "buia" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

171/754 Amhara, and evil witchcraft feared by the geographically close Nilotic Azande. This is not surprising, since contact with the "Barya" people of the Nilotic Sudan is well known. In Azande society, persons who are "socially undesirable" are suspected of sorcery, but never the nobles and the rich.[130] Among the Amhara, too, [554] no "telleq ሰው" (great man, noble, rich) is likely to be accused as a "buda" sorcerer, while socially low-class groups doing the despised work of ironsmithing are immediately suspected when a "buda" case arises. In both societies, Azande and Amhara, such suspicion leads to prompt interrogation of the suspect, and revenge by the kinfolk of the victim. In this type of magic, social significance, i.e. ethnic relations in Amhara territory, is considerable.

177/755 Amhara healing of the spirit is psychological, in the first place of significance. In the second place of significance is the enormous syncretism, among linguistic, ethnic, religious and racial components of the art of healing. It presents one of the few outlets for "free enterprise" available in the Amhara tradition. It is this cultural syncretism over the centuries, which, despite the political isolation of Abyssinia, has maintained and developed the spirited character of the Amhara peasant.

130. Evans-Pritchard, E.E.: Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande. London 1937.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

764 of those departed, which would be vain did they be-
775 lieve they were already in the presence of God, and in possession of the greatest bliss possible, wanting nothing to complete it. "Remember," says their liturgy, "O Lord! the souls of thy servants, our father Abba Matthias, and the rest of our saints, Abba Salama, and Abba Jacob." In another place, "Remember, O Lord! the kings of Ethiopia, Abreha, and Atzbeha, Caleb, and Guebra Mascal." And again, "Release, O, Lord! our father Antonius, and Abba Macarius." If this is not directly acknowledging a separate state, it can have no meaning at all.

304 I have already said, that the Agaazi, the predecessors of those people that settled in Tigre from the
171 mountains of the Habab, were shepherds adjoining to the Red Sea; that they speak the language Geez, and are the only people in Abyssinia in possession of letters; that these are all circumcised, both men and women. The former term, as applied to men, is commonly known to every one the least acquainted with the Jewish history. The latter is, as far as I know, a rite merely Gentile; although in Africa, at least that part adjoining to Egypt and the Red Sea, it is much more known and more universally practised than the other. This I shall call *excision*, that I may express this uncommon operation by as decent a word as possible. The Falasha likewise submit to both.

These nations, however they agree in their rite, differ in their accounts of the time they received this ceremony, as well as the manner of performing it. The Abyssinians of Tigre say, that they received it from Ishmael's family and his descendants, with whom they were early connected in their trading voyages. They say also, that the queen of Saba, and all the women of that coast, had suffered excision at the usual time of life, before puberty, and before her journey to Je-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

rusalem. The Falasha again declare, that their circumcision was that commonly practised at Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, and in use among them when they left Palestine, and came into Abyssinia. 304 171

The circumcision of the Abyssinians is performed with a sharp knife, or razor. There is no laceration with the nails, no formula or repetition of words, nor any religious ceremony at the time of the operation, nor is it done at any particular age, and generally it is a woman that is the surgeon. The Falasha say, they perform it sometimes with the edge of a sharp stone; sometimes with a knife or razor, and at other times with the nails of their fingers; and for this purpose they have the nails of their little fingers of an immoderate length. At the time of the operation, the priest chants a hymn, or verse, importing, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast ordained circumcision!" This is performed on the eighth day, and is a religious rite, according to the first institution by God to Abraham.

The Abyssinians pretend theirs is not so; and, being pressed for the reason, they tell you it is because Christ and the apostles were circumcised, though they do not hold it necessary to salvation. But it is the objection they constantly make against eating out of the same plate, or drinking out of the same cup, with strangers, that they are uncircumcised; while, with the Egyptians or the Cophts, though equally strangers, they make no such difficulty. In the time of the Jesuits, when the Roman Catholic religion was abolished, and liberty given them to return to their old worship, their priests proclaimed a general circumcision; and the populace, in the first days of their fury, or triumph, murdered many Catholics, by stabbing them with a lance in that part, as they met them, repeating, in derision, the Jewish hymn, or ejacula- 304 609

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

304 the countenance of Azarias, the son of Zadok, the high priest, and the representatives of the twelve tribes who came with him at that time from Jerusalem.

304 It seems to me very extraordinary, that, if circumcision was originally a Jewish invention, all those
● 171 nations to the south should be absolutely ignorant of it, while others to the northward were so early acquainted with it; for none of those nations upon the Nile (excepting the Shepherds), either know or practise it to this day; though, ever since the 1400th year before Christ, they have been in the closest connection with the Jews. This would rather make me believe, that the rite of circumcision went northward from the plain of Mamre; for it certainly made no progress southward from Egypt. We see it obtained in Arabia, by Zipporah *, Moses's wife, circumcising her son upon their return to Egypt. Her great anxiety to have that operation immediately performed, shews that her's was a Judaical circumcision; there was no sin that attended the omission of this operation in Egypt; but God had said to Abraham †, "The soul that is not circumcised shall be cut off from Israel."

The Tcheratz Agows, who live between Lasta and Begemder, in an exceedingly fertile country, are not circumcised; and, therefore, if this nation left Palestine upon Joshua passing Jordan, circumcision was not known there; for the Agows, to this day, are uncircumcised. The same may be said of the Agows of Damot, who are settled at the head of the Nile. It will be seen by the two specimens of their different languages, that they are different nations, as I have alleged. Next to these are the Gafat, in a plain open country, who do not use circumcision; none of them

* Exod. chap. iv. ver. 25.
† Gen. chap. xvii. ver. 14.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

were ever converted to Judaism, and but few of them 304
to Christianity. The next are the people of Amhara, 171
who did not use circumcision, at least few of them, till after the massacre of the princes by Judith, in the year 900, when the remaining princes of the line of Solomon fled to Shoa, and the court was established there. The last of these nations that I shall mention are the Galla, who are not circumcised; of this nation we have said enough.

On the north, a black, woolly-headed nation, called the Shangalla, already often mentioned, bounds Abyssinia, and serves like a string to the bow made by these nations of the Galla. Who they are we know perfectly, being the Cushite Troglodytes of Sofala, Saba, Axum, and Meroe; shut up, as I have already mentioned, in those caves, the first habitations of their more polished ancestors. Neither do these circumcise, though they immediately bordered upon Egypt; while the Cushite, adjoining to the peninsula of Africa, certainly did. As, then, so many nations contiguous to Egypt never received circumcision from it, it seems an invincible argument, that this was no endemial rite or custom among the Egyptians, and, I have before observed, that it was of no use to this nation; as the reasons mentioned by Philo, and the rest, of cleanliness and climate, are absolute dreams, and now exploded; and that they are so is plain, because, otherwise, the nations more to the southward would have adopted it, as they have universally done another custom, which I shall presently speak of.

Circumcision, then, having no natural cause or advantage, being in itself repugnant to man's nature, and extremely painful, if not dangerous, it could never originate in man's mind wantonly and out of free-will. It might have done so indeed from imitation; but with Abraham it had a cause, as God was to make his

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

304 private family in a few years numerous like the sand of the sea. This mark, which separated them from
171 all the world, was an easy way to shew whether the promise was fulfilled or not. They were going to take possession of a land where circumcision was not known; and this shewed them their enemy distinct from their own people. And it would be the grossest absurdity to send Samson to bring, as tokens of the slain, so many foreskins, or prepuces, of the Philistines, if, as Herodotus says, the Philistines had cut off their prepuces a thousand years before.

304 I must here take notice, that this custom, filthy and barbarous as it is, has been adopted by the Abyssinians of Tigre, who have always been circumcised, from a knowledge that the nations about them were not circumcised at all. It is true they do not content themselves with the foreskin, and I doubt very much if this was not the case with the Jews likewise. On the contrary, in place of the foreskin, they cut the whole away, scrotum and all, and bring this to their superiors, as a token they have killed an enemy.

Although it then appears, that the nations which had Egypt between Abraham and them, that is, were to the southward, did not follow the Egyptians in the rite of circumcision; yet in another, that of excision, they all concurred. Strabo * says, the Egyptians circumcised both men and women, like the Jews. I will not pretend to say that any such operation ever did obtain among the Jewish women, as Scripture is silent upon it; and, indeed, it is nowhere ever pretended to have been a religious rite, but to be introduced from necessity, to avoid a deformity which nature has sub-

* Lib. xvii. p. 954.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

tent secluded and when they go out they ride mules astride, are completely veiled or rather covered up in their *chammas* and are accompanied by an escort on foot, one or two of whom walk or trot by the side of the mule holding the lady in position. 562

Getting on to the mule is an operation that must by no means be witnessed by the profane masculine eye; I remember on the occasion of the first visit paid to my wife by an Abyssinian lady of rank I went to the entrance to speed the parting guest. To my surprise a number of members of the escort took off their *chammas* and held them all round the mule so that their mistress could climb into her saddle in complete seclusion. 492 576

But rigid as may be the rules of privacy governing the lives of women, there are no harems, and no guard of eunuchs to watch over them as in Moslem countries. 562 644

Nevertheless other Eastern customs are practised, such as circumcision among men and a mild form of clitoridectomy among women; this custom, be it observed, is not as is often supposed of Jewish origin, but probably of much more remote antiquity, and is further evidence of the Hamitic descent of the Abyssinians; according to Gibbon circumcision had been practised "by the most ancient Ethiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness" and presumably not therefore as a religious rite. 304 171

The nation as a whole has not adopted European dress, although it is worn to some extent in Addis Ababa, and by individuals who have been to Europe. They are proud of their national dress and the Emperor still encourages its use at court functions and receptions at the palace. 291 177

The distinctive feature of the dress is the *chamma*, 291

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

related to Ge'ez, the ancient and liturgical language of Ethiopia, much as Italian is related to Latin.[1] It was in Tigre country that, during the first seven centuries A.D., the kingdom of Aksum reached heights of civilization never again attained in Ethiopia's history. Because of the antiquity of their region and the glory of their past, the Tigre are to some extent the cultural aristocrats of Ethiopia.

The Amhara inhabit vast areas of what are today the provinces of Bagemder, Gojjam, Wallo, and Shoa. Their language, Amharic, is the official language of Ethiopia.* Since the beginning of what is called the restored Solomonid Dynasty (1270), all but one of the emperors of Ethiopia have been Amhara.† The exception was a Tigre, Emperor Yohānnes IV (1872–89), though he sojourned for many years at Dabra Tābor in Amhara country, and Amharic was commonly spoken at his court.

The differences between Amhara and Tigre culture have not yet been studied systematically. Even so, one can say that their differences are not nearly so great as what the two groups have in common. Language forms the chief difference. Like Ge'ez and Tigrinya, Amharic is a Semitic language, ultimately descended from old South Arabic, but Amharic has been molded to a greater degree by indigenous Cushitic tongues. Other differences relate to minor variations in custom, greater communal orientation in some Tigre areas, and differences in temperament. But the two groups share the legacy of Aksum, the Ethiopic alphabet, Ge'ez literature, Monophysite Christianity, similar political and social institutions, and the same style of life. One would be justified in treating their traditional Abyssinian culture as a unity, as virtually all authors have done in the past.

In this book, however, I have chosen to focus on Amhara culture as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia. This has been done, first of all, because of my limited competence to deal with Tigre materials, since I am neither familiar with Tigrinya nor fortunate enough to have done field work in Tigre areas. But a less fortuitous reason is that any serious account of contemporary Ethiopia must begin with the fact of Amhara dominance. With respect to numbers, true, the Amhara are in a minority: Amhara probably comprise no more than one-quarter of Ethiopia's total population (now estimated at around twenty-two million). Their dominance is to be measured, rather, in political and cultural terms. On the political side it is manifest in the perpetuation of the Amhara monarchy and the preponderance of Amhara in top political offices. On the cultural side it appears in the spread of Amhara customs throughout the empire by officials, soldiers, settlers, and teachers, and in

* English is the second official language.

† A number of Amhara emperors since the mid-eighteenth century were partly of Galla stock, however.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
[175] Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[173] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).[6] Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[874] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in
Gojjam in the fourteenth century.[7] The important schools of *qenē* have al-
538 ways been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
19 delā, Wāsharā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre
have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use
[171] of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than
in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some
Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is
well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre
are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be
ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in
the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara
discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation
of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethio-
pia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only
in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.[8] They further maintain that
Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in
this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propae-
deutic to the study of religious texts.* Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar,
which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught
only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is
that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and there-
by enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method
of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized
by the formula *sam-ennā warq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara
life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

538 * The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by
running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by
example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of
the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student
goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him
all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 829 ful," and "loud-mouthed." England is liked because it is "highly civilized" and has a "good form of government"; but it is disesteemed because of its waning power, on the one hand, and its "cunning" and "treachery," and being imperialist, on the other. Russia is admired because of its power, its achievements in science, and its rapid attainment of "civilization." It is disliked, on the other hand, for being "aggressive" and "fostering war," and because of its "bad form of government" and its "atheism."

*883 829 921 171

TABLE 12

ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS FROM ETHIOPIA AND SEVEN OTHER COUNTRIES TOWARD WAR*

Country	Institution	Sex	War Is			Number
			Needless and Preventable (per cent)	A Necessary Evil (per cent)	Sometimes a Good Thing (per cent)	
Ethiopia	Secondary schools	M	46	11	43	(392)
	Secondary schools	F	46	18	36	(39)
	Colleges	M	45	20	35	(199)
Egypt	Higher Training College	M	31	34	34	(29)
	Women Teachers' Institute	F	39	35	26	(31)
France	University of Bordeaux	M	65	26	9	(105)
		F	74	26	0	(23)
Italy	Catholic University of the Sacred Heart	M	61	26	13	(39)
		F	46	44	10	(37)
Japan	Secondary school and colleges, Kyoto	M	72	16	8	(95)
		F	58	37	4	(119)
Mexico	National University of Mexico	M	51	23	26	(106)
		F	58	24	18	(103)
New Zealand	Victoria University College	M	72	16	12	(74)
		F	72	12	16	(51)
United States	Miami University	M	69	22	9	(112)
		F	64	33	3	(91)

* The Japanese data appear in Stoetzel, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
For the data on the other countries I am greatly indebted to a personal communication from Professor James Gillespie.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

own right. Indeed, the record of rebellions by nobility as well as clergy against the emperors of Ethiopia bespeaks a persisting dualism in the Abyssinian's disposition toward the monarchy itself. In principle, the emperor is reverenced. Widely held is the sentiment expressed in the *Kebra Nagast:* "It is not a good thing for any of those who are under the dominion of a king to revile him, for retribution belongeth to God."[16] But unquestioning deference is by no means necessarily coupled with unswerving loyalty. The Abyssinian pattern differs from the Japanese, in which total loyalty to the divine monarch calls for suicide in the wake of any disgrace one might have brought upon him. The norms of fealty to the emperor have not been so deeply internalized in Ethiopia, where the pardon and reinstatement of rebels has been a common occurrence. Among Abyssinians a veneer of genuine deference has often concealed an inner consciousness of disaffection, enabling the individual to act out rebellious wishes when the opportunity or need arises. Indeed, this ambivalence has been one of the traditional impulses behind the culture pattern of wax and gold.

The Old Nobility

The Abyssinians themselves acknowledge the existence of, in addition to the emperor, two groups of persons with pre-eminent status. These are called, both in Ge'ez and Amharic, the *makuānnent,* or "nobility," and the *kāhenāt,* or "clergy." While believing the presence of a king to be a precondition of civil order, they also regard the presence of these other elites as necessary for their good life. This attitude is expressed in the Amharic saying: "Fertility of the land [is] through the *makuānnent;* the splendor of the church [is] through the *kāhenāt.*"[17]

The term *makuānnent* may be used to refer to all secular dignitaries between the emperor and the well-to-do landowning peasantry. In strict contemporary usage, however, the *makuānnent* should be distinguished from two other classes of personages, whom we may call the "royal nobility" and the "local nobility" or "gentry." The former consists of the immediate royal family (*negusāwi bētasab*) and more distant royal relatives (*masāfent*). Because of their kinship with the Solomonic line these have at times been referred to as "chiefs of Israel."[18] Although it was customary for each new king to exile all male relatives who were potential candidates for the Crown to a high mountain fortress, more distant relatives might hold provincial governorates, and women of the royal family sometimes played an important role in court politics and provincial administration. Members of the royal nobility have normally been distinguished by special titles: *ābēto* (now vulgarized as *āto,* "Mister"), *le'ul,* and *lijj* for men; and *emebēt, le'elt,* and *wayzaro* (now vulgarized in the sense of "Mrs.") for women.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 Barradas: "Father, these villeins are like camels, they cry and groan when they
554 are loaded, but in the end they carry the load that is put on them."[34] They set themselves off from the commoners, not only because of their style of life and subculture, but also because they came from well-known families.

Such sentiments were shared by the commoners. They would much rather be governed by a man from a noted family than by a person promoted from
565 their own social level. The folkways expressed a disdain for the *nouvel arrivé,*
554 for example, by poking fun at the office of *liqa maḳuās* (the king's double in
644 time of battle). The *liqa maḳuās* was often a man from an unknown family, chosen because of his handsome features and resemblance to the king. The office permitted him to strut about in the king's clothes and inclined him to assume haughty airs. In some places it was customary to ridicule this upstart by referring to the minstrel, or *azmāri,* as *liqa maḳuās;* for the *azmāri,* too, was entitled to wear the kind of dress appropriate to the lord in whose banquet hall he performed, but the *azmāri* was a person of low prestige in Abyssinian society.

643 In other words: although the emperors could appoint and depose when-
565 ever they pleased, with or without cause; and though "the land and persons
554 of their subjects are equally their property, and every inhabitant of their kingdom is born their slave"; by itself the principle of royal favor is clearly inadequate to explain the Abyssinian pattern of social stratification. For, unlike the
[171] neighboring kingdom of Buganda, Abyssinia was not a straightforward despotism in which the dispensation of a *ḳabaḳa* was sufficient to elevate a man into the highest social stratum.[35] The claims of a quasi-hereditary noble status group have also had to be satisfied.

565 How did this status group arise, and how have its claims been expressed and justified? What has been the history of its relationship with the mon-
[423] archy? The existence of this class is anchored in the actual tendency for lands,
[631] office, and titles to be given to members of the same families. In reality, the
[554] emperors frequently let such possessions pass from father to son, either because they were in too distant a region or because there was no good cause for taking them away, and on occasion drew up written charters assigning grants
[423] of land to a man and his future descendants.[36] Indeed, one form of land tenure, known as *rĭsta-gult,* was precisely a sort of hereditary fief, given in
[631] exchange for military service over the generations. In certain areas, moreover, it was a matter of tradition that the governorship be given to members of a
[554] certain family. Finally, although no man inherited a title, as son of a noble-
[428] man he might inherit the culture and facilities that would give him a much better chance than any commoner to obtain a title of his own.

Two other aspects of Abyssinian society supported this tendency toward
[554] the development of what amounted to local dynasties of nobility. One was the prestige attached to the "chiefs of Israel," any of the nobility who could

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE PHENOMENA OF AMHARA ORALITY

155 Shortly after an Amhara child is born some butter is placed in his mouth. This
826 is done in the belief that it will keep his voice from becoming harsh. From
[856] that moment on, the mouth never ceases to be an organ of extraordinary
[192] importance in his life. Its cultural importance is reflected in the attention given to it in the Amharic vocabulary: Baeteman's *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* lists some sixty idioms built with the Amharic word for mouth, *af*, more than are listed for any other words in the language except "eye,"
[539] "heart," and "earth."[4] The organ is publicly celebrated in such proverbs as: "Cleverness of mouth, to the master; cleverness of hand, to the slave."

155 The oral zone is of course of universal significance. Some items of oral
826 imagery probably appear in most languages, and manifestations of oral libido
171 appear in many forms familiar to Westerners: the French love for gourmandism, the German passion for beer-drinking and singing, the American addiction to cigarettes, chewing gum, and "life-savers." Many of the less familiar phenomena to be related below in describing Amhara orality, moreover, are found in most of the cultures of Africa and the Middle East. But such phenomena often appear inconspicuously alongside other culturally patterned impulses and sublimations stemming from other phases of psychosexual development. What may distinguish the Amhara—and doubtless some other cultures—is the extent to which the oral zone is an object of attention and a source of behavioral modes and expressive symbolism. The Amhara, it appears, have a preoccupation with orality.

121 This preoccupation is manifest in three different kinds of phenomena.
155 There are, first of all, aspects of Amhara culture which express a strong positive attachment to the infantile experience of sucking, in pure and in numerous sublimated forms. These we shall designate as the phenomena of *oral erotism*. Second, there are the aspects of Amhara culture which express a
[152] strong positive attachment to the oral zone as a center for various aggressive activities—the modes which Erikson calls "incorporation by biting," "oral retention," and "oral intrusion." These we shall collectively designate as the phenomena of *oral sadism*. Finally, there are phenomena which express a conflict about the gratification of many of these oral desires; and these we shall refer to as the phenomena of *oral ambivalence*.

155 *Oral Erotism*

853 Feeding at the breast is a prominent and beloved experience in Amhara life. The Amhara infant is suckled whenever he wishes, at the slightest show of desire. Since he is rarely separated from his mother it is easy for him to satisfy himself at any time of day or night. Popular beliefs about breast-feed-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 571 [764] Spontaneous co-operation is most in evidence among the Amhara at times of crisis. When death is announced, relatives and friends promptly repair to the home of the deceased and offer their help. They build the coffin and construct a *dāss* (a temporary shelter near the house to accommodate all the expected visitors). They bring food and drink to help provide for the many who will come to pay their respects, and will similarly provide help on the occasion of the big memorial feasts to follow. Like assistance is rendered during other crises, such as prolonged illnesses or fire. Such forms of co-operation set another significant limit to egoistic orientation among the Amhara.

*121 181 156 571 578 691 It is in the realm of interaction involving serious interests, touching layers of the personality deeper than those required for the formalities of etiquette, that Amhara egoism is most conspicuous. Here everything seems to conspire against generous communication and concord of opinion. As we have already observed, the Amhara are quick to become argumentative in ordinary conversation. *Litigation* is one of the most prominent forms of interaction among the Amhara. One can scarcely spend a day in the Amhara countryside without encountering litigants, whether under a tree, at a marketplace, or in the courtyard of some lord. A nobleman can never travel about the country without being accosted on the way by litigants anxious to have him hear their stories.

121 181 571 578 691 171 Litigation is, of course, an endemic feature of peasant civilizations. Yet there can be no doubt that for the Amhara this form embodies a basic psychological disposition that differs from that of the people of other peasant civilizations. In traditional China, to take a case of marked contrast, such interpersonal conflict, far from being relished, was deliberately avoided. The Chinese considered going to court to be an extravagance, and the village judge was one of the most underemployed members of the community. In China, parties to a dispute preferred to assemble at the teahouse and to seek a solution through discussion and negotiation. The Amhara, on the other hand, seeks to maximize the opportunity for self-assertion through litigious disputes. Ordinary sociability among the Amhara is saturated with references to litigation. Current court cases comprise one of the more common topics of conversation.

*121 181 571 578 [691] [621] Beyond litigation, *conflict* is often expressed in more violent forms. Fights with the *dulā* erupt when altercation becomes too heated. Throwing stones is another accepted mode of combat, especially among youth. Protracted enmities tend to eventuate in such acts as house-burning, assault with swords or rifles, and (according to Amhara belief, at least) poisoning.

While it is true that Amhara culture provides means and a certain amount

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* Some indication of the gross national significance of this phenomenon is afforded by the following comparison: twenty-seven high court judges are sufficient to handle the litigation for all of England and Wales; the corresponding number for Ethiopia is *one hundred and eighteen.*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

omy during the past two decades, represents a significant growth of the capacity for voluntary formal organization in the modernizing sector.[41]

Māhebar (*Regional Associations*).—A type of formal association which has sprung up in Addis Ababa in recent years, becoming popular for the first time around 1960, is known as the *māhebar*. While its name is taken from the traditional Orthodox fraternal association, in aims and organization it is different from the religious *māhebar*. While the latter is devoted to honoring one of the saints and is convened primarily for feasting and sociability, the modern *māhebar* is organized on the basis of territorial or tribal bonds and is concerned with problems of social betterment. The first *māhebar* of this kind was established by the Gurage in the fifties.* Thereafter, the idea spread to members of other groups, and Addis Ababa residents originating in Gondar, Tigre, Harar, Manz, Tagulat, Fitche and elsewhere began to form *māhebar* of their own. The basic idea behind all these *māhebar* is to make some contribution to the welfare of the provinces through projects voluntarily financed and organized by fellow-countrymen living in the metropolis. These projects have included construction of roads, schools, and hospitals; supplying books for schools; and provision of facilities for assisting inhabitants of the provinces who come to the city. Members of the various *māhebar* convene weekly or biweekly, usually on Sunday in the vicinity of one or another of the Addis Ababa churches, to discuss their projects and make their financial contributions.

Formal Associations of Foreign Inspiration

Student Associations.—The Orthodox Students Association was founded in 1958 by a convention representing all the colleges and some of the secondary schools. Its successful establishment was due in large part to the efforts of an Indian Orthodox minister who at the time was one of the Emperor's private secretaries. There is some evidence that an earlier spontaneous effort to form such a group in the early fifties was checked by the government. Members of this association have been concerned with adapting the activities of the church to contemporary needs. They criticize the established church for its use of a dead language, excessive ritualism, and lack of teaching; and have proposed that the Orthodox Church should institute Sunday schools and

* The Gurage *māhebar* remains in a class of its own, with respect to size, wealth, and ambitiousness of program. The Gurage have also pointed the way to using the *māhebar* form in a way that transcends the narrow tribal or territorial passions which it has thus far tended to canalize. This has been done through the establishment of another, project-oriented *māhebar* concerned solely with building a road from Alam Gana to Wollamo Soddo, whose membership includes Galla and Wollamo as well as Gurage. This association has already collected well over a million dollars, and has completed the construction of a bridge. It is headed by a capable Gurage army general and its activities and collections are reported regularly in the Addis Ababa press.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

121 nally, data were gathered relating to the modes of acquiring, exercising, validating, and conserving powers of prophylaxis, diagnosis, and therapy. Here, as in the other areas of data gathering, a necessary distinction was made between the perceptions of practitioners and those of their clients.

*793 869 75 197 539 While the secular medical traditions of Ethiopia are exclusively oral, powerful cleric healers known as debteras have traditionally employed diagnositc, prophylactic, and therapeutic texts written in Ge'ez, the language of the Church, and in the vernacular. Numerous *793 114 127 debtera texts gave been collected in the libraries of Europe and the United States, and valuable translations, most notably by Marcel Griaule, Deborah Lifchitz, and Stefan Strelcyn, have been published. These published translations, together with translations made in the field with the assistance of clerics, have been utilized in the writing of those sections of Chapter Four dealing with the debtera's medical texts.

121 Although the focus of this dissertation is limited • 171 to the region in which field research was conducted, it should not be overlooked that the Amhara share important cultural affinities with peoples, now largely Islamic, occupying lands extending from the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.

000 The highlands of Begemder, Tigre, and Eritrea form

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ababa and Debra Berhan remains Galla country. The Amharas have re-occupied the region immediately around Debra Berhan, their southern limit corresponding roughly with the edge of the sheet; but the churches built to meet their needs (including the new St. Gabriel already once mentioned) are comparatively few and far between, a confirmation of the recent date of the re-colonization.

The Gallas remained in possession of the plateau country until the early nineteenth century when Sahele Selassie, king of Shoa, began to push them back. The half-dozen hill-top forts shown on the sheet almost certainly date from this time, or were reoccupied then. The capital of Shoa since the eighteenth century had been Ankober, on the edge of the great eastern escarpment, some 20 miles east of Debra Berhan. But Sahele Selassie, as part of his anti-Galla campaign founded, in about 1830, a new capital at Angolala in the midst of Galla country. He thereafter divided his time between Angolala and Ankober. A largely disused track, still well-defined in most parts, is shown crossing the sheet from Angolala in an easterly direction; this was evidently an old route joining the two capitals. Harris,[1] who conducted a British Mission to Sahele Selassie in 1841–42, visited Angolala which then contained four or five hundred huts. He also describes Sahele Selassie's two-storied "palace," built by an Albanian [2] visitor, standing on an eminence—which however the king would not inhabit, from fear of earthquakes. Angolala continued to be used by Sahele Selassie's son, king Haile Malakot, and the great Menelik, who was Haile Malakot's son, had been born here in 1843—just after the time of Harris's visit.

Not much remains now to show that Angolala was so recently the twin capital of Shoa; but the site of Sahele Salassie's house, an artificial mound crowning the ridge, is easily identified and commands a fine view of the countryside. Inside the mound is a vaulted cellar, its masonry showing clear signs of European workmanship, as also does the central stone-built element of the local church of Kidane Meheret. This work is now exposed to view as the church was burnt down during the Italian occupation. Angolala remains a well-populated area, but only a very few huts now stand among the remains of defensive walls near the old royal residence.

The young Menelik, up to the age of twelve, must have known all this country well. But at that time (1855) the newly crowned emperor Theodore, whose ambition was the unification of Ethiopia after a century and a half of anarchy and internal strife, came down from the north with the object of subjecting Shoa to his personal rule. He defeated king Haile Malakot on the plains of Atakilt, the irrigated area just south-east of Debra Berhan. Haile Malakot died immediately after the battle, and Menelik was carried away captive by Theodore—who, however, afterwards treated him as a son rather than a prisoner. For some years Menelik followed in the emperor's train, moving with him from Gondar to Debra Tabor and then to the hill-fortress of Magdala, Theodore's last capital and later the scene of his undoing. Several years before Napier's siege of 1868 Menelik had escaped from Magdala during, it is said, one of Theodore's periodic orgies. A youth in

[1] Harris, 'The Highlands of Aethiopia,' London, 1844.
[2] It is much more likely that Harris meant an Armenian.

3: Buxtor Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 his early twenties, he found his way back to Ankober and assumed his rights as king of Shoa.

Menelik, who was a restless and imaginative character as well as a great soldier, soon began the series of vast conquests in the southern Galla lands which were to double the size of Ethiopia. It is therefore not surprising that he should have abandoned Ankober in favour of a capital within easier reach of his newly acquired territories. He first reverted to Debra Berhan, then made a new temporary capital at Liché, a few miles to the north-east. Here, [172] at one end of a long, low hill are various remains of massive dry-stone walls as at Angolala, and the raised platform, only about 20 feet across, on which stood Menelik's personal dwelling. But the site is now uninhabited. In the 1880's Menelik, his southern conquests rapidly extending, moved his capital south-westwards to Entotto, in the midst of country newly retrieved from the Gallas. This was a magnificent site, 10,000 feet high and overlooking the plain and the splendid circle of mountains which form the setting of the present capital. Entotto was, however, unsuitable as the site of a permanent [312] city. It is said, also, that Menelik's wife Taitu craved for a warmer residence and especially for the curative waters of the hot springs (the present Fil Wuha baths) on the edge of the plain below. So in 1889, the year in which he was crowned emperor in succession to John IV, Menelik moved down, and Addis Ababa was founded at the foot of the hills, 1500 feet below.

This digression completes our brief review of the historical associations of the area represented on the map. The remainder of this paper will deal with the present inhabitants, their distribution and their way of life.

361 It has already been said that the population of the area is greater than at first sight appears. The small, stone-built huts are inconspicuous objects, especially as they are seldom massed together to form a village but are widely scattered in small groups. Moreover the motor-road follows for the most part an exposed tract which carries less than the normal population. Travellers driving through therefore carry away a false impression: they can see little of the more populated areas, nothing of the gorges, and not a single one of the numerous churches of the region, except those of Debra Berhan itself.

I attempted to mark every inhabited place on the map. In very many cases the single dot indicates several households, and may be taken to represent, on 162 an average, two households of five to six persons each or eleven souls. On 361 this basis the population of the whole area of 102 square miles comes to about 15,500 or 152 per square mile—a high average by African standards. (This excludes Debra Berhan itself which would add a further 2000 or so.) The population is not, however, evenly distributed, and the area may be divided into three parts which, with their areas and population densities (again ignoring Debra Berhan) are as follows:

General plateau: 60 square miles—116 per square mile.

Plateau between or within 1 km. of gorges: 22 square miles—240 per square mile.

The gorges themselves: 20 square miles—162 per square mile. (This indicates a very high concentration on the "shelves" and a few other favoured spots, for a great part of the gorge area is, of course, uninhabitable.)

212 to facilitate the teaching of Amharic to non-Amharic Ethiopians, illiterates, and for typing.

642 779 This latter change has not been made largely because of theopposition of the Abyssinian church. The Emperor is officially "Defender of the Faith". His connection with the church follows Old Testament patterns during the reigns of David and Solomon. The "tabot " (ark), which Emperor Menelik I supposedly spirited away from the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem to its secret place at Aksum, is regarded as guarding the liberty of the countryto this day. Church and State are thus intimately connected, and when Mussolini threatened Ethiopia, the Emperor and his chieftains swore to defend the "tabot" with their lives. After liberation, the Coptic Abyssinian church was reaffirmed as the State church, though weakened in its temporal powers(esp. feudal land tenure). When the last link with Alexandria was severed a few years ago, the Abyssinian church became fully the established state church.

● 173 The traditional epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty", the book "Käbrä Nägäst", is still honored officially, and taken literally by the people. It contains an extension of the Biblical story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to the court of King Solomon, and claims she conceived a son, Menelik I, the first Abyssinian ruler of the Solomonic Dynasty. The book may possibly date from the 13th century, justifying the resumption of this dynasty.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Falasha MP9

A [157] A 563

irony. They are a happy people with a deep love of the natural world around them.

The Tigraians of the north are different. There is something hard and seasoned about a Tigraian which makes him easily distinguishable from an Amhara. The Tigraian is rather the yeoman type. The sharper drier climate of the borders of Eritrea gives him something which recalls a little the ruggedness and shrewdness of the Castilian. There is a determined look in the Tigraian eye which contrasts with the wild and passionate glance of the Amhara. The Amhara and the Tigraians, with the kin Hadendoa of Eritrea, represent varying degrees of mixing of the Hamitic and Semitic stocks.

A 563 F 105

The Agau, on the other hand, are said to be the descendants of the pure Hamitic stock—believed to be aboriginal to the Ethiopian Highland. They may well be "the blameless Ethiopians" of the ancients.[1] The judaised mountaineers of the Simen mountains speak an Agau dialect. There are islands of Agau in Gojjam, particularly along the line of the Western Escarpment. To the best of my knowledge these people together with the neighbouring negroid Gumuz of the Shankalla wilderness, another very primitive stock, have never been seriously studied. The language and customs of the Agau must be of considerable interest from the aspect of comparative linguistics and folklore.

The Agau villages through which we passed between the Escarpment and Njabara were miserably poor in the midst of an often fertile countryside: goitre, elephantiasis, and leprosy were rife. The people have long been a serf population under Amhara overlords; but in the tenth century they threw up the brilliant Zagwe dynasty which ruled Ethiopia for more than three centuries. The Zagwe episode in Ethiopian history seems to have represented some reaction of the older people of the Highland against the Amhara elements intruding from the north.

It may be of interest to refer here, in connection with the Agau, to the so-called Falashas or Black Jews. The main centre of the Falashas, who are Agau-speaking, has been in the Simen Mountains, but during the last century they have become scattered about all the north of the Ethiopian Highland. The religious practises of the Falashas are stated by people who have studied them to be those of the Jewish faith before the Babylonian captivity. The Falashas may therefore represent a remnant of a very old Jewish dispersion, or at least an early penetration of Jewish influences into the Ethiopian Highland.

A ● 173 ●

Again it has been pointed out by Luca di Sabelli, Conte Rossini, and others that the ritual of the Coptic Church in Ethiopia retains a number of practises which were a part of the Jewish religion before the Captivity.[1] These cultural remnants from the past have a bearing on the tenacious tradition in Ethiopia that the Royal House is descended from Menelik (=ibn el-Hakim="son of the doctor" or "the sage") who was reputed to be a natural son of Solomon and Balkis (Arab) or Makeda (Ethiopian) Queen of Sheba. If this legend is rationalized it may be postulated that folk traditions of early Jewish associations were given literary form, in the early centuries of the Christian era, by Coptic monks familiar with Old Testament history.

[1] Luca di Sabelli, 'Storia d'Abissinia,' vol. 1.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
[175] Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[173] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).[6] Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[874] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in
538 Gojjam in the fourteenth century.[7] The important schools of *qenē* have al-
19 ways been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
[171] delā, Wāsharā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre
have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use
of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than
in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some
Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is
well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre
are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be
ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in
the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara
discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation
of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethio-
pia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only
in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.[8] They further maintain that
Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in
this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propae-
deutic to the study of religious texts.* Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar,
which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught
only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is
that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and there-
by enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method
of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized
by the formula *sam-ennā warq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara
life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

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538 * The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by
running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by
example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of
the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student
goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him
all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 361 sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

[132] Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most [312] pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā [132] [241] twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, some-

*175 643

TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāssi (Nagāssē Kristos)	Abēto	169?–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebstē (Sebstyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbīyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Takla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwoflos	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yosṭos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāhla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	***		***
		Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

*175 361 [132] [241] [231] times three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and livestock are produced in abundance.

The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's *175 633 time of power.[5] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The towns- [162] people of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more [463] conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he [173] was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose [361] name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

*175 Gondar has been described at first hand by numerous travelers and scholars, from the time of Poncet (1699) to the present day, only two foreign authors had penetrated Manz prior to my field trip there, and then hastily—the British missionary Krapf, for two days in 1842, and Sbleillet, a French explorer (and friend of Rimbaud), for two days in 1882.[14]

Nevertheless, two circumstances of the era of recovery give Manz a special historical significance. First, since Manz was practically the only part of Shoa not overrun by the Galla, it was able to provide a base from which an Amhara offensive to reconquer the south was launched. It is for this reason that Shoans sentimentalize Manz as *ya-amāra mĭnçh* ("the Amhara's source"). Second, Manz was the birthplace of a line of rulers which culminated in the present imperial family of Ethiopia.

Both of these circumstances have been endowed with supernatural significance by latter-day supporters of the Shoan throne, much as *The Glory of Kings* added religious sanction to the Shoan Dynasty of the thirteenth century. In *Darsāna Rāguēl,* a homily in honor of the archangel Raguel which came to light during the early part of Menelik's reign, they are made the subject of a prophecy of Emperor Lebna Dengel.[15] In this homily Lebna Dengel, overcome by the destruction wrought by the forces of Ahmad Gragn, prays to the Virgin Mary for seven days. When Mary at last appears, she rebukes the king for forsaking the piety of his fathers and urges him to repent. She is followed by the angel Raguel, who announces to the humbled king what is to be the fate of his country and his children. "For two hundred and fifty years there will be many pagans throughout the land of Shoa . . . but not in Manz, for it is the land guarded by Uriel, the angel who gathered the pure blood from the side of Christ."[16] As for the sons of Lebna Dengel, Yā'qob—who is said to have sojourned in Manz during and after the time of Grāñ, and from whom the House of Manz claims descent—"will dwell in your land, in peace and safety. . . . Among the children of the king Yā [the prophecy alludes to persons and places by their initial syllables] one will remain in Manz, by the will of our God, for this son of Yā will love the angel Uriel. . . . The King beloved by the angel Uriel and issue of the house of Yā will govern Shoa."[17]

To some extent, moreover, Manz is noted for its connection with important events and sovereigns of earlier centuries. According to Ethiopian tradition, Manz was the refuge of the sole survivor of Aksumite royalty, Anbasā Wedem, who is believed to have fled south to Manz when Aksum was sacked in the tenth century.[18] Manz was the object of some attention under Emperor Zar'a Yā'qob (1434–68), who established a monastery at Ferkutā in eastern Manz, and during whose reign was written a biography of the "apostle of Manz," Yohānnes the Oriental, who converted wild beasts and overcame the dragon.[19] His successor, Ba'eda Māryām (1468–78), made his camp

[173]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

for a while at Masala Māryām in Manz. His sojourn there, remembered to this day, is recorded in the amusing rhymed formula with which he exacted tribute from the various districts near his camp: 175* [539]

> From Agāntchā/fifty *ḳoretchā* ("saddles"); from Hulu Dehā/fifty *dehā* ("servants"); from Aftanaṭ/fifty *naṭ* ("rugs"); from Godambo/fifty *gambo* ("jars of drink").

It was from Manz that Ba'eda Māryām brought priests to officiate at his coronation in Djagno.[20] According to Shoan beliefs, finally, Manz also served as a refuge during the invasions of Ahmad Grāñ for the fourth son of Lebna Dengel (1507–40), Yā'qob, who is said to have fled there with the royal raiments and received succor from the local inhabitants.

According to *Futuḥ el-Habacha,* Manz was ravaged by the forces of Grāñ in 1531.[21] Scarred timbers identified as pillars of churches burned during that invasion may be seen there today. Local legends concerning the history of Manz relate for the most part to the miraculous feats of strength which Grāñ is said to have performed there and to the resettlement of Manz after Grāñ. These legends speak of the "founding" of Manz by three men—Māmā, Lālo, and Gērā—who were sent by one of the emperors to settle and govern that territory. As the story goes, the emperor offered each of them as much land as he could cross in a single day. They set out from the Adabāy River, today a western boundary of Manz, and the result of their long day's journey was the present tripartite division of Manz into Māmā Meder, Lālo Meder, and Gērā Meder. This explains why Gērā Meder is the largest of the three districts—for Gērā's horse was the strongest! 175* 173

Although their deeds are recorded only in the form of legends, Māmā, Lālo, and Gērā were historical personages. They appear to have lived in the latter part of the seventeenth century.[22] Gērā was the most powerful of the three, as the legend of his horse suggests. He controlled most of the land of Manz, including Afqārā, an impregnable mountain fortress which was used for generations as a garrison for political prisoners. He set aside a large stretch of grassland to be used by local people for grazing cattle and providing thatch for roofs, where still today it is forbidden to plow or build houses. 175*

Not these three lords, however, but one of their rivals—Nagassē Kristos Warada Qāl, commonly known as Nagāssi—put Manz on the map. Nagāssi was born to a wealthy proprietor in the district of Agāntchā. As a young man he showed outstanding valor and skill at arms. His success in battle won him many followers, who helped him advance from enlarging his possessions at the expense of his neighbors to the conquest of Galla territories southeast of Manz.

Nagāssi's ambition was fed by his victories. He proclaimed himself ruling prince of Shoa, and vanquished those who disputed this claim, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations 155
which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged 152
ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which [763]
occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news [764]
evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and [726]
boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive 155
fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training* 757
and Personality. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[13] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general [539]
principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy 155
water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of 755
affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of 155
prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. 751
Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute 155
magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit 789
use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human 261
problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formula- [191]
tion, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a [173]
baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ĭnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution
789 of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of
261 eating something or presenting food to someone.[14] It is a theme conspicuous
173 in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85). According to *The Book of the*
[539] *Riches of Kings,* Yekuno Amlāk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zāgwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[15]

155 *Oral Sadism*

152 In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the envi-
201 ronment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When
155 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong
152 biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following
726 refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:
[539]

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[16]

155 The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagi-
266 nation. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the
773 story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater
[532] of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

consequence of substantial loss of accustomed mother love at the time of weaning—a mild but chronic state of mourning which gives a depressive undertone to the rest of life—is certainly one of the more evident characteristics of most Amhara.[22] At the same time the Amhara child is made anxious about his actual oral gratifications. He no longer eats whenever he wants to, but only after he has waited for the adults to finish their meal. He is no longer entitled to the choicest food, mother's milk, but to poorer food and leftovers. And he is made increasingly aware of the adult anxieties about eating connected with the fasting requirements, and with the food shortages of the rainy season.

Applying the Whiting-Child hypotheses in the light of these observations one may characterize the development of an ambivalent preoccupation with the oral zone by Amhara as follows: an initially very high level of oral satisfaction enjoyed during the nursing period makes oral gratification a particularly attractive source of pleasure as well as a desired refuge for the psyche under the pressure of later deprivations; while the emotional and nutritional deprivations which the Amhara child experiences toward the end of the nursing period and thereafter undermine the sense of security acquired during his indulged infancy and make him anxious about the fount of that security, oral gratification.*

Whatever the precise ontogenetic basis of this phenomenon may prove to be, the Amhara's ambivalent preoccupation with orality is projected at the *cultural* level in the form of two contrasting human ideals. The secular masculine ideal in Amhara culture is a hero of oral gratification and prowess. He is a man who eats much and drinks much, and who excels in litigation, in declaiming the martial chants, and in composing veiled insults. The religious ideal, on the other hand, is a hero of oral renunciation. The most devout Amhara are considered those who keep all of the fasts, even the esoteric ones; or even, as monks and ascetics, live on a fasting diet the year round—in the extreme case, feed on leaves as hermits. The association of religious virtuosity with oral renunciation reaches its logical climax in legends about Gabra Manfas Qeddus ("Servant of the Holy Spirit"), the most hallowed Amhara saint. In contrast with the normal Amhara boy who nurses for close to three years, Gabra Manfas Qeddus is said to have been at his mother's breast for only three months, when a bird swept down one day and carried him away.

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* While this formulation may leave more questions unanswered than it solves—a purely behaviorist formula inevitably neglects the dynamics of defensive operations and the significance of ambivalence—it carries us as far as our data permit and may provide a useful point of departure for further discussion and investigation of Amhara psychology.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 571

> Our people always speak indirectly, in secrets. For example, a man will come, asking for the glass he loaned another man. The debtor says he will bring it in a week, that it has been broken and he will send for a new one. The man may say: "Oh, never mind. It doesn't matter to me, don't bother." The debtor will then be scared; thinking that the owner of the glass is in his stomach quite angry and ready to kill him, he will take his gun and get the man first.[16]

The suspiciousness which so colors interaction among the Amhara has been viewed by some observers primarily as an adaptive response to some very real dangers with which Ethiopia has chronically been confronted: the threat of conversion to Western forms of Christianity by European missionaries, the threat of European imperialism, and the threat of encirclement and occupation by a militant Islam. These factors have undoubtedly intensified the apprehensiveness of Ethiopia's leaders and strengthened the much publicized xenophobic attitude of the Amhara people, just as the proliferation of security networks during the postliberation period has intensified the generalized distrust on the domestic scene. But these attitudes flourish as they do because they are nurtured on the soil of a basic disinclination to trust one another that is endemic in traditional Amhara culture.

That culture is marked, *au fond,* by a sense of despair about the possibilities of concord and enduring consensus among men, and, in more practical terms, by a realization that people who spend so much of their time deceiving one another are not to be trusted very much. *Sawen mämman baḳantu naw* ("it is futile to trust in man")—so runs an Amharic epigram sometimes woven ornamentally into wool rugs; and it carries a secular-practical as well as a religious-speculative meaning. This disposition is institutionalized in the custom of *wäss,* according to which any sort of civil transaction—hiring a man as a servant, or lending money, or litigating in court—involves as one of the first steps the securing of a *wäss,* or "guarantor," who agrees to make good for any damages caused by the man he is backing.[17] It also appears in the custom of continually challenging the assertions made by someone who is relating an episode, so that the speaker is forced to interlard his narration with oaths that swear by the truth of what he is saying. The Amhara tendency to "overinterpret" and impute deception appears in their conception of the very origins of their language, for informed traditional Amhara commonly believe that Amharic originated as a secret language during the reign of the legendary Falasha Queen Yodit.

[173]

*121 181 571 198

A penchant for *secrecy* is pronounced among the Amhara and constitutes still another aspect of the individualistic disposition. In culturally elaborated forms it appears in the predilection for employing secret languages, including the argots of merchants, minstrels, and *zär* victims,[18] and the secret language

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

11. The letter was made available to the author through the courtesy of an Ethiopian informant. The text paraphrases Psalm 79. [27]
12. This and the following section draw in part on material which has been published elsewhere, together with other material on Manz not included here. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, IX (Spring 1964), 204–11. [27] [113]
13. The boundaries of Manz proper include the Mofar River in the south, the Adabāy and Wānchet rivers in the west, the Qechenē River in the north, and in the east a long chain of mountains which pour forth the waters that drain across Manz and which divide it from the lowlands of Efrātā, Gedem, and Qawat. Accurate maps of Manz and its boundaries are not yet available.
14. Their itineraries are described in Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals* (London, 1843); and Paul Soleillet, *Voyages en Éthiopie* (Rouen, 1886). 113
15. A. Caquot, "L'homélie en l'honneur de l'archange Raguel," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 91–122.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
18. Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *Ya-Ityopyā Tārik Ka-Aṭsē Lebna Dengel Eska Aṭse Tēwodros* (Addis Ababa: Tensā'ē Za-Gubā'ē Press, 1949 E.C.), p. 20.
19. Cerulli, *op. cit.*, pp., 101–3.
20. Doresse, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
21. Chahab ad-Din Ahmad, *Futuh el-Habacha*, trans. D'Abbadie and Paulitschke (Paris, 1898), p. 342.
22. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *op. cit.*, p. 208.
23. This account of Nagāssi, like the accounts of his descendants which follow, has been constructed from a variety of sources, which, while differing in details, agree on the essential points presented here unless otherwise indicated. Oral traditions were obtained from Amhara informants in Manz and Addis Ababa. The chief written sources consulted include: Heruy Walda Selassie, an unpublished and untitled manuscript on the history of Ethiopia (part of which was published in his *Wā-Zēmā* [Addis Ababa, 1923 E.C.]); Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *op. cit.*; Tādassa Za-Waldē, *Ya-Abētohun Yā'qob Teweldennā Aṭcher Tārik* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1948 E.C.); Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du Règne de Ménélik II* (2 vols.; Paris: Librairie Orientale et Américaine, 1930–32); Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Cafa* (3 vols.; Rome, 1886–87); Major W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844); Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*; and Soleillet, *op. cit.* [173] [115]
24. The related claim set forth by his dynasty—that Nagāssi was in the direct line of descent from Lebna Dengel—is less universally acknowledged by Ethiopians. It is still a controversial question whether or not Nagāssi was actually related to Lebna Dengel and, if so, by what route. 173 175

    The official genealogy traces the descent line as follows: Lebna Dengel—Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Warada Qāl—Lebsa Qāl—Nagāssi. This is the account set forth in Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā's history. The other Shoan authors who

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

173 175 deal with this matter present different pictures, however. Blāttēngētā Heruy and Guèbrè Sellassié telescope the genealogy: Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Nagāssi. Tādassa Za-Waldē, on the other hand, leaves the question open; he identifies Segew Qāl as one of Yā'qob's sons, and refers to Nagāssi as father of the Shoan Dynasty, but affirms nothing concerning a connection between Segew Qāl and Nagāssi.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that none of these versions was reported to European travelers in the nineteenth century prior to the ascendance of Menelik. According to information given Major Harris by Shoan informants in the 1840's, Nagāssi inherited royal blood through his mother, who was said to be a granddaughter of "a daughter of the House of Solomon." Four decades later Soleillet was told still another story, namely, that "the kings of Shoa are now of the House of David, heirs of Solomon, cousins of Christ" not through Nagāssi, but by virtue of the marriage of his great-great-grandson, Asfā Wassan, to a relative of the imperial family at Gondar. Cecchi, finally, mentions none of these legitimizing affiliations.

113 25. Heruy manuscript, p. 19.
26. The latter version is given by Cecchi.
27. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; London, 1790), III, 255–56.
28. Cecchi, *op. cit.*, I, 241.
29. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
30. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 9.
31. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
32. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 12.
33. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 301. Heruy's account of the rebellion of [114] Matakō is considerably different. We are following Harris and Krapf here since they were virtually contemporaneous with the events, and would have no particular reason not to record them faithfully.
34. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 302.
35. Harris, *op. cit.*, II, 133.
36. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), p. 173.
[103] 37. The word "Manz" (or "Manzeh"), according to local clergy, stems from a Ge'ez expression which means "land on which Christ's blood was sprinkled."
38. Ludolphus, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
39. The architecture and layout of the imperial compound are described in Monti della Corte, *I castelli di Gondar* (Rome: Società Italiana Arti Grafiche, 1938).
40. On the role of the *abuna*, cf. below, chap. v.
41. C. Poncet, "A Voyage to Ethiopia," *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1949), p. 61.
42. This is what has been called an orthogenetic, as distinguished from a heterogenetic, pattern of cultural development. Cf. Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, III, No. 1, 53–73.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

113 34. A. Klingenheben, "Zur Amharischen Poesie," *Rassegna di studi etiopici*, XV (1959), 5–20.

[173] 35. Clyde Kluckhohn's statement that "Where dependence on memory exists, there seems to be an inevitable tendency to emphasize the correct perpetuation of the precious oral tradition," reflects, if the Amhara case is at all typical, an exaggerated view of the rigidity of the oral tradition that is shared by many students. *Mirror for Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949), p. 30.

36. D'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

37. Stories with this theme numbered 27 per cent; the next highest category was only 9 per cent. The data are reported in Edith Lord, *Culture Patterns in Ethiopia* (Washington, D.C.: International Co-operation Administration, 1959), p. 28.

38. Cf. Immanuel Wallerstein, *Africa: The Politics of Independence* (New York: Random House, 1961), p. 134.

39. Cf. Richard Pankhurst and Endreas Eshete, "Self-help in Ethiopia," *Ethiopia Observer*, II, No. 11 (December, 1958), 354–64.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 356.

41. Besides Pankhurst and Eshete, cf. Asfaw Damte, *"Ekub," UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 8 (1938), pp. 63–76.

42. Luther, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

43. On the inhibition of individuality as a generic problem among the new nations cf. Edward Shils, *Political Development in the New States* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1962), pp. 37–38.

44. The classic response of the European mentality to this trait appears in Plowden's famous remark: "Once vanquish [the Abyssinians'] idea that they are perfect, that they are the favoured people on earth, and that nothing can be taught them, and they will be quick and intelligent to learn and to imitate"; *op. cit.*, p. 396.

45. William Seed, "Censorship in Ethiopia," *Manchester Guardian*, Oct. 7, 1954.

*787 539 stars his destiny is linked.[29] For this, the debtera must know the subject's autonym, the year (zemene) and month of his birth, and whether he was born during the day or night; division is by twelve. Here, the text indicates both the name of the subject's star, and a variety of information relevant to all people who are bound to *[753] this star. Among this information, the following medical data figure prominently: 1) Prophylactic and diagnostic notations specifying the ailments and pathogenic *[755] agents which threaten the subject; 2) prophylactic notations regarding the manufacture of the kitab, its appropriate digam (indicated by generic title), and the construction of an effective telsem most appropriate to the [782] subject; 3) therapeutic notations regarding pharmacology *[218] and the choice of suitable sacrifices (indicated in terms of color, combination of colors, animals, combinations of animals, substitute animals).

The text further stimulates and focuses prophylactic interests, by indicating the following concomitants of illnesses which threaten for the future: 1) The days,

[29] Stars one, five and nine are identified by name with fire; two, six, and ten with earth; three, seven and • [193] eleven with air; four, eight and twelve with water. Debteras trace the origins of awdunigist variously to the court of Solomon and to certain monasteries of medieval Ethiopia.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

x 794
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114

Arabic loanwords include:

Alla (h) - master, God, heaven
Awleya - (from Arabic "awliya", plural of waliy, saint), chief zars
Kafir - Arabic term for the Christian Ethiopians
Qwaha - coffee (from Arabic qahwa; Amharic uses "bunna"); coffee and perfume are taken over from Arabs, and are essential parts of the Zar ceremony.

Galla loanwords:

farda - Galla for horse, here meaning slave possessed by a zar; "faräs", Amharic for horse, is taboo.
waqiyä yemmäsgän - Waq is Galla for "God", yemmasgan is Amharic for "be praised." Total means: thank you.

There are also Woyto loanwords.

It is natural that an argot of a professional language should borrow expressions from another language with which it comes in contact....The (zar) belief might have originated with the autochthonous population of Ethiopia - the Woyto probably belong to this population - and the Amhara might have taken it over from them together with some expressions....."

x 794
198

One might add to these conclusions by Dr. Leslau that in recent years Arabic loanwords are increasingly being used in the zar argot, perhaps due to the improvement of trade routes to the Sudan. Also, the poet who must compose somewhat new poetry for special occasions in the zar cult, is the prime agent for the introduction of Arabic loanwords and usages such as addressing a powerful make zar spirit as "Prophet" (in imitation of Muslim usage).

x 794
171
174

Problems of the distribution of the "zar" and simlar cults in Africa and the Middle East, such as questions as to the origin and the diffusion of the cult, are more difficult and complex.

Some linguists believe that the term "zar" is of Cushitic origin (Dr. Leslau, would seem to agree with this). This would antedate the

x 194 Hadramauti (South Arabian) colonization of Abyssinia about 2500 years
171 ago. According to this view, the term is derived from the supreme
• 174 divinity of the "pagan" Cushites, the God-heaven called "Jar" (pronounced djar) in Agau, the old-Cushitic language of Western Ethiopia [104].

The term for the zar ceremony, "wädaja" (lit. love feast) evidently is derived from the Amharic stem "wäddädä" (lit. he loved; to love), unless one concludes that both Amhara and Galla peoples derive the concept from an ancient, common Cushitic origin, the opinion of Dr. Michel Leiris [105].

The bulk of evidence would indicate a "Cushitic" origin for the zar cult. Indeed, the distribution of it and closely related cults is found most intensely in the geographical areas in which Cushitic is spoken.

[114] Among the Cushitic-speaking Galla tribes of southern Ethiopia, Dr. Cerulli [106] found a cult of worship of similar "nature spirits", upon which the God of the conquering Abyssinians was placed later, and he infers that the same happened to the one-time sky-god of the Agau, pre-Semitic inhabitants of Cushitic-speaking northern Ethiopia. As a result, when northern Ethiopia became Christianized, the "zar", the former sky god, was demoted to a possessive spirit. Diffusion of the zar cult, Dr. Cerulli believes, was then carried by Abyssinian slaves into the Arab countries such as Egypt, the Hidjaz of Arabia and Oman, where the zar cult survives under its original name, "sar" or "sar".

104. Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People Possessed by a Spirit; also Cerulli; "Zar" in Encyclopedia of Islam, 1933, p. 1217

105. Leiris, M: L'Afrique Fantôme. Paris 1934, pp. 336-7, 440.

106. Cerulli, E: Etiopia Occidentale, Vol 2, p. 35

751 their happiness from showing. Eating and drinking in the open makes one
754 extremely vulnerable, because this arouses buda's greed, and at the
776 same time makes it easier to penetrate the victim's body, through the wide open mouth and unguarded nose. Therefore, old-time Amhara cover their faces when eating in front of strangers.

751 This attempt to reduce vulnerability is closely related to some
754 of the "language of the shamma" (toga). In the presence of strangers,
291 this can be draped in the fashion that indicates "reserve" - covering the mouth, or even nose and mouth, with the front section of the toga, which has been draped in a turtleneck. When travelling in strange districts, which are doubly dangerous because of cast-out buda spirits hidden by exorcisers along trails, a strong-smelling
[824] herb pushed in the nostril, is often used as a prophylactic. The most commonly used of these herbs is "tena adam" (lit. health of Adam, i.e. mankind). The mouth should be kept closed, or covered. In a fearful situation, he may say "shadow, may it not fall on me". Touching iron, considered specially "strong", also helps. Children are warned to stay away from strangers, and never to leave a baby unattended, lest "buda will eat you". The term "eat" is regularly used for buda possession (not for zar possession), for it indicates consumption.

751 Typhus ("tälälafi bäsheta") and severe epilepsy ("yäbuda bäsheta")
754 the latter literally ascribed to buda (lit. buda disease) are the most
174 common ailments promptly diagnosed as "buda" "eating". Evidently
[164] Amhara doctors long ago observed that covering the mouth and nose and staying away from possibly infected strangers reduced the exposure to certain contagious diseases; they then proceeded to envelop this observation in the culture pattern, including the draping of the toga and stopping up the nose, and not eating uncovered in the presence of strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

776 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often
174 wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the
797 pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, demoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyēn"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits. [127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised ṭänqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only
[182] exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who hold the people in terror and exercise political power. [128]

[194 While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of
562] members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria. [129]

171 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and
754 other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Tulama MP25

A 177

In terms of historical probability it should be emphasized that at many periods during the millennium before the Christian era Jewish influences waxed strong in the interior of Arabia and along the eastern coast of the Red Sea. There was regular intercourse between the two coasts of the Red Sea and the Aksumite kingdom on the borders of Eritrea, and the Ethiopian Highland emerged as a city-state similar in character to the city-states along the Arabian coast, and in culture more than half Semitic.

600

To the north of the Syrian area the tradition of descent from the House of Solomon grew up in the royal houses of Armenia and Georgia, after the conversion of those two countries to the Christian faith. At the same time there were very ancient colonies of Jews in Georgia and Dagistan which may well have dated back to the period of the Babylonian conquest of Israel. A later spread of Jewish influences and even of Jewish elements which may be checked historically from the works of Arab geographers took place in the ninth century A.D. among the Khazars—a Turki people who had founded a state in the northern Caucasus and along the Volga.

A 174

A similar spread of Jewish influences to the Ethiopian Highland in an earlier epoch is historically no more improbable and, in terms of geography, would have been a much easier process. The fact that the present-day Falashas are Agau-speaking indicates that the Jewish infiltration, if it took place, was at a period when Agau was generally spoken on the Ethiopian Highland.

A 563 T 105

The Gallas.—The origin of the Gallas is another of the curious mysteries of African history and the Gallas themselves remain the most significant problem of the inner politics of Ethiopia. They first appeared in Ethiopia towards the end of the sixteenth century. The country had been depopulated by the long Somali wars and by the following conflict between Catholic and Coptic Orthodox arising out of the Portuguese intervention.

During the next two centuries the Gallas swarmed over all the countryside of Ethiopia. They settled in the region of the southern lakes, which at an earlier date had been colonized by the Ethiopian Kings. They reached the Escarpment overlooking the Awash valley and the neighbourhood of Harar on the borders of the Somali country. Like the Amhara they seemed to prefer the Highland and they spread over Shoa up to the canyon of the Blue Nile and north along the ridge of the Eastern Escarpment into Amhara.

In Shoa, the Imperial province of Ethiopia, people speaking Galla represent about half the population; and over Ethiopia as a whole they probably outnumber all the other racial groups.

In the eighteenth century Galla troops proved the decisive factor in the dynastic wars which covered the period of the final disintegration of the mediaeval Empire. Galla chieftains lorded it at the decadent court of Gondar; they made and unmade Emperors and married their daughters to them. But coming as invaders, the Gallas settled as peasants. In contrast with the indolent Amhara squireens, the Gallas are industrious farmers and labourers.

At the same time the Gallas had, and have, little political consciousness or racial coherence. When, in the course of the nineteenth century, Ethiopian

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

633 Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society
[191] has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and
Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and
[563] Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the
uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the
frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and,
[142 although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms
291] exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a
beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wander-
[245] ing among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous
for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudo,
231 which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

487 The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men: the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

174 The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally
been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up
[563] into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to
believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

174

speaking peoples, who have contributed such an important element to the populations of the Mediterranean basin.[1]

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I believe that the early civilized world of the valleys: Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus, which has been revealed by the researches and explorations of the last century had its background in the great ranges from which its peoples came. Professor Toynbee has pointed out that the regions of the Nile and the Mesopotamian valleys must have been areas of unhealthy swamp and wilderness when men first settled there.[2] Such terrain would not produce the conditions necessary to stimulate the multiplication of an indigenous stock: A terrain of this type would rather need clearing and developing by immigrants forced to find their living there after having been driven down from mountain areas by the pressure of increased numbers on food, which we have seen is a common characteristic of mountain economy. But just as the Highland migrant working in the field of American industrialism soon acquires new techniques and develops a higher standard of material culture than his brother who remains a crofter in Scotland, so the colonists of the Nile and Mesopotamian valleys far outpaced in material culture the inhabitants of the remote highlands of Ethiopia or of the Zagros and the Taurus.

There is one last point: the eighteenth-century prejudice against mountains, which influence still remains, tended to an exaggeration of the difficulties of mountain travel in primitive times. Yet the higher ridges of mountain chains often are the easiest lines of movement for men on foot. It makes possible the avoidance of forested valleys and ravines blocked by undergrowth and full of fevers. In England even our earliest forebears kept to the Downlands and trudged along the ridges to keep clear of the thick undergrowth and swamps of the low ground. And the so-called Alpine peoples kept to the mountain belt as they penetrated westward into Europe from the Highlands of Asia Minor through the Balkans to the Alps and the Pyrenees.

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[48]

In this connection it is possible to appreciate the essential importance of Aksum as an early cultural centre. Aksum is at the northern head of the route along the great Eastern Escarpment which leads into the heart of the Ethiopian Highland; at the same time Aksum is within easy reach of the Red Sea and the affluents which lead down to the Nile valley. There is a theory that the monoliths at Aksum are in fact the remains of a great Megalithic centre; the historic Aksumites merely made their own sculptural additions to the stone monuments which they already found in situ.[3] If we accept this theory we can see Aksum as a great centre of early megalithic culture having its connections with the reputed megalithic remains noted by recent Italian travellers in the region of the southern lakes.

[1] Abbé Morié, 'Histoire de l'Ethiopie,' vol. 1. Ethiopia was a term applied by ancient writers loosely and varyingly to all the northern half of Africa between the Atlantic and the Red Sea, and the term was even extended to Caucasian Colchis and to India. In fact mythical Ethiopia covered all that width of Africa and Asia where the Neolithic cultures first appeared. In classical times the name Ethiopia was applied to Nubia and the Sudan and it was only in post-Christian times that it was limited to the Highland area of modern Ethiopia.

[2] A. Toynbee, 'The study of history,' vols. 1/2.

[3] Sir E. H. W. Budge, chapter on Aksum in vol. II 'History of Ethiopia.'

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

174 travellers in the region of the southern lakes.[1] Other and earlier cultures may well have percolated into the Highland by the same routes along the ridges which are established for the mediaeval Copto-Ethiopian culture.

I am afraid I have put before the Society some rather hazardous lines of inquiry, with implications which necessarily impose a great deal of comparative study before they can be established or disproved. My excuse in these days when no one has the leisure to pursue exacting studies is that it is worth putting on record lines of inquiry which some of us may be able to turn to at a later date.

All photographs, unless acknowledged, were taken by the late Captain Mark Pilkington.

DISCUSSION

114 Before the paper the PRESIDENT (the Rt. Hon. Sir GEORGE CLERK) said: Captain Allen has been well known to us in the past as an authority on Georgia and as the author of an excellent history of the Ukraine. Military duty took him to Ethiopia for the operations which restored the Emperor Haile Selassie to his throne and capital—operations in which others of our Fellows, particularly Colonel Orde Wingate, Major Hugh Boustead, and Mr. Wilfred Thesiger, took a prominent part. Some day when the war is over I hope that the story of the Abyssinian campaign will come out, because not only is it in many ways a fantastic story, but it makes a very fine chapter in our annals.

It has been a little difficult for Captain Allen to prepare his paper for this evening, first of all because nearly all his photographs were left behind in Africa, and secondly, because his military duties have given him very little time to get his paper into shape. We look forward to hearing the impressions which the country and people of the Ethiopian Highlands have made upon him in the course of his military duties.

Captain Allen then read the paper printed above

137 The PRESIDENT: The lecture this evening has stirred memories of forty years ago. The lecturer talked about those miles of red-hot pokers. I have always held that if you give Nature a chance she is the best gardener in the world. I came once over a plateau in Abyssinia, a bit of waste country where no white man had ever been before, and there I found a great sheet of red-hot pokers and rosemary: the masses of orange-scarlet flowers backed by the grey-mauve of the rosemary were wonderfully beautiful. It finished in a sort of marsh in which there were immense stretches of white and scarlet arum lilies, inconceivably spectacular.

The lecturer has described the good manners and charm of the Shoan Abyssinians, but it is true that they are very quick to take offence as well as to show affection; they are very volatile. What he said about the Tigraians was also true; they are the tough northerners, more dependable, but not so easy to get on with. I will give you an instance of the funny though rather charming ways of the Abyssinians. Forty years ago I was on a certain expedition with a so-called Abyssinian army: two thousand scallywags, with two thousand small boys to carry their rifles, and two thousand unfortunate second wives to carry their food. We descended the escarpment to the west, and came into populated country. The Abyssinian soldiers were living on the country, and here they started to be extremely tiresome. I had to chase them off the inhabitants and

[1] See 'Africa Orientale,' Italiana Guida, published by Touring Club Italiana, 1939.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

These figures show that the gorges, together with the adjoining and intervening plateau, carry a considerably higher population than the rest of the plateau, the combined average being over 200 per square mile. The figures for population per church are also interesting. The gorges and the adjacent parts of the plateau contain no fewer than thirteen churches and they serve an average population of only some 650 souls each. On the other hand the churches of the general plateau, not counting those of Debra Berhan, which chiefly serve the townspeople, number only four. They must cater for about three times as many people each, and until recently many more for two of them are recent foundations.

The higher population of the gorge region is attributable to two causes: the greater productivity of the land there, and the historical fact, already referred to, that the Amharas were long forced to live in the gorges, and have re-emerged only in recent times. This is confirmed by the evidence of the churches which, in such numbers, are sure evidence of a long-established Christian population. The oldest ones are among those in the depths of the gorges; sites on the edges of gorges seem to be more recent. The few plateau churches are all relatively modern and bespeak the re-occupation by Amharas; two of them were indeed founded within the last fifteen years, and one as recently as 1945.

As can be seen from the map, sites chosen for dwellings are usually on the higher ground. The favourite sites, of which many examples can be seen on the sheet, are rocky ridges and the tops or upper slopes of hills and minor plateaus. A high place with an outlook, together with reasonable proximity to permanent water, seem to be the conditions sought after. Even the most elevated and exposed hill-tops are generally inhabited, whereas nobody tries to live on the plains near the main streams, which become very swampy in the rains. The ordinary family, together with its domestic animals, lives in a small, irregular cluster of round huts, which in this area are built of stone cemented with mud and carry a conical thatched roof. They are surrounded, as a rule, by a dry-stone wall, which may be shared by several households. Richer people may have an ornamental gatehouse at the main entry, with a little watchman's room over the gate; but such ostentation was not common.

Disregarding some of the Debra Berhan people, almost the entire population is engaged in farming which, here as elsewhere in Ethiopia, is the mainstay of existence. Some possess their own land; others hold their plots, in return for a proportion of the produce (but without any security of tenure), from absentee landowners. There is also a landless element, greatly increased through the disturbing influence of the Italian occupation, who hire themselves out as ploughmen and labourers. I had intended to measure some typical holdings in order to estimate the area actually required to support a family, but my time in the area was cut short and I never did so. As a very rough estimate I think that about 15–20 per cent. of the area is under cultivation in any one year, which would indicate an average per family of something like 4 acres. This does not include fallow land which, once re-grown with grass, cannot be distinguished at a glance from permanent pasture.

The most exposed parts of the plateau near Debra Berhan will grow two crops only, barley and broad beans, but a limited amount of wheat (a bearded

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ethiopic verse becomes most obscure in the figure known as *wesṭa wayrā* ("inside of olive tree"). Here only the wax is given, and the listener must work to unearth the gold. Often this can be done only when the circumstances under which the verse was made up are known. The author of a *wesṭa wayrā* often refuses to reveal anything that may help the listener to grasp its hidden meaning. 538 19

The expression *wesṭa wayrā* alludes to the fact that the inner core of the olive tree is a hard substance encased by bark of a different color. The implication is that the inner sense of a *wesṭa wayrā* poem is concealed by a veneer which conveys a quite different sense and is difficult to penetrate. This figure is thus especially suitable for expressing insults in a safe way and for esoteric philosophical or religious message. Here is an instance of the latter usage: [182] 538 539 19

Ya-bāhetāwi lijj sifalleg le'ullennā
Ya-ḳristosn mesht talānt washama-nnā
Qeṭal betābalaw hono qarama-nnā.

The son of a hermit, high rank to display,
Made love with Christ's wife yesterday;
When she fed him leaves he wasted away.

The surface meaning of this tercet describes an ambitious man who had relations with "Christ's wife" in order to raise his status, for in Ethiopia having relations with a woman of high rank is one way to gain prestige. Instead of advancing his position, however, this man lost all his power when the woman fed him (medicinal) leaves. The esoteric meaning, on the other hand, refers to the experience of a hermit. His "son" is intended to symbolize his hunger, and "Christ's wife" symbolizes fasting. The "inside" meaning, the gold, is therefore that the hermit's hunger is heightened by its relations with fasting, but it diminishes when he is fed leaves, the hallowed diet of a hermit.

The mode of the various poetic figures collectively designated as *sam-ennā warq* is intellectual rather than sensuous. The chief delight of Ethiopic poetry is to attain a maximum of thought with a minimum of words. This effect is reached, as we have seen, through subtle allusions and plays on words. The point may be a serious moral comment, the understanding of which requires one to decipher hidden references to biblical passages or sacred legends; or it may be a jest about love based on a pornographic pun. In any case, the more ingeniously compact and obscure the construction of the verse, the more pleased will be the poet and his audience. Weighty (i.e., mysterious) verse is the ideal, for as the Amhara say, "weighty verse, like heavy clothing, warms the insides." 538 19

The creation of the wax and gold figures was an integral part of the development of *qenē*, the genre of verse composed to be sung at the conclusion of devotional services in the church. And *qenē* appears to be a specifically 538 19 174

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
• 174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
[175] Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[173] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).[6] Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[874] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in Gojjam in the fourteenth century.[7] The important schools of *qenē* have always been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
538 delā, Wāsharā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre
19 have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use
[171] of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethiopia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.[8] They further maintain that Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propaedeutic to the study of religious texts.* Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar, which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and thereby enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized by the formula *sam-ennā warq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

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538 * The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

heaven, *samāy*, the abode of supernatural beings and the souls of the dead. 565* The earth is seen as flat, though some believe its shape to be square, others 772 think it is round like a disc, and still others imagine it to extend without limit. [823] That the terrain of Ethiopia is so obviously not flat is explained by reference to the great flood, after which the parts which dried quickly became high- [773] lands (*dēgā*), the parts slow to dry becoming lowlands (*qolā*). The peasant [821] explains the greater heat of the lowlands by saying that they receive less wind than the highlands.

Beneath the earth's surface is an obscure area called *maq*, a depth to which [775] the bodies of evildoers drop after burial. There is also a large subterranean [823] ocean, *weqniyānos*, into which all the rivers and lakes on earth descend. The earth itself is held up, according to some, by a Y-shaped piece of wood; accord- [539] ing to others, by two serpents; still another view is that no support is needed other than the will of God, as the saying indicates:

> Ay, My God! Lord who stretched forth the heavens without a pillar, and the earth without tent-pegs.

The rotation of the sun *above* the earth causes the alternation of night and 565* day. The imagery of this rotation is that of someone going home at night and 821 coming out in the morning. Attitudes toward the sun are quite ambivalent. The sun is appreciated for dispersing the morning chill and for causing seed to germinate, but it is feared as a source of sickness and death.*

The moon is highly regarded, which is probably a vestige of pre-Christian [174] moon worship. At the Ethiopian latitude the moon is functional, for its bright [484] illumination facilitates night travel, especially desirable in the hotter regions. Beyond this, the moon is considered a powerful agent. It is chief of the sky, commander of an army of stars and it is the force which causes crops to grow after the sun has brought forth seedlings.

In the heavenly realm there are two regions located on either side of God's 565* dwelling-place. To the right is an area where good souls repair for an eternity 772 of ease after being judged shortly after the death of their bodies. Known both 775 as the "kingdom of heaven" and "paradise"—terms which refer to quite different spheres in the Orthodox cosmology but are fused in the vulgar mind —it is regarded as a home where food and clothes are plentiful and freely distributed. To the left is the place where wicked souls are taken by the devil to be scorched eternally in the fire of Gehenna, also called *Si'ol* (again a fusion of concepts which are distinct for the learned). This treatment of the damned is made worse by alternate dippings in icy water, though some believe that the wicked souls get a respite from their tortures on weekends.

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* The TAT's revealed a great dread of the sun; nearly every respondent interpreted one or another [125] of the cards in terms of the sun's dangerousness.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

demonstrate some affiliation with the Solomonic line; the marriage of one of these into a local dynasty contributed an added buttress to its traditionalist claims. The other was what seems to be a still more deeply rooted disposition for decentralized hegemony based on the ancient character of the society. For, as Cerulli has recently suggested, the origins of the Ethiopian state were such as to lay the foundation for a persisting order of feudalism. The movement of South Arabs to the Eritrean coast and highlands took place, not through the conquest of an indigenous population by a united invader, as in the Norman Conquest of England, but by the intermittent emigration and settlement of distinct tribes from South Arabia into various parts of the African territory. Thus, Cerulli concludes, we see in Ethiopia "a feudalism expanded from the roots: a number of principalities or peoples which, independent on African land after their emigration, have finally been regrouped in a higher political unity, yet still conserving in the feudal system thus constituted part of their autonomy and their individuality."[37] If this is so, it would constitute an added traditional element in the sense of legitimacy of local dynastic interests.

All this suggests that we must look to two sources for the prestige of the *makuānnent*—that recruitment into the secular elite came from "below" as well as from "above." These two bases of noble status are indicated by the etymology of two Amharic words commonly applied to the local nobility, *shum* and *bālābbāt*. *Shum* (or *seyum*) comes from a root which means to invest with high position. The emperor, as we have seen, is *seyuma egziābhēr* ("invested by God") and he in turn is the source of authority for investing other dignitaries. The status associated with the word *shum* is therefore based on the act of investiture by a sovereign. *Bālābbāt*, on the other hand, has the literal meaning, "one who has a father"; in other words, one who has a significant father, a notable ancestry. This status refers to claims to deference which are based on birth.

Claims based on birth, moreover, were closely tied to the ownership of land and supported by local territorial allegiances. This appears most strikingly in the office of *çhīqā shum*, the lowest level official, who is appointed, to be sure, but by the local people themselves from a small number of *bālābbāt* whose eligibility for the office rests on their inheritance of rights to certain specified pieces of land. Other local offices, like *malkañña* and *meslanē*, were normally given by regional governors to *bālābbāt* indigenous to the area. The sacred sentiment of fealty to a monarch, whose charisma rested both on membership in a hallowed dynasty and the hallowed act of coronation, thus competed in Abyssinian souls with deeply felt sentiments of attachment to members of noted families who symbolized local rights and traditions. Abyssinian political structure at any given time was determined by the relative strength of the forces supported by these two principles of legitimacy.

Neither principle was ever realized in pure form. No matter how great his

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ancient Ethiopia MP3

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Table 14: Chronology of Ethiopian History

Historical Beginnings in the Area : Early Contacts

2900 B.C. Region of Nubia conquered by Pharao Zoser, 3rd Dynasty of Egypt. He imports gold and copper from "Punt" (apparently Somaliland).

2625 B.C. Troglodyte (cave-dwelling) trubes expelled by rulers of the Egyptian 6th Dynasty, from the edge of the "eastern desert"; recorded by the Palermo stone.

1500-1000 B.C. Nubia under Egyptian Dynastic rule.

1000 B.C.(about) Many Egyptian priestly families flee southward after an unsuccessful revolt against the 21st Dynasty of Egypt. They carry the worship of Amon from Thebes to Nubia, now independent, and into Ethiopia proper, attempting to reproduce the Amonite Theocracy in their new home.

950 B.C. Approximate period of visit of the legendary Queen of Sheba To King Solomon in Jerusalem, according to the Abyssinian Royal Chronicles which link this to the Biblical account.

750 B.C.(about) Full development of the Nubian Kingdom of Napata, site of the former Egyptian frontier station for trade with the Sudan. The local dynasty of kings probably descended from the priestly refugees from Thebes.

722-663 B.C. Kings of Napata rule over Egypt as the 25th Dynasty of Egypt Greek writers refer to this Napata Kingdom as the "Ethiopian Theocracy".

670-622 B.C. Assyrian kings conquer Egypt, force out the Nubian Dynasty. As a result, Napata Kingdom moves southward to a new capital known as Meroe, withdraws from northern contacts.

599 B.C. Cyrus II is enthroned, and later takes Egypt, Arabia, and penetrates to the borders of Abyssinia, establishing trade routes and contacts that outlast his conquests.

525 B.C. Cambyses fails to conquer Kingdom of Meroe. End of Direct Persian contacts with Ethiopia.

Origin and Development of the Abyssinian Kingdom of Axum (Aksum).

1300 B.C. Approximate period of the development of civilizations in the Hadhramaut and neighboring areas of southwest Arabia: Irrigation of fields, dams; spice trade to Egypt; the Himyarite written alphabet "musnad"; religious temple worship to the Moon god with the motif of crescent and disk. Kingdoms of Saba, Ma'in, Gataban, Ausan, and later, Marib.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ancient Ethiopia MP3

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500 B.C.(about) Beginning of series of invasions and colonization of northern Abyssinia by Gees-speaking Himyarites from the Hadhramaut. They introduce the scratch plow, stone Cisterns, stone houses, and the spice trade. Later, to carry spices from the Abyssinian upland through the desert to the Red Sea port of Adulis (the modern Zula), the Himyarites introduce the camel.

247-223 B.C. Ptolemy Euergetes of Egypt extends his Graeco-Egyptian empire southward along the Red Sea as far as Adulis (Zula). Greek inscriptions found later at this Abyssinian port recount his campaigns.

80 A.D. Continued contact with the Greek and Roman Mediterranean through ships plying the Red Sea, reported by Periplus, Alexandria merchant.

200-300 A.D. Hadhramaut motherland of the Abyssinian colonists comes under the dominance of the Kingdom of Saba. The colonists set up own capital at Axum, in northern Abyssinia.

270 A.D. Axumite Abyssinians invade the mother country in Arabia Felix.

330 A.D.(about) Syrian Christian missionaries reach the court of Axum and convert the royal family and some nobles to Christianity. Abyssinian tradition of St. Frumentius, who was appointed "Abuna", Bishop of Abyssinia, with the title "Abba Salama" (Father of Peace) by the Metropolitan of Alexandria, Egypt.

378 A.D. With the zeal of new converts, the Axumites invade Arabia Felix once again, to "protect opressed Christians" there, but are driven back by the rulers of Iemen. Christianity at Axum receives a setback.

450 A.D.(abt.) Inscriptions in the Axumite Kingdom of this period record that King Tzana (or Tazana) began his rule as a worshipper of Astar and of Mahrem, but ended as a Christian. He is referred to as the Constantine of Abyssinia.

449 A.D. The Monophysite Doctrine (Christ's nature one) forms at Council of Ephesus, in contradiction to the earlier Nicene Council. The next year, at the Council of Chalcedon, the Monophysites break away and form a separate church. The Abyssinian church, as branch of the Coptic church of Alexandria, joins the Monophysites, breaks contact with the Roman church.

500 A.D.(abt.) Arrival in Abyssinia of the legendary "nine saints", probably Syrian monks, who reinforce Christianity at Axum. They are referred to in Abyssinian literature as "Qedusan Romaweyan" (lit. Roman Saints), but were apparently Monophysites. The Bible is translated from Greek into Gees, for although Greek was the court language at Axum, the people still spoke Gees, even most of the nobles.

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525 A.D. With renewed Christian zeal, the Axumite King Kaleb invades Yemen to "protect opressed Christians", and defeats King D'hu Nuwas of Yemen. Returning Abyssinian soldiers carry much booty from Yemen to Abyssinia, but in return introduce the coffee bean and the drug leaf qat (çhat) into Yemen, where both are soon planted and become popular.

550 A.D.(abt) Travels and writings of Cosmas, who finds the old Greek inscriptions at Adulis. Greek and Roman ships ply the Red Sea.

570 A.D. Christian Abyssinians have reached the outskirts of Mecca, but are defeated there and finally driven out of Asia for the last time.

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687 A.D. War between Abyssinia and Nubia.

644 A.D. Alexandria, spiritual center of Monophysite Copts, conquered by the Muslims. Because Monophysites had protected early Muslim refugees, Mohammed had promised them protection. Therefore, though cut off from the Mediterranean by the Muslim tide for the next millenium, Christian Abyssinia remains under the spiritual jurisdiction of Alexandria.

950 A.D.(abt) Gradual breakup of the Kingdom of Axum, due to regional rebellions and movements for local independence, sometimes motivated in part by religious differences. Abyssinian Royal Chronicles record uprising of the exiled Falashas (who follow Mosaic Judaism) under their Queen Judith, which lasted 40 years.

990-1260 Christian Warlord Zagwe and his dynasty rule from new capital at Lasta. There, King Lalibäla builds the remarkable rock-hewn churches existing to this day. Zagwe kings compromise with the Coptic church by permitting foreign (Egyptian) Abuna as its head in Abyssinia. But the so-called "Solomonic line" claiming descent from Axum and favored by the Abyssinian church continues somewhat further south in Abyssinia, as the Kingdom of Shoa.

1177 A.D. King of Abyssinia known in the Western world as "Prester John" is asked by Pope Alexander III to participate in the attempt to conquer Jerusalem. But the Muslim area in between makes this impossible.

<u>Hegemony of the "Solomonic Line" of the Kingdom of Shoa; the Amhara empire.</u>

1260 A.D. The "Solomonic" King of Shoa, Yekuno Amlak, becomes "King of Kings" of Abyssinia, with aid of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia. The head of the church, Abuna Takla Haymanot, receives one-third of the land of the empire as reward to the church, and proceeds to build monasteries, notably the (still existing) one at Däbra Libanos in Shoa. Zealous monks accompany troops in regional warfare and force conversions in some instances. Amharic, the language spoken by the people of Shoa as vulgate of Geez and Cushitic,

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supplants Geez as the spoken language of Abyssinia.

1314-1344 King 'Amda Sion rules Abyssinia, during a period of increasing contact with Arab neighbors: militarily hostile, but enriching the literature of Abyssinia. The Arabs gain footholds in Somaliland in the South, with the Dankali in the east, and Sudanese and Nilotic tribes to the northwest. Meanwhile Arabic and Coptic translations into Geez include the Book of Adam and Eve. To link the Shoa Dynasty directly to the "Solomonic Dynasty" of Solomon and Sheba, the book "Kebra Nagast", (Glory of the Kings) is composed during this period. Translations from Arabic include epics, liturgies, fables, romances; some via the Coptic church in Alexandria which is now Arabic-speaking.

1434-1468 Rule of King Zar'a Ya'Qob. Continued intermittent warfare against Muslim pressure at the borders, also against Shanqalla tribes and Falashas, to safeguard holy manuscripts against burning by Muslims, Copic monks hide many on islands in Lake Tana, e.g. on Daga Estefanos. Translations from the Arabic include "Tamra Maryam", Miracles of Mary. Contact with Arabs brings luxury items such as perfumes in glass bottles and marroquin leather (hence "arabena" for leatherworker).

1468-1478 Rule of King Baede-Mariam. Royal Abyssinian Chronicles report continued intermittent warfare.

1478-1494 Rule of King Eskender. During his reign a second Portuguese Delegation arrives and finds the leader of the first Delegation, Pedro de Cavilham (sent some decades earlier by Prince Henry the Navigator to the "cinnamon and like spices" land of "Prester John") still alive, though aged. He had been hospitably received, but not been permitted to return home, and had taken an interest in Abyssinian church paintings.

1508-1540 Rule of King Lebna Dengel. Hard-pressed by Muslim invasions from the southeast, the king manages to send the Armenian Mathaeus to Portugal, asking for help. The messenger reaches Portugal in 1513.

1520-1527 Portuguese embassy arrives in Abyssinia, led by Father Alvarez. Portuguese begin attempts to convert the royal court to Roman Catholicism. Upon return to Portugal in 1527, Father Alvarez writes his memoirs, describing the culture of Shoa and Axum, the tent-city capital of the King and his nobles.

1530-1540 Invasion of Abyssinia by the Emir of Harrar, Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, better known as "Gran" (left-handed). With the aid of a new weapon, Turkish firearms ("turk basha"), he overruns most of Abyssinia, burning monasteries and churches, sacking Axum, and killing King Lebna Dengel in battle in 1540.

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Nomadic, islamized Galla tribes settle in Shoa, take up agriculture. They also take up the habit of coffee-drinking, which Mecca had declared permitted ("hallal") in 1510. Coffee penetrates into Arabia from Abyssinia, through a Sufi Muslim brotherhood.

1540-1559 Rule of King Galaudewos, son of Lebna Dengel. The Chronicles refer to him as Asnaf Sagad I. He barely defends the mountain plateau near Lake Tana, all that is left.

1542 Portuguese aid finally arrives at Massaua harbor under Don Christofo da Gama, with 400 musketeers. This turns the tide. In 1543, Mohammed Gran is slain in battle. The Portuguese are greatly honored; some settle down and begin families with native girls. Portuguese castles are built at Gorgora, on the northern bank of Lake Tana, also stone bridges over rivers to permit traffic in the rainy season.
Portuguese Jesuits accuse King Galaudewos of "non-Christian" religious customs, but he tolerates their efforts at conversion.
Counter efforts by the coptic clergy lead to regional rebellions.

1545 The Galla tribes use this to invade once more from the southwest but are finally halted. In 1557 the Turks attack from Massaua to Debra Demo.

1559-1563 Rule of King Minas (Wanag Sagad II). Continued internal and external tensions.

1563-1597 Rule of King Sarsa Dengel (Malak Sagad I). Religious polemics between Copts and Catholics stimulate Geez literature. The king sponsors translations of religious novels from the Arabic, (Balaam and Josaphat), and of the "World History" of Abu Shakir, utilizing Yemenites as translators. Original Abyssinian compositions of this period include the work "Hatata" (Researches) by the "lone thinker" Zara Yaqob, son of a poor peasant near Aksum, who developed a theistic religious philosophy after having retired to a cave to think things out. The Coptic clergy condemned the philosophy of this self-taught thinker as "babble", but he became tutor to the son of a nobleman, and his pupil later collaborated with him on this book. Zara Yaqob also wrote some poetry and satire on the polemics of his day (See Littman, 1907, pp. 219-224; Bent, 1903, p. 449).
By 1579 the king feels secure enough to have himself crowned King of Kings at Axum, after halting another Galla invasion in Dembeya. The king reconstructs the Coptic church at Axum. Warfare against the Falashas breaks out in 1581-2, when they are led by Radai, then Kaleb, in Semien province, and in 1585, when Sarsa Dengel defeats their chief, Gushen, at Warq-Amba in Semien and in Woggera province.

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1597-1607 Interregnum follows the death of Sarsa Dengel; there are several contenders for the throne, including ZaDengel, a nephew of the last king, who has become a Catholic. Finally, first with aid of some loyal Galla troops and then with aid of the Portuguese, another descendant of Lebna Dengel, by name of Susneyos, wins.

1607-1632 Rule of King Susneyos. In 1626 the king reluctantly converts to Roman Catholicism, pressed by the impatient Father Alfonso Mendes, who has replaced the patient Father Paes. Civil wars break out immediately, some against the Coptic clergy, some against Falashas upon whom conversion was being urged since t y inhabited the area north of Lake Tana to which the c ter of the kingdom had shifted after the Galla devastation and conquest of Shoa.

The Amhara Center at Gondar.

1632-1667 Rule of King Fasilidas, at Gondar, north of Lake Tana. Immediately upon ascending the throne, this son of Susneyos reversed his father's religious acts, banished all Portuguese from his realm, re-established the power of the Coptic Abyssinian clergy, and thus ended the civil war. Workmen trained by the Portuguese built Fasil's castles further north, at Gondar, and a masonry-enclosed royal pathway to the huge fig tree, under which he regularly judged the people, in Solomonic style. Although he ruled from Gondar, he acknowledged the state religion by being crowned King of Kings at Aksum. He used his military power to subject some of the Galla. His son and successor, Tzadequ Yohannes, built his own castle at Gondar, and that of his Prime Minister is also preserved to this day. He had to subjugate an Amhara rebellion in Gojjam province.
Fasil's grandson, King Iadem Segadiyasus, added his own castles at Gondar, and built many churches in the area, some in Qemant country. He was the last castle builder, for the trained masons had died and their art was gradually fading away.

Modern Western Contacts

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1684-1704 The German Scholar Hiob Ludolphus compiles a History of Abyssinia and a Geez dictionary, with the aid of a converted Abyssinian scholar, Abba Gorgoryos, whom he encountered in Rome. Among Portuguese introductions to Abyssinia during their century of residence there, he records manufacture and growing of wine (grape) for the Mass (later lost in Abyssinia).

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1768-1773 James Bruce travels about in Abyssinia, and finds the King of Kings still resident at Gondar, the capital. On his return, Bruce carries with him the manuscript "Kəbrä Nägäst" (Kebir Zanegusta, Glory of the Kings), which recounts the story of the "Solomonic Dynasty".

1813 (about) Breakup of the Abyssinian Empire, and of Gondar as the nation's capital. There are six provincial kings who recognize no king of kings. Local and regional chiefs and warlords are divided along feudal lines.

1855-1868 Rule of a commoner usurper, warlord Kassa, who has himself crowned Emperor Theodore (Tewodros) at Gondar. He recognized the need to modernize his country, invited German technicians, welcomed British Protestant missionaries. He realized that he could not modernize his country without first centralizing it. He planned to turn his feudal lords into salaried officials, abolish feudal armies and feudal land tenure, limit tolls, limit the temporal power of the church; and gain the respect of the European world by abolishing the slave trade and enforcing Christian (Western) monogamy. However, he could not carry out any of these plans in face of the opposition of the feudal lords and the clergy. Becoming more bitter, dictatorial, frustrated, violent and cruel, especially after the death in battle of his British advisor and friend, Mr. Bell, he sacked Gondar town, where the British Consul Plowden had been murdered by bandits, and later imprisoned British Protestant missionaries. When Lord Napier landed and attacked the fortress Magdalla in Tigre Province where Theodore had organized his defense, Emperor Theodore committed suicide. Shortly before that, the young King of Shoa, Menelik II, held hostage by Theodore, escaped home to Shoa.

1868-1889 The King of Tigre province is crowned King Johannes (John IV), of Abyssinia, with the aid of the Coptic clergy, and the silent acquiescence of Britain which had withdrawn its troops.

1884-1889 The "Derwishes" attack from the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, sack Gondar, and kill King John IV in battle. The troops from Shoa arrive too late to save him.

<u>Amhara Rule from Addis Ababa</u>

1889-1913 Rule of Menelik II. He consolidated Abyssinia beyond its old boundaries, conquered all Galla provinces and enclisted them as his loyal troops, especially cavalry, armed with spears and Italian rifles, in addition to his Amhara troops. This army defeated the Italian invaders at Adua in 1896. As a result, many European powers sent diplomatic missions to Addis Ababa, the newly built capital on the Shoa plateau. There, some centralization and modernization began.

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1906 The United States of America establishes a Legation at Addis Ababa.

1913-1916 Rule of the young king Lidj Yasu, grandson of Emperor Menelik II. A playboy king, he annoyed the Coptic clergy by close ties to Muslims, and annoyed the British by his friendship with Turkish agents at the time of World War I. Deposed by the clergy and feudal lords.

1916-1929 Ras (Duke) Tafari Makonnen, whose father had conquered the province of Harar for his relative, Emperor Menelik II, becomes Regent of Abyssinia under the formal rule of Empress Zawditu, daughter of Menelik II. Modern-minded and with a French education, Ras Tafari introduced gradual modernization in Addis Ababa and parts of Harar, including elementary and high schools, prohibition of the slave trade, and as much centralization as his limited power then permitted.

1930 Upon the death of Empress Zawditu, Ras Tafari is crowned King of Kings Haile Selassie. His power and proclaimed changes in administration gradually grow. He proclaims a constitution, changing his actually absolute monarchy into a nominally constitutional one; the new Parliament is appointed, with the expressed hope that some day it can be elective. The emperor changes the name of Abyssinia, officially to Ethiopia.

1936-1941 Italian invasion and occupation. The major change made by the Italians was the building of a network of roads. Their treatment of the Ethiopians was confused, largely because of ambivalent orders from Rome. Amhara guerilla resistance continued in the mountains, and in 1937 an assassination attempt against Marshall Graziani led to a massacre, especially of educated Ethiopians.

May 1941 Return of Emperor Haile Selassie, with greater power than ever before. Centralization of the country proceeds more widely than before, and modernization gradually follows.

1951 Long an advocate of "collective security" in international affairs, Emperor Haile Selassie sends two battalions of his own bodyguard to join the U.N. forces in Korea.
The previous year Ethiopia had signed an "umbrella agreement" with the American Point-Four program, for aid in education and agricultural training.

1954 Visit of Emperor Haile Selassie to the U.S.A.

1955 Liberalization of the Ethiopian Constitution by Imperial proclamation. But the modern-educated are still a very small percentage of the population, and the old cultures in the rural areas are still little changed. The nation is still far from homogeneous, though tending in that direction.

697 from the 16th-17th centuries. When this area, which had been a sort of frontier area, became too settled, the political prison was transferred farther northwest to the edge of the escarpment leading down to the Sudan, between Chelga and Metemma.

671 175 779 A formal, written law code was superimposed on the earlier unwritten one in the 13th century, when the Abyssinian church extended its ecclesiastical code to cover also the temporal judicial behavior of lords as well as commoners, in all phases of life. This is referred to as "yäbaherya heg" (lit. the Law from Overseas), regarded as including "Moral Law" (i.e.Church Law).

This code, called the "Fetha Nägäst"(Law of the Kings) was basically derived from Roman Canon Law of Constantine, formulated at the Coptic Synod in Egypt in the 9th and 10th centuries, then translated in 1239, by Al-Safi Abu Al-Fada'il, into the Arabic language which the Copts of Egypt had by that time adopted for their own worship also. The code was a blend of Canons of the Coptic church councils, the Justinian Code, and theBible.

It was brought to Abyssinia during the reign of King Zera-Yaqob, and translated into Geez, then in its final stages as a spoken language, by the Abyssinian priest Petros Gäbre-Egzer. The Fetha Nägäst" became the official supreme law of the land when Bishop Takla-Haymanot resurrected the "Solomonic Dynasty" about that time. Of course the Abyssinian church officially believes that the "Fetha Nägäst" is much older, and that it has never been altered.

671 779 The Code consists of 51 chapters, of which 22 deal with

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

grade from the Eritrean plateau. All civilization in Ethiopia has penetrated from north to south along the great dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment, where the so-called Strada Imperiale now runs from Asmara to Addis Ababa. 133 177 [491]

Along this line have been concentrated the successive Ethiopian capitals with the exception of Gondar, which was chosen far to the north-west as a refuge from the ruinous wars with the Moslems and the Gallas. And along this line, due south from Aksum and Aduwa, were the great centres of the Copto-Ethiopian culture of the Middle Ages, places like Lalibala and the monasteries on lake Haik and the traditional centre of the Coptic Church at Debra Libanos. 361

From this dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment Ethiopian culture, and it was a very real culture in its heyday, spread westward into Gojjam and southward to the region of the lakes. Luca di Sabelli in his recent 'Storia di Abissinia' has shown that Coptic-Ethiopian missionaries were active as far south as Madagascar and the Mozambique coast. 177 [797]

Ethiopian Coptic culture drew its nurture from the powerful Coptic Church in Cairo, from the Crusading civilization in Palestine, and from the Byzantine Empire. Just as the establishment of the Turks at the exit from the Black Sea brought about the decline of the East Christian cultures in the Caucasus and the Balkans, so the Turkish control of the Nile valley and the Red Sea slowly strangled the Coptic Ethiopian culture of East Africa. The Ethiopian rulers, pressed by the invasions of Muhammad Gran, were well aware of their mortal danger and it is a curious fact that kings in Georgia and Ethiopia appealed to the rising power of Spain in the Western Mediterranean at about the same time. The Portuguese episode in Ethiopia was a delayed response to the appeal made to the Catholic powers. 175

The extraordinary tenacity of the Ethiopians to the western tradition is a remarkable characteristic of their historical development. The Aksumite kingdom, for all its Semitic appearance, was essentially a projection of Hellenism, and the Aksumite kings remained the traditional allies of the Byzantine Emperors in their struggle with the Persian Sasanids for the control of the Red Sea—an episode which was parallel in time with the conflict between these same two "world powers" for mastery of the Black Sea. The Coptic Church and Christian civilization in East Africa proved more enduring than the once powerful Nestorian Church in Asia, with which it may in some ways be compared. The later Ethiopian Kingdom played the same role in the struggle between Turks and Portuguese for control of the Red Sea and for the trade of the Indian Ocean as the Aksumites had a thousand years earlier in the rivalry between Byzantines and Persians. But they showed the same persistent antagonism to the Roman Church as the East Christians had displayed towards the Crusaders and the Papacy. In the end the Ethiopians expelled the Portuguese from Abyssinia and managed to maintain their own independence against their Moslem neighbours, until in the last decade it was suppressed by a professedly Christian power.

The Ethiopians are a remarkable phenomenon in the East African world and with their tenacity and their undoubted natural intelligence they are destined to have no little influence on the future course of history in that area.

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186 The great weakness of the Ethiopians, their inveterate regionalism, arises, like other aspects of their life and history, from the peculiar conditions of their geography. The four historic Kingdoms of Tigrai and Amhara, Shoa and Gojjam, cover the plateaux divided by the canyons of the Blue Nile and [132] the Takkaze and their lateral rifts. During four months of the year, the season of the Great Rains between July and October, Gojjam is entirely cut off from Shoa and Amhara by the floods of the Blue Nile. Only recently has the construction of the bridge over the Blue Nile at Shafartak, a major engineering undertaking, made continuous contact possible. The violent regionalism of the Gojjam has been a disastrous factor in internal Ethiopian history which will doubtless tend to decline with the modern development of communications.

114 The Gojjam, scene of the guerrilla campaign of 1941, has been described by Major Cheesman, formerly H.B.M. Consul in Dangila, in several 175 articles in the Society's *Journal*, and in his standard work on the province, 'Lake Tana and the Blue Nile.' Cheesman's work was in fact the basis of knowledge which made practical the organization of the expedition to reinforce the Patriot groups which were in the field against the Italians at the moment when Italy declared war on Britain. His exploration of the gap up the Escarpment, the fruit of an arduous excursion described in his book, enabled the Frontier Battalion of the Sudan Defence Force with their camel convoys of supplies and arms to make a rapid deployment on to the Escarpment.

175 The least-known part of the Gojjam province is probably the region of the Choké Mountains which rise to the north of Debra Markos. In an effort to hold down this very wild bit of country the Italians had built forts at Mota [491] and other points and a passable dirt road had been constructed linking Debra Markos *via* Mota with Bahrdar—the Italian strong point at the southern tip of Lake Tana. After the capture of Debra Markos in April 1941, it proved necessary to make contact with the small group of Patriots and one company of Sudanese with some British officers and non-commissioned officers who were containing the very considerable Italian force still in the field round the south-east shore of Lake Tana. At Debra Markos we were very short of troops. Further, scarcity of mules made it necessary to try the experiment of taking camels over the pass which runs under the peaks of Choké at an altitude indicated on Italian maps at rather over 13,000 feet. Kit had to be limited to one ground-sheet and one blanket each for all ranks and the plain-bred Sudanese, many of whom were already lame with jiggers, suffered from cold and mountain-sickness particularly in the hail blizzard which struck the force on the bare ridge of the Choké Pass. Nevertheless this one company of Sudanese covered the 70 odd miles in just under three days, and Colonel Boustead bluffed the Italian battalion in Mota into surrender within forty-eight hours of opening fire with his solitary mortar.

I was following along in the rear with the camel *hamlia* and on reaching base camp in front of Mota was met with orders to about turn and take the animals back to Debra Markos. I thus crossed the Choké Mountains twice [114] in one week. With amateur medical and veterinary duties and a driving mist at the higher altitudes alternating with rain, sleet, and hail, I had little opportunity for geogeaphical observation

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tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic. Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend.

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile.

There were only two or three villages along the track, which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district.

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May.

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to

[i.e., in the Choké Mountains. -Analyst]

? [i.e., between Debra Markos and Mota. -An.]

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133 the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor
[491] road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada
Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here
Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint.
[132] Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or
eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's
[361] capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns:
an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and
[231] dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputa-
tion of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

175 Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia
since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and
Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was
always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the
[103] Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means
"my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably
beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem
[632] father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military
headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest.
Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to
[563] internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north
route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north:
[598] Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum
of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean
[635] border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the
Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support
[662] of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses. 175

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town. 632

The surrounding grassy *alms* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June. 133

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick. 491 [137] [136]

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people. 563 175

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups. 101 563

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion 101 144

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Tulama MP25

T 105 T A 563 175

imperial power revived, Emperors like Theodore and, later, Menelik, re-established Amhara rule first over the central highland and later over all the Galla lands of the south. The most formidable resistance encountered by Menelik was from the Moslem Galla Sultan of Jimma. From time to time certain Galla districts resented the corrupt or vicious government of individual Amhara officials and revolted; but these revolts were the common phenomenon of a feudal state of society rather than the beginnings of a conscious Galla movement against an alien Amhara rule. In fact in the Galla countries of the south the rule of the Amhara central government has proved more stable than in the north where it had to meet the challenge of powerful Amhara lords. During the dangerous revolt of Ras Gugsa Wolye it was probably the Galla contingents which saved the throne for Haile Selassie. During the campaign of 1941 thousands of Galla guerrillas took the field against the Italians, while the northern leaders, the great Amhara aristocrats, were inclined to wait on the winner.

T 105 A 563 [198]

Gallas are everywhere in Ethiopia and there are probably few Amhara nobles who have not a strong tinge of Galla blood in their veins. Most Amhara have some knowledge of Galla (although many will not own to it), and Galla is popularly supposed to be the "love language" of Ethiopia.

I had little opportunity for investigating the subject, but I do not believe that all Galla-speaking tribes are racially Galla. In the belt of savannah country between the Mussolini Pass and Dessie I met the two sons of a Wallo Galla headman who were a pair of the most beautiful human beings I have ever seen. Copper-skinned and lithe, clad in panther pelts and leaning on their spears, they seemed apparitions out of the Bronze Age. These boys were of pure Hamitic type, rather resembling some of the fine-featured Shluh of the Moroccan Atlas. Yet, in Harar, where I had to disband a battalion of Galla Patriots who had come in from the south, I found stocky square-headed men with heavy jowls, with a fair proportion of negroid types. Incidentally they were reported to show excellent form as soldiers. They were mostly Borana and other southern Gallas.

The variety of physical types among the Gallas adds to the mystery of their origin before the sixteenth century. Some tribes have the tradition of having arrived on the east coast of Africa from over the sea, and one theory postulates the coming of the Galla from Madagascar and attempts to correlate their migration with the intrusion of Malay elements into that island. At present the origin of the Gallas remains one of the most interesting problems of African history.

A 633

Harar itself has, since mediaeval times, enjoyed the situation of a city-state. The emirate of Harar was brought within the Ethiopian Empire only by Ras Makonnen, the father of the present Emperor. It has since remained a favourite city of the Imperial family and a stronghold of their interest. On the edge of the Somali and the Galla country and commanding the way down over the lip of the Southern Escarpment into the Awash valley Harar is a meeting place for all the tribes of Ethiopia and the Arabian coast. The old walled city with its narrow crowded streets and occasional mosques and *turbés* has all the characteristics of an Arabian town, as contrasted with the open settlements of huts, gardens, and plantations which pass for towns in

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

[133] developed. I was interested to find, when first exploring this piece of country, that the shelves were well populated, intensively cultivated, and provided [36] with a quite surprising number of churches; facts, as pointed out below, of some historical significance.

After completing the framework of the map I made several calculations of depth in the Beressa gorge. An Abney level was used and as high angles were involved I think the results are trustworthy. They showed a depth of 1808 feet at the point marked *a*, just under 3 miles from the head of the gorge; 1985 feet at point *b*, 4 miles down; and 2170 feet at *c*, not quite 6 miles down. The average gradient from *a* to *b* was therefore about 2½ per cent., from *b* to *c* about 2 per cent. The depths were measured from three points (marked 1–3), all at practically the same level, on the edge of the gorge, the height of which can be taken as about 9300 feet. The absolute level of point *c* is therefore about 7130 feet, and this is almost the lowest point on the sheet. Measurements show that the depth of this gorge, enormously impressive though it is, is not more than one-fifth of its breadth. Although relatively deeper ones no doubt exist, I cannot help being highly sceptical of Rocher d'Hericourt's report of a ravine "14 leagues north-west of Angolala" which he alleged to be 1254 metres deep and only 800 broad!

Four separate gorges figure on the map. The two middle ones, formed by the Beressa and Dalecha rivers, which enclose between them the cliff-encircled plateau of Choli, can be seen to join within 4 to 5 miles of Debra Berhan. It might be supposed that the other two gorges were destined to join the same system within a short distance, but this does not happen. If the small-scale Italian map is to be trusted, the Gunagunit (north-east corner of the sheet) joins the Beressa system some 20 miles away, and the Chacha (of which the north-western gorge is a tributary) nearly 30 miles away. These junctions are approximately north of Debra Berhan; afterwards the river bends away north-westwards to join a main tributary of the Blue Nile. As might be expected, these independent gorge-systems running approximately parallel to each other proved most confusing. Between the adjacent systems one sees long, narrow strips of residual plateau, perfectly flat-topped, sometimes so narrow as to stand up like a wall between one valley and the next. The Tallak Amba plateau, partly shown in the north-west of the sheet, is an example. On the other side of the sheet a still narrower neck, followed by the [109] Tegulet path, separates the Beressa and Gunagunit systems. Following this route to the north, off the sheet, one finds that for some distance the plateau has been cut right away: one descends about 600 feet to a point where the shelves in two adjacent valleys practically coalesce, being separated only by a rocky barrier a few feet high. Then one climbs again to a narrow slip of [246] plateau on whose summit, flat as a table-top, stands an important church (Zendegur Ghiorghis). Still farther north this narrows down to a sinuous rampart between the valleys, and eventually broadens once more to form a substantial isolated plateau, which appeared in the distance to be almost inaccessible. Another remarkable feature, jutting out between the Dalecha and the small tributary which next joins the Beressa, is shown near the northern border of the sheet and will be described later.

[135] This region is the heart of the old Shoan kingdom and many places included

[Line, the River gorges. -Analyst]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 on the sheet, or not far from it, have historical associations. Tegulet, a little to the north, was the home country of Yikuno Amlak, the Shoan prince in whose person the Solomonian line was restored to the throne of Ethiopia in the thirteenth century. Debra Berhan itself, now a rather sordid settlement on the Asmara road, is of ancient foundation, for the emperor Zar'a Yakob made it his capital in the fifteenth century. Although a somewhat cold and inhospitable place it has an obvious advantage as commanding what must always have been an important focus of routes. Even in modern times it was [491] inevitable that the Asmara road should be brought through this easy passage, avoiding the impassable gorges on the one hand and the much broken country of the higher plateau on the other.

349 Although there is no proof, and apparently no relevant tradition, I should be inclined to attribute to Zar'a Yakob some curious caves excavated in one end of a high hogsback 2 miles south-east of Debra Berhan. Unfortunately I inspected them only once and rather casually and found no opportunity to come again. There are at least two very elaborate excavations, besides some rougher ones, now partly inhabited. The two principal caves are very similar in lay-out. Entering by a roughly rounded lobby, one passes through a small hole in the rock, which admits scarcely any daylight, into the principal interior space. This is approximately circular and perhaps 25 feet in diameter. On the far side, opposite the entrance, it communicates with a smaller chamber semi-circular in form. From the main space a passage leads off, in the first cave to the right, in the second to the left; these receive no daylight at all. In the first cave the passage (which was half under water) turned twice to the right and was thus bent back on itself. It opened into several miniature cells, in shape an erect oval and only big enough for a man to stand in, each of which appeared to have opened through a small hole at the top into an upper space of some kind. The passage belonging to the second cave had basin-shaped excavations in its floor opening through small holes into spaces below. I therefore conjectured that I had here got into an upper passage such as apparently existed above the other system. Possibly these were underground chapels inspired by rock-excavated churches of the Lalibela school. As to the passages and the small spaces leading off them, with what seemed to be their ventilating arrangements, they might have been stores of some kind, or burial chambers, or special places of devotion, or hermits' cells—but these are speculations. If the mud which chokes these caves were removed something definite might be found out about them. They found a use quite recently, for at the time of the Italian invasion *tabots* and other church valuables were said to have been hidden in them.

175 In the first half of the sixteenth century the Shoan plateau, in common with a large part of Ethiopia, was occupied by Galla tribes invading from the 563 south. These Gallas were essentially horsemen and herdsmen, and it seems that, while they occupied the entire plateau, they did not seriously attempt to penetrate the gorges, into which even a mule descends with difficulty. I believe that the Amhara population became forcibly concentrated in the upper reaches of the gorges at this time, and that the dense population which resulted explains the extraordinary number of churches which came to be built there. Even to-day the greater part of the plateau between Addis

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ababa and Debra Berhan remains Galla country. The Amharas have re-occupied the region immediately around Debra Berhan, their southern limit corresponding roughly with the edge of the sheet; but the churches built to meet their needs (including the new St. Gabriel already once mentioned) are comparatively few and far between, a confirmation of the recent date of the re-colonization. 175 563

The Gallas remained in possession of the plateau country until the early nineteenth century when Sahele Selassie, king of Shoa, began to push them back. The half-dozen hill-top forts shown on the sheet almost certainly date from this time, or were reoccupied then. The capital of Shoa since the eighteenth century had been Ankober, on the edge of the great eastern escarpment, some 20 miles east of Debra Berhan. But Sahele Selassie, as part of his anti-Galla campaign founded, in about 1830, a new capital at Angolala in the midst of Galla country. He thereafter divided his time between Angolala and Ankober. A largely disused track, still well-defined in most parts, is shown crossing the sheet from Angolala in an easterly direction; this was evidently an old route joining the two capitals. Harris,[1] who conducted a British Mission to Sahele Selassie in 1841–42, visited Angolala which then contained four or five hundred huts. He also describes Sahele Selassie's two-storied "palace," built by an Albanian [2] visitor, standing on an eminence—which however the king would not inhabit, from fear of earthquakes. Angolala continued to be used by Sahele Selassie's son, king Haile Malakot, and the great Menelik, who was Haile Malakot's son, had been born here in 1843—just after the time of Harris's visit. 175 563 712 487 644

Not much remains now to show that Angolala was so recently the twin capital of Shoa; but the site of Sahele Salassie's house, an artificial mound crowning the ridge, is easily identified and commands a fine view of the countryside. Inside the mound is a vaulted cellar, its masonry showing clear signs of European workmanship, as also does the central stone-built element of the local church of Kidane Meheret. This work is now exposed to view as the church was burnt down during the Italian occupation. Angolala remains a well-populated area, but only a very few huts now stand among the remains of defensive walls near the old royal residence. 172 177

The young Menelik, up to the age of twelve, must have known all this country well. But at that time (1855) the newly crowned emperor Theodore, whose ambition was the unification of Ethiopia after a century and a half of anarchy and internal strife, came down from the north with the object of subjecting Shoa to his personal rule. He defeated king Haile Malakot on the plains of Atakilt, the irrigated area just south-east of Debra Berhan. Haile Malakot died immediately after the battle, and Menelik was carried away captive by Theodore—who, however, afterwards treated him as a son rather than a prisoner. For some years Menelik followed in the emperor's train, moving with him from Gondar to Debra Tabor and then to the hill-fortress of Magdala, Theodore's last capital and later the scene of his undoing. Several years before Napier's siege of 1868 Menelik had escaped from Magdala during, it is said, one of Theodore's periodic orgies. A youth in 175 113

[1] Harris, 'The Highlands of Aethiopia,' London, 1844.

[2] It is much more likely that Harris meant an Armenian.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 his early twenties, he found his way back to Ankober and assumed his rights as king of Shoa.

Menelik, who was a restless and imaginative character as well as a great soldier, soon began the series of vast conquests in the southern Galla lands which were to double the size of Ethiopia. It is therefore not surprising that he should have abandoned Ankober in favour of a capital within easier reach of his newly acquired territories. He first reverted to Debra Berhan, then made a new temporary capital at Liché, a few miles to the north-east. Here, [172] at one end of a long, low hill are various remains of massive dry-stone walls as at Angolala, and the raised platform, only about 20 feet across, on which stood Menelik's personal dwelling. But the site is now uninhabited. In the 1880's Menelik, his southern conquests rapidly extending, moved his capital south-westwards to Entotto, in the midst of country newly retrieved from the Gallas. This was a magnificent site, 10,000 feet high and overlooking the plain and the splendid circle of mountains which form the setting of the present capital. Entotto was, however, unsuitable as the site of a permanent [312] city. It is said, also, that Menelik's wife Taitu craved for a warmer residence and especially for the curative waters of the hot springs (the present Fil Wuha baths) on the edge of the plain below. So in 1889, the year in which he was crowned emperor in succession to John IV, Menelik moved down, and Addis Ababa was founded at the foot of the hills, 1500 feet below.

This digression completes our brief review of the historical associations of the area represented on the map. The remainder of this paper will deal with the present inhabitants, their distribution and their way of life.

361 It has already been said that the population of the area is greater than at first sight appears. The small, stone-built huts are inconspicuous objects, especially as they are seldom massed together to form a village but are widely scattered in small groups. Moreover the motor-road follows for the most part an exposed tract which carries less than the normal population. Travellers driving through therefore carry away a false impression: they can see little of the more populated areas, nothing of the gorges, and not a single one of the numerous churches of the region, except those of Debra Berhan itself.

I attempted to mark every inhabited place on the map. In very many cases the single dot indicates several households, and may be taken to represent, on 162 an average, two households of five to six persons each or eleven souls. On this basis the population of the whole area of 102 square miles comes to about 361 15,500 or 152 per square mile—a high average by African standards. (This excludes Debra Berhan itself which would add a further 2000 or so.) The population is not, however, evenly distributed, and the area may be divided into three parts which, with their areas and population densities (again ignoring Debra Berhan) are as follows:

General plateau: 60 square miles—116 per square mile.

Plateau between or within 1 km. of gorges: 22 square miles—240 per square mile.

The gorges themselves: 20 square miles—162 per square mile. (This indicates a very high concentration on the "shelves" and a few other favoured spots, for a great part of the gorge area is, of course, uninhabitable.)

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

Abuna, Tecla Haimanout knew that very soon no set of people would be more shamefully ignorant than those priests, even in the most common dogmas of their profession. He hoped, therefore, by a considerable stipend, to tempt some men of learning to accept of this place, to give his countenance to learning and religion among them. 793

The Arabic canon*, which is preserved by the Abyssinian church, and said to be of the council of Nice, should certainly be attributed to this Abuna, and is a forgery in, or very soon after, his time; for, it is plain this canon took place about the year 1800, that it was lawful to elect an Abuna, who was a native of Abyssinia before this prohibition, otherwise it would not have been applied. Abuna Tecla Haimanout was an Abyssinian by birth, and he was Abuna; the prohibition, therefore, had not then taken place: but, as no Abyssinian was afterwards chosen, it must certainly be a work of his time; for it is impossible a canon should be made by the council of Nice, settling the rank of a bishop in a nation, which, for above 200 years after that general council, were not Christians. 793 175 779

As the Abuna very seldom understands the language, he has no share of the government, but goes to the palace on days of ceremony, or when he has any favour to ask, or complaint to make. He is much fallen in esteem from what he was formerly, chiefly from his own little intrigues, his ignorance, avarice, and want of firmness. His greatest employment is in ordinations. A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand, from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who these are? and they tell him that they want to be deacons. On this, with a small iron cross in his hand, 793

* See Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 2. No. 17.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

than the Abuna. There are, after these, chief priests 793
and scribes, as in the Jewish church: the last of these, the ignorant, careless copiers of the holy scriptures.

The monks here do not live in convents, as in Eu- 793
rope, but in separate houses round their church, and 794
each cultivates a part of the property they have in land. The priests have their maintenance assigned to them in kind, and do not labour. A steward, being a layman, is placed among them by the king, who receives all the rents belonging to the churches, and gives to the priests the portion that is their due; but neither the Abuna, nor any other churchman, has any business with the revenues of churches, nor can touch them.

The articles of the faith of the Abyssinians have 175
been inquired into and discussed with so much keen- 779
ness in the beginning of this century, that I fear I should disoblige some of my readers were I to pass this subject without notice.

Their first bishop, Frumentius, being ordained about the year 333, and instructed in the religion of the Greeks of the church of Alexandria by St Athanasius, then sitting in the chair of St Mark, it follows, that the true religion of the Abyssinians, which they received on their conversion to Christianity, is that of the Greek church; and every rite, or ceremony, in the Abyssinian church may be found and traced up to its origin in the Greek church, while both of them were orthodox.

Frumentius preserved Abyssinia untainted with heresy till the day of his death. We find, from a letter preserved in the works of St Athanasius, that Constantius, the heretical Greek emperor, wished St Athanasius to deliver him up, which that patriarch refused to do: indeed, at that time, it was not in his power.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

● 175 779 Soon after this, Arianism, and a number of other heresies, each in their turn, were brought by the monks from Egypt, and infected the church of Abyssinia. A great part of these heresies, in the beginning, were certainly owing to the difference of the languages in those times, and especially the two words Nature and Person, than which no two words were ever more equivocal in every language into which they have been translated. Either of these words, in our own language, is a sufficient example of what I have said; and, in fact, we have adopted them from the Latin. If we had adopted the signification of these words in religion from the Greek, and applied the Latin words of Person and Nature to common and material cases, perhaps we had done better. Neither of them has ever yet been translated into the Abyssinian, so as to be understood to mean the same thing in different places. This for a time was, in a certain degree, remedied, or understood, by the free access they had, for several ages, both to Cairo and Jerusalem, where their books were revised and corrected, and many of the principal orthodox opinions inculcated. But, since the conquest of Arabia and Egypt by Sultan Selim, in 1516, the communication between Abyssinia and these two countries hath been very precarious and dangerous, if not entirely cut off; and now, as to doctrine, I am perfectly convinced they are in every respect to the full as great heretics as ever the Jesuits represented them. And I am confident, if any Catholic missionaries attempt to instruct them again, they will soon lose the use of letters, and the little knowledge they yet have of religion, from the prejudice only, and fear of incurring a danger they are not sufficiently acquainted with to follow the means of avoiding it.

779 The two natures in Christ, the two persons, their unity, their equality, the inferiority of the manhood,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-62, Vol. 7 have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

APPENDIX

TO

BOOKS VII. AND VIII.

No. I.

Detached Articles from the several Journals and Common-place Books, containing additional information respecting Abyssinia *.

175 YASOUS TALLACK (the Great) subdued Lasta, and obliged it to pay 1000 ounces of gold per annum in tribute. It continued to pay till the war between Mariam Barea and Ras Michael, when each pretending to it, it became independant, and continues so at this present day, April 1770.

Harar is four days journey from Shoa, and seven from Aussa. It is farther inland, and a plain country. The chief has the title of Emir; and is frequently at war with Amha Yasous in Shoa, who is independant. The people are all Mahometans, called Turks by the Abyssinians.

317 Gold is found in the Shangalla's country in small lumps, is by them put into quills, and carried to Damot fair. This, at least, was the ancient custom when these barbarians sold their gold as necessity required. Since that time they have got scales and weights, and know, in general, the value.—The Agows are the purchasers, and adulterate it with silver;

* The paragraphs marked with N. B. by the Editor.

THE PROVINCES: GENERAL

many of the smaller units retained, like them, much of their old historical 635
and cultural identity.

The provinces do not fall very easily into administrative categories. 175
The deepest distinction is that which has just been mentioned between
the dominant Christian provinces of the old Ethiopia and those of the 563
south which were, in the main, conquered by the Shoan dynasty during 635
the second half of the last century. The dividing line runs approximately along the Blue Nile and across the middle of the modern Shoa, a little to the north of the capital. The region around the capital, though it lay just south of this line, may be regarded as having, since the reign of Sahla Selassié (1813), been progressively assimilated to Amharic society. In the vast area north of the line, below the structure of imperial power and that of the dominating and shifting ruling families there lay, still largely intact, the variegated social design of the Tigré and Amhara groups, closely interwoven with that of the ancient church and sanctioned by long custom. South of this line were Muslim and pagan people, many newly conquered, some of them partially disintegrated and dispossessed by their conquest, and all subject to a far more direct rule under the Shoan Emperor and his agents than was possible in the north. In both groups of provinces there were exceptional areas such as those of the northern Gallas, but it will be more convenient to give the Gallas a chapter to themselves as part of the south. The non-Galla southern provinces must be sub-divided into three groups, the Sidamo Hamites, the negro, and those Danakil and Somali regions, where the semi-desert nature of the country and the nomadic life of the tribes frustrated effective control by the Amharas. The northern provinces are sufficiently homogeneous for us to consider them, in very general terms, as a whole. A discussion of the administration of the provinces must be preceded by an attempt to assess the numbers and distribution of the people.

The main facts of the ethnology of the region have appeared in their 175
place in the historical introduction, but it may be useful to bring
together here some of these scattered facts. We saw that a mainly 563
Hamitic (or Cushitic) population, with negro fringes and pockets, was dominated in successive southward moving stages by those northern groups which had been mastered and stimulated by Semitic emigrants from Arabia, and how this mixed Semitic-Hamitic people had gradually spread its domination over the northern half of the present boundaries to make the Ethiopian state and nation. It has been recounted how Christianity came in the fourth century and how the great movement of Galla peoples from the east and south-east, aided by the Muslim invasions of the sixteenth century, flooded into large areas of Ethiopia.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

175 563 In the nineteenth century, as will be recounted in some detail in the chapter on the southern provinces, the Ethiopians, and especially the Shoans, struck back and overran an immense area inhabited by Gallas, Somalis, non-Semiticized Hamites, and negroes in the south.

THE POPULATION

162 No census has ever been taken in Ethiopia and we cannot, therefore, know either the total of population within her boundaries or how to allocate the numbers to the several races, religions, and regions. All estimates are therefore nothing better than more or less informed guesses. To show the divergences in these guesses, a well-informed British consul writing in 1932 gave 5,500,000 as his figure,[1] whereas, since the liberation, a semi-official Ethiopian journal claims 12,000,000 to 13,000,000. A recent official statement by the ecclesiastical authorities claims 10,000,000 Ethiopian Christians.[2]

Special attention must be paid to the estimates of the Italians. As neighbours, adversaries and, for a short time, rulers of Ethiopia, they have had more reason and opportunity than other people to attempt such calculations.

The following estimates, obviously in very round numbers, are the official Italian figures. They cover the whole of Italian East Africa and it will therefore be necessary to consult Map 2 at the end of the book in order to see the relationship of this area with Ethiopia proper.

Province.	Population
Shoa	500,000
Eritrea	1,000,000
Amhara	1,000,000
Harar	1,600,000
Galla-Sidamo	1,600,000
Somalia	1,300,000
	7,000,000[3]

The following figures for the same area, published in the *Guida* of 1938, give the racial distribution.

[1] Makereth, p. 5. [2] *Herald*, 1 July 1946.
[3] *Annuario dell'Africa Orientale Italiana*, Rome, 1938–9, p. 597.

and I saw them together, and they appeared to be good friends. (God knows their hearts.)'[1] 'And it is so usual', wrote d'Almeyda in the next century, 'for the Emperor to chop, change, and take . . . the lands any man has and to bestow them on another, that it is never thought much of, and very often one plows, another sows, and a third reaps.'[2] Yet practice was never quite the same as theory. The Emperor's claim to make grants of land and office depending solely upon his will waxed and waned according to the changing balance of the social and political forces. Thus we find Ludolphus, while stating the general rule, remarking that there were some prefectures which the Emperor would have to bestow upon another member of the same family. He names six of these, including that of the *Bahr-nagash* and the *Wag-Shum*. Ludolphus has more to tell of the Emperor's views on this question. 'Moreover they presume that Hereditary Dignity is an obstacle to Virtue; that Men are more certainly made, than born great; and that they will prove more faithful, whom they have raised from the Dust, than such as claim their fortunes from their Ancestors.'[3]

To trace the changing movements in this tug-of-war would require a recapitulation of the involved internal struggles, battles of kites and crows, which fill the chronicles and the political details of which are no more interesting than those of our Wars of the Roses. Only a few important phases need be picked out. From d'Almeyda and Ludolphus we must pass on to the eighteenth century, when the royal power fell very low. Ras Mikael of Tigré, who dominates Bruce's story as Satan dominates Paradise Lost, was not a man an Emperor could dismiss; on the contrary he himself dismissed, and, indeed, murdered, more than one Emperor. At this time, even the Gallas of Damot could insist upon the son of the former Galla governor succeeding to the governorship and they killed the Emperor's uncle who was sent to take over the province.[4] The kingdom of Shoa, as we saw in the historical introduction, was all but independent, and though its rulers paid lip service to the King of Kings in Gondar, none of these dared challenge the solid power and hereditary succession of this dynasty.

The Galla mayors of the palace at Gondar struggled to raise the power of the decadent Solomonian rulers. One of these attempts to curb the growth of hereditary succession to offices and lands and to make a bid for the favour of the people against their lords, is of special interest in our context. Ras Gugsa passed the following decree in 1800:

'The land belongs to God. Man has only its usufruct. He fertilizes it by his labours: he passes: it swallows him and grows green again in

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 93. [2] Tellez, p. 63. [3] Ludolphus, p. 235.
[4] Jones and Monroe, pp. 122–3.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

175 the sun. Who then dares to call himself the owner of something stronger than himself? Holders of fiefs: lords of Provinces, listen: there is no more hereditary suzerainty. God alone has possession always. He gives sovereign right to whom he pleases. He has given it to me. . . . I am master of the soil. . . . Noble ladies and lords, holders of fiefs, present yourselves! I give rank and investiture. . . . Labourers, labour! Merchants, continue your traffic! It is I who am your might and your strength.'[1] It is said that the immediate effect of this decree was to turn most of the lesser nobility into soldiers of fortune, but this might have happened in any case in the disorders of the early nineteenth century.

Ras Ali, whom Plowden found in power, ruling with a puppet king, showed the monarchy at its weakest; Ras Oubié of Tigré was at least his equal and brooked no interference, though he sent in a token tribute. Even Ras Ali, in the Emperor's name, still claimed 'the right of appointing all other chiefs of provinces and officers of every kind at his will and pleasure'.[2] But many great families, his equals by birth, had their own armies, and in appointing a governor of a province he was obliged to be attentive to the claims of great families who, from hereditary influence, must be either rulers or rebels in their respective districts.[3]

After the disorders and decline of nearly a century, Theodore tried to revive the imperial authority. His methods were characteristic; they showed the vigour and genius which was so tragically ruined by his violence. 'The arduous task', wrote Plowden, 'of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task in Europe achieved only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous. . . . He has placed the soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish; thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains more proud of their birth than of their monarchy, and organizing a new nobility, a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen especially for their daring and fidelity.'[4] Even the *Wag-Shum* was not spared from seizure.

Theodore's successor, John, for all his great military ability, had at times to treat the kings of Shoa and Gojjam almost as equals. Menelik, though never so violent as Theodore, was able in his prime—but only then—to exert his authority over the provincial governors. An official report of 1906 states that he could at any moment take away the territory of the highest ras and put him in chains without giving any reasons for his action. The extent and also the limits of his power in relation to the great ruling families of the north were shown in his treatment of

[1] Salviac, M. de, *Les Galla*, Paris, 1902, p. 37.
[2] Hotten, p. 116. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 181. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

Gojjam when its king, Takla Haimanot, died in 1901. He wished to break up this large kingdom, but he did so only partially, leaving the eastern part to the son of the dead king. He also made it a habit to keep powerful chiefs waiting about at court, a favourite method of French kings and one that Theodore had applied to him in his own youth. The *Wag-Shum* was again deprived of his ancient hereditary succession by the Empress Taitu, in favour of her own nominee; but the *Shum* was later restored. As Menelik's physical power declined, so did his control until, during his last years, the provincial governors again became largely independent. Imperial authority over the governors declined still further under the unstable Lij Yasu, and was only very gradually restored in a new form by Haile Selassié. 175

We have seen that even the present Emperor had to pay some attention to the hereditary position of great families in those northern regions which had a traditional jealousy of Shoa and in which opposition and rebellion were most likely to appear. In his early days as Regent the provincial governors still remained very independent. Ras Hailu, for instance, did not come near the capital for years. Provincial tribute was very low. Chiefs were allowed to rule the country with which their family had been associated until some misdeed or act of disloyalty brought deposition. Hence Haile Selassié confirmed Ras Hailu in his father's position in Gojjam, and punished his contumacy with disinheritance and imprisonment only later when he was strong enough for this action. Similarly he felt obliged to confirm Ras Seyum in his ancestral lordship of Tigré. It was the decision to grant Ras Seyum, at the expense of his cousin *Dejazmach* Haile Selassié Gugsa, the lion's share of the family lands, which threw the latter into the arms of the Italians in 1935. Ras Gugsa Wallié's position in the provinces of Lasta and Bagemdir was based upon family connections, and when he was killed during his rebellion in 1930 the substitution of Ras Kassa was appropriate because of his connection with the former rulers of Lasta through his mother. Ras Kassa's son was made governor of Bagemdir in 1942 in recognition, presumably, of the family connection.

The present Emperor himself might be given as the representative of a branch of the royal line which has held the great province of Harar since his father Ras Makonnen conquered it and was confirmed in its lordship by his cousin Menelik. The lands and governorship of this province were inherited by Makonnen's eldest son and, upon his death, went to the younger brother, Tafari. Though Lij Yasu, when he came of age, transferred this potential rival to a south-west province, Tafari had left behind him in Harar an army that was loyal to his house, and when the clash came it rallied to him and Lij Yasu lost his throne. 643 [635]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

That the whole fabric of the original tenets of their Church is overlaid with a mass of gross superstition is unfortunately only too obvious; it is due, doubtless, to the vicissitudes through which the Church has passed, to the perpetual and invincible ignorance of the bulk of the priesthood, and to the composite nature of their Church tradition, consisting, as it does, of a pagan, Egyptian, Jewish, Coptic, and Latin evolution. That elements of all these forms of worship enter into their present-day religion cannot be doubted by those who have witnessed their ceremonies, examined their ecclesiastical robes and furniture, and studied their customs. And, indeed, it would be strange if it were not so, for this ancient people are themselves a combination of a number of different strains and races, drawn from both Asia and Africa, combining to form not only an interesting historical study, but a curious and baffling modern problem in the world of to-day, into which they have only comparatively recently emerged.

Originally pagan of course, the country adopted Judaism nearly 1000 B.C., and about the time of the birth of Christ the mythological beliefs of Greece appear to have been introduced, without, however, effecting the supersession of the Jewish faith.

It was in the early part of the fourth century (A.D. 330 is the generally accepted date) that the conversion of Ethiopia from Judaism to Christianity is reported to have been effected as the result of the visit to that country of some shipwrecked Christians. Being successful in converting the sovereign and the Court, they aspired to extend their sway over the whole country, and accordingly one of them returned to Egypt, obtained the assistance of the Alexandrian authorities, was

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

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771

nominated Bishop of Ethiopia, and induced the Abyssinian people to join the Alexandrian or Coptic branch of the Church.

According to Abyssinian tradition the first introduction of Christianity took place at an even earlier date. It is alleged that Matthew the Evangelist visited the northern districts of the country about A.D. 30 and attempted the conversion of the people; apparently, however, he made only few converts to the new doctrines and was eventually turned out. A further slight extension of the new faith is claimed to have been made a few years later; indeed Alvarez, writing in 1527, refers to Ethiopian books and traditions which describe Candace as the first Christian queen of the country and as having had her principal residence near Axum. Her conversion was alleged to have been due to a eunuch in her service who was sent by her to Jerusalem, and there met with Philip and was baptized by him as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles. This would be about A.D. 34, or some three hundred years before the generally accepted date.

I do not propose to enter into the merits of this latter claim, nor even into the claim that Abyssinia became christianized by divine inspiration during Christ's childhood without the aid of any missionaries (!); nor is it my purpose to trace the history of the Church from its inception up to now. Suffice it to say that it has passed through many vicissitudes, and that for hundreds of years the Abyssinians had to fight for the maintenance of their religion against external and internal foes. The main attacks were the great Moslem invasion of 1528 which swept over the country and all but engulfed it, followed by the invasion of the pagan

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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Galla, which came very near to being successful and which would in that event have resulted in blotting out Christianity in the country. And finally, the third attack on their particular form of Christianity, though not on Christianity itself, came from the Portuguese missionaries, who, arriving towards the middle of the sixteenth century, produced a good deal of effect on the religious life of the country. They actually succeeded in inducing one king to renounce the Alexandrian doctrine, to profess publicly his belief in Roman Catholicism, and to proclaim this faith as the national religion. But the success was short-lived; public opinion, bitterly outraged, would not tolerate the supersession of the old doctrines, and the king was compelled to restore the national faith by public proclamation. His son, who succeeded him shortly afterwards, completed the work by expelling the Jesuits.

In spite of these attacks the Abyssinians retain their faith unaltered to this day, though owing to their later conquests their rule extends over a larger number of non-Christian subjects than there are Abyssinians. The Somals, Danakil, and some of the Galla (in Harrar and Djimma) are Moslems; the Shankala and other Galla (in Boran, Arussi and Walega) are pagan, the latter believing in a form of supreme deity they call *Wak* or *Wakwe*, and a number of minor spirits or *Sarosh*. The Falasha are Jews.

Many of the Galla (in Wollo for example) were converted to Christianity by the Emperor Menelik, but his methods hardly seem to have been such as to inspire the converts with any profound or reasoned conviction of the merits of that faith. When he conquered a Galla country the inhabitants had to become Christians lest

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

175 worse should befall them, and the process was rapid and
771 simple—immersion in the nearest stream, circumcision, and generally the tying of a piece of blue silk cord round the neck.

779 The form of Christianity professed by Abyssinia is the monophysite, which was condemned as a "heresy" by the Council of Chalcedon in 450. This doctrine recognizes only one nature in Christ, against the view which has maintained itself as orthodox that the divine and human natures co-existed in him. But in spite of the thunders of Chalcedon the Abyssinians have held to their doctrine, although controversies as to a single, dual, and even threefold nature have raged in the country right up to the time of Theodore, who possessed decided views on the subject, and exercised drastic methods in giving effect to them.

783 The Church is to all intents and purposes an independent one, its only link with the Coptic Church in Egypt, on which it is nominally dependent, being the appointment by Alexandria of the Archbishop, or Abouna: he is an Egyptian, and once appointed he is supposed never to leave the country.

Tradition relates that the appointment of a foreign Abouna was laid down as a cardinal principle by the great Abyssinian ecclesiastic and national saint, Tekla Haimanot, in the thirteenth century in order to maintain connection between Abyssinia and the outside world, and to avoid internal rivalry in the nomination to the headship of the Church. Be that as it may, the Abyssinians attach considerable importance to their connection with the Alexandrian Church through their Abouna; this may be gauged from the fact that the Treaty between England, Egypt, and Abyssinia, made

114 ETHIOPIA has attracted travelers from the earliest days of African exploration. Disease often played an important rôle in the success or failure of such travelers, and a considerable amount of information with regard to nosography may be gathered from their writings. As early as 1855 Meyer-Ahrens published a nosography of Ethiopia based on the information gleaned from travel books then available, and much of this information is still of considerable importance. Other early attempts at a nosography of this region, not covered by Meyer-Ahrens, may be mentioned: Courbon's (1861) thesis, which is very superficial, and Blanc's *Medical History of a Journey in Abyssinia* (1869). Blanc was attached as physician to the expedition sent to relieve a British Consul kept prisoner by King Theodore. Theodore had sent a letter to Queen Victoria and another to Napoleon III asking for an embassy. When both letters were ignored, all Europeans in Ethiopia were imprisoned in 1866. Blanc, although imprisoned for two years, had opportunity to act as physician to Theodore and other important Ethiopians and has given a very interesting, although under the circumstances quite naturally a somewhat prejudiced, account of diseases and customs among the Ethiopians.

● 175 In 1889 Menelik proclaimed himself Emperor of Ethiopia. The years that followed brought Ethiopia into bitter conflict with Italy. A treaty was signed between the two countries at Ucciali in 1889, and Menelik's cousin, Ras Makonnen, father of the present Emperor, was sent on a mission to Rome to obtain a loan for which the whole province of Harar was offered as security. Soon difficulties broke out again and in 1894 Menelik denounced the treaty of

[R 710A]

175 Ucciali. A wave of patriotism swept the country and armies were gathered to meet the Italian invasion. On March 1, the Italians were practically annihilated by a vastly superior Ethiopian Army.

Ethiopia had been put on the map. 177 Menelik was interested in getting foreign help in a number of technical fields, and among the many technical experts traveling in the country during the next twenty years there were also a goodly number of physicians. The different diplomatic missions in the new capital, Addis Ababa, often had their own physicians and with Russian assistance the Emperor founded the first small hospital in the capital. Among the medical writers of this period were Chabaneix (1901), the well-known British medical historian, Charles Singer (1905), who traveled through southwestern Ethiopia to Addis Ababa in 1904, and the French Railway physician, Doreau (1909).

Mission societies sent medical mission- 797 aries to Ethiopia during the following years, 743 and French and Greek physicians, particularly, settled more and more in the capital and in Dire-Dawa, the French railroad town on the Addis-Ababa-Jibuti line. The French Government opened a hospital in Harar and the Italian Government at first kept a clinic in Addis Ababa which, in the early thirties, was enlarged to "The Italian Hospital." Ras Tafari, who had governed as a regent, with Menelik's widow, Zauditu, as Empress, was crowned Emperor in 1930, under the name Haile Selassie I. During his reign Ethiopia slowly has been emerging as a modern state. He early realized that the health of his people was of vital importance for the future of the country. In 1924, he founded the Beit Saida Hospital, which he entrusted to the Swed-

[p. 710B]

11: Levine

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[For historical profiles of two regions of Ethiopia, Gondar and Manz, both significant in Amhara history, see category 116, pp. 18-46.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

related to Ge'ez, the ancient and liturgical language of Ethiopia, much as Italian is related to Latin.[1] It was in Tigre country that, during the first seven centuries A.D., the kingdom of Aksum reached heights of civilization never again attained in Ethiopia's history. Because of the antiquity of their region and the glory of their past, the Tigre are to some extent the cultural aristocrats of Ethiopia.

The Amhara inhabit vast areas of what are today the provinces of Bagemder, Gojjam, Wallo, and Shoa. Their language, Amharic, is the official language of Ethiopia.* Since the beginning of what is called the restored Solomonid Dynasty (1270), all but one of the emperors of Ethiopia have been Amhara.† The exception was a Tigre, Emperor Yohānnes IV (1872–89), though he sojourned for many years at Dabra Tābor in Amhara country, and Amharic was commonly spoken at his court.

The differences between Amhara and Tigre culture have not yet been studied systematically. Even so, one can say that their differences are not nearly so great as what the two groups have in common. Language forms the chief difference. Like Ge'ez and Tigrinya, Amharic is a Semitic language, ultimately descended from old South Arabic, but Amharic has been molded to a greater degree by indigenous Cushitic tongues. Other differences relate to minor variations in custom, greater communal orientation in some Tigre areas, and differences in temperament. But the two groups share the legacy of Aksum, the Ethiopic alphabet, Ge'ez literature, Monophysite Christianity, similar political and social institutions, and the same style of life. One would be justified in treating their traditional Abyssinian culture as a unity, as virtually all authors have done in the past.

In this book, however, I have chosen to focus on Amhara culture as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia. This has been done, first of all, because of my limited competence to deal with Tigre materials, since I am neither familiar with Tigrinya nor fortunate enough to have done field work in Tigre areas. But a less fortuitous reason is that any serious account of contemporary Ethiopia must begin with the fact of Amhara dominance. With respect to numbers, true, the Amhara are in a minority: Amhara probably comprise no more than one-quarter of Ethiopia's total population (now estimated at around twenty-two million). Their dominance is to be measured, rather, in political and cultural terms. On the political side it is manifest in the perpetuation of the Amhara monarchy and the preponderance of Amhara in top political offices. On the cultural side it appears in the spread of Amhara customs throughout the empire by officials, soldiers, settlers, and teachers, and in

* English is the second official language.

† A number of Amhara emperors since the mid-eighteenth century were partly of Galla stock, however.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

the continuous Amharization of the peoples of the empire through the required use of Amharic in schools and government offices and through the substitution of Amharic names for indigenous place-names in many parts of the country. If the national institutions and culture of Ethiopia are essentially Abyssinian, more particularly they are Amhara.[2]

The domination of Ethiopian national life by the Amhara, and the related fact that the modern Ethiopian nation was the creation of the Amhara and not of European colonists, are characteristics which distinguish Ethiopia from all other African societies. For Ethiopia is the only country in Africa with a large number of ethnic groups where one of these groups has imposed its rule and its language over the rest and has preserved indigenous national institutions, elites, and culture patterns from displacement by Western forms and authorities.

This condition has imparted a basically conservative tone to the character of public life in Ethiopia, especially when compared to the new nations of sub-Saharan Africa. Because Ethiopians did not have to participate in the postwar struggle for independence, they did not experience the rise of agitational politics or the related phenomenon of political parties or movements. As a corollary of this, the Ethiopian populace was not exposed to oratory promising dynamic social and economic changes, and therefore developed no mass base of support for populist leaders who might seek to promote more rapid forms of change.

Yet if modernization has proceeded more slowly in Ethiopia than elsewhere in Africa—and speed in such matters has at times been associated with recklessness—the pattern of virtually unbroken Amhara rule for at least seven centuries stands in refreshing contrast to the somewhat anguished struggle for nationality within the new nations. Elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa no indigenous cultural tradition exists at the national level. There are many degrees to this cultural fragmentation. At one extreme are countries such as the Ivory Coast which, with some sixty disparate tribal groups in a population of about three million, can as yet appeal only to French culture as a basis for unity at the national level. Somewhat less fragmented are the nations, like Nigeria, in which a small number of important tribal traditions dominate the national scene. Still more consolidated is Uganda, whose kingdom of Buganda has long supported a strong quasi-national tradition, but whose non-Baganda tribes have remained largely outside the pale.

In Ethiopia, by contrast, Amhara rule has long provided a minimal basis for national unity. While this rule has been secured by coercive means, it has accustomed the various tribes in Ethiopia to live under a common sovereignty and to some extent has enabled their leaders to communicate with one another by means of a common native tongue.

One need not be blind to the drawbacks of Amhara dominance to recog-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

E 175 563 A 175 648

nize in it these and other important advantages for Ethiopia. These drawbacks have been those of any imperialism. During the great Amhara expansion under Menelik (1889–1913), many peoples were maltreated. Independent tribesmen were reduced to slavery; unique cultures were decimated; proud kings were dragged in the dust. Those who held down the Amhara position in these occupied territories seized land from the indigenous peoples and exploited them much as would any invader. The unfavorable reputation of the Amhara in the non-Amhara provinces has been due largely to the example of these governors and soldiers whose worst impulses were at times allowed free play.

One can scarcely single out the Amhara for criticism because of their imperialistic behavior in the past. Nor is it fair to judge the Amhara people as a whole by the character of their provincial officials in conquered areas, any more than one may judge the British, French, Portuguese, or Russian people by the behavior of certain imperious and sadistic colonial administrators. This distinction was self-evident to more discriminating observers of the Ethiopian scene like Augustus Wylde, who wrote in 1901:

A [565] [701] [157]

> There is no harder worker than the Abyssinian peasant, and no more harmless and hospitable person when left alone and properly treated; and no more truculent, worthless, conceited, lazy and useless individual than the Abyssinian soldier, who formerly did nothing but prey upon the defenceless cultivator.[3]

Indeed, if any imperialism of modern times should be granted special consideration, it might be that of the Amhara. The Amhara were to some extent merely reconquering lands that had been taken from them in earlier centuries. Furthermore, they needed additional strength to help withstand threats to their own independence. Finally, it can also be argued that if the Amhara had not conquered the other peoples now within the Ethiopian boundaries some European power might have colonized them instead.

E 563 A 648

However one may assess the fact of Amhara dominance in Ethiopia, it is a given of the present situation. It is a fact that leads naturally to two outstanding questions. One concerns the relations between the Amhara and the non-Amhara peoples of the empire: is it possible for the latter to be integrated more effectively and justly into the texture of a common national life? If not, the present state of tribal calm may prove to be but a long prelude to a wasteful storm. The question demands serious and sustained inquiry by a number of scholars, Ethiopians and foreigners alike.

E 563 178 121 A 121

The other question concerns the nature of Amhara culture, as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia, and its implications for the processes of Ethiopia's modernization now at work and yet to come. To this question we now direct our attention.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
[175] Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[173] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).[6] Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[874] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in
538 Gojjam in the fourteenth century.[7] The important schools of *qenē* have al-
19 ways been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
[171] delā, Wāshārā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethiopia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.[8] They further maintain that Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propaedeutic to the study of religious texts.* Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar, which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and thereby enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized by the formula *sam-ennā warq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

538 * The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely preparing himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adolescence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

The Welfare School

Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in government provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

642 authority, the emperor could never afford to ignore the hereditary claims of
643 regional *bālābbāt* in dispensing favors and making appointments. He needed
565 a minimum of support from regional lords who commanded devoted followers, and he could not with impunity alienate any number of these at a given time. In practice, imperial favor was accorded *both* on the basis of personal loyalty and military ability, and of ascriptive claims to rank based on birth. The exercise of imperial authority was often a question simply of confirming the leadership of a locally successful *bālābbāt*.

565 With regard to regionally based strength, on the other hand, birth was not
554 a sufficient factor to assure a man a high position. (It was not even necessary, strictly speaking. Any man could attempt to build up a position of power by attracting followers. He had a much better chance, however—a chance to attain authority, and not merely force—if he came from a noted family.) If, as the son of an important lord, he inherited his father's position, he had to prove himself a suitable leader or risk being deposed by the men of the area. At the very least he had to withstand competition from his brothers. Thus, as we saw
[175] in the history of Manz, two of Nagāssi's sons were deposed before the men of Manz found in Sebstē a leader worthy of his father's mantle. Military ability, political shrewdness, and lavish generosity toward one's followers were the decisive characteristics which, together with strong ambition, could enable the son of a *bālābbāt* to attract followers and make claims of his own. With adequate forces, he could even depose a regional governor and take his place, so long as he took possession of the official drum (*nagārit*) of the office.[88] For complete legitimation, however, it was usually necessary to secure con-
[643] firmation of the rule of a locally successful *bālābbāt* by the emperor. This was the reason why Nagāssi is said to have journeyed to Gondar.

642 In terms of the distribution of political authority, then, Abyssinian history
643 may be viewed as an oscillation between the emperor's efforts to define local
565 nobles as his agents and their own efforts to attain continuity and autonomy.
175 The available sources concerning the emperors of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries suggest that their efforts were to a large extent successful. The ensuing "barbarian invasions" so weakened the empire that a more locally centered distribution of power became inevitable. At first only the scope of the monarchy was reduced, as the emperor came to govern a smaller area. In consequence, in outlying regions such as Manz, Gishē, and Merhābētē in northern Shoa, virtual sovereignty was wielded by the local *bālābbāt*. Nevertheless, for a good century after its founding Gondar served as a real imperial capital, and its emperors retained authority over the lords in their shrunken empire. Then, as the monarchy began its inexorable decline due to internal rivalries and the movement of Galla into court and capital, localism triumphed. Ethiopia's Age of the Princes (1769–1855) was as decentralized a political system as was twelfth-century France or fourteenth-century Japan.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

It was at this time that the *makuānnent* came into their own. More unabashedly than ever they constituted, not a hereditary aristocracy in corporate opposition to the king, but a plurality of proud centers of rank—partly inherited, partly achieved—enjoying virtual autonomy. To move toward a modern nation it would be necessary to brake their centrifugal force. 175 565 642

The Clergy

Like the nobility, the clergy may be divided into those who are significant at the national level and those who are primarily local dignitaries. The former reside close to the imperial court, while the latter are thickly distributed around monasteries, churches, and wildernesses all over the country. 793 792

The highest ecclesiastical authority in Abyssinia was the *abuna* who, from the time of Frumentius in the fourth century until the death of Abuna Qerlos in 1949, was with few exceptions an appointee of the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria. Chosen from the Egyptian monks of the convent of St. Anthony near the Red Sea, the *abuna* was brought, at great expense to the emperors, to live out his life in an alien land. Ignorant of the language and customs of the country, he played little part in the conduct of church affairs or in affairs of court; and when he did try to do so, his efforts were usually abruptly checked by jealous clerics and suspicious kings. His functions were purely ritual, but indispensable: he alone had authority to anoint and crown the emperor, to confer orders, and to absolve vows. From numerous revenues, rents, and fees, the *abuna* enjoyed a considerable income. Like the emperor, he was regarded as sacred because of the charisma of his office, and spent most of his time secluded from the public.[39]

Second in rank was the *eçhagē*, an appointment made by the emperor. This was the traditional title of the abbot of the convent of Dabra Libānos in Shoa, which in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gained hegemony over Abyssinian monasticism. The *eçhagē* served as administrative head of the church and had jurisdiction over all monks and monasteries. The most esteemed of the Ethiopian clergy, he tended to wield more actual power than the *abuna*. His provincial deputies, called *liqa ḳāhenāt*, controlled the secular clergy. This office was also bestowed by the emperor, and its functions included presenting candidates for ordination and deciding questions of protocol in connection with religious ceremonies.

In addition to these supreme dignitaries of the church, a small number of churchmen enjoyed pre-eminent status by virtue of their activities at the imperial court. These included the *aqābē sa'āt* ("guardian of the [canonical] hours"), the chief ecclesiastic at court, and during part of the reign of Zar'a Yā'qob the only official with unrestricted access to the king; the *qēs hāṭsē* ("king's chaplain"); the *liqa dabtarā* ("chief of the *dabtarā*"); and *liqa mammerān* ("chief of the learned men"). These four served as the four su- 793 644 [693]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of ascetic piety is stressed at the expense of knowledge. The monk need not 793
even know how to read, though if a lifelong monk he is likely to have de- 792
voted much time to traditional studies. The *dabtarā,* by contrast, lives by 554
his lore and his learning. At his best, the Abyssinian monk conveys a real sense of spiritual purity, of profound mystical bearing, of an utterly mild manner. The *dabtarā,* at his best, is a subtle conversationalist and an operator of wondrous effects.*

Thus, while the status of members of the old nobility was a compound resultant of simultaneously operating criteria—family and region, royal favor and accumulated power—the several criteria relevant to the status of the clergy operated more or less independently. This made the religious elite a more differentiated stratum.

This statement need be qualified only by the fact that, in addition to the considerations of ritual purity, ascetic piety, and traditional learning, a fourth factor influenced the status of the clergy, namely, royal favor as expressed in appointments to the high ecclesiastical offices. This factor crosscut the others, for such favor was dispensed to members of all three status groups. The *eçhagē* was always a monk; the *aqābē sa'āt* would seem to have been a *dabtarā;* the post of *alaqā* could be given to members of all three groups.

Just how these types of local clergy were related to the clergy at the na- 79
tional level in the traditional order is a question that is difficult to answer. 175 •
In any case, it is likely that there were conflicts among their representatives in the competition for royal favor. In the fourteenth century, the ecclesiastics of the royal entourage included only secular clergy, and their deportment was sharply criticized by Eçhagē Fileppos, who charged that "those who live in the dwelling of the Sovereign, go about proudly in subtle raiment and with ornaments of gold and silver—perishables—and are very arrogant."[49] However, once Zar'a Yā'qob had established the custom of bringing members of the convent of Dabra Libānos to the court, the monastic order was always well represented in the royal entourage as well. In the present period one sometimes hears of competition among the different groups for influence in

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* The association of impious properties with the main representative of traditional religious 779
learning may be seen as an expression of the Abyssinian's ambivalence toward knowledge as 793
such. The whole tenor of Ethiopian Orthodox religion runs counter to ratiocination and inquiry. It stresses mystery and discourages curiosity with tales like that of the man who tried to probe the mystery of the Trinity and was swallowed up by the earth—a tale commonly told to students who are learning to read. For this reason Orthodox students have frequently been quite upset by the rational theodicy taught by the Jesuit fathers at the University College.

As observed in the previous chapter, moreover, it was traditionally believed that too much learning results in madness, a belief no doubt based on the fact that older church students often drink a certain medicine to quicken their mental faculties, which sometimes deranges them (as the author has witnessed). The *dabtarā,* for their part, would seem to have thrived on this belief, benefiting from the exclusive powers and privileges gained from their esoteric knowledge.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis,* a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

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innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amda Ṭseyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum. 565 792 793 571 182

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[61] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas. 423 795 182 175

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest. 565 792 793 571 182

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict 792 793 643 578

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792 did erupt between the secular and religious powers. In that event both groups
793 had recourse to powerful weapons: the former, violence; the latter, excom-
643 munication. The history of Ethiopia records numerous instances of the flog-
578 ging or execution of clergy by secular authorities. The action of Fāsiladas
[195] (1632–67), who reportedly "caused seven thousand priests to be thrown head-
long from the top of the mountain Balbau for having revolted against him,"[52] would represent but one of the more extreme instances of such violent retribution. Short of violence, the kings at least had other means at their disposal for controlling the clergy: the power to withhold benefices, the right to imprison church officials, the final authority on doctrinal questions, and the ability to block a united front on the part of the clergy by pitting high church officials against each other.

792 On the other hand, infringement on the rights of churches and monasteries,
793 gross civil injustice, or radical departure from religious tradition could on
578 occasion evoke surprisingly effective retaliation by the clergy. D'Abbadie provides some extremely illuminating passages on this matter, from which the following have been extracted:

> More than once have I been present at debates of this nature; I have seen these men of the church, weak and without arms amidst men of war, pleading in the name of the law, indicting the menacing covetousness of the surrounding soldiery, invoking eloquently reprobation against their powerful adversaries, and leading them to disavow themselves that force which constituted their pride. . . .
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> In the case of an open violation of an asylum, the regular clergy got aroused; the most venerable monks abandoned their solitude, assembled the parish clergy, went into the camps, and generally they obtained justice. When the real culprit was the Dajāzmātch, they brought him to repentance, or else excommunicated him, threatened his servants with anathema if they continued to serve him, put the province under interdict and, aided by the monks of the neighboring provinces, stirred up national reprobation against him.[53]

792 The clergy had other resources which it could employ against the emperor
793 himself. It could influence royal policy through highly placed advisers.
578 Through the *abuna* it could exact certain promises from a prospective em-
643 peror as a condition of coronation. Perhaps most important, the clergy could, through its hold over public opinion, turn the populace against the sovereign. As we have seen, this power proved decisive in the encounters between church and monarch in the reigns of Za Dengel and Susneyos, and contributed significantly to the downfall of Tēwodros and Līji Iyāsu.

643 While therefore the emperor may well have been "supreme in all causes,
792 ecclesiastical and civil," he was far from being the sole, or even the decisive,
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source of the influence enjoyed by the clergy. The latter constituted a largely autonomous status group which no emperor could afford to antagonize indefinitely. The attempt to build a more powerful central government and introduce cultural reforms thus required some alteration of their independent status as well as that of the old nobility.

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THE FEUDAL ORDER IN TRANSITION

The Decline of the Old Nobility

It must always have been the policy of the Ethiopian emperors, except for those few who did not relish the political side of their office, to seek to maximize their control over the regional nobility. They did this, we have seen, either by granting land, power, and rank to men who were completely dependent on them, or else by controlling, through military and diplomatic means, those lords whose birthright and regional strength gave them strong claims to their positions.

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During the past century, however, the idea of subordinating regional nobles to imperial control has come to be conceived more radically and has become the core of a slowly emerging ideal of a modern nation-state. Some such vision was certainly behind the tortuous career of Tēwodros II, whose policy was a reaction against the desperate disunity which the Age of the Princes brought to Abyssinia and to the growing threat from foreign powers. In Plowden's official report to the British government in 1855, he described Tēwodros' work as follows:

> The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated. He has placed soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish: thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains, more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility—a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.[54]

The task of displacing the great feudal chiefs proved to be scarcely less arduous in Ethiopia than in Europe, however. Tēwodros' high hopes were shattered against the opposing forces of regional ambitions and clerical disaffection. The national unity he won through conquest and reform did not survive to the end of his reign.

Yohānnes IV (1871–89) likewise aimed at uniting the nation, but was distracted from serious internal reform by the need to fight off the encroach-

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ments of Egyptians, Mahdists, and Europeans. His domestic policy was more concerned with the imposition of religious uniformity than with political transformation.

Menelik revived Tēwodros' policy of creating a band of generals loyal only to himself. He did this partly by raising capable men with no connections to high position: Rās Gobānā and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, two of his most important generals, were originally Galla prisoners. The power of the feudal chieftains he manipulated by traditional techniques, sending them to posts far removed from their home bases, and arranging political marriages. But Menelik did not decisively undercut the authority of the great provincial lords, and at his death the old political structure was still more or less intact.

The experience of these emperors was not forgotten by Haile Selassie, who seems to have made it his primary and unceasing ambition to assure his position by breaking down every sort of autonomous power where it previously existed or threatened to develop. Thanks to his policies of centralization and to modern means of transport and communication he was able to become more of an effective autocrat than any of his predecessors.

The main development during the period of his regency as Rās Tafari (1917–28) was the stiffening of his military posture. To start with he had the regional forces of Harar Province, formerly his father's governorship, which he had acquired through the favor of Empress Taitu (Menelik's wife) following Menelik's paralysis. He built up his strength by making improvements in Harar that increased his revenues and the number of his soldiers, and acquired fiefs elsewhere. Following the death of Empress Zauditu's commander of the imperial troops in 1926, he took command of these troops and brought some of his own forces into Addis Ababa. By 1928 he was strong enough to demand the title of *negus* from Zauditu and, as is well known, acceded as emperor upon her death two years later.

[204] During these years Rās Tafari was gradually promoting the idea of a transformation of the position of the old nobility. As early as 1926 a letter published in his weekly newspaper, *Berhānennā Salām*, suggested that the prevailing feudal system of provincial government be replaced by a system based on salaried administrators.[55] An actual change of that order was out of the question at that time. A contemporary American observer thus described some of the obstacles:

> Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Guksah, chief of Amhara, Dejasmatch Ayalu, powerful head of Simien, Dejasmatch Gabra Salassy of Tigre, and Ras Kassa of Shoa, are supreme lords in the rough highlands of the north country. Far removed from the central authority, thirty to forty days' journey, some of them, they are out of touch—living in a different world from that of Addis Ababa. Hundreds of lesser chiefs rally to their standards, each

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> with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[56]

The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, reestablished after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete.

Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*kārnē*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers.

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175 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureau-
178 cratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of
631 regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central gov-
642 ernment has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of
565 building up their positions, members of the most important noble families
631 have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of
642 Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of
646 high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as
631 regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to
693 Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the
578 behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov-
[465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the
565 aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the
554 eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national
[571] political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

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recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively 793
estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in 178
Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains (423)
a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more 178
vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little 795
relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. 793
The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuännent,* Haile Selassie 178
was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, 565
determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once 554
wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, 642
however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government [645]
officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class 175
of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the 178
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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 178 565 642 645 royal will. A solid foundation for such a class was not possible, however, until the central government had been sufficiently stabilized and expanded. These conditions began to be met under Menelik, who established Addis Ababa in the last decade of the nineteenth century and in 1907 created a number of ministries. Housed in buildings inside the palace compound, the ministries were initially regarded as little more than an ornament to dress up the imperial court. Although men of some stature, like Afa Negus Nasibu and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, were named to the posts, the offices themselves did not acquire much prestige. It was no great matter when, five years after the death of Menelik, the ministers were turned out of office by a group of military officers at the instigation of Rās Tafari and sent home to their provincial estates.

175 178 645 647 After becoming emperor himself, however, Haile Selassie revived and enlarged the ministerial system. Since the restoration, it has expanded into a complex bureaucratic structure. In addition to some sixteen ministries, a number of specialized government agencies have been formed, and the military and judicial hierarchies and the diplomatic corps have been considerably expanded. The rapid growth of the central government in the past two decades is reflected in its budgetary expenditures, which went from about US$10 [652] million in 1942 to an estimated US$110 million in 1962.

178 647 571 554 565 The growth of this governmental machinery has provided a new basis for elite status in Ethiopia. Mobility channels now run in terms of appointments in the government bureaucracy. The periodic announcement of appointments by the Emperor has become the focus of public interest in Ethiopia since the liberation. Every new list of appointments provides the occasion for intense gossip and *de rigueur* congratulatory parties at the homes of the favored.

178 565 571 The new class of high governmental functionaries under Haile Selassie may be regarded as a transitional elite: partly traditional, partly modernizing. With regard to basis of recruitment, values represented, and style of life, the new nobility present, on the one hand, a direct continuation of the old nobility; and, on the other hand, many features novel in Abyssinian society.

178 565 [646] To some extent recruitment of members of the new nobility was not a creation of new dignitaries, but rather an absorption of members of the old nobility into the new political organization. The recruitment of *makuānnent* into the senate, which after all is an organ of the central government, may be taken as an ambiguous instance of this. Some others were given important posts in the civil and military administrations. These include members of the princely families of Shoa, Tigre, Wag, Lasta, and Gōjjam; the Bakere clan, royalty from the Galla province of Wallaga; and scions of the *makuānnent* who were important in Menelik's day or before, members of aristocratic clans which go by the names of Bēzā, Mojā, Sofanē, and Addisgē. Such persons are likely to have been awarded the old military titles for purely honorific pur-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

poses. They have been led to renounce extreme particularistic ambitions, 178 thanks to marital connections, intimidation, the lure of new benefits, and a 565 degree of nationalism, but to some extent they remain spokesmen for regional and para-dynastic interests.

Men who did not belong to the old nobility were recruited into the new 178 nobility on the basis of two criteria, loyalty and ability, with loyalty clearly the 565 more important of the two. Some men from very humble backgrounds have 554 been thus raised to the highest governmental positions through their "loyalty" to the Emperor, manifested in great part by their readiness to inform on the words and deeds of others and their obsequious and flattering manner. These have normally not been given the traditional military titles but only the titles of their office. In contrast with the carry-overs from the old nobility, still known as *masāfent* and *maḳuānnent,* these men have been called *bāla-selṭān* ("holders of power"). They have included a number of men who were [648] active in the fight against the Italians, either through the Hagara Fiqer ("National Patriotic Association," a group organized in 1935 to promote Ethiopian unity and combat Italian propaganda) or as patriotic fighters in the resistance. The Emperor also promoted to high position some men who collaborated with the Italians, relying on their earlier record as an insurance against latter-day disloyalty, and using their antagonism against the patriots as a check against excessive ambitions of the latter.

On the other hand, the new nobility includes those who, whether from high [555] family background or not, are so placed because of outstanding ability. This consideration is no longer primarily a question of military ability, but of competence in dealing with technical modern subjects and with foreign diplomats. This group may be equated with the older generation of European-educated Ethiopians. The categories of adjusted aristocrats, ambitious parvenus, and intellectual bureaucrats have thus constituted a latent subdivision among the new nobility; and tensions have from time to time been expressed along those lines.

Despite the elaboration of modern governmental structures under Haile 178 Selassie, the dominant principle of the social order has been that of royal 64 sovereignty. The entire staff of government officials has been the direct sociological descendant of the traditional court retinue. This was conspicuous in [195] the titles given by Menelik to a number of the original ministers: *Afa Negus* for Minister of Justice; *Azāzh* for Minister of Palace; *Bajirond* for Treasurer; and *Ṭsahāfi Te'ezāz* for Minister of Pen. These and other court titles remain in use today. The primacy of the court over all other functions appears in periodic audiences at the palace, when all high government officials and other notables are expected to pay their respects no matter what business may be pending in their offices. The chief value embodied in the status group of the new nobility as a whole has been that of loyalty to the sovereign.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the
565 new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the
661 view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in
565 terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly
556 as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like
[241] coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to specu-
[455] late in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene
565 in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well
556 as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families,
472 Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became
[175] prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to
[648] collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *maḳuānnent* and *bāla-selṭān*. They
[662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different
565 from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army
369 tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend
177 to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the
[556] more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 532 156 further limited by a number of canons. For example, saints must have no shadows on their faces; "good" characters must be portrayed *en face*, "bad" ones in profile; and honored subjects must be portrayed on the right.* Virtually all aspects of the subject matter—dress, features, actions, symbolism—are prescribed by rigid conventions. That this degree of conformity reflects a cultural attitude and not a want of inventiveness on the part of Amhara artists is shown by the discoveries of Marcel Griaule, who collected hundreds of drawings in Gojjam in the form of silhouettes and graffiti, drawings based on direct observation and exhibiting an "astonishing diversity and revealing . . . a very great liberty of expression." Yet, Griaule observed, "these drawings are scorned by the people, who pay scarcely any attention to them; and by the artists themselves, who regard them as a sort of pastime of no importance, or as an activity reserved primarily for apprentices."[29]

In painting, as in the performing arts, individuality was suppressed not only by the pressure to conform to given models but also by the anonymity of the artists involved. This is more striking in the case of painting which, particularly in the form of miniatures, produced some exceptional works. But painting was carried out for the most part as a devotional activity, and its practitioners were apparently content to remain unknown.

The Written Word and the Oral Tradition

*121 156 538 The written literature of Ethiopia provides as little scope for individuality as does its painting. Like the painters, the authors of the Ethiopian manuscripts have for the most part remained anonymous. Their subject matter has been narrowly circumscribed by the force of tradition, and their genres have been just as narrowly conventionalized.

Ethiopian literature consists primarily of religious writings, in the first instance of free translations from Greek, Syriac, and Arabic texts. Where the writings are original they tend to be either expositions of traditional beliefs and rituals of the church, eulogies of saints, or expressions of pious fantasy on religious themes. The nature of this literature is to extol sacred objects, not to express individual personality. The *Investigations of Zar'a Yāqob*, a very personal and imaginative critique of prevailing orthodoxies dated in the seventeenth century and reminiscent of the French *philosophes*, is the exception that proves the rule; for this manuscript has proved to be a forgery, the work of a Franciscan missionary to Ethiopia in the early nineteenth century.[30]

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[175] * The seriousness with which such conventions seem to have been taken is shown by the episode of Brancaleone, a Venetian painter who was in Ethiopia during the reign of Ba'eda Māryām (1468–78), who is said to have provoked an uproar by painting a Madonna with the child on her left arm instead of the conventional right.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The effect of this literature has not been, as David Riesman suggests is true of the written word generally, an individualizing one. It did not serve to "help liberate the reader from his group and its emotions, and allow the contemplation of alternative responses and the trying on of new emotions."[31] It has served rather to buttress conformity, by rekindling identification with the sacred symbols of the society. Ethiopian religious literature does not invite introspection; it is a corpus to be venerated and solemnly rehearsed. When a devout Ethiopian reads his daily or weekly portion from some writing such as the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David) or the *Weddāssē Māryām* (*Praise of Mary*), he is said to be "repeating" the text—*Dāwit yedaggemāl*. Most of those who learn to read the words of these writings do not understand the Ge'ez in which they are composed. 121* 156 182 538

A similar function has been performed by the secular literature, which runs primarily in praise of royalty and thus has served to uphold the political status quo. The earliest Ethiopian writings are inscriptions of the Aksumite kings dating from the fourth century A.D. Here, in a style that is to persist through the ages, the royal deeds are recounted in meticulous detail and endowed with the highest morality.[32] Ge'ez chronicles were composed in this manner for most of the emperors after the thirteenth century. The earliest specimens of written Amharic consist of hymns in praise of the Emperor Amde Ṭseyon (1314–44). 121* 156 175 182 538

Two other written works put the capstone on this conservative structure. The *Kebra Nagast*, the Ethiopian national epic, has served chiefly to legitimate the royal line that came to power in the thirteenth century and to cement once and for all the union of monarchy and church. The *Fetha Nagast*, the traditional legal code based on various canon and civil laws compiled in medieval Egypt, has served not as a working code for the adjudication of court cases but as an embellishment of *de facto* decisions, imparting to the judge an increment of authority by virtue of his ritual of referring to them. 121* 156 182 538 671 177

Because of the relative sterility of Abyssinian written literature, art, dance, and music, many observers have concluded that Abyssinian culture provides no outlets for truly creative expression.[33] This judgment is not just. The Abyssinian genius freely discloses itself in the stories, verse, and proverbs that make up its very rich *oral* literature. Within this oral tradition, especially in its verse, a good deal of original expression and personalized commentary may be found. 121* 156 53 121* 156 538

Ethiopic verse comprises a wide variety of forms which differ according to subject and occasion. Classical *qenē*, Ge'ez verse in praise of some holy figure or political leader, is composed by *dabtarā* on certain religious or political holidays. More playful verses of praise are sung in Amharic by *dabtarā* or minstrels on festive occasions. In such verses the poet may in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

11. The letter was made available to the author through the courtesy of an Ethiopian informant. The text paraphrases Psalm 79. 000 [27]
12. This and the following section draw in part on material which has been published elsewhere, together with other material on Manz not included here. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, IX (Spring 1964), 204–11. [27] [113]
13. The boundaries of Manz proper include the Mofar River in the south, the Adabāy and Wāncḥet rivers in the west, the Qeḉhenē River in the north, and in the east a long chain of mountains which pour forth the waters that drain across Manz and which divide it from the lowlands of Efrātā, Gedem, and Qawat. Accurate maps of Manz and its boundaries are not yet available.
14. Their itineraries are described in Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals* (London, 1843); and Paul Soleillet, *Voyages en Éthiopie* (Rouen, 1886). 113
15. A. Caquot, "L'homélie en l'honneur de l'archange Raguel," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 91–122.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
18. Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *Ya-Ityopyā Tārik Ka-Aṭsē Lebna Dengel Eska Aṭse Tēwodros* (Addis Ababa: Tensā'ē Za-Gubā'ē Press, 1949 E.C.), p. 20.
19. Cerulli, *op. cit.*, pp., 101–3.
20. Doresse, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
21. Chahab ad-Din Ahmad, *Futuh el-Habacha*, trans. D'Abbadie and Paulitschke (Paris, 1898), p. 342.
22. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *op. cit.*, p. 208.
23. This account of Nagāssi, like the accounts of his descendants which follow, has been constructed from a variety of sources, which, while differing in details, agree on the essential points presented here unless otherwise indicated. Oral traditions were obtained from Amhara informants in Manz and Addis Ababa. The chief written sources consulted include: Heruy Walda Selassie, an unpublished and untitled manuscript on the history of Ethiopia (part of which was published in his *Wā-Zēmā* [Addis Ababa, 1923 E.C.]); Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *op. cit.*; Tādassa Za-Waldē, *Ya-Abētohun Yā'qob Teweldennā Aḉher Tārik* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1948 E.C.); Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du Règne de Ménélik II* (2 vols.; Paris: Librairie Orientale et Américaine, 1930–32); Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa* (3 vols.; Rome, 1886–87); Major W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844); Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*; and Soleillet, *op. cit.* [173] [115]
24. The related claim set forth by his dynasty—that Nagāssi was in the direct line of descent from Lebna Dengel—is less universally acknowledged by Ethiopians. It is still a controversial question whether or not Nagāssi was actually related to Lebna Dengel and, if so, by what route. 173 175

    The official genealogy traces the descent line as follows: Lebna Dengel—Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Warada Qāl—Lebsa Qāl—Nagāssi. This is the account set forth in Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā's history. The other Shoan authors who

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

173 deal with this matter present different pictures, however. Blättengětā Heruy
175 and Guèbrè Sellassié telescope the genealogy: Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Nagāssi. Tādassa Za-Waldē, on the other hand, leaves the question open; he identifies Segew Qāl as one of Yā'qob's sons, and refers to Nagāssi as father of the Shoan Dynasty, but affirms nothing concerning a connection between Segew Qāl and Nagāssi.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that none of these versions was reported to European travelers in the nineteenth century prior to the ascendance of Menelik. According to information given Major Harris by Shoan informants in the 1840's, Nagāssi inherited royal blood through his mother, who was said to be a granddaughter of "a daughter of the House of Solomon." Four decades later Soleillet was told still another story, namely, that "the kings of Shoa are now of the House of David, heirs of Solomon, cousins of Christ" not through Nagāssi, but by virtue of the marriage of his great-great-grandson, Asfā Wassan, to a relative of the imperial family at Gondar. Cecchi, finally, mentions none of these legitimizing affiliations.

113 25. Heruy manuscript, p. 19.
26. The latter version is given by Cecchi.
27. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; London, 1790), III, 255–56.
28. Cecchi, *op. cit.*, I, 241.
29. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
30. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 9.
31. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
32. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 12.
33. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 301. Heruy's account of the rebellion of
[114] Matako is considerably different. We are following Harris and Krapf here since they were virtually contemporaneous with the events, and would have no particular reason not to record them faithfully.
34. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 302.
35. Harris, *op. cit.*, II, 133.
36. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), p. 173.
[103] 37. The word "Manz" (or "Manzeh"), according to local clergy, stems from a Ge'ez expression which means "land on which Christ's blood was sprinkled."
38. Ludolphus, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
39. The architecture and layout of the imperial compound are described in Monti della Corte, *I castelli di Gondar* (Rome: Società Italiana Arti Grafiche, 1938).
40. On the role of the *abuna*, cf. below, chap. v.
41. C. Poncet, "A Voyage to Ethiopia," *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1949), p. 61.
42. This is what has been called an orthogenetic, as distinguished from a heterogenetic, pattern of cultural development. Cf. Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, III, No. 1, 53–73.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

632
621 into sixty-five named wards (sebekas). The social and demographic character of wards varies considerably, and it is useful to describe them in terms of two contrasting types. At one extreme, the ward resembles a kind
[241] of urban parish. It contains an eponymous Church; and
[423] a majority of residents are risteñas, members of land-owning ambilineages who support themselves by farming and renting homesteads on their lands. But even these wards contrast with rural parishes on several counts.
*[492] The ward is generally compact in size, and internally
[463] undivided beyond the homestead (bet). Within it live out-landers who work outside the ward in exclusively non-agricultural occupations. Further, while the parish is administered in detail by residents, the ward relies upon non-resident agents of the municipality for its administration.

At the other extreme, are the town's "non-corporate"
[648] wards. During the Italian occupation, several of
• [175] Gondar's parish-like wards were sequestered by the invaders as building sites. After liberation, the Imperial government divided each of these wards into tracts, which were deliniated according to the buildings upon them. Tracts were then given as grants (yaribeña mariet, "hero's land") to supporters of the government-in-exile, who were often non-residents of Gondar. In time, the pre-war boundaries of such wards were no longer regarded

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
463 favor, permitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qamīs"
under the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
[292] rowing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the
prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled crafts-
men never rose that high but spent their lives accompany-
ing troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup
fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and em-
broiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing
183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and
specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
[754] nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also
the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoub-
tedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of
maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of
invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other
elaborations of culture.

1. Living Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("ṭis", or,
if several on one large hill, "mender"), rather than a vil-
lage. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts,
with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus
the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-
isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the
other side of the same hill.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

793 They have always been bitterly opposed to pro-
176 gress and to innovations, more so as regards changes in their own Church than as regards the introduction into the land of alien religions, strange to say. Thus for example a learned individual, a very religious layman whom I knew, had been accused by the priests of expounding the Gospels in a manner somewhat different to that generally accepted, and as a result he was imprisoned for three years. His views on the subject of his own Church were instructive!

On the other hand they are by no means so in-
793 tolerant to other religious beliefs and efforts in the
609 country; they are not fanatical, and if left alone and not interfered with are not markedly anti-foreign. Individually I have always found them quite pleasant and friendly, and I am bound to say that Mr Wylde, who met a great many of them in various parts of the country, seemed vastly to prefer them to European missionaries. But as a body I think they are—to put it mildly—an unfortunate institution, and so far as their possessions are concerned, treatment on the lines adopted by our Henry VIII would seem to be overdue.

609 Moslems, Jews, and others practise their religion
795 in peace. I have seen religious processions of the followers of Islam on their feast days pass through the streets shouting and singing completely free from molestation, and on the occasion of my last visit I saw a mosque which was on the verge of completion being constructed in one of the principal streets of Addis Ababa.

It is rather remarkable that in spite of the bitter religious warfare in which they have been engaged for centuries Abyssinians should be so tolerant of their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121* 155 855 858

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose. 121* 155 156 86

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development. 121* 876 155 121* 155 871 121* 868 565 554

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar. 121* 533 535 156 [176]

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is 121* 531 156 121* 532 156

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 areas, the wild olive, wäyra, is preferred, because it is
313 available, a hardwood, yet not difficult to split. Ease of splitting is always a most important consideration because of the population's simple tools and disinclination to expend effort to change what nature provides. Another olive, the wanza (Cordia abyssinica, a coarsely porous light wood), is popular for smoking out beer jars and other pottery before and after use. The yellow, cherry-like olive is one of the available wild fruit trees.

On lower levels of plateau elevation, the acacia known as grar is found in many varieties, often as the "umbrella tree". Generally the wood is hard, used in construction, and even more popular as fuel, especially as charcoal for firing pottery. Lowland trees include the termite-resistant Natal yellow pine, the giant sycamore, mimosa(also called grar), gum trees, lemon, and a small size banana.

137 One of the most popular trees, especially in the larger
824 centers of population on the plateau, was imported by Em-
177 peror Menelik II about half a century ago: the odoriferous, water-holding eucalyptus, called bahēr zaf (lit. the tree from overseas). Although there are no real forests of it, it is the most noticeable tree in Ethiopia, planted around houses, in wooded clumps between urban sections, towering above the native plateau trees. It grows so fast that in some areas it can be "harvested", primarily for construction purposes, after only five years.

137 A common sight on lower slopes is the euphorbia, gul-
278 gwal, which resembles an immense, spiny chandelier with
824 multiple branches. Its milky sap is used in some native

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART II: Utilization of Natures Products by the Amhara

177 183 Part I established the basis for examination of the culture of the Amhara of Abyssinia and Ethiopia, and the elements included in the long blending process which created Amhara culture. The original, native, Cushitic-speaking culture patterns were based on the geographical milieu, influenced by topographical and climatic conditions of the highlands. On these were superimposed several ancient cultural influences from abroad. The Amhara thus appears as a "semiticized Hamite".

The results of this blending of autochthonous African culture traits and Mediterranean-Asian traits are apparent in both their material and non-material culture. Much survives in Amhara culture of the ancient South Arabian culture pattern: agricultural patterns, occupational divisions, dress, written language, customs and beliefs. Finally, the [184] cultural configuration which had long been the privilege of the Amhara ruling class has in recent historical times become shared by all Amhara; and, still more recently, due to imitation, prestige, conquests, etc, by ever-increasing numbers of the original, formerly Cushitic-speaking sections of the indigenous population.

123 While Part I was concerned largely with dimensions of Time and Space, Parts II and III will be more concerned with the dimension and the use of Energy. In both material and 181 non-material culture the Amhara pattern has remained, at first glance, strikingly "early medieval." Ingenuity with regard to material culture has gone into the utilization of the products of nature, including farming and animal hus-

439 perhaps replacing obsidian blades. They are now in turn
442 being replaced by European safety razor blades even on remote rural big markets. These are called "lesa melaçh" although very commonly still sold by an Arab trader. The
439 small glass drinking bottle called "berellē", used in place
415 of a cup for mead, has been brought by caravans from the Middle East since the Ottoman Turkish period. The European drinking glass, "berçheqo" is still rare in rural areas.

F. Clothing

291 There is a substratum of wearing skins in all of Ethiopia, sheepskin particularly and even leopard skin. Among the Amhara this appears among poor wandering church students, and in the fact that certain textile articles, notably the "lämd", symbolize the leopard skin of the warrior which he still wore at the time of the accession of the present emperor. This type of clothing is in the African tradition.

But the clothing of the Amhara today is largely of cotton, plus a wool cape for the feudal "great men" or landowning farmer. Both have come to Abyssinia from the
[77] Middle East areas: the long shirt, "çämis" probably came during the 19th century, together with the white Indian jodphurs (that some trace as late as Lord Napier's campaign); the wool burnus is believed to have entered as long ago as the 5th century A.D., together with Coptic Christianity.[66]

66. Mohrer, E.F.: Beiträge Zur Kenntnis der materiellen Kultur der Amhara. Bern, 1932, p. 19.

291 skirted, one-piece, and in rural areas of coarse, heavy cotton cloth made by the weaver (shammani); while the "ejtebab" of men is of imported cotton sheeting (abujedid) of fine quality. Jodphurs (surri) are of heavier, but also imported cotton. The Coptic priests in rural areas also wear a type of "qämīs" resembling that of women, but without embroidery, and much more wide-sleeved, thus called "ejsäri".

291 In very recent times city women of the younger gen-
177 eration in Addis Ababa have compromised with modernity by wearing a "qämīs" of light, imported, white rayon, thus bringing the development full circle. It is, however, still ankle-length, and the upper part of the body still covered in addition by a light version of the traditional shamma. Even modern-educated husbands who, as clerks or teachers wear European suits themselves, insist on their wives wearing some type of "qämīs" plus shamma. Male wearing of the wide-cuffed European trousers ("bolalē") has taken hold only in Addis Ababa and among modern-educated clerks and teachers. The nobility takes pride in resisting and in wearing jodphurs; and rural teachers still imitate them rather than modernity (much as they teach that the world is round without believing it themselves.).

291 The jodphurs, wide at the waist, are held by a cloth belt, "tebtab". This narrow belt of heavy cotton is used also for other trousers, and for the belt around the "qämīs"
[843] of women. Pregnant women wear a long cotton girdle, 6 inches wide, beneath the qämīs, ("mäqännät"), for support, and use it also at night or during the rainy season, for warmth.

286 the expensive, woollen, hand-made "kabe", among the common priesthood.

291 Headdress, except for the cap ("qob") of monks and nuns, and the turban of priests, is not worn by the Amhara. Only in the cold upper "dega" do the shepherd make a kind of helmet of reeds or plaited wool, covering the ears. The first breach came about a generation ago when some of the [77] nobility began to wear European hats of soft felt, with wide brims. More recently, the tropical helmet of British and Italians has become popular among educated clerks, teachers and provincial judges, and even commoners of distinction are beginning to weave an imitation tropical helmet of reeds, to serve as a miniature, personal sun umbrella. But the vast majority still use no headgear, and protect themselves from the hot sun by wrapping a portion of the shamma around the skull. The shamma thus provides protection from cold, heat, dust, rain--and shields the bashful (see language of shamma).

Most Amhara still go barefoot. Sandals used to be the prerogative of royalty, and though this prohibition no longer exists, leather sandals, or rubber sneakers from Egypt are still only in limited use, mainly in towns. Shoes imported from Europe are expensive and are worn only by highly educated individuals, officials in Addis Ababa, etc. The average Amhara, including some rural nobility, prefers to continue barefoot. Rural nobles even ride barefoot using the traditional stirrup with an iron ring for the big toes. Sandals made of leather were used by travellers. They

437 If bettered in trade, he will try to even the score, both in his heart and before his peers, with veiled insults within hearing of the other party, such as "my mother was not a pottery-maker", alluding to the low-class origin of the seller who has charged too high a price.

Housewives shopping at the market are conscious of "nuisance value". Before going home, if it is early, they loiter at the stall of the Arab merchant toying with the displayed merchandise while he nervously watches, until he gives them little gifts so that they go away, "ayn hamälasha" (lit. turning the eye away, i.e. homeward). The young women receive this with glee at having outwitted the shrewd Arab, and dance away.

When two Amhara have concluded an agreement, they touch each other's outstretched palms while standing very close to each other, and, in the presence of witnesses, swear "Haile Selassye yemut" (lit. may the emperor die, i.e. if the swearer breaks his agreement). This procedure is not followed in little transactions, but in the case of major livestock, because of the family and other social significance.

443 177 The Saturday market in a long-settled town ("qedamye gäbaya") has long been the entrance gate for diffusion of foreign goods, ideas, and ethnic groups. The Muslim mosque is usually very close, even at the edge, its minaret overshadowing the market. The teahouses, "shay byet" are of longtime, Arab introduction, usually operated by Ethiopian Muslims who import the tea and know how to prepare Arab delicacies. It is patronized by Arab whole-

443 177 salers, and other Muslim retailers. Here they discuss caravan trade, import and export, and local business. These Arabs speak enough Amharic for their purposes, but cannot read or write it, so that they employ temporary services of Amhara clerks, graduates or upper classmen of elementary schools, to translate and write documents relating to transactions, taxes and loans. It is these Arab traders who constitute most of the customers of provincial branches of the new State Bank of Ethiopia. Only rarely does a foreign company like Besse have a local branch, operated by East Indian managers. This is recent, while the Arab traders are the successors of former Arab slavetraders, an ancient but now abolished occupation in Ethiopia. Arab traders also serve as personal bankers to Amhara.

The broker, "mäden", may be an Amhara. This is especially true if he is the aforementioned labor broker. He acts as negotiator for business transactions, and (e.g. in the sale of major livestock) personally guarantees that the object sold was not stolen; he is required to make good the loss if it is not so. This is an important form of insurance, for which the broker may charge as little as 1%, payable usually in cash; he is also given a barley beer dinner after the transaction. He, in turn, may employ Amhara loiterers to gather around during transactions and contribute their wit to urge the buyer to close the deal.

563 443 554 The Muslim Ethiopian retailer, unlike the Arab trader, carries little prestige among Amhara. His com-

693 and thus not a contender for the throne. He was the chief justice, for he could hear appeals even from the highest court in the land, and act as arbitrator and judge in high-level quarrels between feudal lords and even involving the king himself. His role as chief counselor of the king has now been taken by the "Tsahafi" (lit. scribe), who has risen to that position from that of long-time private secretary, at present Wolda-Giyorgis.

692 The present High Court has original and appellate jurisdiction over all cases in Ethiopia, criminal as well as civil. Majority opinion of the judges prevails. In 1942 a Supreme Imperial Court was appointed to hear appeals from the High Court, but it convenes only intermittently. A secret Crown Court is called together in special treason cases affecting the old nobility, or the officers of the new army.

671 177 A new Civil Law Code is still being worked out, by a series of European jurists invited for that purpose. Meanwhile new decrees are published intermittently in the official "Negarit Gazeta" (lit. the drum gazette), in both Amharic and English. The Attorney-General is a foreigner (for some time Mr. Nathan Marein), but the Minister of Justice, the Legislative Consultative Committee and the President of the High Court are Ethiopians, with a range of modern education from very little to average.

642 The Constitution of 1931, further liberalized in 1955, was a free-will gift of the Emperor. It established a Parliament of two houses, the upper directly appointed,

293 story. Later ones imitate European crowns.
778 In parades tall crosses of bright metal are carried, Like most Abyssinian priestly hand crosses, they are so ornamented with further cross designs that they appear to the Abyssinian as "perforated"; hence the common expression "perforated as the cross" (where a Westerner would use the symbol of the sieve). Priests and monks always carry a handcross, which they hold out to a passing acquaintance to kiss, theproper greeting toward clergy, even on ordinary days. Smaller crosses are [789] used by the public as amulets against evil spirits. The larger crosses, with their ornamental supports, forming perforated circles and squares, sometimes contain engraved verses. The method of casting is the"cire perdue", [325] which is also used to cast the concave tops of the "maqomya" crutch. In front of old churches, resonant stones [534] are suspended from poles, and when struck, act as bells to summon for the service.

778 Other metal church utensils include the censers in which incense is burned during the services, swung by the officiating priest. They may be of brass, silver, iron, even clay in poorer churches. They are often equipped with numerous small bells. Very common is [534] the sistrum, called "sänassel" (onomatopoetic), a rattle instrument reminscent of ancient Egypt, usually of brass, 8 inches long, with a straight wooden handle, the metal frame cast in "cire perdue", often by Falasha smiths. The frame is perforated like a cross. The tinkling disks, [177] which glide along the cross-wire between the sides of the frame

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

201 675 196 Symbolism in commerce serves to give legal validity to a trade agreement, since bystanders thus become witnesses. When buyer and seller agree, the right hands are waved up and down, which attracts attention, then palm touches on palm (with fingers stretched away). This may or may not be reinforced by the verbal oath "Hayle Selassye yemut" (May the emperor die, if I lie). This commercial symbolism is followed especially in important transactions, such as livestock.

201 196 Symbolism in political life takes the form of rythmic handclapping, ("anchchätächchäbä"), not to be confused with Western applause. It is performed as a greeting, as acknowledgement of superordination. It does not follow public proclamation. These are greeted with respectful silence, but women may indicate actual or pretended joy with their joyshout "ellel". Amhara public opinion ("astäyäyät") sometimes signals negative reaction to official proclamations by "murmuring" in a delayed stage-whisper, and though officialdom traditionally pretends to ignore public opinion, it usually employs paid listeners who mix with the public to trace any "murmuring" to its sources. For, in the past, ignored murmurings frequently led to rebellions.

Anger, whether silent or accompanying verbal battles, is signalled by wide opening of the eyes ("afättätä"), or a furious, intent stare ("täfättätä").

201 Directional signs are made by moving eyelids and eyelashes, particularly by nobles or persons imitating their subtle ways. To communicate "get rid of this person", I want to talk to you alone", the eyelids wink up and down ("taqqäsä"); to signal "come out of the hut, I want to talk to you outside", the pupils and eyelashes work in the direction of the door. Men may give such signals as frequently as women.

201 177 The signal of expressing desire to enter consists of knocking with the entire fist ("korräkkomä" - onomatopoetic). Finger-knocking

201 [177] has been introduced only since the Italian occupation.

The gesture indicating sour-bitter taste (which are not differentiated; and collectively called "märara"), consists of slowly shaking the head sideways ("tängäshäggäshä"); sometimes reinforced by the verbal exclamation of pain, "ayye" or "hayy!".

516 Postures differentiate between the status of the master and that of the servant. The master indicates his "free" status by sitting way back on the stool or bench, straight, in a position which would require special effort to rise and therefore emphasizes that he does not expect to have to jump up at anyone's command. A servant may not sit in presence of the master, or must sit lightly so as to be ready to perform any duty for which he may be called upon at any moment. To indicate respect, a servant carries out his duties on the run (as "on the double" in the Western armies), while the master is present.

The correct posture in sitting is called "kurkum alä", sitting "folded up": the legs bent at the knees, the feet far back and partly hidden, since it is "rude" to sit with legs stretched out beyond the knee. But the thighs may be spread, especially when seated on a mat on the ground, even in the case of peasant women who wear the anklelength, heavy cotton gown. To sit with legs crossed (Turkish fashion) is frowned upon as the posture of "barya", the Muslim or "pagan" ex-slaves from the Sudan; considered a rude and lazy position by the Amhara. The proper posture of the Amhara, if seated on the ground, is a squatting position, on the hips, never on the heels; feet flat on the ground, knees high and spread, the toga arranged so as to cover the knees and shins even when jodphurs are worn.

201 554 Facial expression of a high-status Amhara (noble, priest, elder) assumes a stoic appearance. The jaw muscles are relaxed, the mandible slightly dropped, the eyes half-closed but alert, breathing very quiet, [195] the voice in even tone (in contrast to the strident whine of the argumentative peasant-gabbar).

533 To European ears the music of the Amhara sounds like a continuous cacophony, like the tuning up of a Western orchestra. But once accommodated to it, the sentiments expressed in the high-pitched chanting, the ecstatic pitch of emotions of the priests and dabtara, is recognized, when they sing for hours the chants they know so well by heart.

One foreign musicologist characterizes the timbre of voice in some Abyssinian chants as "harsh, forced and strident, unlike the singing in Negro Africa which is usually soft and rounded" (footnote 96). But he appreciates the artistry by which boy singers change the register, dropping from the usual falsetto to chest voice, and octave below, then move back into the falsetto; also, the interesting polyphonic technique, in which the second voice sings the melody introduced by the first voice, in the same pitch, but with delayed entry, so that a "canon" or "round" results, which is abandoned toward the end, the two voices ending in unison. Thirds seem to be preferred, though fourths and fifths occur among the voices.

Dabtara are always at work experimenting with minor alterations, which may in time accumulate. Furthermore, certain regional specializations exist: Arabic music affects Abyssinian music wherever Muslims live in sizeable numbers, especially in Tigre province, and near the Sudanese border. Here the wailing Arabic chant that breaks off abruptly, has infiltrated.

[77]

533 178 Modern, national Ethiopian music dates only to the 1920's. It includes the modern national anthem and other patriotic songs such as "lion of Judah". The music, often composed on order, by foreigners or

Footnote 96 - George Herzog, quoted by Leslau: Chansons Harari. Rassegna di Studi Etiopici VI, p. 161, Rome 1947.

275 548 Even a prostitute would be ashamed to engage in one-night affairs, to engage in sexual activities coldly without at least some minimal affect. She is paid for her services after consumption, or tries to take the man's money while he is asleep, but will not aggressively demand advance payment. Therefore, customers who may develop an interest in the same waitress-prostitute, not rarely fight for her affection, temporary though it is. No prostitute would take more than one man in one night, not only because this would be very shameful, but also her competitors would beat her for such unethical behavior. In the past the "täj bvet" was publicly advertised by a red cross painted on the outside wall. During the Italian occupation, protests of the International Red Cross caused removal of this sign, but one still encounters it in remoter areas.

273 [77] The use of an even stronger drink, "arägi" (arrak), the only distilled drink among traditional beverages, is very likely of Arab introduction; It is on the increase in towns because of exposure to strong European liquor during the Italian occupation, but is not made or consumed in the rural hamlets, not even on feasts. In the towns it is made, usually to fill specific orders, by the wives of soldiers or policemen, to add to the meager income of the husbands, whose salary of Eth$20 - 25 is lower than that of the unskilled laborer (Eth$30 - per month). It is produced from "enselal" caraway seeds, gesho (leaf for fermentation), semi-fermented barley ("beggel") and dagussa grain, ... of which are crushed, mixed with water, dagussa plant is added, and the fermented mixture is boiled for 10 hours, distilled through a bamboo reed. The finished product is carried, in a European glass bottle, to the customer directly, e.g. the owner of the "täj bvet", and is consumed, because of the higher price, by semi-educated clerks and officials with good salaries, or travelling traders or army or

273 police officers. The visiting peasants, who have just sold the harvest, stick to mead, which, for their taste, is alcoholic enough and expensive enough.

The person who pays for a round of drinks is loudly lauded as "elephant", king of African animals. The "tāj bēt" is usually the gayest place in town, well-lit, open until very late at night, equipped with nimble waitresses who, contrary to the usual pattern of female behavior, lightly flirt with the customers, in a semi-childish (therefore subordinate) way.

273 177 In recent years, exposure to European alcoholic beverages in the cities had led to attempts to replace the honey used in "taj" with cheaper sugar, and to add other ingredients to raise the alcoholic content. This is done in many mead-houses in Addis Ababa, but is rejected by the traditional conoisseur, especially in provincial towns like Gondar. Even in the city this is regarded as dangerous, for no one knows just what the experimenter may have added. One common police case is the adding of gasoline to city barley-beer or mead, which competitors sometimes have placed into the competitor's brew so as to ruin her business. An early effect of the exposure to European alcoholic beverages was reported humorously in the 1920's, when the private brewer of the powerful provincial lord Ras Hailu of Gojjam attempted to champagnize the traditional mead (footnote 99).

276 Consumption of tobacco ("tembaho"), which is called "drinking tobacco" if smoked, is still regarded as forbidden by the Abyssinian Coptic clergy, and is therefore rare among Amhara, except for those modern-educated individuals who have been abroad. The latter smoke cigarettes turned out by Ethiopian government monopoly in Addis Ababa.

Footnote 99 - Griaule, M.: D'un Mode Aberrant de Conservation de l'Hydromel au Godjam. Journal de la Societe des Africanistes, IV, Fasc 2, pp. 278-284, Paris, 1934.

186 quoted to praise farming as the best and most typical Amhara occupation, casually refer to the Muslim as a person not bound by social ethics:

[539] "He traded - (then he) cheated;
he was appointed (official) - he began (to act) like a Muslim;
(but) he (who) was a farmer - and became a king!"

[177] Nevertheless, the influence of Islam, probably by slow diffusion, has been considerable on Abyssinian Christianity through the centuries. Their avoidance of "unclean, forbidden things" ("erm"), such as pork, though officially based on the Old Testament prohibitions, was probably reawakened or reintroduced and emphasized through the pressure of Muslim ideas, geographically so close.

[532] The Amhara paint an infidel, like any evil person, with one eye, in profile, for "he has only half a soul, is only half-born, sees only half the truth." The outsider is regarded as automatically of evil personality.

C. Amhara Ideas about Body and Personality.

826 Not all Amhara ideas about human beauty are dominated by racial criteria. A long, lean face ("fit sälkakka") is considered handsome in a man, while a broad face ("fit mēda") is considered ugly; this may bear some relation to the gerontomorphic preference over the pedamorphic.

[304] A long neck ("angät") is a mark of beauty, in both sexes, but noted especially in the woman who therefore may have a series of necklaces tattooed on to her neck. The beauty of the long neck is referred to in the following proverb:

[539] "The neck of the dead child
is longer (than ever);
(meaning, "a good thing that came when of no use).

The forehead is considered the location of good fortune, and a large forehead is considered a mark of beauty in men.

PART VI: HEALING BODY AND SPIRIT

753 177 The "living museum" aspect of Abyssinian culture is perhaps nowhere so evident as in Abyssinian medicine. Both basic concepts and practical functions recall much that has been derived with little change (though much culture loss) from ancient Egypt, the ancient Near East, ancient Greek culture, plus regional ecological developments in Abyssinia itself.

753 756 Many ailments are regarded by the Amhara as closely interwoven in the body and spirit of the patient, and in fact, frequently no sharp distinction is made between bodily and spiritual ailments; so that the same illness may sometimes be treated by the surgeon-herbologist ("woggesha"), and if not successfully cured, by the practitioner of exorcising magic, the "dabtara" scribe; or the practitioner of sympathetic magic, of the "zar" cult; or even the sorcerer, the "tanqway". Only the latter is considered illegal. However, a fairly clear distinction is made between organic ailments and functional ailments, and on the basis of whichever preliminary diagnosis is made, it is decided which practitioner to call in first.

756 The association of the dabtara with the church has increased his activities in recent years from that of amulet-writer and herbologist to many of the functions of outright magic, particularly since the tanqway has become illegal. The dabtara always seems to have enj the highest respectability and trust of any of the practitioners, for, as in ancient Greece, his activity in the official religion is believed to extend over the ills of the body and over the world of the spirits.

753 There is no philosophical basis for the development of medical systems among the Amhara, no reasoned system. Their medical concepts are pre-Galen, at most Aristotelian. The dabtara have, or, in some cases claim

×794 776 781 ●177 771 Yet despite this hierarchy of spirits, in the static construct of the zar cosmology, the factor of syncretism dominates the dynamic functions. As a result, a Coptic woman possessed by a Muslim zar may wear the colorful print head shawl of the Muslim woman; and even a Falasha woman, living in a semi-isolated Falasha hamlet, may suddenly refuse to shave her head (which is required of wives by Falasha religious law) and will braid it in the fashion of a Coptic Amhara woman without serious ostracism by her kinfolk which would be her punishment otherwise. At the wadaja ceremony, like the one at the convention, Coptic women and doctors chant hymns modelled after Muslim worship, refer to the zar as "prophet", and use Arabic loanwords, to flatter and cajole a Christian zar.

×794 776 771 Finally, religious syncretism in the zar cult is often intertwined with Christian cosmology and hagiology. Thus, Zar Sayd-Qadr, of Muslim origin, has become synonymous with Jesus Christ; The legendary Amhara Christian saint Gäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus is believed to have been an ally and advisor of the powerful Zar Säyfu Čhängär. The archangels Mikaël and Gabriël, who are given feasts on tazkar memorials for Coptic Christian departed souls, are regarded in the zar cult as "commander of the right house" and "commander of the left house" of zars (patterned on the human, tradional Abyssinian army). The Christian zar Abba Yosef if believed to join other Copts in bathing in the river to celebrate Temqät (Epiphany). Christian zar spirits remain dormant during the lenten season.

[798] In view of this, it is perhaps not too surprising that the Coptic Church of Abyssinia remains passive, in effect tolerant by default, toward the zar cult and its social institution.

X 794 171 The same observer reports that the silver baton of the former Sultan of Aussa in this area was regarded as a magical object, enshrined, and confided to enboys on special missions. (Note Ber Alanga on zar list of Ashara).

X 794 177 171 Diffusion of the zar cult from these areas to neighboring lands is the general consensus of most scholars who have occupied themselves with the problem. This would center the origin of the zar cult in Ethiopia. The name itself was noted among the Islamized Somali by Cerulli:

[114]

> "As a remainder of paganism may be regarded the ceremony of the zar, perhaps an ancient sacred dance. Natives crown in a circle and the chorus begins to sing on a special rytha. One or many among the singers fall fainting away to the ground. The others "beat the zar" by singing and striking the hands or clattering with the feet or striking drums or kettle drums. Then the person who has fainted rises little by little from the ground, takes in his hands a dagger, and dances in the circle with the dagger drawn out, til he falls again in a faint; but immediately rises fully recovered, The zar is danced also with a burning brand instead of the dagger; among the Sab the dancer goes out of the circle, runs in the jungle nearby and then comes back showing with loud cries his dagger sprinkled with blood of the genius he has killed..." 113

X 794 171 Diffusion of the zar cult into the Sudan from Abyssinia is concluded by Trimmingham in his recent book "Islam in the Sudan".

114 That seems to be a form of the zar cult was observed among the Swahili of coastal East Africa, where it was called "Ngoma ya Pepo", according to Skene. 114

In predominantly Islamic areas, it seems that the zar is classified as an evil spirit, similar to the jinn. This is the how orthodox Muslims are enjoined to regard all pre-Islamic "pagan" deities, according to the Quran, (Sura 37, verse 158).

113. Cerulli: Somali, Encyclop. of Islam 1908, p. 487
114. Skene: Arab and Swahili Dances. Journal of the Royal Anthrop. Institu, 1917, pp. 420-434.

755 buda out of him: seating the patient in ashes - the natural
756 abode of the buda - to entice the evil spirit to leave through the anus. The latter is regarded as the preferred pathway of the buda - the opposite principle of the soul which is believed to leave through the head. Sometimes the tanqway orders that the person accused of buda sorcery be brought before him and made to spit upon the patient, which breaks the spell if he has actually
[689] cast it. Since 1942 the government has branded the "tānqway" as a fraud. As a result, the business of the still respectable dabtara and also the woggesha has increased in treating cases of buda.

C. Evil-Spirit Disease ("ganyēn") and the diviner ("tānqway")

756 While the aforementioned tānqway is, or used to be, called in
776 occasionally to exorcise a buda, his major specialties are the exorcising of "ganyēn" evil spirits who have a very different character, and the divining of lost or stolen goods.

Of all spirit doctors, the tānqway occupies the lowest social position. He is "uneducated" for he uses no books and in fact is almost always illiterate. His methods are nearly identical with those of African "witch-doctors" and include such methods as throwing of bones and animal parts, for divining.

776 The major principle of both the tānqway diviner and the ganyēn
● 777 spirits he specialized in, seem to be regional; the activity one of geographical orientation. For the ganyēn, considered inferior to zar and buda spirits in power, are localized, evil genies. The term itself is etymologically related to the Arabic "djinn", local evil genies, though actually derived from the Geez "janyen"), and the concept is also similar: most ganyen are either water-spirits or fire-spirits.

TK It is therefore likely that the ganyēn idea was brought to the
● 177 Abyssinian highlands from Southern Arabia about 500 B.C., superimposed on the earlier "buda" and "zar" beliefs, but reduced to the bottom scale of the spirit world with the coming of Coptic Christianity in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D.[122]

TK The ganyēn are considered by the Amhara wholly evil. In personality they are choleric, male quickly aroused to aggressive rage. They are believed to be of dark complexion. They are so tough "they can eat stones". They attack men far more often than women and in daylight rather than at night, (exact opposite of the zar). They cause neither hysteria nor apathy, rather they cause their victim to run amok.

682 As a result, the legal significance of the ganyēn possession
754 in Amhara society is considerable. Almost every apprehended murderer claims that the ganyen "pushed his hand". He thus "was not himself". In the old tradition, if evidence for actual ganyen possession was deemed sufficient, the excuse brough sufficient mitigation so that the kin of the murdered individual could accept blood-money from the murderer and his kin without a blood-feud and without losing prestige. In such a case, the priest-confessor or "mānfās gubā", acting as intermediary, would go to the bereaved kin and beg forgiveness for the crime. If they agreed, the "danya" (judge) would set the "semanya", (the amount of blood-money); formerly a minimum of 80 Maria-Theresa Thalers (now Eth$1000 = US $4000).[1/a] It is noteworthy that this tradition is so strong that even the modern Ethiopian court in Addis Ababa often sets the damages for

122. See MacDonald, D.D.: "Djinn", (in) Encyclopedia of Islam, pp. 1044-1046, and Trimmingham: Islam in Ethiopia, p. 260.

1/a [valuation given here is not in agreement with that given elsewhere — probably should read "US $460)."—Analyst]

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755

f. Summary of the dabtara's syncretism in healing the spirit.

It is clear from the above that a number of ancient spirit cosmologies have contributed to, and survived in, Amhara healing practices: Ancient Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Arab, Christian, and African. In fact, the syncretism has been so complex, for so many centuries, that it would be impossible to trace all the roots, with any degree of valid certainty. However, several traces do stand out and their etiology bears significantly on present function.

The book "Lefafa Tsedeq" of the Coptic Abyssinian Church (lit. Book of Righteous Life, in Geez), contains spells and formulae attributed to Jesus Christ and Mary, but actually showing influences [764] from the Egyptian "Book of the Dead". Its function among the Amhara is entirely in the context of funerals and funeral mass during memorial services.

Much of the Greek-Byzantine influence may have entered directly at the time Abyssinia was christianized; but more came via Arabic, later. This includes patches of Greek mythology, legends in connection with the New Testament, and traces of the astrological work of claudius Ptolemy (about 150 A.D. in origin), known in the West as Almagest". 123

Hebrew influence is most commonly encountered with reference to the mystic powers of King Solomon, who occupies about the same role in Amhara spirit cosmology as in Jewish mythology (Kabala). Amhara amulets refer, e.g. to the "fishnet of Solomon", in wich he could catch demons as readily as a fisherman catches fish in the rainy season. The powers of archangels, e.g. Fenuël, Gabriël, etc., are very similar to Jewish cabalistic ideas. 124

123. See Strelcyn, S: Un magicien grec en Ethiopie. Journal Asiatique, 1951, p. 175-192

124. Walker, John: Folk Medicines in Modern Egypt. London 1934.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

177 The "seal of Solomon" (actually the 6-pointed star of David) often
755 appears on Amhara amulets (e.g. against Karina). Even Hebrew-
789 appearing characters are found on amulets (a widespread custom in the Middle East.)[125] As might be expected, Hebrew traits are even more emphasized among the Falashas, who begin every amulet with: "Blessed be the God of Israel, God of all Creatures; prayer against.....".

Arabic influence has served primarily as a carrier. Directly derived from the Arabs are the 12 signs of the Zodiac, found on Abyssinian amulets. Carried was the "seal of Alexander".

Christian mythology and hagiology predominates in the cosmology of the amulets of the dabtara. Many of them begin with the formula: "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity; prayer against.....". Deniers of Christ who are suspected as sorcerers, are often personified in these amulets as Falasha or Barya. Christian martyrs and saints, Abyssinian or "from Jerusalem", are appealed to for intercession against demons. The following are frequently encountered in amulets:

776 Abuna (bishop) Batra Maryam, Abyssinian saint, against snakebite (pro-
177 phylactic); St. George, "Qeddus Giyorgis", shown spearing a monster
755 (an old idea possibly dating to the Bel-Marduk battle among ancient Babylonians, and Ra and Horus in ancient Egypt).

St. Sebastian is often depicted in drawings, and appealed to against the Kagana and other threshhold demons. To keep out disease and evil, this amulet is often placed above the entrance to a hut; but not in the doorway itself, if someone inside is already sick, for this would block the exit of the demon.

[751]

125. Reich, Sigismund: Quatre Coups Magiques. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, Vol. 7-8, pp. 159-175. Institut Francais de Damas, 1937-8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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T16

Gäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus (lit. Saint Servant-of-Soul), an Amhara saint from the province of Shoa, who was a saint from birth, and who, instead of dying the usual way, entered heaven in bodily shape.

Täklä Haymanot, the foremost Abyssinian saint, and an actual historical figure. An Amhara bishop from Shoa province, he lived in the 13th century and founded the still existing monaster of Dabra Libanos. He too is regarded as a saint from birth. His sacred spring at the monastery is regarded as powerful holy water, and those who cannot make the pilgrimage, as far as Addis Ababa (about 150 kilometers away), have water brought in Chianti bottles. The bones of important persons are sometimes unearthed and sent to rest under cave ledges at this monaster. Many austerities, miracles, conversions of heathens, and even temporary conversion of the devil himself are ascribed to him. On church paintings and amulets, Haymanot is depicted with one leg missing, lost during a martyrdom, but with wings which protected him from falling down the steep mountains of Abyssinia.

Tewodros (St. Theodor), regarded as the founder of the Abyssinian monastery of Dabra Maryam. But the name is also used as a synonym for another Messiah, who, according to a 14th century Abyssinian book "Feqqärä Iyasus" (lit. Love of Jesus) will some day come from the east, conquer the world, usher in a long period of peace and prosperity, preceding the final catastrophy. (Probably with this tradition in mind, the usurper Kassa had himself crowned Emperor Theodore, in 1855).

Jesus Christ himself is regarded as a powerful magician, more powerful than the powerful magicians Moses and Solomon, over animate as well as inanimate matter. The curative spells used by Jesus are

177 [776] contained in the aforementioned book "Lefafa Tsedeq".

African cosmology underlies much of this syncretism. Some is probably old-Cushitic, antedating the Geez-speakers. Some evidently has been carried into Ethiopia by the Galla. Caravan routes and the slave trade have long maintained contact with Central Africa, and some amulets resemble the "griegris" of West Africa. [126]

756 [177] The dabtara thus has many tools and sources for his trade. He can use the books of the church, in Geez which he alone understands; saints, angels and martyrs; translated Arabic myths - including many of Graeco-Christian origin; cabalistic Hebrew cosmology; he can call on the mystical elements of nature: fire, water, earth, and air, without knowing that ancient system.

No wonder that some dabtara specialize and work out syncretic systems of their own. The more esoteric the source and the manner and atmosphere of writing, the more admiration and faith does it call forth. Some dabtara secretly cooperate with zar doctor colleagues. Some develop rituals of their own, such as writing amulets only on specified days of the week. Some go so far in their syncretism as to invite (secretly of course) a non-Copt, such as a Muslim or a Falasha, to write certain texts for him, on the amulets; or the interfaith colleagues exchange their handiwork! For the efficacy of the esoteric is regarded as double. Amulet-writers of the three faiths are curious about each other's magical powers, and while the ordinary individual will shun and fear such "comparative religion", the doctors feel protected sufficiently to risk such "free enterprise" contact.

126. See Lifszyz: Amulettes Ethiopiennes. Minotaur, Vol. 2, 1934, p. 71-73

171/754 Amhara, and evil witchcraft feared by the geographically close Nilotic Azande. This is not surprising, since contact with the "Barya" people of the Nilotic Sudan is well known. In Azande society, persons who are "socially undesirable" are suspected of sorcery, but never the nobles and the rich.[130] Among the Amhara, too, [554] no "telleq sew" (great man, noble, rich) is likely to be accused as a "buda" sorcerer, while socially low-class groups doing the despised work of ironsmithing are immediately suspected when a "buda" case arises. In both societies, Azande and Amhara, such suspicion leads to prompt interrogation of the suspect, and revenge by the kinfolk of the victim. In this type of magic, social significance, i.e. ethnic relations in Amhara territory, is considerable.

●177/755 Amhara healing of the spirit is psychological, in the first place of significance. In the second place of significance is the enormous syncretism, among linguistic, ethnic, religious and racial components of the art of healing. It presents one of the few outlets for "free enterprise" available in the Amhara tradition. It is this cultural syncretism over the centuries, which, despite the political isolation of Abyssinia, has maintained and developed the spirited character of the Amhara peasant.

130. Evans-Pritchard, E.E.: Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande. London 1937.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 could see the forests blazing on the flanks of Belaia from the bombs dropped by the Savoias in their unsuccessful attempts to search out the Emperor's camp.

The wooded flanks of the Western Escarpment of the Ethiopian plateau overlook the plains of the Sudan. The top of the Escarpment is 4000–5000 feet above sea-level, and the gap opposite Mambuk village which we climbed is about 2000 feet above the level of the Shankalla plain, which rises steadily in a series of low rocky corrugations all the way from the Dinder river some 100 miles to the west. From the top of the Escarpment the fertile plains of Gojjam stretch for another 100 miles to the canyon of the Blue Nile. There is a fall of about 5000 feet to the great ravine with its subtropical vegetation from the dusty upland round Debra Markos. From the western edge of the Blue Nile Scarp it is a whole day's march down to the river for loaded animals, and more than a day's march up the eastern bank on to the Salale plateau at Shafartak.

The Ethiopian Highland is a series of plateaux separated by deep canyons such as that of the Blue Nile. The eastern edge of the Highland is the western edge of the great African rift. There is a parallel rift from lake Tana along the canyon of the Blue Nile to the Southern Lakes of Ethiopia and it is continued through the East African lake system down to lake Tanganyika. A series of north–south and east–west faults divide up the Ethiopian highland into separated plateaux. The Awash valley, running west–east, and really connecting the north–south rifting with the Red Sea basin, flows in the most notable of these. The different plateaux are sometimes connected by narrow necks of land or panhandles: for instance the neck connecting the plateau of Debra Zebit with that of Debra Tabor is hardly more than 100 yards across with a sheer drop south-west to the ravine of the Bashilo and north to that of the Gash or Takkaze.

133 These peculiar geographical conditions explain much in Ethiopian history. The great line of the Escarpment, overlooking the Red Sea depression on the
● 177 east and the Sudan plains to the west, has protected the population of the
648 uplands from penetration by foreign armies until modern times. The only successful conquest of Ethiopia was that of Muhammad Gran, the "left-handed," a Somali chieftain who is reputed to have had an Ethiopian father. The Somali-Arab armies which were really the spearhead of Turkish imperialism on the Red Sea in the great days of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, penetrated the Ethiopian Highland by the Awash valley in a series of campaigns which lasted for about half a century. In the end the great altitudes and the inclement rainy seasons probably restored their independence to the Ethiopians. In general, it may be said that the Highlanders have never been able to conquer and hold the hot lowlands of the Red Sea and the Arabs and Somalis have never been able to maintain themselves on the upland plateau. Only in the subtropical region of the southern lakes as far as the Dadessa valley and Jimma has there been any important penetration of Islamic influences.

133 Foreign influences, Semitic and that peculiar early Ethiopian or Eritrean
177 civilization known as Aksumite, have come in from the north over the easier

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

grade from the Eritrean plateau. All civilization in Ethiopia has penetrated from north to south along the great dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment, where the so-called Strada Imperiale now runs from Asmara to Addis Ababa.

Along this line have been concentrated the successive Ethiopian capitals with the exception of Gondar, which was chosen far to the north-west as a refuge from the ruinous wars with the Moslems and the Gallas. And along this line, due south from Aksum and Aduwa, were the great centres of the Copto-Ethiopian culture of the Middle Ages, places like Lalibala and the monasteries on lake Haik and the traditional centre of the Coptic Church at Debra Libanos.

From this dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment Ethiopian culture, and it was a very real culture in its heyday, spread westward into Gojjam and southward to the region of the lakes. Luca di Sabelli in his recent 'Storia di Abissinia' has shown that Coptic-Ethiopian missionaries were active as far south as Madagascar and the Mozambique coast.

Ethiopian Coptic culture drew its nurture from the powerful Coptic Church in Cairo, from the Crusading civilization in Palestine, and from the Byzantine Empire. Just as the establishment of the Turks at the exit from the Black Sea brought about the decline of the East Christian cultures in the Caucasus and the Balkans, so the Turkish control of the Nile valley and the Red Sea slowly strangled the Coptic Ethiopian culture of East Africa. The Ethiopian rulers, pressed by the invasions of Muhammad Gran, were well aware of their mortal danger and it is a curious fact that kings in Georgia and Ethiopia appealed to the rising power of Spain in the Western Mediterranean at about the same time. The Portuguese episode in Ethiopia was a delayed response to the appeal made to the Catholic powers.

The extraordinary tenacity of the Ethiopians to the western tradition is a remarkable characteristic of their historical development. The Aksumite kingdom, for all its Semitic appearance, was essentially a projection of Hellenism, and the Aksumite kings remained the traditional allies of the Byzantine Emperors in their struggle with the Persian Sasanids for the control of the Red Sea—an episode which was parallel in time with the conflict between these same two "world powers" for mastery of the Black Sea. The Coptic Church and Christian civilization in East Africa proved more enduring than the once powerful Nestorian Church in Asia, with which it may in some ways be compared. The later Ethiopian Kingdom played the same role in the struggle between Turks and Portuguese for control of the Red Sea and for the trade of the Indian Ocean as the Aksumites had a thousand years earlier in the rivalry between Byzantines and Persians. But they showed the same persistent antagonism to the Roman Church as the East Christians had displayed towards the Crusaders and the Papacy. In the end the Ethiopians expelled the Portuguese from Abyssinia and managed to maintain their own independence against their Moslem neighbours, until in the last decade it was suppressed by a professedly Christian power.

The Ethiopians are a remarkable phenomenon in the East African world and with their tenacity and their undoubted natural intelligence they are destined to have no little influence on the future course of history in that area.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Tulama MP25

A 177

In terms of historical probability it should be emphasized that at many periods during the millennium before the Christian era Jewish influences waxed strong in the interior of Arabia and along the eastern coast of the Red Sea. There was regular intercourse between the two coasts of the Red Sea and the Aksumite kingdom on the borders of Eritrea, and the Ethiopian Highland emerged as a city-state similar in character to the city-states along the Arabian coast, and in culture more than half Semitic.

600

To the north of the Syrian area the tradition of descent from the House of Solomon grew up in the royal houses of Armenia and Georgia, after the conversion of those two countries to the Christian faith. At the same time there were very ancient colonies of Jews in Georgia and Dagistan which may well have dated back to the period of the Babylonian conquest of Israel. A later spread of Jewish influences and even of Jewish elements which may be checked historically from the works of Arab geographers took place in the ninth century A.D. among the Khazars—a Turki people who had founded a state in the northern Caucasus and along the Volga.

A 174

A similar spread of Jewish influences to the Ethiopian Highland in an earlier epoch is historically no more improbable and, in terms of geography, would have been a much easier process. The fact that the present-day Falashas are Agau-speaking indicates that the Jewish infiltration, if it took place, was at a period when Agau was generally spoken on the Ethiopian Highland.

A 563 T 105

The Gallas.—The origin of the Gallas is another of the curious mysteries of African history and the Gallas themselves remain the most significant problem of the inner politics of Ethiopia. They first appeared in Ethiopia towards the end of the sixteenth century. The country had been depopulated by the long Somali wars and by the following conflict between Catholic and Coptic Orthodox arising out of the Portuguese intervention.

During the next two centuries the Gallas swarmed over all the countryside of Ethiopia. They settled in the region of the southern lakes, which at an earlier date had been colonized by the Ethiopian Kings. They reached the Escarpment overlooking the Awash valley and the neighbourhood of Harar on the borders of the Somali country. Like the Amhara they seemed to prefer the Highland and they spread over Shoa up to the canyon of the Blue Nile and north along the ridge of the Eastern Escarpment into Amhara.

In Shoa, the Imperial province of Ethiopia, people speaking Galla represent about half the population; and over Ethiopia as a whole they probably outnumber all the other racial groups.

In the eighteenth century Galla troops proved the decisive factor in the dynastic wars which covered the period of the final disintegration of the mediaeval Empire. Galla chieftains lorded it at the decadent court of Gondar; they made and unmade Emperors and married their daughters to them. But coming as invaders, the Gallas settled as peasants. In contrast with the indolent Amhara squireens, the Gallas are industrious farmers and labourers.

At the same time the Gallas had, and have, little political consciousness or racial coherence. When, in the course of the nineteenth century, Ethiopian

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of translation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth." 133

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of Rocher d'Hericourt, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans. 132 [134] 137 [177] [372] 361 311 [231] 241 311

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow 137

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ababa and Debra Berhan remains Galla country. The Amharas have re-occupied the region immediately around Debra Berhan, their southern limit corresponding roughly with the edge of the sheet; but the churches built to meet their needs (including the new St. Gabriel already once mentioned) are comparatively few and far between, a confirmation of the recent date of the re-colonization. 175 563

The Gallas remained in possession of the plateau country until the early nineteenth century when Sahele Selassie, king of Shoa, began to push them back. The half-dozen hill-top forts shown on the sheet almost certainly date from this time, or were reoccupied then. The capital of Shoa since the eighteenth century had been Ankober, on the edge of the great eastern escarpment, some 20 miles east of Debra Berhan. But Sahele Selassie, as part of his anti-Galla campaign founded, in about 1830, a new capital at Angolala in the midst of Galla country. He thereafter divided his time between Angolala and Ankober. A largely disused track, still well-defined in most parts, is shown crossing the sheet from Angolala in an easterly direction; this was evidently an old route joining the two capitals. Harris,[1] who conducted a British Mission to Sahele Selassie in 1841–42, visited Angolala which then contained four or five hundred huts. He also describes Sahele Selassie's two-storied "palace," built by an Albanian[2] visitor, standing on an eminence—which however the king would not inhabit, from fear of earthquakes. Angolala continued to be used by Sahele Selassie's son, king Haile Malakot, and the great Menelik, who was Haile Malakot's son, had been born here in 1843—just after the time of Harris's visit. 175 [563] [712] [487] [644]

Not much remains now to show that Angolala was so recently the twin capital of Shoa; but the site of Sahele Salassie's house, an artificial mound crowning the ridge, is easily identified and commands a fine view of the countryside. Inside the mound is a vaulted cellar, its masonry showing clear signs of European workmanship, as also does the central stone-built element of the local church of Kidane Meheret. This work is now exposed to view as the church was burnt down during the Italian occupation. Angolala remains a well-populated area, but only a very few huts now stand among the remains of defensive walls near the old royal residence. 172 177

The young Menelik, up to the age of twelve, must have known all this country well. But at that time (1855) the newly crowned emperor Theodore, whose ambition was the unification of Ethiopia after a century and a half of anarchy and internal strife, came down from the north with the object of subjecting Shoa to his personal rule. He defeated king Haile Malakot on the plains of Atakilt, the irrigated area just south-east of Debra Berhan. Haile Malakot died immediately after the battle, and Menelik was carried away captive by Theodore—who, however, afterwards treated him as a son rather than a prisoner. For some years Menelik followed in the emperor's train, moving with him from Gondar to Debra Tabor and then to the hill-fortress of Magdala, Theodore's last capital and later the scene of his undoing. Several years before Napier's siege of 1868 Menelik had escaped from Magdala during, it is said, one of Theodore's periodic orgies. A youth in 175 [13]

[1] Harris, 'The Highlands of Aethiopia,' London, 1844.
[2] It is much more likely that Harris meant an Armenian.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

241 variety) and linseed is grown in most parts of it. Where more shelter exists lentils and chick-pea are also planted, and another low-growing leguminous crop called *gwayo*, which is used only as a cattle fodder as it is believed to [824] cause softening of the bones in man! The barley is planted early and the other crops late in the main rainy season (June–September). Barley is sometimes also planted in the early rains, which are very uncertain here but usually begin in February or March. In this area however the early crop rarely gives a good return and sometimes fails completely. The plateau land, after being cultivated for a few years (often until it shows obvious signs of exhaustion), is fallowed for a period which varies widely according to the type of soil, but may be as long as five or seven years.

Down in the gorges, where the climate is appreciably milder, and where a primitive sort of irrigation can be practised on the level shelves, both chick-pea and lentils flourish. Some *teff* (a grass-like cereal greatly favoured for making the local bread) can be grown, as well as wheat and barley. Shelf cultivation seems as a rule to be continuous, perhaps because of the fresh sediment spread annually over the fields by rain and irrigation. In the lower parts of the gorges some maize and millet (*Sorghum*) can be found, but almost the whole of the area included on the map is too high for these crops. Other gorge products, unknown on the plateau, are tomatoes, chillies, coffee and *gesho*—a shrub whose leaves are used for fermenting the local beer (*talla*) and honey-wine (*tej*). Bananas, for no obvious reason, are not grown, but are brought to Debra Berhan market from the low country beyond the eastern escarpment.

The agricultural methods of the Ethiopians are far more advanced than those of any surrounding territory and do not belong to Africa. They can be paralleled among the west-Asian peasantry, and a close comparison with the methods of the Yemen mountain people might be especially fruitful. It was from this latter region that the Ethiopians' ancestors emigrated, before the [177] Christian era, and it is extremely probable that they brought with them both implements and a knowledge of techniques. Hence perhaps the use of the plough, universal among highland Ethiopians, and their skill in irrigation and terracing.

[462] Farming in Ethiopia is primarily the man's and not the woman's work, the standard female occupation, apart from household cares, being spinning. [283] (Cotton is widely grown in the lowlands.) The farmers spend most of their lives at the plough, a one-handled variety drawn by a yoke of oxen. In their [231] right hand they carry a whip with a short handle and long, heavy thong which they continually whirl and crack above the heads of the oxen, to whom, at the same time, they address an endless succession of strange howls and shouts, curses and imprecations. New or long-fallowed grassland is broken in with the plough in the dry season. This complicated process (known as *gai*) involves first scratching the ground in several directions to dislodge the turf, next gathering the sods into numerous heaps, then setting fire to these so that grass and weeds are gradually burnt out, and finally spreading out the soil again. But the great time for ploughing comes after the main rains have reduced the countryside to a sea of soft, dark mud. At this season the fields are peppered with ploughmen. Each successive sowing must be prepared

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

635 661 lived in passing and upon which he could levy purveyance. His passage was an affair of pomp, in which important ladies had to be considered and a retinue taken, which might swell to many hundreds of soldiers and servants with all their families, slaves, and transport animals. Such journeys were veritable expeditions, not to be undertaken lightly. A journey right across the country might take several weeks, and in parts the rains made travel laborious or impossible for some five months of the year. The difficulty of communication gave the governor an independence of which he made full use. Governors of ancient divisions with a tradition of autonomy and governors from the royal family were generally allowed to rule with little interference. In this century 177 206 507 the main provincial capitals were connected with Addis Ababa by telephone and this, with aeroplanes, which were just beginning to come into use before 1935, were the first threats to the isolation of the governors, which has since, in most parts, been so greatly diminished by the Italian roads. The Emperor had his agents who kept a watch upon governors and reported upon their doings; this kind of espionage was a highly developed system in Ethiopia. The governors on their side kept representatives in the capital. But this did nothing to overcome what several observers have remarked as the besetting sin of Ethiopian administration, the refusal to take any constructive responsibility. Governors of the old school were mainly concerned with the conservation of their own power, the collection of their tribute, and the fulfilment of their military duties. It would have been quite outside their range of thought to initiate new ideas of reform or to put down time-honoured abuses. Some of the governors spent much of their time at Addis Ababa and their deputies tended to be even more conservative in their use of authority than their masters.

635 Although the emphasis here is upon administration, it must not be forgotten that the governor was historically and in Ethiopian eyes primarily a high military officer and his civil duties were no more than the necessary accompaniment of his command. He had—as was shown anew in 1935—to raise and lead his provincial army in war. Some description has, however, already been given of the army, and there will be no need to discuss it further in this chapter except in the next section in relation to land tenure.

622 THE VILLAGE CHIEF

We have seen that by 1935 it was rare for a great local landed potentate to hold the highest provincial office; in most instances this was held by the Emperor's nominees. But this was not the only link the Emperor

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

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427 paying the tribute for these *gabars*. (This method was also very common in Ethiopia proper.) There might also be forms of métayer contract. It need hardly be said that, after very long tenure, a tenant would try to claim that his land was *resti*, and that, with the growing shortage of land, numerous disputes resulted.

427 One of the main interests of Dr. Nadel's valuable analysis of Eritrean land tenure is that it shows the Ethiopian system as it was after half a 177 century of Italian rule and as it is now under a British administration. The Italians swept away the upper parts of the structure except in so far as they allowed favoured chiefs to hold their old large estates, but at a lower level the system has been little changed. British administrators—who, of course, must act with the restraint of temporary caretakers—found their main problems arising from the intense, indeed passionate, competition for the inadequate amount of land which leads to numerous and long-drawn-out disputes. The Eritreans are proud of their land law, but to the European observer the lack of finality in their disputes and the great difficulty of obtaining any implementation of the decisions either of arbitrators or of native courts are great obstacles to the proper development of the land. But the difficulties with regard to tenure are, in all probability, much wider than legal questions and arise from the strain which the changing use of land is putting upon all customary African tenures.

423 Another most interesting conclusion drawn by Dr. Nadel is that the stubborn pride and conservatism of the *restenyas*, who cling to all their privileges with a fierce tenacity, represent a social evil. He speaks of the narrow exclusiveness of the system and its rigid political and economic privileges. 'It excludes large sections of the population permanently from a share in the administration of their own communities and keeps them in a state of dependence and economic insecurity. . . . To-day we are facing not merely the economic system of *resti* but a *resti* mentality.'[1] If this is true of that part of Ethiopia where both migrations and Italian policy have weakened this system, it is likely that in northern Ethiopia the problem is presented in even more rigid and difficult terms. But this, again, is only one illustration of the widespread African problem of harmonizing the existing tenurial rights of the original land-holders with the interests of the population as a whole.

[1] *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 108.

[pp. 293 ff. not processed]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

The Abyssinian calendar for *their* current year (leap year for them) accordingly compares with ours as shewn on the previous page; and in the last month given, the calendar resumes its normal correspondence with ours as, owing to the occurrence of our leap year, February has an extra day in 1936. 805

Apart from their language, there are many customs and practices amongst the Abyssinians which differentiate them sharply from most of the other peoples of Africa, and not the least interesting of these are clearly traceable to their ancient connection with Israel, of which they speak with pride in their old records. 177

For example, much of their religious pageantry, which is described in detail elsewhere, is undoubtedly a remarkable survival of rites which must have been introduced by the earliest Jewish arrivals, such as the Dance of the Priests, their ceremonies connected with the Tabot, and many others. Similarly, their method of slaughtering cattle for food, the division of animals into clean and unclean, etc., are all indications pointing in the same direction.

Their dislike of Jews to-day is accordingly the more remarkable, and must be due to the sanguinary wars which took place from the fourth to the tenth centuries between the newly-converted Christians and those who remained Jews. 609

Among other customs which are peculiar and interesting, pride of place must surely be given to their fondness for raw meat or *broundo*. This form of diet is preferred to any other by the mass of the population, and indeed by practically all sections thereof, beef being liked better than mutton. 262

When we were on trek our men could be given no

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

tent secluded and when they go out they ride mules 562
astride, are completely veiled or rather covered up in their *chammas* and are accompanied by an escort on foot, one or two of whom walk or trot by the side of the mule holding the lady in position.

Getting on to the mule is an operation that must by 492
no means be witnessed by the profane masculine eye; 576
I remember on the occasion of the first visit paid to my wife by an Abyssinian lady of rank I went to the entrance to speed the parting guest. To my surprise a number of members of the escort took off their *chammas* and held them all round the mule so that their mistress could climb into her saddle in complete seclusion.

But rigid as may be the rules of privacy governing 562
the lives of women, there are no harems, and no guard 644
of eunuchs to watch over them as in Moslem countries.

Nevertheless other Eastern customs are practised, 304
such as circumcision among men and a mild form of 171
clitoridectomy among women; this custom, be it observed, is not as is often supposed of Jewish origin, but probably of much more remote antiquity, and is further evidence of the Hamitic descent of the Abyssinians; according to Gibbon circumcision had been practised "by the most ancient Ethiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness" and presumably not therefore as a religious rite.

The nation as a whole has not adopted European 291
dress, although it is worn to some extent in Addis 177
Ababa, and by individuals who have been to Europe. They are proud of their national dress and the Emperor still encourages its use at court functions and receptions at the palace.

The distinctive feature of the dress is the *chamma*, 291

175 Ucciali. A wave of patriotism swept the country and armies were gathered to meet the Italian invasion. On March 1, the Italians were practically annihilated by a vastly superior Ethiopian Army.

●177 Ethiopia had been put on the map. Menelik was interested in getting foreign help in a number of technical fields, and among the many technical experts traveling in the country during the next twenty years there were also a goodly number of physicians. The different diplomatic missions in the new capital, Addis Ababa, often had their own physicians and with Russian assistance the Emperor founded the first small hospital in the capital. Among the medical writers of this period were Chabaneix (1901), the well-known British medical historian, Charles Singer (1905), who traveled through southwestern Ethiopia to Addis Ababa in 1904, and the French Railway physician, Doreau (1909).

797 Mission societies sent medical missionaries to Ethiopia during the following years,
743 and French and Greek physicians, particularly, settled more and more in the capital and in Dire-Dawa, the French railroad town on the Addis-Ababa-Jibuti line. The French Government opened a hospital in Harar and the Italian Government at first kept a clinic in Addis Ababa which, in the early thirties, was enlarged to "The Italian Hospital." Ras Tafari, who had governed as a regent, with Menelik's widow, Zauditu, as Empress, was crowned Emperor in 1930, under the name Haile Selassie I. During his reign Ethiopia slowly has been emerging as a modern state. He early realized that the health of his people was of vital importance for the future of the country. In 1924, he founded the Beit Saida Hospital, which he entrusted to the Swed-

[p. 710B]

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Syphilitic papulae of the face and the axilla.

tion of this disease from the dark continent by Leo Africanus as early as 1515. It is not known how early syphilis appeared in East Africa, but there is every reason to believe that it has been there for centuries. Due to the apparent mildness of clinical cases and the lack of neuro-syphilis, it has been suggested, among others, by Naegelsbach (1926), that there is a relation between this "exotic" syphilis and the "bejel" from Arabia described by Hudson.

[177] It is most likely that syphilis was brought to Ethiopia by the Portuguese in the middle of the 16th century. Most of the early travelers had noticed its presence. Thus, Rochet d'Hericourt (1841) states that: "Although there are no prostitutes in Shoa, the venereal diseases are common, but not in a very malignant form." Blanc (1869) gives an interesting description of syphilis in the northern highland. Ninety percent

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

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related to Ge'ez, the ancient and liturgical language of Ethiopia, much as Italian is related to Latin.[1] It was in Tigre country that, during the first seven centuries A.D., the kingdom of Aksum reached heights of civilization never again attained in Ethiopia's history. Because of the antiquity of their region and the glory of their past, the Tigre are to some extent the cultural aristocrats of Ethiopia.

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The Amhara inhabit vast areas of what are today the provinces of Bagemder, Gojjam, Wallo, and Shoa. Their language, Amharic, is the official language of Ethiopia.* Since the beginning of what is called the restored Solomonid Dynasty (1270), all but one of the emperors of Ethiopia have been Amhara.† The exception was a Tigre, Emperor Yohānnes IV (1872–89), though he sojourned for many years at Dabra Tābor in Amhara country, and Amharic was commonly spoken at his court.

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The differences between Amhara and Tigre culture have not yet been studied systematically. Even so, one can say that their differences are not nearly so great as what the two groups have in common. Language forms the chief difference. Like Ge'ez and Tigrinya, Amharic is a Semitic language, ultimately descended from old South Arabic, but Amharic has been molded to a greater degree by indigenous Cushitic tongues. Other differences relate to minor variations in custom, greater communal orientation in some Tigre areas, and differences in temperament. But the two groups share the legacy of Aksum, the Ethiopic alphabet, Ge'ez literature, Monophysite Christianity, similar political and social institutions, and the same style of life. One would be justified in treating their traditional Abyssinian culture as a unity, as virtually all authors have done in the past.

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In this book, however, I have chosen to focus on Amhara culture as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia. This has been done, first of all, because of my limited competence to deal with Tigre materials, since I am neither familiar with Tigrinya nor fortunate enough to have done field work in Tigre areas. But a less fortuitous reason is that any serious account of contemporary Ethiopia must begin with the fact of Amhara dominance. With respect to numbers, true, the Amhara are in a minority: Amhara probably comprise no more than one-quarter of Ethiopia's total population (now estimated at around twenty-two million). Their dominance is to be measured, rather, in political and cultural terms. On the political side it is manifest in the perpetuation of the Amhara monarchy and the preponderance of Amhara in top political offices. On the cultural side it appears in the spread of Amhara customs throughout the empire by officials, soldiers, settlers, and teachers, and in

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* English is the second official language.

† A number of Amhara emperors since the mid-eighteenth century were partly of Galla stock, however.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

the continuous Amharization of the peoples of the empire through the required use of Amharic in schools and government offices and through the substitution of Amharic names for indigenous place-names in many parts of the country. If the national institutions and culture of Ethiopia are essentially Abyssinian, more particularly they are Amhara.[2]

The domination of Ethiopian national life by the Amhara, and the related fact that the modern Ethiopian nation was the creation of the Amhara and not of European colonists, are characteristics which distinguish Ethiopia from all other African societies. For Ethiopia is the only country in Africa with a large number of ethnic groups where one of these groups has imposed its rule and its language over the rest and has preserved indigenous national institutions, elites, and culture patterns from displacement by Western forms and authorities.

This condition has imparted a basically conservative tone to the character of public life in Ethiopia, especially when compared to the new nations of sub-Saharan Africa. Because Ethiopians did not have to participate in the postwar struggle for independence, they did not experience the rise of agitational politics or the related phenomenon of political parties or movements. As a corollary of this, the Ethiopian populace was not exposed to oratory promising dynamic social and economic changes, and therefore developed no mass base of support for populist leaders who might seek to promote more rapid forms of change.

Yet if modernization has proceeded more slowly in Ethiopia than elsewhere in Africa—and speed in such matters has at times been associated with recklessness—the pattern of virtually unbroken Amhara rule for at least seven centuries stands in refreshing contrast to the somewhat anguished struggle for nationality within the new nations. Elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa no indigenous cultural tradition exists at the national level. There are many degrees to this cultural fragmentation. At one extreme are countries such as the Ivory Coast which, with some sixty disparate tribal groups in a population of about three million, can as yet appeal only to French culture as a basis for unity at the national level. Somewhat less fragmented are the nations, like Nigeria, in which a small number of important tribal traditions dominate the national scene. Still more consolidated is Uganda, whose kingdom of Buganda has long supported a strong quasi-national tradition, but whose non-Baganda tribes have remained largely outside the pale.

In Ethiopia, by contrast, Amhara rule has long provided a minimal basis for national unity. While this rule has been secured by coercive means, it has accustomed the various tribes in Ethiopia to live under a common sovereignty and to some extent has enabled their leaders to communicate with one another by means of a common native tongue.

One need not be blind to the drawbacks of Amhara dominance to recog-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
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TRADITION AND MODERNITY

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Insofar as Ethiopia is committed to the pursuit of modernity, she cannot fail to be embarrassed to some extent by the wax-and-gold complex. For nothing could be more at odds with the ethos of modernization, if not with its actuality, than a cult of ambiguity.[9]

It is true, of course, that cultural formations analogous to wax and gold in their exploitation of ambiguity have been prominent throughout the history of the West, not to mention the whole non-Western world. The Christian tradition has always made much of parables and allegories. The classical teaching of rhetoric, following Cicero, placed great stress on the use of paradox; and a major philosophical tradition, stretching from Plato to Marx, has been founded on a logic which assumes that reality can be known only by combining opposite concepts and that any single term is subject to dual interpretation. The flowering of symbolist literature, to take a more recent example, created an audience as partial to subtle allusion and *double-entendre* as the most obscurantist proponent of *wesṭa wayrä*.

Yet there can be little doubt that the pace-setting spirit of modern Western culture rests on a commitment to unambiguous communication. It is predicated on the proposition that A must be A or not be A. It was no accident that one of the more characteristic philosophical movements of the present century, logical positivism, should have had as its primary motif the desire to maximize precision in the use of language. For the decisive institutions of the modern world—technologies based on logico-experimental science, rational legal systems, and bureaucratic organizations in government, commerce, and industry—depend intimately on the unambiguous definition of terms and the utmost clarity of expression. Whether the task be one of constructing a legal contract, outlining a job description, designing a nuclear reactor, classifying genera and species, or defining variables and their interrelations, these characteristic modern activities are informed by the need and intention to eliminate, as far as possible, all traces of linguistic ambiguity.

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The incorporation of these aspects of modern culture into Ethiopian life must inevitably produce a certain amount of strain in a culture which makes such thoroughgoing use of analogy and equivocation. Indeed, tension generated by this issue has been manifest in a variety of ways. Among the modern-educated Ethiopians, one finds demands for greater clarity in the specification of responsibilities in administration. One finds increased impatience with the devious, equivocal talk involved in joint action of any sort. One finds a slowly growing disposition to structure and fulfil expectations in literal terms, and occasional outbursts of protest against the vagueness and the conspiratorial mentality of those schooled only in the traditional way. In order to escape what they feel are the burdensome subtleties of Amharic,

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some Ethiopians prefer to speak in English in their offices. An alternative solution is proffered by those Amharic writers and journalists who have attempted to adapt Amharic to the modern idiom, replacing the florid, intricate sentence of yore with short, simple, straightforward declarative sentences —an effort that parallels changes in other countries, such as Japan, where an intrinsically more ambiguous language than Amharic in the traditional culture has been revised to facilitate more precise modes of expression.[10]

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The opposition between the wax-and-gold complex and the rationalistic aspects of modern culture which some Ethiopians now seek to assimilate is of interest here as an instance of the more general phenomenon toward which this book as a whole is oriented. It is the dilemma posed in all the nations of Asia and Africa by the confrontation of their traditional cultures with their rather recently activated modernist aspirations. To study what is transpiring in these nations in terms of the encounter between tradition and modernity, rather than in terms of the more bland and less biased category of social change, is to focus our attention on a very important aspect of their actual situation: many members of these societies have suddenly been forced to grapple with a number of intellectual and moral dilemmas of great magnitude. The concepts of tradition and modernity are symbols to which they are more or less passionately attached. All of them have concepts symbolizing the sanctity of tradition, like the Amharic *hāymānot abāw* ("faith of the fathers"); and all have concepts symbolizing the goal of modernity, like the Amharic *selṭānē* ("civilization"). And in all these nations the conflict between the two sorts of orientation has produced acute forms of disorientation, on the one hand, and extraordinary challenges to creativity, on the other.

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Adopting this perspective for the study of "transitional" societies probably opens the door more widely than usual for the intrusion of the biases of the observer. For the observer's own attitudes regarding tradition and modernity naturally affect the order of questions he will ask and the kinds of data he will examine in making his analysis of the "actual situation." They influence, for example, how much attention he pays to the weakening of norms governing traditional kinship systems and whether he views this primarily as a form of social disorganization or primarily as a precondition for more effective societal organization. Accordingly it is fitting that we introduce the analyses to be presented below with a brief statement of the philosophy which guides the author's approach to these questions. This may be done most effectively by surveying the range of positions that might be taken. In considering the encounter between traditional and modern culture patterns currently experienced in acute form in most nations of the world, one may discern, at a high level of abstraction, these five positions: (1) the Traditionalist, (2) the Modernist, (3) the Skeptic, (4) the Conciliatory, and (5) the Pragmatist.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 18 flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

633 *Gondar Today*

• 177 648 A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

633 After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953 [874] with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college. [648] The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utilities as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty [162] thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

633 871 178 With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aquāquām* and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

633 771 793 Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 121 178 181 [212] [577] been employed as a medium for promulgating new ideas or discussing contemporary problems. Another feature of Amhara culture that helps to account for the mental inertia of the peasantry is its emphasis on the value of deference and obedience to authority. The Amhara typically rely on legitimate authority figures to define appropriate responses to new situations, and regard the delegation of powers as a diminution of the status of such authorities. The peasant has thus refrained from initiating changes in the public domain because the prerogative of taking initiative is generally reserved to ecclesiastical and political authorities.

*565 121 • 177 178 *Receptivity to Change*

Consideration of the peasant's readiness to follow the lead of legitimate authorities already points to an inadequacy of the second stereotype we have mentioned: that which sees the peasant as hopelessly ignorant and backward, hence intractable from the viewpoint of a program of modernization. For while the Amhara peasant is likely to resist the efforts of some unknown official from Addis Ababa to introduce change in his local environment, he does tend to follow the directives and imitate the example of the local authorities whom he knows and who shape the course of decisions and sanctions at the [137] local level. Thus it is, for example, that the eucalyptus tree—imported by Emperor Menelik, taken to the provinces by nobles, and eventually planted by individual peasants—has come to dot the Amhara countryside. How quickly such change can take place is shown by the recent acceptance of photography in many provincial regions. In 1950, peasants in many Amhara areas strenuously objected to having their pictures taken, in part at least for fear of the camera as bearer of the evil eye. By 1960, visitors to some of these same areas were being deluged with requests for photographs. In the interim these peasants had been exposed to numerous photographs of the Emperor and high government officials and had observed their local authorities seizing every chance they could to be photographed.

Yet it is clear that the Amhara peasant will not imitate everything that is accepted by his traditional authorities. When a new custom strikes him as too outlandish his resistance can become adamant, as was abundantly demonstrated when the court of Susneyos carried out its ill-fated conversion to Catholicism. In analyzing the peasant's receptivity to change it is important to distinguish as independent variables: (1) the degree of acceptability of the *agents* of change, and (2) the extent to which the proposed change is congruent with traditional beliefs and values.

The whole question of the nature of peasant opposition and receptivity to modernizing programs may be discussed most realistically by focusing on a concrete area of attempted change. The material I have assembled is most [744] detailed for the case of public health, an area to which the government has

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

paid increased attention in recent years. A new phase of public health endeavor in this decade was marked by the imposition of a nationwide health tax in 1960.

Health has become a prime objective in Ethiopia's modernization program because of a growing realization that the wide prevalence of malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, intestinal parasites, syphilis, trachoma, leprosy, and other diseases continues to sap the vitality of the nation's productive forces and to visit misery on countless peasant families. The public health forces in Ethiopia (Ministry of Public Health, WHO mission, and AID Public Health Division) have long understood that Ethiopia's health needs cannot be met by piecemeal therapy. They have undertaken a program of preventive measures by preparing public health teams in the medical college at Gondar. The college trains health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians within a common framework, so that when they go into the field they will understand each other's tasks from the start. The first public health center employing such a team was opened in the late fifties; Ethiopia's Second Five-Year Plan envisions one such center for every fifty thousand people by 1967.

The objective of these public health workers is to transmit a number of instructions—concerning personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, early care for illness, and isolation of contagious diseases—which are at variance with customary beliefs and practices. Experience with comparable programs elsewhere suggests that the success of such health teams is by no means assured.[18] What are the forces working for and against the acceptance of these new instructions by the Amhara peasantry? Both negative and positive factors may be identified with respect to each of the three general categories previously referred to: the general outlook regarding change; attitudes toward the agents of change; and degree of compatibility between the new cultural items and the old.

The Amhara peasant's general resistance to change may be presumed operative here as elsewhere, particularly since health practices are often associated with religious beliefs and sentiments. Defense of indigenous therapies has in fact become a significant channel for the expression of traditionalist sentiment, a channel that has even been utilized on occasion in the Addis Ababa newspapers.[19] And a general posture of resistance to changes in the field of health is supported by the interests of traditional practitioners, *dabtarā* and *ṭanquāy*, who are in danger of losing clientele if modern-trained health workers come to win their allegiance.

Counter to this conservative drag, on the other hand, is the peasant's powerful desire for one basic change in his life circumstances, namely, the reduction of morbidity and mortality. Despite his idyllic conception of paradise and his frequent contention that life on earth is something of little value, the Amhara wants to avoid death. Even from the religious point of view he is

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 121 177 178 75 761 motivated to live as long as possible: the monk wants to live longer in order to get closer to God by prayer, and the worldly man wants to live long enough to atone for his sins so that he may enter paradise. Health thus rates as one of the most important values. The expressions for greeting and farewell stress health. Most of the prayers and vows offered have to do with achieving health. Long, painful pilgrimages are made for cures, and much money is spent for the remedies of native practitioners and for amulets to ward off illness. This powerful desire for health and life operates as a lever to overcome the resistance to change.

*565 121 177 829 Toward the bearers of new ideas designed to satisfy this desire for reduced morbidity and mortality, however, the peasant's stance is suspicious and unsympathetic at the outset. He regards Ethiopians who have been educated by Westerners as contaminated by alien norms and beliefs. They appear to him as Ethiopians, but also as strangers—as "black *faranj*"—with their European clothes and their unorthodox eating and smoking habits. He tends to distrust their motives, to suspect them of being out to take advantage of him in some way. And he resents their overt or implicit disparagement of his way of life, particularly his practices in so sensitive an area as sanitation.

*565 121 177 744 [554] Against such obstacles one cultural factor that serves to present the health worker as an acceptable agent of change is the Amhara peasant's deference to the man of learning. The public health worker is in a position to inherit some of the awe felt for the learned *dabtarā*, especially since the health teams operate out of centers which provide therapy as well as instruction, which gives them the benefit of association with the quasi-magical powers attributed to one who performs successful treatment. In addition, he can be aided by the Amhara peasant's personal devotion to someone who has helped him and won his confidence. Whether this devotion can be stimulated depends, in the last analysis, on the character and resourcefulness of the public health workers themselves. Those who are able to communicate in a dignified manner with the peasants, who avoid dealing with them as an inferior and backward people, who refrain from flaunting the most important local norms, and who are on good terms with local authorities and respected men, have a substantial chance of being accepted after an initial period of suspicion and alienation. Thus it was that a Gojjami peasant, asked why some of the local people were hearkening to the advice of the public health team at Dabra Marqos, explained: "We have come to realize that what you tell us to do is for our own advantage, not yours." Elsewhere in Gojjam, a similar response was the eventual issue of a more pronounced initial rejection of public health workers. In the village of Dajan doors were closed against a venereal disease team which was taking blood samples of the entire population for Kahn test analysis. Popular suspicion was voiced in a number of ways; the health workers were accused of selling blood, of being missionaries, and of otherwise trying

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to cheat the locals. The health officer in charge of the team then brought some of the objectors to the mobile laboratory, patiently explained what was going on, and how it would benefit the people. Before long word got around that these outsiders were not so evil after all, and the doors of Dajan opened. 565* 121 177 744

Given the possibility that the Amhara peasant may come to acknowledge the public health worker as a legitimate agent of change, what about the discrepancy between the ideas advanced by the public health workers and the ideas of his traditional culture? The conception of the causation of illness is radically different in the two cultures. Since the peasant views the etiology of disease as a function of the will of supernatural beings, on what grounds could he adhere to prophylactic measures based on naturalistic conceptions? 565* 121 177 753 744

Valid though our characterization of the peasant's concept of causation may be, it is nevertheless a very simplified one. It is unlikely that any world view is totally devoid of some sort of naturalistic explanations, just as, conversely, well-educated moderns often cling to residues of "superstition." Though the Amhara's general framework for understanding causation is not naturalistic, he does possess a number of specific notions which can be interpreted as naturalistic or protonaturalistic. Here are some examples:

(1) The belief that an excessively dirty house brings sickness (even though in practice animals are permitted to urinate and defecate indoors and strings of soot to hang from the rafters). [231]

(2) A vague notion that the daily washing of hands, mouth, and feet is related to health. [515]

(3) The concept of *metch*, an ailment involving fever and pains, believed to come from exposure to dirty places as well as excessive exposure to the sun (though the devil is often thought to be the conveyer of the ailment).

(4) The concept of *gershā*, a notion that a convalescent is liable to relapse unless he refrains from eating unaccustomed foods, resumes work slowly, stays out of the sun, and washes his body and clothes. [758]

(5) A latent concept of contagion, found in: (a) the belief that smelling the urine of another will give one a cold, (b) the belief that the breath of a typhus patient will communicate his disease, and (c) the custom of referring to all diseases which can be given by one person to another as "*zār* sickness."

Even when the explanations set forth by the health workers deviate too much from what the peasant can possibly conceive as plausible, there may still be grounds to justify his accepting some strange advice through an appeal to more familiar beliefs and interests less directly related to the matter at hand. Thus, while peasants have been reluctant to accept the sanitarian's argument that diseases will be prevented by sanitizing the water supply through building wells, they have often been persuaded to build wells by the prospect of securing a more convenient source of water.

Measuring the relative strength of forces supporting and opposing change 565* 121 177

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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among the peasantry in public health and other fields of planned development is a task that requires intensive empirical studies.[20] But it should be sufficiently clear from the foregoing that the view of the Amhara peasantry as incorrigibly recalcitrant and reactionary is a rather shallow one. Amhara peasant culture contains potentialities for change that are as real as its most rigid beliefs and its substantial antipathy to change. The challenge to social statesmanship and social science alike is to understand the peasant's world in a more analytically precise way so that the diverse potentialities for change can be identified, but in the context of the total structure of peasant life.

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The Legacy of Peasant Culture

Our discussion so far has treated the peasant as a wholly passive entity in contemporary Ethiopia. Whether the emphasis has been on the peasant's resistance to innovation or on his receptivity to change, he has been considered from one point of view: that of the Modernist anxious to transform Ethiopian society according to secular ideals. Common to both the modern-educated Ethiopians, who consider the peasant primarily an object for manipulation and coercion, and to those who think more in terms of providing friendly leadership and perhaps securing future political support, is the assumption that they really have nothing to learn from peasant culture, that peasant culture has nothing of substance to contribute to an Ethiopia in transition.

Whether this assumption is just or not can only be decided by Ethiopians themselves. Ironically, it is easier for an outsider to question it and to search for aspects of peasant culture that might contribute to a more meaningful national experience during the coming decades of transition. The type of possible contribution to be explored here concerns the mode of defining and responding to the situation of rapid change which Ethiopia has entered.

The social environment of contemporary Ethiopia is very tense and affords few outlets for the constructive release of tensions. The discrepancy between the growing desire for aspects of modern culture and the persistence of many old customs and problems has generated much impatience, anxiety, and ennui among the modern-educated. Their sense of inadequacy vis-à-vis Western "metropolitan" standards is no less painful for their having escaped a long heritage of colonial domination, and combined with a sense of failure to move rapidly toward aspired goals has created in many of the modern-educated marked self-destructive tendencies. Insofar as this destructiveness has not turned inward it has been projected outward against other elements inside Ethiopia and without.

One of these targets is the uneducated mass of the people, who, as we have seen, are often regarded as so backward that the only way one can bring progress to them is through coercion and authoritarian manipulation. Another target, naturally enough, has been the higher officials of the govern-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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THE EMERGING ADOLESCENT

While it is clear, as we have argued thus far, that a modernizing society 121
stands to benefit from retaining or redefining many aspects of its traditional culture, it is also clear that in certain areas discontinuity is indispensable if significant change is to be brought about. Just what these areas are is something which presumably varies from nation to nation, though cross-cultural regularities may perhaps be uncovered in the course of further research. In the 121
case of Ethiopia's incipient modernization, at least two subsystems of the 178
traditional social system of the ruling Amhara have already undergone some 86
sort of structural change: that of "secondary socialization," the complex of 554
processes whereby skills and values necessary for adult life are imparted to adolescents; and that of the stratification system—the complex of arrangements whereby status is allocated to members of a society in accord with the various values upheld by the society.

An important precondition for the changes which have taken place in both 121
of these areas was the establishment of a permanent capital: Addis Ababa, 178
founded by Menelik in 1887[1] and now home for nearly half a million Ethio- 177
pians. Menelik's institution of the first government school in Addis Ababa in 633
1908 marked the beginning of a slow but steady process of introducing some [871]
of Ethiopia's youth to the novel skills and norms of modern Western culture. The concentration of power in Addis Ababa through the reign of Haile 121
Selassie has diminished the status of the traditional Amhara elites and brought 178
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— 86
parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, 178
by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their role as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part [87]
by teachers and peers in the government schools.

Schools at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly 875
by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, 177
England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing 873
number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization.

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on 177
the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has 178
occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative 557
of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to- 555
day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied with- 829
out regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affilia- 883*
tions.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of uni- 87
versal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead.

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian 873
nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to 177
associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post- 178
elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with mem- 186
bers of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of 883*
the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic [872]
pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115]

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the students. Rivalries and hostilities tend to get channeled along these lines, particularly along the Amhara-Tigre axis, and petty fights have erupted from time to time among groups of students so divided. The Amhara students, moreover, tend to interpret their numerical majority in school as self-evident justification of their political superiority in the country, an interpretation sullenly rejected by non-Amhara students who tend to be more aware of the Amhara's much smaller percentage of the national population. However, the students are regarded by their teachers, not as members of tribes, but as Ethiopians. The school authorities thus act as a countervailing force in behalf of national symbols, and their effect is considerable.[14] While entering students naturally tend to identify in the first instance with their tribes, sixty per cent of the secondary school seniors and seventy-five per cent of the college students questioned about political identifications indicated that they considered themselves Ethiopians before they considered themselves members of tribes.

The teachers also provide practical information of various sorts to assist the acculturation of their charges. They teach the etiquette of modernity, including the importance of punctuality and the keeping of promises. The objects and events in their own lives quietly demonstrate to the students much about modern Western culture, while their use of English in and out of class accustoms the students to the use of their country's official European language. Thus, besides promoting respect for impersonal standards and the sense of Ethiopian nationalism, the teachers fulfill a third extracurricular function of some importance: that of making the schools a vehicle for social mobility, a place to acquire that minimum of European habits which is essential for attaining high status in a modernizing society.

The total accomplishment of the teachers, however, falls short of giving the modern adolescents a coherent orientation to life. The cultural lessons they transmit are neither consistent among the various schools nor closely related to the situation of changing Ethiopia. The organization of education, as of everything else in Ethiopia, reflects the abiding anxiety of the government about permitting any one foreign nation to gain a monopoly in any sphere of activity. Each secondary school and college has heretofore been virtually autonomous, pursuing those policies and teaching those lessons which best fit its point of view, a point of view now guided by British culture, now by American, now by Swedish, now by French, now by Jesuit. As Margery Perham long since observed, this created a situation in which Ethiopian students have gotten "fragments from the experience and ideals of each [nation] without getting the fullest and best influence from any one national tradition."[15]

Another shortcoming of the educational program has been the relative paucity of materials relating to Ethiopian realities. As one Ethiopian educator has written: "School children are at times more familiar with the history of

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might be expected, the incidence of disapproval was highest among the students of the Gondar secondary school (fifty-eight per cent), whose parents are presumably more traditionalist than those of the Addis Ababa boys, and the students of the technical school (fifty-six per cent), whose occupational interests, involving manual labor and technical skills, are felt to resemble those artisan pursuits traditionally disesteemed by the Amhara.

Time is on the side of the students. As Ethiopia develops and education spreads, the advantages of prolonged training and modern occupations will become increasingly apparent to the parents. For some time to come, however, their resentment of the dependence of youth on foreigners and Western-educated Ethiopians for occupational guidance will continue to generate social tensions and impede the socialization process.

The harmonious pattern of preparation for adult work roles found in traditional Amhara society has been further disrupted under the new school system at at least two points: the point at which occupational commitments are made, and the point of entry into the work force.

The modern adolescent is supposed to choose which of several kinds of schools, representing a variety of vocational commitments, he wishes to enter upon successful completion of the eighth-grade exam. Quite often his choice is dictated by wholly irrelevant factors. For example, it may be made on the basis of which of the available schools promises the best standard of living.[19] Or it may be made for him by the school system, for one finds cases where the student's preferences are disregarded and he is placed in whatever school and vocational program happens to be able to accommodate him.

Even when the student's choice is relatively free from such extraneous determinants, however, it is usually difficult for him to make a meaningful decision. Eight grades of a rudimentary curriculum is hardly an adequate basis for choosing from a variety of unfamiliar vocations. So it is "fate" that guides most youngsters into one or another of the secondary school programs. The problem of choice recurs, for a much smaller number, when commitments are again required for entrance into the colleges. At this point meaningful decisions are often made, but perhaps more often they are spun from a skein of bewilderment. One secondary school graduate summed up the situation by saying, "Foreigners frequently ask young educated Ethiopians, 'What do you want to become?' How do we know? This whole business of *choosing* is entirely new to us, and we know very little about the alternatives that we have now. It is all very confusing."

So far the modernizing sector has provided little, beyond vocational pamphlets in the school libraries and an occasional school debate on the respective values of different occupations, to help orient the students on these matters.

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love and the image of the traditional Amhara marriage, likely as not to end in divorce. This sort of concern was expressed in a revealing way in the following statement by a twenty-year-old college student: 883* 581 586 178 [52]

> The main thing I want in my wife is good character. Beauty is not so important. Of course she will be an excellent cook. But mostly I am concerned that she be the *right* one for me; I do not want to get divorced. But you can't really know if she is the right one until after ten years of married life. If after having about five or six children it turns out troublesome, I will have to leave her. A person cannot go on living that way.

In some instances, ironically, this quest for the perfect marriage leads to a rejection of the very institution of marriage itself. Seven per cent of the students questioned indicated that they do not want to get married eventually—either because they "could never afford it," they "would be happier living single," or they just *"do not want to enter a relation that will end in divorce."* Thus at a time when the stability and warmth of family life are needed more than ever, the very possibility of family is doubted. 883* 178 581 589

Some Ethiopian students blame the deteriorated family and an alleged increase in divorce in their country on the impact of Western civilization. True, the introduction of the Western concept of marriage and of the rudiments of a modern occupational system have dislocated the traditional arrangements for marriage; and other related problems, to be discussed in the next chapter, plague the Western-educated elite. But Western civilization has also developed resources to begin to cope with analogous problems in its own societies, and perhaps it is not too soon to acquaint Ethiopia's youth with some of these: for example, the recent developments in man's understanding of the dynamics of marriage as well as more sophisticated conceptions of the ideal and importance of family life in modern society. 581 177

CULTURAL ORIENTATION

A generational conflict manifests itself further with respect to questions of belief, taste, and value. Because of differences on such issues, students and their parents have grown far apart. The more traditionalist of the older generation refer to the modern youth as *ya-sĭmmĭntaññā shi lĭjjotch* ("children of the eighth millennium"); that is, of that corrupt time the Amhara believe will precede the destruction of the world. The latter, in turn, refer to the old-fashioned as ignorant, uncivilized, sometimes even "savage." 561

Yet, as we have been suggesting, this conflict is by no means total. Amhara adolescents are too deeply attached to many aspects of their traditional culture to engage in wholesale rebellion. Because of strict childhood training they remain basically respectful toward their elders. In addition, they often prefer to champion their own traditions in the spirit of a freshly excited nationalism. 883* 561 178

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding
[882] detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indica-
[128] tion of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

*883 *Religion.*—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian
771 students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "reli-
178 gion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

795 Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as
771 permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches
178 and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

*883 It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the
771 cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether.
178 Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer de-
[790] pendent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to
[771] adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of
[795] the various missions in Ethiopia.* In recent years a third alternative has fired

* In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the imagination of some other students: attempting to reform the Orthodox Church from within. This has been done within the framework of the Orthodox Students Association, which will be discussed further in chapter vii.

Science.—Of all the aspects of Western culture to which they have been exposed, Ethiopia's students have been most receptive to the teachings of natural science. They tend to regard it as the most important single benefit which Ethiopia can gain from Western civilization. After religion, morals, and manners, "science" is the response students give most often to the question: "What specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

TABLE 8

EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS OBSERVE TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Practice	Secondary School (per cent)	College (per cent)
Follow the fasts:		
All the time	38	16
Most of the time	26	23
Sometimes	27	24
Not at all	9	37
Go to church (mosque):		
More than once a week	9	2
Once a week	59	40
Less than once a week	25	36
Not at all	7	22
Bow to church (mosque):		
Always	28	9
Some/most of the time	50	38
Not at all	22	53
Pray:		
Twice or more daily	64	40
Once a day	22	23
Once or twice a week	6	14
Once or twice a month	5	10
Not at all	3	13
Number	(485)	(195)

Disagreement on such questions as the nature of solar eclipses, the descent of man, and the etiology of disease is common between the modern adolescents and their own parents. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the scientific imagination has yet displaced traditional thought patterns in the minds of Ethiopian students, or that scientific beliefs have fully replaced

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*883 815 178 • 177 "superstitious" beliefs about the world. Concerning this latter issue we are fortunate to have a substantial study carried out by Dr. Edith Lord during 1956–57—a study of the beliefs of some 1,250 Ethiopian students and teachers.[22]

[125] The subjects of this study were asked to mark as true or false a list of 132 unscientific beliefs commonly held by Ethiopians. These beliefs dealt with nature and devils, health and disease, danger and death. In spite of a measurable trend toward increased disbelief in the unscientific statements as the level of schooling increased, it was found that a significant number of these statements were accepted by a majority both of the post-elementary students and of the Ethiopian teachers. Thus, 56 items were believed by half or more of the 451 secondary students in the sample; 34 items by half or more of the 96 teachers; 9 items by half or more of the 61 student nurses and first-aid workers; and 6 of the items by half or more of the 29 college freshmen. Table 9 shows some of those unscientific beliefs most commonly subscribed to by secondary school students. These particular items are of interest for two additional reasons. The first five of them were among the beliefs held by *a majority of the twenty-nine college freshmen.* The first and the last, moreover, are among those items which showed an *increasing* frequency of belief with an increase in education, from the first four primary grades, through the second four grades, to the secondary level.

TABLE 9

UNSCIENTIFIC BELIEFS ACCEPTED BY SECONDARY STUDENTS

Item No.	Belief	Percentage of Secondary Students Holding the Belief
53	Certain mineral waters can cure stomach trouble by causing a person to vomit worms, sometimes frogs or toads	88
35	There are some skillful persons who can summon the devil at will	87
102	Too much charity leads to madness	74
58	A child will grow better if the nerves are removed from under his back teeth	68
84	If you go into a room which has been closed for a long time, you will be attacked by Satan	57
78	A man who has skill in stopping rains must not eat or drink while he is performing the ceremony to stop rain, or he will be unsuccessful	64
	Number	(451)

[125] In my own questionnaire, administered three years after Dr. Lord's re-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

search and only to the highest grades of secondary school and college, three 883*
questions regarding unscientific beliefs were included. In a pilot study of 815
sixty secondary school seniors and juniors, 42 per cent held the belief that "a 178
person can be made sick by the evil eye of a *budā*," and 33 per cent believed 177
that "too much learning results in madness." To the one question asked of 125
my entire sample: "Do you believe that some learned *dabtarā* can cause rain to fall or stop?," 16 per cent of 500 secondary and 7 per cent of 200 college seniors and juniors said "Yes."

This persistence among the educated youth of traditional beliefs which run 883*
counter to the consensus of modern scientists has been attributed by Lord to 815
the inadequacies of the Ethiopian school system. This is as might be expected, 871
inasmuch as most Ethiopian teachers have had relatively little education 178
themselves and the curriculum has necessarily been somewhat improvised and 177
incomplete. Officials of the Ministry of Education have labored to overcome these deficiencies, and certain changes were in fact made in consequence of Lord's study which aim at combating the more dysfunctional of the prevailing superstitions.

It seems likely, however, that certain irrational dispositions are also in- 121
volved here, dispositions to maintain the unscientific beliefs in spite of im- 815
provements in teaching methods and materials. One would predict this on the 178
basis of general sociological understanding of the consequences of rapid social 177
change. The disruption of the traditional belief systems brought about by the sudden dissemination of scientific beliefs inevitably creates insecurity, and a common reaction to such insecurity is to cling with increased tenacity to some of the old-fashioned beliefs which are closely identified with the traditional culture.[23]

One area in which this defensive "revivalism" can be observed in Ethiopia 178
is that of medicine. Many Ethiopians who have received modern secondary 75
education maintain that Western medicine, while useful in many cases, repre- 815
sents only one possible approach to the problem of sickness and health.[24] 177
Thus, fifty-seven per cent of the secondary students questioned asserted that traditional Ethiopian medicines are effective all or most of the time, although such therapies include the eating of rancid butter to cure malaria or drinking holy water to cure serious functional disorders. Dr. Lord herself has reported an episode which throws much light on the psychology of this reaction:

> An Ethiopian colleague, a former teacher, warned me against drinking water in a certain provincial town on penalty of my catching malaria. He was challenged thus: "You are one of the better educated persons in Ethiopia; don't you know the cause of malaria?" He quickly, and eruditely, gave all the known scientific facts about malaria. Then he added, "You people from the United States (and the United Nations) think that this (the scientif-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 815 177 [175] ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the water in places where the Anopheles breed."[25]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

*883 177 178 *Taste.*—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from extreme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions.

[262] Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward [272] Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages [273] are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

*883 264 177 178 With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

*883 291 177 178 On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

*883 517 53 177 178 000 In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are preferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of

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Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[26] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 177 178 [535] [533] [276] cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

*883 177 184 Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

*883 517 178 177 AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women	85	15	0	(700)
Food	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry	67	26	7	(700)
Music	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†	40	58	2	(700)
Dance	38	56	6	(700)
Drink	24	56	20	(700)
Painting	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gursha*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically identical.

*883 177 [184] school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

*883 577 178 *Morals.*—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

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the government schools. The weakening of family controls by the new school environment has slightly reduced the importance of loyalty to kin in the students' scheme of things, and has significantly reduced the moral authority of religious customs. A third sphere of norms—respect and obedience toward elders and persons of authority—is maintained by the hierarchical school system, officially headed by the Emperor himself. However, the ambiguous status of foreign teachers and their frequent inability or unwillingness to play the traditional authoritarian role tends to weaken this, for the possibility of informal, even joking, relations with foreign teachers gives Amhara students their first taste of a more relaxed relation to authority figures. (Unprepared by any other experience for such a relationship, their reaction tends to be one of exploiting the permissive teacher as much as possible while at the same time losing respect for him.)

Finally, the expectation of physical stamina and aggressiveness in the Amhara *goramsā* is carried over into the school setting but with definite modification. It prevails in the feeling that one must not tolerate insults or be cowardly. It also persists in altered form in the new pattern of athletic activities instituted by the schools. On the other hand, the greater camaraderie expected among schoolmates means that aggression must also be carefully controlled. An indication of the psychological difficulties to which the crowded yet sociable conditions of school life have given rise appears in response to the question: "What is the worst thing that could justifiably be said against you?" The most frequent sort of answer to this question relates to unchecked aggression: "Quick to anger," "quarrelsome," "ill tempered."

Of the new moral values inculcated by the school system, some of the main ones appear to be self-development via education; honesty; sportsmanship; and social responsibility.

Ethiopians often speak of the "value" (*ṭiqem*) of education, meaning thereby the path to a well-paying job and a higher standard of living. But one would be mistaken to suppose that this explanation exhausts the meaning that education has for the modern adolescents. The freeing of their imagination and the exercise of previously unknown intellectual capacities prove themselves thrilling experiences for each new class of students. And their most preferred pastime is "reading," their most popular films are educational ones. A number of students spontaneously declared, when asked about the real reason they go to school, "to learn about the world" and "to learn about humanity."

In the traditional culture of Abyssinia, learning was highly valued, to be sure. But its task was to produce a class of literati capable of transmitting the hallowed beliefs and symbols. Education for the sake of inquiry as such or for personal development was never permitted in its program. If the value of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 66 ical wit and activism displayed by students from other countries has embarrassed their cautious dispositions.

There are three reasons for this relative lack of politicization of the Ethiopian students. One is that, having maintained her ancient independence [648] throughout the "scramble for Africa," Ethiopia entered the twentieth century as an independent nation; and five years of Italian rule were not sufficient to shake her spirit. Ethiopian students have thus not had to participate in the anti-imperialist movement, the great school for political activism in the colonial areas.

[571] A second factor is the deeply rooted habit of total subordination to any [157] legitimate authority. Because of this orientation there is a persisting disposition to relegate concern for all political questions to the highest authorities. [577] Nearly two-thirds of the secondary students and a third of the college students maintain that one should always obey the order of a superior, arguing [829] that "obedience is a virtue," "things would not go right otherwise," and "the Bible says so."

*883 66 641 The third reason for the almost apolitical posture of Ethiopian students has been the absence of opportunities for political expression in their country. African students from British colonies have in the past been surprised to find that their colonial situation admitted far more freedom of speech and press than Ethiopia. Teachers are expected to keep anything remotely connected with Ethiopian politics out of the classroom, and the editors are expected to keep them out of the newspapers. Nor have the students been permitted to form any kind of politically relevant associations. Even casual discussion of domestic political problems among friends has been curtailed because of the all-pervading fear of government informers.

*883 66 177 All this has not prevented Ethiopian students from being affected to a moderate degree by the libertarian and egalitarian ideals of the West. The teaching of European history in secondary school, evaluation of students' performance without respect to class or tribal affiliation, and the exercise of electing student officers in the colleges have acted to leaven the political imagination of the students. Many of them thus ventured a degree of political *883 66 829 criticism in their anonymous questionnaires. Forty-three per cent indicated disapproval of the existing differences between "big men" and the common people. Thirty-nine per cent were critical of the degree of control exerted by the government, of which group two-thirds felt that governmental controls are too strict (e.g., not permitting free expression), and one-third felt they were not strict enough (e.g., with respect to corruption and provincial administration).

*883 668 669 The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, jarred the Addis Ababa college students into an unprecedented state of political activity.[27] In response

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In these attitudes one may note the persistence of such traditional valuations as the esteem for power, the stress on religion, and the concern about polite and dignified behavior, alongside such modernist valuations as the esteem for civilization (*selṭänē*) and science. With regard to the emerging world power of Africa, however, the students have been rapidly coming to reject the traditional Abyssinian viewpoint, which looks with disdain upon the Negroid peoples of Africa as racially and culturally inferior.

As recently as a decade ago, a group of Ethiopian college students responded with ridicule and evident disdain to an illustrated ethnographic account of some East African tribes. But in the late 1950's, due to the growing

TABLE 13

ATTITUDES OF ETHIOPIAN STUDENTS TOWARD THE "BIG THREE" POWERS

Classification of Comments	England (per cent)	U.S.A. (per cent)	U.S.S.R. (per cent)
Positive.....	32	59	47
Negative.....	37	19	26
Neutral.....	11	5	6
No answer....	20	17	21
Number..	(640)	(700)	(662)

prominence of the African independence movement and the decision of the Ethiopian government to take more interest in African affairs, the pan-African sentiment began to invade the heretofore aloof highland plateau of Ethiopia. The attendance in Ethiopian colleges of students from other African countries and the growing number of pan-African meetings in Addis Ababa have promoted this trend. Consequently a number of Ethiopian students now follow with growing interest the developments in other African countries, and not a few indicated that their identification with Africa as a whole was stronger than their identification with Ethiopia. All but 8 per cent of the 700 students questioned: "What do you think about Africa?" had some response that showed concern, whether sympathy for African independence and getting rid of the Europeans (28 per cent), or sensitivity about Africa's "undeveloped" and "uncivilized" state and its need to work hard (33 per cent), or pride and confidence in Africa's resources and future (24 per cent).

So deeply rooted a sentiment as prejudice against Negroid Africans cannot quickly be willed away. It does seem, however, that the emergence of the

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appeared to the students as the source of their new goods; of their learning, 883*
health, and well-being. Because of a feeling that "he supplies everything" 121
and "he is my guardian," students of all grades have been among the most 178
sincere and enthusiastic supporters of Haile Selassie. So their adoption of 643
Western patterns has from the outset been legitimated by the highest tradi- [177]
tional authority, and the harshness of the culture clash has been softened
by the symbolization of both tradition and modernity in the Imperial Person.
Here the traditional pattern of "functional deviance" re-asserts itself. The 883*
adolescent rebels against the traditional demands of his parents, but expends 121
that deviant energy on behalf of legitimate symbols of the national society. 178

Related to this was a strong sense of national purposiveness. *Agarēnennā* 883*
negusēn tammrē iredālhu ("Having studied, I will serve my country and 121
my king")—this was the motto of most Ethiopian students in the forties and 641
fifties. The conspicuous needs of their country provided clear goals in terms 178
of which students felt they were preparing themselves.

Still another motive force was the need for personal justification. The many 883*
students who in a sense deserted their home villages or families in order to 121
spend years in school carried with them an ambition eventually to show the 178
folks back home that they were right after all. This involved the conviction 871
that going to school was the right, at times the righteous, thing: a blind
faith that simply by continuing along the road of education they would
make good in the world and return home some day as a sort of hero. Here,
too, is an echo of the old deviant pattern: the renegade returning home, after
many years, as a successful churchman or warlord.

The economic situation, finally, was encouraging for students. It seemed [464]
for many years that advanced training, including study abroad, would be
available for whoever qualified, and that the demand for educated personnel
was so great that the job opportunities for students would be endless.

By 1961, however, all these sources of adolescent morale—royal legitima- 883*
tion, national purpose, personal justification, and economic opportunity—had 121
been to some extent undercut. Some of the changing circumstances have al- 178
ready been referred to. The effect of the rebellion of December, 1960, and its 871
aftermath was to weaken the tie between Haile Selassie and the post-elemen- 643
tary students. With his moral authority somewhat undermined, the students
could no longer use him to symbolize a conflict-free transition to modernity.
Nor could they any longer count on him to "supply everything" indefinitely:
in the summer of 1962 the Emperor announced the immediate suspension of
room and board benefits for the students of the University College.

The students' outlook has further been rendered less sanguine by the con- 883*
fusion attending the political crisis of the sixties. They no longer feel the 121
keen sense of national purpose, to serve "country and king." Their ideals in 178
this regard were already weakening before the rebellion by virtue of increased [641]

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The Old and New Elites

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that character-
170 izes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary
178 Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

[433] In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels: coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal [671] realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The govern- [64] mental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial [795] system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious [794] institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

121 This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratifi-
56 cation.
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178 565 661 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 565 556 [241] [455] For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 565 556 472 [175] [648] Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families, Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *makuānnent* and *bāla-selṭān*. They [662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 565 369 177 [556] As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 565 554 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The

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178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shĭr* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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Selassie I theater, and the secondary level art school.* Library facilities included the National Library, with some fifty thousand volumes; the University College Library, with about forty-five; and the reading rooms of the United States Information Service, the British Center, and the Soviet Information Service. The national library also contains a historical museum, and there is a handsome and well appointed archeological museum nearby, neither of which has so far been operated with a view to encouraging public attendance.

Except for occasional lectures sponsored by the national library and the University College extension program, none of the above institutions serves as a center for intellectual communication among adult Ethiopians. It was hoped by some that with the inauguration of the Haile Selassie I University, in December, 1961, a major new center of intellectual life would be created; but the government found it difficult to push ahead with its announced concept of an integrated institution which would operate autonomously and at a high standard.

Outside these institutions, moreover, there have been few channels of communication through which Ethiopian intellectuals can develop their minds and stimulate their imaginations. There are no periodicals to serve as a medium for such communication. One possibility, the *Ethiopian Observer,* is not quite an exception. Limited resources have kept it from operating at as high a level as available talent might permit, and its basically apologetic orientation renders implausible its claims to be "A Journal of Independent Opinion." The daily newspapers which feature contributed articles—the *Ethiopian Herald,* the *Addis Zaman,* and the Amharic sections of the *Voice of Ethiopia*—have tended to exclude pieces that have anything to do with highly controversial matters. Nor are there many social occasions for the serious discussion of intellectual matters. Professional associations, clubs devoted to intellectual matters, and even informal discussion groups exist not at all or else in a very haphazard form.

Contact with the intellectual world outside Ethiopia is almost as meager. Foreign-educated Ethiopians tend to become intellectually demoralized on returning home. The loss of a taste for reading has frequently been one of the first casualties experienced by Western-educated Ethiopians on return from abroad. Only a few hardy souls attempt to maintain some sort of link with the outside world, through subscribing to such magazines as the *New Statesman, Paris Soir,* or *New Republic.* For most of them, coming home means a cessation of the most elementary intellectual functions, other

* In 1963 an Institute of Ethiopian Studies was established at Haile Selassie I University, including a substantial Ethiopiana library and museum.

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phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571
and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178
of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession 565
of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554
ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642]
ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177]
rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556]
imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642]
growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647]
nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701]
force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178
Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests 571
on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554
the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871
the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178
tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565
the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643]
political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178
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* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 [439]
million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

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178 past. The intellectuals are the product of a secular school system which is, as
571 we have seen, a structure foreign to Abyssinian tradition. Their members are
[177] drawn from all parts of Ethiopian society, and in almost no cases consist of
[871] Western-educated members of the old group of literati, the *dabtarā*. The question of their integration into what has remained an essentially traditional social system has thus been Ethiopia's main sociological dilemma during the present decade. We shall return to this question after considering the composition and general situation of the intellectual class.

571 Whatever his line of work, the Ethiopian intellectual tends to be employed
463 by the government, since employment opportunities in the private sector are
[464] still extremely limited; and where such exist, the government has often claimed priority over the intellectual's services by virtue of its having educated him. Many of the intellectuals work as public administrators, in the middle echelons of the government bureaucracy, with the titles of "assistant," "director," and "director general"; and there has been a growing tendency
[875] to appoint them in the higher levels, especially since 1961. Hundreds of them now work as teachers in the elementary and secondary schools,* and some six dozen teach at the college level. A small but growing number are employed as physicians, medical workers, engineers, and legal advisers in various government institutions. Still another group works in the small communications field—on the staffs of the various newspapers, the patriotic monthly *Menen,* and Radio Addis Ababa. The small group holding jobs outside the government works as engineers and bureaucrats in industrial firms, as employees of the Ethiopian Air Lines, or have small commercial or agricultural enterprises of their own.

571 With respect to interaction among the intellectuals, however, the most
871 important distinction among them has been the place where they received their education. Here we may speak of two main groups: those who received part of their education abroad, the "foreign-educated" or "returnees"; and those who received all their education in Ethiopia, the "local-educated" or "locals."†

The Returnees

Close to two hundred Ethiopians studied abroad prior to the Italian occu-
[177] pation. Since French was then the official European language in Ethiopia,

* About forty-five hundred Ethiopians, of varying levels of educational attainment, were teaching in government schools of all types in 1960–61, according to the Ministry of Education school census for that year.

† This term is used as a neutral descriptive category, free from any negative connotations it may have acquired when first coined by the returnees. More recently, the West African term "been-to" has been incorporated into Amharic for referring to the returnee.

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quite a few of these men went to school in France and Switzerland, while others studied in Egypt, England, the United States, and Italy. In general, this first group of returnees was enthusiastic and outspoken in their desire to modernize the country. They were emboldened by the feeling that Haile Selassie was their champion, though some of them, who took plans for a Young Ethiopia movement with them into exile during the occupation, felt a need for more radical reforms than the Emperor was willing to admit.

The pre-occupation intellectuals have no significant voice as such in Ethiopia today. Many of them were massacred by the Italians following the attempt on Graziani's life in 1937. Those who survived have been scattered, some being so thoroughly absorbed in the new nobility as to lose their identity as intellectuals, others tending to lead somewhat isolated and demoralized lives. Only the handful of older military officers, who were trained at the St. Cyr Academy in France, retain any semblance of common identity based on prewar study abroad.

In speaking of the returnees, then, we speak essentially of a group whose education abroad dates to the late forties and after. The typical postliberation returnee has studied from three to five years abroad in an English-speaking institution, under the sponsorship of the Ethiopian government; though there are many exceptions to this type.

As of June, 1959, the main countries in which some five hundred Ethiopians had studied since the mid-forties were: United States and Canada, 38 per cent; United Kingdom, 20 per cent; Lebanon (American University of Beirut), 17 per cent; Western Germany, 10 per cent; and India, 4 per cent. This pattern began to change somewhat at the end of the fifties as, in addition to these countries, Ethiopians in increasingly large numbers began to attend schools in Egypt, Italy, France, Israel, and Sweden. The subjects pursued by these students covered the whole academic spectrum—from dairying and forestry to languages and theology. Most of them, however, concentrated in one of four fields: social sciences, 30 per cent; engineering, 23 per cent; education, 12 per cent; and medical sciences, 12 per cent. Notably underrepresented in their studies were the fields of business and the natural sciences.

The length of time spent abroad varied considerably. Of the three hundred students who had returned by 1958 for whom complete information is available, 15 per cent studied abroad for only one year and 18 per cent for two years; 36 per cent were abroad from three to five years, 25 per cent from six to eight years, and 6 per cent for nine or more years. The education of about half of these students was paid for by the Ethiopian government itself. Others went on scholarships given by the United States government through AID (20 per cent); by other foreign governments, chiefly West Germany and

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571 India (10 per cent); and by international organizations, chiefly WHO and
871 ICAO (8 per cent). The others were financed privately, either by their
177 families (8 per cent), or, in a few cases (3 per cent), by religious groups or
[648] business firms.

571 Given this variety of educational background, it is not surprising that the
829 experience of study abroad has had a variable effect on the returnees. Their
177 images of modernity are differently colored according to the country where they have received their higher education. Their archetypes for the modern component of language vary according to the language in which they have received their technical training.

Despite such variety—which may ultimately serve to enrich their cultural life more than to fragment it—several effects of the experience abroad appear common to nearly all the returnees. These include a radical broadening of perspective; the taste for a high standard of living; greater appreciation of political freedom; a heightened sense of Ethiopian identity; and an increase in nationalistic sentiment.

571 Because Ethiopian students are highly motivated to learn what goes on
829 about them in foreign countries, their travel abroad has tended to broaden
177 their outlooks rather than to confirm their prejudices. This expansion of per-
186 spective alters their attitude toward Ethiopia in two different ways. On the one hand, by enabling them to evaluate aspects of Ethiopian life they had previously taken for granted, it has made them more aggressively critical about conditions at home. On the other hand, it has given them a greater sense of pride about Ethiopia. They have noticed that, however advanced their host country, it had certain shortcomings of its own, a sort of observation which has tended to ease the sting of cultural inferiority inevitably felt during the stay in a more modernized society.

> Before going to the United States, I pictured it as the most perfect country on earth. We students in Ethiopia believed that everything good and beautiful comes from America. After studying there, I was disappointed in many ways. For example, I found the Americans to be hypocritical—they go to church, and don't care about religion; they talk about tolerance, and are still quite prejudiced. This was a great lesson for me. I can never be so romantic about a foreign country again, and can appreciate Ethiopia's strengths as well as its weaknesses better now.

Short travel tours sometimes had a similar effect:

> I spent several weeks in Yugoslavia. . . . And I must say—despite how backward we are here, we live much more happily than the Yugoslavs. The people themselves are wonderful—warm and generous; but their lives are miserable. That experience was really quite a surprise for me.

571 No matter what its shortcomings, the host country inevitably accustomed
829 Ethiopians abroad to a higher standard of living than they had known at
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home—except for the difficulty of having to do without servants. Those students whose rural background and limited intellectual experience had led them to consider Addis Ababa as one of the most advanced cities in the world were often shocked by the comparison. No less shocking was the moral climate, which permitted one to express oneself freely and honestly. The taste for intellectual freedom was added to that of political freedom, as students whose horizons were limited by the meager intellectual fare at home came into hungry contact with authors like Marx and Freud, Dewey and Russell. 571 829 177

However much the Ethiopian students abroad might seek to lose themselves in the host culture, they were not permitted to do so. In the mirror of foreigners' regards, their identity as Ethiopians took clearer shape, transcending narrower tribal identifications. Questions about Ethiopia by foreigners aroused greater interest in Ethiopia's history and contemporary problems. A number of students were thus moved to dip into the literature on their country produced by travelers and scholars in the past, and some of them came to write theses and dissertations on problems related to Ethiopia's development. 571 177 186

All of these factors—broadening of perspective, acquaintance with a higher economic standard, less inhibited discussions, and greater self-consciousness as Ethiopians—contributed to a spirit of nationalist dedication. This spirit was confirmed or aroused in all but two groups of the returnees. One, consisting of children of some wealthy members of the new nobility, went abroad chiefly for the prestige and pleasure involved. For them the experience was an extended holiday; they were playboys more than students. The other group consists of those who were abroad for too short a time to have a complete educational experience—in some cases, for as little as three months. These students have tended to use the tour abroad chiefly as a weapon with which to lord it over their peers on return and otherwise to serve narrow personal ambitions. Those students, however, for whom study abroad entailed a more or less serious encounter with higher education and a more modernized culture normally experienced a swelling aspiration to serve their country. They returned home deeply critical of the status quo and determined to contribute substantially to the modernization of their society. 571 177 186 829

Ostensibly, the returnees have been well situated for making such a contribution. Thanks to prudent government policy since the early fifties, they have been enabled to enjoy a minimally comfortable standard of living. Given a monthly allowance from the moment they step off the plane, they have been automatically salaried at a scale based largely on the academic degree attained, with A.B.'s starting at Eth$450 a month and Ph.D.'s at Eth$700. In addition, provisions have been made for them to borrow money from the government in order to finance heavy investments like furniture or, more usually, an automobile. 571 511 (465) (426)

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furniture, etc.—are equally burdensome investments if the returnee does not possess them. Furthermore, the traditional large wedding is still expected in most cases. In the city this involves an enormous expense—as much as Eth$2,000–$4,000—which often puts the groom in debt for several years.*

There are many returnees for whom these factors are excuses more than insuperable obstacles, or who frankly prefer the extended bachelordom made possible by the greater freedom of the modernizing sector to an uncertain match. If, as frequently is the case, they would marry only an educated wife, they may be discouraged by the shortage of educated Ethiopian women; or beset by too much pride, if coming from a humble background, to ask for the hand of an educated girl who is likely to come from an upper-class family. They may be victims of the cycle of antagonism that has developed between educated men and women in Ethiopia, the former attacking the latter for demanding too much in the way of material things and being only superficially modernized—"half-baked"—and the latter indicting the former for preferring foreign girls and unjustly neglecting Ethiopian women.

But the root of the problem is often deeper (leaving aside, for this discussion, characterological factors). It is entwined with a basic insecurity about the whole idea of marriage in the transitional atmosphere of contemporary Ethiopia. Perhaps nowhere in the minds of the returnees do traditional and modern norms stand in such delicate counterpoise as with regard to the question of the sort of wife one should marry and the proper type of relation to have with her. Should he prefer the traditional woman, modestly dressed and inconspicuous, or the Western ideal of a sexually attractive female? Should he have a wife who stays at home all the time, or one whom he takes along to social gatherings? Should he have a wife with whom to share interests and discuss problems, or one to order about and keep in her place? The returnees have normally been attracted by the Western marriage pattern while abroad, but it is so out of place in the Ethiopian context that many are troubled by the prospect on return. The foreign-educated man feels he should have an educated wife, but he also feels threatened by a woman who is independent, especially if she is holding a job. Such ambivalence adds an additional dimension of vulnerability to the returnee's position.

In sum: the conditions of life receptive to a modernizing intellectual stratum have not yet been established in Ethiopia. The personal frustrations of the returnees are an inevitable consequence of their being the bearers of modern culture in a traditional oligarchical order—especially one that has

* A new custom has developed in response to this problem. It has become the practice in some offices for sheets of paper to be circulated prior to a wedding in the ministry or agency where the groom is employed. Co-workers write the amount they wish to be deducted from their salaries in their behalf. Most recently, modest weddings have started to become respectable.

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been affected by modernizing agents for but a relatively brief period and in a relatively diluted fashion. The beliefs and values which the returnees acquired while abroad concern national development, technical competence, and individuality, while the norms of the social structure in which they must live are based on the values of loyalty to monarch, ascribed status, and authoritarian relations.

Of many possible types of response to such a situation of strain, four are common among the Ethiopian intelligentsia. These we may designate by the terms Opportunism, Withdrawal, Reformism, and Rebellion. With reference to the three variables of commitment to modern goals and norms, acceptance of existing authorities, and the distinction between "activity" and "passivity," these patterns may be represented schematically as in Table 14.[59]

TABLE 14

MODES OF ADAPTATION OF ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES

	Commitment to Modern Values	Acceptance of Existing Authorities	"Activity"
Opportunism	−	+	+
Withdrawal	+	−	−
Reformism	+	+	+
Rebellion	+	−	+

Opportunism is the mode of adaptation in which the returnee's commitment to modern goals and norms is eclipsed by his passion for status, power, and income. He differs from the traditional aspirant for high position in Abyssinia in that two of his status qualifications are novel—residence abroad, and a university degree—and above all in that the pursuit of his personal goals entails a *renunciation* of nationalistic ideals and universalistic standards which were nurtured while abroad. For some opportunists this is no real problem: their study abroad was all along essentially a façade to be used in advancing their careers. But for the others the process of becoming an opportunist is a gradual one and attended by chronic self-recriminations, as the returnee finds himself compulsively agreeing with his superiors and flattering them on every occasion, and performing actions primarily for the sake of advancement rather than for the sake of doing a job well.

It is impossible to go on pursuing progressive principles indiscriminately. I sometimes see my friends doing things now which we used to condemn

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when we were students abroad together. I wonder at times if I am losing sight of my principles altogether.

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Withdrawal is the solution of those who have retained their principles at the expense of being effectual in action. The routes of escape are varied. One way is transferring attention to problems outside the country—to international relations, problems of pan-Africanism, or the gossip about London, Paris, and New York.

To me the independence of all African nations is more important than the progress of Ethiopia.

Some spend their energies in convivial relations with resident Westerners (diplomatic and technical assistance personnel, foreign businessmen) or in the traditional rounds of family visiting. Quite a few returnees lose themselves in card-playing or chess whenever they can, and a number have taken to heavy drinking. Often the returnee who withdraws shows no "symptoms" other than a general constriction of his life into narrow work routines and creature functions. At the same time he may be experiencing a fairly acute sense of estrangement.

Our generation is not really living. We are not "engaged." The simple weaver—most of the people in this country—are "engaged." We are not; we live from day to day. When I leave work I go to the Ras Hotel or somewhere else. I don't want to go home, there is nothing there for me. I have nothing to work for. I have no family, nor any interest in saving money.

The third type of response, Reformism, involves the attempt both to maintain principles and to be effective in action under the existing political order. This alternative places great demands on the personality system and might well be designated as the pattern of "moral heroism."

What we lack today is proper organization. In default of organization, we are forced to rely on morality.

The reformist returnee serves his country according to universalistic standards even though these norms are scarcely institutionalized; even though, in other words, he is likely to be criticized and even punished for maintaining standards in the face of demands by superiors and relatives to do otherwise, or for solving problems in a rational manner on his own initiative. Yet if he is officially disregarded or censured, his efforts do not go unnoticed by the patriotic modernizing elements of the population who, in a covert, informal system of communication, tend to establish severe judgments on the "bad guys" and the "good guys," and to idolize the latter as potential leaders.

In the case of Rebellion, finally, the attempt is made to be active in the pursuit of modern goals but in a spirit of basic alienation from the existing

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121 authorities. Except for a very few eccentric individuals who have seemed
571 oblivious to the dangers of speaking out their criticism of the status quo in
177 public, this has in the nature of current circumstances necessarily involved
178 clandestine activity. Returnees have been involved in small conspiratorial
156 groups since the mid-fifties. The December, 1960, coup d'état has been the
[669] most ambitious rebellious project to be acted out so far. Similarly motivated
[668] activities have included the duplication and distribution of subversive literature, and the formation of small groups as groundwork for an eventual political party.

Our data do not permit reliable estimates of the frequency of these different modes of adaptation among the returnees. It is important to note, however, that individuals often change from one mode to another in the course of their experience after return and that many follow more than one pattern at the same time. It is unlikely that the total number of returnees oriented primarily as rebels has ever exceeded two per cent. Most of them move in and out of phases of Reformism, Withdrawal, and Opportunism, depending to a large extent on the accidents of their appointments. A more concrete picture of their experience may be suggested by the following case study, that of a Western-educated Ethiopian who went from a phase of Withdrawal to one of Reformism tinged with Opportunism.

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The Adjustment of "Haile": Case Study of a Returnee

October, 1958. Haile has recently returned from four years of study in a Western country. He speaks very critically about the state of things in Ethiopia. He is particularly upset by the prevailing inefficiency, the lack of industriousness, and the interminable procrastination (*ĭshi naga*).

January, 1959. Haile seems deeply depressed. The ministry in which he has been placed affords him no opportunity to work effectively and the job he has bears no relation to what he was trained for. He has withdrawn more into himself, but to all outward appearances plays perfectly well, with great self-assurance, the role of the Amhara bureaucrat.

July, 1959. Now Haile is working in a different ministry, in a job somewhat more closely related to his training. He appears to feel productive and useful now, and his criticism is constructive. For example, he frequently compares the situation in the United States and Ethiopia, to show how the same sort of problem can be solved more readily in the U.S. because of its greater facilities. Though Ethiopia's comparative handicaps frustrate him, he talks of plans for the development of Ethiopia with some enthusiasm. . . . Haile complains of an

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

brothels for dancing and more intimate relations. (Returnees normally do not have patience for the shy, traditional girls; and they are too concerned about public opinion to be seen visiting brothels. When they or the locals do visit the brothels, it is often by way of a backdoor entrance.) When they marry, the locals almost invariably choose a traditional type of wife with relatively little education and with whom they expect to have an authoritarian relationship.

In sum: the local is not so afflicted by those problems which derive from the central dilemma of the returnee—how to fulfil himself according to modern standards in an intractable, traditional environment. The local's dilemma typically lies in a different realm, that of economic and social mobility. Whereas the returnee has been given a comparatively high income and status almost as a matter of course, the local has normally started his work life with a relatively low salary and little prestige. If the returnee has felt deprived relative to the Westerners in whose society he has lived, the local has felt deprived relative to the returnee.

The local lives on a day-to-day basis at a relatively simple standard. Though he shares the returnee's passion for woolen suits and, in many cases, for a car of his own, he is not, like the returnee, preoccupied with the quest for housing that conforms to Western standards. Except for those with extraordinary talents and family connections, the locals have had difficulty locating jobs that they feel are not beneath their dignity and which pay salaries sufficient to cover their relatively modest needs. They customarily receive a starting salary in the neighborhood of Eth$150. The more ambitious and fortunate among them have, by changing jobs, manipulating superiors, and improving skills, worked their way up to salaries in the Eth$400–$500 category. Some have become provincial teachers for a while, in order to accumulate money on which to live while shopping for a position in Addis Ababa and with which to influence some higher official to grant it to them. There remains a hard core of locals who feel they are underpaid and live in constant resentment of this situation.

This resentment has produced a general sort of negativism which characterizes many of the locals, a negativism expressed in the form of backbiting and denunciation of the higher government officials and the nobility generally. They decry social injustice and the uses of nepotism. They moralize profusely against those whom fortune has shown greater favors. But not all their social criticism is born of resentment. There are also among the locals many young men who are comfortably situated but fired by patriotic fervor with a desire for social reform.

The local is as deeply concerned about asserting his status vis-à-vis the less educated as he is to advance his position in the hierarchy. Locals are extreme-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The effect of this literature has not been, as David Riesman suggests is true of the written word generally, an individualizing one. It did not serve to "help liberate the reader from his group and its emotions, and allow the contemplation of alternative responses and the trying on of new emotions."[81] It has served rather to buttress conformity, by rekindling identification with the sacred symbols of the society. Ethiopian religious literature does not invite introspection; it is a corpus to be venerated and solemnly rehearsed. When a devout Ethiopian reads his daily or weekly portion from some writing such as the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David) or the *Weddāssē Māryām* (*Praise of Mary*), he is said to be "repeating" the text—*Dāwit yedaggemāl*. Most of those who learn to read the words of these writings do not understand the Ge'ez in which they are composed. 121* 156 182 538

A similar function has been performed by the secular literature, which runs primarily in praise of royalty and thus has served to uphold the political status quo. The earliest Ethiopian writings are inscriptions of the Aksumite kings dating from the fourth century A.D. Here, in a style that is to persist through the ages, the royal deeds are recounted in meticulous detail and endowed with the highest morality.[82] Ge'ez chronicles were composed in this manner for most of the emperors after the thirteenth century. The earliest specimens of written Amharic consist of hymns in praise of the Emperor Amde Ṭseyon (1314–44). 121* 156 175 182 538

Two other written works put the capstone on this conservative structure. The *Kebra Nagast*, the Ethiopian national epic, has served chiefly to legitimate the royal line that came to power in the thirteenth century and to cement once and for all the union of monarchy and church. The *Fetha Nagast*, the traditional legal code based on various canon and civil laws compiled in medieval Egypt, has served not as a working code for the adjudication of court cases but as an embellishment of *de facto* decisions, imparting to the judge an increment of authority by virtue of his ritual of referring to them. 121* 156 182 538 671 177

Because of the relative sterility of Abyssinian written literature, art, dance, and music, many observers have concluded that Abyssinian culture provides no outlets for truly creative expression.[83] This judgment is not just. The Abyssinian genius freely discloses itself in the stories, verse, and proverbs that make up its very rich *oral* literature. Within this oral tradition, especially in its verse, a good deal of original expression and personalized commentary may be found. 121* 156 53 121* 156 538

Ethiopic verse comprises a wide variety of forms which differ according to subject and occasion. Classical *qenē*, Ge'ez verse in praise of some holy figure or political leader, is composed by *dabtarā* on certain religious or political holidays. More playful verses of praise are sung in Amharic by *dabtarā* or minstrels on festive occasions. In such verses the poet may in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

objects of manipulation, their own creative energies will go unused. Only 121*
when their personal aspirations can be linked with co-operative endeavors or 178
collective projects will their participation be sufficiently motivated to draw forth new sources of energy.

The traditional approach, moreover, does not take into acount the available intelligence of the population. It neither takes advantage of the understanding of immediate problems possessed by those concerned nor responds to their pressing needs and interests. The result is failure to make improvements in areas ripe for change, and antagonism or frustration of the elements of the population involved.

Given the relative ineffectuality and unresponsiveness of traditional methods of mobilization, and the new demands for concerted action unleashed by the process of urbanization and the growth of modern aspirations, it is natural that new forms of association should emerge to fill the sociological vacuum. That these new associations have been late in coming merely reflects the tenacity of traditional habits and institutions, as well as the reluctance of the government to permit the formation of groups which might have any sort of political or parapolitical ambitions. But during the past decade, and particularly since the rebellion of December, 1960, a variety of novel associational forms have come into being or have significantly diffused throughout the country. These associations may be described under three general categories: (1) formal associations of indigenous inspiration, (2) formal associations of foreign inspiration, and (3) informal associations.

Formal Associations of Indigenous Inspiration

Eddīr.—Probably the oldest and most widely diffused of the modern associations in Ethiopia, the *eddīr* is a form of welfare institution. Its functions are primarily to help defray the cost of funerals; to assist families in the event of the death, illness, unemployment, or imprisonment of their breadwinners; and to help in the case of loss due to fire. Members of an *eddīr* are obliged to contribute to a common fund and to attend the funerals of other members. (Twenty-five cents a month is not an uncommon payment, although in rural centers the contributions are often solicited only in time of need.) The institution is said to have originated among the Gurage and to have become more widely adopted during the Italian invasion, when many people who were killed had no relatives to bury them. Since then *eddīr* have been established in towns all over the country, fulfilling the vital functions which were performed by kin in the traditional countryside. They are organized on a territorial basis, in villages, towns, and city quarters; on an ethnic basis, as among the Dorze and Wollamo peoples; and even on an institutional basis, as among the employees of some government ministries. Often considerable moral pressure is exerted on townsfolk to become members—the threat of having no one

747 178 [177]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

747 178 come to one's funeral is particularly potent—and the transactions of the *eddīr* are strictly governed by elected officers.[39]

454 178 *Equb.*—The *equb* is a form of savings association in which weekly or monthly payments of a fixed sum are exchanged for the privilege of receiving a large lump sum at some point in the life of the group. In addition to provid- [571] ing a means of forced saving, the *equb* offers a basis for sociability when the members come together to make their payments and are provided with food and drink. Like the *eddīr*, the *equb* is believed to have originated among the [177] Gurage, and acquired wider popularity following the Italian invasion when many people needed large sums of money for rebuilding homes and purchasing livestock. The mode of operation of an *equb* has been described in the *Ethiopian Observer* as follows:

> A person desiring to start an Iqub will discuss the matter with his friends; if they agree a meeting will be called to discuss the rules and regulations of the proposed new society, and in particular the amount of money to be paid by each member, the frequency of payment and the time and place of meeting. A president, or dagna [literally, "judge"], and a money collector will be elected from among the most respected and reliable members of the group.
>
> The President then asks every member to bring one or two guarantors who will be responsible for payment in case of default for whatever reason it may be.
>
> On the appointed day all the members assemble and the secretary will call the roll. Any member unable to attend is expected to send his subscription in time. The specified sum is then handed by every member (or substitute) to the President. Any latecomer will be fined according to a pre-arranged schedule, this money being kept by the President until the end of the Iqub, when it is used for the common enjoyment of the members. The collected funds are drawn by lot, the winner receiving the total subscription of all the members. The lottery is normally effected by the members writing their names on small pieces of paper which are then placed in a hat, a blind-folded non-member then drawing out the name of the winner.
>
> After each draw, the winner is disqualified from taking part in further lotteries, but continues to pay his fee until every member has drawn his share. If he fails in this duty his guarantors have to pay.
>
> When all at length have been rewarded the time has come to set up a new Iqub.[40]

Equb have been established by members of virtually all low- and middle-income groups—clerks, merchants, servants, peasants, policemen. Their rapid increase, in response to the growing importance of money in Ethiopia's econ-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

omy during the past two decades, represents a significant growth of the capacity for voluntary formal organization in the modernizing sector.[41]

Māhebar (*Regional Associations*).—A type of formal association which has sprung up in Addis Ababa in recent years, becoming popular for the first time around 1960, is known as the *māhebar*. While its name is taken from the traditional Orthodox fraternal association, in aims and organization it is different from the religious *māhebar*. While the latter is devoted to honoring one of the saints and is convened primarily for feasting and sociability, the modern *māhebar* is organized on the basis of territorial or tribal bonds and is concerned with problems of social betterment. The first *māhebar* of this kind was established by the Gurage in the fifties.* Thereafter, the idea spread to members of other groups, and Addis Ababa residents originating in Gondar, Tigre, Harar, Manz, Tagulat, Fitche and elsewhere began to form *māhebar* of their own. The basic idea behind all these *māhebar* is to make some contribution to the welfare of the provinces through projects voluntarily financed and organized by fellow-countrymen living in the metropolis. These projects have included construction of roads, schools, and hospitals; supplying books for schools; and provision of facilities for assisting inhabitants of the provinces who come to the city. Members of the various *māhebar* convene weekly or biweekly, usually on Sunday in the vicinity of one or another of the Addis Ababa churches, to discuss their projects and make their financial contributions.

Formal Associations of Foreign Inspiration

Student Associations.—The Orthodox Students Association was founded in 1958 by a convention representing all the colleges and some of the secondary schools. Its successful establishment was due in large part to the efforts of an Indian Orthodox minister who at the time was one of the Emperor's private secretaries. There is some evidence that an earlier spontaneous effort to form such a group in the early fifties was checked by the government. Members of this association have been concerned with adapting the activities of the church to contemporary needs. They criticize the established church for its use of a dead language, excessive ritualism, and lack of teaching; and have proposed that the Orthodox Church should institute Sunday schools and

* The Gurage *māhebar* remains in a class of its own, with respect to size, wealth, and ambitiousness of program. The Gurage have also pointed the way to using the *māhebar* form in a way that transcends the narrow tribal or territorial passions which it has thus far tended to canalize. This has been done through the establishment of another, project-oriented *māhebar* concerned solely with building a road from Alam Gana to Wollamo Soddo, whose membership includes Galla and Wollamo as well as Gurage. This association has already collected well over a million dollars, and has completed the construction of a bridge. It is headed by a capable Gurage army general and its activities and collections are reported regularly in the Addis Ababa press.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

575 cultivate a missionary spirit in order to reach the non-Christian peoples of
794 Ethiopia. The association sponsors weekly religious services, featuring hymns
178 in Amharic and talks in Amharic on religious and moral questions, and publishes a monthly journal. The Orthodox Students Association stands out as the first nationwide voluntary association in Ethiopia. It holds an annual convention which draws some three hundred students from all parts of the country.

The Ethiopian College Students Association was established in 1960 after some years of patient maneuvering by officers of the various college student governments. It attempts to represent the interests and needs of students vis-à-vis the government and to handle relations with international student organizations.

A number of student clubs have appeared from time to time within the framework of the colleges. One of the most popular and productive of these has been the Ethnological Society of the University College, founded in the early fifties by a Polish member of the college staff. Over the years it has produced several issues of an ethnological bulletin. More recently, under the framework of the new university, dramatic and choral groups have been established as well as groups like the Education Students Association and the Economics Students Association. Graduates of some of the secondary schools and colleges, moreover, have formed a small number of alumni associations.

467 *Labor Unions.*—Although Ethiopia has for some time been a paying mem-
178 ber of the ILO, the government has until recently strongly opposed the establishment of unions in the country. Nevertheless, due to the encouragement of
[177] labor representatives from Western and other African countries, as well as to the courageous efforts of a number of Ethiopians, several unions have at last been established and have won some degree of recognition from the government.* Trade unions were first attempted among employees of the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad and in Eritrea.[42] They now include employees of a num-
[357] ber of factories. Even household servants have formed associations that establish minimal conditions which members are obliged to demand from their employers.

814 *Professional Associations.*—The Ethiopian Teachers Association, with a
815 large paper membership but scarcely any activity, was the only professional
875 association in Ethiopia prior to the 1960 rebellion. If one may generalize from
178 the frustrated attempts of Ethiopian doctors to establish a medical association, it would seem that the government was attempting to discourage groups of this sort as well as trade unions. Since 1961, however, the picture has changed.
[759] There now exists not only a medical association, which publishes its own

* A law establishing a legal basis for labor unions was enacted by the Ethiopian parliament in 1962.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

journal, but also an engineers' association, a college teachers' association, and an Ethiopian writers' association. Earlier attempts to establish an organization of lawyers have not yet reached fruition.

National and International Service Organizations.—A final group of formal associations consists of those which include non-Ethiopian nationals as well as Ethiopians in their membership and which carry out welfare services of various sorts. The Ethiopian Red Cross, the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association, the YMCA, and the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa have been active for more than a decade. More recently, the International Christian Fellowship was formed with an eye to discussing ways of translating Christian principles into social action, and the Social Service Society has broken new ground in the welfare field with its ambitious program of relocating and rehabilitating Addis Ababa indigents.

Informal Associations

Another significant sociological development since the 1960 rebellion has been the blossoming of what might be called "mutual confidence groups." Although the public climate remains somewhat tense and generalized suspicion still prevails, a step has been taken away from the complete atomism of the pre-rebellion era. These groups consist of numbers of friends, bound by such factors as kinship, common ethnic background, relationships formed during study abroad, and occupational ties. Perhaps the most important single bond underlying these groups derives from friendships formed during the crucial experience of attending secondary school together. While for the most part these groups carry out no organized activities or structured discussions, they do provide a context in which any of the issues of the day can be discussed with fairly complete frankness and without fear of reprisal.

There are some progressive Ethiopians who would like to see these groups become the nuclei of action groups and political parties, even on an overt basis. The prevailing view among them, however, seems to be that this is as far as they can go under the present regime.

The efflorescence of voluntary associations in Ethiopia during the past half dozen years constitutes a remarkable thickening of the fabric of Ethiopian society. It may be seen as a vast, unconscious process of arousing and co-ordinating energies to meet the novel realities of Ethiopia's current historical situation. What relationship to this collective process have the individualistic features of Amhara character and society which were discussed above?

It may be observed that in virtually none of the cases cited above were the Amhara the initiators of the associational forms in question. The territorial and "project" *māhebar* were introduced into Ethiopian life by the Gurage; so, as far as present evidence indicates, were the *eddīr* and the *equb*. The labor

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The labor movement, limited as it is, has been in the hands of Eritreans on the one hand, and primarily non-Amhara workers in the south. Student associations have been formed chiefly at the instigation and under the aegis of foreign staff members; though here, as with the professional associations, modernized Amhara have sometimes played a leading role.

Once the new associations had been introduced, the Amhara like other Ethiopians were quick to adopt and expand them. Their participation in these new associations, however, has been affected, as might be expected, by the intrusion of traditional behavior patterns. Three examples of such behavior patterns come readily to mind.

(1) While the *equb* is conceived as a kind of credit union and as a focus for communal sociability, the *co-operative* sentiment tends to be lacking among members of Amhara *equb,* at least those of which the author has any knowledge. For example, in case of dire need, an *equb* member who desires the lump sum out of turn may be forced to *buy* the amount from the weekly winner, sometimes by forfeiting as much as ten or twenty per cent of the amount. By capitalizing on the crises of others, some enterprising *equb* members are able to sell their successful claims several times. Furthermore, in the early years of their existence, *equb* were frequently faced with the problem created by members who won the money early in the cycle, left town with the money, and did not return to pay their later installments. This difficulty has been met to some extent by the requirement of securing one or two guarantors for each person who enters an *equb,* but problems of this nature have led to altercations that have brought many *equb* members into court.

(2) The behavior of members of Amhara territorial *mähebar* is essentially that of a traditional social or civil gathering. The big men are seated in places of honor; the rest of the people stand quietly by. After a protracted period of exchanging greetings and milling about, the crowd listens respectfully while one or more of the big men makes a statement, and perhaps exchanges a few words with the group's secretary; and then the gathering disbands. Although the *mähebar* is organized with respect to the attainment of specific goals, the substance of the meetings is instumental to a very slight degree. The assembly rarely involves a meeting of minds to discuss an issue or a common problem, or to work out a program of action; but exists primarily as an occasion for the resonance of primordial sentiments by virtue of shared territorial attachments.

(3) In all associations, finally, certain traditional characteristics which are incongruent with the optimum conduct of groups come to the fore. This is no less true of the modern-educated than of the traditionals. Members fail to come on time to arranged meetings or neglect to come altogether.* They

* The *equb* has attempted to check this pattern by imposing fines on members who come late.

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Begemder

17 peoples who penetrated deep into the highlands, making many converts among the Christians. Even after the defeat of the Muslim armies in the sixteenth century and the subsequent rennaisance of the Ethiopian polity, relations with the Islamic world persisted, augmented now by the presence of Abyssinian Muslims permanently settled in the highlands.

*755 Within the context of Ethiopian medicine, these
*787 widespread cultural affinities are most obvious in the
*793 works of the cleric healer (the debtera), and in the
• 177 practices of the zar possession cult. For example, in their numerological operations, the debtera's divinatory texts repeat the gematria manipulations of the Kabbalah, while the ideology which rationalized these formulations clearly reiterates the astrological lore of Islamic sa-
177 vants. Similarly, affinities are obvious between Ethio-
778 pian and Islamic amulets, in their construction, in the design of talismanic devices, and in the ends for which
*757 they are manufactured. Nor is evidence of the transla-
177 tion of Islamic medical treatises into Ge'ez and Amharic
539 lacking. Here, however, these works, particularly regarding humoral theory, have enjoyed only a very limited diffusion, and have been subordinated to indigenous medi-
*787 cal notions. Finally, the zar cult, in whose coteries many of Begemder's women belong, is no local phenomenon, but appears in one form or another throughout this entire culture area.

capable of rendering bone and jimat supple enough to be manipulated into their appropriate positions. It is important that the bone be set precisely, for if improperly aligned it will stretch the jimat and cause them to twist once more, bringing a recurrence of the original symptoms.

[413] If palpation or visual inspection indicate that
• [177] the bone has splintered, an incision is made over the break and the splinters are removed with an instrument specially brought for this purpose. These instruments are of European manufacture and exotic by local standards, ranging from cosmetic tweezers to surgical forceps. After the bone has been set and the jimat moved into their proper relationships, a wooden splint is secured over the fracture and is tied with strips of toga cloth.

*[757] When an incision is made, an herbal poultice is
*[278] placed over the cut and wrapped beneath the splint, as
*[192] a precaution against subsequent infection (kusil). Every tagañ owns a recipe for an unguent, and the medicaments used in it are kept a professional secret. However, not all tagañs have recipes for kusil prophylaxis. Without the latter, a tagañ who wishes to treat compound fractures must obtain the services of an herbalist whose specialty is the treatment of kusil. Similarly the tagañ who is able to treat compound fractures

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needs.[1]

*759 The wogeysa's remaining therapies---excision of
*753 tonsils (ankar) and teeth---are characterized by simpler
752 diagnosis and treatment than are the tagañ's works.
[843] Swollen and inflamed tonsils (komahaw) may be caused by
*[192] gerifta; in infants, however, the condition may be congenital, brought on by the over-exertions of the child's mother during pregnancy. It is considered a potentially mortal affliction, since the sickman is unable to swallow and loses weight rapidly; eventually the organ bursts and death follows. Tonsils are excised with the assistance of a reed through which a loop of horse
[413] hair has been slipped. With this, the offending organ
* [199] is held fast, and excised by whatever type of blade the therapist regards as most efficacious (e.g., a razor, imported 'Arab' knife, or fragment of glass).[2] Kusil

[1]During 1966, the foremost tagañ of Begemder had the following sickmen living simultaneously in three huts which he had erected on his fields; 1) a woman from Woggera (see map 1), with a fractured clavicle, assisted by her daughter; 2) a four year old boy, with a shoulder injury, accompanied by both parents; 3) a woman with a broken fore-arm, from Belsea, assisted by a locally acquired servant; 4) a woman from Tigre, with an immobile right arm, assisted by a locally acquired servant.

[2]In the Gondar area, both tonsils and uvula are classified as 'ankar'. Elsewhere in Begemder, they are often distinguished as 'ankar' and 'intil'. Therapeutically, diseased tonsils and uvula are treated the same, and a wogeysa capable of treating one invariably treats the other.

*753
*759 is considered a potential, but not immediate danger
752 following excision. If an ankar korac ("tonsil cut-
*[278] ter") is also a kusil herbalist, he may smear a pro-
phylactic unguent over the face of the excision, but
*(192] prophylaxis is not generally given. Even when kusil
does occur (the syndrome known as yiankar mokusil),
it is expected to regress either without any treat-
ment, or by benefit of a commonly known herbal infu-
[855] sion. A young child is considered too small and
frail to endure this operation and the subsequent
period of increased vulnerability to gerifta and kusil.
*[278] In such cases, the child is given a palliative to drink;
in addition, a portion of the ingredients used in the
drink is prepared as an unguent, and rubbed onto the
affected area, against that time when the child will
be old enough to withstand the operation.

*[192] The dental wogeyša is known as a "yiters medhaniyt
awlakiy". As with other wogeyša-treated ailments, tooth-
ache can be traced to multiple causes, whose identifica-
tion is only marginally important to the practitioner.
Toothache is caused either by sun-borne gerifta or by
an intrusive worm whose presence is made apparent by
[413] the caries it bores out. The ultimate and most success-
* [177] ful therapy of the yiters medhaniyt awlakiy is extrac-
* [278] tion, with the use of European dental pliers. Because
of the pain associated with this operation, laymen often

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*757 743 • 177 A government hospital, located on the edge of Gondar provides the most important non-traditional therapies. Most townsfolk regard hospital therapy with considerable apprehension, because of its strangeness and of numerous apochryphal tales describing its thera-
*757 177 178 pies. Nevertheless, the Amhara does not dispute the power of Western medicine, at least regarding some ailments. This respect is largely explained by the demonstrated successes of Western medicine, and the fact that, operationally, it coincides with certain traditional no-
*[192] tions of what powerful therpies should be like. In particular, the violent introjective mode associated with the most commonly experienced of hospital therapies, merify (injection), is regarded as consistent with notions of strong therapies. Moreover, the practitioner of Western medicine, like powerful traditional healers, is characterized by a general mastery over an extensive disease domain, through abstruse sources of power. Western therapy is not in general well integrated into traditional medical beliefs, but tends to be considered mainly from a pragnatic perspective. Thus, hospital therapy is a likely choice for ailments against which it has repeatedly demonstrated successful cures and against which traditional healers are predictably less successful. Conspicuous here are abscesses, ulcerations, and other superficial but potentially serious infections,

• 177 known as kusil and ibac. In addition, Western therapy
178 is sought for ailments which are serious and chronic, but for which traditional cures offer a poor prognosis or only palliatives. For these ailments (in particular, leprosy, kuntina; chronic coughing, yisaal basiyta, including tuberculosis, yilib basiyta; and a variety of stomach ailments, yihod himem and migaña), Western medicine is believed to offer prognosis equal to that of powerful traditional non-secular therapies, but not necessarily superior to them.

The injectionist's therapy is considered a variety of Western medicine. Injections are provided in the town's single pharmacia and by a handful of free-lance injectionists. All offer the same therapy, injection with what the client believes to be a uniform medicament, generally unidentifiable beyond "merify".[19] Injectionist therapy is favored for primary syphilis (kitin) and "fevers" (weba).

*278 The town herbalist's foremost traditional competi-
*759 tors are the weak debtera and the balazar. The relative
632 concentration of these therapists in towns is indicated by the following: In Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, there

[19] Most often, it is penicillin.

*793 is better able to obtain new abinet, since his own grow-
869 ing repertoire increases the possibility of arranging
*[278] abinet exchanges with other debteras. Moreover he is
better equiped to utilize them; he has learned much of
the Ethiopian herbal pharmacopeia, and is able to iden-
tify botanicals by the Ge'ez nomers with which they are
frequently designated in the recipes of abinet therapies
[198] and kitabs. Similarly, his mastery of Ge'ez makes pos-
sible the acquisition of complex digams.

75 In addition to acquiring individual recipes, deb-
539 tera-healers also seek out encyclopaedic treatices.
*[192] These are inventories of recipes, bearing Ge'ez titles
such as "book of medicine for diseases for all parts of
the body" (metshafe medhaniyt lekwiylown deweyate
akalat). In these books, recipes are grouped according
to diseases; the diseases are, in turn, classified ac-
cording to the part of the body that they affect, ar-
[177] ranged from head to feet. Stefan Strelcyn (1965), after
close examination of four such manuscripts, has commented
on the substantial uniformity of their contents and the
remarkable similarities which they share with the third
and fourth books of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine.

*793 While such treatises contain hundreds of recipes,
*765 their significance for the practice of Abyssinian medi-
*756 cine is limited by the character of their pathogenic in-
terests. As seen by his clients, the debtera's thera-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART III: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

171 Some aspects of the social organization of the Amhara resemble those of medieval Europe at early and middle periods; others the ancient and not so ancient Middle East; still others, perhaps a smaller part, parallel patterns in other parts of Africa. It is an "old-world" pattern of human relationships, both in structure and function, and the noteworthy fact is that much has survived, due to comparative isolation, that has changed elsewhere.

186 Amhara attitudes, concomitant with their social organization, recall the attitude of the "Neolithic pattern of human relations" in Coon's terminology.[69] This pattern is characterized by the attitude: "You stay in your village, and I stay in mine. If your sheep eat our grass we will kill you. Anyone who tries to change our ways is a with and we will kill him."

In Amhara rural areas--and most Amhara are rural--this attitude still seems to dominate human relations, be they structured as territorial, class, military, legal, ethnic, religious or racial. Feuds between kin groups often last for several generations; loyalties are intensely regional and ethnocentric.

178 While all this can still be observed, change in the direction of modern occidental patterns has begun to seep in very recently, affecting various phases of social organization in varying degrees. Sometimes the structure

69. Coon: The Story of Man. 1954.

178 is more affected because of orders sent with increasing rapidity and urgency from the central government at Addis Ababa. Sometimes the central government itself gives conservative lip service to some old structure, while quietly modernizing the function.

1. Land Tenure

A. Political Aspects of the Old Tradition:

631 For many centuries Abyssinia was a confederation of states governed by princes, who recognized the superiority of one of them--the "king of kings"; except for occasional centralization of power in the hands of a particular monarch. Only in very recent times, since the late 19th century, does centralization seem to have developed with greater permanency.

631 423 As a result of this social structure, every subject is in some way a functionary of the ruling power. This may infringe on his private property at any time, and he is bound to various labors and obligations. In principle, all land is considered the ultimate property of the power ruling at the top of the social pyramid.

423 All land tenure is therefore considered subject to the final approval of the "king of kings". This [67] principle was recognized in the ancient law code "Fetha Nagast", which, however, formally recognized the principle of private land property, to be expropriated only in case of rebellion. Private land property was further reaffirmed by clause 9 of the Penal Code of 1930, and

423 "gultenna" and his family might try to become squatters,
566 "chesanna", on someone's fallow land, and risk being cha-
701 sed away by a kin unit claiming that territory. Or, permitted to remain on his old lands, a "gultenna" might suddenly find that the new feudal lord of the province was enclosing ("kelkel", declared forbidden) land formerly used as pasturage or for agriculture, to give to his own successful soldier veterans, and exacting quotas of oxen, mules and honey from the former "gultenna".

178 As long as the "gabbar" system was still in full
423 force, the "gultenna" at least had someone to exploit in turn, to ease his own burdens. Now that the present emperor has declared the "gabbar" system ended (though much of it survives), even this relief is passing. Furthermore, the new army is salaried, so that the basic function of the "gult" system has already disappeared. The only hope the sons of "gultennas" have is to have their lands declared "rest", private property, for otherwise they will become landless. This means that they must work the land themselves and pay tithe on the produce; otherwise squatters can alienate it from them.

D. Endowed Lands -- "rest-gult".

423 The many variations of regional "rest"and "gult" lands sometimes crystallize to a combination type referred to as "rest-gult".

725 and left flanks.
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Fanning out in all directions, detachments of light cavalry and foragers on foot, "fano", could destroy and plunder enemy land to do as much damage as possible while on the march. When re-encampment was ordered, the tent of the king or field commander was set up first, and the army divisions and followers, seeing this, grouped themselves accordingly and settled in their proper locations, distances, areas and relative positions. The quartermaster thereupon took over the functions of maintenance and supplies.[74]

[554] This pattern of "relative positions" and functions carried over into civilian life, and dominated land tenure, administration, law, social structure, organized religion, the life cycle, artistic expression, and a multitude of human relations.

C. Significance of the old Military Organization in Modern Change.

178 The spear, the rhinoceros shield and armies paid by land grants have now become memories of the past, [554] though recent past. Yet most of the attitudes and many of the roles that accompanied the old military organization still linger and dominate social organization.

[473] Much of the old land tenure is still little changed in the old-Amhara provinces, as has been pointed out.

74. Bedie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, pp. 86-7.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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3. Public Administration and Territorial Organization

The social structure supported by the pillars of traditional land tenure and feudal army organization, is maintained by a third pillar, public administration and the old territorial organization. However, all three are now in process of gradual, and uneven, transition, partly resembling analogous developments in Europe at the end of the feudal Middle Ages.

A. Rural Administration

622 Much as the hierarchical pyramid of land tenure and the old army of the Amhara rested on the broad back of the "gabbar", so does rural organization still rest ultimately on the broad base of the rural official known as "ḉheqa shum" (lit. appointee over the soil). He might be regarded as village headman, though in view of the residential pattern of scattered hamlets ("ṭis"), his area includes a collection of them, collectively known as "mändär" (village). This may coincide, in the old-Amhara provinces, with the church parishes known as "ānd debber agär".

Although appointed by the governor of the province, and supervised by the intermediate district chief ("worädа gäj", or "worädа shum", or "mislanē", i.e. governor's deputy, or lieutenant), the cheqa shum is regarded as the agent of the highest administrative power, formerly the "ras" of the province; or the king ("negus"); now the emperor. In thetraditional pattern

632 Since the town attracted the most clever "dabtara",
[759] many of whom were herbologists, it was also a center where "medical aid", sometimes quite effective, could be obtained, and attracted patients from far and wide.

[463] Ethnic craftsmen would settle in hamlets within walking distance of the town, to provide iron tools, tanned leather, sun umbrellas, etc., without, however, exposing themselves to mockery, insults and occasional assaults by living in the town itself.

632 517 The town developed as a social center, and center for entertainment, almost inevitably. First, religious feasts such as the Epiphany parades and the tournaments on the public commons on "ganna" (Christmas) attracted the populace; and youngsters as well as adult loafers found themarket scenes fascinating. Secndly, the Arab traders liked to discuss business and news over tea or
[265] coffee. So "teahouses " (shay bet") sprang up near the Saturday market, serving snacks also to many a male at odds with his wife, and excluding all womenfolk. Con-
632 648 versely, the mead house, ("tej bet") provided evening
588 entertainment with female singers and dancers (azmari) for the all-male clientele, and waitresses easily available for sexual entertainment. Moreover, every town had at least one "street of unattached women", who catered to travellers or visiting peasants as innkeepers, restaurateurs, and as temporary wives; they were usually divorcees, who hoped to find another husband, and to settle down again to regular married life.

632 178 Except for some of the feudal arrangements, most of this town pattern of social organization is still

632 little changed. Modern developments are merely super-
[78] imposed on this pattern, mostly due to recent decrees
633 of the central government at Addis Ababa. This city had itself grown out of a modest village on top of Entoto mountain in the 1880's, when Menelik II transferred it to the hilly floodplain just below because the population flocking to his court soon after his early military victories had caused a severe fuel and water shortage on the hilltop. The fondness of the empress for the hot volcanic springs at the somewhat lower water table were another reason for the transfer.

The old title of "kantiba", mayor, was given only to those of most important urban centers, notably Addis Ababa and Gondar, and this tradition has also been maintained. Although the mayors are now supervised by a young, modern-educated "Director of Municipalities" located in the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa, who may visit them or call them in for conferences and instructions, the appointment to "kantiba" is still made directly by the emperor.

[625] The urban chief of police is still called "ahalägä-qa after the former title of the chief of bodyguard, and his subordinate officers are called "shambäl", the title used by Emperor Menelik II for the chief of his most select bodyguard("zebäna") of 300 men.

The kantiba can convene a traditional council of elders, called "chilot" (now often referred to as "commissions", after the Italian occupation), which includes the chief of police and top judges, to hear and discuss

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this would almost certainly happen in case of repeated absences;

To prevent the ruler from forgetting, or to pretend having forgotten, a position of favor promised to the applicant. This follow-up also indicates tenacity, a positive point.

To keep the ruler from thinking that the office-holder has become so proud and independent that he has forgotten the "father" from whom all good things come.

To counteract plots being hatched in his absence, which would not benefit him.

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Another old requirement in appointment to office, which now is in force primarily in the district capitals and rural areas only, is the gift, "shum gänzäb" (lit. money for appointment), paid to the chief at the time of application.

Until very recently , the newly-appointed governor-general of a province would decree a "shum shir", a general, automatic abrogation of all office holdings left by the preceding regime; this enabled the new governor to appoint his own followers, courtiers, retainers, poor relations, etc., in office; but in practice he usually reappointed most of the former officials, down to the many "cheqa shum" headmen, on payment of an appropriate "shum gänzäb". In recent years this practice has been curtailed at the upper levels; for both the director-general of the province, and the secretary-general are now appointed by the central government in Addis Ababa.

But on lower levels the old practices continue, though more subtly and through indirect negotiations.

In decision-making, nothing seems to have changed. The paternalistic attitudes continue, and only very few of the modern-educated young aspirants really hope for and expect a modernization in the direction of greater efficiency. Only European advisors are outspoken on the subject, among themselves. Ethiopian students who return from university study abroad, return immediately to the "däj tenat" pattern. Twice a week they bow before the emperor as he leaves the High Court. Very kindly he greets them, usually by name, asks each after his well-being and that of his family. Later when a job has been assigned them, he asks whether they are satisfied, sometimes even inviting them to tell him if they are worried about something. The "father" role is taken literally on both sides.

Office-holders rarely make even petty decisions themselves. Instead, they take the matter to their superior, who is thus swamped with little details which waste his time. But it enables him to keep control through frequent personal contact and reaffirmation of the superordinate-subordinate relationship, and he in turn does "däj tenat" to his superior.

Office-seekers in the provincial capital maintain a grapevine service for information on the infrequent return of the governor-general from residence or "conferences" in Addis Ababa. Then they besiege his head-

631 It is noteworthy that in this structure the Gover-
635 nor-general of the province is the only administrator
178 permitted to appoint the next two highest officers of his own staff (since 1942). This is in line with the consistent development since 1916, when the present emperor, then regent, began the process of sweeping away the power of the top of the feudal-provincial pyramid. The "ras" gradually lost their private armies, and were expressly forbidden, by decree in 1942, to make treaties between provinces regarding boundaries or political or military matters.

[648] Contact with foreigners was also taken out of the exclusive jurisdiction of the Governor-general of the province, since foreigners going to the provinces require permits issued by the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa; these permits have to presented to the provincial administrators before local travel is allowed . Even the control over the "Kantiba", the mayors of the major towns, was taken from the Governor-general of the province, and invested, by decree of 1942, in the "Director of Municipalities" in the Ministry of Interior. This central control over municipalities was evident in 1953, when mayors were called to Addis Ababa by the Director of Municipalities, for a reprimand from the emperor for having permitted his boarding establishments at elementary schools, intended for war orphans, to become filled with the sons of well-to-do feudal nobility.

631 The feudal nobility, though much less powerful
565 than in the past, plays a more informal, but still

631 dominant role in the rural administration. Most of the
565 "awraja gäj" and "worädä" chiefs are from medium and
lower provincial nobility. In Addis Ababa, the "Senate"
646 or Upper House of the Parliament instituted by Emperor
565 Haile Selassie, is appointed from the higher nobility,
the "Mäkwonent", while the Deputies of the Lower House
are selected, with imperial approval, from the lower
country gentry, largely from the Amhara, Tigre, and Shoa
areas.

643 Many special privileges of regional nobility have
631 been abrogated by the present Emperor: The Wag Shum",
178 hereditary ruler of the sub-province of Wag since the
565 Zagwe dynasty of the 13th century, has been abrogated by
him; also the "Behär Nagash", the "King of the Sea", hereditary ruler of the Red Sea coast, was abrogated; also the Muslim Ethiopian dynasty of Jimma, which Menelik II had permitted to continue in accordance with the treaty of peaceful surrender (ostensibly because the present heir had joined the Italians).

The least changed position in the structure of administration is that of the cheqa shum, who forms its broad base.

4. Customary Law and Justice

671 The foremost characteristics of traditional Abyssinian law and justice seem to be that they are based on the power hierarchy of social structure; that they permit and even encourage considerable subjective inter-

F. Law and Justice in Transition.

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671 Emperor Menelik II had tried to limit what Europeans considered draconic penalties and procedures. Emperor Haile Selassie I continued to adjust tribal law to modern conditions, and, as his power increased, expressed the principle, in the Penal Code of 1935: "By learning European practice, (the people) may attain to higher degrees of knowledge, because the basis of our code of laws in many places fits with the European code". Both emperors, while introducing modern acculturation in law and justice, quite consciously, did not, it is clear, abrogate the old tradition. They could not have done so in practice, despite the growing power of the central monarchy. For the traditional values and attitudes, particularly among the Amhara, are still largely intact.

The transition can be analyzed as proceeding in four phases: (a) The abrogation of draconic penalties and procedures; (b) continuing customary law and justice, (officially and unofficially); (c) Modernization from the top down; (d) Sectarian privileges to resident minorities.

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671 (a) During the reign of Menelik II enforcement of the old draconic penalties continued. The hand of a thief was cut off, and he was thereafter called "dush" (lit. stump). Cattle rustlers, "dandä", were punished the same way. It was not rare to see mutilated persons, hand or foot or both, in those days. It was not until the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie I that the Penal Code of 1930 could have been decreed and enforced.

681 According to this change, mutilation of thieves was
178 forbidden; the chaining of debtor to creditor was abro-
671 gated; flogging was reduced in frequency and quantity; the area that could fall under collective arrest, "afärsata", was limited; the legal validity of evidence from the "lebäshay" was indirectly abrogated. In 1933, the emperor further limited days, hours, and distances of the "afärsata". Capital punishment had been centralized in 1930.

It is noteworthy that in several cases old practices were for the first time acknowledged in writing, despite the continuing hesitancy to admit publicly any practice that European observers might regard as primitive. Thus, blood-money in place of blood-feud was decreed legal in 1930

426 Liberalization was also legalized by regarding
671 civil law. In 1923 the Law of Loans fixed maximum in-
178 terest at 9%. As usual , this was found to be too far a departure from practice for enforcement, and it was later raised to 12%. One of the last decrees prior to Italian hostilities, provided, in May 1935, for the abrogation of statute-labor, permitting the tenant (gabbar) to make a small payment (resembling a quitrent) instead.

694 (b) The pattern of judges riding circuit con-
661 tinued unabated, from the end of the harvest in the
178 month of Tahsas (about November) until Easter. Sometimes judicial councils, "<u>zubaē</u>" were available in towns for appeals. But the old custom of bringing a gift to the "great man" to interest him in the indivi-

694 dual's case, the "gubba" gift, continued, and it is often
[661] identical with a bribe. At the same time, the old cus-
178 tom which served as a last resort to a poor person to
have his injustice rectified, by appearing with a heavy
stone perched on the back of his neck almost crushing
him, was abrogated because Europeans looked on this as
primitive. The poor man thus has lost his few safeguards,
and now is losing evan the right to beg and to create a
traffic hazard by throwing himself before the vehicle of
[171] the great man and shouting "abyet". (The practice of
carrying the rock resembles that of innocently accused
Arab Beduin who appear pressing a blade against their
necks to demonstrate and shout their innocence.

178 Transition thus proceeds in unequal shifts, with
671 many culture lags. Modernization of law and justice
643 proceeds from the top, Addis Ababa, down the pyramid.
One of the reasons for the circuit-riding of the emperor
himself is to remind the chiefs of his realm of his
all-seeing and all-hearing power, just as was done in
the past. He acts as inspector-general.

The Emperor and his High Court in Addis Ababa stil
give lip service to the Fetha Nägäst Code. But in prac-
tice, this amounts to little more than rationalization
for the benefit of the ultra-conservative Amhara nobles.
693 The position of the "afä negus" (lit. Mouthpiece of the
King), who traditionally was the guardian of theFatha Nä-
gäst code, has now become honorary in practice. In the
past he was the second-most powerful person in the realm,
trusted partly because he was not of the ruling family

779 the nation in Western patterns.

659 (1) The use of the church in promoting Amhara-
[721] dominated Ethiopian nationalism. This was recognized and promoted by Emperor Menelik II who had priests carry the "tabot" into newly conquered Galla, Sidamo and other pagan and semi-Muslim areas of his new empire, giving his
[566] military conquests the character of a crusade. Churches were built in these areas, guarded by troops of occupation, made permanent by feudal grants under which the local population, made "gabbar" serfs, was permitted to remain on the land as sharecroppers and peons of the feudal church.

This use of the church has been continued, though with reduced feudal emphasis, by the present emperor.
[212] The Geez alphabet of the church, modified in Amharic usage, is the only alphabet even non-Amharic-speakers may use, if they wish to write their languages, particularly in
[643] print. By taking on the name "Haile Selassye" (Power of the Trinity), upon coronation, the present emperor re-emphasized the power of the church. Finally, on November 4th 1955, when the new liberalized Constitution of 131 articles was proclaimed, it reaffirmed that the Ethiopian "Orthodox" Church, founded in the 4th century on the doctrines of St. Mark, is the established church of the state.

659 Phase (2), begun by the present emperor as his
178 power increased, was a concurrent weakening of the temporal power of the church. At first this was gradual. In

659 In
178 many criminal cases, culprits who had sought asylum
[696] from the police of the state by entering a churchyard and sounding the resonant stone bells to announce to the pursuers that they had placed themselves under the protection of the church, were taken away by force, despite the protests of the priests. This so deteriorated some of the temporal power of the church that persons involved in kin bloodfeuds were also no longer safe in
[688] church confines. Conversely, the traditional request of priests to law enforcement agencies of the state to arrest violaters of church rules (e.g. adulterers) now go unheeded except in remote rural areas, and even there such a prisoner is no longer held and sentenced to an
[688] indefinite term on such a charge. Fines and imprisonment for violation of the Sabbath or for working on a saint's day, also are no longer enforceable.

An official extreme in this direction was reached in 1942, when, a year after his victorious return, Emperor Haile Selassie issued a series of decrees stripping the church of all feudal power, and most of its temporal power, except in the town of Aksum. Under these decrees, church land could henceforth be taxed by the state, though the taxes were to be used to administer church maintenance and education; church courts could levy only spiritual penalties, not money fines; the Central Treasury of the state was to administer rents from church lands. All statute-labor ("gabbar") rights of the church over sharecropping peasants living on its former feudal estates were abrogated.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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It took two years for the leadership of the church to recover from this shock and to bring pressure on the emperor, through his kinsman, the aging but still powerful Ras Kassa. In 1944 further decrees partly returned certain limited temporal rights of the church (such as the right to ask sharecroppers on church land for food supplies, fuel, repair of the local churches) in return for religious services and church education. Little actual change has taken place in the rural, old-Amhara provinces, but even there the priests now enforce their demands in subtler fashion, usually making heavier demands on recent peasants in their areas rather than on old-established families.

Thus, in effect, the state now rules the church from the top. Both Emperors Menelik II and Haile Selassye I refused to be crowned in the church capital, Aksum, preferring their own state capital, Addis Ababa.

Phase (3) represents the more subtle handling of the relations with the church by the present emperor, to utilize the church's structure and function to promote his policies of centralization and modernization.

Already mentioned, the request of the emperor to the sacerdotal church to copy from the Western church the function of preaching ethics to the common lay people, has had little effect. Somewhat more successful has been his repeated request, passed informally through the church hierarchy by word of mouth rather than published decree, to restrain the excesses of the "täzkar" memorial feast. These excesses include both the public

659 178 spectacle of self-abandon of the mourners, who scream, roll on the ground, cut themselves bloody, etc.; and the financial burden of excessively elaborate memorial feasts which were and sometimes still are ruinous to the families involved. To teach by example--a most effective way in a country where everyone imitates the "great man"" --the emperor himself ordered that no memorial feast be given for his own daughter who died in 1933; just some money donations were made to the priests reciting prayers for her soul.

[874] More recently, the emperor founded the Theological College of Addis Ababa, headed by an Egyptian Coptic president and some faculty members from among Egyptian Copts, to modernize the curriculum of the future leaders of the church among whom he hopes, for the first time, to find allies rather than permanent foes. The probable successor to the present Abuna (archbishop) of Ethiopia, Theophilus, is believed to share the emperor's views and has already travelled abroad several times. The emperor wishes the younger clergy to become more learned and to be able to translate the Bible from [198] Geez into Amharic for the lay populace. He has promoted the printing of bibles in Amharic, rather than Geez, thus using religion to promote the official, national language of the state.

6. The Fraternal Association called "mähabbär".

575 This "voluntary" association of individuals, growing out of the "private communion" of the Abyssinian

596 (private freehold), most common in the old-Amhara pro-
[428] vinces (and in Tigre). "Rest" land is inherited only by sons, not by daughters, except in the relatively rare case when a family short of young men permits a son-in-law to settle in its hamlet, whereupon some land may be inherited by the daughter who is consanguinal kin. Daughters may inherit movables such as cows, sheep, some personal belongings of their mother or father (of the father if there are no sons).

601 Kinship terms do not often differ between terms of address and reference, but often between formal and informal terms which are applied in a variety of ways ranging from authoritarian familiarity to endearments. Differences of gender are also expressed.

The generic term for kinfolk is "zämäd". Consanguinal kinfolk, on both the father's and mother's side, are called "wägän", and if they reside far away and are rarely seen the kinship is re-emphasized by the term "yäsega zämäd" (lit. kinship of one flesh). Consanguinal families sharing the same residential hamlet
● [178] are called "betä zämäd" (lit. kinfolk of the house). It
[572] is noteworthy that in very recent times, in urban areas where kinship functions are somewhat attenuated, the term "zamäd" has become extended to include a close personal, though not related, friend.

The affinal relationship is generically called "amachenät", a male affinal relative is addressed and referred to as "amach", a female as "ancha"; whether ego is male or female.

565 In the past, the traditional desire for personal independence of the Amhara, particularly the Amhara noble, led him to prefer residence in his own province or district, where he could rule from the apex of local hierarchy. There he imitated the emperor as much as his means permitted.

565 854 Children of nobles imbibed the tremendous pride of Amhara nobility from the time servants carried them about so that their noble feet would not be dirtied by walking, or else had their hands and feet washed by servants regularly. Boys, at about 7, would be given a private tutor, usually a young priest. At 10, when other boys are still in rags or at most wear tattered shorts, the young "bäläw" (aristocrat) already was wearing full, white jodphurs.

565 178 In the provinces this pattern is still largely unchanged. But with the increase in central government power, feudal nobles find it advisable to spend the greater part of the year in Addis Ababa--more than the emperor himself desires. Young nobles who graduate from the provincial elementary schools, where their Indian teachers deferred to them as much as their Amhara teachers, have a considerable adjustment to make when they enter High School in Addis Ababa, where the European instructors grade them on individual merit alone.

b) The Peasant Class.

565 In the peasant class there is a wide distinction between the landowning ("rest") peasants who are gesemen

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prevail.

871 Most elementary school graduates from the provincial capitals
465 do not continue to Addis Ababa for a high school education, for they can obtain good and honorable positions, paying ETH$125.- (US $50.-) per month in the same town, as teachers, municipal clerks, with a good chance to be appointed to judgeship soon if they cultivate the right persons in power with "daj temat". Even Students who "flunk out" in the 7th or 8th grade can earn ETH$100.- as teachers of lower grades, or as low-grade clerks.

872 One old tradition which has broken down in the modern elemen-
212 tary schools but not in most church schools, is the prohibition of
178 extra-curricular writing. In the higher church grades, in which students' piety was already confirmed, especially in the monastery schools, copying psalms, gospels, (and by extension, government documents), was permitted, practiced, even regarded as praiseworthy. But there was, and in rural areas still is, fear that less pious students would use their knowledge of writing to experiment with magical formulae, doodlings, etc., creating dangerous mischief.

Therefore, parchment goatskins and writing equipment were carefully kept away from students of village church schools, and they were not taught to write. Thus, achievement of the skill of a scribe, "dabtara", required considerable individual initiative and study away from home.

212 However, boys at the "experimental" age of childhood, would
857 amuse themselves with the forbidden game of writing and doodling in secret, and they still do. Their work can be seen scribbled even on the outside walls and posts of some churches, a daring prank, sometimes in imitation of the church painter. More often

588 The "damoz" temporary wife is usually recruited from a lower class than that of the man, of landless family. But often she is merely a divorcee, who "lives alone" in a street inhabited by women of similar status in the town, who are in-between marriages, and make a living serving transients with bed and board, giving them the comforts of home, cooking, baking, cleaning. They are not considered good-time prostitutes of the mead-houses ("tej-byet"), and are therefore much more respected.

588 487 178 Respectably-married ("semanya") men would, in the past, take on a "damoz" wife to accompany them on caravan trips, to spare the "semanya" wife the discomforts and perils of the journey. Now that trucks travel comparatively fast from province to province, the travelling "damoz" wife has become rare, but the residential "damoz" wife continues in the towns much as before, and "semanya" wives are therefore not as tolerant of them as they once were when they appreciated their husbands' efforts to spare them discomfort. For, they reasoned, "who else will cook for him, how will he eat?".

588 848 The "damoz" wife's children are fully legitimate. She is far higher in status than the simple concubine ("yechen garad"), lit. the servant-maid of the thigh), who was and is often a permanent member of the household, often of doubtful or half-Shanqalla ancestry, who has no damoz rights, and whose children have no rights of recognition beyond what the master cares to give them. (The concubine is also called "tara" or "tarata" in some districts).

588 171 The respectability or semi-respectability of the "damoz" wife compares to the Persian "ssighe", and the Arab Muslim temporary wife permitted in the Quran (IV:28 - "And in so far as you have derived pleasure from these women for a stipulated time, give them their

583 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official.
184 After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the cheqa shum present.

[689] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these
656 traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in
[584] the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

•178 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among
871 young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage
581 with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

178 581 871 husbands "Who are you to give me orders - I can read as well as you". Therefore such girls are avoided as brides.

But fully educated young men, in Addis Ababa, especially those who have returned from abroad with graduate degrees, complain that there are not enough educated girls for them to marry. There is now a girl's high school in Addis Ababa, but the supply of educated girls is still far below the demand by educated men who do not wish their wives to sit shy and wordless in modern-urban, international social gatherings.

Another modern difficulty arises in cases where the modern-educated young man is the son of an illiterate peasant, or a "rustic" one, and is ashamed to ask his father and similar kinfolk to negotiate the marriage. For even in the city the traditional "semanya" is the basic and most common form of marriage.

584 a) "Semanya" Marriage Negotiations.

Sometimes the young man decides on a girl and asks his father to begin negotiations. Or the parents, feeling that the time has come, begin to send out feelers. In either case, it is the young man's father who initiates formal negotiations with the father and kinfolk of the bride; though not, at first, directly.

The father of the young man may gather his "enjärä"-friends, "who dine at each other's table", or kinsmen, or both, and appoint a "näggär abbat" (lit. father of the affair) as intermediary.

Before matters go further, the kin group tries to find out and examine three factors of the prospective match:

1) Health of the family, such as absence of leprosy, venereal disease and other diseases belived to be inherited; 2) Land property -

197 in the neighboring Sudan, for Muslim traders even today mix more Arabic loanwords into their Amharic than do Amharas. Areas conquered by slightly islamized Galla and held from the 16th to the 19th centuries were affected to varying degrees by several Galla (Cushitic) dialects.

196 Semantic drift is now in the direction of the Amharic speech pattern of Shoa province, which replaces the dominance of former aristocratic Gondar, thus introducing many more Galla traits into the language. This change is concomitant with the increasing political [191] dominance and centralization of the Shoan dynasty and power. Proclamations emanate from Addis Ababa in Shoan Amharic, and schoolchildren are increasingly taught this "standard" Amharic. Old terms of other provinces are often falling into disuse.

Sometimes this process is conscious, particularly in matters of national pride. Thus, the old word "tuqul" for the primitive, round, thatched, wattle-and-mud hut, is now replaced, through influence directed from Addis Ababa, by "sar byet" (lit. thatched house), considered more polite, for it denotes a house not yet covered by a corrugated iron roof, without the connotation of the mud walls; or, for similar reasons, by "goja" (lit. simple residence).

The use of the call "Gurage" for laborer has been expressly forbidden, because it is now considered insulting to that hardworking ethnic group, and the call "coolie" has been purposely imported. Furthermore, increased use is made in Shoan Amharic of Geez abstracts for modern purposes, such as the suffix "nät", which can be attached [178] to any Amharic verb to render it into an abstraction. Modernization, which has recently introduced such new cultural phenomena into Addis Ababa as the adult, unmarried "Miss", has, within the past decade, amended an old term to describe the new phenomenon: the old "woyzäro" (married, noble lady; Mrs.) is amended to the new concept "woyzarit" (adult though unmarried Miss). This term is still unknown in the rural

291 Men doing physical labor - "boddäna" - lift toga above shoulders to free arms;

- "adägäddäga" - knot toga across chest; wrap-around. (also to tie shammas of debtors to creditors, or prisoners to guard's).

[411] To parry blows - "mäkäta" - wrapping toga around left forearm, as shield.

Preparing for battle - "adägäddäga" (see above): knotting shamma across chest, after wrapping it tightly around the waist.

When cold - "zeqzeq läbbäsä" - doubling a heavy shamma (called "kuta" or "derreb") to wrap oneself in completely, even covering covering head, at night.

When hot - a light shamma of muslin ("nätäla") may be rolled around the head - "tämättämä". Hence, the turban of priests is called "mätämtämiya", a tight wrap-around of the head by muslin.

[535] When dancing - before "däbtära" (scribe-choristers) begin to dance, in church, they first drape the toga tightly ("shäbäsh-häbä"), so that the flaps will not drop from the shoulders during the motion.

[765] In mourning - while dancing the funeral motion, accompanying the improvised eulogy, women approach each other holding their own togas outward and horizontal, like huge wings, (as if they were holding a spear like men dancing the "fukkara" boast dance).

201 Some of these expressive ways of draping the shamma are falling into
291 disuse in the towns where the people are more affected by what passes as
178 "modern dress". However, an interesting increase in one way of draping
685 the shamma can be noticed in recent years: Now that debtors are no

201
291 longer chained to creditors, more frequent knotting-together of the
178
685 shamma is taking place, instead.

G. Dance, Chant, Musical Instruments.

535 Amhara dancing falls into three categories: religious dancing, military dance, and the entertainment dance performed by professionals. The first type has already been described in the section on the church.

Military dancing falls into two main categories: the "fukkara" boasting dance accompanied by boasting chant; and the "hotu" loyalty dance accompanied by shouts.

The "fukkara" is the war-boast, before or after battle, and on other occasions, of the individual warrior boasting of himself, sometimes of his kin group. It used to be danced with a spear, now with a stick or rifle. This is held horizontally over the shoulders. During the dance the head moves sideways, right and left. Defiance is shouted at the enemy, be it human, animal, or a supernatural spirit.

In the zar cult, the victory dance ("gurri") of the spirit just after he has entered the body of the possessed, is regarded so much as the "fukkara" type of dance, that the zar gives his identity away by his own version of "boasting" - whereupon the "disease" is diagnosed.

The hotu loyalty dance, by contrast, is a collective dance, most often a jump-dance, in which the multitude of warriors, brandishing their weapons, try to cast fear on the enemy by numbers, sound, and expression of intense loyalty to their common leader. The name itself is composed of "ho", onomatopoetic for shouting, "ta" signifying the collective suffix (all together). The following are common variations:

"Cho - cho" - simple shouting in unison, ("qärärto").

"Yebähalal Jeb-o" - "The hyena will swallow him (i.e. the enemy)."

"Yärdaw sheb-o" - "crow's beak" (i.e. the vultures will feed on the enemy).

"Addis Abäba" - (lit. "New Flower", name of capital) - shout of

533 To European ears the music of the Amhara sounds like a continuous cacophony, like the tuning up of a Western orchestra. But once accommodated to it, the sentiments expressed in the high-pitched chanting, the ecstatic pitch of emotions of the priests and dabtara, is recognized, when they sing for hours the chants they know so well by heart.

One foreign musicologist characterizes the timbre of voice in some Abyssinian chants as "harsh, forced and strident, unlike the singing in Negro Africa which is usually soft and rounded" (footnote 96). But he appreciates the artistry by which boy singers change the register, dropping from the usual falsetto to chest voice, and octave below, then move back into the falsetto; also, the interesting polyphonic technique, in which the second voice sings the melody introduced by the first voice, in the same pitch, but with delayed entry, so that a "canon" or "round" results, which is abandoned toward the end, the two voices ending in unison. Thirds seem to be preferred, though fourths and fifths occur among the voices.

Dabtara are always at work experimenting with minor alterations, which may in time accumulate. Furthermore, certain regional specializations exist: Arabic music affects Abyssinian music wherever Muslims live in sizeable numbers, especially in Tigre province, and near the Sudanese border. Here the wailing Arabic chant that breaks off abruptly, has infiltrated.

533 178 Modern, national Ethiopian music dates only to the 1920's. It includes the modern national anthem and other patriotic songs such as "lion of Judah". The music, often composed on order, by foreigners or

Footnote 96 - George Herzog, quoted by Leslau: Chansons Harari. Rassegna di Studi Etiopici VI, p. 161, Rome 1947.

533 resident Armenians, ranges from vague "oriental" melodies to European
178 melodies of the marching variety. But secular songs, grassroots folk-songs, are increasing with the use of public loudspeakers and growing up of a somewhat more modern educated generation singing love songs with less restraint than in the past, such as "yänne shega, yänne qonjo" (my peach, my beauty).

534 Musical instruments are largely divided into two categories in the mind of the Amhara; those used for the church service, notably percussion instruments; and those used for entertainment, notably string instruments, and wind instruments. Drums are used in both categories, however.

The reason percussion instruments predominate in church, is that musical instruments used in church have the role of marking time, in the chant-dances. Moreover, there is no independent instrumental music in the Abyssinian tradition, not even in organized entertainment.

Percussion instruments include the following:

Drum - "nägarit", the huge, barrel-like symmetrical drum over which skins are stretched at both ends, made to accompany rythmic (church) dances. It has a wooden body, 3' to 5' in length. It is considered the aristocratic drum, for in the past it was beaten to assemble the population for war or to hear a royal proclamation. (The modern government publication printing decrees is appropriately called "Nagarit Gazetta"). In the past it was carried on muleback in military expeditions, and preceded the entry of a governor into a province. Since it is heavy, it is suspended from a shoulder strap and carried by the younger men. It is beaten by the flat fingers and half the palm, while the drummer keeps time by swaying his upper body.

000 The patient would recover anyway in due course.

758 The therapeutic value of convalescense ("gärgäm alä") is recognized, and patients are told to bask in the sunshine.

562 Men are more likely to let themselves be treated by the "woggesha";
756 women, who suffer more frequently from functional ailments, approach
757 the "dabtarä" or "zar" doctor more often and request magical aid.

844 When birth approaches, the midwife is called, almost never the woggesha. If he is, he may not touch the genital parts of the woman, and merely advises the midwife. When labor pains begin, the patient is given a drink of mashed linseed to "relax the birth tract" and to "lessen the pain". The newborn baby is annointed with butter (often rancid), and fed some of it.

759 Other medical helpers, apprentices, or modern "dressers" may be referred to as "healers" ("fäwash"), "balä mädanit" (lit. medicine man, who knows empirical drugs and cures), "caretaker" ("astabaqi"), male nurse ("mogzit"), modern "dresser" ("astamami"). None of these are respected professions, for they are regarded as too close to manual labor, and such practitioners usually go to other provinces where their work will not shame the family. In recent years, the more skilled ones have been coming from Eritrea.

178 Modern change has been largely indirect and partial. The new
757 laws still permit the "woggesha" to function. Penicillin and other antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription at the big "Saturday markets", for as little as ETh$2.50 (US$1.-), and the patient simply buys it, takes it to a "dresser" in the nearest town, whom he pays 1/2 dollar Ethiopian (US 20 cents), to give the injection. When symptoms disappear, e.g. in syphilis, he believes himself cured.

178 757 This attitude is of course deplored by the Western physicians who know of it. But modern medical treatment is still little available outside the major towns. Patients come to hospitals often only as a last resort, fearing to be separated from kinfolk and exposed to treatment by strangers, so that mortality in hospitals is high, which reinforces [743] the fears. At present there are probably no more than 50 hospitals in all Ethiopia, and only a few hundred Western physicians. Both are heavily concentrated in Addis Ababa, so that the field of the "woggesha" has not shrunk at all.

164 757 756 755 B. Common Ailments and their Treatment.

The more common ailments and procedures followed by the "woggesha" and "dabtara", (practitioners who occasionally overlap in specialties but almost never in treatment), include the following (see next page):

754 776 and are permitted to be dirty most of the time. As for males, the buda also likes to feast on healthy-looking, fat, handsome warriors [753] and chiefs. "Buda" is the general diagnosis when a person always known as healthy suddenly sickens and dies. Therefore it is feared even by the bravest warriors.

754 776 178 Even at present, when "modernization" is proceeding from the central government, "buda" belief has not shrunk. It has simply expanded to take in modern attractions. Thus, police officers in the provincial towns are believed to have attracted "buda", who has developed a taste for officers in nice, new uniforms; and is believed to be "greedy" for healthy-looking boys doing modern gymnastics in their new elementary schools, eager to consume their physical prowess and grace. Even rich, strong, fat, gay, well dressed Europeans are regarded as vulnerable, but less so because "they do not fear him". Fear attracts him too.

"Buda" is most active in August, at the height of the rainy season. [821] His favorite time to strike is just after a heavy thunderstorm, when tornado-like gusts of wind seem to pull up the hut and try to pull the roof off. This would enable "buda" to "see" his victims better, and cannibalize them.

751 754 776 Many ways of trying to prevent victimization by "buda", or at least of reducing one's vulnerability, have been devised over the centuries. To reduce vulnerability, one should not appear too happy, too gay. One should not become an object of open admiration, or of envy and jealousy. One should further paraphrase the tabooed word "buda", by saying "watch your eyes". Newlyweds, who are very vulnerable, should cover their glowing faces for ten days, to keep

562 [554] to an almost sub-culture. The result is at least one real sub-culture, that of the "zar society". Many women find their way to it either through introduction by a female friend, or, if the husband forbids it, through actual or simulated hysteria or catalepsy.

888 Psychological problems of the aged have not as yet become significant in Amhara society. The male elder, and also the old woman, are respected and cared for even in senility - a stage which only a small minority reach because of the comparatively brief life span.

3. Culture Change and Amhara Society: Inertia versus Modernization; the "Change Agent"; the Amharization of Ethiopia; the New Elite; Old Values; Outlook.

178 In view of the traditional hierarchy of government among the Amhara, any major culture changes could be effectively introduced only from the apex downward. This has been the experience during the reigns of the present Emperor Haile Selassie and of his predecessor, Emperor Menelik II; One might even include the unlucky Emperor Theodore. All three recognized the role of the emperor (King of Kings) as "change agent" in culture change. In Ethiopia it has not been the dissatisfied elements who have acted for change.

The forces resisting culture change in that society were and are powerful, not because they have consciously and purposefully banded together in opposition, but by the resistance of inertia. The silent but fierce opposition, notably from the old feudal nobility, the old and dominant heads of the Abyssinian Coptic church, and the rural elders, has long constituted an ultra-conservative immovable object: self-satisfied, fundamentalist, proud of having defended their mountain plateau for centuries, distrustful of foreign innovations.

178 With the gradual increase in their personal and military power, the imperial "change agents" have been able to introduce certain modern reforms. Their direct orders have been fulfilled in haste, as long as they supervised them personally. This was and is in accordance with the old concept of the government hierarchy, according to which the "great man" at the apex must be quickly obeyed as long as he is on the spot. The moment his attention is turned to some other matter, and he is not physically supervising the change, the status quo is largely resumed. In this connection Chapple and Coon's definition of equilibrium is apt:

> "Equilibrium is that state of a system...such that, when a small force is impressed upon it, a change takes place within it, and once this force is removed, the system returns to approximately its previous state."
> (Footnote 137)

Foreign educated students are largely descendants of the Amhara ruling nobility; although they have been motivated toward certain specific reforms, they fall back into their old noble-family patterns soon after their return.

178 643 In order to modernize the country, the Imperial "change agent" is faced with the task of establishing centralized control. For he is not only King of the Amhara, but "King of Kings" of all Ethiopia, a nation still far from homogeneous. Emperor Menelik II started to link the heterogeneous country through military conquest of the Galla and other ethnic entities, and, farsightedly, through the establishment of telegraph and telephone communication with at least his major provincial captials. Emperor Haile Selassie has continued this process, not only through direct orders and proclamations, but by means of the cultural Amharization of Ethiopia.

Footnote 137: Chapple & Coon: Principles of Anthropology, p. 704

563 178 [643 797] Wherever Emperor Menelik II conquered new areas, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he ordered the local people to build Abyssinian Coptic churches, and the Coptic priests who accompanied the troops with the sacred "tabot", consecrated the new local church and parish. These became centers of political and educational Amhara activities. Amharization was advanced not through large scale direct conversion of what was considered by the Amhara clergy a "lower" ethnic group, but through the establishment of a local, administrative, Amhara hierarchy, which the other ethnic peoples found it in their interest to emulate. They soon learned (particularly the old Galla nobility) that they could advance in the Amhara feudal-army system and regain feudal-land-tenure through loyal military service.

[554] By assimilating to this Amhara pattern, young Galla of the old nobility or of the modern-educated élite have found that they can rise in the hierarchy, and, after conversion to the Coptic Abyssinian faith, even intermarry with the ruling class.

At the same time, ethnic particularism and tribal expression of the subject ethnic groups, including the large Galla population, have been consistently discouraged by the ruling Amhara. Even [797] foreign missionaries, who are still forbidden to convert Abyssinian Copts, but may work on Muslims, "pagans", etc, have been pressed into the work of Amharizing Ethiopia. For they must preach in the Amharic language, and can distribute Bibles only in the Amharic language, even in provinces where the vast majority still understands very little or no Amharic. If they break this law, missionairies can be promptly deported.

000 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-
645 larly since his return from exile in 1941, has proceeded to build
[643] a base for the modernization of his country through the creation of a modern-educated new élite. The only portfolio he holds personally in his own cabinet is that of Minister of Education (though the other ministers ask his guidance on even the most minute matters). It is this group which is beginning to bridge the gulf between the ethnic cleavages, and which is trying to enlarge Amhara loyalty to an Ethiopian nationalism. Its members give lip service to the still powerful Coptic church: they smoke publicly, but they will break the lenten fast only in secret, eat pork only when not in the public eye, and still refrain from walking arm-in-arm with a female in public. But when sent to the provinces to modernize the administration, they quietly make gradual but cumulative inroads against the temporal power of the church and against the feudal landowning gentry, on the basis of imperial proclamations and numerous directives. (Footnote 138)

643 This change is only in the initial stages. Some of the most
178 fundamental decisions by the present emperor, notably the abolition
779 of the "gabbar" (serf-like) system, and the measurement and registration of the land, have been most strongly resisted in the old-Amhara provinces, where these edicts have still not been enforced.

As a result, the emperor has often tried to proceed by indirect means. Just as he has utilized the foreign missionaries in his Amharization program, so has he tried to utilize the Abyssinian clergy in his modernization program. He has appointed an Egyptian Coptic clergyman-educator to head the new Theological College of

Footnote 138: For details see: Messing, Simon D.: Changing Ethiopia (in) The Middle East Journal, vol.9, no.4, Autumn 1955, pp. 413-432.

643 Addis Ababa. He has repeatedly urged the Abyssinian clergy to
178 take up the practice of preaching in church, on such subjects as
779 reduction of the violent mourning for the dead and the ruinous "tazkar" memorial feasts; and admission of women into the church building. In Addis Ababa, a few modern-style churches have agreed to do this out of respect for his presence. But the provincial churches have retained their sacerdotal character and have not, except on occasions of brief imperial visits, adopted these innovations. The clergy has also resisted (by means of the "inertia" previously described) the urgings of the emperor to convert masses
[797] of the "lower" ethnic groups to Coptic Abyssinian Christianity. Only sporadically have small-scale conversions taken place. The emperor seems to recognize the value of expanding the nominal State Religion, Coptic Abyssinian Christianity, to a real national church, as a pillar of national solidarity and national loyalty.

178 The new élite, small in number, but actively supporting the
212 emperor's policies, and even occasionally beginning to become impatient with the circumspection and quiet, indirect, subtlety of Emperor Haile Selassie, has for some years raised the issue of the simplification of the Amhara alphabet. They had assumed that there would be much less opposition to such a worthwhile change than to big issues like abolition of the "gabbar" and changes in land tenure. The present alphabet, which consists of 259 syllables composed of 37 consonants and a minimum of 7 vowels, makes it difficult to teach writing to illiterate adults, children, and non-Amharic speakers, or to design typewriters. But the new, young, modern elite could not have been more mistaken in their optimism. The matter became a cause celebre, despite the fact that the proposal, published in 1948 in an Amharic booklet "Reform of the Alphabet",

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 and signed modestly and anonymously "The Friends of Knowledge",
212 had been published under the auspices of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. It had been authored by the Amhara (modern-minded) noble, Ras Imru (later ambassador to the USA), the Amhara historian-grammarian Blatta Marze Hazen, and a Western scholar affiliated with the American National Council of Churches of Christ.

The conflict arose largely from the fact that most Amharic letters are directly derived from the old Geez, considered sacred because church liturgy and literature are written in it. Therefore, the Abyssinian church rejected the idea of alphabet reform as sacrilegeous. The emperor decided to postpone action indefinitely. (footnote 139).

178 It is this opposition, concentrated in the old Amhara nobil-
563 ity and clergy that has given opportunity to the loyal Galla to affiliate themselves more closely with the central government. Their modern-educated sons serve in high positions in the imperial bodyguard, army, and provincial administration. By affiliating themselves with the central government, the Galla obtain protection against the exploiting rural Amhara gentry. From the point of view of the modern central government such loyal support is greatly needed. From the point of view of the provincial, traditional Amhara, however, every young modern official sent from Addis Ababa, is now nicknamed "Galla", even if he is an Amhara.

181 Meanwhile the new elite has itself developed an indirect means
178 to introduce a new value complex, at least in Addis Ababa. This is called "<u>seltaney</u>", which formerly meant politeness, refined and re-

<u>Footnote 139</u>: Leslau, Wolf: La Réforme de l'Alphabet Éthiopien. (in) Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, vol.12,1953,pp.96-106. Rome.

181 strained behavior, civilization, but which now has assumed the con-
178 notation of "modern" in the Western sense. It includes the improved
[562] status of the woman, no longer a mere hewer of wood and hauler of water; and it even became formalized in 1942 when an imperial proclamation, in establishing a Consultative Committee on Legislation, gave instruction to draft new laws that would be "not repugnant to natural justice and humanity".

178 But many old values still persist even at the apex of the
576 hierarchy where the prime "change agent", the emperor, resides. Most
644 notable, to foreign observers, is the continuation of the "daj tenat" (faire l'antechambre: lit. waiting at the gate). This is the traditional palace courtyard ceremony of bowing to the emperor at least twice a week. Emperor Haile Selassie has permitted this institution to continue. Every governor-general has his own "daj tenat" court when he returns to his provincial capital; and so on down the line.

195 The traditional oath on the king's life, sworn even in petty matters and everyday affairs ("Hayle Selassye yemut", lit. May the emperor die; i.e. if I lie) is still in common use and no attempt has been made to suppress or reduce its usage. Haile Selassie well remembers that during the first half of his reign his Amhara subjects still used to swear by the name of the dead Menelik or by provincial dynasts such as Ras Gugsa.

178 Outlook: the "culture lag" between material and non-material culture that has created so many social problems in so many parts of the present-day world has not yet taken place in this society. The old attitude of accepting and enjoying trade goods without trying to reproduce what the foreigner has created, still persists. Direct exploitation of what nature provides still fills most physi-

178 cal needs, and the comparatively rich and complex non-material culture satisfies the need for interpersonal relations and expression. The returning foreign-educated students are still few compared to the size of the population, so that they immediately obtain high positions commensurate with their training, and are therefore generally well satisfied. Until the industrial age brings a cash economy and a modern appreciation of mechanical skills to Ethiopia, Amhara culture will probably remain in its present equilibrium. Meanwhile, however, the Amharization of all Ethiopia is continuing gradually, and can be expected eventually to attain the goal of a culturally homogeneous, predominantly Amhara, nation.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

dolphus put it.[4] At length, unable to witness the further decimation of his people because of religious controversies, Susneyos abdicated in favor of his son Fāsil. Fāsil lost little time in deporting the Jesuits and restoring the Orthodox status quo. 175* 648 797 643

Recovery

In the wake of all these collisions, Ethiopia made two valiant attempts to regain equilibrium and glory: through the splendor of Gondar in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and through the force of three emperors of the nineteenth century—Tēwodros II, Yohānnes IV of Tigre, and Menelik II of Shoa. 175* 648 643

Gondar was founded as a new and stationary capital by Fāsil. It served as imperial headquarters for many generations. Later, the kingdom of Tigre knew a resurgence of power that led to control of the empire under Yohānnes (1872–89). His castle at Makalle symbolized one last rally for the north—after an interregnum of a thousand years—before being eclipsed by the Shoan throne.

The shock which began with the invasions of Ahmad Grañ shattered Ethiopia's medieval synthesis once and for all. The political consequence of those disruptions was an increase in provincialism, reaching its climax in the famous "Age of the Princes" (1755–1855) when each province had its own sovereign and for all practical purposes was a polity unto itself. The Solomonic line, the matrix of Ethiopian political unity, was splintered in several directions, leaving contenders in each of the provinces. Though the official imperial line remained at Gondar, Tigre was able to reassert its ancient claims and Gojjam recurrently voiced its separatism, and what may be called the "House of Manz" came to compete with Gondar as a center of national consciousness. 175* 178 • 635

This political division was accompanied by a peculiar cultural bifurcation. Elements of the national culture that had been rather evenly distributed before Ahmad Grāñ now became relatively specialized in Gondar and Manz. The recovery of Ethiopia produced a geographical division of manners and morals as well as several lines of Solomonic royalty. 175* 184

HISTORICAL PROFILES

The Role of Gondar 175* 633

Gondar is the only city in Ethiopia with charm and character expressive of Amhara culture. Even today, despite modern accretions, the remnants of its castles, walls, bridges, and sanctuaries transmit a stately calm, redolent of past nobility and African grandeur.

The town is situated on a flat volcanic ridge at seven thousand feet above 175* 361

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth cntury: 175* 633 517 538 [539]

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts. 175* 633 517 53

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā,* or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā.* 175* 159 793 633

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām,* the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere. [535] [178]

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā [214] [538]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 18 flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

633 *Gondar Today*

177 648 A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

633 After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953 [874] with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college. [648] The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utilities as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty [162] thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

633 871 178 With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aquāquām* and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

633 771 793 Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chīqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chīqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chīqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chīqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chīqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chīqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 794

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories.

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense.

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.)

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver.

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression.

The Yearly Cycle

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 [164] [785] hazardous. Moisture and chill lower the resistance of man and beast to respiratory infections. The weekly fasting schedule is resumed, and the more devout observe the thirty-day fast of the Disciples. In August, finally, the sixteen-day fast in honor of the Assumption of Mary is observed by everyone older than six or seven years.

*565 796 526 On the thirteenth day of that fast occurs the strange holiday of Buhē. Before and during this day, which is marked by the baking of special *dābo* for the shepherds, the countryside crackles with the reports of shepherds' whips. In this season when the humid air lends an explosive sound, the shepherds crack their whips for fun; but older boys and men join in great whipping battles on Buhē,* in which two teams lash each other until the members of one can stand it no more. On the evenings of Buhē, small bonfires are lit all over the countryside, and more *dābo* is eaten and whips cracked.[5] A few days later the fast of the Assumption is over. Young and old look forward to the end of the rains and the festivities that commence with the new year.

*565 These are the days and years of the Amhara peasant. Some other aspects of his life that come to the fore when more analytic perspectives are applied will be discussed in later chapters. But this calendar of activities forms the immediately observable setting for the "inner world" of the Amhara peasantry: those ideas, sentiments, and values which constitute its outlook on life.

THE WORLD OF MEANING

The Natural Universe

*565 772 [538] The Amhara peasant is not familiar with most of the cosmological notions found in the Great Tradition of Abyssinian culture, as transmitted through books like *Qalamsis* and *Aksimareos* and the oral traditions of learned churchmen. It is unusual for him to have a precise image of the layers of water, fire, and air beneath the earth, and it is still less likely for him to be familiar with the complicated hierarchy of invisible worlds, watery skies, and seven "real" heavens which are enumerated in the Abyssinian cosmology. He [821] believes that stars influence human affairs, but leaves the possession of astro- [756] logical knowledge to the *dabtarā*. The presence of cultural specialists who know about such matters has relieved him of the burden of dealing with ideas about the cosmos, ideas which are more widely diffused in more homogeneous societies.

The peasant's working conception of the cosmos is thus a very simplified version of that of his Great Tradition, together with certain pagan notions. Like his more learned countrymen, he divides the universe into two main parts: the world, *alam*, consisting of the earth, sun, moon, and stars; and

[178] * This custom is now extinct in many Amhara areas.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

MODERNIZATION AND THE PEASANT

*565 121 At the beginning of this chapter we alluded to stereotyped views of the peasantry held by modern-educated Ethiopians who have no meaningful communication with them. It may be fruitful at this point to consider the relationship between the peasant's world and Ethiopia's quest for modernity in the form of a series of critical responses to these stereotypes.

Three views of the peasantry are of particular relevance. One sees the peasant as exploited, hence potentially progressive; one sees the peasant as uneducated, hence reactionary; and a third sees the peasant as traditionalist, hence irrelevant to Ethiopia's modernizing culture. In responding to these opinions we shall discuss, first, the peasant's conservatism; second, areas of the peasant's receptivity to change; and, finally, aspects of peasant culture which may have a positive value for Ethiopia in transition.

Peasant Conservatism

Those who eulogize the simple integrity of peasant life and regret the peasant's suppressed condition in a social order pejoratively termed "feudal" at times maintain that with a radical change of leadership in the government the peasantry would respond with renewed economic initiative and progressive orientation. Given leaders they can trust, it is argued, the Amhara peasants would support radical efforts to restructure their lives and would participate meaningfully in democratic political procedures designed to promote social change.

*565 121 178 181 This view overlooks the fact, which has impressed travelers of many centuries in Ethiopia, that the Abyssinian peasant clings to his traditional ways with unruffled tenacity. The flavor of his conservatism may be illustrated by the following conversation with an unusually open-minded peasant in Manz. The man was complaining about the dangers presented by a little stream between his home and the local church during the rainy season. "If you can't put up some kind of bridge," I suggested, "why do you not stretch a heavy rope across it so people can hold on to something and not be swept away?" "That is a good idea," he replied, "but we just do not do that sort of thing around here."

Such behavior has been explained by many observers, Ethiopians and foreigners alike, as due to simple laziness. No peasant can afford to be simply lazy, however. The roots of this inertia go deeper. They touch a number of fundamental features in Amhara peasant culture which orient the peasantry against the introduction of novelty.

*565 121 777 178 One of these is the concept of fate (*eddīl*) which the Amhara invoke to account for the ups and downs of their lives. *Eddīl* appears to signify the working of God's will insofar as it affects human purposes, and is to be re-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

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* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

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been employed as a medium for promulgating new ideas or discussing contemporary problems. Another feature of Amhara culture that helps to account for the mental inertia of the peasantry is its emphasis on the value of deference and obedience to authority. The Amhara typically rely on legitimate authority figures to define appropriate responses to new situations, and regard the delegation of powers as a diminution of the status of such authorities. The peasant has thus refrained from initiating changes in the public domain because the prerogative of taking initiative is generally reserved to ecclesiastical and political authorities.

Receptivity to Change

Consideration of the peasant's readiness to follow the lead of legitimate authorities already points to an inadequacy of the second stereotype we have mentioned: that which sees the peasant as hopelessly ignorant and backward, hence intractable from the viewpoint of a program of modernization. For while the Amhara peasant is likely to resist the efforts of some unknown official from Addis Ababa to introduce change in his local environment, he does tend to follow the directives and imitate the example of the local authorities whom he knows and who shape the course of decisions and sanctions at the local level. Thus it is, for example, that the eucalyptus tree—imported by Emperor Menelik, taken to the provinces by nobles, and eventually planted by individual peasants—has come to dot the Amhara countryside. How quickly such change can take place is shown by the recent acceptance of photography in many provincial regions. In 1950, peasants in many Amhara areas strenuously objected to having their pictures taken, in part at least for fear of the camera as bearer of the evil eye. By 1960, visitors to some of these same areas were being deluged with requests for photographs. In the interim these peasants had been exposed to numerous photographs of the Emperor and high government officials and had observed their local authorities seizing every chance they could to be photographed.

Yet it is clear that the Amhara peasant will not imitate everything that is accepted by his traditional authorities. When a new custom strikes him as too outlandish his resistance can become adamant, as was abundantly demonstrated when the court of Susneyos carried out its ill-fated conversion to Catholicism. In analyzing the peasant's receptivity to change it is important to distinguish as independent variables: (1) the degree of acceptability of the *agents* of change, and (2) the extent to which the proposed change is congruent with traditional beliefs and values.

The whole question of the nature of peasant opposition and receptivity to modernizing programs may be discussed most realistically by focusing on a concrete area of attempted change. The material I have assembled is most detailed for the case of public health, an area to which the government has

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paid increased attention in recent years. A new phase of public health endeavor in this decade was marked by the imposition of a nationwide health tax in 1960.

Health has become a prime objective in Ethiopia's modernization program because of a growing realization that the wide prevalence of malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, intestinal parasites, syphilis, trachoma, leprosy, and other diseases continues to sap the vitality of the nation's productive forces and to visit misery on countless peasant families. The public health forces in Ethiopia (Ministry of Public Health, WHO mission, and AID Public Health Division) have long understood that Ethiopia's health needs cannot be met by piecemeal therapy. They have undertaken a program of preventive measures by preparing public health teams in the medical college at Gondar. The college trains health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians within a common framework, so that when they go into the field they will understand each other's tasks from the start. The first public health center employing such a team was opened in the late fifties; Ethiopia's Second Five-Year Plan envisions one such center for every fifty thousand people by 1967.

The objective of these public health workers is to transmit a number of instructions—concerning personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, early care for illness, and isolation of contagious diseases—which are at variance with customary beliefs and practices. Experience with comparable programs elsewhere suggests that the success of such health teams is by no means assured.[18] What are the forces working for and against the acceptance of these new instructions by the Amhara peasantry? Both negative and positive factors may be identified with respect to each of the three general categories previously referred to: the general outlook regarding change; attitudes toward the agents of change; and degree of compatibility between the new cultural items and the old.

The Amhara peasant's general resistance to change may be presumed operative here as elsewhere, particularly since health practices are often associated with religious beliefs and sentiments. Defense of indigenous therapies has in fact become a significant channel for the expression of traditionalist sentiment, a channel that has even been utilized on occasion in the Addis Ababa newspapers.[19] And a general posture of resistance to changes in the field of health is supported by the interests of traditional practitioners, *dabtarā* and *ṭanquāy*, who are in danger of losing clientele if modern-trained health workers come to win their allegiance.

Counter to this conservative drag, on the other hand, is the peasant's powerful desire for one basic change in his life circumstances, namely, the reduction of morbidity and mortality. Despite his idyllic conception of paradise and his frequent contention that life on earth is something of little value, the Amhara wants to avoid death. Even from the religious point of view he is

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*565 motivated to live as long as possible: the monk wants to live longer in order
121 to get closer to God by prayer, and the worldly man wants to live long enough
177 to atone for his sins so that he may enter paradise. Health thus rates as one of
• 178 the most important values. The expressions for greeting and farewell stress
75 health. Most of the prayers and vows offered have to do with achieving health.
761 Long, painful pilgrimages are made for cures, and much money is spent for the remedies of native practitioners and for amulets to ward off illness. This powerful desire for health and life operates as a lever to overcome the resistance to change.

*565 Toward the bearers of new ideas designed to satisfy this desire for reduced
121 morbidity and mortality, however, the peasant's stance is suspicious and un-
177 sympathetic at the outset. He regards Ethiopians who have been educated by
829 Westerners as contaminated by alien norms and beliefs. They appear to him as Ethiopians, but also as strangers—as "black *farangi*"—with their European clothes and their unorthodox eating and smoking habits. He tends to distrust their motives, to suspect them of being out to take advantage of him in some way. And he resents their overt or implicit disparagement of his way of life, particularly his practices in so sensitive an area as sanitation.

*565 Against such obstacles one cultural factor that serves to present the health
121 worker as an acceptable agent of change is the Amhara peasant's deference to
177 the man of learning. The public health worker is in a position to inherit some
744 of the awe felt for the learned *dabtarā*, especially since the health teams
(554) operate out of centers which provide therapy as well as instruction, which gives them the benefit of association with the quasi-magical powers attributed to one who performs successful treatment. In addition, he can be aided by the Amhara peasant's personal devotion to someone who has helped him and won his confidence. Whether this devotion can be stimulated depends, in the last analysis, on the character and resourcefulness of the public health workers themselves. Those who are able to communicate in a dignified manner with the peasants, who avoid dealing with them as an inferior and backward people, who refrain from flaunting the most important local norms, and who are on good terms with local authorities and respected men, have a substantial chance of being accepted after an initial period of suspicion and alienation. Thus it was that a Gojjami peasant, asked why some of the local people were hearkening to the advice of the public health team at Dabra Marqos, explained: "We have come to realize that what you tell us to do is for our own advantage, not yours." Elsewhere in Gojjam, a similar response was the eventual issue of a more pronounced initial rejection of public health workers. In the village of Dajan doors were closed against a venereal disease team which was taking blood samples of the entire population for Kahn test analysis. Popular suspicion was voiced in a number of ways; the health workers were accused of selling blood, of being missionaries, and of otherwise trying

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THE EMERGING ADOLESCENT

While it is clear, as we have argued thus far, that a modernizing society stands to benefit from retaining or redefining many aspects of its traditional culture, it is also clear that in certain areas discontinuity is indispensable if significant change is to be brought about. Just what these areas are is something which presumably varies from nation to nation, though cross-cultural regularities may perhaps be uncovered in the course of further research. In the case of Ethiopia's incipient modernization, at least two subsystems of the traditional social system of the ruling Amhara have already undergone some sort of structural change: that of "secondary socialization," the complex of processes whereby skills and values necessary for adult life are imparted to adolescents; and that of the stratification system—the complex of arrangements whereby status is allocated to members of a society in accord with the various values upheld by the society.

An important precondition for the changes which have taken place in both of these areas was the establishment of a permanent capital: Addis Ababa, founded by Menelik in 1887[1] and now home for nearly half a million Ethiopians. Menelik's institution of the first government school in Addis Ababa in 1908 marked the beginning of a slow but steady process of introducing some of Ethiopia's youth to the novel skills and norms of modern Western culture. The concentration of power in Addis Ababa through the reign of Haile Selassie has diminished the status of the traditional Amhara elites and brought

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to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to

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a different identity. Religion and warfare were the two spheres most likely to attract him. Although trade and manual arts were possibilities for those whose industry exceeded their status-consciousness, they were considered the business of other ethnic groups and normally rejected by a self-respecting Amhara. When the Amhara youth left home for a new life, he was usually heading either for the school of some church teacher or the quarters of some chieftain.

Today, as in former times, the role of priest is known from childhood as a possible model for the peasant boy. He and his companions often imitate the clergy and their ceremonies in their play. The wish to become a priest is kindled by a number of interests—desire for the material benefits accorded the clergy; curiosity about the mysteries of the church; envy of the great prestige of the clergy; hope for a better chance of going to heaven after death. During adolescence the outlook of the boy who seeks to become a priest deviates from that of the *goramsä* described above. Instead of the shrill, blood-heating *shillala* war chants he prefers the gentle hymns of the church; instead of the frenzied dancing and singing of the young braves he prefers the schooled dance of the clergy; instead of pursuing women, he is inclined to turn his head the other way when a girl appears.

The military alternative does not seem to be an ideal of Amhara children. They rarely see soldiers; and when they did in former times, it was usually in the unhappy circumstance of seeing the family's reserves plundered. It is not until the time of puberty and after that the great upsurge of aggressive instinct has turned the thoughts of many an Amhara youth to fighting. Chafing under parental domination or bristling with resentment because of being an illegitimate offspring or a stepchild, he may be anxious to turn his hostility against some enemy. He may imagine the free life of a soldier more attractive than the drudgery of the peasant's lot. In the days of feudal armies, he may have heard news about some warlord on the rise and thus have hopes, by attaching himself as a follower, of winning booty and the laurels of a hero, perhaps eventually the powers of a chieftain.

Whether the peasant boy chooses church school or the warpath, his move has frequently been an all-or-none move. The peasant boy can do nothing without the consent of his father, and normally his father will not permit him to do anything except carry on the farmwork and prepare himself to care for his parents in their old age and to inherit the family land. If there should be some sign that the son does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, the latter will do everything he can short of disinheritance—and ofttimes that—to persuade him otherwise.

And so, some restless day, eyes fixed on some alluring goal, the Amhara youth might run away and not be seen again. If he should return, it would

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565 be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or
593 official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In
463 either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely pre-
156 paring himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which
[181] the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

882 The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of
184 Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing
871 up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adoles-
178 cence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

871 *The Welfare School*

175 Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis
[797] Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in government provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

[648] During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

872 The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

second four in English, although Ethiopian teachers often continue to teach 872
in Amharic in the latter years.* This standard curriculum is supposed to be followed by all schools in the country—church, mission, and private schools, as well as those staffed by the government. In practice, a scarcity of teachers and materials in the provincial schools means that the curriculum is followed less closely there than in Addis Ababa. (The exceptional case of Asmara, capital of Eritrea which federated with Ethiopia in 1952 after sixty-two years under Italian administration, will not be considered here.) This elementary program culminates with a general examination that covers the five main fields of Amharic, English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Successful completion of this exam has been required for virtually every type of training beyond the elementary level.

At the secondary level, by contrast, the Ethiopian student faces a bewilder- 873
ing array of educational programs. As listed in the flow chart of the Ministry 874
of Education, they include theological secondary, academic secondary, elementary teacher training, handicraft teacher training, commercial school, technical school, agricultural secondary school, nurses training, community nurses training, sanitarians, naval cadet training, air cadet training, civil aviation, and inservice technical training. Admission of students to these schools is the responsibility of the individual directors, who take into account the students' own preferences when feasible.

A similar procedure obtains at the college level, for which successful completion of the secondary school-leaving examination has in most cases been mandatory. During the 1950's a number of schools were opened at the post-secondary level: the Arts and Science Faculties of the University College of Addis Ababa, the Agricultural College, the Engineering College, the Public Health College, the Building College, and the National Defense Colleges. Some of these have now been combined into a single institution, the Haile Selassie I University.

For students who have gone as far as the upper grades of elementary 883*
school, the desire to get into one of the secondary level schools—no matter 872
which one—has usually become the uppermost concern in their lives. They 873
have become obsessively aware of the "value" (*ïqem*) of further schooling, namely, as the surest way to a job that pays well. Perhaps they have become fired with idealism to help advance their country and hope to gain some special competence that will enable them to do so. Until 1962, moreover, the rewards of being a secondary school student included material fringe benefits that gave many a powerful motive for prolonging their education. Above all, [178]

* In 1963–64 the system was changed to one with six years of elementary education followed by two years of junior secondary education.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

they have come too far along the road of modernity to return to what they regard as the hard and thankless lot of the traditional adolescent, and so are forced to find some place in the modernizing sector of society. Since Ethiopia's modernizing sector has so far provided only the secondary school system as a means of integrating its youth, the eighth-grade examination certificate constitutes a ticket to the future which must be obtained at all costs.

At the same time that this examination was acquiring its momentous significance in the lives of Ethiopia's youth, the proportion of students who passed it was becoming progressively smaller. By 1959, efforts by Ministry of Education officials to raise academic standards and to adjust the number of eligible students to the number of openings in secondary schools resulted in the failing of some sixty per cent of those who took the examination, a situation which provoked nearly riotous protests by students in Addis Ababa.[11]

Such conditions have laden the eighth-grade examination with more awesomeness and terror than a puberty rite. Worries about the exam preoccupy most seventh and eighth graders, and their anxiety is compounded by the attitudes of their school directors, for whom the proportion of passing students has tended to become the primary index of success. The weeks before the exam are filled with frantic cramming on the part of teachers as well as students. It is no wonder that such pressures have on occasion led students to purchase actual or alleged copies of the exam in advance from ministry employees or their go-between, an offense which has been sternly dealt with by the ministry.

Those students who do not pass the eighth-grade exam or who, because of family pressures, low ability, or other reasons, leave school before completing the eighth grade, move to the margin of Ethiopian society. If attendance at a secondary school or beyond may be taken as the defining characteristic of a "modern adolescent" in Ethiopia, since that signifies their participation in the one institutionalized pattern of secondary socialization in the modern sector, these young people are neither traditional adolescents nor fully modern, but fall in an interstitial category. Having caught a glimpse of some brave new world in their early schooling, they find themselves cast adrift, in the prime of their adolescence, in a no-man's region between traditional society and the promised land. In some cases they manage to make a rapid adjustment; more often, only their youthful energy saves them from total despair.

These marginal adolescents normally drift to Addis Ababa, if they are not already there, and lead the most precarious sorts of lives. They live as loiterers on the streets and byways of the capital. They go from school to school, begging for a place; or from office to office, looking for some sort of work, which they are unlikely to find if they do not have a relative in an influential position. It is so hard to find employment without at least an eighth-grade certifi-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cate that boys sometimes borrow the certificates of more successful friends 883* and enter jobs under those assumed names. Often they live for many months 882 with no livelihood at all. Eventually, some find work as houseboys, shine 178 shoes, or peddle merchandise on the streets; others, on an impulse, sign up for [464] life in one of the military services. Still others are reduced to begging, or stealing, or concocting stories with which to extract help from sympathetic foreigners.

The lives of such boys, whose number is large and steadily growing, are among the chief casualties of Ethiopia's transition to date. As they increase, their misery will become more vocal, and they may constitute an element of political unrest. Whether or not they become a political problem, they are already a social problem.

The modern adolescents, by contrast, comprise a small and determinate 883* number.* In 1958–59, the year in which my research on them began, there 178 were all together about 3,900 students in the academic secondary schools, 873 3,350 in other special schools at the secondary level, and 760 students at the post-secondary level. One source of information on these students was a [125] questionnaire which was completed by 700 students: 500 at the secondary level, including 40 female students, in a total of 15 schools, and 200 male students in five colleges.[12] Some of the findings from this survey will be woven into the following text where appropriate.

Compared to the rest of their countrymen, and certainly those of the same age, the modern adolescents have lived in luxury. Most students at the secondary level, and all those at the college level, have been boarding students. At no cost to themselves or their parents, they have received full board and room, a token allotment of clothes, and their books. Day students have received instead a monthly allowance of Eth$20,† approximately the same [434] amount that unskilled laborers earn for full-time work. Tuition is also free for all full-time Ethiopian students at all levels.

These "welfare school" conditions were designed to make further education attractive and possible for Ethiopian students, nearly all of whose families either can not or are unwilling to support their children for many years in school. In this, the parents are following long established Amhara custom, for in the traditional society boys who went off to church schools often did so, as we have seen, without the support of their parents, and in any case were expected to gain their livelihood by begging. Nowadays, if their children are admitted to one of the government secondary schools, even tradition-minded

* And one that grows steadily. In 1958 there were twenty-eight government secondary schools in the empire. By 1964 the number had increased to forty-seven.

† One Ethiopian dollar is equal to (U.S.) forty cents. [436]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 parents who may have objected to their children's spending so many years in
• 178 elementary school are not a little proud to have them in so prestigious an
873 institution, and are delighted to have them so well financed by the Ministry of Education.

*883 Needless to say, the students who make the grade into one of the secondary
873 schools are jubilant. The relative hardship of their elementary years gives way to an easy and stimulating life. For those who grew up in provincial schools, the move to Addis Ababa has been an especially exciting prospect—so much so that when secondary schools were newly established in some of the provincial capitals in the late 1950's, a number of students who were supposed to attend them preferred to stop their education instead.[18]

*883 The pattern of adolescence embodied in the government schools differs
882 from that in traditional Amhara society in two fundamental respects. In the
178 traditional pattern, adolescence is a time when the Amhara are subjected to the strictest controls by their parents. At the same time, they are expected to prepare for independence by assuming increasing amounts of responsibility. In the modern pattern, the welfare school has the effect of removing the student as far as possible from parental controls. At the same time, it puts him in a more passive and irresponsible role than ever. He is given virtually everything he needs and obliged to do nothing in return. He is asked only to prepare himself to serve his country well later on. This obligation is in fact firmly implanted in the minds of many students, who acquire the sense of a personal debt to the government which they want to repay in later years. Ethiopian society is not yet organized, however, in a way that will bring such motives to realistic expression. During and after his school experience, little opportunity is provided for the student to mature out of an essentially passive, receptive, dependent posture. Critical of this state of affairs, one Ethiopian college student was moved to declare in an oratorical contest: "Ethiopian students are like college students the world over, with two differences—they get everything free, and their selfishness is pushed to frightening exaggeration."

Be that as it may, modern adolescence in Ethiopia does provide the essential minimal conditions for fulfilling its function. It is a moratorium for the young, in which relative freedom from traditional controls and a relatively carefree existence facilitate the acquisition of habits, beliefs, and values which their fathers never knew.*

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[873] * The above description applies only until 1961–62, after which secondary students no longer received room and board or stipends and Addis Ababa College students were no longer housed in dormitories. Some implications of this change are considered in the concluding section of this chapter.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their role as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part by teachers and peers in the government schools. 86 178 [87]

Schools at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization. 875 177 873

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to-day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied without regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affiliations.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of universal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead. 177 178 557 555 829 883* 87

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post-elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with members of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among 873 177 178 186 883* [872]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115]

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the students. Rivalries and hostilities tend to get channeled along these lines, 883*
particularly along the Amhara-Tigre axis, and petty fights have erupted from 873
time to time among groups of students so divided. The Amhara students, 177
moreover, tend to interpret their numerical majority in school as self-evident 178
justification of their political superiority in the country, an interpretation sul- 186
lenly rejected by non-Amhara students who tend to be more aware of the Amhara's much smaller percentage of the national population. However, the students are regarded by their teachers, not as members of tribes, but as Ethiopians. The school authorities thus act as a countervailing force in behalf of national symbols, and their effect is considerable.[14] While entering students naturally tend to identify in the first instance with their tribes, sixty per cent of the secondary school seniors and seventy-five per cent of the college students questioned about political identifications indicated that they considered themselves Ethiopians before they considered themselves members of tribes.

The teachers also provide practical information of various sorts to assist the 883*
acculturation of their charges. They teach the etiquette of modernity, includ- 875
ing the importance of punctuality and the keeping of promises. The objects 177
and events in their own lives quietly demonstrate to the students much about 178
modern Western culture, while their use of English in and out of class accus- [576]
toms the students to the use of their country's official European language. Thus, besides promoting respect for impersonal standards and the sense of Ethiopian nationalism, the teachers fulfill a third extracurricular function of [554]
some importance: that of making the schools a vehicle for social mobility, a [871]
place to acquire that minimum of European habits which is essential for attaining high status in a modernizing society.

The total accomplishment of the teachers, however, falls short of giving the 883*
modern adolescents a coherent orientation to life. The cultural lessons they 871
transmit are neither consistent among the various schools nor closely related 177
to the situation of changing Ethiopia. The organization of education, as of everything else in Ethiopia, reflects the abiding anxiety of the government about permitting any one foreign nation to gain a monopoly in any sphere of activity. Each secondary school and college has heretofore been virtually autonomous, pursuing those policies and teaching those lessons which best fit its point of view, a point of view now guided by British culture, now by American, now by Swedish, now by French, now by Jesuit. As Margery Perham long since observed, this created a situation in which Ethiopian students have gotten "fragments from the experience and ideals of each [nation] without getting the fullest and best influence from any one national tradition."[15]

Another shortcoming of the educational program has been the relative 871
paucity of materials relating to Ethiopian realities. As one Ethiopian educator has written: "School children are at times more familiar with the history of

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871 Rome and the life of Abraham Lincoln than with the geography of their immediate community or the history of their own native country."[16] While a certain amount of concentration on remote matters may be essential for introducing modern adolescents to the substance and background of modern culture, it is doubtful whether they are being prepared to relate meaningfully to the society of their adulthood if that society is not made a subject for careful consideration during their schooldays.

875 829 191 Still another limitation on the effectiveness of the teachers stems from a quite different problem, the Ethiopian's ambivalence toward foreigners. This will be overcome with the gradual Ethiopianization of the teaching force, but that cannot be achieved for at least another generation. One area in which this problem manifests itself is linguistic nationalism. English, the official language [873] of all post-elementary instruction, is still regarded as an outsider's tongue in Ethiopia, unlike other African countries where the European language in question serves the native peoples as a *lingua franca;* and many Ethiopians hope that the day will come when it will be replaced by Amharic as the medium of instruction.[17] Due to their ignorance of Amharic or other Ethiopian languages, foreign teachers are rarely able to gain the sort of closeness to their students that promotes the more profoundly beneficial sort of relationship. Because of this and a tradition of suspiciousness regarding foreigners, all but the radically Westernized students maintain a lingering mistrust of the teacher *qua* foreigner.

* 883 178 The gaps in the socialization of the modern adolescent left by the nature of his teachers and their teaching are filled to some extent by his peers. In this respect, too, modern adolescence contrasts with the traditional pattern: not only has the role of mentor and model been taken over by foreign teachers in place of the parents, but also the modern adolescent has become dependent on his peers to a degree unthinkable in traditional Amhara society.

It has been natural that the modern adolescent turn to those his own age for moral support. However much they may support the idea of his going to school as a means to a higher salary, his parents have little understanding of the new directions inherent in modern education. His foreign teachers are, at worst, preoccupied with their own narrow interests or else, at best, out of tune with the Ethiopian ethos and mentality. Older modernized Ethiopians, who should be the most sympathetic, are usually too preoccupied with their own adjustment problems to pay much attention. His schoolmates thus become his only reliable allies in the battle of growing up.

[561] Association with age-mates is informal for the most part. There have been [573] almost no formal youth associations or clubs in Ethiopia. The teen-age gang, with its sharp boundaries and tight controls, has scarcely come into being. [572] Relations with peers thus takes the form of small groups of friends. More

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than half the secondary students questioned, and well over a third of the college students, stated that the number of their friends was only one, two, three, or four. 883* 178 • 572

Almost all the students indicated that they prefer close, intimate, and enduring friendships to casual, impersonal, and frequently changing relationships. There is thus something of the traditional *goramsā*'s companion about these relations, in that these boys define their friends as confidants, as individuals with whom they can disclose "secrets" and discuss personal problems. But the modern relationship is much broader, for it also includes such activities as studying together; going on walks; playing athletic games; going to the movies; visiting the brothels; talking about education, life, and the future; seeing the sights around town.

The great sociological significance of these small clusters of companions, or *bālīnjarā* as they are called, is that they play a crucial part in mediating the transition from a childhood that is essentially traditional, despite exposure to certain modern subjects in school, to an adulthood that will be lived essentially in the modern sector. At the same time that they help the newcomer adjust to each local school community, they are helping him adjust to the broader subculture of modernizing Ethiopia—explaining the strange things and ideas he encounters; correcting his behavior, for example, by showing the proper use of silverware at the table; and refining his language, when necessary, from that of the rustic to that of the urbanite. Their creative function is no less important. Through countless conversations, some idle and some intense, they work to interpret and integrate stimuli coming from many sources—from movies; magazines; the example of Europeans living in Ethiopia; the behavior of government officials, as well as from their teachers—and thus form a sort of buffer between the lone adolescent and the various authoritative influences in his life. 883* 178 572 182

Despite the radical changes in the position of the Amhara adolescents described above—their complete dependence on the government school system, their tutelage under foreign instructors, and their great reliance on age-mates—the traditional pattern of adolescent submission to parental authority still runs strong. Even though most students live as boarders or in rented quarters, they maintain contact with their parents on occasional visits or at vacation time. However far removed, they remain deeply attached to their families and sensitive to the wishes of their parents. How to acquire money to send to their families is often a dominant concern in their lives. Though in most cases the parents can not provide meaningful orientation regarding adjustment to changing conditions in Ethiopia, they do give advice about how their children should behave and try to keep them faithful to traditional norms. The fact 883* 178 593

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that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for consider-

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(396)	(40)	(197)

able strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

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society: to create engineers and mechanics, doctors and nurses, economists and educators. With regard to the familiar occupations of the old order, the schools' task is to engender a new breed of practitioner—farmers versed in modern methods of agriculture, soldiers disciplined and geared to modern techniques, clergy cognizant of ecumenical Christianity, clerks who can type and take shorthand, and government officials with some modern education.

What is most revolutionary is that the schools introduce not only new subject matters for careers, but the very notion of vocation itself—of life work as

TABLE 4

SOURCES OF FUTURE SATISFACTION CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS*

Source from Which Students Expect Most Satisfaction in Life	Secondary School				College Males (per cent)	
	Males (per cent)		Females (per cent)			
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Career or occupation	34	12	30	9	44	17
Improvement of local community	30	27	16	36	22	28
Religious beliefs and activities	13	20	16	21	5	7
Participation in national and international affairs	10	24	13	20	8	26
Family relationships	8	10	20	9	17	14
Leisure-time, recreational activities	5	7	5	5	3	8
Number	(394)		(40)		(195)	

* Based on question 27 in the Gillespie-Allport questionnaire.

something which one *chooses,* trains for in a specific manner, and derives satisfaction from pursuing.* This orientation departs radically from the traditional expectation of inheriting the work of one's father as a matter of course. Whereas, as we have noted, the Amhara son traditionally carried on his father's work, except in rare cases where there were special reasons for not doing so, only *seven per cent* of the boys in my sample indicated that

* When asked what they expected to give most satisfaction in their lives, the students most frequently named "career or occupation" (out of six alternatives). When asked what they considered most desirable in choosing an occupation, they named "work that is really interesting" most frequently (out of six alternatives). See Tables 4 and 5.

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463 they expected to enter the same occupation as their fathers. This figure is
178 much smaller than that obtained from a cross-cultural study of youth by
593 James Gillespie and Gordon Allport, who found that "approximately a third of the male students in all our samples [a total of 1,168, drawn from the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, Egypt, Mexico, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, and Israel] expect to enter the same occupations as their fathers, or ones closely related."[18] In part, the Ethiopian figure simply reflects the preparation for types of work which did not exist for previous generations.

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TABLE 5

OCCUPATIONAL CONDITIONS MOST DESIRED BY STUDENTS

Conditions Which Students Consider Most Desirable in Choosing Future Occupations	Secondary School				College Males (per cent)	
	Males (per cent)		Females (per cent)			
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Interesting work	56	24	63	17	63	18
Job security	19	26	23	11	14	31
Chance to acquire much money	12	11	3	11	10	16
Prestige	7	9	8	17	7	5
Pleasant work companions	4	26	3	30	3	27
Good boss	2	4	0	14	3	3
Number	(325)		(40)		(113)	

463 But since it also represents numerous cases where the boy's occupational
178 interest is a traditional one—where, in other words, one finds sons of soldiers
593 and government officials planning to become farmers, sons of farmers planning to be teachers, and sons of priests and teachers planning to be soldiers and administrators—this figure may be interpreted as indicative of a very general rejection of parental influence with respect to occupational choice.

Parents of the modern adolescents are unhappy about this diminution of their traditional authority, especially so when their children opt for some of the more "outlandish" modern occupations. Their disapproval sometimes takes the form of urging their children to quit school and get married. Often it is expressed in the form of direct criticism of the occupation in question. Nearly two-fifths of the secondary school males questioned about this indicated that their parents did not approve of the occupation they wished to enter. As

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might be expected, the incidence of disapproval was highest among the students of the Gondar secondary school (fifty-eight per cent), whose parents are presumably more traditionalist than those of the Addis Ababa boys, and the students of the technical school (fifty-six per cent), whose occupational interests, involving manual labor and technical skills, are felt to resemble those artisan pursuits traditionally disesteemed by the Amhara.

Time is on the side of the students. As Ethiopia develops and education spreads, the advantages of prolonged training and modern occupations will become increasingly apparent to the parents. For some time to come, however, their resentment of the dependence of youth on foreigners and Western-educated Ethiopians for occupational guidance will continue to generate social tensions and impede the socialization process.

The harmonious pattern of preparation for adult work roles found in traditional Amhara society has been further disrupted under the new school system at at least two points: the point at which occupational commitments are made, and the point of entry into the work force.

The modern adolescent is supposed to choose which of several kinds of schools, representing a variety of vocational commitments, he wishes to enter upon successful completion of the eighth-grade exam. Quite often his choice is dictated by wholly irrelevant factors. For example, it may be made on the basis of which of the available schools promises the best standard of living.[19] Or it may be made for him by the school system, for one finds cases where the student's preferences are disregarded and he is placed in whatever school and vocational program happens to be able to accommodate him.

Even when the student's choice is relatively free from such extraneous determinants, however, it is usually difficult for him to make a meaningful decision. Eight grades of a rudimentary curriculum is hardly an adequate basis for choosing from a variety of unfamiliar vocations. So it is "fate" that guides most youngsters into one or another of the secondary school programs. The problem of choice recurs, for a much smaller number, when commitments are again required for entrance into the colleges. At this point meaningful decisions are often made, but perhaps more often they are spun from a skein of bewilderment. One secondary school graduate summed up the situation by saying, "Foreigners frequently ask young educated Ethiopians, 'What do you want to become?' How do we know? This whole business of *choosing* is entirely new to us, and we know very little about the alternatives that we have now. It is all very confusing."

So far the modernizing sector has provided little, beyond vocational pamphlets in the school libraries and an occasional school debate on the respective values of different occupations, to help orient the students on these matters.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

883 Programs of vocational guidance and counseling have not yet been instituted.
463 Students who manage to form clear and definite ambitions also suffer for
873 want of help, if for some reason they have been shunted away from the appropriate training program, or have been deprived of opportunities to prepare adequately for the vocations to which they aspire. Two research findings bear on this. In one study it was found that "few secondary school administrators when questioned are aware of the ambitions and desires of their students," and that less than twenty per cent of the group of secondary school students surveyed felt they had received training "suitable to their ambitions."[20] In my own survey it appeared that fewer than twenty per cent of the secondary school students expect to enter the occupation they actually want to.

*883 In addition to this discontinuity between childhood experience and the
• 178 hitherto unknown necessity of making some sort of vocational choice, modern
464 adolescence also involves a sharp break between the experience of post-elementary school and the process of getting on a payroll. Here the Ethiopian youth faces the problems of students everywhere as they leave school for the "real world." In at least two respects, however, his dilemma is more acute than that
[557] of his counterpart in Western societies. Because virtually all jobs are controlled by the government, and because the government is still organized along traditional lines, the Ethiopian graduate must suddenly forget the universalistic criteria of school and acclimate himself to the traditional pattern of ingratiating oneself with those in positions of power—a pattern referred to as *daj ṭenät* —if he is to gain and retain a decent job. For many graduates there is no machinery that might assist them in locating a job: no job advertisements, employment bureaus, not even effective personnel departments in most quarters.

87 The school system itself, however, does manage in certain cases to find
464 jobs for its graduates. For the foreign-educated returnees a special placement board was set up within the Ministry of Education. The locally educated are placed, if at all, by their individual schools, depending on the policy of the school, the resourcefulness of its director, the demands of the market, and current political emphases.

The outlook for graduates of the various specialized vocational programs has been in recent years as follows. A consistently high demand for teachers has assured jobs for graduates of the various teachers training programs. Graduates of the commercial school have been in great demand because of the increasing bureaucratization of government and the slight expansion of commerce. The public health college had great difficulty in the placement of its

* Since this was written the University's Department of Education has begun to produce a series of career pamphlets for secondary school students.

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graduates in the late fifties, but the government's implementation of a program of public health centers has opened up increasing opportunities for their employment. Graduates of the school of social work have been placed in positions with little difficulty. 87 464

On the other hand, in those areas in which the government has shown little or no interest the school authorities have been hard put to find employment for their graduates. This was shown most dramatically in the case of the now defunct community development training project at Majete, whose graduates were allowed to drift into oblivion due to the absence of an effective community development program in the country. Those who have completed courses of study in agriculture have not been extensively employed by the government because of chronic disorganization and neglect in the Ministry of Agriculture, while lack of capital and know-how has tended to keep them from private agricultural enterprise. Graduates of the technical and engineering schools have been having some difficulty in entering the work force due to the slow pace of Ethiopia's industrial development. Graduates of general academic programs, finally, and those who drop out before completing some course of study, tend to be left to their own devices.

While the modernizing sector, then, has introduced the revolutionary notion of vocation and has institutionalized means of training young Ethiopians for modern work roles, it has not yet provided adequate mechanisms either for guiding them into and through the training programs or for employing them properly once they are trained. 178 463 464

Preparation for Marriage

Conditions of growing up in the modernizing sector have disrupted the harmonious pattern of Amhara adolescence also with respect to entrance into adult family roles. Conflicts arise both from postponement of the normal age for marriage and from radically new ideas about the nature of marriage. 883* 178 [582] [581]

The modern adolescent typically expects to marry at an age that is at least eight to ten years older than his traditional counterpart. While Amhara girls have traditionally married in their early teens, girls in the senior class of secondary school now say they expect to marry in their early twenties. Amhara boys have traditionally married around the age of twenty, but those in post-elementary schools now expect to marry in their late twenties or early thirties. 883* 178 582

This shift is due to a desire to attain as much education as possible, and above all, for the boys, to the precarious economic position of modern adolescents. While living on his father's farm an Amhara boy could marry early with the assurance of having enough land to work to support his family at least at subsistence level. The modern boy who finishes secondary school or [871]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 178 582 college, however, has no assets beyond his diploma in most cases. He must wait a number of years to achieve the beginnings of financial stability.

*883 178 581 584 The students' conception of marriage, moreover, reflects a still more profound change. They are no longer content to regard the selection of a mate as a matter to be arranged by parents in accord with their own interests and standards. They reject the old-fashioned Amhara marriage in which romantic love plays no part and divorce is common. Most of them insist on the right to choose their own spouses, and they tend to approach that choice with criteria

TABLE 6

QUALITIES MOST DESIRED BY STUDENTS IN A FUTURE WIFE OR HUSBAND*

Quality	Per Cent Checking Quality as Either First or Second Choice		
	Secondary Schools		College Males
	Males	Females	
Educated	48	75	41
Shares my opinions and beliefs	44	48	43
Religious	34	25	19
Good companion	25	30	45
Beautiful	15	0	22
Kind and generous	15	13	9
Wealthy	4	2	5
Will impress my friends socially	3	2	2
Number	(385)	(39)	(191)

* Related to Gillespie-Allport question No. 17.

which differ from those of their parents. Instead of following such traditional criteria as good upbringing, family background, and wealth, a number of modern adolescents aspire to find spouses who, above all else, are educated, who share their opinions and beliefs, and who will be good companions. (See [582] Table 6.) Even such strong aversions as those against tribal and religious exogamy have receded somewhat before the new ideal of marriage founded on romantic love.* The figures in Table 7 are indicative of the diffusion of this ideal as well as of the growth of a sentiment of Ethiopian nationality.

* Although Amhara men have customarily had sexual relations with non-Amhara women and produce countless offspring from them, the latter have not been considered appropriate choices for marriage, except in very high strata where the marriage served a purpose primarily political.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

These changes in the definition of marriage have produced tremendous tensions and heartache in the relations between generations. Deprived of authority in the occupational sphere, parents of modern adolescents cling with all the more pride to their traditional rights and obligations in the sphere of getting their children properly married. They often nag their children to leave school and get married while young. They stand determined to select their children's mates. If they do admit some consideration for their children's desires on the matter, they insist that any prospective spouse measure up to traditional criteria. As a result, disagreements between students and their parents revolve around the subject of marriage more frequently than anything else.

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TABLE 7

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DISPOSITION OF STUDENTS TOWARD TRIBAL AND RELIGIOUS EXOGAMY

		Secondary School		College Males
		Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	(per cent)
Willingness to marry a person of a different religion.	Yes	29	33	60
	No	71	67	40
Willingness to marry a person of a different tribe....	Yes	64	73	84
	No	36	27	16
Number.....		(392)	(40)	(194)

Modern adolescents, however, have by no means wholly rejected traditional attitudes and sentiments concerning marriage and courtship. Although a number of students say they want to marry for the modern reason of finding personal happiness through a satisfying love relation, many more indicate that they are chiefly inspired by the traditional motives of wanting to beget children. Most of them wish to continue the custom of having large families, the most frequently mentioned numbers of children desired being "four" and "more than six."*

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The modern boys still widely share the traditional expectation that their

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* The mean number of children desired by the college students in my sample is 4.23. This figure exceeds those of all the national college groups reported by Gillespie and Allport except Egypt and South African Bantu.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 brides be virgin. Related norms greatly restrict their quest for romantic love.
• 178 Since Ethiopian society still expects its maidens to be shy and retiring, and to
581 avoid social relations with boys outside their families, the boys find few
*883 opportunities for getting to know members of the opposite sex. Even in those
834 few situations where sociability between the sexes is publicly permitted, in-
178 grained tendencies to segregate the sexes persist. The most liberal context for such sociability, the University College campus, has witnessed relatively little interaction between male and female students. In spite of their occasional resolutions to act more boldly, the college boys have in the past tended to shy away from the co-eds except during such rare formal events as a college dance or off-campus parties.

*883 This is not to say that modern adolescent males have no opportunity for
836 premarital sexuality. On the contrary, their opportunities in this regard are
178 perhaps better than ever. The proliferation of brothels in Ethiopia's urban
548 centers makes sexual initiation easy, almost a routine event.* Students also
834 frequent these houses for social entertainment, dancing to swing and Latin rhythms, and sipping beer or soft drinks. Thus the continued sanctions against social intercourse in more respectable forms work to sharpen the Amhara dichotomy between decency and sexuality, and leave modern boys with a double standard that separates the marriageable girls from the enjoyable ones.

*883 The idea that marriage should be founded on romantic love has brought
178 greater anxiety as well as hope into the lives of Ethiopian adolescents. This
581 anxiety is due in part to the above-mentioned inhibitions against that easy
584 commerce of the sexes which so facilitates the discovery of a suitable love
[152] object. It also reflects a certain ambivalence toward the new ideal, based on a lingering attachment to the authority of the old system. This was manifest, for example, in the response to a college debate on the topic, "Resolved: that the custom of letting the parents choose a spouse for the children should be maintained," that took place in 1959. Although on anonymous questionnaires *90 per cent* of the college students said they will probably decide whom to marry themselves, and only 3 per cent said the decision would be made by parents or other relatives, in voting on the matter after the debate the students (in contrast to the judges who awarded the negative debaters) publicly declared themselves 42 per cent affirmative, 41 per cent negative, with 17 per cent abstaining.

*883 Anxiety regarding the new conception of marriage, finally, is also con-
178 nected with a new-fashioned fear of divorce. The mind of the modern adoles-
581 cent vacillates between the ideal of an abiding marital relationship based on
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152 * Due perhaps to the greater importance of their peers, sexual accomplishments have now become a frequent topic of conversation and a matter for boasting among modern adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

love and the image of the traditional Amhara marriage, likely as not to end in divorce. This sort of concern was expressed in a revealing way in the following statement by a twenty-year-old college student: 883* 581 586 178 [152]

> The main thing I want in my wife is good character. Beauty is not so important. Of course she will be an excellent cook. But mostly I am concerned that she be the *right* one for me; I do not want to get divorced. But you can't really know if she is the right one until after ten years of married life. If after having about five or six children it turns out troublesome, I will have to leave her. A person cannot go on living that way.

In some instances, ironically, this quest for the perfect marriage leads to a rejection of the very institution of marriage itself. Seven per cent of the students questioned indicated that they do not want to get married eventually—either because they "could never afford it," they "would be happier living single," or they just *"do not want to enter a relation that will end in divorce."* Thus at a time when the stability and warmth of family life are needed more than ever, the very possibility of family is doubted. 883* 178 581 589

Some Ethiopian students blame the deteriorated family and an alleged increase in divorce in their country on the impact of Western civilization. True, the introduction of the Western concept of marriage and of the rudiments of a modern occupational system have dislocated the traditional arrangements for marriage; and other related problems, to be discussed in the next chapter, plague the Western-educated elite. But Western civilization has also developed resources to begin to cope with analogous problems in its own societies, and perhaps it is not too soon to acquaint Ethiopia's youth with some of these: for example, the recent developments in man's understanding of the dynamics of marriage as well as more sophisticated conceptions of the ideal and importance of family life in modern society. 581 177

CULTURAL ORIENTATION

A generational conflict manifests itself further with respect to questions of belief, taste, and value. Because of differences on such issues, students and their parents have grown far apart. The more traditionalist of the older generation refer to the modern youth as *ya-sĭmmĭntaññā shi lĭjjotch* ("children of the eighth millennium"); that is, of that corrupt time the Amhara believe will precede the destruction of the world. The latter, in turn, refer to the old-fashioned as ignorant, uncivilized, sometimes even "savage." 561

Yet, as we have been suggesting, this conflict is by no means total. Amhara adolescents are too deeply attached to many aspects of their traditional culture to engage in wholesale rebellion. Because of strict childhood training they remain basically respectful toward their elders. In addition, they often prefer to champion their own traditions in the spirit of a freshly excited nationalism. 883* 561 178

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indication of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

Religion.—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "religion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether. Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer dependent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of the various missions in Ethiopia.* In recent years a third alternative has fired

* In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the imagination of some other students: attempting to reform the Orthodox Church from within. This has been done within the framework of the Orthodox Students Association, which will be discussed further in chapter vii.

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Science.—Of all the aspects of Western culture to which they have been exposed, Ethiopia's students have been most receptive to the teachings of natural science. They tend to regard it as the most important single benefit which Ethiopia can gain from Western civilization. After religion, morals, and manners, "science" is the response students give most often to the question: "What specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

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TABLE 8

EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS OBSERVE TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

883* 771 178

Practice	Secondary School (per cent)	College (per cent)
Follow the fasts:		
All the time	38	16
Most of the time	26	23
Sometimes	27	24
Not at all	9	37
Go to church (mosque):		
More than once a week	9	2
Once a week	59	40
Less than once a week	25	36
Not at all	7	22
Bow to church (mosque):		
Always	28	9
Some/most of the time	50	38
Not at all	22	53
Pray:		
Twice or more daily	64	40
Once a day	22	23
Once or twice a week	6	14
Once or twice a month	5	10
Not at all	3	13
Number	(485)	(195)

Disagreement on such questions as the nature of solar eclipses, the descent of man, and the etiology of disease is common between the modern adolescents and their own parents. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the scientific imagination has yet displaced traditional thought patterns in the minds of Ethiopian students, or that scientific beliefs have fully replaced [178]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

"superstitious" beliefs about the world. Concerning this latter issue we are fortunate to have a substantial study carried out by Dr. Edith Lord during 1956–57—a study of the beliefs of some 1,250 Ethiopian students and teachers.[22]

The subjects of this study were asked to mark as true or false a list of 132 unscientific beliefs commonly held by Ethiopians. These beliefs dealt with nature and devils, health and disease, danger and death. In spite of a measurable trend toward increased disbelief in the unscientific statements as the level of schooling increased, it was found that a significant number of these statements were accepted by a majority both of the post-elementary students and of the Ethiopian teachers. Thus, 56 items were believed by half or more of the 451 secondary students in the sample; 34 items by half or more of the 96 teachers; 9 items by half or more of the 61 student nurses and first-aid workers; and 6 of the items by half or more of the 29 college freshmen. Table 9 shows some of those unscientific beliefs most commonly subscribed to by secondary school students. These particular items are of interest for two additional reasons. The first five of them were among the beliefs held by *a majority of the twenty-nine college freshmen*. The first and the last, moreover, are among those items which showed an *increasing* frequency of belief with an increase in education, from the first four primary grades, through the second four grades, to the secondary level.

TABLE 9

UNSCIENTIFIC BELIEFS ACCEPTED BY SECONDARY STUDENTS

Item No.	Belief	Percentage of Secondary Students Holding the Belief
53	Certain mineral waters can cure stomach trouble by causing a person to vomit worms, sometimes frogs or toads	88
35	There are some skillful persons who can summon the devil at will	87
102	Too much charity leads to madness	74
58	A child will grow better if the nerves are removed from under his back teeth	68
84	If you go into a room which has been closed for a long time, you will be attacked by Satan	57
78	A man who has skill in stopping rains must not eat or drink while he is performing the ceremony to stop rain, or he will be unsuccessful	64
	Number	(451)

In my own questionnaire, administered three years after Dr. Lord's re-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

search and only to the highest grades of secondary school and college, three 883*
questions regarding unscientific beliefs were included. In a pilot study of 815
sixty secondary school seniors and juniors, 42 per cent held the belief that "a 178
person can be made sick by the evil eye of a *budā*," and 33 per cent believed 177
that "too much learning results in madness." To the one question asked of 125
my entire sample: "Do you believe that some learned *dabtarā* can cause rain to fall or stop?," 16 per cent of 500 secondary and 7 per cent of 200 college seniors and juniors said "Yes."

This persistence among the educated youth of traditional beliefs which run 883*
counter to the consensus of modern scientists has been attributed by Lord to 815
the inadequacies of the Ethiopian school system. This is as might be expected, 871
inasmuch as most Ethiopian teachers have had relatively little education 178
themselves and the curriculum has necessarily been somewhat improvised and 177
incomplete. Officials of the Ministry of Education have labored to overcome these deficiencies, and certain changes were in fact made in consequence of Lord's study which aim at combating the more dysfunctional of the prevailing superstitions.

It seems likely, however, that certain irrational dispositions are also in- 121
volved here, dispositions to maintain the unscientific beliefs in spite of im- 815
provements in teaching methods and materials. One would predict this on the 178
basis of general sociological understanding of the consequences of rapid social 177
change. The disruption of the traditional belief systems brought about by the sudden dissemination of scientific beliefs inevitably creates insecurity, and a common reaction to such insecurity is to cling with increased tenacity to some of the old-fashioned beliefs which are closely identified with the traditional culture.[23]

One area in which this defensive "revivalism" can be observed in Ethiopia 178
is that of medicine. Many Ethiopians who have received modern secondary 75
education maintain that Western medicine, while useful in many cases, repre- 815
sents only one possible approach to the problem of sickness and health.[24] 177
Thus, fifty-seven per cent of the secondary students questioned asserted that traditional Ethiopian medicines are effective all or most of the time, although such therapies include the eating of rancid butter to cure malaria or drinking holy water to cure serious functional disorders. Dr. Lord herself has reported an episode which throws much light on the psychology of this reaction:

> An Ethiopian colleague, a former teacher, warned me against drinking water in a certain provincial town on penalty of my catching malaria. He was challenged thus: "You are one of the better educated persons in Ethiopia; don't you know the cause of malaria?" He quickly, and eruditely, gave all the known scientific facts about malaria. Then he added, "You people from the United States (and the United Nations) think that this (the scientif-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians
815 know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the
177 water in places where the Anopheles breed."[25]
[175]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

*883 *Taste.*—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from ex-
177 treme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring
178 both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions.
[262] Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward
[272] Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages
[273] are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

*883 With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in
264 that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their
177 hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer
178 eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

*883 On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have
291 sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But
177 because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and
178 using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

*883 In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according
517 to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are pre-
53 ferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more
177 popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[26] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 177 178 [535] [533] [276] cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

*883 177 184 Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

*883 517 178 177 AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women....	85	15	0	(700)
Food.....	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*.....	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays....	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry.....	67	26	7	(700)
Music.....	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†...	40	58	2	(700)
Dance.....	38	56	6	(700)
Drink.....	24	56	20	(700)
Painting.....	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gursha*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically identical.

*883 177 [184] school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

*883 517 178 *Morals.*—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the government schools. The weakening of family controls by the new school environment has slightly reduced the importance of loyalty to kin in the students' scheme of things, and has significantly reduced the moral authority of religious customs. A third sphere of norms—respect and obedience toward elders and persons of authority—is maintained by the hierarchical school system, officially headed by the Emperor himself. However, the ambiguous status of foreign teachers and their frequent inability or unwillingness to play the traditional authoritarian role tends to weaken this, for the possibility of informal, even joking, relations with foreign teachers gives Amhara students their first taste of a more relaxed relation to authority figures. (Unprepared by any other experience for such a relationship, their reaction tends to be one of exploiting the permissive teacher as much as possible while at the same time losing respect for him.)

Finally, the expectation of physical stamina and aggressiveness in the Amhara *goramsä* is carried over into the school setting but with definite modification. It prevails in the feeling that one must not tolerate insults or be cowardly. It also persists in altered form in the new pattern of athletic activities instituted by the schools. On the other hand, the greater camaraderie expected among schoolmates means that aggression must also be carefully controlled. An indication of the psychological difficulties to which the crowded yet sociable conditions of school life have given rise appears in response to the question: "What is the worst thing that could justifiably be said against you?" The most frequent sort of answer to this question relates to unchecked aggression: "Quick to anger," "quarrelsome," "ill tempered."

Of the new moral values inculcated by the school system, some of the main ones appear to be self-development via education; honesty; sportsmanship; and social responsibility.

Ethiopians often speak of the "value" (*ïqem*) of education, meaning thereby the path to a well-paying job and a higher standard of living. But one would be mistaken to suppose that this explanation exhausts the meaning that education has for the modern adolescents. The freeing of their imagination and the exercise of previously unknown intellectual capacities prove themselves thrilling experiences for each new class of students. And their most preferred pastime is "reading," their most popular films are educational ones. A number of students spontaneously declared, when asked about the real reason they go to school, "to learn about the world" and "to learn about humanity."

In the traditional culture of Abyssinia, learning was highly valued, to be sure. But its task was to produce a class of literati capable of transmitting the hallowed beliefs and symbols. Education for the sake of inquiry as such or for personal development was never permitted in its program. If the value of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 871 178 this new sort of education exists but dimly in the minds of the older students, that is largely because the school system has made grades and diplomas the end of scholastic activity.

*883 577 178 871 The fact that the value of truth is to some extent institutionalized in the schools—at least in the demand for correct answers to examination questions—gives honesty a novel importance for the modern adolescents. It does in fact appear that "honesty" is the most highly valued of the six character traits presented in the questionnaire. (See Table 11.) Numerous teachers, however,

*883 577

TABLE 11

QUALITIES PREFERRED BY STUDENTS AS REPRESENTING THE BEST KINDS OF CHARACTER

Quality	Per Cent Checking Quality as Either First or Second Choice		
	Secondary School		College Males
	Males	Females	
Honest	65	73	86
Polite	27	30	18
Smiling, sociable	26	43	28
Patriotic	22	10	19
Kind, generous	21	10	12
Humble, modest	10	15	21
Number	(390)	(38)	(190)

*883 577 178 871 report that the students tend to prevaricate on every convenient occasion. This tendency is the product of a tradition in which the culture hero is not George Washington, who "could not tell a lie," but Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, master of deceit, and of a life outside the classroom in which equivocation and deception are the rule. The effort of Ethiopian students to shake the legacy of wax and gold and incorporate the more austere ideal of truth for truth's sake is fraught with pathos. Some of them have frankly conceded that the task belongs to another generation, by naming "honesty" as the thing they want their children most to have that they did not have.

Another ideal which the Ethiopian students have adopted—slowly, but with growing success—is that of sportsmanship or fair play. In Amhara culture the goal, not the manner of fighting, is what is important. The government school system, however, has taught students to play fairly in accord with

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

fixed rules and to respect their opponents. Until a few years ago, the imperfect acceptance of these norms was shown by the frequent fights between opposing school teams following soccer and basketball games. But gradually a new tradition of athletic activity has been building up in the schools, and with it the related norms have started to gain greater acceptance. 883* 577 178 871

Still another value that the school experience has promoted is that of social responsibility. Most students are very grateful to the government for having provided them with schooling and related benefits, and they feel a keen obligation to show their gratitude by serving their country. They have also become conscious of the great needs of their people for economic and social development. In Amhara society, service was expected in behalf of the family and, except for mass levies in time of warfare, usually stopped there. The modern adolescents are still mindful of their obligations to their parents and siblings, but have now included broader ideals of social service in their moral orientation. When asked what they expect to bring most satisfaction in their lives, the students named "improvement of local community" more often than any other category except "career or occupation." (See Table 4.) When asked what they would do with a million dollars, more than a third answered in terms of purely social enterprises, such as building schools and hospitals, helping the poor and orphaned; and many others indicated private enterprises with specifically social purposes, such as improving agriculture and building factories to provide employment. 883* 641 577 185 593

It is difficult to determine how deeply the value of social responsibility has been internalized. In their public declarations, at any rate, the students wax eloquent in propounding ideals of good citizenship. They urge themselves to prepare for introducing modern ways to the uneducated; to return to the villages, integrate themselves with the old society, and lead them gently to better ways; to fight discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and social class; to solve the problem of corruption and bribery in the government; and to promote national solidarity.

Politics.—The Amhara adolescent has little occasion to develop specifically political attitudes, since his customary political world has been coterminous with subordination to legitimate local and national authorities, and defense of his country against invaders. Unless he was the son of a nobleman involved in struggles for power, there have rarely been any political issues to engage his attention. 883* 66

A host of issues, domestic and international, have by contrast been thrust upon the modern adolescent. Yet in comparison with students from the other countries of Africa and the Middle East, his political orientation is relatively undeveloped. Ethiopian students at regional or international gatherings of students have in the past tended to feel somewhat out of place, for the polit-

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In these attitudes one may note the persistence of such traditional valuations as the esteem for power, the stress on religion, and the concern about polite and dignified behavior, alongside such modernist valuations as the esteem for civilization (*selṭānē*) and science. With regard to the emerging world power of Africa, however, the students have been rapidly coming to reject the traditional Abyssinian viewpoint, which looks with disdain upon the Negroid peoples of Africa as racially and culturally inferior.

As recently as a decade ago, a group of Ethiopian college students responded with ridicule and evident disdain to an illustrated ethnographic account of some East African tribes. But in the late 1950's, due to the growing

TABLE 13

ATTITUDES OF ETHIOPIAN STUDENTS TOWARD THE "BIG THREE" POWERS

Classification of Comments	England (per cent)	U.S.A. (per cent)	U.S.S.R. (per cent)
Positive.....	32	59	47
Negative.....	37	19	26
Neutral.....	11	5	6
No answer....	20	17	21
Number..	(640)	(700)	(662)

prominence of the African independence movement and the decision of the Ethiopian government to take more interest in African affairs, the pan-African sentiment began to invade the heretofore aloof highland plateau of Ethiopia. The attendance in Ethiopian colleges of students from other African countries and the growing number of pan-African meetings in Addis Ababa have promoted this trend. Consequently a number of Ethiopian students now follow with growing interest the developments in other African countries, and not a few indicated that their identification with Africa as a whole was stronger than their identification with Ethiopia. All but 8 per cent of the 700 students questioned: "What do you think about Africa?" had some response that showed concern, whether sympathy for African independence and getting rid of the Europeans (28 per cent), or sensitivity about Africa's "undeveloped" and "uncivilized" state and its need to work hard (33 per cent), or pride and confidence in Africa's resources and future (24 per cent).

So deeply rooted a sentiment as prejudice against Negroid Africans cannot quickly be willed away. It does seem, however, that the emergence of the

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*883 829 186 178 new African nations is proving to be an effective agency for reducing such prejudices among the students. The broader political identity afforded by pan-Africanism may in turn be promoting a more genuine national feeling among the younger educated Ethiopians, a feeling of solidarity that begins to encompass all the ethnic groups in their land.

*883 829 Still another sphere in which the Ethiopian students have had some room for the development of political values has been the study of history. The students were therefore asked to name the persons in Ethiopian and in world history whom they most liked and disliked, and to explain why.

The three most liked figures in Ethiopian history were Haile Selassie, mentioned by 36 per cent of the respondents; Tēwodros (30 per cent); and Menelik (16 per cent). Named much less frequently were Yohānnes (mostly by Tigre students); military heroes of Menelik's day, and of the resistance during the Italian occupation; and church figures, especially Abuna Peṭros (the great Orthodox martyr of the occupation).

*883 829 643 The reasons given for naming Haile Selassie include the wide variety of respects for which his reign has been praised. He is liked for uniting Ethiopia, supporting education, fighting for the country's freedom, introducing modern civilization, and generally "helping the country." The reasons given extend to expressions of very personal attachment, such as "he gives me education," "he supplies everything," and "he is my guardian."

The reasons given for liking Tēwodros or Menelik best are more circumscribed, and they are balanced by a number of other responses in which these two emperors are named as the most *disliked* persons in Ethiopian history (Tēwodros, 7 per cent; Menelik, 4 per cent). Tēwodros is liked chiefly because of his bravery and his attempt to unite the nation, while he is disliked because of his cruelty. Menelik is liked chiefly because of his defense of the country at Adowa and his efforts to modernize Ethiopia and introduce education; and he is disliked for having sold parts of the country to Europeans. Yohānnes is mentioned about the same number of times in both categories (2 per cent): positively, for his courage in battle and his Christian zeal and, negatively, for his intolerance in persecuting non-Christians.

*883 829 Līj Iyāsu (11 per cent) and Ahmad Grāñ (8 per cent) are the most disliked figures in Ethiopian history. They are associated with specific offenses: Iyāsu with being an "incompetent ruler," "encouraging Islam," and "chasing after women," and Grāñ with burning churches and massacring Christians. Three other persons in this category are Sultan Ibrahim (5 per cent), for selling the port of Assab; Dejāzmātch Haile Selassie Gugsa (4 per cent), for fighting on the side of the Italians in 1935; and Yodit (2 per cent), the legendary queen who is said to have sacked Aksum in the tenth century.

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As many as 44 per cent of the students failed to name anyone they dis- 883*
liked in Ethiopian history. This may be attributed in part to their meager 829
knowledge of Ethiopian history, perhaps still more to their fear of expressing themselves honestly on such a point even in an anonymous questionnaire. But doubtless another reason was that presented by the 2 per cent of the students who wrote: "[I dislike] none; all did good."

If the responses on Ethiopian history are analyzed with respect to the qualities or achievements of the men concerned, we find that military virtue —expressed as "brave," "defeated many enemies," or "fought for Ethiopia"— is mentioned far more often than any other (27 per cent). In second place are actions related to the modernization of Ethiopia, and the third most frequent category is that of unifying the nation. The most frequently mentioned negative categories were anti-Christian actions (burning churches, converting to Islam), cruelty, treason, and selling Ethiopian territory.

A different pattern of response is apparent in the comments on world historical personages. The interest in military prowess is still there, but not as prominent (19 per cent). It appears chiefly in the preference for Napoleon and, occasionally, for Alexander the Great. Themes of national unification and modernization occur very rarely. It is the general category of humanitarian qualities and achievements that dominates these responses (40 per cent), expressed variously as "freeing the slaves," "promoting equality," "working for peace," showing kindness or generosity, possessing wisdom or creative genius. Thus it is that Abraham Lincoln stands out as the most admired figure in world history for the Ethiopian students (22 per cent), and that following him, Napoleon, and Peter the Great, Mahatma Gandhi stands in fourth place.

Responses concerning the most disliked figure in world history are consistent with this tendency to transcend the sentiment of militant nationalism. The main charges against the villains of world history have to do with cruelty, slaughter, provocation of war (including, of course, the attack on Ethiopia), and despotism, while vices related to betraying one's nation are scarcely mentioned. The names which dominate these replies are Hitler (22 per cent), Mussolini (21 per cent), Nero (8 per cent), and Stalin (2 per cent). It appears, then, that the study of world history may have the effect of strengthening the humanitarian side of the students' political orientation by exposing them to a different set of ideals and models.

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF MODERN ADOLESCENCE 883*

The pattern of adolescence described in this section came quickly into being 871
and has already undergone some substantial changes. It is, in effect, the pattern 178
of the 1950's. The educational system before and just after the occupation was, structurally, an extension of the old pattern of schooling sons of noble-

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*883 871 178 men and outstanding commoners in the vicinity of the royal court. But with the importation of hundreds of foreign teachers, the establishment of an extensive system of secondary schools and colleges, and the provision of economic support for thousands of post-elementary students, a real structural change came about. Although the school system remained completely subordinate to the throne, it introduced a number of processes that had a dynamic of their own.

*883 121 178 As we have seen, these new socialization processes have subjected the modern adolescents to many sorts of conflict and strain. They have been placed in conflict with their parents, and hence within themselves, on the basic issues of work and, particularly, marriage. They have been subjected to the simultaneous appeal of traditional and modern patterns in virtually all aspects of culture. They have been forced to make choices in numerous areas, while their traditional counterparts have customarily been prevented from making any kind of choice at all.

It might seem that such a situation would breed a troubled generation, distraught and disoriented, knowing what we do about the psychological hazards of rapid culture change. And indeed, among the modern adolescents of the fifties, one might find classical cases of anomie and identity diffusion, boys who confess, "Nothing seems worthwhile to me . . . I am confused, being brought up as I was on the traditional beliefs without questioning and then suddenly being forced to ask questions," or, "The problem of choosing the work I should go into is my only real problem right now, but because of it I find it hard to make decisions about anything. If this suffering is the price of freedom, I am not sure it is worth the price."

Such cases, however, were the exception, not the rule. Most of the students were working hard to get ahead in the world or enjoying their newly acquired freedom and camaraderie. Almost all our respondents had ready answers concerning the sort of work they want to go into, and what they would do if they could have any wish granted. Comparing themselves with [828] their elders, they presented a positive self-image. They regarded themselves as more "civilized," "well built," and "generous" than their parents' generation, albeit somewhat lazier and less polite; and in comparison with Ethiopians a decade older, saw themselves as "better educated," "more clever," "more adventurous," and better able to "enjoy life." Nearly all of them (92 per cent) said that they felt either "enthusiastic" or "hopeful" about their personal future. So one could characterize the Ethiopian post-elementary students of the fifties as relatively buoyant, clear-headed, self-confident, and [181] enjoying their situation of culture contact and change far more than suffering it. How may this be explained?

One great source of their strength was a sense of dependence on the [643] Emperor. As founder of the Ethiopian school system, Haile Selassie has

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appeared to the students as the source of their new goods; of their learning, 883*
health, and well-being. Because of a feeling that "he supplies everything" 121
and "he is my guardian," students of all grades have been among the most 178 •
sincere and enthusiastic supporters of Haile Selassie. So their adoption of 643
Western patterns has from the outset been legitimated by the highest tradi- [177]
tional authority, and the harshness of the culture clash has been softened
by the symbolization of both tradition and modernity in the Imperial Person.
Here the traditional pattern of "functional deviance" re-asserts itself. The 883*
adolescent rebels against the traditional demands of his parents, but expends 121
that deviant energy on behalf of legitimate symbols of the national society. 178

Related to this was a strong sense of national purposiveness. *Agarēnennā* 883*
negusēn tammrē iredālhu ("Having studied, I will serve my country and 121
my king")—this was the motto of most Ethiopian students in the forties and 641
fifties. The conspicuous needs of their country provided clear goals in terms 178
of which students felt they were preparing themselves.

Still another motive force was the need for personal justification. The many 883*
students who in a sense deserted their home villages or families in order to 121
spend years in school carried with them an ambition eventually to show the 178
folks back home that they were right after all. This involved the conviction 871
that going to school was the right, at times the righteous, thing: a blind
faith that simply by continuing along the road of education they would
make good in the world and return home some day as a sort of hero. Here,
too, is an echo of the old deviant pattern: the renegade returning home, after
many years, as a successful churchman or warlord.

The economic situation, finally, was encouraging for students. It seemed [464]
for many years that advanced training, including study abroad, would be
available for whoever qualified, and that the demand for educated personnel
was so great that the job opportunities for students would be endless.

By 1961, however, all these sources of adolescent morale—royal legitima- 883*
tion, national purpose, personal justification, and economic opportunity—had 121
been to some extent undercut. Some of the changing circumstances have al- 178
ready been referred to. The effect of the rebellion of December, 1960, and its 871
aftermath was to weaken the tie between Haile Selassie and the post-elemen- 643
tary students. With his moral authority somewhat undermined, the students
could no longer use him to symbolize a conflict-free transition to modernity.
Nor could they any longer count on him to "supply everything" indefinitely:
in the summer of 1962 the Emperor announced the immediate suspension of
room and board benefits for the students of the University College.

The students' outlook has further been rendered less sanguine by the con- 883*
fusion attending the political crisis of the sixties. They no longer feel the 121
keen sense of national purpose, to serve "country and king." Their ideals in 178
this regard were already weakening before the rebellion by virtue of increased [641]

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*883 121 178 [871] [183] awareness of the political realities in the Ethiopian government. They had also begun to doubt the transcendent efficacy of the educational process itself after observing the behavior of those educated Ethiopians who went before them and inevitably became their ideals. The violation of various traditional and modern norms by the latter, and their evident demoralization, raised many questions in the minds of the students.

*883 121 178 871 464 Finally, the students were made more anxious by a general constricting of opportunity. Increased numbers in the school system meant a steady intensification of the competition to gain and hold on to a place in secondary school and college, particularly since 1959. The rapid filling of jobs by the educated youth and steadily growing numbers of unemployed youth began to create anxieties about finding work in the future.

*883 121 178 [873] [162] From the viewpoint of the modern adolescents, then, a very supportive and stimulating environment in the fifties has changed to a somewhat threatening and confused environment in the sixties. It is in this decade that Ethiopia's leaders of the future, that tiny fraction of one per cent of the population who reach secondary school, are coming to experience adolescence as a real normative crisis. At a time when, in the highly modernized society of the United States, observers like Friedenberg charge that the adolescent condition is becoming obsolete—that scope is no longer afforded the young person for exploration and discovery of an authentic self[28]—in the transitional state of Ethiopia this condition is being thrust on the youth. The decisions they make now, the identities they forge, will largely determine the extent to which reason and creativity will have a place in Ethiopia's future.

*883 871 121 178 The effort of the Ethiopian government to provide a modern education for some of Ethiopia's adolescents illustrates a principle discussed in another context by Karl Mannheim, namely, the characterization of youth as a latent sociological resource which must be mobilized when any social system seeks to change itself. It is a resource analogous to the latent energy reserves which are available to biological organisms when they must make a fresh adjustment to their environment.[29] Thus far the effort to mobilize the resources of Ethiopia's youth in behalf of modernization has proceeded chiefly through a pattern of increased *differentiation:* establishing a structure of secondary socialization separate from that of the traditional structures and thereby transmitting new beliefs, skills, and values to the youth. As yet, relatively little has been done with respect to the problems of devising modes of *integration* commensurate with these new differentiated patterns. The analyses of this chapter suggest the presence of what might be called "integration gaps" on at least three levels. On the level of the individual personality, there is the problem of synthesizing the various aspects of traditional and modern culture which have been transmitted to Ethiopian adolescents through diverse sources. Inasmuch as the external supports which cushioned these conflicts in the fifties are no

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longer so secure, the adolescent individual has been thrown more on his own. He can only be helped to work through these conflicts by a transformed educational program, one which educates for self-education and seeks to enlighten students concerning the complex realities of economic development and culture change. On the level of relating youth to a modernizing occupational system, there is the problem of guiding young people into and through the relevant educational programs and helping them to find appropriate work roles once trained. On the level of planning for the whole society there is the additional problem of relating the number of individuals being trained in various fields at any period to the priority requirements of a national development program.

This last issue raises questions which for the most part lie outside the scope of this book. Yet there is one point concerning the orientation of Ethiopian students which is of immediate relevance: the disjunction between the aspiration of modern-educated Ethiopians to live in Addis Ababa and work in a government office, and the nation's needs for trained workers in more directly productive fields and for those who will work in the provinces. For at the same time that Ethiopia's youth are being trained in modern skills, they are being exposed to modern pleasures; and these—the enjoyment of modern amusements, the company of other educated people, and the excitement of proximity to centers of national power and international commerce—are concentrated in Addis Ababa. At the same time that they are being educated with modern beliefs, they are being primed for a new kind of social mobility; and this channel is concentrated in the governmental bureaucracy—the nesting ground of Ethiopia's new elites. Conflict between these new interests and the nation's deepest needs, endemic in all transitional societies, poses an integrative challenge of the highest order.

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The Old and New Elites

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that character-
177 izes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary
178 Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

[433] In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels: coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal [671] realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The govern- [64] mental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial [795] system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious [794] institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

121 This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratifi-
56 cation.
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cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a 121
society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by 56
that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive frame- 178
work of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are 181
embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is [571]
in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively 565
stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and 554
wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the [463]
statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the mer- 565
chant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the 554
small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was 441
accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an 463
Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be [186]
tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes 565
low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Low- 567
est in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from 554
the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), 463
and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced 565
sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values [181]
of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.

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565 During the reign of Haile Selassie, the infrastructure of Ethiopian society
• 178 has become more differentiated. A large standing army, an air force, and a
463 small navy have been recruited and trained by foreign military missions. The
[701] modernization of transport and communication has produced a sizable class of semiskilled operatives—truck drivers, airline employees, telephone operators, typesetters, etc. The expansion of government has produced a legion of clerks. In the towns tertiary occupational roles, like salesmen and barbers, have come into being, and the establishment of factories has engendered a small industrial labor force.

All such people tend to differ from the traditional lower classes in their relative enthusiasm for *selṭānē* ("civilization"). Still more enthusiastic are those who have had more intimate and prolonged exposure to the fruits of *selṭānē:* domestic servants in *faranj* homes; students of the secondary schools and colleges; Imperial Bodyguard troops who served in the Korean campaign and recently in the Congo; and highland Eritreans, whose experience under sixty years of Italian colonial administration has rendered them far more modernized than people of other provinces.

178 Similarly, the reign of Haile Selassie has witnessed the emergence of new
571 elite groups. A "new nobility" of government officials and urban plutocrats
554 has taken place beside the old. In addition, a nascent intelligentsia has at-
565 tained a precarious high status, resting mostly on the esteem of students, some military officers, and resident Westerners. The integrative dilemma of Ethiopia today has more to do with conflicts among and within its various elites than with tribal enmities or masses in revolt.*

643 Hovering over these four groups, kindred with each but superior to all,
571 has been the personality of the present emperor. Indeed, the history of
565 Ethiopia in the last four decades has for the most part been the story of Haile Selassie's efforts to direct and control the destinies of the old and new elites. The considerable success with which he has done this is a tribute, not only to his own remarkable manipulative skills, but also to the majesty of the office which he possesses. The position of *negusa nagast* has traditionally monopolized the highest reaches of the Abyssinian system of social stratification; constituting, as it were, an elite of One.

THE TRADITIONAL ORDER

643 *The Lofty Throne*

The emperor comprises an elite in the original sense of the word, for to the Ethiopians he is Elect of God (*seyuma egziābhēr*) according to the conventional Ge'ez honorific.

* Although, as was suggested earlier, tribal and religious differences *may* generate new integrative crises in the future.

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> with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[56]

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The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, reestablished after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete.

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Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*kārnē*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers.

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175 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureau-
178 cratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of
631 regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central gov-
642 ernment has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of
565 building up their positions, members of the most important noble families
631 have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of
642 Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of
646 high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as
631 regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to
693 Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the
578 behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov-
[465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the
565 aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the
554 eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national
[571] political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

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directed peasantry, and suffer the consequences, no dynamic program of agricultural and social development can take place in Abyssinian areas that does not enlist the active cooperation of the local *bālābbāt* and *shum*.*

The Decline of the Clergy

Although the church was instrumental in bringing Rās Tafari to power—by relieving the nobles of their oath of allegiance to Lĭjj Iyāsu—it was as a whole not sympathetic to his policy once he began to rule. Foremost champions of tradition, the clergy viewed with suspicion Rās Tafari's interest in modern education and other reforms. So pronounced was their conservatism that his weekly *Berhānennā Salām* found it newsworthy to report the fact that the clergy of one important provincial church were actually reading the Addis Ababa newspaper each week.[87] He was wise to act gingerly at first, limiting ecclesiastical reform to such matters as publishing religious texts in Ge'ez and Amharic, and encouraging the work of foreign missionaries.

In the past three decades, however, changes of many sorts have had the effect of reducing the degree of independent authority which the clergy traditionally enjoyed. These changes included the achievement of independence from the Alexandrian Patriarchate; the weakening of the church under the Italian occupation; subjection of church administration to the central government; and competition from the secular government schools.

Rās Tafari initiated the policy of seeking independence from Alexandria in 1929, when he secured the investiture of five Ethiopian bishops. This gave indigenous clergy, for the first time, the right to ordain priests and deacons, although they remained subordinate to the Egyptian archbishop. In 1950 an Ethiopian bishop, the *eçhagē*, was consecrated as archbishop; and in 1958, culminating Haile Selassie's patient and skillful negotiations, complete autonomy from Alexandria was achieved.

The attainment of ecclesiastical independence has heightened the prestige of national church officials in Ethiopia. It has brought about a re-organization of the national church hierarchy, in which fifteen bishops now hold office, one for each of the fourteen provinces, and one in Jerusalem. At the same time it has reduced the effective freedom of the clergy as a separate status group. Deprived of the external source of legitimacy which the Egyptian *abuna* formerly provided, the clergy are now entirely subordinated to the power of the Emperor. This condition was formally articulated in the Constitution of 1955, which made the election and appointment of archbishops and bishops

* A potentially significant medium of communication between them and the central government is the Chamber of Deputies, which since 1957 has brought popularly elected notables from the provinces to Addis Ababa.

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178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

648 795 793 [792] The general position of the church had already been weakened by the events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 795 793 [643] [651] Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 871 658 793 The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever government schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full-[465] time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 178 [554] [871] [658] Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite

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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Ya-dam Demṭs*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

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recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuännent*, Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

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175 royal will. A solid foundation for such a class was not possible, however, until
178 the central government had been sufficiently stabilized and expanded. These
565 conditions began to be met under Menelik, who established Addis Ababa in
642 the last decade of the nineteenth century and in 1907 created a number of
645 ministries. Housed in buildings inside the palace compound, the ministries were initially regarded as little more than an ornament to dress up the imperial court. Although men of some stature, like Afa Negus Nasibu and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, were named to the posts, the offices themselves did not acquire much prestige. It was no great matter when, five years after the death of Menelik, the ministers were turned out of office by a group of military officers at the instigation of Rās Tafari and sent home to their provincial estates.

175 After becoming emperor himself, however, Haile Selassie revived and en-
178 larged the ministerial system. Since the restoration, it has expanded into a
645 complex bureaucratic structure. In addition to some sixteen ministries, a
647 number of specialized government agencies have been formed, and the military and judicial hierarchies and the diplomatic corps have been considerably expanded. The rapid growth of the central government in the past two dec-
[652] ades is reflected in its budgetary expenditures, which went from about US$10 million in 1942 to an estimated US$110 million in 1962.

178 The growth of this governmental machinery has provided a new basis for
647 elite status in Ethiopia. Mobility channels now run in terms of appointments
571 in the government bureaucracy. The periodic announcement of appointments
554 by the Emperor has become the focus of public interest in Ethiopia since the
565 liberation. Every new list of appointments provides the occasion for intense gossip and *de rigueur* congratulatory parties at the homes of the favored.

178 The new class of high governmental functionaries under Haile Selassie may
565 be regarded as a transitional elite: partly traditional, partly modernizing.
571 With regard to basis of recruitment, values represented, and style of life, the new nobility present, on the one hand, a direct continuation of the old nobility; and, on the other hand, many features novel in Abyssinian society.

178 To some extent recruitment of members of the new nobility was not a
565 creation of new dignitaries, but rather an absorption of members of the old
[646] nobility into the new political organization. The recruitment of *makuānnent* into the senate, which after all is an organ of the central government, may be taken as an ambiguous instance of this. Some others were given important posts in the civil and military administrations. These include members of the princely families of Shoa, Tigre, Wag, Lasta, and Gojjam; the Bakere clan, royalty from the Galla province of Wallaga; and scions of the *makuānnent* who were important in Menelik's day or before, members of aristocratic clans which go by the names of Bēzā, Mojā, Sofanē, and Addisgē. Such persons are likely to have been awarded the old military titles for purely honorific pur-

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poses. They have been led to renounce extreme particularistic ambitions, thanks to marital connections, intimidation, the lure of new benefits, and a degree of nationalism, but to some extent they remain spokesmen for regional and para-dynastic interests. 178 565

Men who did not belong to the old nobility were recruited into the new nobility on the basis of two criteria, loyalty and ability, with loyalty clearly the more important of the two. Some men from very humble backgrounds have been thus raised to the highest governmental positions through their "loyalty" to the Emperor, manifested in great part by their readiness to inform on the words and deeds of others and their obsequious and flattering manner. These have normally not been given the traditional military titles but only the titles of their office. In contrast with the carry-overs from the old nobility, still known as *masäfent* and *maḳuännent*, these men have been called *bäla-selṭän* ("holders of power"). They have included a number of men who were active in the fight against the Italians, either through the Hagara Fiqer ("National Patriotic Association," a group organized in 1935 to promote Ethiopian unity and combat Italian propaganda) or as patriotic fighters in the resistance. The Emperor also promoted to high position some men who collaborated with the Italians, relying on their earlier record as an insurance against latter-day disloyalty, and using their antagonism against the patriots as a check against excessive ambitions of the latter. 178 565 554 [648]

On the other hand, the new nobility includes those who, whether from high family background or not, are so placed because of outstanding ability. This consideration is no longer primarily a question of military ability, but of competence in dealing with technical modern subjects and with foreign diplomats. This group may be equated with the older generation of European-educated Ethiopians. The categories of adjusted aristocrats, ambitious parvenus, and intellectual bureaucrats have thus constituted a latent subdivision among the new nobility; and tensions have from time to time been expressed along those lines. [555]

Despite the elaboration of modern governmental structures under Haile Selassie, the dominant principle of the social order has been that of royal sovereignty. The entire staff of government officials has been the direct sociological descendant of the traditional court retinue. This was conspicuous in the titles given by Menelik to a number of the original ministers: *Afa Negus* for Minister of Justice; *Azäzh* for Minister of Palace; *Bajirond* for Treasurer; and *Ṭsahäfi Te'ezäz* for Minister of Pen. These and other court titles remain in use today. The primacy of the court over all other functions appears in periodic audiences at the palace, when all high government officials and other notables are expected to pay their respects no matter what business may be pending in their offices. The chief value embodied in the status group of the new nobility as a whole has been that of loyalty to the sovereign. 178 64 [175]

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178 565 661 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 565 556 [241] [455] For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 565 556 472 [175] [648] Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families, Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *makuännent* and *bäla-seltän*. They [662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 565 369 177 [556] As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 565 554 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The

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The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shir*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

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178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shĭr* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court.

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand.

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time.

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be

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571 than those necessary to perform their jobs. They do not attempt to maintain and build personal libraries, though there are a few exceptions to this. The [143] three small bookstores in Addis Ababa offer only the most insubstantial fare.

571 Nor, finally, have more than a handful of private individuals taken upon themselves the charge of a scholarly or literary calling. Although Marcel 538 Cohen heralded the birth of a printed literature in Amharic as early as 1925,[88] writing is still not very important on the Ethiopian scene.* The output of [214] original books and pamphlets in Amharic averaged less than fifteen a year over the past two decades. The presses and bookstores distribute Amharic publications indifferently at best. Much of the literary impetus produced by the desire of many Ethiopians to write, and the obvious need for good writing that would address itself to the intellectual demands of the present generation, has been sapped by economic, political, and cultural factors.

571 The economic factors include the high cost of printing; the diminutive 538 market; and the absence of publishing houses. If an author wants to be read, 214 he must normally pay for publication himself. Those who cannot must either [213] find a patron in the Crown—frequently a highly lucrative arrangement—or resort to mimeographic duplication, or else remain unpublished. The censor- [656] ship system and anxiety about spontaneous expression of any sort which has been fostered by prevailing political conditions constitute additional obstacles to literary development.

571 The paucity of serious writing has been the result no less of prevailing 538 cultural conditions. The low intellectual level of his potential audience, the absence of channels for criticism, and the dearth of precedent make it difficult for the Ethiopian writer to determine good standards of writing. The [197] confused state of Amharic, owing to regional variations and the absence of [192] consensus on neologisms and loan words for expressing modern concepts, poses many problems on the level of sheer vocabulary. The temptation to get into print quickly, if the financial and political barriers can be hurdled, exceeds the temptation to work long and hard on an opus of quality. The desire to pontificate frequently eclipses the quest for understanding.

Those conditions which have inhibited the growth of Amharic literature—poverty, governmental reluctance to provide sufficient freedom and support, the newness of the modernizing culture, and the motivational level of the intellectuals themselves—may be viewed more broadly as responsible for the relative barrenness of Ethiopian intellectual life as a whole. Insofar as these 571 conditions change in the coming decades, a radical change in the quality and organization of Ethiopian intellectual life may be expected. As a sociological

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[178] * This is no longer due, however, to the negative attitude toward writing as such which was dis- [212] cussed in chapter iii. That traditional inhibition has been largely removed—primarily, it seems, by the postwar requirement that all legal accusations and court proceedings be set down in writing.

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phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571
and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178
of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession 565
of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554
ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642]
ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177]
rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556]
imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by
allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642]
growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647]
nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701]
force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178
Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests 571
on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554
the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871
the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178
tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565
the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643]
political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178
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* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957. [439]

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178 past. The intellectuals are the product of a secular school system which is, as
571 we have seen, a structure foreign to Abyssinian tradition. Their members are
[177] drawn from all parts of Ethiopian society, and in almost no cases consist of
[871] Western-educated members of the old group of literati, the *dabtarā*. The question of their integration into what has remained an essentially traditional social system has thus been Ethiopia's main sociological dilemma during the present decade. We shall return to this question after considering the composition and general situation of the intellectual class.

571 Whatever his line of work, the Ethiopian intellectual tends to be employed
463 by the government, since employment opportunities in the private sector are
[464] still extremely limited; and where such exist, the government has often claimed priority over the intellectual's services by virtue of its having educated him. Many of the intellectuals work as public administrators, in the middle echelons of the government bureaucracy, with the titles of "assistant," "director," and "director general"; and there has been a growing tendency
[875] to appoint them in the higher levels, especially since 1961. Hundreds of them now work as teachers in the elementary and secondary schools,* and some six dozen teach at the college level. A small but growing number are employed as physicians, medical workers, engineers, and legal advisers in various government institutions. Still another group works in the small communications field—on the staffs of the various newspapers, the patriotic monthly *Menen*, and Radio Addis Ababa. The small group holding jobs outside the government works as engineers and bureaucrats in industrial firms, as employees of the Ethiopian Air Lines, or have small commercial or agricultural enterprises of their own.

571 With respect to interaction among the intellectuals, however, the most
871 important distinction among them has been the place where they received their education. Here we may speak of two main groups: those who received part of their education abroad, the "foreign-educated" or "returnees"; and those who received all their education in Ethiopia, the "local-educated" or "locals."†

The Returnees

Close to two hundred Ethiopians studied abroad prior to the Italian occu-
[177] pation. Since French was then the official European language in Ethiopia,

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* About forty-five hundred Ethiopians, of varying levels of educational attainment, were teaching in government schools of all types in 1960–61, according to the Ministry of Education school census for that year.

† This term is used as a neutral descriptive category, free from any negative connotations it may have acquired when first coined by the returnees. More recently, the West African term "been-to" has been incorporated into Amharic for referring to the returnee.

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familiar with in more industrialized societies. Nor is there any disposition to improvise improvements with what facilities are available. Little attention is paid to the condition of offices, for example, which are normally located in dark, drab, depressing rooms. Furthermore, the operating procedures of Ethiopian administration are bound to frustrate those who have been conditioned to more rationalized systems of organization. Departments frequently operate with ex post facto budgets. Filing systems are hopelessly archaic. There is virtually no public consciousness of the importance of work *time*. 571 466 [47] 571

> Ethiopian persons are not geared to a timetable. I have to keep telling myself: "This is how we do it here." Seeing a ten-story building go up in a month, grass and all—that is not for here. . . . I get most annoyed when I cannot finish some matter as promised. Not wanting to reveal the name of my colleague or superior who is holding up the action, I have to make up excuses. Eventually I run out of excuses and this bothers me. . . . Sometimes I get angry and say: "I have given my word to someone, and must have the matter ready today; please sign it." And am told: "Oh, well, don't rush things so." 466 805

Work relationships have frequently exasperated the returnees. There has been little inclination to give technically competent employees proper jurisdiction over the personnel in their departments. Technically uneducated superiors have tended to make unrealistic demands—for example, requesting an immediate report on a complicated question that requires weeks to prepare. On the other hand, they have tended to assume that their age and experience are equivalent to the technical knowledge of the foreign-trained, so that technically warranted projects have been casually dismissed because they do not strike the fancy of the superior. 571 466

The returnees have not been so despondent about these conditions which, after all, could be changed—than they are about the apparent futility of trying to change them. Older employees are quick to resent alterations in the accustomed order. 571 466 178 829

> My efforts to reform are opposed by most of the men who run the [postal] system now. Some of them have been working there for forty years or so, and they want to keep things just the way they were when mail came in on camels, because they have always done it that way.

Such resistance to change at the workaday level is tacitly supported by those in the upper echelons of authority—the new nobility. In them the returnees have found their main antagonists and from them have received their most painful lacerations. [565]

The *shamäggelotch*, or "elders," as they are termed by the intelligentsia, have by no means presented a solidary front in opposition to the young modernizers. On the contrary, the attitude of the new nobility toward the 571 565 178 829

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571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
571 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
584 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
834 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The tradition-
178 al mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

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furniture, etc.—are equally burdensome investments if the returnee does not 571
possess them. Furthermore, the traditional large wedding is still expected in 585
most cases. In the city this involves an enormous expense—as much as 511
Eth$2,000-$4,000—which often puts the groom in debt for several years.*

There are many returnees for whom these factors are excuses more than in- 571
superable obstacles, or who frankly prefer the extended bachelordom made 582
possible by the greater freedom of the modernizing sector to an uncertain
match. If, as frequently is the case, they would marry only an educated wife, [581]
they may be discouraged by the shortage of educated Ethiopian women; or
beset by too much pride, if coming from a humble background, to ask for the
hand of an educated girl who is likely to come from an upper-class family.
They may be victims of the cycle of antagonism that has developed between [578]
educated men and women in Ethiopia, the former attacking the latter for de-
manding too much in the way of material things and being only superficially
modernized—"half-baked"—and the latter indicting the former for preferring
foreign girls and unjustly neglecting Ethiopian women.

But the root of the problem is often deeper (leaving aside, for this discus- 581
sion, characterological factors). It is entwined with a basic insecurity about 178
the whole idea of marriage in the transitional atmosphere of contemporary 177
Ethiopia. Perhaps nowhere in the minds of the returnees do traditional and 571
modern norms stand in such delicate counterpoise as with regard to the ques-
tion of the sort of wife one should marry and the proper type of relation to
have with her. Should he prefer the traditional woman, modestly dressed and
inconspicuous, or the Western ideal of a sexually attractive female? Should he
have a wife who stays at home all the time, or one whom he takes along to
social gatherings? Should he have a wife with whom to share interests and
discuss problems, or one to order about and keep in her place? The returnees
have normally been attracted by the Western marriage pattern while abroad,
but it is so out of place in the Ethiopian context that many are troubled by the
prospect on return. The foreign-educated man feels he should have an edu-
cated wife, but he also feels threatened by a woman who is independent,
especially if she is holding a job. Such ambivalence adds an additional dimen-
sion of vulnerability to the returnee's position.

In sum: the conditions of life receptive to a modernizing intellectual 121
stratum have not yet been established in Ethiopia. The personal frustrations 571
of the returnees are an inevitable consequence of their being the bearers of 177
modern culture in a traditional oligarchical order—especially one that has 178

* A new custom has developed in response to this problem. It has become the practice in some [178]
offices for sheets of paper to be circulated prior to a wedding in the ministry or agency where
the groom is employed. Co-workers write the amount they wish to be deducted from their
salaries in their behalf. Most recently, modest weddings have started to become respectable.

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been affected by modernizing agents for but a relatively brief period and in a relatively diluted fashion. The beliefs and values which the returnees acquired while abroad concern national development, technical competence, and individuality, while the norms of the social structure in which they must live are based on the values of loyalty to monarch, ascribed status, and authoritarian relations.

Of many possible types of response to such a situation of strain, four are common among the Ethiopian intelligentsia. These we may designate by the terms Opportunism, Withdrawal, Reformism, and Rebellion. With reference to the three variables of commitment to modern goals and norms, acceptance of existing authorities, and the distinction between "activity" and "passivity," these patterns may be represented schematically as in Table 14.[59]

TABLE 14

MODES OF ADAPTATION OF ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES

	Commitment to Modern Values	Acceptance of Existing Authorities	"Activity"
Opportunism	−	+	+
Withdrawal	+	−	−
Reformism	+	+	+
Rebellion	+	−	+

Opportunism is the mode of adaptation in which the returnee's commitment to modern goals and norms is eclipsed by his passion for status, power, and income. He differs from the traditional aspirant for high position in Abyssinia in that two of his status qualifications are novel—residence abroad, and a university degree—and above all in that the pursuit of his personal goals entails a *renunciation* of nationalistic ideals and universalistic standards which were nurtured while abroad. For some opportunists this is no real problem: their study abroad was all along essentially a façade to be used in advancing their careers. But for the others the process of becoming an opportunist is a gradual one and attended by chronic self-recriminations, as the returnee finds himself compulsively agreeing with his superiors and flattering them on every occasion, and performing actions primarily for the sake of advancement rather than for the sake of doing a job well.

It is impossible to go on pursuing progressive principles indiscriminately. I sometimes see my friends doing things now which we used to condemn

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> when we were students abroad together. I wonder at times if I am losing sight of my principles altogether.

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Withdrawal is the solution of those who have retained their principles at the expense of being effectual in action. The routes of escape are varied. One way is transferring attention to problems outside the country—to international relations, problems of pan-Africanism, or the gossip about London, Paris, and New York.

> To me the independence of all African nations is more important than the progress of Ethiopia.

Some spend their energies in convivial relations with resident Westerners (diplomatic and technical assistance personnel, foreign businessmen) or in the traditional rounds of family visiting. Quite a few returnees lose themselves in card-playing or chess whenever they can, and a number have taken to heavy drinking. Often the returnee who withdraws shows no "symptoms" other than a general constriction of his life into narrow work routines and creature functions. At the same time he may be experiencing a fairly acute sense of estrangement.

> Our generation is not really living. We are not "engaged." The simple weaver—most of the people in this country—are "engaged." We are not; we live from day to day. When I leave work I go to the Ras Hotel or somewhere else. I don't want to go home, there is nothing there for me. I have nothing to work for. I have no family, nor any interest in saving money.

The third type of response, Reformism, involves the attempt both to maintain principles and to be effective in action under the existing political order. This alternative places great demands on the personality system and might well be designated as the pattern of "moral heroism."

> What we lack today is proper organization. In default of organization, we are forced to rely on morality.

The reformist returnee serves his country according to universalistic standards even though these norms are scarcely institutionalized; even though, in other words, he is likely to be criticized and even punished for maintaining standards in the face of demands by superiors and relatives to do otherwise, or for solving problems in a rational manner on his own initiative. Yet if he is officially disregarded or censured, his efforts do not go unnoticed by the patriotic modernizing elements of the population who, in a covert, informal system of communication, tend to establish severe judgments on the "bad guys" and the "good guys," and to idolize the latter as potential leaders.

In the case of Rebellion, finally, the attempt is made to be active in the pursuit of modern goals but in a spirit of basic alienation from the existing

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121 authorities. Except for a very few eccentric individuals who have seemed
571 oblivious to the dangers of speaking out their criticism of the status quo in
177 public, this has in the nature of current circumstances necessarily involved
• 178 clandestine activity. Returnees have been involved in small conspiratorial
156 groups since the mid-fifties. The December, 1960, coup d'état has been the
[669] most ambitious rebellious project to be acted out so far. Similarly motivated
[668] activities have included the duplication and distribution of subversive literature, and the formation of small groups as groundwork for an eventual political party.

Our data do not permit reliable estimates of the frequency of these different modes of adaptation among the returnees. It is important to note, however, that individuals often change from one mode to another in the course of their experience after return and that many follow more than one pattern at the same time. It is unlikely that the total number of returnees oriented primarily as rebels has ever exceeded two per cent. Most of them move in and out of phases of Reformism, Withdrawal, and Opportunism, depending to a large extent on the accidents of their appointments. A more concrete picture of their experience may be suggested by the following case study, that of a Western-educated Ethiopian who went from a phase of Withdrawal to one of Reformism tinged with Opportunism.

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The Adjustment of "Haile": Case Study of a Returnee

October, 1958. Haile has recently returned from four years of study in a Western country. He speaks very critically about the state of things in Ethiopia. He is particularly upset by the prevailing inefficiency, the lack of industriousness, and the interminable procrastination (*Ishi naga*).

January, 1959. Haile seems deeply depressed. The ministry in which he has been placed affords him no opportunity to work effectively and the job he has bears no relation to what he was trained for. He has withdrawn more into himself, but to all outward appearances plays perfectly well, with great self-assurance, the role of the Amhara bureaucrat.

July, 1959. Now Haile is working in a different ministry, in a job somewhat more closely related to his training. He appears to feel productive and useful now, and his criticism is constructive. For example, he frequently compares the situation in the United States and Ethiopia, to show how the same sort of problem can be solved more readily in the U.S. because of its greater facilities. Though Ethiopia's comparative handicaps frustrate him, he talks of plans for the development of Ethiopia with some enthusiasm. . . . Haile complains of an

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the Amharic phrase *ya-kantu weddāsē zaman*—"the era of futile flattery."

For, whatever other aspects of modern culture they have identified with, the locals and returnees are seized with the promise of its first principle: dynamism.[62] Should they join forces, among themselves and with each other, they might create the effective intelligentsia which is indispensable for realizing this dynamism in action. They would play complementary, and equally necessary, parts; the locals contributing their greater drive and closeness to traditional society, the returnees their broader perspective and skepticism toward simplistic answers and total reforms.

There are numerous obstacles to such a progressive development. Some of them represent the persistence among the intellectuals of a number of traditional pan-Abyssinian characteristics which inhibit both the exercise of creative leadership and the capacity for solidary action. The traditional context of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters which follow. The most conspicuous obstacle, however, has been the manner in which the Ethiopian government has sought to integrate the intellectuals in the social system. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Role of the Government

In the hierarchy of values which sustained the traditional Abyssinian social order, that of the transcendental religious orientation represented by the Orthodox Church may be said to have held the paramount position. This is the sense in which, as has so often been remarked, religion has been Abyssinia's only truly unifying factor throughout the centuries. Religious charisma transferred from foreign sanctuaries—the mythical Ark of the Covenant brought from Jerusalem and the archbishop periodically imported from Egypt—provided the ultimate source of legitimacy in the society, upholding the authority of a sacred Christian monarch, church-defending warlords, and a numerous and functionally differentiated clergy. It so penetrated the social system that the basic unit of Abyssinian civil life was in fact a religious one, the parish.

In retrospect it would seem that the most profound aspect of Haile Selassie's accomplishment has been to dislodge the transcendental religious value from highest place and to replace it with the system-integrative value of loyalty to the emperor.[63] His mission has been above all a secularizing one. To accomplish it he has had greatly to increase his political and economic resources; but insofar as his regime has been accepted, and not based exclusively on sheer power—which to some extent is certainly the case—the paramount value in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie has become loyalty to the emperor as a symbol of the whole society. The autonomous significance of the church has been reduced; its extra-Ethiopian source of charisma has been cut off, and its func-

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tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the 181
Crown. 178
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The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental 178
religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with 181
the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the 643
chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals 642
of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; 631
and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance 178
to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and 181
prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but inte- 565
grative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pur- 085]
sued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, 178
a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient 181
technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor 571
and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard 871
of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relation- 178
ship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever 643
advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his 571
personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal 871
solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

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Thanks to the untiring endeavour of Your Imperial Majesty in the field of education, we now have not only elementary and secondary schools throughout the country but also different higher educational institutions providing the youth of our country with higher education. Besides this, competent students are selected and sent abroad for specialization, as a result of which the number of Ethiopian students in foreign countries is increasing. Those of us who are now standing before Your Imperial Majesty are only a few among those who have been given such an opportunity. . . .

Your Imperial Majesty's struggle is to enable Ethiopia to benefit from the advantages of modern education in order to improve the standard of living of Your people so that Ethiopia will play adequately its part in the international community. Consequently, the public services that are rendered in the reign of Your Imperial Majesty are enormously great compared with the past. This can be seen easily by the number of ministries and other government agencies established by Your Imperial Majesty. . . .[64]

[A reply by the Emperor]:

We have been deeply touched by what you have said on behalf of the returned students. From you, We expect devotion to your country and your Emperor. . . . Endeavour to profit your country from the fruits of your education. Men are in great need today. It is not enough to be labeled as "man"—one must be worthy of the name by being of use to the community. This is the real test of education.

You must get in intimate touch with the cultural heritage of your country. Familiarise yourselves with the modes of life from which you must have been estranged naturally by your absence. You must endeavour to purge yourselves gradually of alien influence in your daily lives, and so God help you.[65]

This sort of paternal relation has served not only to promote the loyalty of his educated "children" but also to check mild cases of dissidence. Grown men with sophisticated technical training who may have voiced some critical sentiments have been called in for mild reproof: "Why have you behaved thus? Did We not always bring you fruit and other things when you were at school?"

Such a policy was no doubt viable when Ethiopians with secondary education numbered in the hundreds, but it becomes increasingly implausible as the Emperor's family of educated youth multiplies into thousands. No less relevant to its long-run futility is the fact that knowledge, unlike wealth and political position, is an inalienable possession. Their knowledge gives Western-educated Ethiopians a kind of independence of the Emperor that is lacking in most of the new nobility, and that perhaps may be compared to the private armies of the feudal lords or the power of excommunication held by the church. It was awareness of this that prompted one returnee to say: "The Emperor will have to learn that our education is not a plaything he can turn on or off as he pleases."

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But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shĭr* and *divide et impera*. "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

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people. He has been the procreator of much of what demand for modernization now exists in the country, although the Italian colonial administration must also be credited for a certain amount of this demand. By the fifties, however, the growth of the demand of modernization had become self-sustaining, if only in a relatively small part of the population. At that point Haile Selassie was unwilling, or at least unable, to take the next step, to raise national development higher in the societal value hierarchy than loyalty to the Crown. Thus, a traditional oligarchy has been maintained, in which the development of a self-respecting modern intelligentsia has been effectively restrained and its decisive ascendance as a new elite has been prevented.

The paramount sociological problem in Ethiopia in the coming decades concerns whether or not this pattern will be broken. There is no guarantee that it will be. It is highly thinkable that the opportunists among the intellectuals will be absorbed into the new nobility and that a new oligarchy will entrench itself and maintain its exclusive position by increased repression.[66] The number of young people being given secondary and college education will continue to be limited to a diminutive percentage, and the deeply rooted sentiments of the mass of the population for a regime of traditional oligarchy will not be offended. Economic development will proceed at a snail's pace, and what additional wealth is produced will flow into the pockets of a small minority. One possible outcome of such an eventuality would be that the modernizing infrastructure of the society would grow increasingly restless, culminating in a revolution which installed a modernizing oligarchy.

Alternatively, modernizing forces already unleashed in the country may gather momentum and sustain a gradual breakthrough of the new order. If one were to credit the reports of many who have spoken with the Emperor at first hand, this would be his desire. But far more than imperial approval of a distant ideal is required for it to become reality. Two conditions, above all, would be essential. One is that the systematic, if unwitting, demoralization of the intellectuals would have to be ended. Some sphere would have to be created in which universalistic standards have full sway, in which a modernizing intelligentsia can maintain and develop standards and transmit them to younger elements. The most obvious way to do this would be through a university which, by guaranteed financial support, independence from political pressures, and determined operation at a high standard, could provide the Ethiopian government and people with the technical and executive intelligentsia needed for effective modernization, and could provide an environment in which a corps of "custodians of the public good," loyal to the regime but free to express criticism, might be developed. The program for such a university was carefully drawn up by the planners of the Haile Selassie I University. It remains to be seen whether the opposition which muffled that program shortly after its inception, in the spring of 1962, was motivated primarily by

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at social gatherings in the course of discussions about nearly any subject. One 691
cannot but conclude that the Amhara litigate to a large extent because for 182
them it is an intrinsically pleasurable activity. At times, in fact, the forms of 517
litigation are acted out as in a game. *Teṭāyaq,* for example, analogous to the 524
Western process of cross-examination and a beloved feature of traditional 695
court procedure, is sometimes practiced at parties though it has been out- 178
lawed in modern courts.[10] Two men will face a "judge" and try to bedevil each other with sly questions and preposterous claims. The content of the dispute is of no matter; it may be sheer nonsense.

Amhara litigants are ingenious at expressing themselves. They do so with 155
gestures, intonation, and timing that achieve considerable dramatic effect. 537
They are delighted to perform at the slightest provocation. The following 691
incident, recorded during a morning at court in Manz, illustrates that dimen- 695
sion of Amhara litigation which consists of the inherently gratifying expression of oral aggression:

> The defendant had been accused of plowing the plaintiff's land without permission. In fact, however, the plaintiff had given the defendant previous permission to plow there—in front of a group of elders who testified accordingly. The judge therefore ruled against the plaintiff. The plaintiff said he would appeal this decision, because the permission he granted had not been registered in the governor's office and, besides, he had some other complaint to bring against the defendant.
>
> At this point someone in the audience rose and said: "That is all. The judge has ruled against you, and the case is finished." Whereupon the plaintiff told this speaker that he should keep quiet, that his speaking out was against the law, that he had bothered him when the case was tried before a lower level judge previously and should bother him no more. Instead of hushing up, the speaker left his position against the wall and stood next to the defendant, asserting that he would speak in behalf of the latter.
>
> The plaintiff then accused this man of talking out of turn. The judge acknowledged this accusation and called for witnesses. Instantly half a dozen or more men jumped to their feet, eyes bursting with excitement and pride as before a battle, and volunteered to witness against the speaker. One by one, with a great show of oratory, they said their pieces against the man who had spoken out of turn. More than once the judge had to urge these witnesses to stop talking after the evidence had been presented. By this time the substance of the original dispute seemed to have been completely forgotten.

Oral Ambivalence

Much as the oral zone is favored by the Amhara as a center for positive 155
gratifications, both of the passive-receptive and the active-aggressive sort, such

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symbolize communal solidarities by the forthright assertion of individual claims and grievances. 121* 181

In virtually every instance of a consideration of communal projects or needs that the author observed or heard of, the dominant characteristic of the discussion was a vigorous and uncompromising assertion of individual claims. If it was a question of allotting spaces in a new marketplace, each discussant was vociferating that the portion allotted to him was insufficient. If it was a question of securing more land for various communal purposes, the various property owners involved orated against contributing a square foot unless reimbursed at some preposterous figure. If it was a scene in court or a police station, everyone with any personal grievance, real or imagined, felt it perfectly proper to interrupt at any point and give vent to his opinion. If it was a question of rebuilding a ravaged church or constructing a road, personal disputations undermined all efforts toward communal action. If it was simply a ceremonial occasion, the peaceful setting one might have expected was shattered by the airing of private disputes. 156 157

> Today a new church building was dedicated. It was built to replace one that had been destroyed more than two decades ago by the Italians. People from all over the area made the journey to attend this celebration. All night long and well into the morning the priests and *dabtarā* sang and danced, accompanied as usual by sistrums and drums. Later in the morning, after the church had been officially sanctified, everyone was assembled in the open space in the church compound to listen to some verses composed in honor of the event by one of the local *bālābbāt*, a man who had been a key figure in getting the church rebuilt. He had scarcely finished reciting his poem when a woman in the audience spoke up in anger, arguing that the new church would involve more taxes and in some way would affect her property rights adversely. While he was trying to pacify her, others interrupted and began airing grievances of their own. What was to have been the climax of an occasion for the expression of communal solidarity ended as a bedlam of argument.[10]

The one area in which communal sentiments have seemed fairly strong among the Amhara has been in connection with the pursuit of outlaws. It is customary—in some Amhara districts, at least—for the local inhabitants to band together in informal posses when threatened by the presence of one or more *shĭftā*, or "outlaws." Yet even here, in his attitudes toward the *shĭftā*, the Amhara reveals an ambivalence regarding the maintenance of civil order and security. 121* 181 156 157 674 627 [829]

The term *shĭftā* had, in former times, primarily a political connotation. It referred to someone who rebelled against his feudal superior and was applied only to persons of relatively high status.[11] More recently the term has been vulgarized and broadened to include any sort of outlaw in the rural areas. In 121* 674 [178]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

objects of manipulation, their own creative energies will go unused. Only when their personal aspirations can be linked with co-operative endeavors or collective projects will their participation be sufficiently motivated to draw forth new sources of energy. 121* 178

The traditional approach, moreover, does not take into acount the available intelligence of the population. It neither takes advantage of the understanding of immediate problems possessed by those concerned nor responds to their pressing needs and interests. The result is failure to make improvements in areas ripe for change, and antagonism or frustration of the elements of the population involved.

Given the relative ineffectuality and unresponsiveness of traditional methods of mobilization, and the new demands for concerted action unleashed by the process of urbanization and the growth of modern aspirations, it is natural that new forms of association should emerge to fill the sociological vacuum. That these new associations have been late in coming merely reflects the tenacity of traditional habits and institutions, as well as the reluctance of the government to permit the formation of groups which might have any sort of political or parapolitical ambitions. But during the past decade, and particularly since the rebellion of December, 1960, a variety of novel associational forms have come into being or have significantly diffused throughout the country. These associations may be described under three general categories: (1) formal associations of indigenous inspiration, (2) formal associations of foreign inspiration, and (3) informal associations.

Formal Associations of Indigenous Inspiration

Eddīr.—Probably the oldest and most widely diffused of the modern associations in Ethiopia, the *eddīr* is a form of welfare institution. Its functions are primarily to help defray the cost of funerals; to assist families in the event of the death, illness, unemployment, or imprisonment of their breadwinners; and to help in the case of loss due to fire. Members of an *eddīr* are obliged to contribute to a common fund and to attend the funerals of other members. (Twenty-five cents a month is not an uncommon payment, although in rural centers the contributions are often solicited only in time of need.) The institution is said to have originated among the Gurage and to have become more widely adopted during the Italian invasion, when many people who were killed had no relatives to bury them. Since then *eddīr* have been established in towns all over the country, fulfilling the vital functions which were performed by kin in the traditional countryside. They are organized on a territorial basis, in villages, towns, and city quarters; on an ethnic basis, as among the Dorze and Wollamo peoples; and even on an institutional basis, as among the employees of some government ministries. Often considerable moral pressure is exerted on townsfolk to become members—the threat of having no one 747 178 [177]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 selves as a strong progressive force in the national life. This is due, we sug-
156 gested in the previous chapter, to a basic passivity related to the orality syn-
181 drome in Amhara culture. The considerations raised in this chapter seem no less relevant. The egoistic disposition and organizational laissez faire characteristic of traditional Amhara society affect no less their capacity for progressive action by inhibiting the uses of solidarity.

*121 The atomism of the Ethiopian intelligentsia has been a conspicuous feature
156 of their condition since they came into being. It is manifested in the basic dis-
181 trust in their orientation toward one another as well as toward the rest of
571 Ethiopian society. The regret of not being able to trust one's close friends is one of the more frequently heard confessions from their lips. The analysis presented in this chapter suggests that this reflects the attitudes and customs of traditional Amhara culture as much as it does the alleged saturation of the society with informers. That so few modern-educated Ethiopians have dared to break out of the vicious circle of distrust by daring to establish solidary relationships and to circumvent the prevailing fears and stagnation by establishing organizations of some sort is an illustration of the fact that, however much they may give lip service to the ideals of nationalism and populism, their hearts are primarily attached to winning new increments of prestige and income; in brief, to becoming director-generals.

*121 Yet the total picture is by no means only one of atomism and stagnation.
178 Some of the energies needed for Ethiopia's development can be, and have
181 been, obtained by extending the traditional principles of domination and
571 respect for authority into new areas of activity. Successful innovations in rural sanitation or agricultural practice, for example, have come about when local big men have been convinced of the desirability of the change and have then pressured the populace, by means of their authority and prestige, to implement the new measures. While the traditional authoritarian approach may for some time to come be the most ready method of mobilizing energies for social development, it alone cannot meet all the organizational needs of changing Ethiopia. One reason is that its effects are not continuous. To a large extent it depends on the whim and the physical presence of the relevant authority figure. It is common experience in Addis Ababa that particularly pressing problems are neglected for a long while, until the Emperor turns his attention to them; the matter then will be busily attended to for the moment, but is likely to be forgotten again when pressing matters turn the Emperor's attention elsewhere. This pattern is the model for most activity throughout the society where responsibility for specific problems is not carefully institutionalized.

*121 Another shortcoming of the traditional political pattern is that it does not
178 tap the potential energies now dormant in the population. Insofar as the mass of the people remain passive, involved in the developmental process only as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

747 178 come to one's funeral is particularly potent—and the transactions of the *eddīr* are strictly governed by elected officers.[39]

454 178 *Equb.*—The *equb* is a form of savings association in which weekly or monthly payments of a fixed sum are exchanged for the privilege of receiving a large lump sum at some point in the life of the group. In addition to provid- [571] ing a means of forced saving, the *equb* offers a basis for sociability when the members come together to make their payments and are provided with food and drink. Like the *eddīr*, the *equb* is believed to have originated among the [177] Gurage, and acquired wider popularity following the Italian invasion when many people needed large sums of money for rebuilding homes and purchasing livestock. The mode of operation of an *equb* has been described in the *Ethiopian Observer* as follows:

> A person desiring to start an Iqub will discuss the matter with his friends; if they agree a meeting will be called to discuss the rules and regulations of the proposed new society, and in particular the amount of money to be paid by each member, the frequency of payment and the time and place of meeting. A president, or dagna [literally, "judge"], and a money collector will be elected from among the most respected and reliable members of the group.
>
> The President then asks every member to bring one or two guarantors who will be responsible for payment in case of default for whatever reason it may be.
>
> On the appointed day all the members assemble and the secretary will call the roll. Any member unable to attend is expected to send his subscription in time. The specified sum is then handed by every member (or substitute) to the President. Any latecomer will be fined according to a pre-arranged schedule, this money being kept by the President until the end of the Iqub, when it is used for the common enjoyment of the members. The collected funds are drawn by lot, the winner receiving the total subscription of all the members. The lottery is normally effected by the members writing their names on small pieces of paper which are then placed in a hat, a blind-folded non-member then drawing out the name of the winner.
>
> After each draw, the winner is disqualified from taking part in further lotteries, but continues to pay his fee until every member has drawn his share. If he fails in this duty his guarantors have to pay.
>
> When all at length have been rewarded the time has come to set up a new Iqub.[40]

Equb have been established by members of virtually all low- and middle-income groups—clerks, merchants, servants, peasants, policemen. Their rapid increase, in response to the growing importance of money in Ethiopia's econ-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

omy during the past two decades, represents a significant growth of the capacity for voluntary formal organization in the modernizing sector.[41]

Māhebar (*Regional Associations*).—A type of formal association which has sprung up in Addis Ababa in recent years, becoming popular for the first time around 1960, is known as the *māhebar*. While its name is taken from the traditional Orthodox fraternal association, in aims and organization it is different from the religious *māhebar*. While the latter is devoted to honoring one of the saints and is convened primarily for feasting and sociability, the modern *māhebar* is organized on the basis of territorial or tribal bonds and is concerned with problems of social betterment. The first *māhebar* of this kind was established by the Gurage in the fifties.* Thereafter, the idea spread to members of other groups, and Addis Ababa residents originating in Gondar, Tigre, Harar, Manz, Tagulat, Fitche and elsewhere began to form *māhebar* of their own. The basic idea behind all these *māhebar* is to make some contribution to the welfare of the provinces through projects voluntarily financed and organized by fellow-countrymen living in the metropolis. These projects have included construction of roads, schools, and hospitals; supplying books for schools; and provision of facilities for assisting inhabitants of the provinces who come to the city. Members of the various *māhebar* convene weekly or biweekly, usually on Sunday in the vicinity of one or another of the Addis Ababa churches, to discuss their projects and make their financial contributions.

Formal Associations of Foreign Inspiration

Student Associations.—The Orthodox Students Association was founded in 1958 by a convention representing all the colleges and some of the secondary schools. Its successful establishment was due in large part to the efforts of an Indian Orthodox minister who at the time was one of the Emperor's private secretaries. There is some evidence that an earlier spontaneous effort to form such a group in the early fifties was checked by the government. Members of this association have been concerned with adapting the activities of the church to contemporary needs. They criticize the established church for its use of a dead language, excessive ritualism, and lack of teaching; and have proposed that the Orthodox Church should institute Sunday schools and

* The Gurage *māhebar* remains in a class of its own, with respect to size, wealth, and ambitiousness of program. The Gurage have also pointed the way to using the *māhebar* form in a way that transcends the narrow tribal or territorial passions which it has thus far tended to canalize. This has been done through the establishment of another, project-oriented *māhebar* concerned solely with building a road from Alam Gana to Wollamo Soddo, whose membership includes Galla and Wollamo as well as Gurage. This association has already collected well over a million dollars, and has completed the construction of a bridge. It is headed by a capable Gurage army general and its activities and collections are reported regularly in the Addis Ababa press.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cultivate a missionary spirit in order to reach the non-Christian peoples of Ethiopia. The association sponsors weekly religious services, featuring hymns in Amharic and talks in Amharic on religious and moral questions, and publishes a monthly journal. The Orthodox Students Association stands out as the first nationwide voluntary association in Ethiopia. It holds an annual convention which draws some three hundred students from all parts of the country.

The Ethiopian College Students Association was established in 1960 after some years of patient maneuvering by officers of the various college student governments. It attempts to represent the interests and needs of students vis-à-vis the government and to handle relations with international student organizations.

A number of student clubs have appeared from time to time within the framework of the colleges. One of the most popular and productive of these has been the Ethnological Society of the University College, founded in the early fifties by a Polish member of the college staff. Over the years it has produced several issues of an ethnological bulletin. More recently, under the framework of the new university, dramatic and choral groups have been established as well as groups like the Education Students Association and the Economics Students Association. Graduates of some of the secondary schools and colleges, moreover, have formed a small number of alumni associations.

Labor Unions.—Although Ethiopia has for some time been a paying member of the ILO, the government has until recently strongly opposed the establishment of unions in the country. Nevertheless, due to the encouragement of labor representatives from Western and other African countries, as well as to the courageous efforts of a number of Ethiopians, several unions have at last been established and have won some degree of recognition from the government.* Trade unions were first attempted among employees of the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad and in Eritrea.[42] They now include employees of a number of factories. Even household servants have formed associations that establish minimal conditions which members are obliged to demand from their employers.

Professional Associations.—The Ethiopian Teachers Association, with a large paper membership but scarcely any activity, was the only professional association in Ethiopia prior to the 1960 rebellion. If one may generalize from the frustrated attempts of Ethiopian doctors to establish a medical association, it would seem that the government was attempting to discourage groups of this sort as well as trade unions. Since 1961, however, the picture has changed. There now exists not only a medical association, which publishes its own

* A law establishing a legal basis for labor unions was enacted by the Ethiopian parliament in 1962.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

journal, but also an engineers' association, a college teachers' association, and an Ethiopian writers' association. Earlier attempts to establish an organization of lawyers have not yet reached fruition.

National and International Service Organizations.—A final group of formal associations consists of those which include non-Ethiopian nationals as well as Ethiopians in their membership and which carry out welfare services of various sorts. The Ethiopian Red Cross, the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association, the YMCA, and the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa have been active for more than a decade. More recently, the International Christian Fellowship was formed with an eye to discussing ways of translating Christian principles into social action, and the Social Service Society has broken new ground in the welfare field with its ambitious program of relocating and rehabilitating Addis Ababa indigents.

Informal Associations

Another significant sociological development since the 1960 rebellion has been the blossoming of what might be called "mutual confidence groups." Although the public climate remains somewhat tense and generalized suspicion still prevails, a step has been taken away from the complete atomism of the pre-rebellion era. These groups consist of numbers of friends, bound by such factors as kinship, common ethnic background, relationships formed during study abroad, and occupational ties. Perhaps the most important single bond underlying these groups derives from friendships formed during the crucial experience of attending secondary school together. While for the most part these groups carry out no organized activities or structured discussions, they do provide a context in which any of the issues of the day can be discussed with fairly complete frankness and without fear of reprisal.

There are some progressive Ethiopians who would like to see these groups become the nuclei of action groups and political parties, even on an overt basis. The prevailing view among them, however, seems to be that this is as far as they can go under the present regime.

The efflorescence of voluntary associations in Ethiopia during the past half dozen years constitutes a remarkable thickening of the fabric of Ethiopian society. It may be seen as a vast, unconscious process of arousing and co-ordinating energies to meet the novel realities of Ethiopia's current historical situation. What relationship to this collective process have the individualistic features of Amhara character and society which were discussed above?

It may be observed that in virtually none of the cases cited above were the Amhara the initiators of the associational forms in question. The territorial and "project" *māhebar* were introduced into Ethiopian life by the Gurage; so, as far as present evidence indicates, were the *eddīr* and the *equb*. The labor

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The labor movement, limited as it is, has been in the hands of Eritreans on the one hand, and primarily non-Amhara workers in the south. Student associations have been formed chiefly at the instigation and under the aegis of foreign staff members; though here, as with the professional associations, modernized Amhara have sometimes played a leading role.

Once the new associations had been introduced, the Amhara like other Ethiopians were quick to adopt and expand them. Their participation in these new associations, however, has been affected, as might be expected, by the intrusion of traditional behavior patterns. Three examples of such behavior patterns come readily to mind.

(1) While the *equb* is conceived as a kind of credit union and as a focus for communal sociability, the *co-operative* sentiment tends to be lacking among members of Amhara *equb*, at least those of which the author has any knowledge. For example, in case of dire need, an *equb* member who desires the lump sum out of turn may be forced to *buy* the amount from the weekly winner, sometimes by forfeiting as much as ten or twenty per cent of the amount. By capitalizing on the crises of others, some enterprising *equb* members are able to sell their successful claims several times. Furthermore, in the early years of their existence, *equb* were frequently faced with the problem created by members who won the money early in the cycle, left town with the money, and did not return to pay their later installments. This difficulty has been met to some extent by the requirement of securing one or two guarantors for each person who enters an *equb*, but problems of this nature have led to altercations that have brought many *equb* members into court.

(2) The behavior of members of Amhara territorial *māhebar* is essentially that of a traditional social or civil gathering. The big men are seated in places of honor; the rest of the people stand quietly by. After a protracted period of exchanging greetings and milling about, the crowd listens respectfully while one or more of the big men makes a statement, and perhaps exchanges a few words with the group's secretary; and then the gathering disbands. Although the *māhebar* is organized with respect to the attainment of specific goals, the substance of the meetings is instumental to a very slight degree. The assembly rarely involves a meeting of minds to discuss an issue or a common problem, or to work out a program of action; but exists primarily as an occasion for the resonance of primordial sentiments by virtue of shared territorial attachments.

(3) In all associations, finally, certain traditional characteristics which are incongruent with the optimum conduct of groups come to the fore. This is no less true of the modern-educated than of the traditionals. Members fail to come on time to arranged meetings or neglect to come altogether.* They

* The *equb* has attempted to check this pattern by imposing fines on members who come late.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

883* 178 463 87 829

19. Thus, an eighth-grade student in Manz explained the popularity of the Jimma Agricultural School by saying, "The boys all want to go there because it is run by the Americans, and a school run by Americans means that everything is done right—food and clothes are properly distributed, and so on."
20. Shack, *op. cit.*, p. 417. 113
21. In response to a question on their attitudes toward the priests, sixty juniors and seniors of Tafari Makonnen Secondary School replied as follows (1959): 40 per cent were unequivocally proclerical; 22 per cent were ambivalent, expressing awareness of both good and bad elements in the clergy; and 18 per cent were primarily anticlerical, calling the priests "incompetent," "opposed to modernization," and "not supported by the people." (The rest were no answers or noncommittal.) 883* 771 178 829
22. Edith Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-scientific Beliefs in Ethiopia," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XLVII, Second-Half (May, 1958), 339–54. 113
23. Cf. Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (rev. ed.; Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954), chaps. vii and xiv.
24. Cf. chap. iii, p. 89, and note 19.
25. Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-Scientific Beliefs," typescript version, pp. 6–7.
26. A sophisticated expression of this approach to Ethiopian painting has been published by an Ethiopian student in France. Cf. Berhanu Abbaba, "La peinture éthiopienne: point de vue d'un Éthiopien," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, II, No. 1 (1961), 160–65.
27. For a brief account of this historic event cf. Lipsky *et al.*, *Ethiopia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962), pp. 210–12.
28. Edgar Z. Friedenberg, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).
29. *Diagnosis of Our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), chap. iii.

CHAPTER 5: *The Old and New Elites*

1. C. Conti Rossini, "La regalità sacra in Abissinia," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, XXI (1948), 12–31.
2. A. Vasiliev, "Justin I (518–527) and Abyssinia," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXXIII (1933), 67–77; *Justin the First* (Harvard, 1950), pp. 299–302.
3. A. Caquot, "La royauté sacrale en Éthiopie," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 205–19.
4. F. Alvares, *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford (2 vols.; Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961), I, 122.
5. "The Chronicle of the Emperor Zara Yaqob," *Ethiopia Observer*, V, No. 2 (1961), 153.
6. J. Varenbergh, *Studien zur äthiopischen Reichsordnung* (Strassburg, 1916), p. 3.
7. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; Edinburgh, 1790), III, 237.

632
621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by risteñas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [198] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Šankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibañas, eight as wood cutters,

*757 743 177 A government hospital, located on the edge of Gondar provides the most important non-traditional therapies. Most townsfolk regard hospital therapy with considerable apprehension, because of its strangeness and of numerous apochryphal tales describing its thera-*757 177 pies. Nevertheless, the Amhara does not dispute the power of Western medicine, at least regarding some ail- 178 ments. This respect is largely explained by the demonstrated successes of Western medicine, and the fact that, operationally, it coincides with certain traditional no-*[192] tions of what powerful therpies should be like. In particular, the violent introjective mode associated with the most commonly experienced of hospital therapies, merify (injection), is regarded as consistent with notions of strong therapies. Moreover, the practitioner of Western medicine, like powerful traditional healers, is characterized by a general mastery over an extensive disease domain, through abstruse sources of power. Western therapy is not in general well integrated into traditional medical beliefs, but tends to be considered mainly from a pragnatic perspective. Thus, hospital therapy is a likely choice for ailments against which it has repeatedly demonstrated successful cures and against which traditional healers are predictably less successful. Conspicuous here are abscesses, ulcerations, and other superficial but potentially serious infections,

*757 177 known as kusil and ibac. In addition, Western therapy 178 is sought for ailments which are serious and chronic, but for which traditional cures offer a poor prognosis or only palliatives. For these ailments (in particular, leprosy, kuntina; chronic coughing, yisaal baǰiyta, including tuberculosis, yilib baǰiyta; and a variety of stomach ailments, yihod himem and migaña), Western medicine is believed to offer prognosis equal to that of powerful traditional non-secular therapies, but not necessarily superior to them.

The injectionist's therapy is considered a variety of Western medicine. Injections are provided in the town's single pharmacia and by a handful of free-lance injectionists. All offer the same therapy, injection with what the client believes to be a uniform medicament, generally unidentifiable beyond "merify".[19] Injectionist therapy is favored for primary syphilis (kitin) and "fevers" (weba).

*278 The town herbalist's foremost traditional competi- *759 tors are the weak debtera and the balazar. The relative 632 concentration of these therapists in towns is indicated by the following: In Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, there

[19] Most often, it is penicillin.

869 sident student by familiarizing him with the network of churches, monasteries, and academies which constitute the stations along which the student will progress once he leaves his natal parish.

*[192] The completion of psalter (dawiyd) is frequently considered a sign of the student's readiness to be tested by the local bishop (abuna) for certification as a deacon. The boy is fifteen or sixteen by this time, and the recipient of church fields in return for his performance in the Mass; with his marriage a few years later, he becomes a priest. The boy bent on a debtera career generally waits until he has been certified a deacon, since this is considered a prerequisite for enrollment in his first debtera school.

*793 With the exceptions already cited, a man is certain
869 to oppose his son's departure, since, sentiment aside,
621 the boy's move usually represents a significant economic
593 loss. When he leaves his natal parish, he does so sec-
166 retly, journeying to a distant debtera, in order to conceal his new residence from his father. Thus, he begins his debtera career without kinfolk or friends to protect him, without resources to meet his subsistence needs.[23]

[871] [23]Since liberation, government (secular) schools
[178] have offered an alternative to an ecclesiastical education
[369] pursuant to government employment. The effects of this have been limited, however, since only an estimated 3% pass beyond the eighth grade (ESA 1965:198). In addition children of townsmen and non-Amhara are disproportionately represented in these classes.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*787 539 75 tious occupations, journeys and marriages (thus paralling information also given in the kokob text).

Appendix D provides illustrations of medically relevant information which can be obtained from awdunigist texts.

*787 *278 *755 *793 539 In the main, a debtera acquires awdunigist texts individually, just as he collects digams, kitab recipes, and herbalist therapies.[30] Awdunigist repertoires therefore vary in comprehensiveness from debtera to debtera.

*787 539 • 178 437 Moreover, "definitive" versions of awdunigist texts are unknown; whatever their common origins may have been, extant texts are probably unique products of many adventitious deletions and additions. Deletions are most likely when texts are transmitted from seller to buyer. At that time, details are sometimes withheld by the seller, in order to secure additional payments, or as a bond

[30] Over the last three decades, the accessibility of awdunigist texts has been affected by the publication, in Asmara, of a collection of these texts. Most are in Amharic, but perhaps a quarter are in Ge'ez entirely or in part. Although many debteras demean these texts, they are in fact used, particularly by "weak" debteras. Public illiteracy, ignorance of the book's existence, of where it can be obtained, of the precise manipulations it requires, together with the limited utility its contents hold for the layman, and the fear of putative satanic associations have prevented its diffusion to the debtera's public, however.

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against continued services from the buyer. This practice occurs, in fact, in the transmission of all categories of debtera works. For example, while relating therapeutic information, the seller may indicate that he has omitted an ingredient, or he may identify it with an ambiguous or obscure nomer. Should the would-be purchaser subsequently fail to satisfy the owner, the incomplete therapeutic notation must be deleted from the text. On the other hand, debteras frequently add information to texts, first inserting it as marginalia and then, once its efficacy has been accepted, including it within the text when recopying or transmitting it.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

over a century ago that the people of Manz had the reputation of being "brave, daring, and ignorant."[46] The caricatures of the typical Manzē usually have to do with his *qilnat* ("stupidity"), such as the old story about the Manzēs at the bottom of a hill who were warned about some rolling boulders and replied: "That's all right, we'll just put our heads under the blanket and then we won't see the stones." As one Manzē himself put it: "We look to Gondar as our older brother. We know we are ignorant and illiterate."

Although in each other's eyes the Gondarē may be arraigned as haughty and cowardly and the Manzē berated as ignorant and hostile, a comparative view enables one to see the differences between Manz and Gondar as complementary, representing a specialization of interest and function within a common culture. An Amhara priest expressed this idea to me by saying: "The people of Gondar and Manz are really the same. Only Gondar is the head, and Manz the foot." (In Amharic thought the leg symbolizes force.) The pursuit of different interests and the perfection of different functions led to the cultivation of different virtues and, by the same token, the indulgence of different faults. The result was what might be called a moral division of labor along a geographical axis.

The primary axis of this division of labor in Amhara culture was vocational. The separate virtues of soldier and cleric were cultivated through distinct roles, pursued part or full time by two different sets of individuals. This permitted both sets of values to be realized without arousing the cultural and psychic conflicts that would inhere in their joint cultivation by the same persons.

It was by historical accident that Manz and Gondar came to provide an additional axis for this division of labor. At Gondar, through the political circumstances described above, the military function withered away, while the religio-literary culture was enabled to flourish. In Manz, the latter was destroyed and never recovered, while the energies of her people were consumed in fighting.

The historical advantage of this was that the Amhara thereby found the occasion for a massive revitalization of their religious culture through the facilities at Gondar, yet were able to accumulate a military momentum, through the years of incubation in Manz, that favored a political comeback which put them in a position to assert their might over an area larger than ever before in Ethiopian history. The moral consequence was that the Gondarē and the Manzē developed in pronounced form the virtues of the literatus and the soldier, respectively. The total culture was perhaps thereby enriched. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, cultivated literatus, was in a sense the epitome of the Gondarē ethos, just as Menelik II, determined fighter as well as shrewd politician and tactful diplomat, was morally as well as genealogically akin to the men of Manz. The imperial court at the end of the nineteenth century,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax
• 18 and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

633 *Gondar Today*

177 A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was
648 made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

633 After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953
[874] with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college.
[648] The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utilities as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty
[162] thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

633 With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a
871 modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aquāquām*
178 and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

633 Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine
771 church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other
793 cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART II: Utilization of Nature's Products by the Amhara

177 183 Part I established the basis for examination of the culture of the Amhara of Abyssinia and Ethiopia, and the elements included in the long blending process which created Amhara culture. The original, native, Cushitic-speaking culture patterns were based on the geographical milieu, influenced by topographical and climatic conditions of the highlands. On these were superimposed several ancient cultural influences from abroad. The Amhara thus appears as a "semiticized Hamite".

The results of this blending of autochthonous African culture traits and Mediterranean-Asian traits are apparent in both their material and non-material culture. Much survives in Amhara culture of the ancient South Arabian culture pattern: agricultural patterns, occupational divisions, dress, written language, customs and beliefs. Finally, the [184] cultural configuration which had long been the privilege of the Amhara ruling class has in recent historical times become shared by all Amhara; and, still more recently, due to imitation, prestige, conquests, etc, by ever-increasing numbers of the original, formerly Cushitic-speaking sections of the indigenous population.

[128] While Part I was concerned largely with dimensions of Time and Space, Parts II and III will be more concerned with the dimension and the use of Energy. In both material and ●181 non-material culture the Amhara pattern has remained, at first glance, strikingly "early medieval." Ingenuity with regard to material culture has gone into the utilization of the products of nature, including farming and animal hus-

181 bandry, to achieving maximum benefits with a minimum of original invention. Similarly, in non-material culture, a minimum of effort has gone into the elaboration, amendment or improvement of institutions of social organization, but a great deal of ingenuity has gone into spiritual elaborations such as the Zar-cult.

Such a disposition of human energy seems strange and out of balance particularly to the Western mind. How can it be explained?

Perhaps the major clue is contained in the Amhara proverb:

[539] "From cleverness of hand, (you get) serfdom;
from cleverness of mouth (you become) boss."

461 This has long been a basic Amhara attitude, even a
554 world view for them. The Amhara has seen much justification for associating skill of hand with slavery and near-slave status, while associating mental and spiritual skills with leadership: as military officer, judge, bishop, or zar-doctor.

If he becomes impoverished, an Amhara will go to a district where he is not known (in order not to shame his family) to work at some unskilled labor. He is then less despised than if he were to learn a skilled manual trade. For while the first can be excused as a temporary mishap, or smiled off as a lark, the latter, by his painstaking application to a manual skill, indicates a permanent association with the psychological and social patterns in the "slave category". Moreover, he may, in his apprenticeship, become associated not only with the occupation and socially lower status of his teacher, but, since the latter is

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
703 favor, permitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qämïs"
under the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
[292] rowing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the
prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled crafts-
men never rose that high but spent their lives accompany-
ing troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup
fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and em-
broiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing
183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and
specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
[754] nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also
the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoub-
tedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of
maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of
invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other
elaborations of culture.

1. Living Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("tïs", or,
if several on one large hill, "mëndär"), rather than a vil-
lage. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts,
with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus
the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-
isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the
other side of the same hill.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

P A R T VII: Concluding Observations about Amhara Culture and Society.

181

1. Predominant Ecological Characteristics: Peasant Folk Society.

Parts I and II of this study have shown how the Amhara people on the highland plateau of Northern Ethiopia utilize their generous physical environment to fulfill their ecological needs, with a minimum of tools and considerable reliance upon the ethnic division of labor.

Their ecology is primarily that of an agricultural peasantry. They share with peasants the world over certain near-universal characteristics, in the sense of Redfield's definition of a peasant as a person who controls land and practices agriculture as a way of life, not as a business for profit (footnote 131).

182 They also share certain characteristics of cultural integration with other folk societies. With regard to the latter, Kroeber remarks:

> "Folk societies .....belong to that group of societies which identify themselves with their locality, in contrast to the sophisticated city dwellers who float without roots but take pride in living in their era and day and are therefore subject to the play of fashion".
>
> (footnote 132)

This explains, at least in part, the strong regional emphasis, (down to small sub-districts) among the Amhara, indicated many times in this study.

The historian might approach analysis of Amhara culture by totalling its material and non-material traits. This might then appear to be an unbalanced conglomerate. But it seems supremely

Footnote 131: Redfield, Robert: Peasant Society and Culture. 1956
Footnote 132: Kroeber: Anthropology. 1948. p. 282

182 coherent and integrated to the Amhara. Such a point of view is not unique, as has been pointed out by Kroeber:

> "...most of what is in any culture was produced outside of it, but the highly composite product nevertheless is regularly felt as something coherent and integrated, and normally accepted as 'right'.
> ...the average individual (is) so molded by it in growing up...that even incoherences and contradictions are taken for granted as if they were logically sound and a-priori evident...
> ...(He) accepts the surrounding atmosphere as a fish accepts water. What is 50 years old in this culture and what is 3000 years old touch him alike and affect him alike. So do elements that the culture originated and elements which were introduced into it."
> (footnote 133)

From a sociological point of view, one might describe Amhara society as "tradition-directed" in the terminology of David Riesman (footnote 134). Certainly their old norms are still intact. Even the recently "modern-educated" minority has not yet experienced "anomie".

2. How Amhara Culture functions in Amhara Society.

181 How Amhara culture fulfills the non-material needs of Amhara society, may be summarized under three headings: A. Ethos and major values; B. specific culture foci; C. summary of psychological considerations predominant in Amhara culture.

A. Ethos and Major Values: the Possessor and the Possessed.

Ethos and systems of values have been variously defined; e.g.

"..the direction in which the culture is oriented...

"It is evident that the ethos of culture is pretty close to what

Footnote 133: ibid, pp. 286-8.
Footnote 134: Riesman, David: The Lonely Crowd. 1950.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

181 a philosopher or a historian might call its system of values...Values...might be informally defined as those things - cultural products, standards or ideas - which men living in societies prize and hold as having high importance, for them, for their group and decendants..."
(footnote 135)

Amhara culture is oriented to maximum use of what nature provides, but not to alteration of nature. Even the spirit-healers, who enjoy a relative maximum of "free enterprise" in Amhara culture, merely try to understand nature, in order to adjust better to it, to come to terms with it. With great patience and complex rituals, they try to negotiate a reduction in the frequency of the disturbance, to convert a handicap into an asset. Even the power of the written word, personified in the "dabtara" scribe, attempts merely to manipulate what already exists in the natural or supernatural world, without changing any basic characteristics. No "zar" doctor would attempt to change a spirit that is wholly evil into a "protective" one.

The ecological reliance of the Amhara upon the ethnic division of labor is a complex that has been described in this study in context with material culture, Amhara ethnocentrism, and sorcery. Whatever the historical origins of this complex, it is a major characteristic of Amhara ethos. In the Amhara attitude toward the ironsmith, emotional involvement is clearly evident: fear - because the ironsmith who must have derived his amazing craft from evil supernatural forces and hence must be a sorcerer; and pride - that the Amhara is not himself performing such manual labor.

The result of these cultural orientations is an Amhara national

Footnote 135: Kroeber: Anthropology, 1948, pp. 293-295.

181 character that has self-assurance without self-reliance. The trade goods of the foreigner have been received for centuries without hesitation - almost as if they were tribute; but only members of the ethnic laboring groups (Gurage, Falasha women, etc.) evidence curiosity and initiative in reproducing some of the tools and utensils of the foreigner. The Amhara themselves are smugly content to remain consumers.

Amhara culture divides the social universe into two: master and servant; the possessor and the possessed. This dichotomy dominates ethnic relations, spiritual relations, etc. In their tradition of government, one is either a "great man" or at best a retainer. Nobles have often rebelled against Amhara kings - but only to be kings themselves, not to set up a Magna Charta.

This ethos is not discussed, not articulated by the Amhara themselves. However, there are several "culture foci" that the Amhara are aware of and discuss in certain contexts. These will be considered next.

B. Culture Foci: Land, Kin, Rustic vs. Noble, Government Hierarchy, Authoritarian Literalness, the Cultural Uses of Intelligence.

The concept "culture focus" is here used in the definition of Herskovits:

> "A people's dominant concern may be thought of as the focus of their culture; that area of activity or belief where the greatest awareness of form exists, the most discussion of values is heard, the widest difference in structure is to be discerned."
>
> (Footnote 136)

Among the Amhara, notable culture foci of this sort are found in their attachment to the land - not surprising in a peasant folk society;

Footnote 136: Herskovits, M.: (in Linton, The Science of Man in the World Crisis, 1945, pp. 164-5).

181 the emphasis on frequency and intensity of kin relations; the dichotomy between "rustic peasant" and "great man - noble" personality (the latter constituting a culture goal; Amhara concepts of government administration; religious fundamentalism and literalness; and last, healing of "spirit ailments" outside the officially dominant religion.

181 423 571 Attachment to the land is a major preoccupation of all Amhara: Nobles and "gabbar" serfs, men and women, old and young, priest and student, even of the townspeople. The complexity of land tenure (i.e. the varieties of "rest" and "gult" land) is closely connected with the social status of the residential kin group; the life cycle of the individual is largely determined by the land tenure of his family, beginning with the very kind of education he is likely to receive. By extension, a person's secondary social group consists largely of persons inhabiting or stemming from the same "agärey" (lit. my countryside), the sub-district where his family owns land or works on it.

181 602 [591 611] Attachment to one's kin group is nearly as strong on the individual's maternal side as on the paternal. The greater emphasis on the latter is largely due to the predominantly patrilocal residence, and on patrilineal descent. Kin visiting is a primary social duty, on both the individual's paternal and maternal sides, with equal frequency and intensity. By extension, though with lesser frequency and intensity, visiting of affinal relatives, notably the wife's parents who nearly always live in another hamlet, is considered an important social duty.

Kin feuds often last for generations, particularly between land owning ("rest" tenure) kin groups. The fear of shaming ("harerät")

181 one's kin by doing manual labor, made necessary in some cases by
602 poverty, leads to outmigration from the district and often even from the province. Nepotism in obtaining good positions is the norm to such an extent that failure to act in this manner would be severely criticized by the traditional Amhara as the utmost in meanness. In fact, when an Amhara wants to make a particularly derogatory remark about another ethnic group, he says that they are mean to their own kin and quarrelsome within the kin group.

[476] Cooperation and mutual aid, teamwork in agriculture, hut building, etc., are largely centered on the residential kin unit, notably the patrilocal hamlet.

554 A major culture goal in Amhara society is the assumption of the status personality of the "great man - noble" ("telleq säw"), in contra-distinction to the rustic peasant ("balagär"). However, this ambition is usually frustrated because social status is primarily inherited, along with "rest" land and the expectation of re-appointment to one's father's position and rank of nobility in the hierarchy. The door to advancement has traditionally been only through feudal warfare: loyal support of one's feudal lord was rewarded with "rest" land and higher rank. Even today a young nobleman must await formal promotion to his father's rank by the emperor, and this still contains an element of personal reward and punishment.

157 The personality of the rustic Amhara peasant is extroverted,
554 not burdened with the considerable self-restraint expected of the Amhara noble. The peasant is quick to express mirth, anger, and other emotions. He is not stodgy and slow in conversation like the proverbial peasant of Europe. In fact, because of the relative

000 status.

181 776 The Amhara concern with spirits seems motivated not by the negative emotion of fear, but toward an understanding of the universe; toward healing; toward patterns of individual free enterprise under the guidance of protective spirits (regarded by the "zar" doctors and "zar" societies somewhat as patron saints).

181 Inventive intelligence, constrained in Amhara culture from developing material objects, applies itself to nonmaterial culture goals: to etiquette and other fine points of human relations; to speaking well in court; witticisms and proverbs; to entertaining with homiletic and riddles ranging from the ribald to the philosophic; to the development of special argots for the professions of minstrelsy, medicine and commerce. Education is regarded by they Amhara as a highly desirable means to (non-material) achievement. The desire to be regarded as intelligent is even greater than the profit motive, in Amhara culture; so that there is greater fear of being mocked at than being bested in a trade exchange. Producers would rather undersupply a market than risk having to carry any goods back home. The worst mockery and insult is to be regarded as intellectually inferior.

[87]

855 C. Some Psychological Consideration; arising from the Life Cycle.

Infancy and childhood, until adolescence, are years of free experimentation for the young Amhara, years with a minimum of supervision by adults, and maximum exposure to training by the peer-group and slightly older youngsters. The child does not live in a world of giants, but learns to handle his (not very complex) universe through the give-and-take of his age-mates. Until weaning, at the

000

178 and signed modestly and anonymously "The Friends of Knowledge",
212 had been published under the auspices of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. It had been authored by the Amhara (modern-minded) noble, Ras Imru (later ambassador to the USA), the Amhara historian-grammarian Blatta Marse Hazen, and a Western scholar affiliated with the American National Council of Churches of Christ.

... The conflict arose largely from the fact that most Amharic letters are directly derived from the old Geez, considered sacred because church liturgy and literature are written in it. Therefore, the Abyssinian church rejected the idea of alphabet reform as sacrilegeous. The emperor decided to postpone action indefinitely. (footnote 139).

178 It is this opposition, concentrated in the old Amhara nobil-
563 ity and clergy that has given opportunity to the loyal Galla to affiliate themselves more closely with the central government. Their modern-educated sons serve in high positions in the imperial bodyguard, army, and provincial administration. By affiliating themselves with the central government, the Galla obtain protection against the exploiting rural Amhara gentry. From the point of view of the modern central government such loyal suppert is greatly needed. From the point of view of the provincial, traditional Amhara, however, every young modern official sent from Addis Ababa, is now nicknamed "Galla", even if he is an Amhara.

181 Meanwhile the new elite has itself developed an indirect means
178 to introduce a new value complex, at least in Addis Ababa. This is called "zeltenez", which formerly meant politeness, refined and re-

Footnote 139: Leslau, Wolf: La Réforme de l'Alphabet Éthiopien. (in) Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, vol.12,1953,pp.96-106. Rome.

181 strained behavior, civilization, but which now has assumed the con-
178 notation of "modern" in the Western sense. It includes the improved
[562] status of the woman, no longer a mere hewer of wood and hauler of water; and it even became formalized in 1942 when an imperial proclamation, in establishing a Consultative Committee on Legislation, gave instruction to draft new laws that would be "not repugnant to natural justice and humanity".

178 But many old values still persist even at the apex of the
576 hierarchy where the prime "change agent", the emperor, resides. Most
644 notable, to foreign observers, is the continuation of the "daj tenst" (faire l'antechambre: lit. waiting at the gate). This is the traditional palace courtyard ceremony of bowing to the emperor at least twice a week. Emperor Haile Selassie has permitted this institution to continue. Every governor-general has his own "daj tenst" court when he returns to his provincial capital; and so on down the line.

195 The traditional oath on the king's life, sworn even in petty matters and everyday affairs ("Hayle Selassye yemut", lit. May the emperor die; i.e. if I lie) is still in common use and no attempt has been made to suppress or reduce its usage. Haile Selassie well remembers that during the first half of his reign his Amhara subjects still used to swear by the name of the dead Menelik or by provincial dynasts such as Ras Gugsa.

178 Outlook: the "culture lag" between material and non-material culture that has created so many social problems in so many parts of the present-day world has not yet taken place in this society. The old attitude of accepting and enjoying trade goods without trying to reproduce what the foreigner has created, still persists. Direct exploitation of what nature provides still fills most physi-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic! 137
Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles.[1] Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend. [181]

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile. 136

There were only two or three villages along the track,[2] which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district. 361 [241] [231]

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May. 175 [132]

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to 132

[1] [i.e., in the Choké Mountains. —Analyst]
[2] [i.e., between Debra Markos and Mato. —Au.]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

361 I have tried to describe a small section of the old Shoan people in their geographical and historic setting. But this small community, living along the broken edges of the Shoan plateau, typifies the much larger unity of the Amhara nation. Mostly they live in country which resembles either the plateau or the gorges, for they are a mountain people and will not live in the low country; and over most of the Ethiopian highlands their way of life, while varying in detail, is fundamentally the same. Everywhere outside the 181 towns the force of tradition is incomparably stronger than any modern influence, so that life remains, in essentials, what it has been for centuries. I have never come across such a staunch (not to say arrogant) conservatism—a conservatism centred mostly round the old Church which, now as ever, organizes the life of the community. The manifestations of modernity and progress, which now attract some attention in the larger towns, hardly affect the rural picture, and the rural population is content without them. I myself was content without them too, for I valued very highly the experience of sharing the life of a community whose customs, founded on the most ancient traditions, belong essentially to an earlier and to me a congenial age. This [609] was one of the compensations for living in a country where life is necessarily a strain, since the inquisitive foreigner is not really welcome.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

302 imported toilet requisites of this kind, and charge fabulous prices for them.

The curious custom of stopping up the nostrils is still met with, though I imagine it is becoming less and less common; but one still constantly sees natives on their way to market with a piece of green leaf, or a flower petal, protruding from their noses, and I remember on one occasion when an Abyssinian lady, who had been paying us a visit, was leaving the house, she produced some cotton-wool and stuffed it carefully in both nostrils.

• 181 Their love of pageantry, display, and functions is quite Oriental, and is well exemplified by the splendour of some of their religious and Court ceremonies.

521 Amusements are few. The people seem to prefer to sit and chatter; they are great talkers, and whether in the servants' quarters in a house or round their fires on trek, one hears the clatter of their tongues almost incessantly.

492 All Abyssinians can ride more or less, and they are on the whole good horsemen, though indifferent horse-masters. Except in war, or on the occasion of a fantasia, they seldom ride horses; for purposes of daily use mules are almost universally preferred; all but the poorest women also ride mules for getting about.

The Abyssinian saddle is of wood with a pommel back and front and a sheepskin and some padding in the middle, the whole covered with a brightly embroidered saddle-cloth. The stirrups are round and very small, as the Abyssinian inserts only his big toe therein. The bits are horrible instruments, consisting of a ring round the lower jaw and a spike which, when the reins are pulled, sticks into the roof of the animal's

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

5 / *Tradition and Modernization*

THE GENIUS OF AMHARA CULTURE

The Amhara as a whole are not much given to aesthetic concerns. They are 181
practical-minded peasants, austere religionists, and spirited warriors. Their [517]
interests and achievements as a nation are chiefly in the spheres of military
activity and government. And yet, if we seek some theme with which to gain 181
an entree into the spirit of their society and culture, we will do well to attend 538
to the sphere of poetry. For it is a poetic phenomenon—that represented by
the title of this book—which constitutes both a key to the genius of Amhara
culture and a highly distinctive Amhara contribution to Ethiopian culture.

Sam-ennā warq ("wax and gold") is the formula used by the Amhara to 538
symbolize their favorite form of verse. It is a form built of two semantic
layers. The apparent, figurative meaning of the words is called "wax"; their [196]
more or less hidden actual significance is the "gold."

In its generic sense, the expression *sam-ennā warq* refers to a number of
poetic figures which embody this twofold meaning. The use of such figures
distinguishes the Amhara equivalent of true poetry from ordinary verse, in
which everyday language is merely embellished with rhyme and rhythm. In [197]
the genre known as *qenē*, the original and more elegant kind of *sam-ennā*
warq poetry, the lines are composed in Ge'ez and depend primarily on re-
ligious symbolism. But *sam-ennā warq* constructions also appear in some
types of secular verse in the vernacular Amharic and, indeed, at times inform
Amharic conversation.

Masters of the art of *qenē* composition have analyzed these poetic figures 538
into about a dozen different types.[4] *Sam-ennā warq* in its more specific sense 19
refers to one of these types of figures—the prototype of them all. It consists
of an explicit comparison in which the subjects being compared—the wax
and gold—are presented in apposition, while their predicates are rendered
jointly by a single verb which carries both a wax and a gold meaning. (This [325]
terminology is derived from the work of the goldsmith, who constructs a clay
mold around a form created in wax and then, draining the wax, pours the
molten gold into that form.) So, for example, if the poet's aim is to praise a
hero like Emperor Menelik, he creates a wax model, like "the lion," in terms
of whose actions the gold, Menelik, is depicted: "The lion Menelik crushed
the wolf Italy."[5]

Keeping this dual imagery consistent throughout the stanza is a primary
rule of wax-and-gold composition. A poet who mixes his metaphors is some-
times rebuked with the epithet "hermaphrodite." The following example
presents an Amharic couplet which properly embodies the *sam-ennā warq* [539]
figure:

Eṭṣa balas balto addām ḳanfareshe
Madhānē alam lebē tasaqala-leshe.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
[175] Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[173] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).* Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[874] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in Gojjam in the fourteenth century.[7] The important schools of *qenē* have always been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
538 delā, Wāsharā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre
19 have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use
[171] of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethiopia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.[8] They further maintain that Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propaedeutic to the study of religious texts.* Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar, which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and thereby enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
• 181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized by the formula *sam-ennā warq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

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538 * The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

words often carry *double-entendre* as a matter of course; when he listens, he is ever on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. As one of my Ethiopian colleagues has said: "Wax and gold is anything but a formula—it is a way of life." 538 181

In essence, wax and gold is simply a more refined and stylized manifestation of the Amhara's basic manner of communicating. This manner is indirect, often secretive. Amharic conversation is larded with vague remarks like *Min yeshällä?* ("What is better?") when the speaker has failed to indicate what is the issue at hand, or *Tädyäs!*, an interjection which can mean almost anything. Often, when the speaker is then quizzed about the issue at hand, he will give an answer that does not reveal what is really on his mind at all, and even when he does, the person with whom he is talking is likely to interpret his response as a disguise. 195 521 538

Wax and gold embodies this fundamental indirection in speech by means of the studied use of ambiguity. Apart from its literary and religious manifestations, wax and gold appears in the common life of the traditional Amhara on a variety of occasions and serves a number of diverse functions. 195 182 538

It provides the medium for an inexhaustible supply of humor, among a wry people who prefer the clever, double-edged remark to comic actions or incongruous situations. This includes the wit of daily life—the invention of puns and sly retorts, the telling and retelling of good anecdotes and famous lines—as well as the more formalized humor on festive occasions, where minstrels sing the *sam-ennä warq* verses extemporized by the guests. 538 195 182 522

It provides a means for insulting one's fellows in a socially approved manner, in a culture which requires fastidious etiquette in social relations and punishes direct insults by heavy fines. *Sam-ennä warq* insulting, too, has its more stylized expressions, as at the drink-house, where one may find persons competing in a prolonged exchange of more or less disguised insults, or in time of political or military conflict, when opposing lords were wont formerly to satirize one another with ambiguous couplets. 538 195 182 578

It provides a technique for defending the sphere of privacy against excessive intrusion, in a social order that thrives on rumor and gossip and puts most of its people at the mercy of superiors. While vague and evasive responses often suffice to dampen the enthusiasm of the tax collector or the curious neighbor, *sam-ennä warq* constitutes another potent weapon of self-defense. 538 195 182 571 [521]

Finally, it provides the one outlet for criticism of authority figures in a society which strictly controls every kind of overt aggression toward authority, be it parental, religious, or political. Thus it has been a safety valve for certain social tensions, enabling, for example, witty individuals to satirize the monarch himself and still live to repeat the witticism—so long as its subject was himself duly appreciative of the cleverness of the lines. 538 195 182 578 571 [687] [522]

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
tēff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181] •
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 643 nable. As the rainy season was approaching, Haile Malakot retreated to Shoa, where he fell sick and died. For the first time since Nagāssi, Shoa was left without an effective leader. Tēwodros marched into Manz from Wallo, and Shoa capitulated with little struggle. Eleven-year-old Menelik, son of Haile Malakot, was taken hostage.

Ten years later Menelik escaped from the camp of Tēwodros and regained Shoa. Slowly and carefully he built up his power. Tēwodros' reign raced to its tragic end. Takla Giyorgis II reigned briefly at Gondar, the last emperor to sit there. Yohānnes IV of Tigre governed the country for seventeen years. When Yohānnes died, Negus Menelik was forty-five and ready. Nagāssi's seed, eight generations later, reached the throne of all Ethiopia on November 3, 1889.

CULTURAL PROFILES

The Manzē Ethos

*175 185 The goals of Nagāssi and his descendants, apart from simple increase of power, were to recover the lands taken from their fathers and to stiffen the authority of Christianity in Shoa. Their success was virtually unbroken by [181] reason of exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance. These are ideals and qualities embodied par excellence in the people of Manz.

423 181 Sanctity of *rīst*, or land inherited from one's parents, is a cardinal value in the Manzē scheme of things. Such land must not be given or sold to anyone who is not a close relative. People generations removed from actual residents [428] of Manz still retain claims to family land there, still cherish the idea that if they so desired they could go back and live on it. As an urbanized Manzē once told his nephew in Addis Ababa: "No matter how far you travel abroad, no matter how long you stay away, you will always be able to think of your [539] family land in Manz as your true home." This sentiment is expressed in a proverb:

> *Ya-Manz rīst be-shi amatu/la-bālabētu.*
> Manz *rīst* to the thousandth year/belongs to the owner.

A squatter may fight to keep his land from falling to some stranger who claims it as having belonged to his grandfather, but in his heart he respects the values that support such a claim.

[577] By Manzē standards the good man is thus one who defends the land of his fathers, seeing that it is not sold to outsiders or that foreigners do not come to [685] take it. If someone plows another's land without permission, he must be punished. If the matter can be settled through litigation, well and good; if it requires recourse to violence, so be it. To let such an offense go unavenged [691] would be the worst sort of shame. Grievances concerning their "hereditary

[MANZ]

423

estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly 181 a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rist*. 691

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their 771 land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts 181 are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially 771 hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the 773 angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder [823] is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short 181 notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination: 181 551

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Ḉhafḉhefē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow"). 181

A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about 411 three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many pur- 481 poses—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs 482 when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or [599] standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

411 standing at the long church services. Above all it is a weapon of offense and
181 defense, and every Amhara male is supposed to be skilled in its use. When the *dulā* is so employed in Manz, the *bānnā* blanket is usually wrapped around the left arm to form a quick shield, the *dulā* raised high with the right to bring down on the adversary's cranium. The blows are sometimes fatal. The Manzēs are proud of their facility with the lethal stick, and nearly every district in Manz boasts that it is real "*dulā* country."

726 The Manzēs also excel at *shīllalā,* the Abyssinian war chant. This is a
533 form of boastful verse—partly intoned, partly shouted—which is declaimed by
181 warriors to "heat their blood" before hitting the warpath. Children in Manz start practicing *shīllalā* almost as soon as they leave the breast. The following
[539] is a good specimen of Manz *shīllalā:*

> *Agarātchn Māmā agarātchn Lālo wanzātchn Dangazē;*
> *Mān abātu yāzzāl imbi senīl gizē.*

> Our land is Māmā, our land is Lālo, our stream the Dangazē;
> What father will order us when *imbi* we say!

Imbi is an interjection used by children to express "No!" There is a double pun in this couplet. *Mān abātu* ("Who is the father?") is a profane idiom meaning "bastard." "To say *imbi*" is another idiom, meaning "to refuse." The second line may thus be also rendered as:

> What bastard dare shove us around when we tell him to keep off our lands!

181 The Manzē code asks that a man be ready to defend his land and church
865 by force. It does not approve wanton aggression. But the Manzē's disposition
152 is notoriously aggressive, for his emotional life is relatively devoid of warmth
[577] and, on the other hand, fighting is so highly rewarded. Children are urged to be adept with the *dulā.* Their temper tantrums are welcomed as signs that they are brave. As a result the men of Manz are often overcome by the impulse toward physical aggression; assault and murder are recurrent events on their fields and trails and at their marketplaces. The discrepancy between the *norm* of physical bravery, which is operative *in certain specified circumstances,* and the *general character trait* of aggressiveness comprises a major theme in their emotional life: they feel obliged to look for justification for the aggressive actions which they have been conditioned to want to carry out. This disposition is illustrated in the words of the Manzē youth who said:

> I want very much to kill somebody. The only problem is I'm not strong enough. Perhaps one day I will be. Why is it all right to kill? People kill sheep, don't they? And sheep are innocent, they don't know anything, don't do any wrong. But man knows, he knows much, and still he does wrong: every man is bad. I wouldn't kill everybody, only the bad ones. If I had an enemy, I would kill him. Maybe I will become a soldier, and kill my country's enemies.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē.

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna,* an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables.

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

+175 633 streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] [36] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segre- [563] gated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter. [186] [576] Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of [829] national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

+175 633 181 The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat,* or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which con- [551] trast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen,* meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, [691] litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā,* land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rīst.*

[795] The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the [517] center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[43]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 flux of many Muslims and Galla, a migration favored by its urban situation.
633 Manz, surrounded by hostile Galla, was forced for survival to cultivate its
067 fighting powers, and for ultimate security to reconquer the surrounding areas.
*175 It was aided in this by whatever special geographical and cultural factors
• 181 helped to produce the peculiarly militant and defiant character of the Manzē. But because of the annihilation of most of Shoa's churches and monasteries in the sixteenth century, and the isolation of Manz from the renascence of Amhara culture at Gondar, it was left illiterate and culturally impoverished. Its religious life remained limited to a narrow adherence to the ritual requirements of Ethiopian Christianity.

*175 The dispersion of the Solomonic line over the several provinces was thus
181 accompanied by the formation of distinct mores for Manz and Gondar. There
184 is evidence that the differences were quite pronounced by the early nineteenth century. Just a few years before the fierce inhabitants of Manz sped to the rescue of Sāhla Selassie against the rebel Matako, Gondar was similarly threatened by a rebel band under a man named Mersu. Compare Rüppell's account of the behavior of the Gondarēs:

> In this general alarm the pitifulness of the local inhabitants was all too conspicuous. Far from uniting to defend their property with arms against the dreaded plunder—which would have been easy, in as much as there were at least four hundred rifles in Gondar, while not a single one of Mersu's men possessed a firearm—instead they carried the rifles into the churches, in order to keep them from being plundered along with the other booty.[45]

The distinction between Manz and Gondar suggested here is drawn in terms of "ideal types"—generalized dispositions which will, of course, not be true in every case and which will be found elsewhere in Ethiopia to a greater
*175 or lesser degree. It is interesting to note that in their own stereotypes, Ethiopians
829 tend to view the Manzēs as fighters, the Gondarēs as literati, but not vice
181 versa. Thus, an officer of the Imperial Bodyguard who commanded Ethiopian
184 troops in the Korean War has said:

> The Manzēs were excellent soldiers. They were independent, not so ready to obey commands as the Galla, but they had good ideas about fighting and were very brave in the battlefield. The soldiers from Gondar tended to be independent and insubordinate, too, but they were not very good soldiers, either.*

On the other hand, Ethiopians commonly consider Manz as much a land of the backward as they regard Gondar the home of the learned. Krapf observed

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* This stereotype of the Gondarē is combatted by Garimā Tāfara's book, *The Gondarē with His Shield* (*Gondarē Ba-Gāshāw* [Addis Ababa: Tasfā Gabra Selassie Press, 1957]), which records in great detail the contributions of individual Gondarēs to the fight against the enemy during the Italian occupation.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

over a century ago that the people of Manz had the reputation of being "brave, daring, and ignorant."[46] The caricatures of the typical Manzē usually have to do with his *qilnat* ("stupidity"), such as the old story about the Manzēs at the bottom of a hill who were warned about some rolling boulders and replied: "That's all right, we'll just put our heads under the blanket and then we won't see the stones." As one Manzē himself put it: "We look to Gondar as our older brother. We know we are ignorant and illiterate."

Although in each other's eyes the Gondarē may be arraigned as haughty and cowardly and the Manzē berated as ignorant and hostile, a comparative view enables one to see the differences between Manz and Gondar as complementary, representing a specialization of interest and function within a common culture. An Amhara priest expressed this idea to me by saying: "The people of Gondar and Manz are really the same. Only Gondar is the head, and Manz the foot." (In Amharic thought the leg symbolizes force.) The pursuit of different interests and the perfection of different functions led to the cultivation of different virtues and, by the same token, the indulgence of different faults. The result was what might be called a moral division of labor along a geographical axis.

The primary axis of this division of labor in Amhara culture was vocational. The separate virtues of soldier and cleric were cultivated through distinct roles, pursued part or full time by two different sets of individuals. This permitted both sets of values to be realized without arousing the cultural and psychic conflicts that would inhere in their joint cultivation by the same persons.

It was by historical accident that Manz and Gondar came to provide an additional axis for this division of labor. At Gondar, through the political circumstances described above, the military function withered away, while the religio-literary culture was enabled to flourish. In Manz, the latter was destroyed and never recovered, while the energies of her people were consumed in fighting.

The historical advantage of this was that the Amhara thereby found the occasion for a massive revitalization of their religious culture through the facilities at Gondar, yet were able to accumulate a military momentum, through the years of incubation in Manz, that favored a political comeback which put them in a position to assert their might over an area larger than ever before in Ethiopian history. The moral consequence was that the Gondarē and the Manzē developed in pronounced form the virtues of the literatus and the soldier, respectively. The total culture was perhaps thereby enriched. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, cultivated literatus, was in a sense the epitome of the Gondarē ethos, just as Menelik II, determined fighter as well as shrewd politician and tactful diplomat, was morally as well as genealogically akin to the men of Manz. The imperial court at the end of the nineteenth century,

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games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories. 565* 512 527 462 [517] [521]

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense. 565* 512 181

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.) 565* 517 691

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver. 565* 517 443 [462] [437] [436] [178]

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression. 565* 527 796 [132]

The Yearly Cycle 565*

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after 796

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*565 805 796 822 787 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhāra peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [18] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 181 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 346 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

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holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services. 565* 346 341 181 796 822 [778]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery. 565* 822 181 361 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order. 565* 822 181 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities. 565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable 565* 156 157 [577]

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people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war. 828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance. 565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā,* or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin." 565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz,* a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days. 565* 461 [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[13] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

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*565 461 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 461 • 181 577 183 [423] If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obligations toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 78 181 183 [262] [301] Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 577 181 183 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in

*565 577 673 181 183 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shameful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect toward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby

[626] stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

*565 57 181 183 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 602 571 181 183 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.

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Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

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ment on the subject, by following some of the suggestions advanced by Robert Redfield for the comparison of world views.[15]

"What does a people confront as it looks out on the world?" Redfield asks. After proposing a triangle of general objects confronted by all peoples—man, nature, and God—he goes on to suggest two specific questions: (1) Are these objects viewed as parts of a common matrix, each infusing the other, or are they viewed as separate and distinct entities? (2) Are they viewed as equally significant, or is special attention paid to one at the expense of the others?

As a point of departure for discussing the world view of the Amhara peasant as a whole, we may consider Redfield's characterization of the "primitive world view." In his account of a generalized primitive world view, Redfield posits that man, nature, and God are perceived as parts of an indissoluble unity, lacking really distinct identities. In the primitive outlook nature is personalized; the supernatural infuses the natural; and man's actions and traits resemble those of the deities. If this is so, then one may say that the Amhara peasant has passed beyond this primitive conception in the direction of differentiating man, nature, and God; but he has not proceeded very far. His God is conceived as a transcendental, self-sufficient Being, abstracted from particular earthly manifestations, and dwelling only at the crown of heaven. He sees nature as having a character and imposing demands of its own, not as a bearer of divine and human properties. He sees man as lacking the powers and virtues of divine beings and at the same time different in kind and higher in status than anything which exists in nature. Yet while these three objects are endowed with distinct identities and autonomous natures, they are conceived as closely and continuously interdependent. Much of what takes place in nature, such as a flood or a bad harvest, is attributed to divine agency, and the character of certain natural objects, like groves of trees and pools of water, is colored by associations with the supernatural. In human affairs, supernatural beings of various sorts are constantly active, and in the case of the *tābot,* the holy ark, a divine object has been thoroughly personalized. Man's life, moreover, is seen as intimately bound up with the vicissitudes of nature, and a personal relationship subsists between man and his friends and enemies in the animal world. In short, the Amhara looks on man, nature, and God as *separate but closely interconnected entities.*

[181] While each of these three entities is an object of great significance to the Amhara peasant, moreover, it may be said that man is regarded as the most significant of the three; and in particular, the problem of *human aggression* may be identified as the dominant theme in the Amhara peasant's outlook on life.

Nature, to the Amhara peasant, presents no outstanding challenge, no perplexing problem, no compelling attraction. Nature is to be adjusted to carefully and quietly. God and other supernatural beings become crucial objects

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MODERNIZATION AND THE PEASANT

*565 121 At the beginning of this chapter we alluded to stereotyped views of the peasantry held by modern-educated Ethiopians who have no meaningful communication with them. It may be fruitful at this point to consider the relationship between the peasant's world and Ethiopia's quest for modernity in the form of a series of critical responses to these stereotypes.

Three views of the peasantry are of particular relevance. One sees the peasant as exploited, hence potentially progressive; one sees the peasant as uneducated, hence reactionary; and a third sees the peasant as traditionalist, hence irrelevant to Ethiopia's modernizing culture. In responding to these opinions we shall discuss, first, the peasant's conservatism; second, areas of the peasant's receptivity to change; and, finally, aspects of peasant culture which may have a positive value for Ethiopia in transition.

Peasant Conservatism

Those who eulogize the simple integrity of peasant life and regret the peasant's suppressed condition in a social order pejoratively termed "feudal" at times maintain that with a radical change of leadership in the government the peasantry would respond with renewed economic initiative and progressive orientation. Given leaders they can trust, it is argued, the Amhara peasants would support radical efforts to restructure their lives and would participate meaningfully in democratic political procedures designed to promote social change.

*565 121 178 181 This view overlooks the fact, which has impressed travelers of many centuries in Ethiopia, that the Abyssinian peasant clings to his traditional ways with unruffled tenacity. The flavor of his conservatism may be illustrated by the following conversation with an unusually open-minded peasant in Manz. The man was complaining about the dangers presented by a little stream between his home and the local church during the rainy season. "If you can't put up some kind of bridge," I suggested, "why do you not stretch a heavy rope across it so people can hold on to something and not be swept away?" "That is a good idea," he replied, "but we just do not do that sort of thing around here."

Such behavior has been explained by many observers, Ethiopians and foreigners alike, as due to simple laziness. No peasant can afford to be simply lazy, however. The roots of this inertia go deeper. They touch a number of fundamental features in Amhara peasant culture which orient the peasantry against the introduction of novelty.

*565 121 777 178 One of these is the concept of fate (*eddīl*) which the Amhara invoke to account for the ups and downs of their lives. *Eddīl* appears to signify the working of God's will insofar as it affects human purposes, and is to be re-

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garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

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*565 121 178 181 [212] [577] been employed as a medium for promulgating new ideas or discussing contemporary problems. Another feature of Amhara culture that helps to account for the mental inertia of the peasantry is its emphasis on the value of deference and obedience to authority. The Amhara typically rely on legitimate authority figures to define appropriate responses to new situations, and regard the delegation of powers as a diminution of the status of such authorities. The peasant has thus refrained from initiating changes in the public domain because the prerogative of taking initiative is generally reserved to ecclesiastical and political authorities.

*565 121 177 178 *Receptivity to Change*

Consideration of the peasant's readiness to follow the lead of legitimate authorities already points to an inadequacy of the second stereotype we have mentioned: that which sees the peasant as hopelessly ignorant and backward, hence intractable from the viewpoint of a program of modernization. For while the Amhara peasant is likely to resist the efforts of some unknown official from Addis Ababa to introduce change in his local environment, he does tend to follow the directives and imitate the example of the local authorities whom he knows and who shape the course of decisions and sanctions at the [137] local level. Thus it is, for example, that the eucalyptus tree—imported by Emperor Menelik, taken to the provinces by nobles, and eventually planted by individual peasants—has come to dot the Amhara countryside. How quickly such change can take place is shown by the recent acceptance of photography in many provincial regions. In 1950, peasants in many Amhara areas strenuously objected to having their pictures taken, in part at least for fear of the camera as bearer of the evil eye. By 1960, visitors to some of these same areas were being deluged with requests for photographs. In the interim these peasants had been exposed to numerous photographs of the Emperor and high government officials and had observed their local authorities seizing every chance they could to be photographed.

Yet it is clear that the Amhara peasant will not imitate everything that is accepted by his traditional authorities. When a new custom strikes him as too outlandish his resistance can become adamant, as was abundantly demonstrated when the court of Susneyos carried out its ill-fated conversion to Catholicism. In analyzing the peasant's receptivity to change it is important to distinguish as independent variables: (1) the degree of acceptability of the *agents* of change, and (2) the extent to which the proposed change is congruent with traditional beliefs and values.

The whole question of the nature of peasant opposition and receptivity to modernizing programs may be discussed most realistically by focusing on [744] a concrete area of attempted change. The material I have assembled is most detailed for the case of public health, an area to which the government has

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ment. Of particular interest here is the fact that these officials have frequently been condemned in total terms for their alleged "selfishness" and "hypocrisy." Indeed, one of the outstanding characteristics of the modern-educated is a highly moralistic disposition which leads to a constant evaluation, and unmasking, of everyone within the broad orbit of Ethiopian political life in morally uncompromising terms. 565* 121

The sources of this disposition are complex and not fully to be explained here. One factor would seem to be the ascendance of a concern for rationality and its related insistence on integrity, in opposition to the traditional patterns of deviousness and equivocation symbolized by wax and gold. Another would seem to be a growing Rousseauan concern for the "natural rights" of the people, and the related view of the powers supporting the *ancien régime* as selfishly and hypocritically depriving the people of these rights. What the consequences of this disposition may be is a question of greater urgency. For it leads to the insistence on purity of heart as the essential political virtue, a demand which necessarily results in demoralization of public life and political fanaticism.[21]

While this sort of disposition is natural to the situation of the modern-educated, hence not simply to be wished away, it is clearly out of touch with the traditional Amhara mentality. Insofar as the modern-educated may seek alternatives to a purist, sentimental, and somewhat hysterical approach to politics, they may find themselves nourished by contact, through personal communication or through the medium of literature, with the "cooler" approach of the Amhara peasant. 565* 121 181 • 571 828

A feature of Amhara peasant culture discussed earlier in this chapter is the centrality of its orientation to man and to the phenomenon of human aggression in particular. To know the Amhara peasant at all closely is to appreciate how cautious he is about the intentions of others. He does not assume that he can count on others, though they may make promises. Before engaging in any secular transaction, such as lending money to a neighbor, entering into litigation, or taking on a servant, he insists on securing a guarantor (*wäss*) who agrees to make good for damages caused by the man he is backing. He does not assume that others may be benevolently disposed toward him; he suspects that behind every protestation of admiration and fealty lurks some quest for personal advantage. He does not assume that superior social status entails superior moral worth. Wryly commenting on his ambivalence toward superiors toward whom he shows such deference, he describes his posture as one of "bowing in front, and passing gas in the rear." In short, he is on guard at all times, coping with the presumed selfishness and hypocrisy of others and pursuing his own interests in a very sober and manipulative way.

At the same time the Amhara peasant's low estimate of man's potential does 565* 121 181 828

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not bring him to a position of rejecting man. On the contrary, man is accepted, with all his frailties, for what he is. The Amhara's patterns of life are shaped, neither to overwhelm man with guilt for his shortcomings, nor to pressure him into personal or social reform, nor to deprive his worldly existence of all enjoyment and significance; but rather to accommodate human realities and transcendent values to one another in such a way that neither is seriously compromised. He honors the value of non-violence, but indirectly, by relegating its observance to a morally differentiated role, the priest. He honors the value of marital fidelity, embodied again by the priest; but he lives comfortably, following the inclinations of the old Adam, in a status defined as technically excommunicate. He accepts the reality of hostility in human relations and adjusts to this reality by encouraging it where socially useful, curbing its socially disruptive aspects through fasting, and by channeling its expression where possible through litigation before judges, argumentation before elders, and games on festive occasions.

The Amhara peasant's outlook is both realistic and humanitarian. He does not expect political leaders to be morally pure, for he understands that all men are imperfect; *saw yallam*. He is not upset by the "selfishness" and "insincerity" of *Realpolitik*—awareness of which has sometimes been a demoralizing factor among the masses in Western countries—because *Realpolitik* is the stuff of his daily life. At the same time he seeks practical arrangements whereby human interests can be furthered and human conflicts can be contained. Insofar as this characteristic orientation of Amhara peasant culture comes to permeate the outlook of Ethiopia's modernizers—and it has never been wholly absent—it may help to reduce the intensity of those unrealistic demands and inhumanitarian impulses which are endemic in a society in transition to modernity.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Egyptian mosques; youth dormitories and community houses in certain tribes in India; the academic and athletic youth organizations of ancient Athens and Sparta; not to mention the numerous teen-age associations of modern Western society.[3]

Here again, the adolescent Amhara is not involved in any such social forms. The advent of puberty is associated with the growing up and out of childhood groups, the gangs of shepherds who spend their days together in work and play. The girl of eleven or twelve is expected to spend all her time at home, under careful supervision. The boy of thirteen or fourteen has abandoned the shepherd's life for farming, in the company of older relatives, and soon becomes increasingly preoccupied with his private economic and erotic interests. His family elders are likely to warn him not to make friends with other youths outside the family.[4] For a number of adolescent boys to get together outside of festive occasions is, to the traditional Amhara mind, a sign that something wrong is afoot.

The absence of adolescent rites and age groups reflects the individualistic character of Amhara social organization, a subject to which we shall turn in chapter vii. Nevertheless, Amhara society catches young people in its grasp and guides them to adulthood just as firmly and surely as does a society which has many collective arrangements for its adolescents. It does this by means of a well-ordered program for growing up. The road from childhood to adulthood is one series of informal, unproblematic stages through which the growing person adjusts to progressively increased responsibilities and progressively detailed norms. After infancy, there is normally no break in continuity in the whole process.

Toward Adult Work Roles

Following a long and indulged infancy, the Amhara child is early taught the rudiments of work responsibility. At the age of three or four, children are given simple chores, such as shooing chickens from grain drying in the sun or collecting bits of firewood. Somewhat older children are expected to protect the crops against birds, farm animals, and baboons. The Amhara becomes apprenticed in the main vocation of his childhood—tending the herds—almost as soon as he can run about, and six-year-old shepherds play a crucial part in the Amhara economy.

Boys retain the responsibility for tending the herds at least until the age of twelve, but by then they have already been initiated into a number of adult work activities. At about eight or nine years the Amhara boy begins to do his share of the harvesting, sickling the wheat, barley, *tĕff*, or beans and loading the crops in piles he will help transport to the threshing place. He becomes adept at directing the cattle round and round the threshing floor and at winnowing the grain from the chaff. At times he helps with the weeding.

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tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bālagē* ("rude"), a trait which [861]
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [155] [671]

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be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarä* or as a successful warrior or official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely preparing himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adolescence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

The Welfare School

Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in government provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

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*883 871 178 men and outstanding commoners in the vicinity of the royal court. But with the importation of hundreds of foreign teachers, the establishment of an extensive system of secondary schools and colleges, and the provision of economic support for thousands of post-elementary students, a real structural change came about. Although the school system remained completely subordinate to the throne, it introduced a number of processes that had a dynamic of their own.

*883 121 178 As we have seen, these new socialization processes have subjected the modern adolescents to many sorts of conflict and strain. They have been placed in conflict with their parents, and hence within themselves, on the basic issues of work and, particularly, marriage. They have been subjected to the simultaneous appeal of traditional and modern patterns in virtually all aspects of culture. They have been forced to make choices in numerous areas, while their traditional counterparts have customarily been prevented from making any kind of choice at all.

It might seem that such a situation would breed a troubled generation, distraught and disoriented, knowing what we do about the psychological hazards of rapid culture change. And indeed, among the modern adolescents of the fifties, one might find classical cases of anomie and identity diffusion, boys who confess, "Nothing seems worthwhile to me . . . I am confused, being brought up as I was on the traditional beliefs without questioning and then suddenly being forced to ask questions," or, "The problem of choosing the work I should go into is my only real problem right now, but because of it I find it hard to make decisions about anything. If this suffering is the price of freedom, I am not sure it is worth the price."

Such cases, however, were the exception, not the rule. Most of the students were working hard to get ahead in the world or enjoying their newly acquired freedom and camaraderie. Almost all our respondents had ready answers concerning the sort of work they want to go into, and what they [828] would do if they could have any wish granted. Comparing themselves with their elders, they presented a positive self-image. They regarded themselves as more "civilized," "well built," and "generous" than their parents' generation, albeit somewhat lazier and less polite; and in comparison with Ethiopians a decade older, saw themselves as "better educated," "more clever," "more adventurous," and better able to "enjoy life." Nearly all of them (92 per cent) said that they felt either "enthusiastic" or "hopeful" about their [181] personal future. So one could characterize the Ethiopian post-elementary students of the fifties as relatively buoyant, clear-headed, self-confident, and enjoying their situation of culture contact and change far more than suffering it. How may this be explained?

[643] One great source of their strength was a sense of dependence on the Emperor. As founder of the Ethiopian school system, Haile Selassie has

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cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a 121
society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by 56
that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive frame- 178
work of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are 181
embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is [571]
in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively 565
stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and 554
wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the [463]
statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the mer- 565
chant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the 554
small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was 441
accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an 463
Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be [186]
tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes 565
low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Low- 567
est in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from 554
the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), 463
and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced 565
sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values [181]
of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.

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necessary, to die on the battlefield, as did Galāwdēwos, Yohānnes IV, and others. He had to maintain a minimum of political order, balancing off contending ambitions and subduing rebellious elements. Another important function was that of ultimate arbiter in judicial disputes.* As guardian of the church, moreover, he was active in endowing monasteries and churches and in resolving doctrinal disputes among the clergy.

To carry out these and related functions the emperor needed great wealth and political power. When the monarchy was intact he could command wealth from many sources: from the country-wide land tax (*gĭber*), in the form of honey, grain, or livestock, or such special fiscal assignments as saddles, plowshares, spears, ink, or tent pegs;[9] from assessed tithes on produce; in tribute from subject peoples, either in currency (gold, salt bars, etc.) or in kind; in revenues from traders; and from gifts from new appointees and hopeful office seekers. In theory, moreover, all the land of the empire belonged to its ruler; and, in fact, a good part of it was at his direct disposal, either for cultivation as royal estates or to distribute as compensation to those who served him.

The political power of the emperor was grounded in his command of troops supported by the royal bounty. In addition, he could command the troops of all the lords subject to his authority. Through frequent tours around the country he was able to reassert his hegemony from time to time in distant regions. But even from afar, a strong monarch could usually exert great control thanks to his authority to appoint or demote at a moment's notice any officer of the realm. As Alvares observed:

> No great lord of lands, if he is in them, can leave them, or set out for the Court on any account without being summoned by the [emperor]; and being summoned he will not fail to come for any reason. And when he sets out from the land of which he is the lord, he does not leave either wife or children or any property there, because he goes away in the expectation of never returning, since . . . [the emperor] gives when he pleases, and takes away when he pleases.[10]

The ideology of sacred monarchy served to legitimate theoretically boundless demands for wealth and power as well as to provide identity and morale for the body politic. It justified, too, occasional "deviant" behavior on the part of the monarch, virtually the only person with sufficient authority to innovate in this intensely conservative culture. The emperor has always been a primary agent of cultural innovation in Abyssinia, from the time of Ēzānā, who adopted Christianity in the fourth century; to Zar'a Yā'qob in the fifteenth

* To this day Haile Selassie devotes several hours a week to hearing court appeals in a session known as *chelot*.

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the Amharic phrase *ya-ḳantu weddāsē zaman*—"the era of futile flattery."

For, whatever other aspects of modern culture they have identified with, the locals and returnees are seized with the promise of its first principle: dynamism.[62] Should they join forces, among themselves and with each other, they might create the effective intelligentsia which is indispensable for realizing this dynamism in action. They would play complementary, and equally necessary, parts; the locals contributing their greater drive and closeness to traditional society, the returnees their broader perspective and skepticism toward simplistic answers and total reforms.

There are numerous obstacles to such a progressive development. Some of them represent the persistence among the intellectuals of a number of traditional pan-Abyssinian characteristics which inhibit both the exercise of creative leadership and the capacity for solidary action. The traditional context of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters which follow. The most conspicuous obstacle, however, has been the manner in which the Ethiopian government has sought to integrate the intellectuals in the social system. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Role of the Government

In the hierarchy of values which sustained the traditional Abyssinian social order, that of the transcendental religious orientation represented by the Orthodox Church may be said to have held the paramount position. This is the sense in which, as has so often been remarked, religion has been Abyssinia's only truly unifying factor throughout the centuries. Religious charisma transferred from foreign sanctuaries—the mythical Ark of the Covenant brought from Jerusalem and the archbishop periodically imported from Egypt—provided the ultimate source of legitimacy in the society, upholding the authority of a sacred Christian monarch, church-defending warlords, and a numerous and functionally differentiated clergy. It so penetrated the social system that the basic unit of Abyssinian civil life was in fact a religious one, the parish.

In retrospect it would seem that the most profound aspect of Haile Selassie's accomplishment has been to dislodge the transcendental religious value from highest place and to replace it with the system-integrative value of loyalty to the emperor.[63] His mission has been above all a secularizing one. To accomplish it he has had greatly to increase his political and economic resources; but insofar as his regime has been accepted, and not based exclusively on sheer power—which to some extent is certainly the case—the paramount value in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie has become loyalty to the emperor as a symbol of the whole society. The autonomous significance of the church has been reduced; its extra-Ethiopian source of charisma has been cut off, and its func-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the 181
Crown. 178
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The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental 178
religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with 181
the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the 643
chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals 642
of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; 631
and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance 178
to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and 181
prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but inte- 565
grative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pur- [085]
sued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, 178
a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient 181
technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor 571
and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard 871
of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relation- 178
ship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever 643
advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his 571
personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal 871
solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

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But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shir* and *divide et impera*. "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

people. He has been the procreator of much of what demand for modernization now exists in the country, although the Italian colonial administration must also be credited for a certain amount of this demand. By the fifties, however, the growth of the demand of modernization had become self-sustaining, if only in a relatively small part of the population. At that point Haile Selassie was unwilling, or at least unable, to take the next step, to raise national development higher in the societal value hierarchy than loyalty to the Crown. Thus, a traditional oligarchy has been maintained, in which the development of a self-respecting modern intelligentsia has been effectively restrained and its decisive ascendance as a new elite has been prevented.

The paramount sociological problem in Ethiopia in the coming decades concerns whether or not this pattern will be broken. There is no guarantee that it will be. It is highly thinkable that the opportunists among the intellectuals will be absorbed into the new nobility and that a new oligarchy will entrench itself and maintain its exclusive position by increased repression.[68] The number of young people being given secondary and college education will continue to be limited to a diminutive percentage, and the deeply rooted sentiments of the mass of the population for a regime of traditional oligarchy will not be offended. Economic development will proceed at a snail's pace, and what additional wealth is produced will flow into the pockets of a small minority. One possible outcome of such an eventuality would be that the modernizing infrastructure of the society would grow increasingly restless, culminating in a revolution which installed a modernizing oligarchy.

Alternatively, modernizing forces already unleashed in the country may gather momentum and sustain a gradual breakthrough of the new order. If one were to credit the reports of many who have spoken with the Emperor at first hand, this would be his desire. But far more than imperial approval of a distant ideal is required for it to become reality. Two conditions, above all, would be essential. One is that the systematic, if unwitting, demoralization of the intellectuals would have to be ended. Some sphere would have to be created in which universalistic standards have full sway, in which a modernizing intelligentsia can maintain and develop standards and transmit them to younger elements. The most obvious way to do this would be through a university which, by guaranteed financial support, independence from political pressures, and determined operation at a high standard, could provide the Ethiopian government and people with the technical and executive intelligentsia needed for effective modernization, and could provide an environment in which a corps of "custodians of the public good," loyal to the regime but free to express criticism, might be developed. The program for such a university was carefully drawn up by the planners of the Haile Selassie I University. It remains to be seen whether the opposition which muffled that program shortly after its inception, in the spring of 1962, was motivated primarily by

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limitations in addition to those imposed by the government. In the present 121
chapter we shall deal chiefly with factors which are inhibitive of creative 128
leadership, and in the chapter which follows chiefly with factors which affect 571
the capacity for solidary action.

One of the most honest and perceptive of my foreign-educated informants 571
had this to say about the absence of creative leadership among the returnees: 157

> Our maladjustment may be more our fault than that of the government. 121
> We have been led to expect everything from the government, and have become dependent to such a point that we can scarcely think or act for ourselves.

This is a remarkable and convincing piece of self-analysis. It falls short only 571
insofar as it implies that the posture of dependence on governmental author- 157
ity is something peculiar to the modern-educated. It is true that there have 181
been certain conditions such as the "welfare" character of the secondary 121
schools, which are specific to the experience of the modern-educated and which have accentuated a tendency to overdependence. But this tendency is endemic in traditional Amhara-Tigre culture, and those modern Abyssinians who exhibit it are following an inclination deeply rooted in the needs they have acquired and the culture they have internalized in their childhood.

There are various ways in which one might conceptualize this problem. 121
It is not unrelated to what other authors have referred to variously as lack 157
of achievement motivation or lack of innovational personality. The approach of this chapter will stress certain psychoanalytic concepts and insights. In so doing, it will not attempt to delineate an Amhara "basic personality," a task well beyond the scope of the present study.[1] Rather, we shall be concerned here solely with certain kinds of motivational orientation which are widely shared among the Amhara and which frequently inform their social behavior and their cultural symbolism.

Adopting the terminology developed by Erik Erikson,[2] we may rephrase 121
the point about Amhara overdependence by saying that *in Amhara action and* 155
fantasy the social modality of "getting" figures very prominently. The superior 571
is oriented chiefly to getting food, services, and deference from his inferior;[3] the inferior is oriented chiefly to getting favors from his superior. And most interaction among the Amhara is cast in the form of superior-inferior personal dyadic relations. The prominence of this modality reflects a fixation of libido on what Erikson calls a mode of approach to the environment that is "incorporative," and that originates in connection with the infant's experience with a particular part of his body, the oral zone. The central thesis of this chapter is that Amhara behavior and symbolism exhibit a very high degree of attachment of libido, not only to the organ *mode* of incorporation, but even more to the oral *zone*.

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7

INDIVIDUALISM AND THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS

*121 A deep-going process of individualization has commonly been regarded as one of the characteristic features of the early stages of modernization. Whether hailed as a basis for economic rationalism and the embodiment of libertarian ideals or decried as the solvent of communal solidarities and traditional identities, this emergent individualism tends to be viewed against the image of a base line traditional society whose members are enmeshed in various solidary associations, bound by collective obligations, and encompassed by communal restraints.[1]

*121 • 181 [156] While it is probable that such an image exaggerates the degree of corporateness that obtains in most traditional societies, in the case of Abyssinia it is demonstrably wide of the mark. A characteristic individualism has impressed more than one observer of Abyssinian society in the past. Perhaps not by accident, those who have been most responsive to this characteristic have been of French nationality. Arnauld d'Abbadie, writing more than a century ago, depicted the Abyssinian as an irrepressible foe of uniformity and despotism.[2] More recently the noted linguist, Marcel Cohen, in one of his rare but highly perceptive sociological essays, described the Abyssinian as "*membre d'une société individualiste*."[3] In so doing he has suggested an interesting perspective from which to examine Amhara society as a whole, a perspective which may also throw some light on the previously raised question concerning the obstacles to solidary action among modern-educated Ethiopians.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE CONCEPT OF INDIVIDUALISM

What does it mean to characterize Amhara society as "individualistic"? In its most general sense, the concept of individualism refers to a condition in which primacy is given to personal interests at the expense of collective concerns. In applying this concept to Amhara society, or to any other, certain refinements are clearly necessary. 121* 181

In the first place one must distinguish between individualism as the moral basis of a relatively integrated society and individualism as the consequence of social disintegration. In the latter sense it represents a breakdown in the customary standards of society and may be viewed as one form of anomie.[4] Anomic individualism may be seen as an underlying propensity in all societies against which moral sentiment and social institutions must constantly combat. It is liable to appear when any social order has been sufficiently corroded by economic want, warfare, cultural or political dislocations, or natural disaster. In Ethiopian history anomic individualism has often appeared at the death or absence of a ruler; for example, following the assassination of Wassan Sagad of Shoa in 1813,[5] and during the anarchic interval between the departure of Haile Selassie from Addis Ababa and the arrival of Italian troops in May, 1936.

In describing traditional Amhara society as an individualistic one, however, the intention is to evoke an image of a relatively stable social order that has been informed by an individualistic ethos. In this effort two further precautions are called for. There is, on the one hand, the danger that use of a general concept like individualism may obstruct our perception of areas in which the concept does not apply. No single abstraction does justice to the complexities of any society, and it is self-evident that no society can survive in which group interests are not granted priority over individual interests in certain minimal respects. Our aim, in other words, should not be to establish or refute the thesis that Amhara society is individualistic, but rather to determine in what respects it may properly be so regarded and in what respects not.

On the other hand, the concept of individualism as it pertains to a kind of moral order suffers from ambiguity. It has been used to refer to a variety of phenomena which *may* appear concurrently but which in reality are independently variable. These phenomena will be distinguished here in terms of three different usages of the concept: individualism as a psychological disposition, as a mode of social organization, and as a cultural value.

In the first sense of the term, individualism refers to a socially accepted disposition to pursue one's own goals without regard to the goals of society, whether the latter be defined in terms of collectivities or simply of one's fellow men. This is the sort of individualism De Tocqueville had in mind

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*121 • 181 when defining it as the "feeling which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellows and to draw apart with his family and friends, so that after he has thus formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself."[6] In the more extreme instance of this disposition, feelings of attachment even to family and friends would be fairly tenuous. It is difficult to find a neutral term with which to designate this notion. The term *egoism* will be used here, with the understanding that it refers only to the primacy of the ego's personal interests and does not imply either self-conceit or a perverse selfishness.

The concept of individualism may also be used to characterize a type of social system, one which embodies the principle of laissez faire. It is a system in which social norms are directed primarily toward setting the minimal assurance of order and regulating the clash of individual interests and have little to do with promoting consensus and co-ordinating individual activities in behalf of collective goals. In this sense of the term, individualism is comparable to the concept of social freedom: the reduction of constraints on action due to external forces. The term *independence* will be used in this context to designate this sociological concept of individualism.

Taken as a cultural value, finally, individualism may be defined as a positive valuation of the individual as such, with special emphasis on the realization of his human potentialities. As Simmel has suggested, individualism in this sense may stress one of two forms: the attainment of personal distinction by virtue of excellence according to universal standards, or differentiation from others through cultivating and expressing qualities that are unique to oneself.[7] In either form this sense of the concept may be conveyed by the term *individuality*. Both these forms of individuality were described by Burckhardt in his famous discussion of the individualism of the Italian Renaissance.

While there may be a tendency for these three kinds of individualism to appear together in any historic situation, such an association is by no means necessary. A high degree of independence is compatible with a low degree of egoism; witness the case of liberal Quakers. Similarly, individuality may flourish when independence is sharply restricted, as Burckhardt himself suggested when observing that in despotic states "political impotence does not hinder the different tendencies and manifestations of private life from thriving in the fullest vigour and variety."[8] Again, individuality may be high even when egoism is low, as in cases when individuals are led to fulfil their unique selves with the primary aim of enriching the common life—the situation, for example, of certain artists and mystics.

We shall thus be well advised to pursue the analysis of individualism in Amhara society one step at a time. We shall proceed by examining in turn the prevalence of the three kinds of individualism just defined: in the first

.11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

instance, as contrasted with sentiments of mutuality and solidarity; in the second, as contrasted with a condition of numerous social obligations and constraints; in the third, as contrasted with anonymity and conformity. In so doing our attention will necessarily be directed to disparate orders of phenomena. The empirical referent of these three concepts of individualism will be studied as follows: 121* 181 •

(1) *Egoism.*—The degree of individualistic disposition among the Amhara will be examined in terms of two measures: the extent to which individuals are attached to collective symbols and interests, and the extent to which interpersonal relations take non-solidaristic forms.

(2) *Independence.*—The degree of individualistic social organization will be examined with reference to the different institutional foci of Amhara life, and measured by the extent to which role definitions are permissive rather than prescriptive; the possibility of voluntary as opposed to compulsory associations; and the possibilities for the protection of individual rights.

(3) *Individuality.*—The degree of individuality will be measured by the extent to which originality and heroic excellence are valued in the media of self-development and self-expression customary in Amhara culture.

EGOISM VERSUS SOLIDARISM

Self and Community

121* 181 619 186

To what extent are the Amhara bound to one another by a sense of community, and to what extent are their actions guided by a sense of identification with collective symbols and needs? One conspicuous area of such commitment lies in the realm of religious affiliation. The Amhara manifest a strong sense of solidarity with their coreligionists over against all those who do not wear a *mätab* and who have not been baptized. They are deeply attached to the several symbols of the church—the church building itself, the compound in which it is enclosed, the holy ark, and all representatives of ecclesiastical authority—and react to violations of the dignity and purity of their religious symbols as to a personal affront. On certain ceremonial occasions they march in procession around the church shouldering rifles and spears, indicating their determination to defend by force the integrity of their religious objects. In cases where church membership has been channeled along the lines of schismatic orders, the Amhara—particularly the monks—have defended their doctrines faithfully and have at times suffered martyrdom. 121* 181 791 186

With respect to their territorial and linguistic groups, the Amhara seem similarly attached to their collective symbols, if with somewhat less passion than in the religious case. As we have seen, the Amhara has a keen sense of identification with his native locale, or *ägar*, and is readily disposed to defend it against all comers. The expression *yägarē lijj* ("child of my country" or 121* 181 186 619

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*121 *Landsmann*) regularly evokes considerable sentiment. There is also a
• 181 strong sense of solidarity based on the use of Amharic—both among the
186 Amhara as a whole vis-à-vis other Ethiopians who either do not know
619 Amharic or speak it imperfectly, and among regional dialect groups. The people of Gojjam and of the Gondar area are particularly chauvinistic with regard to the quality of their Amharic.

*121 This attachment to symbols of religion, territory, and language is impor-
181 tant in providing a basis for identity and morale. Yet these attachments are
621 of relatively little import in shaping a self-transcending orientation in the day-to-day activities of the Amhara; for the crucial context of these activities is the local community, and in the civic sphere the Amhara manifest very little solidarity. Indeed, it may be said that the Amhara have virtually no sense of "community" at all, for the concept can scarcely be rendered in idiomatic Amharic.

*121 The absence of community sentiment among the Amhara is implied by
181 their ecology. Not only did the Amhara fail to produce extensive and durable
361 urban centers (with the limited exception of Gondar) but their country is
621 even barren of that frequent cornerstone of peasant life, the village. The Amhara have distributed themselves thinly, scattering in groups of fours and fives up and down their mountains and plateaus. Larger aggregations are found on the estates of noblemen, but these constitute expanded private households rather than civic communities. The Amhara justify this dispersion of their population on the grounds that wide spaces are needed for the grazing of livestock and that a man needs to live on the land he farms. But herding and farming have been carried out well enough elsewhere by people living together in villages, and it is quite probable that this ecological pattern is due as much as anything else to the Amhara's preference for not having too much association with those outside his immediate kin group. In his own words, the Amhara prefers the kind of neighbor who "does not push the boundaries" (*wassan aynakām*), and believes, as noted earlier, that *bět-ennā māqbar labetchāw naw* ("home and the grave are by oneself"). It is a preference manifest in such solitary living arrangements as that of divorced women who sometimes live by themselves in the country, eking out a living by spinning cotton or brewing spirits, and in the age-old predilection of Abyssinian monks for anchoritism.

*121 The moral counterpart of this ecological pattern is a preoccupation with
181 private interests that leaves little room for the consideration of communal
156 needs. According to the Amhara vocabulary of motives, social action is moti-
157 vated first and foremost by the pursuit of *ṭīqem*, or narrowly conceived self-interest.[9] This matter-of-fact acceptance of egoistic motivation among the Amhara appears during what is a common occurrence: the shameless subversion of occasions which are set up to consider communal problems and to

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symbolize communal solidarities by the forthright assertion of individual claims and grievances. 121* 181 •

In virtually every instance of a consideration of communal projects or needs that the author observed or heard of, the dominant characteristic of the discussion was a vigorous and uncompromising assertion of individual claims. If it was a question of allotting spaces in a new marketplace, each discussant was vociferating that the portion allotted to him was insufficient. If it was a question of securing more land for various communal purposes, the various property owners involved orated against contributing a square foot unless reimbursed at some preposterous figure. If it was a scene in court or a police station, everyone with any personal grievance, real or imagined, felt it perfectly proper to interrupt at any point and give vent to his opinion. If it was a question of rebuilding a ravaged church or constructing a road, personal disputations undermined all efforts toward communal action. If it was simply a ceremonial occasion, the peaceful setting one might have expected was shattered by the airing of private disputes. 156 157

> Today a new church building was dedicated. It was built to replace one that had been destroyed more than two decades ago by the Italians. People from all over the area made the journey to attend this celebration. All night long and well into the morning the priests and *dabtarā* sang and danced, accompanied as usual by sistrums and drums. Later in the morning, after the church had been officially sanctified, everyone was assembled in the open space in the church compound to listen to some verses composed in honor of the event by one of the local *bālābbāt*, a man who had been a key figure in getting the church rebuilt. He had scarcely finished reciting his poem when a woman in the audience spoke up in anger, arguing that the new church would involve more taxes and in some way would affect her property rights adversely. While he was trying to pacify her, others interrupted and began airing grievances of their own. What was to have been the climax of an occasion for the expression of communal solidarity ended as a bedlam of argument.[10]

The one area in which communal sentiments have seemed fairly strong among the Amhara has been in connection with the pursuit of outlaws. It is customary—in some Amhara districts, at least—for the local inhabitants to band together in informal posses when threatened by the presence of one or more *shīftā*, or "outlaws." Yet even here, in his attitudes toward the *shīftā*, the Amhara reveals an ambivalence regarding the maintenance of civil order and security. 121* 181 156 157 674 627 [829]

The term *shīftā* had, in former times, primarily a political connotation. It referred to someone who rebelled against his feudal superior and was applied only to persons of relatively high status.[11] More recently the term has been vulgarized and broadened to include any sort of outlaw in the rural areas. In 121* 674 [178]

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*121 674 any case the *shĭftā* is a man apart, who makes his home in uninhabited mountainous country or lowlands and lives by stealing cattle and robbing travelers. Some Amhara become *shĭftā* because of a passion for this way of life; this is particularly true of soldiers who, after a long campaign, prefer the continuation of a predatory and free existence to a return to the hard work of the fields. Others do so involuntarily, in order to escape punishment after committing some violence in the course of a personal dispute.

*121 674 829 554 The attitudes of civilian Amhara toward the *shĭftā* combine fear and dislike with a strong tendency toward idealization. The *shĭftā* is feared because he is a killer; if a person happens to witness him performing some act of theft or murder, he will usually keep quiet about it for fear of reprisal. He is disliked because he lives parasitically off the productive activities of others. But the *shĭftā* is widely admired, on the other hand, because he possesses a number of qualities that are dear to the Amhara. He is reputed to be an expert singer of *shĭllalā*. He is credited with unusually handsome features because, living at the expense of others as he does, he has plenty to eat and no [577] arduous work to wear him down. Above all he is *guabaz*, the great Amhara virtue that embodies bravery, fierceness, hardihood, and general male compe- [302] tence. This is symbolized by the *shĭftā*'s letting his hair grow to the proportions of a *gofarē*, the wildly thick hair style of the warrior.

*121 674 829 The Amhara's admiration for the *shĭftā* is reminiscent of American attitudes toward the outlaw in "western" films. In the Amhara case, however, this is not balanced by a corresponding idealization of a sheriff-figure as the representative of civil order. Although a feudal lord or governor who captures some *shĭftā* in his area may be admired, this admiration will be directed to his personal qualities of bravery or cunning far more than to his capacity as an agent of "law and order." There is no feeling among the Amhara that the *shĭftā* must be captured simply because he is an outlaw. Instead, a more pragmatic approach is taken: the *shĭftā* is acknowledged as a legitimate social type and is tolerated at a distance so long as his killing does not become wanton or excessive. This approach, and what, in the idealization of the [181] *shĭftā*, appears to be a tendency to identify with someone who openly flaunts the norms of civil society, bespeaks a relatively weak commitment to the value of civil order.

*121 181 186 619 The weakness of the Amhara's attachment to symbols of local community is paralleled by his parochialism with respect to more inclusive levels of community. This parochialism is manifest in diverse ways in the different social strata. Among the peasantry it appears, for example, as an aversion to arranging marriages and permitting land to pass to an Amhara from a different province. Among the clergy it has been expressed in terms of those regionally based doctrinal differences which have disrupted the church for many centuries. Among the nobility it has taken the form of incessant politi-

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cal animosities which have weakened the nobility as a status group both in relation to the emperor and in relation to foreign countries. Another respect in which Amhara parochialism has been expressed is the addiction to regional stereotypes, according to which the Tigrean has been depicted as flighty, irresponsible, and "dry"; the Gondarē as intolerably proud; the Gojjami as sly and treacherous; and the Shoan as calculating and untrustworthy. Despite its long history as a nation, Ethiopia probably never experienced more than the dimmest stirrings of a truly national sentiment among its people; and more than once in the past century have regional lords strengthened the hand of European powers in Ethiopia by seeking their help in the combat against other local rulers.

Self and Others

In addition to considering the extent to which the members of a society identify with the needs and symbols of their more inclusive collectivities, one may also define the individualistic disposition on the dimension of personal interaction. Egoism contrasts, in other words, not only with the disposition to perceive collective purposes as one's own, but also with the disposition to seek solidarity and mutuality in face-to-face relations.

This aspect of egoism/solidarism is studied by surveying the more important forms of interaction that appear in a given society. In the survey of elementary social behavior among the Amhara now to be reported, two criteria were used to establish the importance of any given form: (1) the frequency with which it was observed, and (2) the extent to which it was stylized or "institutionalized." These criteria were not embodied in any systematic observational procedures; the only control over the observer's bias here is my own deliberate effort to present a balanced and accurate picture.

We may begin by considering the more solidaristic forms. Interaction among the Amhara is characterized, first of all, by a sort of *sensuous camaraderie*. The Amhara enjoy bodily contact. Members of the same sex customarily hold one another's hands for long periods while conversing, or embrace one another in casual fellowship. Crowds of commoners cheerfully huddle close to one another on the floor through the night when they have assembled for some social function and cannot return home the same day. Relatives and companions of the same sex incline to sleep in one another's arms, at least in the chillier altitudes.

Both their style of dress and their manner of eating give the Amhara a ready way to express this comradely feeling. Their untailored cotton or wool cloth easily adapts itself to being shared. Except perhaps for individuals of high social status, the typical Amhara is ready to use his toga as a blanket-wrap for both himself and another whom he may scarcely know.

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*121 571 264 181 [829] A similar spirit is observed in Amhara commensality. Meals are customarily eaten from a common *ĭnjarā* basket. The sauce is ladled onto the center of the *ĭnjarā*, and is consumed ensemble by those sitting around the basket as they dip into it with pieces of *ĭnjarā* broken off from the edges. Traditional Amhara scoff at what they regard as the excessively individualistic Western custom of sitting each person down to a separate place at the table and thus depriving the meal hour of what they feel should be its basically communal tone.

*121 574 571 181 At a more formal level of interaction this disposition is expressed in the form of *hospitality*. Amhara hospitality is luxuriously attentive and thoughtful. For example, if there is foreknowledge of a guest's arrival, he is awaited at some distance from his destination and escorted with much to-do into the home. His mule is at once unsaddled and given to feed. The guest is given a place of honor in the home, and a glass of *ṭallā* is immediately brought for him. Amhara etiquette prescribes, moreover, that a glass is not properly filled unless it overflows; and it is repeatedly filled to overflowing whenever the guest has drunk some portion of the beverage. As a gratuitous gesture of good faith, the host—or his wife, or servant—tastes some of the beverage first, a sign that no "medicine" has been added. Before long the wicker table is produced, and the guest and his party are served copiously—no matter what time of day they arrive (unless, of course, it is a fasting day). When the guest has eaten to satisfaction, the host will insist that he eat some more, by repeatedly issuing injunctions like *tegābazu* ("Help yourselves!"), *moḳar* ("Try!"), or *āfar sehon* ("If I become dust!"—i.e., "If you do not eat you will be condemning me to death"). The Amhara host is also likely to insist that his guest spend the night. The guest's feet will be washed, and the host's bed will be given to him, or long grass will be cut for bedding on the floor. At the time of farewell, the host and his attendants follow the guest and his party a good distance along the road. The guest continually cries, "Return! Return!" and the host agrees but continues to serve as escort.

Such hospitality is not wantonly bestowed upon the casual wayfarer. Normally it is reserved for those who qualify as worthy guests: relatives, friends, [609] or persons of high rank. Nonetheless, there does exist among the Amhara some feeling that even the unknown stranger should be shown hospitality, for he is *ya-egziābhēr engedā* ("a guest of God"). Travelers are generally assured [485] that somebody somewhere will show them hospitality; there are no inns in traditional Ethiopia, for it is considered wrong to exchange food and lodging for money.

*121 576 571 181 Related to this pattern of hospitality is a delicate sense of *respect* that the Amhara displays toward all comers; often, even toward his enemies. When two Amhara pass each other anywhere, they are expected to bow slightly and say: "How did you pass the night?" or "How did you spend the day?" If they

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have not seen each other for some time they will say: "How have you sojourned?" and kiss each other on both cheeks. Depending on the closeness of their relationship and the interval between meetings, this introductory question will be followed by a more or less lengthy series of other questions.[12] Even when one merely passes by the home of another, he is expected to cry out his greetings from afar.

In a number of other ways, the rough edges of social life are softened by Amhara codes of etiquette. Custom prescribes that measures of grain must be filled to overflowing at the market. Grammatical forms indicating respect are used between people who are not on intimate terms. Uncovering one's head is another way of indicating respect during the greeting. Still another form is to rise whenever someone enters the room, and wait until the new entrant has pronounced "*Bezgiërl*" ("By God!") and sits down before reseating oneself.

On more superficial levels of interaction, then, Amhara behavior is apparently not egoistic. In the more fundamental areas of work and serious communication, a different picture appears.

Altogether there is little spontaneous *co-operation* in Amhara life. The Amhara prefers to work by himself, and, when he needs assistance, to order a subordinate to help him rather than to rely on friendly assistance from his neighbor. The distribution as well as the production of goods is carried out on an essentially individualistic basis. Each nuclear family takes care of its own provisions, even when the land being cultivated belongs to one of the parents and when more than one family lives within a single compound. (Even within the nuclear family, the proprietary sentiments of husband and wife regarding objects and land which each may own are rather lively.)

There are exceptions to this general rule. In some Amhara areas certain co-operative work forms have become institutionalized, for example. One of these forms, called *wanfal*, is invoked when there is a considerable amount of plowing or harvesting to be done, and a group of men in a given area take turns working on each other's land. Another form of co-operative work, called *waffar*, is employed when there is some extraordinary job to be done—putting on a new roof or digging land that is too steep for plowing—which cannot readily be reciprocated. In this case a man sends word around that on a certain day those who live in the area should come to work at his place, in reward for which generous quantities of *ṭallā* and *dābo* will be given them.

Despite the existence of special forms like *wanfal* and *waffar*, co-operation is only a peripheral feature of Amhara work activity. These forms involve but a temporary coincidence of individual interests. They are not used because co-operation as such is felt to be an important and natural part of social life—as seems to be the case, for example, among the Galla of Ethiopia.

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*121 Spontaneous co-operation is most in evidence among the Amhara at times
181 of crisis. When death is announced, relatives and friends promptly repair to
571 the home of the deceased and offer their help. They build the coffin and con-
[764] struct a *dāss* (a temporary shelter near the house to accommodate all the expected visitors). They bring food and drink to help provide for the many who will come to pay their respects, and will similarly provide help on the occasion of the big memorial feasts to follow. Like assistance is rendered during other crises, such as prolonged illnesses or fire. Such forms of co-operation set another significant limit to egoistic orientation among the Amhara.

*121 It is in the realm of interaction involving serious interests, touching
181 layers of the personality deeper than those required for the formalities of
156 etiquette, that Amhara egoism is most conspicuous. Here everything seems to
571 conspire against generous communication and concord of opinion. As we have
578 already observed, the Amhara are quick to become argumentative in ordi-
691 nary conversation. *Litigation* is one of the most prominent forms of interaction among the Amhara. One can scarcely spend a day in the Amhara countryside without encountering litigants, whether under a tree, at a marketplace, or in the courtyard of some lord. A nobleman can never travel about the country without being accosted on the way by litigants anxious to have him hear their stories.

*121 Litigation is, of course, an endemic feature of peasant civilizations. Yet
181 there can be no doubt that for the Amhara this form embodies a basic psycho-
571 logical disposition that differs from that of the people of other peasant civiliza-
578 tions. In traditional China, to take a case of marked contrast, such interper-
691 sonal conflict, far from being relished, was deliberately avoided. The Chinese
171 considered going to court to be an extravagance, and the village judge was one of the most underemployed members of the community. In China, parties to a dispute preferred to assemble at the teahouse and to seek a solution through
*121 discussion and negotiation. The Amhara, on the other hand, seeks to maxi-
181 mize the opportunity for self-assertion through litigious disputes.* Ordinary
571 sociability among the Amhara is saturated with references to litigation. Cur-
578 rent court cases comprise one of the more common topics of conversation.
[69.] Beyond litigation, *conflict* is often expressed in more violent forms. Fights
[521] with the *dulā* erupt when altercation becomes too heated. Throwing stones is another accepted mode of combat, especially among youth. Protracted enmities tend to eventuate in such acts as house-burning, assault with swords or rifles, and (according to Amhara belief, at least) poisoning.

While it is true that Amhara culture provides means and a certain amount

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* Some indication of the gross national significance of this phenomenon is afforded by the following comparison: twenty-seven high court judges are sufficient to handle the litigation for all of England and Wales; the corresponding number for Ethiopia is *one hundred and eighteen*.

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of moral pressure for the reconciliation of conflict, it appears to place greater emphasis on the acting out of aggression. It does this, first of all, by defining a number of acts as offenses which justify violent retribution of some sort. Appropriation of one's land, seduction of one's wife, and injury of one's relatives are acts of this nature, and it is incumbent on the offended party to seek personal revenge or, as the Amhara put it, "to return the debt" (*bedder mammalas*). It is considered shameful to remain passive when so affronted, an attitude expressed in the following couplet:

Balaw ba-dimotfar daggmaw ba-wānzā,
Bābbāt rīstennā yallam bamīst wāzzā.

Shoot him with the dimotfar,* get him again with
a wanza,*
Taking your father's land or your wife away,
that is no joking matter.

Aggressiveness is further encouraged by the Amhara ego ideal of masculinity.[13] The identity of Amhara males is very much bound up with their capacity for aggressiveness, by both violent and verbal means. A man who has killed someone is regarded with a certain amount of veneration, and the act of killing is itself praised in verses such as:

Saw gadlu saw gadlu: saw magdal yebajāl,
Saw yālgadala saw sihēd yāngolājāl.

Kill a man! Kill a man! It is good to kill a man!
One who has not killed a man moves around
sleepily.

Similarly, verbal aggression is encouraged by the inclusion of excellence at litigation and insulting in the domain of proper male behavior.[14] The bestowal of insults is a rather stylized, if dangerous, procedure among the Amhara. According to Amhara customary law, insulting is a legal offense. The new criminal code provides for a gradation of penalties according to the seriousness of the insult, including fines which run from Eth$15 to as much as hundreds of dollars. The most serious insults include *bāryā* ("slave"); *ṭayb* ("evil-eyed artisan"); and *qomātā* ("leper"). Insults of lesser to medium degrees of seriousness include the following:

hodām	"greedy" (literally, "bellied")
wafrām	"fat"
sakārām	"drunkard"
quashāshā	"dirty"
amadām	"scaly-faced" (literally, "ashen")

* Types of rifles.

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*121	*arām*	"indolent" (literally, "full of feces")
181	*ya-dehā lijj*	"son of a poor man"
571	*ya-lēbā lijj*	"son of a thief"
578	*yat abātḳ*	"bastard" (literally, "where is your father?")
[673]	*waslātā*	"lazy no-good"

Other, less direct forms of insult are also widely employed. As was already mentioned, a major use of the wax-and-gold formula is to express insults in so veiled a manner that direct reprisal is unlikely. Another tactic is that of not showing someone the proper respect or in some way manipulating the forms of etiquette to his disadvantage. A favorite anecdote concerning Alaqā Gabra Hānnā illustrates the simultaneous use of both methods: the Alaqā once flattered a donkey driver by bowing quite low to greet him and calling, *Endēt adarātchu?* ("How did you spend the night?"). Only when the man proudly related the episode to his friends, so the story goes, was he made to realize that the greeting was expressed in the plural form (*-atchu*), implying that he and his donkey were being placed in the same category.[15] Still another mode of indirect insult is that known as *ashmur,* in which two friends insult each other vigorously at the top of their voices, the real object of their abuse being a third party who is within earshot.

If the Amhara is by disposition inclined to bestow insults, he is still readier
[865] to take offense at the slightest hint of one directed at him. One of the tasks of socialization among the Amhara is to sensitize the young person to the various types of insults and to motivate him to strike back when he is so offended. Insults are frequently part of a vicious circle which moves from petty disagreement to serious argument to litigation at court, *dulā* fights,
[576] and even premeditated murder. Breach of etiquette may lead to no less serious consequences. In one court case which the author observed, a man was accused and convicted for addressing his father-in-law, whom he normally addressed by the polite form *ersewo,* with the familiar form *anta* in a moment of anger.

Argumentation, litigation, insulting, and revenge comprise the hard core of social interaction among Amhara. While it is possible to exaggerate the significance of these forms in the total pattern of Amhara social life, there can be little doubt of a strongly dissentious disposition just below the surface, and often at the surface, of Amhara interpersonal relations. Still another axis along which this individualistic disposition tends to be manifest is that of deception and suspicion.

*121 The Amhara is a master at *deception.* With straight face and convincing
181 manner he will relate the most preposterous fictions. The Amhara themselves
571 tend to be aware that this is one of their characteristic activities. When, for
577 example, I replied to the query of an Amhara gentleman that some horn
[123]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

goblets (which I had purchased for one dollar) had cost five dollars each, he remarked: "Ah, I see you have learned this country's art of lying well." 121* 181 571

The phenomenon in question is not an unmixed expression of egoism. At times the Amhara employ deception chiefly for reasons of considerateness, not wanting to tell the other person something that will offend him. Thus a person will agree to honor a request made by his neighbor even though he has no intention in the world of doing so; his neighbor probably understands this but still prefers an insincere "Yes" to an out-and-out "No." 500 [123]

Most of the time, however, deception is obviously being used to further one man's interests at the expense of another's. A person seeking a favor will pretend to be in much poorer straits than he actually is.* A needy traveler may pretend to be an important personage or otherwise disguise his identity in order to secure lodging for the night. An artisan, in order to obtain business, will tell his prospective customer that a certain job will be finished in two days when he has no intention of completing the work within a fortnight. To refer once again to my own experience: when I once needed to rent a mule for a week, and it was felt that the local mule owners might be reluctant to rent one for more than two or three days, I was advised by some respected Amhara men in the area that the only thing to do was to say that the mule was wanted for a few days, then on return to say that unexpected factors prevented my getting back on time. Far more imaginative plays of deception are attributed, again, to Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, who is renowned for the episode of sending word to Menelik that he was dead so that the Emperor would send money on his behalf to Gondar.

Like the indirect forms of insulting, deception has its more subtle, passive forms; deceptiveness by omitting the truth rather than committing a falsehood. One might render the basic principle that informs communication among the Amhara as: *Avoid binding commitments; maximize the degrees of freedom left after any utterance.* Questions and answers are typically couched in extremely oblique language. Unless there is some overwhelming personal advantage to be obtained from providing information, the Amhara tend to give answers—when they do not pretend not to understand the question—in terms so ambiguous as to be worthless; for example, replying to a question about the location of a certain place or person with the word *mādo* ("yonder").

The natural complement of so much deception is pronounced *suspiciousness.* Amhara are constantly on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. 121* 571 181

* One Amhara priest, for example, showed me that he had no clothes other than his single blanket in order to gain sympathy and induce me to give him something. But when he learned I had a camera, he went home promptly to get dressed for a photograph. [123]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 • 181 571

> Our people always speak indirectly, in secrets. For example, a man will come, asking for the glass he loaned another man. The debtor says he will bring it in a week, that it has been broken and he will send for a new one. The man may say: "Oh, never mind. It doesn't matter to me, don't bother." The debtor will then be scared; thinking that the owner of the glass is in his stomach quite angry and ready to kill him, he will take his gun and get the man first.[16]

The suspiciousness which so colors interaction among the Amhara has been viewed by some observers primarily as an adaptive response to some very real dangers with which Ethiopia has chronically been confronted: the threat of conversion to Western forms of Christianity by European missionaries, the threat of European imperialism, and the threat of encirclement and occupation by a militant Islam. These factors have undoubtedly intensified the apprehensiveness of Ethiopia's leaders and strengthened the much publicized xenophobic attitude of the Amhara people, just as the proliferation of security networks during the postliberation period has intensified the generalized distrust on the domestic scene. But these attitudes flourish as they do because they are nurtured on the soil of a basic disinclination to trust one another that is endemic in traditional Amhara culture.

That culture is marked, *au fond,* by a sense of despair about the possibilities of concord and enduring consensus among men, and, in more practical terms, by a realization that people who spend so much of their time deceiving one another are not to be trusted very much. *Sawen mämman bakantu naw* ("it is futile to trust in man")—so runs an Amharic epigram sometimes woven ornamentally into wool rugs; and it carries a secular-practical as well as a religious-speculative meaning. This disposition is institutionalized in the custom of *wäss,* according to which any sort of civil transaction—hiring a man as a servant, or lending money, or litigating in court—involves as one of the first steps the securing of a *wäss,* or "guarantor," who agrees to make good for any damages caused by the man he is backing.[17] It also appears in the custom of continually challenging the assertions made by someone who is relating an episode, so that the speaker is forced to interlard his narration with oaths that swear by the truth of what he is saying. The Amhara tendency to "overinterpret" and impute deception appears in their conception of the very origins of their language, for informed traditional Amhara commonly believe that Amharic originated as a secret language during the reign of the legendary Falasha Queen Yodit.

[173]

*121 181 571 198

A penchant for *secrecy* is pronounced among the Amhara and constitutes still another aspect of the individualistic disposition. In culturally elaborated forms it appears in the predilection for employing secret languages, including the argots of merchants, minstrels, and *zär* victims,[18] and the secret language

of shepherds,[19] as well as the secret formulae of magicians, the obscurantist constructions of wax and gold, and the use of Ge'ez itself in the presence of illiterates. Related to this is the great popularity of riddle games among Amhara. Personal relations, moreover, are consciously predicated on the harboring of secrets, or *mĭsṭir*. The Amhara assume that it is improper to reveal oneself fully, to disclose one's *mĭsṭir*, to anyone but a very close friend; and that, in fact, rarely happens. 121* 181 • 571 [198] [524]

Given the weakness of horizontal forms of cohesion among the Amhara—sociability at mealtime, stylized politeness among equals, and co-operation in time of crisis, important though they are, cannot contain the centrifugal forces just described—the dispositions which sustain a minimum of social order among the Amhara are expressed through vertical, hierarchical forms of interaction. Here both individualistic and solidaristic forms are in evidence, the latter in the forms of deference and begging, the former in the variety of authoritarian relationships.

Perhaps the most characteristic form of interaction among the Amhara is that of *domination*. The Amhara is at his happiest when he is in a position to order someone about. The sense of domination is marked not only in relations between nobles and commoners, officers and soldiers, masters and servants, but also between husbands and wives, and parents and children. Amhara children sometimes volunteer the explanation of their desire to have children when they grow up as based on the explanation that then *they* will have youngsters of their own to command.

Connected with the passion to dominate is a predilection for administering physical punishment. In all of the relationships just mentioned corporal punishment is an integral feature, particularly so on the domestic scene. With sticks or whips, masters beat servants, teachers pupils, husbands wives, and parents children. The complete acceptance of this pattern was shown by the fact that not a single Amhara TAT respondent objected to any of the corporal punishment cards. They all assumed that the punishment depicted, including that of husband against wife and mistress against servant, was deserved, proper, and would have a salutary effect. (One of the respondents even exclaimed when regarding one of the beating scenes: "What a beautiful punishment!") The only reservations expressed concerned the possibility that the punishment might be so severe as to wound fatally the person being punished, in which case the punisher would have cause for regret. 121* 181 571 152

Whatever the functions of such patterns in controlling antisocial behavior and securing adherence to the norms of the situation, the sentiment that underlies them is primarily egoistic. The superior is interested primarily in having his own way and gratifying his ego through the sheer exercise of his power; and the motivation of the punisher probably often contains a strong 121* 181 571

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 sadistic component—a component that gets thrown into relief in such phe-
571 nomena as the Amhara compulsion to stone dogs and the occasional wan-
• 181 tonly cruel behavior of Amhara soldiers.

*121 While hierarchical relations among the Amhara are upheld to a large de-
571 gree by the subordinate's fear of physical punishment or some other deprivation, a complementary disposition of perhaps greater importance is the senti-
181 ment of *respect for figures of higher status.* Family, age, wealth, and political
596 or ecclesiastical rank are all variables which evoke feelings and gestures of deference proportionate to the vertical distance between the two parties. Many of these gestures consist of elaborations on ordinary forms of etiquette used among peers. Thus, in greeting a superior one not only uncovers one's head but also leaves it uncovered as long as one remains in his presence. If kisses are exchanged in greeting, the superior kisses first, on the cheek, while the person of lesser status kisses the superior's foot or knee. The inferior never sits while the superior stands, and often he remains standing even when the latter is seated.

Other gestures of respect are peculiar to the inferior-superior relationship. If an inferior is seated, for example, he must rise to speak when addressed by a superior. If eating in the home of a superior, he must rise when water is brought to wash his hands. If riding a mule, he must dismount and bow when encountering a nobleman riding on the way. The ritual of respect performed when entering the house of a superior has been vividly described by an Ethiopian student in the following passage:

> When someone, let us say a man of a lower social rank, wishes to enter the house of a superior to greet him or to make some private appeal he must first of all take off his shoes and then give them to his servant if he has one with him; if not he leaves them outside in a safe place. Then he must twist his *lāma* [shammā] round his waist and holding the end in one hand enter the hall and crossing both arms at the lower chest, bow down very low to the ground before his host. Having done that he throws that end of his *lāma* which he is holding over the back of his right or left shoulder (depending on how he wears his *lāma*) and then remains standing near the wall until he is told to sit. When given permission to sit he must choose a lower place. He does not sit in any position he likes but must cross his legs, straighten himself and bow his head a bit looking most of the time at the floor.[20]

*121 Respect is further shown toward superiors through the use of special terms
181 of reference and address. A superior is always referred to and addressed in
571 the third-person-plural respect form. The term *gētotch* ("lordships") is often
596 used instead of his name or rank in reference. In addressing a superior
554 *gētāyē* ("my lord") may be used as well as *gētotch*. Superiors with titles are always addressed by their rank rather than by name. In addition, slightly

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

older or more prestigious males are addressed as *gāshē* ("my shield"); the corresponding term for females is *etēyē* ("my sister"). Much older people are addressed by words signifying "father" or "mother." 121* 181 571 576

It is true that the forms of respect toward superiors are often repeated mechanically and sometimes serve to cover up a distinctly hostile disposition toward certain superiors. They nevertheless do represent to some extent a genuine solidaristic sentiment—perhaps the most profound and influential social sentiment in the Amhara social system. It rests in the last analysis on the fact that the Amhara family develops a pronounced sense of filial devotion as well as habits of filial obedience. Amhara society can dispense with horizontal solidarities and communal attachments because it is held together, sufficiently for traditional purposes, at least, by an infinite network of "father-son" relationships. [554] [593]

The egoistic element in the hierarchical pattern is further modified by a sort of joking relationship that sometimes develops between inferiors and superiors. The harsh interrogation of inferiors at times shades into a sort of wry banter; sons or servants may be called "thief" or "scoundrel" in an undertone of unmistakable affection. At times, moreover, the direction of the jesting may be reversed. Amhara servants are noted for playing practical jokes on their masters, which the latter usually appreciate when the jests are clever.[21] Here again, wax and gold is the perfect medium—for expressing aggression against a superior while at the same time appearing to maintain the respect relationship. The following couplet, attributed to Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē, aptly illustrates this genre: 121* 181 571 522 [539]

Ennānta maḳuānnentotch ba-mīn waṭ balātchu?
Eññām ba-shurwātchen ennāntam bāssātchu.

What sauce, my lords, was on your plate?
We had but peas; 'twas fish you ate.[22]

Here the poet appears to be complimenting the nobles on their more elegant cuisine at a banquet; but there is a pun on the word *bāssātchu*, literally "with your fish," for it may also be taken to mean "you took more than your share."

Within the hierarchical pattern, finally, one finds expressed a certain amount of generosity which, as we have suggested, is relatively uncommon in relations among peers. This appears in connection with the *begging* and *almsgiving* which occur in many sectors of Amhara society. For church students beyond the elementary level, begging is the primary means of livelihood. Youths who have left home to study *zēmā* or *qenē* with a master wander about today, as in former times, carrying small baskets and pleading: "For the sake of Mary! For the sake of God!" in order to get their daily morsels. The activity is so organized that when a large number of students 121* 181 571 735

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 571 live near the same master, they divide up the neighboring countryside to avoid duplication in their begging.

181 735 [193] The ordained clergy are themselves given to begging, for items ranging from contributions to the local church to petty personal effects. High-ranking visitors to their locale are customarily made the objects of such solicitations. [533] Another type of begging is practiced by the minstrels who wander about the country with their one-stringed fiddles and fecund wit, coaxing contributions from any audience they can capture. In addition to these there are numerous professional beggars—the maimed, the diseased, and the poverty-stricken—who attach themselves to a well-attended church or monastery if they are unable to travel. The *lālibalā* is a notable type within this category of mendicants.[23]

[527] In addition to honoring the periodic appeals of beggars, "big men" are supposed to provide yearly feasts (*gĭber*) at which beggars of all the above descriptions are fed. In all these instances, the solicitation and bestowal of charity contributes a solidaristic element to the network of personal relations among the Amhara.

*121 181 156 571 The foregoing analysis of forms of interaction among the Amhara has been undertaken in order to gain material for generalizing about a psychological disposition. Our unspoken, tautological assumption has been that the ways in which individuals typically relate to social objects (i.e., other persons and collectivities) represent the sociologically relevant aspects of their psychology. Egoism and solidarism have been used here as concepts for depicting one dimension of "social character," using this term in the specific sense of comprising those aspects of personality which are both socially shared and constitutive of those actions that are oriented to social objects. We may now attempt to summarize the preceding discussion with the following definition of Amhara social character as it relates to the concept of individualism: The Amhara is primarily disposed to structure interaction in terms of self-assertion, dissension, and distrust, and to be indifferent to the concept of civil community. At the same time this egoistic orientation is blended with a warm and kindly sense of sociability, an occasional mood of generosity, and a refined sensibility regarding differences in status and the readiness to pay deference accordingly.

INDEPENDENCE VERSUS CONSTRAINT

*121 In the previous section we considered the nature of the individual's orientation toward others and toward collectivities in Amhara society. Our question now is the converse: what order of demands is made upon individuals by the institutions of that society? Specifically, we shall be concerned primarily with the degree to which the norms which govern institutional roles are

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Synchronization and Privacy

*121 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further
• 181 assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well
571 as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same
[476] time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is
[704] scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most
181 striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are
571 supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with
533 little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves
535 him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual
181 privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown,
571 first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate
[591] dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not
[576] even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are iso-
[592] lated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household,
[342] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters (*ʿilfiñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

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* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Ṭimqat day described in chap. iii.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Although women and children do not have so much freedom, the adult male Amhara who chooses to go off by himself for some reason is not bothered. In at least two cases, moreover, the right to solitude is institutionalized: that of the monk or hermit, who is left to his meditation and prayers, and that of the student of *qenē*, who spends hour after hour in some lonely place composing his verse for the day. 121* 181 571 517 562

Privacy is further protected among the Amhara by the shared belief that others normally do not have a just claim to information about one's person. Even such superficial matters as one's place of origin or one's family connections are not readily disclosed on a first encounter. This differs markedly from the custom of some other groups in Ethiopia, such as the Borana Galla, among whom it is the first order of business in any conversation to identify the "vital statistics" of one another. 121* 181 571 576

The machinery of wax and gold, again, exists as a useful apparatus with which to protect one's private identity and desires. In authoritarian relations, where the superior questions the subordinate with impunity, this evasive and equivocal manner of response constitutes the latter's main defense against yielding the information sought by the questioner. The superior may feel that he has a right to the information he seeks, but, if he is a good Amhara, he understands that he may never be told the whole truth. 121* 181 195 571

Thus, viewed as a whole, Amhara society does not envelop the individual in a complex network of obligations and constraints. The institutional structure of the society is relatively thin. There are few collectivities to which the individual might belong, and fewer still to which he must belong. He can, if he chooses, live at the very periphery of society—as a hermit, a monk, a *shīftā*, a minstrel, a beggar, or, if a woman, as a solitary householder. For the typical Amhara, the main obligations are to fulfil work responsibilities in behalf of the nuclear family, the parents, and to provide income and services for landlords and chieftains. Here, too, there are important degrees of freedom. An oppressive family situation may be readily relieved by divorce; an oppressive landlord or ruler may possibly be brought to justice over time, or in extreme instances fled from; and for the oppressed vassal or retainer, there is always the alternative of running away to another master or of turning to one's own devices. As a Christian, the Amhara is required to fast a good deal; but attendance at church and membership in religious fraternal associations are voluntary, and for the religious scholar there is considerable freedom of movement. 121* 181 571

It is difficult to assess the relative weight of the few but heavy constraints that do exist in Amhara social structure and of the many areas of real independence. But in view of the considerable latitude for unconstrained action that has been described in this section, it would seem valid to characterize 121* 181

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 Amhara society as marked by a moderately high degree of independence.
• 181 This is to say that Amhara society gives relatively wide rein to individual impulse in action. It is not to say that Amhara culture places a high value on the moral worth of the individual personality. That is a separate question, which we shall now proceed to explore.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS CONFORMITY AND ANONYMITY

*121 The extent to which individual personality is valued in a society is reflected
181 primarily in two aspects of its culture. One of these comprises its processes
156 of education, in the broadest sense of the term; the other, its forms of art. The character of these aspects of culture reveal, respectively, the degree of concern for the *development* of an individualized self and the degree of concern for the *expression* of an individualized self.

*121 *Education and Socialization*

155 Obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in bringing up children
861 among the Amhara. After a prolonged and indulged infancy, the Amhara
867 child from about three years on is subjected to a regime of discipline and
[854] repression. He is taught to fulfill without question any request made by any older person. He is conditioned to stand quietly whenever guests are present and to stand facing the wall while his parents or guests eat their dinner. If addressed by elders, especially those outside his immediate family, he is expected to reply in a barely audible whisper—a norm that is sometimes adhered to with such pathetic faithfulness that it has become the object of gentle satire in a short story by the young Ethiopian writer, Tadesse Liban.[26] Children who are noisy and disrespectful are referred to contemptuously by the term *bālagē*, meaning "rude."

*121 The desires and interests of an Amhara child are not taken into account
155 by those who raise him. He is provided with a bare minimum of clothes,
855 and little effort is expended in procuring him playthings,[27] although in some
524 families little dolls made of rags (*ashāngulit*) are produced. Children have
*121 a rich play-life with their peers, but this consists mostly in imitating various
155 adult activities. Organized games occur very rarely, the chief one—*gannā*—
857 being played as a rule but once a year, on Christmas Day.[28] The traditional songs and dances are learned from other children while tending the herds, but children are not encouraged to perform them in front of adults. The
*121 opinions of children are never expressed, let alone consulted. Indeed, in some
155 commoners' families the children are treated little better than the farm ani-
855 mals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing
858 her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in a piece of verse, he is derided as an "ant." Once he has composed a certain verse, he is supposed to discard it and compose something new the next time. 121* 156 538

The composition of original verse is by no means restricted to a class of professional poets. Every good Amhara is more or less adept at it. Extemporizing verse is a favorite activity at feasts, weddings, and in the aimless camaraderie of the drink-house. Sometimes a minstrel is on hand to begin the entertainment, but the usual pattern is for him to be fed verses extemporized by others present which he then embellishes with music. Even currently, with popular culture being manufactured and distributed out of Addis Ababa, urbanized Amhara place great value on the invention of new lyrics to suit the most popular tunes of the day.

Such verses customarily have not been written down. When unusually clever verses were invented, they were transmitted by word of mouth through the country and over generations. Or some individual would be noted for "owning" some couplet he composed or memorized, and people would turn to him whenever they wanted to hear it. Only in recent decades have some Ethiopians sought to preserve these verses in more durable manner by committing them to print.

Thus it is that, contrary to Riesman's correlation of the spoken word with traditionalistic functions and the written word with individualizing ones, and contrary to the common conception of the oral tradition as inherently rigid and unchanging,[35] oral literature provides the sole area in Amhara culture where conformity to existing works is shunned and the highest premium is placed on individuality.

Cultural Heroes

The last dimension of individualism to be treated here concerns the extent to which a society is inclined to single out individual personalities for special renown. We have seen that Amhara culture places little value on the moral worth of the individual as such, in that—with the limited exception of poetry—it does not encourage the development and expression of a distinctive and authentic self. And it might seem, from a superficial reading of Ethiopian history and culture, that the pre-eminent position of the emperor precluded anything like a general tendency to glorify outstanding individuals other than the sovereign. Yet our picture of Amhara culture cannot be complete without acknowledging the substantial place it has traditionally given to what may be called a "cult of the individual." For, with respect to at least three different qualities—saintliness, bravery, and cleverness—the Amhara have a marked tendency to idealize and remember outstanding individuals. 121* 156 181

The idolization of saintly individuals has been an important part of 121* 156 776

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to change suddenly the whole configuration of battle. He loves to hear, amidst the crackle of rifle-fire, the huzzahs, the shouts, the challenges, the injuries, the encouragements, the allocutions, the piercing voice of the troubadours, and the rhythms of the flutes alternating with the lugubrious wailing of the trumpets; to know, finally, that on the hills, behind their drummers who beat out the charge in place, the two rival chiefs and the two armies are following him with their eyes, and that he may at one moment or another, return to his lord and, hurling before him some trophy, tell him, at the end of his war chant: "There! This is what I know how to do!"[36] 121* 156 703

A cult of the individual obtains, in addition, with respect to the man with a genius for outsmarting others. Men who have beguiled their foes with particular cleverness, in litigation or in political intrigues, are scarcely less celebrated than religious virtuosi or heroic warriors. Anecdotes about great feats of shrewdness are the beloved stuff of Abyssinian folk history and are twice told around the fireplace.*[37] Some lords have enjoyed great reputations simply for being such successful and gifted scoundrels. 121* 156 554 [538]

Cleverness in words counts as much, if not more, than clever deeds. Here we confront once more the phenomenon of wax and gold, but appearing in this context as a sort of finesse in personal relations. It is a question here of individuals made memorable because of their memorable lines, their talent for swiftly and surely employing the ambiguities of Amharic to satirize, at the right moment, some personality, or social type, or aspect of the human condition. Military or political events are often remembered more for the witty verse composed by some personage on the occasion than for their historical significance. In the present century, Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē has been one of the most outstanding personalities of this sort, as was Alaqā Gabra Hānnā in the nineteenth century. [195]

INDIVIDUALISM AND MODERNITY

The Traditional Pattern

Our inquiry thus far has involved analysis of the various ways in which self-orientation is and is not manifest among the Amhara, in lieu of the more simplistic question of whether Amhara society is individualistic or not. Building on this analysis, we may now attempt a more integrated interpretation of traditional Amhara society. 121* 156

The predominant tendency in human relations among the Amhara is a disposition to seek, not unity based on affection, understanding, and/or responsi- 121* 156 181* 571

* A recent study which analyzed 1,086 stories with identifiable themes, told or written by Ethiopian children in grades two through eight, revealed that "cleverness pays" was by far the most frequently recurring theme.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

* 121 bility, but disunity based on the assertion of personal claims. This tendency is
156 to some extent contained by feelings of politeness—an aesthetic of propriety—
• 181 which are manifest in many ways. It is further contained by solidaristic senti-
571 ments closely tied to the feelings and experience of childhood: the euphoria of mealtime, on the one hand, and, on the other, a pervasive respect for figures of authority. But neither by virtue of identifying with social groups of any sort, nor through a sentiment of brotherhood with other men does the Amhara transcend an orientation that is directed to, and by, the narrower needs of the self.

Consistent with this type of subjective disposition, the organization of Amhara society does not rely to a significant extent on co-operative arrangements or the machinery of consensus. Nor does it involve, on the basis of either a division of labor or the sharing of diffuse obligations, the customary performance of numerous functions on behalf of territorial communities or other collectivities. Its main axis of organization, rather, is that of a highly personal relationship between superior and subordinate, with the subordinate existing essentially as an extension of the ego of the superior. This means that there is a marked discontinuity in the exertion of social constraints upon individuals. Within the segments of superior-subordinate relations—husband-wife, father-son, master-servant, teacher-pupil, confessor-confessant, lord-retainer, elder-youth—domination is virtually unlimited. Thus the main social restraints are in the form of repressive obligations—more or less "forced" labor, payment of heavy revenues, fasting—enjoined by figures of authority. Horizontally, however, there are very few obligations, and this accounts for the considerable amount of independence that appears among the Amhara. The demands of superiors, furthermore, are issued on a highly personal and spontaneous basis. They are not systematic, continuous, and detailed; the authority of superiors is not "rationalized." This accounts for the absence of discipline and synchronization, which is a further source of independence from external constraints.*

It is further consistent with the Amhara's egoistic orientation that objects which transcend the self—whether human communities or other groups or transcendent realities—are not greatly esteemed. With the exception, therefore, of those pious men whose paintings and religious studies served a truly devotional purpose, Amhara culture did not prescribe a desire for anonymity in behalf of transcendent values. On the contrary, it greatly valued the outstanding or heroic individual. In participating in this cult of the individual, the Amhara was not submerging his ego for the sake of broader realities but reasserting his ego through identification with the celebrated personality.

Yet for all this adulation of the individual, this substantial degree of social

* We may put all this another way by saying that while Amhara society is highly authoritarian, it is not at all totalitarian.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

freedom, and this assertion of egoistic claims, we have seen that the Amhara care very little for genuine individuality. With the limited exception of the sphere of oral literature, they do not cherish originality or creativity. With the exception of the sphere of litigation, where every man is accorded the right to speak his piece before a judge, they do not honor the dignity of the human person. Individuality as contrasted with conformity is not an Amhara value. 121* 156 181 • 571

The explanation of this seeming paradox is not far to seek. It is, to use the terms we have been employing here, that concern for genuine individuality is grounded on solidaristic sentiment. Respect for the autonomy and uniqueness of individual selves, including one's own self, is a cultural value that can only exist if supported by a socially shared disposition to respect the integrity and dignity of others. Egoism and individuality are not only independently varying aspects of individualism; they are, in the sense in which we have been construing the latter term here, largely incompatible.

The Challenge of Modernity

Characterization of traditional Amhara society in these terms leads naturally to two general questions concerning the relation between Amhara individualism and Ethiopia's quest for modernity. The first question concerns the relation between the individualistic aspects of Amhara society and the organizational requirements of national development; the second concerns the promotion of individuality. 121* 156 181

Whatever priority is given to the various goals more or less implicit under the rubric of "modernization," all of them entail a substantial increase in the mobilization of energies in behalf of societal ends. Whether the primary emphasis is placed on increasing per capita income, raising standards of health and education, building up military and diplomatic strength, or devising governmental institutions more responsive to popular sentiments and more efficiently run, an absolute increase in the available quantum of socially deployable human resources is indispensable.

Our analysis of Amhara society indicates that its traditions are not conducive to the mobilization of energies in behalf of communal goals. In this it differs from other African societies, such as those celebrated by the spokesmen for "African socialism"[38]—not to mention those of other peoples in Ethiopia like the Galla and the Gurage—where more "communitary" traditions would seem to provide a more viable basis for economic and social development at the community level. At the national level, where the developmental tasks are those of institution-building and education, the situation is no different. Here the need is for large numbers of people with modern education working to some degree in concert in behalf of national goals. But, as we have observed, the modern-educated Ethiopians have so far refrained from exerting them-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 156 181 selves as a strong progressive force in the national life. This is due, we suggested in the previous chapter, to a basic passivity related to the orality syndrome in Amhara culture. The considerations raised in this chapter seem no less relevant. The egoistic disposition and organizational laissez faire characteristic of traditional Amhara society affect no less their capacity for progressive action by inhibiting the uses of solidarity.

*121 156 181 571 The atomism of the Ethiopian intelligentsia has been a conspicuous feature of their condition since they came into being. It is manifested in the basic distrust in their orientation toward one another as well as toward the rest of Ethiopian society. The regret of not being able to trust one's close friends is one of the more frequently heard confessions from their lips. The analysis presented in this chapter suggests that this reflects the attitudes and customs of traditional Amhara culture as much as it does the alleged saturation of the society with informers. That so few modern-educated Ethiopians have dared to break out of the vicious circle of distrust by daring to establish solidary relationships and to circumvent the prevailing fears and stagnation by establishing organizations of some sort is an illustration of the fact that, however much they may give lip service to the ideals of nationalism and populism, their hearts are primarily attached to winning new increments of prestige and income; in brief, to becoming director-generals.

*121 178 181 571 Yet the total picture is by no means only one of atomism and stagnation. Some of the energies needed for Ethiopia's development can be, and have been, obtained by extending the traditional principles of domination and respect for authority into new areas of activity. Successful innovations in rural sanitation or agricultural practice, for example, have come about when local big men have been convinced of the desirability of the change and have then pressured the populace, by means of their authority and prestige, to implement the new measures. While the traditional authoritarian approach may for some time to come be the most ready method of mobilizing energies for social development, it alone cannot meet all the organizational needs of changing Ethiopia. One reason is that its effects are not continuous. To a large extent it depends on the whim and the physical presence of the relevant authority figure. It is common experience in Addis Ababa that particularly pressing problems are neglected for a long while, until the Emperor turns his attention to them; the matter then will be busily attended to for the moment, but is likely to be forgotten again when pressing matters turn the Emperor's attention elsewhere. This pattern is the model for most activity throughout the society where responsibility for specific problems is not carefully institutionalized.

*121 178 Another shortcoming of the traditional political pattern is that it does not tap the potential energies now dormant in the population. Insofar as the mass of the people remain passive, involved in the developmental process only as

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resist taking responsibility and showing initiative. In general, they reveal little capacity for self-discipline in a collective setting. 121* 571 156

The need for what can be accomplished through the new associations, however, transcends the intermittent obstacles to their effective functioning posed by such individualistic behavior. As modernization proceeds and as Ethiopians gain experience in these associations, one may expect that the more disruptive aspects of such behavior will be transformed in the direction of greater compliance with the implicit norms of group functioning. Amhara in the modernizing sector have no choice now but to replace the ethos of the *shiftā*, the litigant, and the wandering student with that of the president, secretary, and treasurer if they are to remain true to the ambitions that have been awakened within them. 121* 181 571

There are, moreover, a number of respects in which adequate functioning in modern groups may be supported by behavioral traits inherited from the past. Three of these traits in particular deserve to be mentioned in this context. One is the fundamentally respectful orientation toward others. This serves to reduce the outbreak of dissension among group members, and in the attitude of respect and obedience toward figures of authority provides the basis, given capable and decisive leaders, for a significant amount of concerted action among group members. A second trait of some importance is the acceptance of conflict as a natural and not particularly threatening component of human relations. This means that group members are ready to admit and deal with such conflicts as do emerge in their ranks, and are experienced in the resolution of such conflicts through the agency of elderly mediators or the more formal processes of litigation. Finally, the Amhara sense of humor—wry, realistic, attuned to the ironies of existence—introduces a salutary leavening ingredient into group process. It provides an outlet for the release of tensions in group situations and adds a certain flavor to group experience that often more than compensates for the lack of a hyperinstrumental orientation. 121* 571 156 [578] [522] [154]

The Question of Individuality 121*

Although effective modernization is unthinkable without a significant increase in solidaristic sentiments and rationalized organization, in Ethiopia as elsewhere, the fate of the other aspect of individualism discussed in this chapter—individuality as a cultural value—poses a more controversial question. If the essence of modernity is the systematic effort to control rationally man's physical and social environment, then the society of *1984* may be claimed as a possible modern utopia no less than the society in which all children go to Montessori schools and all adults paint, undergo psychoanalysis, and study Great Books. The cultivation of individuality stands as but one of many pos-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 sible values commonly subsumed under the notion of modernity and must compete with other values, like that of maximizing efficiency in production, which are indifferent or antagonistic to it. The modernizing elites are thus faced with the question, whether they confront it openly or not, of the extent to which their political and cultural institutions should be encouraged to emphasize the dignity, integrity, and creativity of individuals.

And yet it can be argued that individuality, while not a necessary constituent of modernity—if, from the author's viewpoint, an extremely desirable and plausible constituent—may be an indispensable means of accomplishing any of the goals aspired to by the modernizing elites. The argument is that informed and reliable leadership, on the one hand, and responsible and effective criticism, on the other, depend ultimately on the existence of at least a minority of persons who can think for themselves and can have confidence in their thinking and in the possibility of meaningful communication with others. In terms of the collective interests of the national society, one could maintain that a developed individuality is *more* important for the elite of a transitional society than of a highly modernized nation.

*121 156 • 181 The weight of Amhara tradition opposes the graceful emergence of such a minority in Ethiopia. The pressures toward conformity and the inhibition of self-expression in most areas of life are, we have seen, characteristic of that tradition. The surly use of authority, the subtle sense of fatalism, the adulation of rank rather than human qualities, the distrust of innovation, the drabness of subsistence, the authority of conventional styles, the narrowness of outlook maintained by mass illiteracy and religious fundamentalism, the interpersonal aspects of the ethos of wax and gold (deception, insult, and intrigue)—these and related aspects of Amhara culture are formidable obstacles to the development of individuality among Ethiopians.[43]

Such a development is further impeded by two characteristics of Ethiopia's contemporary situation: the fear of criticism and the new "cult of personality." Given the Amhara emphasis on the deserts of status and the formalities of social intercourse, it is natural that the uses of honest criticism should have been kept to a minimum in their traditional social order. And thus it is that, from want of public habits of constructive criticism, traditions of self-examination have never emerged; rather, the ego has ever been first and foremost on the defensive to ward off all real or alleged slights to its dignity.[44] Altercation among Amhara has frequently arisen from a characteristic incapacity to accept advice and counsel, let alone criticism. This difficulty has been compounded by Ethiopia's present circumstance, for she finds herself, after centuries of living as she pleased with a mode of adjustment fairly well suited to the realities of traditional life, suddenly forced to acknowledge the inadequacy of her culture for purposes of living in the modern world. This situa-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tion has prompted the hasty erection of new self-justificatory defenses and an extreme touchiness about being considered "primitive" or "backward." This sensitivity has been exacerbated by the fact that European politicians in pursuit of their colonial interests, and foreign journalists in pursuit of sensational stories, have shown no compunctions about dwelling on and exaggerating some of the more unflattering aspects of Ethiopian culture. In such an emotional climate, the attempt to be objective about one's country and one's self, to engage in self-examination that is both sympathetic and critical, can be carried out only by efforts that are profoundly heroic. 121* 156 181

The situation has scarcely been improved, moreover, by the form taken by the "cult of the individual" in contemporary Ethiopia. The centralization of power has been accompanied by a radical centralization of prestige. The cult of personality occasioned by the ascendance of Haile Selassie overshadows all public life in Ethiopia. It is manifest in the ubiquitous photographs; the naming of countless streets, plazas, schools, and other institutions after him; and in the unremitting praise and adulation accorded him in all public speeches and mass media. Other individuals have normally been accorded recognition only by virtue of their proximity to him, while individuals possessing attainments in their own right, and thus some claim to public attention, have deliberately been kept in the shadows. Domestic news conveyed through the press and radio has largely consisted of the minutiae of the Emperor's daily activities, including such matters as the exact time at which he performs any public function and all the words he speaks on any occasion. This cult of personality has further been advanced in the Ethiopian press by its adherence to a number of conventions respecting the person of the Emperor, such as that of placing the name of the Emperor at the beginning of any article in which he is mentioned; capitalizing all references to the Emperor, including all pronouns; and attributing all developments and progress reported in the newspapers to the initiative and foresight of the Emperor and his government.[48] 121* 181 156 643

The political implications of this phenomenon need not concern us here. Whether the monopolization of prestige as well as power by the Emperor may have a primarily beneficial effect, through providing an authoritative symbol that can link the multifarious elements of the Ethiopian state; or whether, as was the case with Bismarck, the elimination of other possible pre-eminent personalities is laying the basis for a leadership vacuum for which the coming generation may pay dearly, is a question that cannot yet be answered. In this context we are concerned only with establishing the point that the ascendance of a cult of personality such as now obtains in Ethiopia eliminates not only the bestowal of public esteem for authentic individual performance, but also deprives the people of exercise in a crucial prerequisite

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*121 of individuality—loyal criticism toward the government, one's friends, and
• 181 one's self.
156
643 Besides the efforts of those courageous Ethiopians who, in exile abroad or living in inner exile at home, have steadfastly worked to develop their powers
*121 of integrity and their capacities of independent judgment, there is but one
873 force that holds any promise of increasing the scope of personal autonomy and creativity in Ethiopia, and that is education. The fate of Ethiopia one and two generations hence is linked, more closely than members of large, industrialized societies can readily appreciate, with a single small institution: the Haile Selassie I University. As pinnacle of the country's educational system, it sets the standards, prepares the teachers, and devises many of the innovations to be used throughout the nation's schools. No less important, its relative independence from the national government gives it a certain leeway to pursue policies based primarily on academic considerations. The Ministry of
[647] Education, which administers all other secular schools in the country, is necessarily more subjected to the routine pressures of domestic politics. The university, on the other hand, by virtue of its many expatriate staff members and its dependence on outside financial help, is more intimately tied to international academic standards and practices. While a growing number of qualified Ethiopians have joined its staff, for some time to come the University will necessarily be greatly dependent on assistance from academic men from other countries. In any event, it is likely to remain in continuous contact with the outside world by virtue of its participation in the international community of scholars. This condition may give it a degree of autonomy and insulation that can but further the patient development of Ethiopia's most sorely needed asset: cadres of individuals who can resist the facile slogans of the day and work to provide for Ethiopia's great transformation the benefits of enlightened aims and realistic practices.

796 While some of this feasting is now less orgiastic than in the past, "azmari" musicians still pass among the feasters, singing praises to the host and noble guests, [534] to the accompaniment of the single-string "masenqo" of male singers, and the banjo-like "qrar" fingered by women azmari. Torchlight parades, both of men and of women, leave the bonfire later, wind toward the nearest river or brook (still full though no longer raging) to enjoy the pleasure of bathing at its best, before the brooks dry to a trickle.

796 Thus the first church function of the year is an ● 182 important factor in unifying this society: significant for all ages, both sexes, all classes; sets a time and place for rites of passage in the life cycle; renders visible paternalistic feudal patterns of human relationships; reopens the annual cycle of economic endeavors (caravans, weaving, etc.); reopens the pattern of kin visiting after the hibernation of 3 months; and reinforces the traditional religious as well as national values and attitudes.

796 In the months that follow there are several religious festivals, which also have social significance. Named after special saint's days, they vary from region to region.

The next widely observed holy day is Christmas, on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This does not nearly approach the significance it has in the Western 796 world, nor the Masqal feast just described. In fact, 526 Christmas, "Ledät" (lit. birthday) is more often refer-

X794 756 more tricky but less powerful than hers. This enables her to relieve the sufferings of her clients; without, however, curing them. For a possessive spirit can be turned into an asset - into a protective spirit once the spirit's demands are known and regularly fulfilled. Why should anyone wish to reject such a protective spirit who helps solve the problems of life and even "beautifies the face" with an inner glow? Only a few hopelessly evil demons, mostly female, need to be exorcised.

X794 562 Women, otherwise limited in cultural participation among the Amhara, particularly in the church institution where their expressive behavior and opportunity for service are almost entirely rejected, constitute a considerable majority in the zar societies, even in the top leadership; so that many men think of the zar cult as predominantly feminine, and consult zar doctors by stealth only, at night. Men have ambivalent feelings about their wives attendance: they are often jealous of the "possessive" spirit; object to the financial outlays demanded by the "zar" spirit on pain of "relapse" into the patient's catatonic, schizoid or hysterical state; object to their wives being at the doctor's hut all night during worship-sessions; but admit that their wives are thereafter easier to live with, indeed more beautiful when the "wedābi" (inspiration) "is on their face".

[182] Thus the "zar" institution affects many other Amhara institutions: Marriage and the Family; Religion; Economics; Ethnic Relations; and even linguistics.

X794 755 [832] The psychological attitude in Amhara culture which emphasizes the aspect of possession in love, and in other intense human relations, has already been pointed out in connection with "love magic", which attempts, instead of arousing love in the partner, to render him or her submissive.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

776 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often
174 wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the
797 pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, demoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyēn"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits.[127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised t̤ängway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only
[182] exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who hold the people in terror and exercise political power.[128]

[794 While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of
562] members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria.[129]

171 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and
754 other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

P A R T VII: Concluding Observations about Amhara Culture and Society.

181

1. Predominant Ecological Characteristics: Peasant Folk Society.

Parts I and II of this study have shown how the Amhara people on the highland plateau of Northern Ethiopia utilize their generous physical environment to fulfill their ecological needs, with a minimum of tools and considerable reliance upon the ethnic division of labor.

Their ecology is primarily that of an agricultural peasantry. They share with peasants the world over certain near-universal characteristics, in the sense of Redfield's definition of a peasant as a person who controls land and practices agriculture as a way of life, not as a business for profit (footnote 131).

182 They also share certain characteristics of cultural integration with other folk societies. With regard to the latter, Kroeber remarks:

> "Folk societies .....belong to that group of societies which identify themselves with their locality, in contrast to the sophisticated city dwellers who float without roots but take pride in living in their era and day and are therefore subject to the play of fashion".
> (footnote 132)

This explains, at least in part, the strong regional emphasis, (down to small sub-districts) among the Amhara, indicated many times in this study.

The historian might approach analysis of Amhara culture by totalling its material and non-material traits. This might then appear to be an unbalanced conglomerate. But it seems supremely

Footnote 131: Redfield, Robert: Peasant Society and Culture. 1956
Footnote 132: Kroeber: Anthropology. 1948. p. 282

182 coherent and integrated to the Amhara. Such a point of view is not unique, as has been pointed out by Kroeber:

> "...most of what is in any culture was produced outside of it, but the highly composite product nevertheless is regularly felt as something coherent and integrated, and normally accepted as 'right'.
> ...the average individual (is) so molded by it in growing up...that even incoherences and contraditions are taken for granted as if they were logically sound and a-priori evident...
> ...(He) accepts the surrounding atmosphere as a fish accepts water. What is 50 years old in this culture and what is 3000 years old touch him alike and affect him alike. So do elements that the culture originated and elements which were introduced into it."
> (footnote 133)

From a sociological point of view, one might describe Amhara society as "tradition-directed" in the terminology of David Riesman (footnote 134). Certainly their old norms are still intact. Even the recently "modern-educated" minority has not yet experienced "anomie".

2. How Amhara Culture functions in Amhara Society.

181 How Amhara culture fulfills the non-material needs of Amhara society, may be summarized under three headings: A. Ethos and major values; B. specific culture foci; C. summary of psychological considerations predominant in Amhara culture.

A. Ethos and Major Values: the Possessor and the Possessed.

Ethos and systems of values have been variously defined; e.g. "..the direction in which the culture is oriented...

"It is evident that the ethos of culture is pretty close to what

Footnote 133: ibid, pp. 286-8.
Footnote 134: Riesman, David: The Lonely Crowd. 1950.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ethiopic verse becomes most obscure in the figure known as *wesṭa wayrā* ("inside of olive tree"). Here only the wax is given, and the listener must work to unearth the gold. Often this can be done only when the circumstances under which the verse was made up are known. The author of a *wesṭa wayrā* often refuses to reveal anything that may help the listener to grasp its hidden meaning. 538 19

The expression *wesṭa wayrā* alludes to the fact that the inner core of the olive tree is a hard substance encased by bark of a different color. The implication is that the inner sense of a *wesṭa wayrā* poem is concealed by a veneer which conveys a quite different sense and is difficult to penetrate. This figure is thus especially suitable for expressing insults in a safe way and for esoteric philosophical or religious message. Here is an instance of the latter usage: [182] 538 539 19

Ya-bāhetāwi lijj sifalleg le'ullennā
Ya-ḳristosn mesht talānt washama-nnā
Qeṭal betābalaw hono qarama-nnā.

The son of a hermit, high rank to display,
Made love with Christ's wife yesterday;
When she fed him leaves he wasted away.

The surface meaning of this tercet describes an ambitious man who had relations with "Christ's wife" in order to raise his status, for in Ethiopia having relations with a woman of high rank is one way to gain prestige. Instead of advancing his position, however, this man lost all his power when the woman fed him (medicinal) leaves. The esoteric meaning, on the other hand, refers to the experience of a hermit. His "son" is intended to symbolize his hunger, and "Christ's wife" symbolizes fasting. The "inside" meaning, the gold, is therefore that the hermit's hunger is heightened by its relations with fasting, but it diminishes when he is fed leaves, the hallowed diet of a hermit.

The mode of the various poetic figures collectively designated as *sam-ennā warq* is intellectual rather than sensuous. The chief delight of Ethiopic poetry is to attain a maximum of thought with a minimum of words. This effect is reached, as we have seen, through subtle allusions and plays on words. The point may be a serious moral comment, the understanding of which requires one to decipher hidden references to biblical passages or sacred legends; or it may be a jest about love based on a pornographic pun. In any case, the more ingeniously compact and obscure the construction of the verse, the more pleased will be the poet and his audience. Weighty (i.e., mysterious) verse is the ideal, for as the Amhara say, "weighty verse, like heavy clothing, warms the insides." 538 19

The creation of the wax and gold figures was an integral part of the development of *qenē*, the genre of verse composed to be sung at the conclusion of devotional services in the church. And *qenē* appears to be a specifically 538 19 174

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words often carry *double-entendre* as a matter of course; when he listens, he 538
is ever on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. As one of my 181
Ethiopian colleagues has said: "Wax and gold is anything but a formula—it is a way of life."

In essence, wax and gold is simply a more refined and stylized manifesta- 195
tion of the Amhara's basic manner of communicating. This manner is indi- 521
rect, often secretive. Amharic conversation is larded with vague remarks 538
like *Mīn yeshāllāl?* ("What is better?") when the speaker has failed to indicate what is the issue at hand, or *Tādyās!*, an interjection which can mean almost anything. Often, when the speaker is then quizzed about the issue at hand, he will give an answer that does not reveal what is really on his mind at all, and even when he does, the person with whom he is talking is likely to interpret his response as a disguise.

Wax and gold embodies this fundamental indirection in speech by means 195
of the studied use of ambiguity. Apart from its literary and religious mani- 182
festations, wax and gold appears in the common life of the traditional Am- 538
hara on a variety of occasions and serves a number of diverse functions.

It provides the medium for an inexhaustible supply of humor, among a 538
wry people who prefer the clever, double-edged remark to comic actions or 195
incongruous situations. This includes the wit of daily life—the invention of 182
puns and sly retorts, the telling and retelling of good anecdotes and famous 522
lines—as well as the more formalized humor on festive occasions, where minstrels sing the *sam-ennā warq* verses extemporized by the guests.

It provides a means for insulting one's fellows in a socially approved man- 538
ner, in a culture which requires fastidious etiquette in social relations and 195
punishes direct insults by heavy fines. *Sam-ennā warq* insulting, too, has its 182
more stylized expressions, as at the drink-house, where one may find persons 578
competing in a prolonged exchange of more or less disguised insults, or in time of political or military conflict, when opposing lords were wont formerly to satirize one another with ambiguous couplets.

It provides a technique for defending the sphere of privacy against exces- 538
sive intrusion, in a social order that thrives on rumor and gossip and puts 195
most of its people at the mercy of superiors. While vague and evasive re- 182
sponses often suffice to dampen the enthusiasm of the tax collector or the 571
curious neighbor, *sam-ennā warq* constitutes another potent weapon of self- [521]
defense.

Finally, it provides the one outlet for criticism of authority figures in a 538
society which strictly controls every kind of overt aggression toward author- 195
ity, be it parental, religious, or political. Thus it has been a safety valve for 182
certain social tensions, enabling, for example, witty individuals to satirize 578
the monarch himself and still live to repeat the witticism—so long as its sub- 571
ject was himself duly appreciative of the cleverness of the lines. [687] [522]

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[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
ṭēff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182 •
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181]
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

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622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
• 182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 512 *The Daily Round*

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *ṭĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of
[462] pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Egyptian mosques; youth dormitories and community houses in certain tribes in India; the academic and athletic youth organizations of ancient Athens and Sparta; not to mention the numerous teen-age associations of modern Western society.[3]

Here again, the adolescent Amhara is not involved in any such social forms. The advent of puberty is associated with the growing up and out of childhood groups, the gangs of shepherds who spend their days together in work and play. The girl of eleven or twelve is expected to spend all her time at home, under careful supervision. The boy of thirteen or fourteen has abandoned the shepherd's life for farming, in the company of older relatives, and soon becomes increasingly preoccupied with his private economic and erotic interests. His family elders are likely to warn him not to make friends with other youths outside the family.[4] For a number of adolescent boys to get together outside of festive occasions is, to the traditional Amhara mind, a sign that something wrong is afoot.

The absence of adolescent rites and age groups reflects the individualistic character of Amhara social organization, a subject to which we shall turn in chapter vii. Nevertheless, Amhara society catches young people in its grasp and guides them to adulthood just as firmly and surely as does a society which has many collective arrangements for its adolescents. It does this by means of a well-ordered program for growing up. The road from childhood to adulthood is one series of informal, unproblematic stages through which the growing person adjusts to progressively increased responsibilities and progressively detailed norms. After infancy, there is normally no break in continuity in the whole process.

Toward Adult Work Roles

Following a long and indulged infancy, the Amhara child is early taught the rudiments of work responsibility. At the age of three or four, children are given simple chores, such as shooing chickens from grain drying in the sun or collecting bits of firewood. Somewhat older children are expected to protect the crops against birds, farm animals, and baboons. The Amhara becomes apprenticed in the main vocation of his childhood—tending the herds—almost as soon as he can run about, and six-year-old shepherds play a crucial part in the Amhara economy.

Boys retain the responsibility for tending the herds at least until the age of twelve, but by then they have already been initiated into a number of adult work activities. At about eight or nine years the Amhara boy begins to do his share of the harvesting, sickling the wheat, barley, *tĕff*, or beans and loading the crops in piles he will help transport to the threshing place. He becomes adept at directing the cattle round and round the threshing floor and at winnowing the grain from the chaff. At times he helps with the weeding.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

than half the secondary students questioned, and well over a third of the college students, stated that the number of their friends was only one, two, three, or four. 883* 178 572

Almost all the students indicated that they prefer close, intimate, and enduring friendships to casual, impersonal, and frequently changing relationships. There is thus something of the traditional *goramsä*'s companion about these relations, in that these boys define their friends as confidants, as individuals with whom they can disclose "secrets" and discuss personal problems. But the modern relationship is much broader, for it also includes such activities as studying together; going on walks; playing athletic games; going to the movies; visiting the brothels; talking about education, life, and the future; seeing the sights around town.

The great sociological significance of these small clusters of companions, or *bälïnjarä* as they are called, is that they play a crucial part in mediating the transition from a childhood that is essentially traditional, despite exposure to certain modern subjects in school, to an adulthood that will be lived essentially in the modern sector. At the same time that they help the newcomer adjust to each local school community, they are helping him adjust to the broader subculture of modernizing Ethiopia—explaining the strange things and ideas he encounters; correcting his behavior, for example, by showing the proper use of silverware at the table; and refining his language, when necessary, from that of the rustic to that of the urbanite. Their creative function is no less important. Through countless conversations, some idle and some intense, they work to interpret and integrate stimuli coming from many sources—from movies; magazines; the example of Europeans living in Ethiopia; the behavior of government officials, as well as from their teachers—and thus form a sort of buffer between the lone adolescent and the various authoritative influences in his life. 883* 178 572 182

Despite the radical changes in the position of the Amhara adolescents described above—their complete dependence on the government school system, their tutelage under foreign instructors, and their great reliance on age-mates—the traditional pattern of adolescent submission to parental authority still runs strong. Even though most students live as boarders or in rented quarters, they maintain contact with their parents on occasional visits or at vacation time. However far removed, they remain deeply attached to their families and sensitive to the wishes of their parents. How to acquire money to send to their families is often a dominant concern in their lives. Though in most cases the parents can not provide meaningful orientation regarding adjustment to changing conditions in Ethiopia, they do give advice about how their children should behave and try to keep them faithful to traditional norms. The fact 883* 178 593

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that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for considerable strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(396)	(40)	(197)

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

society: to create engineers and mechanics, doctors and nurses, economists and educators. With regard to the familiar occupations of the old order, the schools' task is to engender a new breed of practitioner—farmers versed in modern methods of agriculture, soldiers disciplined and geared to modern techniques, clergy cognizant of ecumenical Christianity, clerks who can type and take shorthand, and government officials with some modern education.

What is most revolutionary is that the schools introduce not only new subject matters for careers, but the very notion of vocation itself—of life work as

TABLE 4

SOURCES OF FUTURE SATISFACTION CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS*

Source from Which Students Expect Most Satisfaction in Life	Secondary School: Males (per cent)		Secondary School: Females (per cent)		College Males (per cent)	
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Career or occupation	34	12	30	9	44	17
Improvement of local community	30	27	16	36	22	28
Religious beliefs and activities	13	20	16	21	5	7
Participation in national and international affairs	10	24	13	20	8	26
Family relationships	8	10	20	9	17	14
Leisure-time, recreational activities	5	7	5	5	3	8
Number	(394)		(40)		(195)	

* Based on question 27 in the Gillespie-Allport questionnaire.

something which one *chooses,* trains for in a specific manner, and derives satisfaction from pursuing.* This orientation departs radically from the traditional expectation of inheriting the work of one's father as a matter of course. Whereas, as we have noted, the Amhara son traditionally carried on his father's work, except in rare cases where there were special reasons for not doing so, only *seven per cent* of the boys in my sample indicated that

* When asked what they expected to give most satisfaction in their lives, the students most frequently named "career or occupation" (out of six alternatives). When asked what they considered most desirable in choosing an occupation, they named "work that is really interesting" most frequently (out of six alternatives). See Tables 4 and 5.

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the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[80]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis,* a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

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innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amda Ṭseyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum.

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[51] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas.

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest.

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict

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the Amharic phrase *ya-ḳantu weddāsē zaman*—"the era of futile flattery."

For, whatever other aspects of modern culture they have identified with, the locals and returnees are seized with the promise of its first principle: dynamism.[62] Should they join forces, among themselves and with each other, they might create the effective intelligentsia which is indispensable for realizing this dynamism in action. They would play complementary, and equally necessary, parts; the locals contributing their greater drive and closeness to traditional society, the returnees their broader perspective and skepticism toward simplistic answers and total reforms.

There are numerous obstacles to such a progressive development. Some of them represent the persistence among the intellectuals of a number of traditional pan-Abyssinian characteristics which inhibit both the exercise of creative leadership and the capacity for solidary action. The traditional context of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters which follow. The most conspicuous obstacle, however, has been the manner in which the Ethiopian government has sought to integrate the intellectuals in the social system. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Role of the Government

In the hierarchy of values which sustained the traditional Abyssinian social order, that of the transcendental religious orientation represented by the Orthodox Church may be said to have held the paramount position. This is the sense in which, as has so often been remarked, religion has been Abyssinia's only truly unifying factor throughout the centuries. Religious charisma transferred from foreign sanctuaries—the mythical Ark of the Covenant brought from Jerusalem and the archbishop periodically imported from Egypt—provided the ultimate source of legitimacy in the society, upholding the authority of a sacred Christian monarch, church-defending warlords, and a numerous and functionally differentiated clergy. It so penetrated the social system that the basic unit of Abyssinian civil life was in fact a religious one, the parish.

In retrospect it would seem that the most profound aspect of Haile Selassie's accomplishment has been to dislodge the transcendental religious value from highest place and to replace it with the system-integrative value of loyalty to the emperor.[63] His mission has been above all a secularizing one. To accomplish it he has had greatly to increase his political and economic resources; but insofar as his regime has been accepted, and not based exclusively on sheer power—which to some extent is certainly the case—the paramount value in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie has become loyalty to the emperor as a symbol of the whole society. The autonomous significance of the church has been reduced; its extra-Ethiopian source of charisma has been cut off, and its func-

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155 521 578 [195] a matter of course. In the more covert forms of expression, however, insulting is a favorite practice among Amhara. Ambiguous language and obscure allusion make possible a good deal of socially admissible, and admired, insulting. It is chiefly due to his mastery of this genre that the Amhara have come to idealize Alaqā Gabra Hānnā who, in the words of a psychologically sophis- [554] ticated Ethiopian informant, by "skillful use of 'wax and gold' has defiled everything that is sacred in Abyssinian tradition: this includes Mother, God, Emperor, and Patriarch, to say nothing of the ignorant clergy, peasantry, and slaves. Gabra Hānnā . . . is the summation of the oral aggressive trend in every Abyssinian, of which the *dabtarā* in the king's court and the singer in the drink-house are only mediocre representations."

155 578 [195] Wax and gold is, furthermore, the vehicle for the mode of expression which Erikson calls "oral retention." Just as the Amhara tends to be tight-lipped and evasive when confronted by questions he does not feel like answering, so he finds pleasure in stubbornly withholding his meaning from his audience through employing figures and allusions which no one can understand. This may be understood as a passive form of oral aggression. For the untutored, however, the active aggressive component is probably more satisfying. Most Amhara males look forward to occasions when they can insult with impunity, such as in victory after the games at Christmas or in the setting of a drink-house, where their skillfully improvised verses are repeated and sung by a minstrel. The oral sadistic spirit of this latter scene has been captured with great fidelity by a contemporary Amhara novelist. Describing the moment in a drink-house when the minstrel begins bowing his one-stringed violin and gets ready to accept verses from the crowd, he writes: "*And now every one of them prepares a bullet of verse, and gets cocked to fire veiled insults.*"[18]

155 521 Two-way communication among Amhara is frequently colored by a biting and intrusive manner as well. Amharic conversation gravitates toward a highly argumentative style. Casual disagreement, or even neutral deliberation over a common problem, often engenders a kind of protracted bickering to which the Amhara have given an onomatopoetic name, "*çhiqeçhiq*." In [691] its more institutionalized form, this argumentativeness becomes litigation, which has long been regarded as the national sport of Abyssinia.

691 182 As the primary means of distributing land-use rights and of reducing the likelihood of resort to violence in personal disputes, litigation serves functions of unmistakable importance in Amhara society. Yet the frequency and intensity with which Amhara take part in litigation suggests that it is motivated by non-rational factors in good part. Litigants have often lost many times the original value of some item under dispute in the course of pursuing litigation over it through the courts for many years. The language and colorful gestures of the court may be observed among Amhara in their homes or

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at social gatherings in the course of discussions about nearly any subject. One cannot but conclude that the Amhara litigate to a large extent because for them it is an intrinsically pleasurable activity. At times, in fact, the forms of litigation are acted out as in a game. *Teṭāyaq*, for example, analogous to the Western process of cross-examination and a beloved feature of traditional court procedure, is sometimes practiced at parties though it has been outlawed in modern courts.[19] Two men will face a "judge" and try to bedevil each other with sly questions and preposterous claims. The content of the dispute is of no matter; it may be sheer nonsense.

Amhara litigants are ingenious at expressing themselves. They do so with gestures, intonation, and timing that achieve considerable dramatic effect. They are delighted to perform at the slightest provocation. The following incident, recorded during a morning at court in Manz, illustrates that dimension of Amhara litigation which consists of the inherently gratifying expression of oral aggression:

> The defendant had been accused of plowing the plaintiff's land without permission. In fact, however, the plaintiff had given the defendant previous permission to plow there—in front of a group of elders who testified accordingly. The judge therefore ruled against the plaintiff. The plaintiff said he would appeal this decision, because the permission he granted had not been registered in the governor's office and, besides, he had some other complaint to bring against the defendant.
>
> At this point someone in the audience rose and said: "That is all. The judge has ruled against you, and the case is finished." Whereupon the plaintiff told this speaker that he should keep quiet, that his speaking out was against the law, that he had bothered him when the case was tried before a lower level judge previously and should bother him no more. Instead of hushing up, the speaker left his position against the wall and stood next to the defendant, asserting that he would speak in behalf of the latter.
>
> The plaintiff then accused this man of talking out of turn. The judge acknowledged this accusation and called for witnesses. Instantly half a dozen or more men jumped to their feet, eyes bursting with excitement and pride as before a battle, and volunteered to witness against the speaker. One by one, with a great show of oratory, they said their pieces against the man who had spoken out of turn. More than once the judge had to urge these witnesses to stop talking after the evidence had been presented. By this time the substance of the original dispute seemed to have been completely forgotten.

Oral Ambivalence

Much as the oral zone is favored by the Amhara as a center for positive gratifications, both of the passive-receptive and the active-aggressive sort, such

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The effect of this literature has not been, as David Riesman suggests is true of the written word generally, an individualizing one. It did not serve to "help liberate the reader from his group and its emotions, and allow the contemplation of alternative responses and the trying on of new emotions."[31] It has served rather to buttress conformity, by rekindling identification with the sacred symbols of the society. Ethiopian religious literature does not invite introspection; it is a corpus to be venerated and solemnly rehearsed. When a devout Ethiopian reads his daily or weekly portion from some writing such as the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David) or the *Weddāssē Māryām* (*Praise of Mary*), he is said to be "repeating" the text—*Dāwit yedaggemāl*. Most of those who learn to read the words of these writings do not understand the Ge'ez in which they are composed. 121* 156 182 538

A similar function has been performed by the secular literature, which runs primarily in praise of royalty and thus has served to uphold the political status quo. The earliest Ethiopian writings are inscriptions of the Aksumite kings dating from the fourth century A.D. Here, in a style that is to persist through the ages, the royal deeds are recounted in meticulous detail and endowed with the highest morality.[32] Ge'ez chronicles were composed in this manner for most of the emperors after the thirteenth century. The earliest specimens of written Amharic consist of hymns in praise of the Emperor Amde Ṭseyon (1314–44). 121* 156 175 182 538

Two other written works put the capstone on this conservative structure. The *Kebrā Nagast*, the Ethiopian national epic, has served chiefly to legitimate the royal line that came to power in the thirteenth century and to cement once and for all the union of monarchy and church. The *Fetha Nagast*, the traditional legal code based on various canon and civil laws compiled in medieval Egypt, has served not as a working code for the adjudication of court cases but as an embellishment of *de facto* decisions, imparting to the judge an increment of authority by virtue of his ritual of referring to them. 121* 156 182 538 671 177

Because of the relative sterility of Abyssinian written literature, art, dance, and music, many observers have concluded that Abyssinian culture provides no outlets for truly creative expression.[33] This judgment is not just. The Abyssinian genius freely discloses itself in the stories, verse, and proverbs that make up its very rich *oral* literature. Within this oral tradition, especially in its verse, a good deal of original expression and personalized commentary may be found. 121* 156 53 121* 156 538

Ethiopic verse comprises a wide variety of forms which differ according to subject and occasion. Classical *qenē*, Ge'ez verse in praise of some holy figure or political leader, is composed by *dabtarā* on certain religious or political holidays. More playful verses of praise are sung in Amharic by *dabtarā* or minstrels on festive occasions. In such verses the poet may in-

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[For vocabulary words passim see category 116, pp. 5-75, 93-112, 123-157, 168-181, and 195-256.]

PART II: Utilization of Nature's Products by the Amhara

177 Part I established the basis for examination of the culture
183 of the Amhara of Abyssinia and Ethiopia, and the elements included in the long blending process which created Amhara culture. The original, native, Cushitic-speaking culture patterns were based on the geographical milieu, influenced by topographical and climatic conditions of the highlands. On these were superimposed several ancient cultural influences from abroad. The Amhara thus appears as a "semiticized Hamite".

The results of this blending of autochthonous African culture traits and Mediterranean-Asian traits are apparent in both their material and non-material culture. Much survives in Amhara culture of the ancient South Arabian culture pattern: agricultural patterns, occupational divisions, dress, written language, customs and beliefs. Finally, the
[184] cultural configuration which had long been the privilege of the Amhara ruling class has in recent historical times become shared by all Amhara; and, still more recently, due to imitation, prestige, conquests, etc, by ever-increasing numbers of the original, formerly Cushitic-speaking sections of the indigenous population.

123 While Part I was concerned largely with dimensions of Time and Space, Parts II and III will be more concerned with
181 the dimension and the use of Energy. In both material and non-material culture the Amhara pattern has remained, at first glance, strikingly "early medieval." Ingenuity with regard to material culture has gone into the utilization of the products of nature, including farming and animal hus-

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
463 favor, permitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qämis"
under the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
[292] rowing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the
prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled crafts-
men never rose that high but spent their lives accompany-
ing troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup
fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and em-
broiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing
183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and
specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
[754] nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also
the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoub-
tedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of
maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of
invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other
elaborations of culture.

1. Living Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("tis", or,
if several on one large hill, "mändär"), rather than a vil-
lage. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts,
with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus
the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-
isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the
other side of the same hill.

*565 461 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 461 181 577 183 [423] If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obligations toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 78 181 183 [262] [301] Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 577 181 183 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in

*565 577 673 181 183 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shameful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect toward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*. [626]

*565 57 181 183 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 602 571 181 183 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565* 602 571 181 183 [561]

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

565* 593 577 181 183

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

565* 577 779 183 181 581 586 637

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

565* 779 577 183 181

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

565* 121 82 771

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [771]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shillalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 [183]

garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a 565* man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may 121 become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged 777 from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the 178 feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant 565* tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we 121 observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment in- 178 forms the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the 181 procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar [577] ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our [521] fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discourag- 565* ing inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was in- 121 hibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, 178 that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. 461 Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a sub- [183] sistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual 565* cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own 121 sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the 178 religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as ex- 181 pressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use 828 Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peas- 565* ant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the pur- 121 pose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the 178 elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected 181 by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although 212 writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never [828]

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* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other [461] than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes [554] whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another [756] connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served [789] injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *ĭnjarā*. Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make good *doro wat*, a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

836 peers with the insulting term *sīlb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that
183 comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsā,* has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain
572 in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *goramsā* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to
[837] aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsā* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the husband or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with
836 a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets
572 difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible
578 females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsā* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulā* fights.

836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquering" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding
[585] night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time
582 to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On the latter occasions, especially Masqāl and Ṭīmqat, the girl may make some
[832] effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair, and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a
[584] chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 121 178 [871] [183] awareness of the political realities in the Ethiopian government. They had also begun to doubt the transcendent efficacy of the educational process itself after observing the behavior of those educated Ethiopians who went before them and inevitably became their ideals. The violation of various traditional and modern norms by the latter, and their evident demoralization, raised many questions in the minds of the students.

*883 121 178 871 464 Finally, the students were made more anxious by a general constricting of opportunity. Increased numbers in the school system meant a steady intensification of the competition to gain and hold on to a place in secondary school and college, particularly since 1959. The rapid filling of jobs by the educated youth and steadily growing numbers of unemployed youth began to create anxieties about finding work in the future.

*883 121 178 [873] [162] From the viewpoint of the modern adolescents, then, a very supportive and stimulating environment in the fifties has changed to a somewhat threatening and confused environment in the sixties. It is in this decade that Ethiopia's leaders of the future, that tiny fraction of one per cent of the population who reach secondary school, are coming to experience adolescence as a real normative crisis. At a time when, in the highly modernized society of the United States, observers like Friedenberg charge that the adolescent condition is becoming obsolete—that scope is no longer afforded the young person for exploration and discovery of an authentic self[28]—in the transitional state of Ethiopia this condition is being thrust on the youth. The decisions they make now, the identities they forge, will largely determine the extent to which reason and creativity will have a place in Ethiopia's future.

*883 871 121 178 The effort of the Ethiopian government to provide a modern education for some of Ethiopia's adolescents illustrates a principle discussed in another context by Karl Mannheim, namely, the characterization of youth as a latent sociological resource which must be mobilized when any social system seeks to change itself. It is a resource analogous to the latent energy reserves which are available to biological organisms when they must make a fresh adjustment to their environment.[29] Thus far the effort to mobilize the resources of Ethiopia's youth in behalf of modernization has proceeded chiefly through a pattern of increased *differentiation:* establishing a structure of secondary socialization separate from that of the traditional structures and thereby transmitting new beliefs, skills, and values to the youth. As yet, relatively little has been done with respect to the problems of devising modes of *integration* commensurate with these new differentiated patterns. The analyses of this chapter suggest the presence of what might be called "integration gaps" on at least three levels. On the level of the individual personality, there is the problem of synthesizing the various aspects of traditional and modern culture which have been transmitted to Ethiopian adolescents through diverse sources. Inasmuch as the external supports which cushioned these conflicts in the fifties are no

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 The *dabtarā*'s way of life is more variable than that of the monk, his possibilities for income more diverse than those of the priest. He may be attached to a church as a chorister and receive a share of the church's revenues, as do the priests. Or he may donate his services to the church and earn his living [212] by secular employment. He may work as a scribe at the court of a king or nobleman. He may spend most of his time teaching, gaining support from some large church or monastery. Like many priests he may cultivate land. [434] In any case, he is likely to derive some income from the sale of amulets and from medical therapies. Some *dabtarā* are even said to have wandered about the country as hunters, performing magical services for clients as they go.

Dabtarā are not set off from the populace by special insignia. Some wind [292] a turban around their heads, as do many priests; but others may dress like ordinary peasants. If holding more prestigious posts they may be seen with fly-whisks or wearing a *barnos*. But they are known by the people, who fear [789] and respect them. They are feared because of their magical powers, which are believed capable of rendering bullets harmless and turning *ĭnjarā* to dust. [554] They are respected because of their learning, for they are the only educated status group in traditional Amhara society. If the commoner's relatively [195] impulsive *manner* of speaking is contrasted with the quiet reserve of the nobility, his relatively simple *language* is contrasted with that of the *dabtarā*, who is noted for a studied and circumspect use of language (*qāla-dabtarā*) and for larding his Amharic with literary (i.e., Ge'ez) expressions (*ya-dabtarā amārĭññā*).

793 554 183 In the case of the religious elite, then, status is in all cases achieved. While there is a natural tendency for sons of priests and *dabtarā* to follow their fathers' example, they arrive at the status in question only by fulfilling the same norms that are applied to the sons of laymen. These norms, however, differ among the different groups within the clergy. Investiture by an authority emanating from the seat of religious charisma, the Alexandrine Patriarchate, and the related ritual requirement of marriage with Communion, were the basis of priestly status, almost irrespective of the personal attainments of the candidate. Personal attainments were *all* that mattered, on the other [792] hand, in the case of monk and *dabtarā*, but they differed radically for the two statuses.

793 792 554 The qualifications and characters of monks and *dabtarā* are almost diametrically opposed. The monastic state is entered only by means of a sacred rite; the *dabtarā* is in no way ordained, and might even be a "defrocked" priest. The monk's life is normally given to sensual renunciation; the *dabtarā* is normally an acknowledged sensualist (as appears, for example, in the proverb *ka-mesā ya-talaya dabtarā / yādargāl serā* ["a *dabtarā* who is kept from lunch / will work intrigues"][48] and in stories which celebrate the *dabtarā*'s use of his knowledge for private erotic ends). In the monk the virtue

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ethiopia. The uplands, even though they lie close to the equator, are pleasantly cool at night during the long dry season, and abundant monsoon rains from the Indian Ocean pour down between June and September. 7 132

Rainfall averages approximately 47 inches annually at Addis Ababa[1] and considerably more in the area around Lake Tana. An average of 81% of the rain falls during the three-month rainy season, and about 13% during the irregular light rains in April and May.[2] The water-table remains high during most of the dry season, even when most rivers have dried up, so that irrigation and terrace farming are possible. Both have been practiced, though neither extensively nor intensively, since ancient times. [312]

The Amhara divides the climatic year into the long dry season, Bäg, which lasts until the beginning of the "little rains", and the 3 to 4 month rainy season, kerämt, which the modern-educated Amhara translates as "winter". Terms subdividing these seasons differ locally, which is not surprising considering the extent to which climate is dominated by local topography. 184 805

While the long dry season is climatically monotonous, the rainy season is in daily, dramatic flux. It is the season of tornadoes, often dangerous. On a relatively dry day during the rainy season, usually in the early afternoon, a whirlwind (called Täro) may occur which can even 132

1. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No.12, May 1947, 4 pp.
2. Hann, Julius: Handbuch der Klimatologie, 1908-1911, Vol.2, p. 181.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART II: Utilization of Nature's Products by the Amhara

177 183 Part I established the basis for examination of the culture of the Amhara of Abyssinia and Ethiopia, and the elements included in the long blending process which created Amhara culture. The original, native, Cushitic-speaking culture patterns were based on the geographical milieu, influenced by topographical and climatic conditions of the highlands. On these were superimposed several ancient cultural influences from abroad. The Amhara thus appears as a "semiticized Hamite".

The results of this blending of autochthonous African culture traits and Mediterranean-Asian traits are apparent in both their material and non-material culture. Much survives in Amhara culture of the ancient South Arabian culture pattern: agricultural patterns, occupational divisions, dress, written language, customs and beliefs. Finally, the [184] cultural configuration which had long been the privilege of the Amhara ruling class has in recent historical times become shared by all Amhara; and, still more recently, due to imitation, prestige, conquests, etc, by ever-increasing numbers of the original, formerly Cushitic-speaking sections of the indigenous population.

123 While Part I was concerned largely with dimensions of Time and Space, Parts II and III will be more concerned with the dimension and the use of Energy. In both material and 181 non-material culture the Amhara pattern has remained, at first glance, strikingly "early medieval." Ingenuity with regard to material culture has gone into the utilization of the products of nature, including farming and animal hus-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

443 369 press to more permanent quarters. Arabs set up more permanent stalls at the market. Girls "between marriages" set up their "hotel services" in makeshift shacks, featuring an imported double bed, and foods like the housewife makes at home, including daily fresh beer. A bizarre variety of trade goods pours in, of foreign or domestic origin. Finally, the government sets up an elementary school-- the most recent development, usually post-1942.

B. Shelter: The Amhara Hut.

342 The Amhara circular hut of wattle and daub, with its overhanging roof to carry off the rains, is called "tuqul" (now more often "sar Byet", i.e. thatched house; in some districts, "gojo"). It does not differ basically from the typical habitation of the Cushitic-speaking Galla, of central Ethiopia. But further south several distinctly different types are encountered, following ethno-linguistic and tribal lines.

[84]

The "tuqul" may contain one room or two, through an interior separation or special elevation. It usually houses both the biological family of procreation and their more important livestock which are brought in at night for fear of hyenas. Tuquls in more elaborate hamlets include special storage tuquls, a kitchen tuqul, and even a guest tuqul which may double as extra storage space for the largest beer jars. During the rainy season, when temperatures, especially at night, drop considerably, the family huddles closely around the central fireplace inside the tuqul, and in that 3-month season the tuqul can be considered overcrow-

825
223 goose "yebra" (anas aegyptiaca).

Quail - "derchet" Perhaps the most common wild fowl very near habitations, but rarely hunted because very small. It is considered a nuisance and a danger because of its habit of hiding in flocks in the tall grass and starting up suddenly, scaring horses and even mules, which is dangerous especially on steep hills. [59]

411 Spears, slingshot, and now rifles are used in part-
184 time or sport hunting. Traps ("atmad") and snares are used only by occupational hunting populations living in jungles such as Wolqait and whose pattern of living differs from that of typical Amhara.

222 A noteworthy Amhara exploitative activity is the col-
[412] lecting of pumice rock in riverbeds during the dry season, and thus called "yabaher dengay" (river rock). It is used
135 in grinding and husking. Gold comes mostly from south of old-Amhara territory, where it is found in sand gravels and has been sold in nuggets since ancient times.

241 D. Food Production and Consumption

a.) Agricultural production

In agriculture in general, there are two major variables: environment, and degree of sophistication - i.e. power and its application.

The ecology of Ethiopia's highland plateau, where

59. The English equivalent terms have been taken from Van Rosen, Björn: Game Animals of Ethiopia. 1953.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

E. Some Regional Variations, in Amhara provinces.

184
423

The sharpest regional variations are between the old-Abyssinian, Coptic north, and the areas conquered by Menelik II to the south. But variations exist to considerable degree among the northern provinces also.

Shoa, particularly the old-Amhara sections, enjoyed many exemptions from burdens which have been mentioned. "Siso" peonage was almost non-existent, and "gultennas" were involved in warfare so much that they enjoyed a maximum of "gult" exemptions. In the past they felt as secure in their tenure as "restenyas". The highest Amhara nobility came from the Shoa districts of "Menz" and "Wanchit", where their lands had actually been "rest" property for centuries. However, in much of Shoa the old kinship holdings had broken up in consequence of the Galla invasion prior to the 19th century. When Menelik II reconquered these areas they became "gult" though under most favorable conditions for "gultennas".

In Gojjam and Begemdir most of the land remained "rest", since Galla invasions did not reach that far to any great extent. This land has remained unmeasured to this day, despite the efforts of the present emperor to ascertain titles to land, replace traditional "status" with "contract", and provide for fixity of tenure. Provincial Amhara resistence to this change is still strong, and the residents have been permitted to continue to pay the low land taxes of 1927 for the time being. In Gojjam, during the rule of the provincial dynasty of Ras Hailu,

184 which ended with his unsuccessful rebellion of 1929,
423 much land was "rest-gult", and there were many kinds of tax exemptions for heirs of veterans, who often paid only the tithe on grain and a small tax on cattle.

In Begemdir province (capital: Gondar), most of the land also remains unmeasured, for the same reason. Much of the land is "rest" owned by kin groups who guard it jealously against alienation; and the old church lands are are regarded as "rest". In the southwestern, lower, section of Gondar town and some nearby rural land, "rest" is owned by Ethiopian Muslims, mostly traders, who purchased it from the church, long ago. In scattered rural areas some families of ethnic specialists like the Falasha smiths own land considered "rest-gult", given to their ancestors in reward for services rendered Menelik's armies in the 19th century. This process has been discontinued (artisans are now in business for themselves and are supposed to pay a trade tax to the central government), and most Falashas live under very uncertain terms of tenure, paying tithe and other taxes, which worries the Amhara claimants to this territory.

F. Crown Lands and Efforts to Centralize Land Tenure.

423
656 In the old tradition of land tenure, the king held some very personal land, inherited or conquered, for the support of the royal household, "mēd-bēt". He added to it by confiscating land of unsuccessful feudal rebels.

796 transferring the blessing of the true cross to their homes.

[184 565] All classes participate in the parade, the bonfire and the worship. There is complete cultural continuum. Even Emperor Haile Selassie parades around the stake three times, accompanied by highest dignitaries of church and state. In the village, the ceremony awaits the arrival of the local cheqa shum and "great men". Old warriors come dressed in their lion-manes and carry the rhinoceros shields of their youth; they boast heroic deeds in the "fukkara". Priests bless the scene and the people, waving cross and incense burners, "blessing the land", so that the harvest will be rich (much as the water is blessed on Epiphany).

Women, as usual, form their own groups, in impromptu singing and rythmic handclapping. The men do not overlook them, bringing them ashes and charcoal from the blessed bonfire, from which the women make a paste with butter and smear the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

Children rise early on the day of "dämmära" to collect their promised gifts. In groups they go from house to house, chanting:

"Let husband and wife consult with each other,
and give us gifts".

Feudal nobles used to take this occasion to acknowledge the knighthood name, the "färäs sem" of young nobles. They also gave a raw beef, "brundo" feast, to their retainers, and a big "gebber"(feast) consuming huge jars full of barley beer, pitchers of mead, and bottles of "araqi" (distilled).

608 ced himself under the protection of a landowning kin group, and injuries inflicted on him thereupon can lead to a blood feud as much as if he were a consanguinal relative.

All these attempts to establish artificial kinship are motivated by the attitude that kinship, even at geographical distance, is greater security than close relations with neighbors even of the same district. The proverb says:

[539] "Your (home) country, where is it?
(It is) Mary's water. (i.e. the womb).
You are my kinfolk!"

8. Attitudes based on Social Stratification

56 Social stratification among the Amhara, as has been shown, is based on land tenure and feudal relations between nobles and peasants; on the temporal as well as spiritual power of the Coptic Abyssinian church; on the ethnic division of skilled labor; on the conquest of border areas and the past subjugation of other ethnic and racial groups; to a lesser degree on age and sex.

565 Analysis of the human relations and attitudes
184 arising out of this social stratification can be expressed in terms of class; sometimes approaching caste, because very little social mobility has been "open" to ethnic specialists in skilled labor and to

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 184 [563] racially enslaved groups; there was, and to a considerable degree there still is, a cultural continuum among Coptic Amhara that is shared by all classes, (with the partial exception of ethnic and racially-separated groups).

A. - Class Stratification.

a/ Regional Distinction and Feudal Nobility.

Regional distinctions are emphasized by both nobles and peasants. The nobles from the old-Amhara districts of Amara Saynt, Länz (both in Shoa province) and of the later developed Gondar district (Gegemdir province) c nsider themselves an upper-upper class even among nobility. At least part of this status is ascribed not only to a local history of "old-nobility" contrast with "new-nobility", but totthe supposed fact that these districts were the only Amhara districts not overrun by the Galla in the 16th century.

The class of nobility is controlled, but also perpetuated, by the emperor. In every generation he gradually raises the young nobles to the rank of their fathers, as each individual advances in age. Usually it is only when the father dies that the son is appointed to full rank. He is not usually raised above it except for unusual service to the emperor, Commoners may be given modest ranks in nobility for special service, thus entering, as "new-nobility", upon the social ladder.

872 easier, in practice, to gain admittance. The efforts of the em-
565 peror to give opportunities to the rural sons of poor orphans of soldiers who died fighting for their country, by opening boarding houses for them, attached to elementary schools, were defeated by the provincial feudal lords and townspeople, who managed to have their sons quartered in them instead.

Thus, traditional social stratification, both class and ethnic, affects even the modern elementary schools. In 1952 about 60,000 children, 10% girls, attended modern elementary schools in Ethiopia, [563] and far more than half this number was Amhara. Ethnic minority groups find it very hard to have their children admitted, because the school administrators are usually Amhara. Thus, the Qemants of Gondar, for example, have found it easier to enroll their sons in the Catholic mission school operated there by Tigrean(Eritrean) priests. Other ethnic minorities have enrolled children in 7th Day Adventist and other mission schools.

871 In Addis Ababa itself the situation is quite different, however,
● 184 Here, traditional social stratification has far less effect, partly
565 because of the closer supervision by more modern officials of the central government, partly because the teachers in the high schools, and even in part in the elementary schools, are Europeans or Americans who emphasise social equality among students, pay no attention to family nobility, and reward only merit. Here, the son of the illiterate peasant, or occasionally even ex-slave negroid Shanqalla, may sit next to the son of an Amhara duke or a Galla "balbat". After graduation, they may be sent abroad for college or post-graduate training, based on merit, regardless of parental rank; though in social and family life the traditional social cleavages
pre

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

588 rewards as agreed upon") practiced by the Shi'ites in particular.
171 (footnote 81). The Abyssinian Coptic "Fetha Nägäst" forbids concubinage; but the custom has long been widespread. "Damoz" is even recognized in the modern law of Emperor Haile Selassie.

551 Individual arrangements are freest in "damoz", also in "qurban"
585 though sometimes less so, and least in "semanya". But in all three forms of marriage, the wife retains her maiden name and does not assume that of her husband. Even Empress Menen continues her old name. Sometimes the husband's mother may try to symbolize her authority - or even affection - by giving a new name to her new daughter-in-law living in her hamlet, but the bride's kinfolk and
[602] peers will continue to use her old name. This is another, unconscious, emphasis of kinship relations over affinal ones.

588 The "damoz" is not considered contradictory to monogamy, which may explain her respectability despite prohibition of concubinage in the "Fetha Nägäst" code. Religious persons will explain the paradox away by quoting from Genesis "be fruitful and multiply".

583 In rural districts there is sometimes found a 4th form of
184 marriage, which indeed is re-enacted in some wedding ceremonies of "semanya". This form is bride capture, especially found among families too poor to defray the expenses of a wedding and cows that must be given the "semanya" couple. To cover up the shame and the poverty, the bride is "captured" and "pursued", by pre-arranged collusion. While she ostensibly goes, alone, to fetch water or gather deadwood, the groom's "mize" appear suddenly, preferably on horseback, and carry her off into the bush, while she, though ex-

Footnote 81: Donaldson, D.M.: Temporary Marriage in Iran. Moslem World, 1936, pp. 358-364. Smith, W. Robertson: Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia, 1885.

583 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official.
184 After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the cheqa shum present.

[589] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these
656 traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalise" them. The new minimm age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in
[594] the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

178 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among
871 young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage
581 with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 bride will cry out for many nights because of the pain". But is is also believed that this painful initiation into marriage bodes well for marital happiness, for, if later the husband neglects or mistreats her, she will remind him of his victory: "Remember you were my first, you were the one who hurt me".

●184 585 In towns, several different customs prevail, and modern change, partly in imitation of nobility, partly in imitation of the Italians during their brief occupation, has seeped in, through eager, though partial, imitation.

In town the wedding ("serg") is more elaborate. Instead of the "dass" shelter, a large canvas tent is borrowed. Men and woman still occupy separate tents. But the wedding takes place in daylight, in mid-afternoon, after which the unveiled bride, seated next to the groom, is driven in a rented automobile through the town, followed by other celebrants in varying conveyances or on foot. Before that, there is less boasting by kinsmen warriors and more by hired "azmari" minstrels, male or female, who entertain the wedding guests. If male they often accompany their impromptu verses with the single-string "masenqo" violin; if female, with the native banjo, the "qrar". They permit themselves such liberties as nudging the guests, singing flirtatiously, even aggressively at them, singing praises to rich individuals, the bride and groom, and kinsmen, to extort cash gifts from them.

There are tables and benches inside the tent at which guests are seated by the clever ushers, the hired "asgafari" (lit. chamberlain), according to social status and official position in town. The ones of high status, including Europeans, are seated at the host's table (usually the groom's), and are served honey-mead ("tej")

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

184 instead of barley-beer, and the best of available meat dishes.
585 In return, the wealthier guests are expected to leave larger cash gifts as they leave. It is in this tent that the "semanya" marriage is performed, and the bridal couple blessed by the "mänfäs qubaä" priest, who will later watch over their marriage. His blessing is the same as that in the rural hamlet:

[539]

> "May God make you capable of begetting, of conception, for office-holding, for honor, for the communion and the flesh of the Lord. May God guide you to truth and make you kin with Abraham and Sarah".

Though the bride in town may be called out from the women's tent, and thus be the only female eating with the men, seated next to the groom, they still act shy with each other in public. Men like to believe that, though there are no tears in public, brides weep silently, out of fear; - the "vanquished sex". But the groom does not yet patronize her in public with the "gursha", hand to mouth feeding, as he will starting some weeks after.

c) Post-Wedding Adjustments and Kin Relations.

585 After the traditional rural wedding, the "dase" remains standing for a week, in both the groom's and the bride's hamlets, to shelter visitors. After two full days of marriage have passed, the mize go to the bride's hamlet to report on her well-being, adjustment and good treatment. They are feted and sleep in the "dase". The next day they return, carrying an invitation to the bridal couple and a specified number of companions (which is usually exceeded!) to come to the bride's hamlet for a 3-day visit, the "mäls".

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE

The taxation in Gojjam was probably lighter than elsewhere, since, as has just been explained, soldiers were paid here by means of exemption from taxation. 651 184 661

In a study of the system round Lake Tana, mainly in Bagemdir, an Italian writer notes how, side by side with the groups of *restenyas* tracing their hereditary occupation to the first settlements, probably in the fifteenth century, other tenures had grown up. One was that of the *farasenya*[1] to whom the Emperor had made grants of certain privileges and payments amounting generally to about a tenth of the produce of the *restenya* and also the right to exact labour for his land and house and collective gifts upon important feast days. Similar rights, but not including administrative powers, were given to *gultenyas* who, while collecting all the dues owed to the government, had to pay to it an agreed quota of oxen, mules, honey, etc. Thirdly there were the grants of *maskal mariet* (lands of the cross) to the church. In all these cases the rights were often given over the heads of the *restenyas*, who would continue to cultivate their lands as before. As there might be superimposition of new rights over old at the top, there might also be added lower stages by the leasing of land by *restenyas* and others to tenants who would have to pay rent as well as tax. [554]

Side by side with these holders of what may be regarded as private rights would be the hierarchy of the governor. The private rights might cut like islands into the administrative area of his district governors or these might be the *gultenyas* or *farasenyas* themselves and so eliminate the dualism. The *chiqa-shum* who collected the tax would thus pay it either to the *Mislané*, the *gultenya*, the *farasenya* or the *alaqa* (head) of the church. The writer condemns the cumbrousness of this method, with its encouragement of peculation and exactions. The original tax of the people was one tenth of their crop, but the feudal organization had resulted in a multiplication of intermediaries whose great object was to pass on less than a tenth to the government and to exact more than a tenth from the people, enriching themselves on the margin of differences. Those who suffered most were some of the *gabars* who had to support both the church and the *farasenyas*. 651 661

An Italian writing of Ethiopian abuses and Italian reforms in 1937 is not likely to underrate the vices of the old system, but there is plenty of comparative evidence, as well as the laws of probability, to suggest that he has not greatly darkened his picture. He states that under the Italian Government, after the conquest, the upper part of the structure[2]

[1] Literally 'horseman' and corresponding, apparently, to the early English 'knight'.

[2] Grottanelli, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 14–15, 105–12.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

dolphus put it.[4] At length, unable to witness the further decimation of his people because of religious controversies, Susneyos abdicated in favor of his son Fāsil. Fāsil lost little time in deporting the Jesuits and restoring the Orthodox status quo. 175* 648 797 643

Recovery

In the wake of all these collisions, Ethiopia made two valiant attempts to regain equilibrium and glory: through the splendor of Gondar in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and through the force of three emperors of the nineteenth century—Tēwodros II, Yohānnes IV of Tigre, and Menelik II of Shoa. 175* 648 643

Gondar was founded as a new and stationary capital by Fāsil. It served as imperial headquarters for many generations. Later, the kingdom of Tigre knew a resurgence of power that led to control of the empire under Yohānnes (1872–89). His castle at Makalle symbolized one last rally for the north—after an interregnum of a thousand years—before being eclipsed by the Shoan throne.

The shock which began with the invasions of Ahmad Grañ shattered Ethiopia's medieval synthesis once and for all. The political consequence of those disruptions was an increase in provincialism, reaching its climax in the famous "Age of the Princes" (1755–1855) when each province had its own sovereign and for all practical purposes was a polity unto itself. The Solomonic line, the matrix of Ethiopian political unity, was splintered in several directions, leaving contenders in each of the provinces. Though the official imperial line remained at Gondar, Tigre was able to reassert its ancient claims and Gojjam recurrently voiced its separatism, and what may be called the "House of Manz" came to compete with Gondar as a center of national consciousness. 175* 178 635

This political division was accompanied by a peculiar cultural bifurcation. Elements of the national culture that had been rather evenly distributed before Ahmad Grāñ now became relatively specialized in Gondar and Manz. The recovery of Ethiopia produced a geographical division of manners and morals as well as several lines of Solomonic royalty. 175* 184

HISTORICAL PROFILES

The Role of Gondar 175* 633

Gondar is the only city in Ethiopia with charm and character expressive of Amhara culture. Even today, despite modern accretions, the remnants of its castles, walls, bridges, and sanctuaries transmit a stately calm, redolent of past nobility and African grandeur.

The town is situated on a flat volcanic ridge at seven thousand feet above 175* 361

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geography than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in response to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones. 133 132 [175]* [184]

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But *tēff*, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley. 241 262

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which ornament the homes of the well-to-do. 233 236 291 184 [262] [556] [286] [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural-colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural environment. 182 291 [386] 342 182 346 182

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses. 132 [165] [181]

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gondar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While 175*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 flux of many Muslims and Galla, a migration favored by its urban situation.
633 Manz, surrounded by hostile Galla, was forced for survival to cultivate its
[167] fighting powers, and for ultimate security to reconquer the surrounding areas.
*175 It was aided in this by whatever special geographical and cultural factors
181 helped to produce the peculiarly militant and defiant character of the Manzē. But because of the annihilation of most of Shoa's churches and monasteries in the sixteenth century, and the isolation of Manz from the renascence of Amhara culture at Gondar, it was left illiterate and culturally impoverished. Its religious life remained limited to a narrow adherence to the ritual requirements of Ethiopian Christianity.

*175 The dispersion of the Solomonic line over the several provinces was thus
181 accompanied by the formation of distinct mores for Manz and Gondar. There
• 184 is evidence that the differences were quite pronounced by the early nineteenth century. Just a few years before the fierce inhabitants of Manz sped to the rescue of Sāhla Selassie against the rebel Mātako, Gondar was similarly threatened by a rebel band under a man named Mersu. Compare Rüppell's account of the behavior of the Gondarēs:

> In this general alarm the pitifulness of the local inhabitants was all too conspicuous. Far from uniting to defend their property with arms against the dreaded plunder—which would have been easy, in as much as there were at least four hundred rifles in Gondar, while not a single one of Mersu's men possessed a firearm—instead they carried the rifles into the churches, in order to keep them from being plundered along with the other booty.[48]

The distinction between Manz and Gondar suggested here is drawn in terms of "ideal types"—generalized dispositions which will, of course, not be true in every case and which will be found elsewhere in Ethiopia to a greater
*175 or lesser degree. It is interesting to note that in their own stereotypes, Ethiopians
829 tend to view the Manzēs as fighters, the Gondarēs as literati, but not vice
181 versa. Thus, an officer of the Imperial Bodyguard who commanded Ethiopian
184 troops in the Korean War has said:

> The Manzēs were excellent soldiers. They were independent, not so ready to obey commands as the Galla, but they had good ideas about fighting and were very brave in the battlefield. The soldiers from Gondar tended to be independent and insubordinate, too, but they were not very good soldiers, either.*

On the other hand, Ethiopians commonly consider Manz as much a land of the backward as they regard Gondar the home of the learned. Krapf observed

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* This stereotype of the Gondarē is combatted by Garimā Tāfara's book, *The Gondarē with His Shield* (*Gondarē Ba-Gāshāw* [Addis Ababa: Tasfā Gabra Selassie Press, 1957]), which records in great detail the contributions of individual Gondarēs to the fight against the enemy during the Italian occupation.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

over a century ago that the people of Manz had the reputation of being "brave, daring, and ignorant."[46] The caricatures of the typical Manzē usually have to do with his *qilnat* ("stupidity"), such as the old story about the Manzēs at the bottom of a hill who were warned about some rolling boulders and replied: "That's all right, we'll just put our heads under the blanket and then we won't see the stones." As one Manzē himself put it: "We look to Gondar as our older brother. We know we are ignorant and illiterate."

Although in each other's eyes the Gondarē may be arraigned as haughty and cowardly and the Manzē berated as ignorant and hostile, a comparative view enables one to see the differences between Manz and Gondar as complementary, representing a specialization of interest and function within a common culture. An Amhara priest expressed this idea to me by saying: "The people of Gondar and Manz are really the same. Only Gondar is the head, and Manz the foot." (In Amharic thought the leg symbolizes force.) The pursuit of different interests and the perfection of different functions led to the cultivation of different virtues and, by the same token, the indulgence of different faults. The result was what might be called a moral division of labor along a geographical axis.

The primary axis of this division of labor in Amhara culture was vocational. The separate virtues of soldier and cleric were cultivated through distinct roles, pursued part or full time by two different sets of individuals. This permitted both sets of values to be realized without arousing the cultural and psychic conflicts that would inhere in their joint cultivation by the same persons.

It was by historical accident that Manz and Gondar came to provide an additional axis for this division of labor. At Gondar, through the political circumstances described above, the military function withered away, while the religio-literary culture was enabled to flourish. In Manz, the latter was destroyed and never recovered, while the energies of her people were consumed in fighting.

The historical advantage of this was that the Amhara thereby found the occasion for a massive revitalization of their religious culture through the facilities at Gondar, yet were able to accumulate a military momentum, through the years of incubation in Manz, that favored a political comeback which put them in a position to assert their might over an area larger than ever before in Ethiopian history. The moral consequence was that the Gondarē and the Manzē developed in pronounced form the virtues of the literatus and the soldier, respectively. The total culture was perhaps thereby enriched. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, cultivated literatus, was in a sense the epitome of the Gondarē ethos, just as Menelik II, determined fighter as well as shrewd politician and tactful diplomat, was morally as well as genealogically akin to the men of Manz. The imperial court at the end of the nineteenth century,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[772] As for the beginning and end of the world, all Amhara believe that the [184] world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium [773] arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside [775] down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

565 82 The Amhara peasant's view of nature is matter-of-fact. There are a few traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy [778] places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration [241] of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.

[192] The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws [184] of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or [241] himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

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[125] [157] *All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge overlooking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

For the groom, too, marriage means a gratifying boost toward adult status, 585
symbolized by his receiving from the bride's parents distinctively adult male 885
possessions—a *kutā*, perhaps a *barnos*, and a rifle if they can afford it.

Such is the basic pattern of betrothal and marriage among the Amhara, 583
though many of the details vary from province to province.[6] There are, in 585
addition, certain traditional alternatives to this standard procedure. One of 184
these involves the solemnization of the marriage oath by taking Communion, a rite necessary for a marriage to be counted as legal by the Church, and followed by the ordained clergy and the most pious families. Another form requires no oath at all; the husband is simply expected to provide a salary and clothes for his wife. This procedure is followed chiefly by soldiers and traders, and by those who are marrying for the second time.

Still another type of marriage is that known as *qoṭ assīr* ("ten beds") in which the boy goes to live with the girl's family while both are quite young. In this case the boy has his work apprenticeship under the girl's father. After several years, when the girl reaches puberty, a second wedding ceremony will take place—this time at the home of the groom's parents—and the union will be consummated. This type of arrangement tends to be made when the boy's family is too poor to provide enough to get him started on his own, or if the girl's father has no son to help him with the work.

There is, finally, a form of marriage by abduction. If the girl's father does not grant the request of the emissaries of the boy's father, and if the boy's father is still interested, the boy may go with two or three friends to capture her when she is on the way to market or fetching water. When this happens, the couple will approach the girl's parents after they have been married for some time and seek a reconciliation. Occasionally poor families have deliberate recourse to this form of marriage, arranging in advance a bride capture so as to avoid having to prepare the expensive wedding feasts.[7]

Although marriage marks the termination of childhood for the Amhara, 591
it does not by itself signify the full attainment of adulthood. The newly wed 585
couple lives at first in the home of the boy's father, and to truly "arrive" [885]
they must establish their own separate household. If the boy's family is wealthy, he may have his own house ready by the time of the wedding. More often, the couple spends a certain amount of time—a few months, or in some cases as much as two or three years—living in the home of the groom's father until their own house is built. To tarry unduly in the father's house, however, is considered a mark of laziness and a great shame.

Furthermore, because of the somewhat arbitrary manner in which the 585
spouses are chosen for each other, there is often a serious problem of post- 606
marital adjustment, a problem not rendered any less difficult by the proximity of the girl's mother-in-law. The divorce pattern is well known among 586

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely preparing himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adolescence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

The Welfare School

Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in government provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

. 11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 177 178 [536] [533] [276] cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

*883 177 184 Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

*883 517 178 177 AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women	85	15	0	(700)
Food	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry	67	26	7	(700)
Music	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†	40	58	2	(700)
Dance	38	56	6	(700)
Drink	24	56	20	(700)
Painting	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gurshá*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically identical.

*883 177 [184] school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

*883 517 178 *Morals.*—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 The local nobility, on the other hand, were eminences whose lives and reputations were bound to a more circumscribed locale. While the non-royal nobility, or *makuännent* in the stricter sense, performed as high dignitaries at the imperial court and governors of large provinces, the local nobility were district chiefs and judges, or even simply wealthy landowners, who enjoyed considerable deference. Though they might not be known outside of their home regions, these men were, for the mass of the population, the lords of existence. *Ka-Gondar negus / yägar ämbärräs,* "the petty district chief [is obeyed] more than the Gondar king"[19] expresses folk wisdom on the subject. The Amharic terms which designate this class of men are *bäläbbät* and *shum,* terms we shall want to consider more closely below.

565 184 Despite these distinctions among members of the upper stratum of Abyssinian society, with respect to their general orientation and style of life they differed only in degree. They created and shared what might be called a "gentry subculture," even though it was not so differentiated from the general culture as was the case in Europe and China. In the present context, it will be meaningful to treat them as a single status group.

565 184 86 [576] Special manners and skills were self-consciously taught to children of the *makuännent,* most of which remain part of the gentry subculture today. An etiquette of instinctual inhibition is taught. Some attention is given, for example, to toilet training, which is spontaneous among peasant children. Spitting in public is proscribed. Physical aggression is discouraged in favor of the more subtle forms of satire and patient manipulation of others. A quiet, reserved manner of speaking is stressed, in contrast with the less inhibited and cruder self-expression of the peasantry. Dignity of comportment is expected at all times; a noble should not, for example, express great enthusiasm or surprise over anything. Sobriety is inculcated as a virtue; alcohol is *la-çhawä lïjj* [293] *mädasetchä / la-bälagē mäzabäbatchä* ("for the nobleman's son a stimulant, for the commoner an intoxicant"). In short, the gentry subculture stresses the general ideal of bringing a child up to be conspicuously genteel, or *çhawä.*

565 184 868 [871] [534] [883] Sons of the nobility have traditionally followed a privileged curriculum.[20] They were given lessons in horseback riding and weaponry at an early age. They were also taught how to swim, an uncommon skill among the Abyssinians. Reading would often be taught, for which schooling a man of the church might be brought in as a tutor, or the boy might be sent for a while to a monastery. He might also learn how to play the *baganä,* the ten-stringed lyre used to accompany certain forms of religious and plaintive secular songs. Instead of spending his teen-age years at the plow, which was regarded as beneath his dignity, the noble boy would follow his father to court and observe the ways of litigation and the manner of passing judgments; or he might be sent as a page to the court of the king or some great lord.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *çhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *ṭajj*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *ṭallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics. 565 184 868 [567] [273]

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dajāzmātch Hailu,* meaning "Dajāzmātch Hailu and his men." 565 576

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics. 565 [142]

Conspicuous consumption among the *maḳuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions: 565 592 357 556

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

853 155 152 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended 853 foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbät*, or breast- 155 152 father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbät*. Used metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 155 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. 201 The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or [832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long 155 separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati- [431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout 155 Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the 538 Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant 832 intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

*175 643 nable. As the rainy season was approaching, Haile Malakot retreated to Shoa, where he fell sick and died. For the first time since Nagāssi, Shoa was left without an effective leader. Tēwodros marched into Manz from Wallo, and Shoa capitulated with little struggle. Eleven-year-old Menelik, son of Haile Malakot, was taken hostage.

Ten years later Menelik escaped from the camp of Tēwodros and regained Shoa. Slowly and carefully he built up his power. Tēwodros' reign raced to its tragic end. Takla Giyorgis II reigned briefly at Gondar, the last emperor to sit there. Yohānnes IV of Tigre governed the country for seventeen years. When Yohānnes died, Negus Menelik was forty-five and ready. Nagāssi's seed, eight generations later, reached the throne of all Ethiopia on November 3, 1889.

CULTURAL PROFILES

The Manzē Ethos

*175 • 185 The goals of Nagāssi and his descendants, apart from simple increase of power, were to recover the lands taken from their fathers and to stiffen the authority of Christianity in Shoa. Their success was virtually unbroken by [181] reason of exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance. These are ideals and qualities embodied par excellence in the people of Manz.

423 181 Sanctity of *rīst*, or land inherited from one's parents, is a cardinal value in the Manzē scheme of things. Such land must not be given or sold to anyone who is not a close relative. People generations removed from actual residents [428] of Manz still retain claims to family land there, still cherish the idea that if they so desired they could go back and live on it. As an urbanized Manzē once told his nephew in Addis Ababa: "No matter how far you travel abroad, no matter how long you stay away, you will always be able to think of your [539] family land in Manz as your true home." This sentiment is expressed in a proverb:

> *Ya-Manz rīst be-shi amatu/la-bālabētu.*
> Manz *rīst* to the thousandth year/belongs to the owner.

A squatter may fight to keep his land from falling to some stranger who claims it as having belonged to his grandfather, but in his heart he respects the values that support such a claim.

[577] By Manzē standards the good man is thus one who defends the land of his fathers, seeing that it is not sold to outsiders or that foreigners do not come to [685] take it. If someone plows another's land without permission, he must be punished. If the matter can be settled through litigation, well and good; if it requires recourse to violence, so be it. To let such an offense go unavenged [691] would be the worst sort of shame. Grievances concerning their "hereditary

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

fixed rules and to respect their opponents. Until a few years ago, the imperfect acceptance of these norms was shown by the frequent fights between opposing school teams following soccer and basketball games.[9] But gradually a new tradition of athletic activity has been building up in the schools, and with it the related norms have started to gain greater acceptance. 883* 577 178 871

Still another value that the school experience has promoted is that of social responsibility. Most students are very grateful to the government for having provided them with schooling and related benefits, and they feel a keen obligation to show their gratitude by serving their country. They have also become conscious of the great needs of their people for economic and social development. In Amhara society, service was expected in behalf of the family and, except for mass levies in time of warfare, usually stopped there. The modern adolescents are still mindful of their obligations to their parents and siblings, but have now included broader ideals of social service in their moral orientation. When asked what they expect to bring most satisfaction in their lives, the students named "improvement of local community" more often than any other category except "career or occupation." (See Table 4.) When asked what they would do with a million dollars, more than a third answered in terms of purely social enterprises, such as building schools and hospitals, helping the poor and orphaned; and many others indicated private enterprises with specifically social purposes, such as improving agriculture and building factories to provide employment. 883* 641 577 185 (593)

It is difficult to determine how deeply the value of social responsibility has been internalized. In their public declarations, at any rate, the students wax eloquent in propounding ideals of good citizenship. They urge themselves to prepare for introducing modern ways to the uneducated; to return to the villages, integrate themselves with the old society, and lead them gently to better ways; to fight discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and social class; to solve the problem of corruption and bribery in the government; and to promote national solidarity.

Politics.—The Amhara adolescent has little occasion to develop specifically political attitudes, since his customary political world has been coterminous with subordination to legitimate local and national authorities, and defense of his country against invaders. Unless he was the son of a nobleman involved in struggles for power, there have rarely been any political issues to engage his attention. 883* 66

A host of issues, domestic and international, have by contrast been thrust upon the modern adolescent. Yet in comparison with students from the other countries of Africa and the Middle East, his political orientation is relatively undeveloped. Ethiopian students at regional or international gatherings of students have in the past tended to feel somewhat out of place, for the polit-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the Crown.

The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but integrative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pursued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relationship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

omy during the past two decades, represents a significant growth of the capacity for voluntary formal organization in the modernizing sector.[41]

Māhebar (*Regional Associations*).—A type of formal association which has sprung up in Addis Ababa in recent years, becoming popular for the first time around 1960, is known as the *māhebar*. While its name is taken from the traditional Orthodox fraternal association, in aims and organization it is different from the religious *māhebar*. While the latter is devoted to honoring one of the saints and is convened primarily for feasting and sociability, the modern *māhebar* is organized on the basis of territorial or tribal bonds and is concerned with problems of social betterment. The first *māhebar* of this kind was established by the Gurage in the fifties.* Thereafter, the idea spread to members of other groups, and Addis Ababa residents originating in Gondar, Tigre, Harar, Manz, Tagulat, Fitche and elsewhere began to form *māhebar* of their own. The basic idea behind all these *māhebar* is to make some contribution to the welfare of the provinces through projects voluntarily financed and organized by fellow-countrymen living in the metropolis. These projects have included construction of roads, schools, and hospitals; supplying books for schools; and provision of facilities for assisting inhabitants of the provinces who come to the city. Members of the various *māhebar* convene weekly or biweekly, usually on Sunday in the vicinity of one or another of the Addis Ababa churches, to discuss their projects and make their financial contributions.

Formal Associations of Foreign Inspiration

Student Associations.—The Orthodox Students Association was founded in 1958 by a convention representing all the colleges and some of the secondary schools. Its successful establishment was due in large part to the efforts of an Indian Orthodox minister who at the time was one of the Emperor's private secretaries. There is some evidence that an earlier spontaneous effort to form such a group in the early fifties was checked by the government. Members of this association have been concerned with adapting the activities of the church to contemporary needs. They criticize the established church for its use of a dead language, excessive ritualism, and lack of teaching; and have proposed that the Orthodox Church should institute Sunday schools and

* The Gurage *māhebar* remains in a class of its own, with respect to size, wealth, and ambitiousness of program. The Gurage have also pointed the way to using the *māhebar* form in a way that transcends the narrow tribal or territorial passions which it has thus far tended to canalize. This has been done through the establishment of another, project-oriented *māhebar* concerned solely with building a road from Alam Gana to Wollamo Soddo, whose membership includes Galla and Wollamo as well as Gurage. This association has already collected well over a million dollars, and has completed the construction of a bridge. It is headed by a capable Gurage army general and its activities and collections are reported regularly in the Addis Ababa press.

137 241 [248] koba (Musa ensete) is grown. This is used for making ropes of all kinds and bags for grain. In the south, the roots and inner parts of the plant are also used to make flour for 262 [186] food; but the Amhara despise this, considering it "food of slave peoples".

137 Vegetation is dense in the valleys, and the forests contain many valuable trees, including the Natal yellow pine. But in spite of the high yearly rainfall the northern plateau is comparatively little wooded. Foresters estimate that only 2.8% of Ethiopia is forest-covered, although they believe that it was once well forested. They ascribe this denuding to centuries of uncontrolled grazing and periodic burning-over. The best hardwoods that remain are usually in the least accessible spots, lowlands and gorges.[7]

137 313 The two most important trees of the highlands are the Ted and the Zegba. The Ted, a juniper (Juniperus procera) sometimes referred to as "pencil cedar" (or Juniperus phoenicoea), is fine-grained, easy to split, aromatic, durable (even when exposed to moist conditions in the rainy season), and termite-resistant. It is popular for beams in the better houses of chiefs, and for the simple native furniture. The Zegba(Podocarpus gracilor), also an evergreen, is found in the warmer parts of the plateau. The wood is soft, easy to split, subject to decay when exposed to moisture, and thus more popular in drier areas. Non-resinous and tasteless, it is useful as a container for food, but is mainly used for construction and furniture. On the higher plateau

7. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia 1954, pp. 127-8; Auo: Ethiopia, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons: Global Epidemiology, 1951, p.63.

PART III: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

171 Some aspects of the social organization of the Amhara resemble those of medieval Europe at early and middle periods; others the ancient and not so ancient Middle East; still others, perhaps a smaller part, parallel patterns in other parts of Africa. It is an "old-world" pattern of human relationships, both in structure and function, and the noteworthy fact is that much has survived, due to comparative isolation, that has changed elsewhere.

186 Amhara attitudes, concomitant with their social organization, recall the attitude of the "Neolithic pattern of human relations" in Coon's terminology.[69] This pattern is characterized by the attitude: "You stay in your village, and I stay in mine. If your sheep eat our grass we will kill you. Anyone who tries to change our ways is a witch and we will kill him."

In Amhara rural areas--and most Amhara are rural--this attitude still seems to dominate human relations, be they structured as territorial, class, military, legal, ethnic, religious or racial. Feuds between kin groups often last for several generations; loyalties are intensely regional and ethnocentric.

178 While all this can still be observed, change in the direction of modern occidental patterns has begun to seep in very recently, affecting various phases of social organization in varying degrees. Sometimes the structure

69. Coon: The Story of Man. 1954.

778 Geez). Here the bread and wine used in the eucharist are
346 prepared and stored with great secrecy. The utensils of
251 the nearby cooking hut, the baking pan "metad" and large clay jars for barley beer, are also stored here. Supplies of tyeff, barley, wheat, beans, peas, may also be stored.

779 In recent years, church parades feature prominent-
186 ly the flag of the nation, the red-green-yellow of the central government, emphasizing in modern ways the close union of church and state that has long been traditional in Abyssinia.

(e) Worship and Devotional Poetry.

533 The musical chants and notations studies formally
796 have already been outlined in connection with church education.

Church hymns, including devotional poetry, are called "qene" in a generic rather than specifically accurate sense. A collection of them is contained in the book "zubaē qana", and they are sung in a special mode. The chief mode is called "selt". It has three variations:

(1) "geez" - short tones, dedicated to the "Father";

(2) "ezel" - mournful tones in minor key, dedicated to the "Son" 's passion;

(3) "araray" - long, drawn-out tones, dedicated to the "Holy Ghost".

These variations are interlaced, for special results, and for specific occasions. The mass, "qeddase" (lit. a notification) is chanted in a mode bearing the

796 The holy day which now symbolized most strongly the union of church and state occurs just after the climax of the rainy season. On the 7th day of the monthe of Nahase occurs the feast of the Trinity, "Selassyē", which the present emperor adopted as his imperial name at coronation. On this day, the "tabot" from the local "Selassyē" church is taken on a colorful, though usually rain-drenched parade. In some regions this feast is called "Abba Abraham", because it is believed that the day also commemorates the Old Testament event when 3 angels visited Rather Abraham. The parade includes also many national flags of the (secular) state, and photographs of the bearded emperor, carried by deacons. Loyalty shouts of "Addis Ababa" are frequently heard.

[186]

The last important socio-religious holy day is "Buhē", the Transfiguration of Jesus, on the 13th of the same month. It is also called "Dabra Tabor", because it is believed to have taken place on Mt. Tabor in ancient Palestine. Again a church bearing that name is chosen as center of the celebration. Buhe is also a feast of lights, perhaps to symbolize the hope that the rainclouds will soon part and let the sun be seen once again. There are torchlight parades, the torches made from braided, resinous barks, carried on the way to the church just before sunrise. All shout "Buhe, Buhe" on many occasions on this day. It is a family holiday remembered all through life by the children. On this day the hearths are brightly lit, and mothers bake a special wheaten bread for the children. Even

[373]

197 most of its syntax, morphology (such as the "frequentative"), phonology
192 such as considerable onomatopoetry and monosyllabic words (though some of these may have been carried in Geez also). The result of this linguistic blend is a number of expressive choices somewhat analogous to the choice in English between Anglo-Saxon cognates and Latin-French cognates: e.g. the word "sun" can be expressed as "sahay" (from Geez) or "jembar" (from Cushitic). Amhara people use these alternates in many ways: to emphasize distinction between "sacred" and "profane", between the philosophic and the prosaic.

578 For, to the mind of the Amhara, Geez and its derivatives are
197 spiritually connected with the church liturgy, with philosophy. Even
186 in the present situation of change, feudal conservatives and the church have banded together most strongly against the suggested simplification of the Amharic alphabet (which is recommended for quicker learning, expecially by illiterate adults of other ethnic groups in Ethiopia; and for devising typewriters). This traditional, religious conservatism is now being reinforced by the new and incipient group of nationalistic, linguistic purists, who bemoan the introduction of more and more European cognates. But the latter group is still small and does not have nearly the political power of the old-style religious conservatives.

197 Finally, the often-repeated qualification with regard to the effect of regional differences applies to linguistic matters also. In different regions, derivations from different Cushitic languages affect all phases of the language, particularly the lexical.

192 b) Lexical, Grammatical and Syntactical Phases.

The Amharic vocabulary is rich in onomatopoetic terms which have been formalized:

524 girls, or two girls holding each other by the hand and spinning like a top. Sometimes somewhat older girls meet boys with whom they have established an experimental "joking relationship" ("tawaza"), and play house, building little huts out in the fields during the dry season, within the hamlet in the rainy season. This free experimentation comes to an end just before adolescence, when their relationships become more formal and more supervised.

Imitations of parental activities fill much of children's playtime. Little boys play "farmer", weave rainhoods of reeds and "broadcast" seeds (actually pebbles). Little boys begin to practice the "art of insult" (brain, not only brawn) e.g. such ethnocentric insults as the following:

[186
578]

	Question: "Where are you from?"
Reply: "Begemdir",	Response: "Land of shysters and quibblers."
"Shoa",	"Land of liars and traitors."
"Gojjam",	"Land of sorcerers (buda)."
"Gondar",	"Gossipers and blabbermouths."
"Gurage",	"Land of tricksters."
"Tigre",	"Land of hotheads."

524 754 The culture's fear of black magic, especially "buda", is reflected in children's games, such as:

A: "Buda, buda, what do you eat?"

B: "Meat" (or, imitating the sorcerer's hidden language, "cakes").

A: "What do you drink?"

B: "Blood" (or, paraphrased, "pure water"). Whereupon boy B howls like a hyena (the "horse" of buda), sprints toward boy A, who flees.

524 831 When no adults are present, boys play games imitating the sex life of animals, sometimes highly imaginary, e.g. the "coitus of baboons" ("ätota teddosh"):

Seated and facing each other, two boys lift each other with their feet,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

776 kingdom. The hyena ("jeb") is regarded as acting sometimes as the
825 "horse" of the evil spirit or human sorcerer, sometimes as a werewolf-like creature, when the evil spirit or human sorcerer assumes its form at night, or makes use of its powerful, hypnotic eyes to "draw the
[755] blood" magically from the living victim. The concept of the magical hyena is much used in diagnosis and treatment of mental ailments. It is the most common wild animal, seen and heard at night, and the holes it burrows under fresh human graves are regarded as visible evidence of the character of the hyena. The fear in which the spiritual world is held is symbolized in the hyena; it is whispered about in connection with suspected ethnic craft groups such as the smiths; or shouted out loud in military unison ("yabahalal jebo") in challenge.

825 Aspects of the animal world which cause great "wonderment" among homespun Amhara "shemagalye" philosophers are types of animal behavior that seem so human. "Bird language" is given a variety of popular interpretations (footnote 102). Baboons, which are a constant annoyance and therefore familiar, are wondered about in part because of their human-like social organization headed by "great man" chiefs ("ramare").

But it is a great insult to call a person a "creature of Thursday" (when animals were created, according to the Bible).

186 B. Amhara Ideas about Human Races and Amhara Ethnocentrism.
829 The dualism of the Amhara culture pattern rules also their view of the human races with which they are familiar, and their own

Footnote 102 - Leslau: Popular Interpretations of Bird Sounds in Ethiopia. Journal of American Folklore, 1952, Vol. 65, pp. 361-4.

186 ethnocentrism: "Je" includes the brunette racial features of the
829 Mediterranean world, particularly if accompanied by Abyssinian-Coptic religion, for to the Amhara the name "Amhara" is synonymous with Christianity of their own denomination. "They", in their mind, refers to the black peoples of Africa whom they enslaved; but also to "infidel", particularly the Muslims with whom they have been at war so often. They draw many lines within these major ethnocentric divisions, racial, religious, ethnic-occupational and linguistic.. But, in the Amhara attitude, racial differences are among the most fundamental.

829 The skin color of most Amhara is regarded by them as brown
822 ("taym"), considered better looking than the black of negroid peoples, and reflecting "better character". Black color is regarded as symbolic of anything unpleasant, spiritually impure, ("taqqorā" connotes "he became shadowed, sad, depressed"). It is a (mild) insult to call a very dark person "taqqwara" (lit. "darkie"). European skin color is regarded as "red" ("oxy") - a common African attitude. The concept of "white" coloring connotes paleness ("nätta" (lit. he became pale), undernourishment, sickness, insipid weakness.

822 Color symbolism is followed in dress: The Amhara wear white
291 togas, without coloring more than the border, because the concept white also connotes spiritual purity (by extension of the concept of the absence of physical strength). Yellow ("wayba") is the traditional color of special mourning, worn only by monastic monks who regard themselves as in a state of perpetual mourning for the passing of Christ from the earth (the dye is made from the bark of the "wayba" tree, hence the name). Green and blue are collectively called "arängwadē", and are not sharply differentiated.

826 Racial ideas also dominate the Amhara concepts of physical

826 beauty: The comparative gerontomorphy of Amhara facial features, even in the case of females, is regarded by them as a mark of beauty, e.g. a long, high bridged nose, which denotes "nobility" and absence of strong negroid strains. In contrast, a flat nose with depressed root and broad nostril is called "kurfäd", which is also used as an insult. The thick lips of the negroid Shanqalla ex-slaves ("känfäran", lit. full lower lip), especially if at the same time everted ("ahewa lämboch" lit. donkey lip; or "lämbocham") are considered marks of ugliness in both men and women. The rare light eyes that crop up among the Amhara are not regarded as special marks of beauty, but as outlandish ("baher ayn", lit. eyes from overseas), for Amhara ethnocentrism is directed also at foreignisms other than negroid traits. [186] [71] The bulging almond eyes popular in other parts of the Middle East are regarded as marks of feminine beauty and feminine "nobility" by the Amhara also.

The spiral peppercorn hair ("barya täsur", lit. slave hair; or "kordada"), of the subjected negroid races is regarded as ugly by the Amhara. Conversely, their own helical hair ("zoma täsur", i.e. hair that stands up thick and rich in a bushy halo, or thick curls) is considered beautiful and indicative of "good racial stock ("attentam"). Outcrops of soft, wavy hair ("lähuqha", light hair that falls down), which is more frequent than light eyes, is regarded as outlandish, but accepted with a smile, as of no great significance.

Similar attitude rules the beauty of the ear. The medium-sized ear of most Amhara is preferred. The round, curved, small negroid ear ("coraf joro") is considered ugly; but the other extreme, the big elongated ear that stands out like a donkey's ("ärbaba joro"), found

[826] in many Europeans, is not considered a mark of beauty either.

186 828 Amhara ethnocentrism rules over their attitudes to the other two major ethnic groups that inhabit Abyssinia: The Coptic Tigré peoples who are accepted as "ethnic cousins"; and the Muslim and "pagan" Galla, somewhat more African but not negroid, who occupy a middle social position above that of the Shanqalla. The Amhara stereotype as to the personality of these different groups is:

Amhara - "noble", slow of speech, subtle, patient, slow to anger.

Tigré - shrewd, fast in thought and action, "light" in temper, impatient.

Galla - coarse, shameless (e.g. willing to do manual labor), dull-witted.

An interesting application of this stereotype has arisen in recent years in the discussions about these "national temperaments" by Amhara officers of the modern Ethiopian army, who are concerned with the performance to be expected of the diverse ethnics in battle; important considerations in a country where emotional differences along tribal lines are still strong:

Amhara soldier:

Proud of individual feats; good fighter when his individual pride has been challenged and aroused.

Hates to take orders; difficult to discipline.

Loves to give orders, to act as "great man"; objects to being hurried.

Explosive in temperament, when startled.

Rarely tenaciously energetic; but if he possesses this quality, he is excellent potential leadership material.

"If you treat him as a friend, he thinks he can be your master."

Galla soldier:

Easy to discipline; will take orders and carry them out, without tricks.

186 828 Pride in group, military unit; less emphasis on individual heroism.

Steadier temperament; endurance rather than burst of energy.

"If you treat him as a friend, he will serve you faithfully."

186 779 The religious ethnocentrism of the Amhara is based on their belief that their nation, ruled by the "Solomonic Dynasty", became heir to the "Chosen People" ruled by the House of David, when the latter refused to accept Christ. This is not always clear to the illiterate Amhara, but even he emphasizes this intertwined ethnic and religious principle of his ethnocentrism when he regards the name "Amhara" as signifying both, as he always does.

[304] While the Amhara no longer regards circumcision ("gezrät") as the symbol of entering the Covenant of the Faith, as does the Old Testament and the Jewish religion, he does follow this procedure a week after birth; and an uncircumcised man ("lembut") is called several insulting names and regarded as almost on a level with African Shanqalla slaves who are also uncircumcised. Circumcision therefore has an intertwined ethnic and religious significance.

671 Amhara legal philosophy, guarded by the church, and expressed therefore in the Geez terminology, analyses the universe as follows:

Natural Law - "tabayawi heg"

Man-made Law - (similar to common law) - "sabawi heg"

Moral Law (particularly Coptic law) - "yäbaherya heg" (lit. Law from overseas).

186 Ethnocentrism of the Amhara has for several centuries been consciously directed particularly against the attacking Muslims. The "mätäb" neckcord is believed directly the result of one such purposeful development. Numerous proverbs emphasize the stereotype of the Muslim as the breaker of Amhara religious order as well as social order, and the promoter of lawlessness. Even proverbs such as the following,

186 quoted to praise farming as the best and most typical Amhara occupation, casually refer to the Muslim as a person not bound by social ethics:

[539] "He traded - (then he) cheated;
he was appointed (official) - he began (to act) like a Muslim;
(but) he (who) was a farmer - and became a king!"

[177] Nevertheless, the influence of Islam, probably by slow diffusion, has been considerable on Abyssinian Christianity through the centuries. Their avoidance of "unclean, forbidden things" ("erm"), such as pork, though officially based on the Old Testament prohibitions, was probably reawakened or reintroduced and emphasized through the pressure of Muslim ideas, geographically so close.

[532] The Amhara paint an infidel, like any evil person, with one eye, in profile, for "he has only half a soul, is only half-born, sees only half the truth." The outsider is regarded as automatically of evil personality.

C. Amhara Ideas about Body and Personality.

826 Not all Amhara ideas about human beauty are dominated by racial criteria. A long, lean face ("fit sälkakka") is considered handsome in a man, while a broad face ("fit mēda") is considered ugly; this may bear some relation to the gerontomorphic preference over the pedamorphic.

[304] A long neck ("angät") is a mark of beauty, in both sexes, but noted especially in the woman who therefore may have a series of necklaces tattooed on to her neck. The beauty of the long neck is referred to in the following proverb:

[539] "The neck of the dead child
is longer (than ever);
(meaning, "a good thing that came when of no use).

The forehead is considered the location of good fortune, and a large forehead is considered a mark of beauty in men.

152 on the ground, Amhara noblewomen weep silently or go into states
554 of apathy. This is a more common mental ailment among nobles than
158 hysteria, and may lead to chronic depression and even catalepsy (see Part VI).

157 However, both the peasant and the noble share certain common
554 Amhara personality characteristics. Both take great pride in being
186 able to "speak well in court". Homesickness is strong among both, and is very widespread. Kings and emperors, until very recently, had great difficulty in sending and keeping ambassadors abroad, for the diplomat regarded his foreign assignment as "exile". Both classes share great pride in their highland plateau, defended for many centuries against all comers. This national vanity is at least in part due to long ignorance of the world beyond (sometimes hardened into xenophobia); pride in their ancient religion and in the national epics like the Solomon-Sheba-Menelik. These are shared by Amhara of all classes.

829 Amhara concepts of government administration are aristocratic: ruled by the noble "great man", who is usually descended from a feudal warlord of past centuries. The military camp and its direct significance for traditional Amhara social structure and government has been described in Part III. At the top of the hierarchy is the king or emperor (King of Kings). At the Amhara grassroots is the peasant, who seeks justice by attaching himself to a "great man" as retainer, so that he too will be treated "with honor" by reflection. From the bottom to the top of the hierarchy of government, persons on every level perform the ceremony of "<u>dají tenat</u>" (lit. waiting by the gate) to obtain jobs, maintain positions, or merely to prevent doubts about personal loyalty from arising through absence. This

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

186 The great weakness of the Ethiopians, their inveterate regionalism, arises, like other aspects of their life and history, from the peculiar conditions of their geography. The four historic Kingdoms of Tigrai and Amhara, Shoa and Gojjam, cover the plateaux divided by the canyons of the Blue Nile and [132] the Takkaze and their lateral rifts. During four months of the year, the season of the Great Rains between July and October, Gojjam is entirely cut off from Shoa and Amhara by the floods of the Blue Nile. Only recently has the construction of the bridge over the Blue Nile at Shafartak, a major engineering undertaking, made continuous contact possible. The violent regionalism of the Gojjam has been a disastrous factor in internal Ethiopian history which will doubtless tend to decline with the modern development of communications.

114 The Gojjam, scene of the guerrilla campaign of 1941, has been de-
175 scribed by Major Cheesman, formerly H.B.M. Consul in Dangila, in several articles in the Society's *Journal*, and in his standard work on the province, 'Lake Tana and the Blue Nile.' Cheesman's work was in fact the basis of knowledge which made practical the organization of the expedition to reinforce the Patriot groups which were in the field against the Italians at the moment when Italy declared war on Britain. His exploration of the gap up the Escarpment, the fruit of an arduous excursion described in his book, enabled the Frontier Battalion of the Sudan Defence Force with their camel convoys of supplies and arms to make a rapid deployment on to the Escarpment.

175 The least-known part of the Gojjam province is probably the region of the Choké Mountains which rise to the north of Debra Markos. In an effort to hold down this very wild bit of country the Italians had built forts at Mota [491] and other points and a passable dirt road had been constructed linking Debra Markos *via* Mota with Bahrdar—the Italian strong point at the southern tip of Lake Tana. After the capture of Debra Markos in April 1941, it proved necessary to make contact with the small group of Patriots and one company of Sudanese with some British officers and non-commissioned officers who were containing the very considerable Italian force still in the field round the south-east shore of Lake Tana. At Debra Markos we were very short of troops. Further, scarcity of mules made it necessary to try the experiment of taking camels over the pass which runs under the peaks of Choké at an altitude indicated on Italian maps at rather over 13,000 feet. Kit had to be limited to one ground-sheet and one blanket each for all ranks and the plain-bred Sudanese, many of whom were already lame with jiggers, suffered from cold and mountain-sickness particularly in the hail blizzard which struck the force on the bare ridge of the Choké Pass. Nevertheless this one company of Sudanese covered the 70 odd miles in just under three days, and Colonel Boustead bluffed the Italian battalion in Mota into surrender within forty-eight hours of opening fire with his solitary mortar.

I was following along in the rear with the camel *hamlia* and on reaching base camp in front of Mota was met with orders to about turn and take the animals back to Debra Markos. I thus crossed the Choké Mountains twice [114] in one week. With amateur medical and veterinary duties and a driving mist at the higher altitudes alternating with rain, sleet, and hail, I had little opportunity for geographical observation.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

optimum realization of *all* values possible in a given historic situation. He 121
affirms the human values of modernization, yet conceives of modernity not as of a single, fixed nature but as relative to the cultural context in which modernization takes place. Given the commitment to modernization he would sustain traditional values wherever possible; would modify them where feasible; and would reject them where necessary. The chief questions raised from this point of view will be outlined presently, since it is the approach we ourselves shall be following.

All of the intellectual positions just identified have been taken by respectable thinkers. All are to be found among the members of the transitional societies, distributed according to the individual's position in the social structure and, secondarily, according to his psychological makeup. Within the social sciences, moreover, the subject matters of the various disciplines incline them to one or another of these positions. Roughly speaking, one may say that heretofore the anthropologist has tended to take the Traditionalist position; the economist and the Marxist sociologist have been Modernists; the political scientist has leaned toward the Conciliatory position; while sociologists have been oriented as Skeptics and Pragmatists.

THE QUESTIONS OF A PRAGMATIST

Our intention in this book is to analyze a number of aspects of the confrontation between Amhara tradition and Ethiopia's quest for modernity from the viewpoint of a Pragmatist. Three general questions express the main concerns of this viewpoint: (1) What is the nature of the traditional culture, and what are its more enduring beliefs and values? (2) What aspects of modern culture are of interest to the society, and what are the processes by which they are introduced and institutionalized? (3) Given this interest in modernization, in what ways has it been frustrated by certain features of the traditional culture?

These three questions divide the following chapters into three pairs. Chap- 121
ters ii and iii attempt a sympathetic understanding of some aspects of Am- 128
hara culture and an assessment of their positive relevance for Ethiopia in transition. Chapters iv and v deal with aspects of Amhara culture which have been found inadequate for modernization and with the natural processes by which they have been replaced in part by modernizing structures. Chapters vi and vii then explore aspects of the traditional Amhara culture which appear to be obstacles to the realization of the modernist goals.

We shall begin by exploring one of the traditional bases of cultural identity among the Amhara, one of those primordial sentiments whose integrity is a condition of vitality for a traditional people.[11] Vis-à-vis outsiders, the Amhara [186]
identify strongly with their religion, language, and racial characteristics, though not so fanatically as to preclude their toleration of other groups as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 128 [186] part of a common nationality. Among themselves, however, the Amhara place great stress on region of origin. Deeply sentimental about their homelands, they regard those whose families have long dwelt in the same area almost as kinsmen vis-à-vis Amhara from other regions. In chapter ii, two of these areas which hold a special place in Ethiopian history are explored in some detail. The history, ethos, and cultural significance of Manz and Gondar are discussed, partly to provide an introduction to Amhara culture that has some historical depth, and partly as background to the general question of the place of primordial sentiments like regionalism in a modernizing society.

Chapter iii proceeds to examine the matrix of Amhara culture, the world of the peasant. Its rhetorical aim is chiefly to bring the little-known peasant into sharper focus, to reaffirm the peasant world as one worthy of attention and respect. This will be done, first, by describing the social setting of peasant life, and the main events which make up the daily round and annual cycle of the typical Amhara. Then we shall explore the world view of the Amhara peasant, the main ideas and attitudes through which he interprets his experience. In conclusion, we shall discuss the relation of some aspects of this world view to certain aspects of modern culture.

Chapter iv proceeds from the fact that the skills and values needed for effective participation in a modernizing society cannot be imparted by the traditional processes of socialization during adolescence. With the establishment of a government school system a new and separate pattern has come into being that exists largely, though not wholly, in isolation from the traditional agents and mechanisms of secondary socialization. The subject of this chapter is thus the contrasting conditions in which an Amhara youth is brought up in the traditional and modernizing sectors of Ethiopian society. This account is followed by a portrayal of the outlook of Ethiopian students today, with emphasis on the question of the continuity and discontinuity of their beliefs, tastes, and values with those of traditional Amhara culture.

In chapter v our attention shifts to the elite structure of Amhara-Tigre society. In this sphere modernization has proceeded, not by the addition of a novel structure as in the case of secondary socialization during adolescence, but through a process of differentiation within the existing order and deliberate co-ordination by the sovereign. We shall discuss, first, the traditional elites of monarchy, nobility, and clergy; and then the changes in the status of these elites and the emergence of the new elites of government officials and a modern-educated "intelligentsia."

A key question to emerge from this chapter concerns what appears to be the relative ineffectuality and passivity of the modernizing intelligentsia as a whole. This is a complex and difficult question, only partly to be explained by the political conditions which are referred to in the chapter. We shall sug-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century. 181 175*

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38] 175* 633 [643]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39] 175* 633 361 [333]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē. [565] [351]

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna,* an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables. [792] [778]

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the 175* 633 361 563 [186] [576]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter.

Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat,* or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which contrast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Maḳonnen,* meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā,* land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rĭst.*

The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one 633
young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found 771
in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery." 793

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provin- 633
cial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle 635
problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their 186
city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national govern- 633
ment, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the 619
symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted 633
that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given 554
Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his succes- [64]
sors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland 643
of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. 571
The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 right to a direct audience at any time. The Emperor is known to glow with
571 pleasure when a subject with whom he is speaking reveals that he comes from Manz. The Manzēs, for their part, proudly refer to their area as *ya-negus agar* ("king's country"). They are perhaps the most devoted of all Ethiopians to the present Crown. However, many stories are told to show that this loyalty has not dissolved their intractable spirit. For example, when asked to select a representative for Ethiopia's first elected parliament in 1957, some of them were indignant: "We already have *our* representative in the capital, and if he isn't able to do the job himself, let him step down and hand it to somebody else."

871 Despite their expressed loyalty to Haile Selassie, the Manzēs stubbornly
658 oppose the program with which he is publicly most associated and whose portfolio he has retained, as Minister of Education, from 1943 to the present day. The adults of Manz object to having their children attend the government schools. In many cases where a child has elected to attend school on his own, his parents have cut off all support. The four schools in Manz thus have
[162] an enrolment far below capacity, totaling (as of 1960) less than four hundred in this area of perhaps fifty to sixty thousand families.[49] Those hardy youngsters who do attend school often do so in rags and with an empty stomach.

[857] One reason for this determined opposition to the government schools is the obvious economic one: children must stay at home to tend the herds. This is a problem all over rural Ethiopia, but still the schools in many other areas are overcrowded. Another reason is that, as we have seen, Manz was not interested in education in the old days. Few Manzēs learned to read in the church schools. When a boy showed unusual talent and interest in traditional studies he had to travel to Gondar, which often meant running away from Manz.

871 The crux of Manzē defiance of the new educational system, however, is
658 cultural fundamentalism. The Manzēs keep their children away from the
186 government schools because they fear that the students there are learning
829 something that threatens the old ways. In particular, they do not like their children to learn the language of the *faranj* ("European") or to be exposed to Ethiopians who have been taught by *faranj* and thereby infected by alien ideas. Tending the farm, keeping the fasts, defending land and self—that is the sum and substance of Manzē education, beyond which there is nothing a boy needs to learn.

829 Undoubtedly part of this dread of *faranj* learning is based on the Manzēs'
648 one experience with the white man: the Fascist occupation. As one of the
186 strongholds of patriotic resistance to the occupation, Manz and the Manzēs became the object of the invader's unyielding fury. Over miles and miles of Manz not a home or church was spared. The inhabitants were either killed, or fled to safer areas in Galla country, or joined the underground opposition—

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in such numbers that "Manzē" virtually became a synonym for "underground patriot."

After the liberation, as after the routing of Ahmad Grāñ's forces, the Manzē once again returned to redeem a ravished land. Slowly, the houses were rebuilt, the land was plowed once more. Churches which had been rebuilt after Grāñ's destruction only to be razed by the Italians were again put into place. Tough in his spiritual as in his physical life, the Manzē doggedly re-established the culture of his own. Now as before the occupation, a man of Manz sits on the throne, promising to let no foreigner take his country's land,* while the young braves celebrate the royal line in their festive boasting:

Ya-Manz ababā, ya-Manz ababā! Yābbabā! genā!
The flower of Manz, the flower of Manz! It will bloom yet again!

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

Thus far the significance of Manz and Gondar has been discussed from the point of view of an outsider. We have attempted to assess, on the basis of the best available evidence, the respective historical and cultural roles of these two noted Amhara regions. We turn now to a different though related question, namely, the significance of these two places in the minds and feelings of Ethiopians themselves.

Two kinds of reaction are conspicuous. To the Ethiopian Modernist, Manz and Gondar are seen primarily as outlying pockets of conservatism. Their commitments to the past move them to resist certain changes promoted by the national government, with Manz protesting modern education and Gondar defending itself against nationalist centralization. They are regarded as backward areas, representative of the many forces that are "holding Ethiopia back," and to a certain extent are disdained.

To their inhabitants, on the other hand, these places are objects of intense loyalty. For differences of identity among the Amhara are defined chiefly in terms of their *agar*, or "home country." The size of one's *agar* is relative; it depends on the context in which the symbol is used, and may be as small as a district or as large as a province. Whatever the referent, one's *agar* signifies more than a place of residence or provenience. It means "home," and all those whose families live there are regarded with special affection, while those out-

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* On certain festive occasions the following antiphonal chant is declaimed in praise of "Ṭaqel" (the affectionate, "horse" name of Haile Selassie):

[Leader:] *Mīn āla ṭaqel mīn āla?*
[Chorus:] *Agarē la-saw agarē la-saw alsatem ala!*
[Leader:] What did Ṭaqel say, what did he say?
[Chorus:] "My country to outsiders, my country to outsiders, I will not give!" said he.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 side are regarded with reserve and suspicion, if not hostility. For this reason
• 186 the word of native local authorities has always carried more weight than that
823 of imported or distant authorities. For this reason the names of bars and cafés around Addis Ababa today are to a large extent place names. For this reason
[575] the type of voluntary association which has aroused the most enthusiastic interest in Addis Ababa in recent years is the association based on a membership drawn from the same *agar*.[50] Regionalist sentiments are so intense in connection with these groups that some members of the Manz association, for example, have asserted that they would not admit to membership a person whose family originated in a district only a few kilometers outside the boundaries of Manz.

121 This type of orientation to Manz, Gondar, and the many other regions in Amhara country may be regarded as an instance of the more general phenomenon referred to above as "primordial sentiments." These are sentiments which are based on the awareness of certain given qualities shared by the members of a group, qualities such as race, language, religious affiliation, tribal affiliation, as well as region of origin. The primordial sentiments account for much of the cohesion and much of the vitality among the members of any traditional society. How these allegiances are affected in the course of modernization has considerable bearing on the future shape of the rapidly developing nations.

A number of factors inherent in modernization work to erode the primordial sentiments. Increased physical and social mobility tend to uproot the individual from the settings of family and home community in which these sentiments are produced and reinforced. Occupational position comes to replace membership in primordial groups as a primary determinant of status and identity. Secondary education, military training, and the development of national institutions and symbols promote the sentiment of nationalism to which these narrower allegiances are subordinated.

Other aspects of modernization, however, work in the opposite direction to intensify primordial sentiments. The education of members of minority groups gives them both a heightened sense of grievance and a voice with which to protest. The creation of new forms of wealth and power provides new bases for competition and conflict, processes which tend to be structured along lines already laid out by cleavages based on primordial differences. The insecurity aroused by the threat to tradition inherent in modernization also produces defensive reactions which often take the form of heightened allegiance to such groups.

This intensification of primordial loyalties during modernization presents a problem which, for all their differences, nearly all the nations of Africa and Asia have in common. Whether the critical differences revolve about language, as in India; religion, as in Lebanon; geography, as in Indonesia; or

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*565 157 823 referents are relative: a man living at 7,500 feet may be considered *qolaññā* by one living at 10,000 and *dēgaññā* by one living at 6,000 feet.

*565 • 186 619 The broadest membership circle that the Amhara peasant normally thinks in terms of is that of the ethnic group consisting of all Amhara.[10] The ethnic self-conception of the Amhara is one which stresses certain physical and cultural characteristics, thanks to which he regards himself as superior to all non-Abyssinian groups in Ethiopia as well as to all non-Ethiopian nationals. With regard to race, the Amhara consider themselves distinctly more handsome than both the white man and the Negro man, to both of whom they apply derisive epithets. Their cultural identity is defined chiefly with respect to religion and language.

186 771 To all Amhara except a small minority who are Muslim, the name of their ethnic group is synonymous with "Christian." The term signifies Ethiopian Orthodox Christian; for the Amhara peasant, "Catholic" and "Protestant" are equivalent to "Muslim" and "pagan" as terms designating so many kinds of heathens. And being an Ethiopian Christian is to the Amhara a mark of superiority in at least two respects: it means belonging to a chosen people, heirs to the Jews and sole bearers of authentic Christianity; and it means being an adept in praying and fasting, which to the Amhara are peculiarly Abyssinian arts. This orientation has motivated a certain amount of exclusion-[798] ism vis-à-vis non-Christian Ethiopians. The latter are disdained because they are not Christian, while at the same time the particularistic cast of Abyssinian Christianity has made the Amhara somewhat reluctant to proselytize and 186 admit non-Abyssinians to the fold. A similar exclusiveness colors the Amhara's sentiments about his language. Knowledge of Amharic is considered another index of superiority, and the Amhara look down on Ethiopians who do not speak Amharic or who speak it with an accent.

The Amhara claim superiority over other Ethiopian peoples in connection with certain other aspects of culture besides religion and language, although most Amhara peasants have very little knowledge about the other ethnic groups in the country.[11] Occupational hunters and pastoral nomads are ridiculed, for example, because of their ignorance of the arts of farming and of eating *ĭnjarā*. Vis-à-vis Europeans, on the other hand, the Amhara's self-image tends to stress qualities of bravery and toughness. Insofar as he has had contact with foreigners, the Amhara has become self-conscious about his rugged way of life—his hot foods, endurance on trips, courage in revenge, and virile longevity—and looks down on the softness of the European.

Being an Amhara is thus belonging to a superior category of human beings. This is not simple ethnocentrism; it reflects rather a basically aristocratic orientation that is repeated within the Amhara fold. It is not only members of other ethnic and religious groups who are considered inferior,

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but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, and social position. 186

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar and trivial talk. 562 [565]* [539]

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including those connected with the saintly figures of Eçhē Yohānnes and Takla Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden. [539] [841]

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably. After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first "age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders. 858 [864]

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults, pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder." 882 885 888 [867]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— 86
parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, 178
by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their role as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part [87]
by teachers and peers in the government schools.

Schools at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly 875
by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, 177
England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing 873
number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization.

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on 177
the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has 178
occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative 557
of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to- 555
day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied with- 829
out regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affilia- 883*
tions.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of uni- 87
versal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead.

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian 873
nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to 177
associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post- 178
elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with mem- 186 •
bers of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of 883*
the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic [872]
pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115]

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the students. Rivalries and hostilities tend to get channeled along these lines, 883* particularly along the Amhara-Tigre axis, and petty fights have erupted from 873 time to time among groups of students so divided. The Amhara students, 177 moreover, tend to interpret their numerical majority in school as self-evident 178 justification of their political superiority in the country, an interpretation sul- 186 lenly rejected by non-Amhara students who tend to be more aware of the Amhara's much smaller percentage of the national population. However, the students are regarded by their teachers, not as members of tribes, but as Ethiopians. The school authorities thus act as a countervailing force in behalf of national symbols, and their effect is considerable.[14] While entering students naturally tend to identify in the first instance with their tribes, sixty per cent of the secondary school seniors and seventy-five per cent of the college students questioned about political identifications indicated that they considered themselves Ethiopians before they considered themselves members of tribes.

The teachers also provide practical information of various sorts to assist the 883* acculturation of their charges. They teach the etiquette of modernity, includ- 875 ing the importance of punctuality and the keeping of promises. The objects 177 and events in their own lives quietly demonstrate to the students much about 178 modern Western culture, while their use of English in and out of class accus- [576] toms the students to the use of their country's official European language. Thus, besides promoting respect for impersonal standards and the sense of [554] Ethiopian nationalism, the teachers fulfill a third extracurricular function of [871] some importance: that of making the schools a vehicle for social mobility, a place to acquire that minimum of European habits which is essential for attaining high status in a modernizing society.

The total accomplishment of the teachers, however, falls short of giving the 883* modern adolescents a coherent orientation to life. The cultural lessons they 871 transmit are neither consistent among the various schools nor closely related 177 to the situation of changing Ethiopia. The organization of education, as of everything else in Ethiopia, reflects the abiding anxiety of the government about permitting any one foreign nation to gain a monopoly in any sphere of activity. Each secondary school and college has heretofore been virtually autonomous, pursuing those policies and teaching those lessons which best fit its point of view, a point of view now guided by British culture, now by American, now by Swedish, now by French, now by Jesuit. As Margery Perham long since observed, this created a situation in which Ethiopian students have gotten "fragments from the experience and ideals of each [nation] without getting the fullest and best influence from any one national tradition."[15]

Another shortcoming of the educational program has been the relative 871 paucity of materials relating to Ethiopian realities. As one Ethiopian educator has written: "School children are at times more familiar with the history of

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In these attitudes one may note the persistence of such traditional valuations as the esteem for power, the stress on religion, and the concern about polite and dignified behavior, alongside such modernist valuations as the esteem for civilization (*selṭānē*) and science. With regard to the emerging world power of Africa, however, the students have been rapidly coming to reject the traditional Abyssinian viewpoint, which looks with disdain upon the Negroid peoples of Africa as racially and culturally inferior.

As recently as a decade ago, a group of Ethiopian college students responded with ridicule and evident disdain to an illustrated ethnographic account of some East African tribes. But in the late 1950's, due to the growing

TABLE 13

ATTITUDES OF ETHIOPIAN STUDENTS TOWARD THE "BIG THREE" POWERS

Classification of Comments	England (per cent)	U.S.A. (per cent)	U.S.S.R. (per cent)
Positive.....	32	59	47
Negative.....	37	19	26
Neutral.....	11	5	6
No answer....	20	17	21
Number..	(640)	(700)	(662)

prominence of the African independence movement and the decision of the Ethiopian government to take more interest in African affairs, the pan-African sentiment began to invade the heretofore aloof highland plateau of Ethiopia. The attendance in Ethiopian colleges of students from other African countries and the growing number of pan-African meetings in Addis Ababa have promoted this trend. Consequently a number of Ethiopian students now follow with growing interest the developments in other African countries, and not a few indicated that their identification with Africa as a whole was stronger than their identification with Ethiopia. All but 8 per cent of the 700 students questioned: "What do you think about Africa?" had some response that showed concern, whether sympathy for African independence and getting rid of the Europeans (28 per cent), or sensitivity about Africa's "undeveloped" and "uncivilized" state and its need to work hard (33 per cent), or pride and confidence in Africa's resources and future (24 per cent).

So deeply rooted a sentiment as prejudice against Negroid Africans cannot quickly be willed away. It does seem, however, that the emergence of the

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*883 829 • 186 178 new African nations is proving to be an effective agency for reducing such prejudices among the students. The broader political identity afforded by pan-Africanism may in turn be promoting a more genuine national feeling among the younger educated Ethiopians, a feeling of solidarity that begins to encompass all the ethnic groups in their land.

*883 829 Still another sphere in which the Ethiopian students have had some room for the development of political values has been the study of history. The students were therefore asked to name the persons in Ethiopian and in world history whom they most liked and disliked, and to explain why.

The three most liked figures in Ethiopian history were Haile Selassie, mentioned by 36 per cent of the respondents; Tēwodros (30 per cent); and Menelik (16 per cent). Named much less frequently were Yohānnes (mostly by Tigre students); military heroes of Menelik's day, and of the resistance during the Italian occupation; and church figures, especially Abuna Peṭros (the great Orthodox martyr of the occupation).

*883 829 643 The reasons given for naming Haile Selassie include the wide variety of respects for which his reign has been praised. He is liked for uniting Ethiopia, supporting education, fighting for the country's freedom, introducing modern civilization, and generally "helping the country." The reasons given extend to expressions of very personal attachment, such as "he gives me education," "he supplies everything," and "he is my guardian."

The reasons given for liking Tēwodros or Menelik best are more circumscribed, and they are balanced by a number of other responses in which these two emperors are named as the most *disliked* persons in Ethiopian history (Tēwodros, 7 per cent; Menelik, 4 per cent). Tēwodros is liked chiefly because of his bravery and his attempt to unite the nation, while he is disliked because of his cruelty. Menelik is liked chiefly because of his defense of the country at Adowa and his efforts to modernize Ethiopia and introduce education; and he is disliked for having sold parts of the country to Europeans. Yohānnes is mentioned about the same number of times in both categories (2 per cent): positively, for his courage in battle and his Christian zeal and, negatively, for his intolerance in persecuting non-Christians.

*883 829 Lījj Iyāsu (11 per cent) and Ahmad Grāñ (8 per cent) are the most disliked figures in Ethiopian history. They are associated with specific offenses: Iyāsu with being an "incompetent ruler," "encouraging Islam," and "chasing after women," and Grāñ with burning churches and massacring Christians. Three other persons in this category are Sultan Ibrahim (5 per cent), for selling the port of Assab; Dajāzmātch Haile Selassie Gugsa (4 per cent), for fighting on the side of the Italians in 1935; and Yodit (2 per cent), the legendary queen who is said to have sacked Aksum in the tenth century.

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cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a 121
society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by 56
that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive frame- 178
work of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are 181
embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is [571]
in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively 565
stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and 554
wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the [463]
statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the mer- 565
chant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the 554
small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was 441
accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an 463
Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be [186]
tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes 565
low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Low- 567
est in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from 554
the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), 463
and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced 565
sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values [181]
of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.

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571 India (10 per cent); and by international organizations, chiefly WHO and
871 ICAO (8 per cent). The others were financed privately, either by their
177 families (8 per cent), or, in a few cases (3 per cent), by religious groups or
[648] business firms.

571 Given this variety of educational background, it is not surprising that the
829 experience of study abroad has had a variable effect on the returnees. Their
177 images of modernity are differently colored according to the country where they have received their higher education. Their archetypes for the modern component of language vary according to the language in which they have received their technical training.

Despite such variety—which may ultimately serve to enrich their cultural life more than to fragment it—several effects of the experience abroad appear common to nearly all the returnees. These include a radical broadening of perspective; the taste for a high standard of living; greater appreciation of political freedom; a heightened sense of Ethiopian identity; and an increase in nationalistic sentiment.

571 Because Ethiopian students are highly motivated to learn what goes on
829 about them in foreign countries, their travel abroad has tended to broaden
177 their outlooks rather than to confirm their prejudices. This expansion of per-
186 spective alters their attitude toward Ethiopia in two different ways. On the one hand, by enabling them to evaluate aspects of Ethiopian life they had previously taken for granted, it has made them more aggressively critical about conditions at home. On the other hand, it has given them a greater sense of pride about Ethiopia. They have noticed that, however advanced their host country, it had certain shortcomings of its own, a sort of observation which has tended to ease the sting of cultural inferiority inevitably felt during the stay in a more modernized society.

> Before going to the United States, I pictured it as the most perfect country on earth. We students in Ethiopia believed that everything good and beautiful comes from America. After studying there, I was disappointed in many ways. For example, I found the Americans to be hypocritical—they go to church, and don't care about religion; they talk about tolerance, and are still quite prejudiced. This was a great lesson for me. I can never be so romantic about a foreign country again, and can appreciate Ethiopia's strengths as well as its weaknesses better now.

Short travel tours sometimes had a similar effect:

> I spent several weeks in Yugoslavia. . . . And I must say—despite how backward we are here, we live much more happily than the Yugoslavs. The people themselves are wonderful—warm and generous; but their lives are miserable. That experience was really quite a surprise for me.

571 No matter what its shortcomings, the host country inevitably accustomed
829 Ethiopians abroad to a higher standard of living than they had known at
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home—except for the difficulty of having to do without servants. Those students whose rural background and limited intellectual experience had led them to consider Addis Ababa as one of the most advanced cities in the world were often shocked by the comparison. No less shocking was the moral climate, which permitted one to express oneself freely and honestly. The taste for intellectual freedom was added to that of political freedom, as students whose horizons were limited by the meager intellectual fare at home came into hungry contact with authors like Marx and Freud, Dewey and Russell. 571 829 177

However much the Ethiopian students abroad might seek to lose themselves in the host culture, they were not permitted to do so. In the mirror of foreigners' regards, their identity as Ethiopians took clearer shape, transcending narrower tribal identifications. Questions about Ethiopia by foreigners aroused greater interest in Ethiopia's history and contemporary problems. A number of students were thus moved to dip into the literature on their country produced by travelers and scholars in the past, and some of them came to write theses and dissertations on problems related to Ethiopia's development. 571 177 186

All of these factors—broadening of perspective, acquaintance with a higher economic standard, less inhibited discussions, and greater self-consciousness as Ethiopians—contributed to a spirit of nationalist dedication. This spirit was confirmed or aroused in all but two groups of the returnees. One, consisting of children of some wealthy members of the new nobility, went abroad chiefly for the prestige and pleasure involved. For them the experience was an extended holiday; they were playboys more than students. The other group consists of those who were abroad for too short a time to have a complete educational experience—in some cases, for as little as three months. These students have tended to use the tour abroad chiefly as a weapon with which to lord it over their peers on return and otherwise to serve narrow personal ambitions. Those students, however, for whom study abroad entailed a more or less serious encounter with higher education and a more modernized culture normally experienced a swelling aspiration to serve their country. They returned home deeply critical of the status quo and determined to contribute substantially to the modernization of their society. 571 177 186 829

Ostensibly, the returnees have been well situated for making such a contribution. Thanks to prudent government policy since the early fifties, they have been enabled to enjoy a minimally comfortable standard of living. Given a monthly allowance from the moment they step off the plane, they have been automatically salaried at a scale based largely on the academic degree attained, with A.B.'s starting at Eth$450 a month and Ph.D.'s at Eth$700. In addition, provisions have been made for them to borrow money from the government in order to finance heavy investments like furniture or, more usually, an automobile. 571 511 465 426

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571 ly meticulous about the state of their clothes. They have their shoes shined
156 several times daily, even when they are eating only one solid meal per day.
[554] They are intent on receiving the proper deference—for example, on being served properly in a hotel. This concern for status is projected in the form of
• [186] an intense nationalism that considers the speedy displacement of non-Ethiopians holding important jobs in the country a more urgent need than the establishment of effective modern institutions and universalistic standards.

Some locals can be found, of course, whose problems and aspirations resemble those of the returnees, and vice versa. However, the characteristics here associated with the two types follow logically from their basic situation and have been observed sufficiently to justify this depicting of them in terms of ideal types. The distinction is further justified on the grounds that the two
[918] groups have developed a modicum of corporate identity and a degree of mutual antagonism which was particularly pronounced in the mid-fifties.

571 The returnees were at first inclined to regard their locally educated coun-
186 trymen with snobbish pride because of the keen sense of superiority which
578 study abroad conferred. It was natural, moreover, for the returnees to associate most closely with those who had shared the very important personal experience of living abroad, and so they tended to neglect their former schoolmates who never crossed the seas. At times, in fact, they scarcely bothered to exchange greetings with them.

The sense that they were being regarded as inferiors embittered the locals. At the same time they were jealous that they, too, had not had the opportunity to study abroad. These mutual incriminations were heightened by economic competition, the returnees claiming that those who stayed behind had the advantage of working their way up into significant and lucrative positions, the locals believing that a degree from abroad was an automatic entree to a good job.

The latent antagonism between locals and returnees came to a head in 1957, with the simultaneous publication in the *Voice of Ethiopia* of an article by a local criticizing returnee behavior[41] and the presentation of a play by the National Patriotic Association which caricatured them. The play, for example, showed a returnee entering the office of a minister, patting him on the back, puffing cigarette smoke into his eyes, sitting back with his feet up on the minister's desk and talking on and on disrespectfully. Another returnee was shown failing to recognize his own mother when she comes into his office, exclaiming: "Woman, get out of here!" A small group of returnees protested these insults with a petition to the Emperor, who is said to have brought some criticism to bear upon the authorities involved.

571 With the return of increasing numbers of Ethiopians from study abroad,
554 however, the prestige of a foreign degree has diminished, and the appearance of classes of locally educated A.B.'s, who have remained in the country to

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work, has further blurred the cleavage between returnees and locals. Finally, the returnees' growing awareness of their own "failure" has in many cases given them added sympathy toward the locals.

> The locals have as much right to live in the land as the returnees and as much duty to help the country. They should be given responsibility commensurate with what they are able to do. Doing serious work and being a leader do not require going abroad. We may find a leader in one of these kids. . . . In private life, I may not have much to do with them: I associate with a small group of friends, as does everyone; and you can't know everybody. But I have no contempt for the locals, and some of them are my best friends.
>
> • • • •
>
> The locals are the real patriots around here and the ones from whom real action will come.

The locals, in turn, seem to have become less suspicious that the returnees are looking down on them. Yet, in more recent years, they have found different grounds on which to be critical of the returnees. They see the returnees as alienated from Ethiopian life, withdrawn from public action, and consumed with private concerns, instead of living up to expectations and exercising dynamic leadership in the transformation of Ethiopian society.

> The returnees know nothing about Ethiopia when they leave, and when they come back they are just like the *faranj*. We, who have not studied much, cannot see far. We know little more than to do our daily routine. But they, who have the vision, don't do anything. They borrow thousands of dollars when they return, to buy furniture, rent a home, get a car, and so on; and that is all they think about.

The dissatisfaction of many locals with the returnees has in fact increased their own self-esteem and ambition to exert leadership themselves.

In terms of the total pattern of stratification in Ethiopia, however, the factors uniting locals and returnees outweigh those separating them. Despite differences of emphasis, they share a basic estrangement from the traditional masses and elites and a deep antagonism toward the government and most of the new nobility. They are unanimous in feeling that something is dreadfully wrong in the state of Ethiopia. Frequently they cannot articulate just what they object to, or else they seize upon some flagrant social evil as the bête noire: with the locals tending to be most outspoken against the widespread prostitution, or alcoholism, or the abuses of the courts, or the inequalities of wealth; and the returnees tending to single out inefficient practices in administration, or nepotism, or corruption in high places. Above all, perhaps, they share an increasing sense of *impatience*, a sense of being smothered in an archaic and stagnant social order, which they designate so expressively with

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965+ MP5 Amhara MP5

instance, as contrasted with sentiments of mutuality and solidarity; in the second, as contrasted with a condition of numerous social obligations and constraints; in the third, as contrasted with anonymity and conformity. In so doing our attention will necessarily be directed to disparate orders of phenomena. The empirical referent of these three concepts of individualism will be studied as follows: 121* 181

(1) *Egoism.*—The degree of individualistic disposition among the Amhara will be examined in terms of two measures: the extent to which individuals are attached to collective symbols and interests, and the extent to which interpersonal relations take non-solidaristic forms.

(2) *Independence.*—The degree of individualistic social organization will be examined with reference to the different institutional foci of Amhara life, and measured by the extent to which role definitions are permissive rather than prescriptive; the possibility of voluntary as opposed to compulsory associations; and the possibilities for the protection of individual rights.

(3) *Individuality.*—The degree of individuality will be measured by the extent to which originality and heroic excellence are valued in the media of self-development and self-expression customary in Amhara culture.

EGOISM VERSUS SOLIDARISM

Self and Community

121* 181 619 186

To what extent are the Amhara bound to one another by a sense of community, and to what extent are their actions guided by a sense of identification with collective symbols and needs? One conspicuous area of such commitment lies in the realm of religious affiliation. The Amhara manifest a strong sense of solidarity with their coreligionists over against all those who do not wear a *mätab* and who have not been baptized. They are deeply attached to the several symbols of the church—the church building itself, the compound in which it is enclosed, the holy ark, and all representatives of ecclesiastical authority—and react to violations of the dignity and purity of their religious symbols as to a personal affront. On certain ceremonial occasions they march in procession around the church shouldering rifles and spears, indicating their determination to defend by force the integrity of their religious objects. In cases where church membership has been channeled along the lines of schismatic orders, the Amhara—particularly the monks—have defended their doctrines faithfully and have at times suffered martyrdom. 121* 181 701 186

With respect to their territorial and linguistic groups, the Amhara seem similarly attached to their collective symbols, if with somewhat less passion than in the religious case. As we have seen, the Amhara has a keen sense of identification with his native locale, or *ägar*, and is readily disposed to defend it against all comers. The expression *yägarē lïjj* ("child of my country" or 121* 181 186 619

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 *Landsmann*) regularly evokes considerable sentiment. There is also a
181 strong sense of solidarity based on the use of Amharic—both among the
• 186 Amhara as a whole vis-à-vis other Ethiopians who either do not know
619 Amharic or speak it imperfectly, and among regional dialect groups. The people of Gojjam and of the Gondar area are particularly chauvinistic with regard to the quality of their Amharic.

*121 This attachment to symbols of religion, territory, and language is impor-
181 tant in providing a basis for identity and morale. Yet these attachments are
621 of relatively little import in shaping a self-transcending orientation in the day-to-day activities of the Amhara; for the crucial context of these activities is the local community, and in the civic sphere the Amhara manifest very little solidarity. Indeed, it may be said that the Amhara have virtually no sense of "community" at all, for the concept can scarcely be rendered in idiomatic Amharic.

*121 The absence of community sentiment among the Amhara is implied by
181 their ecology. Not only did the Amhara fail to produce extensive and durable
361 urban centers (with the limited exception of Gondar) but their country is
621 even barren of that frequent cornerstone of peasant life, the village. The Amhara have distributed themselves thinly, scattering in groups of fours and fives up and down their mountains and plateaus. Larger aggregations are found on the estates of noblemen, but these constitute expanded private households rather than civic communities. The Amhara justify this dispersion of their population on the grounds that wide spaces are needed for the grazing of livestock and that a man needs to live on the land he farms. But herding and farming have been carried out well enough elsewhere by people living together in villages, and it is quite probable that this ecological pattern is due as much as anything else to the Amhara's preference for not having too much association with those outside his immediate kin group. In his own words, the Amhara prefers the kind of neighbor who "does not push the boundaries" (*wassan aynakām*), and believes, as noted earlier, that *bēt-ennā māqbar labetchāw naw* ("home and the grave are by oneself"). It is a preference manifest in such solitary living arrangements as that of divorced women who sometimes live by themselves in the country, eking out a living by spinning cotton or brewing spirits, and in the age-old predilection of Abyssinian monks for anchoritism.

*121 The moral counterpart of this ecological pattern is a preoccupation with
181 private interests that leaves little room for the consideration of communal
156 needs. According to the Amhara vocabulary of motives, social action is moti-
157 vated first and foremost by the pursuit of *ṭiqem*, or narrowly conceived self-interest.[9] This matter-of-fact acceptance of egoistic motivation among the Amhara appears during what is a common occurrence: the shameless subversion of occasions which are set up to consider communal problems and to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 674 any case the *shĭftā* is a man apart, who makes his home in uninhabited mountainous country or lowlands and lives by stealing cattle and robbing travelers. Some Amhara become *shĭftā* because of a passion for this way of life; this is particularly true of soldiers who, after a long campaign, prefer the continuation of a predatory and free existence to a return to the hard work of the fields. Others do so involuntarily, in order to escape punishment after committing some violence in the course of a personal dispute.

*121 674 829 554 The attitudes of civilian Amhara toward the *shĭftā* combine fear and dislike with a strong tendency toward idealization. The *shĭftā* is feared because he is a killer; if a person happens to witness him performing some act of theft or murder, he will usually keep quiet about it for fear of reprisal. He is disliked because he lives parasitically off the productive activities of others. But the *shĭftā* is widely admired, on the other hand, because he possesses a number of qualities that are dear to the Amhara. He is reputed to be an expert singer of *shĭllalā*. He is credited with unusually handsome features because, living at the expense of others as he does, he has plenty to eat and no [577] arduous work to wear him down. Above all he is *guabaz*, the great Amhara virtue that embodies bravery, fierceness, hardihood, and general male compe- [302] tence. This is symbolized by the *shĭftā*'s letting his hair grow to the proportions of a *gofarē*, the wildly thick hair style of the warrior.

*121 674 829 The Amhara's admiration for the *shĭftā* is reminiscent of American attitudes toward the outlaw in "western" films. In the Amhara case, however, this is not balanced by a corresponding idealization of a sheriff-figure as the representative of civil order. Although a feudal lord or governor who captures some *shĭftā* in his area may be admired, this admiration will be directed to his personal qualities of bravery or cunning far more than to his capacity as an agent of "law and order." There is no feeling among the Amhara that the *shĭftā* must be captured simply because he is an outlaw. Instead, a more pragmatic approach is taken: the *shĭftā* is acknowledged as a legitimate social type and is tolerated at a distance so long as his killing does not become wanton or excessive. This approach, and what, in the idealization of the [181] *shĭftā*, appears to be a tendency to identify with someone who openly flaunts the norms of civil society, bespeaks a relatively weak commitment to the value of civil order.

*121 181 186 619 The weakness of the Amhara's attachment to symbols of local community is paralleled by his parochialism with respect to more inclusive levels of community. This parochialism is manifest in diverse ways in the different social strata. Among the peasantry it appears, for example, as an aversion to arranging marriages and permitting land to pass to an Amhara from a different province. Among the clergy it has been expressed in terms of those regionally based doctrinal differences which have disrupted the church for many centuries. Among the nobility it has taken the form of incessant politi-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cal animosities which have weakened the nobility as a status group both in relation to the emperor and in relation to foreign countries. Another respect in which Amhara parochialism has been expressed is the addiction to regional stereotypes, according to which the Tigrean has been depicted as flighty, irresponsible, and "dry"; the Gondarē as intolerably proud; the Gojjami as sly and treacherous; and the Shoan as calculating and untrustworthy. Despite its long history as a nation, Ethiopia probably never experienced more than the dimmest stirrings of a truly national sentiment among its people; and more than once in the past century have regional lords strengthened the hand of European powers in Ethiopia by seeking their help in the combat against other local rulers.

121* 181 186 619 [829]

Self and Others

In addition to considering the extent to which the members of a society identify with the needs and symbols of their more inclusive collectivities, one may also define the individualistic disposition on the dimension of personal interaction. Egoism contrasts, in other words, not only with the disposition to perceive collective purposes as one's own, but also with the disposition to seek solidarity and mutuality in face-to-face relations.

121* 156 571

This aspect of egoism/solidarism is studied by surveying the more important forms of interaction that appear in a given society. In the survey of elementary social behavior among the Amhara now to be reported, two criteria were used to establish the importance of any given form: (1) the frequency with which it was observed, and (2) the extent to which it was stylized or "institutionalized." These criteria were not embodied in any systematic observational procedures; the only control over the observer's bias here is my own deliberate effort to present a balanced and accurate picture.

We may begin by considering the more solidaristic forms. Interaction among the Amhara is characterized, first of all, by a sort of *sensuous camaraderie*. The Amhara enjoy bodily contact. Members of the same sex customarily hold one another's hands for long periods while conversing, or embrace one another in casual fellowship. Crowds of commoners cheerfully huddle close to one another on the floor through the night when they have assembled for some social function and cannot return home the same day. Relatives and companions of the same sex incline to sleep in one another's arms, at least in the chillier altitudes.

121* 571 826 181

Both their style of dress and their manner of eating give the Amhara a ready way to express this comradely feeling. Their untailored cotton or wool cloth easily adapts itself to being shared. Except perhaps for individuals of high social status, the typical Amhara is ready to use his toga as a blanket-wrap for both himself and another whom he may scarcely know.

121* 571 181 291

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

113 Conceptions of Time and Space in the Amhara World View," *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi etiopici* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1960), pp. 223–28.

8. Cf. Allan Hoben, "The Role of Ambilineal Descent Groups in Gojjam Amhara Social Organization" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1963), pp. 140 ff.
9. *Ibid.*, chaps. ii and v.
10. On Amhara attitudes toward nationhood cf. D. Levine, "Ethiopia: Identity, Authority, and Realism," *Political Culture and Political Development*, ed. L. Pye and S. Verba (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).
11. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," pp. 63–67, presents a detailed analysis of the ethnic hierarchy in Ethiopia "as it exists in the minds of most Amhara." Briefly summarized, this hierarchy consists, in order of descending status, of the (Christian) Tigre; Christianized Galla; Muslim and pagan Galla, and other sedentary Cushitic-speaking peoples who were self-governing prior to Menelik's conquests (Kaffa, Wollamo, etc.); peoples identified chiefly as manual laborers (Falasha, Gurage); and occupational hunters, pastoral nomads, and Negroid ex-slaves.

• 186 829

113 12. This subject is discussed in greater detail in D. Levine, "Ethiopia: Identity, Authority, and Realism," *op. cit.*
13. Marcel Griaule, "Le travail en Abyssinie," *Revue internationale du travail*, XXIII (February, 1931), p. 8.
14. This ideal is discussed at greater length in D. Levine, "The Concept of Masculinity in Ethiopian Culture" (paper presented at the Fourteenth Annual Symposium of the Committee on Human Development, The University of Chicago, May 11, 1963: to be published in the *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*).
15. *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1954), chap. iv; and *The Little Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), chap. vi.
16. Cf. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," p. 540.

000 17. Harris observed that "the Abyssinian scribe does not hold the pen of a ready writer; and the dilatory management of his awkward implement is attended with gestures and attitudes the most ridiculous." Also, "Few of the priesthood understand the art of writing, and all regard the exercise of the pen as shameful and derogatory." *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; London, 1844), III, 15, 182.

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18. Cf. Benjamin Paul, ed. *Health, Culture, and Community* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1955).
19. See a series of articles beginning in the *Ethiopian Herald*, Addis Ababa, June 27, 1960: "Let the Victim Speak of the Magnitude of Ethiopian Medicine."

000 20. A long-term study of this and related problems is currently being carried out under the supervision of the US/AID Public Health Section in Ethiopia.

113 21. For general analyses of the nature of political life which support this assertion, cf. Edward Shils, *The Torment of Secrecy* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956);

11: Levine MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For additional information on the "wax and gold" poetic formula, see categories 195, 196 and 538.]

5 / *Tradition and Modernization*

THE GENIUS OF AMHARA CULTURE

The Amhara as a whole are not much given to aesthetic concerns. They are 181
practical-minded peasants, austere religionists, and spirited warriors. Their [517]
interests and achievements as a nation are chiefly in the spheres of military
activity and government. And yet, if we seek some theme with which to gain 181
an entree into the spirit of their society and culture, we will do well to attend 538
to the sphere of poetry. For it is a poetic phenomenon—that represented by
the title of this book—which constitutes both a key to the genius of Amhara
culture and a highly distinctive Amhara contribution to Ethiopian culture.

Sam-ennā warq ("wax and gold") is the formula used by the Amhara to 538
symbolize their favorite form of verse. It is a form built of two semantic
layers. The apparent, figurative meaning of the words is called "wax"; their [196]
more or less hidden actual significance is the "gold."

In its generic sense, the expression *sam-ennā warq* refers to a number of
poetic figures which embody this twofold meaning. The use of such figures
distinguishes the Amhara equivalent of true poetry from ordinary verse, in
which everyday language is merely embellished with rhyme and rhythm. In [197]
the genre known as *qenē,* the original and more elegant kind of *sam-ennā*
warq poetry, the lines are composed in Ge'ez and depend primarily on re-
ligious symbolism. But *sam-ennā warq* constructions also appear in some
types of secular verse in the vernacular Amharic and, indeed, at times inform
Amharic conversation.

Masters of the art of *qenē* composition have analyzed these poetic figures 538
into about a dozen different types.[4] *Sam-ennā warq* in its more specific sense 19
refers to one of these types of figures—the prototype of them all. It consists
of an explicit comparison in which the subjects being compared—the wax
and gold—are presented in apposition, while their predicates are rendered
jointly by a single verb which carries both a wax and a gold meaning. (This [325]
terminology is derived from the work of the goldsmith, who constructs a clay
mold around a form created in wax and then, draining the wax, pours the
molten gold into that form.) So, for example, if the poet's aim is to praise a
hero like Emperor Menelik, he creates a wax model, like "the lion," in terms
of whose actions the gold, Menelik, is depicted: "The lion Menelik crushed
the wolf Italy."[5]

Keeping this dual imagery consistent throughout the stanza is a primary
rule of wax-and-gold composition. A poet who mixes his metaphors is some-
times rebuked with the epithet "hermaphrodite." The following example
presents an Amharic couplet which properly embodies the *sam-ennā warq* [539]
figure:

Eṭṣa balas balto addäm ḳanfareshe
Madhänē alam lebē tasaqala-leshe.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Since Adam your lip did eat of that Tree
539 The Savior my heart has been hung up for thee.
• 19

In this couplet the wax of Adam's sin and Christ's crucifixion in his behalf has been used as a form in which to pour a love message. A literal translation of the wax of the couplet is:

Because Adam ate of the apple from the Tree of Knowledge
The Savior of the World has been crucified for thee.

To savor the gold of the couplet fully, one must know that the verb meaning "was crucified," *tasaqala,* may also signify "is anxious to be near." So a literal translation of the gold would be:

Because of your [tempting] lips
My heart is anxious to be near thee.

538 In other more commonly used figures, the duplexity of the message be-
19 comes less explicit. In figures known as *hīber and merīmer,* the wax and gold are combined in the same word or phrase instead of being put side by side. These figures thus correspond to the English pun. In verses which employ these figures the wax is often but a contrived and transparent excuse for getting to the real point, which appears only in the pun line. Such verses are
[522] highly prized, however, for the Amhara tends to regard the pun as a very
538 high form of humor. Here are two examples of Amharic couplets based on
539 simple puns:

522 (1) *Ya-mīn ṭīqem ṭallā ya-mīn ṭīqem ṭajji*
19 *Tallāt sishañu bunā adargaw enji.*

Of what use is *ṭallā,* of what use is *ṭajji?*•
When seeing an enemy off, serve him coffee.

(2) *Yābbāt eddā la-lījj yebāl nabar dero:*
Bāyāt eddā gabāhu ennē-mā zandero.

In olden times a father's debt was passed down to his son;
But here I have a debt today by grandfather begun.

The pun in the first example lies in the phrase *bunā adargaw* ("serve him coffee"), which by elision becomes *bun adargaw* ("reduce him to ashes"). In the second couplet the pun hinges on the word *bāyat,* which signifies "grandfather" but may also be understood to represent *bāyhuāt* ("because I saw her"). The gold meaning of this couplet is thus: It used to be said that one inherited the debt of one's father, but in my case it was the sight of her that put me into debt.

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[273] • *Ṭallā* is a kind of beer made from barley. *Ṭajj* (pronounced *ṭajji* here for the sake of rhyme) is mead.

Ethiopic verse becomes most obscure in the figure known as *wesṭa wayrā* ("inside of olive tree"). Here only the wax is given, and the listener must work to unearth the gold. Often this can be done only when the circumstances under which the verse was made up are known. The author of a *wesṭa wayrā* often refuses to reveal anything that may help the listener to grasp its hidden meaning. 538 19

The expression *wesṭa wayrā* alludes to the fact that the inner core of the olive tree is a hard substance encased by bark of a different color. The implication is that the inner sense of a *wesṭa wayrā* poem is concealed by a veneer which conveys a quite different sense and is difficult to penetrate. This figure is thus especially suitable for expressing insults in a safe way and for esoteric philosophical or religious message. Here is an instance of the latter usage: [182] 538 539 19

Ya-bāhetāwi lijj sifalleg le'ullennā
Ya-kristosn mesht talānt washama-nnā
Qeṭal betābalaw hono qarama-nnā.

The son of a hermit, high rank to display,
Made love with Christ's wife yesterday;
When she fed him leaves he wasted away.

The surface meaning of this tercet describes an ambitious man who had relations with "Christ's wife" in order to raise his status, for in Ethiopia having relations with a woman of high rank is one way to gain prestige. Instead of advancing his position, however, this man lost all his power when the woman fed him (medicinal) leaves. The esoteric meaning, on the other hand, refers to the experience of a hermit. His "son" is intended to symbolize his hunger, and "Christ's wife" symbolizes fasting. The "inside" meaning, the gold, is therefore that the hermit's hunger is heightened by its relations with fasting, but it diminishes when he is fed leaves, the hallowed diet of a hermit.

The mode of the various poetic figures collectively designated as *sam-ennā warq* is intellectual rather than sensuous. The chief delight of Ethiopic poetry is to attain a maximum of thought with a minimum of words. This effect is reached, as we have seen, through subtle allusions and plays on words. The point may be a serious moral comment, the understanding of which requires one to decipher hidden references to biblical passages or sacred legends; or it may be a jest about love based on a pornographic pun. In any case, the more ingeniously compact and obscure the construction of the verse, the more pleased will be the poet and his audience. Weighty (i.e., mysterious) verse is the ideal, for as the Amhara say, "weighty verse, like heavy clothing, warms the insides." 538 19

The creation of the wax and gold figures was an integral part of the development of *qenē*, the genre of verse composed to be sung at the conclusion of devotional services in the church. And *qenē* appears to be a specifically 538 19 174

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
• 19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[175] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).[6] Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[173] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in
[874] Gojjam in the fourteenth century.[7] The important schools of *qenē* have al-
ways been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
538 delā, Wāsharā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre
19 have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use
[171] of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than
in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some
Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is
well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre
are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be
ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in
the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara
discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation
of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethio-
pia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only
in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.[8] They further maintain that
Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in
this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propae-
deutic to the study of religious texts.* Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar,
which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught
only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is
that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and there-
by enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method
of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized
by the formula *sam-ennā warq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara
life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

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538 * The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by
running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by
example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of
the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student
goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him
all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

197 ment leading to the Sudan, including Baria (the term for slave in Amharic), Kunama, etc. Semitic languages spoken in Ethiopia (mainly in the northern half of the country), are referred to by linguists as "Ethiopic", and are derived from the Geez language which entered Ethiopia in the first half of the first millenium B.C.

Geez ceased to be a spoken language in the 14th century A.D., though it survives in the Abyssinian Coptic liturgy to this day, and was the language of religious, historical and grammatical documents almost until the present generation.

Of the daughter-languages of Geez, Tigrē, spoken in Northern Eritrea, remains the closest to the mother tongue. Its literature is recent, much of it due to the efforts of Swedish missionaries since the 19th century. The same can be said of the literature of the nearest linguistic relative, Tigrinya, spoken in southern Eritrea and in the Ethiopian province of Tigre. These linguistic and territorial names should not be confused.

Amharic, the present national language of Ethiopia, has
191 been important since the 14th century A.D. when the earliest
197 available Amharic document, "Songs of the Kings," was written.
538 The first scientific grammar of Amharic was written in the 17th century by a European scholar, Ludolf. Not until the 20th century has literature in Amharic slowly developed. Amharic is partly derived from Geez, but contains a strong substratum of Cushitic (Leslau, 1945 a). Amharic predominates on the plateau of northwest-central Ethiopia.

191 Other spoken languages partly derived from Geez are now
197 spoken only by small groups of the population, and are disap-

pearing more or less rapidly, mostly in favor of Amharic. 191
They include Argobba, Adare or Harari, Gurage, Gafat. 197

2. The Land.

A. Geographical Location.

The Empire of Ethiopia(south of Eritrea) is located in 131
the northeastern part of Africa, roughly between 5° and 15° north latitude, and 33° -43° east longitude. Prior to the federation of Eritrea in 1952, which added about 45,000 sq. miles and brought access to the Red Sea, Ethiopia had 350,000 sq. miles of landlocked territory. It was roughly the size of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

It is a mountainous kingdom, separated from the Red Sea 133
and the Gulf of Aden on the northeast and the Indian Ocean on the southeast by hot lowland deserts; a steep escarpment borders all along the western area down to the hot lowland of the Sudan. This mountain fortress type of landscape has enabled the plateau people to retain their independence against would-be invaders.

Today the political territory of Ethiopia is divided into 631
12 administrative provinces (Taqlai Gezat), each under a Governor-General appointed by the Emperor. Each province is subdivided into several(usually six) sub-provinces (Awrajja Gezat), ruled by a governor similarly appointed.

Three of the 12 provinces are Amharic-speaking; the 191
national language has recently become the lingua franca for the larger centers of population in the other provinces also.

B. Climate, Climatic Zones, and Topography. 132

Climate and topography are closely inter-related in

462 563 B. THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR.

Division of labor according to the ethnic origin of of the worker is the most distinctly organized division among the Amhara. This is based on the attitude of the [461] Amhara that labor (especially skilled labor and manual labor) is dishonorable. This attitude is reinforced by the close kinship ties which prevent a cultural deviant from shaming the members of his family by working in the district where they are known. It also reinforces the the ethnic boundary lines, and forces the non-Amhara, non-Coptic, working ethnic groups to live within the circle of their own kinfik, religious groups, and hamlets.

[281 191] One of the most despised is the class of the Faqi, the tanners, who speak old-Cushitic languages such as Agau, are considered "pagans" in religion, and are associated by their trade with the hunters, the lowest class.

326 191 On a slightly higher level are the ironsmiths, usually of Falasha, who practice Mosaic Judaism, used to speak Quarinya, an old-Cushitic language, but use the same Semitic Geez language as the Copts in their religious worship and biblical liturgy.

563 463 754 326 [191] This use of Geez by the Falasha is puzzling to the Coptic priests, and brings about a sort of grudging respect for the Falasha, which somewhat elevates their status above that of the tanners. But they are suspected of practicing black magic in connection with their smithing of iron. Patrons take magic precautions to counteract all sorts of magic bewitchment by the Falashas whenever they have contact with them.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

197 in the neighboring Sudan, for Muslim traders even today mix more Arabic loanwords into their Amharic than do Amharas. Areas conquered by slightly islamized Galla and held from the 16th to the 19th centuries were affected to varying degrees by several Galla (Cushitic) dialects.

196 Semantic drift is now in the direction of the Amharic speech pattern of Shoa province, which replaces the dominance of former aristocratic Gondar, thus introducing many more Galla traits into the language. This change is concomitant with the increasing political [191] dominance and centralization of the Shoan dynasty and power. Proclamations emanate from Addis Ababa in Shoan Amharic, and schoolchildren are increasingly taught this "standard" Amharic. Old terms of other provinces are often falling into disuse.

Sometimes this process is conscious, particularly in matters of national pride. Thus, the old word "tuqul" for the primitive, round, thatched, wattle-and-mud hut, is now replaced, through influence directed from Addis Ababa, by "sar byet" (lit. thatched house), considered more polite, for it denotes a house not yet covered by a corrugated iron roof, without the connotation of the mud walls; or, for similar reasons, by "goja" (lit. simple residence).

The use of the call "Gurage" for laborer has been expressly forbidden, because it is now considered insulting to that hardworking ethnic group, and the call "coolie" has been purposely imported. Furthermore, increased use is made in Shoan Amharic of Geez abstracts for modern purposes, such as the suffix "nät", which can be attached [178] to any Amharic verb to render it into an abstraction. Modernization, which has recently introduced such new cultural phenomena into Addis Ababa as the adult, unmarried "Miss", has, within the past decade, amended an old term to describe the new phenomenon: the old "woyzäro" (married, noble lady; Mrs.) is amended to the new concept "woyzarit" (adult though unmarried Miss). This term is still unknown in the rural

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Ambara MP5

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 202 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner [516] gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. [145] Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This [302] gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

633 Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society
[191] has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and
Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and
[563] Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the
uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the
frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and,
[142 although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms
291] exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a
beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wander-
[245] ing among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous
for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudo,
231 which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

487 The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes
along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men:
the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

174 The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally
been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up
[563] into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to
believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

164 There are many lepers in this country, and they do not live separated from the people, they live all together; there are many people who, out of their devotion, wash them, and tend their sores with their hands.

231 There is a great quantity of honey in all the country, and the bees are not in hives, but inside the houses, where the cultivators live, clinging to the walls on the inside, where they have a mode of egress outside, and also inside they surround the house: but they do not on this account desist from dwelling in the house, because the bees go outside. There are a great number of these swarms of bees, chiefly in the monasteries, there are also many in the woods and mountains, and the men put hives near the trees and fill them with bees, and bring them in them to the houses.

346 Since no one sits in the churches, at their doors outside of them, and within the circuit, there are always a great quantity of staves with cross pieces like a .....[1] or cripple's crutch, and each one takes his staff and leans upon it as long as he is at the offices of the church. In the churches there are many effigies painted on the walls. Effigies of [532] our Lord and our Lady, and of the apostles and patriarchs, and prophets and angels, and in all the churches St. George. They have not got solid images. There are many books in [212] the churches all written on parchment, because there is no [191] paper there, and the writing and language is Tigray,[2] which is that of the first country in which Christianity began.

In this country they are not accustomed to write to one another, neither do the officers of justice write anything. All the justice that is done, and what is ordered, is by messengers and speech. I say only that I saw the property of Prester John written down on being delivered up and received.

554 There would be much fruit and much more tillage in the country, if the great men did not ill treat the people, for

[1] *Tahu.* [2] *Tigia.*

191 Ethiopian Folktales Ascribed to the Late Nineteenth Century Amhara Wit, Alāqa Gābre-Hanna:—Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia today, is gradually be-
212 coming the *lingua franca* of the empire. Until recently it was spoken mainly on the fertile
538 highland plateau of central and northwestern Ethiopia, in part of what was formerly known as Abyssinia. Predominantly Coptic Christian, the Amhara people have sacred writings in Ge'ez, old Ethiopic. Amharic has adapted this ancient script to its own use. The folklore of the Amhara is mainly oral (except for religious texts) and represents a crosscurrent of Middle Eastern and African cultures. Traditionally, Amhara society was one of priests, feudal
[565] lords, and peasants. Lower on the social scale were non-Coptic ethnic groups who performed such important economic functions as ironsmithing and pottery-making.

538 This is reflected in the folklore. On non-religious, everyday subjects, the wit of the Am-
522 hara is peasant-like, earthy, full of tales of Rabelaisian appetites and sly solutions to human
193 problems. The Amharic language lends itself readily to puns and hidden meanings, since many verbs can have double or triple interpretations due to the hidden variations in the basic verbal stem and the absence or presence of gemination of some consonants. The listener must pay close attention. If he misinterprets the context and fails to discern the pun, he is often made the butt of the next tricky joke by those who have heard it before. The more a storyteller and wit masters the *sowaso* 'grammar' of the Amharic language, the better he can manipulate this humor.

538 A master of this art was *Alāqa* 'Chief' (an honorary title) Gābre-Hanna, a contem-
159 porary of Emperor Menelik just before the end of the nineteenth century. As far as is known, he never put into writing any of his stories, witticisms, linguistic gymnastics, and philosophical puns. But to this day the peasants and even the nobles remember his stories well and tell them so often that a number of versions have developed.

He was a native of Gondar and had all the provincial pride of the "Gondarey" in the one-time greatness of this town and district that is now back country. He lived at the time the present capital, Addis Ababa, was being built and the King of Shoa had become Emperor of Abyssinia. Like many another "Gondarey," Alāqa Gābre-Hanna pretended to disdain the newfangled importations of Emperor Menelik and the growing employment of subjugated Galla tribal chiefs at the imperial court. Jokingly, he took the liberty of referring to the Emperor's home province, Shoa, as "that Galla province." (Even today much
[191] Gālliña is spoken there, a result of the sixteenth century conquest of the area by Galla tribes.) No one else would have dared such a remark, but he was popular with Emperor Menelik and especially with the Empress Taitu, and could tell them certain frank truths and tease them with irony in a semi-polite manner. However, he was not a court jester.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

THE PROVINCES: GENERAL

162

	Population
Abyssinians (including Agau and Beja)	2,400,000
Gallas	2,350,000
Somalis	1,400,000
Sidamo groups	1,400,000
Afar-Saho (of Danakil districts)	150,000
Negroes	1,000,000
Asiatics and Europeans	100,000[1]
	7,600,000

From both these sets of figures the relatively accurate figures for Eritrea of 757,000,[2] and for Italian Somaliland of 1,000,000,[3] may be deducted, leaving a total for Ethiopia proper of 5,243,000 according to the *Annuario* and 5,843,000 according to the *Guida*.

The British Military Administration in Ethiopia gave the number of 7,000,000 for the total population but did not say upon what calculations this figure was based.[4]

Zoli gives the following classifications for language and race for Ethiopia alone.

[563]

Language		Race	
Amhara	1,900,000	Abyssinian	2,100,000
Tigré	400,000	Galla	2,350,000
Oromo (Galla)	2,000,000	Somali	450,000
Somali	450,000	Sidamo	200,000
Sidamo	200,000	Afar	50,000
Afar (Danakil)	50,000	Negro	850,000
Miscellaneous	1,000,000		
	6,000,000		6,000,000[5]

One point of interest in comparing these latter is that they give an estimate—a highly speculative one—of the degree to which the Gallas have become assimilated to the Amharic culture as shown by their adoption of this language. We may note that Zoli estimates that forty different languages are spoken in Ethiopia, but most of these belong [171] to very small groups in the south-west.

[1] *Guida*, p. 400. [2] Longrigg, *op. cit.*, Appendix C.

[3] This estimate was taken from *Whitaker*. [4] Cmd. 6589/1945.

[5] Zoli, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–13.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[43]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

871 Rome and the life of Abraham Lincoln than with the geography of their immediate community or the history of their own native country."[16] While a certain amount of concentration on remote matters may be essential for introducing modern adolescents to the substance and background of modern culture, it is doubtful whether they are being prepared to relate meaningfully to the society of their adulthood if that society is not made a subject for careful consideration during their schooldays.

875 829 191 Still another limitation on the effectiveness of the teachers stems from a quite different problem, the Ethiopian's ambivalence toward foreigners. This will be overcome with the gradual Ethiopianization of the teaching force, but that cannot be achieved for at least another generation. One area in which this problem manifests itself is linguistic nationalism. English, the official language [873] of all post-elementary instruction, is still regarded as an outsider's tongue in Ethiopia, unlike other African countries where the European language in question serves the native peoples as a *lingua franca;* and many Ethiopians hope that the day will come when it will be replaced by Amharic as the medium of instruction.[17] Due to their ignorance of Amharic or other Ethiopian languages, foreign teachers are rarely able to gain the sort of closeness to their students that promotes the more profoundly beneficial sort of relationship. Because of this and a tradition of suspiciousness regarding foreigners, all but the radically Westernized students maintain a lingering mistrust of the teacher *qua* foreigner.

* 883 178 The gaps in the socialization of the modern adolescent left by the nature of his teachers and their teaching are filled to some extent by his peers. In this respect, too, modern adolescence contrasts with the traditional pattern: not only has the role of mentor and model been taken over by foreign teachers in place of the parents, but also the modern adolescent has become dependent on his peers to a degree unthinkable in traditional Amhara society.

It has been natural that the modern adolescent turn to those his own age for moral support. However much they may support the idea of his going to school as a means to a higher salary, his parents have little understanding of the new directions inherent in modern education. His foreign teachers are, at worst, preoccupied with their own narrow interests or else, at best, out of tune with the Ethiopian ethos and mentality. Older modernized Ethiopians, who should be the most sympathetic, are usually too preoccupied with their own adjustment problems to pay much attention. His schoolmates thus become his only reliable allies in the battle of growing up.

[561] Association with age-mates is informal for the most part. There have been [573] almost no formal youth associations or clubs in Ethiopia. The teen-age gang, with its sharp boundaries and tight controls, has scarcely come into being. [572] Relations with peers thus takes the form of small groups of friends. More

The boundaries of your lips are like the sugar cane; 155
No matter how much one sucks them, one is never satisfied. 538 832

And in one of the few lyric passages in the first novel ever written in Amharic, the author resorts to the imagery of kissing in describing the beauty of an army camp at sunset: [539]

> The plain on which they had encamped was vaster than the mind's eye could measure. Except for that hill on which he stood, there were no elevations or declivities; no roots to trip or confound the foot; not a stone to discomfit the eye. It looked like a calm sea that every breeze had spared. The boundaries of heaven and earth were united by lips of love; lip to lip they were joined like the parts of fitted basketry. It appeared as though it would hurt them to separate, that they had entered a vow not to part.[5] [539]

Talking for the sake of talking is another oral outlet of which the Amhara is generally fond. "In every country," remarked Arnauld d'Abbadie, "the plowman is miserly and sly; but the Ethiopian is, in addition, particularly loquacious."[6] The simple greeting of acquaintances evokes a barrage of ritualistic conversation, a phenomenon which stunned the Englishman Harris: 155 521

> Even two old crones, who are obviously tottering on the very brink of the grave, and who are afflicted with every pain and with every sorrow entailed by the fall of our first parents, never meet in the street without indulging in a string of good wishes which are reiterated so long as their breath will permit. "How are you? How do ye do? How have you passed your time? Are you well? Are you very well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well? Are you not well?"—are questions which serve as the prelude to a thousand other interrogatories; and at each response the Deity must be invoked as to the unadulterated happiness and perfect felicity that has been unremittingly experienced since the last meeting.[7] [596]

A number of other conventions provide further opportunities for this pleasure in talking. Anecdotes and gossip are not merely reported, but are expounded at length with the aid of colorful expressions and gestures. Riddle games are enjoyed by adults as well as young people. Men vie with one another at length in a semiformalized kind of playful boasting. In the church schools all reading is done aloud, a habit which persists among many students of secondary schools when they study outside of class. [524] [876]

A related pleasure in making sounds for their own sake appears in the Amhara's delight in repeating the words or nonsense syllables of his folk songs. On a more refined level, there is his evident pleasure in lulling over and savoring the lines of a choice couplet. We have here for a whole culture an instance of what Brill has ascribed to the poets: 191 155

> Poetry is a sensuous or mystic outlet through words, or, as it were, through a chewing and sucking of nice words and phrases. The poet plays with the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfata*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor [589] Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 574 527 [575] [794] Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious fraternal association known as the *māhebar,* is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māhebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā,*" literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training and Personality*. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[13] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formulation, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ĭnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Mary intervened, placing on the empty side for good deeds a goblet of water which Balaya Sab had once given to a sick beggar out of pity; and the Eater of Men was saved. In the pictorial representation of this legend, Balaya Sab is portrayed cutting off pieces of human flesh with a curved knife in the manner in which raw beef is attacked at the Amhara table. 155 266 773

Most Amhara know some sort of tale about a cannibal. The topic is familiar enough that they are able to invent new ones. One boy told me he made up the following story to explain the nature of cannibals to his younger brother: 155 266 538

> Once there was a cannibal. He lived among many people. He had no food in his house; he was poor. But even if he had not been poor, he just liked to eat the flesh of man. In his house was a big hole which he covered with a carpet. He would invite somebody into his house and tell him to sit down on the chair over the hole. When the person sat down and fell into the hole, he would climb down by a ladder and eat him. In this way he ate all the people in his village one by one—about a hundred people. When he had eaten all the people in his village he returned to live in the forest, because there was nobody left to eat.

The cannibal motif appears in more subtle form in the parlor game known as *gabatā*, in which the aim is to accumulate as many pebbles as possible by moving them around a board with six holes on each side. In *gabatā* the active acquisition of pebbles is called "eating" and the passive acquisition is "drinking." Similarly, those who play chess or checkers refer to the process of taking a man as "eating" him. It is notable, moreover, that the Amhara version of the old riddle about how to transport a certain number of incompatible objects across the river in one boat is posed in terms of three human beings and three cannibals. 155 266 524

Oral sadism is further manifest among the Amhara by the nature of their speech. The Amhara are not only loquacious but also tend, both in manner of delivery and in content of conversation, to be biting and intrusive. Backbiting, insulting, arguing, and litigating are among their more characteristic modes of self-expression. 155 521 191

Backbiting and insulting, and the fear of being the victim of such activities, are the focus of much attention in Amhara culture. Concern about the former is expressed in a number of Amharic proverbs: 155 521 578 [539]

> If the mouth lacks work, it will backbite a friend.
>
> If you praise a man once, you will be in trouble if you backbite him later.
>
> If a man is a backbiter, listen for my sake when he talks to you.

Straightforward insults erupt the polite surface of Amhara social relations only under unusually heated circumstances, though it is customary for social superiors to direct a certain amount of abusive banter at their inferiors as

212 Communication among the Amhara can be said to be formal on all
195 matters of culture focus. Writing is regarded by the Amhara as relegated to formal use, and schoolboys were penalized for experimenting with it informally. Language, however, being oral and thus less controllable, compensates for this; and artistic expression and experimentation make free and often playful and inventive use of the lexical, grammatical, and syntactical raw material of language.

A. The Raw Material of the Amharic Language Put to Use.

a) Historical Development

197 Much of the lexical matter and most of the grammar of the Amharic language, also the basis of the alphabet that it uses, are derived from Geez, one of the South Arabian languages of about 500 B.C. The term "Lisana Geez" the language of the Geez, has, among Abyssinians, the connotation of "language of the free men", i.e. conquerors. Linguistic scholars have raised the question whether one single language, Geez, was imported from Southern Arabia about that time, or whether different, possibly related, languages came from there via separate channels at different times. The latter theory seems more likely, and Amharic may owe the Semitic part of its character to a sister language of Geez, rather than to Geez itself (footnote 85). But the Amhara firmly believe in the derivation from Geez itself - and directly.

197 Whether directly or indirectly derived originally, certain it is
192 that for many centuries and quite consciously even today, the Amhara have been borrowing freely and proudly from the Geez language any term useful particularly to express abstract concepts, in which Amharic is

Footnote 85 - Theory of Professor Marcel Cohen, quoted by Leslau Archaic Features in South Ethiopia. (See Bibliography).

197 sometimes poor, but Geez very rich. In fact, linguistic purists among
192 modern-nationalistic educated Amharas, urge rejection of foreign loan-words in favor of continued and even revived borrowing from Geez cognates.

212 The Amharic script, largely derived from ancient Sabean characters, is, unlike other Semitic scripts, written from left to right. The characters are syllabic, based on 26 consonants from Geez, plus 4 labiovelar diphthongs, plus 7 additional consonants added in Amharic and called "yäärab fidäl" (lit. the Arabic alphabet). These 37 consonants in Amharic are always written in syllabic form, combined with one of 7 vowal orders, so that students must learn a syllabic alphabet of 259 characters. There are also 20 symbols for numerals, which are still taught, and even printed in the modern press, and not replaced by the simpler Arabic numerals; though the latter have been recently taught. These characters and numerals are now printed on a sheet that also includes the Gospel of St. John, in Geez, and a photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie; pasted on a cardboard, this sheet is now carried to school by the young students.

197 Amharic also derives a considerable part of its raw material from
192 Cushitic languages spoken in Ethiopia prior to (and after) the Semitic colonization, perhaps more so than any other Abyssinian language (footnote 86). From these Cushitic sources Amharic obtains part of its vocabulary (especially most of its terms relating to concrete matters),

Footnote 86 - Leslau: Southeast Semitic
Leslau: Observations on Gurage Documents
Leslau: Review of Cohen's Nouvelles Etudes d'Ethiopien Meridional
Cohen, M.: Traité de la Langue Amharique
Houghton: Aspects of Amharic

197 192 most of its syntax, morphology (such as the "frequentative"), phonology such as considerable onomatopoetry and monosyllabic words (though some of these may have been carried in Geez also). The result of this linguistic blend is a number of expressive choices somewhat analogous to the choice in English between Anglo-Saxon cognates and Latin-French cognates: e.g. the word "sun" can be expressed as "sahay" (from Geez) or "jembar" (from Cushitic). Amhara people use these alternates in many ways: to emphasize distinction between "sacred" and "profane", between the philosophic and the prosaic.

578 197 186 For, to the mind of the Amhara, Geez and its derivatives are spiritually connected with the church liturgy, with philosophy. Even in the present situation of change, feudal conservatives and the church have banded together most strongly against the suggested simplification of the Amharic alphabet (which is recommended for quicker learning, expecially by illiterate adults of other ethnic groups in Ethiopia; and for devising typewriters). This traditional, religious conservatism is now being reinforced by the new and incipient group of nationalistic, linguistic purists, who bemoan the introduction of more and more European cognates. But the latter group is still small and does not have nearly the political power of the old-style religious conservatives.

197 Finally, the often-repeated qualification with regard to the effect of regional differences applies to linguistic matters also. In different regions, derivations from different Cushitic languages affect all phases of the language, particularly the lexical.

192 b) Lexical, Grammatical and Syntactical Phases.

The Amharic vocabulary is rich in onomatopoetic terms which have been formalized:

192 "kul kul" - to call the chickens. (Footnote 87)

"fwa fwa" - cascade, waterfall.

"tab alä" - drop by drop ("alä", lit. he went, is the common auxiliary).

"taf taf alä" - poured liquid from a narrow-necked bottle.

"twa alä" - water falling on fire.

"cha alä" - became silent, tranquil, calm; hence - deserted village (1)

"chechch alä" - began to chant; hence - birds in the morning (Twitter).

"gwawqa alä" - knocked loudly at door

"kof kof alä"- marched with gravity (sound of shoes).

"encheq alä" - (sound of) picking feet from muddy place.

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"anchabächchäbä" - clapped hands rythmically, to keep time for music, or to greet a "great man" (Africa style).

"andagaddaga" - made gluglu (water through pipe).

193 Grammar, called "<u>soasso</u>" or "<u>säwasew</u>", is mastered only by the
195 traditional-educated church scholars ("mäzhär") and a few members of
554 noble families. Perhaps only a few hundred individuals master all its intricacies. Emperor Haile Selassie's speeches strike the average

[192] Footnote 87 - Other calls to animals include:
"Kulel Kulel" - to call lost donkey at night.
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"Buch Buch" - call to dogs.
"Wush" - to drive loaded donkeys from path, so the master can ride through
"Che" or "Mach" - to get a horse or mule started when riding it.

264 procedure, also called "gämäsä" is in imitation of procedure at the court of nobles, and it is known that kings have always had their special cupbearers ("gänash") who tasted the drink against possible poison, and who also removed any floating debris ("gäffäta") such as beeswax from the drink.

574 575 The hospitality group on non-kin members which meets most regularly, once a month, is the "mähabbär" association, already described. Based originally on religious private communion, each member plays host once a month to drink from "Mary's cup" ("yämaryam sewa"), to feast, for chant and dance ("zäffän") and less formal gossipy entertainment and conversation ("tächäwwäta").

C. Verbal Expression: Formalities; Wit; Pedagogic Riddles.

192 Emotional exclamations in everyday use are highly formalized:

Pain - "häyy häyy" (also if a painful truth "sinks in"; astonishment).

Fear - "woyy" (especially by women, just before a fearful event happens).

Fearful surprise - "oyyi" (e.g. when someone stumbles, or has an accident).

Alarm - "erriä" - (cry of alarm; also of great sorrow as in death of kin).

Skeptical surprise - "errä" ("you don't say?!"); Reply: "nut" (abbreviated from "yemut", lit. "May (the emperor die) if this is not true").

Pleasure - "essäy" (to indicate comfort, e.g. when sitting down after having climbed a long, tiring hill).

576 514 192 Formal politeness in etiquette always considers the social status of the person addressed. Thus, there are six ways of informing an inquirer that the person he seeks has gone out to defecate or urinate:

Impolite, though not vulgar: "weha afässäsä" - (lit. he poured water).

Polite: "der wätta" - (lit. he went to the bush).

Polite: "däj wätta" - (lit. he went out the door).

576 Very Polite: "shango watta" - (lit. he went to a meeting).
514 Extremely Polite: "gwaro zorä" - (lit. he left home).
192 Extremely Polite: "shersher watta" - (lit. he went for a walk).

522 Wit, used in court or by homespun philosophers to entertain their friends, compensates for the many formalities in this culture and society. The famous wit, Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna has already been cited.
538 Proverbs, "tärät" and riddles may be used to make a comment of esoteric meanings, understandable only to one's initiates. Proverbs fulfill a social function, beyond mere entertainment, for even philosophy, being utilized to begin any negotiation, such as for marriage. This is emphasized in proverbs on proverbs:

[539]

"Like Halleluyah before the chanting (in church),
(begin with) a proverb before the discussion".
"(to drink) mead, (first get) a container,
to talk, (begin with) a proverb".

538 Proverbs and riddles used by parents, teachers and leaders of
593 society have a pedagogic function, and can be used to reprimand and
[861] instruct. Conflict between father and son, the complexities involved, and the possibility that contrary to the major cultural assumption of parental superiority, the son may sometimes have logic on his side, is indicated by the following:

[539] "(Says the father):

"Your Father you cannot accuse (e.g. in court, shaming yourself)
nor plow the sky,
nor roast water".

"(Replies the son):

"The father, by his own shame he will stand accused;
the sky, by lighting it is plowed;
water, in a pot it is steamed".

164 The epidemiology of diphtheria in Africa is still little known. Schick tests have shown high immunity among Ethiopian children, but the occurrence of cases of clinical diphtheria in the native population is unknown.

Every year rabies has claimed a large number of Ethiopians. Until 1927 no treatment was available nearer than Cairo. [744] Since then, treatment has been given in Addis Ababa. The number of rabid dogs in Ethiopia is very large, but little is known of the number of persons bitten outside the capital. It is estimated that approximately 100 persons receive treatment in Addis Ababa every month.

Dengue is common in the northern part of the Harar plateau. It was found quite commonly among Italians at Diredawa and I can remember several fellow travelers coming down with this disease after a night spent in that town. Some control has been attempted since 1943, but until a health service is organized, effective control will not be possible.

Disease terms in Amharic:

164 A number of diseases have clear terms in the Amharic language. Of the venereal ●192 diseases, syphilis is referred to as *kitigne* in its early form while later manifestations are called *worde*. The rheumatic pains, *kurtemaat*, so frequently complained of, are often syphilitic. Gonorrhoea is generally called *chapto* (actually to squeeze, or it squeezes me). The word for malaria is *wobah* (*r*). *Nidad* (i.e., it caught fire) is also used, but may be used for several types of fever. Relapsing fever is called *mitch* and is generally differentiated by the population from typhus fever which is called *tessibo*. Smallpox is called *fantata* and chicken-pox is recognized as a distinct disease called *kuffin*. Diarrhoea is called *tekmat*, which literally means "what makes to sit down." In asking a patient whether he has fever, the word *tekusat* is used. The patient with fever will generally have put a band dipped in cold water around his head.

[p 723 B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

772 As for the beginning and end of the world, all Amhara believe that the
[184] world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium
[773] arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside
[775] down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

*565 The Amhara peasant's view of nature is matter-of-fact. There are a few
82 traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy
[778] places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration
[241] of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.*

• [792] The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws
[784] of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and
[241] they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

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[125] [57] * All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge overlooking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 571 Still another invidious distinction of considerable importance in the Amhara outlook is that between the "big man" (*ṭillīq saw*) and the commoner (*terā saw*). "Bigness" may be measured in terms of political power, economic wealth, ecclesiastical status, or any combination thereof. Though the peasant frequently has little affection for the big man, he customarily treats him with the greatest show of deference. No matter how unfamiliar a big man may be or from what part of the country he comes, the Amhara peasant sees him as entitled to unquestioning courtesy and obeisance. Analogous distinctions discriminate between the wealthy (*hābtām*) and the poor (*dehā*), and between the genteel (*çhawā*) and the rude (*bālagē*).

• 192 828 Yet if the Amhara takes a dim view of women, youth, and poor folk, as well as non-Amhara and non-Christians, he suffers from no illusions about homo sapiens at his best—unless they are dark illusions. The generic word for "man" in Amharic, *saw*, is the subject of a number of negative associations and idiomatic uses.[12] At its worst, the word is found in an idiom that signifies the evil eye (*ya-saw ayn*), literally: the "eye of man" (or, more idiomatically, "the eye of others"). At its best, when used to signify a fully formed human being, the word *saw* characteristically appears in the plaintive saying, *Saw yallam* ("there is no human being"); in other words, an individual who fully embodies the concept of humanity does not exist. In general, one may say that the Amhara's view of human nature is dominated by his perception of man's inherent aggressiveness and untrustworthiness.

828 [861] The Amhara believes that unformed human nature is poor raw material, and that without strict punishment throughout childhood a person will grow up to be rude and offensive toward others. As an adult, moreover, he must constantly be kept in check. The rationale commonly given for the extensive [785] schedule of fasting is that man's nature is wicked, and only by weakening himself in this manner will he be turned away from some act of aggression against others.

828 261 273 The Amharic concept of *ṭegābaññā* illustrates this view. *Ṭegābaññā* literally carries the meaning of one who has been sated with food and drink, but is normally taken to mean someone who begins to insult and pick fights with others. In their use of this and related words the Amhara express the belief that aggression is the usual consequence of being sated. Insubordinate behavior on the part of a servant or political appointee is usually explained as a result of his having been too well fed. "When a peasant gets sated he hits with his stick. . . " is the first line of a number of couplets I collected among rural Amhara. The specific effect of drinking alcoholic beverages is believed to release, not Eros, but the aggressive instincts. An Amharic proverb about [539] *ṭallā* states this directly: "One [glass] whets the appetite; two quenches it; three heats one up; four makes one quarrel; five brings fighting; six causes killing." Contrary to the view that world peace depends chiefly on filling

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565 [644] The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of course, the imperial court. The *makuännent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discre- [492] tion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shoul- [231] dering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi- [273] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *ṭajj* pre- [292] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos,* the dark wool cloak of the [322] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re- [293] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abyssinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 554 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mäʿerg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 554 701 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The *makuännent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary Amharic the term *makuännent* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

räs	"head" (of an army)
dajäzmätch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitäwräri**	"general of the vanguard"
qañäzmätch	"general of the right wing"
geräzmätch	"general of the left wing"
bälämbäräs	"commander of a fort"
bäshä†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shälaqä	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitäwräri* ranked below the *geräzmätch*.

[192] † *Bäshä* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

demonstrate some affiliation with the Solomonic line; the marriage of one of these into a local dynasty contributed an added buttress to its traditionalist claims. The other was what seems to be a still more deeply rooted disposition for decentralized hegemony based on the ancient character of the society. For, as Cerulli has recently suggested, the origins of the Ethiopian state were such as to lay the foundation for a persisting order of feudalism. The movement of South Arabs to the Eritrean coast and highlands took place, not through the conquest of an indigenous population by a united invader, as in the Norman Conquest of England, but by the intermittent emigration and settlement of distinct tribes from South Arabia into various parts of the African territory. Thus, Cerulli concludes, we see in Ethiopia "a feudalism expanded from the roots: a number of principalities or peoples which, independent on African land after their emigration, have finally been regrouped in a higher political unity, yet still conserving in the feudal system thus constituted part of their autonomy and their individuality."[37] If this is so, it would constitute an added traditional element in the sense of legitimacy of local dynastic interests.

All this suggests that we must look to two sources for the prestige of the *makuānnent*—that recruitment into the secular elite came from "below" as well as from "above." These two bases of noble status are indicated by the etymology of two Amharic words commonly applied to the local nobility, *shum* and *bālābbāt*. *Shum* (or *seyum*) comes from a root which means to invest with high position. The emperor, as we have seen, is *seyuma egziābhēr* ("invested by God") and he in turn is the source of authority for investing other dignitaries. The status associated with the word *shum* is therefore based on the act of investiture by a sovereign. *Bālābbāt*, on the other hand, has the literal meaning, "one who has a father"; in other words, one who has a significant father, a notable ancestry. This status refers to claims to deference which are based on birth.

Claims based on birth, moreover, were closely tied to the ownership of land and supported by local territorial allegiances. This appears most strikingly in the office of *çhīqā shum*, the lowest level official, who is appointed, to be sure, but by the local people themselves from a small number of *bālābbāt* whose eligibility for the office rests on their inheritance of rights to certain specified pieces of land. Other local offices, like *malkañña* and *meslanē*, were normally given by regional governors to *bālābbāt* indigenous to the area. The sacred sentiment of fealty to a monarch, whose charisma rested both on membership in a hallowed dynasty and the hallowed act of coronation, thus competed in Abyssinian souls with deeply felt sentiments of attachment to members of noted families who symbolized local rights and traditions. Abyssinian political structure at any given time was determined by the relative strength of the forces supported by these two principles of legitimacy.

Neither principle was ever realized in pure form. No matter how great his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

than those necessary to perform their jobs. They do not attempt to maintain and build personal libraries, though there are a few exceptions to this. The three small bookstores in Addis Ababa offer only the most insubstantial fare.

Nor, finally, have more than a handful of private individuals taken upon themselves the charge of a scholarly or literary calling. Although Marcel Cohen heralded the birth of a printed literature in Amharic as early as 1925,[58] writing is still not very important on the Ethiopian scene.* The output of original books and pamphlets in Amharic averaged less than fifteen a year over the past two decades. The presses and bookstores distribute Amharic publications indifferently at best. Much of the literary impetus produced by the desire of many Ethiopians to write, and the obvious need for good writing that would address itself to the intellectual demands of the present generation, has been sapped by economic, political, and cultural factors.

The economic factors include the high cost of printing; the diminutive market; and the absence of publishing houses. If an author wants to be read, he must normally pay for publication himself. Those who cannot must either find a patron in the Crown—frequently a highly lucrative arrangement—or resort to mimeographic duplication, or else remain unpublished. The censorship system and anxiety about spontaneous expression of any sort which has been fostered by prevailing political conditions constitute additional obstacles to literary development.

The paucity of serious writing has been the result no less of prevailing cultural conditions. The low intellectual level of his potential audience, the absence of channels for criticism, and the dearth of precedent make it difficult for the Ethiopian writer to determine good standards of writing. The confused state of Amharic, owing to regional variations and the absence of consensus on neologisms and loan words for expressing modern concepts, poses many problems on the level of sheer vocabulary. The temptation to get into print quickly, if the financial and political barriers can be hurdled, exceeds the temptation to work long and hard on an opus of quality. The desire to pontificate frequently eclipses the quest for understanding.

Those conditions which have inhibited the growth of Amharic literature—poverty, governmental reluctance to provide sufficient freedom and support, the newness of the modernizing culture, and the motivational level of the intellectuals themselves—may be viewed more broadly as responsible for the relative barrenness of Ethiopian intellectual life as a whole. Insofar as these conditions change in the coming decades, a radical change in the quality and organization of Ethiopian intellectual life may be expected. As a sociological

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* This is no longer due, however, to the negative attitude toward writing as such which was discussed in chapter iii. That traditional inhibition has been largely removed—primarily, it seems, by the postwar requirement that all legal accusations and court proceedings be set down in writing.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE PHENOMENA OF AMHARA ORALITY

155 826 [856] [192] Shortly after an Amhara child is born some butter is placed in his mouth. This is done in the belief that it will keep his voice from becoming harsh. From that moment on, the mouth never ceases to be an organ of extraordinary importance in his life. Its cultural importance is reflected in the attention given to it in the Amharic vocabulary: Baeteman's *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* lists some sixty idioms built with the Amharic word for mouth, *af*, more than are listed for any other words in the language except "eye," [539] "heart," and "earth."[4] The organ is publicly celebrated in such proverbs as: "Cleverness of mouth, to the master; cleverness of hand, to the slave."

155 826 171 The oral zone is of course of universal significance. Some items of oral imagery probably appear in most languages, and manifestations of oral libido appear in many forms familiar to Westerners: the French love for gourmandism, the German passion for beer-drinking and singing, the American addiction to cigarettes, chewing gum, and "life-savers." Many of the less familiar phenomena to be related below in describing Amhara orality, moreover, are found in most of the cultures of Africa and the Middle East. But such phenomena often appear inconspicuously alongside other culturally patterned impulses and sublimations stemming from other phases of psychosexual development. What may distinguish the Amhara—and doubtless some other cultures—is the extent to which the oral zone is an object of attention and a source of behavioral modes and expressive symbolism. The Amhara, it appears, have a preoccupation with orality.

121 155 This preoccupation is manifest in three different kinds of phenomena. There are, first of all, aspects of Amhara culture which express a strong positive attachment to the infantile experience of sucking, in pure and in numerous sublimated forms. These we shall designate as the phenomena of *oral erotism*. Second, there are the aspects of Amhara culture which express a [152] strong positive attachment to the oral zone as a center for various aggressive activities—the modes which Erikson calls "incorporation by biting," "oral retention," and "oral intrusion." These we shall collectively designate as the phenomena of *oral sadism*. Finally, there are phenomena which express a conflict about the gratification of many of these oral desires; and these we shall refer to as the phenomena of *oral ambivalence*.

155 853 *Oral Erotism*

Feeding at the breast is a prominent and beloved experience in Amhara life. The Amhara infant is suckled whenever he wishes, at the slightest show of desire. Since he is rarely separated from his mother it is easy for him to satisfy himself at any time of day or night. Popular beliefs about breast-feed-

192 "kul kul" - to call the chickens. (Footnote 87)

"fwa fwa" - cascade, waterfall.

"täb alä" - drop by drop ("alä", lit. he went, is the common auxiliary).

"täf täf alä" - poured liquid from a narrow-necked bottle.

"twa alä" - water falling on fire.

"cha alä" - became silent, tranquil, calm; hence - deserted village (!)

"chechch alä" - began to chant; hence - birds in the morning (Twitter).

"gwawqa alä" - knocked loudly at door

"kof kof alä"- marched with gravity (sound of shoes).

"encheq alä" - (sound of) picking feet from muddy place.

"aguränarränä" - murmured (sound of large drum), hence - rolling thunder, and incipient rebellion.

"anchabächchäbä" - clapped hands rythmically, to keep time for music, or to greet a "great man" (Africa style).

"andagaddaga" - made gluglu (water through pipe).

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"Wush" - to drive loaded donkeys from path, so the master can ride through
"Che" or "Läch" - to get a horse or mule started when riding it.

193 Amhara layman as esoteric and hard to understand - which causes them to
195 be respected all the more. "Soasso" literally means "ladder" in t he
554 Geez language, and the study of grammar is regarded as "uplifting", steps on the ladder of knowledge, achievable fully only by the few, but respected almost as an end in itself.

193 Special features of this grammar are the following: There is no present tense, and the future tense is used also to indicate the present, as in other Semitic languages. A completed action, in the sense of a "present that has become a past" is expressed by a gerund compound tense. Frequentatives, i.e. reduplicated syllables, are much used to indicate reiterative, intensive, augmentative and attenuative action; foreign scholars believe them to be of Cushitic origin (Footnote 87). Possessive pronouns often take the form of infixes. Among noteworthy absences in this grammar are: No male or female genders, though sex distinctions are made even in concepts of inanimate objects.

There are no "cases" in the Latin sense. There are no subjunctives. The passive and reciprocal voices take the same form, though the meanings are distinguished. A complexity that never fails to complicate matters for non-Amharic speakers (other Ethiopians as well as foreigners) is the gemination, the duplication of a number of consonants, "lala", which gives the word another meaning entirely because it changes the basic stem. The basic stem of verbs is most often a Semitic "triliteral", but through loss or gain is often changed to a "biliteral" or "quadriliteral".

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Footnote 87 - Leslau: Le Thème Verbal Frequentative dans les Langues Etiopiens.
Revue des Etudes Semitiques, I, PP. 15-31. Paris, 1939.

Footnote 88 - Leslau: The Influence of Cushitic on the Semitic Languages of Ethiopia. (in) Word, 1945, pp. 54-82.

193 (E.g. instead of "the man who came", Amharic constructs the sentence "who came the man".)

212 Orthography shows considerable ambivalence of choice, perhaps due to the later influences of Arabic and to the Amharic additions to the Geez alphabet. Thus, interchanges of "q" and "g", "t" and "t", "m" and "n" are common among consonants; "ä" and "i"; "e" and "e" and "a" somewhat less commonly exchanged among vowals. This confuses the root, vowel and tense indications for the foreigner, and even Amharic-speakers when discussing a matter not commonly discussed, may misunderstand each other because of these interchanges, especially if they come from different regions.

c) Regional Variations.

197 Part of the wide variety of regional linguistic differences among Amharic-speakers is due to the long, conservative, provincial semi-isolation. Some of this is not much different from provincialisms in rural Europe; so that the pronounciation of even common words such as "aydollämm" (he isn't here) identifies the Amhara from Shoa, "aydällämm" from Begemdir province (Gondar). But a much greater part of the regional differences is due to the fact that for many centuries, perhaps millenia, the Amharic speakers of Begemdir (Gondar) and Gojjam provinces have been exposed to "old-Cushitic" languages such as Agau, while the Amhara of Shoa province has been exposed to "new-Cushitic" languages such as Galla.

The Abyssinian of Tigre province, whose "Tigre" or "Tigrinya" language may be a closer derivative of Geez than Amharic, has long maintained Semitic ties through continued influence of developing Arabic from Yemen and the Red Sea, and has in turn affected the inland Amharic of Semyen-Begemdir, whose people shared Abyssinian religion and culture. Western Amharas, e.g. in Gojjam province, but also in the trading center of Gondar, have been affected by vulgate Arabic spoken

191 Ethiopian Folktales Ascribed to the Late Nineteenth Century Amhara Wit, Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna:—Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia today, is gradually be-
212 coming the *lingua franca* of the empire. Until recently it was spoken mainly on the fertile
538 highland plateau of central and northwestern Ethiopia, in part of what was formerly known as Abyssinia. Predominantly Coptic Christian, the Amhara people have sacred writings in Ge'ez, old Ethiopic. Amharic has adapted this ancient script to its own use. The folklore of the Amhara is mainly oral (except for religious texts) and represents a crosscurrent of Mid-
[565] dle Eastern and African cultures. Traditionally, Amhara society was one of priests, feudal lords, and peasants. Lower on the social scale were non-Coptic ethnic groups who performed such important economic functions as ironsmithing and pottery-making.

538 This is reflected in the folklore. On non-religious, everyday subjects, the wit of the Am-
522 hara is peasant-like, earthy, full of tales of Rabelaisian appetites and sly solutions to human
● 193 problems. The Amharic language lends itself readily to puns and hidden meanings, since many verbs can have double or triple interpretations due to the hidden variations in the basic verbal stem and the absence or presence of gemination of some consonants. The listener must pay close attention. If he misinterprets the context and fails to discern the pun, he is often made the butt of the next tricky joke by those who have heard it before. The more a storyteller and wit masters the *sowaso* 'grammar' of the Amharic language, the better he can manipulate this humor.

538 A master of this art was *Aläqa* 'Chief' (an honorary title) Gäbre-Hanna, a contem-
159 porary of Emperor Menelik just before the end of the nineteenth century. As far as is known, he never put into writing any of his stories, witticisms, linguistic gymnastics, and philosophical puns. But to this day the peasants and even the nobles remember his stories well and tell them so often that a number of versions have developed.

He was a native of Gondar and had all the provincial pride of the "Gondarey" in the one-time greatness of this town and district that is now back country. He lived at the time the present capital, Addis Ababa, was being built and the King of Shoa had become Emperor of Abyssinia. Like many another "Gondarey," Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna pretended to disdain the newfangled importations of Emperor Menelik and the growing employment of subjugated Galla tribal chiefs at the imperial court. Jokingly, he took the liberty of referring to the Emperor's home province, Shoa, as "that Galla province." (Even today much
[191] Galliña is spoken there, a result of the sixteenth century conquest of the area by Galla tribes.) No one else would have dared such a remark, but he was popular with Emperor Menelik and especially with the Empress Taitu, and could tell them certain frank truths and tease them with irony in a semi-polite manner. However, he was not a court jester.

2; Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 212 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather [576] delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word [145] fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the [302] women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the 644 hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

562 "The killer? (It was) your husband;
602 The victim? (It was) your brother.
[539] Great is your pain,
never will it leave your house"

(said to a woman who promoted her husband's interests, e.g. in competition for a position with the feudal lord, over that of her brother).

562 Psychological inferiority is ascribed to all women, by Amhara men, regardless of social rank. Her weakness is regarded as biological, intellectual and moral. It is regarded as proverbial:

[98] "Vulgar Language" - "yäsyēt qwanqwa" (lit. woman's language)

"Polite Language" - "yäwänd qwanqwa" (lit. man's language); modest, correct, pure, elegant language. Also called "yäwond amarēna" (lit. man's Amharic).

[195] "syeto" - insult to a talkative man. (lit. womanish

"syētē" - (lit. female) - said of timber or soil that is feeble, soft, of little resistance.

[539] "Woman and donkey
(must be trained) with a stick."

"Even if a woman has knowledge,
(only a) man knows how to hold on to it."

212 Communication among the Amhara can be said to be formal on all
195 matters of culture focus. Writing is regarded by the Amhara as relegated to formal use, and schoolboys were penalized for experimenting with it informally. Language, however, being oral and thus less controllable, compensates for this; and artistic expression and experimentation make free and often playful and inventive use of the lexical, grammatical, and syntactical raw material of language.

A. The Raw Material of the Amharic Language Put to Use.

a) Historical Development

197 Much of the lexical matter and most of the grammar of the Amharic language, also the basis of the alphabet that it uses, are derived from Geez, one of the South Arabian languages of about 500 B.C. The term "lisana Geez" the language of the Geez, has, among Abyssinians, the connotation of "language of the free men", i.e. conquerors. Linguistic scholars have raised the question whether one single language, Geez, was imported from Southern Arabia about that time, or whether different, possibly related, languages came from there via separate channels at different times. The latter theory seems more likely, and Amharic may owe the Semitic part of its character to a sister language of Geez, rather than to Geez itself (footnote 85). But the Amhara firmly believe in the derivation from Geez itself - and directly.

197 Whether directly or indirectly derived originally, certain it is
192 that for many centuries and quite consciously even today, the Amhara have been borrowing freely and proudly from the Geez language any term useful particularly to express abstract concepts, in which Amharic is

Footnote 85 - Theory of Professor Marcel Cohen, quoted by Leslau Archaic Features in South Ethiopia. (See Bibliography).

192 "kul kul" - to call the chickens. (Footnote 87)

"fwa fwa" - cascade, waterfall.

"täb alä" - drop by drop ("alä", lit. he went, is the common auxiliary).

"täf täf alä" - poured liquid from a narrow-necked bottle.

"twa alä" - water falling on fire.

"cha alä" - became silent, tranquil, calm; hence - deserted village (!)

"chechch alä" - began to chant; hence - birds in the morning (Twitter).

"gwawqa alä" - knocked loudly at door

"kof kof alä"- marched with gravity (sound of shoes).

"encheq alä" - (sound of) picking feet from muddy place.

"aguramarrama" - murmured (sound of large drum), hence - rolling thunder, and incipient rebellion.

"anchabächchätä" - clapped hands rythmically, to keep time for music, or to greet a "great man" (Africa style).

"andagaddaga" - made gluglu (water through pipe).

193 Grammar, called "<u>sonsso</u>" or "<u>säwasew</u>", is mastered only by the
●195 traditional-educated church scholars ("mänhär") and a few members of
554 noble families. Perhaps only a few hundred individuals master all its intricacies. Emperor Haile Selassie's speeches strike the average

[192] Footnote 87 - Other calls to animals include:
"Kulel Kulel" - to call lost donkey at night.
"Kes Kes" - (or "cheg") to drive sheep on
"Kis Kis" - to drive calves on.
"Buch Buch" - call to dogs.
"Wush" - to drive loaded donkeys from path, so the master can ride through
"Che" or "Ach" - to get a horse or mule started when riding it.

193 Amhara layman as esoteric and hard to understand - which causes them to
195 be respected all the more. "Soasso" literally means "ladder" in t he
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538 He was a master of "sowasse"; of the pun which utilizes gemina-
522 tion and other grammatical possibilities to make an ironic observation and befuddle the unwary, so that they become public laughing stocks. Sometimes the joke was on his own Rabelaisian appetites in food and sex. More often he spoofed the pompousness of feudal and even royal powers, their love for amassing rules and regulations for their courts; and the pretended puritan piety of the priests, behind which facade he recognized witty insight into the minds of men, whose salty comments and behavior in private life he liked to burlesque. For example:

[539]

> "One day the servant of a witty priest suffered from a chigger (sandflea) embedded in his foot. The priest pried it out with a pin and threw it into the fire. A friend, watching this, objected jokingly, saying: "Why did you do this? May it not multiply in the fire?" Replied the priest: "It may be warmed, but not 'done up' ("yazaraw" - also means begotten through sexual intercourse)."

Amhara listeners find such "inpolite" stories extremely amusing.

195 The Amhara people recognize the esoteric use that can be made of
198 their language, and they utilize this. Hence the expression "he is talking Amarinya", meaning "he is speaking in esoteric ways", with double meanings, hidden meanings, to becloud his real purpose so that he cannot be accused of lying and can say later that he meant something else. For example, the verb "qanna" can have the following meanings:

> was right, direct, correct
> was honest, just
> succeeded, prospered
> became jealous, envious
> became zealous, fanatic, intolerant.

198 Certain occupational specialties have traditionally made use of

576 Politeness is not considered "common", but differentiates most sharply between the behavior and expected behavior of the noble "great man" (telleq säw) and the rustic (balägär). The "great man", noble is expected to show graciousness, noblesse oblige. When a social inferior tries to kiss his feet, it is gracious to chuck him under the chin so as not to let him reach the feet, so that the kiss lands on the [593] master's knee. Fathers or mothers imitate this same etiquette when their sons, arriving or departing, try to kiss their feet in symbolic etiquette of subordination. The motion is smooth and evidently routine and well-practiced.

● 195 Stylistic distinctions in the speech pattern also differ between expected etiquette of a noble and rustic. It is noble to talk slowly, softly, choosing words with unworried deliberation, which indicates to the listener that the noble, a man of few and calm words, is secure in his rank and position, and does not have to worry about possible results of poor communication. A noble uses soft-and-polite language (a unified concept to the Amhara), called "yäcätalänät negeger", showing good judgement and taste ("yelumeta"). But his softness of speech has a firm and impressive quality, referred to as "läza mälkäm" (lit. good tongue).

576 It is the mark of a social parvenue of "low" ancestry, if he struts ("tälattätä") with an upward-turned face, and is too proud to reply politely when addressed politely. A true noble, though he will not dismount from his mule when greeted by a commoner on foot (as he would to a social equal or superior), will raise his hat a bit, or raise his toga a bit, in reply to a greeting, in which the commoner has removed from his head his toga protection from the sun.

A social inferior may not sit down in the company of seated "great men" until invited to do so twice. He is expected to be ready to join

576 the retinue of the great man, to serve as messenger, whenever the "great man" decides to go anywhere. When the great man graciously extends his hand in greeting, the social subordinate takes it lightly into his two cupped hands as if it were a precious gift, a "gursha", and permits the hand to be withdrawn soon; for the extended handholding is limited to social equals. The great man is addressed as "getoch" (lit. "masters", using the plural). When appearing before a great man, the toga ("shamma") is redraped in the fashion of appearing before the feudal lord or king, leaving the upper part of the body bare (or nowadays, covered by another garment) in a gesture of self-abasement. Bowing is from the hip, both in case of individuals and by the population at large when the "great man" passes in public.

However, self-abasement among the Amhara is not supposed to be carried to extremes, in their opinion. It does happen that an old rustic ("balagär") will show great servility (resembling that of Uncle Tomism of American Southern states). But this is quietly mocked by other onlooking Amhara commoners. Such a "balagär" may, e.g. throw his toga off his own shoulders and spread it on the ground for a bishop or other great man to walk on, later treasuring the footprints. But it is considered etiquette, especially by young church students and other youngsters, to carry the sandals of adults or priests when they are taken off before entering church.

576 195 It is the mark of the rustic (illiterate) if he is careless in the requirements of polite etiquette, for while the speech pattern of the noble is not expected of him (and would be considered affected, and is therefore never used), he is expected to remember that even he is an Amhara, and therefore somewhat "noble". He will be mocked and criticized for frequent impoliteness, such as using the term "enja" (lit. I don't know) which has the connotation of "... and I don't care", instead of the polite "alawqum" (lit. "it has not entered me", i.e. I don't

576 therefore, know). Abusing people with vulgar insults ("laddafa")
195 tends to reflect on the abuser, so that he is considered "belgena", a rude person. Such a person speaks in high-pitched, strident style, to commoners; while to social superiors he fawns and wheedles, using baby-talk such as "abbabba" (daddy) to a lord and "ammamma" or "tatay" (mummy) to a lady, in mournful tones of self-abasement and utter helplessness, begging paternal protection and forgiveness as if he were an infant that had not yet reached the "age of reason".

576 This is mocked, for the Amhara distinguishes between such servility and non-servile gestures of subordination, such as the "gursha", the bowing from the hip, and the walking backwards when departing from
[466] the king. Servants and other employees may indicate dissatisfaction at being short-changed, by bowing not quite so deeply the next time, whereupon a wise lord or employer will take a cue, increase the wage, and see it acknowledged by a specially deep bow or knee-kiss. Otherwise, protest will take the form of "murmuring", a semi-articulate protest which may lead to open rebellion.

576 Kinship terms are sometimes employed, outside the kin context,
601 to communicate respective positions in a situation of differential social status. Thus, it is respectful to address a status superior as "ayma" (lit. "my dear elder"), used to the father or elder brother. The extension of this term is fairly recent, in line with improved communication and transportation, but the rustic still uses the more ancient version, "ayya", (which has the same meaning). Because of this, a wit who does not want to address a rustic as "ato" (Mister), sometimes addresses the ignoramus, in mock respect, as "ayya". (This cheats him out of his "entitles", reminiscent of the use of the address "Doc" by Southern Whites to Negroes, avoiding "Mister")

576 The speech pattern and etiquette to be expected from women,
195 nearly all of whom are illiterate and have no formal education, is
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classified by Amhara men in the category of the "balagar"; as high-pitched, strident, alternately vulgar and wheedling. The term for female, "syet", also means inconsistent. A woman's voice is not regarded as "soft", which concept is regarded as identical with "polite" and associated with "noble". Noblewomen are considered exempt from this rustic pattern of womanhood, and are expected to behave in accordance with "nobility".

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b) Greetings and Address.

Formality in interpersonal relations is emphasized in greetings, forms of address, postures and gestures, sometimes in considerable detail and variety, since formal politeness is a culture focus among the Amhara.

Distinctions are made even in familiar address. Thus there are two ways of saying "thou": "antä" - to a child, social inferior, or semi-jokingly to emphasize intimate friendship to a social equal;

"antu" - polite "thou", used to older sibling, or by wife to respected husband.

The polite form utilises the plural in address; and, in the case of pronouns, the third person plural. Hence :

"gätoch" - (lit. masters), polite address to employer

"antu" - (thou) polite-familiar address.

"arsu" or "erswo" - (lit. he), polite "you" (singular) to male.

"erswa" - (lit. she) " " " to female.

"ersachäw" - (lit. they) " " (plural), but also used as extremely polite singular address to lord.

The use of the plural communicates that the person addressed is worth several times as much, in material or spiritual worth, as an average person.

524 Boys, from the "age of reason" onward, tease each other with riddles in endless inventive games, such as:

[539] "(Question)":

"In its youth, white hair,
in its maturity, brown,
in its old age, red.
What is it?"

"(Reply)": "Wot". (Red-golden peppersauce).

538 Like medieval bards, Amhara entertainers (azmari) and talented individuals tell of incredible and wonderful happenings of all kinds, stories called "tarik" (synonymous, in Amharic, with history). Often these use as their base historical or pseudo-historical events, and expand on them, experimenting with persons, plots, additional details, etc. Very popular bases are the Royal Chronicles of Abyssinia, "tarik mäqäst", fanciful stories about Alexander the Great, and Biblical plots, especially Apocryphal.

D. Artistic Expression: The Art of Insult and Mockery.

195 A person who is clever at the art of insult is given grudging
578 admiration even by his opponents, and is called "bämälasy lachä" (lit. one who shaves with his tongue). He can insult or mock so subtly that he may leave non-initiates in doubt, yet have full effect on the victim. On the other hand, a coarse person who insults people indiscriminately, regardless of propriety of person or circumstance, is despised ("zärta af").

Mockery is sometimes used for positive as well as negative purposes, especially in pedagogy, but insults are always more or less negative. Mockery, if used to teach a lesson, often employs proverbs;
578 using metaphors, so that the person criticized must think - which
195 might lead to his mending his ways:
539 To mock a useless act: "(it is like) a comb on a shaven head,
(like) trousers to carry dung in".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

To mock false pride:

"A blind man, when he became (too) proud, (to accept help) on his toga defecated".

To mock aggressiveness beyond social station, especially in a young man:

"The mouse that wants to die,
goes to touch the nose of the cat".

Insults, however, do not have this benevolent, educative quality. Instead, they are antagonistic - though in carefully differentiated degrees. In general, an insult may be extremely severe, severe, medium severe, or light, in degree. Insults are considered of greater weight when directed at persons of higher status, (more severe).

There are two major categories of insults:

a) Insults directed at the group to which the insulted person belongs: his racial (usually slave-descent); religious (non-Coptic); ethnic (linguistic-regional) stereotype.

b) Insults directed at his individual personality shortcomings, intended to shame him for having failed to measure up to what is expected of him in society.

Racial insults commonly include:

"shembora ras" (lit. peahead, i.e. peppercorn hair) or "barya tägur" (slave hair), both severe insults referring to slave ancestry, by reference to hair typical of the Shanqalla (negroid tribe in the border lowland). This is now a jail offense.

"täqwara" (lit. dark one). Light insult directed at Shanqalla ex-slave, teasingly.

"wellaj" (half-slave). Severe insult, directed at a person of doubtful ancestry.

Religious insults; often involved also in ethnic insults:

"afotam" (lit. sheathed, encased) - uncircumcised. Directed at "pagan" lowlanders, and lower ethnic castes such as the "Faqi" tanners. Medium severe.

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"kaffir" (infidel). Insult used by islanized Abyssinians and Arabs against Coptic Abyssinians. Severe insult which may lead to bloodshed.

"Koyto" - has the connotation of "one who will eat anything". Refers to the hippopotamus hunters on Lake Tana and the lower Blue Nile. Medium severe insult. (People who subsist on hunting are despised.)

There is also a whispered insult relating to supernatural black magic, "buda", used against persons accused of descent from ironsmiths (e.g. Falasha).

b) Insults directed against individual shortcomings include:

Weak, soft, womanish (directed at a man):

"syëto" - womanish. Directed at chattering male. Medium severe.

"läläta syët" (lit. begging woman). Severe. Directed at flatterer and feigner.

"dumetan" (lit. full of flour), suggesting that he is a coward, who would prefer woman's work, such as grinding, to male behavior.

Generally unsteady character:

"zälläbabeda" - unsteady person. Severe insult.

"jebrarra" - childish, silly jabberer, or a drunk. Severe insult for a man.

"bäsedeb zärrätta" - speechless, e.g. man who cannot reply to insult.

"arho" (lit. wandering minstrel woman), prey to many evils. Medium severe.

"kämmatta" - vagabond, loafer. Medium severe.

Mannish (directed at a woman):

"wändämända" - Severe insult directed at a shrewish, aggressive woman.

●195 578 Stupidity:

"dängwore"(lit. deaf). Fool. Frequently used. Medium to severe.

"dengay ras" (lit. stone head). Slow-witted person. Light insult if directed at a youngster, medium toward low-prestige adult, severe toward other adult males.

Laziness:

"zefeq" - Medium severe insult, directed at woman who evades her chores, and who dresses in her best embroidered toga on a weekday.

Hypocrisy:

"zemban Ïeba" (lit. thief with eyes full of flies): Directed at cunning man who pretends not to see but looks out to take what he should not; like a "blind" thief in the night. Medium severe.

"wärratta" - vain flatterer, good-for-nothing. Severe insult.

Bastard:

"men abbatu" (lit. who is his father). Very frequently used especially by lower class, even against balky mules to "let off steam", but nevertheless considered very severe insult.

Grossness:

"yäharus feträt" (lit. Creature of Thursday; i.e. the day the animals were created). Directed at animal-like behavior. Severe insult.

Supernatural insult:

"ganänam" - full of evil spirits. Severe insult.

Insults of category a) may lead to serious brawls, even kin feuds, for insults against the group are regarded as affecting also the following generations:

[539] "(If the father is hated), the child will not be kissed, when he (the child) speaks, no one will smile".

195 578 Insults of category b) however, may be noisy, sound violent, involve much high-pitched repartee, with the adversaries screaming at each other. But since such individual insults are regarded as a "battle of wits", they rarely even lead to fisticuffs, though, to foreign observers, such encounters seem only a hair's breadth removed from serious bloodshed, and the adversaries seem to lean against each other physically (though now actually). For, even a severe insult is not regarded as a "fighting word", rather as an almost theatrical, almost ceremonial exchange. There may be much waving of a corner of a toga in the opponent's face, as in court. The exchange may end in mutual exhaustion, physically and nervously. The entertainment aspect is not lost on the onlookers, who thoroughly enjoy this and egg on [692] the adversaries. Sometimes curbstone arbitrators ("astaraqi") are appointed to act as "peacemakers".

[554] A person of nobility is not supposed to engage in such public battles of insult, rather employs subtle means of implied antagonism. Even a commoner Amhara may imitate the indirect behavior pattern in a situation of antagonism, e.g. to indicate to a neighbor that he is not wanted, yet without letting the public know it (thus saving face for the neighbor). He may invite him, greet him politely, ask him to wait (standing) while stools "will be brought". When no stools are brought, after some time, the neighbor leaves, never to return. The proverb says:

[539] "So that he will not talk (against us), invite him;
(yet) so that he will not eat, move him about".

In this manner, polite antagonism is indicated, without making a public enemy.

201 [17] has been introduced only since the Italian occupation.

The gesture indicating sour-bitter taste (which are not differentiated; and collectively called "märara"), consists of slowly shaking the head sideways ("tängäshäggäshä"); sometimes reinforced by the verbal exclamation of pain, "ayye" or "hayy!".

516 Postures differentiate between the status of the master and that of the servant. The master indicates his "free" status by sitting way back on the stool or bench, straight, in a position which would require special effort to rise and therefore emphasizes that he does not expect to have to jump up at anyone's command. A servant may not sit in presence of the master, or must sit lightly so as to be ready to perform any duty for which he may be called upon at any moment. To indicate respect, a servant carries out his duties on the run (as "on the double" in the Western armies), while the master is present.

The correct posture in sitting is called "kurkum alä", sitting "folded up"; the legs bent at the knees, the feet far back and partly hidden, since it is "rude" to sit with legs stretched out beyond the knee. But the thighs may be spread, especially when seated on a mat on the ground, even in the case of peasant women who wear the anklelength, heavy cotton gown. To sit with legs crossed (Turkish fashion) is frowned upon as the posture of "barya", the Muslim or "pagan" ex-slaves from the Sudan; considered a rude and lazy position by the Amhara. The proper posture of the Amhara, if seated on the ground, is a squatting position, on the hips, never on the heels; feet flat on the ground, knees high and spread, the toga arranged so as to cover the knees and shins even when jodphurs are worn.

201 554 Facial expression of a high-status Amhara (noble, priest, elder) assumes a stoic appearance. The jaw muscles are relaxed, the mandible slightly dropped, the eyes half-closed but alert, breathing very quiet, [195] the voice in even tone (in contrast to the strident whine of the argumentative peasant-gabbar).

X794 of Lady Salamtew's body. The twisting began like an embrace, with her
796 head thrown back, rotating movements of the chest, followed by a
756 rythmic forward bump of belly and hips. Her ecstatic shrieks varied
781 from pain to exultation (like the "ellel" of women in the Coptic church service). Encouraging shouts came from individual women in the audience, and some raised their holiday - reddened palms in prayerful joy. As the climax approached, the jerky twisting of Lady Salamtew's body gradually changed to smoother movements of the limbs. She was now well in tune with her zar, and he was comfortable within her. The excitement in the audience changed to warm and glowing emotion at the same time. Then Lady Salamtew emitted a loud scream, and dropped in a heap. The drum stopped abruptly. There was a sudden hush in the audience. The strong sweet odor of generously burned incense pervaded the consciousness and its smoke leisurely curled upward.

X794 It was only a matter of minutes before Lady Salamtew recovered.
756 Her brother pulled the curtain to one side. Her eyes were bright with
796 curiosity as she glanced about the house as if she had just arrived. She had lost her absent-minded appearance, for now the zar acted and spoke through her. Suddenly she appeared to notice the foreigner for the first time, smiled and waved a friendly greeting. Her voice was still husky, but warm, as she called out "how are you" in understandable Amharic, rather than her esoteric "zar language"; this was a courtesy, though
[195] she used the female familiar gender (the zar often uses the inverted
[123] genders in address). She further inquired whether the foreigner was sitting in comfort, and how his health was today (hinting at the "ailments" he had used as a pretext). Then she ordered the handmaidens to offer the foreigner tälla (barley beer), and coffee, on one of the zar coffee trays.

*794 782 796 The poet now lures the "pagan" zar Gamyu, whose home is in a bamboo forest in the Metemma lowland of the eastern escarpment of Ethiopia.

Poet: "Tall bamboo you (lit. he) will eat; bamboo you will devour;
Lord, named "Dämmäna" (lit. cloud), from where you devour bamboo;
Gamyu, Gamyu, Gamyu, pure honey (flattering synonym for healer) I
dance eyaho, eyaho dance, Oh Gamyu!"

Thereupon one of the women devotees who has shaved a tonsure in the center of her skull ("Gamyu" comes from "gamye", meaning tonsure), which is the visible requirement he makes of those whom he "possesses", begins to rise. The "gurri" she dances differs only in details from the one performed for the Galla zar spirits.

It is now 11:00 P.M. The various male zars expected on the program for the evening have now "descended". It is time for the female zars to begin making their descent, which is safe, now that many protective male zars are about.

*794 796 781 Word is whispered around that a male and a female zar who "will bite" are about to attack some of the possessed. Everyone rises and crowds close to the wall, leaving the hearth and the center of the room free. Only Lady Säläämtew seems unafraid. She calls out a warning to the [124] foreigner, in her husky voice but in friendly tone, advising him to stand on the bench so as not to be bitten. "Ayzäw" (be well, be of good courage, be of good cheer) she calls out to the foreigner, using the [195] polite address, and forgetting to use the familiar 2nd person singular feminine, which is her privilege.

This time the possession begins differently. Two women detach themselves from the frightened crowd almost simultaneously. Both

181 strained behavior, civilization, but which now has assumed the con-
178 notation of "modern" in the Western sense. It includes the improved
[562] status of the woman, no longer a mere hewer of wood and hauler of water; and it even became formalized in 1942 when an imperial proclamation, in establishing a Consultative Committee on Legislation, gave instruction to draft new laws that would be "not repugnant to natural justice and humanity".

178 But many old values still persist even at the apex of the
576 hierarchy where the prime "change agent", the emperor, resides. Most
644 notable, to foreign observers, is the continuation of the "daj tenat" (faire l'antechambre: lit. waiting at the gate). This is the traditional palace courtyard ceremony of bowing to the emperor at least twice a week. Emperor Haile Selassie has permitted this institution to continue. Every governor-general has his own "daj tenat" court when he returns to his provincial capital; and so on down the line.

195 The traditional oath on the king's life, sworn even in petty matters and everyday affairs ("Hayle Selassye yemut", lit. May the emperor die; i.e. if I lie) is still in common use and no attempt has been made to suppress or reduce its usage. Haile Selassie well remembers that during the first half of his reign his Amhara subjects still used to swear by the name of the dead Menelik or by provincial dynasts such as Ras Gugsa.

178 Outlook: the "culture lag" between material and non-material culture that has created so many social problems in so many parts of the present-day world has not yet taken place in this society. The old attitude of accepting and enjoying trade goods without trying to reproduce what the foreigner has created, still persists. Direct exploitation of what nature provides still fills most physi-

11: Levine MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For additional information on the "wax and gold" poetic formula, see categories 19, 196 and 538.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

words often carry *double-entendre* as a matter of course; when he listens, he is ever on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. As one of my Ethiopian colleagues has said: "Wax and gold is anything but a formula—it is a way of life." 538 181

In essence, wax and gold is simply a more refined and stylized manifestation of the Amhara's basic manner of communicating. This manner is indirect, often secretive. Amharic conversation is larded with vague remarks like *Min yeshällal?* ("What is better?") when the speaker has failed to indicate what is the issue at hand, or *Tädyäsl*, an interjection which can mean almost anything. Often, when the speaker is then quizzed about the issue at hand, he will give an answer that does not reveal what is really on his mind at all, and even when he does, the person with whom he is talking is likely to interpret his response as a disguise. 195 521 538

Wax and gold embodies this fundamental indirection in speech by means of the studied use of ambiguity. Apart from its literary and religious manifestations, wax and gold appears in the common life of the traditional Amhara on a variety of occasions and serves a number of diverse functions. 195 182 538

It provides the medium for an inexhaustible supply of humor, among a wry people who prefer the clever, double-edged remark to comic actions or incongruous situations. This includes the wit of daily life—the invention of puns and sly retorts, the telling and retelling of good anecdotes and famous lines—as well as the more formalized humor on festive occasions, where minstrels sing the *sam-ennä warq* verses extemporized by the guests. 538 195 182 522

It provides a means for insulting one's fellows in a socially approved manner, in a culture which requires fastidious etiquette in social relations and punishes direct insults by heavy fines. *Sam-ennä warq* insulting, too, has its more stylized expressions, as at the drink-house, where one may find persons competing in a prolonged exchange of more or less disguised insults, or in time of political or military conflict, when opposing lords were wont formerly to satirize one another with ambiguous couplets. 538 195 182 578

It provides a technique for defending the sphere of privacy against excessive intrusion, in a social order that thrives on rumor and gossip and puts most of its people at the mercy of superiors. While vague and evasive responses often suffice to dampen the enthusiasm of the tax collector or the curious neighbor, *sam-ennä warq* constitutes another potent weapon of self-defense. 538 195 182 571 [521]

Finally, it provides the one outlet for criticism of authority figures in a society which strictly controls every kind of overt aggression toward authority, be it parental, religious, or political. Thus it has been a safety valve for certain social tensions, enabling, for example, witty individuals to satirize the monarch himself and still live to repeat the witticism—so long as its subject was himself duly appreciative of the cleverness of the lines. 538 195 182 578 571 [687] [522]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

TRADITION AND MODERNITY

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Insofar as Ethiopia is committed to the pursuit of modernity, she cannot fail to be embarrassed to some extent by the wax-and-gold complex. For nothing could be more at odds with the ethos of modernization, if not with its actuality, than a cult of ambiguity.[9]

It is true, of course, that cultural formations analogous to wax and gold in their exploitation of ambiguity have been prominent throughout the history of the West, not to mention the whole non-Western world. The Christian tradition has always made much of parables and allegories. The classical teaching of rhetoric, following Cicero, placed great stress on the use of paradox; and a major philosophical tradition, stretching from Plato to Marx, has been founded on a logic which assumes that reality can be known only by combining opposite concepts and that any single term is subject to dual interpretation. The flowering of symbolist literature, to take a more recent example, created an audience as partial to subtle allusion and *double-entendre* as the most obscurantist proponent of *wesṭa wayrā*.

Yet there can be little doubt that the pace-setting spirit of modern Western culture rests on a commitment to unambiguous communication. It is predicated on the proposition that A must be A or not be A. It was no accident that one of the more characteristic philosophical movements of the present century, logical positivism, should have had as its primary motif the desire to maximize precision in the use of language. For the decisive institutions of the modern world—technologies based on logico-experimental science, rational legal systems, and bureaucratic organizations in government, commerce, and industry—depend intimately on the unambiguous definition of terms and the utmost clarity of expression. Whether the task be one of constructing a legal contract, outlining a job description, designing a nuclear reactor, classifying genera and species, or defining variables and their interrelations, these characteristic modern activities are informed by the need and intention to eliminate, as far as possible, all traces of linguistic ambiguity.

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The incorporation of these aspects of modern culture into Ethiopian life must inevitably produce a certain amount of strain in a culture which makes such thoroughgoing use of analogy and equivocation. Indeed, tension generated by this issue has been manifest in a variety of ways. Among the modern-educated Ethiopians, one finds demands for greater clarity in the specification of responsibilities in administration. One finds increased impatience with the devious, equivocal talk involved in joint action of any sort. One finds a slowly growing disposition to structure and fulfil expectations in literal terms, and occasional outbursts of protest against the vagueness and the conspiratorial mentality of those schooled only in the traditional way. In order to escape what they feel are the burdensome subtleties of Amharic,

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5 •
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some Ethiopians prefer to speak in English in their offices. An alternative solution is proffered by those Amharic writers and journalists who have attempted to adapt Amharic to the modern idiom, replacing the florid, intricate sentence of yore with short, simple, straightforward declarative sentences —an effort that parallels changes in other countries, such as Japan, where an intrinsically more ambiguous language than Amharic in the traditional culture has been revised to facilitate more precise modes of expression.[10]

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The opposition between the wax-and-gold complex and the rationalistic aspects of modern culture which some Ethiopians now seek to assimilate is of interest here as an instance of the more general phenomenon toward which this book as a whole is oriented. It is the dilemma posed in all the nations of Asia and Africa by the confrontation of their traditional cultures with their rather recently activated modernist aspirations. To study what is transpiring in these nations in terms of the encounter between tradition and modernity, rather than in terms of the more bland and less biased category of social change, is to focus our attention on a very important aspect of their actual situation: many members of these societies have suddenly been forced to grapple with a number of intellectual and moral dilemmas of great magnitude. The concepts of tradition and modernity are symbols to which they are more or less passionately attached. All of them have concepts symbolizing the sanctity of tradition, like the Amharic *hāymānot abāw* ("faith of the fathers"); and all have concepts symbolizing the goal of modernity, like the Amharic *selṭānē* ("civilization"). And in all these nations the conflict between the two sorts of orientation has produced acute forms of disorientation, on the one hand, and extraordinary challenges to creativity, on the other.

Adopting this perspective for the study of "transitional" societies probably opens the door more widely than usual for the intrusion of the biases of the observer. For the observer's own attitudes regarding tradition and modernity naturally affect the order of questions he will ask and the kinds of data he will examine in making his analysis of the "actual situation." They influence, for example, how much attention he pays to the weakening of norms governing traditional kinship systems and whether he views this primarily as a form of social disorganization or primarily as a precondition for more effective societal organization. Accordingly it is fitting that we introduce the analyses to be presented below with a brief statement of the philosophy which guides the author's approach to these questions. This may be done most effectively by surveying the range of positions that might be taken. In considering the encounter between traditional and modern culture patterns currently experienced in acute form in most nations of the world, one may discern, at a high level of abstraction, these five positions: (1) the Traditionalist, (2) the Modernist, (3) the Skeptic, (4) the Conciliatory, and (5) the Pragmatist.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

gest that it also reflects certain psychological and social characteristics deeply 121
rooted in the culture of the land of wax and gold. These characteristics will 128
be the subject of analysis in the two concluding chapters, which deal, respectively, with the phenomena of orality and of individualism in Amhara culture.

It should be evident from the foregoing that I have refrained from attempting a comprehensive assessment of the relationship between Amhara tradition and Ethiopia's modernization. By limiting myself to problems for which I had both prior theoretical interests and data obtained at first hand, I have sought to gain in accuracy of detail and depth of understanding what I might lose in breadth of coverage. It is hoped, moreover, that these studies may stimulate other scholars to extend this mode of analysis into such crucial areas as law, economic behavior, family life, religion, and military institutions.

On the other hand, by treating the relation between tradition and moder- 121
nity as it appears in a variety of social and cultural phenomena rather than by concentrating on a single problem, I have found it easier to articulate some of the complexities of that relation. For traditional patterns and modern aspirations are related in many ways. Oftentimes they are fully compatible, the traditional either positively supporting the modern or else presenting no conflict with it. When conflict does obtain, on the other hand, it may work toward resolution in a number of different ways. One alternative is straightforward displacement of the old by the new, through a varying combination of coercive and persuasive measures. Another alternative is through structural differentiation, as mentioned above, either through the incorporation of a novel form from outside or through processes of internal differentiation. Still another way is through a subtle transformation of traditional forms so that they continue to be meaningful but are redefined to fit the modern situation. In its most creative outcome, the conflict may involve so genuine a dialogue between traditional and modern patterns that novel values emerge and authentic variants of modern culture are developed.

Perhaps the most important insight in this connection is that while traditional patterns may stand in conflict with modernity in some respects, the same patterns may support modernity in other respects. It is to this sort of complex relationship that the Pragmatist is most likely to draw attention. Theoretically the relationship follows logically from the realization, hard won by sociologists during recent decades, that no modern society can exist without substantial reliance on patterns which must be regarded as traditional and not rational. For a concrete example of this dual relationship, let us turn once more to the phenomenon previously discussed, that of wax and gold.

We have argued that the ambiguity and equivocation symbolized by the 121
Amharic formula wax and gold stands in opposition to the semantic dimen- 195
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sion of modernization which, because of the ascendance of technology, contractual relations, and bureaucratic organization places great stress on the unambiguous use of language. Yet we may now argue that the intellectual habits associated with the wax-and-gold pattern are also valuable assets in Ethiopia's pursuit of modernity.

The experience of history has demonstrated the futility of attempting the revolutionary implementation of a clear and distinct ideal in human society. No matter how bold and sweeping the program, traditional patterns persist tenaciously. The only real alternatives are whether they are to be maintained in isolation from the modern culture, or whether traditional and modern patterns can be fused sufficiently to produce a relatively homogeneous sort of culture. As Gabriel Almond's analysis suggests, the latter alternative appears to be conducive to stability and effectiveness in modern political systems.[12] For that to take place, however, traditional symbols must be interpreted with sufficient ambiguity as to permit their fusion with modern ones. The problems of "cultural management" faced by the elites of the transitional nations can only be handled in the long run by a deliberate effort to exploit the ambiguity of traditional symbols.

Enrico Cerulli's interpretation of the Aksumite inscriptions provides an interesting precedent for such manipulation of language in the service of induced culture change in Ethiopia.[13] Cerulli has remarked on the cautious and ambiguous language with which Emperor Ēzānā recorded his conversion to Christianity in the fourth century. For example, Ēzānā refers to his new deity, not as "God of the Christians," but with the traditional pagan symbolism, "God of the Heaven" and "God of the Earth"; and he attaches to his new God the same epithet—"Who has not been conquered by enemies"—which traditionally belonged to the pagan god Mahrem. So interpreted, Ēzānā's inscription may be seen as an antique expression of that cultural disposition which centuries later the Amhara were to crystallize in the canons of *sam-ennā warq* poesy. At the same time it illustrates how the sacred symbols of a traditional culture may be used to facilitate radical innovation.

What is true at the level of national leadership is no less true for the leadership of less inclusive social systems. Wise politicians at all levels have always been aware that to gain support and preserve solidarity it is not advisable to adhere scrupulously to a single literal interpretation of any system of beliefs or code of norms. This perception has been affirmed by recent sociological investigations, which show that the most effective administrators of complex organizations are those who have a high tolerance of ambiguity and who are skilled in the use of ambiguous language for the purpose of reducing interpersonal tensions.

In addition to serving these instrumental functions, the ambiguous use of language belongs in the most modern of cultures because it is the foundation

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of a humane literary style. The rationalist emphasis on clear and distinct ideas and the puritanical emphasis on honest, straightforward, and plain talk are indispensable in running the machinery of modern society but by themselves are insufficient to represent the savor of human experience. The ascendance of unambiguous communication in American culture has resulted in the triumph of "a journalese," which is characterized, as one critic has put it, by "words of flat signification . . . and with none of the broadly ruminative phrases which have the power to inspire speculation." As he further observes:

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> The essential sterility of such a style is one of the surest signs we have that modern man is being dessicated. For the "modern" style is at once brash and timid: brash enough to break old patterns without thinking, and timid before the tremendous evocative and constructive powers immanent in language.[14]

If the aim of modern culture is a fuller life for man, it neglects its ends if strictly cognitive and instrumental considerations become so dominant that its very matrix becomes flat and dry. For modernity to be complete, the tremendous evocative powers immanent in language must also be unleashed.

The distrust of ambiguity arises in a modernizing society because those processes most obviously associated with the culture of modernity—chiefly those having to do with rational mastery over the environment and the rational co-ordination of human activities—take place in contexts where unambiguous communication is imperative. The successful development and operation of institutions in these areas do require, as we have suggested, the setting-aside of devious and equivocal habits of mind. But in those areas involving the creation of solidarity, the management of tensions, and the expression of intuition and sentiment, criteria of effectiveness would seem to permit, indeed to require considerable reliance on the uses of ambiguity. From this it follows that the wax-and-gold mentality should be regarded not only as an obstacle to Ethiopia's modernization but also, by virtue of its contribution to the continuing effectiveness of her social organization and the continuing richness of her expressive culture, as a beneficial agent.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 who trailed the Gondar camp to make spades and plowshares, spears and swords, and so improved the quality of agriculture and warfare in Shoa.

The reign of Abbīyē's son Amhāyas was long and prosperous. New lands were conquered, new settlements founded, new churches built. Amhāyas seized the strategic mountain of Ankobar, to which the mountainous plateaus of the north and the vast plains to the south were equally accessible, and set up his official residence there. The last of Shoa's princes to pay his respects to the court at Gondar, he was received there as an emissary of his father with great honors and treated more like a sovereign ally than a vassal.[27] When Amhāyas died, he left for his son Asfā Wassan what had by then become the vast principality of Shoa.

Asfā Wassan's youth was spent in a monastery in Manz, where he became proficient at composing *qenē* under the tutelage of a master from Gondar. As a ruler, he resembled many of Gondar's monarchs, preferring to spend his time in religious pursuits and the embellishment of his capital (Ankobar) than on the warpath. The actual business of warfare he entrusted to his generals, who in a string of victories subjected dozens of Amhara and Galla districts to his authority. Nevertheless, when forced to fight, he lost no time in showing who was *marīdāzmātch*. When two of his generals rebelled, he defeated them in what Cecchi called "the most terrible and bloody battle which the Shoans remember."[28]

Asfā Wassan deserved his name, which means "Expand the Border." He brought nearly all the petty states of Shoa under his rule, by alliance or by
*175 conquest. A famous exchange of couplets between Asfā Wassan and Ṭedu,
539 governor of Morat, formed the prologue to one instance of this expansion. Ṭedu, fearing the absorption of his territory, made the following rhyme:

Asfā Wassan Yefāt ṭankeraw yerrasu
Morat ṭeduāl belaw ḳamamalālasu.

O Asfā Wassan, stoutly plow Yefāt
Rather than eye what's baking in Morat.

*175 There is gold in the verb in the second line, *ṭeduāl,* which may signify not
538 only "is baking" but also "Ṭedu is there." The couplet may thus be read:
539
• 195 O Asfā Wassan, stoutly plow Yefāt
Rather than think about Ṭedu in Morat.

Upon hearing this couplet Asfā Wassan composed the following reply:

La-moſar la-qanbar yamihonaññen
Sālquarṭaw alqerem zandro ṭedun.

To get me yokes and plowbeams in this year
I will not fail to cut the juniper.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

The pun here is on the word *Ṭedu*, for the name of Asfā Wassan's adversary means "the juniper." Morat soon began to pay him tribute.[29] [175*] [538] [539] [195]

Asfā Wassan also accomplished much in the field of administration. He organized his realm into four large provinces, which were in turn subdivided into thirty-nine districts—half Amhara lands, half lands taken from the Galla. He improved the laws and introduced a more orderly system of finance. He supported agriculture and encouraged trade.

Such prosperity could scarcely be viewed with indifference by Gondar. Takla Giyorgis I (1779–84), who was trying vainly to restore imperial authority at Gondar, marched to Shoa with a large force. Asfā Wassan, not ready for an open clash with the emperor's troops, handled the situation with characteristic Shoan adroitness. He heaped gifts upon the emperor and his lieutenants. Protesting his fealty, he noted that if he had extended his own dominions, it had been at the expense of their common enemy, the Galla. Finally, he said he was willing to pay tribute to the emperor, but at the same time was ready if necessary to meet him in battle. The lords who accompanied Takla Giyorgis sympathized with the Shoan, and the emperor was not strong enough to prevent their defection.

Worried by a monkish prophecy that his life would be short, Asfā Wassan emptied the state coffers in order to subsidize churches and monasteries. He lived to fill them time and again, during a reign that lasted thirty-three years. Throughout that time he never forgot his church schooling, and frequently invented *qenē* to be repeated in the churches on holidays. But Asfā Wassan was a true son of Manz, and left the memory, as Harris noted, of "a great Nimrod and an unparalleled warrior."[30]

The next ruler, Wassan Sagad, was the offspring of a fortuitous union between Asfā Wassan and Woizero Atmotch Hono, a relative of the imperial family at Gondar and owner of vast properties in Wallo. En route from Manz to Ankobar at the end of his student days, Asfā Wassan was given hospitality at the home of this genteel woman. Not aware that the lady had in fact been brought by his father with the hope of siring offspring from her, Asfā Wassan spent the night with her. When she bore a son, and Asfā Wassan learned who she really was, he fled in terror to the monastery of Ferkutā. After sending scouts to all the monasteries in the area, Amhāyas had his son brought back and granted him pardon.

Wassan Sagad was thus kin to the highest nobility through his mother as well as his father. His noble blood, haughty disposition, and clever mind moved him to great ambitions. He convoked a large assembly of Amhara and Galla, and proclaimed himself Rās of Shoa.* Then he sent word to Rās Gugsa, power behind the throne at Gondar, that he was coming to fight, "for

* *Rās* is the highest ranking secular title in Abyssinia after *negus* ("king"). Cf. chap. v, p. 158. [554]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 The *dabtarā*'s way of life is more variable than that of the monk, his possibilities for income more diverse than those of the priest. He may be attached to a church as a chorister and receive a share of the church's revenues, as do the priests. Or he may donate his services to the church and earn his living [212] by secular employment. He may work as a scribe at the court of a king or nobleman. He may spend most of his time teaching, gaining support from some large church or monastery. Like many priests he may cultivate land. [434] In any case, he is likely to derive some income from the sale of amulets and from medical therapies. Some *dabtarā* are even said to have wandered about the country as hunters, performing magical services for clients as they go.

Dabtarā are not set off from the populace by special insignia. Some wind [292] a turban around their heads, as do many priests; but others may dress like ordinary peasants. If holding more prestigious posts they may be seen with fly-whisks or wearing a *barnos*. But they are known by the people, who fear and respect them. They are feared because of their magical powers, which [789] are believed capable of rendering bullets harmless and turning *ïnjarā* to dust. [554] They are respected because of their learning, for they are the only educated status group in traditional Amhara society. If the commoner's relatively [195] impulsive *manner* of speaking is contrasted with the quiet reserve of the nobility, his relatively simple *language* is contrasted with that of the *dabtarā*, who is noted for a studied and circumspect use of language (*qāla-dabtarā*) and for larding his Amharic with literary (i.e., Ge'ez) expressions (*yadabtarā amärïññā*).

793 554 183 In the case of the religious elite, then, status is in all cases achieved. While there is a natural tendency for sons of priests and *dabtarā* to follow their fathers' example, they arrive at the status in question only by fulfilling the same norms that are applied to the sons of laymen. These norms, however, differ among the different groups within the clergy. Investiture by an authority emanating from the seat of religious charisma, the Alexandrine Patriarchate, and the related ritual requirement of marriage with Communion, were the basis of priestly status, almost irrespective of the personal attainments of the candidate. Personal attainments were *all* that mattered, on the other [792] hand, in the case of monk and *dabtarā*, but they differed radically for the two statuses.

793 792 554 The qualifications and characters of monks and *dabtarā* are almost diametrically opposed. The monastic state is entered only by means of a sacred rite; the *dabtarā* is in no way ordained, and might even be a "defrocked" priest. The monk's life is normally given to sensual renunciation; the *dabtarā* is normally an acknowledged sensualist (as appears, for example, in the proverb *ḳa-mesā ya-talaya dabtarā / yādargāl serā* ["a *dabtarā* who is kept from lunch / will work intrigues"][48] and in stories which celebrate the *dabtarā*'s use of his knowledge for private erotic ends). In the monk the virtue

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 521 578 [195] a matter of course. In the more covert forms of expression, however, insulting is a favorite practice among Amhara. Ambiguous language and obscure allusion make possible a good deal of socially admissible, and admired, insulting. It is chiefly due to his mastery of this genre that the Amhara have come to idealize Alaqā Gabra Hānnā who, in the words of a psychologically sophis- [554] ticated Ethiopian informant, by "skillful use of 'wax and gold' has defiled everything that is sacred in Abyssinian tradition: this includes Mother, God, Emperor, and Patriarch, to say nothing of the ignorant clergy, peasantry, and slaves. Gabra Hānnā . . . is the summation of the oral aggressive trend in every Abyssinian, of which the *dabtarā* in the king's court and the singer in the drink-house are only mediocre representations."

155 598 [195] Wax and gold is, furthermore, the vehicle for the mode of expression which Erikson calls "oral retention." Just as the Amhara tends to be tight-lipped and evasive when confronted by questions he does not feel like answering, so he finds pleasure in stubbornly withholding his meaning from his audience through employing figures and allusions which no one can understand. This may be understood as a passive form of oral aggression. For the untutored, however, the active aggressive component is probably more satisfying. Most Amhara males look forward to occasions when they can insult with impunity, such as in victory after the games at Christmas or in the setting of a drink-house, where their skillfully improvised verses are repeated and sung by a minstrel. The oral sadistic spirit of this latter scene has been captured with great fidelity by a contemporary Amhara novelist. Describing the moment in a drink-house when the minstrel begins bowing his one-stringed violin and gets ready to accept verses from the crowd, he writes: "*And now every one of them prepares a bullet of verse, and gets cocked to fire veiled insults.*"[18]

155 521 [691] Two-way communication among Amhara is frequently colored by a biting and intrusive manner as well. Amharic conversation gravitates toward a highly argumentative style. Casual disagreement, or even neutral deliberation over a common problem, often engenders a kind of protracted bickering to which the Amhara have given an onomatopoetic name, "*çhīqeçhīq*." In its more institutionalized form, this argumentativeness becomes litigation, which has long been regarded as the national sport of Abyssinia.

691 182 As the primary means of distributing land-use rights and of reducing the likelihood of resort to violence in personal disputes, litigation serves functions of unmistakable importance in Amhara society. Yet the frequency and intensity with which Amhara take part in litigation suggests that it is motivated by non-rational factors in good part. Litigants have often lost many times the original value of some item under dispute in the course of pursuing litigation over it through the courts for many years. The language and colorful gestures of the court may be observed among Amhara in their homes or

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Although women and children do not have so much freedom, the adult male Amhara who chooses to go off by himself for some reason is not bothered. In at least two cases, moreover, the right to solitude is institutionalized: that of the monk or hermit, who is left to his meditation and prayers, and that of the student of *qēnē*, who spends hour after hour in some lonely place composing his verse for the day. 121* 181 571 517 [562]

Privacy is further protected among the Amhara by the shared belief that others normally do not have a just claim to information about one's person. Even such superficial matters as one's place of origin or one's family connections are not readily disclosed on a first encounter. This differs markedly from the custom of some other groups in Ethiopia, such as the Borana Galla, among whom it is the first order of business in any conversation to identify the "vital statistics" of one another. 121* 181 571 576

The machinery of wax and gold, again, exists as a useful apparatus with which to protect one's private identity and desires. In authoritarian relations, where the superior questions the subordinate with impunity, this evasive and equivocal manner of response constitutes the latter's main defense against yielding the information sought by the questioner. The superior may feel that he has a right to the information he seeks, but, if he is a good Amhara, he understands that he may never be told the whole truth. 121* 181 195 571

Thus, viewed as a whole, Amhara society does not envelop the individual in a complex network of obligations and constraints. The institutional structure of the society is relatively thin. There are few collectivities to which the individual might belong, and fewer still to which he must belong. He can, if he chooses, live at the very periphery of society—as a hermit, a monk, a *shiftā*, a minstrel, a beggar, or, if a woman, as a solitary householder. For the typical Amhara, the main obligations are to fulfil work responsibilities in behalf of the nuclear family, the parents, and to provide income and services for landlords and chieftains. Here, too, there are important degrees of freedom. An oppressive family situation may be readily relieved by divorce; an oppressive landlord or ruler may possibly be brought to justice over time, or in extreme instances fled from; and for the oppressed vassal or retainer, there is always the alternative of running away to another master or of turning to one's own devices. As a Christian, the Amhara is required to fast a good deal; but attendance at church and membership in religious fraternal associations are voluntary, and for the religious scholar there is considerable freedom of movement. 121* 181 571

It is difficult to assess the relative weight of the few but heavy constraints that do exist in Amhara social structure and of the many areas of real independence. But in view of the considerable latitude for unconstrained action that has been described in this section, it would seem valid to characterize 121* 181

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to change suddenly the whole configuration of battle. He loves to hear, amidst the crackle of rifle-fire, the huzzahs, the shouts, the challenges, the injuries, the encouragements, the allocutions, the piercing voice of the troubadours, and the rhythms of the flutes alternating with the lugubrious wailing of the trumpets; to know, finally, that on the hills, behind their drummers who beat out the charge in place, the two rival chiefs and the two armies are following him with their eyes, and that he may at one moment or another, return to his lord and, hurling before him some trophy, tell him, at the end of his war chant: "There! This is what I know how to do!"[36] 121* 156 703

A cult of the individual obtains, in addition, with respect to the man with a genius for outsmarting others. Men who have beguiled their foes with particular cleverness, in litigation or in political intrigues, are scarcely less celebrated than religious virtuosi or heroic warriors. Anecdotes about great feats of shrewdness are the beloved stuff of Abyssinian folk history and are twice told around the fireplace.*[37] Some lords have enjoyed great reputations simply for being such successful and gifted scoundrels. 121* 156 554 [538]

Cleverness in words counts as much, if not more, than clever deeds. Here we confront once more the phenomenon of wax and gold, but appearing in this context as a sort of finesse in personal relations. It is a question here of individuals made memorable because of their memorable lines, their talent for swiftly and surely employing the ambiguities of Amharic to satirize, at the right moment, some personality, or social type, or aspect of the human condition. Military or political events are often remembered more for the witty verse composed by some personage on the occasion than for their historical significance. In the present century, Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē has been one of the most outstanding personalities of this sort, as was Alaqā Gabra Hānnā in the nineteenth century. [195]

INDIVIDUALISM AND MODERNITY

The Traditional Pattern

Our inquiry thus far has involved analysis of the various ways in which self-orientation is and is not manifest among the Amhara, in lieu of the more simplistic question of whether Amhara society is individualistic or not. Building on this analysis, we may now attempt a more integrated interpretation of traditional Amhara society. 121* 156

The predominant tendency in human relations among the Amhara is a disposition to seek, not unity based on affection, understanding, and/or responsi- 121* 156 181 571

* A recent study which analyzed 1,086 stories with identifiable themes, told or written by Ethiopian children in grades two through eight, revealed that "cleverness pays" was by far the most frequently recurring theme.

197 in the neighboring Sudan, for Muslim traders even today mix more Arabic loanwords into their Amharic than do Amharas. Areas conquered by slightly islamized Galla and held from the 16th to the 19th centuries were affected to varying degrees by several Galla (Cushitic) dialects.

• 196 Semantic drift is now in the direction of the Amharic speech pattern of Shoa province, which replaces the dominance of former aristocratic Gondar, thus introducing many more Galla traits into the language. This change is concomitant with the increasing political [191] dominance and centralization of the Shoan dynasty and power. Proclamations emanate from Addis Ababa in Shoan Amharic, and schoolchildren are increasingly taught this "standard" Amharic. Old terms of other provinces are often falling into disuse.

Sometimes this process is conscious, particularly in matters of national pride. Thus, the old word "tuqul" for the primitive, round, thatched, wattle-and-mud hut, is now replaced, through influence directed from Addis Ababa, by "sar byēt" (lit. thatched house), considered more polite, for it denotes a house not yet covered by a corrugated iron roof, without the connotation of the mud walls; or, for similar reasons, by "goja" (lit. simple residence).

The use of the call "Gurage" for laborer has been expressly forbidden, because it is now considered insulting to that hardworking ethnic group, and the call "coolie" has been purposely imported. Furthermore, increased use is made in Shoan Amharic of Geez abstracts for modern purposes, such as the suffix "nät", which can be attached [178] to any Amharic verb to render it into an abstraction. Modernization, which has recently introduced such new cultural phenomena into Addis Ababa as the adult, unmarried "Miss", has, within the past decade, amended an old term to describe the new phenomenon: the old "wozäro" (married, noble lady; Mrs.) is amended to the new concept "wozarit" (adult though unmarried Miss). This term is still unknown in the rural

196 Amhara provinces, but is entering through the provincial capitals, such as Gondar, at the present time. Semantic drift can be traced along these lines.

d) Literature; Special Argots.

538 The religious character of most of the traditional Amharic-Geez literature has already been described in connection with the church.

Some of the material of liturgy finds its way into lay usage. Rhymes, "qeqem", originally composed for devotional poetry, have long found their way to chants of praise sung to warlords, feudal nobles, the king, and by extension, philosophic-sentimental poetry in general.

Folk literature, which is oral, contains numerous stories resembling Aesop's fables, in which witty repartee among or with animals is featured (Footnote 89).

538 Individual poets and other authors, if they existed in number,
522 have largely been forgotten, because of the cultural prohibition against writing down any but sacred matter, and the restricted literacy. But a fortunate exception exists in the person of an Amhara wit named Alläqa (lit. chief, an honorific title) Gäbre-Hanna, who was a contemporary of Emperor Menelik II in the late 19th century. (Footnote 90) He, too, apparently did not write down any of his many witticisms, but since he lived fairly recently, commuting between his home in Gondar and the then incipient city of Addis Ababa, he is still popularly as well as officially identified with his stories in both localities, and some of the anecdotes even tie his person to historical events.

Footnote 89 - Courlander & Leslau: The Fire on the Mountain, 1950

Footnote 90 - Messing, S. D.: Ethiopian Folktales ascribed to the 19th Century Wit, Alläqa Gäbre-Hanna. (in) Journal of American Folklore, Jan - March 1957, pp. 69-72.

201 675 196 Symbolism in commerce serves to give legal validity to a trade agreement, since bystanders thus become witnesses. When buyer and seller agree, the right hands are waved up and down, which attracts attention, then palm touches on palm (with fingers stretched away). This may or may not be reinforced by the verbal oath "Hayle Selassye yemut" (May the emperor die, if I lie). This commercial symbolism is followed especially in important transactions, such as livestock.

201 196 Symbolism in political life takes the form of rythmic handclapping, ("anchchätächchäbä"), not to be confused with Western applause. It is performed as a greeting, as acknowledgement of superordination. It does not follow public proclamation. These are greeted with respectful silence, but women may indicate actual or pretended joy with their joyshout "ellel". Amhara public opinion ("astäyäyät") sometimes signals negative reaction to official proclamations by "murmuring" in a delayed stage-whisper, and though officialdom traditionally pretends to ignore public opinion, it usually employs paid listeners who mix with the public to trace any "murmuring" to its sources. For, in the past, ignored murmurings frequently led to rebellions.

Anger, whether silent or accompanying verbal battles, is signalled by wide opening of the eyes ("afättätä"), or a furious, intent stare ("täfättätä").

201 Directional signs are made by moving eyelids and eyelashes, particularly by nobles or persons imitating their subtle ways. To communicate "get rid of this person", I want to talk to you alone", the eyelids wink up and down ("taqqäsä"); to signal "come out of the hut, I want to talk to you outside", the pupils and eyelashes work in the direction of the door. Men may give such signals as frequently as women.

201 177 The signal of expressing desire to enter consists of knocking with the entire fist ("koräkkomä" - onomatopoetic). Finger-knocking

11: Levine MP5 Amhara MP5

196

[For information on the "wax and gold" poetic formula, see categories 19, 195 and 538.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

5 / *Tradition and Modernization*

THE GENIUS OF AMHARA CULTURE

The Amhara as a whole are not much given to aesthetic concerns. They are 181
practical-minded peasants, austere religionists, and spirited warriors. Their [517]
interests and achievements as a nation are chiefly in the spheres of military
activity and government. And yet, if we seek some theme with which to gain 181
an entree into the spirit of their society and culture, we will do well to attend 538
to the sphere of poetry. For it is a poetic phenomenon—that represented by
the title of this book—which constitutes both a key to the genius of Amhara
culture and a highly distinctive Amhara contribution to Ethiopian culture.

Sam-ennā warq ("wax and gold") is the formula used by the Amhara to 538
symbolize their favorite form of verse. It is a form built of two semantic
layers. The apparent, figurative meaning of the words is called "wax"; their [196]
more or less hidden actual significance is the "gold."

In its generic sense, the expression *sam-ennā warq* refers to a number of
poetic figures which embody this twofold meaning. The use of such figures
distinguishes the Amhara equivalent of true poetry from ordinary verse, in
which everyday language is merely embellished with rhyme and rhythm. In [197]
the genre known as *qenē,* the original and more elegant kind of *sam-ennā*
warq poetry, the lines are composed in Ge'ez and depend primarily on re-
ligious symbolism. But *sam-ennā warq* constructions also appear in some
types of secular verse in the vernacular Amharic and, indeed, at times inform
Amharic conversation.

Masters of the art of *qenē* composition have analyzed these poetic figures 538
into about a dozen different types.[4] *Sam-ennā warq* in its more specific sense 19
refers to one of these types of figures—the prototype of them all. It consists
of an explicit comparison in which the subjects being compared—the wax
and gold—are presented in apposition, while their predicates are rendered
jointly by a single verb which carries both a wax and a gold meaning. (This [325]
terminology is derived from the work of the goldsmith, who constructs a clay
mold around a form created in wax and then, draining the wax, pours the
molten gold into that form.) So, for example, if the poet's aim is to praise a
hero like Emperor Menelik, he creates a wax model, like "the lion," in terms
of whose actions the gold, Menelik, is depicted: "The lion Menelik crushed
the wolf Italy."[5]

Keeping this dual imagery consistent throughout the stanza is a primary
rule of wax-and-gold composition. A poet who mixes his metaphors is some-
times rebuked with the epithet "hermaphrodite." The following example
presents an Amharic couplet which properly embodies the *sam-ennā warq* [539]
figure:

Etsa balas balto addäm kanfareshe
Madhänē alam lebē tasaqala-leshe.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

demonstrate some affiliation with the Solomonic line; the marriage of one of these into a local dynasty contributed an added buttress to its traditionalist claims. The other was what seems to be a still more deeply rooted disposition for decentralized hegemony based on the ancient character of the society. For, as Cerulli has recently suggested, the origins of the Ethiopian state were such as to lay the foundation for a persisting order of feudalism. The movement of South Arabs to the Eritrean coast and highlands took place, not through the conquest of an indigenous population by a united invader, as in the Norman Conquest of England, but by the intermittent emigration and settlement of distinct tribes from South Arabia into various parts of the African territory. Thus, Cerulli concludes, we see in Ethiopia "a feudalism expanded from the roots: a number of principalities or peoples which, independent on African land after their emigration, have finally been regrouped in a higher political unity, yet still conserving in the feudal system thus constituted part of their autonomy and their individuality."[37] If this is so, it would constitute an added traditional element in the sense of legitimacy of local dynastic interests.

All this suggests that we must look to two sources for the prestige of the *makuānnent*—that recruitment into the secular elite came from "below" as well as from "above." These two bases of noble status are indicated by the etymology of two Amharic words commonly applied to the local nobility, *shum* and *bālābbāt*. *Shum* (or *seyum*) comes from a root which means to invest with high position. The emperor, as we have seen, is *seyuma egziābhēr* ("invested by God") and he in turn is the source of authority for investing other dignitaries. The status associated with the word *shum* is therefore based on the act of investiture by a sovereign. *Bālābbāt*, on the other hand, has the literal meaning, "one who has a father"; in other words, one who has a significant father, a notable ancestry. This status refers to claims to deference which are based on birth.

Claims based on birth, moreover, were closely tied to the ownership of land and supported by local territorial allegiances. This appears most strikingly in the office of *çhĭqā shum*, the lowest level official, who is appointed, to be sure, but by the local people themselves from a small number of *bālābbāt* whose eligibility for the office rests on their inheritance of rights to certain specified pieces of land. Other local offices, like *malkañña* and *meslanē*, were normally given by regional governors to *bālābbāt* indigenous to the area. The sacred sentiment of fealty to a monarch, whose charisma rested both on membership in a hallowed dynasty and the hallowed act of coronation, thus competed in Abyssinian souls with deeply felt sentiments of attachment to members of noted families who symbolized local rights and traditions. Abyssinian political structure at any given time was determined by the relative strength of the forces supported by these two principles of legitimacy.

Neither principle was ever realized in pure form. No matter how great his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Amharic proverb, and even the Emperor when visiting a school expects students to remain seated if they are at the dining table when he arrives. 155 261 [264]

Some indication of the comparative significance of this concern about eating and drinking in the Amhara psyche is afforded by a recent cross-cultural investigation of dreams. Obtained from samples of young male respondents in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the United States, the dreams were evaluated with respect to the presence or absence of themes of "manifest orality": scenes of someone desiring, looking for, or consuming food or drink. The proportion of Ethiopian respondents (mostly Orthodox Amhara from the Gondar area) who revealed manifest orality in their dreams was found to be *64 per cent*. By contrast, the proportion of those in a sample of non-Muslim Nigerians whose dreams showed manifest orality was 38 per cent, and that in the sample of Americans was only 22 per cent.[11]

The Amhara custom of giving *gurshā* plays up the erotic component of eating. *Gurshā* means "mouthful" and, as already noted, refers to a wad of food which one places in another's mouth, usually as a gesture of affection. *Gurshā* are exchanged between husband and wife and among relatives and friends. They are often given to children, especially in families of higher status, and to favored servants and retainers as well. The *gurshā* is of such meaning in Amhara experience that it is referred to in a number of Amharic idioms. First of all it means a present or a tip—literally, *pourmanger*. It also refers to the charge of a gun: the gun is a beloved object, and a *gurshā* is what one places in its mouth. In contemporary usage, it refers to flashlight batteries. 155 261 264 [196]

In connection with love and many other subjects, a good deal of the imagery of Amharic verse relates in one way or another to eating and drinking. The following sample of proverbs and couplets may convey some of the flavor of this phenomenon: 261 271 155 539

*Ṭajj** has no specks; a poor man has no friends.

• • •

[Use] proverbs in conversation; [drink] *ṭajj* in a carafe.

• • •

Hand and fly-whisk; mouth and *ïnjarā*† [go together].

• • •

No matter how much one plows, nothing tastes so good as *goman*.‡

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* *Ṭajj*, it may be remembered, is the Ethiopian wine made of honey. [273]

† *Ïnjarā* is the staple pancake. [262]

‡ *Goman* is a kind of cabbage plant that requires no plow cultivation. [244]

*753 causes a secondary ailment by lacerating the victim's heart, equally often no specific pathogenic mechanism is specified for the prodrome.

TAXONOMY AND ETIOLOGY

*753 A "disease name", to use Frake's definition, is a
*192 minimal, meaningful answer to the question, "What is the
• 196 name of the illness?", in Amharic, "Baǰiyta simmu min
[121] yibbaalaal?". If none of the linguistic components of a description of an illness can by itself describe that ailment (baǰiyta), then the entire description is a disease name, and labels a single diagnositc category. Not all episodes of illness can be diagnosed by a single disease name, of course, since distinguishable ailments may co-occur, or one may be a prodrome of another (Frake 1961:126).

Disease names thus differ from designations of kinds of symptoms, although the names of certain symtpoms are also used to denote specific ailments. For example, "bird" refers to "chills", but "yibird baǰiyta" (lit., "the chill disease") refers specifically to "malaria". The same is generally true regarding the use of the names of pathogenic agents. For example, the literal meaning of "yibariya baǰiyta" is the "ganel'a disease" ("bariya", meaning slave, is often used as a euphemism for "ganel");

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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in practice, it is used to denote only "epilepsy", one of the several ailments with which the ganel is associated.

Each disease name has, as its diagnostic criteria, perceptible symptoms and a particular etiological context. Etiological information includes the agents, acts, environmental circumstances, substances, and physiological processes which explain the onset of the symptoms. Two disease names contrast if only one is said to diagnose correctly a particular set of symptoms in a specific etiological context. Two contrasting disease names can, then, refer to the same set of symptoms, if at the same time each denotes a different etiological context. For example, the ailments referred to as "migaña" and "kureyña", are characterized by a common set of symptoms (sustained, acute pain in the lower abdomen). The ailments are distinguished etiologically, however, according to different causal agents (non-zar versus zar) and environmental circumstances.

Sometimes, more than one disease name is considered equally appropriate for the same set of symptoms in the same etiological context. Frake (1961:117) suggests that two explanations are possible for this. First, the disease names may be referential synonyms, and mutually inclusive. For example, they may be dialect variants or variants appropriate to different kinds of

discourse. Thus, leprosy is properly referred to as "kontina". This term is rarely used by many women, however; to do so, they believe, exposes the speaker to leprosy in some unknown way. Instead, the ailment is referred to as "yimimat basiyta" ("the disease that takes the skin off").

The second possibility is that the terms are located at different levels of a taxonomic hierarchy. Along the vertical dimension, the Amhara disease-name taxonomy employs only three successive levels of specificity. At the most general level, all human disease names are subsumed by the term "basiyta". At the next level, ailments are divided into "serious" and "non-serious" varieties. Serious ("kobode": "weighty", or "hayleña": "powerful") diseases includes those which are potentially mortal, or severely and usually permanently debilitating, or grossly disfiguring. The third taxonomic level is that of greatest specificity, at which ninety-two disease names were recorded. A minor exception at this level is the use, by some informants, of the term "fantata" to subsume three, contrasting named poxes.

In terms of linguistic criteria, then, the Amhara disease-name taxonomy is relatively simple. When observed from a therapeutic perspective, however, an additional level of discrimination, based on etiological criteria, can be discerned.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

CHAPTER TWO

THE SECULAR HEALERS: HEALER AND SICKMAN

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The Amhara use a set of twenty-one, non-redundant names to categorize traditional practitioners of disease prophylaxis, diagnosis, and treatment. These names are listed in table 2. The most general term employed is "Habeša hakiym" ("Abyssinian healer"), and is used to designate traditional curers as a class by distinguishing them from practitioners working in Western techniques---European physicians, Ethiopian health officers, and local injectionists. The Habeša hakiyms can be sorted into three mutually exclusive categories, each defined analytically, according to shared professional titles.

Category 1. Physical manipulation of the sickman's person is dominant, and the employment of materia medica is either absent or subordinated to these physical manipulations. These healing powers are compatible with the first and second therapeutic strategies discussed in Chapter One. Any therapist of this category, with the exception of the awalaj (midwife), can be referred to as "wogeyša". The exclusion of the midwife is probably a sexual one, since practitioners known as wogeyša are almost invariably male, while the awalaj is always a woman. Operationally, healers of the first category are distinguished from one another by their different organ do-

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[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 29]

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Begemder

TABLE 2

AMHARA PRACTITIONER TITLES

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Practitioner Category	Practitioner Title		
3	Balazar	Awakiy	Tonkway
	Debtera-Ganel Gelaa		
	Debtera-Meshav Gelac (Tinis̃ Debtera)		
	Atmakiy		
2	Medhaniyt Korad		Wogeyza[2]
	Yi_Medhaniyt Awakiy		
	Yi_Med. Korac / Yi_Med. Kabiy / Yi_Kitab Kitabiy		
	Yi_Medhaniyt Ateci		
	Yi_Medhaniyt Seci		
1	Tagañ	Wogeyza[1]	
	Ankar Korac		
	Yiters Medhaniyt Awlakiy		
	Awalaj		
	Agamiy		
	Tokwariy		

*192 *756 *759 mains---bone and jimat, teeth and jaws, tonsils and uvula, womb and associated organs.

*192 *196 Category 2. Therapeutic success relies on the use of medicaments; practitioners of this category utilize the third therapeutic strategy. Although no single term properly distinguishes these therapists from other categories of practitioners, they are, as a class, described by a common set of professional titles. Each title consists of three terms. The first indicates the name of the ailment for which the practitioner owns a therapy. Unlike other categories of practitioners, professional titles among these therapists are specific for single named ailments, rather than for a range of ailments. The second term is always the word "medhaniyt" ("medicament"). The maker of therapeutic amulets is the single exception to this (e.g., yidemaketir kitab kitabiy, "amulet maker for post-partum bleeding"). The final term indicates the format and "completeness" of the herbal therapy practiced. Thus, the "yianfula medhaniyt awakiy" is the "medicine expert for the ailment known as anfula".

[776] Category 3. Therapeutic success derives from the practitioner's intimacy with spirit beings (ganel, zar, or saint of the Church) and his familiarity with magic (asmat); he relies upon the fourth therapeutic strategy. *[793] The term "tonkway" is sometimes used to denote the most prominant practitioners of this category, the debtera-

*756 and balazar-healers, but semantically that term tends
*759 to emphasize the practitioner's ability as a seer rather
*192 than as a therapist. Moreover, the atmakiy (anneinter)
• 196 is never referred to as "tonkway", even though his powers are also derived from supernaturals. When, in conversation, it is necessary to distinguish this category of practitioner (including the atmakiy) from the "secular healer" (categories 1 and 2), the title 'wogeyša' is extended to subsume all of the latter as a class.

Table three outlines the semantic distribution of Amhara practitioner titles.

*756 It is the intention of this chapter to describe
*759 curerers of the first and second categories, from the
[128] perspective of the technical requirements of their respective therapeutic strategies. The chapter also considers two additional healers, the cupper (agamiy) and the tattooist (tokwariy). Like the practitioners of the first and second categories, both are "secular" healers, since their therapeutic strategies and the sources of their curing powers clearly exclude them from the third practitioner category (i.e., healers with supernaturally
[196] derived powers). However, neither cupper nor tattooist fits neatly, semantically or therapeutically, into one of the secular categories, but will be shown to share characteristics of both.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

referred to as "Coptic", although the Abyssinian Copts prefer the term "Towado" meaning Orthodox. The term Copt is derived from the Greek term for "Egyptian." Since the Coptic Metropolitan of Alexandria, Egypt, was also head of the Abyssinian Church and appointed all Abyssinian archbishops until recent years of the reign of the present Emperor, there is some justification for the use of the term Coptic. It will be so used in this study, to indicate the "Abyssinian Church of Ethiopia".

In books on Ethiopia, one often finds the term "Amhara" used in a broad sense as synonymous with Abyssinian Coptic Christian. Although the Amhara in their ethnocentrism also use it in this sense, it is not good usage in the author's opinion. The Tigrinya-speaking peoples of the province of Tigre are also good "Copts", in religious belief and observance; however, they differ from the Amhara in many phases of culture, and, according to native opinion, in personality". Therefore, the term Amhara is used in this study only for the Amharic-speaking, Coptic population of the provinces of Begemdir(Gondar), Gojjam, and parts of Shoa. Formerly, all three provinces were included in a territorial unit called Amhara; hence the name.

B. Linguistic Definitions

There are three major linguistic families in Ethiopia: Cushitic, Semitic and Nilotic. Cushitic is predominant, roughly speaking, in the southern half of modern Ethiopia, including Galla, Somali, Sidamo, Agau, etc. Nilotic languages predominate along the northern and western escarp-

197 ment leading to the Sudan, including Baria (the term for slave in Amharic), Kunama, etc. Semitic languages spoken in Ethiopia (mainly in the northern half of the country), are referred to by linguists as "Ethiopic", and are derived from the Geez language which entered Ethiopia in the first half of the first millenium B.C.

Geez ceased to be a spoken language in the 14th century A.D., though it survives in the Abyssinian Coptic liturgy to this day, and was the language of religious, historical and grammatical documents almost until the present generation.

Of the daughter-languages of Geez, Tigrē, spoken in Northern Eritrea, remains the closest to the mother tongue. Its literature is recent, much of it due to the efforts of Swedish missionaries since the 19th century. The same can be said of the literature of the nearest linguistic relative, Tigrinya, spoken in southern Eritrea and in the Ethiopian province of Tigre. These linguistic and territorial names should not be confused.

Amharic, the present national language of Ethiopia, has
191 been important since the 14th century A.D. when the earliest
197 available Amharic document, "Songs of the Kings," was written.
538 The first scientific grammar of Amharic was written in the 17th century by a European scholar, Ludolf. Not until the 20th century has literature in Amharic slowly developed. Amharic is partly derived from Geez, but contains a strong substratum of Cushitic (Leslau, 1945 a). Amharic predominates on the plateau of northwest-central Ethiopia.

191 Other spoken languages partly derived from Geez are now
197 spoken only by small groups of the population, and are disap-

pearing more or less rapidly, mostly in favor of Amharic. 6 191
They include Argobba, Adare or Hareri, Gurage, Gafat. 197

2. The Land.

A. Geographical Location.

The Empire of Ethiopia(south of Eritrea) is located in 131
the northeastern part of Africa, roughly between 5° and 15° north latitude, and 33° -43° east longitude. Prior to the federation of Eritrea in 1952, which added about 45,000 sq. miles and brought access to the Red Sea, Ethiopia had 350,000 sq. miles of landlocked territory. It was roughly the size of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

It is a mountainous kingdom, separated from the Red Sea 133
and the Gulf of Aden on the northeast and the Indian Ocean on the southeast by hot lowland deserts; a steep escarpment borders all along the western area down to the hot lowland of the Sudan. This mountain fortress type of landscape has enabled the plateau people to retain their independence against would-be invaders.

Today the political territory of Ethiopia is divided into 631
12 administrative provinces (Taqlai Gezat), each under a Governor-General appointed by the Emperor. Each province is subdivided into several(usually six) sub-provinces (Awrajja Gezat), ruled by a governor similarly appointed.

Three of the 12 provinces are Amharic-speaking; the 191
national language has recently become the lingua franca for the larger centers of population in the other provinces also.

B. Climate, Climatic Zones, and Topography. 132

Climate and topography are closely inter-related in

212 Communication among the Amhara can be said to be formal on all
195 matters of culture focus. Writing is regarded by the Amhara as relegated to formal use, and schoolboys were penalized for experimenting with it informally. Language, however, being oral and thus less controllable, compensates for this; and artistic expression and experimentation make free and often playful and inventive use of the lexical, grammatical, and syntactical raw material of language.

A. The Raw Material of the Amharic Language Put to Use.

a) Historical Development

197 Much of the lexical matter and most of the grammar of the Amharic language, also the basis of the alphabet that it uses, are derived from Geez, one of the South Arabian languages of about 500 B.C. The term "lisana Geez" the language of the Geez, has, among Abyssinians, the connotation of "language of the free men", i.e. conquerors. Linguistic scholars have raised the question whether one single language, Geez, was imported from Southern Arabia about that time, or whether different, possibly related, languages came from there via separate channels at different times. The latter theory seems more likely, and Amharic may owe the Semitic part of its character to a sister language of Geez, rather than to Geez itself (footnote 85). But the Amhara firmly believe in the derivation from Geez itself - and directly.

197 Whether directly or indirectly derived originally, certain it is
192 that for many centuries and quite consciously even today, the Amhara have been borrowing freely and proudly from the Geez language any term useful particularly to express abstract concepts, in which Amharic is

Footnote 85 - Theory of Professor Marcel Cohen, quoted by Ieslaus Archaic Features in South Ethiopia. (See Bibliography).

197 192 sometimes poor, but Geez very rich. In fact, linguistic purists among modern-nationalistic educated Amharas, urge rejection of foreign loan-words in favor of continued and even revived borrowing from Geez cognates.

212 The Amharic script, largely derived from ancient Sabean characters, is, unlike other Semitic scripts, written from left to right. The characters are syllabic, based on 26 consonants from Geez, plus 4 labiovelar diphthongs, plus 7 additional consonants added in Amharic and called "yäärab fidäl" (lit. the Arabic alphabet). These 37 consonants in Amharic are always written in syllabic form, combined with one of 7 vowel orders, so that students must learn a syllabic alphabet of 259 characters. There are also 20 symbols for numerals, which are still taught, and even printed in the modern press, and not replaced by the simpler Arabic numerals; though the latter have been recently taught. These characters and numerals are now printed on a sheet that also includes the Gospel of St. John, in Geez, and a photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie; pasted on a cardboard, this sheet is now carried to school by the young students.

197 192 Amharic also derives a considerable part of its raw material from Cushitic languages spoken in Ethiopia prior to (and after) the Semitic colonization, perhaps more so than any other Abyssinian language (footnote 86). From these Cushitic sources Amharic obtains part of its vocabulary (especially most of its terms relating to concrete matters),

Footnote 86 - Leslau: Southeast Semitic
Leslau: Observations on Gurage Documents
Leslau: Review of Cohen's Nouvelles Etudes d'Ethiopien Meridional
Cohen, M.: Traité de la Langue Amharique
Houghton: Aspects of Amharic

197 most of its syntax, morphology (such as the "frequentative"), phonology
192 such as considerable onomatopoetry and monosyllabic words (though some of these may have been carried in Geez also). The result of this linguistic blend is a number of expressive choices somewhat analogous to the choice in English between Anglo-Saxon cognates and Latin-French cognates: e.g. the word "sun" can be expressed as "sahay" (from Geez) or "jembar" (from Cushitic). Amhara people use these alternates in many ways: to emphasize distinction between "sacred" and "profane", between the philosophic and the prosaic.

578 For, to the mind of the Amhara, Geez and its derivatives are
197 spiritually connected with the church liturgy, with philosophy. Even
186 in the present situation of change, feudal conservatives and the church have banded together most strongly against the suggested simplification of the Amharic alphabet (which is recommended for quicker learning, expecially by illiterate adults of other ethnic groups in Ethiopia; and for devising typewriters). This traditional, religious conservatism is now being reinforced by the new and incipient group of nationalistic, linguistic purists, who bemoan the introduction of more and more European cognates. But the latter group is still small and does not have nearly the political power of the old-style religious conservatives.

197 Finally, the often-repeated qualification with regard to the effect of regional differences applies to linguistic matters also. In different regions, derivations from different Cushitic languages affect all phases of the language, particularly the lexical.

192 b) Lexical, Grammatical and Syntactical Phases.

The Amharic vocabulary is rich in onomatopoetic terms which have been formalized:

193 (E.g. instead of "the man who came", Amharic constructs the sentence "who came the man".)

212 Orthography shows considerable ambivalence of choice, perhaps due to the later influences of Arabic and to the Amharic additions to the Geez alphabet. Thus, interchanges of "q" and "g", "t" and "t", "m" and "n" are common among consonants; "ä" and "i"; "e" and "e" and "a" somewhat less commonly exchanged among vowels. This confuses the root, vowel and tense indications for the foreigner, and even Amharic-speakers when discussing a matter not commonly discussed, may misunderstand each other because of these interchanges, especially if they come from different regions.

c) Regional Variations.

●197 Part of the wide variety of regional linguistic differences among Amharic-speakers is due to the long, conservative, provincial semi-isolation. Some of this is not much different from provincialisms in rural Europe; so that the pronounciation of even common words such as "aydollïm" (he isn't here) identifies the Amhara from Shoa, "aydällïm" from Begemdir province (Gondar). But a much greater part of the regional differences is due to the fact that for many centuries, perhaps millenia, the Amharic speakers of Begemdir (Gondar) and Gojjam provinces have been exposed to "old-Cushitic" languages such as Agau, while the Amhara of Shoa province has been exposed to "new-Cushitic" languages such as Galla.

The Abyssinian of Tigre province, whose "Tigre" or "Tigrinya" language may be a closer derivative of Geez than Amharic, has long maintained Semitic ties through continued influence of developing Arabic from Yemen and the Red Sea, and has in turn affected the inland Amharic of Semyen-Begemdir, whose people shared Abyssinian religion and culture. Western Amharas, e.g. in Gojjam province, but also in the trading center of Gondar, have been affected by vulgate Arabic spoken

197 in the neighboring Sudan, for Muslim traders even today mix more Arabic loanwords into their Amharic than do Amharas. Areas conquered by slightly islamized Galla and held from the 16th to the 19th centuries were affected to varying degrees by several Galla (Cushitic) dialects.

196 Semantic drift is now in the direction of the Amharic speech pattern of Shoa province, which replaces the dominance of former aristocratic Gondar, thus introducing many more Galla traits into the language. This change is concomitant with the increasing political [191] dominance and centralization of the Shoan dynasty and power. Proclamations emanate from Addis Ababa in Shoan Amharic, and schoolchildren are increasingly taught this "standard" Amharic. Old terms of other provinces are often falling into disuse.

Sometimes this process is conscious, particularly in matters of national pride. Thus, the old word "tuqul" for the primitive, round, thatched, wattle-and-mud hut, is now replaced, through influence directed from Addis Ababa, by "sar byēt" (lit. thatched house), considered more polite, for it denotes a house not yet covered by a corrugated iron roof, without the connotation of the mud walls; or, for similar reasons, by "goja" (lit. simple residence).

The use of the call "Gurage" for laborer has been expressly forbidden, because it is now considered insulting to that hardworking ethnic group, and the call "coolie" has been purposely imported. Furthermore, increased use is made in Shoan Amharic of Geez abstracts for modern purposes, such as the suffix "nït", which can be attached [178] to any Amharic verb to render it into an abstraction. Modernization, which has recently introduced such new cultural phenomena into Addis Ababa as the adult, unmarried "Miss", has, within the past decade, amended an old term to describe the new phenomenon: the old "woyzäro" (married, noble lady; Mrs.) is amended to the new concept "woyzarit" (adult though unmarried Miss). This term is still unknown in the rural

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 212 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather [516] delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. [145] Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the [302] women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920) 1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-57 have been omitted from the files,- Analyst]

CHAPTER IV

SOME OF THEIR HABITS AND CUSTOMS

197 REFERENCE has already been made to the number of languages spoken in the country. Of these, the principal is Amharic, and of the Semitic languages of the world it is, according to Mr Armbruster, spoken by a greater number of people than any other, with the 212 exception of Arabic. Its difficulty may be gauged by the fact that there are over two hundred letters in the alphabet, and consequently the number of guides to the language guaranteed to teach it in half a dozen lessons by correspondence is limited.

I am bound to say, however, in mitigation of this apparently insurmountable barrier to learning Amharic, that these characters represent syllables and not letters, and are variations of about thirty-seven root characters.

197 The next most important language is Galla, a Hamitic tongue which is spoken and understood by all the different branches of Galla throughout the various districts inhabited by them; in addition Tigré is spoken in Eritrea, and Tigréin in the province of Tigré; both of these are Semitic languages, as is also the ancient Geze or Geuze tongue, which is to the Abyssinians much as Latin was to the English people in the Middle Ages.

805 But if their language is difficult their calendar is simpler than ours, for instead of having months of differing lengths, they divide the year into twelve

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
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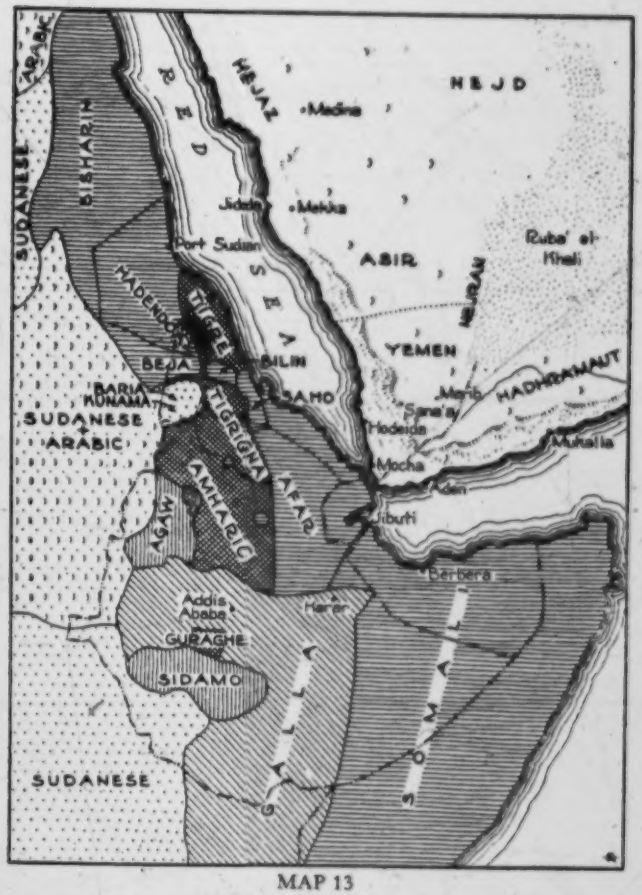

MAP 13

LINGUISTIC MAP OF THE EAST AFRICAN HAMITIC AREA

The Cushitic languages of East Africa and of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan are shown in parallel line representation. The Semitic languages of this region which are derived from Geez are designated by cross-hatching. It should be noted that Tigrigna is the language of Tigré Kingdom; the Tigré language, however, is a related coastal speech. Sudanese Negro languages are shown by means of large dots, Arabic by means of vertical crescents. (Adapted from Meillet and Cohen, *Les Langues du Monde*.)

The living inhabitants of the Abyssinia-Somaliland-Eritrea area may be divided into the following groups:

(1) *The Highland Cushites:* Descendants of the pre-Semitic agricultural population of the northern Ethiopian plateau, speaking early Cushitic dialects. The most numerous and best known of this scattered group are the Agaus, peasants and agricultural serfs living mostly in the kingdom of Gojjam, in the Lake Tsana country.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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[P.ii]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

related to Ge'ez, the ancient and liturgical language of Ethiopia, much as Italian is related to Latin.[1] It was in Tigre country that, during the first seven centuries A.D., the kingdom of Aksum reached heights of civilization never again attained in Ethiopia's history. Because of the antiquity of their region and the glory of their past, the Tigre are to some extent the cultural aristocrats of Ethiopia.

The Amhara inhabit vast areas of what are today the provinces of Bagemder, Gojjam, Wallo, and Shoa. Their language, Amharic, is the official language of Ethiopia.* Since the beginning of what is called the restored Solomonid Dynasty (1270), all but one of the emperors of Ethiopia have been Amhara.† The exception was a Tigre, Emperor Yohännes IV (1872–89), though he sojourned for many years at Dabra Tābor in Amhara country, and Amharic was commonly spoken at his court.

The differences between Amhara and Tigre culture have not yet been studied systematically. Even so, one can say that their differences are not nearly so great as what the two groups have in common. Language forms the chief difference. Like Ge'ez and Tigrinya, Amharic is a Semitic language, ultimately descended from old South Arabic, but Amharic has been molded to a greater degree by indigenous Cushitic tongues. Other differences relate to minor variations in custom, greater communal orientation in some Tigre areas, and differences in temperament. But the two groups share the legacy of Aksum, the Ethiopic alphabet, Ge'ez literature, Monophysite Christianity, similar political and social institutions, and the same style of life. One would be justified in treating their traditional Abyssinian culture as a unity, as virtually all authors have done in the past.

In this book, however, I have chosen to focus on Amhara culture as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia. This has been done, first of all, because of my limited competence to deal with Tigre materials, since I am neither familiar with Tigrinya nor fortunate enough to have done field work in Tigre areas. But a less fortuitous reason is that any serious account of contemporary Ethiopia must begin with the fact of Amhara dominance. With respect to numbers, true, the Amhara are in a minority: Amhara probably comprise no more than one-quarter of Ethiopia's total population (now estimated at around twenty-two million). Their dominance is to be measured, rather, in political and cultural terms. On the political side it is manifest in the perpetuation of the Amhara monarchy and the preponderance of Amhara in top political offices. On the cultural side it appears in the spread of Amhara customs throughout the empire by officials, soldiers, settlers, and teachers, and in

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* English is the second official language.

† A number of Amhara emperors since the mid-eighteenth century were partly of Galla stock, however.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

5 / *Tradition and Modernization*

THE GENIUS OF AMHARA CULTURE

The Amhara as a whole are not much given to aesthetic concerns. They are 181
practical-minded peasants, austere religionists, and spirited warriors. Their [517]
interests and achievements as a nation are chiefly in the spheres of military
activity and government. And yet, if we seek some theme with which to gain 181
an entree into the spirit of their society and culture, we will do well to attend 538
to the sphere of poetry. For it is a poetic phenomenon—that represented by
the title of this book—which constitutes both a key to the genius of Amhara
culture and a highly distinctive Amhara contribution to Ethiopian culture.

Sam-ennā warq ("wax and gold") is the formula used by the Amhara to 538
symbolize their favorite form of verse. It is a form built of two semantic
layers. The apparent, figurative meaning of the words is called "wax"; their [196]
more or less hidden actual significance is the "gold."

In its generic sense, the expression *sam-ennā warq* refers to a number of
poetic figures which embody this twofold meaning. The use of such figures
distinguishes the Amhara equivalent of true poetry from ordinary verse, in
which everyday language is merely embellished with rhyme and rhythm. In [197]
the genre known as *qenē*, the original and more elegant kind of *sam-ennā*
warq poetry, the lines are composed in Ge'ez and depend primarily on re-
ligious symbolism. But *sam-ennā warq* constructions also appear in some
types of secular verse in the vernacular Amharic and, indeed, at times inform
Amharic conversation.

Masters of the art of *qenē* composition have analyzed these poetic figures 538
into about a dozen different types.[4] *Sam-ennā warq* in its more specific sense 19
refers to one of these types of figures—the prototype of them all. It consists
of an explicit comparison in which the subjects being compared—the wax
and gold—are presented in apposition, while their predicates are rendered
jointly by a single verb which carries both a wax and a gold meaning. (This [325]
terminology is derived from the work of the goldsmith, who constructs a clay
mold around a form created in wax and then, draining the wax, pours the
molten gold into that form.) So, for example, if the poet's aim is to praise a
hero like Emperor Menelik, he creates a wax model, like "the lion," in terms
of whose actions the gold, Menelik, is depicted: "The lion Menelik crushed
the wolf Italy."[5]

Keeping this dual imagery consistent throughout the stanza is a primary
rule of wax-and-gold composition. A poet who mixes his metaphors is some-
times rebuked with the epithet "hermaphrodite." The following example
presents an Amharic couplet which properly embodies the *sam-ennā warq* [539]
figure:

Etsa balas balto addām kanfareshe
Madhānē alam lebē tasaqala-leshe.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

TRADITION AND MODERNITY

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Insofar as Ethiopia is committed to the pursuit of modernity, she cannot fail to be embarrassed to some extent by the wax-and-gold complex. For nothing could be more at odds with the ethos of modernization, if not with its actuality, than a cult of ambiguity.[9]

It is true, of course, that cultural formations analogous to wax and gold in their exploitation of ambiguity have been prominent throughout the history of the West, not to mention the whole non-Western world. The Christian tradition has always made much of parables and allegories. The classical teaching of rhetoric, following Cicero, placed great stress on the use of paradox; and a major philosophical tradition, stretching from Plato to Marx, has been founded on a logic which assumes that reality can be known only by combining opposite concepts and that any single term is subject to dual interpretation. The flowering of symbolist literature, to take a more recent example, created an audience as partial to subtle allusion and *double-entendre* as the most obscurantist proponent of *weṣṭa wayrä*.

Yet there can be little doubt that the pace-setting spirit of modern Western culture rests on a commitment to unambiguous communication. It is predicated on the proposition that A must be A or not be A. It was no accident that one of the more characteristic philosophical movements of the present century, logical positivism, should have had as its primary motif the desire to maximize precision in the use of language. For the decisive institutions of the modern world—technologies based on logico-experimental science, rational legal systems, and bureaucratic organizations in government, commerce, and industry—depend intimately on the unambiguous definition of terms and the utmost clarity of expression. Whether the task be one of constructing a legal contract, outlining a job description, designing a nuclear reactor, classifying genera and species, or defining variables and their interrelations, these characteristic modern activities are informed by the need and intention to eliminate, as far as possible, all traces of linguistic ambiguity.

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The incorporation of these aspects of modern culture into Ethiopian life must inevitably produce a certain amount of strain in a culture which makes such thoroughgoing use of analogy and equivocation. Indeed, tension generated by this issue has been manifest in a variety of ways. Among the modern-educated Ethiopians, one finds demands for greater clarity in the specification of responsibilities in administration. One finds increased impatience with the devious, equivocal talk involved in joint action of any sort. One finds a slowly growing disposition to structure and fulfil expectations in literal terms, and occasional outbursts of protest against the vagueness and the conspiratorial mentality of those schooled only in the traditional way. In order to escape what they feel are the burdensome subtleties of Amharic,

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5 •
Ethiopia MP1

some Ethiopians prefer to speak in English in their offices. An alternative solution is proffered by those Amharic writers and journalists who have attempted to adapt Amharic to the modern idiom, replacing the florid, intricate sentence of yore with short, simple, straightforward declarative sentences —an effort that parallels changes in other countries, such as Japan, where an intrinsically more ambiguous language than Amharic in the traditional culture has been revised to facilitate more precise modes of expression.[10]

The opposition between the wax-and-gold complex and the rationalistic aspects of modern culture which some Ethiopians now seek to assimilate is of interest here as an instance of the more general phenomenon toward which this book as a whole is oriented. It is the dilemma posed in all the nations of Asia and Africa by the confrontation of their traditional cultures with their rather recently activated modernist aspirations. To study what is transpiring in these nations in terms of the encounter between tradition and modernity, rather than in terms of the more bland and less biased category of social change, is to focus our attention on a very important aspect of their actual situation: many members of these societies have suddenly been forced to grapple with a number of intellectual and moral dilemmas of great magnitude. The concepts of tradition and modernity are symbols to which they are more or less passionately attached. All of them have concepts symbolizing the sanctity of tradition, like the Amharic *hāymānot abāw* ("faith of the fathers"); and all have concepts symbolizing the goal of modernity, like the Amharic *selṭānē* ("civilization"). And in all these nations the conflict between the two sorts of orientation has produced acute forms of disorientation, on the one hand, and extraordinary challenges to creativity, on the other.

Adopting this perspective for the study of "transitional" societies probably opens the door more widely than usual for the intrusion of the biases of the observer. For the observer's own attitudes regarding tradition and modernity naturally affect the order of questions he will ask and the kinds of data he will examine in making his analysis of the "actual situation." They influence, for example, how much attention he pays to the weakening of norms governing traditional kinship systems and whether he views this primarily as a form of social disorganization or primarily as a precondition for more effective societal organization. Accordingly it is fitting that we introduce the analyses to be presented below with a brief statement of the philosophy which guides the author's approach to these questions. This may be done most effectively by surveying the range of positions that might be taken. In considering the encounter between traditional and modern culture patterns currently experienced in acute form in most nations of the world, one may discern, at a high level of abstraction, these five positions: (1) the Traditionalist, (2) the Modernist, (3) the Skeptic, (4) the Conciliatory, and (5) the Pragmatist.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

than those necessary to perform their jobs. They do not attempt to maintain and build personal libraries, though there are a few exceptions to this. The three small bookstores in Addis Ababa offer only the most insubstantial fare.

Nor, finally, have more than a handful of private individuals taken upon themselves the charge of a scholarly or literary calling. Although Marcel Cohen heralded the birth of a printed literature in Amharic as early as 1925,[88] writing is still not very important on the Ethiopian scene.* The output of original books and pamphlets in Amharic averaged less than fifteen a year over the past two decades. The presses and bookstores distribute Amharic publications indifferently at best. Much of the literary impetus produced by the desire of many Ethiopians to write, and the obvious need for good writing that would address itself to the intellectual demands of the present generation, has been sapped by economic, political, and cultural factors.

The economic factors include the high cost of printing; the diminutive market; and the absence of publishing houses. If an author wants to be read, he must normally pay for publication himself. Those who cannot must either find a patron in the Crown—frequently a highly lucrative arrangement—or resort to mimeographic duplication, or else remain unpublished. The censorship system and anxiety about spontaneous expression of any sort which has been fostered by prevailing political conditions constitute additional obstacles to literary development.

The paucity of serious writing has been the result no less of prevailing cultural conditions. The low intellectual level of his potential audience, the absence of channels for criticism, and the dearth of precedent make it difficult for the Ethiopian writer to determine good standards of writing. The confused state of Amharic, owing to regional variations and the absence of consensus on neologisms and loan words for expressing modern concepts, poses many problems on the level of sheer vocabulary. The temptation to get into print quickly, if the financial and political barriers can be hurdled, exceeds the temptation to work long and hard on an opus of quality. The desire to pontificate frequently eclipses the quest for understanding.

Those conditions which have inhibited the growth of Amharic literature—poverty, governmental reluctance to provide sufficient freedom and support, the newness of the modernizing culture, and the motivational level of the intellectuals themselves—may be viewed more broadly as responsible for the relative barrenness of Ethiopian intellectual life as a whole. Insofar as these conditions change in the coming decades, a radical change in the quality and organization of Ethiopian intellectual life may be expected. As a sociological

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* This is no longer due, however, to the negative attitude toward writing as such which was discussed in chapter iii. That traditional inhibition has been largely removed—primarily, it seems, by the postwar requirement that all legal accusations and court proceedings be set down in writing.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 571 Our people always speak indirectly, in secrets. For example, a man will come, asking for the glass he loaned another man. The debtor says he will bring it in a week, that it has been broken and he will send for a new one. The man may say: "Oh, never mind. It doesn't matter to me, don't bother." The debtor will then be scared; thinking that the owner of the glass is in his stomach quite angry and ready to kill him, he will take his gun and get the man first.[16]

The suspiciousness which so colors interaction among the Amhara has been viewed by some observers primarily as an adaptive response to some very real dangers with which Ethiopia has chronically been confronted: the threat of conversion to Western forms of Christianity by European missionaries, the threat of European imperialism, and the threat of encirclement and occupation by a militant Islam. These factors have undoubtedly intensified the apprehensiveness of Ethiopia's leaders and strengthened the much publicized xenophobic attitude of the Amhara people, just as the proliferation of security networks during the postliberation period has intensified the generalized distrust on the domestic scene. But these attitudes flourish as they do because they are nurtured on the soil of a basic disinclination to trust one another that is endemic in traditional Amhara culture.

That culture is marked, *au fond,* by a sense of despair about the possibilities of concord and enduring consensus among men, and, in more practical terms, by a realization that people who spend so much of their time deceiving one another are not to be trusted very much. *Sawen mämman bakantu naw* ("it is futile to trust in man")—so runs an Amharic epigram sometimes woven ornamentally into wool rugs; and it carries a secular-practical as well as a religious-speculative meaning. This disposition is institutionalized in the custom of *wäss,* according to which any sort of civil transaction—hiring a man as a servant, or lending money, or litigating in court—involves as one of the first steps the securing of a *wäss,* or "guarantor," who agrees to make good for any damages caused by the man he is backing.[17] It also appears in the custom of continually challenging the assertions made by someone who is relating an episode, so that the speaker is forced to interlard his narration with oaths that swear by the truth of what he is saying. The Amhara tendency to "overinter- [173] pret" and impute deception appears in their conception of the very origins of their language, for informed traditional Amhara commonly believe that Amharic originated as a secret language during the reign of the legendary Falasha Queen Yodit.

*121 181 571 • 198 A penchant for *secrecy* is pronounced among the Amhara and constitutes still another aspect of the individualistic disposition. In culturally elaborated forms it appears in the predilection for employing secret languages, including the argots of merchants, minstrels, and *zär* victims,[18] and the secret language

of shepherds,[19] as well as the secret formulae of magicians, the obscurantist constructions of wax and gold, and the use of Ge'ez itself in the presence of illiterates. Related to this is the great popularity of riddle games among Amhara. Personal relations, moreover, are consciously predicated on the harboring of secrets, or *mīsṭir*. The Amhara assume that it is improper to reveal oneself fully, to disclose one's *mīsṭir*, to anyone but a very close friend; and that, in fact, rarely happens. 121* 181 571 [198] • [524]

Given the weakness of horizontal forms of cohesion among the Amhara—sociability at mealtime, stylized politeness among equals, and co-operation in time of crisis, important though they are, cannot contain the centrifugal forces just described—the dispositions which sustain a minimum of social order among the Amhara are expressed through vertical, hierarchical forms of interaction. Here both individualistic and solidaristic forms are in evidence, the latter in the forms of deference and begging, the former in the variety of authoritarian relationships.

Perhaps the most characteristic form of interaction among the Amhara is that of *domination*. The Amhara is at his happiest when he is in a position to order someone about. The sense of domination is marked not only in relations between nobles and commoners, officers and soldiers, masters and servants, but also between husbands and wives, and parents and children. Amhara children sometimes volunteer the explanation of their desire to have children when they grow up as based on the explanation that then *they* will have youngsters of their own to command.

Connected with the passion to dominate is a predilection for administering physical punishment. In all of the relationships just mentioned corporal punishment is an integral feature, particularly so on the domestic scene. With sticks or whips, masters beat servants, teachers pupils, husbands wives, and parents children. The complete acceptance of this pattern was shown by the fact that not a single Amhara TAT respondent objected to any of the corporal punishment cards. They all assumed that the punishment depicted, including that of husband against wife and mistress against servant, was deserved, proper, and would have a salutary effect. (One of the respondents even exclaimed when regarding one of the beating scenes: "What a beautiful punishment!") The only reservations expressed concerned the possibility that the punishment might be so severe as to wound fatally the person being punished, in which case the punisher would have cause for regret. 121* 181 571 152

Whatever the functions of such patterns in controlling antisocial behavior and securing adherence to the norms of the situation, the sentiment that underlies them is primarily egoistic. The superior is interested primarily in having his own way and gratifying his ego through the sheer exercise of his power; and the motivation of the punisher probably often contains a strong 121* 181 571

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

121 nally, data were gathered relating to the modes of acquiring, exercising, validating, and conserving powers of prophylaxis, diagnosis, and therapy. Here, as in the other areas of data gathering, a necessary distinction was made between the perceptions of practitioners and those of their clients.

*793 869 75 • 197 539 While the secular medical traditions of Ethiopia are exclusively oral, powerful cleric healers known as debteras have traditionally employed diagnostic, prophylactic, and therapeutic texts written in Ge'ez, the language of the Church, and in the vernacular. Numerous *793 114 127 debtera texts gave been collected in the libraries of Europe and the United States, and valuable translations, most notably by Marcel Griaule, Deborah Lifchitz, and Stefan Strelcyn, have been published. These published translations, together with translations made in the field with the assistance of clerics, have been utilized in the writing of those sections of Chapter Four dealing with the debtera's medical texts.

121 171 Although the focus of this dissertation is limited to the region in which field research was conducted, it should not be overlooked that the Amhara share important cultural affinities with peoples, now largely Islamic, occupying lands extending from the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.

000 The highlands of Begemder, Tigre, and Eritrea form

*753 grazing. Both highland zones are considered ideal for
131 human habitation. While residents of the dega zone oc-
133 casionally comment on what they regard as the uncomfor-
821 table summer heat of the weyna dega, at the same time
it is acknowledged that the rainy season (kiramt) is more
burdensome in the dega. The rains last from May to
September and are marked by temperatures in the mid-
thirties in dega lands and perhaps ten to fifteen degrees
warmer in the weyna dega. This season is regarded as a
particularly bad time for kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints)
whose severity is considered greatest in the dega zone.
Epidemiologically, the dega is also associated with a
relatively high incidence of yinifas basiyta ("the wind
disease"), an ailment described in Chapter One.

131 Although reliable population estimates are lacking,
101 the weyna dega and dega zones contain perhaps 85% of
161 Begemder's people. These rural highlands are occupied
• 197 by five ethnic groups, racially indistinguishable from
144 one another and, with an exception, now speaking a com-
mon Semetic language, Amharic. The Amhara are the most
numerous of Begemder's highland peoples, and extend into
the provinces of Gojam and Shoa, to the south. Within
the Begemder highlands, they occupy the area south of
latitude 13°30'. North of this line live the Tigre, a
related people who speak a cognate language, Tigrinya.
101 Both Amhara and Tigre are Coptic Christians, and from
131
779

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

162 632 433 463 of the town's total population, support themselves by working among the densely packed rows of beer houses and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 779 563 [197] [167] [142] Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejoratively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinctively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian wives. [443] [442] Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 563 463 [197] [562] A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people, predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics. Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

563 692 ment, who approves appointment to Sharia and Qadi positions.

5. Structure and Function of the Coptic Church among the Amhara.

795 The importance of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia on the life of every Amhara, of all classes, rural or urban, can hardly be exaggerated. To the Amhara, "Amhara" is synonymous with Abyssinian Christian; and the [198] liturgical language used in the church, "Geez", with "language of the free". The term used for their religion is "tewahedo", often shortened to "towado", meaning "orthodox".

To the Amhara, his church is so closely connected with his attitudes to his country, his nation, his ethnocentrism, that the severance of ties with the mother Coptic Church of Alexandria, in 1948, passed almost [779] unnoticed. Only church scholars are aware that, as part of the larger Coptic church, the break with the Western church occurred after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., ostensibly because the Copts insisted on complete fusion of the person of Christ, refusing to accept the "union, but not fusion of Deity and human spirit" of the non-Monophysite faith in the formula he pronounces when [788] slaughtering a sheep or ox: "In the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost, one divinity." The pious [224] hunter will hasten to the wounded gazelle to pronounce the formula before the animal expires, then finish it off by cutting its throat

793 also performs masses on specific occasions, including memorials and holy days, chants part of the liturgy, reads (but usually does not know how to translate) biblical portions from both New and Old Testament in the
[183] Geez language. Before performing the eucharist, the officiating priest is expected to abstain from sexual intercourse for 1 to 3 days, for this is regarded as polluting him (an Old Testament survival). Before such occasions he takes care to sleep on the mudbench of his hut, rather than on his "alga" bed. This procedure is followed Saturday night, before a baby's babtism, before giving ritual ablution to the dying, etc. He is also expected to wash his body before giving the eucharist (but in the dry season this is often overlooked).

A learned priest, more scholarly than the parish administrator or guardian of his flock, is given the special title "mämher" (roughly, "professor"). He is usually an expert on the hymn book "degwa", and is employed in teaching it to upper grades in church school.
[192] When he becomes a monk, he is oftenappointed to "abbatachen" (lit. our father), abbot of a monastery, where his mild disposition enables him to keep the peace among hotheaded, ambitious monks, some of whom regard monasticism as a career. If the "mamher" continues to advance his knowledge of church literature and history and legends (e.g. the life of the saints), he receives the title "lic". He is usually one of the few Amhara who really
793 198 know and understand Geez well, including the subtle shades of meaning of the many diverse grammatical forms;

793 and he may also know grammatical Amharic, which has been
198 mastered by only a few hundred contemporary Amhara (including the present emperor). This grammar is called "sowasso", and contains subtle factitives, frequentatives, etc.

793 In the higher clergy of church administration, a combination of some scholarly accomplishment and political astuteness is necessary. This next higher title is "liqä kähänät" (lit. head ecclesiastic). Given a temporal bishop's territory, he is named "päpäs" (evidently a Greek derivation); or, if his new post is within the spiritual, monastic system, "qomos", who "blesses the cap of the monk" (i.e. can accept and supervise monastic vows of lower-status ecclesiasts). This high clergy is usually found at provincial capitals or nearby monasteries.

Above this level is the very highest leadership of the church, several "liqä päpäs", archbishops, of noble ancestry, who are in line for the position of head of monasteries and temporal church lands and properties, the "echäge". This was traditionally the highest Abyssinian church officer (Amhara or Tigre). Until 1948, his only superior, the "Abuna" (Patriarch), was a foreigner, usually an Egyptian Copt sent from Alexandria. In 1948, when this tie was severed, Echägä Basilios became almost automatically the first native Abuna of Ethiopia. A younger, somewhat more modern-minded element in the high clergy is headed at present by Bishop (Papas) Theophilos, who may be next in line for the highest office.

659 spectacle of self-abandon of the mourners, who scream,
178 roll on the ground, cut themselves bloody, etc.; and the financial burden of excessively elaborate memorial feasts which were and sometimes still are ruinous to the families involved. To teach by example--a most effective way in a country where everyone imitates the "great man"" --the emperor himself ordered that no memorial feast be given for his own daughter who died in 1933; just some money donations were made to the priests reciting prayers for her soul.

[874] More recently, the emperor founded the Theological College of Addis Ababa, headed by an Egyptian Coptic president and some faculty members from among Egyptian Copts, to modernize the curriculum of the future leaders of the church among whom he hopes, for the first time, to find allies rather than permanent foes. The probable successor to the present Abuna (archbishop) of Ethiopia, Theophilus, is believed to share the emperor's views and has already travelled abroad several times. The emperor wishes the younger clergy to become more learned and to be able to translate the Bible from
[198] Geez into Amharic for the lay populace. He has promoted the printing of bibles in Amharic, rather than Geez, thus using religion to promote the official, national language of the state.

6. The Fraternal Association called "mahabbar".

575 This "voluntary" association of individuals, growing out of the "private communion" of the Abyssinian

562 "The killer? (It was) your husband;
602 The victim? (It was) your brother.
[539] Great is your pain,
never will it leave your house"

(said to a woman who promoted her husband's interests, e.g. in competition for a position with the feudal lord, over that of her brother).

562 Psychological inferiority is ascribed to all women, by Amhara men, regardless of social rank. Her weakness is regarded as biological, intellectual and moral. It is regarded as proverbial:

[98] "Vulgar Language" - "yäsyēt qwanqwa" (lit. woman's language)

"Polite Language" - "yäwänd qwanqwa" (lit. man's language); modest, correct, pure, elegant language. Also called "yäwond amarena" (lit. man's Amharic).

[195] "syeto" - insult to a talkative man. (lit. womanish
"syētē" - (lit. female) - said of timber or soil that is feeble, soft, of little resistance.

[539] "Woman and donkey
(must be trained) with a stick."

"Even if a woman has knowledge,
(only a) man knows how to hold on to it."

212 boys playing in the bush write on broad leaves; or on the sun-
857 bleached shoulder blades of dead oxen or donkeys cleaned up by hyenas, vultures and ants; or even scratch letters on their own dark skins with a thorn, preferably on the underside of the arm where it can be hidden more effectively. Sometimes rocks, charcoal and iron scrap provided tools or background for writing experiments.

Boys are very proud of this achievement, and tease illiterates, particularly shepherds who have not attended school, by writing or
[524] speaking phrases of Geez. Sometimes schoolboys use riddles, which they have memorized in school to memorize arithmetic, such as:

"(Question) What is two?
(Reply) Udder of female donkey;
(Question) What is four?
(Reply) Udder of cow."

[198] In reply to this teasing, illiterate shepherd boys make up "secret languages" of their own, by interlacing letters between syllables and speaking rapidly (much as zar doctors in the zar cult).

3. The Age of Obedience: Adolescence.

882 The age of experimentation, in which liberties taken by youngsters are often condoned, comes to an end as soon as puberty is reached. Parental authority, particularly that of the father, is more frequent and intense over the activities of the adolescent than over the peer-group child. The sexes are more sharply divided, no longer engage in experimental play activities in groups, and the patterns of flirting become more culturally structured, less random, and more personal. The adolescents are made to feel more "rule" conscious. With the awkwardness of adolescence comes a sudden shyness,

538 He was a master of "sowasso"; of the pun which utilizes gemina-
522 tion and other grammatical possibilities to make an ironic observation and befuddle the unwary, so that they become public laughing stocks. Sometimes the joke was on his own Rabelaisian appetites in food and sex. More often he spoofed the pompousness of feudal and even royal powers, their love for amassing rules and regulations for their courts; and the pretended puritan piety of the priests, behind which facade he recognized witty insight into the minds of men, whose salty comments and behavior in private life he liked to burlesque. For example:

[539]

> "One day the servant of a witty priest suffered from a chigger (sandflea) embedded in his foot. The priest pried it out with a pin and threw it into the fire. A friend, watching this, objected jokingly, saying: "Why did you do this? May it not multiply in the fire?" Replied the priest: "It may be warmed, but not 'done up' ("yäzäräw" - also means begotten through sexual intercourse)."

Amhara listeners find such "impolite" stories extremely amusing.

195 The Amhara people recognize the esoteric use that can be made of
198 their language, and they utilize this. Hence the expression "he is talking Amarinya", meaning "he is speaking in esoteric ways", with double meanings, hidden meanings, to becloud his real purpose so that he cannot be accused of lying and can say later that he meant something else. For example, the verb "qanna" can have the following meanings:

> was right, direct, correct
> was honest, just
> succeeded, prospered
> became jealous, envious
> became zealous, fanatic, intolerant.

198 Certain occupational specialties have traditionally made use of

198 this esoteric raw material to develop special argots. The most notable ones are those used by traders; in magic; and by minstrels.

A merchant's argot (Footnote 91) uses Arabic loanwords, and also transforms the meaning or form of Amharic words, especially those that can have many alternate meanings. Trade routes travelled by merchants also carry distant lexical matter from Galla and Gurage - speaking provinces. Merchants utilize this argot as secret business codes.

Among practitioners of magic, the most famous argot is the "Zar" language (described in the section on "healing the spirit"). Like the other argots, this "language" has a solidly Amharic base, but this fact is not recognized by the Amharas themselves and has been discovered only by foreign linguistic scholars (Footnote 92). The "zar doctors" are of course careful to keep this fact a secret, for they claim that this language is not only "revealed" to them by the spirits, but that t he spirit "talks through them", so that they themselves are free of responsibility for what they are saying while in a state of possession. Actually, the "zar language" contains purely grammatical Amharic, coded Amharic, transformed lexical matter, and loanwords. Scribes, "dabtara", who perform amulet magic, impress their clients with a seemingly unintelligible, esoteric Amharic called "yädabtära qwanqwa", (the language of the scribe), which often makes use of sowasso (grammar).

The argot of the minstrel, of the "azmari", is a professional code used to communicate with other members of the troupe, e.g. to point out at which guest to direct songs of praise to obtain a reward, without letting the audience become aware of this collusion (footnote 93)

Footnote 91 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Merchant's Argot - Language, 1949 pp. 22-28, Vol. 25, No. 1.

Footnote 92 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People possessed by a Spirit. Africa, July 1949, pp. 204-212

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

x794 198 e.) The "Zar Language": Origin and Diffusion of the Zar Cult.

The "zar language" is used by professional zar doctors not only furing the cult services themselves, but also in daily like, e.g. in response to a greeting; whenever they wish to establish a situation of separateness. Lay Amhara believe that the "zar language" is a completely different, esoteric language. They do not recognize that [197] it is mainly deformed Amharic, plus paraphrases, and loanwords, often similarly deformed, from Arabic, Galla and other geographically neighboring languages. The zar doctors pretend that even they themselves, (mere "horses"), do not understand the zar language, but that it is the zar possessing them who speaks through them in this case, not wanting to be understood by mere humans. Some zars make more frequent use of their esoteric language, notably the "wereza", a group of minor zars.

x794 198 114 Among foreign scholars who have examined the "zar language" the most notable is Dr. Leslau [103], who calls it an "argot":

"Abstract ideas are expressed by concrete words.....
Deformation of the root, either by replacing a consonant or by lengthening of the whole root, is used.....
Some words are taboo, such as salt, the tray on which cups of coffee are served, the plant chat, the horse, etc.....
The morphology of the argot is Amharic throughout....
"addam" (man or woman possessed by a spirit) becomes "addamit"; rain is referred to as "urine of the clouds"; "tänqway", sorcerer, becomes "manqway".....

103. Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People possessed by a Spirit. Africa, Vol. 19, pp. 204-212. London, July 1949.

x 794
198
114

"Arabic loanwords include:

Alla (h) - master, God, heaven
Awleya - (from Arabic "awliya", plural of waliy, saint), chief zars
Kafir - Arabic term for the Christian Ethiopians
Qwaha - coffee (from Arabic qahwa; Amharic uses "bunna"); coffee and perfume are taken over from Arabs, and are essential parts of the Zar ceremony.

Galla loanwords:

farda - Galla for horse, here meaning slave possessed by a zar; "färäs", Amharic for horse, is taboo.
waqiyä yemmäsgän - Waq is Galla for "God", yemmasgan is Amharic for "be praised." Total means: thank you.

There are also Woyto loanwords.

It is natural that an argot of a professional language should borrow expressions from another language with which it comes in contact....The (zar) belief might have originated with the autochthonous population of Ethiopia the Woyto probably belong to this population - and the Amhara might have taken it over from them together with some expressions....."

x 794
198

One might add to these conclusions by Dr. Leslau that in recent years Arabic loanwords are increasingly being used in the zar argot, perhaps due to the improvement of trade routes to the Sudan. Also, the poet who must compose somewhat new poetry for special occasions in the zar cult, is the prime agent for the introduction of Arabic loanwords and usages such as addressing a powerful make zar spirit as "Prophet" (in imitation of Muslim usage).

x 794
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174

Problems of the distribution of the "zar" and similar cults in Africa and the Middle East, such as questions as to the origin and the diffusion of the cult, are more difficult and complex.

Some linguists believe that the term "zar" is of Cushitic origin (Dr. Leslau, would seem to agree with this). This would antedate the

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Tulama MP25

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imperial power revived, Emperors like Theodore and, later, Menelik, re-established Amhara rule first over the central highland and later over all the Galla lands of the south. The most formidable resistance encountered by Menelik was from the Moslem Galla Sultan of Jimma. From time to time certain Galla districts resented the corrupt or vicious government of individual Amhara officials and revolted; but these revolts were the common phenomenon of a feudal state of society rather than the beginnings of a conscious Galla movement against an alien Amhara rule. In fact in the Galla countries of the south the rule of the Amhara central government has proved more stable than in the north where it had to meet the challenge of powerful Amhara lords. During the dangerous revolt of Ras Gugsa Wolye it was probably the Galla contingents which saved the throne for Haile Selassie. During the campaign of 1941 thousands of Galla guerrillas took the field against the Italians, while the northern leaders, the great Amhara aristocrats, were inclined to wait on the winner.

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Gallas are everywhere in Ethiopia and there are probably few Amhara nobles who have not a strong tinge of Galla blood in their veins. Most Amhara have some knowledge of Galla (although many will not own to it), and Galla is popularly supposed to be the "love-language" of Ethiopia.

I had little opportunity for investigating the subject, but I do not believe that all Galla-speaking tribes are racially Galla. In the belt of savannah country between the Mussolini Pass and Dessie I met the two sons of a Wallo Galla headman who were a pair of the most beautiful human beings I have ever seen. Copper-skinned and lithe, clad in panther pelts and leaning on their spears, they seemed apparitions out of the Bronze Age. These boys were of pure Hamitic type, rather resembling some of the fine-featured Shluh of the Moroccan Atlas. Yet, in Harar, where I had to disband a battalion of Galla Patriots who had come in from the south, I found stocky square-headed men with heavy jowls, with a fair proportion of negroid types. Incidentally they were reported to show excellent form as soldiers. They were mostly Borana and other southern Gallas.

The variety of physical types among the Gallas adds to the mystery of their origin before the sixteenth century. Some tribes have the tradition of having arrived on the east coast of Africa from over the sea, and one theory postulates the coming of the Galla from Madagascar and attempts to correlate their migration with the intrusion of Malay elements into that island. At present the origin of the Gallas remains one of the most interesting problems of African history.

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Harar itself has, since mediaeval times, enjoyed the situation of a city-state. The emirate of Harar was brought within the Ethiopian Empire only by Ras Makonnen, the father of the present Emperor. It has since remained a favourite city of the Imperial family and a stronghold of their interest. On the edge of the Somali and the Galla country and commanding the way down over the lip of the Southern Escarpment into the Awash valley Harar is a meeting place for all the tribes of Ethiopia and the Arabian coast. The old walled city with its narrow crowded streets and occasional mosques and *turbés* has all the characteristics of an Arabian town, as contrasted with the open settlements of huts, gardens, and plantations which pass for towns in

*787 *793 869 *[278] is better able to obtain new abinet, since his own growing repertoire increases the possibility of arranging abinet exchanges with other debteras. Moreover he is better equiped to utilize them; he has learned much of the Ethiopian herbal pharmacopeia, and is able to identify botanicals by the Ge'ez nomers with which they are frequently designated in the recipes of abinet therapies [198] and kitabs. Similarly, his mastery of Ge'ez makes possible the acquisition of complex digams.

75 639 In addition to acquiring individual recipes, debtera-healers also seek out encyclopaedic treatices. *[192] These are inventories of recipes, bearing Ge'ez titles such as "book of medicine for diseases for all parts of the body" (metshafe medhaniyt lekwiylown deweyate akalat). In these books, recipes are grouped according to diseases; the diseases are, in turn, classified according to the part of the body that they affect, ar- [177] ranged from head to feet. Stefan Strelcyn (1965), after close examination of four such manuscripts, has commented on the substantial uniformity of their contents and the remarkable similarities which they share with the third and fourth books of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine.

*793 While such treatises contain hundreds of recipes, *755 their significance for the practice of Abyssinian medi- *756 cine is limited by the character of their pathogenic interests. As seen by his clients, the debtera's thera-

E. Gestures and Postures.

201 Meaningful gestures accompany speech quite often among Amhara, occasionally substitute for speech, though not often. Amhara is too proud of ability for self-expression to forego speech in any but sharp dominance-subordination situations, in which case he may resort to non-verbal signs.

Gestures may take the form of signs, signals or symbols, and often emphasize status domination, e.g. noble versus commoner peasant; or patriarchal versus younger generation; or master toward servant.

To symbolize affect, the dominant person may lift part of his toga off his own body and cover the head and shoulders of the subordinate, e.g. a younger person, or a female. This gesture symbolizes protection, shielding, expressed as "gashey" (my shield). Affect can also be symbolized by the "gursha" (described earlier).

201 695 Formal antagonism appears most clearly in court "before the judge" ("badarya fit"). When appearing on the stand, the speaking adversary folds his toga so that he has an ample piece of cloth available to wave in the face of the silent adversary, and, to emphasize his protest and revolt against injustice, even in the face of the judge until restrained. He may raise his "wager" to emphasize the justice of his case and his certainty as to the outcome; using the following signals:

"I bet honey" - by licking his palm,

"I bet a horse" - extending arms and waving hands to imitate gallop,

"I bet a mule" - by raising hands to ears, indicating long ears of a mule, and moving them up and down.

The judge carefully notes the wagers in his book, since he will receive the wager of the loser, and, except for a "tax" to the governor, can keep most of it, in the old tradition.

201 675 196 Symbolism in commerce serves to give legal validity to a trade agreement, since bystanders thus become witnesses. When buyer and seller agree, the right hands are waved up and down, which attracts attention, then palm touches on palm (with fingers stretched away). This may or may not be reinforced by the verbal oath "Hayle Selassye yemut" (May the emperor die, if I lie). This commercial symbolism is followed especially in important transactions, such as livestock.

201 196 Symbolism in political life takes the form of rythmic handclapping, ("anchchätächchäbä"), not to be confused with Western applause. It is performed as a greeting, as acknowledgement of superordination. It does not follow public proclamation. These are greeted with respectful silence, but women may indicate actual or pretended joy with their joyshout "ellel". Amhara public opinion ("astäyäyät") sometimes signals negative reaction to official proclamations by "murmuring" in a delayed stage-whisper, and though officialdom traditionally pretends to ignore public opinion, it usually employs paid listeners who mix with the public to trace any "murmuring" to its sources. For, in the past, ignored murmurings frequently led to rebellions.

Anger, whether silent or accompanying verbal battles, is signalled by wide opening of the eyes ("afättäta"), or a furious, intent stare ("täfättäta").

201 Directional signs are made by moving eyelids and eyelashes, particularly by nobles or persons imitating their subtle ways. To communicate "get rid of this person", I want to talk to you alone", the eyelids wink up and down ("taqqäsä"); to signal "come out of the hut, I want to talk to you outside", the pupils and eyelashes work in the direction of the door. Men may give such signals as frequently as women.

201 177 The signal of expressing desire to enter consists of knocking with the entire fist ("koräkkomä" - onomatopoetic). Finger-knocking

201 [177] has been introduced only since the Italian occupation.

The gesture indicating sour-bitter taste (which are not differentiated; and collectively called "märara"), consists of slowly shaking the head sideways ("tängäshaggäshä"); sometimes reinforced by the verbal exclamation of pain, "ayye" or "hayy!".

516 Postures differentiate between the status of the master and that of the servant. The master indicates his "free" status by sitting way back on the stool or bench, straight, in a position which would require special effort to rise and therefore emphasizes that he does not expect to have to jump up at anyone's command. A servant may not sit in presence of the master, or must sit lightly so as to be ready to perform any duty for which he may be called upon at any moment. To indicate respect, a servant carries out his duties on the run (as "on the double" in the Western armies), while the master is present.

The correct posture in sitting is called "kurkum alä", sitting "folded up": the legs bent at the knees, the feet far back and partly hidden, since it is "rude" to sit with legs stretched out beyond the knee. But the thighs may be spread, especially when seated on a mat on the ground, even in the case of peasant women who wear the anklelength, heavy cotton gown. To sit with legs crossed (Turkish fashion) is frowned upon as the posture of "barya", the Muslim or "pagan" ex-slaves from the Sudan; considered a rude and lazy position by the Amhara. The proper posture of the Amhara, if seated on the ground, is a squatting position, on the hips, never on the heels; feet flat on the ground, knees high and spread, the toga arranged so as to cover the knees and shins even when jodphurs are worn.

201 554 Facial expression of a high-status Amhara (noble, priest, elder) assumes a stoic appearance. The jaw muscles are relaxed, the mandible slightly dropped, the eyes half-closed but alert, breathing very quiet, [195] the voice in even tone (in contrast to the strident whine of the argumentative peasant-gabbar).

201 554 argumentative peasant-gabbar). The body expresses almost the permanence and immobility of a status, as if the high-status person could not be surprised or dismayed by anything, certain that all things due him will come to him.

516 The famous "Nilotic stance", stork-like, in which the person stands on one leg, resting the foot of the other against the inner knee of standing leg, is found in the Amhara only among young boys, and an occasional, low-class adult.

554 481 In walking, nobles of the old school walk slowly, somewhat heavily, as if in formal procession. Members of their retinue carry their cane, overcoat, etc. By contrast, laborers carrying heavy burdens walk catlike, largely on the instep, and fairly fast.

F. The Language of the Toga ("shamma").

201 291 The toga is used in so many different, formal ways by the Amhara to express moods, occasion and social status in the presence of persons of differing social status, that the language of the shamma has been likened to the "language of the buffalo robe" of the Plains Indians of America (footnote 95).

The most common way of draping this usually 6 ft. long, 2-1/2 ft. wide garment can be described as "out-going"; called "tälabbäsä"; The toga is draped around the upper body so that it gives a turtleneck effect, the embroidered border extends from the shoulder to the waist. This may indicate that the young wearer is in an out-going, expansive mood, considers himself a gay blade going into town in a holiday mood; when worn this way by an older man, it expresses that he is a sober, respectable citizen, in an optimistic mood, going to meet persons of equal status.

Footnote 95 - Coon, C. S.: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p. 116.

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To express a sad mood, the toga is not draped, but let hang full length, a corner even trailing in the dust, another corner slung across the front over the opposite shoulder, and the wearer walks with eyes sadly downcast. This way of wearing it is called "ashnäffäta", cloaking the body from the neck down. The method of careless cloaking symbolizes that the wearer is unhappy, depressed, overcome with the sadness of life.

To express reserve, the person who feels himself superior in the presence of people whom he considers inferior, or strangers, can emphasize his dignity by lifting the turtleneck effect of his draped toga to cover his mouth. This form is called "genteb täkänannobä", connoting pride, so that persons who act proud beyond their station are criticized by this term. But in the presence of strangers, who might be carriers of "bäda" (evil spirits, evil eye), which might penetrate into the body through the mouth, this is considered excusable.

To emphasize an even greater degree of reserve, the top part of the toga may be lifted further to cover the nose also. This is called "kofännänä", and a man who makes too frequent use of it is criticized as "abba kofenanä" (lit. father of too much pride); it is also called "täshkärakkärä" (lit. veiling), for only the eyes are left free. This prevents evil spirits from entering through the nostril, while the eyes are regarded as potentially offensive weapons, not vulnerable. This form indicates great superiority, and is therefore limited to men; an occasional woman doing this would be sharply mocked as "mentally unbalanced", unless she walks with her husband who is thus attired, imitating him, e.g. while passing through a strange neighborhood, draped for protection ("täconattäfä"). It signals "keep your distance", "don't touch me".

To express great respect, when in the presence of a "great man", (e.g. when appearing formally before a feudal lord, in the old days,

201 among rustics still today), the toga is draped so that the upper part
291 of the body is bare or at least not covered by the toga, while the corner flaps may rest on the slightly raised forearms, possible accompanying the begging gesture of the outstretched palms; this is called "awwärarräda" (possibly from "woräda", district lord to whom one reports). Combining respect with utility, dancers (azmari) often drape this way, since much of the Amhara dance is upper-body, thus left disentangled, and enabling the dancer to lift the loose corners while swaying in tempo of the musical accompaniment.

Before the judge ("bädanya fit"), the toga is partly draped as in respect, with the difference that one corner is left as large as possible; to enable the wearer to shake an accusing toga-corner in the face of the adversary while on the witness stand, or in protest toward the judge while loudly praying that heaven may give "light" to the judge, or while raising one's wager as to the outcome.

When going to church ("beta kristyän") the toga flaps are draped across the chest so that, in crossing to the opposite shoulder, they form the sign of the cross. When on the way to the house of the great man, this drape is used, for then the flaps can be dropped on the forearms, in the gesture of respect, without draping.

Women usually drape the toga so that part of the shamma acts as a skirt-apron ("sherret"). When in an "out-going" mood, the other part of the shamma covers one arm (usually the left) and the other shoulder. When at work, the top flaps are slung over the chest, leaving both arms completely free for work ("asharräti").

291 Besides these expressive drapes of "language of the shamma", there are several utilitarian ways of draping it which communicate merely the work being done at the time, or represent mere patterns of draping for comfort:

291 Men doing physical labor - "boddäna" - lift toga above shoulders to free arms;

- "adägaddäga" - knot toga across chest; wrap-around. (also to tie shammas of debtors to creditors, or prisoners to guard's).

[411] To parry blows - "mäkäta" - wrapping toga around left forearm, as shield.

Preparing for battle - "adäraddäga" (see above): knotting shamma across chest, after wrapping it tightly around the waist.

When cold - "zeqzeq läbbäsä" - doubling a heavy shamma (called "kuta" or "derreb") to wrap oneself in completely, even covering covering head, at night.

When hot - a light shamma of muslin ("nätäla") may be rolled around the head - "tämättämä". Hence, the turban of priests is called "nätämtämiya", a tight wrap-around of the head by muslin.

[535] When dancing - before "däbtära" (scribe-choristers) begin to dance, in church, they first drape the toga tightly ("shäbäsh-häbä"), so that the flaps will not drop from the shoulders during the motion.

[765] In mourning - while dancing the funeral motion, accompanying the improvised eulogy, women approach each other holding their own togas outward and horizontal, like huge wings, (as if they were holding a spear like men dancing the "fukkara" boast dance).

201 291 178 685 Some of these expressive ways of draping the shamma are falling into disuse in the towns where the people are more affected by what passes as "modern dress". However, an interesting increase in one way of draping the shamma can be noticed in recent years: Now that debtors are no

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291 longer chained to creditors, more frequent knotting-together of the
178
685 shamma is taking place, instead.

G. Dance, Chant, Musical Instruments.

535 Amhara dancing falls into three categories: religious dancing, military dance, and the entertainment dance performed by professionals. The first type has already been described in the section on the church.

Military dancing falls into two main categories: the "fukkara" boasting dance accompanied by boasting chant; and the "hotu" loyalty dance accompanied by shouts.

The "fukkara" is the war-boast, before or after battle, and on other occasions, of the individual warrior boasting of himself, sometimes of his kin group. It used to be danced with a spear, now with a stick or rifle. This is held horizontally over the shoulders. During the dance the head moves sideways, right and left. Defiance is shouted at the enemy, be it human, animal, or a supernatural spirit.

In the zar cult, the victory dance ("gurri") of the spirit just after he has entered the body of the possessed, is regarded so much as the "fukkara" type of dance, that the zar gives his identity away by his own version of "boasting" - whereupon the "disease" is diagnosed.

The hotu loyalty dance, by contrast, is a collective dance, most often a jump-dance, in which the multitude of warriors, brandishing their weapons, try to cast fear on the enemy by numbers, sound, and expression of intense loyalty to their common leader. The name itself is composed of "ho", onomatopoetic for shouting, "ta" signifying the collective suffix (all together). The following are common variations:

"Cho - cho" - simple shouting in unison, ("qärärto").

"yebähalal Jeb-o" - "The hyena will swallow him (i.e. the enemy)."

"Wärdaw sheb-o" - "crow's beak" (i.e. the vultures will feed on the enemy).

"Addis Abäba" - (lit. "New Flower", name of capital) - shout of

828 imbecility - "leb defen" (lit. whose heart is stopped up).

828.201 Certain emotions are expressed by certain patterned physiological signals, often unconsciously:

Anger may be expressed unconsciously by biting the lower lip, or one's finger. Also by knitting the brow ("fir kosättälä"), from the painful expression that results from drinking the purgative drug kosso, so that a person who perpetually goes about with a frown is said to have a face "as if he had eaten kosso", a "kosso face" ("kosso fit"). Melancholy is expressed in a wrinkled facial expression ("fit chändadda").

The symbolic significance of the eye has been referred to in a number of connections. Timidity, and respect in the young, is expressed by "turning the eyes to the dust" ("ayn afar"). Impatience, by shifting the glance rapidly ("gärämmätä"), without making impatient body movements which would be "lower class". Directional signals may be consciously given ("ayn ataggäsä") by eye movements already described; and observation out of the corner of one's eye ("ayn tägärämmätä") is [754] a finely developed Amhara subtlety. The sorcerer's eye ("wäsäw ayn" lit. "the man's eye," to avoid the sinister name of the "buda" evil spirit) is greatly feared; particularly when it stares and seems to pop ("ayn tägolaggälä").

The "left" position is considered the embarassing side ("gera agäbba") (perhaps because the right side is always the honorable, because it would be embarrassing to place someone so that he would have to take food with the left hand which is used in the toilet). Left-handedness is extremely rare. When some undertaking turns out badly, the saying is "The matter has turned left" ("nägär gera honä").

827 Physiological functions carried out without repression are considered low-class and low-ethnic by the Amhara. Only a low-class

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

853 155 152 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 853 155 152 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbāt*, or breast-father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbāt*. Used metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 155 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 201 [832] The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 155 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati- [431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 155 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 538 832 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution
789 of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of
261 eating something or presenting food to someone.[14] It is a theme conspicuous
173 in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85). According to *The Book of the*
[539] *Riches of Kings,* Yekuno Amlāk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zāgwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[15]

155 *Oral Sadism*

152 In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the envi-
201 ronment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When
155 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong
152 biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following
726 refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:
[539]

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[16]

155 The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagi-
266 nation. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the
773 story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater
[532] of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

651 439 Import duties are collected on the relatively limited routes of access to the country, e.g. on cotton sheeting, and on modern "luxury" items imported for Europeans in Addis Ababa.

202 Communications were recognized by both Emperor Menelik II and Haile Selassie I as one of the foremost bottlenecks. At the turn of the present century and in some areas even later, messages and orders from and to provincial administrators were still carried by the traditional runner on horseback, carrying the message wedged in the top of a cleft stick, which assured safe conduct even through valleys dominated by bandits. Menelik 206 II introduced telegraph and telephone service at least to the major provincial capitals, and this has been improved since, though the rural district headquarters often still are without either form of modern communication, not to speak of the rural hinterland.

622 he has been able to accuse the governor himself when called before the uppermost ruler, e.g. after an unsuccessful rebellion, thus freeing himself from any involvement in the guilt. It is he who orders a crier [203] to proclaim the latest decrees of the emperor at the big marketplace within his area.

His function has been likened to those of an Elizabethan Justice of the peace, and there are indeed partial analogies. Among the duties of the ḉheqa shum are:

Proclamation of imperial decrees; including call to arms in case of war;

Officiating at weddings ("semanya", outside church) arranged between kin groups;

Presiding over the village Council of Elders(chilot);

Supervising local "gabbar" on their statute-labor and impressments;

Aiding the "mislanē" in collection of taxes;

Assisting the local priests in collection of dues on church lands;

Estimating the fertility of land, in assessments of land tax;

Mediating between landlord and tenant in case of disagreements (basing himself largely on local custom and unwritten law);

Facilitating efforts of "näch lēbash" police in pursuit of bandits (shefta);

Arresting local criminals and bringing them before the "dänya"(judge) at the nearest market

PART V : INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

156 Social stratification and kinship relations dominate interpersonal relations in Amhara society, and, though they put their stamp also on segments of the Amhara cultural pattern, they do not limit the corresponding artistic expression as much as one might expect. Thus, while Amhara artistic expression shares much of the "formality" of the rest of the culture, it evidences considerable potentialities for individual initiative, particularly in non-material expression such as games of intellect.

538 Material culture has not been much developed among the Amhara; artistic expression also has many of the usual characteristics of a [212] non-literate society, since literacy has traditionally been limited to a small minority of the population. This has led both to a reinforcement of formality in literature, and to a playfulness in oral artistic expression which remained unfettered.

1. Communication and Interpersonal Relations.

203 Communication "by grapevine" is still the major method of dissemination of news, rumor, and entertainment. Feudal lords in the past would even make use of "musical signatures" which identified the sender: to prove that a message was actually sent by the sender, the messenger was taught a secret musical note like a code, which identified the master. There was considerable suspicion about interference with 212 203 messages by enemies, who might alter them, so that, when messages were written, the scribe was careful not to leave a margin at the bottom, lest an enemy intercepting the message might add harmful statements falsely reflecting on the sender (e.g. his loyalty). Since most writing was done by formal, professional scribes, and Geez square writing was used, handwriting was not considered sufficient safeguard for identification. This pattern of leaving no margin persists to this day.

203 Transportation of messages, until the recent installment of telegraph, was by messenger, and still is to a considerable extent. In the past, the king or governor would send an official messenger, ("melekt ätta") with the message wedged tightly in a cleft stick carried above the head while running, which assured safety to the runner.

Proclamation of decrees was and sometimes still is drummed out at the public market place, and only in the capital are public radio loudspeakers utilized. These decrees are heard in respectful silence, though unpopular decrees might, among Amhara, be followed by a delayed "murmuring", which, in the past, often led to local rebellions. Spies [208] of the government listen on such occasions to learn public opinion (astäyayät") in time.

211 Landmarks "for memory" are encountered frequently, and they partly take the place of inscribed monuments of cultures of greater literacy. Commemorative monuments in the countryside, called "mäsalläniya", take the form of conical piles of rocks, to which passersby add small rocks, so that one grows sometimes until no one remembers what the original event was. It may have been a battle, or the resting place of a saint. There are no name inscriptions, this being sometimes purposely avoided to prevent an evil spirit such as buda from fastening onto the name and doing harm.

212 To insure precision of communication in matters of culture focus, e.g. in religious communication, a combination of pictures and written words is used. This has developed the ancient comic-strip-type of illustration of religious scenes, mainly biblical, hagiological, and Abyssinian-National, found in canvas paintings on the walls of churches. The words spoken by the character are written into the empty space near the mouth. The scenery is starkly realistic. The style shows fierce concentration on the event depicted, without irrelevent background scenery, naivete, but body positions shown with realistic gusto.

576 572 specific forms. This relationship is mostly that of the "balenjära" (lit. mutual breadgivers), who enjoy the privilege of visiting each other without formal prearrangement; who may call upon each other to stand personal bond ("wäs"); who are likely to ask each other to act as negotiator for the marriage of a son or daughter before the affair becomes a formal kinship matter.

The very absence of a kinship tie makes it possible for "balenjara" to negotiate arbitration of blood-money to end or prevent a bloody feud between kin groups. The intenseness of the "balenjära" relationship may range from the trusted, though casual companion, "gorätsa", usually an age-mate, with whom interpersonal relationships are frequent and regular, but not intense; to the more intense but less frequent and less regular relationships with the "wädaj", a warm friend, "tebeq wädaj", the intimate confidante, so that the two individuals become "nestirräñ" (mutual bosom pals) to each other. "Balenjära" address each other with "antu" (the more polite form of "thou"; and other "thou", "antä", being used for children and inferiors mostly). When walking or standing and talking to each other, "balenjära" (and also other acquaintances, if on the same social level) interlace one or two of their fingers, loosely, but enough to remain in physical communication. Like kinsmen, "balenjära" men kiss each other on t he neck when they meet after not having seen each other for some weeks. Women may also establish "balenjära" relations with other women, and go on picnics together after the harvest in the dry season, especially on church holidays, but Amhara men believe that women do not form long-lasting friendships as often as men do.

[203] Dissemination of news and rumors through the "grapevine" occurs frequently through the channel of the "balenjära", who utilize the occasion of a bit of news as justification to drop in on each other, and to share barley beer and "enjära" bread (hence the term).

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XXVIII.—*How the goods arrived at the town of Barra, and of the bad equipment of the Barnagais.*

On the 3rd day of July of the said year, '20, our baggage 648
arrived at the town of Barra, where we were. We hoped to start at once, and went to speak to the Barnagais requiring him to despatch us. We met with good words from him. On the following day a gentleman from the court of Prester John arrived, and the Barnagais gave him such a reception that he forgot us. When this gentleman arrived the Barnagais went out of the town to receive him at a small hill near the houses; and there went out with him many people, and he was naked from the waist upwards. The gentleman placed himself on the highest spot above the rest, and his first words were: the King sends to salute you. At these words all went with their hand upon the ground, [576]
which is the courtesy and reverence of this country. After that, he spoke the message which he had brought, and when he had finished hearing it the Barnagais clothed himself with rich garments, and took the gentleman to his house. It is the usage of this country to hear the words which the [203]
Prester sends outside the house, and on foot, and he to whom they are sent has to be naked above the waist until they have been delivered, and if the message is one of satisfaction on the part of Prester John, as soon as it is given he at once dresses himself: if it expresses his dissatisfaction, he remains naked as when he heard it. This Barnagais is brother of the mother of Prester John. After this the ambassador, and we with him, came to speak to the Barnagais, and he sent us away saying that for the love of God we should leave him, that he was sick. When we came they did not allow us to enter, saying that he was sleeping. So much passed of this sort that the ambassador said that he ill remembered what he had sworn and promised to the Captain-major of the King of Portugal, that is to say,

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

claimed with the provinces. It was at a lower level that his official hierarchy was, in theory, in continuous contact with the regional and hereditary element. The governors' deputies and their assistants in the still smaller districts might or might not be local men, but when we come to the heads of villages or groups of villages we find that the leader and representative of the people and the lowest agent of the Emperor and his governor were united in the person of the *chiqa-shum*. 622

This officer was universal in Tigré, Amhara, and most of Galla country though in the latter this title was not always used. Because of his close association with the customary agrarian societies there were local variations in his status and duties. In general character and importance, even though the analogy is not exact, the *chiqa-shum* occupied something like the position of the Elizabethan justice of the peace. In his office central and local authority met. He was responsible to the governor's district chief for the proper performance by his own community of their duties and especially for their payments to the proper authorities of tithe and tax and of dues in kind and labour. He was the judge to whom, if wayside arbitration failed, the litigants would first apply. He would be present at local weddings; would preside at meetings of the village council, and would be especially concerned with all transfers or allocations of land and disputes about it. He would see that orders from the higher authorities were proclaimed by a crier in the village. [692] [203]

According to an Ethiopian account he is 'the officer of the district, living upon the soil as one joined to it'.[1] He is the agent of the Emperor. 'He will be an Amhara and may accuse even the Governor. If a man touches or strikes him, he (i.e. the striker) will not pay compensation, but all his goods will be confiscated.'[2] Coulbeaux defines him as 'le maire de la commune . . . tuteur, père même'. He manages the affairs of the village like his own, and his patriarchal authority is sacred. He is generally the genealogical chief of the community, and calls the village council together under a tree.[3] Certainly these village chiefs, representing continuity of tradition and the sedentary agricultural life, were the stabilizing factor in a system in which changing governors, roving armies, and a distant Emperor played the more dramatic, but often the more superficial, parts. This especially struck Plowden. 'There is in each village', he wrote, 'one hereditary officer that cannot be displaced on any pretence; and it is this institution alone that preserves some appearance of order in the absence of all written documents, amidst the whirl of revolutions and the rapid succession of dynasties and gover- [687]

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 42. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 184. [3] Coulbeaux, vol. 1, pp. 35–6.

*756 the connection between the weak debtera, his familiars,
*793 and his therapies is, at most, tacit, and unarticulated.
[776] More often, clients ignore the tie altogether, and conveniently assimilate this debtera into position (8) of the logically maximal chain.

The diagnostic significance of this move does not detain the client. Therapeutic success is in itself regarded as sufficient, and diagnostic speculation is not indulged. Therapeutic failure, likewise, tends to be interpreted in pragmatic terms only, indicating that the services of a more powerful healer must be obtained if
*[278] the sickman is to be cured. Probably, the choice will be a ganel gelac, but it is possible that even an herbalist of reknown will be chosen.

*278 Real herbalist chains are, then constructed by
*756 clients on an ad hoc basis. In constructing his herbal-
*759 ist chain, the client is dependent upon, first, the ac-
• 203 tual distribution of relevant practitioners within his environs, and, second, persons who can communicate this information to him. A client knows the herbal specialties of most residents of his own hamlet, and of the more prominent healers of the parish in which his hamlet is located. Beyond the parish, however, he knows the names of few secular practitioners, and these few are healers with whom he has stood previously as a client. To build his chain, he must often rely on information

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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provided by kinsmen, neighbors, and lower grade herbalists who are familiar with the identity of professional colleagues in their own disease-name specialties. A client sometimes has difficulty finding local herbalists with which to staff a desired herbalist chain. The ("weak") debtera is often a "convenient" choice to fill this deficiency. He is a member of a class of practitioners who are famous for practicing therapies for a wide variety of ailments. Moreover, the debtera is conspicuous. In ecclesiastical performances, divination, and providing prophylactic amulets, he is observed and patronized by many residents of the district in which he lives. Thus, although potential clients may not know his therapeutic repertoire in detail, he is considered a potentially relevant practitioner about whom clients are always likely to make active inquiries.

The empirical chain is the product of non-medical as well as medical considerations. The client's non-medical interests include the cost of therapy, the discomfort associated with the therapy, and the distance which the client might have to travel to reach the therapist. Lower grade herbalists are always less expensive and generally less painful than higher grade ones, and the client is more likely to find a lower grade herbalist in his vicinity. So far as non-medical factors are considered in isolation, initial consultation with a

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592 two as talla sellers, and one each as mat seller, carpen-
463 ter, day laborer, and pensioner.

*278 The practice of herbalist therapies in ward and
*759 town contrasts significantly with the situation in rural
369 hamlet and parish. The relatively dense population of the town has important consequences. In the countryside, the closest herbalist needed for a specific episode may be a day's walk from the client's home; in the town several may be found within an hour's walk. The increase in herbalist therapies is not directly proportional to the increased population of town over countryside, however.
*278 In Gabrael sebeka, for example, only eighteen households
*759 (41% of the total) contain one or more herbalists. Many
632 townfolk are forced to abstain from practicing herbalist therapies, because, as out-landers, they are unable or disinclined to locate needed botanicals. Also, significant numbers of townsfolk practice non-secular therapies, particularly as balazars.

*278 Further, although there are more redundant herbalist
*759 therapies potentially available to the townsman, he re-
369 mains ignorant of many of them. The peasant locates him-
• 203 self within a network of several core kinsmen and neigh-
602 bors upon whom he depends for information regarding herbalist chains. The townsman finds his place in a social matrix in which kinship ties are greatly diluted by dis-
632 tance. In Gabrael sebeka, for example, thirty-two house-
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holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town.

[613] In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-
[423] agricultural employment for their subsistence needs,
[241] there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

*278 Kinship ties are an important means by which the
*759 peasant acquires and communicates information necessary
• 203 for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every
602 herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own
369 "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant
613 herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an
*278 agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like
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*759 the female moving away to her husband's parish, is
• 203 generally cut off from this reputation. Thus, the her-
369 balist in the town must most often establish this professional existence and reputation de novo. There is no way in which he can stimulate clients to come his way other than by empirical proofs. If his therapy is directed against an ailment for which even expert herbalist therapy promises success in only a fraction of cases, or an ailment which is epidemiologically infrequent, his difficulties are so much the greater. Thus, in spite of Gondar's relatively great population, the town contains only a handful of herbalists of provincial-wide fame. These same considerations dampen the herbalist's readiness to acquire new disease-name specialties. In addition to the difficulties already noted in Chapter 2, such a therapist would likewise be forced to establish his new professional presence de novo, even though he enjoyed an already established reputation against another ailment.

*278 The contrast between the place of herbalist thera-
*759 pies in town and country has been most notably effected
369 by the relative accessibility of non-herbalist therapies in the town. This is a result of the concentration of non-herbalist practitioners in towns, and of the relative affluence enabling townsmen to purchase more expensive therapies.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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ments of Egyptians, Mahdists, and Europeans. His domestic policy was more concerned with the imposition of religious uniformity than with political transformation.

Menelik revived Tēwodros' policy of creating a band of generals loyal only to himself. He did this partly by raising capable men with no connections to high position: Rās Gobānā and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, two of his most important generals, were originally Galla prisoners. The power of the feudal chieftains he manipulated by traditional techniques, sending them to posts far removed from their home bases, and arranging political marriages. But Menelik did not decisively undercut the authority of the great provincial lords, and at his death the old political structure was still more or less intact.

The experience of these emperors was not forgotten by Haile Selassie, who seems to have made it his primary and unceasing ambition to assure his position by breaking down every sort of autonomous power where it previously existed or threatened to develop. Thanks to his policies of centralization and to modern means of transport and communication he was able to become more of an effective autocrat than any of his predecessors.

The main development during the period of his regency as Rās Tafari (1917–28) was the stiffening of his military posture. To start with he had the regional forces of Harar Province, formerly his father's governorship, which he had acquired through the favor of Empress Taitu (Menelik's wife) following Menelik's paralysis. He built up his strength by making improvements in Harar that increased his revenues and the number of his soldiers, and acquired fiefs elsewhere. Following the death of Empress Zauditu's commander of the imperial troops in 1926, he took command of these troops and brought some of his own forces into Addis Ababa. By 1928 he was strong enough to demand the title of *negus* from Zauditu and, as is well known, acceded as emperor upon her death two years later.

[204] During these years Rās Tafari was gradually promoting the idea of a transformation of the position of the old nobility. As early as 1926 a letter published in his weekly newspaper, *Berhānennā Salām*, suggested that the prevailing feudal system of provincial government be replaced by a system based on salaried administrators.[55] An actual change of that order was out of the question at that time. A contemporary American observer thus described some of the obstacles:

> Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Guksah, chief of Amhara, Dejasmatch Ayalu, powerful head of Simien, Dejasmatch Gabra Salassy of Tigre, and Ras Kassa of Shoa, are supreme lords in the rough highlands of the north country. Far removed from the central authority, thirty to forty days' journey, some of them, they are out of touch—living in a different world from that of Addis Ababa. Hundreds of lesser chiefs rally to their standards, each

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Selassie I theater, and the secondary level art school.* Library facilities included the National Library, with some fifty thousand volumes; the University College Library, with about forty-five; and the reading rooms of the United States Information Service, the British Center, and the Soviet Information Service. The national library also contains a historical museum, and there is a handsome and well appointed archeological museum nearby, neither of which has so far been operated with a view to encouraging public attendance.

Except for occasional lectures sponsored by the national library and the University College extension program, none of the above institutions serves as a center for intellectual communication among adult Ethiopians. It was hoped by some that with the inauguration of the Haile Selassie I University, in December, 1961, a major new center of intellectual life would be created; but the government found it difficult to push ahead with its announced concept of an integrated institution which would operate autonomously and at a high standard.

Outside these institutions, moreover, there have been few channels of communication through which Ethiopian intellectuals can develop their minds and stimulate their imaginations. There are no periodicals to serve as a medium for such communication. One possibility, the *Ethiopian Observer*, is not quite an exception. Limited resources have kept it from operating at as high a level as available talent might permit, and its basically apologetic orientation renders implausible its claims to be "A Journal of Independent Opinion." The daily newspapers which feature contributed articles—the *Ethiopian Herald*, the *Addis Zaman*, and the Amharic sections of the *Voice of Ethiopia*—have tended to exclude pieces that have anything to do with highly controversial matters. Nor are there many social occasions for the serious discussion of intellectual matters. Professional associations, clubs devoted to intellectual matters, and even informal discussion groups exist not at all or else in a very haphazard form.

Contact with the intellectual world outside Ethiopia is almost as meager. Foreign-educated Ethiopians tend to become intellectually demoralized on returning home. The loss of a taste for reading has frequently been one of the first casualties experienced by Western-educated Ethiopians on return from abroad. Only a few hardy souls attempt to maintain some sort of link with the outside world, through subscribing to such magazines as the *New Statesman, Paris Soir*, or *New Republic*. For most of them, coming home means a cessation of the most elementary intellectual functions, other

* In 1963 an Institute of Ethiopian Studies was established at Haile Selassie I University, including a substantial Ethiopiama library and museum.

651 Import duties are collected on the relatively limited
439 routes of access to the country, e.g. on cotton sheeting, and on modern "luxury" items imported for Europeans in Addis Ababa.

202 Communications were recognized by both Emperor Menelik II and Haile Selassie I as one of the foremost bottlenecks. At the turn of the present century and in some areas even later, messages and orders from and to provincial administrators were still carried by the traditional runner on horseback, carrying the message wedged in the top of a cleft stick, which assured safe conduct even through valleys dominated by bandits. Menelik
206 II introduced telegraph and telephone service at least to the major provincial capitals, and this has been improved since, though the rural district headquarters often still are without either form of modern communication, not to speak of the rural hinterland.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

635 661 lived in passing and upon which he could levy purveyance. His passage was an affair of pomp, in which important ladies had to be considered and a retinue taken, which might swell to many hundreds of soldiers and servants with all their families, slaves, and transport animals. Such journeys were veritable expeditions, not to be undertaken lightly. A journey right across the country might take several weeks, and in parts the rains made travel laborious or impossible for some five months of the year. The difficulty of communication gave the governor an independence of which he made full use. Governors of ancient divisions with a tradition of autonomy and governors from the royal family were generally allowed to rule with little interference. In this century [177 206 507] the main provincial capitals were connected with Addis Ababa by telephone and this, with aeroplanes, which were just beginning to come into use before 1935, were the first threats to the isolation of the governors, which has since, in most parts, been so greatly diminished by the Italian roads. The Emperor had his agents who kept a watch upon governors and reported upon their doings; this kind of espionage was a highly developed system in Ethiopia. The governors on their side kept representatives in the capital. But this did nothing to overcome what several observers have remarked as the besetting sin of Ethiopian administration, the refusal to take any constructive responsibility. Governors of the old school were mainly concerned with the conservation of their own power, the collection of their tribute, and the fulfilment of their military duties. It would have been quite outside their range of thought to initiate new ideas of reform or to put down time-honoured abuses. Some of the governors spent much of their time at Addis Ababa and their deputies tended to be even more conservative in their use of authority than their masters.

635 Although the emphasis here is upon administration, it must not be forgotten that the governor was historically and in Ethiopian eyes primarily a high military officer and his civil duties were no more than the necessary accompaniment of his command. He had—as was shown anew in 1935—to raise and lead his provincial army in war. Some description has, however, already been given of the army, and there will be no need to discuss it further in this chapter except in the next section in relation to land tenure.

622 THE VILLAGE CHIEF

We have seen that by 1935 it was rare for a great local landed potentate to hold the highest provincial office; in most instances this was held by the Emperor's nominees. But this was not the only link the Emperor

203 Transportation of messages, until the recent installment of telegraph, was by messenger, and still is to a considerable extent. In the past, the king or governor would send an official messenger, ("melekt šätta") with the message wedged tightly in a cleft stick carried above the head while running, which assured safety to the runner.

Proclamation of decrees was and sometimes still is drummed out at the public market place, and only in the capital are public radio loudspeakers utilized. These decrees are heard in respectful silence, though unpopular decrees might, among Amhara, be followed by a delayed "murmuring", which, in the past, often led to local rebellions. Spies [208] of the government listen on such occasions to learn public opinion (astäyayät") in time.

211 Landmarks "for memory" are encountered frequently, and they partly take the place of inscribed monuments of cultures of greater literacy. Commemorative monuments in the countryside, called "mäsaläniya", take the form of conical piles of rocks, to which passersby add small rocks, so that one grows sometimes until no one remembers what the original event was. It may have been a battle, or the resting place of a saint. There are no name inscriptions, this being sometimes purposely avoided to prevent an evil spirit such as buda from fastening onto the name and doing harm.

212 To insure precision of communication in matters of culture focus, e.g. in religious communication, a combination of pictures and written words is used. This has developed the ancient comic-strip-type of illustration of religious scenes, mainly biblical, hagiological, and Abyssinian-National, found in canvas paintings on the walls of churches. The words spoken by the character are written into the empty space near the mouth. The scenery is starkly realistic. The style shows fierce concentration on the event depicted, without irrelevent background scenery; naivete, but body positions whown with realistic gusto.

788 the chest. The church is then "saluted" by kissing the wall, a ceremony called "sälam" in Geez. If the person wears sandals, he must remove them before entering the church itself.

[211] On the path near the church, or leading to it, there is often a conical pile of small rocks. This may indicate a church on a nearby hilltop, and this pile, "mäsalämiya", functions then as a poster of salutation. If the passerby is in a hurry on another errand, he may simply bow deeply in the direction of the church instead of going there to kiss the wall. In modern times truck-drivers will bow in that direction without stopping.

794 The individual layman usually belongs to a private sodality that holds private communion together. But he may, more informally, invite some personal friends on his personal Saint's day, especially his namesake's. Since this informal private communion is cheaper, costing only the price of a jar of beer and some roasted grain, it is more popular among the poor than the formal "mähabber" sodality. The informal private communion, called "zekert", is shared only by men, uses no drummer, no expensive wheat bread, no collection for a common purse, and usually only the personal confessor is invited from among the priesthood. But the zekert cannot be used as a means of gaining social prestige. [654]

795 e) Religious Syncretism.

Surrounded by Muslim and "pagan" religions, and

203 Transportation of messages, until the recent installment of telegraph, was by messenger, and still is to a considerable extent. In the past, the king or governor would send an official messenger, ("melekt šätta") with the message wedged tightly in a cleft stick carried above the head while running, which assured safety to the runner.

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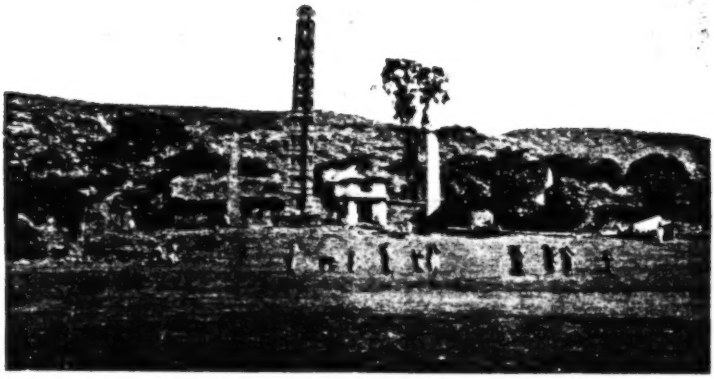

Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, monoliths

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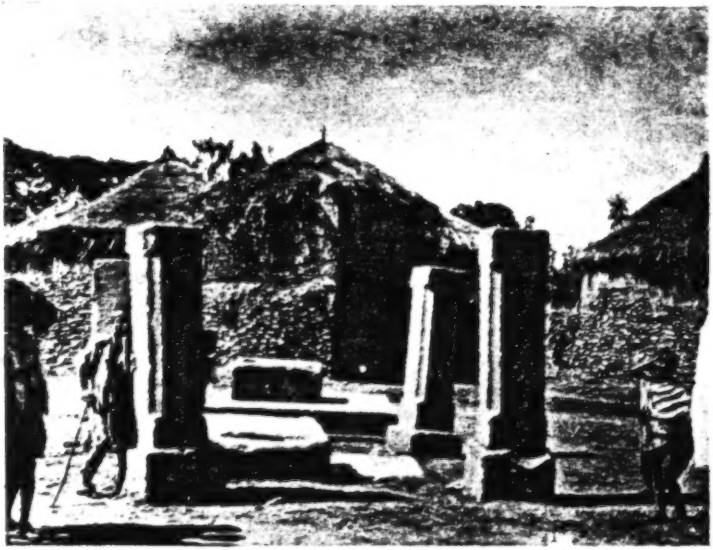

Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, King's coronation throne and four pillars, Abunas' throne in background

[Facing p. 13]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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speaking peoples, who have contributed such an important element to the populations of the Mediterranean basin.[1]

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I believe that the early civilized world of the valleys: Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus, which has been revealed by the researches and explorations of the last century had its background in the great ranges from which its peoples came. Professor Toynbee has pointed out that the regions of the Nile and the Mesopotamian valleys must have been areas of unhealthy swamp and wilderness when men first settled there.[2] Such terrain would not produce the conditions necessary to stimulate the multiplication of an indigenous stock. A terrain of this type would rather need clearing and developing by immigrants forced to find their living there after having been driven down from mountain areas by the pressure of increased numbers on food, which we have seen is a common characteristic of mountain economy. But just as the Highland migrant working in the field of American industrialism soon acquires new techniques and develops a higher standard of material culture than his brother who remains a crofter in Scotland, so the colonists of the Nile and Mesopotamian valleys far outpaced in material culture the inhabitants of the remote highlands of Ethiopia or of the Zagros and the Taurus.

There is one last point: the eighteenth-century prejudice against mountains, which influence still remains, tended to an exaggeration of the difficulties of mountain travel in primitive times. Yet the higher ridges of mountain chains often are the easiest lines of movement for men on foot. It makes possible the avoidance of forested valleys and ravines blocked by undergrowth and full of fevers. In England even our earliest forebears kept to the Downlands and trudged along the ridges to keep clear of the thick undergrowth and swamps of the low ground. And the so-called Alpine peoples kept to the mountain belt as they penetrated westward into Europe from the Highlands of Asia Minor through the Balkans to the Alps and the Pyrenees.

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In this connection it is possible to appreciate the essential importance of Aksum as an early cultural centre. Aksum is at the northern head of the route along the great Eastern Escarpment which leads into the heart of the Ethiopian Highland; at the same time Aksum is within easy reach of the Red Sea and the affluents which lead down to the Nile valley. There is a theory that the monoliths at Aksum are in fact the remains of a great Megalithic centre; the historic Aksumites merely made their own sculptural additions to the stone monuments which they already found in situ.[3] If we accept this theory we can see Aksum as a great centre of early megalithic culture having its connections with the reputed megalithic remains noted by recent Italian travellers in the region of the southern lakes.

[1] Abbé Morié, 'Histoire de l'Ethiopie,' vol. 1. Ethiopia was a term applied by ancient writers loosely and varyingly to all the northern half of Africa between the Atlantic and the Red Sea, and the term was even extended to Caucasian Colchis and to India. In fact mythical Ethiopia covered all that width of Africa and Asia where the Neolithic cultures first appeared. In classical times the name Ethiopia was applied to Nubia and the Sudan and it was only in post-Christian times that it was limited to the Highland area of modern Ethiopia.

[2] A. Toynbee, 'The study of history,' vols. 1/2.

[3] Sir E. H. W. Budge, chapter on Aksum in vol. II 'History of Ethiopia.'

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[For the religious functions of the dabtara in the Ethiopian church, see category 793.]

282 over the "alga" bedstead.

Sheepskins ("debdeb") are used as upholstery over the solid clay bench that runs along the inside of the Amhara hut, as cover for the children at night, or to protect a mule from chafing by placing the sheepskin under [291] the saddle. Other sheepskins, "agoza" or "dëbëlo", are worn by church students too poor to own a good toga. Several skins make a coat for an adult itinerant monk and, formerly, for the warriors.

[415] Goatskins, when little-worked, are used for water carrying ("qërbëta") on travel, or to store butter in. [212] The bladder is made into a little bag. But goatskins carefully and at length scraped and tanned are made into parchment for amulets and books, especially psalteries for the church. These yellow-brown parchments ("beranna") with religious or warrior-king texts were rolled into a goatskin cover. Since contact with European missionaries in the mid-19th century, the custom has been to sew parchment pages together on one side with a twisted gut, bind the book in this fashion within two wooden covers covered with a fed, tanned goatskin, on which a cross with even branches is impressed with a hot iron.

[531] In the same fashion scabbards of daggers are covered and ornamented with impressed, geometric lines. The tanned tailskin of a cow is used to cover a better walking stick, on which it gradually dries fast. Drums for [534] use in church (and formerly for royal proclamations) are made by tanned cowskins stretched over both ends of the wooden body. Finely tanned skins are used to cover the

643 Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1931 and 1955.

His "Solomonic Dynasty" claims descent from the Biblical Queen of Sheba, known to Abyssinian tradition as "Makeda", or "Azeb", and her son, Menelik I. The proper reference to the emperor is "Aṭse", to the empress, "Itēgē" (lit. Master, Mistress, i.e., of the country), used before the name. If no name follows the designation, the title "jan" is used (possibly from the Geez "dayyänä", he judges, or from the Cushitic "zehon", elephant, king of beasts). In address, the appelation used for the emperor is "Germawi hoy!" (Oh, Magnificence), formerly "Jan hoy!" (Oh, Elephant).

645 The Council of Elders, "chelot", referred to in village and town, also applies to the Crown Council of State. It consists, in addition to the emperor, of the Abuna, the archbishop of the State; those "ras" who have survived the centralization of recent years, notably the conservative kinsman of the emperor, Ras Kassa, and his liberal kinsman, Ras Imru; the powerful, reputedly chauvinistic, Minister of the Pen, Wolds Giyorgis; and several cabinet Ministers included more for decoration than expected contributions. Next to the emperor himself, this is the highest policy-making body at present, dominating, on important issues, the legislative, judicial and executive framework of the bicameral Parliament and cabinet. Serious problems discussed in the Crown
• 212 Council have ranged from disaffection in high places, to the question of whether or not the old Geez-Amharic alphabet of 276 and more syllables should be simplified

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

●212 to facilitate the teaching of Amharic to non-Amharic Ethiopians, illiterates, and for typing.

642 779 This latter change has not been made largely because of theopposition of the Abyssinian church. The Emperor is officially "Defender of the Faith". His connection with the church follows Old Testament patterns during the reigns of David and Solomon. The "tabot " (ark), which Emperor Menelik I supposedly spirited away from the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem to its secret place at Aksum, is regarded as guarding the liberty of the countryto this day. Church and State are thus intimately connected, and when Mussolini threatened Ethiopia, the Emperor and his chieftains swore to defend the "tabot" with their lives. After liberation, the Coptic Abyssinian church was reaffirmed as the State church, though weakened in its temporal powers(esp. feudal land tenure). When the last link with Alexandria was severed a few years ago, the Abyssinian church became fully the established state church.

173 The traditional epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty", the book "Käbrä Nägäst", is still honored officially, and taken literally by the people. It contains an extension of the Biblical story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to the court of King Solomon, and claims she conceived a son, Menelik I, the first Abyssinian ruler of the Solomonic Dynasty. The book may possibly date from the 13th century, justifying the resumption of this dynasty.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

872 Maryam", "Mälka Iyasus". All of these are basic devotion-
[538] al liturgy.

[212] It is noteworthy that there is usually no formal training in writing at all, for fear of misuse. Individual students can take the initiative of finding a private tutor for writing.

At this point the local schooling ended, usually after about three years. In the past, only church students travelling to canters of learning went beyond that level. Only they learned to understand what they were reading.

874 On this higher level, church students read Geez
538 literature such as Miracles, Lives of Saints, "Gädel", "Tamarä Maryam", "Gänzät", "Mar Yes-haq", and Ethics, "sirak". Also church homilies, "dersan", containing doctrine, "dersät", composed by a saintly author, "Därasi". Important is the book "bal abäw" a combination of homilies of Greek, Coptic, and Syrian church Fathers, probably translated from Arabic to Geez in the mid-15th century under Emperor Zara Yaqob.

874 Those proceeding still further divided into specializations (sort of electives). Some specialized in devotional poetry, including compositions, for about 3 years--"qenē". Others specialized in "zēma", for which they had to be talented with a musical ear to distinguish the musical notation of "degwa", "somä degwa", "me'raf", "mäwasat", "zenmarē qeddasē säatat". Still others specialized for a minimum of three years in religious philo-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

779 the nation in Western patterns.

659 (1) The use of the church in promoting Amhara-

[721] dominated Ethiopian nationalism. This was recognized and promoted by Emperor Menelik II who had priests carry the "tabot" into newly conquered Galla, Sidamo and other pagan and semi-Muslim areas of his new empire, giving his

[566] military conquests the character of a crusade. Churches were built in these areas, guarded by troops of occupation, made permanent by feudal grants under which the local population, made "gabbar" serfs, was permitted to remain on the land as sharecroppers and peons of the feudal church.

This use of the church has been continued, though with reduced feudal emphasis, by the present emperor.

[212] The Geez alphabet of the church, modified in Amharic usage, is the only alphabet even non-Amharic-speakers may use, if they wish to write their languages, particularly in

[643] print. By taking on the name "Haile Selassye" (Power of the Trinity), upon coronation, the present emperor re-emphasized the power of the church. Finally, on November 4th 1955, when the new liberalized Constitution of 131 articles was proclaimed, it reaffirmed that the Ethiopian "Orthodox" Church, founded in the 4th century on the doctrines of St. Mark, is the established church of the state.

659 Phase (2), begun by the present emperor as his

178 power increased, was a concurrent weakening of the temporal power of the church. At first this was gradual. In

500 prevail.

871 Most elementary school graduates from the provincial capitals
465 do not continue to Addis Ababa for a high school education, for they can obtain good and honorable positions, paying ETH$125.- (US $50.-) per month in the same town, as teachers, municipal clerks, with a good chance to be appointed to judgeship soon if they cultivate the right persons in power with "daj temat". Even Students who "flunk out" in the 7th or 8th grade can earn ETH$100.- as teachers of lower grades, or as low-grade clerks.

872 One old tradition which has broken down in the modern elemen-
212 tary schools but not in most church schools, is the prohibition of
178 extra-curricular writing. In the higher church grades, in which students' piety was already confirmed, especially in the monastery schools, copying psalms, gospels, (and by extension, government documents), was permitted, practiced, even regarded as praiseworthy. But there was, and in rural areas still is, fear that less pious students would use their knowledge of writing to experiment with magical formulae, doodlings, etc., creating dangerous mischief.

Therefore, parchment goatskins and writing equipment were carefully kept away from students of village church schools, and they were not taught to write. Thus, achievement of the skill of a scribe, "dabtara", required considerable individual initiative and study away from home.

212 However, boys at the "experimental" age of childhood, would
857 amuse themselves with the forbidden game of writing and doodling in secret, and they still do. Their work can be seen scribbled even on the outside walls and posts of some churches, a daring prank, sometimes in imitation of the church painter. More often

212 boys playing in the bush write on broad leaves; or on the sun-
857 bleached shoulder blades of dead oxen or donkeys cleaned up by hyenas, vultures and ants; or even scratch letters on their own dark skins with a thorn, preferably on the underside of the arm where it can be hidden more effectively. Sometimes rocks, charcoal and iron scrap provided tools or background for writing experiments.

Boys are very proud of this achievement, and tease illiterates, particularly shepherds who have not attended school, by writing or [524] speaking phrases of Geez. Sometimes schoolboys use riddles, which they have memorized in school to memorize arithmetic, such as:

"(Question) What is two?
(Reply) Udder of female donkey;
(Question) What is four?
(Reply) Udder of cow."

[198] In reply to this teasing, illiterate shepherd boys make up "secret languages" of their own, by interlacing letters between syllables and speaking rapidly (much as zar doctors in the zar cult).

3. The Age of Obedience: Adolescence.

882 The age of experimentation, in which liberties taken by youngsters are often condoned, comes to an end as soon as puberty is reached. Parental authority, particularly that of the father, is more frequent and intense over the activities of the adolescent than over the peer-group child. The sexes are more sharply divided, no longer engage in experimental play activities in groups, and the patterns of flirting become more culturally structured, less random, and more personal. The adolescents are made to feel more "rule" conscious. With the awkwardness of adolescence comes a sudden shyness,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART V : INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

156 Social stratification and kinship relations dominate interpersonal relations in Amhara society, and, though they put their stamp also on segments of the Amhara cultural pattern, they do not limit the corresponding artistic expression as much as one might expect. Thus, while Amhara artistic expression shares much of the "formality" of the rest of the culture, it evidences considerable potentialities for individual initiative, particularly in non-material expression such as games of intellect.

538 Material culture has not been much developed among the Amhara; artistic expression also has many of the usual characteristics of a [212] non-literate society, since literacy has traditionally been limited to a small minority of the population. This has led both to a reinforcement of formality in literature, and to a playfulness in oral artistic expression which remained unfettered.

1. Communication and Interpersonal Relations.

203 Communication "by grapevine" is still the major method of dissemination of news, rumor, and entertainment. Feudal lords in the past would even make use of "musical signatures" which identified the sender: to prove that a message was actually sent by the sender, the messenger was taught a secret musical note like a code, which identified the master. There was considerable suspicion about interference with
212
203 messages by enemies, who might alter them, so that, when messages were written, the scribe was careful not to leave a margin at the bottom, lest an enemy intercepting the message might add harmful statements falsely reflecting on the sender (e.g. his loyalty). Since most writing was done by formal, professional scribes, and Geez square writing was used, handwriting was not considered sufficient safeguard for identification. This pattern of leaving no margin persists to this day.

203 Transportation of messages, until the recent installment of telegraph, was by messenger, and still is to a considerable extent. In the past, the king or governor would send an official messenger, ("melekt ätta") with the message wedged tightly in a cleft stick carried above the head while running, which assured safety to the runner.

Proclamation of decrees was and sometimes still is drumned out at the public market place, and only in the capital are public radio loudspeakers utilized. These decrees are heard in respectful silence, though unpopular decrees might, among Amhara, be followed by a delayed "murmuring", which, in the past, often led to local rebellions. Spies [208] of the government listen on such occasions to learn public opinion (astäyayät") in time.

211 Landmarks "for memory" are encountered frequently, and they partly take the place of inscribed monuments of cultures of greater literacy. Commemorative monuments in the countryside, called "mäsalänäya", take the form of conical piles of rocks, to which passersby add small rocks, so that one grows sometimes until no one remembers what the original event was. It may have been a battle, or the resting place of a saint. There are no name inscriptions, this being sometimes purposely avoided to prevent an evil spirit such as buda from fastening onto the name and doing harm.

212 To insure precision of communication in matters of culture focus, e.g. in religious communication, a combination of pictures and written words is used. This has developed the ancient comic-strip-type of illustration of religious scenes, mainly biblical, hagiological, and Abyssinian-National, found in canvas paintings on the walls of churches. The words spoken by the character are written into the empty space near the mouth. The scenery is starkly realistic. The style shows fierce concentration on the event depicted, without irrelevent background scenery; naivete, but body positions shown with realistic gusto.

212 Communication among the Amhara can be said to be formal on all
195 matters of culture focus. Writing is regarded by the Amhara as relegated to formal use, and schoolboys were penalized for experimenting with it informally. Language, however, being oral and thus less controllable, compensates for this; and artistic expression and experimentation make free and often playful and inventive use of the lexical, grammatical, and syntactical raw material of language.

A. The Raw Material of the Amharic Language Put to Use.

a) Historical Development

197 Much of the lexical matter and most of the grammar of the Amharic language, also the basis of the alphabet that it uses, are derived from Geez, one of the South Arabian languages of about 500 B.C. The term "lisana Geez" the language of the Geez, has, among Abyssinians, the connotation of "language of the free men", i.e. conquerors. Linguistic scholars have raised the question whether one single language, Geez, was imported from Southern Arabia about that time, or whether different, possibly related, languages came from there via separate channels at different times. The latter theory seems more likely, and Amharic may owe the Semitic part of its character to a sister language of Geez, rather than to Geez itself (footnote 85). But the Amhara firmly believe in the derivation from Geez itself - and directly.

197 Whether directly or indirectly derived originally, certain it is
192 that for many centuries and quite consciously even today, the Amhara have been borrowing freely and proudly from the Geez language any term useful particularly to express abstract concepts, in which Amharic is

Footnote 85 - Theory of Professor Marcel Cohen, quoted by Leslau Archaic Features in South Ethiopia. (See Bibliography).

197 sometimes poor, but Geez very rich. In fact, linguistic purists among
192 modern-nationalistic educated Amharas, urge rejection of foreign loan-words in favor of continued and even revived borrowing from Geez cognates.

212 The Amharic script, largely derived from ancient Sabean characters, is, unlike other Semitic scripts, written from left to right. The characters are syllabic, based on 26 consonants from Geez, plus 4 labiovelar diphthongs, plus 7 additional consonants added in Amharic and called "yäärab fidäl" (lit. the Arabic alphabet). These 37 consonants in Amharic are always written in syllabic form, combined with one of 7 vowal orders, so that students must learn a syllabic alphabet of 259 characters. There are also 20 symbols for numerals, which are still taught, and even printed in the modern press, and not replaced by the simpler Arabic numerals; though the latter have been recently taught. These characters and numerals are now printed on a sheet that also includes the Gospel of St. John, in Geez, and a photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie; pasted on a cardboard, this sheet is now carried to school by the young students.

197 Amharic also derives a considerable part of its raw material from
192 Cushitic languages spoken in Ethiopia prior to (and after) the Semitic colonization, perhaps more so than any other Abyssinian language (footnote 86). From these Cushitic sources Amharic obtains part of its vocabulary (especially most of its terms relating to concrete matters),

Footnote 86 - Leslau: Southeast Semitic
Leslau: Observations on Gurage Documents
Leslau: Review of Cohen's Nouvelles Etudes d'Ethiopien Meridional
Cohen, M.: Traité de la Langue Amharique
Houghton: Aspects of Amharic

193 (E.g. instead of "the man who came", Amharic constructs the sentence "who came the man".)

212 . Orthography shows considerable ambivalence of choice, perhaps due to the later influences of Arabic and to the Amharic additions to the Geez alphabet. Thus, interchanges of "q" and "g", "t" and "t", "m" and "n" are common among consonants; "ä" and "i"; "e" and "e" and "a" somewhat less commonly exchanged among vowals. This confuses the root, vowel and tense indications for the foreigner, and even Amharic-speakers when discussing a matter not commonly discussed, may misunderstand each other because of these interchanges, especially if they come from different regions.

c) Regional Variations.

197 Part of the wide variety of regional linguistic differences among Amharic-speakers is due to the long, conservative, provincial semi-isolation. Some of this is not much different from provincialisms in rural Europe; so that the pronounciation of even common words such as "aydälläm" (he isn't here) identifies the Amhara from Shoa, "aydällämm" from Begemdir province (Gondar). But a much greater part of the regional differences is due to the fact that for many centuries, perhaps millenia, the Amharic speakers of Begemdir (Gondar) and Gojjam provinces have been exposed to "old-Cushitic" languages such as Agau, while the Amhara of Shoa province has been exposed to "new-Cushitic" languages such as Galla.

The Abyssinian of Tigre province, whose "Tigre" or "Tigrinya" language may be a closer derivative of Geez than Amharic, has long maintained Semitic ties through continued influence of developing Arabic from Yemen and the Red Sea, and has in turn affected the inland Amharic of Semyen-Begemdir, whose people shared Abyssinian religion and culture. Western Amharas, e.g. in Gojjam province, but also in the trading center of Gondar, have been affected by vulgate Arabic spoken

643 Addis Ababa. He has repeatedly urged the Abyssinian clergy to
178 take up the practice of preaching in church, on such subjects as
779 reduction of the violent mourning for the dead and the ruinous "tazkar" memorial feasts; and admission of women into the church building. In Addis Ababa, a few modern-style churches have agreed to do this out of respect for his presence. But the provincial churches have retained their sacerdotal character and have not, except on occasions of brief imperial visits, adopted these innovations. The clergy has also resisted (by means of the "inertia" previously described) the urgings of the emperor to convert masses
[797] of the "lower" ethnic groups to Coptic Abyssinian Christianity. Only sporadically have small-scale conversions taken place. The emperor seems to recognize the value of expanding the nominal State Religion, Coptic Abyssinian Christianity, to a real national church, as a pillar of national solidarity and national loyalty.

178 The new élite, small in number, but actively supporting the
212 emperor's policies, and even occasionally beginning to become impatient with the circumspection and quiet, indirect, subtlety of Emperor Haile Selassie, has for some years raised the issue of the simplification of the Amhara alphabet. They had assumed that there would be much less opposition to such a worthwhile change than to big issues like abolition of the "gabbar" and changes in land tenure. The present alphabet, which consists of 259 syllables composed of 37 consonants and a minimum of 7 vowels, makes it difficult to teach writing to illiterate adults, children, and non-Amharic speakers, or to design typewriters. But the new, young, modern elite could not have been more mistaken in their optimism. The matter became a cause celebre, despite the fact that the proposal, published in 1948 in an Amharic booklet "Reform of the Alphabet",

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 and signed modestly and anonymously "The Friends of Knowledge",
212 had been published under the auspices of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. It had been authored by the Amhara (modern-minded) noble, Ras Imru (later ambassador to the USA), the Amhara historian-grammarian Blatta Marze Hazen, and a Western scholar affiliated with the American National Council of Churches of Christ.

The conflict arose largely from the fact that most Amharic letters are directly derived from the old Geez, considered sacred because church liturgy and literature are written in it. Therefore, the Abyssinian church rejected the idea of alphabet reform as sacrilegeous. The emperor decided to postpone action indefinitely. (footnote 139).

178 It is this opposition, concentrated in the old Amhara nobil-
563 ity and clergy that has given opportunity to the loyal Galla to affiliate themselves more closely with the central government. Their modern-educated sons serve in high positions in the imperial bodyguard, army, and provincial administration. By affiliating themselves with the central government, the Galla obtain protection against the exploiting rural Amhara gentry. From the point of view of the modern central government such loyal support is greatly needed. From the point of view of the provincial, traditional Amhara, however, every young modern official sent from Addis Ababa, is now nicknamed "Galla", even if he is an Amhara.

181 Meanwhile the new elite has itself developed an indirect means
178 to introduce a new value complex, at least in Addis Ababa. This is called "<u>seltaney</u>", which formerly meant politeness, refined and re-

<u>Footnote 139</u>: Leslau, Wolf: La Réforme de l'Alphabet Éthiopien. (in) Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, vol.12,1953,pp.96-106. Rome.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 212 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner [516] gives the impression which I eannot describe better than by the word fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. [145] Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This [302] gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 is painted, it is not certain whether it is stone or wood. It has two sets of cloisters round the body of the church, both 346 covered in, and much painted with figures of apostles, 532 patriarchs, prophets, and many things of the Old Law, and 353 many angels, and St. George on horseback, who is in all the churches. This monastery also possesses a great cloth, like a piece of tapestry, on which is the crucifix and effigy of Our Lady and the apostles, and other figures of patriarchs and prophets, and each one has his Latin name written, so that no man of the country made it. It has many small and ancient pictures, not well made, and they are not upon the altars, for it is not their custom: they keep them in a [212] sacristy, mixed up with many books, and they bring them out on feast days. There is in this monastery a very large kitchen and bakehouse, also a very large refectory, in which 792 they eat. They mostly eat three and three[1] in a large dish, 262 it is not deep, but flat like a tray, and their food is very [264] poor. The bread is of maize and barley, and other grain which they call *taffo*,[2] a small black grain. They make this bread round, and of the size and roundness of a citron,[3] and they give three of these to each friar: to the novices they give three loaves to two of them, it is a matter of amazement how they can maintain themselves. They also give them a few vegetables, without salt or oil. Of this food they send to a great many old pensioners, who do not come to the refectory. Besides seeing these things when we 792 buried Matthens, I saw them many times, because I came there to pass time with the friars, principally on feast days, when we were near there. In this way I learned about them and their property, and revenues and customs. In my opinion there were generally always a hundred friars in this

[1] By threes.

[2] Mansfield Parkins calls it teff, the species of corn most esteemed in this country.

[3] Zamboa, not referred to in Selves' translation.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

164 There are many lepers in this country, and they do not live separated from the people, they live all together; there are many people who, out of their devotion, wash them, and tend their sores with their hands.

231 There is a great quantity of honey in all the country, and the bees are not in hives, but inside the houses, where the cultivators live, clinging to the walls on the inside, where they have a mode of egress outside, and also inside they surround the house: but they do not on this account desist from dwelling in the house, because the bees go outside. There are a great number of these swarms of bees, chiefly in the monasteries, there are also many in the woods and mountains, and the men put hives near the trees and fill them with bees, and bring them in them to the houses.

346 Since no one sits in the churches, at their doors outside of them, and within the circuit, there are always a great quantity of staves with cross pieces like a .....[1] or cripple's crutch, and each one takes his staff and leans upon it as long as he is at the offices of the church. In the churches there are many effigies painted on the walls. Effigies of [532] our Lord and our Lady, and of the apostles and patriarchs, and prophets and angels, and in all the churches St. George. They have not got solid images. There are many books in [212] the churches all written on parchment, because there is no [191] paper there, and the writing and language is Tigray,[2] which is that of the first country in which Christianity began.

In this country they are not accustomed to write to one another, neither do the officers of justice write anything. All the justice that is done, and what is ordered, is by messengers and speech. I say only that I saw the property of Prester John written down on being delivered up and received.

554 There would be much fruit and much more tillage in the country, if the great men did not ill treat the people, for

[1] *Taku.* [2] *Tigia.*

191 Ethiopian Folktales Ascribed to the Late Nineteenth Century Amhara Wit, Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna:—Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia today, is gradually be-
212 coming the *lingua franca* of the empire. Until recently it was spoken mainly on the fertile
538 highland plateau of central and northwestern Ethiopia, in part of what was formerly known as Abyssinia. Predominantly Coptic Christian, the Amhara people have sacred writings in Ge'ez, old Ethiopic. Amharic has adapted this ancient script to its own use. The folklore of the Amhara is mainly oral (except for religious texts) and represents a crosscurrent of Middle Eastern and African cultures. Traditionally, Amhara society was one of priests, feudal
[565] lords, and peasants. Lower on the social scale were non-Coptic ethnic groups who performed such important economic functions as ironsmithing and pottery-making.

538 This is reflected in the folklore. On non-religious, everyday subjects, the wit of the Am-
522 hara is peasant-like, earthy, full of tales of Rabelaisian appetites and sly solutions to human
193 problems. The Amharic language lends itself readily to puns and hidden meanings, since many verbs can have double or triple interpretations due to the hidden variations in the basic verbal stem and the absence or presence of gemination of some consonants. The listener must pay close attention. If he misinterprets the context and fails to discern the pun, he is often made the butt of the next tricky joke by those who have heard it before. The more a storyteller and wit masters the *sowaso* 'grammar' of the Amharic language, the better he can manipulate this humor.

538 A master of this art was *Aläqa* 'Chief' (an honorary title) Gäbre-Hanna, a contem-
159 porary of Emperor Menelik just before the end of the nineteenth century. As far as is known, he never put into writing any of his stories, witticisms, linguistic gymnastics, and philosophical puns. But to this day the peasants and even the nobles remember his stories well and tell them so often that a number of versions have developed.

He was a native of Gondar and had all the provincial pride of the "Gondarey" in the one-time greatness of this town and district that is now back country. He lived at the time the present capital, Addis Ababa, was being built and the King of Shoa had become Emperor of Abyssinia. Like many another "Gondarey," Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna pretended to disdain the newfangled importations of Emperor Menelik and the growing employment of subjugated Galla tribal chiefs at the imperial court. Jokingly, he took the liberty of referring to the Emperor's home province, Shoa, as "that Galla province." (Even today much
[191] Galliña is spoken there, a result of the sixteenth century conquest of the area by Galla tribes.) No one else would have dared such a remark, but he was popular with Emperor Menelik and especially with the Empress Taitu, and could tell them certain frank truths and tease them with irony in a semi-polite manner. However, he was not a court jester.

8: Rey G.-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-57 have been omitted from the files,- Analyst]

CHAPTER IV

SOME OF THEIR HABITS AND CUSTOMS

197 REFERENCE has already been made to the number of languages spoken in the country. Of these, the principal is Amharic, and of the Semitic languages of the world it is, according to Mr Armbruster, spoken by a greater number of people than any other, with the
● 212 exception of Arabic. Its difficulty may be gauged by the fact that there are over two hundred letters in the alphabet, and consequently the number of guides to the language guaranteed to teach it in half a dozen lessons by correspondence is limited.

I am bound to say, however, in mitigation of this apparently insurmountable barrier to learning Amharic, that these characters represent syllables and not letters, and are variations of about thirty-seven root characters.

197 The next most important language is Galla, a Hamitic tongue which is spoken and understood by all the different branches of Galla throughout the various districts inhabited by them; in addition Tigré is spoken in Eritrea, and Tigréin in the province of Tigré; both of these are Semitic languages, as is also the ancient Geze or Geuze tongue, which is to the Abyssinians much as Latin was to the English people in the Middle Ages.

805 But if their language is difficult their calendar is simpler than ours, for instead of having months of differing lengths, they divide the year into twelve

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[43]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

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* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 121 178 181 [212] [577] been employed as a medium for promulgating new ideas or discussing contemporary problems. Another feature of Amhara culture that helps to account for the mental inertia of the peasantry is its emphasis on the value of deference and obedience to authority. The Amhara typically rely on legitimate authority figures to define appropriate responses to new situations, and regard the delegation of powers as a diminution of the status of such authorities. The peasant has thus refrained from initiating changes in the public domain because the prerogative of taking initiative is generally reserved to ecclesiastical and political authorities.

*565 121 177 178 *Receptivity to Change*

Consideration of the peasant's readiness to follow the lead of legitimate authorities already points to an inadequacy of the second stereotype we have mentioned: that which sees the peasant as hopelessly ignorant and backward, hence intractable from the viewpoint of a program of modernization. For while the Amhara peasant is likely to resist the efforts of some unknown official from Addis Ababa to introduce change in his local environment, he does tend to follow the directives and imitate the example of the local authorities whom he knows and who shape the course of decisions and sanctions at the [137] local level. Thus it is, for example, that the eucalyptus tree—imported by Emperor Menelik, taken to the provinces by nobles, and eventually planted by individual peasants—has come to dot the Amhara countryside. How quickly such change can take place is shown by the recent acceptance of photography in many provincial regions. In 1950, peasants in many Amhara areas strenuously objected to having their pictures taken, in part at least for fear of the camera as bearer of the evil eye. By 1960, visitors to some of these same areas were being deluged with requests for photographs. In the interim these peasants had been exposed to numerous photographs of the Emperor and high government officials and had observed their local authorities seizing every chance they could to be photographed.

Yet it is clear that the Amhara peasant will not imitate everything that is accepted by his traditional authorities. When a new custom strikes him as too outlandish his resistance can become adamant, as was abundantly demonstrated when the court of Susneyos carried out its ill-fated conversion to Catholicism. In analyzing the peasant's receptivity to change it is important to distinguish as independent variables: (1) the degree of acceptability of the *agents* of change, and (2) the extent to which the proposed change is congruent with traditional beliefs and values.

The whole question of the nature of peasant opposition and receptivity to modernizing programs may be discussed most realistically by focusing on [144] a concrete area of attempted change. The material I have assembled is most detailed for the case of public health, an area to which the government has

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 The *dabtarā*'s way of life is more variable than that of the monk, his possibilities for income more diverse than those of the priest. He may be attached to a church as a chorister and receive a share of the church's revenues, as do the priests. Or he may donate his services to the church and earn his living [212] by secular employment. He may work as a scribe at the court of a king or nobleman. He may spend most of his time teaching, gaining support from some large church or monastery. Like many priests he may cultivate land. [434] In any case, he is likely to derive some income from the sale of amulets and from medical therapies. Some *dabtarā* are even said to have wandered about the country as hunters, performing magical services for clients as they go.

Dabtarā are not set off from the populace by special insignia. Some wind [292] a turban around their heads, as do many priests; but others may dress like ordinary peasants. If holding more prestigious posts they may be seen with fly-whisks or wearing a *barnos*. But they are known by the people, who fear [789] and respect them. They are feared because of their magical powers, which are believed capable of rendering bullets harmless and turning *ǐnjarā* to dust. [554] They are respected because of their learning, for they are the only educated status group in traditional Amhara society. If the commoner's relatively [195] impulsive *manner* of speaking is contrasted with the quiet reserve of the nobility, his relatively simple *language* is contrasted with that of the *dabtarā*, who is noted for a studied and circumspect use of language (*qāla-dabtarā*) and for larding his Amharic with literary (i.e., Ge'ez) expressions (*ya-dabtarā amārǐññā*).

793 554 183 In the case of the religious elite, then, status is in all cases achieved. While there is a natural tendency for sons of priests and *dabtarā* to follow their fathers' example, they arrive at the status in question only by fulfilling the same norms that are applied to the sons of laymen. These norms, however, differ among the different groups within the clergy. Investiture by an authority emanating from the seat of religious charisma, the Alexandrine Patriarchate, and the related ritual requirement of marriage with Communion, were the basis of priestly status, almost irrespective of the personal attainments of the candidate. Personal attainments were *all* that mattered, on the other [792] hand, in the case of monk and *dabtarā*, but they differed radically for the two statuses.

793 792 554 The qualifications and characters of monks and *dabtarā* are almost diametrically opposed. The monastic state is entered only by means of a sacred rite; the *dabtarā* is in no way ordained, and might even be a "defrocked" priest. The monk's life is normally given to sensual renunciation; the *dabtarā* is normally an acknowledged sensualist (as appears, for example, in the proverb *ḳa-mesā ya-talaya dabtarā / yādargāl serā* ["a *dabtarā* who is kept from lunch / will work intrigues"][48] and in stories which celebrate the *dabtarā*'s use of his knowledge for private erotic ends). In the monk the virtue

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 than those necessary to perform their jobs. They do not attempt to maintain and build personal libraries, though there are a few exceptions to this. The [443] three small bookstores in Addis Ababa offer only the most insubstantial fare.

571 Nor, finally, have more than a handful of private individuals taken upon themselves the charge of a scholarly or literary calling. Although Marcel 538 Cohen heralded the birth of a printed literature in Amharic as early as 1925,[58] writing is still not very important on the Ethiopian scene.* The output of [214] original books and pamphlets in Amharic averaged less than fifteen a year over the past two decades. The presses and bookstores distribute Amharic publications indifferently at best. Much of the literary impetus produced by the desire of many Ethiopians to write, and the obvious need for good writing that would address itself to the intellectual demands of the present generation, has been sapped by economic, political, and cultural factors.

571 The economic factors include the high cost of printing; the diminutive 538 market; and the absence of publishing houses. If an author wants to be read, 214 he must normally pay for publication himself. Those who cannot must either [213] find a patron in the Crown—frequently a highly lucrative arrangement—or resort to mimeographic duplication, or else remain unpublished. The censor- [656] ship system and anxiety about spontaneous expression of any sort which has been fostered by prevailing political conditions constitute additional obstacles to literary development.

571 The paucity of serious writing has been the result no less of prevailing 538 cultural conditions. The low intellectual level of his potential audience, the absence of channels for criticism, and the dearth of precedent make it difficult for the Ethiopian writer to determine good standards of writing. The [197] confused state of Amharic, owing to regional variations and the absence of [192] consensus on neologisms and loan words for expressing modern concepts, poses many problems on the level of sheer vocabulary. The temptation to get into print quickly, if the financial and politieal barriers can be hurdled, exceeds the temptation to work long and hard on an opus of quality. The desire to pontificate frequently eclipses the quest for understanding.

Those conditions which have inhibited the growth of Amharic literature—poverty, governmental reluctance to provide sufficient freedom and support, the newness of the modernizing culture, and the motivational level of the intellectuals themselves—may be viewed more broadly as responsible for the 571 relative barrenness of Ethiopian intellectual life as a whole. Insofar as these conditions change in the coming decades, a radical change in the quality and organization of Ethiopian intellectual life may be expected. As a sociological

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[178] * This is no longer due, however, to the negative attitude toward writing as such which was dis- [212] cussed in chapter iii. That traditional inhibition has been largely removed—primarily, it seems, by the postwar requirement that all legal accusations and court proceedings be set down in writing.

*755 *793 ensorcelling spells and rituals is mainly limited to
certain debteras, the Coptic scholars among whom the
*755 ganel's human intimates are also found. Since laymen
539 are generally illiterate and unfamiliar with the litur-
• [212] gical language (Ge'ez) in which spells are composed, they
are unable to master the long lists of magical names and
injunctions which are associated with powerful spells.
Consequently, although laymen occasionally own ensor-
celling spells and rituals, these spells are generally
abbreviated and invariably weak. In addition, lay-
owned spells and rituals are usually obtained from
questionable sources, since the layman is unlikely to
possess a medium appropriate for "purchasing" such
knowledge.

*753 Human illness-causing powers may be inherited or
754 congenital, as well as learned. In Begemder Province, in-
herited powers are limited to budas, Falasha wer-hyenas.
The buda's dangerous abilities reach full potency after
pubescence, when the hyenas' nocturnal cries compel him
to spend the night with them feasting upon disinterred
human cadavers. At dawn, the buda returns home, assum-
ing a benign demeanor until his morbid attentions are
[826] fixed upon a living victim. Many of these are persons
+ [192] of "good blood" (tiruw dem sew), individuals who have
inherited the light and unblemished complexion favored
by Amhara, although other attractive physical features

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 than those necessary to perform their jobs. They do not attempt to maintain and build personal libraries, though there are a few exceptions to this. The [1413] three small bookstores in Addis Ababa offer only the most insubstantial fare.

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth century: 175* 633 517 538 [539]

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts. 175* 633 517 53

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā*, or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā*. 175* 159 793 633

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām*, the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere. [535] [178]

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā [214] [538]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

423 'foreigners', and even though, within the group ownership, there was
461 individual and family ownership of the land.

The allocation of and the succession to the land was governed by ancient custom. This custom varied greatly because, as d'Abbadie said, 'In Ethiopia one of the despairs of the traveller, who thinks he knows the country, is to discover, sometimes by chance, that such and such a community, comprising a family, a part of a village, or district is of a different origin from the population which surrounds it.' In internal land and family matters, it would keep its own private law.[1] In some communities there were meetings at fixed intervals of three to seven years according to the region and at which the reallocation between families of the different types of land, which was in several categories according to its fertility, was arranged. Apart from these adjustments by agreement, land went from father to son. Land transactions were announced by the public crier and registered, generally by [217] entry in a Bible or other book, in the 'parish' church. The penal code [687] of 1930 decreed up to three years' imprisonment for failure to register transactions in hereditary land,[2] but this decree may not have been fully effective in the provinces by 1935. Transactions were always carried out before witnesses. These sometimes included young children who might [262] be given a feast of the delicacy of fried grain in order to fix the event in their memories.

Landmatters, indeed, were settled within such land-holding groups with little intervention from higher authority so long as all its members gave what was due to the government or to the representative of the government. Their relations with this representative would be through their family and the heads of their family group and it is obvious that a community with this degree of autonomy in the vital matters of land and tribute, in addition to the minor legislative and judicial powers already described,[3] might be regarded as largely self-governing in local matters. Such *restenya*, or hereditary land-holders, were further fortified in their position by the recognition of private property in the *Fetha Nagast*. In Menelik's later days, his council confirmed this position by a decree in which it was promised that except in cases of rebellion and treason even criminals should not be dispossessed from such tenure.[4] This provision was repeated in clause 9 of the penal code of 1930. It is probable that it was unbroken settlement by an Amhara tribal community which alone could offer effective resistance to royal and other pressure.

423 The Emperor would, however, seize every opportunity of breaking

[1] d'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 90. [2] Clause 458. [3] See above, p. 142.
[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 23.—*Clergy and government school students observing national holiday*

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FIG. 24.—*Inside a secondary school library*

[P. 142-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Selassie I theater, and the secondary level art school.* Library facilities included the National Library, with some fifty thousand volumes; the University College Library, with about forty-five; and the reading rooms of the United States Information Service, the British Center, and the Soviet Information Service. The national library also contains a historical museum, and there is a handsome and well appointed archeological museum nearby, neither of which has so far been operated with a view to encouraging public attendance.

Except for occasional lectures sponsored by the national library and the University College extension program, none of the above institutions serves as a center for intellectual communication among adult Ethiopians. It was hoped by some that with the inauguration of the Haile Selassie I University, in December, 1961, a major new center of intellectual life would be created; but the government found it difficult to push ahead with its announced concept of an integrated institution which would operate autonomously and at a high standard.

Outside these institutions, moreover, there have been few channels of communication through which Ethiopian intellectuals can develop their minds and stimulate their imaginations. There are no periodicals to serve as a medium for such communication. One possibility, the *Ethiopian Observer,* is not quite an exception. Limited resources have kept it from operating at as high a level as available talent might permit, and its basically apologetic orientation renders implausible its claims to be "A Journal of Independent Opinion." The daily newspapers which feature contributed articles—the *Ethiopian Herald,* the *Addis Zaman,* and the Amharic sections of the *Voice of Ethiopia*—have tended to exclude pieces that have anything to do with highly controversial matters. Nor are there many social occasions for the serious discussion of intellectual matters. Professional associations, clubs devoted to intellectual matters, and even informal discussion groups exist not at all or else in a very haphazard form.

Contact with the intellectual world outside Ethiopia is almost as meager. Foreign-educated Ethiopians tend to become intellectually demoralized on returning home. The loss of a taste for reading has frequently been one of the first casualties experienced by Western-educated Ethiopians on return from abroad. Only a few hardy souls attempt to maintain some sort of link with the outside world, through subscribing to such magazines as the *New Statesman, Paris Soir,* or *New Republic.* For most of them, coming home means a cessation of the most elementary intellectual functions, other

* In 1963 an Institute of Ethiopian Studies was established at Haile Selassie I University, including a substantial Ethiopiana library and museum.

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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Table 15: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Amhara

Month: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Month: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau	Annual Cycle of Amhara Ecological Activities (Economics, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Coptic-Abyssinian Amhara.	Cycle of Amhara Social Events	Syncretism	New, Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1 to Mäskäräm 30	Sept. 11 to Oct. 10	receding flood after rainy season; yellow "mäsqäl" daisy carpets land; spring ("tsädaye").	place beehive basket-work in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ("gai").	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ("yäMäsqäl Bäal")- public rejoicing around bonfire (dämmära). Minor: 1st Mäskäräm is St. John's Day. 11th: "Arafa" - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	Kin visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ("enqutatash") on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive promise of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		"Mäsqäl" is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
Teqemt 1 to Teqemt 30	Oct. 11 to Nov. 9	sunny growing & ripening season (ämänä sega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ("geba"), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ("tälla"); sell honey to make mead ("täj"); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Teqemt: St. Michael's Feast "Mikael"; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 5th: pilgrimage to "tebel" holy wells and waterfalls of Äbrä Mänfäs Qeddus (Abe).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ("gurmamosh") to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving "from Jarusalem".		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Teqemt 23rd).

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Hedar 1 to Hedar 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "tyëff" for bread; "nug" and "talba" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Hedar: "Mikael" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Qwusqwam"-clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Zion" Festival at Aksum; Nuns' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikael": fresh togas, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). 21st: Church student holiday.		
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 8	Summer ("balg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate scorched landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "tyeff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus" coming), esp. at Qulubi near Dire Daua. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Ledät", or "Gänna"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Gänna") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).		19th: Emp. Haile Selassi travels to Qulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional toga and Jodphurs.
Ter 1 to Ter 30	Jan. 9 to Feb. 7	Height of dry summer ("bälg"). Some sluggish rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shembera), plant (gomän) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ter is "Temqät"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially created pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Gezrät"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Giyorgis" (St. George) 21st: "Astäryo Maryam" (Mary)	Taxgatherers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("guga") women are coiffured, henna-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary among Falashas as harvest fest. 12th moonday	On Epiphany, Jan. 19th Pentecost (11th Ter), ("mayrär") Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in traditional costume.

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Yäkatit I to Yäkatit 30	Feb. 8 to Mar. 9	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adja gebs") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before lenten season) 11th-20th ("ebed amus").	Lenten Fast "kudade" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tom" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day Fast of Niniwah ("Tsomä Nänäwe"). 16th is feast "Kedana Mehrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and spices, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 16th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
Mägabit I to Mägabit 30	Mar. 10 to April 8	dry; burning of bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, because of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 19th "Debrä Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Aläm" =(Savior)	Youngsters pasturing cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
Miyazya 1 to Miyazya 30	April 9 to May 8	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bäga"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron plowpoints and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("hamamat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent,"seqlät" Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services eve of the 17th, Fassika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qetäma") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tehsaä") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season from Easter to heavy rains, so unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palms, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("qenchebt") games.	17th: Muslims (on Easter) celebrate "Sheykh Abader" water saint.	27th:(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("määlas bäal") entry into Addis Ababa

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Genbot 1 to Genbot 30	May 9 to June 7	light rains; spots of fresh, green grass (for pasturage nearer home). Storks fly northward.	Women prepare fuel for rainy season: deadwood; piles of sun-dried cowdung, coated with layer of mud. Caravans hurry home from Sudan, etc. Fish "senro" caught in rivers.	1st: Ledata (Birthday of Virgin Mary): After services, last, large, outdoor picnic, under "dass" shelter 24th: "Täklä Haymanot" day, pilgrimage to his holy well at Däbrä Libanos. Children sing of country's well-being to storks.	1st: Men and women celebrate outdoor picnic separately, but young folk meet while older ones feast on meat and barley beer.	
Säneye 1 to Säneye 30	June 8 to July 7	Heavy rains, winter "Kerämt" begin: fogs, storms, cold rain. Fishing season. Children are taught to swim before rivers are dangerous.	Intensive plowing of softened soil, seeding by broadcasting: barley, then tyeff, wheat. Beans and other garden crops are seeded and fenced. Fish is plentiful and cheap.	9th: Resumption of Wednesday and Friday "Fast of the Salvation" recessed since Easter. Clergy: "Faräqlitos" 6th-feast; 7th "tsomä hawaryat" - 1 month Fast of Apostles.	Master gives feast to retainers for plowing, "erf mätay", with fried fish, beer, "azmari" music, and "hotu" dance. Mutual aid in hut-repair.	
Hamlé 1 to Hamlé 30	July 8 to August 6	Heavy monsoon rains, sometimes tornadoes. sheets of rain almost daily. Cold	Indoor work; some minor hut repairs.	Intensive church school for boys, who are not needed at this season for any other work. Clergy: 5th: Fast of Peter and Paul ends month Fast of Apostles.	Standstill (e.g. of visiting) due to swollen brooks and washed-out paths.	16th(July23) Birthday ("Ledät") of Emp. Haile Selassie; praise hymns changed in churches.

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Nähase 1 to Nähase 30	August 7 to Sept. 5	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some sow a bit of "ïäff and "Adja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Selassye"); parade, despite rain, with "tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Buhe", "Debrä TaboP) feast, with torch-light parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeraf") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger childred badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his namesake; flags, etc.
Pagumeni 2 3 4 5	Sept. 6 7 8 9 10	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Nägadras" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "lefafa sedeq", screll; baths.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	

make a toga.

221 241 Since agriculture is a major concern, much of the annual cycle of activities is centered around it. With the onset of the light rains, fields left fallow the years before are redistributed among the members of the extended family of those who work the land. Fathers allocate fields to their newly married sons or to those who have an added child. The matted grass is plowed before the rains start--"tärättärä--plowing to kill the weeds in the sun; then a second, third, fourth time at right angles--"gämmäsä", "däggämä", "sälläsä". Then the turf is piled, dried and burned. The land is now ready, "masa" land", and when puffy clouds appear over the horizon in the morning, the farmer takes his plow to the field for rains will surely follow in the afternoon.

241 407 The plow is one-handed, derived from the ancient Middle East. The yoke, about 5 feet in length and 3-4" thick ("qämbär") is lowered behind the humps of two oxen. The plowpoint, held in place by two vertical wedges, is attached to the central stick, "manäqo". At first this plow, which is little more than a converted digging stick dragged at an angle, penetrates less than 6 inches, but after about 5 replowings, as deeply as one foot. The plowpoint is flat and cannot turn the earth.

241 Major procedures fall into the following categories:

preliminary plowing - "tällämä", cutting field into furrows, preparatory to seeding. Plow is led around large rocks and ignores small ones, so that

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and men who sleep there to watch, from fear of the animals 231
that roam about the villages all night: and if they did not keep this watch nothing alive would remain which they would not devour. The people who go to sow millet in the 241
mountains of Bisan belong to this country and the neigh- 221
bouring towns. The reason why they go and do it is this. 132
Here there are very numerous grain crops of every kind and nature that can be mentioned, as I have already said; and because it is near to the sea, by which go all the provisions for Arabia, Mekkah, Zebid, Jiddah, and Toro,[1] and other parts; and they carry the provisions to the sea to sell them. And because in this country the winters are divided into seasons, and the seed crops do not grow except with the rains, they go to sow these millet fields at the mountain of Bisan, where it is winter in the months of February, March, and April. There is this same winter in a mountain called Lama, in this kingdom of the Barnagais, which is fully eight days' journey from the mountain of Bisan. In another country, which is named Doba, and which is quite a month's journey from this lordship of Lama, there is winter in these same months. As for these millet fields, they require rains, and as these winters happen out of season, they go and sow them where it rains, and so profit by both winters. In this town of 346
Barua are two churches with many priests, one close to the 562
other, one is for men, the other for women. The men's church is called St. Michael, that of the women is named after the apostles Peter and Paul. They say that a great lord, who was then Barnagais, built the men's church, and [644]
gave it the privilege that no woman should enter it, except only the wife of the Barnagais, with one damsel, whenever she went to take the communion, and even she does not now enter the church, but takes the communion at the door in the inner circuit with the laity, and so the

[1] Mount Sinai.

severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably
[262] the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based in-
[164] gredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat.
[735] His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals,
*[192] and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain
(kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent
[164] wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints
*[192] (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint
(night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the
context of the student's nocturnal activities.

[231] There is also danger from animals, the vicious and
[735] often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs;
[776] from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting
[514] to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege
with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to
waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for noc-
turnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the excep-
tion of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's
patronage, or who receive parental support, the young
scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study
for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their
• [221] subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains
[222] have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure,
*[192] kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the
wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for

824 [283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called [324] "aräg", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and [293] grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

[372] Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

[386] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

● [222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by <u>collecting</u>, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Phytolacca Abyssinica).

824 281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[251] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

[263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshäm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

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wild blueberry - "agam", very common; with thorny twigs, resembling the sloe tree; found not far from rivers, on the woyna dega.

wild fig tree - "shola", or "warka", giant tree (ficus sycomorus) with small but very sweet fruit.

"qamma" - fruit resembling raisin, turns brown when ripe, sour, consumed as mild laxative.

mushroom - "enguday", or "anguday", with white bottom. Rarely eaten.

"awut" - common, reddish or white fruit of a nettle bush, of very low prestige and consumed only in time of famine; gathered in early dry season (Läskäräm to Ter).

Only lemons are consumed publicly without shame. They are purchased on the market. Bananas from the lowlands are also available to urban people, or "great men" who can afford them. Observers have suggested that the common nose-bleeding of Amhara may result from a Vitamin C deficiency, due to little fruit consumption.

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Collecting also provides such necessities as wild cotton in more remote areas (e.g. the Magnza district of Wolqait). Every housewife uses leaves of the "lola" bush in which to bake the festive bread "dabbo".

Wild honey is obtained from the wild bee called "tazzema" (Apis africans miaia), and used against colds as well as "heart ailments". More commonly, honey for making the alcoholic drink "tej", is obtained from a small, tiny-stinged bee (Apis dorsata), but since many of the bees are killed when they are smoked out, this process, too, is one of collecting rather than bee culture.

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825 223 goose "yebra" (anas aegyptiaca).

Quail - "derchet" Perhaps the most common wild fowl very near habitations, but rarely hunted because very small. It is considered a nuisance and a danger because of its habit of hiding in flocks in the tall grass and starting up suddenly, scaring horses and even mules, which is dangerous especially on steep hills.[59]

411 184 Spears, slingshot, and now rifles are used in part-time or sport hunting. Traps ("atmäd") and snares are used only by occupational hunting populations living in jungles such as Wolqait and whose pattern of living differs from that of typical Amhara.

222 [412] A noteworthy Amhara exploitative activity is the collecting of pumice rock in riverbeds during the dry season, and thus called "yäbahär dengay" (river rock). It is used 135 in grinding and husking. Gold comes mostly from south of old-Amhara territory, where it is found in sand gravels and has been sold in nuggets since ancient times.

241 D. Food Production and Consumption

a.) Agricultural production

In agriculture in general, there are two major variables: environment, and degree of sophistication - i.e. power and its application.

The ecology of Ethiopia's highland plateau, where

59. The English equivalent terms have been taken from Van Rosen, Björn: Game Animals of Ethiopia. 1953.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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262 pork, bat flesh, meat of wild birds, insects; and repulsive stuffs, such as cow or goat urine and donkey milk.

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• 222 Gathering, Processing, and Administering. The gathering of herbals for medicinal recipes assumes, first, accurate knowledge of their appearance and location. Many medicinals are exotics whose appearance and even whose names are unknown by most men; many of these must be searched out in distant and barely accessible corners of the highland plateau, others can be found only in the malarial lowlands. From the time an herbal is located until it is processed together with the remaining materia medica, it must be handled in a prescribed fashion. During gathering, while the herbal is being cut or pried from its natural surroundings, there is the danger that its latent curing powers will be lost. For leafy botanicals, particularly takiltila, precautions must be taken against diffusing these powers into the earth through some object simultaneously in contact with the botanical and the ground. Here, a weighted noose may be used. Many prescribed techniques of gathering are only loosely identified as precautionary, since the specific dangers each guards against are unknown. These techniques specify the equipment to be used, the quality of the gatherer, and circumstantial conditions. Thus, if a recipe requires that a branch be severed with a knife, it often adds that the instrument be unused, or made of a single piece of

*278 *222 iron, or in the "Arab" style, or the product of Falasha smiths, that it be double-edged, or have a handle of horn or some exotic wood. Similarly, recipes requiring roots may state that they be dug with a spade of specified characteristics, or with a digging stick of special wood. As for the gatherer, in some recipes, he is a vir-
[801] gin boy, in others naked or facing east. Circumstantially, recipes established the day of the week on which the herbal may be obtained, and numerological details, such as the number of locations from which a particular herbal is to be gathered, and the number of samples to be taken from
[788] each place. Finally, the gatherer may be required to recite, and perhaps repeat, a designated common prayer before cutting or digging the botanical.

*278 824 Once gathered, medicaments must be processed using the equipment and following the procedures specified by the recipe as being necessary for releasing the healing powers from their botanical confinement and for guarding them from dilution or loss. Botanicals may be required fresh or dried, crushed or ground or whole, soaked or decocted or simply mixed with other medicaments, strained through cloth or not further refined. Occasionally, recipes direct that medicaments be cooked with mead or distilled spirits, but it is the liquid (or tincture) which is discarded. In other recipes, botanicals, particularly leaves, require no processing other than being chewed or

*278 *759 874 [593] [604] Occasionally, an herbalist, particularly a medhaniyt awakiy, will utilize an apprentice as his medhaniyt korac. This is usually a close kinsman, a son or nephew, who has been taken to gather medicinals on previous occasions, and is thus familiar with their appearance and location. [222] As an apprentice, he relieves the herbalist of the burden of gathering botanicals, which often involves trips to the hot and malarial lowlands. At the same time, the apprentice gradually becomes acquainted with various pharmacological details of the therapy.

*278 *759 No terminological distinction is made between herbalists who rely on a medhaniyt korac and those who do not. The client, in fact, is usually unaware of the situation in specific cases.

*278 *759 778 *[192] Classed together with other herbalists is the maker of herbal amulets, the kitab kitabiy. In most cases, the herbal amulet (kitab) is part of a complex therapy which includes, as a final step, the presentation to the sickman of a leather pouch containing a sample of all or some of the ingredients of the primary medicine. The amulet is worn around the neck, on the girdle, or fastened beneath an armpit. In this context, the amulet performs a prophylactic function, for it protects the now vulnerable client against a recurrence of the ailment. Certain of these therapists also provide these prophylactic amulets to clients who have never ahd the ailment in

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*793 869 five weeks before it is ready to be woven into a tsifit, • 222 a food hamper and table around which the Amhara meal is eaten. Because the students cannot afford so long a hiatus from their studies, the grasses are dried only a week or so, in order to lighten them for the trip back [735] to the highlands. During their stay in the lowlands, the students support themselves by begging food from local farmers. Enterprising students often gather twice the amount of gramta they can carry, leaving the surplus to be taken up to the highlands in January.

*793 869 The gramta is brought to the student's hut at the kiyne school for storage and drying. Although the stu- [442] dents are anxious to sell immediately upon drying, both price and demand are low then, since the weavers, peasant [286] women, have no leisure for tsifit making until March. In *[192] the meanwhile, the student makes either traditional umbrellas of gramta for sale at the regional market, or seleyen, shrouds which he sells in the churchyard to mourners.

[434] Students also beg crops, a portion of which they consume and the remainder of which is sold at market. For a four week period, during October and November, the student begs a traditional double handful of pulses from farmers. During a two to three month period from February to April, students beg cereals and other crops (especially, cayenne). Because the amounts of produce

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825 lope, reddish, more shy.

Ethiopian klipspringer - "sässo", a little mountain antelope resembling the European chamois, with soft, smooth skin. The Amhara is amused by the curious habit of this sociable animal of mixing with herds of tame goats and grazing in their midst, when goats are taken to upper hillsides for pasturage in the rainy season.

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Waterbuck - "defassa", large antelope resembling European red deer in build. Brown color; hers of 5 to 10 usually contain only one old bull. Common near Lake Tana.

Reedbuck - "behor", golden-colored antelope, in bush near water. They like to inhabit a specific small territory, in herds of 5 to 10.

Ethiopian ibex - "walya", very wild, red-speckled, on the dega steep mountains of Semyen subprovince. Not common elsewhere.

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223 Francolins - "qoq" is the generic name for this family of common wild fowl of the woyna dega; resemble the partridge. Boys are adept at hunting them with slingshot and pebble and run after them until both are exhausted.

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Guinea fowl - "zegra" or "jegra", black, lean, fast runner, found near water.

Partridge - "sorän", common on woyna dega. Wild

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Quail - "derchet" Perhaps the most common wild fowl very near habitations, but rarely hunted because very small. It is considered a nuisance and a danger because of its habit of hiding in flocks in the tall grass and starting up suddenly, scaring horses and even mules, which is dangerous especially on steep hills. [59]

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The ecology of Ethiopia's highland plateau, where

59. The English equivalent terms have been taken from Van Rosen, Björn: Game Animals of Ethiopia. 1953.

224 One of the traits the Amhara shares with the older culture pattern mentioned above is contempt for those who live by hunting; though he is proud to show his prowess against major wild fauna such as the elephant, lion, leopard, rhinoceros ("awraris"), and, of course, human enemies. There is no pride in hunting gazelle and other food animals. They are left to lowland peoples or low-class ethnic groups [563] like the Woyto, who hunt the hippopotamus ("gummarēy") along the gorges of the Blue Nile (and formerly also on Lake Tana).

Hunting, in the mind of the Amhara, is connected with such low-elevation jungle areas as Wolkait, on the northwestern escarpment, where the ecology differs considerable from the highland. Here are thick forest stands, many wild fruits (such as the wild orange), much wild coffee. Cotton is one of the few crops grown there.

Until the reign of the present Emperor, decorations were given to heroes who had killed big game. In fact, up to the end of the 19th century one of the flattering terms of address to the king was "zehon", elephant, considered the king of beasts. (This has since been replaced by the address "Germawi hoy", "Oh Majesty").

224 Other game hunted in jungle-forest areas such as Wol-
136 kait include:

Greater Kudu ("agazän"), one of the largest antelopes in existence, described by Amhares as having the size and shape of an ox. European hunters have measured it as 60" at shoulder height.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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224

Northeastern Buffalo ("gosha"), fairly small in size, in wet lowlands.

Hartebeest ("tora"), a tall, slimmer antelope with inward-turned horns which the Amhara describes as being big as a zebra, dangerous, but becoming rare.

Wildcats ("demmat"), including the serval cat ("dero"), hunted for their skins.

Civet cat ("terin"), of the mongoose family, trapped for its musk gland.

Leopard ("nabber"), whose beautifully spotted skin is an export item.

Colobus monkey ("gureza"), now one of the protected animals, but still hunted freely in remote jungle areas for its black-and-white coat, sold freely even in the streets of Addis Ababa. From its tail hair the famous "chera" flyswitch is made for the nobles who can afford to pay for it, instead of the horsetail substitute. This coat is also exported.

823 The jungle is regarded by the Amhara as the place of refuge of dangerous bandits, outcasts, and rebels against noble chieftains and kings; also, as the place inhabited by socially inferior ethnic groups; and, spiritually, as the [772] place inhabited by many powerful "zar" spirits (see Part VI, Section 2.). who "ride" leopards and lions and "milk" female elephants.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

AE 563

practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

4. Occupational hunters: lowland border peoples; negroid ex-slaves; all non-Coptic.

AE 563 224

The occupational hunting tribes are considered the most primitive, as pre-agricultural and even pre-pastoral subsisters on the bush, jungle, river gorges and deserts. Among them are the Woyto, the hunters of the Hippopotamus, which is considered by the Coptic clergy especially unclean because of the similarity to the pig. Jungles like Wolkait, in northwest Begemdir, contain such despised and feared hunters, as does the eastern lowland desert of the Danakil (Afar).

AE 563 233

Considered on a somewhat higher level within these groups are the pastoral nomads like the Somali; some of the borana, and other southern tribes who, when they are better known to settled neighbors, are equated with class 2. When less well known, they are classed not much above hunters, and it does not matter to the Amhara that the pastoral nomads in turn look down on settled peasants.

AE 563 567

The lowest on level four are the ex-slaves, who are referred to as Shancalla if they look negroid, or the more general "barya", i.e. slave (name of a Sudanese border tribe). Only a very poor person, possibly an outcast, cripple, etc., of the two upper classes would consider marrying a Shanqalla. Nevertheless, because of the aforementioned concubinage with female slaves, there are Shanqalla outcrops among even the Amhara of Gondar. An offspring of such a union not infrequently does marry a Shanqalla woman, after converting her to Coptic Christianity. This is pos-

245 Planting of fruit is done largely in the qolla, outside Amhara areas: bananas, the large citrus("trengo"), mango, guava ("zäytun"), custard apple ("gishta") shaped like an artichoke. Cactus fruit grow wild up to the woyna dega.

226 [554] Fishing, interestingly enough, is not despised, because it is not considered a full-time occupation. It is limited largely to the 3-month rainy season, when rivers are full and fish is plentiful. The fisherman has another source of livelihood the rest of the year, and fishes to sell at the next market or merely to increase the family food supply.

Fishing is also much easier in the rainy season because the water is muddy and the fish cannot see the fisherman--who is clearly visible in the calm, clear waterholes during the dry season. A day's catch of 30 to 50 fish in the rainy season is not rare; in the dry season the fisherman may well come home empty handed. Therefore, in the dry season the occasional fisherman who does try, often uses fish intoxicants called "yasa maskäriya", especially the dried and ground "berberra" seed (Berebera ferruginea). Fishnets, "mäyaza", are used primarily. There is no concept of fishing for sport.

● 224 In hunting, when it is not done for major livelihood, the concept of sport does exist in Amhara tradition. The pride of the hunter who has overcome a major, dangerous game, has already been mentioned. The young sons of nobles were expected to prove their mettle against this big game, if no war-raid was currently available. Before

224 Before
535 going on an elephant hunt, for example, he performed the "boasting dance", "fukkara", largely with his shoulders and upper arms, predicting his feats; and his retainers honored him by declaring their confidence in his prowess, jumping up and down in the "hota" dance, chanting repeatedly:

[539] "Elephant-killer, (to) your home-
elephant-killer, take him home".
(Hunter:) Elephant-killer (I am), to home (I'll take him)."
(Retainers:)" When it (the elephant) will be moving,
he will kill it!"

224 The elephant-killer, considered braver than the lion-
554 killer, was called "addo" and given a special decoration to wear on forehead and upper arm by the king or feudal lord. A warrior who had killed a human enemy was called "geday" (lit. killer) and held prestige equal to the elephant-killer. Now that rifles are used in place of spears, such heroes have become more common and decorations among the Amhara have fallen into disuse.

224 Besides the big-game, edible jungle animals mentioned
825 before under "fauna", there are numerous wild game, mainly gazelles and partridges, hunted near human habitations to increase the food supply and for occasional sport:

Ethiopian duiker - "midaqwa", very common near habitations on the woyna dega, an antelope the size of a small goat, often approaching hamlets at dusk. It is considered the "cattle" of the zar spirits, and sacrifice to them is thus called "midaqwa".

[782]

Bushbuck - "demula", similar but medium-sized ante-

224
825 lope, reddish, more shy.

Ethiopian klipspringer - "sässo", a little mountain antelope resembling the European chamois, with soft, smooth skin. The Amhara is amused by the curious habit of this sociable animal of mixing with herds of tame goats and grazing in their midst, when goats are taken to upper hillsides for pasturage in the rainy season.

[233]

Waterbuck - "defassa", large antelope resembling European red deer in build. Brown color; hers of 5 to 10 usually contain only one old bull. Common near Lake Tana.

Reedbuck - "behor", golden-colored antelope, in bush near water. They like to inhabit a specific small territory, in herds of 5 to 10.

Ethiopian ibex - "walya", very wild, red-speckled, on the dega steep mountains of Senyen subprovince. Not common elsewhere.

825 223 Francolins - "qoq" is the generic name for this family of common wild fowl of the woyna dega; resemble the partridge. Boys are adept at hunting them with slingshot and pebble and run after them until both are exhausted.

[411 857]

Guinea fowl - "zegra" or "jegra", black, lean, fast runner, found near water.

Partridge - "sorän", common on woyna dega. Wild

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

563
692 ment, who approves appointment to Sharia and Qadi positions.

5. Structure and Function of the Coptic Church among the Amhara.

795 The importance of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia on the life of every Amhara, of all classes, rural or urban, can hardly be exaggerated. To the Amhara, "Amhara" is synonymous with Abyssinian Christian; and the [198] liturgical language used in the church, "Geez", with "language of the free". The term used for their religion is "täwahedo", often shortened to "towado", meaning "orthodox".

To the Amhara, his church is so closely connected with his attitudes to his country, his nation, his ethnocentrism, that the severance of ties with the mother Coptic Church of Alexandria, in 1948, passed almost [779] unnoticed. Only church scholars are aware that, as part of the larger Coptic church, the break with the Western church occurred after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., ostensibly because the Copts insisted on complete fusion of the person of Christ, refusing to accept the "union, but not fusion of Deity and human spirit" of the non-Monophysite faith in the formula he pronounces when [788] slaughtering a sheep or ox: "In the name of the father, [224] the son, and the holy ghost, one divinity." The pious hunter will hasten to the wounded gazelle to pronounce the formula before the animal expires, then finish it off by cutting its throat

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

804 night. And if it is distant they say, you will arrive in a *sambete*, that is a week, and so they define it according to the distances. When I said that from Barua to Barra there 484 were from three and a half up to four leagues, that was according to our opinion, and it would not be more. We afterwards travelled there many times, and we started from one town and dined at the other, and did our business and returned to the town we had started from by daylight. The people of the country reckon this as a day's journey, because they travel very slowly. Between these two towns [241] there is very remarkable country, tilled fields of wheat, barley, millet, pulse, lentils, and all other sorts of vegetables which the country possesses unknown to us. From the [361] road from one place to the other more than fifty towns are to be seen: I say large towns and very good ones, all on 224 heights. In these plains and fields there are herds of wild cattle, forty or fifty in a herd. It is a chase that is very pleasant for the Portuguese, but the country people are able to do them little hurt, although they receive from them much injury to their crops.

CAP. XX.—*Of the town of Barua, and of the women and their traffic, and of the marriages which are made outside of the churches.*

621 This town of Barua in which we were staying, and where later we passed more time, may have three hundred hearths and more, a great part of them belonging to women, because this is like a court in many respects. One is that people of the Prester's court never go from here, and as many as come are not without wives. The other is because this is the residence and seat of the Barnagais, and there are continually in his house three hundred mounted men and upwards, and as many more who come every day for

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

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goats, and sheep, and of much game of all sorts. In the river there is much fish, and many wild ducks of different kinds,[1] and on land much game of all kinds, such as wild cattle; in the plains hares in great quantity, so that every day we killed twenty or thirty of a morning, and that without dogs, but caught with nets. There are partridges of three kinds, which do not differ from ours, except in size and the colour of their legs. There are partridges like big capons of the same colour and fashion as ours, except that their beaks and feet are yellow. There are others the size of hens; these have red beaks and feet like ours. There are others the size of ours, not different in colour or in anything else, except that their beaks and feet are grey. To the taste all are very good partridges, as they are good in colour. They do not frighten them to the earth.[2] Wild hens cover the ground, quails are in infinite numbers, and so of all other birds that can be mentioned, such as parrots and other birds not known to us, great and small, and of many shapes and colours; birds of prey, such as royal eagles, falcons, hawks, sparrow hawks, blue herons, and river cranes, and all other sorts that can be mentioned. In the mountains are many hogs, stags, antelopes, gazelles, deer. It will be said, how is it that there is so much game on the land and fish in the river, when the country is so populous? I say that nobody hunts or fishes, nor have they engines nor devices, nor the will to do it; on this account the game is very easy to kill, because it is not pursued by the people. There are many wild beasts—lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, foxes, jackals, and other animals not known to us. I never heard that these wild beasts did any harm, although the people are in great fear of them; only in one place which is called Camarua, and which is about half a league from

[224]
[226]

[1] *Adens* and *marrecas*.

[2] *No las assombram a terra*: perhaps this means with a paper kite. This passage is omitted in Selve's translation.

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137 remedies. The nutmeg tree, tosiya, is also medicinal, and
824 the Kosso tree is widely used against tapeworm. Common sights include the reddish ret, a cactus; and just as soon as the rainy season ends, the yellow daisy, adäy abäba carpets the landscape, heralding the masqal holiday. Hence it is also called mäsqäl abäba. A study of the FAUNA connec-
136 tions between Ethiopia and surrounding areas contributes significantly to the understanding of Ethiopia's cultures from ancient times to the present.

The last remnant of the prehistoric belt of tropical forest that once stretched from Africa to India, is found today in Dhofar, Southern Arabia. There, in the Gara mountains, Bertram Thomas collected fossil fauna which is definitely Ethiopic and which also evidences links to southern India.[8] Animal husbandry in Yemen in prehistoric times was apparently based on hump-necked cattle of Indian origin. This cattle complex reached Africa late, probably as late
[231] as 1000 B.C.[9] To this day, the cattle of Ethiopia is hump-necked, though cave paintings clearly show domestic cattle without humps.

171 Social and religious regulations associated with the
231 cattle complex among the Cushitic-speaking tribesmen of southern Ethiopia, are very similar to sets of the same regulations among the Gara tribesmen of Dhofar. Both despise hunters and artisans, but also consider agriculture a most ignoble occupation.

8. Coon: Southern Arabia. Papers of the Peabody Museum, Vol.20., 1943, p. 209.
9. Ibid.

136 laying during the little and big rains. But
241 there are many variations.) When it comes, the farmer tries to scare it away by setting fire to fallow fields, stubble, bush and trees.

136 Other wild creatures familiar to the Amhara are Migrating birds which fly north (to "Jerusalem" in the popular mind, actually to Europe) in March and return in October, including the "zorit", a white-bellied, black-backed, red-winged bird, and a variety of stork, called "asa leqami". The Nile Monitor, ("ardjano"), a huge lizard is found along larger rivers, often not far from villages and even towns, and easy to hunt. With its scaly skin and often large size, it resembles a crocodile, with dark stripes and spots on a very white underside.
281] The skin is used to cover better utensils and is exported as "crocodile leather" for bags and shoes. Actual crocodiles are much harder to hunt, in less accessible river gorges in the lowlands. The Guenon Monkey (Tota) is common on lower
231] elevations(where it is also a danger to crops). Its young are sometimes made pets.

136 Insect life is abundant in Ethiopia, varies in type according to elevation, and bears considerable significance to ecology.

136 Flies - abundant everywhere, transmitting intestinal
.4 and skin infections. They are not interfered with beyond swishing with the fly-switch which, if kept in constant motion, chases out does not kill them.

Fleas ("qunechcha") are very common on humans. Everyone has them most of the time, even in the city.

136 "meset", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses, does not live in colonies. It makes honey which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "tenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens.

[776 237]

Scorpion ("gint"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice.

[752]

Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins.

[241 251]

13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

231 556 Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of

231 livestock he own, and he prefers to keep it or dole it out
[556] to his children on their marriages, rather than sell it. Practically everyone has a few sheep and goats, possibly also a donkey and a horse, and, if richer, a mule, some cows and a team of two oxen.

The cattle population of Ethiopia is estimated at 18 million, or 1.2 head per person, comparable with New Zealand and Argentina.[11] However, an estimated million or more cattle die each year of rinderpest, anthrax, tick fever, etc. This limits the exportation of meat surplus almost as much as does difficulty of transportation to world markets.

412 According to the United Nations estimate, Ethiopia in
494 1950-1951 had 1 million horses, 1 million mules, 3 million donkeys. These provide the bulk of transportation, except for the few hundred heavy trucks (trente-quatros) which
491 operate on the few Italian-built roads. This modern road network has been badly damaged by the annual rains, by the overloading of trucks, and by inadequate (though improving) repairs.

241 The estimated agricultural production of Ethiopia in
493 1954 included:

Maize - 150,000 metric tons,
Barley - 600,000 metric tons,
Linseed - 50,000 metric tons,
Coffee - 45,800 metric tons, [12]

11. MuO, 1955, 4pp.
12. U. N. Secretariat, Statistical Office: Statistical Yearbook 1955, tables 29, 14, 15, 20, 25.

602 farm the land and use church pasturage in the valley, are often the sons of the brothers of the priest, if not his own sons--an Amhara form of nepotism.

417 Each hamlet is usually fenced in ("jägol"-thorny
●231 fence) against night-roving hyenas, and may contain, besides living huts and store huts, a cattle corral ("magwa") though at least the calves and the family mule are taken into the living hut at night. The kitchen garden may also have an enclosure of cut thornbushes, protection against ravages by domestic cattle; and ther usually is at least one fierce reddish-brown dog (with white underside). Solid fences of stakes fixed straight in the ground ("gäräggärä") are usually used only around churches.

632 While the head of each hamlet is the head of the resi-
622 dential, extended family, the administrative head of a series of hamlets is appointed by the governor of the province (formerly by the feudal lord). This appointed headman, chega shum (lit. "appointed one over the soil") may administer as few as two hamlets, or as many as fifty, with the mode about 8 to 10. In sparsely populated, less fertile or very mountainous territory his domain may be greater, but in most cases his area is within sight so that he can even maintain contact during the rainy season. His area is properly called "mändär" and constitutes the nearest approach to the village concept. If his territory is on church land, it is referred to as "And debber agär" (lit. land in support of a certain holy place) since very often this land has been donated for that purpose in the last will of a pious elderly landowner, and is something like parish

241 cereal, as well as other crops already mentioned are grown. The lowest and warmest spots of the plateau are usually used for various types of millet-sorghum, gesho (hops). Coffee grows wild or is purchased on the market, as are bananas from the lowland. After a few years of cultivation, a field may be left fallow for five or more years.

[171] The Amhara's irrigation and terrace farming resemble [462] those of Yemen, not of Africa. Farming is man's work, not [231] woman's. The one-handed plow is drawn by a yoke of two oxen, encouraged by a long fibre whip. The Amhara rerely uses other animals for drawing the plow.

Fallow land or new bush is broken during the dry season. A heavier-than-usual iron plow point is purchased from the Falasha ironsmiths, affixed to the scratch plow, and the area, after preliminary burning, is scratched many times at right angles. The stubble and weeds are then piled and burned. But for the actual plowing and seeding, the beginning of the rains is awaited.

312 Irrigation canals are completely washed out in the rainy season, and must be rebuilt in each dry season. Terracing is less common than irrigation, but on occasion mountain farmers of long residence do build low walls of rock and mud on hillsides to prevent severe washouts and landslides during the rainy season.

243 Tyēff (Eragrostic abyssinica; Poa abyssinica) deserves the latter Latin name, for it is the mainstay staple of Abyssinia, except in the south. It is an annual indigenous grass with seeds of pinhead size, cultivated

243 crops, and the only one grown all year, thus the most often irrigated. It grows well even on semi-eroded soil, unlike wheat. It is consumed in emergencies, and more usually used in making beer, despite its comparatively poor malting qualities. It is provided as fodder for the mule, the most [231] important animal for human transportation, to give it "strength". Barley becomes more important for human consumption when the rainy season has been shorter than usual. In that case, the grain is soaked in water and then crushed with wooden morter and pestle to remove the husks without reducing the grain to flour. After drying in the sun, the broken grain called "gebs qolo" is roasted and eaten Some is always in the hut, in case guests should come. The same crushing procedure is followed for preparing malt for barley beer. Late, irrigated barley called "aja", is considered tough but "giving strength", though dishonorable for a guest, and also causing complaint from women that it is "hard to pound" and "good only for mules".

Oats and rice as special crops are almost unknown to the Amhara. Oats ("gencha", "arämamo", "qwa"), considered wild, are gathered with barley and used in beer.

In view of the importance of cereal crops, it is not surprising that the farmer refers to them collectively as "teru", which means "good", while garden crops ("debäla") which enjoy a lesser appreciation, are not included in this concept.

[427 804] Rent, tribute and taxes were paid per "madiga", the clay water pot used to measure it. Although this procedure is no longer followed, rent is still quoted in terms of "madiga".

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are permitted to use it. Milking is done in a very tightly woven 234 415 reed container ("gerera") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwacha" or "chocho").

233 423 691 Sometimes a large extended family will try to enclose a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Länz district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary 251 yoke. The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya 262 läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

61. Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

231 [262] the "great man" (feudal lord) and to warriors at rural, traditional feasts.

The cattle is not fat, since there is no intensive feeding. Even bulls are so patient that children can herd them, and cows are accustomed to walking home unescorted even through urban streets -- including Addis Ababa. With its broad forehead, long narrow skull, well-developed horns, the Abyssinian cattle still bears some resemblance to Primigenius, the cattle of Egypt and Nubia, and probably of Ethiopia prior to 500 B.C.[62]

232 Cattle is slaughtered for meat only in case of a barren cow and when the ox becomes too old to pull the plow. The male ancestry of a calf is given little attention, because it is not always possible, under the relaxed manner of breeding, to identify the paternal animal. Bulls are gelded by having their testicles crushed between rocks, and an ox so treated is called "wärräm" or "mäsina". Since the testicles are not cut, this primitive operation is not infrequently unsuccessful, and such a bull is then referred to as "amälät" and is troubled no further since it is believed that he is so virile that his virility cannot be taken from him without killing him. Bulls are gelded not to prevent them from begetting offspring, but to prevent them from "dissipating their energies" in sexual activity when it is needed for plowing. A rare secondary reason would be to fatten them for sale in preperation for slaughter.

Fully grown steers are fattened by feeding them chäw bälé, a mineral salt, for two years, or, where mineral

62. Ibid.

232 these cattle are resistant to diseases that killed off European cattle brought to Ethiopia by Point IV. This immunity includes poisonous grasses as well as ticks. They are resistant to changes in temperature between day and night, thrive on natural fodder of little nutritive quality, and even old cows continue to have calves for a considerable period.

233 Several factors characterize the Amhara attitude as agricultural rather than pastoral, in addition to the emphasis on the hump and the geldin-for-strength instead of for breeding. Herding is not considered a suitable occupation for a grown Amhara adult; there is no cowboy pattern at all, and cattle herding is usually assigned to boys under 12 years of age while sheep-and-goatherding is often assigned to a dimwitted simpleton. The corral is not of strong stakes, but of light, loose thornbushes.

231 556 On the other hand, cattle, especially cows, play an important role in social organization and other human relations among the Amhara. The terms for cattle and for wealth are synonymous. In marriage agreements, the kinfolk on both the bride's and the groom's side promise to contribute an equal number of cows. This means that the child of a poor farmer cannot hope to marry the offspring of a wealthy farmer, under the usual circumstances, unless the rich partner restricts his contribution to what the poor can afford, or unless the poorer manages to borrow enough cattle from a wider range of kinfolk.

To overcome boundaries of social stratification, cattle enables a peasant to present an "entrance gift"

231 [656] ("agäbba") to an important "great man", perhaps to become a "client" in his retinue for protection.

[77] In religious life, the old peasant can arrange for the peace of his soul after death by giving a cow to his Confessor or to the "qēs gabaz" the administrative priest of the parish church, to have masses recited. [682] In criminal law, a murderer in the remote rural areas can still save himself and even prevent a long and bloody feud between families, if he can borrow enough cattle, in addition to his own, to pay "blood-money", in cows, to the kin of the victim, the agreement witnessed by the presence of a "cheqa shum", a judge, or a priest, preferably all three. Thus there are some aspects of the cattle pattern that are reminiscent of a tribal, semi-nomadic, rather than settled territorial social organization. This becomes emphasized during the upland trek in the rainy season.

233 Though entrusted to youngsters, care of cattle is obviously a task requiring responsibility. Cattle is not taken out until one hour after sunrise, about 7 A.M., when the dew has dried. During the hot dry season, cattle rest under umbrella trees and other shade from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., so that the grazing period away from the hamlet is not long. Before dusk, by 6 P.M., they are taken into the hamlet enclosure or corrall, or even into the hut, for hyenas may come early.

The cash value of cattle is low, primarily because of the distance and poor transportation to world markets. [281] The hides, a major export item, are of low cash value because this type is not tanned, merely sundried, and "book-folded" for export.

233 folded" for export.

Sheep are raised primarily for meat. They do not figure in social organization except as minor gifts (including entrance gifts). They are small in stature, and so inexpensive that the sheepskin can often be sold for 1/3 the cost of the entire animal. The woolly skins are used as cloaks, bedcovers, etc. The sheep is not bred for wool, only for meat, especially for the fattail ("lat") which is as prized as in other Middle Eastern areas. The wool (yäbäg t'ägur) is not very long, and is used to stuff pillows in urban areas. Wool weaving is a local specialty of remote districts, now dying out due to competition of modern, imported blankets, but formerly used to make the black, Arab-type "burnos". [280]

Goats as well as sheep are usually entrusted to an ex-slave or a simpleton, or very small children, when on pasture. Domestic goats ("feyäl") are raised because of the cheapness of their meat, and the skin which is tanned by the Faqi, and made into parchment for church literature, etc. To fatten rams, their testicles are crushed between rocks, and the resulting animal is called "qetqet". [281] [232]

231 Horses are small, wiry and very enduring. They are the animal of the young aristocrats in warfare, in games showing prowess. Mules, small, wiry, and intelligent, cost at least twice as much as horses. They are preferred by travellers and older persons, and are used as the animal of honor ridden by the veiled bride when she is taken to her bridegroom's hamlet. If they can at all afford it, a Senaar mule is preferred, and for the bridal

231 party preferably a white one. Senaar mules are as big as Ethiopian horses, being the offspring of a large Arabian male donkey and an Ethiopian mare (horse). A good Senaar mule may cost twice the price of an Ethiopian mule, especially when actually imported from the Senaar (Sudan). Its strong but ambling gait ("tëkolkoloch" or "säggärä") is due to the work of the expert trainer. A donkey is the cheapest of all animals of transportation, very small in stature, and never ridden except in jest by very small children. All these Ethiopian animals are surefooted on steep hills, the Ethiopian mule most of all.

232 Many Livestock diseases are endemic. The more common are:

Mouth disease of cattle - "maz" (Shoa "qefd"), transferred by licking. Treatment is often the same as that traditionally given humans for syphilis, including bathing in hot springs.

Wasting disease - "gordäbeta", or "gorba" for short, which affects cattle and other horned animals; believed caused by evil eye (buda).

Broken-windedness of horses - "nedfat" (lit. pricked), believed caused by evil spirit who has "pricked the animal" and is drinking its strength.

Dizzy spinning on one spot - "azwarit", believed caused by demon.

If the disease is of physical origin, a "wogäsha" surgeon-herbologist may be called in. Sores on the backs of mules and other livestock are cauterized with a "guba", a hot iron rod about two feet long, with a bent tip. If

232 the sickness is believed of magic origin, a dabtara may be called, or a zar doctor consulted. One often sees large nicks cut out of the ears of livestock, especially cows, where pieces have been excised and fed to the spirits on the principle of "pars pro toto".

235 Chickens ("doro") are small, look undernourished, and lay very small eggs. Little clay henhouses are built for them. They are cooked in "doro wot" (chicken curry--Abyssinian style) in a golden reddish sauce, but do not occupy a highly honored spot in the diet, and at feasts are prepared merely to add variety to the menu. Until recently eggs were not sold but given away. Even now they are very cheap. No attempt is made to breed fowl.

231 Beekeeping is one of the few ways the farmer has to obtain some ready cash income. As soon as the rainy season is over, and fragrant wildflowers carpet the landscape, the time for swarming has arrived. The farmer prepares a hollow cylindrical reed basket (called "qafo"), with one end narrower. This he places in the fork of a tree. Sometimes it is made from the bark of the "elol" or "lol" tree. It has an exit, "fenchu". Sometimes the farmer will capture the queen bee ("awura neb", lit. vulture bee) in a little box and place her inside the basket, so that the worker bees, called "virgin bees" ("dengel neb") because they do not lay eggs, will swarm after her. He is not afraid of stings which are small, cause only a little pimple and heal rapidly. Next to the reed basket he often builds a smaller hive of sticks and mud ("gushgusha"), so that the bees will not have far to go when they decide to break up the colony

●23 and form a new one. If he re-uses an old basket, he first sweeps out the larvae (ech) remnants, wax, etc., with the "nebasel" plant which the bees are said to like.

Sometimes as rapidly as six weeks later, the honey is ready for collecting. The hive is smoked out, and many bees perish. Some of the honey is retained at home and mix-
[272] ed with water to make non-alcoholic "berz" when honored
[373] guests come. The wax, to which some of the honey still adheres, is rolled over strong cotton or fiber thread and the resulting long thin candle is used in church to illuminate the readings and the processions.

Most of the honey is sold on the big "Saturday market", or directly to the woman in the nearest town who operates a "tedj byet", a mead house. To make it worth his while, a farmer should have at least five skeps-hives, from which he can realize 50 kilos of honey annually, for which he can obtain about $20. A very big keeper may have as many as 50 skeps, bringing him U.S. $200. for the honey.
[275] But the real profit is made by the woman owner of the tedj byet, who pays little for this honey, for gesho (fermenting agent) and for a big barrel to brew mead in, and then, after some months, sells her product, "tedj", a wine-like alcoholic drink, at a price that only noblemen, clerks, town officials, and Muslim traders can afford.

[278] The honey of the wild bee, "terb", is used against trachoma and other eye diseases. But "shame" forbids the eating of such wild honey.

Civet cat has been "farmed" by some in certain districts for centuries, and the musk taken regularly from the

231 gland of the animal was packed in cowhorns, and exported as a fixer for scents and perfumes. But the average Amhara farmer does not keep civet cat (zebāt).

Livestock is perhaps even more important economic property than land. Since land tenure is uncertain and complicated and since the produce from land is usually consumed by rent, taxes, obligations, and food for the family, any capital surplus and private property is largely expressed in livestock, particularly in the absence of valuable tools. [42] Also, land is at best owned by a man's kin, while livestock is personal property.

231 436 Livestock prices at the rural and provincial-urban markets are still quoted in Mariah Theresa Thalers, although the actual coin is now illegal and may not be used in transactions. The compromise that has developed is to quote MT thalers for livestock only, and to pay in paper or coins of the present legal Ethiopian currency at the rate of Ethiopian $1.50 per MT 1. --(U.S.$0.60). MT Thalers are quoted for sale only, because of the significance of such a transaction, while rent is quoted in modern Ethiopian dollars.

231 583 Cattle: An Amhara peasant may own from 1 to 150 cows; mean about 5. A rich peasant may own about 50 cows, a few bulls, a dozen oxen, 5 mules, over 50 sheep and and goats. In giving his daughter in marriage he may pridefully give her 20 cows, especially if the groom contributes an equal number. A poor peasant may be hard put to give his daughter 3 cows, which is a respectable minimum, and may have to borrow two cows to fill that, but he can hold off fulfillment of the contribution until a few

231 [583] months after the wedding, when it seems certain the marriage will last.

231 435 A good, milk-giving cow is worth 50 MT, but an old cow ready for slaughter brings only 15 MT. A farmer needs at least 2 oxen for plowing, and a well-to-do farmer may have about 8. Oxen are not contributed in marriage, but are loaned or given to the groom by his father at the time land is allocated to him for plowing. A good, strong ox is worth 40 MT, but hardly ever is such a one for sale; instead, he is more commonly traded for two male calves. An old ox for slaughter can be bought for 15 MT, and if the skin is still good it may be sold in turn for up to four MT. Thus beef is much more expensive than sheep or goat meat, and is reserved for feasts.

Mule: The average peasant may own one mule, or none at all, since even a small Ethiopian mule costs 40 MT, and a Senaar mule as much as 80 MT. Feudal lords have several. Mules are rented to caravans for ETH$1.-per day; double that if the borrower is a foreigner. Relatives borrow free of charge.

Sheep: These bring from ETH$3 - $6 depending on season more than on quality, though a heavy fattail helps. The sheepskin alone can be resold for ETH$1.50, so that the meat is very cheap and within reach of almost everyone's pocketbook. The average farmer keeps perhaps a dozen sheep used

231 435 for his family's consumption, guests, and gifts, but not larger flocks, conserving grass for cattle.

Donkeys: The average peasant may have 2, to carry goods to and from the market. A good donkey may bring as much as 12 - 15 MT, but an average donkey no more than 8 MT out of season (when no caravans are about to leave. They are not usually rented, but are lent to friends and kin more freely than mules, without charge.

[234] Butter: This is sold to urban people and at big markets, wrapped in leaves. Milk is sold only by personal arrangement, directly to the house.

235 435 Chicken: These bring as little as ETH$0.50, or even $0.25, depending on season and quality. All meat prices rise sharply at the end of the lenten season. Otherwise the peasant does not bother to sell chickens to towns unless he lives very close.

Eggs: These sell for as little as ETH$0.01 a-piece, sold only since Italian occupation, and only in towns. Otherwise the peasant gives them away, or boils them in the wot.

231 435 Honey: Perhaps less than a quarter of all peasants bother to sell honey. Much depends on whether there are bees in the immediate neighborhood, and whether a town with tedj-byets (mead houses) is nearby. On the average he may put up at least 5 skeps, realize at most 10 kilos of honey from each, and obtain a maximum of ETH$50. --(US$20.) at the market.

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435 Thus, the capital of our hypothetical "average" freehold farmer would total as follows:

3 good cows	150 MT	(ETH$225.-)
2 old cows	30 MT	45.-
2 strong oxen	80	120.-
2 old oxen	30 MT	45.-
2 donkeys	15 MT	22.-
1 mule	40 MT	60.-
6 sheep		30.-
3 goats		15.-
	Total ETH$562.-	(US$230)

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[231] Sales from livestock and livestock produce, in one year, by the average freehold farmer would be about as follows, providing ready cash:

2 old cows	ETH$45.-
1 old ox	20.-
3 sheep	15.-
10 chickens	3.-
300 eggs	3.-
50 kilos honey	50.-
Milk	5.-
	ETH$141.-

With this cash he would buy salt, raw cotton, a toga, some imported spices, coffee, and pay certain cash taxes such as the education tax. These would all be necessary expenditures. The rest would go for other items.

It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 [321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. [531] Ornamentation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric [303] nature, in the wood. Wooden combs together with their handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. [412] Wooden mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. [354] On occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back-[407] rest of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint [231] firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 Horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

136 164 government has now made free injections available at "big markets" of provincial towns. Bedbugs are also prevalent, of the bloodsucking variety. They are considered a nussance by the Amhara, but all that is done is to air the "alga" bed in the sunlight, which merely reduces the infestation temporarily. Flies are also abundant and very aggressive, so that a flyswitch ("chera") is kept in motion for comfort. Contagious diseases spread readily. Just after each rainy season, malarial mosquitoes have caused epidemics up to levels of 5,000 feet, on the shore of overflowing lakes and rivers.

511 In the majority of cases, some livestock is taken into the living hut (tuqul) everynight. The tuqul has, of course, an unwashable mud floor, no windows or chimney, soot-blackened ceiling, cobwebs in corners. There is no change of clothing at night, merely an added "kutta" or sheepskin, against the cold. Aside from drinking cups, there are no individual utensils.

164 Towns, including provincial towns, are centers for the spread of syphilis and other venereal diseases, due to the existence of entire streets of "women in-between marriages" who act as restauranteurs-prostitutes. When surface lesions appear, the native "wogasha" is consulted; or since the Italian invasion made the "needle" popular, the modern government medical personnel is approached. But patients usually cease to continue treatment when surface lesions disappear.[67]

Eating "brundo", raw beef, at feasts, almost always leads to tapeworm and other taenia infestation. Fortunately

67. Guthe, Th: Venerial Disease in Ethiopia. W.H.O.Bulletin, Vol.2, 1949, pl. 85-138.

281 563 [797] verted to Christianity due to the influence of the Emperor's wishes. Socially they are now considered on a level above the hunters, and, after adopting Christianity almost on a level with other non-ethnic craftsmen. Though largely endogamous within their own Faqi class, they used to take half-Shanqalla wives, or "woyto" (hippopotamus hunters), but near urban places such as Gondar they now marry poor Amhara of doubtful ancestry, after having become Christians. They are still considered "rustic" by the Amhara townsmen, since the Faqi, like the Falasha, do not like to live in town, to avoid negative human relations and insults based on their occupation ("You Faqi").

The Faqi do not like to be called by that name and prefer the term "arabannya", which has a connotation of someone skilled in something imported, of prestigeful origin. This is perhaps well-founded for some of their finer products resemble morocco leather.

The Faqi farm little, less than the Falasha, but keep kitchen gardens. They usually do not own land- unless a family acquired some as a reward for ordnance services rendered accompanying the troops of Menelik II. The cash obtained from their products goes largely to pay rent for the land, similar to the Falasha. The Faqi try to [231] keep as much cattle as they can afford, for the skins are valuable to them, and cow's urine is used in the process of tanning.

The basic team need not exceed three ablebodied, experienced tanners, but there are numerous little jobs for boys and older men.

463 prestige involved is slight--occurring only if there is
464 kinfolk nearby shamed by such manual labor. It is on a social level with the gathering of kosso-bark by a poor Amhara woman.

463 Some farmers have a part-time specialty of fashion-
[324] ing the stone used as mano by the housewife when she grinds grain. They are called "wäqari". No shame is involved; it is considered like a hobby, like whittling away at wood.

[693 Some heads of farming families are adept at "talk-
554] ing well in court" for which they achieve great prestige--the major method of achieving prestige. They are called "täbäqa" lawyers, and not full-time specialists since all they can expect, if they win the case, is a bellyful of barley beer or an occasional gift, but they are guests of honor at the victory feasts and "men of reknown".

A large number of semi-specialists fall into the
[23] category of caretakers, "täbaqi". Cowherds and shepherds, if they are grown men not useful at anything else, are included in this category.

463 Part-time employment is found by the former feudal
265 chamberlain, "agafari", at big weddings of landholding peasants or in towns. They act as caterers, order the bread, meat, beer, mead, etc. They are experts at headwaiting, and know just whom to seat at what table or around which "mäsob", according to rank, and they indicate to each servant to whom to serve beer and to whom the more expensive and more noble mead. This was

X794 776 753 cultivating the spirit. If she is already pregnant, the zar may cause a miscarriage; either because he wants his human mate "pure", or to take revenge on the husband for miserly refusal of a chicken or young goat requested by the wife for the "zar" sacrifice - which may cause the zar to take the fetus as his "äqwädäsha" (lit. love gift).

When a male zar appears to a human female in a dream, he takes the form of a husband visiting his wife, if he is in a benevolent mood; if angry, he takes the form of a black dog (though Ethiopian dogs are [231] reddish) or of a snake. The actual possession, in this relationship is a magical coitus, expressed in the violently sensuous "gurri" dance. Some women possessed by a male zar drape their shamma (toga) in male fashion; some even put on ornaments of oldtime male warriors (lion mane, leopard skin), male jodphurs - all at the request of her male "zar", in which case she is actually "dressing" him.

X794 776 A woman who sleeps alone risks being struck by a male zar, and even neighbors sometimes admit having heard a "spirit visitor" at [845] night. When a baby is born deformed, it is regarded as the result [841] of a magical coitus. Male zar spirits avoid menstruating women, and during this period they may not sit on the skin of an animal that has been sacrificed to the zar. Male zar prefer to possess beautiful human females, and add to their beauty; so that some male [832] connoisseurs of female beauty claim that a woman's glowing charms leave her when her protective zar ("weqabi") leaves her. Therefore, there is some ambivalence in the hostility of human husbands to the possession of their wives by male zars; which may contribute to the frequency of such possession. For, at least, the neglected wife is then no longer ignored and may even become the center of attraction.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic. Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend.

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile.

There were only two or three villages along the track, which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district.

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May.

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to

Also, in the Choké Mountains. -Analyst
Also, between Debra Markos and Mota. -Ai, l

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint. Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns: an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputation of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south-north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north: Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

633 Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society [191] has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and [563] Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and, [142 291] although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wander- [245] ing among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudo, 231 which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

487 The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men: the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

174 The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up [563] into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

[137] *Buddleia*, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

133 The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of [49] country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being [23] swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used [311] for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the [135] north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several [325] travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated [712] long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high [346] point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

241 variety) and linseed is grown in most parts of it. Where more shelter exists lentils and chick-pea are also planted, and another low-growing leguminous crop called *gwayo*, which is used only as a cattle fodder, as it is believed to [824] cause softening of the bones in man! The barley is planted early and the other crops late in the main rainy season (June–September). Barley is sometimes also planted in the early rains, which are very uncertain here but usually begin in February or March. In this area however the early crop rarely gives a good return and sometimes fails completely. The plateau land, after being cultivated for a few years (often until it shows obvious signs of exhaustion), is fallowed for a period which varies widely according to the type of soil, but may be as long as five or seven years.

Down in the gorges, where the climate is appreciably milder, and where a primitive sort of irrigation can be practised on the level shelves, both chick-pea and lentils flourish. Some *teff* (a grass-like cereal greatly favoured for making the local bread) can be grown, as well as wheat and barley. Shelf cultivation seems as a rule to be continuous, perhaps because of the fresh sediment spread annually over the fields by rain and irrigation. In the lower parts of the gorges some maize and millet (*Sorghum*) can be found, but almost the whole of the area included on the map is too high for these crops. Other gorge products, unknown on the plateau, are tomatoes, chillies, coffee and *gesho*—a shrub whose leaves are used for fermenting the local beer (*talla*) and honey-wine (*tej*). Bananas, for no obvious reason, are not grown, but are brought to Debra Berhan market from the low country beyond the eastern escarpment.

The agricultural methods of the Ethiopians are far more advanced than those of any surrounding territory and do not belong to Africa. They can be paralleled among the west-Asian peasantry, and a close comparison with the methods of the Yemen mountain people might be especially fruitful. It was from this latter region that the Ethiopians' ancestors emigrated, before the [177] Christian era, and it is extremely probable that they brought with them both implements and a knowledge of techniques. Hence perhaps the use of the plough, universal among highland Ethiopians, and their skill in irrigation and terracing.

[462] Farming in Ethiopia is primarily the man's and not the woman's work, the standard female occupation, apart from household cares, being spinning. [283] (Cotton is widely grown in the lowlands.) The farmers spend most of their lives at the plough. a one-handled variety drawn by a yoke of oxen. In their [231] right hand they carry a whip with a short handle and long, heavy thong which they continually whirl and crack above the heads of the oxen, to whom, at the same time, they address an endless succession of strange howls and shouts, curses and imprecations. New or long-fallowed grassland is broken in with the plough in the dry season. This complicated process (known as *gai*) involves first scratching the ground in several directions to dislodge the turf, next gathering the sods into numerous heaps, then setting fire to these so that grass and weeds are gradually burnt out, and finally spreading out the soil again. But the great time for ploughing comes after the main rains have reduced the countryside to a sea of soft, dark mud. At this season the fields are peppered with ploughmen. Each successive sowing must be prepared

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

each of the years that I came there they gave me two 796
quarters of the fattest cow that was killed. This flesh is 782
distributed amongst the people who come to the Castar, and
the friars have none because they do not eat meat. And [784]
these cows are all brought as offerings by their breeders in
the district, who vow them to Philip. This monastery, and
the others that are subject to it, have this rule in addition,
that no females enter them, that is to say, neither women,
nor she-mules, nor cows, nor hens, nor anything else that is
female. And these cows which they kill are killed a long
way from the wall, and when I came there they came to the
distance of a cross-bow shot to take my mule, and they
took her away to their farm of Jamgargara, where Mattheus
died.

CAP. XV.—*Of the agriculture of this country, and how they preserve themselves from the wild beasts, and of the revenues of the monastery.*

The friars of this monastery, and of the other monasteries 241
subject to it, might do good works by planting trees and [792]
vines, and making gardens and orchards for their exercise;
and they do nothing. The country is ready to produce
everything, as is seen from that which is uncultivated: they
do not plant or grow anything except millet and bee-hives. [231]
When it is night, neither they nor anybody else go out from
their houses from fear of the wild beasts that are in the
country, and those who watch the millet have very high
resting places upon the trees, in which they sleep at night.
In the district of this monastery there are, in the valleys 231
between the mountains, very large herds of cows, kept by 563
Arab Moors, and there go with each herd forty or fifty
Moors, with their wives and children: and their headman is

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

231 a Christian, because the cows that they keep belong to
563 Christian gentlemen of the country of the Barnagais. These Moors have nothing else for their labour than the milk and butter which they get from the cows, and with this they maintain themselves and their wives and children. On some occasions it happened to us to sleep near these Arabs, they accosted us to ask if we wished to buy cows, and for the price allowed us to choose them. They say that these
[484] Moors, and headmen who go with them, are all robbers under the favour of the lords to whom the cows belong, and so only large caravans travel. The revenues of this
792 monastery are very large; those which I saw and heard of
631 are, chiefly, this mountain in which the monastery is situated,
361 of an extent of ten leagues, in which they sow much millet,
[243] barley, rye, and all these pay dues to the monastery, and they are also paid on the herds. On the skirts of this mountain there are many large villages, and most of them belong to the monastery, and at a distance of one or two days' journey an infinite number of places belonging to the monastery, and are called *Gultus* of the monastery, which means *coutos* or *celeiros*,[1] according to our Portugal. Don Rodrigro the ambassador and I were going on the road to the Court, a good five days' journey from this monastery, and arriving at a town which is named *Caina* we kept Saturday and Sunday in a small village which might contain twenty people, and they told us they belonged to the monastery of Bisan. Besides that town there were a hundred villages all belonging to the monastery, and that in which we halted was one of them. We were also shown
651 many of the others, and they told us that every three years
631 they paid a horse to the monastery, and that each village
792 did this, which makes thirty-three horses every year. And in order to be certain of this I went to ask it of the *Alicaxi* of the monastery, which means the auditor or major-domo,

[1] *Couto*, an asylum, an enclosure; *celeiro*, a granary.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

000 764 a burn, because their colour is dark. On the occasion of death, I never saw great personages borne away; but of small people, and of others rather better, an infinite number. Their burials are in this manner. They do not use candles after death, but much incense. They carry them away wrapped up[1] in a shroud, and some of the more honoured have over the shroud tanned ox-hides, and are placed on trestles. The priests come for them, and pray shortly, and then set out at once with them on the way to the church, with cross, thurible, and holy water, running so that a man cannot catch them up. They do not bring the dead man into the church, but place him close to the grave; they do not use our office for him, nor do they recite psalms, neither do they say anything from the Book of Job. I asked what it was that they prayed; they told me that they read the Gospel of St. John all complete. And so they give him to the grave with their incense and holy water, and they do not say mass for the defunct, nor of devotion for any living person, nor more than one mass a day in each church; and all are communicants, as many as go to it.

CAP. XXIII.—*Of the situation of the town of Barua, chief place of the kingdom of the Barnagais, and of his hunting.*

361 This town of Barua is very good, and it is situated on a very high rock above a river, upon which are situated the king's houses, which they call Beteneguz, which means houses of the king. They are well situated in the manner of a fortress. All the rest is a great plain and an infinite number of large villages at the extremities of the fields. There is much breeding of all sorts of flocks, cows, goats and sheep, and of much game of all sorts

[231] *Enrorilhados* for *enrodilhados*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 he had, since he was Arraz of the Chaufas, that is, head or
701 captain of the men at arms, was to go about like a man at
631 arms. In the fashion that he went, there followed behind him twenty or thirty men with spears and bucklers, so that he goes about the court like a provost with his men. I knew another Arraz Tagale, and Arraz Jacob, lords of large lands, and many other Xuums, lords of lands, but without titles. Thus the Barnagais is the lord of many
643 lords, and of many lands and people, and so he and all
631 these lords that have been mentioned are subject to the
651 Prester John, and he removes and appoints them as he
439 pleases: so they pay to him large dues. As all these lords and their lordships are on the side of Egypt and Arabia, from whence come the good horses, and the brocades and the silks, they pay in these same goods: that is to say, horses, brocades, and other silks. They come to the Barnagais with all these dues, and the Barnagais to Prester John, and pays for himself and for the others, in each year, a hundred and fifty horses; as to the brocades and silks, it cannot be known how much they amount to, only I heard say that they were many; I also heard that they pay a large sum of cotton cloths from India for the customs which they levy in the port of Arquiquo.

CAP. XXV.—*Of their method of guarding their herds from wild beasts, and how there are two winters in this country: and of two churches that are in the town of Barua.*

[621] The settlement of this town of Barua and of those
231 adjoining it, is this. There are ten, twelve, or fifteen houses, and one walled and closed yard, served by a gate: in this yard they shut up their domestic cows which they use for their milk and butter, and also small flocks, and mules and asses. They keep the gate well fastened, and a great fire,

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and men who sleep there to watch, from fear of the animals 231
that roam about the villages all night: and if they did not
keep this watch nothing alive would remain which they
would not devour. The people who go to sow millet in the 241
mountains of Bisan belong to this country and the neigh- 221
bouring towns. The reason why they go and do it is this. 132
Here there are very numerous grain crops of every kind
and nature that can be mentioned, as I have already said;
and because it is near to the sea, by which go all the
provisions for Arabia, Mekkah, Zebid, Jiddah, and Toro,[1]
and other parts; and they carry the provisions to the sea to
sell them. And because in this country the winters are
divided into seasons, and the seed crops do not grow
except with the rains, they go to sow these millet
fields at the mountain of Bisan, where it is winter in the
months of February, March, and April. There is this same
winter in a mountain called Lama, in this kingdom of the
Barnagais, which is fully eight days' journey from the
mountain of Bisan. In another country, which is named
Doba, and which is quite a month's journey from this lord-
ship of Lama, there is winter in these same months. As
for these millet fields, they require rains, and as these win-
ters happen out of season, they go and sow them where it
rains, and so profit by both winters. In this town of 346
Barua are two churches with many priests, one close to the 562
other, one is for men, the other for women. The men's
church is called St. Michael, that of the women is named
after the apostles Peter and Paul. They say that a great [644]
lord, who was then Barnagais, built the men's church, and
gave it the privilege that no woman should enter it, except
only the wife of the Barnagais, with one damsel, whenever
she went to take the communion, and even she does not
now enter the church, but takes the communion at the
door in the inner circuit with the laity, and so the

[1] Mount Sinai.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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this, that they do not cut their beard, and the laity shave below the chin and the throat. There are other priests, whom they call Debeteraas, which means canons; these belong to great churches, which are like their cathedrals or collegiate churches, and are not monasteries. These are very well dressed, and at once appear as what they are: these do not go to the fairs and markets.

CAP. XXX.—*Of the state of the Barnagais and manner of his house, and how he ordered a proclamation to be made to go against the Nobiis,*[1] *and the method of his justice.*

The service of this Barnagais is very poor in state, although he is a great lord and has the title of king. As many times as we spoke to him we always found him seated on a bedstead beneath a coverlid, and himself covered with hairy cotton cloths which they name *basutos*; they are good for the country, and there are some here of a high price. Behind the sides of the bedstead, walls, without anything except four swords hung each on a pole, and two great books, also suspended on poles. In front of the bedstead, mats on the floor, upon which sit those who come; the houses rarely swept, his wife always seated on a mat near the head of the bedstead, many people always before him, the great people seated on mats. In sight of his bedstead stand four horses, one always saddled, and the others covered, not caparisoned for war, but as horses are in the stables. In these houses of his are two inclosures, and each one has its gate, and in it porters with whips in their hands, and in the one nearest to him are smarter porters. Between these gates, the inner one and the outer one, is always his Alicaxi, which means his judge, hearing causes and administering justice. If the cause is important,

[1] Nubians.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

164 There are many lepers in this country, and they do not live separated from the people, they live all together; there are many people who, out of their devotion, wash them, and tend their sores with their hands.

231 There is a great quantity of honey in all the country, and the bees are not in hives, but inside the houses, where the cultivators live, clinging to the walls on the inside, where they have a mode of egress outside, and also inside they surround the house: but they do not on this account desist from dwelling in the house, because the bees go outside. There are a great number of these swarms of bees, chiefly in the monasteries, there are also many in the woods and mountains, and the men put hives near the trees and fill them with bees, and bring them in them to the houses.

346 Since no one sits in the churches, at their doors outside of them, and within the circuit, there are always a great quantity of staves with cross pieces like a .....[1] or cripple's crutch, and each one takes his staff and leans upon it as long as he is at the offices of the church. In the churches there are many effigies painted on the walls. Effigies of [532] our Lord and our Lady, and of the apostles and patriarchs, and prophets and angels, and in all the churches St. George. They have not got solid images. There are many books in [212] the churches all written on parchment, because there is no [191] paper there, and the writing and language is Tigray,[2] which is that of the first country in which Christianity began.

In this country they are not accustomed to write to one another, neither do the officers of justice write anything. All the justice that is done, and what is ordered, is by messengers and speech. I say only that I saw the property of Prester John written down on being delivered up and received.

554 There would be much fruit and much more tillage in the country, if the great men did not ill treat the people, for

[1] *Talu.* [2] *Tigia.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

In this country there are in some parts very flat lands, and 133
in others mountainous; and altogether they are fruitful lands. There are no snowy ranges, but withal severe frosts, especially in the flat lands. In all the lands there is great [231]
breeding of cattle.

He says that he did not see the river Nile, and he reached to two days' journey from it, and the days' journey which they went were small ones, namely, four or five leagues, a little more or less. But some of those in his company reached its source, and they say that it rises in the Kingdom of Gojame, and its source is in great lakes, and where it rises there are islands, and thence it commences its course and goes to Egypt.

The time when the Nile rises in Egypt is (as they say) from the 15th day of September and later, and in all October; and the reason of this is, because the winter of Ethiopia begins from the middle of June to the middle of September, and on account of the great rains which take place in it without this winter ever changing, the Nile overflows in Egypt at that time.

It is the general custom of Prester John and all the peo- 492
ple for no man on horseback to pass a church, but before 576
they reach it they dismount, and so pass it, and lead their beasts by the bridles, and after passing they mount.

When Prester John and all his people travel, the altar and 484
the altar stone on which mass is said, all goes on the shoulders of the priests as on a litter, and there go eight priests with each altar by turns, that is, four and four: and a priest goes in front of them with a thurible, and further in front a zagonay ringing a bell, and all the people go away from the road, and those that are on horses dismount, and show reverence to the altar stone or altar.

There is no grape wine there, more than in two houses, 273
where it is made publicly, namely, in the house of Prester John and the house of the Patriarch Abima Marcos; and if

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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273 any other is made, it is secretly. The wine with which mass is said in all the churches and monasteries is made in this manner. They take raisins which they have stored in the sacristies and they put them to soak in water for ten days, and they swell, and they let them dry, and they crush them and press them in a cloth, and with that wine which comes out they say mass.[1]

231 The horses, natives of the country of Prester John, are many and not good, for they are like Gallician beasts; those which come from Arabia are very good, like Moorish horses; those from Egypt are much better, very tall and big and handsome. Many lords breed horses from the mares they get from Egypt in their stables. In this manner, namely, when they are born, they do not suck the mother more than three days, and they at once put the mares to the horses[2]; and they tie up the little colts somewhat apart from the mothers, and they keep for them many milch cows, and give them their milk to drink.

DEO GRATIAS.

[1] The Malabar Christians had the same custom. See Duarte Barbosa.
[2] *As mais acavalanas logo.*

[pp. 413-416 have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

492 mouth and causes it to bleed freely; in spite of, or perhaps because of this, I never came across an Abyssinian pony with a hard mouth; indeed, they can nearly all be ridden on a snaffle.

Their mules are so covered with many-hued trappings that sometimes they leave very little of the beast to be seen. These trappings are made of several thicknesses of native-dyed coloured leathers sewn together, machine-embroidered in silks of many colours, and covered with metal ornaments.

On special occasions the Abyssinians of rank cover their mules with extra gorgeous drapings in vivid colourings of velvet or silk, decorated with handsome embossed silver or silver-gilt ornaments. The men themselves on these occasions bring out their best sword and buckler, the latter being made of stretched and shaped rhino hide, covered with velvet and ornamented with silver and gilt mountings.

342 The houses of the wealthier people are constructed of stone (of which ample supplies are available almost everywhere), plastered together with a sort of mortar called *chika*, mostly mud and water; the roof is either of corrugated iron or is thatched. They are as a rule one-storied buildings, though I have been in one or two that had an upper story surrounded by a verandah and reached by an outside staircase, but these have generally been acquired from Greeks. In these cases [231] the ground floor is frequently used as stabling for the mules and ponies (even amongst Greeks and Armenians), a state of affairs which can hardly be regarded as sanitary.

5/3 In the peasants' *tukuls* in the country, men, women, and children, mules, ponies, and other animals sleep

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 361 sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

[132] Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most [312] pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā [132] twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, some- [241]

*175 643 TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāssi (Nagāssē Kristos)	Abēto	169?–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebstē (Sebstyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbīyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Takla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwoflos	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yostos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	***		***
		Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

*175 361 times three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and [132] livestock are produced in abundance. [241]

[231] The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's *175 time of power.[5] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The towns- 633 people of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, [162] and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more [463] conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he [173] was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose [361] name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

133
443
231
291

FIG. 9.—*The weekly market*

443
804
142
291
302

[P.46-B]

FIG. 10.—*The market: working cotton*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man
[782] of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of
[462] pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] [231] [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭēff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā*, literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā*, preparing *ṭallā*, spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to cheat the locals. The health officer in charge of the team then brought some of the objectors to the mobile laboratory, patiently explained what was going on, and how it would benefit the people. Before long word got around that these outsiders were not so evil after all, and the doors of Dajan opened. 565* 121 177 744

Given the possibility that the Amhara peasant may come to acknowledge the public health worker as a legitimate agent of change, what about the discrepancy between the ideas advanced by the public health workers and the ideas of his traditional culture? The conception of the causation of illness is radically different in the two cultures. Since the peasant views the etiology of disease as a function of the will of supernatural beings, on what grounds could he adhere to prophylactic measures based on naturalistic conceptions? 565* 121 177 753 744

Valid though our characterization of the peasant's concept of causation may be, it is nevertheless a very simplified one. It is unlikely that any world view is totally devoid of some sort of naturalistic explanations, just as, conversely, well-educated moderns often cling to residues of "superstition." Though the Amhara's general framework for understanding causation is not naturalistic, he does possess a number of specific notions which can be interpreted as naturalistic or protonaturalistic. Here are some examples:

(1) The belief that an excessively dirty house brings sickness (even though in practice animals are permitted to urinate and defecate indoors and strings of soot to hang from the rafters). [231]

(2) A vague notion that the daily washing of hands, mouth, and feet is related to health. [515]

(3) The concept of *metch*, an ailment involving fever and pains, believed to come from exposure to dirty places as well as excessive exposure to the sun (though the devil is often thought to be the conveyer of the ailment).

(4) The concept of *gershā*, a notion that a convalescent is liable to relapse unless he refrains from eating unaccustomed foods, resumes work slowly, stays out of the sun, and washes his body and clothes. [758]

(5) A latent concept of contagion, found in: (a) the belief that smelling the urine of another will give one a cold, (b) the belief that the breath of a typhus patient will communicate his disease, and (c) the custom of referring to all diseases which can be given by one person to another as "*zār* sickness."

Even when the explanations set forth by the health workers deviate too much from what the peasant can possibly conceive as plausible, there may still be grounds to justify his accepting some strange advice through an appeal to more familiar beliefs and interests less directly related to the matter at hand. Thus, while peasants have been reluctant to accept the sanitarian's argument that diseases will be prevented by sanitizing the water supply through building wells, they have often been persuaded to build wells by the prospect of securing a more convenient source of water.

Measuring the relative strength of forces supporting and opposing change 565* 121 177

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of
[644] course, the imperial court. The *maḳuānnent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discre-
[492] tion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shoul-
[231] dering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-
[273] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *ṭajj* pre-
[292] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos,* the dark wool cloak of the
[822] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-
[293] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abyssinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for
554 instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mäʿerg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The
554 *maḳuānnent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary
701 Amharic the term *maḳuānnent* (singular *maḳonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

rās	"head" (of an army)
dajāzmātch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitāwrāri**	"general of the vanguard"
qaññāzmātch	"general of the right wing"
gerāzmātch	"general of the left wing"
bālāmbārās	"commander of a fort"
bāshā†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shālaqā	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitāwrāri* ranked below the *gerāzmātch.*

[192] † *Bāshā* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

131
133

[243] cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous, [635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse- [162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial [563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic [567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000 [136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano- [243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals, [231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which [243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes [233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.

*793 869 [262] [164] [735] *(192)

severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based ingredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat. His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals, and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain (kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint (night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the context of the student's nocturnal activities.

[164] *(192)

[231] [735] [776] [514]

There is also danger from animals, the vicious and often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs; from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for nocturnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the exception of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's patronage, or who receive parental support, the young scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure, kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for

[221] [222] *(192)

231 [262] the "great man" (feudal lord) and to warriors at rural, traditional feasts.

The cattle is not fat, since there is no intensive feeding. Even bulls are so patient that children can herd them, and cows are accustomed to walking home unescorted even through urban streets -- including Addis Ababa. With its broad forehead, long narrow skull, well-developed horns, the Abyssinian cattle still bears some resemblance to Primigenius, the cattle of Egypt and Nubia, and probably of Ethiopia prior to 500 B.C.[62]

● 232 Cattle is slaughtered for meat only in case of a barren cow and when the ox becomes too old to pull the plow. The male ancestry of a calf is given little attention, because it is not always possible, under the relaxed manner of breeding, to identify the paternal animal. Bulls are gelded by having their testicles crushed between rocks, and an ox so treated is called "wärärm" or "mäsina". Since the testicles are not cut, this primitive operation is not infrequently unsuccessful, and such a bull is then referred to as "amälät" and is troubled no further since it is believed that he is so virile that his virility cannot be taken from him without killing him. Bulls are gelded not to prevent them from begetting offspring, but to prevent them from "dissipating their energies" in sexual activity when it is needed for plowing. A rare secondary reason would be to fatten them for sale in preperation for slaughter.

Fully grown steers are fattened by feeding them chäw bälä, a mineral salt, for two years, or, where mineral

62. Ibid.

232 springs ("ambo") exist, by taking them to water there("Hora"). This is done also to increase the milk supply of cows. "Rejuvenators" ("zēbäzayähu) consisting of large pieces of mineral salt are fed to them for this purpose, also. Whenever possible, cows are taken to spots where the light rains have sprouted fresh grass ("chälē"). If the unreliable light rains fail to appear, the cattle is taken to "chäqäçhi", lit. muddy places, i.e. brooks and river beds that retain some moisture and grass, when meadows are yellow, dry, and even crabgrass is wooden and nearly useless.

234 A cow will not let herself be milked, despite the remarkable patience of this cattle, unless a calf stands close or in front of her. But the Amhara find it sufficient, when no calf is available, to prop up a stuffed calfskin in front of the cow. The milking period lasts from 2 - 8 months. While at the climax the cow can be milked several times a day, this is reduced to only once a day toward the end. The calf takes most of the mother's milk during the first month. Then milking is begun gradually, first 1/4 udder, until, at the end of the 3rd month, the entire udder. Italian estimates of the milk production during the entire lactation period vary from 200 to 450 kilos, the average being 300 kilos.[63]

232 A calf weighing 15-25 kilos at birth reaches no more than 80-100 kilos at the end of the year. Both male ("bärē") and female ("lam") cattle reach their full height at seven years, and are almost never slaughtered before then. Despite the slow growth and the small milk supply,

63. Ibid.

232 these cattle are resistant to diseases that killed off European cattle brought to Ethiopia by Point IV. This immunity includes poisonous grasses as well as ticks. They are resistant to changes in temperature between day and night, thrive on natural fodder of little nutritive quality, and even old cows continue to have calves for a considerable period.

233 Several factors characterize the Amhara attitude as agricultural rather than pastoral, in addition to the emphasis on the hump and the geldin-for-strength instead of for breeding. Herding is not considered a suitable occupation for a grown Amhara adult; there is no cowboy pattern at all, and cattle herding is usually assigned to boys under 12 years of age while sheep-and-goatherding is often assigned to a dimwitted simpleton. The corral is not of strong stakes, but of light, loose thornbushes.

231 556 On the other hand, cattle, especially cows, play an important role in social organization and other human relations among the Amhara. The terms for cattle and for wealth are synonymous. In marriage agreements, the kinfolk on both the bride's and the groom's side promise to contribute an equal number of cows. This means that the child of a poor farmer cannot hope to marry the offspring of a wealthy farmer, under the usual circumstances, unless the rich partner restricts his contribution to what the poor can afford, or unless the poorer manages to borrow enough cattle from a wider range of kinfolk.

To overcome boundaries of social stratification, cattle enables a peasant to present an "entrance gift"

233 folded" for export.

Sheep are raised primarily for meat. They do not figure in social organization except as minor gifts (including entrance gifts). They are small in stature, and so inexpensive that the sheepskin can often be sold for 1/3 the cost of the entire animal. The woolly skins are used as cloaks, bedcovers, etc. The sheep is not bred for wool, only for meat, especially for the fattail ("lat") which is as prized as in other Middle Eastern areas. The wool (yä-bäg t'ägur) is not very long, and is used to stuff pillows in urban areas. Wool weaving is a local specialty of re-
[286] mote districts, now dying out due to competition of modern, imported blankets, but formerly used to make the black, Arab-type "burnos".

Goats as well as sheep are usually entrusted to an ex-slave or a simpleton, or very small children, when on pasture. Domestic goats ("feyäl") are raised because of
[281] the cheapness of their meat, and the skin which is tanned by the Faqi, and made into parchment for church literature,
[232] etc. To fatten rams, their testicles are crushed between rocks, and the resulting animal is called "qet'qet".

231 Horses are small, wiry and very enduring. They are the animal of the young aristocrats in warfare, in games showing prowess. Mules, small, wiry, and intelligent, cost at least twice as much as horses. They are preferred by travellers and older persons, and are used as the animal of honor ridden by the veiled bride when she is taken to her bridegroom's hamlet. If they can at all afford it, a Senaar mule is preferred, and for the bridal

231 party preferably a white one. Senaar mules are as big as Ethiopian horses, being the offspring of a large Arabian male donkey and an Ethiopian mare (horse). A good Senaar mule may cost twice the price of an Ethiopian mule, especially when actually imported from the Senaar (Sudan). Its strong but ambling gait ("täkolkoloch" or"säggärä") is due to the work of the expert trainer. A donkey is the cheapest of all animals of transportation, very small in stature, and never ridden except in jest by very small children. All these Ethiopian animals are surefooted on steep hills, the Ethiopian mule most of all.

232 Many Livestock diseases are endemic. The more common are:

Mouth disease of cattle - "maz" (Shoa "qefd"), transferred by licking. Treatment is often the same as that traditionally given humans for syphilis, including bathing in hot springs.

Wasting disease - "gordäbeta", or "gorba" for short, which affects cattle and other horned animals; believed caused by evil eye (buda).

Broken-windedness of horses - "nedfat" (lit. pricked), believed caused by evil spirit who has"pricked the animal" and is drinking its strength.

Dizzy spinning on one spot - "azwarit", believed caused by demon.

If the disease is of physical origin, a "wogäsha" surgeon-herbologist may be called in. Sores on the backs of mules and other livestock are cauterized with a "guba", a hot iron rod about two feet long, with a bent tip. If

232 the sickness is believed of magic origin, a dabtara may be called, or a zar doctor consulted. One often sees large nicks cut out of the ears of livestock, especially cows, where pieces have been excised and fed to the spirits on the principle of "pars pro toto".

235 Chickens ("doro") are small, look undernourished, and lay very small eggs. Little clay henhouses are built for them. They are cooked in "doro wot" (chicken curry--Abyssinian style) in a golden reddish sauce, but do not occupy a highly honored spot in the diet, and at feasts are prepared merely to add variety to the menu. Until recently eggs were not sold but given away. Even now they are very cheap. No attempt is made to breed fowl.

231 Beekeeping is one of the few ways the farmer has to obtain some ready cash income. As soon as the rainy season is over, and fragrant wildflowers carpet the landscape, the time for swarming has arrived. The farmer prepares a hollow cylindrical reed basket (called "qäfo"), with one end narrower. This he places in the fork of a tree. Sometimes it is made from the bark of the "elol" or "lol" tree. It has an exit, "fenchu". Sometimes the farmer will capture the queen bee ("awura neb", lit. vulture bee) in a little box and place her inside the basket, so that the worker bees, called "virgin bees" ("dengel neb") because they do not lay eggs, will swarm after her. He is not afraid of stings which are small, cause only a little pimple and heal rapidly. Next to the reed basket he often builds a smaller hive of sticks and mud ("gushgusha"), so that the bees will not have far to go when they decide to break up the colony

412 ly by the ladies. An awl ("wäsfē") is used in basket-making and umbrella-weaving. A small chisel ("mesar") may be a more recent introduction, but, like the awl and larger items, is nonetheless made by the (Falasha) smith. [232] Burning irons for burning out sores on the backs of mules and donkeys are also made by the ironsmith.

326 The ironsmith, usually Falasha in ethnic identification, does not usually do silversmithing. This is done in urban areas or big markets usually by Muslim silversmiths. The silver is smithed from Maria Theresa thalers, and the smith may keep as much as 2/3 of the "raw material" for himself. As in the case of most other marketable tools and utensils, the product of the silversmith is made on order only, though increasingly there are traders with chests full of silver filigree earspoons, crosses, rings, etc., ready for sale to officials, travellers, and others with ready cash. In the past, silversmiths using imported coins, and goldsmiths using Ethiopian mined gold nuggets, were to found primarily attached to the tent city of the king at his capital. Casting is done on the principle of cire perdue, a form of wax in clay.

411 Weapons were made also in connection with the feudal military organization, which required the craftsman to follow wherever the armed bands of the warlords went in raids or new settlements, serving as a kind or ordinance, and always on call. Rifles in Abyssinia date back over 300 years, handed down as family property, the stocks replaced time and again with tough, white wood, "wanza" (Cordia abyssinica). Each soldier carried gunpowder in

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

AE 563

practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

4. Occupational hunters: lowland border peoples; negroid ex-slaves; all non-Coptic.

AE 563 224

The occupational hunting tribes are considered the most primitive, as pre-agricultural and even pre-pastoral subsisters on the bush, jungle, river gorges and deserts. Among them are the Woyto, the hunters of the Hippopotamus, which is considered by the Coptic clergy especially unclean because of the similarity to the pig. Jungles like Wolkait, in northwest Begemdir, contain such despised and feared hunters, as does the eastern lowland desert of the Danakil (Afar).

AE 563 233

Considered on a somewhat higher level within these groups are the pastoral nomads like the Somali, some of the Borana, and other southern tribes who, when they are better known to settled neighbors, are equated with class 2. When less well known, they are classed not much above hunters, and it does not matter to the Amhara that the pastoral nomads in turn look down on settled peasants.

AE 563 567

The lowest on level four are the ex-slaves, who are referred to as Shancalla if they look negroid, or the more general "barya", i.e. slave (name of a Sudanese border tribe). Only a very poor person, possibly an outcast, cripple, etc., of the two upper classes would consider marrying a Shanqalla. Nevertheless, because of the aforementioned concubinage with female slaves, there are Shanqalla outcrops among even the Amhara of Gondar. An offspring of such a union not infrequently does marry a Shanqalla woman, after converting her to Coptic Christianity. This is pos-

1224 825 lope, reddish, more shy.

Ethiopian klipspringer - "sasso", a little mountain antelope resembling the European chamois, with soft, smooth skin. The Amhara is amused by the curious habit of this sociable animal of mixing with herds of tame goats and grazing in their midst, when goats are taken to upper hillsides for pasturage in the rainy season.

[233]

Waterbuck - "defassa", large antelope resembling European red deer in build. Brown color; hers of 5 to 10 usually contain only one old bull. Common near Lake Tana.

Reedbuck - "behor", golden-colored antelope, in bush near water. They like to inhabit a specific small territory, in herds of 5 to 10.

Ethiopian ibex - "walya", very wild, red-speckled, on the dega steep mountains of Semyen subprovince. Not common elsewhere.

825 223 Francolins - "qoq" is the generic name for this family of common wild fowl of the woyna dega; resemble the partridge. Boys are adept at hunting them with slingshot and pebble and run after them until both are exhausted.

[411 857]

Guinea fowl - "zegra" or "jegra", black, lean, fast runner, found near water.

Partridge - "sorän", common on woyna dega. Wild

273

Nowadays the Coptic priests prepare wine for the eucharist in great secrecy, locked up in the beytalehem", the storehouse of the church, but it is believed that they use raisins purchased from Arab traders.

b. Animal Husbandry

233 The raising of livestock among the Amhara is not directly related to available pasture. The two factors that stand out are the importance of cattle for prestige and expression of wealth; the interrelatedness of livestock with the agricultural ecology and land use.

In the rainy season the valleys are usually waterlogged, and armed peasants take the cattle to the "dega" upland for several weeks of grazing. Obversely, in the dry season when the uplands and hilltops are parched, the cattle is taken to the valley to graze in and alongside riverbeds. Pasturage, "sed", is free--by agreement, usually within the "bota", somewhat vague territorial area belonging to the local church, feudal lord, etc. During the rainy season, the trek upland assumes semi-nomadic proportions at times, ("zallan"), for the peasants may take their wives, bigger children, and households along. Generally, if the fields are very fertile, the pasturage will be more distant from the hamlets. The dry season sometimes causes such severe drought that after the cattle has eaten the stubble off the harvested fields, the growth of calves comes to a temporary stop, there is no mating, and milk is reduced even to cessation. Fortunately

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are permitted to use it. Milking is done in a very tightly woven
231 415 reed container ("gerera") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwacha" or "chocho").

233 423 691 Sometimes a large extended family will try to enclose a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Mänz district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary
251 yoke. The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya
262 läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

61. Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

232 these cattle are resistant to diseases that killed off European cattle brought to Ethiopia by Point IV. This immunity includes poisonous grasses as well as ticks. They are resistant to changes in temperature between day and night, thrive on natural fodder of little nutritive quality, and even old cows continue to have calves for a considerable period.

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To overcome boundaries of social stratification, cattle enables a peasant to present an "entrance gift"

231 [556] ("agäbba") to an important "great man", perhaps to become a "client" in his retinue for protection.

[775] In religious life, the old peasant can arrange for the peace of his soul after death by giving a cow to his Confessor or to the "qēs gabaz" the administrative priest of the parish church, to have masses recited. [682] In criminal law, a murderer in the remote rural areas can still save himself and even prevent a long and bloody feud between families, if he can borrow enough cattle, in addition to his own, to pay "blood-money", in cows, to the kin of the victim, the agreement witnessed by the presence of a "chega shum", a judge, or a priest, preferably all three. Thus there are some aspects of the cattle pattern that are reminiscent of a tribal, semi-nomadic, rather than settled territorial social organization. This becomes emphasized during the upland trek in the rainy season.

●233 Though entrusted to youngsters, care of cattle is obviously a task requiring responsibility. Cattle is not taken out until one hour after sunrise, about 7 A.M., when the dew has dried. During the hot dry season, cattle rest under umbrella trees and other shade from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., so that the grazing period away from the hamlet is not long. Before dusk, by 6 P.M., they are taken into the hamlet enclosure or corrall, or even into the hut, for hyenas may come early.

The cash value of cattle is low, primarily because of the distance and poor transportation to world markets. [281] The hides, a major export item, are of low cash value because this type is not tanned, merely sundried, and "book-folded" for export.

233 folded" for export.

Sheep are raised primarily for meat. They do not figure in social organization except as minor gifts (including entrance gifts). They are small in stature, and so inexpensive that the sheepskin can often be sold for 1/3 the cost of the entire animal. The woolly skins are used as cloaks, bedcovers, etc. The sheep is not bred for wool, only for meat, especially for the fattail ("lat") which is as prized as in other Middle Eastern areas. The wool (yä-bäg ṭägur) is not very long, and is used to stuff pillows in urban areas. Wool weaving is a local specialty of re-
[286] mote districts, now dying out due to competition of modern, imported blankets, but formerly used to make the black, Arab-type "burnos".

Goats as well as sheep are usually entrusted to an ex-slave or a simpleton, or very small children, when on pasture. Domestic goats ("feyäl") are raised because of
[281] the cheapness of their meat, and the skin which is tanned by the Faqi, and made into parchment for church literature,
[232] etc. To fatten rams, their testicles are crushed between rocks, and the resulting animal is called "qeṭqeṭ".

231 Horses are small, wiry and very enduring. They are the animal of the young aristocrats in warfare, in games showing prowess. Mules, small, wiry, and intelligent, cost at least twice as much as horses. They are preferred by travellers and older persons, and are used as the animal of honor ridden by the veiled bride when she is taken to her bridegroom's hamlet. If they can at all afford it, a Senaar mule is preferred, and for the bridal

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geography than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in response to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones. 133 132 [175]* [184]

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But *tēff*, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley. 241 262

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which ornament the homes of the well-to-do. 233 236 291 184 [262] [556] [286] [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural-colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural environment. 182 291 [386] 342 182 346 182

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses. 132 [165] [181]

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gondar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While 175*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] [231] [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭēff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā,* literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā,* preparing *ṭallā,* spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*665 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* *565 512 or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from 233 857 somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain— [262] their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā,* or *dābo.* They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening [782] prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children [513] settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the em- [352] bers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds [524] must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 14.—*A group of shepherds*

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FIG. 15.—*Threshing time*

[P.78-B]

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Preferred
[243] cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous,
[635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse-
[162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial
[563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic
[567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000
[136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano-
[243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals,
[231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which
[243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes
[233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.

* 754
* 793 Literacy, per se, is not the goal of enrollment, but is
869 percieved rather as a pre-requisite for studying the
* [192] Gospels (wangel), the psalter (dawiyt), and a variety
of prayers, pursuant to participating in the Mass
(kidasiy) as an ecclesiastic of the parish.

621 Within a parish, only a minority of households send
869 boys to the church school; these are generally ristemma
* 793 households, each sending a single priest-candidate in
* 233 any one generation. Because attendance at the school
[602] precludes shepherding, the common lot of young boys, the
student's family must find a substitute shepherd for him;
a younger sibling is usually available for this task, but,
if not, a collateral or even non-kinsman may be obtained.
Indeed, the age at which a boy begins his studies (gener-
ally, between seven and thirteen years) is often deter-
mined by when this substitute can be found. The parish
school is suspended, however, during periods of inten-
sive agricultural activities, of harvesting, threshing,
and winnowing.

* 793 Although considerations of piety influence a man to
423 seek ordination for his son, self-interest generally do-
593 minates. The achievement of priesthood validates a
621 family's claims to church lands (yimoskol mariet). If
554 the neophyte's father is himself a priest, his son's or-
* [192] dination means freedom from bothersome performances in
the Mass. If the father is not a priest, but anyway

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are permitted to use it. Milking is done in a very tightly woven 234 415 reed container ("gerera") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwacha" or "chocho").

233 423 691 Sometimes a large extended family will try to enclose a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Läna district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary 251 yoke. The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya 262 läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

61. Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

232 springs ("ambo") exist, by taking them to water there("Hora"). This is done also to increase the milk supply of cows. "Rejuvenators" ("gēbäzayähu) consisting of large pieces of mineral salt are fed to them for this purpose, also. Whenever possible, cows are taken to spots where the light rains have sprouted fresh grass ("chälē"). If the unreliable light rains fail to appear, the cattle is taken to "chäqä-çhwi", lit. muddy places, i.e. brooks and river beds that retain some moisture and grass, when meadows are yellow, dry, and even crabgrass is wooden and nearly useless.

234 A cow will not let herself be milked, despite the remarkable patience of this cattle, unless a calf stands close or in front of her. But the Amhara find it sufficient, when no calf is available, to prop up a stuffed calfskin in front of the cow. The milking period lasts from 2 - 8 months. While at the climax the cow can be milked several times a day, this is reduced to only once a day toward the end. The calf takes most of the mother's milk during the first month. Then milking is begun gradually, first 1/4 udder, until, at the end of the 3rd month, the entire udder. Italian estimates of the milk production during the entire lactation period vary from 200 to 450 kilos, the average being 300 kilos.[63]

232 A calf weighing 15-25 kilos at birth reaches no more than 80-100 kilos at the end of the year. Both male ("bäre") and female ("lam") cattle reach their full height at seven years, and are almost never slaughtered before then. Despite the slow growth and the small milk supply,

63. Ibid.

231 435 for his family's consumption, guests, and gifts, but not larger flocks, conserving grass for cattle.

Donkeys: The average peasant may have 2, to carry goods to and from the market. A good donkey may bring as much as 12 - 15 MT, but an average donkey no more than 8 MT out of season (when no caravans are about to leave. They are not usually rented, but are lent to friends and kin more freely than mules, without charge.

[234] Butter: This is sold to urban people and at big markets, wrapped in leaves. Milk is sold only by personal arrangement, directly to the house.

235 435 Chicken: These bring as little as ETH$0.50, or even $0.25, depending on season and quality. All meat prices rise sharply at the end of the lenten season. Otherwise the peasant does not bother to sell chickens to towns unless he lives very close.

Eggs: These sell for as little as ETH$0.01 a-piece, sold only since Italian occupation, and only in towns. Otherwise the peasant gives them away, or boils them in the wot.

231 435 Honey: Perhaps less than a quarter of all peasants bother to sell honey. Much depends on whether there are bees in the immediate neighborhood, and whether a town with tedj-byets (mead houses) is nearby. On the average he may put up at least 5 skeps, realize at most 10 kilos of honey from each, and obtain a maximum of ETH$50. --(US$20.) at the market.

232 the sickness is believed of magic origin, a dabtara may be called, or a zar doctor consulted. One often sees large nicks cut out of the ears of livestock, especially cows, where pieces have been excised and fed to the spirits on the principle of "pars pro toto".

●235 Chickens ("doro") are small, look undernourished, and lay very small eggs. Little clay henhouses are built for them. They are cooked in "doro wot" (chicken curry--Abyssinian style) in a golden reddish sauce, but do not occupy a highly honored spot in the diet, and at feasts are prepared merely to add variety to the menu. Until recently eggs were not sold but given away. Even now they are very cheap. No attempt is made to breed fowl.

231 Beekeeping is one of the few ways the farmer has to obtain some ready cash income. As soon as the rainy season is over, and fragrant wildflowers carpet the landscape, the time for swarming has arrived. The farmer prepares a hollow cylindrical reed basket (called "qafo"), with one end narrower. This he places in the fork of a tree. Sometimes it is made from the bark of the "elol" or "lol" tree. It has an exit, "fenchu". Sometimes the farmer will capture the queen bee ("awura neb", lit. vulture bee) in a little box and place her inside the basket, so that the worker bees, called "virgin bees" ("dengel neb") because they do not lay eggs, will swarm after her. He is not afraid of stings which are small, cause only a little pimple and heal rapidly. Next to the reed basket he often builds a smaller hive of sticks and mud ("gushgusha"), so that the bees will not have far to go when they decide to break up the colony

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136 "meset", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses, does not live in colonies. It makes honey which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "tenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens.

[776 237]

Scorpion ("gint"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice.

[752]

Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins.

[241 251]

13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

231 556 Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of

462 processing tasks of the women also include the prepara-
29 tion of staples of the pantry, to be ready for immediate use when her other tasks have left her no time. The red pepper ("bärbärä") is preserved and readied in the form of a paste, by grinding it, adding water and salt, plus a bit of onion. This paste, called "delleh"or "delleha" can then be used in wot, or to spice butter to be smeared on "enjära" bread, or mixed with oily nug paste and car-
[x3] ried as a condiment and staple on travel. Another prepared spice condiment used by travellers is a dry mixture of spices, salt and "shero" (ground peas), called "meten". Butter may be processed by boiling it with pepper, or with the small yellow root of a rhubarb called "mäqmäqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), which is also used as a medicine against tuberculosis.

462 Fetching and producing materials for fuel is a major
237 female occupation, though left to young girls when avail-
372 able. A special supply of dried cowdung is prepared for the rainy season, beginning right after Easter when the intermittent light rains are expected soon. Donkey and horse manure, "fanday", are not used by the proud Amhara, but cattle dung is flattened between the palms of women, dried in the sun, piled into tall heaps right next to the hut, then covered with a protective mask of mud and fresh dung. It is also women's task to watch the hearth fire in the evening, to check that it is covered with hot ashes over glowing embers, so that it will not go out and leave the hut chilly, on the one hand, but not burn so brightly that it might set fire to the hut.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

They say the prayers by heart and
without light, except in the lamps or chandeliers, for they 796 782
have not got lamps. They burn butter in these chandeliers, [373]
for they have not got oil. They pray or chaunt very loud, [354]
without art of singing, and they do not recite (alternate) [237]
verses, but all sing straight on. Their prayers are psalms, and
on feast days besides psalms they recite prose, according as [533]
the feast is so is the prose. They always stand in the churches; at matins they only say one single lesson: this is said by a priest or a friar, rather shouted than intoned, and he reads this lesson before the principal entrance. When this lesson is finished, on Saturdays, Sundays, and 792
feast days, they make a procession with four or five crosses 796
on their poles, and a cross not so much raised as carried like a stick in the left hand, because they carry a thurible in the right hand, since as many as carry a cross carry a thurible, there are always as many thuribles as crosses. They wear some silk cloaks, not well made, because they [292]
are not wider than the width of a piece of damask, or other silk from top to bottom. Before the breast, a cross piece to the flanks on each side, of any other stuff and of any colour, even though it should not match the principal part, and of this principal part a good ell hangs behind dragging on the ground. They make this procession through the circuit, which is like a cloister. This being ended, on the said Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts, he who has to say mass enters with two others into the chancel; they bring out an [778]
effigy of Our Lady, which they have in ancient pictures in all churches and monasteries. He who has to say mass places himself in the centre of the transept with his face towards the principal entrance, and the image in his hands held before his breast: and those who stand by his sides hold lighted candles in their hands, and all the others commence a chaunt like prose, and all walk, shouting and leaping as if dancing[1] they hold hands and go round, before the

[1] *Como em chacota*, dancing and singing, *i.e.*, not reverentially.

*787
*755
539

been mixed together with other ingredients (such as sacramental oil, juice or sap, animal blood or urine). The recipe further states which segments of the text (e.g., asmat) are to be represented in a contrasting
[824] color (usually red). Finally, the botanical variety of reed with which the text is written may be determined also.

Beyond the effects gained from the manufacture of the digam itself, the text's goals are further augmented by materials which are included in the kitab, together
[237] with the digam. These include, as indicated by the debtera's recipe, botanicals, often together with such exotic ingredients as a designated number of hairs from a lion's mane. The outer cover of the kitab is made of leather, but a debtera must determine if it should come from a wild or domestic animal, and, if the latter, what its sex and color should be. The digam is sewn into this, but whether the stitch should be to the right or to the left, whether the thread should be cotton or silk, and what its color should be, must also be con-
[801] sidered first. The number of stitches to be made is likewise relevant, for numerological considerations suffuse the entire process of making the kitab. Nor are the makers of the kitab neglected; whether the debtera should be sexually continent before writing the digam, whether the cord by which the kitab is worn should be

132 take the corrugated iron roofs off urban houses. Most tornadoes do not hit the ground, but if they do there is destruction. Usually such a cyclone precedes a heavy rainstorm.

The fog in the rainy season, called "gum", is cold and thick and covers the countryside. On the other hand, the fog that precedes the light rains of April and May, called gag or tegag, is milky, light, and causes very humid heat. Metereologists believe that it is the result of the sand raised by the hot "simoun" wind blowing from Arabia and the eastern lowlands of Ethiopia.

821 The importance of "rain in season" is of course an urgent concern of people living in a primarily agricultural economy. An unseasonal fall, which occasionally arrives after the end of the rainy season, when the grown grain begins to ripen, is called sabbiya, and is highly unpopular. The proverb, to indicate "all things in their proper time", refers to seasonal rains:

"In (the month of) Hamlē, beating-down rain;
in (the month of) Sänyē, fine drizzle."

At the beginning of the rainy season, in Sanye, the farmer wishes for constant drizzle, wetting the ground just enough to enable him to make headway with his scratch-plow and to seed in the previously sunbaked soil; in Hamlē, he wishes for plentiful rain so that the sprouting grain will grow fast and tall.

132 137 241 The Abyssinians themselves long ago recognized three distinct climatic zones in their country:

132 Dega - more than 8,000 feet above sea level; cold, with
137 average temperatures of 50° - 61° F. The dega
241 is primarily prairie grassland, strewn with many medium-sized wooded areas of the high mountain type. The area is particularly adapted for raising livestock, but also suitable for growing barley, wheat, tieff (a variety of millet), beans flax, and temperate fruit, which are gathered wild not long after the end of the rains. Trees include the wild olive (Olea chrysophylla), juniper (Juniperus procera), the medicinal Kosso tree (Hegenia abyssinica).

Woyna Dega - between 6,000 and 8,000 feet: temperate to warm, with average temperatures of 61° - 68° F. This climatic zone includes the greater part of the plateau country, and most of the populated and cultivated lands. This is the zone where most cereals are grown, including soft grains, barley, tieff, maize. Here coffee grows wild. Forests, where they occur, are thicker, but spiny bushes are more prevalent. At the lower levels there are thick stands of bamboo (Podocarpus) and
[361] East African hardwoods; at the higher levels are juniper varieties. Most Amhara live in this zone.

132 Qolla - below 5,000 feet: hot. with average temperatures
137 in the 70's, 80's and 90's F. The qolla includes the arid lowland zones, as well as tropical forest; river valleys like that of the Awash; and most border areas of the country.

134 carried down the Blue Nile into Egypt. In Ethiopia, irrigation canals make use of it.

[311] (3) The remaining, eroded, red loam soil, of little fertility. This is left to the bush or is used for grazing.[5]

135 There is little information on the mineral wealth of Ethiopia, since whatever there is, particularly gold, has been kept from the knowledge of outsiders. The Italians had merely begun their surveys when they had to leave the country. Salt has always been a major item of import from the border lowlands in the east to the highland plateau. Numerous volcanic mineral springs, used for healing since ancient times, exist in many plateau districts.

[326] Since ancient times, gold from the sand gravels of Wollega and southern provinces was sold in small nuggets, or fashioned by goldsmiths into rings and sold by weight. It is now a monopoly of the central government; goldsmiths have been drawn to Addis Ababa, where they now use modern methods.

D. Flora, Fauna, their significance in Ethiopian Ecology.

137 The generosity of nature on the highland plateau has provided a basis for human subsistence with little effort. In addition to a healthful climate and fertile soil, resources of vegetation and animal life are abundant.

137 Economic botanists have conducted studies which indicate
241 that the highlands of Ethiopia contain a number of indigenous varieties of cultivated cereals and legumes. Some are of the opinion that these highlands even formed one of the PRIMARY

5. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia, 1954, p. 127-8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 centers of old world agriculture in which the Neolithic
241 economy originated, possibly contributing to the initial development of ancient Egyptian civilization. Like the highlands of Yemen, the highlands of Ethiopia seem to represent ancient centers of TERRACED AGRICULTURE. It was in the Kaffa province of Ethiopia that coffee originated. It was carried to Yemen, planted there, and exported from coastal harbors (like the town of Mocha) through the Red
439 Sea into the Mediterranean. Coffee is still Ethiopia's most important export. Other major exports include sundried hides, sheep and goat skins, cereals, edible oils, and gold.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that major imports consist primarily of items not of major importance in subsistence, but which reflect secondary needs: cotton sheeting (abujedid), cotton yarn, cotton piece goods, raw cotton, naphtha. The major exception is salt, still a major import.[6]

137 Many varieties of wild fruit and vegetables are eaten
262 only in small quantities, especially by the Amhara, partly because of the abundance of cereal crops and legumes, partly because of a cultural attitude that despises "wild food" fit for use only in case of crop failure, famine due to warfare, and for outcasts.

Another group of highly useful plants which grow wild in Ethiopia are the oilseeds. A number of these are planted and used in the diet.

137 In the lower regions of the plateau, mainly south of
241 the Amhara area, a "false banana" fiber crop called muz or
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6. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No12, May 1947, 4pp.

137 241 [248] koba (Musa ensete) is grown. This is used for making ropes of all kinds and bags for grain. In the south, the roots and inner parts of the plant are also used to make flour for 262 [186] food; but the Amhara despise this, considering it "food of slave peoples".

137 Vegetation is dense in the valleys, and the forests contain many valuable trees, including the Natal yellow pine. But in spite of the high yearly rainfall the northern plateau is comparatively little wooded. Foresters estimate that only 2.8% of Ethiopia is forest-covered, although they believe that it was once well forested. They ascribe this denuding to centuries of uncontrolled grazing and periodic burning-over. The best hardwoods that remain are usually in the least accessible spots, lowlands and gorges.[7]

137 313 The two most important trees of the highlands are the Ṭed and the Zegba. The Ṭed, a juniper (Juniperus procera) sometimes referred to as "pencil cedar" (or Juniperus phoenicoea), is fine-grained, easy to split, aromatic, durable (even when exposed to moist conditions in the rainy season), and termite-resistant. It is popular for beams in the better houses of chiefs, and for the simple native furniture. The Zegba(Podocarpus gracilor), also an evergreen, is found in the warmer parts of the plateau. The wood is soft, easy to split, subject to decay when exposed to moisture, and thus more popular in drier areas. Non-resinous and tasteless, it is useful as a container for food, but is mainly used for construction and furniture. On the higher plateau

7. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia 1954, pp. 127-8; Huo: Ethiopia, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons:Global Epidemiology, 1951, p.63.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

136 Jackal ("qäbbäro"), common north of Lake Tana, near Gondar and in most other parts of Ethiopia. Its nocturnal habits are similar to those of the hyena, and it also burrows into graves.

Vultures ("amora"), This term includes all carrion-eating birds, and other birds of prey. Among Carrion-eaters are: the ever-present, sharp-eyed fork-tailed hawk ("ṭenb amora") which will swoop down and steal meat away from a man in the middle of the town if he is not quick to protect it; a white-bodied water-bird (näch amora) (including the "shemäla", a kind of heron) who competes with fishermen in the rainy season; "warda", the blackbird (merle) that cleans up after human feasts.

Crow ("qura"), named after its cry. This bird is most often seen in back yards or cleaning up the market area after a market day. Thus, a day when no market takes place, is called "Day of the Crow's market" ("yäqura gäbäya"). Pious individuals remember the crow as one of Noah's pets and call a variety that has a white spot on its head, "Noah's crow" (yänoa qura).

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136 A third category of wild animals includes those that
241 endanger the crops. The farmer sends his children to watch for these from the tops of umbrella trees, and the boys use their fiber-and-pebble slingshots against them. These include:

Baboon ("zendjäro"), very unpopular because a troop can

136 241 destroy the crops of a village in a week. Shouting is not sufficient to scare them off when there are many. When the small baboon families held off by the boys threaten to grow into a troop, farmers use their rifles.

Hare ("ṭenchäl") is also called the "enemy of tiff" because it likes to feed on that main crop of the farmer. It is a nocturnal animal, perhaps because of its natural enemies, the ever-present birds of prey.

Yellow Sparrow ("mänäkusit"), lit. "little monk", be-
[712] cause its yellow coloring resembles the saffron toga formerly worn by monks.

Flax snake ("yätalba ebäb") is of the light-brown color of flax-seed, on which it likes to feed. It is also called "kurfafeya", because when disturbed, it makes a sound like "fuff". Its bite is con-
[825] sidered mildly poisonous by the Amhara but requiring the services of a native "wogäsha" (surgeon), who thus acquires a reputation for his "cure" against this actually non-poisonous snake.

Locust (anbäṭa), occurs less often than the other dangers, but when it comes, in huge swarms of a 3-inch species, the results are devastating, causing major famines. (The usual route of the locust is arrival from the lowland eastern border, through the Great Rift valley (Awash), up the plateau, in January, just after the main harvest. It withdraws to the dry lowlands for egg-

136 laying during the little and big rains. But
●241 there are many variations.) When it comes, the farmer tries to scare it away by setting fire to fallow fields, stubble, bush and trees.

136 Other wild creatures familiar to the Amhara are Migrating birds which fly north (to "Jerusalem" in the popular mind, actually to Europe) in March and return in October, including the "zorit", a white-bellied, black-backed, red-winged bird, and a variety of stork, called "asa leqami". The Nile Monitor, ("ardjano"), a huge lizard is found along larger rivers, often not far from villages and even towns, and easy to hunt. With its scaly skin and often large size, it resembles a crocodile, with dark stripes and spots on a very white underside.
281] The skin is used to cover better utensils and is exported as "crocodile leather" for bags and shoes. Actual crocodiles are much harder to hunt, in less accessible river gorges in the lowlands. The Guenon Monkey (Ṭoṭa) is common on lower
231] elevations(where it is also a danger to crops). Its young are sometimes made pets.

136 Insect life is abundant in Ethiopia, varies in type according to elevation, and bears considerable significance to ecology.

136 Flies - abundant everywhere, transmitting intestinal
1.4 and skin infections. They are not interfered with beyond swishing with the fly-switch which, if kept in constant motion, chases but does not kill them.

Fleas ("qunechcha") are very common on humans. Everyone has them most of the time, even in the city.

136 "meset", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses, does not live in colonies. It makes honey which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "tenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens. [776 237]

Scorpion ("gint"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice. [752]

Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins. [241 251]

13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

231 556 Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of

231 livestock he own, and he prefers to keep it or dole it out
[556] to his children on their marriages, rather than sell it. Practically everyone has a few sheep and goats, possibly also a donkey and a horse, and, if richer, a mule, some cows and a team of two oxen.

The cattle population of Ethiopia is estimated at 18 million, or 1.2 head per person, comparable with New Zealand and Argentina.[11] However, an estimated million or more cattle die each year of rinderpest, anthrax, tick fever, etc. This limits the exportation of meat surplus almost as much as does difficulty of transportation to world markets.

412 According to the United Nations estimate, Ethiopia in
494 1950-1951 had 1 million horses, 1 million mules, 3 million donkeys. These provide the bulk of transportation, except for the few hundred heavy trucks (trente-quatros) which
491 operate on the few Italian-built roads. This modern road network has been badly damaged by the annual rains, by the overloading of trucks, and by inadequate (though improving) repairs.

241 The estimated agricultural production of Ethiopia in
433 1954 included:

Maize - 150,000 metric tons,
Barley - 600,000 metric tons,
Linseed - 50,000 metric tons,
Coffee - 45,800 metric tons,[12]

11. KuO, 1955, 4pp.
12. U. N. Secretariat, Statistical Office: Statistical Yearbook 1955, tables 29, 14, 15, 20, 25.

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goose "yebra" (anas aegyptiaca).

Quail - "derchet" Perhaps the most common wild fowl very near habitations, but rarely hunted because very small. It is considered a nuisance and a danger because of its habit of hiding in flocks in the tall grass and starting up suddenly, scaring horses and even mules, which is dangerous especially on steep hills. [59]

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184 Spears, slingshot, and now rifles are used in part-time or sport hunting. Traps ("atmed") and snares are used only by occupational hunting populations living in jungles such as Wolqait and whose pattern of living differs from that of typical Amhara.

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[412] A noteworthy Amhara exploitative activity is the collecting of pumice rock in riverbeds during the dry season, and thus called "yabaher dengay" (river rock). It is used
135 in grinding and husking. Gold comes mostly from south of old-Amhara territory, where it is found in sand gravels and has been sold in nuggets since ancient times.

241 D. Food Production and Consumption

a.) Agricultural production

In agriculture in general, there are two major variables: environment, and degree of sophistication - i.e. power and its application.

The ecology of Ethiopia's highland plateau, where

59. The English equivalent terms have been taken from Van Rosen, Bjorn: Game Animals of Ethiopia. 1953.

244 topography provides for a variety of climate at a minimum of distance, is very favorable to diversified agriculture. But, as indicated before, the uses of power have not developed in millenia. Much land is permitted to lie fallow, and slash-and-burn methods are used when old soil becomes exhausted and new lands are needed. Therefore, apart from market villages, no settlements remain on the same spot for as much as a century, usually. The fields are not fertilized; manure from cattle is used as fuel. However, irrigation, though not intensive; terrace farming since ancient times; and the use of a wooden scratch plow with iron tip, give the Amhara agricultural picture an old-Middle Eastern character. Also Middle Eastern is the fact that among the Amhara and other north Abyssinians cereals are the most important field crops.

Ninety-five percent of the population of Ethiopia depends on farming and stock raising.[60] European estimates [134] indicate that half the land territory of Ethiopia is arable. Despite much erosion, the depth of the subsoil is regarded as unusually deep. But much good land is left fallow, because there is enough land for the low density of the population; and because life is fairly comfortable at the old standards of living, especially now that ravaging armies of [311] hungry soldiers seem a thing of the past. Thus, there is little urge for increased production, except by proclamation from the central authority from Addis Ababa which has tried to stimulate it with only modest success. The reason for this lack of success is that the farmer argues, with

60. Underhill, C.T.: Industry in Ethiopia,1950, p. 21.

2+/ considerable justification, that even if he raised larger and more diversified crops, they would not find a ready sale (due to undeveloped lines of transport to world markets). Thus the old pattern of not raising more crops than one's family can consume in one year, and for taxes and tribute, continues, especially among the Amhara; consequently fields do not become exhausted as quickly as they would in intensive agriculture.

[427] Another factor was (and is to some extent) the insecurity of tenure. The sharecropping "gabbar" was little more than a serf, who did not know from year to year what treatment he would receive from the next (often absentee) feudal landlord to whom his land might be assigned the next year. This was not conducive to the growth of much sentimental attachment to any particular plot of soil.

[311] Among the Amhara, only about 20% of the potentially fertile area available in a neighborhood ("and debber agar") is usually under cultivation in any one year. On exposed parts of the plateau the crops are usually barley, broad beans, some bearded wheat, and linseed. In more sheltered spots, lentils, chick peas, and a legume called "gwayo" used as cattle fodder (but feared by Amhara because walking in it or lying in it is supposed to cause softening of the human bones). Barley is planted almost the whole year round, starting early with the "light rains", and irrigated in the dry season. In valleys of the plateau, where fields are warmer and more protected, as well as better watered, the major crop of tieff, a grass-like

●241 cereal, as well as other crops already mentioned are grown. The lowest and warmest spots of the plateau are usually used for various types of millet-sorghum, gesho (hops). Coffee grows wild or is purchased on the market, as are bananas from the lowland. After a few years of cultivation, a field may be left fallow for five or more years.

[17] The Amhara's irrigation and terrace farming resemble
[46] those of Yemen, not of Africa. Farming is man's work, not
[231] woman's. The one-handed plow is drawn by a yoke of two oxen, encouraged by a long fibre whip. The Amhara rerely uses other animals for drawing the plow.

Fallow land or new bush is broken during the dry season. A heavier-than-usual iron plow point is purchased from the Falasha ironsmiths, affixed to the scratch plow, and the area, after preliminary burning, is scratched many times at right angles. The stubble and weeds are then piled and burned. But for the actual plowing and seeding, the beginning of the rains is awaited.

312 Irrigation canals are completely washed out in the rainy season, and must be rebuilt in each dry season. Terracing is less common than irrigation, but on occasion mountain farmers of long residence do build low walls of rock and mud on hillsides to prevent severe washouts and landslides during the rainy season.

243 Tyēff (Eragrostic abyssinica; Poa abyssinica) deserves the latter Latin name, for it is the mainstay staple of Abyssinia, except in the south. It is an annual indigenous grass with seeds of pinhead size, cultivated

make a toga.

221 241 Since agriculture is a major concern, much of the annual cycle of activities is centered around it. With the onset of the light rains, fields left fallow the years before are redistributed among the members of the extended family of those who work the land. Fathers allocate fields to their newly married sons or to those who have an added child. The matted grass is plowed before the rains start--"tärättärä--plowing to kill the weeds in the sun; then a second, third, fourth time at right angles--"gämmäsä", "däggämä", "sällässä". Then the turf is piled, dried and burned. The land is now ready, "masa" land", and when puffy clouds appear over the horizon in the morning, the farmer takes his plow to the field for rains will surely follow in the afternoon.

241 407 The plow is one-handed, derived from the ancient Middle East. The yoke, about 5 feet in length and 3-4" thick ("qämbär") is lowered behind the humps of two oxen. The plowpoint, held in place by two vertical wedges, is attached to the central stick, "manäqo". At first this plow, which is little more than a converted digging stick dragged at an angle, penetrates less than 6 inches, but after about 5 replowings, as deeply as one foot. The plowpoint is flat and cannot turn the earth.

241 Major procedures fall into the following categories:

preliminary plowing - "tällämä", cutting field into furrows, preparatory to seeding. Plow is led around large rocks and ignores small ones, so that

very few need to be removed by hand; "fär" is the first furrow in a field.

deep plowing - "shärakkätä", in order to raise good soil.

final plowing - "zärrä", just before or after seeding.

134 823 Numerous distinctions are made between types of soil, so that every member of the extended family receives his share of both good or poor soil. Fertility is basically categorized into the aforementioned "lām tyēff" and "tyēff" types. Finer distinctions show awareness of conservation needs:

male soil ("wändē märēt") - any heavy, humus-rich, fertile soil.

female soil ("tyētē märēt") - any light, especially sandy soil. Less fertile.

dark soil - "walka", used for luxury grain such as wheat.

sandy soil - "mwaçhçhärä", must be lightly plowed so as not to blow away.

mobile soil - "lel märēt", easily eroded, often left fallow for that reason.

poorly draining soil - "rānkwa märēt", or "ambaza", gets muddy easily and then becomes difficult to plow.

eroded land - "borbor märēt", with many crevasses, "eaten by water" during the rainy season.

243 patient oxen. If the farmer has no ex-slave retainers, his wife may help in the harvest. Even young boys help, particularly in protecting crops. The direction of the breeze [461] is carefully observed before winnowing. Work proceeds from sunrise to sundown (from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.), with a rest from noon to 3 P.M., the hottest time of the day. At that time the women bring barley beer, enjara bread, and a spe- [263] cial condiment prepared from crushed "nug" oilseeds called "anäbabär".

Threshing by sticks instead of oxen is done in harvest of the "nug" and this may require some additional helpers.

241 Oil plants are cultivated and of considerable impor- 262 tance in the diet. They are considered field crops rather than garden crops:

"nug" (Guizotia abyssinica), the black Niger Seed, which is the most used vegetable oil of the Amhara. Travellers take it along, mixed with spices, as a staple. It is used in many items of diet. After crushing, the oil cakes are used for fuel (not fodder).

Flax seed (Linum usitatissimum), called "talbä", the second most common oilseed, of light brown color, consumed in similar ways and in drinks. It is not raised for the fiber, which is considered fodder or fuel.

Castor bean (Ricinus communis), called "gulqwas" or "qachma". This is not a field crop as much as nug and talba, and not as much of a staple. Tan- [281] ners use it for lubrication of skins. The emperor has urged increased production, but there

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are no ready markets.

Sesame seed (Sesamum indicum) called "selit", is rather rare, and, as the name indicates, not originally native to Abyssinia. The Amhara, finding it difficult to grow, consider it an expensive and delicious delicacy, and consume the oil only as a rare treat.

Sunflower seed (Heliantus annuus), called "sur" is not a field crop, only occasionally planted, often semi-wild.

244 Vegetables are considered garden crops, and are planted near the hamlet on the hillside, while field crops are in the valley and river flood plains. Apart from kitchen gardens, which are considered necessities because of the spices that are consumed daily, other vegetables, particularly cabbage (gomän) are despised as poor food (food of p poor people or in times of famine). Consequently the Amhara raises few vegetables and small quantities.

Cabbage (gomän), and a white variety, "aydärgē", resistant to climatic change.

252 Chick-Peas, "shembera" (Cicer arietum), the most common, generally eaten roasted, but also boiled in the lenten season, and baked into bread to stretch tyeff in case of crop failure. Shembera is the proverbial staple, even in war and famine, never expected to fail. The proverb says:

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"She who has not born, will never carry her load;

285 415 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large basket of withes, "qerchat", used to measure 25 kilos of pinhead-grained tyeff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqaha"), or of a variety of reeds ("sabäz", "geramta", "akärma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofada") made by shepherding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by morocco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agälgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("muday") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("qwacha")

285 [531] There is also a purely ornamental fiber plate, entirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, mostly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 411 857 Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wänchäf") of a strong fiber ("nacha"). When completed, it has a loop on one end to hook over a finger. A pebble is placed in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end released at just the right speed and direction. It can [244] stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

439 412 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight razor, "arab melach", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic. Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend.

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile.

There were only two or three villages along the track, which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district.

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May.

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to

[Line, in the Choké Mountains. —Analyst]
[Line, between Debra Markos and Mato. —An.]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of translation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth." 133

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of Rocher d'Hericourt, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans. 132 [134] 137 [177] [372] 361 311 [231] 241 311

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow 137

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

These figures show that the gorges, together with the adjoining and intervening plateau, carry a considerably higher population than the rest of the plateau, the combined average being over 200 per square mile. The figures for population per church are also interesting. The gorges and the adjacent parts of the plateau contain no fewer than thirteen churches and they serve an average population of only some 650 souls each. On the other hand the churches of the general plateau, not counting those of Debra Berhan, which chiefly serve the townspeople, number only four. They must cater for about three times as many people each, and until recently many more for two of them are recent foundations. 162 361 [346]

The higher population of the gorge region is attributable to two causes: the greater productivity of the land there, and the historical fact, already referred to, that the Amharas were long forced to live in the gorges, and have re-emerged only in recent times. This is confirmed by the evidence of the churches which, in such numbers, are sure evidence of a long-established Christian population. The oldest ones are among those in the depths of the gorges; sites on the edges of gorges seem to be more recent. The few plateau churches are all relatively modern and bespeak the re-occupation by Amharas; two of them were indeed founded within the last fifteen years, and one as recently as 1945. 174 361

As can be seen from the map, sites chosen for dwellings are usually on the higher ground. The favourite sites, of which many examples can be seen on the sheet, are rocky ridges and the tops or upper slopes of hills and minor plateaus. A high place with an outlook, together with reasonable proximity to permanent water, seem to be the conditions sought after. Even the most elevated and exposed hill-tops are generally inhabited, whereas nobody tries to live on the plains near the main streams, which become very swampy in the rains. The ordinary family, together with its domestic animals, lives in a small, irregular cluster of round huts, which in this area are built of stone cemented with mud and carry a conical thatched roof. They are surrounded, as a rule, by a dry-stone wall, which may be shared by several households. Richer people may have an ornamental gatehouse at the main entry, with a little watchman's room over the gate; but such ostentation was not common. 361 [342] [556]

Disregarding some of the Debra Berhan people, almost the entire population is engaged in farming which, here as elsewhere in Ethiopia, is the mainstay of existence. Some possess their own land; others hold their plots, in return for a proportion of the produce (but without any security of tenure), from absentee landowners. There is also a landless element, greatly increased through the disturbing influence of the Italian occupation, who hire themselves out as ploughmen and labourers. I had intended to measure some typical holdings in order to estimate the area actually required to support a family, but my time in the area was cut short and I never did so. As a very rough estimate I think that about 15–20 per cent. of the area is under cultivation in any one year, which would indicate an average per family of something like 4 acres. This does not include fallow land which, once re-grown with grass, cannot be distinguished at a glance from permanent pasture. 241 423

The most exposed parts of the plateau near Debra Berhan will grow two crops only, barley and broad beans, but a limited amount of wheat (a bearded 241

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

241 variety) and linseed is grown in most parts of it. Where more shelter exists lentils and chick-pea are also planted, and another low-growing leguminous crop called *gwayo*, which is used only as a cattle fodder as it is believed to [824] cause softening of the bones in man! The barley is planted early and the other crops late in the main rainy season (June–September). Barley is sometimes also planted in the early rains, which are very uncertain here but usually begin in February or March. In this area however the early crop rarely gives a good return and sometimes fails completely. The plateau land, after being cultivated for a few years (often until it shows obvious signs of exhaustion), is fallowed for a period which varies widely according to the type of soil, but may be as long as five or seven years.

Down in the gorges, where the climate is appreciably milder, and where a primitive sort of irrigation can be practised on the level shelves, both chick-pea and lentils flourish. Some *teff* (a grass-like cereal greatly favoured for making the local bread) can be grown, as well as wheat and barley. Shelf cultivation seems as a rule to be continuous, perhaps because of the fresh sediment spread annually over the fields by rain and irrigation. In the lower parts of the gorges some maize and millet (*Sorghum*) can be found, but almost the whole of the area included on the map is too high for these crops. Other gorge products, unknown on the plateau, are tomatoes, chillies, coffee and *gesho*—a shrub whose leaves are used for fermenting the local beer (*talla*) and honey-wine (*tej*). Bananas, for no obvious reason, are not grown, but are brought to Debra Berhan market from the low country beyond the eastern escarpment.

The agricultural methods of the Ethiopians are far more advanced than those of any surrounding territory and do not belong to Africa. They can be paralleled among the west-Asian peasantry, and a close comparison with the methods of the Yemen mountain people might be especially fruitful. It was from this latter region that the Ethiopians' ancestors emigrated, before the [177] Christian era, and it is extremely probable that they brought with them both implements and a knowledge of techniques. Hence perhaps the use of the plough, universal among highland Ethiopians, and their skill in irrigation and terracing.

[462] Farming in Ethiopia is primarily the man's and not the woman's work, the standard female occupation, apart from household cares, being spinning. [283] (Cotton is widely grown in the lowlands.) The farmers spend most of their lives at the plough, a one-handled variety drawn by a yoke of oxen. In their [231] right hand they carry a whip with a short handle and long, heavy thong which they continually whirl and crack above the heads of the oxen, to whom, at the same time, they address an endless succession of strange howls and shouts, curses and imprecations. New or long-fallowed grassland is broken in with the plough in the dry season. This complicated process (known as *gai*) involves first scratching the ground in several directions to dislodge the turf, next gathering the sods into numerous heaps, then setting fire to these so that grass and weeds are gradually burnt out, and finally spreading out the soil again. But the great time for ploughing comes after the main rains have reduced the countryside to a sea of soft, dark mud. At this season the fields are peppered with ploughmen. Each successive sowing must be prepared

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

for, and, in the height of the rains when some crops are already up, deep furrows are made at regular intervals, and enlarged from time to time to carry away the surplus rain water. 244

Irrigation on the shelves of the gorges has already been referred to. But a more elaborate system, the extent of which is shown schematically on the map, has been developed along the river Beressa and its tributary the Maka, which both provide a small flow of water throughout the dry season. The whole enterprise is an interesting example of concerted effort and communal organization—in neither of which are the Amharas usually believed to excel. Its object is to ensure an early crop of barley, to be reaped before the onset of the main rains in June. 312 [476]

The irrigation system has to be partly rebuilt every dry season for the dams, which are constructed of stones and heavy sods, are swept away in the rains. From each dam the water is led off into a well-established furrow, which is carried down in a divergent line from the river and sometimes cut out of the rock on steep scarps. From it minor channels, which can be opened or blocked at will, branch off to irrigate the intervening lands. There are however more complicated systems; thus the dam near Dilila feeds two irrigation channels, one on either bank of the river. The right-bank channel receives its water direct from the dam, that on the left bank by means of an aqueduct carried across the main stream just below the dam and likewise constructed of stones and sods. The flow is not sufficient to feed both at once, so that the water is excluded from one or other branch on different days of the week; while if rain happens to fall the whole system is switched off. The left-bank channel, after running almost parallel to the Beressa for nearly a mile and a half, has to cross obstacles in the form of two tributary streams. The second tributary crossed is a large one, and the irrigation channel, in order to maintain its level, makes a big loop upstream and is then carried over the tributary by means of another wall-like aqueduct 8 or 10 feet high.

During the latter part of the dry season the brilliant green crops of the irrigated area make a striking contrast to the brown and withered aspect of the surrounding countryside. The district (known as Atakilt or "garden") takes its name from this characteristic feature. There are other minor irrigation schemes on the plateau, as on the Dalecha river in the east and the Angolala river in the west of the sheet, but nothing on so large a scale or so elaborately organized as the Beressa system. The Atakilt plains also have historic interest as the scene of the battle, already mentioned, which resulted in the emperor Theodore's annexation of Shoa and the capture of young Menelik. [103]

To conclude this brief account of the agricultural techniques of our area something must be said of terracing and its effect on the landscape. Nothing like the impressive and elaborate terracing practised in some eastern rice-growing countries is attempted in these parts. Many slopes are nevertheless unobtrusively terraced, both in the gorges and on the plateau, and it is not uncommon to see new terraces in process of formation. A wall (*gur*) is built on the lower side of the area selected for improvement, advantage being often taken of any natural flattening of the hillside. The *gur* has a vertical face on

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

each of the years that I came there they gave me two 796
quarters of the fattest cow that was killed. This flesh is 782
distributed amongst the people who come to the Castar, and
the friars have none because they do not eat meat. And [784]
these cows are all brought as offerings by their breeders in
the district, who vow them to Philip. This monastery, and
the others that are subject to it, have this rule in addition,
that no females enter them, that is to say, neither women,
nor she-mules, nor cows, nor hens, nor anything else that is
female. And these cows which they kill are killed a long
way from the wall, and when I came there they came to the
distance of a cross-bow shot to take my mule, and they
took her away to their farm of Jamgargara, where Mattheus
died.

CAP. XV.—*Of the agriculture of this country, and how they preserve themselves from the wild beasts, and of the revenues of the monastery.*

The friars of this monastery, and of the other monasteries 241
subject to it, might do good works by planting trees and [792]
vines, and making gardens and orchards for their exercise;
and they do nothing. The country is ready to produce
everything, as is seen from that which is uncultivated: they
do not plant or grow anything except millet and bee-hives. [231]
When it is night, neither they nor anybody else go out from
their houses from fear of the wild beasts that are in the
country, and those who watch the millet have very high
resting places upon the trees, in which they sleep at night.
In the district of this monastery there are, in the valleys 231
between the mountains, very large herds of cows, kept by 563
Arab Moors, and there go with each herd forty or fifty
Moors, with their wives and children: and their headman is

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

804 night. And if it is distant they say, you will arrive in a *sambete*, that is a week, and so they define it according to the distances. When I said that from Barua to Barra there 484 were from three and a half up to four leagues, that was according to our opinion, and it would not be more. We afterwards travelled there many times, and we started from one town and dined at the other, and did our business and returned to the town we had started from by daylight. The people of the country reckon this as a day's journey, because they travel very slowly. Between these two towns [241] there is very remarkable country, tilled fields of wheat, barley, millet, pulse, lentils, and all other sorts of vegetables which the country possesses unknown to us. From the [361] road from one place to the other more than fifty towns are to be seen: I say large towns and very good ones, all on 224 heights. In these plains and fields there are herds of wild cattle, forty or fifty in a herd. It is a chase that is very pleasant for the Portuguese, but the country people are able to do them little hurt, although they receive from them much injury to their crops.

CAP. XX.—*Of the town of Barua, and of the women and their traffic, and of the marriages which are made outside of the churches.*

621 This town of Barua in which we were staying, and where later we passed more time, may have three hundred hearths and more, a great part of them belonging to women, because this is like a court in many respects. One is that people of the Prester's court never go from here, and as many as come are not without wives. The other is because this is the residence and seat of the Barnagais, and there are continually in his house three hundred mounted men and upwards, and as many more who come every day for

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and men who sleep there to watch, from fear of the animals 231
that roam about the villages all night: and if they did not keep this watch nothing alive would remain which they would not devour. The people who go to sow millet in the 241
mountains of Bisan belong to this country and the neigh- 221
bouring towns. The reason why they go and do it is this. 132
Here there are very numerous grain crops of every kind and nature that can be mentioned, as I have already said; and because it is near to the sea, by which go all the provisions for Arabia, Mekkah, Zebid, Jiddah, and Toro,[1] and other parts; and they carry the provisions to the sea to sell them. And because in this country the winters are *divided into seasons*, and the seed crops do not grow except with the rains, they go to sow these millet fields at the mountain of Bisan, where it is winter in the months of February, March, and April. There is this same winter in a mountain called Lama, in this kingdom of the Barnagais, which is fully eight days' journey from the mountain of Bisan. In another country, which is named Doba, and which is quite a month's journey from this lordship of Lama, there is winter in these same months. As for these millet fields, they require rains, and as these winters happen out of season, they go and sow them where it rains, and so profit by both winters. In this town of 346
Barua are two churches with many priests, one close to the 562
other, one is for men, the other for women. The men's church is called St. Michael, that of the women is named after the apostles Peter and Paul. They say that a great lord, who was then Barnagais, built the men's church, and [644]
gave it the privilege that no woman should enter it, except only the wife of the Barnagais, with one damsel, whenever she went to take the communion, and even she does not now enter the church, but takes the communion at the door in the inner circuit with the laity, and so the

[1] Mount Sinai.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well
532 made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
491 in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John
[563] are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

ning of a reign; which she could not do, until one of the nobles supplied her with a sum of money. There were only a few derims left in the treasury. 792

Abyssinian Harvests. They first sow barley from the end of April to the beginning of May, or later; that is, towards the first rains. This ripens in the rains in June; and is carried off the fields into the house, that it may not rot. Then they sow fitches, which likewise ripen in the rains after. In September they sow wheat, or teff, which is cut down in December; and, if they have water, they sow barley, or fitches, again in January. In Woggora (a very fertile province), there is seed-time, and harvest, and plowing, in every month in the year; water being easily diverted to the grounds. The rent paid to the king for the ground is one-tenth of what they reap, yet, with all this, they are all poor; for a harvest, at a medium, is about twenty after one; and they sometimes, nay, very often, scarce reap the seed. They never manure the ground; and there are great quantities of rats, and innumerable ants, that consume their corn at different, nay, at all periods of its growth. All their five harvests do not, in produce, equal one Egyptian one; and they are at five times the labour. In the several villages, living, in general, is very miserable; and, in general, people of consideration scarcely know any other diet than teff bread and bouza. Whether this teff is black, or white, is the whole difference between the diet of master and servant. 241 ● [511] [262]

Abyssinian Dress. The principal part of the dress of the natives is a large cotton cloth, 24 peek (cubits) in length, and one and a half in breadth, with a blue and yellow stripe round the bottom of it. This blue is not dyed; but the Surat blue cloths are unravelled and woven for this purpose; and the yellow they dye with sûf, the yellow thistle. The best for ordinary wear costs 10 salts, or 1¼ pataka, about 6s. 6d. English. It is called Kuara, as probably coming from that province. They are very beautiful and light. The other pieces of dress are breeches, which reach to their mid-thighs; and girt with a white girdle of cloth to the common people; but the better sort have red Indian cotton cloths for breeches; and silk, or worsted coloured girdles from the Levant. When they ride, they only hold their stirrups between their great and 291 [435] 492

[p. 45]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

423 here there is no Domesday Book to give a clear point of departure and none of the successive unravellings of generations of scholars to help the inquirer. Any attempt at the simplification of the evidence must to some extent be a distortion.

Two preliminary generalizations may help to clarify the picture.

[556] Firstly it is important to remember that in Ethiopia, as in all economically backward countries where industry is negligible, almost all material wealth was the direct produce of the herdsman or the man who worked on the land with his plough and his hoe.

423 Ethiopia shared with the rest of tropical Africa a primitive peasant
466 agriculture; the difference was that there stood upon this basis a large
651 hierarchical structure of government. This meant that the cultivator
241 must, as the Ethiopians themselves express it, 'carry upon his shoulders' all that very large proportion of the population which had withdrawn themselves from work on the land. This included the Emperor; all his officials, central and provincial, great and small; the vast hierarchy of the church and the large armies of soldiers. As a result of the undeveloped economy and communications of Ethiopia, the services of the agriculturalist had for the most part to be used directly by the contribution of part of the crops or cattle from his own land or by the use of his labour upon that of another. While slave labour was widely used for domestic purposes, especially in the houses of the rich, it was not in the north used very extensively in the fields, and the main support of Ethiopian state and society was not the slave but the theoretically free cultivator, the *gabar*. The elaborate systems of land tenure and of tribute with all their provincial variations represent only the different means by which his services and produce were utilized by the government and by other classes. It was not the land but the labour of the *gabars* on the land which provided the support for provincial as well as imperial administration. Hence the importance of the forms of tenure and tribute.

423 The word *gabar* has been used as a term of reproach against Ethiopia.
466 At the end of these chapters on the provinces the reader will be in a
651 better position to judge how far this charge was just, and especially how far it accumulated evil association by the forms it assumed in the conquered south. Here the position of the northern *gabar* must be defined in its simplest terms. In theory and, at its best, in practice, the status was not synonymous with slavery or even with oppression. Literally it means one who pays *gibr* or tribute. 'There is no shame in the word "gabbar"' was the general Ethiopian opinion recorded by an observant British consul.[1] As tribute was in theory based upon land

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5 •
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

I

INTRODUCTION

AMHARA TRADITION AND ETHIOPIA'S MODERNIZATION

THE FACT OF AMHARA DOMINANCE

Of the many traditions which are alive in the empire of Ethiopia—those of the nomadic Danakil and the sedentary Wollamo, the hippopotamus-eating Woyto and the ensete-eating Gurage, the age-graded Konso and the patrilineal Somali, the Judaic Falasha and the Muslim Bani 'Amer, and many others—clearly the dominant tradition is that of the people known throughout history to the outside world as the Abyssinians. Living on the temperate highland massif in the northern and central regions of the country, these people have gained their subsistence through the plow cultivation of cereal grains, have organized their polity as a feudal kingdom, and have remained steadfast in their Monophysite Christian faith since its introduction to the land in the fourth century.

The Abyssinians comprise two linguistic and geographical groups—the Amhara and the Tigre.* The Tigre inhabit the northern part of Ethiopia, above the Takazzē River; their lands fall in what are now the province of Tigre and the former Italian colony of Eritrea. Their language, Tigrinya, is

* Abyssinians object to the term "Abyssinian," since it has been used pejoratively by foreigners, even though they do use its indigenous counterpart, "*Hābashā*," among themselves. The term apparently derives from the name of one of the South Arabian tribes which migrated to Ethiopia in antiquity—the Habashat. In deference to this objection, I shall use the compound "Amhara-Tigre" in place of "Abyssinian" wherever feasible. The name "Ethiopia" will be used consistently to refer to the national polity which, throughout its history, has included other peoples and traditions as well as the Amhara-Tigre.

1, [The Abyssinians, composed of Amhara and Tigre--Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 361 sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

[132] Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most [312] pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā [132] twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, some- [241]

*175 643 TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāssi (Nagāssē Kristos)	Abēto	169?–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebstē (Sebstyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbīyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Takla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwofīos	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yostos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāhla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

*175 361 [132] times three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and [241] livestock are produced in abundance. [231]

The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's *175 633 time of power.[5] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The towns- [162] people of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, [463] and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he [193] was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose [361] name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geography than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in response to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones. 133 132 [175]* [184]

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But *ṭēff*, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley. 241 262

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which ornament the homes of the well-to-do. 233 236 291 184 [262] [556] [286] [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural-colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural environment. 182 291 [386] 342 182 346 182

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses. 132 [165] [181]

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gondar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While 175*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] [231] [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭēff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā*, literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā*, preparing *ṭallā*, spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭīmqat,* means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭīmqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā,* grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household.

The program for Ṭīmqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized.

By noon on Ṭīmqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭīmqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter.

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings.

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

772 As for the beginning and end of the world, all Amhara believe that the [184] world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium [773] arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside [775] down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

565 The Amhara peasant's view of nature is matter-of-fact. There are a few 82 traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy [778] places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration • [241] of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.

[192] The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws [184] of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or [241] himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

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[125] [157] * All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge overlooking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 14.—*A group of shepherds*

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FIG. 15.—*Threshing time*

[P.78-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 18.—*Ten-year-old boy plowing*

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FIG. 19.—*Mother and daughter carrying water pots*

[P. 110-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 565 661 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 565 556 [241] [455] For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 565 556 472 [175] [648] Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families, Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *maḳuännent* and *bäla-selṭän*. They [662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 565 369 177 [556] As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 565 554 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Amharic proverb, and even the Emperor when visiting a school expects students to remain seated if they are at the dining table when he arrives.

Some indication of the comparative significance of this concern about eating and drinking in the Amhara psyche is afforded by a recent cross-cultural investigation of dreams. Obtained from samples of young male respondents in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the United States, the dreams were evaluated with respect to the presence or absence of themes of "manifest orality": scenes of someone desiring, looking for, or consuming food or drink. The proportion of Ethiopian respondents (mostly Orthodox Amhara from the Gondar area) who revealed manifest orality in their dreams was found to be *64 per cent*. By contrast, the proportion of those in a sample of non-Muslim Nigerians whose dreams showed manifest orality was 38 per cent, and that in the sample of Americans was only 22 per cent.[11]

The Amhara custom of giving *gurshā* plays up the erotic component of eating. *Gurshā* means "mouthful" and, as already noted, refers to a wad of food which one places in another's mouth, usually as a gesture of affection. *Gurshā* are exchanged between husband and wife and among relatives and friends. They are often given to children, especially in families of higher status, and to favored servants and retainers as well. The *gurshā* is of such meaning in Amhara experience that it is referred to in a number of Amharic idioms. First of all it means a present or a tip—literally, *pourmanger*. It also refers to the charge of a gun: the gun is a beloved object, and a *gurshā* is what one places in its mouth. In contemporary usage, it refers to flashlight batteries.

In connection with love and many other subjects, a good deal of the imagery of Amharic verse relates in one way or another to eating and drinking. The following sample of proverbs and couplets may convey some of the flavor of this phenomenon:

*Ṭajj** has no specks; a poor man has no friends.

• • •

[Use] proverbs in conversation; [drink] *ṭajj* in a carafe.

• • •

Hand and fly-whisk; mouth and *ĭnjarā*† [go together].

• • •

No matter how much one plows, nothing tastes so good as *goman*.‡

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* *Ṭajj*, it may be remembered, is the Ethiopian wine made of honey.

† *Injarā* is the staple pancake.

‡ *Goman* is a kind of cabbage plant that requires no plow cultivation.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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131 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has
779 been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries.
[241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively
[463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm-
[286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga
[443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of
[562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin-
[423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil-
[326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields
[286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha
[162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority
[361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

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621 into sixty-five named wards (sebekas). The social and demographic character of wards varies considerably, and it is useful to describe them in terms of two contrasting types. At one extreme, the ward resembles a kind
[241] of urban parish. It contains an eponymous Church; and
[423] a majority of residents are risteñas, members of landowning ambilineages who support themselves by farming and renting homesteads on their lands. But even these wards contrast with rural parishes on several counts.
*[192] The ward is generally compact in size, and internally
[463] undivided beyond the homestead (bet). Within it live out-landers who work outside the ward in exclusively non-agricultural occupations. Further, while the parish is administered in detail by residents, the ward relies upon non-resident agents of the municipality for its administration.

At the other extreme, are the town's "non-corporate"
[648] wards. During the Italian occupation, several of
[175] Gondar's parish-like wards were sequestered by the invaders as building sites. After liberation, the Imperial government divided each of these wards into tracts, which were deliniated according to the buildings upon them. Tracts were then given as grants (yaribeña mariet, "hero's land") to supporters of the government-in-exile, who were often non-residents of Gondar. In time, the pre-war boundaries of such wards were no longer regarded

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621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by risteñas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [178] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Šankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations, which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibañas, eight as wood cutters,

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holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town.

613 In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-
423 agricultural employment for their subsistence needs,
241 there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

*278 Kinship ties are an important means by which the
*759 peasant acquires and communicates information necessary
203 for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every
602 herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own
369 "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant
613 herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an
*278 agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like
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*793

621 as a means for diousing and strengthening a risteña
869 family's economic and social interests within the parish.
• 241 There are two conspicuous exceptions. Should a boy bear
[732] a physical disability so severe that he will be unable
to perform the basic subsistence activities of Amhara
men, particularly plowing, he may be enrolled in the
parish school as a prelude to a non-agricultural career
beyond his natal parish. The alternatives are few.
[463] work as an artisan is appropriate for Muslim and Falasha,
[441] but shameful for an Amhara; while employment as a mer-
[563] chant is less objectionable, the peasant is generally
without the necessary skills, contacts, and capital;
military service is beyond his abilities; thus, only the
Church and government remain. Regarding the Church, the
priesthood is closed to him, since a priest must be phy-
sically whole, and capable of standing unassisted during
[647] the performance of the Mass. The remaining ecclesiasti-
cal and government career choices assume that a boy will
achieve literacy at the parish school and subsequently
*793 depart from his natal community. The second exception
621 to the local focus of the parish school, is the small
869 number of boys who are offspring of debtera-teachers ser-
593 ving in parish churches. The ties of these men to their
parishes-of-residence are usually only professional, and
they are rarely risteñas, it is moreover their profes-
sional ethos which influences them to seek an extensive

*755 *787 *793 539 tection against ganels (but as a category of agents, rather than as named individuals), against the shifta bandit, and against the wild animals of the lowlands. The prophylactic abinet that he acquires, although short on asmat, perhaps lacking telsem, and with few magical [437] features of manufacture, he works into kitabs. While [241] the student's initial stimulus for collecting these abinet is his own immediate needs, he is nonetheless aware of the commercial value of such abinet, in the form of commercial services for lowland peasants.

*793 484 Relatively few experienced debteras pay visits to the kola lands. The lowlands, considered unhealthful and dangerous by highlanders in general, are still less appealing to the mature debtera. He deprecates them for the absence of ecclesiastical establishments, and fears them for what he believes to be the shifta's predilection *755 for robbing and murdering debteras.[27] In lieu of more *793 expert services, and attracted by the moderate costs, the 437 lowlander is often anxious to purchase kitabs from visit- 484 ing students. The students, in anticipation, prepare a 539 score or more of kitabs before traveling to the lowlands;

[27] Debteras attribute the shifta's murderousness to his fear of subsequent magical revenge by the debtera.

566 794 mand of the feudal lord that deacons, choir-boys with good voices, be supplied to him. The "gultaňňa" could be made responsible for this, and would search the countryside for likely peasant boys. For his service in acting as music critic in examining the boys, and as their trainer, the "master of the chant" would receive a specified number of baskets of grain from the feudal lord, who, of course, passed this extra expense on down the line until the bill was finally footed by the peasant gabbar.

566 The term "gabbar" itself is closely related (perhaps derived from) "gebber", feast (especially feasting of guest by noblemen, or soldiers after victory). Indeed, it is the gabbar who supplies the materials for the feasts.

[242] In view of this regular as well as irregular exploitation, it is not surprising that the gabbar did not try to improve the land he worked, and to this day leaves more fields fallow than he works in any given year. A rank above him, the "gultanna" suffered from insecure tenure. Above him loomed the authority of the feudal warlord ("farāsanya") and the shadow of landowning monasteries and parish churches. Their power, in turn, varied inversely with the power, or weakness, of the "king of kings".

241 cereal, as well as other crops already mentioned are grown. The lowest and warmest spots of the plateau are usually used for various types of millet-sorghum, gesho (hops). Coffee grows wild or is purchased on the market, as are bananas from the lowland. After a few years of cultivation, a field may be left fallow for five or more years.

[17] The Amhara's irrigation and terrace farming resemble
[462] those of Yemen, not of Africa. Farming is man's work, not
[231] woman's. The one-handed plow is drawn by a yoke of two oxen, encouraged by a long fibre whip. The Amhara rerely uses other animals for drawing the plow.

Fallow land or new bush is broken during the dry season. A heavier-than-usual iron plow point is purchased from the Falasha ironsmiths, affixed to the scratch plow, and the area, after preliminary burning, is scratched many times at right angles. The stubble and weeds are then piled and burned. But for the actual plowing and seeding, the beginning of the rains is awaited.

312 Irrigation canals are completely washed out in the rainy season, and must be rebuilt in each dry season. Terracing is less common than irrigation, but on occasion mountain farmers of long residence do build low walls of rock and mud on hillsides to prevent severe washouts and landslides during the rainy season.

● 243 Tyēff (Eragrostic abyssinica; Poa abyssinica) deserves the latter Latin name, for it is the mainstay staple of Abyssinia, except in the south. It is an annual indigenous grass with seeds of pinhead size, cultivated

243 as a cereal grain in Abyssinia since ancient times. It is known in the USA as "teff lovegrass" and is sometimes grown for hay or pasture. In Abyssinia it is the most important cereal.

Tyēff seeding takes place, by broadcasting, at the beginning of the rainy season in June; it is ready for harvest in October-November. Sheep are driven over after the seeding to cover the seeds and thus insure maximum germination. Harvesting is done by hand cutting. The grain is made into sheaves about 6 inches thick. Sickles [442] made by the Falasha ironsmiths are simple affairs, a quarter-circle of toothed iron blade fitted into a wooden handle. Tyēff flour is made by the housewives, who grind it on a stone mill (wofcho) by hand on the mano-matate principle.

There are tow major kinds of sorghums (durra) grown as staple cereals, "mashella" and "zengada"; a third, "dagussa" is used more for making beer and in poor times. Many of these are sown when the early light rains come in March-April. The stalks of mashella are used to build simple temporary huts; other stalks become fodder. As [857] soon as the heavy rains are over, boys with slingshots and whips are stationed in the fields and on lookout posts atop the "umbrella tree" to fight off the birds who are very fond of sorghum, especially the "mashella".

Mashella (Andropogon sorghum) is of yellowish-white color, and the most desired of this family. The seed is much bigger than tyēff. It is often ground and mixed with it for injara-baking. Known in other parts of Africa as

243 "Kaffir corn", in Abyssinia it is the second most important cereal. Interestingly enough, the Amhara has a form of crop insurance, by sowing mashella with "bahēr mashella" (lit. the sorghum from overseas), possibly imported by the Portuguese. In Shoa province, it is called "boqolo". A whitish type of mashella called "tenqesh" is liked for its stalk, which is eaten like sugar can, offerred to a special friend or as an honor.

Zengada (also called "bulē mashella") is a reddish, darker variety of mashella, grown as crop insurance for birds do not like it as well. (Zengada is Eleusina multiforma).

Dagussa(Eleusine coracana or Eleusine tocusso) is a very dark millet, grown as an emergency crop and used as an ingredient in beer. Poor people mix it with tyeff for injara.

Maize (Zea mays), the "bahēr mashella" already mentioned, is often grown also in the same field as cotton (gossypium) on lower elevations of the plateau to "keep the cotton warm and protected from wind", according to the Amhara. Maize kernels, since they are biggest, are boiled with peas to make a filling meal in the lenten season.

Wheat (Triticum spp) called "sendē" is considered a luxury grain (e.g. to make wafers for the church eucharist). It is grown on higher altitudes, in smaller quantities than the other cereals mentioned, and is seeded and harvested somewhat late. A special dark rich soil called "walka" is considered necessary; also plowing 4-5 times.

Barley (Hordeum spp), called "gebs", one of the major

243 crops, and the only one grown all year, thus the most often irrigated. It grows well even on semi-eroded soil, unlike wheat. It is consumed in emergencies, and more usually used in making beer, despite its comparatively poor malting qualities. It is provided as fodder for the mule, the most [231] important animal for human transportation, to give it "strength". Barley becomes more important for human consumption when the rainy season has been shorter than usual. In that case, the grain is soaked in water and then crushed with wooden mortar and pestle to remove the husks without reducing the grain to flour. After drying in the sun, the broken grain called "gebs qolo" is roasted and eaten Some is always in the hut, in case guests should come. The same crushing procedure is followed for preparing malt for barley beer. Late, irrigated barley called "aja", is considered tough but "giving strength", though dishonorable for a guest, and also causing complaint from women that it is "hard to pound" and "good only for mules".

Oats and rice as special crops are almost unknown to the Amhara. Oats ("gēnçha", "arämamo", "qwa"), considered wild, are gathered with barley and used in beer.

In view of the importance of cereal crops, it is not surprising that the farmer refers to them collectively as "teru", which means "good", while garden crops ("debäla") which enjoy a lesser appreciation, are not included in this concept.

[427 804] Rent, tribute and taxes were paid per "madiga", the clay water pot used to measure it. Although this procedure is no longer followed, rent is still quoted in terms of "madiga".

243 of "madiga".

[311] The term "tyëff" also has a projection. Good, fertile, fat land is still classified as "läm tyëff", in distinction to "tyëff" land, meaning average usable land for cereals.

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This is to say that if the parent had good qualities, the son will be a "chip off the old block."

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248 Cotton, called "tet", is grown in lowland areas. To separate the husks, a roller of scrap iron is preferred; it is worked on a rock. When rain has occurred during the maturing of cotton, its quality is lowered. The typical Amhara prefers to buy his raw cotton on the market and have his wife or female servant clean, card and spin it. Then he calls in the weaver or takes the spun cotton to him, to make a toga.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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alluvial soil -	"borbwara märēt", rich silt carried by rivers and brooks.
infertile soils -	"qoda märēt" dries too quickly after rains; "arbacha märēt", reddish, after erosion, infertile mounds; "gebgaba märēt", harvest withers at stalk before maturity; "gergera märēt", useless to plow, better leave for wild fruit. "fech märēt", abandoned land, leave for pasturage.
hard-to-penetrate -	"gewçhaçha märēt", plow cannot penetrate readily, "gombore märēt", sandy but very rocky, hard to plow, "çhaçha märēt" rocky terrain, where rain does not penetrate well.

[132
821] The preferred early rain is the light, intermittent but penetrating "zeɛ yalä zenäb", not the heavy continuous downpour that occurs later. Fast-growing barley, called 243
251 "bällega" after the "bälg" season, is sown first, during the light rains of March, for it can be harvested 3 months later, just before the heavy rains, to help tide the people over until the main harvests. This is very important because of the traditional hesitancy of the farmer to store crops. Historically, he would rather have it almost ready on the stalk, and would rather risk a crop failure than

expose a full granary to the mercy of the feudal lord and passing soldiers.

Before threshing can begin, about a month after the end of the rainy season, a flat, circular area is marked out with rocks. Cowdung is stamped into the wetted floor, and the sun hardens the ground into cement-like consistency in one day. This threshing floor, called "awdema", is usually big enough to accommodate at least 4 oxen that are now driven over the grain, abreast but not tied, walking in a steady circle all day long, a procedure called "mabärayät". On the third day, winnowing (called "mäshin") takes place, by means of wooden pitchforks cut from a hardwood bush without carpentry (thus usually two-pronged), and a semi-circular winnowing fan about 2 feet long and not quite as wide, made of oxhide that has been stretched on a wooden, semi-circular frame. The threshed grain is covered overnight with branches, to protect it from wind.

On the fourth day, the grain is swept up with simple whiskbrooms made of stalks (e.g. those of wild oats). All these procedures are done as quickly as possible, partly to protect the crop during this stage of maximum vulnerability from birds and baboons, partly because of fear of the evil eye. If an unrelated stranger passes at this time, the farmer sprinkles him with water to avert the possible evil eye. Formerly spitting was the procedure.

[54 609]

In that season many small threshing grounds dot the landscape, especially on river flood plains. Here the plots are usually not more than 100-200 yards long. A minimum team of three men can usually do the job described in four days. Only one person is needed to drive the

243 patient oxen. If the farmer has no ex-slave retainers, his wife may help in the harvest. Even young boys help, particularly in protecting crops. The direction of the breeze [461] is carefully observed before winnowing. Work proceeds from sunrise to sundown (from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.), with a rest from noon to 3 P.M., the hottest time of the day. At that time the women bring barley beer, enjara bread, and a spe- [263] cial condiment prepared from crushed "nug" oilseeds called "anäbabär".

Threshing by sticks instead of oxen is done in harvest of the "nug" and this may require some additional helpers.

241 Oil plants are cultivated and of considerable impor- 262 tance in the diet. They are considered field crops rather than garden crops:

"nug" (Guizotia abyssinica), the black Niger Seed, which is the most used vegetable oil of the Amhara. Travellers take it along, mixed with spices, as a staple. It is used in many items of diet. After crushing, the oil cakes are used for fuel (not fodder).

Flax seed (Linum usitatissimum), called "talbä", the second most common oilseed, of light brown color, consumed in similar ways and in drinks. It is not raised for the fiber, which is considered fodder or fuel.

Castor bean (Ricinus communis), called "gulqwas" or "qachma". This is not a field crop as much as nug and talba, and not as much of a staple. Tan- [281] ners use it for lubrication of skins. The emperor has urged increased production, but there

887 preoccupied with the immediate demands of life. The culture pattern
812 encourages the shemagalye to give much time and effort to this wonderment, for it belongs to his prime role and social duty at this stage: the accumulation of wisdom. The church does not interfere with this wonderment and its expression, partly because it has not bothered to establish dogma on many subjects.

A. The Natural Universe.

821 In many ways the Amhara concept of the universe resembles that of
[[71]] early medieval Europe, plus understandable similarities to the Middle East and Africa. Some conceptualizations are elaborations from the Biblical universe, readily recognizable because almost always the Geez language is used to express them. Other conceptualizations are animistic, and usually employ Cushitic terminology.

The universe is regarded as a Ptolemaic system, with the earth as the fixed center around which the sun turns. A distinction is made between the physical world, called simply "arät mazän" (lit. the 4 corners); and the world populated by all creatures, "aläm" (lit. world, in the Geez language). The persistence of this traditional view of a flat earth is so great that even Amhara schoolteachers in the modern elementary schools in the provinces, who are required to teach a spherical earth, privately admit that they don't believe it themselves!

Heavenly bodies and metereological phenomena are interpreted as directly related to human events. Venus is called "astärboshäsh" or "astäryo", (lit. the one who gives hunger and then flees), because the planet appears in the very brief dusk, when the heat of the day is over and one gets hungry. Because Venus is "fleeing and inconstant like a woman", she is given the feminine gender.

821 Considerable attention is given to the moon ("chäräqa"), for it
243 is believed to cause the ripening of the grain after the sun has

821 caused the tender plant to sprout; therefore, cereal grains just
[243] beginning to sprout are called "charäqwa". Full moon is a good time
[484] to travel, avoiding the heat of the day especially in the hot lowlands where travel in daytime is almost impossible; also it is safer since approaching or ambushing bandits can be more readily seen than earlier or later in the lunar cycle.

Dawn is personified, regarded as a young day being suckled ("täbba") by the warm and expansive sun, after chill of the night on the plateau.

787 However, the working out of astrological systems is left to the dabtära, who collects his knowledge from "secret" books (in Geez), more often actually from apprenticeship and extracurricular activities while in church school, and uses it in writing especially powerful and expensive amulets.

821 The various kinds of rain are almost as important to the Amhara as snows to the Eskimo and sands to the desert Arab. For the Amhara with his primitive plowing, has to wait until the right kind of light rain loosens the sunbaked soil; and his simple hut is little protection from the heavy rains. He therefore studies clouds and wind direction in relation to topography. The fine and penetrating rain ("zeg yalä zenab") permits the use of the common scratch-plow, and seeding. The heavy rainy season brings downpours, and is also accompanied by strong gusts of wind ("wächafo") and tornadoes. When the thunderstorm ends and a rainbow appears, it seems as if the earth had been reprieved, so that the rainbow is called "marwam mäcämät" (lit. the jealousy of Mary; i.e. her intercession, in the Geez language). However, when a rainbow occurs while it is still raining, the interpretation is more animistic, for it is regarded as an unnatural event, heralding the moment at which wild

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

231 a Christian, because the cows that they keep belong to
563 Christian gentlemen of the country of the Barnagais. These Moors have nothing else for their labour than the milk and butter which they get from the cows, and with this they maintain themselves and their wives and children. On some occasions it happened to us to sleep near these Arabs, they accosted us to ask if we wished to buy cows, and for the price allowed us to choose them. They say that these
[484] Moors, and headmen who go with them, are all robbers under the favour of the lords to whom the cows belong, and so only large caravans travel. The revenues of this
792 monastery are very large; those which I saw and heard of
631 are, chiefly, this mountain in which the monastery is situated,
361 of an extent of ten leagues, in which they sow much millet,
[243] barley, rye, and all these pay dues to the monastery, and they are also paid on the herds. On the skirts of this mountain there are many large villages, and most of them belong to the monastery, and at a distance of one or two days' journey an infinite number of places belonging to the monastery, and are called *Gultus* of the monastery, which means *coutos* or *celeiros*,[1] according to our Portugal. Don Rodrigro the ambassador and I were going on the road to the Court, a good five days' journey from this monastery, and arriving at a town which is named *Caina* we kept Saturday and Sunday in a small village which might contain twenty people, and they told us they belonged to the monastery of Bisan. Besides that town there were a hundred villages all belonging to the monastery, and that in which we halted was one of them. We were also shown
651 many of the others, and they told us that every three years
631 they paid a horse to the monastery, and that each village
792 did this, which makes thirty-three horses every year. And in order to be certain of this I went to ask it of the *Alicazi* of the monastery, which means the auditor or major-domo,

[1] *Couto*, an asylum, an enclosure; *celeiro*, a granary.

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[243] Preferred cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous, [635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse- [162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial [563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic [567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000 [136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano- [243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals, [231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which [243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes [233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.

241
262 are no ready markets.

Sesame seed (Sesamum indicum) called "selit", is rather rare, and, as the name indicates, not originally native to Abyssinia. The Amhara, finding it difficult to grow, consider it an expensive and delicious delicacy, and consume the oil only as a rare treat.

Sunflower seed (Heliantus annuus), called "suf" is not a field crop, only occasionally planted, often semi-wild.

244 Vegetables are considered garden crops, and are planted near the hamlet on the hillside, while field crops are in the valley and river flood plains. Apart from kitchen gardens, which are considered necessities because of the spices that are consumed daily, other vegetables, particularly cabbage (gomän) are despised as poor food (food of p poor people or in times of famine). Consequently the Amhara raises few vegetables and small quantities.

Cabbage (gomän), and a white variety, "aydärgē", resistant to climatic change.

252 Chick-Peas, "shembera" (Cicer arietum), the most common, generally eaten roasted, but also boiled in the lenten season, and baked into bread to stretch tyeff in case of crop failure. Shembera is the proverbial staple, even in war and famine, never expected to fail. The proverb says:

244
539 "She who has not born, will never carry her load;

244
[539]

(but a fallow) shembera (field) will bear (next year)".

meaning that a barren woman will never carry a child in womb, but a shembera field will bear again and again. The Amhara realizes that this legume improves the soil. It will grow in poor soil, resist drought. The harvest is late, usually February.

Peas, called "atär" are also grown in quantity, for similar reasons: they grow well in poor soil, and are especially important in lent.

"meser" The collective term for lentils.

Broad bean, "baqella" also grows in poor and eroded soil, and is much planted. It is then roasted, or boiled, or mixed in curry (wot).

[252]

Onions and garlic, the latter called "white onion" are grown in kitchen gardens as ingredients of wot.

Grey bean called "adängwarē", planted at beginning of heavy rains as fenced-in garden crop, eaten raw, considered semi-wild, and not prestige food.

Gourds, "qēl", e.g. "dubba", pumpkin-type (Cucurbita maxima), are grown inside hamlets and boiled and cut into strips in wot (curry-type stew). Some gourds are planted in dug holes, others grow on vines to the height of roofs, on which they rest for support.

Roots, similar to potatoes, called "dennech" are grown in Shoa, but are of minor importance

244 in northern Abyssinia.

[263] bärbärē is the generic name for the red spicy pepper, a major ingredient of wot, and the most important item in the kitchen garden. The strongest kind is called "mitmitta" or "sätita" and because it is grown in Begemdir it is often called "Gondar bärbärey". The smaller the pod, the stronger the pepper.

Gesho, the leaf used as fermenting agent in beer and mead, grows on a bush which is a garden crop.

Ades, another leafy garden crop is grown in a wind-

[302] protected area, fenced in; used to purify butter in boiling, especially for use in women's hairdo, for they believe the odor of it is irresistible to men.

Gwaya, a major forage crop of the legume family, is grown as scarcity fodder but contact with it is believed dangerous to humans.

245 Lemons, very small, are grown in a scattered fashion, the only fruit so raised.

Viticulture is a riddle. Grape growing is not in evidence any more among Amhara peasants, but there are local traditions that up to a century ago grapes were grown, e.g. in the worāda (district) of "yäkämkäm qaroda", east of Lake Tana. The name "woyna dega" is derived from the wine-growing, intermediate level of topography. It may have been imported by the Portuguese, or may have been much older. Nowadays

245 Planting of fruit is done largely in the qolla, outside Amhara areas: bananas, the large citrus("trengo"), mango, guava ("zäytun"), custard apple ("gishta") shaped like an artichoke. Cactus fruit grow wild up to the woyna dega.

226 Fishing, interestingly enough, is not despised, because it is not considered a full-time occupation. It is limited largely to the 3-month rainy season, when rivers are full and fish is plentiful. The fisherman has another source of livelihood the rest of the year, and fishes to sell at the next market or merely to increase the family food supply.

Fishing is also much easier in the rainy season because the water is muddy and the fish cannot see the fisherman--who is clearly visible in the calm, clear waterholes during the dry season. A day's catch of 30 to 50 fish in the rainy season is not rare; in the dry season the fisherman may well come home empty handed. Therefore, in the dry season the occasional fisherman who does try, often uses fish intoxicents called "yasa maskäriya", especially the dried and ground "berberra" seed (Berebera ferruginea). Fishnets, "mäyaza", are used primarily. There is no concept of fishing for sport.

224 In hunting, when it is not done for major livelihood, the c ncept of sport does exist in Amhara tradition. The pride of the hunter who has overcome a major, dangerous game, has already been mentioned. The young sons of nobles were expected to prove their mettle against this big game, if no war-raid was currently available. Before

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2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

633 Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society [191] has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and [563] Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and, [142 291] although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wander- [245] ing among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudo, 231 which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

487 The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men: the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

174 The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up [563] into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

137 centers of old world agriculture in which the Neolithic
241 economy originated, possibly contributing to the initial development of ancient Egyptian civilization. Like the highlands of Yemen, the highlands of Ethiopia seem to represent ancient centers of TERRACED AGRICULTURE. It was in the Kaffa province of Ethiopia that coffee originated. It was carried to Yemen, planted there, and exported from coastal harbors (like the town of Mocha) through the Red
439 Sea into the Mediterranean. Coffee is still Ethiopia's most important export. Other major exports include sundried hides, sheep and goat skins, cereals, edible oils, and gold.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that major imports consist primarily of items not of major importance in subsistence, but which reflect secondary needs: cotton sheeting (abujedid), cotton yarn, cotton piece goods, raw cotton, naphtha. The major exception is salt, still a major import.[6]

137 Many varieties of wild fruit and vegetables are eaten
262 only in small quantities, especially by the Amhara, partly because of the abundance of cereal crops and legumes, partly because of a cultural attitude that despises "wild food" fit for use only in case of crop failure, famine due to warfare, and for outcasts.

Another group of highly useful plants which grow wild in Ethiopia are the oilseeds. A number of these are planted and used in the diet.

137 In the lower regions of the plateau, mainly south of
241 the Amhara area, a "false banana" fiber crop called muz or
248

6. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No12, May 1947, 4pp.

137 241 [248] koba (Musa ensete) is grown. This is used for making ropes of all kinds and bags for grain. In the south, the roots and inner parts of the plant are also used to make flour for 262 186] food; but the Amhara despise this, considering it "food of slave peoples".

137 Vegetation is dense in the valleys, and the forests contain many valuable trees, including the Natal yellow pine. But in spite of the high yearly rainfall the northern plateau is comparatively little wooded. Foresters estimate that only 2.8% of Ethiopia is forest-covered, although they believe that it was once well forested. They ascribe this denuding to centuries of uncontrolled grazing and periodic burning-over. The best hardwoods that remain are usually in the least accessible spots, lowlands and gorges.[7]

137 313 The two most important trees of the highlands are the Ṭed and the Zegba. The Ṭed, a juniper (Juniperus procera) sometimes referred to as "pencil cedar" (or Juniperus phoenicoea), is fine-grained, easy to split, aromatic, durable (even when exposed to moist conditions in the rainy season), and termite-resistant. It is popular for beams in the better houses of chiefs, and for the simple native furniture. The Zegba(Podocarpus gracilor), also an evergreen, is found in the warmer parts of the plateau. The wood is soft, easy to split, subject to decay when exposed to moisture, and thus more popular in drier areas. Non-resinous and tasteless, it is useful as a container for food, but is mainly used for construction and furniture. On the higher plateau

7. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia 1954, pp. 127-8; Huo: Ethiopia, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons:Global Epidemiology, 1951, p.63.

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4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

which we call of Guinea, there they are called zegra, quails, 136
pigeons, turtles, hawks, falcons, kites, eagles, thrushes, sparrows, swallows, nightingales, larks, wild ducks, of different kinds,[1] and other waterfowl, herons, cranes, *hemas*, and all other birds that may be in the world, and not known to us; and there are all in this country except magpies and cuckoos, which I never saw, nor heard of their being there.

There are so many apes, that in the kingdom of the Barnagais, in a town which is named Ceroel, at the time the harvest is ripe, they pursue them till they make them pass a mountain; and they keep guard over them in a pass by day, because at night they do not move about, and they give a certain provision to two men who keep guard over them until the corn is gathered in, when they let them loose, or leave off keeping watch over them.

There is much basil in the thickets, and there are none 137
of our trees except cypresses, plumtrees, and willows by the rivers; there are no melons, cucumbers, nor horse-radish.

In the country there is no gold or silver money, and pur- 436
chases are made by exchange of one thing for another, principally salt, which is current throughout the country as money.

There is linen there, but it gives no fibre, and no stuff is 248
made with it; there is much cotton, and stuff made of it; there is much coloured cloth, and there is a very cold country where they wear serge.

The churches there are well built, but the walls are not 346
well wrought, and they do not place anything upon them; they pitch [the roof] upon props, which reach from the ground upwards.

In the country there is gold, silver, copper and tin, but 135
they do not know how to get it out of the mines.

[1] *Idem, marrecas.*

136 "meset", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses, does not live in colonies. It makes honey which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "tenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens. [776 237]

Scorpion ("gint"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice. [752]

Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins. [241 251]

13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of 231 556

352 legs; thongs of sundried oxhide interlace the wooden frame diagonally giving the bed a springy quality. In case of great poverty, wooden slats are used instead of oxhide, and a cowskin is placed on top. The leather alga seems to resemble the leather thong bed of ancient Greece.

354 (4) The fireplace set up front of center, 5 of 3 cornerstones ("medeja", or, "gulcha"), so that the broad baking-pan and clay cooking pots are well supported.

352 (5) From the center pole to the rear are various clay bins
[251] ("riq", made of a frame of willow branches, cowdung and mud)
[415] holding threshed grain. Behind the fireplace is the "gurej", the storage space for plow, axe, adze, beer and water
[482] pots, skin sacks for transporting grain to market; sometimes a litter ("qarēza") used for transporting rocks, beams, sick or dead persons, the wounded in war, and formerly an indispensable equipment for corvée. Also behind the cen-
[251] ter pole is the indoor grain bin made of concentric rings of clay and fine straw, dried outside, and inside assembled to a height of 60".

(6) In front of the center pole stands the portable "mäsob", the table woven tightly of reeds in the shape of a round breadbasket, on which the daily bread, "enjara" is served. A small massob may have a diameter at top of 18" and may be 20" high. The height would come from a triangular leg of 7", on which an inverted, triangular leg faces upward 10" in the manner of an hourglass; and another 3" from the height of the top tablet. The hollow leg tapers to a waist, then widens again toward the top. It has a depression in the center, so that the spiced meat stew can

[352] accumulate there when poured over the limp sheets of bread.

251 (7) Food staples must be stored out of reach of domestic animals, on horizontal slats fastened between the horizontal beam and walls. On these slats lie flat cakes of "abshelo" (pre-fermented and baked hops), bunches of sorghum, husks of maize, etc.

352 To provide additional privacy, togas can be hung across. This was done in the past particularly at dinner [754] time, to protect the eaters from the "evil eye" in the [609] presence of non-kinsmen, and is still done in some remote areas, unless the peasant prefers to postpone his meal until the stranger has gone away, so as not to offend him.

342 The tuqul is regarded as a good, sound habitation by the Amhara. It is compared to the round tent of the king and duke ("ras") which not so long ago was the center of activities (if not the actual capital) of the province and country. On the other hand, reactangular or square huts, [554] "säqäla", are regarded as carrying low prestige, little more than temporary lean-to's of hunters. The proverb indicates this low regard of a säqäla:

[539]

"Of children, the worst is the bastard;
of foods, the hardest is beans;
of clothing, the poorest is nätäla (half-toga);
of housing, the poorest is säqäla."

Response: "(but) from enemy, the bastard son will defend you;
toward better days the bean will let you survive;
in (warm) daytime, the nätäla will clothe you;
till a better is built, the säqäla will shelter you".

There are special tuquls of varying degrees of sturdiness:

824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[251] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

[263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshäm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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823

alluvial soil - "borbwara märet", rich silt carried by rivers and brooks.

infertile soils - "qoda märet" dries too quickly after rains;
"arbacha märet", reddish, after erosion, infertile mounds;
"gebgaba märet", harvest withers at stalk before maturity;
"gergera märet", useless to plow, better leave for wild fruit.
"rech märet", abandoned land, leave for pasturage.

hard-to-penetrate - "gewchacha märet", plow cannot penetrate readily,
"gombore märet", sandy but very rocky, hard to plow,
"chencha märet" rocky terrain, where rain does not penetrate well.

[132
82] The preferred early rain is the light, intermittent but penetrating "zeg yalä zenäb", not the heavy continuous downpour that occurs later. Fast-growing barley, called
243
251 "bällega" after the "bälg" season, is sown first, during the light rains of March, for it can be harvested 3 months later, just before the heavy rains, to help tide the people over until the main harvests. This is very important because of the traditional hesitancy of the farmer to store crops. Historically, he would rather have it almost ready on the stalk, and would rather risk a crop failure than

243
251 expose a full granary to the mercy of the feudal lord and passing soldiers.

Before threshing can begin, about a month after the end of the rainy season, a flat, circular area is marked out with rocks. Cowdung is stamped into the wetted floor, and the sun hardens the ground into cement-like consistency in one day. This threshing floor, called "awdema", is usually big enough to accommodate at least 4 oxen that are now driven over the grain, abreast but not tied, walking in a steady circle all day long, a procedure called "mabärayät". On the third day, winnowing (called "mäshin") takes place, by means of wooden pitchforks cut from a hardwood bush without carpentry (thus usually two-pronged), and a semi-circular winnowing fan about 2 feet long and not quite as wide, made of oxhide that has been stretched on a wooden, semi-circular frame. The threshed grain is covered overnight with branches, to protect it from wind.

On the fourth day, the grain is swept up with simple whiskbrooms made of stalks (e.g. those of wild oats). All these procedures are done as quickly as possible, partly to protect the crop during this stage of maximum vul-
554 nerability from birds and baboons, partly because of fear
609 of the evil eye. If an unrelated stranger passes at this time, the farmer sprinkles him with water to avert the possible evil eye. Formerly spitting was the procedure.

In that season many small threshing grounds dot the landscape, especially on river flood plains. Here the plots are usually not more than 100-200 yards long. A minimum team of three men can usually do the job described in four days. Only one person is needed to drive the

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are permitted to use it. Milking is done in a very tightly woven 234 415 reed container ("gerera") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwacha" or "chocho").

233 423 691 Sometimes a large extended family will try to enclose a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Länz district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary yoke. The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya 251 262 läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

61. Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

324 motion, and the rotary quern of ancient Rome and Alexandria
412 is of course entirely unknown.

251 Bins for storage of grain are also made by men. The
333 two major types are the "gota", made of rings of sundried mud and straw, which are built up later inside the hut; and the "gotara" bin, made of a barrel-like skeleton of sticks, plastered with mud and left to harden in the sun. The former can, of course, be built higher, as much as 7 feet tall, while the latter is limited to the size of the door of the tuqul.

415 Gourds are widely raised as utensils, in line with the pattern of using natural products directly. Sometimes the gourds ("qel") grow on vines supported on the roof of the tuquol. When at full size, some are cut lengthwise so that each half represents a drinking cup with its own natural handle affixed. Travellers always carry these. They also carry gourds used as waterbottles ("wamara") with the top cut off and refixed to serve as a removable plug. Or, the narrowing top of a gourd is cut off and used by women while carding raw cotton on a bowstring. Artists of chiefs and feudal "great men" paint designs and scenes on gourds ("ankola") belonging to their patrons.

285 Basketry can be made by either men or women, often
415 by servants and ex-slaves, but since it is not considered specialized, there is no shame attached to this work. Both coiling and weaving techniques are used, the latter more often. Noteworthy is the frequent close weaving which results in watertight containers, further secured with hot milk and fumigating with gum woods. This method,

462 or will be described under "division of labor by sex".

462 The hardest daily work of the female is the pounding
252 and/or grinding of grain. Sorghum(mashella), barley, even shembera peas and pepper, are dehusked by pounding with an up-and-down motion in a hollow wooden tree-trunk, with a stout wooden pestle. After that, the grains are usually left overnight in water for softening. The next day they, as well as the common tyeff grain, are hand-ground on an inclined flat stone, by use of a smaller stone of different type, weighing as much as 4-5 kilos, with the same back-and-forth motion of ancient Egypt, rather than rotary. To produce flour for the entire family takes the better part of each day.

316 The woman carries water from the valley every morning,
462 sometimes several kilometers, in a heavy earthenware pot
[482] tied to her upper back. It weighs 20 kilos when full. Only during the 3-months rainy season can she use nearby brooks and temporary watercourses. This female task makes it possible to locate hamlets on or near hilltops, far from water in the dry season, but safe from flooding in the rainy season.

462 Kitchen duties of the female, besides cooking and
251 daily baking of "enjärä" bread, includes also the processing of meat for later use. After slaughtering, done by men because of the religious significance of this duty from which women are excluded, she cuts the meat into thin strips, called "zelzel", dries them in the sun to leather-like toughness, then stores them in the hut for the next feast, for use in the stew called "zelzel wot". Food -

462 processing tasks of the women also include the prepara-
251 tion of staples of the pantry, to be ready for immediate use when her other taks have left her no time. The red pepper ("bärbäre") is preserved and readied in the form of a paste, by grinding it, adding water and salt, plus a bit of onion. This paste, called "delleh"or "delleha" can then be used in wot, or to spice butter to be smeared on "enjära" bread, or mixed with oily nug paste and car-
[x3] ried as a condiment and staple on travel. Another prepared spice condiment used by travellers is a dry mixture of spices, salt and "shero" (ground peas), called "meten". Butter may be processed by boiling it with pepper, or with the small yellow root of a rhubarb called "mäqmäqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), which is also used as a medicine against tuberculosis.

462 Fetching and producing materials for fuel is a major
237 female occupation, though left to young girls when avail-
572 able. A special supply of dried cowdung is prepared for the rainy season, beginning right after Easter when the intermittent light rains are expected soon. Donkey and horse manure, "fanday", are not used by the proud Amhara, but cattle dung is flattened between the palms of women, dried in the sun, piled into tall heaps right next to the hut, then covered with a protective mask of mud and fresh dung. It is also women's task to watch the hearth fire in the evening, to check that it is covered with hot ashes over glowing embers, so that it will not go out and leave the hut chilly, on the one hand, but not burn so brightly that it might set fire to the hut.

778 the frame, are now often cut from modern tin cans.

The ceremonial drinking cup used in the eucharist is the "ṭewa", usually made of metal. But if used in the "mähabber" communal sodality outside the church, it is often of horn or clay, about 4½ inches high, 5 inches diameter at top, 1½ inches at bottom. On the latter occasion it is filled with barley beer or "berz" (honey-water). This is given the peasant at plowing time to [788] confer blessing upon him, thus called "maras baggo" (for spring plowing).

Other equipment belonging to the church may be a wooden pulpit for reading (not preaching), some tin [373] oil-lamps or the old wick-like candles (called "twäf"). 778 Very important are the drums, huge affairs carried by 534 the younger dancers during worship, suspended from shoulder straps. The barrel-like "nägarit", of which the average church has three (or must borrow them), usually has a height of at least 30 inches, a diameter of 15 inches. It is made of "wanza" wood (olive or other hardwood), with tanned oxhide moistened and stretched tightly across both ends. The drummer operates it with the flat of his fingers and top of flat palm. Another type is the "kabaro" drum, in which one end is bigger than the other. The drums and the swaying maqomya sticks keep time during the chanting. Trumpets are used only for parades, to herald the march, but not in accompaniment.

778 When not in use, most of these utensils are loc-
346 ked in a little treasure house, called "bätalehem" (in
251

778 Geez). Here the bread and wine used in the eucharist are
346 prepared and stored with great secrecy. The utensils of
251 the nearby cooking hut, the baking pan "metad" and large clay jars for barley beer, are also stored here. Supplies of tyeff, barley, wheat, beans, peas, may also be stored.

779 In recent years, church parades feature prominant-
186 ly the flag of the nation, the red-green-yellow of the central government, emphasizing in modern ways the close union of church and state that has long been traditional in Abyssinia.

(e) Worship and Devotional Poetry.

533 The musical chants and notations studies formally
796 have already been outlined in connection with church education.

Church hymns, including devotional poetry, are called "gene" in a generic rather than specifically accurate sense. A collection of them is contained in the book "gubae gana", and they are sung in a special mode. The chief mode is called "selt". It has three variations:

(1) "geez" - short tones, dedicated to the "Father";

(2) "ezel" - mournful tones in minor key, dedicated to the "Son" 's passion;

(3) "araray" - long, drawn-out tones, dedicated to the "Holy Ghost".

These variations are interlaced, for special results, and for specific occasions. The mass, "geddede" (lit. a notification) is chanted in a mode bearing the

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

262 greater treat than an ox, and within an hour of the purchase of the animal it was killed, skinned, cut into joints and divided amongst the tents, and our followers were busy gorging themselves on the still warm flesh. [25] What the twenty men could not eat in the day was 136 never cooked, but was cut into long thin strips and hung on ropes to dry in the sun and wind for the morrow's meal—a tempting bait for the vultures, hawks, and carrion crows that used to collect in their hundreds and make frantic dives for the tempting morsels, occasionally picking up a piece from the line in their claws to the intense disgust of the men. It was fascinating to watch the daring swoops and dips of the circling birds, and so reckless did they become that one day whilst we were at lunch a hawk, baulked of his craving for raw meat by the watchfulness of its guardians, actually swooped down on our luncheon table and snatched from the plate on my wife's knees the wing of a duck that she was about to operate on, brushing her face and knocking her knife out of her hand with his powerful wings; and at the same moment another bird lifted a cutlet from a dish which our "boy" was carrying from the cook's tent to our table. The "boy's" expression of indignation and helplessness was most comical to watch.

262 But to revert to the practice of eating raw meat. Early travellers to Abyssinia have not only commented on this, but have gone even further, and have stated that meat is cut and eaten *from the living animal*. Bruce describes two separate and distinct instances of this practice, which he stated occurred frequently. The first was that of three soldiers whom he saw driving along a cow, and on arriving at a halting-place they tied it,

241
262 are no ready markets.

Sesame seed (Sesamum indicum) called "selit", is rather rare, and, as the name indicates, not originally native to Abyssinia. The Amhara, finding it difficult to grow, consider it an expensive and delicious delicacy, and consume the oil only as a rare treat.

Sunflower seed (Heliantus annuus), called "suf" is not a field crop, only occasionally planted, often semi-wild.

244 Vegetables are considered garden crops, and are planted near the hamlet on the hillside, while field crops are in the valley and river flood plains. Apart from kitchen gardens, which are considered necessities because of the spices that are consumed daily, other vegetables, particularly cabbage (gomän) are despised as poor food (food of p poor people or in times of famine). Consequently the Amhara raises few vegetables and small quantities.

Cabbage (gomän), and a white variety, "aydärgë", resistant to climatic change.

252 Chick-Peas, "shembera" (Cicer arietum), the most common, generally eaten roasted, but also boiled in the lenten season, and baked into bread to stretch tyeff in case of crop failure. Shembera is the proverbial staple, even in war and famine, never expected to fail. The proverb says:

244
539 "She who has not born, will never carry her load;

244
[539]

(but a fallow) shembera (field) will bear (next year)".

meaning that a barren woman will never carry a child in womb, but a shembera field will bear again and again. The Amhara realizes that this legume improves the soil. It will grow in poor soil, resist drought. The harvest is late, usually February.

Peas, called "atär" are also grown in quantity, for similar reasons: they grow well in poor soil, and are especially important in lent.

"meser" The collective term for lentils.

Broad bean, "bagella" also grows in poor and eroded soil, and is much planted. It is then roasted, or boiled, or mixed in curry (wot).

[252]

Onions and garlic, the latter called "white onion" are grown in kitchen gardens as ingredients of wot.

Grey bean called "adängwarä", planted at beginning of heavy rains as fenced-in garden crop, eaten raw, considered semi-wild, and not prestige food.

Gourds, "qäl", e.g. "dubba", pumpkin-type (Cucurbita maxima),are grown inside hamlets and boiled and cut into strips in wot (curry-type stew). Some gourds are planted in dug holes, others grow on vines to the height of roofs, on which they rest for support.

Roots, similar to potatoes, called "dennech" are grown in Shoa, but are of minor importance

423 It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-
435 rate and reliable survey of "capital" and expenditures--due to concealment of property for fear of taxes. As for the value of their own land, this cannot even be estimated by observation, for not even the owners know the value of their own land. For fear of alienation, and possible higher taxes on land found to be more fertile than declared, they actually do not want to know. Most Amhara land is not even measured, and most have no clear titles, except by local "custom". The value of the tuqul hut cannot be estimated since it is not a cash item and utilizes only the raw products of nature. The same is true of utensils and equipment. Even the plowpoint is bartered rather than purchased.

C. Dietary habits

252
262 The diet in general is low in proteins and vitamins, but otherwise not inadequate.[64]

The mainstay of the Amhara is a round, thin, limp, slightly sour bread "enjāra", made largely from tyēff grain. After the grain has been handground by the housewife, she mixes the flour with water and lets it stand about three days. Then she pours the thickish liquid on a clay plate (called "metād") about 2 feet in diameter, covers it with a high lid of tight reeds or clay which leaves much air space. The bread is thus baked for about four minutes on top of the triangular stone hearth. The result is a leavened, spongy-surfaced but flat-bottomed limp bread about 1/4 inch thick, and about 2 feet in diameter. The meat-curry is

64. Simmons, et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. p.64.

252 262 poured over several layers of it; or spiced butter is smeared; or, especially in the fasting season or while travelling, condiments such as nug-paste or talba-paste are smeared. Variations in the preparation of enjara include some kneading during the fermentation process, adding some old enjara to aid in leavening, polishing the plate with oilcake of nug or talba to prevent sticking, using straw for the fire so heat will be spread evenly and uniformly.

Unleavened bread, "qitta", is baked mainly as a staple for travelling. The flour may be of other grains (e.g. wheat) or of a mixture of sorghum, barley, dagussa, even shembera. The flour is allowed to remain in water a maximum of 5 hours. If even less time, it is called "afla qitta", doubly unleavened. This bread is also baked when in great hurry to leave, as in warfare, and the Falashas believe that this was the "unleavanede bread" baked by the ancient Israelites on their Exodus from Egypt.

Another travel mainstay, elaborate to prepare, is a soggy, but not liquid, mixture of enjara and wot meat-stew, called "fetfet". It is carried in a reed basket which has been covered by a finely tanned morocco skin.

Another type of bread, thicker, more consistent, and resembling European varieties, is collectively called "dabbo". It is baked only for rare occasions, such as religious feasts, e.g. "mäsqäl", the Feast of the Cross. Therefore, it is usually made from the luxury grain, wheat, and only the poor add barley or tyäff, to stretch the wheat. The grain is first softened in water; then husked in a wodden mortar; then ground into fine flour. This is then knea-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

252 262 ded, with water, in a wooden bowl, "gäbätä". Various spices and condiments are added. The dough is left to rise at least 5 hours, and the metad plate is preheated. Leaves of "koba", or the large leaves of the "embush" plant are spread on the metad plate (preferable banana leaves when available). After the clay plate has been rubbed with "ketketa" leaves (Dodonea viscosa), and the dough is evenly spread on the leaves, and covered with more leaves, a clay lid is sealed around the edges with mud. Wood from the hearth is now placed on top of the lid, until only glowing embers are left underneath. With a properly smoldering fire the dabbo can be baked in two hours; but for flavor the dabbo is left sealed for some hours more. The result is a massive bread, about 2 inches thick, 2 feet in diameter, with distinct crust, and very tasty. Only in the wealthier monasteries, where it is referred to as "dabyä" is it a daily staple. (e.g. in Däbra Libanos it is cut into four quarters, and each monk receives a specific number of quarters according to his rank) Variations of baking include pouring the dough in more liquid form, or baking the leaves filled with heavy dough in hot ashes rather than in the clay plates.

The second most common item of food is the "wot", a peppered spiced sauce which may or may not contain meat. Innumerable variations exist: this is usually the only dish in which the housewife has the opportunity to develop her own recipes, by adding certain spices, etc. Some of these spices are even imported from Yemen and are for sale at all major markets, even remote ones, although most spices

252 are raised in the housewife's kitchen garden. Every hus-
262 band of pride claims to be able to distinguish the wot of his wife. Among spices used are:

263 [278] Ethiopian spices, raised by Amhara:

"Tena Adam" (lit. health of Adam), very aromatic. Important medicine against buda spirit (evil eye). This is Rue (Ruta graveolens, Ruta hortensis).

Fenugreek (Trigonella foenumgroccum), called "Abush"

Coriander (Coriandrum sativum), "dembelal". Cheaper than "bärbärē and used to replace it.

Sweet Basil (Ocinum Basilicum), called "bäsobela" or "zäqa qebye"

Bärbärē, the all-important red peppery major garden crop.

Ginger, called "zendjebel". It is used unscraped.

[273] Caraway seed (Carum carvi) called "enselal", also used to make "araqi" intoxicant drink.

"Abusda", a dark seed resembling nug. Also called "tequr azmud".

Mustard seed, called "shenfa", ground to condiment.

Thyme, called "azmud", in light and dark varieties. Wild Thyme, "tosen".

Garlic, called "näch shenkurt" (lit. white onion).

Spices used by Amhara, but bought on market, including those of Yemen importation:

Cardamon, called "korärima". (Elettaria paradise).

Saffron (Crocus sativus), called "erd", used to add golden orange color to reddish "wot".

Cumin (Cuminium cynisum), called "kamun".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

263 "afär kochär" resembling nutmeg.

Capsicum (Cayenne pepper), possibly introduced by the Portuguese. Called "qundo bärbärē".

252 262 263 A number of these spices are pre-mixed, some added later to the woṭ. A mixture of bärbärē powder, a salt called "duddus", and garlic, called "awäzē", is kept as a staple and also carried by travellers. Vegetables such as cabbage ("gomänzär") and pumpkin slices ("dubba)" are boiled in the "wäṭ". Sesame seed ("sälit", Sesamum indicum) add purplish spots of oil content to the woṭ. Aroma is added by "senbul" (Spica celtica), expensive and therefore rare.

The most common woṭ is "qay wät". Chick-peas are pre-fried with red onion. Water, mashed red pepper ("delleh") and butter are added, stirred and heated. Finely sliced meat is then added, and black spice (tequr azmud) is sprayed over the boiling mixture. More water is added and stirring continues. . Some add a bit of barley beer, others pea flour.

When fresh beef is used on Sundays or at special feasts, the red pepper woṭ is called "zegen woṭ". The meat is lightly boiled, and minced; onions are minced and slowly roasted, and the whole is boiled with pre-roasted fenugreek spice, and with red barbare pepper. Then butter is added. When this is well cooked, and the host can afford it, the following spices are added: white azmud ("näch azmud"), black azmud (both thyme); ginger; sweet basil; cardamom seed. After cooking, capsicum is sprinkled over the settling stew, and other spices according to individual preference.

252 262 For the less well-to-do, the cheapest meat is chicken, and this red pepper stew is called "qäy doro wät". Slaughtering, even of chicken, must be done by men. The pious pronounce the invocation, "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity"(because of the Monophysite faith). Then the housewife takes over, removes the feathers in boiling water, singes the skin, inflates the outer skin by blowing into the cut skin near the throat. She then cleans the chicken and rubs it with pea flour. Inner organs and wings and legs are washed with salt and lemon juice, then lightly roasted. In another pan, minced red onion, red pepper and other spices are fired in butter, water is added and stirred, ground salt is powdered over it. Then boiled, shelled eggs are added. Now all chicken parts are boiled with this prepared mixture, in a deeper clay pot.

Whenever any of these vegetable or meat stews is boiled without red pepper, the stew is called "alecha", and, unless this dish is added to the menu for variety, it is considered a poor substitute. It is given to very young [758] infants and to persons with intestinal ailments, and so [576] constitutes a symbol for weakness. (It is a major insult to call a man "alecha", because the term also means "impotent".)

Most often alecha is boiled with chicken, "yädoro alecha". Red onion is preferred in butter, in a clay pot ("dest"). Peeled vegetables such as tomatoes (in urban areas) and water are added. The chicken, disjointed, washed and dried, is boiled in this. Powdered ginger, cloves, green pepper without seeds, sweet basil are added,

252 262 the last a few minutes before the wot is ready. Some add capsicum at the same time.

Liver and stomach, especially of sheep and goat, are eaten, but spleen and milt are considered hard to digest and are given to dogs. In general, interior organs are not prestigeful.

Raw beef, "brundo", is still featured at special feasts such as weddings, religious feasts like "tärkär",
[64] as it was featured at feasts of warriors in the past. This brings much tapeworm infection, but the risk is taken because it is believed that "brundo" makes strong like no
[755] other food. The painful purgative cure is undergone every two months with "kosso", still a major institution among the Amhara.

To cool the palate linings and tongue from the bärbärē, curdled milk, "ergo", is consumed right afterwards.
[515] Hands are carefully washed, for touching the eyes with fingers stained from the spiced stew makes them smart.

Fish, much eaten only in the rainy season, is also boiled in wot, often after slight prefrying in talba (linseed oil); lentils (mesr) are often added.

Lentils become very important in the long lenten sea-
[784] son and on every Wednesday and Friday, when the average Amhara still abstains from meat, milk, eggs and other animal products, for religious (Coptic fast) reasons. The staple food during these periods is a porridge called "shero": mashed peas seasoned with spices, onion and vegetable oil.

Another vegetarian staple is "nefro", consisting of peas, chick peas, sorghum, all boiled and eaten as ker-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

252 262 nels, or crushed and baked into a cake with nug or linseed oil. The porridge of non-fast times is called "genfo". It is made of crushed wheat, barley, butter and curdled milk. In fast times nug and linseed are substituted for [272] the forbidden butter and milk. A fast drink consists of tyeff flour boiled in salt water, called "hug".

Other religious food taboos include the pig, which is never raised, except for European's use. This taboo dates back to Judaism and the Old Testament.

Every householder usually has a supply of roasted kernels "qolo" available in case unexpected guests or kin come to visit, a frequent occurrence. The pattern of "qolo" is very similar to that of a linguistically equivalent concept in Yemen. The Amhara makes it mostly of barley, "gebs qolo", but also of shembera and of maize.

[263] Condiments taken along on trips include an oily paste made of nug or linseed. When this is also spiced, salted, or mixed with honey, it is called "chelqa". It [272] resembles a gummy porridge. The traveller can mix it with water and instantly have a drink which is regarded not only as thirst-quenching, but also as strength-giving. However, no one claims that the taste is good.

264 There are two major meals per day: midday lunch, a light meal, though it may feature both "enjara" and "wot"; and the heavier supper, "erut", the main meal consumed in the cool of the early evening around the hearth of the hut, with bread, meat stew, barley beer and condiments. Breakfast as such is not eaten, except for a handful of roasted barley, and, if the household can afford it, black coffee.

252 Butter is made in a large gourd ("gurna"), plugged with a wooden prop. The housewife shakes this back and forth, much like Middle Eastern nomads shake it in skins. The butter that results resembles Indian ghee, and is called, at this stage, "gorënna". For human consumption it is then usually boiled with spices, especially bärbärey, but not with salt. To cure it further in order to make it sweet, delay rancidity, etc., butter (qebyë) is further boiled with one or several of the following spices in the process known as "yäqoyë mantäriya", "yäqebyë anätatär":

263]

bark of ginger	- quaräfa zenjebel
cardamon seeds	- korärima
thyme	- azmud
garlic	- näçh shenkurt
sweet basil	- bäsobela
saffron	- erd
wild thyme	- tosen

302] Since most of these spices are expensive, butter intended for ornamental pomade of women's hair is boiled instead with leaves of the "ades" bush, which grows wild.

This process is "ades qernefad".

273 The most important, daily drink is tälla, the barley beer brewed by the housewife. It is little different, basically, from other African barley beers. Men almost never drink water (though the barley beer may be very weak), partly due to their fondness for "sweet", i.e. only slightly fermented beer. After three days of storage, the Amhara begin to complain that it is "too bitter", and let the women drink it up.

462 or will be described under "division of labor by sex".

462 The hardest daily work of the female is the pounding
252 and/or grinding of grain. Sorghum(mashella), barley, even shembera peas and pepper, are dehusked by pounding with an up-and-down motion in a hollow wooden tree-trunk, with a stout wooden pestle. After that, the grains are usually left overnight in water for softening. The next day they, as well as the common tyeff grain, are hand-ground on an inclined flat stone, by use of a smaller stone of different type, weighing as much as 4-5 kilos, with the same back-and-forth motion of ancient Egypt, rather than rotary. To produce flour for the entire family takes the better part of each day.

316 The woman carries water from the valley every morning,
462 sometimes several kilometers, in a heavy earthenware pot
[482] tied to her upper back. It weighs 20 kilos when full. Only during the 3-months rainy season can she use nearby brooks and temporary watercourses. This female task makes it possible to locate hamlets on or near hilltops, far from water in the dry season, but safe from flooding in the rainy season.

462 Kitchen duties of the female, besides cooking and
251 daily baking of "enjera" bread, includes also the processing of meat for later use. After slaughtering, done by men because of the religious significance of this duty from which women are excluded, she cuts the meat into thin strips, called "zelzel", dries them in the sun to leather-like toughness, then stores them in the hut for the next feast, for use in the stew called "zelzel wot". Food -

373 Little clay oil lamps are a luxury, since the fuel, often kerosene, must be bought at the market. Only churches and landowning farmers can afford it on occasion. In the church, beeswax candles, made by the women auxiliaries of the church from cotton thread and beeswax, serve for illumination at the early masses, and are surprisingly non-dripping.

372 Modern matches, made in Ethiopia under a government monopoly, are now cheaply available at all great markets, and have replaced earlier methods of making fire. The old method is still folowed in remote jungle areas such as Wolqait. There, fire is produced by friction, using a big, soft, bottom piece of "wanza" or "gerawa wood", and a branch or piece of hardwood, such as wild olive ("woyra") as the twirling or rubbing top piece. It sometimes takes an hour of effort. Even in the hamlets, where matches are available, they are saved by transporting fire from hearth to hearth in a broken potsherd (gel). Charcoal ("käsäl") is a luxury item, used sparingly only in pottery-making, occasionally to boil coffee if in a hurry or tea in urban places.

462 252 Baking is a female occupation, but becomes a source of income only in urban centers or temporarily at great markets, where restorateur-prostitutes engage in this work or hire less attractive women to do it for them. A woman who specializes in baking and selling "enjära" and other breads is called a "gagari". It is one of the very few 462 252 554 money-producing occupations in which a Coptic Amhara woman can engage. But it is low prestige, and no self-respecting

462 pater familias, certainly not a feudal "great man" or offi-
252 cial will buy from her, and a lazy housewife, even an ur-
[554] ban one, would be sharply criticized, even divorced, if she bought the product of the "gagari". For it is believed that her baking is carelessly done, that sand and dirt have not been picked out carefully before and during grinding, and the product is "fit only for Shanqalla" ex-slaves. One thin, round, two-foot pancake of "enjära" costs 5 Ethiopian cents (US$0.02); dabbo bread of course costs considerably more but customers are less frequent than for the daily "enjära" bread.

283 Spinning is the task of the housewife and of all wo-
462 men attached to a household, be it a hamlet kin group, or an all-female zar society (see chapter on spiritual healing). On her wedding day, the bride brings with her a small, ornamented reed basket, called "muday", in which she carries her own personal little distaff, some cotton thread on a reed bobbin that she has made, together with personal
[885] ornaments and tattooing dyes. This symbolizes that she is ready for adult womanhood and marriage, though she may be only 13 or 14 years old.

Carding of the raw cotton is also done by women. They beat it, pick out the husks, then place the cotton balls on the string of a bow called "dägan", tense the string with a stick, then agitate the string with the neck cut off a gourd (called "qel angät"). This loosens the cotton so that it can be cleaned and completely dehusked.

Every afternoon the housewife takes up her spinning, unless some special task takes her time. The distaff "emmärt" consists of a round, solid reed or thin round

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XII.—*Where and how the bread of the Sacrament is made, and of a Procession they made, and of the pomp with which the mass is said, and of entering into the church.*

782 The making of this sacramental bread is in this manner.
252 The building in which it is made, in all churches and
[346] monasteries, is, as I said above, on the gospel side, outside of the church and its circuit, which is like a cloister, in the space contained by the other outer circuit, which is not covered in, which space serves for a churchyard. All the churches and monasteries have such a building, and it does not contain anything else except what is requisite for this purpose; that is to say, a mortar for pounding wheat, a machine for making very clean flour, and such as is required for such a purpose, for they do not prepare this sacrament from flour or wheat on which women have laid their hands. They have pots for preparing the paste, which they make thicker than ours. They have a furnace, as for distilling water, and upon it a plate of iron, and in some churches of copper, and in other poor churches of clay. This plate is round and of a good size; they place fire underneath it, and when it is hot clean it with a waxed cloth, pour on it a portion of paste, and spread it out with a wooden spoon of such size as they intend to make the bread, and they make it very round. When it is set they take it off and place it on end, then they make another in the same way. When this second one is set, they take the first and place it upon it, that is to say, the side of the first which was uppermost they put upon the top of the other, fresh with fresh, and so the bread remains one whole one, and they do nothing more than make it round and turn it from one side to the other, and move it about on the plate, that it may bake on both sides and on the circumference. In this manner they make one or as many as they wish. In this same
[273] house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a machine for pressing.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means emperor, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thousand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and courtyards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

784 Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by
795 one of themselves, nor will Moslems eat any which has been killed by a Christian. We had one Moslem with us when we were on trek, and as he would not eat the ox which my other men had killed he bought a whole sheep for himself, and killed and ate it himself; none of the other men would touch an atom of it, even when their own supply ran out and they had no meat at all.

262 Of course the comparatively high price of meat (for
252 an Abyssinian) prevents the too frequent consumption of *broundo* amongst the people, and their tastes in everyday food are simple. Bread is their mainstay. This is found in many varieties; some of it soft, slightly sour in taste, and pale brown in colour; the most popular is of flour made from *teff* or millet seed, mixed to a thick paste with water and then poured into a large rough slightly concave iron receptacle and cooked over an open fire, without grease or fat of any kind. When finished this bread takes the form and aspect of large pancakes, twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, and is very good, especially when eaten with jam or butter; we always ate it ourselves when on trek. The native eats with it a kind of mash of lentils or dried peas, ground and cooked, and mixed with butter and a very hot red sauce which is produced from the chilli; this latter is very widely cultivated in several varieties all over the country.

263 The amount of pepper that is put into their cooked dishes is as a rule disastrous to the European palate at the first time of trying, and how they can swallow the fiery compounds that they do passes my comprehension —their tongues and palates must be made of leather.

All food, including meat, is eaten with the fingers amongst all classes, a piece of bread being broken off,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 ### *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *injarā*. Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make good *doro wat*, a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

they take what they have, and they do not choose to pro- 554
vide more than what they require and is necessary for them.

In no part that he went about in were there butchers' 253
shops, except at the Court, and no person of the common people may kill a cow (even though it is his own) without leave from the lord of the country.

The people speak the truth little, even when they make 695
oath, unless they swear by the head of the King. They much fear excommunication, and if they are ordered to do [688]
something, and that it be to their prejudice, they do it from fear of excommunication.

The oath is administered in this manner. They go to the door of the church with two priests, and they have there incense and embers, and he who has to swear puts his hands upon the church door, and one the priests tells him of the oath to speak the truth, and that if he speaks falsely, that as the lion swallows his prey in the woods, so may his soul be swallowed by the devil; and as the wheat is broken between the stones, so may his bones be ground by the devils; and he who swears, at each thing answers Amen; and as the fire burns wood, so may your soul be burned in the fire of hell and made dust. He says Amen. And this if you do not speak truth; he says Amen. And if you speak truth, may your life be prolonged with honour, and your soul in paradise with the blest. He says Amen. And this ended, he gives his testimony.

He says that the movable feasts, Easter, Ascension, Pen- 796
tecost, are celebrated on the same days and seasons that we 805
celebrate them. The birth of Christ, Circumcision, Epiphany, and other feasts of saints also agree with us, and others not. The year and months begin on the 29th day of August, on which was the beheading of St. John, and the year is of twelve months, and the month of thirty days. When the year is ended, there are five days over, which they call pagomen, which means fulfilment of the year, and in the bissextile year there are six days over; so they keep with us.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭimqat,* means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭimqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā,* grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household. 565* 796 [296]

The program for Ṭimqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized. [778] [851]

By noon on Ṭimqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭimqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter. [585] [785] [461] [782] [785]

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings. [261] [785] [241] [585]

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and [821] [164]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 571 Still another invidious distinction of considerable importance in the Amhara outlook is that between the "big man" (*ṭillīq saw*) and the commoner (*terā saw*). "Bigness" may be measured in terms of political power, economic wealth, ecclesiastical status, or any combination thereof. Though the peasant frequently has little affection for the big man, he customarily treats him with the greatest show of deference. No matter how unfamiliar a big man may be or from what part of the country he comes, the Amhara peasant sees him as entitled to unquestioning courtesy and obeisance. Analogous distinctions discriminate between the wealthy (*hābtām*) and the poor (*dehā*), and between the genteel (*çhawā*) and the rude (*bālagē*).

192 828 Yet if the Amhara takes a dim view of women, youth, and poor folk, as well as non-Amhara and non-Christians, he suffers from no illusions about homo sapiens at his best—unless they are dark illusions. The generic word for "man" in Amharic, *saw*, is the subject of a number of negative associations and idiomatic uses.[12] At its worst, the word is found in an idiom that signifies the evil eye (*ya-saw ayn*), literally: the "eye of man" (or, more idiomatically, "the eye of others"). At its best, when used to signify a fully formed human being, the word *saw* characteristically appears in the plaintive saying, *Saw yallam* ("there is no human being"); in other words, an individual who fully embodies the concept of humanity does not exist. In general, one may say that the Amhara's view of human nature is dominated by his perception of man's inherent aggressiveness and untrustworthiness.

828 [861] The Amhara believes that unformed human nature is poor raw material, and that without strict punishment throughout childhood a person will grow up to be rude and offensive toward others. As an adult, moreover, he must constantly be kept in check. The rationale commonly given for the extensive [785] schedule of fasting is that man's nature is wicked, and only by weakening himself in this manner will he be turned away from some act of aggression against others.

828 261 273 The Amharic concept of *ṭegābaññā* illustrates this view. *Ṭegābaññā* literally carries the meaning of one who has been sated with food and drink, but is normally taken to mean someone who begins to insult and pick fights with others. In their use of this and related words the Amhara express the belief that aggression is the usual consequence of being sated. Insubordinate behavior on the part of a servant or political appointee is usually explained as a result of his having been too well fed. "When a peasant gets sated he hits with his stick. . . " is the first line of a number of couplets I collected among rural Amhara. The specific effect of drinking alcoholic beverages is believed to release, not Erōs, but the aggressive instincts. An Amharic proverb about [539] *ṭallā* states this directly: "One [glass] whets the appetite; two quenches it; three heats one up; four makes one quarrel; five brings fighting; six causes killing." Contrary to the view that world peace depends chiefly on filling

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war. 828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance. 565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā*, or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin." 565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz*, a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days. 565* 461 [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[13] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfata*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor [539] Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 574 527 [575] [794] Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious fraternal association known as the *māhebar*, is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māhebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā*," literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Amharic proverb, and even the Emperor when visiting a school expects students to remain seated if they are at the dining table when he arrives.

Some indication of the comparative significance of this concern about eating and drinking in the Amhara psyche is afforded by a recent cross-cultural investigation of dreams. Obtained from samples of young male respondents in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the United States, the dreams were evaluated with respect to the presence or absence of themes of "manifest orality": scenes of someone desiring, looking for, or consuming food or drink. The proportion of Ethiopian respondents (mostly Orthodox Amhara from the Gondar area) who revealed manifest orality in their dreams was found to be *64 per cent*. By contrast, the proportion of those in a sample of non-Muslim Nigerians whose dreams showed manifest orality was 38 per cent, and that in the sample of Americans was only 22 per cent.[11]

The Amhara custom of giving *gurshā* plays up the erotic component of eating. *Gurshā* means "mouthful" and, as already noted, refers to a wad of food which one places in another's mouth, usually as a gesture of affection. *Gurshā* are exchanged between husband and wife and among relatives and friends. They are often given to children, especially in families of higher status, and to favored servants and retainers as well. The *gurshā* is of such meaning in Amhara experience that it is referred to in a number of Amharic idioms. First of all it means a present or a tip—literally, *pourmanger*. It also refers to the charge of a gun: the gun is a beloved object, and a *gurshā* is what one places in its mouth. In contemporary usage, it refers to flashlight batteries.

In connection with love and many other subjects, a good deal of the imagery of Amharic verse relates in one way or another to eating and drinking. The following sample of proverbs and couplets may convey some of the flavor of this phenomenon:

*Ṭajj** has no specks; a poor man has no friends.

• • •

[Use] proverbs in conversation; [drink] *ṭajj* in a carafe.

• • •

Hand and fly-whisk; mouth and *ïnjarā*† [go together].

• • •

No matter how much one plows, nothing tastes so good as *goman*.‡

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* *Ṭajj*, it may be remembered, is the Ethiopian wine made of honey.

† *Injarā* is the staple pancake.

‡ *Goman* is a kind of cabbage plant that requires no plow cultivation.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
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539

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[176] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

574 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
[554] *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *Injarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations 155
which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged 152
ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which [763]
occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news [764]
evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and [726]
boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive 155
fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training* 757
and Personality. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[13] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general [539]
principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy 155
water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of 755
affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of 155
prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. 751
Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute 155
magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit 789
use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human 261
problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formula- [191]
tion, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength.
A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a [173]
baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ĭnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution
789 of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of
261 eating something or presenting food to someone.[14] It is a theme conspicuous
173 in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85). According to *The Book of the*
[539] *Riches of Kings,* Yekuno Amlāk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zāgwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[15]

155 *Oral Sadism*

152 In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the envi-
201 ronment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When
155 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong
152 biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following
726 refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:
[539]

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[16]

155 The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagi-
266 nation. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the
773 story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater
[532] of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [262]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [754]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away [609]
from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well- [776]
known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 34.—*Offering a gursha*

FIG. 35.—*Singing out the master's* qenè

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FIG. 36.—*Amhara litigants* [P. 238-A]

754 tarily, and, in the case of yisew ayn, this power is usually unknown to its possessor. The victim of yisew ayn may have "good blood" or, more frequently, he may have been observed while eating or drinking (milk being the most commonly mentioned beverage). Like the buda, the bearer of yisew ayn stares intensely at his victim, who subsequently develops symptoms of chronic fatigue, abdominal cramps, headache, and occasional vomiting. These similarities are attended by important contrasts: Yisew ayn is congenitally acquired, and is not limited to any segment of the population. Its victims are sometimes people whose finery, rather than physical attractiveness, has drawn the yisew ayn's interest. Although its pathogenic mode is only vaguely understood, there is [261] no agent introjection. Lastly, it is considerably less serious than buda possession; there are no nocturnal seizures alternating with diurnal lassitude, and child victims often experience an eccentric syndrome---eating ashes, clay, and charcoal---for which there is no buda possession analogy.

*753 Certain ailments result from contagion (telalafiy), *[192] that is, the transmission of a disease substance (basiyta) from a sickman to another human recipient, without need for a mediating agent. Telalafiy is linked to dermatological symptoms (septacemia, hemorrhagic ulcer, scrofula, carbuncles, venereal chancre, shenkroid, gonorrhea,

137 centers of old world agriculture in which the Neolithic
241 economy originated, possibly contributing to the initial development of ancient Egyptian civilization. Like the highlands of Yemen, the highlands of Ethiopia seem to represent ancient centers of TERRACED AGRICULTURE. It was in the Kaffa province of Ethiopia that coffee originated. It was carried to Yemen, planted there, and exported from coastal harbors (like the town of Mocha) through the Red
439 Sea into the Mediterranean. Coffee is still Ethiopia's most important export. Other major exports include sundried hides, sheep and goat skins, cereals, edible oils, and gold.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that major imports consist primarily of items not of major importance in subsistence, but which reflect secondary needs: cotton sheeting (abujedid), cotton yarn, cotton piece goods, raw cotton, naphtha. The major exception is salt, still a major import.[6]

137 Many varieties of wild fruit and vegetables are eaten
262 only in small quantities, especially by the Amhara, partly because of the abundance of cereal crops and legumes, partly because of a cultural attitude that despises "wild food" fit for use only in case of crop failure, famine due to warfare, and for outcasts.

Another group of highly useful plants which grow wild in Ethiopia are the oilseeds. A number of these are planted and used in the diet.

137 In the lower regions of the plateau, mainly south of
241 the Amhara area, a "false banana" fiber crop called muz or
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6. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No12, May 1947, 4pp.

137 241 [248] kobe (Musa ensete) is grown. This is used for making ropes of all kinds and bags for grain. In the south, the roots and inner parts of the plant are also used to make flour for 262 186] food; but the Amhara despise this, considering it "food of slave peoples".

137 Vegetation is dense in the valleys, and the forests contain many valuable trees, including the Natal yellow pine. But in spite of the high yearly rainfall the northern plateau is comparatively little wooded. Foresters estimate that only 2.8% of Ethiopia is forest-covered, although they believe that it was once well forested. They ascribe this denuding to centuries of uncontrolled grazing and periodic burning-over. The best hardwoods that remain are usually in the least accessible spots, lowlands and gorges.[7]

137 313 The two most important trees of the highlands are the Ted and the Zegba. The Ted, a juniper (Juniperus procera) sometimes referred to as "pencil cedar" (or Juniperus phoenicoea), is fine-grained, easy to split, aromatic, durable (even when exposed to moist conditions in the rainy season), and termite-resistant. It is popular for beams in the better houses of chiefs, and for the simple native furniture. The Zegba (Podocarpus gracilor), also an evergreen, is found in the warmer parts of the plateau. The wood is soft, easy to split, subject to decay when exposed to moisture, and thus more popular in drier areas. Non-resinous and tasteless, it is useful as a container for food, but is mainly used for construction and furniture. On the higher plateau

7. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia 1954, pp. 127-8; Ruo: Ethiopia, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons: Global Epidemiology, 1951, p.63.

824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[251] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

[263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshäm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

243 patient oxen. If the farmer has no ex-slave retainers, his wife may help in the harvest. Even young boys help, particularly in protecting crops. The direction of the breeze [461] is carefully observed before winnowing. Work proceeds from sunrise to sundown (from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.), with a rest from noon to 3 P.M., the hottest time of the day. At that [263] time the women bring barley beer, enjara bread, and a special condiment prepared from crushed "nug" oilseeds called "anababar".

Threshing by sticks instead of oxen is done in harvest of the "nug" and this may require some additional helpers.

241 Oil plants are cultivated and of considerable impor- ●262 tance in the diet. They are considered field crops rather than garden crops:

"nug" (Guizotia abyssinica), the black Niger Seed, which is the most used vegetable oil of the Amhara. Travellers take it along, mixed with spices, as a staple. It is used in many items of diet. After crushing, the oil cakes are used for fuel (not fodder).

Flax seed (Linum usitatissimum), called "talba", the second most common oilseed, of light brown color, consumed in similar ways and in drinks. It is not raised for the fiber, which is considered fodder or fuel.

Castor bean (Ricinus communis), called "gulqwas" or "gachma". This is not a field crop as much as [281] nug and talba, and not as much of a staple. Tanners use it for lubrication of skins. The emperor has urged increased production, but there

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are no ready markets.

Sesame seed (Sesamum indicum) called "selit", is rather rare, and, as the name indicates, not originally native to Abyssinia. The Amhara, finding it difficult to grow, consider it an expensive and delicious delicacy, and consume the oil only as a rare treat.

Sunflower seed (Heliantus annuus), called "suf" is not a field crop, only occasionally planted, often semi-wild.

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Vegetables are considered garden crops, and are planted near the hamlet on the hillside, while field crops are in the valley and river flood plains. Apart from kitchen gardens, which are considered necessities because of the spices that are consumed daily, other vegetables, particularly cabbage (gomän) are despised as poor food (food of p poor people or in times of famine). Consequently the Amhara raises few vegetables and small quantities.

Cabbage (gomän), and a white variety, "aydärgē", resistant to climatic change.

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Chick-Peas, "shembera" (Cicer arietum), the most common, generally eaten roasted, but also boiled in the lenten season, and baked into bread to stretch tyeff in case of crop failure. Shembera is the proverbial staple, even in war and famine, never expected to fail. The proverb says:

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"She who has not born, will never carry her load;

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are permitted to use it. Milking is done in a very tightly woven 234 415 reed container ("gerera") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwacha" or "chocho").

233 423 691 Sometimes a large extended family will try to enclose a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Menz district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary 251 yoke. The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya 262 läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

61. Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

231 [262] the "great man" (feudal lord) and to warriors at rural, traditional feasts.

The cattle is not fat, since there is no intensive feeding. Even bulls are so patient that children can herd them, and cows are accustomed to walking home unescorted even through urban streets -- including Addis Ababa. With its broad forehead, long narrow skull, well-developed horns, the Abyssinian cattle still bears some resemblance to Primigenius, the cattle of Egypt and Nubia, and probably of Ethiopia prior to 500 B.C.[62]

232 Cattle is slaughtered for meat only in case of a barren cow and when the ox becomes too old to pull the plow. The male ancestry of a calf is given little attention, because it is not always possible, under the relaxed manner of breeding, to identify the paternal animal. Bulls are gelded by having their testicles crushed between rocks, and an ox so treated is called "wärräm" or "mäsina". Since the testicles are not cut, this primitive operation is not infrequently unsuccessful, and such a bull is then referred to as "amälät" and is troubled no further since it is believed that he is so virile that his virility cannot be taken from him without killing him. Bulls are gelded not to prevent them from begetting offspring, but to prevent them from "dissipating their energies" in sexual activity when it is needed for plowing. A rare secondary reason would be to fatten them for sale in preparation for slaughter.

Fully grown steers are fattened by feeding them chäw bälé, a mineral salt, for two years, or, where mineral

62. Ibid.

423 It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-
435 rate and reliable survey of "capital" and expenditures--due to concealment of property for fear of taxes. As for the value of their own land, this cannot even be estimated by observation, for not even the owners know the value of their own land. For fear of alienation, and possible higher taxes on land found to be more fertile than declared, they actually do not want to know. Most Amhara land is not even measured, and most have no clear titles, except by local "custom". The value of the tuqul hut cannot be estimated since it is not a cash item and utilizes only the raw products of nature. The same is true of utensils and equipment. Even the plowpoint is bartered rather than purchased.

C. Dietary habits

252
262 The diet in general is low in proteins and vitamins, but otherwise not inadequate.[64]

The mainstay of the Amhara is a round, thin, limp, slightly sour bread "enjara", made largely from tyeff grain. After the grain has been handground by the housewife, she mixes the flour with water and lets it stand about three days. Then she pours the thickish liquid on a clay plate (called "metad") about 2 feet in diameter, covers it with a high lid of tight reeds or clay which leaves much air space. The bread is thus baked for about four minutes on top of the triangular stone hearth. The result is a leavened, spongy-surfaced but flat-bottomed limp bread about 1/4 inch thick, and about 2 feet in diameter. The meat-curry is

64. Simmons, et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. p.64.

252 poured over several layers of it; or spiced butter is smear-
262 ed; or, especially in the fasting season or while travelling, condiments such as nug-paste or talba-paste are smeared. Variations in the preparation of enjara include some kneading during the fermentation process, adding some old enjara to aid in leavening, polishing the plate with oilcake of nug or talba to prevent sticking, using straw for the fire so heat will be spread evenly and uniformly.

Unleavened bread, "qitta", is baked mainly as a staple for travelling. The flour may be of other grains (e.g. wheat) or of a mixture of sorghum, barley, dagussa, even shembera. The flour is allowed to remain in water a maximum of 5 hours. If even less time, it is called "afla qitta", doubly unleavened. This bread is also baked when in great hurry to leave, as in warfare, and the Falashas believe that this was the "unleavanede bread" baked by the ancient Israelites on their Exodus from Egypt.

Another travel mainstay, elaborate to prepare, is a soggy, but not liquid, mixture of enjara and wot meat-stew, called "fetfet". It is carried in a reed basket which has been covered by a finely tanned morocco skin.

Another type of bread, thicker, more consistent, and resembling European varieties, is collectively called "dabbo". It is baked only for rare occasions, such as religious feasts, e.g. "masqal", the Feast of the Cross. Therefore, it is usually made from the luxury grain, wheat, and only the poor add barley or tyeff; to stretch the wheat. The grain is first softened in water; then husked in a wodden mortar; then ground into fine flour. This is then knea-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

252 262 ded, with water, in a wooden bowl, "gäbätē". Various spices and condiments are added. The dough is left to rise at least 5 hours, and the meted plate is preheated. Leaves of "koba", or the large leaves of the "embush" plant are spread on the meted plate (preferable banana leaves when available). After the clay plate has been rubbed with "ketketa" leaves (Dodonea viscosa), and the dough is evenly spread on the leaves, and covered with more leaves, a clay lid is sealed around the edges with mud. Wood from the hearth is now placed on top of the lid, until only glowing embers are left underneath. With a properly smoldering fire the dabbo can be baked in two hours; but for flavor the dabbo is left sealed for some hours more. The result is a massive bread, about 2 inches thick, 2 feet in diameter, with distinct crust, and very tasty. Only in the wealthier monasteries, where it is referred to as "dabyē" is it a daily staple. (e.g. in Däbra Libanos it is cut into four quarters, and each monk receives a specific number of quarters according to his rank) Variations of baking include pouring the dough in more liquid form, or baking the leaves filled with heavy dough in hot ashes rather than in the clay plates.

The second most common item of food is the "wot", a peppered spiced sauce which may or may not contain meat. Innumerable variations exist: this is usually the only dish in which the housewife has the opportunity to develop her own recipes, by adding certain spices, etc. Some of these spices are even imported from Yemen and are for sale at all major markets, even remote ones, although most spices

252 262 are raised in the housewife's kitchen garden. Every husband of pride claims to be able to distinguish the wot of his wife. Among spices used are:

263 [278] Ethiopian spices, raised by Amhara:

"Tena Adam" (lit. health of Adam), very aromatic. Important medicine against buda spirit (evil eye). This is Rue (Ruta graveolens, Ruta hortensis).

Fenugreek (Trigonella Foenumgroecum), called "Abush"

Coriander (Coriandrum sativum), "dembelal". Cheaper than "bärbärē and used to replace it.

Sweet Basil (Ocinum Basilicum), called "bäsobela" or "zäqa qebye"

Bärbärē, the all-important red peppery major garden crop.

Ginger, called "zendjebel". It is used unscraped.

[273] Caraway seed (Carum carvi) called "enselal", also used to make "araqi" intoxicant drink.

"Abuṣda", a dark seed resembling nug. Also called "tequr azmud".

Mustard seed, called "shenfa", ground to condiment.

Thyme, called "azmud", in light and dark varieties. Wild Thyme, "tosen".

Garlic, called "näch shenkurt" (lit. white onion).

Spices used by Amhara, but bought on market, including those of Yemen importation:

Cardamon, called "korärima". (Elettaria paradise).

Saffron (Crocus sativus), called "erd", used to add golden orange color to reddish "wot".

Cumin (Cuminium cynisum), called "kamun".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

263 "afär kochär" resembling nutmeg.

Capsicum (Cayenne pepper), possibly introduced by the Portuguese. Called "qundo bärbäre".

252 262 263 A number of these spices are pre-mixed, some added later to the wot. A mixture of bärbäre powder, a salt called "duddus", and garlic, called "awazē", is kept as a staple and also carried by travellers. Vegetables such as cabbage ("gomänzär") and pumpkin slices ("dubba)" are boiled in the "wät". Sesame seed ("sälit", Sesamum indicum) add purplish spots of oil content to the wot. Aroma is added by "senbul" (Spica celtica), expensive and therefore rare.

The most common wot is "qay wät". Chick-peas are pre-fried with red onion. Water, mashed red pepper ("delleh") and butter are added, stirred and heated. Finely sliced meat is then added, and black spice (tequr azmud) is sprayed over the boiling mixture. More water is added and stirring continues. . Some add a bit of barley beer, others pea flour.

When fresh beef is used on Sundays or at special feasts, the red pepper wot is called "zegen wot". The meat is lightly boiled, and minced; onions are minced and slowly roasted, and the whole is boiled with pre-roasted fenugreek spice, and with red barbare pepper. Then butter is added. When this is well cooked, and the host can afford it, the following spices are added: white azmud ("näch azmud"), black azmud (both thyme); ginger; sweet basil; cardamon seed. After cooking, capsicum is sprinkled over the settling stew, and other spices according to individual preference.

252 262 For the less well-to-do, the cheapest meat is chicken, and this red pepper stew is called "qäy doro wät". Slaughtering, even of chicken, must be done by men. The pious pronounce the invocation, "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity"(because of the Monophysite faith). Then the housewife takes over, removes the feathers in boiling water, singes the skin, inflates the outer skin by blowing into the cut skin near the throat. She then cleans the chicken and rubs it with pea flour. Inner organs and wings and legs are washed with salt and lemon juice, then lightly roasted. In another pan, minced red onion, red pepper and other spices are fired in butter, water is added and stirred, ground salt is powdered over it. Then boiled, shelled eggs are added. Now all chicken parts are boiled with this prepared mixture, in a deeper clay pot.

Whenever any of these vegetable or meat stews is boiled without red pepper, the stew is called "alecha", and, unless this dish is added to the menu for variety, it [758] is considered a poor substitute. It is given to very young infants and to persons with intestinal ailments, and so [576] constitutes a symbol for weakness. (It is a major insult to call a man "alecha", because the term also means "impotent".)

Most often alecha is boiled with chicken, "yädoro alecha". Red onion is preferred in butter, in a clay pot ("dest"). Peeled vegetables such as tomatoes (in urban areas) and water are added. The chicken, disjointed, washed and dried, is boiled in this. Powdered ginger, cloves, green pepper without seeds, sweet basil are added,

252 262 the last a few minutes before the wot is ready. Some add capsicum at the same time.

Liver and stomach, especially of sheep and goat, are eaten, but spleen and milt are considered hard to digest and are given to dogs. In general, interior organs are not prestigeful.

Raw beef, "brundo", is still featured at special feasts such as weddings, religious feasts like "täzkär", [164] as it was featured at feasts of warriors in the past. This brings much tapeworm infection, but the risk is taken because it is believed that "brundo" makes strong like no [755] other food. The painful purgative cure is undergone every two months with "kosso", still a major institution among the Amhara.

To cool the palate linings and tongue from the bärbärē, curdled milk, "ergo", is consumed right afterwards. [515] Hands are carefully washed, for touching the eyes with fingers stained from the spiced stew makes them smart.

Fish, much eaten only in the rainy season, is also boiled in wot, often after slight prefrying in talba (linseed oil); lentils (mesr) are often added.

Lentils become very important in the long lenten sea- [784] son and on every Wednesday and Friday, when the average Amhara still abstains from meat, milk, eggs and other animal products, for religious (Coptic fast) reasons. The staple food during these periods is a porridge called "shero": mashed peas seasoned with spices, onion and vegetable oil.

Another vegetarian staple is "nefro", consisting of peas, chick peas, sorghum, all boiled and eaten as ker-

252 262 nels, or crushed and baked into a cake with nug or linseed oil. The porridge of non-fast times is called "genfo". It is made of crushed wheat, barley, butter and curdled milk. In fast times nug and linseed are substituted for the forbidden butter and milk. A fast drink consists of [272] tyeff flour boiled in salt water, called "hug".

Other religious food taboos include the pig, which is never raised, except for European's use. This taboo dates back to Judaism and the Old Testament.

Every householder usually has a supply of roasted kernels "qolo" available in case unexpected guests or kin come to visit, a frequent occurrence. The pattern of "qolo" is very similar to that of a linguistically equivalent concept in Yemen. The Amhara makes it mostly of barley, "gebs qolo", but also of shembera and of maize.

[263] Condiments taken along on trips include an oily paste made of nug or linseed. When this is also spiced, salted, or mixed with honey, it is called "chelqa". It [272] resembles a gummy porridge. The traveller can mix it with water and instantly have a drink which is regarded not only as thirst-quenching, but also as strength-giving. However, no one claims that the taste is good.

264 There are two major meals per day: midday lunch, a light meal, though it may feature both "enjara" and "wot"; and the heavier supper, "erat", the main meal consumed in the cool of the early evening around the hearth of the hut, with bread, meat stew, barley beer and condiments. Breakfast as such is not eaten, except for a handful of roasted barley, and, if the household can afford it, black coffee.

792 council of elder monks

If a nunnery is attached to the monastery (e.g by common ownership of land), they are separated by riverbeds, steep hill, etc., and have their own pasturage meadows, and their own chapels.

262 792 465 The staple foods are beans and peas, consumed in large quantities, usually boiled as "nefro" (the staple hot dish of fasting periods), and a specially thick, nutritious bread, "deboye". The latter is at least 1-½ feet in diameter, at least half an inch thick. It is cut into quarters, and each monk receives a specified number of quarters according to his monastic rank. Thus, older, high-level monks who need less food have much surplus with which to engage the services of church students, or even trade with peasants for occasional chickens, honey, spices, etc. The range is from a mere one-quarter for the lowliest monk to 12 quarters for the head of the monastery, plus proportional distribution of "nefro".

Barley-beer is also similarly rationed out, on permitted occasions. Cotton cloth (abujedid) and shamma or natala togas are distributed once a year, preferably in time for the masqal holyday.

792 The chanting of prayers and poetry permeates the atmosphere, from 3 A.M. when the monk supervisor of the day enters the kitchen, humming the pre-dawn chants, to long after nightfall when students still practice for exams.

796 After dawn, the priests are again ready, awaiting only the arrival of the bishop, the governor and other officials, before resuming the services which this time include the re-baptism of the populace. Lighted candles are set afloat on the pond, and the bishop, after reciting blessings over the water and the future light and heavy rains, dips the cross in the water and sprinkles it over the governor and other "great men"; then lesser priests take over until every man is sprinkled. Very pious and rustic peasants jump into the water, younger boys strip and swim in the pond usually filled for this occasion. Amidst further chants and dancing, the procession slowly winds its way back, stopping at crossroads to take leave of the various "tabot" returning to their own churches. Only the "tabot" of "Mikael" remains at the water, for the following day belongs to that archangel.

The same ceremony as in villages, is followed in the capital. In national sports, the "gänna" season (hockey) ends that day, and the "guks" season of horsemanship and lance-throwing in mock pursuit, begins. The latter name is therefore closely connected with Temqät.

[262] Among the many minor feasts and fasts that follow, another Old Testament survival stands out. It stands out as a 3-day fast--no animal products, and no food before noon), from the 8th to the 10th of Yäkatit, called "tsomä Nänäwe", reminiscent of the Fast of Nineveh mentioned in the Bible. It is observed only by church students and clergy, but is more widely known than "gezrat".

796 262 As soon as this is over, a period of intensive meat-eating begins, similar to European carne-vale (carnival), for the same reason: the long lenten period is approaching, and in Abyssinia this means also abstention from eggs, cheese, milk, and other animal products (some even avoid fish), just as on any Wednesday and Friday; and no food before noon, for the strictly observant. The fast is obeyed by nearly everyone, in all classes. This fast begins on the 22nd day of Yäkatit, and is called "kudade" (lit. suffering) to indicate both the suffering of Jesus and of the faster. It is also referred to as "arba tom"(lit. 40-fast) though in fact the fast lasts 55 days. Women prepare a variety of vegetable and grain dishes, to substitute for the absence of more solid food.

796 [71] Finally, on the 17th day of the month of Miyazya, the long-awaited Easter, "Fassika" (related to the Hebrew Passover, "Passah" etymologically), occurs.

It is the climax of a week of preparations during which the lenten "hudadey" sharpens. This week is called "hemamat" (passion, extreme suffering), and no work is done, symbolizing the sympathy withthe weakness and suffering of Jesus. Even the Saturday market is cancelled--the only time this happens.

[443] Purchasers of meat and supplies for Easter must do their shopping on Thursday, when a special big market is held. The price of sheep, etc., goes up sharply, even doubles, in anticipation of the feast. Even tyeff and pepper (bärbärē) become more expensive. Ethnic craftsmen take this opportunity to bring their products,

796 selling plowpoints for the plowing that will soon begin when the light rains have softened the ground.

[262] On this Thursday, the pious begin a 3-day fast, taking only dry peas and water after the noon hour. Good Friday, called "seqlät", is on the 15th of Miyazya. Chil-
796 857 dren, too young to fast, are given special privileges of impertinence that day. (For are not all rules suspended now that the Savior himself is dying?). From sunrise on, boys and girls knock at doors of huts and houses, chanting:

[539] "Musha-musho, (nonsense rhyme, meaning lamentation, funeral chant)
we come for your crucifixion (Oh Christ);
Fill (our hands) with flour (ye women),
we are many as fleas".
Musho-musha,
May He (God) give ye fat cattle,
children in your womb;
give us gifts!"

They are given freshly-baked bread being prepared for the Easter feast, but they keep on demanding, making the most of this rare freedom, insulting and mocking the stingy hosts. They may carry an effigy corpse of the latter, as if to his funeral, weeping and lamenting his "lekso" (funeral eulogy). Some boys dress as priests, the girls imitating hysterical women relatives, until they bury him with full ceremonials on the market place, to the great amusement of the adult audience.

776 Adults on this Friday rise early for morning wor-

796 ship, perform the "segdat" (prostration) many times. This signifies the climax of lenten suffering. Toward evening, when Christ is presumed to have died on the cross, the pious are of good cheer, for He has descended to purgatory, has tied the devil hand and foot, and has liberated all the souls to paradise.

796 At earliest dawn Saturday morning, about 5:30,
793 priests and deacons put on their best garments, including "kapa" (cape) and "lämd", carry their colorful sun umbrellas as if in procession, and pass through the streets with parade cross, bell, incense burners, and armsful of yellow-green palm strips called "qetäma". They stop before every house or hut, ringing the bell. The sleepy owner answering the call is given the reed to wind flat around his forehead, and he will wear it all day. The priest sings out: "Oh, master, Jesus Christ has been found! The devil is chained!". In appreciation of the good news, the head of the house gives the priest some money, and receives a blessing in return. This ceremonial interchange is called "Gebra salam" (serving the greeting).

796 Sometime before midnight, the church services begin, with alternately mournful and hopeful liturgy. When the night is about to end, at cockcrow Sunday morning (about 4 A.M.) the resurrection, ("tensaē") is loudly declared amidst shouting and ringing of bells.
[262] The pious now break fast with crushed linseed ("talba") mixed with honey, and pronounce the blessing of having been permitted to reach this day. All rush out of the

796 smoky, incense-filled church, to reach home and begin the feasting on meat. Sheep are rapidly slaughtered all over the area, fires are lit, pepper stew is boiling everywhere, and the vast jars of barley beer, injära, coffee, and milk and butter are consumed. This feasting, often ruinous to the digestion, continues for some time, for the Wednesday and Friday fasts are abrogated for the next 50 days.

With regained strength, fired by good food and [526] beer, the young men begin games of javelin throwing. Ball games ("qenchebt") continue the entire following week, when the heavy feasting still keeps work to a minimum.

The last outdoor picnic before the rains takes place occurs on the 1st day of the month of "Genbot", when the "Ledäta" (birthday) of the Virgin Mary is celebrated. The leafy outdoor shelter, "dass", is erected for this occasion. Both women and men take part, though [789] in separate groups. At the end of the day, some women "clean house" of evil spirits, to keep them away while shut in during the rainy season. This is done by casting boiled "nefro" porridge into the bush, telling the personified sickness to go after it.

[262] During the next church holydays, fish, particularly the "senro", become staples of the menu of priests and others, since rivers begin to fill with water and fish are more plentiful. There is a church festival "räbbä kahnat" (lit. inventory of the priests), a purely internal affair,

574 visitors screw up their faces as if in great agony, even despair, and
576 utter the long, subdued wail "ayye". Religious expressions on such occasions are "erziabher yatnawo" (May God give you health), or "egzer yemarewo" (May God be merciful to you).

574 d) Hospitality and Dining.
539 Hospitality to kinfolk, members of the secondary group, and other travellers, in that sequence of emphasis, is a major culture focus. Numerous proverbs are often quoted, governing this behavior:

Even a poor man is expected to give what he can, even if he can offer little more than a pleasant face:

"More than his food,
his face pleased me."

Refusal of hospitality for the night is castigated:

"He has let me be eaten by the hyena" (at night).

A stingy host, who could well afford generosity, is mocked:

"He goes about, attended by 90 retainers;
but in his house famine reigns".

A host is advised to make his invitation specific as to the day:

"A dog, called for the right day,
arrives on his own feet".

574 A host is expected to urge the guest to take freely of profferred
262 good and drink. An invitation to "take coffee" is frequently the formula introducing a complete dinner. Staples readily available, unlike dinners that require preparation, include barley beer ("tella"), roasted barley grains ("gebs golo"), roasted peas ("shembera golo"), boiled corn grains ("mashella"), milk, eggs, limp bread ("enjara"), and except among the very poor, coffee beans, which are roasted, crushed and boiled in front of the guest.

Dinner is regarded as a feast ("degges" or "gebber") and should include meat and butter, so that it is impolite to invite anyone on

574 262 Wednesday or Friday when no animal products can be consumed; the months of lent also interrupt the frequency of visiting.

To honor a "great man" ("telleq säw") the host presents him with a live sheep, select, with a heavy tail, then has it slaughtered and cooked in a spicy and peppery sauce ("wot"). In place of barley beer he will offer honeywater ("berz") or even honeymead ("täj"); the bread will be served smeared with spiced butter. A poor man, forced to substitute chicken for sheep, can at least indicate that he honors the guest by giving him the choice morsel - the wing: The proverb says:

[539]

"The chicken wing
joy brings to the face".

264 Etiquette in eating follows these procedures: The hands are washed prior to consuming bread or meat (though often with not very clean, muddy river water poured from a clay pot); and washed again after the meal to remove pepper stains of the "bärbäre wot" from the fingers, lest absentminded rubbing of the eye cause painful stinging. Only the right hand is used in eating, for the left is used in the toilet. The right hand is used to rip off a piece of the limp "enjära", dip it into the meat stew, close the piece of pancake-like bread around some morsel and fish it out for immediate consumption. A knife is used only when eating "brundo" (raw beef), at a special feast, to cut off a piece held between the teeth (now, at city feasts, brundo is served pre-sliced into cubes).

Noisy eating ("gorädämä") is permitted in the old tradition as indicative of he-man behavior, but smacking of lips and ceremonial belching, though not criticized, are not emphasized. It is an old custom of Amhara hosts, still followed in rural areas, to pour a mouthful of a profferred drink into their own cupped hands and consume it, before passing the cup to the honored guest or "great man" ("ejun däqno ätta"- lit. he received (cup) with hands (under chin) and drank). This

x794 Women cower on all fours, snarl at each other, snort like angry
796 leopards, showing their teeth. They crouch like wildcats about to spring
781 at each other, their faces turned to the ground, and eying each other only intermittently. A shallow, large clay dish filled with barley beer is set on the floor for them, and the two antagonists compete with each other in lapping up the drink like cats.

One of the women is possessed by an evil female zar, the other by a mean male zar. The male zar snaps at the female zar, who is of equal power and status. Appearing stimulated by the drink, they chase each other about the room, still cowering, snorting, attacking, retreating, finally grasping each other in a battle clinch, and actually nipping at each other. When this happens, the Lady Salamtu rises quickly, and descends into the arena wielding a thick leather strap. The contestants roll on and off one another and begin to bite seriously, but before damage is done, Lady Salämtu swishes her strap, pulls them apart or separates them with light blows.

This battle is accompanied with drumbeat and rythmic handclapping by the crowd. The contestants do not rejoin battle but roam very rapidly as if blind and lost, sniffing the ground as if they depended on the sense of smell, until they fall exhausted in a heap. But a few moments later they run to Lady Salämtew, kiss her hand, and prostrate themselves before her on the dirt floor in front of the platform. Thus the female and minor zars pay homage to the powerful male zars that possess Lady Salamtew, and acknowledge that they have learned to keep within bounds and not do very severe damage.

x794 It is now 11:30 P.M. and a brief recess is announced. A young,
796 part-Sudanese servant woman, and ex-slave, serves coffee, barley beer,
262

x794 796 262 araqi, and also round, solid wheat discs (Qitta")- the unleavened bread of travelers, expensive when made of wheat.

About midight, the convention proceeds, with the poet intoning x794 781 [782] the call for the female zar "Shazqit (see table for her characteristics):

Poet: "Dance, round and round, brave one;

Shanqit, we are calling; brave one".

Both men and women clap more fiercely than over, in quick rythm Suddenly the servant woman who had served the latest refreshments stiffens with a jerk, screams, and lets the tray slide from her hand. She is about to be possessed by the female zar of her class and occupation. This "gurri" is infantile in character. The young woman begins to skip about the room like a young goat or an overly gay little girl. She teasingly pokes at the men, again and again, until a few copper coins are given her. When this happens, she jumps high with glee. But a moment later she is back, pouting, demanding some sweets, asking for honey. Given some, she devours it, and dances a victory dance, flipping about on tiptoe. The drumbeat quickens. Finally she falls exhausted, her zar now in full possession of her.

x794 796 688 There is another hush, awaiting further demonstrations. But there is an unscheduled interlude which reinforces discipline. The woman who had danced the "pagan" gurri had left shortly afterward, ostensibly for a call of nature, but had not returned until now, far too long an absence without permission. Seeing her enter, Lady Salamtew rises, shouting angrily, walkes toward her and beats her on the upper back with the heavy strap, several times, rather hard. The victim stands with bowed head, not stirring under the punishment, evidently

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 20 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner [516] gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. [145] Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This [302] gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 is painted, it is not certain whether it is stone or wood. It has two sets of cloisters round the body of the church, both 346 covered in, and much painted with figures of apostles, 532 patriarchs, prophets, and many things of the Old Law, and 353 many angels, and St. George on horseback, who is in all the churches. This monastery also possesses a great cloth, like a piece of tapestry, on which is the crucifix and effigy of Our Lady and the apostles, and other figures of patriarchs and prophets, and each one has his Latin name written, so that no man of the country made it. It has many small and ancient pictures, not well made, and they are not upon the altars, for it is not their custom: they keep them in a [212] sacristy, mixed up with many books, and they bring them out on feast days. There is in this monastery a very large kitchen and bakehouse, also a very large refectory, in which 792 they eat. They mostly eat three and three[1] in a large dish, 262 it is not deep, but flat like a tray, and their food is very [264] poor. The bread is of maize and barley, and other grain which they call *taffo*,[2] a small black grain. They make this bread round, and of the size and roundness of a citron,[3] and they give three of these to each friar: to the novices they give three loaves to two of them, it is a matter of amazement how they can maintain themselves. They also give them a few vegetables, without salt or oil. Of this food they send to a great many old pensioners, who do not come to the refectory. Besides seeing these things when we 792 buried Matthens, I saw them many times, because I came there to pass time with the friars, principally on feast days, when we were near there. In this way I learned about them and their property, and revenues and customs. In my opinion there were generally always a hundred friars in this

[1] By threes.

[2] Mansfield Parkins calls it teff, the species of corn most esteemed in this country.

[3] Zamboa, not referred to in Selves' translation.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

000 574 middle upwards hairy like lions. We passed the mountain, and went to sleep at the foot of a village called Zalote. There will be about four or five leagues from this place to the monastery from which we set out. We halted by a running river of very good water, and when our baggage had been unloaded we went to the said village to see a very honourable gentleman, the headman of it—a very old man, who was lodged here very honourably. He gave us a very [242] hospitable reception, giving us many fowls cooked in butter, and much mead, and he sent us a very large fat cow to the place of our halt. On the following day, which was Sunday, we went to say our mass at the church of the village, which is called St. Michael, a poor church, both the fabric and the ornaments. There are in this church three 793 married priests and three others, deacons,[1] that is to say, of 796 the gospel, and all are necessary, for no less can say mass. This honourable captain I met with later as a friar in the monastery of Bisan, and he left his condition and revenues to his sons, who were honourable persons; and I saw him stand at the gate outside, and he did not enter within the monastery, and there he received the communion with the novices, and when the offices of the church were ended he remained in honour with the provincial. On this Sunday we set out again in the afternoon, because the country 133 people who conducted us wished it so. Here we began to travel through flat country fallows and tillage, in the fashion of Portugal, and the bushes which are between the tilled lands are all wild olives, without other trees. We slept by some running streams, between many good villages.

[1] *Zagonaes.* Ethiopian corruption of *diakonos.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XIX.—*How they gave us to eat in the house of the Barnagais, and how in this country the journeys are not reckoned by leagues.* 648

When we were out of the house where the Barnagais was, they made us sit down in the receiving room of another house on mats on the ground, and they brought here a large trencher of barley meal, but little kneaded, and a horn of mead. And, since we had not seen such food, we would not eat it; but when we were more accustomed to the country we ate it readily. Without eating of this, we arose and came to our resting-place and then set out. This might be at two hours before midday. Having gone on our road half a league or more there came to us a man running and telling us to wait; that the mother of the Barnagais was sending us food, and took it as a misfortune our coming away without eating and not accepting the food they gave us, which was that customary in the country. We waited, and the food came to us, that is to say, five large rolls of wheat bread and a horn of mead. Let not anyone be amazed who hears of a horn of wine, because for the great lords and Prester John cows' horns are their cups for wine, and there are horns holding five or six canadas.[1] Besides this, the mother of the Barnagais sent us some of the same kneaded flour, and now we ate some of it. This meal is of parched barley, made into flour, and they mix it up with very little water, and so eat it. After this banquet we made our way to the town of Barua, where our goods and companions had remained. In this country, and in all the kingdoms of Prester John, there are no leagues, and if you ask how far it is from this place to such a place, they say: If you depart in the morning at sunrise, you will arrive when the sun is in such a place; and if you travel slowly you will arrive there when they shut up the cows, that is at

[264] [262] [415] [262] 804

[1] A Portuguese measure equal to about three pints.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

000 of Braga, put to Francisco Alvaréz, chaplain of the king our sovereign, respecting some particulars of the country of Prester John, beyond those which the said Francisco Alvarez has written in his book; the said Francisco Alvarez having gone to the said Prester in the company of Don Rodrigo de Lima, who went as ambassador to the said Prester, on account of the death of Duarte Galvam, who was sent there by the King Don Manuel, may he be in holy glory; which persons reached the port of Masua, an island in the Red Sea, close to the town of Arquico, country of the Prester, on the 27th day of April 1520, and they passed six[1] years in the said country and lordships of the Prester, and they returned to embark at the said port of Masua, close to Arquico, in the year 1526 on the 28th day of April; and the said Francisco Alvarez came to this city of Braga to be confirmed in the benefice which the King our sovereign gave him. He remained in it some days, and the said Francisco Alvarez reached this city of Braga on the 30th July, of the year 1529.

264 262 784 He[1] said that usually the people do not eat only once a day, and this at night, and that the monks and clergy fast strictly during Lent, so that many only eat three times in the week, namely, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, that they do not drink wine of grapes nor of honey, and that they drink other beverages which are made of other vegetables.

In Lent they eat neither meat not milk, nor eggs nor butter, even though they are near dying, they eat vegetables and some few fruits which are in the country. All the men and women, great and small, fast all the Wednesdays and Fridays in the year; this is not to be understood from Christmas to the Purification of Our Lady, nor from Easter to Trinity, when there is no fast. Friars, priests, gentlemen and noblemen, fast all the week excepting Saturday and Sunday.

[1] Should be seven years.

[1] [the author, i.e., Alvarez]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that 681
they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester 793
John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means em- 643
peror, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some 752
sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, 757
they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thou- 621
sand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and 361
there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and 342
all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and courtyards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others 352
on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without 415
napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black 264
earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others 262
eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, 252
and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is 373
much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which 314
they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 000

[1] *Akegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

136 is no fish there except very little from the rivers; There from the sea none.

795 There are no monasteries except of St. Anthony, and
792 not of any other order, as some friars say who come from there.

291 The gentlemen, monks, canons, and priests are clothed; most of the other people are bare from the waist upwards, and a sheepskin on the shoulders, with the front and hind feet tied together.

792 Most of the monasteries are situated on high mountains,
346 or in great ravines; they have large revenues and juris-
[262] diction. In many monasteries they do not eat meat all the year, and fish very few times, as they have not go it in the country. The services of these monasteries are psalms and prose, and so it is done in the churches of the canons.

796 Every church has two curtains, one on this side of the altar with little bells, and no one but priests enter inside this curtain; and another curtain in the middle of the church. And no one but persons in orders enter the church, and many gentlemen and honourable persons are ordained in order to enter the church. They go to the door of all the churches and monasteries to read the epistles and gospels, and they say them rapidly, and there they give the communion to the people.

The priests consecrate at the altar, and do not show the sacrament. When the priest who says mass comes to take the communion, he takes a particle from the top, and the other two large parts he leaves for the communion of the people. All the people who come to the church have to receive the communion every day, or else not come to church. When the communion is ended, they give them a little blessed water with which they wash their mouths.

Nobody sits down in the church, nor do they enter it shod; they do not hem or spit, nor do they let any dog or other animal come into the church. They confess standing,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

ning of a reign; which she could not do, until one of the nobles supplied her with a sum of money. There were only a few derims left in the treasury. 792

Abyssinian Harvests. They first sow barley from the end of April to the beginning of May, or later; that is, towards the first rains. This ripens in the rains in June; and is carried off the fields into the house, that it may not rot. Then they sow fitches, which likewise ripen in the rains after. In September they sow wheat, or teff, which is cut down in December; and, if they have water, they sow barley, or fitches, again in January. In Woggora (a very fertile province), there is seed-time, and harvest, and plowing, in every month in the year; water being easily diverted to the grounds. The rent paid to the king for the ground is one-tenth of what they reap, yet, with all this, they are all poor; for a harvest, at a medium, is about twenty after one; and they sometimes, nay, very often, scarce reap the seed. They never manure the ground; and there are great quantities of rats, and innumerable ants, that consume their corn at different, nay, at all periods of its growth. All their five harvests do not, in produce, equal one Egyptian one; and they are at five times the labour. In the several villages, living, in general, is very miserable; and, in general, people of consideration scarcely know any other diet than teff bread and bouza. Whether this teff is black, or white, is the whole difference between the diet of master and servant. 241 [511] [262]

Abyssinian Dress. The principal part of the dress of the natives is a large cotton cloth, 24 peek (cubits) in length, and one and a half in breadth, with a blue and yellow stripe round the bottom of it. This blue is not dyed; but the Surat blue cloths are unravelled and woven for this purpose; and the yellow they dye with sûf, the yellow thistle. The best for ordinary wear costs 10 salts, or 1¼ pataka, about 6s. 6d. English. It is called Kuara, as probably coming from that province. They are very beautiful and light. The other pieces of dress are breeches, which reach to their mid-thighs; and girt with a white girdle of cloth to the common people; but the better sort have red Indian cotton cloths for breeches; and silk, or worsted coloured girdles from the Levant. When they ride, they only hold their stirrups between their great and 291 [435] 492

[p. 45]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

423 'foreigners', and even though, within the group ownership, there was
461 individual and family ownership of the land.

The allocation of and the succession to the land was governed by ancient custom. This custom varied greatly because, as d'Abbadie said, 'In Ethiopia one of the despairs of the traveller, who thinks he knows the country, is to discover, sometimes by chance, that such and such a community, comprising a family, a part of a village, or district is of a different origin from the population which surrounds it.' In internal land and family matters, it would keep its own private law.[1] In some communities there were meetings at fixed intervals of three to seven years according to the region and at which the reallocation between families of the different types of land, which was in several categories according to its fertility, was arranged. Apart from these adjustments by agreement, land went from father to son. Land transactions were announced by the public crier and registered, generally by [217] entry in a Bible or other book, in the 'parish' church. The penal code [687] of 1930 decreed up to three years' imprisonment for failure to register transactions in hereditary land,[2] but this decree may not have been fully effective in the provinces by 1935. Transactions were always carried out before witnesses. These sometimes included young children who might [262] be given a feast of the delicacy of fried grain in order to fix the event in their memories.

Landmatters, indeed, were settled within such land-holding groups with little intervention from higher authority so long as all its members gave what was due to the government or to the representative of the government. Their relations with this representative would be through their family and the heads of their family group and it is obvious that a community with this degree of autonomy in the vital matters of land and tribute, in addition to the minor legislative and judicial powers already described,[3] might be regarded as largely self-governing in local matters. Such *restenya*, or hereditary land-holders, were further fortified in their position by the recognition of private property in the *Fetha Nagast*. In Menelik's later days, his council confirmed this position by a decree in which it was promised that except in cases of rebellion and treason even criminals should not be dispossessed from such tenure.[4] This provision was repeated in clause 9 of the penal code of 1930. It is probable that it was unbroken settlement by an Amhara tribal community which alone could offer effective resistance to royal and other pressure.

423 The Emperor would, however, seize every opportunity of breaking

[1] d'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 90. [2] Clause 458. [3] See above, p. 142.
[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

The Abyssinian calendar for *their* current year (leap year for them) accordingly compares with ours as shewn on the previous page; and in the last month given, the calendar resumes its normal correspondence with ours as, owing to the occurrence of our leap year, February has an extra day in 1936. 805

Apart from their language, there are many customs and practices amongst the Abyssinians which differentiate them sharply from most of the other peoples of Africa, and not the least interesting of these are clearly traceable to their ancient connection with Israel, of which they speak with pride in their old records. 171

For example, much of their religious pageantry, which is described in detail elsewhere, is undoubtedly a remarkable survival of rites which must have been introduced by the earliest Jewish arrivals, such as the Dance of the Priests, their ceremonies connected with the Tabot, and many others. Similarly, their method of slaughtering cattle for food, the division of animals into clean and unclean, etc., are all indications pointing in the same direction.

Their dislike of Jews to-day is accordingly the more remarkable, and must be due to the sanguinary wars which took place from the fourth to the tenth centuries between the newly-converted Christians and those who remained Jews. 609

Among other customs which are peculiar and interesting, pride of place must surely be given to their fondness for raw meat or *broundo*. This form of diet is preferred to any other by the mass of the population, and indeed by practically all sections thereof, beef being liked better than mutton. 262

When we were on trek our men could be given no

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

262 greater treat than an ox, and within an hour of the purchase of the animal it was killed, skinned, cut into joints and divided amongst the tents, and our followers were busy gorging themselves on the still warm flesh. [257] What the twenty men could not eat in the day was 136 never cooked, but was cut into long thin strips and hung on ropes to dry in the sun and wind for the morrow's meal—a tempting bait for the vultures, hawks, and carrion crows that used to collect in their hundreds and make frantic dives for the tempting morsels, occasionally picking up a piece from the line in their claws to the intense disgust of the men. It was fascinating to watch the daring swoops and dips of the circling birds, and so reckless did they become that one day whilst we were at lunch a hawk, baulked of his craving for raw meat by the watchfulness of its guardians, actually swooped down on our luncheon table and snatched from the plate on my wife's knees the wing of a duck that she was about to operate on, brushing her face and knocking her knife out of her hand with his powerful wings; and at the same moment another bird lifted a cutlet from a dish which our "boy" was carrying from the cook's tent to our table. The "boy's" expression of indignation and helplessness was most comical to watch.

262 But to revert to the practice of eating raw meat. Early travellers to Abyssinia have not only commented on this, but have gone even further, and have stated that meat is cut and eaten *from the living animal.* Bruce describes two separate and distinct instances of this practice, which he stated occurred frequently. The first was that of three soldiers whom he saw driving along a cow, and on arriving at a halting-place they tied it,

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

threw it down, cut steaks from it which they devoured 262
rapidly, and then drove the cow on again, plastering up the wound with mud. The second (which is given with a wealth of detail too revolting to repeat) was at a regular banquet at which a live cow was brought in and strips cut from it by all the guests until the animal died, which took some time.

Salt states that Pearce actually saw an example of the first instance quoted above, which he says is by no means uncommon, but he disbelieves the second instance. No other writer that I am acquainted with recounts any such instance *of his own knowledge*, and the suggestion that such a practice ever existed is hotly denied in the country. Nor could I find any evidence of the existence of such a habit either as to the present or the past. Personally I am inclined to disbelieve the stories or to regard them as gross exaggerations, or possibly as isolated instances.

Be that as it may, the raw meat dietary, however, 262
is undoubtedly very popular to-day, and it may be of 574
interest if I give an extract from my diary describing a great *Gebur*, or banquet given at the Feast of Maskal, which we attended, and at which no fewer than 15,000 soldiers and 2000 or 3000 palace retainers were fed in four relays in the great hall. This is the more interesting in that for some years past Europeans have not been admitted to the *Gebur*, and although one was held on our last visit we were not present.

The *Gebur*

"We were received by the Court Chamberlain on 574
the large stone terrace outside the *aderatch*, and after a 264

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

784 Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by
795 one of themselves, nor will Moslems eat any which has been killed by a Christian. We had one Moslem with us when we were on trek, and as he would not eat the ox which my other men had killed he bought a whole sheep for himself, and killed and ate it himself; none of the other men would touch an atom of it, even when their own supply ran out and they had no meat at all.

262 Of course the comparatively high price of meat (for
252 an Abyssinian) prevents the too frequent consumption of *broundo* amongst the people, and their tastes in everyday food are simple. Bread is their mainstay. This is found in many varieties; some of it soft, slightly sour in taste, and pale brown in colour; the most popular is of flour made from *teff* or millet seed, mixed to a thick paste with water and then poured into a large rough slightly concave iron receptacle and cooked over an open fire, without grease or fat of any kind. When finished this bread takes the form and aspect of large pancakes, twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, and is very good, especially when eaten with jam or butter; we always ate it ourselves when on trek. The native eats with it a kind of mash of lentils or dried peas, ground and cooked, and mixed with butter and a very hot red sauce which is produced from the chilli; this latter is very widely cultivated in several varieties all over the country.

263 The amount of pepper that is put into their cooked dishes is as a rule disastrous to the European palate at the first time of trying, and how they can swallow the fiery compounds that they do passes my comprehension —their tongues and palates must be made of leather.

264 All food, including meat, is eaten with the fingers amongst all classes, a piece of bread being broken off,

164 Aubert-Roche (1845-46) also describes smallpox as an important disease and Courbon (1861) states that few Abyssinians are seen without smallpox scars.

The Italians undertook large scale vaccination and smallpox began to disappear. In 1937, 200,000 vaccinations were given in and around Addis Ababa as a small epidemic had occurred among the people living near the aerodrome. (In 1944, I saw a small outbreak at Sire, near Lekemti.)

Smallpox vaccine is being prepared in Addis Ababa, but until an adequate health service can be established this disease will continue to be a menace both to the Ethiopians and their surroundings.

Helminthic Diseases

The classical disease of Ethiopia is infection by the tapeworm *Taenia saginata*. All the old travelers have detailed descriptions of the eating of raw meat (*brindo*) and the ensuing tape-worm infection. Courbon's (1861) statement is a typical example:

> "Men and women, all and sundry, in this country, have the entozoon; and they take some *kouzzo* regularly every two months to prevent the more serious derangements, which it might cause."

Detailed descriptions of the special Ethiopian anti-helminthic, the so-called *kousso*, have been given in every book on Ethiopia, up to the latest. The professional medical writers have shown the same picture of the omnipresent tapeworm. I had long been skeptical about the frequency of tapeworm. Very little meat, raw or pre- [262] pared, is eaten by the average Ethiopian, for the simple reason that he cannot afford it. The older travelers were describing special festivals in connection with arrival at distant places. At such occasions meat would be eaten. In a survey of three Ethiopian villages the U. S. Technical Project found tapeworm to be a comparatively rare disease, *Ascaris lumbricoides* being by far the most common helminthic parasite. Conditions are in most places favorable for the embryonation of the ova. The soil is heav-

[p. 719B]

11:Levin Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
tĕff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181]
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *ṭēff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

*665 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] [782] [513] [352] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 776 many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and *565 776 753 [828] mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. [845] When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

*565 776 Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, [562] offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[8]

*565 754 780 Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

*565 754 The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork [262] are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving [789] as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been [323] kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such [326] artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is [554] important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

*565 461 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 461 181 577 183 [423] If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obligations toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 78 181 183 [262] [301] Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 577 181 183 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in

*565 577 673 181 183 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shameful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect toward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby

[626] stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

*565 57 181 183 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 602 57 181 183 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *ĭnjarā*. Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make good *doro wat*, a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought
885 into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have re-
[851] sulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or
[586] else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a com-
[587] plete adult, a *mulu sēt* or *mulu saw*.

From Generation to Generation

867 Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

[577] The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profes-
[779] sion of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

867 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central
779 symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern
785 a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout matura-
262 tion. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early
577 age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

867 At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction
779 of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or
793 confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may
577 either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her
[785] husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing
[688] penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the water in places where the Anopheles breed."[25]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

Taste.—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from extreme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions.

Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are preferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[26] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Amharic proverb, and even the Emperor when visiting a school expects students to remain seated if they are at the dining table when he arrives. 155 261 [264]

Some indication of the comparative significance of this concern about eating and drinking in the Amhara psyche is afforded by a recent cross-cultural investigation of dreams. Obtained from samples of young male respondents in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the United States, the dreams were evaluated with respect to the presence or absence of themes of "manifest orality": scenes of someone desiring, looking for, or consuming food or drink. The proportion of Ethiopian respondents (mostly Orthodox Amhara from the Gondar area) who revealed manifest orality in their dreams was found to be *64 per cent*. By contrast, the proportion of those in a sample of non-Muslim Nigerians whose dreams showed manifest orality was 38 per cent, and that in the sample of Americans was only 22 per cent.[11]

The Amhara custom of giving *gurshā* plays up the erotic component of eating. *Gurshā* means "mouthful" and, as already noted, refers to a wad of food which one places in another's mouth, usually as a gesture of affection. *Gurshā* are exchanged between husband and wife and among relatives and friends. They are often given to children, especially in families of higher status, and to favored servants and retainers as well. The *gurshā* is of such meaning in Amhara experience that it is referred to in a number of Amharic idioms. First of all it means a present or a tip—literally, *pourmanger*. It also refers to the charge of a gun: the gun is a beloved object, and a *gurshā* is what one places in its mouth. In contemporary usage, it refers to flashlight batteries. 155 261 264 [196]

In connection with love and many other subjects, a good deal of the imagery of Amharic verse relates in one way or another to eating and drinking. The following sample of proverbs and couplets may convey some of the flavor of this phenomenon: 261 271 155 539

*Ṭajj** has no specks; a poor man has no friends.

• • •

[Use] proverbs in conversation; [drink] *ṭajj* in a carafe.

• • •

Hand and fly-whisk; mouth and *ĩnjarā*† [go together].

• • •

No matter how much one plows, nothing tastes so good as *goman*.‡

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* *Ṭajj*, it may be remembered, is the Ethiopian wine made of honey. [273]

† *Ĩnjarā* is the staple pancake. [262]

‡ *Goman* is a kind of cabbage plant that requires no plow cultivation. [244]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 gratifications are not enjoyed wholly without conflict. In actuality, traits which reflect anxiety about the prospect of oral gratification are no less conspicuous in Amhara culture than the phenomena we have just been discussing.

155 Negative attitudes regarding oral gratification appear, first of all, in the
262 scope and variety of the restrictions placed on eating. From both their Judaic and their Christian traditions the Abyssinians have taken over nearly every restriction on eating available. The chief exception to this is the Judaic injunction against eating blood, which Abyssinian custom permits. But they have retained intact the Semitic ban on unclean animals—those which lack a split hoof, upper teeth, or do not chew the cud. Their dread of pork is so strong that to some extent they feel closer to Muslims, who also avoid pork, than to Western Christians.

155 They have likewise retained and elaborated on the norms concerning fast-
785 ing found in early Christianity. With respect to the number and harshness of the fasts it prescribes, Amhara-Tigre custom is probably the strictest in the world. In the rigor of its fasting laws the Ethiopian Church surpasses its sister religions of Eastern Orthodoxy—the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, and Indian Orthodox Churches. On fasting days no food or drink is to be tasted before early afternoon. Thereafter, no sort of meat, fowl, milk, or eggs may be eaten, which reduces the Amhara's post meridiem diet on fasting days to grains and pulse.

Such fasting days occur on every Wednesday and Friday of the year, except those which come during the eight weeks after Easter. There are, in addition, many special fasts in the course of the year. Some of these, like the month-long fast before Pentecost and the two months prior to Christmas, are observed only by clergy and elders. Others must be observed by everyone, though children are led into them gradually. These universal fasts include the eight weeks before Easter, plus a three-day fast during the week before Lent; two days before Christmas; and sixteen days preceding the festival of the Assumption of Mary in August. Total abstinence is prescribed for a period of forty-eight hours before Easter. All together, the ordinary Amhara is supposed to fast 165 days each year; for the devout person the total approaches 250 days.

155 The taboo on the use of tobacco presents another area in which oral grati-
276 fication is suppressed. Two myths are told to explain this taboo. One is that
773 the tobacco plant originally grew out of the intestines of the heretic Arius.
784 The other is that on the day of the Crucifixion all plants except tobacco withered and died. In any case, smoking is regarded as a grave sin among traditional Amhara, and one who has been suspected of using tobacco is not permitted to kiss the Cross.

121 One could argue that these taboos and fasting customs are simply cultural
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [262]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [754]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away [609]
from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well- [776]
known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

*759 without the assistance of another practitioner is him-
752 self identifiable as a kusil herbalist (yikusil medhaniyt awakiy), a non-wogeyša professional identity.

752 While the splint is worn, the sickman is directed
• 262 to eat quantities of a restorative (atmit); for frac-
*[192] ture, this consists of fatty meats, which are believed conducive to the mending of bones. After the splint has been removed, the affected region is regularly massaged with the unguent compound which had been used during diagnosis and therapy. The massage aims to restore normal flexibility to the affected body part. Some therapists continue the atmit regimen during this period and even beyond it.

*759 Alone among Ambara secular practitioners, the
752 tagañ practices a therapy which immobilizes the sickman for an extended period. During recuperation, therapeutic massages must continue, and the instability of the sickman's jimat preclude his moving about. When a tagañ is famous for difficult therapies, such as breaking and resetting improperly set bones or treating paralyzed limbs, he attracts sickmen from great dis-
[758] tances. Since these sickmen cannot leave the tagañ until pronounced cured, they require access to local accomodations and the assistance of a relative or servant to prepare their meals and tend to other personal

*278 call for specific parts of named botanicals---either root, leaf, stem, shoot, fruit, flower, seed, whole, *[192] rind or juice. Botanical parasites (takiltila), identified in recipes by the plant upon which they grow, are also frequent ingredients. 2) Typically, recipes combine these herbal ingredients with foods. Virtually every generic foodstuff is represented in some recipe---water, dairy products, eggs, alcoholic beverages, honey, citrus juice, cereal grains, spices, oil seeds, and meat. Often, recipes set special requirements for these ingredients. For example, animal products (flesh, organs, milk, butter, whey) may be required from animals and fowls whose sex (male, female, castrated) and coloring are designated in the recipe (a desired color, combination of colors, or color scheme shared by mother and offspring). Similarly, recipes sometimes prescribe beer or bread which are made of grains not locally grown (wheat, barley, red tef, white tef, millet). 3) Lastly, some recipes require the sick-man to consume ingredients which the Amhara regards as *278 bizarre or repulsive. Included here are exotic substances • 262 such as battery carbon, gasoline, and rust; ingredients which are ordinarily forbidden to Christians,[4] such as

[4]Ethiopians, Copts, Muslims, Jews as well as Agaw pagans adhere to the injunctions of Leviticus regarding proscribed foods.

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• 262 pork, bat flesh, meat of wild birds, insects; and repulsive stuffs, such as cow or goat urine and donkey milk.

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222 Gathering, Processing, and Administering. The gathering of herbals for medicinal recipes assumes, first, accurate knowledge of their appearance and location. Many medicinals are exotics whose appearance and even whose names are unknown by most men; many of these must be searched out in distant and barely accessible corners of the highland plateau, others can be found only in the malarial lowlands. From the time an herbal is located until it is processed together with the remaining materia medica, it must be handled in a prescribed fashion. During gathering, while the herbal is being cut or pried from its natural surroundings, there is the danger that its latent curing powers will be lost. For leafy botanicals, particularly takiltila, precautions must be taken against diffusing these powers into the earth through some object simultaneously in contact with the botanical and the ground. Here, a weighted noose may be used. Many prescribed techniques of gathering are only loosely identified as precautionary, since the specific dangers each guards against are unknown. These techniques specify the equipment to be used, the quality of the gatherer, and circumstantial conditions. Thus, if a recipe requires that a branch be severed with a knife, it often adds that the instrument be unused, or made of a single piece of

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751 the sunlight.[6] After the disease symptoms have disap-
758 peared, and the convalescent has regained his former vitality, some precautions may still be followed to prevent the return of the original syndrome, to which he
[262] may have developed a vulnerability. For example, the former sickman may be forbidden to eat one or more of the foodstuffs which were included among the materia
[278] medica of his cure. Often, an amulet containing dried materia medica of the primary medicine is also worn.

*278 Pharmacological Combinations. In the abstract, Amhara pharmacology can be considered as a corpus of discrete and varied instructions for a) conserving the latent healing power of botanicals, and b) converting this power into therapeutically effective agents. Seen from this perspective, Amhara pharmacolog y has the potential for a large number of logically possible combinations of instructions, ranging from those with few directions of any kind, to combinations with elaborate instructions in each pharmacological category. Although, empirically, Amhara herbal therapies probably fall short of the potential number of combinations, the combinations charac-

[757] [834] [6]Primary syphilis, in particular, sets elaborate requirements---the removal of all hair from the body, head, and face; in addition, there is a period of abstinence from coitus.

869 criteria. His personal interest means to the student
876 rapid advancement through the curriculum, dining at the master's table, and enjoying privileged information of a non-ecclesiastical nature. Without his patronship, a student is committed to years of uncertainty and physical misery, scraping to meet his subsistence needs, paying his "tuition" in demeaning services, such as gathering the master's wood and tilling his garden, and in deferential performances, particularly washing the master's feet and those of his visitors.

*793 The kiyne student is further troubled by the many
869 ailments which are his lot. He lives, with one or two
[342] of his mates, in a wretched lean-to of twigs and wild grasses, which proves to be poor protection against the
[291] cold winter rains. Often he owns only the toga on his
[515] back, and it, like him, remains unwashed for the dura-
[164] tion of the long dry season. Thus, ikek (scrofula) becomes his badge, and kurtimat (joint pains) and weba
• [262] (fever) his recurrent companions. The student's diet
*[192] is his special concern, since it conspicuously lacks the combination of wholesome wot (stew) and injera (pancake-
[735] like bread) necessary to sustain good health. He ob-
[164] tains most of his food by begging in the town and local hamlets, where he generally receives scraps of stale injera bread, always inadequate and potentially pathogenic (i.e., likift bearing, threatening fever and

*793 869 severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably
• [262] the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based in-
[164] gredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat.
[735] His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals,
* (192) and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain
(kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent
[164] wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints
* (192) (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint
(night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the
context of the student's nocturnal activities.

[231] There is also danger from animals, the vicious and
[735] often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs;
[776] from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting
[514] to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege
with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to
waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for noc-
turnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the excep-
tion of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's
patronage, or who receive parental support, the young
scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study
for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their
[221] subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains
[222] have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure,
* (192) kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the
wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for

824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[251] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

[263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshäm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

243 patient oxen. If the farmer has no ex-slave retainers, his wife may help in the harvest. Even young boys help, particularly in protecting crops. The direction of the breeze [461] is carefully observed before winnowing. Work proceeds from sunrise to sundown (from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.), with a rest from noon to 3 P.M., the hottest time of the day. At that time the women bring barley beer, enjara bread, and a spe- [263] cial condiment prepared from crushed "nug" oilseeds called "anäbabär".

Threshing by sticks instead of oxen is done in harvest of the "nug" and this may require some additional helpers.

241 Oil plants are cultivated and of considerable impor- 262 tance in the diet. They are considered field crops rather than garden crops:

"nug" (Guizotia abyssinica), the black Niger Seed, which is the most used vegetable oil of the Amhara. Travellers take it along, mixed with spices, as a staple. It is used in many items of diet. After crushing, the oil cakes are used for fuel (not fodder).

Flax seed (Linum usitatissimum), called "talba", the second most common oilseed, of light brown color, consumed in similar ways and in drinks. It is not raised for the fiber, which is considered fodder or fuel.

Castor bean (Ricinus communis), called "gulgwas" or "qachma". This is not a field crop as much as nug and talba, and not as much of a staple. Tan- [281] ners use it for lubrication of skins. The emperor has urged increased production, but there

244 in northern Abyssinia.

[263] bärbärē is the generic name for the red spicy pepper, a major ingredient of wot, and the most important item in the kitchen garden. The strongest kind is called "mitmitta" or "sätita" and because it is grown in Begemdir it is often called "Gondar bärbärey". The smaller the pod, the stronger the pepper.

Gesho, the leaf used as fermenting agent in beer and mead, grows on a bush which is a garden crop.

Ades, another leafy garden crop is grown in a wind-

[302] protected area, fenced in; used to purify butter in boiling, especially for use in women's hairdo, for they believe the odor of it is irresistible to men.

Gwaya, a major forage crop of the legume family, is grown as scarcity fodder but contact with it is believed dangerous to humans.

245 Lemons, very small, are grown in a scattered fashion, the only fruit so raised.

Viticulture is a riddle. Grape growing is not in evidence any more among Amhara peasants, but there are local traditions that up to a century ago grapes were grown, e.g. in the worädä (district) of "yäkämkäm qaroda", east of Lake Tana. The name "woyna dega" is derived from the wine-growing, intermediate level of topography. It may have been imported by the Portuguese, or may have been much older. Nowadays

252 are raised in the housewife's kitchen garden. Every hus-
262 band of pride claims to be able to distinguish the wot of his wife. Among spices used are:

263 [278] Ethiopian spices, raised by Amhara:

"Tena Adam" (lit. health of Adam), very aromatic. Important medicine against buda spirit (evil eye). This is Rue (Ruta graveolens, Ruta hortensis).

Fenugreek (Trigonella Foenumgroccum), called "Abush"

Coriander (Coriandrum sativum), "dembelal". Cheaper than "bärbärē and used to replace it.

Sweet Basil (Ocinum Basilicum), called "bäsobela" or "zäqa qebye"

Bärbärē, the all-important red peppery major garden crop.

Ginger, called "zendjebel". It is used unscraped.

[273] Caraway seed (Carum carvi) called "enselal", also used to make "araqi" intoxicant drink.

"Abusda", a dark seed resembling nug. Also called "tequr azmud".

Mustard seed, called "shenfa", ground to condiment.

Thyme, called "azmud", in light and dark varieties. Wild Thyme, "tosen".

Garlic, called "näch shenkurt" (lit. white onion).

Spices used by Amhara, but bought on market, including those of Yemen importation:

Cardamon, called "korärima". (Elettaria paradise).

Saffron (Crocus sativus), called "erd", used to add golden orange color to reddish "wot".

Cumin (Cuminium cynisum), called "kamun".

263 "afär kochär" resembling nutmeg.

Capsicum (Cayenne pepper), possibly introduced by the Portuguese. Called "qundo bärbäre".

252 262 263 A number of these spices are pre-mixed, some added later to the woṭ. A mixture of bärbäre powder, a salt called "duddus", and garlic, called "awazē", is kept as a staple and also carried by travellers. Vegetables such as cabbage ("gomänzär") and pumpkin slices ("dubba)" are boiled in the "wäṭ". Sesame seed ("sälit", Sesamum indicum) add purplish spots of oil content to the woṭ. Aroma is added by "senbul" (Spica celtica), expensive and therefore rare.

The most common woṭ is "qay wät". Chick-peas are pre-fried with red onion. Water, mashed red pepper ("delleh") and butter are added, stirred and heated. Finely sliced meat is then added, and black spice (tequr azmud) is sprayed over the boiling mixture. More water is added and stirring continues. . Some add a bit of barley beer, others pea flour.

When fresh beef is used on Sundays or at special feasts, the red pepper woṭ is called "zegen woṭ". The meat is lightly boiled, and minced; onions are minced and slowly roasted, and the whole is boiled with pre-roasted fenugreek spice, and with red barbare pepper. Then butter is added. When this is well cooked, and the host can afford it, the following spices are added: white azmud ("näch azmud"), black azmud (both thyme); ginger; sweet basil; cardamom seed. After cooking, capsicum is sprinkled over the settling stew, and other spices according to individual preference.

252 262 nels, or crushed and baked into a cake with nug or linseed oil. The porridge of non-fast times is called "genfo". It is made of crushed wheat, barley, butter and curdled milk. In fast times nug and linseed are substituted for [272] the forbidden butter and milk. A fast drink consists of tyeff flour boiled in salt water, called "Mug".

Other religious food taboos include the pig, which is never raised, except for European's use. This taboo dates back to Judaism and the Old Testament.

Every householder usually has a supply of roasted kernels "qolo" available in case unexpected guests or kin come to visit, a frequent occurrence. The pattern of "qolo" is very similar to that of a linguistically equivalent concept in Yemen. The Amhara makes it mostly of barley, "gebs qolo", but also of shembera and of maize.

[263] Condiments taken along on trips include an oily paste made of nug or linseed. When this is also spiced, salted, or mixed with honey, it is called "chelqa". It [272] resembles a gummy porridge. The traveller can mix it with water and instantly have a drink which is regarded not only as thirst-quenching, but also as strength-giving. However, no one claims that the taste is good.

264 There are two major meals per day: midday lunch, a light meal, though it may feature both "enjara" and "wot"; and the heavier supper, "erat", the main meal consumed in the cool of the early evening around the hearth of the hut, with bread, meat stew, barley beer and condiments. Breakfast as such is not eaten, except for a handful of roasted barley, and, if the household can afford it, black coffee.

252 Butter is made in a large gourd ("gurna"), plugged with a wooden prop. The housewife shakes this back and forth, much like Middle Eastern nomads shake it in skins. The butter that results resembles Indian ghee, and is called, at this stage, "gorännä". For human consumption it is then usually boiled with spices, especially bärbärey, but not with salt. To cure it further in order to make it sweet, delay rancidity, etc., butter (qebyē) is further boiled with one or several of the following spices in the process known as "yäqebyē mantäriya", "yäqebyē anätatär":

263

bark of ginger	- quaräfa zenjebel
cardamon seeds	- korärima
thyme	- azmud
garlic	- näçh shenkurt
sweet basil	- bäsobela
saffron	- erd
wild thyme	- tosen

302 Since most of these spices are expensive, butter intended for ornamental pomade of women's hair is boiled instead with leaves of the "ades" bush, which grows wild.

This process is "ades qernefad".

273 The most important, daily drink is tälla, the barley beer brewed by the housewife. It is little different, basically, from other African barley beers. Men almost never drink water (though the barley beer may be very weak), partly due to their fondness for "sweet", i.e. only slightly fermented beer. After three days of storage, the Amhara begin to complain that it is "too bitter", and let the women drink it up.

462 processing tasks of the women also include the prepara-
251 tion of staples of the pantry, to be ready for immediate use when her other tasks have left her no time. The red pepper ("bärbärä") is preserved and readied in the form of a paste, by grinding it, adding water and salt, plus a bit of onion. This paste, called "delleh"or "delleha" can then be used in wot, or to spice butter to be smeared on "enjära" bread, or mixed with oily nug paste and carried as a condiment and staple on travel. Another pre-
[x3] pared spice condiment used by travellers is a dry mixture of spices, salt and "shero" (ground peas), called "meṭen". Butter may be processed by boiling it with pepper, or with the small yellow root of a rhubarb called "mäqmäqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), which is also used as a medicine against tuberculosis.

462 Fetching and producing materials for fuel is a major
237 female occupation, though left to young girls when avail-
572 able. A special supply of dried cowdung is prepared for the rainy season, beginning right after Easter when the intermittent light rains are expected soon. Donkey and horse manure, "fanday", are not used by the proud Amhara, but cattle dung is flattened between the palms of women, dried in the sun, piled into tall heaps right next to the hut, then covered with a protective mask of mud and fresh dung. It is also women's task to watch the hearth fire in the evening, to check that it is covered with hot ashes over glowing embers, so that it will not go out and leave the hut chilly, on the one hand, but not burn so brightly that it might set fire to the hut.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

784 Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by
795 one of themselves, nor will Moslems eat any which has been killed by a Christian. We had one Moslem with us when we were on trek, and as he would not eat the ox which my other men had killed he bought a whole sheep for himself, and killed and ate it himself; none of the other men would touch an atom of it, even when their own supply ran out and they had no meat at all.

262 Of course the comparatively high price of meat (for
252 an Abyssinian) prevents the too frequent consumption of *broundo* amongst the people, and their tastes in everyday food are simple. Bread is their mainstay. This is found in many varieties; some of it soft, slightly sour in taste, and pale brown in colour; the most popular is of flour made from *teff* or millet seed, mixed to a thick paste with water and then poured into a large rough slightly concave iron receptacle and cooked over an open fire, without grease or fat of any kind. When finished this bread takes the form and aspect of large pancakes, twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, and is very good, especially when eaten with jam or butter; we always ate it ourselves when on trek. The native eats with it a kind of mash of lentils or dried peas, ground and cooked, and mixed with butter and a very hot red sauce which is produced from the chilli; this latter is very widely cultivated in several varieties all over the country.

263 The amount of pepper that is put into their cooked dishes is as a rule disastrous to the European palate at the first time of trying, and how they can swallow the fiery compounds that they do passes my comprehension —their tongues and palates must be made of leather.

264 All food, including meat, is eaten with the fingers amongst all classes, a piece of bread being broken off,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
155
539

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *injarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. *They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.*
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *injarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālinjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[176] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *tonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

594 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
(554) *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *injarā* baskets around the field. A truly
594 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
(135) association, and holds an annual feast (*zīker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
152

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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *Injarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

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867 "He, before becoming old,
[539] wants to be serious".

(This is also said of a young man who saves gifts for a bride before he has chosen a girl).

When the adolescent boys take part in the aforementioned ritual mock-battles, younger boys imitate them by staging similar hazing-battles among their age peers.

Little girls are encultured in somewhat similar fashion by peers of their own sex, but more often including some older girls who patronize the younger. Girls are not taught any social graces among commoner Amharas, so that they sit shyly and wordless when in the company of men. Any girl who shows signs of daring is mocked and hazed as "gobba" (daring, enterprising female). Generally the activities of girls are less vilent,. At times when boys fight their ritual mock-battles, girls dance rounds and sing in unison.

Both boys and girls are taught to be right-handed, and a "lefty" is extremely rare. They are taught to eat with the right
[264 hand, shake hands with the right, and use the left for wiping
[576 themselves with leaves after defecating. But the prohibition
514 against use of the left hand on other occasions is not as severe as among Arabs.

[754 Both sexes fear the supernatural "buda" spirit, also in the shape of human sorcerer and magical hyena. Older boys claim they can distinguish the cry of a real hyena from that of a magical one, and sometimes scare younger children by imitating the howl.

867 Sex differentiation among children is expressed in the hair
302 style. Boys wear a single coxcomb hairlock, girls a ring of hair around the shaven skull which sometimes may contain a center hair-

574 262 Wednesday or Friday when no animal products can be consumed; the months of lent also interrupt the frequency of visiting.

To honor a "great man" ("telleq säw") the host presents him with a live sheep, select, with a heavy tail, then has it slaughtered and cooked in a spicy and peppery sauce ("wot"). In place of barley beer he will offer honeywater ("berz") or even honeymead ("täj"); the bread will be served smeared with spiced butter. A poor man, forced to substitute chicken for sheep, can at least indicate that he honors the guest by giving him the choice morsel - the wing: The proverb says:

[539]

"The chicken wing
joy brings to the face".

264 Etiquette in eating follows these procedures: The hands are washed prior to consuming bread or meat (though often with not very clean, muddy river water poured from a clay pot); and washed again after the meal to remove pepper stains of the "bärbäre wot" from the fingers, lest absentminded rubbing of the eye cause painful stinging. Only the right hand is used in eating, for the left is used in the toilet. The right hand is used to rip off a piece of the limp "enjära", dip it into the meat stew, close the piece of pancake-like bread around some morsel and fish it out for immediate consumption. A knife is used only when eating "brundo" (raw beef), at a special feast, to cut off a piece held between the teeth (now, at city feasts, brundo is served pre-sliced into cubes).

Noisy eating ("gorädäma") is permitted in the old tradition as indicative of he-man behavior, but smacking of lips and ceremonial belching, though not criticized, are not emphasized. It is an old custom of Amhara hosts, still followed in rural areas, to pour a mouthful of a profferred drink into their own cupped hands and consume it, before passing the cup to the honored guest or "great man" ("ejun däqno tätta"- lit. he received (cup) with hands (under chin) and drank). This

264 procedure, also called "gämmäsä" is in imitation of procedure at the court of nobles, and it is known that kings have always had their special cupbearers ("gänash") who tasted the drink against possible poison, and who also removed any floating debris ("gäffäta") such as beeswax from the drink.

574 575 The hospitality group on non-kin members which meets most regularly, once a month, is the "mähabbär" association, already described. Based originally on religious private communion, each member plays host once a month to drink from "Mary's cup" ("yänaryam sewa"), to feast, for chant and dance ("zäffän") and less formal gossipy entertainment and conversation ("tächäwwäta").

C. Verbal Expression: Formalities; Wit; Pedagogic Riddles.

192 Emotional exclamations in everyday use are highly formalized:

Pain - "häyy häyy" (also if a painful truth "sinks in"; astonishment).

Fear - "wyy" (especially by women, just before a fearful event happens).

Fearful surprise - "eyyi" (e.g. when someone stumbles, or has an accident).

Alarm - "errii" - (cry of alarm; also of great sorrow as in death of kin).

Skeptical surprise - "erra" ("you don't say?!"); Reply: "mut" (abbreviated from "yemut", lit. "May (the emperor die) if this is not true").

Pleasure - "essäy" (to indicate comfort, e.g. when sitting down after having climbed a long, tiring hill).

576 514 192 Formal politeness in etiquette always considers the social status of the person addressed. Thus, there are six ways of informing an inquirer that the person he seeks has gone out to defecate or urinate:

Impolite, though not vulgar: "weha afässäsä" - (lit. he poured water).

Polite: "der wätta" - lit. he went to the bush).

Polite: "däj wätta" - (lit. he went out the door).

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 is painted, it is not certain whether it is stone or wood. It has two sets of cloisters round the body of the church, both 346 covered in, and much painted with figures of apostles, 532 patriarchs, prophets, and many things of the Old Law, and 353 many angels, and St. George on horseback, who is in all the churches. This monastery also possesses a great cloth, like a piece of tapestry, on which is the crucifix and effigy of Our Lady and the apostles, and other figures of patriarchs and prophets, and each one has his Latin name written, so that no man of the country made it. It has many small and ancient pictures, not well made, and they are not upon the altars, for it is not their custom: they keep them in a [212] sacristy, mixed up with many books, and they bring them out on feast days. There is in this monastery a very large kitchen and bakehouse, also a very large refectory, in which 792 they eat. They mostly eat three and three[1] in a large dish, 262 it is not deep, but flat like a tray, and their food is very [264] poor. The bread is of maize and barley, and other grain which they call *taffo*,[2] a small black grain. They make this bread round, and of the size and roundness of a citron,[3] and they give three of these to each friar: to the novices they give three loaves to two of them, it is a matter of amazement how they can maintain themselves. They also give them a few vegetables, without salt or oil. Of this food they send to a great many old pensioners, who do not come to the refectory. Besides seeing these things when we 792 buried Matthens, I saw them many times, because I came there to pass time with the friars, principally on feast days, when we were near there. In this way I learned about them and their property, and revenues and customs. In my opinion there were generally always a hundred friars in this

[1] By threes.

[2] Mansfield Parkins calls it teff, the species of corn most esteemed in this country.

[3] Zamboa, not referred to in Selves' translation.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XIX.—*How they gave us to eat in the house of the Barnagais, and how in this country the journeys are not reckoned by leagues.* 648

When we were out of the house where the Barnagais was, they made us sit down in the receiving room of another house on mats on the ground, and they brought here a large trencher of barley meal, but little kneaded, and a horn of mead. And, since we had not seen such food, we would not eat it; but when we were more accustomed to the country we ate it readily. Without eating of this, we arose and came to our resting-place and then set out. This might be at two hours before midday. Having gone on our road half a league or more there came to us a man running and telling us to wait; that the mother of the Barnagais was sending us food, and took it as a misfortune our coming away without eating and not accepting the food they gave us, which was that customary in the country. We waited, and the food came to us, that is to say, five large rolls of wheat bread and a horn of mead. Let not anyone be amazed who hears of a horn of wine, because for the great lords and Prester John cows' horns are their cups for wine, and there are horns holding five or six canadas.[1] Besides this, the mother of the Barnagais sent us some of the same kneaded flour, and now we ate some of it. This meal is of parched barley, made into flour, and they mix it up with very little water, and so eat it. After this banquet we made our way to the town of Barua, where our goods and companions had remained. In this country, and in all the kingdoms of Prester John, there are no leagues, and if you ask how far it is from this place to such a place, they say: If you depart in the morning at sunrise, you will arrive when the sun is in such a place; and if you travel slowly you will arrive there when they shut up the cows, that is at

[264] [262] [415] [262] 804

[1] A Portuguese measure equal to about three pints.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

000 of Braga, put to Francisco Alvarez, chaplain of the king our sovereign, respecting some particulars of the country of Prester John, beyond those which the said Francisco Alvarez has written in his book; the said Francisco Alvarez having gone to the said Prester in the company of Don Rodrigo de Lima, who went as ambassador to the said Prester, on account of the death of Duarte Galvam, who was sent there by the King Don Manuel, may he be in holy glory; which persons reached the port of Masua, an island in the Red Sea, close to the town of Arquico, country of the Prester, on the 27th day of April 1520, and they passed six[1] years in the said country and lordships of the Prester, and they returned to embark at the said port of Masua, close to Arquico, in the year 1526 on the 28th day of April; and the said Francisco Alvarez came to this city of Braga to be confirmed in the benefice which the King our sovereign gave him. He remained in it some days, and the said Francisco Alvarez reached this city of Braga on the 30th July, of the year 1529.

264 262 784 He[1] said that usually the people do not eat only once a day, and this at night, and that the monks and clergy fast strictly during Lent, so that many only eat three times in the week, namely, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, that they do not drink wine of grapes nor of honey, and that they drink other beverages which are made of other vegetables.

In Lent they eat neither meat not milk, nor eggs nor butter, even though they are near dying, they eat vegetables and some few fruits which are in the country. All the men and women, great and small, fast all the Wednesdays and Fridays in the year; this is not to be understood from Christmas to the Purification of Our Lady, nor from Easter to Trinity, when there is no fast. Friars, priests, gentlemen and noblemen, fast all the week excepting Saturday and Sunday.

[1] Should be seven years.

1 [the author, i.e., Alvarez]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that 681
they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester 793
John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means em- 643
peror, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some 752
sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, 757
they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thou- 621
sand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and 361
there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and 342
all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and court-
yards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others 352
on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without 415
napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black 264
earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others 262
eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, 252
and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is 373
much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which 314
they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 000

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

threw it down, cut steaks from it which they devoured 262
rapidly, and then drove the cow on again, plastering up the wound with mud. The second (which is given with a wealth of detail too revolting to repeat) was at a regular banquet at which a live cow was brought in and strips cut from it by all the guests until the animal died, which took some time.

Salt states that Pearce actually saw an example of the first instance quoted above, which he says is by no means uncommon, but he disbelieves the second instance. No other writer that I am acquainted with recounts any such instance *of his own knowledge*, and the suggestion that such a practice ever existed is hotly denied in the country. Nor could I find any evidence of the existence of such a habit either as to the present or the past. Personally I am inclined to disbelieve the stories or to regard them as gross exaggerations, or possibly as isolated instances.

Be that as it may, the raw meat dietary, however, 262
is undoubtedly very popular to-day, and it may be of 574
interest if I give an extract from my diary describing a great *Gebur*, or banquet given at the Feast of Maskal, which we attended, and at which no fewer than 15,000 soldiers and 2000 or 3000 palace retainers were fed in four relays in the great hall. This is the more interesting in that for some years past Europeans have not been admitted to the *Gebur*, and although one was held on our last visit we were not present.

The *Gebur*

"We were received by the Court Chamberlain on 574
the large stone terrace outside the *aderatch*, and after a 244

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short interval led through rooms wrapped in darkness to the banqueting hall, at one end of which was a large raised platform shut in by closely drawn white curtains. Here, seated on a dais, was the Empress, surrounded by Abyssinian notables, and after paying our respects to Her Majesty, Ras Tafari, and others, we were conducted to the table prepared for Europeans on one side of the platform—there were about fifteen of us. At the opposite side of the platform the Ras and the principal chiefs sat down at another table, whilst in the middle green silk curtains were drawn round the Empress' dais, so that she should be hidden from the vulgar eye whilst eating; a constant stream of attendants bearing every conceivable kind of receptacle, from beautifully wrought gold dishes to enamelled iron mugs, passed in and out of her little tent.

"After we had had an excellent, if somewhat lengthy, meal, consisting of a mixed assortment of European and Abyssinian courses, the white curtains by which the platform was shut in were pulled back, shewing the hall packed with long low tables as closely as they could be got in, the tables being covered with slabs of Abyssinian bread enclosing quantities of cooked cut-up meat.

"To the sound of bugles and trumpets the main doors were opened and in poured the chiefs with their soldiery, who had come up to Addis Ababa for the feast from all over the country; the organization was admirable, and though some 5000 men filled the hall there was no sort of scrambling or disorder whatever.

"They set to work at once on the *hors-d'œuvres*, and then the *pièces de résistance* arrived. Hundreds of pairs of men came in, each pair carrying between them a long

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

stout pole, from which hung huge pieces of red raw meat, covered with strips of red and gold cloth. 574 264

"These men stood closely together all along the tables and one on each side, so that the meat hung down from the poles over the tables just in front of the diners. The guests produced knives, and feeling the joint with their fingers to pick out a tender bit, rapidly sliced off strips of meat, which they put into their mouths, cutting off what would not go in quite close to their lips, an operation which, from personal experience, I know demands great skill if one's nose is not to suffer—as the cut is always made upwards.

"After ample libations of *tej* and *araki* (native mead, or hydromel and spirit) the diners filed out in perfect order, and the stage was cleared for the next party.

"The whole function had lasted nearly four hours and the Ras must have been heartily glad when it was over, for he had previously dined one instalment of 5000 warriors, and two more were to follow—between 17,000 and 18,000 in all partaking of the royal hospitality."

Broundo may be a nourishing form of diet tending to the development of warlike qualities, but its consumption has one serious drawback at all events, in that it is the cause of taenia (or tapeworm), a disease which is almost universal in the country. So much is this the case indeed that it is a recognized practice for all, high and low, to take monthly as a "taenicide" a dose of a plant known as *kousso*, which is so violent in its effects as to incapacitate the patient from work or occupation for the day. 164 757

Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by 000

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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784 Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by
195 one of themselves, nor will Moslems eat any which has been killed by a Christian. We had one Moslem with us when we were on trek, and as he would not eat the ox which my other men had killed he bought a whole sheep for himself, and killed and ate it himself; none of the other men would touch an atom of it, even when their own supply ran out and they had no meat at all.

262 Of course the comparatively high price of meat (for
252 an Abyssinian) prevents the too frequent consumption of *broundo* amongst the people, and their tastes in everyday food are simple. Bread is their mainstay. This is found in many varieties; some of it soft, slightly sour in taste, and pale brown in colour; the most popular is of flour made from *teff* or millet seed, mixed to a thick paste with water and then poured into a large rough slightly concave iron receptacle and cooked over an open fire, without grease or fat of any kind. When finished this bread takes the form and aspect of large pancakes, twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, and is very good, especially when eaten with jam or butter; we always ate it ourselves when on trek. The native eats with it a kind of mash of lentils or dried peas, ground and cooked, and mixed with butter and a very hot red sauce which is produced from the chilli; this latter is very widely cultivated in several varieties all over the country.

263 The amount of pepper that is put into their cooked dishes is as a rule disastrous to the European palate at the first time of trying, and how they can swallow the fiery compounds that they do passes my comprehension —their tongues and palates must be made of leather.

All food, including meat, is eaten with the fingers amongst all classes, a piece of bread being broken off,

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wrapped round the portion of other foodstuff to be eaten, and the whole put bodily into the mouth. 264

I happened on one occasion to call on an Abyssinian chieftain, a ruler of a distant province who was visiting Addis and who was a particular friend of mine, just as he was sitting down to a late lunch in his *tukul* surrounded by his principal vassal chiefs. I had to sit down on the divan next to him; and as he was of course eating *à l'Abyssine* his cook kept on rolling up succulent morsels of terrifically hot curry or stewed meat or raw flesh in bread with his fingers, and pressing them on my jaded palate. Any of his chiefs whom he desired to honour was similarly distinguished, that is to say, he would select a tit-bit, give it to the cook who doctored it up and passed it to a slave, who conveyed it to the fortunate recipient, who ate it with great gusto. And fingers all round all the time!

Except for some few individuals who have acquired the habit in Europe or from Europeans, smoking, curiously enough, is practically non-existent among Abyssinians although the tobacco plant grows freely, and the Gallas make a sort of rough coarse tobacco which is possible, though hardly pleasant. The practice was somewhat drastically discouraged by the late Emperor Johannes (Theodore's successor), who is said to have punished smoking by cutting off the offender's lips, and snuffing by removing his nose. I was unsuccessful in ascertaining the cause of their objection to smoking, one of the various obviously inadequate reasons being that the use of tobacco was condemned because the plant was supposed to have grown originally out of the tomb of the heretic Arius! A more probable explanation is that the practice was regarded as a 276

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] [231] [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭēff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā*, literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā*, preparing *ṭallā*, spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

*565 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* *565 512 or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from 233 somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped 857 if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain— [262] their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or [182] children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children [513] settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the em- [352] bers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the water in places where the Anopheles breed."[25]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

Taste.—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from extreme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions. Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are preferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfata*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor [539] Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 574 527 [575] [794] Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious fraternal association known as the *māhebar,* is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māhebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā,*" literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Amharic proverb, and even the Emperor when visiting a school expects students to remain seated if they are at the dining table when he arrives. 155 261 [264]

Some indication of the comparative significance of this concern about eating and drinking in the Amhara psyche is afforded by a recent cross-cultural investigation of dreams. Obtained from samples of young male respondents in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the United States, the dreams were evaluated with respect to the presence or absence of themes of "manifest orality": scenes of someone desiring, looking for, or consuming food or drink. The proportion of Ethiopian respondents (mostly Orthodox Amhara from the Gondar area) who revealed manifest orality in their dreams was found to be *64 per cent*. By contrast, the proportion of those in a sample of non-Muslim Nigerians whose dreams showed manifest orality was 38 per cent, and that in the sample of Americans was only 22 per cent.[11]

The Amhara custom of giving *gurshā* plays up the erotic component of eating. *Gurshā* means "mouthful" and, as already noted, refers to a wad of food which one places in another's mouth, usually as a gesture of affection. *Gurshā* are exchanged between husband and wife and among relatives and friends. They are often given to children, especially in families of higher status, and to favored servants and retainers as well. The *gurshā* is of such meaning in Amhara experience that it is referred to in a number of Amharic idioms. First of all it means a present or a tip—literally, *pourmanger*. It also refers to the charge of a gun: the gun is a beloved object, and a *gurshā* is what one places in its mouth. In contemporary usage, it refers to flashlight batteries. 155 261 264 [196]

In connection with love and many other subjects, a good deal of the imagery of Amharic verse relates in one way or another to eating and drinking. The following sample of proverbs and couplets may convey some of the flavor of this phenomenon: 261 271 155 539

*Ṭajj** has no specks; a poor man has no friends.

• • •

[Use] proverbs in conversation; [drink] *ṭajj* in a carafe.

• • •

Hand and fly-whisk; mouth and *īnjarā*† [go together].

• • •

No matter how much one plows, nothing tastes so good as *goman*.‡

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* *Ṭajj*, it may be remembered, is the Ethiopian wine made of honey. [273]

† *Injarā* is the staple pancake. [262]

‡ *Goman* is a kind of cabbage plant that requires no plow cultivation. [244]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
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• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
• 264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[176] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

594 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
[554] *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *Injarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

consequence of substantial loss of accustomed mother love at the time of weaning—a mild but chronic state of mourning which gives a depressive undertone to the rest of life—is certainly one of the more evident characteristics of most Amhara.[22] At the same time the Amhara child is made anxious about his actual oral gratifications. He no longer eats whenever he wants to, but only after he has waited for the adults to finish their meal. He is no longer entitled to the choicest food, mother's milk, but to poorer food and leftovers. And he is made increasingly aware of the adult anxieties about eating connected with the fasting requirements, and with the food shortages of the rainy season.

Applying the Whiting-Child hypotheses in the light of these observations one may characterize the development of an ambivalent preoccupation with the oral zone by Amhara as follows: an initially very high level of oral satisfaction enjoyed during the nursing period makes oral gratification a particularly attractive source of pleasure as well as a desired refuge for the psyche under the pressure of later deprivations; while the emotional and nutritional deprivations which the Amhara child experiences toward the end of the nursing period and thereafter undermine the sense of security acquired during his indulged infancy and make him anxious about the fount of that security, oral gratification.*

Whatever the precise ontogenetic basis of this phenomenon may prove to be, the Amhara's ambivalent preoccupation with orality is projected at the *cultural* level in the form of two contrasting human ideals. The secular masculine ideal in Amhara culture is a hero of oral gratification and prowess. He is a man who eats much and drinks much, and who excels in litigation, in declaiming the martial chants, and in composing veiled insults. The religious ideal, on the other hand, is a hero of oral renunciation. The most devout Amhara are considered those who keep all of the fasts, even the esoteric ones; or even, as monks and ascetics, live on a fasting diet the year round—in the extreme case, feed on leaves as hermits. The association of religious virtuosity with oral renunciation reaches its logical climax in legends about Gabra Manfas Qeddus ("Servant of the Holy Spirit"), the most hallowed Amhara saint. In contrast with the normal Amhara boy who nurses for close to three years, Gabra Manfas Qeddus is said to have been at his mother's breast for only three months, when a bird swept down one day and carried him away.

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* While this formulation may leave more questions unanswered than it solves—a purely behaviorist formula inevitably neglects the dynamics of defensive operations and the significance of ambivalence—it carries us as far as our data permit and may provide a useful point of departure for further discussion and investigation of Amhara psychology.

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FIG. 34.—*Offering a gurshā*

FIG. 35.—*Singing out the master's qenē*

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FIG. 36.—*Amhara litigants* [P. 238-A]

*121 571 • 264 181 [829] A similar spirit is observed in Amhara commensality. Meals are customarily eaten from a common *ĭnjarā* basket. The sauce is ladled onto the center of the *ĭnjarā*, and is consumed ensemble by those sitting around the basket as they dip into it with pieces of *ĭnjarā* broken off from the edges. Traditional Amhara scoff at what they regard as the excessively individualistic Western custom of sitting each person down to a separate place at the table and thus depriving the meal hour of what they feel should be its basically communal tone.

*121 574 571 181 At a more formal level of interaction this disposition is expressed in the form of *hospitality*. Amhara hospitality is luxuriously attentive and thoughtful. For example, if there is foreknowledge of a guest's arrival, he is awaited at some distance from his destination and escorted with much to-do into the home. His mule is at once unsaddled and given to feed. The guest is given a place of honor in the home, and a glass of *ṭallā* is immediately brought for him. Amhara etiquette prescribes, moreover, that a glass is not properly filled unless it overflows; and it is repeatedly filled to overflowing whenever the guest has drunk some portion of the beverage. As a gratuitous gesture of good faith, the host—or his wife, or servant—tastes some of the beverage first, a sign that no "medicine" has been added. Before long the wicker table is produced, and the guest and his party are served copiously—no matter what time of day they arrive (unless, of course, it is a fasting day). When the guest has eaten to satisfaction, the host will insist that he eat some more, by repeatedly issuing injunctions like *tegābuzu* ("Help yourselves!"), *moḳar* ("Try!"), or *āfar sehon* ("If I become dust!"—i.e., "If you do not eat you will be condemning me to death"). The Amhara host is also likely to insist that his guest spend the night. The guest's feet will be washed, and the host's bed will be given to him, or long grass will be cut for bedding on the floor. At the time of farewell, the host and his attendants follow the guest and his party a good distance along the road. The guest continually cries, "Return! Return!" and the host agrees but continues to serve as escort.

Such hospitality is not wantonly bestowed upon the casual wayfarer. Normally it is reserved for those who qualify as worthy guests: relatives, friends, [609] or persons of high rank. Nonetheless, there does exist among the Amhara some feeling that even the unknown stranger should be shown hospitality, for he is *ya-egziābhĕr engedā* ("a guest of God"). Travelers are generally assured [485] that somebody somewhere will show them hospitality; there are no inns in traditional Ethiopia, for it is considered wrong to exchange food and lodging for money.

*121 576 571 181 Related to this pattern of hospitality is a delicate sense of *respect* that the Amhara displays toward all comers; often, even toward his enemies. When two Amhara pass each other anywhere, they are expected to bow slightly and say: "How did you pass the night?" or "How did you spend the day?" If they

754 also excite the buda's interests. The buda's remaining
[826] victims are people he sees eating ordrinking in public,
[264] particularly while the buda himself is hungry or thirsty.
In all cases, the buda concentrates upon the part of his victim's anatomy that initially attracted him, and through it introjects his invisible buda aspect into the victim's abdomen. Unknown by the victim, the buda sets about dining on the latter's viscera; only later that day do the initial symptoms---nausea, vomiting, torpor---become evident. By nightfall, the unique symptoms of buda possession begin. The victim no longer complains of nausea, and vomiting ceases; now oblivious of his surroundings, he alternates periods of vacant staring with violent frenzies, during which he attempts to tear off his clothes and seeks reunion with the roaming hyenas. If forcibly restrained, he grits his teeth edge-to-edge, rigidly holds his flexed limbs close to his body, and compresses fingers against palms, thumbs inward; to onlookers, he appears as a human hyena. At dawn, the victim's frenzy dissipates, and he lies abed, greatly fatigued by the nocturnal exertions and severly weakened by the buda's feasting. At nightfall, the frenetic drama is repeated, and, unless the buda is exorcised soon, the victim's death becomes certain.

*[192] Yisew ayn ("the person's eye") shares important similarities with buda powers. It is exercised involun-

754 drome in a victim.

[826] The buda is attracted to 1) persons of "good blood"
*[192] (tiruw dem sew: someone with a light, clear and unblemished complexion, or, by extension, with another particularly attractive, konjow, aspect of his body) and
[264] 2) persons observed eating or drinking, particularly when the buda is hungry or thirsty. While concentrating on that aspect of the victim which attracted him (e.g., the face of the child of good blood, or the diner's mouth), the buda introjects his invisible self into the victim's body. Once inside, he sets to eating the viscera, simultaneously laying eggs from which prodigious numbers of wosfat hatch out. About two-thirds of his victims are children of ten years or less.

*753 His victim is never aware of the disease act taking
754 place, and symptoms of the ailment appear only later in the day, as the wosfat hatched by the buda vent their rapacity on the sickman's stomach and heart. Thus, he experiences nausea, vomiting and fatigue. At nightfall the first of the ailment's dramatic symptoms appear, as the buda acknowledges his presence.[53] Complaints of nausea and stomach pain stop, as the sickman grows oblivious to

[53] Bibuda tabalac, "seized by the buda", is also a common nomer for this ailment.

463 prestige involved is slight--occurring only if there is
464 kinfolk nearby shamed by such manual labor. It is on a social level with the gathering of kosso-bark by a poor Amhara woman.

463 [324] Some farmers have a part-time specialty of fashioning the stone used as mano by the housewife when she grinds grain. They are called "wäqäri". No shame is involved; it is considered like a hobby, like whittling away at wood.

[693 554] Some heads of farming families are adept at "talking well in court" for which they achieve great prestige--the major method of achieving prestige. They are called "täbäqa" lawyers, and not full-time specialists since all they can expect, if they win the case, is a bellyful of barley beer or an occasional gift, but they are guests of honor at the victory feasts and "men of reknown".

A large number of semi-specialists fall into the [23] category of caretakers, "täbäqi". Cowherds and shepherds, if they are grown men not useful at anything else, are included in this category.

463 Part-time employment is found by the former feudal
265 chamberlain, "agäfari", at big weddings of landholding peasants or in towns. They act as caterers, order the bread, meat, beer, mead, etc. They are experts at headwaiting, and know just whom to seat at what table or around which "mäsob", according to rank, and they indicate to each servant to whom to serve beer and to whom the more expensive and more noble mead. This was

463 once a noble profession, requiring much intelligence
265 and training, but now a handsome cash gift, partly for the wedded couple and partly as a tip, can introduce a non-prestigeful guest to the table of the nobles. The profession has thus dropped to the level of the itinerant musician, the "azmari", and brings neither prestige nor any particular shame.

463 A still honorable semi-specialization is that of
532 the painter of religious or religious-royal themes in the church, the "seel-sali". He is often a layman loosely attached to the church, who learned his craft while attending church school and then apprenticed himself to a master painter. He is often hired by an individial landlord or well-to-do, often aging, pious Amhara man or noble lady, who wish to make this gift to the church and often order the painter to paint in a small, modest likeness of themselves or their recently departed parents. (See section of art).

464 The third category of "damoz"[1] labor is traditionally found in the rural areas primarily in the case of the temporary marriage. The availability of ex-slaves rarely makes it necessary to hire on any but temporary agricultural labor, for it would be too expensive and difficult to hire Amhara labor. There is, however, a type of day laborer, "hwayatänya", or simply "seratänya" (worker), who is now paid about Eth$1.- a day, and can be hired for some temporary job without the other involvements, sich as leave for church holidays and kin-visiting. A poor Amhara will sometimes hire on for some ready cash,

[1] [i.e. "temporary" - see p.215, cat.116. - Analyst]

357 his task is fixed in advance and if an Amhara he will
466 usually refuse to carry out any work for which he was
[E62] not engaged. Women servants usually receive half the salary of a male servant. Thus only officials and relatively high-income urbanites can afford Amhara servants; servants of socially lower groups can be hired for considerably less, if themaster is willing to forego the prestige of having Amhara servants.

The urban householder, who is not surrounded by kinfolk in his residence, usually must hire a night watchman, "zebanya", who sleeps huddled in coarse shammas in front of the house or behind the outer gate. They receive the wage of day laborers. Often they are old veterans of former feudal soldiery, too decrepit for any other work, yet still fierce-looking and fierce-tongued enough to discourage thieves.

265 Urban teahouses, coffeehouses and mead-houses
466 employ waiters, "asalafi", who do not have the specialization of the more prestigeful "agafari", but who have steadier jobs. Their pay is not above that of the day laborer, but they can accumulate cash more readily.

[463] During the present generation a new wlement of
875 modern-educated clerks, teachers, hospital "dressers" and
871 government officials is gradually entering the occupational pattern of the town, though still in very small percentages. A graduate of the traditional church school of the rural areas is considered to have only the equivalent of 2 grades of elementary school. All towns now have at least one modern elementary school with 8

632 Since the town attracted the most clever "dabtara",
[759] many of whom were herbologists, it was also a center where "medical aid", sometimes quite effective, could be obtained, and attracted patients from far and wide.

[463] Ethnic craftsmen would settle in hamlets within walking distance of the town, to provide iron tools, tanned leather, sun umbrellas, etc., without, however, exposing themselves to mockery, insults and occasional assaults by living in the town itself.

632 517 The town developed as a social center, and center for entertainment, almost inevitably. First, religious feasts such as the Epiphany parades and the tournaments on the public commons on "ganna" (Christmas) attracted the populace; and youngsters as well as adult loafers found themarket scenes fascinating. Secndly, the Arab traders liked to discuss business and news over tea or
[265] coffee. So "teahouses " (shay bet") sprang up near the Saturday market, serving snacks also to many a male at odds with his wife, and excluding all womenfolk. Con-
632 648 versely, the mead house, ("tej bet") provided evening
588 entertainment with female singers and dancers (azmari) for the all-male clientele, and waitresses easily available for sexual entertainment. Moreover, every town had at least one "street of unattached women", who catered to travellers or visiting peasants as innkeepers, restaurateurs, and as temporary wives; they were usually divorcees, who hoped to find another husband, and to settle down again to regular married life.

632 178 Except for some of the feudal arrangements, most of this town pattern of social organization is still

275 is served with it. Traders and travellers often stop by during the day,
487 and the place usually closes not long after sundown.

275 The barley-beer house ("talla byet") is still fairly respectable
487 for people of commoner and lower classes, but not for respected elders
265 or priests. It is operated by women, either matronly married women or "unattached girls", i.e. divorcees. It serves not only as dispenser of beer, but also serves full meals, so that the travelling trader is dependent on it. For as little as Eth. $0.25 (U.S. 10 cents) the patron may obtain a minimal meal of enjara bread, 2 liters of talla beer, and all the roast chickpeas and roasted barley ("qolo") he can eat; meatstew costs more. Often such a restaurant contains an extra room with a bed for the weary traveller to sleep in, and such an inn is then called "meshta byet" (lit. accommodation house, from "mesht" or "mest", meaning wife), for the traveller has no difficulty in securing a temporary wife for the duration of his local stay, among the divorcees.

275 The mead-house ("taj byet") does not even have the minimal
548 respectability of the talla byet. It is operated strictly for entertainment, i.e. drinking and sexual pleasures. For the owner, usually a clever, middleaged townswoman, it represents one of the few ways of amassing capital and becoming one of the wealthiest local citizens. She controls her waitresses much as a madam would. To protect herself from brawls, which are not infrequent, she also employs, - though they are kept out of sight so as not to frighten off customers, - one or several husky bouncers. The proverb says:

[539]

"In the prostitute's house,
all the time a scuffle."

For, even in prostitution a pretense of "temporary wife" is made.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 789 261 173 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of eating something or presenting food to someone.[14] It is a theme conspicuous in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85). According to *The Book of the* [539] *Riches of Kings,* Yekuno Amlāk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zāgwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[15]

155 152 201 *Oral Sadism*

In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the environment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When 155 152 726 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following [539] refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[16]

155 266 773 [532] The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagination. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Mary intervened, placing on the empty side for good deeds a goblet of water which Balaya Sab had once given to a sick beggar out of pity; and the Eater of Men was saved. In the pictorial representation of this legend, Balaya Sab is portrayed cutting off pieces of human flesh with a curved knife in the manner in which raw beef is attacked at the Amhara table. 155 266 773

Most Amhara know some sort of tale about a cannibal. The topic is familiar enough that they are able to invent new ones. One boy told me he made up the following story to explain the nature of cannibals to his younger brother: 155 266 538

> Once there was a cannibal. He lived among many people. He had no food in his house; he was poor. But even if he had not been poor, he just liked to eat the flesh of man. In his house was a big hole which he covered with a carpet. He would invite somebody into his house and tell him to sit down on the chair over the hole. When the person sat down and fell into the hole, he would climb down by a ladder and eat him. In this way he ate all the people in his village one by one—about a hundred people. When he had eaten all the people in his village he returned to live in the forest, because there was nobody left to eat.

The cannibal motif appears in more subtle form in the parlor game known as *gabatā,* in which the aim is to accumulate as many pebbles as possible by moving them around a board with six holes on each side. In *gabatā* the active acquisition of pebbles is called "eating" and the passive acquisition is "drinking." Similarly, those who play chess or checkers refer to the process of taking a man as "eating" him. It is notable, moreover, that the Amhara version of the old riddle about how to transport a certain number of incompatible objects across the river in one boat is posed in terms of three human beings and three cannibals. 155 266 524

Oral sadism is further manifest among the Amhara by the nature of their speech. The Amhara are not only loquacious but also tend, both in manner of delivery and in content of conversation, to be biting and intrusive. Backbiting, insulting, arguing, and litigating are among their more characteristic modes of self-expression. 155 521 191

Backbiting and insulting, and the fear of being the victim of such activities, are the focus of much attention in Amhara culture. Concern about the former is expressed in a number of Amharic proverbs: 155 521 578 [539]

> If the mouth lacks work, it will backbite a friend.
>
> If you praise a man once, you will be in trouble if you backbite him later.
>
> If a man is a backbiter, listen for my sake when he talks to you.

Straightforward insults erupt the polite surface of Amhara social relations only under unusually heated circumstances, though it is customary for social superiors to direct a certain amount of abusive banter at their inferiors as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Amharic proverb, and even the Emperor when visiting a school expects students to remain seated if they are at the dining table when he arrives. 155 261 [264]

Some indication of the comparative significance of this concern about eating and drinking in the Amhara psyche is afforded by a recent cross-cultural investigation of dreams. Obtained from samples of young male respondents in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the United States, the dreams were evaluated with respect to the presence or absence of themes of "manifest orality": scenes of someone desiring, looking for, or consuming food or drink. The proportion of Ethiopian respondents (mostly Orthodox Amhara from the Gondar area) who revealed manifest orality in their dreams was found to be *64 per cent.* By contrast, the proportion of those in a sample of non-Muslim Nigerians whose dreams showed manifest orality was 38 per cent, and that in the sample of Americans was only 22 per cent.[11]

The Amhara custom of giving *gurshā* plays up the erotic component of eating. *Gurshā* means "mouthful" and, as already noted, refers to a wad of food which one places in another's mouth, usually as a gesture of affection. *Gurshā* are exchanged between husband and wife and among relatives and friends. They are often given to children, especially in families of higher status, and to favored servants and retainers as well. The *gurshā* is of such meaning in Amhara experience that it is referred to in a number of Amharic idioms. First of all it means a present or a tip—literally, *pourmanger*. It also refers to the charge of a gun: the gun is a beloved object, and a *gurshā* is what one places in its mouth. In contemporary usage, it refers to flashlight batteries. 155 261 264 [196]

In connection with love and many other subjects, a good deal of the imagery of Amharic verse relates in one way or another to eating and drinking. The following sample of proverbs and couplets may convey some of the flavor of this phenomenon: 261 271 • 155 539

Ṭajj• has no specks; a poor man has no friends.

• • •

[Use] proverbs in conversation; [drink] *ṭajj* in a carafe.

• • •

Hand and fly-whisk; mouth and *ïnjarā*† [go together].

• • •

No matter how much one plows, nothing tastes so good as *goman*.‡

• *Ṭajj*, it may be remembered, is the Ethiopian wine made of honey. [273]

† *Injarā* is the staple pancake. [262]

‡ *Goman* is a kind of cabbage plant that requires no plow cultivation. [244]

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
• 271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
155
539

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[176] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

594 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
(554) *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[135] association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *Injarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

23 and form a new one. If he re-uses an old basket, he first sweeps out the larvae (eçh) remnants, wax, etc., with the "nebasel" plant which the bees are said to like.

Sometimes as rapidly as six weeks later, the honey is ready for collecting. The hive is smoked out, and many bees perish. Some of the honey is retained at home and mix-
[272] ed with water to make non-alcoholic "berz" when honored
[373] guests come. The wax, to which some of the honey still adheres, is rolled over strong cotton or fiber thread and the resulting long thin candle is used in church to illuminate the readings and the processions.

Most of the honey is sold on the big "Saturday market", or directly to the woman in the nearest town who operates a "tedj byet", a mead house. To make it worth his while, a farmer should have at least five skeps-hives, from which he can realize 50 kilos of honey annually, for which he can obtain about $20. A very big keeper may have as many as 50 skeps, bringing him U.S. $200. for the honey.
[273] But the real profit is made by the woman owner of the tedj byet, who pays little for this honey, for gesho (fermenting agent) and for a big barrel to brew mead in, and then, after some months, sells her product, "tedj", a wine-like alcoholic drink, at a price that only noblemen, clerks, town officials, and Muslim traders can afford.

[278] The honey of the wild bee, "terb", is used against trachoma and other eye diseases. But "shame" forbids the eating of such wild honey.

Civet cat has been "farmed" by some in certain districts for centuries, and the musk taken regularly from the

252 262 nels, or crushed and baked into a cake with nug or linseed oil. The porridge of non-fast times is called "genfo". It is made of crushed wheat, barley, butter and curdled milk. In fast times nug and linseed are substituted for the forbidden butter and milk. A fast drink consists of teff flour boiled in salt water, called "hug".

Other religious food taboos include the pig, which is never raised, except for European's use. This taboo dates back to Judaism and the Old Testament.

Every householder usually has a supply of roasted kernals "qolo" available in case unexpected guests or kin come to visit, a frequent occurrence. The pattern of "qolo" is very similar to that of a linguistically equivalent concept in Yemen. The Amhara makes it mostly of barley, "gebs qolo", but also of shembera and of maize.

[263] Condiments taken along on trips include an oily paste made of nug or linseed. When this is also spiced, salted, or mixed with honey, it is called "chelqa". It [272] resembles a gummy porridge. The traveller can mix it with water and instantly have a drink which is regarded not only as thirst-quenching, but also as strength-giving. However, no one claims that the taste is good.

264 There are two major meals per day: midday lunch, a light meal, though it may feature both "enjera" and "wot"; and the heavier supper, "erit", the main meal consumed in the cool of the early evening around the hearth of the hut, with bread, meat stew, barley beer and condiments. Breakfast as such is not eaten, except for a handful of roasted barley, and, if the household can afford it, black coffee.

273 Since fermenting mead is too specialized for the
[272] ordinary housewife and it must usually be bought, the peasant consumes his honey-drink more often as "barz", unfermented honey water, and this is what he offers an honored guest, in addition to barley beer. If the peasant consumes mead, he usually does it away from home, at the nearest big market or town where he has gone to sell his products. For two liters of mead he has to pay as much as he receives for an entire kilo of honey (ETH$1.- or US$0.40). He cannot usually afford more and leaves after one bottle.

In the fermentation of mead, "gēsho" or other hops mentioned are used. Six or seven parts of water to one part of honey, plus gesho, are stirred in a huge barrel or large imported tin can. This permits the tapping of the finished product at the bottom, as a jar would not. The first, lightly fermented mead is called "bätäha". Mead fermented several months to a year, more expensive and of higher prestige is "däräq" (lit. dry), a strong intoxicant.

272 Coffee is served black, after roasting, crushing and boiling in front of an honored guest. Salt may be added, African style, but never sugar (which, however, is added to imported tea drunk in towns). Milk is never added, but sometimes butter, even spiced butter. Coffee may grow wild, or may be purchased at the market: longberry from Harar, or from Jimma.

576 A significant culture trait is connected with the serving of any drink. The servant who pours, or the host himself in case of an honored guest, pours a small mouthful into his own cupped hand and drinks it publicly. This

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 815 177 [175] ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the water in places where the Anopheles breed."[25]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

*883 177 178 *Taste.*—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from extreme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions.

[262] Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward [272] [273] Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

*883 264 177 178 With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

*883 291 177 178 On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

*883 517 53 177 178 000 In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are preferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of

273 Nowadays the Coptic priests prepare wine for the eucharist in great secrecy, locked up in the beyta-lehem", the storehouse of the church, but it is believed that they use raisins purchased from Arab traders.

b. Animal Husbandry

233 The raising of livestock among the Amhara is not directly related to available pasture. The two factors that stand out are the importance of cattle for prestige and expression of wealth; the interrelatedness of livestock with the agricultural ecology and land use.

In the rainy season the valleys are usually waterlogged, and armed peasants take the cattle to the "dega" upland for several weeks of grazing. Obversely, in the dry season when the uplands and hilltops are parched, the cattle is taken to the valley to graze in and alongside riverbeds. Pasturage, "sed", is free--by agreement, usually within the "bota", somewhat vague territorial area belonging to the local church, feudal lord, etc. During the rainy season, the trek upland assumes semi-nomadic proportions at times, ("zallan"), for the peasants may take their wives, bigger children, and households along. Generally, if the fields are very fertile, the pasturage will be more distant from the hamlets. The dry season sometimes causes such severe drought that after the cattle has eaten the stubble off the harvested fields, the growth of calves comes to a temporary stop, there is no mating, and milk is reduced even to cessation. Fortunately

23 and form a new one. If he re-uses an old basket, he first sweeps out the larvae (ech) remnants, wax, etc., with the "nebasel" plant which the bees are said to like.

Sometimes as rapidly as six weeks later, the honey is ready for collecting. The hive is smoked out, and many bees perish. Some of the honey is retained at home and mix-
[272] ed with water to make non-alcoholic "berz" when honored
[373] guests come. The wax, to which some of the honey still adheres, is rolled over strong cotton or fiber thread and the resulting long thin candle is used in church to illuminate the readings and the processions.

Most of the honey is sold on the big "Saturday market", or directly to the woman in the nearest town who operates a "tedj byet", a mead house. To make it worth his while, a farmer should have at least five skeps-hives, from which he can realize 50 kilos of honey annually, for which he can obtain about $20. A very big keeper may have as many as 50 skeps, bringing him U.S. $200. for the honey.
[273] But the real profit is made by the woman owner of the tedj byet, who pays little for this honey, for gesho (fermenting agent) and for a big barrel to brew mead in, and then, after some months, sells her product, "tedj", a wine-like alcoholic drink, at a price that only noblemen, clerks, town officials, and Muslim traders can afford.

[278] The honey of the wild bee, "terb", is used against trachoma and other eye diseases. But "ghame" forbids the eating of such wild honey.

Civet cat has been "farmed" by some in certain districts for centuries, and the musk taken regularly from the

252 262 are raised in the housewife's kitchen garden. Every husband of pride claims to be able to distinguish the wot of his wife. Among spices used are:

263 [278] Ethiopian spices, raised by Amhara:

"Tena Adam" (lit. health of Adam), very aromatic. Important medicine against buda spirit (evil eye). This is Rue (Ruta graveolens, Ruta hortensis).

Fenugreek (Trigonella Foenumgroccum), called "Abush"

Coriander (Coriandrum sativum), "dembelal". Cheaper than "bärbärē and used to replace it.

Sweet Basil (Ocinum Basilicum), called "bäsobela" or "zäqa qebye"

Bärbärē, the all-important red peppery major garden crop.

Ginger, called "zendjebel". It is used unscraped.

[273] Caraway seed (Carum carvi) called "enselal", also used to make "araqi" intoxicant drink.

"Abusda", a dark seed resembling nug. Also called "tequr azmud".

Mustard seed, called "shenfa", ground to condiment.

Thyme, called "azmud", in light and dark varieties.

Wild Thyme, "tosen".

Garlic, called "näch shenkurt" (lit. white onion).

Spices used by Amhara, but bought on market, including those of Yemen importation:

Cardamon, called "korärima". (Elettaria paradise).

Saffron (Crocus sativus), called "erd", used to add golden orange color to reddish "wot".

Cumin (Cuminium cynisum), called "kamun".

252 Butter is made in a large gourd ("gurna"), plugged with a wooden prop. The housewife shakes this back and forth, much like Middle Eastern nomads shake it in skins. The butter that results resembles Indian ghee, and is called, at this stage, "gorränna". For human consumption it is then usually boiled with spices, especially bärbärey, but not with salt. To cure it further in order to make it sweet, delay rancidity, etc., butter (qebyë) is further boiled with one or several of the following spices in the process known as "yäqbyë mantäriya", "yäqebyë anäṭatär":

[263]

bark of ginger	- quaräfa zenjebel
cardamon seeds	- korärima
thyme	- azmud
garlic	- näch shenkurt
sweet basil	- bäsobela
saffron	- erd
wild thyme	- tosen

[302] Since most of these spices are expensive, butter intended for ornamental pomade of women's hair is boiled instead with leaves of the "ades" bush, which grows wild.

This process is "ades qernefad".

273 The most important, daily drink is tälla, the barley beer brewed by the housewife. It is little different, basically, from other African barley beers. Men almost never drink water (though the barley beer may be very weak), partly due to their fondness for "sweet", i.e. only slightly fermented beer. After three days of storage, the Amhara begin to complain that it is "too bitter", and let the women drink it up.

●273 The preparation proceeds in steps at long intervals (up to a year), but the final stage takes 1-2 days only, to prevent "bitter" taste. There is nearly as much discussion over which woman brews the best talla as of who makes the best wot, though the opportunity for individual recipes is much more limited.

In most cases, the fermenting agent is "gesho" (Ziziphus mitis), the leaf of a bush that is semi-domesticated, grown inside or near the hamlet. The shiny green leaves are dried. Then the housewife washes the big beer jars, dries them, fumigates them with olive wood for at least 15 minutes. She prepares the malt, "beqqel", by fermenting barley in water for 3 days, while in another jar she mixes sorghum varieties, dagussa, or zengada (Eleusina multiforma) with water, and lets it also ferment for 3 days. Then she dries and bakes the malt into bricklike consistency, and stores this "abshello" on the horizontal rafters of the hut, ready for quick use.

When consumption time nears, she breaks up some bricks of abshello into another freshly fumigated jar, adds gesho and some fresh "beqqel", and wets the mixture slightly. After 3 days it is ready for use. The morning of each day she takes some of it, places it in a big pot, and fills it with water taken from the river. After 6 hours of settling, the beer is ready for consumption. Leftovers (e.g. from feasts) begin to carbonize a bit after 3 days, and, just when the European begins to enjoy the slightly alcoholic drink, the Amhara declares it "bitter" and unfit.

Variations include: The use of other grains, even

●273 wheat, in place of barley, after roasting, grinding and baking. "ṭitta" leftovers may be used in place of abshello. A rich man may add honey at the final stage to increase the sweetness of the "ṭälla". To increase alcoholic content, mashella can be added. But for the average peasant it is more important to find ways of stretching the daily beer by watering it down, resulting in "asser weha", or "qerrara". A poor man who has no gesho plants and cannot afford to buy the leaves at the market, can gather leaves of the "qäčhämo" or "gerawa" plants which grow wild; also the root and bark of "ṭädjo" (Rhamnus straddo), but this is of low prestige. Interestingly enough, Muslim neighbors who are religiously forbidden alcohol, dispense with gēsho or other hops, and brew a light drink in similar fashion, called "bebun" or "qärbäbbo".

Much more alcoholic is mead made from fermented honey, "ṭädj" (which may possibly derive its name from the [554] wild hops). It is the drink of prestige, regularly consumed only by feudal lords, and available to peasants only for feasts. While barley beer is drunk from a cow's horn, [415] mead is imbibed from a widespread, imported "berelle", a small, long-necked, decanter-shaped glass bottle which first entered this area in the last century containing Turkish perfume, traded by Arabs for the ladies of "great men". It has practical advantages: the small opening lets wax and dead bees float to the surface where a flick of the thumb can remove them; and it is much harder for the ever-present flies to enter the bottle, especially since the tip of the thumb can seal it.

•273 [272] Since fermenting mead is too specialized for the ordinary housewife and it must usually be bought, the peasant consumes his honey-drink more often as "berz", unfermented honey water, and this is what he offers an honored guest, in addition to barley beer. If the peasant consumes mead, he usually does it away from home, at the nearest big market or town where he has gone to sell his products. For two liters of mead he has to pay as much as he receives for an entire kilo of honey (ETH$1.- or US$0.40). He cannot usually afford more and leaves after one bottle.

In the fermentation of mead, "gesho" or other hops mentioned are used. Six or seven parts of water to one part of honey, plus gesho, are stirred in a huge barrel or large imported tin can. This permits the tapping of the finished product at the bottom, as a jar would not. The first, lightly fermented mead is called "bätäha". Mead fermented several months to a year, more expensive and of higher prestige is "däräq" (lit. dry), a strong intoxicant.

272 Coffee is served black, after roasting, crushing and boiling in front of an honored guest. Salt may be added, African style, but never sugar (which, however, is added to imported tea drunk in towns). Milk is never added, but sometimes butter, even spiced butter. Coffee may grow wild, or may be purchased at the market: longberry from Harar, or from Jimma.

576 A significant culture trait is connected with the serving of any drink. The servant who pours, or the host himself in case of an honored guest, pours a small mouthful into his own cupped hand and drinks it publicly. This

524 pebble, thus becoming "owner" of position A6.

Now it is the turn of player A, who can begin anywhere he likes, palming one of his own pebbles, and proceeding as above until he conquers one opponent's position, alway proceeding counterclockwise. There are many variations to this basic procedure. E.g. it is possible to become "partial owner" of a position, in which case the dispute is settled by chance, e.g. by hiding a pebble in one hand and letting the other guess which hand hides it. The player who wins all the grooves wins the game. The loser is called "ayt bälla" (lit. the rat ate him).

This game is regarded as harmless, unless a person becomes so addicted to it that he wastes all his time at it.

273 517 Entertainment of adults, especially in the towns, often involves considerable consumption of barley beer, fermented honeymead, and even "araqi". The proverb interprets stages of behavior, in drinking, as follows:

"First cup : Rat", (When one drinks eagerly, like a rodent);

"Second cup : Bee", (When there is buzzing among pleasantly agitated drinkers);

"Third cup : Monkey", (Grimacing, laughing foolishly, sweeping arms);

"Fourth cup : Dog", (When drunkards howl, without control, or depressed).

275 487 There are three types of public facilities for relaxation, found in the market-towns; The teahouse, the beer-house, and the mead-house, all of which are sharply differentiated:

The teahouse ("shäy bet") is fully respectable; it is for men only, no women are supposed to enter it, and even the waiters are male. It is patronized by traders, clerks, minor officials (for high officials and nobles would not want to be seen consuming food or drink in public), police detectives, etc. Talk is largely of business matters and events of the day. The tea is consumed with a great deal of sugar dissolved in it, and a sweet condiment called "fül", probably of Arab introduction,

275 548 Even a prostitute would be ashamed to engage in one-night affairs, to engage in sexual activities coldly without at least some minimal affect. She is paid for her services after consumption, or tries to take the man's money while he is asleep, but will not aggressively demand advance payment. Therefore, customers who may develop an interest in the same waitress-prostitute, not rarely fight for her affection, temporary though it is. No prostitute would take more than one man in one night, not only because this would be very shameful, but also her competitors would beat her for such unethical behavior. In the past the "täj bet" was publicly advertised by a red cross painted on the outside wall. During the Italian occupation, protests of the International Red Cross caused removal of this sign, but one still encounters it in remoter areas.

●273 [77] The use of an even stronger drink, "arägi" (arrak), the only distilled drink among traditional beverages, is very likely of Arab introduction; It is on the increase in towns because of exposure to strong European liquor during the Italian occupation, but is not made or consumed in the rural hamlets, not even on feasts. In the towns it is made, usually to fill specific orders, by the wives of soldiers or policemen, to add to the meager income of the husbands, whose salary of Eth$20 - 25 is lower than that of the unskilled laborer (Eth$30 - per month). It is produced from "enselal" caraway seeds, gesho (leaf f fermentation), semi-fermented barley ("beggel") and dagussa grain, of which are crushed, mixed with water, dagussa plant is added, and the fermented mixture is boiled for 10 hours, distilled through a bamboo reed. The finished product is carried, in a European glass bottle, to the customer directly, e.g. the owner of the "täj bet", and is consumed, because of the higher price, by semi-educated clerks and officials with good salaries, or travelling traders or army or

273 police officers. The visiting peasants, who have just sold the harvest, stick to mead, which, for their taste, is alcoholic enough and expensive enough.

The person who pays for a round of drinks is loudly lauded as "elephant", king of African animals. The "tāj bēt" is usually the gayest place in town, well-lit, open until very late at night, equipped with nimble waitresses who, contrary to the usual pattern of female behavior, lightly flirt with the customers, in a semi-childish (therefore subordinate) way.

273 177 In recent years, exposure to European alcoholic beverages in the cities had led to attempts to replace thehoney used in "taj" with cheaper sugar, and to add other ingredients to raise the alcoholic content. This is done in many mead-houses in Addis Ababa, but is rejected by the traditional conoisseur, especially in provincial towns like Gondar. Even in the city this is regarded as dangerous, for no one knows just what the experimenter may have added. One common police case is the adding of gasoline to city barley-beer or mead, which competitors sometimes have placed into the competitor's brew so as to ruin her business. An early effect of the exposure to European alcoholic beverages was reported humorously in the 1920's, when the private brewer of the powerful provincial lord Ras Hailu of Gojjam attempted to champagnize the traditional mead (footnote 99).

276 Consumption of tobacco ("tembaho"), which is called "drinking tobacco" if smoked, is still regarded as forbidden by the Abyssinian Coptic clergy, and is therefore rare among Amhara, except for those modern-educated individuals who have been abroad. The latter smoke cigarettes turned out by Ethiopian government monopoly in Addis Ababa.

Footnote 99 - Griaule, M.: D'un Mode Aberrant de Conservation de l'hydromel au Godjam. Journal de la Societe des Africanistes, IV, Fasc 2, pp. 278-284, Paris, 1934.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XII.—*Where and how the bread of the Sacrament is made, and of a Procession they made, and of the pomp with which the mass is said, and of entering into the church.*

782 The making of this sacramental bread is in this manner.
252 The building in which it is made, in all churches and
[346] monasteries, is, as I said above, on the gospel side, outside of the church and its circuit, which is like a cloister, in the space contained by the other outer circuit, which is not covered in, which space serves for a churchyard. All the churches and monasteries have such a building, and it does not contain anything else except what is requisite for this purpose; that is to say, a mortar for pounding wheat, a machine for making very clean flour, and such as is required for such a purpose, for they do not prepare this sacrament from flour or wheat on which women have laid their hands. They have pots for preparing the paste, which they make thicker than ours. They have a furnace, as for distilling water, and upon it a plate of iron, and in some churches of copper, and in other poor churches of clay. This plate is round and of a good size; they place fire underneath it, and when it is hot clean it with a waxed cloth, pour on it a portion of paste, and spread it out with a wooden spoon of such size as they intend to make the bread, and they make it very round. When it is set they take it off and place it on end, then they make another in the same way. When this second one is set, they take the first and place it upon it, that is to say, the side of the first which was uppermost they put upon the top of the other, fresh with fresh, and so the bread remains one whole one, and they do nothing more than make it round and turn it from one side to the other, and move it about on the plate, that it may bake on both sides and on the circumference. In this manner they make one or as many as they wish. In this same
[273] house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a machine for pressing.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

In this country there are in some parts very flat lands, and in others mountainous; and altogether they are fruitful lands. There are no snowy ranges, but withal severe frosts, especially in the flat lands. In all the lands there is great breeding of cattle. 133 [231]

He says that he did not see the river Nile, and he reached to two days' journey from it, and the days' journey which they went were small ones, namely, four or five leagues, a little more or less. But some of those in his company reached its source, and they say that it rises in the Kingdom of Gojame, and its source is in great lakes, and where it rises there are islands, and thence it commences its course and goes to Egypt.

The time when the Nile rises in Egypt is (as they say) from the 15th day of September and later, and in all October; and the reason of this is, because the winter of Ethiopia begins from the middle of June to the middle of September, and on account of the great rains which take place in it without this winter ever changing, the Nile overflows in Egypt at that time.

It is the general custom of Prester John and all the people for no man on horseback to pass a church, but before they reach it they dismount, and so pass it, and lead their beasts by the bridles, and after passing they mount. 492 576

When Prester John and all his people travel, the altar and the altar stone on which mass is said, all goes on the shoulders of the priests as on a litter, and there go eight priests with each altar by turns, that is, four and four: and a priest goes in front of them with a thurible, and further in front a zagonay ringing a bell, and all the people go away from the road, and those that are on horses dismount, and show reverence to the altar stone or altar. 484

There is no grape wine there, more than in two houses, where it is made publicly, namely, in the house of Prester John and the house of the Patriarch Abima Marcos; and if 273

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

273 any other is made, it is secretly. The wine with which mass is said in all the churches and monasteries is made in this manner. They take raisins which they have stored in the sacristies and they put them to soak in water for ten days, and they swell, and they let them dry, and they crush them and press them in a cloth, and with that wine which comes out they say mass.[1]

231 The horses, natives of the country of Prester John, are many and not good, for they are like Gallician beasts; those which come from Arabia are very good, like Moorish horses; those from Egypt are much better, very tall and big and handsome. Many lords breed horses from the mares they get from Egypt in their stables. In this manner, namely, when they are born, they do not suck the mother more than three days, and they at once put the mares to the horses[2]; and they tie up the little colts somewhat apart from the mothers, and they keep for them many milch cows, and give them their milk to drink.

DEO GRATIAS.

[1] The Malabar Christians had the same custom. See Duarte Barbosa.
[2] *As mais acavalanas logo.*

[pp. 413-416 have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

The Abyssinians receive the holy sacrament in both kinds, in unleavened bread, and in the grape bruised with the husk together as it grows, so that it is a kind of marmalade, and is given in a flat spoon. Whatever they may pretend, some mixture seems necessary to keep it from fermentation in the state that it is in, unless the dried cluster is fresh bruised just before it is used; for it is little more fluid than the common marmalade of confectioners; but it is perfectly the grape as it grew, bruised stones and skin together. Some means, however, have been used, as I suppose, to prevent fermentation, and make it keep; and though this is constantly denied, I have often thought I tasted with a flavour that was not natural to the grape itself. 796 782

It is a mistake that there is no wine in Abyssinia; for a quantity of excellent strong wine is made at Dreeda, south-west from Gondar about thirty miles, which would more than supply the quantity necessary for the celebration of the eucharist in all Abyssinia twenty times over. The people themselves are not fond of wine, and plant the vine in one place only; and in this they have been imitated by the Egyptians, their colony; but a small black grape, of an excellent flavour, grows plentifully wild in every wood in Tigre. 273

Large pieces of bread are given to the communicants, in proportion to their quality; and I have seen great men, who, though they open their mouths as wide as conveniently a man can do, yet from the respect the priest bore him, such a portion of the loaf was put into his mouth, that water ran from his eyes, from the incapacity of chewing it; which, however, he does as indecently, and with full as much noise, as he eats at table. 796 782

After receiving the sacrament of the eucharist in

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

four cuba for a pataka, each cuba about two rotol, or somewhat less. Butter, 20 rotol, for 1½ pataka, and 3½ harf. Civet, 1¼ pataka the wakea. Wax, 4 patt. the faranzola. Elephants teeth, 35 rotol for 18 patt. Water, 1½ paras the smallest jar, and 3 paras the largest. Abyssinian gold dust, 15 patt. per wakea, at Mocha. Dora, 12 measures for a pataka. The Venetian sequin goes for 2¼ patakas. 435 804

The Abyssinian grain measure is the ardeb, which, at Gondar, contains 10 measures, called Madega, each equal to 12 ounces, Cairo weight. An ardeb of grain costs 2 derims, or 2 patakas; an ardeb of teff, the same; 6 or 8 ardeb of tocusso pay an ounce (wakea) of gold, or 10 derims.

Servants Wages at Gondar *. At Gondar a maid-servant receives 15 salts per annum, and is fed in the house. A man-servant is paid 4 pataka yearly, which correspond to four wakea, or ounces of gold, Abyssinian weight, and receives besides two loaves, or cakes of teff, for his support daily. If his master is good, he sometimes gives him a little flesh, lentils, or vetches. He is not obliged to clothe him, but he sometimes gives him a pair of trowsers, which consist of about one-fourth of a yard of white cloth. 465 357

With respect to carriage, &c. three bundles of wood, which are brought from Tchagassa, three hours walking, cost a salt. The carriage of a jar, or manteca, full of wine, or honey, from Emfras, eight hours journey, pays a salt, of the weight of 3 faranzala, or so. 435 482

Thirty-three teff bread cost a salt; the loaves are about 3 lines thick, and 18 inches diameter. A pair of shoes (pantufle) cost a salt. 8¼ peeks of cloth is the least gift that can be offered in the country. 435

Bouza. Manner in which the Abyssinians make a kind of beer, that, in their language, is called bouza. 273

To make this, they use tocusso simply; but sometimes they mix it with grain (wheat), or dora, or all three together; but in ordinary tocusso is best. A jar of tocusso, or of the three sorts of grain, contains as much as is sufficient to make two loaves, that are a tenth part of the whole jar; besides which, they use about half a rotol of Ghesh leaves.

* From this, to the 29th line of page 68, is a translation from the Italian of L. Balugani.

[p. 47]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

●273 The first part of the process is to grind the tocusso, after which they take a fourth part of it, and knead it with water and leaven, as if to make bread. This they put in a jar to ferment for two days, at the end of which they make a good many thin large cakes, and dry them on the fire till they become as hard as a stone, then break them down into crumbs, and put them in a large vessel full of water, capable of holding six times the volume of the grain; or for one jar of grain, the vessel holds five of water, and one for the quantity of grain. At the same time that they put in the bruised bread, as above-mentioned, into that quantity of water, the other things should be got ready to go in also. The grain ought to be fermented for two days, then dried in the sun, and afterwards ground into meal. The Ghesh leaves are ground likewise. The remainder of the meal, or those three-fourths that were not used to make the bread, must be put into a hollow oven, over a fire, with a small quantity of water, and constantly stirred with a stick, until it become a paste; and when the water is dried up, more is put in, constantly stirring the mass until it become black like a coal. The whole so prepared, the crumbs, the mass, and the leaves, are put together into the large jar, and let alone for a day, after which it is poured off, and preserved in jars well stopped. At the end of seven or eight days this liquor begins to be too strong, and is best when fresh, two or three days old.

584 [581] *Marriage.* Marriage is not considered in Abyssinia as a sacrament, yet the church ordains some rules to be observed, in order that the man and the woman may be faithful towards one another. The ordinary method of marriage among people of condition, and among those who most fear God, is the following: The man, when he resolves to marry a girl, sends some person to her father to ask his daughter in marriage. It seldom happens that she is refused; and when she is granted, the future husband is called into the girl's house, and an oath is taken reciprocally by the parties, that they will maintain due fidelity to one another. Then the father of the bride presents to the bridegroom the fortune that he will give: it consists of a particular sum of gold, some oxen, sheep, or horses, &c. according to the circumstances of the people. Then the bridegroom is obliged to find surety

p. 48

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

276 Moslem one and was accordingly originally condemned by the Church.

On the other hand they make up for this privation 273 by a pretty free indulgence in their own home-made hydromel (*tej*), beer (*talla*), and spirits (*araki*), and also in fearsome alcoholic preparations distilled by some of the small Greek traders in Addis.

Tej, their principal drink, is home-made by nearly every family; this is manufactured from honey, which is to be found in great quantities in most parts of Abyssinia, and is fermented by means of an evergreen plant called *guecho* or *geshu*. When well made and matured it is a very pleasant beverage; to the native it is an intoxicant, and during the feast days one meets many who have partaken well but not too wisely of it.

538 Since Adam your lip did eat of that Tree
539 The Savior my heart has been hung up for thee.
19

In this couplet the wax of Adam's sin and Christ's crucifixion in his behalf has been used as a form in which to pour a love message. A literal translation of the wax of the couplet is:

Because Adam ate of the apple from the Tree of Knowledge
The Savior of the World has been crucified for thee.

To savor the gold of the couplet fully, one must know that the verb meaning "was crucified," *tasaqala*, may also signify "is anxious to be near." So a literal translation of the gold would be:

Because of your [tempting] lips
My heart is anxious to be near thee.

538 In other more commonly used figures, the duplexity of the message be-
19 comes less explicit. In figures known as *hīber and merīmer*, the wax and gold are combined in the same word or phrase instead of being put side by side. These figures thus correspond to the English pun. In verses which employ these figures the wax is often but a contrived and transparent excuse for getting to the real point, which appears only in the pun line. Such verses are
[522] highly prized, however, for the Amhara tends to regard the pun as a very high form of humor. Here are two examples of Amharic couplets based on
538 simple puns:
539
522
19

(1) *Ya-mīn ṭiqem ṭallā ya-mīn ṭiqem ṭajji*
Tallāt sishañu bunā adargaw enji.

Of what use is *ṭallā*, of what use is *ṭajji*?*
When seeing an enemy off, serve him coffee.

(2) *Yābbāt eddā la-lijj yebāl nabar dero:*
Bāyāt eddā gabāhu ennē-mā sandero.

In olden times a father's debt was passed down to his son;
But here I have a debt today by grandfather begun.

The pun in the first example lies in the phrase *bunā adargaw* ("serve him coffee"), which by elision becomes *bun adargaw* ("reduce him to ashes"). In the second couplet the pun hinges on the word *bāyat*, which signifies "grandfather" but may also be understood to represent *bāyhuāt* ("because I saw her"). The gold meaning of this couplet is thus: It used to be said that one inherited the debt of one's father, but in my case it was the sight of her that put me into debt.

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[273] * *Tallā* is a kind of beer made from barley. *Ṭajj* (pronounced *ṭajji* here for the sake of rhyme) is mead.

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*565 571 Still another invidious distinction of considerable importance in the Amhara outlook is that between the "big man" (*ṭillīq saw*) and the commoner (*terā saw*). "Bigness" may be measured in terms of political power, economic wealth, ecclesiastical status, or any combination thereof. Though the peasant frequently has little affection for the big man, he customarily treats him with the greatest show of deference. No matter how unfamiliar a big man may be or from what part of the country he comes, the Amhara peasant sees him as entitled to unquestioning courtesy and obeisance. Analogous distinctions discriminate between the wealthy (*hābtām*) and the poor (*dehā*), and between the genteel (*çhawā*) and the rude (*bālagē*).

192 828 Yet if the Amhara takes a dim view of women, youth, and poor folk, as well as non-Amhara and non-Christians, he suffers from no illusions about homo sapiens at his best—unless they are dark illusions. The generic word for "man" in Amharic, *saw*, is the subject of a number of negative associations and idiomatic uses.[12] At its worst, the word is found in an idiom that signifies the evil eye (*ya-saw ayn*), literally: the "eye of man" (or, more idiomatically, "the eye of others"). At its best, when used to signify a fully formed human being, the word *saw* characteristically appears in the plaintive saying, *Saw yallam* ("there is no human being"); in other words, an individual who fully embodies the concept of humanity does not exist. In general, one may say that the Amhara's view of human nature is dominated by his perception of man's inherent aggressiveness and untrustworthiness.

828 861 [785] The Amhara believes that unformed human nature is poor raw material, and that without strict punishment throughout childhood a person will grow up to be rude and offensive toward others. As an adult, moreover, he must constantly be kept in check. The rationale commonly given for the extensive schedule of fasting is that man's nature is wicked, and only by weakening himself in this manner will he be turned away from some act of aggression against others.

828 261 273 The Amharic concept of *ṭegābaññā* illustrates this view. *Ṭegābaññā* literally carries the meaning of one who has been sated with food and drink, but is normally taken to mean someone who begins to insult and pick fights with others. In their use of this and related words the Amhara express the belief that aggression is the usual consequence of being sated. Insubordinate behavior on the part of a servant or political appointee is usually explained as a result of his having been too well fed. "When a peasant gets sated he hits with his stick. . . " is the first line of a number of couplets I collected among rural Amhara. The specific effect of drinking alcoholic beverages is believed to release, not Eros, but the aggressive instincts. An Amharic proverb about *ṭellā* [539] states this directly: "One [glass] whets the appetite; two quenches it; three heats one up; four makes one quarrel; five brings fighting; six causes killing." Contrary to the view that world peace depends chiefly on filling

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people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war. 828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance. 565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā*, or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin." 565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz*, a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days. 565* 461 [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[18] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

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178 ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians
815 know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the
177 water in places where the Anopheles breed."[28]
[175]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

*883 *Taste.*—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from ex-
177 treme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring
178 both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions.

Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of
[262] which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward
[272] Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages
[273] are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second:

*883 With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in
264 that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their
177 hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer
178 eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

*883 On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have
291 sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But
177 because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and
178 using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

*883 In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according
517 to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are pre-
53 ferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more
177 popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of
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565 554 The local nobility, on the other hand, were eminences whose lives and reputations were bound to a more circumscribed locale. While the non-royal nobility, or *makuānnent* in the stricter sense, performed as high dignitaries at the imperial court and governors of large provinces, the local nobility were district chiefs and judges, or even simply wealthy landowners, who enjoyed considerable deference. Though they might not be known outside of their home regions, these men were, for the mass of the population, the lords of existence. *Ka-Gondar negus / yāgar āmbārās,* "the petty district chief [is obeyed] more than the Gondar king"[19] expresses folk wisdom on the subject. The Amharic terms which designate this class of men are *bālābbāt* and *shum,* terms we shall want to consider more closely below.

565 184 Despite these distinctions among members of the upper stratum of Abyssinian society, with respect to their general orientation and style of life they differed only in degree. They created and shared what might be called a "gentry subculture," even though it was not so differentiated from the general culture as was the case in Europe and China. In the present context, it will be meaningful to treat them as a single status group.

565 184 86 [576] Special manners and skills were self-consciously taught to children of the *makuānnent,* most of which remain part of the gentry subculture today. An etiquette of instinctual inhibition is taught. Some attention is given, for example, to toilet training, which is spontaneous among peasant children. Spitting in public is proscribed. Physical aggression is discouraged in favor of the more subtle forms of satire and patient manipulation of others. A quiet, reserved manner of speaking is stressed, in contrast with the less inhibited and cruder self-expression of the peasantry. Dignity of comportment is expected at all times; a noble should not, for example, express great enthusiasm or surprise over anything. Sobriety is inculcated as a virtue; alcohol is *la-çhawā lĭjj* [293] *mādasetchā / la-bālagē māzabābatchā* ("for the nobleman's son a stimulant, for the commoner an intoxicant"). In short, the gentry subculture stresses the general ideal of bringing a child up to be conspicuously genteel, or *çhawā.*

565 184 868 [871] [534] [883] Sons of the nobility have traditionally followed a privileged curriculum.[20] They were given lessons in horseback riding and weaponry at an early age. They were also taught how to swim, an uncommon skill among the Abyssinians. Reading would often be taught, for which schooling a man of the church might be brought in as a tutor, or the boy might be sent for a while to a monastery. He might also learn how to play the *baganā,* the ten-stringed lyre used to accompany certain forms of religious and plaintive secular songs. Instead of spending his teen-age years at the plow, which was regarded as beneath his dignity, the noble boy would follow his father to court and observe the ways of litigation and the manner of passing judgments; or he might be sent as a page to the court of the king or some great lord.

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The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *çhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *ṭajj*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *ṭallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics. 565 184 868 [567] [273]

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dājāzmātch Hailu*, meaning "Dajāzmātch Hailu and his men." 565 576

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics. 565 [142]

Conspicuous consumption among the *makuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions: 565 592 357 556

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

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565 The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of
[644] course, the imperial court. The *makuännent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discretion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but
[492] on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shoulder-
[231] ing spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-
[273] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *tajj* pre-
[292] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos*, the dark wool cloak of the
[822] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-
[293] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abyssinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for
554 instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mäerg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The
554 *makuännent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary
701 Amharic the term *makuännent* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

räs	"head" (of an army)
dajäzmätch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitäwrari**	"general of the vanguard"
qaññäzmätch	"general of the right wing"
geräzmätch	"general of the left wing"
bälämbäräs	"commander of a fort"
bäshä†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shälaqä	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitäwrari* ranked below the *geräzmätch*.

[192] † *Bäshä* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

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793 and misreading sacred texts in a language they have never understood. They
[293] are notorious drinkers, so much so that a modern Ethiopian novelist has one of his characters, a priest, ask: "If one stops drinking, what else is left in this world?"[44]

Nevertheless, the prestige of the priests was unassailable in Amhara culture. Whatever their personal life, they represented the value of ritual sanctity, which made it possible for the Mass to be performed in the local churches. So long as they had been duly ordained and did not break their lawful marriage bond, they were part of a sacred class. Combes and Tamisier remarked upon this in the 1830's:

> Despite all their vices, these priests manage to make themselves respected; when they pass along the roads, the faithful bow deeply to them, and in no matter what gathering they appear, everyone rises and hurries to kiss their hands.[45]

793 Privileged contact with the sacred symbols of the church—ordination by the
798 sacrosanct *abuna*, exclusive access to the *tābot*, and officiation at the Eucharist —gave the priests an authority that was independent both of political dispensation and of personal accomplishment.

793 Other groups within the clergy have been highly esteemed for quite differ-
792 ent reasons. Those who become monks carry great weight because they embody the virtue of ascetic piety. The *dabtarā*, on the other hand, are respected for their erudition.

792 Monks usually come from two kinds of background: unwed deacons desiring to spend their lives as monks, and priests whose wives have died. But previous ecclesiastical connection is not necessary for the monastic calling, nor is the ability to read required. The essential qualification is the willingness to renounce the world. The word for becoming a monk (*manakwasa*) means to renounce earthly things. A prospective monk may be of the sort described by one of Walker's informants:

> An old man who has married many wives and divorced them one by one, may say, "Henceforth it suffices me! Let the world remain lost to me! I am to turn my face to God!"[46]

In earlier times the monastic life was sought by men from all walks of life, including lords, soldiers, even emperors, in consequence of some grievous affliction, or perhaps a vow made in time of trouble, or excessive *Weltschmerz*.

Heads of monasteries have the jurisdiction to confer the monastic status. One who desires this status bequeathes his worldly possessions and goes
[292] through a ceremony in the church in which his body is declared dead. The symbol of the monastic state is a little cloth skullcap (*askēma*). Once he has become a monk, an Ethiopian is a legal nonentity. This frees him from all

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Amharic proverb, and even the Emperor when visiting a school expects students to remain seated if they are at the dining table when he arrives. 155 261 [264]

Some indication of the comparative significance of this concern about eating and drinking in the Amhara psyche is afforded by a recent cross-cultural investigation of dreams. Obtained from samples of young male respondents in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the United States, the dreams were evaluated with respect to the presence or absence of themes of "manifest orality": scenes of someone desiring, looking for, or consuming food or drink. The proportion of Ethiopian respondents (mostly Orthodox Amhara from the Gondar area) who revealed manifest orality in their dreams was found to be *64 per cent*. By contrast, the proportion of those in a sample of non-Muslim Nigerians whose dreams showed manifest orality was 38 per cent, and that in the sample of Americans was only 22 per cent.[11]

The Amhara custom of giving *gurshā* plays up the erotic component of eating. *Gurshā* means "mouthful" and, as already noted, refers to a wad of food which one places in another's mouth, usually as a gesture of affection. *Gurshā* are exchanged between husband and wife and among relatives and friends. They are often given to children, especially in families of higher status, and to favored servants and retainers as well. The *gurshā* is of such meaning in Amhara experience that it is referred to in a number of Amharic idioms. First of all it means a present or a tip—literally, *pourmanger*. It also refers to the charge of a gun: the gun is a beloved object, and a *gurshā* is what one places in its mouth. In contemporary usage, it refers to flashlight batteries. 155 261 264 [196]

In connection with love and many other subjects, a good deal of the imagery of Amharic verse relates in one way or another to eating and drinking. The following sample of proverbs and couplets may convey some of the flavor of this phenomenon: 261 271 155 539

*Ṭajj** has no specks; a poor man has no friends.

• • •

[Use] proverbs in conversation; [drink] *ṭajj* in a carafe.

• • •

Hand and fly-whisk; mouth and *injarā*† [go together].

• • •

No matter how much one plows, nothing tastes so good as *goman*.‡

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* *Ṭajj*, it may be remembered, is the Ethiopian wine made of honey. [273]

† *Injarā* is the staple pancake. [262]

‡ *Goman* is a kind of cabbage plant that requires no plow cultivation. [244]

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
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539

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[176] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

574 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
[554] *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
152

[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *ĭnjarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

524 pebble, thus becoming "owner" of position A6.

Now it is the turn of player A, who can begin anywhere he likes, palming one of his own pebbles, and proceeding as above until he conquers one opponent's position, alway proceeding counterclockwise. There are many variations to this basic procedure. E.g. it is possible to become "partial owner" of a position, in which case the dispute is settled by chance, e.g. by hiding a pebble in one hand and letting the other guess which hand hides it. The player who wins all the grooves wins the game. The loser is called "ayt bälla" (lit. the rat ate him).

This game is regarded as harmless, unless a person becomes so addicted to it that he wastes all his time at it.

273 517 Entertainment of adults, especially in the towns, often involves considerable consumption of barley beer, fermented honeymead, and even "araqi". The proverb interprets stages of behavior, in drinking, as follows:

"First cup : Rat", (When one drinks eagerly, like a rodent);

"Second cup : Bee", (When there is buzzing among pleasantly agitated drinkers);

"Third cup : Monkey", (Grimacing, laughing foolishly, sweeping arms);

"Fourth cup : Dog", (When drunkards howl, without control, or depressed).

275 487 There are three types of public facilities for relaxation, found in the market-towns; The teahouse, the beer-house, and the mead-house, all of which are sharply differentiated:

The teahouse ("shay bet") is fully respectable; it is for men only, no women are supposed to enter it, and even the waiters are male. It is patronized by traders, clerks, minor officials (for high officials and nobles would not want to be seen consuming food or drink in public), police detectives, etc. Talk is largely of business matters and events of the day. The tea is consumed with a great deal of sugar dissolved in it, and a sweet condiment called "fol", probably of Arab introduction,

275 is served with it. Traders and travellers often stop by during the day,
487 and the place usually closes not long after sundown.

275 The barley-beer house ("talla byet") is still fairly respectable
487 for people of commoner and lower classes, but not for respected elders
265 or priests. It is operated by women, either matronly married women or "unattached girls", i.e. divorcees. It serves not only as dispenser of beer, but also serves full meals, so that the travelling trader is dependent on it. For as little as Eth. $0.25 (U.S. 10 cents) the patron may obtain a minimal meal of enjara bread, 2 liters of talla beer, and all the roast chickpeas and roasted barley ("qolo") he can eat; meatstew costs more. Often such a restaurant contains an extra room with a bed for the weary traveller to sleep in, and such an inn is then called "meshta byet" (lit. accommodation house, from "mesht" or "mest", meaning wife), for the traveller has no difficulty in securing a temporary wife for the duration of his local stay, among the divorcees.

275 The mead-house ("taj byet") does not even have the minimal
548 respectability of the talla byet. It is operated strictly for entertainment, i.e. drinking and sexual pleasures. For the owner, usually a clever, middleaged townswoman, it represents one of the few ways of amassing capital and becoming one of the wealthiest local citizens. She controls her waitresses much as a madam would. To protect herself from brawls, which are not infrequent, she also employs, - though they are kept out of sight so as not to frighten off customers, - one or several husky bouncers. The proverb says:

[539]

"In the prostitute's house,
all the time a scuffle."

For, even in prostitution a pretense of "temporary wife" is made.

275 548 Even a prostitute would be ashamed to engage in one-night affairs, to engage in sexual activities coldly without at least some minimal affect. She is paid for her services after consumption, or tries to take the man's money while he is asleep, but will not aggressively demand advance payment. Therefore, customers who may develop an interest in the same waitress-prostitute, not rarely fight for her affection, temporary though it is. No prostitute would take more than one man in one night, not only because this would be very shameful, but also her competitors would beat her for such unethical behavior. In the past the "täj bet" was publicly advertised by a red cross painted on the outside wall. During the Italian occupation, protests of the International Red Cross caused removal of this sign, but one still encounters it in remoter areas.

273 [77] The use of an even stronger drink, "äräqi" (arrak), the only distilled drink among traditional beverages, is very likely of Arab introduction; It is on the increase in towns because of exposure to strong European liquor during the Italian occupation, but is not made or consumed in the rural hamlets, not even on feasts. In the towns it is made, usually to fill specific orders, by the wives of soldiers or policemen, to add to the meager income of the husbands, whose salary of Eth$20 - 25 is lower than that of the unskilled laborer (Eth$30 - per month). It is produced from "enselal" caraway seeds, gesho (leaf f fermentation), semi-fermented barley ("beccel") and dagussa grain, of which are crushed, mixed with water, dagussa plant is added, and the fermented mixture is boiled for 10 hours, distilled through a bamboo reed. The finished product is carried, in a European glass bottle, to the customer directly, e.g. the owner of the "täj bet", and is consumed, because of the higher price, by semi-educated clerks and officials with good salaries, or travelling traders or army or

276 The Muslims, who smoke freely, even in the provincial towns, especially in the Arab or Muslim-operated teahouses, follow a variety of ways of consuming tobacco. Some use a brown snuff tobacco, "semqan" or "surat"; a few even chew "chat", a stimulant drug chewed in the original leaf, which is far more common in southern Ethiopia. This is held in low prestige by the Amhara, who associate the consumption of traditional tobacco and chat with the customs of Shanqalla and Sudanese ex-slaves. In the 1870's the fanatically orthodox Emperor John, who later died fighting the invading Muslem Mahdi, even forbade the raising of tobacco, but since then it is grown again in small patches in and near towns.

517 The high point of traditional entertainment and recreation is still the traditional feast, the "deges" (or "gebber"), featuring special material enjoyments such as raw beef and fermented honeymead; and such emotional enjoyments as watching azmari performers do their shoulder dance, their high-pitched song-chants, to traditional musical accompaniment; and, perhaps, receiving a "gursha" from the "great man" (telleq säw). On less intense occasions, picnics in the countryside and recreational promenading ("shengher"), are still the major forms of adult recreation in the long dry season.

275 Not only shame, but also fear, keep many peasants and townsmen out of the "täj-byet". Many a peasant, intending merely to take one drink, stays until after dark, then, fearing robbery on his way home or the sharp tongue of his wife, succumbs to the "consolation" of the waitresses; and wakes up the next morning without any of his harvest money. Therefore, travellers prefer to lodge with an "unattached woman", whom they may encounter at a beer-house (tälla byet) and who will serve as temporary wife.

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632 once-weekly market, staggered, so that the market days of over-lapping spheres do not coincide. Peasant exchange at these markets tend to be "sectional" in character; that is to say, producer-sellers bring regional specialties (such as cotton and high quality cayenne from kola lands; cereals, fresh vegetables, and livestock from highland farms), or occupational specialties (such as Falasha iron mongery and pots; the leather goods of the Fakiy, a largely endogamous artisan group). In addition to local products, peasants come to purchase imported goods (especially clothing) and the produce of distant parts of the Empire (such as salt bars from the Danakil Depression). The market is also the peasant's tie to the world market, to which he sends cattle and cattle hides.

The large market towns, with their numerous consumer crowds, offer important economic inducements to
[275] the peasant marketeer. Beyond these economic functions,
[548] the large town offers diversions and attractions unavailable in the peasant's home parish---exotic surroundings, the temporary fellowship and entertainment of beer houses and mead halls, and the sexual companionship of the town's numerous prostitutes.

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796 The town also attracts peasant visitors on matters unrelated to the market place. The monthly feast days of various saints of the Coptic Church are occasions for special celebrations, and these attract peasants, out of

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Nähase 1 to Nähase 30	August 7 to Sept. 5	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some sow a bit of tyäff and "Adja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Selassye"); parade, despite rain, with "tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Buhe", "Debrä Tabor") feast, with torch-light parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeraf") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger children badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his name-sake; flags, etc.
Pagumeä 2	Sept. 6	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Wägadrea" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "lefafa sedeq", scroll; bathe.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	
3	8					
4	9					
5	10					

789 where the thief had slept, until he was caught.
694 The thiefcatcher directed this procedure, but did not drug himself. For that puppose he selected a boy about the age of a deacon, i.e. 10 to 15, for it was believed that puberty spoiled the sensitivity and "unblemished innocence" of the boy. This boy was never taught the secret of his power. Often he was a young slave (more recently ex-slave), who had been selected on account of his particular suggestibility. It was be-
[276] lieved that years of this repeated drugging made him a permanent addict, slowed his mental functions and even sent him occasionally into raving fits; so that a person who had served as "tracer" for the lebashay could not be a witness in court.

When complaint of a theft reached the lēbashay from within his "territory", he went to the ḉheqa shum or other local administrative official, and asked permission to begin his investigation. Together, they as well as the local "aṭbiya danya" judge and witnesses (if it was grand larceny) went to the place where the crime had been committed. The boy, young enough never to have had manly sexual intercourse with a woman, was now given the drug to drink. The lēbashay tied the boy's waist with a girdle, leaving 3 to 4 yards hanging down, (to be used later to maintain control like a chain in curbing a dog).

The boy was now given a hornful of milk to drink, in which a black powder from the medicine bag had been dissolved. It did not take long before the boy began

793 Parish priests, (unlike mämhär scholars) are also
[66] not bashful about demanding their due (produce tithe, sheep, honey, even cash) from their tenants of church land. Sardonic peasant humor expresses this in the proverb:

[539] "The bashful priest,
the blind donkey,
(are one)" . (i.e. both would be helpless and starve to death).

532 Among artisans who do specialist work for the
346 church is the artist of church paintings, usually highly colorful and realistic scenes from the suffering of the saints, in morbid and gory detail; the beauties of heaven and the trinity; the horrors of hell ruled by a chained, soul-munching Satan; etc. These religious and semi-religious story illustrations and legends are painted on canvas and then attached to the inside of church walls.

874 Church students are usually boys 10 years or over (never girls), who at first learn the Geez-Amharic alphabet, reading Geez without translating, beginning with the Epistle of the Apostle John. They are taught by rote, memorizing by chanting the portions out loud. There is very little writing in the early grades, and experimentation is traditionally discouraged, for fear that the boys might use their new-won learning to write magic amulets. Before examinations, church studetns stimulate
874 their mental processes by eating the leaf of a Datura
●276 weed resembling Jimson weed called "astänager" (lit. to stimulate talk) which is also used by däbtära in exor-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

874 [278] cising the bewitched, and which seems to have an effect similar to benzedrine.

Examinations include fluency in reading Geez and in reciting by heart Gospels, Lives of Saints, and Ethics ("sirak"), the last particularly in the upper grades. In still higher grades they learn devotional poetry ("qene"), including composition, and "zäma", church liturgical music in correct tones and notes.

874 792 For more advanced study, the boys interested in a career in the church have to go to monastery schools. At the old and famous Amhara monastery of Dabra Libanos the number of students may reach 500 at any given time. They earn their keep by serving the monks, begging in the vicinity, and eating as much as they can when a noble family arrives to give a memorial feast, "täzkar", in honor of a departed soul. Often the students do not possess a good shamma, and therefore have adopted the ancient clothing of sheepskins over their rags, to keep themselves warm and to be identified more easily when they go begging. Begging, they carry a small basket on the left arm and, leaning on a maqomya stick with the right, chant ecstatic church melodies until the housewives fill the baskets with enjara or parched barley ("qolo").

Those who serve the monks, carrying water, washing their clothes, carrying their food, water, etc., receive part of the monk's daily ration("dergo"). The 874 students usually graduate by age 18 to 20, and then decide whether to take monastic vows or return home to

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

273 police officers. The visiting peasants, who have just sold the harvest, stick to mead, which, for their taste, is alcoholic enough and expensive enough.

The person who pays for a round of drinks is loudly lauded as "elephant", king of African animals. The "tāj bēt" is usually the gayest place in town, well-lit, open until very late at night, equipped with nimble waitresses who, contrary to the usual pattern of female behavior, lightly flirt with the customers, in a semi-childish (therefore subordinate) way.

273 177 In recent years, exposure to European alcoholic beverages in the cities had led to attempts to replace thehoney used in "taj" with cheaper sugar, and to add other ingredients to raise the alcoholic content. This is done in many mead-houses in Addis Ababa, but is rejected by the traditional conoisseur, especially in provincial towns like Gondar. Even in the city this is regarded as dangerous, for no one knows just what the experimenter may have added. One common police case is the adding of gasoline to city barley-beer or mead, which competitors sometimes have placed into the competitor's brew so as to ruin her business. An early effect of the exposure to European alcoholic beverages was reported humorously in the 1920's, when the private brewer of the powerful provincial lord Ras Hailu of Gojjam attempted to champagnize the traditional mead (footnote 99).

276 Consumption of tobacco ("tembaho"), which is called "drinking tobacco" if smoked, is still regarded as forbidden by the Abyssinian Coptic clergy, and is therefore rare among Amhara, except for those modern-educated individuals who have been abroad. The latter smoke cigarettes turned out by Ethiopian government monopoly in Addis Ababa.

Footnote 99 - Griaule, M.: D'un Mode Aberrant de Conservation de l'hydromel au Godjam. Journal de la Societe des Africanistes, IV, Fasc 2, pp. 278-284, Paris, 1934.

276 The Muslims, who smoke freely, even in the provincial towns, especially in the Arab or Muslim-operated teahouses, follow a variety of ways of consuming tobacco. Some use a brown snuff tobacco, "senqan" or "surat"; a few even chew "chat", a stimulant drug chewed in the original leaf, which is far more common in southern Ethiopia. This is held in low prestige by the Amhara, who associate the consumption of traditional tobacco and chat with the customs of Shanqalla and Sudanese ex-slaves. In the 1870's the fanatically orthodox Emperor John, who later died fighting the invading Muslem Mahdi, even forbade the raising of tobacco, but since then it is grown again in small patches in and near towns.

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8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

wrapped round the portion of other foodstuff to be 264
eaten, and the whole put bodily into the mouth.

I happened on one occasion to call on an Abyssinian chieftain, a ruler of a distant province who was visiting Addis and who was a particular friend of mine, just as he was sitting down to a late lunch in his *tukul* surrounded by his principal vassal chiefs. I had to sit down on the divan next to him; and as he was of course eating *à l'Abyssine* his cook kept on rolling up succulent morsels of terrifically hot curry or stewed meat or raw flesh in bread with his fingers, and pressing them on my jaded palate. Any of his chiefs whom he desired to honour was similarly distinguished, that is to say, he would select a tit-bit, give it to the cook who doctored it up and passed it to a slave, who conveyed it to the fortunate recipient, who ate it with great gusto. And fingers all round all the time!

Except for some few individuals who have acquired 276
the habit in Europe or from Europeans, smoking, curiously enough, is practically non-existent among Abyssinians although the tobacco plant grows freely, and the Gallas make a sort of rough coarse tobacco which is possible, though hardly pleasant. The practice was somewhat drastically discouraged by the late Emperor Johannes (Theodore's successor), who is said to have punished smoking by cutting off the offender's lips, and snuffing by removing his nose. I was unsuccessful in ascertaining the cause of their objection to smoking, one of the various obviously inadequate reasons being that the use of tobacco was condemned because the plant was supposed to have grown originally out of the tomb of the heretic Arius! A more probable explanation is that the practice was regarded as a

8: Rey G-5 (1910-~~1920~~)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

276 Moslem one and was accordingly originally condemned by the Church.

On the other hand they make up for this privation
273 by a pretty free indulgence in their own home-made hydromel (*tej*), beer (*talla*), and spirits (*araki*), and also in fearsome alcoholic preparations distilled by some of the small Greek traders in Addis.

Tej, their principal drink, is home-made by nearly every family; this is manufactured from honey, which is to be found in great quantities in most parts of Abyssinia, and is fermented by means of an evergreen plant called *guecho* or *geshu*. When well made and matured it is a very pleasant beverage; to the native it is an intoxicant, and during the feast days one meets many who have partaken well but not too wisely of it.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[26] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 177 178 [535] [533] [276] cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

*883 177 184 Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

*883 517 178 177 AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women	85	15	0	(700)
Food	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry	67	26	7	(700)
Music	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†	40	58	2	(700)
Dance	38	56	6	(700)
Drink	24	56	20	(700)
Painting	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gursha*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically identical.

*883 177 [184] school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

*883 517 178 *Morals.*—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 gratifications are not enjoyed wholly without conflict. In actuality, traits which reflect anxiety about the prospect of oral gratification are no less conspicuous in Amhara culture than the phenomena we have just been discussing.

155 262 Negative attitudes regarding oral gratification appear, first of all, in the scope and variety of the restrictions placed on eating. From both their Judaic and their Christian traditions the Abyssinians have taken over nearly every restriction on eating available. The chief exception to this is the Judaic injunction against eating blood, which Abyssinian custom permits. But they have retained intact the Semitic ban on unclean animals—those which lack a split hoof, upper teeth, or do not chew the cud. Their dread of pork is so strong that to some extent they feel closer to Muslims, who also avoid pork, than to Western Christians.

155 785 They have likewise retained and elaborated on the norms concerning fasting found in early Christianity. With respect to the number and harshness of the fasts it prescribes, Amhara-Tigre custom is probably the strictest in the world. In the rigor of its fasting laws the Ethiopian Church surpasses its sister religions of Eastern Orthodoxy—the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, and Indian Orthodox Churches. On fasting days no food or drink is to be tasted before early afternoon. Thereafter, no sort of meat, fowl, milk, or eggs may be eaten, which reduces the Amhara's post meridiem diet on fasting days to grains and pulse.

Such fasting days occur on every Wednesday and Friday of the year, except those which come during the eight weeks after Easter. There are, in addition, many special fasts in the course of the year. Some of these, like the month-long fast before Pentecost and the two months prior to Christmas, are observed only by clergy and elders. Others must be observed by everyone, though children are led into them gradually. These universal fasts include the eight weeks before Easter, plus a three-day fast during the week before Lent; two days before Christmas; and sixteen days preceding the festival of the Assumption of Mary in August. Total abstinence is prescribed for a period of forty-eight hours before Easter. All together, the ordinary Amhara is supposed to fast 165 days each year; for the devout person the total approaches 250 days.

155 276 773 784 The taboo on the use of tobacco presents another area in which oral gratification is suppressed. Two myths are told to explain this taboo. One is that the tobacco plant originally grew out of the intestines of the heretic Arius. The other is that on the day of the Crucifixion all plants except tobacco withered and died. In any case, smoking is regarded as a grave sin among traditional Amhara, and one who has been suspected of using tobacco is not permitted to kiss the Cross.

121 784 785 155 One could argue that these taboos and fasting customs are simply cultural

137 areas, the wild olive, wäyra, is preferred, because it is
313 available, a hardwood, yet not difficult to split. Ease of splitting is always a most important consideration because of the population's simple tools and disinclination to expend effort to change what nature provides. Another olive, the wanza (Cordia abyssinica, a coarsely porous light wood), is popular for smoking out beer jars and other pottery before and after use. The yellow, cherry-like olive is one of the available wild fruit trees.

On lower levels of plateau elevation, the acacia known as grar is found in many varieties, often as the "umbrella tree". Generally the wood is hard, used in construction, and even more popular as fuel, especially as charcoal for firing pottery. Lowland trees include the termite-resistant Natal yellow pine, the giant sycamore, mimosa(also called grar), gum trees, lemon, and a small size banana.

137 One of the most popular trees, especially in the larger
824 centers of population on the plateau, was imported by Em-
177 peror Menelik II about half a century ago: the odoriferous, water-holding eucalyptus, called bahēr zaf (lit. the tree from overseas). Although there are no real forests of it, it is the most noticeable tree in Ethiopia, planted around houses, in wooded clumps between urban sections, towering above the native plateau trees. It grows so fast that in some areas it can be "harvested", primarily for construction purposes, after only five years.

137 A common sight on lower slopes is the euphorbia, qul-
278 qual, which resembles an immense, spiny chandelier with
824 multiple branches. Its milky sap is used in some native

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"Balla", after weeks of searching, a strong tree trunk is selected, after weeks of searching, to serve as center port for the new tuqul.

"Tequr enchät" (Pygeum Africanum), actually light red (lit. black wood), a porous hardwood, commonly available, which seasons well.

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Rosewood, "Kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica) the search for which is a major occupation and livelihood of poor widows, since the bark and twigs are consumed against tapeworm. It is a heavy wood which can take a fine polish, thus more commonly used in noble homes. It is commonly available, at edge of "dega" upland forest.

"qarqaha", a bamboo of river valleys, can grow up to 5" in diameter, commonly used as major posts in tents of feudal lords during their military campaigns.

"yäbäraha shemäl" (bambusa abyssinica), lit. "bamboo of the jungle", a strong bamboo from the qolla lowland, traded from there in former times to serve as a staff for the spear; now used by shepherds as staff, and to fend off dogs, also for some simple furniture.

Male wood is also called "täbot enchät" because hardwood is used to make the tabot, the sacred tablet inscribed with the name of a church, placed in the inner sanctum, symbolizing the Ark of Moses in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem.

[778]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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wild blueberry - "agam", very common; with thorny twigs, resembling the sloe tree; found not far from rivers, on the woyna dega.

wild fig tree - "shola", or "warka", giant tree (ficus sycomorus) with small but very sweet fruit.

"qamma" - fruit resembling raisin, turns brown when ripe, sour, consumed as mild laxative.

mushroom - "enguday", or "anguday", with white bottom. Rarely eaten.

"awut" - common, reddish or white fruit of a nettle bush, of very low prestige and consumed only in time of famine, gathered in early dry season (Mäskäräm to Ter).

Only lemons are consumed publicly without shame. They are purchased on the market. Bananas from the lowlands are also available to urban people, or "great men" who can afford them. Observers have suggested that the common nose-bleeding of Amhara may result from a Vitamin C deficiency, due to little fruit consumption.

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Collecting also provides such necessities as wild cotton in more remote areas (e.g. the Magoza district of Wolqait). Every housewife uses leaves of the "lola" bush in which to bake the festive bread "dabbo".

Wild honey is obtained from the wild bee called "tazzema" (Apis africans miaia), and used against colds as well as "heart ailments". More commonly, honey for making the alcoholic drink "tej", is obtained from a small, tiny-stinged bee (Apis dorsata), but since many of the bees are killed when they are smoked out, this process, too, is one of collecting rather than bee culture.

[278]

23 and form a new one. If he re-uses an old basket, he first sweeps out the larvae (ech) remnants, wax, etc., with the "nebasel" plant which the bees are said to like.

Sometimes as rapidly as six weeks later, the honey is ready for collecting. The hive is smoked out, and many bees perish. Some of the honey is retained at home and mix-
[272] ed with water to make non-alcoholic "berz" when honored
[373] guests come. The wax, to which some of the honey still adheres, is rolled over strong cotton or fiber thread and the resulting long thin candle is used in church to illuminate the readings and the processions.

Most of the honey is sold on the big "Saturday market", or directly to the woman in the nearest town who operates a "tedj byet", a mead house. To make it worth his while, a farmer should have at least five skeps-hives, from which he can realize 50 kilos of honey annually, for which he can obtain about $20. A very big keeper may have as many as 50 skeps, bringing him U.S. $200. for the honey.
[273] But the real profit is made by the woman owner of the tedj byet, who pays little for this honey, for gesho (fermenting agent) and for a big barrel to brew mead in, and then, after some months, sells her product, "tedj", a wine-like alcoholic drink, at a price that only noblemen, clerks, town officials, and Muslim traders can afford.

[278] The honey of the wild bee, "terb", is used against trachoma and other eye diseases. But "shame" forbids the eating of such wild honey.

Civet cat has been "farmed" by some in certain districts for centuries, and the musk taken regularly from the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

252 262 are raised in the housewife's kitchen garden. Every husband of pride claims to be able to distinguish the wot of his wife. Among spices used are:

263 [278] Ethiopian spices, raised by Amhara:

"Tena Adam" (lit. health of Adam), very aromatic. Important medicine against buda spirit (evil eye). This is Rue (Ruta graveolens, Ruta hortensis).

Fenugreek (Trigonella foenumgroccum), called "Abush"

Coriander (Coriandrum sativum), "dembelal". Cheaper than "bärbärē and used to replace it.

Sweet Basil (Ocinum Basilicum), called "bäsobela" or "zäqa qebye"

Bärbärē, the all-important red peppery major garden crop.

Ginger, called "zendjebel". It is used unscraped.

[273] Caraway seed (Carum carvi) called "enselal", also used to make "araqi" intoxicant drink.

"Abusda", a dark seed resembling nug. Also called "tequr azmud".

Mustard seed, called "shenfa", ground to condiment.

Thyme, called "azmud", in light and dark varieties. Wild Thyme, "tosen".

Garlic, called "näch shenkurt" (lit. white onion).

Spices used by Amhara, but bought on market, including those of Yemen importation:

Cardamon, called "korärima". (Elettaria paradise).

Saffron (Crocus sativus), called "erd", used to add golden orange color to reddish "wot".

Cumin (Cuminium cynisum), called "kamun".

582

757 The pulse is of no interest to the woggesha (unlike ancient medicine in Asia). He relies as heavily on violent purgatives as the ancient Egyptians, and on cauterization (much in the ancient Hippocratic tradition).

The enema, widespread in Asia, is not used. But the intestinal purgatives against tapeworm, especially the famous "kosso" (Quassia abyssinica), have been developed to complex sequences in medical cure. Butter is used as an ointment and mild laxative, sometimes boiled with specific herbs.

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The instruments used by the "woggesha" are very simple: a sharp knife, simple forceps or pliers, wire for ripping (e.g. the soft palate), the horn of a cow or antelope or zebra (called "wäänt") for cupping ("äärärä"). The latter procedure is not used often, it is tried primarily to cure a chronic headache, by shaving an area on the rear of the skull, making a small incision, and drawing the blood by means of the horn. Artificial nosebleeds are also occasionally produced ("ärräräärä").[1] But drawing blood is done in great secrecy, for the patient is ashamed to have it become known that his "blood is tad". Instead of applying leeches, some patients are taken to a waterhole or lowland lake known to contain leeches, where they expose the sick part of the body in the water, waiting for the leeches to fasten themselves.

752 Some "woggesha" have a great reputation for having saved patients bitten by snakes. The fact is that most Amhara, living on the highland plateau, rarely encounter a really poisonous snake, and suffer most often from the harmless (though painful) bite of the "talba" snake. The patient would recover anyway in due course.

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Table II: Bodily Ailments, Symptoms, Practitioners, Diagnoses, Treatment.

Ailment	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Diagnosis or Symptoms	Treatment
snakebite	"ebab"(snake) "wämit", very poisonous but rare; "täwarwari ebab", lowland cave snake (also "asil"), very poisonous, but rare on plateau. "talba ebab" brownish flax-snake, common, not poisonous, but believed to be. "zändo" (large python), not poisonous, infrequently encountered.	woggesha däbtära: prevents snakebite by writing amulet "Abuna Batra Maryam", and wrapping it in "tonätla" (mistletoe) leaves that keep snakes away. In presence of snake, lets shadow fall on it to immobilize it, saying: "He is born of virgin, without conception by a father, a and He has saved us; but it, that has misled Eve, the snake..."(which scares the snake away).	fang marks	cuts wound with razor (arab melach), also may cut flesh away. No sucking of blood for fear of poison. Stop bleeding with "let" leaves. Smears oily "nug" - cake on, for healing.
tonsilitis, chronic sore throat	"angar", or "entel" (lit. uvula)	woggesha	pain in throat, regarded as "sick uvula"	rips out part of soft palate with wire.
toothache	"lemam yäzä" (lit. the rot has seized it).	woggesha	toothache	"kills the demon that bites" by inserting a caustic medicine that eats into the gum; (actually a counter-irritant).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
Ear infection	"qenqen" or "qetqet"	woggesha	diagnosed as "buzzing insect that got into patient's ear".	"kills insect in ear" by caustic drops; (actually a counter-irritant)
cough (human) (donkey)		woggesha		drink expectorant made from aloes ("erä"). feed donkey roasted "qärcho", a yellow thistle weed that grows in plowed fields.
tuberculosis (esp. pulmonary). 30% incidence estimated by Italians.	"mäggäna" (Galla: "arwa karhamu)	dabtära	coughing blood, leaving patient limp. Diagnosed as "threshhold demon named 'mäggäna', who entered patient in early morning", or "red snake in belly".	Purgative, made of root of rhubarb "mäqmäqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), boiled in butter. Magic "sacrifice of threshhold" of chicken or goat, and fumigation of hut with "woggärt". Spraying of holy water. If all are dead, abandon the hut. (Also, cauterization with hot pin).
tapeworm (taenia saginata) Very common.	"wäsfat"	woggesha	noticed in stool; or, prophylactic after every "brundo" (raw beef) feast; or every 2 months.	Purgative (Vermifuge) made of "kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica, Quassia amara), prepared from the dry flowers, bark and twigs of this rosacious highland tree, while swallowing a dozen "enqoqo" seeds like pills. Produces a 3-day painful diarrhea.

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
bacterial dysentery. Very common.		woggesha	diarrhea	Only black tyeff grain may be eaten. If not cured, drink boiled leaves of "zärch embway" thistle (Solanum marginatum).
dysentery. Very common, esp. in market towns	"teqmat" (lit. what makes to sit down)	woggesha	diarrhea with blood	Purgative made of hottest "bärbärä" pepper called "mitmitta" (Capsicum abyssinicum) with smallest pods, taken in the evening together with raw beef ("brundo") after a day of complete fasting; the next morning, drink purgative kosso with engogo pills.
intestinal disturbances colic	angorba	woggesha	pains, much salivation	drink tea of "teferendo" bush, or of "tembälal" (Jasminum floribundum); or of "amorra" root (used also in tatooing as astringent). In mild cases, chew leaf of "tena adam" garden plant and swallow the juice.

(constipation, etc., is treated with mineral salt (aghal chäw," now with "English salt" (Epsom).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
heart ailment. occasionally.	"leb bäsheta" (lit. heart sickness)	woggesha	pains in heart region	antispasmotic drink made of honey of the wild bee "tazzema" (Apis Africans miaia).
conjunctivitis, trachoma, ophthalmia, eye diseases Very common.	"Nädära" or "Aynät" (female demons)	däbtära	eye inflammation, pain, incipient blindness	apply juice of "Ketketa" flower (Dodonea viscosa) by means of cotton cloth; then take vapor bath. Or use juice of aloes ("rōt"). Rub wrinkled leaves of "käsyē" (resembles thyme). Wear amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of the demon.
headache, migraine, neuralgia. Very common.	"feltät"	woggesha däbtära		Inhale fumes of burning leaves of "woggärt" plant or "gizewa" bush(which resembles elderberry). Shave area in back of head, make small incision with horn, sucking the blood. On Mary's birthday, leave chickpeas or other food for the birds.
hemorrhoids. common.	"kentarot"	woggesha	pains, (mostly in adults)	Astringent shrinks piles; made of the juice of certain secret roots, applied daily for a week.

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
bleeding from wounds		woggesha		apply rolled and crumbled leaf of "let" plant to wound, to stop bleeding. apply aloes ("rēt") to promote formation of scar tissue.
excessive menstrual bleeding	"yädam abennät"	woggesha dabtara	diagnosed as female demon "Werzelya"	Hang magic root under garment. Root bears name of illness, drives it away. Amulets.
miscarriage	"yädam terät"	dabtara	demon Werzelya	Peel this root and wear it. Amulets
barrenness. Incidence as high as 25%	"yädam tefat"	dabtara	demon Werzelya, believed to have "stopped patient's menstruation."	Specially written amulet, referring to King Susneyos' formula, hung on the neckcord.
chigger, sandflea infection. Common, esp. in dry lowland.	"moyalē"	woggesha		Pick out whole organism with needle, without breaking it.
muscular dystrophy, & other paralytic diseases.	"gwaya ankätäkkätäw" (lit. the gwaya plant has broken him).		diagnosed as due to "having walked through a field of this plant", or "having spilled water in which it was boiled, on one's leg". Symptoms: cross legged, pigeontoed walk.	No certain cure. Sometimes treated like the "mech" disease (general functional ailment).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
paralysis	"sefat"	woggesha dabtara	stroke, often fatal	No certain cure, Amulets.
struck by lightning	"mabraq	woggesha dabtara	found unconcious diagnosed as "struck by thunder".	Carried to fireplace, kept warm. If patient dies, regarded as heavenly punishment, for hidden crime.
visible syphilis (early stage). Incidence syphilis 50-80% estimated by Italians.	"qitẽ"	woggesha dabtara	syphilitic sores	1st stage of treatment: Smear resin on sores, or "Kabre" (sulphur). Intensive eating of barbare pepper (Capsicum abyssinicum) in order to salivate, for the disease is believed to come out with saliva; also the purgative kosso (as in cases of tapeworm), for same reason. (Magic): sacrifice male, black goat (to demon), drink its blood and eat it, for this omnivorous animal has eaten a variety of herbs that may help. Then purge 4 months. 2nd stage: Sweatcure at hot springs("filowa"), dedicated to a saint, for 40 days. Refrain from salt, drink much water. In some cases, drink sarsaparilla root (Smilax mauritanica) - (possibly recent diffusion).

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Ailments	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
chronic syphilis (including "benign syphilis" resembling Arab "bejel"; neuro syphilis extremely rare. Chronic and inherited syphilis believed common by physicians.	"verdē"	dabtāra woggesha		Prophylactic treatment obtained by some from dabtāra before exposure to syphilis is kept secret. Cures include crushing of "bessana" root with Kosso, ratio 1 : 2, which is dissolved in pure barley beer "talla gebs". This purgative is believed to bring out germ with diarrhea or vomiting.
gonorrhea (common - esp. in market towns)	"çhäbet" or "çhebet" (lit. it squeezes me)	woggesha	believed caused from having urinated in sunshine. Symptom: pain and urinating with difficulty.	Same cure with "bessana" root purgative as in chronic syphilis.
smallpox other pox (occasional epidemics, now rarer)	"fäntata" "litē"	woggesha	believed caused by morning-threshhold demon "mäggäña" (See tuberculosis)	Vesicant to "bring out the rash" by rubbing "kābrē" (sulphur) on sores, or, if unavailable, saffron. Patient must not touch water until healed. Neighbors wait until after 7½.M. to brink cakes of food, so that they will not encounter the morning demon "mäggäña" on threshhold.

Variolation with "kuffēñ" (mild pox or chicken pox, or taken from pus of sick person) especially in epidemics; sores are rubbed with honey.

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
abscess or running sore	"quncher"	woggesha	believed caused by urine of certain moth.	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur or resin. Ointment made from leaves of "enqoqo" bush used as anti scabies. Purgatives made from "bessana" leaves or from juice of euphorbia candelabra ("qolqwal"), drunk in fresh barley beer.
impetigo	"chefe"	woggesha	believed caused by washing in "bad water"	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur.
white sore on hand; itch.	"lekäft"	woggesha	believed caused by having left water uncovered overnight, and washing hand in it the next morning. Pain, tendons affected. Believed non-contageous.	apply astringent leaf-compresses, e.g. from the "darch embway" flower with the little red fruit; or of the "embway" (yellow thistle).
other sore on hand	"chäfe"	woggesha	believed contageous form of "lekaft"; much feared.	Cover sore with nug oil paste, and salt, to keep it from spreading.
scrofula	"näqärsa"	woggesha	symptoms on neck	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur.

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Ailments	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
leprosy (occasionally).	"lefe", "qomata", "läms"	woggesha	discoloration of skin, loss of nails, etc.	Combination of treatment of other sores. (Now treated by WHO with injection of sulphetrone, etc.).
scarlet fever (rare)	"lash"	woggesha dabtara	Peeling skin, sometimes falling hair, in children. Believed caused by female demon that specializes in hurting children.	"bring out rash" by applying sulphur to the itchy skin. Dabtara provides prophylactic as well as curative amulet against this demon.
typhus fever; If epidemic: "tässebo" (common in highlands)	"tälalafi bäsheta", "yänäfs bäsheta"	dabtara	Believed caused by certain demons.	Amulets. (Now free injections and immunization by government "dressers" at town markets).
relapsing fever (Fatality higher than typhus; louse-born in highland, tick-born in lowland).	"mech" or "mechdär"	dabtara woggasha	Patient believed struck by the demon of "hot fog", ("mech ättaw"). Same term used for sunstroke, and pneumonia. Symptoms include headaches, vomiting, violent fever, soon fatal. Illness believed brought on by sunstroke or eating spicy foods or green corn without washing mouth.	Febrifuge prepared from roasted "halgab" plant (which resembles mint), collected with great secrecy in the bush. "Mech mädhänit" (lit. Mech medicine) also uses other plants, the leaves of which are squeezed, and the juice is drunk, sniffed, and rubbed over body, with formulae being pronounced (magic)

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
malaria (common below 5000 ft. endemic below 3000 ft; epidemics in lowland market towns.	"nedad" (lit. burn) "tekwesat" (fever, generic) "woba" (boil)	woggesha	fever	Patient drinks febrifuge made from min-like herbs boiled in butter. Band with cold water placed on head.
rheumatism (common)	"qerṭemat"	däbtära	believed caused by "buda" evil spirit	Drive evil spirit away with disagreeable odor of "chegguñ" plant stuffed in nose.
		zar doctor	if believed due to possession by "lasy zar"	Bribe the "adbar" outdoor zar spirit or the "qolē" zar with sacrifice of food.
arthritis or deforming rheumatism	"rih"	priest		Rebaptize patient at holy well ("täbäl"); or advise him to go to a hot mineral spring dedicated to a saint ("filowa") for sweat cure.
rickets	"ṭela"	däbtära	swelling of bony joints; believed caused by dream of evil eye.	Amulet.
yellow jaundice	"wof zorräbbat" (lit. the bird turned directions over him	däbtära	skin discoloration, thick urin.	Amulet.

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
puerperal fever	"tekwesat" (generic, fever)	dabtära	believed caused by female, jealous, demon "Karina".	Amulet reciting victory of Solomon over Karina.
delirium	"buda" (evil spirit)	dabtära	believed due to "buda" possession.	Intoxicant drug "abtänager" Thornapple Jimsonwee (Datura stramonium) (lit. that which makes to talk) is drunk by patient so that he reveals the name of the specific evil spirit; then it can be exorcised.
epilepsy	"yabarya basheta" "yabuda basheta" (evil spirit disease) (haut gal) "ganyen yazä (lit. the djinn have seized him) "ebd" (have enslaved him)	dabtära	spasms, convulsions.	Same treatment as in delirium and rheumatism, or both.
			running amok, violent	Cast out "ganyen" by spells and exorcism. Or eat intoxicant paste of "assärkush tabbätabkush" (Cissus adenautha) root. Exorcism of "buda" or "ganyen".
(St. Vitus)	"nägärgar", or naqatqat"			

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
hysteria	"zar" (spirit, benign or evil)	zar doctor	(see zar cult) and "buda"	(see zar cult); Stimulant "apë faris" (stramoine datura) (lit. wood of Persia) is often preliminary treatment. The effect is agitated somnambulism, enabling patient to see the future, and the (evil) spirits that have attached themselves to him; esp. the "ayni tela" (lit. shadow eye), usually in shape of a woman, who spoils well-laid plans. Once her name is revealed, dëbtëra throws cold water on patient to reawaken.
chronic apathy (catalepsy)	"Tegerteya" (female demon)	zar doctor dëbtëra	(see zar cult) and "buda"	(see zar cult) and "buda"
insanity	"Waddegeni" (female demon)	zar doctor	(see zar cult)	(see zar cult)
amok			(see "ganyen")	

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682 754 manslaughter of an average citizen, killed e.g. in an automobile accident, or by a trigger-happy policeman, at "semanya" on its present monetary level.

755 Other types of ganyen disease are forms of epilepsy, "haut mal", referred to by the Amhara as "ganyen yaẓä" (lit. the ganyen has seized him; plural is "aganent". In this case, a dabtara is often called in and tries to exorcise the evil spirit with magic formulae; sometimes the woggesha doctor tries to intoxicate the patient with [278] a paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha), which drug finally lets him have some rest. In contrast, the method of the täqway is literally a bag of tricks.

755 756 789 In his role as magician, the täqway is called "qumma" (from "qomä", he stood up), for he tries to identify the personality of the evil spirit from his abode; e.g. in the water of a brook, or a waterhole in the river, or under a certain tree, etc. The magician is also considered an expert on fire and lightning. When a person is struck by lightning, "mäbräq" (lit. Thunder), [761] the priests consider it heavenly punishment and in the past even refused to bury the victim in the churchyard; thus the täqway is called in. His treatment consists of moving the victim quickly to the fireplace - for he regards fire and warm ashes as the counteracting principle. If a house is on fire in town, it is still believed that the magician, standing on the roof of a neighboring house with a mirror, can prevent the spreading of the fire by causing the flames to recoil.

Cases of drowning are his specialty also. This too is considered by the church a heavenly punishment for hidden crimes, for the victim is regarded as having been surrendered to the "demons";

843 844 [796] pain, loss of her senses, inability to move her limbs in an often fatal ailment known as sarakian. The mid- *759 *793 wife is powerless in these contingencies; instead, it 846 is the herbalist or debtera who must be consulted. Thus, • [278] the sinj medhaniyt awakiy provides an infusion which the [778] post-partuitive mother drinks to eject a recalcitrant [192] afterbirth (sinj), and the yidemaketir kitabiy provides an herbal amulet to be tied around the waist of the female suffering from post-partum hemorrhaging (demaketir).

*755 The cupper. The cupper (agamiy) assumes either of *756 two therapeutic strategies, depending upon the ailment *757 he is treating. Like the herbalist, he may attempt to *759 draw the pathogenic substance out from the sickman's [192] body. For severe headache (ras mitat: literally, head-gerifta), he shaves a circle of one inch diameter on the sickman's occiput, makes a single incision with a razor or other favored knife, places his cup of horn over the incision, sucks out a required number of hornfulls (usually three) of blood, and pours the blood into a [192] waiting basin of water. The extruded blood is then examined for clotting (tikur waha: dark water) which is regarded as evidence that the pathogenic substance is being removed. Later that day, the agamiy returns to repeat his therapy. The occiput is chosen for bleeding because of its proximity to the body's blood reservoir (yidem sir), located at the nape.

12: Young

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[For information on use of pharmaceuticals, see category 116, pp. 10, 35, 39-69, 73 76-77, 81-90, 92, 113-125, 132-137, 157, 159, 162, 174, 182, 185, 192, and 237-249.]

136 laying during the little and big rains. But
241 there are many variations.) When it comes, the farmer tries to scare it away by setting fire to fallow fields, stubble, bush and trees.

136 Other wild creatures familiar to the Amhara are Migrating birds which fly north (to "Jerusalem" in the popular mind, actually to Europe) in March and return in October, including the "zorit", a white-bellied, black-backed, red-winged bird, and a variety of stork, called "asa leqami". The Nile Monitor, ("ardjano"), a huge lizard is found along larger rivers, often not far from villages and even towns, and easy to hunt. With its scaly skin and often large size, it resembles a crocodile, with dark stripes and spots on a very white underside.
281] The skin is used to cover better utensils and is exported as "crocodile leather" for bags and shoes. Actual crocodiles are much harder to hunt, in less accessible river gorges in the lowlands. The Guenon Monkey (Tota) is common on lower
231] elevations(where it is also a danger to crops). Its young are sometimes made pets.

136 Insect life is abundant in Ethiopia, varies in type according to elevation, and bears considerable significance to ecology.

136 Flies - abundant everywhere, transmitting intestinal
7 and skin infections. They are not interfered with beyond swishing with the fly-switch which, if kept in constant motion, chases out does not kill them.

Fleas ("qunechcha") are very common on humans. Everyone has them most of the time, even in the city.

824 [283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called "aräg", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of [324] excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and [293] grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

[372] Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

[386] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

[222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by <u>collecting</u>, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Sircunia Abyssinica).

824 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained
• 281 from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[251] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

[263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshäm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

243 patient oxen. If the farmer has no ex-slave retainers, his wife may help in the harvest. Even young boys help, particularly in protecting crops. The direction of the breeze [461] is carefully observed before winnowing. Work proceeds from sunrise to sundown (from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.), with a rest from noon to 3 P.M., the hottest time of the day. At that time the women bring barley beer, enjara bread, and a special condiment prepared from crushed "nug" oilseeds called [263] "anäbabär".

Threshing by sticks instead of oxen is done in harvest of the "nug" and this may require some additional helpers.

241 Oil plants are cultivated and of considerable impor-
262 tance in the diet. They are considered field crops rather than garden crops:

"nug" (Guizotia abyssinica), the black Niger Seed, which is the most used vegetable oil of the Amhara. Travellers take it along, mixed with spices, as a staple. It is used in many items of diet. After crushing, the oil cakes are used for fuel (not fodder).

Flax seed (Linum usitatissimum), called "talbä", the second most common oilseed, of light brown color, consumed in similar ways and in drinks. It is not raised for the fiber, which is considered fodder or fuel.

Castor bean (Ricinus communis), called "gulqwas" or "gachma". This is not a field crop as much as nug and talba, and not as much of a staple. Tan- [281] ners use it for lubrication of skins. The emperor has urged increased production, but there

231 [556] ("agäbba") to an important "great man", perhaps to become a "client" in his retinue for protection.

[775] In religious life, the old peasant can arrange for the peace of his soul after death by giving a cow to his Confessor or to the "qēs gabaz" the administrative priest of the parish church, to have masses recited. [682] In criminal law, a murderer in the remote rural areas can still save himself and even prevent a long and bloody feud between families, if he can borrow enough cattle, in addition to his own, to pay "blood-money", in cows, to the kin of the victim, the agreement witnessed by the presence of a "che-qa shum", a judge, or a priest, preferably all three. Thus there are some aspects of the cattle pattern that are reminiscent of a tribal, semi-nomadic, rather than settled territorial social organization. This becomes emphasized during the upland trek in the rainy season.

233 Though entrusted to youngsters, care of cattle is obviously a task requiring responsibility. Cattle is not taken out until one hour after sunrise, about 7 A.M., when the dew has dried. During the hot dry season, cattle rest under umbrella trees and other shade from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., so that the grazing period away from the hamlet is not long. Before dusk, by 6 P.M., they are taken into the hamlet enclosure or corrall, or even into the hut, for hyenas may come early.

The cash value of cattle is low, primarily because of the distance and poor transportation to world markets. [281] The hides, a major export item, are of low cash value because this type is not tanned, merely sundried, and "book-folded" for export.

233 folded" for export.

Sheep are raised primarily for meat. They do not figure in social organization except as minor gifts (including entrance gifts). They are small in stature, and so inexpensive that the sheepskin can often be sold for 1/3 the cost of the entire animal. The woolly skins are used as cloaks, bedcovers, etc. The sheep is not bred for wool, only for meat, especially for the fattail ("lat") which is as prized as in other Middle Eastern areas. The wool (yä-bäg t'ägur) is not very long, and is used to stuff pillows in urban areas. Wool weaving is a local specialty of re-
[286] mote districts, now dying out due to competition of modern, imported blankets, but formerly used to make the black, Arab-type "burnos".

Goats as well as sheep are usually entrusted to an ex-slave or a simpleton, or very small children, when on pasture. Domestic goats ("feyäl") are raised because of
[281] the cheapness of their meat, and the skin which is tanned by the Faqi, and made into parchment for church literature,
[232] etc. To fatten rams, their testicles are crushed between rocks, and the resulting animal is called "qet'qet".

231 Horses are small, wiry and very enduring. They are the animal of the young aristocrats in warfare, in games showing prowess. Mules, small, wiry, and intelligent, cost at least twice as much as horses. They are preferred by travellers and older persons, and are used as the animal of honor ridden by the veiled bride when she is taken to her bridegroom's hamlet. If they can at all afford it, a Senaar mule is preferred, and for the bridal

462 563 B. THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR.

Division of labor according to the ethnic origin of of the worker is the most distinctly organized division among the Amhara. This is based on the attitude of the [461] Amhara that labor (especially skilled labor and manual labor) is dishonorable. This attitude is reinforced by the close kinship ties which prevent a cultural deviant from shaming the members of his family by working in the district where they are known. It also reinforces the the ethnic boundary lines, and forces the non-Amhara, non-Coptic, working ethnic groups to live within the circle of their own kinfik, religious groups, and hamlets.

[281 191] One of the most despised is the class of the Faqi, the tanners, who speak old-Cushitic languages such as Agau, are considered "pagans" in religion, and are associated by their trade with the hunters, the lowest class.

326 191 On a slightly higher level are the ironsmiths, usually of Falasha, who practice Mosaic Judaism, used to speak Quarinya, an old-Cushitic language, but use the same Semitic Geez language as the Copts in their religious worship and biblical liturgy.

563 463 754 326 [191] This use of Geez by the Falasha is puzzling to the Coptic priests, and brings about a sort of grudging respect for the Falasha, which somewhat elevates their status above that of the tanners. But they are suspected of practicing black magic in connection with their smithing of iron. Patrons take magic precautions to counteract all sorts of magic bewitchment by the Falashas whenever they have contact with them.

322 saddlemaker is usually an expert at lumbering. A well-made "korecha", wooden, skin-covered saddle, with adornements, made to order, may cost a total of Eth$25.-

D. Tanning

281 The consumption of leather articles among the Amhara is tremendous for a settled agricultural people. It is reminiscent of Hamitic-speaking tribes whose ecology is based on animal husbandry, and the technology of tanning and manufacture of leather articles is linked with that of North Africa. The ethnic group that does this specialized work in Amhara territory, the Faqi, were Cushitic (Hamitic) - speaking, and probably constitute an early group in residence in Ethiopia. Products consumed include cooking utensils especially for travelling, riding equipment, scabbards, shields, and formerly skin clothing (now worn only by itinerant monks).

281 563 797 The Faqi live in scattered hamlets of their own, the size of which is usually like the smaller Amhara ones: patrilocal residence, 5 to 6 huts at most, each occupied by a biological family. Until very recently, none of them were Coptic Christians since the Coptic priesthood considered these "pagans" on the same level as occupational hunters, too low to be "raised to Christianity". They spoke old-Cushitic languages such as Qemant and other Agau tongues, and gathered in remote tree-groves on top of hills for occasional religous worship similar to that of the "pagan" Galla. Now most of them speak or at least understand Amharic, and since 1942 some have become con-

281 563 [797] verted to Christianity due to the influence of the Emperor's wishes. Socially they are now considered on a level above the hunters, and, after adopting Christianity almost on a level with other non-ethnic craftsmen. Though largely endogamous within their own Faqi class, they used to take half-Shanqalla wives, or "woyto" (hippopotamus hunters), but near urban places such as Gondar they now marry poor Amhara of doubtful ancestry, after having become Christians. They are still considered "rustic" by the Amhara townsmen, since the Faqi, like the Falasha, do not like to live in town, to avoid negative human relations and insults based on their occupation ("You Faqi").

The Faqi do not like to be called by that name and prefer the term "arabannya", which has a connotation of someone skilled in something imported, of prestigeful origin. This is perhaps well-founded for some of their finer products resemble morocco leather.

The Faqi farm little, less than the Falasha, but keep kitchen gardens. They usually do not own land- unless a family acquired some as a reward for ordnance services rendered accompanying the troops of Menelik II. The cash obtained from their products goes largely to pay rent for the land, similar to the Falasha. The Faqi try to [231] keep as much cattle as they can afford, for the skins are valuable to them, and cow's urine is used in the process of tanning.

The basic team need not exceed three ablebodied, experienced tanners, but there are numerous little jobs for boys and older men.

•281 'The raw material, sometimes bought from the place of slaughtering, sometimes brought by the customer, consists largely of skins of cattle, goats and sheep. Goat and sheepskin are worked to finely tanned leather often of reddish color and are used for ornaments, or covers for food baskets and other utensils. Cow or ox skins are used to make rougher leather such as saddlecovers, household utensils, or simply covers for nighttime sleeping. Skins of horses, mules and the multitude of cheaply available donkeys, are not used.

Of wild animals, skins of buffalo (Bos caffer aequinoctialis) and of rhinoceros (Rhinoceros africanus) were used to make shields while antelope skin is still tanned in a fashion similar to that of goats. Skins of oxen and cows are often simply dried in the sun and sold on the market, Thence much of it is exported to foreign countries and made into cheap shoesoles. This method is also followed with crocodile skins, leopard skins and the skins of the Colobus ("gureza") monkey. For simple sun drying, skins are scraped on the inside with knives to remove all remnants of flesh and ligaments, then stretched tight in the sun. The fibers in the skin become glued together to a strong, hard surface. This method is followed by the rural Amhara householder, the hunter who has no skill or experience in tanning.

The Faqi tanner follows two major methods, sometimes both, in the preparation of a skin for specific products: The producing of chamois-type skin by means largely of fats, a method widespread in inner Africa; and tanning by means of tannin-containing plants, a method known in Asia and

281 Egypt since ancient times. Dyeing usually red, by means of native plants, accompanies the tanning process, for any good skin that is to be further manufactured.

Depilation is achieved by exposing the skin to a carefully controlled "sweating" process of natural putrefaction. A cowskin is soaked in water for 3 days, then dried and soaked in cow's urine for 3 days. The hair is thus loosened, the skin softened, so that it responds to easy depilation by rubbing with astringent plants:

[824] "embwaçho" - (Solanum margitanum)

"embway" - (Rumex alismafolius), a thistle, the crushed yellow fruit of which also acts as a preservative for the skin, since it contains tannin.

Then the skin is stretched tight on wooden pegs, to dry in the sun for one day. It is then rubbed with a stone for one day, which removes the last remaining hair except for a hairline or raised skin which is purposely left to indicate the pattern for the cutting that will take place later. The skin is then rubbed for one day with lemon (which is commonly available) for a pickling effect.

It is now ready for dyeing. Sometimes, especially in the case of smaller (e.g. goat) skins, the dye is first prepared by boiling the plants in clay pots (the bark of the "qerate" or other bush, or "enqoy" seed mixed with lemon juice), and then soaking and drying the skin several times after the dye has cooled. Cowskins are more often dyed by leaving them stretched and rubbing with the bark of the "beshesha" tree or leaves of the "qarat" (or "qerate") bush, for one day.

281 Fats, usually of plant origin, either wild or domestic, are then used to lubricate and soften the skin. This is hard manual work, lasting sometimes several days. Most commonly preferred is the castor oil bean, called "qachma" or "gulqwas". The skin may now be kneaded or stamped by feet, to work the fats in and render the skin soft for the cutting and fashioning of objects, which now follows.

282 411 The shield was formerly one of the major products of the Faqi, but now is made rarely and only for ornamental use. The rhinoceros or buffalo skin is cut circular, placed over a wooden stake in the ground, the rim pegged down, to prepare the cupola shape. The skin is then depilated, dried, smeared with oils to expand again. It is beaten to increase its resistance. Incised decorations and the pulling through of the leather handle, are done before the shield is entirely hard and dry. Metal decor is added later, by the smith, after the Faqi has delivered his product.

282 More common products, still made today, are: half-sack, "ënqalba", for carrying the baby on the mother's [354] back, with straps and a bottom tied to the mother's shoul- [415] ders, chest and waist; full sacks, "aqomada", for transporting grain to market, tied with strips (these are also used for various storage in the better Amhara huts); [283] straps cut of poor skins in all kinds and sizes, "qeralla", some for tying loads onto donkeys, some to serve as more springy diagonal straps of the better "alga" bed; a fine, tanned cowskin used as blanket; "jändi", cover

563 326 754 able to turn themselves into "buda" hyenas, and of having learned their craft from the "buda" evil spirit. Since the smiths in the old-Amhara areas are mostly Falashas, whose formal religious worship is never observed by Coptic Amhara, the Falasha smith is feared and [412] suspected of black magic. At the same time, the iron tools produced by the Falasha are much prized, not only on account of their material utility but on account of their supposed supernatural strength, endurance and "secretly revealed" workmanship. Even today, the provincial peasant will insist on obtaining his plowpoint or adze from a "real" Falasha.

563 326 The Falashas practice endogamy, as do the Coptic Amhara. But in the towns where increased contact occasionally begins to attenuate the old rules, individuals of low prestige in both groups do sometimes marry, which [797] usually results in the conversion of the Falasha partner to the majority religion. Also due to modern contact, it is beginning to happen that a Falasha teaches his craft to a non-Falasha, but the peasants often reject the output of the latter on the grounds that it isn't a "really strong, genuine Falasha article".

563 281 Somewhat similar untouchability attaches to the tanners, who are usually of local pre-Amharic, (Cushitic, e.g. Agau) descent, often still speak their ancient tongues, and until recently were never converted to Coptic Christianity. As traditionally "conquered" peoples, they are not "attentam", and Amhara endogamous rules prevail against them. The stigma against them seems to

563 rest not on any supposed supernatural powers of their
281 craft, but on theoccupation which requires them to deal with carcasses regularly, and places them in a class with the "Woyto" hippopotamus hunters of Lake Tana. However, the tanned skins produced by these "Faqi" tanners, prepared through a primitve version of making "morocco" leather, ismuch appreciated as "best workmanship" by the rural as well as town Amhara.

Like the Falasha, the "Faqi" live in hamlets of their own, usually within half a day's waling distance of a big market. They are regarded by Amhara as pagans; they gather under large trees in remote areas for their nature worship on several occasions each year. In very recent years, the urgings from the emperor and the example of Protestant missionaries have stimulated the Coptic clergy to admit them to Christianity, but, as
[97] in the case of converted Falasha, the social stigma remains attached to the convert, even if he changes his occupation. Socially he is then worse off than before, for as an outcast from his own group he feels the barbs of social discrimination more than ever. In the past, the "Faqi", like the "Falasha" did not concern themselves much about this stigma, but now the "Faqi" insist on the polite address "arabenna" --which refers to the tanner workmanship (lit. the one who creates Arab-like, i.e. imported luxury, articles.).

[463] Occupations that can be readily learned by anyone, or that require talent rather than skill, do not connote
533 low class. A musician, "azmari", male or female, who may or may not play an instrument for accompaniment, is

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282 over the "alga" bedstead.

Sheepskins ("debdeb") are used as upholstery over the solid clay bench that runs along the inside of the Amhara hut, as cover for the children at night, or to protect a mule from chafing by placing the sheepskin under the saddle. Other sheepskins, "agoza" or "dabälo", are worn by church students too poor to own a good toga. Several skins make a coat for an adult itinerant monk and, formerly, for the warriors.

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[415] Goatskins, when little-worked, are used for water carrying ("qärbäta") on travel, or to store butter in. The bladder is made into a little bag. But goatskins carefully and at length scraped and tanned are made into parchment for amulets and books, especially psalteries for the church. These yellow-brown parchments ("beranna") with religious or warrior-king texts were rolled into a goatskin cover. Since contact with European missionaries in the mid-19th century, the custom has been to sew parchment pages together on one side with a twisted gut, bind the book in this fashion within two wooden covers covered with a red, tanned goatskin, on which a cross with even branches is impressed with a hot iron.

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[531] In the same fashion scabbards of daggers are covered and ornamented with impressed, geometric lines. The tanned tailskin of a cow is used to cover a better walking stick, on which it gradually dries fast. Drums for use in church (and formerly for royal proclamations) are made by tanned cowskins stretched over both ends of the wooden body. Finely tanned skins are used to cover the

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282 aforementioned foodbasket for travel (the "agelgel"). Drinking horns and cups of "great men" (feudal lords) and landholding Amhara peasants are sometimes similarly covered by ornamental skins.

282 492 The saddle, "korecha", is still an important product of the Faqi, after the carpenter-smith has prepared its wooden basis. It has a high front pummel of wood, and a high wooden backrest, both held together by the saddle-tree of two wooden planks at a wide angle to each other. This is covered by the Faqi with a very thick, strong, parchment-like cowskin, sewn carefully and tightly through holes drilled in the wood, and ornamented with line designs, often after dying the skin black with soot obtained from the "qäntäṭef" creeper vine. [386]

Saddlemaking, like shield-making, caused much displacement of the Faqi during the long periods of warring chieftains and their armies. The great pride of an Amhara horseman was to have well-made and ornamented leather equipment for his horse, on its head, chest and back. Here the tanner often had to work in close cooperation with the smith. The iron ring of the stirrup (still in use); ornamental metal discs; the iron mouth pieces which resemble the Arab type and press tongue to mandible so that the horse reacts painfully to the slightest direction of the little finger, were common and still are in many districts. Gold or silver ornaments for the horse were important decorations for bravery given by the king especially to officers of high Amhara nobility. They are still honored as family heirlooms.

302 attempting to grow a rich one. This rich beard - though really a full goatee - is called "tïïa aron" (lit. beard of Aaron) in Gees, and is worn with the pride of the elder. Hair is also left on the upper lip, but usually does not grow very long or rich.

301 Ornaments are worn almost exclusively by women, and often include items that also have utility; the metal or wooden pin ("walaba" or "wolba") that is stuck in the tight hair and also used to scratch; an earwax spoon of metal, suspended from the matab neckcord on which are also suspended a small cross, amulets, (keys in modern situation), etc. Necklaces ("qwad") may be of wooden beads. In recent years country women have become very fond of a necklace of imported bluish glass rings ("deba"), which can do double duty in scouring and burnishing the clay pottery. A necklace of 130 of these rings costs 50 ¢ (Ethiopian). Also widespread is the use of a beaded strap with a large button-like center ("shotïïalay") which is worn on the forehead as an amulet, e.g. by women who have sufferred several miscarriages. A metal bracelet, ("ambar") was formerly given to soldiers as decoration, but has now become a women's fashion, worn on upper arms or legs.

B. Fine Arts

531 Artistic expression in the fine arts bears the stamp of the
[566] feudal lord, who alone was in a position to order, encourage and reward individual craftsmen and their apprentices; and of the Abyssinian Coptic church.

The feudal lord commanded decorative arts relating to warfare, such
[282] as the previously described rhinoceros shields. Another common object is the saddlecover ("degus"), made by experienced tanners out of leather, with geometric designs impressed by hot irons; fine leather stitching; and metal ornaments fastened on by the smiths. These designs and ornaments are still found, e.g. on leather cases containing the "dawit" (Psalter) written on parchment made of tanned goatskin.

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placed on the outside of garden or hamlet-fences, to discourage hyenas, to keep livestock inside -- a natural barbed wire.

Eucalyptus tree ("bahēr zaf") has become thoroughly rooted in Ethiopia. It is used in construction, especially of the more urban dwellings, as urban fuel, and its blue smoke and aroma is an early morning and evening feature of every town and market-town, where it is a major trade item. During the rainy season it grows so fast that a mature tree can be "harvested" 5 years after the nursling stage. Since it sells for $3-5 Ethiopian, (US $1-2) it is the most planted tree in Ethiopia today. The peasant also likes to use the odoriferous branches and leaves to cover the "dass" the festivity-shelter on marriages, etc., and the leafy branch as chera, flyswitch. Entire hillsides may be seen planted with this tree.

Female woods are also used for other indispensable products:

[386] Ink - is made from the fruit of the "tämbälal" (Jasminum floribundum) tree, and its timer is used

[534] for the stock of the single-string violin, the masenqo. (But imported blue ink called "nil" is preferred by däbtära scribes.)

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Fibre - for basketry, roof-hoops, etc. is obtained from the "wärqē" (musa ensete) (also called "enset") at lower altitudes, used especially for cords. Rope "gämäd" is made from the bark cut

824 [283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called [324] "aräg", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and [293] grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

[372] Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

[386] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

[222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by <u>collecting</u>, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Hircunia Abyssinica).

824 281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

462 252 [554] pater familias, certainly not a feudal "great man" or official will buy from her, and a lazy housewife, even an urban one, would be sharply criticized, even divorced, if she bought the product of the "gagari". For it is believed that her baking is carelessly done, that sand and dirt have not been picked out carefully before and during grinding, and the product is "fit only for Shanqalla" ex-slaves. One thin, round, two-foot pancake of "enjära" costs 5 Ethiopian cents (US$0.02); dabbo bread of course costs considerably more but customers are less frequent than for the daily "enjära" bread.

283 462 Spinning is the task of the housewife and of all women attached to a household, be it a hamlet kin group, or an all-female zar society (see chapter on spiritual healing). On her wedding day, the bride brings with her a small, ornamented reed basket, called "muday", in which she carries her own personal little distaff, some cotton thread on a reed bobbin that she has made, together with personal [885] ornaments and tattooing dyes. This symbolizes that she is ready for adult womanhood and marriage, though she may be only 13 or 14 years old.

Carding of the raw cotton is also done by women. They beat it, pick out the husks, then place the cotton balls on the string of a bow called "dägan", tense the string with a stick, then agitate the string with the neck cut off a gourd (called "qel angät"). This loosens the cotton so that it can be cleaned and completely dehusked.

Every afternoon the housewife takes up her spinning, unless some special task takes her time. The distaff "emmärt" consists of a round, solid reed or thin round

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wood about 10 inches long, crowned near the tap end by a round, wooden disk about 1-1/2 inches in diameter. The reed penetrates it through a hole in the center of the disk, and the top of the reed has a small wire hook (called "qwanṭa") attached. The spinner uses this hook to rip out a bit of raw cotton, rapidly twirls the reed in vertical position, pulling thread after thread ("der") from the ball of cotton, and wrapping the thread on the reed below the disk. During this process, the balls of cotton are held in her left palm, the twirling of the distaff is done by her right hand, while the thumb and index finger of the left hand undo knots in the thread and generally straighten it out. The motor habit of this makes it possible to work very rapidly, the thread accumulating on the reed below the disk.

It is now taken off and rolled and connected in two possible ways. Some are rolled directly onto small reed bobbins 3-1/2 inches long, hollow, with outside diameter of 3/8 inches, called "qälämä" ("qäsäm" in Shoa province). These are later placed in the shuttle of the weaver for the weft. Cotton for the warp requires firmer consistency and more preparation. After spinning, it is either rerolled onto the sorter end of a partitioned distaff-shaped but much firmer wooden stick that may be as much as 2 feet long and 1/4 inch thick, called "mädäwäriya". This rolling is done horizontally, on the upper thigh, in the privacy of the hut, or by an ex-slave Shanqalla servant woman in similar fashion. The other method which may follow this or serve as alternative, is the rolling of the

283 thread onto a warping reel in rough basket shape and size,
462 called "mäzäwär". It is a kneehigh frame of branches set on the ground, with a somewhat narrower waist. Several a skeins of cotton thread are thus connected and rolled into long, firm strands to serve as warp.

Sometimes it takes several months for a housewife to prepare enough cotton thread for the warp and woof of a single toga ("shamma"). But a diligent woman, if she has little else to do, can prepare enough for half a dozen or more togas a year. The cotton thread is now given to
[286] the male weaver "shamani" who is to weave the toga. He may set up his loom in the back yard of the customer, or work near his own hut.

462 Skilled occupations for single women, e.g. "women between marriages" who often go to urban centers, are few. The brewer of mead and owner of the "tej byet", described under entertainment, usually employs several women as waitress-prostitutes.

462 There is another occupation, the woman beautician.
305 She may be specialized as a tatooer of women, "täqwari",
304 usually a Coptic Amhara woman, who is kept busy especially
[796] before great church holy days such as the Feast of the True Cross ("Mäsqäl"), Christmas ("Gänna") and Epiphany ("Temqät"). Hercustomers are more often divorcees "between marriages "(who can afford it because of earnings as restaurateur-prostitutes or beer and mead brewers), than young girls or married women, who have no cash. As the name indicates ("tequrat" means blackening), one of her jobs is to darken the gums between the teeth, to heighten

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3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

241 variety) and linseed is grown in most parts of it. Where more shelter exists lentils and chick-pea are also planted, and another low-growing leguminous [824] crop called *gwayo*, which is used only as a cattle fodder as it is believed to cause softening of the bones in man! The barley is planted early and the other crops late in the main rainy season (June–September). Barley is sometimes also planted in the early rains, which are very uncertain here but usually begin in February or March. In this area however the early crop rarely gives a good return and sometimes fails completely. The plateau land, after being cultivated for a few years (often until it shows obvious signs of exhaustion), is fallowed for a period which varies widely according to the type of soil, but may be as long as five or seven years.

Down in the gorges, where the climate is appreciably milder, and where a primitive sort of irrigation can be practised on the level shelves, both chick-pea and lentils flourish. Some *teff* (a grass-like cereal greatly favoured for making the local bread) can be grown, as well as wheat and barley. Shelf cultivation seems as a rule to be continuous, perhaps because of the fresh sediment spread annually over the fields by rain and irrigation. In the lower parts of the gorges some maize and millet (*Sorghum*) can be found, but almost the whole of the area included on the map is too high for these crops. Other gorge products, unknown on the plateau, are tomatoes, chillies, coffee and *gesho*—a shrub whose leaves are used for fermenting the local beer (*talla*) and honey-wine (*tej*). Bananas, for no obvious reason, are not grown, but are brought to Debra Berhan market from the low country beyond the eastern escarpment.

The agricultural methods of the Ethiopians are far more advanced than those of any surrounding territory and do not belong to Africa. They can be paralleled among the west-Asian peasantry, and a close comparison with the methods of the Yemen mountain people might be especially fruitful. It was from this latter region that the Ethiopians' ancestors emigrated, before the [177] Christian era, and it is extremely probable that they brought with them both implements and a knowledge of techniques. Hence perhaps the use of the plough, universal among highland Ethiopians, and their skill in irrigation and terracing.

[462] Farming in Ethiopia is primarily the man's and not the woman's work, the standard female occupation, apart from household cares, being spinning. [283] (Cotton is widely grown in the lowlands.) The farmers spend most of their lives at the plough, a one-handled variety drawn by a yoke of oxen. In their [231] right hand they carry a whip with a short handle and long, heavy thong which they continually whirl and crack above the heads of the oxen, to whom, at the same time, they address an endless succession of strange howls and shouts, curses and imprecations. New or long-fallowed grassland is broken in with the plough in the dry season. This complicated process (known as *gai*) involves first scratching the ground in several directions to dislodge the turf, next gathering the sods into numerous heaps, then setting fire to these so that grass and weeds are gradually burnt out, and finally spreading out the soil again. But the great time for ploughing comes after the main rains have reduced the countryside to a sea of soft, dark mud. At this season the fields are peppered with ploughmen. Each successive sowing must be prepared

324 motion, and the rotary quern of ancient Rome and Alexandria
412 is of course entirely unknown.

251 Bins for storage of grain are also made by men. The
333 two major types are the "gota", made of rings of sundried mud and straw, which are built up later inside the hut; and the "gotära" bin, made of a barrel-like skeleton of sticks, plastered with mud and left to harden in the sun. The former can, of course, be built higher, as much as 7 feet tall, while the latter is limited to the size of the door of the tuqul.

415 Gourds are widely raised as utensils, in line with the pattern of using natural products directly. Sometimes the gourds ("qel") grow on vines supported on the roof of the tuqul. When at full size, some are cut lengthwise so that each half represents a drinking cup with its own natural handle affixed. Travellers always carry these. They also carry gourds used as waterbottles ("wamära") with the top cut off and refixed to serve as a removable plug. Or, the narrowing top of a gourd is cut off and used by women while carding raw cotton on a bowstring. Artists of chiefs and feudal "great men" paint designs and scenes on gourds ("ankola") belonging to their patrons.

285 Basketry can be made by either men or women, often
415 by servants and ex-slaves, but since it is not considered specialized, there is no shame attached to this work. Both coiling and weaving techniques are used, the latter more often. Noteworthy is the frequent close weaving which results in watertight containers, further secured with hot milk and fumigating with gum woods. This method,

285 415 especially the use of milk (also found in pottery), is typically African.

Reeds, fibers (including the musa ensete and baobab), and grasses already mentioned are used to produce many types of articles, equal in variety only to pottery, and in numbers even exceeding.

285 415 352 The reed table, "mäsob" is one of the most noteworthy, for every household has several, in different sizes, and usually one with ornamental geometric designs woven into it by means of dyed reeds. In principle it is a combination breadbasket and table, for by lifting the lid the former turns into the latter. The diameter at the top may be as much as 2 feet, just high enough to be comfortable for eating while seated on a mat on the ground. Thus the cylindrical, almost hourglass-shaped leg of the same tightly woven reeds, may be from 1 foot to 2 feet high. The lid fits tightly inside, so that flies and even ants cannot enter; it is of the same type found in the Sudan and parts of North Africa.

285 273 The next most noteworthy item of woven fiber is the famous sun umbrella, "jan ṭela" (lit. the emperor's shade, from "zehon", elephant). Formerly a royal prerogative, then a feudal one, it is now owned by every peasant housewife, and in provincial towns purchasable at the big market for ETH$2.-(US$0.80). This umbrella is unfoldable, made of strong ribs of split bamboo (called "qerqaha"), bent almost semi-circular; the central wooden stick ending in a woven plate above the shade itself; the sections woven tight enough to keep out the sun, though not watertight.

285 415 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large basket of withes, "qerchat", used to measure 25 kilos of pinhead-grained tyeff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqaha"), or of a variety of reeds ("säbäz", "geramta", "akärma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofada") made by shepherding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by morocco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agälgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("muday") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("qwacha")

285 [531] There is also a purely ornamental fiber plate, entirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, mostly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 411 857 Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wänchäf") of a strong fiber ("nacha"). When completed, it has a loop on one end to hook over a finger. A pebble is placed in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end [244] released at just the right speed and direction. It can stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

439 412 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight razor, "arab melach", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

233 folded" for export.

Sheep are raised primarily for meat. They do not figure in social organization except as minor gifts (including entrance gifts). They are small in stature, and so inexpensive that the sheepskin can often be sold for 1/3 the cost of the entire animal. The woolly skins are used as cloaks, bedcovers, etc. The sheep is not bred for wool, only for meat, especially for the fattail ("lat") which is as prized as in other Middle Eastern areas. The wool (yä-bäg tägur) is not very long, and is used to stuff pillows in urban areas. Wool weaving is a local specialty of re-
[286] mote districts, now dying out due to competition of modern, imported blankets, but formerly used to make the black, Arab-type "burnos".

Goats as well as sheep are usually entrusted to an ex-slave or a simpleton, or very small children, when on pasture. Domestic goats ("feyäl") are raised because of
[281] the cheapness of their meat, and the skin which is tanned by the Faqi, and made into parchment for church literature,
[232] etc. To fatten rams, their testicles are crushed between rocks, and the resulting animal is called "qetqet".

231 Horses are small, wiry and very enduring. They are the animal of the young aristocrats in warfare, in games showing prowess. Mules, small, wiry, and intelligent, cost at least twice as much as horses. They are preferred by travellers and older persons, and are used as the animal of honor ridden by the veiled bride when she is taken to her bridegroom's hamlet. If they can at all afford it, a Senaar mule is preferred, and for the bridal

291 and women, as protection from rain and cold in the rainy season. Finely embroidered, it was also a garment of high prestige, since the king himself presented it to his liege lords from his own royal workshop, frequently made by imported artisans from the Middle East and their Abyssinian [439] apprentices, often slaves. It is still worn by feudal lords in remote rural areas, but has to be bought from caravan traders who import it, though there are rumors that they were until recently still produced in the district of Bäjäda in remote, mountainous Semyen sub-province.

292 The old prestige of the "burnos" lives on in the "kabā", the royal (hoodless) cape or mantle, of dark wool with embroidered stiff collar and borders, draped over the shoulders, and reaching to the ankles. This garment is still the prerogative of royalty, of nobility on festive occasions, and of priests. It was the garment seen in western newsreels at the time Emperor Haile Selassie wore it in Geneva and London, even with his European suit.

286 During the time of the roving Amhara feudal chiefs, even in Menelik's time, when capitals were no more than tent cities, carpet making was extensive. Some were used as tapestry, by the nobility. The best were imported, but there was considerable domestic production. A type called "kozā" was woven, surviving for a while in remote areas such as the aforementioned "Bäjäda" district in Semyen, but not of any economic significance. It died out as an art, with the death of the old craftsmen, increase in imports, and the end of the tent cities. Cheap rugs have replaced the carpets, just as imported black chintz has replaced

286 the expensive, woollen, hand-made "kabā", among the common priesthood.

291 Headdress, except for the cap("qob") of monks and nuns, and the turban of priests, is not worn by the Amhara. Only in the cold upper "dega" do the shepherd make a kind of helmet of reeds or plaited wool, covering the ears. The first breach came about a generation ago when some of the [177] nobility began to wear European hats of soft felt, with wide brims. More recently, the tropical helmet of British and Italians has become popular among educated clerks, teachers and provincial judges, and even commoners of distinction are beginning to weave an imitation tropical helmet of reeds, to serve as a miniature, personal sun umbrella. But the vast majority still use no headgear, and protect themselves from the hot sun by wrapping a portion of the shamma around the skull. The shamma thus provides protection from cold, heat, dust, rain--and shields the bashful (see language of shamma).

Most Amhara still go barefoot. Sandals used to be the prerogative of royalty, and though this prohibition no longer exists, leather sandals, or rubber sneakers from Egypt are still only in limited use, mainly in towns. Shoes imported from Europe are expensive and are worn only by highly educated individuals, officials in Addis Ababa, etc. The average Amhara, including some rural nobility, prefers to continue barefoot. Rural nobles even ride barefoot using the traditional stirrup with an iron ring for the big toes. Sandals made of leather were used by travellers. They

283 thread onto a warping reel in rough basket shape and size,
462 called "mäzäwär". It is a kneehigh frame of branches set on the ground, with a somewhat narrower waist. Several s skeins of cotton thread are thus connected and rolled into long, firm strands to serve as warp.

Sometimes it takes several months for a housewife to prepare enough cotton thread for the warp and woof of a single toga ("shamma"). But a diligent woman, if she has little else to do, can prepare enough for half a dozen or more togas a year. The cotton thread is now given to
[286] the male weaver "shamani" who is to weave the toga. He may set up his loom in the back yard of the customer, or work near his own hut.

462 Skilled occupations for single women, e.g. "women between marriages" who often go to urban centers, are few. The brewer of mead and owner of the "tej byet", described under entertainment, usually employs several women as waitress-prostitutes.

462 There is another occupation, the woman beautician.
305 She may be specialized as a tatooer of women, "täqwari",
304 usually a Coptic Amhara woman, who is kept busy especially
[796] before great church holy days such as the Feast of the True Cross ("Mäsqäl"), Christmas ("Gänna") and Epiphany ("Temqät"). Hercustomers are more often divorcees "between marriages "(who can afford it because of earnings as restaurateur-prostitutes or beer and mead brewers), than young girls or married women, who have no cash. As the name indicates ("tequrat" means blackening), one of her jobs is to darken the gums between the teeth, to heighten

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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463 They are especially afraid of the "buda", evil eye concept,
754 of which Falashas are believed especially capable; also of
326 their supposed ability to turn themselves into real and magic hyenas at night.

This magic power, however, is believed to make their
[323] tools "strong", and the pottery of the Falasha womenfolk "hard to break", so that their wares are preferred by the Amhara, creating a monopoly for Falasha iron tools and pottery wherever Falasha hamlets are within a day's walking distance. In some areas there are itinerant Falasha smiths, whose womenfolk make pottery at the same time. They will live in a special guest hut at the edge of an Amhara hamlet.

463 Weaving is also done by Falashas, but they have no
563 monopoly on it, as Muslim Ethiopian weavers are believed
286 by the Amhara to turn out togas that are just as good. For many centuries Muslims were permitted to reside only in segregated sections of towns, such as "AddisAlem" of
[361] Gondar town. Though this prohibition has been lifted, most Ethiopian Muslims still reside in special quarters of towns, rarely in a rural hamlet on the Amhara plateau. They were not permitted to own land and no one would rent them any.

They see much more of the country trade routes, since it is they who do much of caravan trading, acting as guides, quartermasters and retail traders for Arab coreligionists who are the wholesalers, usually on routes leading to the Sudan, to Eritrea and to Somaliland. The Coptic Amhara consider the Ethiopian Muslims almost as foreign as the Arabs, even the descendants of Amhara who were forcefully

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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286 converted to Islam by the invading Mahdi in the late 19th century, some of whom never reconverted to Christianity after the end of the invasion. This latter group speaks Amharic, but the Coptic Amhara refuse to call them Amhara. In turn, the Muslims call the Copts "Kaffir", infidels, which is considered an insult. Though socially segregated, Muslim weavers are often called to make shammas in the back yard of a Coptic Amhara house, returning to their own homes at dusk.

463
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464 In the province of Shoa, and the southern, non-Amhara provinces, the Amhara conquered much land in the late 19th century, acquiring millions of Galla and other "gabbar", sharecropping peasants with a status somewhat resembling that of medieval European serfs. They still constitute an important category of labor, though they can leave the land if they are willing to abandon everything (which they rarely do). During the reign of the present emperor their lot has improved, and it is the Galla who are at present experiencing the most remarkable mobility in occupation of any group in Ethiopia. The numbers affected by the change are small, but the principle of this mobility cannot be exaggerated. Even Menelik II, conqueror of the Galla, had noticed how easily he could win them over to serve under his military banner, partly because of their in-tribal dissention, partly due to their fierce loyalty to any chief to whom they have sworn allegiance. Today a number are in positions of the central government, and many Galla officials and clerks are sent out to the old Amhara provinces, even to Gondar, to govern and administer

their erstwhile conquerors

E. Weaving

286 Most weaving is of cotton (Gossypium arboreum), grown in the lowlands of Ethiopia. It is of shorter staple but stronger than the Egyptian, imported from the Sudan.

286 563 [465] Weaving is man's work, and in Amhara territory is an "ethnic occupation" carried out either by Falashas or by Muslim Ethiopians. Emperor Menelik II tried to change this by encouraging Amhara men to take part in this basic and increasingly necessary activity, not only for the traditional shamma, but also for the spreading use of "qāmīs" shirt and jodphur trousers. But he had little success with it. Only very poor, "detribalized" Amhara (who have intermarried with socially lower ethnic groups) weave shamma togas, and cotton sheeting imports have increased steadily since Menelik II for other garments. One can therefore state that weaving remains an ethnic occupation.

286 There are two basic types of materials for shammas woven on the traditional handloom The more prevalent is the peasant-type, thick, warm, soft, tight-knit and sturdy, heavy material, that will last long; the other is thinly woven, almost like a muslin, and is preferred in towns, especially by the women who use it like a long shawl above a long dress. The latter type is more richly embroidered at the narrow borders.

When the housewife has cleaned, carded, spun and rolled the cotton thread for the warp on a warping reel,

286 and the thread for the woof is rolled on reed bobbins, the weaver is called, if he does not insist at doing the work in his own courtyard (on which the rural Falashas particularly usually insist). He brings the portable comb "mämcha", which consists largely of fairly light hardwood bars with neat rows of thin reeds, "ters" (lit. teeth) fixed horizontally between them; also the heddling arrangement which consists of a few neat sticks and cords, and the small canoe-shaped shuttle, "mäwärwärya" made of smooth hardwood and pierced by a hole through which the cotton thread from the bobbin inside the shuttle can later be drawn during wefting. This is the basic, personal equipment of the weaver, referred to as "shamani eqa".

At his place of work, a horizontal beam and bar are set up on sturdy stakes, high enough so that they will be above his head when he is in sitting position. A hole, "masraya", is dug so that he can place his feet from the knees down in it and yet have another foot of leeway at bottom. This is important for the heddling arrangement, the device of raising and lowering alternate strands during wefting by means of a treadle which consists simply of strings attached to the big toes, so that each foot moving up and down creates a shed and countershed, up above.

The fixed part of the loom is set up on stakes about 2 yards from each other, the horizontal bar about 2-1/2 yards high. The portable comb is about 1-1/2 yards long and is suspended by 2 ropes about 1-1/4 yards long from

286 the top, so that it hangs about 20 inches above ground and can be operated comfortably. The shuttle is about 8 inches long, canoe-shaped, with its inside carved out to interior length of 5-1/2 inches, 1-1/4 inches inside width, and by means of a lengthwide strong reed a bobbin 2-1/2 inches long is suspended within it.

The loom mounting now takes place. The warp is stretched lengthwise in front of, over and behind the weaver, hitched firmly to a wooden post in front of him ("yäfit gend"), after being laid out over a horizontal beam on top and in front of him so that on that beam the warp is laid out, bothllengthwise and parallel. Usually there are 8 packthreads ("mäzärazär").

The operation consists principally of putting the waft between the warp as quickly as possible by throwing the shuttle across horizontally from one hand into the other, through the passageway("wärrawärrä"), which constitutes the picking part of the wefting. At the same time he operates the warp or comb by means of a long, arched stick of hardwood ("mäwätäriya") to smooth the edges of the material and prevent puckering by stretching it. From time to time he lets on and takes off, by unknotting and loosening the bundle of thread and retightening (this may be done by his junior assistant-apprentice). When finished, the weaver carefully knots the ends together, and sews the lengthwise ends of the shamma ("mäsad") by hand with a strong thread, now often an imported one.

286 An experienced weaver can throw the shuttle as quickly as every 1/2 second, which would mean 120 picks a minute. It is a one-man operation, and the junior helper is employed primarily to carry the portable comb hand bobbins and make fastenings as indicated. An average, simple shamma takes about two days of work, but cases have been known when an experienced weaver in the prime of life, working uninterruptedly for 12 hours from sunrise to sunset, without rest and withour mishap, did it in one day, because of the pressure of an approaching marriage. The marriage months following the harvest are the busy season, ending at the approach of the light rains. Often a weaver takes 3 days for an average shamma, with long rests during the work day; a "kutta" toga maywell take a week.

Weavers usually work by special order only and do not store any products for more advantageous sale, for the "season". They are craftsmen, not traders, particularly the Falashas, and they employ no middleman. Thus the transaction is on the interpersonal level. This is even true in the provincial towns. Only in Addis Ababa can a market section be found where traders store and sell readymade shammas, but nearly always they are of the muslin, cheesecloth-type variety, with a selection of colorfully embroidered, narrow borders.

286 386 439 Traditional dying is rarely of the cloth, but mostly of threads which are then used in embroidery. In the past many of these red and blue dyes were imported from the coast, from India, or colored threads

286 pulled from imported cloth. Now most of these dyes are
386 imported from Europe, and many are colorfast only in
[439] cold water (which causes little difficulty as most washing is in cold water). Such embroidery must be paid for extra, but the simple, narrow, single-colored border of the shamma, of the rural type, is included in the price.

286 For such a peasant shamma, the weaver receives
434 from Eth$5 to 8.- depending on whether or not the customer supplied all the prepared cotton. An average, experienced weaver can usually get enough orders to earn about Eth$200.- per year, in the rural area. If he does no farming other than gardening, his food cost may be Eth$140.- per annum. The average weaver is left with more cash than the farmer, who rarely has more than Eth-$30.- left in cash at the end of the year. More often the weaver also farms, since his "season" does not conflict with the major active farming season. A hard-working weaver of solid reputation has the opportunity to accumulate comparative wealth, at least theoretically, but since most rural ethnic specialists, including the Falashas, are not much concerned with commercial profit, few do. It occurs more often among Muslim town weavers.

286 The social position of the weaver, apart from his
554 ethno-religious affiliation, gives him a high place among working specialists, almost equal to that of the musician (if it were not for the fact that the weaver is usually non-Coptic). He is above the status of a smith, and there is no suspicion of black magic attached to the

286 weaver's occupation. If the weaver were to become a Copt
554 and live among Copts, he would be on a social level equal to a poor, laboring Amhara.

C. Semi-specialized and unskilled.

463 The present division of labor is still based on
563 the former feudal structure of the Amhara economy and human organization. Specialized skills are left to other ethnic groups, and, apart from non-ignoble occupations such as war, church, agriculture, healing, the Amhara reserve to themselves semi-specialized occupations and part-time labor traditionally carried out by household retainers.

The latter type of labor, dealt with in this section, can be roughly divided into three categories: (1) labor arising out of the feudal lord-peasant relationship; (2) semi-specialization "that anyone can learn", in the attitude of the Coptic Amhara; (3) temporary la-
[465] bor, for which specified wages based on Time and Energy are agreed upon, called "damoz" (a contraction of "dämä-wäs", lit. "blood-and sweat" compensation). This term is even used for temporary marriage, during which the woman acts as cook and travelling companion.

466 The first category arises out of the obligations
[566] owed by the sharecropping "gabbar" to his feudal lord, or landowning church: the former statute labor, when everyone would come with his own tools and construct a

[533] usually a Coptic Amhara, of more talent than skill.
286 The weaver, "shamani", though usually a Ethiopian Muslim (or Falasha), carries on his work in theopen, and anyone may learn it. It is only because it requires consistent manual labor that most Amhara shun,it.

d) Religious Minority.

794 The foremost religious minority in Amhara provinces is that of the Ethiopian Muslims. Most of them live in towns, and in the past were residentially segregated to the older parts of town, near caravan trails andbig markets. Even today, their social associations are almost exclusively with other Muslims, e.g. traders from the Sudan. Both are regarded as low-class not only by the Amhara but also by the handful of Arab wholesale traders from Yemen. As a result, negroid and semi-negroid ex-
[79] slaves (Shanqalla), especially women, often become converted to Islam in order to marry Ethiopian Muslims or Sudanese, who, as retail traders, are economically better off. The Muslim veneer of these women is very thin, and they are among the most ardent followers of the "Zar" cult.

e) Racial Minority

563 Shanqalla slaves were, [redacted], entirely below
567 the social scale, and treated as a separate caste. They were brought or purchased from the Shanqalla, negroid, people on the southwest escarpment, or from Nilotic

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

291 which is worn by both men and women of all ranks; and by the beauty of the *chamma* can as a rule be judged the position or state of purse of the wearer. It consists of a piece of material about three yards in length and from two to four yards in width according as to whether it is doubled or not.

291 The more beautiful specimens of these are hand-
•286 woven from native cotton, spun and prepared by the Abyssinian women. These are usually edged with red or mixed coloured silks, and those worn by the high priests, great chiefs, and princes and princesses have a very handsome border varying from twelve to eighteen inches wide, carried out in silks of vivid colours woven into an artistic design. They are as fine as gossamer, though large and warm; they are not as a rule sold, but if ever obtainable by Europeans cost from 200 to 500 dollars.

The more ordinary *chammas* are also woven by hand, but of imported cotton, and by comparison are of a much harder and coarser character, though still nice to look at. Natives who cannot afford the hand-woven shawl make use of a length of *abougedid* or cotton sheeting for the same purpose.

291 The *chamma*, which is not unlike the old Roman toga, is draped round the shoulders, often being brought up over the head to the eyebrow and again over the lower part of the face and nose, leaving but the eyes
[376] visible. It is always lowered from the face and head as a mark of friendliness or respect, and generally when passing Europeans, though I have known Abyssinians of the anti-foreign old régime to cover up their faces more closely when passing the *Frangi*. At court those in attendance twist the garment round the waist and

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
tēff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181]
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

101 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has
131 been historically recruited. Third among the highland
779 peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries.
[241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively
[463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm-
[286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga
[443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of
[562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin-
[423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil-
[326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields
[286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha
[162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority
[361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

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[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total risteñas households	31	21

[423] In each of the hamlets, there are two households be-
*[192] longing to Amhara tenant farmers (timeneña), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the risteñas
[779] whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two addition-
[433] al timeneña households, whose members are Muslims. These
• [286] households are headed by brothers who supplement their
*[192] agricultural activities by weaving the šama (toga) for local Christians.

*793 Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are
361 believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the
423 use of such fields, known as yikeys mariet ("priest's
795 land"),
*[192] is given to local priests in return for parti-
[613] cipating in the Masses of the parish church. In practice, rist-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of yikeys mariet by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

*793 869 222 five weeks before it is ready to be woven into a tsifit, a food hamper and table around which the Amhara meal is eaten. Because the students cannot afford so long a hiatus from their studies, the grasses are dried only a week or so, in order to lighten them for the trip back [735] to the highlands. During their stay in the lowlands, the students support themselves by begging food from local farmers. Enterprising students often gather twice the amount of gramta they can carry, leaving the surplus to be taken up to the highlands in January.

*793 869 The gramta is brought to the student's hut at the kiyne school for storage and drying. Although the stu- [442] dents are anxious to sell immediately upon drying, both price and demand are low then, since the weavers, peasant women, have no leisure for tsifit making until March. In [286] the meanwhile, the student makes either traditional um- *[192] brellas of gramta for sale at the regional market, or seleyen, shrouds which he sells in the churchyard to mourners.

[434] Students also beg crops, a portion of which they consume and the remainder of which is sold at market. For a four week period, during October and November, the student begs a traditional double handful of pulses from farmers. During a two to three month period from February to April, students beg cereals and other crops (especially, cayenne). Because the amounts of produce

439 412 perhaps replacing obsidian blades. They are now in turn being replaced by European safety razor blades even on remote rural big markets. These are called "lesa melaçh" although very commonly still sold by an Arab trader. The 439 415 small glass drinking bottle called "berellē", used in place of a cup for mead, has been brought by caravans from the Middle East since the Ottoman Turkish period. The European drinking glass, "berçheqo" is still rare in rural areas.

F. Clothing

291 There is a substratum of wearing skins in all of Ethiopia, sheepskin particularly and even leopard skin. Among the Amhara this appears among poor wandering church students, and in the fact that certain textile articles, notably the "lämd", symbolize the leopard skin of the warrior which he still wore at the time of the accession of the present emperor. This type of clothing is in the African tradition.

But the clothing of the Amhara today is largely of cotton, plus a wool cape for the feudal "great men" or landowning farmer. Both have come to Abyssinia from the [17] Middle East areas: the long shirt, "çämis" probably came during the 19th century, together with the white Indian jodphurs (that some trace as late as Lord Napier's campaign); the wool burnus is believed to have entered as long ago as the 5th century A.D., together with Coptic Christianity.[66]

66. Mohrer, E.F.: Beiträge Zur Kenntnis der materiellen Kultur der Amhara, Bern, 1932, p. 19.

291 [439] Raw cotton and cotton sheeting have long been imported, and still are, but the toga (shamma), probably the oldest of the Abyssinian cotton garments, is made domestically, from cotton spun by the housewife and woven on the handloom of the weaver.

The cotton clothing now considered "traditional" is [765] always white. The explanation given by the pious is that white is the expression of mourning, because of the passing from the earth of Jesus Christ.

[294] Tailoring is done by poor semi-specialized Amhara men at "big markets". Garments are made with great care, to follow the traditional style and also fit well. There are no new fashions in these costumes, for the prevalent pattern is conservative: to be properly dressed for the occasion, in the style of one's forebears. Variety exists in trousers: the jodphurs which reach to the bare feet, as former clothing of feudal lords, are more prestigeful than the wide peasant trousers that narrow to the leg just below the knee. The shirt, worn kneelength above the trousers, similarly narrows on the forearm, and is therefore called "ej tebab" (lit. narrow-sleeve) in the vernacular, instead of "qamis", the proper name (possibly from French chemise, though no Amhara would admit this foreign name for his "traditional" shirt). The only untailored garment is the toga, but this is used for expression of moods and situational conditions (see "language of the shamma").

296 Laundering is done in or near riverbeds, or brooks, by women, housewives or female ex-slaves, using the dried

296 and crushed, potash--containing saponaria seed called "endod" (Phytolacca abyssinica) which grows wild, but the locations of which are carefully remembered for "harvest". The crushed seed is mixed with cold water on the slightly concave top of a rock, or in a cowskin. The cloth is kneaded, stamped on with feet, until a good foam develops. This is done several times; then the garment is rinsed, and bleached by the sun. In time the cloth does become grayish, particularly the peasant trousers which are used more than the festive shirt and jodphurs, but the native soap-plant is kinder to the material than the coarse European laundry soap now available at big markets.

291 There is little basic difference between the garments worn by the sexes. Jodphurs may be worn by travelling ladies of feudal lords, since there is no side-saddle, but the peasant woman never wears trousers. Also, instead of the shirt, women generally wear a long loose heavy cotton gown from shoulder to feet, though formerly the peasant women used to leave the upper body bare, as a symbol of "respect" (as peasant males used to do on most occasions), and for comfort. Above the tied waist, this garment is still loose, and two-year old infants not yet weaned can walk up to their seated mothers and help themselves to nourishment and comfort by simply pulling the unobstructed breast out. Women wear the toga just as men do, but drape it differently on certain occasions.

[853]

The old type of trousers, wide at the hips and tapering to leg size just below the knee ("bat tähulät") has survived the introduction of white jodphurs ("surri") only

291 among peasant's weekday wear, and on the occasion of a peasant woman riding a mule (e.g. the bride being carried to the groom's hamlet). In the latter, somewhat tighter variety, it is called "lebaleba". Very recently, Sudanese-imported khaki shorts, British-type, have become popular 294 among peasants for workaday wear, and are mass-produced by foot-operated Singer sewing machines at "big markets" of provincial town, This has changed the status of the male tailor to a full-time, urban occupation, carried on by a poor Amhara and only when he is far from the district of his own kinfolk, to avoid shaming them.

292 The wearing of the kneelength cotton shirt, formerly also of imported silk, the "qämīs", was a special privilege granted by the King to his chief courtiers and feudal governors and lords. This meant that they did not have to bare the upper body even to their superiors, and could, when travelling, demand food supplied from any peasant for themselves and their troops. Now called "ej ṭäbab" (narrow-sleeve) it is urban wear for the commoner, and even the peasant wears it when he is not at work as well as on festive occasions; It is always of cotton. The term "qämīs" is now used only for the full-length, wider-sleeved gown of women, who like to have it emboroidered with green, flowery designs on chest and back ("telf qämīs"). Unlike the male shirt, it is worn all the way to the feet, and is tied around the waist with a thin strip of cloth,

[831] The "qämīs" of women is almost untailored, for emphasizing body contours would be "shameful". It is full-

291 skirted, one-piece, and in rural areas of coarse, heavy cotton cloth made by the weaver (shammani); while the "ejtebab" of men is of imported cotton sheeting (abujedid) of fine quality. Jodphurs (surri) are of heavier, but also imported cotton. The Coptic priests in rural areas also wear a type of "qämīs" resembling that of women, but without embroidery, and much more wide-sleeved, thus called "ejsäfi".

291 In very recent times city women of the younger gen-
177 eration in Addis Ababa have compromised with modernity by wearing a "qämīs" of light, imported, white rayon, thus bringing the development full circle. It is, however, still ankle-length, and the upper part of the body still covered in addition by a light version of the traditional shamma. Even modern-educated husbands who, as clerks or teachers wear European suits themselves, insist on their wives wearing some type of "qämīs" plus shamma. Male wearing of the wide-cuffed European trousers ("bolalē") has taken hold only in Addis Ababa and among modern-educated clerks and teachers. The nobility takes pride in resisting and in wearing jodphurs; and rural teachers still imitate them rather than modernity (much as they teach that the world is round without believing it themselves.).

291 The jodphurs, wide at the waist, are held by a cloth belt, "tebtab". This narrow belt of heavy cotton is used also for other trousers, and for the belt around the "qämīs"
[843] of women. Pregnant women wear a long cotton girdle, 6 inches wide, beneath the qämīs, ("mäqännät"), for support, and use it also at night or during the rainy season, for warmth.

291 it also at night or during the rainy season, for warmth. Old men use it for the latter reason, (but call it "deg", to differentiate it from the girdle of pregnancy).

The most important, and most varied, traditional garment of both sexes and all social levels among the Amhara, is the cotton toga, "shamma". It is made from cotton spun at home and then fashioned by the weaver. It is untailored, but draped with care.

In addition to the average shamma, there is a double shamma (called "kutta") for warmth and longer wear; and a half-shamma, usually of finer weave, for prestige (called "netela") used only for daytime wear. Size specifications vary between rural and urban usage, and between districts and provinces.

A full size rural shamma measures about five feet
297 by 10 feet, when finished. To achieve this size, the weaver produces a piece of cloth 2-1/2 feet x 20 feet, cuts it in half, places the borders together, and sews lengthwise. This is the most common garment of the peasant during the work-week, in the dry season, day or night, male and female. It usually has a simple, narrow, dyed border, which is colorfast only in cold water.

The "kutta", when completed, is usually 6 feet wide and up to 15 feet long, cut and sewn in similar fashion,
291 and of coarse, tightly woven cotton. It is worn at night,
513 especially in the rainy season, and by travellers, for it can also be used as a blanket. Today, even in the center of Addis Ababa, one sees peasants curled up head to foot

291 [513] in this kutta, resembling a motionless sack, stirring only when the rays of the sun begin to warm.

The "nätäla" is more loosely woven and about half the size of a "kutta". Because it was quickly made, used little cotton, and was therefore much cheaper, it was the dress of the poor and consequently despised. But in very recent times it has been finely made, some even in a factory in Dire Dawa city, and it is now finely embroidered near the border where the dyed strip used to be.

291 531 "Jano" or "jano kuta", as the name indicates, was the fine shamma of royalty, in chich case warmth was no consideration, and border embroidery was of purple, green gold and other colored silken thread, in various designs. "Tebäb" or "derb jano" was embroidered with arabesques, and nowadays has often been changed to diamonds in the national colors of Ethiopia; green, yellow, red. Now urban women wear it, and it is becoming festive dress even for peasant women.

291 The roughest, coarsest and most durable workaday shamma of the peasant has no border ("goda"). Sometimes the "Jämïs" of the peasant woman is made of this tightly woven material. In the old times it had a very broad red border (a foot wide) and since it was worn by the freehold farmer, it was a garment of honor among the peasantry, even in the time of Menelik II. Now it has lost prestige, except among the more remote rural landholding kin, and it is not produced any more.

The "burnos" hooded cape of wool, is an ancient garment worn by Amhara feudal lords and royalty, both men

291 and women, as protection from rain and cold in the rainy season. Finely embroidered, it was also a garment of high prestige, since the king himself presented it to his liege lords from his own royal workshop, frequently made by imported artisans from the Middle East and their Abyssinian [439] apprentices, often slaves. It is still worn by feudal lords in remote rural areas, but has to be bought from caravan traders who import it, though there are rumors that they were until recently still produced in the district of Bäjä-da in remote, mountainous Semyen sub-province.

292 The old prestige of the "burnos" lives on in the "kabā", the royal (hoodless) cape or mantle, of dark wool with embroidered stiff collar and borders, draped over the shoulders, and reaching to the ankles. This garment is still the prerogative of royalty, of nobility on festive occasions, and of priests. It was the garment seen in western newsreels at the time Emperor Haile Selassie wore it in Geneva and London, even with his European suit.

286 During the time of the roving Amhara feudal chiefs, even in Menelik's time, when capitals were no more than tent cities, carpet making was extensive. Some were used as tapestry, by the nobility. The best were imported, but there was considerable domestic production. A type called "kozē" was woven, surviving for a while in remote areas such as the aforementioned "Bäjäda" district in Semyen, but not of any economic significance. It died out as an art, with the death of the old craftsmen, increase in imports, and the end of the tent cities. Cheap rugs have replaced the carpets, just as imported black chintz has replaced

286 the expensive, woollen, hand-made "kabe", among the common priesthood.

291 Headdress, except for the cap("qob") of monks and nuns, and the turban of priests, is not worn by the Amhara. Only in the cold upper "dega" do the shepherd make a kind of helmet of reeds or plaited wool, covering the ears. The first breach came about a generation ago when some of the [77] nobility began to wear European hats of soft felt, with wide brims. More recently, the tropical helmet of British and Italians has become popular among educated clerks, teachers and provincial judges, and even commoners of distinction are beginning to weave an imitation tropical helmet of reeds, to serve as a miniature, personal sun umbrella. But the vast majority still use no headgear, and protect themselves from the hot sun by wrapping a portion of the shamma around the skull. The shamma thus provides protection from cold, heat, dust, rain--and shields the bashful (see language of shamma).

Most Amhara still go barefoot. Sandals used to be the prerogative of royalty, and though this prohibition no longer exists, leather sandals, or rubber sneakers from Egypt are still only in limited use, mainly in towns. Shoes imported from Europe are expensive and are worn only by highly educated individuals, officials in Addis Ababa, etc. The average Amhara, including some rural nobility, prefers to continue barefoot. Rural nobles even ride barefoot using the traditional stirrup with an iron ring for the big toes. Sandals made of leather were used by travellers. They

291 are only of the last items to increase in prestige in very recent years, due to growing imitation of living patters of Addis Ababa. Coptic churches still require removal of footgear.

G. Sanitation.

515 Two traditional traits of health care and sanitation have already been mentioned in connection with the direct use of natural products: polishing teeth, and washing clothes.

[824] Hardwood twigs such as wild olive (Olea chrysophylla) called "wäyra", or of the "ahya" or "ächema" bush (also softer ones of the type that Somali use in lower elevations) are held between the lips, by men or women, after meals. Even old men (in rural Ethiopia this means men over fifty) have most of their teeth as a result, with little sign of wear or decay. Much of this is due to this habit of polishing teeth and gums at odd moments, much as an American might chew gum. Before this polishing, the end of the twig to be used is masticated thoroughly, and the fibrous ends are then used. The Amhara belief is that this keeps the teeth in sharp condition--they do not do it with the idea of cleaning food remnants out of the mouth. The mental association is than of a bird sharpening its beak.

[296] Already noted also is the use of the potash content
[824] of the seed of the "endod" bush (Circunia abyssinica, or, Phytolacca abyssinica), for laundering and washing.

Little more positive statements can be made about sanitation. When water is short in the dry season, which

282 over the "alga" bedstead.

Sheepskins ("debdeb") are used as upholstery over the solid clay bench that runs along the inside of the Amhara hut, as cover for the children at night, or to protect a mule from chafing by placing the sheepskin under the saddle. Other sheepskins, "agoza" or "dä̈bä̈lo", are worn by church students too poor to own a good toga. Several skins make a coat for an adult itinerant monk and, formerly, for the warriors.

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[415] Goatskins, when little-worked, are used for water carrying ("qärbäta") on travel, or to store butter in. The bladder is made into a little bag. But goatskins carefully and at length scraped and tanned are made into parchment for amulets and books, especially psalteries for the church. These yellow-brown parchments ("berannа") with religious or warrior-king texts were rolled into a goatskin cover. Since contact with European missionaries in the mid-19th century, the custom has been to sew parchment pages together on one side with a twisted gut, bind the book in this fashion within two wooden covers covered with a red, tanned goatskin, on which a cross with even branches is impressed with a hot iron.

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[531] In the same fashion scabbards of daggers are covered and ornamented with impressed, geometric lines. The tanned tailskin of a cow is used to cover a better walking stick, on which it gradually dries fast. Drums for use in church (and formerly for royal proclamations) are made by tanned cowskins stretched over both ends of the wooden body. Finely tanned skins are used to cover the

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439 bales of finished material include white khaki, "mäbruq"; a thinner and cheaper quality, "mahmädi"; and colorful prints, sometimes of rayon and even silk, "balä mänäter", used by the Coptic clergy to wrap the tabot in, or to make colorful umbrellas for processions.

In the past, most imports were for the top feudal chiefs and the clergy (e.g. chintz for the mantle replacing some uses of the older burnos). Now every 439 291 Amhara, even if poor, wants to own a pair of white Jodphurs, for going to town, to church and to special feasts. In the cities, the semi-educated now also sport a long-sleeve, khaki bush jacket, the "duba", worn usually under a light shamma instead of a peasant one, and only fully educated top officials have gone over to full European dress. This has steadily increased imports of 439 cotton cloth, ever since Menelik's victories made even [293] the poorer Amhara feel "noble". The sun-umbrella once reserved for the king, "jan tela" became the ambition of every peasant housewife. Little porcelain cups, "fenjal", are often the only item of foreign origin, besides cotton cloth, found even in remote hamlets, for the use of honored guests.

The drawing power of the big markets was increased still more when the Italians built roads to some of them during 1936-1940. Their heavy trente-quatro trucks bring imported items mostly from Asmara and the Red Sea coast: blankets, wood or glass beads for necklaces, sandals, Egyptian rubber sneakers, Yemen incense and

857 boys and girls - for the sexes are not yet separated up to that
867 time - play "house" with considerable sophistication. For example, when they play "marriage", the "father" of the "bride" goes to the "elders" to inquire about the character of the "groom", after the groom's father has initiated the negotiations on the groom's request. They build a "marriage hut", and play at heavy drinking of barley-beer and honey-mead. The "bride" demands a gift from her new "husband", and enters into his "residence". After they have been in there a while, the two best-men, the "mizē", who had been duly sworn to protect her even against her husband, go off to the bride's parents to announce loudly and joyfully that the girl had proven a virgin! Whereupon the "mizē" are feted.

B. The Stage of Childhood, "Reason" Incipient Discipline.

857 There is no special rite of passage that marks entry into the
868 next stage, at about 5 for girls, about 7 for boys. But there is
855 recognition, at this point, that the girls mature faster and are economically useful at a younger age than boys. Henceforth, girls
[291] play with girls, follow their mothers in their duties, (watch babies, fetch wood) and wear a more complete shift that covers them better; while boys play in boys' groups, follow their fathers, have regular duties assigned them such as taking cattle to and from pasture, and guarding the harvest against birds and baboons. Girl-children are addressed and referred to as "leja-ṗarad" (servant maid) for their duties are even more regular than those of
[858] the boys. Both sexes can now be asked in court to choose sides when their parents are being divorced and the guardianship is in question. For they have entered the "age of reason".

855 Neglect of duty is therefore punished, and a father may fly into a sudden rage, beat the child without waiting for an excuse, even hurl a firebrand at the offending boy, so that considerable injuries sometimes occur. Mothers discipline the girls in similar temperamental fashion. But the rage, in either case, is quickly forgotten. There is no pattern of cold discipline, no "woodshed" punishment, rather hot-tempered, quick retribution.

857 Play activity and imitation of adults continues, but it takes on more seasonal and constructive characteristics. This is partly due to the seasonal pattern of the economic activities of boys age 7 to 11 and girls 5 to 14. Formal education in church school rarely begins before 11 in the rural areas, whereupon their play activities become more "extra-curricular".

[526] The seasonal games include the ball game after the harvest is completed, known as "gencheb" or "kwas", and seasonal construction and repair activities. On the church feast of Mikael, little boys have their own outdoor party, eating barley roasted on the stalk, and watching the flirtatious play of adolescent boys and girls.

291 Boys 7 to 11 still wear the tattered, knee length cotton shift, as their basic garment in rural areas, but beg a new one from relatives once a year, for the holy day of "Mäsgäl", or "Timgät". But they are increasingly self-conscious about nudity, and if the tattered shift reveals the pubic area, other boys will haze and playfully beat the offender, saying:

[539] "My father told me not to let a snake warm itself in the sun".

865 In summary, parental discipline in this age group is specific,
867 work-oriented and intermittent; while experimentation with, and

201 argumentative peasant-gabbar). The body expresses almost the permanence
554 and immobility of a status, as if the high-status person could not be surprised or dismayed by anything, certain that all things due him will come to him.

516 The famous "Nilotic stance", stork-like, in which the person stands on one leg, resting the foot of the other against the inner knee of standing leg, is found in the Amhara only among young boys, and an occasional, low-class adult.

554 In walking, nobles of the old school walk slowly, somewhat heavily,
481 as if in formal procession. Members of their retinue carry their cane, overcoat, etc. By contrast, laborers carrying heavy burdens walk catlike, largely on the instep, and fairly fast.

F. The Language of the Toga ("shamma").

201 The toga is used in so many different, formal ways by the Amhara to
291 express moods, occasion and social status in the presence of persons of differing social status, that the language of the shamma has been likened to the "language of the buffalo robe" of the Plains Indians of America (footnote 95).

The most common way of draping this usually 6 ft. long, 2-1/2 ft. wide garment can be described as "out-going"; called "tälabbäsä": The toga is draped around the upper body so that it gives a turtleneck effect, the embroidered border extends from the shoulder to the waist. This may indicate that the young wearer is in an out-going, expansive mood, considers himself a gay blade going into town in a holiday mood; when worn this way by an older man, it expresses that he is a sober, respectable citizen, in an optimistic mood, going to meet persons of equal status.

Footnote 95 - Coon, C. S.: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p. 116.

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291 To express a sad mood, the toga is not draped, but let hang full length, a corner even trailing in the dust, another corner slung across the front over the opposite shoulder, and the wearer walks with eyes sadly downcast. This way of wearing it is called "ashnäffäta", cloaking the body from the neck down. The method of careless cloaking symbolizes that the wearer is unhappy, depressed, overcome with the sadness of life.

To express reserve, the person who feels himself superior in the presence of people whom he considers inferior, or strangers, can emphasize his dignity by lifting the turtleneck effect of his draped toga to cover his mouth. This form is called "genteb täkänannobä", connoting pride, so that persons who act proud beyond their station are criticized by this term. But in the presence of strangers, who might be carriers of "buda" (evil spirits, evil eye), which might penetrate into the body through the mouth, this is considered excusable.

To emphasize an even greater degree of reserve, the top part of the toga may be lifted further to cover the nose also. This is called "kofännänä", and a man who makes too frequent use of it is criticized as "abba kofenanä" (lit. father of too much pride); it is also called "täshkärakkärä" (lit. veiling), for only the eyes are left free. This prevents evil spirits from entering through the nostril, while the eyes are regarded as potentially offensive weapons, not vulnerable. This form indicates great superiority, and is therefore limited to men; an occasional woman doing this would be sharply mocked as "mentally unbalanced", unless she walks with her husband who is thus attired, imitating him, e.g. while passing through a strange neighborhood, draped for protection ("täconattäfä"). It signals "keep your distance", "don't touch me".

To express great respect, when in the presence of a "great man", (e.g. when appearing formally before a feudal lord, in the old days,

201 291 among rustics still today), the toga is draped so that the upper part of the body is bare or at least not covered by the toga, while the corner flaps may rest on the slightly raised forearms, possible accompanying the begging gesture of the outstretched palms; this is called "awwärarräda" (possibly from "wor̈äda", district lord to whom one reports). Combining respect with utility, dancers (azmari) often drape this way, since much of the Amhara dance is upper-body, thus left disentangled, and enabling the dancer to lift the loose corners while swaying in tempo of the musical accompaniment.

Before the judge ("bäḏarya fit"), the toga is partly draped as in respect, with the difference that one corner is left as large as possible; to enable the wearer to shake an accusing toga-corner in the face of the adversary while on the witness stand, or in protest toward the judge while loudly praying that heaven may give "light" to the judge, or while raising one's wager as to the outcome.

When going to church ("beta kristyän") the toga flaps are draped across the chest so that, in crossing to the opposite shoulder, they form the sign of the cross. When on the way to the house of the great man, this drape is used, for then the flaps can be dropped on the forearms, in the gesture of respect, without draping.

Women usually drape the toga so that part of the shamma acts as a skirt-apron ("sherret"). When in an "out-going" mood, the other part of the shamma covers one arm (usually the left) and the other shoulder. When at work, the top flaps are slung over the chest, leaving both arms completely free for work ("asharräta").

291 Besides these expressive drapes of "language of the shamma", there are several utilitarian ways of draping it which communicate merely the work being done at the time, or represent mere patterns of draping for comfort:

291 Men doing physical labor - "boddäna" - lift toga above shoulders to free arms;

- "adägäddäga" - knot toga across chest; wrap-around. (also to tie shammas of debtors to creditors, or prisoners to guard's).

[411] To parry blows - "mäkkäta" - wrapping toga around left forearm, as shield.

Preparing for battle - "adäräddäga" (see above): knotting shamma across chest, after wrapping it tightly around the waist.

When cold - "zeqzeq läbbäsä" - doubling a heavy shamma (called "kuta" or "derreb") to wrap oneself in completely, even covering covering head, at night.

When hot - a light shamma of muslin ("nätäla") may be rolled around the head - "tämättämä". Hence, the turban of priests is called "mätämtämiya", a tight wrap-around of the head by muslin.

[535] When dancing - before "däbtära" (scribe-choristers) begin to dance, in church, they first drape the toga tightly ("shäbäsh-häbä"), so that the flaps will not drop from the shoulders during the motion.

[765] In mourning - while dancing the funeral motion, accompanying the improvised eulogy, women approach each other holding their own togas outward and horizontal, like huge wings, (as if they were holding a spear like men dancing the "fukkara" boast dance).

201 291 178 685 Some of these expressive ways of draping the shamma are falling into disuse in the towns where the people are more affected by what passes as "modern dress". However, an interesting increase in one way of draping the shamma can be noticed in recent years: Now that debtors are no

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291 longer chained to creditors, more frequent knotting-together of the
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685 shamma is taking place, instead.

G. Dance, Chant, Musical Instruments.

535 Amhara dancing falls into three categories: religious dancing, military dance, and the entertainment dance performed by professionals. The first type has already been described in the section on the church.

Military dancing falls into two main categories: the "fukkara" boasting dance accompanied by boasting chant; and the "hotu" loyalty dance accompanied by shouts.

The "fukkara" is the war-boast, before or after battle, and on other occasions, of the individual warrior boasting of himself, sometimes of his kin group. It used to be danced with a spear, now with a stick or rifle. This is held horizontally over the shoulders. During the dance the head moves sideways, right and left. Defiance is shouted at the enemy, be it human, animal, or a supernatural spirit.

In the zar cult, the victory dance ("gurri") of the spirit just after he has entered the body of the possessed, is regarded so much as the "fukkara" type of dance, that the zar gives his identity away by his own version of "boasting" - whereupon the "disease" is diagnosed.

The hotu loyalty dance, by contrast, is a collective dance, most often a jump-dance, in which the multitude of warriors, brandishing their weapons, try to cast fear on the enemy by numbers, sound, and expression of intense loyalty to their common leader. The name itself is composed of "ho", onomatopoetic for shouting, "ta" signifying the collective suffix (all together). The following are common variations:

"Cho - cho" - simple shouting in unison, ("qärärto").

"Yebahalal Jeb-o" - "The hyena will swallow him (i.e. the enemy)."

"Wardaw sheb-o" - "crow's beak" (i.e. the vultures will feed on the enemy).

"Addis Ababa" - (lit. "New Flower", name of capital) - shout of

186 ethnocentrism: "We" includes the brunette racial features of the
829 Mediterranean world, particularly if accompanied by Abyssinian-Coptic religion, for to the Amhara the name "Amhara" is synonymous with Christianity of their own denomination. "They", in their mind, refers to the black peoples of Africa whom they enslaved; but also to "infidel", particularly the Muslims with whom they have been at war so often. They draw many lines within these major ethnocentric divisions, racial, religious, ethnic-occupational and linguistic. But, in the Amhara attitude, racial differences are among the most fundamental.

829 The skin color of most Amhara is regarded by them as brown
822 ("ṭäym"), considered better looking than the black of negroid peoples, and reflecting "better character". Black color is regarded as symbolic of anything unpleasant, spiritually impure, ("ṭäccorä" connotes "he became shadowed, sad, depressed"). It is a (mild) insult to call a very dark person "ṭäccwara" (lit. "darkie"). European skin color is regarded as "red" ("ošy") - a common African attitude. The concept of "white" coloring connotes paleness ("näṭṭa" (lit. he became pale), undernourishment, sickness, insipid weakness.

822 Color symbolism is followed in dress: The Amhara wear white
291 togas, without coloring more than the border, because the concept white also connotes spiritual purity (by extension of the concept of the absence of physical strength). Yellow ("wäyba") is the traditional color of special mourning, worn only by monastic monks who regard themselves as in a state of perpetual mourning for the passing of Christ from the earth (the dye is made from the bark of the "wayba" tree, hence the name). Green and blue are collectively called "ärängwadä", and are not sharply differentiated.

826 Racial ideas also dominate the Amhara concepts of physical

751 their happiness from showing. Eating and drinking in the open makes one
754 extremely vulnerable, because this arouses buda's greed, and at the
776 same time makes it easier to penetrate the victim's body, through the wide open mouth and unguarded nose. Therefore, old-time Amhara cover their faces when eating in front of strangers.

751 This attempt to reduce vulnerability is closely related to some
754 of the "language of the shamma" (toga). In the presence of strangers,
● 291 this can be draped in the fashion that indicates "reserve" - covering the mouth, or even nose and mouth, with the front section of the toga, which has been draped in a turtleneck. When travelling in strange districts, which are doubly dangerous because of cast-out buda spirits hidden by exorcisers along trails, a strong-smelling
[824] herb pushed in the nostril, is often used as a prophylactic. The most commonly used of these herbs is "tena adam" (lit. health of Adam, i.e. mankind). The mouth should be kept closed, or covered. In a fearful situation, he may say "shadow, may it not fall on me". Touching iron, considered specially "strong", also helps. Children are warned to stay away from strangers, and never to leave a baby unattended, lest "buda will eat you". The term "eat" is regularly used for buda possession (not for zar possession), for it indicates consumption.

751 Typhus ("tälalafi bäsheta") and severe epilepsy ("yäbuda bäsheta")
754 the latter literally ascribed to buda (lit. buda disease) are the most
174 common ailments promptly diagnosed as "buda" "eating". Evidently
[164] Amhara doctors long ago observed that covering the mouth and nose and staying away from possibly infected strangers reduced the exposure to certain contagious diseases; they then proceeded to envelop this observation in the culture pattern, including the draping of the toga and stopping up the nose, and not eating uncovered in the presence of strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

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The Emperor and Colonel Wingate at Debra Markos, April 1941

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Household Cavalry

Patriots entering Debra Tabor, July 1941

[Facing p. 5]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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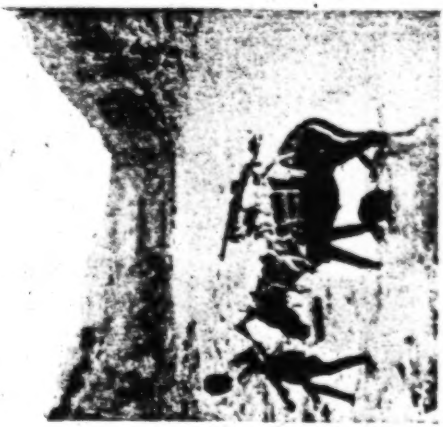

Mule and Hotchkiss gun crossing Blue Nile

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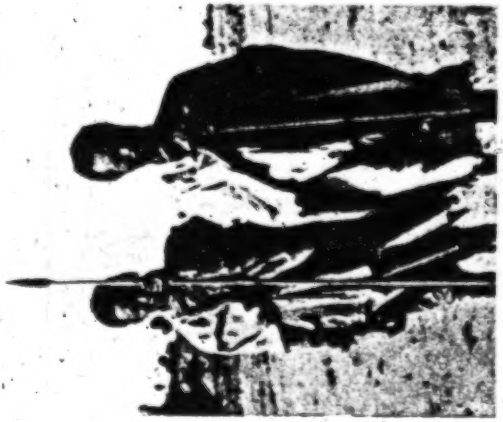

Gojjamis, Matakal

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Gojjam notable and boy learning trade of war by parrying weapons

[Facing p. 7]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and, although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wandering among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudo, which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men: the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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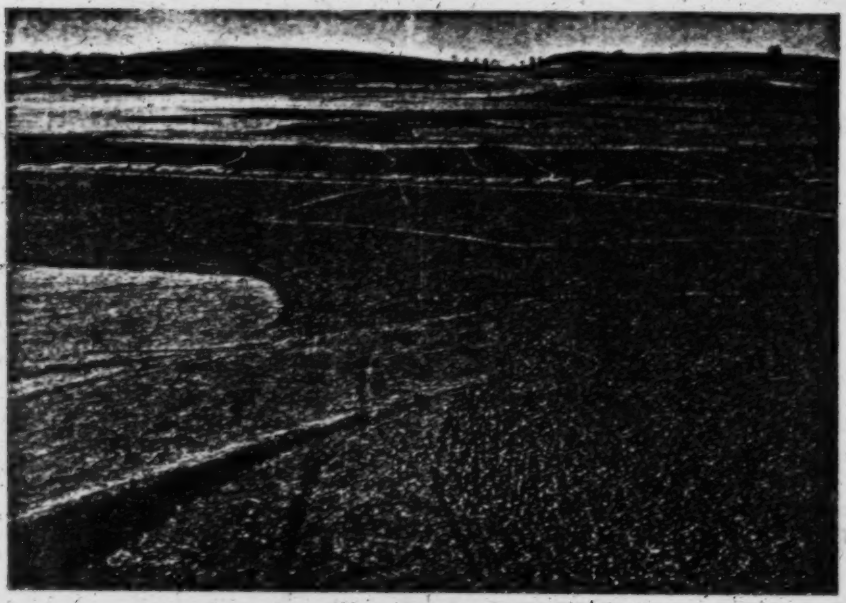
Gorges of the Kassam river from the Shoan plateau

[facing p. 158]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Church at Abo, Baressa gorge

Monk and deacon receiving offerings [Facing p. 170]



Irrigated land, Atakilt

The ceremony of Timkat (Epiphany), near Debra Berhan

[Facing p. 171]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

136 is no fish there except very little from the rivers; There from the sea none.

795 There are no monasteries except of St. Anthony, and
792 not of any other order, as some friars say who come from there.

291 The gentlemen, monks, canons, and priests are clothed; most of the other people are bare from the waist upwards, and a sheepskin on the shoulders, with the front and hind feet tied together.

792 Most of the monasteries are situated on high mountains,
346 or in great ravines; they have large revenues and juris-
[262] diction. In many monasteries they do not eat meat all the year, and fish very few times, as they have not go it in the country. The services of these monasteries are psalms and prose, and so it is done in the churches of the canons.

796 Every church has two curtains, one on this side of the altar with little bells, and no one but priests enter inside this curtain; and another curtain in the middle of the church. And no one but persons in orders enter the church, and many gentlemen and honourable persons are ordained in order to enter the church. They go to the door of all the churches and monasteries to read the epistles and gospels, and they say them rapidly, and there they give the communion to the people.

The priests consecrate at the altar, and do not show the sacrament. When the priest who says mass comes to take the communion, he takes a particle from the top, and the other two large parts he leaves for the communion of the people. All the people who come to the church have to receive the communion every day, or else not come to church. When the communion is ended, they give them a little blessed water with which they wash their mouths.

Nobody sits down in the church, nor do they enter it shod; they do not hem or spit, nor do they let any dog or other animal come into the church. They confess standing,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

783 of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
796 It was most thronged at sun-rise, and ended about nine o'clock; a long time for an old man to stand in frozen water.

The number (as women were promiscuously admitted) could not be less than 40,000; so that even the nine hours this baptist-general officiated, he must have had exercise enough to keep him warm, if 40,000 (many of them naked beauties) passed through his hands.

The women were stark naked before the men, not even the rag about them. Without such a proper medium as frozen water, I fear it would not have contributed much to the interests of religion to have trusted a priest (even an old one) among so many bold and naked beauties, especially as he had the first six hours of them in the dark.

783 The Abuna, the king, and queen, were the three
796 first baptized, all three being absolutely naked, having
291 only a cotton cloth round their middle. I am sure
831 there never could be a greater deviation from the manners of any kingdom, than this is from those of Abyssinia. The king is always covered; you seldom see any part of him but his eyes. The queen and every woman in Abyssinia, in public and private, (I mean where nothing is intended but conversation) are covered to the chin. It is a disgrace to them to have even their feet seen by strangers; and their arms and hands are concealed even to their nails. A curious circumstance, therefore, it would have been for the king to be so liberal of his queen's charms, while he covers his own face with blue taffeta; but to imagine that the Abuna, a Coptish monk, bred in the desert of St Macarius, would expose himself naked among naked women, contrary to the usual custom of the celebration he observes in his own church, is monstrous, and

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

must exceed all belief whatever. As the Abuna Mark too was of the reasonable age of 110 years, he might, I think, have dispensed at that time of life with a bathing gown, especially as it was frost. 783 796 [297] [831]

The old man in the pond repeated the formula, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in his own language; and Alvarez, it is plain, understood not one word of Abyssinian. Yet, on the other hand, he speaks Latin to the king, who wonderfully understands him, and answers as decisively on the merits of the dispute as if he had been educated in the Sorbonne. "Confiteor unum baptizma," says Alvarez *, was a constitution of the Nicene council under Pope Leo. Right, says the king, whose church, however, anathematized Leo and the council he presided at; which both the king and Alvarez should have known was not the Nicene council, though the words of the symbol quoted are thought to be part of a confession framed by that assembly.

"Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit salvus erit," says Alvarez. "You say right," answers the king, "as to baptism; these are the words of our Saviour; but this present ceremony was lately invented by a grandfather of mine, in favour of such as have turned Moors, and are desirous again of becoming Christians."

I should think, in the first place, this answer of the king should have let Alvarez see no baptism was intended there; or, if it was a re-baptism, it only took place in favour of those who had turned Moors, and must therefore have been but partial. If this was really the case, what had the king, queen, and Abuna,

* Vid. Alvarez, hoc loco. Ramusio. Viaggi. p. 254.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

ning of a reign; which she could not do, until one of the nobles supplied her with a sum of money. There were only a few derims left in the treasury. 792

Abyssinian Harvests. They first sow barley from the end of April to the beginning of May, or later; that is, towards the first rains. This ripens in the rains in June; and is carried off the fields into the house, that it may not rot. Then they sow fitches, which likewise ripen in the rains after. In September they sow wheat, or teff, which is cut down in December; and, if they have water, they sow barley, or fitches, again in January. In Woggora (a very fertile province), there is seed-time, and harvest, and plowing, in every month in the year; water being easily diverted to the grounds. The rent paid to the king for the ground is one-tenth of what they reap, yet, with all this, they are all poor; for a harvest, at a medium, is about twenty after one; and they sometimes, nay, very often, scarce reap the seed. They never manure the ground; and there are great quantities of rats, and innumerable ants, that consume their corn at different, nay, at all periods of its growth. All their five harvests do not, in produce, equal one Egyptian one; and they are at five times the labour. In the several villages, living, in general, is very miserable; and, in general, people of consideration scarcely know any other diet than teff bread and bouza. [511] [262] Whether this teff is black, or white, is the whole difference between the diet of master and servant. 241

Abyssinian Dress. The principal part of the dress of the natives is a large cotton cloth, 24 peek (cubits) in length, and one and a half in breadth, with a blue and yellow stripe round the bottom of it. This blue is not dyed; but the Surat blue cloths are unravelled and woven for this purpose; and the yellow they dye with sûf, the yellow thistle. The best for ordinary wear costs 10 salts, or 1¼ pataka, about 6s. 6d. English. It is called Kuara, as probably coming from that province. They are very beautiful and light. The other pieces of dress are breeches, which reach to their mid-thighs; and girt with a white girdle of cloth to the common people; but the better sort have red Indian cotton cloths for breeches; and silk, or worsted coloured girdles from the Levant. When they ride, they only hold their stirrups between their great and 291 [435] 492

[p. 45]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

tent secluded and when they go out they ride mules 562
astride, are completely veiled or rather covered up in their *chammas* and are accompanied by an escort on foot, one or two of whom walk or trot by the side of the mule holding the lady in position.

Getting on to the mule is an operation that must by 492
no means be witnessed by the profane masculine eye; 576
I remember on the occasion of the first visit paid to my wife by an Abyssinian lady of rank I went to the entrance to speed the parting guest. To my surprise a number of members of the escort took off their *chammas* and held them all round the mule so that their mistress could climb into her saddle in complete seclusion.

But rigid as may be the rules of privacy governing 562
the lives of women, there are no harems, and no guard 644
of eunuchs to watch over them as in Moslem countries.

Nevertheless other Eastern customs are practised, 304
such as circumcision among men and a mild form of 171
clitoridectomy among women; this custom, be it observed, is not as is often supposed of Jewish origin, but probably of much more remote antiquity, and is further evidence of the Hamitic descent of the Abyssinians; according to Gibbon circumcision had been practised "by the most ancient Ethiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness" and presumably not therefore as a religious rite.

The nation as a whole has not adopted European 291
dress, although it is worn to some extent in Addis 177
Ababa, and by individuals who have been to Europe. They are proud of their national dress and the Emperor still encourages its use at court functions and receptions at the palace.

The distinctive feature of the dress is the *chamma*, 291

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

291 which is worn by both men and women of all ranks; and by the beauty of the *chamma* can as a rule be judged the position or state of purse of the wearer. It consists of a piece of material about three yards in length and from two to four yards in width according as to whether it is doubled or not.

291 286 The more beautiful specimens of these are hand-woven from native cotton, spun and prepared by the Abyssinian women. These are usually edged with red or mixed coloured silks, and those worn by the high priests, great chiefs, and princes and princesses have a very handsome border varying from twelve to eighteen inches wide, carried out in silks of vivid colours woven into an artistic design. They are as fine as gossamer, though large and warm; they are not as a rule sold, but if ever obtainable by Europeans cost from 200 to 500 dollars.

The more ordinary *chammas* are also woven by hand, but of imported cotton, and by comparison are of a much harder and coarser character, though still nice to look at. Natives who cannot afford the hand-woven shawl make use of a length of *abougedid* or cotton sheeting for the same purpose.

291 The *chamma*, which is not unlike the old Roman toga, is draped round the shoulders, often being brought up over the head to the eyebrow and again over the lower part of the face and nose, leaving but the eyes [576] visible. It is always lowered from the face and head as a mark of friendliness or respect, and generally when passing Europeans, though I have known Abyssinians of the anti-foreign old régime to cover up their faces more closely when passing the *Frangi*. At court those in attendance twist the garment round the waist and

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

throw the end over the right shoulder from back to front. As a general rule, however, women turn them up on the left shoulder, whilst men free their right arm and shoulder. They make, floating in the breeze, a very picturesque addition to the costume of the wearers. 291

Very little difference is apparent in the dress of the Ethiopian men and women of any class. This is made of imported white cotton materials of varying design and quality, and consists of roomy trousers tied round the waist and tightened in from calf to ankle, and a loose shirt reaching below the knee. The latter is worn longer by the women, with some coloured silk embroidery round neck and cuffs; this embroidery is also carried out round the bottom of the trousers, which are tightly fastened at the ankle with tiny silver or gold buttons. The shirts of both men and women have very close-fitting sleeves from elbow to wrist, which are also buttoned, the men's shirts being finished with high tight neck-bands which give them a clean, smart appearance.

Sometimes I have seen, though rarely, the shirt and trousers, and even the *chamma*, worn in pink or blue or even yellow. This is a sign of mourning—white is otherwise the universal rule. [765]

Most Abyssinians wear a head-covering of sorts. In the case of the people this generally consists of a piece of white muslin twisted round or tied over the head; I have also, though rarely, seen them wearing straw hats of native manufacture, and, still more rarely, a sort of brown woollen cap with a tuft, not unlike a fez in shape. The better-class Abyssinian, of both sexes, sometimes affects a wide-brimmed soft grey or black felt hat of European manufacture.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

291 The Abyssinian lady and gentleman are frequently to be seen with a black satin three-quarter mantle, ornamented by a little gold braid round the neck and generally a coloured silk lining. In the rainy season a black woollen-hooded cape or *burnous* is donned by all classes, women wearing the hood at the back, and men sporting theirs on their left shoulder. The *burnous* is also a sign of mourning, for which purpose people of every class wear it.

765 515 296 A further, and less pleasant, sign of mourning is for the bereaved one to refrain from washing his clothes; but I only observed this practice in connection with servants and persons of humble position. Ordinarily they are very keen on washing their white garments, and even on trek there was a great "clean-up" whenever we stayed in camp for an extra twenty-four hours. The day before our return into Addis was always the occasion for the most lavish use of soap and water, and the *safari* on arrival looked really quite smart, the men all having donned spotless white *chammas*, shirt, and trousers for the occasion, when, I am bound to say, they looked externally a good deal cleaner than our travel-stained garments allowed us to do.

293 A cartridge belt of various colours and designs, from the plain native leather to the gold and silk embroidered specimen, is more or less generally worn by the men, and its value is also often an indication to the position or means of the wearer. In its place women use a girdle of some sort, to which is attached their keys, ear-cleaners, head-scratchers, and small silver ornaments. Parasols of neatly plaited grass, intermixed with coloured cottons, are carried frequently by both sexes in all seasons. These are quite picturesque, and no doubt serve their

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

●291

A Typical Provincial Governor.

This Provincial Governor is wearing the National Dress known as the "Chamma."

[facing p. 78]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 1.—*School of qenè (Wāshārā Māryām monastery, Goijam)*

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FIG. 2.—*Nagāsi's church, Agāntchā, Manz*

[P.14-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

FIG. 3.—*Fāsil's castle, Gondar*

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FIG. 4.—*Two Manzē elders*

FIG. 5.—*Manz: the rafe of bānnā*

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[R14-8]

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
ṭēff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181]
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 6.—*The Amhara countryside*

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FIG. 7.—*An Amhara homestead, Mana*

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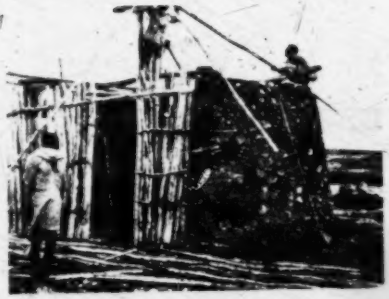

[D-46-A]

FIG. 8.—*Building a house*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 9.—*The weekly market*

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[P.46-B]

FIG. 10.—*The market weighing cotton*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*665 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or [182] children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children [513] settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the em- [352] bers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 62 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 11.—*The market: buying honey*

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FIG. 12.—*The market: inspecting pottery*

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FIG. 13.—*The market: selling salt bars*

[P.78-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 14.—*A group of shepherds*

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FIG. 15.—*Threshing time*

[P.78-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 : MP5 Amhara MP5

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The procession on Timkat Day

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The Timkat procession detail

[P. 110-A]

T1:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MPS Amhara MPS

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FIG. 18.—*Ten-year-old boy plowing*

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FIG. 19.—*Mother and daughter carrying water pots*

[P. 110-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 815 177 [175] ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the water in places where the Anopheles breed."[25]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

*883 177 178 *Taste.*—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from extreme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions. Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of [262] which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward [272] Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages [273] are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

*883 264 177 178 With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

*883 291 177 178 On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

*883 517 53 177 178 In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are preferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of

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11:Levine Z.-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 20.—*Traditional (church) school: student huts*

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FIG. 21.—*Traditional school: learning to read*

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FIG. 22.—*Traditional school: learning zema from master*

[P 142-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 23—*Clergy and government school students observing national holiday*

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FIG. 24—*Inside a secondary school library*

[P. 142-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 25.—Provincial nobleman and wife

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FIG. 26.—"Big men" journeying with retainers

[P.174-A]

11:Levine Z-4.5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[P.174-8]

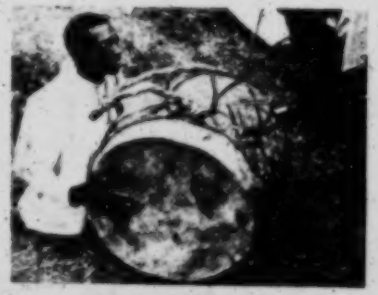

FIG. 27.—*A deacon*

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FIG. 28.—*Group of debtarā*

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FIG. 29.—*An old priest*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 30.—*A widower who has become a monk*

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FIG. 31.—*A group of clergy*

[P. 206-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 32.—*Haile Selassie as a boy with his father, Rās Makonnen*

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FIG. 33.—*The Emperor attending a ceremony at the University College*

[P. 206-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 34.—*Offering a* gurshá

FIG. 35.—*Singing out the master's* qené

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FIG. 36.—*Amhara litigants* [P. 238-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cal animosities which have weakened the nobility as a status group both in 121*
relation to the emperor and in relation to foreign countries. Another respect 181
in which Amhara parochialism has been expressed is the addiction to regional 186
stereotypes, according to which the Tigrean has been depicted as flighty, irre- 619
sponsible, and "dry"; the Gondarē as intolerably proud; the Gojjami as sly [829]
and treacherous; and the Shoan as calculating and untrustworthy. Despite its long history as a nation, Ethiopia probably never experienced more than the dimmest stirrings of a truly national sentiment among its people; and more than once in the past century have regional lords strengthened the hand of European powers in Ethiopia by seeking their help in the combat against other local rulers.

Self and Others

In addition to considering the extent to which the members of a society 121*
identify with the needs and symbols of their more inclusive collectivities, one 156
may also define the individualistic disposition on the dimension of per- 571
sonal interaction. Egoism contrasts, in other words, not only with the disposition to perceive collective purposes as one's own, but also with the disposition to seek solidarity and mutuality in face-to-face relations.

This aspect of egoism/solidarism is studied by surveying the more important forms of interaction that appear in a given society. In the survey of elementary social behavior among the Amhara now to be reported, two criteria were used to establish the importance of any given form: (1) the frequency with which it was observed, and (2) the extent to which it was stylized or "institutionalized." These criteria were not embodied in any systematic observational procedures; the only control over the observer's bias here is my own deliberate effort to present a balanced and accurate picture.

We may begin by considering the more solidaristic forms. Interaction 121*
among the Amhara is characterized, first of all, by a sort of *sensuous cama-* 571
raderie. The Amhara enjoy bodily contact. Members of the same sex custom- 826
arily hold one another's hands for long periods while conversing, or embrace 181
one another in casual fellowship. Crowds of commoners cheerfully huddle close to one another on the floor through the night when they have assembled for some social function and cannot return home the same day. Relatives and companions of the same sex incline to sleep in one another's arms, at least in the chillier altitudes.

Both their style of dress and their manner of eating give the Amhara a 121*
ready way to express this comradely feeling. Their untailored cotton or wool 571
cloth easily adapts itself to being shared. Except perhaps for individuals of 181
high social status, the typical Amhara is ready to use his toga as a blanket- 291
wrap for both himself and another whom he may scarcely know.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*793 869 875 criteria. His personal interest means to the student rapid advancement through the curriculum, dining at the master's table, and enjoying privileged information of a non-ecclesiastical nature. Without his patronship, a student is committed to years of uncertainty and physical misery, scraping to meet his subsistence needs, paying his "tuition" in demeaning services, such as gathering the master's wood and tilling his garden, and in deferential performances, particularly washing the master's feet and those of his visitors.

*793 869 The kiyne student is further troubled by the many ailments which are his lot. He lives, with one or two [342] of his mates, in a wretched lean-to of twigs and wild grasses, which proves to be poor protection against the [291] [515] cold winter rains. Often he owns only the toga on his back, and it, like him, remains unwashed for the dura- [164] tion of the long dry season. Thus, ikek (scrofula) becomes his badge, and kurtimat (joint pains) and weba [262] (fever) his recurrent companions. The student's diet *[192] is his special concern, since it conspicuously lacks the combination of wholesome wot (stew) and injera (pancake- [735] like bread) necessary to sustain good health. He ob- [164] tains most of his food by begging in the town and local hamlets, where he generally receives scraps of stale injera bread, always inadequate and potentially pathogenic (i.e., likift bearing, threatening fever and

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
463 favor, permitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qamis"
under the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
[292] rowing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the
prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled crafts-
men never rose that high but spent their lives accompany-
ing troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup
fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and em-
broiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing
183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and
specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
[754] nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also
the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoub-
tedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of
maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of
invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other
elaborations of culture.

1. Living Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("tis", or,
if several on one large hill, "mändär"), rather than a vil-
lage. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts,
with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus
the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-
isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the
other side of the same hill.

291 among peasant's weekday wear, and on the occasion of a peasant woman riding a mule (e.g. the bride being carried to the groom's hamlet). In the latter, somewhat tighter variety, it is called "lebaleba". Very recently, Sudanese-imported khaki shorts, British-type, have become popular 294 among peasants for workaday wear, and are mass-produced by foot-operated Singer sewing machines at "big markets" of provincial town, This has changed the status of the male tailor to a full-time, urban occupation, carried on by a poor Amhara and only when he is far from the district of his own kinfolk, to avoid shaming them.

292 The wearing of the kneelength cotton shirt, formerly also of imported silk, the "qämis", was a special privilege granted by the king to his chief courtiers and feudal governors and lords. This meant that they did not have to bare the upper body even to their superiors, and could, when travelling, demand food supplied from any peasant for themselves and their troops. Now called "ej täbab" (narrow-sleeve) it is urban wear for the commoner, and even the peasant wears it when he is not at work as well as on festive occasions; It is always of cotton. The term "qämis" is now used only for the full-length, wider-sleeved gown of women, who like to have it emoroidered with green, flowery designs on chest and back ("telf qämis"). Unlike the male shirt, it is worn all the way to the feet, and is tied around the waist with a thin strip of cloth,

[831] The "qämis" of women is almost untailored, for emphasizing body contours would be "shameful". It is full-

291 and women, as protection from rain and cold in the rainy season. Finely embroidered, it was also a garment of high prestige, since the king himself presented it to his liege lords from his own royal workshop, frequently made by imported artisans from the Middle East and their Abyssinian [439] apprentices, often slaves. It is still worn by feudal lords in remote rural areas, but has to be bought from caravan traders who import it, though there are rumors that they were until recently still produced in the district of Bäjäda in remote, mountainous Semyen sub-province.

292 The old prestige of the "burnos" lives on in the "kabā", the royal (hoodless) cape or mantle, of dark wool with embroidered stiff collar and borders, draped over the shoulders, and reaching to the ankles. This garment is still the prerogative of royalty, of nobility on festive occasions, and of priests. It was the garment seen in western newsreels at the time Emperor Haile Selassie wore it in Geneva and London, even with his European suit.

286 During the time of the roving Amhara feudal chiefs, even in Menelik's time, when capitals were no more than tent cities, carpet making was extensive. Some were used as tapestry, by the nobility. The best were imported, but there was considerable domestic production. A type called "kozē" was woven, surviving for a while in remote areas such as the aforementioned "Bäjäda" district in Semyen, but not of any economic significance. It died out as an art, with the death of the old craftsmen, increase in imports, and the end of the tent cities. Cheap rugs have replaced the carpets, just as imported black chintz has replaced

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

792 Nunneries are similarly organized, headed by an abess, but the average age is much higher, since becoming a nun is far less a career than becoming a monk, and typically chosen by women who have been unhappy in marriage or have been widowed. Virgin nuns are extremely rare.

There are also laywomen who serve as volunteers and for the occasional spiritual and temporal benefits that result from association with a large nunnery-monastery, which still represents a major business organization, trading post, produce and commodities exchange, etc. "Gabbar" sharecrop tenants supply cereals, services, etc.

[292] The baking is done largely by nuns and laywomen, who also cook and brew barley beer, and milk cows. The last is particularly essential on non-fast periods when milk consumption is permitted. Monastic rules are so severe, that no female animals are permitted inside the monk's area; no cows, mares, bitches, etc. This is the literalness with which the separation of the sexes is enforced!

Finally, there is a non-functional clergy, a relatively small number of hermits. They usually live under cave-ledges, near brooks, in forest land near monasteries. The monks come daily to bring them food, leaving it at a respectful distance. These hermits, called "bahetawi", are paradoxically regarded as "loving mankind", as praying for the well-being of all "orthodox"

792 believers, but as quick in anger when a human face disturbs their solitude. Legends tell of hermits who, receiving a "call", returned to the temporal world as prophets and leaders of men. But this is regarded as rare. During their lifetime the hermits are held in awe, and even after their death they are believed to haunt their earthy cave-ledges, so that passers-by talk in whispers only, and fear to come too close.

(d) Utensils of the Church.

793 The headgear of the priests, "mätämtämiya", is a
292 turban-like affair, basically a white muslin wrapped around the head or the cylindrical cap ("qob"). Monks wear the "qob" without the muslin, and, in many monasteries, used to dye their "qob" as well as their robes
[822] yellow. In recent years the yellow color is falling into disuse, and white--believed to be the color of mourning for the passing of Christ, is worn alternately with black caps and capes. Black is evidently due to acculturation. It first entered in the form of imported chintz capes for the bishops and upper clergy in the time of Menelik II, and has spread, due to the Italian occupation.

Like noblemen, middle and higher clergy wear the kaba, the heavy , woolen, sleeveless cape, and carry an especially good "chera" (flyswitch) of guresa-monkey hair. Priests wear the narrow white jodphurs at all times,

793 beneath kneelength shirt ("qämis") and shamma; often
292 they wear sandals. They usually let a full beard grow
[293] as richly as it will. Another private symbol of priestly nobility is an abbreviated "maqomya" leaning staff, shorter, without crutch, topped by an ivory knob and equipped as a walking stick, called "sände kahanat", with an iron point at the bottom.

In church parades, priests and deacons add colorfully embroidered garments of imported and embroidered velvet, rayon, silk, brocade, etc., often cut like the ancient leopard-skin in sleeveless capes which hang from the shoulders over front and back. If of domestic origin, the holy day garments are dyed black or red. Embroidery is of gold or silver thread, and sometimes includes gold or silver filigree plates in geometric patterns (e.g.the
[293] sun). On such occasions the ordinary sun umbrella ("jantela") of reeds gives way to a colorful umbrella of imported cloth, in which red and gold predominate. It is now often attached to the ribs of a modern umbrella. The black cape ("kaba") is held across the chest with a metal (often silver) clasp or chain.

293 On such holy day parades, clergy and upper-class
778 persons married in a eucharistic ceremony ("qurban"), wear the metal crown, "akläl". This is one of the most valuable of each church's possessions, always locked in the church when not in use, usually donated by noble sponsors. They are usually made of silver, or at least of brass, and the older more traditiona ones are shaped in tiered stories of circles narrowing toward the top

796 own people and to the Christians of Constantinople.
[779] Therefore, she ordered that a tall pole be erected, crowned with a burning torch, called "dämmärä". The present procedure re-enacts this traditional tale, for on the afternoon preceding the 17th huge poles are stacked up, parades circle them, and in the evening the stacks are set afire, lighting up the landscape.

In preparation, some days before Masqal, peasants and townsmen go to the bush to cut long sticks, so that they will be dry in time. Pious persons touch them to the hearthstone and pray that the harvest will be good, [292] so that they will not have to subsist on cabbage (the food of poverty). Even the poorest can bring the plentiful yellow "masqal" daisies, tied to the top of the poles. The stacks are formed on public areas, such as a marketplace, in front of the church, etc. Adults and children parade around them at least 3 times, wearing their best new garments and trinkets. This is an occasion for girls to be seen at their prettiest, and for young braves to boast.

Some of the young men form into groups and dance [535] the "hoya-hoya", refrains of past or future brave deeds. Warriors perform the loyalty jumping-dance shouting "Addis Ababa". Sometimes, when the resinous torches are lit, mock battles develop. Little girls dance rings-around-the-rosy, while little boys may take the occasion to burn scars on their forearms as proof of courage and to be "strong". Pious elders take a brand from the lit bonfire and rekindle their home hearths, in the hope of

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

They say the prayers by heart and
without light, except in the lamps or chandeliers, for they 796 78
have not got lamps. They burn butter in these chandeliers, [373]
for they have not got oil. They pray or chaunt very loud, [354]
without art of singing, and they do not recite (alternate) [237]
verses, but all sing straight on. Their prayers are psalms, and
on feast days besides psalms they recite prose, according as [533]
the feast is so is the prose. They always stand in the
churches; at matins they only say one single lesson: this
is said by a priest or a friar, rather shouted than intoned,
and he reads this lesson before the principal entrance.
When this lesson is finished, on Saturdays, Sundays, and 792
feast days, they make a procession with four or five crosses 796
on their poles, and a cross not so much raised as carried
like a stick in the left hand, because they carry a thurible
in the right hand, since as many as carry a cross carry a
thurible, there are always as many thuribles as crosses.
They wear some silk cloaks, not well made, because they [292]
are not wider than the width of a piece of damask, or other
silk from top to bottom. Before the breast, a cross piece to
the flanks on each side, of any other stuff and of any colour,
even though it should not match the principal part, and of
this principal part a good ell hangs behind dragging on the
ground. They make this procession through the circuit,
which is like a cloister. This being ended, on the said
Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts, he who has to say mass
enters with two others into the chancel; they bring out an [778]
effigy of Our Lady, which they have in ancient pictures in all
churches and monasteries. He who has to say mass places
himself in the centre of the transept with his face towards
the principal entrance, and the image in his hands held
before his breast: and those who stand by his sides hold
lighted candles in their hands, and all the others commence
a chaunt like prose, and all walk, shouting and leaping as if
dancing[1] they hold hands and go round, before the

[1] *Como em chacota*, dancing and singing, *i.e.*, not reverentially.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a 782
machine for pressing. In this same house the blessed 796
bread is made which is given away on Saturdays and Sundays and feast days; and on great feasts, such as Christmas, Easter, Our Lady of August, etc., they carry this bread of the sacrament with a pallium,[1] bell, and cross devoutly. Before they enter the church with it they go round the church by the circuit like a cloister; when it is not a feast they enter the church at once and without the pallium. On a Saturday before Ascension these friars made a procession; and from being in a new country it seemed to us very good, and they did it in this way. They took crosses, and the altar stone covered with a silk cloth, a friar carried it on his head, which was also covered with the said cloths; and they carried books and bells, and thuribles, and holy water; and all went chaunting to some millet fields: there they made their devotions and cries after the fashion of litanies, and with this procession they returned to the monastery. We asked why they did that, and they said that the animals ate their millet, and so they went to pour out holy water and pray God to drive them out. In this country he that says 793
the mass has no other difference from the deacon and sub- 292
deacon in his vestments than a long stole with an opening 796
in the middle to allow the head to pass through; before and behind it reaches to the ground. The friars say mass [302]
with hair on their heads; the priests do not wear hair, and are shaven and so say mass. Also, both friars and priests say mass barefooted, nobody enters the church with his feet shod, and they allege for this what God said to Moses: "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for thou art on holy ground."

[1] Under a canopy.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

monastery, most of them old men of great age, and as dry 797
as wood; very few young men. This monastery is entirely
surrounded by a wall, and this wall is closed with two [346]
gates, which are always locked.

CAP. XIV.—*How the monastery of Bisan is the head of six monasteries, of the number of the brothers, and ornaments, of the "castar"*[1] *which they do to Philip, whom they call a Saint.*

This monastery is the head of six monasteries, which are 792
around it in these mountains; the furthest off is at a 793
distance of three leagues from it, and all are subject to it, and are governed and ruled by it. In each of them is a David, that is a guardian appointed by the Abbot or provincial of this monastery, who is also David under the Abba. I always heard say that there were in this monastery
three thousand friars, and because I doubted it much I 792
came here to keep the feast of our Lady of August, in order to see if they would come together. Certainly I rejoiced to see the riches of this monastery, and the procession which they made: in my judgment the friars did not exceed three hundred, and most of them were very old. There is a circuit to this monastery which surrounds the two
which are like cloisters covered in, and this one which is not [346]
covered in was on that occasion all covered in with brocades and inferior brocades, and velvets of Mekkah, all long pieces, sewn one to another in order that they might shelter the whole circuit. They made a very beautiful procession through this canopied circuit; all wore cloaks of
the same stuffs, brocades, and velvets of Mekkah, badly [292]
made as I mentioned above. They carried fifty small crosses of silver, of bad workmanship, and as many

[1] Should be *teslar*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

another lord, who was named Adiby, who was now Bar- 643
nagais. Beneath the Barnagais are some great lords whom 631
they call Xuums, which means captains; and these are, first, Xuum Cire, a very great captaincy, he is now married to a sister of Prester John. We never went to this country and Xuumeta because it is distant and out of the way. There 643
is another Xuumeta named Ceruil. We knew this lordship, 701
and they say that its Xuum brings into the field fifteen 631
thousand spearmen with shields and archers. Also Xuum Cama, and Buno Xuum, and Xuum bono. These Xumetas had been one, and on account of its being large, and the Prester having misgivings that they might set themselves up against the Barnagais, he made it into two, and even yet each of them is very large. They say that this lordship which is now two was the dominion of Queen Candace, without having been larger in her time. She was the first Christian that there was in this country, and whom the Lord called powerful. Also two other captaincies, one is named Dafilla, the other Canfila; these two border on Egypt, and their captains are like lords of the marches. All these captains before mentioned are of kettledrums, [534]
which nobody except great lords can carry: and all these serve with the Barnagais in wars when he goes to them, and wherever he may go. They have other great gentlemen under their command who are called Arraz,[1] which means heads. We knew one of these, who was named Arraz Aderaan, he is head over fifteen thousand men at arms, whom they name chavas. I saw this Arraz Aderaan twice at the court, both times I saw him before the gate of the [292]
Prester John going without a shirt, and from his waist downwards a very good silk cloth, and on his shoulders the skin of a lion, in his right hand a spear, and in his left hand [411]
a shield. I asked how it was so great a lord went about in that manner, they told me that the greatest honour

[1] *Ar-ras.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

443 places which are chief towns of districts, every week. The fairs consist of bartering one thing for another, as for instance, an ass for a cow, and that which is of least value gives to the other two or three measures of bread. By means of bread they buy stuffs, and with stuffs they buy mules and cows, and whatever they want, for salt, incense, pepper, myrrh, camphor, and other small articles.[1] They buy fowls and capons, and whatever they need or want to buy is all to be found at these fairs in exchange for others, for there is no current money. The principal merchants 792 292 at these fairs are priests, friars, and nuns. The friars are decent in their habits, which are full, and reaching to the ground. Some wear yellow habits of coarse cotton stuff, others habits of tanned goat skins like wide breeches,[2] also yellow. The nuns also wear the same habits; the friars wear, besides, capes of the fashion of Dominican friars, of the same yellow skins or stuffs, they wear hats; and the nuns wear neither capes nor hats, but [302] only the habit, and are shaven with a razor; and they wear a leather strap wound or fastened round the head. When they are old women they wear fillets[3] round their heads over their tonsures. These nuns are not cloistered, nor do they live together in convents, but in villages, and in the monasteries of the friars, on account of belonging to those houses and order. The order is all one, and the nuns give obedience where they receive their habits. With regard to entering churches and monasteries, the nuns do not enter except as other women do. There is a great multitude of nuns, as well as of friars; they say that some of them are very holy women, and others are not so. The priests show very 793 302 little difference from the laity in their dress, because all [292] wear a good cloth wrapped round, like smart men, and their difference is that they carry a cross in their hand, and are shaven, and the laity wear long hair. The priests also have

[1] *Bechugarias.* [2] *Zafoens* or *Safoens.* [3] *Tufas.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

693 he hears the parties until he has determined upon it, and then he goes and relates the cause to the Barnagais, who gives the sentence: if it is a small cause, or if the parties wish it, the Alicaxi gives sentence, and the cause is concluded. Moreover, in all judgments, whether the Barnagais or the Alicaxi judges, there must be present an honourable man, whom they call by the name of his office Malaganha, who is like a tabellion or notary of Prester John, and if either of the parties wishes to appeal, he requires from this man the certifying of the cause for Prester John and his judges. All the lords of the countries of any of the kingdoms of Prester John have an Alicaxi and a Malaganha appointed by the Prester; so also have the captains subject to the Barnagais and to the other great lords. The gentlemen who are about the house of the Barnagais, and other grandees who come on business, have this manner of coming from their abodes. Whilst at the place he is living at he mounts his mule, seven, eight, or ten men on foot go before him as far as the first gate, and there he dismounts. If he is a person of greater importance, he takes seven, eight, or ten mules, or else three or four, according as the person is. So he dismounts at the first gate, and arrives at the second, after that, if they are bidden at once to enter, they go in, if not, they sit outside like beehives in the sun, without any other pastime. All these honourable persons wear sheep skins at [292] their necks or on their shoulders, and he who wears the skin of a lion, tiger, or ounce, is more honourable. When 576 they come before the lord they take off the skin, as we take off our caps. Whilst we were in this town of Barra on a 721 market day, they made a solemn proclamation that the Barnagais intended to make war on the Nobiis, five or six days' journey from the limits of his country, towards Egypt, neighbouring to the countries of Canfilla and Dafolha,[1] which are subject to the Barnagais, as I have before mentioned.

[1] Dafilla.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and so receive absolution. They pray in the churches of 796
the canons as in those of the friars. Friars do not marry, [782]
canons and priests do so. When the canons live together 793
in the circuit they eat in their houses, and the friars eat in community. The chiefs of these churches are called Licacanate. The wives of the canons have houses outside of the circuit, where they go to live with them: the son of a canon remains a canon, and the son of a priest not, except he chooses later to become one. No tithes are paid to any church, they live on the large properties which the churches and monasteries possess. Complaints against the clergy [694]
are dealt with before the secular justice.

The vestment is made like a shirt, and the stole with a 292
hole in the middle, and put over the head; they have no maniple, nor amice, nor girdle; priests and friars all have [302]
their heads shaved, and the beards not. The friars say mass with their hats on their heads, and the priests with their heads bare.

In no church is more than one mass said, and no mass is 794
said for alms, not even for the dead. When any person dies, the priests come with cross and holy water and incense, and recite certain prayers for him, and carry him off to burial very hurriedly: next day they bring offerings: the churchyards are all closed, so that nothing can enter them.

Prester John has no determined place of abode, he 643
always goes about the country in tents, and he will always have in his camp five or six tents among good and common ones: and there will always be at Court of people for the 644
horses and mules from fifty thousand upwards.

The kitchen of Prester John is a good crossbow shot behind his quarters, and they bring his food in this manner: all that he has to eat comes in porringers and dishes of very black earthenware on wooden trays, and pages bring them, and above the pages come a pallium of silk, which covers them so that these viands come with reverence.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by 794
those who are sick, or dying.

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a 292
white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar.

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the 796
church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married 784
are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Persons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the [846] church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first [304] day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occasions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment. [852]

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure 131
in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It 361
may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem.* Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla 101
who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma;

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

main purpose, but of course they cannot be closed up. 293
Ordinary umbrellas are never used by the Abyssinians, though huge and brilliant coloured umbrellas are used by priests and other important personages on ceremonial occasions.

On feast days the chiefs and other functionaries at 292
Court change their cotton shirt for one of silk or satin, gorgeously embroidered in gold and silver, and in various colours. And finally a pelerine of bright-coloured cloth of velvet, or, better still, of lion or black leopard skin ornamented in silver and silver-gilt, is permitted to be worn by those only whom it is desired to distinguish on account of specially meritorious conduct, generally in war.

The full-dress costume of a Ras or Dejazmach, with 293
bristling lion's mane head-dress, velvet cape with lion's mane collar, embroidered in gold and silver-gilt, and gala shield and sword-scabbard covered with velvet and embossed with silver-gilt ornamentation, is a really magnificent one, and the appearance of Dejazmach Nado, the envoy to King George in 1919, at Buckingham Palace in this dress caused quite a sensation.

Mention must also be made of one article which is 301
an indispensable adjunct to the dress of every Christian 778
Abyssinian, and that is the *mätab*, a silken cord carrying an amulet or charm, which is worn round the neck as the badge of their faith.

The gentler sex affect as much jewellery of all sorts, 301
bracelets, rings, anklets, necklaces, earrings, etc., as they are able to procure; these are of native make as already described. As a general rule they have extraordinarily small *attaches*, and of all the native bracelets that we collected in and round Addis Ababa none

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 [644] The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of course, the imperial court. The *makuānnent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discretion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but [492] on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shouldering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-[231] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *ṭajj* pre-[273] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos,* the dark wool cloak of the [292] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-[822] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abys-[293] sinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 554 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mā'erg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 554 701 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The *makuānnent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary Amharic the term *makonnen* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

rās	"head" (of an army)
dajāzmātch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitāwrāri**	"general of the vanguard"
qaññāzmātch	"general of the right wing"
gerāzmātch	"general of the left wing"
bālāmbārās	"commander of a fort"
bāshā†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shālaqā	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitāwrāri* ranked below the *gerāzmātch*.

[192] † *Bāshā* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 preme judges at the royal court, and the *aqābē sa'āt* ranked third—in some
644 lists, first—in the official order of precedence of all court dignitaries.[40]
[693] One other church dignitary, finally, was the *nebra ed,* chief of the sacred district of Aksum, who always enjoyed a high position at the royal court. When appointed by the emperor (instead of by the provincial governor who sometimes possessed that authority), the *nebra ed* enjoyed the rare privilege of being permitted to sit while speaking in the event of his involvement in litigation.

793 The status of the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries was based on approxi-
554 mately the same factors as those which determined the status of secular nobility: royal favor; family background, in the case of those whose fathers were important nobles or noted churchmen; and the possession of wealth, political power, and imposing titles.[41] The same was true of their regional counterparts, the *alaqā,* "chiefs" of large churches and monasteries, whose wealth, power, and leisurely mode of life gave them, in Plowden's opinion, "perhaps the most enviable position in Abyssinia."[42]

793 The status of the clergy as a whole, however, rested on three other prin-
792 ciples which are not affected by royal favor, birth, or worldly possessions.
554 These were: contact with the most sacred symbols of religious authority; ascetic piety; and religious learning. Broadly speaking, in Abyssinia these three principles have been embodied primarily in three distinct roles, namely, those of priest, monk, and *dabtārā.*

793 A normal preparation for these roles—necessarily so, in the case of the
794 priesthood—is service as a deacon. Ability to read is, now as before, a requisite qualification for the diaconate, but that requirement has in the past often been overlooked. More important has been the requirement of ordination by the *abuna.* Ordination formerly took place in the company of hundreds of other aspirants and, when there was uncertainty about the future availability of an *abuna,* even babes in arms were admitted.[43]

794 The traditional garb of the deacon is a yellowish cape made of sheepskins,
292 though on holidays the officiating deacons may be dressed in richly colored silk robes like the priests. The duties of the deacon—and they are accounted great and secret privileges—are to prepare the sacramental bread, fetch the holy water, and assist at the Mass (the performance of which normally requires two priests and three deacons).

793 On reaching puberty a deacon is no longer supposed to serve in the church,
794 for fear that he will become "impure." At that time he may decide to prepare for the priesthood. For this two qualifications must be met. He must have completed his study of reading and, ideally, of *zēmā,* the chants that are intoned in the liturgy of the Mass. These matters he may learn from the older clergy during his service as a deacon, or from his father, who, in many cases, is a priest himself. Otherwise, he goes off in search of a master. He

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

builds a tiny thatch hut near the home of his tutor, wears ragged, unsheared 793
sheepskins, and gets his meals by begging. He lives thus for a year or two, 794
until he has mastered the fourteen varieties of chants used in the various masses, and perhaps special chants like the *Praise of Mary* (*Weddāssē Māryām*) which are sung on holidays.

The other, and more important, qualification for the priesthood is marriage according to the law of the church. After a deacon has been married in the customary manner and lived with his wife for at least forty days, their marriage must be solemnized by the celebration of the Eucharist. Thereafter he may not divorce her or remarry if she dies.

With these conditions satisfied, the candidate for priesthood may travel to 793
the *abuna* and be ordained. He acquires thereby the power to bind and to absolve, and is granted full knowledge of the mysteries of the *tābot*. The new priest attaches himself to a church, and is given his share of the monthly assignments for conducting the Mass. This is his main responsibility, though as he grows older he will also acquire confessants to whom he will give advice and assign penances.

Apart from these duties, the life of an Abyssinian priest in many ways resembles that of his lay neighbors. He plows his fields and harvests his crops. He may do business at the markets, or add to his income by weaving. Perhaps the chief difference in his manner of life is the habit of spending time in the "gate of peace," a little building near the church where the clergy assemble after services for hours of drinking *ṭallā* and idle conversation.

In reward for his services—and this is normally the chief inducement to become a priest—the priest is given a share of the revenues in kind brought in from lands owned and managed by the church. He may also be given some land owned by the church to cultivate for himself. In addition, he [431]
receives gifts in kind from his confessants periodically, is entitled to take part in the various feasts to which priests are regularly invited, and is likely to receive some bequest from time to time.*

The insignia of the priest are modest, but they suffice to inform the stranger 793
that here is a man to be shown special respect: a white turban wrapped 292
around the head and a cross carried in the hand, to be kissed by all comers. 293
Older priests often carry a fly-whisk made of horsehair, and a wicker sun 778
umbrella.

Though there are devout and kindly men among them, the Ethiopian 793
priests have never been particularly noted for their moral qualities. Often they are ungenerous and scheming, and ready to exploit their position at the expense of the laity. They are poorly educated in their own tradition, stuttering

* A sheep, or at least a sheepskin—insurance that the Memorial Mass will be properly performed on the fortieth day after the donor's death.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 and misreading sacred texts in a language they have never understood. They
[293] are notorious drinkers, so much so that a modern Ethiopian novelist has one of his characters, a priest, ask: "If one stops drinking, what else is left in this world?"[44]

Nevertheless, the prestige of the priests was unassailable in Amhara culture. Whatever their personal life, they represented the value of ritual sanctity, which made it possible for the Mass to be performed in the local churches. So long as they had been duly ordained and did not break their lawful marriage bond, they were part of a sacred class. Combes and Tamisier remarked upon this in the 1830's:

> Despite all their vices, these priests manage to make themselves respected; when they pass along the roads, the faithful bow deeply to them, and in no matter what gathering they appear, everyone rises and hurries to kiss their hands.[45]

793 Privileged contact with the sacred symbols of the church—ordination by the
798 sacrosanct *abuna*, exclusive access to the *tābot*, and officiation at the Eucharist —gave the priests an authority that was independent both of political dispensation and of personal accomplishment.

793 Other groups within the clergy have been highly esteemed for quite differ-
792 ent reasons. Those who become monks carry great weight because they embody the virtue of ascetic piety. The *dabtarā*, on the other hand, are respected for their erudition.

792 Monks usually come from two kinds of background: unwed deacons desiring to spend their lives as monks, and priests whose wives have died. But previous ecclesiastical connection is not necessary for the monastic calling, nor is the ability to read required. The essential qualification is the willingness to renounce the world. The word for becoming a monk (*manakwasa*) means to renounce earthly things. A prospective monk may be of the sort described by one of Walker's informants:

> An old man who has married many wives and divorced them one by one, may say, "Henceforth it suffices me! Let the world remain lost to me! I am to turn my face to God!"[46]

In earlier times the monastic life was sought by men from all walks of life, including lords, soldiers, even emperors, in consequence of some grievous affliction, or perhaps a vow made in time of trouble, or excessive *Weltschmerz*.

Heads of monasteries have the jurisdiction to confer the monastic status. One who desires this status bequeathes his worldly possessions and goes
[292] through a ceremony in the church in which his body is declared dead. The symbol of the monastic state is a little cloth skullcap (*askēma*). Once he has become a monk, an Ethiopian is a legal nonentity. This frees him from all

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 The *dabtarā*'s way of life is more variable than that of the monk, his possibilities for income more diverse than those of the priest. He may be attached to a church as a chorister and receive a share of the church's revenues, as do the priests. Or he may donate his services to the church and earn his living [212] by secular employment. He may work as a scribe at the court of a king or nobleman. He may spend most of his time teaching, gaining support from some large church or monastery. Like many priests he may cultivate land. [434] In any case, he is likely to derive some income from the sale of amulets and from medical therapies. Some *dabtarā* are even said to have wandered about the country as hunters, performing magical services for clients as they go.

Dabtarā are not set off from the populace by special insignia. Some wind [292] a turban around their heads, as do many priests; but others may dress like ordinary peasants. If holding more prestigious posts they may be seen with fly-whisks or wearing a *barnos*. But they are known by the people, who fear and respect them. They are feared because of their magical powers, which [789] are believed capable of rendering bullets harmless and turning *ĭnjarā* to dust. [554] They are respected because of their learning, for they are the only educated status group in traditional Amhara society. If the commoner's relatively [195] impulsive *manner* of speaking is contrasted with the quiet reserve of the nobility, his relatively simple *language* is contrasted with that of the *dabtarā*, who is noted for a studied and circumspect use of language (*qāla-dabtarā*) and for larding his Amharic with literary (i.e., Ge'ez) expressions (*ya-dabtarā amārĭññā*).

793 554 183 In the case of the religious elite, then, status is in all cases achieved. While there is a natural tendency for sons of priests and *dabtarā* to follow their fathers' example, they arrive at the status in question only by fulfilling the same norms that are applied to the sons of laymen. These norms, however, differ among the different groups within the clergy. Investiture by an authority emanating from the seat of religious charisma, the Alexandrine Patriarchate, and the related ritual requirement of marriage with Communion, were the basis of priestly status, almost irrespective of the personal attainments of the candidate. Personal attainments were *all* that mattered, on the other [792] hand, in the case of monk and *dabtarā*, but they differed radically for the two statuses.

793 792 554 The qualifications and characters of monks and *dabtarā* are almost diametrically opposed. The monastic state is entered only by means of a sacred rite; the *dabtarā* is in no way ordained, and might even be a "defrocked" priest. The monk's life is normally given to sensual renunciation; the *dabtarā* is normally an acknowledged sensualist (as appears, for example, in the proverb *ḳa-mesā ya-talaya dabtarā / yādargāl serā* ["a *dabtarā* who is kept from lunch / will work intrigues"][48] and in stories which celebrate the *dabtarā*'s use of his knowledge for private erotic ends). In the monk the virtue

*753 and sexually ambiguous roles. The other, predominantly
*787 female, members of his hadra treat him as an equal,
776 rather than with the deference ordinarily shown men.
562 What is more, his shame is public, since the zars gener-
• [292] ally demand as a sign of obeisance that a colored bor-
der be woven into the normally undecorated white toga
of Amhara men.

*753 The type of practitioner that a client consults
*755 influences the final etiology with which his disease epi-
*756 sode is finally rationalized. In the context of category
*793 three ailments, the awakiy debtera is a morally correct
choice for the male client, since his therapy is capable
of translating the disease episode into a confirmation
of the client's normative social state. Failing more
innocuous indications (generally involving ganels), the
debtera's diagnosis and cure are expected to support an
etiology of sorcery or poisoning. This marks the sick-
man as someone's talat; a man someone wishes to kill or
maim in retribution or fear; a man who has incurred a
talat's interest by demonstrating aggressive and proud
(i.e., masculine) behavior, by committing assault and
murder, by usurping land rights, or by contesting sexual
access to women.

824 [283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called [324] "aräg", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and [293] grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

[372] Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

[386] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

[222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by <u>collecting</u>, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Sircunia Abyssinica).

824 281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

285 415 especially the use of milk (also found in pottery), is typically African.

Reeds, fibers (including the musa ensete and baobab), and grasses already mentioned are used to produce many types of articles, equal in variety only to pottery, and in numbers even exceeding.

285 415 352 The reed table, "mäsob" is one of the most noteworthy, for every household has several, in different sizes, and usually one with ornamental geometric designs woven into it by means of dyed reeds. In principle it is a combination breadbasket and table, for by lifting the lid the former turns into the latter. The diameter at the top may be as much as 2 feet, just high enough to be comfortable for eating while seated on a mat on the ground. Thus the cylindrical, almost hourglass-shaped leg of the same tightly woven reeds, may be from 1 foot to 2 feet high. The lid fits tightly inside, so that flies and even ants cannot enter; it is of the same type found in the Sudan and parts of North Africa.

285 293 The next most noteworthy item of woven fiber is the famous sun umbrella, "jan ṭela" (lit. the emperor's shade, from "zehon", elephant). Formerly a royal prerogative, then a feudal one, it is now owned by every peasant housewife, and in provincial towns purchasable at the big market for ETH$2.-(US$0.80). This umbrella is unfoldable, made of strong ribs of split bamboo (called "qerqaha"), bent almost semi-circular; the central wooden stick ending in a woven plate above the shade itself; the sections woven tight enough to keep out the sun, though not watertight.

439 bales of finished material include white khaki, "mäbruq"; a thinner and cheaper quality, "mahmädi"; and colorful prints, sometimes of rayon and even silk, "balä mänäter", used by the Coptic clergy to wrap the tabot in, or to make colorful umbrellas for processions.

In the past, most imports were for the top feudal chiefs and the clergy (e.g. chintz for the mantle replacing some uses of the older burnos). Now every 439 291 Amhara, even if poor, wants to own a pair of white Jodphurs, for going to town, to church and to special feasts. In the cities, the semi-educated now also sport a long-sleeve, khaki bush jacket, the "duba", worn usually under a light shamma instead of a peasant one, and only fully educated top officials have gone over to full European dress. This has steadily increased imports of 439 cotton cloth, ever since Menelik's victories made even [293] the poorer Amhara feel "noble". The sun-umbrella once reserved for the king, "jan tela" became the ambition of every peasant housewife. Little porcelain cups, "fenjal", are often the only item of foreign origin, besides cotton cloth, found even in remote hamlets, for the use of honored guests.

The drawing power of the big markets was increased still more when the Italians built roads to some of them during 1936-1940. Their heavy trente-quatro trucks bring imported items mostly from Asmara and the Red Sea coast: blankets, wood or glass beads for necklaces, sandals, Egyptian rubber sneakers, Yemen incense and

795 off by cutting its throat.

It may be that the use of the formula became emphatic centuries ago, as an equivalent-though-distinctive counterpart to the Muslim formula "In the name of Allah the all-merciful, and Muhammad hid his prophet". Another such distinction is almost certainly the blue neck-cord, "mätäb" which both male and female Abyssinian Copts wear to distinguish them from Muslims. But their other religious laws and taboos seem to date back to the Old Testament observances of Judaism, notable the taboo on the pig, which is not even raised outside European Addis Ababa.

[171] [293] [784]

795 779 As a consequence of the religiosity of the people, the rules of the church have the force of law, unchallenged especially in the rural areas. Even the more modernized administration and new legislation has made little change in the close inter-relation of church and state functions, at the grassroots level. This inter-relation is even closer in the form of social pressure. Foreign observers have remarked that without this church organization the social structure of the country would fall to pieces and lose its coherence.

795 Another significant factor is the large number of persons consecrated, or partly consecrated to the church service. Besides priests, monks and nuns there are boy deacons and church students, chorister-scribes, and other semi-laymen attached to the church, whose total number has been estimated at from 10% to 20% of the population, particularly the male population.

793 beneath kneelength shirt ("qämis") and shamma; often
292 they wear sandals. They usually let a full beard grow
[293] as richly as it will. Another private symbol of priestly nobility is an abbreviated "maqomya" leaning staff, shorter, without crutch, topped by an ivory knob and equipped as a walking stick, called "sände kahanat", with an iron point at the bottom.

In church parades, priests and deacons add colorfully embroidered garments of imported and embroidered velvet, rayon, silk, brocade, etc., often cut like the ancient leopard-skin in sleeveless capes which hang from the shoulders over front and back. If of domestic origin, the holy day garments are dyed black or red. Embroidery is of gold or silver thread, and sometimes includes gold or silver filigree plates in geometric patterns (e.g.the
[293] sun). On such occasions the ordinary sun umbrella ("jantela") of reeds gives way to a colorful umbrella of imported cloth, in which red and gold predominate. It is now often attached to the ribs of a modern umbrella. The black cape ("kaba") is held across the chest with a metal (often silver) clasp or chain.

293 On such holy day parades, clergy and upper-class
778 persons married in a eucharistic ceremony ("qurban"), wear the metal crown, "akliil". This is one of the most valuable of each church's possessions, always locked in the church when not in use, usually donated by noble sponsors. They are usually made of silver, or at least of brass, and the older more traditiona ones are shaped in tiered stories of circles narrowing toward the top

293 story. Later ones imitate European crowns.
778

In parades tall crosses of bright metal are carried, Like most Abyssinian priestly hand crosses, they are so ornamented with further cross designs that they appear to the Abyssinian as "perforated"; hence the common expression "perforated as the cross" (where a Westerner would use the symbol of the sieve). Priests and monks always carry a handcross, which they hold out to a passing acquaintance to kiss, thepproper greeting toward clergy, even on ordinary days. Smaller crosses are [789] used by the public as amulets against evil spirits. The larger crosses, with their ornamental supports, forming perforated circles and squares, sometimes contain engraved verses. [325] The method of casting is the"cire perdue", which is also used to cast the concave tops of the "maqomya" crutch. [534] In front of old churches, resonant stones are suspended from poles, and when struck, act as bells to summon for the service.

778 Other metal church utensils include the censers in which incense is burned during the services, swung by the officiating priest. They may be of brass, silver, iron, even clay in poorer churches. They are often equipped with numerous small bells. Very common is [534] the sistrum, called "sänässel" (onomatopoetic), a rattle instrument reminiscent of ancient Egypt, usually of brass, 8 inches long, with a straight wooden handle, the metal frame cast in "cire perdue", often by Falasha smiths. The frame is perforated like a cross. The tinkling disks, [177] which glide along the cross-wire between the sides of the frame

852 unbaptized during this period of ritual impurity.

852 304 Another Old Testament survival, which is considered more customary than religious, is circumsision. Boys are circumcised about a week after birth, but not usually on Wednesday or Friday fast days. In some regions, notably Gojjam, girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed by a woman in a strictly female gathering, so that the girl will not become a "selfish" wife, and will be happy in marriage. After these operations, the babies may be blessed by a priest. However, when an adult person becomes Christian, circumcision or clitoredtomy are not performed, since they are not required.

293 At baptism, the baby receives the blue neck-cord, 852 553 the "mätäb", which forever after distinguishes him from a Muslim. The priest gives or confirms the Christian name of the child, usually one that places the child under the protection and guidance of a saint or archangel, such as "Gäbre-Mikaël" (Servant of Michael). However, in later life, most children will use and be called by the "world name" given them by their mothers at time of birth, such as "Taamrat" (miracle, e.g if the husband suddenly returned from a distant and dangerous trip at the time) for a boy, or "almaz" (diamond) or other sparkling name for a girl. The Christian name may be used later in life if the person becomes a priest or monk or nun, or participates in "qurban" (eucharistic marriage in church).

608 852 Every baby baptized, also every new adult convert, is given godparents. When a slave was baptised (prior

562 The commoner woman may not
565 carry a "ç̣hera" flyswitch of monkey-hair or horse-
293 hair, otherwise she will be criticized as "rudely presumptuous" and "proud". Commoner women therefore drape the shamma over their heads to be somewhat protected from flies, or cut a small branch off a eucalyptus tree. Noblewomen may carry a ç̣hera, and indicate by their heavy weight that they have a houseful of servants to perform every menial task.

562 With advancing age, past menopause, the social
888 position of the commoner woman steadily improves. She now lords it over the younger women in the household who have taken over the menial tasks. If she has remained married to the same husband for a number of years, she is respectfully addressed as "emmä bēt" (lit. mother of the house). If she is widowed, she gains prestige by taking vows as a nun. A woman who marries a priest shares some of the social dignity of his position; she is referred to as "qesenna" (from "qēs", priest). Women listening to the church service have the privilege of gaining merit by shouting the shrill joyshout "ellel" at the proper times in the liturgy.

562 Kinship ties remain a strong protection to
602 women even after marriage and residence away from the parental hamlet. She is often reminded not to forget her kinship ties when she marries:

X794 realizing that her "zar" had insulted the powerful one of Salamtew.
796 Back on her throne, Lady Sälämtew harshly admonishes the audience for
[688] dozing, for whispering, for laughing, and some for having taken food and drink during the previous "gurri". This inattentiveness is an insult to her zar, and she threatens to recess the convention if it continues. But then she sugarcoats the threat by calling for another round of refreshments.

[853] Some of the babies in the rear had cried, and were nursed by their mothers. This had also been done by some of the possessed women previously, sometimes within half an hour after the exhausting "gurri". Motherhood and zar devotion evidently did not conflict.

[123] Lady Sälämtu used this intermission to send the foreigner word promising "I shall appoint you a zar as your weqabi (protective spirit)". When she saw that he had drunk some of the barley beer which she had ordered to be served on the tablet of her zar. This time she addressed him in the female gender again, just as she had used a male gender in addressing her female devotees. The zars are believed to enjoy playing their game of turning nature upside down.

X794 About 1A.M., everyone rose, except the poet and the drummer.
535 Fresh incense was heaped on the burners. Tired and partly intoxi-
796 cated members of the audience were shaken awake. For now they were to witness the "fukkara", the individualistic "boasting dance" of Lady Sälämtew's zar. It was a spastic bobbing up-and-down dance, similar to the "hotu" dance of warriors. The drum beat faster and
[293] faster, Lady Sälämtew seemed to forget her dignity, but still waved her strap, the symbol of her seniority, while the devotees shouted

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920) 1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

291 The Abyssinian lady and gentleman are frequently to be seen with a black satin three-quarter mantle, ornamented by a little gold braid round the neck and generally a coloured silk lining. In the rainy season a black woollen-hooded cape or *burnous* is donned by all classes, women wearing the hood at the back, and men sporting theirs on their left shoulder. The *burnous* is also a sign of mourning, for which purpose people of every class wear it.

765 515 296 A further, and less pleasant, sign of mourning is for the bereaved one to refrain from washing his clothes; but I only observed this practice in connection with servants and persons of humble position. Ordinarily they are very keen on washing their white garments, and even on trek there was a great "clean-up" whenever we stayed in camp for an extra twenty-four hours. The day before our return into Addis was always the occasion for the most lavish use of soap and water, and the *safari* on arrival looked really quite smart, the men all having donned spotless white *chammas*, shirt, and trousers for the occasion, when, I am bound to say, they looked externally a good deal cleaner than our travel-stained garments allowed us to do.

293 A cartridge belt of various colours and designs, from the plain native leather to the gold and silk embroidered specimen, is more or less generally worn by the men, and its value is also often an indication to the position or means of the wearer. In its place women use a girdle of some sort, to which is attached their keys, ear-cleaners, head-scratchers, and small silver ornaments. Parasols of neatly plaited grass, intermixed with coloured cottons, are carried frequently by both sexes in all seasons. These are quite picturesque, and no doubt serve their

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main purpose, but of course they cannot be closed up. Ordinary umbrellas are never used by the Abyssinians, though huge and brilliant coloured umbrellas are used by priests and other important personages on ceremonial occasions.

On feast days the chiefs and other functionaries at Court change their cotton shirt for one of silk or satin, gorgeously embroidered in gold and silver, and in various colours. And finally a pelerine of bright-coloured cloth of velvet, or, better still, of lion or black leopard skin ornamented in silver and silver-gilt, is permitted to be worn by those only whom it is desired to distinguish on account of specially meritorious conduct, generally in war.

The full-dress costume of a Ras or Dejazmach, with bristling lion's mane head-dress, velvet cape with lion's mane collar, embroidered in gold and silver-gilt, and gala shield and sword-scabbard covered with velvet and embossed with silver-gilt ornamentation, is a really magnificent one, and the appearance of Dejazmach Nado, the envoy to King George in 1919, at Buckingham Palace in this dress caused quite a sensation.

Mention must also be made of one article which is an indispensable adjunct to the dress of every Christian Abyssinian, and that is the *matab*, a silken cord carrying an amulet or charm, which is worn round the neck as the badge of their faith.

The gentler sex affect as much jewellery of all sorts, bracelets, rings, anklets, necklaces, earrings, etc., as they are able to procure; these are of native make as already described. As a general rule they have extraordinarily small *attaches*, and of all the native bracelets that we collected in and round Addis Ababa none

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of
[644] course, the imperial court. The *makuānnent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discre-
[492] tion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shoul-
[231] dering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-
[273] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *ṭajj* pre-
[292] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos*, the dark wool cloak of the
[822] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-
[293] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abyssinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for
554 instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mā'erg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The
554 *makuānnent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary
701 Amharic the term *makuānnent* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

rās	"head" (of an army)
dajāzmāṭch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitāwrāri**	"general of the vanguard"
qaññāzmātch	"general of the right wing"
gerāzmātch	"general of the left wing"
bālāmbārās	"commander of a fort"
bāshā†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shālaqā	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitāwrāri* ranked below the *gerāzmātch*.

[192] † *Bāshā* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

builds a tiny thatch hut near the home of his tutor, wears ragged, unsheared 793
sheepskins, and gets his meals by begging. He lives thus for a year or two, 794
until he has mastered the fourteen varieties of chants used in the various masses, and perhaps special chants like the *Praise of Mary* (*Weddāssē Māryām*) which are sung on holidays.

The other, and more important, qualification for the priesthood is marriage according to the law of the church. After a deacon has been married in the customary manner and lived with his wife for at least forty days, their marriage must be solemnized by the celebration of the Eucharist. Thereafter he may not divorce her or remarry if she dies.

With these conditions satisfied, the candidate for priesthood may travel to 793
the *abuna* and be ordained. He acquires thereby the power to bind and to absolve, and is granted full knowledge of the mysteries of the *tābot*. The new priest attaches himself to a church, and is given his share of the monthly assignments for conducting the Mass. This is his main responsibility, though as he grows older he will also acquire confessants to whom he will give advice and assign penances.

Apart from these duties, the life of an Abyssinian priest in many ways resembles that of his lay neighbors. He plows his fields and harvests his crops. He may do business at the markets, or add to his income by weaving. Perhaps the chief difference in his manner of life is the habit of spending time in the "gate of peace," a little building near the church where the clergy assemble after services for hours of drinking *ṭallā* and idle conversation.

In reward for his services—and this is normally the chief inducement to become a priest—the priest is given a share of the revenues in kind brought in from lands owned and managed by the church. He may also be given some land owned by the church to cultivate for himself. In addition, he [431]
receives gifts in kind from his confessants periodically, is entitled to take part in the various feasts to which priests are regularly invited, and is likely to receive some bequest from time to time.*

The insignia of the priest are modest, but they suffice to inform the stranger 793
that here is a man to be shown special respect: a white turban wrapped 292
around the head and a cross carried in the hand, to be kissed by all comers. 293
Older priests often carry a fly-whisk made of horsehair, and a wicker sun 778
umbrella.

Though there are devout and kindly men among them, the Ethiopian 793
priests have never been particularly noted for their moral qualities. Often they are ungenerous and scheming, and ready to exploit their position at the expense of the laity. They are poorly educated in their own tradition, stuttering

* A sheep, or at least a sheepskin—insurance that the Memorial Mass will be properly performed on the fortieth day after the donor's death.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 27.—*A deacon*

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FIG. 28.—*Group of* dabtarā

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FIG. 29.—*An old priest*

291 [439] Raw cotton and cotton sheeting have long been imported, and still are, but the toga (shamma), probably the oldest of the Abyssinian cotton garments, is made domestically, from cotton spun by the housewife and woven on the handloom of the weaver.

The cotton clothing now considered "traditional" is [765] always white. The explanation given by the pious is that white is the expression of mourning, because of the passing from the earth of Jesus Christ.

[294] Tailoring is done by poor semi-specialized Amhara men at "big markets". Garments are made with great care, to follow the traditional style and also fit well. There are no new fashions in these costumes, for the prevalent pattern is conservative: to be properly dressed for the occasion, in the style of one's forebears. Variety exists in trousers: the jodphurs which reach to the bare feet, as former clothing of feudal lords, are more prestigeful than the wide peasant trousers that narrow to the leg just below the knee. The shirt, worn kneelength above the trousers, similarly narrows on the forearm, and is therefore called "ej tebab" (lit. narrow-sleeve) in the vernacular, instead of "qamis", the proper name (possibly from French chemise, though no Amhara would admit this foreign name for his "traditional" shirt). The only untailored garment is the toga, but this is used for expression of moods and situational conditions (see "language of the shamma").

296 Laundering is done in or near riverbeds, or brooks, by women, housewives or female ex-slaves, using the dried

291 among peasant's weekday wear, and on the occasion of a peasant woman riding a mule (e.g. the bride being carried to the groom's hamlet). In the latter, somewhat tighter variety, it is called "lebaleba". Very recently, Sudanese-imported khaki shorts, British-type, have become popular
294 among peasants for workaday wear, and are mass-produced by foot-operated Singer sewing machines at "big markets" of provincial town. This has changed the status of the male tailor to a full-time, urban occupation, carried on by a poor Amhara and only when he is far from the district of his own kinfolk, to avoid shaming them.

292 The wearing of the kneelength cotton shirt, formerly also of imported silk, the "qämis", was a special privilege granted by the King to his chief courtiers and feudal governors and lords. This meant that they did not have to bare the upper body even to their superiors, and could, when travelling, demand food supplied from any peasant for themselves and their troops. Now called "ej täbab" (narrow-sleeve) it is urban wear for the commoner, and even the peasant wears it when he is not at work as well as on festive occasions; It is always of cotton. The term "qämis" is now used only for the full-length, wider-sleeved gown of women, who like to have it emroidered with green, flowery designs on chest and back ("telf qämis"). Unlike the male shirt, it is worn all the way to the feet, and is tied around the waist with a thin strip of cloth,

[831] The "qämis" of women is almost untailored, for emphasizing body contours would be "shameful". It is full-

291 it also at night or during the rainy season, for warmth. Old men use it for the latter reason, (but call it "deg", to differentiate it from the girdle of pregnancy).

The most important, and most varied, traditional garment of both sexes and all social levels among the Amhara, is the cotton toga, "shamma". It is made from cotton spun at home and then fashioned by the weaver. It is untailored, but draped with care.

In addition to the average shamma, there is a double shamma (called "kutta") for warmth and longer wear; and a half-shamma, usually of finer weave, for prestige (called "netela") used only for daytime wear. Size specifications vary between rural and urban usage, and between districts and provinces.

A full size rural shamma measures about five feet by 10 feet, when finished. To achieve this size, the weaver produces a piece of cloth 2-1/2 feet x 20 feet, cuts it in half, places the borders together, and sews lengthwise. This is the most common garment of the peasant during the work-week, in the dry season, day or night, male and female. It usually has a simple, narrow, dyed border, which is colorfast only in cold water.

The "kutta", when completed, is usually 6 feet wide and up to 15 feet long, cut and sewn in similar fashion, and of coarse, tightly woven cotton. It is worn at night, especially in the rainy season, and by travellers, for it can also be used as a blanket. Today, even in the center of Addis Ababa, one sees peasants curled up head to foot

557 household both in rural areas or towns, also to do
565 plowing for the freehold farmer and help in the harvest. Servants are usually permanently employed, and therefore do not usually leave even if the employer is behind in his monthly wage payments. Salary and food are received with a bow and cupped hands. The servant addresses the master with the extra polite "gētoch" (lit. masters, i.e. plural), walks in front of the master's mule to make way, slightly behind him when both are on foot, and never lets his master carry anything.

Long interpersonal relations usually improve the position of the servant to master, and it is not in the servant's interest to change jobs, or to go to another area where he is unknown. A landless "gabbar" may try to attach himself to a well-to-do household as "retainer ("zēga"), without wages, doing a servant's work in the hope of occasional, seasonal gifts, a share of the produce, or, in town, a share in trade. For, a servant or retainer who is Amhara "attentam" and Coptic Christian becomes like a member of the extended family. The proverb says:

[539] "When (women) grind (grain) together,
there is no mistress".

556 Economic wealth enables each of these social
565 classes to achieve some upward social mobility, within limits. But there are not many opportunities to accumulate much wealth. Traders can raise their status
441 in towns, despite doubful ancestry. The same is true
294 of tailors, a very recent occupation in town, where
565 foot-operated singer sewing machines have enabled men

294 to set up shops along the main street leading to the
565 market, or at the market itself, manufacturing khaki shorts and jackets. But this is still considered shameful manual labor by the Amhara, so that he will pursue it only in another province where it does not shame his kinfolk.

556 A rich man, whose low ancestry may be whispered behind his back, is nevertheless usually treated with honor by Amhara commoners. The proverb says:

[539] "He who falls in a shallow place"
hurt will not come to him", (i.e. a rich man, even if he falls drunk in a gutter, will not be molested by ruffians, who will instead take him to his house, expecting a reward).

[539] "The water of (the rainy month) Mähasse is good,
yet no one will drink it;
the word of the poor man may be fruitful,
but no one will listen to him" (i.e. he is not appreciated, no matter how wise).

B. Age Stratification.

561 Age stratification among the Amhara ranks in emphasis between class stratification and sex stratification.

561 The social relation of old toward the young is
882 often likened by the Amhara to that of master to servant. Indeed, a young man between puberty and marriage is addressed as "ashäkär", (lit. servant). A young girl of the same age is addressed and even referred to as "[illegible]" (lit. servant maid, [illegible]).

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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

296 and crushed, potash--containing saponaria seed called "endod" (Phytolacca abyssinica) which grows wild, but the locations of which are carefully remembered for "harvest". The crushed seed is mixed with cold water on the slightly concave top of a rock, or in a cowskin. The cloth is kneaded, stamped on with feet, until a good foam develops. This is done several times; then the garment is rinsed, and bleached by the sun. In time the cloth does become grayish, particularly the peasant trousers which are used more than the festive shirt and jodphurs, but the native soap-plant is kinder to the material than the coarse European laundry soap now available at big markets.

291 There is little basic difference between the garments worn by the sexes. Jodphurs may be worn by travelling ladies of feudal lords, since there is no side-saddle, but the peasant woman never wears trousers. Also, instead of the shirt, women generally wear a long loose heavy cotton gown from shoulder to feet, though formerly the peasant women used to leave the upper body bare, as a symbol of "respect" (as peasant males used to do on most occasions), and for comfort. Above the tied waist, this garment is still loose, and two-year old infants not yet weaned can walk up to their seated mothers and help themselves to nourishment and comfort by simply pulling the unobstructed breast out. Women wear the toga just as men do, but drape it differently on certain occasions.

[853]

The old type of trousers, wide at the hips and tapering to leg size just below the knee ("bat tähulät") has survived the introduction of white jodphurs ("surri") only

291 are only of the last items to increase in prestige in very recent years, due to growing imitation of living patters of Addis Ababa. Coptic churches still require removal of footgear.

G. Sanitation.

515 Two traditional traits of health care and sanitation have already been mentioned in connection with the direct use of natural products: polishing teeth, and washing clothes.

[824] Hardwood twigs such as wild olive (Olea chrysophylla) called "wäyra", or of the "ahya" or "ächeme" bush (also softer ones of the type that Somali use in lower elevations) are held between the lips, by men or women, after meals. Even old men (in rural Ethiopia this means men over fifty) have most of their teeth as a result, with little sign of wear or decay. Much of this is due to this habit of polishing teeth and gums at odd moments, much as an American might chew gum. Before this polishing, the end of the twig to be used is masticated thoroughly, and the fibrous ends are then used. The Amhara belief is that this keeps the teeth in sharp condition--they do not do it with the idea of cleaning food remnants out of the mouth. The mental association is than of a bird sharpening its beak.

[296] Already noted also is the use of the potash content
[824] of the seed of the "endod" bush (Phytolacca abyssinica, or, Phytolacca abyssinica), for laundering and washing.

Little more positive statements can be made about sanitation. When water is short in the dry season, which

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. Ṭhe holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭimqat,* means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭimqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā,* grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household. 565* 796 [296]

The program for Ṭimqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized. [778] [851]

By noon on Ṭimqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭimqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter. [585] [785] [461] [782] [785]

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings. [261] [785] [241] [585]

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and [821] [164]

000 and just above the teeth, done with soot, achieves a much darker affect.

302 Women's coiffure is more elaborate and more regularly attended to than any other part of body care, not only by divorcees, but also by respectably married Amhara women; though the former have it done more often and more elaborately. The work is done by a woman beautician, whose bigrest season is before religious holy days. The hair is braided front to back; and the finer the braid the more numerous the braids, the more prestigeful, and the more expensive. The thickest and cheapest braiding costs 25 ¢ Ethiopian, ("nätäla shämo", lit. a half-done hairdo); a medium job costs 50 ¢ ("derb"); a fairly good job alternating one thick with one thin braid, called "sereng" costs 75 ¢; the thinnest, finest braids, "gechen", in which no fluffy hair is left between or above the braids, costs Eht $1.- (in Gondar), and takes several hours. Sometimes a slight variation of this hairdo leaves a horizontal, thin braid of hair across the upper forehead. The hair at the end of the braid, sticking out over the base of the skull, is left fluffy, ("jofjofe"), because the men like to caress the nape of the women's neck, and the hairdo carefully leaves this area free.

Butter boiled with the "ades" leaves is placed on the hairdo, and the smell of this is believed by the women to attract the men. When butter is put on unbraided hair, the hair is covered with a cloth. If the hair is braided, a thick ribbon of cotton, sometimes dyed green by 301 a divorcee who wants to advertise that she is available, is tied around the forehead, to catch the flow of butter when it melts in the heat of the day. This ribbon, ("gardaba", or "gälbe", or "mälayo") formerly represented decorations given by their warlord commander to men who served as soldiers, but now women have taken it as their fashion, particularly the divorcees who can experiment more freely than wives, without being criticized. Well-to-do women or divorcees will

302 attempting to grow a rich one. This rich beard - though really a full goatee - is called "tïmä aron" (lit. beard of Aaron) in Geez, and is worn with the pride of the elder. Hair is also left on the upper lip, but usually does not grow very long or rich.

301 Ornaments are worn almost exclusively by women, and often include items that also have utility; the metal or wooden pin ("walaba" or "wolba") that is stuck in the tight hair and also used to scratch; an earwax spoon of metal, suspended from the matab neckcord on which are also suspended a small cross, amulets, (keys in modern situation), etc. Necklaces ("qwad") may be of wooden beads. In recent years country women have become very fond of a necklace of imported bluish glass rings ("deba"), which can do double duty in scouring and burnishing the clay pottery. A necklace of 130 of these rings costs 50 ¢ (Ethiopian). Also widespread is the use of a beaded strap with a large button-like center ("shotälay") which is worn on the forehead as an amulet, e.g. by women who have sufferred several miscarriages. A metal bracelet, ("ambar") was formerly given to soldiers as decoration, but has now become a women's fashion, worn on upper arms or legs.

B. Fine Arts

531 Artistic expression in the fine arts bears the stamp of the
[566] feudal lord, who alone was in a position to order, encourage and reward individual craftsmen and their apprentices; and of the Abyssinian Coptic church.

The feudal lord commanded decorative arts relating to warfare, such
[282] as the previously described rhinoceros shields. Another common object is the saddlecover ("degus"), made by experienced tanners out of leather, with geometric designs inpressed by hot irons; fine leather stitching; and metal ornaments fastened on by the smiths. These designs and ornaments are still found, e.g. on leather cases containing the "dawit" (Psalter) written on parchment made of tanned goatskin.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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main purpose, but of course they cannot be closed up. 293
Ordinary umbrellas are never used by the Abyssinians, though huge and brilliant coloured umbrellas are used by priests and other important personages on ceremonial occasions.

On feast days the chiefs and other functionaries at 292
Court change their cotton shirt for one of silk or satin, gorgeously embroidered in gold and silver, and in various colours. And finally a pelerine of bright-coloured cloth of velvet, or, better still, of lion or black leopard skin ornamented in silver and silver-gilt, is permitted to be worn by those only whom it is desired to distinguish on account of specially meritorious conduct, generally in war.

The full-dress costume of a Ras or Dejazmach, with 293
bristling lion's mane head-dress, velvet cape with lion's mane collar, embroidered in gold and silver-gilt, and gala shield and sword-scabbard covered with velvet and embossed with silver-gilt ornamentation, is a really magnificent one, and the appearance of Dejazmach Nado, the envoy to King George in 1919, at Buckingham Palace in this dress caused quite a sensation.

Mention must also be made of one article which is 301
an indispensable adjunct to the dress of every Christian 778
Abyssinian, and that is the *matab*, a silken cord carrying an amulet or charm, which is worn round the neck as the badge of their faith.

The gentler sex affect as much jewellery of all sorts, 30
bracelets, rings, anklets, necklaces, earrings, etc., as they are able to procure; these are of native make as already described. As a general rule they have extraordinarily small *attaches*, and of all the native bracelets that we collected in and round Addis Ababa none

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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301 would meet round the wrist of any of our English friends.

302 The fashion amongst the women of wearing the hair, which is jet black, varies, and sometimes it is left about two or three inches long, curling and waving, thus forming a becoming frame to the face. More common, perhaps, is the style of doing up the hair into dozens of tiny plaits taking the form of the head, the ends being loosely tied together on the neck and left to hang; some affect a parting down the middle of their heads, puff the hair out at the sides, and do it up in a chignon at the back like many Europeans. Amongst the lowest classes one finds perhaps most frequently in both sexes the head shaved, the hair being allowed to grow till uncomfortable and then shaved again. This shaving appears to us a somewhat painful process, and to be an apt illustration of the dictum that *il faut souffrir pour être beau*; for one frequently sees the operation in progress, two forms squatting on the ground, one shaving the other with a bit of broken glass-bottle.

Children as a general rule also have their heads shaved, but a tuft of hair is often left on the crown of the head, or a fringe round their forehead, and young boys frequently have the head bare except for a strip of hair extending from the back of the neck to the forehead over the centre of the head, which gives the appearance of a cock's comb and is most comical.

The Abyssinians of the people are also addicted to buttering their heads, of which unpleasant (though fortunately not universal) practice I have been given three explanations. The first is that it is done for purposes of adornment, which is understandable; the

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

habit is not confined to Abyssinia! The second, which is more curious, is that of protection against the sun's rays. In this connection it is interesting to recall that Mr Mansfield Parkyns, who spent three years in Abyssinia, used no head covering of any sort at any time other than a coating of butter, which he says he found as effective as any hat.

The third (and most frivolous) reason is that butter in the hair hampers the free movement (and consequent irritation) of the little creatures that live there. There is possibly something in this, as a "head-scratcher", in the form of a blunt silver or wooden pin, is a general ornament, as incidentally is also an "ear-cleaner" which resembles a small salt-spoon.

In some parts of the country where the hairdressing mode is of an elaborate character, the women, when lying down to sleep, use wooden head-rests for their necks, made of a slightly curved piece of wood supported on a sort of foot, the whole being a few inches high. Some of these are quite elaborately carved or coloured; but however pleasing they may be to the eye—and I have seen some very pretty ones—they must make exceedingly uncomfortable pillows, and the use of them appears to argue an even greater interest in personal appearance than European women display. These head-rests are of very ancient origin; they are curiously similar to the one discovered in Tutankhamen's tomb.

The more wealthy Abyssinians are very partial to scents and scented hair oils; the strength of the scent is more important to them than its quality, and the shops in Addis Ababa do a brisk trade in inferior

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but
461 acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one
461 moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that
181 while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing
577 one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obliga-
183 tions toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level
[423] he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the
78 fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also
181 important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple
183 neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited
[262] and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be
[301] neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good
577 works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms
181 to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who
183 is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in
*565 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code
577 of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very
673 worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shame-
181 ful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect to-
183 ward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby
[626] stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

*565 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus
57 kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors
181 and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived
183 within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.
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183

244 in northern Abyssinia.

[263] bärbärē is the generic name for the red spicy pepper, a major ingredient of woṭ, and the most important item in the kitchen garden. The strongest kind is called "miṭmiṭṭa" or "säṭiṭa" and because it is grown in Begemdir it is often called "Gondar bärbärey". The smaller the pod, the stronger the pepper.

Gesho, the leaf used as fermenting agent in beer and mead, grows on a bush which is a garden crop.

Ades, another leafy garden crop is grown in a wind-

● [302] protected area, fenced in; used to purify butter in boiling, especially for use in women's hairdo, for they believe the odor of it is irresistible to men.

Gwaya, a major forage crop of the legume family, is grown as scarcity fodder but contact with it is believed dangerous to humans.

245 Lemons, very small, are grown in a scattered fashion, the only fruit so raised.

Viticulture is a riddle. Grape growing is not in evidence any more among Amhara peasants, but there are local traditions that up to a century ago grapes were grown, e.g. in the worädä (district) of "yäkämkäm qäroda", east of Lake Tana. The name "woyna dega" is derived from the wine-growing, intermediate level of topography. It may have been imported by the Portuguese, or may have been much older. Nowadays

252 Butter is made in a large gourd ("gurna"), plugged with a wooden prop. The housewife shakes this back and forth, much like Middle Eastern nomads shake it in skins. The butter that results resembles Indian ghee, and is called, at this stage, "gorännä". For human consumption it is then usually boiled with spices, especially bärbärē, but not with salt. To cure it further in order to make it sweet, delay rancidity, etc., butter (qebyē) is further boiled with one or several of the following spices in the process known as "yäqoyē mantäriya", "yäqebyē anäṭaṭär":

263]

bark of ginger	- quaräfa zenjebel
cardamon seeds	- korärima
thyme	- azmud
garlic	- näçh shenkurt
sweet basil	- bäsobela
saffron	- erd
wild thyme	- ṭosen

302] Since most of these spices are expensive, butter intended for ornamental pomade of women's hair is boiled instead with leaves of the "ades" bush, which grows wild.

This process is "ades qernefad".

273 The most important, daily drink is tällä, the barley beer brewed by the housewife. It is little different, basically, from other African barley beers. Men almost never drink water (though the barley beer may be very weak), partly due to their fondness for "sweet", i.e. only slightly fermented beer. After three days of storage, the Amhara begin to complain that it is "too bitter", and let the women drink it up.

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305 the effect of their whiteness. She also tatoos the women's
304 necks up to the cheek, in the shape of concentric necklaces, to make the neck appear longer, a mark of beauty.

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305 The hairdresser, "ras sari" is a woman who operates
302 a traditional beauty parlor. She braids the women's hair front to back in as few as 12 or as many as 32 braids, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Her best-paying customers are divorcees looking for husbands, especially during the marriage season that follows the major harvest early in the dry season. A full two-hour job with a maximum of fine braids costs ETH$1.00 (US$0.40), while a simple job producing only few and thick braids, costs only a quarter of that. Many peasant women, and women unwilling to go to this expenditure, usually let their hair grow to a huge bushy crop, halo-like surrounding the skull, occasionally anointing it with butter boiled with "ades" leaves. But divorcees have the expensive hairdo done over as often as once every two months, and have it thoroughly washed during the process, so that their hair is much cleaner than that of married women.

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533 Another occupation of women is that of "azmari",
535 musician-singer-dancer, who performs at more elaborate, wealthier, rural weddings, and nearly all urban ones. This will be described under entertainment. She is often accompanied by a male azmari, who plays the single-string violin or the banjo-type instrument, and who may alternate with her in singing rhymes, but who does not dance.

867 "He, before becoming old,
[539] wants to be serious".

(This is also said of a young man who saves gifts for a bride before he has chosen a girl).

When the adolescent boys take part in the aforementioned ritual mock-battles, younger boys imitate them by staging similar hazing-battles among their age peers.

Little girls are encultured in somewhat similar fashion by peers of their own sex, but more often including some older girls who patronize the younger. Girls are not taught any social graces among commoner Amharas, so that they sit shyly and wordless when in the company of men. Any girl who shows signs of daring is mocked and hazed as "gobba" (daring, enterprising female). Generally the activities of girls are less vilent,. At times when boys fight their ritual mock-battles, girls dance rounds and sing in unison.

Both boys and girls are taught to be right-handed, and a
[264 "lefty" is extremely rare. They are taught to eat with the right
576] hand, shake hands with the right, and use the left for wiping
514] themselves with leaves after defecating. But the prohibition against use of the left hand on other occasions is not as severe as among Arabs.

[754] Both sexes fear the supernatural "buda" spirit, also in the shape of human sorcerer and magical hyena. Older boys claim they can distinguish the cry of a real hyena from that of a magical one, and sometimes scare younger children by imitating the howl.

867 Sex differentiation among children is expressed in the hair
302 style. Boys wear a single coxcomb hairlock, girls a ring of hair around the shaven skull which sometimes may contain a center hair-

867 [302] lock in addition. But boys never wear the ring of hair, which would be insulting to them.

864 When sex differentiation becomes more emphasized in the culture, at about seven, sex talk and sex play goes on primarily within the peer group of the same sex. The invitation to do this is "enkä sälantiya", (lit. let us play at guessing impolite matters). They play hide and seek, whisper, re-enact what they have observed their parents do at night in the hut, and phantasy experimenting with sexual possibilities. Children observe a lot in the quiet of the night in the hut, but are careful not to be seen watching. They misunderstand and are greatly puzzled, since no elder will explain "impolite matters" to them. It is impolite even to mention the names of genitals and reproductive organs, such as "kola" for penis, and "ems" for vulva, so they are merely whispered about. In church school, boys are puzzled by overt references to "Mary's womb" and "God's seed", but questions are rejected as "rudeness". Youngsters in town have broader information, because there they hear "rude" talk more often among adults.

D. Toys and Games.

857 524 The economic activities of children in the fields, where they spend much time in guarding but do little intensive labor, is regarded by them more in the nature of play. It is fun to throw rocks at thieving baboons and shoot pebbles at birds, with slingshots made of "nacha" fiber.

The boys also make a bullroarer, "mät", to scare birds away from seeds and mature crops. This instrument is also called, onomatopoetically, "gurumremosh" (from "tägwerämärrämä", to

584 door event of the year, the church parades on Epiphany ("Temqat"),
796 in connection with the "guks" tournament of the young men. Dressed up in holiday fashion, the "qonjo" girls eagerly follow the fortunes of their preferred boy friends. When no elders are within hearing, some girls direct teasing shouts of encouragement at the young men, even occasionally "ellel" (reserved for church ritual earlier that day). This day is the climax of the informal courtship - serious flirting season, in mid-January.

The third and final occasion occurs on Easter, "Fassika", at the very end of the dry season, just before social activities move indoors. For this holy day, the girls have once more washed their [302] garments despite the shortage of water, reddened their palms, prepared the hairdo. Everyone is in a happy mood, for the long lenten season is over, and meat is consumed in greater quantities than at any other time. There is an element of urgency in social relations, for this is the second and final marriage season, and soon all social life and kin visiting comes to an end for four long,dreary, rainy, chilly months.

It is on the basis of such informal courtship, climaxed on these three annual occasions but continuing in-between, that a young man requests his father to initiate negotiations for marriage by sending an intermediary to the girl's family. If the match seems suitable to the elders, negotiations begin.

4. Adulthood and Marriage: Dominance of the Kin.

582 A girl's first marriage nearly always takes place before she is fully adult, physically as well as in maturity of character; while the bridegroom, though also young, is physically adult and in

3. Expressive Physical Arts.

531 Physical arts, like their material culture, are little developed among the Amhara, compared to their elaborate spiritual culture. If their life cycle gives any clue, it seems that the explanation lies at least in part in the end of free experimentation at the onset of adolescence, after which the experimentation is fettered into lines ordained by the Coptic church. Especially fine art, is considered exclusively within the domain of the church. This leaves little beyond body care and ornamentation for expression of physical arts, and even [302] this is partly dedicated to religion, such as the rationalized plucking of pubic hair of the woman, and the fullest expression of body arts on the occasion of church festivals.

171 It is also interesting to observe how patterns of the Middle East and of Africa are so evidently drawn from and synthesized in the traditional Amhara pattern of expressive physical arts, particularly in body care and ornamentation.

A. Body Care and Ornamentation.

515 [312] Washing in the dry season is difficult, since water is scarce and there are no wells. However, with some little effort, water can even then be obtained by digging in the riverbed, since the water table is high; this is what travellers do. Near towns the latter effort develops into a business, for water carriers, employing women as cheap labor to carry the water in their clay pots uphill to the town, charge 5¢ [548] (Ethiopian) per potfull of water. Only the "unattached woman" who has a cash income from beer-brewing or temporary wife - prostitution, can afford this, and usually buys a potfull of this muddy water every day during the long dry season, to wash herself and her clothing regularly and frequently, at a time when the fully respectable Amhara housewife goes unwashed (except for hands and private parts). Divorcees looking for husbands and professional women alone feel the need for daily

515 washing of the body and frequent washing of clothes, and an individual housewife who takes it upon herself to wash more than expected is noticed as different and suspected as possibly being not as respectable and innocent as she might like to appear.

388 In washing, especially of clothes, a soapwort ("endod") (pircunia abyssinica) is gathered from wild bushes the location of which is carefully remembered, for they are not planted. The yellow fruit is dried and crushed, on a flat rock above the river or in it when the water is shallow. It is mixed with water, so that a greenish-white foam results. The fingermarks, resulting from the mixing and gathering of the foam, can be seen on rocks where the sun has dried the remnant.

[574] Dry grass is used as toilet paper, usually held in the left hand.

515 302 Women fumigate their bodies frequently, in the dry season because water is short and hard to come by; in the rainy season, after bathing in the brook or river, to "get rid of the river odor". For, especially at the beginning of the rainy season, the rivers are muddy and carry much smelly debris.

There are 3 different, major kinds of fumigation wood ("yätis enchät"): Domestic incense gathered in the woods by commoner women are "abalo" and "täjo" (Rhamnus straddo); noblewomen and wealthy women aiming at prestige despise domestic woods, and insist on imported incense, primarily "etan" (frankincense), more expensive but freely purchasable on all markets because it is used regularly in the church, during services.

302 Plucking out of pubic hair, by means of ashes held between the fingers, was considered one of the most important duties of feminine hygiene. Men might shave, though not pluck, their pubic hair, if they desired to do so for special "cleanliness". This procedure of plucking

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302 was required of females past puberty, i.e. women of marriage age, and they were not supposed to substitute the less efficient method of shaving. The proverb says:

[539]

"To a man who plucks out,
to a woman who shaves (pubic hair),
forgive He (God) will not."

However, in the recent change situation, possibly since the spread of the European razor blade, plucking is becoming a lost art among the younger generation; and, while women now shave their pubic hair; men let it grow naturally as most of them apparently have always done.

515 The continuous polishing of teeth ("mewachä") has already been mentioned. This is one of the few activities of body care in which even men indulge as continuously as women. The reason is that it is not regarded as "for cleanliness" (which is considered less necessary for men, in a culture which regards women as "dirty"), but as "polishing" and "sharpening" this equipment of nature for powerful use, much like birds whet their beaks, readying them for action. The polishing is done with a hardwood twig, the ends of which are masticated first, and and motion is upward and downward, so that the upper gums receive considerable massage also.

302 Nails are given little attention, except in the case of the bride, whose nails are trimmed usually a day before the wedding, so that she will not be able to scratch the bridegroom when he has to use force to deflower her. Her nails are cut so short that not infrequently the skin is cut, and hot butter is applied, to heal them and also render the fingers caressingly smooth.

Reddening of palms, fingers and soles of feet is feminine procedure in preparation for holy days and festivities. The most common cosmetic used for this purpose is called "ensosella" (Impatiens tinctore),

302 golden red stain obtained from the root of this bulbuous plant which grows wild. This is done by young girls and respectable married women, as well as "unattached women".

Shadowing of eyelids, however, is the specialty of divorcees and "unattached women". It is done by means of antimony ("kull"), mixed in powdered form with vegetable oil, and applied with a simple grass brush (much as in ancient Egypt).

304 Tattooing ("negsat") is also a special attraction made use of almost exclusively by divorcees who want to attract another husband; as they themselves say "for beauty's sake". Since it is a mark of 826 beauty to have a long neck, tattooing aims at emphasizing this feature, and a concentric series of necklaces is carefully tattooed on the neck from ear to ear and from the collarbone until part of the way up the cheek. Seven hatched lines of this tattoo can cost as much as Eth$3-4, even in the less expensive provincial towns. The work is done by a professional woman tattooer, and takes several hours. There is pain for about a week thereafter, so that a divorcee usually has it done about two weeks before one of the major holy days in the year which also serve as climaxes of the flirting season, notably Epiphany (Temqat) and Mikael. The freshly applied tattooing will then be noticed as an innovation by men looking over the eligible women, and as conversation piece invite the approach of the male. Tattooing fades, especially on dark skin.

Tattooing of the gums is also popular among divorcees, to heighten the whiteness of the teeth, and is curiously called "ters tequrat" (lit. blackening of the teeth), (also "guramayle"). Unlike neck tattooing, in which the dye used is usually blue, blackening of the gums, between and just above the teeth, done with soot, achieves a much darker effect.

000 and just above the teeth, done with soot, achieves a much darker affect.

302 Women's coiffure is more elaborate and more regularly attended to than any other part of body care, not only by divorcees, but also by respectably married Amhara women; though the former have it done more often and more elaborately. The work is done by a woman beautician, whose bigrest season is before religious holy days. The hair is braided front to back; and the finer the braid the more numerous the braids, the more prestigeful, and the more expensive. The thickest and cheapest braiding costs 25 ¢ Ethiopian, ("mätäla shämo", lit. a half-done hairdo); a medium job costs 50 ¢ ("derb"); a fairly good job alternating one thick with one thin braid, called "sereng" costs 75 ¢; the thinnest, finest braids, "gechen", in which no fluffy hair is left between or above the braids, costs Eht $1.- (in Gondar), and takes several hours. Sometimes a slight variation of this hairdo leaves a horizontal, thin braid of hair across the upper forehead. The hair at the end of the braid, sticking out over the base of the skull, is left fluffy, ("jofjofē"), because the men like to caress the nape of the women's neck, and the hairdo carefully leaves this area free.

Butter boiled with the "ades" leaves is placed on the hairdo, and the smell of this is believed by the women to attract the men. When butter is put on unbraided hair, the hair is covered with a cloth. If

301 the hair is braided, a thick ribbon of cotton, sometimes dyed green by a divorcee who wants to advertise that she is available, is tied around the forehead, to catch the flow of butter when it melts in the heat of the day. This ribbon, ("gardaba", or "gälbē", or "mälävo") formerly represented decorations given by their warlord commander to men who served as soldiers, but now women have taken it as their fashion, particularly the divorcees who can experiment more freely than wives, without being criticized. Well-to-do women or divorcees will

302 have their braids undone every two months or so, so the hair can be washed, and then re-braided.

A woman who cannot afford even the minimal hairdo; or one who is in mourning; or one who is being possessed by a jealous "zar" spirit who has forbidden her to braid her hair the usual way may, on the occasion of an approaching holy day, have a single, horizontal, thick braid surround the head, called "surosh".

Adolescent girls and poor unattached women, on the occasion of an approaching holy day, sometimes give themselves a simple hair innovation by shaving a circle in the center of the skull, leaving a ring of hair; or, as a compromise, shave the rear half of the skull, ("sadulla" or "gamo"). A partly braided skull is the frequent symbol of the adolescent girl, also of the bride; but if a married matron and mother of children were to resume it, she would be criticised for "light conduct" and suspected of immorality. However, zar doctors may order women clients to do this, as the expressed desire of a jealous zar spirit.

Little boys wear a coxcomb of hair (already described in section on the life cycle), called "guncho", resembling the Horus lock of ancient Egypt. Girl children wear, with or without the center lock, a ring of hair symbolic of their sexual differentiation.

Warrior males in the old tradition would wear their hair standing up as stiffly as possible ("anchabarrara"), often by means of grease, since this symbolized both ferociousness and disinterest in the finer arts of body care. This is still found in the Wolkait jungle area populated by hunters, and the refuge of bandits.

Beard comes somewhat late to men, usually not before the age of 25, so that a man waits till he is in the thirties and forties before

302 attempting to grow a rich one. This rich beard - though really a full goatee - is called "tïmä aron" (lit. beard of Aaron) in Geez, and is worn with the pride of the elder. Hair is also left on the upper lip, but usually does not grow very long or rich.

301 Ornaments are worn almost exclusively by women, and often include items that also have utility: the metal or wooden pin ("walaba" or "wolba") that is stuck in the tight hair and also used to scratch; an earwax spoon of metal, suspended from the matab neckcord on which are also suspended a small cross, amulets, (keys in modern situation), etc. Necklaces ("qwad") may be of wooden beads. In recent years country women have become very fond of a necklace of imported bluish glass rings ("deba"), which can do double duty in scouring and burnishing the clay pottery. A necklace of 130 of these rings costs 50 ¢ (Ethiopian). Also widespread is the use of a beaded strap with a large button-like center ("shotälay") which is worn on the forehead as an amulet, e.g. by women who have sufferred several miscarriages. A metal bracelet, ("ambar") was formerly given to soldiers as decoration, but has now become a women's fashion, worn on upper arms or legs.

B. Fine Arts

531 Artistic expression in the fine arts bears the stamp of the
[566] feudal lord, who alone was in a position to order, encourage and reward individual craftsmen and their apprentices; and of the Abyssinian Coptic church.

The feudal lord commanded decorative arts relating to warfare, such
[282] as the previously described rhinoceros shields. Another common object is the saddlecover ("derus"), made by experienced tanners out of leather, with geometric designs impressed by hot irons; fine leather stitching; and metal ornaments fastened on by the smiths. These designs and ornaments are still found, e.g. on leather cases containing the "dawit" (Psalter) written on parchment made of tanned goatskin.

826 Projecting teeth, especially incisors ("gätata") are considered ugly, wild animal-like, and it is an insult to call such a person [302] "tersam" (lit. toothy). Hair is grown long and standing up stiff by warriors who wish to appear ferocious. The hairdoes of women are diverse. Baldness ("tämällätä") is relatively rare, and if at all, comes very late. Big hips, though covered, are considered an important mark of beauty in a woman, while little attention is paid to the breasts which lose their youthful shape early in life due to prolonged breastfeeding. The ideal feminine body is a fairly short, hippy woman ("täfar wägäb") with high-bridged nose and bulging eyes. On the other hand, a woman with small or lean hips, called "dog hips" ("wesha wägäb"), whose hips are sharply outlined ("wägäb araqi"), is considered deficient in feminine allure. The proverb says:

[539] "(strong) child from hippy woman;
(good) grain from lower terrain (more fertile)."
"A short man is like a monkey,
(but) a short woman like a moblewoman."

The seat of strength in a man is not considered to be in the biceps, but is believed located in the knee ("gulet"). This is examined when hiring a laborer (formerly also in a soldier), perhaps because the physical type of most Amhara is slender, and their legs have little visible musculature - though much endurance. It is still considered praise to call a young man "gulnasa" (powerfully kneed), and the Amhara take great pride in being able to walk long distances without a rest; flexing the tendon behind the knee ("gwanja"). The elbow is the next place ("kendam" man with powerful elbow) of strength. Bowlegs ("waraha") are considered the result of riding too much, and are not regarded as a special mark of ugliness.

X794 756 123 not to cross the boundary in front of the stage again. He is not to approach the house until well after nightfall, and is to come by a back trail, so as not to be seen by passersby.

X794 796 123 Thus, after nightfall on the 23rd of the month of Yäkatit, he climbed over eroded back trails down to the "Kokit" section of Addis Aläm and approached the house of Lady Säläämtu where her devotees were assembled. It was 7:30 P.M. More oil lamps had been lit. There were about 20 women, but a male zar doctor with talents in poetry and chanting sat near the stage, wearing a white turban much like a Coptic Abyssinian priest. A powerful male drummer had been hired for the occasion.

X794 796 [123] Lady Säläämtew still took no official notice of the foreigner, for her zar had not yet "descended", and without that she was just a hollow shell, a mute "horse". One of her brothers motioned the foreigner politely to a seat on the mudbench that ringed the wall. There was much subdued whispering, as if a momentous event was about to take place. The hairdo of several of the women devotees and doctors had been specially arranged to honor their individual zars: those not [302] permitted to cut their hair had plaited it into a braid ("zurosh") surrounding the skull; others had shaved a circle in the middle (called "gucho"), like a little girl.

X794 796 778 Other preparations and paraphenalia included the ritual coffee trays ("gända"), which symbolized the wooden"tabot" (sacred tablet) of the holy Coptic city of Aksum, and which were dedicated to several zars including Säyfu Čhängär and Rahelo. The ancient mother of many zars, named "Werär" was believed to have stolen the original "tabot"

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 212 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic [194] alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner [516] gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. [145] Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This [302] gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill 576 voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a machine for pressing. In this same house the blessed bread is made which is given away on Saturdays and Sundays and feast days; and on great feasts, such as Christmas, Easter, Our Lady of August, etc., they carry this bread of the sacrament with a pallium,[1] bell, and cross devoutly. Before they enter the church with it they go round the church by the circuit like a cloister; when it is not a feast they enter the church at once and without the pallium. On a Saturday before Ascension these friars made a procession; and from being in a new country it seemed to us very good, and they did it in this way. They took crosses, and the altar stone covered with a silk cloth, a friar carried it on his head, which was also covered with the said cloths; and they carried books and bells, and thuribles, and holy water; and all went chaunting to some millet fields: there they made their devotions and cries after the fashion of litanies, and with this procession they returned to the monastery. We asked why they did that, and they said that the animals ate their millet, and so they went to pour out holy water and pray God to drive them out. In this country he that says the mass has no other difference from the deacon and sub-deacon in his vestments than a long stole with an opening in the middle to allow the head to pass through; before and behind it reaches to the ground. The friars say mass with hair on their heads; the priests do not wear hair, and are shaven and so say mass. Also, both friars and priests say mass barefooted, nobody enters the church with his feet shod, and they allege for this what God said to Moses: "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for thou art on holy ground."

782 796 793 292 796 [302]

[1] Under a canopy.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

443 places which are chief towns of districts, every week. The fairs consist of bartering one thing for another, as for instance, an ass for a cow, and that which is of least value gives to the other two or three measures of bread. By means of bread they buy stuffs, and with stuffs they buy mules and cows, and whatever they want, for salt, incense, pepper, myrrh, camphor, and other small articles.[1] They buy fowls and capons, and whatever they need or want to buy is all to be found at these fairs in exchange for others, for there is no current money. The principal merchants
792 292 at these fairs are priests, friars, and nuns. The friars are decent in their habits, which are full, and reaching to the ground. Some wear yellow habits of coarse cotton stuff, others habits of tanned goat skins like wide breeches,[2] also yellow. The nuns also wear the same habits; the friars wear, besides, capes of the fashion of Dominican friars, of the same yellow skins or stuffs, they wear hats; and the nuns wear neither capes nor hats, but
[302] only the habit, and are shaven with a razor; and they wear a leather strap wound or fastened round the head. When they are old women they wear fillets[3] round their heads over their tonsures. These nuns are not cloistered, nor do they live together in convents, but in villages, and in the monasteries of the friars, on account of belonging to those houses and order. The order is all one, and the nuns give obedience where they receive their habits. With regard to entering churches and monasteries, the nuns do not enter except as other women do. There is a great multitude of nuns, as well as of friars; they say that some of them are very holy women, and others are not so. The priests show very
793 302 little difference from the laity in their dress, because all
[292] wear a good cloth wrapped round, like smart men, and their difference is that they carry a cross in their hand, and are shaven, and the laity wear long hair. The priests also have

[1] *Bechugarias.* [2] *Zafoens* or *Safoens.* [3] *Tufas.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

this, that they do not cut their beard, and the laity shave 793
below the chin and the throat. There are other priests, [302]
whom they call Debeteraas, which means canons; these
belong to great churches, which are like their cathedrals or
collegiate churches, and are not monasteries. These are
very well dressed, and at once appear as what they are:
these do not go to the fairs and markets.

CAP. XXX.—*Of the state of the Barnagais and manner of his house, and how he ordered a proclamation to be made to go against the Nobiis,*[1] *and the method of his justice.*

The service of this Barnagais is very poor in state, although he is a great lord and has the title of king. As many times as we spoke to him we always found him seated on a bedstead beneath a coverlid, and himself covered with hairy cotton cloths which they name *basutos*; they are good for the country, and there are some here of a high price. Behind the sides of the bedstead, walls, without anything except four swords hung each on a pole, and two great books, also suspended on poles. In front of the bedstead, mats on the floor, upon which sit those who come; the houses rarely swept, his wife always seated on a mat near the head of the bedstead, many people always before him, the great people seated on mats. In sight of his [231]
bedstead stand four horses, one always saddled, and the
others covered, not caparisoned for war, but as horses are
in the stables. In these houses of his are two inclosures,
and each one has its gate, and in it porters with whips in
their hands, and in the one nearest to him are smarter porters. Between these gates, the inner one and the outer 693
one, is always his Alicaxi, which means his judge, hearing
causes and administering justice. If the cause is important,

[1] Nubians.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and so receive absolution. They pray in the churches of 796
the canons as in those of the friars. Friars do not marry, [782]
canons and priests do so. When the canons live together 793
in the circuit they eat in their houses, and the friars eat in community. The chiefs of these churches are called Licacanate. The wives of the canons have houses outside of the circuit, where they go to live with them: the son of a canon remains a canon, and the son of a priest not, except he chooses later to become one. No tithes are paid to any church, they live on the large properties which the churches and monasteries possess. Complaints against the clergy [694]
are dealt with before the secular justice.

The vestment is made like a shirt, and the stole with a 292
hole in the middle, and put over the head; they have no maniple, nor amice, nor girdle; priests and friars all have [302]
their heads shaved, and the beards not. The friars say mass with their hats on their heads, and the priests with their heads bare.

In no church is more than one mass said, and no mass is 794
said for alms, not even for the dead. When any person dies, the priests come with cross and holy water and incense, and recite certain prayers for him, and carry him off to burial very hurriedly: next day they bring offerings: the churchyards are all closed, so that nothing can enter them.

Prester John has no determined place of abode, he 643
always goes about the country in tents, and he will always have in his camp five or six tents among good and common ones: and there will always be at Court of people for the 644
horses and mules from fifty thousand upwards.

The kitchen of Prester John is a good crossbow shot behind his quarters, and they bring his food in this manner: all that he has to eat comes in porringers and dishes of very black earthenware on wooden trays, and pages bring them, and above the pages come a pallium of silk, which covers them so that these viands come with reverence.

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

539 and was always looking up intently and with concentration. One of his friends asked him, "What are you looking for?"

"*Mäwča,*" replied the wit in his classic manner. [The literal meaning is "exit," i.e., either the exit from the trail on the tiring climb, or "the place where we emerge" from the female body.]

The Wit At Home. Home in his hut in Gondar, AG-H was one day at dusk lying on his bed.
[56] His wife had gone to the river to wash her private parts, as is the custom of the Amhara women at nightfall. Tired from the uphill climb from the valley, she rested before the hearth to dry herself, but dozed off. Soon AG-H heard a cannonade of farting, issuing from his half-conscious wife. He called out to her, "Where are you? Come to bed!"

Awakening, she said dazedly, "I am just drying myself."

To which he replied, "You are drying yourself so much that you are cracking apart."

[302] *A Woman's "Way."* [In accordance with ancient custom, women used to pluck out their pubic hair, rubbing ashes between their fingers to get a good grip while plucking.]

One day a girl student of AG-H was late for her lesson. Taking a quick short-cut across the back yard, she tumbled into the ash heap, soiling her lower toga and her legs with the ashes. She excused her appearance to her teacher, saying, "Oh, Master, I was so eager to come quickly, and now I have dirtied myself with ashes all over."

"That is *your way,*" nodded AG-H.

Only much later did the girl learn that he had meant not only the wrong way she had come, but was referring to the fact that being smudged with ashes was the natural "way" for a woman.

[564] *The Pot Of Caste.* [The women of the Falasha caste are makers of pottery, a despised occu-
[323] pation among the Coptic Amhara, though much appreciated by the Amhara, who buy all their better pots from them.]

The wife of AG-H, quarreling with a certain woman, accused her of being of Falasha ancestry and that her mother had been a pottery-maker. One day that woman returned from the river valley, carrying a large, full pot of water on her back. She saw AG-H sitting in front of his hut, and decided to take the opportunity to complain to him about the taunts of his wife.

AG-H disliked being involved in the petty quarreling of the womenfolk, but he listened quietly. As she took leave, he patted her full clay pot and said, "*This* is your work."

She thought that he meant she should not quarrel with his wife, should instead attend to her tasks of fetching water, cooking, etc. But on further reflection what had he meant? Had he accused her of being a pottery-maker herself?

Jealousy Is Dangerous. AG-H was also notorious for his prowess in bed and his fickleness in love.

One day his wife had to go far down to a valley to fetch water, since the dry season had left only water holes in the river bed. She left him in charge of their baby. Taking the baby with him, he went to the hut of his current girl friend and spent the afternoon making passionate love. As it happened, this woman also had a baby about the same age. Dusk came rapidly, and AG-H knew that his wife would soon be back. In the hurry, he took the wrong baby.

A moment after his return his wife arrived, laden with water pot and firewood. When she beheld the baby of her current rival, she became very angry and said, "This thing is not my baby! Shall I throw it in the fire?"

Calm as ever, AG-H replied: "There is a fire also in the house of his mother."

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8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

301 would meet round the wrist of any of our English friends.

302 The fashion amongst the women of wearing the hair, which is jet black, varies, and sometimes it is left about two or three inches long, curling and waving, thus forming a becoming frame to the face. More common, perhaps, is the style of doing up the hair into dozens of tiny plaits taking the form of the head, the ends being loosely tied together on the neck and left to hang; some affect a parting down the middle of their heads, puff the hair out at the sides, and do it up in a chignon at the back like many Europeans. Amongst the lowest classes one finds perhaps most frequently in both sexes the head shaved, the hair being allowed to grow till uncomfortable and then shaved again. This shaving appears to us a somewhat painful process, and to be an apt illustration of the dictum that *il faut souffrir pour être beau*; for one frequently sees the operation in progress, two forms squatting on the ground, one shaving the other with a bit of broken glass-bottle.

Children as a general rule also have their heads shaved, but a tuft of hair is often left on the crown of the head, or a fringe round their forehead, and young boys frequently have the head bare except for a strip of hair extending from the back of the neck to the forehead over the centre of the head, which gives the appearance of a cock's comb and is most comical.

The Abyssinians of the people are also addicted to buttering their heads, of which unpleasant (though fortunately not universal) practice I have been given three explanations. The first is that it is done for purposes of adornment, which is understandable; the

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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habit is not confined to Abyssinia! The second, 302
which is more curious, is that of protection against the sun's rays. In this connection it is interesting to recall that Mr Mansfield Parkyns, who spent three years in Abyssinia, used no head covering of any sort at any time other than a coating of butter, which he says he found as effective as any hat.

The third (and most frivolous) reason is that 302
butter in the hair hampers the free movement (and 515
consequent irritation) of the little creatures that live there. There is possibly something in this, as a "head-
scratcher", in the form of a blunt silver or wooden [301]
pin, is a general ornament, as incidentally is also an "ear-cleaner" which resembles a small salt-spoon.

In some parts of the country where the hairdress- 352
ing mode is of an elaborate character, the women, 513
when lying down to sleep, use wooden head-rests for their necks, made of a slightly curved piece of wood supported on a sort of foot, the whole being a few inches high. Some of these are quite elaborately carved or coloured; but however pleasing they may be to the eye—and I have seen some very pretty ones —they must make exceedingly uncomfortable pillows, and the use of them appears to argue an even greater interest in personal appearance than European women display. These head-rests are of very ancient origin; they are curiously similar to the one discovered in Tutankhamen's tomb.

The more wealthy Abyssinians are very partial to 302
scents and scented hair oils; the strength of the scent is more important to them than its quality, and the shops in Addis Ababa do a brisk trade in inferior

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

302 imported toilet requisites of this kind, and charge fabulous prices for them.

The curious custom of stopping up the nostrils is still met with, though I imagine it is becoming less and less common; but one still constantly sees natives on their way to market with a piece of green leaf, or a flower petal, protruding from their noses, and I remember on one occasion when an Abyssinian lady, who had been paying us a visit, was leaving the house, she produced some cotton-wool and stuffed it carefully in both nostrils.

181 Their love of pageantry, display, and functions is quite Oriental, and is well exemplified by the splendour of some of their religious and Court ceremonies.

521 Amusements are few. The people seem to prefer to sit and chatter; they are great talkers, and whether in the servants' quarters in a house or round their fires on trek, one hears the clatter of their tongues almost incessantly.

492 All Abyssinians can ride more or less, and they are on the whole good horsemen, though indifferent horse-masters. Except in war, or on the occasion of a fantasia, they seldom ride horses; for purposes of daily use mules are almost universally preferred; all but the poorest women also ride mules for getting about.

The Abyssinian saddle is of wood with a pommel back and front and a sheepskin and some padding in the middle, the whole covered with a brightly embroidered saddle-cloth. The stirrups are round and very small, as the Abyssinian inserts only his big toe therein. The bits are horrible instruments, consisting of a ring round the lower jaw and a spike which, when the reins are pulled, sticks into the roof of the animal's

FIG. 3.—*Fāsil's castle, Gondar*

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FIG. 4.—*Two Manzē elders*

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FIG. 5.—*Manzē elders of Ānnā*

[R14-8]

11:Levine. Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 9.—*The weekly market*

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[P.46-B]

The market in Gondar

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FIG. 11.—*The market: buying honey*

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FIG. 12.—*The market: inspecting pottery*

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FIG. 13.—*The market: selling salt bars*

[P.78-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 16.—*The procession on Timqat Day*

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FIG. 17.—*Timqat procession: detail*

[P. 110-A]

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FIG. 20.—*Traditional (church) school: student huts*

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FIG. 21.—*Traditional school: learning to read*

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FIG. 22.—*Traditional school: learning zema from master*

[P. 142-A]

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FIG. 9.—Landowner who has become a monk

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FIG. 11.—A group of clergy

[P 206-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhará MP5

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FIG. 32.—*Haile Selassie as a boy with his father, Rás Makonnen*

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FIG. 33.—*The Emperor attending a ceremony at the University College*

[P. 206-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 674 any case the *shīftā* is a man apart, who makes his home in uninhabited mountainous country or lowlands and lives by stealing cattle and robbing travelers. Some Amhara become *shīftā* because of a passion for this way of life; this is particularly true of soldiers who, after a long campaign, prefer the continuation of a predatory and free existence to a return to the hard work of the fields. Others do so involuntarily, in order to escape punishment after committing some violence in the course of a personal dispute.

*121 674 829 554 The attitudes of civilian Amhara toward the *shīftā* combine fear and dislike with a strong tendency toward idealization. The *shīftā* is feared because he is a killer; if a person happens to witness him performing some act of theft or murder, he will usually keep quiet about it for fear of reprisal. He is disliked because he lives parasitically off the productive activities of others. But the *shīftā* is widely admired, on the other hand, because he possesses a number of qualities that are dear to the Amhara. He is reputed to be an expert singer of *shīllalā*. He is credited with unusually handsome features because, living at the expense of others as he does, he has plenty to eat and no [577] arduous work to wear him down. Above all he is *guabaz*, the great Amhara virtue that embodies bravery, fierceness, hardihood, and general male competence. [302] This is symbolized by the *shīftā*'s letting his hair grow to the proportions of a *gofarē*, the wildly thick hair style of the warrior.

*121 674 829 The Amhara's admiration for the *shīftā* is reminiscent of American attitudes toward the outlaw in "western" films. In the Amhara case, however, this is not balanced by a corresponding idealization of a sheriff-figure as the representative of civil order. Although a feudal lord or governor who captures some *shīftā* in his area may be admired, this admiration will be directed to his personal qualities of bravery or cunning far more than to his capacity as an agent of "law and order." There is no feeling among the Amhara that the *shīftā* must be captured simply because he is an outlaw. Instead, a more pragmatic approach is taken: the *shīftā* is acknowledged as a legitimate social type and is tolerated at a distance so long as his killing does not become [181] wanton or excessive. This approach, and what, in the idealization of the *shīftā*, appears to be a tendency to identify with someone who openly flaunts the norms of civil society, bespeaks a relatively weak commitment to the value of civil order.

*121 181 186 619 The weakness of the Amhara's attachment to symbols of local community is paralleled by his parochialism with respect to more inclusive levels of community. This parochialism is manifest in diverse ways in the different social strata. Among the peasantry it appears, for example, as an aversion to arranging marriages and permitting land to pass to an Amhara from a different province. Among the clergy it has been expressed in terms of those regionally based doctrinal differences which have disrupted the church for many centuries. Among the nobility it has taken the form of incessant politi-

*278 chases more exotic ingredients from an herbalist (in this
*786 304 transaction, acting as medhaniyt korac) who is known to
treat the relevant ailment. Medicaments are mixed with
the tokwariy's ink for all instances of therapeutic tat-
*755 tooing. The decision to include medicaments in prophy-
*767 lactic tattooing reflects the tokwariy's alternative stra-
304 tegies. In the first of these, the tattooing aims to
drive away the pathogenic agent, by a combination of de-
*[278] signs. These designs are associated with the pathogen
in "conventional" or pragmatic terms only; the medica-
ments used in tattooing are derived from herbalist thera-
pies in which the medicament assisted in expelling the
pathogen from the sickman. The second strategy is direc-
ted against purposive agents, those responsible for yisow
ayn and yibuda baziyta (discussed in chapter one). Here
no medicaments are used, and the designs aim to distract
the agent's attention and his disease-causing eye from
vulnerable areas of the potential victim's body, particu-
304 larly away from his mouth. Children under ten are
• 302 rarely tattooed, but are protected from these agents by
751 bizarre haircuts (for example, three asymmetrically ar-
856 ranged patches of hair on an otherwise shaven skull, or
a single patch on the brow), likewise intended to draw
attention to less vulnerable body areas.

304 A variety of motifs are utilized by the tokwariy,
necklaces of "beads", geometric decorations, crosses, and

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

APPENDIX B

HERBALIST THERAPY FOR YIBUDA BAŠIYTA (BUDA POSSESSION)

754 [825] The buda is a human, male or female, who shares a kinship of sorts with the hyena. When at night he hears their calls, he is irresistably attracted to run about with them. Like the hyena, he strongly desires to eat of human flesh and blood, but his cravings are not malevolent, and he often regrets this compulsion. The buda trait is most often passed down within families; in Begemder Province, it is limited to Falasha families.[52] [856] The buda trait is present at birth, but like an individual's other capacities, reaches full potency at its bearer's physical maturity.

In his nocturnal guise, the buda bears his human [302] face upon a hyena's body. The first time an individual runs with the hyenas, he (or she) is obliged to cut his hair short, in the fashion of Falasha women; the subsequent transition from wer-hyena form to human appearance is accomplished on the following morning with the aid of a secret medicine. The buda is, however, most dangerous, when in his prosaic human form, he produces the buda syn-

[52] Elsewhere in Ethiopia, buda accusations are directed against local endogamous iron working peoples.

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 [321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. [531] Ornamentation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric nature, in the wood. [303] Wooden combs together with their handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. [412] Wooden mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. [354] On occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back-rest of interlaced oxhide. [407] The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint firmly in place. [231] A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 Horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

412 lower, muddy terrain, e.g. in the Lazaga district of the Wolkait jungle border, digging sticks are used to prepare small holes for mashella seed. But the Amhara peasant prefers to use the plow, even on contours of hills, since the use of the stick is hard labor, requiring several men working in unison. Often the stick must be weighed down with heavy rocks against the sun-baked soil in the dry season.

412 407 The scratch plow probably evolved as an elaboration of the digging stick by fixing it at an angle to a long beam pulled forward by the yoke of two oxen, thus substituting animal muscle power for human energy. Among the Amhara, the bottom tip of the plowpoint is almost always strengthened and protected by an iron plowpoint purchased from an ethnic (Falasha) smith. The sharp angle biting into the soil can be adjusted by means of a suspension binding strap of hippopotamus skin, and two small wedges. The farmer merely has to guide the digging-stick part of the plow, and encourage the oxen with his long fiber whip.

412 303 Knives for kitchen use very in length usually from 8 to 12 inches, are curved, with the cutting edge on the curved side which comes to a point. The blade is set in a wooden handle. These knives are also used for circumcision. The old razor blade usually was of similar shape, about 6 inches long, and used primarily for shaping head head hair. It is now replaced by imported European blades. Pincers, 4-5 inches long, are carried on trips to remove thorns from the bare feet. Little ear spoons are suspended from the neck-cord and used to remove earwax, especially by the ladies. [515]

283 thread onto a warping reel in rough basket shape and size,
462 called "mäzäwär". It is a kneehigh frame of branches set on the ground, with a somewhat narrower waist. Several s skeins of cotton thread are thus connected and rolled into long, firm strands to serve as warp.

Sometimes it takes several months for a housewife to prepare enough cotton thread for the warp and woof of a single toga ("shamma"). But a diligent woman, if she has little else to do, can prepare enough for half a dozen or more togas a year. The cotbn thread is now given to
[286] the male weaver "shamani" who is to weave the toga. He may set up his loom in the back yard of the customer, or work near his own hut.

462 Skilled occupations for single women, e.g. "women between marriages" who often go to urban centers, are few. The brewer of mead and owner of the "tej byet", described under entertainment, usually employs several women as waitress-prostitutes.

462 There is another occupation, the woman beautician.
305 She may be specialized as a tatooer of women, "täqwari",
●304 usually a Coptic Amhara woman, who is kept busy especially
[796] before great church holy days such as the Feast of the True Cross ("Mäsqäl"), Christmas ("Gänna") and Epiphany ("Temqät"). Hercustomers are more often divorcees "between marriages "(who can afford it because of earnings as restaurateur-prostitutes or beer and mead brewers), than young girls or married women, who have no cash. As the name indicates ("tequrat" means blackening), one of her jobs is to darken the gums between the teeth, to heighten

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305 the effect of their whiteness. She also tatoos the women's
304 necks up to the cheek, in the shape of concentric necklaces, to make the neck appear longer, a mark of beauty.

462
305 The hairdresser, "ras sari" is a woman who operates
302 a traditional beauty parlor. She braids the women's hair front to back in as few as 12 or as many as 32 braids, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Her best-paying customers are divorcees looking for husbands, especially during the marriage season that follows the major harvest early in the dry season. A full two-hour job with a maximum of fine braids costs ETH$1.00 (US$0.40), while a simple job producing only few and thick braids, costs only a quarter of that. Many peasant women, and women unwilling to go to this expenditure, usually let their hair grow to a huge bushy crop, halo-like surrounding the skull, occasionally anointing it with butter boiled with "ades" leaves. But divorcees have the expensive hairdo done over as often as once every two months, and have it thoroughly washed during the process, so that their hair is much cleaner than that of married women.

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533 Another occupation of women is that of "azmari",
535 musician-singer-dancer, who performs at more elaborate, wealthier, rural weddings, and nearly all urban ones. This will be described under entertainment. She is often accompanied by a male azmari, who plays the single-string violin or the banjo-type instrument, and who may alternate with her in singing rhymes, but who does not dance.

852 unbaptized during this period of ritual impurity.

852 304 Another Old Testament survival, which is considered more customary than religious, is circumsision. Boys are circumcised about a week after birth, but not usually on Wednesday or Friday fast days. In some regions, notably Gojjam, girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed by a woman in a strictly female gathering, so that the girl will not become a "selfish" wife, and will be happy in marriage. After these operations, the babies may be blessed by a priest. However, when an adult person becomes Christian, circumcision or clitoredtomy are not performed, since they are not required.

293 At baptism, the baby receives the blue neck-cord, 852 553 the "mätäb", which forever after distinguishes him from a Muslim. The priest gives or confirms the Christian name of the child, usually one that places the child under the protection and guidance of a saint or archangel, such as "G[illegible]-Mikaël" (Servant of Michael). However, in later life, most children will use and be called by the "world name" given them by their mothers at time of birth, such as "Taamrat" (miracle, e.g if the husband suddenly returned from a distant and dangerous trip at the time) for a boy, or "almaz" (diamond) or other sparkling name for a girl. The Christian name may be used later in life if the person becomes a priest or monk or nun, or participates in "qurban" (eucharistic marriage in church).

608 852 Every baby baptized, also every new adult convert, is given godparents. When a slave was baptised (prior

842 birth, or later by causing its joints to swell.

843 It is considered impossible for a woman to conceive while still breastfeeding a baby. This belief is so strong that no precautions are taken, coitus proceeds as usual after the first few months, and when a pregnancy does occur it is regarded as a freak of nature and misfortune.

841 These physical matters are more discussed by women than by men. Menstruation is differentiated in several ways: "tärekäsä" - she has become impure; "räggäma" - the (monthly) curse is on her; "edef" - the discharge of menstruation; "bädäm nat" (lit. she is in blood). Husbands are expected to shun "the dirt" and avoid sex relations during that time.

843 As a pregnancy advances, women wrap a long cotton girdle around the belly and waist, "näqänät", for support, and continue this some time after childbirth.

843 574 844 About two months before a woman is about to give birth, ("ergüz" - woman in advanced pregnancy), she often leaves her husband and goes to the hamlet of her parents'. There she knows she will be taken care of, fed, constantly attended, treated by the local experienced woman who acts as midwife, and not be expected to follow any of her housewifely duties such as fetching water, cooking, brewing beer, gathering fuel, etc. After birth she will usually remain at her parents' for some months, until her childbed, "aras" period (usually 80 days) is over. During [304] this time, circumcision and clitorectomy are performed. For even good husbands are regarded as so habituated to the wifely services that they become impatient with the wife at this time.

844 During parturition, the midwife usually sits on the ground in such a position that the baby will drop into her lap. The mother usually kneels. Sometimes incense is lit to lure the baby out, and to attract protective "zar" spirits. It is believed that both embryo and placenta consist of menstrual blood that has not come out and become coagulated like buttermilk; fermented with the male semen, like yeast. The placenta, "adäf" (discharged dirty part), also called "yäengedä lej" (lit. host of the child), is buried out of sight. The baby is immediately fed butter, anointed with butter, and wrapped loosely in a warm toga. Meanwhile the mother is tightly bound in the long cotton [789] girdle, "lest her back hurt". In some areas, iron tools or weapons are placed close to her, to frighten off demons which fear iron.

[842] If the baby is a boy, women emerge from the huts shouting "ellel". The father, usually waiting nearby, is summoned. There is merriment and drinking and "fukkara" dancing among men in the evening.

304 852 Circumcision ("gezrat") of boys takes place a week after birth, and is of less religious significance than the baptism which follows some weeks later. It is a simple operation of removal of the foreskin, usually carried out by a "wozäsha" (native herbologist-surgeon) or other skilled man. Uncircumcised persons, e.g. Shanqalla from the lowlands, are insulted as "arotam" (sheathed); even the Italians were referred to as "wäshäla", a reference to having foreskins; less insulting is the factual ter "qurzam" (uncircumcised).

304 852 Although Amhara often deny the religious aspect of their circumcision, it is recalled by the more learned that Jesus Christ was circumcised on the 6th day of the month Ṭer. Also, the confessor is invited to circumcisions, and blesses the baby, sprinkles the hut with blessed water, waves the cross about to exorcise lingering demons who have waited for the kill like vultures. He blesses the entire family; May God rear up the baby for you, that he be your support in old age, and carry you to your burial". He is rewarded with a small feast and as much barley beer as he can drink.

In some regions of Begemdir province girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed without ceremony by the midwife, without any religious connotation. Usually the operation is a simple cut, a "clitorotomy". The purpose is to prepare the girl baby for future marital happiness by reducing the egotistical part of her sensuality. It is believed that Amhara women of the province [831] of Gojjam, where clitorectomy is not practiced, are very difficult to satisfy sexually, that they are more concerned with their own sexual gratification than with that of their husbands', and even become unfaithful because of this. At least this is the belief of Amhara of Begemdir province. The term "wäshäla" is also used for an "uncircumcised" woman.

845 It is considered a great calamity when twins are born. They are referred to as "ämänta" (from "ämänätä", undecided, not knowing which to accept). Everyone wonders "who will feed and carry the 845 539 twin"? The proverb says:

"The mother of twins,

302 golden red stain obtained from the root of this bulbuous plant which grows wild. This is done by young girls and respectable married women, as well as "unattached women".

Shadowing of eyelids, however, is the specialty of divorcees and "unattached women". It is done by means of antimony ("kull"), mixed in powdered form with vegetable oil, and applied with a simple grass brush (much as in ancient Egypt).

304 Tattooing ("negsat") is also a special attraction made use of almost exclusively by divorcees who want to attract another husband; [826] as they themselves say "for beauty's sake". Since it is a mark of beauty to have a long neck, tattooing aims at emphasizing this feature, and a concentric series of necklaces is carefully tattooed on the neck from ear to ear and from the collarbone until part of the way up the cheek. Seven hatched lines of this tattoo can cost as much as Eth$3-4, even in the less expensive provincial towns. The work is done by a professional woman tattooer, and takes several hours. There is pain for about a week thereafter, so that a divorcee usually has it done about two weeks before one of the major holy days in the year which also serve as climaxes of the flirting season, notably Epiphany (Temqat) and Mikael. The freshly applied tattooing will then be noticed as an innovation by men looking over the eligible women, and as conversation piece invite the approach of the male. Tattooing fades, especially on dark skin.

Tattooing of the gums is also popular among divorcees, to heighten the whiteness of the teeth, and is curiously called "ters tequrat" (lit. blackening of the teeth), (also "guramayle"). Unlike neck tattooing, in which the dye used is usually blue, blackening of the gums, between and just above the teeth, done with soot, achieves a much darker effect.

186 828 Pride in group, military unit; less emphasis on individual heroism.

Steadier temperament; endurance rather than burst of energy.

"If you treat him as a friend, he will serve you faithfully."

186 779 The religious ethnocentrism of the Amhara is based on their belief that their nation, ruled by the "Solomonic Dynasty", became heir to the "Chosen People" ruled by the House of David, when the latter refused to accept Christ. This is not always clear to the illiterate Amhara, but even he emphasizes this intertwined ethnic and religious principle of his ethnocentrism when he regards the name "Amhara" as signifying both, as he always does.

[304] While the Amhara no longer regards circumcision ("gezrat") as the symbol of entering the Covenant of the Faith, as does the Old Testament and the Jewish religion, he does follow this procedure a week after birth; and an uncircumcised man ("lembut") is called several insulting names and regarded as almost on a level with African Shanqalla slaves who are also uncircumcised. Circumcision therefore has an intertwined ethnic and religious significance.

671 Amhara legal philosophy, guarded by the church, and expressed therefore in the Geez terminology, analyses the universe as follows:

Natural Law - "tabayawi heg"

Man-made Law - (similar to common law) - "sabawi heg"

Moral Law (particularly Coptic law) - "yabaherya heg" (lit. Law from overseas).

186 Ethnocentrism of the Amhara has for several centuries been consciously directed particularly against the attacking Muslims. The "matab" neckcord is believed directly the result of one such purposeful development. Numerous proverbs emphasize the stereotype of the Muslim as the breaker of Amhara religious order as well as social order, and the promoter of lawlessness. Even proverbs such as the following,

186 quoted to praise farming as the best and most typical Amhara occupation, casually refer to the Muslim as a person not bound by social ethics:

[539] "He traded - (then he) cheated;
he was appointed (official) - he began (to act) like a Muslim;
(but) he (who) was a farmer - and became a king!"

[177] Nevertheless, the influence of Islam, probably by slow diffusion, has been considerable on Abyssinian Christianity through the centuries. Their avoidance of "unclean, forbidden things" ("erm"), such as pork, though officially based on the Old Testament prohibitions, was probably reawakened or reintroduced and emphasized through the pressure of Muslim ideas, geographically so close.

[532] The Amhara paint an infidel, like any evil person, with one eye, in profile, for "he has only half a soul, is only half-born, sees only half the truth." The outsider is regarded as automatically of evil personality.

C. Amhara Ideas about Body and Personality.

826 Not all Amhara ideas about human beauty are dominated by racial criteria. A long, lean face ("fit sälkakka") is considered handsome in a man, while a broad face ("fit mäda") is considered ugly; this may bear some relation to the gerontomorphic preference over the pedamorphic.

[304] A long neck ("angät") is a mark of beauty, in both sexes, but noted especially in the woman who therefore may have a series of necklaces tattooed on to her neck. The beauty of the long neck is referred in the following proverb:

[539] "The neck of the dead child
is longer (than ever);
(meaning, "a good thing that came when of no use).

The forehead is considered the location of good fortune, and a large forehead is considered a mark of beauty in men.

157 absence of self-restraint, he can give free rein to the typical
554 Amhara fondness for rapid and noisy argumentation, quoting witticisms, puns and proverbs. He does not have to control his typical Amhara curiosity about non-material objects and human behavior, and can stare freely and openly. Even his servility to the noble is only formal and not internalized, for, while he bows deeply from
[57½] the hips, his eyes are raised to observe every detail of the situation (especially to see whether some reward can be wheedled).

The Amhara noble, however, is required to be at least outwardly, an introverted personality. This is expressed in formal dignity, a partly withdrawn and meditative manner, a serious (though not severe) mien. His bodily movements must be slow and deliberate; his pattern of speech must be the same. Most of the time he remains pokerfaced. He has been trained to observe by moving only his eyes,
[152] not his head. He does not express his basic emotions directly, except with social equals under proper circumstances. He must appear too proud to show curiosity, even for interesting and strange articles brought by the foreigner; he accepts them with just a dignified and appreciative nod of the head.

152 There is the principle of "noblesse oblige". The noble be-
554 haves as if his due will certainly come to him - he does not have to go and seek it. When a servant has angered him, the noble does not fly into a rage publicly, though he may have him routinely flogged later on. It is noteworthy that even the womenfolk among the nobles share this personality training. Although hysteria is
152 very common among Amhara women, it is rare among noblewomen. Even
554 in case of great emotional distress (e.g. if a child has died)
158 when commoner Amhara women wail loudly, scarify themselves, and roll
[304]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

586 separated from this husband and married a man more than forty years of age, who is one of the great lords of the court; the title of this one whom she married is Abuquer, and his father Cabeata. This is the greatest lord there is in the court. Thus I saw and knew many of these separations; I have named these because they are of great personages. [587] And because I said that Aaron married the wife of his brother, let not him that reads it be amazed, because it is the usage of the country. They do not think it strange for [607] a brother to sleep with the wife of his brother. This Aaron moreover had sons of her who had been the wife of his brother, and he left her and married another to whom he is now married.

CAP. XXII.—*Of the manner of baptism and circumcision, and how they carry the dead to their burial.*

304 Circumcision is done by anybody without any ceremony, only they say that so they find it written in the books, that God commanded circumcision. And let not the reader of this be amazed—they also circumcise the females as well as the males, which was not in the Old Law. Baptism they do 851 in this manner: they baptize males at forty days, and females at sixty days after their birth, and if they die before they go without baptism. I, many times and in many places, used to tell them that they committed a great error, and went against what the Gospel says: Quod natum est ex carne caro est; et quod natum est ex spiritu spiritus est. They answered me many times that the faith of their mother sufficed for them, and the communion which she received whilst in a state of pregnancy.[1] They perform this baptism

[1] This opinion of the Abyssinians appears to have anticipated the Sorbonne judgment of 1733, given in the 20th chapter of *Tristram Shandy*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

in the church, with water which they keep in a vase, and 851
which they bless, and they put oil on the forehead and on the breasts and shoulder-blades. They do not put ointment,[1] nor do they have it, nor the oil of extreme unction. This office of catechism which they celebrate seems to me to be much the same form as the Roman, and at the time of pouring the water on the child they do it in this way. One who is the godfather takes the child from the hands of the woman that has it and raises it, holding it under the arms, and holds it suspended; and the priest who baptizes, with one hand holds the vase and pours the water over the child, and with the other washes it all over, saying in his language the words which we say, that is: I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. They always perform this office on a Saturday or a Sunday, and it is done in the morning at mass, because every child that receives baptism receives the communion, and they give it in very small quantities, and cause it to be swallowed by means of water. With regard to this, also, I used to tell them that this communion was very dangerous, and in no wise necessary. As I said that they put oil on the forehead, 851
you should know that every child comes to baptism shaved 304
with a razor, and the scars or marks which they bear on the nose, between the eyes, and at the corners of the eyes, are not made by fire nor for anything of Christianity, but with cold iron for ornament, and because they say that it is good for the sight. There are here women who are very skilful at making these marks. They make them in this manner: they take a clove of garlic, large and moist, and place it on the corner of the eye; with a sharp knife they cut round the garlic, and then with the fingers widen the cut, and put upon it a little paste of wax, and over the wax another paste of dough, and press it down for one night with a cloth, and there remains for ever a mark which appears like a burn, because their color Crisma is dark.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

764 775 of those departed, which would be vain did they believe they were already in the presence of God, and in possession of the greatest bliss possible, wanting nothing to complete it. "Remember," says their liturgy, "O Lord! the souls of thy servants, our father Abba Matthias, and the rest of our saints, Abba Salama, and Abba Jacob." In another place, "Remember, O Lord! the kings of Ethiopia, Abreha, and Atzbeha, Caleb, and Guebra Mascal." And again, "Release, O, Lord! our father Antonius, and Abba Macarius." If this is not directly acknowledging a separate state, it can have no meaning at all.

● 304 171 I have already said, that the Agaazi, the predecessors of those people that settled in Tigre from the mountains of the Habab, were shepherds adjoining to the Red Sea; that they speak the language Geez, and are the only people in Abyssinia in possession of letters; that these are all circumcised, both men and women. The former term, as applied to men, is commonly known to every one the least acquainted with the Jewish history. The latter is, as far as I know, a rite merely Gentile; although in Africa, at least that part adjoining to Egypt and the Red Sea, it is much more known and more universally practised than the other. This I shall call *excision*, that I may express this uncommon operation by as decent a word as possible. The Falasha likewise submit to both.

These nations, however they agree in their rite, differ in their accounts of the time they received this ceremony, as well as the manner of performing it. The Abyssinians of Tigre say, that they received it from Ishmael's family and his descendants, with whom they were early connected in their trading voyages. They say also, that the queen of Saba, and all the women of that coast, had suffered excision at the usual time of life, before puberty, and before her journey to Je-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

rusalem. The Falasha again declare, that their circumcision was that commonly practised at Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, and in use among them when they left Palestine, and came into Abyssinia. 304 171

The circumcision of the Abyssinians is performed with a sharp knife, or razor. There is no laceration with the nails, no formula or repetition of words, nor any religious ceremony at the time of the operation, nor is it done at any particular age, and generally it is a woman that is the surgeon. The Falasha say, they perform it sometimes with the edge of a sharp stone; sometimes with a knife or razor, and at other times with the nails of their fingers; and for this purpose they have the nails of their little fingers of an immoderate length. At the time of the operation, the priest chants a hymn, or verse, importing, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast ordained circumcision!" This is performed on the eighth day, and is a religious rite, according to the first institution by God to Abraham.

The Abyssinians pretend theirs is not so; and, being pressed for the reason, they tell you it is because Christ and the apostles were circumcised, though they do not hold it necessary to salvation. But it is the objection they constantly make against eating out of the same plate, or drinking out of the same cup, with strangers, that they are uncircumcised; while, with the Egyptians or the Cophts, though equally strangers, they make no such difficulty. In the time of the Jesuits, when the Roman Catholic religion was abolished, and liberty given them to return to their old worship, their priests proclaimed a general circumcision; and the populace, in the first days of their fury, or triumph, murdered many Catholics, by stabbing them with a lance in that part, as they met them, repeating, in derision, the Jewish hymn, or ejacula- 304 609

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

304 tion, "Blessed is the Lord that hath ordained circum-
609 cision!" so that, I believe, their indifference in this article is rather owing to not being contradicted; just as they are careless about every other part of religion, unless such as have been revived in their minds by disputes with the Jesuits, and kept up since, in part, among their clergy. But none of them pretend that circumcision arises from necessity of any kind, or from any obstruction or impediment to procreation, or that it becomes necessary for cleanliness, or from the heat of climate.

304 None of these reasons, constantly alleged in Europe, are ever to be heard of here; nor do I believe they have the smallest foundation any where: and this, I think, should weigh strongly in favour of the account Scripture gives of it. Examining the origin of this ceremony, independent of this revelation, I will never believe that man, or nations of men, rashly submitted to a disgraceful, sometimes dangerous, and always painful operation, unless there had been proposed, as a consequence, some reward for submitting to, or some punishment for refusing it, which balanced in their minds the pain and danger, as well as disgrace, of that operation.

All the inhabitants of the globe agree in considering it shameful to expose that part of their body, even to men; and in the East, where, from climate, you are allowed, and, from respect to your superiors, the generality of men are forced to go naked, all agree in covering their waist, which is called their *nakedness*, though it is really the only part of their body that is covered. We see even that there a curse * at-

* Gen. chap. ix. ver. 22.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

tended the mere seeing that part of the body of a parent, and not instantly throwing a covering over it. 304

I do not propose discussing at large the arguments for or against the time of the beginning to circumcise. The Scripture has given such an account of it, that, when weighed with the promise so exactly kept to the end, seems to me to be a very rational one. But, considering all revelation out of the question, I think there is no room to institute any free or fair inquiry. I give no pre-eminence to Moses, nor his writings. I suppose him a profane author; but, till those that argue against his account, and maintain circumcision was earlier than Abraham, shall shew me another profane writer as old as Moses, as near the time they say it began as Moses was to the time of Abraham, I will not argue with them in support of Moses against Herodotus, nor discuss who Herodotus's Phenicians, and who his Egyptians were, that circumcised. Herodotus knew not Abraham nor Moses, and, compared to their days, he is but as yesterday. Those Phenicians and Egyptians might, for any thing he knew at his time, have received circumcision from Abraham or Ishmael, or some of their posterity, as the Abyssinians or Ethiopians, whom he refers to, actually say they did, which Herodotus did not know, it is plain, though he mentions they were circumcised. This tradition of the Abyssinians merits some consideration from what they say of it themselves, that they were, in the earliest time, circumcised before they left their native country, and settled in Tigre. From this they derive no honour, nor do they pretend to any. It would have been otherwise, if the era fixed upon had been the reign of Menilek, son of Solomon, when they first embraced Judaism under a monarch. This would have made a much more brilliant epoch in their history, whilst it was probable, that they adopted circumcision under

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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304 the countenance of Azarias, the son of Zadok, the high priest, and the representatives of the twelve tribes who came with him at that time from Jerusalem.

304 171 It seems to me very extraordinary, that, if circumcision was originally a Jewish invention, all those nations to the south should be absolutely ignorant of it, while others to the northward were so early acquainted with it; for none of those nations upon the Nile (excepting the Shepherds), either know or practise it to this day; though, ever since the 1400th year before Christ, they have been in the closest connection with the Jews. This would rather make me believe, that the rite of circumcision went northward from the plain of Mamre; for it certainly made no progress southward from Egypt. We see it obtained in Arabia, by Zipporah *, Moses's wife, circumcising her son upon their return to Egypt. Her great anxiety to have that operation immediately performed, shews that her's was a Judaical circumcision; there was no sin that attended the omission of this operation in Egypt; but God had said to Abraham †, "The soul that is not circumcised shall be cut off from Israel."

The Tcheratz Agows, who live between Lasta and Begemder, in an exceedingly fertile country, are not circumcised; and, therefore, if this nation left Palestine upon Joshua passing Jordan, circumcision was not known there; for the Agows, to this day, are uncircumcised. The same may be said of the Agows of Damot, who are settled at the head of the Nile. It will be seen by the two specimens of their different languages, that they are different nations, as I have alleged. Next to these are the Gafat, in a plain open country, who do not use circumcision; none of them

* Exod. chap. iv. ver. 25.
† Gen. chap. xvii. ver. 14.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

were ever converted to Judaism, and but few of them 304
to Christianity. The next are the people of Amhara, 171
who did not use circumcision, at least few of them, till after the massacre of the princes by Judith, in the year 900, when the remaining princes of the line of Solomon fled to Shoa, and the court was established there. The last of these nations that I shall mention are the Galla, who are not circumcised; of this nation we have said enough.

On the north, a black, woolly-headed nation, called the Shangalla, already often mentioned, bounds Abyssinia, and serves like a string to the bow made by these nations of the Galla. Who they are we know perfectly, being the Cushite Troglodytes of Sofala, Saba, Axum, and Meroe; shut up, as I have already mentioned, in those caves, the first habitations of their more polished ancestors. Neither do these circumcise, though they immediately bordered upon Egypt; while the Cushite, adjoining to the peninsula of Africa, certainly did. As, then, so many nations contiguous to Egypt never received circumcision from it, it seems an invincible argument, that this was no endemial rite or custom among the Egyptians, and, I have before observed, that it was of no use to this nation; as the reasons mentioned by Philo, and the rest, of cleanliness and climate, are absolute dreams, and now exploded; and that they are so is plain, because, otherwise, the nations more to the southward would have adopted it, as they have universally done another custom, which I shall presently speak of.

Circumcision, then, having no natural cause or advantage, being in itself repugnant to man's nature, and extremely painful, if not dangerous, it could never originate in man's mind wantonly and out of free-will. It might have done so indeed from imitation; but with Abraham it had a cause, as God was to make his

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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304 private family in a few years numerous like the sand
171 of the sea. This mark, which separated them from all the world, was an easy way to shew whether the promise was fulfilled or not. They were going to take possession of a land where circumcision was not known; and this shewed them their enemy distinct from their own people. And it would be the grossest absurdity to send Samson to bring, as tokens of the slain, so many foreskins, or prepuces, of the Philistines, if, as Herodotus says, the Philistines had cut off their prepuces a thousand years before.

304 I must here take notice, that this custom, filthy and barbarous as it is, has been adopted by the Abyssinians of Tigre, who have always been circumcised, from a knowledge that the nations about them were not circumcised at all. It is true they do not content themselves with the foreskin, and I doubt very much if this was not the case with the Jews likewise. On the contrary, in place of the foreskin, they cut the whole away, scrotum and all, and bring this to their superiors, as a token they have killed an enemy.

Although it then appears, that the nations which had Egypt between Abraham and them, that is, were to the southward, did not follow the Egyptians in the rite of circumcision; yet in another, that of excision, they all concurred. Strabo * says, the Egyptians circumcised both men and women, like the Jews. I will not pretend to say that any such operation ever did obtain among the Jewish women, as Scripture is silent upon it; and, indeed, it is nowhere ever pretended to have been a religious rite, but to be introduced from necessity, to avoid a deformity which nature has sub-

* Lib. xvii. p. 950.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

jected particular people to, in particular climates and countries. 307

We perceive among the brutes, that Nature, creating the animal with the same limbs, or members, all the world over, does yet indulge itself in a variety, in the proportion of such limbs or members. Some are remarkable for the size of their heads, some for the breadth and bigness of the tail, some for the length of their legs, and some for the size of their horns*. There is a district in Abyssinia, within the perpetual rains, where cows, of no greater size than ours, have horns, each of which would contain as much water as the ordinary water-pail used in England does; and I remember, on the frontiers of Sennaar, near the river Dender, to have seen a herd of many hundred cows, every one of which had the apparent construction of their parts almost similar with that of the bull; so that, for a considerable time, I was persuaded that these were oxen, their udders being very small, until I had seen them milked.

This particular appearance, or unnecessary appendage, at first made me believe that I had found the real cause of circumcision from analogy; but, upon information, this did not hold. It is, however, otherwise in the excision of women. From climate, or some other cause, a certain disproportion is found generally to prevail among them. And, as the population of a country has, in every age, been considered as an object worthy of attention, men have endeavoured to remedy this deformity by the amputation of that redundancy. All the Egyptians, therefore, the Arabians, and nations to the south of Africa, the Abyssinians, Gallas, Agows, Gafats, and Gongas, make

* Some of these large horns are in Mr Bruce's collection of natural history, &c., at Kinnaird. E.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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304 their children undergo this operation, at no fixed time indeed, but always before they are marriageable.

When the Roman Catholic priests first settled in Egypt, they did not neglect supporting their mission by temporal advantages, and small presents given to needy people, their proselytes; but mistaking this excision of the Coptish women for a ceremony performed upon Judaical principles, they forbade, upon pain of excommunication, that excision should be performed upon the children of parents who had become Catholics. The converts obeyed, the children grew up, and arrived at puberty; but the consequences of having obeyed the interdict were, that the man found, by choosing a wife among Catholic Cophts, he subjected himself to a very disagreeable inconveniency, to which he had conceived an unconquerable aversion; and therefore he married a heretical wife, free from this objection, and with her he relapsed into heresy.

The missionaries, therefore, finding it impossible that ever their congregation could increase, and that this accident frustrated their labours, laid their case before the college of Cardinals *de propagânda fide*, at Rome. These took it up as a matter of moment, which it really was, and sent over visitors skilled in surgery, fairly to report upon the case as it stood. They, on their return, declared, that the heat of the climate, or some other natural cause, did, in that particular nation, invariably alter the formation, so as to make a difference from what was ordinary in the sex in other countries; and that this difference did occasion a disgust, which must impede the consequences for which matrimony was instituted. The college, upon this report, ordered that a declaration, being first made by the patient and her parents, that it was not done from Judaical intention, but because it disappointed the ends of marriage, "Si modo matrimonii fructus impediret id omnino tollendum esset:" that

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the imperfection was, by all manner of means, to be removed; so that the Catholics, as well as the Cophts, in Egypt, undergo excision ever since. This is done with a knife, or razor, by women, generally when the child is about eight years old *. 304

There is another ceremony, with which I shall close, and this regards the women also, and I shall call it *incision*. This is an usage frequent, and still retained among the Jews, though positively prohibited by the law: "Thou shalt not cut thy face for the sake of, or on account of, the dead †." As soon as a near relation dies in Abyssinia, a brother or parent, cousin-german or lover, every woman in that relation, with the nail of her little finger, which she leaves long on purpose, cuts the skin of both her temples, about the size of a sixpence; and therefore you see either a wound or a scar in every fair face in Abyssinia; and in the dry season, when the camp is out, from the loss of friends, they seldom have liberty to heal, till peace and the army return, with the rains. 304 765

The Abyssinians, like the ancient Egyptians, their first colony, in computing their time, have continued the use of the solar year. Diodorus Siculus says, "They do not reckon their time by the moon, but according to the sun; that thirty days constitute their month, to which they add five days and the fourth part of a day, and this completes their year. 805

These five days were, by the Egyptians, called Nici, and by the Greeks, Epagomeni, which signifies, days

* The reader will observe, by the obscurity of this passage, that it is with reluctance I have been determined to mention it at all; but as it is an historical fact, which has had material consequences, I have thought it not allowable to omit it altogether. Any naturalist, wishing for more particular information, may consult the French copy.

† Deut. chap. xiv. ver. 1.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by The 794 those who are sick, or dying.

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a 292 white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar.

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the 796 church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married 784 are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Persons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the [846] church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first [84] day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occasions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment. [304] [852]

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It 131 may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to 361 Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla 101 who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Teluma;

[p. 57]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

tent secluded and when they go out they ride mules astride, are completely veiled or rather covered up in their *chammas* and are accompanied by an escort on foot, one or two of whom walk or trot by the side of the mule holding the lady in position. 562

Getting on to the mule is an operation that must by no means be witnessed by the profane masculine eye; I remember on the occasion of the first visit paid to my wife by an Abyssinian lady of rank I went to the entrance to speed the parting guest. To my surprise a number of members of the escort took off their *chammas* and held them all round the mule so that their mistress could climb into her saddle in complete seclusion. 492 576

But rigid as may be the rules of privacy governing the lives of women, there are no harems, and no guard of eunuchs to watch over them as in Moslem countries. 562 644

Nevertheless other Eastern customs are practised, such as circumcision among men and a mild form of clitoridectomy among women; this custom, be it observed, is not as is often supposed of Jewish-origin, but probably of much more remote antiquity, and is further evidence of the Hamitic descent of the Abyssinians; according to Gibbon circumcision had been practised "by the most ancient Ethiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness" and presumably not therefore as a religious rite. 304 171

The nation as a whole has not adopted European dress, although it is worn to some extent in Addis Ababa, and by individuals who have been to Europe. They are proud of their national dress and the Emperor still encourages its use at court functions and receptions at the palace. 291 177

The distinctive feature of the dress is the *chamma*, 291

*756 wrapped tightly around the narrow end of the horn. The
*757 leaves are rolled to form an air tight funnel ending an
*759 inch or so beyond the end of the horn. Through this herbal funnel, the agamiy sucks blood up into the horn, seals the vacuum by gripping the funnel between his incisors, and, with his lips upon the leaves, senses when the blood has risen beyond the tip of the horn. As with the midwife, the agamiy's therapy is founded on his physical skills and is devoid of professional secrets and
[602] magical elements. Unlike the midwife, however, the agamiy learns his trade through an intimate apprenticeship with a cupper-kinsman.

*756 The Tattooer. The tattooer (tokwariy) is generally
*759 a woman who performs both prophylactic and therapeutic
• 304 tattoos, and although she also performs purely decora-
[562] tive works, aesthetic considerations are usually compounded with medical ones. The tokwariy uses either ink or a paste of carbon mixed with domestic oil; into this, the tattooer mixes whatever ground medicinals she considers appropriate to the ailment against which she is working. The tattooer rarely collects the medicaments
*[278] herself. The tokwariy utilizes the services of a full-time medhaniyt korac (medicine gatherer) of the market place, for medicaments used in a wide variety of recipes (such as the sebat kelems, the "seven colors", used by the tattooer for ayni tila and yibuda basiyta). She pur-

*278 chases more exotic ingredients from an herbalist (in this
*762 transaction, acting as medhaniyt korac) who is known to
• 304 treat the relevant ailment. Medicaments are mixed with
the tokwariy's ink for all instances of therapeutic tat-
*755 tooing. The decision to include medicaments in prophy-
*757 lactic tattooing reflects the tokwariy's alternative stra-
304 tegies. In the first of these, the tattooing aims to
drive away the pathogenic agent, by a combination of de-
* [278] signs. These designs are associated with the pathogen
in "conventional" or pragmatic terms only; the medica-
ments used in tattooing are derived from herbalist thera-
pies in which the medicament assisted in expelling the
pathogen from the sickman. The second strategy is direc-
ted against purposive agents, those responsible for yisow
ayn and yibuda basiyta (discussed in chapter one). Here
no medicaments are used, and the designs aim to distract
the agent's attention and his disease-causing eye from
vulnerable areas of the potential victim's body, particu-
304 larly away from his mouth. Children under ten are
302 rarely tattooed, but are protected from these agents by
751 bizarre haircuts (for example, three asymmetrically ar-
856 ranged patches of hair on an otherwise shaven skull, or
a single patch on the brow), likewise intended to draw
attention to less vulnerable body areas.

304 A variety of motifs are utilized by the tokwariy,
necklaces of "beads", geometric decorations, crosses, and

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

304 the names of saints. The client generally selects designs within the range appropriate to his needs, and women favor aesthetically attractive patterns. Only the gums are undecorated with designs, but are completely blackened; even here, however, the tattooing is regarded [551] as aesthetically pleasing. Men sometimes have their [608] godfather's names as well as their own (which incorpor- [764] ates the patronym) tattooed on their wrists, so that should they die in some foreign place, the local priests will regognize them as Christians and give them a proper burial.

Table 5 outlines the tokwariy's practice.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

TABLE 5

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THE TOKWARIY'S PRACTICE

Area Tattooed	Function		
	Prophylactic	Therapeutic	Decorative
forehead (female only)			exclusive
gums	e,f	f	present
throat (female only)	a		present
breasts (female only)			exclusive
upper arm (male only)	g	g	present
forearm	b,c*,d*	b	present
back of hand	b,c*,d*	b	present
shin to ankle (female only)	b,c*,d*	b	present

*765
*757
• 304
1

TABLE 5 CONTINUED

Key

a: Inkert: goiter

b: Kurtimat: rheumatoid pain

c: Yisow Ayn: an ailment characterized by lassitude, nausea, headache, vomiting, bloody stools; in young children, the syndrome includes the eating of ashes, mud, and charcoal.

d: Yibuda Basiyta: buda possession

e: Yiters Himem: toothache

f: Yiters Kurtimat: chronic pain in teeth and adjacent jaw

g: Ayni Tila: an ailment characterized by irresolution in the presence of others; the sickman experiences impotency, an inability to reply coherently to questions, forgetfulness, and "free-floating" anxiety.

*: Medicaments are not mixed with ink.

*755 *756 breached. Thus, the information it provides regarding *793 pathogenesis is equally relevant and detailed for pre-*[787] scribing prophylaxis, as it is for selecting therapy. [539] The secular healer, in contrast, is unequipped to prescribe prophylaxis, except for the inconclusive and pre-[751] liminary indications given by the hilimefoc. In addition to prescribing prophylaxes, the debtera provides protective kitabs for a great variety of medical contingencies. Among secular healers, only the tokwariy (tattooist) is [304] [951] able to perform prophylactic works, and these provide very imperfect protection against only a small number of ailments.

*755 Laymen assess differences between their own medical *756 procedures and those of debtera-healers most precisely *757 with regards to the preparation and administration of *759 therapy. Most details regarding the preparation and ad-*793 ministration of the debtera's medical works are unavailable, directly at least, to the layman. In these areas, he perceives the debtera's medical works by means of a series of semblances, linking the "asmat" (magic) which appear in secular therapies with the esoteric activities the debtera is known or assumed to perform in his own *[278] *[787] therapies. Among the important "asmat" of secular thera-pies are the use of prescribed instruments for gathering and processing of medicaments, the special condition of the gatherer, the numerological content of pharmacology

283 thread onto a warping reel in rough basket shape and size,
462 called "mäzäwär". It is a kneehigh frame of branches set on the ground, with a somewhat narrower waist. Several s skeins of cotton thread are thus connected and rolled into long, firm strands to serve as warp.

Sometimes it takes several months for a housewife to prepare enough cotton thread for the warp and woof of a single toga ("shamma"). But a diligent woman, if she has little else to do, can prepare enough for half a dozen
[286] or more togas a year. The cotton thread is now given to the male weaver "shamani" who is to weave the toga. He may set up his loom in the back yard of the customer, or work near his own hut.

462 Skilled occupations for single women, e.g. "women between marriages" who often go to urban centers, are few. The brewer of mead and owner of the "tej byet", described under entertainment, usually employs several women as waitress-prostitutes.

462 There is another occupation, the woman beautician.
●305 She may be specialized as a tatooer of women, "täqwari",
304 usually a Coptic Amhara woman, who is kept busy especially
[796] before great church holy days such as the Feast of the True Cross ("Mäsqäl"), Christmas ("Gänna") and Epiphany ("Temqät"). Hercustomers are more often divorcees "between marriages "(who can afford it because of earnings as restaurateur-prostitutes or beer and mead brewers), than young girls or married women, who have no cash. As the name indicates ("tequrat" means blackening), one of her jobs is to darken the gums between the teeth, to heighten

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305 the effect of their whiteness. She also tatoos the women's
304 necks up to the cheek, in the shape of concentric necklaces, to make the neck appear longer, a mark of beauty.

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305 The hairdresser, "ras sari" is a woman who operates
302 a traditional beauty parlor. She braids the women's hair front to back in as few as 12 or as many as 32 braids, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Her best-paying customers are divorcees looking for husbands, especially during the marriage season that follows the major harvest early in the dry season. A full two-hour job with a maximum of fine braids costs ETH$1.00 (US$0.40), while a simple job producing only few and thick braids, costs only a quarter of that. Many peasant women, and women unwilling to go to this expenditure, usually let their hair grow to a huge bushy crop, halo-like surrounding the skull, occasionally anointing it with butter boiled with "ades" leaves. But divorcees have the expensive hairdo done over as often as once every two months, and have it thoroughly washed during the process, so that their hair is much cleaner than that of married women.

462
533 Another occupation of women is that of "azmari",
535 musician-singer-dancer, who performs at more elaborate, wealthier, rural weddings, and nearly all urban ones. This will be described under entertainment. She is often accompanied by a male azmari, who plays the single-string violin or the banjo-type instrument, and who may alternate with her in singing rhymes, but who does not dance.

134 carried down the Blue Nile into Egypt. In Ethiopia, irrigation canals make use of it.

[311] (3) The remaining, eroded, red loam soil, of little fertility. This is left to the bush or is used for grazing.[5]

135 There is little information on the mineral wealth of Ethiopia, since whatever there is, particularly gold, has been kept from the knowledge of outsiders. The Italians had merely begun their surveys when they had to leave the country. Salt has always been a major item of import from the border lowlands in the east to the highland plateau. Numerous volcanic mineral springs, used for healing since ancient times, exist in many plateau districts.

[326] Since ancient times, gold from the sand gravels of Wollega and southern provinces was sold in small nuggets, or fashioned by goldsmiths into rings and sold by weight. It is now a monopoly of the central government; goldsmiths have been drawn to Addis Ababa, where they now use modern methods.

D. Flora, Fauna: their significance in Ethiopian Ecology.

137 The generosity of nature on the highland plateau has provided a basis for human subsistence with little effort. In addition to a healthful climate and fertile soil, resources of vegetation and animal life are abundant.

137 Economic botanists have conducted studies which indicate
241 that the highlands of Ethiopia contain a number of indigenous varieties of cultivated cereals and legumes. Some are of the opinion that these highlands even formed one of the PRIMARY

5. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia, 1954, p. 127-8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

244 topography provides for a variety of climate at a minimum of distance, is very favorable to diversified agriculture. But, as indicated before, the uses of power have not developed in millenia. Much land is permitted to lie fallow, and slash-and-burn methods are used when old soil becomes exhausted and new lands are needed. Therefore, apart from market villages, no settlements remain on the same spot for as much as a century, usually. The fields are not fertilized; manure from cattle is used as fuel. However, irrigation, though not intensive; terrace farming since ancient times; and the use of a wooden scratch plow with iron tip, give the Amhara agricultural picture an old-Middle Eastern character. Also Middle Eastern is the fact that among the Amhara and other north Abyssinians cereals are the most important field crops.

Ninety-five percent of the population of Ethiopia depends on farming and stock raising.[60] European estimates [134] indicate that half the land territory of Ethiopia is arable. Despite much erosion, the depth of the subsoil is regarded [311] as unusually deep. But much good land is left fallow, because there is enough land for the low density of the population; and because life is fairly comfortable at the old standards of living, especially now that ravaging armies of hungry soldiers seem a thing of the past. Thus, there is little urge for increased production, except by proclamation from the central authority from Addis Ababa which has tried to stimulate it with only modest success. The reason for this lack of success is that the farmer argues, with

60. Underhill, C.T.: Industry in Ethiopia,1950, p. 21.

considerable justification, that even if he raised larger and more diversified crops, they would not find a ready sale (due to undeveloped lines of transport to world markets). Thus the old pattern of not raising more crops than one's family can consume in one year, and for taxes and tribute, continues, especially among the Amhara; consequently fields do not become exhausted as quickly as they would in intensive agriculture.

[427] Another factor was (and is to some extent) the insecurity of tenure. The sharecropping "gabbar" was little more than a serf, who did not know from year to year what treatment he would receive from the next (often absentee) feudal landlord to whom his land might be assigned the next year. This was not conducive to the growth of much sentimental attachment to any particular plot of soil.

[311] Among the Amhara, only about 20% of the potentially fertile area available in a neighborhood ("and debber agar") is usually under cultivation in any one year. On exposed parts of the plateau the crops are usually barley, broad beans, some bearded wheat, and linseed. In more sheltered spots, lentils, chick peas, and a legume called "gwayo" used as cattle fodder (but feared by Amhara because walking in it or lying in it is supposed to cause softening of the human bones). Barley is planted almost the whole year round, starting early with the "light rains", and irrigated in the dry season. In valleys of the plateau, where fields are warmer and more protected, as well as better watered, the major crop of tiff, a grass-like

243 of "madiga".

[311] The term "ṭyēff" also has a projection. Good, fertile, fat land is still classified as "lämm tyēff", in distinction to "ṭyēff" land, meaning average usable land for cereals.

Mashella is used as a concept in the following proverb:

[539] "(Both) the seed of mashella
and the stalk, are good"

This is to say that if the parent had good qualities, the son will be a "chip off the old block."

Numerous distinctions are made in the types and qualities of each of the cereals. Among ṭyēff the farmer distinguishes "bunneñ" which grows and matures rapidly even in Läskäräm immediately on the end of the rainy season. In barley, the "aja" is disliked because of its coarseness, but its green fields, irrigated, stand out among the sun-yellowed stubble in the dry season and provide a pleasant sight, as well as year-round crops. "Ferey gebs" is a fine choice barley, and "sänäf qolo" (a long-eared variety) is roasted as a daily condiment.

248 Cotton, called "ṭeṭ", is grown in lowland areas. To separate the husks, a roller of scrap iron is preferred; it is worked on a rock. When rain has occurred during the maturing of cotton, its quality is lowered. The typical Amhara prefers to buy his raw cotton on the market and have his wife or female servant clean, card and spin it. Then he calls in the weaver or takes the spun cotton to him, to make a toga.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of translation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth." 133

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of Rocher d'Hericourt, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans. 132 [134] 137 [177] [372] 361 31 [231] 241 311

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow 137

133
311

Artificial terraces and natural shelves, Dalecha gorge

133

[Facing p 160] *Shelves at two levels, Chacha gorge*

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Buddleia, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ethiopia. The uplands, even though they lie close to the equator, are pleasantly cool at night during the long dry season, and abundant monsoon rains from the Indian Ocean pour down between June and September. 7 132

Rainfall averages approximately 47 inches annually at Addis Ababa[1] and considerably more in the area around Lake Tana. An average of 81% of the rain falls during the three-month rainy season, and about 13% during the irregular light rains in April and May.[2] The water-table remains high during most of the dry season, even when most rivers have dried up, so that irrigation and terrace farming are possible. Both have been practiced, though neither extensively nor intensively, since ancient times. [312]

The Amhara divides the climatic year into the long dry season, Bälg, which lasts until the beginning of the "little rains", and the 3 to 4 month rainy season, kerämt, which the modern-educated Amhara translates as "winter". Terms subdividing these seasons differ locally, which is not surprising considering the extent to which climate is dominated by local topography. 184 805

While the long dry season is climatically monotonous, the rainy season is in daily, dramatic flux. It is the season of tornadoes, often dangerous. On a relatively dry day during the rainy season, usually in the early afternoon, a whirlwind (called Täro) may occur which can even 132

1. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No.12, May 1947, 4 pp.
2. Hann, Julius: Handbuch der Klimatologie, 1908-1911, Vol.2, p. 181.

241 cereal, as well as other crops already mentioned are grown. The lowest and warmest spots of the plateau are usually used for various types of millet-sorghum, gesho (hops). Coffee grows wild or is purchased on the market, as are bananas from the lowland. After a few years of cultivation, a field may be left fallow for five or more years.

[171] The Amhara's irrigation and terrace farming resemble
[462] those of Yemen, not of Africa. Farming is men's work, not
[231] woman's. The one-handed plow is drawn by a yoke of two oxen, encouraged by a long fibre whip. The Amhara rerely uses other animals for drawing the plow.

Fallow land or new bush is broken during the dry season. A heavier-than-usual iron plow point is purchased from the Falasha ironsmiths, affixed to the scratch plow, and the area, after preliminary burning, is scratched many times at right angles. The stubble and weeds are then piled and burned. But for the actual plowing and seeding, the beginning of the rains is awaited.

● 312 Irrigation canals are completely washed out in the rainy season, and must be rebuilt in each dry season. Terracing is less common than irrigation, but on occasion mountain farmers of long residence do build low walls of rock and mud on hillsides to prevent severe washouts and landslides during the rainy season.

243 Tyēff (Eragrostic abyssinica; Poa abyssinica) deserves the latter Latin name, for it is the mainstay staple of Abyssinia, except in the south. It is an annual indigenous grass with seeds of pinhead size, cultivated

164 this is limited to occasional feasts due to the comparatively high cost of beef, and the "kosso" cure does seem to work. Dysentery kills many infants; amoebic dysentery sickens and kills adults also, especially near towns where the population is denser. The opening and increase in trade route communications since the Italian occupation has led to an increase in tuberculosis epidemics.[68]

312 164 Brooks, rivers and wells become increasingly more polluted as each dry season proceeds, and just after the flooding during the rainy season. Water carried long distances in skins is not safe either. The housewife, trying to manage as best as she can under the circumstances, carefully covers containers of food and drink, even of water stored overnight.

H. Mutual Aid

476 The simple living standard of the Amhara is somewhat improved by traits of mutual aid.

These may be listed in four categories, according to Amhara attitude:

(1) Mutual aid within the territorial or kinship unit, usually the hamlet;

(2) between neighboring hamlets that may or may not be kinfolk;

(3) within the religious sodality, the "mähabär";

(4) between individuals.

68. Simmons et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. pp.62-73

796
795 On Easter, the Muslim worshippers of Saint Sheykh Abader leave Gondar town beginning at dawn, for a hill about half an hour's walking distance to the east, bringing with them about 100 live sheep, each donated by a faily. This is the hour when the Christians still feast on meat and beer. The hill is far enough away so that the rival religions do not annoy each other, but in the belief of the worshippers, the miracle of a water spring [312] will recur on this particular hill on this saint's day, despite the seasonal dryness which is then at its height making water a valuable and much desired commodity.

The Muslim men seat themselves on one side of the hill, the Muslim women, their hair covered with colorful red kerchiefs, on the other. Some erect shelters against the mounting sun. The men proceed to slaughter the sheep, away from the groups, with the formula "In the name of Allah the all-merciful and Muhammad his prophet". The meat is well roasted, then passed around in baskets, the pieces already cut to individual portions. There is plenty for everyone. There is also wheat bread ("qitta").

The Muslim leader meanwhile has proceeded half way up the hill, at a spot midway between the men and the women, and has begun to dig a hole about three feet deep. The water table is sufficiently high here so that muddy water begins to accumulate in the hole gradually. He digs another few inches, and more water accumulate. A half-gourd, sliced lengthwise, is brought and he reaches into the hole and begins to pass up the water. When the silt has settled in the bottom of the gourd, it is

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

3. Expressive Physical Arts.

531 Physical arts, like their material culture, are little developed among the Amhara, compared to their elaborate spiritual culture. If their life cycle gives any clue, it seems that the explanation lies at least in part in the end of free experimentation at the onset of adolescence, after which the experimentation is fettered into lines ordained by the Coptic church. Especially fine art, is considered exclusively within the domain of the church. This leaves little beyond body care and ornamentation for expression of physical arts, and even [302] this is partly dedicated to religion, such as the rationalized plucking of pubic hair of the woman, and the fullest expression of body arts on the occasion of church festivals.

171 It is also interesting to observe how patterns of the Middle East and of Africa are so evidently drawn from and synthesized in the traditional Amhara pattern of expressive physical arts, particularly in body care and ornamentation.

A. Body Care and Ornamentation.

515 Washing in the dry season is difficult, since water is scarce and [312] there are no wells. However, with some little effort, water can even then be obtained by digging in the riverbed, since the water table is high; this is what travellers do. Near towns the latter effort develops into a business, for water carriers, employing women as cheap labor to carry the water in their clay pots uphill to the town, charge 5¢ [548] (Ethiopian) per potfull of water. Only the "unattached woman" who has a cash income from beer-brewing or temporary wife - prostitution, can afford this, and usually buys a potfull of this muddy water every day during the long dry season, to wash herself and her clothing regularly and frequently, at a time when the fully respectable Amhara housewife goes unwashed (except for hands and private parts). Divorcees looking for husbands and professional women alone feel the need for daily

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 his early twenties, he found his way back to Ankober and assumed his rights as king of Shoa.

Menelik, who was a restless and imaginative character as well as a great soldier, soon began the series of vast conquests in the southern Galla lands which were to double the size of Ethiopia. It is therefore not surprising that he should have abandoned Ankober in favour of a capital within easier reach of his newly acquired territories. He first reverted to Debra Berhan, then made a new temporary capital at Liché, a few miles to the north-east. Here, [172] at one end of a long, low hill are various remains of massive dry-stone walls as at Angolala, and the raised platform, only about 20 feet across, on which stood Menelik's personal dwelling. But the site is now uninhabited. In the 1880's Menelik, his southern conquests rapidly extending, moved his capital south-westwards to Entotto, in the midst of country newly retrieved from the Gallas. This was a magnificent site, 10,000 feet high and overlooking the plain and the splendid circle of mountains which form the setting of the present capital. Entotto was, however, unsuitable as the site of a permanent [312] city. It is said, also, that Menelik's wife Taitu craved for a warmer residence and especially for the curative waters of the hot springs (the present Fil Wuha baths) on the edge of the plain below. So in 1889, the year in which he was crowned emperor in succession to John IV, Menelik moved down, and Addis Ababa was founded at the foot of the hills, 1500 feet below.

This digression completes our brief review of the historical associations of the area represented on the map. The remainder of this paper will deal with the present inhabitants, their distribution and their way of life.

361 It has already been said that the population of the area is greater than at first sight appears. The small, stone-built huts are inconspicuous objects, especially as they are seldom massed together to form a village but are widely scattered in small groups. Moreover the motor-road follows for the most part an exposed tract which carries less than the normal population. Travellers driving through therefore carry away a false impression: they can see little of the more populated areas, nothing of the gorges, and not a single one of the numerous churches of the region, except those of Debra Berhan itself.

I attempted to mark every inhabited place on the map. In very many cases the single dot indicates several households, and may be taken to represent, on 162 an average, two households of five to six persons each or eleven souls. On this basis the population of the whole area of 102 square miles comes to about 361 15,500 or 152 per square mile—a high average by African standards. (This excludes Debra Berhan itself which would add a further 2000 or so.) The population is not, however, evenly distributed, and the area may be divided into three parts which, with their areas and population densities (again ignoring Debra Berhan) are as follows:

General plateau: 60 square miles—116 per square mile.

Plateau between or within 1 km. of gorges: 22 square miles—240 per square mile.

The gorges themselves: 20 square miles—162 per square mile. (This indicates a very high concentration on the "shelves" and a few other favoured spots, for a great part of the gorge area is, of course, uninhabitable.)

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

for, and, in the height of the rains when some crops are already up, deep furrows are made at regular intervals, and enlarged from time to time to carry away the surplus rain water. 241

Irrigation on the shelves of the gorges has already been referred to. But a more elaborate system, the extent of which is shown schematically on the map, has been developed along the river Beressa and its tributary the Maka, which both provide a small flow of water throughout the dry season. The whole enterprise is an interesting example of concerted effort and communal organization—in neither of which are the Amharas usually believed to excel. Its object is to ensure an early crop of barley, to be reaped before the onset of the main rains in June. 312 [476]

The irrigation system has to be partly rebuilt every dry season for the dams, which are constructed of stones and heavy sods, are swept away in the rains. From each dam the water is led off into a well-established furrow, which is carried down in a divergent line from the river and sometimes cut out of the rock on steep scarps. From it minor channels, which can be opened or blocked at will, branch off to irrigate the intervening lands. There are however more complicated systems; thus the dam near Dilila feeds two irrigation channels, one on either bank of the river. The right-bank channel receives its water direct from the dam, that on the left bank by means of an aqueduct carried across the main stream just below the dam and likewise constructed of stones and sods. The flow is not sufficient to feed both at once, so that the water is excluded from one or other branch on different days of the week; while if rain happens to fall the whole system is switched off. The left-bank channel, after running almost parallel to the Beressa for nearly a mile and a half, has to cross obstacles in the form of two tributary streams. The second tributary crossed is a large one, and the irrigation channel, in order to maintain its level, makes a big loop upstream and is then carried over the tributary by means of another wall-like aqueduct 8 or 10 feet high.

During the latter part of the dry season the brilliant green crops of the irrigated area make a striking contrast to the brown and withered aspect of the surrounding countryside. The district (known as Atakilt or "garden") takes its name from this characteristic feature. There are other minor irrigation schemes on the plateau, as on the Dalecha river in the east and the Angolala river in the west of the sheet, but nothing on so large a scale or so elaborately organized as the Beressa system. The Atakilt plains also have historic interest as the scene of the battle, already mentioned, which resulted in the emperor Theodore's annexation of Shoa and the capture of young Menelik. [103]

To conclude this brief account of the agricultural techniques of our area something must be said of terracing and its effect on the landscape. Nothing like the impressive and elaborate terracing practised in some eastern rice-growing countries is attempted in these parts. Many slopes are nevertheless unobtrustively terraced, both in the gorges and on the plateau, and it is not uncommon to see new terraces in process of formation. A wall (*gur*) is built on the lower side of the area selected for improvement, advantage being often taken of any natural flattening of the hillside. The *gur* has a vertical face on

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

312 the downward side but is sloped on the up-hill side and therefore triangular in section. The filling-up of the empty space behind the wall, to the new terrace level, may be partly accomplished by hand but tends to be left to nature. During the rains, especially on the steeper slopes, there is a continuous downward movement of soil, which is arrested by the terrace walls and the pockets above them gradually fill up. In the course of centuries an immense amount of simple terracing of this kind has been done; the effect being to accentuate the existing irregularities of the steeper slopes. The landscape has certainly been greatly modified in this way, but it is often impossible to tell at first sight whether a given feature is natural, or partly or wholly due to terracing. It is obvious that such terracing has not only provided additional acreage for agriculture but also served the useful purpose of saving many steep slopes from excessive erosion. In several parts of Ethiopia, including this area, I have seen slopes under cultivation which were so steep that the soil, when loosened and disturbed, would slide away downhill. At first sight one would suppose that such slopes must be completely denuded after a few seasons' rain. The fact that this does not happen is due, I believe, to the vast abundance of stones in these soils, every one of which acts as a minute barrier arresting the flow of water and silt. Nevertheless such slopes, unless terraced, clearly cannot survive indefinitely under cultivation.

443 Surplus produce is brought in to the big weekly market at Debra Berhan
[487] which is both the commercial and the social centre of the whole district; all the main routes radiate from it. Every Saturday morning these routes are thronged with market-goers, who can be seen moving along in an almost continuous stream, the well-to-do mounted on mules, the majority on foot, some driving laden donkeys and pack-mules. The products of this countryside are few, and there is little food surplus, but some wheat and barley come to market, also eggs and chickens and a good deal of butter. Some honey (used in making the local mead or *tej*) comes in, and beeswax is collected for export. Firewood, a scarce commodity on the plateau, is carried in in quantity. *Gesho*, the fermenting agent, comes up from the gorges. There is plenty of earthenware, made on the plateau nearby. From the district of Menz to the north come excellent felt blankets and burnouses. Traders from farther afield bring salt from the desert, partly in the bars which used formerly to pass as currency, and raw cotton and spices from the eastern plains. Textiles and other imported goods now find their way to this market by lorry.

When, in the course of the afternoon, the market crowds begin to stream homewards, one may identify the few simple wares they have bought or bartered. Some have a bag or a bar of salt, some raw cotton for spinning or a piece of cotton cloth, some a fresh supply of coffee-beans, some a bottle of kerosene or a cake of soap. Many have acquired earthenware water-pots or
[323] cooking vessels; the large round platters (*matad*) 18 inches across, on which
[482] the local bread is baked, stand out conspicuously for they are always carried, for safety, on the head.

971 It still remains to describe the most potent of the influences which shape the life of the country-bred Amhara—that of the Church. The priests, of

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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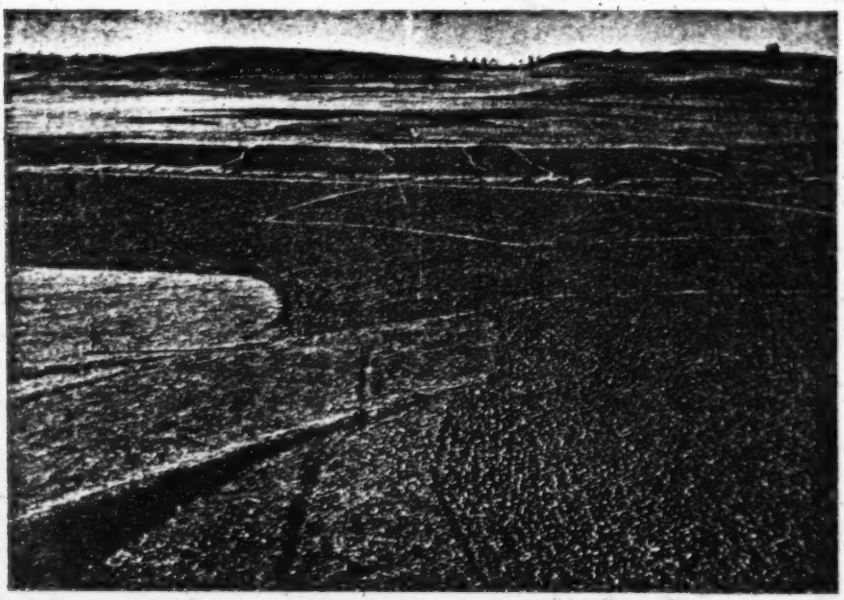

Irrigated land, Atakilt

The ceremony of Timkat (Epiphany), near Debra Berhan

[Facing p. 171]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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487
712
361
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[End map II-A]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948) 1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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361
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[End map II-B]

SHOAN PLATEAU
Buxton

5

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well
532 made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
491 in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John
[563] are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

*175 361 sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

[132] Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most [312] pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā [132] twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, some- [241]

*175 643 TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāssi (Nagāssē Kristos)	Abēto	169?–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebstē (Sebstyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbīyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Takla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwoflos	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yosṭos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāhla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	***		***
		Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

*175 361 times three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and [132] livestock are produced in abundance. [241]

[231] The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's *175 633 time of power.[5] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The towns- people of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, [162] and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more [463] conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he [173] was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose [361] name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

137 241 [248] kobo (Musa ensete) is grown. This is used for making ropes of all kinds and bags for grain. In the south, the roots and inner parts of the plant are also used to make flour for 264 [186] food; but the Amhara despise this, considering it "food of slave peoples".

137 Vegetation is dense in the valleys, and the forests contain many valuable trees, including the Natal yellow pine. But in spite of the high yearly rainfall the northern plateau is comparatively little wooded. Foresters estimate that only 2.8% of Ethiopia is forest-covered, although they believe that it was once well forested. They ascribe this denuding to centuries of uncontrolled grazing and periodic burning-over. The best hardwoods that remain are usually in the least accessible spots, lowlands and gorges.[7]

137 313 The two most important trees of the highlands are the Ted and the Zegba. The Ted, a juniper (Juniperus procera) sometimes referred to as "pencil cedar" (or Juniperus phoenicoea), is fine-grained, easy to split, aromatic, durable (even when exposed to moist conditions in the rainy season), and termite-resistant. It is popular for beams in the better houses of chiefs, and for the simple native furniture. The Zegba (Podocarpus gracilor), also an evergreen, is found in the warmer parts of the plateau. The wood is soft, easy to split, subject to decay when exposed to moisture, and thus more popular in drier areas. Non-resinous and tasteless, it is useful as a container for food, but is mainly used for construction and furniture. On the higher plateau

7. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia 1954, pp. 127-8; Kuo: Ethiopia, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons: Global Epidemiology, 1951, p.63.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 areas, the wild olive, wäyra, is preferred, because it is
●318 available, a hardwood, yet not difficult to split. Ease of splitting is always a most important consideration because of the population's simple tools and disinclination to expend effort to change what nature provides. Another olive, the wanza (Cordia abyssinica, a coarsely porous light wood), is popular for smoking out beer jars and other pottery before and after use. The yellow, cherry-like olive is one of the available wild fruit trees.

On lower levels of plateau elevation, the acacia known as grar is found in many varieties, often as the "umbrella tree". Generally the wood is hard, used in construction, and even more popular as fuel, especially as charcoal for firing pottery. Lowland trees include the termite-resistant Natal yellow pine, the giant sycamore, mimosa(also called grar), gum trees, lemon, and a small size banana.

137 One of the most popular trees, especially in the larger
324 centers of population on the plateau, was imported by Em-
177 peror Menelik II about half a century ago: the odoriferous, water-holding eucalyptus, called bahär zaf (lit. the tree from overseas). Although there are no real forests of it, it is the most noticeable tree in Ethiopia, planted around houses, in wooded clumps between urban sections, towering above the native plateau trees. It grows so fast that in some areas it can be "harvested", primarily for construction purposes, after only five years.

137 A common sight on lower slopes is the euphorbia, qul-
278 qual, which resembles an immense, spiny chandelier with
124 multiple branches. Its milky sap is used in some native

824 searching for suitably shaped hard or soft saplings and
461 other woods and certain herbs, than perform carpentry or much transplanting. Apart from saddle-making, the alga-bed, and simple musical instruments, one can hardly speak of any carpentry.

824 In preparation for housebuilding and other activities
313 connected with lumbering, the timber provided by nature is divided, in the Amhara view, into two major categories: Male, i.e. hard wood or strong wood; Female or soft, less consistent, or easily pliable woods. Heaviness or lightness are not major categories (as in western countries).

Male woods ("wandō enchāt") and their uses include the following:

Wild Olive Tree ("wāyra") (olea chrysophylla), one of the hardest; often heavy and massive, found on the edge of forests, brown-black in color, quite oily. Used for construction on plateau, e.g. as saplings for walls, rafters, etc. The small twigs
[515] are in common use as "toothbrushes". They are chewed and used to clean teeth and polish gums, as a leisure-time activity after meals.

"Manza" (Cordia abyssinica), a light but hard wood which is found very commonly and is therefore popular; used to make the yokes of oxen, saddles, low, round chairs and other equipment that takes much punishment in use, such as riflestocks when the original has broken.

"Gulheffa" (Dombeya Bruceana), very hard, used for clubs, e.g. as pestle in the women's crushing of barley.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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"Balla", after weeks of searching, a strong tree trunk is selected, after weeks of searching, to serve as center port for the new tuqul.

"Tequr enchät" (Pygeum Africanum), actually light red (lit. black wood), a porous hardwood, commonly available, which seasons well.

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Rosewood, "Kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica) the search for which is a major occupation and livelihood of poor widows, since the bark and twigs are consumed against tapeworm. It is a heavy wood which can take a fine polish, thus more commonly used in noble homes. It is commonly available, at edge of "dega" upland forest.

"qarqaha", a bamboo of river valleys, can grow up to 5" in diameter, commonly used as major posts in tents of feudal lords during their military campaigns.

"yäbäraha shemäl" (bambusa abyssinica), lit. "bamboo of the jungle", a strong bamboo from the qolla lowland, traded from there in former times to serve as a staff for the spear; now used by shepherds as staff, and to fend off dogs, also for some simple furniture.

Male wood is also called "tabot enchät" because hardwood is used to make the tabot, the sacred tablet inscribed with the name of a church, placed in the inner sanctum, symbolizing the Ark of Moses in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem.

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824 313 Female woods ("enest enchat") are preferred and much more used than hardwoods, if the purposes permit, because they are more easily worked:

"Ted" (Juniperus Procera), or (Juniperus Phoenicoea) pencil cedar, is popular as a tall conifer, easy to split, moisture-resistent in rainy season, termite-resistent. It is one of the most important woods, and the only one of the traditional woods that is actually planted and protected by cut thornbushes against goats (which like to feed on the nursling). The grown tree resembles the cypress, and is the landmark of churches, churchyards and church schools. Thus the tree assumes a kind of sacredness, perhaps since pre-Christian times. In the tuqul it is often used as the horizontal, transversal beam.

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"Zigba" (Podocarpus elongata, or, Podocarpus gracilor) is a tall conifer of similar properties, with stringy, tough wood, used to make the alga bedsteads and other furniture.

"Ketketta" (Dodonea viscosa) is used for small carpentry, walking sticks; due to its slightly resinous but long-lasting qualities for torch parade at Masqal or wedding festivities. The leaves have household uses.

[313]

"Qwara" (Erytrina tomentosa), used for slats in simple carpentry.

824 313 417 "Qenchub" bush, which resembles the euphorbia but grows at higher altitudes and is tougher, is cut and

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placed on the outside of garden or hamlet-fences, to discourage hyenas, to keep livestock inside -- a natural barbed wire.

Eucalyptus tree ("bahēr zaf") has become thoroughly rooted in Ethiopia. It is used in construction, especially of the more urban dwellings, as urban fuel, and its blue smoke and aroma is an early morning and evening feature of every town and market-town, where it is a major trade item. During the rainy season it grows so fast that a mature tree can be "harvested" 5 years after the nursling stage. Since it sells for $3-5 Ethiopian, (US $1-2) it is the most planted tree in Ethiopia today. The peasant also likes to use the odoriferous branches and leaves to cover the "dass" the festivity-shelter on marriages, etc., and the leafy branch as chera, flyswitch. Entire hillsides may be seen planted with this tree.

Female woods are also used for other indispensable products:

[386] Ink - is made from the fruit of the "tämbälal" (Jasminum floribundum) tree, and its timer is used

[534] for the stock of the single-string violin, the masenqo. (But imported blue ink called "nil" is preferred by däbtära scribes.)

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Fibre - for basketry, roof-hoops, etc. is obtained from the "wärqē" (musa ensete) (also called "enset") at lower altitudes, used especially for cords. Rope "gämäd" is made from the bark cut

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that 681
they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of
others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality
the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he
was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester 793
John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is
nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester
who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means em- 643
peror, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some 752
sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, 757
they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein,
and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw
blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure
themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thou- 621
sand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and 361
there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without num-
ber. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and 342
all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and court-
yards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others 352
on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table.
They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without 415
napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black 264
earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for
drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others 262
eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, 252
and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is 373
much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make
candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which 314
they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like
Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 000

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

462 or will be described under "division of labor by sex".

462 The hardest daily work of the female is the pounding
252 and/or grinding of grain. Sorghum(mashella), barley, even shembera peas and pepper, are dehusked by pounding with an up-and-down motion in a hollow wooden tree-trunk, with a stout wooden pestle. After that, the grains are usually left overnight in water for softening. The next day they, as well as the common tyeff grain, are hand-ground on an inclined flat stone, by use of a smaller stone of different type, weighing as much as 4-5 kilos, with the same back-and-forth motion of ancient Egypt, rather than rotary. To produce flour for the entire family takes the better part of each day.

● 316 The woman carries water from the valley every morning,
462 sometimes several kilometers, in a heavy earthenware pot
[482] tied to her upper back. It weighs 20 kilos when full. Only during the 3-months rainy season can she use nearby brooks and temporary watercourses. This female task makes it possible to locate hamlets on or near hilltops, far from water in the dry season, but safe from flooding in the rainy season.

462 Kitchen duties of the female, besides cooking and
251 daily baking of "enjärä" bread, includes also the processing of meat for later use. After slaughtering, done by men because of the religious significance of this duty from which women are excluded, she cuts the meat into thin strips, called "zelzel", dries them in the sun to leather-like toughness, then stores them in the hut for the next feast, for use in the stew called "zelzel wot". Food -

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

492 second toes. Even the king rides bare-footed; and being used chiefly to mules, they are far inferior horsemen to the Arabs.

Price of Gold. Gold, at a medium, sells for 10 pataka
436 each wakea; or 10 derims, salt, at a medium 8 per pataka.
435 The piece (of salt), speaking of it identically, is called Kourman, but in estimation, or such a thing costs so many salts, they are called Amooli. These are the ordinary currency for the necessaries of life. For considerable purchases, gold is used; and there is great loss in cutting the wakea into derims, at least one in ten. The gold is got by
[316] washing the earth in water, in wooden dishes. The grains, that remain behind are put into a quill, melted down, and
[325] alloyed, probably by the Shangalla; for it is pale, and is never brought to market in its first form, but melted down into small rods, or ingots. In Joas's time a wakea was valued only at 8 patakas. Yasous Tanush, or the II. turned round, and reduced the Sennaar Shangalla; but they are now quite independant of Habbesh. Their fair is held at Buré in Damot.

804 *Weights and Measures.* The wakea (or ounce), in Abys-
436 sinia, is considered as 10 derims, or drams, and 12 ounces make a litir, or rotol (pound). At Gondar, the capital of all Abyssinia, the wakea is 6 drams, 40 grains, Troy weight English, and divided into 10 drams of 40 grains. The small money is salt bricks, dug out of the mines at Dancali, near the myrrh country. Every wakea, in ordinary times, gives from 72 to 76 salts. In 1769, the wakea was 80 salts, and June 15th, 1771, the wakea sold at 34, but there was a great difference in the size of the bricks. These are little or not at all liable to waste, as M. Montesquieu supposes. Abyssinian gold at Mocha is 15 or 16 patakas when the Sennaar gold is 22, because the Agows, &c. alloy it with silver.

At Masuah, the current money is the Venetian sequin, the pataka, or queen's dollar, and half-dollars. For small money are used grains of glass, called borjook, three of which make a chebir (Vid. Book V. Chap. ii.)

436 Corn sold at Masuah for four patakas the ardep, which
436 contains about 24 measures of the country. Coffee, six ro-
804 tol per pataka, sometimes ten, or even 15 rotol. Honey,

p. 161

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-62, Vol. 7 have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

APPENDIX

TO

BOOKS VII. AND VIII.

No. I.

Detached Articles from the several Journals and Common-place Books, containing additional information respecting Abyssinia *.

175 YASOUS TALLACK (the Great) subdued Lasta, and obliged it to pay 1000 ounces of gold per annum in tribute. It continued to pay till the war between Mariam Barea and Ras Michael, when each pretending to it, it became independant, and continues so at this present day, April 1770.

Harar is four days journey from Shoa, and seven from Aussa. It is farther inland, and a plain country. The chief has the title of Emir; and is frequently at war with Amha Yasous in Shoa, who is independant. The people are all Mahometans, called Turks by the Abyssinians.

317 Gold is found in the Shangalla's country in small lumps, is by them put into quills, and carried to Damot fair. This, at least, was the ancient custom when these barbarians sold their gold as necessity required. Since that time they have got scales and weights, and know, in general, the value.—The Agows are the purchasers, and adulterate it with silver;

* The paragraphs marked with N. B. by the Editor.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

317 one ounce to ten of gold, which gives it a very pale colour.

703 N. B. This observation is sufficiently confirmed by the colour of those links that still remain of the honorary gold chain conferred on Mr Bruce by the king of Abyssinia. These links are of a paler hue than a common guinea, rather coarsely made, and unpolished. Gold chains, called in Habbesh sunsuk, are a mark of dignity bestowed by the sovereign on the most meritorious persons in his army. It is usual to give a splendid suit of clothes at the same time, an Egyptian and Persian custom; vide Genesis, xli. 42. and Esther, viii. 15.

651 Wechne, in Belessen, is about 34 or 35 miles, a long day's journey from Emfras. There is paid, to maintain the royal family on the mountain, 250 ounces gold, and 730 cloths (this means webs of cotton cloth, called shuma). This is an old establishment. None are permitted to go up but the women carrying water. There was formerly a cistern, but it is now in ruins, and useless. There are near 300 persons there; and all the exiles are allowed to marry. Bacuffa escaped by help of his sister.

793 Extreme unction is unknown in Abyssinia; that is, the anointing with oil. However, when a person is attacked
792 with sickness, which threatens death, he often puts on a monk's hood, as a token that in case of recovery, he will abandon the world, and then receives the last sacrament, or rather he does so before putting it on; and it is generally the custom to distribute all his moveables to the churches, which the priests appropriate. These are traces of extreme unction. The great men ofen renounce the hood, and return to their former life.

792 N. B. The Abyssinian MS. histories are full of these instances, in which the great men, when disappointed in politics, retire to Waldubba, or other deserts, to live as monks. The distribution of goods and money made by the kings, when sick, to the churches, occurs in almost every reign. Before Yasous II. died, the Chronicle says, that he had given away every thing he had, in this way, except the crown on his head. When Joas was proclaimed, the Iteghe his grandmother wished to give a present to the poor, as usual at the begin-

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps [32] because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. Ornamen- [531] tation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric nature, in the wood. Wooden combs together with their [303] handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. Wood- [412] en mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. On [354] occasion, one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back- [407] rest of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint [231] firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 Horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

321 415 The Amhara warrior sought to have at least one very large horn containing mead (cattle was sometimes bred for large horns or bought from Galla), and smaller ones for gunpowder or for the staple mixture of salt and barbare, or nug paste. The narrow end is sealed with a wooden plug. In the past they were sometimes of buffalo horn, but now mostly of cow's horn. One observer noticed a striking similarity between this container and ancient Egyptian ones of smaller size, used to contain antimony for eye toilette.[65] [171]

Perhaps this may give a clue as to why the drinking utensils made of horn look so strikingly European, amid the other Amhara containers which are more African than Middle Eastern. Nearly every Amhara peasant has at least one large drinking cup of horn; besides the usual clay cups used for coffee. The large horn cup is used by the head of the house for barley beer. Churches usually have several, especially the "tewa" used at church feasts or memorial feasts such as tazkar. An average-sized one measures about 4-1/2 inches high, has a 5 inch diameter at the top, but only 1-1/2 inche diameter at the bottom. A church which has a large working retinue of dabtara and hangers-on, acolytes, etc., often makes a practice of giving one as a courtesy gift to deserving peasants at plowing time, with the blessings of the church for a good harvest.

324 412 The main stone utensil that men make for the house is the mano-type stone called "maj", usually selected from a river bed and further shaped so that the bottom is flat and the rounded top fits comfortably into the palm of the housewife when she grinds the grain. She does this by a forward and backward motion, not the more advanced rotary

65. Cohen, Marcel: Flagon Abyssin en corne...Tr, Paris 1920, pp.269-6.

576 is called "qämmash", an important etiquette. Its origin may stem from the well-known oriental pattern of protecting an important personage from being poisoned, and since the feudal lord is still imitated among the Amhara, even by peasants, the custom is still prevalent in rural areas, provincial towns, and even in Addis Ababa.

E. Utensils and Tools.

322 Whenever possible, the Amhara likes to utilize direct products of nature, such as natural shape of branches, branch forks, branches at the right angle (e.g.for adzes), gradual thickening of a branch of hardwood (e.g. for ax handles). Much time is spent in the bush looking for the right wood, for there is no carpentry on any developed level. Sawing is unknown. So is splitting of wood to prepare boards, so that laborious chopping away at a log from both sides would be necessary. Nailing and gluing is still not done in rural areas. To drill a hole in wood, the blacksmith is called and burns a hole with an iron poke. Oxhide strips are used for fastening.

412 415 Therefore there are very few wooden utensils. Spoons and forks are not used by the Amhara. During dinner, pieces of enjära are ripped from the edge, to serve as spoon and fork. Then the piece is used to fish out a morsel of meat and some of the sauce of the "wot". Iron knives are used at dinner time only at a feast of "brundo", raw beef, when a red morsel is cut off just in front of the teeth.

412 415 463 Preparations of tools and utensils fall into four categories of division of labor: (1) Work done by special-

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 [321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. [531] Ornamentation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric nature, in the wood. [303] Wooden combs together with their handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. [412] Wooden mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. [354] On occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back-rest of interlaced oxhide. [407] The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint firmly in place. [231] A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 Horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

326 563 [443] Another difficulty is that the Falasha, observing Sabbath on Saturday when the big markets are in operation, cannot market any surplus of iron products directly, even if they wanted to, and must use a middleman, usually a Muslim, who absorbs any extra profit that might accrue in town. Thus the economic significance of their craft remains entirely in the old pattern, and is not developing in a modern direction, which it might have as a result of recent Western contact, stimulation and tools. The Falasha are recasting every part of their own rifles except the barrel, and their womenfolk have attempted to make glass out of sand (with little success) and modern Yemenite clay incense burners (with more success).

C. Carpentry.

322 Carpentry has already been characterized as minimal, incidental, merely semi-occupational among the Amhara, and as a tangential task of the ironsmith toolmaker. At best, the carpenter ("tarabi") is a part-time specialist.

The riflestock, of wanza wood, made by the ironsmith, often leads to his being asked to do other special woodwork, e.g. saddlemaking. If he becomes proficient in it, he may do nothing else during part of the year, and then send the finished, wooden saddle to the faqi tanners for a leather cover. For his own labor he may charge as much as Eth$8.- a better profit than that achieved by the average ironsmith. Wanza wood (Cordia abyssinica) is also used for the legs of the "alga" bed, so that the

322 saddlemaker is usually an expert at lumbering. A well-made "korecha", wooden, skin-covered saddle, with adornements, made to order, may cost a total of Eth$25.-

D. Tanning

281 The consumption of leather articles among the Amhara is tremendous for a settled agricultural people. It is reminiscent of Hamitic-speaking tribes whose ecology is based on animal husbandry, and the technology of tanning and manufacture of leather articles is linked with that of North Africa. The ethnic group that does this specialized work in Amhara territory, the Faqi, were Cushitic (Hamitic) - speaking, and probably constitute an early group in residence in Ethiopia. Products consumed include cooking utensils especially for travelling, riding equipment, scabbards, shields, and formerly skin clothing (now worn only by itinerant monks).

281 563 797. The Faqi live in scattered hamlets of their own, the size of which is usually like the smaller Amhara ones: patrilocal residence, 5 to 6 huts at most, each occupied by a biological family. Until very recently, none of them were Coptic Christians since the Coptic priesthood considered these "pagans" on the same level as occupational hunters, too low to be "raised to Christianity". They spoke old-Cushitic languages such as Qemant and other Agau tongues, and gathered in remote tree-groves on top of hills for occasional religous worship similar to that of the "pagan" Galla. Now most of them speak or at least understand Amharic, and since 1942 some have become con-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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463 They are especially afraid of the "buda", evil eye concept,
754 of which Falashas are believed especially capable; also of
326 their supposed ability to turn themselves into real and magic hyenas at night.

This magic power, however, is believed to make their
[323] tools "strong", and the pottery of the Falasha womenfolk "hard to break", so that their wares are preferred by the Amhara, creating a monopoly for Falasha iron tools and pottery wherever Falasha hamlets are within a day's walking distance. In some areas there are itinerant Falasha smiths, whose womenfolk make pottery at the same time. They will live in a special guest hut at the edge of an Amhara hamlet.

463 Weaving is also done by Falashas, but they have no
563 monopoly on it, as Muslim Ethiopian weavers are believed
286 by the Amhara to turn out togas that are just as good. For many centuries Muslims were permitted to reside only in segregated sections of towns, such as "AddisAlem" of
[361] Gondar town. Though this prohibition has been lifted, most Ethiopian Muslims still reside in special quarters of towns, rarely in a rural hamlet on the Amhara plateau. They were not permitted to own land and no one would rent them any.

They see much more of the country trade routes, since it is they who do much of caravan trading, acting as guides, quartermasters and retail traders for Arab coreligionists who are the wholesalers, usually on routes leading to the Sudan, to Eritrea and to Somaliland. The Coptic Amhara consider the Ethiopian Muslims almost as foreign as the Arabs, even the descendants of Amhara who were forcefully

463 563 their erstwhile conquerors.

The majority of the Galla are still primitive, dress in skins, use iron spears since they have few rifles, and are "pagan" or slightly islamized, in provinces south of the Amhara provinces. Their participation in the economy is largely agricultural and pastoral, both honorable occupations in the Amhara view. Their low (though rising) social status is due to their conquest, the African living patterns in their home provinces, the difference in religion and in language, but not to their occupation.

The following crafts fall under the ethnic division of labor:

563 323 [462] A. Pottery-making

This occupation can also be classed under Division of Labor by Sex, since only women, mostly Falasha women, engage in it. In the provinces where no Falasha women are available, pottery is made by Gurage or by Galla women. The only time a Coptic Amhara woman prepares a rough utensil she fashions an unsymmetrical container out of mud coarsely mixed with straw or cowdung and left to dry in the sun without firing. Compared with that, the pottery made by women of the other ethnic groups, is indeed "professional".

323 But in fact even the best pottery made by the craftswomen must be considered primitive. It belongs to the category referred to by archeologists in other areas as "women home industry". The firing is of the "first level", i.e. below 600° Centigrade. No potter's wheel is used. Glazing and waterproofing are minimal and primitive; only

323 the beginning of a slip appears.

There are several puzzles in this situation. In ancient Yemen and Hadhramaut, whence much of Abyssinian culture came, pottery was made with a true slip. The potter's wheel was known from ancient times in many parts of Asia and later in much of North Africa, both areas of ancient contact with and influence on Abyssinia. Yet pottery-making even of the craftswomen in Abyssinia has [462] remained African to this day: it is considered an extension of preparation of food and therefore a strictly female occupation. However, one of the most primitive African methods, e.g. of some Nilotic tribes, who shape pottery from a crude lump of mud, is not used by the craftswomen, though the aforementioned Coptic Amhara housewife may use this method, considered unskilled, and therefore not ignoble.

The first step in pottery-making is the selection of different types of raw material. Three types are usually selected and blended in different proportions for the right consistency and, occasionally, color: Red clay "farafar", often containing iron ochre; sandy, fine clay from soil too poor for farming, "chencha", which is sometimes fired, ground, kneaded with water, dried and broken before use; black soil from fertile topsoil ("lamm") called "walka", often containing graphite. These are kneaded together with gradual additions of water. Next the woman selects a flat round plate of wood or metal to serve as the bottom support, outline and protection from dirt, for the pot about to be made.

823 The method of building up the pot is the spiral-coiling technique (resembling somewhat that of the Choctaw American Indians), strips coiling upward from the botton, as if in imitation of basketry. The woman rolls a thick sausage of the prepared clay between her palms, and presses each tightly, building up the sides of the pot in a spiral. Then she smoothes the sides with a small piece of bamboo, wood, wet corncob, leather rag or sherd of clay. Decorations are by simple incision of lines (if at all), parallel strokes made with a piece of wood or iron spike while the clay is still damp, after burnishing and rubbing has produced a tight and slightly shiny surface. The pottery is then dried in the sun, for 3 days.

The attempt at glazing of some pots, bowls and pitchers to be watertight when used in cooking, sometimes begins even before firing. Such a pot may be burnished with sundried dung, a process called "tärättäfa", which produces a thick and sticky surface, almost like a slip.

Firing is usually done not more than once a week. In preparation, some of the larger and deeper pots, where the sun does not penetrate well enough, may be pre-heated with hot charcoal ("käsäl"), placed inside the jar. Then all pottery is washed, dried again, and leaned neck on neck. After the big beer jars, the next biggest bowls, "daka", (used for fermenting tyeff flour in water) are stacked around them, then the cooking pots "dass"(for "wot" stew) which are smaller, and pitchers and drinking cups, if the space is not needed for the larger water-carrying pots. There are usually no more than 4 of the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

323 largest, thigh-high beer jars included in one such heap of pottery to be fired, but a dozen smaller pots may be included. Dry cowdung and branches of hardwood are stuffed in between the pottery and all around. Wind direction and strength is calculated from experience and observation, and when deemed right, the heap is fired. Sometimes the firing lasts only 1 to 2 hours, sometimes longer.

The finished product may be burnished smooth, in case of cooking pots, with the necklace of imported blue glass rings called "doqa". There are several methods of waterproofing pottery ("mamuashät"). The pot may be reheated on the hearth for 1/2 hour, then placed on the ground and cold milk quickly poured in and swished around for several minutes until the pot is cold. The milk is then thrown away. The silicon that has adhered to the heated cooking pot thus provides a partial, interior glazing. This glazing by animal product is considered better, by the craftswoman, than vegetable glaze. The latter is done by using yeast ("teffin") on a heated pot in place of milk. The large baking plate for enjara, the "megogo", is burnished with the caked remains of crushed nug-seed after the oil has been pressed out, the mass of compressed seed referred to as "yäqebye ar" (lit. excrement of butter). Before actual use, the megogo is further rubbed, this time by the housewife, with leaves of the "ketketa" bush (Dodonea viscosa).

Another method of the craftswomen is to paint on the resinous juice of the euphorbia (Euphorbia candelabrum trem), but this is done only at lower elevations.

323 The result of all of these methods is not a true glaze, rather a dull one of only partial efficiency.

It is interesting that these attempts at glazing are also used on tightly woven reed baskets, "qwaçha", waterproofed with "wägämit", skimmed milk, then smoked with "abalo" wood, or the odoroferous "mätänya" wood. This smoking out is also done to pottery, not only cooking pots but also the beer storage jars, "gan", and the waterpot, "madiga", though the wood used is "wanza". But this smoking out is the work of the housewife, not the craftswoman, for the purpose is to kill the sour smell rather than to aid the glazing. Amhara housewives do not glaze any pottery.

When a pot breaks it is no great calamity, for the pieces are ground up and mixed with raw clay in kneading to give the next pot a greater chance. The life of a pot may range from 2 weeks to 5 years, in the opinion of the craftswomen, who admit that no one can predict the life of a pot even in ordinary usage.

Two craftswomen usually work as a team. One, usually the younger, stronger but less experienced kneads the clay in a squatting position, while the older woman squats in the sun building up the pot or stands bent over, burnishing it. A big beer jar, the work of 2 days prior to firing, brings from 50 Ethiopian cents to Eth$1.-, depending on locality. The lesser price is more common in trade between hamlets that have long-established trade connections, while the higher price is common at big markets. The same price applies to 3 to 4 smaller pots.

Pottery is made during the entire dry season, from the months of Teqemt to Senye, interrupted only by the

323 harvest in the first month. Cash income from this occupation in the case of a diligent craftswoman can amount to Eth$50.-per year, which means at least 50 large beer jugs or at least 150 smaller kitchen pottery. Such a craftswoman is called "antäränya" or the general term for craftsman, "kayla" (which, however, is often considered an insult). She may be freed from other labors, particularly spinning, in her own household. But in general she considers it a sideline, for some cash income, or to please the landlord by supplying his household and tenants with pottery at very low prices.

323 443 Most Falasha craftswomen do not like to sell on the big market, despite the much better prices there. The reason they give is that they may face insults during the usual dickering that precedes purchase, and also that they do not wish to arouse the envy of their Coptic Amhara neighbors by accumulating wealth. Another reason is that the big markets take place invariably on Saturday, on which day the Sabbath-observing Falashas cannot go to market or trade, and the Muslim middleman would absorb the extra profit that comes from trading at the market. However, Falasha men do follow the latter alternative with their plowpoints.

323 This disinterest of Falasha craftswomen in developing their economic potentials has led to conservatism in regard to modern change. Though very curious about European pottery brought in the Italian occupation, particularly about shape and glazing, they did not adopt European methods, partly because of technical limitation of power and fuel as well as techniques, partly for the

●323 aforementioned social reasons. They can bake fired bricks, "shehla", but have no use or orders for them, and do not make them at present. They apply their artistic talents [346] to a tower-like crown, "gulelat", which they place on the top of the thatched roof of the Falasha synagogue, the "mesgid" (which has also the practical effect of preventing the penetration of water during the rain storms).

415 The vast majority of clay utensils produced by the craftswoman is used in the household. Many of them are small, not over 12 inches in diameter or height. Round forms predominate, especially spherical or semi-spherical bowls with a long or short neck. Nearly all have two handles on the side, for grasping and for pulling a rope through.

The simple baking plate for the daily enjara bread, the "megogo", in town called "metad", has already been mentioned. Placed on the hearth of three stones, it forms [354] a simple stove, and itself is topped by a somewhat conical ("moged") lid which fits snugly. 20" in diameter, 1-1/2" high, 1" thick, grain is also roasted on it.

There are numerous varieties of water pitchers, mostly pear-shaped, with long, stout necks. When full (about 15 liters), the Amhara women carry them on the back, and therefore a special loop is added by the craftswoman on the base of the neck, so that the rope can be drawn through it and around the chest, for added support. The most common, big water-pitcher of this kind is the "madiga", with a height of 20" of which 5" are spout, 14" at its greatest width, and a 5" width of the spout. It is

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

312 the downward side but is sloped on the up-hill side and therefore triangular in section. The filling-up of the empty space behind the wall, to the new terrace level, may be partly accomplished by hand but tends to be left to nature. During the rains, especially on the steeper slopes, there is a continuous downward movement of soil, which is arrested by the terrace walls and the pockets above them gradually fill up. In the course of centuries an immense amount of simple terracing of this kind has been done, the effect being to accentuate the existing irregularities of the steeper slopes. The landscape has certainly been greatly modified in this way, but it is often impossible to tell at first sight whether a given feature is natural, or partly or wholly due to terracing. It is obvious that such terracing has not only provided additional acreage for agriculture but also served the useful purpose of saving many steep slopes from excessive erosion. In several parts of Ethiopia, including this area, I have seen slopes under cultivation which were so steep that the soil, when loosened and disturbed, would slide away downhill. At first sight one would suppose that such slopes must be completely denuded after a few seasons' rain. The fact that this does not happen is due, I believe, to the vast abundance of stones in these soils, every one of which acts as a minute barrier arresting the flow of water and silt. Nevertheless such slopes, unless terraced, clearly cannot survive indefinitely under cultivation.

443 Surplus produce is brought in to the big weekly market at Debra Berhan
[487] which is both the commercial and the social centre of the whole district; all the main routes radiate from it. Every Saturday morning these routes are thronged with market-goers, who can be seen moving along in an almost continuous stream, the well-to-do mounted on mules, the majority on foot, some driving laden donkeys and pack-mules. The products of this countryside are few, and there is little food surplus, but some wheat and barley come to market, also eggs and chickens and a good deal of butter. Some honey (used in making the local mead or *tej*) comes in, and beeswax is collected for export. Firewood, a scarce commodity on the plateau, is carried in in quantity. *Gesho*, the fermenting agent, comes up from the gorges. There is plenty of earthenware, made on the plateau nearby. From the district of Menz to the north come excellent felt blankets and burnouses. Traders from farther afield bring salt from the desert, partly in the bars which used formerly to pass as currency, and raw cotton and spices from the eastern plains. Textiles and other imported goods now find their way to this market by lorry.

When, in the course of the afternoon, the market crowds begin to stream homewards, one may identify the few simple wares they have bought or bartered. Some have a bag or a bar of salt, some raw cotton for spinning or a piece of cotton cloth, some a fresh supply of coffee-beans, some a bottle of kerosene or a cake of soap. Many have acquired earthenware water-pots or
[323] cooking vessels; the large round platters (*matad*) 18 inches across, on which
[482] the local bread is baked, stand out conspicuously for they are always carried, for safety, on the head.

771 It still remains to describe the most potent of the influences which shape the life of the country-bred Amhara—that of the Church. The priests, of

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

539 and was always looking up intently and with concentration. One of his friends asked him, "What are you looking for?"

"*Mawcā*," replied the wit in his classic manner. [The literal meaning is "exit," i.e., either the exit from the trail on the tiring climb, or "the place where we emerge" from the female body.]

The Wit At Home. Home in his hut in Gondar, AG-H was one day at dusk lying on his bed.
[56] His wife had gone to the river to wash her private parts, as is the custom of the Amhara women at nightfall. Tired from the uphill climb from the valley, she rested before the hearth to dry herself, but dozed off. Soon AG-H heard a cannonade of farting, issuing from his half-conscious wife. He called out to her, "Where are you? Come to bed!"

Awakening, she said dazedly, "I am just drying myself."

To which he replied, "You are drying yourself so much that you are cracking apart."

[302] *A Woman's "Way."* [In accordance with ancient custom, women used to pluck out their pubic hair, rubbing ashes between their fingers to get a good grip while plucking.]

One day a girl student of AG-H was late for her lesson. Taking a quick short-cut across the back yard, she tumbled into the ash heap, soiling her lower toga and her legs with the ashes. She excused her appearance to her teacher, saying, "Oh, Master, I was so eager to come quickly, and now I have dirtied myself with ashes all over."

"That is *your way*," nodded AG-H.

Only much later did the girl learn that he had meant not only the wrong way she had come, but was referring to the fact that being smudged with ashes was the natural "way" for a woman.

[564] *The Pot Of Caste.* [The women of the Falasha caste are makers of pottery, a despised occupation among the Coptic Amhara, though much appreciated by the Amhara, who buy all their
[323] better pots from them.]

The wife of AG-H, quarreling with a certain woman, accused her of being of Falasha ancestry and that her mother had been a pottery-maker. One day that woman returned from the river valley, carrying a large, full pot of water on her back. She saw AG-H sitting in front of his hut, and decided to take the opportunity to complain to him about the taunts of his wife.

AG-H disliked being involved in the petty quarreling of the womenfolk, but he listened quietly. As she took leave, he patted her full clay pot and said, "*This* is your work."

She thought that he meant she should not quarrel with his wife, should instead attend to her tasks of fetching water, cooking, etc. But on further reflection what had he meant? Had he accused her of being a pottery-maker herself?

Jealousy Is Dangerous. AG-H was also notorious for his prowess in bed and his fickleness in love.

One day his wife had to go far down to a valley to fetch water, since the dry season had left only water holes in the river bed. She left him in charge of their baby. Taking the baby with him, he went to the hut of his current girl friend and spent the afternoon making passionate love. As it happened, this woman also had a baby about the same age. Dusk came rapidly, and AG-H knew that his wife would soon be back. In the hurry, he took the wrong baby.

A moment after his return his wife arrived, laden with water pot and firewood. When she beheld the baby of her current rival, she became very angry and said, "This thing is not my baby! Shall I throw it in the fire?"

Calm as ever, AG-H replied: "There is a fire also in the house of his mother."

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 776 many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

*565 776 753 [828] [845]

Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[8]

*565 776 [562]

Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

*565 754 754 787

The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

754 [262] [789] [323] 326 [554]

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

824 [283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called "aräg", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of [324] excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed [293] grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

[372] Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

[386] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

[222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by collecting, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Sircunia Abyssinica).

824 281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

321 415 The Amhara warrior sought to have at least one very large horn containing mead (cattle was sometimes bred for large horns or bought from Galla), and smaller ones for gunpowder or for the staple mixture of salt and barbare, or nug paste. The narrow end is sealed with a wooden plug. In the past they were sometimes of buffalo horn, but now mostly of cow's horn. One observer noticed a striking similarity between this container and ancient Egyptian ones of smaller size, used to contain antimony for eye toilette.[65]

[171]

Perhaps this may give a clue as to why the drinking utensils made of horn look so strikingly European, amid the other Amhara containers which are more African than Middle Eastern. Nearly every Amhara peasant has at least one large drinking cup of horn; besides the usual clay cups used for coffee. The large horn cup is used by the head of the house for barley beer. Churches usually have several, especially the "tewa" used at church feasts or memorial feasts such as tazkar. An average-sized one measures about 4-1/2 inches high, has a 5 inch diameter at the top, but only 1-1/2 inche diameter at the bottom. A church which has a large working retinue of dabtara and hangers-on, acolytes, etc., often makes a practice of giving one as a courtesy gift to deserving peasants at plowing time, with the blessings of the church for a good harvest.

324 412 The main stone utensil that men make for the house is the mano-type stone called "maj", usually selected from a river bed and further shaped so that the bottom is flat and the rounded top fits comfortably into the palm of the housewife when she grinds the grain. She does this by a forward and backward motion, not the more advanced rotary

65. Cohen, Marcel: Flagon Abyssin en corne. Tr. Paris 1920, pp.285-6.

324 motion, and the rotary quern of ancient Rome and Alexandria
412 is of course entirely unknown.

251 Bins for storage of grain are also made by men. The
333 two major types are the "gota", made of rings of sundried mud and straw, which are built up later inside the hut; and the "gotara" bin, made of a barrel-like skeleton of sticks, plastered with mud and left to harden in the sun. The former can, of course, be built higher, as much as 7 feet tall, while the latter is limited to the size of the door of the tuqul.

415 Gourds are widely raised as utensils, in line with the pattern of using natural products directly. Sometimes the gourds ("qel") grow on vines supported on the roof of the tuquol. When at full size, some are cut lengthwise so that each half represents a drinking cup with its own natural handle affixed. Travellers always carry these. They also carry gourds used as waterbottles ("wamara") with the top cut off and refixed to serve as a removable plug. Or, the narrowing top of a gourd is cut off and used by women while carding raw cotton on a bowstring. Artists of chiefs and feudal "great men" paint designs and scenes on gourds ("ankola") belonging to their patrons.

285 Basketry can be made by either men or women, often
415 by servants and ex-slaves, but since it is not considered specialized, there is no shame attached to this work. Both coiling and weaving techniques are used, the latter more often. Noteworthy is the frequent close weaving which results in watertight containers, further secured with hot milk and fumigating with gum woods. This method,

463 prestige involved is slight--occurring only if there is
464 kinfolk nearby shamed by such manual labor. It is on a social level with the gathering of kosso-bark by a poor Amhara woman.

463 Some farmers have a part-time specialty of fashion-
[324] ing the stone used as mano by the housewife when she grinds grain. They are called "wäqari". No shame is involved; it is considered like a hobby, like whittling away at wood.

[693 Some heads of farming families are adept at "talk-
554] ing well in court" for which they achieve great prestige--the major method of achieving prestige. They are called "täbäqa" lawyers, and not full-time specialists since all they can expect, if they win the case, is a bellyful of barley beer or an occasional gift, but they are guests of honor at the victory feasts and "men of reknown".

A large number of semi-specialists fall into the
[23] category of caretakers, "täbäqi". Cowherds and shepherds, if they are grown men not useful at anything else, are included in this category.

463 Part-time employment is found by the former feudal
265 chamberlain, "agafari", at big weddings of landholding peasants or in towns. They act as caterers, order the bread, meat, beer, mead, etc. They are experts at headwaiting, and know just whom to seat at what table or around which "mäsob", according to rank, and they indicate to each servant to whom to serve beer and to whom the more expensive and more noble mead. This was

293 story. Later ones imitate European crowns.
778 In parades tall crosses of bright metal are carried, Like most Abyssinian priestly hand crosses, they are so ornamented with further cross designs that they appear to the Abyssinian as "perforated"; hence the common expression "perforated as the cross" (where a Westerner would use the symbol of the sieve). Priests and monks always carry a handcross, which they hold out to a passing acquaintance to kiss, the proper greeting toward clergy, even on ordinary days. Smaller crosses are [789] used by the public as amulets against evil spirits. The larger crosses, with their ornamental supports, forming perforated circles and squares, sometimes contain engraved verses. The method of casting is the "cire perdue", [325] which is also used to cast the concave tops of the "maqomya" crutch. In front of old churches, resonant stones [534] are suspended from poles, and when struck, act as bells to summon for the service.

778 Other metal church utensils include the censers in which incense is burned during the services, swung by the officiating priest. They may be of brass, silver, iron, even clay in poorer churches. They are often equipped with numerous small bells. Very common is [534] the sistrum, called "sänassel" (onomatopoetic), a rattle instrument reminiscent of ancient Egypt, usually of brass, 8 inches long, with a straight wooden handle, the metal frame cast in "cire perdue", often by Falasha smiths. The frame is perforated like a cross. The tinkling disks, [177] which glide along the cross-wire between the sides of the frame

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Buddleia, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

492 second toes. Even the king rides bare-footed; and being used chiefly to mules, they are far inferior horsemen to the Arabs.

Price of Gold. Gold, at a medium, sells for 10 pataka
436 each wakea; or 10 derims, salt, at a medium 8 per pataka.
435 The piece (of salt), speaking of it identically, is called Kourman, but in estimation, or such a thing costs so many salts, they are called Amooli. These are the ordinary currency for the necessaries of life. For considerable purchases, gold is used; and there is great loss in cutting the wakea into derims, at least one in ten. The gold is got by
[316] washing the earth in water, in wooden dishes. The grains, that remain behind are put into a quill, melted down, and
[325] alloyed, probably by the Shangalla; for it is pale, and is never brought to market in its first form, but melted down into small rods, or ingots. In Joas's time a wakea was valued only at 8 patakas. Yasous Tanush, or the II. turned round, and reduced the Sennaar Shangalla; but they are now quite independant of Habbesh. Their fair is held at Buré in Damot.

804 *Weights and Measures.* The wakea (or ounce), in Abyssinia, is considered as 10 derims, or drams, and 12 ounces
436 make a litir, or rotol (pound). At Gondar, the capital of all Abyssinia, the wakea is 6 drams, 40 grains, Troy weight English, and divided into 10 drams of 40 grains. The small money is salt bricks, dug out of the mines at Dancali, near the myrrh country. Every wakea, in ordinary times, gives from 72 to 76 salts. In 1769, the wakea was 80 salts, and June 15th, 1771, the wakea sold at 34, but there was a great difference in the size of the bricks. These are little or not at all liable to waste, as M. Montesquieu supposes. Abyssinian gold at Mocha is 15 or 16 patakas when the Sennaar gold is 22, because the Agows, &c. alloy it with silver.

At Masuah, the current money is the Venetian sequin, the pataka, or queen's dollar, and half-dollars. For small money are used grains of glass, called borjook, three of which make a chebir (Vid. Book V. Chap. ii.)

Corn sold at Masuah for four patakas the ardep, which
436 contains about 24 measures of the country. Coffee, six ro-
804 tol per pataka, sometimes ten, or even 15 rotol. Honey,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

5 / *Tradition and Modernization*

THE GENIUS OF AMHARA CULTURE

The Amhara as a whole are not much given to aesthetic concerns. They are 181
practical-minded peasants, austere religionists, and spirited warriors. Their [517]
interests and achievements as a nation are chiefly in the spheres of military
activity and government. And yet, if we seek some theme with which to gain 181
an entree into the spirit of their society and culture, we will do well to attend 538
to the sphere of poetry. For it is a poetic phenomenon—that represented by
the title of this book—which constitutes both a key to the genius of Amhara
culture and a highly distinctive Amhara contribution to Ethiopian culture.

Sam-ennā warq ("wax and gold") is the formula used by the Amhara to 538
symbolize their favorite form of verse. It is a form built of two semantic
layers. The apparent, figurative meaning of the words is called "wax"; their [196]
more or less hidden actual significance is the "gold."

In its generic sense, the expression *sam-ennā warq* refers to a number of
poetic figures which embody this twofold meaning. The use of such figures
distinguishes the Amhara equivalent of true poetry from ordinary verse, in
which everyday language is merely embellished with rhyme and rhythm. In [197]
the genre known as *qenē*, the original and more elegant kind of *sam-ennā*
warq poetry, the lines are composed in Ge'ez and depend primarily on re-
ligious symbolism. But *sam-ennā warq* constructions also appear in some
types of secular verse in the vernacular Amharic and, indeed, at times inform
Amharic conversation.

Masters of the art of *qenē* composition have analyzed these poetic figures 538
into about a dozen different types.[4] *Sam-ennā warq* in its more specific sense 19
refers to one of these types of figures—the prototype of them all. It consists
of an explicit comparison in which the subjects being compared—the wax
and gold—are presented in apposition, while their predicates are rendered
jointly by a single verb which carries both a wax and a gold meaning. (This [325]
terminology is derived from the work of the goldsmith, who constructs a clay
mold around a form created in wax and then, draining the wax, pours the
molten gold into that form.) So, for example, if the poet's aim is to praise a
hero like Emperor Menelik, he creates a wax model, like "the lion," in terms
of whose actions the gold, Menelik, is depicted: "The lion Menelik crushed
the wolf Italy."[5]

Keeping this dual imagery consistent throughout the stanza is a primary
rule of wax-and-gold composition. A poet who mixes his metaphors is some-
times rebuked with the epithet "hermaphrodite." The following example
presents an Amharic couplet which properly embodies the *sam-ennā warq* [539]
figure:

Etsa balas balto addām kanfareshe
Madhānē alam lebē tasaqala-leshe.

134 carried down the Blue Nile into Egypt. In Ethiopia, irrigation canals make use of it.

[311] (3) The remaining, eroded, red loam soil, of little fertility. This is left to the bush or is used for grazing.[5]

135 There is little information on the mineral wealth of Ethiopia, since whatever there is, particularly gold, has been kept from the knowledge of outsiders. The Italians had merely begun their surveys when they had to leave the country. Salt has always been a major item of import from the border lowlands in the east to the highland plateau. Numerous volcanic mineral springs, used for healing since ancient times, exist in many plateau districts.

[326] Since ancient times, gold from the sand gravels of Wollega and southern provinces was sold in small nuggets, or fashioned by goldsmiths into rings and sold by weight. It is now a monopoly of the central government; goldsmiths have been drawn to Addis Ababa, where they now use modern methods.

D. Flora, Fauna: their significance in Ethiopian Ecology.

137 The generosity of nature on the highland plateau has provided a basis for human subsistence with little effort. In addition to a healthful climate and fertile soil, resources of vegetation and animal life are abundant.

137 Economic botanists have conducted studies which indicate
241 that the highlands of Ethiopia contain a number of indigenous varieties of cultivated cereals and legumes. Some are of the opinion that these highlands even formed one of the PRIMARY

5. Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook of Ethiopia, 1954, p. 127-8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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B. THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR.

Division of labor according to the ethnic origin of of the worker is the most distinctly organized division among the Amhara. This is based on the attitude of the Amhara that labor (especially skilled labor and manual labor) is dishonorable. This attitude is reinforced by the close kinship ties which prevent a cultural deviant from shaming the members of his family by working in the district where they are known. It also reinforces the the ethnic boundary lines, and forces the non-Amhara, non-Coptic, working ethnic groups to live within the circle of their own kinfik, religious groups, and hamlets.

[461]

One of the most despised is the class of the Faqi, the tanners, who speak old-Cushitic languages such as Agau, are considered "pagans" in religion, and are associated by their trade with the hunters, the lowest class.

[281 191]

On a slightly higher level are the ironsmiths, usually of Falasha, who practice Mosaic Judaism, used to speak Quarinya, an old-Cushitic language, but use the same Semitic Geez language as the Copts in their religious worship and biblical liturgy.

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This use of Geez by the Falasha is puzzling to the Coptic priests, and brings about a sort of grudging respect for the Falasha, which somewhat elevates their status above that of the tanners. But they are suspected of practicing black magic in connection with their smithing of iron. Patrons take magic precautions to counteract all sorts of magic bewitchment by the Falashas whenever they have contact with them.

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463 They are especially afraid of the "buda", evil eye concept,
754 of which Falashas are believed especially capable; also of
326 their supposed ability to turn themselves into real and magic hyenas at night.

This magic power, however, is believed to make their
[323] tools "strong", and the pottery of the Falasha womenfolk "hard to break", so that their wares are preferred by the Amhara, creating a monopoly for Falasha iron tools and pottery wherever Falasha hamlets are within a day's walking distance. In some areas there are itinerant Falasha smiths, whose womenfolk make pottery at the same time. They will live in a special guest hut at the edge of an Amhara hamlet.

463 Weaving is also done by Falashas, but they have no
563 monopoly on it, as Muslim Ethiopian weavers are believed
286 by the Amhara to turn out togas that are just as good. For many centuries Muslims were permitted to reside only in segregated sections of towns, such as "AddisAlem" of
[361] Gondar town. Though this prohibition has been lifted, most Ethiopian Muslims still reside in special quarters of towns, rarely in a rural hamlet on the Amhara plateau. They were not permitted to own land and no one would rent them any.

They see much more of the country trade routes, since it is they who do much of caravan trading, acting as guides, quartermasters and retail traders for Arab coreligionists who are the wholesalers, usually on routes leading to the Sudan, to Eritrea and to Somaliland. The Coptic Amhara consider the Ethiopian Muslims almost as foreign as the Arabs, even the descendants of Amhara who were forcefully

415 housewives prefer a much larger variety, "mägäfäl", for the family "wot", or, for small-scale cooking the common "dest", or "mamwashät". This is 4-1/2" high, sometimes with two vertically separated compartments for different foods, e.g. peppery meat stew and vegetables. It is usually the blackest in color of all pots. A similar small pot, "mächit" is used for cooking fish.

The traditional coffeepot, called "kuskus" or "kuskushet" (onomatopoetic), is shaped like a madiga, but less than half its size, and has a short and narrower spout. Another pitcher does resemble a European bowl-coffee pot in shape, with a long, bent, narrow spout. This is the one-handled "manqurqoriya" (onomatopoetic), called "jäbäna" in Shoa and "gämbo" in Cushitic, used to pour barley beer into individual cups, holding at most 15 berelle. This pouring was the special occupation of servants called "gämbonya" in elaborate feudal households, and he did nothing else but carry the "gambo" or barley beer on military expeditions with his master. This special occupation has recently fallen into disuse but is well remembered by the nostalgic.

B. Smithing

326 Of all specialized, manual occupations, smithcraft involves the largest team, five able bodied men who, however, can interchange their roles. A team of five is necessary because of the greater use of musclepower and greater need for cooperation is this occupation. But, apart from the former specialist in weapon-making, the technological

326 achievement even of the smith remains comparatively primitive and not only is there no further sub-specialization, but the smith also does whatever carpentry is tangential to his occupation.

The following roles are involved:

2 men to hold the piece of hot iron ("berät") with iron tongs ("fächäl"),

1 man to hammer the iron into shape with a heavy iron hammer,

1 man to operate the twin bellows of goatskin ("wänäf"), one hand moving away from the fire and the other going down,

1 man to coordinate, supervise, and relieve one of the others if he tires, so that the operation is not interrupted.

In some parts of Ethiopia where iron ores occur, the ore was smelted and resmelted to a slaky, spongy, carbon-poor raw material that must be hammered and heated many times before use. This has become rarer until today all the iron used by ironsmiths is scrap, formerly imported from Eritrea and the Sudan, but now available in large quantities where Italian military and civilian machinery remained behind and is being used. Even the anvil, formerly a flat rock, is now often an iron European one, as are the heavy hammers, tongs, etc. Only the bellows is still traditional. It is of the hose type, consisting of a complete goatskin tied up at head and 3 legs, with a lengthy slit on 1 rear quarter (or the legs are tied up and the slit used at neck). When the bellows is extended, air enters into the spread slit. This is closed by hand

326 during the downward stroke, the compression, when the air is pressed through the built-in pipe(or a horn inserted in the neck) into the nozzle to the fire at the other end. There are two such bellows in the operation, one being extended while the other is being compressed with the other hand.

412 Agricultural tools are the major products of the smith. Sickles ("mached") resemble European ones but are smaller and not curved as far. They are teethed somewhat roughly. In case of thick, wooden stalks such as mashella (sorghum) maize and other tall stalks, the sickle is used at the bottom, while other grains, whose stalks are more useful for thatching, etc. are cut at the top just beneath the ear. To cut branches off trees, etc., a billhock, machete-type ("gajam") hacking knife is used, which resembles an oversize sickle but has no teeth.

A big axe ("fas") is used to cut trees, but a more common, smaller hatchet, "mätrabiya", is used to cut deadwood for fuel and other uses. When this grows dull, the owner takes it to the smith who cuts it down and makes an adze of it, after seeking a properly-shaped, angle-formed wooden handle with a knoll at the elbow, to fit the iron adze-blade into. This adze is much used in digging, scraping, hoeing and harrowing the soil after seeding.

The smith also makes the sharp iron point for the digging stick used on steep slopes, especially on the "dega" upland where terrace farming is impractical, or to help break up new or long-fallow soil, using the digging stick as a lever. It is called "ankasē" or "doma". On

412 ly by the ladies. An awl ("wäsfe") is used in basket-making and umbrella-weaving. A small chisel ("mesar") may be a more recent introduction, but, like the awl and larger items, is nonetheless made by the (Falasha) smith. [232] Burning irons for burning out sores on the backs of mules and donkeys are also made by the ironsmith.

326 The ironsmith, usually Falasha in ethnic identification, does not usually do silversmithing. This is done in urban areas or big markets usually by Muslim silversmiths. The silver is smithed from Maria Theresa thalers, and the smith may keep as much as 2/3 of the "raw material" for himself. As in the case of most other marketable tools and utensils, the product of the silversmith is made on order only, though increasingly there are traders with chests full of silver filigree earspoons, crosses, rings, etc., ready for sale to officials, travellers, and others with ready cash. In the past, silversmiths using imported coins, and goldsmiths using Ethiopian mined gold nuggets, were to found primarily attached to the tent city of the king at his capital. Casting is done on the principle of cire perdue, a form of wax in clay.

411 Weapons were made also in connection with the feudal military organization, which required the craftsman to follow wherever the armed bands of the warlords went in raids or new settlements, serving as a kind or ordinance, and always on call. Rifles in Abyssinia date back over 300 years, handed down as family property, the stocks replaced time and again with tough, white wood, "wanza" (Cordia abyssinica). Each soldier carried gunpowder in

411 A safer version of the throwing spear, with dull or no point, is used by the young men during their mock battle and chase at the "gänna" feast (Christmas).

326 435 The economic aspects of smithcraft could provide the smith with considerable income, since the Amhara peasants are in regular need, and since the Falasha smiths have a monopoly due to the suspicions of the magic correlation which keep Amhara from the craft. But in fact the income is not large. A team of rural smiths, 5 men, receive only Eth$1.50 for their labor in making a plowpoint, if the customer brings his own scrap, double that if the smiths have to supply it. The somewhat bigger "summer plow" costs somewhat more. The customer usually waits in a special hut of the hamlet of the smiths, and must be provided with grain and other necessities, meanwhile. Thus, while an individual smith may earn as much as Eth$400.- from his craft in a year, the additional food bill may be Eth$300.-, and most of the earnings will go to pay the rent on his land, of which he farms less than the average peasant.

Even a well-made plowpoint dulls after about 10 years. Then it is brought back and the smith cuts it down to an axe ("mäteräbiya") for only 50¢ Eth. When that dulls, he cuts it down further to a slightly smaller adze ("mäqofäriya") for half that sum.

326 563 The human organization of smithcraft, particularly in the Amhara area where the Falasha are the smiths, presents peculiar problems and patterns. Where no Falasha hamlets are near, the smithing is done by itinerant Fa-

326 lasha smiths, whose women make pottery at the same time.
563 This arrangement is not liked by the Falasha because of their religious obligations, even though they reside in a special guest hut, slaughter their own sheep and use their own utensils while at work for a distant Amhara hamlet. For they rest on Saturday, work on Sunday, and the more traditional among them have to undergo elaborate purification ceremonies upon their return home.

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This alternate, itinerant pattern probably developed during recent centuries when feudal warlords forced them to accompany their troops as ordnance, at any time, often during their entire lifetimes. This continued as late as the 1920's, when Ras Gugsa still ruled the province of Begemdir (Gondar). Since Menelik's conquest of distant Galla lands, in the late 19th century, Falasha smiths have been carried off farther than ever, and sometimes never again seen by their families. Ras Gugsa wanted to please Menelik in his Amharization program in the south, and ordered Coptic churches built by the Falashas in "pagan" or Muslim Galla areas, when their wartime duties were largely over. Some were given Shanqalla females to replace their own distant families. A few rose to the position of "bäjirond" (treasurer) and were given land property in lieu of salary. Thus an exception was made for these individuals, for Falashas were not permitted to purchase land, on condition that their offspring carry on the same services in the feudal armies. Now that these services have been abrogated, there are still a few land-holding Falasha families, the descendants of army-ordnance Falasha smiths.

326 563 [443] Another difficulty is that the Falasha, observing Sabbath on Saturday when the big markets are in operation, cannot market any surplus of iron products directly, even if they wanted to, and must use a middleman, usually a Muslim, who absorbs any extra profit that might accrue in town. Thus the economic significance of their craft remains entirely in the old pattern, and is not developing in a modern direction, which it might have as a result of recent Western contact, stimulation and tools. The Falasha are recasting every part of their own rifles except the barrel, and their womenfolk have attempted to make glass out of sand (with little success) and modern Yemenite clay incense burners (with more success).

C. Carpentry.

322 Carpentry has already been characterized as minimal, incidental, merely semi-occupational among the Amhara, and as a tangential task of the ironsmith toolmaker. At best, the carpenter ("ṭarabi") is a part-time specialist.

The riflestock, of wanza wood, made by the ironsmith, often leads to his being asked to do other special woodwork, e.g. saddlemaking. If he becomes proficient in it, he may do nothing else during part of the year, and then send the finished, wooden saddle to the faqi tanners for a leather cover. For his own labor he may charge as much as Eth$8.- a better profit than that achieved by the average ironsmith. Wanza wood (Cordia abyssinica) is also used for the legs of the "alga" bed, so that the

565 ("chäwa") of Amhara ancestry ("attentam"); and the "gabbar" sharecropper on feudal land, who is regarded as of doubtful ancestry (part-slave, or part-Galla ethnic), who is referred to as "rustic" ("balagär). While the former, usually descended from warriors who were given land many generations ago, considers himself inferior only to nobility and higher church officials, the latter occupies the broad bottom base of the Amhara social pyramid. The proverb says of the rustic "gabbar":

[539] "He who honors a gabbar
will be despised by him ".

In fact there are not many who might honor a gabbar, except for some ethnic laborers and ex-slaves, both of whom occupy somewhat of an outcast position.

c) The Ethnic Classes

563 463 565 The ethnic skilled-labor class does not usually consider itself inferior to the gabbar class. This is especially true if the particular ethnic group has a non-material culture or subculture of its own, notably the Falashas who observe Mosaic Judaism.

The factor of fear of a skilled occupation, the practitioners of which are called "täbib" (lit. "knowing one ", i.e to whom secrets are revealed), enters into the class stratification. It attaches an aura of untouchability to certain occupational classes, especially if reinforced by ethnic or religious difference.

563 326 754 This combination of factors applies to the smithcraft, the "mayla", who are suspected of witchcraft, of being

563 326 754 able to turn themselves into "buda" hyenas, and of having learned their craft from the "buda" evil spirit. Since the smiths in the old-Amhara areas are mostly Falashas, whose formal religious worship is never observed by Coptic Amhara, the Falasha smith is feared and [412] suspected of black magic. At the same time, the iron tools produced by the Falasha are much prized, not only on account of their material utility but on account of their supposed supernatural strength, endurance and "secretly revealed" workmanship. Even today, the provincial peasant will insist on obtaining his plowpoint or adze from a "real" Falasha.

563 326 The Falashas practice endogamy, as do the Coptic Amhara. But in the towns where increased contact occasionally begins to attenuate the old rules, individuals of low prestige in both groups do sometimes marry, which [797] usually results in the conversion of the Falasha partner to the majority religion. Also due to modern contact, it is beginning to happen that a Falasha teaches his craft to a non-Falasha, but the peasants often reject the output of the latter on the grounds that it isn't a "really strong, genuine Falasha article".

563 281 Somewhat similar untouchability attaches to the tanners, who are usually of local pre-Amharic, (Cushitic, e.g. Agau) descent, often still speak their ancient tongues, and until recently were never converted to Coptic Christianity. As traditionally "conquered" peoples, they are not "attentam", and Amhara endogamous rules are all against them. The stigma against them seems to

754 The Amhara belief in buda has been very troublesome for the
563 Falashas, for they are believed to have inherited the practice of sorcery from their fathers along with the craft of ironsmithing. Thus, the Falashas are blamed for individual cases of magical "eating" as well as for epidemics. Such accusations have repeatedly led to "sorcerer-killings". When an Amhara patient dreams that a certain Falasha is "eating" him, he sometimes gathers his kinfolk for a sudden attack on a Falasha hamlet, demanding that the particular "sorcerer" be handed over to them. In 1936, when the country was in turmoil following the Italian invasion, Falashas of one district were so plagued by buda persecutions that they evacuated their hamlets there and moved closer to the town of Gondar, though keeping a half day's distance from the town itself in line with their tradition of self-segregation(based on their religious particularism). Even now Falashas in their hamlets keep loaded rifles handy all night.

326 What happens when a non-Falasha learns the trade of ironsmithing,
563 e.g. a Gurage, which happens near Addis Ababa where no Falasha hamlets exist? He dies not become a "kayla" (ironsmith; this term is considered insulting); he is not regarded as a potential buda, because he has not inherited the trade. But, his handiwork is suspect as "unprofessional"! It is called "yärägä sera" (work of a "räga", unprofessional), which indicates that his customers are likely to hold a low opinion of the quality of his product and the endurance of his tools in those areas where Falasha-made articles are readily available. The latter is not true where no Falasha hamlets exist, so that Gurage work is appreciated near Addis Ababa.

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What happens when a Falasha gives up his Judaic religion and converts to Christianity? Does that free him from being suspected of buda? Only to a slight degree, for his Amhara neighbors refuse to forget his ancestry. In case of conversion, the Falasha becomes an outcast from his own people and usually moves to town. Only an ex-slave or a very poor Coptic woman will marry him. In the latter case, his in-laws believe that his kinship ties are still stronger than his new religion. Thus, if they have him teach them his ironsmithing trade, they believe he will not teach it properly to his affinal relatives. He can never become deacon or priest.

The buda-ironsmithing syndrome of the kayla seems based, in the Amhara mind, on the idea that a very strong power, namely the evil eye spirit, is necessary to accomplish sound work in ironsmithing. To remain powerful, the buda-ironsmith is regarded by the Amhara as requiring blood from time to time, otherwise his product, the iron plowpoint, will not stand wear and tear and the spear will break.

What happens to a Falasha who gives up his kayla trade? The stigma will remain on him, where his family is known. Therefore, some Falashas have migrated and tried to change their trade. This avoidance has not helped at all as long as they remain Falasha in religion. Those who have taken the step of conversion (e.g. as result of Protestant missionary activity in the lat 19th century) are still whispered about as Falashas by their Amhara neighbors and their social and marital associations are largely limited to other ex-Falasha, ex-ironsmith people. Assimilation has not solved the problem of ridding themselves of buda suspicion by the Coptic Amhara, though it has reduced direct, individual accusations of sorcery.

578 In the new courts established by the central government in
689 the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

326 How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda -
754 Falasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting
563 that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Falashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despising of this manual craft onto the Falashas and believe that Falasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passersby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces
[71] of the supernatural. This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Amont the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous. Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

e. <u>"Buda" doctors past and present</u>

756 While the aforementioned dabtara is the most commonly
793 called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1963 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 776 many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

*565 776 [562] Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[8]

*565 754 787 Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

*565 754 [262] [189] [323] [326] [354] The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

101 131 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has
779 been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries.
[241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively
[463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm-
[286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga
[443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of
[562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin-
[423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil-
[326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields
[286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha
[162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority
[361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

632
563 bar maids.
[463]
[562] A third, numerically significant minority have come from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even
[144] though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly
[779] negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are
[647] non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations
[562] also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly
[464] by girls and women working as servants for the less af-
[192] fluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Nilotes living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for
[326] sale in the town's daily wood market (sir gabiya). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

632
621 Ward and Town. Gondar's residents divide the town

[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("bariya").

324 motion, and the rotary quern of ancient Rome and Alexandria
412 is of course entirely unknown.

251 Bins for storage of grain are also made by men. The
333 two major types are the "gota", made of rings of sundried mud and straw, which are built up later inside the hut; and the "gotäre" bin, made of a barrel-like skeleton of sticks, plastered with mud and left to harden in the sun. The former can, of course, be built higher, as much as 7 feet tall, while the latter is limited to the size of the door of the tuqul.

415 Gourds are widely raised as utensils, in line with the pattern of using natural products directly. Sometimes the gourds ("qel") grow on vines supported on the roof of the tuquol. When at full size, some are cut lengthwise so that each half represents a drinking cup with its own natural handle affixed. Travellers always carry these. They also carry gourds used as waterbottles ("wamära") with the top cut off and refixed to serve as a removable plug. Or, the narrowing top of a gourd is cut off and used by women while carding raw cotton on a bowstring. Artists of chiefs and feudal "great men" paint designs and scenes on gourds ("ankola") belonging to their patrons.

285 Basketry can be made by either men or women, often
415 by servants and ex-slaves, but since it is not considered specialized, there is no shame attached to this work. Both coiling and weaving techniques are used, the latter more often. Noteworthy is the frequent close weaving which results in watertight containers, further secured with hot milk and fumigating with gum woods. This method,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century. 181 175*

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38] 175* 633 [643]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39] 175* 633 361 [333]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē. [565] [351]

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna,* an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables. [792] [778]

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the 175* 633 361 563 [186] [576]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 14.—*A group of shepherds*

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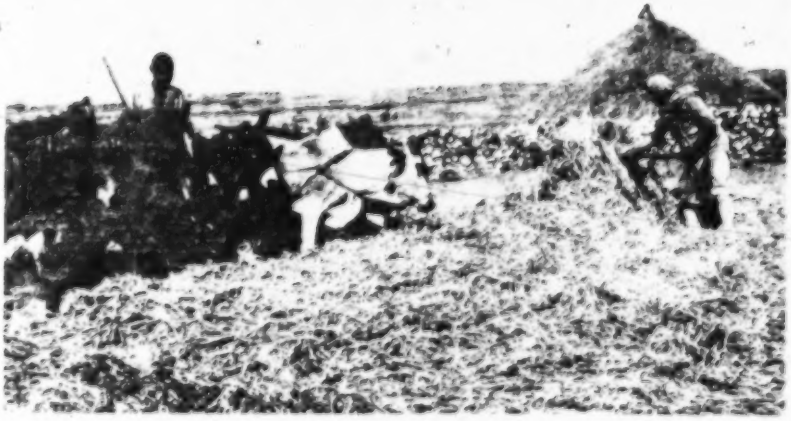

FIG. 15.—*Threshing time*

[P.78-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

*175 chant"), *qenē*, and *tergum* ("interpretation")—is said to have received its
643 definitive organization.
633
517 Dāwit III appears to have had a pronounced interest in Amharic folk song, for the more perfect enjoyment of which he built a special hall in the imperial compound. Because of this he has been called "Dāwit the Singer"—no term of praise in a land where minstrelsy is looked down on and where serious deportment is expected of royalty. Actually, this epithet, with its connotation of "playboy," was not deserved. Dāwit was a religious man, and in his brief reign built two churches. Knowledgeable Gondarēs today insist that, at first, even the priests were happy to join him in the amusement hall to listen to the one-stringed fiddles and the witty songs. Only after Dāwit's partiality to the
[798] Unctionist doctrine (that the humanity of Christ was made divine through the unction of the Holy Spirit) led him to persecute the Unionist clergy (who hold that humanity and divinity are blended in the single nature of Christ) did they abuse his music hall and tarnish his name.[7]

[341] Interest in architecture was revived by Bakāffā. He constructed a long U-shaped castle which, together with the new castle of his Empress Mantuāb, completed the major complex of buildings in Gondar. Mantuāb's castle is
[532] noted for bas-reliefs of the Ethiopian Cross, while her other castle at nearby Qusquam is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting saints and animals as well.

The tastes of Iyāsu II were especially refined. He cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He built a large and handsome church. He began to construct a palace, in the lavish
[344] decoration of which he took a personal interest. Budge writes of this:

> A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the walls of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts . . . with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. . . . Iyāsu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen.[8]

*175 The decline of imperial power at Gondar after Iyāsu II did not produce a
633 slackening of the cultural activities that had been concentrated there. During
517 the reign of Takla Hāymānot II (1769–77), for example, when the actual
[643] power at Gondar was in the hands of a lord from Tigre, seven more churches were built. One of these, Ba'ātā Māryām, eventually became one of the most
[874] famous schools for the teaching of *aquāquām* ("religious dance"), and in its heyday boasted 276 masters. Another, Abi Egzi, became noted for instruction in *tergum*, and is still a leading school for such studies.

[538] The composition of verse, in forms which had become canonized during the early Gondar period, continued to flourish. As political turmoil often

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 805 796 822 787 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [181] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 181 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 346 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services. 565* 346 341 181 796 822 [778]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery. 565* 822 181 361 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order. 565* 822 181 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities. 565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable 565* 156 157 [577]

443 369 press to more permanent quarters. Arabs set up more permanent stalls at the market. Girls "between marriages" set up their "hotel services" in makeshift shacks, featuring an imported double bed, and foods like the housewife makes at home, including daily fresh beer. A bizarre variety of trade goods pours in, of foreign or domestic origin. Finally, the government sets up an elementary school-- the most recent development, usually post-1942.

B. Shelter: The Amhara Hut.

342 The Amhara circular hut of wattle and daub, with its overhanging roof to carry off the rains, is called "tuqul" (now more often "sar byet", i.e. thatched house; in some districts, "gojo"). It does not differ basically from the typical habitation of the Cushitic-speaking Galla, of cen- [84] tral Ethiopia. But further south several distinctly different types are encountered, following ethno-linguistic and tribal lines.

The "tuqul" may contain one room or two, through an interior separation or special elevation. It usually houses both the biological family of procreation and their more important livestock which are brought in at night for fear of hyenas. Tuquls in more elaborate hamlets include special storage tuquls, a kitchen tuqul, and even a guest tuqul which may double as extra storage space for the largest beer jars. During the rainy season, when temperatures, especially at night, drop considerably, the family huddles closely around the central fireplace inside the tuqul, and in that 3-month season the tuqul can be considered overcrow-

342 ded and especially unsanitary. But during most of the year nearly all activities during the 12 to 13 hours of daylight are carried on outside. After each rainy season the roof and walls are inspected for damage from heavy rain, hail and tornadoes, and, with repairs, a good tuqul can last twenty years.

The hut-building season begins usually a few months after the rainy season is over, in the month of Hedar, after the major harvest of cereals has been gathered and threshed. A tuqul is usually built in stages, interrupted by other chores. Since there is no danger of rain, the beams, saplings, withes, thatch grass can be selected from forest and bush at leisure, and left on the spot selected. But when a marriage approaches, especially during the main "mar-
[476] riage season", the entire process can be speeded up to little over a week; and if there are not enough hands in one hamlet, other kinsmen and friends can be invited to the hut-building-party, the host supplying daily spiced meat stew, barley beer, etc., thus attracting as many as twenty men.

[361] The first step is to select a location that will blend into the landscape and thus be best protected from wind, driving rain, tornado twisters. Cypresses, which always surround a church on the hilltop, are utilized as partial windbreaks for tuquls of a hamlet just below.

The circular ground floor for the hut, usually about 20 feet in, is measured off by means of a central stick and a rope. The stick indicates where the central, roof-supporting post will be, and the circle indicates the walls. Both the selection of location and the measuring of the ground is done by a semi-specialist, an Amhara who acts

342 as "consultant" and is therefore treated with honor, which would not be the case if he were a fully specialized craftsman. He may be the local saddlemaker who furnishes the wooden framework but will not touch any leatherwork; very likely he is the local weather-expert; he may be the one who understands the qualities of certain woods at a glance. He is rewarded with gifts of beer, chickens, etc.

Once he has marked out the ground plan, the team uses hoes to dig a circular ditch on the circle, about a foot deep, as foundation for the walls. Strong saplings of hard woods are set upright in the trench to form the backbone of the wall, measuring, above ground, to a height of at least 74 inches. The top of the roof will measure another 70" from the top of the wall (measured from the center pole). A gap is left for the doorway. The saplings forming the wall are set so close that they touch each other, but, since there is no "carpentry", no fine trimming or straightening, the saplings remain in the shape in which they grew.

When all the poles of the wall are in place, thinner but strong and elastic withes resembling willow branches are intertwined through the wall saplings, until they form hoops running horizontally through the entire wall. They are tied in place, usually leaving a thumbwidth of space between each hoop. Now mud mixed with straw is plastered thickly to the walls, both inside and out, and pressed into the framework, in a process called "yacheqa margacha". In case of an especially well-built hut three plaster coats of clay are later added to the outside ("märräga, lässänä, lägällägä"), and each is permitted to dry almost to the hard-

342 ness of cement. At this point there is usually a pause and a feast.

The next job is the preparation of a framework for the roof. First the central pole is set in place, preferable a straight, heavy pole with a natural fork at the top. In this fork is placed the strong horizontal beam, "walta" (or "gedgeda") which forms a transversal across the entire diameter of the hut, its ends resting directly on the wall which is reinforced on these two spots by special poles. This horizontal beam later becomes the dividing line for interior partitions, and the base for horizontal storage facilities for gesho (hops), maize, and pre-baked ingredients of barley beer which must be on hand every day.

The men go to the forest or bush to select and cut slender but strong rafters, elastic but strong hoops for the roof, etc. Since churches have the best roofs, a däbtära (scribe-chorister attached to the church) is often invited to supervise the roof-building and thatching. A church roof or that of a well-to-do farmer is thatched with a strong, brownish reed-grass called "kedän" (lit. covenant); another good sort is "sänbälet".

A kind of cupola ("gulelat") is made of wooden rafters (magär) long enough to sit on the walls and even project, while converging to a point on top. During the preparation, the cupola is placed upside down on the ground, and the rafters are tentatively tied in place. The cupola is now set on the "walta" beam, and centered on top of the center pole of the hut. Many more rafters are tied onto the cupola. Paired hoops of vine-like branches of strength and elasti-

342 city ("chemchem") are woven into and across the rafters or tied to them, all the way up to the top of the roof; Sometimes, instead of in parallel rings, the hoops are wound to the top in spiral, seashell-type windings (bat). Near that lower border, where the rafters are farther apart, additional shorter sticks ("mäqa" bamboo) are shoved in between, so that no large gaps are left in the roof frame. Everything is tied in place, and a strong roof results.

Thatching is done by the master of the new tuqul, with the aid of men who are considered good at this. They work up from the edge of the roof to the top, then a second layer is laid and tied to the first, then a third to the second. At the top the thatch is tied to the top of the center pole, or to a stick firmly planted into the top of the hut's center pole. This is reinforced from the inside. The outside peak of the thatched roof forms a tuft called "qunçho" (lit. crest of hair), or "sebsab". Near trade routes, imported heavy glass bulbs or oriental perfume bottles are often fitted upside down on this tuft, for functional reasons they hold better against rain and as ornament. Falasha potterymakers create a small tower-like outer dome ("gullelat") over the tuft. A well-made roof may last 10 to 30 years, with repairs.

[354] There is no opening for a chimney. The smoke from the daily cooking fire escapes through the door, and in time through cracks in the walls, blackening the inner rafters with soot. Three stones are placed near the center of the hut, to serve as the fireplace.

A door is now made of wooden planks for a good hut or a church, or of bamboo sticks "mäqa" for an ordinary

342 hut. The door is equipped with projecting pivots on top and bottom, the ends turning in two troughs carved into the door-frame.

The overhanging roof protects most of the wall from being damaged by driving rain, and the darkness inside is also a protection against the sun-loving flies. The average hut needs re-thatching every 5 to 8 years, and an additional coating of clay plaster mixed with straw every 2 to 3 years. Old huts, abandoned due to fire, war, death [777] by sickness, etc., are considered unlucky and are not rebuilt. Sometimes their remaining walls are used as windbreaks for garden crops.

Interior architecture consists of the following:

(1) a high-fencelike partition of bamboo ("mäqa") to give privacy to the master and his wife, usually center-right from the door, with a special high elevation on which the bed of the couple is set; another high partition, usually to the left of the door or toward the rear, for nighttime shelter for calves, goats or the family mule. This fencelike, permanent partition is called "get" or "gedgedda";

352 (2) a solid clay bench which runs along half the interior of the walls, on one or both sides of the door, about 16 inches high, called "mädäb", usually covered with sheepskins. On this clay bench men sit during the day with visitor, while sipping barley beer, and at night the children sleep on them, covering themselves with the sheepskins;

(3) on top of a center-rear elevation of rock and clay, up to 42" high, rests the "alga", the master's bed, 15"-30" high. It consists of a wooden frame on four wooden

[352] accumulate there when poured over the limp sheets of bread.

251 (7) Food staples must be stored out of reach of domestic animals, on horizontal slats fastened between the horizontal beam and walls. On these slats lie flat cakes of "abshelo" (pre-fermented and baked hops), bunches of sorghum, husks of maize, etc.

352 To provide additional privacy, togas can be hung across. This was done in the past particularly at dinner [754] time, to protect the eaters from the "evil eye" in the [609] presence of non-kinsmen, and is still done in some remote areas, unless the peasant prefers to postpone his meal until the stranger has gone away, so as not to offend him.

342 The tuqul is regarded as a good, sound habitation by the Amhara. It is compared to the round tent of the king and duke ("ras") which not so long ago was the center of activities (if not the actual capital) of the province and country. On the other hand, reactangular or square huts, [554] "säqäla", are regarded as carrying low prestige, little more than temporary lean-to's of hunters. The proverb indicates this low regard of a säqäla: [539]

"Of children, the worst is the bastard;
of foods, the hardest is beans;
of clothing, the poorest is nätäla (half-toga);
of housing, the poorest is säqäla."

Response: "(but) from enemy, the bastard son will defend you;
toward better days the bean will let you survive;
in (warm) daytime, the nätäla will clothe you;
till a better is built, the säqäla will shelter you".

There are special tuquls of varying degrees of sturdiness:

●342 sega byet - where meat is stored after sundrying in strips;

wät byet - the kitchen hut;

gemja byet - the "treasury" house, general storehouse of tools and weapons, drums, decorations.

tej byet - honeymead brewery; talla byet - beer brewery, worked by women.

engeda byet- guest hut;

adarash - reception hut, larger, less solid, used for banqueting;

mänyeta byet - (lit. bedroom house), the master's bedroom hut;

"mad byet" - dining hut for daily dining.

565 352 The noble also has carpets ("sägaja") to sit on or, in feudal tents, to use as tapestry. These are carried from long distances, where specialists live, or are imported. He also has hardwood stools ("dekkwa") to sit on, cut out of solid tree trunks. In a wooden storage box he has one or several burnos, and one or several "kaba" (a dark, woolen mantle). Guests receive their coffee in small imported glazed china cups instead of clay ones, and the reed table is a "massob word", with dyed braids of imported dyes, in geometric designs.

824 461 C. What Nature Provides: Lumbering, Hunting, Fishing, Collecting

Much of what little ingenuity goes into Amhara material culture is applied to the direct exploitation of natural resources. He would rather spend days and weeks

794 patients to her when his organic medicines had not helped. It was this
756 guide who hit on the idea of flattering Lady Salämtew by notifying her
123 that the foreigner was sick, suffering from severe headaches, sleeplessness and chronic intestinal cramps - (all common ailments in her practice), and that he would trust only her for treatment. Whether or not Lady Salamtew believed this, it indicated to her that the foreigner would fit himself into the framework and procedures of her zar cult, and not become a disturbing element that might "offend" her zar spirits.

The guide had taken the further precaution of negotiating with her through her brothers, who were willing to encourage her to accept, in the hope of gifts and rewards. As a result, Lady Salamtew accepted in principle; but in line with the unhurried dignity of her position she had the foreigner informed that he should send the guide again at a later time when she would make known the conditions under which he might attend the "amat bal" convention. In appreciation for having reached this point in the negotiation, the guide left her brothers with some "etan gänzäb" (money for frankincense).

The next step was reached when Lady Salamtu expressed the wish to have the foreigner appear before her, some days before the convention, so that she could look him over.

794 Her house, a semimodern affair of hard-mud walls, is reached by
756 a steep downhill trail from the Gondar town market. On the lower level
123 (the old section of Gondar called "Addis Alam") many houses and huts are
361 built on the foundations of stone houses destroyed by the dervishes in the late 19th century. This section, once restricted to Muslim and other non-Coptic minorities, is now largely inhabited by Muslim Ethiopian weavers and retail traders, many ex-slaves of Sudanese or part-Shanqalla

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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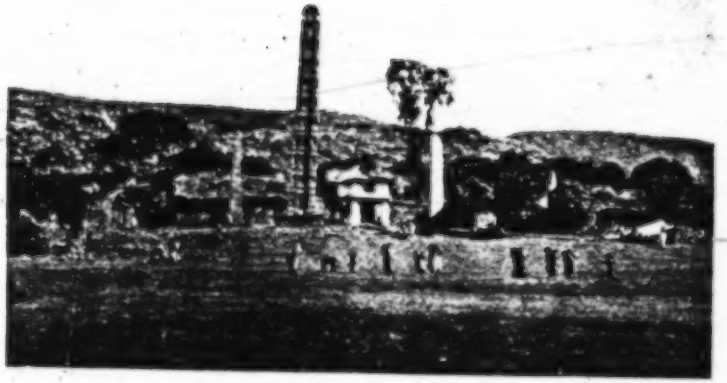

Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, monoliths

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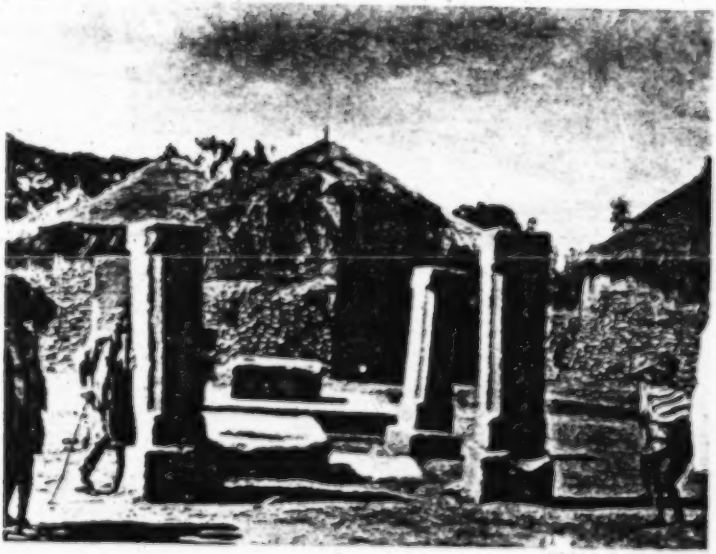

Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, King's coronation throne and four pillars, Abunas' throne in background

[Facing p. 13]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

These figures show that the gorges, together with the adjoining and intervening plateau, carry a considerably higher population than the rest of the plateau, the combined average being over 200 per square mile. The figures for population per church are also interesting. The gorges and the adjacent parts of the plateau contain no fewer than thirteen churches and they serve an average population of only some 650 souls each. On the other hand the churches of the general plateau, not counting those of Debra Berhan, which chiefly serve the townspeople, number only four. They must cater for about three times as many people each, and until recently many more for two of them are recent foundations. 162 361 [346]

The higher population of the gorge region is attributable to two causes: the greater productivity of the land there, and the historical fact, already referred to, that the Amharas were long forced to live in the gorges, and have re-emerged only in recent times. This is confirmed by the evidence of the churches which, in such numbers, are sure evidence of a long-established Christian population. The oldest ones are among those in the depths of the gorges; sites on the edges of gorges seem to be more recent. The few plateau churches are all relatively modern and bespeak the re-occupation by Amharas; two of them were indeed founded within the last fifteen years, and one as recently as 1945. 174 361

As can be seen from the map, sites chosen for dwellings are usually on the higher ground. The favourite sites, of which many examples can be seen on the sheet, are rocky ridges and the tops or upper slopes of hills and minor plateaus. A high place with an outlook, together with reasonable proximity to permanent water, seem to be the conditions sought after. Even the most elevated and exposed hill-tops are generally inhabited, whereas nobody tries to live on the plains near the main streams, which become very swampy in the rains. The ordinary family, together with its domestic animals, lives in a small, irregular cluster of round huts, which in this area are built of stone cemented with mud and carry a conical thatched roof. They are surrounded, as a rule, by a dry-stone wall, which may be shared by several households. Richer people may have an ornamental gatehouse at the main entry, with a little watchman's room over the gate; but such ostentation was not common. 361 [342] [556]

Disregarding some of the Debra Berhan people, almost the entire population is engaged in farming which, here as elsewhere in Ethiopia, is the mainstay of existence. Some possess their own land; others hold their plots, in return for a proportion of the produce (but without any security of tenure), from absentee landowners. There is also a landless element, greatly increased through the disturbing influence of the Italian occupation, who hire themselves out as ploughmen and labourers. I had intended to measure some typical holdings in order to estimate the area actually required to support a family, but my time in the area was cut short and I never did so. As a very rough estimate I think that about 15–20 per cent. of the area is under cultivation in any one year, which would indicate an average per family of something like 4 acres. This does not include fallow land which, once re-grown with grass, cannot be distinguished at a glance from permanent pasture. 241 423

The most exposed parts of the plateau near Debra Berhan will grow two crops only, barley and broad beans, but a limited amount of wheat (a bearded 241

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

648 each one with his whip[1] in his hand, and they would not let us enter, saying that we should give them some pepper, and they kept us for a good while at the gate. Passing through this gate we arrived at another, at which stood three other porters who seemed more honourable persons; these made us wait more than half an hour standing on a little straw, and the heat was so great it killed us. Upon this the ambassador sent to say that he should bid us come in or he would return to his abode. Then the message went by one who seemed to be of higher position, and word came that we should enter. The Barnagais was in this manner, in a [342] large house of one story (for in this country there are not [352] houses of several stories), sitting on a bedstead, as is their custom, fitted with poor curtains; he had sore eyes, and his wife was sitting at the head of the bedstead. Having made our obeisance, the ambassador offered him a *master* to cure him; and he said that he had no need of him, as though he did not thank him for it. Upon this the ambassador asked him as a favour, and required on the part of Prester John, that he should order equipment to be given us for our journey, assuring him how much service he would be doing in this way to the king of Portugal, which would be well repaid to him by the King and by his Captain-major; and he, the ambassador, would tell Prester John the honour and favour which he received from him. The Barnagais asking what it was that we required, the ambassador said he wanted oxen and asses for baggage, and mules for the Portuguese. To this the Barnagais replied that he could not give any mules, and that we might buy them ourselves; that he would give orders for the rest, and would send a son of his with us to the court of Prester John, and with that he gave us our dismissal.

[1] *Azorague*, a kurbach, or whip of hide, *crarache*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that 681
they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of
others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality
the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he
was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester 793
John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is
nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester
who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means em- 643
peror, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some 752
sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, 757
they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein,
and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw
blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure
themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thou- 621
sand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and 361
there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without num-
ber. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and 342
all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and court-
yards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others 352
on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table.
They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without 415
napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black 264
earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for
drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others 262
eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, 252
and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is 373
much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make
candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which 314
they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like
Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 000

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

492 mouth and causes it to bleed freely; in spite of, or perhaps because of this, I never came across an Abyssinian pony with a hard mouth; indeed, they can nearly all be ridden on a snaffle.

Their mules are so covered with many-hued trappings that sometimes they leave very little of the beast to be seen. These trappings are made of several thicknesses of native-dyed coloured leathers sewn together, machine-embroidered in silks of many colours, and covered with metal ornaments.

On special occasions the Abyssinians of rank cover their mules with extra gorgeous drapings in vivid colourings of velvet or silk, decorated with handsome embossed silver or silver-gilt ornaments. The men themselves on these occasions bring out their best sword and buckler, the latter being made of stretched and shaped rhino hide, covered with velvet and ornamented with silver and gilt mountings.

• 342 The houses of the wealthier people are constructed of stone (of which ample supplies are available almost everywhere), plastered together with a sort of mortar called *chika*, mostly mud and water; the roof is either of corrugated iron or is thatched. They are as a rule one-storied buildings, though I have been in one or two that had an upper story surrounded by a verandah and reached by an outside staircase, but these have generally been acquired from Greeks. In these cases [231] the ground floor is frequently used as stabling for the mules and ponies (even amongst Greeks and Armenians), a state of affairs which can hardly be regarded as sanitary.

513 In the peasants' *tukuls* in the country, men, women, and children, mules, ponies, and other animals sleep

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

513 all together in their single room; if to the aroma arising from this combined population be added the acrid [372] smoke from a fire made of dung-cakes, and a plentiful accompaniment of fleas and other insects, the joys of a night's shelter in such quarters may well be imagined.

351 The house nearly always stands in a very large piece of ground surrounded by a mud and stone wall. It is a curious habit of theirs that in building the wall they generally start with the gateway. Occasionally, for one reason or another, the wall-building suffers a hitch, and one sees the quaint spectacle of a gateway (sometimes with a gate), a few yards of wall, and then nothing to impede general ingress. Some of the chiefs, •342 however, are now building themselves better places, especially those that have been on missions to Europe. But even among these an ordinary *tukul* sometimes suffices, and most of the important chiefs I met in Abyssinia were content with most primitive installations.

The *tukuls* of the poorer class are mostly constructed in a circular form of sticks plastered inside and out with mud. The roof, which is made separately and put on last, is cone-shaped, made of sticks or cane bound strongly together with strips of bark and then thatched: the latter is an art in which the Abyssinians particularly excel. The roof extends two or three feet from the walls; thus the torrential rains run off easily and leave the hut perfectly dry.

342 Inside, a part is usually divided off by a length of 352 sheeting suspended on a string, behind which, on a raised platform, the family sleep on couches or beds made of wood and grass and covered with skins; blankets are uncommon, and the *chammas* in which

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

they are rolled form their only covering apart from the clothes which have been worn during the day. The remaining part of the hut is used for everything—living, cooking, eating, and also spinning in the rainy season—but of course in the dry weather much work is done outside. Apart from one or two rough wooden stools, furniture is rare or non-existent in these huts. In most of them, however, there are one or more wooden packing-cases containing the owners' most precious possessions, and fastened with a padlock and key; the remainder of their worldly goods are hung on hooks or put in niches in the walls. A form of basket-table is used at meal-times as both dish and plate, and drinking-cups made of horn are still to be seen in the provinces, though imported cups are now fairly common in Addis. A draught of mead from a cow's horn a couple of feet long is delightfully reminiscent of the pictures of the Danish and Norse invaders of England in the distant past.

342 352 [416]

[pp. 82-173 have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

10: Barkhuus D-5 (1944-1945) 1947 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Typical huts for lepers at the Akaki Leprosarium near Addis Ababa.

[p 711a].

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
ṭēff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342*
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181]
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

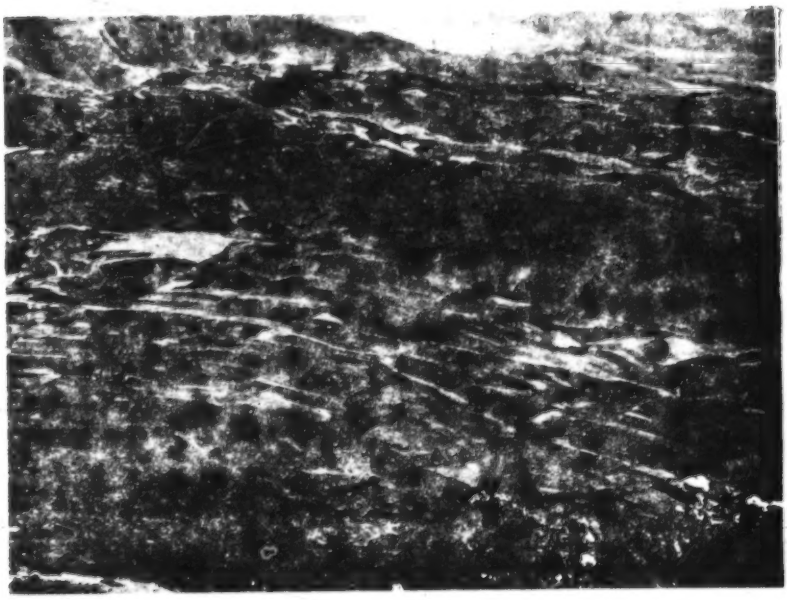

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FIG. 6.—*The Amhara countryside*

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FIG. 7.—*An Amhara homestead, Manz*

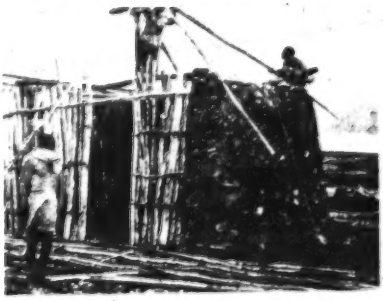

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FIG. 8.—*Building a house*

[P-46-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[2]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry, using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[3]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by hereditary right (*rĭst*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 805 796 822 787 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [181] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 181 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 346 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 20.—*Traditional (church) school: student huts*

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FIG. 21.—*Traditional school: learning to read*

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FIG. 22.—*Traditional school: learning zémā from master*

[P. 142-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Synchronization and Privacy

*121 181 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is [476] scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [704] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 [591] The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly [576] acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, [592] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters [342] (*ilfiñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Ṭīmqat day described in chap. iii.

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621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by risteñas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [178] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Šankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibañas, eight as wood cutters,

869 criteria. His personal interest means to the student
875 rapid advancement through the curriculum, dining at the master's table, and enjoying privileged information of a non-ecclesiastical nature. Without his patronship, a student is committed to years of uncertainty and physical misery, scraping to meet his subsistence needs, paying his "tuition" in demeaning services, such as gathering the master's wood and tilling his garden, and in deferential performances, particularly washing the master's feet and those of his visitors.

*793 869 The kiyne student is further troubled by the many ailments which are his lot. He lives, with one or two [342] of his mates, in a wretched lean-to of twigs and wild grasses, which proves to be poor protection against the [291] cold winter rains. Often he owns only the toga on his [515] back, and it, like him, remains unwashed for the dura- [164] tion of the long dry season. Thus, ikek (scrofula) becomes his badge, and kurtimat (joint pains) and weba [262] (fever) his recurrent companions. The student's diet *[192] is his special concern, since it conspicuously lacks the combination of wholesome wot (stew) and injera (pancake- [735] like bread) necessary to sustain good health. He ob- [164] tains most of his food by begging in the town and local hamlets, where he generally receives scraps of stale injera bread, always inadequate and potentially pathogenic (i.e., likift bearing, threatening fever and

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[128] and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—
[114] with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry,
[12] using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[3]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

*565
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

FIG. 3.—*Fāsil's castle, Gondar*

FIG. 4.—*Two Manzē elders*

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FIG. 5.—*Manz, the ceremonial bānnā*

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[R14-8]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

*175 643 633 517 chant"), *qenē,* and *tergum* ("interpretation")—is said to have received its definitive organization.

Dāwit III appears to have had a pronounced interest in Amharic folk song, for the more perfect enjoyment of which he built a special hall in the imperial compound. Because of this he has been called "Dāwit the Singer"—no term of praise in a land where minstrelsy is looked down on and where serious deportment is expected of royalty. Actually, this epithet, with its connotation of "playboy," was not deserved. Dāwit was a religious man, and in his brief reign built two churches. Knowledgeable Gondarēs today insist that, at first, even the priests were happy to join him in the amusement hall to listen to the one-stringed fiddles and the witty songs. Only after Dāwit's partiality to the [798] Unctionist doctrine (that the humanity of Christ was made divine through the unction of the Holy Spirit) led him to persecute the Unionist clergy (who hold that humanity and divinity are blended in the single nature of Christ) did they abuse his music hall and tarnish his name.[7]

[341] Interest in architecture was revived by Bakāffā. He constructed a long U-shaped castle which, together with the new castle of his Empress Mantuāb, completed the major complex of buildings in Gondar. Mantuāb's castle is [532] noted for bas-reliefs of the Ethiopian Cross, while her other castle at nearby Qusquam is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting saints and animals as well.

The tastes of Iyāsu II were especially refined. He cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He built a large and handsome church. He began to construct a palace, in the lavish [344] decoration of which he took a personal interest. Budge writes of this:

> A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the walls of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts . . . with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. . . . Iyāsu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen.[8]

*175 633 517 The decline of imperial power at Gondar after Iyāsu II did not produce a slackening of the cultural activities that had been concentrated there. During the reign of Takla Hāymānot II (1769–77), for example, when the actual [543] power at Gondar was in the hands of a lord from Tigre, seven more churches were built. One of these, Ba'ātā Māryām, eventually became one of the most [874] famous schools for the teaching of *aquāquām* ("religious dance"), and in its heyday boasted 276 masters. Another, Abi Egzi, became noted for instruction in *tergum,* and is still a leading school for such studies.

[538] The composition of verse, in forms which had become canonized during the early Gondar period, continued to flourish. As political turmoil often

323 aforementioned social reasons. They can bake fired bricks, "shehla", but have no use or orders for them, and do not make them at present. They apply their artistic talents [346] to a tower-like crown, "gulelat", which they place on the top of the thatched roof of the Falasha synagogue, the "mesgid" (which has also the practical effect of preventing the penetration of water during the rain storms).

415 The vast majority of clay utensils produced by the craftswoman is used in the household. Many of them are small, not over 12 inches in diameter or height. Round forms predominate, especially spherical or semi-spherical bowls with a long or short neck. Nearly all have two handles on the side, for grasping and for pulling a rope through.

The simple baking plate for the daily enjara bread, the "megogo", in town called "meted", has already been [354] mentioned. Placed on the hearth of three stones, it forms a simple stove, and itself is topped by a somewhat conical ("moged") lid which fits snugly. 20" in diameter, 1-1/2" high, 1" thick, grain is also roasted on it.

There are numerous varieties of water pitchers, mostly pear-shaped, with long, stout necks. When full (about 15 liters), the Amhara women carry them on the back, and therefore a special loop is added by the craftswoman on the base of the neck, so that the rope can be drawn through it and around the chest, for added support. The most common, big water-pitcher of this kind is the "mndiga", with a height of 20" of which 5" are spout, 14" at its greatest width, and a 5" width of the spout. It is

633 the old Portuguese-type castles, even then in ruins.
[346] The new mosque, built through Italian encouragement during the occupation, overshadows both the big market and the old Muslim "ghetto" with the old mosque, at lower elevation.

563 The local Muslim "Qadi", ecclesiastical Muslim judge,
624 regarded as their procvincial temporal chief, calls on the governor-general every Tuesday. Most Muslims have not moved far from their old section, partly because it is near the big market which is their economic as well as social gathering place, partly because they, almost as much as the ethnic artisans, wish to avoid insults, mockery, and quarrels with young members of the dominant majority.

759 In addition to being a center of public announce-
743 ments, and the table of the judge for petty crimes, the market now also serves as center for the activities of modern "dressers". These medical auxiliaries set up their tables under one of the shady trees, their bottles, hypodermic needles, cotton wool, etc., clearly visible, with chairs for several patients, set apart by an enclosure of barbed wire. When an epidemic threatens, and
[73] during and after it (e.g. typhus or spotted fever), the public can obtain free injections there, or call a dresser to come to their home for a small fee.

633 Each town is divided into administrative wards, sometimes called "qäbälē", but almost invariably named after the church located in it. Thus a person will say "I am from Medhanē Aläm" (church of the "Savior of the

A. The Structure of Church Organization.

346
778 a) The Church buildings and design.

The traditional church building is round, designed on a pattern of three concentric circles. This combines the round pattern of the African hut, though much larger in this case, with the functional design of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. Like the latter, each church has a Holy of Holies ("qeddesta qeddusan"), a closed inner sanctum, which may be entered only by upper priesthood
[782] or the day's officiating priest. He carries burning and smoking incense in a metal or clay censer, while he marches around the sacred wooden tablet, the "tabot", located there. On the tabot, which may not be seen by layman's eyes, are inscribed, in Geez, the name of the saint to whom the particular (parish) church is dedicated, plus magical names of angels and geometric symbolism and phrases from both the Old and New Testament. The "tabot" represents symbolically the Ark of Moses kept by the ancient Israelites in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem

346 The second circumference, the "mäqdäs", can be
[788] seen from the outside through several doorless openings. Here the priests perform the eucharist, hidden from the public gaze by portable white linen screens. The "maqdas" is restricted only during services.

796 Within the third, walled-in circumference, the
346 "taza", called also "qene mahlet" (lit. reciting-place of devotional poetry), the chorister-scribes ("dabtara") congregate while they chant devotional poetry and other

796 liturgy, swaying and dancing to the rythm of their raised
346 voices, the beat of huge drums, and the tinkling of sistra.

Laymen may also occupy sections within this third enclosure, mostly near the northern end. There is no seating. Standing is required during the long services [481] that begin just before dawn and last many hours. Therefore, priests and chanters lean on "maqomya", strong bamboo crutches equipped with iron or even silver concave tops. These are also used as they sway with the rythm when the dancing is in progress. These crutches may be privately owned; but many churches own simpler ones as church utensils. When important visitors, "great men" and their guests attend, without maqomyas of their own, the chief priest usually takes those owned or used by the lesser priests to supply the Very Important Persons, to the barely disguised displeasure of the regular users.

346 Women are not admitted even into this third out-
562 er enclosure. They must remain outside the church building, in the yard, or leaning against the hard-mud wall, or, at a more pretentious church, under the outer collonade of wooden posts which support the overhanging edge of the roof. The roof, usually thatched, but of imported corrugated iron in better urban churches, is usually ornamented with an iron cross adorned with wooden or metal ostrich eggs.(This custom may be of older, African, origin.)

793 Parish priests, (unlike mämhär scholars) are also
[66] not bashful about demanding their due (produce tithe, sheep, honey, even cash) from their tenants of church land. Sardonic peasant humor expresses this in the proverb:

[539] "The bashful priest,
the blind donkey,
(are one)" . (i.e. both would be halpless and starve to death).

532 Among artisans who do specialist work for the
346 church is the artist of church paintings, usually highly colorful and realistic scenes from the suffering of the saints, in morbid and gory detail; the beauties of heaven and the trinity; the horrors of hell ruled by a chained, soul-munching Satan; etc. These religious and semi-religious story illustrations and legends are painted on canvas and then attached to the inside of church walls.

874 Church students are usually boys 10 years or over (never girls), who at first learn the Geez-Amharid alphabet, reading Geez without translating, beginning with the Epistle of the Apostle John. They are taught by rote, memorizing by chanting the portions out loud. There is very little writing in the early grades, and experimentation is traditionally discouraged, for fear that the boys might use their new-won learning to write magic amulets. Before examinations, church studetns stimulate
874 their mental processes by eating the leaf of a Datura
276 weed resembling Jimson weed called "astänager" (lit. to stimulate talk) which is also used by dabtära in exor-

778 the frame, are now often cut from modern tin cans.

The ceremonial drinking cup used in the eucharist is the "ṭewa", usually made of metal. But if used in the "mähabber" communal sodality outside the church, it is often of horn or clay, about 4½ inches high, 5 inches diameter at top, 1½ inches at bottom. On the latter occasion it is filled with barley beer or "berz" (honey-water). This is given the peasant at plowing time to [788] confer blessing upon him, thus called "maras baggo" (for spring plowing).

Other equipment belonging to the church may be a wooden pulpit for reading (not preaching), some tin [373] oil-lamps or the old wick-like candles (called "twäf"). 778 Very important are the drums, huge affairs carried by 534 the younger dancers during worship, suspended from shoulder straps. The barrel-like "nägarit", of which the average church has three (or must borrow them), usually has a height of at least 30 inches, a diameter of 15 inches. It is made of "wanza" wood (olive or other hardwood), with tanned oxhide moistened and stretched tightly across both ends. The drummer operates it with the flat of his fingers and top of flat palm. Another type is the "kabaro" drum, in which one end is bigger than the other. The drums and the swaying maqomya sticks keep time during the chanting. Trumpets are used only for parades, to herald the march, but not in accompaniment.

778 When not in use, most of these utensils are loc- 34 251 ked in a little treasure house, called "bätälehem" (in

778 Geez). Here the bread and wine used in the eucharist are
346 prepared and stored with great secrecy. The utensils of
251 the nearby cooking hut, the baking pan "metad" and large clay jars for barley beer, are also stored here. Supplies of tyēff, barley, wheat, beans, peas, may also be stored.

779 In recent years, church parades feature prominent-
186 ly the flag of the nation, the red-green-yellow of the central government, emphasizing in modern ways the close union of church and state that has long been traditional in Abyssinia.

(e) Worship and Devotional Poetry.

533 The musical chants and notations studies formally
796 have already been outlined in connection with church education.

Church hymns, including devotional poetry, are called "qēnē" in a generic rather than specifically accurate sense. A collection of them is contained in the book "qubaē qana", and they are sung in a special mode. The chief mode is called "selt". It has three variations:

(1) "geez" - short tones, dedicated to the "Father";

(2) "ezel" - mournful tones in minor key, dedicated to the "Son" 's passion;

(3) "araray" - long, drawn-out tones, dedicated to the "Holy Ghost".

These variations are interlaced, for special results, and for specific occasions. The mass, "qeddase" (lit. a sanctification) is chanted in a mode bearing the

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Buddleia, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

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developed. I was interested to find, when first exploring this piece of country, that the shelves were well populated, intensively cultivated, and provided with a quite surprising number of churches; facts, as pointed out below, of some historical significance.

After completing the framework of the map I made several calculations of depth in the Beressa gorge. An Abney level was used and as high angles were involved I think the results are trustworthy. They showed a depth of 1808 feet at the point marked *a*, just under 3 miles from the head of the gorge; 1985 feet at point *b*, 4 miles down; and 2170 feet at *c*, not quite 6 miles down. The average gradient from *a* to *b* was therefore about 2½ per cent., from *b* to *c* about 2 per cent. The depths were measured from three points (marked 1–3), all at practically the same level, on the edge of the gorge, the height of which can be taken as about 9300 feet. The absolute level of point *c* is therefore about 7130 feet, and this is almost the lowest point on the sheet. Measurements show that the depth of this gorge, enormously impressive though it is, is not more than one-fifth of its breadth. Although relatively deeper ones no doubt exist, I cannot help being highly sceptical of Rocher d'Hericourt's report of a ravine "14 leagues north-west of Angolala" which he alleged to be 1254 metres deep and only 800 broad!

Four separate gorges figure on the map. The two middle ones, formed by the Beressa and Dalecha rivers, which enclose between them the cliff-encircled plateau of Choli, can be seen to join within 4 to 5 miles of Debra Berhan. It might be supposed that the other two gorges were destined to join the same system within a short distance, but this does not happen. If the small-scale Italian map is to be trusted, the Gunagunit (north-east corner of the sheet) joins the Beressa system some 20 miles away, and the Chacha (of which the north-western gorge is a tributary) nearly 30 miles away. These junctions are approximately north of Debra Berhan; afterwards the river bends away north-westwards to join a main tributary of the Blue Nile. As might be expected, these independent g[illegible]-systems running approximately parallel to each other proved most confusing. Between the adjacent systems one sees long, narrow strips of residual plateau, perfectly flat-topped, sometimes so narrow as to stand up like a wall between one valley and the next. The Tallak Amba plateau, partly shown in the north-west of the sheet, is an example. On the other side of the sheet a still narrower neck, followed by the Tegulet path, separates the Beressa and Gunagunit systems. Following this route to the north, off the sheet, one finds that for some distance the plateau has been cut right away: one descends about 600 feet to a point where the shelves in two adjacent valleys practically coalesce, being separated only by a rocky barrier a few feet high. Then one climbs again to a narrow slip of plateau on whose summit, flat as a table-top, stands an important church (Zendegur Ghiorghis). Still farther north this narrows down to a sinuous rampart between the valleys, and eventually broadens once more to form a substantial isolated plateau, which appeared in the distance to be almost inaccessible. Another remarkable feature, jutting out between the Dalecha and the small tributary which next joins the Beressa, is shown near the northern border of the sheet and will be described later.

This region is the heart of the old Shoan kingdom and many places included

11

Alice, the Ewer gorges - Analyst

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These figures show that the gorges, together with the adjoining and intervening plateau, carry a considerably higher population than the rest of the plateau, the combined average being over 200 per square mile. The figures for population per church are also interesting. The gorges and the adjacent parts of the plateau contain no fewer than thirteen churches and they serve an average population of only some 650 souls each. On the other hand the churches of the general plateau, not counting those of Debra Berhan, which chiefly serve the townspeople, number only four. They must cater for about three times as many people each, and until recently many more for two of them are recent foundations.

The higher population of the gorge region is attributable to two causes: the greater productivity of the land there, and the historical fact, already referred to, that the Amharas were long forced to live in the gorges, and have re-emerged only in recent times. This is confirmed by the evidence of the churches which, in such numbers, are sure evidence of a long-established Christian population. The oldest ones are among those in the depths of the gorges; sites on the edges of gorges seem to be more recent. The few plateau churches are all relatively modern and bespeak the re-occupation by Amharas; two of them were indeed founded within the last fifteen years, and one as recently as 1945.

As can be seen from the map, sites chosen for dwellings are usually on the higher ground. The favourite sites, of which many examples can be seen on the sheet, are rocky ridges and the tops or upper slopes of hills and minor plateaus. A high place with an outlook, together with reasonable proximity to permanent water, seem to be the conditions sought after. Even the most elevated and exposed hill-tops are generally inhabited, whereas nobody tries to live on the plains near the main streams, which become very swampy in the rains. The ordinary family, together with its domestic animals, lives in a small, irregular cluster of round huts, which in this area are built of stone cemented with mud and carry a conical thatched roof. They are surrounded, as a rule, by a dry-stone wall, which may be shared by several households. Richer people may have an ornamental gatehouse at the main entry, with a little watchman's room over the gate; but such ostentation was not common.

Disregarding some of the Debra Berhan people, almost the entire population is engaged in farming which, here as elsewhere in Ethiopia, is the mainstay of existence. Some possess their own land; others hold their plots, in return for a proportion of the produce (but without any security of tenure), from absentee landowners. There is also a landless element, greatly increased through the disturbing influence of the Italian occupation, who hire themselves out as ploughmen and labourers. I had intended to measure some typical holdings in order to estimate the area actually required to support a family, but my time in the area was cut short and I never did so. As a very rough estimate I think that about 15–20 per cent. of the area is under cultivation in any one year, which would indicate an average per family of something like 4 acres. This does not include fallow land which, once re-grown with grass, cannot be distinguished at a glance from permanent pasture.

The most exposed parts of the plateau near Debra Berhan will grow two crops only, barley and broad beans, but a limited amount of wheat (a bearded

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whom many hard things have been said by prejudiced travellers, play so 771
essential a part in almost every aspect of rural life that the community simply cannot be imagined without them. Christenings, funerals and periodic commemorations of the dead are ceremonies of enormous importance which must, of course, be conducted by priests, and their presence is deemed desirable at the higher forms of civil marriage. The *mahabar* or Private Communion, an old social institution deeply rooted among these people, cannot be held unless priests are present, nor can oaths be sworn, or public inquiries made, without them. The traditional customs of the Ethiopian Church, based on those of the Copts but strongly influenced by Judaistic practices, still retain their hold, some would say a strangle-hold, over the rural population. Many long fasts are rigorously observed, besides weekly ones on Wednesdays and Fridays; so are a multiplicity of feast-days when no work may be done, though Saturday is not always observed, as it used to be, as a workless day equivalent to Sunday.

I have already spoken of the large number of churches scattered over this 346 ●
area, especially in the northern half of the sheet, among the gorges. When first wandering about the district I had no idea they were so numerous. But while making the survey I continually came across new ones, and the last two, those nearest the north-east and north-west corners of the sheet, were discovered only while filling in the final detail. They brought the total for this small area up to twenty. They are not elaborate buildings, nor do they conform to the ordinary western conception of a church. They are indeed round huts, quite uninfluenced by the rectangular form (deriving from a very ancient tradition) which exists in the northern part of the country.[1] Some are built in masonry, some in mud-and-stick, and the slightly more pretentious have an outer colonnade of wooden uprights supporting the edge of the roof. Inside one finds two concentric passages surrounding the *makdas*, or Holy of Holies, which only priests may enter. In the distance one can usually recognize a country church by its fine conical thatched roof, which is much bigger than that of any ordinary hut, and is crowned by a sort of double cone carrying a complicated cross, often ornamented with ostrich eggs.

Of the twenty churches, seven were dedicated to the Virgin Mary (Mariam), [776]
four to St. George (Ghiorghis), and three to the Archangel Michael, and these are, in general, the most popular dedications. The principal church in Debra Berhan was a Selassie (Trinity), that of Angolala a Kidane Meheret (Covenant of Mercy). There was one St. John, one St. Gabriel, and one each dedicated to the most famous of Ethiopian saints—"Abo" and Tekla Haymanot. Splendid sites have been chosen for most of these churches, the chief consideration having been, it would seem, visibility from afar. The plateau churches are invariably raised on a conspicuous ridge or hill-top. Many are beautifully situated on the shelves in the gorges, or overlooking these. Some again are placed on the extreme edge of a gorge—such are Saria Mikael in the north-east of the sheet and the old St. George, just north of Debra Berhan, now unfortunately moved nearer the town (both sites are marked on the map).

Perhaps the most striking of all these sites is that of Iteghe Mariam, to the

[1] D. R. Buxton, "The Christian Antiquities of Northern Ethiopia," *Archaeologia*, 92 (1947) 1–42. [113]

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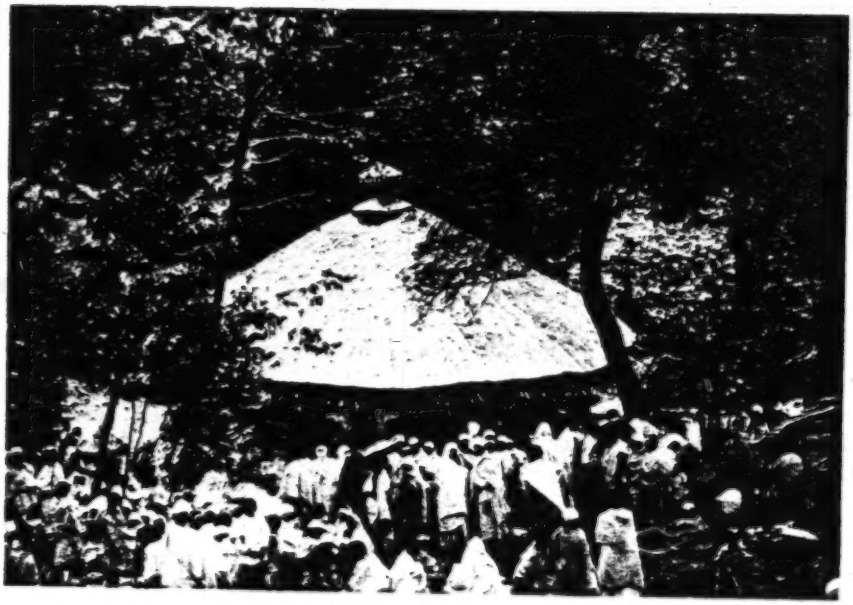

Church at Abo, Baressa gorge

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778
793

Monk and deacon receiving offerings [Facing p. 170]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

346 north-west of Zanjira near the upper margin of the sheet. The church clings to the side of a steep little hill which stands almost isolated among vast gorges and commands the grandest panorama imaginable of this tormented country. The hill is joined to Zanjira by a narrow causeway little lower than the general plateau, flat on top and dropping away in cliffs on either side, so regular that it almost seems artificial. Harris records a saying which evidently refers to this place: "from Iteghe you can see the Echeghe" (*i.e.* the chief of the monks, who then lived in Gondar). To be sure, one does seem to overlook a great part of the world from this point of vantage.

[487] Every church is the centre of a radiating system of small paths (not shown on the map) chiefly used by people coming to service. There are of course 796 regular Sunday services, but these are not very well attended. More important are the special festivals observed on certain dates of the Ethiopian month, which may fall on any day of the week. In this area the monthly festivals universally observed, on which no work could be done, were those of St. Michael, St. Mary, and St. George, on the 12th, 21st, and 23rd respectively, as well as "Bal Wold," a commemoration of the Birth of Christ, on the 29th of each month. Of still greater significance in the life of the people are the annual festivals, falling on the same day of the month as the monthly ones but in certain months only. On these annual festivals nearly the whole population makes its way to the churches dedicated to the particular saint [783] commemorated. Often they will visit the local *tebel* or Holy Water and bathe there early in the morning before service. Going on to the church, all remain outside, for there would be no room for such a crowd within the cramped passages of the church itself. In the middle of the morning the *tabot* or ark is brought out and ceremonial dances held before it. Finally, before the service ends, it will be carried three times round the church in procession, attended by magnificent crosses and gaudy umbrellas. These are occasions of great popular excitement and rejoicing, and the congregations are often enormous. The long service over, they break up into gossiping groups, and go back to social lunches in each other's huts.

771 Enough has been said to show how large a part is played among these people by the Church and its priesthood. The country has indeed been described as priest-ridden, the people as over-dominated or even enslaved by the Church. If so, this servitude, at least in the country, is still a willing and unquestioned one. It is also true to say that without the Church the social structure of this countryside would fall to pieces, and life would lose not only its coherence but nearly all its variety and colour.

346 It was mentioned above that, to meet the needs of an increasing plateau 794 population, several new churches had been founded in recent times in the area covered by the map. Two of these were established by "division" of a 518 church which already existed in the gorge. Each original church had two *tabots* one of which was removed for the new foundation, for no church can exist without a *tabot* or altar-slab, this being the only part of the church which is consecrated. Thus the Mariam of the Tallak Amba plateau was derived from the Mariam half-way down the cliff about a mile to the north-east; and similarly a new Ghiorghis of the plateau, just east of Daloti, from the Ghiorghis in the gorge below. Of these "divisions," both of which took place

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

shortly before the Italian invasion of 1935, the first was accomplished peacefully; but not the second. According to the story told me, the *tabot* of the lower Ghiorghis had been borrowed and carried in solemn procession on the plateau in order to ward off a swarm of locusts which were damaging the crops there. This measure was successful, and the plateau people determined to keep the *tabot* which had proved itself so powerful. The people of the gorge would not agree, and tried to recapture their *tabot*. The plateau party however successfully defended it by force of arms, and later built a little church to house it. It was not unusual to attribute specific powers to *tabots*: for instance, that of Dimbaro Mariam (a little east of the north-east corner of the sheet) used to be carried to war by the emperors, attended by a retinue of priests and scribes, to bring success in battle.

The last church to be founded in these parts was the new St. Gabriel, on a prominent hill-top in the district of Dilila near the south-east corner of the sheet. I came upon it when first following the upper course of the Beressa in December 1946. As I approached the foot of the hill I learnt from passers-by that a new church had been built upon it, and that the foundress herself, a certain great lady from Addis Ababa, was at that moment on the hill. Climbing a rocky track to the top, I saw a cluster of new huts and the still unfinished building of the church. Nearby was a large canvas awning stretched rather clumsily between rough stone walls. Under the awning I found the lady herself, short and stout and genial, sitting on a camp chair; around her, squatting on the ground, was a deferential assembly of local dignitaries, personal retainers and priests. After the fluster caused by my unexpected arrival had died down, I had a talk with the worthy lady who, having just presided at a mid-day meal, now plied me with very welcome refreshment. She had been born and bred in this very place. Having spent most of her life elsewhere, and somehow acquired a certain amount of wealth, she had returned in later life to her place of birth and founded this church only the year before my visit. It met a need, she said, for the area lacked a church, and no other St. Gabriel existed anywhere in the neighbourhood. As it chanced, I had come on the day after St. Gabriel's annual festival (which is the 19th of Tahisas, or, in European style, the 28th of December). She expressed great regret that I had not been present at the festival itself, when big crowds had come from Debra Berhan and from all the surrounding country.

This incident seemed to me interesting as demonstrating the tenacity of the local religious tradition in Ethiopia. After all the upheaval and disruption of Italian occupation and the Second World War, the hold of the ancient Church over the Amhara people seemed unweakened. The Church was able to extend its influence in an area not yet well served as readily as ever. It was still an appropriate act for a pious person to found a new church in a lonely place. Perhaps these things are not surprising, for the Church has been the main support and inspiration of Ethiopian unity since the earliest Christian times. It has always been the focal centre of the national sentiment, the fount of renewed resistance to aggression, the main force, in fact, which has maintained Ethiopia's independence and made of it, as Menelik himself once said, an island of Christianity in the great Islamic sea.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[End map II-A]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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SHOAN PLATEAU
Buxton

[End map II-B]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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[pp. 1-20 have not been processed for the files.—Analyst]

CAP. XI.—*Of the fashion and situation of the monasteries and their customs, first this of St. Michael.*

346 The manner of these monasteries as to their sites and
361 customs: all are situated on the greatest and highest cliffs, or the deepest they can find. This one of St. Michael is situated on a very steep rock at the foot of another very high rock, where no one can ascend. The stone of which these rocks consist is of the grain of the walls of the port of Portugal.[1] They are very great rocks. The land around
137 these rocks is all covered with very great forests, and besides wild olive trees and high grass between them, in which there is much basil. The trees which are not wild olive trees are not trees known to us; all are without fruit. In the narrow valleys which belong to this monastery there are orange trees, lemon trees, citron trees, pear trees and fig trees of all kinds, both of Portugal and India; peach trees, cabbages, coriander, cardamine, wormwood,[2] myrtle and other sweet-smelling and medicinal herbs, all ill profited by
[461] because they are not good working men: and the earth produces these like wild plants, and it would produce whatever was planted and sown in it. The monastery house
346 looks quite like a church building, constructed like ours. It has around it a circuit like a cloister, covered above in the same manner as the body of the monastery. It has three entrances, as ours are, one principal one, and two side ones. The roof of the church and of its cloisters is of wild straw, which lasts a man's life: the body of the church is built with naves very well constructed, and their arches are

[1] Sic. [p.21] [2] Alessna.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 very well closed; all appears to be vaulted. The church has a chancel and a transept, in the centre transept are curtains from end to end; and there are other curtains before the side doors, from wall to wall. They are curtains of silk: the entrance through these curtains is in three places, they are open in the middle, and they reach one to another, also they can be entered close to the walls. In the said three entrances there are little bells suspended to the curtains themselves, and nobody can enter by any part without these bells ringing. Here there is not more than one altar, which is in the chancel: this has a stand on four props, and the altar reaches to these four props. This stand is covered over above as though with a vault, and there is an altar stone which they call *tabuto*. Upon this altar stone there is a basin of copper, very large and flat below, and with low sides. This basin also reaches to the supports of the stand, which are disposed in a square. Within this large basin there is another smaller one. This stand has curtains hanging down from it to the ground, that is, at the back and sides, which screen the altar, except that in front it is open. One can go all round the altar. The bells are of
534 stone, and in this manner: long thin stones, suspended by cords passed through them, and they strike them with sticks made for the purpose, and they make a sound as of cracked bells heard at a distance. Also at festivals they take the basins from the altar and strike them with sticks, and they help to make a sound. They have also other iron bells, not round, but with two sides, they have a clapper which strikes first on one side and then on the other, and it makes a noise as of helving a mattock. They also have other small ill-made bells, which they carry in their hands at processions, and they ring the whole of them at the festivals. On other days the bells of stones and iron are
182 used. In all churches and monasteries they ring for matins
796 two hours before dawn. They say the prayers by heart and

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XII.—*Where and how the bread of the Sacrament is made, and of a Procession they made, and of the pomp with which the mass is said, and of entering into the church.*

782 The making of this sacramental bread is in this manner.
252 The building in which it is made, in all churches and
[346] monasteries, is, as I said above, on the gospel side, outside of the church and its circuit, which is like a cloister, in the space contained by the other outer circuit, which is not covered in, which space serves for a churchyard. All the churches and monasteries have such a building, and it does not contain anything else except what is requisite for this purpose; that is to say, a mortar for pounding wheat, a machine for making very clean flour, and such as is required for such a purpose, for they do not prepare this sacrament from flour or wheat on which women have laid their hands. They have pots for preparing the paste, which they make thicker than ours. They have a furnace, as for distilling water, and upon it a plate of iron, and in some churches of copper, and in other poor churches of clay. This plate is round and of a good size; they place fire underneath it, and when it is hot clean it with a waxed cloth, pour on it a portion of paste, and spread it out with a wooden spoon of such size as they intend to make the bread, and they make it very round. When it is set they take it off and place it on end, then they make another in the same way. When this second one is set, they take the first and place it upon it, that is to say, the side of the first which was uppermost they put upon the top of the other, fresh with fresh, and so the bread remains one whole one, and they do nothing more than make it round and turn it from one side to the other, and move it about on the plate, that it may bake on both sides and on the circumference. In this manner they make one or as many as they wish. In this same
[273] house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a machine for pressing.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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we had no one to explain it to us: as soon as their liberty not 796
to fast had ended, their mass could not be said, except at 784
night, and so they did not consent to our saying it; thus we felt aggrieved without cause. This time having ended and Trinity passed by, all priests and friars are obliged to fast every day except Saturdays and Sundays. They keep this fast up to Christmas Day, and as all fast they say mass at night. They allege for this the supper of Christ, when He consecrated His true Body, having been a fast time, and almost night. The general people, that is secular men and women, are obliged to fast from Trinity to Advent, Wednesdays and Fridays of each week, and from Christmas day to the Purification of Our Lady, which they call the feast of Simeon,[1] they have no fast. The first three days after the Purification, not being Saturday or Sunday, are great fast days for priests, friars, and laymen. They say that in these three days they do not eat more than once: it is called the penitence of Niniveh. At the end of these three days, up to the beginning of Lent, they again fast as from after Trinity. During Advent and the whole of Lent, priests, friars, lay friars, men and women, small and great, sound and sick, all fast. Thus from Easter to Trinity, and from Christmas to the Purification, they say mass in the morning, because there is no fast, and all the other time at night, because they are fasting. Where we buried Mattheus is a 346
great and honourable monastery, which is named Bisam, and its patron, Jesus. From the monastery where we stayed to this is a league of very precipitous country. It is on a very high rock, and looking round all sides of it there appear like the depths of hell. The monastery house is very large in bulk, and larger in revenues, and this monastery is very well fitted. The fashion of this house is of three large and beautiful naves, with their arches and vaulted roofs. They appear to be of wood, and because all

[1] *Symaon.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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346 is painted, it is not certain whether it is stone or wood. It has two sets of cloisters round the body of the church, both 346 covered in, and much painted with figures of apostles, 532 patriarchs, prophets, and many things of the Old Law, and 353 many angels, and St. George on horseback, who is in all the churches. This monastery also possesses a great cloth, like a piece of tapestry, on which is the crucifix and effigy of Our Lady and the apostles, and other figures of patriarchs and prophets, and each one has his Latin name written, so that no man of the country made it. It has many small and ancient pictures, not well made, and they are not upon the altars, for it is not their custom: they keep them in a [212] sacristy, mixed up with many books, and they bring them out on feast days. There is in this monastery a very large kitchen and bakehouse, also a very large refectory, in which 792 they eat. They mostly eat three and three[1] in a large dish, 262 it is not deep, but flat like a tray, and their food is very [264] poor. The bread is of maize and barley, and other grain which they call *taffo*,[2] a small black grain. They make this bread round, and of the size and roundness of a citron,[3] and they give three of these to each friar: to the novices they give three loaves to two of them, it is a matter of amazement how they can maintain themselves. They also give them a few vegetables, without salt or oil. Of this food they send to a great many old pensioners, who do not come to the refectory. Besides seeing these things when we 792 buried Matthews, I saw them many times, because I came there to pass time with the friars, principally on feast days, when we were near there. In this way I learned about them and their property, and revenues and customs. In my opinion there were generally always a hundred friars in this

[1] By threes.

[2] Mansfield Parkins calls it teff, the species of corn most esteemed in this country.

[3] Zamboa, not referred to in Selves' translation.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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monastery, most of them old men of great age, and as dry 792
as wood; very few young men. This monastery is entirely
surrounded by a wall, and this wall is closed with two [346]
gates, which are always locked.

CAP. XIV.—*How the monastery of Bisan is the head of six monasteries, of the number of the brothers, and ornaments, of the "castar"*[1] *which they do to Philip, whom they call a Saint.*

This monastery is the head of six monasteries, which are 792
around it in these mountains; the furthest off is at a 793
distance of three leagues from it, and all are subject to it, and are governed and ruled by it. In each of them is a David, that is a guardian appointed by the Abbot or provincial of this monastery, who is also David under the Abba. I always heard say that there were in this monastery
three thousand friars, and because I doubted it much I 792
came here to keep the feast of our Lady of August, in order to see if they would come together. Certainly I rejoiced to see the riches of this monastery, and the procession which they made: in my judgment the friars did not exceed three hundred, and most of them were very old.
There is a circuit to this monastery which surrounds the two [346]
which are like cloisters covered in, and this one which is not covered in was on that occasion all covered in with brocades and inferior brocades, and velvets of Mekkah, all long pieces, sewn one to another in order that they might shelter the whole circuit. They made a very beautiful
procession through this canopied circuit; all wore cloaks of [292]
the same stuffs, brocades, and velvets of Mekkah, badly made as I mentioned above. They carried fifty small crosses of silver, of bad workmanship, and as many

[1] Should be *teskar*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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and men who sleep there to watch, from fear of the animals 231
that roam about the villages all night: and if they did not
keep this watch nothing alive would remain which they
would not devour. The people who go to sow millet in the 241
mountains of Bisan belong to this country and the neigh- 221
bouring towns. The reason why they go and do it is this. 132
Here there are very numerous grain crops of every kind
and nature that can be mentioned, as I have already said;
and because it is near to the sea, by which go all the
provisions for Arabia, Mekkah, Zebid, Jiddah, and Toro,[1]
and other parts; and they carry the provisions to the sea to
sell them. And because in this country the winters are
divided into seasons, and the seed crops do not grow
except with the rains, they go to sow these millet
fields at the mountain of Bisan, where it is winter in the
months of February, March, and April. There is this same
winter in a mountain called Lama, in this kingdom of the
Barnagais, which is fully eight days' journey from the
mountain of Bisan. In another country, which is named
Doba, and which is quite a month's journey from this lord-
ship of Lama, there is winter in these same months. As
for these millet fields, they require rains, and as these win-
ters happen out of season, they go and sow them where it
rains, and so profit by both winters. In this town of 346
Barua are two churches with many priests, one close to the 562
other, one is for men, the other for women. The men's
church is called St. Michael, that of the women is named
after the apostles Peter and Paul. They say that a great [644]
lord, who was then Barnagais, built the men's church, and
gave it the privilege that no woman should enter it, except
only the wife of the Barnagais, with one damsel, whenever
she went to take the communion, and even she does not
now enter the church, but takes the communion at the
door in the inner circuit with the laity, and so the

[1] Mount Sinai.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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346 other women do in the church of the apostles, who take it
562 in its place. I always saw the women of the Barnagais go
[644] to the women's church to take the communion with the other women, and I did not see them use the privilege which they say they have, of taking the communion, with one damsel, in the church of the men. The circuits of the churchyards join to one another; they are of very high
796 walls. They make the sacramental bread for both churches in one building, and they say the masses in both churches at the same time, and the priests who serve in one church serve also in the other; that is two thirds of the priests in the men's church, and one third in the women's church, and so they are distributed. These churches have not got tithes, but they have got much land belonging to the priests, and they put it out to profit and divide the revenues of the lands among themselves: the Barnagais gives what is necessary to the churches, such as ornaments, wax, butter, incense in sufficient quantity, and he supplies them with
[792] everything. There may be in these churches twenty priests and always twenty-two friars. I never saw a church of priests which had not got friars, nor a monastery of friars which had got priests; because the friars are so numerous that they cover the world, both in the monasteries as also in the churches, roads, and markets: they are in every place.

CAP. XXVI.—*How the priests are, and how they are ordained, and of the reverence which they pay to the churches and*
793 *their churchyards.*

684 The priests are married to one wife, and they observe the
587 law of matrimony better than the laity: they live in their houses with their wives and children. If their wife should die they do not marry again; neither can the wife, but she

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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an ouquia. This Barnagais forbade the people in his country having any other weights except his own, and they had to ask the Barnagais or his factors for the weights whenever they had to sell or receive gold, so that he had knowledge of what was in the country, and he takes it when he pleases, according to what his country people say, who must know it well. 436

CAP. XXIX.—*Of the church of the town of Barra, and its ornaments, and of the fair there, and of the merchandise, and costumes of the friars, nuns, and priests.*

In this town of Barra there is a church of Our Lady, large, new, very well painted and well built, and handsomely ornamented with many brocades, crimson silks, and Mekkah velvets, and red camlets. The church in this town is served like that at Barua, only that the offices are more solemnized because the Barnagais resides here, and because here there are more clergy and an infinite number of friars. The church is managed by priests. I saw them make a procession round the church in the greater circuit, which is of the churchyard. In it there were many priests, friars, and men and women, because in this church the women receive the communion in the place where the laity do so. In that procession I saw the ornaments which I have mentioned: they must have taken quite thirty turns round the church chaunting like a litany, and sounding many drums and cymbals, as they sound them when they make a procession before the effigy of Our Lady on Sundays and feast days; and they sing and celebrate a feast; and likewise when they give the communion on feast days. They said that this procession was made in supplication to God for rain for their sowing. The bells are of stone, like those of other churches, and the bells badly made. In this town there is a great fair like that of Barua, and so likewise in all the 346 796 443

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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136 is no fish there except very little from the rivers; from the sea none.

795 There are no monasteries except of St. Anthony, and
792 not of any other order, as some friars say who come from there.

291 The gentlemen, monks, canons, and priests are clothed; most of the other people are bare from the waist upwards, and a sheepskin on the shoulders, with the front and hind feet tied together.

792 Most of the monasteries are situated on high mountains,
346 or in great ravines; they have large revenues and juris-
[262] diction. In many monasteries they do not eat meat all the year, and fish very few times, as they have not go it in the country. The services of these monasteries are psalms and prose, and so it is done in the churches of the canons.

796 Every church has two curtains, one on this side of the altar with little bells, and no one but priests enter inside this curtain; and another curtain in the middle of the church. And no one but persons in orders enter the church, and many gentlemen and honourable persons are ordained in order to enter the church. They go to the door of all the churches and monasteries to read the epistles and gospels, and they say them rapidly, and there they give the communion to the people.

The priests consecrate at the altar, and do not show the sacrament. When the priest who says mass comes to take the communion, he takes a particle from the top, and the other two large parts he leaves for the communion of the people. All the people who come to the church have to receive the communion every day, or else not come to church. When the communion is ended, they give them a little blessed water with which they wash their mouths.

Nobody sits down in the church, nor do they enter it shod; they do not hem or spit, nor do they let any dog or other animal come into the church. They confess standing,

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which we call of Guinea, there they are called zegra, quails, 136
pigeons, turtles, hawks, falcons, kites, eagles, thrushes, sparrows, swallows, nightingales, larks, wild ducks, of different kinds,[1] and other waterfowl, herons, cranes, *hemas*, and all other birds that may be in the world, and not known to us; and there are all in this country except magpies and cuckoos, which I never saw, nor heard of their being there.

There are so many apes, that in the kingdom of the Barnagais, in a town which is named Ceroel, at the time the harvest is ripe, they pursue them till they make them pass a mountain; and they keep guard over them in a pass by day, because at night they do not move about, and they give a certain provision to two men who keep guard over them until the corn is gathered in, when they let them loose, or leave off keeping watch over them.

There is much basil in the thickets, and there are none 137
of our trees except cypresses, plumtrees, and willows by the rivers; there are no melons, cucumbers, nor horse-radish.

In the country there is no gold or silver money, and pur- 436
chases are made by exchange of one thing for another, principally salt, which is current throughout the country as money.

There is linen there, but it gives no fibre, and no stuff is 248
made with it; there is much cotton, and stuff made of it; there is much coloured cloth, and there is a very cold country where they wear serge.

The churches there are well built, but the walls are not 346
well wrought, and they do not place anything upon them; they pitch [the roof] upon props, which reach from the ground upwards.

In the country there is gold, silver, copper and tin, but 135
they do not know how to get it out of the mines.

[1] *Adens, marecas.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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154 There are many lepers in this country, and they do not live separated from the people, they live all together; there are many people who, out of their devotion, wash them, and tend their sores with their hands.

231 There is a great quantity of honey in all the country, and the bees are not in hives, but inside the houses, where the cultivators live, clinging to the walls on the inside, where they have a mode of egress outside, and also inside they surround the house: but they do not on this account desist from dwelling in the house, because the bees go outside. There are a great number of these swarms of bees, chiefly in the monasteries, there are also many in the woods and mountains, and the men put hives near the trees and fill them with bees, and bring them in them to the houses.

● 346 Since no one sits in the churches, at their doors outside of them, and within the circuit, there are always a great quantity of staves with cross pieces like a .....[1] or cripple's crutch, and each one takes his staff and leans upon it as long as he is at the offices of the church. In the churches there are many effigies painted on the walls. Effigies of [532] our Lord and our Lady, and of the apostles and patriarchs, and prophets and angels, and in all the churches St. George. They have not got solid images. There are many books in [212] the churches all written on parchment, because there is no [191] paper there, and the writing and language is Tigray,[2] which is that of the first country in which Christianity began.

In this country they are not accustomed to write to one another, neither do the officers of justice write anything. All the justice that is done, and what is ordered, is by messengers and speech. I say only that I saw the property of Prester John written down on being delivered up and received.

554 There would be much fruit and much more tillage in the country, if the great men did not ill treat the people, for

[1] *Tahu.* [2] *Tigia.*

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

BOOK V.—CONTINUED.

CHAP. XII.

State of Religion—Circumcision, Excision, &c.

346 THERE is no country in the world in which there are so many churches as in Abyssinia. Though the country is very mountainous, and consequently the view much obstructed, it is very seldom you see less than five or six churches; and, if you are on a commanding ground, five times that number. Every great [83] man, that dies, thinks he has atoned for all his wickedness if he leaves a fund to build a church, or has built one in his lifetime. The king builds many. Where- 346 ever a victory is gained, there a church * is erected in 727 the very field, stinking with the putrid bodies of the slain. Formerly this was only the case when the ene-

* The oldest churches in Habbesh are those in the province of Tigre. Axum, now in ruins, possessed many before the Adelan war. A list of these is given in the Appendix of Kebir Neguste, or Chronicle of Axum; and of the lands which they possessed, as given by several kings. R.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 my was Pagan or Infidel; now the same is observed
[727] when the victories are over Christians.

346 The situation of a church is always chosen near
running water, for the convenience of their purifica-
351 tions and ablutions, in which they observe strictly the
[783] Levitical law. They are always placed upon the top of some beautiful, round hill, which is surrounded entirely with rows of the oxycedrus, or Virginia cedar, which grows here in great beauty and perfection, and is called Arz *. There is nothing adds so much to the beauty of the country as these churches, and the plantations about them.

In the middle of this plantation of cedars is interspersed, at proper distances, a number of those beautiful trees called Cusso, which grow very high, and are all extremely picturesque.

346 All the churches are round, with thatched roofs; their summits are perfect cones; the outside is surrounded by a number of wooden pillars, which are nothing else than the trunks of the cedar-tree, and are placed to support the edifice, about eight feet of the roof projecting beyond the wall of the church, which forms an agreeable walk, or colonade, around it in hot weather, or in rain. The inside of the church is in several divisions, according as is prescribed by the law of Moses. The first is a circle somewhat wider than the inner one; here the congregation sit and pray. Within this is a square, and that square is divided by a veil or curtain, in which is another very

* Ludolf, in his dictionary, says, this word, in Hebrew, signifies any tall tree. In this, however, he is mistaken. The translators did not, indeed, know what tree it was, and so have said this to cover their ignorance; but Arz is as exclusively the oxycedrus, as is an oak or an elm when so named. Arz is indeed a tall tree, but every tall tree is not Arz, which is the Virginia berry-bearing cedar.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

small division answering to the holy of holies. This 346
is so narrow, that none but the priests can go into it. You are bare-footed whenever you enter the church; 783
and, if bare-footed, you may go through every part of it, if you have any such curiosity, provided you are pure, i. e. have not been concerned with women for 24 hours before, or touched carrion, or dead bodies (a curious assemblage of ideas); for in that case you are not to go within the precincts, or outer circumference of the church, but stand and say your prayers at an awful distance among the cedars.

All persons of both sexes, under Jewish disqualifications, are obliged to observe this distance; and this is always a place belonging to the church, where, unless in Lent, you see the greatest part of the congregation; but this is left to your own conscience; and, if there was either great inconvenience in the one situation, or great satisfaction in the other, the cause would be otherwise.

When you go to the church, you put off your shoes 782
before your first entering the outer precinct; but you must leave a servant there with them, or else they will be stolen, if good for any thing, by the priests and monks before you come out of the church. At entry you kiss the threshold, and two door-posts, go in and say what prayer you please; that finished, you come out again, and your duty is over. The churches 532
are full of pictures, painted on parchment, and nailed 346
upon the walls, in a manner little less slovenly than you see paltry prints in beggarly country ale-houses. There has been always a sort of painting known among the scribes, a daubing much inferior to the worst of our sign-painters. Sometimes, for a particular church, they get a number of pictures of saints, on skins of parchment, ready finished from Cairo, in a style very little superior to these performances of

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 their own. They are placed like a frize, and hung in
532 the upper part of the wall. St George is generally there with his dragon, and Demetrius fighting a lion. There is no choice in their saints; they are both of the Old and New Testament, and some that might be dispensed with from both. There is St Pontius Pilate and his wife; there is St Balaam and his ass; Samson and his jaw-bone; and so of the rest. But the thing that surprised me most was a kind of square-miniature upon the front of the head-piece, or mitre, of the priest, administering the sacrament at Adowa, representing Pharaoh on a white horse, plunging in the Red Sea, with many guns and pistols swimming upon the surface of it around him.

Nothing embossed, nor in relief, ever appears in any of the churches; all this would be reckoned idolatry, so much that they do not wear a cross, as has been represented, on the top of the ball of the sendick, or standard, because it casts a shade; but there is no doubt that pictures have been used in their churches from the very earliest age of Christianity.

793 The Abuna is looked upon as the patriarch of the Abyssinian church, for they have little knowledge of the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria. We are perfectly ignorant of the history of these prelates for many years after their appointment. The first of these mentioned is Abuna Tecla Haimanout, who distinguished himself by the restoration of the royal family, and the regulations he made both in the church and state, as we have seen in the history of those times. A very remarkable, but wise regulation was then made, that the Abyssinians should not have it in their power to choose one of their own countrymen as Abuna.

Wise men saw the fallen state of literature among them; and unless opportunity was given, from time to time, for their priests to go abroad to Jerusalem for their instruction, and for the purpose of bringing the

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER XVI

THE NATIONAL CHURCH AND RELIGION OF ABYSSINIA (*continued*)

346 BRUCE wrote that there was no country in the world
771 where there were so many churches, and I have seen an estimate which I should think was well under the mark —of 3000 for Shoa, 1100 for Gojam, and 2600 for the districts of Gondar and Axum. For even small villages have two or three churches each, and it is a popular axiom that he who has erected a church has atoned for every sin. And to each of this legion of churches are attached many priests who live in remarkably simple—to put it mildly—accommodation in the precincts.

346 The buildings themselves are quite unpretentious, being small circular erections built of the stone that abounds everywhere in the country, covered with pointed thatched roofs surmounted by a cross on the points of which ostrich eggs are generally impaled. The Abyssinians show a considerable measure of reverence to their churches, outwardly at all event. I have [788] frequently seen men of importance stop their retinue when passing the church, dismount, and kiss the earth.

The principal modern church in Abyssinia is that of St. George, the patron saint of Abyssinia, at Addis Ababa. It is a stone-built edifice, octagonal in shape, surmounted by a large central dome; it is of no particular style of architecture, though it approximates to the Greek, and externally it is not very pleasing to

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

the eye. Its beauty was not increased by the addition of a corrugated iron annexe for the purpose of seating some of the foreign guests at the Emperor's coronation. 346

The Abouna was good enough to arrange for us to visit the church, and we were received with ceremony by a number of priests, who were exceedingly kind and enabled us to make a thorough inspection, and even allowed us to take some photographs (which unfortunately, owing to the bad light, did not come out). They showed us everything with great enthusiasm and begged us to return "when a great feast was in progress". The building consists of three portions, a sort of outer gallery, an inner court, and finally the Holy Place or Holy of Holies, an inner chamber in the centre of the building in which rests the *Tabot* or representative of the Ark of the Covenant to which only the priests are allowed access. 346 778

The priests threw open the doors of the Holy Place for us to see in; it contained a kind of altar where the Sacraments are kept, and was surrounded by priests in very gorgeous vestments, burning incense and holding big crosses and crucifixes. 778 788

In one of the galleries a service was proceeding. Two priests were beating with their hands very big drums made of wood and hide; many others were shaking their curious little brass cymbals; and all were chanting, swaying their bodies, and slowly waving their praying-sticks. The time was really good, and the chant was rhythmic and tuneful, and not at all unmelodious. 796 534

The galleries were profusely decorated with huge life-size paintings depicting mainly scenes from the Scriptures, scenes from the life of Christ, the miracles, etc.; one dreadfully realistic picture of the Massacre 353 532

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

291
874
516

FIG. 1.—*School of qenê (Wäshwä Märyäm monastery, Gojjam)*

346

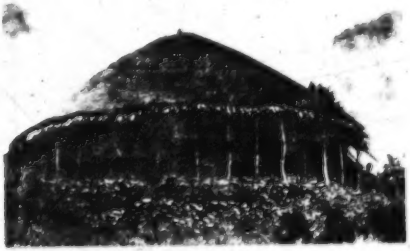

FIG. 2.—*Nagäsi's church, Äqäntchä, Manz*

[P. 14-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

sponsored the translation of works from Arabic. Among these were *Laws of the Kings,* a collection of civil and canon laws which became the official basis for judication, and a penitential manual, *Spiritual Medicine,* the last major production in Ge'ez literature. 175* 643 517 [633]

Yohānnes also continued Fāsil's work of "purifying" the church. He decreed that descendants of the Portuguese must leave Ethiopia unless they joined the Orthodox Church and that Muslims must reside apart, either in their own villages or in ghettos. Ordained as a priest before becoming emperor, Yohānnes followed keenly the theological disputes of his day. Toward the end of his reign he convoked a synod in Gondar to discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit in Christ, the chief theological question in Ethiopian history. [798] [793] [779]

Iyāsu I, like many of Ethiopia's rulers, appears to have been moved by deep religious feeling. Describing Iyāsu's religiosity, one of the priests of Gondar wrote an eulogy a few years after his death: 175* 643 781

> The king used to stand at the window of his palace . . . and listen from his tower on high to the singing of the priests and learned men, to their gentle hymns which moistened the bones by their exceeding tenderness. When their offerings pleased him greatly he was pierced with affection for them and drawn by the harmony of their heavenly peace. For this reason . . . he would prepare for them dinners filled with delights, and bid them eat with him in his royal chambers, ornamented all about with the beauty of pure gold and wrought silver. He would take off his gold necklace and present it to them. He adorned them with garments of purple and of staffs interwoven with gold from the treasury of his kingdom. . . . None of the kings before him had done such as he, and none of the clergy of yore had been treated as were his priests and learned men. After the dinners, the king and his priests together sang hymns of joy and jubilation all night long in the palace—in their time of pleasure, in the sweetness of divine ministry.[6]

Iyāsu the Great did much to establish Gondar as the most important center of religious culture in Ethiopia. To this end he brought outstanding priests and learned men from all over the country to his capital. From Gojjam, for example, he brought the great master of religious verse, Kĭfflē Yohānnes, whose lines are remembered even today. The number of teachers in Gondar in his time exceeded five hundred; there were one hundred and fifty at his church Dabra Berhān Selassie alone.* It was under Iyāsu I that the classic subject matter of the higher religious studies in Abyssinia—*zēmā* ("religious 175* 643 633 517

* Dabra Berhān Selassie, one of the two churches built by Iyāsu I, is the only one of the original churches of Gondar which survived later conflagrations of the city. The original paintings which covered its walls have been preserved, as well as the remarkable ceiling from which rows of wide-eyed angels look down from between wooden beams. The church provides separate places for nobility and commoners, and a balcony for the emperor. [346]

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
tĕff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181]
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 805 796 822 787 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [181] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 181 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 346 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services. 565* 346 341 181 796 822 [778]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery. 565* 822 181 361 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order. 565* 822 181 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities. 565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable 565* 156 157 [577]

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

townspeople of highland Begemder.

Field research was concentrated in the vicintiy of Gondar, the largest of the province's towns, and imperial capital during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Today, it is the provincial capital and an important ecclesiastical center, housing several famous churches and reknowned ecclesiastical academies. The town is also the home of many of the province's most famous healers. Extended research was also conducted in the Woggera region north of Gondar, in the rural hamlets discussed in Chapter Three. The division of research efforts between town and countryside reflects the important urban and rural aspects of Amhara medical practices with regard to the distribution of practitioners.

Through observation and inquiry, this field research sought, first, to elicit a description of the social and natural environments in which Amhara perceive pathogenic, prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic forces to operate. A second concern was to examine how Amhara select elements from these environments, and arrange them into etiologies with which to explain particular disease episodes. On the one hand, this meant collecting abstract, conscious etiological models used by Amhara; on the other hand, it meant recognizing etiologies that are constructed pragmatically and piecemeal, in the course of prophylactic and therapeutic failures and successes. Fi-

632 [796] motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' epony-
[346] mic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "govern-
[691] ment" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means
[423] litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
[161] Total population	151	95
[592] Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by
[613] risteñas. These households are distributed among the
[592] hamlets' ambilineages as follows:
[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 on the sheet, or not far from it, have historical associations. Tegulet, a little to the north, was the home country of Yikuno Amlak, the Shoan prince in whose person the Solomonian line was restored to the throne of Ethiopia in the thirteenth century. Debra Berhan itself, now a rather sordid settlement on the Asmara road, is of ancient foundation, for the emperor Zar'a Yakob made it his capital in the fifteenth century. Although a somewhat cold and inhospitable place it has an obvious advantage as commanding what must always have been an important focus of routes. Even in modern times it was [491] inevitable that the Asmara road should be brought through this easy passage, avoiding the impassable gorges on the one hand and the much broken country of the higher plateau on the other.

● 349 Although there is no proof, and apparently no relevant tradition, I should be inclined to attribute to Zar'a Yakob some curious caves excavated in one end of a high hogsback 2 miles south-east of Debra Berhan. Unfortunately I inspected them only once and rather casually and found no opportunity to come again. There are at least two very elaborate excavations, besides some rougher ones, now partly inhabited. The two principal caves are very similar in lay-out. Entering by a roughly rounded lobby, one passes through a small hole in the rock, which admits scarcely any daylight, into the principal interior space. This is approximately circular and perhaps 25 feet in diameter. On the far side, opposite the entrance, it communicates with a smaller chamber semi-circular in form. From the main space a passage leads off, in the first cave to the right, in the second to the left; these receive no daylight at all. In the first cave the passage (which was half under water) turned twice to the right and was thus bent back on itself. It opened into several miniature cells, in shape an erect oval and only big enough for a man to stand in, each of which appeared to have opened through a small hole at the top into an upper space of some kind. The passage belonging to the second cave had basin-shaped excavations in its floor opening through small holes into spaces below. I therefore conjectured that I had here got into an upper passage such as apparently existed above the other system. Possibly these were underground chapels inspired by rock-excavated churches of the Lalibela school. As to the passages and the small spaces leading off them, with what seemed to be their ventilating arrangements, they might have been stores of some kind, or burial chambers, or special places of devotion, or hermits' cells—but these are speculations. If the mud which chokes these caves were removed something definite might be found out about them. They found a use quite recently, for at the time of the Italian invasion *tabots* and other church valuables were said to have been hidden in them.

175 563 In the first half of the sixteenth century the Shoan plateau, in common with a large part of Ethiopia, was occupied by Galla tribes invading from the south. These Gallas were essentially horsemen and herdsmen, and it seems that, while they occupied the entire plateau, they did not seriously attempt to penetrate the gorges, into which even a mule descends with difficulty. I believe that the Amhara population became forcibly concentrated in the upper reaches of the gorges at this time, and that the dense population which resulted explains the extraordinary number of churches which came to be built there. Even to-day the greater part of the plateau between Addis

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

shortly before the Italian invasion of 1935, the first was accomplished peacefully; but not the second. According to the story told me, the *tabot* of the lower Ghiorghis had been borrowed and carried in solemn procession on the plateau in order to ward off a swarm of locusts which were damaging the crops there. This measure was successful, and the plateau people determined to keep the *tabot* which had proved itself so powerful. The people of the gorge would not agree, and tried to recapture their *tabot*. The plateau party however successfully defended it by force of arms, and later built a little church to house it. It was not unusual to attribute specific powers to *tabots*: for instance, that of Dimbaro Mariam (a little east of the north-east corner of the sheet) used to be carried to war by the emperors, attended by a retinue of priests and scribes, to bring success in battle.

The last church to be founded in these parts was the new St. Gabriel, on a prominent hill-top in the district of Dilila near the south-east corner of the sheet. I came upon it when first following the upper course of the Beressa in December 1946. As I approached the foot of the hill I learnt from passers-by that a new church had been built upon it, and that the foundress herself, a certain great lady from Addis Ababa, was at that moment on the hill. Climbing a rocky track to the top, I saw a cluster of new huts and the still unfinished building of the church. Nearby was a large canvas awning stretched rather clumsily between rough stone walls. Under the awning I found the lady herself, short and stout and genial, sitting on a camp chair; around her, squatting on the ground, was a deferential assembly of local dignitaries, personal retainers and priests. After the fluster caused by my unexpected arrival had died down, I had a talk with the worthy lady who, having just presided at a mid-day meal, now plied me with very welcome refreshment. She had been born and bred in this very place. Having spent most of her life elsewhere, and somehow acquired a certain amount of wealth, she had returned in later life to her place of birth and founded this church only the year before my visit. It met a need, she said, for the area lacked a church, and no other St. Gabriel existed anywhere in the neighbourhood. As it chanced, I had come on the day after St. Gabriel's annual festival (which is the 19th of Tahisas, or, in European style, the 28th of December). She expressed great regret that I had not been present at the festival itself, when big crowds had come from Debra Berhan and from all the surrounding country.

This incident seemed to me interesting as demonstrating the tenacity of the local religious tradition in Ethiopia. After all the upheaval and disruption of Italian occupation and the Second World War, the hold of the ancient Church over the Amhara people seemed unweakened. The Church was able to extend its influence in an area not yet well served as readily as ever. It was still an appropriate act for a pious person to found a new church in a lonely place. Perhaps these things are not surprising, for the Church has been the main support and inspiration of Ethiopian unity since the earliest Christian times. It has always been the focal centre of the national sentiment, the fount of renewed resistance to aggression, the main force, in fact, which has maintained Ethiopia's independence and made of it, as Menelik himself once said, an island of Christianity in the great Islamic sea.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 my was Pagan or Infidel; now the same is observed
[727] when the victories are over Christians.

346 The situation of a church is always chosen near running water, for the convenience of their purifica-
● 351 tions and ablutions, in which they observe strictly the
[783] Levitical law. They are always placed upon the top of some beautiful, round hill, which is surrounded entirely with rows of the oxycedrus, or Virginia cedar, which grows here in great beauty and perfection, and is called Arz *. There is nothing adds so much to the beauty of the country as these churches, and the plantations about them.

In the middle of this plantation of cedars is interspersed, at proper distances, a number of those beautiful trees called Cusso, which grow very high, and are all extremely picturesque.

346 All the churches are round, with thatched roofs; their summits are perfect cones; the outside is surrounded by a number of wooden pillars, which are nothing else than the trunks of the cedar-tree, and are placed to support the edifice, about eight feet of the roof projecting beyond the wall of the church, which forms an agreeable walk, or colonade, around it in hot weather, or in rain. The inside of the church is in several divisions, according as is prescribed by the law of Moses. The first is a circle somewhat wider than the inner one; here the congregation sit and pray. Within this is a square, and that square is divided by a veil or curtain, in which is another very

* Ludolf, in his dictionary, says, this word, in Hebrew, signifies any tall tree. In this, however, he is mistaken. The translators did not, indeed, know what tree it was, and so have said this to cover their ignorance; but Arz is as exclusively the oxycedrus, as is an oak or an elm when so named. Arz is indeed a tall tree, but every tall tree is not Arz, which is the Virginia berry-bearing cedar.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

513 all together in their single room; if to the aroma arising from this combined population be added the acrid [372] smoke from a fire made of dung-cakes, and a plentiful accompaniment of fleas and other insects, the joys of a night's shelter in such quarters may well be imagined.

•351 The house nearly always stands in a very large piece of ground surrounded by a mud and stone wall. It is a curious habit of theirs that in building the wall they generally start with the gateway. Occasionally, for one reason or another, the wall-building suffers a hitch, and one sees the quaint spectacle of a gateway (sometimes with a gate), a few yards of wall, and then nothing to impede general ingress. Some of the chiefs, 342 however, are now building themselves better places, especially those that have been on missions to Europe. But even among these an ordinary *tukul* sometimes suffices, and most of the important chiefs I met in Abyssinia were content with most primitive installations.

The *tukuls* of the poorer class are mostly constructed in a circular form of sticks plastered inside and out with mud. The roof, which is made separately and put on last, is cone-shaped, made of sticks or cane bound strongly together with strips of bark and then thatched: the latter is an art in which the Abyssinians particularly excel. The roof extends two or three feet from the walls; thus the torrential rains run off easily and leave the hut perfectly dry.

342 Inside, a part is usually divided off by a length of 352 sheeting suspended on a string, behind which, on a raised platform, the family sleep on couches or beds made of wood and grass and covered with skins; blankets are uncommon, and the *chammas* in which

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē.

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna*, an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables.

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 805 796 822 787 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [18] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 18 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 346 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

342 hut. The door is equipped with projecting pivots on top and bottom, the ends turning in two troughs carved into the door-frame.

The overhanging roof protects most of the wall from being damaged by driving rain, and the darkness inside is also a protection against the sun-loving flies. The average hut needs re-thatching every 5 to 8 years, and an additional coating of clay plaster mixed with straw every 2 to 3 years. Old huts, abandoned due to fire, war, death [777] by sickness, etc., are considered unlucky and are not rebuilt. Sometimes their remaining walls are used as windbreaks for garden crops.

Interior architecture consists of the following:

(1) a high-fencelike partition of bamboo ("mäqa") to give privacy to the master and his wife, usually center-right from the door, with a special high elevation on which the bed of the couple is set; another high partition, usually to the left of the door or toward the rear, for nighttime shelter for calves, goats or the family mule. This fence-like, permanent partition is called "get" or "gedgedda";

●352 (2) a solid clay bench which runs along half the interior of the walls, on one or both sides of the door, about 16 inches high, called "mädäb", usually covered with sheepskins. On this clay bench men sit during the day with visitor, while sipping barley beer, and at night the children sleep on them, covering themselves with the sheepskins;

(3) on top of a center-rear elevation of rock and clay, up to 42" high, rests the "alga", the master's bed, 15"-30" high. It consists of a wooden frame on four wooden

352 legs; thongs of sundried oxhide interlace the wooden frame diagonally giving the bed a springy quality. In case of great poverty, wooden slats are used instead of oxhide, and a cowskin is placed on top. The leather alga seems to resemble the leather thong bed of ancient Greece.

354 (4) The fireplace set up front of center, 5 of 3 cornerstones ("medeja", or, "gulcha"), so that the broad baking-pan and clay cooking pots are well supported.

352 (5) From the center pole to the rear are various clay bins
[251] ("riq", made of a frame of willow branches, cowdung and mud)
[415] holding threshed grain. Behind the fireplace is the "gu-
rej", the storage space for plow, axe, adze, beer and water
[482] pots, skin sacks for transporting grain to market; sometimes a litter ("qarēza") used for transporting rocks, beams, sick or dead persons, the wounded in war, and formerly an indispensable equipment for corvée. Also behind the cen-
[251] ter pole is the indoor grain bin made of concentric rings of clay and fine straw, dried outside, and inside assembled to a height of 60".

(6) In front of the center pole stands the portable "mäs-sob", the table woven tightly of reeds in the shape of a round breadbasket, on which the daily bread, "enjara" is served. A small massob may have a diameter at top of 18" and may be 20" high. The height would come from a triangular leg of 7", on which an inverted, triangular leg faces upward 10" in the manner of an hourglass; and another 3" from the height of the top tablet. The hollow leg tapers to a waist, then widens again toward the top. It has a depression in the center, so that the spiced meat stew can

[352] accumulate there when poured over the limp sheets of bread.

251 (7) Food staples must be stored out of reach of domestic animals, on horizontal slats fastened between the horizontal beam and walls. On these slats lie flat cakes of "abshelo" (pre-fermented and baked hops), bunches of sorghum, husks of maize, etc.

352 To provide additional privacy, togas can be hung a-
[754] cross. This was done in the past particularly at dinner
[609] time, to protect the eaters from the "evil eye" in the presence of non-kinsmen, and is still done in some remote areas, unless the peasant prefers to postpone his meal until the stranger has gone away, so as not to offend him.

342 The tuqul is regarded as a good, sound habitation by the Amhara. It is compared to the round tent of the king and duke ("ras") which not so long ago was the center of activities (if not the actual capital) of the province and
[554] country. On the other hand, reactangular or square huts, "säqäla", are regarded as carrying low prestige, little more than temporary lean-to's of hunters. The proverb indicates
[539] this low regard of a säqäla:

"Of children, the worst is the bastard;
of foods, the hardest is beans;
of clothing, the poorest is nätäla (half-toga);
of housing, the poorest is säqäla."

Response: "(but) from enemy, the bastard son will defend you;
toward better days the bean will let you survive;
in (warm) daytime, the nätäla will clothe you;
till a better is built, the säqäla will shelter you".

There are special tuquls of varying degrees of sturdiness:

342 sega byet - where meat is stored after sundrying in strips;

wäṭ byet - the kitchen hut;

gemja byet - the "treasury" house, general storehouse of tools and weapons, drums, decorations.

ṭej byet - honeymead brewery; talla byet - beer brewery, worked by women.

engeda byet- guest hut;

adarash - reception hut, larger, less solid, used for banqueting;

mänyeta byet - (lit. bedroom house), the master's bedroom hut;

"mad byet" - dining hut for daily dining.

565 The noble also has carpets ("säg̣aja") to sit on or,
●352 in feudal tents, to use as tapestry. These are carried from long distances, where specialists live, or are imported. He also has hardwood stools ("dekkwa") to sit on, cut out of solid tree trunks. In a wooden storage box he has one or several burnos, and one or several "kaba" (a dark, woolen mantle). Guests receive their coffee in small imported glazed china cups instead of clay ones, and the reed table is a "massob word", with dyed braids of imported dyes, in geometric designs.

824 C. What Nature Provides: Lumbering, Hunting, Fishing,
461 Collecting

Much of what little ingenuity goes into Amhara material culture is applied to the direct exploitation of natural resources. He would rather spend days and weeks

285 415 especially the use of milk (also found in pottery), is typically African.

Reeds, fibers (including the musa ensete and baobab), and grasses already mentioned are used to produce many types of articles, equal in variety only to pottery, and in numbers even exceeding.

285 415 352 The reed table, "mässob" is one of the most noteworthy, for every household has several, in different sizes, and usually one with ornamental geometric designs woven into it by means of dyed reeds. In principle it is a combination breadbasket and table, for by lifting the lid the former turns into the latter. The diameter at the top may be as much as 2 feet, just high enough to be comfortable for eating while seated on a mat on the ground. Thus the cylindrical, almost hourglass-shaped leg of the same tightly woven reeds, may be from 1 foot to 2 feet high. The lid fits tightly inside, so that flies and even ants cannot enter; it is of the same type found in the Sudan and parts of North Africa.

285 293 The next most noteworthy item of woven fiber is the famous sun umbrella, "jan ṭela" (lit. the emperor's shade, from "zehon", elephant). Formerly a royal prerogative, then a feudal one, it is now owned by every peasant housewife, and in provincial towns purchasable at the big market for ETH$2.-(US$0.80). This umbrella is unfoldable, made of strong ribs of split bamboo (called "qerqaha"), bent almost semi-circular; the central wooden stick ending in a woven plate above the shade itself; the sections woven tight enough to keep out the sun, though not watertight.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Ambara MP5

648 each one with his whip[1] in his hand, and they would not let us enter, saying that we should give them some pepper, and they kept us for a good while at the gate. Passing through this gate we arrived at another, at which stood three other porters who seemed more honourable persons; these made us wait more than half an hour standing on a little straw, and the heat was so great it killed us. Upon this the ambassador sent to say that he should bid us come in or he would return to his abode. Then the message went by one who seemed to be of higher position, and word came that we should enter. The Barnagais was in this manner, in a [342] large house of one story (for in this country there are not [352] houses of several stories), sitting on a bedstead, as is their custom, fitted with poor curtains; he had sore eyes, and his wife was sitting at the head of the bedstead. Having made our obeisance, the ambassador offered him a *master* to cure him; and he said that he had no need of him, as though he did not thank him for it. Upon this the ambassador asked him as a favour, and required on the part of Prester John, that he should order equipment to be given us for our journey, assuring him how much service he would be doing in this way to the king of Portugal, which would be well repaid to him by the King and by his Captain-major; and he, the ambassador, would tell Prester John the honour and favour which he received from him. The Barnagais asking what it was that we required, the ambassador said he wanted oxen and asses for baggage, and mules for the Portuguese. To this the Barnagais replied that he could not give any mules, and that we might buy them ourselves; that he would give orders for the rest, and would send a son of his with us to the court of Prester John, and with that he gave us our dismissal.

[1] *Azorague*, a kurbach, or whip of hide, *cravache*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church. 681

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him. 793

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means emperor, and he is called Neguz, which means king. 643

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves. 752 757

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thousand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and courtyards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 621 361 342 352 415 264 262 252 373 314 009

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

habit is not confined to Abyssinia! The second, which is more curious, is that of protection against the sun's rays. In this connection it is interesting to recall that Mr Mansfield Parkyns, who spent three years in Abyssinia, used no head covering of any sort at any time other than a coating of butter, which he says he found as effective as any hat.

The third (and most frivolous) reason is that butter in the hair hampers the free movement (and consequent irritation) of the little creatures that live there. There is possibly something in this, as a "head-scratcher", in the form of a blunt silver or wooden pin, is a general ornament, as incidentally is also an "ear-cleaner" which resembles a small salt-spoon.

In some parts of the country where the hairdressing mode is of an elaborate character, the women, when lying down to sleep, use wooden head-rests for their necks, made of a slightly curved piece of wood supported on a sort of foot, the whole being a few inches high. Some of these are quite elaborately carved or coloured; but however pleasing they may be to the eye—and I have seen some very pretty ones—they must make exceedingly uncomfortable pillows, and the use of them appears to argue an even greater interest in personal appearance than European women display. These head-rests are of very ancient origin; they are curiously similar to the one discovered in Tutankhamen's tomb.

The more wealthy Abyssinians are very partial to scents and scented hair oils; the strength of the scent is more important to them than its quality, and the shops in Addis Ababa do a brisk trade in inferior

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

513 all together in their single room; if to the aroma arising from this combined population be added the acrid [372] smoke from a fire made of dung-cakes, and a plentiful accompaniment of fleas and other insects, the joys of a night's shelter in such quarters may well be imagined.

351 The house nearly always stands in a very large piece of ground surrounded by a mud and stone wall. It is a curious habit of theirs that in building the wall they generally start with the gateway. Occasionally, for one reason or another, the wall-building suffers a hitch, and one sees the quaint spectacle of a gateway (sometimes with a gate), a few yards of wall, and then nothing to impede general ingress. Some of the chiefs, 342 however, are now building themselves better places, especially those that have been on missions to Europe. But even among these an ordinary *tukul* sometimes suffices, and most of the important chiefs I met in Abyssinia were content with most primitive installations.

The *tukuls* of the poorer class are mostly constructed in a circular form of sticks plastered inside and out with mud. The roof, which is made separately and put on last, is cone-shaped, made of sticks or cane bound strongly together with strips of bark and then thatched: the latter is an art in which the Abyssinians particularly excel. The roof extends two or three feet from the walls; thus the torrential rains run off easily and leave the hut perfectly dry.

342 Inside, a part is usually divided off by a length of sheeting suspended on a string, behind which, on a 352 raised platform, the family sleep on couches or beds made of wood and grass and covered with skins; blankets are uncommon, and the *chammas* in which

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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they are rolled form their only covering apart from the clothes which have been worn during the day. The remaining part of the hut is used for everything—living, cooking, eating, and also spinning in the rainy season—but of course in the dry weather much work is done outside. Apart from one or two rough wooden stools, furniture is rare or non-existent in these huts. In most of them, however, there are one or more wooden packing-cases containing the owners' most precious possessions, and fastened with a padlock and key; the remainder of their worldly goods are hung on hooks or put in niches in the walls. A form of basket-table is used at meal-times as both dish and plate, and drinking-cups made of horn are still to be seen in the provinces, though imported cups are now fairly common in Addis. A draught of mead from a cow's horn a couple of feet long is delightfully reminiscent of the pictures of the Danish and Norse invaders of England in the distant past.

342
352
[416]

[pp. 82-173 have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
tēff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181]
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 512 *The Daily Round*

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *ṭēff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[352] his hands, and *injarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[515] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.
[264]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *īnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *īnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *tallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [244] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] [782] [513] [352] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

11:Levine Z-4.5 (1958-1961)1965 MPS Amhara MPS

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FIG. 23—Clergy and government school students observing national holiday

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FIG. 24—Inside a secondary school library

[P. 142-B]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 is painted, it is not certain whether it is stone or wood. It has two sets of cloisters round the body of the church, both 346 covered in, and much painted with figures of apostles, 532 patriarchs, prophets, and many things of the Old Law, and 353 many angels, and St. George on horseback, who is in all the churches. This monastery also possesses a great cloth, like a piece of tapestry, on which is the crucifix and effigy of Our Lady and the apostles, and other figures of patriarchs and prophets, and each one has his Latin name written, so that no man of the country made it. It has many small and ancient pictures, not well made, and they are not upon the altars, for it is not their custom: they keep them in a [212] sacristy, mixed up with many books, and they bring them out on feast days. There is in this monastery a very large kitchen and bakehouse, also a very large refectory, in which 792 they eat. They mostly eat three and three[1] in a large dish, 262 it is not deep, but flat like a tray, and their food is very [264] poor. The bread is of maize and barley, and other grain which they call *taffo*,[2] a small black grain. They make this bread round, and of the size and roundness of a citron,[3] and they give three of these to each friar: to the novices they give three loaves to two of them, it is a matter of amazement how they can maintain themselves. They also give them a few vegetables, without salt or oil. Of this food they send to a great many old pensioners, who do not come to the refectory. Besides seeing these things when we 792 buried Mattheus, I saw them many times, because I came there to pass time with the friars, principally on feast days, when we were near there. In this way I learned about them and their property, and revenues and customs. In my opinion there were generally always a hundred friars in this

[1] By threes.

[2] Mansfield Parkins calls it teff, the species of corn most esteemed in this country.

[3] Zamboa, not referred to in Selves' translation.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

the eye. Its beauty was not increased by the addition of a corrugated iron annexe for the purpose of seating some of the foreign guests at the Emperor's coronation. 346

The Abouna was good enough to arrange for us to visit the church, and we were received with ceremony by a number of priests, who were exceedingly kind and enabled us to make a thorough inspection, and even allowed us to take some photographs (which unfortunately, owing to the bad light, did not come out). They showed us everything with great enthusiasm and begged us to return "when a great feast was in progress". The building consists of three portions, a sort of outer gallery, an inner court, and finally the Holy Place or Holy of Holies, an inner chamber in the centre of the building in which rests the *Tabot* or representative of the Ark of the Covenant to which only the priests are allowed access. 346 178

The priests threw open the doors of the Holy Place for us to see in; it contained a kind of altar where the Sacraments are kept, and was surrounded by priests in very gorgeous vestments, burning incense and holding big crosses and crucifixes. 178 188

In one of the galleries a service was proceeding. Two priests were beating with their hands very big drums made of wood and hide; many others were shaking their curious little brass cymbals; and all were chanting, swaying their bodies, and slowly waving their praying-sticks. The time was really good, and the chant was rhythmic and tuneful, and not at all unmelodious. 196 534

The galleries were profusely decorated with huge life-size paintings depicting mainly scenes from the Scriptures, scenes from the life of Christ, the miracles, etc.; one dreadfully realistic picture of the Massacre 353 532

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

353 532 of the Innocents was very striking. There was also a portrait of the Emperor Menelik, and of other noted characters in Abyssinian history; the likenesses of royal and other famous persons are frequently to be found on the walls or among the possessions of the principal churches.

778 In this connection an amusing incident is told by Stern. King Sehala Selassie had been given by Captain Harris' mission to the Court of Shoa, a portrait of Queen Victoria. This had been carefully guarded for many years amongst his treasures until his death, some time after which his successor, King Haile Malekot, presented it to the principal church at Ankober where the people used to flock on grand festivities to worship it as the representation of the Virgin Mary!

The *Tabot*, to which reference has been made, is the object of much veneration and has to be blessed or consecrated prior to being used in the particular church to which it is allocated. In one case the priest in charge of the church had committed a murder, and the *Tabot* had to be sent up to Addis to be reconsecrated before it could be used again.

796 785 The most prominent features of the practice of their religion are the fasts, feasts, and pageants; and each of these is sufficiently remarkable. A very large part of the year—about 150 days—falls under the category of fast or feast, and both are strictly observed. During their fasts they are forbidden not only meat, but also butter and milk and eggs, and it is really surprising to see to what an extent this rigid abstinence is followed, especially as the fasting periods are lengthy, that prior to Easter lasting forty days.

For a day or so immediately prior to the main feast,

342 city ("ḫemḫem") are woven into and across the rafters or tied to them, all the way up to the top of the roof; Sometimes, instead of in parallel rings, the hoops are wound to the top in spiral, seashell-type windings (baṭ). Near that lower border, where the rafters are farther apart, additional shorter sticks ("mäqa" bamboo) are shoved in between, so that no large gaps are left in the roof frame. Everything is tied in place, and a strong roof results.

Thatching is done by the master of the new tuqul, with the aid of men who are considered good at this. They work up from the edge of the roof to the top, then a second layer is laid and tied to the first, then a third to the second. At the top the thatch is tied to the top of the center pole, or to a stick firmly planted into the top of the hut's center pole. This is reinforced from the inside. The outside peak of the thatched roof forms a tuft called "ḫuṇcho" (lit. crest of hair), or "sebsab". Near trade routes, imported heavy glass bulbs or oriental perfume bottles are often fitted upside down on this tuft, for functional reasons they hold better against rain and as ornament. Falasha potterymakers create a small tower-like outer dome ("gullelat") over the tuft. A well-made roof may last 10 to 30 years, with repairs.

[354] There is no opening for a chimney. The smoke from the daily cooking fire escapes through the door, and in time through cracks in the walls, blackening the inner rafters with soot. Three stones are placed near the center of the hut, to serve as the fireplace.

A door is now made of wooden planks for a good hut or a church, or of bamboo sticks "mäqa" for an ordinary

352 legs; thongs of sundried oxhide interlace the wooden frame diagonally giving the bed a springy quality. In case of great poverty, wooden slats are used instead of oxhide, and a cowskin is placed on top. The leather alga seems to resemble the leather thong bed of ancient Greece.

354 (4) The fireplace set up front of center, 5 of 3 cornerstones ("medeja", or, "gulcha"), so that the broad baking-pan and clay cooking pots are well supported.

352 (5) From the center pole to the rear are various clay bins
[251] ("riq", made of a frame of willow branches, cowdung and mud)
[415] holding threshed grain. Behind the fireplace is the "gurej", the storage space for plow, axe, adze, beer and water
[482] pots, skin sacks for transporting grain to market; sometimes a litter ("qarēza") used for transporting rocks, beams, sick or dead persons, the wounded in war, and formerly an indispensable equipment for corvée. Also behind the cen-
[251] ter pole is the indoor grain bin made of concentric rings of clay and fine straw, dried outside, and inside assembled to a height of 60".

(6) In front of the center pole stands the portable "massob", the table woven tightly of reeds in the shape of a round breadbasket, on which the daily bread, "enjara" is served. A small massob may have a diameter at top of 18" and may be 20" high. The height would come from a triangular leg of 7", on which an inverted, triangular leg faces upward 10" in the manner of an hourglass; and another 3" from the height of the top tablet. The hollow leg tapers to a waist, then widens again toward the top. It has a depression in the center, so that the spiced meat stew can

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 [321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. [531] Ornamentation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric nature, in the wood. [303] Wooden combs together with their handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. [412] Wooden mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. [354] On occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and backrest of interlaced oxhide. [407] The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint firmly in place. [231] A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 Horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

323 aforementioned social reasons. They can bake fired bricks, "shehla", but have no use or orders for them, and do not make them at present. They apply their artistic talents [346] to a tower-like crown, "gulelat", which they place on the top of the thatched roof of the Falasha synagogue, the "mesgid" (which has also the practical effect of preventing the penetration of water during the rain storms).

415 The vast majority of clay utensils produced by the craftswoman is used in the household. Many of them are small, not over 12 inches in diameter or height. Round forms predominate, especially spherical or semi-spherical bowls with a long or short neck. Nearly all have two handles on the side, for grasping and for pulling a rope through.

The simple baking plate for the daily enjara bread, the "megogo", in town called "metad", has already been mentioned. Placed on the hearth of three stones, it forms [354] a simple stove, and itself is topped by a somewhat conical ("moged") lid which fits snugly. 20" in diameter, 1-1/2" high, 1" thick, grain is also roasted on it.

There are numerous varieties of water pitchers, mostly pear-shaped, with long, stout necks. When full (about 15 liters), the Amhara women carry them on the back, and therefore a special loop is added by the craftswoman on the base of the neck, so that the rope can be drawn through it and around the chest, for added support. The most common, big water-pitcher of this kind is the "madiga", with a height of 20" of which 5" are spout, 14" at its greatest width, and a 5" width of the spout. It is

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

They say the prayers by heart and
without light, except in the lamps or chandeliers, for they 796 782
have not got lamps. They burn butter in these chandeliers, [373]
for they have not got oil. They pray or chaunt very loud, [354]
without art of singing, and they do not recite (alternate) [237]
verses, but all sing straight on. Their prayers are psalms, and
on feast days besides psalms they recite prose, according as [533]
the feast is so is the prose. They always stand in the churches; at matins they only say one single lesson: this is said by a priest or a friar, rather shouted than intoned, and he reads this lesson before the principal entrance. When this lesson is finished, on Saturdays, Sundays, and 792
feast days, they make a procession with four or five crosses 796
on their poles, and a cross not so much raised as carried like a stick in the left hand, because they carry a thurible in the right hand, since as many as carry a cross carry a thurible, there are always as many thuribles as crosses. They wear some silk cloaks, not well made, because they [292]
are not wider than the width of a piece of damask, or other silk from top to bottom. Before the breast, a cross piece to the flanks on each side, of any other stuff and of any colour, even though it should not match the principal part, and of this principal part a good ell hangs behind dragging on the ground. They make this procession through the circuit, which is like a cloister. This being ended, on the said Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts, he who has to say mass enters with two others into the chancel; they bring out an [178]
effigy of Our Lady, which they have in ancient pictures in all churches and monasteries. He who has to say mass places himself in the centre of the transept with his face towards the principal entrance, and the image in his hands held before his breast: and those who stand by his sides hold lighted candles in their hands, and all the others commence a chaunt like prose, and all walk, shouting and leaping as if dancing[1], they hold hands and go round, before the

[1] *Como em chacota*, dancing and singing, *i.e.*, not reverentially.

464 and be willing to forego his usual demands, temporarily. During the caravan season, some will hire on as mule-drivers for a round trip. Otherwise the day laborer is rare among rural Amhara, and met more often only in provincial capitals and the few cities.

D. Labor and the market-town.

464 Laborers hiring on in the towns for temporary work (e.g. in construction) do so usually through a labor broker. There are no organized factories in the provin-
[467] cial towns, only a few small ones in the main cities, and there is not yet such a modern development as a labor union. Child and female labor is widespread and almost entirely
[465] unskilled. A laborer's daily wage was equated with 25¢ Ethiopian, by clause 6 of the Penal Code of 1930, but the present rate actively paid for urban labor of Amhara is Eth$1.- per day. The Emperor's factory proclamation of 1944 authorized the Ministry of Commerce to regulate hours and conditions of labor, but this actually anticipates future conditions and finds little application at present.

357 466 The household servant in the town usually hires out on a monthly basis. The traditional, personal guarantor and 2 witnesses of wage agreement are still necessary. The salary may now be as high as Eth$40.-. The servant is also fed and housed, and if he stays some months may keep any clothing given him. Moreover, his

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

357 466 his task is fixed in advance and if an Amhara he will usually refuse to carry out any work for which he was [E62] not engaged. Women servants usually receive half the salary of a male servant. Thus only officials and relatively high-income urbanites can afford Amhara servants; servants of socially lower groups can be hired for considerably less, if themaster is willing to forego the prestige of having Amhara servants.

The urban householder, who is not surrounded by kinfolk in his residence, usually must hire a night watchman, "zebanya", who sleeps huddled in coarse shammas in front of the house or behind the outer gate. They receive the wage of day laborers. Often they are old veterans of former feudal soldiery, too decrepit for any other work, yet still fierce-looking and fierce-tongued enough to discourage thieves.

265 466 Urban teahouses, coffeehouses and mead-houses employ waiters, "asalafi", who do not have the specialization of the more prestigeful "agafari", but who have steadier jobs. Their pay is not above that of the day laborer, but they can accumulate cash more readily.

[463] 875 871 During the present generation a new element of modern-educated clerks, teachers, hospital "dressers" and government officials is gradually entering the occupational pattern of the town, though still in very small percentages. A graduate of the traditional church school of the rural areas is considered to have only the equivalent of 2 grades of elementary school. All towns now have at least one modern elementary school with 8

563 "Barya" people below the northwest escarpment, so that
567 both terms became synonymous with "slave". Because of the negroid features of the former, and the very black skin of both, they had high visibility, and did not have to be guarded closely as they could hardly escape. In view of the widespread illiteracy, manumission was almost never practiced, and such a document would be ignored by a slave trader or any Amhara who wanted to re-enslave a manumitted Shanqalla or Barya. Until slave-trading was prohibited by the present emperor, negroid slaves were still brought from the Gumuz tribe of Guara sub-province, just below the western, old-
[588] Amhara escarpment. But concubinage was so widespread that today there are more half-Shanqalla than full-blooded ex-slaves. Freed only since 1942, little change has so far taken place in their social status. In rural areas most remain with their old masters as
[464] servants or sharecroppers. In towns, they form a pool ofunskilled labor, employed only briefly from time to time, subsisting on very little, residing in the oldest parts of theold Muslim ghetto. Some of their women have
[357] managed to raise their economic status by becoming house-maids, especially serving the women on the "street of unattached girls", or by marrying polygynous Muslims.

563 The Coptic church had not interested itself in
567 the status of slaves, for according to its rules a
797 Christian could not be kept in slavery, and therefore no attempt was made to convert Shanqalla or Barya slaves.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

four cuba for a pataka, each cuba about two rotol, or somewhat less. Butter, 20 rotol, for 1½ pataka, and 3½ harf. Civet, 1¼ pataka the wakea. Wax, 4 patt. the faranzola. Elephants teeth, 35 rotol for 18 patt. Water, 1½ paras the smallest jar, and 3 paras the largest. Abyssinian gold dust, 15 patt. per wakea, at Mocha. Dora, 12 measures for a pataka. The Venetian sequin goes for 2¼ patakas. 435 804

The Abyssinian grain measure is the ardeb, which, at Gondar, contains 10 measures, called Madega, each equal to 12 ounces, Cairo weight. An ardeb of grain costs 2 derims, or 2 patakas; an ardeb of teff, the same; 6 or 8 ardeb of tocusso pay an ounce (wakea) of gold, or 10 derims.

Servants Wages at Gondar *. At Gondar a maid-servant receives 15 salts per annum, and is fed in the house. A man-servant is paid 4 pataka yearly, which correspond to four wakea, or ounces of gold, Abyssinian weight, and receives besides two loaves, or cakes of teff, for his support daily. If his master is good, he sometimes gives him a little flesh, lentils, or vetches. He is not obliged to clothe him, but he sometimes gives him a pair of trowsers, which consist of about one-fourth of a yard of white cloth. 465 357

With respect to carriage, &c. three bundles of wood, which are brought from Tchagassa, three hours walking, cost a salt. The carriage of a jar, or manteca, full of wine, or honey, from Emfras, eight hours journey, pays a salt, of the weight of 3 faranzala, or so. 435 482

Thirty-three teff bread cost a salt; the loaves are about 3 lines thick, and 18 inches diameter. A pair of shoes (pantufle) cost a salt. 8¼ peeks of cloth is the least gift that can be offered in the country. 435

Bouza. Manner in which the Abyssinians make a kind of beer, that, in their language, is called bouza. 273

To make this, they use tocusso simply; but sometimes they mix it with grain (wheat), or dora, or all three together; but in ordinary tocusso is best. A jar of tocusso, or of the three sorts of grain, contains as much as is sufficient to make two loaves, that are a tenth part of the whole jar; besides which, they use about half a rotol of Ghesh leaves.

* From this, to the 29th line of page 68, is a translation from the Italian of L. Balugani.

(p. 41)

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

583 and divorced in this manner two or three times she is
586 considered rather a "catch", on account perhaps of her worldly possessions which she has acquired from her previous matrimonial ventures. Then if she does not retire from the world and become a kind of nun she often indulges in the third form of marriage, a solemn religious ceremony which is really binding; it is as a general rule confined to the better class of Abyssinians.

Women, some of whom are attractive and even
562 pretty, have, speaking generally, little or no position. There are of course exceptions to this rule, and I have known cases where a wife has by her influence over her husband acquired a certain status for herself. But this is rare, and by a general though not universal rule women are even supposed to eat separately.

Nevertheless the higher-class woman manages to
562 hold her own, and if badly treated by her husband has
586 the right of appeal to the Church. And so far as I can gather the woman of any class can divorce her husband as easily as he can divorce her, which gives her a certain protection in itself.

In spite of the facility of divorce—possibly to some
562 extent because of the mutual power to exercise it—the
462 lot of women is not at all what one might expect; they
357 are by no means the hewers of wood and drawers of water that one finds so extensively in Africa. They do little or no work, neither washing nor mending their husbands' clothes nor cooking; all this is done by Gourages or others of whom one or more is to be found in almost every household—other than the very poorest —and even amongst one's own servants, acting as "gentlemen's gentlemen".

562 Women of the upper classes are still to some ex-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and 857
for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly 868
useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *injarā.* [252]
Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make [262]
good *doro wat,* a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of
an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to 883*
manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is 868
often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside [582]
her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the 885
assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous 883*
throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter 857
of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through 867
virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, 836
a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin 183
at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to [357] •
provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *çhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *ṭajj*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *ṭallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics. 565 184 868 [567] [273]

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dajāzmātch Hailu*, meaning "Dajāzmātch Hailu and his men." 565 576

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics. 565 [142]

Conspicuous consumption among the *maḳuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions: 565 592 357 556

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shir*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cultivate a missionary spirit in order to reach the non-Christian peoples of Ethiopia. The association sponsors weekly religious services, featuring hymns in Amharic and talks in Amharic on religious and moral questions, and publishes a monthly journal. The Orthodox Students Association stands out as the first nationwide voluntary association in Ethiopia. It holds an annual convention which draws some three hundred students from all parts of the country.

The Ethiopian College Students Association was established in 1960 after some years of patient maneuvering by officers of the various college student governments. It attempts to represent the interests and needs of students vis-à-vis the government and to handle relations with international student organizations.

A number of student clubs have appeared from time to time within the framework of the colleges. One of the most popular and productive of these has been the Ethnological Society of the University College, founded in the early fifties by a Polish member of the college staff. Over the years it has produced several issues of an ethnological bulletin. More recently, under the framework of the new university, dramatic and choral groups have been established as well as groups like the Education Students Association and the Economics Students Association. Graduates of some of the secondary schools and colleges, moreover, have formed a small number of alumni associations.

Labor Unions.—Although Ethiopia has for some time been a paying member of the ILO, the government has until recently strongly opposed the establishment of unions in the country. Nevertheless, due to the encouragement of labor representatives from Western and other African countries, as well as to the courageous efforts of a number of Ethiopians, several unions have at last been established and have won some degree of recognition from the government.* Trade unions were first attempted among employees of the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad and in Eritrea.[42] They now include employees of a number of factories. Even household servants have formed associations that establish minimal conditions which members are obliged to demand from their employers.

Professional Associations.—The Ethiopian Teachers Association, with a large paper membership but scarcely any activity, was the only professional association in Ethiopia prior to the 1960 rebellion. If one may generalize from the frustrated attempts of Ethiopian doctors to establish a medical association, it would seem that the government was attempting to discourage groups of this sort as well as trade unions. Since 1961, however, the picture has changed. There now exists not only a medical association, which publishes its own

* A law establishing a legal basis for labor unions was enacted by the Ethiopian parliament in 1962.

132 Dega - more than 8,000 feet above sea level; cold, with
137 average temperatures of 50° - 61° F. The dega
241 is primarily prairie grassland, strewn with many medium-sized wooded areas of the high mountain type. The area is particularly adapted for raising livestock, but also suitable for growing barley, wheat, tieff (a variety of millet), beans flax, and temperate fruit, which are gathered wild not long after the end of the rains. Trees include the wild olive (Olea chrysophylla), juniper (Juniperus procera), the medicinal Kosso tree (Hegenia abyssinica).

Woyna Dega - between 6,000 and 8,000 feet: temperate to warm, with average temperatures of 61° - 68° F. This climatic zone includes the greater part of the plateau country, and most of the populated and cultivated lands. This is the zone where most cereals are grown, including soft grains, barley, tieff, maize. Here coffee grows wild. Forests, where they occur, are thicker, but spiny bushes are more prevalent. At the lower levels there are thick stands of bamboo (Podocarpus) and East African hardwoods; at the higher levels are juniper varieties. Most Amhara live in this zone.

[361]

132 Qolla - below 5,000 feet: hot. with average temperatures
137 in the 70's, 80's and 90's F. The qolla includes the arid lowland zones, as well as tropical forest; river valleys like that of the Awash; and most border areas of the country.

other side of the same hill.

361 Four factors seem to determine where a hamlet is likely to be formed: (1) Ecological considerations (water within a woman's walking distance; pasturage for the flock); (2) kinship consideration - for all persons within a hamlet are nearly always closely related and form a family community; (3) administrative considerations - inherited family ownership of land, or tenancy on land of feudal lord or in a fief of the church, when an agreement for settlement can be negotiated. This latter type is often found among the older hamlets, placed where some historical or legendary event occurred (e.g. a miracle recognized by the local Coptic church; or a military event). When a new church is built in an untenanted area, there are usually several extended families needing land, who negotiate a sharecropping agreement with the chief priest of the local church. (4) Ethnic consideration. Because of the individualism of each residential family group, two hamlets are rarely close to one another. Since they are built on or near hilltops to avoid flooding in the rainy season, there is usually a valley in between where brooks or irrigation canals form borderlines for planted fields. The hillsides, if they are not terrace-farmed, provide common pasturage for all hamlets on the hill. Not only sheep and goats, but even cows are quite used to climbing over fairly steep bushy hillsides to feed. Carrying water is a woman's job; but a hamlet may be located several hours climb from the nearest all-year water supply. Wind protection, i.e. location of the hamlet in a spot below the top of the hill, for fear of

361 tornadoes in the rainy season, is another ecological consideration.

591 [621] The hamlet is always a kinship unit, usually patrilocal and patrilineal. When a young man marries, his father will give him a cow or two, as he will to his daughter. But only the son will receive the use of part of his father's rented (or owned) fields to support his new family. Thus he will usually build his hut near his father's, father's brother's, and paternal grandfather's. In exceptional cases, when no land is available at his father's, the bridegroom may agree to establish himself at his wife's hamlet, but this is rare since the feeling is that he will always remain a subjugated, barely tolerated, henpecked and ill-treated figure. A proud Amhara male, even a "gabbar" (peasant ex-serf), would not agree to such a condition and insists on patriarchal status at least within his own biological family of creation. He would much rather continue [606] to obey his father than his new father-in-law. Consanguinal kinship feelings are so strong that it is a common assumption that no in-law could really mean well and be unselfishly well-disposed to the newcomer. Only when warfare has killed off the adult males in a hamlet, male inlaws move in.

512 Each hut is inhabited by a biological family, usually father and mother, about three children who have survived infant mortality, and perhaps an aged parent or old, widowed kinswoman of the husband's.

602 Patrilineal kinship relations are often related also to administrative considerations. On church-owned land, the peasants who live on the hillside below the church, who

622 485 This change has also lightened the burden on the "gabbar", the tenant sharecropper. In the past it was the gabbar who had to supply the "feast" (called "gebber", with ironic truthfulness regarding the provider) for feudal troops on march, in addition to all his other burdens. The chega shum was responsible for its collection, for only he knew how much produce, goats, sheep, honey, etc., the peasant had left after the heavy sharecropping rent to the landlord and the "tithe" ("asrat") which is still payable to the central government (formerly to the district feudal lord).

651 There is now a new tax, the "education tax" payable even in rural areas where no government schools exist as yet, and payable in cash only, not in produce as in case of "asrat". This tax, too, is collected by the chega shum and delivered to the mislanē who must now issue a receipt and forward the money to the central treasury.

563 361 Ethnic considerations in the location of a hamlet in Amhara territory apply to hamlets of scattered Falashas, ironsmiths who observe Mosaic Judaism, and hamlets of the Fagi, Cushitic-speaking tanners who were "Pagan" but have recently accepted the Coptic faith and the Amharic language. Since their services are required, they are often permitted to rent land on a hill, the other side of which may contain a Coptic Amhara hamlet. Relations between these hamlets, beginning on strictly economic terms, often become as friendly as the difference between religions, low status of skilled smiths and tanners, and old supernatural [622] suspicions permit. In case of such residence, one chega shum may have an ethnic variety of hamlets under his domain, and may know far more about their "strange" inhabitants and their customs than the average Amhara.

342 ded and especially unsanitary. But during most of the year nearly all activities during the 12 to 13 hours of daylight are carried on outside. After each rainy season the roof and walls are inspected for damage from heavy rain, hail and tornadoes, and, with repairs, a good tuqul can last twenty years.

The hut-building season begins usually a few months after the rainy season is over, in the month of Hedar, after the major harvest of cereals has been gathered and threshed. A tuqul is usually built in stages, interrupted by other chores. Since there is no danger of rain, the beams, saplings, withes, thatch grass can be selected from forest and bush at leisure, and left on the spot selected. But when a marriage approaches, especially during the main "mar-
[476] riage season", the entire process can be speeded up to little over a week; and if there are not enough hands in one hamlet, other kinsmen and friends can be invited to the hut-building-party, the host supplying daily spiced meat stew, barley beer, etc., thus attracting as many as twenty men.

[361] The first step is to select a location that will blend into the landscape and thus be best protected from wind, driving rain, tornado twisters. Cypresses, which always surround a church on the hilltop, are utilized as partial windbreaks for tuquls of a hamlet just below.

The circular ground floor for the hut, usually about 20 feet in, is measured off by means of a central stick and a rope. The stick indicates where the central, roof-supporting post will be, and the circle indicates the walls. Both the selection of location and the measuring of the ground is done by a semi-specialist, an Amhara who acts

563
463 They are especially afraid of the "buda", evil eye concept,
754 of which Falashas are believed especially capable; also of
326 their supposed ability to turn themselves into real and magic hyenas at night.

This magic power, however, is believed to make their
[323] tools "strong", and the pottery of the Falasha womenfolk "hard to break", so that their wares are preferred by the Amhara, creating a monopoly for Falasha iron tools and pottery wherever Falasha hamlets are within a day's walking distance. In some areas there are itinerant Falasha smiths, whose womenfolk make pottery at the same time. They will live in a special guest hut at the edge of an Amhara hamlet.

463 Weaving is also done by Falashas, but they have no
563 monopoly on it, as Muslim Ethiopian weavers are believed
286 by the Amhara to turn out togas that are just as good. For many centuries Muslims were permitted to reside only in segregated sections of towns, such as "AddisAlem" of
[361] Gondar town. Though this prohibition has been lifted, most Ethiopian Muslims still reside in special quarters of towns, rarely in a rural hamlet on the Amhara plateau. They were not permitted to own land and no one would rent them any.

They see much more of the country trade routes, since it is they who do much of caravan trading, acting as guides, quartermasters and retail traders for Arab coreligionists who are the wholesalers, usually on routes leading to the Sudan, to Eritrea and to Somaliland. The Coptic Amhara consider the Ethiopian Muslims almost as foreign as the Arabs, even the descendants of Amhara who were forcefully

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

606 to be a "good wife", to do "everything right", to learn what her husband likes. If she does not obey her mother-in-law, she is criticized as "rude", and the women say that the groom will "divorce her soon".

423 596 After the marriage, and especially after she bears children, a wife is regarded as a charter member of her husband's "byet" (lit. house), his family of procreation, continuing his patrilineal kinship unit, regardless of whether they move to residence elsewhere or not. Nevertheless, it is the "byet" that is the landholding unit among most "rest"-owning Amhara, and each biological unit within it receives an allocation of land for usufruct; the limit of one able-bodied plowman is regarded as 5-10 "qada". Thus, the biological family of procreation does not own land, nor does it control it, until, with the death of elders and advancing age, it becomes the "family of orientation" to which a succeeding generation must give obedience.

596 422 Meanwhile, however, the biological family unit does own the cattle and other mobile goods with which they started their married life, and the increase therefrom. This gives them some partial economic independence.

[731] 423 166 361 When, due to war, epidemics (e.g. malaria), or famine (erosion), a "byet" decides to abandon, for the time being, the ancestral lands, and migrates to another district, it usually huddles together in one or a minimum of residential hamlets, sometimes for several generations, until times are better. Then it buds off so rapidly that soon only a few huts remain on the location of the original hamlet of refuge. Thereupon kinsmen may claim "betäna" rights of usufruct from more distant kinfolk who had remained be-

423 hind on the ancestral lands.

166 361 This succession of events has taken place so often in Amhara history, that very few old settlements have remained on the same [591] spot for even a century. As a result, many regional varieties of "patrilocal residence" have developed, and even "matrilocal residence" is not excluded, though most bridegrooms would shun such a fate. Also, the land tenure of the Amhara has become complex and replete with litigation, because of the amorphous definition of "byet", which sometimes emphasizes the consanguineal aspect, sometimes the residential, of kinship after marriage.

B. Problems of the Married Couple and Divorce.

586 When a couple has remained married for a number of years, people say they are "rägga" (lit. coagulated), stuck on each other. For divorce of a first marriage is common as the partners mature.

If her husband neglects her, wanders off, is a drunkard, or beats her too often, a woman may decide to initiate divorce proceedings. A man may do so if she is disobedient, e.g. wanders off to town without his permission.

587 If a man takes a "damoz" wife in addition to his "semanya" wife, the latter has no recourse in court. But if he takes another "semanya" wife, she can have him arrested, if she can locate him, for breaking his oath. She then angrily accuses him of doing a stupid thing, "you married one ox hump (shanna) above the other". He may be fined, but his first marriage may still remain valid. If a "semanya" wife hears that her husband has a previous wife, she often laughs, flattered, mocking the other woman by saying: "I married on top of her and not below" - for evidently, the man,

794 756 123 [116] patients to her when his organic medicines had not helped. It was this guide who hit on the idea of flattering Lady Salämtew by notifying her that the foreigner was sick, suffering from severe headaches, sleeplessness and chronic intestinal cramps - (all common ailments in her practice), and that he would trust only her for treatment. Whether or not Lady Salamtew believed this, it indicated to her that the foreigner would fit himself into the framework and procedures of her zar cult, and not become a disturbing element that might "offend" her zar spirits.

The guide had taken the further precaution of negotiating with her through her brothers, who were willing to encourage her to accept, in the hope of gifts and rewards. As a result, Lady Salamtew accepted in principle; but in line with the unhurried dignity of her position she had the foreigner informed that he should send the guide again at a later time when she would make known the conditions under which he might attend the "amat bal" convention. In appreciation for having reached this point in the negotiation, the guide left her brothers with some "etan gänzäb" (money for frankincense).

The next step was reached when Lady Salamtu expressed the wish to have the foreigner appear before her, some days before the convention, so that she could look him over.

794 756 123 361 [342] Her house, a semimodern affair of hard-mud walls, is reached by a steep downhill trail from the Gondar town market. On the lower level (the old section of Gondar called "Addis Alam") many houses and huts are built on the foundations of stone houses destroyed by the dervishes in the late 19th century. This section, once restricted to Muslim and other non-Coptic minorities, is now largely inhabited by Muslim Ethiopian weavers and retail traders, many ex-slaves of Sudanese or part-Shanqalla

x794 756 123 361 descent, and a few poor Amhara Coptic families, as well as some Amhara who do business there, such as the "wogasha" doctor. Various elements which do not wish to be under too close scrutiny by the church or the police prefer to live in this section. Here the "zar" societies can pound their drums as loudly as the cult requires, for only muffled sounds will rise to the Coptic part of the town.

x794 756 123 After stooping to pass through the somewhat low entrance to the house of Lady Salamtew, the visitor finds himself in a room larger than he had anticipated. He is told to remove his shoes, (as if this were a church or mosque). The room is lit by numerous little clay oil lamps even in daytime - a considerable luxury, - for windows have been carefully avoided or boarded up to assure privacy. On the mud-benches around the wall sit a number of women; others sit on mats on the hard-mud floor. An Amhara male visitor in European type suit, who has just consulted the Lady Salamtu, leaves hurriedly. Lady Salamtu is seated on a raised platform at the far end of the room, behind a curtain, and another area in front of her stage is marked off by a long, thin wooden beam embedded in the floor. The women devotees in the room are busily spinning cotton with their little distaffs, and, since it is still afternoon and not yet "zar time", whisper and gossip with each other freely. Some take time out to suckle their babies, often without rising.

Someone has gone behind the curtain and whispered to her that the foreigner and his guide have arrived. She promptly pulls the curtain aside, but pretends to pay no special attention to the visitor. Her active zars have not possessed her at this time, and she therefore appears absent-minded. She sits on a slightly raised seat on the small

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 ; MP5 Amhara MP5

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ETHIOPIAN HIGHLANDS

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114 THIS lecture does not pretend to be a serious study of any geographical aspect of Ethiopia. It is rather a record of impressions gained during a year spent in Ethiopia in various jobs ranging from the care of a park of derelict mules to that of Intelligence Officer to the newly formed Ethiopian Army.

Unluckily I was posted away from Addis Ababa at short notice, and my reference books in Italian and Italian photographs of ethnological interest which I had collected should now be in Nairobi, if they have not been lost. Many of the photographs used as illustrations were taken in the field by Captain Mark Pilkington, the Life Guards, a very gallant officer who distinguished himself in the guerrilla fighting round Lake Tana and who was killed in action in Libya, just two months ago.

With the possible exception of parts of the Shankalla wilderness, which is the Abyssinian extension of the Sudan plain between the western bend of the Blue Nile and the Escarpment, it cannot be said that any large areas of the Ethiopian Empire had remained unvisited by Europeans prior to the Italian War of 1935–36 and the campaign of 1941. I have however come across no account of the remarkable massifs of Dungwur and Belaia which rise out of
133 the Shankalla plain to the east of the Escarpment. On the tableland of Belaia, well within the nominal Italian frontier, an advance base for the supply of the Patriot forces was established in January 1941 and in February the Emperor set up his headquarters there.

[137] These twin mountain masses rise out of the Shankalla plain to an altitude of about 7000 feet above sea-level. They are covered with rich forests and watered by fast-running streams. Dungwur was uninhabited and visited
[361] only from time to time by stray bands of Abyssinian hunters. But there are flourishing villages and ancient churches on Belaia. It was a weird experience to reach these strange islands of luxuriating nature after the long camel trek across the burnt-out Shankalla wilderness. From a day's march away we

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

grade from the Eritrean plateau. All civilization in Ethiopia has penetrated from north to south along the great dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment, where the so-called Strada Imperiale now runs from Asmara to Addis Ababa.

Along this line have been concentrated the successive Ethiopian capitals with the exception of Gondar, which was chosen far to the north-west as a refuge from the ruinous wars with the Moslems and the Gallas. And along this line, due south from Aksum and Aduwa, were the great centres of the Copto-Ethiopian culture of the Middle Ages, places like Lalibala and the monasteries on lake Haik and the traditional centre of the Coptic Church at Debra Libanos.

From this dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment Ethiopian culture, and it was a very real culture in its heyday, spread westward into Gojjam and southward to the region of the lakes. Luca di Sabelli in his recent 'Storia di Abissinia' has shown that Coptic-Ethiopian missionaries were active as far south as Madagascar and the Mozambique coast.

Ethiopian Coptic culture drew its nurture from the powerful Coptic Church in Cairo, from the Crusading civilization in Palestine, and from the Byzantine Empire. Just as the establishment of the Turks at the exit from the Black Sea brought about the decline of the East Christian cultures in the Caucasus and the Balkans, so the Turkish control of the Nile valley and the Red Sea slowly strangled the Coptic Ethiopian culture of East Africa. The Ethiopian rulers, pressed by the invasions of Muhammad Gran, were well aware of their mortal danger and it is a curious fact that kings in Georgia and Ethiopia appealed to the rising power of Spain in the Western Mediterranean at about the same time. The Portuguese episode in Ethiopia was a delayed response to the appeal made to the Catholic powers.

The extraordinary tenacity of the Ethiopians to the western tradition is a remarkable characteristic of their historical development. The Aksumite kingdom, for all its Semitic appearance, was essentially a projection of Hellenism, and the Aksumite kings remained the traditional allies of the Byzantine Emperors in their struggle with the Persian Sasanids for the control of the Red Sea—an episode which was parallel in time with the conflict between these same two "world powers" for mastery of the Black Sea. The Coptic Church and Christian civilization in East Africa proved more enduring than the once powerful Nestorian Church in Asia, with which it may in some ways be compared. The later Ethiopian Kingdom played the same role in the struggle between Turks and Portuguese for control of the Red Sea and for the trade of the Indian Ocean as the Aksumites had a thousand years earlier in the rivalry between Byzantines and Persians. But they showed the same persistent antagonism to the Roman Church as the East Christians had displayed towards the Crusaders and the Papacy. In the end the Ethiopians expelled the Portuguese from Abyssinia and managed to maintain their own independence against their Moslem neighbours, until in the last decade it was suppressed by a professedly Christian power.

The Ethiopians are a remarkable phenomenon in the East African world and with their tenacity and their undoubted natural intelligence they are destined to have no little influence on the future course of history in that area.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic. Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend.

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile.

There were only two or three villages along the track, which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district.

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May.

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to

i.e., in the Choké Mountains. -Analyst

i.e., between Debra Markos and Mota. Anal.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Desaie–Debra Tabor road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint. Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns: an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputation of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north: Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 — MP5 Amhara MP5

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Phot. W. Thesiger

Awash river, Northern Aussa

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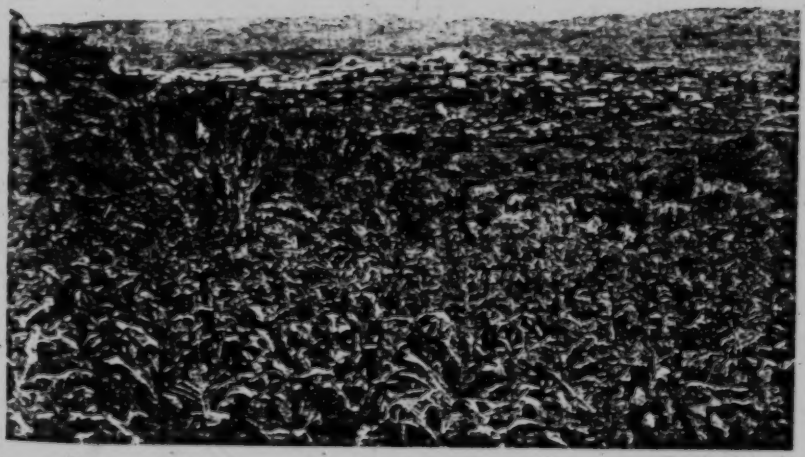

Phot. F. D. Corfield

[Facing p. 12]

Harar

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of translation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth." 133

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of Rocher d'Hericourt, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans. 132 [134] 137 [177] [372] 361 [231] 241 311

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow 137

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

[33] developed. I was interested to find, when first exploring this piece of country, that the shelves were well populated, intensively cultivated, and provided [36] with a quite surprising number of churches; facts, as pointed out below, of some historical significance.

After completing the framework of the map I made several calculations of depth in the Beressa gorge. An Abney level was used and as high angles were involved I think the results are trustworthy. They showed a depth of 1808 feet at the point marked *a*, just under 3 miles from the head of the gorge; 1985 feet at point *b*, 4 miles down; and 2170 feet at *c*, not quite 6 miles down. The average gradient from *a* to *b* was therefore about 2½ per cent., from *b* to *c* about 2 per cent. The depths were measured from three points (marked 1–3), all at practically the same level, on the edge of the gorge, the height of which can be taken as about 9300 feet. The absolute level of point *c* is therefore about 7130 feet, and this is almost the lowest point on the sheet. Measurements show that the depth of this gorge, enormously impressive though it is, is not more than one-fifth of its breadth. Although relatively deeper ones no doubt exist, I cannot help being highly sceptical of Rocher d'Hericourt's report of a ravine "14 leagues north-west of Angolala" which he alleged to be 1254 metres deep and only 800 broad!

Four separate gorges figure on the map. The two middle ones, formed by the Beressa and Dalecha rivers, which enclose between them the cliff-encircled plateau of Choli, can be seen to join within 4 to 5 miles of Debra Berhan. It might be supposed that the other two gorges were destined to join the same system within a short distance, but this does not happen. If the small-scale Italian map is to be trusted, the Gunagunit (north-east corner of the sheet) joins the Beressa system some 20 miles away, and the Chacha (of which the north-western gorge is a tributary) nearly 30 miles away. These junctions are approximately north of Debra Berhan; afterwards the river bends away north-westwards to join a main tributary of the Blue Nile. As might be expected, these independent gorge systems running approximately parallel to each other proved most confusing. Between the adjacent systems one sees long, narrow strips of residual plateau, perfectly flat-topped, sometimes so narrow as to stand up like a wall between one valley and the next. The Tallak Amba plateau, partly shown in the north-west of the sheet, is an example. On the other side of the sheet a still narrower neck, followed by the [40] Teguiet path, separates the Beressa and Gunagunit systems. Following this route to the north, off the sheet, one finds that for some distance the plateau has been cut right away: one descends about 600 feet to a point where the shelves in two adjacent valleys practically coalesce, being separated only by a rocky barrier a few feet high. Then one climbs again to a narrow slip of [34] plateau on whose summit, flat as a table-top, stands an important church (Zendegur Ghiorghis). Still farther north this narrows down to a sinuous rampart between the valleys, and eventually broadens once more to form a substantial isolated plateau, which appeared in the distance to be almost inaccessible. Another remarkable feature, jutting out between the Dalecha and the small tributary which next joins the Beressa, is shown near the northern border of the sheet and will be described later.

This region is the heart of the old Shoan kingdom and many places included

[i.e., the Lower gorges - Analysis]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 his early twenties, he found his way back to Ankober and assumed his rights as king of Shoa.

Menelik, who was a restless and imaginative character as well as a great soldier, soon began the series of vast conquests in the southern Galla lands which were to double the size of Ethiopia. It is therefore not surprising that he should have abandoned Ankober in favour of a capital within easier reach of his newly acquired territories. He first reverted to Debra Berhan, then made a new temporary capital at Liché, a few miles to the north-east. Here, [172] at one end of a long, low hill are various remains of massive dry-stone walls as at Angolala, and the raised platform, only about 20 feet across, on which stood Menelik's personal dwelling. But the site is now uninhabited. In the 1880's Menelik, his southern conquests rapidly extending, moved his capital south-westwards to Entotto, in the midst of country newly retrieved from the Gallas. This was a magnificent site, 10,000 feet high and overlooking the plain and the splendid circle of mountains which form the setting of the present capital. Entotto was, however, unsuitable as the site of a permanent [312] city. It is said, also, that Menelik's wife Taitu craved for a warmer residence and especially for the curative waters of the hot springs (the present Fil Wuha baths) on the edge of the plain below. So in 1889, the year in which he was crowned emperor in succession to John IV, Menelik moved down, and Addis Ababa was founded at the foot of the hills, 1500 feet below.

This digression completes our brief review of the historical associations of the area represented on the map. The remainder of this paper will deal with the present inhabitants, their distribution and their way of life.

361 It has already been said that the population of the area is greater than at first sight appears. The small, stone-built huts are inconspicuous objects, especially as they are seldom massed together to form a village but are widely scattered in small groups. Moreover the motor-road follows for the most part an exposed tract which carries less than the normal population. Travellers driving through therefore carry away a false impression: they can see little of the more populated areas, nothing of the gorges, and not a single one of the numerous churches of the region, except those of Debra Berhan itself.

I attempted to mark every inhabited place on the map. In very many cases the single dot indicates several households, and may be taken to represent, on 162 an average, two households of five to six persons each or eleven souls. On 361 this basis the population of the whole area of 102 square miles comes to about 15,500 or 152 per square mile—a high average by African standards. (This excludes Debra Berhan itself which would add a further 2000 or so.) The population is not, however, evenly distributed, and the area may be divided into three parts which, with their areas and population densities (again ignoring Debra Berhan) are as follows:

General plateau: 60 square miles—116 per square mile.

Plateau between or within 1 km. of gorges: 22 square miles—240 per square mile.

The gorges themselves: 20 square miles—162 per square mile. (This indicates a very high concentration on the "shelves" and a few other favoured spots, for a great part of the gorge area is, of course, uninhabitable.)

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

These figures show that the gorges, together with the adjoining and intervening plateau, carry a considerably higher population than the rest of the plateau, the combined average being over 200 per square mile. The figures for population per church are also interesting. The gorges and the adjacent parts of the plateau contain no fewer than thirteen churches and they serve an average population of only some 650 souls each. On the other hand the churches of the general plateau, not counting those of Debra Berhan, which chiefly serve the townspeople, number only four. They must cater for about three times as many people each, and until recently many more for two of them are recent foundations.

The higher population of the gorge region is attributable to two causes: the greater productivity of the land there, and the historical fact, already referred to, that the Amharas were long forced to live in the gorges, and have re-emerged only in recent times. This is confirmed by the evidence of the churches which, in such numbers, are sure evidence of a long-established Christian population. The oldest ones are among those in the depths of the gorges; sites on the edges of gorges seem to be more recent. The few plateau churches are all relatively modern and bespeak the re-occupation by Amharas; two of them were indeed founded within the last fifteen years, and one as recently as 1945.

As can be seen from the map, sites chosen for dwellings are usually on the higher ground. The favourite sites, of which many examples can be seen on the sheet, are rocky ridges and the tops or upper slopes of hills and minor plateaus. A high place with an outlook, together with reasonable proximity to permanent water, seem to be the conditions sought after. Even the most elevated and exposed hill-tops are generally inhabited, whereas nobody tries to live on the plains near the main streams, which become very swampy in the rains. The ordinary family, together with its domestic animals, lives in a small, irregular cluster of round huts, which in this area are built of stone cemented with mud and carry a conical thatched roof. They are surrounded, as a rule, by a dry-stone wall, which may be shared by several households. Richer people may have an ornamental gatehouse at the main entry, with a little watchman's room over the gate; but such ostentation was not common.

Disregarding some of the Debra Berhan people, almost the entire population is engaged in farming which, here as elsewhere in Ethiopia, is the mainstay of existence. Some possess their own land; others hold their plots, in return for a proportion of the produce (but without any security of tenure), from absentee landowners. There is also a landless element, greatly increased through the disturbing influence of the Italian occupation, who hire themselves out as ploughmen and labourers. I had intended to measure some typical holdings in order to estimate the area actually required to support a family, but my time in the area was cut short and I never did so. As a very rough estimate I think that about 15–20 per cent. of the area is under cultivation in any one year, which would indicate an average per family of something like 4 acres. This does not include fallow land which, once re-grown with grass, cannot be distinguished at a glance from permanent pasture.

The most exposed parts of the plateau near Debra Berhan will grow two crops only, barley and broad beans, but a limited amount of wheat (a bearded

3: Buxton Y.5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

361 I have tried to describe a small section of the old Shoan people in their geographical and historic setting. But this small community, living along the broken edges of the Shoan plateau, typifies the much larger unity of the Amhara nation. Mostly they live in country which resembles either the plateau or the gorges, for they are a mountain people and will not live in the low country; and over most of the Ethiopian highlands their way of life, while varying in detail, is fundamentally the same. Everywhere outside the 181 towns the force of tradition is incomparably stronger than any modern influence, so that life remains, in essentials, what it has been for centuries. I have never come across such a staunch (not to say arrogant) conservatism—a conservatism centred mostly round the old Church which, now as ever, organizes the life of the community. The manifestations of modernity and progress, which now attract some attention in the larger towns, hardly affect the rural picture, and the rural population is content without them. I myself was content without them too, for I valued very highly the experience of sharing the life of a community whose customs, founded on the most ancient traditions, belong essentially to an earlier and to me a congenial age. This [609] was one of the compensations for living in a country where life is necessarily a strain, since the inquisitive foreigner is not really welcome.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949.MP5 Ambara MP5

133
487
712
361
312
346

Published by the Royal Geographical Society.

[End map II-A]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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387
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361
312
346

[End map II-B]

SHOAN PLATEAU
Buxton

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-20 have not been processed for the files.—Analyst]

CAP. XI.—*Of the fashion and situation of the monasteries and their customs, first this of St. Michael.*

346 The manner of these monasteries as to their sites and
361 customs: all are situated on the greatest and highest cliffs, or the deepest they can find. This one of St. Michael is situated on a very steep rock at the foot of another very high rock, where no one can ascend. The stone of which these rocks consist is of the grain of the walls of the port of Portugal.[1] They are very great rocks. The land around
137 these rocks is all covered with very great forests, and besides wild olive trees and high grass between them, in which there is much basil. The trees which are not wild olive trees are not trees known to us; all are without fruit. In the narrow valleys which belong to this monastery there are orange trees, lemon trees, citron trees, pear trees and fig trees of all kinds, both of Portugal and India; peach trees, cabbages, coriander, cardamine, wormwood,[2] myrtle and other sweet-smelling and medicinal herbs, all ill profited by
461 because they are not good working men: and the earth produces these like wild plants, and it would produce whatever was planted and sown in it. The monastery house
346 looks quite like a church building, constructed like ours. It has around it a circuit like a cloister, covered above in the same manner as the body of the monastery. It has three entrances, as ours are, one principal one, and two side ones. The roof of the church and of its cloisters is of wild straw, which lasts a man's life: the body of the church is built with naves very well constructed, and their arches are

[1] Ms. [2] Alosna.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

231 a Christian, because the cows that they keep belong to
563 Christian gentlemen of the country of the Barnagais. These Moors have nothing else for their labour than the milk and butter which they get from the cows, and with this they maintain themselves and their wives and children. On some occasions it happened to us to sleep near these Arabs, they accosted us to ask if we wished to buy cows, and for the price allowed us to choose them. They say that these
[484] Moors, and headmen who go with them, are all robbers under the favour of the lords to whom the cows belong, and so only large caravans travel. The revenues of this
792 monastery are very large; those which I saw and heard of
631 are, chiefly, this mountain in which the monastery is situated,
361 of an extent of ten leagues, in which they sow much millet,
[243] barley, rye, and all these pay dues to the monastery, and they are also paid on the herds. On the skirts of this mountain there are many large villages, and most of them belong to the monastery, and at a distance of one or two days' journey an infinite number of places belonging to the monastery, and are called *Gultus* of the monastery, which means *coutos* or *celeiros*,[1] according to our Portugal. Don Rodrigro the ambassador and I were going on the road to the Court, a good five days' journey from this monastery, and arriving at a town which is named *Caina* we kept Saturday and Sunday in a small village which might contain twenty people, and they told us they belonged to the monastery of Bisan. Besides that town there were a hundred villages all belonging to the monastery, and that in which we halted was one of them. We were also shown
651 many of the others, and they told us that every three years
631 they paid a horse to the monastery, and that each village
792 did this, which makes thirty-three horses every year. And in order to be certain of this I went to ask it of the *Alicaxi* of the monastery, which means the auditor or major-domo,

[1] *Couto*, an asylum, an enclosure; *celeiro*, a granary.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

804 night. And if it is distant they say, you will arrive in a *sambete*, that is a week, and so they define it according to the distances. When I said that from Barua to Barra there 484 were from three and a half up to four leagues, that was according to our opinion, and it would not be more. We afterwards travelled there many times, and we started from one town and dined at the other, and did our business and returned to the town we had started from by daylight. The people of the country reckon this as a day's journey, because they travel very slowly. Between these two towns [241] there is very remarkable country, tilled fields of wheat, barley, millet, pulse, lentils, and all other sorts of vegetables which the country possesses unknown to us. From the [361] road from one place to the other more than fifty towns are to be seen: I say large towns and very good ones, all on heights. In these plains and fields there are herds of wild 224 cattle, forty or fifty in a herd. It is a chase that is very pleasant for the Portuguese, but the country people are able to do them little hurt, although they receive from them much injury to their crops.

CAP. XX.—*Of the town of Barua, and of the women and their traffic, and of the marriages which are made outside of the churches.*

621 This town of Barua in which we were staying, and where later we passed more time, may have three hundred hearths and more, a great part of them belonging to women, because this is like a court in many respects. One is that people of the Prester's court never go from here, and as many as come are not without wives. The other is because this is the residence and seat of the Barnagais, and there are continually in his house three hundred mounted men and upwards, and as many more who come every day for

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

000 764 a burn, because their colour is dark. On the occasion of death, I never saw great personages borne away; but of small people, and of others rather better, an infinite number. Their burials are in this manner. They do not use candles after death, but much incense. They carry them away wrapped up[1] in a shroud, and some of the more honoured have over the shroud tanned ox-hides, and are placed on trestles. The priests come for them, and pray shortly, and then set out at once with them on the way to the church, with cross, thurible, and holy water, running so that a man cannot catch them up. They do not bring the dead man into the church, but place him close to the grave; they do not use our office for him, nor do they recite psalms, neither do they say anything from the Book of Job. I asked what it was that they prayed; they told me that they read the Gospel of St. John all complete. And so they give him to the grave with their incense and holy water, and they do not say mass for the defunct, nor of devotion for any living person, nor more than one mass a day in each church; and all are communicants, as many as go to it.

CAP. XXIII.—*Of the situation of the town of Barua, chief place of the kingdom of the Barnagais, and of his hunting.*

361 This town of Barua is very good, and it is situated on a very high rock above a river, upon which are situated the king's houses, which they call Beteneguz, which means houses of the king. They are well situated in the manner of a fortress. All the rest is a great plain and an infinite number of large villages at the extremities of the [231] fields. There is much breeding of all sorts of flocks, cows, goats and sheep, and of much game of all sorts

[1] *Enrorilhados* for *enrodilhados*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that 681
they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of
others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality
the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he
was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester 793
John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is
nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester
who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means em- 643
peror, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some 752
sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, 757
they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein,
and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw
blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure
themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thou- 621
sand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and 361
there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without num-
ber. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and 342
all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and court-
yards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others 352
on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table.
They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without 415
napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black 264
earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for
drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others 262
eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, 252
and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is 373
much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make
candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which 314
they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like
Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 000

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

585 known, in Europe. These marriages are, by no means, permanent: Many of the Ozoros, who always rule their husbands, marry as often as they please; dissolving the marriage preceding at the dictates of convenience, or fancy. But notwithstanding the general licentiousness, there are found several faithful wives and mothers, who are content to deviate from the common example.

When any of the king's children dies, it is the custom to 766 hang the audience-chamber with tapestry and curtains, and spread carpets on the floor. The king, having entered, sits on the throne, and the *iteagerd*, a set of professed mourners [767] of the female sex, along with the nobles and household-servants, attend. One of the licaonte, a priest, reads over a list of the former kings with great solemnity, adding, after every name, "May the Lord have mercy on his soul, even to the fifth generation." The assembly reply, "Amen, ycoune, so let it be." At last he says, "Greatly may the Lord have mercy on the soul of ***, who died this day;" on which the Ozoros and their women, the mourners, the household, and the nobles, all set up a loud and general cry of lamentation, and weep for some time. If the person has died in the camp, or city, the coffin is brought before the king, but if not, he performs the ceremony without it. It is afterwards carried out with sendic and nagareet, and buried by the Betwudet, or Billetana-gueta dakakin, in the manner which shall be afterwards mentioned.

Koscam * is the richest church in Abyssinia; it is situated 361 on the banks of Kahha, below a ruinous palace, or house, of the king. There are about 40 houses in the village, all belonging to the principal Kuaragna, the party of the queen. All the Kuaragna, Eshte, Eusebius, and the rest, had their troops drawn up to attack Michael when called to Gondar by Joas, at the advice of Lubo. They designed to engage him on the Angrab, but failed completely. The residing people at Koscam, after Joas's death, were in great fear of Michael, and wore a hood, or cowl, like the monks. Gondar is 2¾ miles, perhaps 3, at its greatest length, and nowhere above a mile broad. The palace is in the centre. Below the town, on the S. W. at the conflux of

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From this to the end, wholly in the words of Mr Bruce.

[p. 52]

5: Bruce :T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the Angrab and Kahha, is the Mahometan town. These rivers inclose the town on its N. and S. sides, and join on the W. On the S. E. part of it is the church of Debra-berhan. On the N. E. is Kedus Gabriel. Two suburbs above Kedus Gabriel, is Anta Naggar, the hill, where, till Yasous's time, the Tigre, in consequence of a proclamation, were obliged to halt, and not allowed to enter Gondar. 361

In Abyssinia there remains not a shadow of the hospitality, which is said to be a trait in the character of barbarous nations. 574

They divide the day into five parts (humisi). From the twilight, which is here short, it is nagga; about nine it is called selest, or the third hour; mid-day is kutter; three o'clock, tessaat; and sun-set, serk. They judge by the height of the sun, having neither clocks nor watches. The other hours mentioned in their books are counted 1, 2, 3, &c. after dawn, sun-rise, or sun-set. 805

There are two kinds of monarchy; one is absolute, where there are no written laws, but the will of the prince carried into effect by his command and force; another is, where there are laws and restraints, but these occasionally broken through. The Abyssinian government is neither of those. There are no laws: the lives of the king's subjects and their lands are *de jure* his; he is absolute and sole master of their lives and property: Yet he has no military force; this is all in the hands of the governors of provinces, whose safety lies in keeping the prince in want of every thing. It is a monstrous kind of monarchy, and to this are owing the continual wars and rebellions. While the districts were small, these were prevented; but minorities, weak reigns, &c. have united them into great ones, each of which are more than a match for the sovereign; indeed, the forty-four nagareets of Tigre united are more than a match for all Abyssinia. Damot and Agow-midre, joined to Maitsha, when they please, starve the capital, and leave the king not only without army and provisions, but even meat and clothes for himself. The Turkish and Galla wars have accelerated this state of affairs. Each of the governments have become a kind of fiefs, very rarely not granted to the family of the deceased, and that one of it most likely to be serviceable. 642 631

[p. 53]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by The 794
those who are sick, or dying.

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a 292
white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar.

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the 796
church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married 784
are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Per- [846]
sons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the [84]
church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first [304]
day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occa- [852]
sions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment.

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure 131
in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It 361
may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla 101
who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma;

[2,677]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

101 and these Toluma come down to the Nile, and divide Walaka and Shoa from the Nile.

651 Agow-midre pays yearly to the king in all about 1000 ounces of gold; and 1000 dabras of honey, each dabra about 60 rotol. It pays also about 1000 or 1500 cattle. Ancasha, Azena, Quaquera, and Banja, pay their quota in honey; Banja, gold; Metchakel, Ayamico's country, gold; Zigam, gold, no honey. Danguiah, Dengla, and Saccala, all are called Ancasha. Dengla pays chiefly cattle, and a large kind of sheep called Macoot. Butter is no part of the meery, but is brought as a present on paying the meery. After passing the Kelti, on the right, by the Bronti, is Atchefer, after that Quaquera, then Dengla, then Banja, then Metchakel. Temhua belongs to the Ras, and the revenue is paid to him. The first heavy stroke the Agow received of late years was Waragna, father of this Fasil, bringing Galla from beyond the Abay, and wasting their country entirely. He burnt the houses and churches, and led away captive the women and children. Under the mild government of Casmati Eshte they began to revive, but now again under Fasil they are very low.

●361 Metchakel is one long day's journey, I suppose 36 miles, from Boori (Bure); it is inhabited by Galla Djawi. After these are the Basso Gallo; and the Gooderoo Galla of Kasmati Boro. His place is called Hadis Amba. These border on Gojam, Damot, and Metchakel. Gafat is not one continued country, but villages here and there. Wumbarma is Gafat. Metchakel is, however, a much more considerable country. Beyond the Nile, west of Bure, the country for a considerable distance is dry, deserted, and uninhabited, the Galla living further into the territory. All the banks are there high, steep, and unwholesome, and full of trees. These Galla are Amoro Jidda. Guesgue belongs to the Iteghe, has a nagareet, and gives the title of Kasmati. It pays 1000 cloths, 50 oxen, and 100 wakeet.

The caravans of Egypt used to go from Aidab, or Gaidab, to Dahalac, in their way to Yemen, or Jidda, the port of Mecca. Souakin is seven days south of Gaidab.

101 The Galla, west of the Abay, say, that they are descended
563 of a Gin or devil, and a woman of the tribe of Koreish. They are always at war with the Nareans, Abyssinians, or

[p. 58]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

Mahometans. They reckon about 12,000 horse of Galla 101
between the Nile and Narea. The tribes go every seventh 563
year to the reigning house, where the council debates on the duties of government. The points agitated are, how our fathers governed, what measures are to be taken with murderers and robbers on the high-ways, how merchants are to be dealt with, &c. The young then declaim in favour of violence and injustice; after which the elders, five in number, are asked. These decide in favour of equity. The king is afterwards chosen by a plurality of voices.

Waragna, father of Fasil, was converted to Christianity. His father was Wusho (signifying a dog), of the western Galla, of the tribe Jimmali. He was a merchant; but being remarked to be brave in a battle Bacuffa had with these Galla, he was invested with the cafian, and made commander of several places on the frontiers of Damot.

The Djawi Galla of Damot, Gafat, and Metchakel, as also the Galla of Maitsha, came there, in the time of Yasous Tallac. The Basso, and other Galla of Gojam, were brought there by Hatze Fasil; others say his son Hannes.

Maitsha, from the place the Abay comes out of the lake 361
to Courtohha, is 1½ day's march, at a moderate pace, 6 hours a day; from Courtohha, the hither part, to Samseen, one long day's journey; and from the same part to the Abay at Goutta, a very long day's journey, at a brisk pace.

The Shankala entrench their huts against surprise, and 563
burn large fires. They wear a long shield, covering nearly the whole side, and five lances each, which they throw or stab with as needed. Bows and arrows are their chief weapons. They dig up gold among reddish earth, which they burn in the fire, and gather it as it runs out in small pieces like shot. They put it next in to a small purse, or other sort of bag. Every individual is free to search for it. They are flat-nosed and flat-lipped, very black, best shaped in the upper parts, but with bad knees and legs.

The Bure way to Narea is W. in the country south by A- 487
moro. The nearest way is by Gojam and Gooderoo, performed in 30 days with loaden asses, about eight or nine miles a-day.

Harar is a very large town, has five gates, and is constant- 361
ly at war with Habbesh, or the Galla. The ridge of hills

[p. 59]

5 Bruce I-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

●36 continues from Masuah to Cape Gardefan. Harar, Adel, and the Gibbertis, all hate Franks and Christians. Their prince is an Imam. The road north to the Toluma Galla is nearest by Harar; to the Woolo by Aussa. There runs the large river Hawash. There is no communication with the sea at Harar, which is surrounded on the south and east by multitudes of Galla through all that country to the interior of the continent of Africa.

From the Toluma Galla, which is one day south of Amhara to Gurague, is seven days of an ass from morning to night, I suppose 15 to 16 miles per day. From Gurague to Narea, 4 days; in their way they pass the Bashilo, but not the Kibbee, which passes through Narea. The Bashilo falls into the Abay before they pass Angheree, and they meet with it past Gerramidre before they enter Gurague.

From Raheeda to Aussa, 5 or 6 days. From Aussa to Harar, 6 days moderate journey; in 4 a strong man can accomplish it. From Raheeda to the Woolo, 15 days; from these to Amhara, 3 days. From Raheeda to Woolo all the country is plain; the journey is performed with camels, I suppose 10 miles per day. They carry water with them in girbas, and at one time are three or four days without any other supply. Aussa is now no separate kingdom, but dependant on Harar; the race of people was from Harar, and therefore they are not subject to strangers. They are called Mellassua, and still preserve their language, which is the same with that of the Gibbertis. They count up 317 kings. From this city was Mahomet Gragne. The whole country is Adel; from Zeila to Harar is 8 days journey; but Zeila is now little inhabited, on account of the faithlessness of the natives in robbing the Jelalib. Soomal is governed by a chief at peace with Adel. Harar, the capital of Adel, has 99 villages, all governed each by a vizir, and pay tribute.

Goutta is not in Damot, though depending on it. A small peaked hill, pointed with rock, is called Geesh, or Gutch. Southward, scarce a quarter of a mile from the fountains of the Nile, the plain ends in a precipice, planted with very tall sambucs, and other trees. In this is a cavern called Washa, which they say communicates with the fountains, and that when it rains violently the water overflows and comes in higher. The Shum Kella Abay told me, that in the constant

1 p. 667

5: Bruce T-5 (1708-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

rains of Naasse and Hamlie, it never overflows at the springs, nor do the fountains seem larger. He remembered the accession of Hatze Yasous to the throne, and was about 80 years old. The east side of the Nile is less barren than the west side. 'Aformasha is not barren. 36

Singular custom. The Betwudet (in Habesh), upon the death of any Wiziro, is obliged to pay the expences of the ceremony, called Misle, which amounts to 100 oxen, 3000 loaves of wheat bread, 20 jars hydromel, wood, &c. the whole about 60 ounces of gold. The ceremony is this: A sort of figure, resembling the defunct, is placed upon horseback, in his usual dress, and so carried in procession about the outer court of the palace, with the royal standard (sendick) carried before it, and the nagareet beating. This is called, in this country, "burying with sendick and nagareet;" for which the Betwudet has 1200 ardeb of wheat yearly out of the Attekolla. 651 766

The route of the Islam merchants, S. is by two ways, with loaden asses, 8 or 9 miles per day. The way by Gojam is performed in 30 days to Sebou, and thence for other 10 to Narea. The Kibby, or Zebee, rises in Narea. Coffee, of different kinds, grows there in abundance, and the Galla feed on it. They use the lex talionis, but their internal justice is strict. They are very scrupulous of oaths: Wauke Laftan, by heaven and earth, is one of the most solemn. There are three races of Galla, the Guangoul in Angot, north-east of Begemder; Mahomet Ali, another farther west than the Guangoul, towards Amhara; and a third, Mahomet, brother of Lubo, west of Amhara. The rest are pagans; but when converted are said to be better Christians than the native Abyssinians. 487

Mahabar Selasse is four commodious days journey from Gondar, in the line of Tchemmera and Tenkel. Near it pass the rivers Shimfa and Gandova, the last of which has several very high cataracts; it joins to the Shankala, and is about two days journey from Tchemmera. Both rivers fall into the Nile. 133

The river Bashilo separates Amhara from Begemder; the Mashilla, a river of Gojam, and the river Nefasse, fall into the Nile at the same place. In the country of the Galla west of Damot, across or west of the Abay, there is little

[p. 61]

5: Bruce T.-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

133 water, and near the banks of the river the country is desert.

Damot pays 800 ounces (wakea) of gold; formerly 1000.
651 Gojam 80 ounces, and 70 mules. Lasta 1000 ounces; these last years it pays no more, being at present annexed to Begemder. Tigre pays 400 ounces in salt and cotton cloths. Walcait 1500 ounces in cotton cloths.

131 The latitude of Adderghey is 13° 24′ 56″; of Macara, on
361 Lamalmon, 13° 6′ 8″; of Gondar, 12° 34′ 30″; of Emfras, 12° 12′ 38″; of the fountains, 10° 58′ 58″.

Note at Lobeia.—The Arabs are fond of music, especially
000 vocal; for they have no instruments but a kind of flute, of the size of a German flute, which gives a wild and not unmelodious sound, and the cymbal or drum, with ten pieces fixed to its sides, which is chiefly used in cadence in dancing, or for symphonies. Their vocal music, or songs, are upon first hearing disagreeable; but it rarely happens that one who has a good ear is not soon fond of them. They are all upon love; at least I never heard any that had war for their subject; some have religion, and are sung by their Shekhs, or saints. The former have effects upon their hearers nearly as extravagant as the ancient music produced. They have no music in parts, and have absolutely no idea of harmonical composition.

[pp. 61-end have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

[p. 62]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

dolphus put it.[4] At length, unable to witness the further decimation of his people because of religious controversies, Susneyos abdicated in favor of his son Fāsil. Fāsil lost little time in deporting the Jesuits and restoring the Orthodox status quo. 175* 648 797 643

Recovery

In the wake of all these collisions, Ethiopia made two valiant attempts to regain equilibrium and glory: through the splendor of Gondar in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and through the force of three emperors of the nineteenth century—Tēwodros II, Yohānnes IV of Tigre, and Menelik II of Shoa. 175* 648 643

Gondar was founded as a new and stationary capital by Fāsil. It served as imperial headquarters for many generations. Later, the kingdom of Tigre knew a resurgence of power that led to control of the empire under Yohānnes (1872–89). His castle at Makalle symbolized one last rally for the north—after an interregnum of a thousand years—before being eclipsed by the Shoan throne.

The shock which began with the invasions of Ahmad Grañ shattered Ethiopia's medieval synthesis once and for all. The political consequence of those disruptions was an increase in provincialism, reaching its climax in the famous "Age of the Princes" (1755–1855) when each province had its own sovereign and for all practical purposes was a polity unto itself. The Solomonic line, the matrix of Ethiopian political unity, was splintered in several directions, leaving contenders in each of the provinces. Though the official imperial line remained at Gondar, Tigre was able to reassert its ancient claims and Gojjam recurrently voiced its separatism, and what may be called the "House of Manz" came to compete with Gondar as a center of national consciousness. 175* 178 635

This political division was accompanied by a peculiar cultural bifurcation. Elements of the national culture that had been rather evenly distributed before Ahmad Grāñ now became relatively specialized in Gondar and Manz. The recovery of Ethiopia produced a geographical division of manners and morals as well as several lines of Solomonic royalty. 175* 184

HISTORICAL PROFILES

The Role of Gondar 175* 633

Gondar is the only city in Ethiopia with charm and character expressive of Amhara culture. Even today, despite modern accretions, the remnants of its castles, walls, bridges, and sanctuaries transmit a stately calm, redolent of past nobility and African grandeur.

The town is situated on a flat volcanic ridge at seven thousand feet above 175* 361

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded
• 361 military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

[132] Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most
[312] pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā
[132] twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, some-
[241]

*175
643 TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāssi (Nagāssē Kristos)	Abēto	1697–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebstē (Sebstyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbiyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Takla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwoflos	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yoṣṭos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāhla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	•••		•••
		Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

*175
361
[132] times three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and
[241] livestock are produced in abundance.

[231] The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's
*175 time of power.[5] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The towns-
633 people of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans,
[162] and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more
[163] conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he
[173] was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose
[361] name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

the proximity to water, the protective rings of mountains, and the healthy distance from Galla tribes. 175* 633 361 •

When Fāsil arrived at Gondar, then no more than an insignificant village, he pitched his tent near a large sycamore. This magnificent tree, one of the landmarks of Gondar, became the site of popular celebrations on holidays. Not far from this tree Fāsil decided to construct his castle, the largest and best preserved of the castles of Gondar. Thus began an ambitious program of building, which included the construction of seven churches, a number of bridges over the streams around Gondar, and a large bath, next to which Fāsil placed a three-story pavilion. In the course of the following century Fāsil's successors added many more buildings, including a total of twenty-one additional churches. Of the secular buildings, the castles of Bakāffā and Empress Mantuāb and the "Recreation Hall" of Dāwit III were the most outstanding. 175* 633 361 643

In their political endeavors, Gondar's monarchs began by upholding the Abyssinian tradition of a warrior king. Though unable to secure definitive victories over his enemies, Fāsil was continually joining battle with them. He spent all but five of his thirty-five years of rule on the warpath. The reign of Yohānnes the Pious was marked more by religious than military preoccupations, but warfare on a small scale was carried out during half the years he ruled. Yohānnes' son, Iyāsu the Great, seized the spear with renewed vigor and brought Gondar to the pinnacle of its might. Iyāsu's campaigns carried him to far parts of the empire, some of which were not again to be visited by a triumphant Amhara king until two centuries later. 175* 643

On Iyāsu's return from one of his famous field tours, Gondar suffered a misfortune that ushered in a long era of political disorganization. Learning that his favorite concubine had died and been buried while he was away, the grief-stricken Iyāsu withdrew to one of the monastic islands of Lake Ṭānā. His son, Takla Hāymānot, took advantage of the situation to have himself proclaimed emperor; and shortly after, probably encouraged by those of the clergy who mistrusted Iyāsu's sympathy for Catholicism, he had his father assassinated on the isle.

The next four emperors had short and brutish reigns. Takla Hāymānot, Tēwoflos, and Yoṣṭos were occupied mainly with the quashing of conspiracy and rebellion. Even so, they had time for the favored sports of hunting wild animals and raiding Galla and Negroid tribes. Dāwit III, it seems, did not even accomplish that. The chief slaughter in his reign was of the local clergy; he brought Muslim Galla to massacre hundreds of the monks and priests of Gondar, for they had opposed his theological views. All four emperors ended ignobly. Takla Hāymānot was stabbed to death; Tēwoflos was probably poisoned; Yoṣṭos, not of the Solomonic line, was forcibly deposed; and Dāwit III was poisoned. Bakāffā was more careful to protect himself from pretend-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē.

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna,* an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables.

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

+175 633 streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] [36] [563] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter.

[186] [576] Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien [829] custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

*175 633 181 The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat*, or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which contrast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the [551] Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen*, meaning "noleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, [691] litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā*, land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rīst*.

[795] [517] The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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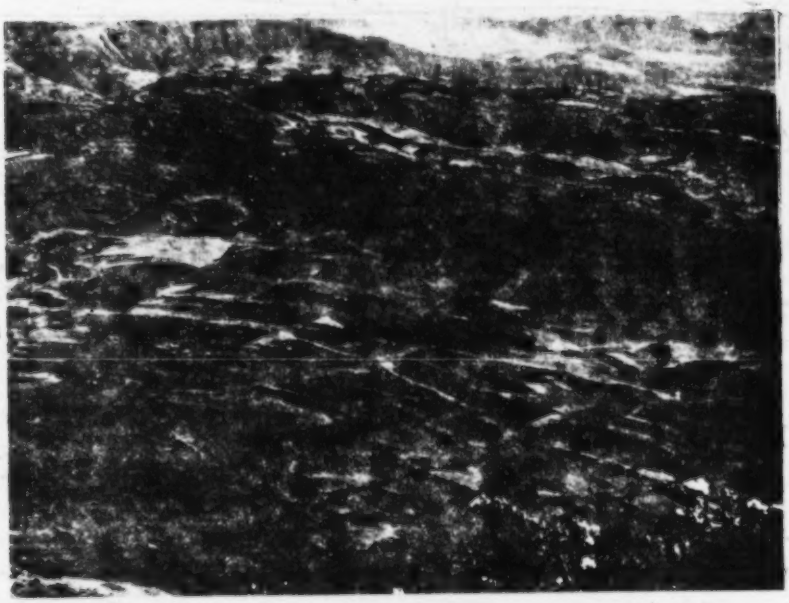

FIG. 6.—*The Amhara countryside*

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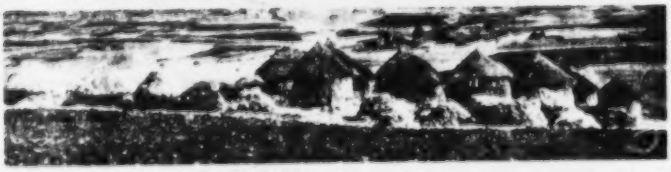

FIG. 7.—*An Amhara homestead, Manz*

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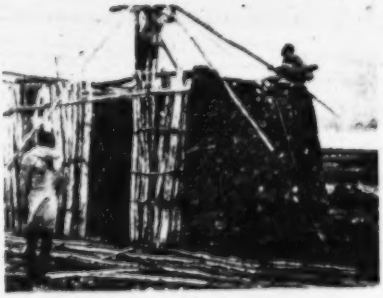

FIG. 8.—*Building a house*

[D-46-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services. 565* 346 341 181 796 822 [778]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery. 565* 822 181 361 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order. 565* 822 181 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities. 565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable 565* 156 157 [577]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 186 619 *Landsmann*) regularly evokes considerable sentiment. There is also a strong sense of solidarity based on the use of Amharic—both among the Amhara as a whole vis-à-vis other Ethiopians who either do not know Amharic or speak it imperfectly, and among regional dialect groups. The people of Gojjam and of the Gondar area are particularly chauvinistic with regard to the quality of their Amharic.

*121 181 621 This attachment to symbols of religion, territory, and language is important in providing a basis for identity and morale. Yet these attachments are of relatively little import in shaping a self-transcending orientation in the day-to-day activities of the Amhara; for the crucial context of these activities is the local community, and in the civic sphere the Amhara manifest very little solidarity. Indeed, it may be said that the Amhara have virtually no sense of "community" at all, for the concept can scarcely be rendered in idiomatic Amharic.

*121 181 361 621 The absence of community sentiment among the Amhara is implied by their ecology. Not only did the Amhara fail to produce extensive and durable urban centers (with the limited exception of Gondar) but their country is even barren of that frequent cornerstone of peasant life, the village. The Amhara have distributed themselves thinly, scattering in groups of fours and fives up and down their mountains and plateaus. Larger aggregations are found on the estates of noblemen, but these constitute expanded private households rather than civic communities. The Amhara justify this dispersion of their population on the grounds that wide spaces are needed for the grazing of livestock and that a man needs to live on the land he farms. But herding and farming have been carried out well enough elsewhere by people living together in villages, and it is quite probable that this ecological pattern is due as much as anything else to the Amhara's preference for not having too much association with those outside his immediate kin group. In his own words, the Amhara prefers the kind of neighbor who "does not push the boundaries" (*wassan aynakām*), and believes, as noted earlier, that *bēt-ennā māqbar labetchāw naw* ("home and the grave are by oneself"). It is a preference manifest in such solitary living arrangements as that of divorced women who sometimes live by themselves in the country, eking out a living by spinning cotton or brewing spirits, and in the age-old predilection of Abyssinian monks for anchoritism.

*121 181 156 157 The moral counterpart of this ecological pattern is a preoccupation with private interests that leaves little room for the consideration of communal needs. According to the Amhara vocabulary of motives, social action is motivated first and foremost by the pursuit of *fīqem*, or narrowly conceived self-interest.[9] This matter-of-fact acceptance of egoistic motivation among the Amhara appears during what is a common occurrence: the shameless subversion of occasions which are set up to consider communal problems and to

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

101
131 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has
779 been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries.
[241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively
[463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm-
[286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga
[443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of
[562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin-
[423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil-
[326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields
[286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha
[162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority
[361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

634 635 Parish and Hamlet. The highland zones can be divided along three complementary social dimensions---po-
*[192] litical, ecclesiastical, and economic. Politically, the province is divided into awraja (sub-province), warada (district of a sub-province), and meketel warada (sub-
632 district). The meketel warada consists of fifteen to
*361 thirty parishes (deber). The parish, in turn, is com-
*[192] posed of three to ten hamlets (mender), each consisting
592 of ten to fifty households (bet). Most households consist of husband, wife, unmarried sons, and pre-pubscent daughters[11]; a minority of households consist of aged spouses only, or of widowed individuals living by them-
592 selves. Characteristically, the households of a hamlet
361 are dispersed, so that any one is perhaps 100 to 300 meters from its closest neighbors.

647 While officials of the provincial and sub-provincial governments are generally out-landers appointed by the central government, administrators of the warada and meketel warada are usually members of the local gen-
*[192] try. Within the parish, civil administration is in the hands of the ceka Ẓum, a petty administrator who imple-

[582] [591] 11 Since it is common for a girl to marry at 11 or 12, but to delay the virilocal move until age 15 or 16, the natal household may include a married daughter.

632 [796] [346] motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' eponymic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "government" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means [691] [423] litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

[161] [592]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total population	151	95
Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by [613] risteñas. These households are distributed among the [592] [162] hamlets' ambilineages as follows:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariět
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total risteñas households	31	21

In each of the hamlets, there are two households belonging to Amhara tenant farmers (timeneña), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the risteñas whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two additional timeneña households, whose members are Muslims. These households are headed by brothers who supplement their agricultural activities by weaving the šama (toga) for local Christians.

Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the use of such fields, known as yikeys mariet ("priest's land"), is given to local priests in return for participating in the Masses of the parish church. In practice, rist-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of yikeys mariet by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

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• 361
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members are unable to retain their claims to these church lands (which are intimately linked to the acquisition of leadership positions and prestige within the parish) by providing priests from their own ranks. Consequently, substitutes from outside the parish must be obtained. Such is the case with ambilineage I today. According to current allocation of yikeys mariet in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, ambilineages I and V are each expected to provide three priests for the Mass. Ambilineage V currently provides its three from three ambilineage households of Lemmariet. Ambilineage I, however, currently provides only one risteña priest (a resident of Tikurmidir). Thus, members of ambilineage I using these fields have been obliged to invite two non-risteña priests to take up residence on a portion of these lands, in return for participation in the Mass.

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Finally, these hamlets contain three female servants, unrelated to other residents of the parish. In Tikurmidir, there is a single Amhara attached to a household of ambilineage I; in Lemmariet there is a "bariya" in a household of ambilineage I, and another in a household of ambilineage V.

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Herbalist Medicine in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet. The herbalist therapies of these two hamlets are described in Table 7. With the use of this information, the following paragraphs will indicate that the professional

136 The lowland is also the habitat of poisonous snakes, rare on the upland. They are usually lumped under the name "yäqolla ebäb" (lowland snake), and include the very poisonous cobra ("funjit"). This species is avoided, but the large, non-poisonous python ("zändo") is prized for its skin and is an export item sought out by some hunters.

136 364 A second category of fauna are the animals sometimes referred to by foreigners as the "sanitation squad". They protect the health of the population by cleaning up carcasses of donkeys left dead in their tracks; leftovers from butchering, etc. No one ever hunts these animals, though everyone is familiar with them, as they or their traces are common sights in urban as well as rural areas. It is only since the increase in motor traffic that hyenas no longer penetrate at night into the heart of Addis Ababa itself. These animals include:

[825] Hyena ("djebb"), spotted, often quite large, feeds mainly on carrion but on occasion attacks domestic animals, small children, and even shepherds [754] sleeping in the open. In black magic, the hyena is "ridden" by the buda spirit, and many Amhara believe that they can distinguish the call of a real hyena from one into which a blacksmith has turned himself. This is why no one will open his hut at night to a strange. Hyena holes are also found in potter's fields, where the poor and strangers are buried outside churchyards, for hyenas smell out and eat recently buried corpses. Passers-by piously try to fill the holes with stones to prevent the hyenas from returning.

515 may last 9 months, there is very little bathing, and only hands are washed, in muddy water brought from the river or
514 brook, before and after meals. There are no latrine ditches. Feces are deposited behind thorny bushes 1/4 mile from the hamlet at most, while urination at night proceeds within the hamlet. This practice is followed even in towns and in Addis Ababa. Fortunately the strong sun carbonizes the feces in the dry season, and the strong rain in that season sweeps it away. There is no caste of sweepers, and no attention is paid to human or animal feces, except for the manure of oxen and cows. The latter is hand-pressed into cakes and used as fuel.

364 Hyenas, jackals and vultures are not interfered
825 with, as their services in removing carcasses of animal origin are well appreciated.

165 Abundant sunlight during 9 months of the year, coupled with the scanty clothing of small children, probably gives them their best chance of survival in addition to the long breast-feeding. Nevertheless infant mortality is very high, and in an average family half the babies born die before reaching the age of 5.

164 Flea infestation of humans can be described as
136 complete. This opens the way to flea-born typhus, especially on the highland plateau. Lice are somewhat less general, since they are not regarded by the Amhara as inevitable as fleas. Thus, an Amhara whose hair is infected
136 with lice (e.g. during a stay in prisons which are always
164 lice-infected), he may shave his hair. But louse-born re-
744 lapsing fever epidemics recur from time to time, and the

tants and their customs than the average Amhara.

571 624 566 Thus, the officials with whom the average Amhara has to deal are the headman (cheqa shum), the district tax-collector, the thiefcatcher-in white, and the judge of the nearest market town; also, the priest and/or new, young teacher of written Amharic and arithmetic for the first and second grade. Very often, the governor, who is usually a former feudal lord himself, may grant the posts of district chief (worada shum) and lieutenant (mislanē) to the lower nobility, or their sons; while they in turn draw on their loyal retainers for the more local jobs of headman and thiefcatcher-in-white. In this manner the former feudal structure of human relationships is retained in the old Amhara provinces, despite the official breakup of the system at the top levels. The former feudal chief may even still be addressed by his old title, which has been officially transformed from a military to a civilian significance, but he is still the "telleq sāw" ("great man" and conservative pacesetter.

443 369 This pattern of residential kin-hamlets and feudal relationships changes only in the urban centers which grow out of permanent market spots. The market area is usually located on a little hill, called "arada". Soon a church is built there, and a public area below the hill is cleared of bush to serve as a camping place for caravans, and as a race course for the young Amharas' horse games on Christmas, Epiphany and other feast days. On the hill, the district chief or governor builds his "palace", with a large courtyard for his retainers and office-seekers. The local judges gradually graduate from their table-beneath-the-cy-

443 press to more permanent quarters. Arabs set up more perma-
369 nent stalls at the market. Girls "between marriages" set up their "hotel services" in makeshift shacks, featuring an imported double bed, and foods like the housewife makes at home, including daily fresh beer. A bizarre variety of trade goods pours in, of foreign or domestic origin. Finally, the government sets up an elementary school-- the most recent development, usually post-1942.

B. Shelter: The Amhara Hut.

342 The Amhara circular hut of wattle and daub, with its overhanging roof to carry off the rains, is called "tuqul" (now more often "sar byet", i.e. thatched house; in some districts, "gojo"). It does not differ basically from the typical habitation of the Cushitic-speaking Galla, of cen-
[84] tral Ethiopia. But further south several distinctly different types are encountered, following ethno-linguistic and tribal lines.

The "tuqul" may contain one room or two, through an interior separation or special elevation. It usually houses both the biological family of procreation and their more important livestock which are brought in at night for fear of hyenas. Tuquls in more elaborate hamlets include special storage tuquls, a kitchen tuqul, and even a guest tuqul which may double as extra storage space for the largest beer jars. During the rainy season, when temperatures, especially at night, drop considerably, the family huddles closely around the central fireplace inside the tuqul, and in that 3-month season the tuqul can be considered overcrow-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 565 661 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 565 556 [241] [455] For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 565 556 472 [175] [648] Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families, Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *makuānnent* and *bāla-selṭān*. They [662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 565 369 177 [556] As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 565 554 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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*757 the memelesa counters the effect of the poison, which
628 stands in the place that the primary medicine would in any other internally administered herbalist therapy.

The remaining therapy attracting clients from beyond the hamlet is Nikersa:kitabiy:A:I, and is the hamlet's best example of a therapy of medhaniyt awakiy grade. As an "amulet therapy", it has no memelesa, nor does it allow for a diagnosis to the administration of the therapy. The grading of such therapies is dependent upon criteria of efficacity and professional reputation; this nikersa therapy is regarded as relatively effective and it attracts clients from all Woggera, in spite of the presence of redundant therapies within this area.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN URBAN BEGEMDER

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632 Less than 5% of the province's people are classified
• [369] "urban" by Government census.[16] Half of these townfolk live in Gondar, the provincial capital. Although Gondar is the administrative, ecclesiastical, and commercial center of Begemder, its demographic and social character-

[16] 56,000 out of a total of 1.24 million (EAS1965: 23-24).

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two as talla sellers, and one each as mat seller, carpenter, day laborer, and pensioner.

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The practice of herbalist therapies in ward and town contrasts significantly with the situation in rural hamlet and parish. The relatively dense population of the town has important consequences. In the countryside, the closest herbalist needed for a specific episode may be a day's walk from the client's home; in the town several may be found within an hour's walk. The increase in herbalist therapies is not directly proportional to the increased population of town over countryside, however.

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In Gabrael sebeka, for example, only eighteen households (41% of the total) contain one or more herbalists. Many townfolk are forced to abstain from practicing herbalist therapies, because, as out-landers, they are unable or disinclined to locate needed botanicals. Also, significant numbers of townsfolk practice non-secular therapies, particularly as balazars.

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Further, although there are more redundant herbalist therapies potentially available to the townsman, he remains ignorant of many of them. The peasant locates himself within a network of several core kinsmen and neighbors upon whom he depends for information regarding herbalist chains. The townsman finds his place in a social matrix in which kinship ties are greatly diluted by distance. In Gabrael sebeka, for example, thirty-two house-

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holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town.

[613] In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-
[423] agricultural employment for their subsistence needs,
[241] there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

*278 Kinship ties are an important means by which the
*759 peasant acquires and communicates information necessary
203 for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every
602 herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own
• 369 "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant
613 herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an
*278 agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like
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*278 *759 203 369 the female moving away to her husband's parish, is generally cut off from this reputation. Thus, the herbalist in the town must most often establish this professional existence and reputation de novo. There is no way in which he can stimulate clients to come his way other than by empirical proofs. If his therapy is directed against an ailment for which even expert herbalist therapy promises success in only a fraction of cases, or an ailment which is epidemiologically infrequent, his difficulties are so much the greater. Thus, in spite of Gondar's relatively great population, the town contains only a handful of herbalists of provincial-wide fame. These same considerations dampen the herbalist's readiness to acquire new disease-name specialties. In addition to the difficulties already noted in Chapter 2, such a therapist would likewise be forced to establish his new professional presence de novo, even though he enjoyed an already established reputation against another ailment.

*278 *759 369 The contrast between the place of herbalist therapies in town and country has been most notably effected by the relative accessibility of non-herbalist therapies in the town. This is a result of the concentration of non-herbalist practitioners in towns, and of the relative affluence enabling townsmen to purchase more expensive therapies.

*278 *759 632 are no debtera therapists, and, although there are several women who are members of zar coteries (and are, thus, balazar) none publicly practiced therapies which might have been obtained from zars or fellow balazars. In contrast, the following non-secular therapies are practiced in Gabrael sebeka:

	Non-secular therapies	Herbalist therapies
Balazar 1	7	
Balazar 2	7	
Balazar 3	8	
Debtera 1	6	
Debtera 2[20]	10	
Total	40	31
% of all therapies of Gabrael sebeka	56%	44%

*278 *759 369 In summary, then, herbalists figure less prominantly in the town than in the countryside. The townsman more frequently omits them from relevant practitioner chains, or limits them to the initial consultation in such chains. 369 However, from the perspective of the system of Amhara 75 medical beliefs, this contrast between town and country

[20] In ecclesiastical terms, this man is not entitled to the title of "debtera".

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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has no important consequences, and, in terms of Amhara medical practices, the contrast is statistical rather than substantive.

869 sident student by familiarizing him with the network of churches, monasteries, and academies which constitute the stations along which the student will progress once he leaves his natal parish.

*[192] The completion of psalter (dawiyd) is frequently considered a sign of the student's readiness to be tested by the local bishop (abuna) for certification as a deacon. The boy is fifteen or sixteen by this time, and the recipient of church fields in return for his performance in the Mass; with his marriage a few years later, he becomes a priest. The boy bent on a debtera career generally waits until he has been certified a deacon, since this is considered a prerequisite for enrollment in his first debtera school.

*793 With the exceptions already cited, a man is certain
869 to oppose his son's departure, since, sentiment aside,
621 the boy's move usually represents a significant economic
593 loss. When he leaves his natal parish, he does so sec-
166 retly, journeying to a distant debtera, in order to conceal his new residence from his father. Thus, he begins his debtera career without kinfolk or friends to protect him, without resources to meet his subsistence needs.[23]

[871] [23]Since liberation, government (secular) schools
[178] have offered an alternative to an ecclesiastical education pursuant to government employment. The effects of this
[369] have been limited, however, since only an estimated 3% pass beyond the eighth grade (ESA 1965:198). In addition children of townsmen and non-Amhara are disproportionately represented in these classes.

824 [283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called [324] "aräg", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and [293] grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

[372] Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

[386] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

[222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by collecting, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Sircunia Abyssinica).

824 281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

462 processing tasks of the women also include the prepara-
25 tion of staples of the pantry, to be ready for immediate use when her other tasks have left her no time. The red pepper ("barbarē") is preserved and readied in the form of a paste, by grinding it, adding water and salt, plus a bit of onion. This paste, called "delleh" or "delleha" can then be used in wot, or to spice butter to be smeared on "enjera" bread, or mixed with oily nug paste and car-
[x3] ried as a condiment and staple on travel. Another prepared spice condiment used by travellers is a dry mixture of spices, salt and "shero" (ground peas), called "meten". Butter may be processed by boiling it with pepper, or with the small yellow root of a rhubarb called "maqmaqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), which is also used as a medicine against tuberculosis.

462 Fetching and producing materials for fuel is a major
237 female occupation, though left to young girls when avail-
572 able. A special supply of dried cowdung is prepared for the rainy season, beginning right after Easter when the intermittent light rains are expected soon. Donkey and horse manure, "fanday", are not used by the proud Amhhara, but cattle dung is flattened between the palms of women, dried in the sun, piled into tall heaps right next to the hut, then covered with a protective mask of mud and fresh dung. It is also women's task to watch the hearth fire in the evening, to check that it is covered with hot ashes over glowing embers, so that it will not go out and leave the hut chilly, on the one hand, but not burn so brightly that it might set fire to the hut.

373 Little clay oil lamps are a luxury, since the fuel, often kerosene, must be bought at the market. Only churches and landowning farmers can afford it on occasion. In the church, beeswax candles, made by the women auxiliaries of the church from cotton thread and beeswax, serve for illumination at the early masses, and are surprisingly non-dripping.

372 Modern matches, made in Ethiopia under a government monopoly, are how cheaply available at all great markets, and have replaced earlier methods of making fire. The old method is still folowed in remote jungle areas such as Wolqait. There, fire is produced by friction, using a big, soft, bottom piece of "wanza" or "gerawa wood", and a branch or piece of hardwood, such as wild olive ("woyra") as the twirling or rubbing top piece. It sometimes takes an hour of effort. Even in the hamlets, where matches are available, they are saved by transporting fire from hearth to hearth in a broken potsherd (gel). Charcoal ("käsäl") is a luxury item, used sparingly only in pottery-making, occasionally to boil coffee if in a hurry or tea in urban places.

462 252 Baking is a female occupation, but becomes a source of income only in urban centers or temporarily at great markets, where restorateur-prostitutes engage in this work or hire less attractive women to do it for them. A woman who specializes in baking and selling "enjära" and other breads is called a "gagari". It is one of the very few 462 252 554 money-producing occupations in which a Coptic Amhara woman can engage. But it is low prestige, and no self-respecting

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

of running water, and appeal to such *Dei ex machina* as marine action and waves of translation, cannot see a few such marks of the handiwork of rain and rivers as are shown by these gorges. There is not the slightest possibility, as far as I can see, of explaining their origin by any other force than that of the streams flowing in them. Any faulting or dislocation of the rocks is out of the question, there is no evidence of glacier action at any past time, and even the most fervent apostle of marine denudation would scarcely credit it with the formation of a Titanic trench three-quarters of a mile deep and very little more in breadth." 133

This description would apply equally to the gorges found in other parts of the Ethiopian highlands, for they are all, as far as I have seen, remarkably similar; and no geologist would now question their formation by stream erosion.

The formations of Blanford's area were called by him the Magdala group of "Traps"—an enormously thick, practically horizontal layer of lava flows. They were especially characterized by bands of trachyte, often columnar, weathering to form steep scarps. These formations are probably of late- or post-Cretaceous age, since Blanford's Ashangi Traps (upon which the Magdala group lies unconformably) were tentatively attributed by him to the Upper Cretaceous. Referring to the Magdala Traps Blanford says: "It is highly probable that the Trap rocks of Shoa belong, in part at least, to this group", his belief being based on some descriptions of Rocher d'Hericourt, who travelled in Shoa in the 1840's. My own limited observations confirm this assumption, except that in our area the most conspicuous cliffs and scarps consisted of columnar basalt, not trachyte. The area shown on the map consists of alternating harder and softer layers of volcanic rocks, including basalts, trachytes and tuffs (the latter often used, as in Kenya, for building). They dip slightly to the north-west.

The plateau, which occupies most of the sheet, lies everywhere above 9000 feet. It enjoys a temperate climate, and frosts are not uncommon in December and January. It is swept by easterly winds throughout the year, except when rain is actually threatened or falling, when it commonly turns right round to the west—a frequent occurrence during the long rainy season (June to September). The volcanic rocks have given rise to deep and potentially very fertile soils. The high plateau is mostly short grassland with very little bush, except in places protected both from wind and grazing animals, and very few trees except for small clumps of introduced Eucalyptus which mark almost every inhabited place. Owing to the scarcity of timber a dung-fuel known as *kubat* is usually burnt. At first sight the plateau appears very thinly populated but this, as will be shown, is an illusion. Anything like a village is rare, but isolated homesteads occur almost everywhere on rising ground. Nearly all this country makes good grazing for cattle, sheep and goats, and it is high enough for horses to flourish. Perhaps a third of it is more or less cultivable, though the area under cultivation in any one year is much less. Owing to cold and exposure very few crops flourish on the plateau itself, the principal ones being barley and broad beans. 132 [134] 137 [177] [372] 361 31 [231] 241 311

The natural flora of the high plateau is not rich, though in rocky, sheltered spots a succession of attractive herbs and shrubs, including Jasmine, a yellow 137

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

513 all together in their single room; if to the aroma arising from this combined population be added the acrid [372] smoke from a fire made of dung-cakes, and a plentiful accompaniment of fleas and other insects, the joys of a night's shelter in such quarters may well be imagined.

351 The house nearly always stands in a very large piece of ground surrounded by a mud and stone wall. It is a curious habit of theirs that in building the wall they generally start with the gateway. Occasionally, for one reason or another, the wall-building suffers a hitch, and one sees the quaint spectacle of a gateway (sometimes with a gate), a few yards of wall, and then nothing to impede general ingress. Some of the chiefs, 342 however, are now building themselves better places, especially those that have been on missions to Europe. But even among these an ordinary *tukul* sometimes suffices, and most of the important chiefs I met in Abyssinia were content with most primitive installations.

The *tukuls* of the poorer class are mostly constructed in a circular form of sticks plastered inside and out with mud. The roof, which is made separately and put on last, is cone-shaped, made of sticks or cane bound strongly together with strips of bark and then thatched: the latter is an art in which the Abyssinians particularly excel. The roof extends two or three feet from the walls; thus the torrential rains run off easily and leave the hut perfectly dry.

342 Inside, a part is usually divided off by a length of 352 sheeting suspended on a string, behind which, on a raised platform, the family sleep on couches or beds made of wood and grass and covered with skins; blankets are uncommon, and the *chammas* in which

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

23 and form a new one. If he re-uses an old basket, he first sweeps out the larvae (ech) remnants, wax, etc., with the "nebasel" plant which the bees are said to like.

Sometimes as rapidly as six weeks later, the honey is ready for collecting. The hive is smoked out, and many bees perish. Some of the honey is retained at home and mix-
[272] ed with water to make non-alcoholic "berz" when honored guests come. The wax, to which some of the honey still ad-
[373] heres, is rolled over strong cotton or fiber thread and the resulting long thin candle is used in church to illuminate the readings and the processions.

Most of the honey is sold on the big "Saturday market", or directly to the woman in the nearest town who operates a "tedj byet", a mead house. To make it worth his while, a farmer should have at least five skeps-hives, from which he can realize 50 kilos of honey annually, for which he can obtain about $20. A very big keeper may have as many as 50 skeps, bringing him U.S. $200. for the honey.
[273] But the real profit is made by the woman owner of the tedj byet, who pays little for this honey, for gesho (fermenting agent) and for a big barrel to brew mead in, and then, after some months, sells her product, "tedj", a wine-like alcoholic drink, at a price that only noblemen, clerks, town officials, and Muslim traders can afford.

[278] The honey of the wild bee, "terb", is used against trachoma and other eye diseases. But "shame" forbids the eating of such wild honey.

Civet cat has been "farmed" by some in certain districts for centuries, and the musk taken regularly from the

373 Little clay oil lamps are a luxury, since the fuel, often kerosene, must be bought at the market. Only churches and landowning farmers can afford it on occasion. In the church, beeswax candles, made by the women auxiliaries of the church from cotton thread and beeswax, serve for illumination at the early masses, and are surprisingly non-dripping.

372 Modern matches, made in Ethiopia under a government monopoly, are now cheaply available at all great markets, and have replaced earlier methods of making fire. The old method is still folowed in remote jungle areas such as Wolqait. There, fire is produced by friction, using a big, soft, bottom piece of "wanza" or "gerawa wood", and a branch or piece of hardwood, such as wild olive ("woyra") as the twirling or rubbing top piece. It sometimes takes an hour of effort. Even in the hamlets, where matches are available, they are saved by transporting fire from hearth to hearth in a broken potsherd (gel). Charcoal ("käsäl") is a luxury item, used sparingly only in pottery-making, occasionally to boil coffee if in a hurry or tea in urban places.

462 252 Baking is a female occupation, but becomes a source of income only in urban centers or temporarily at great markets, where restorateur-prostitutes engage in this work or hire less attractive women to do it for them. A woman who specializes in baking and selling "enjära" and other breads is called a "gagari". It is one of the very few 462 252 554 money-producing occupations in which a Coptic Amhara woman can engage. But it is low prestige, and no self-respecting

778 the frame, are now often cut from modern tin cans.

The ceremonial drinking cup used in the eucharist is the "ṭewa", usually made of metal. But if used in the "mähabber" communal sodality outside the church, it is often of horn or clay, about 4½ inches high, 5 inches diameter at top, 1½ inches at bottom. On the latter occasion it is filled with barley beer or "berz" (honey-water). This is given the peasant at plowing time to [788] confer blessing upon him, thus called "maras baggo" (for spring plowing).

Other equipment belonging to the church may be a wooden pulpit for reading (not preaching), some tin [373] oil-lamps or the old wick-like candles (called "twäf").

778 Very important are the drums, huge affairs carried by 534 the younger dancers during worship, suspended from shoulder straps. The barrel-like "nägarit", of which the average church has three (or must borrow them), usually has a height of at least 30 inches, a diameter of 15 inches. It is made of "wanza" wood (olive or other hardwood), with tanned oxhide moistened and stretched tightly across both ends. The drummer operates it with the flat of his fingers and top of flat palm. Another type is the "kabaro" drum, in which one end is bigger than the other. The drums and the swaying maqomya sticks keep time during the chanting. Trumpets are used only for parades, to herald the march, but not in accompaniment.

778 When not in use, most of these utensils are loc-
344 251 ked in a little treasure house, called "bätälehem" (in

796 The holy day which now symbolized most strongly the union of church and state occurs just after the climax of the rainy season. On the 7th day of the monthe of Nahase occurs the feast of the Trinity, "Selassyē", which the present emperor adopted as his imperial name at coronation. On this day, the "tabot" from the local "Selassyē" church is taken on a colorful, though usually rain-drenched parade. In some regions this feast is called "Abba Abraham", because it is believed that the day also commemorates the Old Testament event when 3 angels [188] visited Rather Abraham. The parade includes also many national flags of the (secular) state, and photographs of the bearded emperor, carried by deacons. Loyalty shouts of "Addis Ababa" are frequently heard.

The last important socio-religious holy day is "Buhē", the Transfiguration of Jesus, on the 13th of the same month. It is also called "Dabra Tabor", because it is believed to have taken place on Mt. Tabor in ancient Palestine. Again a church bearing that name is chosen as center of the celebration. Buhe is also a feast of lights, perhaps to symbolize the hope that the rainclouds will soon part and let the sun be seen [373] once again. There are torchlight parades, the torches made from braided, resinous barks, carried on the way to the church just before sunrise. All shout "Buhe, Buhe" on many occasions on this day. It is a family holiday remembered all through life by the children. On this day the hearths are brightly lit, and mothers bake a special wheaten bread for the children. Even

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

They say the prayers by heart and
without light, except in the lamps or chandeliers, for they 796 782
have not got lamps. They burn butter in these chandeliers, [373]
for they have not got oil. They pray or chaunt very loud, [354]
without art of singing, and they do not recite (alternate) [237]
verses, but all sing straight on. Their prayers are psalms, and
on feast days besides psalms they recite prose, according as [533]
the feast is so is the prose. They always stand in the
churches; at matins they only say one single lesson: this
is said by a priest or a friar, rather shouted than intoned,
and he reads this lesson before the principal entrance.
When this lesson is finished, on Saturdays, Sundays, and 792
feast days, they make a procession with four or five crosses 796
on their poles, and a cross not so much raised as carried
like a stick in the left hand, because they carry a thurible
in the right hand, since as many as carry a cross carry a
thurible, there are always as many thuribles as crosses.
They wear some silk cloaks, not well made, because they
are not wider than the width of a piece of damask, or other [292]
silk from top to bottom. Before the breast, a cross piece to
the flanks on each side, of any other stuff and of any colour,
even though it should not match the principal part, and of
this principal part a good ell hangs behind dragging on the
ground. They make this procession through the circuit,
which is like a cloister. This being ended, on the said
Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts, he who has to say mass
enters with two others into the chancel; they bring out an
effigy of Our Lady, which they have in ancient pictures in all [778]
churches and monasteries. He who has to say mass places
himself in the centre of the transept with his face towards
the principal entrance, and the image in his hands held
before his breast: and those who stand by his sides hold
lighted candles in their hands, and all the others commence
a chaunt like prose, and all walk, shouting and leaping as if
dancing[1], they hold hands and go round, before the

[1] *Como'em chacota*, dancing and singing, *i.e.*, not reverentially.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that 681
they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester 793
John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means em- 643
peror, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some 752
sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, 757
they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thou- 621
sand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and 361
there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and 342
all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and court-
yards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others 352
on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without 415
napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black 264
earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others 262
eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, 252
and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is 373
much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which 314
they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 000

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

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placed on the outside of garden or hamlet-fences, to discourage hyenas, to keep livestock inside -- a natural barbed wire.

Eucalyptus tree ("bahēr zaf") has become thoroughly rooted in Ethiopia. It is used in construction, especially of the more urban dwellings, as urban fuel, and its blue smoke and aroma is an early morning and evening feature of every town and market-town, where it is a major trade item. During the rainy season it grows so fast that a mature tree can be "harvested" 5 years after the nursling stage. Since it sells for $3-5 Ethiopian, (US $1-2) it is the most planted tree in Ethiopia today. The peasant also likes to use the odoriferous branches and leaves to cover the "dass" the festivity-shelter on marriages, etc., and the leafy branch as chera, flyswitch. Entire hillsides may be seen planted with this tree.

Female woods are also used for other indispensable products:

[386] Ink - is made from the fruit of the "tämbälal" (Jasminum floribundum) tree, and its timer is used

[534] for the stock of the single-string violin, the masenqo. (But imported blue ink called "nil" is preferred by däbtära scribes.)

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Fibre - for basketry, roof-hoops, etc. is obtained from the "wärqē" (musa ensete) (also called "enset") at lower altitudes, used especially for cords. Rope "gämäd" is made from the bark cut

824 [283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called [324] "aräg", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and [293] grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

[372] Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

[386] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

[222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by collecting, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Sirounia Abyssinica).

824 281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

282 aforementioned foodbasket for travel (the "agelgel"). Drinking horns and cups of "great men" (feudal lords) and landholding Amhara peasants are sometimes similarly covered by ornamental skins.

282 492 The saddle, "korecha", is still an important product of the Faqi, after the carpenter-smith has prepared its wooden basis. It has a high front pummel of wood, and a high wooden backrest, both held together by the saddle-tree of two wooden planks at a wide angle to each other. This is covered by the Faqi with a very thick, strong, parchment-like cowskin, sewn carefully and tightly through holes drilled in the wood, and ornamented with line designs, often after dying the skin black with soot obtained from the "qäntäṭef" creeper vine. [384]

Saddlemaking, like shield-making, caused much displacement of the Faqi during the long periods of warring chieftains and their armies. The great pride of an Amhara horseman was to have well-made and ornamented leather equipment for his horse, on its head, chest and back. Here the tanner often had to work in close cooperation with the smith. The iron ring of the stirrup (still in use); ornamental metal discs; the iron mouth pieces which resemble the Arab type and press tongue to mandible so that the horse reacts painfully to the slightest direction of the little finger, were common and still are in many districts. Gold or silver ornaments for the horse were important decorations for bravery given by the king especially to officers of high Amhara nobility. They are still honored as family heirlooms.

286 An experienced weaver can throw the shuttle as quickly as every 1/2 second, which would mean 120 picks a minute. It is a one-man operation, and the junior helper is employed primarily to carry the portable comb hand bobbins and make fastenings as indicated. An average, simple shamma takes about two days of work, but cases have been known when an experienced weaver in the prime of life, working uninterruptedly for 12 hours from sunrise to sunset, without rest and withour mishap, did it in one day, because of the pressure of an approaching marriage. The marriage months following the harvest are the busy season, ending at the approach of the light rains. Often a weaver takes 3 days for an average shamma, with long rests during the work day; a "kutta" toga may well take a week.

Weavers usually work by special order only and do not store any products for more advantageous sale, for the "season". They are craftsmen, not traders, particularly the Falashas, and they employ no middleman. Thus the transaction is on the interpersonal level. This is even true in the provincial towns. Only in Addis Ababa can a market section be found where traders store and sell readymade shammas, but nearly always they are of the muslin, cheesecloth-type variety, with a selection of colorfully embroidered, narrow borders.

286 386 439 Traditional dying is rarely of the cloth, but mostly of threads which are then used in embroidery. In the past many of these red and blue dyes were imported from the coast, from India, or colored threads

286 pulled from imported cloth. Now most of these dyes are
386 imported from Europe, and many are colorfast only in
[439] cold water (which causes little difficulty as most washing is in cold water). Such embroidery must be paid for extra, but the simple, narrow, single-colored border of the shamma, of the rural type, is included in the price.

286 For such a peasant shamma, the weaver receives
434 from Eth$5 to 8.- depending on whether or not the customer supplied all the prepared cotton. An average, experienced weaver can usually get enough orders to earn about Eth$200.- per year, in the rural area. If he does no farming other than gardening, his food cost may be Eth$140.- per annum. The average weaver is left with more cash than the farmer, who rarely has more than Eth-$30.- left in cash at the end of the year. More often the weaver also farms, since his "season" does not conflict with the major active farming season. A hard-working weaver of solid reputation has the opportunity to accumulate comparative wealth, at least theoretically, but since most rural ethnic specialists, including the Falashas, are not much concerned with commercial profit, few do. It occurs more often among Muslim town weavers.

286 The social position of the weaver, apart from his
554 ethno-religious affiliation, gives him a high place among working specialists, almost equal to that of the musician (if it were not for the fact that the weaver is usually non-Coptic). He is above the status of a smith, and there is no suspicion of black magic attached to the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

532 For it is in connection with the church institution that most of the limited Amhara decorative arts received their reason for tolerated existence and even encouragement. The most famous development of these arts are the Abyssinian Coptic churchpaintings. While writing and doodling and drawing is discouraged among the mass of church students because of the fear of misuse of black magic; skilled and supervised artists working within the framework of the church are freed from this suspicion by the sanctity of the church.

The skilled painter of church art, ("se'el sälī") may receive a commission for a specific painting from the priests or from a lay sponsor who may have himself or his deceased parents memorialized by ordering the artist to paint pictures of the sponsors into corners of the saint's painting, though in modestly smaller scale. Some artists have even painted themselves into a corner.

Most paintings are on canvas, in very vivid colors, and are affixed to the hard mud-and-wattle walls inside the church. Apprentices are drawn from upper students in church school, and first practice on silhouettes (footnote 100): Some of these incipient doodles can be seen on the whitewashed outer walls of some of the sturdier churches, e.g. at monasteries. They practice realistic drawings such as saints on horseback, daily life, games and animals, though their paintings will all be realistically portrayed religious scenes. Ink used is often [586] made from the black fruit of the "tämbälal" tree (Jasminum floribundum), but dabtara scribes often use imported blue ink called "nil". A quill ("be'er") was traditionally used for writing and drawing.

Footnote 100 - Griaule, M.: Silhouettes et Graffiti Abyssins. Paris, 1935

795 Some dabtara have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
556 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually [386] made of soot, charcoat, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre- [776] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susnecs, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female [56] of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay the murderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
tĕff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181]
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

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[283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called
[324] "aräg", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and
[293] grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

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[386] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

[222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by <u>collecting</u>, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Sircunia Abyssinica).

824
281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

515 washing of the body and frequent washing of clothes, and an individual housewife who takes it upon herself to wash more than expected is noticed as different and suspected as possibly being not as respectable and innocent as she might like to appear.

388 In washing, especially of clothes, a soapwort ("endod") (pircunia abyssinica) is gathered from wild bushes the location of which is carefully remembered, for they are not planted. The yellow fruit is dried and crushed, on a flat rock above the river or in it when the water is shallow. It is mixed with water, so that a greenish-white foam results. The fingermarks, resulting from the mixing and gathering of the foam, can be seen on rocks where the sun has dried the remnant.

[574] Dry grass is used as toilet paper, usually held in the left hand.

515 302 Women fumigate their bodies frequently, in the dry season because water is short and hard to come by; in the rainy season, after bathing in the brook or river, to "get rid of the river odor". For, especially at the beginning of the rainy season, the rivers are muddy and carry much smelly debris.

There are 3 different, major kinds of fumigation wood ("yätis enchät"): Domestic incense gathered in the woods by commoner women are "abalo" and "täjo" (Rhamnus straddo); noblewomen and wealthy women aiming at prestige despise domestic woods, and insist on imported incense, primarily "etan" (frankincense), more expensive but freely purchasable on all markets because it is used regularly in the church, during services.

302 Plucking out of pubic hair, by means of ashes held between the fingers, was considered one of the most important duties of feminine hygiene. Men might shave, though not pluck, their pubic hair, if they desired to do so for special "cleanliness". This procedure of plucking

make a toga.

221 241 Since agriculture is a major concern, much of the annual cycle of activities is centered around it. With the onset of the light rains, fields left fallow the years before are redistributed among the members of the extended family of those who work the land. Fathers allocate fields to their newly married sons or to those who have an added child. The matted grass is plowed before the rains start--"tärättärä--plowing to kill the weeds in the sun; then a second, third, fourth time at right angles--"gämmäsä", "däggämä", "sälläsä". Then the turf is piled, dried and burned. The land is now ready, "masa" land", and when puffy clouds appear over the horizon in the morning, the farmer takes his plow to the field for rains will surely follow in the afternoon.

241 407 The plow is one-handed, derived from the ancient Middle East. The yoke, about 5 feet in length and 3-4" thick ("qämbär") is lowered behind the humps of two oxen. The plowpoint, held in place by two vertical wedges, is attached to the central stick, "manäqo". At first this plow, which is little more than a converted digging stick dragged at an angle, penetrates less than 6 inches, but after about 5 replowings, as deeply as one foot. The plowpoint is flat and cannot turn the earth.

241 Major procedures fall into the following categories:

preliminary plowing - "tällämä", cutting field into furrows, preparatory to seeding. Plow is led around large rocks and ignores small ones, so that

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 [321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. [531] Ornamentation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric [303] nature, in the wood. Wooden combs together with their handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. [412] Wooden mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, [354] from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. On occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back-[407] rest of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint [231] firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 Horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

412 lower, muddy terrain, e.g. in the Lazaga district of the Wolkait jungle border, digging sticks are used to prepare small holes for mashella seed. But the Amhara peasant prefers to use the plow, even on contours of hills, since the use of the stick is hard labor, requiring several men working in unison. Often the stick must be weighed down with heavy rocks against the sun-baked soil in the dry season.

412 407 The scratch plow probably evolved as an elaboration of the digging stick by fixing it at an angle to a long beam pulled forward by the yoke of two oxen, thus substituting animal muscle power for human energy. Among the Amhara, the bottom tip of the plowpoint is almost always strengthened and protected by an iron plowpoint purchased from an ethnic (Falasha) smith. The sharp angle biting into the soil can be adjusted by means of a suspension binding strap of hippopotamus skin, and two small wedges. The farmer merely has to guide the digging-stick part of the plow, and encourage the oxen with his long fiber whip.

412 303 Knives for kitchen use very in length usually from 8 to 12 inches, are curved, with the cutting edge on the curved side which comes to a point. The blade is set in a wooden handle. These knives are also used for circumcision. The old razor blade usually was of similar shape, about 6 inches long, and used primarily for shaping head head hair. It is now replaced by imported European blades. Pincers, 4-5 inches long, are carried on trips to remove thorns from the bare feet. Little ear spoons are suspended from the neck-cord and used to remove earwax, especially by the ladies. [515]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] [231] [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭēff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā*, literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā*, preparing *ṭallā*, spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

224
825 lope, reddish, more shy.

Ethiopian klipspringer - "sässo", a little mountain antelope resembling the European chamois, with soft, smooth skin. The Amhara is amused by the curious habit of this sociable animal of mixing with herds of tame goats and grazing in their midst, when goats are taken to upper hillsides for pasturage in the rainy season.

[233]

Waterbuck - "defassa", large antelope resembling European red deer in build. Brown color; hers of 5 to 10 usually contain only one old bull. Common near Lake Tana.

Reedbuck - "behor", golden-colored antelope, in bush near water. They like to inhabit a specific small territory, in herds of 5 to 10.

Ethiopian ibex - "walya", very wild, red-speckled, on the dega steep mountains of Semyen subprovince. Not common elsewhere.

825 Francolins - "qoq" is the generic name for this family of common wild fowl of the woyna
223 dega; resemble the partridge. Boys are adept at hunting them with slingshot and pebble and run after them until both are exhausted.

[411
857]

Guinea fowl - "zegra" or "jegra", black, lean, fast runner, found near water.

Partridge - "sorän", common on woyna dega. Wild

825
223

goose "yebra" (anas aegyptiaca).

Quail - "derchet" Perhaps the most common wild fowl very near habitations, but rarely hunted because very small. It is considered a nuisance and a danger because of its habit of hiding in flocks in the tall grass and starting up suddenly, scaring horses and even mules, which is dangerous especially on steep hills. [59]

411
184 Spears, slingshot, and now rifles are used in part-time or sport hunting. Traps ("atmed") and snares are used only by occupational hunting populations living in jungles such as Wolqait and whose pattern of living differs from that of typical Amhara.

222
[412] A noteworthy Amhara exploitative activity is the collecting of pumice rock in riverbeds during the dry season, and thus called "yabaher dengay" (river rock). It is used
135 in grinding and husking. Gold comes mostly from south of old-Amhara territory, where it is found in sand gravels and has been sold in nuggets since ancient times.

241 D. Food Production and Consumption

a.) Agricultural production

In agriculture in general, there are two major variables: environment, and degree of sophistication - i.e. power and its application.

The ecology of Ethiopia's highland plateau, where

59. The English equivalent terms have been taken from Van Rosen, Björn: Game Animals of Ethiopia. 1953.

285 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large bas-
415 ket of withes, "qerçhat", used to measure 25 kilos of pin-head-grained tyëff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqa-ha"), or of a variety of reeds ("säbäz", "geramta", "akär-ma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofada") made by shep-herding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by morocco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agälgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("mu-day") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("çwaçha")

285 There is also a purely ornamental fiber plate, en-
[531] tirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, most-ly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wänchär")
●411 of a strong fiber ("naçha"). When completed, it has a
857 loop on one end to hook over a finger. A pebble is pla-ced in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end
[244] released at just the right speed and direction. It can stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

439 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the
412 Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight ra-zor, "arab melaç", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

412 ly by the ladies. An awl ("wäsfe") is used in basket-making and umbrella-weaving. A small chisel ("mesar") may be a more recent introduction, but, like the awl and larger items, is nonetheless made by the (Falasha) smith. [232] Burning irons for burning out sores on the backs of mules and donkeys are also made by the ironsmith.

326 The ironsmith, usually Falasha in ethnic identification, does not usually do silversmithing. This is done in urban areas or big markets usually by Muslim silversmiths. The silver is smithed from Maria Theresa thalers, and the smith may keep as much as 2/3 of the "raw material" for himself. As in the case of most other marketable tools and utensils, the product of the silversmith is made on order only, though increasingly there are traders with chests full of silver filigree earspoons, crosses, rings, etc., ready for sale to officials, travellers, and others with ready cash. In the past, silversmiths using imported coins, and goldsmiths using Ethiopian mined gold nuggets, were to found primarily attached to the tent city of the king at his capital. Casting is done on the principle of cire perdue, a form of wax in clay.

411 Weapons were made also in connection with the feudal military organization, which required the craftsman to follow wherever the armed bands of the warlords went in raids or new settlements, serving as a kind or ordinance, and always on call. Rifles in Abyssinia date back over 300 years, handed down as family property, the stocks replaced time and again with tough, white wood, "wanza" (Cordia abyssinica). Each soldier carried gunpowder in

411 a cow's horn and had to manufacture his own cartridges. European cartridges, since the late 19th century have become prized items and are traded, though not illegally, at all big markets, sometimes in lieu of cash. However during all this time, until the present decade, spears were the primary weapons, for rifles were in short supply, out of date, and often in poor condition. The Galla and other south Ethiopians still use the spear almost exclusively.

Among the Amhara, as in most of Africa, the spear ("ṭor") rather than the also available saber or sword symbolized warfare ("ṭornät"). It still is kept, as a festive ornament and as a symbol of individual liberty and manly courage. There were numerous types and sizes, blades ranging most often from 12 to 20 inches, some lances used for throwing, some as hand spears, some two-pronged. Some were used in battle as late as the Italian invasion in 1935/6.

The saber was considered much less significant. It was curved toward the blade like an oversized kitchen knife, and fitted snugly into a scabbard. The main defensive protection was the round shield of rhinocerous or buffalo hide. It was not very large, 18 to 24 inches in diameter, height of curvature about 8 inches. It was often richly decorated with metal, silver, and even gold in case of the highest ranks. Daggers ("ṣhubbē") were curved among the Amhara, but straight among other groups, for daggers, too, were regarded by the Amhara merely as adaptations of the kitchen knife.

411 A safer version of the throwing spear, with dull or no point, is used by the young men during their mock battle and chase at the "gänna" feast (Christmas).

326 435 The economic aspects of smithcraft could provide the smith with considerable income, since the Amhara peasants are in regular need, and since the Falasha smiths have a monopoly due to the suspicions of the magic correlation which keep Amhara from the craft. But in fact the income is not large. A team of rural smiths, 5 men, receive only Eth$1.50 for their labor in making a plowpoint, if the customer brings his own scrap, double that if the smiths have to supply it. The somewhat bigger "summer plow" costs somewhat more. The customer usually waits in a special hut of the hamlet of the smiths, and must be provided with grain and other necessities, meanwhile. Thus, while an individual smith may earn as much as Eth$400.- from his craft in a year, the additional food bill may be Eth$300.-, and most of the earnings will go to pay the rent on his land, of which he farms less than the average peasant.

Even a well-made plowpoint dulls after about 10 years. Then it is brought back and the smith cuts it down to an axe ("mäterabiya") for only 50¢ Eth. When that dulls, he cuts it down further to a slightly smaller adze ("mäqofäriya") for half that sum.

326 563 The human organization of smithcraft, particularly in the Amhara area where the Falasha are the smiths, presents peculiar problems and patterns. Where no Falasha hamlets are near, the smithing is done by itinerant Fa-

281 Fats, usually of plant origin, either wild or domestic, are then used to lubricate and soften the skin. This is hard manual work, lasting sometimes several days. Most commonly preferred is the castor oil bean, called "qaçhma" or "gulqwas". The skin may now be kneaded or stamped by feet, to work the fats in and render the skin soft for the cutting and fashioning of objects, which now follows.

282 411 The shield was formerly one of the major products of the Faqi, but now is made rarely and only for ornamental use. The rhinoceros or buffalo skin is cut circular, placed over a wooden stake in the ground, the rim pegged down, to prepare the cupola shape. The skin is then depilated, dried, smeared with oils to expand again. It is beaten to increase its resistance. Incised decorations and the pulling through of the leather handle, are done before the shield is entirely hard and dry. Metal decor is added later, by the smith, after the Faqi has delivered his product.

282 More common products, still made today, are: half-sack, "ënqälba", for carrying the baby on the mother's [354] back, with straps and a bottom tied to the mother's shoul- [415] ders, chest and waist; full sacks, "aqomada", for transporting grain to market, tied with strips (these are also used for various storage in the better Amhara huts); [283] straps cut of poor skins in all kinds and sizes, "qeralla", some for tying loads onto donkeys, some to serve as more springy diagonal straps of the better "alga" bed; a fine, tanned cowskin used as blanket; "jändi", cover

782 is already assured. It is also performed on Epiphany,
726 to defy human as well as spirit enemiesoof the Faith.
521
535 Before battle, it was the response of the simple soldiers, ("wätadär") to the pep-talk ("arraga") given them by the commander, encouraging them to stand their ground.

727 After thevictorious battle, the soldier could look
554 forward to taking part in the royal feasting, the "gabber", and to lording it over the local "gabbar" peasant who had to supply the means and the womenfolk. It is at least part of the basis of the pride (critics say false sense of their own worth) of the free Amhara over subject peoples, enabling evan the simplest soldier to feel that he belongs to the proprietory class. Back home, he therefore despises manual labor, and even in going into battle he used to conscript peasant boys to carry his heavy rhinoceros-hide shield ("gasha"). These boys often became replacements for slain warriors when they could secure weapons, and, in turn, recruited servants for themselves.

441 The typical weapon was the spear (the word "tor" means both war and spear) until replaced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by rifles, though late-medieval muskets and Ottoman firearms were available to a few from the Portuguese period in the 16th century. The spear, some in use as late as the Italian invasion of 1935/6, sometimes had two or three prongs. Sabers were rare, and available mostley to noble officers. They were of the curved, Damascene type. Daggers of

441 various shapes were somewhat more common. Long lances and shorter throwing spears, both with fine, long iron 714 heads, were in use. Round rhinoceros shields belonging to officers were often ornamented carefully with brass or even silver or gold plates arranged in geometric patterns; circles; colorful velvet embroidery, granted as reward gifts for special bravery. Crown-like bands worn around forehead and skull, of gold, silver or lion-mane, were given to officers as decorations for bravery.

More lasting awards were available only in the form of "gult" fiefs.

701 Table 5: Land Tenure of Artisans and Chaplains.

Title and Rank	Function	Reward in Land Tenure
bajirond (lit. treasurer)	(ethnic-origin) quartermaster, chief of artisans	"rest-gult" lands, inheritable.
qēs (priest)	army chaplain, carrier of sacred "tabot" (representing home church, and symbolizing the ark of the ancient Israelites.	"rest-gult" land, given to parish church.

725 The Amhara army on the march (or any Abyssinian army) has been described as resembling a migrating people rather than a disciplined-looking army. Supplies and equipment crawling over the landscape on donkey or human carriers, might amount to two-thirds of the army. Servants, priests, women and children, household utensils, cattle and sheep, huge jars of beer, etc., seemed to surround the main military caval-

796 the youngest are lifted to see the parade. Boys and
[857] girls age 7 to 15 go from hut to hut starting inthe early morning, chanting "Buhe, Buhe", "hoyya, hoyyo, ho", and verses:

[539] "All shout 'Buhe!, children all!
Give us what (you have) prepared; Do not change (your mind)! "

"When the rooster has crowed, night is gone;
After Buhe, the winter(rainy season) is gone".

796 Long whips, mostly of finely braided fibre, of
526 tree bark or "tucha" grass, are made before Buhe, and
[411] young men practice with them until they can hit even small targets easily. On Buhe afternoon, two groups of contestants face each other, often across a swollen brook, and line up so that each individual faces an opponent of equal skill and strength. They come armed with the whips, and begin to warm up by hurling insults at each other, addressing each other in the female gender. Soon the game of aiming at the face and ducking the adversary's whip begins. The whip has a short wooden handle, but the strap may be as long as 15 feet. Sometimes this opportunity is taken to work out grudge fights. For, traditionally, any wounds incurred, even the loss of an eye, cannot be taken to court or cause a feud, as the result of this ritual battle. No other weapons may be used. The losers flee, are pursued to their huts, and the victors are entitled to all the

291 Men doing physical labor - "boddäna" - lift toga above shoulders to free arms;

- "adägäddäga" - knot toga across chest; wrap-around. (also to tie shammas of debtors to creditors, or prisoners to guard's).

[411] To parry blows - "mäkäta" - wrapping toga around left forearm, as shield.

Preparing for battle - "adäräddäga" (see above): knotting shamma across chest, after wrapping it tightly around the waist.

When cold - "zeqzeq läbbäsä" - doubling a heavy shamma (called "kuta" or "derreb") to wrap oneself in completely, even covering covering head, at night.

When hot - a light shamma of muslin ("nätala") may be rolled around the head - "tämättäma". Hence, the turban of priests is called "mätamtamiya", a tight wrap-around of the head by muslin.

[535] When dancing - before "dabtara" (scribe-choristers) begin to dance, in church, they first drape the toga tightly ("shäbäsh-häbä"), so that the flaps will not drop from the shoulders during the motion.

[765] In mourning - while dancing the funeral motion, accompanying the improvised eulogy, women approach each other holding their own togas outward and horizontal, like huge wings, (as if they were holding a spear like men dancing the "fukkara" boast dance).

201 291 178 685 Some of these expressive ways of draping the shamma are falling into disuse in the towns where the people are more affected by what passes as "modern dress". However, an interesting increase in one way of draping the shamma can be noticed in recent years: Now that debtors are no

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Gojjam notable and boy learning trade of war by carrying weapons

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411

Gojjamis, Matakal

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Mule and Hotchkiss gun crossing Blue Nile

(Facing p 7)

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

another lord, who was named Adiby, who was now Bar- 643
nagais. Beneath the Barnagais are some great lords whom 631
they call Xuums, which means captains; and these are, first, Xuum Cire, a very great captaincy, he is now married to a sister of Prester John. We never went to this country and Xuumeta because it is distant and out of the way. There 643
is another Xuumeta named Ceruil. We knew this lordship, 701
and they say that its Xuum brings into the field fifteen 631
thousand spearmen with shields and archers. Also Xuum Cama, and Buno Xuum, and Xuum bono. These Xumetas had been one, and on account of its being large, and the Prester having misgivings that they might set themselves up against the Barnagais, he made it into two, and even yet each of them is very large. They say that this lordship which is now two was the dominion of Queen Candace, without having been larger in her time. She was the first Christian that there was in this country, and whom the Lord called powerful. Also two other captaincies, one is named Dafilla, the other Canfila; these two border on Egypt, and their captains are like lords of the marches. All these captains before mentioned are of kettledrums, [534]
which nobody except great lords can carry: and all these serve with the Barnagais in wars when he goes to them, and wherever he may go. They have other great gentlemen under their command who are called Arraz,[1] which means heads. We knew one of these, who was named Arraz Aderaan, he is head over fifteen thousand men at arms, whom they name chavas. I saw this Arraz Aderaan twice at the court, both times I saw him before the gate of the [292]
Prester John going without a shirt, and from his waist downwards a very good silk cloth, and on his shoulders the skin of a lion, in his right hand a spear, and in his left hand [411]
a shield. I asked how it was so great a lord went about in that manner, they told me that the greatest honour

[1] *Ar-ras.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

These Nobiis are neither Moors, nor Jews, nor Christians. 721
It is said that they had been Christians, and had lost their faith, and are thus without any faith. They say that there is among these Nobiis much fine gold. They said that but a short time ago they had killed a son of the Barnagais, and that he wished to go and avenge his death. I heard say that in the frontier districts of these Nobiis there were four or five hundred horsemen, very great warriors, and that it is a country very well supplied with provisions, and it cannot be otherwise because it is on this and the further side of the Nile, which they say is a very fertile country. The proclamation said that he would set out in fifty days from that time: but up to this there had been no muster nor movement of arms. This would be because in the country there are not many, and few people possess them except the Chavas, who are the men at arms. These [411] men have javelins, bows and arrows. These great lords have a few swords, hangers, and shirts of mail (not many of [714] them). On the occasion of this little revolt, the Barnagais asked the ambassador for swords, and the ambassador gave him his own, which he wore on the road, and which was very good, and he still persistently begged another rich sword with ornaments which he carried with him, saying he wanted it for the war he was going to make, and the ambassador not being able to excuse himself, it suited him to buy another from his companions with gilt ends and a velvet scabbard, which he gave him instead of his own. And in the house where we kept our goods, and where our Portuguese slept, which was a house without doors, on the following night they stole from them two swords and a helmet. All this would be on account of the war.

[pp. 66-400 have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

784 He says that during all Passion week they are dressed in black or blue, and do not speak to one another for grief, saying that Judas by a kiss of peace betrayed his Lord.

532 Although there are in the churches effigies painted on all
784 the walls, and also crosses, nevertheless on no cross is a crucifix painted, neither have they any of solid carving; because they say they are not deserving to see Christ crucified.

792 All the priests, friars, and gentlemen carry crosses in their
778 hands, both on foot and on horseback; and the laymen of the people and lower people carry crosses round their necks. Every priest and friar carries a little horn of copper with holy water, and the hosts where they arrive beg of them water and a blessing, and they give it. Before they eat they throw drops of water on the food, and also in the drinking vases.

411 Their arms are assagays, few swords, a few shirts of mail, long and narrow; our Portuguese say that they are not of good mail.

There are many bows and arrows, they have no feathers like ours; there are very few helmets and casques. Those that there are have come since they have had intercourse with the Portuguese. There are plenty of strong bucklers;
713 there are no cannon, except two swivel guns which we brought them. At our departure there were fourteen muskets at Court, which they bought from the Turks who come there to trade. The Prester ordered whatever they asked to be given for them, and ordered men to be taught to shoot.

534 There are trumpets, but not good ones; there are many drums of copper which come from Cairo, and others of wood which have leather on both sides; there are tambourines like ours, and large cymbals which they sound. There are flutes and some instruments with chords, square like harps, which they call David moçanquo, which means the harp of David. They play these to the Prester, and not well.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

423
estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly 181
a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rĭst.* 691

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their 771
land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts 181
are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially 771
hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the 773
angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder [823]
is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short 181
notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to chil- 181
dren in Manz express this determination: 551

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Ḉhafḉhefē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

181
A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā,* a hardwood staff about 411
three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā.* It has many pur- 481
poses—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs 482
when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or [599]
standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

411 standing at the long church services. Above all it is a weapon of offense and
181 defense, and every Amhara male is supposed to be skilled in its use. When the *dulā* is so employed in Manz, the *bānnā* blanket is usually wrapped around the left arm to form a quick shield, the *dulā* raised high with the right to bring down on the adversary's cranium. The blows are sometimes fatal. The Manzēs are proud of their facility with the lethal stick, and nearly every district in Manz boasts that it is real "*dulā* country."

726 The Manzēs also excel at *shillalā,* the Abyssinian war chant. This is a
533 form of boastful verse—partly intoned, partly shouted—which is declaimed by
181 warriors to "heat their blood" before hitting the warpath. Children in Manz start practicing *shillalā* almost as soon as they leave the breast. The following
[539] is a good specimen of Manz *shillalā:*

> *Agarātchn Māmā agarātchn Lālo wanzātchn Dangazē;*
> *Mān abātu yāzzāl imbi senīl gizē.*

> Our land is Māmā, our land is Lālo, our stream the Dangazē;
> What father will order us when *imbi* we say!

Imbi is an interjection used by children to express "No!" There is a double pun in this couplet. *Mān abātu* ("Who is the father?") is a profane idiom meaning "bastard." "To say *imbi*" is another idiom, meaning "to refuse." The second line may thus be also rendered as:

> What bastard dare shove us around when we tell him to keep off our lands!

181 The Manzē code asks that a man be ready to defend his land and church
865 by force. It does not approve wanton aggression. But the Manzē's disposition
152 is notoriously aggressive, for his emotional life is relatively devoid of warmth
[577] and, on the other hand, fighting is so highly rewarded. Children are urged to be adept with the *dulā*. Their temper tantrums are welcomed as signs that they are brave. As a result the men of Manz are often overcome by the impulse toward physical aggression; assault and murder are recurrent events on their fields and trails and at their marketplaces. The discrepancy between the *norm* of physical bravery, which is operative *in certain specified circumstances,* and the *general character trait* of aggressiveness comprises a major theme in their emotional life: they feel obliged to look for justification for the aggressive actions which they have been conditioned to want to carry out. This disposition is illustrated in the words of the Manzē youth who said:

> I want very much to kill somebody. The only problem is I'm not strong enough. Perhaps one day I will be. Why is it all right to kill? People kill sheep, don't they? And sheep are innocent, they don't know anything, don't do any wrong. But man knows, he knows much, and still he does wrong: every man is bad. I wouldn't kill everybody, only the bad ones. If I had an enemy, I would kill him. Maybe I will become a soldier, and kill my country's enemies.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 156 157 man, as we shall see in more detail below, includes the quality of leaving others alone.

[577] This strong sense of self is confirmed and symbolized by two conspicuous *565 156 411 Amhara customs: carrying staves and going on trips. A staff, like a pipe, affirms the ego in two ways. As a piece of personal property right at hand, it stimulates a sense of pride of ownership; as something external yet confronting the person, it makes the ego more conscious of its bounded reality. Such sensations are daily experiences for the Amhara peasant, who is rarely separated from the staff in one form or other. When he leaves his homestead he normally carries the hard *dulā*, a potential weapon of defense that likewise affirms his ego by bolstering self-confidence in a dangerous world. He braces the *dulā* against his back as he treks along, or holds it against the [481] front of his shoulder like a rifle. Older men walk using it as a cane. A special kind of staff made of softer wood (*zang*) is carried by pious and elderly [481] men. Participants in devotional services lean on still another type of staff (*maquāmiyā*) which is distributed in the church for that purpose.

*565 156 484 Traveling is another custom which affirms the ego, at least when one travels spontaneously and not in organized company. As the individual moves past various stimuli, his self-consciousness is heightened by the contrast between a persisting ego and a constantly changing environment. As a traveler par excellence—and a lone traveler, unless social rank requires the presence of retainers—the Amhara peasant frequently removes himself from familiar home settings and confronts an outside world. He loves to go on the road and will travel at the slightest provocation. For him a distance of two or three hours by foot is like the American's trip to the corner drugstore. Whether to visit relatives or pay respects after death, to go to market or to court, to get holy water at a distant church, or to look after land in a far away district, the Amhara peasant is on the move dozens of times each year, often for trips involving two or three days of travel.

*565 156 829 602 609 Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and culture, one may for the moment say that the personal ego is the central object in the Amhara peasant's view of society. Exactly what might be meant by this statement and in what respects it needs qualification are questions that will be taken up in the concluding chapter. If it is so, certainly the next most prominent social object in his world is the circle of close ones, or *zamad*. *Zamad* refers in the first instance to consanguineal kin, and is distinguished from the category of those who are strangers, or *bā'ed*. This is perhaps the most important of all the sociological distinctions made by the Amhara: the former, *zamad*, are seen as entitled to the warmest hospitality, while toward *bā'ed* indifference and suspicion are appropriate responses.

*565 156 602 This does not mean that the kin group is a corporate entity whose interests and identity transcend that of the individual. On the contrary, the notion of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
831 particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the
(834) sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical
[577] courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat,* is synonymous with *guabaznat,* or "bravery.")

*883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often
[41] carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
463

825 goose "yebra" (anas aegyptiaca).

223 Quail - "derchet" Perhaps the most common wild fowl very near habitations, but rarely hunted because very small. It is considered a nuisance and a danger because of its habit of hiding in flocks in the tall grass and starting up suddenly, scaring horses and even mules, which is dangerous especially on steep hills. [59]

411 184 Spears, slingshot, and now rifles are used in part-time or sport hunting. Traps ("atmäd") and snares are used only by occupational hunting populations living in jungles such as Wolqait and whose pattern of living differs from that of typical Amhara.

222 412 A noteworthy Amhara exploitative activity is the collecting of pumice rock in riverbeds during the dry season, and thus called "yäbaher dengay" (river rock). It is used in grinding and husking. 135 Gold comes mostly from south of old-Amhara territory, where it is found in sand gravels and has been sold in nuggets since ancient times.

241 D. Food Production and Consumption

a.) Agricultural production

In agriculture in general, there are two major variables: environment, and degree of sophistication - i.e. power and its application.

The ecology of Ethiopia's highland plateau, where

59. The English equivalent terms have been taken from Van Rosen, Björn: Game Animals of Ethiopia. 1953.

243 as a cereal grain in Abyssinia since ancient times. It is known in the USA as "teff lovegrass" and is sometimes grown for hay or pasture. In Abyssinia it is the most important cereal.

Tyēff seeding takes place, by broadcasting, at the beginning of the rainy season in June; it is ready for harvest in October-November. Sheep are driven over after the seeding to cover the seeds and thus insure maximum germination. Harvesting is done by hand cutting. The grain is made into sheaves about 6 inches thick. Sickles [412] made by the Falasha ironsmiths are simple affairs, a quarter-circle of toothed iron blade fitted into a wooden handle. Tyēff flour is made by the housewives, who grind it on a stone mill (wofcho) by hand on the mano-matate principle.

There are tow major kinds of sorghums (durra) grown as staple cereals, "mashella" and "zengada"; a third, "dagussa" is used more for making beer and in poor times. Many of these are sown when the early light rains come in March-April. The stalks of mashella are used to build simple temporary huts; other stalks become fodder. As [857] soon as the heavy rains are over, boys with slingshots and whips are stationed in the fields and on lookout posts atop the "umbrella tree" to fight off the birds who are very fond of sorghum, especially the "mashella".

Mashella (Andropogon sorghum) is of yellowish-white color, and the most desired of this family. The seed is much bigger than tyēff. It is often ground and mixed with it for injara-baking. Known in other parts of Africa as

576 is called "qämmash", an important etiquette. Its origin may stem from the well-known oriental pattern of protecting an important personage from being poisoned, and since the feudal lord is still imitated among the Amhara, even by peasants, the custom is still prevalent in rural areas, provincial towns, and even in Addis Ababa.

E. Utensils and Tools.

322 Whenever possible, the Amhara likes to utilize direct products of nature, such as natural shape of branches, branch forks, branches at the right angle (e.g.for adzes), gradual thickening of a branch of hardwood (e.g. for ax handles). Much time is spent in the bush looking for the right wood, for there is no carpentry on any developed level. Sawing is unknown. So is splitting of wood to prepare boards, so that laborious chopping away at a log from both sides would be necessary. Nailing and gluing is still not done in rural areas. To drill a hole in wood, the blacksmith is called and burns a hole with an iron poke. Oxhide strips are used for fastening.

442 415 Therefore there are very few wooden utensils. Spoons and forks are not used by the Amhara. During dinner, pieces of enjära are ripped from the edge, to serve as spoon and fork. Then the piece is used to fish out a morsel of meat and some of the sauce of the "wot". Iron knives are used at dinner time only at a feast of "brundo", raw beef, when a red morsel is cut off just in front of the teeth.

442 415 463 Preparations of tools and utensils fall into four categories of division of labor: (1) Work done by special-

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 [321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. [531] Ornamentation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric [303] nature, in the wood. Wooden combs together with their handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. [412] Wooden mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, [354] from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. On occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back-[407] rest of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint [231] firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

321 415 The Amhara warrior sought to have at least one very large horn containing mead (cattle was sometimes bred for large horns or bought from Galla), and smaller ones for gunpowder or for the staple mixture of salt and barbare, or nug paste. The narrow end is sealed with a wooden plug. In the past they were sometimes of buffalo horn, but now mostly of cow's horn. One observer noticed a striking similarity between this container and ancient Egyptian ones of smaller size, used to contain antimony for eye toilette.[65]

[71]

Perhaps this may give a clue as to why the drinking utensils made of horn look so strikingly European, amid the other Amhara containers which are more African than Middle Eastern. Nearly every Amhara peasant has at least one large drinking cup of horn; besides the usual clay cups used for coffee. The large horn cup is used by the head of the house for barley beer. Churches usually have several, especially the "tewa" used at church feasts or memorial feasts such as tazkar. An average-sized one measures about 4-1/2 inches high, has a 5 inch diameter at the top, but only 1-1/2 inche diameter at the bottom. A church which has a large working retinue of dabtara and hangers-on, acolytes, etc., often makes a practice of giving one as a courtesy gift to deserving peasants at plowing time, with the blessings of the church for a good harvest.

324 412 The main stone utensil that men make for the house is the mano-type stone called "maj", usually selected from a river bed and further shaped so that the bottom is flat and the rounded top fits comfortably into the palm of the housewife when she grinds the grain. She does this by a forward and backward motion, not the more advanced rotary

65. Cohen, Marcel: Glagon Abyssin en corne..., Paris 1920, pp.265-6.

324 motion, and the rotary quern of ancient Rome and Alexandria
412 is of course entirely unknown.

251 Bins for storage of grain are also made by men. The
333 two major types are the "gota", made of rings of sundried mud and straw, which are built up later inside the hut; and the "gotära" bin, made of a barrel-like skeleton of sticks, plastered with mud and left to harden in the sun. The former can, of course, be built higher, as much as 7 feet tall, while the latter is limited to the size of the door of the tuqul.

445 Gourds are widely raised as utensils, in line with the pattern of using natural products directly. Sometimes the gourds ("qel") grow on vines supported on the roof of the tuquol. When at full size, some are cut lengthwise so that each half represents a drinking cup with its own natural handle affixed. Travellers always carry these. They also carry gourds used as waterbottles ("wamära") with the top cut off and refixed to serve as a removable plug. Or, the narrowing top of a gourd is cut off and used by women while carding raw cotton on a bowstring. Artists of chiefs and feudal "great men" paint designs and scenes on gourds ("ankola") belonging to their patrons.

285 Basketry can be made by either men or women, often
415 by servants and ex-slaves, but since it is not considered specialized, there is no shame attached to this work. Both coiling and weaving techniques are used, the latter more often. Noteworthy is the frequent close weaving which results in watertight containers, further secured with hot milk and fumigating with gum woods. This method,

285 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large bas-
415 ket of withes, "qerchat", used to measure 25 kilos of pin-head-grained tyeff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqa-ha"), or of a variety of reeds ("säbäz", "geramta", "akär-ma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofada") made by shep-herding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by morocco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agälgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("mu-day") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("qwacha")

285 There is also a purely ornamental fiber plate, en-
[531] tirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, mostly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wänchäf")
411 of a strong fiber ("nacha"). When completed, it has a
857 loop on one end to hook over a finger. A pebble is placed in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end
[244] released at just the right speed and direction. It can stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

439 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the
412 Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight razor, "arab melach", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

439 perhaps replacing obsidian blades. They are now in turn
442 being replaced by European safety razor blades even on remote rural big markets. These are called "lesa melaçh" although very commonly still sold by an Arab trader. The
439 415 small glass drinking bottle called "berellē", used in place of a cup for mead, has been brought by caravans from the Middle East since the Ottoman Turkish period. The European drinking glass, "berçheqo" is still rare in rural areas.

F. Clothing

291 There is a substratum of wearing skins in all of Ethiopia, sheepskin particularly and even leopard skin. Among the Amhara this appears among poor wandering church students, and in the fact that certain textile articles, notably the "lämd", symbolize the leopard skin of the warrior which he still wore at the time of the accession of the present emperor. This type of clothing is in the African tradition.

But the clothing of the Amhara today is largely of cotton, plus a wool cape for the feudal "great men" or
[77] landowning farmer. Both have come to Abyssinia from the Middle East areas: the long shirt, "çämis" probably came during the 19th century, together with the white Indian jodphurs (that some trace as late as Lord Napier's campaign); the wool burnus is believed to have entered as long ago as the 5th century A.D., together with Coptic Christianity.[66]

66. Mohrer, E.F.: Beiträge Zur Kenntnis der materiellen Kultur der Amhara. Bern, 1932, p. 19.

326 during the downward stroke, the compression, when the air is pressed through the built-in pipe(or a horn inserted in the neck) into the nozzle to the fire at the other end. There are two such bellows in the operation, one being extended while the other is being compressed with the other hand.

412 Agricultural tools are the major products of the smith. Sickles ("mạched") resemble European ones but are smaller and not curved as far. They are teethed somewhat roughly. In case of thick, wooden stalks such as mashella (sorghum) maize and other tall stalks, the sickle is used at the bottom, while other grains, whose stalks are more useful for thatching, etc. are cut at the top just beneath the ear. To cut branches off trees, etc., a billhock, machete-type ("gajam") hacking knife is used, which resembles an oversize sickle but has no teeth.

A big axe ("fas") is used to cut trees, but a more common, smaller hatchet, "mätrabiya", is used to cut deadwood for fuel and other uses. When this grows dull, the owner takes it to the smith who cuts it down and makes an adze of it, after seeking a properly-shaped, angle-formed wooden handle with a knoll at the elbow, to fit the iron adze-blade into. This adze is much used in digging, scraping, hoeing and harrowing the soil after seeding.

The smith also makes the sharp iron point for the digging stick used on steep slopes, especially on the "dega" upland where terrace farming is impractical, or to help break up new or long-fallow soil, using the digging stick as a lever. It is called "ankasē" or "doma". On

412 lower, muddy terrain, e.g. in the Kazaga district of the Wolkait jungle border, digging sticks are used to prepare small holes for mashella seed. But the Amhara peasant prefers to use the plow, even on contours of hills, since the use of the stick is hard labor, requiring several men working in unison. Often the stick must be weighed down with heavy rocks against the sun-baked soil in the dry season.

412 407 The scratch plow probably evolved as an elaboration of the digging stick by fixing it at an angle to a long beam pulled forward by the yoke of two oxen, thus substituting animal muscle power for human energy. Among the Amhara, the bottom tip of the plowpoint is almost always strengthened and protected by an iron plowpoint purchased from an ethnic (Falasha) smith. The sharp angle biting into the soil can be adjusted by means of a suspension binding strap of hippopotamus skin, and two small wedges. The farmer merely has to guide the digging-stick part of the plow, and encourage the oxen with his long fiber whip.

412 303 Knives for kitchen use very in length usually from 8 to 12 inches, are curved, with the cutting edge on the curved side which comes to a point. The blade is set in a wooden handle. These knives are also used for circumcision. The old razor blade usually was of similar shape, about 6 inches long, and used primarily for shaping head head hair. It is now replaced by imported European blades. Pincers, 4-5 inches long, are carried on trips to remove thorns from the bare feet. Little ear spoons are suspended from the neck-cord and used to remove earwax, especially by the ladies. [515]

412 ly by the ladies. An awl ("wäsfe") is used in basket-making and umbrella-weaving. A small chisel ("mesar") may be a more recent introduction, but, like the awl and larger items, is nonetheless made by the (Falasha) smith. [532] Burning irons for burning out sores on the backs of mules and donkeys are also made by the ironsmith.

326 The ironsmith, usually Falasha in ethnic identification, does not usually do silversmithing. This is done in urban areas or big markets usually by Muslim silversmiths. The silver is smithed from Maria Theresa thalers, and the smith may keep as much as 2/3 of the "raw material" for himself. As in the case of most other marketable tools and utensils, the product of the silversmith is made on order only, though increasingly there are traders with chests full of silver filigree earspoons, crosses, rings, etc., ready for sale to officials, travellers, and others with ready cash. In the past, silversmiths using imported coins, and goldsmiths using Ethiopian mined gold nuggets, were to found primarily attached to the tent city of the king at his capital. Casting is done on the principle of cire perdue, a form of wax in clay.

411 Weapons were made also in connection with the feudal military organization, which required the craftsman to follow wherever the armed bands of the warlords went in raids or new settlements, serving as a kind or ordinance, and always on call. Rifles in Abyssinia date back over 300 years, handed down as family property, the stocks replaced time and again with tough, white wood, "wanza" (Cordia abyssinica). Each soldier carried gunpowder in

563 326 754 able to turn themselves into "buda" hyenas, and of having learned their craft from the "buda" evil spirit. Since the smiths in the old-Amhara areas are mostly Falashas, whose formal religious worship is never observed by Coptic Amhara, the Falasha smith is feared and suspected of black magic. At the same time, the iron [412] tools produced by the Falasha are much prized, not only on account of their material utility but on account of their supposed supernatural strength, endurance and "secretly revealed" workmanship. Even today, the provincial peasant will insist on obtaining his plowpoint or adze from a "real" Falasha.

563 326 The Falashas practice endogamy, as do the Coptic Amhara. But in the towns where increased contact occasionally begins to attenuate the old rules, individuals of low prestige in both groups do sometimes marry, which [797] usually results in the conversion of the Falasha partner to the majority religion. Also due to modern contact, it is beginning to happen that a Falasha teaches his craft to a non-Falasha, but the peasants often reject the output of the latter on the grounds that it isn't a "really strong, genuine Falasha article".

563 281 Somewhat similar untouchability attaches to the tanners, who are usually of local pre-Amharic, (Cushitic, e.g. Agau) descent, often still speak their ancient tongues, and until recently were never converted to Coptic Christianity. As traditionally "conquered" peoples, they are not "attentam", and Amhara endogamous rules prevail against them. The stigma against them seems to

capable of rendering bone and jimat supple enough to be manipulated into their appropriate positions. It is important that the bone be set precisely, for if improperly aligned it will stretch the jimat and cause them to twist once more, bringing a recurrence of the original symptoms.

• [413] [177] If palpation or visual inspection indicate that the bone has splintered, an incision is made over the break and the splinters are removed with an instrument specially brought for this purpose. These instruments are of European manufacture and exotic by local standards, ranging from cosmetic tweezers to surgical forceps. After the bone has been set and the jimat moved into their proper relationships, a wooden splint is secured over the fracture and is tied with strips of toga cloth.

*[757] *[278] *[192] When an incision is made, an herbal poultice is placed over the cut and wrapped beneath the splint, as a precaution against subsequent infection (kusil). Every tagañ owns a recipe for an unguent, and the medicaments used in it are kept a professional secret. However, not all tagañs have recipes for kusil prophylaxis. Without the latter, a tagañ who wishes to treat compound fractures must obtain the services of an herbalist whose specialty is the treatment of kusil. Similarly the tagañ who is able to treat compound fractures

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needs.[1]

*759 The wogeysa's remaining therapies---excision of
*753 tonsils (ankar) and teeth---are characterized by simpler
752 diagnosis and treatment than are the tagañ's works.
[843] Swollen and inflamed tonsils (komahaw) may be caused by
*[192] gerifta; in infants, however, the condition may be congenital, brought on by the over-exertions of the child's mother during pregnancy. It is considered a potentially mortal affliction, since the sickman is unable to swallow and loses weight rapidly; eventually the organ bursts and death follows. Tonsils are excised with the assistance of a reed through which a loop of horse
• [413] [177] hair has been slipped. With this, the offending organ is held fast, and excised by whatever type of blade the therapist regards as most efficacious (e.g., a razor, imported 'Arab' knife, or fragment of glass).[2] Kusil

[1]During 1966, the foremost tagañ of Begemder had the following sickmen living simultaneously in three huts which he had erected on his fields; 1) a woman from Woggera (see map 1), with a fractured clavicle, assisted by her daughter; 2) a four year old boy, with a shoulder injury, accompanied by both parents; 3) a woman with a broken fore-arm, from Belsea, assisted by a locally acquired servant; 4) a woman from Tigre, with an immobile right arm, assisted by a locally acquired servant.

[2]In the Gondar area, both tonsils and uvula are classified as 'ankar'. Elsewhere in Begemder, they are often distinguished as 'ankar' and 'intil'. Therapeutically, diseased tonsils and uvula are treated the same, and a wogeysa capable of treating one invariably treats the other.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*753 39
*759 is considered a potential, but not immediate danger
752 following excision. If an ankar korac ("tonsil cut-
*[278] ter") is also a kusil herbalist, he may smear a pro-
phylactic unguent over the face of the excision, but
*(192] prophylaxis is not generally given. Even when kusil
does occur (the syndrome known as yiankar mokusil),
it is expected to regress either without any treat-
ment, or by benefit of a commonly known herbal infu-
[855] sion. A young child is considered too small and
frail to endure this operation and the subsequent
period of increased vulnerability to gerifta and kusil.
*[278] In such cases, the child is given a palliative to drink;
in addition, a portion of the ingredients used in the
drink is prepared as an unguent, and rubbed onto the
affected area, against that time when the child will
be old enough to withstand the operation.

*[192] The dental wogeyša is known as a "yiters medhaniyt
awlakiy". As with other wogeyša-treated ailments, tooth-
ache can be traced to multiple causes, whose identifica-
tion is only marginally important to the practitioner.
Toothache is caused either by sun-borne gerifta or by
an intrusive worm whose presence is made apparent by
[413] the caries it bores out. The ultimate and most success-
[177] ful therapy of the yiters medhaniyt awlakiy is extrac-
*[278] tion, with the use of European dental pliers. Because
of the pain associated with this operation, laymen often

*753 *759 *278 752 *(192] use local applications of commonly known palliatives, until subsequent discomfort obliges them to consult a tooth extractor.[3] In addition to simple toothache (yiters himem), gerifta may result in rheumatoid pain (kurtimat) in the cheek teeth and adjacent jaw, accompanied by swollen, itching gums. Although herbal poultices are available for this syndroms, only tooth ex-
*759 752 846 traction promises permanent relief. The yiters medhaniyt awlakiy also treats the newly irrupted teeth of year-old infants. The upper lateral incisors are believed to often cause infants severe pain, resulting in incessant
• [413] crying, diarrhea and failure to suckle properly. To remedy this dangerous situation, the practitioner removes the offending teeth using an awl-like implement. In each of these dental operations, kusil is considered no real danger, and prophylaxis is not given.

*759 752 *[278] Toothache is perhaps the only ailment for which wogeyša and herbalist (see below) both offer therapies. The differences here are illuminating: The dental wogeyša's therapy is only incidentally concerned with causes,

[3]In the abstract, these palliatives (distilled spirits known as arakiy and ginger root) are only effective against the intrusive worm, but in reality they are used even when evidence of the worm agent (til), i.e., caries, are not apparent.

352 legs; thongs of sundried oxhide interlace the wooden frame diagonally giving the bed a springy quality. In case of great poverty, wooden slats are used instead of oxhide, and a cowskin is placed on top. The leather alga seems to resemble the leather thong bed of ancient Greece.

354 (4) The fireplace set up front of center, 5 of 3 cornerstones ("medeja", or, "gulcha"), so that the broad baking-pan and clay cooking pots are well supported.

352 (5) From the center pole to the rear are various clay bins
[251] ("riq", made of a frame of willow branches, cowdung and mud)
[415] holding threshed grain. Behind the fireplace is the "gu-
rej", the storage space for plow, axe, adze, beer and water
[482] pots, skin sacks for transporting grain to market; sometimes a litter ("qarēza") used for transporting rocks, beams, sick or dead persons, the wounded in war, and formerly an indispensable equipment for corvée. Also behind the cen-
[251] ter pole is the indoor grain bin made of concentric rings of clay and fine straw, dried outside, and inside assembled to a height of 60".

(6) In front of the center pole stands the portable "mäsob", the table woven tightly of reeds in the shape of a round breadbasket, on which the daily bread, "enjara" is served. A small massob may have a diameter at top of 18" and may be 20" high. The height would come from a triangular leg of 7", on which an inverted, triangular leg faces upward 10" in the manner of an hourglass; and another 3" from the height of the top tablet. The hollow leg tapers to a waist, then widens again toward the top. It has a depression in the center, so that the spiced meat stew can

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are permitted to use it. Milking is done in a very tightly woven 234 415 reed container ("gerera") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwacha" or "chocho").

233 423 691 Sometimes a large extended family will try to enclose a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Menz district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary 251 yoke. The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya 262 läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

61. Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

273 wheat, in place of barley, after roasting, grinding and baking. "ätta" leftovers may be used in place of abshello. A rich man may add honey at the final stage to increase the sweetness of the "tälla". To increase alcoholic content, mashella can be added. But for the average peasant it is more important to find ways of stretching the daily beer by watering it down, resulting in "asser weha", or "qerrara". A poor man who has no gesho plants and cannot afford to buy the leaves at the market, can gather leaves of the "qächamo" or "gerawa" plants which grow wild; also the root and bark of "tädjo" (Rhamnus straddo), but this is of low prestige. Interestingly enough, Muslim neighbors who are religiously forbidden alcohol, dispense with gesho or other hops, and brew a light drink in similar fashion, called "bebun" or "qärbäbbo".

Much more alcoholic is mead made from fermented honey, "tädj" (which may possibly derive its name from the [554] wild hops). It is the drink of prestige, regularly consumed only by feudal lords, and available to peasants only for feasts. While barley beer is drunk from a cow's horn, [445] mead is imbibed from a widespread, imported "berelle", a small, long-necked, decanter-shaped glass bottle which first entered this area in the last century containing Turkish perfume, traded by Arabs for the ladies of "great men". It has practical advantages: the small opening lets wax and dead bees float to the surface where a flick of the thumb can remove them; and it is much harder for the ever-present flies to enter the bottle, especially since the tip of the thumb can seal it.

576 is called "qämmash", an important etiquette. Its origin may stem from the well-known oriental pattern of protecting an important personage from being poisoned, and since the feudal lord is still imitated among the Amhara, even by peasants, the custom is still prevalent in rural areas, provincial towns, and even in Addis Ababa.

E. Utensils and Tools.

322 Whenever possible, the Amhara likes to utilize direct products of nature, such as natural shape of branches, branch forks, branches at the right angle (e.g.for adzes), gradual thickening of a branch of hardwood (e.g. for ax handles). Much time is spent in the bush looking for the right wood, for there is no carpentry on any developed level. Sawing is unknown. So is splitting of wood to prepare boards, so that laborious chopping away at a log from both sides would be necessary. Nailing and gluing is still not done in rural areas. To drill a hole in wood, the blacksmith is called and burns a hole with an iron poke. Oxhide strips are used for fastening.

442 415 Therefore there are very few wooden utensils. Spoons and forks are not used by the Amhara. During dinner, pieces of enjärä are ripped from the edge, to serve as spoon and fork. Then the piece is used to fish out a morsel of meat and some of the sauce of the "wot". Iron knives are used at dinner time only at a feast of "brundo", raw beef, when a red morsel is cut off just in front of the teeth.

442 415 463 Preparations of tools and utensils fall into four categories of division of labor: (1) Work done by special-

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 [321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. [531] Ornamentation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric [303] nature, in the wood. Wooden combs together with their handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. [412] Wooden mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, [354] from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. On occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back-[407] rest of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint [231] firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

321 The Amhara warrior sought to have at least one very large
415 horn containing mead (cattle was sometimes bred for large horns or bought from Galla), and smaller ones for gunpowder or for the staple mixture of salt and barbare, or nug paste. The narrow end is sealed with a wooden plug. In the past they were sometimes of buffalo horn, but now mostly of cow's horn. One observer noticed a striking similarity between this container and ancient Egyptian ones of smaller size, used to contain antimony for eye toilette.[65]

[171]

Perhaps this may give a clue as to why the drinking utensils made of horn look so strikingly European, amid the other Amhara containers which are more African than Middle Eastern. Nearly every Amhara peasant has at least one large drinking cup of horn; besides the usual clay cups used for coffee. The large horn cup is used by the head of the house for barley beer. Churches usually have several, especially the "tewa" used at church feasts or memorial feasts such as tazkar. An average-sized one measures about 4-1/2 inches high, has a 5 inch diameter at the top, but only 1-1/2 inche diameter at the bottom. A church which has a large working retinue of dabtara and hangers-on, acolytes, etc., often makes a practice of giving one as a courtesy gift to deserving peasants at plowing time, with the blessings of the church for a good harvest.

324 The main stone utensil that men make for the house
412 is the mano-type stone called "mäj", usually selected from a river bed and further shaped so that the bottom is flat and the rounded top fits comfortably into the palm of the housewife when she grinds the grain. She does this by a forward and backward motion, not the more advanced rotary

65. Cohen, Marcel: Flacon Abyssin en corne...Tr, Paris 1920, pp.265-6.

324 motion, and the rotary quern of ancient Rome and Alexandria
412 is of course entirely unknown.

251 Bins for storage of grain are also made by men. The
333 two major types are the "gota", made of rings of sundried mud and straw, which are built up later inside the hut; and the "gotara" bin, made of a barrel-like skeleton of sticks, plastered with mud and left to harden in the sun. The former can, of course, be built higher, as much as 7 feet tall, while the latter is limited to the size of the door of the tuqul.

415 Gourds are widely raised as utensils, in line with the pattern of using natural products directly. Sometimes the gourds ("qel") grow on vines supported on the roof of the tuquol. When at full size, some are cut lengthwise so that each half represents a drinking cup with its own natural handle affixed. Travellers always carry these. They also carry gourds used as waterbottles ("wamara") with the top cut off and refixed to serve as a removable plug. Or, the narrowing top of a gourd is cut off and used by women while carding raw cotton on a bowstring. Artists of chiefs and feudal "great men" paint designs and scenes on gourds ("ankola") belonging to their patrons.

285 Basketry can be made by either men or women, often
415 by servants and ex-slaves, but since it is not considered specialized, there is no shame attached to this work. Both coiling and weaving techniques are used, the latter more often. Noteworthy is the frequent close weaving which results in watertight containers, further secured with hot milk and fumigating with gum woods. This method,

285 415 especially the use of milk (also found in pottery), is typically African.

Reeds, fibers (including the musa ensete and baobab), and grasses already mentioned are used to produce many types of articles, equal in variety only to pottery, and in numbers even exceeding.

285 415 362 The reed table, "massob" is one of the most noteworthy, for every household has several, in different sizes, and usually one with ornamental geometric designs woven into it by means of dyed reeds. In principle it is a combination breadbasket and table, for by lifting the lid the former turns into the latter. The diameter at the top may be as much as 2 feet, just high enough to be comfortable for eating while seated on a mat on the ground. Thus the cylindrical, almost hourglass-shaped leg of the same tightly woven reeds, may be from 1 foot to 2 feet high. The lid fits tightly inside, so that flies and even ants cannot enter; it is of the same type found in the Sudan and parts of North Africa.

285 273 The next most noteworthy item of woven fiber is the famous sun umbrella, "jan tela" (lit. the emperor's shade, from "zehon", elephant). Formerly a royal prerogative, then a feudal one, it is now owned by every peasant housewife, and in provincial towns purchasable at the big market for ETH$2.-(US$0.80). This umbrella is unfoldable, made of strong ribs of split bamboo (called "qerqaha"), bent almost semi-circular; the central wooden stick ending in a woven plate above the shade itself; the sections woven tight enough to keep out the sun, though not watertight.

285 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large bas-
●415 ket of withes, "qerchat", used to measure 25 kilos of pin-head-grained tyeff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqa-ha"), or of a variety of reeds ("säbäz", "geramta", "akär-ma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofeda") made by shep-herding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by morocco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agälgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("mu-day") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("qwacha")

285 There is also a purely ornamental fiber plate, en-
[531] tirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, mostly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wänchär")
411 of a strong fiber ("nacha"). When completed, it has a
857 loop on one end to hook over a finger. A pebble is placed in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end
[244] released at just the right speed and direction. It can stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

439 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the
442 Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight razor, "arab melach", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

I: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

perhaps replacing obsidian blades. They are now in turn being replaced by European safety razor blades even on remote rural big markets. These are called "lesa melaqh" although very commonly still sold by an Areb trader. The small glass drinking bottle called "berellē", used in place of a cup for mead, has been brought by caravans from the Middle East since the Ottoman Turkish period. The European drinking glass, "berchego" is still rare in rural areas.

F. Clothing

There is a substratum of wearing skins in all of Ethiopia, sheepskin particularly and even leopard skin. Among the Amhara this appears among poor wandering church students, and in the fact that certain textile articles, notably the "lämd", symbolize the leopard skin of the warrior which he still wore at the time of the accession of the present emperor. This type of clothing is in the African tradition.

But the clothing of the Amhara today is largely of cotton, plus a wool cape for the feudal "great men" or landowning farmer. Both have come to Abyssinia from the Middle East areas: the long shirt, "qämis" probably came during the 19th century, together with the white Indian jodphurs (that some trace as late as Lord Napier's campaign); the wool burnus is believed to have entered as long ago as the 5th century A.D., together with Coptic Christianity.[66]

66. Mohrer, E.F.: Beiträge zur Kenntnis der materiellen Kultur der Amhara. Bern, 1932, p. 19.

323 aforementioned social reasons. They can bake fired bricks, "shehla", but have no use or orders for them, and do not make them at present. They apply their artistic talents [346] to a tower-like crown, "gulelat", which they place on the top of the thatched roof of the Falasha synagogue, the "mesgid" (which has also the practical effect of preventing the penetration of water during the rain storms).

415 The vast majority of clay utensils produced by the craftswoman is used in the household. Many of them are small, not over 12 inches in diameter or height. Round forms predominate, especially spherical or semi-spherical bowls with a long or short neck. Nearly all have two handles on the side, for grasping and for pulling a rope through.

The simple baking plate for the daily enjara bread, the "megogo", in town called "metad", has already been [354] mentioned. Placed on the hearth of three stones, it forms a simple stove, and itself is topped by a somewhat conical ("moged") lid which fits snugly. 20" in diameter, 1-1/2" high, 1" thick, grain is also roasted on it.

There are numerous varieties of water pitchers, mostly pear-shaped, with long, stout necks. When full (about 15 liters), the Amhara women carry them on the back, and therefore a special loop is added by the craftswoman on the base of the neck, so that the rope can be drawn through it and around the chest, for added support. The most common, big water-pitcher of this kind is the "madiga", with a height of 20" of which 5" are spout, 14" at its greatest width, and a 5" width of the spout. It is

415 It is used for the last stage in beer making, when the talla and fresh gesho are mixed with water. It was also used in many such annual transactions to avoid arguing and litigation.

A smaller version which is more often used as a water pitcher is the "mänqäl", only 14" high of which 4" are spout, 10" diameter at the widest, 7" bottom diameter, and a spout width of 4". It usually contains 6 - 10 liters of water. The "mänqäl" is also used to store smaller quantities of mead("tej").

For final preparation and short-time storage of barley beer (tälla), on feast occasions rather than for daily use, a huge jar called "gan" is used, with a capacity of about 150 liters. Several men are needed to tilt it so that beer can be poured into the smaller madiga. The shape is more like an amphora, with two side handles and almost round bottom. It can also be used to store grain. For safety's sake, the bottom half may be buried in the soil. In Amhara terms, the average "gan" holds more than 100 "berelle" (glass bottles used as mead cups). The spout may be 9" wide, 6" long. Two "gan" are usually sufficient for the average country feast or "tazkar", unless it continues for more than a full day. A "gan" with a shorter spout is called "masäro". Special straps are used for inclining it, called "maweräja" or "mängächa".

Cooking pots and bowls are usually small. The "wachet", a small variety, is preferred in urban areas. It is about 13" in diameter but only 3" high, with a thickness of 3/4" to 1". It is covered with a straw lid. Rural

415 housewives prefer a much larger variety, "mägäfäl", for the family "wot", or, for small-scale cooking the common "dest", or "mamwashät". This is 4-1/2" high, sometimes with two vertically separated compartments for different foods, e.g. peppery meat stew and vegetables. It is usually the blackest in color of all pots. A similar small pot, "mächit" is used for cooking fish.

The traditional coffeepot, called "kuskus" or "kuskushet" (onomatopoetic), is shaped like a madiga, but less than half its size, and has a short and narrower spout. Another pitcher does resemble a European bowl-coffee pot in shape, with a long, bent, narrow spout. This is the one-handled "manqurqoriya" (onomatopoetic), called "jäbäna" in Shoa and "gämbo" in Cushitic, used to pour barley beer into individual cups, holding at most 15 berelle. This pouring was the special occupation of servants called "gämbonya" in elaborate feudal households, and he did nothing else but carry the "gambo" or barley beer on military expeditions with his master. This special occupation has recently fallen into disuse but is well remembered by the nostalgic.

B. Smithing

326 Of all specialized, manual occupations, smithcraft involves the largest team, five able bodied men who, however, can interchange their roles. A team of five is necessary because of the greater use of musclepower and greater need for cooperation is this occupation. But, apart from the former specialist in weapon-making, the technological

281 Fats, usually of plant origin, either wild or domestic, are then used to lubricate and soften the skin. This is hard manual work, lasting sometimes several days. Most commonly preferred is the castor oil bean, called "qaçhma" or "gulqwas". The skin may now be kneaded or stamped by feet, to work the fats in and render the skin soft for the cutting and fashioning of objects, which now follows.

282 411 The shield was formerly one of the major products of the Faqi, but now is made rarely and only for ornamental use. The rhinoceros or buffalo skin is cut circular, placed over a wooden stake in the ground, the rim pegged down, to prepare the cupola shape. The skin is then depilated, dried, smeared with oils to expand again. It is beaten to increase its resistance. Incised decorations and the pulling through of the leather handle, are done before the shield is entirely hard and dry. Metal decor is added later, by the smith, after the Faqi has delivered his product.

282 More common products, still made today, are: half-sack, "ënqälba", for carrying the baby on the mother's [354] back, with straps and a bottom tied to the mother's shoul- [415] ders, chest and waist; full sacks, "aqomada", for transporting grain to market, tied with strips (these are also used for various storage in the better Amhara huts); [283] straps cut of poor skins in all kinds and sizes, "qeralla", some for tying loads onto donkeys, some to serve as more springy diagonal straps of the better "alga" bed; a fine, tanned cowskin used as blanket; "jëndi", cover

282 over the "alga" bedstead.

Sheepskins ("debdeb") are used as upholstery over the solid clay bench that runs along the inside of the Amhara hut, as cover for the children at night, or to protect a mule from chafing by placing the sheepskin under [291] the saddle. Other sheepskins, "agoza" or "dä̈bälo", are worn by church students too poor to own a good toga. Several skins make a coat for an adult itinerant monk and, formerly, for the warriors.

[415] Goatskins, when little-worked, are used for water carrying ("qärbäta") on travel, or to store butter in. [212] The bladder is made into a little bag. But goatskins carefully and at length scraped and tanned are made into parchment for amulets and books, especially psalteries for the church. These yellow-brown parchments ("beranna") with religious or warrior-king texts were rolled into a goatskin cover. Since contact with European missionaries in the mid-19th century, the custom has been to sew parchment pages together on one side with a twisted gut, bind the book in this fashion within two wooden covers covered with a red, tanned goatskin, on which a cross with even branches is impressed with a hot iron.

[531] In the same fashion scabbards of daggers are covered and ornamented with impressed, geometric lines. The tanned tailskin of a cow is used to cover a better walk- [534] ing stick, on which it gradually dries fast. Drums for use in church (and formerly for royal proclamations) are made by tanned cowskins stretched over both ends of the wooden body. Finely tanned skins are used to cover the

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XIX.—*How they gave us to eat in the house of the Barnagais, and how in this country the journeys are not reckoned by leagues.* 648

When we were out of the house where the Barnagais was, they made us sit down in the receiving room of another house on mats on the ground, and they brought here a large trencher of barley meal, but little kneaded, and a horn of mead. And, since we had not seen such food, we would not eat it; but when we were more accustomed to the country we ate it readily. Without eating of this, we arose and came to our resting-place and then set out. This might be at two hours before midday. Having gone on our road half a league or more there came to us a man running and telling us to wait; that the mother of the Barnagais was sending us food, and took it as a misfortune our coming away without eating and not accepting the food they gave us, which was that customary in the country. We waited, and the food came to us, that is to say, five large rolls of wheat bread and a horn of mead. Let not anyone be amazed who hears of a horn of wine, because for the great lords and Prester John cows' horns are their cups for wine, and there are horns holding five or six canadas.[1] Besides this, the mother of the Barnagais sent us some of the same kneaded flour, and now we ate some of it. This meal is of parched barley, made into flour, and they mix it up with very little water, and so eat it. After this banquet we made our way to the town of Barua, where our goods and companions had remained. In this country, and in all the kingdoms of Prester John, there are no leagues, and if you ask how far it is from this place to such a place, they say: If you depart in the morning at sunrise, you will arrive when the sun is in such a place; and if you travel slowly you will arrive there when they shut up the cows, that is at

[264] [262] [415] [262] 804

[1] A Portuguese measure equal to about three pints.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that 681
they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester 793
John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means em- 643
peror, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some 752
sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, 757
they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thou- 621
sand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and 361
there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and 342
all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and court-
yards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others 352
on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without 415
napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black 264
earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others 262
eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, 252
and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is 373
much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which 314
they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 000

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

AG-H quickly ducked behind a bush. He placed the purse in his *gābāte*, the lengthwise half of a gourd which all travelers carry for mixing their ration of crushed linseed (called *tālba*) with water. He wrapped this in a piece of colorful imported silk that he had bought as a gift for his home church. Flattening the package as much as possible, he placed it on his head in the manner of the Abyssinian priests when they carry the *tabot*, the sacred tablet which is taken from the inner sanctum of the church to a pool of water on the day of the saint after whom the church is named. With his free hand he quickly folded his daytime toga in the manner of one going to church and borrowed the largest cross his companions were carrying. Holding it before him like a weapon, and looking serious, holy, and unafraid, AG-H led the caravan as he climbed up the trail in a slow, dignified manner.

When the bandits drew near, they bowed politely. AG-H stopped and gave them the cross to kiss. They asked respectfully to which saint his *tabot* had been consecrated. He replied with the most common one, *Qeddus Giyorgis* 'St. George.' Then they wanted to know which parish church it was from. By this time the old wit had returned to AG-H, and he answered: *"Yātalba masha Giyorgis"* 'St. George of the linseed-paste.'

The bandits nodded gravely and escorted him all the way up the escarpment, explaining that the area was dangerous and full of organized bandits. Some days later they learned how they had been fooled, and forever after they were on the lookout for AG-H on the banks of the Blue Nile.

Poetic Revenge. AG-H had spoken a candid truth once too often and was in official disgrace with Emperor Menelik. As usual, when miffed, he retired to Gondar.

But this time, having left Addis Ababa unofficially and quickly, his finances were low. Adding to his discomfiture was the news, brought to him by a friend from the capital some months later, that Menelik was amusing himself by telling stories of the misdeeds and follies of AG-H.

An idea of poetic revenge came to him. He instructed his friend to go to the Emperor and report that AG-H had died and that his kinsmen in Gondar were too poor to hold a fitting *tāzkar*, a big memorial feast held forty days after death.

Empress Taitu was first to hear of the sudden death of her favorite. She promptly stormed into the chambers of Emperor Menelik, much as she had stormed into the battle of Adua against the Italians shortly before, riding with the troops of her own province. "You murderer," she shouted at the Emperor, "you broke his heart, you banned him from the court." She threw up her hands in misery, wailed as if a close kinsman had died, moving back and forth, chanting aloud about the goodness of the deceased. After a while this began to affect even the iron Menelik. At this point the messenger brought up the rest of his news, the *tāzkar* problem. Menelik promptly gave him the huge sum of ten thousand thalers, to assuage his own feelings of guilt and to calm the Empress.

For a while AG-H enjoyed the fruits of his revenge back in Gondar. But he knew that he could not hide forever. Moreover, his generosity to kinsmen, neighbors, and transient monks was such that before long his money was gone.

So one day he reappeared in Addis Ababa. When he first approached the Empress, the stout woman almost fainted. She immediately sent a messenger to the Emperor. Unwilling to believe the news, he sent the messenger back to ask whether the Empress was feeling well. Thereupon, she took AG-H by the hand and stormed into Menelik's chamber. The Emperor was too shocked and surprised to be angry. He managed to inquire, "How is it that the dead arise from the grave?"

With a deep bow, AG-H replied: "Your Majesty, it is not uncommon in our Christian religion to arise from the dead" [alluding to the resurrection of Jesus].

Another version: While in disgrace, and living in Gondar, the newly-rich AG-H neglected his field, wasted his money and, toward the end of the rainy season, his wife and children were starving. So he sent his long-suffering wife to Addis Ababa with the false story of his death and need for *tāzkar* money. Explaining his reappearance later, AG-H said, "Your Majesty, I so longed to see the faces of your Majesties again that I was not at peace in the earth and had to return."

A third version: "Your Majesty, they had so many rules and regulations up there [pointing to heaven] that I preferred to return and live under the rules of Your Majesty."

Sex On The Hill. Women are forgetful creatures. Sometimes they don't even remember that they don't wear trousers under their cotton skirts. One day AG-H was climbing up a steep trail in the company of men and women. A connoisseur of female flesh, he kept behind the women

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

they are rolled form their only covering apart from the clothes which have been worn during the day. The remaining part of the hut is used for everything—living, cooking, eating, and also spinning in the rainy season—but of course in the dry weather much work is done outside. Apart from one or two rough wooden stools, furniture is rare or non-existent in these huts. In most of them, however, there are one or more wooden packing-cases containing the owners' most precious possessions, and fastened with a padlock and key; the remainder of their worldly goods are hung on hooks or put in niches in the walls. A form of basket-table is used at meal-times as both dish and plate, and drinking-cups made of horn are still to be seen in the provinces, though imported cups are now fairly common in Addis. A draught of mead from a cow's horn a couple of feet long is delightfully reminiscent of the pictures of the Danish and Norse invaders of England in the distant past.

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[416]

[pp. 82-173 have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 11.—*The market: buying honey*

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FIG. 12.—*The market: inspecting pottery*

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FIG. 13.—*The market: selling salt bars*

[P.78-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 857 868 Somewhat later, when he reaches ten or eleven, the Amhara boy begins to accustom himself to the plow, perhaps trying his hand at it from time to time while his father rests for lunch. Intermittently his ability increases, and by the age of fourteen or so—earlier if the family is short of help—he is given a regular share of the plowing. This may be limited to one or two hours a day at first, but before many seasons elapse he is ready to undertake a full day's work, along with his older relatives.

*883 868 In his mid-teens the Amhara boy is normally given a small part of his father's land to use for himself. The boy has full charge of plowing and harvesting this land and selling the crops at market. The crops or money he [434] earns thereby is referred to as *gulammā* ("private possession") and is set aside for helping him to get started on his own later on. Eventually the *gulammā* will be used to purchase new clothes, an ox, and presents for his bride. Year by year the father may add a bit more land for the boy's private management, though all together it does not often amount to a very large quantity; he may produce, say, 150 to 200 liters of grain for his *gulammā* in a year (in the Amhara system of measures, about 2 *dāwlā*). When he has saved enough [582] grain to fill a *riq*, a large wicker storage bin plastered inside with cow dung, he is considered ready to get married and strike out on his own.

By the time a boy begins to accumulate his *gulammā* he has learned nearly everything he needs to know for performing the work which will be expected of him as an adult. In his late teens the education is completed, through the mastery of such special techniques as fashioning the yoke and wooden attachments for the plow, and constructing the walls and roof for a house.

The work life of the Amhara peasant is thus a simple continuation of activities with which he has long been familiar. The same is true, *mutatis* [463] *mutandis*, for those who, following their fathers' footsteps, become priests or sorcerers, governors or warriors, artisans or traders. In these cases, moreover, the foregoing pattern applies to a great extent, since the latter roles are often combined with an agricultural economic base and way of life. (Special aspects of some of these variant patterns will be discussed below.)

857 868 This pattern of gradually increased work responsibility is conspicuous in the case of girls. While shepherding and other childhood tasks are shared by both sexes, the Amhara girl begins to do distinctively female work at about six or seven. First she learns to clear seeds from cotton, and to spin, by hand. Later on she is introduced to the more taxing female chores, like fetching water and grinding grain. The progressive increase of the girl's work load is visibly illustrated by the graduated sizes of clay jugs used for carrying water. When she begins to fetch water, the young girl carries a tiny jug, [415] called a *gambo*. As she becomes older and stronger she is given a larger size, a small *enserā*. Finally, the mature female carries the large *enserā*, a jug that holds as much as twenty liters.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 18.—*Ten-year-old boy plowing*

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FIG. 19.—*Mother and daughter carrying water pots*

[P. 110-B]

*278 824 rubbed across the palm (releasing the juices to be licked up). Other herbals must be burned or boiled before becoming therapeutically active, in smoke or vapor.

*278 801 804 Both absolute and relative measurements are used. Among the former are mentioned handfuls, finger-joint lengths, and weights equivalent to a small egg. Relative measurements are most common during decocting. Required ratios suggest a numerological component here, reduction from seven volumes to one being the most frequently used ratio. Numerological elements appear elsewhere during processing, as when a recipe required, as a final step in processing, that the preparation be rolled into seven portions, or that the materia medica be steeped for seven days.

*278 415 Equipment used for processing medicaments is of common domestic origin, sometimes specified unused (e.g., pots for decocting, cloth for straining), sometimes worn (e.g., pitted mortars for grinding). Generally, the containers used cannot be allowed to rest directly upon the ground, but must sit upon stones, whose number and provenience (usually riverine) are likewise specified by the recipe.

*278 In addition to preparations consumed orally, herbalists provide fumitories, inhalents, instillations, gargles, lotions, poultices, and therapeutic amulets.

*278 *757 Herbal therapies further indicate the appropriate

*278 terizing actual therapies range along the entire continuum of pharmacological elaboration. Moreover, the position of any real therapy (and its pharmacological combination) on this continuum tends to be fixed. That is to day, once a man has inherited (or, rarely, purchased) a specific therapy, he generally regards its instructions for gathering, processing and applying medicaments as not amenable to further elaboration. In order to understand this tendency, two questions must be addressed: What are the "grammatical rules" by which discrete pharmacological elements are associated within real therapies? and, What inhibits an herbalist from "elaborating" his pharmacologically simple therapies?

In the context of Ambara herbal medicine, three kinds of pharmacological associations can be usefully distinguished. There are, first, those associations which are conventional (that is, the link between specific instructions cannot be further explained), and for [415] which no alternative associations seem probable. For example, mortars, when elaborated in real therapies, are always worn and pitted; cloth through which medicaments are strained is invariably elaborated as unused; therapies stipulating either new mortars or used cloth, in contrast, appear to be lacking. A second category of associations can also be characterized as conventional, but here alternative associations are possible.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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• 415 Thus, prescriptions for gathering herbals with either a Falasha knife or an Arab one, one with a bone handle or another with a wooden handle, appear to be randomly incorporated within the pharmacological instructions of Amhara herbal therapies.

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* 759 The distinction between these two categories of conventional associations, between links which allow no alternatives and those which do, is by no means obvious to Amhara herbalists. To appreciate this distinction, a man must be acquainted with a substantial number of therapies and observe these regularities, for they form no part of the conscious pharmacological "theory" of the herbalist. Because the Amhara herbalist rarely owns more than three or four therapies, and, of these, perhaps only one or two contain any significant pharmacological elaborations, he is unlikely to recognize regularities of association from his own store of therapies. Nor does he receive any gratuitous information from other herbalists. Information regarding medicaments and techniques for gathering, processing, and administering them is professional secret of the owner. It is zealously guarded from public exposure, out of fear that this would dilute the therapy's healing power (although no mechanism can be suggested by which this might occur), and demean the herbalist's professional status through his abrogation of proprietary rights without recompense. Although pharma-

602 farm the land and use church pasturage in the valley, are often the sons of the brothers of the priest, if not his own sons--an Amhara form of nepotism.

417 231 Each hamlet is usually fenced in ("jägol"-thorny fence) against night-roving hyenas, and may contain, besides living huts and store huts, a cattle corral ("magwa") though at least the calves and the family mule are taken into the living hut at night. The kitchen garden may also have an enclosure of cut thornbushes, protection against ravages by domestic cattle; and ther usually is at least one fierce reddish-brown dog (with white underside). Solid fences of stakes fixed straight in the ground ("gärëggärä") are usually used only around churches.

632 622 While the head of each hamlet is the head of the residential, extended family, the administrative head of a series of hamlets is appointed by the governor of the province (formerly by the feudal lord). This appointed headman, chesa shum (lit. "appointed one over the soil") may administer as few as two hamlets, or as many as fifty, with the mode about 8 to 10. In sparsely populated, less fertile or very mountainous territory his domain may be greater, but in most cases his area is within sight so that he can even maintain contact during the rainy season. His area is properly called "mändär" and constitutes the nearest approach to the village concept. If his territory is on church land, it is referred to as "ënd debber agär" (lit. land in support of a certain holy place) since very often this land has been donated for that purpose in the last will of a pious elderly landowner, and is something like parish

824 313 Female woods ("enest enchat") are preferred and much more used than hardwoods, if the purposes permit, because they are more easily worked:

"Ted" (Juniperus Procera), or (Juniperus Phoenicoea) pencil cedar, is popular as a tall conifer, easy to split, moisture-resistent in rainy season, termite-resistent. It is one of the most important woods, and the only one of the traditional woods that is actually planted and protected by cut thornbushes against goats (which like to feed on the nursling). The grown tree resembles the cypress, and is the landmark of churches, churchyards and church schools. Thus the tree assumes a kind of sacredness, perhaps since pre-Christian times. In the tuqul it is often used as the horizontal, transversal beam. [778]

"Zigba" (Podocarpus elongata, or, Podocarpus gracilor) is a tall conifer of similar properties, with stringy, tough wood, used to make the alga bedsteads and other furniture.

"Ketketta" (Dodonea viscosa) is used for small carpentry, walking sticks; due to its slightly resinous but long-lasting qualities for torch parade at Masqal or wedding festivities. The leaves have household uses. [313]

"Qwara" (Erytrina tomentosa), used for slats in simple carpentry.

824 313 417 "Lenchub" bush, which resembles the euphorbia but grows at higher altitudes and is tougher, is cut and

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placed on the outside of garden or hamlet-fences, to discourage hyenas, to keep livestock inside -- a natural barbed wire.

Eucalyptus tree ("bahär zaf") has become thoroughly rooted in Ethiopia. It is used in construction, especially of the more urban dwellings, as urban fuel, and its blue smoke and aroma is an early morning and evening feature of every town and market-town, where it is a major trade item. During the rainy season it grows so fast that a mature tree can be "harvested" 5 years after the nursling stage. Since it sells for $3-5 Ethiopian, (US $1-2) it is the most planted tree in Ethiopia today. The peasant also likes to use the odoriferous branches and leaves to cover the "dass" the festivity-shelter on marriages, etc., and the leafy branch as chora, flyswitch. Entire hillsides may be seen planted with this tree.

Female woods are also used for other indispensable products:

[386] Ink - is made from the fruit of the "tämbälal" (Jasminum floribundum) tree, and its timer is used

[534] for the stock of the single-string violin, the masenqo. (But imported blue ink called "nil" is preferred by däbtära scribes.)

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Fibre - for basketry, roof-hoops, etc. is obtained from the "wärqe" (musa ensete) (also called "enset") at lower altitudes, used especially for cords. Rope "gämäd" is made from the bark cut

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 805 796 822 789 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [181] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 181 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 346 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

231 gland of the animal was packed in cowhorns, and exported as a fixer for scents and perfumes. But the average Amhara farmer does not keep civet cat (zebat).

Livestock is perhaps even more important economic property than land. Since land tenure is uncertain and complicated and since the produce from land is usually consumed by rent, taxes, obligations, and food for the family, any capital surplus and private property is largely expressed in livestock, particularly in the absence of valuable tools. [421] Also, land is at best owned by a man's kin, while livestock is personal property.

231 436 Livestock prices at the rural and provincial-urban markets are still quoted in Mariah Theresa Thalers, although the actual coin is now illegal and may not be used in transactions. The compromise that has developed is to quote MT thalers for livestock only, and to pay in paper or coins of the present legal Ethiopian currency at the rate of Ethiopian $1.50 per MT 1. --(U.S.$0.60). MT Thalers are quoted for sale only, because of the significance of such a transaction, while rent is quoted in modern Ethiopian dollars.

231 583 Cattle: An Amhara peasant may own from 1 to 150 cows, mean about 5. A rich peasant may own about 50 cows, a few bulls, a dozen oxen, 5 mules, over 50 sheep and and goats. In giving his daughter in marriage he may gridefully give her 20 cows, especially if the groom contributes an equal number. A poor peasant may be hard put to give his daughter 3 cows, which is a respectable minimum, and may have to borrow two cows to fill that, but he can hold off fulfillment of the contribution until a few

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 602 601 shown by the vagueness of Amhara kin terminology. The term for brother, *wandam,* also applies to all the male relatives of one's generation and even to one's close friends. Similarly, the terms for uncle and aunt (*agot* and *akeste*) are sometimes used for nephew, niece, and cousin as well; and often these terms are simply replaced by the abstract generic word for kin, *zamad.*

*121 602 The extent of reciprocal obligations among kin outside the nuclear family is a function primarily of the amount of spontaneous affection that exists among the individuals concerned and how close they happen to live to each other. Relatives on good terms with one another normally take turns visiting one another and eating together on holidays. They help one another in the event of sickness, death, fire, litigation, and murder. Orphaned or economically burdensome children are often farmed out to the households of more successful relatives.

*121 602 593 These activities are based on voluntary reciprocity or good will. In its formal structure, the Amhara kinship system stresses the independence of the nuclear family. Although it occasionally happens that married brothers live in a single large compound under the moral authority of their father or an older brother, who is known as its *alaqā* and is responsible for the compound's payment of taxes, each nuclear family lives in separate quarters and produces and consumes its own supply of food by working its own separate acreage of land.

*121 594 42 Within the nuclear family itself, the ties that bind are limited by certain fundamental safeguards of individual rights. One is the institution of private property. The land which each partner brings into a marriage or later acquires through bequests remains his own until death. If they should separate, each takes his own land, and the goods acquired by the household during their marriage are divided equally between them. There is also the provision of *gīl,* a quantity of property that either or both of the spouses may designate, prior to getting married, as strictly private property and indivisible in case of divorce. In the event that a nuclear family enters one of the modern savings associations or *equb* (to be discussed below), husband and wife join as separate members.

*121 593 586 [585] The possibility of divorce is another safeguard of individual rights within the nuclear family. Only in the *querbān* type of marriage is divorce forbidden. This form is normally restricted to priests and very devout, usually older, people; and even then divorces sometimes occur, the couple preferring the displeasure of the church to a life of continued antagonism. The standard sort of marriage is the *samānya* or contract form, in which the equivalent of a simple "I do" concludes the match and a simple "I do not" legitimates divorce. The divorce may be initiated by either husband or wife. An Amharic

606 to be a "good wife", to do "everything right", to learn what her husband likes. If she does not obey her mother-in-law, she is criticized as "rude", and the women say that the groom will "divorce her soon".

423 After the marriage, and especially after she bears children,
596 a wife is regarded as a charter member of her husband's "byet" (lit. house), his family of procreation, continuing his patrilineal kinship unit, regardless of whether they move to residence elsewhere or not. Nevertheless, it is the "byet" that is the landholding unit among most "rest"-owning Amhara, and each biological unit within it receives an allocation of land for usufruct; the limit of one able-bodied plowman is regarded as 5-10 "qada". Thus, the biological family of procreation does not own land, nor does it control it, until, with the death of elders and advancing age, it becomes the "family of orientation" to which a succeeding generation must give obedience.

596 Meanwhile, however, the biological family unit does own the
422 cattle and other mobile goods with which they started their married life, and the increase therefrom. This gives them some partial economic independence.

[731] When, due to war, epidemics (e.g. malaria), or famine (erosion),
423 a "byet" decides to abandon, for the time being, the ancestral
166 lands, and migrates to another district, it usually huddles to-
361 gether in one or a minimum of residential hamlets, sometimes for several generations, until times are better. Then it buds off so rapidly that soon only a few huts remain on the location of the original hamlet of refuge. Thereupon kinsmen may claim "betäna" rights of usufruct from more distant kinfolk who had remained be-

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are per-
234 mitted to use it. Milking is done in a very tightly woven
415 reed container ("gerera") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwacha" or "chocho").

233 Sometimes a large extended family will try to en-
423 close a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock
691 markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Menz district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary
251 yoke. The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya
262 läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

61. Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

423 It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-
435 rate and reliable survey of "capital" and expenditures--due to concealment of property for fear of taxes. As for the value of their own land, this cannot even be estimated by observation, for not even the owners know the value of their own land. For fear of alienation, and possible higher taxes on land found to be more fertile than declared, they actually do not want to know. Most Amhara land is not even measured, and most have no clear titles, except by local "custom". The value of the tuqul hut cannot be estimated since it is not a cash item and utilizes only the raw products of nature. The same is true of utensils and equipment. Even the plowpoint is bartered rather than purchased.

C. Dietary habits

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262 The diet in general is low in proteins and vitamins, but otherwise not inadequate.[64]

The mainstay of the Amhara is a round, thin, limp, slightly sour bread "enjara", made largely from tyeff grain. After the grain has been handground by the housewife, she mixes the flour with water and lets it stand about three days. Then she pours the thickish liquid on a clay plate (called "meted") about 2 feet in diameter, covers it with a high lid of tight reeds or clay which leaves much air space. The bread is thus baked for about four minutes on top of the triangular stone hearth. The result is a leavened, spongy-surfaced but flat-bottomed limp bread about 1/4 inch thick, and about 2 feet in diameter. The meat-curry is

64. Simmons, et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. p.64.

178 is more affected because of orders sent with increasing rapidity and urgency from the central government at Addis Ababa. Sometimes the central government itself gives conservative lip service to some old structure, while quietly modernizing the function.

1. Land Tenure

A. Political Aspects of the Old Tradition:

631 For many centuries Abyssinia was a confederation of states governed by princes, who recognized the superiority of one of them--the "king of kings"; except for occasional centralization of power in the hands of a particular monarch. Only in very recent times, since the late 19th century, does centralization seem to have developed with greater permanency.

631 423 As a result of this social structure, every subject is in some way a functionary of the ruling power. This may infringe on his private property at any time, and he is bound to various labors and obligations. In principle, all land is considered the ultimate property of the power ruling at the top of the social pyramid.

423 All land tenure is therefore considered subject to the final approval of the "king of kings". This [671] principle was recognized in the ancient law code "Fetha Negast", which, however, formally recognized the principle of private land property, to be expropriated only in case of rebellion. Private land property was further reaffirmed by clause 9 of the Penal Code of 1930, and

423 the Constitutions of 1931 and 1955.

The two basic forms of land tenure are called "rest" and "gult". "Rest" comes as close to private property, particularly agricultural real estate, as is possible under these circumstances. It is inheritable, and in principle authorities are not to interfere in the enjoyment of it except in case of rebellion or in case there are no heirs. Most land of this type is found in the old Amhara provinces. "Gult" is land controlled by the governing power, which concedes temporary title to officers of the state, in lieu of salary, particularly to military officers and soldier veterans. Resident peasants who occupy and work the land are usually passed on with this grant(resembling some of the nature of a medieval European fief, or a Spanish encomienda), particularly since the grant is usually continued to the following generations for equal services. These services vary in regions, details, peacetime, wartime, etc., but may include taxes, deliveries of produce, personal services to feudal lords, supplies of grain, charcoal and incense to parish churches, conducting own mules as pack animals during military expeditions, feeding travellers who are "guests of the king", and in general carrying out any new obligation the feudal lord of the region has promised the king.

On the other hand, for every one of these services the "gultenna" could claim land, on the principle that for every function there ought to be a rewarding piece of land. This land was then given the name of the function.

566 [423] At the bottom of the social pyramid of land tenure was the "gabbar", the peasant, whose status resembled that of the medieval European serf. In the final step of passing tasks along, he was responsible for carrying them out, though he could shift some manual labor to the slaves under his constant supervision. The gabbar owed regular statute-labor (called "kudād" or "hudād", literally painful labor), resembling the medieval European corvee, and could also be called out for any special labor. At any moment, authority could decree that a bridge was to be built, a church to be constructed or repaired, at an appointed time and place. Thereupon every gabbar would have to appear, carrying his own tools, to work under the direction os the feudal officer, governor, or his lieutenants ("mislanē"). Heavy fines punished failure to appear for this labor.

It is peculiar, perhaps, how this system was internalized by the gabbar. If he was not on good enough terms with his neighbors to call on them for mutual aid, e.g. in housebuilding or harvesting, perhaps due to a quarrel between kin units, he could demand such aid by appealing to the "cheqa shum" (village headman) or governor's lieutenants, who would then proclaim the work as an official [689] task. The penalty for failure to appear, however, was milder; the offender was sentenced to donate a great feast to all the other participants.

566 794 Another noteworthy traditional task emphasized the feudal structure of the church. A priest in charge of periodic services, the "master of the chant", could de-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

B. Private Property - "rest".

423 "Rest", at least since the days of the Fetha Nägäst and probably earlier, is a form of freehold, with rights and privileges resembling those of a medieval European entail. It is inherited. It is normally free from any statute-labor, It can be expropriated only for rebellion, or certain segments for a public utility such as roadways. The owner has to pay land taxes and a tithe on produce, but can and does pass them on to his tenant.

423 614 The most important factor regarding "rest" is that it is usually owned by a kinship group, predominantly the patrilineal-patrilocal kin. Land of such a kin group is often referred to as "yäwel märet" (lit. partnership land), and this has led some foreign observers mistakenly to regard Amhara land tenure as communal property. It is that only in a very restricted sense. An individual whose kin have died becomes sole proprietor. At the other extreme, if the next generation has become too numerous, a process of "sharing out" can take place, in which new kinship units "bud off" after the death of a patriarch.

Every few years the elders of a patrilocal kin group allocate land to individuals and to biological (nuclear) families, according to their manpower and to their needs. A father, on the marriage of his son, allocates him some of the kin's "rest" land that he individually holds at the time, so that the son can enjoy the produce of his own labors. In some ways this form

423 614 of land settlement resembles the Middle Eastern (Arab) "musha's" land tenure.

No individual or nuclear family can sell, or otherwise alienate, "rest" land belonging to the kin group. He may ask them for permission to do so, but in Amhara provinces this is usually refused. On the other hand, if he moves to a different province (which has happened particularly since Menelik's borderland conquests), his kinfolk will hold his claim in trust so that a returning grandson can claim his rights in full. He can even do this, in some cases of particularly strong and proud families, if the inheritance is on his mother's side.

It is interesting that the Biblical principle of the kinsman-redeemer of the land is still in force among the Amhara, in the same spirit. Cases of this kind have arisen increasingly in the past decade, because of the emperor's efforts to settle landless squatters, who have worked fallow land and have paid tithe for several years. If such formerly fallow land belonged to "rest" kin groups, they try to evict the squatters through legal(or sometimes illegal) means, thus "redeeming the land" for the kin group.

423 428 614 For purposes of inheritance, landholding kin usually include all descendants to the "fourth house", i.e. the great-grandsons. After that, disputes usually arise. If no kin survives-- a very rare occurrence--the partners of the "mahabber" sodality to which the deceased belonged, have a final claim, before the land reverts to the regional authority. Affinal relations, except for the mate who shares equally with children of the deceased, are not considred kin for purposes of inheritance of land. If there are no children, [586] the wife has user claims up to half the estate, which would have been her portion in case of divorce.

423 have been her portion in case of divorce. If the deceased
428 left an infant, the widow is expected to remain with the kin
614 group of the deceased until the child is reared to adulthood. Then she may leave, taking movable belongings that are her share, but, of course, foregoing any claims on real estate. The same procedure is followed in case of her marriage again.

[848] Illegitimate sons, including children of ex-slave concubines, also have the right to inheri their share of "rest", unless the presumed father has publicly rejected them as offspring. Girls who leave the kin group upon marriage, have claims only on movable property, not land. However, if the bridegroom settles on land belonging to the bride's kin, as happens in a minority of cases, the elders will allocate him land, and the male offspring will share in the inheritace.

[852] Allocations of land by the elders to the various biological families used to be made into great events and festivities particularly for the children. This was the only time children were singled out for attention, in this adult-centered culture. Thus the purpose of firmly impressing the event on their minds, to be always remembered and defended in the future, was achieved. In the absence of written legal titles, this procedure was necessary, and is still followed in some rural districts.

C. Semi-private Real Estate--"gult".

423 For many centuries past, land, with the peasants
566 occupying it, has been assigned to feudal officers and soldiers, similar to fiefs of medieval Europe. These "gult" lands also resemble in principle the "miri" state lands of

1: Messing E45 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 566 the Middle East; particularly of the Ottoman empire, where they were also refered to as "çiftliks" (peasant estates that had passed into the possession of soldiers, "sipahi", who in turn constituted fiefs assigned to officers as personal estates.[70]

423 566 701 The process which created "gult" land can be clearly observed intthe history of Abyssinia toward the end of the 19th century. Soldiers and officers in the armies of Menilek II were assigned conquered Galla lands in lieu of salary. They were free from land tax, but obliged to pay "asrat" (tithe) on produce, which tax they of course passed on to the Galla "gabbar". The sons of these veterans usually assumed the same military responsibilities when they came of age, so that the lands passed on to them on the same terms. These lands were referred to as "mädariya" lands, and

70. Inalcik, Halil: Land Problems in Turkish History. (in) Muslim World, July 1955, pp. 221-2.

423 the plots carried names associating them with the speci-
566 fic services owed by the holder of the homestead:
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"land for the rifleman" (infantry)

"land for the guard of prisoners" (military police)

"land for the bearer of the tent" (standard bearer)

"land for the shield-bearer" (bodyguard)

"land for the forager" (quartermaster)

"land for the left flank" (i.e. platoon attacking on the left column); etc.

The "gultenna" homesteader was always on call for a new military campaign. His land was regarded as his for enjoyment of produce only, like land allocated by a father to his son upon marriage. The size of "gult" land could vary from one gasha (usually about 50 acres) for a soldier-veteran of long service, to as much as 1000 gasha for a high officer of feudal nobility. The latter could, and usually did, set aside part of his "gult" land as endowment for a monastery or church, and the gabbar on such land passed to the control of the church.

There is very little "gult" land in old-Amhara provinces dating from this period of Menelik II. If found there, it is usually older, since his conquests were farther south, southwest and southeast.

On his long and distant campaigns, Menelik II thus found his supply lines assured, for the "gultenna" was obliged to feed passing armies and to aid the military foragers. He had also to act as host to any passing "nagadras" (treasurer, customs agent) of Menelik during intervals of peace.

423 566 701 If these interludes of peace lengthened greatly, the feudal knight ("färäsenya") would often conclude a contract with his "gulteñnas", which gave both parties some security in what they could expect of each other in services and privileges. This contract usually took the [427] form of "siso" (lit. one-third). The "gulteñña" thus became a sharecropper, paying 1/3 of his produce to the feudal lord after each harvest, working statute-labor for him one day in three, making his team of oxen available on a basis of one day in three, Sometimes the "gulteñña" thus became a sharecropper and little better off than the "gabbar", especially if no war service interrupted the arrangement for many years. Though he could pass on much of the labor to his own gabbars, he himself sometimes became so debt-ridden to the feudal landlord above him that his status resembled that of a Mexican peon. "Siso" contracts were rare in Shoa, where the "gulteñña" was frequently called to war, and his status as honorable and free soldier-veteran thus never faded away.

The fortunes of war ruled the life of the "gulteñña" much more than the owner of "rest" property. For if the Ras (feudal top nobility) of his province, under whom the gulteñña was fighting, lost in a war or in a rebellion, the gulteñña found himself under a newly-appointed Ras who might ignore customary relaxation of burdens, who might even confiscate the "gult" lands and make the homesteaders "gabbar" serfs, leaving them only the alternative of escaping into the bush. Outside of Shoa, (where fertile land is more expensive and more closely guarded), the

423 "gultenna" and his family might try to become squatters,
566 "chesanna", on someone's fallow land, and risk being cha-
701 sed away by a kin unit claiming that territory. Or, permitted to remain on his old lands, a "gultenna" might suddenly find that the new feudal lord of the province was enclosing ("kelkel", declared forbidden) land formerly used as pasturage or for agriculture, to give to his own successful soldier veterans, and exacting quotas of oxen, mules and honey from the former "gultenna".

178 As long as the "gabbar" system was still in full
423 force, the "gultenna" at least had someone to exploit in turn, to ease his own burdens. Now that the present emperor has declared the "gabbar" system ended (though much of it survives), even this relief is passing. Furthermore, the new army is salaried, so that the basic function of the "gult" system has already disappeared. The only hope the sons of "gultennas" have is to have their lands declared "rest", private property, for otherwise they will become landless. This means that they must work the land themselves and pay tithe on the produce; otherwise squatters can alienate it from them.

D. Endowed Lands -- "rest-gult".

423 The many variations of regional "rest" and "gult" lands sometimes crystallize to a combination type referred to as "rest-gult".

423 Such types of land tenure arose in the past when a king awarded land for personal service, or in gratitude, as "gult" land, without specifying the conditions under which such land might pass to the heirs of the recipient.

423 794 Land donated to the church, in areas far from a monastery or parish that could easily administer it, sometimes belong in this category. In gratitude for victory, a king would sometimes establish ecclesiastical fiefs, "rim", for the support of officiating priests and boy deacons. The most famous endowment of this kind occurred in 1270 A.D., when archbishop Täklä Haymanot received 1/3 of the land of Abyssinia from the "Solomonic Dynasty" he had helped to restore. The archbishop immediately founded monasteries to administer the property and to supervise the "gabbar on it. Priests and monks since [793] then have served in functions similar to chaplains, and have carried the "tabot" representing the sacred ark, into battles, much like the priests of the ancient Israelites. Endowments have continued to add land to the church, "mäsqäl märet" (lit. lands of the cross), and a priest is usually sent to act as local administrator, "aläqa" (lit. chief). He also supervises the functioning of a church built on land not given to the church, and often acts as if the surrounding land were "gult" land belonging to the church.

The moral power of the church in many localities is so strong that the borderlines between "rest" and "gult" may become hazy. Aging persons often try to

423 donate some plots to the church as "sämonanya", to have
794 masses fead for their souls after their deaths. Widows, who often take vows as nuns, try to endow the church if they can. Sometimes, "gultennas" threatened with expropriation, sought the protection of the church, so that they could remain on their lands. Sometimes parish priests
423 793 practice nepotism by inviting their nephews or other kinsmen to settle on endowed land surrounding the parish church, without paying rent or performing heavy labors. In return, this arrangement serves the local priests as life insurance and income-insurance, for they will always be certain of supplies of produce, beer, meat, incense, clothing, etc., from their grateful kinfolk, for themselves and their offspring.

The local priest then also acts as patron of his kinfolk against the regional administration, interceding for them when they become involved in litigation, acts as their "guarantor" ("was") when they apply for jobs or seek more land from the governor or neighboring landlord. This nepotism actually seems on the increase, since the present emperor abrogated the feudal rights of all church lands in 1942 (though reinstituting some in exchange for services such as education, a few years later). Now that the church has lost the right to charge feudal rent, parish priests are more eager than ever to have kinfolk settle around them, to avoid dependence on payment from parents whose boys are enrolled in the church school.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

E. Some Regional Variations, in Amhara provinces.

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The sharpest regional variations are between the old-Abyssinian, Coptic north, and the areas conquered by Menelik II to the south. But variations exist to considerable degree among the northern provinces also.

Shoa, particularly the old-Amhara sections, enjoyed many exemptions from burdens which have been mentioned. "Siso" peonage was almost non-existent, and "gultennas" were involved in warfare so much that they enjoyed a maximum of "gult" exemptions. In the past they felt as secure in their tenure as "restenyas". The highest Amhara nobility came from the Shoa districts of "Manz" and "Wanchit", where their lands had actually been "rest" property for centuries. However, in much of Shoa the old kinship holdings had broken up in consequence of the Galla invasion prior to the 19th century. When Menelik II reconquered these areas they became "gult" though under most favorable conditions for "gultennas".

In Gojjam and Begemdir most of the land remained "rest", since Galla invasions did not reach that far to any great extent. This land has remained unmeasured to this day, despite the efforts of the present emperor to ascertain titles to land, replace traditional "status" with "contract", and provide for fixity of tenure. Provincial Amhara resistence to this change is still strong, and the residents have been permitted to continue to pay the low land taxes of 1927 for the time being. In Gojjam, during the rule of the provincial dynasty of Ras Hailu,

184 which ended with his unsuccessful rebellion of 1929,
423 much land was "rest-gult", and there were many kinds of tax exemptions for heirs of veterans, who often paid only the tithe on grain and a small tax on cattle.

In Begemdir province (capital: Gondar), most of the land also remains unmeasured, for the same reason. Much of the land is "rest" owned by kin groups who guard it jealously against alienation; and the old church lands are are regarded as "rest". In the southwestern, lower, section of Gondar town and some nearby rural land, "rest" is owned by Ethiopian Muslims, mostly traders, who purchased it from the church, long ago. In scattered rural areas some families of ethnic specialists like the Falasha smiths own land considered "rest-gult", given to their ancestors in reward for services rendered Menelik's armies in the 19th century. This process has been discontinued (artisans are now in business for themselves and are supposed to pay a trade tax to the central government), and most Falashas live under very uncertain terms of tenure, paying tithe and other taxes, which worries the Amhara claimants to this territory.

F. Crown Lands and Efforts to Centralize Land Tenure.

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656 In the old tradition of land tenure, the king held some very personal land, inherited or conquered, for the support of the royal household, "mēd-bēt". He added to it by confiscating land of unsuccessful feudal rebels.

423 He could do with "mād-bēt" lands as he pleased, without
656 interference from kin groups, the church, or other local-feudal dynasties.

654 Thus the present emperor, when he was still merely
656 regent, and a young man in his twenties, began his pro-
423 gram of modernization and centralization in his own "mad-bet" in Harar province. He organized the coffee-growing of that area as a cash crop for export, and, more significantly, reduced the burdens on the "gabbar", improved security of tenure, appointed supervisors to see that matters would not slip back, and instructed them to report to him as the central power. He also set up elementary schools in several locations. At regular intervals he toured his lands personally. As a result, "gabbar" from neighboring feudal estates were eager to have the protection of his "mād-bēt".

423 These efforts were a departure from the traditional
656 pattern of high feudal nobles on their "mād-bēt" (though, on the other hand, no one could criticize him for doing as he pleased on his own "household land"). The others appointed trustees, "täwälaj", usually 12, to administer their land, while they remained absentee landlords at the court of the "king of kings". These trustees were u usually appointed from patriarchal elders and lowest nobility, and were responsible for the support of the parish churches of their area, with priest, deacons, däbtära (scribe-choristers), etc.

423 In the traditional pattern there was another means
651 of exercising some central control, through the collection

423 651 of land taxes and tithe, provided these were not entirely claimed by powerful local feudal nobility or the church. These tax-collectors, who often lived dangerously, were given land as reward for services; this land was called "mälkäña" land. They also acted as overseers of stature-labor, "hudäd". They were usually free from both land tax and tithe on their own territory, and, although their sons could inherit the job and the land that went with it, their security of tenure was even weaker than that of the "gultenna". Partly this was due to the ever-shifting power factors, for, when the central power was weak or distracted by a distant war, the tax-collector might find himself working as a provincial functionary, intermediate between the cheqa shum (headman) and the provincial feudal lords.

423 656 When central power was greatly strengthened in the days of Menelik II, there was a considerable increase in "malkana" lands. This was particularly the case in lands he had conquered from the Galla landlords ("balbat"). He expropriated 3/4 of their lands for distribution among his military veterans, but in consolation granted the balbats the remaining 1/4 as "mälkäña" land. This freed them from taxes, enabled them to pass their remaining landholdings on to their sons, and turned them into loyal subjects of the central power which alone could protect their tenure from future expropriation. The outcome of this amazingly Solomonic solution of an age-old problem of land tenure in a feudal country has turned the Galla balbats today into the most reliable

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656 supporters of the central government.

The descendants of these balbats, now educated in
423 the high schools of Addis Ababa, are being sent into even
647
651 the old-Amhara provinces at present, by Emperor Haile Selassie, to act as salaried collectors for the central treasury ("Gemja-Bet") (so that the function of the former malkana has again come full circle, though the term is no longer used for the office). In fact, the new centralized tax-gathering has ended the office of the old, provincial "mälkäña", and they, much like the "gultäñña", can only hope to have their lands affirmed as "rest". This they can hope to achieve only if they work the lands themselves and pay tithe on produce, otherwise it may be lost to squatters. Their final security of tenure, by contract instead of vague status (they have lost the latter), will come only when the lands are measured and modern titles issued, which has not yet happened in the old-Amhara areas that resist this. The non-resistant Galla balbats of Shoa province are thus more secure in tenure, and will remain so as long as the central government is strong.

423 Measurement of land is called, traditionally, "throw-
804 ing the rope" ("yase gämäd"). This rope may be made of cordage, plant fibers, traditionally 40 elbow lengths long. In northern districts it is sometimes made of plaited oxhide, and called "qäläd".

423 The "rope was thrown" widely in Galla lands conquered by Menelik II, Three-quarters of these lands were then divided into gashas of 80-100 acres each, and

423 the peasants occupying them were allocated as "gabbar" to soldiers and officers. A soldier-veteran who had family might have received 2 to 5 families "gabbar"; officers 7 to 10, district commanders 30 and more "gabbar" families, governors hundreds of gabbar. From the gabbar's point of view, this constituted little change in his lot, for he had served the Galla balbat in similar ways. Gabbar were also allocated to the Coptic churches built on the new territories. Menelik II regarded these new parishes and buildings as permanent outposts of Amhara society in the Galla south.

423 651 The first emperor to strengthen central power, in modern times, and to begin land reforms, was Emperor Theodore. In the 1850's and 1860's he instituted a new office, still retained. This was the appointment of trusted lieutenants, "mislanē", to act as tax-collectors, in place of the uncertain "malkana" who were always being subdued by regional feudal powers. He appointed as "mislanē" persons from different regions, who would own no fealty to local lords, and could be relied upon to owe personal loyalty directly to the central power that had appointed them. This was the first type of officer not rewarded by land grants, but receiving salary out of the taxes he had collected. At present, a century later, the office of "mislanē" is little changed, except that he is now directly responsible to the provincial governor who is himself an appointee of the Emperor and who is frequently shifted to another province to prevent him from growing local roots.

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G. Present Holdings and Problems of Amhara Peasants of Begemdir Province.

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423 Most of the Amhara peasants of Begemdir (and other provinces) live much as their ancestors have lived for centuries. They subsist largely on the products of their lands, needing relatively few gooda and services from outside the province. They do not care for profit and loss accounting. Their social organization is built on visible human relationships. They do not welcome modern bookkeeping and registration, particularly with regard to land tenure, which the modern central government is gradually attempting to foist on them; adding, to the proud provincial Amhara mind, insult to disturbance by doing it through "Galla" clerks from Shoa province.

423 The basic land unit to which the Amhara peasant of Begemdir refers in transactions, is the "qada", usually a little less than half an acre. The average "gasha" may contain as many as 150 "qada", varying with the relative fertility of the soil. Several patrilocal hamlets, constituting a "mandar" (villageship) and supervised by one cheqa shum (headman), may control as many as 10 gashas, (about 500 acres.). The average farmer, supporting his family of procreation and an aged parent and aunt, may control, on the average, about 50 qada (about 20 acres), half of which he may leave fallow at any given time.

423 The richest farmer in the rural vicinity of Gondar,
427 a member of the Qemant (Cushitic-speaking) ethnic group, owns 8 gasha (about 400 acres), which is considered fabulous wealth by his Amhara neighbors. However, with the aid of his sons and servants, he cultivates only one gasha at any given time. He parcels out the remaining 7 gasha, except for some fallow land, to landless tenant farmers, many of them ex-slaves, usually in plots no bigger than 10 qada (about 4 acres), which is considered the limit one man can plow and seed without help. The rent they pay him consists of one "madiga " of tyeff grain (about 25 kilo); payable by each. Each also pays him 1/2 madiga of barley, referred to as "qolo", tribute to his "household". His agents also collect the 10% tithe, in produce, which he is expected to pass on to the government, and the new Eth$4.- education tax. He invest part of his profits in cows for his increasing herds.

423 For purposes of taxation, of peasants, the govern-
651 ment treasury must rely on the judgment of the headman, ("qheqa shum"), who is difficult to check because the land is unmeasured and a "gasha" is a flexible concept. Therefore, his supervisor, usually the mislane, can only base a check on past, customary payments.

[602] Taxcollectors are known to be generous when deal-
423 ing with even distant kinfolk, or with priests and
651 their relatives, and to even out the receipts by pres-
653 sure on low-class ethnic minorities, justifying this by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income from their handicrafts.

423 by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income
651 from their handicrafts. Among the methods of this
563 extortion is the "initiation fee" of as much as Eth$3.- per qada, when freshly cleared from the bush. Another impressment consists of "voluntary" supplies regularly paid to the Coptic parish church in the locality, by non-Coptic ethnics. Also, the feudal landlord usually asks them for a special "pasturage fee"--as much as Eth$2.- per qada of fallow land--with the further condition that no more than two oxen (or cows) graze on each qada. Where a Coptic farmer may pay perhaps Eth$10.- tithe on his semi-fertile 50 qada, the non-Coptic farmer may be made to pay double to four times that for similar produce on an equivalent plot of land. While
[871] the new education tax is the same, the non-Coptic artisan finds it very difficult to enroll his boy in the overcrowded elementary school in the provincial capital.

423 The average "rest"-owning farmer working 10 qada
651 every year, may harvest about 50 madiga of tyeff grain,
511 selling it for Eth$150.-(In the rainy season it would bring twice that); plus 30 madiga barley, Eth$60.- plus some honey, if he has it.

If the tax-collector is his friend, his tithe may amount to as little as Eth$5 to 10, his education tax Eth$2 to 4. His land tax based on the rate of 1927 will be very low, and his pasturage, as Coptic non-artisan, free.

511 Thus he has enough for his basic needs including the purchase of a new toga (shamma) per year, and perhaps a new donkey. However, he cannot normally afford

511 prestige items of luxury, such as a mule, a fine saddle, and he would not want to "waste" his money on imported snadals. His expenses for shelter and furnishings are almost nil in terms of cash, and even a beer jar can be purchased for Eth$1.- in rural areas.

423 His basic needs filled with a minimum of labor,
578 and his wants few, the "rest"-owning Amhara farmer views modern land measurement with suspicion. He fears that disputed land with vague boundaries will be declared government land and be redistributed. In the absence of written deeds; dependence on remembered local traditions and natural landmarks; and the practice of letting fallow land revert to bush to be cleared anew every few years, disputes are many at any time. Rumors from southern areas where courts have for several years now recognized tithe receipts as evidence of ownership, reinforces these fears. Alienation of any part of one's land is strongly objected to as loss of prestige and weakening of kin bonds. As a result, there is little appreciation among "rest"-holding Amhara of Begemdir for the efforts of the emperor, to replace vague "status" of land tenure with assured "contract", to have real estate deeds issued and registered, to end the tax exemptions of feudal lords and the church, to institute uniform land taxes, etc. Any general change, they feel, is bound to raise the socio-economic level of non-Coptic ethnic minorities and depress their own.

423 Several land laws were included in the Penal

423 Code of 1930 of the central government. "Rest" land was protected by a provision that it could not be sold without permission of the district judge. This assured that the transaction would be public, enabling the kinfolk to protest. In the provinces of Begemdir, Semyen and Gojjam, where land was considered plentiful, most land consisted of freehold "rest", which remained unsurveyed, and in practice virtually unsaleable. In Shoa province, much land formerly held by veterans and officials ("gultennas") has reverted to the government. But most "gabbar" tenants still owe the 2/3 of produce previously paid. The tenants of the descendants of "gultennas" can become owners only by purchasing the land; meanwhile their income goes to pay the rent, the tithe, etc., leaving no capital to accumulate.

423 651 Under this Code the church was still exempt from land tax on its huge holdings. The laws of 1944 abrogated this exemption, but the amendment of 1947 partially restored the right of the church to claim "voluntary contributions" locally, from recipients of benefits such as education. The law of 1944 was a victory for the resisting provincial Amhara peasants, in that it limited, temporarily, the land taxes of Begemdir, Semyen and Gojjam (also the Coptic province of Tigre) to the low rate of 1927. The tithe could continue to be on an "estimated" basis. All taxes permitted "scaling" according to fertility.

Thus the old immunities and inequalities in

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 [651] taxation of landholdings have been only partially swept away. Enforcement in the old-Amhara provinces is lax. The "gabbar" system, abolished by decree after the emperor's return in 1941, continues as the broad basis of land occupancy, and as a major pillar of social structure, with only little, gradual change.

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725 and left flanks.
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Fanning out in all directions, detachments of light cavalry and foragers on foot, "fano", could destroy and plunder enemy land to do as much damage as possible while on the march. When re-encampment was ordered, the tent of the king or field commander was set up first, and the army divisions and followers, seeing this, grouped themselves accordingly and settled in their proper locations, distances, areas and relative positions. The quartermaster thereupon took over the functions of maintenance and supplies.[74]

[554] This pattern of "relative positions" and functions carried over into civilian life, and dominated land tenure, administration, law, social structure, organized religion, the life cycle, artistic expression, and a multitude of human relations.

C. Significance of the old Military Organization in Modern Change.

178 The spear, the rhinoceros shield and armies paid by land grants have now become memories of the past, [554] though recent past. Yet most of the attitudes and many of the roles that accompanied the old military organization still linger and dominate social organization.

[473] Much of the old land tenure is still little changed in the old-Amhara provinces, as has been pointed out.

74. Sadie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, pp. 86-7.

632 not far from the market. A smaller daily market for retail items would develop, so commerce proceeded even on a daily basis. A larger church school, to include some higher grades, would be set up by priests and Pätära (scribe-choristers).

632 712 On account of the floods in the rainy season, most of this town would be on a higher level, preferably a butte overlooking a river valley from which drinking water could be brought every day. On this fertile flood plain, just below the town, there would be some grass even at the height of the dry season, so that the cows owned by urban citizens would always find some pasture. [423] On this floodplain a "commons" was set aside, which no one could "enclose" for private use. It was called "ad-[485] äbäbay" or even "yäheab addäbäbay", and served as camping place for caravans, for temporary storage space of their goods and their mules, donkeys or camels, prior to the slow climb up the butte to the Saturday market. This arrangement also had the advantage of military security for the town, protecting it from sneak attack of an enemy under guise of a caravan, which was not permitted to proceed upward into town until dawn. For the Amhara town, unlike the Muslim towns in the south, were not walled.

632 651 This arrangement also permitted the "näsadraa" the collector of duties for the central power of the province, to keep control of the merchandise entering and leaving the market.

b) Parish Organization.

423
795 In many districts of the oldAmhara provinces, the church has owned much feudal land (it was given 1/3 of the land in the 13th century). Endowments from the wills of pious persons have been adding to this.

This land, which is regarded as "rest", freehold real estate, in the traditional land tenure, is administered in divisions, called "däbber", that somewhat resemble medieaval European parishes. The population of such an area, which directly or indirectly supports the local church, through tithes, rents, services, periodic supplies, memorial gifts, etc., refers to "and däbber agär" (lit. one particular countryside) as its home district; much as an Itálian refers to "mi paese".

793 The priests attached to this church (often for long periods) usually attempt to create a residential kinship unit for themselves, similar to the residential hamlets of freehold families, inviting their nephews and other young-married kin, both patrilineal and matrilineal, to settle near the church. A priest thus closely surrounded by kin becomes the local patriarch, and his personal economic future, as well as his leadership are assured. The priest locally appointed by higher church authorities ato act as administrator is the sacristan, "gäbäz", or "qäs"(priest) gobäz", who is respectfully addressed and referred to as "aläqa" (lit. chief).

793
795 The number of clergy attached to an old-established, local church, often includes, besides the "gobäz"

606 to be a "good wife", to do "everything right", to learn what her husband likes. If she does not obey her mother-in-law, she is criticized as "rude", and the women say that the groom will "divorce her soon".

423 596 After the marriage, and especially after she bears children, a wife is regarded as a charter member of her husband's "byet" (lit. house), his family of procreation, continuing his patrilineal kinship unit, regardless of whether they move to residence elsewhere or not. Nevertheless, it is the "byet" that is the landholding unit among most "rest"-owning Amhara, and each biological unit within it receives an allocation of land for usufruct; the limit of one able-bodied plowman is regarded as 5-10 "qada". Thus, the biological family of procreation does not own land, nor does it control it, until, with the death of elders and advancing age, it becomes the "family of orientation" to which a succeeding generation must give obedience.

596 422 Meanwhile, however, the biological family unit does own the cattle and other mobile goods with which they started their married life, and the increase therefrom. This gives them some partial economic independence.

[731] 423 166 361 When, due to war, epidemics (e.g. malaria), or famine (erosion), a "byet" decides to abandon, for the time being, the ancestral lands, and migrates to another district, it usually huddles together in one or a minimum of residential hamlets, sometimes for several generations, until times are better. Then it buds off so rapidly that soon only a few huts remain on the location of the original hamlet of refuge. Thereupon kinsmen may claim "betäba" rights of usufruct from more distant kinfolk who had remained be-

423 hind on the ancestral lands.

166 This succession of events has taken place so often in Amhara
361 history, that very few old settlements have remained on the same
[591] spot for even a century. As a result, many regional varieties of "patrilocal residence" have developed, and even "matrilocal residence" is not excluded, though most bridegrooms would shun such a fate. Also, the land tenure of the Amhara has become complex and replete with litigation, because of the amorphous definition of "byet", which sometimes emphasizes the consanguineal aspect, sometimes the residential, of kinship after marriage.

B. Problems of the Married Couple and Divorce.

586 When a couple has remained married for a number of years, people say they are "*rägga*" (lit. coagulated), stuck on each other. For divorce of a first marriage is common as the partners mature.

If her husband neglects her, wanders off, is a drunkard, or beats her too often, a woman may decide to initiate divorce proceedings. A man may do so if she is disobedient, e.g. wanders off to town without his permission.

587 If a man takes a "damoz" wife in addition to his "semanya" wife, the latter has no recourse in court. But if he takes another "semanya" wife, she can have him arrested, if she can locate him, for breaking his oath. She then angrily accuses him of doing a stupid thing, "you married one ox hump (shanna) above the other". He may be fined, but his first marriage may still remain valid. If a "semanya" wife hears that her husband has a previous wife, she often laughs, flattered, mocking the other woman by saying: "I married on top of her and not below" - for evidently, the man,

181 the emphasis on frequency and intensity of kin relations; the dichotomy between "rustic peasant" and "great man - noble" personality (the latter constituting a culture goal; Amhara concepts of government administration; religious fundamentalism and literalness; and last, healing of "spirit ailments" outside the officially dominant religion.

181 Attachment to the land is a major preoccupation of all Amhara: 423 Nobles and "gabbar" serfs, men and women, old and young, priest and 571 student, even of the townspeople. The complexity of land tenure (i.e. the varieties of "rest" and "gult" land) is closely connected with the social status of the residential kin group; the life cycle of the individual is largely determined by the land tenure of his family, beginning with the very kind of education he is likely to receive. By extension, a person's secondary social group consists largely of persons inhabiting or stemming from the same "agärey" (lit. my countryside), the sub-district where his family owns land or works on it.

181 Attachment to one's kin group is nearly as strong on the in- 602 dividual's maternal side as on the paternal. The greater emphasis [591 on the latter is largely due to the predominantly patrilocal resi- 611] dence, and on patrilineal descent. Kin visiting is a primary social duty, on both the individual's paternal and maternal sides, with equal frequency and intensity. By extension, though with lesser frequency and intensity, visiting of affinal relatives, notably the wife's parents who nearly always live in another hamlet, is considered an important social duty.

Kin feuds often last for generations, particularly between land owning ("rest" tenure) kin groups. The fear of shaming ("harerät")

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

These figures show that the gorges, together with the adjoining and intervening plateau, carry a considerably higher population than the rest of the plateau, the combined average being over 200 per square mile. The figures for population per church are also interesting. The gorges and the adjacent parts of the plateau contain no fewer than thirteen churches and they serve an average population of only some 650 souls each. On the other hand the churches of the general plateau, not counting those of Debra Berhan, which chiefly serve the townspeople, number only four. They must cater for about three times as many people each, and until recently many more for two of them are recent foundations. 162 361 [346]

The higher population of the gorge region is attributable to two causes: the greater productivity of the land there, and the historical fact, already referred to, that the Amharas were long forced to live in the gorges, and have re-emerged only in recent times. This is confirmed by the evidence of the churches which, in such numbers, are sure evidence of a long-established Christian population. The oldest ones are among those in the depths of the gorges; sites on the edges of gorges seem to be more recent. The few plateau churches are all relatively modern and bespeak the re-occupation by Amharas; two of them were indeed founded within the last fifteen years, and one as recently as 1945. 174 361

As can be seen from the map, sites chosen for dwellings are usually on the higher ground. The favourite sites, of which many examples can be seen on the sheet, are rocky ridges and the tops or upper slopes of hills and minor plateaus. A high place with an outlook, together with reasonable proximity to permanent water, seem to be the conditions sought after. Even the most elevated and exposed hill-tops are generally inhabited, whereas nobody tries to live on the plains near the main streams, which become very swampy in the rains. The ordinary family, together with its domestic animals, lives in a small, irregular cluster of round huts, which in this area are built of stone cemented with mud and carry a conical thatched roof. They are surrounded, as a rule, by a dry-stone wall, which may be shared by several households. Richer people may have an ornamental gatehouse at the main entry, with a little watchman's room over the gate; but such ostentation was not common. 361 [342] [556]

Disregarding some of the Debra Berhan people, almost the entire population is engaged in farming which, here as elsewhere in Ethiopia, is the mainstay of existence. Some possess their own land; others hold their plots, in return for a proportion of the produce (but without any security of tenure), from absentee landowners. There is also a landless element, greatly increased through the disturbing influence of the Italian occupation, who hire themselves out as ploughmen and labourers. I had intended to measure some typical holdings in order to estimate the area actually required to support a family, but my time in the area was cut short and I never did so. As a very rough estimate I think that about 15–20 per cent. of the area is under cultivation in any one year, which would indicate an average per family of something like 4 acres. This does not include fallow land which, once re-grown with grass, cannot be distinguished at a glance from permanent pasture. 241 423

The most exposed parts of the plateau near Debra Berhan will grow two crops only, barley and broad beans, but a limited amount of wheat (a bearded 241

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE AND TRIBUTE

THE GABAR

It is impossible to go any further with this discussion of provincial administration without some understanding of the Ethiopian methods of land tenure. The three strands, administration, tribute, and tenure, were closely twisted together and with them the fourth strand of military service, which we have already endeavoured to study separately. Unfortunately the whole subject is extremely complex. A few investigations have been made especially by Italian scholars, whose work has been mainly in the old Tigré province, part of which became Eritrea, but, as there are very wide varieties even within the northern provinces, seeming inconsistencies occur between the authorities.[1] The situation was at least as intricate as in early medieval England while

423 [114]

[1] Among the chief authorities upon this subject are:
1. P. Soleillet, *Voyages en Ethiopie*, Rouen, 1886.
2. E. de Felcourt, *L'Abyssinie*, Paris, 1911.
3. Rossini.
4. Cerulli.
5. Guèbrè Sellassié, especially Appendix xi by M. de Coppet, 'Landed Property in Shoa'.
6. A. Pollera, *Le popolazioni indigene dell'Eritrea*, Bologna, 1935.
7. de Castro, *L'Etiopia*.
8. G. P. Veroi, *Caratteri generali dell'economica dell'Impero*, Rome, 1937.
9. V. L. Grottanelli, *Missione di Studi al Lago Tana*, 2 vols., Rome, 1939.
10. J. Kalmer, 'The Return of Haile Selassié', *Contemporary Review*, vol. 159, pp. 290–4.
11. L. Meri, *Problema fondiario*, Rivista delle Colonie, Rome, 1937.
(For nos. 3, 4, and 5, see list of abbreviated references.)
In addition to these modern authors who give special consideration to land tenure, nearly all the travellers have something to say of the subject. While use has been made of these authorities, some of the information in this and the next chapter is based upon evidence collected directly from Ethiopians by F. de Halpert.

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423 here there is no Domesday Book to give a clear point of departure and none of the successive unravellings of generations of scholars to help the inquirer. Any attempt at the simplification of the evidence must to some extent be a distortion.

Two preliminary generalizations may help to clarify the picture.

[556] Firstly it is important to remember that in Ethiopia, as in all economically backward countries where industry is negligible, almost all material wealth was the direct produce of the herdsman or the man who worked on the land with his plough and his hoe.

423 Ethiopia shared with the rest of tropical Africa a primitive peasant
466 agriculture; the difference was that there stood upon this basis a large
651 hierarchical structure of government. This meant that the cultivator
241 must, as the Ethiopians themselves express it, 'carry upon his shoulders' all that very large proportion of the population which had withdrawn themselves from work on the land. This included the Emperor; all his officials, central and provincial, great and small; the vast hierarchy of the church and the large armies of soldiers. As a result of the undeveloped economy and communications of Ethiopia, the services of the agriculturalist had for the most part to be used directly by the contribution of part of the crops or cattle from his own land or by the use of his labour upon that of another. While slave labour was widely used for domestic purposes, especially in the houses of the rich, it was not in the north used very extensively in the fields, and the main support of Ethiopian state and society was not the slave but the theoretically free cultivator, the *gabar*. The elaborate systems of land tenure and of tribute with all their provincial variations represent only the different means by which his services and produce were utilized by the government and by other classes. It was not the land but the labour of the *gabars* on the land which provided the support for provincial as well as imperial administration. Hence the importance of the forms of tenure and tribute.

423 The word *gabar* has been used as a term of reproach against Ethiopia.
466 At the end of these chapters on the provinces the reader will be in a
651 better position to judge how far this charge was just, and especially how far it accumulated evil association by the forms it assumed in the conquered south. Here the position of the northern *gabar* must be defined in its simplest terms. In theory and, at its best, in practice, the status was not synonymous with slavery or even with oppression. Literally it meant one who pays *gibr* or tribute. 'There is no shame in the word "gabbar"' was the general Ethiopian opinion recorded by an observant British consul.[1] As tribute was in theory based upon land

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

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not the person, it has been said that high notables and the Emperor himself might, in strict technicality, be called *gabars*, since they might hold land burdened with some *gabar* service. Moreover—again in the theory—*gabars* were not, like the serf, tied to the soil; they could leave their land and seek a new holding elsewhere.

The position can be put in another way. The Ethiopian, like the Englishman, owed dues to the central government or to its representative; firstly, he owed the Emperor tribute and tithe for his land; secondly, he owed the equivalent of local rates, and, thirdly, when he was a tenant, he owed rent. The only difference, it might be said, was that the Ethiopian paid all these dues in grain, honey, firewood, stock, or labour instead of in money. The difference was, however, fundamental. In the absence of central control or uniformity and in situations where the *gabar*, the man who provided all this tribute in kind with his own hands, happened to be in a weak position, the form of payment opened the way to all kinds of extortion.

Mrs. Sandford, who with her husband ran a farm for many years in Galla country near the capital and was therefore in a position to provide very authoritative evidence upon this subject, gives the following account of the *gabars*, presumably those in her district. They owed the governor or soldiers to whom they were allotted both produce and services: these might be one day's labour out of three, eight or ten days; the provision of timber for building the master's house and grass for its thatching; firewood and one fifth of the grain crop in addition to the Emperor's tenth. This, she concludes, might have been reasonable especially if the *gabars* could have dared to use their right of appeal. 'But in fact the abuse proved stronger than the system.' The masters exacted more than their due 'and the system was in practice as extortionate as those of old Roman days. Officer and soldier were equally rapacious, . . .' The *gabar* dared not appeal. Coming from a witness of such experience and of such devotion to Ethiopia, this evidence carries weight.[1]

The tithe of grain was owed to the Emperor by every subject unless he were exempted on account of his other services to state or church. This grain was collected on the threshing floors and stored in the governor's official granaries; it was used mainly for the sustenance of the soldiers. Since such a bulky product could hardly be carried far in Ethiopia there was very little market in cereals. Pastoral tribes were expected to pay their tithe in stock. There was also a tribute of produce or labour, or both, which was nearly always taken by the governor or his representative and there were further dues or presents to the sub-

[1] Sandford, pp. 48–9.

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.651 ordinate officials which varied from province to province. There were also the heavy dues of purveyance to passing officials, soldiers and even private travellers, whose records are full of evidence of the readiness with which through the centuries this burdensome obligation was accepted. Some of these dues were not easily to be distinguished from the further requirements in kind and in labour which a tenant might owe, in addition, as rent to a private landlord.

THE EMPEROR AND THE LAND

●423 From the *gabar*, who formed the basis of the system of land tenure, we return to the Emperor at its apex. The conflict as to whether provincial office was held personally and terminally at the royal will was reproduced in the closely complementary question of the usage and ownership of land and its dues by which alone office could be supported. Here, in theory as well as in practice, the Emperor was less successful in maintaining his claims. It was true that land and office generally went together, but land-holding was wider than office-holding; it was more complex and it affected more people. Moreover, while office was highly desirable, the earth, meeting all necessities, was the main object and, once acquired, was held with the utmost tenacity.

423 643 The theory maintained by the Emperors was that they owned all the land in the country and that it was therefore all held at their will. 'He takes and gives all lands at pleasure' we read in Tellez.[1] 'The King's authority is so unlimited', wrote Lobo, 'that no Man can in this country be called with Justice Proprietor of anything, nor doth any Man when he Sows his Field know that he shall Reap it.'[2] Numerous authorities follow these early observers in this view. The assumption was that no land could be private property and therefore heritable. The most authoritative challenge to this theory was to be found in the ancient *Fetha Nagast* itself: in this, private property was formally recognized.[3] Turning to the latest age we find that a clause (article 27) of the constitution of 1931 runs as follows: 'Except in cases of public utility determined by law, no-one shall be entitled to deprive an Ethiopian subject of the movable or landed property which he holds.' Between these dates stretches the long struggle of the crown to counter these rights and to retain control over the lands granted out on various terms to the several categories of subjects.

[1] Tellez, p. 53.

[2] Lobo, J., *A Voyage to Abyssinia* (translated by Mr. Le Grand), 1735, p. 263.

[3] Guidi, p. 361. Quoted by M. de Coppet in Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

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THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE

According to one legend, when Menelik I returned from his visit to his father Solomon, he divided the land into three parts, one for the crown, one for the church and the other for the laity. Certainly, as regards the first part of the division, the Emperors retained vast estates as the royal domain. These tended to be most numerous in the region of the imperial headquarters and became less so towards the periphery of the country. We saw in the chapter upon public finance that the estates from which it was possible to supply the royal household with grain, honey, *tej*, etc., were known as *mad-bet*. These estates included also wide pastoral areas which carried the royal herds. There were numerous large estates scattered about the country which the Emperor had granted to members of his own family and so long as these remained closely bound to him they were, politically, as useful as his personal domain. 423 643

From his royal domains the Emperor took all the produce that could be delivered to him. With the conquest of the southern lands and the arrival of the railway he was able to grow and to sell coffee. Outside his domains, in spite of his frequent claims, the Emperor was only able to make effective claim to waste, lapsed, conquered, and confiscated lands. Sometimes individuals or groups, holding private heritable land, would ask the Emperor to take it over as royal land in order to protect themselves from the rapacity of some local lord or the claims of some other group. In Dembea the people did this because the Emperor was allotting so much of their land to the churches against their will and they felt that if it was royal land he would not be so generous with it.[1] An unsuccessful rebellion would give an excellent opportunity for him to regain some of his lost land by means of confiscation. What he resumed with one hand he was always giving away with the other into what was in fact, if not in theory, private ownership. He still retained over this, of course, his rights to taxation. This consisted, as we have seen, in the tithe, a tenth of the produce, which was generally confined to grain, and to a land-tax which varied in amount and character from time to time and from place to place. He also reserved the right to make special levies. [651]

Within the vast terminology referring to Ethiopian land tenure there are two terms which must be defined and kept before the reader. The one is *rest*, which means hereditary ownership, and the other is *gult* which describes land in which the Emperor had granted away some or all of his rights to tribute. (There is a conflict of authorities as to whether the Emperor had ever granted away his tithe as well as his tax upon *gult* land.) Clearly either of these kinds of tenure was very desirable; 423

[1] Rossini, pp. 104–5.

423 when combined they represented the most coveted of all tenures as well as the one most weakening to the imperial authority.

From the different kinds of grant made to the various classes, the governors, the churches, the soldiers and others, for various purposes, arose the many categories of land tenure.

THE GOVERNOR AND THE LAND

635 651 661 423 The position of the provincial governor was relatively simple. He collected the whole of the Emperor's tribute within the province (in so far as this had not already been granted away by a process which will be examined presently), and he used it for the support of his administration, which meant of himself, his deputies, judges, messengers, and above all, the soldiery. As we have seen in the chapter upon public finance, it is impossible to generalize upon the proportion of tribute which the governor sent on to his Emperor except that it varied with the distribution of power at any given time between the two of them, and in the north might range from the refusal by a distant and almost autonomous governor to send anything but perhaps a token payment to the large tributes in kind and in money which are described by observers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It is frequently stated in the European accounts of Ethiopia that the office of governor, like all other offices, was sold by the Emperor and by this method, injurious as it was, he would be sure of at least some return. He would also have an interest in frequent changes of office; the governor's interest would consequently be in extorting all he could from his province as rapidly as possible. 'They are generally more like robbers than governors', was the conclusion of one witness.[1] 'The governors purchase their Commissions, or to speak properly their privilege of pillaging the Provinces" concludes another.[2] 'You are governor of Ras el Feel', the Emperor's secretary announced to Bruce. 'I hope you will never see it. It is a hot, unwholesome country, full of Mahometans, but its gold is as good as any Christian gold whatever.'[3]

That these exactions continued into Haile Selassié's day was shown by the measures he took in his endeavours to reform the provincial administration. These exactions would certainly be less in the northern provinces where the governor was dealing with an ancient society, that of his own people, in which all relationships and tributes were sanctified by long established custom.

The governor would parcel out the tribute he controlled amongst his many lieutenants in the districts and amongst his own and the Emperor's

[1] Tellez. p. 53. [2] Lobo, *op. cit.*, p. 263. [3] Bruce. vol. 3, p. 365.

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soldiers. He would also have, like the Emperor, official estates set aside 635
for the upkeep of his large household and it would be these he would 651
be most anxious to retain if he lost his governorship. For these estates 661
he could call up the labour of soldiers and *gabars*.[1] Parkyns recorded 423
in the mid-nineteenth century that for his estates the governor could
exact one day's work for clearing, one for sowing, two for cleaning,
and two for harvesting, and this was still the custom in this century.[2]
Instead of cultivating his estates directly by using labour in this way, [427]
the governor might lease his land to tenants who would pay him a stated
proportion of the crop as rent. According to one authority in the north,
governors claimed that one tenth of all privately owned land should also
be cultivated for him and he would himself choose the lands. Where,
as in Tigré, the governorship tended to remain for a period in the same
family this was not so grave an injury to the province, but if a governor
from outside were sent in the people might not dare to demand back
the lands from the local family and were obliged to set aside new lands
for their new governor.[3] Besides the governor's estates there would be
others attached to the various offices of his assistants.

In addition to their more regular dues from the people it was customary for governors and their assistants to demand special gifts from time to time, such as a sheep from each village at Easter and at the festival of the true cross.

THE CHURCH AND THE ARMY

The Emperors were always extremely generous to the church, even if 794
they had not gone so far as to allocate that third of the original legend 423
which the famous cleric Takla Haimanot claimed in 1270. Every priest, 651
monk, *debtera*, and deacon, in so far as he was excused from the work
of the fields, required that land furnished with slaves or *gabars* should
be set aside for his support. A vast total of land was burdened with
this service. The piety of Emperors warred here with their political
interests—at one moment they were moved to give, at another to resume
their gifts. But it was not easy to assert the royal claim against monasteries which were undying corporations or against churches which needed permanent endowment and were, moreover, served by priests determined to pass on their lands with their offices to their sons. Moreover, the very character of the grants protected them. Their most

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–91.

[2] Parkyns, M., *Life in Abyssinia*, 1853, vol. 2, p. 230. Also Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

[3] Rossini, pp. 107–8.

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794 frequent form was that of *samonanya*, lands given to support the service
423 of the mass. The Emperors had granted much *gult* to the churches and
651 thus gave them the power to keep all the royal tribute from it and even to administer justice and to retain its proceeds. Even where this grant had not been made as *rest-gult* it was not easy to regain control of it and the convention was that, when such land was taken back by the Emperor, an equivalent estate should be granted.[1]

It should be remembered that land was not held collectively by the church but, as in England, by the individual 'parish' churches or monasteries or by the Abuna and the *Ichegé*, who between them held very large estates, and by other ecclesiastics.

701 Military service, regarded in this chapter from the aspect of land
423 tenure, was a universal obligation upon land unless the land was held by the church and specially exempted. The obligation was on the land rather than on the person, so that if a woman held a piece of land which had to supply soldiers it was her duty to raise and equip them. There were many different kinds of military tenure because each type of service was attached to special pieces of land and called by different names which need not be listed here. There was, for example, land which supplied the following services—the fusilier, the artilleryman, the muleteer, the porter transporting baggage, the bearer of the red tent or the Emperor's tent poles, the makers of gunpowder, the quartermaster, the forager, and many other military needs. It was even specially laid down for each piece of land whether its soldiers should fight in the centre or the left or right wings of the army.[2]

Estates would have to give the service of soldiers in varying numbers from the single man to a thousand or more. Those who owed these large numbers were, of course, very important people, and in Shoa at least it was probable that the man liable for a thousand would be a holder of *gult* over a considerable area.[3] Parcels of land might be allotted to 'regular' soldiers to support them while on service, or given as a reward for service, generally with a continuing obligation to provide a soldier of some special type.

It will be seen that there was no uniform system for the raising or support of the soldiers, especially as these were serving different masters. Thus in one province there might be part of the Emperor's army as well as the governor's provincial army, while both the latter and his district governors would have their personal bodyguards. Though in the north the serving soldiers were generally supported out of the tithes, they might be quartered directly upon the people or given lands of their

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, pp. 611–13. [2] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–90.
[3] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 612; also de Castro, pp. 281 ff.

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own. The soldier was generally freed from all taxes except the tithe and this might be excused where he provided his own horse and weapons. 701 [651]

Not only was there great variety in the arrangements but they were by no means static even in the conservative north. An example of this may be given from Gojjam. Here under Ras Hailu and his father, the *Negus* Tekla Haimanot, the soldiers were simply local men who, being exempted from tithes and other dues to the government, cultivated their own land and did three months' service a year at the governor's headquarters. After Ras Hailu's rebellion and his deposition in 1932 on grounds of misrule, Ras Imru, the Emperor's kinsman, was sent in his place. Although he was said to be a much more enlightened governor, the people murmured because he brought with him his 'foreign' Shoan army which oppressed the *gabars* who had to support it. This is an example of how, in the face of the complexities of the social situation, an ostensibly reforming measure might be frustrated.

PRIVATE TENURE

The main forces by which land and tribute were held by what may be called the public elements of the national life of Ethiopia, the Emperor, the church, the governor and his assistants, and the soldiers, have been very briefly indicated. The picture, even in this outline form, would not be complete without some reference to tenure by private persons, especially by those small farmers and peasant cultivators by whose work the rest were nourished. 423

The position of the *gabar* has been defined in relation to the rest of the community. When, in the northern provinces, we examine this class in their own right we find that it presented the most enduring strands in the texture of Ethiopian society and that its composition leads us back to the tribal past.

Over large parts of the northern provinces, especially those that were not too seriously disturbed or overlaid by Galla invasions, the land was held by groups of peasant holders, generally under the leadership of one or more families, and any inquiries about their origin would lead almost at once to romantic personal stories that may date, or appear to date, from some centuries before. These stories would explain how that group had come to be where it was and how its forefathers had first occupied the land. 423 621

These groups held by *rest*, that is, by hereditary right. They held as a group which had preserved some of the close ties of an original kinship group even though in the course of time it had absorbed many

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423 'foreigners', and even though, within the group ownership, there was
461 individual and family ownership of the land.

The allocation of and the succession to the land was governed by ancient custom. This custom varied greatly because, as d'Abbadie said, 'In Ethiopia one of the despairs of the traveller, who thinks he knows the country, is to discover, sometimes by chance, that such and such a community, comprising a family, a part of a village, or district is of a different origin from the population which surrounds it.' In internal land and family matters, it would keep its own private law.[1] In some communities there were meetings at fixed intervals of three to seven years according to the region and at which the reallocation between families of the different types of land, which was in several categories according to its fertility, was arranged. Apart from these adjustments by agreement, land went from father to son. Land transac-
[217] tions were announced by the public crier and registered, generally by entry in a Bible or other book, in the 'parish' church. The penal code
[687] of 1930 decreed up to three years' imprisonment for failure to register transactions in hereditary land,[2] but this decree may not have been fully effective in the provinces by 1935. Transactions were always carried out before witnesses. These sometimes included young children who might
[262] be given a feast of the delicacy of fried grain in order to fix the event in their memories.

Landmatters, indeed, were settled within such land-holding groups with little intervention from higher authority so long as all its members gave what was due to the government or to the representative of the government. Their relations with this representative would be through their family and the heads of their family group and it is obvious that a community with this degree of autonomy in the vital matters of land and tribute, in addition to the minor legislative and judicial powers already described,[3] might be regarded as largely self-governing in local matters. Such *restenya*, or hereditary land-holders, were further fortified in their position by the recognition of private property in the *Fetha Nagast*. In Menelik's later days, his council confirmed this position by a decree in which it was promised that except in cases of rebellion and treason even criminals should not be dispossessed from such tenure.[4] This provision was repeated in clause 9 of the penal code of 1930. It is probable that it was unbroken settlement by an Amhara tribal community which alone could offer effective resistance to royal and other
423 pressure.

The Emperor would, however, seize every opportunity of breaking

[1] d'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 90. [2] Clause 458. [3] See above, p. 142.
[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

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down the resistance of the undisturbed customary societies in favour of his own centralized control. Thus in Wallo, an ancient Galla region, the people had been organized into seven districts under the rule of seven of the original families. When Menelik first wrested its allegiance from John he had to conciliate these local leaders, but later, when he became stronger, he weakened them and had the land measured and more evenly distributed. In 1916 when the *Negus* Mikael was defeated after an attempt to rebel, Wallo was parcelled out under generals, and soldiers were put in by the central government. 423

MEASUREMENT AND INHERITANCE

Before concluding this general account some answer must be given to the questions as to whether there was any survey and registration and what were the rules of inheritance? 423

There was, of course, no survey as the term is understood in England. There was a measurement, a *gasha*, which was the equivalent of 80 to 100 acres, and in some parts of the country and notably, as we shall see, in parts of the conquered south the land had been measured. In Ethiopian terms, 'the cord had been thrown', sometimes once and sometimes a second time, with more accuracy, after the land had been cleared and farmed. Measurement of the land gave the Emperor and his officers greater control over it and its resources and the prime mover in this process had been Menelik. [804]

In the north, measurement has been by no means universal. In Gojjam, most stubborn and independent of provinces, and in Bagemdir there was no general measurement of land. In other northern provinces it appears that when estates were granted in recent times by the Emperor, especially those in *rest-gult* tenure, they were measured and registered. Small estates and the lands held by groups of *restenyas*, divided and at times redivided, were distinguished by natural landmarks and registered in men's minds or they might be entered into parish registers. The new land-tax of 1944 was based upon the unit of the *gasha*, but it is very doubtful whether measurement had been sufficiently carried through by this date to make it possible to execute the law upon this basis. [651]

With regard to inheritance, we have seen that this was only held to be permissible for *rest* land though in fact it was far more widely applied. It was not permissible to leave land away from the family or the group, or equally to give or sell it, without the permission of those chiefly interested. In leaving land the owner could allocate as much as two thirds to his favourite child—and in some parts this could be a daughter—while the rest was divided equally between the other children. 423 428

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THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

THREE LOCAL EXAMPLES OF TENURE

423 634 Three local examples will illustrate tenure. The first is from Gojjam under Ras Hailu.[1] The province was divided into fourteen districts. Most of these were in turn divided into two or three sub-districts. In each of the fourteen districts was a district governor (*abagaz*), who generally bore the title of *dejazmach*, and an assistant or deputy (*Mislané*). These men, appointed solely at the governor's will, were in general charge of the administration and jurisdiction of the district. Beside them functioned the *gulta gaji*, who was always a local man whose title was hereditary in certain families. He oversaw the collection of taxes, settled small cases between the *gabars*, and acted as liaison between the government and the people. He appointed as assistants a *chiqa-shum* for each village-group, an office which was held for a year and rotated among heads of families.

651 The list of the tributes paid to the various officials is very indefinite as to the amount and is of value only as indicating very generally the complexity of the system rather than the exact weight of the burden carried by the peasantry or the proportions taken by the different officers. Taxes and payments were divided as follows between the various authorities.

Government	Tithe in grain.
	Tax of $2 on each pair of oxen.
	afarsata fines.[2]
	Tax of $1 on each hut.
Abagaz (district governor)	Court Fees.
	Labour dues.
	Dues for use by men and cattle of warm mineral springs.
Mislané (deputy)	*Irbo* (a proportion of the government tax paid in kind).
	A proportion of the court fees paid to the *abagaz*.
	Labour dues.
Gulta gaji (hereditary chief)	A proportion of the grain crop of his district.
Chiqa-shum (village head)	His reward was exemption from taxation during year of office.[3]

[1] From information obtained locally by F. de Halpert. [2] See p. 149.

[3] It may be of some slight help in interpreting the money payments to note that the penal code of 1930 equates a quarter of a dollar with one day's work of an unskilled labourer. (Clause 6.)

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651 661 had been removed, leaving the heads of villages and districts in direct contact with the Italian resident.

114 Our third example comes from Eritrea. No excuse is needed for this excursion beyond the present borders of Ethiopia, since the Eritrean plateau was until fifty years ago a part, and one of the oldest parts, of the Ethiopian state, and this region may again revert to its former status. In addition, however, we have the great advantage that Dr. Nadel, an anthropologist of experience and authority, has had the opportunity in this region under the British military administration to make a thorough investigation of a land tenure closely resembling that of northern Ethiopia.[1]

621 614 On the Eritrean plateau the most characteristic unit was the *enda*, a number of families which claimed to have descended from a single ancestor. This group was not static; it might decline or be dispersed, or it might thrive and reach a size when it became necessary to break up and form new *endas*. It was not an administrative unit, but in certain matters it acted as a unity through meetings of its elders. The administrative unit, the village, generally covered several *endas*, though these may have all descended from a parent *enda*. The village unit might also cut across *endas*.

423 651 [631] Above the village administrations, in the days before the Italian conquest, came the hierarchy of the Emperor, his governors and deputy governors. These were often strangers from the south though local chiefs might be promoted to imperial positions. The imperial taxation had to be delivered to these officers, and the Emperor might arbitrarily cut out estates in *gult* for their support, or for that of monasteries or colonies of soldiers posted in these outlying regions to support the Emperor's power.

423 These rights may be regarded as extraneous to the underlying customary tenures which are divided by Dr. Nadel into three, ownership by the individual (which generally meant the individual family); by the kindred, or *enda*, and by the village. The first two types of ownership might, owing to the blurring of the edges between the three groups by growth or decline, shade off into each other.

In his discussion of family ownership Dr. Nadel gives us an authoritative definition of *resti*, which may cover ownership ranging from that of an individual to that of a large kinship group. This tenure was held by the people to be the most fundamental and sacred, and its characteristics were firstly its relative absoluteness; secondly its hereditary nature,

[1] Nadel, S. F., 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau', *Africa*, vol. 16, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 1–22, 99–109. The succeeding pages are closely based on this concise report.

and thirdly its derivation from the rights of some forefather who first took possession of the land. 423

Where the *resti* land was still held by a large kindred group, the individual family had a secondary or derived ownership of a piece of land adequate to meet its needs. When a son married and set up house he applied through his father to the council which allocated a plot to him within the kindred land. Thus the hereditary right was to land within that of the *enda*, not necessarily to a particular piece of land. Sons and, in certain conditions, daughters would inherit their father's rights. Before a man could give or sell his share of land he must offer it first to members of his *enda* and then to those of his village, and this restriction might apply to a subsequent sale of the land. It seems that in some parts the control of the *enda* council was even stricter and that the individual had no more than a very restricted usufruct, with frequent reallocation by lot. 423 428

The complexities of land tenure have only to be defined in these general terms to make it necessary to list numerous qualifications and apparent inconsistencies. These cannot all be given here. Mention must, however, be made of the system of village ownership, which, as a result largely of later immigration and of heavy pressure upon the land, had in some parts overlaid or ousted the *enda* ownership and the principle of *resti*. In these units (the development of which, though not begun by the Italian Government, was encouraged by it), the village council made an equal division of its lands, which were allocated by lot in three categories according to fertility, to all inhabitants of the village, whether *restenyas* or not. There was a redistribution at periods ranging from three to seven years. Village ownership appears to have been more just and flexible than that of the *enda*, though it is not clear how it dealt with improvements and permanent crops. 423

From the social aspect it is interesting to learn that everywhere, even where village ownership had deprived the *restenyas* of their special privileges with regard to land, their personal prestige remained. The *restenyas* were the people of superior status who, however small their holdings, could claim to belong to families which descended from the first family to hold the land. This gave them a peculiar status; it endowed them with a primacy in the local councils and even, in some parts, with certain small dues and privileges; it is from their ranks alone that the village chief, the *chiqa-shum*, was chosen. 423 554

In addition to these main forms of ownership the *restenyas* could create subsidiary forms by leasing or lending their land or, especially in the case of large and absentee landlords, by introducing a number of tenants to farm their land and pay with their services, the landlord 427

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427 paying the tribute for these *gabars*. (This method was also very common in Ethiopia proper.) There might also be forms of métayer contract. It need hardly be said that, after very long tenure, a tenant would try to claim that his land was *resti*, and that, with the growing shortage of land, numerous disputes resulted.

427 One of the main interests of Dr. Nadel's valuable analysis of Eritrean land tenure is that it shows the Ethiopian system as it was after half a century of Italian rule and as it is now under a British administration. The Italians swept away the upper parts of the structure except in so far as they allowed favoured chiefs to hold their old large estates, but at a lower level the system has been little changed. British administrators—who, of course, must act with the restraint of temporary caretakers—found their main problems arising from the intense, indeed passionate, competition for the inadequate amount of land which leads to numerous and long-drawn-out disputes. The Eritreans are proud of their land law, but to the European observer the lack of finality in their disputes and the great difficulty of obtaining any implementation of the decisions either of arbitrators or of native courts are great obstacles to the proper development of the land. But the difficulties with regard to tenure are, in all probability, much wider than legal questions and arise from the strain which the changing use of land is putting upon all customary African tenures.

423 Another most interesting conclusion drawn by Dr. Nadel is that the stubborn pride and conservatism of the *restenyas*, who cling to all their privileges with a fierce tenacity, represent a social evil. He speaks of the narrow exclusiveness of the system and its rigid political and economic privileges. 'It excludes large sections of the population permanently from a share in the administration of their own communities and keeps them in a state of dependence and economic insecurity. . . . To-day we are facing not merely the economic system of *resti* but a *resti* mentality.'[1] If this is true of that part of Ethiopia where both migrations and Italian policy have weakened this system, it is likely that in northern Ethiopia the problem is presented in even more rigid and difficult terms. But this, again, is only one illustration of the widespread African problem of harmonizing the existing tenurial rights of the original land-holders with the interests of the population as a whole.

[1] *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 108.

[pp. 293 ff not processed]

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[MANZ]

*175 643 nable. As the rainy season was approaching, Haile Malakot retreated to Shoa, where he fell sick and died. For the first time since Nagāssi, Shoa was left without an effective leader. Tēwodros marched into Manz from Wallo, and Shoa capitulated with little struggle. Eleven-year-old Menelik, son of Haile Malakot, was taken hostage.

Ten years later Menelik escaped from the camp of Tēwodros and regained Shoa. Slowly and carefully he built up his power. Tēwodros' reign raced to its tragic end. Takla Giyorgis II reigned briefly at Gondar, the last emperor to sit there. Yohānnes IV of Tigre governed the country for seventeen years. When Yohānnes died, Negus Menelik was forty-five and ready. Nagāssi's seed, eight generations later, reached the throne of all Ethiopia on November 3, 1889.

CULTURAL PROFILES

The Manzē Ethos

*175 185 The goals of Nagāssi and his descendants, apart from simple increase of power, were to recover the lands taken from their fathers and to stiffen the authority of Christianity in Shoa. Their success was virtually unbroken by [181] reason of exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance. These are ideals and qualities embodied par excellence in the people of Manz.

423 Sanctity of *rist,* or land inherited from one's parents, is a cardinal value in 181 the Manzē scheme of things. Such land must not be given or sold to anyone who is not a close relative. People generations removed from actual residents [428] of Manz still retain claims to family land there, still cherish the idea that if they so desired they could go back and live on it. As an urbanized Manzē once told his nephew in Addis Ababa: "No matter how far you travel abroad, no matter how long you stay away, you will always be able to think of your [539] family land in Manz as your true home." This sentiment is expressed in a proverb:

> *Ya-Manz rist be-shi amatu/la-bālabētu.*
> Manz *rist* to the thousandth year/belongs to the owner.

A squatter may fight to keep his land from falling to some stranger who claims it as having belonged to his grandfather, but in his heart he respects the values that support such a claim.

[577] By Manzē standards the good man is thus one who defends the land of his fathers, seeing that it is not sold to outsiders or that foreigners do not come to [685] take it. If someone plows another's land without permission, he must be punished. If the matter can be settled through litigation, well and good; if it requires recourse to violence, so be it. To let such an offense go unavenged [691] would be the worst sort of shame. Grievances concerning their "hereditary

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[MANZ]

estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rĭst*.

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination:

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangāṭ	"Frighten"	*Latybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Çhafçhefē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many purposes—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic
*565 and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[2]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom
[128] and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our
[114] account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry,
[12] using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[3]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

*565
592 The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara
[342] peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round
[343] structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land
[423] worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by
[427] hereditary right (*rĭst*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the
[556] household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

621 At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number
602 of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the
[592] father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

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*565 805 796 822 789 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [191] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 181 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 346 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

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zamad is highly subjective, and all constellations of *zamad* reflect the interests 565*
and affections of ego. For the quality of kinship can be attributed to persons 156
who are not consanguineal relatives, and this is done without resorting to 602
fictions of affiliation. The term *wandam*, for example, meaning "brother," 565*
is simply applied to any male person of about the same age to whom one feels 156
closely attached. The term *zamad* itself is applied to anyone to whom one 602
feels a close personal tie—even to a mere fellow-countryman whom one 572
happens to meet in a distant region. It is thus not taking too great a liberty to translate the term *zamad* as "close ones."

The primarily subjective nature of the circle of *zamad* derives not only 565*
from the fact that it includes friends as readily as actual blood relatives. With- 602
in the bounds of consanguinity, the composition of the kin group with which 572
a person identifies fluctuates according to his current needs, particularly with 423
respect to land use rights. As Allan Hoben has demonstrated, corporate 565*
descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use 602
are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; but 423
the fact that in this ambilineal descent system each individual may claim 611
multiple active affiliations, and enjoys a relatively wide range of choice, means that the particular corporate descent group with which an individual affiliates in order to claim his rights varies according to what land is subject to disputation. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mothers' rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors.[9]

The next most inclusive sociological concept beyond the ego-oriented circle 565*
of *zamad* is that of *agar*, or "homeland."* The co-residents of one's *agar*, like 571
those who comprise one's circle of *zamad*, are regarded as forming an im- 823
portant "in-group," outside of which all other persons are a priori rejected. Yet the Amharic concept of homeland, like that of kin, does not refer to a fixed social entity; its referent varies according to the context in which the individual chooses to use it. Thus, as we have seen, the concept of *agar* may be used to refer to one's parish, district, province, or even nation.

A more specialized dichotomy of some prominence in the outlook of the 565*
Amhara peasant hinges on variation in the altitude of homelands. Inhabit- 157
ants of lowlands (*qolaññā*) and dwellers of higher regions (*dēgaññā*) tend 823
to be conceived as polar cultural types. Different sets of habits and traits are attributed to them. Thus, according to one set of stereotypes, the *qolaññā* is viewed as a heavy drinker and hot tempered, while the *dēgaññā* is viewed as a heavy eater and inclined more to litigation than to violence. Again, the

* The less prominent category of *wagan* is intermediate between these two. *Wagan* has a pri- [602]
marily political connotation; it consists of one's consanguineal and affinal kin, friends and close [572]
retainers, all who may be mobilized in the event of political or military competition.

*565 461 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 461 181 577 183 [423] If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obligations toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 78 181 183 [262] [301] Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 577 181 183 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in

*565 577 673 181 183 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shameful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect toward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides [626] some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

*565 57 181 183 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 602 571 181 183 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

necessary, to die on the battlefield, as did Galāwdēwos, Yohānnes IV, and others. He had to maintain a minimum of political order, balancing off contending ambitions and subduing rebellious elements. Another important function was that of ultimate arbiter in judicial disputes.* As guardian of the church, moreover, he was active in endowing monasteries and churches and in resolving doctrinal disputes among the clergy.

To carry out these and related functions the emperor needed great wealth and political power. When the monarchy was intact he could command wealth from many sources: from the country-wide land tax (*gĭber*), in the form of honey, grain, or livestock, or such special fiscal assignments as saddles, plowshares, spears, ink, or tent pegs;[9] from assessed tithes on produce; in tribute from subject peoples, either in currency (gold, salt bars, etc.) or in kind; in revenues from traders; and from gifts from new appointees and hopeful office seekers. In theory, moreover, all the land of the empire belonged to its ruler; and, in fact, a good part of it was at his direct disposal, either for cultivation as royal estates or to distribute as compensation to those who served him.

The political power of the emperor was grounded in his command of troops supported by the royal bounty. In addition, he could command the troops of all the lords subject to his authority. Through frequent tours around the country he was able to reassert his hegemony from time to time in distant regions. But even from afar, a strong monarch could usually exert great control thanks to his authority to appoint or demote at a moment's notice any officer of the realm. As Alvares observed:

> No great lord of lands, if he is in them, can leave them, or set out for the Court on any account without being summoned by the [emperor]; and being summoned he will not fail to come for any reason. And when he sets out from the land of which he is the lord, he does not leave either wife or children or any property there, because he goes away in the expectation of never returning, since . . . [the emperor] gives when he pleases, and takes away when he pleases.[10]

The ideology of sacred monarchy served to legitimate theoretically boundless demands for wealth and power as well as to provide identity and morale for the body politic. It justified, too, occasional "deviant" behavior on the part of the monarch, virtually the only person with sufficient authority to innovate in this intensely conservative culture. The emperor has always been a primary agent of cultural innovation in Abyssinia, from the time of Ēzānā, who adopted Christianity in the fourth century; to Zar'a Yā'qob in the fifteenth

* To this day Haile Selassie devotes several hours a week to hearing court appeals in a session known as *chelot*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 *bajirond* — guardian of royal property, treasurer (two)
554 *liqa makuās* — king's double and keeper of the king's mule
644 *āggāfāri*• — protocol officer, superintendent of banquets

The status of these dignitaries may have been particularly vulnerable, depending so closely as it did on the whims of the monarch. Nonetheless their proximity to the center of imperial power gave them unique advantages. They were in a position to receive many gifts for favors and influence, as well as to come by some part of the royal revenues and to attend the royal banquets. They were consulted, together with military commanders, provincial governors, and high ecclesiastics, on important matters of state. Lands granted to them for their services enabled them to support small retinues of their own, including, in some cases, military contingents. They were normally an important factor in promoting stability and continuity during the troubled moments that usually followed the death of an emperor.[26]

565 554 The above classification of titles is meant only to provide a quick overview of their variety; no such formal compartmentation existed in the Abyssinian perspective. All the titles converged into a single hierarchy.[27] What is more, titles were not strictly connected to offices or functions, so military titles were frequently given to court or civil functionaries. This was particularly true of [644] the court of Menelik, where, for example, the Superintendent of Royal Tents bore the title *bālāmbārās* and the Chief Hand-washer that of *gerāzmātch*.[28] [635] For centuries before, moreover, provincial governors were often known by military rather than civil titles, and men holding civil titles were liable to be called to take part in military campaigns by the sovereign.

565 The sociological reality underlying this overlapping of titles among the nobility was the essentially unspecialized nature of their role. The ideal type of the *makuānnent* was at once governor, soldier, and courtier. In time of war he set forth at his own expense, with his own troops, to support the cause of the emperor, or perhaps simply to defend his own regional interests. In time of peace he might sojourn, if permitted, at the court of his king or overlord, eating and drinking with his peers, giving counsel to his liege when asked, engaged in intrigue and otherwise seeking to improve his station.

[427] When not active in warfare or the affairs of court, the nobleman would repair to his lands to supervise the agricultural production and the collection [643] of rents from his tenants. The emperors rewarded nobles who served them [423] with grants of land. The higher chieftains in turn rewarded their own fol- [427] lowers accordingly. These estates were usually held *in absentia*, the peasants

• *Āggāfāri* is an important title in the courts of provincial lords but is not mentioned in the court list of Iyāsu I, nor in that of the *Ser'āta Mangest*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 taxes collected in the name of the emperor. Concerning the imposts for which
631 the peasants were liable, Plowden wrote in 1844:
661

[651] They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts—he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.[30]

Two centuries earlier, observing similar phenomena, Almeida had concluded that "generally speaking, they are all plunderers rather than governors."[31] The only restraints on their exploitative behavior have been an occasionally keen sense of Christian propriety and the limits to what an exasperated local populace will bear.

565 The existence of a predatory class who serve military functions and maintain a gentry subculture is a common enough feature of traditional agrarian societies. What is perhaps less common in the Abyssinian case is the constellation of factors relating to the recruitment of members into this elite.

High secular status in Abyssinia was dependent on a complex of possessions—land, political strength, and honorific titles—which tended to reinforce
[423] one another. The possession of much land has always been a basis for con-
[556] siderable deference in Abyssinia. As a source of produce, rents, and revenues
[662] deflected from the Crown, moreover, it was also a source of wealth to be used
[661] in building up one's political strength by rewarding able soldiers and loyal
[631] followers, and by making gifts to one's superiors. Political power was directly obtained through the acquisition of governorships. Such offices were a further basis for much deference and, through the incumbent's access to tribute, customs fees, court fees, and gifts from his subjects, of much income as well.
[554] Titles, finally, not only were universally esteemed but also entitled the bearers to a style of life which included a presumptive right to gifts and obedience from all inferiors as well as the consumption of much wealth and power.

565 For all these possessions, the Abyssinian noble was directly dependent on
643 his king (or, in the case of a lesser noble, on his overlord). His dependence was twofold: land, political office, and titles came to him as gifts from the sovereign, and, what is more, their continued possession was contingent on
[423] the sovereign's continuing favor. Abyssinian "vassals" had no legal rights to their "benefices," and lands granted them could be withdrawn and given to others as the emperor wished. At the death of a feudal beneficiary his lands

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

reverted to the Crown unless specifically reconveyed to the heir by royal proclamation. Political office was no less precarious. Governors were made and unmade—by the traditional process known as *shum-shir* ("appoint-demote")—in short periods of time. The powerful position of governor of the maritime province (*bāhr nagāsh*) changed hands four times during the six years that Alvares spent in Ethiopia. Even when tradition assigned a certain post to the descendants of a certain lord, the emperors were able to exert control by shifting their favor from one descendant to another from year to year. Titles, unlike land and office, were granted for life, as we observed; but they were in no case hereditary, and thus every Abyssinian's hope for a title, let alone a raise in rank, depended on the grace of the king or of his major appointees.

Given these conditions, it was not possible for the nobility to become a closed, hereditary estate, or to develop a corporate identity capable of confronting the imperial will. On the contrary, thanks to the emperor's freedom to ennoble anyone whom he chose, there was a relatively high degree of social mobility, and the ranks of the upper strata were continuously being reshuffled.

Outstanding personal properties of various sorts often enabled Ethiopians of low birth to rise to high positions. The emperors and great lords conferred honors on those who served especially well in military expeditions, whatever their origins. Menelik's promotion of two Galla prisoners to rank as his highest generals is a famous case in point. The royal favor occasionally smiled on low-born Ethiopians who excelled in such qualities as physical beauty or witty repartee.[32] Unquestionable personal loyalty was another quality in high demand; freed slaves were sometimes given offices and dignities, since their lack of ties to political families made them particularly trustworthy.

Abyssinians have thus cherished the idea that they could rise to a higher station in life than that to which they were born. Comparatively few ever tried to do so, probably, but ambitious souls were never wanting. Seeking some benefice, or the glory of a title, or a position of power that would permit them to help their kinfolk or avenge themselves for a wrong suffered at the hands of some superior, they would attach themselves to the lord whose fortunes seemed brightest at the moment and hope, by valorous service and God's favor, to arrive someday at an estimable position.[33]

Nevertheless, though ability and fortune might carry any man high in the political hierarchy, he would not thereby automatically be accepted as one of the *makuānnent*. A self-respecting man of noble family would resist marrying his daughter to a commoner or person of dubious parentage, no matter how high a rank the latter obtained. For the Abyssinian nobility did form a self-conscious status group with a certain hereditary base. Its members shared a sense of superiority, a consciousness of kind, and an attitude toward commoners such as that expressed by the governor Takla Giyorgis to the Jesuit

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 Barradas: "Father, these villeins are like camels, they cry and groan when they are loaded, but in the end they carry the load that is put on them."[34] They set themselves off from the commoners, not only because of their style of life and subculture, but also because they came from well-known families.

Such sentiments were shared by the commoners. They would much rather be governed by a man from a noted family than by a person promoted from their own social level. The folkways expressed a disdain for the *nouvel arrivé,* for example, by poking fun at the office of *liqa makuās* (the king's double in time of battle). The *liqa makuās* was often a man from an unknown family, chosen because of his handsome features and resemblance to the king. The office permitted him to strut about in the king's clothes and inclined him to assume haughty airs. In some places it was customary to ridicule this upstart by referring to the minstrel, or *azmāri,* as *liqa makuās;* for the *azmāri,* too, was entitled to wear the kind of dress appropriate to the lord in whose banquet hall he performed, but the *azmāri* was a person of low prestige in Abyssinian society.

565 554 644

643 565 554 In other words: although the emperors could appoint and depose whenever they pleased, with or without cause; and though "the land and persons of their subjects are equally their property, and every inhabitant of their kingdom is born their slave"; by itself the principle of royal favor is clearly inadequate to explain the Abyssinian pattern of social stratification. For, unlike the [171] neighboring kingdom of Buganda, Abyssinia was not a straightforward despotism in which the dispensation of a *ḳabaḳa* was sufficient to elevate a man into the highest social stratum.[35] The claims of a quasi-hereditary noble status group have also had to be satisfied.

565 How did this status group arise, and how have its claims been expressed and justified? What has been the history of its relationship with the monarchy? The existence of this class is anchored in the actual tendency for lands, [423] [631] office, and titles to be given to members of the same families. In reality, the [554] emperors frequently let such possessions pass from father to son, either because they were in too distant a region or because there was no good cause for taking them away, and on occasion drew up written charters assigning grants of land to a man and his future descendants.[36] Indeed, one form of land [423] tenure, known as *rīsta-gult,* was precisely a sort of hereditary fief, given in exchange for military service over the generations. In certain areas, moreover, [631] it was a matter of tradition that the governorship be given to members of a [554] certain family. Finally, although no man inherited a title, as son of a noble- [428] man he might inherit the culture and facilities that would give him a much better chance than any commoner to obtain a title of his own.

Two other aspects of Abyssinian society supported this tendency toward [554] the development of what amounted to local dynasties of nobility. One was the prestige attached to the "chiefs of Israel," any of the nobility who could

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amda Ṭseyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum. 565 792 793 571 182

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[51] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas. 423 795 182 175

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest. 565 792 793 571 182

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict 792 793 643 578

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *maḳuānnent,* Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkār*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [764] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [601]

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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131 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has
779 been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries.
[241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively
[463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm-
[286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga
[443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of
[562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin-
[423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil-
[326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields
[286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha
[162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority
[361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

647 *[192] ments decisions that come down from the meketel warada or warada.[12] Incumbency tends to rotate among the senior 611 • 423 risteñas of the parish. Amhara trace genealogies ambilineally to the original recipients of primary land rights (rist) to local fields. Ambilineages are traced from these apical ancestory through those descendants (risteñas) who have made effective claims to the fields of the original estates. Over time, it is the genealogical links associated with land claims which tend to be [582] remembered, to the exclusion of other descent ties. Similarly, it is these links which are examined most carefully in deciding whether a proposed marriage would be properly exogamous (i.e., ideally excluding descendants of the sixth ascending generation).[13]

*793 From the perspective of the Amhara peasant, the ecclesiastical organization of Begemder consists of two levels, the bishopric (located in Gondar, the provincial

[12] A feresena, rural policeman, is also a resident farmer of the parish.

[13] Hoben (1963:116-117) considers these matters in detail, and notes that occasionally the boundaries of exogamous unions are contracted to include the descendants of the fifth and even fourth ascending generations.

632 [796] [346] motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' eponymic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "government" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means [691] [423] litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

[161] [592]	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total population	151	95
Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by [613] risteñas. These households are distributed among the [592] hamlets' ambilineages as follows: [162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

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592
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[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total *risteña*s households	31	21

[423] In each of the hamlets, there are two households be-
*[192] longing to Amhara tenant farmers (*timeneña*), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the *risteña*s
[779] whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two addition-
[433] al *timeneña* households, whose members are Muslims. These
[286] households are headed by brothers who supplement their
*[192] agricultural activities by weaving the *šama* (toga) for local Christians.

*793 Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are
361 believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the
423 use of such fields, known as *yikeys mariet* ("priest's
795 land"), is given to local priests in return for parti-
*[192]
[613] cipating in the Masses of the parish church. In practice, *rist*-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of *yikeys mariet* by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

361 members are unable to retain their claims to these
• 423 church lands (which are intimately linked to the ac-
613 quisition of leadership positions and prestige within
795 the parish) by providing priests from their own ranks. Consequently, substitutes from outside the parish must be obtained. Such is the case with ambilineage I today. According to current allocation of yikeys mariet in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, ambilineages I and V are each expected to provide three priests for the Mass. Ambilineage V currently provides its three from three ambilineage households of Lemmariet. Ambilineage I, however, currently provides only one risteña priest (a resident of Tikurmidir). Thus, members of ambilineage I using these fields have been obliged to invite two non-risteña priests to take up residence on a portion of these lands, in return for participation in the Mass.

361 Finally, these hamlets contain three female ser-
562 vants, unrelated to other residents of the parish. In
592 Tikurmidir, there is a single Amhara attached to a household of ambilineage I; in Lemmariet there is a "bariya" in a household of ambilineage I, and another in a household of ambilineage V.

*278 Herbalist Medicine in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet.
*757 The herbalist therapies of these two hamlets are descri-
*759 bed in Table 7. With the use of this information, the
613 following paragraphs will indicate that the professional

632
621 into sixty-five named wards (sebekas). The social and demographic character of wards varies considerably, and it is useful to describe them in terms of two contrasting types. At one extreme, the ward resembles a kind
[241] of urban parish. It contains an eponymous Church; and
[423] a majority of residents are risteñas, members of landowning ambilineages who support themselves by farming and renting homesteads on their lands. But even these wards contrast with rural parishes on several counts.
*[192] The ward is generally compact in size, and internally
[463] undivided beyond the homestead (bet). Within it live out-landers who work outside the ward in exclusively non-agricultural occupations. Further, while the parish is administered in detail by residents, the ward relies upon non-resident agents of the municipality for its administration.

At the other extreme, are the town's "non-corporate"
[648] wards. During the Italian occupation, several of
[175] Gondar's parish-like wards were sequestered by the invaders as building sites. After liberation, the Imperial government divided each of these wards into tracts, which were deliniated according to the buildings upon them. Tracts were then given as grants (yaribeña mariet, "hero's land") to supporters of the government-in-exile, who were often non-residents of Gondar. In time, the pre-war boundaries of such wards were no longer regarded

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621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by risteñas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [178] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Šankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibañas, eight as wood cutters,

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holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town.

[613] In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-
[423] agricultural employment for their subsistence needs,
[241] there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

*278 Kinship ties are an important means by which the
*759 peasant acquires and communicates information necessary
203 for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every
602 herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own
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613 "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an
*278 agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like
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* 793 Literacy, per se, is not the goal of enrollment, but is
869 percieved rather as a pre-requisite for studying the
* [192] Gospels (wangel), the psalter (dawiyt), and a variety of prayers, pursuant to participating in the Mass (kidasiy) as an ecclesiastic of the parish.

621 Within a parish, only a minority of households send
869 boys to the church school; these are generally ristemma
* 793 households, each sending a single priest-candidate in
233 any one generation. Because attendance at the school
[602] precludes shepherding, the common lot of young boys, the student's family must find a substitute shepherd for him; a younger sibling is usually available for this task, but, if not, a collateral or even non-kinsman may be obtained. Indeed, the age at which a boy begins his studies (generally, between seven and thirteen years) is often determined by when this substitute can be found. The parish school is suspended, however, during periods of intensive agricultural activities, of harvesting, threshing, and winnowing.

* 793 Although considerations of piety influence a man to
• 423 seek ordination for his son, self-interest generally do-
593 minates. The achievement of priesthood validates a
621 family's claims to church lands (yimoskol mariet). If
554 the neophyte's father is himself a priest, his son's or-
* [192] dination means freedom from bothersome performances in the Mass. If the father is not a priest, but anyway

*793
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holds priest land because he is a risteña of a founding ambilineage of the parish, his son's ordination means that the lands or payments until now turned over to a stranger priest (in lieu of a risteña priest) can be kept within the family.

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[586]

The durability of the ties which bind a priest to his natal parish are reinforced by his marriage. Most peasants are married in a "secular union" (yaluwkurban migabat), which excludes neither divorce not extra-marital sexual adventures.[21] The priest, on the other hand, must be married, and it can be only as a "communion marriage" (bikurban migabat), an indissoluble sacrament of the Church which commits the spouses to sexual fidel-

[572]

ity and forbids even remarriage. Thus, the priest is cut off from carousing in the talla houses of the town. He must instead confine his comraderie to the courtyard of the parish church, separated from the persons and experiences which might otherwise lead him away from his parish fields.

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Thus enrollment in the parish school is conceived

[21] Two other forms of marriage, associated with a man on travels or living in town, are yidomoz migabat (which lasts for a contractual period) and yilijinat (providing only exclusive sexual rights to the woman).

681 According to this change, mutilation of thieves was
178 forbidden; the chaining of debtor to creditor was abro-
671 gated; flogging was reduced in frequency and quantity; the area that could fall under collective arrest, "afärsata", was limited; the legal validity of evidence from the "lebäshay" was indirectly abrogated. In 1933, the emperor further limited days, hours, and distances of the "afärsata". Capital punishment had been centralized in 1930.

It is noteworthy that in several cases old practices were for the first time acknowledged in writing, despite the continuing hesitancy to admit publicly any practice that European observers might regard as primitive. Thus, blood-money in place of blood-feud was decreed legal in 1930

426 Liberalization was also legalized by regarding
671 civil law. In 1923 the Law of Loans fixed maximum in-
178 terest at 9%. As usual , this was found to be too far a departure from practice for enforcement, and it was later raised to 12%. One of the last decrees prior to Italian hostilities, provided, in May 1935, for the abrogation of statute-labor, permitting the tenant (gabbar) to make a small payment (resembling a quitrent) instead.

694 (b) The pattern of judges riding circuit con-
661 tinued unabated, from the end of the harvest in the
178 month of Tahsas (about November) until Easter. Sometimes judicial councils, "<u>zubaē</u>" were available in towns for appeals. But the old custom of bringing a gift to the "great man" to interest him in the indivi-

575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men "brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship relation which is taken very literally by the more pious. Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahabbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry the widow of a mahabbar "brother", for this would be "levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church as a prechristian custom.

575 According to traditional law, the mähabbär in-
[428] herits any property left by a deceased member who leaves no blood kin (consanguinal) , in preferance to any rela-
[426 476] tives he might have by marriage (affinal). The mahabbar acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker, making loans to members in financial need by raising internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "tazkar" memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his
[608] family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and personal problems of all kinds are discussed among "brothers" and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements between extended families having eligible youngsters are often first informally broached by women "sisters", who then agree to ask their husbands to act as intermediaries.

575 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys
561 above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind of junior mähabbär by older boys; girls above 10 years of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

home—except for the difficulty of having to do without servants. Those students whose rural background and limited intellectual experience had led them to consider Addis Ababa as one of the most advanced cities in the world were often shocked by the comparison. No less shocking was the moral climate, which permitted one to express oneself freely and honestly. The taste for intellectual freedom was added to that of political freedom, as students whose horizons were limited by the meager intellectual fare at home came into hungry contact with authors like Marx and Freud, Dewey and Russell. 571 829 177

However much the Ethiopian students abroad might seek to lose themselves in the host culture, they were not permitted to do so. In the mirror of foreigners' regards, their identity as Ethiopians took clearer shape, transcending narrower tribal identifications. Questions about Ethiopia by foreigners aroused greater interest in Ethiopia's history and contemporary problems. A number of students were thus moved to dip into the literature on their country produced by travelers and scholars in the past, and some of them came to write theses and dissertations on problems related to Ethiopia's development. 571 177 186

All of these factors—broadening of perspective, acquaintance with a higher economic standard, less inhibited discussions, and greater self-consciousness as Ethiopians—contributed to a spirit of nationalist dedication. This spirit was confirmed or aroused in all but two groups of the returnees. One, consisting of children of some wealthy members of the new nobility, went abroad chiefly for the prestige and pleasure involved. For them the experience was an extended holiday; they were playboys more than students. The other group consists of those who were abroad for too short a time to have a complete educational experience—in some cases, for as little as three months. These students have tended to use the tour abroad chiefly as a weapon with which to lord it over their peers on return and otherwise to serve narrow personal ambitions. Those students, however, for whom study abroad entailed a more or less serious encounter with higher education and a more modernized culture normally experienced a swelling aspiration to serve their country. They returned home deeply critical of the status quo and determined to contribute substantially to the modernization of their society. 571 177 186 829

Ostensibly, the returnees have been well situated for making such a contribution. Thanks to prudent government policy since the early fifties, they have been enabled to enjoy a minimally comfortable standard of living. Given a monthly allowance from the moment they step off the plane, they have been automatically salaried at a scale based largely on the academic degree attained, with A.B.'s starting at Eth$450 a month and Ph.D.'s at Eth$700. In addition, provisions have been made for them to borrow money from the government in order to finance heavy investments like furniture or, more usually, an automobile. 571 511 [465] [426]

*793 studies are likewise persuasive regarding the collection
754 of kifat works: The debtera is threatened by serious dangers, and he lacks an effective, less controversial alternative. Thus, his early acquisitions of kifat works are intended to be an implicit threat against those student rivals (towdadariy), who would assault and ruin him by magical and mundane means. A man generally begins his repertoire of kifat works before leaving the kiyne school. Once begun, there are strong inducements to expand it, since a repertoire of kifat works can be effective, particularly against students knowledgeable in abinet, only if it includes works sufficiently varied to threaten the intended victim's prophylactic defenses. Subsequently, an extensive repertoire of kifat works remains a valuable asset for a debtera who is developing a commercially remunerative abinet practice. The threat of sanctions by kifat works is his ultimate guarantee for the honesty of other debteras during abinet exchanges. Similarly, the threat of kifat works guarantees payment
[426] by laymen for the debtera's services. Often, these services extend beyond the performance of abinet and include the lending of money at interest.[35] Finally, kifat works

[35] Capitalizing on his cash reserves, awakiy debteras sometimes lend money, customarily at an interest rate of 30% for three months.

24/considerable justification, that even if he raised larger and more diversified crops, they would not find a ready sale (due to undeveloped lines of transport to world markets). Thus the old pattern of not raising more crops than one's family can consume in one year, and for taxes and tribute, continues, especially among the Amhara; consequently fields do not become exhausted as quickly as they would in intensive agriculture.

[427] Another factor was (and is to some extent) the insecurity of tenure. The sharecropping "gabbar" was little more than a serf, who did not know from year to year what treatment he would receive from the next (often absentee) feudal landlord to whom his land might be assigned the next year. This was not conducive to the growth of much sentimental attachment to any particular plot of soil.

[311] Among the Amhara, only about 20% of the potentially fertile area available in a neighborhood ("and debber agär") is usually under cultivation in any one year. On exposed parts of the plateau the crops are usually barley, broad beans, some bearded wheat, and linseed. In more sheltered spots, lentils, chick peas, and a legume called "gwayo" used as cattle fodder (but feared by Amhara because walking in it or lying in it is supposed to cause softening of the human bones). Barley is planted almost the whole year round, starting early with the "light rains", and irrigated in the dry season. In valleys of the plateau, where fields are warmer and more protected, as well as better watered, the major crop of tïeff, a grass-like

243 crops, and the only one grown all year, thus the most often irrigated. It grows well even on semi-eroded soil, unlike wheat. It is consumed in emergencies, and more usually used in making beer, despite its comparatively poor malting qualities. It is provided as fodder for the mule, the most [231] important animal for human transportation, to give it "strength". Barley becomes more important for human consumption when the rainy season has been shorter than usual. In that case, the grain is soaked in water and then crushed with wooden mortar and pestle to remove the husks without reducing the grain to flour. After drying in the sun, the broken grain called 'gebs qolo" is roasted and eaten Some is always in the hut, in case guests should come. The same crushing procedure is followed for preparing malt for barley beer. Late, irrigated barley called "aja", is considered tough but "giving strength", though dishonorable for a guest, and also causing complaint from women that it is "hard to pound" and "good only for mules".

Oats and rice as special crops are almost unknown to the Amhara. Oats ("gēnçha", "arāmamo", "qwa"), considered wild, are gathered with barley and used in beer.

In view of the importance of cereal crops, it is not surprising that the farmer refers to them collectively as "teru", which means "good", while garden crops ("debāla") which enjoy a lesser appreciation, are not included in this concept.

[427 804] Rent, tribute and taxes were paid per "madiga", the clay water pot used to measure it. Although this procedure is no longer followed, rent is still quoted in terms of "madiga".

423 If these interludes of peace lengthened greatly,
566 the feudal knight ("färäsenya") would often conclude a
701 contract with his "gulteñnas", which gave both parties some security in what they could expect of each other in services and privileges. This contract usually took the form of "siso" (lit. one-third). The "gulteñña" thus [427] became a sharecropper, paying 1/3 of his produce to the feudal lord after each harvest, working statute-labor for him one day in three, making his team of oxen available on a basis of one day in three, Sometimes the "gulteñña" thus became a sharecropper and little better off than the "gabbar", especially if no war service interrupted the arrangement for many years. Though he could pass on much of the labor to his own gabbars, he himself sometimes became so debt-ridden to the feudal landlord above him that his status resembled that of a Mexican peon. "Siso" contracts were rare in Shoa, where the "gulteñña" was frequently called to war, and his status as honorable and free soldier-veteran thus never faded away.

The fortunes of war ruled the life of the "gulteñña" much more than the owner of "rest" property. For if the Ras (feudal top nobility) of his province, under whom the gulteñña was fighting, lost in a war or in a rebellion, the gulteñña found himself under a newly-appointed Ras who might ignore customary relaxation of burdens, who might even confiscate the "gult" lands and make the homesteaders "gabbar" serfs, leaving them only the alternative of escaping into the bush. Outside of Shoa, (where fertile land is more expensive and more closely guarded), the

423 The richest farmer in the rural vicinity of Gondar,
427 a member of the Qemant (Cushitic-speaking) ethnic group, owns 8 gasha (about 400 acres), which is considered fabulous wealth by his Amhara neighbors. However, with the aid of his sons and servants, he cultivates only one gasha at any given time. He parcels out the remaining 7 gasha, except for some fallow land, to landless tenant farmers, many of them ex-slaves, usually in plots no bigger than 10 qada (about 4 acres), which is considered the limit one man can plow and seed without help. The rent they pay him consists of one "madiga " of tyeff grain (about 25 kilo); payable by each. Each also pays him 1/2 madiga of barley, referred to as "qolo", tribute to his "household". His agents also collect the 10% tithe, in produce, which he is expected to pass on to the government, and the new Eth$4.- education tax. He invest part of his profits in cows for his increasing herds.

423 For purposes of taxation, of peasants, the government treasury must rely on the judgment of the headman,
651 ("ḉheqa shum"), who is difficult to check because the land is unmeasured and a "gasha" is a flexible concept. Therefore, his supervisor, usually the mislane, can only base a check on past, customary payments.

[602] Taxcollectors are known to be generous when deal-
423 ing with even distant kinfolk, or with priests and
651 their relatives, and to even out the receipts by pres-
653 sure on low-class ethnic minorities, justifying this by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income from their handicrafts.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

651 dition; with fertility of soil, size of plot, size of harvest in a given year, constituting merely secondary
651 427 considerations. For the tribute is regarded as payment also for the right to squat on the land, to gather dead-wood and cowdung for fuel, wood and nature-grown fibers for utensils, pasture cattle and donkeys, build a hut, use the water in the brook. Consequently, a greedy landlord parcels out his land in smallest possible plots, to receive as much profit as possible, and he is aided and abetted in this by the poor tenants who are so jealous of each other that they complain if their neighboring tenant has been granted more land than he can farm without servants. The tribute for such a minimum plot to the landlord thus takes the form of a "quitrent" (now that the statute-labor has been abrogated officially, though not always actually):

1 madiga of grain (usually tyeff), referred to as "amsho"

plus 1/2 madiga of "qolo" (usually barley, for roasted condiments or beer-making).

651 439 Only in export duties and import tariffs does the central government have full control. Export taxes, ranging usually from 28 - 50% on coffee, the major valuable export, are levied and collected by the Ministry of Finance. This product comes from the southwest, Jimma sub-province, or Harar, in the southeast, both areas conquered by Menelik II from the Galla, and therefore under more unchallenged central administration.

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE

soldiers. He would also have, like the Emperor, official estates set aside for the upkeep of his large household and it would be these he would be most anxious to retain if he lost his governorship. For these estates he could call up the labour of soldiers and *gabars*.[1] Parkyns recorded in the mid-nineteenth century that for his estates the governor could exact one day's work for clearing, one for sowing, two for cleaning, and two for harvesting, and this was still the custom in this century.[2] Instead of cultivating his estates directly by using labour in this way, the governor might lease his land to tenants who would pay him a stated proportion of the crop as rent. According to one authority in the north, governors claimed that one tenth of all privately owned land should also be cultivated for him and he would himself choose the lands. Where, as in Tigré, the governorship tended to remain for a period in the same family this was not so grave an injury to the province, but if a governor from outside were sent in the people might not dare to demand back the lands from the local family and were obliged to set aside new lands for their new governor.[3] Besides the governor's estates there would be others attached to the various offices of his assistants.

In addition to their more regular dues from the people it was customary for governors and their assistants to demand special gifts from time to time, such as a sheep from each village at Easter and at the festival of the true cross.

THE CHURCH AND THE ARMY

The Emperors were always extremely generous to the church, even if they had not gone so far as to allocate that third of the original legend which the famous cleric Takla Haimanot claimed in 1270. Every priest, monk, *debtera*, and deacon, in so far as he was excused from the work of the fields, required that land furnished with slaves or *gabars* should be set aside for his support. A vast total of land was burdened with this service. The piety of Emperors warred here with their political interests—at one moment they were moved to give, at another to resume their gifts. But it was not easy to assert the royal claim against monasteries which were undying corporations or against churches which needed permanent endowment and were, moreover, served by priests determined to pass on their lands with their offices to their sons. Moreover, the very character of the grants protected them. Their most

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–91.
[2] Parkyns, M., *Life in Abyssinia*, 1853, vol. 2, p. 230. Also Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
[3] Rossini, pp. 107–8.

and thirdly its derivation from the rights of some forefather who first took possession of the land. 423

Where the *resti* land was still held by a large kindred group, the individual family had a secondary or derived ownership of a piece of land adequate to meet its needs. When a son married and set up house he applied through his father to the council which allocated a plot to him within the kindred land. Thus the hereditary right was to land within that of the *enda*, not necessarily to a particular piece of land. Sons and, in certain conditions, daughters would inherit their father's rights. Before a man could give or sell his share of land he must offer it first to members of his *enda* and then to those of his village, and this restriction might apply to a subsequent sale of the land. It seems that in some parts the control of the *enda* council was even stricter and that the individual had no more than a very restricted usufruct, with frequent reallocation by lot. 423 428

The complexities of land tenure have only to be defined in these general terms to make it necessary to list numerous qualifications and apparent inconsistencies. These cannot all be given here. Mention must, however, be made of the system of village ownership, which, as a result largely of later immigration and of heavy pressure upon the land, had in some parts overlaid or ousted the *enda* ownership and the principle of *resti*. In these units (the development of which, though not begun by the Italian Government, was encouraged by it), the village council made an equal division of its lands, which were allocated by lot in three categories according to fertility, to all inhabitants of the village, whether *restenyas* or not. There was a redistribution at periods ranging from three to seven years. Village ownership appears to have been more just and flexible than that of the *enda*, though it is not clear how it dealt with improvements and permanent crops. 423

From the social aspect it is interesting to learn that everywhere, even where village ownership had deprived the *restenyas* of their special privileges with regard to land, their personal prestige remained. The *restenyas* were the people of superior status who, however small their holdings, could claim to belong to families which descended from the first family to hold the land. This gave them a peculiar status; it endowed them with a primacy in the local councils and even, in some parts, with certain small dues and privileges; it is from their ranks alone that the village chief, the *chiqa-shum*, was chosen. 423 554

In addition to these main forms of ownership the *restenyas* could create subsidiary forms by leasing or lending their land or, especially in the case of large and absentee landlords, by introducing a number of tenants to farm their land and pay with their services, the landlord 427

7: Perham S-4 (no date) 1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

427 paying the tribute for these *gabars*. (This method was also very common in Ethiopia proper.) There might also be forms of métayer contract. It need hardly be said that, after very long tenure, a tenant would try to claim that his land was *resti*, and that, with the growing shortage of land, numerous disputes resulted.

427 177 One of the main interests of Dr. Nadel's valuable analysis of Eritrean land tenure is that it shows the Ethiopian system as it was after half a century of Italian rule and as it is now under a British administration. The Italians swept away the upper parts of the structure except in so far as they allowed favoured chiefs to hold their old large estates, but at a lower level the system has been little changed. British administrators—who, of course, must act with the restraint of temporary caretakers—found their main problems arising from the intense, indeed passionate, competition for the inadequate amount of land which leads to numerous and long-drawn-out disputes. The Eritreans are proud of their land law, but to the European observer the lack of finality in their disputes and the great difficulty of obtaining any implementation of the decisions either of arbitrators or of native courts are great obstacles to the proper development of the land. But the difficulties with regard to tenure are, in all probability, much wider than legal questions and arise from the strain which the changing use of land is putting upon all customary African tenures.

423 Another most interesting conclusion drawn by Dr. Nadel is that the stubborn pride and conservatism of the *restenyas*, who cling to all their privileges with a fierce tenacity, represent a social evil. He speaks of the narrow exclusiveness of the system and its rigid political and economic privileges. 'It excludes large sections of the population permanently from a share in the administration of their own communities and keeps them in a state of dependence and economic insecurity. . . . To-day we are facing not merely the economic system of *resti* but a *resti* mentality.'[1] If this is true of that part of Ethiopia where both migrations and Italian policy have weakened this system, it is likely that in northern Ethiopia the problem is presented in even more rigid and difficult terms. But this, again, is only one illustration of the widespread African problem of harmonizing the existing tenurial rights of the original land-holders with the interests of the population as a whole.

[1] *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 108.

[pp. 293 ff. not processed]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic
*565 and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[2]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom
[128] and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our
[114] account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry,
[12] using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[3]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

*565
592 The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara
[342] peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round
[343] structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land
[423] worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by
[427] hereditary right (*rĭst*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the
[556] household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

621 At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number
602 of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the
[592] father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565	*bajirond*	guardian of royal property, treasurer (two)
554	*liqa maḳuās*	king's double and keeper of the king's mule
644	*āggāfāri*•	protocol officer, superintendent of banquets

The status of these dignitaries may have been particularly vulnerable, depending so closely as it did on the whims of the monarch. Nonetheless their proximity to the center of imperial power gave them unique advantages. They were in a position to receive many gifts for favors and influence, as well as to come by some part of the royal revenues and to attend the royal banquets. They were consulted, together with military commanders, provincial governors, and high ecclesiastics, on important matters of state. Lands granted to them for their services enabled them to support small retinues of their own, including, in some cases, military contingents. They were normally an important factor in promoting stability and continuity during the troubled moments that usually followed the death of an emperor.[26]

565 554 The above classification of titles is meant only to provide a quick overview of their variety; no such formal compartmentation existed in the Abyssinian perspective. All the titles converged into a single hierarchy.[27] What is more, titles were not strictly connected to offices or functions, so military titles were frequently given to court or civil functionaries. This was particularly true of [644] the court of Menelik, where, for example, the Superintendent of Royal Tents bore the title *bālāmbārās* and the Chief Hand-washer that of *gerāzmātch*.[28] [635] For centuries before, moreover, provincial governors were often known by military rather than civil titles, and men holding civil titles were liable to be called to take part in military campaigns by the sovereign.

565 The sociological reality underlying this overlapping of titles among the nobility was the essentially unspecialized nature of their role. The ideal type of the *maḳuānnent* was at once governor, soldier, and courtier. In time of war he set forth at his own expense, with his own troops, to support the cause of the emperor, or perhaps simply to defend his own regional interests. In time of peace he might sojourn, if permitted, at the court of his king or overlord, eating and drinking with his peers, giving counsel to his liege when asked, engaged in intrigue and otherwise seeking to improve his station.

• [427] When not active in warfare or the affairs of court, the nobleman would repair to his lands to supervise the agricultural production and the collection [643] of rents from his tenants. The emperors rewarded nobles who served them [423] with grants of land. The higher chieftains in turn rewarded their own fol- [427] lowers accordingly. These estates were usually held *in absentia,* the peasants

• *Āggāfāri* is an important title in the courts of provincial lords but is not mentioned in the court list of Iyāsu I, nor in that of the *Ser'āta Mangest.*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.*

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services.

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagārit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area.

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[29]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement.

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagārit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gabbār*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dēgā* (high) land, while in certain *qolā* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

423 of land settlement resembles the Middle Eastern (Arab) "mus-
614 ha's" land tenure.

No individual or nuclear family can sell, or otherwise alienate, "rest" land belonging to the kin group. He may ask them for permission to do so, but in Amhara provinces this is usually refused. On the other hand, if he moves to a different province (which has happened particularly since Menelik's borderland conquests), his kinfolk will hold his claim in trust so that a returning grandson can claim his rights in full. He can even do this, in some cases of particularly strong and proud families, if the inheritance is on his mother's side.

It is interesting that the Biblical principle of the kinsman-redeemer of the land is still in force among the Amhara, in the same spirit. Cases of this kind have arisen increasingly in the past decade, because of the emperor's efforts to settle landless squatters, who have worked fallow land and have paid tithe for several years. If such formerly fallow land belonged to "rest" kin groups, they try to evict the squatters through legal(or sometimes illegal) means, thus "redeeming the land" for the kin group.

423 For purposes of inheritance, landholding kin usual-
428 ly include all descendants to the "fourth house", i.e. the
614 great-grandsons. After that, disputes usually arise. If no kin survives-- a very rare occurrence--the partners of the "mahabber" sodality to which the deceased belonged, have a final claim, before the land reverts to the regional authority. Affinal relations, except for the mate who shares equally with children of the deceased, are not considred kin for purposes of inheritance of land. If there are no children,
[586] the wife has user claims up to half the estate, which would have been her portion in case of divorce.

423 have been her portion in case of divorce. If the deceased
428 left an infant, the widow is expected to remain with the kin
614 group of the deceased until the child is reared to adulthood. Then she may leave, taking movable belongings that are her share, but, of course, foregoing any claims on real estate. The same procedure is followed in case of her marriage again.

[848] Illegitimate sons, including children of ex-slave concubines, also have the right to inheri their share of "rest", unless the presumed father has publicly rejected them as offspring. Girls who leave the kin group upon marriage, have claims only on movable property, not land. However, if the bridegroom settles on land belonging to the bride's kin, as happens in a minority of cases, the elders will allocate him land, and the male offspring will share in the inheritace.

[852] Allocations of land by the elders to the various biological families used to be made into great events and festivities particularly for the children. This was the only time children were singled out for attention, in this adult-cantered culture. Thus the purpose of firmly impressing the event on their minds, to be always remembered and defended in the future, was achieved. In the absence of written legal titles, this procedure was necessary, and is still followed in some rural districts.

C. Semi-private Real Estate--"gult".

423
566 For many centuries past, land, with the peasants occupying it, has been assigned to feudal officers and soldiers, similar to fiefs of medieval Europe. These "gult" lands also resemble in principle the "miri" state lands of

586 having "torn the marriage agreement". Furthermore, the
684 woman can bring religious pressure to bear on the "manfas agway" if he hesitates in granting the divorce, by publicly ripping off her blue neckcord, the "mätäb", symbol of Christianity, thus threatening to run off to the Muslims because her mistreatment has become completely unendurable. Since the "Fetha Nägäst" also covers Guardianship, the "mänfäs agway" decides to whom children of a broken marriage are to be assigned: usually children under 7 years of age go to the mother, but an older child may be asked to indicate a choice. Boys over 10 usually are given to the father.

671 The new law codes of Emperor Haile Selassie I are patterned after European, modern codes and are in the process of more comprehensive codification at present. What has been done so far will be described later.

675 B. Contracts, Oath, and the Legal Person, in Abyssinian Traditional Law.

A contract, called "kedan" (the same word is used for "Testament" in Biblical reference), does not have to be written, and usually is not. But it must be witnessed, preferably by more than one reliable person, preferably male. The contracting parties formally announce their agreement, then touch their palms lightly, (ej mätta). If the contract is a last will and testa- 428 ment, the Confessor ("mänfäs agway") holds the thumb of the testator while the will is formally spoken aloud.

575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men "brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship relation which is taken very literally by the more pious. Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahabbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry the widow of a mahabbar "brother", for this would be "levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church as a prechristian custom.

575 According to traditional law, the mähabär in-
[428] herits any property left by a deceased member who leaves no blood kin (consanguinal) , in preferance to any rela-
[426 476] tives he might have by marriage (affinal). The mahabbar acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker, making loans to members in financial need by raising internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "tazkar" memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his
[608] family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and personal problems of all kinds are discussed among "brothers" and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship-
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements between extended families having eligible youngsters are often first informally broached by women "sisters", who then agree to ask their husbands to act as intermediaries.

575 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys
561 above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind of junior mähabär by older boys; girls above 10 years of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

7. Family and Kinship in Social Organization.

602 The emphasis on the extended family and kin relations among the Amhara can hardly be exagerated. In all problems of life the Amhara first turns to family and kin. While the partilineal-patrilocal extended family is considered of first importance, consanguinal kinfolk on themother's side rank only slightly less in obligation and duties owed by the individual, and in benefits for which he can appeal. In contrast, affinal relationships are regarded as considerably less important in obligations and benefits,. This attitude is reinforced by the traditional law which emphasized inheritance in consanguineal relationships, even distant ones, over closer affinal relatives; and by the relatively easy divorce from the common "semanya" marriage.

[428] [584]

602 539 Proverbs emphasizing various aspects of kin relations abound and are constantly cited as advice in problems, and in "socializing" and "enculturating" the young:

"The liar to win over,
to his brother and sister appeal",

(i.e., do not appeal to the judge, whom the liar may fool; but to his siblings, whom he cannot fool).

"Quarrels within the kinfolk,
(are like) insects on cabbage",

(i.e. they do not strike at the root, are not really destructive).

"Relatives and medicine,
in days of trouble seek them."

596 (private freehold), most common in the old-Amhara pro-
[428] vinces (and in Tigre). "Rest" land is inherited only
by sons, not by daughters, except in the relatively
rare case when a family short of young men permits a
son-in-law to settle in its hamlet, whereupon some land
may be inherited by the daughter who is consanguinal kin.
Daughters may inherit movables such as cows, sheep, some
personal belongings of their mother or father (of the
father if there are no sons).

601 Kinship terms do not often differ between terms
of address and reference, but often between formal and
informal terms which are applied in a variety of ways
ranging from authoritarian familiarity to endearments.
Differences of gender are also expressed.

The generic term for kinfolk is "zämäd". Con-
sanguinal kinfolk, on both the father's and mother's
side, are called "wägän", and if they reside far away
and are rarely seen the kinship is re-emphasized by the
term "yäsega zämäd" (lit. kinship of one flesh). Con-
sanguinal families sharing the same residential hamlet
[178] are called "betä zämäd" (lit. kinfolk of the house). It
[572] is noteworthy that in very recent times, in urban areas
where kinship functions are somewhat attenuated, the
term "zamad" has become extended to include a close per-
sonal, though not related, friend.

The affinal relationship is generically called
"amachenät", a male affinal relative is addressed and
referred to as "amach", a female as "amcha"; whether
ego is male or female.

585 bride and groom merely expresses the prayerful wish that "God will show the way" to the lay couple toward "qurban", in time. In fact, middle-aged couples who have gone through several divorces and have finally decided definitely to spend the rest of their days together, may take the "aklil" in "qurban". Qurban for lay people, e.g. deacons, is performed usually only 40 days after their "semanya", to make certain that their marriage bond is strong and real and that no rift has arisen (e.g. if the bride had been found not a virgin).

588 487 "Damoz" marriage (lit. wage) is what the term implies. Most commonly the arrangement is from month to month, but may be for longer or shorter periods, such as the duration of a caravan trip, or an extended stay at a major market, where the "damoz" wife offers the best and often the only available hotel and restaurant services. (She is similar to the Biblical lady in the city of Jericho). The term is a contraction of "dam-wag" (lit. "blood - and - sweat") [465] compensation. Her wages vary greatly from region to region, and have considerably increased in recent years, for even the new, modern law recognized her claim. In the past she did well if she received ETH$5.-per month in addition to housekeeping expenses, but [675] now some obtain ETH$20.- from traders. The agreement is made orally but before witnesses, so that she can go to court if the man defaults on his payments. If they separate at the expiration of the contract, she has no right to half his property as does the semanya [428] wife, but if there are children conceived during her contract, the children can make a claim for part of the father's inheritance should he die.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

down the resistance of the undisturbed customary societies in favour of his own centralized control. Thus in Wallo, an ancient Galla region, the people had been organized into seven districts under the rule of seven of the original families. When Menelik first wrested its allegiance from John he had to conciliate these local leaders, but later, when he became stronger, he weakened them and had the land measured and more evenly distributed. In 1916 when the *Negus* Mikael was defeated after an attempt to rebel, Wallo was parcelled out under generals, and soldiers were put in by the central government. 423

MEASUREMENT AND INHERITANCE

Before concluding this general account some answer must be given to the questions as to whether there was any survey and registration and what were the rules of inheritance? 423

There was, of course, no survey as the term is understood in England. There was a measurement, a *gasha*, which was the equivalent of 80 to 100 acres, and in some parts of the country and notably, as we shall see, in parts of the conquered south the land had been measured. In Ethiopian terms, 'the cord had been thrown', sometimes once and sometimes a second time, with more accuracy, after the land had been cleared and farmed. Measurement of the land gave the Emperor and his officers greater control over it and its resources and the prime mover in this process had been Menelik. [804]

In the north, measurement has been by no means universal. In Gojjam, most stubborn and independent of provinces, and in Bagemdir there was no general measurement of land. In other northern provinces it appears that when estates were granted in recent times by the Emperor, especially those in *rest-gult* tenure, they were measured and registered. Small estates and the lands held by groups of *restenyas*, divided and at times redivided, were distinguished by natural landmarks and registered in men's minds or they might be entered into parish registers. The new land-tax of 1944 was based upon the unit of the *gasha*, but it is very doubtful whether measurement had been sufficiently carried through by this date to make it possible to execute the law upon this basis. [651]

With regard to inheritance, we have seen that this was only held to be permissible for *rest* land though in fact it was far more widely applied. It was not permissible to leave land away from the family or the group, or equally to give or sell it, without the permission of those chiefly interested. In leaving land the owner could allocate as much as two thirds to his favourite child—and in some parts this could be a daughter—while the rest was divided equally between the other children. 423 428

and thirdly its derivation from the rights of some forefather who first took possession of the land. 423

Where the *resti* land was still held by a large kindred group, the individual family had a secondary or derived ownership of a piece of land adequate to meet its needs. When a son married and set up house he applied through his father to the council which allocated a plot to him within the kindred land. Thus the hereditary right was to land within that of the *endà*, not necessarily to a particular piece of land. Sons and, in certain conditions, daughters would inherit their father's rights. Before a man could give or sell his share of land he must offer it first to members of his *enda* and then to those of his village, and this restriction might apply to a subsequent sale of the land. It seems that in some parts the control of the *enda* council was even stricter and that the individual had no more than a very restricted usufruct, with frequent reallocation by lot. 423 428

The complexities of land tenure have only to be defined in these general terms to make it necessary to list numerous qualifications and apparent inconsistencies. These cannot all be given here. Mention must, however, be made of the system of village ownership, which, as a result largely of later immigration and of heavy pressure upon the land, had in some parts overlaid or ousted the *enda* ownership and the principle of *resti*. In these units (the development of which, though not begun by the Italian Government, was encouraged by it), the village council made an equal division of its lands, which were allocated by lot in three categories according to fertility, to all inhabitants of the village, whether *restenyas* or not. There was a redistribution at periods ranging from three to seven years. Village ownership appears to have been more just and flexible than that of the *enda*, though it is not clear how it dealt with improvements and permanent crops. 423

From the social aspect it is interesting to learn that everywhere, even where village ownership had deprived the *restenyas* of their special privileges with regard to land, their personal prestige remained. The *restenyas* were the people of superior status who, however small their holdings, could claim to belong to families which descended from the first family to hold the land. This gave them a peculiar status; it endowed them with a primacy in the local councils and even, in some parts, with certain small dues and privileges; it is from their ranks alone that the village chief, the *chiqa-shum*, was chosen. 423 554

In addition to these main forms of ownership the *restenyas* could create subsidiary forms by leasing or lending their land or, especially in the case of large and absentee landlords, by introducing a number of tenants to farm their land and pay with their services, the landlord 427

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

(MANZ)

*175 643 nable. As the rainy season was approaching, Haile Malakot retreated to Shoa, where he fell sick and died. For the first time since Nagāssi, Shoa was left without an effective leader. Tēwodros marched into Manz from Wallo, and Shoa capitulated with little struggle. Eleven-year-old Menelik, son of Haile Malakot, was taken hostage.

Ten years later Menelik escaped from the camp of Tēwodros and regained Shoa. Slowly and carefully he built up his power. Tēwodros' reign raced to its tragic end. Takla Giyorgis II reigned briefly at Gondar, the last emperor to sit there. Yohānnes IV of Tigre governed the country for seventeen years. When Yohānnes died, Negus Menelik was forty-five and ready. Nagāssi's seed, eight generations later, reached the throne of all Ethiopia on November 3, 1889.

CULTURAL PROFILES

The Manzē Ethos

*175 185 The goals of Nagāssi and his descendants, apart from simple increase of power, were to recover the lands taken from their fathers and to stiffen the authority of Christianity in Shoa. Their success was virtually unbroken by [181] reason of exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance. These are ideals and qualities embodied par excellence in the people of Manz.

423 Sanctity of *rīst*, or land inherited from one's parents, is a cardinal value in 181 the Manzē scheme of things. Such land must not be given or sold to anyone who is not a close relative. People generations removed from actual residents [428] of Manz still retain claims to family land there, still cherish the idea that if they so desired they could go back and live on it. As an urbanized Manzē once told his nephew in Addis Ababa: "No matter how far you travel abroad, no matter how long you stay away, you will always be able to think of your [539] family land in Manz as your true home." This sentiment is expressed in a proverb:

> *Ya-Manz rīst be-shi amatu/la-bālabētu.*
> Manz *rīst* to the thousandth year/belongs to the owner.

A squatter may fight to keep his land from falling to some stranger who claims it as having belonged to his grandfather, but in his heart he respects the values that support such a claim.

[577] By Manzē standards the good man is thus one who defends the land of his fathers, seeing that it is not sold to outsiders or that foreigners do not come to [685] take it. If someone plows another's land without permission, he must be punished. If the matter can be settled through litigation, well and good; if it requires recourse to violence, so be it. To let such an offense go unavenged [691] would be the worst sort of shame. Grievances concerning their "hereditary

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

reverted to the Crown unless specifically reconveyed to the heir by royal proclamation. Political office was no less precarious. Governors were made and unmade—by the traditional process known as *shum-shĭr* ("appoint-demote")—in short periods of time. The powerful position of governor of the maritime province (*bāhr nagāsh*) changed hands four times during the six years that Alvares spent in Ethiopia. Even when tradition assigned a certain post to the descendants of a certain lord, the emperors were able to exert control by shifting their favor from one descendant to another from year to year. Titles, unlike land and office, were granted for life, as we observed; but they were in no case hereditary, and thus every Abyssinian's hope for a title, let alone a raise in rank, depended on the grace of the king or of his major appointees.

Given these conditions, it was not possible for the nobility to become a closed, hereditary estate, or to develop a corporate identity capable of confronting the imperial will. On the contrary, thanks to the emperor's freedom to ennoble anyone whom he chose, there was a relatively high degree of social mobility, and the ranks of the upper strata were continuously being reshuffled.

Outstanding personal properties of various sorts often enabled Ethiopians of low birth to rise to high positions. The emperors and great lords conferred honors on those who served especially well in military expeditions, whatever their origins. Menelik's promotion of two Galla prisoners to rank as his highest generals is a famous case in point. The royal favor occasionally smiled on low-born Ethiopians who excelled in such qualities as physical beauty or witty repartee.[32] Unquestionable personal loyalty was another quality in high demand; freed slaves were sometimes given offices and dignities, since their lack of ties to political families made them particularly trustworthy.

Abyssinians have thus cherished the idea that they could rise to a higher station in life than that to which they were born. Comparatively few ever tried to do so, probably, but ambitious souls were never wanting. Seeking some benefice, or the glory of a title, or a position of power that would permit them to help their kinfolk or avenge themselves for a wrong suffered at the hands of some superior, they would attach themselves to the lord whose fortunes seemed brightest at the moment and hope, by valorous service and God's favor, to arrive someday at an estimable position.[33]

Nevertheless, though ability and fortune might carry any man high in the political hierarchy, he would not thereby automatically be accepted as one of the *makuānnent*. A self-respecting man of noble family would resist marrying his daughter to a commoner or person of dubious parentage, no matter how high a rank the latter obtained. For the Abyssinian nobility did form a self-conscious status group with a certain hereditary base. Its members shared a sense of superiority, a consciousness of kind, and an attitude toward commoners such as that expressed by the governor Takla Giyorgis to the Jesuit

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 Barradas: "Father, these villeins are like camels, they cry and groan when they are loaded, but in the end they carry the load that is put on them."[34] They set themselves off from the commoners, not only because of their style of life and subculture, but also because they came from well-known families.

Such sentiments were shared by the commoners. They would much rather be governed by a man from a noted family than by a person promoted from 565 their own social level. The folkways expressed a disdain for the *nouvel arrivé,* 554 for example, by poking fun at the office of *liqa maḳuās* (the king's double in 644 time of battle). The *liqa maḳuās* was often a man from an unknown family, chosen because of his handsome features and resemblance to the king. The office permitted him to strut about in the king's clothes and inclined him to assume haughty airs. In some places it was customary to ridicule this upstart by referring to the minstrel, or *azmāri,* as *liqa maḳuās;* for the *azmāri,* too, was entitled to wear the kind of dress appropriate to the lord in whose banquet hall he performed, but the *azmāri* was a person of low prestige in Abyssinian society.

643 In other words: although the emperors could appoint and depose whenever they pleased, with or without cause; and though "the land and persons 565 554 of their subjects are equally their property, and every inhabitant of their kingdom is born their slave"; by itself the principle of royal favor is clearly inadequate to explain the Abyssinian pattern of social stratification. For, unlike the [171] neighboring kingdom of Buganda, Abyssinia was not a straightforward despotism in which the dispensation of a *ḳabaḳa* was sufficient to elevate a man into the highest social stratum.[35] The claims of a quasi-hereditary noble status group have also had to be satisfied.

565 How did this status group arise, and how have its claims been expressed and justified? What has been the history of its relationship with the monarchy? The existence of this class is anchored in the actual tendency for lands, [423] office, and titles to be given to members of the same families. In reality, the [631] emperors frequently let such possessions pass from father to son, either be- [554] cause they were in too distant a region or because there was no good cause for taking them away, and on occasion drew up written charters assigning grants of land to a man and his future descendants.[36] Indeed, one form of land [423] tenure, known as *rīsta-gult,* was precisely a sort of hereditary fief, given in exchange for military service over the generations. In certain areas, moreover, [631] it was a matter of tradition that the governorship be given to members of a [554] certain family. Finally, although no man inherited a title, as son of a noble- [428] man he might inherit the culture and facilities that would give him a much better chance than any commoner to obtain a title of his own.

Two other aspects of Abyssinian society supported this tendency toward [554] the development of what amounted to local dynasties of nobility. One was the prestige attached to the "chiefs of Israel," any of the nobility who could

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkār*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [764] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [601]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

builds a tiny thatch hut near the home of his tutor, wears ragged, unsheared 793
sheepskins, and gets his meals by begging. He lives thus for a year or two, 794
until he has mastered the fourteen varieties of chants used in the various masses, and perhaps special chants like the *Praise of Mary* (*Weddāssē Māryām*) which are sung on holidays.

The other, and more important, qualification for the priesthood is marriage according to the law of the church. After a deacon has been married in the customary manner and lived with his wife for at least forty days, their marriage must be solemnized by the celebration of the Eucharist. Thereafter he may not divorce her or remarry if she dies.

With these conditions satisfied, the candidate for priesthood may travel to 793
the *abuna* and be ordained. He acquires thereby the power to bind and to absolve, and is granted full knowledge of the mysteries of the *tābot*. The new priest attaches himself to a church, and is given his share of the monthly assignments for conducting the Mass. This is his main responsibility, though as he grows older he will also acquire confessants to whom he will give advice and assign penances.

Apart from these duties, the life of an Abyssinian priest in many ways resembles that of his lay neighbors. He plows his fields and harvests his crops. He may do business at the markets, or add to his income by weaving. Perhaps the chief difference in his manner of life is the habit of spending time in the "gate of peace," a little building near the church where the clergy assemble after services for hours of drinking *ṭallā* and idle conversation.

In reward for his services—and this is normally the chief inducement to become a priest—the priest is given a share of the revenues in kind brought in from lands owned and managed by the church. He may also be given some land owned by the church to cultivate for himself. In addition, he [431] •
receives gifts in kind from his confessants periodically, is entitled to take part in the various feasts to which priests are regularly invited, and is likely to receive some bequest from time to time.*

The insignia of the priest are modest, but they suffice to inform the stranger 793
that here is a man to be shown special respect: a white turban wrapped 292
around the head and a cross carried in the hand, to be kissed by all comers. 293
Older priests often carry a fly-whisk made of horsehair, and a wicker sun 778
umbrella.

Though there are devout and kindly men among them, the Ethiopian 793
priests have never been particularly noted for their moral qualities. Often they are ungenerous and scheming, and ready to exploit their position at the expense of the laity. They are poorly educated in their own tradition, stuttering

* A sheep, or at least a sheepskin—insurance that the Memorial Mass will be properly performed on the fortieth day after the donor's death.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

853 155 152 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended 853 foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbāt*, or breast- 155 152 father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbāt*. Used metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 155 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 201 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or [832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 155 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati- [431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 155 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 538 832 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

*787 judged directly according to their offensiveness to the
*793 Church, and indirectly according to the availability of
869 morally more acceptable alternatives. Professionally, the acquisition of abinet is guided by the quality and size of the debtera's capital, and of his ability to utilize abinet which are available to him.

*755 The First Abinet. With few exceptions, a student's
*787 first abinet acquisitions are herbalist therapies and com-
*793 plementary digams. These early therapies address the
869 most persistent threats of his environment, ikek (scabies), saal (cough), and kurtimat (joint pains). In addition, the student frequently obtains the recipe for a stimulant which ostensibly increases his acuity for learning kiyne.

*787 These first abinet studies are generally gifts,
*793 since a student rarely possesses anything beyond defer-
572 ence and abjectness with which he can appeal to a poten-
431 tial donor. He has two sources from which he can obtain
869 this knowledge. The first is a gwadeña or sympathetic balinjera. Among a student's fellows, he has a single special friend, whom he calls gwadeña. The gwadeña is his constant companion, who begs for ego when the latter is too sick to get his own food; he is completely trustworthy, and, with the exception of his money reserves gained from gramta sales and the like, whatever he possesses is at ego's disposal. The relationship is sym-

*787 *793 metrical; it is also characteristically brittle, and
431 rarely lasts beyond attendance at the kiyne school. A
572 student's balinjeras are, literally, his mess-mates.
869 They form an exclusive group of peers, reliable confidants
*[192] pledged to cooperation. Beyond the circle of balinjeras, all students are implicitly towdaderiys (rivals). Between both gwadeñas and balinjeras favors are expected to be freely given and no formal accounting kept, although the latter are less committed to sharing than are the former. Because the new boy's gwadeña and balinjera are, like himself, in the first two years of the kiyne curriculum, the abinet repertoire of either consists of few studies, and these with little or no magical content. Ego's second source of abinet is an older, more knowledgeable student, who has been made aware of the novice's
*[192] difficulties, and is willing to help. The relationship between the donor and recipient here is perceived as an exchange between radat (benefactor) and taraj (beneficiary). The new boy is abject, he is without power, and faces immediate dangers and difficulties. By his gift, the donor dramatizes a status difference between himself and novices in general, differences based on the culturally significant contrast between power and dependency. The recipient, by his deferential behavior, validates the donor's self-image.

231 livestock he own, and he prefers to keep it or dole it out
[556] to his children on their marriages, rather than sell it. Practically everyone has a few sheep and goats, possibly also a donkey and a horse, and, if richer, a mule, some cows and a team of two oxen.

The cattle population of Ethiopia is estimated at 18 million, or 1.2 head per person, comparable with New Zealand and Argentina.[11] However, an estimated million or more cattle die each year of rinderpest, anthrax, tick fever, etc. This limits the exportation of meat surplus almost as much as does difficulty of transportation to world markets.

412 According to the United Nations estimate, Ethiopia in
494 1950-1951 had 1 million horses, 1 million mules, 3 million donkeys. These provide the bulk of transportation, except for the few hundred heavy trucks (trente-quatros) which
491 operate on the few Italian-built roads. This modern road network has been badly damaged by the annual rains, by the overloading of trucks, and by inadequate (though improving) repairs.

241 The estimated agricultural production of Ethiopia in
433 1954 included:

Maize - 150,000 metric tons,
Barley - 600,000 metric tons,
Linseed - 50,000 metric tons,
Coffee - 45,800 metric tons,[12]

11. KuO, 1955, 4pp.
12. U. N. Secretariat, Statistical Office: Statistical Yearbook 1955, tables 29, 14, 15, 20, 25.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5 •
Ethiopia MP1

3

THE WORLD OF THE AMHARA PEASANT

The life of the peasantry has been a constant setting for the Amhara drama. It is the faithful pedal point against which the ups and downs of Ethiopian history have been played. We cannot savor that history fully without becoming closely acquainted with the peasant himself.

If understanding the peasantry is important for a truer picture of the Abyssinian past, it is indispensable for a sensible approach to Ethiopia's future. Ethiopia is and will remain for a long time a predominantly agricultural nation, one whose exports—chiefly coffee, skins, and oilseeds—depend almost exclusively on rural output. The one economist to have discussed the problem at any length in print maintains that agriculture is the one area in which Ethiopia can reasonably expect significant economic development in the foreseeable future.[1] Conscious efforts to stimulate peasant productivity, however, may issue in stagnation or even setbacks if they are not based on a realistic understanding of the peasants' own attitudes and conditions of life.

Ethiopians who are striving to modernize their country have for the most part lost touch with the peasantry. If they were born and raised in one of the cities, they may have had no direct contact with the peasantry at all. If their origins are rural, they have been oriented all their school days toward gaining a modern education and tend, wittingly or not, to ignore what they can of their past. Nor are they helped much in this regard by foreign technical experts, who tend to have a modernist bias and typically know still less about the indigenous peasantry. Understanding of the peasantry by scholars, on the

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THE OLD AND NEW ELITES

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that character-
170 izes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary
178 Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

[433] In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels: coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal
[671] realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The govern-
[64] mental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial
[795] system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious
[794] institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

121 This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratifi-
56
178 cation.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571
and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178
of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession 565
of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554
ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642]
ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177]
rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556]
imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642]
growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647]
nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701]
force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178
Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests 571
on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554
the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871
the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178
tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565
the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643]
political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178
571

* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 [439]
million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

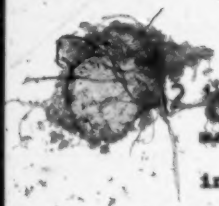
361
592
613
[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total risteñas households	31	21

[423] In each of the hamlets, there are two households be-
*[192] longing to Amhara tenant farmers (timeneña), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the risteñas
[779] whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two addition-
• [433] al timeneña households, whose members are Muslims. These
[286] households are headed by brothers who supplement their
*[192] agricultural activities by weaving the šama (toga) for local Christians.

*793 Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are
361 believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the
423 use of such fields, known as yikeys mariet ("priest's
795 land"), is given to local priests in return for parti-
*[192]
[613] cipating in the Masses of the parish church. In practice, rist-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of yikeys mariet by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder



2 topics are, except for differences in scale, approximated by most of the other provincial towns situated in predominantly Amhara areas.[17]

632 463 The People of the Town. Approximately three-quarters of Gondar's residents are Amhara, born in either Begemder or adjacent Gojam province. Most Amhara townsmen are government employees (clerks, messengers, teachers, and judicial functionaries); a lesser number enjoy some ecclesiastical identity, and others are local rentiers, often supplementing their incomes with government or Church employment. A smaller number work in miscellaneous, unskilled occupations, notably as watchmen (zibaña) at the households of affluent co-religionists.

162 632 463 433 Three quarters of Gondar's adult Amhara are women. A minority of them are the spouses or dependents of local Amhara townsmen, and confine their daily activities to domestic duties. A still smaller number are rentiers, or the recipients of stipends from mature sons living elsewhere. The remaining Amhara townswomen, perhaps 40%

[17] Thus excluding Chilga (urban center for the Kemant Agaw region) and Metemma (a border town of the Sudanese lowlands).

162
632 of the town's total population, support themselves by
433 working among the densely packed rows of beer houses
463 and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejora-
779 tively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the
563 former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically
[197] indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinc-
[167] tively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often
[142] light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian
[443] wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants
[442] (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people,
563 predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are
463 employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal
[197] makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics.
[562] Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

441 The Alternative Career Paths. In choosing between [869] material and professional interests, some men forsake *[793] their erstwhile ecclesiastical goals altogether, to apply in secular occupations (particularly as scribes and merchants) the skills that they have acquired or perfec- *[192] ted during their student days. Exemplary among these is the kibe (butter) merchant. Occasionally, profits accumulated by gathering and begging are invested in the purchase of lowland butter and the means for transporting it to highland markets. Profits earned from kibe trading are sometimes sufficient to promise a standard of living which exceeds that of the peasants with whom the student trades. The student who yields to the temptations of a full-time trading career generally establishes an annual cycle in which a portion of his kibe profits are reinvested in livestock for subsequent sale at regional markets.

*793 A second category of students reverses these priori- 869 ties, and disregards non-ecclesiastical goals altogether. • 433 Such students believe that, for themselves, it is faith in the Almighty which must sustain them in their travail. Thus, even excursions into the lowlands are re- *[192] placed by exclusively ecclesiastical activities. Subsistence needs are met by copying Church books for resale, participating in the Mass in return for a portion of the grain tithes given to the church, and dining at baptisms and annual memorial feasts (fehitat). In

*793 addition, he blesses houses against ganels with readings
869
• 433 from appropriate books of the Church, and sprinkles the house with water he has sanctified with his reading and spittle.

*793 Finally, there is the largest category of students,
*756 those who choose the path of compromise and abinet. It
869 is from their ranks that the debtera-healer emerges.

THE ABINET WORKS: PROPHYLAXIS AND THERAPY

*787 Abinet are a class of recondite works directed at the satisfaction of some personal desire; their efficacy is obtained wholly or in large measure by invoking the assistance of super-humans (most often of the Church, but sometimes ganels), usually in contexts beyond those
*[755] permitted by the Church. Abinet subjects include thera-
[778] peutic performances (medhaniyt ina digam), and prophy-
*[192] lactic amulets (kitab), divinatory texts (awdunigist), academic (timhirt) abinet, other inoffensive commercial works destructive works sending sickness and other misfortunes (kifat), and techniques for forcing the appearance and cooperation of ganels (ganel gelac).

Table eight indicates the constituent techniques of each category of abinet. The remaining paragraphs of this section consider those abinet works which address the therapeutic and prophylactic interests of the deb-

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435 Thus, the capital of our hypothetical "average" freehold farmer would total as follows:

3 good cows	150 MT	(ETH$225.-)
2 old cows	30 MT	45.-
2 strong oxen	80	120.-
2 old oxen	30 MT	45.-
2 donkeys	15 MT	22.-
1 mule	40 MT	60.-
6 sheep		30.-
3 goats		15.-
	Total ETH$562.-	(US$230)

511
434
[231] Sales from livestock and livestock produce, in one year, by the average freehold farmer would be about as follows, providing ready cash:

2 old cows	ETH$45.-
1 old ox	20.-
3 sheep	15.-
10 chickens	3.-
300 eggs	3.-
50 kilos honey	50.-
Milk	5.-
	ETH$141.-

With this cash he would buy salt, raw cotton, a toga, some imported spices, coffee, and pay certain cash taxes such as the education tax. These would all be necessary expenditures. The rest would go for other items.

006 It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-

286 pulled from imported cloth. Now most of these dyes are
386 imported from Europe, and many are colorfast only in
[439] cold water (which causes little difficulty as most washing is in cold water). Such embroidery must be paid for extra, but the simple, narrow, single-colored border of the shamma, of the rural type, is included in the price.

286 For such a peasant shamma, the weaver receives
434 from Eth$5 to 8.- depending on whether or not the customer supplied all the prepared cotton. An average, experienced weaver can usually get enough orders to earn about Eth$200.- per year, in the rural area. If he does no farming other than gardening, his food cost may be Eth$140.- per annum. The average weaver is left with more cash than the farmer, who rarely has more than Eth-$30.- left in cash at the end of the year. More often the weaver also farms, since his "season" does not conflict with the major active farming season. A hard-working weaver of solid reputation has the opportunity to accumulate comparative wealth, at least theoretically, but since most rural ethnic specialists, including the Falashas, are not much concerned with commercial profit, few do. It occurs more often among Muslim town weavers.

286 The social position of the weaver, apart from his
554 ethno-religious affiliation, gives him a high place among working specialists, almost equal to that of the musician (if it were not for the fact that the weaver is usually non-Coptic). He is above the status of a smith, and there is no suspicion of black magic attached to the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 857 868 Somewhat later, when he reaches ten or eleven, the Amhara boy begins to accustom himself to the plow, perhaps trying his hand at it from time to time while his father rests for lunch. Intermittently his ability increases, and by the age of fourteen or so—earlier if the family is short of help—he is given a regular share of the plowing. This may be limited to one or two hours a day at first, but before many seasons elapse he is ready to undertake a full day's work, along with his older relatives.

*883 868 In his mid-teens the Amhara boy is normally given a small part of his father's land to use for himself. The boy has full charge of plowing and harvesting this land and selling the crops at market. The crops or money he [434] earns thereby is referred to as *gulammā* ("private possession") and is set aside for helping him to get started on his own later on. Eventually the *gulammā* will be used to purchase new clothes, an ox, and presents for his bride. Year by year the father may add a bit more land for the boy's private management, though all together it does not often amount to a very large quantity; he may produce, say, 150 to 200 liters of grain for his *gulammā* in a year (in the Amhara system of measures, about 2 *dāwlā*). When he has saved enough [582] grain to fill a *riq*, a large wicker storage bin plastered inside with cow dung, he is considered ready to get married and strike out on his own.

By the time a boy begins to accumulate his *gulammā* he has learned nearly everything he needs to know for performing the work which will be expected of him as an adult. In his late teens the education is completed, through the mastery of such special techniques as fashioning the yoke and wooden attachments for the plow, and constructing the walls and roof for a house.

The work life of the Amhara peasant is thus a simple continuation of activities with which he has long been familiar. The same is true, *mutatis* [463] *mutandis*, for those who, following their fathers' footsteps, become priests or sorcerers, governors or warriors, artisans or traders. In these cases, moreover, the foregoing pattern applies to a great extent, since the latter roles are often combined with an agricultural economic base and way of life. (Special aspects of some of these variant patterns will be discussed below.)

857 868 This pattern of gradually increased work responsibility is conspicuous in the case of girls. While shepherding and other childhood tasks are shared by both sexes, the Amhara girl begins to do distinctively female work at about six or seven. First she learns to clear seeds from cotton, and to spin, by hand. Later on she is introduced to the more taxing female chores, like fetching water and grinding grain. The progressive increase of the girl's work load is visibly illustrated by the graduated sizes of clay jugs used for carrying [415] water. When she begins to fetch water, the young girl carries a tiny jug, called a *gambo*. As she becomes older and stronger she is given a larger size, a small *enserā*. Finally, the mature female carries the large *enserā*, a jug that holds as much as twenty liters.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cate that boys sometimes borrow the certificates of more successful friends 883*
and enter jobs under those assumed names. Often they live for many months 882
with no livelihood at all. Eventually, some find work as houseboys, shine 178
shoes, or peddle merchandise on the streets; others, on an impulse, sign up for [464]
life in one of the military services. Still others are reduced to begging, or stealing, or concocting stories with which to extract help from sympathetic foreigners.

The lives of such boys, whose number is large and steadily growing, are among the chief casualties of Ethiopia's transition to date. As they increase, their misery will become more vocal, and they may constitute an element of political unrest. Whether or not they become a political problem, they are already a social problem.

The modern adolescents, by contrast, comprise a small and determinate 883*
number.* In 1958–59, the year in which my research on them began, there 178
were all together about 3,900 students in the academic secondary schools, 873
3,350 in other special schools at the secondary level, and 760 students at the post-secondary level. One source of information on these students was a [125]
questionnaire which was completed by 700 students: 500 at the secondary level, including 40 female students, in a total of 15 schools, and 200 male students in five colleges.[12] Some of the findings from this survey will be woven into the following text where appropriate.

Compared to the rest of their countrymen, and certainly those of the same age, the modern adolescents have lived in luxury. Most students at the secondary level, and all those at the college level, have been boarding students. At no cost to themselves or their parents, they have received full board and room, a token allotment of clothes, and their books. Day students have re- [434]
ceived instead a monthly allowance of Eth$20,† approximately the same amount that unskilled laborers earn for full-time work. Tuition is also free for all full-time Ethiopian students at all levels.

These "welfare school" conditions were designed to make further education attractive and possible for Ethiopian students, nearly all of whose families either can not or are unwilling to support their children for many years in school. In this, the parents are following long established Amhara custom, for in the traditional society boys who went off to church schools often did so, as we have seen, without the support of their parents, and in any case were expected to gain their livelihood by begging. Nowadays, if their children are admitted to one of the government secondary schools, even tradition-minded

* And one that grows steadily. In 1958 there were twenty-eight government secondary schools in the empire. By 1964 the number had increased to forty-seven.

† One Ethiopian dollar is equal to (U.S.) forty cents. [436]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 The *dabtarā*'s way of life is more variable than that of the monk, his possibilities for income more diverse than those of the priest. He may be attached to a church as a chorister and receive a share of the church's revenues, as do the priests. Or he may donate his services to the church and earn his living [212] by secular employment. He may work as a scribe at the court of a king or nobleman. He may spend most of his time teaching, gaining support from some large church or monastery. Like many priests he may cultivate land. [434] In any case, he is likely to derive some income from the sale of amulets and from medical therapies. Some *dabtarā* are even said to have wandered about the country as hunters, performing magical services for clients as they go.

Dabtarā are not set off from the populace by special insignia. Some wind [292] a turban around their heads, as do many priests; but others may dress like ordinary peasants. If holding more prestigious posts they may be seen with fly-whisks or wearing a *barnos*. But they are known by the people, who fear and respect them. They are feared because of their magical powers, which [789] are believed capable of rendering bullets harmless and turning *ǎnjarā* to dust. [554] They are respected because of their learning, for they are the only educated status group in traditional Amhara society. If the commoner's relatively [195] impulsive *manner* of speaking is contrasted with the quiet reserve of the nobility, his relatively simple *language* is contrasted with that of the *dabtarā*, who is noted for a studied and circumspect use of language (*qāla-dabtarā*) and for larding his Amharic with literary (i.e., Ge'ez) expressions (*ya-dabtarā amārīññā*).

793 554 183 In the case of the religious elite, then, status is in all cases achieved. While there is a natural tendency for sons of priests and *dabtarā* to follow their fathers' example, they arrive at the status in question only by fulfilling the same norms that are applied to the sons of laymen. These norms, however, differ among the different groups within the clergy. Investiture by an authority emanating from the seat of religious charisma, the Alexandrine Patriarchate, and the related ritual requirement of marriage with Communion, were the basis of priestly status, almost irrespective of the personal attainments of the candidate. Personal attainments were *all* that mattered, on the other [792] hand, in the case of monk and *dabtarā*, but they differed radically for the two statuses.

793 792 554 The qualifications and characters of monks and *dabtarā* are almost diametrically opposed. The monastic state is entered only by means of a sacred rite; the *dabtarā* is in no way ordained, and might even be a "defrocked" priest. The monk's life is normally given to sensual renunciation; the *dabtarā* is normally an acknowledged sensualist (as appears, for example, in the proverb *ka-mesā ya-talaya dabtarā / yādargāl serā* ["a *dabtarā* who is kept from lunch / will work intrigues"][48] and in stories which celebrate the *dabtarā*'s use of his knowledge for private erotic ends). In the monk the virtue

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*793 869 222 five weeks before it is ready to be woven into a tsifit, a food hamper and table around which the Amhara meal is eaten. Because the students cannot afford so long a hiatus from their studies, the grasses are dried only a week or so, in order to lighten them for the trip back [735] to the highlands. During their stay in the lowlands, the students support themselves by begging food from local farmers. Enterprising students often gather twice the amount of gramta they can carry, leaving the surplus to be taken up to the highlands in January.

*793 869 The gramta is brought to the student's hut at the kiyne school for storage and drying. Although the stu- [442] dents are anxious to sell immediately upon drying, both price and demand are low then, since the weavers, peasant [286] women, have no leisure for tsifit making until March. In *[192] the meanwhile, the student makes either traditional umbrellas of gramta for sale at the regional market, or seleyen, shrouds which he sells in the churchyard to mourners.

• [434] Students also beg crops, a portion of which they consume and the remainder of which is sold at market. For a four week period, during October and November, the student begs a traditional double handful of pulses from farmers. During a two to three month period from February to April, students beg cereals and other crops (especially, cayenne). Because the amounts of produce

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obtained are often considerable (100 kilos and more), arrangements must be made for obtaining a donkey.

[735] However great his needs may be, a student cannot
[442] expect to participate in all of these activities, since this would leave insufficient time for his kiyne studies. However, gramta gathering and pulse begging are sometimes both engaged in during a single year.

Thus, the young debtera student finds himself transported from the benign enviornment of his natal parish to one in which only self-reliance and resourcefulness can secure his chosen goals and maintain his physical well-being. Ultimately, he must make a bitter choice
[442] between professional and material satisfaction. The
[735] profits from gramta sales, and the foodstuffs he has begged would much ameliorate his misery. Yet, in spite of his pressing subsistence requirements, the student sets aside only a minor portion of his profits for these needs. He exchanges most of these goods for money, which he retains as a fluid and durable capital with which to purchase necessary professional articles (mainly books) and to support his future commercial ventures. During the years of his kiyne studies, his assets accumulate at the rate of perhaps E$25. per annum.[25]

[25] A significant sum where per capita gross national product is E$116. (EAS:134); E$1.=U.S.$0.40.

*793 The debtera-healer faces two practical obstacles to obtaining public recognition of his power. First, [751] his most frequent works are prophylactic kitabs; however, prophylactic success can be assessed only over a period of many years.[45] Second, the overt expression of abinet powers is often prosaic, without visible signs *[787] of the extraordinary forces at work. These two diffi- [539] culties in communicating his power are met, in part, by the debtera's display of esoteria during diagnosis, when he manipulates avdunigist texts in the presence of his clients, and during the preparation of therapy, when the otherwise secretive debtera sends his client to obtain some exotic ingredient which is necessary for the work.

*756 Mithat. The debtera goes beyond these displays, *793 however, to simulate, through the use of mithat, dramatic *755 demonstrations of his putative magical powers (asmat). The debtera distinguishes mithat from other abinet subjects by the fact that mithat require no recitation or ritual beyond the spurious performances required to impress his public, and that the mundane materials used in the work are sufficient to produce the desired effects.

• [434] [45] The sale of kitabs usually provides the abinet-using debtera with the greatest portion of his income.

231 [583] months after the wedding, when it seems certain the marriage will last.

231 435 A good, milk-giving cow is worth 50 MT, but an old cow ready for slaughter brings only 15 MT. A farmer needs at least 2 oxen for plowing, and a well-to-do farmer may have about 8. Oxen are not contributed in marriage, but are loaned or given to the groom by his father at the time land is allocated to him for plowing. A good, strong ox is worth 40 MT, but hardly ever is such a one for sale; instead, he is more commonly traded for two male calves. An old ox for slaughter can be bought for 15 MT, and if the skin is still good it may be sold in turn for up to four MT. Thus beef is much more expensive than sheep or goat meat, and is reserved for feasts.

Mule: The average peasant may own one mule, or none at all, since even a small Ethiopian mule costs 40 MT, and a Senaar mule as much as 80 MT. Feudal lords have several. Mules are rented to caravans for ETH$1.-per day; double that if the borrower is a foreigner. Relatives borrow free of charge.

Sheep: These bring from ETH$3 - $6 depending on season more than on quality, though a heavy fattail helps. The sheepskin alone can be resold for ETH$1.50, so that the meat is very cheap and within reach of almost everyone's pocketbook. The average farmer keeps perhaps a dozen sheep used

231 435 for his family's consumption, guests, and gifts, but not larger flocks, conserving grass for cattle.

Donkeys: The average peasant may have 2, to carry goods to and from the market. A good donkey may bring as much as 12 - 15 MT, but an average donkey no more than 8 MT out of season (when no caravans are about to leave. They are not usually rented, but are lent to friends and kin more freely than mules, without charge.

[234] Butter: This is sold to urban people and at big markets, wrapped in leaves. Milk is sold only by personal arrangement, directly to the house.

235 435 Chicken: These bring as little as ETH$0.50, or even $0.25, depending on season and quality. All meat prices rise sharply at the end of the lenten season. Otherwise the peasant does not bother to sell chickens to towns unless he lives very close.

Eggs: These sell for as little as ETH$0.01 a-piece, sold only since Italian occupation, and only in towns. Otherwise the peasant gives them away, or boils them in the wot.

231 435 Honey: Perhaps less than a quarter of all peasants bother to sell honey. Much depends on whether there are bees in the immediate neighborhood, and whether a town with tedj-byets (mead houses) is nearby. On the average he may put up at least 5 skeps, realize at most 10 kilos of honey from each, and obtain a maximum of ETH$50. --(US$20.) at the market.

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435 Thus, the capital of our hypothetical "average" freehold farmer would total as follows:

3 good cows	150 MT	(ETH$225.-)
2 old cows	30 MT	45.-
2 strong oxen	80	120.-
2 old oxen	30 MT	45.-
2 donkeys	15 MT	22.-
1 mule	40 MT	60.-
6 sheep		30.-
3 goats		15.-
	Total ETH$562.-	(US$230)

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[231] Sales from livestock and livestock produce, in one year, by the average freehold farmer would be about as follows, providing ready cash:

2 old cows	ETH$45.-
1 old ox	20.-
3 sheep	15.-
10 chickens	3.-
300 eggs	3.-
50 kilos honey	50.-
Milk	5.-
	ETH$141.-

With this cash he would buy salt, raw cotton, a toga, some imported spices, coffee, and pay certain cash taxes such as the education tax. These would all be necessary expenditures. The rest would go for other items.

It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-

423 It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-
435 rate and reliable survey of "capital" and expenditures--due to concealment of property for fear of taxes. As for the value of their own land, this cannot even be estimated by observation, for not even the owners know the value of their own land. For fear of alienation, and possible higher taxes on land found to be more fertile than declared, they actually do not want to know. Most Amhara land is not even measured, and most have no clear titles, except by local "custom". The value of the tuqul hut cannot be estimated since it is not a cash item and utilizes only the raw products of nature. The same is true of utensils and equipment. Even the plowpoint is bartered rather than purchased.

C. Dietary habits

252 The diet in general is low in proteins and vita-
262 mins, but otherwise not inadequate.[64]

The mainstay of the Amhara is a round, thin, limp, slightly sour bread "enjara", made largely from tyeff grain. After the grain has been handground by the housewife, she mixes the flour with water and lets it stand about three days. Then she pours the thickish liquid on a clay plate (called "metad") about 2 feet in diameter, covers it with a high lid of tight reeds or clay which leaves much air space. The bread is thus baked for about four minutes on top of the triangular stone hearth. The result is a leavened, spongy-surfaced but flat-bottomed limp bread about 1/4 inch thick, and about 2 feet in diameter. The meat-curry is

64. Simmons, et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. p.64.

411 A safer version of the throwing spear, with dull or no point, is used by the young men during their mock battle and chase at the "gänna" feast (Christmas).

326 435 The economic aspects of smithcraft could provide the smith with considerable income, since the Amhara peasants are in regular need, and since the Falasha smiths have a monopoly due to the suspicions of the magic correlation which keep Amhara from the craft. But in fact the income is not large. A team of rural smiths, 5 men, receive only Eth$1.50 for their labor in making a plowpoint, if the customer brings his own scrap, double that if the smiths have to supply it. The somewhat bigger "summer plow" costs somewhat more. The customer usually waits in a special hut of the hamlet of the smiths, and must be provided with grain and other necessities, meanwhile. Thus, while an individual smith may earn as much as Eth$400.- from his craft in a year, the additional food bill may be Eth$300.-, and most of the earnings will go to pay the rent on his land, of which he farms less than the average peasant.

Even a well-made plowpoint dulls after about 10 years. Then it is brought back and the smith cuts it down to an axe ("mäterabiya") for only 50¢ Eth. When that dulls, he cuts it down further to a slightly smaller adze ("mäqofäriya") for half that sum.

326 563 The human organization of smithcraft, particularly in the Amhara area where the Falasha are the smiths, presents peculiar problems and patterns. Where no Falasha hamlets are near, the smithing is done by itinerant Fa-

439 some spices, English razorblades, sewing needles, safety pins, Lux soap in Hotelroom size, laundry soap cake, [442] kerosene, etc. The wholesalers, usually Arabs, buy these [443] and sell them to Muslim Ethiopian retailers. Sometimes, in bigger towns, Arabs open regular stalls and even stores to sell these items daily, as well as special luxuries such as chocolate, hard candy, and products of the central Ethiopian government such as matches (a government monopoly), cigarettes for Muslims (also a government monopoly), school notebooks with the picture of the Emperor on the title page, pencils, imported readymade eyeglasses, etc. On their return trips the trente-quatro trucks are heavily laden with produce such as tyeff, nug, linseed, peas, beans, honey, sheepskins, cowhides, and in some areas musk from the civet cat, and coffee.

438 The purchases of the farmer consist in greater part of items from other areas of Ethiopia, notably, salt, coffee, spices, some of the raw cotton and matches. Much of this is still carried by traditional caravan, where no roads exist or where they have been washed out. Caravans form after the middle of the dry season, and return just before the rainy season, so that the farmer can stock up on staples.

435 To pay for these purchases and for some of the imported items such as razor blades, the farmer brings his produce, but prices fluctuate between seasons, with every arrival or departure of caravans (or trucks), and with distance. For example, 1 quintal (100 kilos) of

435 tyeff in Gondar brings as little as Eth$10.- but in Addis Ababa Eth$30.- and more. Nug seed bring as much as Eth$30. per 100 kilos even at the Gondar market, a rural production area. Gesho, hops, brings as much as Eth$1.- per kilo; some semi-urban farmers grow it as a parttime cash crop (also the drug plant "chat" chewed by Muslims). Other products sold by the farmer include honey, peas, beans, maize, sorghum, dagussa, spices, beeswax, chickens brought by farm women, and recently also eggs; milk, butter, livestock big and small, goat-gut ("jemat") for cordage and the "qrar" banjo. Big livestock (cows, oxen and mules) are traded only at big Saturday markets, also the fat-tailed sheep or old cow for the Sunday dinner. At the end of long fasts edible livestock is in much demand and prices may double. It is also noteworthy that despite the poor roads, modern truck transportation is so efficient economically in comparison with traditional caravans, that prices for comparable imported and long-distance domestic products are on the same scale at the big Saturday markets.

443 [492] The big market is also an important governmental administrative center, especially the judicial organization. From ancient times this has been the location of the formally appointed judge, the "dayna", to arbitrate disputes that the curbstone judge has not settled, and to hear cases against accused thieves. Here the 443 651 governor's trade chief, the "nägad-ras", acts as collector of revenue and supervisor of trade practices. He fixes and alters tolls on trails and river crossings,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

ning of a reign; which she could not do, until one of the no- 792
bles supplied her with a sum of money. There were only a few derims left in the treasury.

Abyssinian Harvests. They first sow barley from the end 241
of April to the beginning of May, or later; that is, towards the first rains. This ripens in the rains in June; and is carried off the fields into the house, that it may not rot. Then they sow fitches, which likewise ripen in the rains after. In September they sow wheat, or teff, which is cut down in December; and, if they have water, they sow barley, or fitches, again in January. In Woggora (a very fertile province), there is seed-time, and harvest, and plowing, in every month in the year; water being easily diverted to the grounds. The rent paid to the king for the ground is one-tenth of what they reap, yet, with all this, they are all poor; for a harvest, at a medium, is about twenty after one; and they sometimes, nay, very often, scarce reap the seed. They never manure the ground; and there are great quantities of rats, and innumerable ants, that consume their corn at different, nay, at all periods of its growth. All their five harvests do not, in produce, equal one Egyptian one; and they are at five times the labour. In the several villages, living, in gene- [511]
ral, is very miserable; and, in general, people of considera- [262]
tion scarcely know any other diet than teff bread and bouza. Whether this teff is black, or white, is the whole difference between the diet of master and servant.

Abyssinian Dress. The principal part of the dress of the 291
natives is a large cotton cloth, 2¼ peek (cubits) in length, and one and a half in breadth, with a blue and yellow stripe round the bottom of it. This blue is not dyed; but the Surat blue cloths are unraveiled and woven for this purpose; and the yellow they dye with sûf, the yellow thistle. The best
for ordinary wear costs 10 salts, or 1½ pataka, about 6s. 6d. [435]
English. It is called Kuara, as probably coming from that province. They are very beautiful and light. The other pieces of dress are breeches, which reach to their mid-thighs; and girt with a white girdle of cloth to the common people; but the better sort have red Indian cotton cloths for breeches; and silk, or worsted coloured girdles from the Levant. When 492
they ride, they only hold their stirrups between their great and

[p. 45]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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492 second toes. Even the king rides bare-footed; and being used chiefly to mules, they are far inferior horsemen to the Arabs.

Price of Gold. Gold, at a medium, sells for 10 pataka
436 each wakea; or 10 derims, salt, at a medium 8 per pataka.
435 The piece (of salt), speaking of it identically, is called Kourman, but in estimation, or such a thing costs so many salts, they are called Amooli. These are the ordinary currency for the necessaries of life. For considerable purchases, gold is used; and there is great loss in cutting the wakea into derims, at least one in ten. The gold is got by
[316] washing the earth in water, in wooden dishes. The grains, that remain behind are put into a quill, melted down, and
[325] alloyed, probably by the Shangalla; for it is pale, and is never brought to market in its first form, but melted down into small rods, or ingots. In Joas's time a wakea was valued only at 8 patakas. Yasous Tanush, or the II. turned round, and reduced the Sennaar Shangalla; but they are now quite independant of Habbesh. Their fair is held at Buré in Damot.

804 *Weights and Measures.* The wakea (or ounce), in Abys-
436 sinia, is considered as 10 derims, or drams, and 12 ounces make a litir, or rotol (pound). At Gondar, the capital of all Abyssinia, the wakea is 6 drams, 40 grains, Troy weight English, and divided into 10 drams of 40 grains. The small money is salt bricks, dug out of the mines at Dancali, near the myrrh country. Every wakea, in ordinary times, gives from 72 to 76 salts. In 1769, the wakea was 80 salts, and June 15th, 1771, the wakea sold at 34, but there was a great difference in the size of the bricks. These are little or not at all liable to waste, as M. Montesquieu supposes. Abyssinian gold at Mocha is 15 or 16 patakas when the Sennaar gold is 22, because the Agows, &c. alloy it with silver.

At Masuah, the current money is the Venetian sequin, the pataka, or queen's dollar, and half-dollars. For small money are used grains of glass, called borjook, three of which make a chebir (Vid. Book V. Chap. ii.)

Corn sold at Masuah for four patakas the ardep, which
436 contains about 24 measures of the country. Coffee, six ro-
304 tol per pataka, sometimes ten, or even 15 rotol. Honey,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

four cuba for a pataka, each cuba about two rotol, or somewhat less. Butter, 20 rotol, for 1½ pataka, and 3½ harf. Civet, 1¼ pataka the wakea. Wax, 4 patt. the faranzola. Elephants teeth, 35 rotol for 18 patt. Water, 1½ paras the smallest jar, and 3 paras the largest. Abyssinian gold dust, 15 patt. per wakea, at Mocha. Dora, 12 measures for a pataka. The Venetian sequin goes for 2¼ patakas. 435 804

The Abyssinian grain measure is the ardeb, which, at Gondar, contains 10 measures, called Madega, each equal to 12 ounces, Cairo weight. An ardeb of grain costs 2 derims, or 2 patakas; an ardeb of teff, the same; 6 or 8 ardeb of tocusso pay an ounce (wakea) of gold, or 10 derims.

Servants Wages at Gondar *. At Gondar a maid-servant receives 15 salts per annum, and is fed in the house. A man-servant is paid 4 pataka yearly, which correspond to four wakea, or ounces of gold, Abyssinian weight, and receives besides two loaves, or cakes of teff, for his support daily. If his master is good, he sometimes gives him a little flesh, lentils, or vetches. He is not obliged to clothe him, but he sometimes gives him a pair of trowsers, which consist of about one-fourth of a yard of white cloth. 465 357

With respect to carriage, &c. three bundles of wood, which are brought from Tchagassa, three hours walking, cost a salt. The carriage of a jar, or manteca, full of wine, or honey, from Emfras, eight hours journey, pays a salt, of the weight of 3 faranzala, or so. 435 482

Thirty-three teff bread cost a salt; the loaves are about 3 lines thick, and 18 inches diameter. A pair of shoes (pantufle) cost a salt. 8¼ peeks of cloth is the least gift that can be offered in the country. 435

Bouza. Manner in which the Abyssinians make a kind of beer, that, in their language, is called bouza. 273

To make this, they use tocusso simply; but sometimes they mix it with grain (wheat), or dora, or all three together; but in ordinary tocusso is best. A jar of tocusso, or of the three sorts of grain, contains as much as is sufficient to make two loaves, that are a tenth part of the whole jar; besides which, they use about half a rotol of Ghesh leaves.

* From this, to the 29th line of page 68, is a translation from the Italian of L. Balugani.

(p. 41)

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

622 nors.'[1] An interesting confirmation of this comes from a later date: the British minister in 1939 reported that after two years of bitter experience the Italians found they could not run the country without the co-operation of the Ethiopians at the village level, and were trying to restore the village organization.

The Emperor claimed to appoint the *chiqa-shum* but we may assume that in this and in the other matters discussed in this chapter he intervened to do so when and where he had the power. The *shum* was generally too small a man to attract imperial attention and a strong governor would, without doubt, play his part in the matter. According to Krapf the *shum* was appointed by the governor at the request of the villagers [435] and paid twenty pieces of rock salt, then valued at one dollar, for the appointment which he held only for a year.[2] The choice, whether made by Emperor or governor, was clearly limited by the character of the office; its value depended upon the local status and representative capacity of the holder. In some communities the appointment might be for a period or even for life, but it was also a widespread custom in the north for the office to rotate yearly amongst the leading men of a few families, generally those whose prestige rested upon their descent from the family which founded the group. There were, of course, a number of privileges and perquisites in the form of gifts for the *shum*. There were differences in his official rewards; in some areas he got no more than exemption from taxes. In a vivid Ethiopian comment, 'he . . . pays tribute only with his legs, running up, and down to carry the orders of the Government'.[3] In other parts, however, it appears that he retained some proportion of the taxes he collected for the government. It would be very valuable if further investigation could be made into this obscure but all-important office and into the position which, after all that has happened since 1935, it holds to-day.

[1] Hotten, p. 157.
[2] Krapf, J. L., and Isenberg, C. W., *Journals*, 1843, p. 280.
[3] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

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more completely, is to violate the conventions of the gwadeña relationship, and to close it off to ego altogether. Moreover, the intense gwadeña relationship, which binds pairs of kiyne students is typically brittle, and is infrequent in later years when commercially valuable abinet are being acquired. Finally the gwadeña relationship is antithetical to the independent and aloof (kuruw) character associated with the man who owns strong abinet.

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The exchange of labor for abinet is difficult to arrange. An abinet owner must be found who is disposed to such exchanges, and has not already obtained someone to fulfill his needs. For the recipient, the exchange means often demeaning work over an extended period of time, with a humiliating lack of an effective quid pro quo, in order to acquire a single abinet study.

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Debteras are not reluctant to price their abinet studies, in Ethiopian dollars, for prospective purchasers. Since a man's standing as a practitioner of abinet is intimately related to the effectiveness of his individual studies, the evaluation of his abinet against a nearly universal standard of value (Ethiopian dollars) is likely to be understood as an implicit personal challenge. Thus, the owner's evaluation of his abinet is inevitably greater than any amount likely to be paid. Prices range from E$50. to E$500., immense sums relative

*756 *787 to the modest cash reserves of the potential purchaser
*793 whose money reserves are unlikely to exceed E$150.
* 435 437 There is no haggling, in the sense that the purchaser offers a counter-price which is closer to the study's real value, for injury to the owner's pride would be
*[192] certain to end negotiations. Rather, the prospective purchaser asks for special consideration on the grounds that the seller is his wadajey ("friend", but not peer), and that his assistance is needed. If the abinet owner is amenable to the appeal, a price is set at one-half, one-quarter, or even less of the study's assessed value. Even so, the cost of abinet is sufficiently great to deplete the purchaser's reserves in short order should he persist with such purchases.

*756 Before a man can begin to exchange abinet for
*787 abinet, he must obtain a sufficient variety of valuable
*793 studies in order to interest other debteras in an ex-
437 change. Once acquired, an abinet repertoire proves itself a superior medium of exchange for acquiring more abinet. Unlike friendship, abinet are entirely liquid; unlike labor purchase, abinet exchange is neither demeaning nor time-consuming; unlike money pruchase, it involves neither principal in difficult price setting, and far from being exhausted, the abinet capital tends to grow the more a debtera "spends" of it.

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*756 Mithat works are particularly important for publicly
*793 validating the debtera's ability to tap ganel sources of power. Although a debtera may in truth renounce his familiars, he keeps this his professional secret. For his public, only the possession of ganel familiars validates an awakiy debtera's grade. Thus the awakiy debtera is committed to demonstrating the overt complicity of ganels in his works. He accomodates these expectations of his public by either simulating ganel cooperation, or employing a neutral medium for reaching the ganels. Here, as in his other diagnostic and therapeutic works, the debtera presents through artifice a public demonstration of healing power that is more convincing and manageable than reality would allow.

Laymen are uncertain whether an awakiy debtera need pull a ganel for each prophylactic, therapeutic, or pathogenic work that he performs, or whether the information he obtains at one session is relevant to similar episodes involving subsequent clients. In a specific episode, it is usually the debtera who determines whether a demonstration of ganel pulling is necessary. He is careful to learn his client's expectations in this matter. The debtera learns this implicitly, through the mechanism of
[435] fee setting. The calling of ganels is an expensive service, and agreement by the client to a fee of E$50. or more indicates that evidence of ganel complicity is expected.

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it. Bogalec decided to take the boy to a yikoruba medhaniyt seci who lived in a nearby hamlet, who was re-
*278 puted to be able to recognize koruba. The herbalist, a
*759 woman, was consulted within hours of the irruptions, for
*767 Bogalec knew that koruba advances rapidly and, after a day's time, is no longer susceptible to treatment. The herbalist examined the irruptions, diagnosed the ailment as koruba, and gave Bogalec a leaf with directions that it be ground, mixed with hydromel (birz) and given to the child in small increments. The infusion was a strong emetic and purge, and, since there was no memeleśa, Bogalec had to watch the child carefully lest he be overcome by the therapy. After two applications, Bogalec stopped, for fear that a third would kill the child.
[758] The boy was afterwards fed a liver restorative. During his recuperation, Bogalec and her husband took care not to speak the word "koruba" before the boy; in addition, he was given no talla beer. Either action could have in-
[435] duced a fatal relapse.[50] The herbalist asked for and received a fee of E$1., but told Bogalec that the money would be given to the parish church, since she did not intend to profit from her curing.

[50] A similar injunction is followed for certain other ailments, even where there is no present danger, particularly "kuntina" (leprosy).

*278 *755 *756 *757 *759 wise. After a minute, the practitioner declared that Tesfahun had not contracted the ailment. The fukura was was paid E$1., and Tesfahun was given no therapy. His companions were later taken to this practitioner, who after diagnosis indicated that both had contracted rabies, and required therapy. None of the participants attempted to obtain an explanation for this epidemiological pattern. This consisted of herbals mixed with the milk of a cow nursing a calf of its own color. The infusion was a violent purgative, and a memeleša permitted its safe application until blood had appeared in the evacuae. This was taken as a sign that the disease substance had been destroyed and was being eliminated. Although all of this had taken place within one week of the dog's attack, the principals were aware that the ailment can be treated successfully within four weeks of an attack. After that time, no therapy, however powerful it [435] may be, can succeed. The fukura sold his therapy at the of E$10. for each boy. Although the fee was paid on receipt of therapy, this was not necessary; the payment could have been made to a third party (a gwadeña of the client), who would then transmit the money to the therapist once the therapy had proven itself effective.

231 gland of the animal was packed in cowhorns, and exported as a fixer for scents and perfumes. But the average Amhara farmer does not keep civet cat (zebāt).

Livestock is perhaps even more important economic property than land. Since land tenure is uncertain and complicated and since the produce from land is usually consumed by rent, taxes, obligations, and food for the family, any capital surplus and private property is largely expressed in livestock, particularly in the absence of valuable tools. [42] Also, land is at best owned by a man's kin, while livestock is personal property.

231 436 Livestock prices at the rural and provincial-urban markets are still quoted in Mariah Theresa Thalers, although the actual coin is now illegal and may not be used in transactions. The compromise that has developed is to quote MT thalers for livestock only, and to pay in paper or coins of the present legal Ethiopian currency at the rate of Ethiopian $1.50 per MT 1. --(U.S.$0.60). MT Thalers are quoted for sale only, because of the significance of such a transaction, while rent is quoted in modern Ethiopian dollars.

231 583 Cattle: An Amhara peasant may own from 1 to 150 cows, mean about 5. A rich peasant may own about 50 cows, a few bulls, a dozen oxen, 5 mules, over 50 sheep and and goats. In giving his daughter in marriage he may pridefully give her 20 cows, especially if the groom contributes an equal number. A poor peasant may be hard put to give his daughter 3 cows, which is a respectable minimum, and may have to borrow two cows to fill that, but he can hold off fulfillment of the contribution until a few

563 443 554 parative wealth may be envied, but his religion, and his habit of taking several wives from ex-slave (Barya), Sudanese, lowland females, places him on a level with the upper ethnic craftsmen class. The fact that his labor is not manual elevates him a bit. The full Arab from Yemen or Arabia is regarded as a foreigner, and there is little concern about him since he does not participate in the social hierarchy of the Coptic Amhara.

436 Silver coinage for major transactions, until recently, was the Maria Theresa Thaler, bearing the year 1780, even if coined much later, imported, and sometimes referred to as "machedo", sickle. The recent laws of the present emperor provide for confiscation and punishment for possession of this now illegal currency, but peasants and townsmen have them hidden and silversmiths can still obtain them with little difficulty. The habit of burying coins for safekeeping has carried over to modern paper money. Every year cases of buried paper money that decayed in the rainy season become the talk of the town. The former MT Thaler was divided as follows:

1 MT Thaler = 16" temun" silver coins of Menelik; the term "temun" is now used for silver ornaments, though the new Ethiopian 25¢ piece is actually used in exchange, or even in ornaments.

= 16 "gresh", the Egyptian-Turkish piastre coined in 1899, no longer used, and rarely seen.

436

= 2 "alad", Menelik half-thaler, no longer used.

= 4 "rub", quarter MT Thalers, no longer in use, but still occasionally quoted.

The term "gresh" is still used in its probable derivative, the well-known "gursha", meaning tip given to a servant, etc., apparently replacing an earlier term. Also, it is interesting that Gresham's Law functions also in Ethiopia: The new coinage, once accepted (rather than fear of prosecution) drove the old MT Thaler out of circulation. Furthermore, from time to time certain items of the new coinage become particularly popular for some temporary reason, and then are hoarded and absent from circulation.

471 In traditional Amhara material culture there is an absence of such processing industries, (except for specializations mentioned), as soap factories, flour mills, brick factories, textile factories, timber mills, sugar industries, power industries (no windmills), though the essentials for such industries exist. Foreigners have, [648] in recent decades, built a few small ones at major centers of population, since Menelik and the present Emperor began handing out concessions. There are economic and national reasons, e.g. the law that foreigners may only rent but not buy real estate. The present government of Ethiopia has a monopoly on and produces matches and cigarettes. Whether private or public, processing industries can be expected to increase gradually and only about

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

648 to assist us and order equipment to be given us for our journey, that he forgot all this, and also that he was not mindful of the friendship which they had established and sworn, since he did so little for the affairs of the King of Portugal. Neither on this account did he make any more haste, but always excused himself with his guest, and with being ill. On the 6th of July seven or eight horsemen arrived, very gaily caparisoned, these were Moors, and seemed to be honourable persons, they came from other countries, and brought many very beautiful horses, which they were bringing to pay as tribute which they owed to Prester John and the Barnagais. As the arrival of the Moors redounded to his profit, neither his guests nor his sickness impeded him. The great reception and honour which the Barnagais paid to these Moors gave us great trouble. The ambassador had told him that he wanted
648 twelve mules, and asked him to order them to be lent: he
661 said that he could not lend them, and that we should buy them. When we wished to buy these mules which the people of the country were selling to us, the servants of the Barnagais came and interrupted the purchase, telling the vendors not to sell them, and that if they sold them they would be punished, and the gold would be taken away from them, for in this country money is not current. This happened in such manner that the rumour of it spread throughout the country, and the people told us that even if they wished to sell to us they did not dare, from fear of the Barnagais, because he wished to sell his own mules, and therefore forbade their selling them. (He has another method with
436 the people of his country.) In all the kingdoms of Prester John money is not current, but only gold by weight, and the principal weight is called *ouquia*,[1] and this, which is an ounce, makes in weight ten cruzados, and for change there is a half ouquia, and from twelve drachms to ten make

[1] A gold coin in some parts of Africa.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

an ouquia. This Barnagais forbade the people in his country having any other weights except his own, and they had to ask the Barnagais or his factors for the weights whenever they had to sell or receive gold, so that he had knowledge of what was in the country, and he takes it when he pleases, according to what his country people say, who must know it well. 436

CAP. XXIX.—*Of the church of the town of Barra, and its ornaments, and of the fair there, and of the merchandise, and costumes of the friars, nuns, and priests.*

In this town of Barra there is a church of Our Lady, large, new, very well painted and well built, and handsomely ornamented with many brocades, crimson silks, and Mekkah velvets, and red camlets. The church in this town is served like that at Barua, only that the offices are more solemnized because the Barnagais resides here, and because here there are more clergy and an infinite number of friars. The church is managed by priests. I saw them make a procession round the church in the greater circuit, which is of the churchyard. In it there were many priests, friars, and men and women, because in this church the women receive the communion in the place where the laity do so. In that procession I saw the ornaments which I have mentioned: they must have taken quite thirty turns round the church chaunting like a litany, and sounding many drums and cymbals, as they sound them when they make a procession before the effigy of Our Lady on Sundays and feast days; and they sing and celebrate a feast; and likewise when they give the communion on feast days. They said that this procession was made in supplication to God for rain for their sowing. The bells are of stone, like those of other churches, and the bells badly made. In this town there is a great fair like that of Barua, and so likewise in all the 346 796 443

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

which we call of Guinea, there they are called zegra, quails, 136
pigeons, turtles, hawks, falcons, kites, eagles, thrushes, sparrows, swallows, nightingales, larks, wild ducks, of different kinds,[1] and other waterfowl, herons, cranes, *hemas*, and all other birds that may be in the world, and not known to us; and there are all in this country except magpies and cuckoos, which I never saw, nor heard of their being there.

There are so many apes, that in the kingdom of the Barnagais, in a town which is named Ceroel, at the time the harvest is ripe, they pursue them till they make them pass a mountain; and they keep guard over them in a pass by day, because at night they do not move about, and they give a certain provision to two men who keep guard over them until the corn is gathered in, when they let them loose, or leave off keeping watch over them.

There is much basil in the thickets, and there are none 137
of our trees except cypresses, plumtrees, and willows by the rivers; there are no melons, cucumbers, nor horse-radish.

In the country there is no gold or silver money, and pur- 436
chases are made by exchange of one thing for another, principally salt, which is current throughout the country as money.

There is linen there, but it gives no fibre, and no stuff is 248
made with it; there is much cotton, and stuff made of it; there is much coloured cloth, and there is a very cold country where they wear serge.

The churches there are well built, but the walls are not 346
well wrought, and they do not place anything upon them; they pitch [the roof] upon props, which reach from the ground upwards.

In the country there is gold, silver, copper and tin, but 135
they do not know how to get it out of the mines.

[1] *Adens, marrecas.*

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

492 second toes. Even the king rides bare-footed; and being used chiefly to mules, they are far inferior horsemen to the Arabs.

Price of Gold. Gold, at a medium, sells for 10 pataka
436 each wakea; or 10 derims, salt, at a medium 8 per pataka.
435 The piece (of salt), speaking of it identically, is called Kourman, but in estimation, or such a thing costs so many salts, they are called Amooli. These are the ordinary currency for the necessaries of life. For considerable purchases, gold is used; and there is great loss in cutting the wakea into derims, at least one in ten. The gold is got by
[316] washing the earth in water, in wooden dishes. The grains,
[325] that remain behind are put into a quill, melted down, and alloyed, probably by the Shangalla; for it is pale, and is never brought to market in its first form, but melted down into small rods, or ingots. In Joas's time a wakea was valued only at 8 patakas. Yasous Tanush, or the II. turned round, and reduced the Sennaar Shangalla; but they are now quite independant of Habbesh. Their fair is held at Buré in Damot.

804 *Weights and Measures.* The wakea (or ounce), in Abyssinia, is considered as 10 derims, or drams, and 12 ounces
436 make a litir, or rotol (pound). At Gondar, the capital of all Abyssinia, the wakea is 6 drams, 40 grains, Troy weight English, and divided into 10 drams of 40 grains. The small money is salt bricks, dug out of the mines at Dancali, near the myrrh country. Every wakea, in ordinary times, gives from 72 to 76 salts. In 1769, the wakea was 80 salts, and June 15th, 1771, the wakea sold at 34, but there was a great difference in the size of the bricks. These are little or not at all liable to waste, as M. Montesquieu supposes. Abyssinian gold at Mocha is 15 or 16 patakas when the Sennaar gold is 22, because the Agows, &c. alloy it with silver.

At Masuah, the current money is the Venetian sequin, the pataka, or queen's dollar, and half-dollars. For small money are used grains of glass, called borjook, three of which make a chebir (Vid. Book V. Chap. ii.)

Corn sold at Masuah for four patakas the ardep, which
436 contains about 24 measures of the country. Coffee, six ro-
804 tol per pataka, sometimes ten, or even 15 rotol. Honey,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chīqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chīqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chīqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chīqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chīqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chīqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 794

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories.

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense.

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.)

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver.

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression.

The Yearly Cycle

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cate that boys sometimes borrow the certificates of more successful friends and enter jobs under those assumed names. Often they live for many months with no livelihood at all. Eventually, some find work as houseboys, shine shoes, or peddle merchandise on the streets; others, on an impulse, sign up for life in one of the military services. Still others are reduced to begging, or stealing, or concocting stories with which to extract help from sympathetic foreigners.

The lives of such boys, whose number is large and steadily growing, are among the chief casualties of Ethiopia's transition to date. As they increase, their misery will become more vocal, and they may constitute an element of political unrest. Whether or not they become a political problem, they are already a social problem.

The modern adolescents, by contrast, comprise a small and determinate number.* In 1958–59, the year in which my research on them began, there were all together about 3,900 students in the academic secondary schools, 3,350 in other special schools at the secondary level, and 760 students at the post-secondary level. One source of information on these students was a questionnaire which was completed by 700 students: 500 at the secondary level, including 40 female students, in a total of 15 schools, and 200 male students in five colleges.[12] Some of the findings from this survey will be woven into the following text where appropriate.

Compared to the rest of their countrymen, and certainly those of the same age, the modern adolescents have lived in luxury. Most students at the secondary level, and all those at the college level, have been boarding students. At no cost to themselves or their parents, they have received full board and room, a token allotment of clothes, and their books. Day students have received instead a monthly allowance of Eth$20,† approximately the same amount that unskilled laborers earn for full-time work. Tuition is also free for all full-time Ethiopian students at all levels.

These "welfare school" conditions were designed to make further education attractive and possible for Ethiopian students, nearly all of whose families either can not or are unwilling to support their children for many years in school. In this, the parents are following long established Amhara custom, for in the traditional society boys who went off to church schools often did so, as we have seen, without the support of their parents, and in any case were expected to gain their livelihood by begging. Nowadays, if their children are admitted to one of the government secondary schools, even tradition-minded

* And one that grows steadily. In 1958 there were twenty-eight government secondary schools in the empire. By 1964 the number had increased to forty-seven.

† One Ethiopian dollar is equal to (U.S.) forty cents.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories. 565* 512 527 462 [517] [521]

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The Yearly Cycle 565* 796

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*765 *787 *793 539 tection against ganels (but as a category of agents, rather than as named individuals), against the shifta bandit, and against the wild animals of the lowlands. The prophylactic abinet that he acquires, although short on asmat, perhaps lacking telsem, and with few magical [437] [241] features of manufacture, he works into kitabs. While the student's initial stimulus for collecting these abinet is his own immediate needs, he is nonetheless aware of the commercial value of such abinet, in the form of commercial services for lowland peasants.

*793 484 Relatively few experienced debteras pay visits to the kola lands. The lowlands, considered unhealthful and dangerous by highlanders in general, are still less appealing to the mature debtera. He deprecates them for the absence of ecclesiastical establishments, and fears them for what he believes to be the shifta's predilection *755 *793 437 484 539 for robbing and murdering debteras.[27] In lieu of more expert services, and attracted by the moderate costs, the lowlander is often anxious to purchase kitabs from visiting students. The students, in anticipation, prepare a score or more of kitabs before traveling to the lowlands;

[27] Debteras attribute the shifta's murderousness to his fear of subsequent magical revenge by the debtera.

*755 *793 *437 484 539 a blank space is left on each kitab, to be filled in later with the client's name. In general, the student initially sells kitabs to the lowlands to assist him in gathering agricultural products. The kitabs are purchased with either crops or services, and only infrequently with money. The peasant's services include recommending the student's kitabs to his neighbors, safe storage of the goods which the student has collected, and lending draught animals to bring the student's sacks up to the highlands. Sometimes, enterprising students arrange their visits in order to obtain payment in cotton, a relatively valuable product which debtera students are unable to obtain otherwise.

*793 *787 808 [437] The student's experience selling kitabs in the lowlands has a significant effect on the course of his subsequent abinet career. First, his abinet interests are redirected. His previous acquisitions were abinet which served an immediate personal interest, and whose commercial value was adventitious. These commercial successes, however small-scale, frequently stimulate the student to obtain abinet which have an exclusively commercial value. Interest in personally useful abinet by no means ends during this period, however; often it is accelerated by the student's changing attitudes to the practice of abinet. There is a tendency to now perceive his moral interests as less opposed to these works than he had pre-

*787 *793 869 viously conjectured. Concomitantly, he renders these works morally acceptable by emphasizing their inoffensive goals and the divine and untainted sources of their abinet powers. Thus, he seeks more specialized academic abinet, from among those studies which enable him to learn quickly, or retain what he has learned, or extemporize well, or master any one of the ecclesiastical subjects of the debtera's curriculum.

*787 *793 869 437 Second, the student's commercial success often convinces him to give up entirely his earlier economic activities. In part, he is persuaded by the economic rewards of writing kitabs, since the profits can equal those obtained from selling kibe, while requiring neither the great capital outlay nor capital risk which characterizes kibe trading. Equally significant is the young man's pride in his publicly acknowledged abinet powers. He begins now to consciously assume a new identity as a self-sufficient manipulator of human and supernatural forces, a self-image which contrasts so obviously with the mendicant and passive character of his earlier years.

Third, he is able to accelerate the accumulation of a modest reserve of money. With this, he can purchase relatively specialized abinet, generally from fellow students who already own important studies. Before this time, the student could obtain relatively valuable abinet only from a knowledgeable debtera who was prepared to act

*787 *793 869

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*787 539 75 tious occupations, journeys and marriages (thus paral-
ling information also given in the kokob text).

Appendix D provides illustrations of medically relevant information which can be obtained from awdunigist texts.

*787 *278 *755 *793 539 In the main, a debtera acquires awdunigist texts individually, just as he collects digams, kitab recipes, and herbalist therapies.[30] Awdunigist repertoires therefore vary in comprehensiveness from debtera to debtera.

*787 539 178 *437 Moreover, "definitive" versions of awdunigist texts are unknown; whatever their common origins may have been, extant texts are probably unique products of many adventitious deletions and additions. Deletions are most likely when texts are transmitted from seller to buyer. At that time, details are sometimes withheld by the seller, in order to secure additional payments, or as a bond

[30] Over the last three decades, the accessibility of awdunigist texts has been affected by the publication, in Asmara, of a collection of these texts. Most are in Amharic, but perhaps a quarter are in Ge'ez entirely or in part. Although many debteras demean these texts, they are in fact used, particularly by "weak" debteras. Public illiteracy, ignorance of the book's existence, of where it can be obtained, of the precise manipulations it requires, together with the limited utility its contents hold for the layman, and the fear of putative satanic associations have prevented its diffusion to the debtera's public, however.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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against continued services from the buyer. This practice occurs, in fact, in the transmission of all categories of debtera works. For example, while relating therapeutic information, the seller may indicate that he has omitted an ingredient, or he may identify it with an ambiguous or obscure nomer. Should the would-be purchaser subsequently fail to satisfy the owner, the incomplete therapeutic notation must be deleted from the text. On the other hand, debteras frequently add information to texts, first inserting it as marginalia and then, once its efficacy has been accepted, including it within the text when recopying or transmitting it.

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*787
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more completely, is to violate the conventions of the gwadeña relationship, and to close it off to ego altogether. Moreover, the intense gwadeña relationship, which binds pairs of kiyne students is typically brittle, and is infrequent in later years when commercially valuable abinet are being acquired. Finally the gwadeña relationship is antithetical to the independent and aloof (kuruw) character associated with the man who owns strong abinet.

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*793
*787

The exchange of labor for abinet is difficult to arrange. An abinet owner must be found who is disposed to such exchanges, and has not already obtained someone to fulfill his needs. For the recipient, the exchange means often demeaning work over an extended period of time, with a humiliating lack of an effective quid pro quo, in order to acquire a single abinet study.

[439]
[435]

Debteras are not reluctant to price their abinet studies, in Ethiopian dollars, for prospective purchasers. Since a man's standing as a practitioner of abinet is intimately related to the effectiveness of his individual studies, the evaluation of his abinet against a nearly universal standard of value (Ethiopian dollars) is likely to be understood as an implicit personal challenge. Thus, the owner's evaluation of his abinet is inevitably greater than any amount likely to be paid. Prices range from E$50. to E$500., immense sums relative

*756 *787 to the modest cash reserves of the potential purchaser *793 whose money reserves are unlikely to exceed E$150. 435 There is no haggling, in the sense that the purchaser • 437 offers a counter-price which is closer to the study's real value, for injury to the owner's pride would be *[192] certain to end negotiations. Rather, the prospective purchaser asks for special consideration on the grounds that the seller is his wadajey ("friend", but not peer), and that his assistance is needed. If the abinet owner is amenable to the appeal, a price is set at one-half, one-quarter, or even less of the study's assessed value. Even so, the cost of abinet is sufficiently great to deplete the purchaser's reserves in short order should he persist with such purchases.

*756 Before a man can begin to exchange abinet for *787 abinet, he must obtain a sufficient variety of valuable *793 studies in order to interest other debteras in an ex- 437 change. Once acquired, an abinet repertoire proves itself a superior medium of exchange for acquiring more abinet. Unlike friendship, abinet are entirely liquid; unlike labor purchase, abinet exchange is neither demeaning nor time-consuming; unlike money pruchase, it involves neither principal in difficult price setting, and far from being exhausted, the abinet capital tends to grow the more a debtera "spends" of it.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*756
*787 A debtera is occupied by three concerns when ex-
*793 changing abinet subjects: First, he must be certain
• 437 that alter's study does not substantively duplicate, in whole or large part, abinet he already owns. However, a debtera does not exclude the acquisition of a study which duplicates the intention of one he already owns.

Second, he must learn whether alter's study is empirically effective or untested. A study's effectiveness is inferred from the owner's public reputation for achieving the designated ends; often, it is this reputation which first attracts the interest of a potential purchaser. Where this information is unavailable, the principals may agree to a test of the abinet; here, conditions relevant to the study's purported effects are simulated, often with the use of domestic animals in lieu of humans. Generally, such tests cannot be contrived for prophylactic or therapeutic works, however. When only the seller's assurance is available, the fear of punitive kifat works by the recipient provides an inducement for objectively evaluating the abinet's effectiveness. Finally, some studies are offered with the admission that they are untested. Proven works are considered far more valuable than untested ones, and each category tends to be exchanged within its separate sphere.

Third, the debtera's final concern is that the value of the studies he receives approximates the value of

*787 those he gives. The relative value of an abinet study
*793 is weighed against criteria recognized by both princi-
• 437 pals, although verbalized by neither during their nego-
tiations. These criteria refer to the study's goals,
its constituent elements, and its efficacy. 1) Criteria
regarding goals enable ego to assess the commercial
*[192] value of alter's study, if it is effective. Studies
whose goals involve issues of life and death, or serious
physical impairment, and studies with offensive intent
(kifat), are valued above those characterized by inessen-
tial or benign goals. A study whose goals are not or-
dinarily addressed by abinet or secular works is valued
over those made redundant by widely disseminated works.
A study which deals with a common interest of the deb-
tera's public is valued greater than one which addresses
an unusual concern. 2) Regarding constituent elements,
an abinet study is valued if its digam contains magical
names (asmat), but it is derogated if the digam simply
replicates materials available in ecclesiastical texts.
A study which calls for ingredients which are reasonably
accessible is valued more than one calling for rare items.
3) Finally, a study which works by true magic, asmat, is
valued over one which relies on mithat, a trick or illu-
*759 sion simulating the effects of asmat.

*756 Comparison with Secular Medical Capital. Rarely
869 does a layman acquire any disease name specialty beyond

*759
*756

869 those few he inherits. Additional acquisitions are discouraged for several reasons. First, the exchange of medical knowledge with other healers is difficult to arrange. A layman is unlikely to find another secular healer whose medical specialty he desires and who desires [437] one of the few disease name specialties he owns. Thus, it is generally cattle or money which must be exchanged for medical knowledge. Such purchases are relatively expensive, since the gain is only a minor increment in prestige and the tenuous possibility of earning modest material rewards after an extended period of professional obscurity. Further, the layman has available to him alternative forms of investment (mainly land, labor, and livestock), whose utilization is more consistent with the ethos of the Amhara peasant, and more remunerative (in prestige and material rewards) than the practice of new therapies.

The secular healer (particularly the <u>medhaniyt awakiy</u>) is reluctant to part with professional knowledge, even when a reasonable price is offered. Unlike the <u>abinet</u> capital of <u>debteras</u>, medical capital dissipates
*756 as it is "spent". When <u>debteras</u> exchange subjects,
*793 neither considers the other a rival in the specialties
869 which they exchange. Eventually, their paths are bound to part, as one or the other continues his travels over the Coptic highlands. Moreover, a <u>debtera</u> is not known

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

463
563 East countries, but it is not the elaborate caste system of
[565] India.

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438 Regional division of labor plays only a small role. When it does occur, as in case of the "burnos"-weaving and carpet-making of spots in Semyen, which survived until recently, it is a case of local survival of a craft that has experienced culture loss, fallen into disuse elsewhere. This is also believed to be true with regard to viticulture which seems to have been lost during the 19th century southeast of Lake Tana. It is the story of ancient Aksum all over again, where a 1700-year old stone cistern is to this day the major water supply and a marvel to the present inhabitants, as are the obelisks, stone steps, etc. where regional specialization does play some role, it is in a very limited sense. Certain districts of Begemdir province, for example, are more inhabited by Falashas than others, and the iron plowpoints and pottery may be preferred from there, especially in the dry season when travel is possible. The better togas are made by Muslim Ethiopians in suburban Gondar town. Hamlets of tanners are also encountered more often in the vicinity of a town like Gondar. Since so many basic crafts are handed down only in the family system, modern changes de-emphasizing the family economy, plus importation via Italian-built roads, will increasingly cause culture loss, especially in the rural districts. Already the contemptuous reference to "balagar sera" (rustic workmanship) are beginning to heard among urban Amhara (e.g. in connection with the plow and pottery).

443 or green ones for "alecha" meat sauce; tyeff grain; imported and native spices; linseed and nug oil seeds; firewood; chickens; donkeys and sheep and goats, but no more expensive livestock. Approaching feasts, fasts and rainy season change the emphasis and veriety of products and activities.

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439 [65] Import duty is high, as much as Eth$9.- per "taqa", about 45 meters. Some raw cotton is domestic, from the Gettit market of the Wolkait jungle border. "Taqa"

439 some spices, English razorblades, sewing needles, safety pins, Lux soap in hotelroom size, laundry soap cake, [442] kerosene, etc. The wholesalers, usually Arabs, buy these [443] and sell them to Muslim Ethiopian retailers. Sometimes, in bigger towns, Arabs open regular stalls and even stores to sell these items daily, as well as special luxuries such as chocolate, hard candy, and products of the central Ethiopian government such as matches (a government monopoly), cigarettes for Muslims (also a government monopoly), school notebooks with the picture of the Emperor on the title page, pencils, imported readymade eyeglasses, etc. On their return trips the trente-quatro trucks are heavily laden with produce such as tyeff, nug, linseed, peas, beans, honey, sheepskins, cowhides, and in some areas musk from the civet cat, and coffee.

438 The purchases of the farmer consist in greater part of items from other areas of Ethiopia, notably, salt, coffee, spices, some of the raw cotton and matches. Much of this is still carried by traditional caravan, where no roads exist or where they have been washed out. Caravans form after the middle of the dry season, and return just before the rainy season, so that the farmer can stock up on staples.

435 To pay for these purchases and for some of the imported items such as razor blades, the farmer brings his produce, but prices fluctuate between seasons, with every arrival or departure of caravans (or trucks), and with distance. For example, 1 quintal (100 kilos) of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chĭqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chĭqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chĭqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chĭqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chĭqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chĭqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 794

137 centers of old world agriculture in which the Neolithic
241 economy originated, possibly contributing to the initial development of ancient Egyptian civilization. Like the highlands of Yemen, the highlands of Ethiopia seem to represent ancient centers of TERRACED AGRICULTURE. It was in the Kaffa province of Ethiopia that coffee originated. It was carried to Yemen, planted there, and exported from coastal harbors (like the town of Mocha) through the Red
439 Sea into the Mediterranean. Coffee is still Ethiopia's most important export. Other major exports include sundried hides, sheep and goat skins, cereals, edible oils, and gold.

On the other hand, it is noteworthy that major imports consist primarily of items not of major importance in subsistence, but which reflect secondary needs: cotton sheeting (abujedid), cotton yarn, cotton piece goods, raw cotton, naphtha. The major exception is salt, still a major import.[6]

137 Many varieties of wild fruit and vegetables are eaten
262 only in small quantities, especially by the Amhara, partly because of the abundance of cereal crops and legumes, partly because of a cultural attitude that despises "wild food" fit for use only in case of crop failure, famine due to warfare, and for outcasts.

Another group of highly useful plants which grow wild in Ethiopia are the oilseeds. A number of these are planted and used in the diet.

137 In the lower regions of the plateau, mainly south of
241 the Amhara area, a "false banana" fiber crop called muz or
248

6. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No12, May 1947, 4pp.

285 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large bas-
415 ket of withes, "qerchat", used to measure 26 kilos of pin-head-grained tyeff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqa-ha"), or of a variety of reeds ("sabaz", "geramta", "akar-ma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofada") made by shep-herding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by morocco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agalgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("mu-day") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("qwacha")

285 There is also a purely ornamental fiber plate, en-
[531] tirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, mostly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wanchar")
411 of a strong fiber ("nacha"). When completed, it has a
857 loop on one end to hook over a finger. A pebble is placed in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end
[244] released at just the right speed and direction. It can stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

● 439 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the
412 Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight razor, "arab melach", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

439 perhaps replacing obsidian blades. They are now in turn
442 being replaced by European safety razor blades even on remote rural big markets. These are called "lesa melaçh" although very commonly still sold by an Arab trader. The
439 small glass drinking bottle called "berellē", used in place
415 of a cup for mead, has been brought by caravans from the Middle East since the Ottoman Turkish period. The European drinking glass, "berçheqo" is still rare in rural areas.

F. Clothing

291 There is a substratum of wearing skins in all of Ethiopia, sheepskin particularly and even leopard skin. Among the Amhara this appears among poor wandering church students, and in the fact that certain textile articles, notably the "lämd", symbolize the leopard skin of the warrior which he still wore at the time of the accession of the present emperor. This type of clothing is in the African tradition.

But the clothing of the Amhara today is largely of cotton, plus a wool cape for the feudal "great men" or
[77] landowning farmer. Both have come to Abyssinia from the Middle East areas: the long shirt, "qämis" probably came during the 19th century, together with the white Indian jodphurs (that some trace as late as Lord Napier's campaign); the wool burnus is believed to have entered as long ago as the 5th century A.D., together with Coptic Christianity.[66]

66. Rohrer, E.F.: Beiträge Zur Kenntnis der materiellen Kultur der Amhara. Bern, 1932, p. 19.

291 [439] Raw cotton and cotton sheeting have long been imported, and still are, but the toga (shamma), probably the oldest of the Abyssinian cotton garments, is made domestically, from cotton spun by the housewife and woven on the handloom of the weaver.

The cotton clothing now considered "traditional" is [165] always white. The explanation given by the pious is that white is the expression of mourning, because of the passing from the earth of Jesus Christ.

[294] Tailoring is done by poor semi-specialized Amhara men at "big markets". Garments are made with great care, to follow the traditional style and also fit well. There are no new fashions in these costumes, for the prevalent pattern is conservative: to be properly dressed for the occasion, in the style of one's forebears. Variety exists in trousers: the jodphurs which reach to the bare feet, as former clothing of feudal lords, are more prestigeful than the wide peasant trousers that narrow to the leg just below the knee. The shirt, worn kneelength above the trousers, similarly narrows on the forearm, and is therefore called "ej tebab" (lit. narrow-sleeve) in the vernacular, instead of "qamis", the proper name (possibly from French chemise, though no Amhara would admit this foreign name for his "traditional" shirt). The only untailored garment is the toga, but this is used for expression of moods and situational conditions (see "language of the shamma").

296 Laundering is done in or near riverbeds, or brooks, by women, housewives or female ex-slaves, using the dried

291 and women, as protection from rain and cold in the rainy season. Finely embroidered, it was also a garment of high prestige, since the king himself presented it to his liege lords from his own royal workshop, frequently made by imported artisans from the Middle East and their Abyssinian [439] apprentices, often slaves. It is still worn by feudal lords in remote rural areas, but has to be bought from caravan traders who import it, though there are rumors that they were until recently still produced in the district of Bäjäda in remote, mountainous Semyen sub-province.

292 The old prestige of the "burnos" lives on in the "kabä", the royal (hoodless) cape or mantle, of dark wool with embroidered stiff collar and borders, draped over the shoulders, and reaching to the ankles. This garment is still the prerogative of royalty, of nobility on festive occasions, and of priests. It was the garment seen in western newsreels at the time Emperor Haile Selassie wore it in Geneva and London, even with his European suit.

286 During the time of the roving Amhara feudal chiefs, even in Menelik's time, when capitals were no more than tent cities, carpet making was extensive. Some were used as tapestry, by the nobility. The best were imported, but there was considerable domestic production. A type called "kozä" was woven, surviving for a while in remote areas such as the aforementioned "Bäjäda" district in Semyen, but not of any economic significance. It died out as an art, with the death of the old craftsmen, increase in imports, and the end of the tent cities. Cheap rugs have replaced the carpets, just as imported black chintz has replaced

286 An experienced weaver can throw the shuttle as quickly as every 1/2 second, which would mean 120 picks a minute. It is a one-man operation, and the junior helper is employed primarily to carry the portable comb hand bobbins and make fastenings as indicated. An average, simple shamma takes about two days of work, but cases have been known when an experienced weaver in the prime of life, working uninterruptedly for 12 hours from sunrise to sunset, without rest and withour mishap, did it in one day, because of the pressure of an approaching marriage. The marriage months following the harvest are the busy season, ending at the approach of the light rains. Often a weaver takes 3 days for an average shamma, with long rests during the work day; a "kutta" toga may well take a week.

Weavers usually work by special order only and do not store any products for more advantageous sale, for the "season". They are craftsmen, not traders, particularly the Falashas, and they employ no middleman. Thus the transaction is on the interpersonal level. This is even true in the provincial towns. Only in Addis Ababa can a market section be found where traders store and sell readymade shammas, but nearly always they are of the muslin, cheesecloth-type variety, with a selection of colorfully embroidered, narrow borders.

286 386 439 Traditional dying is rarely of the cloth, but mostly of threads which are then used in embroidery. In the past many of these red and blue dyes were imported from the coast, from India, or colored threads

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

286 pulled from imported cloth. Now most of these dyes are
386 imported from Europe, and many are colorfast only in
[439] cold water (which causes little difficulty as most washing is in cold water). Such embroidery must be paid for extra, but the simple, narrow, single-colored border of the shamma, of the rural type, is included in the price.

286 For such a peasant shamma, the weaver receives
434 from Eth$5 to 8.- depending on whether or not the customer supplied all the prepared cotton. An average, experienced weaver can usually get enough orders to earn about Eth$200.- per year, in the rural area. If he does no farming other than gardening, his food cost may be Eth$140.- per annum. The average weaver is left with more cash than the farmer, who rarely has more than Eth-$30.- left in cash at the end of the year. More often the weaver also farms, since his "season" does not conflict with the major active farming season. A hard-working weaver of solid reputation has the opportunity to accumulate comparative wealth, at least theoretically, but since most rural ethnic specialists, including the Falashas, are not much concerned with commercial profit, few do. It occurs more often among Muslim town weavers.

286 The social position of the weaver, apart from his
554 ethno-religious affiliation, gives him a high place among working specialists, almost equal to that of the musician (if it were not for the fact that the weaver is usually non-Coptic). He is above the status of a smith, and there is no suspicion of black magic attached to the

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439 bales of finished material include white khaki, "mäbruq"; a thinner and cheaper quality, "mahmädi"; and colorful prints, sometimes of rayon and even silk, "bala mänäter", used by the Coptic clergy to wrap the tabot in, or to make colorful umbrellas for processions.

In the past, most imports were for the top feudal chiefs and the clergy (e.g. chintz for the mantle replacing some uses of the older burnos). Now every 439 291 Amhara, even if poor, wants to own a pair of white Jodphurs, for going to town, to church and to special feasts. In the cities, the semi-educated now also sport a long-sleeve, khaki bush jacket, the "duba", worn usually under a light shamma instead of a peasant one, and only fully educated top officials have gone over to full European dress. This has steadily increased imports of 439 cotton cloth, ever since Menelik's victories made even [293] the poorer Amhara feel "noble". The sun-umbrella once reserved for the king, "jan tela" became the ambition of every peasant housewife. Little porcelain cups, "fenjal", are often the only item of foreign origin, besides cotton cloth, found even in remote hamlets, for the use of honored guests.

The drawing power of the big markets was increased still more when the Italians built roads to some of them during 1936-1940. Their heavy trente-quatro trucks bring imported items mostly from Asmara and the Red Sea coast: blankets, wood or glass beads for necklaces, sandals, Egyptian rubber sneakers, Yemen incense and

439 some spices, English razorblades, sewing needles, safety pins, Lux soap in hotelroom size, laundry soap cake, [442] kerosene, etc. The wholesalers, usually Arabs, buy these [443] and sell them to Muslim Ethiopian retailers. Sometimes, in bigger towns, Arabs open regular stalls and even stores to sell these items daily, as well as special luxuries such as chocolate, hard candy, and products of the central Ethiopian government such as matches (a government monopoly), cigarettes for Muslims (also a government monopoly), school notebooks with the picture of the Emperor on the title page, pencils, imported readymade eyeglasses, etc. On their return trips the trente-quatro trucks are heavily laden with produce such as tyeff, nug, linseed, peas, beans, honey, sheepskins, cowhides, and in some areas musk from the civet cat, and coffee.

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435 To pay for these purchases and for some of the imported items such as razor blades, the farmer brings his produce, but prices fluctuate between seasons, with every arrival or departure of caravans (or trucks), and with distance. For example, 1 quintal (100 kilos) of

651 dition; with fertility of soil, size of plot, size of harvest in a given year, constituting merely secondary
651 427 considerations. For the tribute is regarded as payment also for the right to squat on the land, to gather dead-wood and cowdung for fuel, wood and nature-grown fibers for utensils, pasture cattle and donkeys, build a hut, use the water in the brook. Consequently, a greedy landlord parcels out his land in smallest possible plots, to receive as much profit as possible, and he is aided and abetted in this by the poor tenants who are so jealous of each other that they complain if their neighboring tenant has been granted more land than he can farm without servants. The tribute for such a minimum plot to the landlord thus takes the form of a "quitrent" (now that the statute-labor has been abrogated officially, though not always actually):

1 madiga of grain (usually tyeff), referred to as "amsho"

plus 1/2 madiga of "qolo" (usually barley, for roasted condiments or beer-making).

651 439 Only in export duties and import tariffs does the central government have full control. Export taxes, ranging usually from 28 - 50% on coffee, the major valuable export, are levied and collected by the Ministry of Finance. This product comes from the southwest, Jimma sub-province, or Harar, in the southeast, both areas conquered by Menelik II from the Galla, and therefore under more unchallenged central administration.

651 Import duties are collected on the relatively limited
439 routes of access to the country, e.g. on cotton sheeting, and on modern "luxury" items imported for Europeans in Addis Ababa.

202 Communications were recognized by both Emperor Menelik II and Haile Selassie I as one of the foremost bottlenecks. At the turn of the present century and in some areas even later, messages and orders from and to provincial administrators were still carried by the traditional runner on horseback, carrying the message wedged in the top of a cleft stick, which assured safe con-
206 duct even through valleys dominated by bandits. Menelik II introduced telegraph and telephone service at least to the major provincial capitals, and this has been improved since, though the rural district headquarters often still are without either form of modern communication, not to speak of the rural hinterland.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 he had, since he was Arraz of the Chaufas, that is, head or
701 captain of the men at arms, was to go about like a man at
631 arms. In the fashion that he went, there followed behind him twenty or thirty men with spears and bucklers, so that he goes about the court like a provost with his men. I knew another Arraz Tagale, and Arraz Jacob, lords of large lands, and many other Xuums, lords of lands, but without titles. Thus the Barnagais is the lord of many
643 lords, and of many lands and people, and so he and all
631 these lords that have been mentioned are subject to the
651 Prester John, and he removes and appoints them as he
439 pleases: so they pay to him large dues. As all these lords and their lordships are on the side of Egypt and Arabia, from whence come the good horses, and the brocades and the silks, they pay in these same goods: that is to say, horses, brocades, and other silks. They come to the Barnagais with all these dues, and the Barnagais to Prester John, and pays for himself and for the others, in each year, a hundred and fifty horses; as to the brocades and silks, it cannot be known how much they amount to, only I heard say that they were many; I also heard that they pay a large sum of cotton cloths from India for the customs which they levy in the port of Arquiquo.

CAP. XXV.—*Of their method of guarding their herds from wild beasts, and how there are two winters in this country: and of two churches that are in the town of Barua.*

[621] The settlement of this town of Barua and of those
231 adjoining it, is this. There are ten, twelve, or fifteen houses, and one walled and closed yard, served by a gate: in this yard they shut up their domestic cows which they use for their milk and butter, and also small flocks, and mules and asses. They keep the gate well fastened, and a great fire,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5 •
Ethiopia MP1

3

The World of The Amhara Peasant

The life of the peasantry has been a constant setting for the Amhara drama. It is the faithful pedal point against which the ups and downs of Ethiopian history have been played. We cannot savor that history fully without becoming closely acquainted with the peasant himself.

A 121 565*

If understanding the peasantry is important for a truer picture of the Abyssinian past, it is indispensable for a sensible approach to Ethiopia's future. Ethiopia is and will remain for a long time a predominantly agricultural nation, one whose exports—chiefly coffee, skins, and oilseeds—depend almost exclusively on rural output. The one economist to have discussed the problem at any length in print maintains that agriculture is the one area in which Ethiopia can reasonably expect significant economic development in the foreseeable future.[1] Conscious efforts to stimulate peasant productivity, however, may issue in stagnation or even setbacks if they are not based on a realistic understanding of the peasants' own attitudes and conditions of life.

A E [433] [439]

Ethiopians who are striving to modernize their country have for the most part lost touch with the peasantry. If they were born and raised in one of the cities, they may have had no direct contact with the peasantry at all. If their origins are rural, they have been oriented all their school days toward gaining a modern education and tend, wittingly or not, to ignore what they can of their past. Nor are they helped much in this regard by foreign technical experts, who tend to have a modernist bias and typically know still less about the indigenous peasantry. Understanding of the peasantry by scholars, on the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571
and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178
of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession 565
of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554
ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642]
ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177]
rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556]
imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by
allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642]
growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647]
nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701]
force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178
Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests 571
on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554
the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871
the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178
tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565
the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643]
political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178
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* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 [439]
million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

651 the hands of the feudal landlords, mostly in produce, though the new Education Tax is paid in cash. The sales tax on horses, mules, donkeys and cattle, collected at the big markets by the old "nägadras" is now supposed to be accumulated at the "gemja bet" of the provincial capital, to be forwarded to Addis Ababa once every month, sometimes after deduction of expenses incurred locally by the central government. The same procedure is followed with income taxes, which, in a provincial capital such as Gondar, are stated officially as averaging Eth$1.50 per taxpayer per year.

651 441 [494] The highest local income tax is paid by the local branch of the widespread trading company of Besse Co., which has a monopoly on gasoline sales, and does trucking, imports and exports from the provinces, and which pays Eth$750.-per annum in Gondar, a very small percentage of its actual income. [505] The next-highest local taxpayer is Navigatana Co, formerly of Italian origin, which controls the diesel boats which monopolize modern traffic across Lake Tana. [494] The third-highest local taxpayer is an Arab wholesale merchant, who operates at irregular intervals in import, export, and trucking, westward to the Sudan and eastward to Eritrea, on the Italian-built roads.

651 But in the strictly rural, agricultural environment, tributes and taxes are still measured per "madiga" (lit. potful) of tyeff grain, received by the feudal landlord ("balbat") or landowning local church. The amounts are largely determined by local custom and tre-

557 household both in rural areas or towns, also to do
565 plowing for the freehold farmer and help in the harvest. Servants are usually permanently employed, and therefore do not usually leave even if the employer is behind in his monthly wage payments. Salary and food are received with a bow and cupped hands. The servant addresses the master with the extra polite "gētoch" (lit. masters, i.e. plural), walks in front of the master's mule to make way, slightly behind him when both are on foot, and never lets his master carry anything.

Long interpersonal relations usually improve the position of the servant to master, and it is not in the servant's interest to change jobs, or to go to another area where he is unknown. A landless "gabbar" may try to attach himself to a well-to-do household as "retainer ("zēga"), without wages, doing a servant's work in the hope of occasional, seasonal gifts, a share of the produce, or, in town, a share in trade. For, a servant or retainer who is Amhara "attentam" and Coptic Christian becomes like a member of the extended family. The proverb says:

[539] "When (women) grind (grain) together,
there is no mistress".

556 Economic wealth enables each of these social
565 classes to achieve some upward social nobility, within limits. But there are not many opportunities to accumulate much wealth. Traders can raise their status
[441] in towns, despite doubtful ancestry. The same is true
294 of tailors, a very recent occupation in town, where
565 foot-operated Singer sewing machines have enabled men

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a 121
society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by 56
that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive frame- 178
work of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are 181
embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is
in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethio- [571]
pia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively 565
stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and 554
wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents; tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the
statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as [463]
weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the mer- 565
chant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the 554
small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was 441
accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an 463
Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be [186]
tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels.
Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes 565
low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Low- 567
est in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from 554
the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), 463
and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced 565
sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the
society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values [181]
of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.

621 as a means for dicusing and strengthening a risteña
869 family's economic and social interests within the parish.
241 There are two conspicuous exceptions. Should a boy bear
[732] a physical disability so severe that he will be unable
to perform the basic subsistence activities of Amhara
men, particularly plowing, he may be enrolled in the
parish school as a prelude to a non-agricultural career
beyond his natal parish. The alternatives are few.
[463] work as an artisan is appropriate for Muslim and Falasha,
[441] but shameful for an Amhara; while employment as a mer-
[563] chant is less objectionable, the peasant is generally
without the necessary skills, contacts, and capital;
military service is beyond his abilities; thus, only the
Church and government remain. Regarding the Church, the
priesthood is closed to him, since a priest must be phy-
sically whole, and capable of standing unassisted during
[647] the performance of the Mass. The remaining ecclesiasti-
cal and government career choices assume that a boy will
achieve literacy at the parish school and subsequently
*793 depart from his natal community. The second exception
621 to the local focus of the parish school, is the small
869 number of boys who are offspring of debtera-teachers ser-
593 ving in parish churches. The ties of these men to their
parishes-of-residence are usually only professional, and
they are rarely risteñas, it is moreover their profes-
sional ethos which influences them to seek an extensive

• 441 The Alternative Career Paths. In choosing between
[869] material and professional interests, some men forsake
*[793] their erstwhile ecclesiastical goals altogether, to ap-
ply in secular occupations (particularly as scribes and
merchants) the skills that they have acquired or perfec-
*[192] ted during their student days. Exemplary among these is
the kibe (butter) merchant. Occasionally, profits ac-
cumulated by gathering and begging are invested in the
purchase of lowland butter and the means for transporting
it to highland markets. Profits earned from kibe trading
are sometimes sufficient to promise a standard of living
which exceeds that of the peasants with whom the student
trades. The student who yields to the temptations of a
full-time trading career generally establishes an annual
cycle in which a portion of his kibe profits are reinves-
ted in livestock for subsequent sale at regional markets.

*793 A second category of students reverses these priori-
869 ties, and disregards non-ecclesiastical goals altogether.
433 Such students believe that, for themselves, it is faith
in the Almighty which must sustain them in their tra-
vail. Thus, even excursions into the lowlands are re-
*[192] placed by exclusively ecclesiastical activities. Sub-
sistence needs are met by copying Church books for re-
sale, participating in the Mass in return for a por-
tion of the grain tithes given to the church, and dining
at baptisms and annual memorial feasts (fehitat). In

439 some spices, English razorblades, sewing needles, safety pins, Lux soap in hotelroom size, laundry soap cake, [442] kerosene, etc. The wholesalers, usually Arabs, buy these [443] and sell them to Muslim Ethiopian retailers. Sometimes, in bigger towns, Arabs open regular stalls and even stores to sell these items daily, as well as special luxuries such as chocolate, hard candy, and products of the central Ethiopian government such as matches (a government monopoly), cigarettes for Muslims (also a government monopoly), school notebooks with the picture of the Emperor on the title page, pencils, imported readymade eyeglasses, etc. On their return trips the trente-quatro trucks are heavily laden with produce such as tyeff, nug, linseed, peas, beans, honey, sheepskins, cowhides, and in some areas musk from the civet cat, and coffee.

438 The purchases of the farmer consist in greater part of items from other areas of Ethiopia, notably, salt, coffee, spices, some of the raw cotton and matches. Much of this is still carried by traditional caravan, where no roads exist or where they have been washed out. Caravans form after the middle of the dry season, and return just before the rainy season, so that the farmer can stock up on staples.

435 To pay for these purchases and for some of the imported items such as razor blades, the farmer brings his produce, but prices fluctuate between seasons, with every arrival or departure of caravans (or trucks), and with distance. For example, 1 quintal (100 kilos) of

162 632 433 463 of the town's total population, support themselves by working among the densely packed rows of beer houses and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 779 563 [197] [167] [142] Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejoratively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinctively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian wives. [443] [442] Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 563 463 [197] [562] A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people, predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics. Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

*793 869 222 five weeks before it is ready to be woven into a tsifit, a food hamper and table around which the Amhara meal is eaten. Because the students cannot afford so long a hiatus from their studies, the grasses are dried only a week or so, in order to lighten them for the trip back [735] to the highlands. During their stay in the lowlands, the students support themselves by begging food from local farmers. Enterprising students often gather twice the amount of gramta they can carry, leaving the surplus to be taken up to the highlands in January.

*793 869 The gramta is brought to the student's hut at the kiyne school for storage and drying. Although the stu- [442] dents are anxious to sell immediately upon drying, both price and demand are low then, since the weavers, peasant [286] women, have no leisure for tsifit making until March. In *[192] the meanwhile, the student makes either traditional umbrellas of gramta for sale at the regional market, or seleyen, shrouds which he sells in the churchyard to mourners.

[434] Students also beg crops, a portion of which they consume and the remainder of which is sold at market. For a four week period, during October and November, the student begs a traditional double handful of pulses from farmers. During a two to three month period from February to April, students beg cereals and other crops (especially, cayenne). Because the amounts of produce

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obtained are often considerable (100 kilos and more), arrangements must be made for obtaining a donkey.

[735] However great his needs may be, a student cannot
[442] expect to participate in all of these activities, since this would leave insufficient time for his kiyne studies. However, gramta gathering and pulse begging are sometimes both engaged in during a single year.

Thus, the young debtera student finds himself transported from the benign enviornment of his natal parish to one in which only self-reliance and resourcefulness can secure his chosen goals and maintain his physical well-being. Ultimately, he must make a bitter choice
[442] between professional and material satisfaction. The
[735] profits from gramta sales, and the foodstuffs he has begged would much ameliorate his misery. Yet, in spite of his pressing subsistence requirements, the student sets aside only a minor portion of his profits for these needs. He exchanges most of these goods for money, which he retains as a fluid and durable capital with which to purchase necessary professional articles (mainly books) and to support his future commercial ventures. During the years of his kiyne studies, his assets accumulate at the rate of perhaps E$25. per annum.[25]

[25] A significant sum where per capita gross national product is E$116. (EAS:134); E$1.=U.S.$0.40.

tants and their customs than the average Amhara.

571 624 566 Thus, the officials with whom the average Amhara has to deal are the headman (cheqa shum), the district tax-collector, the thiefcatcher-in white, and the judge of the nearest market town; also, the priest and/or new, young teacher of written Amharic and arithmetic for the first and second grade. Very often, the governor, who is usually a former feudal lord himself, may grant the posts of district chief (worada shum) and lieutenant (mislanē) to the lower nobility, or their sons; while they in turn draw on their loyal retainers for the more local jobs of headman and thiefcatcher-in-white. In this manner the former feudal structure of human relationships is retained in the old Amhara provinces, despite the official breakup of the system at the top levels. The former feudal chief may even still be addressed by his old title, which has been officially transformed from a military to a civilian significance, but he is still the "telleq sāw" ("great man" and conservative pacesetter.

443 369 This pattern of residential kin-hamlets and feudal relationships changes only in the urban centers which grow out of permanent market spots. The market area is usually located on a little hill, called "arada". Soon a church is built there, and a public area below the hill is cleared of bush to serve as a camping place for caravans, and as a race course for the young Amharas' horse games on Christmas, Epiphany and other feast days. On the hill, the district chief or governor builds his "palace", with a large courtyard for his retainers and office-seekers. The local judges gradually graduate from their table-beneath-the-cy-

443 369 press to more permanent quarters. Arabs set up more permanent stalls at the market. Girls "between marriages" set up their "hotel services" in makeshift shacks, featuring an imported double bed, and foods like the housewife makes at home, including daily fresh beer. A bizarre variety of trade goods pours in, of foreign or domestic origin. Finally, the government sets up an elementary school-- the most recent development, usually post-1942.

B. Shelter: The Amhara Hut.

342 The Amhara circular hut of wattle and daub, with its overhanging roof to carry off the rains, is called "tuqul" (now more often "sar Byet", i.e. thatched house; in some districts, "gojo"). It does not differ basically from the typical habitation of the Cushitic-speaking Galla, of cen-
[84] tral Ethiopia. But further south several distinctly different types are encountered, following ethno-linguistic and tribal lines.

The "tuqul" may contain one room or two, through an interior separation or special elevation. It usually houses both the biological family of procreation and their more important livestock which are brought in at night for fear of hyenas. Tuquls in more elaborate hamlets include special storage tuquls, a kitchen tuqul, and even a guest tuqul which may double as extra storage space for the largest beer jars. During the rainy season, when temperatures, especially at night, drop considerably, the family huddles closely around the central fireplace inside the tuqul, and in that 3-month season the tuqul can be considered overcrow-

323 harvest in the first month. Cash income from this occupation in the case of a diligent craftswoman can amount to Eth$50.-per year, which means at least 50 large beer jugs or at least 150 smaller kitchen pottery. Such a craftswoman is called "antäränya" or the general term for craftsman, "kayla" (which, however, is often considered an insult). She may be freed from other labors, particularly spinning, in her own household. But in general she considers it a sideline, for some cash income, or to please the landlord by supplying his household and tenants with pottery at very low prices.

323 443 Most Falasha craftswomen do not like to sell on the big market, despite the much better prices there. The reason they give is that they may face insults during the usual dickering that precedes purchase, and also that they do not wish to arouse the envy of their Coptic Amhara neighbors by accumulating wealth. Another reason is that the big markets take place invariably on Saturday, on which day the Sabbath-observing Falashas cannot go to market or trade, and the Muslim middleman would absorb the extra profit that comes from trading at the market. However, Falasha men do follow the latter alternative with their plowpoints.

323 This disinterest of Falasha craftswomen in developing their economic potentials has led to conservatism in regard to modern change. Though very curious about European pottery brought in the Italian occupation, particularly about shape and glazing, they did not adopt European methods, partly because of technical limitation of power and fuel as well as techniques, partly for the

326 523 [143] Another difficulty is that the Falasha, observing Sabbath on Saturday when the big markets are in operation, cannot market any surplus of iron products directly, even if they wanted to, and must use a middleman, usually a Muslim, who absorbs any extra profit that might accrue in town. Thus the economic significance of their craft remains entirely in the old pattern, and is not developing in a modern direction, which it might have as a result of recent Western contact, stimulation and tools. The Falasha are recasting every part of their own rifles except the barrel, and their womenfolk have attempted to make glass out of sand (with little success) and modern Yemenite clay incense burners (with more success).

C. Carpentry.

322 Carpentry has already been characterized as minimal, incidental, merely semi-occupational among the Amhara, and as a tangential task of the ironsmith toolmaker. At best, the carpenter ("tarabi") is a part-time specialist.

The riflestock, of wanza wood, made by the ironsmith, often leads to his being asked to do other special woodwork, e.g. saddlemaking. If he becomes proficient in it, he may do nothing else during part of the year, and then send the finished, wooden saddle to the faqi tanners for a leather cover. For his own labor he may charge as much as Eth$8.- a better profit than that achieved by the average ironsmith. Wanza wood (Cordia abyssinica) is also used for the legs of the "alga" bed, so that the

464 632 happen and can be talked about. Here caravans arrive with all kinds of trade goods, and though the Amhara is not a trader in his culture pattern, he does hire on as transportation helper, and will have his own donkey carry some goods for sale.

443 There is a small daily market in each town. Where no town is near, one day a week a small rural market takes place (e.g. every Tuesday at Laqwamiya in the district of Seqelt) so that farmer and trader can meet Monday through Friday, at these markets set up at crossroads, in a grove of trees, or near a church center.

The big Saturday market takes place in a town terminal of caravan routes; nowadays at the end of an Italian road, also, e.g. at Qolarba in Dembea, where Italian trente-quatro trucks carry imports and exports to Asmara, Eritrea, and the coast, while caravans carry goods from and to the Sudan. Gondar town is an older and bigger Saturday market. To these markets are brought surplus farm products. All routes lead to it, and the well-to-do ride there on mules, their servants beating out a road for them among pack donkeys and pedestrians. In return, Ethiopian retailers (often Muslim) sell goods bought from Arab wholesalers.

While there is some duplication of items of sale at these markets, the daily markets specialize in items used by or obtained from the household: fresh butter sold on a leaf, to put on the hair; melted butter for cooking in "wot"; red bärbärä pods of varying strength,

443 or green ones for "alecha" meat sauce; tyeff grain; imported and native spices; linseed and nug oil seeds; firewood; chickens; donkeys and sheep and goats, but no more expensive livestock. Approaching feasts, fasts and rainy season change the emphasis and veriety of products and activities.

438 The big Saturday market emphasizes items of long-distance trade such as salt, from the lowland plain of Areho, in Danakil, bordering on French Somaliland. Bricks of this coarse-grained salt "Amolye" were formerly used as money, their value increasing with the distance from the place of origin. This has been gradually discontinued during the reign of the present Emperor, and salt is now also imported in crushed pebbles from the Sudan, called "Senar" after the area of origin. The big bar has become rare, is called "lemadaw", and costs from Eth$4.- for a big one to Eth 50¢ for a little one.

438 Coffee comes from Jimma. Raw cotton is sold by
439 weight, from the Matamma border of the Sudan, brought on camel back. Spices (e.g. abusda) and incense come from as far as Yemen. Razor blades come from England. Imports from the Sudan include much cotton cloth: "abujedid" for shirt-making, more expensive cotton "stock" material, and now also khaki cloth for shorts and modern bush jackets.

439 Import duty is high, as much as Eth$9.- per "ta-
[65] qa", about 45 meters. Some raw cotton is domestic, from the Setit market of the Wolkait jungle border. "Taqa"

439 some spices, English razorblades, sewing needles, safety pins, Lux soap in hotelroom size, laundry soap cake, [442] kerosene, etc. The wholesalers, usually Arabs, buy these [443] and sell them to Muslim Ethiopian retailers. Sometimes, in bigger towns, Arabs open regular stalls and even stores to sell these items daily, as well as special luxuries such as chocolate, hard candy, and products of the central Ethiopian government such as matches (a government monopoly), cigarettes for Muslims (also a government monopoly), school notebooks with the picture of the Emperor on the title page, pencils, imported readymade eyeglasses, etc. On their return trips the trente-quatro trucks are heavily laden with produce such as tyeff, nug, linseed, peas, beans, honey, sheepskins, cowhides, and in some areas musk from the civet cat, and coffee.

438 The purchases of the farmer consist in greater part of items from other areas of Ethiopia, notably, salt, coffee, spices, some of the raw cotton and matches. Much of this is still carried by traditional caravan, where no roads exist or where they have been washed out. Caravans form after the middle of the dry season, and return just before the rainy season, so that the farmer can stock up on staples.

435 To pay for these purchases and for some of the imported items such as razor blades, the farmer brings his produce, but prices fluctuate between seasons, with every arrival or departure of caravans (or trucks), and with distance. For example, 1 quintal (100 kilos) of

435 tyeff in Gondar brings as little as Eth$10.- but in Addis Ababa Eth$30.- and more. Nug seed bring as much as Eth$30. per 100 kilos even at the Gondar market, a rural production area. Gesho, hops, brings as much as Eth$1.- per kilo; some semi-urban farmers grow it as a parttime cash crop (also the drug plant "chat" chewed by Muslims). Other products sold by the farmer include honey, peas, beans, maize, sorghum, dagussa, spices, beeswax, chickens brought by farm women, and recently also eggs; milk, butter, livestock big and small, goat-gut ("jemat") for cordage and the "qrar" banjo. Big livestock (cows, oxen and mules) are traded only at big Saturday markets, also the fat-tailed sheep or old cow for the Sunday dinner. At the end of long fasts edible livestock is in much demand and prices may double. It is also noteworthy that despite the poor roads, modern truck transportation is so efficient economically in comparison with traditional caravans, that prices for comparable imported and long-distance domestic products are on the same scale at the big Saturday markets.

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443 [492] The big market is also an important governmental administrative center, especially the judicial organization. From ancient times this has been the location of the formally appointed judge, the "dayna", to arbitrate disputes that the curbstone judge has not settled, and to hear cases against accused thieves. Here the governor's trade chief, the "nägad-ras", acts as collector of revenue and supervisor of trade practices. He fixes and alters tolls on trails and river crossings,

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and observes the travelling traders, the "mängädänna". Both chiefs, especially the danya, sit under broad, shady trees on the market. Nearby is the gibbet, from which criminals were publicly hung until less than a decade ago. Recent additions to the market scene include a few modern tables and chairs at which treasury clerks from Addis Ababa receive import and other duties; and, within a barbed wire fence, government "dressers" of the health department from time to time, especially in epidemics, give free typhus and other injections to anyone applying and diagnosed sick.

Trade practices of the Amhara differ from much of the Middle East, especially from the Arab, The Amhara is too proud to badger a customer, and the profit motive is not as storng--he is not concerned with financial gain. The Amhara is not concerned at monetary loss in a trade transaction but his temper is aroused if he fears that he has been bettered, outwitted and made the laughing stock of others. If he has sold to a foreigner at only a little above the usual price instead of double or triple, his competitors at the market will jeer at him. In this case he will try to undo the trade, claiming linguistic misunderstanding.

As a result of this fear of being shamed, producers of native articles will not bring manufactured goods to market unless they have a previous firm order, after which the customer has to wait. It is craftsman's trade rather than commercial. This is even true of members of ethnic low-class producers, tanners, saddlemakers, smiths,

437 If bettered in trade, he will try to even the score, both in his heart and before his peers, with veiled insults within hearing of the other party, such as "my mother was not a pottery-maker", alluding to the low-class origin of the seller who has charged too high a price.

Housewives shopping at the market are conscious of "nuisance value". Before going home, if it is early, they loiter at the stall of the Arab merchant toying with the displayed merchandise while he nervously watches, until he gives them little gifts so that they go away, "ayn mämälasha" (lit. turning the eye away, i.e. homeward). The young women receive this with glee at having outwitted the shrewd Arab, and dance away.

When two Amhara have concluded an agreement, they touch each other's outstretched palms while standing very close to each other, and, in the presence of witnesses, swear "Haile Selassye yemut" (lit. may the emperor die, i.e. if the swearer breaks his agreement). This procedure is not followed in little transactions, but in the case of major livestock, because of the family and other social significance.

443 177 The Saturday market in a long-settled town ("qedamye gäbäya") has long been the entrance gate for diffusion of foreign goods, ideas, and ethnic groups. The Muslim mosque is usually very close, even at the edge, its minaret overshadowing the market. The teahouses, "shay byet" are of longtime, Arab introduction, usually operated by Ethiopian Muslims who import the tea and know how to prepare Arab delicacies. It is patronized by Arab whole-

443 177 salers, and other Muslim retailers. Here they discuss caravan trade, import and export, and local business. These Arabs speak enough Amharic for their purposes, but cannot read or write it, so that they employ temporary services of Amhara clerks, graduates or upper classmen of elementary schools, to translate and write documents relating to transactions, taxes and loans. It is these Arab traders who constitute most of the customers of provincial branches of the new State Bank of Ethiopia. Only rarely does a foreign company like Besse have a local branch, operated by East Indian managers. This is recent, while the Arab traders are the successors of former Arab slavetraders, an ancient but now abolished occupation in Ethiopia. Arab traders also serve as personal bankers to Amhara.

The broker, "mäden", may be an Amhara. This is especially true if he is the aforementioned labor broker. He acts as negotiator for business transactions, and (e.g. in the sale of major livestock) personally guarantees that the object sold was not stolen; he is required to make good the loss if it is not so. This is an important form of insurance, for which the broker may charge as little as 1%, payable usually in cash; he is also given a barley beer dinner after the transaction. He, in turn, may employ Amhara loiterers to gather around during transactions and contribute their wit to urge the buyer to close the deal.

563 443 554 The Muslim Ethiopian retailer, unlike the Arab trader, carries little prestige among Amhara. His com-

563 parative wealth may be envied, but his religion, and
443 his habit of taking several wives from ex-slave (Barya),
554 Sudanese, lowland females, places him on a level with the upper ethnic craftsmen class. The fact that his labor is not manual elevates him a bit. The full Arab from Yemen or Arabia is regarded as a foreigner, and there is little concern about him since he does not participate in the social hierarchy of the Coptic Amhara.

436 Silver coinage for major transactions, until recently, was the Maria Theresa Thaler, bearing the year 1780, even if coined much later, imported, and sometimes referred to as "machedo", sickle. The recent laws of the present emperor provide for confiscation and punishment for possession of this now illegal currency, but peasants and townsmen have them hidden and silversmiths can still obtain them with little difficulty. The habit of burying coins for safekeeping has carried over to modern paper money. Every year cases of buried paper money that decayed in the rainy season become the talk of the town. The former MT Thaler was divided as follows:

1 MT Thaler = 16" temun" silver coins of Menelik; the term "temun" is now used for silver ornaments, though the new Ethiopian 25¢ piece is actually used in exchange, or even in ornaments.

= 16 "gresh", the Egyptian-Turkish piastre coined in 1899, no longer used, and rarely seen.

796 262 As soon as this is over, a period of intensive meat-eating begins, similar to European carne-vale (carnival), for the same reason: the long lenten period is approaching, and in Abyssinia this means also abstention from eggs, cheese, milk, and other animal products (some even avoid fish), just as on any Wednesday and Friday; and no food before noon, for the strictly observant. The fast is obeyed by nearly everyone, in all classes. This fast begins on the 22nd day of Yäkatit, and is called "kudade" (lit. suffering) to indicate both the suffering of Jesus and of the faster. It is also referred to as "arba tom"(lit. 40-fast) though in fact the fast lasts 55 days. Women prepare a variety of vegetable and grain dishes, to substitute for the absence of more solid food.

796 [17] Finally, on the 17th day of the month of Miyazya, the long-awaited Easter, "Fassika" (related to the Hebrew Passover, "Passah" etymologically), occurs.

It is the climax of a week of preparations during which the lenten "hudadey" sharpens. This week is called "hemamat" (passion, extreme suffering), and no work is done, symbolizing the sympathy withthe weakness and suffering of Jesus. Even the Saturday market is cancelled--the only time this happens.

[743] Purchasers of meat and supplies for Easter must do their shopping on Thursday, when a special big market is held. The price of sheep, etc., goes up sharply, even doubles, in anticipation of the feast. Even tyäff and pepper (bärbärä) become more expensive. Ethnic craftsmen take this opportunity to bring their products,

X 794 [798] tolerates it, as long as the residential location of the zar house is sufficiently beyond hearing distance of the church.

[562] Men are often ashamed to admit that they themselves are zar-possessed devotees. If possessed by a feminine zar, considered more stupid and ignorant than a male zar, in most cases, it is considered [782] possible to "outwit" her. A clever zar doctor may negotiate with a female zar to accept a consecrated hen, never to be slaughtered for her, merely to be looked at. The owner of the hen can then sell the eggs, and has a (totemically?) protected hen!

[787] More often, men consult zar doctors on business - though by stealth. In the town of Gondar, e.g., a man wishing to find a job for his nephew might present the problem to Lady Salamtew, who would listen quietly, accept his "frankincense money", and tell him to return on a certain day for her advice.

X 794 782 143 The economic significance of the zar cult varies, but can be considerable especially in the provincial towns. Most zar spirits, especially the powerful and clever ones, like "generosity" in sacrifices, are pleased by voluptuousness, insist on healthy animals for sacrifice, neat gifts and attire of their "horses" (a woman who is a clothes horse would certainly be regarded as possessed), incense that has been imported from Yemen, aromatic herbs, imported perfumes, European utensils and alcoholic beverages (distilled arrak). Retail traders know this and encourage women to buy "nice things for the zar". It is well known that many women are "struck" by the spirit for the first time just after having visited ("window shopped" in the modern equivalent) a big market. No wonder zar doctors are popular with the Muslim Ethiopian retail traders, who not infrequently let them take some fancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission!

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

312 the downward side but is sloped on the up-hill side and therefore triangular in section. The filling-up of the empty space behind the wall, to the new terrace level, may be partly accomplished by hand but tends to be left to nature. During the rains, especially on the steeper slopes, there is a continuous downward movement of soil, which is arrested by the terrace walls and the pockets above them gradually fill up. In the course of centuries an immense amount of simple terracing of this kind has been done, the effect being to accentuate the existing irregularities of the steeper slopes. The landscape has certainly been greatly modified in this way, but it is often impossible to tell at first sight whether a given feature is natural, or partly or wholly due to terracing. It is obvious that such terracing has not only provided additional acreage for agriculture but also served the useful purpose of saving many steep slopes from excessive erosion. In several parts of Ethiopia, including this area, I have seen slopes under cultivation which were so steep that the soil, when loosened and disturbed, would slide away downhill. At first sight one would suppose that such slopes must be completely denuded after a few seasons' rain. The fact that this does not happen is due, I believe, to the vast abundance of stones in these soils, every one of which acts as a minute barrier arresting the flow of water and silt. Nevertheless such slopes, unless terraced, clearly cannot survive indefinitely under cultivation.

443 Surplus produce is brought in to the big weekly market at Debra Berhan
[487] which is both the commercial and the social centre of the whole district; all the main routes radiate from it. Every Saturday morning these routes are thronged with market-goers, who can be seen moving along in an almost continuous stream, the well-to-do mounted on mules, the majority on foot, some driving laden donkeys and pack-mules. The products of this countryside are few, and there is little food surplus, but some wheat and barley come to market, also eggs and chickens and a good deal of butter. Some honey (used in making the local mead or *tej*) comes in, and beeswax is collected for export. Firewood, a scarce commodity on the plateau, is carried in in quantity. *Gesho*, the fermenting agent, comes up from the gorges. There is plenty of earthenware, made on the plateau nearby. From the district of Menz to the north come excellent felt blankets and burnouses. Traders from farther afield bring salt from the desert, partly in the bars which used formerly to pass as currency, and raw cotton and spices from the eastern plains. Textiles and other imported goods now find their way to this market by lorry.

When, in the course of the afternoon, the market crowds begin to stream homewards, one may identify the few simple wares they have bought or bartered. Some have a bag or a bar of salt, some raw cotton for spinning or a piece of cotton cloth, some a fresh supply of coffee-beans, some a bottle of kerosene or a cake of soap. Many have acquired earthenware water-pots or
[323] cooking vessels; the large round platters (*matad*) 18 inches across, on which
[482] the local bread is baked, stand out conspicuously for they are always carried, for safety, on the head.

It still remains to describe the most potent of the influences which shape
771 the life of the country-bred Amhara—that of the Church. The priests, of

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

business of petitions, and few are without wives. This 621
causes many single women to live here, and when they are 443
old they have another resource, for in this town every Tuesday there is a great market or fair at which three or four hundred persons are brought together; and all the old women and some young ones have measures to measure wheat and salt, and they go to the market to measure and gain their living; they give hospitality to those that sleep there that day, and also take care for them of what remains to be sold for the next market day. There is another 595
reason why there are many women in this town, it is 688
because the men who have plenty of food to eat keep two or three wives; and this is not forbidden to them by the King nor by their magistrates, only by the Church. Every man who has more than one wife does not enter the church, nor does he receive any sacrament: and they hold him to be excommunicated. For a year and a half a nephew of mine and I lodged in the house of a man named Ababitay, and he had three wives still alive and acquaintances of ours, friends in honourable friendship: they said that he had had seven wives and thirty children of them. Nobody forbade them, except the Church, as has been said, which did not give them the benefit of the sacraments; and before our departure, he put away from him, and from intercourse with him, two wives, and remained with one, that is to say, the one he had last, who was the youngest, and already they gave him the sacraments, and he entered the church like anybody else, and as though he had not had more than one wife. On this account there are many women in this town, because the men are well off and are like courtiers: and they take two or three, or more if it pleases them. In this [586]
country marriages are not fixed, because they separate for any cause. I saw people married, and was at a marriage 585
which was not in a church, and it was done in this manner. On the open space before some houses they placed a bed-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

an ouquia. This Barnagais forbade the people in his country having any other weights except his own, and they had to ask the Barnagais or his factors for the weights whenever they had to sell or receive gold, so that he had knowledge of what was in the country, and he takes it when he pleases, according to what his country people say, who must know it well. 436

CAP. XXIX.—*Of the church of the town of Barra, and its ornaments, and of the fair there, and of the merchandise, and costumes of the friars, nuns, and priests.*

In this town of Barra there is a church of Our Lady, large, new, very well painted and well built, and handsomely ornamented with many brocades, crimson silks, and Mekkah velvets, and red camlets. The church in this town is served like that at Barua, only that the offices are more solemnized because the Barnagais resides here, and because here there are more clergy and an infinite number of friars. The church is managed by priests. I saw them make a procession round the church in the greater circuit, which is of the churchyard. In it there were many priests, friars, and men and women, because in this church the women receive the communion in the place where the laity do so. In that procession I saw the ornaments which I have mentioned: they must have taken quite thirty turns round the church chanting like a litany, and sounding many drums and cymbals, as they sound them when they make a procession before the effigy of Our Lady on Sundays and feast days; and they sing and celebrate a feast; and likewise when they give the communion on feast days. They said that this procession was made in supplication to God for rain for their sowing. The bells are of stone, like those of other churches, and the bells badly made. In this town there is a great fair like that of Barua, and so likewise in all the 346 796 443

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

443 places which are chief towns of districts, every week. The fairs consist of bartering one thing for another, as for instance, an ass for a cow, and that which is of least value gives to the other two or three measures of bread. By means of bread they buy stuffs, and with stuffs they buy mules and cows, and whatever they want, for salt, incense, pepper, myrrh, camphor, and other small articles.[1] They buy fowls and capons, and whatever they need or want to buy is all to be found at these fairs in exchange for others, for there is no current money. The principal merchants 792 292 at these fairs are priests, friars, and nuns. The friars are decent in their habits, which are full, and reaching to the ground. Some wear yellow habits of coarse cotton stuff, others habits of tanned goat skins like wide breeches,[2] also yellow. The nuns also wear the same habits; the friars wear, besides, capes of the fashion of Dominican friars, of the same yellow skins or stuffs, they wear hats; and the nuns wear neither capes nor hats, but [302] only the habit, and are shaven with a razor; and they wear a leather strap wound or fastened round the head. When they are old women they wear fillets[3] round their heads over their tonsures. These nuns are not cloistered, nor do they live together in convents, but in villages, and in the monasteries of the friars, on account of belonging to those houses and order. The order is all one, and the nuns give obedience where they receive their habits. With regard to entering churches and monasteries, the nuns do not enter except as other women do. There is a great multitude of nuns, as well as of friars; they say that some of them are 793 very holy women, and others are not so. The priests show very 302 little difference from the laity in their dress, because all [292] wear a good cloth wrapped round, like smart men, and their difference is that they carry a cross in their hand, and are shaven, and the laity wear long hair. The priests also have

[1] *Rechugarias.* [2] *Zafoens* or *Safoens.* [3] *Tufas.*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 9.—*The weekly market*

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FIG. 10.—*The market: weighing cotton*

[P. 46-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chĭqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chĭqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chĭqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chĭqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chĭqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chĭqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 794

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories. 565* 512 527 462 [517] [521]

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense. 565* 512 181

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.) 565* 517 691

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver. 565* 517 443 [462] [437] [436] [178]

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression. 565* 527 796 [132]

The Yearly Cycle 565* 796

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Fig. 11.—*The market: buying honey*

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Fig. 12.—*The market: inspecting pottery*

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Fig. 13.—*The market: selling salt bars*

[P.78-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

than those necessary to perform their jobs. They do not attempt to maintain and build personal libraries, though there are a few exceptions to this. The three small bookstores in Addis Ababa offer only the most insubstantial fare.

Nor, finally, have more than a handful of private individuals taken upon themselves the charge of a scholarly or literary calling. Although Marcel Cohen heralded the birth of a printed literature in Amharic as early as 1925,[58] writing is still not very important on the Ethiopian scene.* The output of original books and pamphlets in Amharic averaged less than fifteen a year over the past two decades. The presses and bookstores distribute Amharic publications indifferently at best. Much of the literary impetus produced by the desire of many Ethiopians to write, and the obvious need for good writing that would address itself to the intellectual demands of the present generation, has been sapped by economic, political, and cultural factors.

The economic factors include the high cost of printing; the diminutive market; and the absence of publishing houses. If an author wants to be read, he must normally pay for publication himself. Those who cannot must either find a patron in the Crown—frequently a highly lucrative arrangement—or resort to mimeographic duplication, or else remain unpublished. The censorship system and anxiety about spontaneous expression of any sort which has been fostered by prevailing political conditions constitute additional obstacles to literary development.

The paucity of serious writing has been the result no less of prevailing cultural conditions. The low intellectual level of his potential audience, the absence of channels for criticism, and the dearth of precedent make it difficult for the Ethiopian writer to determine good standards of writing. The confused state of Amharic, owing to regional variations and the absence of consensus on neologisms and loan words for expressing modern concepts, poses many problems on the level of sheer vocabulary. The temptation to get into print quickly, if the financial and political barriers can be hurdled, exceeds the temptation to work long and hard on an opus of quality. The desire to pontificate frequently eclipses the quest for understanding.

Those conditions which have inhibited the growth of Amharic literature—poverty, governmental reluctance to provide sufficient freedom and support, the newness of the modernizing culture, and the motivational level of the intellectuals themselves—may be viewed more broadly as responsible for the relative barrenness of Ethiopian intellectual life as a whole. Insofar as these conditions change in the coming decades, a radical change in the quality and organization of Ethiopian intellectual life may be expected. As a sociological

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* This is no longer due, however, to the negative attitude toward writing as such which was discussed in chapter iii. That traditional inhibition has been largely removed—primarily, it seems, by the postwar requirement that all legal accusations and court proceedings be set down in writing.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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131 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has
779 been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries.
[241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively
[463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm-
[286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga
[443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of
[562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin-
[423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil-
[326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields
[286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha
[162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority
[361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

*793 capital) and the parishes. The social identity of the
*793 parish tends to be defined in terms of the ties linking
794 its residents to the parish church. The church must be provided with sufficient clergy for the performance of the weekly Mass, as well as Masses on feast days and on occasions which mark a sacrament of the Church. This amounts to perhaps three Masses every week, each of which must be conducted by at least two priests (keys) and three deacons (diyakon). Ideally, these ecclesiastics are recruited from among the parish's risteñas, in return for the use of fields belonging to the parish church.
[776] The tie between residents of a parish and its eponymous church is further strengthened by the tendency of these people to confine their public ritual performances to the church, to favor the church's saint (reified in the arc, tabot) with private appeals for protection against illness and other misfortunes, to donate gifts to it when such appeals have been answered, to bury their dead in its churchyard, to pay towards the salary of a church teacher (astemariy) of the syllabary, and perhaps for a teacher (memher) of advanced Church subjects as well, and, lastly, to contribute in tithes (generally cereals and other foodstuffs) and labor towards the proper maintenance of the church.

• 443 Parish and Town. The highland zones can be concep-
632 tualized as a series of overlapping market spheres, each

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632 centered in a town and extending outward to include those areas from which peasants come to buy and sell.

[132] The size of the town's sphere contracts and expands sea-
[484] sonally, reaching its nadir furing the rainy season, when overland travel becomes difficult owning to deep mud and raging torrents. Then, travelling is infrequent and confined to the market town closest to a peasant's home parish. Although market trips are more frequent during the remainder of the year, most terminate at the closest market. These relatively short trips are favored when grain is brought to the mills located on the periphery
[796] of most market sites. The spheres of the larger towns (Gondar, Debre Tabor, Dabat) reach maximum size on the market days which preceed the great celebrations of the Coptic Church---Meskal (which celebrates the discovery of the True Cross, and follows the end of the rains), Michaelmas (November), Timkat (feast of the Epiphany, and preceeding the Lenten fast), and Easter. Map 3 indicates the extreme limits for market spheres of the towns of the Begemder highlands.

[491] The highland market towns are strung along the province's only all-weather motor road.[14] Each offers a

[648] [14]This road, built during the Italian occupation (1936-1941), runs north to Asmara (capital of Eritrea) and (since the 1960's) south to Addis Ababa (the national capital). A dry season road links the highland towns to Metemma on the Sudan border.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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632 once-weekly market, staggered, so that the market days of over-lapping spheres do not coincide. Peasant exchange at these markets tend to be "sectional" in character; that is to say, producer-sellers bring regional specialties (such as cotton and high quality cayenne from kola lands; cereals, fresh vegetables, and livestock from highland farms), or occupational specialties (such as Falasha iron mongery and pots; the leather goods of the Fakiy, a largely endogamous artisan group). In addition to local products, peasants come to purchase imported goods (especially clothing) and the produce of distant parts of the Empire (such as salt bars from the Danakil Depression). The market is also the peasant's tie to the world market, to which he sends cattle and cattle hides.

The large market towns, with their numerous consumer crowds, offer important economic inducements to
[275] the peasant marketeer. Beyond these economic functions,
[548] the large town offers diversions and attractions unavailable in the peasant's home parish---exotic surroundings, the temporary fellowship and entertainment of beer houses and mead halls, and the sexual companionship of the town's numerous prostitutes.

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796 The town also attracts peasant visitors on matters unrelated to the market place. The monthly feast days of various saints of the Coptic Church are occasions for special celebrations, and these attract peasants, out of

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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632 of the town's total population, support themselves by
433 working among the densely packed rows of beer houses
463 and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejora-
779 tively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the
563 former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically
[197] indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinc-
[167] tively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often
[142] light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian
[443] wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants
[442] (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people,
563 predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are
463 employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal
[197] makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics.
[562] Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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(3) In all associations, finally, certain traditional characteristics which are incongruent with the optimum conduct of groups come to the fore. This is no less true of the modern-educated than of the traditionals. Members fail to come on time to arranged meetings or neglect to come altogether.* They

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

747 178 come to one's funeral is particularly potent—and the transactions of the *eddīr* are strictly governed by elected officers.[39]

454 178 *Equb.*—The *equb* is a form of savings association in which weekly or monthly payments of a fixed sum are exchanged for the privilege of receiving a large lump sum at some point in the life of the group. In addition to provid- [571] ing a means of forced saving, the *equb* offers a basis for sociability when the members come together to make their payments and are provided with food and drink. Like the *eddīr*, the *equb* is believed to have originated among the [177] Gurage, and acquired wider popularity following the Italian invasion when many people needed large sums of money for rebuilding homes and purchasing livestock. The mode of operation of an *equb* has been described in the *Ethiopian Observer* as follows:

> A person desiring to start an Iqub will discuss the matter with his friends; if they agree a meeting will be called to discuss the rules and regulations of the proposed new society, and in particular the amount of money to be paid by each member, the frequency of payment and the time and place of meeting. A president, or dagna [literally, "judge"], and a money collector will be elected from among the most respected and reliable members of the group.
>
> The President then asks every member to bring one or two guarantors who will be responsible for payment in case of default for whatever reason it may be.
>
> On the appointed day all the members assemble and the secretary will call the roll. Any member unable to attend is expected to send his subscription in time. The specified sum is then handed by every member (or substitute) to the President. Any latecomer will be fined according to a pre-arranged schedule, this money being kept by the President until the end of the Iqub, when it is used for the common enjoyment of the members. The collected funds are drawn by lot, the winner receiving the total subscription of all the members. The lottery is normally effected by the members writing their names on small pieces of paper which are then placed in a hat, a blind-folded non-member then drawing out the name of the winner.
>
> After each draw, the winner is disqualified from taking part in further lotteries, but continues to pay his fee until every member has drawn his share. If he fails in this duty his guarantors have to pay.
>
> When all at length have been rewarded the time has come to set up a new Iqub.[40]

Equb have been established by members of virtually all low- and middle-income groups—clerks, merchants, servants, peasants, policemen. Their rapid increase, in response to the growing importance of money in Ethiopia's econ-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

omy during the past two decades, represents a significant growth of the capacity for voluntary formal organization in the modernizing sector.[41]

Māhebar (*Regional Associations*).—A type of formal association which has sprung up in Addis Ababa in recent years, becoming popular for the first time around 1960, is known as the *māhebar*. While its name is taken from the traditional Orthodox fraternal association, in aims and organization it is different from the religious *māhebar*. While the latter is devoted to honoring one of the saints and is convened primarily for feasting and sociability, the modern *māhebar* is organized on the basis of territorial or tribal bonds and is concerned with problems of social betterment. The first *māhebar* of this kind was established by the Gurage in the fifties.* Thereafter, the idea spread to members of other groups, and Addis Ababa residents originating in Gondar, Tigre, Harar, Manz, Tagulat, Fitche and elsewhere began to form *māhebar* of their own. The basic idea behind all these *māhebar* is to make some contribution to the welfare of the provinces through projects voluntarily financed and organized by fellow-countrymen living in the metropolis. These projects have included construction of roads, schools, and hospitals; supplying books for schools; and provision of facilities for assisting inhabitants of the provinces who come to the city. Members of the various *māhebar* convene weekly or biweekly, usually on Sunday in the vicinity of one or another of the Addis Ababa churches, to discuss their projects and make their financial contributions.

Formal Associations of Foreign Inspiration

Student Associations.—The Orthodox Students Association was founded in 1958 by a convention representing all the colleges and some of the secondary schools. Its successful establishment was due in large part to the efforts of an Indian Orthodox minister who at the time was one of the Emperor's private secretaries. There is some evidence that an earlier spontaneous effort to form such a group in the early fifties was checked by the government. Members of this association have been concerned with adapting the activities of the church to contemporary needs. They criticize the established church for its use of a dead language, excessive ritualism, and lack of teaching; and have proposed that the Orthodox Church should institute Sunday schools and

* The Gurage *māhebar* remains in a class of its own, with respect to size, wealth, and ambitiousness of program. The Gurage have also pointed the way to using the *māhebar* form in a way that transcends the narrow tribal or territorial passions which it has thus far tended to canalize. This has been done through the establishment of another, project-oriented *māhebar* concerned solely with building a road from Alam Gana to Wollamo Soddo, whose membership includes Galla and Wollamo as well as Gurage. This association has already collected well over a million dollars, and has completed the construction of a bridge. It is headed by a capable Gurage army general and its activities and collections are reported regularly in the Addis Ababa press.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

journal, but also an engineers' association, a college teachers' association, and an Ethiopian writers' association. Earlier attempts to establish an organization of lawyers have not yet reached fruition.

National and International Service Organizations.—A final group of formal associations consists of those which include non-Ethiopian nationals as well as Ethiopians in their membership and which carry out welfare services of various sorts. The Ethiopian Red Cross, the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association, the YMCA, and the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa have been active for more than a decade. More recently, the International Christian Fellowship was formed with an eye to discussing ways of translating Christian principles into social action, and the Social Service Society has broken new ground in the welfare field with its ambitious program of relocating and rehabilitating Addis Ababa indigents.

Informal Associations

Another significant sociological development since the 1960 rebellion has been the blossoming of what might be called "mutual confidence groups." Although the public climate remains somewhat tense and generalized suspicion still prevails, a step has been taken away from the complete atomism of the pre-rebellion era. These groups consist of numbers of friends, bound by such factors as kinship, common ethnic background, relationships formed during study abroad, and occupational ties. Perhaps the most important single bond underlying these groups derives from friendships formed during the crucial experience of attending secondary school together. While for the most part these groups carry out no organized activities or structured discussions, they do provide a context in which any of the issues of the day can be discussed with fairly complete frankness and without fear of reprisal.

There are some progressive Ethiopians who would like to see these groups become the nuclei of action groups and political parties, even on an overt basis. The prevailing view among them, however, seems to be that this is as far as they can go under the present regime.

The efflorescence of voluntary associations in Ethiopia during the past half dozen years constitutes a remarkable thickening of the fabric of Ethiopian society. It may be seen as a vast, unconscious process of arousing and co-ordinating energies to meet the novel realities of Ethiopia's current historical situation. What relationship to this collective process have the individualistic features of Amhara character and society which were discussed above?

It may be observed that in virtually none of the cases cited above were the Amhara the initiators of the associational forms in question. The territorial and "project" *māhebar* were introduced into Ethiopian life by the Gurage; so, as far as present evidence indicates, were the *eddīr* and the *equb*. The labor

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178 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the
565 new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the
661 view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in
565 terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly
556 as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like
[241] coffee and *ç̌hat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to specu-
[455] late in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene
565 in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well
556 as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families,
472 Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became
[175] prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to
[648] collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *makuānnent* and *bāla-selṭān*. They
[662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different
565 from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army
369 tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend
177 to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the
[556] more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The
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|81| bandry, to achieving maximum benefits with a minimum of original invention. Similarly, in non-material culture, a minimum of effort has gone into the elaboration, amendment or improvement of institutions of social organization, but a great deal of ingenuity has gone into spiritual elaborations such as the Zar-cult.

Such a disposition of human energy seems strange and out of balance particularly to the Western mind. How can it be explained?

Perhaps the major clue is contained in the Amhara proverb:

[539] "From cleverness of hand, (you get) serfdom;
from cleverness of mouth (you become) boss."

●461 554 This has long been a basic Amhara attitude, even a world view for them. The Amhara has seen much justification for associating skill of hand with slavery and near-slave status, while associating mental and spiritual skills with leadership: as military officer, judge, bishop, or zar-doctor.

If he becomes impoverished, an Amhara will go to a district where he is not known (in order not to shame his family) to work at some unskilled labor. He is then less despised than if he were to learn a skilled manual trade. For while the first can be excused as a temporary mishap, or smiled off as a lark, the latter, by his painstaking application to a manual skill, indicates a permanent association with the psychological and social patterns in the "slave category". Moreover, he may, in his apprenticeship, become associated not only with the occupation and socially lower status of his teacher, but, since the latter is

461 often a member of a socially lower ethnic group (see sec-
554 tion B), such an Amhara would become "detribalized", sus-
pected of having learned occult powers (e.g. in smith-
craft), and suspected of being no longer an observant and
563 believing Copt. As a result of his ostracism, he may then
461 very likely marry a girl from the socially lower ethnic
554 group, and his children would be social halfbreeds. If that
ethnic group were Shanqalla (negroid, ex-slave), his chil-
dren would also be racially, as well as socially, mixed, and
be relegated to the servant class. Thus the prediction of
the proverb would have come full cycle. This process can
be observed in Gondar, Addis Ababa, and wherever a market
town develops out of the more conservative, rural milieu.

566 Before the abrogation of the major feudal privileges
463 by the present emperor, the feudal lord could and did put
skilled specialists to work without specific wages or limit
of service. Moreover, the skilled specialist would often
be worse off than the unskilled serf. For while the latter
would at least be permitted, usually, to remain at his place
of origin, the skilled specialists were very often required
to accompany the feudal troops and resettle in an alien
province, cut off from their kinfolk.

Smiths had to produce and repair weapons, masons to
build churches, weavers to make togas and adornments, brew-
ers of honeywine and musician-bards to prepare feasts and
entertainments, etc. The chief quartermaster and "treasurer"
carried the title "bajirond" and was usually a skilled and
trusted master craftsman himself. In reward, he and some
of the other skilled specialists might be allocated new

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

342 sega byet - where meat is stored after sundrying in strips;

wäṭ byet - the kitchen hut;

gemja byet - the "treasury" house, general storehouse of tools and weapons, drums, decorations.

ṭej byet - honeymead brewery; talla byet - beer brewery, worked by women.

engeda byet- guest hut;

adarash - reception hut, larger, less solid, used for banqueting;

mänyeta byet - (lit. bedroom house), the master's bedroom hut;

"mad byet" - dining hut for daily dining.

565 The noble also has carpets ("sägaja") to sit on or,
352 in feudal tents, to use as tapestry. These are carried from long distances, where specialists live, or are imported. He also has hardwood stools ("dekkwa") to sit on, cut out of solid tree trunks. In a wooden storage box he has one or several burnos, and one or several "kaba" (a dark, woolen mantle). Guests receive their coffee in small imported glazed china cups instead of clay ones, and the reed table is a "massob worq", with dyed braids of imported dyes, in geometric designs.

824 C. What Nature Provides: Lumbering, Hunting, Fishing,
●461 Collecting

Much of what little ingenuity goes into Amhara material culture is applied to the direct exploitation of natural resources. He would rather spend days and weeks

824 searching for suitably shaped hard or soft saplings and
●461 other woods and certain herbs, than perform carpentry or much transplanting. Apart from saddle-making, the alga-bed, and simple musical instruments, one can hardly speak of any carpentry.

824 In preparation for housebuilding and other activities
313 connected with lumbering, the timber provided by nature is divided, in the Amhara view, into two major categories: Male, i.e. hard wood or strong wood; Female or soft, less consistent, or easily pliable woods. Heaviness or lightness are not major categories (as in Western countries).

Male woods ("wandō enchāt") and their uses include the following:

Wild Olive Tree ("wāyra") (olea chrysophylla), one of the hardest; often heavy and massive, found on the edge of forests, brown-black in color, quite oily. Used for construction on plateau, e.g. as saplings for walls, rafters, etc. The small twigs
[515] are in common use as "toothbrushes". They are chewed and used to clean teeth and polish gums, as a leisure-time activity after meals.

"Wanza" (Cordia abyssinica), a light but hard wood which is found very commonly and is therefore popular; used to make the yokes of oxen, saddles, low, round chairs and other equipment that takes much punishment in use, such as riflestocks when the original has broken.

"Wulkeffa" (Dombeya Bruceana), very hard, used for clubs, e.g. as pestle in the women's crushing of barley.

243 patient oxen. If the farmer has no ex-slave retainers, his wife may help in the harvest. Even young boys help, particularly in protecting crops. The direction of the breeze is carefully observed before winnowing. Work proceeds from [461] sunrise to sundown (from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.), with a rest from noon to 3 P.M., the hottest time of the day. At that time the women bring barley beer, enjara bread, and a spe- [263] cial condiment prepared from crushed "nug" oilseeds called "anäbabär".

Threshing by sticks instead of oxen is done in harvest of the "nug" and this may require some additional helpers.

241 Oil plants are cultivated and of considerable impor- 262 tance in the diet. They are considered field crops rather than garden crops:

"nug" (Guizotia abyssinica), the black Niger Seed, which is the most used vegetable oil of the Amhara. Travellers take it along, mixed with spices, as a staple. It is used in many items of diet. After crushing, the oil cakes are used for fuel (not fodder).

Flax seed (Linum usitatissimum), called "talbä", the second most common oilseed, of light brown color, consumed in similar ways and in drinks. It is not raised for the fiber, which is considered fodder or fuel.

Castor bean (Ricinus communis), called "gulqwas" or "qechma". This is not a field crop as much as nug and talba, and not as much of a staple. Tan- [281] ners use it for lubrication of skins. The emperor has urged increased production, but there

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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B. THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR.

Division of labor according to the ethnic origin of of the worker is the most distinctly organized division among the Amhara. This is based on the attitude of the Amhara that labor (especially skilled labor and manual labor) is dishonorable. This attitude is reinforced by the close kinship ties which prevent a cultural deviant from shaming the members of his family by working in the district where they are known. It also reinforces the the ethnic boundary lines, and forces the non-Amhara, non-Coptic, working ethnic groups to live within the circle of their own kinfik, religious groups, and hamlets.

[461]

[281 191] One of the most despised is the class of the Faqi, the tanners, who speak old-Cushitic languages such as Agau, are considered "pagans" in religion, and are associated by their trade with the hunters, the lowest class.

326 [191] On a slightly higher level are the ironsmiths, usually of Falasha, who practice Mosaic Judaism, used to speak Quarinya, an old-Cushitic language, but use the same Semitic Geez language as the Copts in their religious worship and biblical liturgy.

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This use of Geez by the Falasha is puzzling to the Coptic priests, and brings about a sort of grudging respect for the Falasha, which somewhat elevates their status above that of the tanners. But they are suspected of practicing black magic in connection with their smithing of iron. Patrons take magic precautions to counteract all sorts of magic bewitchment by the Falashas whenever they have contact with them.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-20 have not been processed for the files.-Analyst]

CAP. XI.—*Of the fashion and situation of the monasteries and their customs, first this of St. Michael.*

346 The manner of these monasteries as to their sites and
361 customs: all are situated on the greatest and highest cliffs, or the deepest they can find. This one of St. Michael is situated on a very steep rock at the foot of another very high rock, where no one can ascend. The stone of which these rocks consist is of the grain of the walls of the port of Portugal.[1] They are very great rocks. The land around
137 these rocks is all covered with very great forests, and besides wild olive trees and high grass between them, in which there is much basil. The trees which are not wild olive trees are not trees known to us; all are without fruit. In the narrow valleys which belong to this monastery there are orange trees, lemon trees, citron trees, pear trees and fig trees of all kinds, both of Portugal and India; peach trees, cabbages, coriander, cardamine, wormwood,[2] myrtle and other sweet-smelling and medicinal herbs, all ill profited by
[461] because they are not good working men: and the earth produces these like wild plants, and it would produce whatever was planted and sown in it. The monastery house
346 looks quite like a church building, constructed like ours. It has around it a circuit like a cloister, covered above in the same manner as the body of the monastery. It has three entrances, as ours are, one principal one, and two side ones. The roof of the church and of its cloisters is of wild straw, which lasts a man's life: the body of the church is built with naves very well constructed, and their arches are

[1] Oporto. [2] Alosna.

[p.21]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

423 'foreigners', and even though, within the group ownership, there was individual and family ownership of the land.

●461 The allocation of and the succession to the land was governed by ancient custom. This custom varied greatly because, as d'Abbadie said, 'In Ethiopia one of the despairs of the traveller, who thinks he knows the country, is to discover, sometimes by chance, that such and such a community, comprising a family, a part of a village, or district is of a different origin from the population which surrounds it.' In internal land and family matters, it would keep its own private law.[1] In some communities there were meetings at fixed intervals of three to seven years according to the region and at which the reallocation between families of the different types of land, which was in several categories according to its fertility, was arranged. Apart from these adjustments by agreement, land went from father to son. Land transactions were announced by the public crier and registered, generally by [217] entry in a Bible or other book, in the 'parish' church. The penal code [687] of 1930 decreed up to three years' imprisonment for failure to register transactions in hereditary land,[2] but this decree may not have been fully effective in the provinces by 1935. Transactions were always carried out before witnesses. These sometimes included young children who might [262] be given a feast of the delicacy of fried grain in order to fix the event in their memories.

Landmatters, indeed, were settled within such land-holding groups with little intervention from higher authority so long as all its members gave what was due to the government or to the representative of the government. Their relations with this representative would be through their family and the heads of their family group and it is obvious that a community with this degree of autonomy in the vital matters of land and tribute, in addition to the minor legislative and judicial powers already described,[3] might be regarded as largely self-governing in local matters. Such *restenya*, or hereditary land-holders, were further fortified in their position by the recognition of private property in the *Fetha Nagast*. In Menelik's later days, his council confirmed this position by a decree in which it was promised that except in cases of rebellion and treason even criminals should not be dispossessed from such tenure.[4] This provision was repeated in clause 9 of the penal code of 1930. It is probable that it was unbroken settlement by an Amhara tribal community which alone could offer effective resistance to royal and other pressure.

423 The Emperor would, however, seize every opportunity of breaking

[1] d'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 90. [2] Clause 458. [3] See above, p. 142.
[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭimqat,* means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭimqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā,* grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household.

The program for Ṭimqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized.

By noon on Ṭimqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭimqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter.

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings.

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war. 828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance. 565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā*, or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin." 565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz*, a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days. 565* 461 • [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[18] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

*565 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but
• 461 acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one
461 moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that
181 while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing
577 one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obliga-
183 tions toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level
[423] he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the
78 fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also
181 important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple
183 neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited
[262] and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be
[301] neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good
577 works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms
181 to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who
183 is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in
*565 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code
577 of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very
673 worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shame-
181 ful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect to-
183 ward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby
[626] stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

*565 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus
57 kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors
181 and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived
183 within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

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* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

a different identity. Religion and warfare were the two spheres most likely to attract him. Although trade and manual arts were possibilities for those whose industry exceeded their status-consciousness, they were considered the business of other ethnic groups and normally rejected by a self-respecting Amhara. When the Amhara youth left home for a new life, he was usually heading either for the school of some church teacher or the quarters of some chieftain.

Today, as in former times, the role of priest is known from childhood as a possible model for the peasant boy. He and his companions often imitate the clergy and their ceremonies in their play. The wish to become a priest is kindled by a number of interests—desire for the material benefits accorded the clergy; curiosity about the mysteries of the church; envy of the great prestige of the clergy; hope for a better chance of going to heaven after death. During adolescence the outlook of the boy who seeks to become a priest deviates from that of the *goramsä* described above. Instead of the shrill, blood-heating *shillala* war chants he prefers the gentle hymns of the church; instead of the frenzied dancing and singing of the young braves he prefers the schooled dance of the clergy; instead of pursuing women, he is inclined to turn his head the other way when a girl appears.

The military alternative does not seem to be an ideal of Amhara children. They rarely see soldiers; and when they did in former times, it was usually in the unhappy circumstance of seeing the family's reserves plundered. It is not until the time of puberty and after that the great upsurge of aggressive instinct has turned the thoughts of many an Amhara youth to fighting. Chafing under parental domination or bristling with resentment because of being an illegitimate offspring or a stepchild, he may be anxious to turn his hostility against some enemy. He may imagine the free life of a soldier more attractive than the drudgery of the peasant's lot. In the days of feudal armies, he may have heard news about some warlord on the rise and thus have hopes, by attaching himself as a follower, of winning booty and the laurels of a hero, perhaps eventually the powers of a chieftain.

Whether the peasant boy chooses church school or the warpath, his move has frequently been an all-or-none move. The peasant boy can do nothing without the consent of his father, and normally his father will not permit him to do anything except carry on the farmwork and prepare himself to care for his parents in their old age and to inherit the family land. If there should be some sign that the son does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, the latter will do everything he can short of disinheritance—and ofttimes that—to persuade him otherwise.

And so, some restless day, eyes fixed on some alluring goal, the Amhara youth might run away and not be seen again. If he should return, it would

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 17 century, who instituted a number of monthly holidays and prescribed new liturgical texts; to Menelik, who introduced vaccination and the eucalyptus tree in the twentieth century. For more than a century now kings and emperors have attempted to combat the traditional Abyssinian repugnance for manual labor by themselves engaging in arduous physical work on numerous occasions.[11] Haile Selassie has followed a pattern with abundant precedents in introducing the many changes which have characterized his reign.[12]

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As object of Abyssinia's highest esteem, symbol of its most cherished values, possessor of supreme wealth and power, and author of new norms, the emperor of Ethiopia thus qualifies as an elite in the more technical, sociological sense of the word as well as in its original sense of "being chosen."[13] Indeed, if more extreme interpretations of the emperor's significance are to be credited, he might even be viewed as the fountainhead of high status for all other elites. Thus Bruce, in a famous passage, declares:

> The Kings of Abyssinia are above all laws. They are supreme in all causes, ecclesiastical and civil; the land and persons of all their subjects are equally their property and every inhabitant of the kingdom is born their slave; *if he bears a higher rank it is by the king's gift; for his nearest relations are accounted nothing better.* [Italics mine.][14]

Such an interpretation, however, is more ideological than analytic. Throughout Ethiopian history one can discern definite limits to royal authority, and bases of elite status other than imperial favor.

121 643 17 It is true, as Margery Perham ably sets forth, that a primitive state of technology and severe geographical obstacles prevented the realization of imperial power to the degree that the royal ideology would have permitted.[15] Yet this failure of the monarchy "to build up any kind of administrative framework through which to exercise the absolute powers with which, by tradition and consent, it was endowed" was not simply a matter of wanting techniques. It also reflected the importance of ultimate values other than that of anointed royalty in Abyssinian culture.

121 643 17 771 The primary sociological limit to imperial authority was the commitment of the Abyssinian people to the tradition of their church. Religious conversion was one change which, at least in the period of Amhara hegemony, could no longer be tolerated. Za Dengel (1603–4) and Susneyos (1607–32) were brought down because of their forthright conversion to Catholicism, and the overthrow of Lĭjj Iyāsu in 1917 was legitimated on the alleged grounds that he had become a practicing Muslim. The decline in power of Tēwodros II (1855–68) was due in no small measure to the fact that his cavalier policy toward the clergy resulted in his being branded an enemy of the church.

121 643 17 A second limit on imperial authority lay in the perennial tendency of certain regional families to become endowed with an aura of legitimacy in their

241 cereal, as well as other crops already mentioned are grown. The lowest and warmest spots of the plateau are usually used for various types of millet-sorghum, gesho (hops). Coffee grows wild or is purchased on the market, as are bananas from the lowland. After a few years of cultivation, a field may be left fallow for five or more years.

[171] The Amhara's irrigation and terrace farming resemble [462] those of Yemen, not of Africa. Farming is man's work, not [231] woman's. The one-handed plow is drawn by a yoke of two oxen, encouraged by a long fibre whip. The Amhara rerely uses other animals for drawing the plow.

Fallow land or new bush is broken during the dry season. A heavier-than-usual iron plow point is purchased from the Falasha ironsmiths, affixed to the scratch plow, and the area, after preliminary burning, is scratched many times at right angles. The stubble and weeds are then piled and burned. But for the actual plowing and seeding, the beginning of the rains is awaited.

312 Irrigation canals are completely washed out in the rainy season, and must be rebuilt in each dry season. Terracing is less common than irrigation, but on occasion mountain farmers of long residence do build low walls of rock and mud on hillsides to prevent severe washouts and landslides during the rainy season.

243 Tyēff (Eragrostic abyssinica; Poa abyssinica) deserves the latter Latin name, for it is the mainstay staple of Abyssinia, except in the south. It is an annual indigenous grass with seeds of pinhead size, cultivated

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

2. The Division of Labor.

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462 Besides the dimensions of time and space, the factor of the use of energy is important in material culture. The Amhara of Ethiopia still uses the force of their own muscles as the primary source of industrial power, and their material culture has thus remained basically unchanged, especially in the aspect of human organization of labor.

There is sharp seasonal division of labor among the Amhara, already described in connection with agriculture, the major occupation. This is largely determined by the climate, the heavy rains and little rains, the long dry season; and the very limited conquest of nature by the people in this area, which does not go beyond occasional irrigation ditches. As a result, the seasonal division of labor follows every minute change in the ewather, differs womewhat from year to year depending on early or late onset of the rains. The human organization aspect of agriculture and feasts remains ruled by the weather, which dominates the ecological and religious calendar of activities.

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463 Human organization of labor among the Amhara seems
596 to follow two major principles: (1), Extension of the family organization. The extended family is self-sufficient in most needs for food, shelter, and the spinning of cotton for clothing. Salt and raw cotton are the only basic purchases, and only the services of smith, potter, tanner and weaver are actually essential, though there are a few other cultural elaborations. The extended family is also the major producing unit, in agriculture and animal husbandry. It has traditionally limited its own production

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because the often arbitrary, confiscatory taxation have lain heaviest on the producer of the most abundant harvest.

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(2) The attitude despising labor as an activity for slaves or lower-class ethnic groups, especially if the labor is skilled. Acquisition of special labor skills led to enforced migration, serfdom close to slavery, as has been described. Shame is attached to it, by the Amhara. For him, only agriculture, settled animal husbandry, warfare and spiritual activity in church or healing are acceptable. Even in this group of non-ignoble occupations, there are limitations. A farmer who would try to improve the quality of his land on any but a year-to-year basis, would be very unusual and an object of ridicule. For such land would arouse the evil eye, or the envy of the feudal lord, who would increase his tribute or, in case of family freeholds("rest"), increase his extortion of services. Even though a formal "corvee" has very recently been declared illegal, the local rural statute labor cannot be changed much by the central government, especially since it usually appoints former feudal lords to administrative positions in rural districts.

Principle (1) dominates the division of labor by sex, and to some extent by age. It also sets the pattern for the need for and existence of market-places that become urban centers, places where specialist not found among the scattered hamlets can be encountered: in entertainment, in trading goods brought by caravan, in higher justice, higher church, better medicine, and recently, in the availability for some of the 8-year elementary school.

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463 The rural extended family is also the residential unit, the
596 hamlet, and this principle affects the rural residence of the ethnic specialists: the Faqi tanners occupy their own hamlets, Falasha smiths theirs, and, within each ethnic hamlet, the specialists are related by kinship, usually patrilocal as well as patrilineal.

463 Principle (2) here creates the basis forthe ethnic
563 division of labor. The concern of the Amhara is not the time and effort saved by each group doing a specialized task, it is to retain prestige by not working at a skilled manual task but having social inferiors do it for them. Time is not much concern in this culture, for labor is paid by the job, not the hour. Labor is cheap, and since the material culture is relatively undeveloped technically, the work does not require the close synchronization of modern, western factories. Thus, as long as the primary source of power consists of muscular force and simple technology, the old ethnic division of labor remains satisfactory to the Amhara, and often even to the ethnic specialists whose livelihood is assured.

The Amhara has more confidence that an iron plow-point or pot made by the Falasha is well-made, or that a toga woven by a Muslim will give long wear, than he exhibits if a poor Amhara has learned the crafts and tries to sell him his products. For, he reasons, has not the ethnic workman learned his craft since childhood, from his father, who in turn has practiced and perfected it for countless generations? The Amhara purchaser suspects that a new

463 561 males in their prime occupied, in teams of five, at smithing a plowpoint; while the elder weaves a toga at his handloom, as fast or as slowly as his physical condition or pride permit. Pottery is made by the Falasha womenfolk, and men do not participate other than to load finished pottery on donkeys for transportation to the customer.

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A. Division of Labor by Sex.

462 Whenever uses of energy are not developed technologically, there is usually a sharp division of labor by sex, in which the routine everyday labor is largely left to women. This is true in Amhara society. Women are tied to household tasks and babies, and therefore tasks that are bound to a fixed time are usually left to women. By extension, since water-carrying is the woman's task, pottery-making is done by women of the ethnic specialist class, usually Falasha. On the other hand, tasks involving tools rather than utensils, and tasks not bound to a fixed daily routine, are usually male occupations in Amhara society.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Table 3: Division of Labor by Sex

Male occupations	Female occupations	Both
agriculture	kitchen work(except slaughter)	sale of products on market,
animal husbandry	grinding, crushing, husking grain	servants
slaughtering	carrying water from valley	
civil administration	fetching firewood or dung	beggary
military	gardening	musician-singer
religious occupations	spinning cotton thread	
healers	manual labor for church	
scribes, amulet writers	pottery-making (ethnics)	
church painters	restaurateur-prostitute	
weavers	tatooer and hair-dresser	
smiths	mead-brewer(urban)	
leatherwork		
hornwork		
porterage charcoal making		
hunting		
teaching		
judges		

The male occupations have already been described in "material culture"or will be dealt with in relation to their significance in "social organization", since they are usually more specialized and more inter-related to other aspects of Amhara culture. This is less true of most female tasks, so that most of them, except for "ethnic" and urban occupations, have been mentioned under "dietary habits"

462 or will be described under "division of labor by sex".

462 The hardest daily work of the female is the pounding
252 and/or grinding of grain. Sorghum(mashella), barley, even shembera peas and pepper, are dehusked by pounding with an up-and-down motion in a hollow wooden tree-trunk, with a stout wooden pestle. After that, the grains are usually left overnight in water for softening. The next day they, as well as the common tyeff grain, are hand-ground on an inclined flat stone, by use of a smaller stone of different type, weighing as much as 4-5 kilos, with the same back-and-forth motion of ancient Egypt, rather than rotary. To produce flour for the entire family takes the better part of each day.

316 The woman carries water from the valley every morning,
462 sometimes several kilometers, in a heavy earthenware pot
[482] tied to her upper back. It weighs 20 kilos when full. Only during the 3-months rainy season can she use nearby brooks and temporary watercourses. This female task makes it possible to locate hamlets on or near hilltops, far from water in the dry season, but safe from flooding in the rainy season.

462 Kitchen duties of the female, besides cooking and
251 daily baking of "enjera" bread, includes also the processing of meat for later use. After slaughtering, done by men because of the religious significance of this duty from which women are excluded, she cuts the meat into thin strips, called "zelzel", dries them in the sun to leather-like toughness, then stores them in the hut for the next feast, for use in the stew called "zelzel wot". Food -

462 processing tasks of the women also include the prepara-
25 tion of staples of the pantry, to be reedy for immediate use when her other taks have left her no time. The red pepper ("barbare") is preserved and readied in the form of a paste, by grinding it, adding water and salt, plus a bit of onion. This paste, called "delleh"or "delleha" can then be used in wot, or to spice butter to be smeared on "enjera" bread, or mixed with oily nug paste and carried as a condiment and staple on travel. Another pre-
[x3] pared spice condiment used by travellers is a dry mixture of spices, salt and "shero" (ground peas), called "meten". Butter may be processed by boiling it with pepper, or with the small yellow root of a rhubarb called "maqmaqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), which is also used as a medicine against tuberculosis.

462 Fetching and producing materials for fuel is a major
237 female occupation, though left to young girls when avail-
572 able. A special supply of dried cowdung is prepared for the rainy season, beginning right after Easter when the intermittent light rains are expected soon. Donkey and horse manure, "fanday", are not used by the proud Amhara, but cattle dung is flattened between the palms of women, dried in the sun, piled into tall heaps right next to the hut, then covered with a protective mask of mud and fresh dung. It is also women's task to watch the hearth fire in the evening, to check that it is covered with hot ashes over glowing embers, so that it will not go out and leave the hut chilly, on the one hand, but not burn so brightly that it might set fire to the hut.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

373 Little clay oil lamps are a luxury, since the fuel, often kerosene, must be bought at the market. Only churches and landowning farmers can afford it on occasion. In the church, beeswax candles, made by the women auxiliaries of the church from cotton thread and beeswax, serve for illumination at the early masses, and are surprisingly non-dripping.

372 Modern matches, made in Ethiopia under a government monopoly, are now cheaply available at all great markets, and have replaced earlier methods of making fire. The old method is still folowed in remote jungle areas such as Wolqait. There, fire is produced by friction, using a big, soft, bottom piece of "wanza" or "gerawa wood", and a branch or piece of hardwood, such as wild olive ("woyra") as the twirling or rubbing top piece. It sometimes takes an hour of effort. Even in the hamlets, where matches are available, they are saved by transporting fire from hearth to hearth in a broken potsherd (gel). Charcoal ("käsäl") is a luxury item, used sparingly only in pottery-making, occasionally to boil coffee if in a hurry or tea in urban places.

462 252 Baking is a female occupation, but becomes a source of income only in urban centers or temporarily at great markets, where restorateur-prostitutes engage in this work or hire less attractive women to do it for them. A woman who specializes in baking and selling "enjära" and other breads is called a "gagari". It is one of the very few 462 252 554 money-producing occupations in which a Coptic Amhara woman can engage. But it is low prestige, and no self-respecting

462 252 [554] pater familias, certainly not a feudal "great man" or official will buy from her, and a lazy housewife, even an urban one, would be sharply criticized, even divorced, if she bought the product of the "gagari". For it is believed that her baking is carelessly done, that sand and dirt have not been picked out carefully before and during grinding, and the product is "fit only for Shanqalla" ex-slaves. One thin, round, two-foot pancake of "enjära" costs 5 Ethiopian cents (US$0.02); dabbo bread of course costs considerably more but customers are less frequent than for the daily "enjära" bread.

283 462 Spinning is the task of the housewife and of all women attached to a household, be it a hamlet kin group, or an all-female zar society (see chapter on spiritual healing). On her wedding day, the bride brings with her a small, ornamented reed basket, called "muday", in which she carries her own personal little distaff, some cotton thread on a reed bobbin that she has made, together with personal ornaments and tattooing dyes. This symbolizes that she is [885] ready for adult womanhood and marriage, though she may be only 13 or 14 years old.

Carding of the raw cotton is also done by women. They beat it, pick out the husks, then place the cotton balls on the string of a bow called "dägan", tense the string with a stick, then agitate the string with the neck cut off a gourd (called "qel angät"). This loosens the cotton so that it can be cleaned and completely dehusked.

Every afternoon the housewife takes up her spinning, unless some special task takes her time. The distaff "emmärt" consists of a round, solid reed or thin round

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wood about 10 inches long, crowned near the tap end by a round, wooden disk about 1-1/2 inches in diameter. The reed penetrates it through a hole in the center of the disk, and the top of the reed has a small wire hook (called "qwanṭa") attached. The spinner uses this hook to rip out a bit of raw cotton, rapidly twirls the reed in vertical position, pulling thread after thread ("der") from the ball of cotton, and wrapping the thread on the reed below the disk. During this process, the balls of cotton are held in her left palm, the twirling of the distaff is done by her right hand, while the thumb and index finger of the left hand undo knots in the thread and generally straighten it out. The motor habit of this makes it possible to work very rapidly, the thread accumulating on the reed below the disk.

It is now taken off and rolled and connected in two possible ways. Some are rolled directly onto small reed bobbins 3-1/2 inches long, hollow, with outside diameter of 3/8 inches, called "qälämm" ("qäsäm" in Shoa province). These are later placed in the shuttle of the weaver for the weft. Cotton for the warp requires firmer consistency and more preparation. After spinning, it is either rerolled onto the sorter end of a partitioned distaff-shaped but much firmer wooden stick that may be as much as 2 feet long and 1/4 inch thick, called "mädäwäriya". This rolling is done horizontally, on the upper thigh, in the privacy of the hut, or by an ex-slave Shanqalla servant woman in similar fashion. The other method which may follow this or serve as alternative, is the rolling of the

283 thread onto a warping reel in rough basket shape and size,
462 called "mäzäwär". It is a kneehigh frame of branches set on the ground, with a somewhat narrower waist. Several s skeins of cotton thread are thus connected and rolled into long, firm strands to serve as warp.

Sometimes it takes several months for a housewife to prepare enough cotton thread for the warp and woof of a single toga ("shamma"). But a diligent woman, if she has little else to do, can prepare enough for half a dozen
[286] or more togas a year. The cotton thread is now given to the male weaver "shamani" who is to weave the toga. He may set up his loom in the back yard of the customer, or work near his own hut.

462 Skilled occupations for single women, e.g. "women between marriages" who often go to urban centers, are few. The brewer of mead and owner of the "tej byet", described under entertainment, usually employs several women as waitress-prostitutes.

462 There is another occupation, the woman beautician.
305 She may be specialized as a tatooer of women, "täqwari",
304 usually a Coptic Amhara woman, who is kept busy especially
[796] before great church holy days such as the Feast of the True Cross ("Mäsqäl"), Christmas ("Gänna") and Epiphany ("Temqät"). Hercustomers are more often divorcees "between marriages "(who can afford it because of earnings as restaurateur-prostitutes or beer and mead brewers), than young girls or married women, who have no cash. As the name indicates ("tequrat" means blackening), one of her jobs is to darken the gums between the teeth, to heighten

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305 the effect of their whiteness. She also tatoos the women's
304 necks up to the cheek, in the shape of concentric necklaces, to make the neck appear longer, a mark of beauty.

462
305 The hairdresser, "ras sari" is a woman who operates
302 a traditional beauty parlor. She braids the women's hair front to back in as few as 12 or as many as 32 braids, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Her best-paying customers are divorcees looking for husbands, especially during the marriage season that follows the major harvest early in the dry season. A full two-hour job with a maximum of fine braids costs ETH$1.00 (US$0.40), while a simple job producing only few and thick braids, costs only a quarter of that. Many peasant women, and women unwilling to go to this expenditure, usually let their hair grow to a huge bushy crop, halo-like surrounding the skull, occasionally anointing it with butter boiled with "ades" leaves. But divorcees have the expensive hairdo done over as often as once every two months, and have it thoroughly washed during the process, so that their hair is much cleaner than that of married women.

462
533 Another occupation of women is that of "azmari",
535 musician-singer-dancer, who performs at more elaborate, wealthier, rural weddings, and nearly all urban ones. This will be described under entertainment. She is often accompanied by a male azmari, who plays the single-string violin or the banjo-type instrument, and who may alternate with her in singing rhymes, but who does not dance.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

462 563 B. THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR.

Division of labor according to the ethnic origin of of the worker is the most distinctly organized division among the Amhara. This is based on the attitude of the Amhara that labor (especially skilled labor and manual labor) is dishonorable. This attitude is reinforced by the close kinship ties which prevent a cultural deviant from shaming the members of his family by working in the district where they are known. It also reinforces the the ethnic boundary lines, and forces the non-Amhara, non-Coptic, working ethnic groups to live within the circle of their own kinship, religious groups, and hamlets.

[461]

[281 91] One of the most despised is the class of the Faqi, the tanners, who speak old-Cushitic languages such as Agau, are considered "pagans" in religion, and are associated by their trade with the hunters, the lowest class.

326 [91] On a slightly higher level are the ironsmiths, usually of Falasha, who practice Mosaic Judaism, used to speak Quarinya, an old-Cushitic language, but use the same Semitic Geez language as the Copts in their religious worship and biblical liturgy.

563 463 754 326 [91] This use of Geez by the Falasha is puzzling to the Coptic priests, and brings about a sort of grudging respect for the Falasha, which somewhat elevates their status above that of the tanners. But they are suspected of practicing black magic in connection with their smithing of iron. Patrons take magic precautions to counteract all sorts of magic bewitchment by the Falashas whenever they have contact with them.

463 563 their erstwhile conquerors.

The majority of the Galla are still primitive, dress in skins, use iron spears since they have few rifles, and are "pagan" or slightly islamized, in provinces south of the Amhara provinces. Their participation in the economy is largely agricultural and pastoral, both honorable occupations in the Amhara view. Their low (though rising) social status is due to their conquest, the African living patterns in their home provinces, the difference in religion and in language, but not to their occupation.

The following crafts fall under the ethnic division of labor:

563 323 [462] A. Pottery-making

This occupation can also be classed under Division of Labor by Sex, since only women, mostly Falasha women, engage in it. In the provinces where no Falasha women are available, pottery is made by Gurage or by Galla women. The only time a Coptic Amhara woman prepares a rough utensil she fashions an unsymmetrical container out of mud coarsely mixed with straw or cowdung and left to dry in the sun without firing. Compared with that, the pottery made by women of the other ethnic groups, is indeed "professional".

323 But in fact even the best pottery made by the craftswomen must be considered primitive. It belongs to the category referred to by archeologists in other areas as "women home industry". The firing is of the "first level", i.e. below 600° Centigrade. No potter's wheel is used. Glazing and waterproofing are minimal and primitive; only

323 the beginning of a slip appears.

There are several puzzles in this situation. In ancient Yemen and Hadhramaut, whence much of Abyssinian culture came, pottery was made with a true slip. The potter's wheel was known from ancient times in many parts of Asia and later in much of North Africa, both areas of ancient contact with and influence on Abyssinia. Yet pottery-making even of the craftswomen in Abyssinia has [462] remained African to this day: it is considered an extension of preparation of food and therefore a strictly female occupation. However, one of the most primitive African methods, e.g. of some Nilotic tribes, who shape pottery from a crude lump of mud, is not used by the craftswomen, though the aforementioned Coptic Amhara housewife may use this method, considered unskilled, and therefore not ignoble.

The first step in pottery-making is the selection of different types of raw material. Three types are usually selected and blended in different proportions for the right consistency and, occasionally, color: Red clay "farafar", often containing iron ochre; sandy, fine clay from soil too poor for farming, "chencha", which is sometimes fired, ground, kneaded with water, dried and broken before use; black soil from fertile topsoil ("lamm") called "walka", often containing graphite. These are kneaded together with gradual additions of water. Next the woman selects a flat round plate of wood or metal to serve as the bottom support, outline and protection from dirt, for the pot about to be made.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

E. Weaving

286 Most weaving is of cotton (Gossypium arboreum), grown in the lowlands of Ethiopia. It is of shorter staple but stronger than the Egyptian, imported from the Sudan.

286 563 [445] Weaving is man's work, and in Amhara territory is an "ethnic occupation" carried out either by Falashas or by Muslim Ethiopians. Emperor Menelik II tried to change this by encouraging Amhara men to take part in this basic and increasingly necessary activity, not only for the traditional shamma, but also for the spreading use of "qämis" shirt and jodphur trousers. But he had little success with it. Only very poor, "detribalized" Amhara (who have intermarried with socially lower ethnic groups) weave shamma togas, and cotton sheeting imports have increased steadily since Menelik II for other garments. One can therefore state that weaving remains an ethnic occupation.

286 There are two basic types of materials for shammas woven on the traditional handloom The more prevalent is the peasant-type, thick, warm, soft, tight-knit and sturdy, heavy material, that will last long; the other is thinly woven, almost like a muslin, and is preferred in towns, especially by the women who use it like a long shawl above a long dress. The latter type is more richly embroidered at the narrow borders.

When the housewife has cleaned, carded, spun and rolled the cotton thread for the warp on a warping reel,

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

241 variety) and linseed is grown in most parts of it. Where more shelter exists lentils and chick-pea are also planted, and another low-growing leguminous crop called *gwayo*, which is used only as a cattle fodder as it is believed to [824] cause softening of the bones in man! The barley is planted early and the other crops late in the main rainy season (June–September). Barley is sometimes also planted in the early rains, which are very uncertain here but usually begin in February or March. In this area however the early crop rarely gives a good return and sometimes fails completely. The plateau land, after being cultivated for a few years (often until it shows obvious signs of exhaustion), is fallowed for a period which varies widely according to the type of soil, but may be as long as five or seven years.

Down in the gorges, where the climate is appreciably milder, and where a primitive sort of irrigation can be practised on the level shelves, both chick-pea and lentils flourish. Some *teff* (a grass-like cereal greatly favoured for making the local bread) can be grown, as well as wheat and barley. Shelf cultivation seems as a rule to be continuous, perhaps because of the fresh sediment spread annually over the fields by rain and irrigation. In the lower parts of the gorges some maize and millet (*Sorghum*) can be found, but almost the whole of the area included on the map is too high for these crops. Other gorge products, unknown on the plateau, are tomatoes, chillies, coffee and *gesho*—a shrub whose leaves are used for fermenting the local beer (*talla*) and honey-wine (*tej*). Bananas, for no obvious reason, are not grown, but are brought to Debra Berhan market from the low country beyond the eastern escarpment.

The agricultural methods of the Ethiopians are far more advanced than those of any surrounding territory and do not belong to Africa. They can be paralleled among the west-Asian peasantry, and a close comparison with the methods of the Yemen mountain people might be especially fruitful. It was from this latter region that the Ethiopians' ancestors emigrated, before the [177] Christian era, and it is extremely probable that they brought with them both implements and a knowledge of techniques. Hence perhaps the use of the plough, universal among highland Ethiopians, and their skill in irrigation and terracing.

[462] Farming in Ethiopia is primarily the man's and not the woman's work, the standard female occupation, apart from household cares, being spinning. [283] (Cotton is widely grown in the lowlands.) The farmers spend most of their lives at the plough, a one-handled variety drawn by a yoke of oxen. In their [231] right hand they carry a whip with a short handle and long, heavy thong which they continually whirl and crack above the heads of the oxen, to whom, at the same time, they address an endless succession of strange howls and shouts, curses and imprecations. New or long-fallowed grassland is broken in with the plough in the dry season. This complicated process (known as *gai*) involves first scratching the ground in several directions to dislodge the turf, next gathering the sods into numerous heaps, then setting fire to these so that grass and weeds are gradually burnt out, and finally spreading out the soil again. But the great time for ploughing comes after the main rains have reduced the countryside to a sea of soft, dark mud. At this season the fields are peppered with ploughmen. Each successive sowing must be prepared

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

583 and divorced in this manner two or three times she is
586 considered rather a "catch", on account perhaps of her worldly possessions which she has acquired from her previous matrimonial ventures. Then if she does not retire from the world and become a kind of nun she often indulges in the third form of marriage, a solemn religious ceremony which is really binding; it is as a general rule confined to the better class of Abyssinians.

Women, some of whom are attractive and even
562 pretty, have, speaking generally, little or no position. There are of course exceptions to this rule, and I have known cases where a wife has by her influence over her husband acquired a certain status for herself. But this is rare, and by a general though not universal rule women are even supposed to eat separately.

Nevertheless the higher-class woman manages to
562 hold her own, and if badly treated by her husband has
586 the right of appeal to the Church. And so far as I can gather the woman of any class can divorce her husband as easily as he can divorce her, which gives her a certain protection in itself.

In spite of the facility of divorce—possibly to some
562 extent because of the mutual power to exercise it—the
462 lot of women is not at all what one might expect; they
357 are by no means the hewers of wood and drawers of water that one finds so extensively in Africa. They do little or no work, neither washing nor mending their husbands' clothes nor cooking; all this is done by Gourages or others of whom one or more is to be found in almost every household—other than the very poorest —and even amongst one's own servants, acting as "gentlemen's gentlemen".

562 Women of the upper classes are still to some ex-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man
[782] of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of
[462] pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[262] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[252] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[352] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[515] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.
[264]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] [231] [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭēff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā*, literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā*, preparing *ṭallā*, spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*665 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or [182] children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening [513] prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children [352] settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories.

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense.

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.)

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver.

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression.

The Yearly Cycle

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkār*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [764] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [601]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

AE 563

other southern provinces, who are considered more "primitive" in their material culture, and many of whom are "pagan".

Emperor Haile Selassie has urged the Coptic clergy to "raise to Christianity" even peoples despised as "unworthy" [illegible] the old pattern. As a result, peoples like the Agau (incl. the Qemant) who have long been neighbors to the western Amhara, and the laboring Gurage near Addis Ababa, have been converted and occupy status somewhere between level 1. and 2., depending on the wealth they have been able to accumulate by past labors. The Qemants have become favorites of the clergy at Gondar because of their generous donations to the local Coptic churches.

AE 563 [826]

The people of coffee-rich Jimma, in Kaffa province, enjoy respect within level 2. because they had been left with internal autonomy during the rule of Menelik II; and because they are believed to be a slightly higher physical type than other infidels (they are considered "wammate", people with wrinkles at the corner of the mouth). Perhaps due to their old wealth based on coffee, slave and gold trade, they are envied; but they are regarded as "people of dissolute moral habits" by the Amharas.

AE 463 563

3. Laboring peoples and classes; non-Coptic; despised, in the old patterns of behavior.

This includes all occupational groups that did or do the ironsmithing, leather tanning, skilled or non-skilled manual labor. Among them are the lower classes of the Galla (mentioned before); the non-Coptic Gurage; the Falasha who live in small rural communities in Begemdir province, who do most of the ironsmithing and pottery-making there, and who practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

461 often a member of a socially lower ethnic group (see sec-
554 tion B), such an Amhara would become "detribalized", sus-
pected of having learned occult powers (e.g. in smith-
craft), and suspected of being no longer an observant and
563 believing Copt. As a result of his ostracism, he may then
461 very likely marry a girl from the socially lower ethnic
554 group, and his children would be social halfbreeds. If that
ethnic group were Shanqalla (negroid, ex-slave), his chil-
dren would also be racially, as well as socially, mixed, and
be relegated to the servant class. Thus the prediction of
the proverb would have come full cycle. This process can
be observed in Gonder, Addis Ababa, and wherever a market
town develops out of the more conservative, rural milieu.

566 Before the abrogation of the major feudal privileges
463 by the present emperor, the feudal lord could and did put
skilled specialists to work without specific wages or limit
of service. Moreover, the skilled specialist would often
be worse off than the unskilled serf. For while the latter
would at least be permitted, usually, to remain at his place
of origin, the skilled specialists were very often required
to accompany the feudal troops and resettle in an alien
province, cut off from their kinfolk.

Smiths had to produce and repair weapons, masons to
build churches, weavers to make togas and adornments, brew-
ers of honeywine and musician-bards to prepare feasts and
entertainments, etc. The chief quartermaster and "treasurer"
carried the title "bajirond" and was usually a skilled and
trusted master craftsman himself. In reward, he and some
of the other skilled specialists might be allocated new

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
463 favor, permitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qamis"
under the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
[892] rowing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the
prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled crafts-
men never rose that high but spent their lives accompany-
ing troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup
fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and em-
broiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing
183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and
specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
[754] nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also
the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoub-
tedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of
maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of
invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other
elaborations of culture.

1. Living Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("tis", or,
if several on one large hill, "mender"), rather than a vil-
lage. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts,
with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus
the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-
isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the
other side of the same hill.

576 is called "qammash", an important etiquette. Its origin may stem from the well-known oriental pattern of protecting an important personage from being poisoned, and since the feudal lord is still imitated among the Amhara, even by peasants, the custom is still prevalent in rural areas, provincial towns, and even in Addis Ababa.

E. Utensils and Tools.

322 Whenever possible, the Amhara likes to utilize direct products of nature, such as natural shape of branches, branch forks, branches at the right angle (e.g.for adzes), gradual thickening of a branch of hardwood (e.g. for ax handles). Much time is spent in the bush looking for the right wood, for there is no carpentry on any developed level. Sawing is unknown. So is splitting of wood to prepare boards, so that laborious chopping away at a log from both sides would be necessary. Nailing and gluing is still not done in rural areas. To drill a hole in wood, the blacksmith is called and burns a hole with an iron poke. Oxhide strips are used for fastening.

412 415 Therefore there are very few wooden utensils. Spoons and forks are not used by the Amhara. During dinner, pieces of enjara are ripped from the edge, to serve as spoon and fork. Then the piece is used to fish out a morsel of meat and some of the sauce of the "wot". Iron knives are used at dinner time only at a feast of "brundo", raw beef, when a red morsel is cut off just in front of the teeth.

412 415 463 Preparations of tools and utensils fall into four categories of division of labor: (1) Work done by special-

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 [321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. Ornamentation [531] consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric nature, in the wood. Wooden combs together with their [303] handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. Wood- [412] en mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. On [354] occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back- [407] rest of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint [231] firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 Horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

2. The Division of Labor.

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462 Besides the dimensions of time and space, the factor of the use of energy is important in material culture. The Amhara of Ethiopia still uses the force of their own muscles as the primary source of industrial power, and their material culture has thus remained basically unchanged, especially in the aspect of human organization of labor.

There is sharp seasonal division of labor among the Amhara, already described in connection with agriculture, the major occupation. This is largely determined by the climate, the heavy rains and little rains, the long dry season; and the very limited conquest of nature by the people in this area, which does not go beyond occasional irrigation ditches. As a result, the seasonal division of labor follows every minute change in the ewather, differs womewhat from year to year depending on early or late onset of the rains. The human organization aspect of agriculture and feasts remains ruled by the weather, which dominates the ecological and religious calendar of activities.

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463 Human organization of labor among the Amhara seems
596 to follow two major principles: (1), Extension of the family organization. The extended family is self-sufficient in most needs for food, shelter, and the spinning of cotton for clothing. Salt and raw cotton are the only basic purchases, and only the services of smith, potter, tanner and weaver are actually essential, though there are a few other cultural elaborations. The extended family is also the major producing unit, in agriculture and animal husbandry. It has traditionally limited its own production

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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because the often arbitrary, confiscatory taxation have lain heaviest on the producer of the most abundant harvest.

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(2) The attitude despising labor as an activity for slaves or lower-class ethnic groups, especially if the labor is skilled. Acquisition of special labor skills led to enforced migration, serfdom close to slavery, as has been described. Shame is attached to it, by the Amhara. For him, only agriculture, settled animal husbandry, warfare and spiritual activity in church or healing are acceptable. Even in this group of non-ignoble occupations, there are limitations. A farmer who would try to improve the quality of his land on any but a year-to-year basis, would be very unusual and an object of ridicule. For such land would arouse the evil eye, or the envy of the feudal lord, who would increase his tribute or, in case of family freeholds("rest"), increase his extortion of services. Even though a formal "corvee" has very recently been declared illegal, the local rural statute labor cannot be changed much by the central government, especially since it usually appoints former feudal lords to administrative positions in rural districts.

Principle (1) dominates the division of labor by sex, and to some extent by age. It also sets the pattern [633] for the need for and existence of market-places that become urban centers, places where specialist not found among the scattered hamlets can be encountered: in entertainment, in trading goods brought by caravan, in higher justice, higher church, better medicine, and recently, in the availability for some of the 8-year elementary school.

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463 The rural extended family is also the residential unit, the
596 hamlet, and this principle affects the rural residence of the ethnic specialists: the Faqi tanners occupy their own hamlets, Falasha smiths theirs, and, within each ethnic hamlet, the specialists are related by kinship, usually patrilocal as well as patrilineal.

463 Principle (2) here creates the basis forthe ethnic
563 division of labor. The concern of the Amhara is not the time and effort saved by each group doing a specialized task, it is to retain prestige by not working at a skilled manual task but having social inferiors do it for them. Time is not much concern in this culture, for labor is paid by the job, not the hour. Labor is cheap, and since the material culture is relatively undeveloped technically, the work does not require the close synchronization of modern, Western factories. Thus, as long as the primary source of power consists of muscular force and simple technology, the old ethnic division of labor remains satisfactory to the Amhara, and often even to the ethnic specialists whose livelihood is assured.

The Amhara has more confidence that an iron plow-point or pot made by the Falasha is well-made, or that a toga woven by a Muslim will give long wear, than he exhibits if a poor Amhara has learned the crafts and tries to sell him his products. For, he reasons, has not the ethnic workman learned his craft since childhood, from his father, who in turn has practiced and perfected it for countless generations? The Amhara purchaser suspects that a new

463 563 non-ethnic (Amhara), supplier may have done a slovenly job to pick up some quick money, even if he knew the craft. Moreover, the Amhara is convinced that the craft of the ethnic workman, especially the Falasha, is connected with black magic ("buda"), and therefore strong, though evil; while another Amhara individual who may have persuaded or hired a Falasha to teach him his craft (which occasionally has happed in very recent years), will never be taught the magical power connected with ironsmithing, not even from his own father-in-law if he intermarries into a Falasha family (which is also beginning to happen, in towns). Therefore, the product will not be "strong": if a pot it will break; if a plowpoint it will dull soon.

463 563 466 Thus, the ethnic craftsmen retain their patrons, a relationship reinforced also by the personal factor: for the Amhara customer who has established or inherited the habit of trading with a particular Falasha hamlet, where confidence has developed and even personal idiosyncrasies are known, prefers to continue to deal on this personal (or family) basis. This is particularly true since in rural areas the work done is paid for in produce, or in lieu of rent payable by the Falashas for land farmed by them and belonging to the Amhara landholding family. The limitations of this economic, or at best inter-personal relationship are mutually recognized , for neither group would mix socially or intermarry, in the rural district. The boundary line is one of religion as well as occupation and social status. As in most parts of the Middle East, the blacksmith remains an outsider. This is also true of the tanner, in Amhara society.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

000 the tanner, in Amhara society.

463 563 565 The values that dominate the division of labor in Amhara territory are closely connected with social stratification, which has been described. While hunters would be at the bottom of the scale, they do not actually have much share in the economic organization. The ethnic occupation class is in the second or third class from the top, depending on how much change has taken place in the local status of "conquered populations" since the 19th century Amhara victories. Actual ex-slaves, usually negroid, are below this level, usually sharing the same status as hunters. The Coptic Amhara, who is occupationally limited occupies the top class, subdivided into feudal lords and sharecropping peasants, with landholding families in between.

But this is a division into classes rather than into castes. For, although occupations tend to be hereditary, and most individuals follow the ethnic specialty of their fathers, they are not under a strict obligation to do so. Emperor Theodore was a usurper of commoner origin, whose mother made a living by gathering bark of the Kosso tree, the lowest occupation of an Amhara. The ethnic classes are more strictly divided by religious identification. In the rural districts there is still no intermarriage between religious or racial groups. In town, persons of the same socio-economic level do intermarry, e.g. "woyto" hippopotamus hunters or ex-hunters, and Shanqalla ex-slaves. Both are likely to work as unskilled servants or laborers, in a town such as Gonder. In general, the class system of Amhara territory is somewhat sharper than in most Middle

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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563 East countries, but it is not the elaborate caste system of
[565] India.

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438 Regional division of labor plays only a small role. When it does occur, as in case of the "burnos"-weaving and carpet-making of spots in Semyen, which survived until recently, it is a case of local survival of a craft that has experienced culture loss, fallen into disuse elsewhere. This is also believed to be true with regard to viticulture which seems to have been lost during the 19th century southeast of Lake Tana. It is the story of ancient Aksum all over again, where a 1700-year old stone cistern is to this day the major water supply and a marvel to the present inhabitants, as are the obelisks, stone steps, etc. Where regional specialization does play some role, it is in a very limited sense. Certain districts of Begemdir province, for example, are more inhabited by Falashas than others, and the iron plowpoints and pottery may be preferred from there, especially in the dry season when travel is possible. The better togas are made by Muslim Ethiopians in suburban Gondar town. Hamlets of tanners are also encountered more often in the vicinity of a town like Gondar. Since so many basic crafts are handed down only in the family system, modern changes de-emphasizing the family economy, plus importation via Italian-built roads, will increasingly cause culture loss, especially in the rural districts. Already the contemptuous reference to "balagar sera" (rustic workmanship) are beginning to heard among urban Amhara (e.g. in connection with the plow and pottery).

463 561 Division of labor by age is not elaborate in Amhara culture, and will be mentioned in connection with the life cycle. Children perform useful work from the age of seven on. Boys watch cattle, and the harvest against birds and baboons. Girls help in the house and take care of younger siblings. Both do the milking. Adults exercise authority and supervise the community. Elders (anyone 50 or over) are respected and do no hard work. They may supervise harvesters from high points, warn of fire or locusts because of life-long experience, reprimand shepherds. Widows very often become nuns, more often than widowers become monks. For old nuns can still do cooking and baking in monasteries, while old men would not be economically useful there, and usually are too old and illiterate to join the clergy even as acolytes. However, priests who have become widowers very often become monks and continue their former activities.

[885] Girls are considered adults, for work and marriage, at 12-12; Boys usually 4-5 years later. Sons of priests and feudal families usually begin to attend church school at seven. Even today, in places where modern-type elementary schooling has become available, this pattern continues, and the sons of peasants, if they live near a town and have a chance to be entered at all, at least for the first 3 grades, are usually 11 years old in the first grade, and have already served their parents for 5 years in pastoral and harvest occupations.

Among the ethnic specialists, the harder physical labor is done by male adults in their prime, and lighter tasks allocated to children, elders and women. Thus (e.g., within one Falasha hamlet) one will usually see the adult

463 561 males in their prime occupied, in teams of five, at smithing a plowpoint; while the elder weaves a toga at his handloom, as fast or as slowly as his physical condition or pride permit. [462] Pottery is made by the Falasha womenfolk, and men do not participate other than to load finished pottery on donkeys for transportation to the customer.

A. Division of Labor by Sex.

462 Whenever uses of energy are not developed technologically, there is usually a sharp division of labor by sex, in which the routine everyday labor is largely left to women. This is true in Amhara society. Women are tied to household tasks and babies, and therefore tasks that are bound to a fixed time are usually left to women. By extension, since water-carrying is the woman's task, pottery-making is done by women of the ethnic specialist class, usually Falasha. On the other hand, tasks involving tools rather than utensils, and tasks not bound to a fixed daily routine, are usually male occupations in Amhara society.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

462 563 B. THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR.

Division of labor according to the ethnic origin of of the worker is the most distinctly organized division among the Amhara. This is based on the attitude of the Amhara that labor (especially skilled labor and manual labor) is dishonorable. This attitude is reinforced by the close kinship ties which prevent a cultural deviant from shaming the members of his family by working in the district where they are known. It also reinforces the the ethnic boundary lines, and forces the non-Amhara, non-Coptic, working ethnic groups to live within the circle of their own kinfik, religious groups, and hamlets.

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One of the most despised is the class of the Faqi, the tanners, who speak old-Cushitic languages such as Agau, are considered "pagans" in religion, and are associated by their trade with the hunters, the lowest class.

[281 191]

On a slightly higher level are the ironsmiths, usually of Falasha, who practice Mosaic Judaism, used to speak Quarinya, an old-Cushitic language, but use the same Semitic Geez language as the Copts in their religious worship and biblical liturgy.

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This use of Geez by the Falasha is puzzling to the Coptic priests, and brings about a sort of grudging respect for the Falasha, which somewhat elevates their status above that of the tanners. But they are suspected of practicing black magic in connection with their smithing of iron. Patrons take magic precautions to counteract all sorts of magic bewitchment by the Falashas whenever they have contact with them.

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463 They are especially afraid of the "buda", evil eye concept,
754 of which Falashas are believed especially capable; also of
326 their supposed ability to turn themselves into real and magic hyenas at night.

This magic power, however, is believed to make their
[323] tools "strong", and the pottery of the Falasha womenfolk "hard to break", so that their wares are preferred by the Amhara, creating a monopoly for Falasha iron tools and pottery wherever Falasha hamlets are within a day walking distance. In some areas there are itinerant Falasha smiths, whose womenfolk make pottery at the same time. They will live in a special guest hut at the edge of an Amhara hamlet.

463 Weaving is also done by Falashas, but they have no
563 monopoly on it, as Muslim Ethiopian weavers are believed
286 by the Amhara to turn out togas that are just as good. For many centuries Muslims were permitted to reside only in segregated sections of towns, such as "AddisAlem" of
[361] Gondar town. Though this prohibition has been lifted, most Ethiopian Muslims still reside in special quarters of towns, rarely in a rural hamlet on the Amhara plateau. They were not permitted to own land and no one would rent them any.

They see much more of the country trade routes, since it is they who do much of caravan trading, acting as guides, quartermasters and retail traders for Arab coreligionists who are the wholesalers, usually on routes leading to the Sudan, to Eritrea and to Somaliland. The Coptic Amhara consider the Ethiopian Muslims almost as foreign as the Arabs, even the descendants of Amhara who were forcefully

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286 converted to Islam by the invading Mahdi in the late 19th century, some of whom never reconverted to Christianity after the end of the invasion. This latter group speaks Amharic, but the Coptic Amhara refuse to call them Amhara. In turn, the Muslims call the Copts "Kaffir", infidels, which is considered an insult. Though socially segregated, Muslim weavers are often called to make shammas in the back yard of a Coptic Amhara house, returning to their own homes at dusk.

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464 In the province of Shoa, and the southern, non-Amhara provinces, the Amhara conquered much land in the late 19th century, acquiring millions of Galla and other "gabbar", sharecropping peasants with a status somewhat resembling that of medieval European serfs. They still constitute an important category of labor, though they can leave the land if they are willing to abandon everything (which they rarely do). During the reign of the present emperor their lot has improved, and it is the Galla who are at present experiencing the most remarkable mobility in occupation of any group in Ethiopia. The numbers affected by the change are small, but the principle of this mobility cannot be exaggerated. Even Menelik II, conqueror of the Galla, had noticed how easily he could win them over to serve under his military banner, partly because of their in-tribal dissention, partly due to their fierce loyalty to any chief to whom they have sworn allegiance. Today a number are in positions of the central government, and many Galla officials and clerks are sent out to the old Amhara provinces, even to Gondar, to govern and administer their erstwhile conquerors

463 563 their erstwhile conquerors.

The majority of the Galla are still primitive, dress in skins, use iron spears since they have few rifles, and are "pagan" or slightly islamized, in provinces south of the Amhara provinces. Their participation in the economy is largely agricultural and pastoral, both honorable occupations in the Amhara view. Their low (though rising) social status is due to their conquest, the African living patterns in their home provinces, the difference in religion and in language, but not to their occupation.

The following crafts fall under the ethnic division of labor:

563 A. Pottery-making

323 [462] This occupation can also be classed under Division of Labor by Sex, since only women, mostly Falasha women, engage in it. In the provinces where no Falasha women are available, pottery is made by Gurage or by Galla women. The only time a Coptic Amhara woman prepares a rough utensil she fashions an unsymmetrical container out of mud coarsely mixed with straw or cowdung and left to dry in the sun without firing. Compared with that, the pottery made by women of the other ethnic groups, is indeed "professional".

323 But in fact even the best pottery made by the craftswomen must be considered primitive. It belongs to the category referred to by archeologists in other areas as "women home industry". The firing is of the "first level", i.e. below 600° Centigrade. No potter's wheel is used. Glazing and waterproofing are minimal and primitive; only

286 weaver's occupation. If the weaver were to become a Copt
554 and live among Copts, he would be on a social level equal to a poor, laboring Amhara.

C. Semi-specialized and unskilled.

463 The present division of labor is still based on
563 the former feudal structure of the Amhara economy and human organization. Specialized skills are left to other ethnic groups, and, apart from non-ignoble occupations such as war, church, agriculture, healing, the Amhara reserve to themselves semi-specialized occupations and part-time labor traditionally carried out by household retainers.

The latter type of labor, dealt with in this section, can be roughly divided into three categories: (1) labor arising out of the feudal lord-peasant relationship; (2) semi-specialization "that anyone can learn", in the attitude of the Coptic Amhara; (3) temporary la-
[465] bor, for which specified wages based on Time and Energy are agreed upon, called "damoz" (a contraction of "dämä-wäs", lit. "blood-and sweat" compensation). This term is even used for temporary marriage, during which the woman acts as cook and travelling companion.

466 The first category arises out of the obligations
[566] owed by the sharecropping "gabbar" to his feudal lord or landowning church: the former statute labor, when everyone would come with his own tools and construct a

464 an entire harvest, but the slave would suddenly find
567 himself without a protector, without food and shelter, separated from his own (Shanqalla) people since birth and not knowing their language or their customs.

When liberation was decreed by Emperor Haile Selassie in 1941/2, many ex-slaves remained with their old masters or attached themselves as retainers to a new one, to have a basic livelihood and protection in court against hurt or insult from strangers. The fact that slave trading had been forbidden by Haile Selassie since 1924, and been gradually enforced since then, had increased the personal attachment of slaves not only to the master but to his entire extended family from which they could no longer be sold. After 1942, those ex-slaves who did leave their former masters often settled in makeshift shacks in towns, usually in the section formerly assigned to Muslims, and they now constitute an important potential labor supply in the towns.

463 The second category[1] includes semi-specializations
464 of some poorer Coptic Amhara who, in addition to some farming, do such work as making charcoal ("käsäl" or "dengay Käsäl"), as soon as themajor harvest is over. They then move in small teams, usually kinfolk, into the drying river valleys where suitable wood is more plentiful, and later sell their product in towns, to restaurateurs, on the big and little markets, or to smiths and potters. Since this trade is "one that anyone can learn", non-occult, there is nothing slavish about it to the mind of the Amhara, and the loss of

[1] [of part time labor (see p.215, cat. 116).-Analyst]

463 prestige involved is slight--occurring only if there is
464 kinfolk nearby shamed by such manual labor. It is on a social level with the gathering of kosso-bark by a poor Amhara woman.

463 Some farmers have a part-time specialty of fashion-
[324] ing the stone used as mano by the housewife when she grinds grain. They are called "wäqari". No shame is involved; it is considered like a hobby, like whittling away at wood.

[693 Some heads of farming families are adept at "talk-
554] ing well in court" for which they achieve great prestige--the major method of achieving prestige. They are called "täbäqa" lawyers, and not full-time specialists since all they can expect, if they win the case, is a bellyful of barley beer or an occasional gift, but they are guests of honor at the victory feasts and "men of reknown".

A large number of semi-specialists fall into the
[23] category of caretakers, "täbäqi". Cowherds and shepherds, if they are grown men not useful at anything else, are included in this category.

463 Part-time employment is found by the former feudal
265 chamberlain, "agafari", at big weddings of landholding peasants or in towns. They act as caterers, order the bread, meat, beer, mead, etc. They are experts at headwaiting, and know just whom to seat at what table or around which "mäsob", according to rank, and they indicate to each servant to whom to serve beer and to whom the more expensive and more noble mead. This was

463 once a noble profession, requiring much intelligence
265 and training, but now a handsome cash gift, partly for the wedded couple and partly as a tip, can introduce a non-prestigeful guest to the table of the nobles. The profession has thus dropped to the level of the itinerant musician, the "azmari", and brings neither prestige nor any particular shame.

463 A still honorable semi-specialization is that of
532 the painter of religious or religious-royal themes in the church, the "seel-sali". He is often a layman loosely attached to the church, who learned his craft while attending church school and then apprenticed himself to a master painter. He is often hired by an individial landlord or well-to-do, often aging, pious Amhara man or noble lady, who wish to make this gift to the church and often order the painter to paint in a small, modest likeness of themselves or their recently departed parents. (See section of art).

464 The third category of "damoz"[1] labor is traditionally found in the rural areas primarily in the case of the temporary marriage. The availability of ex-slaves rarely makes it necessary to hire on any but temporary agricultural labor, for it would be too expensive and difficult to hire Amhara labor. There is, however, a type of day laborer, "mwayatänya", or simply "seratänya" (worker), who is now paid about Eth$1.- a day, and can be hired for some temporary job without the other involvements sich as leave for church holidays and kin-visiting. A poor Amhara will sometimes hire on for some ready cash,

1 [i.e. "temporary" - see p.215, cat.116. - Analyst]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

357 466 his task is fixed in advance and if an Amhara he will usually refuse to carry out any work for which he was [E-2] not engaged. Women servants usually receive half the salary of a male servant. Thus only officials and relatively high-income urbanites can afford Amhara servants; servants of socially lower groups can be hired for considerably less, if themaster is willing to forego the prestige of having Amhara servants.

The urban householder, who is not surrounded by kinfolk in his residence, usually must hire a night watchman, "zebanya", who sleeps huddled in coarse shammas in front of the house or behind the outer gate. They receive the wage of day laborers. Often they are old veterans of former feudal soldiery, too decrepit for any other work, yet still fierce-looking and fierce-tongued enough to discourage thieves.

265 466 Urban teahouses, coffeehouses and mead-houses employ waiters, "asalafi", who do not have the specialization of the more prestigeful "agafari", but who have steadier jobs. Their pay is not above that of the day laborer, but they can accumulate cash more readily.

[463] 875 871 During the present generation a new element of modern-educated clerks, teachers, hospital "dressers" and government officials is gradually entering the occupational pattern of the town, though still in very small percentages. A graduate of the traditional church school of the rural areas is considered to have only the equivalent of 2 grades of elementary school. All towns now have at least one modern elementary school with 8

632 Since the town attracted the most clever "dabtärä",
[754] many of whom were herbologists, it was also a center where "medical aid", sometimes quite effective, could be obtained, and attracted patients from far and wide.

[463] Ethnic craftsmen would settle in hamlets within walking distance of the town, to provide iron tools, tanned leather, sun umbrellas, etc., without, however, exposing themselves to mockery, insults and occasional assaults by living in the town itself.

632 517 The town developed as a social center, and center for entertainment, almost inevitably. First, religious feasts such as the Epiphany parades and the tournaments on the public commons on "ganna" (Christmas) attracted the populace; and youngsters as well as adult loafers found themarket scenes fascinating. Secndly, the Arab traders liked to discuss business and news over tea or coffee. So "teahouses " (shay bet") sprang up near the [265] Saturday market, serving snacks also to many a male at odds with his wife, and excluding all womenfolk. Con-
632 648 versely, the mead house, ("tej bet") provided evening
588 entertainment with female singers and dancers (azmari) for the all-male clientele, and waitresses easily available for sexual entertainment. Moreover, every town had at least one "street of unattached women", who catered to travellers or visiting peasants as innkeepers, restaurateurs, and as temporary wives; they were usually divorcees, who hoped to find another husband, and to settle down again to regular married life.

632 178 Except for some of the feudal arrangements, most of this town pattern of social organization is still

565 ("ehawa") of Amhara ancestry ("attentam"); and the "gabbar" sharecropper on feudal land, who is regarded as of doubtful ancestry (part-slave, or part-Galla ethnic), who is referred to as "rustic" ("balagar"). While the former, usually descended from warriors who were given land many generations age, considers himself inferior only to nobility and higher church officials, the latter occupies the broad bottom base of the Amhara social pyramid. The proverb says of the rustic "gabbar":

[539] "He who honors a gabbar
will be despised by him ".

In fact there are not many who might honor a gabbar, except for some ethnic laborers and ex-slaves, both of whom occupy somewhat of an outcast position.

c) The Ethnic Classes

523 The ethnic skilled-labor class does not usually
463 consider itself inferior to the gabbar class. This is
565 especially true if the particular ethnic group has a non-material culture or subculture of its own, notably the Falashas who observe Mosaic Judaism.

The factor of fear of a skilled occupation, the practitioners of which are called "tabib" (lit. "knowing one ", i.e to whom secrets are revealed), enters into the class stratification. It attaches an aura of untouchability to certain occupational classes, especially if reinforced by ethnic or religious difference.
563 This combination of factors applies to the smithcraft,
326 the "Kayla", who are suspected of witchcraft, of being
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533 rest not on any supposed supernatural powers of their
281 craft, but on theoccupation which requires them to deal with carcasses regularly, and places them in a class with the "Moyto" hippopotamus hunters of Lake Tana. However, the tanned skins produced by these "Faqi" tanners, prepared through a primitve version of making "morocco" leather, ismuch appreciated as "best workmanship" by the rural as well as town Amhara.

Like the Falasha, the "Faqi" live in hamlets of their own, usually within half a day's waling distance of a big market. They are regarded by Amhara as pagans; they gather under large trees in remote areas for their nature worship on several occasions each year. In very recent years, the urgings from the emperor and the example of Protestant missionaries have stimulated the Coptic clergy to admit them to Christianity, but, as
[97] in the case of converted Falasha, the social stigma remains attached to the convert, even if he changes his occupation. Socially he is then worse off than before, for as an outcast from his own group he feels the barbs of social discrimination more than ever. In the past, the "Faqi", like the "Falasha" did not concern themselves much about this stigma, but now the "Faqi" insist on the polite address "arabeñña" --which refers to the tanner workmanship (lit. the one who creates Arab-like, i.e. imported luxury, articles.).

[143] Occupations that can be readily learned by anyone, or that require talent rather than skill, do not connote
533 low class. A musician, "azmari", male or female, who m[illegible]br may not play an instrument for accompaniment, is

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 361 sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

[132] Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most [312] pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā [132] twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, some- [241]

*175 643 TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāssi (Nagāssē Kristos)	Abēto	169?–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebstē (Sebstyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbiyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Takla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwofios	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yostos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāhla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

*175 361 times three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and [132] livestock are produced in abundance. [241]

[231] The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's *175 633 time of power.[8] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The towns- [162] people of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more [463] conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he [193] was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose [361] name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

over a century ago that the people of Manz had the reputation of being "brave, daring, and ignorant."[46] The caricatures of the typical Manzē usually have to do with his *qilnat* ("stupidity"), such as the old story about the Manzēs at the bottom of a hill who were warned about some rolling boulders and replied: "That's all right, we'll just put our heads under the blanket and then we won't see the stones." As one Manzē himself put it: "We look to Gondar as our older brother. We know we are ignorant and illiterate." 175* 829 181 184

Although in each other's eyes the Gondarē may be arraigned as haughty and cowardly and the Manzē berated as ignorant and hostile, a comparative view enables one to see the differences between Manz and Gondar as complementary, representing a specialization of interest and function within a common culture. An Amhara priest expressed this idea to me by saying: "The people of Gondar and Manz are really the same. Only Gondar is the head, and Manz the foot." (In Amharic thought the leg symbolizes force.) The pursuit of different interests and the perfection of different functions led to the cultivation of different virtues and, by the same token, the indulgence of different faults. The result was what might be called a moral division of labor along a geographical axis. 175* 181 184

The primary axis of this division of labor in Amhara culture was vocational. The separate virtues of soldier and cleric were cultivated through distinct roles, pursued part or full time by two different sets of individuals. This permitted both sets of values to be realized without arousing the cultural and psychic conflicts that would inhere in their joint cultivation by the same persons. [463]

It was by historical accident that Manz and Gondar came to provide an additional axis for this division of labor. At Gondar, through the political circumstances described above, the military function withered away, while the religio-literary culture was enabled to flourish. In Manz, the latter was destroyed and never recovered, while the energies of her people were consumed in fighting.

The historical advantage of this was that the Amhara thereby found the occasion for a massive revitalization of their religious culture through the facilities at Gondar, yet were able to accumulate a military momentum, through the years of incubation in Manz, that favored a political comeback which put them in a position to assert their might over an area larger than ever before in Ethiopian history. The moral consequence was that the Gondarē and the Manzē developed in pronounced form the virtues of the literatus and the soldier, respectively. The total culture was perhaps thereby enriched. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, cultivated literatus, was in a sense the epitome of the Gondarē ethos, just as Menelik II, determined fighter as well as shrewd politician and tactful diplomat, was morally as well as genealogically akin to the men of Manz. The imperial court at the end of the nineteenth century, 175* 18

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 857 868 Somewhat later, when he reaches ten or eleven, the Amhara boy begins to accustom himself to the plow, perhaps trying his hand at it from time to time while his father rests for lunch. Intermittently his ability increases, and by the age of fourteen or so—earlier if the family is short of help—he is given a regular share of the plowing. This may be limited to one or two hours a day at first, but before many seasons elapse he is ready to undertake a full day's work, along with his older relatives.

*883 868 In his mid-teens the Amhara boy is normally given a small part of his father's land to use for himself. The boy has full charge of plowing and harvesting this land and selling the crops at market. The crops or money he [434] earns thereby is referred to as *gulammā* ("private possession") and is set aside for helping him to get started on his own later on. Eventually the *gulammā* will be used to purchase new clothes, an ox, and presents for his bride. Year by year the father may add a bit more land for the boy's private management, though all together it does not often amount to a very large quantity; he may produce, say, 150 to 200 liters of grain for his *gulammā* in a year (in the Amhara system of measures, about 2 *ṣāwlā*). When he has saved enough [582] grain to fill a *riq*, a large wicker storage bin plastered inside with cow dung, he is considered ready to get married and strike out on his own.

By the time a boy begins to accumulate his *gulammā* he has learned nearly everything he needs to know for performing the work which will be expected of him as an adult. In his late teens the education is completed, through the mastery of such special techniques as fashioning the yoke and wooden attachments for the plow, and constructing the walls and roof for a house.

The work life of the Amhara peasant is thus a simple continuation of activities with which he has long been familiar. The same is true, *mutatis* [463] *mutandis*, for those who, following their fathers' footsteps, become priests or sorcerers, governors or warriors, artisans or traders. In these cases, moreover, the foregoing pattern applies to a great extent, since the latter roles are often combined with an agricultural economic base and way of life. (Special aspects of some of these variant patterns will be discussed below.)

857 868 This pattern of gradually increased work responsibility is conspicuous in the case of girls. While shepherding and other childhood tasks are shared by both sexes, the Amhara girl begins to do distinctively female work at about six or seven. First she learns to clear seeds from cotton, and to spin, by hand. Later on she is introduced to the more taxing female chores, like fetching water and grinding grain. The progressive increase of the girl's work load is visibly illustrated by the graduated sizes of clay jugs used for carrying [415] water. When she begins to fetch water, the young girl carries a tiny jug, called a *gambo*. As she becomes older and stronger she is given a larger size, a small *enserā*. Finally, the mature female carries the large *enserā*, a jug that holds as much as twenty liters.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
831 particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the
[834] sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical
[577] courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat*, is synonymous with *guabaznat*, or "bravery.")

*883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often
[141] carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
463

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a different identity. Religion and warfare were the two spheres most likely to 156
attract him. Although trade and manual arts were possibilities for those whose 554
industry exceeded their status-consciousness, they were considered the busi- 463
ness of other ethnic groups and normally rejected by a self-respecting Am- [461]
hara. When the Amhara youth left home for a new life, he was usually heading either for the school of some church teacher or the quarters of some chieftain.

Today, as in former times, the role of priest is known from childhood as 793
a possible model for the peasant boy. He and his companions often imitate 554
the clergy and their ceremonies in their play. The wish to become a priest 156
is kindled by a number of interests—desire for the material benefits accorded [178]
the clergy; curiosity about the mysteries of the church; envy of the great prestige of the clergy; hope for a better chance of going to heaven after death.
During adolescence the outlook of the boy who seeks to become a priest [883]*
deviates from that of the *gorumsā* described above. Instead of the shrill, blood-heating *shillala* war chants he prefers the gentle hymns of the church; instead of the frenzied dancing and singing of the young braves he prefers the schooled dance of the clergy; instead of pursuing women, he is inclined to turn his head the other way when a girl appears.

The military alternative does not seem to be an ideal of Amhara children. 701
They rarely see soldiers; and when they did in former times, it was usually 156
in the unhappy circumstance of seeing the family's reserves plundered. It is 554
not until the time of puberty and after that the great upsurge of aggressive instinct has turned the thoughts of many an Amhara youth to fighting. Chafing under parental domination or bristling with resentment because of being an illegitimate offspring or a stepchild, he may be anxious to turn his hostility against some enemy. He may imagine the free life of a soldier more attractive than the drudgery of the peasant's lot. In the days of feudal armies, he may have heard news about some warlord on the rise and thus have hopes, by attaching himself as a follower, of winning booty and the laurels of a hero, perhaps eventually the powers of a chieftain.

Whether the peasant boy chooses church school or the warpath, his move 565
has frequently been an all-or-none move. The peasant boy can do nothing 593
without the consent of his father, and normally his father will not permit him 463
to do anything except carry on the farmwork and prepare himself to care for 156
his parents in their old age and to inherit the family land. If there should be some sign that the son does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, the latter will do everything he can short of disinheritance—and ofttimes that—to persuade him otherwise.

And so, some restless day, eyes fixed on some alluring goal, the Amhara youth might run away and not be seen again. If he should return, it would

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely preparing himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adolescence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

The Welfare School

Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in government provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

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that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for consider-

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(396)	(40)	(197)

able strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

society: to create engineers and mechanics, doctors and nurses, economists and educators. With regard to the familiar occupations of the old order, the schools' task is to engender a new breed of practitioner—farmers versed in modern methods of agriculture, soldiers disciplined and geared to modern techniques, clergy cognizant of ecumenical Christianity, clerks who can type and take shorthand, and government officials with some modern education.

What is most revolutionary is that the schools introduce not only new subject matters for careers, but the very notion of vocation itself—of life work as

TABLE 4

SOURCES OF FUTURE SATISFACTION CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS*

Source from Which Students Expect Most Satisfaction in Life	Secondary School				College Males (per cent)	
	Males (per cent)		Females (per cent)			
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Career or occupation	34	12	30	9	44	17
Improvement of local community	30	27	16	36	22	28
Religious beliefs and activities	13	20	16	21	5	7
Participation in national and international affairs	10	24	13	20	8	26
Family relationships	8	10	20	9	17	14
Leisure-time, recreational activities	5	7	5	5	3	8
Number	(304)		(40)		(195)	

* Based on question 27 in the Gillespie-Allport questionnaire.

something which one *chooses*, trains for in a specific manner, and derives satisfaction from pursuing.* This orientation departs radically from the traditional expectation of inheriting the work of one's father as a matter of course. Whereas, as we have noted, the Amhara son traditionally carried on his father's work, except in rare cases where there were special reasons for not doing so, only *seven per cent* of the boys in my sample indicated that

* When asked what they expected to give most satisfaction in their lives, the students most frequently named "career or occupation" (out of six alternatives). When asked what they considered most desirable in choosing an occupation, they named "work that is really interesting" most frequently (out of six alternatives). See Tables 4 and 5.

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463 they expected to enter the same occupation as their fathers. This figure is
178 much smaller than that obtained from a cross-cultural study of youth by
593 James Gillespie and Gordon Allport, who found that "approximately a third of the male students in all our samples [a total of 1,168, drawn from the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, Egypt, Mexico, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, and Israel] expect to enter the same occupations as their fathers, or ones closely related."[18] In part, the Ethiopian figure simply reflects the preparation for types of work which did not exist for previous generations.

829
463 TABLE 5

OCCUPATIONAL CONDITIONS MOST DESIRED BY STUDENTS

Conditions Which Students Consider Most Desirable in Choosing Future Occupations	Secondary School				College Males (per cent)	
	Males (per cent)		Females (per cent)			
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Interesting work	56	24	63	17	63	18
Job security	19	26	23	11	14	31
Chance to acquire much money	12	11	3	11	10	16
Prestige	7	9	8	17	7	5
Pleasant work companions	4	26	3	30	3	27
Good boss	2	4	0	14	3	3
Number	(325)		(40)		(113)	

463 But since it also represents numerous cases where the boy's occupational
178 interest is a traditional one—where, in other words, one finds sons of soldiers
593 and government officials planning to become farmers, sons of farmers planning to be teachers, and sons of priests and teachers planning to be soldiers and administrators—this figure may be interpreted as indicative of a very general rejection of parental influence with respect to occupational choice.

Parents of the modern adolescents are unhappy about this diminution of their traditional authority, especially so when their children opt for some of the more "outlandish" modern occupations. Their disapproval sometimes takes the form of urging their children to quit school and get married. Often it is expressed in the form of direct criticism of the occupation in question. Nearly two-fifths of the secondary school males questioned about this indicated that their parents did not approve of the occupation they wished to enter. As

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

might be expected, the incidence of disapproval was highest among the students of the Gondar secondary school (fifty-eight per cent), whose parents are presumably more traditionalist than those of the Addis Ababa boys, and the students of the technical school (fifty-six per cent), whose occupational interests, involving manual labor and technical skills, are felt to resemble those artisan pursuits traditionally disesteemed by the Amhara.

Time is on the side of the students. As Ethiopia develops and education spreads, the advantages of prolonged training and modern occupations will become increasingly apparent to the parents. For some time to come, however, their resentment of the dependence of youth on foreigners and Western-educated Ethiopians for occupational guidance will continue to generate social tensions and impede the socialization process.

The harmonious pattern of preparation for adult work roles found in traditional Amhara society has been further disrupted under the new school system at at least two points: the point at which occupational commitments are made, and the point of entry into the work force.

The modern adolescent is supposed to choose which of several kinds of schools, representing a variety of vocational commitments, he wishes to enter upon successful completion of the eighth-grade exam. Quite often his choice is dictated by wholly irrelevant factors. For example, it may be made on the basis of which of the available schools promises the best standard of living.[19] Or it may be made for him by the school system, for one finds cases where the student's preferences are disregarded and he is placed in whatever school and vocational program happens to be able to accommodate him.

Even when the student's choice is relatively free from such extraneous determinants, however, it is usually difficult for him to make a meaningful decision. Eight grades of a rudimentary curriculum is hardly an adequate basis for choosing from a variety of unfamiliar vocations. So it is "fate" that guides most youngsters into one or another of the secondary school programs. The problem of choice recurs, for a much smaller number, when commitments are again required for entrance into the colleges. At this point meaningful decisions are often made, but perhaps more often they are spun from a skein of bewilderment. One secondary school graduate summed up the situation by saying, "Foreigners frequently ask young educated Ethiopians, 'What do you want to become?' How do we know? This whole business of *choosing* is entirely new to us, and we know very little about the alternatives that we have now. It is all very confusing."

So far the modernizing sector has provided little, beyond vocational pamphlets in the school libraries and an occasional school debate on the respective values of different occupations, to help orient the students on these matters.

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883 Programs of vocational guidance and counseling have not yet been instituted.
• 463 Students who manage to form clear and definite ambitions also suffer for
873 want of help, if for some reason they have been shunted away from the appropriate training program, or have been deprived of opportunities to prepare adequately for the vocations to which they aspire. Two research findings bear on this. In one study it was found that "few secondary school administrators when questioned are aware of the ambitions and desires of their students," and that less than twenty per cent of the group of secondary school students surveyed felt they had received training "suitable to their ambitions."[20] In my own survey it appeared that fewer than twenty per cent of the secondary school students expect to enter the occupation they actually want to.

*883 In addition to this discontinuity between childhood experience and the
178 hitherto unknown necessity of making some sort of vocational choice, modern
464 adolescence also involves a sharp break between the experience of post-elementary school and the process of getting on a payroll. Here the Ethiopian youth faces the problems of students everywhere as they leave school for the "real world." In at least two respects, however, his dilemma is more acute than that of his counterpart in Western societies. Because virtually all jobs are controlled
(557) by the government, and because the government is still organized along traditional lines, the Ethiopian graduate must suddenly forget the universalistic criteria of school and acclimate himself to the traditional pattern of ingratiating oneself with those in positions of power—a pattern referred to as *daj ţenät*—if he is to gain and retain a decent job. For many graduates there is no machinery that might assist them in locating a job: no job advertisements, employment bureaus, not even effective personnel departments in most quarters.

87 The school system itself, however, does manage in certain cases to find
464 jobs for its graduates. For the foreign-educated returnees a special placement board was set up within the Ministry of Education. The locally educated are placed, if at all, by their individual schools, depending on the policy of the school, the resourcefulness of its director, the demands of the market, and current political emphases.

The outlook for graduates of the various specialized vocational programs has been in recent years as follows. A consistently high demand for teachers has assured jobs for graduates of the various teachers training programs. Graduates of the commercial school have been in great demand because of the increasing bureaucratization of government and the slight expansion of commerce. The public health college had great difficulty in the placement of its

* Since this was written the University's Department of Education has begun to produce a series of career pamphlets for secondary school students.

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graduates in the late fifties, but the government's implementation of a program of public health centers has opened up increasing opportunities for their employment. Graduates of the school of social work have been placed in positions with little difficulty. 87 464

On the other hand, in those areas in which the government has shown little or no interest the school authorities have been hard put to find employment for their graduates. This was shown most dramatically in the case of the now defunct community development training project at Majete, whose graduates were allowed to drift into oblivion due to the absence of an effective community development program in the country. Those who have completed courses of study in agriculture have not been extensively employed by the government because of chronic disorganization and neglect in the Ministry of Agriculture, while lack of capital and know-how has tended to keep them from private agricultural enterprise. Graduates of the technical and engineering schools have been having some difficulty in entering the work force due to the slow pace of Ethiopia's industrial development. Graduates of general academic programs, finally, and those who drop out before completing some course of study, tend to be left to their own devices.

While the modernizing sector, then, has introduced the revolutionary notion of vocation and has institutionalized means of training young Ethiopians for modern work roles, it has not yet provided adequate mechanisms either for guiding them into and through the training programs or for employing them properly once they are trained. 178 463 • 464

Preparation for Marriage 883* 178

Conditions of growing up in the modernizing sector have disrupted the harmonious pattern of Amhara adolescence also with respect to entrance into adult family roles. Conflicts arise both from postponement of the normal age for marriage and from radically new ideas about the nature of marriage. [582] [581]

The modern adolescent typically expects to marry at an age that is at least eight to ten years older than his traditional counterpart. While Amhara girls have traditionally married in their early teens, girls in the senior class of secondary school now say they expect to marry in their early twenties. Amhara boys have traditionally married around the age of twenty, but those in post-elementary schools now expect to marry in their late twenties or early thirties. 883* 178 582

This shift is due to a desire to attain as much education as possible, and above all, for the boys, to the precarious economic position of modern adolescents. While living on his father's farm an Amhara boy could marry early with the assurance of having enough land to work to support his family at least at subsistence level. The modern boy who finishes secondary school or [871]

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cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a 121
society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by 56
that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive frame- 178
work of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are 181
embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is [571]
in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively 565
stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and 554
wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the [463]
statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the mer- 565
chant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the 554
small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was 441
accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an 463
Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be [186]
tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes 565
low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Low- 567
est in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from 554
the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), 463
and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced 565
sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values [181]
of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 During the reign of Haile Selassie, the infrastructure of Ethiopian society
178 has become more differentiated. A large standing army, an air force, and a
463 small navy have been recruited and trained by foreign military missions. The
[701] modernization of transport and communication has produced a sizable class of semiskilled operatives—truck drivers, airline employees, telephone operators, typesetters, etc. The expansion of government has produced a legion of clerks. In the towns tertiary occupational roles, like salesmen and barbers, have come into being, and the establishment of factories has engendered a small industrial labor force.

All such people tend to differ from the traditional lower classes in their relative enthusiasm for *selṭänē* ("civilization"). Still more enthusiastic are those who have had more intimate and prolonged exposure to the fruits of *selṭänē:* domestic servants in *faranj* homes; students of the secondary schools and colleges; Imperial Bodyguard troops who served in the Korean campaign and recently in the Congo; and highland Eritreans, whose experience under sixty years of Italian colonial administration has rendered them far more modernized than people of other provinces.

178 Similarly, the reign of Haile Selassie has witnessed the emergence of new
571 elite groups. A "new nobility" of government officials and urban plutocrats
554 has taken place beside the old. In addition, a nascent intelligentsia has at-
565 tained a precarious high status, resting mostly on the esteem of students, some military officers, and resident Westerners. The integrative dilemma of Ethiopia today has more to do with conflicts among and within its various elites than with tribal enmities or masses in revolt.*

643 Hovering over these four groups, kindred with each but superior to all,
571 has been the personality of the present emperor. Indeed, the history of
565 Ethiopia in the last four decades has for the most part been the story of Haile Selassie's efforts to direct and control the destinies of the old and new elites. The considerable success with which he has done this is a tribute, not only to his own remarkable manipulative skills, but also to the majesty of the office which he possesses. The position of *negusa nagast* has traditionally monopolized the highest reaches of the Abyssinian system of social stratification; constituting, as it were, an elite of One.

THE TRADITIONAL ORDER

643 *The Lofty Throne*

The emperor comprises an elite in the original sense of the word, for to the Ethiopians he is Elect of God (*seyuma egziäbhēr*) according to the conventional Ge'ez honorific.

* Although, as was suggested earlier, tribal and religious differences *may* generate new integrative crises in the future.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 past. The intellectuals are the product of a secular school system which is, as
571 we have seen, a structure foreign to Abyssinian tradition. Their members are
[177] drawn from all parts of Ethiopian society, and in almost no cases consist of
[871] Western-educated members of the old group of literati, the *dabtarā*. The question of their integration into what has remained an essentially traditional social system has thus been Ethiopia's main sociological dilemma during the present decade. We shall return to this question after considering the composition and general situation of the intellectual class.

571 Whatever his line of work, the Ethiopian intellectual tends to be employed
463 by the government, since employment opportunities in the private sector are
[464] still extremely limited; and where such exist, the government has often claimed priority over the intellectual's services by virtue of its having educated him. Many of the intellectuals work as public administrators, in the middle echelons of the government bureaucracy, with the titles of "assistant," "director," and "director general"; and there has been a growing tendency
[875] to appoint them in the higher levels, especially since 1961. Hundreds of them now work as teachers in the elementary and secondary schools,* and some six dozen teach at the college level. A small but growing number are employed as physicians, medical workers, engineers, and legal advisers in various government institutions. Still another group works in the small communications field—on the staffs of the various newspapers, the patriotic monthly *Menen*, and Radio Addis Ababa. The small group holding jobs outside the government works as engineers and bureaucrats in industrial firms, as employees of the Ethiopian Air Lines, or have small commercial or agricultural enterprises of their own.

571 With respect to interaction among the intellectuals, however, the most
871 important distinction among them has been the place where they received their education. Here we may speak of two main groups: those who received part of their education abroad, the "foreign-educated" or "returnees"; and those who received all their education in Ethiopia, the "local-educated" or "locals."†

The Returnees

Close to two hundred Ethiopians studied abroad prior to the Italian occu-
[177] pation. Since French was then the official European language in Ethiopia,

* About forty-five hundred Ethiopians, of varying levels of educational attainment, were teaching in government schools of all types in 1960–61, according to the Ministry of Education school census for that year.

† This term is used as a neutral descriptive category, free from any negative connotations it may have acquired when first coined by the returnees. More recently, the West African term "been-to" has been incorporated into Amharic for referring to the returnee.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Ambhara MP5

19. Thus, an eighth-grade student in Manz explained the popularity of the Jimma Agricultural School by saying, "The boys all want to go there because it is run by the Americans, and a school run by Americans means that everything is done right—food and clothes are properly distributed, and so on."
20. Shack, *op. cit.*, p. 417.
21. In response to a question on their attitudes toward the priests, sixty juniors and seniors of Tafari Makonnen Secondary School replied as follows (1959): 40 per cent were unequivocally proclerical; 22 per cent were ambivalent, expressing awareness of both good and bad elements in the clergy; and 18 per cent were primarily anticlerical, calling the priests "incompetent," "opposed to modernization," and "not supported by the people." (The rest were no answers or noncommittal.)
22. Edith Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-scientific Beliefs in Ethiopia," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XLVII, Second-Half (May, 1958), 339–54.
23. Cf. Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (rev. ed.; Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954), chaps. vii and xiv.
24. Cf. chap. iii, p. 89, and note 19.
25. Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-Scientific Beliefs," typescript version, pp. 6–7.
26. A sophisticated expression of this approach to Ethiopian painting has been published by an Ethiopian student in France. Cf. Berhanu Abbaba, "La peinture éthiopienne: point de vue d'un Éthiopien," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, II, No. 1 (1961), 160–65.
27. For a brief account of this historic event cf. Lipsky *et al.*, *Ethiopia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962), pp. 210–12.
28. Edgar Z. Friedenberg, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).
29. *Diagnosis of Our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), chap. iii.

CHAPTER 5: *The Old and New Elites*

1. C. Conti Rossini, "La regalità sacra in Abissinia," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, XXI (1948), 12–31.
2. A. Vasiliev, "Justin I (518–527) and Abyssinia," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXXIII (1933), 67–77; *Justin the First* (Harvard, 1950), pp. 299–302.
3. A. Caquot, "La royauté sacrale en Éthiopie," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 205–19.
4. F. Alvares, *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford (2 vols.; Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961), I, 122.
5. "The Chronicle of the Emperor Zara Yaqob," *Ethiopia Observer*, V, No. 2 (1961), 153.
6. J. Varenbergh, *Studien zur äthiopischen Reichsordnung* (Strassburg, 1916), p. 3.
7. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; Edinburgh, 1790), III, 237.

101 131 779 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries. [241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively [463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm- [286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga [443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of [562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin- [423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil- [326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields [286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha [162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority [361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

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632 istics are, except for differences in scale, approximated by most of the other provincial towns situated in predominantly Amhara areas.[17]

632 The People of the Town. Approximately three-
463 quarters of Gondar's residents are Amhara, born in either Begemder or adjacent Gojam province. Most Amhara townsmen are government employees (clerks, messengers, teachers, and judicial functionaries); a lesser number enjoy some ecclesiastical identity, and others are local rentiers, often supplementing their incomes with government or Church employment. A smaller number work in miscellaneous, unskilled occupations, notably as watchmen (zibaña) at the households of affluent co-religionists.

162
632 Three quarters of Gondar's adult Amhara are women.
463 A minority of them are the spouses or dependents of lo-
433 cal Amhara townsmen, and confine their daily activities to domestic duties. A still smaller number are rentiers, or the recipients of stipends from mature sons living elsewhere. The remaining Amhara townswomen, perhaps 40%

[17] Thus excluding Chilga (urban center for the Kemant Agaw region) and Metemma (a border town of the Sudanese lowlands).

162 632 433 463 of the town's total population, support themselves by working among the densely packed rows of beer houses and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 779 563 [197] [167] [142] Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejoratively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinctively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian wives. [443] [442] Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 563 463 [197] [562] A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people, predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics. Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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563 bar maids.

[463]
[562] A third, numerically significant minority have come from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even [144] though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly [779] negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are [649] non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations [562] also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly [464] by girls and women working as servants for the less af- [192] fluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Kilotes living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for [326] sale in the town's daily wood market (sir gabiya). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

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621 Ward and Town. Gondar's residents divide the town

[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("bariya").

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621 into sixty-five named wards (sebekas). The social and demographic character of wards varies considerably, and it is useful to describe them in terms of two contrasting types. At one extreme, the ward resembles a kind
[241] of urban parish. It contains an eponymous Church; and
[423] a majority of residents are risteñas, members of landowning ambilineages who support themselves by farming and renting homesteads on their lands. But even these wards contrast with rural parishes on several counts.
*[492] The ward is generally compact in size, and internally
• [463] undivided beyond the homestead (bet). Within it live out-landers who work outside the ward in exclusively non-agricultural occupations. Further, while the parish is administered in detail by residents, the ward relies upon non-resident agents of the municipality for its administration.

At the other extreme, are the town's "non-corporate"
[648] wards. During the Italian occupation, several of
[175] Gondar's parish-like wards were sequestered by the invaders as building sites. After liberation, the Imperial government divided each of these wards into tracts, which were deliniated according to the buildings upon them. Tracts were then given as grants (yaribeña mariet, "hero's land") to supporters of the government-in-exile, who were often non-residents of Gondar. In time, the pre-war boundaries of such wards were no longer regarded

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621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by risteñas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [198] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Šankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibañas, eight as wood cutters,

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two as talla sellers, and one each as mat seller, carpenter, day laborer, and pensioner.

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The practice of herbalist therapies in ward and town contrasts significantly with the situation in rural hamlet and parish. The relatively dense population of the town has important consequences. In the countryside, the closest herbalist needed for a specific episode may be a day's walk from the client's home; in the town several may be found within an hour's walk. The increase in herbalist therapies is not directly proportional to the increased population of town over countryside, however.

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In Gabrael sebeka, for example, only eighteen households (41% of the total) contain one or more herbalists. Many townfolk are forced to abstain from practicing herbalist therapies, because, as out-landers, they are unable or disinclined to locate needed botanicals. Also, significant numbers of townsfolk practice non-secular therapies, particularly as balazars.

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Further, although there are more redundant herbalist therapies potentially available to the townsman, he remains ignorant of many of them. The peasant locates himself within a network of several core kinsmen and neighbors upon whom he depends for information regarding herbalist chains. The townsman finds his place in a social matrix in which kinship ties are greatly diluted by distance. In Gabrael sebeka, for example, thirty-two house-

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621 as a means for dicusing and strengthening a risteña
869 family's economic and social interests within the parish.
241 There are two conspicuous exceptions. Should a boy bear
[732] a physical disability so severe that he will be unable
to perform the basic subsistence activities of Amhara
men, particularly plowing, he may be enrolled in the
parish school as a prelude to a non-agricultural career
beyond his natal parish. The alternatives are few.
[463] work as an artisan is appropriate for Muslim and Falasha,
[441] but shameful for an Amhara; while employment as a mer-
[563] chant is less objectionable, the peasant is generally
without the necessary skills, contacts, and capital;
military service is beyond his abilities; thus, only the
Church and government remain. Regarding the Church, the
priesthood is closed to him, since a priest must be phy-
sically whole, and capable of standing unassisted during
[647] the performance of the Mass. The remaining ecclesiasti-
cal and government career choices assume that a boy will
achieve literacy at the parish school and subsequently
*793 depart from his natal community. The second exception
621 to the local focus of the parish school, is the small
869 number of boys who are offspring of debtera-teachers ser-
593 ving in parish churches. The ties of these men to their
parishes-of-residence are usually only professional, and
they are rarely risteñas, it is moreover their profes-
sional ethos which influences them to seek an extensive

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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286 converted to Islam by the invading Mahdi in the late 19th century, some of whom never reconverted to Christianity after the end of the invasion. This latter group speaks Amharic, but the Coptic Amhara refuse to call them Amhara. In turn, the Muslims call the Copts "Kaffir", infidels, which is considered an insult. Though socially segregated, Muslim weavers are often called to make shammas in the back yard of a Coptic Amhara house, returning to their own homes at dusk.

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464 In the province of Shoa, and the southern, non-Amhara provinces, the Amhara conquered much land in the late 19th century, acquiring millions of Galla and other "gabbar", sharecropping peasants with a status somewhat resembling that of medieval European serfs. They still constitute an important category of labor, though they can leave the land if they are willing to abandon everything (which they rarely do). During the reign of the present emperor their lot has improved, and it is the Galla who are at present experiencing the most remarkable mobility in occupation of any group in Ethiopia. The numbers affected by the change are small, but the principle of this mobility cannot be exaggerated. Even Menelik II, conqueror of the Galla, had noticed how easily he could win them over to serve under his military banner, partly because of their in-tribal dissention, partly due to their fierce loyalty to any chief to whom they have sworn allegiance. Today a number are in positions of the central government, and many Galla officials and clerks are sent out to the old Amhara provinces, even to Gondar, to govern and administer their erstwhile conquerors

466 house, a church, a simple bridge, help in harvest, make charcoal and gather incense for the church, conduct pack animals on military expeditions, function as guard or sacristan, Amhara labor thus includes the agricultural worker of many semi-skills, who usually hires on in March when the little rains launch the plowing season, and who must furnish a "wās", a personal guarantor who will be responsible for the employee's conduct, and agree on time, energy to be expended and wages to be received.

465 At present the wage is about Eth$30.- per month for full-time labor, 6 days a week, sunrise to sunset (12 hours, less about 3-5 hours rest); plus free food (usually simple) and a place to sleep inside a hut or temporary shelter; clothing is at the employee's expense. Important church holidays are observed, and leave is usually granted to take care of personal affairs, in the case of an Amhara -Coptic employee. The master may not beat or haze the employee, on penalty of a fine levied by the "cheqa shum".

464 Thus, even the poor Amhara laborer retains his pride, but causes the employer to look for labor among socially lower ethnic groups or even Shanqalla ex-slaves who have remained, largely in Amhara territory after liberation. The employer pays these less, works them more, even on church holidays since many of them are still non-Christian. In proud Begemdir (Gonder) province, where no Galla or Gurage ethnics are available for labor (as they are in Shoa), unskilled labor is a

464 real problem, and for modern tasks has to be brought from southern provinces, or Eritrea (as the Italians, as well as Point IV have found out).

566 466 701 The pattern in the former feudal military service was one of greater pride and prestige even for the poorest Amhara. The feudal-military chief had to clothe, house and feed his men, and could never use them for hard labor, such as agriculture--especially plowing--even when he had no temporary work for them. They were quartered with peasants whom they exploited like serfs, and since the chief paid no wages, he assigned his soldiers "gult" land, often on a temporary basis, which included the peasants who usually were non-Copts and did not have the protection of either church or cheqa shum.

567 797 Though actual slavery has now been abolished, its recent existence still affects the pattern of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and introduces an important element which differs from the otherwise similar picture of early post-feudal Europe. Most of the slaves were Shanqalla (negroid) or Barya (Nilotic); plus some Galla and other south Ethiopian, more-African groups. Since they could not be sold if baptized Christian, the master was not interested in their conversion; the church despised these different lowlanders as unfit to be "raised to Christianity", in the Amhara phrase. If a master desired to free a loyal slave, the method was to have him baptized, on which occasion he would acquire a Christian godfather who would henceforth protect him from sale

567 and insist that he be declared and remain free. Until

567 then a slave had no legal personality and his master was responsible for any damages or crimes he might commit.

Though it was illegal, no one interfered with a master who killed his non-Christian slave. The offspring of an Amhara father and slave mother had full legitimacy and rights of inheritance, but the child of a free woman and a male slave--a rarity--remained a slave and belonged to whoever had rights over her, i.e. her husband, or her parents if whe was unmarried. In the province of Godjam a slave could own his own skins, till allocated field of his own in own spare time, and trade his grain on the market, so that he resembled a serf of medieval Europe, but belonged to his master, not to the soil

464 567 Much of the labor available today in the rural Amhara provinces, especially Begender, is of Shanqalla or semi-Shanqalla and half-Barya origin (ie. with an Amhara father and ex-slave mother). There are many of these half-negroids because of generations of concubinage, and because of the simplicity of the ecological life of the Amhara which can be regarded as a levelling factor, and good harvests or wartime famines were almost equally enjoyed or suffered by master as well as slave. Free Amhara peasant women and slave women did the same type of work, even crushed barley together at the same time in the same hollow treetrunk (a frequent scene in paintings). Liberation, in the past, of individual slaves, was rare, for not only was it a loss to the master equal to 3 pairs of oxen, or 2to3 good huts, or

464 an entire harvest, but the slave would suddenly find
567 himself without a protector, without food and shelter, separated from his own (Shanqalla) people since birth and not knowing their language or their customs.

When liberation was decreed by Emperor Haile Selassie in 1941/2, many ex-slaves remained with their old masters or attached themselves as retainers to a new one, to have a basic livelihood and protection in court against hurt or insult from strangers. The fact that slave trading had been forbidden by Haile Selassie since 1924, and been gradually enforced since then, had increased the personal attachment of slaves not only to the master but to his entire extended family from which they could no longer be sold. After 1942, those ex-slaves who did leave their former masters often settled in makeshift shacks in towns, usually in the section formerly assigned to Muslims, and they now constitute an important potential labor supply in the towns.

463 The second category[1] includes semi-specializations
464 of some poorer Coptic Amhara who, in addition to some farming, do such work as making charcoal ("käsäl" or "dengay Käsäl"), as soon as the major harvest is over. They then move in small teams, usually kinfolk, into the drying river valleys where suitable wood is more plentiful, and later sell their product in towns, to restaurateurs, on the big and little markets, or to smiths and potters. Since this trade is "one that anyone can learn", non-occult, there is nothing slavish about it to the mind of the Amhara, and the loss of

[1] [of part time labor (see p.215; cat. 116).-Analyst]

463 prestige involved is slight--occurring only if there is
464 kinfolk nearby shamed by such manual labor. It is on a social level with the gathering of kosso-bark by a poor Amhara woman.

463 Some farmers have a part-time specialty of fashion-
[324] ing the stone used as mano by the housewife when she grinds grain. They are called "wäqari". No shame is involved; it is considered like a hobby, like whittling away at wood.

[693 Some heads of farming families are adept at "talk-
554] ing well in court" for which they achieve great prestige--the major method of achieving prestige. They are called "täbäqa" lawyers, and not full-time specialists since all they can expect, if they win the case, is a bellyful of barley beer or an occasional gift, but they are guests of honor at the victory feasts and "men of reknown".

A large number of semi-specialists fall into the
[23] category of caretakers, "täbäqi". Cowherds and shepherds, if they are grown men not useful at anything else, are included in this category.

463 Part-time employment is found by the former feudal
265 chamberlain, "agafari", at big weddings of landholding peasants or in towns. They act as caterers, order the bread, meat, beer, mead, etc. They are experts at headwaiting, and know just whom to seat at what table or around which "mäsob", according to rank, and they indicate to each servant to whom to serve beer and to whom the more expensive and more noble mead. This was

463 once a noble profession, requiring much intelligence
265 and training, but now a handsome cash gift, partly for the wedded couple and partly as a tip, can introduce a non-prestigeful guest to the table of the nobles. The profession has thus dropped to the level of the itinerant musician, the "azmari", and brings neither prestige nor any particular shame.

463 A still honorable semi-specialization is that of
532 the painter of religious or religious-royal themes in the church, the "seel-sali". He is often a layman loosely attached to the church, who learned his craft while attending church school and then apprenticed himself to a master painter. He is often hired by an individial landlord or well-to-do, often aging, pious Amhara man or noble lady, who wish to make this gift to the church and often order the painter to paint in a small, modest likeness of themselves or their recently departed parents. (See section of art).

464 The third category of "damoz"[1] labor is traditionally found in the rural areas primarily in the case of the temporary marriage. The availability of ex-slaves rarely makes it necessary to hire on any but temporary agricultural labor, for it would be too expensive and difficult to hire Amhara labor. There is, however, a type of day laborer, "mwayatänya", or simply "seratänya" (worker), who is now paid about Eth$1.- a day, and can be hired for some temporary job without the other involvements sich as leave for church holidays and [illegible]-visiting. A poor Amhara will sometimes hire on for some ready cash,

[1] [i.e. "temporary"—see p.215, cat.116. -Analyst]

464 and be willing to forego his usual demands, temporarily. During the caravan season, some will hire on as mule-drivers for a round trip. Otherwise the day laborer is rare among rural Amhara, and met more often only in provincial capitals and the few cities.

D. Labor and the market-town.

464 Laborers hiring on in the towns for temporary work (e.g. in construction) do so usually through a labor broker. There are no organized factories in the provin-
[467] cial towns, only a few small ones in the main cities, and there is not yet such a modern development as a labor union. Child and female labor is widespread and almost entirely
[465] unskilled. A laborer's daily wage was equated with 25¢ Ethiopian, by clause 6 of the Penal Code of 1930, but the present rate actively paid for urban labor of Amhara is Eth$1.-per day. The Emperor's factory proclamation of 1944 authorized the Ministry of Commerce to regulate hours and conditions of labor, but this actually anticipates future conditions and finds little application at present.

357 The household servant in the town usually hires
466 out on a monthly basis. The traditional, personal guarantor and 2 witnesses of wage agreement are still necessary. The salary may now be as high as Eth$40.-. The servant is also fed and housed, and if he stays some months may keep any clothing given him. Moreover, his

875 grades, in the Amhara areas, sometimes also in the south.
871 Most elementary school teachers in the provincial capitals are East Indians, except that Amharic and Coptic religion are taught by Amhara. A graduate of an elementary school can take a job as a teacher himself and begin with a wage of Eth$125.-a month; or as a municipal clerk with about equal income, which places them in the upper income group. Even a graduate of the 5th grade can earn Eth$50.- as a clerk on the bottom rung of the "educated". Or he may secure a teaching job in a church school near his home, and then go to the court of the bishop and wait about ("daj tena") until the great man notices him and confirms him in his job.

871 In view of the high cash value of modern education, almost everyone wishes to enter, though fathers are still reluctant to part with the services of their sons, in cattle herding and harvest-watching, until the boys are 11 years old, so that graduates of elementary schools are frequently 19 years old. The elementary schools are still so few (though increasing) that only the sons of influential "great men" usually manage to be admitted. Secondary schools are available primarily in Addis Ababa, not in provincial Amhara capitals, and there nearly all the teachers are Europeans. Graduates of secondary schools become upper-level government officials.

464 The preference of Amhara individuals to hire on
632 only for temporary labor, if at all, finds its expression and variation in the market town. Here many events that bring variety into his fairly monotonous rural life,

464 632 happen and can be talked about. Here caravans arrive with all kinds of trade goods, and though the Amhara is not a trader in his culture pattern, he does hire on as transportation helper, and will have his own donkey carry some goods for sale.

443 There is a small daily market in each town. Where no town is near, one day a week a small rural market takes place (e.g. every Tuesday at Maqwamiya in the district of Seqelt) so that farmer and trader can meet Monday through Friday, at these markets set up at crossroads, in a grove of trees, or near a church center.

The big Saturday market takes place in a town terminal of caravan routes; nowadays at the end of an Italian road, also, e.g. at Golarba in Dembea, where Italian trente-quatro trucks carry imports and exports to Asmara, Eritrea, and the coast, while caravans carry goods from and to the Sudan. Gondar town is an older and bigger Saturday market. To these markets are brought surplus farm products. All routes lead to it, and the well-to-do ride there on mules, their servants beating out a road for them among pack donkeys and pedestrians. In return, Ethiopian retailers (often Muslim) sell goods bought from Arab wholesalers.

While there is some duplication of items of sale at these markets, the daily markets specialize in items used by or obtained from the household: fresh butter sold on a leaf, to put on the hair; melted butter for cooking in "wot"; red barbare pods of varying strength,

563 "Barya" people below the northwest escarpment, so that
567 both terms became synonymous with "slave". Because of the negroid features of the former, and the very black skin of both, they had high visibility, and did not have to be guarded closely as they could hardly escape. In view of the widespread illiteracy, manumission was almost never practiced, and such a document would be ignored by a slave trader or any Amhara who wanted to re-enslave a manumitted Shanqalla or Barya. Until slave-trading was prohibited by the present emperor, negroid slaves were still brought from the Gumuz tribe of Quara sub-province, just below the western, old-
[588] Amhara escarpment. But concubinage was so widespread that today there are more half-Shanqalla than full-blooded ex-slaves. Freed only since 1942, little change has so far taken place in their social status. In rural areas most remain with their old masters as
[464] servants or sharecroppers. In towns, they form a pool of unskilled labor, employed only briefly from time to time, subsisting on very little, residing in the oldest parts of the old Muslim ghetto. Some of their women have
[357] managed to raise their economic status by becoming house-maids, especially serving the women on the "street of unattached girls", or by marrying ploygynous Muslims.

563 The Coptic church had not interested itself in
567 the status of slaves, for according to its rules a
797 Christian could not be kept in slavery, and therefore no attempt was made to convert Shanqalla or Barya slaves.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

they have come too far along the road of modernity to return to what they regard as the hard and thankless lot of the traditional adolescent, and so are forced to find some place in the modernizing sector of society. Since Ethiopia's modernizing sector has so far provided only the secondary school system as a means of integrating its youth, the eighth-grade examination certificate constitutes a ticket to the future which must be obtained at all costs.

At the same time that this examination was acquiring its momentous significance in the lives of Ethiopia's youth, the proportion of students who passed it was becoming progressively smaller. By 1959, efforts by Ministry of Education officials to raise academic standards and to adjust the number of eligible students to the number of openings in secondary schools resulted in the failing of some sixty per cent of those who took the examination, a situation which provoked nearly riotous protests by students in Addis Ababa.[11]

Such conditions have laden the eighth-grade examination with more awesomeness and terror than a puberty rite. Worries about the exam preoccupy most seventh and eighth graders, and their anxiety is compounded by the attitudes of their school directors, for whom the proportion of passing students has tended to become the primary index of success. The weeks before the exam are filled with frantic cramming on the part of teachers as well as students. It is no wonder that such pressures have on occasion led students to purchase actual or alleged copies of the exam in advance from ministry employees or their go-betweens, an offense which has been sternly dealt with by the ministry.

Those students who do not pass the eighth-grade exam or who, because of family pressures, low ability, or other reasons, leave school before completing the eighth grade, move to the margin of Ethiopian society. If attendance at a secondary school or beyond may be taken as the defining characteristic of a "modern adolescent" in Ethiopia, since that signifies their participation in the one institutionalized pattern of secondary socialization in the modern sector, these young people are neither traditional adolescents nor fully modern, but fall in an interstitial category. Having caught a glimpse of some brave new world in their early schooling, they find themselves cast adrift, in the prime of their adolescence, in a no-man's region between traditional society and the promised land. In some cases they manage to make a rapid adjustment; more often, only their youthful energy saves them from total despair.

These marginal adolescents normally drift to Addis Ababa, if they are not already there, and lead the most precarious sorts of lives. They live as loiterers on the streets and byways of the capital. They go from school to school, begging for a place; or from office to office, looking for some sort of work, which they are unlikely to find if they do not have a relative in an influential position. It is so hard to find employment without at least an eighth-grade certifi-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cate that boys sometimes borrow the certificates of more successful friends 883* and enter jobs under those assumed names. Often they live for many months 882 with no livelihood at all. Eventually, some find work as houseboys, shine 178 shoes, or peddle merchandise on the streets; others, on an impulse, sign up for [464] life in one of the military services. Still others are reduced to begging, or stealing, or concocting stories with which to extract help from sympathetic foreigners.

The lives of such boys, whose number is large and steadily growing, are among the chief casualties of Ethiopia's transition to date. As they increase, their misery will become more vocal, and they may constitute an element of political unrest. Whether or not they become a political problem, they are already a social problem.

The modern adolescents, by contrast, comprise a small and determinate 883* number.* In 1958–59, the year in which my research on them began, there 178 were all together about 3,900 students in the academic secondary schools, 873 3,350 in other special schools at the secondary level, and 760 students at the post-secondary level. One source of information on these students was a [125] questionnaire which was completed by 700 students: 500 at the secondary level, including 40 female students, in a total of 15 schools, and 200 male students in five colleges.[12] Some of the findings from this survey will be woven into the following text where appropriate.

Compared to the rest of their countrymen, and certainly those of the same age, the modern adolescents have lived in luxury. Most students at the secondary level, and all those at the college level, have been boarding students. At no cost to themselves or their parents, they have received full board and room, a token allotment of clothes, and their books. Day students have re- [434] ceived instead a monthly allowance of Eth$20,† approximately the same amount that unskilled laborers earn for full-time work. Tuition is also free for all full-time Ethiopian students at all levels.

These "welfare school" conditions were designed to make further education attractive and possible for Ethiopian students, nearly all of whose families either can not or are unwilling to support their children for many years in school. In this, the parents are following long established Amhara custom, for in the traditional society boys who went off to church schools often did so, as we have seen, without the support of their parents, and in any case were expected to gain their livelihood by begging. Nowadays, if their children are admitted to one of the government secondary schools, even tradition-minded

* And one that grows steadily. In 1958 there were twenty-eight government secondary schools in the empire. By 1964 the number had increased to forty-seven.

† One Ethiopian dollar is equal to (U.S.) forty cents. [436]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

883 Programs of vocational guidance and counseling have not yet been instituted.
463 Students who manage to form clear and definite ambitions also suffer for
873 want of help, if for some reason they have been shunted away from the appropriate training program, or have been deprived of opportunities to prepare adequately for the vocations to which they aspire. Two research findings bear on this. In one study it was found that "few secondary school administrators when questioned are aware of the ambitions and desires of their students," and that less than twenty per cent of the group of secondary school students surveyed felt they had received training "suitable to their ambitions."[20] In my own survey it appeared that fewer than twenty per cent of the secondary school students expect to enter the occupation they actually want to.

*883 In addition to this discontinuity between childhood experience and the
178 hitherto unknown necessity of making some sort of vocational choice, modern
464 adolescence also involves a sharp break between the experience of post-elementary school and the process of getting on a payroll. Here the Ethiopian youth faces the problems of students everywhere as they leave school for the "real world." In at least two respects, however, his dilemma is more acute than that of his counterpart in Western societies. Because virtually all jobs are controlled
[557] by the government, and because the government is still organized along traditional lines, the Ethiopian graduate must suddenly forget the universalistic criteria of school and acclimate himself to the traditional pattern of ingratiating oneself with those in positions of power—a pattern referred to as *daj ţenāt*—if he is to gain and retain a decent job. For many graduates there is no machinery that might assist them in locating a job: no job advertisements, employment bureaus, not even effective personnel departments in most quarters.

87 The school system itself, however, does manage in certain cases to find
464 jobs for its graduates. For the foreign-educated returnees a special placement board was set up within the Ministry of Education. The locally educated are placed, if at all, by their individual schools, depending on the policy of the school, the resourcefulness of its director, the demands of the market, and current political emphases.

The outlook for graduates of the various specialized vocational programs has been in recent years as follows. A consistently high demand for teachers has assured jobs for graduates of the various teachers training programs. Graduates of the commercial school have been in great demand because of the increasing bureaucratization of government and the slight expansion of commerce. The public health college had great difficulty in the placement of its

* Since this was written the University's Department of Education has begun to produce a series of career pamphlets for secondary school students.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

graduates in the late fifties, but the government's implementation of a program of public health centers has opened up increasing opportunities for their employment. Graduates of the school of social work have been placed in positions with little difficulty. 87 464

On the other hand, in those areas in which the government has shown little or no interest the school authorities have been hard put to find employment for their graduates. This was shown most dramatically in the case of the now defunct community development training project at Majete, whose graduates were allowed to drift into oblivion due to the absence of an effective community development program in the country. Those who have completed courses of study in agriculture have not been extensively employed by the government because of chronic disorganization and neglect in the Ministry of Agriculture, while lack of capital and know-how has tended to keep them from private agricultural enterprise. Graduates of the technical and engineering schools have been having some difficulty in entering the work force due to the slow pace of Ethiopia's industrial development. Graduates of general academic programs, finally, and those who drop out before completing some course of study, tend to be left to their own devices.

While the modernizing sector, then, has introduced the revolutionary notion of vocation and has institutionalized means of training young Ethiopians for modern work roles, it has not yet provided adequate mechanisms either for guiding them into and through the training programs or for employing them properly once they are trained. 178 463 464

Preparation for Marriage 883* 178

Conditions of growing up in the modernizing sector have disrupted the harmonious pattern of Amhara adolescence also with respect to entrance into adult family roles. Conflicts arise both from postponement of the normal age for marriage and from radically new ideas about the nature of marriage. [582] [581]

The modern adolescent typically expects to marry at an age that is at least eight to ten years older than his traditional counterpart. While Amhara girls have traditionally married in their early teens, girls in the senior class of secondary school now say they expect to marry in their early twenties. Amhara boys have traditionally married around the age of twenty, but those in post-elementary schools now expect to marry in their late twenties or early thirties. 883* 178 582

This shift is due to a desire to attain as much education as possible, and above all, for the boys, to the precarious economic position of modern adolescents. While living on his father's farm an Amhara boy could marry early with the assurance of having enough land to work to support his family at least at subsistence level. The modern boy who finishes secondary school or [871]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

appeared to the students as the source of their new goods; of their learning, 883*
health, and well-being. Because of a feeling that "he supplies everything" 121
and "he is my guardian," students of all grades have been among the most 178
sincere and enthusiastic supporters of Haile Selassie. So their adoption of 643
Western patterns has from the outset been legitimated by the highest tradi- [177]
tional authority, and the harshness of the culture clash has been softened by the symbolization of both tradition and modernity in the Imperial Person. Here the traditional pattern of "functional deviance" re-asserts itself. The 883*
adolescent rebels against the traditional demands of his parents, but expends 121
that deviant energy on behalf of legitimate symbols of the national society. 178

Related to this was a strong sense of national purposiveness. *Agarēnennā* 883*
negusēn tammrē iredālhu ("Having studied, I will serve my country and 121
my king")—this was the motto of most Ethiopian students in the forties and 641
fifties. The conspicuous needs of their country provided clear goals in terms 178
of which students felt they were preparing themselves.

Still another motive force was the need for personal justification. The many 883*
students who in a sense deserted their home villages or families in order to 121
spend years in school carried with them an ambition eventually to show the 178
folks back home that they were right after all. This involved the conviction 871
that going to school was the right, at times the righteous, thing: a blind faith that simply by continuing along the road of education they would make good in the world and return home some day as a sort of hero. Here, too, is an echo of the old deviant pattern: the renegade returning home, after many years, as a successful churchman or warlord.

The economic situation, finally, was encouraging for students. It seemed [464]
for many years that advanced training, including study abroad, would be available for whoever qualified, and that the demand for educated personnel was so great that the job opportunities for students would be endless.

By 1961, however, all these sources of adolescent morale—royal legitima- 883*
tion, national purpose, personal justification, and economic opportunity—had 121
been to some extent undercut. Some of the changing circumstances have al- 178
ready been referred to. The effect of the rebellion of December, 1960, and its 871
aftermath was to weaken the tie between Haile Selassie and the post-elemen- 643
tary students. With his moral authority somewhat undermined, the students could no longer use him to symbolize a conflict-free transition to modernity. Nor could they any longer count on him to "supply everything" indefinitely: in the summer of 1962 the Emperor announced the immediate suspension of room and board benefits for the students of the University College.

The students' outlook has further been rendered less sanguine by the con- 883*
fusion attending the political crisis of the sixties. They no longer feel the 121
keen sense of national purpose, to serve "country and king." Their ideals in 178
this regard were already weakening before the rebellion by virtue of increased [641]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 121 178 (871) [183] awareness of the political realities in the Ethiopian government. They had also begun to doubt the transcendent efficacy of the educational process itself after observing the behavior of those educated Ethiopians who went before them and inevitably became their ideals. The violation of various traditional and modern norms by the latter, and their evident demoralization, raised many questions in the minds of the students.

*883 121 178 871 464 Finally, the students were made more anxious by a general constricting of opportunity. Increased numbers in the school system meant a steady intensification of the competition to gain and hold on to a place in secondary school and college, particularly since 1959. The rapid filling of jobs by the educated youth and steadily growing numbers of unemployed youth began to create anxieties about finding work in the future.

*883 121 178 (873) [162] From the viewpoint of the modern adolescents, then, a very supportive and stimulating environment in the fifties has changed to a somewhat threatening and confused environment in the sixties. It is in this decade that Ethiopia's leaders of the future, that tiny fraction of one per cent of the population who reach secondary school, are coming to experience adolescence as a real normative crisis. At a time when, in the highly modernized society of the United States, observers like Friedenberg charge that the adolescent condition is becoming obsolete—that scope is no longer afforded the young person for exploration and discovery of an authentic self[28]—in the transitional state of Ethiopia this condition is being thrust on the youth. The decisions they make now, the identities they forge, will largely determine the extent to which reason and creativity will have a place in Ethiopia's future.

*883 871 121 178 The effort of the Ethiopian government to provide a modern education for some of Ethiopia's adolescents illustrates a principle discussed in another context by Karl Mannheim, namely, the characterization of youth as a latent sociological resource which must be mobilized when any social system seeks to change itself. It is a resource analogous to the latent energy reserves which are available to biological organisms when they must make a fresh adjustment to their environment.[29] Thus far the effort to mobilize the resources of Ethiopia's youth in behalf of modernization has proceeded chiefly through a pattern of increased *differentiation:* establishing a structure of secondary socialization separate from that of the traditional structures and thereby transmitting new beliefs, skills, and values to the youth. As yet, relatively little has been done with respect to the problems of devising modes of *integration* commensurate with these new differentiated patterns. The analyses of this chapter suggest the presence of what might be called "integration gaps" on at least three levels. On the level of the individual personality, there is the problem of synthesizing the various aspects of traditional and modern culture which have been transmitted to Ethiopian adolescents through diverse sources. Inasmuch as the external supports which cushioned these conflicts in the fifties are no

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 past. The intellectuals are the product of a secular school system which is, as
571 we have seen, a structure foreign to Abyssinian tradition. Their members are
[177] drawn from all parts of Ethiopian society, and in almost no cases consist of
[871] Western-educated members of the old group of literati, the *dabtarā*. The question of their integration into what has remained an essentially traditional social system has thus been Ethiopia's main sociological dilemma during the present decade. We shall return to this question after considering the composition and general situation of the intellectual class.

571 Whatever his line of work, the Ethiopian intellectual tends to be employed
463 by the government, since employment opportunities in the private sector are
[464] still extremely limited; and where such exist, the government has often claimed priority over the intellectual's services by virtue of its having educated him. Many of the intellectuals work as public administrators, in the middle echelons of the government bureaucracy, with the titles of "assistant," "director," and "director general"; and there has been a growing tendency
[805] to appoint them in the higher levels, especially since 1961. Hundreds of them now work as teachers in the elementary and secondary schools,* and some six dozen teach at the college level. A small but growing number are employed as physicians, medical workers, engineers, and legal advisers in various government institutions. Still another group works in the small communications field—on the staffs of the various newspapers, the patriotic monthly *Menen*, and Radio Addis Ababa. The small group holding jobs outside the government works as engineers and bureaucrats in industrial firms, as employees of the Ethiopian Air Lines, or have small commercial or agricultural enterprises of their own.

571 With respect to interaction among the intellectuals, however, the most
871 important distinction among them has been the place where they received their education. Here we may speak of two main groups: those who received part of their education abroad, the "foreign-educated" or "returnees"; and those who received all their education in Ethiopia, the "local-educated" or "locals."†

The Returnees

Close to two hundred Ethiopians studied abroad prior to the Italian occu-
[177] pation. Since French was then the official European language in Ethiopia,

* About forty-five hundred Ethiopians, of varying levels of educational attainment, were teaching in government schools of all types in 1960–61, according to the Ministry of Education school census for that year.

† This term is used as a neutral descriptive category, free from any negative connotations it may have acquired when first coined by the returnees. More recently, the West African term "been-to" has been incorporated into Amharic for referring to the returnee.

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571 829 respects. They are not anchored in a *conscience collective*. They are islands of clarity in a sea of confusion that becomes evident in remarks like the following:

> While we were in high school here, we still followed the old beliefs. We went abroad and lost them all. Nothing has yet replaced them. We have no beliefs—in any sphere—religion, social, politics.
>
> • • • •
>
> We are all of us confused today. Perhaps it is that the change has come too fast. At any rate, we have lost our values. We don't know what is best for us to do.
>
> • • • •
>
> I don't believe there is anyone in the entire country who knows where we are heading or where we should be heading.

This confusion is the confusion of all Ethiopia today, but because the returnees became so deeply involved in Western culture while abroad they alone have experienced it so acutely. Were they engaged in satisfying work and enmeshed in family obligations, moreover, such malaise would be reduced. Precisely in these fundamental areas, however, the returnees are typically frustrated.

571 464 The burden of the returnees' frustration in work has not been to locate employment, but to find meaningful employment. It is true that several of the foreign-educated have had to wait for months, in some cases for over a year, after returning to Ethiopia before they were actually given employment. With the establishment of a placement board for returned students in the Ministry of Education about 1955, this difficulty has been minimized. The more fundamental problem has been that the institutional system has been insufficiently modernized to make proper use of individuals who had acquired specialized training abroad. There has been great variability of experience in this regard. Many of the technical intelligentsia have found suitable positions, especially those in the fields of medicine and engineering, and have led quite productive and satisfying work lives since shortly after their return. Many others, however, have been demoralized by the experience of having to occupy simple administrative positions which anyone with a little common sense could handle, or by being saddled with purely administrative responsibilities even when initially placed in a technical job. In such circumstances they have found themselves forgetting most of what they learned while abroad and felt themselves not being used.

571 466 Even when located in work broadly commensurate with their training received abroad, the returnees have been frustrated by numerous hardships in the work situation and by the difficulties of reform. As might be expected, work facilities are generally inferior to those which the returnees became

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brothels for dancing and more intimate relations. (Returnees normally do not 571
have patience for the shy, traditional girls; and they are too concerned about [548]
public opinion to be seen visiting brothels. When they or the locals do visit
the brothels, it is often by way of a backdoor entrance.) When they [581]
marry, the locals almost invariably choose a traditional type of wife with
relatively little education and with whom they expect to have an authoritarian
relationship.

In sum: the local is not so afflicted by those problems which derive from the
central dilemma of the returnee—how to fulfil himself according to modern
standards in an intractable, traditional environment. The local's dilemma 571
typically lies in a different realm, that of economic and social mobility. 554
Whereas the returnee has been given a comparatively high income and status
almost as a matter of course, the local has normally started his work life with
a relatively low salary and little prestige. If the returnee has felt deprived rela-
tive to the Westerners in whose society he has lived, the local has felt de-
prived relative to the returnee.

The local lives on a day-to-day basis at a relatively simple standard. Though 571
he shares the returnee's passion for woolen suits and, in many cases, for a car 511
of his own, he is not, like the returnee, preoccupied with the quest for housing 177
that conforms to Western standards. Except for those with extraordinary 571
talents and family connections, the locals have had difficulty locating jobs that 464
they feel are not beneath their dignity and which pay salaries sufficient to
cover their relatively modest needs. They customarily receive a starting salary [465]
in the neighborhood of Eth$150. The more ambitious and fortunate among
them have, by changing jobs, manipulating superiors, and improving skills,
worked their way up to salaries in the Eth$400–$500 category. Some have be- [875]
come provincial teachers for a while, in order to accumulate money on which
to live while shopping for a position in Addis Ababa and with which to influ-
ence some higher official to grant it to them. There remains a hard core of 571
locals who feel they are underpaid and live in constant resentment of this 156
situation.

This resentment has produced a general sort of negativism which character-
izes many of the locals, a negativism expressed in the form of backbiting and
denunciation of the higher government officials and the nobility generally.
They decry social injustice and the uses of nepotism. They moralize profusely
against those whom fortune has shown greater favors. But not all their social
criticism is born of resentment. There are also among the locals many young
men who are comfortably situated but fired by patriotic fervor with a desire
for social reform.

The local is as deeply concerned about asserting his status vis-à-vis the less [554]
educated as he is to advance his position in the hierarchy. Locals are extreme-

632
563 bar maids.
[463]
[562] A third, numerically significant minority have come from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even
[144] though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly
[779] negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are
[649] non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations
[562] also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly
[464] by girls and women working as servants for the less affluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Nilotes
*[192] living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for
[326] sale in the town's daily wood market (sir gabiya). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

632
621 Ward and Town. Gondar's residents divide the town

[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("bariya").

286 weaver's occupation. If the weaver were to become a Copt
554 and live among Copts, he would be on a social level equal to a poor, laboring Amhara.

C. Semi-specialized and unskilled.

463 The present division of labor is still based on
563 the former feudal structure of the Amhara economy and human organization. Specialized skills are left to other ethnic groups, and, apart from non-ignoble occupations such as war, church, agriculture, healing, the Amhara reserve to themselves semi-specialized occupations and part-time labor traditionally carried out by household retainers.

The latter type of labor, dealt with in this section, can be roughly divided into three categories: (1) labor arising out of the feudal lord-peasant relationship; (2) semi-specialization "that anyone can learn", in the attitude of the Coptic Amhara; (3) temporary la-
[465] bor, for which specified wages based on Time and Energy are agreed upon, called "damoz" (a contraction of "dämä-wäs", lit. "blood-and sweat" compensation). This term is even used for temporary marriage, during which the woman acts as cook and travelling companion.

466 The first category arises out of the obligations
[566] owed by the sharecropping "gabbar" to his feudal lord or landowning church: the former statute labor, when everyone would come with his own tools and construct a

466 house, a church, a simple bridge, help in harvest, make charcoal and gather incense for the church, conduct pack animals on military expeditions, function as guard or sacristan, Amhara labor thus includes the agricultural worker of many semi-skills, who usually hires on in March when the little rains launch the plowing season, and who must furnish a "wās", a personal guarantor who will be responsible for the employee's conduct, and agree on time, energy to be expended and wages to be received.

465 At present the wage is about Eth$30.- per month for full-time labor, 6 days a week, sunrise to sunset (12 hours, less about 3-5 hours rest); plus free food (usually simple) and a place to sleep inside a hut or temporary shelter; clothing is at the employee's expense. Important church holidays are observed, and leave is usually granted to take care of personal affairs, in the case of an Amhara -Coptic employee. The master may not beat or haze the employee, on penalty of a fine levied by the "cheqa shum".

464 Thus, even the poor Amhara laborer retains his pride, but causes the employer to look for labor among socially lower ethnic groups or even Shanqalla ex-slaves who have remained, largely in Amhara territory after liberation. The employer pays these less, works them more, even on church holidays since many of them are still non-Christian. In proud Begemdir (Gondar) province, where no Galla or Gurage ethnics are available for labor (as they are in Shoa), unskilled labor is a

464 and be willing to forego his usual demands, temporarily. During the caravan season, some will hire on as mule-drivers for a round trip. Otherwise the day laborer is rare among rural Amhara, and met more often only in provincial capitals and the few cities.

D. Labor and the market-town.

464 Laborers hiring on in the towns for temporary work (e.g. in construction) do so usually through a labor broker. There are no organized factories in the provin-
[467] cial towns, only a few small ones in the main cities, and there is not yet such a modern development as a labor union. Child and female labor is widespread and almost entirely
[465] unskilled. A laborer's daily wage was equated with 25¢ Ethiopian, by clause 6 of the Penal Code of 1930, but the present rate actively paid for urban labor of Amhara is Eth$1.-per day. The Emperor's factory proclamation of 1944 authorized the Ministry of Commerce to regulate hours and conditions of labor, but this actually anticipates future conditions and finds little application at present.

357 466 The household servant in the town usually hires out on a monthly basis. The traditional, personal guarantor and 2 witnesses of wage agreement are still necessary. The salary may now be as high as Eth$40.-. The servant is also fed and housed, and if he stays some months may keep any clothing given him. Moreover, his

792 council of elder monks

If a nunnery is attached to the monastery (e.g by common ownership of land), they are separated by riverbeds, steep hill, etc., and have their own pasturage meadows, and their own chapels.

262 792 465 The staple foods are beans and peas, consumed in large quantities, usually boiled as "nefro" (the staple hot dish of fasting periods), and a specially thick, nutritious bread, "debbye". The latter is at least 1-½ feet in diameter, at least half an inch thick. It is cut into quarters, and each monk receives a specified number of quarters according to his monastic rank. Thus, older, high-level monks who need less food have much surplus with which to engage the services of church students, or even trade with peasants for occasional chickens, honey, spices, etc. The range is from a mere one-quarter for the lowliest monk to 12 quarters for the head of the monastery, plus proportional distribution of "nefro".

Barley-beer is also similarly rationed out, on permitted occasions. Cotton cloth (abujedid) and shamma or natala togas are distributed once a year, preferably in time for the masqal holyday.

792 The chanting of prayers and poetry permeates the atmosphere, from 3 A.M. when the monk supervisor of the day enters the kitchen, humming the pre-dawn chants, to long after nightfall when students still practice for exams.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

000 prevail.

871 Most elementary school graduates from the provincial capitals
465 do not continue to Addis Ababa for a high school education, for they can obtain good and honorable positions, paying ETH$125.- (US $50.-) per month in the same town, as teachers, municipal clerks, with a good chance to be appointed to judgeship soon if they cultivate the right persons in power with "daj temat". Even Students who "flunk out" in the 7th or 8th grade can earn ETH$100.- as teachers of lower grades, or as low-grade clerks.

872 One old tradition which has broken down in the modern elemen-
212 tary schools but not in most church schools, is the prohibition of
178 extra-curricular writing. In the higher church grades, in which students' piety was already confirmed, especially in the monastery schools, copying psalms, gospels, (and by extension, government documents), was permitted, practiced, even regarded as praiseworthy. But there was, and in rural areas still is, fear that less pious students would use their knowledge of writing to experiment with magical formulae, doodlings, etc., creating dangerous mischief.

Therefore, parchment goatskins and writing equipment were carefully kept away from students of village church schools, and they were not taught to write. Thus, achievement of the skill of a scribe, "dabtara", required considerable individual initiative and study away from home.

212 However, boys at the "experimental" age of childhood, would
257 amuse themselves with the forbidden game of writing and doodling in secret, and they still do. Their work can be seen scribbled even on the outside walls and posts of some churches, a daring prank, sometimes in imitation of the church painter. More often

585 bride and groom merely expresses the prayerful wish that "God will show the way" to the lay couple toward "qurban", in time. In fact, middle-aged couples who have gone through several divorces and have finally decided definitely to spend the rest of their days together, may take the "aklil" in "qurban". Qurban for lay people, e.g. deacons, is performed usually only 40 days after their "semanya", to make certain that their marriage bond is strong and real and that no rift has arisen (e.g. if the bride had been found not a virgin).

588 487 "Damoz" marriage (lit. wage) is what the term implies. Most commonly the arrangement is from month to month, but may be for longer or shorter periods, such as the duration of a caravan trip, or an extended stay at a major market, where the "damoz" wife offers the best and often the only available hotel and restaurant services. (She is similar to the Biblical lady in the city of Jericho). The term is a contraction of "damawaz" (lit. "blood - and - sweat") [465] compensation. Her wages vary greatly from region to region, and have considerably increased in recent years, for even the new, modern law recognized her claim. In the past she did well if she received ETH$5.-per month in addition to housekeeping expenses, but [675] now some obtain ETH$20.- from traders. The agreement is made orally but before witnesses, so that she can go to court if the man defaults on his payments. If they separate at the expiration of the contract, she has no right to half his property as does the semanya [428] wife, but if there are children conceived during her contract, the children can make a claim for part of the father's inheritance should he die.

576 [572] Apart from this interpersonal relationship of choice, in which two individuals establish psychological response to each other (and mutual aid) outside the kinship group, most other forms of interpersonal etiquette are patterned so formally that they can be readily learned (even by outsiders). The vagueness and ambivalence of shifting etiquette of the Western world of modern times has not yet affected Amhara culture. Even modern-educated Amhara continue to fall back to the established pattern of traditional etiquette as soon as they return to their own country.

576 a) Formal Expressions of Status of Class, Age, Sex.

In formal expression of status, be it of class, age or sex, Amhara etiquette differentiates most sharply the dominant role from the role of the subordinate.

The most dramatic expression of this is the "gursha". It is enacted by the status superior toward the status inferior, a symbolic giving of food, money, wages, or other gifts. Thus, the master who wishes to indicate fondness and favor to the servant, will stuff some morsels of food into his mouth, publicly, while at dinner. A father will do it to his children, or to his wife. A chief may do it to a visiting "great man" of inferior or equal status, but never to a superior. However, a wife who has been married for some time and feels secure enough in her status to demonstrate equality, may jokingly return the favor and feed "gursha" to her husband, but only after he has initiated the activity.

[465] Servants, when receiving wages, receive them with both hands raised above the head, with bowed head and downcast eyes, and must never look at the money, much less count it in presence of the employer; for etiquette requires that wages be regarded as "gursha". (In recent years, the term "gursha" has become used in the sense of "tip", gratuity, baksheesh.)

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

four cuba for a pataka, each cuba about two rotol, or somewhat less. Butter, 20 rotol, for 1½ pataka, and 3½ harf. Civet, 1¼ pataka the wakea. Wax, 4 patt. the faranzola. Elephants teeth, 35 rotol for 18 patt. Water, 1½ paras the smallest jar, and 3 paras the largest. Abyssinian gold dust, 15 patt. per wakea, at Mocha. Dora, 12 measures for a pataka. The Venetian sequin goes for 2¼ patakas. 435 804

The Abyssinian grain measure is the ardeb, which, at Gondar, contains 10 measures, called Madega, each equal to 12 ounces, Cairo weight. An ardeb of grain costs 2 derims, or 2 patakas; an ardeb of teff, the same; 6 or 8 ardeb of tocusso pay an ounce (wakea) of gold, or 10 derims.

Servants Wages at Gondar *. At Gondar a maid-servant receives 15 salts per annum, and is fed in the house. A man-servant is paid 4 pataka yearly, which correspond to four wakea, or ounces of gold, Abyssinian weight, and receives besides two loaves, or cakes of teff, for his support daily. If his master is good, he sometimes gives him a little flesh, lentils, or vetches. He is not obliged to clothe him, but he sometimes gives him a pair of trowsers, which consist of about one-fourth of a yard of white cloth. 465 357

With respect to carriage, &c. three bundles of wood, which are brought from Tchagassa, three hours walking, cost a salt. The carriage of a jar, or manteca, full of wine, or honey, from Emfras, eight hours journey, pays a salt, of the weight of 3 faranzala, or so. 435 482

Thirty-three teff bread cost a salt; the loaves are about 3 lines thick, and 18 inches diameter. A pair of shoes (pantufle) cost a salt. 8¼ peeks of cloth is the least gift that can be offered in the country. 435

Bouza. Manner in which the Abyssinians make a kind of beer, that, in their language, is called bouza. 273

To make this, they use tocusso simply; but sometimes they mix it with grain (wheat), or dora, or all three together; but in ordinary tocusso is best. A jar of tocusso, or of the three sorts of grain, contains as much as is sufficient to make two loaves, that are a tenth part of the whole jar; besides which, they use about half a rotol of Ghesh leaves.

* From this, to the 29th line of page 68, is a translation from the Italian of L. Balugani.

[p. 41]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureau-
178 cratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of
631 regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central gov-
642 ernment has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of
565 building up their positions, members of the most important noble families
631 have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of
642 Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of
646 high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as
631 regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to
693 Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the
578 behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov-
[465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the
565 aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the
554 eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national
[571] political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

The general position of the church had already been weakened by the 648 795 793 [792] events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 795 793 [643] [651] Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 871 658 793 The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever government schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full-time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month [465] from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 178 [554] [871] [658] Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite

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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Yä-dam Demṭ*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

home—except for the difficulty of having to do without servants. Those students whose rural background and limited intellectual experience had led them to consider Addis Ababa as one of the most advanced cities in the world were often shocked by the comparison. No less shocking was the moral climate, which permitted one to express oneself freely and honestly. The taste for intellectual freedom was added to that of political freedom, as students whose horizons were limited by the meager intellectual fare at home came into hungry contact with authors like Marx and Freud, Dewey and Russell. 571 829 177

However much the Ethiopian students abroad might seek to lose themselves in the host culture, they were not permitted to do so. In the mirror of foreigners' regards, their identity as Ethiopians took clearer shape, transcending narrower tribal identifications. Questions about Ethiopia by foreigners aroused greater interest in Ethiopia's history and contemporary problems. A number of students were thus moved to dig into the literature on their country produced by travelers and scholars in the past, and some of them came to write theses and dissertations on problems related to Ethiopia's development. 571 177 186

All of these factors—broadening of perspective, acquaintance with a higher economic standard, less inhibited discussions, and greater self-consciousness as Ethiopians—contributed to a spirit of nationalist dedication. This spirit was confirmed or aroused in all but two groups of the returnees. One, consisting of children of some wealthy members of the new nobility, went abroad chiefly for the prestige and pleasure involved. For them the experience was an extended holiday; they were playboys more than students. The other group consists of those who were abroad for too short a time to have a complete educational experience—in some cases, for as little as three months. These students have tended to use the tour abroad chiefly as a weapon with which to lord it over their peers on return and otherwise to serve narrow personal ambitions. Those students, however, for whom study abroad entailed a more or less serious encounter with higher education and a more modernized culture normally experienced a swelling aspiration to serve their country. They returned home deeply critical of the status quo and determined to contribute substantially to the modernization of their society. 571 177 186 829

Ostensibly, the returnees have been well situated for making such a contribution. Thanks to prudent government policy since the early fifties, they have been enabled to enjoy a minimally comfortable standard of living. Given a monthly allowance from the moment they step off the plane, they have been automatically salaried at a scale based largely on the academic degree attained, with A.B.'s starting at Eth$450 a month and Ph.D.'s at Eth$700. In addition, provisions have been made for them to borrow money from the government in order to finance heavy investments like furniture or, more usually, an automobile. 571 511 [465] [426]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 511 automobile. All this permits returnees to live at a standard which, while clearly inferior to what they enjoyed abroad, is well above that of all their countrymen except the higher nobility. Their income compares favorably [465] with the prevailing monthly wages for policemen (Eth$25–$30) and district (*waradā*) governors (Eth$100), and not unfavorably with the salary earned by vice-ministers (Eth$1,000). Compared with the more sumptuous residences of the new nobility, their housing is threadbare, their staff of servants small; but usually their homes contain one or two modern appliances—a radio or phonograph, perhaps a refrigerator.

571 554 The returnees have, moreover, been shown deference from many quarters: from the modernizing sector of the public which, in its growing esteem for education, has adulated them as the most educated Ethiopians and, in the early fifties, regarded them as something of national heroes; from resident Europeans and Americans, whose perception of shared understandings with the returnees has flattered them; and from the government, which at the least has shown consistent concern for their economic security and at best has given them responsibilities and status that they would not be granted in a more modernized society without considerably more experience.

Despite such apparent advantages, however, it must be said that the returnees as a whole have so far done little either to modernize their country or even to establish themselves as a self-respecting status group. Their failure to do so has become one of the most widely discussed questions in Ethiopia in recent years, both among the more self-critical of the returnees and among critical Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian observers. Instead of being leaders of the new era, they have been little more than misfits in the old. If the central quality of the life of the new nobility has been anxiety, that of the intellectuals has been frustration. In the passionate words of one of them: "There is a wound, a boiling within each and every one of the returnees." Theirs is the frustration of modernized individuals attempting to live meaningful lives in a society that has remained essentially traditional.

571 829 The ideological aspect of this dilemma is that no synthesis of traditional and modern perspectives has yet been effected which has won the adherence of a sizable number of intellectuals and which could serve to energize their transformation of the status quo. Consensus exists only with regard to a vague sense of the inadequacy of the traditional system. There is no sense of direction. Partly this reflects deprivation due to maladjustment in personal areas, but it also represents a genuine cultural problem.

Foreign-educated Ethiopians return intellectually aware of the traditional nature of their society, but emotionally unprepared to cope with the tenacity of tradition or with the paucity of modern institutions and culture. The experience of culture shock seems greater when they return to Ethiopia than

brothels for dancing and more intimate relations. (Returnees normally do not 571
have patience for the shy, traditional girls; and they are too concerned about [548]
public opinion to be seen visiting brothels. When they or the locals do visit
the brothels, it is often by way of a backdoor entrance.) When they [581]
marry, the locals almost invariably choose a traditional type of wife with
relatively little education and with whom they expect to have an authoritarian
relationship.

In sum: the local is not so afflicted by those problems which derive from the
central dilemma of the returnee—how to fulfil himself according to modern
standards in an intractable, traditional environment. The local's dilemma 571
typically lies in a different realm, that of economic and social mobility. 554
Whereas the returnee has been given a comparatively high income and status
almost as a matter of course, the local has normally started his work life with
a relatively low salary and little prestige. If the returnee has felt deprived rela-
tive to the Westerners in whose society he has lived, the local has felt de-
prived relative to the returnee.

The local lives on a day-to-day basis at a relatively simple standard. Though 571
he shares the returnee's passion for woolen suits and, in many cases, for a car 511
of his own, he is not, like the returnee, preoccupied with the quest for housing 177
that conforms to Western standards. Except for those with extraordinary 571
talents and family connections, the locals have had difficulty locating jobs that 464
they feel are not beneath their dignity and which pay salaries sufficient to
cover their relatively modest needs. They customarily receive a starting salary [465]
in the neighborhood of Eth$150. The more ambitious and fortunate among
them have, by changing jobs, manipulating superiors, and improving skills,
worked their way up to salaries in the Eth$400–$500 category. Some have be- [875]
come provincial teachers for a while, in order to accumulate money on which
to live while shopping for a position in Addis Ababa and with which to influ-
ence some higher official to grant it to them. There remains a hard core of 571
locals who feel they are underpaid and live in constant resentment of this 156
situation.

This resentment has produced a general sort of negativism which character-
izes many of the locals, a negativism expressed in the form of backbiting and
denunciation of the higher government officials and the nobility generally.
They decry social injustice and the uses of nepotism. They moralize profusely
against those whom fortune has shown greater favors. But not all their social
criticism is born of resentment. There are also among the locals many young
men who are comfortably situated but fired by patriotic fervor with a desire
for social reform.

The local is as deeply concerned about asserting his status vis-à-vis the less [554]
educated as he is to advance his position in the hierarchy. Locals are extreme-

*756 *793 *759 between the works performed by the two categories of healers.[31] Laymen conceive the debtera's healing powers as the product of his knowledge of asmat, possession of awdunigist, and intimacy with ganel familiars. Although the layman recognizes that his own knowledge of these matters is inexact, he assumes that the debtera's use of asmat, awdunigist, and familiars can be synthesized into an integral body of learning, skills, and practices. Two types of syntheses are believed possible. The first of these characterizes the "weak" (tinis) debtera, already discussed in chapter three. This debtera lacks demon familiars, but he can perform awdunigist calculations and he possesses sufficient asmat to provide prophylactic amulets and a number of therapies. However, his prophylaxes are easily breached by powerful sorcerers or determined ganels, and his therapeutic powers do not exceed those of secular herbalists. The second synthesis characterizes the awakiy debtera. Here, the debtera's professional title signals the possession of ganel famili-

[465] [31]The layman's belief in the medical superiority of the awakiy debtera is asserted verbally, in the context of herbalist chains, and in the impressive fees paid to the debtera (for therapy, ten times and more the amount paid to a secular healer; for prophylaxes, fees between E$50. and E$300. are not uncommon).

463 563 non-ethnic (Amhara), supplier may have done a slovenly job to pick up some quick money, even if he knew the craft. Moreover, the Amhara is convinced that the craft of the ethnic workman, especially the Falasha, is connected with black magic ("buda"), and therefore strong, though evil; while another Amhara individual who may have persuaded or hired a Falasha to teach him his craft (which occasionally has happed in very recent years), will never be taught the magical power connected with ironsmithing, not even from his own father-in-law if he intermarries into a Falasha family (which is also beginning to happen, in towns). Therefore, the product will not be "strong": if a pot it will break; if a plowpoint it will dull soon.

463 563 466 Thus, the ethnic craftsmen retain their patrons, a relationship reinforced also by the personal factor: for the Amhara customer who has established or inherited the habit of trading with a particular Falasha hamlet, where confidence has developed and even personal idiosyncrasies are known, prefers to continue to deal on this personal (or family) basis. This is particularly true since in rural areas the work done is paid for in produce, or in lieu of rent payable by the Falashas for land farmed by them and belonging to the Amhara landholding family. The limitations of this economic, or at best inter-personal relationship are mutually recognized , for neither group would mix socially or intermarry, in the rural district. The boundary line is one of religion as well as occupation and social status. As in most parts of the Middle East, the blacksmith remains an outsider. This is also true of the tanner, in Amhara society.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

286 weaver's occupation. If the weaver were to become a Copt
554 and live among Copts, he would be on a social level equal to a poor, laboring Amhara.

C. Semi-specialized and unskilled.

463 The present division of labor is still based on
563 the former feudal structure of the Amhara economy and human organization. Specialized skills are left to other ethnic groups, and, apart from non-ignoble occupations such as war, church, agriculture, healing, the Amhara reserve to themselves semi-specialized occupations and part-time labor traditionally carried out by household retainers.

The latter type of labor, dealt with in this section, can be roughly divided into three categories: (1) labor arising out of the feudal lord-peasant relationship; (2) semi-specialization "that anyone can learn", in the attitude of the Coptic Amhara; (3) temporary la-
[465] bor, for which specified wages based on Time and Energy are agreed upon, called "damoz" (a contraction of "dämä-wäs", lit. "blood-and sweat" compensation). This term is even used for temporary marriage, during which the woman acts as cook and travelling companion.

● 466 The first category arises out of the obligations
[566] owed by the sharecropping "gabbar" to his feudal lord or landowning church: the former statute labor, when everyone would come with his own tools and construct a

466 house, a church, a simple bridge, help in harvest, make charcoal and gather incense for the church, conduct pack animals on military expeditions, function as guard or sacristan, Amhara labor thus includes the agricultural worker of many semi-skills, who usually hires on in March when the little rains launch the plowing season, and who must furnish a "wās", a personal guarantor who will be responsible for the employee's conduct, and agree on time, energy to be expended and wages to be received.

465 At present the wage is about Eth$30.- per month for full-time labor, 6 days a week, sunrise to sunset (12 hours, less about 3-5 hours rest); plus free food (usually simple) and a place to sleep inside a hut or temporary shelter; clothing is at the employee's expense. Important church holidays are observed, and leave is usually granted to take care of personal affairs, in the case of an Amhara -Coptic employee. The master may not beat or haze the employee, on penalty of a fine levied by the "cheqa shum".

464 Thus, even the poor Amhara laborer retains his pride, but causes the employer to look for labor among socially lower ethnic groups or even Shanqalla ex-slaves who have remained, largely in Amhara territory after liberation. The employer pays these less, works them more, even on church holidays since many of them are still non-Christian. In proud Begemdir (Gondar) province, where no Galla or Gurage ethnics are available for labor (as they are in Shoa), unskilled labor is a

464 real problem, and for modern tasks has to be brought from southern provinces, or Eritrea (as the Italians, as well as Point IV have found out).

526 The pattern in the former feudal military service
466 was one of greater pride and prestige even for the poor-
701 est Amhara. The feudal military chief had to clothe, house and feed his men, and could never use them for hard labor, such as agriculture--especially plowing--even when he had no temporary work for them. They were quartered with peasants whom they exploited like serfs, and since the chief paid no wages, he assigned his soldiers "gult" land, often on a temporary basis, which included the peasants who usually were non-Copts and did not have the protection of either church or cheqa shum.

567 Though actual slavery has now been abolished, its
797 recent existence still affects the pattern of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and introduces an important element which differs from the otherwise similar picture of early post-feudal Europe. Most of the slaves were Shanqalla (negroid) or Barya (Nilotic); plus some Galla and other south Ethiopian, more-African groups. Since they could not be sold if baptized Christian, the master was not interested in their conversion; the church despised these different lowlanders as unfit to be "raised to Christianity", in the Amhara phrase. If a master desired to free a loyal slave, the method was to have him baptized, on which occasion he would acquire a Christian godfather who would henceforth protect him from sale
567 and insist that he be declared and remain free. Until

464 and be willing to forego his usual demands, temporarily. During the caravan season, some will hire on as mule-drivers for a round trip. Otherwise the day laborer is rare among rural Amhara, and met more often only in provincial capitals and the few cities.

D. Labor and the market-town.

464 Laborers hiring on in the towns for temporary work (e.g. in construction) do so usually through a labor broker. There are no organized factories in the provin-
[467] cial towns, only a few small ones in the main cities, and there is not yet such a modern development as a labor union. Child and female labor is widespread and almost entirely
[465] unskilled. A laborer's daily wage was equated with 25¢ Ethiopian, by clause 6 of the Penal Code of 1930, but the present rate actively paid for urban labor of Amhara is Eth$1.-per day. The Emperor's factory proclamation of 1944 authorized the Ministry of Commerce to regulate hours and conditions of labor, but this actually anticipates future conditions and finds little application at present.

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● 466 The household servant in the town usually hires out on a monthly basis. The traditional, personal guarantor and 2 witnesses of wage agreement are still necessary. The salary may now be as high as Eth$40.-. The servant is also fed and housed, and if he stays some months may keep any clothing given him. Moreover, his

357 his task is fixed in advance and if an Amhara he will
466 usually refuse to carry out any work for which he was
[E62] not engaged. Women servants usually receive half the salary of a male servant. Thus only officials and relatively high-income urbanites can afford Amhara servants; servants of socially lower groups can be hired for considerably less, if themaster is willing to forego the prestige of having Amhara servants.

The urban householder, who is not surrounded by kinfolk in his residence, usually must hire a night watchman, "zebanya", who sleeps huddled in coarse shammas in front of the house or behind the outer gate. They receive the wage of day laborers. Often they are old veterans of former feudal soldiery, too decrepit for any other work, yet still fierce-looking and fierce-tongued enough to discourage thieves.

265 Urban teahouses, coffeehouses and mead-houses
466 employ waiters, "asalafi", who do not have the specialization of the more prestigeful "agafari", but who have steadier jobs. Their pay is not above that of the day laborer, but they can accumulate cash more readily.

[463] During the present generation a new wlement of
875 modern-educated clerks, teachers, hospital "dressers" and
871 government officials is gradually entering the occupational pattern of the town, though still in very small percentages. A graduate of the traditional church school of the rural areas is considered to have only the equivalent of 2 grades of elementary school. All towns now have at least one modern elementary school with 8

576 therefore, know). Abusing people with vulgar insults ("läddäfä")
195 tends to reflect on the abuser, so that he is considered "belgena", a rude person. Such a person speaks in high-pitched, strident style, to commoners; while to social superiors he fawns and wheedles, using baby-talk such as "abbabba" (daddy) to a lord and "ammamma" or "tatay" (mummy) to a lady, in mournful tones of self-abasement and utter helplessness, begging paternal protection and forgiveness as if he were an infant that had not yet reached the "age of reason".

576 This is mocked, for the Amhara distinguishes between such servility and non-servile gestures of subordination, such as the "gursha", the bowing from the hip, and the walking backwards when departing from
[H66] the king. Servants and other employees may indicate dissatisfaction at being short-changed, by bowing not quite so deeply the next time, whereupon a wise lord or employer will take a cue, increase the wage, and see it acknowledged by a specially deep bow or knee-kiss. Otherwise, protest will take the form of "murmuring", a semi-articulate protest which may lead to open rebellion.

576 Kinship terms are sometimes employed, outside the kin context,
601 to communicate respective positions in a situation of differential social status. Thus, it is respectful to address a status superior as "ayya" (lit. "my dear elder"), used to the father or elder brother. The extension of this term is fairly recent, in line with improved communication and transportation, but the rustic still uses the more ancient version, "ayya", (which has the same meaning). Because of this, a wit who does not want to address a rustic as "ato" (Mister), sometimes addresses the ignoramus, in mock respect, as "ayya". (This cheats him out of his "entitles", reminiscent of the use of the address "Doc" by Southern Whites to Negroes, avoiding "Mister")

576 The speech pattern and etiquette to be expected from women,
195 nearly all of whom are illiterate and have no formal education, is
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7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

423 here there is no Domesday Book to give a clear point of departure and none of the successive unravellings of generations of scholars to help the inquirer. Any attempt at the simplification of the evidence must to some extent be a distortion.

Two preliminary generalizations may help to clarify the picture.

[556] Firstly it is important to remember that in Ethiopia, as in all economically backward countries where industry is negligible, almost all material wealth was the direct produce of the herdsman or the man who worked on the land with his plough and his hoe.

423 Ethiopia shared with the rest of tropical Africa a primitive peasant agriculture; the difference was that there stood upon this basis a large
466 hierarchical structure of government. This meant that the cultivator
651 must, as the Ethiopians themselves express it, 'carry upon his shoulders'
241 all that very large proportion of the population which had withdrawn themselves from work on the land. This included the Emperor; all his officials, central and provincial, great and small; the vast hierarchy of the church and the large armies of soldiers. As a result of the undeveloped economy and communications of Ethiopia, the services of the agriculturalist had for the most part to be used directly by the contribution of part of the crops or cattle from his own land or by the use of his labour upon that of another. While slave labour was widely used for domestic purposes, especially in the houses of the rich, it was not in the north used very extensively in the fields, and the main support of Ethiopian state and society was not the slave but the theoretically free cultivator, the *gabar*. The elaborate systems of land tenure and of tribute with all their provincial variations represent only the different means by which his services and produce were utilized by the government and by other classes. It was not the land but the labour of the *gabars* on the land which provided the support for provincial as well as imperial administration. Hence the importance of the forms of tenure and tribute.

423 The word *gabar* has been used as a term of reproach against Ethiopia.
466 At the end of these chapters on the provinces the reader will be in a
651 better position to judge how far this charge was just, and especially how far it accumulated evil association by the forms it assumed in the conquered south. Here the position of the northern *gabar* must be defined in its simplest terms. In theory and, at its best, in practice, the status was not synonymous with slavery or even with oppression. Literally it means one who pays *gibr* or tribute. 'There is no shame in the word "gabbar"' was the general Ethiopian opinion recorded by an observant British consul.[1] As tribute was in theory based upon land

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

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not the person, it has been said that high notables and the Emperor himself might, in strict technicality, be called *gabars*, since they might hold land burdened with some *gabar* service. Moreover—again in the theory—*gabars* were not, like the serf, tied to the soil; they could leave their land and seek a new holding elsewhere. 423 466 651

The position can be put in another way. The Ethiopian, like the Englishman, owed dues to the central government or to its representative; firstly, he owed the Emperor tribute and tithe for his land; secondly, he owed the equivalent of local rates, and, thirdly, when he was a tenant, he owed rent. The only difference, it might be said, was that the Ethiopian paid all these dues in grain, honey, firewood, stock, or labour instead of in money. The difference was, however, fundamental. In the absence of central control or uniformity and in situations where the *gabar*, the man who provided all this tribute in kind with his own hands, happened to be in a weak position, the form of payment opened the way to all kinds of extortion.

Mrs. Sandford, who with her husband ran a farm for many years in Galla country near the capital and was therefore in a position to provide very authoritative evidence upon this subject, gives the following account of the *gabars*, presumably those in her district. They owed the governor or soldiers to whom they were allotted both produce and services: these might be one day's labour out of three, eight or ten days; the provision of timber for building the master's house and grass for its thatching; firewood and one fifth of the grain crop in addition to the Emperor's tenth. This, she concludes, might have been reasonable especially if the *gabars* could have dared to use their right of appeal. 'But in fact the abuse proved stronger than the system.' The masters exacted more than their due 'and the system was in practice as extortionate as those of old Roman days. Officer and soldier were equally rapacious, . . .' The *gabar* dared not appeal. Coming from a witness of such experience and of such devotion to Ethiopia, this evidence carries weight.[1] 661 651 423 466

The tithe of grain was owed to the Emperor by every subject unless he were exempted on account of his other services to state or church. This grain was collected on the threshing floors and stored in the governor's official granaries; it was used mainly for the sustenance of the soldiers. Since such a bulky product could hardly be carried far in Ethiopia there was very little market in cereals. Pastoral tribes were expected to pay their tithe in stock. There was also a tribute of produce or labour, or both, which was nearly always taken by the governor or his representative and there were further dues or presents to the sub- 651

[1] Sandford, pp. 48–9.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.*

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services.

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagārit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area.

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[29]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement.

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagārit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gabbār*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dēgā* (high) land, while in certain *qolā* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 829 respects. They are not anchored in a *conscience collective*. They are islands of clarity in a sea of confusion that becomes evident in remarks like the following:

> While we were in high school here, we still followed the old beliefs. We went abroad and lost them all. Nothing has yet replaced them. We have no beliefs—in any sphere—religion, social, politics.
>
> • • • •
>
> We are all of us confused today. Perhaps it is that the change has come too fast. At any rate, we have lost our values. We don't know what is best for us to do.
>
> • • • •
>
> I don't believe there is anyone in the entire country who knows where we are heading or where we should be heading.

This confusion is the confusion of all Ethiopia today, but because the returnees became so deeply involved in Western culture while abroad they alone have experienced it so acutely. Were they engaged in satisfying work and enmeshed in family obligations, moreover, such malaise would be reduced. Precisely in these fundamental areas, however, the returnees are typically frustrated.

571 464 The burden of the returnees' frustration in work has not been to locate employment, but to find meaningful employment. It is true that several of the foreign-educated have had to wait for months, in some cases for over a year, after returning to Ethiopia before they were actually given employment. With the establishment of a placement board for returned students in the Ministry of Education about 1955, this difficulty has been minimized. The more fundamental problem has been that the institutional system has been insufficiently modernized to make proper use of individuals who had acquired specialized training abroad. There has been great variability of experience in this regard. Many of the technical intelligentsia have found suitable positions, especially those in the fields of medicine and engineering, and have led quite productive and satisfying work lives since shortly after their return. Many others, however, have been demoralized by the experience of having to occupy simple administrative positions which anyone with a little common sense could handle, or by being saddled with purely administrative responsibilities even when initially placed in a technical job. In such circumstances they have found themselves forgetting most of what they learned while abroad and felt themselves not being used.

571 466 Even when located in work broadly commensurate with their training received abroad, the returnees have been frustrated by numerous hardships in the work situation and by the difficulties of reform. As might be expected, work facilities are generally inferior to those which the returnees became

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

familiar with in more industrialized societies. Nor is there any disposition to improvise improvements with what facilities are available. Little attention is paid to the condition of offices, for example, which are normally located in dark, drab, depressing rooms. Furthermore, the operating procedures of Ethiopian administration are bound to frustrate those who have been conditioned to more rationalized systems of organization. Departments frequently operate with ex post facto budgets. Filing systems are hopelessly archaic. There is virtually no public consciousness of the importance of work *time*. 571 466 [47] 571 466 805

> Ethiopian persons are not geared to a timetable. I have to keep telling myself: "This is how we do it here." Seeing a ten-story building go up in a month, grass and all—that is not for here. . . . I get most annoyed when I cannot finish some matter as promised. Not wanting to reveal the name of my colleague or superior who is holding up the action, I have to make up excuses. Eventually I run out of excuses and this bothers me. . . . Sometimes I get angry and say: "I have given my word to someone, and must have the matter ready today; please sign it." And am told: "Oh, well, don't rush things so."

Work relationships have frequently exasperated the returnees. There has been little inclination to give technically competent employees proper jurisdiction over the personnel in their departments. Technically uneducated superiors have tended to make unrealistic demands—for example, requesting an immediate report on a complicated question that requires weeks to prepare. On the other hand, they have tended to assume that their age and experience are equivalent to the technical knowledge of the foreign-trained, so that technically warranted projects have been casually dismissed because they do not strike the fancy of the superior. 571 466

The returnees have not been so despondent about these conditions which, after all, could be changed—than they are about the apparent futility of trying to change them. Older employees are quick to resent alterations in the accustomed order. 571 466 178 829

> My efforts to reform are opposed by most of the men who run the [postal] system now. Some of them have been working there for forty years or so, and they want to keep things just the way they were when mail came in on camels, because they have always done it that way.

Such resistance to change at the workaday level is tacitly supported by those in the upper echelons of authority—the new nobility. In them the returnees have found their main antagonists and from them have received their most painful lacerations. [565]

The *shamāggelotch*, or "elders," as they are termed by the intelligentsia, have by no means presented a solidary front in opposition to the young modernizers. On the contrary, the attitude of the new nobility toward the 571 565 178 829

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[466] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, *121 641 such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms [701] under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not [689] respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the [626] barbs of public opinion.

The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Un-*121 701 like the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide [702] his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came [714] of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

464 and be willing to forego his usual demands, temporarily. During the caravan season, some will hire on as mule-drivers for a round trip. Otherwise the day laborer is rare among rural Amhara, and met more often only in provincial capitals and the few cities.

D. Labor and the market-town.

464 Laborers hiring on in the towns for temporary work (e.g. in construction) do so usually through a labor broker. There are no organized factories in the provin-
[467] cial towns, only a few small ones in the main cities, and there is not yet such a modern development as a labor union. Child and female labor is widespread and almost entirely
[465] unskilled. A laborer's daily wage was equated with 25¢ Ethiopian, by clause 6 of the Penal Code of 1930, but the present rate actively paid for urban labor of Amhara is Eth$1.-per day. The Emperor's factory proclamation of 1944 authorized the Ministry of Commerce to regulate hours and conditions of labor, but this actually anticipates future conditions and finds little application at present.

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466 The household servant in the town usually hires out on a monthly basis. The traditional, personal guarantor and 2 witnesses of wage agreement are still necessary. The salary may now be as high as Eth$40.-. The servant is also fed and housed, and if he stays some months may keep any clothing given him. Moreover, his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

575 794 178 cultivate a missionary spirit in order to reach the non-Christian peoples of Ethiopia. The association sponsors weekly religious services, featuring hymns in Amharic and talks in Amharic on religious and moral questions, and publishes a monthly journal. The Orthodox Students Association stands out as the first nationwide voluntary association in Ethiopia. It holds an annual convention which draws some three hundred students from all parts of the country.

The Ethiopian College Students Association was established in 1960 after some years of patient maneuvering by officers of the various college student governments. It attempts to represent the interests and needs of students vis-à-vis the government and to handle relations with international student organizations.

A number of student clubs have appeared from time to time within the framework of the colleges. One of the most popular and productive of these has been the Ethnological Society of the University College, founded in the early fifties by a Polish member of the college staff. Over the years it has produced several issues of an ethnological bulletin. More recently, under the framework of the new university, dramatic and choral groups have been established as well as groups like the Education Students Association and the Economics Students Association. Graduates of some of the secondary schools and colleges, moreover, have formed a small number of alumni associations.

467 178 [177] *Labor Unions.*—Although Ethiopia has for some time been a paying member of the ILO, the government has until recently strongly opposed the establishment of unions in the country. Nevertheless, due to the encouragement of labor representatives from Western and other African countries, as well as to the courageous efforts of a number of Ethiopians, several unions have at last been established and have won some degree of recognition from the government.* Trade unions were first attempted among employees of the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad and in Eritrea.[42] They now include employees of a number of factories. Even household servants have formed associations that establish minimal conditions which members are obliged to demand from their employers. [357]

814 815 875 178 *Professional Associations.*—The Ethiopian Teachers Association, with a large paper membership but scarcely any activity, was the only professional association in Ethiopia prior to the 1960 rebellion. If one may generalize from the frustrated attempts of Ethiopian doctors to establish a medical association, it would seem that the government was attempting to discourage groups of this sort as well as trade unions. Since 1961, however, the picture has changed. There now exists not only a medical association, which publishes its own [859]

* A law establishing a legal basis for labor unions was enacted by the Ethiopian parliament in 1962.

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The labor movement, limited as it is, has been in the hands of Eritreans on the one hand, and primarily non-Amhara workers in the south. Student associations have been formed chiefly at the instigation and under the aegis of foreign staff members; though here, as with the professional associations, modernized Amhara have sometimes played a leading role.

Once the new associations had been introduced, the Amhara like other Ethiopians were quick to adopt and expand them. Their participation in these new associations, however, has been affected, as might be expected, by the intrusion of traditional behavior patterns. Three examples of such behavior patterns come readily to mind.

(1) While the *equb* is conceived as a kind of credit union and as a focus for communal sociability, the *co-operative* sentiment tends to be lacking among members of Amhara *equb,* at least those of which the author has any knowledge. For example, in case of dire need, an *equb* member who desires the lump sum out of turn may be forced to *buy* the amount from the weekly winner, sometimes by forfeiting as much as ten or twenty per cent of the amount. By capitalizing on the crises of others, some enterprising *equb* members are able to sell their successful claims several times. Furthermore, in the early years of their existence, *equb* were frequently faced with the problem created by members who won the money early in the cycle, left town with the money, and did not return to pay their later installments. This difficulty has been met to some extent by the requirement of securing one or two guarantors for each person who enters an *equb,* but problems of this nature have led to altercations that have brought many *equb* members into court.

(2) The behavior of members of Amhara territorial *māhebar* is essentially that of a traditional social or civil gathering. The big men are seated in places of honor; the rest of the people stand quietly by. After a protracted period of exchanging greetings and milling about, the crowd listens respectfully while one or more of the big men makes a statement, and perhaps exchanges a few words with the group's secretary; and then the gathering disbands. Although the *māhebar* is organized with respect to the attainment of specific goals, the substance of the meetings is instumental to a very slight degree. The assembly rarely involves a meeting of minds to discuss an issue or a common problem, or to work out a program of action; but exists primarily as an occasion for the resonance of primordial sentiments by virtue of shared territorial attachments.

(3) In all associations, finally, certain traditional characteristics which are incongruent with the optimum conduct of groups come to the fore. This is no less true of the modern-educated than of the traditionals. Members fail to come on time to arranged meetings or neglect to come altogether.* They

* The *equb* has attempted to check this pattern by imposing fines on members who come late.

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= 2 "alad", Menelik half-thaler, no longer used.

= 4 "rub", quarter MT Thalers, no longer in use, but still occasionally quoted.

The term "gresh" is still used in its probable derivative, the well-known "gursha", meaning tip given to a servant, etc., apparently replacing an earlier term. Also, it is interesting that Gresham's Law functions also in Ethiopia: The new coinage, once accepted (rather than fear of prosecution) drove the old MT Thaler out of circulation. Furthermore, from time to time certain items of the new coinage become particularly popular for some temporary reason, and then are hoarded and absent from circulation.

471 In traditional Amhara material culture there is an absence of such processing industries, (except for specializations mentioned), as soap factories, flour mills, brick factories, textile factories, timber mills, sugar industries, power industries (no windmills), though the [648] essentials for such industries exist. Foreigners have, in recent decades, built a few small ones at major centers of population, since Menelik and the present Emperor began handing out concessions. There are economic and national reasons, e.g. the law that foreigners may only rent but not buy real estate. The present government of Ethiopia has a monopoly on and produces matches and cigarettes. Whether private or public, processing industries can be expected to increase gradually and bring about

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 565 661 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 565 556 [241] [455] For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 565 556 472 [175] [648] Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families, Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *makuännent* and *bäla-seltän*. They are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life. [662]

178 565 369 177 [556] As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 565 554 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shĭr* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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342 ded and especially unsanitary. But during most of the year nearly all activities during the 12 to 13 hours of daylight are carried on outside. After each rainy season the roof and walls are inspected for damage from heavy rain, hail and tornadoes, and, with repairs, a good tuqul can last twenty years.

The hut-building season begins usually a few months after the rainy season is over, in the month of Hedar, after the major harvest of cereals has been gathered and threshed. A tuqul is usually built in stages, interrupted by other chores. Since there is no danger of rain, the beams, saplings, withes, thatch grass can be selected from forest and bush at leisure, and left on the spot selected. But when a marriage approaches, especially during the main "mar-
[476] riage season", the entire process can be speeded up to little over a week; and if there are not enough hands in one hamlet, other kinsmen and friends can be invited to the hut-building-party, the host supplying daily spiced meat stew, barley beer, etc., thus attracting as many as twenty men.

[361] The first step is to select a location that will blend into the landscape and thus be best protected from wind, driving rain, tornado twisters. Cypresses, which always surround a church on the hilltop, are utilized as partial windbreaks for tuquls of a hamlet just below.

The circular ground floor for the hut, usually about 20 feet in, is measured off by means of a central stick and a rope. The stick indicates where the central, roof-supporting post will be, and the circle indicates the walls. Both the selection of location and the measuring of the ground is done by a semi-specialist, an Ambara who acts

164 this is limited to occasional feasts due to the comparatively high cost of beef, and the "kosso" cure does seem to work. Dysentery kills many infants; amoebic dysentery sickens and kills adults also, especially near towns where the population is denser. The opening and increase in trade route communications since the Italian occupation has led to an increase in tuberculosis epidemics.[68]

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164 Brooks, rivers and wells become increasingly more polluted as each dry season proceeds, and just after the flooding during the rainy season. Water carried long distances in skins is not safe either. The housewife, trying to manage as best as she can under the circumstances, carefully covers containers of food and drink, even of water stored overnight.

H. Mutual Aid

476 The simple living standard of the Amhara is somewhat improved by traits of mutual aid.

These may be listed in four categories, according to Amhara attitude:

(1) Mutual aid within the territorial or kinship unit, usually the hamlet;

(2) between neighboring hamlets that may or may not be kinfolk;

(3) within the religious sodality, the "mähabär";

(4) between individuals.

68. Simmons et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. pp.62-73

476 The reasons for such mutual aid, generally called "wänfäl" or "wämfäl", may be of time, space, economics, energy. The time element enters when a task requires completion within a specified period such as harvesting, threshing and winnowing. This is usually done withing the hamlet extended family, aided by other kinfolk. No remuneration is asked, but return services and a feast are expected. The energy element enters in such tasks as hut-building and roof-thatching ("wämfäl awätta", lit. he left to do mutual aid). This too is done within category (1), or with additional help from (2). The space element usually involves neighboring hamlets, on such tasks of common interest as digging an irrigation canal, called "bringing home the bread" ("däbbo awwälä"). Also, category (2) may be involved in the common pasturage, "adäbay" or"adäbabay", used by several hamlets, which includes the right to take water from the same brook, collect deadwood, cut branches and reeds for numerous usages. As a result of toleration and cooperation in category (2), ethnic lines may be crossed, for the neighboring hamlet may be of an ethnic occupation class, and/or of another religion, which often astonishes the urban Amhara and even the provincial one.

The factor of economics may affect all four categories, usually in the sequence of 1 - 4. A farmer may lend his team of oxen for plowing or threshing, to a neighbor who has none or has just lost an ox, in exchange for help with his harvest or other service, such as using a donkey or a mule.

●476 Consumption, beyond the territorial kinship group, often takes place within category (3). By way of extension, the"drinking together" of members of the religious sodality known as "mähabbär", who also take communion together in apostolic imitation, and who are usually of the same age groups and sex, leads to mutual trust in common purchases for consumption. Most common is the mutual purchase of an old cow or old ox for beef. This would otherwise be too expensive, and it must be distributed and consumed quickly due to the absence of any means of preservation(aside from drying). This mutual sharing agreement is called "qerchan", and is even more common in towns than in hamlets, because category (1) is absent and the need is felt for some near substitute, for mutual cooperation. They also share in the money realized from the sale of the skin, after the slaughtering.

Finally there is the economic partnership between individuals, ("wel"), resorted to usually after possibilities in categories (1),(2),(3) have been exhausted. It is more common in towns than in rural districts. But even among rural neighbors, two individuals may aid each other in clearing fallow land or new bush, or sell each other's produce on the market, particularly if they have quarrelled with their kinfolk. But such partnerships are usually of brief duration, while the first three categories of mutual aid are far more enduring.

575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men "brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship relation which is taken very literally by the more pious. Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahabbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry the widow of a mahabbar "brother", for this would be "levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church as a prechristian custom.

575 According to traditional law, the mähabbär in-
[428] herits any property left by a deceased member who leaves no blood kin (consanguinal) , in preferance to any rela-
[426 476] tives he might have by marriage (affinal). The mahabbar acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker, making loans to members in financial need by rai-sing internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "taz-kar" memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his
[608] family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and per-sonal problems of all kinds are discussed among "bro-thers" and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements between extended families having eligible youngsters are often first informally broached by women "sisters", who then agree to ask their husbands to act as interme-diaries.

575 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys
561 above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind of junior mähabbär by older boys; girls above 10 years of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

181 one's kin by doing manual labor, made necessary in some cases by
602 poverty, leads to outmigration from the district and often even from the province. Nepotism in obtaining good positions is the norm to such an extent that failure to act in this manner would be severely criticized by the traditional Amhara as the utmost in meanness. In fact, when an Amhara wants to make a particularly derogatory remark about another ethnic group, he says that they are mean to their own kin and quarrelsome within the kin group.

[476] Cooperation and mutual aid, teamwork in agriculture, hut building, etc., are largely centered on the residential kin unit, notably the patrilocal hamlet.

554 A major culture goal in Amhara society is the assumption of the status personality of the "great man - noble" ("telleq säw"), in contra-distinction to the rustic peasant ("balagär"). However, this ambition is usually frustrated because social status is primarily inherited, along with "rest" land and the expectation of re-appointment to one's father's position and rank of nobility in the hierarchy. The door to advancement has traditionally been only through feudal warfare: loyal support of one's feudal lord was rewarded with "rest" land and higher rank. Even today a young nobleman must await formal promotion to his father's rank by the emperor, and this still contains an element of personal reward and punishment.

157 The personality of the rustic Amhara peasant is extroverted,
554 not burdened with the considerable self-restraint expected of the Amhara noble. The peasant is quick to express mirth, anger, and other emotions. He is not stodgy and slow in conversation like the proverbial peasant of Europe. In fact, because of the relative

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

for, and, in the height of the rains when some crops are already up, deep furrows are made at regular intervals, and enlarged from time to time to carry away the surplus rain water. 244

Irrigation on the shelves of the gorges has already been referred to. But a more elaborate system, the extent of which is shown schematically on the map, has been developed along the river Beressa and its tributary the Maka, which both provide a small flow of water throughout the dry season. The whole enterprise is an interesting example of concerted effort and communal organization—in neither of which are the Amharas usually believed to excel. Its object is to ensure an early crop of barley, to be reaped before the onset of the main rains in June. 312 [476]

The irrigation system has to be partly rebuilt every dry season for the dams, which are constructed of stones and heavy sods, are swept away in the rains. From each dam the water is led off into a well-established furrow, which is carried down in a divergent line from the river and sometimes cut out of the rock on steep scarps. From it minor channels, which can be opened or blocked at will, branch off to irrigate the intervening lands. There are however more complicated systems; thus the dam near Dilila feeds two irrigation channels, one on either bank of the river. The right-bank channel receives its water direct from the dam, that on the left bank by means of an aqueduct carried across the main stream just below the dam and likewise constructed of stones and sods. The flow is not sufficient to feed both at once, so that the water is excluded from one or other branch on different days of the week; while if rain happens to fall the whole system is switched off. The left-bank channel, after running almost parallel to the Beressa for nearly a mile and a half, has to cross obstacles in the form of two tributary streams. The second tributary crossed is a large one, and the irrigation channel, in order to maintain its level, makes a big loop upstream and is then carried over the tributary by means of another wall-like aqueduct 8 or 10 feet high.

During the latter part of the dry season the brilliant green crops of the irrigated area make a striking contrast to the brown and withered aspect of the surrounding countryside. The district (known as Atakilt or "garden") [103] takes its name from this characteristic feature. There are other minor irrigation schemes on the plateau, as on the Dalecha river in the east and the Angolala river in the west of the sheet, but nothing on so large a scale or so elaborately organized as the Beressa system. The Atakilt plains also have historic interest as the scene of the battle, already mentioned, which resulted in the emperor Theodore's annexation of Shoa and the capture of young Menelik.

To conclude this brief account of the agricultural techniques of our area something must be said of terracing and its effect on the landscape. Nothing like the impressive and elaborate terracing practised in some eastern rice-growing countries is attempted in these parts. Many slopes are nevertheless unobtrustively terraced, both in the gorges and on the plateau, and it is not uncommon to see new terraces in process of formation. A wall (*gur*) is built on the lower side of the area selected for improvement, advantage being often taken of any natural flattening of the hillside. The *gur* has a vertical face on

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

have not seen each other for some time they will say: "How have you sojourned?" and kiss each other on both cheeks. Depending on the closeness of their relationship and the interval between meetings, this introductory question will be followed by a more or less lengthy series of other questions.[12] Even when one merely passes by the home of another, he is expected to cry out his greetings from afar. 121* 576 571 181

In a number of other ways, the rough edges of social life are softened by Amhara codes of etiquette. Custom prescribes that measures of grain must be filled to overflowing at the market. Grammatical forms indicating respect are used between people who are not on intimate terms. Uncovering one's head is another way of indicating respect during the greeting. Still another form is to rise whenever someone enters the room, and wait until the new entrant has pronounced "*Bezgiēr!*" ("By God!") and sits down before reseating oneself.

On more superficial levels of interaction, then, Amhara behavior is apparently not egoistic. In the more fundamental areas of work and serious communication, a different picture appears. 121* 571 181

Altogether there is little spontaneous *co-operation* in Amhara life. The Amhara prefers to work by himself, and, when he needs assistance, to order a subordinate to help him rather than to rely on friendly assistance from his neighbor. The distribution as well as the production of goods is carried out on an essentially individualistic basis. Each nuclear family takes care of its own provisions, even when the land being cultivated belongs to one of the parents and when more than one family lives within a single compound. (Even within the nuclear family, the proprietary sentiments of husband and wife regarding objects and land which each may own are rather lively.) 121* 181 571 476

There are exceptions to this general rule. In some Amhara areas certain co-operative work forms have become institutionalized, for example. One of these forms, called *wanfal,* is invoked when there is a considerable amount of plowing or harvesting to be done, and a group of men in a given area take turns working on each other's land. Another form of co-operative work, called *waffar,* is employed when there is some extraordinary job to be done—putting on a new roof or digging land that is too steep for plowing—which cannot readily be reciprocated. In this case a man sends word around that on a certain day those who live in the area should come to work at his place, in reward for which generous quantities of *ṭallā* and *dābo* will be given them.

Despite the existence of special forms like *wanfal* and *waffar,* co-operation is only a peripheral feature of Amhara work activity. These forms involve but a temporary coincidence of individual interests. They are not used because co-operation as such is felt to be an important and natural part of social life—as seems to be the case, for example, among the Galla of Ethiopia.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Synchronization and Privacy

*121 184 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is [476] scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [704] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 [591] [576] The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, [592] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters [342] (*ĭlfĭñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

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* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Ṭĭmqat day described in chap. iii.

796 liturgy, swaying and dancing to the rythm of their raised
346 voices, the beat of huge drums, and the tinkling of sistra.

Laymen may also occupy sections within this third enclosure, mostly near the northern end. There is no seating. Standing is required during the long services
● [481] that begin just before dawn and last many hours. Therefore, priests and chanters lean on "maqomya", strong bamboo crutches equipped with iron or even silver concave tops. These are also used as they sway with the rythm when the dancing is in progress. These crutches may be privately owned; but many churches own simpler ones as church utensils. When important visitors, "great men" and their guests attend, without maqomyas of their own, the chief priest usually takes those owned or used by the lesser priests to supply the Very Important Persons, to the barely disguised displeasure of the regular users.

346 Women are not admitted even into this third out-
562 er enclosure. They must remain outside the church building, in the yard, or leaning against the hard-mud wall, or, at a more pretentious church, under the outer collonade of wooden posts which support the overhanging edge of the roof. The roof, usually thatched, but of imported corrugated iron in better urban churches, is usually ornamented with an iron cross adorned with wooden or metal ostrich eggs.(This custom may be of older, African, origin.)

201 argumentative peasant-gabbar). The body expresses almost the permanence
554 and immobility of a status, as if the high-status person could not be surprised or dismayed by anything, certain that all things due him will come to him.

516 The famous "Nilotic stance", stork-like, in which the person stands on one leg, resting the foot of the other against the inner knee of standing leg, is found in the Amhara only among young boys, and an occasional, low-class adult.

554 In walking, nobles of the old school walk slowly, somewhat heavily,
481 as if in formal procession. Members of their retinue carry their cane, overcoat, etc. By contrast, laborers carrying heavy burdens walk catlike, largely on the instep, and fairly fast.

F. The Language of the Toga ("shamma").

201 The toga is used in so many different, formal ways by the Amhara to
291 express moods, occasion and social status in the presence of persons of differing social status, that the language of the shamma has been likened to the "language of the buffalo robe" of the Plains Indians of America (footnote 95).

The most common way of draping this usually 6 ft. long, 2-1/2 ft. wide garment can be described as "out-going"; called "ālabbāsā". The toga is draped around the upper body so that it gives a turtleneck effect, the embroidered border extends from the shoulder to the waist. This may indicate that the young wearer is in an out-going, expansive mood, considers himself a gay blade going into town in a holiday mood; when worn this way by an older man, it expresses that he is a sober, respectable citizen, in an optimistic mood, going to meet persons of equal status.

Footnote 95 - Coon, C. S.: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p. 116.

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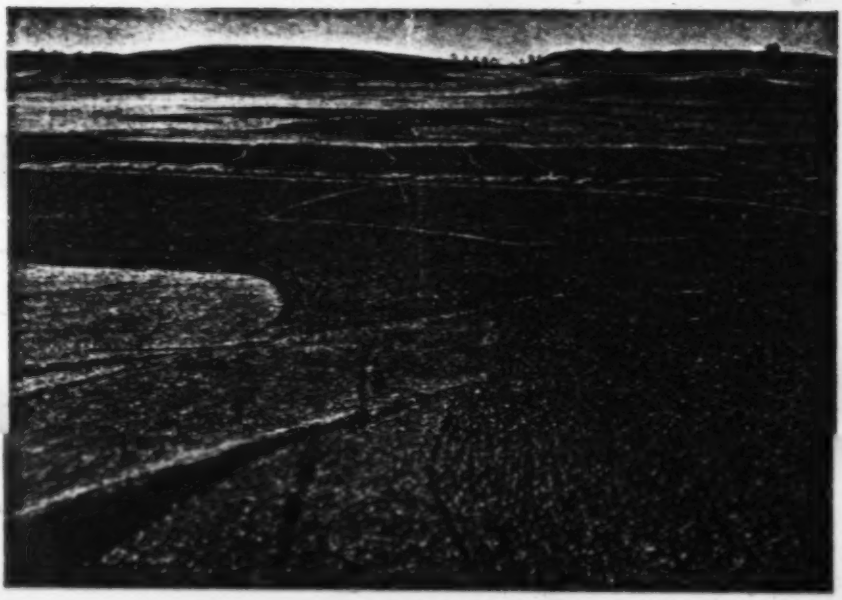

Irrigated land, Atahilt

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The ceremony of Timkat (Epiphany), near Debra Berhan

[Facing p. 171]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rĭst*.

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. ***Mot ged yallam*** ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be ***guabaz*** ("brave") and uses this term, like that of ***waṭādar*** ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination:

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Ḉhaḉhefē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many purposes—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 156 157 man, as we shall see in more detail below, includes the quality of leaving others alone.

[577] This strong sense of self is confirmed and symbolized by two conspicuous *565 156 411 Amhara customs: carrying staves and going on trips. A staff, like a pipe, affirms the ego in two ways. As a piece of personal property right at hand, it stimulates a sense of pride of ownership; as something external yet confronting the person, it makes the ego more conscious of its bounded reality. Such sensations are daily experiences for the Amhara peasant, who is rarely separated from the staff in one form or other. When he leaves his homestead he normally carries the hard *dulā*, a potential weapon of defense that likewise affirms his ego by bolstering self-confidence in a dangerous world. He braces the *dulā* against his back as he treks along, or holds it against the [481] front of his shoulder like a rifle. Older men walk using it as a cane. A special kind of staff made of softer wood (*zang*) is carried by pious and elderly [481] men. Participants in devotional services lean on still another type of staff (*maquāmiyā*) which is distributed in the church for that purpose.

*565 156 484 Traveling is another custom which affirms the ego, at least when one travels spontaneously and not in organized company. As the individual moves past various stimuli, his self-consciousness is heightened by the contrast between a persisting ego and a constantly changing environment. As a traveler par excellence—and a lone traveler, unless social rank requires the presence of retainers—the Amhara peasant frequently removes himself from familiar home settings and confronts an outside world. He loves to go on the road and will travel at the slightest provocation. For him a distance of two or three hours by foot is like the American's trip to the corner drugstore. Whether to visit relatives or pay respects after death, to go to market or to court, to get holy water at a distant church, or to look after land in a far away district, the Amhara peasant is on the move dozens of times each year, often for trips involving two or three days of travel.

*565 156 829 602 609 Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and culture, one may for the moment say that the personal ego is the central object in the Amhara peasant's view of society. Exactly what might be meant by this statement and in what respects it needs qualification are questions that will be taken up in the concluding chapter. If it is so, certainly the next most prominent social object in his world is the circle of close ones, or *zamad*. *Zamad* refers in the first instance to consanguineal kin, and is distinguished from the category of those who are strangers, or *bā'ed*. This is perhaps the most important of all the sociological distinctions made by the Amhara: the former, *zamad*, are seen as entitled to the warmest hospitality, while toward *bā'ed* indifference and suspicion are appropriate responses.

*565 156 602 This does not mean that the kin group is a corporate entity whose interests and identity transcend that of the individual. On the contrary, the notion of

352 legs; thongs of sundried oxhide interlace the wooden frame diagonally giving the bed a springy quality. In case of great poverty, wooden slats are used instead of oxhide, and a cowskin is placed on top. The leather alga seems to resemble the leather thong bed of ancient Greece.

354 (4) The fireplace set up front of center, 5 of 3 cornerstones ("medeja", or, "gulcha"), so that the broad baking-pan and clay cooking pots are well supported.

352 [251] (5) From the center pole to the rear are various clay bins ("riq", made of a frame of willow branches, cowdung and mud) [415] holding threshed grain. Behind the fireplace is the "gurej", the storage space for plow, axe, adze, beer and water [482] pots, skin sacks for transporting grain to market; sometimes a litter ("qarēza") used for transporting rocks, beams, sick or dead persons, the wounded in war, and formerly an indispensable equipment for corvée. Also behind the center pole is the indoor grain bin made of concentric rings [251] of clay and fine straw, dried outside, and inside assembled to a height of 60".

(6) In front of the center pole stands the portable "massob", the table woven tightly of reeds in the shape of a round breadbasket, on which the daily bread, "enjara" is served. A small massob may have a diameter at top of 18" and may be 20" high. The height would come from a triangular leg of 7", on which an inverted, triangular leg faces upward 10" in the manner of an hourglass; and another 3" from the height of the top tablet. The hollow leg tapers to a waist, then widens again toward the top. It has a depression in the center, so that the spiced meat stew can

462 or will be described under "division of labor by sex".

462 The hardest daily work of the female is the pounding
252 and/or grinding of grain. Sorghum(mashella), barley, even shembera peas and pepper, are dehusked by pounding with an up-and-down motion in a hollow wooden tree-trunk, with a stout wooden pestle. After that, the grains are usually left overnight in water for softening. The next day they, as well as the common tyeff grain, are hand-ground on an inclined flat stone, by use of a smaller stone of different type, weighing as much as 4-5 kilos, with the same back-and-forth motion of ancient Egypt, rather than rotary. To produce flour for the entire family takes the better part of each day.

316 The woman carries water from the valley every morning,
462 sometimes several kilometers, in a heavy earthenware pot
[482] tied to her upper back. It weighs 20 kilos when full. Only during the 3-months rainy season can she use nearby brooks and temporary watercourses. This female task makes it possible to locate hamlets on or near hilltops, far from water in the dry season, but safe from flooding in the rainy season.

462 Kitchen duties of the female, besides cooking and
251 daily baking of "enjara" bread, includes also the processing of meat for later use. After slaughtering, done by men because of the religious significance of this duty from which women are excluded, she cuts the meat into thin strips, called "zelzel", dries them in the sun to leather-like toughness, then stores them in the hut for the next feast, for use in the stew called "zelzel wot". Food -

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

312 the downward side but is sloped on the up-hill side and therefore triangular in section. The filling-up of the empty space behind the wall, to the new terrace level, may be partly accomplished by hand but tends to be left to nature. During the rains, especially on the steeper slopes, there is a continuous downward movement of soil, which is arrested by the terrace walls and the pockets above them gradually fill up. In the course of centuries an immense amount of simple terracing of this kind has been done, the effect being to accentuate the existing irregularities of the steeper slopes. The landscape has certainly been greatly modified in this way, but it is often impossible to tell at first sight whether a given feature is natural, or partly or wholly due to terracing. It is obvious that such terracing has not only provided additional acreage for agriculture but also served the useful purpose of saving many steep slopes from excessive erosion. In several parts of Ethiopia, including this area, I have seen slopes under cultivation which were so steep that the soil, when loosened and disturbed, would slide away downhill. At first sight one would suppose that such slopes must be completely denuded after a few seasons' rain. The fact that this does not happen is due, I believe, to the vast abundance of stones in these soils, every one of which acts as a minute barrier arresting the flow of water and silt. Nevertheless such slopes, unless terraced, clearly cannot survive indefinitely under cultivation.

443 Surplus produce is brought in to the big weekly market at Debra Berhan
[487] which is both the commercial and the social centre of the whole district; all the main routes radiate from it. Every Saturday morning these routes are thronged with market-goers, who can be seen moving along in an almost continuous stream, the well-to-do mounted on mules, the majority on foot, some driving laden donkeys and pack-mules. The products of this countryside are few, and there is little food surplus, but some wheat and barley come to market, also eggs and chickens and a good deal of butter. Some honey (used in making the local mead or *tej*) comes in, and beeswax is collected for export. Firewood, a scarce commodity on the plateau, is carried in in quantity. *Gesho*, the fermenting agent, comes up from the gorges. There is plenty of earthenware, made on the plateau nearby. From the district of Menz to the north come excellent felt blankets and burnouses. Traders from farther afield bring salt from the desert, partly in the bars which used formerly to pass as currency, and raw cotton and spices from the eastern plains. Textiles and other imported goods now find their way to this market by lorry.

When, in the course of the afternoon, the market crowds begin to stream homewards, one may identify the few simple wares they have bought or bartered. Some have a bag or a bar of salt, some raw cotton for spinning or a piece of cotton cloth, some a fresh supply of coffee-beans, some a bottle of kerosene or a cake of soap. Many have acquired earthenware water-pots or
[323] cooking vessels; the large round platters (*matad*) 18 inches across, on which
[482] the local bread is baked, stand out conspicuously for they are always carried, for safety, on the head.

771 It still remains to describe the most potent of the influences which shape the life of the country-bred Amhara—that of the Church. The priests, of

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

four cuba for a pataka, each cuba about two rotol, or somewhat less. Butter, 20 rotol, for 1½ pataka, and 3½ harf. Civet, 1¼ pataka the wakea. Wax, 4 patt. the faranzola. Elephants teeth, 35 rotol for 18 patt. Water, 1½ paras the smallest jar, and 3 paras the largest. Abyssinian gold dust, 15 patt. per wakea, at Mocha. Dora, 12 measures for a pataka. The Venetian sequin goes for 2¼ patakas. 435 804

The Abyssinian grain measure is the ardeb, which, at Gondar, contains 10 measures, called Madega, each equal to 12 ounces, Cairo weight. An ardeb of grain costs 2 derims, or 2 patakas; an ardeb of teff, the same; 6 or 8 ardeb of tocusso pay an ounce (wakea) of gold, or 10 derims.

Servants Wages at Gondar *. At Gondar a maid-servant receives 15 salts per annum, and is fed in the house. A man-servant is paid 4 pataka yearly, which correspond to four wakea, or ounces of gold, Abyssinian weight, and receives besides two loaves, or cakes of teff, for his support daily. If his master is good, he sometimes gives him a little flesh, lentils, or vetches. He is not obliged to clothe him, but he sometimes gives him a pair of trowsers, which consist of about one-fourth of a yard of white cloth. 465 357

With respect to carriage, &c. three bundles of wood, which are brought from Tchagassa, three hours walking, cost a salt. The carriage of a jar, or manteca, full of wine, or honey, from Emfras, eight hours journey, pays a salt, of the weight of 3 faranzala, or so. 435 482

Thirty-three teff bread cost a salt; the loaves are about 3 lines thick, and 18 inches diameter. A pair of shoes (pantufle) cost a salt. 8¼ peeks of cloth is the least gift that can be offered in the country. 435

Bouza. Manner in which the Abyssinians make a kind of beer, that, in their language, is called bouza. 273

To make this, they use tocusso simply; but sometimes they mix it with grain (wheat), or dora, or all three together; but in ordinary tocusso is best. A jar of tocusso, or of the three sorts of grain, contains as much as is sufficient to make two loaves, that are a tenth part of the whole jar; besides which, they use about half a rotol of Ghesh leaves.

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* From this, to the 29th line of page 68, is a translation from the Italian of L. Balugani.

[p. 47]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

423
estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly 181
a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rist.* 691

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their 771
land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts 181
are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially 771
hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the 773
angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder [823]
is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short 181
notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the [illegible] to one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination: 181 551

Ḫhidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Ḉhafḉhefē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

181
A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about 411
three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many pur- 481
poses—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs 482
when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or [577]
standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 18.—*Ten-year-old boy plowing*

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FIG. 19.—*Mother and daughter carrying water pots*

[P. 110-B]

821 caused the tender plant to sprout; therefore, cereal grains just
[243] beginning to sprout are called "charäqwa". Full moon is a good time
[484] to travel, avoiding the heat of the day especially in the hot lowlands where travel in daytime is almost impossible; also it is safer since approaching or ambushing bandits can be more readily seen than earlier or later in the lunar cycle.

Dawn is personified, regarded as a young day being suckled ("täbba") by the warm and expansive sun, after chill of the night on the plateau.

787 However, the working out of astrological systems is left to the dabtära, who collects his knowledge from "secret" books (in Geez), more often actually from apprenticeship and extracurricular activities while in church school, and uses it in writing especially powerful and expensive amulets.

821 The various kinds of rain are almost as important to the Amhara as snows to the Eskimo and sands to the desert Arab. For the Amhara with his primitive plowing, has to wait until the right kind of light rain loosens the sunbaked soil; and his simple hut is little protection from the heavy rains. He therefore studies clouds and wind direction in relation to topography. The fine and penetrating rain ("zeg yalä zenab") permits the use of the common scratch-plow, and seeding. The heavy rainy season brings downpours, and is also accompanied by strong gusts of wind ("wächafo") and tornadoes. When the thunderstorm ends and a rainbow appears, it seems as if the earth had been reprieved, so that the rainbow is called "maryam mäqänät" (lit. the jealousy of Mary; i.e. her intercession, in the Geez language). However, when a rainbow occurs while it is still raining, the interpretation is more animistic, for it is regarded as an unnatural event, heralding the moment at which wild

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

231 a Christian, because the cows that they keep belong to
563 Christian gentlemen of the country of the Barnagais. These Moors have nothing else for their labour than the milk and butter which they get from the cows, and with this they maintain themselves and their wives and children. On some occasions it happened to us to sleep near these Arabs, they accosted us to ask if we wished to buy cows, and for the price allowed us to choose them. They say that these
[484] Moors, and headmen who go with them, are all robbers under the favour of the lords to whom the cows belong, and so only large caravans travel. The revenues of this
792 monastery are very large; those which I saw and heard of
631 are, chiefly, this mountain in which the monastery is situated,
361 of an extent of ten leagues, in which they sow much millet,
[243] barley, rye, and all these pay dues to the monastery, and they are also paid on the herds. On the skirts of this mountain there are many large villages, and most of them belong to the monastery, and at a distance of one or two days' journey an infinite number of places belonging to the monastery, and are called *Gultus* of the monastery, which means *coutos* or *celeiros*,[1] according to our Portugal. Don Rodrigro the ambassador and I were going on the road to the Court, a good five days' journey from this monastery, and arriving at a town which is named *Caina* we kept Saturday and Sunday in a small village which might contain twenty people, and they told us they belonged to the monastery of Bisan. Besides that town there were a hundred villages all belonging to the monastery, and that in which we halted was one of them. We were also shown
651 many of the others, and they told us that every three years
631 they paid a horse to the monastery, and that each village
792 did this, which makes thirty-three horses every year. And in order to be certain of this I went to ask it of the *Alicaxi* of the monastery, which means the auditor or major-domo,

[1] *Couto*, an asylum, an enclosure; *celeiro*, a granary.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

because he receives, and does justice: he told me that it was 651
true that they paid the said horses. I asked why the 631
monastery wanted so many horses, since they did not ride 792
on them. He told me that they were obliged to pay horses, but that they did not give him horses, but paid fifty cows for each horse, and that this due of horses was so because these were villages of the King which paid him this due, and as he had endowed the monastery with these villages, between the monastery and the villagers this due of horses had been transmuted into cows. And over and above these dues of cows they also pay dues on fruits. Besides, at fifteen days' journey from the monastery, in the kingdom of Tigre mahom, there is a very large town belonging to the monastery named Aadete, which may be a large dukedom. This pays every year sixty horses, and an infinite number of dues and customs. In this district there are always more than a thousand friars of the monastery, because there are many churches in it, and the monastery is much favoured there. Of these friars some are very good, honourable, and devout, and others are not such. Besides these dues of horses paid to this monastery and to others, there are many villages belonging to the King which pay dues of the said horses, because this is always his due, and there are villages neighbouring to Egypt in which are large and good horses, and others near Arabia in which they are very good, but not so much so as those of Egypt.

CAP. XVI.—*How the friars impeded our departure, and of what happened to us on the road.*

Returning therefore to our journey; whilst we were still 484
at the monastery of St. Michael there arrived the man sent by the Barnagais to take us away, and with him two of our Portuguese, on the fourth day of the month of June; and he

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

484 brought a few oxen and men to carry our baggage. The said man who had thus come went off at once to the mountains to fetch more oxen and people, and he came back with them. Whilst our baggage was out in the road for our departure, and the men and oxen ready, the friars came and talked so much to the people without their understanding us that they disarranged our departure, so that we again took in our baggage, and the ambassador again sent another time to the Barnagais, and Joan Escolar the clerk went thither with the man of the Barnagais, and they remained there six days. They came with orders and equipment for our departure, that is to say, that they were to conduct us and our goods, and to give us as many oxen and mules as we had need of. Even then the friars were set on impeding us greatly, as though they wished us evil. We left this monastery of St. Michael on the 15th day of June, and because there was detention in loading the baggage, on account of the oxen only coming in a few at a time, and there not being mules enough for all of us, and some having to go on foot, and also because there were few people to carry the baggage which could not go on the oxen where the country was precipitous, the bombards and four barrels of powder remained behind. Not very far from the monastery, half a league at most, the ambassador came up, and those that had remained with him, and we found all the baggage unloaded. Not being able to understand the cause for their having done it, we made them load it again; and not having yet started it all, a rumour arose amongst the negroes who were carrying our baggage, and they said that there were robbers there who were waiting for us in the road. Nevertheless we did not on that account desist from making the baggage go on in front through the bushes, because the road was narrow. The ambassador and all those that were with him determined to die upon the King's goods. The negroes were much amazed at the courage of

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

ten or twelve men, who did not fear passing such steep 484
mountains, where it was said that there were multitudes of robbers. Thus we went away, divided, with the oxen and negroes, with their burdens in front of us, going forward on our course. We travelled through very wild mountains, 133
over ascents and descents, and very bad stony road. Most [491]
of the woods of these mountains are very large wild olive [137]
trees, from which good olive trees could be made. Issuing from these mountain ranges we entered into dry channels, which in winter time are great rivers, that is to say, as long as the showers last. As soon as the shower is finished the river is dry. These channels have on each side of them very high mountains, as rugged as those we had left behind. In these river beds there are large clumps of unknown trees, amongst which, near the rivers, there are a few wild [137]
palm trees. We slept this night in a river bed with little water in it.

CAP. XVII.—*How we passed a great mountain in which there were many apes, on a Saturday, and on the following Sunday we said mass in a village called Zalote.*

On the following day we again crossed another very high and rugged mountain ridge, over which we could not make our way, either on the mules or on foot. In this mountain 136
there are many animals of different species, and an infinite quantity of apes in herds: and they are not generally spread over the mountain, but only where there are clefts and holes in the rock; they are not found in quantities less than two or three hundred, and beyond that number. If there is any flat ground above these precipices, that is their promenade, and no stone remains that they do not turn, and they scrape the earth so that it looks as though it were tilled. They are very large, the size of sheep, and from the middle upwards hairy like lions.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

804 night. And if it is distant they say, you will arrive in a *sambete*, that is a week, and so they define it according to the distances. When I said that from Barua to Barra there 484 were from three and a half up to four leagues, that was according to our opinion, and it would not be more. We afterwards travelled there many times, and we started from one town and dined at the other, and did our business and returned to the town we had started from by daylight. The people of the country reckon this as a day's journey, because they travel very slowly. Between these two towns [241] there is very remarkable country, tilled fields of wheat, barley, millet, pulse, lentils, and all other sorts of vegetables which the country possesses unknown to us. From the [361] road from one place to the other more than fifty towns are to be seen: I say large towns and very good ones, all on 224 heights. In these plains and fields there are herds of wild cattle, forty or fifty in a herd. It is a chase that is very pleasant for the Portuguese, but the country people are able to do them little hurt, although they receive from them much injury to their crops.

CAP. XX.—*Of the town of Barua, and of the women and their traffic, and of the marriages which are made outside of the churches.*

621 This town of Barua in which we were staying, and where later we passed more time, may have three hundred hearths and more, a great part of them belonging to women, because this is like a court in many respects. One is that people of the Prester's court never go from here, and as many as come are not without wives. The other is because this is the residence and seat of the Barnagais, and there are continually in his house three hundred mounted men and upwards, and as many more who come every day for

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

In this country there are in some parts very flat lands, and 133
in others mountainous; and altogether they are fruitful lands. There are no snowy ranges, but withal severe frosts, especially in the flat lands. In all the lands there is great [231]
breeding of cattle.

He says that he did not see the river Nile, and he reached to two days' journey from it, and the days' journey which they went were small ones, namely, four or five leagues, a little more or less. But some of those in his company reached its source, and they say that it rises in the Kingdom of Gojame, and its source is in great lakes, and where it rises there are islands, and thence it commences its course and goes to Egypt.

The time when the Nile rises in Egypt is (as they say) from the 15th day of September and later, and in all October; and the reason of this is, because the winter of Ethiopia begins from the middle of June to the middle of September, and on account of the great rains which take place in it without this winter ever changing, the Nile overflows in Egypt at that time.

It is the general custom of Prester John and all the peo- 492
ple for no man on horseback to pass a church, but before 576
they reach it they dismount, and so pass it, and lead their beasts by the bridles, and after passing they mount.

When Prester John and all his people travel, the altar and 484
the altar stone on which mass is said, all goes on the shoulders of the priests as on a litter, and there go eight priests with each altar by turns, that is, four and four: and a priest goes in front of them with a thurible, and further in front a zagonay ringing a bell, and all the people go away from the road, and those that are on horses dismount, and show reverence to the altar stone or altar.

There is no grape wine there, more than in two houses, 273
where it is made publicly, namely, in the house of Prester John and the house of the Patriarch Abima Marcos; and if

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chīqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chīqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chīqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chīqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chīqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chīqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 794

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

heaven, *samāy*, the abode of supernatural beings and the souls of the dead. 565* The earth is seen as flat, though some believe its shape to be square, others 772 think it is round like a disc, and still others imagine it to extend without limit. [823] That the terrain of Ethiopia is so obviously not flat is explained by reference [773] to the great flood, after which the parts which dried quickly became highlands (*dēgā*), the parts slow to dry becoming lowlands (*qolā*). The peasant [821] explains the greater heat of the lowlands by saying that they receive less wind than the highlands.

Beneath the earth's surface is an obscure area called *maq*, a depth to which [775] the bodies of evildoers drop after burial. There is also a large subterranean [823] ocean, *weqniyānos*, into which all the rivers and lakes on earth descend. The earth itself is held up, according to some, by a Y-shaped piece of wood; accord- [539] ing to others, by two serpents; still another view is that no support is needed other than the will of God, as the saying indicates:

> Ay, My God! Lord who stretched forth the heavens without a pillar, and the earth without tent-pegs.

The rotation of the sun *above* the earth causes the alternation of night and 565* day. The imagery of this rotation is that of someone going home at night and 821 coming out in the morning. Attitudes toward the sun are quite ambivalent. The sun is appreciated for dispersing the morning chill and for causing seed to germinate, but it is feared as a source of sickness and death.*

The moon is highly regarded, which is probably a vestige of pre-Christian [174] moon worship. At the Ethiopian latitude the moon is functional, for its bright [484] illumination facilitates night travel, especially desirable in the hotter regions. Beyond this, the moon is considered a powerful agent. It is chief of the sky, commander of an army of stars and it is the force which causes crops to grow after the sun has brought forth seedlings.

In the heavenly realm there are two regions located on either side of God's 565* dwelling-place. To the right is an area where good souls repair for an eternity 772 of ease after being judged shortly after the death of their bodies. Known both 775 as the "kingdom of heaven" and "paradise"—terms which refer to quite different spheres in the Orthodox cosmology but are fused in the vulgar mind —it is regarded as a home where food and clothes are plentiful and freely distributed. To the left is the place where wicked souls are taken by the devil to be scorched eternally in the fire of Gehenna, also called *Si'ol* (again a fusion of concepts which are distinct for the learned). This treatment of the damned is made worse by alternate dippings in icy water, though some believe that the wicked souls get a respite from their tortures on weekends.

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* The TAT's revealed a great dread of the sun; nearly every respondent interpreted one or another [125] of the cards in terms of the sun's dangerousness.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 156 157 man, as we shall see in more detail below, includes the quality of leaving others alone.

[577] This strong sense of self is confirmed and symbolized by two conspicuous *565 156 411 Amhara customs: carrying staves and going on trips. A staff, like a pipe, affirms the ego in two ways. As a piece of personal property right at hand, it stimulates a sense of pride of ownership; as something external yet confronting the person, it makes the ego more conscious of its bounded reality. Such sensations are daily experiences for the Amhara peasant, who is rarely separated from the staff in one form or other. When he leaves his homestead he normally carries the hard *dulā*, a potential weapon of defense that likewise affirms his ego by bolstering self-confidence in a dangerous world. He braces the *dulā* against his back as he treks along, or holds it against the [481] front of his shoulder like a rifle. Older men walk using it as a cane. A special kind of staff made of softer wood (*zang*) is carried by pious and elderly [481] men. Participants in devotional services lean on still another type of staff (*maqudmiyā*) which is distributed in the church for that purpose.

*565 156 484 Traveling is another custom which affirms the ego, at least when one travels spontaneously and not in organized company. As the individual moves past various stimuli, his self-consciousness is heightened by the contrast between a persisting ego and a constantly changing environment. As a traveler par excellence—and a lone traveler, unless social rank requires the presence of retainers—the Amhara peasant frequently removes himself from familiar home settings and confronts an outside world. He loves to go on the road and will travel at the slightest provocation. For him a distance of two or three hours by foot is like the American's trip to the corner drugstore. Whether to visit relatives or pay respects after death, to go to market or to court, to get holy water at a distant church, or to look after land in a far away district, the Amhara peasant is on the move dozens of times each year, often for trips involving two or three days of travel.

*565 156 829 602 609 Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and culture, one may for the moment say that the personal ego is the central object in the Amhara peasant's view of society. Exactly what might be meant by this statement and in what respects it needs qualification are questions that will be taken up in the concluding chapter. If it is so, certainly the next most prominent social object in his world is the circle of close ones, or *zamad*. *Zamad* refers in the first instance to consanguineal kin, and is distinguished from the category of those who are strangers, or *bā'ed*. This is perhaps the most important of all the sociological distinctions made by the Amhara: the former, *zamad*, are seen as entitled to the warmest hospitality, while toward *bā'ed* indifference and suspicion are appropriate responses.

*565 156 602 This does not mean that the kin group is a corporate entity whose interests and identity transcend that of the individual. On the contrary, the notion of

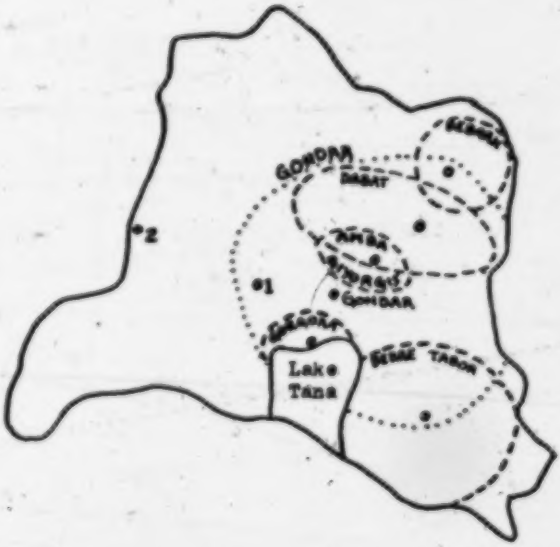
12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

MAP 3

EXTREME DISTANCES TRAVELLED TO PRINCIPAL WEEKLY MARKETS OF

HIGHLAND BEGEMDER PROVINCE

102
131
• 484



Distances from Gondar

Amba Giyorgis...	24 miles
Dabat.....	44 miles
Debark.....	61 miles
Debre Tabor.....	104 miles
Gorgora.....	40 miles
Chilga (1).....	45 miles
Metemma (2).....	140 miles

443
632 centered in a town and extending outward to include those areas from which peasants come to buy and sell.

[132] The size of the town's sphere contracts and expands sea-
[484] sonally, reaching its nadir furing the rainy season, when overland travel becomes difficult owning to deep mud and raging torrents. Then, travelling is infrequent and confined to the market town closest to a peasant's home parish. Although market trips are more frequent during the remainder of the year, most terminate at the closest market. These relatively short trips are favored when grain is brought to the mills located on the periphery
[796] of most market sites. The spheres of the larger towns (Gondar, Debre Tabor, Dabat) reach maximum size on the market days which preceed the great celebrations of the Coptic Church---Meskal (which celebrates the discovery of the True Cross, and follows the end of the rains), Michaelmas (November), Timkat (feast of the Epiphany, and preceeding the Lenten fast), and Easter. Map 3 indicates the extreme limits for market spheres of the towns of the Begemder highlands.

[491] The highland market towns are strung along the province's only all-weather motor road.[14] Each offers a

[648] [14] This road, built during the Italian occupation (1936-1941), runs north to Asmara (capital of Eritrea) and (since the 1960's) south to Addis Ababa (the national capital). A dry season road links the highland towns to Metemma on the Sudan border.

765 *787 *793 539 [437] [241] *793 484 *755 *793 437 484 539

tection against ganels (but as a category of agents, rather than as named individuals), against the shifta bandit, and against the wild animals of the lowlands. The prophylactic abinet that he acquires, although short on asmat, perhaps lacking telsem, and with few magical features of manufacture, he works into kitabs. While the student's initial stimulus for collecting these abinet is his own immediate needs, he is nonetheless aware of the commercial value of such abinet, in the form of commercial services for lowland peasants.

Relatively few experienced debteras pay visits to the kola lands. The lowlands, considered unhealthful and dangerous by highlanders in general, are still less appealing to the mature debtera. He deprecates them for the absence of ecclesiastical establishments, and fears them for what he believes to be the shifta's predilection for robbing and murdering debteras.[27] In lieu of more expert services, and attracted by the moderate costs, the lowlander is often anxious to purchase kitabs from visiting students. The students, in anticipation, prepare a score or more of kitabs before traveling to the lowlands;

[27] Debteras attribute the shifta's murderousness to his fear of subsequent magical revenge by the debtera.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*755 *793 437 484 539 a blank space is left on each kitab, to be filled in later with the client's name. In general, the student initially sells kitabs to the lowlands to assist him in gathering agricultural products. The kitabs are purchased with either crops or services, and only infrequently with money. The peasant's services include recommending the student's kitabs to his neighbors, safe storage of the goods which the student has collected, and lending draught animals to bring the student's sacks up to the highlands. Sometimes, enterprising students arrange their visits in order to obtain payment in cotton, a relatively valuable product which debtera students are unable to obtain otherwise.

*793 *787 818 [437] The student's experience selling kitabs in the lowlands has a significant effect on the course of his subsequent abinet career. First, his abinet interests are redirected. His previous acquisitions were abinet which served an immediate personal interest, and whose commercial value was adventitious. These commercial successes, however small-scale, frequently stimulate the student to obtain abinet which have an exclusively commercial value. Interest in personally useful abinet by no means ends during this period, however; often it is accelerated by the student's changing attitudes to the practice of abinet. There is a tendency to now perceive his moral interests as less opposed to these works than he had pre-

*787 *793 869 *[192] as his radat. In practice, this debtera is usually the student's memher (ecclesiastical teacher), since the student cannot simultaneously serve two debteras, the memher and an abinet teacher, without offending the pride of both. Occasionally an enthusiastic collector of abinet may serve under a debtera in order to learn only abinet. Under these circumstances, both student and teacher maintain the pretext that the abinet collector is but another of the debtera's ecclesiastical scholars. In both situations, the abinet subject is learned only gradually, as the radat releases it, secret by secret, over a period of weeks or even months. The student, for his part, may be expected to provide confidential assistance in support of the debtera's abinet activities (sometimes involving kifat, offensive abinet), to act as his mentor's medhaniyt korac, or, less often, to provide substantial agricultural services, such as ploughing.

As a debtera student grows older and advances in his ecclesiastical studies, he finds it progressively easier to acquire new abinet studies. By then, he has travelled extensively over the network of monasteries and famous churches which are scattered over the northern plateau. In the course of these travels, he has made the acquaintance of many abinet-practicing debteras, and consequently a great variety of abinet studies have become potentially available to him. At the same time, he

• [484]

622 both the central government and the local church. Where
651 the land has not been officially measured, which is the usual case in old Amhara territory, the mislane must rely on him for information necessary to the assessment of taxes. The cheqa shum is expected also to supervise customs evasion
622 when caravans or smugglers move through his territory. He
692 mediates between landlord and tenant in their endless little disagreement. In fact, his activities resemble those of an Elizabethan "Justice of the Peace".

He decides local disputes, in civil cases; officiates at the most common type of marriage, the "semanya" (an agreement between two kinship groups); he reads out government proclamations and decrees of the emperor at the nearest rural market place, including the call to arms in case of war. He can also indict a criminal and bring him before the "danya" the judge of the nearest market town, or to the "judges on circuit" accompanying the governor on his annual inspec-
622 tion tour during the dry season. Usually the cheqa shum is a local landlord himself, unless he has been given the post as a special favor for services rendered to the governor.

[701] Until the diminution of feudal privileges during the past decade, the cheqa shum was also responsible for providing the military-feudal chiefs and their troops with provisions when they were on march, making it unnecessary for
[485] them to depend on supply lines. Now that army troops receive regular salaries, he still has to play host to travelling officials for their personal needs, since there are no rural hotels. They do not pay him except by promises of future favors.

1: Messing, E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 This change has also lightened the burden on the "gab-
485 bar", the tenant sharecropper. In the past it was the gab-bar who had to supply the "feast" (called "gebber", with ironic truthfulness regarding the provider) for feudal troops on march, in addition to all his other burdens. The cheqa shum was responsible for its collection, for only he knew how much produce, goats, sheep, honey, etc., the peasant had left after the heavy sharecropping rent to the landlord and the "tithe" ("asrat") which is still payable to the central government (formerly to the district feudal lord).

651 There is now a new tax, the "education tax" payable even in rural areas where no government schools exist as yet, and payable in cash only, not in produce as in case of "asrat". This tax, too, is collected by the cheqa shum and delivered to the mislanē who must now issue a receipt and forward the money to the central treasury.

563 Ethnic considerations in the location of a hamlet in
361 Amhara territory apply to hamlets of scattered Falashas, ironsmiths who observe Mosaic Judaism, and hamlets of the Fagi, Cushitic-speaking tanners who were "Pagan" but have recently accepted the Coptic faith and the Amharic language. Since their services are required, they are often permitted to rent land on a hill, the other side of which may contain a Coptic Amhara hamlet. Relations between these hamlets, beginning on strictly economic terms, often become as friendly as the difference between religions, low status of skilled smiths and tanners, and old supernatural
[622] suspicions permit. In case of such residence, one cheqa shum may have an ethnic variety of hamlets under his domain, and may know far more about their "strange" inhabitants and their customs than the average Amhara.

632 not far from the market. A smaller daily market for retail items would develop, so commerce proceeded even on a daily basis. A larger church school, to include some higher grades, would be set up by priests and Däbtära (scribe-choristers).

632 712 On account of the floods in the rainy season, most of this town would be on a higher level, preferably a butte overlooking a river valley from which drinking water could be brought every day. On this fertile flood plain, just below the town, there would be some grass even at the gheight of the dry season, so that the cows owned by urban citizens would always find some pasture. [423] On this floodplain a "commons" was set aside, which no one could "enclose" for private use. It was called "ad-[485] däbabay" or even "yähezb addäbabay", and served as camping place for caravans, for temporary storage space of their goods and their mules, donkeys or camels, prior to the slow climb up the butte to the Saturday market. This arrangement also had the advantage of military security for the town, protecting it from sneak attack of an enemy under guise of a caravan, which was not permitted to proceed upward into town until dawn. For the Amhara town, unlike the Muslim towns in the south, were not walled.

632 651 This arrangement also permitted the "nägadras", the collector of duties for the central power of the province, to keep control of the merchandise entering and leaving the market.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 571 264 181 [829] A similar spirit is observed in Amhara commensality. Meals are customarily eaten from a common *ĭnjarā* basket. The sauce is ladled onto the center of the *ĭnjarā,* and is consumed ensemble by those sitting around the basket as they dip into it with pieces of *ĭnjarā* broken off from the edges. Traditional Amhara scoff at what they regard as the excessively individualistic Western custom of sitting each person down to a separate place at the table and thus depriving the meal hour of what they feel should be its basically communal tone.

*121 574 571 181 At a more formal level of interaction this disposition is expressed in the form of *hospitality*. Amhara hospitality is luxuriously attentive and thoughtful. For example, if there is foreknowledge of a guest's arrival, he is awaited at some distance from his destination and escorted with much to-do into the home. His mule is at once unsaddled and given to feed. The guest is given a place of honor in the home, and a glass of *ṭallā* is immediately brought for him. Amhara etiquette prescribes, moreover, that a glass is not properly filled unless it overflows; and it is repeatedly filled to overflowing whenever the guest has drunk some portion of the beverage. As a gratuitous gesture of good faith, the host—or his wife, or servant—tastes some of the beverage first, a sign that no "medicine" has been added. Before long the wicker table is produced, and the guest and his party are served copiously—no matter what time of day they arrive (unless, of course, it is a fasting day). When the guest has eaten to satisfaction, the host will insist that he eat some more, by repeatedly issuing injunctions like *tegābazu* ("Help yourselves!"), *mokar* ("Try!"), or *āfar sehon* ("If I become dust!"—i.e., "If you do not eat you will be condemning me to death"). The Amhara host is also likely to insist that his guest spend the night. The guest's feet will be washed, and the host's bed will be given to him, or long grass will be cut for bedding on the floor. At the time of farewell, the host and his attendants follow the guest and his party a good distance along the road. The guest continually cries, "Return! Return!" and the host agrees but continues to serve as escort.

Such hospitality is not wantonly bestowed upon the casual wayfarer. Normally it is reserved for those who qualify as worthy guests: relatives, friends, [609] or persons of high rank. Nonetheless, there does exist among the Amhara some feeling that even the unknown stranger should be shown hospitality, for he is *ya-egziābhēr engedā* ("a guest of God"). Travelers are generally assured [485] that somebody somewhere will show them hospitality; there are no inns in traditional Ethiopia, for it is considered wrong to exchange food and lodging for money.

*121 576 571 181 Related to this pattern of hospitality is a delicate sense of *respect* that the Amhara displays toward all comers; often, even toward his enemies. When two Amhara pass each other anywhere, they are expected to bow slightly and say: "How did you pass the night?" or "How did you spend the day?" If they

137 most border areas of the country. This is the zone of desert and thorn shrub vegetation; flora include the tamarind, giant sycamore, acacia, myrtle and zizygium, "Insett" (musa ensete or "Koba"), euphorbia, depending on availability of water. Crops include cotton, tobacco, dura, sugar cane. Poisonous snakes, leopards, malarial mosquitoes are common, and therefore the qolla is avoided by upland peoples like the Amhara. The qolla is loosely populated by hardy nomads like the feared Danakil in the east, and by Nilotic-speaking and negroid peoples like the Shanqalla in the western lowland.[3]

133 Much of Ethiopia is a subtabular plateau about 7,000 feet high, bisected north and south by a sector of the Great Rift Valley of East Africa with an average width of 30 miles. Rivers such as the Blue Nile have cut deep gorges breaking the highland into many isolated parts. Above the plateau rise higher mountains, the highest of which is 14,500 feet--Ras Dashan(Bejeda).

487 133 The many steep canyons which break up the plateaus have made Ethiopia almost inaccessible in the past. There are only three possible routes of access, an important consideration when one tries to reconstruct the ethnic prehistory of this area:

(1) The Eritrean gateway, where the highland approach

3. See Chamber of Commerce of Addis Ababa: Guidebook, 1954, pp. 127-8; KUO, 1955, p.1-2; Simmons 1951, p. 63

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

487
133

the sea. It is here, as C. S. Coon points out,[4] that all the historic traffic between the Ethiopian highlands and Yemen has taken place; here lie all the ancient cities and holiest places. Semitic-speaking influences came this way.

(2) Sailing down the Nile with the north wind, and continuing south past the gorges of the Blue Nile. Despite the hardships of this route, Egypt has often been a source of cultural influence on Ethiopia, and once an Ethiopian dynasty reigned over Egypt. Today, Nilotic-speaking tribes live on this gateway.

(3) A route from the south, at the place where the highland of Ethiopia connects with the grasslands and parklands of Kenya and Uganda. Here we find a continuum of flora and fauna, and a human ethnic continuum. Cushitic-speaking peoples have entered this way, probably for ages past.

C. Soil and Minerals

134 The soil of Ethiopia can be roughly divided into three major types:

(1) Decomposed volcanic rock on the central plateau. This is very fertile, of black or dark brown color.

(2) Alluvial soil on the flood plains of streams. This is derived mainly from the decomposed volcanic rock, washed out of the plateau soil during the rainy season, and is very fertile. Muddy in color, the rich overflow of Lake Tana is

4. Coon, C. S.: Horn of Africa. Unpublished.

585 bride and groom merely expresses the prayerful wish that "God will show the way" to the lay couple toward "qurban", in time. In fact, middle-aged couples who have gone through several divorces and have finally decided definitely to spend the rest of their days together, may take the "aklil" in "qurban". Qurban for lay people, e.g. deacons, is performed usually only 40 days after their "semanya", to make certain that their marriage bond is strong and real and that no rift has arisen (e.g. if the bride had been found not a virgin).

588 487 "Damoz" marriage (lit. wage) is what the term implies. Most commonly the arrangement is from month to month, but may be for longer or shorter periods, such as the duration of a caravan trip, or an extended stay at a major market, where the "damoz" wife offers the best and often the only available hotel and restaurant services. (She is similar to the Biblical lady in the city of Jericho). The term is a contraction of "dammwaz" (lit. "blood - and - sweat") [465] compensation. Her wages vary greatly from region to region, and have considerably increased in recent years, for even the new, modern law recognized her claim. In the past she did well if she received ETH$5.-per month in addition to housekeeping expenses, but [675] now some obtain ETH$20.- from traders. The agreement is made orally but before witnesses, so that she can go to court if the man defaults on his payments. If they separate at the expiration of the contract, she has no right to half his property as does the semanya [428] wife, but if there are children conceived during her contract, the children can make a claim for part of the father's inheritance should he die.

588 The "damoz" temporary wife is usually recruited from a lower class than that of the man, of landless family. But often she is merely a divorcee, who "lives alone" in a street inhabited by women of similar status in the town, who are in-between marriages, and make a living serving transients with bed and board, giving them the comforts of home, cooking, baking, cleaning. They are not considered good-time prostitutes of the mead-houses ("tej-byet"), and are therefore much more respected.

[548]

588 487 178 Respectably-married ("semanya") men would, in the past, take on a "damoz" wife to accompany them on caravan trips, to spare the "semanya" wife the discomforts and perils of the journey. Now that trucks travel comparatively fast from province to province, the travelling "damoz" wife has become rare, but the residential "damoz" wife continues in the towns much as before, and "semanya" wives are therefore not as tolerant of them as they once were when they appreciated their husbands' efforts to spare them discomfort. For, they reasoned, "who else will cook for him, how will he eat?".

588 848 The "damoz" wife's children are fully legitimate. She is far higher in status than the simple concubine ("yechen garad"), lit. the servant-maid of the thigh), who was and is often a permanent member of the household, often of doubtful or half-Shanqalla ancestry, who has no damoz rights, and whose children have no rights of recognition beyond what the master cares to give them. (The concubine is also called "tara" or "tarata" in some districts).

588 171 The respectability or semi-respectability of the "damoz" wife compares to the Persian "ssighe", and the Arab Muslim temporary wife permitted in the Quran (IV:28 - "And in so far as you have derived pleasure from these women for a stipulated time, give them their

524 pebble, thus becoming "owner" of position A6.

Now it is the turn of player A, who can begin anywhere he likes, palming one of his own pebbles, and proceeding as above until he conquers one opponent's position, alway proceeding counterclockwise. There are many variations to this basic procedure. E.g. it is possible to become "partial owner" of a position, in which case the dispute is settled by chance, e.g. by hiding a pebble in one hand and letting the other guess which hand hides it. The player who wins all the grooves wins the game. The loser is called "ayt bälla" (lit. the rat ate him).

This game is regarded as harmless, unless a person becomes so addicted to it that he wastes all his time at it.

273 517 Entertainment of adults, especially in the towns, often involves considerable consumption of barley beer, fermented honeymead, and even "araqi". The proverb interprets stages of behavior, in drinking, as follows:

"First cup : Rat", (When one drinks eagerly, like a rodent);

"Second cup : Bee", (When there is buzzing among pleasantly agitated drinkers);

"Third cup : Monkey", (Grimacing, laughing foolishly, sweeping arms);

"Fourth cup : Dog", (When drunkards howl, without control, or depressed).

275 487 There are three types of public facilities for relaxation, found in the market-towns; The teahouse, the beer-house, and the mead-house, all of which are sharply differentiated:

The teahouse ("shäy byet") is fully respectable; it is for men only, no women are supposed to enter it, and even the waiters are male. It is patronized by traders, clerks, minor officials (for high officials and nobles would not want to be seen consuming food or drink in public), police detectives, etc. Talk is largely of business matters and events of the day. The tea is consumed with a great deal of sugar dissolved in it, and a sweet condiment called "ful", probably of Arab introduction,

275 is served with it. Traders and travellers often stop by during the day,
487 and the place usually closes not long after sundown.

275 The barley-beer house ("talla byet") is still fairly respectable
487 for people of commoner and lower classes, but not for respected elders
265 or priests. It is operated by women, either matronly married women or "unattached girls", i.e. divorcees. It serves not only as dispenser of beer, but also serves full meals, so that the travelling trader is dependent on it. For as little as Eth. $0.25 (U.S. 10 cents) the patron may obtain a minimal meal of enjara bread, 2 liters of talla beer, and all the roast chickpeas and roasted barley ("qolo") he can eat; meatstew costs more. Often such a restaurant contains an extra room with a bed for the weary traveller to sleep in, and such an inn is then called "meshta byet" (lit. accommodation house, from "mesht" or "mest", meaning wife), for the traveller has no difficulty in securing a temporary wife for the duration of his local stay, among the divorcees.

275 The mead-house ("taj byet") does not even have the minimal
548 respectability of the talla byet. It is operated strictly for entertainment, i.e. drinking and sexual pleasures. For the owner, usually a clever, middleaged townswoman, it represents one of the few ways of amassing capital and becoming one of the wealthiest local citizens. She controls her waitresses much as a madam would. To protect herself from brawls, which are not infrequent, she also employs, - though they are kept out of sight so as not to frighten off customers, - one or several husky bouncers. The proverb says:

[539]

"In the prostitute's house,
all the time a scuffle."

For, even in prostitution a pretense of "temporary wife" is made.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

633 Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society
[191] has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and
Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and
[563] Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the
uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the
frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and,
[142 although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms
291] exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a
beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wander-
[245] ing among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous
for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudo,
231 which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

487 The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men: the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

174 The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally
been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up
[563] into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to
believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

174

speaking peoples, who have contributed such an important element to the populations of the Mediterranean basin.[1]

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I believe that the early civilized world of the valleys: Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus, which has been revealed by the researches and explorations of the last century had its background in the great ranges from which its peoples came. Professor Toynbee has pointed out that the regions of the Nile and the Mesopotamian valleys must have been areas of unhealthy swamp and wilderness when men first settled there.[2] Such terrain would not produce the conditions necessary to stimulate the multiplication of an indigenous stock. A terrain of this type would rather need clearing and developing by immigrants forced to find their living there after having been driven down from mountain areas by the pressure of increased numbers on food, which we have seen is a common characteristic of mountain economy. But just as the Highland migrant working in the field of American industrialism soon acquires new techniques and develops a higher standard of material culture than his brother who remains a crofter in Scotland, so the colonists of the Nile and Mesopotamian valleys far outpaced in material culture the inhabitants of the remote highlands of Ethiopia or of the Zagros and the Taurus.

There is one last point: the eighteenth-century prejudice against mountains, which influence still remains, tended to an exaggeration of the difficulties of mountain travel in primitive times. Yet the higher ridges of mountain chains often are the easiest lines of movement for men on foot. It makes possible the avoidance of forested valleys and ravines blocked by undergrowth and full of fevers. In England even our earliest forebears kept to the Downlands and trudged along the ridges to keep clear of the thick undergrowth and swamps of the low ground. And the so-called Alpine peoples kept to the mountain belt as they penetrated westward into Europe from the Highlands of Asia Minor through the Balkans to the Alps and the Pyrenees.

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In this connection it is possible to appreciate the essential importance of Aksum as an early cultural centre. Aksum is at the northern head of the route along the great Eastern Escarpment which leads into the heart of the Ethiopian Highland; at the same time Aksum is within easy reach of the Red Sea and the affluents which lead down to the Nile valley. There is a theory that the monoliths at Aksum are in fact the remains of a great Megalithic centre; the historic Aksumites merely made their own sculptural additions to the stone monuments which they already found in situ.[3] If we accept this theory we can see Aksum as a great centre of early megalithic culture having its connections with the reputed megalithic remains noted by recent Italian travellers in the region of the southern lakes.

[1] Abbé Morié, 'Histoire de l'Ethiopie,' vol. 1. Ethiopia was a term applied by ancient writers loosely and varyingly to all the northern half of Africa between the Atlantic and the Red Sea, and the term was even extended to Caucasian Colchis and to India. In fact mythical Ethiopia covered all that width of Africa and Asia where the Neolithic cultures first appeared. In classical times the name Ethiopia was applied to Nubia and the Sudan and it was only in post-Christian times that it was limited to the Highland area of modern Ethiopia.

[2] A. Toynbee, 'The study of history,' vols. 1/2.

[3] Sir E. H. Wallis Budge, chapter on Aksum in vol. II 'History of Ethiopia.'

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 *Buddleia*, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

133 The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has [48] naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being [231] swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used [311] for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the [135] north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several [325] travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated [712] long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high [346] point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 developed. I was interested to find, when first exploring this piece of country, that the shelves were well populated, intensively cultivated, and provided with a quite surprising number of churches; facts, as pointed out below, of [illegible] historical significance.

[illegible]pleting the framework of the map I made several calculations of depth [illegible] Beressa gorge. An Abney level was used and as high angles were involved I think the results are trustworthy. They showed a depth of 1808 feet at the point marked *a*, just under 3 miles from the head of the gorge; 1985 feet at point *b*, 4 miles down; and 2170 feet at *c*, not quite 6 miles down. The average gradient from *a* to *b* was therefore about 2½ per cent., from *b* to *c* about 2 per cent. The depths were measured from three points (marked 1–3), all at practically the same level, on the edge of the gorge, the height of which can be taken as about 9300 feet. The absolute level of point *c* is therefore about 7130 feet, and this is almost the lowest point on the sheet. Measurements show that the depth of this gorge, enormously impressive though it is, is not more than one-fifth of its breadth. Although relatively deeper ones no doubt exist, I cannot help being highly sceptical of Rocher d'Hericourt's report of a ravine "14 leagues north-west of Angolala" which he alleged to be 1254 metres deep and only 800 broad!

Four separate gorges figure on the map. The two middle ones, formed by the Beressa and Dalecha rivers, which enclose between them the cliff-encircled plateau of Choli, can be seen to join within 4 to 5 miles of Debra Berhan. It might be supposed that the other two gorges were destined to join the same system within a short distance, but this does not happen. If the small-scale Italian map is to be trusted, the Gunagunit (north-east corner of the sheet) joins the Beressa system some 20 miles away, and the Chacha (of which the north-western gorge is a tributary) nearly 30 miles away. These junctions are approximately north of Debra Berhan; afterwards the river bends away north-westwards to join a main tributary of the Blue Nile. As might be expected, these independent gorge-systems running approximately parallel to each other proved most confusing. Between the adjacent systems one sees long, narrow strips of residual plateau, perfectly flat-topped, sometimes so narrow as to stand up like a wall between one valley and the next. The Tallak Amba plateau, partly shown in the north-west of the sheet, is an example. On the other side of the sheet a still narrower neck, followed by the [497] Tegulet path, separates the Beressa and Gunagunit systems. Following this route to the north, off the sheet, one finds that for some distance the plateau has been cut right away: one descends about 600 feet to a point where the shelves in two adjacent valleys practically coalesce, being separated only by a rocky barrier a few feet high. Then one climbs again to a narrow slip of [341] plateau on whose summit, flat as a table-top, stands an important church (Zendegur Ghiorghis). Still farther north this narrows down to a sinuous rampart between the valleys, and eventually broadens once more to form a substantial isolated plateau, which appeared in the distance to be almost inaccessible. Another remarkable feature, jutting out between the Dalecha and the small tributary which next joins the Beressa, is shown near the northern border of the sheet and will be described later.

115 This region is the heart of the old Shoan kingdom and many places included

11

A[i.e., the river gorges. —Awalyol]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ababa and Debra Berhan remains Galla country. The Amharas have re-occupied the region immediately around Debra Berhan, their southern limit corresponding roughly with the edge of the sheet; but the churches built to meet their needs (including the new St. Gabriel already once mentioned) are comparatively few and far between, a confirmation of the recent date of the re-colonization. 175 563

The Gallas remained in possession of the plateau country until the early nineteenth century when Sahele Selassie, king of Shoa, began to push them back. The half-dozen hill-top forts shown on the sheet almost certainly date from this time, or were reoccupied then. The capital of Shoa since the eighteenth century had been Ankober, on the edge of the great eastern escarpment, some 20 miles east of Debra Berhan. But Sahele Selassie, as part of his anti-Galla campaign founded, in about 1830, a new capital at Angolala in the midst of Galla country. He thereafter divided his time between Angolala and Ankober. A largely disused track, still well-defined in most parts, is shown crossing the sheet from Angolala in an easterly direction; this was evidently an old route joining the two capitals. Harris,[1] who conducted a British Mission to Sahele Selassie in 1841–42, visited Angolala which then contained four or five hundred huts. He also describes Sahele Selassie's two-storied "palace," built by an Albanian[2] visitor, standing on an eminence—which however the king would not inhabit, from fear of earthquakes. Angolala continued to be used by Sahele Selassie's son, king Haile Malakot, and the great Menelik, who was Haile Malakot's son, had been born here in 1843—just after the time of Harris's visit. 175 [563] [712] [487] [644]

Not much remains now to show that Angolala was so recently the twin capital of Shoa; but the site of Sahele Salassie's house, an artificial mound crowning the ridge, is easily identified and commands a fine view of the countryside. Inside the mound is a vaulted cellar, its masonry showing clear signs of European workmanship, as also does the central stone-built element of the local church of Kidane Meheret. This work is now exposed to view as the church was burnt down during the Italian occupation. Angolala remains a well-populated area, but only a very few huts now stand among the remains of defensive walls near the old royal residence. 172 177

The young Menelik, up to the age of twelve, must have known all this country well. But at that time (1855) the newly crowned emperor Theodore, whose ambition was the unification of Ethiopia after a century and a half of anarchy and internal strife, came down from the north with the object of subjecting Shoa to his personal rule. He defeated king Haile Malakot on the plains of Atakilt, the irrigated area just south-east of Debra Berhan. Haile Malakot died immediately after the battle, and Menelik was carried away captive by Theodore—who, however, afterwards treated him as a son rather than a prisoner. For some years Menelik followed in the emperor's train, moving with him from Gondar to Debra Tabor and then to the hill-fortress of Magdala, Theodore's last capital and later the scene of his undoing. Several years before Napier's siege of 1868 Menelik had escaped from Magdala during, it is said, one of Theodore's periodic orgies. A youth in 175 [113]

[1] Harris, 'The Highlands of Aethiopia,' London, 1844.
[2] It is much more likely that Harris meant an Armenian.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

312 the downward side but is sloped on the up-hill side and therefore triangular in section. The filling-up of the empty space behind the wall, to the new terrace level, may be partly accomplished by hand but tends to be left to nature. During the rains, especially on the steeper slopes, there is a continuous downward movement of soil, which is arrested by the terrace walls and the pockets above them gradually fill up. In the course of centuries an immense amount of simple terracing of this kind has been done, the effect being to accentuate the existing irregularities of the steeper slopes. The landscape has certainly been greatly modified in this way, but it is often impossible to tell at first sight whether a given feature is natural, or partly or wholly due to terracing. It is obvious that such terracing has not only provided additional acreage for agriculture but also served the useful purpose of saving many steep slopes from excessive erosion. In several parts of Ethiopia, including this area, I have seen slopes under cultivation which were so steep that the soil, when loosened and disturbed, would slide away downhill. At first sight one would suppose that such slopes must be completely denuded after a few seasons' rain. The fact that this does not happen is due, I believe, to the vast abundance of stones in these soils, every one of which acts as a minute barrier arresting the flow of water and silt. Nevertheless such slopes, unless terraced, clearly cannot survive indefinitely under cultivation.

443 Surplus produce is brought in to the big weekly market at Debra Berhan
[487] which is both the commercial and the social centre of the whole district; all the main routes radiate from it. Every Saturday morning these routes are thronged with market-goers, who can be seen moving along in an almost continuous stream, the well-to-do mounted on mules, the majority on foot, some driving laden donkeys and pack-mules. The products of this countryside are few, and there is little food surplus, but some wheat and barley come to market, also eggs and chickens and a good deal of butter. Some honey (used in making the local mead or *tej*) comes in, and beeswax is collected for export. Firewood, a scarce commodity on the plateau, is carried in in quantity. *Gesho*, the fermenting agent, comes up from the gorges. There is plenty of earthenware, made on the plateau nearby. From the district of Menz to the north come excellent felt blankets and burnouses. Traders from farther afield bring salt from the desert, partly in the bars which used formerly to pass as currency, and raw cotton and spices from the eastern plains. Textiles and other imported goods now find their way to this market by lorry.

When, in the course of the afternoon, the market crowds begin to stream homewards, one may identify the few simple wares they have bought or bartered. Some have a bag or a bar of salt, some raw cotton for spinning or a piece of cotton cloth, some a fresh supply of coffee-beans, some a bottle of kerosene or a cake of soap. Many have acquired earthenware water-pots or
[323] cooking vessels; the large round platters (*matad*) 18 inches across, on which
[482] the local bread is baked, stand out conspicuously for they are always carried, for safety, on the head.

971 It still remains to describe the most potent of the influences which shape the life of the country-bred Amhara—that of the Church. The priests, of

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

346 north-west of Zanjira near the upper margin of the sheet. The church clings to the side of a steep little hill which stands almost isolated among vast gorges and commands the grandest panorama imaginable of this tormented country. The hill is joined to Zanjira by a narrow causeway little lower than the general plateau, flat on top and dropping away in cliffs on either side, so regular that it almost seems artificial. Harris records a saying which evidently refers to this place: "from Iteghe you can see the Echeghe" (*i.e.* the chief of the monks, who then lived in Gondar). To be sure, one does seem to overlook a great part of the world from this point of vantage.

[487] Every church is the centre of a radiating system of small paths (not shown on the map) chiefly used by people coming to service. There are of course 796 regular Sunday services, but these are not very well attended. More important are the special festivals observed on certain dates of the Ethiopian month, which may fall on any day of the week. In this area the monthly festivals universally observed, on which no work could be done, were those of St. Michael, St. Mary, and St. George, on the 12th, 21st, and 23rd respectively, as well as "Bal Wold," a commemoration of the Birth of Christ, on the 29th of each month. Of still greater significance in the life of the people are the annual festivals, falling on the same day of the month as the monthly ones but in certain months only. On these annual festivals nearly the whole population makes its way to the churches dedicated to the particular saint [783] commemorated. Often they will visit the local *tebel* or Holy Water and bathe there early in the morning before service. Going on to the church, all remain outside, for there would be no room for such a crowd within the cramped passages of the church itself. In the middle of the morning the *tabot* or ark is brought out and ceremonial dances held before it. Finally, before the service ends, it will be carried three times round the church in procession, attended by magnificent crosses and gaudy umbrellas. These are occasions of great popular excitement and rejoicing, and the congregations are often enormous. The long service over, they break up into gossiping groups, and go back to social lunches in each other's huts.

771 Enough has been said to show how large a part is played among these people by the Church and its priesthood. The country has indeed been described as priest-ridden, the people as over-dominated or even enslaved by the Church. If so, this servitude, at least in the country, is still a willing and unquestioned one. It is also true to say that without the Church the social structure of this countryside would fall to pieces, and life would lose not only its coherence but nearly all its variety and colour.

346 It was mentioned above that, to meet the needs of an increasing plateau 794 population, several new churches had been founded in recent times in the area covered by the map. Two of these were established by "division" of a 578 church which already existed in the gorge. Each original church had two *tabots* one of which was removed for the new foundation, for no church can exist without a *tabot* or altar-slab, this being the only part of the church which is consecrated. Thus the Mariam of the Tallak Amba plateau was derived from the Mariam half-way down the cliff about a mile to the north-east; and similarly a new Ghiorghis of the plateau, just east of Daloti, from the Ghiorghis in the gorge below. Of these "divisions," both of which took place

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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712
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[End map II-A]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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The Geographical Journal, Oct.-Dec. 1949
Lanjeri
Sera
Lichi
Chali
DEBRA BERBAN
Atakilt
Tebasse
Karnotno
School
Milkt
Dilila
Ta A
Dam
Falls
Bridge
Road
Rivers
Lake Alemaya
Lake Zway
Lake Langano
Lake Shala
Lake Abiata
Lake Ziway
Debre Sina
Berbera
Lake Hora
Lake Tana
Lake Rudolf
Lake Stephanie
Lake Margherita
Lake Abaya
Lake Chamo

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

Mahometans. They reckon about 12,000 horse of Galla 101
between the Nile and Narea. The tribes go every seventh 563
year to the reigning house, where the council debates on the duties of government. The points agitated are, how our fathers governed, what measures are to be taken with murderers and robbers on the high-ways, how merchants are to be dealt with, &c. The young then declaim in favour of violence and injustice; after which the elders, five in number, are asked. These decide in favour of equity. The king is afterwards chosen by a plurality of voices.

Waragna, father of Fasil, was converted to Christianity. His father was Wusho (signifying a dog), of the western Galla, of the tribe Jimmali. He was a merchant; but being remarked to be brave in a battle Bacuffa had with these Galla, he was invested with the caftan, and made commander of several places on the frontiers of Damot.

The Djawi Galla of Damot, Gafat, and Metchakel, as also the Galla of Maitsha, came there, in the time of Yasous Tallac. The Basso, and other Galla of Gojam, were brought there by Hatze Fasil; others say his son Hannes.

Maitsha, from the place the Abay comes out of the lake 361
to Courtohha, is 1½ day's march, at a moderate pace, 6 hours a day; from Courtohha, the hither part, to Samseen, one long day's journey; and from the same part to the Abay at Goutta, a very long day's journey, at a brisk pace.

The Shankala entrench their huts against surprise, and 563
burn large fires. They wear a long shield, covering nearly the whole side, and five lances each, which they throw or stab with as needed. Bows and arrows are their chief weapons. They dig up gold among reddish earth, which they burn in the fire, and gather it as it runs out in small pieces like shot. They put it next in to a small purse, or other sort of bag. Every individual is free to search for it. They are flat-nosed and flat-lipped, very black, best shaped in the upper parts, but with bad knees and legs.

The Bure way to Narea is W. in the country south by A- 487
moro. The nearest way is by Gojam and Gooderoo, performed in 30 days with loaden asses, about eight or nine miles a-day.

Harar is a very large town, has five gates, and is constant- 361
ly at war with Habbesh, or the Galla. The ridge of hills

[p. 59]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

rains of Naasse and Hamlie, it never overflows at the springs, 361
nor do the fountains seem larger. He remembered the accession of Hatze Yasous to the throne, and was about 80 years old. The east side of the Nile is less barren than the west side. Aformasha is not barren.

Singular custom. The Betwudet (in Habesh), upon the 651
death of any Wiziro, is obliged to pay the expences of the 766
ceremony, called Misle, which amounts to 100 oxen, 3000 loaves of wheat bread, 20 jars hydromel, wood, &c. the whole about 60 ounces of gold. The ceremony is this: A sort of figure, resembling the defunct, is placed upon horseback, in his usual dress, and so carried in procession about the outer court of the palace, with the royal standard (sendick) carried before it, and the nagareet beating. This is called, in this country, "burying with sendick and nagareet;" for which the Betwudet has 1200 ardeb of wheat yearly out of the Attekolla.

The route of the Islam merchants, S. is by two ways, with 487
loaden asses, 8 or 9 miles per day. The way by Gojam is performed in 30 days to Sebou, and thence for other 10 to Narea. The Kibby, or Zebee, rises in Narea. Coffee, of different kinds, grows there in abundance, and the Galla feed on it. They use the lex talionis, but their internal justice is strict. They are very scrupulous of oaths: Wauke Laftan, by heaven and earth, is one of the most solemn. There are three races of Galla, the Guangoul in Angot, north-east of Begemder; Mahomet Ali, another farther west than the Guangoul, towards Amhara; and a third, Mahomet, brother of Lubo, west of Amhara. The rest are pagans; but when converted are said to be better Christians than the native Abyssinians.

Mahabar Selasse is four commodious days journey from 133
Gondar, in the line of Tchemmera and Tenkel. Near it pass the rivers Shimfa and Gandova, the last of which has several very high cataracts; it joins to the Shankala, and is about two days journey from Tchemmera. Both rivers fall into the Nile.

The river Bashilo separates Amhara from Begemder; the Mashilla, a river of Gojam, and the river Nefasse, fall into the Nile at the same place. In the country of the Galla west of Damot, across or west of the Abay, there is little

[p. 61]

231 livestock he own, and he prefers to keep it or dole it out
[556] to his children on their marriages, rather than sell it. Practically everyone has a few sheep and goats, possibly also a donkey and a horse, and, if richer, a mule, some cows and a team of two oxen.

The cattle population of Ethiopia is estimated at 18 million, or 1.2 head per person, comparable with New Zealand and Argentina.[11] However, an estimated million or more cattle die each year of rinderpest, anthrax, tick fever, etc. This limits the exportation of meat surplus almost as much as does difficulty of transportation to world markets.

412 According to the United Nations estimate, Ethiopia in
494 1950-1951 had 1 million horses, 1 million mules, 3 million donkeys. These provide the bulk of transportation, except for the few hundred heavy trucks (trente-quatros) which
491 operate on the few Italian-built roads. This modern road network has been badly damaged by the annual rains, by the overloading of trucks, and by inadequate (though improving) repairs.

241 The estimated agricultural production of Ethiopia in
433 1954 included:

Maize - 150,000 metric tons,
Barley - 600,000 metric tons,
Linseed - 50,000 metric tons,
Coffee - 45,800 metric tons,[12]

11. MuO, 1955, 4pp.
12. U. N. Secretariat, Statistical Office: Statistical Yearbook 1955, tables 29, 14, 15, 20, 25.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

grade from the Eritrean plateau. All civilization in Ethiopia has penetrated from north to south along the great dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment, where the so-called Strada Imperiale now runs from Asmara to Addis Ababa. 133 177 [491]

Along this line have been concentrated the successive Ethiopian capitals with the exception of Gondar, which was chosen far to the north-west as a refuge from the ruinous wars with the Moslems and the Gallas. And along this line, due south from Aksum and Aduwa, were the great centres of the Copto-Ethiopian culture of the Middle Ages, places like Lalibala and the monasteries on lake Haik and the traditional centre of the Coptic Church at Debra Libanos. 361

From this dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment Ethiopian culture, and it was a very real culture in its heyday, spread westward into Gojjam and southward to the region of the lakes. Luca di Sabelli in his recent 'Storia di Abissinia' has shown that Coptic-Ethiopian missionaries were active as far south as Madagascar and the Mozambique coast. 177 [797]

Ethiopian Coptic culture drew its nurture from the powerful Coptic Church in Cairo, from the Crusading civilization in Palestine, and from the Byzantine Empire. Just as the establishment of the Turks at the exit from the Black Sea brought about the decline of the East Christian cultures in the Caucasus and the Balkans, so the Turkish control of the Nile valley and the Red Sea slowly strangled the Coptic Ethiopian culture of East Africa. The Ethiopian rulers, pressed by the invasions of Muhammad Gran, were well aware of their mortal danger and it is a curious fact that kings in Georgia and Ethiopia appealed to the rising power of Spain in the Western Mediterranean at about the same time. The Portuguese episode in Ethiopia was a delayed response to the appeal made to the Catholic powers. 175

The extraordinary tenacity of the Ethiopians to the western tradition is a remarkable characteristic of their historical development. The Aksumite kingdom, for all its Semitic appearance, was essentially a projection of Hellenism, and the Aksumite kings remained the traditional allies of the Byzantine Emperors in their struggle with the Persian Sasanids for the control of the Red Sea—an episode which was parallel in time with the conflict between these same two "world powers" for mastery of the Black Sea. The Coptic Church and Christian civilization in East Africa proved more enduring than the once powerful Nestorian Church in Asia, with which it may in some ways be compared. The later Ethiopian Kingdom played the same role in the struggle between Turks and Portuguese for control of the Red Sea and for the trade of the Indian Ocean as the Aksumites had a thousand years earlier in the rivalry between Byzantines and Persians. But they showed the same persistent antagonism to the Roman Church as the East Christians had displayed towards the Crusaders and the Papacy. In the end the Ethiopians expelled the Portuguese from Abyssinia and managed to maintain their own independence against their Moslem neighbours, until in the last decade it was suppressed by a professedly Christian power.

The Ethiopians are a remarkable phenomenon in the East African world and with their tenacity and their undoubted natural intelligence they are destined to have no little influence on the future course of history in that area.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

186 The great weakness of the Ethiopians, their inveterate regionalism, arises, like other aspects of their life and history, from the peculiar conditions of their geography. The four historic Kingdoms of Tigrai and Amhara, Shoa and Gojjam, cover the plateaux divided by the canyons of the Blue Nile and [132] the Takkaze and their lateral rifts. During four months of the year, the season of the Great Rains between July and October, Gojjam is entirely cut off from Shoa and Amhara by the floods of the Blue Nile. Only recently has the construction of the bridge over the Blue Nile at Shafartak, a major engineering undertaking, made continuous contact possible. The violent regionalism of the Gojjam has been a disastrous factor in internal Ethiopian history which will doubtless tend to decline with the modern development of communications.

114 175 The Gojjam, scene of the guerrilla campaign of 1941, has been described by Major Cheesman, formerly H.B.M. Consul in Dangila, in several articles in the Society's *Journal*, and in his standard work on the province, 'Lake Tana and the Blue Nile.' Cheesman's work was in fact the basis of knowledge which made practical the organization of the expedition to reinforce the Patriot groups which were in the field against the Italians at the moment when Italy declared war on Britain. His exploration of the gap up the Escarpment, the fruit of an arduous excursion described in his book, enabled the Frontier Battalion of the Sudan Defence Force with their camel convoys of supplies and arms to make a rapid deployment on to the Escarpment.

175 The least-known part of the Gojjam province is probably the region of the Choké Mountains which rise to the north of Debra Markos. In an effort to hold down this very wild bit of country the Italians had built forts at Mota [491] and other points and a passable dirt road had been constructed linking Debra Markos *via* Mota with Bahrdar—the Italian strong point at the southern tip of Lake Tana. After the capture of Debra Markos in April 1941, it proved necessary to make contact with the small group of Patriots and one company of Sudanese with some British officers and non-commissioned officers who were containing the very considerable Italian force still in the field round the south-east shore of Lake Tana. At Debra Markos we were very short of troops. Further, scarcity of mules made it necessary to try the experiment of taking camels over the pass which runs under the peaks of Choké at an altitude indicated on Italian maps at rather over 13,000 feet. Kit had to be limited to one ground-sheet and one blanket each for all ranks and the plain-bred Sudanese, many of whom were already lame with jiggers, suffered from cold and mountain-sickness particularly in the hail blizzard which struck the force on the bare ridge of the Choké Pass. Nevertheless this one company of Sudanese covered the 70 odd miles in just under three days, and Colonel Boustead bluffed the Italian battalion in Mota into surrender within forty-eight hours of opening fire with his solitary mortar.

I was following along in the rear with the camel *hamlia* and on reaching base camp in front of Mota was met with orders to about turn and take the animals back to Debra Markos. I thus crossed the Choké Mountains twice [114] in one week. With amateur medical and veterinary duties and a driving mist at the higher altitudes alternating with rain, sleet, and hail, I had little opportunity for geographical observation

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor
[491] road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint.
[132] Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns:
[361] an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and
[231] dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputation of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

175 Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the
[103] Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem
[632] father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to
[563] internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north:
[578] Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean
[635] border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support
[662] of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses. 175

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town. 632

The surrounding grassy *alms* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June. 133

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick. 491 [137] [136]

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people. 563 175

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups. 101 563

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion 101 144

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948) 1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

131 The fragment of country depicted by the map lies on the edge of an important section of the Shoan plateau which extends in the form of an elongated oval north-eastwards from Addis Ababa and forms the watershed between the drainage systems of the Awash and the Blue Nile. The Asmara road uses this 133 convenient high causeway from Addis Ababa to a little beyond Debra Berhan, and would go on using it if this were possible, for the road was made 491 to follow the plateau wherever it was flat enough. North of Debra Berhan, however, the country is tremendously cut up by deep ravines and no level plateau remains. The road is therefore forced down, at Debra Sina, to lower levels (as happens again in several places on the way to Asmara). The higher 133 portions of this plateau lie at well over 9000 feet and constitute an undulating tract, sometimes almost flat, sometimes rather hilly, where differences in level amount to a few hundred feet only. But, on both sides, the plateau breaks up in the most spectacular fashion. To the north-west lie a series of gorges, all belonging to the Blue Nile system, opening up with extreme abruptness along an irregular front, as will be seen in the map. To the east, the plateau terminates in some places at the main escarpment which bounds the Danakil plains, an impressive drop of several thousand feet along a fault, well seen at Ankober and Debra Sina. But farther south the simplicity of this escarpment is disguised by certain tributaries of the Hawash system which, eating their way into the plateau, have formed gorges as striking as those of the Blue Nile system. These gorges, cutting back continually, must in time complete the destruction of the plateau, and produce, by the interdigitation of their deeply entrenched headstreams, the confused type of scenery already observable farther north.

The geological structure of the plateau, on which the local landscape, and especially the peculiar type of gorge developed, directly depends, seems to be extremely simple and almost the same as that which occurs over vast areas of central and northern Ethiopia. As long ago as 1870 the step-like hill sides and tremendous gorges of the Magdala area were well described by Blanford,[1] who had accompanied the Napier Expedition. He compared Abyssinian scenery with that of the western Deccan and the Western Ghats of India, but remarked that in the case of Abyssinia the special features of this type of landscape were exaggerated. He drew attention to the hill-forts or "ambas" of Abyssinia, closely corresponding to features which had likewise been used in India as forts.

Writing of the Jitta gorge near Magdala, Blanford says:

> ". . . we came suddenly on the brink of the mighty chasm in which the Jitta river runs, and to which all the minor valleys converge. Of all the grand scenery met with in Abyssinia, none equalled this wonderful gorge. It is 3500 feet deep, and looks scarcely a mile across. The sides are extremely steep, in places nearly perpendicular. The horizontal beds on both sides appear to correspond exactly; half-way down there is a well-marked terrace, evidently formed by the same bed, on both sides of the river. The bedding is very distinct.

It is to be regretted that all those geologists who disbelieve in the power

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[1] Blanford, 'The Geology and Zoology of Abyssinia,' p. 86, London, 1870.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 on the sheet, or not far from it, have historical associations. Tegulet, a little to the north, was the home country of Yikuno Amlak, the Shoan prince in whose person the Solomonian line was restored to the throne of Ethiopia in the thirteenth century. Debra Berhan itself, now a rather sordid settlement on the Asmara road, is of ancient foundation, for the emperor Zar'a Yakob made it his capital in the fifteenth century. Although a somewhat cold and inhospitable place it has an obvious advantage as commanding what must always have been an important focus of routes. Even in modern times it was [491] inevitable that the Asmara road should be brought through this easy passage, avoiding the impassable gorges on the one hand and the much broken country of the higher plateau on the other.

349 Although there is no proof, and apparently no relevant tradition, I should be inclined to attribute to Zar'a Yakob some curious caves excavated in one end of a high hogsback 2 miles south-east of Debra Berhan. Unfortunately I inspected them only once and rather casually and found no opportunity to come again. There are at least two very elaborate excavations, besides some rougher ones, now partly inhabited. The two principal caves are very similar in lay-out. Entering by a roughly rounded lobby, one passes through a small hole in the rock, which admits scarcely any daylight, into the principal interior space. This is approximately circular and perhaps 25 feet in diameter. On the far side, opposite the entrance, it communicates with a smaller chamber semi-circular in form. From the main space a passage leads off, in the first cave to the right, in the second to the left; these receive no daylight at all. In the first cave the passage (which was half under water) turned twice to the right and was thus bent back on itself. It opened into several miniature cells, in shape an erect oval and only big enough for a man to stand in, each of which appeared to have opened through a small hole at the top into an upper space of some kind. The passage belonging to the second cave had basin-shaped excavations in its floor opening through small holes into spaces below. I therefore conjectured that I had here got into an upper passage such as apparently existed above the other system. Possibly these were underground chapels inspired by rock-excavated churches of the Lalibela school. As to the passages and the small spaces leading off them, with what seemed to be their ventilating arrangements, they might have been stores of some kind, or burial chambers, or special places of devotion, or hermits' cells—but these are speculations. If the mud which chokes these caves were removed something definite might be found out about them. They found a use quite recently, for at the time of the Italian invasion *tabots* and other church valuables were said to have been hidden in them.

175 In the first half of the sixteenth century the Shoan plateau, in common with a large part of Ethiopia, was occupied by Galla tribes invading from the 563 south. These Gallas were essentially horsemen and herdsmen, and it seems that, while they occupied the entire plateau, they did not seriously attempt to penetrate the gorges, into which even a mule descends with difficulty. I believe that the Amhara population became forcibly concentrated in the upper reaches of the gorges at this time, and that the dense population which resulted explains the extraordinary number of churches which came to be built there. Even to-day the greater part of the plateau between Addis

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

ten or twelve men, who did not fear passing such steep 484
mountains, where it was said that there were multitudes of robbers. Thus we went away, divided, with the oxen and negroes, with their burdens in front of us, going forward on our course. We travelled through very wild mountains, 133
over ascents and descents, and very bad stony road. Most [491]
of the woods of these mountains are very large wild olive [137]
trees, from which good olive trees could be made. Issuing from these mountain ranges we entered into dry channels, which in winter time are great rivers, that is to say, as long as the showers last. As soon as the shower is finished the river is dry. These channels have on each side of them very high mountains, as rugged as those we had left behind. In these river beds there are large clumps of unknown trees, amongst which, near the rivers, there are a few wild [137]
palm trees. We slept this night in a river bed with little water in it.

CAP. XVII.—*How we passed a great mountain in which there were many apes, on a Saturday, and on the following Sunday we said mass in a village called Zalote.*

On the following day we again crossed another very high and rugged mountain ridge, over which we could not make our way, either on the mules or on foot. In this mountain 136
there are many animals of different species, and an infinite quantity of apes in herds: and they are not generally spread over the mountain, but only where there are clefts and holes in the rock; they are not found in quantities less than two or three hundred, and beyond that number. If there is any flat ground above these precipices, that is their promenade, and no stone remains that they do not turn, and they scrape the earth so that it looks as though it were tilled. They are very large, the size of sheep, and from the middle upwards hairy like lions.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well
532 made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

491 In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
[563] in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chīqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chīqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chīqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chīqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chīqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chīqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 794

443
632 centered in a town and extending outward to include those areas from which peasants come to buy and sell.

[132] The size of the town's sphere contracts and expands sea-
[484] sonally, reaching its nadir furing the rainy season, when overland travel becomes difficult owning to deep mud and raging torrents. Then, travelling is infrequent and confined to the market town closest to a peasant's home parish. Although market trips are more frequent during the remainder of the year, most terminate at the closest market. These relatively short trips are favored when grain is brought to the mills located on the periphery
[796] of most market sites. The spheres of the larger towns (Gondar, Debre Tabor, Dabat) reach maximum size on the market days which preceed the great celebrations of the Coptic Church---Meskal (which celebrates the discovery of the True Cross, and follows the end of the rains), Michaelmas (November), Timkat (feast of the Epiphany, and preceeding the Lenten fast), and Easter. Map 3 indicates the extreme limits for market spheres of the towns of the Begemder highlands.

[491] The highland market towns are strung along the province's only all-weather motor road.[14] Each offers a

[648] [14]This road, built during the Italian occupation (1936-1941), runs north to Asmara (capital of Eritrea) and (since the 1960's) south to Addis Ababa (the national capital). A dry season road links the highland towns to Metemma on the Sudan border.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

231 livestock he own, and he prefers to keep it or dole it out
[556] to his children on their marriages, rather than sell it. Practically everyone has a few sheep and goats, possibly also a donkey and a horse, and, if richer, a mule, some cows and a team of two oxen.

The cattle population of Ethiopia is estimated at 18 million, or 1.2 head per person, comparable with New Zealand and Argentina.[11] However, an estimated million or more cattle die each year of rinderpest, anthrax, tick fever, etc. This limits the exportation of meat surplus almost as much as does difficulty of transportation to world markets.

412 According to the United Nations estimate, Ethiopia in
414 1950-1951 had 1 million horses, 1 million mules, 3 million donkeys. These provide the bulk of transportation, except for the few hundred heavy trucks (trente-quatros) which
411 operate on the few Italian-built roads. This modern road network has been badly damaged by the annual rains, by the overloading of trucks, and by inadequate (though improving) repairs.

241 The estimated agricultural producti[illegible] of Ethiopia in
243 1954 included:

Maize - 150,000 metric tons,
Barley - 600,000 metric tons,
Linseed - 50,000 metric tons,
Coffee - 45,800 metric tons,[12]

11. Ku[illegible], 1955, 4pp.
12. U. N. Secretariat, Statistical Office: Statistical Yearbook 1955, tables 29, 14, 15, 20, 25.

282 aforementioned foodbasket for travel (the "agelgel"). Drinking horns and cups of "great men" (feudal lords) and landholding Amhara peasants are sometimes similarly covered by ornamental skins.

282 492 The saddle, "köreçha", is still an important product of the Faqi, after the carpenter-smith has prepared its wooden basis. It has a high front pummel of wood, and a high wooden backrest, both held together by the saddle-tree of two wooden planks at a wide angle to each other. This is covered by the Faqi with a very thick, strong, parchment-like cowskin, sewn carefully and tightly through holes drilled in the wood, and ornamented with line designs, often after dying the skin black with soot obtained from the "qäntäf" creeper vine. [386]

Saddlemaking, like shield-making, caused much displacement of the Faqi during the long periods of warring chieftains and their armies. The great pride of an Amhara horseman was to have well-made and ornamented leather equipment for his horse, on its head, chest and back. Here the tanner often had to work in close cooperation with the smith. The iron ring of the stirrup (still in use); ornamental metal discs; the iron mouth pieces which resemble the Arab type and press tongue to mandible so that the horse reacts painfully to the slightest direction of the little finger, were common and still are in many districts. Gold or silver ornaments for the horse were important decorations for bravery given by the king especially to officers of high Amhara nobility. They are still honored as family heirlooms.

435 teff in Gondar brings as little as Eth$10.- but in Addis Ababa Eth$30.- and more. Nug seed bring as much as Eth$30. per 100 kilos even at the Gondar market, a rural production area. Gesho, hops, brings as much as Eth$1.- per kilo; some semi-urban farmers grow it as a parttime cash crop (also the drug plant "chat" chewed by Muslims). Other products sold by the farmer include honey, peas, beans, maize, sorghum, dagussa, spices, beeswax, chickens brought by farm women, and recently also eggs; milk, butter, livestock big and small, goat-gut ("jemat") for cordage and the "qrar" banjo. Big livestock (cows, oxen and mules) are traded only at big Saturday markets, also the fat-tailed sheep or old cow for the Sunday dinner. At the end of long fasts edible livestock is in much demand and prices may double. It is also noteworthy that despite the poor roads, modern truck transportation is so efficient economically in comparison with traditional caravans, that prices for comparable imported and long-distance domestic products are on the same scale at the big Saturday markets.

443 [492] The big market is also an important governmental administrative center, especially the judicial organization. From ancient times this has been the location of the formally appointed judge, the "dayna", to arbitrate disputes that the curbstone judge has not settled, and to hear cases against accused thieves. Here the 443 651 governor's trade chief, the "nägad-ras", acts as collector of revenue and supervisor of trade practices. He fixes and alters tolls on trails and river crossings,

585 made, blue-bordered "kuta" (double toga). His hair has been trimmed short, so that he will not appear like a rustic woodsman. His mize flank him, and henceforth never part from his side during the wedding proceedings. All three approach the groom's father, bow from the hip in greeting. A patrilineal elder addresses the groom in serious tones, reminding him that his obligations to his father continue although he will now be founding a house of his own. Then the father addresses his blessing to him, more briefly. In reply, the son makes the motion of kissing the father's feet, which the latter deftly prevents by tucking him under the chin so that the kiss lands on the knee. He also kisses the knee of the [826] elder (the knee is regarded as the seat of strength). Then the groom and mize sit down about a minute, to symbolize having taken part in the initial festivities.

•492 585 Meanwhile the escort saddle the biggest mule, preferable a strong, huge, "Senaar" mule. The groom bids farewell to the father and elder kinsmen, most of whom remain behind, though at least one elder kinsman rides along to act as spokesman, usually the "naggar abbat" who can best recapitulate the negotiations. The young "gobäz" escort run along on foot, brandishing their long sticks (formerly spears), shouting war shouts. A Senaar mule can go at a fast trot, so that the men on foot must keep on a run. The elder kinsman rides a smaller, Ethiopian mule.

585 Like a fast-moving army on the attack, the group crosses fields, trails, hills, valleys, finally stops in the valley below the hill on which the bride's hamlet is located. Here they catch their breath, shake off the dust, arrange their togas in "outgoing" fashion, go behind a bush to satisfy the call of nature after so much beer-

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Gojjam

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Camp at Matakal, Gojjam, complete air cover for standing camp along wooded wady

[Facing p. 4]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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The Emperor and Colonel Wingate at Debra Markos, April 1941

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Household Cavalry

Patriots entering Debra Tabor, July 1941

[Facing p. 5]

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Camels flattening landing ground at Matakal

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Captain Pilkington's Wallos on parade, October 1941

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714

Men of Gaint [Facing p. 6]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

In this country there are in some parts very flat lands, and 133
in others mountainous; and altogether they are fruitful lands. There are no snowy ranges, but withal severe frosts, especially in the flat lands. In all the lands there is great [231]
breeding of cattle.

He says that he did not see the river Nile, and he reached to two days' journey from it, and the days' journey which they went were small ones, namely, four or five leagues, a little more or less. But some of those in his company reached its source, and they say that it rises in the Kingdom of Gojame, and its source is in great lakes, and where it rises there are islands, and thence it commences its course and goes to Egypt.

The time when the Nile rises in Egypt is (as they say) from the 15th day of September and later, and in all October; and the reason of this is, because the winter of Ethiopia begins from the middle of June to the middle of September, and on account of the great rains which take place in it without this winter ever changing, the Nile overflows in Egypt at that time.

It is the general custom of Prester John and all the peo- 492
ple for no man on horseback to pass a church, but before 576
they reach it they dismount, and so pass it, and lead their beasts by the bridles, and after passing they mount.

When Prester John and all his people travel, the altar and 484
the altar stone on which mass is said, all goes on the shoulders of the priests as on a litter, and there go eight priests with each altar by turns, that is, four and four: and a priest goes in front of them with a thurible, and further in front a zagonay ringing a bell, and all the people go away from the road, and those that are on horses dismount, and show reverence to the altar stone or altar.

There is no grape wine there, more than in two houses, 273
where it is made publicly, namely, in the house of Prester John and the house of the Patriarch Abima Marcos; and if

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

ning of a reign; which she could not do, until one of the nobles supplied her with a sum of money. There were only a few derims left in the treasury. 792

Abyssinian Harvests. They first sow barley from the end of April to the beginning of May, or later; that is, towards the first rains. This ripens in the rains in June; and is carried off the fields into the house, that it may not rot. Then they sow fitches, which likewise ripen in the rains after. In September they sow wheat, or teff, which is cut down in December; and, if they have water, they sow barley, or fitches, again in January. In Woggora (a very fertile province), there is seed-time, and harvest, and plowing, in every month in the year; water being easily diverted to the grounds. The rent paid to the king for the ground is one-tenth of what they reap, yet, with all this, they are all poor; for a harvest, at a medium, is about twenty after one; and they sometimes, nay, very often, scarce reap the seed. They never manure the ground; and there are great quantities of rats, and innumerable ants, that consume their corn at different, nay, at all periods of its growth. All their five harvests do not, in produce, equal one Egyptian one; and they are at five times the labour. In the several villages, living, in general, is very miserable; and, in general, people of consideration scarcely know any other diet than teff bread and bouza. Whether this teff is black, or white, is the whole difference between the diet of master and servant. 241 [511] [262]

Abyssinian Dress. The principal part of the dress of the natives is a large cotton cloth, 24 peek (cubits) in length, and one and a half in breadth, with a blue and yellow stripe round the bottom of it. This blue is not dyed; but the Surat blue cloths are unravelled and woven for this purpose; and the yellow they dye with sûf, the yellow thistle. The best for ordinary wear costs 10 salts, or 1¼ pataka, about 6s. 6d. English. It is called Kuara, as probably coming from that province. They are very beautiful and light. The other pieces of dress are breeches, which reach to their mid-thighs; and girt with a white girdle of cloth to the common people; but the better sort have red Indian cotton cloths for breeches; and silk, or worsted coloured girdles from the Levant. When they ride, they only hold their stirrups between their great and 291 [435] 492

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

492 second toes. Even the king rides bare-footed; and being used chiefly to mules, they are far inferior horsemen to the Arabs.

Price of Gold. Gold, at a medium, sells for 10 pataka
436 each wakea; or 10 derims, salt, at a medium 8 per pataka.
435 The piece (of salt), speaking of it identically, is called Kourman, but in estimation, or such a thing costs so many salts, they are called Amooli. These are the ordinary currency for the necessaries of life. For considerable purchases, gold is used; and there is great loss in cutting the wakea into derims, at least one in ten. The gold is got by
[316] washing the earth in water, in wooden dishes. The grains, that remain behind are put into a quill, melted down, and
[325] alloyed, probably by the Shangalla; for it is pale, and is never brought to market in its first form, but melted down into small rods, or ingots. In Joas's time a wakea was valued only at 8 patakas. Yasous Tanush, or the II. turned round, and reduced the Sennaar Shangalla; but they are now quite independant of Habbesh. Their fair is held at Buré in Damot.

804 *Weights and Measures.* The wakea (or ounce), in Abyssinia, is considered as 10 derims, or drams, and 12 ounces
436 make a litir, or rotol (pound). At Gondar, the capital of all Abyssinia, the wakea is 6 drams, 40 grains, Troy weight English, and divided into 10 drams of 40 grains. The small money is salt bricks, dug out of the mines at Dancali, near the myrrh country. Every wakea, in ordinary times, gives from 72 to 76 salts. In 1769, the wakea was 80 salts, and June 15th, 1771, the wakea sold at 34, but there was a great difference in the size of the bricks. These are little or not at all liable to waste, as M. Montesquieu supposes. Abyssinian gold at Mocha is 15 or 16 patakas when the Sennaar gold is 22, because the Agows, &c. alloy it with silver.

At Masuah, the current money is the Venetian sequin, the pataka, or queen's dollar, and half-dollars. For small money are used grains of glass, called borjook, three of which make a chebir (Vid. Book V. Chap. ii.)

Corn sold at Masuah for four patakas the ardep, which
436 contains about 24 measures of the country. Coffee, six ro-
804 tol per pataka, sometimes ten, or even 15 rotol. Honey,

[p. 46]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

tent secluded and when they go out they ride mules astride, are completely veiled or rather covered up in their *chammas* and are accompanied by an escort on foot, one or two of whom walk or trot by the side of the mule holding the lady in position. 562

Getting on to the mule is an operation that must by no means be witnessed by the profane masculine eye; I remember on the occasion of the first visit paid to my wife by an Abyssinian lady of rank I went to the entrance to speed the parting guest. To my surprise a number of members of the escort took off their *chammas* and held them all round the mule so that their mistress could climb into her saddle in complete seclusion. 492 576

But rigid as may be the rules of privacy governing the lives of women, there are no harems, and no guard of eunuchs to watch over them as in Moslem countries. 562 644

Nevertheless other Eastern customs are practised, such as circumcision among men and a mild form of clitoridectomy among women; this custom, be it observed, is not as is often supposed of Jewish origin, but probably of much more remote antiquity, and is further evidence of the Hamitic descent of the Abyssinians; according to Gibbon circumcision had been practised "by the most ancient Ethiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness" and presumably not therefore as a religious rite. 304 171

The nation as a whole has not adopted European dress, although it is worn to some extent in Addis Ababa, and by individuals who have been to Europe. They are proud of their national dress and the Emperor still encourages its use at court functions and receptions at the palace. 291 177

The distinctive feature of the dress is the *chamma*, 291

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

302 imported toilet requisites of this kind, and charge fabulous prices for them.

The curious custom of stopping up the nostrils is still met with, though I imagine it is becoming less and less common; but one still constantly sees natives on their way to market with a piece of green leaf, or a flower petal, protruding from their noses, and I remember on one occasion when an Abyssinian lady, who had been paying us a visit, was leaving the house, she produced some cotton-wool and stuffed it carefully in both nostrils.

181 Their love of pageantry, display, and functions is quite Oriental, and is well exemplified by the splendour of some of their religious and Court ceremonies.

521 Amusements are few. The people seem to prefer to sit and chatter; they are great talkers, and whether in the servants' quarters in a house or round their fires on trek, one hears the clatter of their tongues almost incessantly.

492 All Abyssinians can ride more or less, and they are on the whole good horsemen, though indifferent horse-masters. Except in war, or on the occasion of a fantasia, they seldom ride horses; for purposes of daily use mules are almost universally preferred; all but the poorest women also ride mules for getting about.

The Abyssinian saddle is of wood with a pommel back and front and a sheepskin and some padding in the middle, the whole covered with a brightly embroidered saddle-cloth. The stirrups are round and very small, as the Abyssinian inserts only his big toe therein. The bits are horrible instruments, consisting of a ring round the lower jaw and a spike which, when the reins are pulled, sticks into the roof of the animal's

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

492 mouth and causes it to bleed freely; in spite of, or perhaps because of this, I never came across an Abyssinian pony with a hard mouth; indeed, they can nearly all be ridden on a snaffle.

Their mules are so covered with many-hued trappings that sometimes they leave very little of the beast to be seen. These trappings are made of several thicknesses of native-dyed coloured leathers sewn together, machine-embroidered in silks of many colours, and covered with metal ornaments.

On special occasions the Abyssinians of rank cover their mules with extra gorgeous drapings in vivid colourings of velvet or silk, decorated with handsome embossed silver or silver-gilt ornaments. The men themselves on these occasions bring out their best sword and buckler, the latter being made of stretched and shaped rhino hide, covered with velvet and ornamented with silver and gilt mountings.

342 The houses of the wealthier people are constructed of stone (of which ample supplies are available almost everywhere), plastered together with a sort of mortar called *chika*, mostly mud and water; the roof is either of corrugated iron or is thatched. They are as a rule one-storied buildings, though I have been in one or two that had an upper story surrounded by a verandah and reached by an outside staircase, but these have generally been acquired from Greeks. In these cases [231] the ground floor is frequently used as stabling for the mules and ponies (even amongst Greeks and Armenians), a state of affairs which can hardly be regarded as sanitary.

513 In the peasants' *tukuls* in the country, men, women, and children, mules, ponies, and other animals sleep

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] [231] [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭēff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā*, literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā*, preparing *ṭallā*, spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 14.—*A group of shepherds*

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FIG. 15.—*Threshing time*

[P.78-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of
[644] course, the imperial court. The *makuānnent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discre-
[492] tion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shoul-
[231] dering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-
[273] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *ṭajj* pre-
[292] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos,* the dark wool cloak of the
[822] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-
[293] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abyssinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for
554 instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mā'erg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The
554 *makuānnent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary
701 Amharic the term *makuānnent* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

rās	"head" (of an army)
dajāzmātch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitāwrāri**	"general of the vanguard"
qañňāzmātch	"general of the right wing"
gerāzmātch	"general of the left wing"
bālāmbārās	"commander of a fort"
bāshā†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shālaqā	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitāwrāri* ranked below the *gerāzmātch*.

[192] † *Bāshā* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 25.—*Provincial nobleman and wife*

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FIG. 26.—*"Big men" journeying with retainers*

[P.174-A]

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

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The Emperor and Colonel Wingate at Debra Markos, April 1941

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Household Cavalry

Patriots entering Debra Tabor, July 1941

[Facing p. 5]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

231 livestock he own, and he prefers to keep it or dole it out
[556] to his children on their marriages, rather than sell it. Practically everyone has a few sheep and goats, possibly also a donkey and a horse, and, if richer, a mule, some cows and a team of two oxen.

The cattle population of Ethiopia is estimated at 18 million, or 1.2 head per person, comparable with New Zealand and Argentina.[11] However, an estimated million or more cattle die each year of rinderpest, anthrax, tick fever, etc. This limits the exportation of meat surplus almost as much as does difficulty of transportation to world markets.

412 According to the United Nations estimate, Ethiopia in
494 1950-1951 had 1 million horses, 1 million mules, 3 million donkeys. These provide the bulk of transportation, except for the few hundred heavy trucks (trente-quatros) which operate on the few Italian-built roads. This modern road
471 network has been badly damaged by the annual rains, by the overloading of trucks, and by inadequate (though improving) repairs.

241 The estimated agricultural production of Ethiopia in
533 1954 included:

Maize - 150,000 metric tons,
Barley - 600,000 metric tons,
Linseed - 50,000 metric tons,
Coffee - 45,800 metric tons,[12]

11. MuO, 1955, 4pp.
12. U. N. Secretariat, Statistical Office: Statistical Yearbook 1955, tables 29, 14, 15, 20, 25.

435 tyeff in Gondar brings as little as Eth$10.- but in Addis Ababa Eth$30.- and more. Nug seed bring as much as Eth$30. per 100 kilos even at the Gondar market, a rural production area. Gesho, hops, brings as much as Eth$1.- per kilo; some semi-urban farmers grow it as a parttime cash crop (also the drug plant "chat" chewed by Muslims). Other products sold by the farmer include honey, peas, beans, maize, sorghum, dagussa, spices, beeswax, chickens brought by farm women, and recently also eggs; milk, butter, livestock big and small, goat-gut ("jemat") for cordage and the "qrar" banjo. Big livestock (cows, oxen and mules) are traded only at big Saturday markets, also the fat-tailed sheep or old cow for the Sunday dinner. At the end of long fasts edible livestock is in much demand and prices may double. It is also noteworthy that despite the poor roads, modern truck transportation is so efficient economically in comparison with traditional caravans, that prices for comparable imported and long-distance domestic products are on the same scale at the big Saturday markets.

443 [492] The big market is also an important governmental administrative center, especially the judicial organization. From ancient times this has been the location of the formally appointed judge, the "dayna", to arbitrate disputes that the curbstone judge has not settled, and to hear cases against accused thieves. Here the 443 651 governor's trade chief, the "negad-ras", acts as collector of revenue and supervisor of trade practices. He fixes and alters tolls on trails and river crossings,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

651 the hands of the feudal landlords, mostly in produce, though the new Education Tax is paid in cash. The sales tax on horses, mules, donkeys and cattle, collected at the big markets by the old "nagadras" is now supposed to be accumulated at the "gemja bet" of the provincial capital, to be forwarded to Addis Ababa once every month, sometimes after deduction of expenses incurred locally by the central government. The same procedure is followed with income taxes, which, in a provincial capital such as Gondar, are stated officially as averaging Eth$1.50 per taxpayer per year.

651 441 The highest local income tax is paid by the local branch of the widespread trading company of Besse Co., [494] which has a monopoly on gasoline sales, and does trucking, imports and exports from the provinces, and which pays Eth$750.-per annum in Gondar, a very small percentage of its actual income. [505] The next-highest local taxpayer is Navigatana Co, formerly of Italian origin, which controls the diesel boats which monopolize modern traffic across Lake Tana. [494] The third-highest local taxpayer is an Arab wholesale merchant, who operates at irregular intervals in import, export, and trucking, westward to the Sudan and eastward to Eritrea, on the Italian-built roads.

651 But in the strictly rural, agricultural environment, tributes and taxes are still measured per "maddga" (lit. potful) of tyeff grain, received by the feudal landlord ("balbat") or landowning local church. The amounts are largely determined by local custom and tra-

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7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

635 661 lived in passing and upon which he could levy purveyance. His passage was an affair of pomp, in which important ladies had to be considered and a retinue taken, which might swell to many hundreds of soldiers and servants with all their families, slaves, and transport animals. Such journeys were veritable expeditions, not to be undertaken lightly. A journey right across the country might take several weeks, and in parts the rains made travel laborious or impossible for some five months of the year. The difficulty of communication gave the governor an independence of which he made full use. Governors of ancient divisions with a tradition of autonomy and governors from the royal family were generally allowed to rule with little interference. In this century [177 206 507] the main provincial capitals were connected with Addis Ababa by telephone and this, with aeroplanes, which were just beginning to come into use before 1935, were the first threats to the isolation of the governors, which has since, in most parts, been so greatly diminished by the Italian roads. The Emperor had his agents who kept a watch upon governors and reported upon their doings; this kind of espionage was a highly developed system in Ethiopia. The governors on their side kept representatives in the capital. But this did nothing to overcome what several observers have remarked as the besetting sin of Ethiopian administration, the refusal to take any constructive responsibility. Governors of the old school were mainly concerned with the conservation of their own power, the collection of their tribute, and the fulfilment of their military duties. It would have been quite outside their range of thought to initiate new ideas of reform or to put down time-honoured abuses. Some of the governors spent much of their time at Addis Ababa and their deputies tended to be even more conservative in their use of authority than their masters.

635 Although the emphasis here is upon administration, it must not be forgotten that the governor was historically and in Ethiopian eyes primarily a high military officer and his civil duties were no more than the necessary accompaniment of his command. He had—as was shown anew in 1935—to raise and lead his provincial army in war. Some description has, however, already been given of the army, and there will be no need to discuss it further in this chapter except in the next section in relation to land tenure.

622 THE VILLAGE CHIEF

We have seen that by 1935 it was rare for a great local landed potentate to hold the highest provincial office; in most instances this was held by the Emperor's nominees. But this was not the only link the Emperor

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Camels flattening landing ground at Matakal

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Captain Pilkington's Wallos on parade, October 1941

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Men of Gaint [Facing p. 6]

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435 Thus, the capital of our hypothetical "average" freehold farmer would total as follows:

3 good cows	150 MT	(ETH$225.-)
2 old cows	30 MT	45.-
2 strong oxen	80	120.-
2 old oxen	30 MT	45.-
2 donkeys	15 MT	22.-
1 mule	40 MT	60.-
6 sheep		30.-
3 goats		15.-
	Total ETH$562.-	(US$230)

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[23] Sales from livestock and livestock produce, in one year, by the average freehold farmer would be about as follows, providing ready cash:

2 old cows	ETH$45.-
1 old ox	20.-
3 sheep	15.-
10 chickens	3.-
300 eggs	3.-
50 kilos honey	50.-
Milk	5.-
	ETH$141.-

With this cash he would buy salt, raw cotton, a toga, some imported spices, coffee, and pay certain cash taxes such as the education tax. These would all be necessary expenditures. The rest would go for other items.

It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-

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164 government has now made free injections available at "big
544 markets" of provincial towns. Bedbugs are also prevalent, of the bloodsucking variety. They are considered a nussance by the Amhara, but all that is done is to air the "alga" bed in the sunlight, which merely reduces the infestation temporarily. Flies are also abundant and very aggressive, so that a flyswitch ("chera") is kept in motion for comfort. Contagious diseases spread readily. Just after each rainy season, malarial mosquitoes have caused epidemics up to levels of 5,000 feet, on the shore of overflowing lakes and rivers.

511 In the majority of cases, some livestock is taken
[23] into the living hut (tuqul) everynight. The tuqul has, of course, an unwashable mud floor, no windows or chimney, soot-blackened ceiling, cobwebs in corners. There is no change of clothing at night, merely an edded "kutta" or sheepskin, against the cold. Aside from drinking cups, there are no individual utensils.

164 Towns, including provincial towns, are centers for
548 the spread of syphilis and other venereal diseases, due to the existence of entire streets of "women in-between marriages" who act as restauranteurs-prostitutes. When sur-
759 face lesions appear, the native "wogasha" is consulted; or since the Italian invasion made the "needle" popular, the modern government medical personnel is approached. But patients usually cease to continue treatment when surface lesions disappear.[67]

Eating "brundo", raw beef, at feasts, almost always leads to tapeworm and other taenia infestation. Fortunately

67. Guthe, Th: Venerial Disease in Ethiopia. W.H.O.Bulletin, Vol.2, 1949, pp. 85-138.

423 651 563 by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income from their handicrafts. Among the methods of this extortion is the "initiation fee" of as much as Eth$3.- per qada, when freshly cleared from the bush. Another impressment consists of "voluntary" supplies regularly paid to the Coptic parish church in the locality, by non-Coptic ethnics. Also, the feudal landlord usually asks them for a special "pasturage fee"--as much as Eth$2.- per qada of fallow land--with the further condition that no more than two oxen (or cows) graze on each qada. Where a Coptic farmer may pay perhaps Eth$10.- tithe on his semi-fertile 50 qada, the non-Coptic farmer may be made to pay double to four times that for similar produce on an equivalent plot of land. While [871] the new education tax is the same, the non-Coptic artisan finds it very difficult to enroll his boy in the overcrowded elementary school in the provincial capital.

423 651 511 The average "rest"-owning farmer working 10 qada every year, may harvest about 50 madiga of tyeff grain, selling it for Eth$150.-(In the rainy season it would bring twice that); plus 30 madiga barley, Eth$60.- plus some honey, if he has it.

If the tax-collector is his friend, his tithe may amount to as little as Eth$5 to 10, his education tax Eth$2 to 4. His land tax based on the rate of 1927 will be very low, and his pasturage, as Coptic non-artisan, free.

511 Thus he has enough for his basic needs including the purchase of a new toga (shamma) per year, and perhaps a new donkey. However, he cannot normally afford

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

511 prestige items of luxury, such as a mule, a fine saddle, and he would not want to "waste" his money on imported sandals. His expenses for shelter and furnishings are almost nil in terms of cash, and even a beer jar can be purchased for Eth$1.- in rural areas.

423 578 His basic needs filled with a minimum of labor, and his wants few, the "rest"-owning Amhara farmer views modern land measurement with suspicion. He fears that disputed land with vague boundaries will be declared government land and be redistributed. In the absence of written deeds; dependence on remembered local traditions and natural landmarks; and the practice of letting fallow land revert to bush to be cleared anew every few years, disputes are many at any time. Rumors from southern areas where courts have for several years now recognized tithe receipts as evidence of ownership, reinforces these fears. Alienation of any part of one's land is strongly objected to as loss of prestige and weakening of kin bonds. As a result, there is little appreciation among "rest"-holding Amhara of Begemdir for the efforts of the emperor, to replace vague "status" of land tenure with assured "contract", to have real estate deeds issued and registered, to end the tax exemptions of feudal lords and the church, to institute uniform land taxes, etc. Any general change, they feel, is bound to raise the socio-economic level of non-Coptic ethnic minorities and depress their own.

423 Several land laws were included in the Penal

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

ning of a reign; which she could not do, until one of the nobles supplied her with a sum of money. There were only a few derims left in the treasury. 792

Abyssinian Harvests. They first sow barley from the end of April to the beginning of May, or later; that is, towards the first rains. This ripens in the rains in June; and is carried off the fields into the house, that it may not rot. Then they sow fitches, which likewise ripen in the rains after. In September they sow wheat, or teff, which is cut down in December; and, if they have water, they sow barley, or fitches, again in January. In Woggora (a very fertile province), there is seed-time, and harvest, and plowing, in every month in the year; water being easily diverted to the grounds. The rent paid to the king for the ground is one-tenth of what they reap, yet, with all this, they are all poor; for a harvest, at a medium, is about twenty after one; and they sometimes, nay, very often, scarce reap the seed. They never manure the ground; and there are great quantities of rats, and innumerable ants, that consume their corn at different, nay, at all periods of its growth. All their five harvests do not, in produce, equal one Egyptian one; and they are at five times the labour. In the several villages, living, in general, is very miserable; and, in general, people of consideration scarcely know any other diet than teff bread and bouza. Whether this teff is black, or white, is the whole difference between the diet of master and servant. 241 [511] [262]

Abyssinian Dress. The principal part of the dress of the natives is a large cotton cloth, 24 peek (cubits) in length, and one and a half in breadth, with a blue and yellow stripe round the bottom of it. This blue is not dyed; but the Surat blue cloths are unravelled and woven for this purpose; and the yellow they dye with sûf, the yellow thistle. The best for ordinary wear costs 10 salts, or 1¼ pataka, about 6s. 6d. English. It is called Kuara, as probably coming from that province. They are very beautiful and light. The other pieces of dress are breeches, which reach to their mid-thighs; and girt with a white girdle of cloth to the common people; but the better sort have red Indian cotton cloths for breeches; and silk, or worsted coloured girdles from the Levant. When they ride, they only hold their stirrups between their great and 291 [435] 492

[p. 45]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

home—except for the difficulty of having to do without servants. Those students whose rural background and limited intellectual experience had led them to consider Addis Ababa as one of the most advanced cities in the world were often shocked by the comparison. No less shocking was the moral climate, which permitted one to express oneself freely and honestly. The taste for intellectual freedom was added to that of political freedom, as students whose horizons were limited by the meager intellectual fare at home came into hungry contact with authors like Marx and Freud, Dewey and Russell. 571 829 177

However much the Ethiopian students abroad might seek to lose themselves in the host culture, they were not permitted to do so. In the mirror of foreigners' regards, their identity as Ethiopians took clearer shape, transcending narrower tribal identifications. Questions about Ethiopia by foreigners aroused greater interest in Ethiopia's history and contemporary problems. A number of students were thus moved to dip into the literature on their country produced by travelers and scholars in the past, and some of them came to write theses and dissertations on problems related to Ethiopia's development. 571 177 186

All of these factors—broadening of perspective, acquaintance with a higher economic standard, less inhibited discussions, and greater self-consciousness as Ethiopians—contributed to a spirit of nationalist dedication. This spirit was confirmed or aroused in all but two groups of the returnees. One, consisting of children of some wealthy members of the new nobility, went abroad chiefly for the prestige and pleasure involved. For them the experience was an extended holiday; they were playboys more than students. The other group consists of those who were abroad for too short a time to have a complete educational experience—in some cases, for as little as three months. These students have tended to use the tour abroad chiefly as a weapon with which to lord it over their peers on return and otherwise to serve narrow personal ambitions. Those students, however, for whom study abroad entailed a more or less serious encounter with higher education and a more modernized culture normally experienced a swelling aspiration to serve their country. They returned home deeply critical of the status quo and determined to contribute substantially to the modernization of their society. 571 177 186 829

Ostensibly, the returnees have been well situated for making such a contribution. Thanks to prudent government policy since the early fifties, they have been enabled to enjoy a minimally comfortable standard of living. Given a monthly allowance from the moment they step off the plane, they have been automatically salaried at a scale based largely on the academic degree attained, with A.B.'s starting at Eth$450 a month and Ph.D.'s at Eth$700. In addition, provisions have been made for them to borrow money from the government in order to finance heavy investments like furniture or, more usually, an automobile. 571 511 465 426

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 511 automobile. All this permits returnees to live at a standard which, while clearly inferior to what they enjoyed abroad, is well above that of all their countrymen except the higher nobility. Their income compares favorably [465] with the prevailing monthly wages for policemen (Eth$25–$30) and district (*waradā*) governors (Eth$100), and not unfavorably with the salary earned by vice-ministers (Eth$1,000). Compared with the more sumptuous residences of the new nobility, their housing is threadbare, their staff of servants small; but usually their homes contain one or two modern appliances—a radio or phonograph, perhaps a refrigerator.

571 554 The returnees have, moreover, been shown deference from many quarters: from the modernizing sector of the public which, in its growing esteem for education, has adulated them as the most educated Ethiopians and, in the early fifties, regarded them as something of national heroes; from resident Europeans and Americans, whose perception of shared understandings with the returnees has flattered them; and from the government, which at the least has shown consistent concern for their economic security and at best has given them responsibilities and status that they would not be granted in a more modernized society without considerably more experience.

Despite such apparent advantages, however, it must be said that the returnees as a whole have so far done little either to modernize their country or even to establish themselves as a self-respecting status group. Their failure to do so has become one of the most widely discussed questions in Ethiopia in recent years, both among the more self-critical of the returnees and among critical Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian observers. Instead of being leaders of the new era, they have been little more than misfits in the old. If the central quality of the life of the new nobility has been anxiety, that of the intellectuals has been frustration. In the passionate words of one of them: "There is a wound, a boiling within each and every one of the returnees." Theirs is the frustration of modernized individuals attempting to live meaningful lives in a society that has remained essentially traditional.

571 829 The ideological aspect of this dilemma is that no synthesis of traditional and modern perspectives has yet been effected which has won the adherence of a sizable number of intellectuals and which could serve to energize their transformation of the status quo. Consensus exists only with regard to a vague sense of the inadequacy of the traditional system. There is no sense of direction. Partly this reflects deprivation due to maladjustment in personal areas, but it also represents a genuine cultural problem.

Foreign-educated Ethiopians return intellectually aware of the traditional nature of their society, but emotionally unprepared to cope with the tenacity of tradition or with the paucity of modern institutions and culture. The experience of culture shock seems greater when they return to Ethiopia than

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571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

571 Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
584 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
834 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
178 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The tradition-
al mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

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furniture, etc.—are equally burdensome investments if the returnee does not 571
possess them. Furthermore, the traditional large wedding is still expected in 585
most cases. In the city this involves an enormous expense—as much as 511 •
Eth$2,000–$4,000—which often puts the groom in debt for several years.*

There are many returnees for whom these factors are excuses more than in- 571
superable obstacles, or who frankly prefer the extended bachelordom made 582
possible by the greater freedom of the modernizing sector to an uncertain
match. If, as frequently is the case, they would marry only an educated wife, [581]
they may be discouraged by the shortage of educated Ethiopian women; or
beset by too much pride, if coming from a humble background, to ask for the
hand of an educated girl who is likely to come from an upper-class family.
They may be victims of the cycle of antagonism that has developed between [578]
educated men and women in Ethiopia, the former attacking the latter for de-
manding too much in the way of material things and being only superficially
modernized—"half-baked"—and the latter indicting the former for preferring
foreign girls and unjustly neglecting Ethiopian women.

But the root of the problem is often deeper (leaving aside, for this discus- 581
sion, characterological factors). It is entwined with a basic insecurity about 178
the whole idea of marriage in the transitional atmosphere of contemporary 177
Ethiopia. Perhaps nowhere in the minds of the returnees do traditional and 571
modern norms stand in such delicate counterpoise as with regard to the ques-
tion of the sort of wife one should marry and the proper type of relation to
have with her. Should he prefer the traditional woman, modestly dressed and
inconspicuous, or the Western ideal of a sexually attractive female? Should he
have a wife who stays at home all the time, or one whom he takes along to
social gatherings? Should he have a wife with whom to share interests and
discuss problems, or one to order about and keep in her place? The returnees
have normally been attracted by the Western marriage pattern while abroad,
but it is so out of place in the Ethiopian context that many are troubled by the
prospect on return. The foreign-educated man feels he should have an edu-
cated wife, but he also feels threatened by a woman who is independent,
especially if she is holding a job. Such ambivalence adds an additional dimen-
sion of vulnerability to the returnee's position.

In sum: the conditions of life receptive to a modernizing intellectual 121
stratum have not yet been established in Ethiopia. The personal frustrations 571
of the returnees are an inevitable consequence of their being the bearers of 177
modern culture in a traditional oligarchical order—especially one that has 178

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* A new custom has developed in response to this problem. It has become the practice in some [178]
offices for sheets of paper to be circulated prior to a wedding in the ministry or agency where
the groom is employed. Co-workers write the amount they wish to be deducted from their
salaries in their behalf. Most recently, modest weddings have started to become respectable.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

brothels for dancing and more intimate relations. (Returnees normally do not have patience for the shy, traditional girls; and they are too concerned about public opinion to be seen visiting brothels. When they or the locals do visit the brothels, it is often by way of a backdoor entrance.) When they marry, the locals almost invariably choose a traditional type of wife with relatively little education and with whom they expect to have an authoritarian relationship.

In sum: the local is not so afflicted by those problems which derive from the central dilemma of the returnee—how to fulfil himself according to modern standards in an intractable, traditional environment. The local's dilemma typically lies in a different realm, that of economic and social mobility. Whereas the returnee has been given a comparatively high income and status almost as a matter of course, the local has normally started his work life with a relatively low salary and little prestige. If the returnee has felt deprived relative to the Westerners in whose society he has lived, the local has felt deprived relative to the returnee.

The local lives on a day-to-day basis at a relatively simple standard. Though he shares the returnee's passion for woolen suits and, in many cases, for a car of his own, he is not, like the returnee, preoccupied with the quest for housing that conforms to Western standards. Except for those with extraordinary talents and family connections, the locals have had difficulty locating jobs that they feel are not beneath their dignity and which pay salaries sufficient to cover their relatively modest needs. They customarily receive a starting salary in the neighborhood of Eth$150. The more ambitious and fortunate among them have, by changing jobs, manipulating superiors, and improving skills, worked their way up to salaries in the Eth$400-$500 category. Some have become provincial teachers for a while, in order to accumulate money on which to live while shopping for a position in Addis Ababa and with which to influence some higher official to grant it to them. There remains a hard core of locals who feel they are underpaid and live in constant resentment of this situation.

This resentment has produced a general sort of negativism which characterizes many of the locals, a negativism expressed in the form of backbiting and denunciation of the higher government officials and the nobility generally. They decry social injustice and the uses of nepotism. They moralize profusely against those whom fortune has shown greater favors. But not all their social criticism is born of resentment. There are also among the locals many young men who are comfortably situated but fired by patriotic fervor with a desire for social reform.

The local is as deeply concerned about asserting his status vis-à-vis the less educated as he is to advance his position in the hierarchy. Locals are extreme-

585 [574] Three-day visiting is the pattern in kin visiting, for it usually takes one day for initial greetings and exchange of news, slaughtering and preparation of a sheep; a second day for feasting and talks with the neighbors; a third day for preparation of leave-taking.

After one week, the "dass" are torn down. A "great man" who is father of the bride, will usually send his daughter several donkeyloads of household staples, including lentils ("shuro"), peas cooked with salt, pepper, and spices, so that she will be honored and well treated by the women under whose jurisdiction she has come. Then, after a month, he will send a messenger to ask how she is habituated to the new life. If the reply is favorable, another load of grain, butter, spices, flaxseed oil are sent.

512 The adjustment of the bride may not be easy. The night she leaves her parental roof, she takes with her, besides her skin-mat, a little basket of dyed reeds, containing her personal little distaff, spindle, and glass necklace used in scouring pottery. After a week or a few weeks of honeymoon, she is expected to participate in the women's household tasks: fetching water and fuel, baking "enjara" daily for her husband, cooking "wot", to her husband's tastes, crushing barley, grinding "tyeff", brewing beer. If she complains too soon, the womenfolk will quote the proverb:

[539] "Hardly arrived have you, young bride,
(but) already you crunch shembera (peas)"
(meaning: lazily pick at peas, instead of
doing the regular, harder work).

606 [591] The couple is expected to remain in patrilocal residence at least a year, so that the bride can be taught, by her mother-in-law, how

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965. MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man
[782] of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] [231] [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭēff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā*, literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā*, preparing *ṭallā*, spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

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*565 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] [782] [513] [352] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories.

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense.

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.)

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver.

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression.

The Yearly Cycle

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after

291 it also at night or during the rainy season, for warmth. Old men use it for the latter reason, (but call it "deg", to differentiate it from the girdle of pregnancy).

The most important, and most varied, traditional garment of both sexes and all social levels among the Amhara, is the cotton toga, "shamma". It is made from cotton spun at home and then fashioned by the weaver. It is untailored, but draped with care.

In addition to the average shamma, there is a double shamma (called "kutta") for warmth and longer wear; and a half-shamma, usually of finer weave, for prestige (called "nätäla") used only for daytime wear. Size specifications vary between rural and urban usage, and between districts and provinces.

A full size rural shamma measures about five feet
294 by 10 feet, when finished. To achieve this size, the weaver produces a piece of cloth 2-1/2 feet x 20 feet, cuts it in half, places the borders together, and sews lengthwise. This is the most common garment of the peasant during the work-week, in the dry season, day or night, male and female. It usually has a simple, narrow, dyed border, which is colorfast only in cold water.

The "kutta", when completed, is usually 6 feet wide and up to 15 feet long, cut and sewn in similar fashion,
291 and of coarse, tightly woven cotton. It is worn at night,
513 especially in the rainy season, and by travellers, for it can also be used as a blanket. Today, even in the center of Addis Ababa, one sees peasants curled up head to foot

291 in this kutta, resembling a motionless sack, stirring only
513 when the rays of the sun begin to warm.

The "nätäla" is more loosely woven and about half the size of a "kutta". Because it was quickly made, used little cotton, and was therefore much cheaper, it was the dress of the poor and consequently despised. But in very recent times it has been finely made, some even in a factory in Dire Dawa city, and it is now finely embroidered near the border where the dyed strip used to be.

291 "Jano" or "jano kuta", as the name indicates, was
531 the fine shamma of royalty, in chich case warmth was no consideration, and border emoroidery was of purple, green gold and other colored silken thread, in various designs. "Tebäb" or "derb jano" was embroidered with arabesques, and nowadays has often been changed to diamonds in the national colors of Ethiopia; green, yellow, red. Now urban women wear it, and it is becoming festive dress even for peasant women.

291 The roughest, coarsest and most durable workaday shamma of the peasant has no border ("goda"). Sometimes the "ämis" of the peasant woman is made of this tightly woven material. In the old times it had a very broad red border (a foot wide) and since it was worn by the freehold farmer, it was a garment of honor among the peasantry, even in the time of Menelik II. Now it has lost prestige, except among the more remote rural landholding kin, and it is not produced any more.

The "burnos" hooded cape of wool, is an ancient garment worn by Amhara feudal lords and royalty, both men

X794 536 796 "ellel" as shrilly as they do outside church during Coptic services. Exhausted, the powerful woman finally collapsed, and the curtain was quickly drawn to hide her during her recovery.

X794 796 Several other zar doctors demonstrated their individual "fukkara" activities. But more and more participants grew inattentive, and some began to doze. Lady Salämtew declared the session ended at about 3 A.M. The women bedded down right on the floor or the mud bench, while the men who lived nearby went home, and others rolled up in blankets and skins just outside the house, under the overhanging roof. It was a cold night, usual during cloudless month of Yäkatit.

[513]

The season of the roaming zar spirits had once again been concluded, not to revive in full vigor until after the rainy season half a year later. At the convention much protection had been gained, and old protection reinforced against the many mischievous zars that might plague people in the meantime.

d) Social Aspects of the Zar Cult.

X794 608 The groups of chronically possessed persons who meet regularly as devotees of the zars, in the "wädaja" (lit. love feast), constitute what are called "aqwädash" (sometimes "aqtacha"), face-to-face societies. Their interpersonal relationships soon become social, much like the mähabbär communal worship society of the church. Both establish bonds which, to the Amhara mind, become "artificial kinship". Not infrequently this leads to the establishment of bonds of actual affinal kinship (as described earlier).

X794 772 The parallel can also be applied to an understanding of the leadership involved. Much like the mähabbär is led and blessed by the priest-confessor, so the zar society is led and blessed by the

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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habit is not confined to Abyssinia! The second, which is more curious, is that of protection against the sun's rays. In this connection it is interesting to recall that Mr Mansfield Parkyns, who spent three years in Abyssinia, used no head covering of any sort at any time other than a coating of butter, which he says he found as effective as any hat.

The third (and most frivolous) reason is that butter in the hair hampers the free movement (and consequent irritation) of the little creatures that live there. There is possibly something in this, as a "head-scratcher", in the form of a blunt silver or wooden pin, is a general ornament, as incidentally is also an "ear-cleaner" which resembles a small salt-spoon.

In some parts of the country where the hairdressing mode is of an elaborate character, the women, when lying down to sleep, use wooden head-rests for their necks, made of a slightly curved piece of wood supported on a sort of foot, the whole being a few inches high. Some of these are quite elaborately carved or coloured; but however pleasing they may be to the eye—and I have seen some very pretty ones—they must make exceedingly uncomfortable pillows, and the use of them appears to argue an even greater interest in personal appearance than European women display. These head-rests are of very ancient origin; they are curiously similar to the one discovered in Tutankhamen's tomb.

The more wealthy Abyssinians are very partial to scents and scented hair oils; the strength of the scent is more important to them than its quality, and the shops in Addis Ababa do a brisk trade in inferior

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

492 mouth and causes it to bleed freely; in spite of, or perhaps because of this, I never came across an Abyssinian pony with a hard mouth; indeed, they can nearly all be ridden on a snaffle.

Their mules are so covered with many-hued trappings that sometimes they leave very little of the beast to be seen. These trappings are made of several thicknesses of native-dyed coloured leathers sewn together, machine-embroidered in silks of many colours, and covered with metal ornaments.

On special occasions the Abyssinians of rank cover their mules with extra gorgeous drapings in vivid colourings of velvet or silk, decorated with handsome embossed silver or silver-gilt ornaments. The men themselves on these occasions bring out their best sword and buckler, the latter being made of stretched and shaped rhino hide, covered with velvet and ornamented with silver and gilt mountings.

342 The houses of the wealthier people are constructed of stone (of which ample supplies are available almost everywhere), plastered together with a sort of mortar called *chika*, mostly mud and water; the roof is either of corrugated iron or is thatched. They are as a rule one-storied buildings, though I have been in one or two that had an upper story surrounded by a verandah and reached by an outside staircase, but these have generally been acquired from Greeks. In these cases [231] the ground floor is frequently used as stabling for the mules and ponies (even amongst Greeks and Armenians), a state of affairs which can hardly be regarded as sanitary.

In the peasants' *tukuls* in the country, men, women, and children, mules, ponies, and other animals sleep

8: Rex G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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513 all together in their single room; if to the aroma arising from this combined population be added the acrid [372] smoke from a fire made of dung-cakes, and a plentiful accompaniment of fleas and other insects, the joys of a night's shelter in such quarters may well be imagined.

351 The house nearly always stands in a very large piece of ground surrounded by a mud and stone wall. It is a curious habit of theirs that in building the wall they generally start with the gateway. Occasionally, for one reason or another, the wall-building suffers a hitch, and one sees the quaint spectacle of a gateway (sometimes with a gate), a few yards of wall, and then nothing to impede general ingress. Some of the chiefs, 342 however, are now building themselves better places, especially those that have been on missions to Europe. But even among these an ordinary *tukul* sometimes suffices, and most of the important chiefs I met in Abyssinia were content with most primitive installations.

The *tukuls* of the poorer class are mostly constructed in a circular form of sticks plastered inside and out with mud. The roof, which is made separately and put on last, is cone-shaped, made of sticks or cane bound strongly together with strips of bark and then thatched: the latter is an art in which the Abyssinians particularly excel. The roof extends two or three feet from the walls; thus the torrential rains run off easily and leave the hut perfectly dry.

342 Inside, a part is usually divided off by a length of 352 sheeting suspended on a string, behind which, on a raised platform, the family sleep on couches or beds made of wood and grass and covered with skins; blankets are uncommon, and the *chammas* in which

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or [182] children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children [513] settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the em- [352] bers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

515 may last 9 months, there is very little bathing, and only hands are washed, in muddy water brought from the river or brook, before and after meals. There are no latrine dit-
● 514 ches. Feces are deposited behind thorny bushes 1/4 mile from the hamlet at most, while urination at night proceeds within the hamlet. This practice is followed even in towns and in Addis Ababa. Fortunately the strong sun carbonizes the feces in the dry season, and the strong rain in that season sweeps it away. There is no caste of sweepers, and no attention is paid to human or animal feces, except for the manure of oxen and cows. The latter is hand-pressed into cakes and used as fuel.

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825 with, as their services in removing carcasses of animal origin are well appreciated.

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136 complete. This opens the way to flea-born typhus, especially on the highland plateau. Lice are somewhat less general, since they are not regarded by the Amhara as inevitable as fleas. Thus, an Amhara whose hair is infected
136 with lice (e.g. during a stay in prisons which are always
164 lice-infected), he may shave his hair. But louse-born re-
744 lapsing fever epidemics recur from time to time, and the

867 [539] "He, before becoming old,
wants to be serious".

(This is also said of a young man who saves gifts for a bride before he has chosen a girl).

When the adolescent boys take part in the aforementioned ritual mock-battles, younger boys imitate them by staging similar hazing-battles among their age peers.

Little girls are encultured in somewhat similar fashion by peers of their own sex, but more often including some older girls who patronize the younger. Girls are not taught any social graces among commoner Amharas, so that they sit shyly and wordless when in the company of men. Any girl who shows signs of daring is mocked and hazed as "gobba" (daring, enterprising female). Generally the activities of girls are less vilent,. At times when boys fight their ritual mock-battles, girls dance rounds and sing in unison.

Both boys and girls are taught to be right-handed, and a "lefty" is extremely rare. They are taught to eat with the right hand, shake hands with the right, and use the left for wiping themselves with leaves after defecating. But the prohibition against use of the left hand on other occasions is not as severe as among Arabs.

[264 576 514]

[754] Both sexes fear the supernatural "buda" spirit, also in the shape of human sorcerer and magical hyena. Older boys claim they can distinguish the cry of a real hyena from that of a magical one, and sometimes scare younger children by imitating the howl.

867 Sex differentiation among children is expressed in the hair style. Boys wear a single coxcomb hairlock, girls a ring of hair around the shaven skull which sometimes may contain a center hair-

264 procedure, also called "cämmäsä" is in imitation of procedure at the court of nobles, and it is known that kings have always had their special cupbearers ("cämäsh") who tasted the drink against possible poison, and who also removed any floating debris ("äffäta") such as beeswax from the drink.

574 575 The hospitality group on non-kin members which meets most regularly, once a month, is the "mähabbär" association, already described. Based originally on religious private communion, each member plays host once a month to drink from "Mary's cup" ("Mäkaryam sewa"), to feast, for chant and dance ("zäfän") and less formal gossipy entertainment and conversation ("täcchäwwäta").

C. Verbal Expression: Formalities; Wit; Pedagogic Riddles.

192 Emotional exclamations in everyday use are highly formalized:

Pain - "häyy häyy" (also if a painful truth "sinks in"; astonishment).

Fear - "woyy" (especially by women, just before a fearful event happens).

Fearful surprise - "oyyi" (e.g. when someone stumbles, or has an accident).

Alarm - "erriii" - (cry of alarm; also of great sorrow as in death of kin).

Skeptical surprise - "erriä" ("you don't say?!"); Reply: "mut" (abbreviated from "yemut", lit. "May (the emperor die) if this is not true").

Pleasure - "essäy" (to indicate comfort, e.g. when sitting down after having climbed a long, tiring hill).

576 514 192 Formal politeness in etiquette always considers the social status of the person addressed. Thus, there are six ways of informing an inquirer that the person he seeks has gone out to defecate or urinate:

Impolite, though not vulgar: "weha äfäccäsä" - (lit. he poured water).

Polite: "der wätta" - (lit. he went to the bush).

Polite: "äij wätta" - (lit. he went out the door).

513

576 Very Polite: "shango watta" - (lit. he went to a meeting).

514 Extremely Polite: "mare zorä" - (lit. he left home).

192 Extremely Polite: "shersher watta" - (lit. he went for a walk).

522 Wit, used in court or by homespun philosophers to entertain their friends, compensates for the many formalities in this culture and society. The famous wit, Alänga Gabre-Hanna has already been cited.

538 Proverbs, "barät" and riddles may be used to make a comment of esoteric meanings, understandable only to one's initiates. Proverbs fulfill a social function, beyond mere entertainment, for even philosophy, being utilized to begin any negotiation, such as for marriage. This is emphasized in proverbs on proverbs:

[539]

"Like Hallelujah before the chanting (in church),
(begin with) a proverb before the discussion".
"(to drink) mead, (first get) a container,
to talk, (begin with) a proverb".

538 Proverbs and riddles used by parents, teachers and leaders of
593 society have a pedagogic function, and can be used to reprimand and
[861] instruct. Conflict between father and son, the complexities involved, and the possibility that contrary to the major cultural assumption of parental superiority, the son may sometimes have logic on his side, is indicated by the following:

[539]

"(Says the father):

"Your Father you cannot accuse (e.g. in court, shaming yourself)
nor plow the sky,
nor roast water".

"(Replies the son):

"The father, by his own shame he will stand accused;
the sky, by lighting it is plowed;
water, in a pot it is steamed".

*793
869

[262] severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably
[164] the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based in-
[735] gredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat.
+ [192] His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals,
and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain
(kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent
[164] wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints
+ [192] (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint
(night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the
context of the student's nocturnal activities.

[231] There is also danger from animals, the vicious and
[735] often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs;
[776] from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting
• [514] to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege
with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to
waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for noc-
turnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the excep-
tion of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's
patronage, or who receive parental support, the young
scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study
for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their
[221] subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains
[222] have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure,
* [192] kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the
wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

824 searching for suitably shaped hard or soft saplings and
461 other woods and certain herbs, than perform carpentry or much transplanting. Apart from saddle-making, the alga-bed, and simple musical instruments, one can hardly speak of any carpentry.

824 In preparation for housebuilding and other activities
313 connected with lumbering, the timber provided by nature is divided, in the Amhara view, into two major categories: Male, i.e. hard wood or strong wood; Female or soft, less consistent, or easily pliable woods. Heaviness or lightness are not major categories (as in Western countries).

Male woods ("wandō enchāt") and their uses include the following:

Wild Olive Tree ("wāyra") (olea chrysophylla), one of the hardest; often heavy and massive, found on the edge of forests, brown-black in color, quite [illegible]ly. Used for construction on plateau, e.g. as saplings for walls, rafters, etc. The small twigs
• [515] are in common use as "toothbrushes". They are chewed and used to clean teeth and polish gums, as a leisure-time activity after meals.

"Manza" (Cordia abyssinica), a light but hard wood which is found very commonly and is therefore popular; used to make the yokes of oxen, saddles, low, round chairs and other equipment that takes much punishment in use, such as riflestocks when the original has broken.

"Mulkeffa" (Dombeya Bruceana), very hard, used for clubs, e.g. as pestle in the women's crushing of barley.

252 262 the last a few minutes before the wot is ready. Some add capsicum at the same time.

Liver and stomach, especially of sheep and goat, are eaten, but spleen and milt are considered hard to digest and are given to dogs. In general, interior organs are not prestigeful.

Raw beef, "brundo", is still featured at special feasts such as weddings, religious feasts like "tärkär",
[K4] as it was featured at feasts of warriors in the past. This brings much tapeworm infection, but the risk is taken because it is believed that "brundo" makes strong like no
[755] other food. The painful purgative cure is undergone every two months with "kosso", still a major institution among the Amhara.

To cool the palate linings and tongue from the bär-
bärë, curdled milk, "ergo", is consumed right afterwards.
[515] Hands are carefully washed, for touching the eyes with fingers stained from the spiced stew makes them smart.

Fish, much eaten only in the rainy season, is also boiled in wot, often after slight prefrying in talba (linseed oil); lentils (mesr) are often added.

Lentils become very important in the long lenten sea-
[784] son and on every Wednesday and Friday, when the average Amhara still abstains from meat, milk, eggs and other animal products, for religious (Coptic fast) reasons. The staple food during these periods is a porridge called "shero": mashed peas seasoned with spices, onion and vegetable oil.

Another vegetarian staple is "nefro", consisting of peas, chick peas, sorghum, all boiled and eaten as ker-

291 are only of the last items to increase in prestige in very recent years, due to growing imitation of living patters of Addis Ababa. Coptic churches still require removal of footgear.

G. Sanitation.

515 Two traditional traits of health care and sanitation have already been mentioned in connection with the direct use of natural products: polishing teeth, and washing clothes.

[824] Hardwood twigs such as wild olive (Olea chrysophylla) called "wäyra", or of the "ahya" or "ächema" bush (also softer ones of the type that Somali use in lower elevations) are held between the lips, by men or women, after meals. Even old men (in rural Ethiopia this means men over fifty) have most of their teeth as a result, with little sign of wear or decay. Much of this is due to this habit of polishing teeth and gums at odd moments, much as an American might chew gum. Before this polishing, the end of the twig to be used is masticated thoroughly, and the fibrous ends are then used. The Amhara belief is that this keeps the teeth in sharp condition--they do not do it with the idea of cleaning food remnants out of the mouth. The mental association is than of a bird sharpening its beak.

[296] Already noted also is the use of the potash content
[824] of the seed of the "endod" bush (Phytolacca abyssinica, or, Phytolacca abyssinica), for laundering and washing.

Little more positive statements can be made about sanitation. When water is short in the dry season, which

515 may last 9 months, there is very little bathing, and only hands are washed, in muddy water brought from the river or
514 brook, before and after meals. There are no latrine ditches. Feces are deposited behind thorny bushes 1/4 mile from the hamlet at most, while urination at night proceeds within the hamlet. This practice is followed even in towns and in Addis Ababa. Fortunately the strong sun carbonizes the feces in the dry season, and the strong rain in that season sweeps it away. There is no caste of sweepers, and no attention is paid to human or animal feces, except for the manure of oxen and cows. The latter is hand-pressed into cakes and used as fuel.

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136 with lice (e.g. during a stay in prisons which are always
164 lice-infected), he may shave his hair. But louse-born re-
744 lapsing fever epidemics recur from time to time, and the

412 lower, muddy terrain, e.g. in the Käzäga district of the Wolkait jungle border, digging sticks are used to prepare small holes for mashella seed. But the Amhara peasant prefers to use the plow, even on contours of hills, since the use of the stick is hard labor, requiring several men working in unison. Often the stick must be weighed down with heavy rocks against the sun-baked soil in the dry season.

412 407 The scratch plow probably evolved as an elaboration of the digging stick by fixing it at an angle to a long beam pulled forward by the yoke of two oxen, thus substituting animal muscle power for human energy. Among the Amhara, the bottom tip of the plowpoint is almost always strengthened and protected by an iron plowpoint purchased from an ethnic (Falasha) smith. The sharp angle biting into the soil can be adjusted by means of a suspension binding strap of hippopotamus skin, and two small wedges. The farmer merely has to guide the digging-stick part of the plow, and encourage the oxen with his long fiber whip.

412 303 Knives for kitchen use very in length usually from 8 to 12 inches, are curved, with the cutting edge on the curved side which comes to a point. The blade is set in a wooden handle. These knives are also used for circumcision. The old razor blade usually was of similar shape, about 6 inches long, and used primarily for shaping head head hair. It is now replaced by imported European blades. Pincers, 4-5 inches long, are carried on trips to remove thorns from the bare feet. Little ear spoons are suspended from the neck-cord and used to remove earwax, especially by the ladies. [515]

832 Men, particularly young men, are also among his loyal customers.

The dabtara may be called upon to embark upon a magic strategy designed to bewitch a person of the opposite sex so as to fall in love with the client, and also to render the beloved impotent or frigid to all rivals. On a moonlit night, or when unobserved, the dabtara will go to bush or field to seek a certain root, then write the magic bann on a piece of linen, including the names of the persons to be joined in the love bewitchment. This bann is then read over the root as many as 49 times. The root is then chewed, and the masticated paste is carefully preserved for application as soon as possible, to the skin and clothing of the beloved. To do this, tactics such as feigning anger at the beloved and spitting the paste at her so she will not suspect, may be resorted to.

To render a beloved faithful and thoroughly frigid to all rivals may require an even more difficult strategy. The ideal method is to wipe her vulva, preferably the vagina, with the cloth that contains the magic bann, on the pretext of cleaning her after coitus. Conversely, a woman employing this magic may use the cloth to wipe his genitals after coitus, to render him impotent with other women. If the bewitched finds the cloth, he or she can break the spell by washing it in a running river that contains fish. Even if not all of the ink or dye comes off, if fish can nibble at it, it is believed that the spell is broken and carried off.

There are many variations of this basic procedure. Some dabtara "prove" their power to sceptical clients by "testing" the efficacy of the bann and the paste. They may agree to try it out on one of the "unattached women" that earn a living by brewing daily barley beer. They enter her "talla tyet", order beer, and the dabtara, apparently 55 chewing on an olive twig preparatory to polishing his teeth with it, which is general common procedure, spits out what the woman believes

3. Expressive Physical Arts.

531 Physical arts, like their material culture, are little developed among the Amhara, compared to their elaborate spiritual culture. If their life cycle gives any clue, it seems that the explanation lies at least in part in the end of free experimentation at the onset of adolescence, after which the experimentation is fettered into lines ordained by the Coptic church. Especially fine art, is considered exclusively within the domain of the church. This leaves little beyond body care and ornamentation for expression of physical arts, and even [302] this is partly dedicated to religion, such as the rationalized plucking of pubic hair of the woman, and the fullest expression of body arts on the occasion of church festivals.

171 It is also interesting to observe how patterns of the Middle East and of Africa are so evidently drawn from and synthesized in the traditional Amhara pattern of expressive physical arts, particularly in body care and ornamentation.

A. Body Care and Ornamentation.

515 [312] Washing in the dry season is difficult, since water is scarce and there are no wells. However, with some little effort, water can even then be obtained by digging in the riverbed, since the water table is high; this is what travellers do. Near towns the latter effort develops into a business, for water carriers, employing women as cheap labor to carry the water in their clay pots uphill to the town, charge 5¢ [548] (Ethiopian) per potfull of water. Only the "unattached woman" who has a cash income from beer-brewing or temporary wife - prostitution, can afford this, and usually buys a potfull of this muddy water every day during the long dry season, to wash herself and her clothing regularly and frequently, at a time when the fully respectable Amhara housewife goes unwashed (except for hands and private parts). Divorcees looking for husbands and professional women alone feel the need for daily

515 washing of the body and frequent washing of clothes, and an individual housewife who takes it upon herself to wash more than expected is noticed as different and suspected as possibly being not as respectable and innocent as she might like to appear.

388 In washing, especially of clothes, a soapwort ("endod") (pircunia abyssinica) is gathered from wild bushes the location of which is carefully remembered, for they are not planted. The yellow fruit is dried and crushed, on a flat rock above the river or in it when the water is shallow. It is mixed with water, so that a greenish-white foam results. The fingermarks, resulting from the mixing and gathering of the foam, can be seen on rocks where the sun has dried the remnant.

[574] 515 302 Dry grass is used as toilet paper, usually held in the left hand. Women fumigate their bodies frequently, in the dry season because water is short and hard to come by; in the rainy season, after bathing in the brook or river, to "get rid of the river odor". For, especially at the beginning of the rainy season, the rivers are muddy and carry much smelly debris.

There are 3 different, major kinds of fumigation wood ("yätis enchät"): Domestic incense gathered in the woods by commoner women are "abalo" and "täjo" (Phamnus straddo); noblewomen and wealthy women aiming at prestige despise domestic woods, and insist on imported incense, primarily "etan" (frankincense), more expensive but freely purchasable on all markets because it is used regularly in the church, during services.

302 Plucking out of pubic hair, by means of ashes held between the fingers, was considered one of the most important duties of feminine hygiene. Men might shave, though not pluck, their pubic hair, if they desired to do so for special "cleanliness". This procedure of plucking

302 was required of females past puberty, i.e. women of marriage age, and they were not supposed to substitute the less efficient method of shaving. The proverb says;

[539]

"To a man who plucks out,
to a woman who shaves (pubic hair),
forgive He (God) will not."

However, in the recent change situation, possibly since the spread of the European razor blade, plucking is becoming a lost art among the younger generation; and, while women now shave their pubic hair; men let it grow naturally as most of them apparently have always done.

515 The continuous polishing of teeth ("mewachä") has already been mentioned. This is one of the few activities of body care in which even men indulge as continuously as women. The reason is that it is not regarded as "for cleanliness" (which is considered less necessary for men, in a culture which regards women as "dirty"), but as "polishing" and "sharpening" this equipment of nature for powerful use, much like birds whet their beaks, readying them for action. The polishing is done with a hardwood twig, the ends of which are masticated first, and and motion is upward and downward, so that the upper gums receive considerable massage also.

302 Nails are given little attention, except in the case of the bride, whose nails are trimmed usually a day before the wedding, so that she will not be able to scratch the bridegroom when he has to use force to deflower her. Her nails are cut so short that not infrequently the skin is cut, and hot butter is applied, to heal them and also render the fingers caressingly smooth.

Reddening of palms, fingers and soles of feet is feminine procedure in preparation for holy days and festivities. The most common cosmetic used for this purpose is called "ensosella" (Impatiens tinctore), a

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

539 and was always looking up intently and with concentration. One of his friends asked him, "What are you looking for?"

"*Mawéa*," replied the wit in his classic manner. [The literal meaning is "exit," i.e., either the exit from the trail on the tiring climb, or "the place where we emerge" from the female body.]

The Wit At Home. Home in his hut in Gondar, AG-H was one day at dusk lying on his bed. [56] His wife had gone to the river to wash her private parts, as is the custom of the Amhara women at nightfall. Tired from the uphill climb from the valley, she rested before the hearth to dry herself, but dozed off. Soon AG-H heard a cannonade of farting, issuing from his half-conscious wife. He called out to her, "Where are you? Come to bed!"

Awakening, she said dazedly, "I am just drying myself."

To which he replied, "You are drying yourself so much that you are cracking apart."

[302] *A Woman's "Way."* [In accordance with ancient custom, women used to pluck out their pubic hair, rubbing ashes between their fingers to get a good grip while plucking.]

One day a girl student of AG-H was late for her lesson. Taking a quick short-cut across the back yard, she tumbled into the ash heap, soiling her lower toga and her legs with the ashes. She excused her appearance to her teacher, saying, "Oh, Master, I was so eager to come quickly, and now I have dirtied myself with ashes all over."

"That is *your way*," nodded AG-H.

Only much later did the girl learn that he had meant not only the wrong way she had come, but was referring to the fact that being smudged with ashes was the natural "way" for a woman.

[564] *The Pot Of Caste.* [The women of the Falasha caste are makers of pottery, a despised occu-
[323] pation among the Coptic Amhara, though much appreciated by the Amhara, who buy all their better pots from them.]

The wife of AG-H, quarreling with a certain woman, accused her of being of Falasha ancestry and that her mother had been a pottery-maker. One day that woman returned from the river valley, carrying a large, full pot of water on her back. She saw AG-H sitting in front of his hut, and decided to take the opportunity to complain to him about the taunts of his wife.

AG-H disliked being involved in the petty quarreling of the womenfolk, but he listened quietly. As she took leave, he patted her full clay pot and said, "*This* is your work."

She thought that he meant she should not quarrel with his wife, should instead attend to her tasks of fetching water, cooking, etc. But on further reflection what had he meant? Had he accused her of being a pottery-maker herself?

Jealousy Is Dangerous. AG-H was also notorious for his prowess in bed and his fickleness in love.

One day his wife had to go far down to a valley to fetch water, since the dry season had left only water holes in the river bed. She left him in charge of their baby. Taking the baby with him, he went to the hut of his current girl friend and spent the afternoon making passionate love. As it happened, this woman also had a baby about the same age. Dusk came rapidly, and AG-H knew that his wife would soon be back. In the hurry, he took the wrong baby.

A moment after his return his wife arrived, laden with water pot and firewood. When she beheld the baby of her current rival, she became very angry and said, "This thing is not my baby! Shall I throw it in the fire?"

Calm as ever, AG-H replied: "There is a fire also in the house of his mother."

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8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

291 The Abyssinian lady and gentleman are frequently to be seen with a black satin three-quarter mantle, ornamented by a little gold braid round the neck and generally a coloured silk lining. In the rainy season a black woollen-hooded cape or *burnous* is donned by all classes, women wearing the hood at the back, and men sporting theirs on their left shoulder. The *burnous* is also a sign of mourning, for which purpose people of every class wear it.

765 515 296 A further, and less pleasant, sign of mourning is for the bereaved one to refrain from washing his clothes; but I only observed this practice in connection with servants and persons of humble position. Ordinarily they are very keen on washing their white garments, and even on trek there was a great "clean-up" whenever we stayed in camp for an extra twenty-four hours. The day before our return into Addis was always the occasion for the most lavish use of soap and water, and the *safari* on arrival looked really quite smart, the men all having donned spotless white *chammas*, shirt, and trousers for the occasion, when, I am bound to say, they looked externally a good deal cleaner than our travel-stained garments allowed us to do.

293 A cartridge belt of various colours and designs, from the plain native leather to the gold and silk embroidered specimen, is more or less generally worn by the men, and its value is also often an indication to the position or means of the wearer. In its place women use a girdle of some sort, to which is attached their keys, ear-cleaners, head-scratchers, and small silver ornaments. Parasols of neatly plaited grass, intermixed with coloured cottons, are carried frequently by both sexes in all seasons. These are quite picturesque, and no doubt serve their

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

habit is not confined to Abyssinia! The second, which is more curious, is that of protection against the sun's rays. In this connection it is interesting to recall that Mr Mansfield Parkyns, who spent three years in Abyssinia, used no head covering of any sort at any time other than a coating of butter, which he says he found as effective as any hat.

The third (and most frivolous) reason is that butter in the hair hampers the free movement (and consequent irritation) of the little creatures that live there. There is possibly something in this, as a "head-scratcher", in the form of a blunt silver or wooden pin, is a general ornament, as incidentally is also an "ear-cleaner" which resembles a small salt-spoon.

In some parts of the country where the hairdressing mode is of an elaborate character, the women, when lying down to sleep, use wooden head-rests for their necks, made of a slightly curved piece of wood supported on a sort of foot, the whole being a few inches high. Some of these are quite elaborately carved or coloured; but however pleasing they may be to the eye—and I have seen some very pretty ones—they must make exceedingly uncomfortable pillows, and the use of them appears to argue an even greater interest in personal appearance than European women display. These head-rests are of very ancient origin; they are curiously similar to the one discovered in Tutankhamen's tomb.

The more wealthy Abyssinians are very partial to scents and scented hair oils; the strength of the scent is more important to them than its quality, and the shops in Addis Ababa do a brisk trade in inferior

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chīqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chīqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565
512 ### *The Daily Round*

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tēff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[515] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.
[264]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or [182] children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening [513] prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children [352] settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to cheat the locals. The health officer in charge of the team then brought some of the objectors to the mobile laboratory, patiently explained what was going on, and how it would benefit the people. Before long word got around that these outsiders were not so evil after all, and the doors of Dajan opened. 565* 121 177 744

Given the possibility that the Amhara peasant may come to acknowledge the public health worker as a legitimate agent of change, what about the discrepancy between the ideas advanced by the public health workers and the ideas of his traditional culture? The conception of the causation of illness is radically different in the two cultures. Since the peasant views the etiology of disease as a function of the will of supernatural beings, on what grounds could he adhere to prophylactic measures based on naturalistic conceptions? 565* 121 177 753 744

Valid though our characterization of the peasant's concept of causation may be, it is nevertheless a very simplified one. It is unlikely that any world view is totally devoid of some sort of naturalistic explanations, just as, conversely, well-educated moderns often cling to residues of "superstition." Though the Amhara's general framework for understanding causation is not naturalistic, he does possess a number of specific notions which can be interpreted as naturalistic or protonaturalistic. Here are some examples:

(1) The belief that an excessively dirty house brings sickness (even though in practice animals are permitted to urinate and defecate indoors and strings of soot to hang from the rafters). [231]

(2) A vague notion that the daily washing of hands, mouth, and feet is related to health. [515]

(3) The concept of *metch*, an ailment involving fever and pains, believed to come from exposure to dirty places as well as excessive exposure to the sun (though the devil is often thought to be the conveyer of the ailment).

(4) The concept of *gershā*, a notion that a convalescent is liable to relapse unless he refrains from eating unaccustomed foods, resumes work slowly, stays out of the sun, and washes his body and clothes. [758]

(5) A latent concept of contagion, found in: (a) the belief that smelling the urine of another will give one a cold, (b) the belief that the breath of a typhus patient will communicate his disease, and (c) the custom of referring to all diseases which can be given by one person to another as "*zār* sickness."

Even when the explanations set forth by the health workers deviate too much from what the peasant can possibly conceive as plausible, there may still be grounds to justify his accepting some strange advice through an appeal to more familiar beliefs and interests less directly related to the matter at hand. Thus, while peasants have been reluctant to accept the sanitarian's argument that diseases will be prevented by sanitizing the water supply through building wells, they have often been persuaded to build wells by the prospect of securing a more convenient source of water.

Measuring the relative strength of forces supporting and opposing change 565* 121 177

*793 869 875 criteria. His personal interest means to the student rapid advancement through the curriculum, dining at the master's table, and enjoying privileged information of a non-ecclesiastical nature. Without his patronship, a student is committed to years of uncertainty and physical misery, scraping to meet his subsistence needs, paying his "tuition" in demeaning services, such as gathering the master's wood and tilling his garden, and in deferential performances, particularly washing the master's feet and those of his visitors.

*793 869 The kiyne student is further troubled by the many ailments which are his lot. He lives, with one or two [342] of his mates, in a wretched lean-to of twigs and wild grasses, which proves to be poor protection against the [291] cold winter rains. Often he owns only the toga on his [515] back, and it, like him, remains unwashed for the dura- [164] tion of the long dry season. Thus, ikek (scrofula) becomes his badge, and kurtimat (joint pains) and weba [262] (fever) his recurrent companions. The student's diet *[192] is his special concern, since it conspicuously lacks the combination of wholesome wot (stew) and injera (pancake- [735] like bread) necessary to sustain good health. He ob- [164] tains most of his food by begging in the town and local hamlets, where he generally receives scraps of stale injera bread, always inadequate and potentially pathogenic (i.e., likift bearing, threatening fever and

201 [177] has been introduced only since the Italian occupation.

The gesture indicating sour-bitter taste (which are not differentiated; and collectively called "märara"), consists of slowly shaking the head sideways ("tängäshäggäshä"); sometimes reinforced by the verbal exclamation of pain, "ayye" or "hayyi".

516 Postures differentiate between the status of the master and that of the servant. The master indicates his "free" status by sitting way back on the stool or bench, straight, in a position which would require special effort to rise and therefore emphasizes that he does not expect to have to jump up at anyone's command. A servant may not sit in presence of the master, or must sit lightly so as to be ready to perform any duty for which he may be called upon at any moment. To indicate respect, a servant carries out his duties on the run (as "on the double" in the Western armies), while the master is present.

The correct posture in sitting is called "kurkum alä", sitting "folded up": the legs bent at the knees, the feet far back and partly hidden, since it is "rude" to sit with legs stretched out beyond the knee. But the thighs may be spread, especially when seated on a mat on the ground, even in the case of peasant women who wear the anklelength, heavy cotton gown. To sit with legs crossed (Turkish fashion) is frowned upon as the posture of "barya", the Muslim or "pagan" ex-slaves from the Sudan; considered a rude and lazy position by the Amhara. The proper posture of the Amhara, if seated on the ground, is a squatting position, on the hips, never on the heels; feet flat on the ground, knees high and spread, the toga arranged so as to cover the knees and shins even when jodphurs are worn.

201 554 Facial expression of a high-status Amhara (noble, priest, elder) assumes a stoic appearance. The jaw muscles are relaxed, the mandible slightly dropped, the eyes half-closed but alert, breathing very quiet, [195] the voice in even tone (in contrast to the strident whine of the argumentative peasant-gabbar).

201 554 argumentative peasant-gabbar). The body expresses almost the permanence and immobility of a statue, as if the high-status person could not be surprised or dismayed by anything, certain that all things due him will come to him.

● 516 The famous "Nilotic stance", stork-like, in which the person stands on one leg, resting the foot of the other against the inner knee of standing leg, is found in the Amhara only among young boys, and an occasional, low-class adult.

554 481 In walking, nobles of the old school walk slowly, somewhat heavily, as if in formal procession. Members of their retinue carry their cane, overcoat, etc. By contrast, laborers carrying heavy burdens walk catlike, largely on the instep, and fairly fast.

F. The Language of the Toga ("shamma").

201 291 The toga is used in so many different, formal ways by the Amhara to express moods, occasion and social status in the presence of persons of differing social status, that the language of the shamma has been likened to the "language of the buffalo robe" of the Plains Indians of America (footnote 95).

The most common way of draping this usually 6 ft. long, 2-1/2 ft. wide garment can be described as "out-going"; called "tälabbäsä": The toga is draped around the upper body so that it gives a turtleneck effect, the embroidered border extends from the shoulder to the waist. This may indicate that the young wearer is in an out-going, expansive mood, considers himself a gay blade going into town in a holiday mood; when worn this way by an older man, it expresses that he is a sober, respectable citizen, in an optimistic mood, going to meet persons of equal status.

Footnote 95 - Coon, C. S.: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p. 116.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 212 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather 142 delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner [516] gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. [145] Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the [302] women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 1.—*School of* qenê (*Wäshärä Märyäm monastery, Gojjam*)

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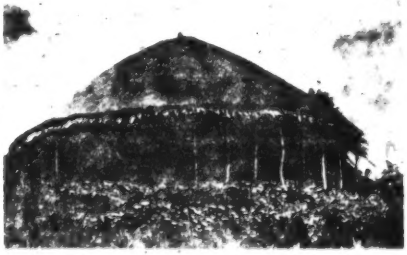

[P. 14-A]

FIG. 3.—*Nagäsä's church, Äganchä, Manz*

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FIG. 3.—*Fāsil's castle, Gondar*

FIG. 4.—*Two Manzē elders*

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FIG. 5.—*Manz, the ode of bānā*

[R14-8]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 20.—*Traditional (church) school: student huts*

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FIG. 21.—*Traditional school: learning to read*

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FIG. 22.—*Traditional school: learning zema from master*

[P 142-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[P.174-8]

FIG. 27.—*A deacon*

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FIG. 28.—*Group of* dabtarā

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FIG. 29.—*An old priest*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 30.—*A widower who has become a monk*

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FIG. 31.—*A group of clergy*

[P. 206-A]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Table 15: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Amhara

Month: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Month: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau	Annual Cycle of Amhara Ecological Activities (Economics, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Coptic-Abyssinian Amhara.	Cycle of Amhara Social Events	Syncretism	New, Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1	Sept. 11	receding flood after rainy season; yellow "Mäsqäl" daisy carpets land; spring ("tsädaye").	place beehive basket-work in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ("gai").	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ("yäMäsqäl Äbäl")- public rejoicing around bonfire (dämmära). Minor: 1st Mäskäräm is St. John's Day. 11th: "Arafa" - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	Kin visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ("enqutatash") on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive promise of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		"Mäsqäl" is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
to	to						
Mäskäräm 30	Oct. 10						
Teqemt 1	Oct. 11	sunny growing & ripening season (äkwänä sega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ("geba"), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ("t'illa"); sell honey to make mead ("t'äj"); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Teqemt: St. Michael's Feast "Mikael"; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 5th: pilgrimage to "tebel" holy wells and waterfalls of Äbrä Mänfäs Qeddus (Abe).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ("gurmrenosh") to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving "from Jarusalem".		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Teqemt 23rd).
to	to						
Teqemt 30	Nov. 9						

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Genbot 1 to Genbot 30	May 9 to June 7	light rains; spots of fresh, green grass (for pasturage nearer home). Storks fly northward.	Women prepare fuel for rainy season: deadwood; piles of sun-dried cowdung, coated with layer of mud. Caravans hurry home from Sudan, etc. Fish "sanro" caught in rivers.	1st: Ledata (Birthday of Virgin Mary): After services, last, large, outdoor picnic, under "dass" shelter 24th: "Täklä Haymanot" day, pilgrimage to his holy well at Däbrä Libanos. Children sing of country's well-being to storks.	1st: Men and women celebrate outdoor picnic separately, but young folk meet while older ones feast on meat and barley beer.	
Säneye 1 to Säneye 30	June 8 to July 7	Heavy rains, winter "Kerämt" begins: fogs, storms, cold rain. Fishing season. Children are taught to swim before rivers are dangerous.	Intensive plowing of softened soil, seeding by broadcasting: barley, then tyeff, wheat. Beans and other garden crops are seeded and fenced. Fish is plentiful and cheap.	9th: Resumption of Wednesday and Friday "Fast of the Salvation" recessed since Easter. Clergy: "Parälqlitos" 6th-feast; 7th "tsomä hawaryat" - 1 month Fast of Apostles.	Master gives feast to retainers for plowing, "arf märay", with fried fish, beer, "azmari" music, and "hetu" dance. Mutual aid in hut repair.	
Hamlä 1 to Hamlä 30	July 8 to August 6	Heavy monsoon rains, sometimes tornadoes, sheets of rain almost daily. Cold	Indoor work; some minor but repairs.	Intensive church school for boys, who are not needed at this season for any other work. Clergy: 5th: Fast of Peter and Paul ends month Fast of Apostles.	Standstill (e.g. of visiting) due to swollen brooks and washed-out paths.	16th(July 23) Birthday ("Ledät") of Emp. Haile Selassie; praise hymns chanted in churches.

632 Since the town attracted the most clever "dibtara",
[759] many of whom were herbologists, it was also a center where "medical aid", sometimes quite effective, could be obtained, and attracted patients from far and wide.

[463] Ethnic craftsmen would settle in hamlets within walking distance of the town, to provide iron tools, tanned leather, sun umbrellas, etc., without, however, exposing themselves to mockery, insults and occasional assaults by living in the town itself.

632 517 The town developed as a social center, and center for entertainment, almost inevitably. First, religious feasts such as the Epiphany parades and the tournaments on the public commons on "ganna" (Christmas) attracted the populace; and youngsters as well as adult loafers found themarket scenes fascinating. Secndly, the Arab traders liked to discuss business and news over tea or coffee. So "teahouses " (shay bet") sprang up near the
[265] Saturday market, serving snacks also to many a male at odds with his wife, and excluding all womenfolk. Con-
632 648 versely, the mead house, ("tej bet") provided evening
588 entertainment with female singers and dancers (azmari) for the all-male clientele, and waitressos easily available for sexual entertainment. Moreover, every town had at least one "street of unattached women", who catered to travellers or visiting peasants as innkeepers, restaurateurs, and as temporary wives; they were usually divorcees, who hoped to find another husband, and to settle down again to regular married life.

632 178 Except for some of the feudal arrangements, most of this town pattern of social organization is still

524 pebble, thus becoming "owner" of position A6.

Now it is the turn of player A, who can begin anywhere he likes, palming one of his own pebbles, and proceeding as above until he conquers one opponent's position, alway proceeding counterclockwise. There are many variations to this basic procedure. E.g. it is possible to become "partial owner" of a position, in which case the dispute is settled by chance, e.g. by hiding a pebble in one hand and letting the other guess which hand hides it. The player who wins all the grooves wins the game. The loser is called "ayt bälla" (lit. the rat ate him).

This game is regarded as harmless, unless a person becomes so addicted to it that he wastes all his time at it.

273 517 Entertainment of adults, especially in the towns, often involves considerable consumption of barley beer, fermented honeymead, and even "araqi". The proverb interprets stages of behavior, in drinking, as follows:

"First cup : Rat", (When one drinks eagerly, like a rodent);

"Second cup : Bee", (When there is buzzing among pleasantly agitated drinkers);

"Third cup : Monkey", (Grimacing, laughing foolishly, sweeping arms);

"Fourth cup : Dog", (When drunkards howl, without control, or depressed).

275 487 There are three types of public facilities for relaxation, found in the market-towns; The teahouse, the beer-house, and the mead-house, all of which are sharply differentiated:

The teahouse ("shay bet") is fully respectable; it is for men only, no women are supposed to enter it, and even the waiters are male. It is patronized by traders, clerks, minor officials (for high officials and nobles would not want to be seen consuming food or drink in public), police detectives, etc. Talk is largely of business matters and events of the day. The tea is consumed with a great deal of sugar dissolved in it, and a sweet condiment called "ful", probably of Arab introduction,

276 The Muslims, who smoke freely, even in the provincial towns, especially in the Arab or Muslim-operated teahouses, follow a variety of ways of consuming tobacco. Some use a brown snuff tobacco, "sengan" or "surat"; a few even chew "chat", a stimulant drug chewed in the original leaf, which is far more common in southern Ethiopia. This is held in low prestige by the Amhara, who associate the consumption of traditional tobacco and chat with the customs of Shanqalla and Sudanese ex-slaves. In the 1870's the fanatically orthodox Emperor John, who later died fighting the invading Muslem Mahdi, even forbade the raising of tobacco, but since then it is grown again in small patches in and near towns.

517 The high point of traditional entertainment and recreation is still the traditional feast, the "deges" (or "gebber"), featuring special material enjoyments such as raw beef and fermented honeymead; and such emotional enjoyments as watching azmari performers do their shoulder dance, their high-pitched song-chants, to traditional musical accompaniment; and, perhaps, receiving a "gursha" from the "great man" (telleq säw). On less intense occasions, picnics in the countryside and recreational promenading ("shersher"), are still the major forms of adult recreation in the long dry season.

275 Not only shame, but also fear, keep many peasants and townsmen out of the "täj-bët". Many a peasant, intending merely to take one drink, stays until after dark, then, fearing robbery on his way home or the sharp tongue of his wife, succumbs to the "consolation" of the waitresses; and wakes up the next morning without any of his harvest money. Therefore, travellers prefer to lodge with an "unattached woman", whom they may encounter at a beer-house (tälla bët) and who will serve as temporary wife.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

5 / *Tradition and Modernization*

THE GENIUS OF AMHARA CULTURE

The Amhara as a whole are not much given to aesthetic concerns. They are 181
practical-minded peasants, austere religionists, and spirited warriors. Their [517]
interests and achievements as a nation are chiefly in the spheres of military
activity and government. And yet, if we seek some theme with which to gain 181
an entree into the spirit of their society and culture, we will do well to attend 538
to the sphere of poetry. For it is a poetic phenomenon—that represented by
the title of this book—which constitutes both a key to the genius of Amhara
culture and a highly distinctive Amhara contribution to Ethiopian culture.

Sam-ennā warq ("wax and gold") is the formula used by the Amhara to 538
symbolize their favorite form of verse. It is a form built of two semantic
layers. The apparent, figurative meaning of the words is called "wax"; their [196]
more or less hidden actual significance is the "gold."

In its generic sense, the expression *sam-ennā warq* refers to a number of poetic figures which embody this twofold meaning. The use of such figures distinguishes the Amhara equivalent of true poetry from ordinary verse, in which everyday language is merely embellished with rhyme and rhythm. In [197]
the genre known as *qenē,* the original and more elegant kind of *sam-ennā warq* poetry, the lines are composed in Ge'ez and depend primarily on religious symbolism. But *sam-ennā warq* constructions also appear in some types of secular verse in the vernacular Amharic and, indeed, at times inform Amharic conversation.

Masters of the art of *qenē* composition have analyzed these poetic figures 538
into about a dozen different types.[4] *Sam-ennā warq* in its more specific sense 19
refers to one of these types of figures—the prototype of them all. It consists of an explicit comparison in which the subjects being compared—the wax and gold—are presented in apposition, while their predicates are rendered
jointly by a single verb which carries both a wax and a gold meaning. (This [325]
terminology is derived from the work of the goldsmith, who constructs a clay mold around a form created in wax and then, draining the wax, pours the molten gold into that form.) So, for example, if the poet's aim is to praise a hero like Emperor Menelik, he creates a wax model, like "the lion," in terms of whose actions the gold, Menelik, is depicted: "The lion Menelik crushed the wolf Italy."[5]

Keeping this dual imagery consistent throughout the stanza is a primary rule of wax-and-gold composition. A poet who mixes his metaphors is sometimes rebuked with the epithet "hermaphrodite." The following example
presents an Amharic couplet which properly embodies the *sam-ennā warq* [539]
figure:

Etsa balas balto addām ḳanfareshe
Madhānē alam lebē tasaqala-leshe.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

*175 643 ers than were his predecessors. He spent his days breaking the power of the feudal lords and strengthening the hand of the monarchy, and died a natural death.

Iyāsu II was the last of the Gondar emperors to rule with full power. He, too, had to spend much of his military energy suppressing conspirators. One pretender maintained a long siege of Gondar, and although his troops never succeeded in storming the castle, they destroyed much of the capital. After checking the rebels, Iyāsu II withdrew from the political affairs and became absorbed in private pursuits. Later, stung by the popular ridicule of his inactivity, he launched a major campaign against the Fung kingdom of Senaar. The net result of that venture was eighteen thousand dead and the depletion of his treasury. The subsequent subdual of Lāstā, a rebel region for generations, and Iyāsu's raids against tribes in the Atbārā district were not sufficient to redeem that defeat or restore the force of Gondar.

The political history of Gondar after the assassination of Iyāsu the Great is that of a fairly steady decline. The power of the monarchy was weakened by frequent coups d'état: no fewer than twenty-five emperors were deposed in the century and a half between Iyāsu I and Tēwodros. The power of central government was weakened by the increased strength of the nobles, each pursuing his personal interests. The power of the Abyssinian nation was weakened by the influx of Galla, who entered Gondar as prisoners and mercenary troops and finally, with the marriage of Iyāsu II to the daughter of a Galla chieftain, reached the royal court itself. The succession of emperors after Iyāsu II is largely a list of figureheads, living their brief spells in the dreary pomp into which the court had fallen, while the real power was wielded by independent lords throughout the land.

*175 643 633 • 517 The history of Gondar, however, is more than a chronicle of military expeditions and political intrigues. It is above all a history of the Amhara's most concentrated attempt to cultivate their religious and aesthetic culture, some aspect of which stimulated most of Gondar's sovereigns.

Fāsil, we have seen, was greatly interested in architecture. In addition to his many constructions in and around Gondar, he rebuilt the old cathedral at Aksum, which had been in ruins since the pillage of Ahmad Grāñ. Fāsil's interest in religion, moreover, extended beyond the building of churches. He sought to promote the integrity of the Ethiopian Church by expelling the Jesuits, and assisted its restoration by fixing rules for the ministration of church services.

Yohānnes the Pious was devoted to the furtherance of religious studies. He built a library to house religious manuscripts, as well as two new churches. Possessed of an unusual decorative bent, he had the walls of the library covered with a yellowish plaster and raised designs in stucco, and he himself painted miniatures on some of the manuscripts. His queen, Sebla Wangel,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

sponsored the translation of works from Arabic. Among these were *Laws of the Kings,* a collection of civil and canon laws which became the official basis for judication, and a penitential manual, *Spiritual Medicine,* the last major production in Ge'ez literature. 175* 643 517 • [633]

Yohānnes also continued Fāsil's work of "purifying" the church. He decreed that descendants of the Portuguese must leave Ethiopia unless they joined the Orthodox Church and that Muslims must reside apart, either in their own villages or in ghettos. Ordained as a priest before becoming emperor, Yohānnes followed keenly the theological disputes of his day. Toward the end of his reign he convoked a synod in Gondar to discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit in Christ, the chief theological question in Ethiopian history. [798] [793] [779]

Iyāsu I, like many of Ethiopia's rulers, appears to have been moved by deep religious feeling. Describing Iyāsu's religiosity, one of the priests of Gondar wrote an eulogy a few years after his death: 175* 643 781

> The king used to stand at the window of his palace . . . and listen from his tower on high to the singing of the priests and learned men, to their gentle hymns which moistened the bones by their exceeding tenderness. When their offerings pleased him greatly he was pierced with affection for them and drawn by the harmony of their heavenly peace. For this reason . . . he would prepare for them dinners filled with delights, and bid them eat with him in his royal chambers, ornamented all about with the beauty of pure gold and wrought silver. He would take off his gold necklace and present it to them. He adorned them with garments of purple and of staffs interwoven with gold from the treasury of his kingdom. . . . None of the kings before him had done such as he, and none of the clergy of yore had been treated as were his priests and learned men. After the dinners, the king and his priests together sang hymns of joy and jubilation all night long in the palace—in their time of pleasure, in the sweetness of divine ministry.[6]

Iyāsu the Great did much to establish Gondar as the most important center of religious culture in Ethiopia. To this end he brought outstanding priests and learned men from all over the country to his capital. From Gojjam, for example, he brought the great master of religious verse, Kĭfflē Yohānnes, whose lines are remembered even today. The number of teachers in Gondar in his time exceeded five hundred; there were one hundred and fifty at his church Dabra Berhān Selassie alone.* It was under Iyāsu I that the classic subject matter of the higher religious studies in Abyssinia—*zēmā* ("religious 175* 643 633 517

* Dabra Berhān Selassie, one of the two churches built by Iyāsu I, is the only one of the original churches of Gondar which survived later conflagrations of the city. The original paintings which covered its walls have been preserved, as well as the remarkable ceiling from which rows of wide-eyed angels look down from between wooden beams. The church provides separate places for nobility and commoners, and a balcony for the emperor. [346]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 chant"), *qenē*, and *tergum* ("interpretation")—is said to have received its
643 633 definitive organization.

517 Dāwit III appears to have had a pronounced interest in Amharic folk song, for the more perfect enjoyment of which he built a special hall in the imperial compound. Because of this he has been called "Dāwit the Singer"—no term of praise in a land where minstrelsy is looked down on and where serious deportment is expected of royalty. Actually, this epithet, with its connotation of "playboy," was not deserved. Dāwit was a religious man, and in his brief reign built two churches. Knowledgeable Gondarēs today insist that, at first, even the priests were happy to join him in the amusement hall to listen to the one-stringed fiddles and the witty songs. Only after Dāwit's partiality to the
[798] Unctionist doctrine (that the humanity of Christ was made divine through the unction of the Holy Spirit) led him to persecute the Unionist clergy (who hold that humanity and divinity are blended in the single nature of Christ) did they abuse his music hall and tarnish his name.[7]

[341] Interest in architecture was revived by Bakāffā. He constructed a long U-shaped castle which, together with the new castle of his Empress Mantuāb, completed the major complex of buildings in Gondar. Mantuāb's castle is
[532] noted for bas-reliefs of the Ethiopian Cross, while her other castle at nearby Qusquam is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting saints and animals as well.

The tastes of Iyāsu II were especially refined. He cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He built a large and handsome church. He began to construct a palace, in the lavish
[344] decoration of which he took a personal interest. Budge writes of this:

> A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the walls of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts . . . with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. . . . Iyāsu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen.[8]

*175 The decline of imperial power at Gondar after Iyāsu II did not produce a
633 slackening of the cultural activities that had been concentrated there. During
517 the reign of Takla Hāymānot II (1769–77), for example, when the actual
[643] power at Gondar was in the hands of a lord from Tigre, seven more churches
[874] were built. One of these, Ba'ātā Māryām, eventually became one of the most famous schools for the teaching of *aquāquām* ("religious dance"), and in its heyday boasted 276 masters. Another, Abi Egzi, became noted for instruction in *tergum*, and is still a leading school for such studies.

[538] The composition of verse, in forms which had become canonized during the early Gondar period, continued to flourish. As political turmoil often

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth cntury: 175* 633 517 538 [539]

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts. 175* 633 517 53

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā*, or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā*. 175* 159 793 633

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām*, the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere. [535] [178]

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā [214] [538]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

+175 633 [36] [563] [186] [578] streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter.

Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of [829] national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

+175 633 181 The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat*, or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which con- [551] trast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen*, meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, [691] litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā*, land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rīst*.

[795] The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the [517] center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

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priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[43]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. Bút they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories. 565* 512 527 462 [517] [527]

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense. 565* 512 181

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.) 565* 517 691

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver. 565* 517 443 [462] [437] [436] [178]

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression. 565* 527 796 [132]

The Yearly Cycle

565* 796

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians
815 know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the
177 water in places where the Anopheles breed."[25]
[175]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

*883 *Taste.*—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from ex-
177 treme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring
178 both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions.

Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of
[262] which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward
[272] Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages
[273] are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

*883 With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in
264 that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their
177 hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer
178 eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have
*883 sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But
291 because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and
177 using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the
178 modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

*883 In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according
• 517 to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are pre-
53 ferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more
177 popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[28] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 177 178 [535] [533] [276] cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

*883 177 184 Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

*883 • 517 178 177

AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women	85	15	0	(700)
Food	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry	67	26	7	(700)
Music	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†	40	58	2	(700)
Dance	38	56	6	(700)
Drink	24	56	20	(700)
Painting	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gursha*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically identical.

*883 177 [184] school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

*883 517 178 *Morals.*—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

at social gatherings in the course of discussions about nearly any subject. One 691
cannot but conclude that the Amhara litigate to a large extent because for 182
them it is an intrinsically pleasurable activity. At times, in fact, the forms of [517]
litigation are acted out as in a game. *Teṭäyaq,* for example, analogous to the [524]
Western process of cross-examination and a beloved feature of traditional [695]
court procedure, is sometimes practiced at parties though it has been out- [178]
lawed in modern courts.[10] Two men will face a "judge" and try to bedevil each other with sly questions and preposterous claims. The content of the dispute is of no matter; it may be sheer nonsense.

Amhara litigants are ingenious at expressing themselves. They do so with 155
gestures, intonation, and timing that achieve considerable dramatic effect. 537
They are delighted to perform at the slightest provocation. The following 691
incident, recorded during a morning at court in Manz, illustrates that dimen- 695
sion of Amhara litigation which consists of the inherently gratifying expression of oral aggression:

> The defendant had been accused of plowing the plaintiff's land without permission. In fact, however, the plaintiff had given the defendant previous permission to plow there—in front of a group of elders who testified accordingly. The judge therefore ruled against the plaintiff. The plaintiff said he would appeal this decision, because the permission he granted had not been registered in the governor's office and, besides, he had some other complaint to bring against the defendant.
>
> At this point someone in the audience rose and said: "That is all. The judge has ruled against you, and the case is finished." Whereupon the plaintiff told this speaker that he should keep quiet, that his speaking out was against the law, that he had bothered him when the case was tried before a lower level judge previously and should bother him no more. Instead of hushing up, the speaker left his position against the wall and stood next to the defendant, asserting that he would speak in behalf of the latter.
>
> The plaintiff then accused this man of talking out of turn. The judge acknowledged this accusation and called for witnesses. Instantly half a dozen or more men jumped to their feet, eyes bursting with excitement and pride as before a battle, and volunteered to witness against the speaker. One by one, with a great show of oratory, they said their pieces against the man who had spoken out of turn. More than once the judge had to urge these witnesses to stop talking after the evidence had been presented. By this time the substance of the original dispute seemed to have been completely forgotten.

Oral Ambivalence

Much as the oral zone is favored by the Amhara as a center for positive 155
gratifications, both of the passive-receptive and the active-aggressive sort, such

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Although women and children do not have so much freedom, the adult male Amhara who chooses to go off by himself for some reason is not bothered. In at least two cases, moreover, the right to solitude is institutionalized: that of the monk or hermit, who is left to his meditation and prayers, and that of the student of *qenē*, who spends hour after hour in some lonely place composing his verse for the day. 121* 181 571 517 • [562]

Privacy is further protected among the Amhara by the shared belief that others normally do not have a just claim to information about one's person. Even such superficial matters as one's place of origin or one's family connections are not readily disclosed on a first encounter. This differs markedly from the custom of some other groups in Ethiopia, such as the Borana Galla, among whom it is the first order of business in any conversation to identify the "vital statistics" of one another. 121* 181 571 576

The machinery of wax and gold, again, exists as a useful apparatus with which to protect one's private identity and desires. In authoritarian relations, where the superior questions the subordinate with impunity, this evasive and equivocal manner of response constitutes the latter's main defense against yielding the information sought by the questioner. The superior may feel that he has a right to the information he seeks, but, if he is a good Amhara, he understands that he may never be told the whole truth. 121* 181 195 571

Thus, viewed as a whole, Amhara society does not envelop the individual in a complex network of obligations and constraints. The institutional structure of the society is relatively thin. There are few collectivities to which the individual might belong, and fewer still to which he must belong. He can, if he chooses, live at the very periphery of society—as a hermit, a monk, a *shīftā*, a minstrel, a beggar, or, if a woman, as a solitary householder. For the typical Amhara, the main obligations are to fulfil work responsibilities in behalf of the nuclear family, the parents, and to provide income and services for landlords and chieftains. Here, too, there are important degrees of freedom. An oppressive family situation may be readily relieved by divorce; an oppressive landlord or ruler may possibly be brought to justice over time, or in extreme instances fled from; and for the oppressed vassal or retainer, there is always the alternative of running away to another master or of turning to one's own devices. As a Christian, the Amhara is required to fast a good deal; but attendance at church and membership in religious fraternal associations are voluntary, and for the religious scholar there is considerable freedom of movement. 121* 181 571

It is difficult to assess the relative weight of the few but heavy constraints that do exist in Amhara social structure and of the many areas of real independence. But in view of the considerable latitude for unconstrained action that has been described in this section, it would seem valid to characterize 121* 181

701 It is noteworthy that the military ranking of the com-
554 moner-soldiery, which made up the rank and file of the fighters on foot, was not nearly so formal. The fortunes of war, if they did not leave him dead or maimed, could move him upward to lower nobility. Failing to achieve that, veterans could still hope for a modest fief of "gult" land, enabling him to play the "telleq saw" (great man) role over some hapless "gabbar" peasants. Meanwhile, pseudo-"telleq säw" behaved much like the proverbial sergeant of any army, making his men fear him more than any enemy, rewarding them with feasts, in this case of raw beef and medium-alcoholic mead. The only way he could maintain his following of individual-minded Amhara soldiers, each one of whom wanted to be a hero himself, was by continous personal bravery coupled with cleverness in military tactics. But here the similarity ends, for the non-noble chief of Amhara warriors had no pride of a non-commissioned officer; his ambition was to become a real "telleq säw", a minor nobleman owning "rest" lands.

782 Personal bravery was expressed and recalled in
726 formal boasting, a tradition that survives to this day
521 even for such civilian occasions as weddings. Prior to
535 battle each potential hero would go into a personal song and dance called "fukkara". The ceremonial dance accompanying his boast proceeded as follows: Spear, or rifle, held horizontally behind head, just above shoulders; the head moves in increasingly rapid motion from right to

782 left, while boasts are shouted rythmically. Personal
726 boasts are interspersed with shouts of loyalty to the
521 emperor ("Addis Ababa! Addis Ababa!"), or recalling
535 past loyal bravery in the service of a provincial chieftain. Fukkara is performed also before the military games of "ganna" on Christmas, and outside the church on Epiphany (Ṭemqät), to express the readiness of the young warriors to defend the faith, and on weddings to boast of warrior ancestors and so impress the in-laws.

The song and dance is also referred to as "dan-
[533] kira " (stomping); to distinguish it from the tamer entertainment song, "ḫafan" performed by female "azmari" who perform accompanied by a violin ("masenqo") or banjo ("qrar"), often recounting tales of renown in ballad form. The "fukkara" in military life takes place before the "joy tent" ("das") of the king, before the "denkwan" (from diwan, round cotton or hair tent) of feudal lords on the march; or, in honor of a successful "killer" ("gedday") of a lion, rhinoceros, elephant or human enemy, in presence of the trophy.

[72] The dance after the victorious battle is called "hoto". It is a simple jumping up and down, brandishing spear, rifle or stick vertically, reminiscent of the Central and West African dancing to exhaustion. It is accompanied by refrains, shouted frequently in response to impromptu poetry made up to celebrate the event, such as "yebahalal jebo" (the hyena will swallow him, i.e. the slain enemy). This refrain is also used before the battle, to defy the enemy and pretend that victory

782 is already assured. It is also performed on Epiphany,
726 to defy human as well as spirit enemiesoof the Faith.
521 Before battle, it was the response of the simple sol-
535 diers, ("wätadär") to the pep-talk ("arraga") given them by the commander, encouraging them to stand their ground.

727 After thevictorious battle, the soldier could look
554 forward to taking part in the royal feasting, the "gabber", and to lording it over the local "gabbar" peasant who had to supply the means and the womenfolk. It is at least part of the basis of the pride (critics say false sense of their own worth) of the free Amhara over subject peoples, enabling evan the simplest soldier to feel that he belongs to the proprietory class. Back home, he therefore despises manual labor, and even in going into battle he used to conscript peasant boys to carry his heavy rhinoceros-hide shield ("gasha"). These boys often became replacements for slain warriors when they could secure weapons, and, in turn, recruited servants for themselves.

411 The typical weapon was the spear (the word "tor" means both war and spear) until replaced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by rifles, though late-medieval muskets and Ottoman firearms were available to a few from the Portuguese period in the 16th century. The spear, some in use as late as the Italian invasion of 1935/6, sometimes had two or three prongs. Sabers were rare, and available mostley to noble officers. They were of the curved, Damascene type. Daggers of

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

302 imported toilet requisites of this kind, and charge fabulous prices for them.

The curious custom of stopping up the nostrils is still met with, though I imagine it is becoming less and less common; but one still constantly sees natives on their way to market with a piece of green leaf, or a flower petal, protruding from their noses, and I remember on one occasion when an Abyssinian lady, who had been paying us a visit, was leaving the house, she produced some cotton-wool and stuffed it carefully in both nostrils.

181 Their love of pageantry, display, and functions is quite Oriental, and is well exemplified by the splendour of some of their religious and Court ceremonies.

•521 Amusements are few. The people seem to prefer to sit and chatter; they are great talkers, and whether in the servants' quarters in a house or round their fires on trek, one hears the clatter of their tongues almost incessantly.

492 All Abyssinians can ride more or less, and they are on the whole good horsemen, though indifferent horse-masters. Except in war, or on the occasion of a fantasia, they seldom ride horses; for purposes of daily use mules are almost universally preferred; all but the poorest women also ride mules for getting about.

The Abyssinian saddle is of wood with a pommel back and front and a sheepskin and some padding in the middle, the whole covered with a brightly embroidered saddle-cloth. The stirrups are round and very small, as the Abyssinian inserts only his big toe therein. The bits are horrible instruments, consisting of a ring round the lower jaw and a spike which, when the reins are pulled, sticks into the roof of the animal's

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

words often carry *double-entendre* as a matter of course; when he listens, he is ever on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. As one of my Ethiopian colleagues has said: "Wax and gold is anything but a formula—it is a way of life." 538 181

In essence, wax and gold is simply a more refined and stylized manifestation of the Amhara's basic manner of communicating. This manner is indirect, often secretive. Amharic conversation is larded with vague remarks like *Mīn yeshāllāl?* ("What is better?") when the speaker has failed to indicate what is the issue at hand, or *Tādyās!*, an interjection which can mean almost anything. Often, when the speaker is then quizzed about the issue at hand, he will give an answer that does not reveal what is really on his mind at all, and even when he does, the person with whom he is talking is likely to interpret his response as a disguise. 195 521 538

Wax and gold embodies this fundamental indirection in speech by means of the studied use of ambiguity. Apart from its literary and religious manifestations, wax and gold appears in the common life of the traditional Amhara on a variety of occasions and serves a number of diverse functions. 195 182 538

It provides the medium for an inexhaustible supply of humor, among a wry people who prefer the clever, double-edged remark to comic actions or incongruous situations. This includes the wit of daily life—the invention of puns and sly retorts, the telling and retelling of good anecdotes and famous lines—as well as the more formalized humor on festive occasions, where minstrels sing the *sam-ennā warq* verses extemporized by the guests. 538 195 182 522

It provides a means for insulting one's fellows in a socially approved manner, in a culture which requires fastidious etiquette in social relations and punishes direct insults by heavy fines. *Sam-ennā warq* insulting, too, has its more stylized expressions, as at the drink-house, where one may find persons competing in a prolonged exchange of more or less disguised insults, or in time of political or military conflict, when opposing lords were wont formerly to satirize one another with ambiguous couplets. 538 195 182 578

It provides a technique for defending the sphere of privacy against excessive intrusion, in a social order that thrives on rumor and gossip and puts most of its people at the mercy of superiors. While vague and evasive responses often suffice to dampen the enthusiasm of the tax collector or the curious neighbor, *sam-ennā warq* constitutes another potent weapon of self-defense. 538 195 182 571 [521]

Finally, it provides the one outlet for criticism of authority figures in a society which strictly controls every kind of overt aggression toward authority, be it parental, religious, or political. Thus it has been a safety valve for certain social tensions, enabling, for example, witty individuals to satirize the monarch himself and still live to repeat the witticism—so long as its subject was himself duly appreciative of the cleverness of the lines. 538 195 182 578 571 [687] [522]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories. 565* 512 527 462 [517] [521]

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense. 565* 512 181

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.) 565* 517 691

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver. 565* 517 443 [462] [437] [436] [178]

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression. 565* 527 796 [132]

The Yearly Cycle 565*

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after 796

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

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* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

The boundaries of your lips are like the sugar cane; 155
No matter how much one sucks them, one is never satisfied. 538 832

And in one of the few lyric passages in the first novel ever written in Amharic, the author resorts to the imagery of kissing in describing the beauty of an army camp at sunset: [539]

> The plain on which they had encamped was vaster than the mind's eye could measure. Except for that hill on which he stood, there were no elevations or declivities; no roots to trip or confound the foot; not a stone to discomfit the eye. It looked like a calm sea that every breeze had spared. The boundaries of heaven and earth were united by lips of love; lip to lip they were joined like the parts of fitted basketry. It appeared as though it would hurt them to separate, that they had entered a vow not to part.[5] [539]

Talking for the sake of talking is another oral outlet of which the Amhara is generally fond. "In every country," remarked Arnauld d'Abbadie, "the plowman is miserly and sly; but the Ethiopian is, in addition, particularly loquacious."[6] The simple greeting of acquaintances evokes a barrage of ritualistic conversation, a phenomenon which stunned the Englishman Harris: 155 521

> Even two old crones, who are obviously tottering on the very brink of the grave, and who are afflicted with every pain and with every sorrow entailed by the fall of our first parents, never meet in the street without indulging in a string of good wishes which are reiterated so long as their breath will permit. "How are you? How do ye do? How have you passed your time? Are you well? Are you very well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well? Are you not well?"—are questions which serve as the prelude to a thousand other interrogatories; and at each response the Deity must be invoked as to the unadulterated happiness and perfect felicity that has been unremittingly experienced since the last meeting.[7] [596]

A number of other conventions provide further opportunities for this pleasure in talking. Anecdotes and gossip are not merely reported, but are expounded at length with the aid of colorful expressions and gestures. Riddle games are enjoyed by adults as well as young people. Men vie with one another at length in a semiformalized kind of playful boasting. In the church schools all reading is done aloud, a habit which persists among many students of secondary schools when they study outside of class. [524] [876]

A related pleasure in making sounds for their own sake appears in the Amhara's delight in repeating the words or nonsense syllables of his folk songs. On a more refined level, there is his evident pleasure in lulling over and savoring the lines of a choice couplet. We have here for a whole culture an instance of what Brill has ascribed to the poets: 191 155

> Poetry is a sensuous or mystic outlet through words, or, as it were, through a chewing and sucking of nice words and phrases. The poet plays with the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Mary intervened, placing on the empty side for good deeds a goblet of water which Balaya Sab had once given to a sick beggar out of pity; and the Eater of Men was saved. In the pictorial representation of this legend, Balaya Sab is portrayed cutting off pieces of human flesh with a curved knife in the manner in which raw beef is attacked at the Amhara table. 155 266 773

Most Amhara know some sort of tale about a cannibal. The topic is familiar enough that they are able to invent new ones. One boy told me he made up the following story to explain the nature of cannibals to his younger brother: 155 266 538

> Once there was a cannibal. He lived among many people. He had no food in his house; he was poor. But even if he had not been poor, he just liked to eat the flesh of man. In his house was a big hole which he covered with a carpet. He would invite somebody into his house and tell him to sit down on the chair over the hole. When the person sat down and fell into the hole, he would climb down by a ladder and eat him. In this way he ate all the people in his village one by one—about a hundred people. When he had eaten all the people in his village he returned to live in the forest, because there was nobody left to eat.

The cannibal motif appears in more subtle form in the parlor game known as *gabatā*, in which the aim is to accumulate as many pebbles as possible by moving them around a board with six holes on each side. In *gabatā* the active acquisition of pebbles is called "eating" and the passive acquisition is "drinking." Similarly, those who play chess or checkers refer to the process of taking a man as "eating" him. It is notable, moreover, that the Amhara version of the old riddle about how to transport a certain number of incompatible objects across the river in one boat is posed in terms of three human beings and three cannibals. 155 266 524

Oral sadism is further manifest among the Amhara by the nature of their speech. The Amhara are not only loquacious but also tend, both in manner of delivery and in content of conversation, to be biting and intrusive. Backbiting, insulting, arguing, and litigating are among their more characteristic modes of self-expression. 155 521 191

Backbiting and insulting, and the fear of being the victim of such activities, are the focus of much attention in Amhara culture. Concern about the former is expressed in a number of Amharic proverbs: 155 521 578 [539]

> If the mouth lacks work, it will backbite a friend.
>
> If you praise a man once, you will be in trouble if you backbite him later.
>
> If a man is a backbiter, listen for my sake when he talks to you.

Straightforward insults erupt the polite surface of Amhara social relations only under unusually heated circumstances, though it is customary for social superiors to direct a certain amount of abusive banter at their inferiors as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 a matter of course. In the more covert forms of expression, however, insulting
• 521 is a favorite practice among Amhara. Ambiguous language and obscure
578 allusion make possible a good deal of socially admissible, and admired, insult-
[195] ing. It is chiefly due to his mastery of this genre that the Amhara have come to idealize Alaqā Gabra Hānnā who, in the words of a psychologically sophis-
[554] ticated Ethiopian informant, by "skillful use of 'wax and gold' has defiled everything that is sacred in Abyssinian tradition: this includes Mother, God, Emperor, and Patriarch, to say nothing of the ignorant clergy, peasantry, and slaves. Gabra Hānnā . . . is the summation of the oral aggressive trend in every Abyssinian, of which the *dabtarā* in the king's court and the singer in the drink-house are only mediocre representations."

155 Wax and gold is, furthermore, the vehicle for the mode of expression which
578 Erikson calls "oral retention." Just as the Amhara tends to be tight-lipped
[195] and evasive when confronted by questions he does not feel like answering, so he finds pleasure in stubbornly withholding his meaning from his audience through employing figures and allusions which no one can understand. This may be understood as a passive form of oral aggression. For the untutored, however, the active aggressive component is probably more satisfying. Most Amhara males look forward to occasions when they can insult with impunity, such as in victory after the games at Christmas or in the setting of a drink-house, where their skillfully improvised verses are repeated and sung by a minstrel. The oral sadistic spirit of this latter scene has been captured with great fidelity by a contemporary Amhara novelist. Describing the moment in a drink-house when the minstrel begins bowing his one-stringed violin and gets ready to accept verses from the crowd, he writes: "*And now every one of them prepares a bullet of verse, and gets cocked to fire veiled insults.*"[18]

155 Two-way communication among Amhara is frequently colored by a biting
521 and intrusive manner as well. Amharic conversation gravitates toward a highly argumentative style. Casual disagreement, or even neutral deliberation over a common problem, often engenders a kind of protracted bickering to which the Amhara have given an onomatopoetic name, "*çhīqeçhīq*." In
[691] its more institutionalized form, this argumentativeness becomes litigation, which has long been regarded as the national sport of Abyssinia.

691 As the primary means of distributing land-use rights and of reducing the
182 likelihood of resort to violence in personal disputes, litigation serves functions of unmistakable importance in Amhara society. Yet the frequency and intensity with which Amhara take part in litigation suggests that it is motivated by non-rational factors in good part. Litigants have often lost many times the original value of some item under dispute in the course of pursuing litigation over it through the courts for many years. The language and colorful gestures of the court may be observed among Amhara in their homes or

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ORALITY AND MODERNIZATION

121 155 571 The preoccupation with orality which appears in their traditional orientations has not disappeared among those Abyssinians who have acquired a modern education. In some respects, that experience has tended to intensify it. A state of prolonged dependence was institutionalized in the government school system. The hiring of most educated Ethiopians by the government has meant that most of them live in a position of waiting to receive their salary—or *ĭnjarā,* as they themselves put it—from the central authority. Thus the image of a bountiful father-figure has become the more firmly established. [643] While in his own person the Emperor has projected an image of vigorous leadership, he has at the same time taken pains to promote this old pattern of oral dependence, by sending gifts of food to students and of champagne to educated officials when they marry; by continuing to provide politically relevant feasts at the palace; and, like the traditional Amhara father-feeder, by frequently reminding his subjects that everything they have they owe to him. This pattern is replicated to some extent in the relations between members of the new nobility and their younger relatives and retainers.

Part of the self-reproach of some of the modern-educated Ethiopians is directed against this passive, receptive aspect of their motivational orientation. Their criticism says in effect: instead of drafting proposals to reform our departments, teaching or writing in order to educate our countrymen, or seeking to understand better the complexities of Ethiopia's current situation, we are far more likely to be found sitting about drinking coffee in our offices, sipping beer at some hotel, playing chess, savoring felicitous phrases, and going to parties where eating and drinking are invariably the main order of business.

Insofar as they are moved to take a more active approach to their situation, moreover, their effectiveness is blocked by a tendency to fall into the tradi- [578] tional oral aggressive patterns of behavior. Their manner of criticizing the government, or certain officials, is frequently one of wholesale insulting. When confronted by a difficult problem, whenever they do not fall back to [521] a posture of dependence on superiors, they incline toward argumentation, *çhĭqeçhĭq,* backbiting, and mutual incrimination. Experts in debate, they are unaccustomed to the arts of creative discussion.

121 155 It is not my intention to suggest that the phenomena examined in this chapter are in total conflict with the Ethiopians' search for leadership. Many aspects of Amhara orality are not in the least inconsistent with the demands of a modernizing culture. Many aspects of Amhara orality would appear to be of enduring value—the excellence in debate and the appreciation of literary subtlety, the preparation of fine feasts and the enjoyment of the table. And it is not necessary for a very large number of Amhara to change their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 571 [764] Spontaneous co-operation is most in evidence among the Amhara at times of crisis. When death is announced, relatives and friends promptly repair to the home of the deceased and offer their help. They build the coffin and construct a *däss* (a temporary shelter near the house to accommodate all the expected visitors). They bring food and drink to help provide for the many who will come to pay their respects, and will similarly provide help on the occasion of the big memorial feasts to follow. Like assistance is rendered during other crises, such as prolonged illnesses or fire. Such forms of co-operation set another significant limit to egoistic orientation among the Amhara.

*121 181 156 571 578 691 It is in the realm of interaction involving serious interests, touching layers of the personality deeper than those required for the formalities of etiquette, that Amhara egoism is most conspicuous. Here everything seems to conspire against generous communication and concord of opinion. As we have already observed, the Amhara are quick to become argumentative in ordinary conversation. *Litigation* is one of the most prominent forms of interaction among the Amhara. One can scarcely spend a day in the Amhara countryside without encountering litigants, whether under a tree, at a marketplace, or in the courtyard of some lord. A nobleman can never travel about the country without being accosted on the way by litigants anxious to have him hear their stories.

121 181 571 578 691 171 Litigation is, of course, an endemic feature of peasant civilizations. Yet there can be no doubt that for the Amhara this form embodies a basic psychological disposition that differs from that of the people of other peasant civilizations. In traditional China, to take a case of marked contrast, such interpersonal conflict, far from being relished, was deliberately avoided. The Chinese considered going to court to be an extravagance, and the village judge was one of the most underemployed members of the community. In China, parties to a dispute preferred to assemble at the teahouse and to seek a solution through discussion and negotiation. The Amhara, on the other hand, seeks to maximize the opportunity for self-assertion through litigious disputes. Ordinary sociability among the Amhara is saturated with references to litigation. Current court cases comprise one of the more common topics of conversation.

*121 181 571 578 [69] [521] Beyond litigation, *conflict* is often expressed in more violent forms. Fights with the *dulä* erupt when altercation becomes too heated. Throwing stones is another accepted mode of combat, especially among youth. Protracted enmities tend to eventuate in such acts as house-burning, assault with swords or rifles, and (according to Amhara belief, at least) poisoning.

While it is true that Amhara culture provides means and a certain amount

* Some indication of the gross national significance of this phenomenon is afforded by the following comparison: twenty-seven high court judges are sufficient to handle the litigation for all of England and Wales; the corresponding number for Ethiopia is *one hundred and eighteen*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 156 776 Amhara religious experience. The favorite written literature consists of those genres which glorify individual saints for their special powers and great deeds. The *gadel* depicts the heroic struggles of saints against temptations and persecutions; the *tāmher* relates their miraculous feats; and the *malka,* a verse form of some fifty five-line stanzas, consists of a rhapsodic description of the physical features and moral qualities of some saintly subject. The various *qenē* stanza types, moreover, serve largely to glorify individuals through the exotic use of religious symbolism—especially the nine-line *mawaddas,* which means "praise."

*121 156 538 776

*121 156 776 While these literary genres are accessible only to the learned few, the multitude also adores individual saints. Each of the saints has his particular following in the population, his popularity varying according to region and to the powers for which he is famed. This idolization has been directed not only to angels and legendary figures from the past, but also, to a lesser extent, to contemporaneous religious virtuosi and outstanding masters of the religious books.

*121 156 554

Perhaps more prominent in Amhara life has been the glorification of brave men. The Abyssinian military ethic took the form of a cult of the hero. Personal bravery—not discipline, training, honor, or self-sacrificing loyalty—was the paramount virtue in Abyssinian warfare. The *guabaz* warrior was rewarded by his chief, praised by the minstrel, and esteemed by the populace. His bravery was ranked according to the fearfulness of the enemy vanquished. Thus, in Menelik's day the fanciest headdress was given to a noble who killed one of the fierce Danakil, a less fancy headdress being awarded the killer of the tough Raya Galla. Such actions constituted the one area in which personal boasting was permitted and, in fact, institutionalized in the genre known as *fukarā.*

*121 156 703 [554] [521]

We are indebted to Arnauld d'Abbadie for a firsthand account of the effect of this cult of the individual hero on the orientation of the Abyssinian warrior, in a passage so rare it is worth citing at length:

> The type of combat which [the Ethiopian] prefers over all others—because it gives him the most freedom to expand his personality—is that where, due to insufficiency of terrain or other circumstances, the chiefs can engage only a part of their forces. He loves to watch the skirmishers of the two armies spy out and accost one another while declaiming their martial themes. Joyously he throws off his toga to clad himself in some military ornament . . . and to mix himself in the widely spaced lines which follow one another and rise to the attack. He loves to comprehend the rationale of the manouvers of the two parties, to be able to judge the blows, to know under which hand the victims fall, to choose from among the enemy to avenge their death, to adapt his movements to the instincts which animate his companions, and to feel the earth tremble under the charges of cavalry which come as a squall

196 Amhara provinces, but is entering through the provincial capitals, such as Gondar, at the present time. Semantic drift can be traced along these lines.

d) Literature; Special Argots.

538 The religious character of most of the traditional Amharic-Geez literature has already been described in connection with the church.

Some of the material of liturgy finds its way into lay usage. Rhymes, "getem", originally composed for devotional poetry, have long found their way to chants of praise sung to warlords, feudal nobles, the king, and by extension, philosophic-sentimental poetry in general.

Folk literature, which is oral, contains numerous stories resembling Aesop's fables, in which witty repartee among or with animals is featured (Footnote 89).

538 Individual poets and other authors, if they existed in number,
● 522 have largely been forgotten, because of the cultural prohibition against writing down any but sacred matter, and the restricted literacy. But a fortunate exception exists in the person of an Amhara wit named Alläqa (lit. chief, an honorific title) Gäbre-Hanna, who was a contemporary of Emperor Menelik II in the late 19th century. (Footnote 90) He, too, apparently did not write down any of his many witticisms, but since he lived fairly recently, commuting between his home in Gondar and the then incipient city of Addis Ababa, he is still popularly as well as officially identified with his stories in both localities, and some of the anecdotes even tie his person to historical events.

Footnote 89 - Courlander & Leslau: The Fire on the Mountain, 1950

Footnote 90 - Messing, S. D.: Ethiopian Folktales ascribed to the 19th Century Wit, Alläqa Gäbre-Hanna. (in) Journal of American Folklore, Jan - March 1957, pp. 69-72.

538 He was a master of "sowasso"; of the pun which utilizes gemina-
522 tion and other grammatical possibilities to make an ironic observation and befuddle the unwary, so that they become public laughing stocks. Sometimes the joke was on his own Rabelaisian appetites in food and sex. More often he spoofed the pompousness of feudal and even royal powers, their love for amassing rules and regulations for their courts; and the pretended puritan piety of the priests, behind which facade he recognized witty insight into the minds of men, whose salty comments and behavior in private life he liked to burlesque. For example:

[539]

> "One day the servant of a witty priest suffered from a chigger (sandflea) embedded in his foot. The priest pried it out with a pin and threw it into the fire. A friend, watching this, objected jokingly, saying: "Why did you do this? May it not multiply in the fire?" Replied the priest: "It may be warmed, but not 'done up' ("yäzäräw" - also means begotten through sexual intercourse)."

Amhara listeners find such "impolite" stories extremely amusing.

195 The Amhara people recognize the esoteric use that can be made of
198 their language, and they utilize this. Hence the expression "he is talking Amarinya", meaning "he is speaking in esoteric ways", with double meanings, hidden meanings, to becloud his real purpose so that he cannot be accused of lying and can say later that he meant something else. For example, the verb "qanna" can have the following meanings:

> was right, direct, correct
> was honest, just
> succeeded, prospered
> became jealous, envious
> became zealous, fanatic, intolerant.

198 Certain occupational specialties have traditionally made use of

576 Very Polite: "shängo wätta" - (lit. he went to a meeting).

514 Extremely Polite: "twaro zorä" - (lit. he left home).

192 Extremely Polite: "shersher wätta" - (lit. he went for a walk).

522 Wit, used in court or by homespun philosophers to entertain their friends, compensates for the many formalities in this culture and society. The famous wit, Aläqa Gäbre-Hanna has already been cited.

538 Proverbs, "tärät" and riddles may be used to make a comment of esoteric meanings, understandable only to one's initiates. Proverbs fulfill a social function, beyond mere entertainment, for even philosophy, being utilized to begin any negotiation, such as for marriage. This is emphasized in proverbs on proverbs:

[539]

"Like Halleluyah before the chanting (in church),
(begin with) a proverb before the discussion".
"(to drink) mead, (first get) a container,
to talk, (begin with) a proverb".

538 Proverbs and riddles used by parents, teachers and leaders of
593 society have a pedagogic function, and can be used to reprimand and
[86] instruct. Conflict between father and son, the complexities involved, and the possibility that contrary to the major cultural assumption of parental superiority, the son may sometimes have logic on his side, is indicated by the following:

[539] "(Says the father):

"Your Father you cannot accuse (e.g. in court, shaming yourself)
nor plow the sky,
nor roast water".

"(Replies the son):

"The father, by his own shame he will stand accused;
the sky, by lighting it is plowed;
water, in a pot it is steamed".

191 212 538 Ethiopian Folktales Ascribed to the Late Nineteenth Century Amhara Wit, Alāqa Gābre-Hanna:—Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia today, is gradually becoming the *lingua franca* of the empire. Until recently it was spoken mainly on the fertile highland plateau of central and northwestern Ethiopia, in part of what was formerly known as Abyssinia. Predominantly Coptic Christian, the Amhara people have sacred writings in Ge'ez, old Ethiopic. Amharic has adapted this ancient script to its own use. The folklore of the Amhara is mainly oral (except for religious texts) and represents a crosscurrent of Middle Eastern and African cultures. Traditionally, Amhara society was one of priests, feudal [565] lords, and peasants. Lower on the social scale were non-Coptic ethnic groups who performed such important economic functions as ironsmithing and pottery-making.

538 This is reflected in the folklore. On non-religious, everyday subjects, the wit of the Amhara is peasant-like, earthy, full of tales of Rabelaisian appetites and sly solutions to human 522 problems. The Amharic language lends itself readily to puns and hidden meanings, since 193 many verbs can have double or triple interpretations due to the hidden variations in the basic verbal stem and the absence or presence of gemination of some consonants. The listener must pay close attention. If he misinterprets the context and fails to discern the pun, he is often made the butt of the next tricky joke by those who have heard it before. The more a storyteller and wit masters the *sowaso* 'grammar' of the Amharic language, the better he can manipulate this humor.

538 A master of this art was *Alāqa* 'Chief' (an honorary title) Gābre-Hanna, a contem- 159 porary of Emperor Menelik just before the end of the nineteenth century. As far as is known, he never put into writing any of his stories, witticisms, linguistic gymnastics, and philosophical puns. But to this day the peasants and even the nobles remember his stories well and tell them so often that a number of versions have developed.

He was a native of Gondar and had all the provincial pride of the "Gondarey" in the one-time greatness of this town and district that is now back country. He lived at the time the present capital, Addis Ababa, was being built and the King of Shoa had become Emperor of Abyssinia. Like many another "Gondarey," Alāqa Gābre-Hanna pretended to disdain the newfangled importations of Emperor Menelik and the growing employment of subjugated Galla tribal chiefs at the imperial court. Jokingly, he took the liberty of referring to the Emperor's home province, Shoa, as "that Galla province." (Even today much [191] Galliña is spoken there, a result of the sixteenth century conquest of the area by Galla tribes.) No one else would have dared such a remark, but he was popular with Emperor Menelik and especially with the Empress Taitu, and could tell them certain frank truths and tease them with irony in a semi-polite manner. However, he was not a court jester.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Since Adam your lip did eat of that Tree
539 The Savior my heart has been hung up for thee.
19

In this couplet the wax of Adam's sin and Christ's crucifixion in his behalf has been used as a form in which to pour a love message. A literal translation of the wax of the couplet is:

Because Adam ate of the apple from the Tree of Knowledge
The Savior of the World has been crucified for thee.

To savor the gold of the couplet fully, one must know that the verb meaning "was crucified," *tasaqala,* may also signify "is anxious to be near." So a literal translation of the gold would be:

Because of your [tempting] lips
My heart is anxious to be near thee.

538 In other more commonly used figures, the duplexity of the message be-
19 comes less explicit. In figures known as *hiber and merimer,* the wax and gold are combined in the same word or phrase instead of being put side by side. These figures thus correspond to the English pun. In verses which employ these figures the wax is often but a contrived and transparent excuse for getting to the real point, which appears only in the pun line. Such verses are
[522] highly prized, however, for the Amhara tends to regard the pun as a very
538 high form of humor. Here are two examples of Amharic couplets based on
539 simple puns:
522
19

(1) *Ya-min ṭiqem ṭallā ya-min ṭiqem ṭajji*
Tallāt sishañu bunā adargaw enji.

Of what use is *ṭallā,* of what use is *ṭajji?**
When seeing an enemy off, serve him coffee.

(2) *Yābbāt eddā la-lijj yebāl nabar dero:*
Bāyāt eddā gabāhu ennē-mā'zandero.

In olden times a father's debt was passed down to his son;
But here I have a debt today by grandfather begun.

The pun in the first example lies in the phrase *bunā adargaw* ("serve him coffee"), which by elision becomes *bun adargaw* ("reduce him to ashes"). In the second couplet the pun hinges on the word *bāyat,* which signifies "grandfather" but may also be understood to represent *bāyhuāt* ("because I saw her"). The gold meaning of this couplet is thus: It used to be said that one inherited the debt of one's father, but in my case it was the sight of her that put me into debt.

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[273] * *Ṭallā* is a kind of beer made from barley. *Ṭajj* (pronounced *ṭajji* here for the sake of rhyme) is mead.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

words often carry *double-entendrè* as a matter of course; when he listens, he 538
is ever on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. As one of my 181
Ethiopian colleagues has said: "Wax and gold is anything but a formula—it is a way of life."

In essence, wax and gold is simply a more refined and stylized manifesta- 195
tion of the Amhara's basic manner of communicating. This manner is indi- 521
rect, often secretive. Amharic conversation is larded with vague remarks 538
like *Mīn yeshāllāl?* ("What is better?") when the speaker has failed to indicate what is the issue at hand, or *Tādyās!*, an interjection which can mean almost anything. Often, when the speaker is then quizzed about the issue at hand, he will give an answer that does not reveal what is really on his mind at all, and even when he does, the person with whom he is talking is likely to interpret his response as a disguise.

Wax and gold embodies this fundamental indirection in speech by means 195
of the studied use of ambiguity. Apart from its literary and religious mani- 182
festations, wax and gold appears in the common life of the traditional Am- 538
hara on a variety of occasions and serves a number of diverse functions.

It provides the medium for an inexhaustible supply of humor, among a 538
wry people who prefer the clever, double-edged remark to comic actions or 195
incongruous situations. This includes the wit of daily life—the invention of 182
puns and sly retorts, the telling and retelling of good anecdotes and famous 522
lines—as well as the more formalized humor on festive occasions, where minstrels sing the *sam-ennā warq* verses extemporized by the guests.

It provides a means for insulting one's fellows in a socially approved man- 538
ner, in a culture which requires fastidious etiquette in social relations and 195
punishes direct insults by heavy fines. *Sam-ennā warq* insulting, too, has its 182
more stylized expressions, as at the drink-house, where one may find persons 578
competing in a prolonged exchange of more or less disguised insults, or in time of political or military conflict, when opposing lords were wont formerly to satirize one another with ambiguous couplets.

It provides a technique for defending the sphere of privacy against exces- 538
sive intrusion, in a social order that thrives on rumor and gossip and puts 195
most of its people at the mercy of superiors. While vague and evasive re- 182
sponses often suffice to dampen the enthusiasm of the tax collector or the 571
curious neighbor, *sam-ennā warq* constitutes another potent weapon of self- [521]
defense.

Finally, it provides the one outlet for criticism of authority figures in a 538
society which strictly controls every kind of overt aggression toward author- 195
ity, be it parental, religious, or political. Thus it has been a safety valve for 182
certain social tensions, enabling, for example, witty individuals to satirize 578
the monarch himself and still live to repeat the witticism—so long as its sub- 571
ject was himself duly appreciative of the cleverness of the lines. [687] [522]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

older or more prestigious males are addressed as *gāshē* ("my shield"); the corresponding term for females is *etēyē* ("my sister"). Much older people are addressed by words signifying "father" or "mother."

It is true that the forms of respect toward superiors are often repeated mechanically and sometimes serve to cover up a distinctly hostile disposition toward certain superiors. They nevertheless do represent to some extent a genuine solidaristic sentiment—perhaps the most profound and influential social sentiment in the Amhara social system. It rests in the last analysis on the fact that the Amhara family develops a pronounced sense of filial devotion as well as habits of filial obedience. Amhara society can dispense with horizontal solidarities and communal attachments because it is held together, sufficiently for traditional purposes, at least, by an infinite network of "father-son" relationships.

The egoistic élement in the hierarchical pattern is further modified by a sort of joking relationship that sometimes develops between inferiors and superiors. The harsh interrogation of inferiors at times shades into a sort of wry banter; sons or servants may be called "thief" or "scoundrel" in an undertone of unmistakable affection. At times, moreover, the direction of the jesting may be reversed. Amhara servants are noted for playing practical jokes on their masters, which the latter usually appreciate when the jests are clever.[21] Here again, wax and gold is the perfect medium—for expressing aggression against a superior while at the same time appearing to maintain the respect relationship. The following couplet, attributed to Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē, aptly illustrates this genre:

Ennānta maḳuānnentotch ba-mīn waṭ balātchu?
Eñnām ba-shurwātchen ennāntam bāssātchu.

What sauce, my lords, was on your plate?
We had but peas; 'twas fish you ate.[22]

Here the poet appears to be complimenting the nobles on their more elegant cuisine at a banquet; but there is a pun on the word *bāssātchu,* literally "with your fish," for it may also be taken to mean "you took more than your share."

Within the hierarchical pattern, finally, one finds expressed a certain amount of generosity which, as we have suggested, is relatively uncommon in relations among peers. This appears in connection with the *begging* and *almsgiving* which occur in many sectors of Amhara society. For church students beyond the elementary level, begging is the primary means of livelihood. Youths who have left home to study *zēmā* or *qenē* with a master wander about today, as in former times, carrying small baskets and pleading: "For the sake of Mary! For the sake of God!" in order to get their daily morsels. The activity is so organized that when a large number of students

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

resist taking responsibility and showing initiative. In general, they reveal little capacity for self-discipline in a collective setting. 121* 571 156

The need for what can be accomplished through the new associations, however, transcends the intermittent obstacles to their effective functioning posed by such individualistic behavior. As modernization proceeds and as Ethiopians gain experience in these associations, one may expect that the more disruptive aspects of such behavior will be transformed in the direction of greater compliance with the implicit norms of group functioning. Amhara in the modernizing sector have no choice now but to replace the ethos of the *shĭftā,* the litigant, and the wandering student with that of the president, secretary, and treasurer if they are to remain true to the ambitions that have been awakened within them. 121* 181 571

There are, moreover, a number of respects in which adequate functioning in modern groups may be supported by behavioral traits inherited from the past. Three of these traits in particular deserve to be mentioned in this context. One is the fundamentally respectful orientation toward others. This serves to reduce the outbreak of dissension among group members, and in the attitude of respect and obedience toward figures of authority provides the basis, given capable and decisive leaders, for a significant amount of concerted action among group members. A second trait of some importance is the acceptance of conflict as a natural and not particularly threatening component of human relations. This means that group members are ready to admit and deal with such conflicts as do emerge in their ranks, and are experienced in the resolution of such conflicts through the agency of elderly mediators or the more formal processes of litigation. Finally, the Amhara sense of humor—wry, realistic, attuned to the ironies of existence—introduces a salutary leavening ingredient into group process. It provides an outlet for the release of tensions in group situations and adds a certain flavor to group experience that often more than compensates for the lack of a hyperinstrumental orientation. 121* 571 156 [578] [522] [154]

The Question of Individuality 121*

Although effective modernization is unthinkable without a significant increase in solidaristic sentiments and rationalized organization, in Ethiopia as elsewhere, the fate of the other aspect of individualism discussed in this chapter—individuality as a cultural value—poses a more controversial question. If the essence of modernity is the systematic effort to control rationally man's physical and social environment, then the society of *1984* may be claimed as a possible modern utopia no less than the society in which all children go to Montessori schools and all adults paint, undergo psychoanalysis, and study Great Books. The cultivation of individuality stands as but one of many pos-

867 [300] lock in addition. But boys never wear the ring of hair, which would be insulting to them.

864 When sex differentiation becomes more emphasized in the culture, at about seven, sex talk and sex play goes on primarily within the peer group of the same sex. The invitation to do this is "enkä sälantiya", (lit. let us play at guessing impolite matters). They play hide and seek, whisper, re-enact what they have observed their parents do at night in the hut, and phantasy experimenting with sexual possibilities. Children observe a lot in the quiet of the night in the hut, but are careful not to be seen watching. They misunderstand and are greatly puzzled, since no elder will explain "impolite matters" to them. It is impolite even to mention the names of genitals and reproductive organs, such as "kola" for penis, and "ems" for vulva, so they are merely whispered about. In church school, boys are puzzled by overt references to "Mary's womb" and "God's seed", but questions are rejected as "rudeness". Youngsters in town have broader information, because there they hear "rude" talk more often among adults.

D. Toys and Games.

857 524 The economic activities of children in the fields, where they spend much time in guarding but do little intensive labor, is regarded by them more in the nature of play. It is fun to throw rocks at thieving baboons and shoot pebbles at birds, with slingshots made of "nacha" fiber.

The boys also make a bullrearer, "mät", to scare birds away from seeds and mature crops. This instrument is also called, onomatopoetically, "gurumrumosh" (from "tägwerämärrämä", to

857 grumble, growl, snarl). It consists of a stick of wood, a foot
524 long, 1/2 inch thick, notched at the thinner end, to which a cord of twisted fibre is attached. This is swung horizontally, above the head, to produce what is regarded as a terrifying sound. It is even used in shepherding, since boys believe it frightens away hyenas and the occasional leopard. During the rainy season, boys play it indoors to amuse each other and haze-tease younger siblings, who are frightened by it.

At the beginning of the light rainy season, when the storks and other birds fly north, children especially girls, form circles and dance rounds, chanting to the flocks of birds:

[539]

> "Stork, our country is well;
> the woman who baked <u>oitta</u> (luxurious wheat bread)
> has died swallowing <u>oitta</u> (i.e. luxury is plentiful).

[825] At harvest time, in November, similar greetings are sung to the birds when they return from the north, from "Jerusalem" in popular belief. The Falashas children express this by singing to departing storks:

[539]

> "How are you?
> The people of Jerusalem (Falashas) are well)."

The Coptic Amhara hold the same belief as to the destination of the birds.

Winter games, i.e. in the rainy season, when children are restricted to the hamlet, include building of makeshift huts, in which they play "man and wife". The girls gather leaves, roll red mud inside, and "bake" cakes. Boys mimic the farmer, weave a hood of reeds, and just as he walks in the rain broadcasting his seeds, so boys broadcast pebbles.

Swimming is a favorite sport of children in the rainy season,

857 when even brooks are swollen, but rivers soon become too dangerous.
524 During the first season, when they learn to swim, a rope is tied
[868] around the child's waist and held by an adolescent or young adult. At this time boys make waterpistols, "tiqqosh" with a bamboo syringe; also peashooters shooting small pebbles with a bamboo strip acting as spring. Boys also make panpipe flutes from stout reeds, in preparation for "spring".

E. Formal Education and Extra-curricular Activities.

872 Basic education, already described in connection with the church, now falls into two types: the traditional church school; and the modern-style elementary school. Overlaps are beginning to appear.

Until a generation ago, the traditional church school had a complete monopoly on education, and for the vast majority of all children this is still true at this writing. It resembles in structure and function the "Kuttab" school of the Muslims. Boys of peasant parents usually do not enroll before the age of 11, for until then their economic services are utilized fully, and only when they approach adolescence are the needs for their education felt by parents.

874 Most of the boys attend church school for only three years, for if they wish to study beyond what the village priest can teach them they must leave home for another district or province, e.g. a monastery school. Since the peasant family usually cannot or does not wish to sponsor this, the boy who insists becomes a "wandering" student, begging his way. Usually he goes for "zema"

212 boys playing in the bush write on broad leaves; or on the sun-
857 bleached shoulder blades of dead oxen or donkeys cleaned up by hyenas, vultures and ants; or even scratch letters on their own dark skins with a thorn, preferably on the underside of the arm where it can be hidden more effectively. Sometimes rocks, charcoal and iron scrap provided tools or background for writing experiments.

Boys are very proud of this achievement, and tease illiterates, particularly shepherds who have not attended school, by writing or [524] speaking phrases of Geez. Sometimes schoolboys use riddles, which they have memorized in school to memorize arithmetic, such as:

"(Question) What is two?
(Reply) Udder of female donkey;
(Question) What is four?
(Reply) Udder of cow."

[198] In reply to this teasing, illiterate shepherd boys make up "secret languages" of their own, by interlacing letters between syllables and speaking rapidly (much as zar doctors in the zar cult).

3. The Age of Obedience: Adolescence.

882 The age of experimentation, in which liberties taken by youngsters are often condoned, comes to an end as soon as puberty is reached. Parental authority, particularly that of the father, is more frequent and intense over the activities of the adolescent than over the peer-group child. The sexes are more sharply divided, no longer engage in experimental play activities in groups, and the patterns of flirting become more culturally structured, less random, and more personal. The adolescents are made to feel more "rule" conscious. With the awkwardness of adolescence comes a sudden shyness,

524 Boys, from the "age of reason" onward, tease each other with riddles in endless inventive games, such as:

539 "(Question)":

"In its youth, white hair,
in its maturity, brown,
in its old age, red.
What is it?"

"(Reply)": "Wot". (Red-golden peppersauce).

538 Like medieval bards, Amhara entertainers (azmari) and talented individuals tell of incredible and wonderful happenings of all kinds, stories called "tarik" (synonymous, in Amharic, with history). Often these use as their base historical or pseudo-historical events, and expand on them, experimenting with persons, plots, additional details, etc. Very popular bases are the Royal Chronicles of Abyssinia, "tarik nägäst", fanciful stories about Alexander the Great, and Biblical plots, especially Apocryphal.

D. Artistic Expression: The Art of Insult and Mockery.

195 578 A person who is clever at the art of insult is given grudging admiration even by his opponents, and is called "bämälasy lachä" (lit. one who shaves with his tongue). He can insult or mock so subtly that he may leave non-initiates in doubt, yet have full effect on the victim. On the other hand, a coarse person who insults people indiscriminately, regardless of propriety of person or circumstance, is despised ("ärta af").

Mockery is sometimes used for positive as well as negative purposes, especially in pedagogy, but insults are always more or less negative. Mockery, if used to teach a lesson, often employs proverbs; 578 using metaphors, so that the person criticized must think - which 195 might lead to his mending his ways:

537 To mock a useless act: "(it is like) a comb on a shaven head,
(like) trousers to carry dirt in".

534 a cross-country church procession on a saint's day. But modern (leftover Italian) brass trumpets are replacing it for the latter use.

2. Play and Entertainment.

A. Games and Leisure-time Activities.

524 Games are differentiated largely on the basis of age: little boys' games are largely of a hazing type or of imitation of adult behavior; adolescents' games are predominantly competitive; adult games are largely leisure pastimes. In this adult-centered culture, children's games are at the same time freely experimental and directed toward growing up as fast as possible; while an adult would be ashamed to continue playing childish games or to compete with adolescents.

Small children, especially boys, are involved in hazing activities, [865] "bedder", early in life. If they suffer a relapse into "Bedwetting", they are publicly shamed by the older children, and made to urinate publicly into a little trench. Small children are sometimes frightened by older ones with the bullroarer, ("zezzeta" - onomatopoetic), or by imitation of the sound of the hyena at night. Frequency of contact between older and younger children is especially prevalent during the "shut-in" rainy season. At this time, boys age 5 to 12 fight battles, sometimes using waterpistols ("tiggosh") made of bamboo, with a wooden syringe. When the game gets rough ("entush") they knock each other down with knees (the seat of strength in Amhara opinion) and feet.

Boys of 8 or 9, who aspire to deaconhood at the next New Year holy days, are mock-examined by older boys who have achieved that status. The candidate must carry each of them several times around the churchyard, and must recite and chant liturgical prayers for them for hours. The candidate is punished for any disobediance by being pinched, tied up and otherwise abused.

Little girls play milder games, such as dancing rounds with other

●524 girls, or two girls holding each other by the hand and spinning like a top. Sometimes somewhat older girls meet boys with whom they have established an experimental "joking relationship" ("täwäza"), and play house, building little huts out in the fields during the dry season, within the hamlet in the rainy season. This free experimentation comes to an end just before adolescence, when their relationships become more formal and more supervised.

Imitations of parental activities fill much of children's playtime. Little boys play "farmer", weave rainhoods of reeds and "broadcast" seeds (actually pebbles). Little boys begin to practice the "art of insult" (brain, not only brawn) e.g. such ethnocentric insults as the following:

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	Question: "where are you from?"
Reply: "Begemdir",	Response: "Land of shysters and quibblers."
"Shoa",	"Land of liars and traitors."
"Gojjam",	"Land of sorcerers (buda)."
"Gondar",	"Gossipers and blabbermouths."
"Curagē",	"Land of tricksters."
"Tigrē",	"Land of hotheads."

524
754 The culture's fear of black magic, especially "buda", is reflected in children's games, such as:

A: "Buda, buda, what do you eat?"

B: "Meat" (or, imitating the sorcerer's hidden language, "cakes").

A: "What do you drink?"

B: "Blood" (or, paraphrased, "pure water"). Whereupon boy B howls like a hyena (the "horse" of buda), sprints toward boy A, who flees.

524
831 When no adults are present, boys play games imitating the sex life of animals, sometimes highly imaginary, e.g. the "coitus of baboons" ("ätota bäddosh"):

Seated and facing each other, two boys lift each other with their feet,

524 and rock back and forth. This is largely a projection of human
831 activities, in their minds, for they have all seen actual sexual intercourse among domestic animals.

The puzzle of human sexual activities is reflected in boys' riddles:

Question: "On a precipice, two large gourds hang down, What are they?"

Reply: "Woman's breasts."

Question: "A little goatskin bottle, with mouth and fur.(What is it?)"

Reply: "Vulva ("ems").

Question: "In a porridge of sorghum, a potato expands?"

Reply: "Vulva and penis."

Question: "Hardwood that does not break, skin bottle that is not worn out?"

Reply: "Penis and vulva."

524 Since toys are almost never made for children, they must rely on
533 older children for any that they cannot make themselves, e.g. slingshots.
[534] The aforementioned flute, "washint", is made by boys age 11 to 12, of a hollow light bamboo into which four holes are bored. The flute is blown into from the right corner of the mouth. The following sounds are distinguished:

a) to keep the cows calmly grazing: extended high-pitched sound (dadada dididi).

b) to keep away the leopard: lower-pitched sounds. (A variation is believed useful to attract the leopard to lure him into a covered pit, onto which the flute is then thrown).

c) to accompany the azmari singer, e.g. at a wedding: high-pitched sound in somewhat minor key, as in wooing chants, to suggest emotion.

d) to accompany the "hotu" jump-dance, e.g. on holy days as Temqat: a hacked, staccato sound is produced (dada dodo dada).

526 organized battles similar to the "rumble" of Western culture; but Amhara adolescents are not marked as delinquents, by such activities, especially on the ritual occasions.

The "guks" game of horsemanship, on the feast of Temqat enables late adolescents and young men to show their prowess, on a ritual occasion; this is socially approved, for in gallopping and throwing the imitation lances, in their military maneuvers, they symbolize their readiness to defend their society, their kinsmen, their district, and the Coptic Abyssinian church, i.e. the "faith". The game itself has been likened to the "jarid" game of Arab culture (footnote 98).

524 Among leisure-time games, played by adults of either sex, and also by adolescents, the most popular is the pebble game called "gäbäta". It is played with a single partner, and there is little intensity to try to win, rather pleasure in shared activity, in a leisurely fashion: Two parallel rows of grooves are carved into a flat rock, 6 grooves in each row. The two players place 4 pebbles in each hole, so that each owns 24 pebbles in 6 grooves at the start. The game consists of passing the little pebbles ("gebeta") from hole to hole ("gudagwad").:

Illustration 1: Positions in the Pebble Game "gäbäta".

Player:

A	o o o o o o	← direction of play
	1 2 3 4 5 6	
B	o o o o o o	→ direction of play

B begins by removing one pebble from position B6, palms it in his hand. He then takes one pebble from the opponent's position A6, placing it into the A5 groove; he then takes from A4, places pebble in A3
A2, " A1
B1, " B2
B5, " B6 ;

then he completes position A6 by placing in it the originally palmed

Footnote 98 - Dawson: The Inte and the Arab. Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, 1950, p. 37

524 pebble, thus becoming "owner" of position A6.

Now it is the turn of player A, who can begin anywhere he likes, palming one of his own pebbles, and proceeding as above until he conquers one opponent's position, alway proceeding counterclockwise. There are many variations to this basic procedure. E.g. it is possible to become "partial owner" of a position, in which case the dispute is settled by chance, e.g. by hiding a pebble in one hand and letting the other guess which hand hides it. The player who wins all the grooves wins the game. The loser is called "ayt bälla" (lit. the rat ate him).

This game is regarded as harmless, unless a person becomes so addicted to it that he wastes all his time at it.

273 517 Entertainment of adults, especially in the towns, often involves considerable consumption of barley beer, fermented honeymead, and even "araqi". The proverb interprets stages of behavior, in drinking, as follows:

"First cup : Rat", (When one drinks eagerly, like a rodent);

"Second cup : Bee", (When there is buzzing among pleasantly agitated drinkers);

"Third cup : Monkey", (Grimacing, laughing foolishly, sweeping arms);

"Fourth cup : Dog", (When drunkards howl, without control, or depressed).

275 487 There are three types of public facilities for relaxation, found in the market-towns; The teahouse, the beer-house, and the mead-house, all of which are sharply differentiated:

The teahouse ("shay bet") is fully respectable; it is for men only, no women are supposed to enter it, and even the waiters are male. It is patronized by traders, clerks, minor officials (for high officials and nobles would not want to be seen consuming food or drink in public), police detectives, etc. Talk is largely of business matters and events of the day. The tea is consumed with a great deal of sugar dissolved in it, and a sweet condiment called "fuul", probably of Arab introduction,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] [182] [513] [352] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds [524] must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The boundaries of your lips are like the sugar cane; 155
No matter how much one sucks them, one is never satisfied. 538 832

And in one of the few lyric passages in the first novel ever written in Amharic, the author resorts to the imagery of kissing in describing the beauty of an army camp at sunset: [539]

> The plain on which they had encamped was vaster than the mind's eye could measure. Except for that hill on which he stood, there were no elevations or declivities; no roots to trip or confound the foot; not a stone to discomfit the eye. It looked like a calm sea that every breeze had spared. The boundaries of heaven and earth were united by lips of love; lip to lip they were joined like the parts of fitted basketry. It appeared as though it would hurt them to separate, that they had entered a vow not to part.[5] [539]

Talking for the sake of talking is another oral outlet of which the Amhara is generally fond. "In every country," remarked Arnauld d'Abbadie, "the plowman is miserly and sly; but the Ethiopian is, in addition, particularly loquacious."[6] The simple greeting of acquaintances evokes a barrage of ritualistic conversation, a phenomenon which stunned the Englishman Harris: 155 521

> Even two old crones, who are obviously tottering on the very brink of the grave, and who are afflicted with every pain and with every sorrow entailed by the fall of our first parents, never meet in the street without indulging in a string of good wishes which are reiterated so long as their breath will permit. "How are you? How do ye do? How have you passed your time? Are you well? Are you very well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well? Are you not well?"—are questions which serve as the prelude to a thousand other interrogatories; and at each response the Deity must be invoked as to the unadulterated happiness and perfect felicity that has been unremittingly experienced since the last meeting.[7] [576]

A number of other conventions provide further opportunities for this pleasure in talking. Anecdotes and gossip are not merely reported, but are expounded at length with the aid of colorful expressions and gestures. Riddle games are enjoyed by adults as well as young people. Men vie with one another at length in a semiformalized kind of playful boasting. In the church schools all reading is done aloud, a habit which persists among many students of secondary schools when they study outside of class. [524] • [876]

A related pleasure in making sounds for their own sake appears in the Amhara's delight in repeating the words or nonsense syllables of his folk songs. On a more refined level, there is his evident pleasure in lulling over and savoring the lines of a choice couplet. We have here for a whole culture an instance of what Brill has ascribed to the poets: 191 155

> Poetry is a sensuous or mystic outlet through words, or, as it were, through a chewing and sucking of nice words and phrases. The poet plays with the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Mary intervened, placing on the empty side for good deeds a goblet of water which Balaya Sab had once given to a sick beggar out of pity; and the Eater of Men was saved. In the pictorial representation of this legend, Balaya Sab is portrayed cutting off pieces of human flesh with a curved knife in the manner in which raw beef is attacked at the Amhara table. 155 266 773

Most Amhara know some sort of tale about a cannibal. The topic is familiar enough that they are able to invent new ones. One boy told me he made up the following story to explain the nature of cannibals to his younger brother: 155 266 538

> Once there was a cannibal. He lived among many people. He had no food in his house; he was poor. But even if he had not been poor, he just liked to eat the flesh of man. In his house was a big hole which he covered with a carpet. He would invite somebody into his house and tell him to sit down on the chair over the hole. When the person sat down and fell into the hole, he would climb down by a ladder and eat him. In this way he ate all the people in his village one by one—about a hundred people. When he had eaten all the people in his village he returned to live in the forest, because there was nobody left to eat.

The cannibal motif appears in more subtle form in the parlor game known as *gabatā,* in which the aim is to accumulate as many pebbles as possible by moving them around a board with six holes on each side. In *gabatā* the active acquisition of pebbles is called "eating" and the passive acquisition is "drinking." Similarly, those who play chess or checkers refer to the process of taking a man as "eating" him. It is notable, moreover, that the Amhara version of the old riddle about how to transport a certain number of incompatible objects across the river in one boat is posed in terms of three human beings and three cannibals. 155 266 524

Oral sadism is further manifest among the Amhara by the nature of their speech. The Amhara are not only loquacious but also tend, both in manner of delivery and in content of conversation, to be biting and intrusive. Backbiting, insulting, arguing, and litigating are among their more characteristic modes of self-expression. 155 521 191

Backbiting and insulting, and the fear of being the victim of such activities, are the focus of much attention in Amhara culture. Concern about the former is expressed in a number of Amharic proverbs: 155 521 578 [539]

> If the mouth lacks work, it will backbite a friend.
>
> If you praise a man once, you will be in trouble if you backbite him later.
>
> If a man is a backbiter, listen for my sake when he talks to you.

Straightforward insults erupt the polite surface of Amhara social relations only under unusually heated circumstances, though it is customary for social superiors to direct a certain amount of abusive banter at their inferiors as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

at social gatherings in the course of discussions about nearly any subject. One 691
cannot but conclude that the Amhara litigate to a large extent because for 182
them it is an intrinsically pleasurable activity. At times, in fact, the forms of 517
litigation are acted out as in a game. *Teṭäyaq*, for example, analogous to the 524
Western process of cross-examination and a beloved feature of traditional 695
court procedure, is sometimes practiced at parties though it has been out- 178
lawed in modern courts.[19] Two men will face a "judge" and try to bedevil each other with sly questions and preposterous claims. The content of the dispute is of no matter; it may be sheer nonsense.

Amhara litigants are ingenious at expressing themselves. They do so with 155
gestures, intonation, and timing that achieve considerable dramatic effect. 537
They are delighted to perform at the slightest provocation. The following 691
incident, recorded during a morning at court in Manz, illustrates that dimen- 695
sion of Amhara litigation which consists of the inherently gratifying expression of oral aggression:

> The defendant had been accused of plowing the plaintiff's land without permission. In fact, however, the plaintiff had given the defendant previous permission to plow there—in front of a group of elders who testified accordingly. The judge therefore ruled against the plaintiff. The plaintiff said he would appeal this decision, because the permission he granted had not been registered in the governor's office and, besides, he had some other complaint to bring against the defendant.
>
> At this point someone in the audience rose and said: "That is all. The judge has ruled against you, and the case is finished." Whereupon the plaintiff told this speaker that he should keep quiet, that his speaking out was against the law, that he had bothered him when the case was tried before a lower level judge previously and should bother him no more. Instead of hushing up, the speaker left his position against the wall and stood next to the defendant, asserting that he would speak in behalf of the latter.
>
> The plaintiff then accused this man of talking out of turn. The judge acknowledged this accusation and called for witnesses. Instantly half a dozen or more men jumped to their feet, eyes bursting with excitement and pride as before a battle, and volunteered to witness against the speaker. One by one, with a great show of oratory, they said their pieces against the man who had spoken out of turn. More than once the judge had to urge these witnesses to stop talking after the evidence had been presented. By this time the substance of the original dispute seemed to have been completely forgotten.

Oral Ambivalence

Much as the oral zone is favored by the Amhara as a center for positive 155
gratifications, both of the passive-receptive and the active-aggressive sort, such

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of shepherds,[19] as well as the secret formulae of magicians, the obscurantist 121*
constructions of wax and gold, and the use of Ge'ez itself in the presence of 181
[illegible]es. Related to this is the great popularity of riddle games among Am- 571
[illegible]. Personal relations, moreover, are consciously predicated on the harbor- [198]
[illegible] of [illegible] or *mīsṭir*. The Amhara assume that it is improper to reveal [524]
oneself fully, to disclose one's *mīsṭir*, to anyone but a very close friend; and
that, in fact, rarely happens.

Given the weakness of horizontal forms of cohesion among the Amhara—sociability at mealtime, stylized politeness among equals, and co-operation in time of crisis, important though they are, cannot contain the centrifugal forces just described—the dispositions which sustain a minimum of social order among the Amhara are expressed through vertical, hierarchical forms of interaction. Here both individualistic and solidaristic forms are in evidence, the latter in the forms of deference and begging, the former in the variety of authoritarian relationships.

Perhaps the most characteristic form of interaction among the Amhara is that of *domination*. The Amhara is at his happiest when he is in a position to order someone about. The sense of domination is marked not only in relations between nobles and commoners, officers and soldiers, masters and servants, but also between husbands and wives, and parents and children. Amhara children sometimes volunteer the explanation of their desire to have children when they grow up as based on the explanation that then *they* will have youngsters of their own to command.

Connected with the passion to dominate is a predilection for administering 121*
physical punishment. In all of the relationships just mentioned corporal 181
punishment is an integral feature, particularly so on the domestic scene. With 571
sticks or whips, masters beat servants, teachers pupils, husbands wives, and 152
parents children. The complete acceptance of this pattern was shown by the fact that not a single Amhara TAT respondent objected to any of the corporal punishment cards. They all assumed that the punishment depicted, including that of husband against wife and mistress against servant, was deserved, proper, and would have a salutary effect. (One of the respondents even exclaimed when regarding one of the beating scenes: "What a beautiful punishment!") The only reservations expressed concerned the possibility that the punishment might be so severe as to wound fatally the person being punished, in which case the punisher would have cause for regret.

Whatever the functions of such patterns in controlling antisocial behavior 121*
and securing adherence to the norms of the situation, the sentiment that un- 181
derlies them is primarily egoistic. The superior is interested primarily in 571
having his own way and gratifying his ego through the sheer exercise of his power: and the motivation of the punisher probably often contains a strong

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 Amhara society as marked by a moderately high degree of independence.
18 This is to say that Amhara society gives relatively wide rein to individual impulse in action. It is not to say that Amhara culture places a high value on the moral worth of the individual personality. That is a separate question, which we shall now proceed to explore.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS CONFORMITY AND ANONYMITY

*121 The extent to which individual personality is valued in a society is reflected
181 primarily in two aspects of its culture. One of these comprises its processes
156 of education, in the broadest sense of the term; the other, its forms of art. The character of these aspects of culture reveal, respectively, the degree of concern for the *development* of an individualized self and the degree of concern for the *expression* of an individualized self.

Education and Socialization

*121 155 Obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in bringing up children
861 among the Amhara. After a prolonged and indulged infancy, the Amhara
867 child from about three years on is subjected to a regime of discipline and
[854] repression. He is taught to fulfill without question any request made by any older person. He is conditioned to stand quietly whenever guests are present and to stand facing the wall while his parents or guests eat their dinner. If addressed by elders, especially those outside his immediate family, he is expected to reply in a barely audible whisper—a norm that is sometimes adhered to with such pathetic faithfulness that it has become the object of gentle satire in a short story by the young Ethiopian writer, Tadesse Liban.[26] Children who are noisy and disrespectful are referred to contemptuously by the term *bālagē*, meaning "rude."

*121 The desires and interests of an Amhara child are not taken into account
155 by those who raise him. He is provided with a bare minimum of clothes,
855 and little effort is expended in procuring him playthings,[27] although in some
524 families little dolls made of rags (*ashängulit*) are produced. Children have
*121 a rich play-life with their peers, but this consists mostly in imitating various
155 adult activities. Organized games occur very rarely, the chief one—*gannā*—
857 being played as a rule but once a year, on Christmas Day.[28] The traditional songs and dances are learned from other children while tending the herds, but children are not encouraged to perform them in front of adults. The
*121 opinions of children are never expressed, let alone consulted. Indeed, in some
155 commoners' families the children are treated little better than the farm ani-
855 mals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing
858 her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Hedar 1 to Hedar 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "tyäff" for bread; "nug" and "telba" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Hedar: "Mikael" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Qwusqwam"- clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Zion" Festival at Aksum; Nuns' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikael": fresh togas, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). 21st: Church student holiday.	
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 8	Summer ("balg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate scorched landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "tyeff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus' coming), esp. at Qulubi near Dire Daua. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Ledät", or "Gänna"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Gänna") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).	19th: Emp. Haile Selassai travels to Qulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional toga and Jodphurs.
Ter 1 to Ter 30	Jan. 9 to Feb. 7	Height of dry summer ("bälg"). Some sluggish rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shembera), plant (gomän) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ter is "Temqät"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially created pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Gezrät"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Giyorgis" (St. George) 21st: "Astärye Maryam" (Mary)	Taxgatherers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("guge") women are coiffured, henna-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary harvest feast. 12th Monday Pentecost (11th Ter), ("mayrkr") among Falashas as traditional costume. On Epiphany, Jan. 19th Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in

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Yäkatit I to Yäkatit 30	Feb. 8 to Mar. 9	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adja gebs") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before lenten season) 11th-20th ("abed amus").	Lenten Fast "kudade" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tom" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day Fast of Niniweh ("Tsome Nänäwe"). 16th is feast "Kedana Mehrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and spices, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 16th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
Mägabit I to Mägabit 30	Mar. 10 to April 8	dry; burning of bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, because of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 17th "Debrä Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Aläm" =(Savior)	Youngsters pasturing cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
Miyazya 1 to Miyazya 30	April 9 to May 8	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bäga"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron plowpoints and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("hamamat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent, "seqlät" Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services eve of the 17th, Fassika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qetäma") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tensaä") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season from Easter to heavy rains, so unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palms, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("qenchebt") games.	17th: Muslims (on Easter) celebrate "Shaykh Abader" water saint.	27th:(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("mänäläs bäal") entry into Addis Ababa

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Mäkäsä 1 to Mäkäsä 30	August 7 to Sept. 5	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some sow a bit of tyäff and "Adja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Selassye"); parade, despite rain, with "tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Buhe", "Debrä Tabor") feast, with torch-light parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeraf") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger children badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his namesake; flags, etc.
Pagumen1	Sept. 6	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Nägadras" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "lefafa sedeq", scroll; bathe.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	
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3	8					
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5	10					

796 While some of this feasting is now less orgiastic than in the past, "azmari" musicians still pass among the feasters, singing praises to the host and noble guests, [534] to the accompaniment of the single-string "masenqo" of male singers, and the banjo-like "qrar" fingered by women azmari. Torchlight parades, both of men and of women, leave the bonfire later, wind toward the nearest river or brook (still full though no longer raging) to enjoy the pleasure of bathing at its best, before the brooks dry to a trickle.

796 182 Thus the first church function of the year is an important factor in unifying this society: significant for all ages, both sexes, all classes; sets a time and place for rites of passage in the life cycle; renders visible paternalistic feudal patterns of human relationships; reopens the annual cycle of economic endeavors (caravans, weaving, etc.); reopens the pattern of kin visiting after the hibernation of 3 months; and reinforces the traditional religious as well as national values and attitudes.

796 In the months that follow there are several religious festivals, which also have social significance. Named after special saint's days, they vary from region to region.

The next widely observed holy day is Christmas, on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This does not nearly approach the significance it has in the Western 796 world, nor the Masqal feast just described. In fact, 526 Christmas, "Lediet" (lit. birthday) is more often refer-

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red to as "gänna", the name of the hockey-like game played by the young men on this day, and for the next two weeks. It is a sacerdotal holy day with little social significance. The priests congregate in the church of the district that bears the name "Iyasus" (Jesus). Services begin at midnight the eve before and end with chanting and dancing inthe sunshine at 9 A.M. when the clergy parades in the churchyard.

Old Testament survivals are indicated by one of the many minor church celebrations, the feast of "gezrat" (circumcision), celebrating the circumsision of Jesus Christ a week after birth, on the 6th day of the month of Ter. It is held entirely within the church, especially monasteries.[77]

More important than Christmas is Epiphany, "Temqät", on the 11th of Ter. In the late afternoon preceding this day, the "tabot" are carried out of all churches, swathed in imported silks and borne on the heads of priests, in vast ceremonial parades that stop frequently for chanting and ceremonial dancing, until the procession, which includes national vlags, arrives at the water. There a solid, large tent hasbeen erected to house these sacred objects.

Evening chants and dances are continued to the beat of drums and tinkle of sistra, until the last light fades. The faithful surround the tent all night long as guard of honor, while feasting and drinking continues.

77. The circumcision of Jesus is also celebrated by the Christian Alawites, in Syria. See-Janot, E.: La Famille Alawite. Les Missions Catholiques, 65, Paris, Aout 1933, pp. 381-384.

796 smoky, incense-filled church, to reach home and begin the feasting on meat. Sheep are rapidly slaughtered all over the area, fires are lit, pepper stew is boiling everywhere, and the vast jars of barley beer, injära, coffee, and milk and butter are consumed. This feasting, often ruinous to the digestion, continues for some time, for the Wednesday and Friday fasts are abrogated for the next 50 days.

With regained strength, fired by good food and [526] beer, the young men begin games of javelin throwing. Ball games ("qenchebt") continue the entire following week, when the heavy feasting still keeps work to a minimum.

The last outdoor picnic before the rains takes place occurs on the 1st day of the month of "Genbot", when the "Ledäta" (birthday) of the Virgin Mary is celebrated. The leafy outdoor shelter, "dass", is erected for this occasion. Both women and men take part, though [789] in separate groups. At the end of the day, some women "clean house" of evil spirits, to keep them away while shut in during the rainy season. This is done by casting boiled "nefro" porridge into the bush, telling the personified sickness to go after it.

[262] During the next church holydays, fish, particularly the "senro", become staples of the menu of priests and others, since rivers begin to fill with water and fish are more plentiful. There is a church festival "räbbä kahnat" (lit. inventory of the priests), a purely internal affair,

796 the youngest are lifted to see the parade. Boys and
[857] girls age 7 to 15 go from hut to hut starting inthe early morning, chanting "Buhe, Buhe", "hoyya, hoyyo, ho", and verses:

[539] "All shout 'Buhe!, children all!
Give us what (you have) prepared; Do not change (your mind)! "

"When the rooster has crowed, night is gone;
After Buhe, the winter(rainy season) is gone".

796 Long whips, mostly of finely braided fibre, of
•526 tree bark or "tucha" grass, are made before Buhe, and
[411] young men practice with them until they can hit even small targets easily. On Buhe afternoon, two groups of contestants face each other, often across a swollen brook, and line up so that each individual faces an opponent of equal skill and strength. They come armed with the whips, and begin to warm up by hurling insults at each other, addressing each other in the female gender. Soon the game of aiming at the face and ducking the adversary's whip begins. The whip has a short wooden handle, but the strap may be as long as 15 feet. Sometimes this opportunity is taken to work out grudge fights. For, traditionally, any wounds incurred, even the loss of an eye, cannot be taken to court or cause a feud, as the result of this ritual battle. No other weapons may be used. The losers flee, are pursued to their huts, and the victors are entitled to all the

796 food of the feast prepared by the losing side.
526 In the evening "fires of joy" are lit, where the rain-drenched, weary and sore contestants and others can dry out, drink barley beer, and are supposed to forget and forgive the hostilities. Some may still boast of individual feats of heroism, in Amhara warrior style; others will sulk. But generally the day ends in harmony, after the excitement which itself was a welcome break in the monotonous hibernation of the rainy season.

796 The end of the annual cycle coincides with the end of the rainy season. The last 5 days (in leap years 6 days) are added after the end of the last month, and are called "Pagumēn" or "Qwagmē". On the 3rd day the [776] annual festival of St. Raphael, called "geddus Rufaēl", the water saint, takes place. The rain, which still falls [821] heavily that day, is considered "ṭebel" (holy water) and to have the power to dull the poison of snakes so [787] that their bites will not be fatal. Much rain during Pagumēn is taken as an omen that the crops will be good.

796 This day is final examination day for the boys 874 who have attended church school long enough to be promoted to "deacon". They are examined in correct chanting of liturgy and prayers. To be mentally wide awake they often go to the dabtara beforehand, and, for a small gift, obtain the stimulating herb "esa fars" (lit. Persian wood) or drink boiled "astänagär" (lit. the plant that makes to talk), which also helps to overcome stage-fright.

796 The younger children go from hut to hut, chanting:
857 "In the name of Rufael,
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855 Neglect of duty is therefore punished, and a father may fly into a sudden rage, beat the child without waiting for an excuse, even hurl a firebrand at the offending boy, so that considerable injuries sometimes occur. Mothers discipline the girls in similar temperamental fashion. But the rage, in either case, is quickly forgotten. There is no pattern of cold discipline, no "woodshed" punishment, rather hot-tempered, quick retribution.

857 Play activity and imitation of adults continues, but it takes on more seasonal and constructive characteristics. This is partly due to the seasonal pattern of the economic activities of boys age 7 to 11 and girls 5 to 14. Formal education in church school rarely begins before 11 in the rural areas, whereupon their play activities become more "extra-curricular".

[526] The seasonal games include the ball game after the harvest is completed, known as "gencheb" or "kwas", and seasonal construction and repair activities. On the church feast of Mikael, little boys have their own outdoor party, eating barley roasted on the stalk, and watching the flirtatious play of adolescent boys and girls.

291 Boys 7 to 11 still wear the tattered, knee length cotton shift, as their basic garment in rural areas, but beg a new one from relatives once a year, for the holy day of "Mäsgal", or "Timqät". But they are increasingly self-conscious about nudity, and if the tattered shift reveals the pubic area, other boys will haze and playfully beat the offender, saying:

[539] "My father told me not to let a snake warm itself in the sun".

865 In summary, parental discipline in this age group is specific,
867 work-oriented and intermittent; while experimentation with, and

882 has arrived at the age of making full use of the sexual organ), an
831 expression not considered polite. So is the term "gorämsa", (lit. neighbor) when used to refer to a young buck at the peak age for continuous sex desire, for it signifies the male sexual organ next to its female "mate".

883 [561] At the end of adolescence, the honorific address is "kobäle" (powerful warrior), in some regions. In the old feudal tradition, this was the age when the young man could be called to war, at about 18 to 20 and beyond, for as long as he retained his physical strength as well as skill of hand and eye. Even today, at church festivals, the "gobäz" - "kobälo" category of men perform the "hotu" and "fukkara" jump-dance and military boast, shouting "Addis Ababa" to signify loyalty, and "yebalabal jebo" ("The hyena will swallow him", i.e. any enemy), (or "wardaw shebo" crow's beak) symbolizing
883 526 their readiness to defend the sacred "tabot" of the church. On the "Temqät" festival, the young "gobäz" assemble in teams of individuals on the public plain and the church parades stop to watch their game of "guks" (or gugs), a kind of tournament fought on horseback with blunt, wooden, straight lances. They race at each other at full speed, throwing the spearlike missiles at each other at close range, and ducking at the last moment. Sometimes rhinoceros shields were used for protection, but it is considered more clever to duck. Occasionally serious wounds result, and an overeager young warrior having repeatedly caused them is prevented from taking part in the future (losing his license for recklessness, so to speak).

Usually each participant has singled out a personal opponent. They are conscious that not only the eyes of the elders, priests and feudal lords are on them, but also those of the girls who follow

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883 the turn of their fortunes with excited comments whispered in their
526 own groups. They know that the game will be discussed in individual terms until late into that night, for this is the month of intensive flirting and marriage.

At Christmas, the hockey-like game called "gänna" is played, where the team is emphasized over the individual, unlike "guks". In fact, Christmas derives its popular name, "Gänna", from the game, rather than the proper "Ledät" (lit. "birthday" of Jesus). The "fukkara" beasting, accompanied by chant and little jig-dance while holding a spear or rifle horozontally over the shoulders, is a major kin event, performed by respected and fully-grown "gobäz" at weddings and other formal family events, to recount the past heroic deeds of members of the extended family.

All these roles played by the male adolescent as he approaches and reaches young manhood complete his individual socialization, and reward him with the full attention and acknowledgement given him by his society.

B. The Adolescent Female: Informal Courtship in the Annual Cycle.

882 From puberty until she has settled as a housewife and mother, the female adolescent is addressed as "conjo" (lit. beautiful), a flattering and honorific address used in everyday language, much as "gobaz" for young men. This address designates her new status, the attention given by all to her blossoming cut, her increased status in the family as a young person, and her duties of responsibility rather than mere menial routine labor of the younger "leja-gärad". If the latter term is still used, it is often in opprobium, or in reference if she is not present.

526 Organized teams and organized competition characterizes the games of adolescents, especially boys. In ritual battles (aforementioned) and in the "ganna" game, team-moieties ("bmden") are formed ("tabmaddänä" - divided into teams), but every participant usually tries to select a personal opponent ("budänä") in the opposite team.

The "gänna" game, played on Christmas, at the public racecourse or meadow, is played with bent, hockey-like sticks ("ganna"), which are used to try to knock a baseball-sized ball, made of skins or linen, beyond a line. The ball may be picked up, thrown in the air and caught at the same spot, to confuse the opponents. The art of insult is freely practiced at the same time, such as: "oho - you play like a castrated ox". The game may last for 2 or 3 days, being resumed every morning.

The "kmas" game, played by boys throughout the dry season, somewhat resembles baseball. The ball is made of goatskin strips, sometimes with mule dung placed inside "to give it bounce". Two teams are formed, with equal distribution of big boys and little boys on each side. The goalkeeper can stop the ball only with his hips, so that he must twist his body so he can see where the ball is coming from. The ball is knocked with a stick, and there is running from base to base. The game is often accompanied, preceded and concluded with formal "boasting", in imitation of the adult, "fukkara", but differentiated as "chiwata" (play). Shouts of "gärraf" (lit. pillage, the traditional shout of conquering soldiers entering a village), encourage the attacking team. There is also an umpire ("achawach": lit. master of ceremonies).

In preparation for ritual mock battles, e.g. on the Feast of the Cross, and on Transfiguration (see section on religious calendar), teams of adolescents gather, with their long whips. On less formal occasions, battles can begin with dirty looks, jostling, insults, leading to

526 organized battles similar to the "rumble" of Western culture; but Amhara adolescents are not marked as delinquents, by such activities, especially on the ritual occasions.

The "guks" game of horsemanship, on the feast of Temqat enables late adolescents and young men to show their prowess, on a ritual occasion; this is socially approved, for in gallopping and throwing the imitation lances, in their military maneuvers, they symbolize their readiness to defend their society, their kinsmen, their district, and the Coptic Abyssinian church, i.e. the "faith". The game itself has been likened to the "jarid" game of Arab culture (footnote 98).

524 Among leisure-time games, played by adults of either sex, and also by adolescents, the most popular is the pebble game called "gäbäta". It is played with a single partner, and there is little intensity to try to win, rather pleasure in shared activity, in a leisurely fashion: Two parallel rows of grooves are carved into a flat rock, 6 grooves in each row. The two players place 4 pebbles in each hole, so that each owns 24 pebbles in 6 grooves at the start. The game consists of passing the little pebbles ("gebeta") from hole to hole ("gudaswad").:

Illustration 1: Positions in the Pebble Game "gäbäta".

Player:

A	o o o o o o	⟵ direction of play
	1 2 3 4 5 6	
B	o o o o o o	⟶ direction of play

B begins by removing one pebble from position B6, palms it in his hand. He then takes one pebble from the opponent's position A6, placing it into the A5 groove; he then takes from A4, places pebble in A3
A2, " A1
B1, " B2
B5, " B6 ;

then he completes position A6 by placing in it the originally palmed

Footnote 98 - Dawson: The Date and the Arab. Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, 1950, p. 37

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 the long rains. Children go singing from house to house in small bands, or take bunches of wild flowers to relatives, in hopes of getting a bit of *dābo*. In most homes an animal is slaughtered—in some areas superstition decrees that it be a white-headed lamb or a red chicken—and there is much eating and drinking, the basic activity of every holiday.

A little more than two weeks later the much more important festival of Masqal is observed, celebrating the discovery of the true Cross by Empress Helena. By this time the heavy rains have subsided, and the air is filled with something of the spirit of spring. (Although Ethiopia lies north of the [132] equator the summer rainy season is known as "winter" because of its coldness.) The landscape is colored by acres of yellow wildflowers, which are cut and fastened to the poles each family brings to a central clearing where a huge bonfire is built. In late afternoon, after the tepee of poles has been constructed, the priests begin the ceremony by intoning appropriate chants. Then [554] each status group circles the poles three times, in honor of the Trinity—first the local lord, then the clergy, the lesser nobility, the peasant men, women, and finally the children. In the evening the festival takes a more secular turn. The bonfire is lit, and the young braves dance around it shouting their war chants. As the fire blazes on, these fellows seize burning brands and playfully hurl them at one another.

In November the monthly St. Michael's Day is honored with special celebrations. The peasants travel distances to attend the ceremonies at any [778] church consecrated to "Mikā'ēl." Holy water and hot springs sanctified by Mikā'ēl's name are drunk and bathed in by those with many kinds of disease. The rituals involve carrying the Mikā'ēl *tābot* ("holy ark") out of the church and elaborate chanting and dancing by the clergy. After the *tābot* has been returned, in a procession in which the laymen follow shouldering their rifles (undoubtedly spears in older times), folk dancing and singing go on until late [584] afternoon. This provides an occasion for the more enterprising adolescent male to spot a potential bride, about whom he may diffidently ask his father to make inquiries.

*565 796 • 526 Christmas, celebrated in early January, is marked chiefly by the playing of secular games. The common word for Christmas, *gannā*, is actually the name of an outdoors game played with sticks and a wooden puck. Played by boys, young men, and occasionally elders on the afternoon of Christmas Day, *gannā* is marked by a spirit of aggressive license. Accustomed norms of deference are held in abeyance. The game is played in so rough and disorderly a manner that it often results in broken limbs and scarred faces. Staged by two teams made up on the spot, *gannā* is concluded at dusk by volleys of abusive limericks with which the victors revile their adversaries.[4]

*565 796 This is the season for special festivities on saints' days. St. Gabriel is particularly honored in December, as are St. Mary, St. George, and again St. Michael

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 [164] [785] hazardous. Moisture and chill lower the resistance of man and beast to respiratory infections. The weekly fasting schedule is resumed, and the more devout observe the thirty-day fast of the Disciples. In August, finally, the sixteen-day fast in honor of the Assumption of Mary is observed by everyone older than six or seven years.

*565 796 • 526 On the thirteenth day of that fast occurs the strange holiday of Buhē. Before and during this day, which is marked by the baking of special *dābo* for the shepherds, the countryside crackles with the reports of shepherds' whips. In this season when the humid air lends an explosive sound, the shepherds crack their whips for fun; but older boys and men join in great whipping battles on Buhē,* in which two teams lash each other until the members of one can stand it no more. On the evenings of Buhē, small bonfires are lit all over the countryside, and more *dābo* is eaten and whips cracked.[5] A few days later the fast of the Assumption is over. Young and old look forward to the end of the rains and the festivities that commence with the new year.

*565 These are the days and years of the Amhara peasant. Some other aspects of his life that come to the fore when more analytic perspectives are applied will be discussed in later chapters. But this calendar of activities forms the immediately observable setting for the "inner world" of the Amhara peasantry: those ideas, sentiments, and values which constitute its outlook on life.

THE WORLD OF MEANING

The Natural Universe

*565 772 [538] The Amhara peasant is not familiar with most of the cosmological notions found in the Great Tradition of Abyssinian culture, as transmitted through books like *Qalamsis* and *Aksimareos* and the oral traditions of learned churchmen. It is unusual for him to have a precise image of the layers of water, fire, and air beneath the earth, and it is still less likely for him to be familiar with the complicated hierarchy of invisible worlds, watery skies, and seven "real" heavens which are enumerated in the Abyssinian cosmology. He [821] believes that stars influence human affairs, but leaves the possession of astro- [756] logical knowledge to the *dabtarā*. The presence of cultural specialists who know about such matters has relieved him of the burden of dealing with ideas about the cosmos, ideas which are more widely diffused in more homogeneous societies.

The peasant's working conception of the cosmos is thus a very simplified version of that of his Great Tradition, together with certain pagan notions. Like his more learned countrymen, he divides the universe into two main parts: the world, *alam*, consisting of the earth, sun, moon, and stars; and

[178] * This custom is now extinct in many Amhara areas.

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Table 15: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Amhara

Month: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Month: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau	Annual Cycle of Amhara Ecological Activities (Economic, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Coptic-Abyssinian Amhara.	Cycle of Amhara Social Events	Syncretism	New, Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1	Sept. 11	receding flood after rainy season; yellow "mäsqäl" daisy carpets land; spring ("tsädaye").	place beehive basket-work in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ("gäi").	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ("yäMäsqäl Mäal")- public rejoicing around bonfire (dämmära). Minor: 1st Mäskäräm is St. John's Day. 11th: "Arafa" - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	Kin visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ("enqutatash") on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive presents of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		"Mäsqäl" is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
to	to						
Mäskäräm 30	Oct. 10						
Tequemt 1	Oct. 11	sunny growing & ripening season (ämmänä sega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ("gebs"), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ("tälla"); sell honey to make mead ("Täj"); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Tequemt: St. Michael's Feast "Mikael"; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 5th: pilgrimage to "tobal" holy wells and waterfalls of Zäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus (Abo).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ("gurmurcoosh") to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving "from Jerusalem".		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Tequemt 23rd).
to	to						
Tequemt 30	Nov. 9						

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Nedar 1 to Nedar 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "tyéff" for bread; "nug" and "talba" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Nedar: "Mikael" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Qwusqwam"-clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Ilen" Festival at Aksum; Nuns' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikael": fresh togas, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). 21st: Church student holiday.		
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 8	Summer ("bälg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate scorched landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "tyéff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus' coming), esp. at Gulubi near Dire Daua. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Ledät", or "Gänna"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Gänna") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).		19th: Emp. Haile Selassi travels to Gulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional toga and Jodphurs.
Ter 1 to Ter 30	Jan. 9 to Feb. 7	Height of dry summer ("bälg"). Some sluggish rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shembera), plant (gomän) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ter is "Tomkät"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially created pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Gesrät"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Giyorgis" (St. George) 21st: "Astäryo Maryam" (Mary)	Taxgatherers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("gugs") women are coiffured, henna-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary harvest among Falashas as Pentecost (11th Ter), ("mayrär")	On Epiphany, Jan. 19th Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in fest. 12th traditional monday costume.

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Yäkatit 1 to Yäkatit 30	Feb. 8 to Mar. 9	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adja gebs") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before lenten season) 11th-20th ("abed amus").	Lenten Fast "kudade" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tom" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day Fast of Miniwah ("Tsomä Nänäwe"). 16th is feast "Kedane Mehrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and spices, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 16th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
Mägabit 1 to Mägabit 30	Mar. 10 to April 8	dry; burning of bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, because of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 19th "Debrä Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Aläm" =(Savior)	Youngsters pasturing cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
Miyazya 1 to Miyazya 30	April 9 to May 8	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bäga"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron plowpoints and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("hemamat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent, "seqlät" Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services eve of the 17th, Fäsika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qetäma") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tensäa") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season from Easter to heavy rains, so unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palms, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("qenchebt") games.	17th: Muslims (on Easter) celebrate "Sheykh Abader" water saint.	27th:(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("Hamälas bäal") entry into Addis Ababa

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Genbot 1 to Genbot 30	May 9 to June 7	light rains; spots of fresh, green grass (for pasturage nearer home). Storks fly northward.	Women prepare fuel for rainy season: deadwood; piles of sun-dried cowdung, coated with layer of mud. Caravans: hurry home from Sudan, etc. Fish "senre" caught in rivers.	1st: Ledata (Birthday of Virgin Mary): After services, last, large, outdoor picnic, under "dass" shelter 24th: "Täklä Haymanot" day, pilgrimage to his holy well at Däbrä Libanos. Children sing of country's well-being to storks.	1st: Men and women celebrate outdoor picnic separately, but young folk meet while older ones feast on meat and barley beer.	
Säne 1 to Säne 30	June 8 to July 7	Heavy rains, winter "Keremt" begin: fogs, storms, cold rain. Fishing season. Children are taught to swim before rivers are dangerous.	Intensive plowing of softened soil, seeding by broadcasting: barley, then teff, wheat. Beans and other garden crops are seeded and fenced. Fish is plentiful and cheap.	9th: Resumption of Wednesday and Friday "Fast of the Salvation" recessed since Easter. Clergy: "Farläqlitos" 6th-feast; 7th "tsomä hawaryat" - 1 month Fast of Apostles.	Master gives feast to retainers for plowing, "erf mäday", with fried fish, beer, "asmari" music, and "hotu" dance. Mutual aid in hut repair.	
Hamlé 1 to Hamlé 30	July 8 to August 6	Heavy monsoon rains, sometimes tornadoes. sheets of rain almost daily. Cold	Indoor work; some minor hut repairs.	Intensive church school for boys, who are not needed at this season for any other work. Clergy: 5th: Fast of Peter and Paul ends month Fast of Apostles.	Standstill (e.g. of visiting) due to swollen brooks and washed-out paths.	16th(July 23) Birthday ("Ledät") of Emp: Haile Selassie; praise hymns chanted in churches.

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Nähase 1 to Nähase 30	August 7 to Sept. 5	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some sow a bit of tyäff and "Adja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Selasaye"); parade, despite rain, with "Tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Buhe", "Debre Tabor") feast, with torch-light parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeraf") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger childred badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his namesake; flags, etc.
Pagumen1	Sept. 6	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Nägadras" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "lefafa sedeq", scroll; bathe.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	
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8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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that is, at the end of a long period of fasting, they eat nothing at all, and so far do they carry this rule that sometimes one or two of our older servants have become so weak that they have had to go home and remain in bed, so exhausted were they. 796 785

On Wednesdays and Fridays they eat no meat, and wherever they are or whatever they are doing they adhere firmly to this rule. I was immensely struck by this when on trek; for example, one day we had bought an ox for our men and on Thursday they had had a great raw meat banquet. The next day being Friday they would not touch an atom of the quantities of raw meat hung round the camp, though they had had a long and tiring march and had nothing else to eat. One of the men, who was really ill, would not drink a drop of the fresh milk we had prescribed for him, though he was excessively weak and could not retain anything else.

Their feasts are observed just as whole-heartedly, and obviously with more enthusiasm, inasmuch as much eating and drinking and no work are the order of the day. Their main feasts are New Year, the Feast of the Cross or *Maskal*, *Temkat* (Epiphany), and Easter. 796 527

Their New Year's Day, the 1st Maskaram, falls on the 11th September (or the 12th in the European year preceding our Leap year) and is a great feast, and of course a general holiday, the religious side of which is strongly marked, the Empress and the Court attending the Church of St. George in state.

No work is done, and there is much eating, an oasis of plenty in the desert of fasting which starts again on the day after New Year's Day, and continues until the end of the month. Bands of grown-up people and groups of children wander round serenading the differ-

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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ent houses, and although their intentions are doubtless of the best, the sounds they produce leave much to be desired from the point of view of harmony.

At the end of September is held the Feast of *Maskal*. There are three separate functions during the week in this connection, firstly the Dance of the Priests, 21st September, then the Dance of the Cross, 27th September, which includes a fantasia in which thousands of mounted troops take part, and finally the great *Gebbar* at which 17,000 to 18,000 men are fed (28th September).

On the day of the Dance of the Cross, after dinner we could see from our verandah the whole country for miles in every direction dotted with bonfires—a wonderful sight. Every Abyssinian must light something on this night, and they seemed to have done it pretty thoroughly; even high up in the mountains far away one could see the little points of light everywhere.

The Feast of the *Maskal* itself, which took place on the next day, is mainly remarkable for the great banquet; this I have described elsewhere, and though it is held on a religious festival the religious nature of it is less apparent.

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Temkat (18th, 19th, and 20th January) is perhaps the most beautiful and remarkable of their various pageants, and I will accordingly endeavour to give some idea of this ceremony, unique as it probably is.

It is difficult in mere words to do justice to the really wonderful pageantry attendant on these religious festivals. Their historical significance alone is worthy of the pen of a Gibbon, for they are probably some 3000 years old in some of their features, and half-

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time to the rhythm, then the little bell cymbals joined in, and finally the big drums. 796 535

All this time the long lines of priests were advancing and retiring, turning this way and that, their bodies swaying to the music. The time got quicker and quicker, others joined in, their movements became accentuated and their voices rose to a climax; then quite suddenly sound and movement ceased and the long lines were quite still.

After this, passages were read from enormous silver-covered Bibles, and with a final boom of the drums it was all over—a morning's journey back through the centuries, probably unique in the world in its character. 796

The Abyssinian Easter falls a week later than our own and is the occasion of great feasting; much rifle firing takes place the night before (or used to two years ago when ammunition was more plentiful), and much eating and drinking, on the day itself. And I am bound to say they must need it, for they have been fasting for forty days, and for the two previous days have eaten nothing at all. 796 527

Bands of priests visit the principal houses, soliciting alms, and I find the following description of one of these visits in my diary:

"Soon after breakfast a party of about five priests accompanied by attendants came up the drive, stationed themselves in front of the house, and began to sing and ring bells to wish us a prosperous Easter. Some of the priests wore their gorgeous vestments, and all had brilliant green or red silk parasols fringed with gold braid. We sent them out a small offering, which appeared to please them very much.

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"Then they blessed a lot of long grass they had, and gave it to us and we distributed it amongst the staff. Every servant there tied his piece of grass tightly round his head and wore it all day—they all seemed highly delighted."

But in spite of their strict observance of feasts and their pride in the fact of their being Christians, I cannot really think that they could in any sense of the word be described as a really religious people, their lives being in no way a reflection of their theoretical beliefs. Their religion is overlaid with a thick layer of superstition, some of which is merely curious, but some apt to have dangerous results. Thus they wear their charms and amulets suspended round their necks by a silken cord (never leather, which is used by Mohammedans for this purpose); they have a strong belief in the power of the "evil eye"; they will not look at a person eating, they will not start on journeys on certain days, and they believe that certain houses are inhabited by evil spirits and will not live in them.

We came across some curious examples of this latter superstition. Two important Abyssinian nobles had built in their grounds quite nice stone and mortar houses in the European style. These houses were lying empty, and their owners were living in native built *tukuls*, for the reason that their tame priests had told them that evil would befall them if they moved into their new residences.

Another and more serious example was that of a chief who was very ill with pneumonia. He was just getting over it when in the middle of one night his priest told him that he had had a vision to the effect that if he

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*565 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sóoner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] [182] [513] [352] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

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games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories.

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense.

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.)

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver.

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression.

The Yearly Cycle

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after

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FIG. 23.—*Clergy and government school students observing national holiday*

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FIG. 24.—*Inside a secondary school library*

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191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfata*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor [539] Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 574 527 Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of [575] the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious [794] fraternal association known as the *māhebar,* is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māhebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā,*" literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

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*121 571 181 735 [793] [533] live near the same master, they divide up the neighboring countryside to avoid duplication in their begging.

The ordained clergy are themselves given to begging, for items ranging from contributions to the local church to petty personal effects. High-ranking visitors to their locale are customarily made the objects of such solicitations. Another type of begging is practiced by the minstrels who wander about the country with their one-stringed fiddles and fecund wit, coaxing contributions from any audience they can capture. In addition to these there are numerous professional beggars—the maimed, the diseased, and the poverty-stricken—who attach themselves to a well-attended church or monastery if they are unable to travel. The *lālibalā* is a notable type within this category of mendicants.[23]

[527] In addition to honoring the periodic appeals of beggars, "big men" are supposed to provide yearly feasts (*gĭber*) at which beggars of all the above descriptions are fed. In all these instances, the solicitation and bestowal of charity contributes a solidaristic element to the network of personal relations among the Amhara.

*121 181 156 571 The foregoing analysis of forms of interaction among the Amhara has been undertaken in order to gain material for generalizing about a psychological disposition. Our unspoken, tautological assumption has been that the ways in which individuals typically relate to social objects (i.e., other persons and collectivities) represent the sociologically relevant aspects of their psychology. Egoism and solidarism have been used here as concepts for depicting one dimension of "social character," using this term in the specific sense of comprising those aspects of personality which are both socially shared and constitutive of those actions that are oriented to social objects. We may now attempt to summarize the preceding discussion with the following definition of Amhara social character as it relates to the concept of individualism: The Ambara is primarily disposed to structure interaction in terms of self-assertion, dissension, and distrust, and to be indifferent to the concept of civil community. At the same time this egoistic orientation is blended with a warm and kindly sense of sociability, an occasional mood of generosity, and a refined sensibility regarding differences in status and the readiness to pay deference accordingly.

INDEPENDENCE VERSUS CONSTRAINT

*121 In the previous section we considered the nature of the individual's orientation toward others and toward collectivities in Amhara society. Our question now is the converse: what order of demands is made upon individuals by the institutions of that society? Specifically, we shall be concerned primarily with the degree to which the norms which govern institutional roles are

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kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth century: 175* 633 517 538 [539]

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts. 175* 633 517 53

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā*, or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā*. 175* 159 993 633

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām*, the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere. [535] [178]

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā [214] [538]

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priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[43]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

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178 815 177 [175] ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the water in places where the Anopheles breed."[28]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

*883 177 178 *Taste.*—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from extreme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions.

[262] Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward [272] Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages [273] are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

*883 264 177 178 With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

*883 291 177 178 On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

*883 517 • 53 177 178 000 In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are preferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The effect of this literature has not been, as David Riesman suggests is true of the written word generally, an individualizing one. It did not serve to "help liberate the reader from his group and its emotions, and allow the contemplation of alternative responses and the trying on of new emotions."[31] It has served rather to buttress conformity, by rekindling identification with the sacred symbols of the society. Ethiopian religious literature does not invite introspection; it is a corpus to be venerated and solemnly rehearsed. When a devout Ethiopian reads his daily or weekly portion from some writing such as the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David) or the *Weddāssē Māryām* (*Praise of Mary*), he is said to be "repeating" the text—*Dāwit yedaggemāl*. Most of those who learn to read the words of these writings do not understand the Ge'ez in which they are composed. 121* 156 182 538

A similar function has been performed by the secular literature, which runs primarily in praise of royalty and thus has served to uphold the political status quo. The earliest Ethiopian writings are inscriptions of the Aksumite kings dating from the fourth century A.D. Here, in a style that is to persist through the ages, the royal deeds are recounted in meticulous detail and endowed with the highest morality.[32] Ge'ez chronicles were composed in this manner for most of the emperors after the thirteenth century. The earliest specimens of written Amharic consist of hymns in praise of the Emperor Amde Ṭseyon (1314–44). 121* 156 175 182 538

Two other written works put the capstone on this conservative structure. The *Kebra Nagast*, the Ethiopian national epic, has served chiefly to legitimate the royal line that came to power in the thirteenth century and to cement once and for all the union of monarchy and church. The *Fetha Nagast*, the traditional legal code based on various canon and civil laws compiled in medieval Egypt, has served not as a working code for the adjudication of court cases but as an embellishment of *de facto* decisions, imparting to the judge an increment of authority by virtue of his ritual of referring to them. 121* 156 182 538 671 177

Because of the relative sterility of Abyssinian written literature, art, dance, and music, many observers have concluded that Abyssinian culture provides no outlets for truly creative expression.[33] This judgment is not just. The Abyssinian genius freely discloses itself in the stories, verse, and proverbs that make up its very rich *oral* literature. Within this oral tradition, especially in its verse, a good deal of original expression and personalized commentary may be found. 121* 156 53 121* 156 538

Ethiopic verse comprises a wide variety of forms which differ according to subject and occasion. Classical *qenē*, Ge'ez verse in praise of some holy figure or political leader, is composed by *dabtarā* on certain religious or political holidays. More playful verses of praise are sung in Amharic by *dabtarā* or minstrels on festive occasions. In such verses the poet may in-

412 415 463 ists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322 [321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. [531] Ornamentation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric [303] nature, in the wood. Wooden combs together with their handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. [412] Wooden mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, [354] from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. On occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back-[407] rest of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint [231] firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

321 415 horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

285 415 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large basket of withes, "qerchat", used to measure 25 kilos of pinhead-grained tyeff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqaha"), or of a variety of reeds ("säbäz", "geramta", "akärma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofada") made by shepherding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by moroeco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agälgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("muday") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("qwacha")

285 [531] There is also a purely ornamental fiber plate, entirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, mostly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 411 857 Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wänchäf") of a strong fiber ("nacha"). When completed, it has a loop on one end to hook over a finger. A pebble is placed in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end released at just the right speed and direction. It can [244] stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

439 412 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight razor, "arab melach", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

291 in this kutta, resembling a motionless sack, stirring only
[513] when the rays of the sun begin to warm.

The "nätäla" is more loosely woven and about half the size of a "kutta". Because it was quickly made, used little cotton, and was therefore much cheaper, it was the dress of the poor and consequently despised. But in very recent times it has been finely made, some even in a factory in Dire Dawa city, and it is now finely embroidered near the border where the dyed strip used to be.

291 "Jano" or "jano kuta", as the name indicates, was
531 the fine shamma of royalty, in chich case warmth was no consideration, and border embroidery was of purple, green gold and other colored silken thread, in various designs. "Tebäb" or "derb jano" was embroidered with arabesques, and nowadays has often been changed to diamonds in the national colors of Ethiopia; green, yellow, red. Now urban women wear it, and it is becoming festive dress even for peasant women.

291 The roughest, coarsest and most durable workaday shamma of the peasant has no border ("goda"). Sometimes the "ämis" of the peasant woman is made of this tightly woven material. In the old times it had a very broad red border (a foot wide) and since it was worn by the freehold farmer, it was a garment of honor among the peasantry, even in the time of Menelik II. Now it has lost prestige, except among the more remote rural landholding kin, and it is not produced any more.

The "burnos" hooded cape of wool, is an ancient garment worn by Amhara feudal lords and royalty, both men

282 over the "alga" bedstead.

Sheepskins ("debdeb") are used as upholstery over the solid clay bench that runs along the inside of the Amhara hut, as cover for the children at night, or to protect a mule from chafing by placing the sheepskin under
[291] the saddle. Other sheepskins, "agoza" or "dä̈bä̈lo", are worn by church students too poor to own a good toga. Several skins make a coat for an adult itinerant monk and, formerly, for the warriors.

[415] Goatskins, when little-worked, are used for water carrying ("qärbä̈ta") on travel, or to store butter in.
[212] The bladder is made into a little bag. But goatskins carefully and at length scraped and tanned are made into parchment for amulets and books, especially psalteries for the church. These yellow-brown parchments ("berana") with religious or warrior-king texts were rolled into a goatskin cover. Since contact with European missionaries in the mid-19th century, the custom has been to sew parchment pages together on one side with a twisted gut, bind the book in this fashion within two wooden covers covered with a red, tanned goatskin, on which a cross with even branches is impressed with a hot iron.
[531] In the same fashion scabbards of daggers are covered and ornamented with impressed, geometric lines. The tanned tailskin of a cow is used to cover a better walk-
[534] ing stick, on which it gradually dries fast. Drums for use in church (and formerly for royal proclamations) are made by tanned cowskins stretched over both ends of the wooden body. Finely tanned skins are used to cover the

575 796 The preferred number of charter members is 12. The reason is not certain, but some ascribe it to the 12 apostles, some so that each member has the duty and privigele of acting as host once a year. The evening itself, within each month, is preferably the host's. The host asks his confessor-priest to officiate furing the religious part of the meeting. Part of the worship always includes ceremonial drinking from a special clay cup called "ṭuwa", or "ṣuwa", which is dedicated to a saint or archangel, and from which the particular mähabbär takes its name (e.g. the "ṭuwa-ef-Gabriel mähabbär). The host has prepared a large "gan" (largest clay jar) of barley beer, which is blessed by the officiating priest. There is also ceremonial breaking of bread, the well-baked kind usually called "dabye", preferably of wheat, and half an inch thick, which, on this occasion, is referred to as "ṭadiq" (lit. offering of righteousness), or as "shellemlämi" (a reference to the cross). This bread is sometimes adorned with incised geometric designs. A poor host may substitute the common limp enjära bread, but that would lower his prestige. A rich host or one trying to gain prestige will have carpets spread on theddirt floor, and even the poorest can spread odoriferous grasses and leaves, to give the hut a clean and festive atmosphere.

[531] [554]

The members congregate at dusk, some a bit earlier because of the Amhara aversion to travel after sundown. When the confessor-priest is seen to approach, the members rise and retrape their shammas in the symbol

3. Expressive Physical Arts.

531 Physical arts, like their material culture, are little developed among the Amhara, compared to their elaborate spiritual culture. If their life cycle gives any clue, it seems that the explanation lies at least in part in the end of free experimentation at the onset of adolescence, after which the experimentation is fettered into lines ordained by the Coptic church. Especially fine art, is considered exclusively within the domain of the church. This leaves little beyond body care and ornamentation for expression of physical arts, and even [302] this is partly dedicated to religion, such as the rationalized plucking of pubic hair of the woman, and the fullest expression of body arts on the occasion of church festivals.

171 It is also interesting to observe how patterns of the Middle East and of Africa are so evidently drawn from and synthesized in the traditional Amhara pattern of expressive physical arts, particularly in body care and ornamentation.

A. Body Care and Ornamentation.

515 [312] Washing in the dry season is difficult, since water is scarce and there are no wells. However, with some little effort, water can even then be obtained by digging in the riverbed, since the water table is high; this is what travellers do. Near towns the latter effort develops into a business, for water carriers, employing women as cheap labor to carry the water in their clay pots uphill to the town, charge 5¢ [548] (Ethiopian) per potfull of water. Only the "unattached woman" who has a cash income from beer-brewing or temporary wife - prostitution, can afford this, and usually buys a potfull of this muddy water every day during the long dry season, to wash herself and her clothing regularly and frequently, at a time when the fully respectable Amhara housewife goes unwashed (except for hands and private parts). Divorcees looking for husbands and professional women alone feel the need for daily

302 attempting to grow a rich one. This rich beard - though really a full goatee - is called "tïmä aron" (lit. beard of Aaron) in Geez, and is worn with the pride of the elder. Hair is also left on the upper lip, but usually does not grow very long or rich.

301 Ornaments are worn almost exclusively by women, and often include items that also have utility; the metal or wooden pin ("walaba" or "wolba") that is stuck in the tight hair and also used to scratch; an earwax spoon of metal, suspended from the matab neckcord on which are also suspended a small cross, amulets, (keys in modern situation), etc. Necklaces ("qwad") may be of wooden beads. In recent years country women have become very fond of a necklace of imported bluish glass rings ("deba"), which can do double duty in scouring and burnishing the clay pottery. A necklace of 130 of these rings costs 50 ¢ (Ethiopian). Also widespread is the use of a beaded strap with a large button-like center ("shotälay") which is worn on the forehead as an amulet, e.g. by women who have sufferred several miscarriages. A metal bracelet, ("ambar") was formerly given to soldiers as decoration, but has now become a women's fashion, worn on upper arms or legs.

B. Fine Arts

531 Artistic expression in the fine arts bears the stamp of the
[566] feudal lord, who alone was in a position to order, encourage and reward individual craftsmen and their apprentices; and of the Abyssinian Coptic church.

The feudal lord commanded decorative arts relating to warfare, such
[282] as the previously described rhinoceros shields. Another common object is the saddlecover ("degus"), made by experienced tanners out of leather, with geometric designs impressed by hot irons; fine leather stitching; and metal ornaments fastened on by the smiths. These designs and ornaments are still found, e.g. on leather cases containing the "dawit" (Psalter) written on parchment made of tanned goatskin.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

 121* 155

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by 855 throwing stones. 858

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimu- 121* late the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara 155 child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood 156 and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose. 86

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the 121* personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is 876 taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based 155 on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, 121* but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform 155 the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The in- 871 struction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, 121* and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners 868 and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for 565 personal development. 554

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention 121* is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their perform- 533 ance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except 535 for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, con- 156 sists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, [176] particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free 121* play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique orna- 531 • mentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of 156 Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again in- 121* dividuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited 532 by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to 156 the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

463 once a noble profession, requiring much intelligence
265 and training, but now a handsome cash gift, partly for the wedded couple and partly as a tip, can introduce a non-prestigeful guest to the table of the nobles. The profession has thus dropped to the level of the itinerant musician, the "azmari", and brings neither prestige nor any particular shame.

463 A still honorable semi-specialization is that of
532 the painter of religious or religious-royal themes in the church, the "seel-sali". He is often a layman loosely attached to the church, who learned his craft while attending church school and then apprenticed himself to a master painter. He is often hired by an individial landlord or well-to-do, often aging, pious Amhara man or noble lady, who wish to make this gift to the church and often order the painter to paint in a small, modest likeness of themselves or their recently departed parents. (See section of art).

464 The third category of "damoz"[1] labor is traditionally found in the rural areas primarily in the case of the temporary marriage. The availability of ex-slaves rarely makes it necessary to hire on any but temporary agricultural labor, for it would be too expensive and difficult to hire Amhara labor. There is, however, a type of day laborer, "mwayatänya", or simply "seratänya" (worker), who is now paid about Eth$1.- a day, and can be hired for some temporary job without the other involvements sich as leave for church holidays and kin-visiting. A poor Amhara will sometimes hire on for some ready cash,

1 [i.e. "temporary"--see p.215, cat.116. -Analyst]

793 Parish priests, (unlike mämhär scholars) are also
[66] not bashful about demanding their due (produce tithe, sheep, honey, even cash) from their tenants of church land. Sardonic peasant humor expresses this in the proverb:

[539] "The bashful priest,
the blind donkey,
(are one)". (i.e. both would be halpless and starve to death).

532 Among artisans who do specialist work for the
346 church is the artist of church paintings, usually highly colorful and realistic scenes from the suffering of the saints, in morbid and gory detail; the beauties of heaven and the trinity; the horrors of hell ruled by a chained, soul-munching Satan; etc. These religious and semi-religious story illustrations and legends are painted on canvas and then attached to the inside of church walls.

874 Church students are usually boys 10 years or over (never girls), who at first learn the Geez-Amharic alphabet, reading Geez without translating, beginning with the Epistle of the Apostle John. They are taught by rote, memorizing by chanting the portions out loud. There is very little writing in the early grades, and experimentation is traditionally discouraged, for fear that the boys might use their new-won learning to write magic amulets. Before examinations, church studetns stimulate
874 their mental processes by eating the leaf of a Datura
276 weed resembling Jimson weed called "astänager" (lit. to stimulate talk) which is also used by däbtära in exor-

532 For it is in connection with the church institution that most of the limited Amhara decorative arts received their reason for tolerated existence and even encouragement. The most famous development of these arts are the Abyssinian Coptic churchpaintings. While writing and doodling and drawing is discouraged among the mass of church students because of the fear of misuse of black magic; skilled and supervised artists working within the framework of the church are freed from this suspicion by the sanctity of the church.

The skilled painter of church art, ("se'el sälī") may receive a commission for a specific painting from the priests or from a lay sponsor who may have himself or his deceased parents memorialized by ordering the artist to paint pictures of the sponsors into corners of the saint's painting, though in modestly smaller scale. Some artists have even painted themselves into a corner.

Most paintings are on canvas, in very vivid colors, and are affixed to the hard mud-and-wattle walls inside the church. Apprentices are drawn from upper students in church school, and first practice on silhouettes (footnote 100); Some of these incipient doodles can be seen on the whitewashed outer walls of some of the sturdier churches, e.g. at monasteries. They practice realistic drawings such as saints on horseback, daily life, games and animals, though their paintings will all be realistically portrayed religious scenes. Ink used is often [58] made from the black fruit of the "tämbälal" tree (Jasminum floribundum), but dabtara scribes often use imported blue ink called "nil". A quill ("be'er") was traditionally used for writing and drawing.

Footnote 100 - Griaule, M.: Silhouettes et Graffiti Abyssins. Paris, 1933

●532 The actual church paintings are in oils, and they are the most amazing products of Abyssinian art. They are highly formalized compositions, which is the chief concern of the artist, but accuracy of significant detail, expression and action, is also important. (To the foreigner the scenes and persons portrayed at first look naive and childlike.) Some scenes, if showing continuous developments of the story told, are arranged in strips like American comic strips, with the words spoken by the characters written in Amharic near the mouth of the speaker; names of sacred figures are written in Geez, so that no one can misread the story portrayed.

Among frequent subjects are scenes from the Bible, especially New Testament, portrayed realistically even to teardrops and drops of blood; and the lives of saints. Thus, the Abyssinian saint Takla Haymanot is shown one-legged, for he lost the other on a mission. Biblical characters are portrayed as light or light-brown of skin, and [776] God is shown as a long-bearded Mediterranean-or-European-Looking elder. Abyssinians are shown as brown in coloring, other Africans as black with peppercorn hair. One of the most frequent strips is the subject of the voyage of the Queen of Sheba to the court of Solomon, the conception of the prince Menelik I, and his miraculous return after reaching adulthood. This is semi-religious, but acceptable because of the "Solomonic Dynasty" acting as defender of the faith. By extension however, battle scenes showing Abyssinians defeating the Italian invaders in 1896, also "heathen" Shanqalla and Danakil, are occasionally seen and have become common for the tourist trade.

One of the noteworthy symbolisms in these oil paintings is the traditional portrayal of infidels, evil beings, demons, sinners, and torturers of Christian saints - in profile. By contrast, all good Christians are painted full-face. In profile, only one eye is shown, which may be one of the possible explanations - reduction of the power

532 of the evil eye. Another possible explanation is that centuries ago this symbolism was adopted from Armenian paintings; which is not surprising in view of early, though interrupted contacts between Byzantine and Coptic church art, and later on even Persian and Indian contacts (footnote 101). The amazing realism of natural objects may possibly be of ancient origin, and has survived the emphasis on highly formalized composition enforced by the church.

Scenes depicting everyday life ("abore"), or the famous motif showing the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon (mentioned in the Bible), are also painted on gourds, the useful utensil with the smooth surface. But only the well-to-do or noble families can afford this; (also the tourist). Sometimes the secular motifs show figures of famous military warlords and provincial dynastic heads of the past; and simple, incised geometric figures pleasing to the traditional feudal lord whose appreciation of art wanted direct, simple, and realistic portrayal.

4. Amhara Ideas about Nature and Mankind.

887 While his material culture is limited, speculation about the
812 structure, function, and most of all meaning, of the non-material world ranges unfettered in the Amhara culture pattern. Moreover, it is freely expressed, evidencing deep thought, but primarily a wonderment. Often there is a sensitivity that resembles Weltschmerz. This wondering out loud affects most Amhara men when they reach the "shemagalye" (elder) stage, and is one of the most frequently and intensely expressed subjects of their conversation; while at younger ages they are too

Footnote 101 - Mollet, G.: Note (in) Aethiopica, Vol. 3 pp. 191-2 New York, 1935.

186 quoted to praise farming as the best and most typical Amhara occupation, casually refer to the Muslim as a person not bound by social ethics:

[539] "He traded - (then he) cheated;
he was appointed (official) - he began (to act) like a Muslim;
(but) he (who) was a farmer - and became a king!"

[177] Nevertheless, the influence of Islam, probably by slow diffusion, has been considerable on Abyssinian Christianity through the centuries. Their avoidance of "unclean, forbidden things" ("erm"), such as pork, though officially based on the Old Testament prohibitions, was probably reawakened or reintroduced and emphasized through the pressure of Muslim ideas, geographically so close.

[532] The Amhara paint an infidel, like any evil person, with one eye, in profile, for "he has only half a soul, is only half-born, sees only half the truth." The outsider is regarded as automatically of evil personality.

C. Amhara Ideas about Body and Personality.

826 Not all Amhara ideas about human beauty are dominated by racial criteria. A long, lean face ("fit sälkakka") is considered handsome in a man, while a broad face ("fit mäda") is considered ugly; this may bear some relation to the gerontomorphic preference over the pedamorphic.

[304] A long neck ("angät") is a mark of beauty, in both sexes, but noted especially in the woman who therefore may have a series of necklaces tattooed on to her neck. The beauty of the long neck is referred to in the following proverb:

[539] "The neck of the dead child
is longer (than ever);
(meaning, "a good thing that came when of no use).

The forehead is considered the location of good fortune, and a large forehead is considered a mark of beauty in men.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 is painted, it is not certain whether it is stone or wood. It has two sets of cloisters round the body of the church, both 346 covered in, and much painted with figures of apostles, 532 patriarchs, prophets, and many things of the Old Law, and 353 many angels, and St. George on horseback, who is in all the churches. This monastery also possesses a great cloth, like a piece of tapestry, on which is the crucifix and effigy of Our Lady and the apostles, and other figures of patriarchs and prophets, and each one has his Latin name written, so that no man of the country made it. It has many small and ancient pictures, not well made, and they are not upon the altars, for it is not their custom: they keep them in a [212] sacristy, mixed up with many books, and they bring them out on feast days. There is in this monastery a very large kitchen and bakehouse, also a very large refectory, in which 792 they eat. They mostly eat three and three[1] in a large dish, 262 it is not deep, but flat like a tray, and their food is very [264] poor. The bread is of maize and barley, and other grain which they call *taffo*,[2] a small black grain. They make this bread round, and of the size and roundness of a citron,[3] and they give three of these to each friar: to the novices they give three loaves to two of them, it is a matter of amazement how they can maintain themselves. They also give them a few vegetables, without salt or oil. Of this food they send to a great many old pensioners, who do not come to the refectory. Besides seeing these things when we 792 buried Matthæus, I saw them many times, because I came there to pass time with the friars, principally on feast days, when we were near there. In this way I learned about them and their property, and revenues and customs. In my opinion there were generally always a hundred friars in this

[1] By threes.

[2] Mansfield Parkins calls it teff, the species of corn most esteemed in this country.

[3] Zamboa: not referred to in Selves' translation.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

532 In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

491 In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
[563] in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

154 There are many lepers in this country, and they do not live separated from the people, they live all together; there are many people who, out of their devotion, wash them, and tend their sores with their hands.

231 There is a great quantity of honey in all the country, and the bees are not in hives, but inside the houses, where the cultivators live, clinging to the walls on the inside, where they have a mode of egress outside, and also inside they surround the house: but they do not on this account desist from dwelling in the house, because the bees go outside. There are a great number of these swarms of bees, chiefly in the monasteries, there are also many in the woods and mountains, and the men put hives near the trees and fill them with bees, and bring them in them to the houses.

346 Since no one sits in the churches, at their doors outside of them, and within the circuit, there are always a great quantity of staves with cross pieces like a .....[1] or cripple's crutch, and each one takes his staff and leans upon it as long as he is at the offices of the church. In the churches there are many effigies painted on the walls. Effigies of [532] our Lord and our Lady, and of the apostles and patriarchs, and prophets and angels, and in all the churches St. George. They have not got solid images. There are many books in [212] the churches all written on parchment, because there is no [191] paper there, and the writing and language is Tigray,[2] which is that of the first country in which Christianity began.

In this country they are not accustomed to write to one another, neither do the officers of justice write anything. All the justice that is done, and what is ordered, is by messengers and speech. I say only that I saw the property of Prester John written down on being delivered up and received.

554 There would be much fruit and much more tillage in the country, if the great men did not ill treat the people, for

[1] *Taku.* [2] *Tigia.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

784 He says that during all Passion week they are dressed in black or blue, and do not speak to one another for grief, saying that Judas by a kiss of peace betrayed his Lord.

532 Although there are in the churches effigies painted on all
784 the walls, and also crosses, nevertheless on no cross is a crucifix painted, neither have they any of solid carving; because they say they are not deserving to see Christ crucified.

792 All the priests, friars, and gentlemen carry crosses in their
778 hands, both on foot and on horseback; and the laymen of the people and lower people carry crosses round their necks. Every priest and friar carries a little horn of copper with holy water, and the hosts where they arrive beg of them water and a blessing, and they give it. Before they eat they throw drops of water on the food, and also in the drinking vases.

411 Their arms are assagays, few swords, a few shirts of mail, long and narrow; our Portuguese say that they are not of good mail.

There are many bows and arrows, they have no feathers like ours; there are very few helmets and casques. Those that there are have come since they have had intercourse with the Portuguese. There are plenty of strong bucklers;
713 there are no cannon, except two swivel guns which we brought them. At our departure there were fourteen muskets at Court, which they bought from the Turks who come there to trade. The Prester ordered whatever they asked to be given for them, and ordered men to be taught to shoot.

534 There are trumpets, but not good ones; there are many drums of copper which come from Cairo, and others of wood which have leather on both sides; there are tambourines like ours, and large cymbals which they sound. There are flutes and some instruments with chords, square like harps, which they call David moçanquo, which means the harp of David. They play these to the Prester, and not well.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

small division answering to the holy of holies. This 346
is so narrow, that none but the priests can go into it.
You are bare-footed whenever you enter the church;
and, if bare-footed, you may go through every part of 783
it, if you have any such curiosity, provided you are
pure, i. e. have not been concerned with women for
24 hours before, or touched carrion, or dead bodies
(a curious assemblage of ideas); for in that case you
are not to go within the precincts, or outer circumfe-
rence of the church, but stand and say your prayers
at an awful distance among the cedars.

All persons of both sexes, under Jewish disqualifi-
cations, are obliged to observe this distance; and this
is always a place belonging to the church, where, un-
less in Lent, you see the greatest part of the congrega-
tion; but this is left to your own conscience; and, if
there was either great inconvenience in the one situa-
tion, or great satisfaction in the other, the cause would
be otherwise.

When you go to the church, you put off your shoes 782
before your first entering the outer precinct; but you
must leave a servant there with them, or else they
will be stolen, if good for any thing, by the priests
and monks before you come out of the church. At
entry you kiss the threshold, and two door-posts, go in
and say what prayer you please; that finished, you
come out again, and your duty is over. The churches 532
are full of pictures, painted on parchment, and nailed 346
upon the walls, in a manner little less slovenly than
you see paltry prints in beggarly country ale-houses.
There has been always a sort of painting known a-
mong the scribes, a daubing much inferior to the
worst of our sign-painters. Sometimes, for a particu-
lar church, they get a number of pictures of saints,
on skins of parchment, ready finished from Cairo, in
a style very little superior to these performances of

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 their own. They are placed like a frize, and hung in
532 the upper part of the wall. St George is generally there with his dragon, and Demetrius fighting a lion. There is no choice in their saints; they are both of the Old and New Testament, and some that might be dispensed with from both. There is St Pontius Pilate and his wife; there is St Balaam and his ass; Samson and his jaw-bone; and so of the rest. But the thing that surprised me most was a kind of square-miniature upon the front of the head-piece, or mitre, of the priest, administering the sacrament at Adowa, representing Pharaoh on a white horse, plunging in the Red Sea, with many guns and pistols swimming upon the surface of it around him.

Nothing embossed, nor in relief, ever appears in any of the churches; all this would be reckoned idolatry, so much that they do not wear a cross, as has been represented, on the top of the ball of the sendick, or standard, because it casts a shade; but there is no doubt that pictures have been used in their churches from the very earliest age of Christianity.

798 The Abuna is looked upon as the patriarch of the Abyssinian church, for they have little knowledge of the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria. We are perfectly ignorant of the history of these prelates for many years after their appointment. The first of these mentioned is Abuna Tecla Haimanout, who distinguished himself by the restoration of the royal family, and the regulations he made both in the church and state, as we have seen in the history of those times. A very remarkable, but wise regulation was then made, that the Abyssinians should not have it in their power to choose one of their own countrymen as Abuna.

Wise men saw the fallen state of literature among them; and unless opportunity was given, from time to time, for their priests to go abroad to Jerusalem for their instruction, and for the purpose of bringing the

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

the eye. Its beauty was not increased by the addition of a corrugated iron annexe for the purpose of seating some of the foreign guests at the Emperor's coronation. 346

The Abouna was good enough to arrange for us to visit the church, and we were received with ceremony by a number of priests, who were exceedingly kind and enabled us to make a thorough inspection, and even allowed us to take some photographs (which unfortunately, owing to the bad light, did not come out). They showed us everything with great enthusiasm and begged us to return "when a great feast was in progress". The building consists of three portions, a sort of outer gallery, an inner court, and finally the Holy Place or Holy of Holies, an inner chamber in the centre of the building in which rests the *Tabot* or representative of the Ark of the Covenant to which only the priests are allowed access. 346 778

The priests threw open the doors of the Holy Place for us to see in; it contained a kind of altar where the Sacraments are kept, and was surrounded by priests in very gorgeous vestments, burning incense and holding big crosses and crucifixes. 778 788

In one of the galleries a service was proceeding. Two priests were beating with their hands very big drums made of wood and hide; many others were shaking their curious little brass cymbals; and all were chanting, swaying their bodies, and slowly waving their praying-sticks. The time was really good, and the chant was rhythmic and tuneful, and not at all unmelodious. 796 534

The galleries were profusely decorated with huge life-size paintings depicting mainly scenes from the Scriptures, scenes from the life of Christ, the miracles, etc.; one dreadfully realistic picture of the Massacre 353 532

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

353 of the Innocents was very striking. There was also a
532 portrait of the Emperor Menelik, and of other noted characters in Abyssinian history; the likenesses of royal and other famous persons are frequently to be found on the walls or among the possessions of the principal churches.

778 In this connection an amusing incident is told by Stern. King Sehala Selassie had been given by Captain Harris' mission to the Court of Shoa, a portrait of Queen Victoria. This had been carefully guarded for many years amongst his treasures until his death, some time after which his successor, King Haile Malekot, presented it to the principal church at Ankober where the people used to flock on grand festivities to worship it as the representation of the Virgin Mary!

The *Tabot*, to which reference has been made, is the object of much veneration and has to be blessed or consecrated prior to being used in the particular church to which it is allocated. In one case the priest in charge of the church had committed a murder, and the *Tabot* had to be sent up to Addis to be reconsecrated before it could be used again.

796 The most prominent features of the practice of their
785 religion are the fasts, feasts, and pageants; and each of these is sufficiently remarkable. A very large part of the year—about 150 days—falls under the category of fast or feast, and both are strictly observed. During their fasts they are forbidden not only meat, but also butter and milk and eggs, and it is really surprising to see to what an extent this rigid abstinence is followed, especially as the fasting periods are lengthy, that prior to Easter lasting forty days.

For a day or so immediately prior to the main feast,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

times brought dissension to the state, the legitimate Crown was triumphant most of the time. 175*

In the history of Ethiopian literature the period has been called a Golden Age.[1] The important works composed during this time include *The Glory of Kings,* which contains the story of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon, and their offspring, Menelik I, legendary first king of Ethiopia; *The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth,* a compilation of occult theology and numerology, with a Miltonic account of the struggle between Michael and Satan; *The Christian Romance of Alexander the Great,* a fantastic portrayal of Alexander as a Christian hero who traverses the Land of Darkness and the miraculous Land of the Living; the moralizing tracts of the greatest emperor of the period, Zar'a Yā'qob; as well as numerous lives of saints and translations of Christian writings from Arabic. 175* 538

Connoisseurs of Ethiopian art attribute the most original and refined paintings to the latter part of this period. Using translucent colors and austere shapes and design, Ethiopian monks brought to expression an intense spirituality in the form of miniatures in illuminated manuscripts.[2] 175* 532

At the same time this was the Heroic Age of Ethiopian warfare. Amda Ṭseyon vanquished sixteen Muslim chiefs to the south and west; the valor of Sayfa Ar'ed was celebrated in medieval Arab tales of chivalry; Dāwit I pushed his victories against the Muslims as far as Zeila on the Gulf of Aden. Improved military equipment and organization under Yeshāq brought the imperial forces to a new level of discipline and power, which Yeshāq used to establish his authority in many southern areas. Zar'a Yā'qob, famous for endowing churches and monasteries and for encouraging literature and art, was a successful warrior in his own right. 175* 648

A close-up of Ethiopia at the height of its medieval synthesis is provided by Father Francisco Alvares, Portuguese emissary to Abyssinia during the years 1520–27.[3] We see a prosperous kingdom, its far-flung dominions headed by hereditary rulers and royal appointees, all of whom pay tribute in kind to the emperor. The tribute consists of horses and mules, blankets and cloths, silk stuffs and gold, all in impressive amounts. The provincial heads, and the armies they must make available, live off the land they govern. The numerous priests and monks are supported by lands granted them by the king. Justice is administered at three levels, with the possibility of appeal from the local judge, to the provincial governor, to the royal court itself. The king's mobile camp, large as a town, is his capital, so that he spends his years marching about from one corner of his domain to another. 175* 64 631 [651] [69]

The monarch at the time of Alvares' visit was Lebna Dengel (1508–40), a man of pride and temper. He refused to heed counsel that the kingdom was imperiled by threats from the outside. Indeed, legend has it that he was discontented with the prevailing civil harmony and begged God to send an ad- 175* 643

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 chant"), *qenē*, and *tergum* ("interpretation")—is said to have received its
643 definitive organization.
633
517 Dāwit III appears to have had a pronounced interest in Amharic folk song, for the more perfect enjoyment of which he built a special hall in the imperial compound. Because of this he has been called "Dāwit the Singer"—no term of praise in a land where minstrelsy is looked down on and where serious deportment is expected of royalty. Actually, this epithet, with its connotation of "playboy," was not deserved. Dāwit was a religious man, and in his brief reign built two churches. Knowledgeable Gondarēs today insist that, at first, even the priests were happy to join him in the amusement hall to listen to the one-stringed fiddles and the witty songs. Only after Dāwit's partiality to the
[798] Unctionist doctrine (that the humanity of Christ was made divine through the unction of the Holy Spirit) led him to persecute the Unionist clergy (who hold that humanity and divinity are blended in the single nature of Christ) did they abuse his music hall and tarnish his name.[7]

[341] Interest in architecture was revived by Bakāffā. He constructed a long U-shaped castle which, together with the new castle of his Empress Mantuāb, completed the major complex of buildings in Gondar. Mantuāb's castle is
[532] noted for bas-reliefs of the Ethiopian Cross, while her other castle at nearby Qusquam is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting saints and animals as well.

The tastes of Iyāsu II were especially refined. He cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He built a large and handsome church. He began to construct a palace, in the lavish
[344] decoration of which he took a personal interest. Budge writes of this:

> A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the walls of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts . . . with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. . . . Iyāsu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen.[8]

*175 The decline of imperial power at Gondar after Iyāsu II did not produce a
633 slackening of the cultural activities that had been concentrated there. During
517 the reign of Takla Hāymānot II (1769–77), for example, when the actual
[643] power at Gondar was in the hands of a lord from Tigre, seven more churches
[874] were built. One of these, Baʿātā Māryām, eventually became one of the most famous schools for the teaching of *aquāquām* ("religious dance"), and in its heyday boasted 276 masters. Another, Abi Egzi, became noted for instruction in *tergum*, and is still a leading school for such studies.

[538] The composition of verse, in forms which had become canonized during the early Gondar period, continued to flourish. As political turmoil often

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[26] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution
789 of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of
261 eating something or presenting food to someone.[14] It is a theme conspicuous
173 in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85). According to *The Book of the*
[539] *Riches of Kings,* Yekuno Amlāk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zāgwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[15]

155 *Oral Sadism*

152 In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the envi-
201 ronment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When
155 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong
152 biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following
726 refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:
[539]

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[16]

155 The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagi-
266 nation. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the
773 story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater
[532] of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 97.—St. Gabra Manfas Qeddus

[P 238-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 further limited by a number of canons. For example, saints must have no
• 532 shadows on their faces; "good" characters must be portrayed *en face,* "bad"
156 ones in profile; and honored subjects must be portrayed on the right.• Virtually all aspects of the subject matter—dress, features, actions, symbolism—are prescribed by rigid conventions. That this degree of conformity reflects a cultural attitude and not a want of inventiveness on the part of Amhara artists is shown by the discoveries of Marcel Griaule, who collected hundreds of drawings in Gojjam in the form of silhouettes and graffiti, drawings based on direct observation and exhibiting an "astonishing diversity and revealing . . . a very great liberty of expression." Yet, Griaule observed, "these drawings are scorned by the people, who pay scarcely any attention to them; and by the artists themselves, who regard them as a sort of pastime of no importance, or as an activity reserved primarily for apprentices."[29]

In painting, as in the performing arts, individuality was suppressed not only by the pressure to conform to given models but also by the anonymity of the artists involved. This is more striking in the case of painting which, particularly in the form of miniatures, produced some exceptional works. But painting was carried out for the most part as a devotional activity, and its practitioners were apparently content to remain unknown.

The Written Word and the Oral Tradition

*121 The written literature of Ethiopia provides as little scope for individuality
156 as does its painting. Like the painters, the authors of the Ethiopian manu-
538 scripts have for the most part remained anonymous. Their subject matter has been narrowly circumscribed by the force of tradition, and their genres have been just as narrowly conventionalized.

Ethiopian literature consists primarily of religious writings, in the first instance of free translations from Greek, Syriac, and Arabic texts. Where the writings are original they tend to be either expositions of traditional beliefs and rituals of the church, eulogies of saints, or expressions of pious fantasy on religious themes. The nature of this literature is to extol sacred objects, not to express individual personality. The *Investigations of Zar'a Yā'qob,* a very personal and imaginative critique of prevailing orthodoxies dated in the seventeenth century and reminiscent of the French *philosophes,* is the exception that proves the rule; for this manuscript has proved to be a forgery, the work of a Franciscan missionary to Ethiopia in the early nineteenth century.[30]

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[175] • The seriousness with which such conventions seem to have been taken is shown by the episode of Brancaleone, a Venetian painter who was in Ethiopia during the reign of Ba'eda Māryām (1468–78), who is said to have provoked an uproar by painting a Madonna with the child on her left arm instead of the conventional right.

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[For the religious functions of the dabtara in the Ethiopian church, see category 793.]

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305 the effect of their whiteness. She also tatoos the women's
304 necks up to the cheek, in the shape of concentric necklaces, to make the neck appear longer, a mark of beauty.

462
305 The hairdresser, "ras säri" is a woman who operates
302 a traditional beauty parlor. She braids the women's hair front to back in as few as 12 or as many as 32 braids, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Her best-paying customers are divorcees looking for husbands, especially during the marriage season that follows the major harvest early in the dry season. A full two-hour job with a maximum of fine braids costs ETH$1.00 (US$0.40), while a simple job producing only few and thick braids, costs only a quarter of that. Many peasant women, and women unwilling to go to this expenditure, usually let their hair grow to a huge bushy crop, halo-like surrounding the skull, occasionally anointing it with butter boiled with "ades" leaves. But divorcees have the expensive hairdo done over as often as once every two months, and have it thoroughly washed during the process, so that their hair is much cleaner than that of married women.

462
533 Another occupation of women is that of "azmari",
535 musician-singer-dancer, who performs at more elaborate, wealthier, rural weddings, and nearly all urban ones. This will be described under entertainment. She is often accompanied by a male azmari, who plays the single-string violin or the banjo-type instrument, and who may alternate with her in singing rhymes, but who does not dance.

782 726 521 535 left, while boasts are shouted rythmically. Personal boasts are interspersed with shouts of loyalty to the emperor ("Addis Ababa! Addis Ababa!"), or recalling past loyal bravery in the service of a provincial chieftain. Fukkara is performed also before the military games of "ganna" on Christmas, and outside the church on Epiphany (Ṭemqāt), to express the readiness of the young warriors to defend the faith, and on weddings to boast of warrior ancestors and so impress the in-laws.

The song and dance is also referred to as "dan-
[533] kira " (stomping); to distinguish it from the tamer entertainment song, "ṣafan" performed by female "azmari" who perform accompanied by a violin ("masenqo") or banjo ("qrar"), often recounting tales of renown in ballad form. The "fukkara" in military life takes place before the "joy tent" ("das") of the king, before the "denkwan" (from diwan, round cotton or hair tent) of feudal lords on the march; or, in honor of a successful "killer" ("gedday") of a lion, rhinoceros, elephant or human enemy, in presence of the trophy.

[727] The dance after the victorious battle is called "koto". It is a simple jumping up and down, brandishing spear, rifle or stick vertically, reminiscent of the Central and West African dancing to exhaustion. It is accompanied by refrains, shouted frequently in response to impromptu poetry made up to celebrate the event, such as "yebanalal jebo" (the hyena will swallow him, i.e. the slain enemy). This refrain is also used before the battle, to defy the enemy and pretend that victory

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

778 Geez). Here the bread and wine used in the eucharist are
346 prepared and stored with great secrecy. The utensils of
251 the nearby cooking hut, the baking pan "metad" and large clay jars for barley beer, are also stored here. Supplies of tyeff, barley, wheat, beans, peas, may also be stored.

779 In recent years, church parades feature prominent-
186 ly the flag of the nation, the red-green-yellow of the central government, emphasizing in modern ways the close union of church and state that has long been traditional in Abyssinia.

(e) Worship and Devotional Poetry.

533 The musical chants and notations studies formally
796 have already been outlined in connection with church education.

Church hymns, including devotional poetry, are called "qene" in a generic rather than specifically accurate sense. A collection of them is contained in the book "qubaé qana", and they are sung in a special mode. The chief mode is called "selt". It has three variations:

(1) "geez" - short tones, dedicated to the "Father";

(2) "ezel" - mournful tones in minor key, dedicated to the "Son" 's passion;

(3) "araray" - long, drawn-out tones, dedicated to the "Holy Ghost".

These variations are interlaced, for special results, and for specific occasions. The mass, "qeddase" (lit. sanctification) is chanted in a mode bearing the

533 796 same name. "Saatat", the midnight chant, has a special mode. "Dawit", the Psalms of David, are chanted in their characteristic mode, as is the "Addis Kidan" (New Testament).

On other occasions, not only does the musical composer have the opportunity to improvise, but the lyrical poetry, "qené", can be varied. In rural districts, priests who can only recite Geez but not compose in it, because they don't understand it, even compose "qené" in Amharic. For example:

[539] "How are you, earth? How are you, world?
Even though I love you (my home soil), I wish not to come.
Even if I hated you--how shall I stay away?"

This poem, chanted as part of a church service, is not strictly liturgical, varies from district to district, and can express a wide variety of philosophical emotions, including the weltschmerz motive illustrated here. The peasants appreciate this unofficial, Amharic addition to Geez liturgy, and often mutter under their breath "Aiyye! what good words!".

(f) Heretical Movements.

795 Like any old church, the Abyssinian Coptic church has had heretical movements within it, but none of them have ever been able to split the church into sharply divided sects. Instead, heretical sects seem to follow

563 rest not on any supposed supernatural powers of their
281 craft, but on theoccupation which requires them to deal with carcasses regularly, and places them in a class with the "Woyto" hippopotamus hunters of Lake Tana. However, the tanned skins produced by these "Faqi" tanners, prepared through a primitve version of making "morocco" leather, ismuch appreciated as "best workmanship" by the rural as well as town Amhara.

Like the Falasha, the "Faqi" live in hamlets of their own, usually within half a day's waling distance of a big market. They are regarded by Amhara as pagans; they gather under large trees in remote areas for their nature worship on several occasions each year. In very recent years, the urgings from the emperor and the example of Protestant missionaries have stimulated the
[97] Coptic clergy to admit them to Christianity, but, as in the case of converted Falasha, the social stigma remains attached to the convert, even if he changes his occupation. Socially he is then worse off than before, for as an outcast from his own group he feels the barbs of social discrimination more than ever. In the past, the "Faqi", like the "Falasha" did not concern themselves much about this stigma, but now the "Faqi" insist on the polite address "arabeñña" --which refers to the tanner workmanship (lit. the one who creates Arab-like, i.e. imported luxury, articles.).

[463] Occupations that can be readily learned by anyone, or that require talent rather than skill, do not connote
533 low class. A musician, "azmari", male or female, who may or may not play an instrument for accompaniment, is

[533] usually a Coptic Amhara, of more talent than skill.
286 The weaver, "shamani", though usually a Ethiopian Muslim (or Falasha), carries on his work in theopen, and anyone may learn it. It is only because it requires consistent manual labor that most Amhara shun,it.

d) Religious Minority.

794 The foremost religious minority in Amhara provinces is that of the Ethiopian Muslims. Most of them live in towns, and in the past were residentially segregated to the older parts of town, near caravan trails andbig markets. Even today, their social associations are almost exclusively with other Muslims, e.g. traders from the Sudan. Both are regarded as low-class not only by the Amhara but also by the handful of Arab wholesale traders from Yemen. As a result, negroid and semi-negroid ex-
[797] slaves (Shanqalla), especially women, often become converted to Islam in order to marry Ethiopian Muslims or Sudanese, who, as retail traders, are economically better off. The Muslim veneer of these women is very thin, and they are among the most ardent followers of the "Zar" cult.

e) Racial Minority

563 Shanqalla slaves were, [redacted], entirely below
567 the social scale, and treated as a separate caste. They were brought or purchased from the Shanqalla, negroid, people on the southwest escarpment, or from Nilotic

535 shoulders and hisses along ("tekäsha wärrädä"). This dance, therefore is often used to warm up an audience before the next performer begins the "zäffän" chant, the high-pitched wailing song of the women.

533 The "zäffän" chant is accompanied by less frenzied shoulder movements, the head raised forward, and the singer chanting "up" at the sky, not forward toward the audience. This gradually changes the performance from the sensual to the spiritual. There are several variations of "zäffän":

"zäffän awärrädä" - loud, strident, high-pitched chant, mostly performed by women in public entertainment, in which the audience soon participates as chorus; accompanied by shoulder dance.

"zäffän engorgorra" - softly hummed chant, expressing philosophical sadness. Frequent at portions of the funeral chants and at ecclesiastical chanting of poetry ("genyē") performed by male dabtara.

Professional entertainment singers may be recognized "azmari" hired e.g. for weddings, when they also play such musical instruments as the "masenco" (single-string violin) and "grar" (banjo). Or they may be wandering minstrels ("hamina").

The "gena" sung in church by the "dabtära" choristers are rhymes that follow pattern and content of the psalms. Young dabtara compete with each other both as composers and as performers, for their careers depend on the critiques of the old connoisseurs. Little boys begin to chant the syllabic alphabet, as soon as they go to church school, and this pedagogic recitation is called "meleket" or "yäzema melekt" (Geez "malekta"), which may originate from the word for "gospel", or the word for "trumpet" ("mälkät"). Chants taken from the church are sung by children in a similar manner as Western Christmas carols; "Säba segäl" (three wise men), "Buhe bälu" (let all say buhe), etc.

533 To European ears the music of the Amhara sounds like a continuous cacophony, like the tuning up of a Western orchestra. But once accommodated to it, the sentiments expressed in the high-pitched chanting, the ecstatic pitch of emotions of the priests and dabtara, is recognized, when they sing for hours the chants they know so well by heart.

One foreign musicologist characterizes the timbre of voice in some Abyssinian chants as "harsh, forced and strident, unlike the singing in Negro Africa which is usually soft and rounded" (footnote 96). But he appreciates the artistry by which boy singers change the register, dropping from the usual falsetto to chest voice, and octave below, then move back into the falsetto; also, the interesting polyphonic technique, in which the second voice sings the melody introduced by the first voice, in the same pitch, but with delayed entry, so that a "canon" or "round" results, which is abandoned toward the end, the two voices ending in unison. Thirds seem to be preferred, though fourths and fifths occur among the voices.

Dabtara are always at work experimenting with minor alterations, which may in time accumulate. Furthermore, certain regional specializations exist: Arabic music affects Abyssinian music wherever Muslims live in sizeable numbers, especially in Tigre province, and near the Sudanese border. Here the wailing Arabic chant that breaks off abruptly, has infiltrated.

[77]

533 178 Modern, national Ethiopian music dates only to the 1920's. It includes the modern national anthem and other patriotic songs such as "Lion of Judah". The music, often composed on order, by foreigners or

Footnote 96 - George Herzog, quoted by Leslau: Chansons Harari. Rassegna di Studi Etiopici VI, p. 161, Rome 1947.

533 resident Armenians, ranges from vague "oriental" melodies to European
178 melodies of the marching variety. But secular songs, grassroots folk-songs, are increasing with the use of public loudspeakers and growing up of a somewhat more modern educated generation singing love songs with less restraint than in the past, such as "yänne shega, yänne qonjo" (my peach, my beauty).

534 Musical instruments are largely divided into two categories in the mind of the Amhara; those used for the church service, notably percussion instruments; and those used for entertainment, notably string instruments, and wind instruments. Drums are used in both categories, however.

The reason percussion instruments predominate in church, is that musical instruments used in church have the role of marking time, in the chant-dances. Moreover, there is no independent instrumental music in the Abyssinian tradition, not even in organized entertainment.

Percussion instruments include the following:

Drum - "nägarit", the huge, barrel-like symmetrical drum over which skins are stretched at both ends, made to accompany rythmic (church) dances. It has a wooden body, 3' to 5' in length. It is considered the aristocratic drum, for in the past it was beaten to assemble the population for war or to hear a royal proclamation. (The modern government publication printing decrees is appropriately called "Nagarit Gazetta"). In the past it was carried on muleback in military expeditions, and preceded the entry of a governor into a province. Since it is heavy, it is suspended from a shoulder strap and carried by the younger men. It is beaten by the flat fingers and half the palm, while the drummer keeps time by swaying his upper body.

524 and rock back and forth. This is largely a projection of human
831 activities, in their minds, for they have all seen actual sexual intercourse among domestic animals.

The puzzle of human sexual activities is reflected in boys' riddles:

Question: "On a precipice, two large gourds hang down, What are they?"

Reply: "Woman's breasts."

Question: "A little goatskin bottle, with mouth and fur.(What is it?)"

Reply: "Vulva ("ens").

Question: "In a porridge of sorghum, a potato expands?"

Reply: "Vulva and penis."

Question: "Hardwood that does not break, skin bottle that is not worn out?"

Reply: "Penis and vulva."

524 Since toys are almost never made for children, they must rely on
533 older children for any that they cannot make themselves, e.g. slingshots.

537 The aforementioned flute, "washint", is made by boys age 11 to 12, of a hollow light bamboo into which four holes are bored. The flute is blown into from the right corner of the mouth. The following sounds are distinguished:

a) to keep the cows calmly grazing: extended high-pitched sound (dadada dididi).

b) to keep away the leopard: lower-pitched sounds. (A variation is believed useful to attract the leopard to lure him into a covered pit, onto which the flute is then thrown).

c) to accompany the azmari singer, e.g. at a wedding: high-pitched sound in somewhat minor key, as in wooing chants, to suggest emotion.

d) to accompany the "hotu" jump-dance, eg. on holy days as Temqat: a hacked, staccato sound is produced (dada dodo dada).

×794 796 778 from Aksum (just as Menelik I is regarded by the Coptic Abyssinians to have brought it to Aksum from Solomon's Holy of Holies at the temple in Jerusalem). But the tabot of the zars also symbolized the outdoor tree stump which serves the invisible zar spirits as a table. Thus, partaking of refreshments from the coffee trays constituted a kind of communion with the zar spirit to whom the tray was dedicated, although this was done only during intermissions of the cult services. On one tablet, the "araqi" supplied by the foreigner stood ready.

×794 796 782 In the corners, more types of incense were burning than before. In addition to "etan" (frankincense), the domestic Ethiopian "bukbuka" was sending up clouds of perfumed smoke. Leaves of "wogart", believed pleasing to the zar that causes headaches and neuralgic pains, were occasionally placed on the clay incense burners. From time to time, some imported pebbles of yellow sulphur ("kabrē" or "din") sent up acrid smoke. But the sweet odor of most types of incense predominated most of the time.

×794 796 756 781 533 About 8:30, the drummer brought his heavy drum down from beneath the solidly built roof, and began to drum slowly, rythmically, still subdued. The curtain was lowered, but the shadow of Lady Salamtew behind it could still be vaguely seen. Suddenly raucous grunts began to be heard from behind the curtain, emanating from Woyzärö Salämtew. This meant that her first major zar had arrived, and was beginning to descend into her, performing the magical coitus. Her joyshouts became louder, higher-pitched, turning to shrieks, quicker and quicker. She was beginning to perform the "gurri" victory dance of the zar who had conquered her.

Immediately the women devotees began to handclap rythmically, gradually quickening their tempo, in time to the twisting and turning

X 794 She then proceeded to greet the individual zar doctors and devotees
756 as if she had been absent a long time. Each rose and bowed deeply to
796 her. Barley beer was now passed around freely, while coffee beans were being roasted and crushed, in preparation for the next intermission.

X 794 Refreshed and heartened, the male zar doctor serving as poet now
782 began to chant the hymns he had composed in honor of "aweliya" the
796 [533] chief male zar of Lady Salamtew. The rythm was as formal as the hymns chanted by the dabtara in the Coptic Abyssinian church, but contained Arabic loanwords borrowed from the traders' vernacular. The audience quickly leaned the response and accompanied the responsive chant with rythmic handclapping:

Poet: "Salaam" (lit. "Peace", greeting; similar in Geez and Arabic languages).

Crowd: "Salaam Alēkum" (lit."Peace be with you", in Arabic).

Poet (continuing in Amharic): "Enter, warrior; enter warrior! "

Crowd: (repeats the same words).

Poet: "Lord Aweliya, what have I given to him (polite address) that he may be merciful to me?"

Crowd: (repeats same chant in more wailing pitch).

Poet: "Flower (synonym for youth), oh zar, flower!"

Crowd: (repeats)

Poet: He is Lord of Sera, Lord of Mora is he". (Polite address).

Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "He, bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Crowd: "Bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Poet: "Like a lion, like a leopard, when he roars!"

Crowd: (repeats).

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

They say the prayers by heart and
without light, except in the lamps or chandeliers, for they 796 78
have not got lamps. They burn butter in these chandeliers, [373]
for they have not got oil. They pray or chaunt very loud, [354]
without art of singing, and they do not recite (alternate) [237]
verses, but all sing straight on. Their prayers are psalms, and
on feast days besides psalms they recite prose, according as [533]
the feast is so is the prose. They always stand in the churches; at matins they only say one single lesson: this is said by a priest or a friar, rather shouted than intoned, and he reads this lesson before the principal entrance. When this lesson is finished, on Saturdays, Sundays, and 792
feast days, they make a procession with four or five crosses 796
on their poles, and a cross not so much raised as carried like a stick in the left hand, because they carry a thurible in the right hand, since as many as carry a cross carry a thurible, there are always as many thuribles as crosses. They wear some silk cloaks, not well made, because they [292]
are not wider than the width of a piece of damask, or other silk from top to bottom. Before the breast, a cross piece to the flanks on each side, of any other stuff and of any colour, even though it should not match the principal part, and of this principal part a good ell hangs behind dragging on the ground. They make this procession through the circuit, which is like a cloister. This being ended, on the said Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts, he who has to say mass enters with two others into the chancel; they bring out an [778]
effigy of Our Lady, which they have in ancient pictures in all churches and monasteries. He who has to say mass places himself in the centre of the transept with his face towards the principal entrance, and the image in his hands held before his breast: and those who stand by his sides hold lighted candles in their hands, and all the others commence a chaunt like prose, and all walk, shouting and leaping as if dancing[1] they hold hands and go round, before the

[1] *Como em chacota*, dancing and singing, *i.e.*, not reverentially.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

411 standing at the long church services. Above all it is a weapon of offense and
181 defense, and every Amhara male is supposed to be skilled in its use. When the *dulā* is so employed in Manz, the *bānnā* blanket is usually wrapped around the left arm to form a quick shield, the *dulā* raised high with the right to bring down on the adversary's cranium. The blows are sometimes fatal. The Manzēs are proud of their facility with the lethal stick, and nearly every district in Manz boasts that it is real "*dulā* country."

726 The Manzēs also excel at *shillalā*, the Abyssinian war chant. This is a
• 533 form of boastful verse—partly intoned, partly shouted—which is declaimed by
181 warriors to "heat their blood" before hitting the warpath. Children in Manz start practicing *shillalā* almost as soon as they leave the breast. The following
[539] is a good specimen of Manz *shillalā:*

> *Agarātchn Māmā agarātchn Lālo wanzātchn Dangazē;*
> *Mān abātu yāzzāl imbi senīl gizē.*

> Our land is Māmā, our land is Lālo, our stream the Dangazē;
> What father will order us when *imbi* we say!

Imbi is an interjection used by children to express "No!" There is a double pun in this couplet. *Mān abātu* ("Who is the father?") is a profane idiom meaning "bastard." "To say *imbi*" is another idiom, meaning "to refuse." The second line may thus be also rendered as:

> What bastard dare shove us around when we tell him to keep off our lands!

181 The Manzē code asks that a man be ready to defend his land and church
865 by force. It does not approve wanton aggression. But the Manzē's disposition
152 is notoriously aggressive, for his emotional life is relatively devoid of warmth
[577] and, on the other hand, fighting is so highly rewarded. Children are urged to be adept with the *dulā*. Their temper tantrums are welcomed as signs that they are brave. As a result the men of Manz are often overcome by the impulse toward physical aggression; assault and murder are recurrent events on their fields and trails and at their marketplaces. The discrepancy between the *norm* of physical bravery, which is operative *in certain specified circumstances*, and the *general character trait* of aggressiveness comprises a major theme in their emotional life: they feel obliged to look for justification for the aggressive actions which they have been conditioned to want to carry out. This disposition is illustrated in the words of the Manzē youth who said:

> I want very much to kill somebody. The only problem is I'm not strong enough. Perhaps one day I will be. Why is it all right to kill? People kill sheep, don't they? And sheep are innocent, they don't know anything, don't do any wrong. But man knows, he knows much, and still he does wrong: every man is bad. I wouldn't kill everybody, only the bad ones. If I had an enemy, I would kill him. Maybe I will become a soldier, and kill my country's enemies.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in such numbers that "Manzē" virtually became a synonym for "underground patriot." 829 648 186

After the liberation, as after the routing of Ahmad Grāñ's forces, the Manzē once again returned to redeem a ravished land. Slowly, the houses were rebuilt, the land was plowed once more. Churches which had been rebuilt after Grāñ's destruction only to be razed by the Italians were again put into place. Tough in his spiritual as in his physical life, the Manzē doggedly re-established the culture of his own. Now as before the occupation, a man of Manz sits on the throne, promising to let no foreigner take his country's land,* while the young braves celebrate the royal line in their festive boasting: [539]

Ya-Manz ababā, ya-Manz ababā! Yābbabāl genā!
The flower of Manz, the flower of Manz! It will bloom yet again!

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

Thus far the significance of Manz and Gondar has been discussed from the point of view of an outsider. We have attempted to assess, on the basis of the best available evidence, the respective historical and cultural roles of these two noted Amhara regions. We turn now to a different though related question, namely, the significance of these two places in the minds and feelings of Ethiopians themselves. 121

Two kinds of reaction are conspicuous. To the Ethiopian Modernist, Manz and Gondar are seen primarily as outlying pockets of conservatism. Their commitments to the past move them to resist certain changes promoted by the national government, with Manz protesting modern education and Gondar defending itself against nationalist centralization. They are regarded as backward areas, representative of the many forces that are "holding Ethiopia back," and to a certain extent are disdained.

To their inhabitants, on the other hand, these places are objects of intense loyalty. For differences of identity among the Amhara are defined chiefly in terms of their *agar*, or "home country." The size of one's *agar* is relative; it depends on the context in which the symbol is used, and may be as small as a district or as large as a province. Whatever the referent, one's *agar* signifies more than a place of residence or provenience. It means "home," and all those whose families live there are regarded with special affection, while those out- 121 186 823

* On certain festive occasions the following antiphonal chant is declaimed in praise of "Ṭaqel" (the affectionate, "horse" name of Haile Selassie): [533] [539] [551]

[Leader:] *Mīn āla ṭaqel mīn āla?*
[Chorus:] *Agarē la-saw agarē la-saw alsatem ala!*
[Leader:] What did Ṭaqel say, what did he say?
[Chorus:] "My country to outsiders, my country to outsiders, I will not give!" said he.

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[26] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 177 178 [535] [533] [276] cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

*883 177 184 Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

*883 517 178 177

AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women	85	15	0	(700)
Food	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry	67	26	7	(700)
Music	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†	40	58	2	(700)
Dance	38	56	6	(700)
Drink	24	56	20	(700)
Painting	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gurshā*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically icentical.

*883 177 [184] school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

*883 517 178 *Morals.*—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 live near the same master, they divide up the neighboring countryside to
571 avoid duplication in their begging.
181 The ordained clergy are themselves given to begging, for items ranging
735 from contributions to the local church to petty personal effects. High-ranking
[793] visitors to their locale are customarily made the objects of such solicitations.
•*[533] Another type of begging is practiced by the minstrels who wander about the country with their one-stringed fiddles and fecund wit, coaxing contributions from any audience they can capture. In addition to these there are numerous professional beggars—the maimed, the diseased, and the poverty-stricken—who attach themselves to a well-attended church or monastery if they are unable to travel. The *lālibalā* is a notable type within this category of mendicants.[23]

[527] In addition to honoring the periodic appeals of beggars, "big men" are supposed to provide yearly feasts (*gĭber*) at which beggars of all the above descriptions are fed. In all these instances, the solicitation and bestowal of charity contributes a solidaristic element to the network of personal relations among the Amhara.

*121 The foregoing analysis of forms of interaction among the Amhara has
181 been undertaken in order to gain material for generalizing about a psycho-
156 logical disposition. Our unspoken, tautological assumption has been that the
571 ways in which individuals typically relate to social objects (i.e., other persons and collectivities) represent the sociologically relevant aspects of their psychology. Egoism and solidarism have been used here as concepts for depicting one dimension of "social character," using this term in the specific sense of comprising those aspects of personality which are both socially shared and constitutive of those actions that are oriented to social objects. We may now attempt to summarize the preceding discussion with the following definition of Amhara social character as it relates to the concept of individualism: The Amhara is primarily disposed to structure interaction in terms of self-assertion, dissension, and distrust, and to be indifferent to the concept of civil community. At the same time this egoistic orientation is blended with a warm and kindly sense of sociability, an occasional mood of generosity, and a refined sensibility regarding differences in status and the readiness to pay deference accordingly.

INDEPENDENCE VERSUS CONSTRAINT

*121 In the previous section we considered the nature of the individual's orientation toward others and toward collectivities in Amhara society. Our question now is the converse: what order of demands is made upon individuals by the institutions of that society? Specifically, we shall be concerned primarily with the degree to which the norms which govern institutional roles are

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Synchronization and Privacy

*121 181 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is [476] scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [704] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 591 576 592 342 The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters (*ĭlfĭñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

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* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Ṭĭmqat day described in chap. iii.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured āccelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 538 156 [726] sinuate insults through the ambiguities of his compliments, as was illustrated above. *Shillalā,* declaimed to arouse male courage before battle, is also heard at weddings and other festive occasions. Another type of exclamatory verse (*ho-berē*) is sung by the peasant at harvest time as he drives his cattle around the threshing floor. Verse of sorrow (*engurguro*) is intoned at time of bereavement or during moments of loneliness. Finally, in the conviviality of a drink-house enlivened by a minstrel, alone at work, or with a group of friends on various occasions, the Amhara finds that verse provides a medium for thoughts on almost any subject—people, places, animals, weather, love, work, and death. The following poem illustrates an important quality found in many of these verses, pessimism and irony, especially common in verses about love.

[539] Fish on the cliff, baboons in the sea;
The ass after honey, while hay draws the bee;
On a baking-pan of wax, butter to see;
Or a monk from Zegamel monastery
In the pagan land of Metcha to bury;
With an unsuited person in love to be;
Thus has it ended, my affair with thee.
Leave it, forget it, just let it rest—
A hapless ass at a hyena's breast.

[533] [534] These various sorts of verse may be either sung or spoken. The auditory effect is often enhanced by the accompaniment of musical instruments. When serious *qenē* has been recited by its author in church, it is usually repeated by a chorus of *dabtarā* singing to the slow beat of drums and sistrums. The sad strains of *engurgo* are sometimes accompanied by the mellow ten-stringed lyre, while an instrumental background for livelier subjects may be provided by the Abyssinian banjo or one-stringed violin.

Throughout these varieties of verse forms, certain conventions are followed. Most important, the lines are supposed to rhyme; that is, end with the same consonant-plus-vowel. Inferior poets achieve this rhyme at the expense of the words they use. In addition, proper rhythm must be maintained; the lines must not "break." This means that the flow of the line must be smooth and that the metrical pattern in one line—based on the number of accents, not syllables[84]—should be paralleled by the others. A poet who breaks his lines is satirized by being dubbed a "lion."

While observing these rules—and, in the case of *qenē,* the much more complicated rules pertaining to stanza forms and poetic figures—the Amhara poet *must also be original.* In the production of verse, individuality is explicitly emphasized. Poets who use verses composed by others—this is primarily true of students of *qenē*—are insulted with the term *lēbā* ("thief"). Similarly, a poet should not repeat himself. If he repeats the same word

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placed on the outside of garden or hamlet-fences, to discourage hyenas, to keep livestock inside -- a natural barbed wire.

Eucalyptus tree ("bahär zaf") has become thoroughly rooted in Ethiopia. It is used in construction, especially of the more urban dwellings, as urban fuel, and its blue smoke and aroma is an early morning and evening feature of every town and market-town, where it is a major trade item. During the rainy season it grows so fast that a mature tree can be "harvested" 5 years after the nursling stage. Since it sells for $3-5 Ethiopian, (US $1-2) it is the most planted tree in Ethiopia today. The peasant also likes to use the odoriferous branches and leaves to cover the "dass" the festivity-shelter on marriages, etc., and the leafy branch as chera, flyswitch. Entire hillsides may be seen planted with this tree.

Female woods are also used for other indispensable products:

[386] Ink - is made from the fruit of the "tämbälal" (Jasminum floribundum) tree, and its timer is used

[534] for the stock of the single-string violin, the masenqo. (But imported blue ink called "nil" is preferred by däbtära scribes.)

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Fibre - for basketry, roof-hoops, etc. is obtained from the "wärqe" (musa ensete) (also called "enset") at lower altitudes, used especially for cords. Rope "gämäd" is made from the bark cut

282 over the "alga" bedstead.

Sheepskins ("debdeb") are used as upholstery over the solid clay bench that runs along the inside of the Amhara hut, as cover for the children at night, or to protect a mule from chafing by placing the sheepskin under [291] the saddle. Other sheepskins, "agoza" or "dä̈bälo", are worn by church students too poor to own a good toga. Several skins make a coat for an adult itinerant monk and, formerly, for the warriors.

[415] Goatskins, when little-worked, are used for water carrying ("qärbäta") on travel, or to store butter in. [212] The bladder is made into a little bag. But goatskins carefully and at length scraped and tanned are made into parchment for amulets and books, especially psalteries for the church. These yellow-brown parchments ("beranna") with religious or warrior-king texts were rolled into a goatskin cover. Since contact with European missionaries in the mid-19th century, the custom has been to sew parchment pages together on one side with a twisted gut, bind the book in this fashion within two wooden covers covered with a fed, tanned goatskin, on which a cross with even branches is impressed with a hot iron.

[531] In the same fashion scabbards of daggers are covered and ornamented with impressed, geometric lines. The tanned tailskin of a cow is used to cover a better walking stick, on which it gradually dries fast. [534] Drums for use in church (and formerly for royal proclamations) are made by tanned cowskins stretched over both ends of the wooden body. Finely tanned skins are used to cover the

293 story. Later ones imitate European crowns.
778 In parades tall crosses of bright metal are carried, Like most Abyssinian priestly hand crosses, they are so ornamented with further cross designs that they appear to the Abyssinian as "perforated"; hence the common expression "perforated as the cross" (where a Westerner would use the symbol of the sieve). Priests and monks always carry a handcross, which they hold out to a passing acquaintance to kiss, theproper greeting toward clergy, even on ordinary days. Smaller crosses are [789] used by the public as amulets against evil spirits. The larger crosses, with their ornamental supports, forming perforated circles and squares, sometimes contain engraved verses. The method of casting is the"cire perdue", [325] which is also used to cast the concave tops of the "maqomya" crutch. In front of old churches, resonant stones [534] are suspended from poles, and when struck, act as bells to summon for the service.

778 Other metal church utensils include the censers in which incense is burned during the services, swung by the officiating priest. They may be of brass, silver, iron, even clay in poorer churches. They are often equipped with numerous small bells. Very common is [534] the sistrum, called "sänässel" (onomatopoetic), a rattle instrument reminscent of ancient Egypt, usually of brass, 8 inches long, with a straight wooden handle, the metal frame cast in "cire perdue", often by Falasha smiths. The frame is perforated like a cross. The tinkling disks, [177] which glide along the cross-wire between the sides of the frame

778 the frame, are now often cut from modern tin cans.

The ceremonial drinking cup used in the eucharist is the "ṭewa", usually made of metal. But if used in the "mäḥabber" communal sodality outside the church, it is often of horn or clay, about 4½ inches high, 5 inches diameter at top, 1½ inches at bottom. On the latter occasion it is filled with barley beer or "berz" (honey-water). This is given the peasant at plowing time to [788] confer blessing upon him, thus called "maras baggo" (for spring plowing).

Other equipment belonging to the church may be a wooden pulpit for reading (not preaching), some tin [373] oil-lamps or the old wick-like candles (called "twäf").
778 Very important are the drums, huge affairs carried by
534 the younger dancers during worship, suspended from shoulder straps. The barrel-like "näṗarit", of which the average church has three (or must borrow them), usually has a height of at least 30 inches, a diameter of 15 inches. It is made of "wanza" wood (olive or other hardwood), with tanned oxhide moistened and stretched tightly across both ends. The drummer operates it with the flat of his fingers and top of flat palm. Another type is the "kabaro" drum, in which one end is bigger than the other. The drums and the swaying maqomya sticks keep time during the chanting. Trumpets are used only for parades, to herald the march, but not in accompaniment.

778 When not in use, most of these utensils are loc-
344 ked in a little treasure house, called "bätälehem" (in
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796 While some of this feasting is now less orgiastic than in the past, "azmari" musicians still pass among the feasters, singing praises to the host and noble guests, [534] to the accompaniment of the single-string "masenqo" of male singers, and the banjo-like "qrar" fingered by women azmari. Torchlight parades, both of men and of women, leave the bonfire later, wind toward the nearest river or brook (still full though no longer raging) to enjoy the pleasure of bathing at its best, before the brooks dry to a trickle.

796 Thus the first church function of the year is an
182 important factor in unifying this society: significant for all ages, both sexes, all classes; sets a time and place for rites of passage in the life cycle; renders visible paternalistic feudal patterns of human relationships; reopens the annual cycle of economic endeavors (caravans, weaving, etc.); reopens the pattern of kin visiting after the hibernation of 3 months; and reinforces the traditional religious as well as national values and attitudes.

796 In the months that follow there are several religious festivals, which also have social significance. Named after special saint's days, they vary from region to region.

The next widely observed holy day is Christmas, on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This does not nearly approach the significance it has in the Western
796 world, nor the Masqal feast just described. In fact,
526 Christmas, "Ledet" (lit. birthday) is more often refer-

533 resident Armenians, ranges from vague "oriental" melodies to European
178 melodies of the marching variety. But secular songs, grassroots folk-songs, are increasing with the use of public loudspeakers and growing up of a somewhat more modern educated generation singing love songs with less restraint than in the past, such as "yänne shega, yänne qonjo" (my peach, my beauty).

534 Musical instruments are largely divided into two categories in the mind of the Amhara; those used for the church service, notably percussion instruments; and those used for entertainment, notably string instruments, and wind instruments. Drums are used in both categories, however.

The reason percussion instruments predominate in church, is that musical instruments used in church have the role of marking time, in the chant-dances. Moreover, there is no independent instrumental music in the Abyssinian tradition, not even in organized entertainment.

Percussion instruments include the following:

Drum - "nägarit", the huge, barrel-like symmetrical drum over which skins are stretched at both ends, made to accompany rythmic (church) dances. It has a wooden body, 3' to 5' in length. It is considered the aristocratic drum, for in the past it was beaten to assemble the population for war or to hear a royal proclamation. (The modern government publication printing decrees is appropriately called "Nagarit Gazetta"). In the past it was carried on muleback in military expeditions, and preceded the entry of a governor into a province. Since it is heavy, it is suspended from a shoulder strap and carried by the younger men. It is beaten by the flat fingers and half the palm, while the drummer keeps time by swaying his upper body

534 Kettledrum - "käbäro", somewhat smaller drum, made of wooden bowl with a skin stretched over the mouth. It takes a variety of shapes, but unlike the nägarit it is not symmetrical, one end being smaller than the other. Sometimes it is a frame with beatable skins at both ends. It is used both in church and for less aristocratic occasions, such as entertainment dances, chants of warriors. Usually it fits into niches used as windows in church, or hangs under the overhanging roof of a private hut.

Sistrum - "sänasel" (onomatopoetic) resembles the ancient Egyptian variety. It is usually cast from brass through the cire perdue method. The sides are then perforated many times. Round, resonant metal discs glide on wires that connect the two sides. They are made of sheet metal, now often cut from tin cans. The grip is of brown or black wood. The whole instrument does not usually exceed 8".

Gongs - "däwäl", traditionally were of phonolithic stone suspended in front of churches, used as church bells to call to services. They are beaten with another rock or batter of iron, either called "yädäwäl mäncha". The Falashas, being ironsmiths, possess a flat iron disc almost a foot in diameter, which they suspend from a string from a finger, and beat with an iron spike, achieving a distinct gong sound.

String instruments used in public entertainment, include:

Lyre - "qerar" or "kerar", banjo-like, with 5 or 6 cords made of prepared goatgut (hence the name, from "karrara", stretched). It takes various forms and sometimes

resembles a guitar. It is the most common string instrument in Abyssinia. Some observers think it recalls the antique Mediterranean lyre. The sound chamber consists of a wooden basin (sometimes a castoff Italian pot), over which goatskin is stretched. This instrument is usually played by women, accompanying ballad-like love songs, etc. All the strings are struck at the same time, with a small, hard, thin, flat piece of leather, giving a harmonious sound. The instrument is used at weddings, or to attract customers to inns - for it is a "female instrument. It is also common in the Sudan.

Single-string violin, or "spike fiddle" - "masenqo". The sound chamber consists of a diamond-shaped wooden frame, over which a specially tanned goatskin ("mälägoniya qoda") is stretched tight. The wood is preferably from the jasmin tree ("tämbälal") (jasminum floribundum, the berries of which are used to make ink). The semicircular bow is spanned with black horsehair ("chera"), hence playing this instrument is called "chera tächäwwätä", shortened to "cherawwata". Only males play the masenqo, usually male professional azmari, to accompany singing. At big feasts, as many as a dozen may play together. The music played on it is usually very high-pitched, accompanying female or male singers. Subject matter includes Songs to the Emperor, feudal war songs, etc. It is considered by the Amhara, more typically Amhara than the kerar. It actually does resemble the Arab "Rabab" (footnote 97).

Footnote 97 - Rohrer: Beiträge zur Materiellen Kultur der Amhara, 1932, p. 157.

534 Harp - "bäganna", has 10 to 12 cords, played with a soft stroke and special fiddlestick ("yäbägenna mämcha") of horny skin. It is reserved for rare and important occasions, when it is played before high clergy on religious occasions, or before royalty. Identified with King David, it is used to accompany spiritual and philosophical chants and laments. But in recent years it has been used more often in public entertainment in larger cities.

Wind instruments are not much used in organized fashion.

Fife - "washint", is a simple affair of bamboo, about 20 inches long, usually with four holes, producing as many tones. They are made and played by boys guarding cattle. The music has a bubbling quality that is believed to sound like running water, hence is attractive to the cattle and sheep. "Shämbäqo" bamboo is preferred. Sometimes an impromptu orchestra is formed by boys, when some bring drums to play in accompaniment.

Fife - "embilta", a larger, thicker fife of bamboo pipes, employing no stops, played by blowing strongly across a mouth hole (similar in principle to the Western pipe organ). Each pipe gives a single, true, tone, determined by its dimensions. Three or four different pipes are usually used together - though several blowers are then necessary. This creates a polyphony of high-pitched tones, very popular, used in accompanying chant-dances in public entertainment. It is widespread in the lowlands also, of Tigre and Eritrea.

Trumpet - "mälläkat" is relatively little used. Made of horn or wood, it blows long, solemn tones, used by cattle herders to call the flock, or, by an occasional rustic individual to lead

534 a cross-country church procession on a saint's day. But modern (leftover Italian) brass trumpets are replacing it for the latter use.

2. Play and Entertainment.

A. Games and Leisure-time Activities.

524 Games are differentiated largely on the basis of age: little boys' games are largely of a hazing type or of imitation of adult behavior; adolescents' games are predominantly competitive; adult games are largely leisure pastimes. In this adult-centered culture, children's games are at the same time freely experimental and directed toward growing up as fast as possible; while an adult would be ashamed to continue playing childish games or to compete with adolescents.

Small children, especially boys, are involved in hazing activities, [865] "bedder", early in life. If they suffer a relapse into "Bedwetting", they are publicly shamed by the older children, and made to urinate publicly into a little trench. Small children are sometimes frightened by older ones with the bullroarer, ("zezzeta" - onomatopoetic), or by imitation of the sound of the hyena at night. Frequency of contact between older and younger children is especially prevalent during the "shut-in" rainy season. At this time, boys age 5 to 12 fight battles, sometimes using waterpistols ("tiggosh") made of bamboo, with a wooden syringe. When the game gets rough ("entush") they knock each other down with knees (the seat of strength in Amhara opinion) and feet.

Boys of 8 or 9, who aspire to deaconhood at the next New Year holy days, are mock-examined by older boys who have achieved that status. The candidate must carry each of them several times around the churchyard, and must recite and chant liturgical prayers for them for hours. The candidate is punished for any disobediance by being pinched, tied up and otherwise abused.

Little girls play milder games, such as dancing rounds with other

524 and rock back and forth. This is largely a projection of human
831 activities, in their minds, for they have all seen actual sexual intercourse among domestic animals.

The puzzle of human sexual activities is reflected in boys' riddles:

Question: "On a precipice, two large gourds hang down, What are they?"

Reply: "Woman's breasts."

Question: "A little goatskin bottle, with mouth and fur.(What is it?)"

Reply: "Vulva ("ems").

Question: "In a porridge of sorghum, a potato expands?"

Reply: "Vulva and penis."

Question: "Hardwood that does not break, skin bottle that is not worn out?"

Reply: "Penis and vulva."

524 Since toys are almost never made for children, they must rely on
533 older children for any that they cannot make themselves, e.g. slingshots.

534 The aforementioned flute, "washint", is made by boys age 11 to 12, of a hollow light bamboo into which four holes are bored. The flute is blown into from the right corner of the mouth. The following sounds are distinguished:

a) to keep the cows calmly grazing: extended high-pitched sound (dadada dididi).

b) to keep away the leopard: lower-pitched sounds. (A variation is believed useful to attract the leopard to lure him into a covered pit, onto which the flute is then thrown).

c) to accompany the azmari singer, e.g. at a wedding: high-pitched sound in somewhat minor key, as in wooing chants, to suggest emotion.

d) to accompany the "hotu" jump-dance, eg. on holy days as Temqat: a hacked, staccato sound is produced (dada dodo dada).

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 very well closed; all appears to be vaulted. The church has a chancel and a transept, in the centre transept are curtains from end to end; and there are other curtains before the side doors, from wall to wall. They are curtains of silk: the entrance through these curtains is in three places, they are open in the middle, and they reach one to another, also they can be entered close to the walls. In the said three entrances there are little bells suspended to the curtains themselves, and nobody can enter by any part without these bells ringing. Here there is not more than one altar, which is in the chancel: this has a stand on four props, and the altar reaches to these four props. This stand is covered over above as though with a vault, and there is an altar stone which they call *tabuto*. Upon this altar stone there is a basin of copper, very large and flat below, and with low sides. This basin also reaches to the supports of the stand, which are disposed in a square. Within this large basin there is another smaller one. This stand has curtains hanging down from it to the ground, that is, at the back and sides, which screen the altar, except that in front it is open. One can go all round the altar. The bells are of 534 stone, and in this manner: long thin stones, suspended by cords passed through them, and they strike them with sticks made for the purpose, and they make a sound as of cracked bells heard at a distance. Also at festivals they take the basins from the altar and strike them with sticks, and they help to make a sound. They have also other iron bells, not round, but with two sides, they have a clapper which strikes first on one side and then on the other, and it makes a noise as of helving a mattock. They also have other small ill-made bells, which they carry in their hands at processions, and they ring the whole of them at the festivals. On other days the bells of stones and iron are 182 used. In all churches and monasteries they ring for matins 796 two hours before dawn. They say the prayers by heart and

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

another lord, who was named Adiby, who was now Bar- 643
nagais. Beneath the Barnagais are some great lords whom 631
they call Xuums, which means captains; and these are, first, Xuum Cire, a very great captaincy, he is now married to a sister of Prester John. We never went to this country and Xuumeta because it is distant and out of the way. There 643
is another Xuumeta named Ceruil. We knew this lordship, 701
and they say that its Xuum brings into the field fifteen 631
thousand spearmen with shields and archers. Also Xuum Cama, and Buno Xuum, and Xuum bono. These Xumetas had been one, and on account of its being large, and the Prester having misgivings that they might set themselves up against the Barnagais, he made it into two, and even yet each of them is very large. They say that this lordship which is now two was the dominion of Queen Candace, without having been larger in her time. She was the first Christian that there was in this country, and whom the Lord called powerful. Also two other captaincies, one is named Dafilla, the other Canfila; these two border on Egypt, and their captains are like lords of the marches. All these captains before mentioned are of kettledrums, [534] ●
which nobody except great lords can carry: and all these serve with the Barnagais in wars when he goes to them, and wherever he may go. They have other great gentlemen under their command who are called Arraz,[1] which means heads. We knew one of these, who was named Arraz Aderaan, he is head over fifteen thousand men at arms, whom they name chavas. I saw this Arraz Aderaan twice at the court, both times I saw him before the gate of the [292]
Prester John going without a shirt, and from his waist downwards a very good silk cloth, and on his shoulders the skin of a lion, in his right hand a spear, and in his left hand [411]
a shield. I asked how it was so great a lord went about in that manner, they told me that the greatest honour

[1] *Ar-ras.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

784 He says that during all Passion week they are dressed in black or blue, and do not speak to one another for grief, saying that Judas by a kiss of peace betrayed his Lord.

532 Although there are in the churches effigies painted on all
784 the walls, and also crosses, nevertheless on no cross is a crucifix painted, neither have they any of solid carving; because they say they are not deserving to see Christ crucified.

792 All the priests, friars, and gentlemen carry crosses in their
778 hands, both on foot and on horseback; and the laymen of the people and lower people carry crosses round their necks. Every priest and friar carries a little horn of copper with holy water, and the hosts where they arrive beg of them water and a blessing, and they give it. Before they eat they throw drops of water on the food, and also in the drinking vases.

411 Their arms are assagays, few swords, a few shirts of mail, long and narrow; our Portuguese say that they are not of good mail.

There are many bows and arrows, they have no feathers like ours; there are very few helmets and casques. Those that there are have come since they have had intercourse with the Portuguese. There are plenty of strong bucklers;
713 there are no cannon, except two swivel guns which we brought them. At our departure there were fourteen muskets at Court, which they bought from the Turks who come there to trade. The Prester ordered whatever they asked to be given for them, and ordered men to be taught to shoot.

534 There are trumpets, but not good ones; there are many drums of copper which come from Cairo, and others of wood which have leather on both sides; there are tambourines like ours, and large cymbals which they sound. There are flutes and some instruments with chords, square like harps, which they call David moçanquo, which means the harp of David. They play these to the Prester, and not well.

8: Rex G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

the eye. Its beauty was not increased by the addition of a corrugated iron annexe for the purpose of seating some of the foreign guests at the Emperor's coronation. 346

The Abouna was good enough to arrange for us to visit the church, and we were received with ceremony by a number of priests, who were exceedingly kind and enabled us to make a thorough inspection, and even allowed us to take some photographs (which unfortunately, owing to the bad light, did not come out). They showed us everything with great enthusiasm and begged us to return "when a great feast was in progress". The building consists of three portions, a sort of outer gallery, an inner court, and finally the Holy Place or Holy of Holies, an inner chamber in the centre of the building in which rests the *Tabot* or representative of the Ark of the Covenant to which only the priests are allowed access. 346 778

The priests threw open the doors of the Holy Place for us to see in; it contained a kind of altar where the Sacraments are kept, and was surrounded by priests in very gorgeous vestments, burning incense and holding big crosses and crucifixes. 778 788

In one of the galleries a service was proceeding. Two priests were beating with their hands very big drums made of wood and hide; many others were shaking their curious little brass cymbals; and all were chanting, swaying their bodies, and slowly waving their praying-sticks. The time was really good, and the chant was rhythmic and tuneful, and not at all unmelodious. 796 534

The galleries were profusely decorated with huge life-size paintings depicting mainly scenes from the Scriptures, scenes from the life of Christ, the miracles, etc.; one dreadfully realistic picture of the Massacre 353 532

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

796 ments, whilst their shaggy little ponies curveted and plunged like mad things.

Dressed in his magnificent Abyssinian robes, carrying a modern rifle, and mounted on a wonderfully caparisoned black mule, Ras Tafari rode slowly up to the tent and took his seat on the throne surrounded by hundreds of gorgeously clad notables, and facing what was perhaps the most striking contingent of all, the priests, ranged on three sides of a square in front of the throne. Those on the opposite side of the square were all in white; those on the right and left wore robes of such dazzling colouring that in the sun's bright rays it almost hurt one's eyes to look at them. Red, blue, green, orange, purple, every imaginable colour, thickly covered with heavy gold and silver embroideries, and gold ornaments and head-dresses. And as if this orgy of colour were not enough, servants held scores of gaudy coloured gold-embroidered and much befringed and tasselled umbrellas over them.

796 Many of the priests carried magnificent crosses of
778 gold and silver, others their long silver or ivory-handled
534 praying-sticks, whilst some held various musical bell-like instruments, and about half a dozen managed large drums—things about three feet high made of silver with copper bands. Particularly striking were the dresses of ten young boys bearing golden crowns, symbolical of the ten commandments; while the *Tabots* brought from the neighbouring churches were very gorgeously bedecked. It was a wonderful and barbaric sight.

796 And then the Dance of the Priests began. Low
535 chanting without music at first, followed by slow graceful movements of all their hundreds of arms in fine

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 16.—*The procession on Tīmqat Day*

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FIG. 17.—*Tīmqat procession: detail*

[P. 110-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 The local nobility, on the other hand, were eminences whose lives and reputations were bound to a more circumscribed locale. While the non-royal nobility, or *maḳuānnent* in the stricter sense, performed as high dignitaries at the imperial court and governors of large provinces, the local nobility were district chiefs and judges, or even simply wealthy landowners, who enjoyed considerable deference. Though they might not be known outside of their home regions, these men were, for the mass of the population, the lords of existence. *Ka-Gondar negus / yāgar āmbārās,* "the petty district chief [is obeyed] more than the Gondar king"[19] expresses folk wisdom on the subject. The Amharic terms which designate this class of men are *bālābbāt* and *shum,* terms we shall want to consider more closely below.

565 184 Despite these distinctions among members of the upper stratum of Abyssinian society, with respect to their general orientation and style of life they differed only in degree. They created and shared what might be called a "gentry subculture," even though it was not so differentiated from the general culture as was the case in Europe and China. In the present context, it will be meaningful to treat them as a single status group.

565 184 86 [576] Special manners and skills were self-consciously taught to children of the *maḳuānnent,* most of which remain part of the gentry subculture today. An etiquette of instinctual inhibition is taught. Some attention is given, for example, to toilet training, which is spontaneous among peasant children. Spitting in public is proscribed. Physical aggression is discouraged in favor of the more subtle forms of satire and patient manipulation of others. A quiet, reserved manner of speaking is stressed, in contrast with the less inhibited and cruder self-expression of the peasantry. Dignity of comportment is expected at all times; a noble should not, for example, express great enthusiasm or surprise over anything. Sobriety is inculcated as a virtue; alcohol is *la-çhawā lijj* [293] *mādasetchā / la-bālagē māzabābatchā* ("for the nobleman's son a stimulant, for the commoner an intoxicant"). In short, the gentry subculture stresses the general ideal of bringing a child up to be conspicuously genteel, or *çhawā.*

565 184 868 [871] [534] [883] Sons of the nobility have traditionally followed a privileged curriculum.[20] They were given lessons in horseback riding and weaponry at an early age. They were also taught how to swim, an uncommon skill among the Abyssinians. Reading would often be taught, for which schooling a man of the church might be brought in as a tutor, or the boy might be sent for a while to a monastery. He might also learn how to play the *baganā,* the ten-stringed lyre used to accompany certain forms of religious and plaintive secular songs. Instead of spending his teen-age years at the plow, which was regarded as beneath his dignity, the noble boy would follow his father to court and observe the ways of litigation and the manner of passing judgments; or he might be sent as a page to the court of the king or some great lord.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.*

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services.

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagārit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area.

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[29]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement.

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagārit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gabbār*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dēgâ* (high) land, while in certain *qolâ* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[p.174-8]

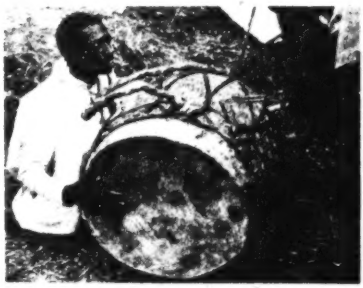

FIG. 27.—*A deacon*

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FIG. 28.—*Group of* dabtarā

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FIG. 29.—*An old priest*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 538 156 [526] sinuate insults through the ambiguities of his compliments, as was illustrated above. *Shillalā,* declaimed to arouse male courage before battle, is also heard at weddings and other festive occasions. Another type of exclamatory verse (*ho-berē*) is sung by the peasant at harvest time as he drives his cattle around the threshing floor. Verse of sorrow (*engurguro*) is intoned at time of bereavement or during moments of loneliness. Finally, in the conviviality of a drink-house enlivened by a minstrel, alone at work, or with a group of friends on various occasions, the Amhara finds that verse provides a medium for thoughts on almost any subject—people, places, animals, weather, love, work, and death. The following poem illustrates an important quality found in many of these verses, pessimism and irony, especially common in verses about love.

[539] Fish on the cliff, baboons in the sea;
The ass after honey, while hay draws the bee;
On a baking-pan of wax, butter to see;
Or a monk from Zegamel monastery
In the pagan land of Metcha to bury;
With an unsuited person in love to be;
Thus has it ended, my affair with thee.
Leave it, forget it, just let it rest—
A hapless ass at a hyena's breast.

[533] These various sorts of verse may be either sung or spoken. The auditory [534] effect is often enhanced by the accompaniment of musical instruments. When serious *qenē* has been recited by its author in church, it is usually repeated by a chorus of *dabtarā* singing to the slow beat of drums and sistrums. The sad strains of *engurgo* are sometimes accompanied by the mellow ten-stringed lyre, while an instrumental background for livelier subjects may be provided by the Abyssinian banjo or one-stringed violin.

Throughout these varieties of verse forms, certain conventions are followed. Most important, the lines are supposed to rhyme; that is, end with the same consonant-plus-vowel. Inferior poets achieve this rhyme at the expense of the words they use. In addition, proper rhythm must be maintained; the lines must not "break." This means that the flow of the line must be smooth and that the metrical pattern in one line—based on the number of accents, not syllables[34]—should be paralleled by the others. A poet who breaks his lines is satirized by being dubbed a "lion."

While observing these rules—and, in the case of *qenē,* the much more complicated rules pertaining to stanza forms and poetic figures—the Amhara poet *must also be original.* In the production of verse, individuality is explicitly emphasized. Poets who use verses composed by others—this is primarily true of students of *qenē*—are insulted with the term *lēbā* ("thief"). Similarly, a poet should not repeat himself. If he repeats the same word

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[For the religious functions of the dabtara in the Ethiopian church, see category 793.]

224 Before
535 going on an elephant hunt, for example, he performed the "boasting dance", "fukkara", largely with his shoulders and upper arms, predicting his feats; and his retainers honored him by declaring their confidence in his prowess, jumping up and down in the "hota" dance, chanting repeatedly:

[539] "Elephant-killer, (to) your home-
elephant-killer, take him home".
(Hunter:) Elephant-killer (I am), to home (I'll take him)."
(Retainers:)" When it (the elephant) will be moving,
he will kill it!"

224 The elephant-killer, considered braver than the lion-
554 killer, was called "addo" and given a special decoration to wear on forehead and upper arm by the king or feudal lord. A warrior who had killed a human enemy was called "geday" (lit. killer) and held prestige equal to the elephant-killer. Now that rifles are used in place of spears, such heroes have become more common and decorations among the Amhara have fallen into disuse.

224 Besides the big-game, edible jungle animals mentioned
825 before under "fauna", there are numerous wild game, mainly gazelles and partridges, hunted near human habitations to increase the food supply and for occasional sport:

Ethiopian duiker - "midaqwa", very common near habitations on the woyna dega, an antelope the size of a small goat, often approaching hamlets at dusk. It is considered the "cattle" of the zar spirits, and sacrifice to them is thus called "midaqwa".

[782]

Bushbuck - "demula", similar but medium-sized ante-

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305 the effect of their whiteness. She also tatoos the women's
304 necks up to the cheek, in the shape of concentric necklaces, to make the neck appear longer, a mark of beauty.

462 The hairdresser, "ras säri" is a woman who operates
305
302 a traditional beauty parlor. She braids the women's hair front to back in as few as 12 or as many as 32 braids, depending on how much the customer is willing to pay. Her best-paying customers are divorcees looking for husbands, especially during the marriage season that follows the major harvest early in the dry season. A full two-hour job with a maximum of fine braids costs ETH$1.00 (US$0.40), while a simple job producing only few and thick braids, costs only a quarter of that. Many peasant women, and women unwilling to go to this expenditure, usually let their hair grow to a huge bushy crop, halo-like surrounding the skull, occasionally anointing it with butter boiled with "ades" leaves. But divorcees have the expensive hairdo done over as often as once every two months, and have it thoroughly washed during the process, so that their hair is much cleaner than that of married women.

462 Another occupation of women is that of "azmari",
533
535 musician-singer-dancer, who performs at more elaborate, wealthier, rural weddings, and nearly all urban ones. This will be described under entertainment. She is often accompanied by a male azmari, who plays the single-string violin or the banjo-type instrument, and who may alternate with her in singing rhymes, but who does not dance.

701 It is noteworthy that the military ranking of the com-
554 moner-soldiery, which made up the rank and file of the fighters on foot, was not nearly so formal. The fortunes of war, if they did not leave him dead or maimed, could move him upward to lower nobility. Failing to achieve that, veterans could still hope for a modest fief of "gult" land, enabling him to play the "telleq saw" (great man) role over some hapless "gabbar" peasants. Meanwhile, pseudo-"telleq säw" behaved much like the proverbial sergeant of any army, making his men fear him more than any enemy, rewarding them with feasts, in this case of raw beef and medium-alcoholic mead. The only way he could maintain his following of individual-minded Amhara soldiers, each one of whom wanted to be a hero himself, was by continous personal bravery coupled with cleverness in military tactics. But here the similarity ends, for the non-noble chief of Amhara warriors had no pride of a non-commissioned officer; his ambition was to become a real "telleq säw", a minor nobleman owning "rest" lands.

782 Personal bravery was expressed and recalled in
726 formal boasting, a tradition that survives to this day
521 even for such civilian occasions as weddings. Prior to
535 battle each potential hero would go into a personal song and dance called "fukkara". The ceremonial dance accompanying his boast proceeded as follows: Spear, or rifle, held horizontally behind head, just above shoulders; the head moves in increasingly rapid motion from right to

782 726 521 535 left, while boasts are shouted rythmically. Personal boasts are interspersed with shouts of loyalty to the emperor ("Addis Ababa! Addis Ababa!"), or recalling past loyal bravery in the service of a provincial chieftain. Fukkara is performed also before the military games of "ganna" on Christmas, and outside the church on Epiphany (Temqät), to express the readiness of the young warriors to defend the faith, and on weddings to boast of warrior ancestors and so impress the in-laws.

[533] The song and dance is also referred to as "dankira " (stomping); to distinguish it from the tamer entertainment song, "zafan" performed by female "azmari" who perform accompanied by a violin ("masenqo") or banjo ("qrar"), often recounting tales of renown in ballad form. The "fukkara" in military life takes place before the "joy tent" ("das") of the king, before the "denkwan" (from diwan, round cotton or hair tent) of feudal lords on the march; or, in honor of a successful "killer" ("gedday") of a lion, rhinoceros, elephant or human enemy, in presence of the trophy.

[727] The dance after the victorious battle is called "koto". It is a simple jumping up and down, brandishing spear, rifle or stick vertically, reminiscent of the Central and West African dancing to exhaustion. It is accompanied by refrains, shouted frequently in response to impromptu poetry made up to celebrate the event, such as "yebanalal jebo" (the hyena will swallow him, i.e., the slain enemy). This refrain is also used before the battle, to defy the enemy and pretend that victory

782 is already assured. It is also performed on Epiphany,
726 to defy human as well as spirit enemiesoof the Faith.
521
535 Before battle, it was the response of the simple soldiers, ("wätadär") to the pep-talk ("arraga") given them by the commander, encouraging them to stand their ground.

727 After thevictorious battle, the soldier could look
554 forward to taking part in the royal feasting, the "gabber", and to lording it over the local "gabbar" peasant who had to supply the means and the womenfolk. It is at least part of the basis of the pride (critics say false sense of their own worth) of the free Amhara over subject peoples, enabling evan the simplest soldier to feel that he belongs to the proprietory class. Back home, he therefore despises manual labor, and even in going into battle he used to conscript peasant boys to carry his heavy rhinoceros-hide shield ("gasha"). These boys often became replacements for slain warriors when they could secure weapons, and, in turn, recruited servants for themselves.

41! The typical weapon was the spear (the word "tor" means both war and spear) until replaced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by rifles, though late-medieval muskets and Ottoman firearms were available to a few from the Portuguese period in the 16th century. The spear, some in use as late as the Italian invasion of 1935/6, sometimes had two or three prongs. Sabers were rare, and available mostley to noble officers. They were of the curved, Damascene type. Daggers of

796 own people and to the Christians of Constantinople.
[779] Therefore, she ordered that a tall pole be erected, crowned with a burning torch, called "dämmärä". The present procedure re-enacts this traditional tale, for on the afternoon preceding the 17th huge poles are stacked up, parades circle them, and in the evening the stacks are set afire, lighting up the landscape.

In preparation, some days before Masqal, peasants and townsmen go to the bush to cut long sticks, so that they will be dry in time. Pious persons touch them to the hearthstone and pray that the harvest will be good,
[292] so that they will not have to subsist on cabbage (the food of poverty). Even the poorest can bring the plentiful yellow "masqal" daisies, tied to the top of the poles. The stacks are formed on public areas, such as a marketplace, in front of the church, etc. Adults and children parade around them at least 3 times, wearing their best new garments and trinkets, This is an occasion for girls to be seen at their prettiest, and for young braves to boast.

Some of the young men form into groups and dance
[535] the "hoya-hoya", refrains of past or future brave deeds. Warriors perform the loyalty jumping-dande shouting "Addis Ababa". Sometimes, when the resinous torches are lit, mock battles develop. Little girls dance rings-around-the-rosy, while little boys may take the occasion to burn scars on their forearms as proof of courage and to be "strong". Pious elders take a brand from the lit bonfire and rekindle their home hearths, in the hope of

291 Men doing physical labor - "boddïna" - lift toga above shoulders to free arms;

- "adägaddäga" - knot toga across chest; wrap-around. (also to tie shammas of debtors to creditors, or prisoners to guard's).

[411] To parry blows - "makkäta" - wrapping toga around left forearm, as shield.

Preparing for battle - "adäraddäga" (see above): knotting shamma across chest, after wrapping it tightly around the waist.

When cold - "zeqzeq läbbäsä" - doubling a heavy shamma (called "kuta" or "derreb") to wrap oneself in completely, even covering covering head, at night.

When hot - a light shamma of muslin ("nätäla") may be rolled around the head - "tämättämä". Hence, the turban of priests is called "mätämtämiya", a tight wrap-around of the head by muslin.

[535] When dancing - before "dabtara" (scribe-choristers) begin to dance, in church, they first drape the toga tightly ("shäbäsh-häbä"), so that the flaps will not drop from the shoulders during the motion.

[765] In mourning - while dancing the funeral motion, accompanying the improvised eulogy, women approach each other holding their own togas outward and horizontal, like huge wings, (as if they were holding a spear like men dancing the "fukkara" boast dance).

201 291 178 685 Some of these expressive ways of draping the shamma are falling into disuse in the towns where the people are more affected by what passes as "modern dress". However, an interesting increase in one way of draping the shamma can be noticed in recent years: Now that debtors are no

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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291 longer chained to creditors, more frequent knotting-together of the
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685 shamma is taking place, instead.

G. Dance, Chant, Musical Instruments.

535 Amhara dancing falls into three categories: religious dancing, military dance, and the entertainment dance performed by professionals. The first type has already been described in the section on the church.

Military dancing falls into two main categories: the "fukkara" boasting dance accompanied by boasting chant; and the "hotu" loyalty dance accompanied by shouts.

The "fukkara" is the war-boast, before or after battle, and on other occasions, of the individual warrior boasting of himself, sometimes of his kin group. It used to be danced with a spear, now with a stick or rifle. This is held horizontally over the shoulders. During the dance the head moves sideways, right and left. Defiance is shouted at the enemy, be it human, animal, or a supernatural spirit.

In the zar cult, the victory dance ("gurri") of the spirit just after he has entered the body of the possessed, is regarded so much as the "fukkara" type of dance, that the zar gives his identity away by his own version of "boasting" - whereupon the "disease" is diagnosed.

The hotu loyalty dance, by contrast, is a collective dance, most often a jump-dance, in which the multitude of warriors, brandishing their weapons, try to cast fear on the enemy by numbers, sound, and expression of intense loyalty to their common leader. The name itself is composed of "ho", onomatopoetic for shouting, "ta" signifying the collective suffix (all together). The following are common variations:

"Cho - cho" - simple shouting in unison, ("qärärto").

"Yebahalal Jeb-o" - "The hyena will swallow him (i.e. the enemy)."

"Wärdaw sheb-o" - "crow's beak" (i.e. the vultures will feed on the enemy).

"Addis Abäba" - (lit. "New Flower", name of capital) - shout of

loyalty to the central government, since the late 19th century.

"Aya-ho-ho, mätä näw delēy" - (lit."Ayahoho, tonight will be my victory), signifying "we'll win yet"; also sung teasingly at weddings.

The "hotu", though a strictly male dance, is often accompanied by the rythmic handclapping ("anchäbächchäbä") of the women; also the female joyshout "ellel"; sometimes also by the "käbäro" drum.

While the individual dance, "fukkara" is most often used at weddings, the collective "hotu" is performed at public occasions such as church parades on Tenqät (Epiphany), St. George's day, etc; also on some of the new civil holidays such as the annual coronation anniversary.

Some observers have regarded the "fukkara" boast dance as more Middle Eastern, and the "hotu" (including the possible equivalent "dankira" leap of the zar cult) as more African. But it is doubtful whether such a distinction can be made.

The entertainment dance, "eskesta", is a shoulder dance performed by either a man or woman, recently more commonly by women. Of all the dances, it seems the most typical Amhara, for the performer if too proud to use hips or legs as southern Ethiopians would. It is performed by "azmari" or similar professionals, wherever crowds gather, e.g. at "inns" near a marketplace. In the dance, the shoulders are moved rapidly in a variety of motions, often circular, with intermittent forward and backward jerks, to the beat of a drum. A teasing element is sometimes introduced by women performers, who thrust their breasts forward and make the cross suspended from the matab neckcord dance on and off the bulging breasts. The performer accompanies the motion with audible gasps of air drawn through the teeth, producing sounds like "hs,hssess,hst,hssessess", hence the name "eskesta". The audience, when moved, loosens up in the

535 shoulders and hisses along ("tekäsha wärräda"). This dance, therefore is often used to warm up an audience before the next performer begins the "zäffän" chant, the high-pitched wailing song of the women.

533 The "zäffän" chant is accompanied by less frenzied shoulder movements, the head raised forward, and the singer chanting "up" at the sky, not forward toward the audience. This gradually changes the performance from the sensual to the spiritual. There are several variations of "zäffän":

"zäffän awärräda" - loud, strident, high-pitched chant, mostly performed by women in public entertainment, in which the audience soon participates as chorus; accompanied by shoulder dance.

"zäffän engorgorra" - softly hummed chant, expressing philosophical sadness. Frequent at portions of the funeral chants and at ecclesiastical chanting of poetry ("genyē") performed by male dabtara.

Professional entertainment singers may be recognized "azmari" hired e.g. for weddings, when they also play such musical instruments as the "masenqo" (single-string violin) and "grar" (banjo). Or they may be wandering minstrels ("namina").

The "gena" sung in church by the "dabtära" choristers are rhymes that follow pattern and content of the psalms. Young dabtara compete with each other both as composers and as performers, for their careers depend on the critiques of the old connoisseurs. Little boys begin to chant the syllabic alphabet, as soon as they go to church school, and this pedagogic recitation is called "meleket" or "yäzema melekt" (Geez "malekta"), which may originate from the word for "gospel", or the word for "trumpet" ("mälakat"). Chants taken from the church are sung by children in a similar manner as Western Christmas carols; "Säba sägäl" (three wise men), "Buhe bälu" (let all say buhe), etc.

X794 so that the patient "does not get hurt" in the violent twirling
776 (much as "mizō" protect a wife against her husband). The zar spirit appreciates these acknowledgements and is thus open to negotiations, especially during the "honeymoon".

Only rarely does a male zar "possess" a male human. In this case it is considered not very difficult to come to terms with him and turn him into a protective spirit, through regular financial sacrifices, special attire, and other physical adjustments. Zar doctors seek out powerful male zars whom they need as protective and guiding spirits in their profession. Powerful warriors who have seemed to have a charmed life are believed under such protection - which makes a male more
[674] masculine. Consistently successful thieves who always seem to elude capture are believed to be under such protection. This is said to frighten even the police (or at least offers a ready alibi).

X794 A patient under active treatment by a "zar" doctor is called
755 "tamami" (lit. the one being cared for). The first step in the procedure is the diagnosis, i.e. the identification of the specific zar personality that has possessed the patient. This is usually done at night, for the "zar" hide in daytime and room at night - their element.

When darkness has fallen, the patient is brought to the hut of the zar doctor. Here the zar disciples, mostly women, are assembled, seated quietly, perhaps talking in subdued tones, or spinning cotton thread. Incense is burning, there is a low, rythmic drum beat, occasionally broken by chants accompanied by rythmic handclapping. Member after
X794 member rises individually, "when the spirit moves her" and begins to
755 perform her "gurri", with slight variations according to her particular
535 zar. The "gurri" is a movement that begins with the shoulders (typical

794 of Amhara dancing), while the performer is yet seated, and continues
755 while she rises. Head and shoulders move forward and backward, sometimes
535 in horizontal direction, sometimes rotating clockwise, sometimes counterclockwise. Nearing the orgiastic climax, the possessed proceeds to twirl like a top, faster and faster, until she drops in a heap. Habitues can go on for 20 minutes, and be ready for another movement an hour later.

While watching this over and over again, the patient may herself in time be moved to do likewise, though at first clumsily. This is a good sign, for it means that her zar has consented to dismount from his "riding" position, and is beginning to "descend" into the possessed person itself. The "gurri" is regarded as the "victory dance" of the zar, much like a hunter who has wounded and felled his deer. There is a strong element of struggle in the "gurri" dance, like the frantic death-
[831] throes of an animal about to surrender its individual existence. It is also the climax of the magical coitus (much like the bride who is "conquered" on her wedding night).

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755 The patient is now in a trancelike state, considered in communication and partly identified with the zar, but yet open to urgings by the doctor. More incense is burned, close by, to make the new and as-yet unidentified zar feel cozy and put him in a benevolent, cooperative mood. Great care must be taken prior to the diagnosis. For this reason no poetry is sung to him and no gift given as yet, for the wrong king might insult him - he insists on his own, individual cult. When the patient dances subsequent "gurri", the zar doctor becomes increasingly certain whether the zar is male, or female, evil or mischievous, "neglected" or offended.

X-794 755 535 The specific personality and identity of the zar is revealed later during the course of the diagnosis, when the zar, using the body of the patient, dances the "fukkara" dance. This is considered the equivalent of the "boasting dance" of the Amhara warrior on the eve of battle, which goes by the same name. Thus the zar reveals his "färäs sem" (war name; lit. horse name, i.e. knighthood name), much like an Amhara feudal knight. Since formal "boasting" is highly individualistic, this means that the zar has come out of hiding, like a warrior who emerges from ambush. The dance itself is just as individualistic and irregular, therefore called "dankira", and may include the brandishing of sticks (as if they were spears) or jumping up and down.

X-794 755 Once the patient has proceeded to such expressive behavior, the zar doctor claims that he "knows" the identity of the zar. The doctor now asks the zar a series of leading questions, and the patient usually does not fail to respond with the "truthful" answers. Finally the name of the zar is openly proclaimed. Certain zars are stubborn, hide their identity in various subterfuges, so that the battle of wits between the zar doctor and the zar is a lengthy and difficult one. But the former nearly always wins out and announces his diagnosis.

Thereupon the zar doctor proceeds to decide what course of treatment to follow. The zar is asked, through the mouth of the patient, what [782] offense has been committed against him; what he would like to receive as "mäqwädäsha" love-gift in order to "pardon" the iniquity, or as damages for the "insult" or "neglect". Finally the zar is asked what he will demand in regular offerings in order to remain on good terms with the possessed, to plague her less and only at regular intervals, and, perhaps, to become her protective spirit. On the basis of the replies, the patient is

X794 realizing that her "zar" had insulted the powerful one of Salamtew.
796 Back on her throne, Lady Säläm̈tew harshly admonishes the audience for
[688] dozing, for whispering, for laughing, and some for having taken food and drink during the previous "gurri". This inattentiveness is an insult to her zar, and she threatens to recess the convention if it continues. But then she sugarcoats the threat by calling for another round of refreshments.

[853] Some of the babies in the rear had cried, and were nursed by their mothers. This had also been done by some of the possessed women previously, sometimes within half an hour after the exhausting "gurri". Motherhood and zar devotion evidently did not conflict.

[123] Lady Säläm̈tu used this intermission to send the foreigner word promising "I shall appoint you a zar as your weqabi (protective spirit)". When she saw that he had drunk some of the barley beer which she had ordered to be served on the tablet of her zar. This time she addressed him in the female gender again, just as she had used a male gender in addressing her female devotees. The zars are believed to enjoy playing their game of turning nature upside down.

X794 About 1A.M., everyone rose, except the poet and the drummer.
535 Fresh incense was heaped on the burners. Tired and partly intoxi-
796 cated members of the audience were shaken awake. For now they were to witness the "fukkara", the individualistic "boasting dance" of Lady Säläm̈tew's zar. It was a spastic bobbing up-and-down dance, similar to the "hotu" dance of warriors. The drum beat faster and
[293] faster, Lady Säläm̈tew seemed to forget her dignity, but still waved her strap, the symbol of her seniority, while the devotees shouted

X794 535 796 "ellel" as shrilly as they do outside church during Coptic services. Exhausted, the powerful woman finally collapsed, and the curtain was quickly drawn to hide her during her recovery.

X794 796 Several other zar doctors demonstrated their individual "fukkara" activities. But more and more participants grew inattentive, and some began to doze. Lady Salämtew declared the session ended at about 3 A.M. [513] The women bedded down right on the floor or the mud bench, while the men who lived nearby went home, and others rolled up in blankets and skins just outside the house, under the overhanging roof. It was a cold night, usual during cloudless month of Yäkatit.

The season of the roaming zar spirits had once again been concluded, not to revive in full vigor until after the rainy season half a year later. At the convention much protection had been gained, and old protection reinforced against the many mischievous zars that might plague people in the meantime.

d) Social Asrects of the Zar Cult.

X794 608 The groups of chronically possessed persons who meet regularly as devotees of the zars, in the "wädaja" (lit. love feast), constitute what are called "aqwädash" (sometimes "aqtacha"), face-to-face societies. Their interpersonal relationships soon become social, much like the mähabbär communal worship society of the church. Both establish bonds which, to the Amhara mind, become "artificial kinship". Not infrequently this leads to the establishment of bonds of actual affinal kinship (as described earlier).

X794 772 The parallel can also be applied to an understanding of the leadership involved. Much like the mähabbär is led and blessed by the priest-confessor, so the zar society is led and blessed by the

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920) 1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

796 ments, whilst their shaggy little ponies curveted and plunged like mad things.

Dressed in his magnificent Abyssinian robes, carrying a modern rifle, and mounted on a wonderfully caparisoned black mule, Ras Tafari rode slowly up to the tent and took his seat on the throne surrounded by hundreds of gorgeously clad notables, and facing what was perhaps the most striking contingent of all, the priests, ranged on three sides of a square in front of the throne. Those on the opposite side of the square were all in white; those on the right and left wore robes of such dazzling colouring that in the sun's bright rays it almost hurt one's eyes to look at them. Red, blue, green, orange, purple, every imaginable colour, thickly covered with heavy gold and silver embroideries, and gold ornaments and head-dresses. And as if this orgy of colour were not enough, servants held scores of gaudy coloured gold-embroidered and much befringed and tasselled umbrellas over them.

796 Many of the priests carried magnificent crosses of
778 gold and silver, others their long silver or ivory-handled
534 praying-sticks, whilst some held various musical bell-like instruments, and about half a dozen managed large drums—things about three feet high made of silver with copper bands. Particularly striking were the dresses of ten young boys bearing golden crowns, symbolical of the ten commandments; while the *Tabots* brought from the neighbouring churches were very gorgeously bedecked. It was a wonderful and barbaric sight.

796 And then the Dance of the Priests began. Low
535 chanting without music at first, followed by slow graceful movements of all their hundreds of arms in fine

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

time to the rhythm, then the little bell cymbals joined in, and finally the big drums. 796 535

All this time the long lines of priests were advancing and retiring, turning this way and that, their bodies swaying to the music. The time got quicker and quicker, others joined in, their movements became accentuated and their voices rose to a climax; then quite suddenly sound and movement ceased and the long lines were quite still.

After this, passages were read from enormous silver-covered Bibles, and with a final boom of the drums it was all over—a morning's journey back through the centuries, probably unique in the world in its character. 796

The Abyssinian Easter falls a week later than our own and is the occasion of great feasting; much rifle firing takes place the night before (or used to two years ago when ammunition was more plentiful), and much eating and drinking, on the day itself. And I am bound to say they must need it, for they have been fasting for forty days, and for the two previous days have eaten nothing at all. 796 527

Bands of priests visit the principal houses, soliciting alms, and I find the following description of one of these visits in my diary:

"Soon after breakfast a party of about five priests accompanied by attendants came up the drive, stationed themselves in front of the house, and began to sing and ring bells to wish us a prosperous Easter. Some of the priests wore their gorgeous vestments, and all had brilliant green or red silk parasols fringed with gold braid. We sent them out a small offering, which appeared to please them very much.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth century: 175* 633 517 538 [539]

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts. 175* 633 517 53

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā*, or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā*. 175* 159 793 633

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām*, the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere. [535] [178]

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā [214] [538]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[28] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 177 178 cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

*883 177 184 Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

*883 517 178 177 AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women	85	15	0	(700)
Food	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry	67	26	7	(700)
Music	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†	40	58	2	(700)
Dance	38	56	6	(700)
Drink	24	56	20	(700)
Painting	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gursha*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically identical.

*883 177 184 school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

*883 517 178 *Morals.*—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Synchronization and Privacy

*121 181 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is [476] scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [704] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 [591] [576] The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, [592] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters [342] (*ilfīñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

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* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Ṭimqat day described in chap. iii.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

at social gatherings in the course of discussions about nearly any subject. One cannot but conclude that the Amhara litigate to a large extent because for them it is an intrinsically pleasurable activity. At times, in fact, the forms of litigation are acted out as in a game. *Teṭāyaq,* for example, analogous to the Western process of cross-examination and a beloved feature of traditional court procedure, is sometimes practiced at parties though it has been outlawed in modern courts.[10] Two men will face a "judge" and try to bedevil each other with sly questions and preposterous claims. The content of the dispute is of no matter; it may be sheer nonsense.

Amhara litigants are ingenious at expressing themselves. They do so with gestures, intonation, and timing that achieve considerable dramatic effect. They are delighted to perform at the slightest provocation. The following incident, recorded during a morning at court in Manz, illustrates that dimension of Amhara litigation which consists of the inherently gratifying expression of oral aggression:

> The defendant had been accused of plowing the plaintiff's land without permission. In fact, however, the plaintiff had given the defendant previous permission to plow there—in front of a group of elders who testified accordingly. The judge therefore ruled against the plaintiff. The plaintiff said he would appeal this decision, because the permission he granted had not been registered in the governor's office and, besides, he had some other complaint to bring against the defendant.
>
> At this point someone in the audience rose and said: "That is all. The judge has ruled against you, and the case is finished." Whereupon the plaintiff told this speaker that he should keep quiet, that his speaking out was against the law, that he had bothered him when the case was tried before a lower level judge previously and should bother him no more. Instead of hushing up, the speaker left his position against the wall and stood next to the defendant, asserting that he would speak in behalf of the latter.
>
> The plaintiff then accused this man of talking out of turn. The judge acknowledged this accusation and called for witnesses. Instantly half a dozen or more men jumped to their feet, eyes bursting with excitement and pride as before a battle, and volunteered to witness against the speaker. One by one, with a great show of oratory, they said their pieces against the man who had spoken out of turn. More than once the judge had to urge these witnesses to stop talking after the evidence had been presented. By this time the substance of the original dispute seemed to have been completely forgotten.

Oral Ambivalence

Much as the oral zone is favored by the Amhara as a center for positive gratifications, both of the passive-receptive and the active-aggressive sort, such

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[For the religious functions of the dabtara in the Ethiopian church, see category 793.]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

197 ment leading to the Sudan, including Baria (the term for slave in Amharic), Kunama, etc. Semitic languages spoken in Ethiopia (mainly in the northern half of the country), are referred to by linguists as "Ethiopic", and are derived from the Geez language which entered Ethiopia in the first half of the first millenium B.C.

Geez ceased to be a spoken language in the 14th century A.D., though it survives in the Abyssinian Coptic liturgy to this day, and was the language of religious, historical and grammatical documents almost until the present generation.

Of the daughter-languages of Geez, Tigrē, spoken in Northern Eritrea, remains the closest to the mother tongue. Its literature is recent, much of it due to the efforts of Swedish missionaries since the 19th century. The same can be said of the literature of the nearest linguistic relative, Tigrinya, spoken in southern Eritrea and in the Ethiopian province of Tigre. These linguistic and territorial names should not be confused.

Amharic, the present national language of Ethiopia, has
191 been important since the 14th century A.D. when the earliest
197 available Amharic document, "Songs of the Kinga," was written.
● 538 The first scientific grammar of Amharic was written in the 17th century by a European scholar, Ludolf. Not until the 20th century has literature in Amharic slowly developed. Amharic is partly derived from Geez, but contains a strong substratum of Cushitic (Leslau, 1945 a). Amharic predominates on the plateau of northwest-central Ethiopia.

191 Other spoken languages partly derived from Geez are now
197 spoken only by small groups of the population, and are disap-

874 utilize their learning in other capacities. The sons of former feudal nobles or of priests usually secure administrative positions or judgeships without difficulty; those of undistinguished birth could become däbtära; or locate a vacancy as teacher in a parish school--then "däj tena" the regional bishop to confirm them in the appointment.

872 538 Methods of the church school were followed, for centuries, for all those boys who attended the local school, which was in reality a lower-grade church school itself. The initial process of learning to read was called "quter" (lit. number), "counting" letters. The second stage was called "Geez", for then they learned the seven syllabic variants of each Geez consonantal letter. The third stage, "werd nebab", had the pupils read the entire syllabic alphabet up and down until completely memorized in sequence. In the fourth stage, "abugida", the order of the syllabic alphabet is mixed up and the pupil must place each syllabic letter in proper order. In the 5th stage, he reads, in a sing-song which varies from province to province, the first chapter of the Epistle of St. John, first letter by letter, then word by word, finally phrase by phrase, a repetition of the first four stages. This musical singsong "mäläktä yohanesä hawareya" symbolizes what ABC does in the West. Then follow readings from the New Testament, Psalms of David ("dawit"), then any text "on sight" in Geez or Amharic. Liturgical songs and poetry most often learned by heart are: "Wedäsä Maryam", "Anqäsä Berhan", "Mälka

872 Maryam", "Mälka Iyasus". All of these are basic devotion-
[538] al liturgy.

[212] It is noteworthy that there is usually no formal training in writing at all, for fear of misuse. Individual students can take the initiative of finding a private tutor for writing.

At this point the local schooling ended, usually after about three years. In the past, only church students travelling to canters of learning went beyond that level. Only they learned to understand what they were reading.

874 On this higher level, church students read Geez
538 literature such as Miracles, Lives of Saints, "Gädel", "Tamarä Maryam", "Gänzät", "Mar Yes-haq", and Ethics, "sirak". Also church homilies, "dersan", containing doctrine, "dersät", composed by a saintly author, "Därasi". Important is the book "bal abäw" a combination of homilies of Greek, Coptic, and Syrian church Fathers, probably translated from Arabic to Geez in the mid-15th century under Emperor Zara Yaqob.

874 Those proceeding still further divided into specializations (sort of electives). Some specialized in devotional poetry, including compositions, for about 3 years-"qenē". Others specialized in "zēma", for which they had to be talented with a musical ear to distinguish the musical notation of "degwa", "somä degwa", "me'raf", "mäwasat", "zenmarē qeddasē säatat". Still others specialized for a minimum of three years in religious philo-

874 sophy, "mäṣehäf" (lit. book), interpretation of Old and New Testament, and writings of Coptic Church Fathers on the subject. Also studied are the "Käbrä Nägäst" (epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty") and the "Fetha Nägäst", law code.

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Examinations are held orally, usually on the saint's day of the institution, which thereupon becomes graduation day. The oral degrees given are termed, "qenē", "zēma", "mäṣehaf", according to the individual's specialization, much as Western colleges grant Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, etc. degrees. Receipt of the degree is regarded only as a commencement in scholarship, for a real "mämhēr" requires 20 to 40 years of study, to complete all these branches of religious education, in view of the Amhara themselves.

872 Since little girls receive no formal education,
562 they cannot be taught nearly as much as boys, when, later in life, females aspire to become active nuns in nunneries. At most they are taught Geez prayer, with difficulty and by rote, and do nto go beyond what is taught little boys at the local parish schools.

792 Monks usually reside in landowning monasteries, except for former priest who have taken monastic vows and return to their parishes. Monasteries are headed by the "abbatachen" (lit. our father), whose official co-administrator is called "Säbate". In personality he is usually dominant andcommanding, unlike the mild, otherworldly abbatachen; though on occasion the same person can hold both positions. Each large monastery has a

PART V : INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

156 Social stratification and kinship relations dominate interpersonal relations in Amhara society, and, though they put their stamp also on segments of the Amhara cultural pattern, they do not limit the corresponding artistic expression as much as one might expect. Thus, while Amhara artistic expression shares much of the "formality" of the rest of the culture, it evidences considerable potentialities for individual initiative, particularly in non-material expression such as games of intellect.

538 Material culture has not been much developed among the Amhara; artistic expression also has many of the usual characteristics of a [212] non-literate society, since literacy has traditionally been limited to a small minority of the population. This has led both to a reinforcement of formality in literature, and to a playfulness in oral artistic expression which remained unfettered.

1. Communication and Interpersonal Relations.

203 Communication "by grapevine" is still the major method of dissemination of news, rumor, and entertainment. Feudal lords in the past would even make use of "musical signatures" which identified the sender: to prove that a message was actually sent by the sender, the messenger was taught a secret musical note like a code, which identified the master. There was considerable suspicion about interference with 212 203 messages by enemies, who might alter them, so that, when messages were written, the scribe was careful not to leave a margin at the bottom, lest an enemy intercepting the message might add harmful statements falsely reflecting on the sender (e.g. his loyalty). Since most writing was done by formal, professional scribes, and Geez square writing was used, handwriting was not considered sufficient safeguard for identification. This pattern of leaving no margin persists to this day.

196 Amhara provinces, but is entering through the provincial capitals, such as Gondar, at the present time. Semantic drift can be traced along these lines.

d) Literature; Special Argots.

•538 The religious character of most of the traditional Amharic-Geez literature has already been described in connection with the church.

Some of the material of liturgy finds its way into lay usage. Rhymes, "qetem", originally composed for devotional poetry, have long found their way to chants of praise sung to warlords, feudal nobles, the king, and by extension, philosophic-sentimental poetry in general.

Folk literature, which is oral, contains numerous stories resembling Aesop's fables, in which witty repartee among or with animals is featured (Footnote 89).

538 Individual poets and other authors, if they existed in number,
522 have largely been forgotten, because of the cultural prohibition against writing down any but sacred matter, and the restricted literacy. But a fortunate exception exists in the person of an Amhara wit named Alläqa (lit. chief, an honorific title) Gäbre-Hanna, who was a contemporary of Emperor Menelik II in the late 19th century. (Footnote 90) He, too, apparently did not write down any of his many witticisms, but since he lived fairly recently, commuting between his home in Gondar and the then incipient city of Addis Ababa, he is still popularly as well as officially identified with his stories in both localities, and some of the anecdotes even tie his person to historical events.

Footnote 89 - Courlander & Leslau: The Fire on the Mountain, 1950

Footnote 90 - Messing, S. D.: Ethiopian Folktales ascribed to the 19th Century Wit, Alläqa Gäbre-Hanna. (in) Journal of American Folklore, Jan - March 1957, pp. 69-72.

538 He was a master of "sowasso"; of the pun which utilizes gemina-
522 tion and other grammatical possibilities to make an ironic observation and befuddle the unwary, so that they become public laughing stocks. Sometimes the joke was on his own Rabelaisian appetites in food and sex. More often he spoofed the pompousness of feudal and even royal powers, their love for amassing rules and regulations for their courts; and the pretended puritan piety of the priests, behind which facade he recognized witty insight into the minds of men, whose salty comments and behavior in private life he liked to burlesque. For example:

[539]

> "One day the servant of a witty priest suffered from a chigger (sandflea) embedded in his foot. The priest pried it out with a pin and threw it into the fire. A friend, watching this, objected jokingly, saying: "Why did you do this? May it not multiply in the fire?" Replied the priest: "It may be warmed, but not 'done up' ("yäzäräw" - also means begotten through sexual intercourse)."

Amhara listeners find such "inpolite" stories extremely amusing.

195 The Amhara people recognize the esoteric use that can be made of
198 their language, and they utilize this. Hence the expression "he is talking Amarinya", meaning "he is speaking in esoteric ways", with double meanings, hidden meanings, to becloud his real purpose so that he cannot be accused of lying and can say later that he meant something else. For example, the verb "qanna" can have the following meanings:

> was right, direct, correct
> was honest, just
> succeeded, prospered
> became jealous, envious
> became zealous, fanatic, intolerant.

198 Certain occupational specialties have traditionally made use of

576 Very Polite: "shängo wätta" - (lit. he went to a meeting).
514 Extremely Polite: "ïwäro zorä" - (lit. he left home).
192 Extremely Polite: "shersher wätta" - (lit. he went for a walk).

522 Wit, used in court or by homespun philosophers to entertain their friends, compensates for the many formalities in this culture and society. The famous wit, Alïäqa Gäbre-Hanna has already been cited. 538 Proverbs, "tärät" and riddles may be used to make a comment of esoteric meanings, understandable only to one's initiates. Proverbs fulfill a social function, beyond mere entertainment, for even philosophy, being utilized to begin any negotiation, such as for marriage. This is emphasized in proverbs on proverbs:

[539]

"Like Halleluyah before the chanting (in church),
(begin with) a proverb before the discussion".
"(to drink) mead, (first get) a container,
to talk, (begin with) a proverb".

538 Proverbs and riddles used by parents, teachers and leaders of
593 society have a pedagogic function, and can be used to reprimand and
[861] instruct. Conflict between father and son, the complexities involved, and the possibility that contrary to the major cultural assumption of parental superiority, the son may sometimes have logic on his side, is indicated by the following:

[539]

"(Says the father):

"Your Father you cannot accuse (e.g. in court, shaming yourself)
nor plow the sky,
nor roast water".

"(Replies the son):

"The father, by his own shame he will stand accused;
the sky, by lighting it is plowed;
water, in a pot it is steamed".

524 Boys, from the "age of reason" onward, tease each other with riddles in endless inventive games, such as:

[539] "(Question)":

"In its youth, white hair,
in its maturity, brown,
in its old age, red.
What is it?"

"(Reply)": "Wot". (Red-golden peppersauce).

●538 Like medieval bards, Amhara entertainers (azmari) and talented individuals tell of incredible and wonderful happenings of all kinds, stories called "tarik" (synonymous, in Amharic, with history). Often these use as their base historical or pseudo-historical events, and expand on them, experimenting with persons, plots, additional details, etc. Very popular bases are the Royal Chronicles of Abyssinia, "tarik nägäst", fanciful stories about Alexander the Great, and Biblical plots, especially Apocryphal.

D. Artistic Expression: The Art of Insult and Mockery.

195 A person who is clever at the art of insult is given grudging
578 admiration even by his opponents, and is called "bämälasy lachä" (lit. one who shaves with his tongue). He can insult or mock so subtly that he may leave non-initiates in doubt, yet have full effect on the victim. On the other hand, a coarse person who insults people indiscriminately, regardless of propriety of person or circumstance, is despised ("märta af").

Mockery is sometimes used for positive as well as negative purposes, especially in pedagogy, but insults are always more or less negative. Mockery, if used to teach a lesson, often employs proverbs;
578 using metaphors, so that the person criticized must think - which
195 might lead to his mending his ways:
539 To mock a useless act: "(it is like) a comb on a shaven head,
(like) trousers to carry dung in".

191 Ethiopian Folktales Ascribed to the Late Nineteenth Century Amhara Wit,
212 Alāqa Gābre-Hanna:—Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia today, is gradually be-
538 coming the *lingua franca* of the empire. Until recently it was spoken mainly on the fertile highland plateau of central and northwestern Ethiopia, in part of what was formerly known as Abyssinia. Predominantly Coptic Christian, the Amhara people have sacred writings in Ge'ez, old Ethiopic. Amharic has adapted this ancient script to its own use. The folklore of the Amhara is mainly oral (except for religious texts) and represents a crosscurrent of Mid-
[565] dle Eastern and African cultures. Traditionally, Amhara society was one of priests, feudal lords, and peasants. Lower on the social scale were non-Coptic ethnic groups who performed such important economic functions as ironsmithing and pottery-making.

538 This is reflected in the folklore. On non-religious, everyday subjects, the wit of the Am-
522 hara is peasant-like, earthy, full of tales of Rabelaisian appetites and sly solutions to human
193 problems. The Amharic language lends itself readily to puns and hidden meanings, since many verbs can have double or triple interpretations due to the hidden variations in the basic verbal stem and the absence or presence of gemination of some consonants. The listener must pay close attention. If he misinterprets the context and fails to discern the pun, he is often made the butt of the next tricky joke by those who have heard it before. The more a storyteller and wit masters the *sowaso* 'grammar' of the Amharic language, the better he can manipulate this humor.

538 A master of this art was *Alāqa* 'Chief' (an honorary title) Gābre-Hanna, a contem-
159 porary of Emperor Menelik just before the end of the nineteenth century. As far as is known, he never put into writing any of his stories, witticisms, linguistic gymnastics, and philosophical puns. But to this day the peasants and even the nobles remember his stories well and tell them so often that a number of versions have developed.

He was a native of Gondar and had all the provincial pride of the "Gondarey" in the one-time greatness of this town and district that is now back country. He lived at the time the present capital, Addis Ababa, was being built and the King of Shoa had become Emperor of Abyssinia. Like many another "Gondarey," Alāqa Gābre-Hanna pretended to disdain the newfangled importations of Emperor Menelik and the growing employment of subjugated Galla tribal chiefs at the imperial court. Jokingly, he took the liberty of referring to the Emperor's home province, Shoa, as "that Galla province." (Even today much
[191] Galliña is spoken there, a result of the sixteenth century conquest of the area by Galla tribes.) No one else would have dared such a remark, but he was popular with Emperor Menelik and especially with the Empress Taitu, and could tell them certain frank truths and tease them with irony in a semi-polite manner. However, he was not a court jester.

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 When miffed, or in temporary disgrace, he would request permission to return to his native
159 Gondar. Subsequently he would send excuse after excuse to the capital for refusing to go back there until he felt that he had been sufficiently coaxed to assuage his pride as a scholar and that further hesitation might result in serious difficulties, even for him. Empress Taitu was a very powerful figure and often protected him when he had gone too far with Emperor Menelik (her fifth husband).

[114] Although the following stories have no titles except "Story of Alāqa Gābre-Hanna," I have given them names to point up the major emphasis. This material was gathered orally from Amharic-speaking peasants and nobles in the Gondar region (during my field trip to that area in 1953-54 on a grant from the Ford Foundation).

539 *The Wit And The Nitwit.* AG-H didn't like the rumor going around that he had become a snob, that he didn't greet common people politely any more. One day, accompanied by his usual retinue of friends and admirers, he was greeted effusively with deep bows by a certain donkey-
[576] driver who was known as none too bright. In return, to quash the nasty rumors, AG-H bowed just as deeply, from the hips, instead of the usual nod from one of his station in life. But, unable to resist the temptation for a witticism, he greeted the donkey-driver with the words *"Endēz ad-derachuh?* 'How are *ye?*' "

Unaware that the second person plural had been used, the proud donkey-driver was soon boasting at the nearest barley-beer hut of the honor he had received. His cronies made him repeat the exact remark, suspecting some twist. They quickly convinced the poor fool that the greeting had included him in the same class with his donkeys, and the simpleton slunk away in shame.

Another version of the story: But the donkey-driver was, after all, a proud Amhara. Realizing that he had been made a fool of, he took his walking stick, went to the house of AG-H, and beat him unmercifully. This was one time that his wit struck back at him.

Good Eating Comes First. Though greatly honored at the court of Emperor Menelik in newly-built Addis Ababa, AG-H was once again homesick for his native Gondar. Finally, he was granted permission for a leave home.

He promptly organized his small caravan and was about to mount his mule when he noticed two fat cows being taken to slaughter. Thinking of the long trip ahead without fresh beef, he decided to wait around and obtain a good share of the meat which was being rapidly parcelled out. The meat had to be washed down with a huge jugful of barley-beer and honeymead, and so the day passed with pleasant feasting. It was late afternoon when it happened that Emperor Menelik came riding by. Surprised to see the homesick scholar still in the capital, the Emperor addressed him: "I gave you permission to go, and you are still here?"

But, as usual, his wit did not fail AG-H. *"Lām gāb* 'the cows were entering,' your Majesty," he replied. (The phrase is used to indicate dusk, when the cows come home, too late to start on a trip. The cows had indeed "entered," i.e., into the stomach of AG-H; and no one could accuse him later of having told a lie to the Emperor.)

Pride Of A Man From Gondar Province. The next time AG-H became homesick occurred in the middle of the long Lenten fast. The housewives of Gondar were famous for their many spicy recipes for cooking fish in that season, and when AG-H thought of these his mouth watered and nothing pleased him any more in Shoa province.

One day he was invited to dine at the house of a noble of Shoa. The odor of fish being cooked attracted him to the cooking hut. It seemed to him that the woman cook had not properly cleaned the fish and had added too much water. He began to moan and groan.

"What's the matter?" asked his host.

Pointing to the watery fish stew, AG-H replied: "The fish are better off than I. They are *in their native state,* but I am so far from mine!"

Safety From Robbers. Once again the long rainy season was over, the rivers had receded, and the trails were passable again. AG-H managed to obtain a generous purse of Maria-Theresa thalers from the Empress and was on his perennial way back to Gondar.

He was just emerging from the lowland valley of the Abbai (Blue Nile) to climb up the escarpment of the dangerous province of Gojjam, which he had to traverse. Suddenly one of his companions spotted a band of robbers waiting at the top of the upland trail.

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[For additional information on the "wax and gold" poetic formula, particularly for information on its uses in other modes of communication, see categories 19, 195, and 196.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

5 / *Tradition and Modernization*

THE GENIUS OF AMHARA CULTURE

The Amhara as a whole are not much given to aesthetic concerns. They are practical-minded peasants, austere religionists, and spirited warriors. Their interests and achievements as a nation are chiefly in the spheres of military activity and government. And yet, if we seek some theme with which to gain an entree into the spirit of their society and culture, we will do well to attend to the sphere of poetry. For it is a poetic phenomenon—that represented by the title of this book—which constitutes both a key to the genius of Amhara culture and a highly distinctive Amhara contribution to Ethiopian culture.

Sam-ennā warq ("wax and gold") is the formula used by the Amhara to symbolize their favorite form of verse. It is a form built of two semantic layers. The apparent, figurative meaning of the words is called "wax"; their more or less hidden actual significance is the "gold."

In its generic sense, the expression *sam-ennā warq* refers to a number of poetic figures which embody this twofold meaning. The use of such figures distinguishes the Amhara equivalent of true poetry from ordinary verse, in which everyday language is merely embellished with rhyme and rhythm. In the genre known as *qenē*, the original and more elegant kind of *sam-ennā warq* poetry, the lines are composed in Ge'ez and depend primarily on religious symbolism. But *sam-ennā warq* constructions also appear in some types of secular verse in the vernacular Amharic and, indeed, at times inform Amharic conversation.

Masters of the art of *qenē* composition have analyzed these poetic figures into about a dozen different types.[4] *Sam-ennā warq* in its more specific sense refers to one of these types of figures—the prototype of them all. It consists of an explicit comparison in which the subjects being compared—the wax and gold—are presented in apposition, while their predicates are rendered jointly by a single verb which carries both a wax and a gold meaning. (This terminology is derived from the work of the goldsmith, who constructs a clay mold around a form created in wax and then, draining the wax, pours the molten gold into that form.) So, for example, if the poet's aim is to praise a hero like Emperor Menelik, he creates a wax model, like "the lion," in terms of whose actions the gold, Menelik, is depicted: "The lion Menelik crushed the wolf Italy."[5]

Keeping this dual imagery consistent throughout the stanza is a primary rule of wax-and-gold composition. A poet who mixes his metaphors is sometimes rebuked with the epithet "hermaphrodite." The following example presents an Amharic couplet which properly embodies the *sam-ennā warq* figure:

Etsa balas balto addām ḳanfareshe
Madhānē alam lebē tasaqala-leshe.

538 Since Adam your lip did eat of that Tree
539 The Savior my heart has been hung up for thee.
19

In this couplet the wax of Adam's sin and Christ's crucifixion in his behalf has been used as a form in which to pour a love message. A literal translation of the wax of the couplet is:

Because Adam ate of the apple from the Tree of Knowledge
The Savior of the World has been crucified for thee.

To savor the gold of the couplet fully, one must know that the verb meaning "was crucified," *tasaqala,* may also signify "is anxious to be near." So a literal translation of the gold would be:

Because of your [tempting] lips
My heart is anxious to be near thee.

538 In other more commonly used figures, the duplexity of the message be-
19 comes less explicit. In figures known as *hīber and merīmer,* the wax and gold are combined in the same word or phrase instead of being put side by side. These figures thus correspond to the English pun. In verses which employ these figures the wax is often but a contrived and transparent excuse for getting to the real point, which appears only in the pun line. Such verses are
[522] highly prized, however, for the Amhara tends to regard the pun as a very
538 high form of humor. Here are two examples of Amharic couplets based on
539 simple puns:

522 (1) *Ya-mīn ṭīqem ṭallā ya-mīn ṭīqem ṭajji*
19 *Tallāt tishañu bunā adargaw enji.*

Of what use is *ṭallā,* of what use is *ṭajji?**
When seeing an enemy off, serve him coffee.

(2) *Yābbāt eddā la-lījj yebāl nabar dero:*
Bāyāt eddā gabāhu ennē-mā zandero.

In olden times a father's debt was passed down to his son;
But here I have a debt today by grandfather begun.

The pun in the first example lies in the phrase *bunā adargaw* ("serve him coffee"), which by elision becomes *bun adargaw* ("reduce him to ashes"). In the second couplet the pun hinges on the word *bāyat,* which signifies "grandfather" but may also be understood to represent *bāyhuāt* ("because I saw her"). The gold meaning of this couplet is thus: It used to be said that one inherited the debt of one's father, but in my case it was the sight of her that put me into debt.

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[273] * *Ṭallā* is a kind of beer made from barley. *Ṭajj* (pronounced *ṭajji* here for the sake of rhyme) is mead.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ethiopic verse becomes most obscure in the figure known as *wesṭa wayrā* 538
("inside of olive tree"). Here only the wax is given, and the listener must 19
work to unearth the gold. Often this can be done only when the circumstances under which the verse was made up are known. The author of a *wesṭa wayrā* often refuses to reveal anything that may help the listener to grasp its hidden meaning.

The expression *wesṭa wayrā* alludes to the fact that the inner core of the olive tree is a hard substance encased by bark of a different color. The implication is that the inner sense of a *wesṭa wayrā* poem is concealed by a veneer which conveys a quite different sense and is difficult to penetrate. This figure [182]
is thus especially suitable for expressing insults in a safe way and for esoteric philosophical or religious message. Here is an instance of the latter usage: 538

Ya-bāhetāwi lijj sifalleg le'ullennā 539
Ya-ḳristosn mesht talānt washama-nnā 19
Qeṭal betābalaw hono qarama-nnā.

The son of a hermit, high rank to display,
Made love with Christ's wife yesterday;
When she fed him leaves he wasted away.

The surface meaning of this tercet describes an ambitious man who had relations with "Christ's wife" in order to raise his status, for in Ethiopia having relations with a woman of high rank is one way to gain prestige. Instead of advancing his position, however, this man lost all his power when the woman fed him (medicinal) leaves. The esoteric meaning, on the other hand, refers to the experience of a hermit. His "son" is intended to symbolize his hunger, and "Christ's wife" symbolizes fasting. The "inside" meaning, the gold, is therefore that the hermit's hunger is heightened by its relations with fasting, but it diminishes when he is fed leaves, the hallowed diet of a hermit.

The mode of the various poetic figures collectively designated as *sam-ennā* 538
warq is intellectual rather than sensuous. The chief delight of Ethiopic poetry 19
is to attain a maximum of thought with a minimum of words. This effect is reached, as we have seen, through subtle allusions and plays on words. The point may be a serious moral comment, the understanding of which requires one to decipher hidden references to biblical passages or sacred legends; or it may be a jest about love based on a pornographic pun. In any case, the more ingeniously compact and obscure the construction of the verse, the more pleased will be the poet and his audience. Weighty (i.e., mysterious) verse is the ideal, for as the Amhara say, "weighty verse, like heavy clothing, warms the insides."

The creation of the wax and gold figures was an integral part of the de- 538
velopment of *qenē*, the genre of verse composed to be sung at the conclusion 19
of devotional services in the church. And *qenē* appears to be a specifically 174

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
[175] Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[173] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).[6] Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[874] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in Gojjam in the fourteenth century.[7] The important schools of *qenē* have always been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
538 delā, Wāsharā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre
19 have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use
[171] of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethiopia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.[8] They further maintain that Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propaedeutic to the study of religious texts.* Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar, which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and thereby enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized by the formula *sam-ennā warq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

538 * The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

words often carry *double-entendre* as a matter of course; when he listens, he is ever on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. As one of my Ethiopian colleagues has said: "Wax and gold is anything but a formula—it is a way of life." 538 181

In essence, wax and gold is simply a more refined and stylized manifestation of the Amhara's basic manner of communicating. This manner is indirect, often secretive. Amharic conversation is larded with vague remarks like *Mīn yeshāllāl?* ("What is better?") when the speaker has failed to indicate what is the issue at hand, or *Tādyās!*, an interjection which can mean almost anything. Often, when the speaker is then quizzed about the issue at hand, he will give an answer that does not reveal what is really on his mind at all, and even when he does, the person with whom he is talking is likely to interpret his response as a disguise. 195 521 538

Wax and gold embodies this fundamental indirection in speech by means of the studied use of ambiguity. Apart from its literary and religious manifestations, wax and gold appears in the common life of the traditional Amhara on a variety of occasions and serves a number of diverse functions. 195 182 538

It provides the medium for an inexhaustible supply of humor, among a wry people who prefer the clever, double-edged remark to comic actions or incongruous situations. This includes the wit of daily life—the invention of puns and sly retorts, the telling and retelling of good anecdotes and famous lines—as well as the more formalized humor on festive occasions, where minstrels sing the *sam-ennā warq* verses extemporized by the guests. 538 195 182 522

It provides a means for insulting one's fellows in a socially approved manner, in a culture which requires fastidious etiquette in social relations and punishes direct insults by heavy fines. *Sam-ennā warq* insulting, too, has its more stylized expressions, as at the drink-house, where one may find persons competing in a prolonged exchange of more or less disguised insults, or in time of political or military conflict, when opposing lords were wont formerly to satirize one another with ambiguous couplets. 538 195 182 578

It provides a technique for defending the sphere of privacy against excessive intrusion, in a social order that thrives on rumor and gossip and puts most of its people at the mercy of superiors. While vague and evasive responses often suffice to dampen the enthusiasm of the tax collector or the curious neighbor, *sam-ennā warq* constitutes another potent weapon of self-defense. 538 195 182 571 [521]

Finally, it provides the one outlet for criticism of authority figures in a society which strictly controls every kind of overt aggression toward authority, be it parental, religious, or political. Thus it has been a safety valve for certain social tensions, enabling, for example, witty individuals to satirize the monarch himself and still live to repeat the witticism—so long as its subject was himself duly appreciative of the cleverness of the lines. 538 195 182 578 571 [687] [522]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

TRADITION AND MODERNITY

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Insofar as Ethiopia is committed to the pursuit of modernity, she cannot fail to be embarrassed to some extent by the wax-and-gold complex. For nothing could be more at odds with the ethos of modernization, if not with its actuality, than a cult of ambiguity.[9]

It is true, of course, that cultural formations analogous to wax and gold in their exploitation of ambiguity have been prominent throughout the history of the West, not to mention the whole non-Western world. The Christian tradition has always made much of parables and allegories. The classical teaching of rhetoric, following Cicero, placed great stress on the use of paradox; and a major philosophical tradition, stretching from Plato to Marx, has been founded on a logic which assumes that reality can be known only by combining opposite concepts and that any single term is subject to dual interpretation. The flowering of symbolist literature, to take a more recent example, created an audience as partial to subtle allusion and *double-entendre* as the most obscurantist proponent of *wesṭa wayrā*.

Yet there can be little doubt that the pace-setting spirit of modern Western culture rests on a commitment to unambiguous communication. It is predicated on the proposition that A must be A or not be A. It was no accident that one of the more characteristic philosophical movements of the present century, logical positivism, should have had as its primary motif the desire to maximize precision in the use of language. For the decisive institutions of the modern world—technologies based on logico-experimental science, rational legal systems, and bureaucratic organizations in government, commerce, and industry—depend intimately on the unambiguous definition of terms and the utmost clarity of expression. Whether the task be one of constructing a legal contract, outlining a job description, designing a nuclear reactor, classifying genera and species, or defining variables and their interrelations, these characteristic modern activities are informed by the need and intention to eliminate, as far as possible, all traces of linguistic ambiguity.

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The incorporation of these aspects of modern culture into Ethiopian life must inevitably produce a certain amount of strain in a culture which makes such thoroughgoing use of analogy and equivocation. Indeed, tension generated by this issue has been manifest in a variety of ways. Among the modern-educated Ethiopians, one finds demands for greater clarity in the specification of responsibilities in administration. One finds increased impatience with the devious, equivocal talk involved in joint action of any sort. One finds a slowly growing disposition to structure and fulfil expectations in literal terms, and occasional outbursts of protest against the vagueness and the conspiratorial mentality of those schooled only in the traditional way. In order to 'escape' what they feel are the burdensome subtleties of Amharic,

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

gest that it also reflects certain psychological and social characteristics deeply 121
rooted in the culture of the land of wax and gold. These characteristics will 128
be the subject of analysis in the two concluding chapters, which deal, respectively, with the phenomena of orality and of individualism in Amhara culture.

It should be evident from the foregoing that I have refrained from attempting a comprehensive assessment of the relationship between Amhara tradition and Ethiopia's modernization. By limiting myself to problems for which I had both prior theoretical interests and data obtained at first hand, I have sought to gain in accuracy of detail and depth of understanding what I might lose in breadth of coverage. It is hoped, moreover, that these studies may stimulate other scholars to extend this mode of analysis into such crucial areas as law, economic behavior, family life, religion, and military institutions.

On the other hand, by treating the relation between tradition and moder- 121
nity as it appears in a variety of social and cultural phenomena rather than by concentrating on a single problem, I have found it easier to articulate some of the complexities of that relation. For traditional patterns and modern aspirations are related in many ways. Oftentimes they are fully compatible, the traditional either positively supporting the modern or else presenting no conflict with it. When conflict does obtain, on the other hand, it may work toward resolution in a number of different ways. One alternative is straightforward displacement of the old by the new, through a varying combination of coercive and persuasive measures. Another alternative is through structural differentiation, as mentioned above, either through the incorporation of a novel form from outside or through processes of internal differentiation. Still another way is through a subtle transformation of traditional forms so that they continue to be meaningful but are redefined to fit the modern situation. In its most creative outcome, the conflict may involve so genuine a dialogue between traditional and modern patterns that novel values emerge and authentic variants of modern culture are developed.

Perhaps the most important insight in this connection is that while traditional patterns may stand in conflict with modernity in some respects, the same patterns may support modernity in other respects. It is to this sort of complex relationship that the Pragmatist is most likely to draw attention. Theoretically the relationship follows logically from the realization, hard won by sociologists during recent decades, that no modern society can exist without substantial reliance on patterns which must be regarded as traditional and not rational. For a concrete example of this dual relationship, let us turn once more to the phenomenon previously discussed, that of wax and gold.

We have argued that the ambiguity and equivocation symbolized by the 121
Amharic formula wax and gold stands in opposition to the semantic dimen- 195
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sion of modernization which, because of the ascendance of technology, contractual relations, and bureaucratic organization places great stress on the unambiguous use of language. Yet we may now argue that the intellectual habits associated with the wax-and-gold pattern are also valuable assets in Ethiopia's pursuit of modernity.

The experience of history has demonstrated the futility of attempting the revolutionary implementation of a clear and distinct ideal in human society. No matter how bold and sweeping the program, traditional patterns persist tenaciously. The only real alternatives are whether they are to be maintained in isolation from the modern culture, or whether traditional and modern patterns can be fused sufficiently to produce a relatively homogeneous sort of culture. As Gabriel Almond's analysis suggests, the latter alternative appears to be conducive to stability and effectiveness in modern political systems.[12] For that to take place, however, traditional symbols must be interpreted with sufficient ambiguity as to permit their fusion with modern ones. The problems of "cultural management" faced by the elites of the transitional nations can only be handled in the long run by a deliberate effort to exploit the ambiguity of traditional symbols.

Enrico Cerulli's interpretation of the Aksumite inscriptions provides an interesting precedent for such manipulation of language in the service of induced culture change in Ethiopia.[13] Cerulli has remarked on the cautious and ambiguous language with which Emperor Ēzānā recorded his conversion to Christianity in the fourth century. For example, Ēzānā refers to his new deity, not as "God of the Christians," but with the traditional pagan symbolism, "God of the Heaven" and "God of the Earth"; and he attaches to his new God the same epithet—"Who has not been conquered by enemies"—which traditionally belonged to the pagan god Mahrem. So interpreted, Ēzānā's inscription may be seen as an antique expression of that cultural disposition which centuries later the Amhara were to crystallize in the canons of *sam-ennā warq* poesy. At the same time it illustrates how the sacred symbols of a traditional culture may be used to facilitate radical innovation.

What is true at the level of national leadership is no less true for the leadership of less inclusive social systems. Wise politicians at all levels have always been aware that to gain support and preserve solidarity it is not advisable to adhere scrupulously to a single literal interpretation of any system of beliefs or code of norms. This perception has been affirmed by recent sociological investigations, which show that the most effective administrators of complex organizations are those who have a high tolerance of ambiguity and who are skilled in the use of ambiguous language for the purpose of reducing interpersonal tensions.

In addition to serving these instrumental functions, the ambiguous use of language belongs in the most modern of cultures because it is the foundation

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of a humane literary style. The rationalist emphasis on clear and distinct ideas and the puritanical emphasis on honest, straightforward, and plain talk are indispensable in running the machinery of modern society but by themselves are insufficient to represent the savor of human experience. The ascendance of unambiguous communication in American culture has resulted in the triumph of "a journalese," which is characterized, as one critic has put it, by "words of flat signification . . . and with none of the broadly ruminative phrases which have the power to inspire speculation." As he further observes:

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> The essential sterility of such a style is one of the surest signs we have that modern man is being dessicated. For the "modern" style is at once brash and timid: brash enough to break old patterns without thinking, and timid before the tremendous evocative and constructive powers immanent in language.[14]

If the aim of modern culture is a fuller life for man, it neglects its ends if strictly cognitive and instrumental considerations become so dominant that its very matrix becomes flat and dry. For modernity to be complete, the tremendous evocative powers immanent in language must also be unleashed.

The distrust of ambiguity arises in a modernizing society because those processes most obviously associated with the culture of modernity—chiefly those having to do with rational mastery over the environment and the rational co-ordination of human activities—take place in contexts where unambiguous communication is imperative. The successful development and operation of institutions in these areas do require, as we have suggested, the setting-aside of devious and equivocal habits of mind. But in those areas involving the creation of solidarity, the management of tensions, and the expression of intuition and sentiment, criteria of effectiveness would seem to permit, indeed to require considerable reliance on the uses of ambiguity. From this it follows that the wax-and-gold mentality should be regarded not only as an obstacle to Ethiopia's modernization but also, by virtue of its contribution to the continuing effectiveness of her social organization and the continuing richness of her expressive culture, as a beneficial agent.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

times brought dissension to the state, the legitimate Crown was triumphant most of the time. 175*

In the history of Ethiopian literature the period has been called a Golden Age.[1] The important works composed during this time include *The Glory of Kings,* which contains the story of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon, and their offspring, Menelik I, legendary first king of Ethiopia; *The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth,* a compilation of occult theology and numerology, with a Miltonic account of the struggle between Michael and Satan; *The Christian Romance of Alexander the Great,* a fantastic portrayal of Alexander as a Christian hero who traverses the Land of Darkness and the miraculous Land of the Living; the moralizing tracts of the greatest emperor of the period, Zar'a Yā'qob; as well as numerous lives of saints and translations of Christian writings from Arabic. 175* 538

Connoisseurs of Ethiopian art attribute the most original and refined paintings to the latter part of this period. Using translucent colors and austere shapes and design, Ethiopian monks brought to expression an intense spirituality in the form of miniatures in illuminated manuscripts.[2] 175* 532

At the same time this was the Heroic Age of Ethiopian warfare. Amda Ṭseyon vanquished sixteen Muslim chiefs to the south and west; the valor of Sayfa Ar'ed was celebrated in medieval Arab tales of chivalry; Dāwit I pushed his victories against the Muslims as far as Zeila on the Gulf of Aden. Improved military equipment and organization under Yeshāq brought the imperial forces to a new level of discipline and power, which Yeshāq used to establish his authority in many southern areas. Zar'a Yā'qob, famous for endowing churches and monasteries and for encouraging literature and art, was a successful warrior in his own right. 175* 648

A close-up of Ethiopia at the height of its medieval synthesis is provided by Father Francisco Alvares, Portuguese emissary to Abyssinia during the years 1520–27.[3] We see a prosperous kingdom, its far-flung dominions headed by hereditary rulers and royal appointees, all of whom pay tribute in kind to the emperor. The tribute consists of horses and mules, blankets and cloths, silk stuffs and gold, all in impressive amounts. The provincial heads, and the armies they must make available, live off the land they govern. The numerous priests and monks are supported by lands granted them by the king. Justice is administered at three levels, with the possibility of appeal from the local judge, to the provincial governor, to the royal court itself. The king's mobile camp, large as a town, is his capital, so that he spends his years marching about from one corner of his domain to another. 175* 64 631 [651] [69]

The monarch at the time of Alvares' visit was Lebna Dengel (1508–40), a man of pride and temper. He refused to heed counsel that the kingdom was imperiled by threats from the outside. Indeed, legend has it that he was discontented with the prevailing civil harmony and begged God to send an ad- 175* 643

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*175 643 633 517 chant"), *qenē*, and *tergum* ("interpretation")—is said to have received its definitive organization.

Dāwit III appears to have had a pronounced interest in Amharic folk song, for the more perfect enjoyment of which he built a special hall in the imperial compound. Because of this he has been called "Dāwit the Singer"—no term of praise in a land where minstrelsy is looked down on and where serious deportment is expected of royalty. Actually, this epithet, with its connotation of "playboy," was not deserved. Dāwit was a religious man, and in his brief reign built two churches. Knowledgeable Gondarēs today insist that, at first, even the priests were happy to join him in the amusement hall to listen to the one-stringed fiddles and the witty songs. Only after Dāwit's partiality to the [798] Unctionist doctrine (that the humanity of Christ was made divine through the unction of the Holy Spirit) led him to persecute the Unionist clergy (who hold that humanity and divinity are blended in the single nature of Christ) did they abuse his music hall and tarnish his name.[7]

[341] Interest in architecture was revived by Bakāffā. He constructed a long U-shaped castle which, together with the new castle of his Empress Mantuāb, completed the major complex of buildings in Gondar. Mantuāb's castle is [532] noted for bas-reliefs of the Ethiopian Cross, while her other castle at nearby Qusquam is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting saints and animals as well.

The tastes of Iyāsu II were especially refined. He cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He built a large and handsome church. He began to construct a palace, in the lavish [344] decoration of which he took a personal interest. Budge writes of this:

> A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the walls of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts . . . with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. . . . Iyāsu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen.[8]

*175 633 517 The decline of imperial power at Gondar after Iyāsu II did not produce a slackening of the cultural activities that had been concentrated there. During the reign of Takla Hāymānot II (1769–77), for example, when the actual [643] power at Gondar was in the hands of a lord from Tigre, seven more churches were built. One of these, Ba'ātā Māryām, eventually became one of the most [874] famous schools for the teaching of *aquāquām* ("religious dance"), and in its heyday boasted 276 masters. Another, Abi Egzi, became noted for instruction in *tergum*, and is still a leading school for such studies.

[538] The composition of verse, in forms which had become canonized during the early Gondar period, continued to flourish. As political turmoil often

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth cntury: 175* 633 517 538 • [539]

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts. 175* 633 517 53

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā,* or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā.* 175* 159 793 633

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām,* the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere. [535] [178]

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, ~~however~~, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā [214] [538]

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*175 who trailed the Gondar camp to make spades and plowshares, spears and swords, and so improved the quality of agriculture and warfare in Shoa.

The reign of Abbīyē's son Amhāyas was long and prosperous. New lands were conquered, new settlements founded, new churches built. Amhāyas seized the strategic mountain of Ankobar, to which the mountainous plateaus of the north and the vast plains to the south were equally accessible, and set up his official residence there. The last of Shoa's princes to pay his respects to the court at Gondar, he was received there as an emissary of his father with great honors and treated more like a sovereign ally than a vassal.[27] When Amhāyas died, he left for his son Asfā Wassan what had by then become the vast principality of Shoa.

Asfā Wassan's youth was spent in a monastery in Manz, where he became proficient at composing *qenē* under the tutelage of a master from Gondar. As a ruler he resembled many of Gondar's monarchs, preferring to spend his time in religious pursuits and the embellishment of his capital (Ankobar) than on the warpath. The actual business of warfare he entrusted to his generals, who in a string of victories subjected dozens of Amhara and Galla districts to his authority. Nevertheless, when forced to fight, he lost no time in showing who was *marīdāzmātch*. When two of his generals rebelled, he defeated them in what Cecchi called "the most terrible and bloody battle which the Shoans remember."[28]

Asfā Wassan deserved his name, which means "Expand the Border." He brought nearly all the petty states of Shoa under his rule, by alliance or by
*175 conquest. A famous exchange of couplets between Asfā Wassan and Ṭedu,
539 governor of Morat, formed the prologue to one instance of this expansion. Ṭedu, fearing the absorption of his territory, made the following rhyme:

Asfā Wassan Yefāt ṭankeraw yerrasu
Morat ṭeduāl belaw ḳamamalālasu.

O Asfā Wassan, stoutly plow Yefāt
Rather than eye what's baking in Morat.

*175 There is gold in the verb in the second line, *ṭeduāl*, which may signify not
538 only "is baking" but also "Ṭedu is there." The couplet may thus be read:
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195 O Asfā Wassan, stoutly plow Yefāt
Rather than think about Ṭedu in Morat.

Upon hearing this couplet Asfā Wassan composed the following reply:

La-mofar la-qanbar yamihonaññen
Sālquarṭaw alqerem zandro ṭedun.

To get me yokes and plowbeams in this year
I will not fail to cut the juniper.

[MANZ]

35 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The pun here is on the word *Ṭedu,* for the name of Asfā Wassan's adversary means "the juniper." Morat soon began to pay him tribute.[29] 175* [538] [539] [195]

Asfā Wassan also accomplished much in the field of administration. He organized his realm into four large provinces, which were in turn subdivided into thirty-nine districts—half Amhara lands, half lands taken from the Galla. He improved the laws and introduced a more orderly system of finance. He supported agriculture and encouraged trade.

Such prosperity could scarcely be viewed with indifference by Gondar. Takla Giyorgis I (1779–84), who was trying vainly to restore imperial authority at Gondar, marched to Shoa with a large force. Asfā Wassan, not ready for an open clash with the emperor's troops, handled the situation with characteristic Shoan adroitness. He heaped gifts upon the emperor and his lieutenants. Protesting his fealty, he noted that if he had extended his own dominions, it had been at the expense of their common enemy, the Galla. Finally, he said he was willing to pay tribute to the emperor, but at the same time was ready if necessary to meet him in battle. The lords who accompanied Takla Giyorgis sympathized with the Shoan, and the emperor was not strong enough to prevent their defection.

Worried by a monkish prophecy that his life would be short, Asfā Wassan emptied the state coffers in order to subsidize churches and monasteries. He lived to fill them time and again, during a reign that lasted thirty-three years. Throughout that time he never forgot his church schooling, and frequently invented *qenē* to be repeated in the churches on holidays. But Asfā Wassan was a true son of Manz, and left the memory, as Harris noted, of "a great Nimrod and an unparalleled warrior."[30]

The next ruler, Wassan Sagad, was the offspring of a fortuitous union between Asfā Wassan and Woizero Atmotch Hono, a relative of the imperial family at Gondar and owner of vast properties in Wallo. En route from Manz to Ankobar at the end of his student days, Asfā Wassan was given hospitality at the home of this genteel woman. Not aware that the lady had in fact been brought by his father with the hope of siring offspring from her, Asfā Wassan spent the night with her. When she bore a son, and Asfā Wassan learned who she really was, he fled in terror to the monastery of Ferkutā. After sending scouts to all the monasteries in the area, Amhāyas had his son brought back and granted him pardon.

Wassan Sagad was thus kin to the highest nobility through his mother as well as his father. His noble blood, haughty disposition, and clever mind moved him to great ambitions. He convoked a large assembly of Amhara and Galla, and proclaimed himself Rās of Shoa.* Then he sent word to Rās Gugsa, power behind the throne at Gondar, that he was coming to fight, "for

* *Rās* is the highest ranking secular title in Abyssinia after *negus* ("king"). Cf. chap. v, p. 158. [554]

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*565 796 [164] [785] hazardous. Moisture and chill lower the resistance of man and beast to respiratory infections. The weekly fasting schedule is resumed, and the more devout observe the thirty-day fast of the Disciples. In August, finally, the sixteen-day fast in honor of the Assumption of Mary is observed by everyone older than six or seven years.

*565 796 526 On the thirteenth day of that fast occurs the strange holiday of Buhē. Before and during this day, which is marked by the baking of special *dābo* for the shepherds, the countryside crackles with the reports of shepherds' whips. In this season when the humid air lends an explosive sound, the shepherds crack their whips for fun; but older boys and men join in great whipping battles on Buhē,* in which two teams lash each other until the members of one can stand it no more. On the evenings of Buhē, small bonfires are lit all over the countryside, and more *dābo* is eaten and whips cracked.[5] A few days later the fast of the Assumption is over. Young and old look forward to the end of the rains and the festivities that commence with the new year.

*565 These are the days and years of the Amhara peasant. Some other aspects of his life that come to the fore when more analytic perspectives are applied will be discussed in later chapters. But this calendar of activities forms the immediately observable setting for the "inner world" of the Amhara peasantry: those ideas, sentiments, and values which constitute its outlook on life.

THE WORLD OF MEANING

The Natural Universe

*565 772 [538] The Amhara peasant is not familiar with most of the cosmological notions found in the Great Tradition of Abyssinian culture, as transmitted through books like *Qalamsis* and *Aksimareos* and the oral traditions of learned churchmen. It is unusual for him to have a precise image of the layers of water, fire, and air beneath the earth, and it is still less likely for him to be familiar with the complicated hierarchy of invisible worlds, watery skies, and seven "real" heavens which are enumerated in the Abyssinian cosmology. He [821] believes that stars influence human affairs, but leaves the possession of astro- [756] logical knowledge to the *dabtarā*. The presence of cultural specialists who know about such matters has relieved him of the burden of dealing with ideas about the cosmos, ideas which are more widely diffused in more homogeneous societies.

The peasant's working conception of the cosmos is thus a very simplified version of that of his Great Tradition, together with certain pagan notions. Like his more learned countrymen, he divides the universe into two main parts: the world, *alam*, consisting of the earth, sun, moon, and stars; and

[178] * This custom is now extinct in many Amhara areas.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

771 776 805 Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci for the organization of time and space.

*565 805 In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes. Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *hābashā qaṭaro* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amhara peasant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

*565 805 829 Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Amhara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

*565 • 538 829 When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

*565 805 796 [787] With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year. A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*) [576] representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

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Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[28] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

conventional Ge'ez honorific. Sanctity of the imperial office is an antique 643
theme, deriving apparently from pagan ideas of divine kingship which were 17
transplanted from South Arabia in the first millennium B.C. along with other aspects of Sabaean culture.[1] But the working ideology which has upheld [538]
this conception during the period of Amhara hegemony draws on Semitic motifs of later origin, motifs which received their classic formulation in the fourteenth century national epic, *Kebra Nagast* (*The Glory of Kings*).

The effect of the *Kebra Nagast* is to make the Ethiopian emperor both physical descendant and spiritual successor to the kings of Israel. The genealogical tie is argued by the legendary union of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, whose offspring, Menelik I, is held to have fathered the line of royalty which allegedly ruled at Aksum and was restored in the thirteenth century. The transfer of religious mission is shown both in a prophetic dream attributed to Solomon, in which God's favor passes from Israel to Ethiopia, and in the story of Menelik's theft from Jerusalem of the most sacred symbol of the Judaic mission, the Ark of the Covenant.* Furthermore, while at the time the *Kebra Nagast* was written the Ethiopian monarch was presented as a friendly cousin of the "king of Rome"—an echo of the sixth-century alliance between Caleb of Ethiopia and Justin I of Byzantium[2]—thereafter he came to be regarded as successor to the latter as well, and hence the sole defender of the true Christian faith.

The Ethiopians have elaborated on this exalted conception of their mon- 643
archy in other literary forms.[3] In royal chronicles and hymns of praise which 538
span seven centuries, the emperors are celebrated for superlative beauty and 17
superhuman powers. In splendor of countenance they are likened to the sun; in awesomeness of power, to the lion; in religious character and divine force, to the kings of Israel and, at times, to God Himself.

In life as well as in literature the person of the emperor was clad with an 643
aura of sanctity. Ethiopian subjects have had to prostrate themselves and 17
refrain from lifting their eyes in his presence. An analogous show of deference was expected when they received royal messages from afar; the recipient had to hear the message outside his home, standing, and naked above the waist.[4] The emperors rarely permitted themselves to be seen in public, and were often secluded by curtains while eating or drinking. They were not addressed directly, but through an interlocutor. Zar'a Yā'qob, whose [644]
officers were said to have kissed the earth each time they heard the sound of his voice, carried the demand for social distance so far that pages attached to his court were not permitted to have contact with anybody from outside, and were put to death if they dared to fraternize with local inhabitants.[5]

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* The orthodox still maintain that the original ark containing the stone tablets of the Law is located at Aksum. It is symbolized by the *tābot* found in every Ethiopian church. [778]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

648 795 793 [792] The general position of the church had already been weakened by the events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 795 793 [643] [651] Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 871 658 793 The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever government schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full-[465] time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 178 [554] [871] [658] Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite

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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Ya-dam Demṭs*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

than those necessary to perform their jobs. They do not attempt to maintain and build personal libraries, though there are a few exceptions to this. The three small bookstores in Addis Ababa offer only the most insubstantial fare.

Nor, finally, have more than a handful of private individuals taken upon themselves the charge of a scholarly or literary calling. Although Marcel Cohen heralded the birth of a printed literature in Amharic as early as 1925,[55] writing is still not very important on the Ethiopian scene.* The output of original books and pamphlets in Amharic averaged less than fifteen a year over the past two decades. The presses and bookstores distribute Amharic publications indifferently at best. Much of the literary impetus produced by the desire of many Ethiopians to write, and the obvious need for good writing that would address itself to the intellectual demands of the present generation, has been sapped by economic, political, and cultural factors.

The economic factors include the high cost of printing; the diminutive market; and the absence of publishing houses. If an author wants to be read, he must normally pay for publication himself. Those who cannot must either find a patron in the Crown—frequently a highly lucrative arrangement—or resort to mimeographic duplication, or else remain unpublished. The censorship system and anxiety about spontaneous expression of any sort which has been fostered by prevailing political conditions constitute additional obstacles to literary development.

The paucity of serious writing has been the result no less of prevailing cultural conditions. The low intellectual level of his potential audience, the absence of channels for criticism, and the dearth of precedent make it difficult for the Ethiopian writer to determine good standards of writing. The confused state of Amharic, owing to regional variations and the absence of consensus on neologisms and loan words for expressing modern concepts, poses many problems on the level of sheer vocabulary. The temptation to get into print quickly, if the financial and political barriers can be hurdled, exceeds the temptation to work long and hard on an opus of quality. The desire to pontificate frequently eclipses the quest for understanding.

Those conditions which have inhibited the growth of Amharic literature—poverty, governmental reluctance to provide sufficient freedom and support, the newness of the modernizing culture, and the motivational level of the intellectuals themselves—may be viewed more broadly as responsible for the relative barrenness of Ethiopian intellectual life as a whole. Insofar as these conditions change in the coming decades, a radical change in the quality and organization of Ethiopian intellectual life may be expected. As a sociological

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* This is no longer due, however, to the negative attitude toward writing as such which was discussed in chapter iii. That traditional inhibition has been largely removed—primarily, it seems, by the postwar requirement that all legal accusations and court proceedings be set down in writing.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

853 155 152 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended 853 foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's 155 *ṭuṭ abbāt*, or breast-152 father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbāt*. Used metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the 155 oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. 201 The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or [832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long 155 separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati-[431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout 155 Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the • 538 Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant 832 intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The boundaries of your lips are like the sugar cane; 155
No matter how much one sucks them, one is never satisfied. 538 • 832

And in one of the few lyric passages in the first novel ever written in Amharic, the author resorts to the imagery of kissing in describing the beauty of an army camp at sunset: [539]

> The plain on which they had encamped was vaster than the mind's eye could measure. Except for that hill on which he stood, there were no elevations or declivities; no roots to trip or confound the foot; not a stone to discomfit the eye. It looked like a calm sea that every breeze had spared. The boundaries of heaven and earth were united by lips of love; lip to lip they were joined like the parts of fitted basketry. It appeared as though it would hurt them to separate, that they had entered a vow not to part.[6] [539]

Talking for the sake of talking is another oral outlet of which the Amhara is generally fond. "In every country," remarked Arnauld d'Abbadie, "the plowman is miserly and sly; but the Ethiopian is, in addition, particularly loquacious."[8] The simple greeting of acquaintances evokes a barrage of ritualistic conversation, a phenomenon which stunned the Englishman Harris: 155 521

> Even two old crones, who are obviously tottering on the very brink of the grave, and who are afflicted with every pain and with every sorrow entailed by the fall of our first parents, never meet in the street without indulging in a string of good wishes which are reiterated so long as their breath will permit. "How are you? How do ye do? How have you passed your time? Are you well? Are you very well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well? Are you not well?"—are questions which serve as the prelude to a thousand other interrogatories; and at each response the Deity must be invoked as to the unadulterated happiness and perfect felicity that has been unremittingly experienced since the last meeting.[7] [596]

A number of other conventions provide further opportunities for this pleasure in talking. Anecdotes and gossip are not merely reported, but are expounded at length with the aid of colorful expressions and gestures. Riddle games are enjoyed by adults as well as young people. Men vie with one another at length in a semiformalized kind of playful boasting. In the church schools all reading is done aloud, a habit which persists among many students of secondary schools when they study outside of class. [524] [876]

A related pleasure in making sounds for their own sake appears in the Amhara's delight in repeating the words or nonsense syllables of his folk songs. On a more refined level, there is his evident pleasure in lulling over and savoring the lines of a choice couplet. We have here for a whole culture an instance of what Brill has ascribed to the poets: 191 155

> Poetry is a sensuous or mystic outlet through words, or, as it were, through a chewing and sucking of nice words and phrases. The poet plays with the

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Mary intervened, placing on the empty side for good deeds a goblet of water which Balaya Sab had once given to a sick beggar out of pity; and the Eater of Men was saved. In the pictorial representation of this legend, Balaya Sab is portrayed cutting off pieces of human flesh with a curved knife in the manner in which raw beef is attacked at the Amhara table. 155 266 773

Most Amhara know some sort of tale about a cannibal. The topic is familiar enough that they are able to invent new ones. One boy told me he made up the following story to explain the nature of cannibals to his younger brother: 155 266 538

> Once there was a cannibal. He lived among many people. He had no food in his house; he was poor. But even if he had not been poor, he just liked to eat the flesh of man. In his house was a big hole which he covered with a carpet. He would invite somebody into his house and tell him to sit down on the chair over the hole. When the person sat down and fell into the hole, he would climb down by a ladder and eat him. In this way he ate all the people in his village one by one—about a hundred people. When he had eaten all the people in his village he returned to live in the forest, because there was nobody left to eat.

The cannibal motif appears in more subtle form in the parlor game known as *gabatā*, in which the aim is to accumulate as many pebbles as possible by moving them around a board with six holes on each side. In *gabatā* the active acquisition of pebbles is called "eating" and the passive acquisition is "drinking." Similarly, those who play chess or checkers refer to the process of taking a man as "eating" him. It is notable, moreover, that the Amhara version of the old riddle about how to transport a certain number of incompatible objects across the river in one boat is posed in terms of three human beings and three cannibals. 155 266 524

Oral sadism is further manifest among the Amhara by the nature of their speech. The Amhara are not only loquacious but also tend, both in manner of delivery and in content of conversation, to be biting and intrusive. Backbiting, insulting, arguing, and litigating are among their more characteristic modes of self-expression. 155 521 191

Backbiting and insulting, and the fear of being the victim of such activities, are the focus of much attention in Amhara culture. Concern about the former is expressed in a number of Amharic proverbs: 155 521 578 [539]

> If the mouth lacks work, it will backbite a friend.
>
> If you praise a man once, you will be in trouble if you backbite him later.
>
> If a man is a backbiter, listen for my sake when he talks to you.

Straightforward insults erupt the polite surface of Amhara social relations only under unusually heated circumstances, though it is customary for social superiors to direct a certain amount of abusive banter at their inferiors as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful physical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argument also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fasting prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are expressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Traditional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well-known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 further limited by a number of canons. For example, saints must have no
532 shadows on their faces; "good" characters must be portrayed *en face*, "bad"
156 ones in profile; and honored subjects must be portrayed on the right.* Virtually all aspects of the subject matter—dress, features, actions, symbolism—are prescribed by rigid conventions. That this degree of conformity reflects a cultural attitude and not a want of inventiveness on the part of Amhara artists is shown by the discoveries of Marcel Griaule, who collected hundreds of drawings in Gojjam in the form of silhouettes and graffiti, drawings based on direct observation and exhibiting an "astonishing diversity and revealing . . . a very great liberty of expression." Yet, Griaule observed, "these drawings are scorned by the people, who pay scarcely any attention to them; and by the artists themselves, who regard them as a sort of pastime of no importance, or as an activity reserved primarily for apprentices."[29]

In painting, as in the performing arts, individuality was suppressed not only by the pressure to conform to given models but also by the anonymity of the artists involved. This is more striking in the case of painting which, particularly in the form of miniatures, produced some exceptional works. But painting was carried out for the most part as a devotional activity, and its practitioners were apparently content to remain unknown.

The Written Word and the Oral Tradition

*121 The written literature of Ethiopia provides as little scope for individuality
156 as does its painting. Like the painters, the authors of the Ethiopian manu-
538 scripts have for the most part remained anonymous. Their subject matter has been narrowly circumscribed by the force of tradition, and their genres have been just as narrowly conventionalized.

Ethiopian literature consists primarily of religious writings, in the first instance of free translations from Greek, Syriac, and Arabic texts. Where the writings are original they tend to be either expositions of traditional beliefs and rituals of the church, eulogies of saints, or expressions of pious fantasy on religious themes. The nature of this literature is to extol sacred objects, not to express individual personality. The *Investigations of Zar'a Yāqob*, a very personal and imaginative critique of prevailing orthodoxies dated in the seventeenth century and reminiscent of the French *philosophes*, is the exception that proves the rule; for this manuscript has proved to be a forgery, the work of a Franciscan missionary to Ethiopia in the early nineteenth century.[30]

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[175] * The seriousness with which such conventions seem to have been taken is shown by the episode of Brancaleone, a Venetian painter who was in Ethiopia during the reign of Ba'eda Māryām (1468–78), who is said to have provoked an uproar by painting a Madonna with the child on her left arm instead of the conventional right.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The effect of this literature has not been, as David Riesman suggests is true of the written word generally, an individualizing one. It did not serve to "help liberate the reader from his group and its emotions, and allow the contemplation of alternative responses and the trying on of new emotions."[31] It has served rather to buttress conformity, by rekindling identification with the sacred symbols of the society. Ethiopian religious literature does not invite introspection; it is a corpus to be venerated and solemnly rehearsed. When a devout Ethiopian reads his daily or weekly portion from some writing such as the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David) or the *Weddāssē Māryām* (*Praise of Mary*), he is said to be "repeating" the text—*Dāwit yedaggemāl*. Most of those who learn to read the words of these writings do not understand the Ge'ez in which they are composed. 121* 156 182 538

A similar function has been performed by the secular literature, which runs primarily in praise of royalty and thus has served to uphold the political status quo. The earliest Ethiopian writings are inscriptions of the Aksumite kings dating from the fourth century A.D. Here, in a style that is to persist through the ages, the royal deeds are recounted in meticulous detail and endowed with the highest morality.[32] Ge'ez chronicles were composed in this manner for most of the emperors after the thirteenth century. The earliest specimens of written Amharic consist of hymns in praise of the Emperor Amde Ṭseyon (1314–44). 121* 156 175 182 538

Two other written works put the capstone on this conservative structure. The *Kebra Nagast*, the Ethiopian national epic, has served chiefly to legitimate the royal line that came to power in the thirteenth century and to cement once and for all the union of monarchy and church. The *Fetha Nagast*, the traditional legal code based on various canon and civil laws compiled in medieval Egypt, has served not as a working code for the adjudication of court cases but as an embellishment of *de facto* decisions, imparting to the judge an increment of authority by virtue of his ritual of referring to them. 121* 156 182 538 671 177

Because of the relative sterility of Abyssinian written literature, art, dance, and music, many observers have concluded that Abyssinian culture provides no outlets for truly creative expression.[33] This judgment is not just. The Abyssinian genius freely discloses itself in the stories, verse, and proverbs that make up its very rich *oral* literature. Within this oral tradition, especially in its verse, a good deal of original expression and personalized commentary may be found. 121* 156 53 121* 156 538

Ethiopic verse comprises a wide variety of forms which differ according to subject and occasion. Classical *qenē*, Ge'ez verse in praise of some holy figure or political leader, is composed by *dabtarā* on certain religious or political holidays. More playful verses of praise are sung in Amharic by *dabtarā* or minstrels on festive occasions. In such verses the poet may in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 sinuate insults through the ambiguities of his compliments, as was illus-
• 538 trated above. *Shillalā,* declaimed to arouse male courage before battle, is
156 also heard at weddings and other festive occasions. Another type of ex-
[126] clamatory verse (*ho-berē*) is sung by the peasant at harvest time as he drives his cattle around the threshing floor. Verse of sorrow (*engurguro*) is intoned at time of bereavement or during moments of loneliness. Finally, in the conviviality of a drink-house enlivened by a minstrel, alone at work, or with a group of friends on various occasions, the Amhara finds that verse provides a medium for thoughts on almost any subject—people, places, animals, weather, love, work, and death. The following poem illustrates an important quality found in many of these verses, pessimism and irony, especially common in verses about love.

[539] Fish on the cliff, baboons in the sea;
The ass after honey, while hay draws the bee;
On a baking-pan of wax, butter to see;
Or a monk from Zegamel monastery
In the pagan land of Metcha to bury;
With an unsuited person in love to be;
Thus has it ended, my affair with thee.
Leave it, forget it, just let it rest—
A hapless ass at a hyena's breast.

[533] These various sorts of verse may be either sung or spoken. The auditory
[534] effect is often enhanced by the accompaniment of musical instruments. When serious *qenē* has been recited by its author in church, it is usually repeated by a chorus of *dabtarā* singing to the slow beat of drums and sistrums. The sad strains of *engurgo* are sometimes accompanied by the mellow ten-stringed lyre, while an instrumental background for livelier subjects may be provided by the Abyssinian banjo or one-stringed violin.

Throughout these varieties of verse forms, certain conventions are followed. Most important, the lines are supposed to rhyme; that is, end with the same consonant-plus-vowel. Inferior poets achieve this rhyme at the expense of the words they use. In addition, proper rhythm must be maintained; the lines must not "break." This means that the flow of the line must be smooth and that the metrical pattern in one line—based on the number of accents, not syllables[24]—should be paralleled by the others. A poet who breaks his lines is satirized by being dubbed a "lion."

While observing these rules—and, in the case of *qenē,* the much more complicated rules pertaining to stanza forms and poetic figures—the Amhara poet *must also be original.* In the production of verse, individuality is explicitly emphasized. Poets who use verses composed by others—this is primarily true of students of *qenē*—are insulted with the term *lēbā* ("thief"). Similarly, a poet should not repeat himself. If he repeats the same word

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in a piece of verse, he is derided as an "ant." Once he has composed a certain verse, he is supposed to discard it and compose something new the next time. 121* 156 538

The composition of original verse is by no means restricted to a class of professional poets. Every good Amhara is more or less adept at it. Extemporizing verse is a favorite activity at feasts, weddings, and in the aimless camaraderie of the drink-house. Sometimes a minstrel is on hand to begin the entertainment, but the usual pattern is for him to be fed verses extemporized by others present which he then embellishes with music. Even currently, with popular culture being manufactured and distributed out of Addis Ababa, urbanized Amhara place great value on the invention of new lyrics to suit the most popular tunes of the day.

Such verses customarily have not been written down. When unusually clever verses were invented, they were transmitted by word of mouth through the country and over generations. Or some individual would be noted for "owning" some couplet he composed or memorized, and people would turn to him whenever they wanted to hear it. Only in recent decades have some Ethiopians sought to preserve these verses in more durable manner by committing them to print.

Thus it is that, contrary to Riesman's correlation of the spoken word with traditionalistic functions and the written word with individualizing ones, and contrary to the common conception of the oral tradition as inherently rigid and unchanging,[35] oral literature provides the sole area in Amhara culture where conformity to existing works is shunned and the highest premium is placed on individuality.

Cultural Heroes

The last dimension of individualism to be treated here concerns the extent to which a society is inclined to single out individual personalities for special renown. We have seen that Amhara culture places little value on the moral worth of the individual as such, in that—with the limited exception of poetry—it does not encourage the development and expression of a distinctive and authentic self. And it might seem, from a superficial reading of Ethiopian history and culture, that the pre-eminent position of the emperor precluded anything like a general tendency to glorify outstanding individuals other than the sovereign. Yet our picture of Amhara culture cannot be complete without acknowledging the substantial place it has traditionally given to what may be called a "cult of the individual." For, with respect to at least three different qualities—saintliness, bravery, and cleverness—the Amhara have a marked tendency to idealize and remember outstanding individuals. 121* 156 181

The idolization of saintly individuals has been an important part of 121* 156 776

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 Amhara religious experience. The favorite written literature consists of
156 those genres which glorify individual saints for their special powers and
776 great deeds. The *gadel* depicts the heroic struggles of saints against tempta-
*121 tions and persecutions; the *tāmher* relates their miraculous feats; and the
156 *malḳa,* a verse form of some fifty five-line stanzas, consists of a rhapsodic
• 538 description of the physical features and moral qualities of some saintly sub-
776 ject. The various *qenē* stanza types, moreover, serve largely to glorify individuals through the exotic use of religious symbolism—especially the nine-line *mawaddas,* which means "praise."

*121 While these literary genres are accessible only to the learned few, the
156 multitude also adores individual saints. Each of the saints has his particular
776 following in the population, his popularity varying according to region and to the powers for which he is famed. This idolization has been directed
*121 not only to angels and legendary figures from the past, but also, to a lesser
156 extent, to contemporaneous religious virtuosi and outstanding masters of
554 the religious books.

Perhaps more prominent in Amhara life has been the glorification of brave
*121 men. The Abyssinian military ethic took the form of a cult of the hero. Per-
156 sonal bravery—not discipline, training, honor, or self-sacrificing loyalty—
703 was the paramount virtue in Abyssinian warfare. The *guabaz* warrior was
[554] rewarded by his chief, praised by the minstrel, and esteemed by the populace. His bravery was ranked according to the fearfulness of the enemy vanquished. Thus, in Menelik's day the fanciest headdress was given to a noble who killed one of the fierce Danakil, a less fancy headdress being awarded the killer of the tough Raya Galla. Such actions constituted the one area in which per-
[521] sonal boasting was permitted and, in fact, institutionalized in the genre known as *fukarā.*

We are indebted to Arnauld d'Abbadie for a firsthand account of the effect of this cult of the individual hero on the orientation of the Abyssinian warrior, in a passage so rare it is worth citing at length:

> The type of combat which [the Ethiopian] prefers over all others—because it gives him the most freedom to expand his personality—is that where, due to insufficiency of terrain or other circumstances, the chiefs can engage only a part of their forces. He loves to watch the skirmishers of the two armies spy out and accost one another while declaiming their martial themes. Joyously he throws off his toga to clad himself in some military ornament . . . and to mix himself in the widely spaced lines which follow one another and rise to the attack. He loves to comprehend the rationale of the manouvers of the two parties, to be able to judge the blows, to know under which hand the victims fall, to choose from among the enemy to avenge their death, to adapt his movements to the instincts which animate his companions, and to feel the earth tremble under the ch ges of cavalry which come as a squall

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to change suddenly the whole configuration of battle. He loves to hear, amidst the crackle of rifle-fire, the huzzahs, the shouts, the challenges, the injuries, the encouragements, the allocutions, the piercing voice of the troubadours, and the rhythms of the flutes alternating with the lugubrious wailing of the trumpets; to know, finally, that on the hills, behind their drummers who beat out the charge in place, the two rival chiefs and the two armies are following him with their eyes, and that he may at one moment or another, return to his lord and, hurling before him some trophy, tell him, at the end of his war chant: "There! This is what I know how to do!"[36] 121* 156 703

A cult of the individual obtains, in addition, with respect to the man with a genius for outsmarting others. Men who have beguiled their foes with particular cleverness, in litigation or in political intrigues, are scarcely less celebrated than religious virtuosi or heroic warriors. Anecdotes about great feats of shrewdness are the beloved stuff of Abyssinian folk history and are twice told around the fireplace.*[37] Some lords have enjoyed great reputations simply for being such successful and gifted scoundrels. 121* 156 554 [538]

Cleverness in words counts as much, if not more, than clever deeds. Here we confront once more the phenomenon of wax and gold, but appearing in this context as a sort of finesse in personal relations. It is a question here of individuals made memorable because of their memorable lines, their talent for swiftly and surely employing the ambiguities of Amharic to satirize, at the right moment, some personality, or social type, or aspect of the human condition. Military or political events are often remembered more for the witty verse composed by some personage on the occasion than for their historical significance. In the present century, Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē has been one of the most outstanding personalities of this sort, as was Alaqā Gabra Hānnā in the nineteenth century. [195]

INDIVIDUALISM AND MODERNITY

The Traditional Pattern

Our inquiry thus far has involved analysis of the various ways in which self-orientation is and is not manifest among the Amhara, in lieu of the more simplistic question of whether Amhara society is individualistic or not. Building on this analysis, we may now attempt a more integrated interpretation of traditional Amhara society. 121* 156

The predominant tendency in human relations among the Amhara is a disposition to seek, not unity based on affection, understanding, and/or responsi- 121* 156 181 571

* A recent study which analyzed 1,086 stories with identifiable themes, told or written by Ethiopian children in grades two through eight, revealed that "cleverness pays" was by far the most frequently recurring theme.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

113 ington, D.C., September 7, 1962; printed in the *Journal of the Ethiopian Students of North America*, IV, No. 1, 3–20).

10. H. Nakamura, *The Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples* (Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, 1960), p. 484.
11. On the concept of primordial sentiments cf. Edward Shils, "Primordial, Personal, Sacred, and Civil Ties," *British Journal of Sociology*, VIII (June, 1957), 130–45; and Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," *Old Societies and New States*, ed. C. Geertz (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 105–57.
12. G. Almond, "A Functional Approach to Comparative Politics," *The Politics of the Developing Areas*, ed. G. Almond, J. Coleman, and L. Pye (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), esp. pp. 36–38.
13. *Op. cit.*, pp. 17–21.
14. Richard Weaver, "Individuality and Modernity," *Essays on Individuality*, ed. Felix Morley (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), p. 77.

CHAPTER 2: *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

1. Stephen Wright, "Ethiopian Literature," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. More detailed descriptions of the literature of the period may be found in Enrico Cerulli, *Storia della letteratura etiopica* (Milan: Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1956), chaps. iii–vii; and Jean Doresse, *L'empire du Prêtre-Jean* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1957), II, chaps. xii, xiv.
2. Cf. Otto Jäger, *Aethiopische Miniaturen* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1957); and *Ethiopia: Illuminated Manuscripts* (Paris: UNESCO, 1961).
3. A revised edition of the English translation of Alvares' valuable manuscript has recently been published, and will be the text referred to in later references: *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. W. B. Huntingford (2 vols.; Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1961).
4. Job Ludolphus, *A New History of Ethiopia*, trans. J. P. Gent (2d ed.; London, 1684), p. 189.
5. Cf. Richard Pankhurst, *An Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia* (London: Lalibela House, 1961), p. 406.
6. Carlo Conti-Rossini, ed. and trans., "Iyāsu I, Re d'Etiopia e martire," *Rivista degli studi orientali*, XX, 107.
7. [538] This disparaging image of Dāwit III has been perpetuated in the contemporary verse drama, *Selāsāwi Dāwit*, by the Shoan author Makonnen Endālkātchaw.
8. Sir Wallis Budge, *A History of Ethiopia* (2 vols.; London: Methuen and Co., 1928), II, 453.
9. This translation was made from the Italian translation in Cerulli, *op. cit.*, pp. 231–32.
10. Ababa Ayçhēh, *Bileçho* (Addis Ababa: Tensā'ē Za-Gubā'ē Press, 1948 E.C.).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

A in the minds of most Amhara:

E 56 1. The Coptic Abyssinian, on which top level the Amharic-speaker and the Tigrina-speaker are equal except for the added Amhara prestige due to the "Solomonic Dynasty". Both consider themselves "attentām" (of noble bones). Both consider themselves superior to all other groups, notably the "conquered nations", infidels, "laboring classes" and "lower races". Both consider themselves the descendants of the Hadhrami invaders of the late pre-Christian era.

As conquerors, the Amhara believe in their superior toughness. The aphorism says:

A [53] "The aged Amhara is (powerful) like bärbärē
the aged Galla is (soft) like butter".

A [101] The word Amhara is itself derived from "amari", meaning one who is pleasing, agreeable, beautiful and gracious.

On the other hand, the services rendered by Galla cavalry to Menelik II (e.g. in his victory over the Italians at Aduwa) are well known and admitted. In reward, many of the Galla feudal nobles were permitted to retain in fief 1/4 of their land and its serfs, so that a Galla "Balbat" (landowner) class has arisen and prospered. They are in ostentatious presence at all national festivals in Addis Ababa, notably the annual coronation festival of Haile Selassie, when their young men are seen and heard, jumping with brandished spears or sticks, shouting the loyalty of the "Oromo" to "Addis Ababa" (symbolic for Menelik and Haile Selassie). Among the modern-educated Amhara, and even among many uneducated Amhara of Shoa province, intermarriage with Galla Balbat families is not rare, nowadays, especially if the Galla partner is wealthier than the Amhara, and if the Galla is the bride. This is still resis-

181 bandry, to achieving maximum benefits with a minimum of original invention. Similarly, in non-material culture, a minimum of effort has gone into the elaboration, amendment or improvement of institutions of social organization, but a great deal of ingenuity has gone into spiritual elaborations such as the Zar-cult.

Such a disposition of human energy seems strange and out of balance particularly to the Western mind. How can it be explained?

Perhaps the major clue is contained in the Amhara proverb:

[539] "From cleverness of hand, (you get) serfdom;
from cleverness of mouth (you become) boss."

461 554 This has long been a basic Amhara attitude, even a world view for them. The Amhara has seen much justification for associating skill of hand with slavery and near-slave status, while associating mental and spiritual skills with leadership: as military officer, judge, bishop, or zar-doctor.

If he becomes impoverished, an Amhara will go to a district where he is not known (in order not to shame his family) to work at some unskilled labor. He is then less despised than if he were to learn a skilled manual trade. For while the first can be excused as a temporary mishap, or smiled off as a lark, the latter, by his painstaking application to a manual skill, indicates a permanent association with the psychological and social patterns in the "slave category". Moreover, he may, in his apprenticeship, become associated not only with the occupation and socially lower status of his teacher, but, since the latter is

[352] accumulate there when poured over the limp sheets of bread.

251 (7) Food staples must be stored out of reach of domestic animals, on horizontal slats fastened between the horizontal beam and walls. On these slats lie flat cakes of "abshelo" (pre-fermented and baked hops), bunches of sorghum, husks of maize, etc.

352 To provide additional privacy, togas can be hung across. This was done in the past particularly at dinner [754] time, to protect the eaters from the "evil eye" in the [609] presence of non-kinsmen, and is still done in some remote areas, unless the peasant prefers to postpone his meal until the stranger has gone away, so as not to offend him.

342 The tuqul is regarded as a good, sound habitation by the Amhara. It is compared to the round tent of the king and duke ("ras") which not so long ago was the center of activities (if not the actual capital) of the province and country. On the other hand, reactangular or square huts, [554] "säqäla", are regarded as carrying low prestige, little more than temporary lean-to's of hunters. The proverb indicates this low regard of a säqäla:

[539]

"Of children, the worst is the bastard;
of foods, the hardest is beans;
of clothing, the poorest is nätäla (half-toga);
of housing, the poorest is säqäla."

Response: "(but) from enemy, the bastard son will defend you;
toward better days the bean will let you survive;
in (warm) daytime, the nätäla will clothe you;
till a better is built, the säqäla will shelter you".

There are special tuquls of varying degrees of sturdiness:

224 Before
535 going on an elephant hunt, for example, he performed the "boasting dance", "fukkara", largely with his shoulders and upper arms, predicting his feats; and his retainers honored him by declaring their confidence in his prowess, jumping up and down in the "hota" dance, chanting repeatedly:

[539] "Elephant-killer, (to) your home-
elephant-killer, take him home".
(Hunter:) Elephant-killer (I am), to home (I'll take him)."
(Retainers:)" When it (the elephant) will be moving,
he will kill it!"

224 The elephant-killer, considered braver than the lion-
554 killer, was called "addo" and given a special decoration to wear on forehead and upper arm by the king or feudal lord. A warrior who had killed a human enemy was called "geday" (lit. killer) and held prestige equal to the elephant-killer. Now that rifles are used in place of spears, such heroes have become more common and decorations among the Amhara have fallen into disuse.

224 Besides the big-game, edible jungle animals mentioned
825 before under "fauna", there are numerous wild game, mainly gazelles and partridges, hunted near human habitations to increase the food supply and for occasional sport:

Ethiopian duiker - "midaqwa", very common near habitations on the woyna dega, an antelope the size of a small goat, often approaching hamlets at dusk. It is considered the "cattle" of the zar spirits, and sacrifice to them is thus called "midaqwa".

[782]

Bushbuck - "demula", similar but medium-sized ante-

243 of "madiga".

[311] The term "tyëff" also has a projection. Good, fertile, fat land is still classified as "lämm tyëff", in distinction to "tyëff" land, meaning average usable land for cereals.

Mashella is used as a concept in the following proverb:

[539] "(Both) the seed of mashella
and the stalk, are good"

This is to say that if the parent had good qualities, the son will be a "chip off the old block."

Numerous distinctions are made in the types and qualities of each of the cereals. Among tyëff the farmer distinguishes "bunnen" which grows and matures rapidly even in Mäskäräm immediately on the end of the rainy season. In barley, the "aja" is disliked because of its coarseness, but its green fields, irrigated, stand out among the sun-yellowed stubble in the dry season and provide a pleasant sight, as well as year-round crops. "Ferey gebs" is a fine choice barley, and "sänär qolo" (a long-eared variety) is roasted as a daily condiment.

248 Cotton, called "tet", is grown in lowland areas. To separate the husks, a roller of scrap iron is preferred; it is worked on a rock. When rain has occurred during the maturing of cotton, its quality is lowered. The typical Amhara prefers to buy his raw cotton on the market and have his wife or female servant clean, card and spin it. Then he calls in the weaver or takes the spun cotton to him, to make a toga.

241
262 are no ready markets.

Sesame seed (Sesamum indicum) called "selit", is rather rare, and, as the name indicates, not originally native to Abyssinia. The Amhara, finding it difficult to grow, consider it an expensive and delicious delicacy, and consume the oil only as a rare treat.

Sunflower seed (Heliantus annuus), called "suf" is not a field crop, only occasionally planted, often semi-wild.

244 Vegetables are considered garden crops, and are planted near the hamlet on the hillside, while field crops are in the valley and river flood plains. Apart from kitchen gardens, which are considered necessities because of the spices that are consumed daily, other vegetables, particularly cabbage (gomän) are despised as poor food (food of p poor people or in times of famine). Consequently the Amhara raises few vegetables and small quantities.

Cabbage (gomän), and a white variety, "aydärgë", resistant to climatic change.

[252] Chick-Peas, "shembera" (Cicer arietum), the most common, generally eaten roasted, but also boiled in the lenten season, and baked into bread to stretch tyeff in case of crop failure. Shembera is the proverbial staple, even in war and famine, never expected to fail. The proverb says:

244
539 "She who has not born, will never carry her load;

244
[539]

(but a fallow) shembera (field) will bear
(next year)".

meaning that a barren woman will never carry a child in womb, but a shembera field will bear again and again. The Amhara realizes that this legume improves the soil. It will grow in poor soil, resist drought. The harvest is late, usually February.

Peas, called "ätär" are also grown in quantity, for similar reasons: they grow well in poor soil, and are especially important in lent.

"meser" The collective term for lentils.

Broad bean, "bagella" also grows in poor and eroded soil, and is much planted. It is then roasted, or boiled, or mixed in curry (wot).

[252]

Onions and garlic, the latter called "white onion" are grown in kitchen gardens as ingredients of wot.

Grey bean called "adängwarä", planted at beginning of heavy rains as fenced-in garden crop, eaten raw, considered semi-wild, and not prestige food.

Gourds, "qel", e.g. "dubba", pumpkin-type (Cucurbita maxima), are grown inside hamlets and boiled and cut into strips in wot (curry-type stew). Some gourds are planted in dug holes, others grow on vines to the height of roofs, on which they rest for support.

Roots, similar to potatoes, called "dennech" are grown in Shoa, but are of minor importance

437 weavers, potters, etc. They, particularly tanners, may bring finished products to market but only for "show", claiming these items are ordered and merely waiting for the customer to come and fetch.

Even semi-specialists of light-weight products such as umbrella makers and weavers of baskets and masob, table follow this practice or bring only as much as they feel sure will sell, even at the risk of having to turn away customers. For the ultimate shame would be to have to carry unsold goods back home. This is avoided by selling very cheaply just when the market closes at dusk. The proverb advises the buyer, therefore, as follows:

[539]

"To church (go) early,
to market (go) late."

To avoid being outwitted, the Amhara seller usually begins the transaction by asking the buyer to suggest a price he is willing to pay. If the amount is within reason, and if the purchaser is on the same economic level, they will agree on the spot, without haggling. Doubts and dickering occur only when the customer is a stranger or a foreigner, since then the seller has to guess how high he can go, and how much he must charge to avoid being mocked. Such a price increase is called "waga asarrara". If there is no immediate agreement, the Amhara tries to disconcert his customer, or supplier, by indirect insults such as:

"I'm not expecting a hyena as my guest" ("yäjeb engeda yällaben"), meaning, the animal you are trying to sell me is so lean that it is close to death and soon will be food for the hyena.

695 The traditional oath, "May the ruler die" (If I lie), is still in full use. This oath is called "semanya". As mentioned above, perjury was once a very serious offense, even a capital one, later was penalized by substitution of "blood money", i.e. 80 Thalers fine. Until recently, provincial farmers still invoked the name of the head of their old provincial dynasty in this oath, the "ras", or the name of the long-dead Menelik II. Since 1941, however, the name of the present emperor is [643] universally used, "Haile Selassie yemut". It is in a very real sense a form of acknowledgement of the supreme power of the ruler, whose supreme power over and above the feudal system is regarded, traditionally, as a protection from chaos, lawlessness and uprisings that destroy and cause suffering. The proverb says:

[539] "When the emperor dies,
with whom will there be judging?".

The oath "Haile Selassie yemut" is used also to arrest lawbreakers, much as English police might arrest "in the name of the king".

672 Another old legal tradition still in full force is that of the "wäs", the personal guarantor. To obtain a loan or a job, the applicant must always present at least one reputable guarantor, who is then personally responsible for making up any default or damage or misbehavior, and who can even be jailed in case the culprit escapes. He acts as personal bondsman for a defendant, to avoid his being held for trial in jail. This "wäs"

695 661 er court, if he felt he had the means. In this case the judge might sometimes not appropriate the wager for fear of having to surrender it again later.

●539 691 There are numerous proverbs characterizing roles in litigation, and counseling behavior and decisions to be made in certain situations:

"The young lawyer,
in the beginning he acclaims to heaven;
later on, he will look to the ground"
(Moral: always choose an old, experienced lawyer, with many reserve tricks up his sleeve).

"Don't seize the tail of the leopard;
but if you did, don't let go."
(Meaning: Don't go to court against a good talker, or "great man", or wealthy adversary; but once started, fight as hard as hard as you can, or else he will ruin you).

"Even if you know how,
against the judge do not debate".
"Judge, why your partiality?
the loser must pay you (anyway)".

"One witness need not make you tremble,
(just as) a one-eyed (person) cannot dance well."

[17] The pattern of the wager resembles, in part, that of the "khabdh" of Arab bedouin.[76]

76. Ibid.

793 [66] Parish priests, (unlike mämhär scholars) are also not bashful about demanding their due (produce tithe, sheep, honey, even cash) from their tenants of church land. Sardonic peasant humor expresses this in the proverb:

[539] "The bashful priest,
the blind donkey,
(are one)" . (i.e. both would be helpless and starve to death).

532 346 Among artisans who do specialist work for the church is the artist of church paintings, usually highly colorful and realistic scenes from the suffering of the saints, in morbid and gory detail; the beauties of heaven and the trinity; the horrors of hell ruled by a chained, soul-munching Satan; etc. These religious and semi-religious story illustrations and legends are painted on canvas and then attached to the inside of church walls.

874 Church students are usually boys 10 years or over (never girls), who at first learn the Geez-Amharic alphabet, reading Geez without translating, beginning with the Epistle of the Apostle John. They are taught by rote, memorizing by chanting the portions out loud. There is very little writing in the early grades, and experimentation is traditionally discouraged, for fear that the boys might use their new-won learning to write magic amulets. Before examinations, church students stimulate 874 276 their mental processes by eating the leaf of a Datura weed resembling Jimson weed called "astänäger" (lit. to stimulate talk) which is also used by däbtära in exor-

533 same name. "Sätat", the midnight chant, has a special
796 mode. "Dawit", the Psalms of David, are chanted in their characteristic mode, as is the "Addis Kidan" (New Testament).

On other occasions, not only does the musical composer have the opportunity to improvise, but the lyrical poetry, "qeñe", can be varied. In rural districts, priests who can only recite Geez but not compose in it, because they don't understand it, even compose "qeñe" in Amharic. For example:

[539] "How are you, earth? How are you, world?
Even though I love you (my home soil), I wish not to come.
Even if I hated you--how shall I stay away?"

This poem, chanted as part of a church service, is not strictly liturgical, varies from district to district, and can express a wide variety of philosophical emotions, including the weltschmerz motive illustrated here. The peasants appreciate this unofficial, Amharic addition to Geez liturgy, and often mutter under their breath "Aiyye! what good words!".

(f) Heretical Movements.

795 Like any old church, the Abyssinian Coptic church has had heretical movements within it, but none of them have ever been able to split the church into sharply divided sects. Instead, heretical sects seem to follow

796 selling plowpoints for the plowing that will soon begin when the light rains have softened the ground.

[262] On this Thursday, the pious begin a 3-day fast, taking only dry peas and water after the noon hour. Good Friday, called "seqlät", is on the 15th of Miyazya. Chil-
796 857 dren, too young to fast, are given special privileges of impertinence that day. (For are not all rules suspended now that the Savior himself is dying?). From sunrise on, boys and girls knock at doors of huts and houses, chanting:

[539] "Musha-musho, (nonsense rhyme, meaning lamentation, funeral chant)
we come for your crucifixion (Oh Christ);
Fill (our hands) with flour (ye women),
we are many as fleas".
Musho-musha,
May He (God) give ye fat cattle,
children in your womb;
give us gifts!"

They are given freshly-baked bread being prepared for the Easter feast, but they keep on demanding, making the most of this rare freedom, insulting and mocking the stingy hosts. They may carry an effigy corpse of the latter, as if to his funeral, weeping and lamenting his "lekso" (funeral eulogy). Some boys dress as priests, the girls imitating hysterical women relatives, until they bury him with full ceremonials on the market place, to the great amusement of the adult audience.

796 Adults on this Friday rise early for morning wor-

796 the youngest are lifted to see the parade. Boys and
[857] girls age 7 to 15 go from hut to hut starting in the early morning, chanting "Buhe, Buhe", "hoyya, hoyyo, ho", and verses:

[539] "All shout 'Buhe!, children all!
Give us what (you have) prepared; Do not change (your mind)! "

"When the rooster has crowed, night is gone;
After Buhe, the winter(rainy season) is gone".

796 Long whips, mostly of finely braided fibre, of
526 tree bark or "tucha" grass, are made before Buhe, and
[411] young men practice with them until they can hit even small targets easily. On Buhe afternoon, two groups of contestants face each other, often across a swollen brook, and line up so that each individual faces an opponent of equal skill and strength. They come armed with the whips, and begin to warm up by hurling insults at each other, addressing each other in the female gender. Soon the game of aiming at the face and ducking the adversary's whip begins. The whip has a short wooden handle, but the strap may be as long as 15 feet. Sometimes this opportunity is taken to work out grudge fights. For, traditionally, any wounds incurred, even the loss of an eye, cannot be taken to court or cause a feud, as the result of this ritual battle. No other weapons may be used. The losers flee, are pursued to their huts, and the victors are entitled to all the

796 food of the feast prepared by the losing side.
526 In the evening "fires of joy" are lit, where the rain-drenched, weary and sore contestants and others can dry out, drink barley beer, and are supposed to forget and forgive the hostilities. Some may still boast of individual feats of heroism, in Amhara warrior style; others will sulk. But generally the day ends in harmony, after the excitement which itself was a welcome break in the monotonous hibernation of the rainy season.

796 The end of the annual cycle coincides with the end of the rainy season. The last 5 days (in leap years 6 days) are added after the end of the last month, and are called "Pagumēn" or "Qwagmē". On the 3rd day the [776] annual festival of St. Raphael, called "qeddus Rufaēl", the water saint, takes place. The rain, which still falls [821] heavily that day, is considered "tebel" (holy water) and to have the power to dull the poison of snakes so [787] that their bites will not be fatal. Much rain during Pagumēn is taken as an omen that the crops will be good.

796 This day is final examination day for the boys 874 who have attended church school long enough to be promoted to "deacon". They are examined in correct chanting of liturgy and prayers. To be mentally wide awake they often go to the dabbara beforehand, and, for a small gift, obtain the stimulating herb "esa fars" (lit. Persian wood) or drink boiled "astänagär" (lit. the plant that makes to talk), which also helps to overcome stage-fright.

796 The younger children go from hut to hut, chanting:
857 "In the name of Rufael,
539

796 857 [539] from the bin of peas
fill me up."

Thereupon the householder gives them a handful of shembera peas, which they roast to "qolo", and this symbol, too, is considered to invite a good crop.

796 805 The 5th or last day of Pagumēn is the annual feast day of St. John. The "tabot" from his church is carried to water very early in the morning, and the men bathe in the river. The old year is symbolically buried, in some regions, by ceremonial burial of the book "Lefafa Ṭsedeq" (Scroll of Righteousness) which resembles in part the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. The day is traditionally also the end of the fiscal budget year, on which the nagadras, the appointee over commerce, had to pay the feudal tribute to his lord (at least a large jar of beer and 20 enjara breads) in addition to squaring his accounts. [651]

That evening torches are lit, for this is the beginning of a new year.

c) The Religious Life Cycle of the Lay Individual.

852 Baptism usually occurs after 40 days for boys, still later for girl babies, sometimes as long as 80 days. This practice is based on Old Testament patterns, and more directly, on the period of 40 days that the Virgin Mary herself had to segregate herself from the Temple after the birth of Jesus. (The Falasha Jews of Abyssinia is concerned less that a baby might die

7. Family and Kinship in Social Organization.

602 The emphasis on the extended family and kin relations among the Amhara can hardly be exagerated. In all problems of life the Amhara first turns to family and kin. While the partilineal-patrilocal extended family is considered of first importance, consanguinal kinfolk on themother's side rank only slightly less in obligation and duties owed by the individual, and in benefits for which he can appeal. In contrast, affinal relationships are regarded as considerably less important [428] in obligations and benefits,. This attitude is reinforced by the traditional law which emphasized inheritance in consanguineal relationships, even distant ones, over [586] closer affinal relatives; and by the relatively easy divorce from the common "semanya" marriage.

602 539 Proverbs emphasizing various aspects of kin relations abound and are constantly cited as advice in problems, and in "socializing " and "enculturating" the young:

"The liar to win over,
to his brother and sister appeal",

(i.e., do not appeal to the judge, whom the liar may fool; but to his siblings, whom he cannot fool).

"Quarrels within the kinfolk,
(are like) insects on cabbage",

(i.e. they do not strike at the root, are not really destructive).

"Relatives and medicine,
in days of trouble seek them."

602
539

"When kinfolk aid each other,
no trouble can sever them".

"The needle does not see her own hole
yet it serves her so well",

(said of a man, who, as is common, is generous to his brothers and sisters, yet stingy to his wife and even children).

"When the nose is hit,
the eye begins to weep",

(i.e when one relative is hurt, the others suffer with him).

602 Kin relations give the individual his greatest source of security, psychological and economic, to the Amhara mind, and protect him from the world outside. [574] Therefore, regular and frequent visiting of kinfolk is emphasized; it is one of the most frequent causes of absentiism of Amhara employees. Events of the life cycle (marriages, memorial feasts, etc.) require such visiting. The end of the rainy season is another stimulus. No other association seriously challenges the predominance of kin relations in Amhara society.

A. The Extended Family and Kinship Terms.

596 The extended patrilocal, patrilineal family usually inhabits its own hamlet, farms its own land, allocating it to its biological-nuclear families. Patriarchal elders form an informal council that can be convened in any case of need. This extended family is most typically found among owners of "rest" land

608 be the "mother's" barrenness, or a man's wish to be
597 taken care of in his old age, or both. Obversely, an adolescent orphan may himself take the initiative in selecting a prospective breast-parent, attaching himself to him, ingratiating himself with gifts of honey, etc. After adoption, the "breast-child" is literally considered like a blood relative, and may not marry his new "sibling" -by-adoption.

This prohibition does not apply to the "bread-parent" relation. A bread-father ("anjara abbat"), and bread-mother ("enjara ennat") are considered not truly "artificial kinship" of permanence. It is a step-parent relationship, arising out of divorce and remarriage of parents, or a man's last will asking a close friend to take care of his children, in war or famine, or sickness. Youngsters do not often take the initiative to establish this relationship, for it does not usually provide the security of the breast-parenthood. The proverb says:

[539] "Bread-mother, what will move you?
(you are tough) like a gut!".

608 Another, mild, form of artificial kinship is established to give security and guarantee against ill-treatment to the bride, in the persons of the "mizē", two kinsmen of the groom who take an oath to regard and protect her like a sister in her new residential hamlet.

In the broadest sense, kinfolk also includes the retainer, usually a landless peasant, who has pla-

608 ced himself under the protection of a landowning kin group, and injuries inflicted on him thereupon can lead to a blood feud as much as if he were a consanguinal relative.

All these attempts to establish artificial kinship are motivated by the attitude that kinship, even at geographical distance, is greater security than close relations with neighbors even of the same district. The proverb says:

[539] "Your (home) country, where is it?
(It is) Mary's water. (i.e. the womb).
You are my kinfolk!"

8. Attitudes based on Social Stratification

56 Social stratification among the Amhara, as has been shown, is based on land tenure and feudal relations between nobles and peasants; on the temporal as well as spiritual power of the Coptic Abyssinian church; on the ethnic division of skilled labor; on the conquest of border areas and the past subjugation of other ethnic and racial groups; to a lesser degree on age and sex.

565 184 Analysis of the human relations and attitudes arising out of this social stratification can be expressed in terms of class; sometimes approaching caste, because very little social mobility has been "open" to ethnic specialists in skilled labor and to

565 ("chäwa") of Amhara ancestry ("attentam"); and the "gabbar" sharecropper on feudal land, who is regarded as of doubtful ancestry (part-slave, or part-Galla ethnic), who is referred to as "rustic" ("balagär). While the former, usually descended from warriors who were given land many generations age, considers himself inferior only to nobility and higher church officials, the latter occupies the broad bottom base of the Amhara social pyramid. The proverb says of the rustic "gabbar":

[539] "He who honors a gabbar
will be despised by him ".

In fact there are not many who might honor a gabbar, except for some ethnic laborers and ex-slaves, both of whom occupy somewhat of an outcast position.

c) The Ethnic Classes

563 463 565 The ethnic skilled-labor class does not usually consider itself inferior to the gabbar class. This is especially true if the particular ethnic group has a non-material culture or subculture of its own, notably the Falashas who observe Mosaic Judaism.

The factor of fear of a skilled occupation, the practitioners of which are called "täbib" (lit. "knowing one ", i.e to whom secrets are revealed), enters into the class stratification. It attaches an aura of untouchability to certain occupational classes, especially if reinforced by ethnic or religious difference.

563 326 754 This combination of factors applies to the smithcraft, the "kayla", who are suspected of witchcraft, of being

557 household both in rural areas or towns, also to do
565 plowing for the freehold farmer and help in the harvest. Servants are usually permanently employed, and therefore do not usually leave even if the employer is behind in his monthly wage payments. Salary and food are received with a bow and cupped hands. The servant addresses the master with the extra polite "gētoch" (lit. masters, i.e. plural), walks in front of the master's mule to make way, slightly behind him when both are on foot, and never lets his master carry anything.

Long interpersonal relations usually improve the position of the servant to master, and it is not in the servant's interest to change jobs, or to go to another area where he is unknown, A landless "gabbar" may try to attach himself to a well-to-do household as "retainer ("zēga"), without wages, doing a servant's work in the hope of occasional, seasonal gifts, a share of the produce, or, in town, a share in trade. For, a servant or retainer who is Amhara "attentam" and Coptic Christian becomes like a member of the extended family. The proverb says:

[539] "When (women) grind (grain) together,
there is no mistress".

556 Economic wealth enables each of these social
565 classes to achieve some upward social mobility, within limits. But there are not many opportunities to accu-
[441] mulate much wealth. Traders can raise their status
294 in towns, despite doubtful ancestry. The same is true
565 of tailors, a very recent occupation in town, where foot-operated Singer sewing machines have enabled men

294 to set up shops along the main street leading to the
565 market, or at the market itself, manufacturing khaki shorts and jackets. But this is still considered shameful manual labor by the Amhara, so that he will pursue it only in another province where it does not shame his kinfolk.

556 A rich man, whose low ancestry may be whispered behind his back, is nevertheless usually treated with honor by Amhara commoners. The proverb says:

[539] "He who falls in a shallow place"
hurt will not come to him", (i.e. a rich man, even if he falls drunk in a gutter, will not be molested by ruffians, who will instead take him to his house, expecting a reward).

[539] "The water of (the rainy month) Mähasse is good,
yet no one will drink it;
the word of the poor man may be fruitful,
but no one will listen to him" (i.e.he is not appreciated, no matter how wise).

B. Age Stratification.

561 Age stratification among the Amhara ranks in emphasis between class stratification and sex stratification.

561 The social relation of old toward the young is
882 often likened by the Amhara to that of master to servant. Indeed, a young man between puberty and marriage is addressed as "ashkär", (lit. servant). A young girl of the same age is addressed and even referred to as "leïä wäïïd"(lit. servant maid, handmaiden).

561 The functions of the young literally follow these
882 terms. Even boys attending church school do pasturing of the flock before and after their lessons, and school is recessed during plowing and harvesting seasons. Elder brothers may and do discipline their juniors, despite the superficial "joking relationship" between siblings of the same sex. As "ashkär", the young bachelor is constantly at the beck and call of his father and other elders of the extended family. At feasts, the father may show affectionate approval by feeding his son hand-to-mouth, the "gursha", also given to servants and other social inferiors.

The proverb admonishes the young man to respect age, and family patriarchs watch jealously a personal friendship developing between any young man with another outside the family:

[539] "More than a trusted companion, who is unlearned, the old teacher is better".

561 Age stratification outranks sex stratification even in matters of religion. An old woman is sometimes permitted to enter the church building, especially if she
[565] has taken vows as a nun and wears the "qob". Though the church would like to promote it, social attitudes criticize as ostentatious a young couple of undistinguished, commoner ancestry, who marry by "qurban" (eucharistic marriage) and wear the bright metal crown("aklil"). But a middle-aged couple, long married by "semanya", may take this honorable step without being criticized.

562 "The killer? (It was) your husband;
602 The victim? (It was) your brother.
[539] Great is your pain,
never will it leave your house"
(said to a woman who promoted her husband's interests, e.g. in competition with the feudal lord, over that of her brother).

562 Psychological inferiority is ascribed to all women, by Amhara men, regardless of social rank. Her weakness is regarded as biological, intellectual and moral. It is regarded as proverbial:

[98] "Vulgar Language" - "yäsyēt qwanqwa" (lit. woman's language)

"Polite Language" - "yäwänd qwanqwa" (lit. man's language); modest, correct, pure, elegant language. Also called "yäwond amarena" (lit. man's Amharic).

[195] "syeto" - insult to a talkative man. (lit. womanish
"syētē" - (lit. female) - said of timber or soil that is feeble, soft, of little resistance.

[539] "Woman and donkey
(must be trained) with a stick."

"Even if a woman has knowledge,
(only a) man knows how to hold on to it."

1. The Beginning of Life.

842 A. The Desire for Children: adoption.

Children are greatly desired by the Amhara, and a childless home is regarded as under a heavenly curse. Children are regarded as continuing the "byet", the residential extended family; as a source of riches from childhood on when they begin economic tasks; as a source of comfort and security in old age; as defenders in feuds and wars; even after the death of parents, children help them into heaven by means of "täzkar".

[588] When a woman is barren, and amulets have proven no cure for her, she may give her husband a concubine, "gärad" (lit. servant maid), so that he will not feel deprived of fatherhood and begin

597 to hate her. Or she may adopt a child, preferably an orphan of kinfolk or a well-known family, by taking the child to the confessor-priest and swearing the oath of ecclesiastical adoption, whereupon the child becomes "yäqal kidan lej" (lit. contract-child). This may include the ceremony of "breast-mother", "yätut ennat", previously described. Less fortunate is the foster child, not formally adopted, who lives with the foster parents, guards the crops and herds the cows, but is more completely dependent on the good will of the "bread mother", "enjära ennat".

593 Fathers, whether natural or adopted, expect complete obedience from their children, particularly after they have arrived at the "age of reason". Fathers feel defensively obliged to maintain their authority; as the proverbs say of a father addressing the

593 son:

539 "Sheep! If I do not eat you, you would devour me", said the hyena". (meaning: perhaps you'd

593
[539]

like to order me about?).

"He who talks before his father does,

his mouth will become like that of a leper".

Older brothers may discipline younger siblings, but there is less emphasis on the privileges of the first-born than in Arab countries. The Amhara is aware that younger brothers may often become more honored, richer and wiser later in life:

[539]

"Formerly, he (the older) pulled his (the younger's) ear, later on, the horn of the other (the younger) became bigger".

586 In case of divorce, which is frequent, children not staying with one of the parents are quickly taken by kinfolk. Thus, children are often raised by their grandparents, paternal or maternal, who often are young enough to have small children of their own. It is not even rare to see children of a divorcee by her first marriage may be raised by the family of her second husband even after she has divorced and left him also. This is more likely to happen in a town, where the consanguinal kin ties are weakened due to absence of the factor of kin residence, than in the residential kin hamlet. (Foreign observers have paraphrased an old English saying and adapted it to this situation in Abyssinia:

B. Pregnancy, Birth, Circumcision.

842
843

According to popular observation, 25% of all women, especially in the towns, are barren, and another 25% have frequent miscarriages. There are many precautions taken against these mishaps. A pregnant woman may wear extra cowrie shells, "gagol"; in addition to amulets written against the evil spirit "tela" (lit. shadow, an envious female spirit) which brings miscarriages, kills babies at

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304 852 Although Amhara often deny the religious aspect of their circumcision, it is recalled by the more learned that Jesus Christ was circumcized on the 6th day of the month Ṭer. Also, the confessor is invited to circumcisions, and blesses the baby, sprinkles the hut with blessed water, waves the cross about to exorcise lingering demons who have waited for the kill like vultures. He blesses the entire family; May God rear up the baby for you, that he be your support in old age, and carry you to your burial". He is rewarded with a small feast and as much barley beer as he can drink.

In some regions of Begemdir province girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed without ceremony by the midwife, without any religious connotation. Usually the operation is a simple cut, a "clitorotomy". The purpose is to prepare the girl baby for future marital happiness by reducing the egotistical part of her sensuality. It is believed that Amhara women of the province [831] of Gojjam, where clitorectomy is not practiced, are very difficult to satisfy sexually, that they are more concerned with their own sexual gratification than with that of their husbands', and even become unfaithful because of this. At least this is the belief of Amhara of Begemdir province. The term "wäshäla" is also used for an "uncircumcised" woman.

845 It is considered a great calamity when twins are born. They are referred to as "ämänta" (from "amämänta", undecided, not knowing which to accept). Everyone wonders "who will feed and carry the twin"? The proverb says: 845 539

"The mother of twins,

845 (because of what she carries) on her
[539] back, she dies."

It would indeed be difficult for her to suckle two babies for two years, and to carry them on her back while fetching water and deadwood and doing all her other chores. Very likely, the weaker of twins is neglected, which greatly increases the higher natural mortality of twins. The observable fact is that one never seems to encounter adult Amhara twins.

C. Naming the Baby.

553 Since Amhara fathers pay little attention to details concerning the unweaned baby, the task of naming the baby, giving it the "world name", usually falls to the mother. She does not usually prepare a name during pregnancy. Instead, she awaits the momentuous event of birth, then decides on a name based on her predominant emotion at that time, or on a significant event occurring at the same time, or on the special wish she has for the personality or the future of her baby. All classes follow this practice, but among nobles there is an additional pattern of naming the baby after a deceased ancestor, particularly in the direct patrilineal line.

55 Common "world names" given by mothers include:

Boys

"Taamrat" - (lit. miracle), e.g. if the mother barely survived the parturition, or some other miraculous deliverance took place.

"Mälläsä"- (lit. he returned), e.g. if the baby's father had been away, and the mother was overjoyed to see him return just at the time the baby was born.

855 Neglect of duty is therefore punished, and a father may fly into a sudden rage, beat the child without waiting for an excuse, even hurl a firebrand at the offending boy, so that considerable injuries sometimes occur. Mothers discipline the girls in similar temperamental fashion. But the rage, in either case, is quickly forgotten. There is no pattern of cold discipline, no "woodshed" punishment, rather hot-tempered, quick retribution.

857 Play activity and imitation of adults continues, but it takes on more seasonal and constructive characteristics. This is partly due to the seasonal pattern of the economic activities of boys age 7 to 11 and girls 5 to 14. Formal education in church school rarely begins before 11 in the rural areas, whereupon their play activities become more "extra-curricular".

[526] The seasonal games include the ball game after the harvest is completed, known as "gencheb" or "kwas", and seasonal construction and repair activities. On the church feast of Mikael, little boys have their own outdoor party, eating barley roasted on the stalk, and watching the flirtatious play of adolescent boys and girls.

291 Boys 7 to 11 still wear the tattered, knee length cotton shift, as their basic garment in rural areas, but beg a new one from relatives once a year, for the holy day of "Masqal", or "Timqat". But they are increasingly self-conscious about nudity, and if the tattered shift reveals the putic area, other boys will haze and playfully beat the offender, saying:

[539] "My father told me not to let a snake warm itself in the sun".

855 In summary, parental discipline in this age group is specific,
867 work-oriented and intermittent; while experimentation with, and

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855 socialization by the peer group continues more regularly and fre-
867 quently and on a broader range of activities.

C. Training through the Peer-group; Patterns of Hazing.

867 Parental training during childhood is minimal, and much of enculturation is left to the peer-group which proceeds to function in little-structured fashion, largely through hazing.

Differential behavior of the sexes is largely taught this way. Little boys haze any boy who cries, or seems soft, "geltan", by darkly hinting that he "lacks something" ("täämättälä"); and, if he is shy in talking and defending himself with his sharp tongue, "gämtalla", effeminate. To prove their physical bravery, boys burn scars ("tässasa") in their own forearms, saying that this will make them "strong", and believing that this will immunize them from showing pain or softness in public. An aggressive, clever
[562] tongue, capable of a wide repertoire of insults that will shatter the adversary's composure, and also include appropriate milder and semi-strong insults, is regarded as male behavior, as "strong" or stronger than brawn. This makes a "known man" ("yätämäga säw"). The proverb says:

[539]

> "The son of man, by what is he respected?
> by his seat (position)?
> Not by his seat -
> by his lip. (i.e. cleverness in argument)".

Boys are hazed by other boys for picking on little girls. Hazing is sometimes physical, sometimes by mockery, often both. If physical, it consists of shoving, wrestling, in spontaneous manner, almost never with cold formality. A boy who wants to grow up too fast beyond his peers, i.e. by showing too much preference for the company of elders, is criticized with the proverb:

867 [539] "He, before becoming old,
wants to be serious".

(This is also said of a young man who saves gifts for a bride before he has chosen a girl).

When the adolescent boys take part in the aforementioned ritual mock-battles, younger boys imitate them by staging similar hazing-battles among their age peers.

Little girls are encultured in somewhat similar fashion by peers of their own sex, but more often including some older girls who patronize the younger. Girls are not taught any social graces among commoner Amharas, so that they sit shyly and wordless when in the company of men. Any girl who shows signs of daring is mocked and hazed as "gobba" (daring, enterprising female). Generally the activities of girls are less vilent,. At times when boys fight their ritual mock-battles, girls dance rounds and sing in unison.

Both boys and girls are taught to be right-handed, and a "lefty" is extremely rare. They are taught to eat with the right hand, shake hands with the right, and use the left for wiping themselves with leaves after defecating. But the prohibition against use of the left hand on other occasions is not as severe as among Arabs.

[264 576 514]

[754] Both sexes fear the supernatural "buda" spirit, also in the shape of human sorcerer and magical hyena. Older boys claim they can distinguish the cry of a real hyena from that of a magical one, and sometimes scare younger children by imitating the howl.

867 302 Sex differentiation among children is expressed in the hair style. Boys wear a single coxcomb hairlock, girls a ring of hair around the shaven skull which sometimes may contain a center hair-

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857 grumble, growl, snarl). It consists of a stick of wood, a foot
524 long, 1/2 inch thick, notched at the thinner end, to which a cord of twisted fibre is attached. This is swung horizontally, above the head, to produce what is regarded as a terrifying sound. It is even used in shepherding, since boys believe it frightens away hyenas and the occasional leopard. During the rainy season, boys play it indoors to amuse each other and haze-tease younger siblings, who are frightened by it.

At the beginning of the light rainy season, when the storks and other birds fly north, children especially girls, form circles and dance rounds, chanting to the flocks of birds:

[539]

"Stork, our country is well;
the woman who baked <u>oitta</u> (luxuricus wheat bread)
has died swallowing <u>oitta</u> (i.e. luxury is plentiful).

[825] At harvest time, in November, similar greetings are sung to the birds when they return from the north, from "Jerusalem" in popular belief. The Falashas children express this by singing to departing storks:

[539]

"How are you?
The people of Jerusalem (Falashas) are well)."

The Coptic Amhara hold the same belief as to the destination of the birds.

Winter games, i.e. in the rainy season, when children are restricted to the hamlet, include building of makeshift huts, in which they play "man and wife". The girls gather leaves, roll red mud inside, and "bake" cakes. Boys mimic the farmer, weave a hood of reeds, and just as he walks in the rain broadcasting his seeds, so boys broadcast pebbles.

Swimming is a favorite sport of children in the rainy season,

883 pasturing, housebuilding, packing and unpacking of mules on trips to the market and caravans. Able-bodied and semi-skilled, he is at the beck and call of any male kinsman, whenever the call "antä gobäz" (thou, warrior) resounds.

882 But he is still considered "half-baked", not fully skilled, strong but not wise, capable of carrying out orders but not of giving them because impatient and unable to foresee all consequences. The proverbs say:

[539] "The heart of the gobäz is in his chest" (meaning he is brave but does not reflect, in his head, the consequences of his deeds).

"A village full of young men
in one year it will become a desert".

"A young chief;
fog in (the month of) Hedar; (harvest month in dry season) (both) ruin the country".

[583] In return for his services, the young man hopes that his father will be generous in allocating a large and fertile plot of land to him upon marriage; also many cows, so he can ask an equal number from the bride's family.

883 In these services, particularly in transportation of goods and in housebuilding, he may be working in a team with other young men, his former playmates. But hazing is rare at this stage and considered childish, as is unrestrained shouting and pushing, especially within sight and hearing of full adults.

882 Sexual activities after puberty are much more secretive than
831 before, go on at night rather than in daytime, and are discussed only in whispers. Puberty is called" akalä mätän därräsä (lit. he

584 about the economic arrangements to which both sides contribute equally, for "honor"; for setting up the couple on a sound economic basis; and to assure property to the bride in case of divorce or widowhood. "Semanya" marriage among Amhara usually begins on an economic basis of half-and-half ("bal ekkul") contributions from both kin groups. The kinsmen of the bride would be ashamed to accept more of dowry (macha) for her than they are able to contribute, lest she be treated disrespectfully by the groom's kinfolk later on who might say: "She was bought like a "damoz", whenever there is a wuarrel. For there is no lobola custom in the one-sided African way. Conversely, a man who marries for cows is mocked:

[539]

"Seeing her cattle, he married a bad one;
when the cattle died,
his trouble was double".

583 Cows are usually the major item of discussion of property changing hands at marriage. Negotiations finally fix the number of cows each will contribute ("kābetesh bākābtē") (lit. "your property is mine"), usually payable gradually as down payment and in installments, as a further guarantee that the marriage is working out and that there are no complaints (e.g. that the bride actually proved to be a virgin as promised).

Even a poor peasant will try to beg and borrow among his kin, lest he be shamed, so that he can match the dowry of the in-laws with 3 to 5 cows. A rich farmer may give as many as 30 cows to his child, thus requiring the in-laws to match this. A stubborn father can use this means to discourage a match that his youngster has set his heart on; knowing full well that the in-laws, if not rich

584 tiations are concluded, preparations are made to ensure the spiritual and emotional well-being of the couple. A bridegroom is warned to study the character of his prospective mother-in-law, for it is believed that her daughter will take after her:

"Observe her mother,

before you let the daughter enter (the house)."

584 But the importance of the sworn best men, the "mizē", in protecting
608 the bride after the marriage, is considered even more important, due to the patrilocal residence. They are called the protectors of her "teeth and arms", ready to rush to her aid even against the husband when she shouts for help. On the other hand, to balance the situation, they are chosen from among the groom's closest relatives, e.g. first cousins (patrilineal), so that they won't be likely to seduce the girl. The two "mize" have to take the vow of excommunication before the "mänfäs gubaē" (lit. soul counsel) priest, in front of the parents of the girl and the groom, that they will regard her as a sister, that they will treat her as their own sisters, that they will come night or day when she calls. This formal, literal bond of artificial kinship is strong, and the bride affectionately addresses the "mize" as "gashey" (lit. my shield, i.e. by protector) much as she would an uncle or other grown kinsman. The proverb says:

[539] "For confession - go to the priest,

for (selfless) love - go to the mize".

These "mize" become protectors not only of the bride, but, in consequence, of the marriage of the couple. For, if the groom needs a "wäs", a personal guarantor-bondsman for employment or if in legal trouble, the mize can hardly refuse this service as they are now doubly bound. The mize pattern thus increases security and stability

184 instead of barley-beer, and the best of available meat dishes.
585 In return, the wealthier guests are expected to leave larger cash gifts as they leave. It is in this tent that the "semanya" marriage is performed, and the bridal couple blessed by the "mänfäs gubaë" priest, who will later watch over their marriage. His blessing is the same as that in the rural hamlet:

[539]

> "May God make you capable of begetting, of conception, for office-holding, for honor, for the communion and the flesh of the Lord. May God guide you to truth and make you kin with Abraham and Sarah".

Though the bride in town may be called out from the women's tent, and thus be the only female eating with the men, seated next to the groom, they still act shy with each other in public. Men like to believe that, though there are no tears in public, brides weep silently, out of fear; - the "vanquished sex". But the groom does not yet patronize her in public with the "gursha", hand to mouth feeding, as he will starting some weeks after.

c) Post-Wedding Adjustments and Kin Relations.

585 After the traditional rural wedding, the "dass" remains standing for a week, in both the groom's and the bride's hamlets, to shelter visitors. After two full days of marriage have passed, the mize go to the bride's hamlet to report on her well-being, adjustment and good treatment. They are feted and sleep in the "dass". The next day they return, carrying an invitation to the bridal couple and a specified number of companions (which is usually exceeded!) to come to the bride's hamlet for a 3-day visit, the "mäla".

585 [574] Three-day visiting is the pattern in kin visiting, for it usually takes one day for initial greetings and exchange of news, slaughtering and preparation of a sheep; a second day for feasting and talks with the neighbors; a third day for preparation of leave-taking.

After one week, the "dass" are torn down. A "great man" who is father of the bride, will usually send his daughter several donkeyloads of household staples, including lentils ("shuro"), peas cooked with salt, pepper, and spices, so that she will be honored and well treated by the women under whose jurisdiction she has come. Then, after a month, he will send a messenger to ask how she is habituated to the new life. If the reply is favorable, another load of grain, butter, spices, flaxseed oil are sent.

512 The adjustment of the bride may not be easy. The night she leaves her parental roof, she takes with her, besides her skin-mat, a little basket of dyed reeds, containing her personal little distaff, spindle, and glass necklace used in scouring pottery. After a week or a few weeks of honeymoon, she is expected to participate in the women's household tasks: fetching water and fuel, baking "enjara" daily for her husband, cooking "wot", to her husband's tastes, crushing barley, grinding "tyeff", brewing beer. If she complains too soon, the womenfolk will quote the proverb:

[539] "Hardly arrived have you, young bride,
(but) already you crunch shembera (peas)"
(meaning: lazily pick at peas, instead of
doing the regular, harder work).

606 [591] The couple is expected to remain in patrilocal residence at least a year, so that the bride can be taught, by her mother-in-law, how

888 young, "not-yet-serious" young woman, partly because there is no
792 career involved, as there is in case of young men who become monks. Though there are usually fewer widows then widowers (due to the mortality in connection with childbirth), the lot of a widow is not a happy one. The proverb says:

[539]

"Now that my fortune (husband) has died,
what will my mother-in-law give me?"

888 Without the kin group, an aging man, especially if sick, blind
735 or crippled, has little protection. The church is not eager to have
[792] him as a monk, for it can recruit younger men for its service, as a career, and an old man is much less useful in the churchyard than an old woman. He may, especially if landless, or in town, be reduced to beggary. There he sits at the approaches to the churches, repeating his demanding, ceaseless litany: "Selä Medhane Aläm, selä Maryam, selä Givorgis" (For sake of the Savior, of Mary, of St. George), stretching out an open hand. Sometimes he may send out a child to beg for him, either because he is too bashful, or is using it as a technique. Little boys will thus attach themselves to a potential donor, repeating "babba, babba" (babytalk for "daddy").
[608] They have already learned the concept of artificial kinship to establish human relationships.

6. The End of Life: Eulogy; Memorial Services and Feasts.

763 When an elder is close to death, other elders from among his nearest kin come with his confessor, and say to him: "Confess yourself". When he has done so, they ask him for his last will: "What do you give to your children, and for your soul (i.e. to the church, through the confessor, to the poor)". While fields and cattle are given to the descendants, (the former only in patrilineal descent), personal belongings such as cowhide mats, chamma

538 He was a master of "sowasso"; of the pun which utilizes gemina-
522 tion and other grammatical possibilities to make an ironic observation and befuddle the unwary, so that they become public laughing stocks. Sometimes the joke was on his own Rabelaisian appetites in food and sex. More often he spoofed the pompousness of feudal and even royal powers, their love for amassing rules and regulations for their courts; and the pretended puritan piety of the priests, behind which facade he recognized witty insight into the minds of men, whose salty comments and behavior in private life he liked to burlesque. For example:

[539]

> "One day the servant of a witty priest suffered from a chigger (sandflea) embedded in his foot. The priest pried it out with a pin and threw it into the fire. A friend, watching this, objected jokingly, saying: "Why did you do this? May it not multiply in the fire?" Replied the priest: "It may be warmed, but not 'done up' ("yazaraw" - also means begotten through sexual intercourse)."

Amhara listeners find such "impolite" stories extremely amusing.

195 The Amhara people recognize the esoteric use that can be made of
198 their language, and they utilize this. Hence the expression "he is talking Amarinya", meaning "he is speaking in esoteric ways", with double meanings, hidden meanings, to becloud his real purpose so that he cannot be accused of lying and can say later that he meant something else. For example, the verb "qanna" can have the following meanings:

> was right, direct, correct
> was honest, just
> succeeded, prospered
> became jealous, envious
> became zealous, fanatic, intolerant.

198 Certain occupational specialties have traditionally made use of

574 576 visitors screw up their faces as if in great agony, even despair, and utter the long, subdued wail "ayye". Religious expressions on such occasions are "egziabher yatnawo" (May God give you health), or "egzer yemarewo" (May God be merciful to you).

574 539 d) Hospitality and Dining.

Hospitality to kinfolk, members of the secondary group, and other travellers, in that sequence of emphasis, is a major culture focus. Numerous proverbs are often quoted, governing this behavior:

Even a poor man is expected to give what he can, even if he can offer little more than a pleasant face:

"More than his food,
his face pleased me."

Refusal of hospitality for the night is castigated:

"He has let me be eaten by the hyena" (at night).

A stingy host, who could well afford generosity, is mocked:

"He goes about, attended by 90 retainers;
but in his house famine reigns".

A host is advised to make his invitation specific as to the day:

"A dog, called for the right day,
arrives on his own feet".

574 262 A host is expected to urge the guest to take freely of profferred food and drink. An invitation to "take coffee" is frequently the formula introducing a complete dinner. Staples readily available, unlike dinners that require preparation, include barley beer ("tella"), roasted barley grains ("gebs golo"), roasted peas ("shembera golo"), boiled corn grains ("mashella"), milk, eggs, limp bread ("enjara"), and except among the very poor, coffee beans, which are roasted, crushed and boiled in front of the guest.

Dinner is regarded as a feast ("doggee" or "gebber") and should include meat and butter, so that it is impolite to invite anyone on

574 262 Wednesday or Friday when no animal products can be consumed; the months of lent also interrupt the frequency of visiting.

To honor a "great man" ("telleq sew") the host presents him with a live sheep, select, with a heavy tail, then has it slaughtered and cooked in a spicy and peppery sauce ("wot"). In place of barley beer he will offer honeywater ("berz") or even honeymead ("täj"); the bread will be served smeared with spiced butter. A poor man, forced to substitute chicken for sheep, can at least indicate that he honors the guest by giving him the choice morsel - the wing: The proverb says:

[539]

"The chicken wing

joy brings to the face".

264 Etiquette in eating follows these procedures: The hands are washed prior to consuming bread or meat (though often with not very clean, muddy river water poured from a clay pot); and washed again after the meal to remove pepper stains of the "bärbäre wot" from the fingers, lest absentminded rubbing of the eye cause painful stinging. Only the right hand is used in eating, for the left is used in the toilet. The right hand is used to rip off a piece of the limp "enjära", dip it into the meat stew, close the piece of pancake-like bread around some morsel and fish it out for immediate consumption. A knife is used only when eating "brundo" (raw beef), at a special feast, to cut off a piece held between the teeth (now, at city feasts, brundo is served pre-sliced into cubes).

Noisy eating ("gorädäma") is permitted in the old tradition as indicative of he-man behavior, but smacking of lips and ceremonial belching, though not criticized, are not emphasized. It is an old custom of Amhara hosts, still followed in rural areas, to pour a mouthful of a profferred drink into their own cupped hands and consume it, before passing the cup to the honored guest or "great man" ("ejun däno ätta"- lit. he received (cup) with hands (under chin) and drank). This

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

576 Very Polite: "shango watta" - (lit. he went to a meeting).
514 Extremely Polite: "gwaro zorä" - (lit. he left home).
192 Extremely Polite: "shersher watta" - (lit. he went for a walk).

522 Wit, used in court or by homespun philosophers to entertain their friends, compensates for the many formalities in this culture and society. The famous wit, Alaqa Gabre-Hanna has already been cited.
538 Proverbs, "tarat" and riddles may be used to make a comment of esoteric meanings, understandable only to one's initiates. Proverbs fulfill a social function, beyond mere entertainment, for even philosophy, being utilized to begin any negotiation, such as for marriage. This is emphasized in proverbs on proverbs:

[539]

"Like Halleluyah before the chanting (in church),
(begin with) a proverb before the discussion".
"(to drink) mead, (first get) a container,
to talk, (begin with) a proverb".

538 Proverbs and riddles used by parents, teachers and leaders of
593 society have a pedagogic function, and can be used to reprimand and
[861] instruct. Conflict between father and son, the complexities involved, and the possibility that contrary to the major cultural assumption of parental superiority, the son may sometimes have logic on his side, is indicated by the following:

[539] "(Says the father):

"Your Father you cannot accuse (e.g. in court, shaming yourself)
nor plow the sky,
nor roast water".

"(Replies the son):

"The father, by his own shame he will stand accused;
the sky, by lighting it is plowed;
water, in a pot it is steamed".

524 Boys, from the "age of reason" onward, tease each other with riddles in endless inventive games, such as:

[539] "(Question)":

"In its youth, white hair,
in its maturity, brown,
in its old age, red.
What is it?"

"(Reply)": "Wot". (Red-golden peppersauce).

538 Like medieval bards, Amhara entertainers (amari) and talented individuals tell of incredible and wonderful happenings of all kinds, stories called "tarik" (synonymous, in Amharic, with history). Often these use as their base historical or pseudo-historical events, and expand on them, experimenting with persons, plots, additional details, etc. Very popular bases are the Royal Chronicles of Abyssinia, "tarik nägäst", fanciful stories about Alexander the Great, and Biblical plots, especially Apocryphal.

D. Artistic Expression: The Art of Insult and Mockery.

195 A person who is clever at the art of insult is given grudging
578 admiration even by his opponents, and is called "shälaqy lachä" (lit. one who shaves with his tongue). He can insult or mock so subtly that he may leave non-initiates in doubt, yet have full effect on the victim. On the other hand, a coarse person who insults people indiscriminately, regardless of propriety of persons or circumstance, is despised ("ärta af").

Mockery is sometimes used for positive as well as negative purposes, especially in pedagogy, but insults are always more or less negative. Mockery, if used to teach a lesson, often employs proverbs;
578 also metaphors, so that the person criticized must think - which
195 might lead to his mending his ways:
537 To teach a careless Adi: "(it is like) a co[illegible] on a shaven head,
[illegible] trousers to carry [illegible] in".

578
195 To mock false pride: 515

[539]

"A blind man, when he became (too) proud, (to accept help) on his toga defecated".

To mock aggressiveness beyond social station, especially in a young man:

"The mouse that wants to die,
goes to touch the nose of the cat".

Insults, however, do not have this benevolent, educative quality. Instead, they are antagonistic - though in carefully differentiated degrees. In general, an insult may be extremely severe, severe, medium severe, or light, in degree. Insults are considered of greater weight when directed at persons of higher status, (more severe).

There are two major categories of insults:

a) Insults directed at the group to which the insulted person belongs: his racial (usually slave-descent); religious (non-Coptic); ethnic (linguistic-regional) stereotype.

b) Insults directed at his individual personality shortcomings, intended to shame him for having failed to measure up to what is expected of him in society.

Racial insults commonly include:

"shembora ras" (lit. peahead, i.e. peppercorn hair) or "barya tägur" (slave hair), both severe insults referring to slave ancestry, by reference to hair typical of the Shanqallä (negroid tribe in the border lowland). This is now a jail offense.

"Äqwara" (lit. dark one). Light insult directed at Shanqalla ex-slave, teasingly.

"xellaj" (half-slave). Severe insult directed at a person of doubtful ancestry.

Religious insults; often involved also in ethnic insults:

"äfotam" (lit. sheathed, encased) - uncircumcised. Directed at "pagan" lowlanders, and lower ethnic castes such as the "Faqi" tanners. Medium severe.

Stupidity:

"dänqworo"(lit. deaf). Fool. Frequently used. Medium to severe.

"dengay ras" (lit. stone head). Slow-witted person. Light insult if directed at a youngster, medium toward low-prestige adult, severe toward other adult males.

Laziness:

"zefeq" - Medium severe insult, directed at woman who evades her chores, and who dresses in her best embroidered toga on a weekday.

Hypocrisy:

"zemban ïeba" (lit. thief with eyes full of flies): Directed at cunning man who pretends not to see but looks out to take what he should not; like a "blind" thief in the night. Medium severe.

"wälratta" - vain flatterer, good-for-nothing. Severe insult.

Bastard:

"men abbatu" (lit. who is his father). Very frequently used especially by lower class, even against balky mules to "let off steam", but nevertheless considered very severe insult.

Crossness:

"yähanus feträt" (lit. Creature of Thursday; i.e. the day the animals were created). Directed at animal-like behavior. Severe insult.

Supernatural insult:

"yäïenan" - full of evil spirits. Severe insult.

Insults of category a) may lead to serious brawls, even kin feuds, for insults against the group are regarded as affecting also the following generations:

[539] "(If the father is hated), the child will not be kissed, when he (the child) speaks, no one will smile".

195 578 Insults of category b) however, may be noisy, sound violent, involve much high-pitched repartee, with the adversaries screaming at each other. But since such individual insults are regarded as a "battle of wits", they rarely even lead to fisticuffs, though, to foreign observers, such encounters seem only a hair's breadth removed from serious bloodshed, and the adversaries seem to lean against each other physically (though now actually). For, even a severe insult is not regarded as a "fighting word", rather as an almost theatrical, almost ceremonial exchange. There may be much waving of a corner of a toga in the opponent's face, as in court. The exchange may end in mutual exhaustion, physically and nervously. The entertainment aspect is not lost on the onlookers, who thoroughly enjoy this and egg on [692] the adversaries. Sometimes curbstone arbitrators ("astaraqi") are appointed to act as "peacemakers".

[554] A person of nobility is not supposed to engage in such public battles of insult, rather employs subtle means of implied antagonism. Even a commoner Amhara may imitate the indirect behavior pattern in a situation of antagonism, e.g. to indicate to a neighbor that he is not wanted, yet without letting the public know it (thus saving face for the neighbor). He may invite him, greet him politely, ask him to wait (standing) while stools "will be brought". When no stools are brought, after some time, the neighbor leaves, never to return. The proverb says:

[539] "So that he will not talk (against us), invite him;
(yet) so that he will not eat, move him about".

In this manner, polite antagonism is indicated, without making a public enemy.

275 is served with it. Traders and travellers often stop by during the day,
487 and the place usually closes not long after sundown.

275 The barley-beer house ("talla byet") is still fairly respectable
487 for people of commoner and lower classes, but not for respected elders
265 or priests. It is operated by women, either matronly married women or "unattached girls", i.e. divorcees. It serves not only as dispenser of beer, but also serves full meals, so that the travelling trader is dependent on it. For as little as Eth. $0.25 (U.S. 10 cents) the patron may obtain a minimal meal of enjara bread, 2 liters of talla beer, and all the roast chickpeas and roasted barley ("qolo") he can eat; meatstew costs more. Often such a restaurant contains an extra room with a bed for the weary traveller to sleep in, and such an inn is then called "meshta byet" (lit. accommodation house, from "mesht" or "mest", meaning wife), for the traveller has no difficulty in securing a temporary wife for the duration of his local stay, among the divorcees.

275 The mead-house ("taj byet") does not even have the minimal
548 respectability of the talla byet. It is operated strictly for entertainment, i.e. drinking and sexual pleasures. For the owner, usually a clever, middleaged townswoman, it represents one of the few ways of amassing capital and becoming one of the wealthiest local citizens. She controls her waitresses much as a madam would. To protect herself from brawls, which are not infrequent, she also employs, - though they are kept out of sight so as not to frighten off customers, - one or several husky bouncers. The proverb says:

[539]

"In the prostitute's house,
all the time a scuffle."

For, even in prostitution a pretense of "temporary wife" is made.

587 The proverb says:

[539] "He who knows not how to kiss,
his nose he will blow on you."

The divorcée often develops strategy and techniques to win a man of her choice: She may give him a ring to remind him of her when he is away from her; when he visits her, she feeds him "ergo" (thick buttermilk), so he will be sleepy and remain at her house, rather than go to his men friends to gamble. Women have a proverb about men:

[539] "Like a child, (he is attracted) by the ring,
like a cat, (he is attracted) by milk."

If she has a mother who is a good cook, the divorcee will employ this attraction, saying:

[539] "More than the flesh of the daughter,
(he is attracted by)
the butter (i.e. cooking) of the mother."

[832] When this fails, she may enlist the supernatural aid of love amulets, "mastafaqer", purchased from the dabtara scribe with the man's name inscribed, to inspire love for her in him; and in addition to the fee, may treat the dabtara to beer and sweets to enlist his greatest power on her behalf.

588 If her lover is already married, she may nevertheless establish a "sweetheart" ("wusherna") relationship with him, though she has no claim on "damoz" wages or recognition of this temporary wifehood. This is also one of the few cases in which a woman will try not to have children.

548 588 However, a divorcee who was divorced largely on account of her barrenness - and about 25% of the townswomen are barren at least for some years - will try to have a child, even out of wedlock. She will then very likely join the "unattached women" in the streets inhabited

302 was required of females past puberty, i.e. women of marriage age, and they were not supposed to substitute the less efficient method of shaving. The proverb says:

[539]

"To a man who plucks out,
to a woman who shaves (pubic hair),
forgive He (God) will not."

However, in the recent change situation, possibly since the spread of the European razor blade, plucking is becoming a lost art among the younger generation; and, while women now shave their pubic hair; men let it grow naturally as most of them apparently have always done.

515 The continuous polishing of teeth ("mewachä") has already been mentioned. This is one of the few activities of body care in which even men indulge as continuously as women. The reason is that it is not regarded as "for cleanliness" (which is considered less necessary for men, in a culture which regards women as "dirty"), but as "polishing" and "sharpening" this equipment of nature for powerful use, much like birds whet their beaks, readying them for action. The polishing is done with a hardwood twig, the ends of which are masticated first, and and motion is upward and downward, so that the upper gums receive considerable massage also.

302 Nails are given little attention, except in the case of the bride, whose nails are trimmed usually a day before the wedding, so that she will not be able to scratch the bridegroom when he has to use force to deflower her. Her nails are cut so short that not infrequently the skin is cut, and hot butter is applied, to heal them and also render the fingers caressingly smooth.

Reddening of palms, fingers and soles of feet is feminine procedure in preparation for holy days and festivities. The most common cosmetic used for this purpose is called "ensosella" (Impatiens tinctore), a

186 quoted to praise farming as the best and most typical Amhara occupation, casually refer to the Muslim as a person not bound by social ethics:

[539] "He traded - (then he) cheated;
he was appointed (official) - he began (to act) like a Muslim;
(but) he (who) was a farmer - and became a king!"

[177] Nevertheless, the influence of Islam, probably by slow diffusion, has been considerable on Abyssinian Christianity through the centuries. Their avoidance of "unclean, forbidden things" ("erm"), such as pork, though officially based on the Old Testament prohibitions, was probably reawakened or reintroduced and emphasized through the pressure of Muslim ideas, geographically so close.

[532] The Amhara paint an infidel, like any evil person, with one eye, in profile, for "he has only half a soul, is only half-born, sees only half the truth." The outsider is regarded as automatically of evil personality.

C. Amhara Ideas about Body and Personality.

826 Not all Amhara ideas about human beauty are dominated by racial criteria. A long, lean face ("fit sälkakka") is considered handsome in a man, while a broad face ("fit mäda") is considered ugly; this may bear some relation to the gerontomorphic preference over the pedamorphic.

[304] A long neck ("angät") is a mark of beauty, in both sexes, but noted especially in the woman who therefore may have a series of necklaces tattooed on to her neck. The beauty of the long neck is referred to in the following proverb:

[539] "The neck of the dead child
is longer (than ever);
(meaning, "a good thing that came when of no use).

The forehead is considered the location of good fortune, and a large forehead is considered a mark of beauty in men.

826 Projecting teeth, especially incisors ("gätata") are considered ugly, wild animal-like, and it is an insult to call such a person [302] "tersam" (lit. toothy). Hair is grown long and standing up stiff by warriors who wish to appear ferocious. The hairdoes of women are diverse. Baldness ("tämällätä") is relatively rare, and if at all, comes very late. Big hips, though covered, are considered an important mark of beauty in a woman, while little attention is paid to the breasts which lose their youthful shape early in life due to prolonged breastfeeding. The ideal feminine body is a fairly short, hippy woman ("täfär wägäb") with high-bridged nose and bulging eyes. On the other hand, a woman with small or lean hips, called "dog hips" ("wesha wägäb"), whose hips are sharply outlined ("wägäb araqi"), is considered deficient in feminine allure. The proverb says:

[539] "(strong) child from hippy woman;
(good) grain from lower terrain (more fertile)."
"A short man is like a monkey,
(but) a short woman like a noblewoman."

The seat of strength in a man is not considered to be in the biceps, but is believed located in the knee ("gulet"). This is examined when hiring a laborer (formerly also in a soldier), perhaps because t he physical type of most Amhara is slender, and their legs have little visible musculature - though much endurance. It is still considered praise to call a young man "gulnasa" (powerfully kneed), and the Amhara take great pride in being able to walk long distances without a rest; flexing the tendon behind the knee ("gwanja"). The elbow is the next place ("kendam" man with powerful elbow) of strength. Bowlegs ("waraha") are considered the result of riding too much, and are not regarded as a special mark of ugliness.

826 A very thin person ("jemmatan") is regarded as being full of tendons, nerves and veins, all of which are generically called "jemmat"; they are conceived as running through the body like the fibers of a tree.

The beard comes late, and since a good chin whisker is rare before the age of 30, it is regarded as a sign of maturity. The proverb says:

[539] "Beard, lacking to the teacher;
cypress, lacking to the church; (i.e. symbol of the churchyard) (are one)." (i.e. neither will be fully respected.)

[779] The dichotomy of the human body, in the religion, considers the upper part holy; and the lower part, which serves sex and defecation, as profane. To illustrate one who serves two masters, the proverb says:

[539] "Above the hips - the tabot (sacred tablet of the church), below the hips - idols."

No distinction is made in body hair, whether it is usually scanty under-arm hair ("cheggum") or pubic hair, except that the latter was supposed to be plucked out by women. Despite the distinction of sacred and profane body parts, this distinction does not apply to archangels and saints, every part of whose body is lauded in some of the liturgy, e.g. in the book "Malek Mikael" which eulogizes also the body of this archangel.

Abnormalities of the human body are attributed to the effect of the supernatural. In the case of a new-born child, abnormality of body attributed to an evil spirit, especially a male "zar" who has magically possessed the mother and who is jealous of the human husband whom he regards as his rival. In case of transvestites, who are always believed to be hermaphrodites ("fenafel"), the abnormality is actually referred to as a "mistake of God".

827 person would use direct terms relating to certain body functions: "ar" (fecal matter), "shänna" (he urinated), etc. Polite circumscription is well developed. But the actual carrying out of basic body functions is merely channelled, not repressed, even in "polite society". Farting, e.g., which is almost inevitable after consuming the daily "qolo" (roast peas or barley), is channelled as expressed in the following proberb:

[539] "The Abyssinian is clever;

bowing low (before the great man), he (silently) farts".

Spitting is the inevitable result of masticating the end of the twig used as a toothbrush; but it is not nearly as voluminous as the low-class spitting ("tiq alä", or "entef alä", both alliterations) of the Sudanese ex-slaves (Barya) and Muslim Abyssinians who hold a wad of tobacco between lower lip and gum, chew, and spit.

828 157 In the conceptualization of human personalities, the Amhara take subject matter also from physiological functions and from the ethnic and other divisions of the class structure:

The Rustic (esp. peasant):

"balagär" (lit. man of the rural country), also "balage". Unpolished, impolite, vulgar.

"wetter" - ignorant person who asks embarassing questions to "inflate his own belly".

The Simple-minded: "yäwäh" - simple, good, modest, honest, frank, sincere.

"wedegät" - (lit. young bull) - simpleton, who causes damage without meaning to; e.g. who cannot hold his tongue.

The Fool: "dongworo" (lit. deaf; deaf-mute) Stupid person whose mind nothing seems to penetrate.

828
157

"qäleb" - one who shines with intelligence;

"qälbam" - Person full of reason, discretion, intellectual beauty.

812 It is clear from the last two personalities that a distinction is made between the merely clever (e.g. in material things) and the wise person. Wisdom is stressed in numerous proverbs:

[539]

"A king who has no wise councillor,
not one year will he reign".

Many Amhara desirous of reputation, emulate the Biblical wisdom of King Solomon, a wise judge whom "no one could fool". Anecdotes of this type of wisdom are told far and wide, of kings and of rulers of provinces. Even at present, some of these anecdotes are told of rulers still living, including of Emperor Haile Selassie. The following two anecdotes, which may well be factual, are told in Gondar about Ras Imru, who ruled as governor-general of Begemdir province just after the liberation from Italian occupation, when banditry was a major problem:

539 812 1. Two bandits accused of robbery-murder were placed in separate confinement. They had refused to confess, and the time of the murder could not be ascertained. One bandit was taken to the place of the crime, on orders of Ras Imru, and told that his partner had confessed; then, that the time of the crime had been such-and-such. Eager to argue against such an error, the bandit momentarily overlooked the fact that by correcting the time element he was giving himself away. Whereupon both were convicted and hanged.

2. One day, while riding through the market, Ras Imru was halted when a woman threw herself before his horse, shouting "abret", the traditional appeal of the oppressed. She accused one of Ras Imru's soldiers of having consumed a large pitcher of milk she had for sale, without payment. The soldier denied it, and there were no witnesses

812 willing to testify against him. Ras Imru ordered that he be made to
[539] vomit, and on the basis of this evidence convicted him on the spot.

While the clever arguer in court, who is acclaimed, may be merely "clever", the truly wise man is conceived as one whose words are few but weighty:

[539] "Man, by what can he be valued?
by his speech can he be valued".

Hence, in the games of growing children, the hazing pattern is gradually replaced by verbal contests, and the winner or "better man" is not necessarily the physically stronger but he who can out-insult and out-argue the other.

However, individualistic non-conformity in ordinary persons is criticized, and regarded as rendering such persons shiftless, unstable and impermanent.

Finally, different regions of Amhara-populated areas are believed to be specialized in specific types of personalities; e.g. the dabtara scribes of Entoto, where the capital of Addis Ababa is located now, have long had the reputation of special cleverness, speaking in riddles which make understanding painful, when they deign to converse at all with ordinary Amhara commoners:

[539] "The wise men of Entoto,
talk just once a year,
(and then) always (bitingly) bitter".

[77] Special skill of hand or mind is generally believed, for good or ill, to come from the world and functions of the spirits.

756 His clientele in this role consists largely of women, who often come to him with petty problems, whom he can charge little for his services, but who provide him with a regular, though modest, income. A ẗänqway, unlike zar doctor or dabtara, never becomes rich. Also, both peasant women and townswomen go to him to have their personal fortunes told. He sympathizes with them in their marital quarrels, encourages them to be disobedient to their husbands and to bring him money and gifts withheld from the husband. Consequently, men consider the ẗänqway a wrecker of marriage, and so does the church. The proverb says:

[539] "Lying ẗänqway,
the house he destroys".

Men do consult him on the occasion of stolen property, but are ashamed to be seen going to his house. They go secretly.

There is a significant element of competition between the ẗänqway and the d̈abẗära, though the latter is considered far superior, "educated", and is now actually driving the ẗänqway out of much of his business.

In the popular Amhara mind, the ẗänqway is regarded as fearful of the d̈abẗära. For the latter can undo the success of the former through magic formulae written in Geez, copies from secret Geez books. With such a formula, the d̈abẗära can go to the river, call the ganyēn water-spirits and instruct them to steal the "bag of tricks" of the ẗänqway, or to refuse to come when called by the ẗänqway. The dabtara disdains to use the bag of tricks, regarded as primitive and when he captures it will destroy it. Conversely, if a dabtara has "charmed" a thief by giving him a specially written amulet against capture by the police, nothing the tanqway can do

795 His social status compares to that of a "great man" (telleq säw),
756 but much of this is due to the fear in which he is held, because of his power over the supernatural world, in Amhara belief. There is fear that if someone were to offend him, he might use his powers to do evil - though black magic is not his usual metier. (The "love magic" of the däbtära has been described in relation to sex).

[539] "of insects, the worst is the scorpion;
of men, the worst is the däbtära".

[574] For the dabtara are unabashed in inviting themselves to feasts, weddings and any distribution of goods (e.g. parceling out of meat as soon as an ox has been slaughtered). In fact, they often act as if the host owed them an apology for not having sent an official invitation. Therefore, dabtara are usually invited to family feasts even if they are not kin.

795 The däbtära learns his craft through apprenticeship, beginning
756 when in the upper grades of church school. To achieve this, he
874 must be "attentam" (of unmixed Amhara or Tigre stock), have a good chanting voice and musical ear, be good in school, and find a däbtära-teacher willing to impart his knowledge to him. At this stage in church school he begins to be permitted to learn to write; and is not punished for doodling - forbidden at lower grades for fear a student might stumble on a formula and misuse a powerful spell.

795 There is even one priestly function which the däbtära occasionally
756 carries out. That is "re-baptism". He may re-baptize a patient vic-
[783] timized by ganyen, sometimes also cases of buda, as part of exorcism.

538 When miffed, or in temporary disgrace, he would request permission to return to his native
159 Gondar. Subsequently he would send excuse after excuse to the capital for refusing to go back there, until he felt that he had been sufficiently coaxed to assuage his pride as a scholar and that further hesitation might result in serious difficulties, even for him. Empress Taitu was a very powerful figure and often protected him when he had gone too far with Emperor Menelik (her fifth husband).

[114] Although the following stories have no titles except "Story of Alāqa Gābre-Hanna," I have given them names to point up the major emphasis. This material was gathered orally from Amharic-speaking peasants and nobles in the Gondar region (during my field trip to that area in 1953-54 on a grant from the Ford Foundation).

●539 *The Wit And The Nitwit.* AG-H didn't like the rumor going around that he had become a snob, that he didn't greet common people politely any more. One day, accompanied by his usual retinue of friends and admirers, he was greeted effusively with deep bows by a certain donkey-
[576] driver who was known as none too bright. In return, to quash the nasty rumors, AG-H bowed just as deeply, from the hips, instead of the usual nod from one of his station in life. But, unable to resist the temptation for a witticism, he greeted the donkey-driver with the words *"Endē: adderachuh?* 'How are ye?' "

Unaware that the second person plural had been used, the proud donkey-driver was soon boasting at the nearest barley-beer hut of the honor he had received. His cronies made him repeat the exact remark, suspecting some twist. They quickly convinced the poor fool that the greeting had included him in the same class with his donkeys, and the simpleton slunk away in shame.

Another version of the story: But the donkey-driver was, after all, a proud Amhara. Realizing that he had been made a fool of, he took his walking stick, went to the house of AG-H, and beat him unmercifully. This was one time that his wit struck back at him.

Good Eating Comes First. Though greatly honored at the court of Emperor Menelik in newly-built Addis Ababa, AG-H was once again homesick for his native Gondar. Finally, he was granted permission for a leave home.

He promptly organized his small caravan and was about to mount his mule when he noticed two fat cows being taken to slaughter. Thinking of the long trip ahead without fresh beef, he decided to wait around and obtain a good share of the meat which was being rapidly parcelled out. The meat had to be washed down with a huge jugful of barley-beer and honeymead, and so the day passed with pleasant feasting. It was late afternoon when it happened that Emperor Menelik came riding by. Surprised to see the homesick scholar still in the capital, the Emperor addressed him: "I gave you permission to go, and you are still here?"

But, as usual, his wit did not fail AG-H. *"Lam gāb* 'the cows were entering,' your Majesty," he replied. (The phrase is used to indicate dusk, when the cows come home, too late to start on a trip. The cows had indeed "entered," i.e., into the stomach of AG-H; and no one could accuse him later of having told a lie to the Emperor.)

Pride Of A Man From Gondar Province. The next time AG-H became homesick occurred in the middle of the long Lenten fast. The housewives of Gondar were famous for their many spicy recipes for cooking fish in that season, and when AG-H thought of these his mouth watered and nothing pleased him any more in Shoa province.

One day he was invited to dine at the house of a noble of Shoa. The odor of fish being cooked attracted him to the cooking hut. It seemed to him that the woman cook had not properly cleaned the fish and had added too much water. He began to moan and groan.

"What's the matter?" asked his host.

Pointing to the watery fish stew, AG-H replied: "The fish are better off than I. They are *in their native state,* but I am so far from mine!"

Safety From Robbers. Once again the long rainy season was over, the rivers had receded, and the trails were passable again. AG-H managed to obtain a generous purse of Maria-Theresa thalers from the Empress and was on his perennial way back to Gondar.

He was just emerging from the lowland valley of the Abbai (Blue Nile) to climb up the escarpment of the dangerous province of Gojjam, which he had to traverse. Suddenly one of his companions spotted a band of robbers waiting at the top of the upland trail.

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

AG-H quickly ducked behind a bush. He placed the purse in his *gābāte*, the lengthwise half of a gourd which all travelers carry for mixing their ration of crushed linseed (called *tālba*) with water. He wrapped this in a piece of colorful imported silk that he had bought as a gift for his home church. Flattening the package as much as possible, he placed it on his head in the manner of the Abyssinian priests when they carry the *tabot*, the sacred tablet which is taken from the inner sanctum of the church to a pool of water on the day of the saint after whom the church is named. With his free hand he quickly folded his daytime toga in the manner of one going to church and borrowed the largest cross his companions were carrying. Holding it before him like a weapon, and looking serious, holy, and unafraid, AG-H led the caravan as he climbed up the trail in a slow, dignified manner.

When the bandits drew near, they bowed politely. AG-H stopped and gave them the cross to kiss. They asked respectfully to which saint his *tabot* had been consecrated. He replied with the most common one, *Qeddus Giyorgis* 'St. George.' Then they wanted to know which parish church it was from. By this time the old wit had returned to AG-H, and he answered: *"Yātalba masha Giyorgis"* 'St. George of the linseed-paste.'

The bandits nodded gravely and escorted him all the way up the escarpment, explaining that the area was dangerous and full of organized bandits. Some days later they learned how they had been fooled, and forever after they were on the lookout for AG-H on the banks of the Blue Nile.

Poetic Revenge. AG-H had spoken a candid truth once too often and was in official disgrace with Emperor Menelik. As usual, when miffed, he retired to Gondar.

But this time, having left Addis Ababa unofficially and quickly, his finances were low. Adding to his discomfiture was the news, brought to him by a friend from the capital some months later, that Menelik was amusing himself by telling stories of the misdeeds and follies of AG-H.

An idea of poetic revenge came to him. He instructed his friend to go to the Emperor and report that AG-H had died and that his kinsmen in Gondar were too poor to hold a fitting *tāzkar*, a big memorial feast held forty days after death.

Empress Taitu was first to hear of the sudden death of her favorite. She promptly stormed into the chambers of Emperor Menelik, much as she had stormed into the battle of Adua against the Italians shortly before, riding with the troops of her own province. "You murderer," she shouted at the Emperor, "you broke his heart, you banned him from the court." She threw up her hands in misery, wailed as if a close kinsman had died, moving back and forth, chanting aloud about the goodness of the deceased. After a while this began to affect even the iron Menelik. At this point the messenger brought up the rest of his news, the *tāzkar* problem. Menelik promptly gave him the huge sum of ten thousand thalers, to assuage his own feelings of guilt and to calm the Empress.

For a while AG-H enjoyed the fruits of his revenge back in Gondar. But he knew that he could not hide forever. Moreover, his generosity to kinsmen, neighbors, and transient monks was such that before long his money was gone.

So one day he reappeared in Addis Ababa. When he first approached the Empress, the stout woman almost fainted. She immediately sent a messenger to the Emperor. Unwilling to believe the news, he sent the messenger back to ask whether the Empress was feeling well. Thereupon, she took AG-H by the hand and stormed into Menelik's chamber. The Emperor was too shocked and surprised to be angry. He managed to inquire, "How is it that the dead arise from the grave?"

With a deep bow, AG-H replied: "Your Majesty, it is not uncommon in our Christian religion to arise from the dead" [alluding to the resurrection of Jesus].

Another version: While in disgrace, and living in Gondar, the newly-rich AG-H neglected his field, wasted his money and, toward the end of the rainy season, his wife and children were starving. So he sent his long-suffering wife to Addis Ababa with the false story of his death and need for *tāzkar* money. Explaining his reappearance later, AG-H said, "Your Majesty, I so longed to see the faces of your Majesties again that I was not at peace in the earth and had to return."

A third version: "Your Majesty, they had so many rules and regulations up there [pointing to heaven] that I preferred to return and live under the rules of Your Majesty."

Sex On The Hill. Women are forgetful creatures. Sometimes they don't even remember that they don't wear trousers under their cotton skirts. One day AG-H was climbing up a steep trail in the company of men and women. A connoisseur of female flesh, he kept behind the women

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

539 and was always looking up intently and with concentration. One of his friends asked him, "What are you looking for?"

"*Mawca*," replied the wit in his classic manner. [The literal meaning is "exit," i.e., either the exit from the trail on the tiring climb, or "the place where we emerge" from the female body.]

The Wit At Home. Home in his hut in Gondar, AG-H was one day at dusk lying on his bed.

[56] His wife had gone to the river to wash her private parts, as is the custom of the Amhara women at nightfall. Tired from the uphill climb from the valley, she rested before the hearth to dry herself, but dozed off. Soon AG-H heard a cannonade of farting, issuing from his half-conscious wife. He called out to her, "Where are you? Come to bed!"

Awakening, she said dazedly, "I am just drying myself."

To which he replied, "You are drying yourself so much that you are cracking apart."

[302] *A Woman's "Way."* [In accordance with ancient custom, women used to pluck out their pubic hair, rubbing ashes between their fingers to get a good grip while plucking.]

One day a girl student of AG-H was late for her lesson. Taking a quick short-cut across the back yard, she tumbled into the ash heap, soiling her lower toga and her legs with the ashes. She excused her appearance to her teacher, saying, "Oh, Master, I was so eager to come quickly, and now I have dirtied myself with ashes all over."

"That is *your way*," nodded AG-H.

Only much later did the girl learn that he had meant not only the wrong way she had come, but was referring to the fact that being smudged with ashes was the natural "way" for a woman.

[564] *The Pot Of Caste.* [The women of the Falasha caste are makers of pottery, a despised occu-
[323] pation among the Coptic Amhara, though much appreciated by the Amhara, who buy all their better pots from them.]

The wife of AG-H, quarreling with a certain woman, accused her of being of Falasha ancestry and that her mother had been a pottery-maker. One day that woman returned from the river valley, carrying a large, full pot of water on her back. She saw AG-H sitting in front of his hut, and decided to take the opportunity to complain to him about the taunts of his wife.

AG-H disliked being involved in the petty quarreling of the womenfolk, but he listened quietly. As she took leave, he patted her full clay pot and said, "*This* is your work."

She thought that he meant she should not quarrel with his wife; should instead attend to her tasks of fetching water, cooking, etc. But on further reflection what had he meant? Had he accused her of being a pottery-maker herself?

Jealousy Is Dangerous. AG-H was also notorious for his prowess in bed and his fickleness in love.

One day his wife had to go far down to a valley to fetch water, since the dry season had left only water holes in the river bed. She left him in charge of their baby. Taking the baby with him, he went to the hut of his current girl friend and spent the afternoon making passionate love. As it happened, this woman also had a baby about the same age. Dusk came rapidly, and AG-H knew that his wife would soon be back. In the hurry, he took the wrong baby.

A moment after his return his wife arrived, laden with water pot and firewood. When she beheld the baby of her current rival, she became very angry and said, "This thing is not my baby! Shall I throw it in the fire?"

Calm as ever, AG-H replied: "There is a fire also in the house of his mother."

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

5 / *Tradition and Modernization*

THE GENIUS OF AMHARA CULTURE

The Amhara as a whole are not much given to aesthetic concerns. They are 181
practical-minded peasants, austere religionists, and spirited warriors. Their [517]
interests and achievements as a nation are chiefly in the spheres of military
activity and government. And yet, if we seek some theme with which to gain 181
an entree into the spirit of their society and culture, we will do well to attend 538
to the sphere of poetry. For it is a poetic phenomenon—that represented by
the title of this book—which constitutes both a key to the genius of Amhara
culture and a highly distinctive Amhara contribution to Ethiopian culture.

Sam-ennā warq ("wax and gold") is the formula used by the Amhara to 538
symbolize their favorite form of verse. It is a form built of two semantic
layers. The apparent, figurative meaning of the words is called "wax"; their [196]
more or less hidden actual significance is the "gold."

In its generic sense, the expression *sam-ennā warq* refers to a number of poetic figures which embody this twofold meaning. The use of such figures distinguishes the Amhara equivalent of true poetry from ordinary verse, in which everyday language is merely embellished with rhyme and rhythm. In [197]
the genre known as *qenē*, the original and more elegant kind of *sam-ennā warq* poetry, the lines are composed in Ge'ez and depend primarily on religious symbolism. But *sam-ennā warq* constructions also appear in some types of secular verse in the vernacular Amharic and, indeed, at times inform Amharic conversation.

Masters of the art of *qenē* composition have analyzed these poetic figures 538
into about a dozen different types.[4] *Sam-ennā warq* in its more specific sense 19
refers to one of these types of figures—the prototype of them all. It consists of an explicit comparison in which the subjects being compared—the wax and gold—are presented in apposition, while their predicates are rendered
jointly by a single verb which carries both a wax and a gold meaning. (This [325]
terminology is derived from the work of the goldsmith, who constructs a clay mold around a form created in wax and then, draining the wax, pours the molten gold into that form.) So, for example, if the poet's aim is to praise a hero like Emperor Menelik, he creates a wax model, like "the lion," in terms of whose actions the gold, Menelik, is depicted: "The lion Menelik crushed the wolf Italy."[5]

Keeping this dual imagery consistent throughout the stanza is a primary rule of wax-and-gold composition. A poet who mixes his metaphors is sometimes rebuked with the epithet "hermaphrodite." The following example
presents an Amharic couplet which properly embodies the *sam-ennā warq* [539]
figure:

Etsa balas balto addām ḳanfareshe
Madhānē alam lebē tasaqala-leshe.

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Since Adam your lip did eat of that Tree
The Savior my heart has been hung up for thee.

In this couplet the wax of Adam's sin and Christ's crucifixion in his behalf has been used as a form in which to pour a love message. A literal translation of the wax of the couplet is:

Because Adam ate of the apple from the Tree of Knowledge
The Savior of the World has been crucified for thee.

To savor the gold of the couplet fully, one must know that the verb meaning "was crucified," *tasaqala,* may also signify "is anxious to be near." So a literal translation of the gold would be:

Because of your [tempting] lips
My heart is anxious to be near thee.

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In other more commonly used figures, the duplexity of the message becomes less explicit. In figures known as *hīber and merīmer,* the wax and gold are combined in the same word or phrase instead of being put side by side. These figures thus correspond to the English pun. In verses which employ these figures the wax is often but a contrived and transparent excuse for getting to the real point, which appears only in the pun line. Such verses are highly prized, however, for the Amhara tends to regard the pun as a very high form of humor. Here are two examples of Amharic couplets based on simple puns:

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(1) *Ya-mīn ṭīqem ṭallā ya-mīn ṭīqem ṭajji*
Tallāt sishañu bunā adargaw enji.

Of what use is *ṭallā,* of what use is *ṭajji?*•
When seeing an enemy off, serve him coffee.

(2) *Yābbāt eddā la-lījj yebāl nabar dero:*
Bāyāt eddā gabāhu ennē-mā zandero.

In olden times a father's debt was passed down to his son;
But here I have a debt today by grandfather begun.

The pun in the first example lies in the phrase *bunā adargaw* ("serve him coffee"), which by elision becomes *bun adargaw* ("reduce him to ashes"). In the second couplet the pun hinges on the word *bāyat,* which signifies "grandfather" but may also be understood to represent *bāyhuāt* ("because I saw her"). The gold meaning of this couplet is thus: It used to be said that one inherited the debt of one's father, but in my case it was the sight of her that put me into debt.

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[273] • *Ṭallā* is a kind of beer made from barley. *Ṭajj* (pronounced *ṭajji* here for the sake of rhyme) is mead.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ethiopic verse becomes most obscure in the figure known as *wesṭa wayrā* ("inside of olive tree"). Here only the wax is given, and the listener must work to unearth the gold. Often this can be done only when the circumstances under which the verse was made up are known. The author of a *wesṭa wayrā* often refuses to reveal anything that may help the listener to grasp its hidden meaning. 538 19

The expression *wesṭa wayrā* alludes to the fact that the inner core of the olive tree is a hard substance encased by bark of a different color. The implication is that the inner sense of a *wesṭa wayrā* poem is concealed by a veneer which conveys a quite different sense and is difficult to penetrate. This figure is thus especially suitable for expressing insults in a safe way and for esoteric philosophical or religious message. Here is an instance of the latter usage: [182] 538 539 19

Ya-bāhetāwi lijj sifalleg le'ullennā
Ya-ḳristosn mesht talānt washama-nnā
Qeṭal betābalaw hono qarama-nnā.

The son of a hermit, high rank to display,
Made love with Christ's wife yesterday;
When she fed him leaves he wasted away.

The surface meaning of this tercet describes an ambitious man who had relations with "Christ's wife" in order to raise his status, for in Ethiopia having relations with a woman of high rank is one way to gain prestige. Instead of advancing his position, however, this man lost all his power when the woman fed him (medicinal) leaves. The esoteric meaning, on the other hand, refers to the experience of a hermit. His "son" is intended to symbolize his hunger, and "Christ's wife" symbolizes fasting. The "inside" meaning, the gold, is therefore that the hermit's hunger is heightened by its relations with fasting, but it diminishes when he is fed leaves, the hallowed diet of a hermit.

The mode of the various poetic figures collectively designated as *sam-ennā warq* is intellectual rather than sensuous. The chief delight of Ethiopic poetry is to attain a maximum of thought with a minimum of words. This effect is reached, as we have seen, through subtle allusions and plays on words. The point may be a serious moral comment, the understanding of which requires one to decipher hidden references to biblical passages or sacred legends; or it may be a jest about love based on a pornographic pun. In any case, the more ingeniously compact and obscure the construction of the verse, the more pleased will be the poet and his audience. Weighty (i.e., mysterious) verse is the ideal, for as the Amhara say, "weighty verse, like heavy clothing, warms the insides." 538 19

The creation of the wax and gold figures was an integral part of the development of *qenē*, the genre of verse composed to be sung at the conclusion of devotional services in the church. And *qenē* appears to be a specifically 538 19 174

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth cntury: 175* 633 517 538 [539]

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts. 175* 633 517 53

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā,* or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā.* 175* 159 793 633

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām,* the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere. [535] [178]

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā [214] [538]

11;Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

for a while at Masala Māryām in Manz. His sojourn there, remembered to this day, is recorded in the amusing rhymed formula with which he exacted tribute from the various districts near his camp: 175* [539]

> From Agāntchā/fifty *ḳoretchā* ("saddles"); from Hulu Dehā/fifty *dehā* ("servants"); from Aftanaṭ/fifty *naṭ* ("rugs"); from Godambo/fifty *gambo* ("jars of drink").

It was from Manz that Ba'eda Māryām brought priests to officiate at his coronation in Djagno.[20] According to Shoan beliefs, finally, Manz also served as a refuge during the invasions of Ahmad Grāñ for the fourth son of Lebna Dengel (1507–40), Yā'qob, who is said to have fled there with the royal raiments and received succor from the local inhabitants.

According to *Futuḥ el-Habacha,* Manz was ravaged by the forces of Grāñ in 1531.[21] Scarred timbers identified as pillars of churches burned during that invasion may be seen there today. Local legends concerning the history of Manz relate for the most part to the miraculous feats of strength which Grāñ is said to have performed there and to the resettlement of Manz after Grāñ. These legends speak of the "founding" of Manz by three men—Māmā, Lālo, and Gērā—who were sent by one of the emperors to settle and govern that territory. As the story goes, the emperor offered each of them as much land as he could cross in a single day. They set out from the Adabāy River, today a western boundary of Manz, and the result of their long day's journey was the present tripartite division of Manz into Māmā Meder, Lālo Meder, and Gērā Meder. This explains why Gērā Meder is the largest of the three districts—for Gērā's horse was the strongest! 175* 173

Although their deeds are recorded only in the form of legends, Māmā, Lālo, and Gērā were historical personages. They appear to have lived in the latter part of the seventeenth century.[22] Gērā was the most powerful of the three, as the legend of his horse suggests. He controlled most of the land of Manz, including Afqārā, an impregnable mountain fortress which was used for generations as a garrison for political prisoners. He set aside a large stretch of grassland to be used by local people for grazing cattle and providing thatch for roofs, where still today it is forbidden to plow or build houses. 175*

Not these three lords, however, but one of their rivals—Nagassē Kristos Warada Qāl, commonly known as Nagāssi—put Manz on the map. Nagāssi was born to a wealthy proprietor in the district of Agāntchā. As a young man he showed outstanding valor and skill at arms. His success in battle won him many followers, who helped him advance from enlarging his possessions at the expense of his neighbors to the conquest of Galla territories southeast of Manz.

Nagāssi's ambition was fed by his victories. He proclaimed himself ruling prince of Shoa, and vanquished those who disputed this claim, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

*175 who trailed the Gondar camp to make spades and plowshares, spears and swords, and so improved the quality of agriculture and warfare in Shoa.

The reign of Abbīyē's son Amhāyas was long and prosperous. New lands were conquered, new settlements founded, new churches built. Amhāyas seized the strategic mountain of Ankobar, to which the mountainous plateaus of the north and the vast plains to the south were equally accessible, and set up his official residence there. The last of Shoa's princes to pay his respects to the court at Gondar, he was received there as an emissary of his father with great honors and treated more like a sovereign ally than a vassal.[27] When Amhāyas died, he left for his son Asfā Wassan what had by then become the vast principality of Shoa.

Asfā Wassan's youth was spent in a monastery in Manz, where he became proficient at composing *qenē* under the tutelage of a master from Gondar. As a ruler he resembled many of Gondar's monarchs, preferring to spend his time in religious pursuits and the embellishment of his capital (Ankobar) than on the warpath. The actual business of warfare he entrusted to his generals, who in a string of victories subjected dozens of Amhara and Galla districts to his authority. Nevertheless, when forced to fight, he lost no time in showing who was *marīdāzmātch*. When two of his generals rebelled, he defeated them in what Cecchi called "the most terrible and bloody battle which the Shoans remember."[28]

Asfā Wassan deserved his name, which means "Expand the Border." He brought nearly all the petty states of Shoa under his rule, by alliance or by
*175 conquest. A famous exchange of couplets between Asfā Wassan and Ṭedu,
• 539 governor of Morat, formed the prologue to one instance of this expansion. Ṭedu, fearing the absorption of his territory, made the following rhyme:

Asfā Wassan Yefāt ṭanḳeraw yerrasu
Morat ṭeduāl belaw ḳamamalālasu.

O Asfā Wassan, stoutly plow Yefāt
Rather than eye what's baking in Morat.

*175 There is gold in the verb in the second line, *ṭeduāl*, which may signify not
538 only "is baking" but also "Ṭedu is there." The couplet may thus be read:
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195 O Asfā Wassan, stoutly plow Yefāt
Rather than think about Ṭedu in Morat.

Upon hearing this couplet Asfā Wassan composed the following reply:

La-mofar la-qanbar yamihonaññen
Sālquarṭaw alqerem zandro ṭedun.

To get me yokes and plowbeams in this year
I will not fail to cut the juniper.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

The pun here is on the word *Ṭedu*, for the name of Asfā Wassan's adversary means "the juniper." Morat soon began to pay him tribute.[29] 175* [538] [539] [195]

Asfā Wassan also accomplished much in the field of administration. He organized his realm into four large provinces, which were in turn subdivided into thirty-nine districts—half Amhara lands, half lands taken from the Galla. He improved the laws and introduced a more orderly system of finance. He supported agriculture and encouraged trade.

Such prosperity could scarcely be viewed with indifference by Gondar. Takla Giyorgis I (1779–84), who was trying vainly to restore imperial authority at Gondar, marched to Shoa with a large force. Asfā Wassan, not ready for an open clash with the emperor's troops, handled the situation with characteristic Shoan adroitness. He heaped gifts upon the emperor and his lieutenants. Protesting his fealty, he noted that if he had extended his own dominions, it had been at the expense of their common enemy, the Galla. Finally, he said he was willing to pay tribute to the emperor, but at the same time was ready if necessary to meet him in battle. The lords who accompanied Takla Giyorgis sympathized with the Shoan, and the emperor was not strong enough to prevent their defection.

Worried by a monkish prophecy that his life would be short, Asfā Wassan emptied the state coffers in order to subsidize churches and monasteries. He lived to fill them time and again, during a reign that lasted thirty-three years. Throughout that time he never forgot his church schooling, and frequently invented *qenē* to be repeated in the churches on holidays. But Asfā Wassan was a true son of Manz, and left the memory, as Harris noted, of "a great Nimrod and an unparalleled warrior."[30]

The next ruler, Wassan Sagad, was the offspring of a fortuitous union between Asfā Wassan and Woizero Atmotch Hono, a relative of the imperial family at Gondar and owner of vast properties in Wallo. En route from Manz to Ankobar at the end of his student days, Asfā Wassan was given hospitality at the home of this genteel woman. Not aware that the lady had in fact been brought by his father with the hope of siring offspring from her, Asfā Wassan spent the night with her. When she bore a son, and Asfā Wassan learned who she really was, he fled in terror to the monastery of Ferkutā. After sending scouts to all the monasteries in the area, Amhāyas had his son brought back and granted him pardon.

Wassan Sagad was thus kin to the highest nobility through his mother as well as his father. His noble blood, haughty disposition, and clever mind moved him to great ambitions. He convoked a large assembly of Amhara and Galla, and proclaimed himself Rās of Shoa.* Then he sent word to Rās Gugsa, power behind the throne at Gondar, that he was coming to fight, "for

* *Rās* is the highest ranking secular title in Abyssinia after *negus* ("king"). Cf. chap. v, p. 158.

[554]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

*175 643 nable. As the rainy season was approaching, Haile Malakot retreated to Shoa, where he fell sick and died. For the first time since Nagāssi, Shoa was left without an effective leader. Tēwodros marched into Manz from Wallo, and Shoa capitulated with little struggle. Eleven-year-old Menelik, son of Haile Malakot, was taken hostage.

Ten years later Menelik escaped from the camp of Tēwodros and regained Shoa. Slowly and carefully he built up his power. Tēwodros' reign raced to its tragic end. Takla Giyorgis II reigned briefly at Gondar, the last emperor to sit there. Yohānnes IV of Tigre governed the country for seventeen years. When Yohānnes died, Negus Menelik was forty-five and ready. Nagāssi's seed, eight generations later, reached the throne of all Ethiopia on November 3, 1889.

CULTURAL PROFILES

The Manzē Ethos

*175 185 The goals of Nagāssi and his descendants, apart from simple increase of power, were to recover the lands taken from their fathers and to stiffen the authority of Christianity in Shoa. Their success was virtually unbroken by [181] reason of exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance. These are ideals and qualities embodied par excellence in the people of Manz.

423 Sanctity of *rīst*, or land inherited from one's parents, is a cardinal value in 181 the Manzē scheme of things. Such land must not be given or sold to anyone who is not a close relative. People generations removed from actual residents [428] of Manz still retain claims to family land there, still cherish the idea that if they so desired they could go back and live on it. As an urbanized Manzē once told his nephew in Addis Ababa: "No matter how far you travel abroad, no matter how long you stay away, you will always be able to think of your [539] family land in Manz as your true home." This sentiment is expressed in a proverb:

> *Ya-Manz rīst be-shi amatu/la-bālabētu.*
> Manz *rīst* to the thousandth year/belongs to the owner.

A squatter may fight to keep his land from falling to some stranger who claims it as having belonged to his grandfather, but in his heart he respects the values that support such a claim.

[577] By Manzē standards the good man is thus one who defends the land of his fathers, seeing that it is not sold to outsiders or that foreigners do not come to [685] take it. If someone plows another's land without permission, he must be punished. If the matter can be settled through litigation, well and good; if it requires recourse to violence, so be it. To let such an offense go unavenged [691] would be the worst sort of shame. Grievances concerning their "hereditary

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

411 standing at the long church services. Above all it is a weapon of offense and
181 defense, and every Amhara male is supposed to be skilled in its use. When the *dulā* is so employed in Manz, the *bānnā* blanket is usually wrapped around the left arm to form a quick shield, the *dulā* raised high with the right to bring down on the adversary's cranium. The blows are sometimes fatal. The Manzēs are proud of their facility with the lethal stick, and nearly every district in Manz boasts that it is real "*dulā* country."

726 The Manzēs also excel at *shīllalā*, the Abyssinian war chant. This is a
533 form of boastful verse—partly intoned, partly shouted—which is declaimed by
181 warriors to "heat their blood" before hitting the warpath. Children in Manz start practicing *shīllalā* almost as soon as they leave the breast. The following
• [539] is a good specimen of Manz *shīllalā:*

> *Agarātchn Māmā agarātchn Lālo wanzātchn Dangazē;*
> *Mān abātu yāzzāl imbi senīl gizē.*
>
> Our land is Māmā, our land is Lālo, our stream the Dangazē;
> What father will order us when *imbi* we say!

Imbi is an interjection used by children to express "No!" There is a double pun in this couplet. *Mān abātu* ("Who is the father?") is a profane idiom meaning "bastard." "To say *imbi*" is another idiom, meaning "to refuse." The second line may thus be also rendered as:

> What bastard dare shove us around when we tell him to keep off our lands!

181 The Manzē code asks that a man be ready to defend his land and church
865 by force. It does not approve wanton aggression. But the Manzē's disposition
152 is notoriously aggressive, for his emotional life is relatively devoid of warmth
[577] and, on the other hand, fighting is so highly rewarded. Children are urged to be adept with the *dulā*. Their temper tantrums are welcomed as signs that they are brave. As a result the men of Manz are often overcome by the impulse toward physical aggression; assault and murder are recurrent events on their fields and trails and at their marketplaces. The discrepancy between the *norm* of physical bravery, which is operative *in certain specified circumstances*, and the *general character trait* of aggressiveness comprises a major theme in their emotional life: they feel obliged to look for justification for the aggressive actions which they have been conditioned to want to carry out. This disposition is illustrated in the words of the Manzē youth who said:

> I want very much to kill somebody. The only problem is I'm not strong enough. Perhaps one day I will be. Why is it all right to kill? People kill sheep, don't they? And sheep are innocent, they don't know anything, don't do any wrong. But man knows, he knows much, and still he does wrong: every man is bad. I wouldn't kill everybody, only the bad ones. If I had an enemy, I would kill him. Maybe I will become a soldier, and kill my country's enemies.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in such numbers that "Manzē" virtually became a synonym for "underground patriot." 829 648 186

After the liberation, as after the routing of Ahmad Grāñ's forces, the Manzē once again returned to redeem a ravished land. Slowly, the houses were rebuilt, the land was plowed once more. Churches which had been rebuilt after Grāñ's destruction only to be razed by the Italians were again put into place. Tough in his spiritual as in his physical life, the Manzē doggedly re-established the culture of his own. Now as before the occupation, a man of Manz sits on the throne, promising to let no foreigner take his country's land,* while the young braves celebrate the royal line in their festive boasting: [539]

Ya-Manz ababā, ya-Manz ababā! Yābbabāl genā!
The flower of Manz, the flower of Manz! It will bloom yet again!

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

Thus far the significance of Manz and Gondar has been discussed from the point of view of an outsider. We have attempted to assess, on the basis of the best available evidence, the respective historical and cultural roles of these two noted Amhara regions. We turn now to a different though related question, namely, the significance of these two places in the minds and feelings of Ethiopians themselves. 121

Two kinds of reaction are conspicuous. To the Ethiopian Modernist, Manz and Gondar are seen primarily as outlying pockets of conservatism. Their commitments to the past move them to resist certain changes promoted by the national government, with Manz protesting modern education and Gondar defending itself against nationalist centralization. They are regarded as backward areas, representative of the many forces that are "holding Ethiopia back," and to a certain extent are disdained.

To their inhabitants, on the other hand, these places are objects of intense loyalty. For differences of identity among the Amhara are defined chiefly in terms of their *agar*, or "home country." The size of one's *agar* is relative; it depends on the context in which the symbol is used, and may be as small as a district or as large as a province. Whatever the referent, one's *agar* signifies more than a place of residence or provenience. It means "home," and all those whose families live there are regarded with special affection, while those out- 121 186 823

* On certain festive occasions the following antiphonal chant is declaimed in praise of "Ṭaqel" (the affectionate, "horse" name of Haile Selassie): [533]

[Leader:] *Mīn āla taqel mīn āla?* [539]
[Chorus:] *Agarē la-saw agarē la-saw alsaṭem ala!* [551]
[Leader:] What did Ṭaqel say, what did he say?
[Chorus:] "My country to outsiders, my country to outsiders, I will not give!" said he.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

heaven, *samāy*, the abode of supernatural beings and the souls of the dead. 565* The earth is seen as flat, though some believe its shape to be square, others 772 think it is round like a disc, and still others imagine it to extend without limit. [823] That the terrain of Ethiopia is so obviously not flat is explained by reference to the great flood, after which the parts which dried quickly became high- [773] lands (*dēgā*), the parts slow to dry becoming lowlands (*qolā*). The peasant [821] explains the greater heat of the lowlands by saying that they receive less wind than the highlands.

Beneath the earth's surface is an obscure area called *maq*, a depth to which [775] the bodies of evildoers drop after burial. There is also a large subterranean ocean, *weqniyānos*, into which all the rivers and lakes on earth descend. The [823] earth itself is held up, according to some, by a Y-shaped piece of wood; accord- [539] ing to others, by two serpents; still another view is that no support is needed other than the will of God, as the saying indicates:

> Ay, My God! Lord who stretched forth the heavens without a pillar, and the earth without tent-pegs.

The rotation of the sun *above* the earth causes the alternation of night and 565* day. The imagery of this rotation is that of someone going home at night and 821 coming out in the morning. Attitudes toward the sun are quite ambivalent. The sun is appreciated for dispersing the morning chill and for causing seed to germinate, but it is feared as a source of sickness and death.*

The moon is highly regarded, which is probably a vestige of pre-Christian [174] moon worship. At the Ethiopian latitude the moon is functional, for its bright [484] illumination facilitates night travel, especially desirable in the hotter regions. Beyond this, the moon is considered a powerful agent. It is chief of the sky, commander of an army of stars and it is the force which causes crops to grow after the sun has brought forth seedlings.

In the heavenly realm there are two regions located on either side of God's 565* dwelling-place. To the right is an area where good souls repair for an eternity 772 of ease after being judged shortly after the death of their bodies. Known both 775 as the "kingdom of heaven" and "paradise"—terms which refer to quite different spheres in the Orthodox cosmology but are fused in the vulgar mind —it is regarded as a home where food and clothes are plentiful and freely distributed. To the left is the place where wicked souls are taken by the devil to be scorched eternally in the fire of Gehenna, also called *Si'ol* (again a fusion of concepts which are distinct for the learned). This treatment of the damned is made worse by alternate dippings in icy water, though some believe that the wicked souls get a respite from their tortures on weekends.

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* The TAT's revealed a great dread of the sun; nearly every respondent interpreted one or another [125] of the cards in terms of the sun's dangerousness.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, 186
and social position.

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance 562
rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the [565]*
wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the [539]
proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar and trivial talk.

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells [539]
us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including those connected with the saintly figures of Eçhē Yohānnes and Takla Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by [841]
womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden.

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance 858
and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and [864]
cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably. After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first "age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders.

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. 882
The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches 885
forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. 888
Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults, pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon [867]
learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 571 Still another invidious distinction of considerable importance in the Amhara outlook is that between the "big man" (*ṭillīq saw*) and the commoner (*terā saw*). "Bigness" may be measured in terms of political power, economic wealth, ecclesiastical status, or any combination thereof. Though the peasant frequently has little affection for the big man, he customarily treats him with the greatest show of deference. No matter how unfamiliar a big man may be or from what part of the country he comes, the Amhara peasant sees him as entitled to unquestioning courtesy and obeisance. Analogous distinctions discriminate between the wealthy (*hābtām*) and the poor (*dehā*), and between the genteel (*çhawā*) and the rude (*bālagē*).

192 828 Yet if the Amhara takes a dim view of women, youth, and poor folk, as well as non-Amhara and non-Christians, he suffers from no illusions about homo sapiens at his best—unless they are dark illusions. The generic word for "man" in Amharic, *saw*, is the subject of a number of negative associations and idiomatic uses.[12] At its worst, the word is found in an idiom that signifies the evil eye (*ya-saw ayn*), literally: the "eye of man" (or, more idiomatically, "the eye of others"). At its best, when used to signify a fully formed human being, the word *saw* characteristically appears in the plaintive saying, *Saw yallam* ("there is no human being"); in other words, an individual who fully embodies the concept of humanity does not exist. In general, one may say that the Amhara's view of human nature is dominated by his perception of man's inherent aggressiveness and untrustworthiness.

828 [861] The Amhara believes that unformed human nature is poor raw material, and that without strict punishment throughout childhood a person will grow up to be rude and offensive toward others. As an adult, moreover, he must constantly be kept in check. The rationale commonly given for the extensive [785] schedule of fasting is that man's nature is wicked, and only by weakening himself in this manner will he be turned away from some act of aggression against others.

828 261 273 The Amharic concept of *ṭegābaññā* illustrates this view. *Ṭegābaññā* literally carries the meaning of one who has been sated with food and drink, but is normally taken to mean someone who begins to insult and pick fights with others. In their use of this and related words the Amhara express the belief that aggression is the usual consequence of being sated. Insubordinate behavior on the part of a servant or political appointee is usually explained as a result of his having been too well fed. "When a peasant gets sated he hits with his stick. . . " is the first line of a number of couplets I collected among rural Amhara. The specific effect of drinking alcoholic beverages is believed to release, not Eros, but the aggressive instincts. An Amharic proverb about [539] *tallā* states this directly: "One [glass] whets the appetite; two quenches it; three heats one up; four makes one quarrel; five brings fighting; six causes killing." Contrary to the view that world peace depends chiefly on filling

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE PHENOMENA OF AMHARA ORALITY

155 826 [856] [192] Shortly after an Amhara child is born some butter is placed in his mouth. This is done in the belief that it will keep his voice from becoming harsh. From that moment on, the mouth never ceases to be an organ of extraordinary importance in his life. Its cultural importance is reflected in the attention given to it in the Amharic vocabulary: Baeteman's *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* lists some sixty idioms built with the Amharic word for mouth, *af*, more than are listed for any other words in the language except "eye," [539] "heart," and "earth."[4] The organ is publicly celebrated in such proverbs as: "Cleverness of mouth, to the master; cleverness of hand, to the slave."

155 826 171 The oral zone is of course of universal significance. Some items of oral imagery probably appear in most languages, and manifestations of oral libido appear in many forms familiar to Westerners: the French love for gourmandism, the German passion for beer-drinking and singing, the American addiction to cigarettes, chewing gum, and "life-savers." Many of the less familiar phenomena to be related below in describing Amhara orality, moreover, are found in most of the cultures of Africa and the Middle East. But such phenomena often appear inconspicuously alongside other culturally patterned impulses and sublimations stemming from other phases of psychosexual development. What may distinguish the Amhara—and doubtless some other cultures—is the extent to which the oral zone is an object of attention and a source of behavioral modes and expressive symbolism. The Amhara, it appears, have a preoccupation with orality.

121 155 This preoccupation is manifest in three different kinds of phenomena. There are, first of all, aspects of Amhara culture which express a strong positive attachment to the infantile experience of sucking, in pure and in numerous sublimated forms. These we shall designate as the phenomena of *oral erotism*. Second, there are the aspects of Amhara culture which express a [152] strong positive attachment to the oral zone as a center for various aggressive activities—the modes which Erikson calls "incorporation by biting," "oral retention," and "oral intrusion." These we shall collectively designate as the phenomena of *oral sadism*. Finally, there are phenomena which express a conflict about the gratification of many of these oral desires; and these we shall refer to as the phenomena of *oral ambivalence*.

155 853 *Oral Erotism*

Feeding at the breast is a prominent and beloved experience in Amhara life. The Amhara infant is suckled whenever he wishes, at the slightest show of desire. Since he is rarely separated from his mother it is easy for him to satisfy himself at any time of day or night. Popular beliefs about breast-feed-

The boundaries of your lips are like the sugar cane; 155
No matter how much one sucks them, one is never satisfied. 538 832

And in one of the few lyric passages in the first novel ever written in Amharic, the author resorts to the imagery of kissing in describing the beauty of an army camp at sunset: [539]

> The plain on which they had encamped was vaster than the mind's eye could measure. Except for that hill on which he stood, there were no elevations or declivities; no roots to trip or confound the foot; not a stone to discomfit the eye. It looked like a calm sea that every breeze had spared. The boundaries of heaven and earth were united by lips of love; lip to lip they were joined like the parts of fitted basketry. It appeared as though it would hurt them to separate, that they had entered a vow not to part.[5] [539]

Talking for the sake of talking is another oral outlet of which the Amhara is generally fond. "In every country," remarked Arnauld d'Abbadie, "the plowman is miserly and sly; but the Ethiopian is, in addition, particularly loquacious."[6] The simple greeting of acquaintances evokes a barrage of ritualistic conversation, a phenomenon which stunned the Englishman Harris: 155 521

> Even two old crones, who are obviously tottering on the very brink of the grave, and who are afflicted with every pain and with every sorrow entailed by the fall of our first parents, never meet in the street without indulging in a string of good wishes which are reiterated so long as their breath will permit. "How are you? How do ye do? How have you passed your time? Are you well? Are you very well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well? Are you not well?"—are questions which serve as the prelude to a thousand other interrogatories; and at each response the Deity must be invoked as to the unadulterated happiness and perfect felicity that has been unremittingly experienced since the last meeting.[7] [596]

A number of other conventions provide further opportunities for this pleasure in talking. Anecdotes and gossip are not merely reported, but are expounded at length with the aid of colorful expressions and gestures. Riddle games are enjoyed by adults as well as young people. Men vie with one another at length in a semiformalized kind of playful boasting. In the church schools all reading is done aloud, a habit which persists among many students of secondary schools when they study outside of class. [524] [876]

A related pleasure in making sounds for their own sake appears in the Amhara's delight in repeating the words or nonsense syllables of his folk songs. On a more refined level, there is his evident pleasure in lulling over and savoring the lines of a choice couplet. We have here for a whole culture an instance of what Brill has ascribed to the poets: 191 155

> Poetry is a sensuous or mystic outlet through words, or, as it were, through a chewing and sucking of nice words and phrases. The poet plays with the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfata*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor [539] Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 574 527 [575] [794] Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious fraternal association known as the *māhebar,* is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māhebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā,*" literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Amharic proverb, and even the Emperor when visiting a school expects students to remain seated if they are at the dining table when he arrives.

Some indication of the comparative significance of this concern about eating and drinking in the Amhara psyche is afforded by a recent cross-cultural investigation of dreams. Obtained from samples of young male respondents in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and the United States, the dreams were evaluated with respect to the presence or absence of themes of "manifest orality": scenes of someone desiring, looking for, or consuming food or drink. The proportion of Ethiopian respondents (mostly Orthodox Amhara from the Gondar area) who revealed manifest orality in their dreams was found to be *64 per cent*. By contrast, the proportion of those in a sample of non-Muslim Nigerians whose dreams showed manifest orality was 38 per cent, and that in the sample of Americans was only 22 per cent.[11]

The Amhara custom of giving *gurshā* plays up the erotic component of eating. *Gurshā* means "mouthful" and, as already noted, refers to a wad of food which one places in another's mouth, usually as a gesture of affection. *Gurshā* are exchanged between husband and wife and among relatives and friends. They are often given to children, especially in families of higher status, and to favored servants and retainers as well. The *gurshā* is of such meaning in Amhara experience that it is referred to in a number of Amharic idioms. First of all it means a present or a tip—literally, *pourmanger*. It also refers to the charge of a gun: the gun is a beloved object, and a *gurshā* is what one places in its mouth. In contemporary usage, it refers to flashlight batteries.

In connection with love and many other subjects, a good deal of the imagery of Amharic verse relates in one way or another to eating and drinking. The following sample of proverbs and couplets may convey some of the flavor of this phenomenon:

*Ṭajj** has no specks; a poor man has no friends.

• • •

[Use] proverbs in conversation; [drink] *ṭajj* in a carafe.

• • •

Hand and fly-whisk; mouth and *ĭnjarā*† [go together].

• • •

No matter how much one plows, nothing tastes so good as *goman*.‡

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* *Ṭajj*, it may be remembered, is the Ethiopian wine made of honey.

† *Ĭnjarā* is the staple pancake.

‡ *Goman* is a kind of cabbage plant that requires no plow cultivation.

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
155
• 539

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[776] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

594 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
[554] *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
152

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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *ĭnjarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training and Personality*. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[13] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formulation, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ĭnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution
789 of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of
261 eating something or presenting food to someone.[14] It is a theme conspicuous
173 in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85). According to *The Book of the*
[539] *Riches of Kings,* Yekuno Amlāk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zāgwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[15]

155 *Oral Sadism*

152 In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the envi-
201 ronment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When
155 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong
152 biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following
726 refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:
[539]

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[16]

155 The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagi-
266 nation. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the
773 story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater
[532] of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

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Mary intervened, placing on the empty side for good deeds a goblet of water which Balaya Sab had once given to a sick beggar out of pity; and the Eater of Men was saved. In the pictorial representation of this legend, Balaya Sab is portrayed cutting off pieces of human flesh with a curved knife in the manner in which raw beef is attacked at the Amhara table. 155 266 773

Most Amhara know some sort of tale about a cannibal. The topic is familiar enough that they are able to invent new ones. One boy told me he made up the following story to explain the nature of cannibals to his younger brother: 155 266 538

> Once there was a cannibal. He lived among many people. He had no food in his house; he was poor. But even if he had not been poor, he just liked to eat the flesh of man. In his house was a big hole which he covered with a carpet. He would invite somebody into his house and tell him to sit down on the chair over the hole. When the person sat down and fell into the hole, he would climb down by a ladder and eat him. In this way he ate all the people in his village one by one—about a hundred people. When he had eaten all the people in his village he returned to live in the forest, because there was nobody left to eat.

The cannibal motif appears in more subtle form in the parlor game known as *gabatā,* in which the aim is to accumulate as many pebbles as possible by moving them around a board with six holes on each side. In *gabatā* the active acquisition of pebbles is called "eating" and the passive acquisition is "drinking." Similarly, those who play chess or checkers refer to the process of taking a man as "eating" him. It is notable, moreover, that the Amhara version of the old riddle about how to transport a certain number of incompatible objects across the river in one boat is posed in terms of three human beings and three cannibals. 155 266 524

Oral sadism is further manifest among the Amhara by the nature of their speech. The Amhara are not only loquacious but also tend, both in manner of delivery and in content of conversation, to be biting and intrusive. Backbiting, insulting, arguing, and litigating are among their more characteristic modes of self-expression. 155 521 191

Backbiting and insulting, and the fear of being the victim of such activities, are the focus of much attention in Amhara culture. Concern about the former is expressed in a number of Amharic proverbs: 155 521 578 [539]

> If the mouth lacks work, it will backbite a friend.
>
> If you praise a man once, you will be in trouble if you backbite him later.
>
> If a man is a backbiter, listen for my sake when he talks to you.

Straightforward insults erupt the polite surface of Amhara social relations only under unusually heated circumstances, though it is customary for social superiors to direct a certain amount of abusive banter at their inferiors as

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of moral pressure for the reconciliation of conflict, it appears to place greater emphasis on the acting out of aggression. It does this, first of all, by defining a number of acts as offenses which justify violent retribution of some sort. Appropriation of one's land, seduction of one's wife, and injury of one's relatives are acts of this nature, and it is incumbent on the offended party to seek personal revenge or, as the Amhara put it, "to return the debt" (*bedder mammalas*). It is considered shameful to remain passive when so affronted, an attitude expressed in the following couplet:

Balaw ba-dimotfar daggmaw ba-wānzā,
Bābbāt ristennā yallam bamist wāzzā.

Shoot him with the dimotfar,* get him again with
a wanza,*
Taking your father's land or your wife away,
that is no joking matter.

Aggressiveness is further encouraged by the Amhara ego ideal of masculinity.[13] The identity of Amhara males is very much bound up with their capacity for aggressiveness, by both violent and verbal means. A man who has killed someone is regarded with a certain amount of veneration, and the act of killing is itself praised in verses such as:

Saw gadlu saw gadlu: saw magdal yebajāl,
Saw yālgadala saw sihēd yāngolājāl.

Kill a man! Kill a man! It is good to kill a man!
One who has not killed a man moves around
sleepily.

Similarly, verbal aggression is encouraged by the inclusion of excellence at litigation and insulting in the domain of proper male behavior.[14] The bestowal of insults is a rather stylized, if dangerous, procedure among the Amhara. According to Amhara customary law, insulting is a legal offense. The new criminal code provides for a gradation of penalties according to the seriousness of the insult, including fines which run from Eth$15 to as much as hundreds of dollars. The most serious insults include *bāryā* ("slave"); *ṭayb* ("evil-eyed artisan"); and *qomātā* ("leper"). Insults of lesser to medium degrees of seriousness include the following:

hodām	"greedy" (literally, "bellied")
wafrām	"fat"
saḳārām	"drunkard"
quashāshā	"dirty"
amadām	"scaly-faced" (literally, "ashen")

* Types of rifles.

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older or more prestigious males are addressed as *gāshē* ("my shield"); the corresponding term for females is *etēyē* ("my sister"). Much older people are addressed by words signifying "father" or "mother."

It is true that the forms of respect toward superiors are often repeated mechanically and sometimes serve to cover up a distinctly hostile disposition toward certain superiors. They nevertheless do represent to some extent a genuine solidaristic sentiment—perhaps the most profound and influential social sentiment in the Amhara social system. It rests in the last analysis on the fact that the Amhara family develops a pronounced sense of filial devotion as well as habits of filial obedience. Amhara society can dispense with horizontal solidarities and communal attachments because it is held together, sufficiently for traditional purposes, at least, by an infinite network of "father-son" relationships.

The egoistic element in the hierarchical pattern is further modified by a sort of joking relationship that sometimes develops between inferiors and superiors. The harsh interrogation of inferiors at times shades into a sort of wry banter; sons or servants may be called "thief" or "scoundrel" in an undertone of unmistakable affection. At times, moreover, the direction of the jesting may be reversed. Amhara servants are noted for playing practical jokes on their masters, which the latter usually appreciate when the jests are clever.[21] Here again, wax and gold is the perfect medium—for expressing aggression against a superior while at the same time appearing to maintain the respect relationship. The following couplet, attributed to Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē, aptly illustrates this genre:

Ennānta maḳuānnentotch ba-mīn waṭ balātchu?
Eññām ba-shurwātchen ennāntam bāssātchu.

What sauce, my lords, was on your plate?
We had but peas; 'twas fish you ate.[22]

Here the poet appears to be complimenting the nobles on their more elegant cuisine at a banquet; but there is a pun on the word *bāssātchu,* literally "with your fish," for it may also be taken to mean "you took more than your share."

Within the hierarchical pattern, finally, one finds expressed a certain amount of generosity which, as we have suggested, is relatively uncommon in relations among peers. This appears in connection with the *begging* and *almsgiving* which occur in many sectors of Amhara society. For church students beyond the elementary level, begging is the primary means of livelihood. Youths who have left home to study *zēmā* or *qenē* with a master wander about today, as in former times, carrying small baskets and pleading: "For the sake of Mary! For the sake of God!" in order to get their daily morsels. The activity is so organized that when a large number of students

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proverb which stresses the rights of women in this regard gives the following advice: 121* 593 586 [539] •

> *Bālāgar siṭagab yemaṭāl ba-degger;*
> *Tayawennā nay qitāwen yegāgger.*
>
> When a peasant gets sated he beats you with wood;
> Leave and come home, let him bake his own bread!

A couple who have firmly decided upon divorce need simply call in their relatives or go before the *çhĭqā shum* in order to have their property properly divided. The only recourse to judicial process is when, as often happens, disputes break out concerning the division of property. In the *damoz* form of marriage, in which there is no civil oath, divorce is yet simpler. The wife is given certain presents and a monthly salary for the duration of the marriage. When the husband has to leave for another part of the country, or if the couple quarrel, they simply separate without further ado.

Despite its heavy claim on the energies of its members, then, the Amhara kinship system is such as to make members of the nuclear family relatively independent of extended relationships, and to give the individual marriage partners important areas of independence from each other. 121* 593 594

Religious Organization

Membership in the Monophysite Church is automatic for all Amhara except a small percentage who are Muslim. This membership is symbolized by the ceremony of baptism, performed for male infants on the fortieth day and for females on the eightieth. At that time the child receives a special Christian name in addition to his regular family name. 121* 795 794 [851] [553]

Certain obligations are incumbent upon every member of the church. Foremost among these is the requirement of fasting, which begins for children of both sexes at about the age of seven and introduces a considerable element of constraint into the lives of the Amhara. Second, there is the obligation to observe the Sabbaths and the main holidays by refraining from arduous physical labor on those days. In addition, each household is obliged to contribute a certain quantity of grain to the local church every year.* [785] [796]

Apart from the rigorous fasting requirements, and the injunction not to work on holy days—a dubious hardship—the individual is relatively free of ritual obligations. The rituals demanded by the church are so manifold, and so sacred, that responsibility for them is given to the clergy, and the laymen

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* In some areas this is a fixed amount per household (e.g., one or two *quana*); in others it is proportionate to the wealth of the family. It is collected by a lay official of the church, the *gend alaqā*, though sometimes by the *gabaz*.

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*121 538 156 [126] sinuate insults through the ambiguities of his compliments, as was illustrated above. *Shillalā,* declaimed to arouse male courage before battle, is also heard at weddings and other festive occasions. Another type of exclamatory verse (*ho-berē*) is sung by the peasant at harvest time as he drives his cattle around the threshing floor. Verse of sorrow (*engurguro*) is intoned at time of bereavement or during moments of loneliness. Finally, in the conviviality of a drink-house enlivened by a minstrel, alone at work, or with a group of friends on various occasions, the Amhara finds that verse provides a medium for thoughts on almost any subject—people, places, animals, weather, love, work, and death. The following poem illustrates an important quality found in many of these verses, pessimism and irony, especially common in verses about love.

[539] Fish on the cliff, baboons in the sea;
The ass after honey, while hay draws the bee;
On a baking-pan of wax, butter to see;
Or a monk from Zegamel monastery
In the pagan land of Metcha to bury;
With an unsuited person in love to be;
Thus has it ended, my affair with thee.
Leave it, forget it, just let it rest—
A hapless ass at a hyena's breast.

[533] [534] These various sorts of verse may be either sung or spoken. The auditory effect is often enhanced by the accompaniment of musical instruments. When serious *qenē* has been recited by its author in church, it is usually repeated by a chorus of *dabtarā* singing to the slow beat of drums and sistrums. The sad strains of *engurgo* are sometimes accompanied by the mellow ten-stringed lyre, while an instrumental background for livelier subjects may be provided by the Abyssinian banjo or one-stringed violin.

Throughout these varieties of verse forms, certain conventions are followed. Most important, the lines are supposed to rhyme; that is, end with the same consonant-plus-vowel. Inferior poets achieve this rhyme at the expense of the words they use. In addition, proper rhythm must be maintained; the lines must not "break." This means that the flow of the line must be smooth and that the metrical pattern in one line—based on the number of accents, not syllables[34]—should be paralleled by the others. A poet who breaks his lines is satirized by being dubbed a "lion."

While observing these rules—and, in the case of *qenē,* the much more complicated rules pertaining to stanza forms and poetic figures—the Amhara poet *must also be original.* In the production of verse, individuality is explicitly emphasized. Poets who use verses composed by others—this is primarily true of students of *qenē*—are insulted with the term *lēbā* ("thief"). Similarly, a poet should not repeat himself. If he repeats the same word

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121 nally, data were gathered relating to the modes of acquiring, exercising, validating, and conserving powers of prophylaxis, diagnosis, and therapy. Here, as in the other areas of data gathering, a necessary distinction was made between the perceptions of practitioners and those of their clients.

*793 869 75 197 • 539 While the secular medical traditions of Ethiopia are exclusively oral, powerful cleric healers known as debteras have traditionally employed diagnositc, prophylactic, and therapeutic texts written in Ge'ez, the language of the Church, and in the vernacular. Numerous debtera texts gave been collected in the libraries of Europe and the United States, and valuable translations, most notably by Marcel Griaule, Deborah Lifchitz, and Stefan Strelcyn, have been published. These published translations, together with translations made in the field with the assistance of clerics, have been utilized in the writing of those sections of Chapter Four dealing with the debtera's medical texts.

*795 114 127

121 171 Although the focus of this dissertation is limited to the region in which field research was conducted, it should not be overlooked that the Amhara share important cultural affinities with peoples, now largely Islamic, occupying lands extending from the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.

000 The highlands of Begemder, Tigre, and Eritrea form

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17 peoples who penetrated deep into the highlands, making many converts among the Christians. Even after the defeat of the Muslim armies in the sixteenth century and the subsequent rennaisance of the Ethiopian polity, relations with the Islamic world persisted, augmented now by the presence of Abyssinian Muslims permanently settled in the highlands.

*755 Within the context of Ethiopian medicine, these
*787 widespread cultural affinities are most obvious in the
*793 works of the cleric healer (the debtera), and in the
177 practices of the zar possession cult. For example, in their numerological operations, the debtera's divinatory texts repeat the gematria manipulations of the Kabbalah, while the ideology which rationalized these formulations clearly reiterates the astrological lore of Islamic sa-
177 vants. Similarly, affinities are obvious between Ethio-
778 pian and Islamic amulets, in their construction, in the design of talismanic devices, and in the ends for which
*757 they are manufactured. Nor is evidence of the translation of Islamic medical treatises into Ge'ez and Amharic
177
• 539 lacking. Here, however, these works, particularly regarding humoral theory, have enjoyed only a very limited diffusion, and have been subordinated to indigenous medi-
* 787 cal notions. Finally, the zar cult, in whose coteries many of Begemder's women belong, is no local phenomenon, but appears in one form or another throughout this entire culture area.

* 753 pitiated with zar-favored foodstuffs. Because of this,
776 they are loosely associated with the zars. Unlike the
782 latter, however, they are vague phantoms with whom no
* [755] communication is possible; their demands are known from
* [192] convention and, once satiated, leave the sickman permanently.

776 Zars contrast with ganels in several significant
779 respects. The zar lives in a world which parallels but is distinct from man's own; it is a world whose existence, together with that of the zars themselves, is denied by
* [192] the Coptic Church. The ganel's existence is entirely earth-bound, and he is identified by the Church as the Abyssinian satan (seytan). Whereas it is the zar which initiates ties with his human host, the ganel is forced into such relationships by his human partner. The zar's host may be anyone, the ganel's partner is always a male ecclesiastic who possesses a store of esoteric knowledge.

* 753 The ganel's appearance is known from scriptural
776 references and, in addition, they are infrequently seen.
* [539] When visible, the ganel appears as a tall and thin black-
* [192] man, Nilotic except for certain details. Descriptions by laymen are generally hearsay, since madness (ibidet) strikes the unprotected human who looks on a ganel; if the glance is returned, the effects are mortal. So dangerous is the ganel's person that even contact with his shadow leaves the victim stammering and given over to

*755 *793 ensorcelling spells and rituals is mainly limited to certain debteras, the Coptic scholars among whom the *755 ganel's human intimates are also found. Since laymen • 539 are generally illiterate and unfamiliar with the litur- [212] gical language (Ge'ez) in which spells are composed, they are unable to master the long lists of magical names and injunctions which are associated with powerful spells. Consequently, although laymen occasionally own ensorcelling spells and rituals, these spells are generally abbreviated and invariably weak. In addition, lay-owned spells and rituals are usually obtained from questionable sources, since the layman is unlikely to possess a medium appropriate for "purchasing" such knowledge.

*753 754 Human illness-causing powers may be inherited or congenital, as well as learned. In Begemder Province, inherited powers are limited to budas, Falasha wer-hyenas. The buda's dangerous abilities reach full potency after pubescence, when the hyenas' nocturnal cries compel him to spend the night with them feasting upon disinterred human cadavers. At dawn, the buda returns home, assuming a benign demeanor until his morbid attentions are [826] fixed upon a living victim. Many of these are persons *[192] of "good blood" (tiruw dem sew), individuals who have inherited the light and unblemished complexion favored by Amhara, although other attractive physical features

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tera. They are described, in terms of their constituent elements and operational goals.

*793 "Herbal" therapies. Pharmacologically, the debtera's
*755 therapies are, with an exception, indistinguishable from
*278 those of the secular herbalists. Indeed, where possible,
[869] the debtera obtains new therapies from obliging secular
• [539] therapists, setting them down in a book he keeps for this purpose (yisowat himem medhaniyt meshav, or hivri'i isowat). In contrast to the therapies practiced by secular herbalists, however, the debtera often supplements otherwise prosaic therapies with exotic, non-botanical ingredients (for example, owl's wing, hair from a lion's mane, blood of sheep's spleen), often employed in fumitories and libations.

*787
*755 Digam and Kitab. The digam is a syncretic invoca-
539 tion constructed from passages extracted from the Old
*[192] Testament (particularly Psalms), the New Testament (particularly the Gospels), zeyma (the litanies of the Mass), and devotional books dedicated to the saints (the lives of the Saints, the Images of the Saints); asmat, magical power derived from the secret names of Jesus and the Almighty; and requests for specific assistance.

From an operational point of view, each digam communicates five messages. 1) The digam indicates the supernaturals to whom the appeal is directed. An address

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to the Father, Son, Holy Spirit and their essential oneness[26] inevitably begins the text. Subsequently, Jesus, Mary, persons of the Old and New Testaments, and angels by name, singly or in combination, are cited. 2) The digam indicates the misfortune-bearing agent against which the assistance is sought. These are identified as either a category of agents (for example, ganels, budas, sorcerers), or as specific, named agents (generally individual ganels). The digam also frequently indicates specific misfortunes against which protection is asked. Although a causal link is assumed, between the agents and ailments mentioned in the digam, the link is made explicit in only a minority of cases, as, for example, when the ganel Šowtaley is associated with childhood aynitila (pica). 3) The digam further notes the power of the supplicant's supernatural protector to bring about the desired ends. This power, traced to the Almighty, is described in numinous allusions, each as "By the strength of Your names," "He who slays, heals, makes life," "Inextinguishable Light," "Omnipotent," "Fortress," "Conqueror of Evil". Similarly, this power may be associated with analogous precedents. For example,

[6]Reflecting the monophysite character of the Ethiopian Coptic Church.

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TABLE 8

ABINET CATEGORIES AND ACTIVITIES

1. Abinet Categories

Key:

x=always present (x)=frequently present o=absent

Abinet	CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS					
	"Herbal Therapy"	Digam Read	Digam Write	Telsem	Manipulation of text	Other
A. Debtera therapy (preparation)	x	x	o	o	o	o
B. Kitab amulet (preparation)	(x)	(x)	x	x	o	o
C. Awdunigist divination	o	o	o	o	x	o
D. Academic abinet	(x)	(x)	o	o	o	o
E. Other commercial, inoffensive works	o	x	o	o	o	x
F. Kifat destructive works	o	x	o	o	o	x
G. Ganel-calling	o	x	o	o	o	x

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hemorrhaging is countered with the reference "As you curdled the might of the wind and hale," protection from the buda's eye is sought with "As you saved Joseph from the clutches of evil brigands," assistance in learning and memory notes "As You enlightened the heart (i.e., seat of the intellect) of Moses and loosened the bonds of his tongue". 4) The digam includes a petition for either an intrinsic improvement (e.g., "Illuminate my heart like the sun," "Uncover the eyes of my memory"), for his protection from external dangers ("Save me," "Conceal me"), or for the diminution of his oppressors (e.g., "Disperse my enemies," "Cast them out as anathema"). 5) Finally, the supplicant is identified as faithful to the Trinity, and abject but for the assistance he asks.

In the abstract, debteras consider a digam to be equally efficacious whether it is recited or written. In a practical context, however, the contrast between the written and recited digam is significant. Since the debtera's public is overwhelmingly illiterate, they are unable to read a digam, as the debtera does. The problem of memorizing even one lengthy digam, let alone the three, four or more that the peasant carries in his kitabs (amulets), makes memorization an unlikely alternative from the client's point of view. The debtera, for his part, sees the sale of a written digam as profesionally a very different act from selling a text for

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recitation. The first is a professional service provided for a client, the second marks a loss of professional capital, since the erstwhile client would then be free to transmit this knowledge to still other clients of the debtera. Thus, it is only the debtera himself who recites the digam; his recitations are generally adjuncts to the preparation of herbal therapies and the gathering or processing of ingredients which will be included in a kitab.

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From a medical point of view, the contrast between written and recited digam is equally important. First, there is the matter of the duration of a digam's effectiveness. In general, a recited digam must be spoken aloud daily, lest its efficacy be interrupted. The effects of the written digam, on the other hand, are continuous, so long as the text remains legible and the digam is renewed annually. Once a digam has been sewn into its kitab, it cannot be removed without losing its potency. Thus, the digam's legibility is known only indirectly, and is assumed to remain legible unless made wet; once exposed to water, it is considered no longer effective. The owner of a kitab guarantees its continued potency by burying it for a twenty-four hour period, beginning on the eve of the new year, generally beneath his threshhold. Necessary cautions aside, the effective life span of certain kitabs is sometimes no more than seven

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or nine years, depending upon the debtera's recipe. Since a digam customarily includes the name of the supplicant, the usefulness of the kitab ends with the death of its owner.

Second, the recited digam derives its efficacy from a single, verbal, dimension. In contrast, the effect of a digam written into a kitab is amplified by a variety of non-textual elements. When written, the digam's script is most often set down from left to right, in the conventional direction of written Amharic and Ge'ez. Occasionally, however, a recipe indicates that the digam's effects can be better achieved if produced in another format, particularly a circular one. Another graphic device is the appearance of a telsem, a talismanic drawing appropriate to text, together with the written digam. The very materials which are used to set down digam and telsem are chosen and combined to maximize the achievement of the desired goal. The debtera must apply details regarding both the animal source of the parchment on which the digam is written (e.g., antelope, he-goat) and its dimensions, for it is often required that the parchment be tailored to the client's height. The composition and color of the ink used are a further concern. The text is generally copied in some combination of the sebat kolmat ("seven colors": pigments of red, blue, black, yellow, brown, new grass green, leaf green) which have

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been mixed together with other ingredients (such as sacramental oil, juice or sap, animal blood or urine). The recipe further states which segments of the text (e.g., asmat) are to be represented in a contrasting [824] color (usually red). Finally, the botanical variety of reed with which the text is written may be determined also.

Beyond the effects gained from the manufacture of the digam itself, the text's goals are further augmented by materials which are included in the kitab, together [237] with the digam. These include, as indicated by the debtera's recipe, botanicals, often together with such exotic ingredients as a designated number of hairs from a lion's mane. The outer cover of the kitab is made of leather, but a debtera must determine if it should come from a wild or domestic animal, and, if the latter, what its sex and color should be. The digam is sewn into this, but whether the stitch should be to the right or to the left, whether the thread should be cotton or silk, and what its color should be, must also be con- [801] sidered first. The number of stitches to be made is likewise relevant, for numerological considerations suffuse the entire process of making the kitab. Nor are the makers of the kitab neglected; whether the debtera should be sexually continent before writing the digam, whether the cord by which the kitab is worn should be

woven by a virgin or a post-menopausal woman, are frequently relevant questions. Before giving the kitab to his client, the debtera may find it useful to recite a digam over it, perhaps accompanying this recitation with some activity, such as walking a designated numberof circuits around a church. Finally, the knowledgeable debtera can prescribe the part of the client's body where the kitab will work most effectively, on the arm, around the neck, at the groin or arm pit, whether right side or left.

782 Although laymen recite prayers which are analogous to the debtera's digams, they are exclusively verbal and without asmat. Amhara customarily pray on retiring and waking; there are also occasional prayers after meals. Prayers at home are always performed by individuals, and are directed to the Almighty, Jesus, Mary, and the saints of the Church. Prayers to the Almighty either thank Him for fulfilling requests made in previous prayers, or ask for special favors. The layman asks for protection from imminent danger and unknown enemies, for injury to those hostile to him, for wealth (especially land), good fortune, and long life; his most frequent request, however, is that his good health and that of other members of his household be maintained or restored. Prayers to saints are usually to Kidus Makael, Kidus Yowhanis, Kidus Gebre Menfis, and, particularly, the eponymous saint of the

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*787 *793 869 Students who are more advanced in abinet studies consider the novice's acquisitions to be trivial and inocuous, because their goals are modest and they lack significant asmat. The young kiyne student, however, puzzles over whether these studies involve the coercion of supernaturals of the Church, instead of the humble and supplicatory attitude he wishes to express. Thus, the student often grows uneasy concerning these first acquisitions, and many, unable to reconcile their material and moral interests, go no further in their abinet studies. For the others, however, the pragmatic advantages of the abinet continue to stimulate their acquisitive interests. Once more, the student regards his powerlessness, his lack of mundane protectors and less controversial alternatives, to be particularly important; here, he considers it to legitimize the use of minor abinet. The student supports this perspective by emphasizing that the abinet are confined to his own immediate needs, and never used as a commercial service for others. Finally, by participating in the Mass and ecclesiastical scholarship, he expects to mitigate any taint acquired through these abinet activities.

*787 *793 *755 • 539 After one or two excursions into the lowlands, the young student who has already accomodated himself to the use of personal abinet comes to intensify his interest in prophylactic works, particularly digams. He seeks pro-

*755 *787 *793 • 539 tection against ganels (but as a category of agents, rather than as named individuals), against the shifta bandit, and against the wild animals of the lowlands. The prophylactic abinet that he acquires, although short on asmat, perhaps lacking telsem, and with few magical [437] [241] features of manufacture, he works into kitabs. While the student's initial stimulus for collecting these abinet is his own immediate needs, he is nonetheless aware of the commercial value of such abinet, in the form of commercial services for lowland peasants.

*793 484 Relatively few experienced debteras pay visits to the kola lands. The lowlands, considered unhealthful and dangerous by highlanders in general, are still less appealing to the mature debtera. He deprecates them for the absence of ecclesiastical establishments, and fears them for what he believes to be the shifta's predilection *755 for robbing and murdering debteras.[27] In lieu of more *793 expert services, and attracted by the moderate costs, the 437 lowlander is often anxious to purchase kitabs from visit- 484 ing students. The students, in anticipation, prepare a 539 score or more of kitabs before traveling to the lowlands;

[27] Debteras attribute the shifta's murderousness to his fear of subsequent magical revenge by the debtera.

*793 a blank space is left on each kitab, to be filled in la-
437 ter with the client's name. In general, the student
484 initially sells kitabs to the lowlands to assist him in
• 539 gathering agricultural products. The kitabs are purchased with either crops or services, and only infrequently with money. The peasant's services include recommending the student's kitabs to his neighbors, safe storage of the goods which the student has collected, and lending draught animals to bring the student's sacks up to the highlands. Sometimes, enterprising students arrange their visits in order to obtain payment in cotton, a relatively valuable product which debtera students are unable to obtain otherwise.

*793 The student's experience selling kitabs in the low-
*787 lands has a significant effect on the course of his sub-
808 sequent abinet career. First, his abinet interests are
[437] redirected. His previous acquisitions were abinet which served an immediate personal interest, and whose commercial value was adventitious. These commercial successes, however small-scale, frequently stimulate the student to obtain abinet which have an exclusively commercial value. Interest in personally useful abinet by no means ends during this period, however; often it is accelerated by the student's changing attitudes to the practice of abinet. There is a tendency to now perceive his moral interests as less opposed to these works than he had pre-

*793 is better able to obtain new abinet, since his own grow-
869 ing repertoire increases the possibility of arranging
*[278] abinet exchanges with other debteras. Moreover he is
better equiped to utilize them; he has learned much of
the Ethiopian herbal pharmacopeia, and is able to iden-
tify botanicals by the Ge'ez nomers with which they are
frequently designated in the recipes of abinet therapies
[198] and kitabs. Similarly, his mastery of Ge'ez makes pos-
sible the acquisition of complex digams.

75 In addition to acquiring individual recipes, deb-
• 639 tera-healers also seek out encyclopaedic treatices.
*[192] These are inventories of recipes, bearing Ge'ez titles
such as "book of medicine for diseases for all parts of
the body" (metshafe medhaniyt lekwiylown deweyate
akalat). In these books, recipes are grouped according
to diseases; the diseases are, in turn, classified ac-
cording to the part of the body that they affect, ar-
[177] ranged from head to feet. Stefan Strelcyn (1965), after
close examination of four such manuscripts, has commented
on the substantial uniformity of their contents and the
remarkable similarities which they share with the third
and fourth books of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine.

*793 While such treatises contain hundreds of recipes,
*755 their significance for the practice of Abyssinian medi-
*756 cine is limited by the character of their pathogenic in-
terests. As seen by his clients, the debtera's thera-

*787 client's conubial interests, and 8) enabling accurate
*793 divination through dreams.[28]

DIVINING WITH AWDUNIGIST

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*787 More than anything, it is the ability to manipu-
*793 late awdunigist texts on behalf of a client that communi-
• 539 cates a man's transition from an amulet writing student serving lowland peasants with a few simple kitabs, to a weak (tinis) debtera providing services to a highland
*[192] public. According to those debteras who have not accompanied him along the abinet path, such a debtera has now become a "tonkway", a "seer" classified together with the heterodoxical and despised balazar, tarnished by the proscribed manipulation of supernatural powers. These clerics consider the use of awdunigist objectionable,

[778] [28] Written digams and kitabs are largely confined to contingencies for which the client carries the amulet on his person. A client's agricultural interests (for example, protection from locust, birds, and rodents), in contrast, are safeguarded otherwise. Here, the client's fields are often sprinkled with the debtera's infusion, over which digams have been read. In addition, a portion of the infusion is placed in a vessel and secreted among his fields, in order to secure sustained protection. Analogous abinet are worked for the client's other property interests (for example, safeguarding from theft).

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because it assumes that forces other than the Almighty can direct man's life on earth. In addition, assertions are sometimes made which link awdunigist to satanic origins and, with more justification, to offensive applications. The awdunigist-using debtera, however, generally ignores this theological question and regards these texts in an exclusively technical context.

During the years that a debtera accumulates the abinet works discussed in the preceeding section, he also acquires awdunigist texts. These texts are a variety of abinet, with which the debtera divines the client's real needs, present and future. Using awdunigist, the debtera is able to maximize his abinet resources, to select those works best suited to the client's revealed needs and most effective in concert with one another. Since the major part of the debtera's abinet services are prophylactic (mainly in the form of kitabs), and since the client's own divinatory techniques are relatively uninformative and often unreliable, it is the debtera himself who must generally prescribe prophylaxis. Thus, it is mainly through owning and manipulating awdunigist texts that the debtera enjoys the opportunity for the commercial exercise of his prophylaxes.

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Before describing the content and use of awdunigist texts, it is necessary to first consider lay divination through dreams, indicating both its practical limitations

*787 *793 • 539 and its complementary relationship to consultation with the awdunigist-using debtera.

*787 The Hilimefoc. Dreams occur as either kijet or hilim. A hilim is an intelligible narrative whose prosaic events and recognizable persons, if properly interpreted, reveal useful information about the immediate future. In the kijet, bizarre happenings and strange actors frighten and distress the dreamer, and whose content yields no useful information. The lexicon of *[192] hilims is public knowledge. However, older laymen of either sex, are considered more knowledgeable in this regard, and the title "hilimefoc" ("dream interpreter") is generally limited to them.

Hilims contain information about a variety of subjects, including prosperity or poverty, enmity and friendship, honor and respect, marriage and divorce, the birth of children, and changes in residence. Dominant among the themes appearing in hilims are questions regarding misfortune in general, and physical well-being in particular. A hilim message indicates, first, the character of the future event, and, second, the person to whom the message refers. Six specific events are relevant to an individual's medical interests: 1) specific ailment, 2) illness, 3) death by causes unspecified, 4) ganel-caused misfortune, 5) human danger, 6) unspecified misfortune.

*787 vide a stimulus for the layman to obtain the services of an awdunigist-using debtera; this is particularly true when messages are redundant or corroborated by other kinds of information. Appendix C provides examples of hilim motifs and messages.

*787 Infrequently, an ecclesiastical student who is beg-
*793 ging for food will deliver a spontaneous prediction (imeninant), before the house of a prospective donor.
*[192] These predictions duplicate the range of hilim messages, and refer to members of the household.

*787 The Awdunigist Texts. "Awdunigist" refers to a
*793 category of texts with which a debtera divines by means
539 of arithmetical calculations. Each text is divided into two parts. The first specifies information which is required for the debtera's calculations; the second contains the information which the debtera seeks, and is arranged as a series of numbered entries, only one of which is appropriate to the debtera's input information.

The categories of input information are:

*787 Names. Each letter of the Amharic syllabary is
*793 given a set numerical value, which like all input values,
539 remains constant for any awdunigist text used. Using
551 these numbers, the debtera converts each input name to the sum of the values of its constituent letters. Ego's autonym is almost always required; his father's autonym (which is ego's patrinym) and mother's autonym are fre-

*787 *793 539 [551] quently required. Depending upon the contingency being investigated, the names of other individuals may also be included; for example, in divination concerning litigation, the judge's name is asked.

[805] *[192] Dates. The Amhara group years into cycles of four, naming each year after one of the four evangelists. Thus, 1956 is the year (zemene), of Yowhanis, 1957 of Matiyows, 1958 of Markows, 1959 of Luwkows, 1960 of Yowhanis, and so on. Each year is assigned a numerical value (for example, zemene Yowhanis is two). Months, days, and diurnal count (day is six, night is fourteen) each are numbered.

[823] Directions. Each of the eight cardinal and intermediary points is numbered.

The numerical values of all required input information are totled, and this total is then divided by a factor indicated in the text. The debtera's goal is the numerical remainder of this division; it is this figure that indicates which of the text's numbered entires is relevant to the subject (that is, the person about whom the debtera is divining).

*787 539 *[192] Broadly speaking, there are two categories of awdunigist texts. The first consists of largely redundant "astrological" (kokob) texts. These texts are based on the assumption that the course of any person's life on earth can be revealed by learning with which of twelve

*787 stars his destiny is linked.[29] For this, the debtera
539 must know the subject's autonym, the year (zemene) and month of his birth, and whether he was born during the day or night; division is by twelve. Here, the text indicates both the name of the subject's star, and a variety of information relevant to all people who are bound to
*[753] this star. Among this information, the following medical data figure prominently: 1) Prophylactic and diagnostic notations specifying the ailments and pathogenic
*[755] agents which threaten the subject; 2) prophylactic notations regarding the manufacture of the kitab, its appropriate digam (indicated by generic title), and the construction of an effective telsem most appropriate to the
[782] subject; 3) therapeutic notations regarding pharmacology
*[278] and the choice of suitable sacrifices (indicated in terms of color, combination of colors, animals, combinations of animals, substitute animals).

The text further stimulates and focuses prophylactic interests, by indicating the following concomitants of illnesses which threaten for the future: 1) The days,

[29] Stars one, five and nine are identified by name with fire; two, six, and ten with earth; three, seven and
[173] eleven with air; four, eight and twelve with water. Debteras trace the origins of awdunigist variously to the court of Solomon and to certain monasteries of medieval Ethiopia.

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months, and years (zemene) which are non-propitious for the subject's well-being, 2) the age to which the subject will probably live and the age (always markedly longer) to which he may live if appropriate prophylaxes are employed, 3) bad omens (often indicated as a color of men, animals, or land), 4) dangerous places and environmental conditions. (The text likewise indicated propitious dates, omens, and places.) In addition, the text describes the subject's social persona and the responses it will (eventually) elicit from the people with whom he interacts.

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While the kokob text addresses a variety of interests, the texts of the second awdunigist category are more specialized. From a medical point of view, these texts can be divided into the following six types, according to the services that each provides:

1. These are exclusively medical texts, providing detailed information of prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic utility, and coinciding with the range of medical interests considered by the kokob text. This information is relevant to the period specified by the debtera in his calculations.

[774] 2. These texts name the saints, angels, and biblical persons who are particularly disposed to assisting the subject. Although this information is not exclusively of medical relevance, it is useful for constructing the

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kitab and addressing personal petitions by the client.

3. These texts provide prognosis for the subject's (unspecified) ailments. Prognoses are generally given as combinations of the following oppositions: a)life : death, b)(if life,) complete recovery : lingering ailment or disability, c)(if complete recovery,) rapid recovery : slow recovery.

4. These texts indicate medical information, generally specifying pathogenic agents and named ailments, which threaten this subject during the period specified by the debtera in his calculations. The information is, however, cursory and often mixed with matters of no real medical significance.

5. These texts provide general indications of the dangers and misfortunes which threaten the subject, but fail to indicate whether these misfortunes affect the subject's health. Such texts enable the debtera to inquire about periods (year or month of a specific year) which are of special interest to the debtera and his client. Here, the debtera includes in his calculations the numerical values of the year or month and year about which the inquiry is being made. Often, these texts also indicate what segment of the specified period is particularly threatening.

6. These texts provide no information of likely medical importance, but consider matters such as propi-

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tious occupations, journeys and marriages (thus paralling information also given in the kokob text).

Appendix D provides illustrations of medically relevant information which can be obtained from awdunigist texts.

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In the main, a debtera acquires awdunigist texts individually, just as he collects digams, kitab recipes, and herbalist therapies.[30] Awdunigist repertoires therefore vary in comprehensiveness from debtera to debtera.

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Moreover, "definitive" versions of awdunigist texts are unknown; whatever their common origins may have been, extant texts are probably unique products of many adventitious deletions and additions. Deletions are most likely when texts are transmitted from seller to buyer. At that time, details are sometimes withheld by the seller, in order to secure additional payments, or as a bond

[30] Over the last three decades, the accessibility of awdunigist texts has been affected by the publication, in Asmara, of a collection of these texts. Most are in Amharic, but perhaps a quarter are in Ge'ez entirely or in part. Although many debteras demean these texts, they are in fact used, particularly by "weak" debteras. Public illiteracy, ignorance of the book's existence, of where it can be obtained, of the precise manipulations it requires, together with the limited utility its contents hold for the layman, and the fear of putative satanic associations have prevented its diffusion to the debtera's public, however.

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against continued services from the buyer. This practice occurs, in fact, in the transmission of all categories of debtera works. For example, while relating therapeutic information, the seller may indicate that he has omitted an ingredient, or he may identify it with an ambiguous or obscure nomer. Should the would-be purchaser subsequently fail to satisfy the owner, the incomplete therapeutic notation must be deleted from the text. On the other hand, debteras frequently add information to texts, first inserting it as marginalia and then, once its efficacy has been accepted, including it within the text when recopying or transmitting it.

*756 *793 *759 prior to professional consultation. Rather, it comments incompletely on the appropriateness of a therapy already applied, choosing between "household diagnosis is correct", and "household diagnosis is possilby incorrect". On the other hand, the debtera diagnoses by means of awdunigist, and can provide information concerning the choice of an effective therapy. Moreover, the debtera is generally consulted for serious ailments, many of which are identifiable as cases of poisoning (mers) or sorcery (sray) which have been instigated by a human enemy of the sickman. Here, the debtera diagnoses not only the correct disease-name, but also indicates the [751] probable identity of the malfactor.[32] Beyond its incidental therapeutic value, this is necessary for preventing the future occurence of this syndrome or an analogous one, by directing prophylaxis against the pathogenic agency and counter-measures (i.e., physical or magical assault, change of residence, or reconciliation) regarding the sickman's human persecutor.

*[787] • [539] Awdunigist addresses a client's congenital vulnerabilities, whether or not these have been actually

[32] The debtera "assists" in identifying this individual, by indicating various characteristics, but does not actually name him.

*755 *756 breached. Thus, the information it provides regarding
*793 pathogenesis is equally relevant and detailed for pre-
*[787] scribing prophylaxis, as it is for selecting therapy.
*[539] The secular healer, in contrast, is unequipped to pre-
scribe prophylaxis, except for the inconclusive and pre-
[751] liminary indications given by the hilimefoc. In addition
to prescribing prophylaxes, the debtera provides protec-
tive kitabs for a great variety of medical contingencies.
[304] Among secular healers, only the tokwariy (tattooist) is
[951] able to perform prophylactic works, and these provide
very imperfect protection against only a small number of
ailments.

*755 Laymen assess differences between their own medical
*756 procedures and those of debtera-healers most precisely
*757 with regards to the preparation and administration of
*759 therapy. Most details regarding the preparation and ad-
*793 ministration of the debtera's medical works are unavail-
able, directly at least, to the layman. In these areas,
he perceives the debtera's medical works by means of a
series of semblances, linking the "asmat" (magic) which
appear in secular therapies with the esoteric activities
the debtera is known or assumed to perform in his own
*[278] therapies. Among the important "asmat" of secular thera-
*[787] pies are the use of prescribed instruments for gathering
and processing of medicaments, the special condition of
the gatherer, the numerological content of pharmacology

754 kifat works require special conditions of the operator, generally that he remain chaste for a designated period prior to the operation, and often require that the kifat work is performed in a room where no sexual relations have taken place. In the second type of pathogenic kifat works, recitation and manipulation are followed by burying the materials (denkero) close by the victim's place of sleeping and eating, generally beneath the threshhold of his hut. Non-pathogenic kifat works are sent from a distance only.

*787 754 539 Competence in the use of awdunigist texts is considered a prerequisite for the effective use of kifat works, and laymen are well aware of the anti-therapeutic uses of these texts. If attack by a kifat work is to succeed, information must be obtained beforehand regarding the special vulnerabilities of the intended victim. For this information, the debtera turns to awdunigist, reading it just as he would for a client, noting periods of danger, ailments, misfortunes, and pharmacological information. This information is used to select an appropriate type of unhappiness; in addition, it indicates effective materials for the operation of the kifat works, particularly regarding characteristics of animals to be sacrificed or whose organs are to be used.

*756 *793 754 Acquiring and Using Kifat Works. The considerations which influence a debtera to acquire inoffensive shinet

*787 plexy, the ailment with which ganels characteristically
*793 choose to afflict burdensome callers. To avoid this, a ganel puller typically enlarges his list of ganel fa-
*[192] miliars. In the end he succeeds only in increasing his number of ganel antagonists and, through his continuing familiarity with ganels, courts a sign of divine displeasure (mekseft).[38] Significantly, the ganel puller fears that participating in the Masa will be his ultimate affront to divine patience. Thus, he abstains from entering the church and deprives himself of the ecclesiastical identity which he prizes so much.

The debtera's decision to abandon his ganel familiars causes no fundamental disruption in his abinet career as less objectionable alternatives to ganel pulling become available. A man's reputation as a ganel sabiy generally places him in a favorable position in any exchange of abinet, for it tends to validate his claims regarding his own works, and guarantees him fair dealing by other debteras. Thus, the debtera continues to acquire abinet studies even while actively pulling ganels.

[539] [38]Additional familiars appear to be obtained through acquiring new abinet texts, or assembling (from a category of generic texts which describe the ganel commanders) combinations of data relevant to the pulling, interrogating, and sending of familiars.

*756 *793 The debtera-healer faces two practical obstacles to obtaining public recognition of his power. First, [751] his most frequent works are prophylactic kitabs; however, prophylactic success can be assessed only over a period of many years.[45] Second, the overt expression of abinet powers is often prosaic, without visible signs *[787] of the extraordinary forces at work. These two diffi- *[539] culties in communicating his power are met, in part, by the debtera's display of esoteria during diagnosis, when he manipulates awdunigist texts in the presence of his clients, and during the preparation of therapy, when the otherwise secretive debtera sends his client to obtain some exotic ingredient which is necessary for the work.

*756 Mithat. The debtera goes beyond these displays, *793 however, to simulate, through the use of mithat, dramatic *755 demonstrations of his putative magical powers (asmat). The debtera distinguishes mithat from other abinet subjects by the fact that mithat require no recitation or ritual beyond the spurious performances required to impress his public, and that the mundane materials used in the work are sufficient to produce the desired effects.

[434] [45] The sale of kitabs usually provides the abinet-using debtera with the greatest portion of his income.

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APPENDIX D

EXAMPLES OF AWDUNIGIST DIVINATORY TEXTS

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A. The Twelve Stars. Required input is the subject's autonym, month, year (zemene) and diurnal phase of his birth; division is by twelve. The following is a translation of the medically-relevant information pertaining to men of the first star (i.e., remainder of one), Hamil Iysat ("intense fire"):

"The year of Matiyows is in general a bad time for him. Sickness will affect his stomach, head, and left leg during the month of Tekemt. If poison should be administered to him, it is certain to prove fatal. When fifteen and when twenty-two years old, he will be very sick. When he is fifty years old he will suffer serious misfortunes. During the months of Meskarum, Heydar, Megarid, Sañey of the year of Luwkows, he will be particularly susceptible to wuwgat (pain) and saal (cough). When he becomes ill, he should use the leaf of the zigba tree as a fumitory; in addition, the gum (muwca) which appears at the spot where the leaf was picked must be eaten. Ganels and lions are a special danger to the Hamil Iysat man. When sick, he should eat sesame, owl, and the rose; in addition, he should use the wing of an owl as a fumitory. Good days for him are Monday, Tuesday and Saturday. Bad days for him are Wednesday, Friday

*787 or Sunday. Should he fall ill on Wednesday, Friday or
• 539 Sunday, prescribed treatment should include a kitab of
*[192] Mofte Sray (counter charm) written upon the skin of a white Adal sheep or upon a white goat skin. For aynitila, the Merbite Selomon book should be employed for writing a kitab. Treatment for ganel-inflicted sickness should include the text of Seyfe Melicot and the sacrifice of white and red sheep, and red chickens with white markings. White clothes and white domestic animals will be good fortune for this man. He has enemies jealous of him who wish him harm. He may die when he is forty years old, but if he lives past this age, his life will be good and he will be prosperous. Red things are good for him, and he must live in a red (clay) land. Poison (yijeseb) administered to him by a woman will probably be fatal to him. He has many enemies, people who are jealous of him, and he must pray to the Almighty for pro-
*[192] tection. This man always wants to sleep with women, but kitin (syphilis), if contracted, will be likely to prove fatal. When he becomes ill, a sacrifice should be made of a brown and white sheep, or black sheep with white marking on its forehead; in addition, he should drink the blood found in the sheep's spleen. The Hamil Iysat man must be particularly careful of fires and of crossing, swimming, or coming into other contact with rivers or lakes. If he conforms to all of the above precau-

*787 tions, he will live until he is eighty-two years old."
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B. Specialized Texts. Each of the following entries is representative of categories of awdunigist texts containing information of medical relevance. Each entry (with the exception of the last) is drawn from a different awdunigist text, and each is complete as it appears in the text.

I. An entry from a text indicating general dangers for a specified period:

"This month brings great danger, take care."

II. Entries from texts providing medical information which is cursory, often mixed with non-medical matters, and relevant for a specified period:

"Special dangers face you during the months of Ter and Magariyd. During that time, take care for thieves, misfortune and ganel-caused ailments."

"Be watchful during the first three weeks of the months of Magairyd, Soney, and Nahasiey. You will have an opp ortunity to defeat your enemies and to gain rank. If you are sick during these periods you will recover, but yihod basiyta (stomach ailment) will prove fatal."

"Take care until the fifteenth of the current month (i.e., the month for which the computation has been made), for great dangers face you. Your rival and
*[192] enemy will surely attempt to harm you. Be particularly watchful of denkera (ensorcelling medicine placed by the

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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•539
*192

roadside)."

III. An entry from a text providing exclusively medical information for a specified period:

"On Wednesday he contracted the sickness, while eating food or washing his body. This sickness was caused by a female ganel or a buda. Ego's head, stomach, heart are affected, and his lower back aches; his entire body has bird (chills) and kurtimat (rheumatoid-like pains), takimat (diarrhea), nisir (nosebleed), towkit (vomiting), and ibac (painful cutaneous swelling, generally of the limbs) over the body. These effects come and go; you will be very sick for the first twelve days; then ras yazaral (dizziness), kijet (nightmare) relating to day-time events will begin, together with more wuwgat (pain). After one and a half years of this he will die. Appropriate medicine is a yiseytan dorow (wild fowl); cook the meat and burn the feathers as an olficant. He will recover for a time. The red chicken, tan (daliyda) goat and sheep, red and gold breasted (libiwork) chicken, white and black (gebsima) chicken, black sheep with a white forehead (buwha) are appropriate sacrifices. Follow instructions noted under his star. All will then be well."

*787
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IV. Entries from texts indicating which saints, angels, and biblical persons are disposed to assisting the subject:

*787 "Fear neither ganels nor evil men, for the angel
• 539 Gabrael will be with you."

"Do not journey during the current month, for you will face death along the way. Death is coming to you; you must pray to Saint Nikael, and sacrifice a white sheep."

V. A complete set of entries from a single text providing prognostic information:

1. will die
2. will live, but never recover completely
3. will live without sickness
4. will die
5. a limb (or the use of a limb) will be lost
6. will suffer a chronic illness, but will eventually recover
7. will recover soon

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[26] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

136
164 government has now made free injections available at "big
[774] markets" of provincial towns, Bedbugs are also prevalent, of the bloodsucking variety. They are considered a nussance by the Amhara, but all that is done is to air the "alga" bed in the sunlight, which merely reduces the infestation temporarily. Flies are also abundant and very aggressive, so that a flyswitch ("chera") is kept in motion for comfort. Contagious diseases spread readily. Just after each rainy season, malarial mosquitoes have caused epidemics up to levels of 5,000 feet, on the shore of overflowing lakes and rivers.

511 In the majority of cases, some livestock is taken
[23] into the living hut (tuqul) everynight. The tuqul has, of course, an unwashable mud floor, no windows or chimney, soot-blackened ceiling, cobwebs in corners. There is no change of clothing at night, merely an added "kutta" or sheepskin, against the cold. Aside from drinking cups, there are no individual utensils.

164 Towns, including provincial towns, are centers for
[548] the spread of syphilis and other venereal diseases, due to the existence of entire streets of "women in-between mar-
[759] riages" who act as restauranteurs-prostitutes. When surface lesions appear, the native "wogasha" is consulted; or since the Italian invasion made the "needle" popular, the modern government medical personnel is approached. But patients usually cease to continue treatment when surface lesions disappear.[67]

Eating "brundo", raw beef, at feasts, almost always leads to tapeworm and other taenia infestation. Fortunately

67. Guthe, Th: Venerial Disease in Ethiopia. W.H.O.Bulletin, Vol.2, 1949, pp. 85-138.

588 The "damoz" temporary wife is usually recruited from a lower class than that of the man, of landless family. But often she is merely a divorcee, who "lives alone" in a street inhabited by women of similar status in the town, who are in-between marriages, and make a living serving transients with bed and board, giving them the comforts of home, cooking, baking, cleaning. They are not considered good-time prostitutes of the mead-houses ("tej-byet"), and are therefore much more respected. [548]

588 487 178 Respectably-married ("semanya") men would, in the past, take on a "damoz" wife to accompany them on caravan trips, to spare the "semanya" wife the discomforts and perils of the journey. Now that trucks travel comparatively fast from province to province, the travelling "damoz" wife has become rare, but the residential "damoz" wife continues in the towns much as before, and "semanya" wives are therefore not as tolerant of them as they once were when they appreciated their husbands' efforts to spare them discomfort. For, they reasoned, "who else will cook for him, how will he eat?".

588 848 The "damoz" wife's children are fully legitimate. She is far higher in status than the simple concubine ("yachen garad"), lit. the servant-maid of the thigh), who was and is often a permanent member of the household, often of doubtful or half-Shanqalla ancestry, who has no damoz rights, and whose children have no rights of recognition beyond what the master cares to give them. (The concubine is also called "tara" or "tarata" in some districts).

588 171 The respectability or semi-respectability of the "damoz" wife compares to the Persian "ssighe", and the Arab Muslim temporary wife permitted in the Quran (IV:28 - "And in so far as you have derived pleasure from these women for a stipulated time, give them their

586 issue the traditional divorce, "mäftat" (lit. freeing, i.e. to marry another) dissolving "semanya" marriages. But before doing so he tries to reconcile the couple, quoting proverbs, calling on kin elders, postponing the case time and again to let them "cool off". One mate can summon the other before him by appealing to the "manfas gubae" to issue a summons, and if the mate refuses to come, police can be sent to bring him by force.

A desperate wife can bring pressure on the "mänfäs gubäe" by appealing to him as a priest, tearing off her "matab" neckcord signifying Coptic faith, and threatening to turn Muslim. This is interpreted to signify that she is "nearly out of her mind with suffering".

If the divorce is granted, each mate must pay a fine of ETH$5.-, for technically they have "torn the marriage oath". The divorce is witnessed by the mizä, the kin of each mate, and the cheqa shum. Half the husband's property goes to her, particularly of their communal property and its increase, except items called "gil" which they had agreed in writing not to divide and retain as individual property. Unweaned babies remain with the mother, also, usually, children below the "age of reason" (ages 7 to 10). The husband will often take older children, especially sons. If he permanently has injured his wife's eye, or hand, he must pay her damages, even if there is no divorce. The formula of divorce, pronounced by each mate, is "May the Emperor die, I have divorced you".

586 548 In rural areas and in the past, a woman almost always returned to her kinfolk. But since the growth of towns, many divorced women have been drawn to the easier livelihood of the "street of single girls" in towns, where they live in shacks, and serve as short-term

586 "damoz" wives and innkeepers, offering bed, board and home comforts
548 to traders and transients. By treating some customers well, they hope to find another husband. When no clients are available, they still earn some income by brewing beer and selling it. They wash themselves and their clothing far more often than peasant women, and pay servants to do the heavy labor and cleaning for them. They leave their children with their kinfolk, sometimes sending money. If she were to remain with her kinfolk herself, family pressure would be great for her to remarry quickly, very likely a more undesirable husband than the first.

587 If and when she does remarry, she usually has few of the social safeguards of her first, virgin marriage. There are no "mizē" to protect her, the "ïanfäs gubaē" will not be as sympathetic in marital disputes, and the new husband may take her far away from her kinfolk. But by this time she has matured, at least in experience, and is far more capable of protecting her own interests, economically as well as emotionally, than in her first marriage.

5. The Age of Dominance: The Elder:

888 The term "shemagelvē" signifies an elder; serious, wise, past the prime of physical strength but more energetic and persistent in determining and commanding human relations, particularly within the residential kin group, than ever before. He is treated with great respect.

887 He is one of the dominant elders who rule the kin group, parcel out land for usufruct to biological family units, make decisions in marriage negotiations and other personal affairs involving the family. In town, they act as judges on higher levels. Among the

275 is served with it. Traders and travellers often stop by during the day,
487 and the place usually closes not long after sundown.

275 The barley-beer house ("talla byet") is still fairly respectable
487 for people of commoner and lower classes, but not for respected elders
265 or priests. It is operated by women, either matronly married women or "unattached girls", i.e. divorcees. It serves not only as dispenser of beer, but also serves full meals, so that the travelling trader is dependent on it. For as little as Eth. $0.25 (U.S. 10 cents) the patron may obtain a minimal meal of enjara bread, 2 liters of talla beer, and all the roast chickpeas and roasted barley ("qolo") he can eat; meatstew costs more. Often such a restaurant contains an extra room with a bed for the weary traveller to sleep in, and such an inn is then called "meshta byet" (lit. accommodation house, from "mesht" or "mest", meaning wife), for the traveller has no difficulty in securing a temporary wife for the duration of his local stay, among the divorcees.

275 The mead-house ("taj byet") does not even have the minimal
548 respectability of the talla byet. It is operated strictly for entertainment, i.e. drinking and sexual pleasures. For the owner, usually a clever, middleaged townswoman, it represents one of the few ways of amassing capital and becoming one of the wealthiest local citizens. She controls her waitresses much as a madam would. To protect herself from brawls, which are not infrequent, she also employs, - though they are kept out of sight so as not to frighten off customers, - one or several husky bouncers. The proverb says:

[539]

"In the prostitute's house,
all the time a scuffle."

For, even in prostitution a pretense of "temporary wife" is made.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

275 548 Even a prostitute would be ashamed to engage in one-night affairs, to engage in sexual activities coldly without at least some minimal affect. She is paid for her services after consumption, or tries to take the [illegible] while he is asleep, but will not aggressively demand [illegible] Therefore, customers who may develop an interest in [illegible] waitress-prostitute, not rarely fight for her affection, temporary though it is. No prostitute would take more than one man in one night, not only because this would be very shameful, but also her competitors would beat her for such unethical behavior. In the past the "täj bret" was publicly advertised by a red cross painted on the outside wall. During the Italian occupation, protests of the International Red Cross caused removal of this sign, but one still encounters it in remoter areas.

273 [77] The use of an even stronger drink, "arägi" (arrak), the only distilled drink among traditional beverages, is very likely of Arab introduction; It is on the increase in towns because of exposure to strong European liquor during the Italian occupation, but is not made or consumed in the rural hamlets, not even on feasts. In the towns it is made, usually to fill specific orders, by the wives of soldiers or policemen, to add to the meager income of the husbands, whose salary of Eth$20 - 25 is lower than that of the unskilled laborer (Eth$30 - per month). It is produced from "enselal" caraway seeds, pesho (leaf f[illegible] fermentation), semi-fermented barley ("beggel") and darussa grain, [illegible] of which are crushed, mixed with water, [illegible] plant is added, and the fermented mixture is boiled for 10 hours, distilled through a [illegible] reed. The finished product is carried, in a European glass bottle, to the customer directly, e.g. the owner of the "täj bret", and is consumed, because of the higher price, by semi-educated clerks and officials with good salaries, or travelling traders or army or

B. Sex in Amhara Culture.

588
548 The extension of the concept of "temporary wife" to prostitution has already been touched upon in connection with the entertainment aspect of sex. It is this extension which imposes on this activity a characteristic culture pattern, involving the "unattached woman's" hoping to find another husband, and meanwhile serving transient travellers with food, shelter, and even some wifely affect. In return for this partial constraint, the culture pattern rewards the "unattached woman" prostitute with certain minimal respectability. She may actually break the curse of barrenness of a first marriage by bearing a child, and thus finding it easier to find another husband. She also has the chance to experiment in sex, learning from travellers, and teaching the local townsmen and peasants. Most terms meaning prostitute are therefore matter-of-fact, and not insulting ("shärmuta" - the most polite reference, regarded as an Arabic loanword; "galämota"; "amänzera" (lit. recipient of the seed); "lagärbäga" (lit. "to the whole country", public woman). However, references to "loose personality, e.g. "mäsessenya syet" are insulting.

834 A strong constraint placed on the temporary wife - prostitute, as on any other Amhara, is against her sexual intercourse with a Muslim. Infraction of this rule would bring immediate and severe ostracism. Since many of her potential clients are travelling traders, many of whom are Muslims, the temptation is strong to ignore that rule. But if she does, she can seek reinstatement in Amhara-Coptic society, which she is considered to have renounced in consummating a union with a Muslim, by appealing penitently to her confessor, who may then agree to re-baptize her, which is considered necessary.. This will lift the ban of ostracism against her, on her social level.

This religious ban against sexual intercourse with a non-Copt

587 The proverb says:

[539] "He who knows not how to kiss,
his nose he will blow on you."

The divorcée often develops strategy and techniques to win a man of her choice: She may give him a ring to remind him of her when he is away from her; when he visits her, she feeds him "ergo" (thick buttermilk), so he will be sleepy and remain at her house, rather than go to his men friends to gamble. Women have a proverb about men:

[539] "Like a child, (he is attracted) by the ring,
like a cat, (he is attracted) by milk."

If she has a mother who is a good cook, the divorcee will employ this attraction, saying:

[539] "More than the flesh of the daughter,
(he is attracted by)
the butter (i.e. cooking) of the mother."

[832] When this fails, she may enlist the supernatural aid of love amulets, "mästäfaqer", purchased from the däbtära scribe with the man's name inscribed, to inspire love for her in him; and in addition to the fee, may treat the dabtara to beer and sweets to enlist his greatest power on her behalf.

588 If her lover is already married, she may nevertheless establish a "sweetheart" ("mushemma") relationship with him, though she has no claim on "damoz" wages or recognition of this temporary wifehood. This is also one of the few cases in which a woman will try not to have children.

548 588 However, a divorcee who was divorced largely on account of her barrenness - and about 25% of the townswomen are barren at least for some years - will try to have a child, even out of wedlock. She will then very likely join the "unattached women" in the streets inhabited

548 588 by them in the towns. Divorcees who are young and still attractive often do not want to return to their kinfolk, especially if they have seen town life and the kin life in remote rural hamlets. Like men doing manual labor, she may go to another district or even province to avoid shaming them. On this street she will usually begin by brewing daily barley beer, or even expand this to a small restaurant-inn performing the housekeeping tasks which she has been taught since early childhood and which are the only trade she knows. Occasionally she will then take in a travelling trader for 3 days or more, cook and bake and brew beer for him, also sleep with him if he desires. She hopes, not rarely with success, that one or the other will make the relationship permanent.

831 Men take great pride in virility, but also in sexual technique. They liken the activity to expertly "riding a horse" ("afärräsä" lit. [842] he rode her like a horse, is used for "defloration"). Men believe that it is frequency of intercourse, each night or several times each night, that brings conception. The popular, vulgar name for coitus is "bädda" (related to "bädäbbädä", he beat, whipped; shook with fever). Variations in sexual technique are referred to as "nett" (lit. hits). An impotent male is mocked as "alecha" (lit. sauce without pepper).

There is a sharp distinction between references that are "rude", consisting of direct references to sexual organs and activities; and veiled language used to refer to such matters, if at all, before an elder, priest, or upper-class person. The former is referred to as "yäsäär gal" (lit. light matters), connoting "shameful matters". This includes such direct names as "gela" for penis ("jälla" is even more vulgar), "yägela ferey" (lit. fruit of the penis) for testicles, "ens" for vulva. Curiously enough, overt loud expression of these terms are heard only from little boys, e.g. when, during the rainy season, they

3. Expressive Physical Arts.

531 Physical arts, like their material culture, are little developed among the Amhara, compared to their elaborate spiritual culture. If their life cycle gives any clue, it seems that the explanation lies at least in part in the end of free experimentation at the onset of adolescence, after which the experimentation is fettered into lines ordained by the Coptic church. Especially fine art, is considered exclusively within the domain of the church. This leaves little beyond body care and ornamentation for expression of physical arts, and even [302] this is partly dedicated to religion, such as the rationalized plucking of pubic hair of the woman, and the fullest expression of body arts on the occasion of church festivals.

171 It is also interesting to observe how patterns of the Middle East and of Africa are so evidently drawn from and synthesized in the traditional Amhara pattern of expressive physical arts, particularly in body care and ornamentation.

A. Body Care and Ornamentation.

515 [312] Washing in the dry season is difficult, since water is scarce and there are no wells. However, with some little effort, water can even then be obtained by digging in the riverbed, since the water table is high; this is what travellers do. Near towns the latter effort develops into a business, for water carriers, employing women as cheap labor to carry the water in their clay pots uphill to the town, charge S¢ [548] (Ethiopian) per potfull of water. Only the "unattached woman" who has a cash income from beer-brewing or temporary wife - prostitution, can afford this, and usually buys a potfull of this muddy water every day during the long dry season, to wash herself and her clothing regularly and frequently, at a time when the fully respectable Amhara housewife goes unwashed (except for hands and private parts). Divorcees looking for husbands and professional women alone feel the need for daily

X794 562 593 [548] Some women, particularly those possessed by the female zar Shanqit, learn to solicit money from strangers (as described during the convention). Some women thus gradually enter the path to prostitution, while others become independent businesswomen.

The atiitude of husbands of zar-possessed wives varies and often is ambivalent. A rustic balagär often fears that if he refuses the time and money and sacrifices demanded by his wife for her zar, the neglected zar will take worse revenge (e.g. on his cattle) or will send locusts to eat his grain, or so distract his wife that she will set fire to the hut. He knows also that if he divorces her, half his cattle and other movable property will be taken by the wife. Thus it is cheaper to let her take an occasional chicken or, more rarely, a ylung goat to the zar. Some men, especially in town, are ashamed to admit that their wives frequent the house of the zar. Semi-educated men, who might themselves consult the zar doctor on some matter of business, forbid their wives to go there. This is more to protest a blow to their prestige than out of modernism, but they will divorce her if she persists.

X794 586 798 A chronically unhappy marriage not infrequently ends in divorce by way of the zar cult. The "mänfäs gubaë" is placed in an awkward position when the husband or the wife sue for divorce from their "semanya" marriage on the grounds of zar possession. For while as priest of the Coptic church he cannot admit the reality of the zar world, there is sufficient overlap between that and the world of evil spirits in which the priest does (unofficially) believe and against which he may himself, as däbtära, have written amulets. This explains at least in part why the Coptic church ignores the zar cult, and thus

X794 798

164 of the persons treated by him suffered from syphilis. It is peculiar that he saw little of what he calls "skin syphilis," which is now extremely common. Hirsch (1886) thinks that while the northern highland was infected early the disease most likely did not reach Shoa until the 19th century. He states that at the time of Rigler's travels (1852) it had apparently not yet reached the Galla country.

Today syphilis is common all over Ethiopia. It is estimated that from fifty to eighty percent of the population suffers from this disease. It would seem that the rate is lowest in Somalia and highest in Gojjam and in Addis Ababa. Little exact information is available. The U. S. Technical Project, however, was able to confirm the extremely high rates in a survey of three villages, where from 50 to 85 percent of the population was found to suffer from syphilis.

Tertiary lesions are rather rare, most likely due to the fact that life expectancy is so low, but the secondary symptoms of the skin and viscera are very common. The general manifestations are more or less pronounced. Rashes are seen of macular, papular acneiform, varicelloid, or impetiginous form. Primary syphilitic ulcers are often associated with other venereal ulcerations. Mixed infections are far more common than in Europe.

Of the other venereal diseases, gonorrhea is extremely common, as is also soft chancre. Lymphogranuloma inguinale is seen now and then, but is not important.

164 As elsewhere, the venereal problem in Ethiopia is intimately linked to the general
548 social life of the people. It would seem that sex morals, as understood by occidentals, have never been particularly strict among the Amharas. It is stated by local missionaries that already at the age of sixteen the young Amhara used to begin visiting prostitutes, and that it, therefore, was quite common to find, when he was ready for marriage, at about 18, that he had acquired both syphilis and gonorrhea. While it should be pointed out that the present gov-

[p. 715A]

164 ernment under Emperor Haile Selassie is
548 acutely aware of the seriousness of this problem, and seeks to educate the people to understand its dangers, corrective efforts have been severely handicapped so far by lack of trained educators and physicians.

We are dealing with two forms of syph-
164 ilis in Ethiopia. In the urban districts and along the main highways we have an "epidemic" form, a syphilis which is being spread at a great rate of speed up and down the lines of communication. In the more isolated parts of the country the disease is also present, but in what might be called an endemic form, the larger part of the population suffering from congenital syphilis, with some imported fresh cases.

One of the most surprising facts about this congenital syphilis is that it does not seem to show up in early childhood. Among 10,000 children examined by the Italians, no clinical case of syphilis was seen, although at least 60 percent of the children's parents were syphilitic.

During the Italian occupation the venereal situation grew still worse, notwithstanding an extensive medical service. This was due to the general war conditions in the country with the constant movement from one place to another. Castellani's fantastic statements on the efficiency of the Italian preventive system have been adequately discussed by Manson-Bahr (1941). The large Italian labor forces introduced for road building were an important factor in the spread of the disease. The considerable development of the road net has been a factor of extreme importance.

Tuberculosis

There has been considerable discussion of the age of tuberculosis in Ethiopia. The earlier writers, like Bruce (1790), and Courbon (1861), either do not mention the disease, or, like Rueppell (1840) and Kirk (1843), their descriptions are so vague that no definite conclusions can be drawn. Blanc (1869) states that at Magdala scrofula, consisting of severe inflammation of

[p. 715 B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 brides be virgin. Related norms greatly restrict their quest for romantic love.
178 Since Ethiopian society still expects its maidens to be shy and retiring, and to
581 avoid social relations with boys outside their families, the boys find few
*883 opportunities for getting to know members of the opposite sex. Even in those
834 few situations where sociability between the sexes is publicly permitted, in-
178 grained tendencies to segregate the sexes persist. The most liberal context for such sociability, the University College campus, has witnessed relatively little interaction between male and female students. In spite of their occasional resolutions to act more boldly, the college boys have in the past tended to shy away from the co-eds except during such rare formal events as a college dance or off-campus parties.

*883 This is not to say that modern adolescent males have no opportunity for
836 premarital sexuality. On the contrary, their opportunities in this regard are
178 perhaps better than ever. The proliferation of brothels in Ethiopia's urban
• 548 centers makes sexual initiation easy, almost a routine event.* Students also
834 frequent these houses for social entertainment, dancing to swing and Latin rhythms, and sipping beer or soft drinks. Thus the continued sanctions against social intercourse in more respectable forms work to sharpen the Amhara dichotomy between decency and sexuality, and leave modern boys with a double standard that separates the marriageable girls from the enjoyable ones.

*883 The idea that marriage should be founded on romantic love has brought
178 greater anxiety as well as hope into the lives of Ethiopian adolescents. This
581 anxiety is due in part to the above-mentioned inhibitions against that easy
584 commerce of the sexes which so facilitates the discovery of a suitable love
[152] object. It also reflects a certain ambivalence toward the new ideal, based on a lingering attachment to the authority of the old system. This was manifest, for example, in the response to a college debate on the topic, "Resolved: that the custom of letting the parents choose a spouse for the children should be maintained," that took place in 1959. Although on anonymous questionnaires *90 per cent* of the college students said they will probably decide whom to marry themselves, and only 3 per cent said the decision would be made by parents or other relatives, in voting on the matter after the debate the students (in contrast to the judges who awarded the negative debaters) publicly declared themselves 42 per cent affirmative, 41 per cent negative, with 17 per cent abstaining.

*883 Anxiety regarding the new conception of marriage, finally, is also con-
178 nected with a new-fashioned fear of divorce. The mind of the modern adoles-
581 cent vacillates between the ideal of an abiding marital relationship based on
586

152 * Due perhaps to the greater importance of their peers, sexual accomplishments have now become a frequent topic of conversation and a matter for boasting among modern adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The Locals

571 Ethiopians with only a secondary school education comprise a group which must be reckoned as part of a burgeoning intelligentsia. Relative to the mass of the population, their intellectual attainments are high indeed. Although their cultural level is usually lower than that of the returnees, they include a few extremely cultivated self-educated men, and others whose intense intellectual curiosity would put the average returnee to shame. Apart from such considerations, however, the fact that they are among the small number of bearers of modern culture in present-day Ethiopia suffices to justify considering them as part of a secular educated elite. The very small but growing number of graduates from Ethiopian colleges who do not go abroad for graduate study may for the present discussion be included in this group, though in some respects their situation is intermediate between the locals and the returnees.

The basic differences between the returnees and locals is that the latter never lost touch with Ethiopia. Their growth has been more closely in step with the growth of their nation. Not having been accustomed to the comforts of a more modern environment, they find it less trying to live with what Addis Ababa has to offer. Not having become so deeply attached to norms rooted in an alien culture, they need not rack themselves re-adjusting. They have been spared the extremes of "soaring and collapsing enthusiasm" which inform the experience of so many foreign-educated men in traditional societies.[60]

Their cultural orientation is far less anomic than it is patriotic. They have remained enmeshed in familiar personal nexuses, to kin and schoolmates, ethnic and regional confreres, which have minimized the disruptive effect of rapid culture diffusion. Because of their essentially particularistic orientation, they are far less perplexed about the problems of institutionalizing universalistic standards than they are enthusiastic about anything that represents indigenous achievement, such as the modern secular songs created and performed by talented members of the Imperial Bodyguard or the National Patriotic Association.

Their work life is often quite gratifying: it represents, in any case, the best that they have ever known at first hand. It is not so hard for them to get used to rudimentary facilities and procedures, or to lower standards of performance. They are supplely adaptive to the moods of their superiors and the nuances of domestic political intrigue, even though they may be moved periodically to denounce such intrigue.

The locals also tend to be more content in their sexual adjustment than the returnees. The local can live happily for a long time as a bachelor, maintaining polite and distant relations with the traditional girls and frequenting the [548]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

brothels for dancing and more intimate relations. (Returnees normally do not have patience for the shy, traditional girls; and they are too concerned about public opinion to be seen visiting brothels. When they or the locals do visit the brothels, it is often by way of a backdoor entrance.) When they marry, the locals almost invariably choose a traditional type of wife with relatively little education and with whom they expect to have an authoritarian relationship.

In sum: the local is not so afflicted by those problems which derive from the central dilemma of the returnee—how to fulfil himself according to modern standards in an intractable, traditional environment. The local's dilemma typically lies in a different realm, that of economic and social mobility. Whereas the returnee has been given a comparatively high income and status almost as a matter of course, the local has normally started his work life with a relatively low salary and little prestige. If the returnee has felt deprived relative to the Westerners in whose society he has lived, the local has felt deprived relative to the returnee.

The local lives on a day-to-day basis at a relatively simple standard. Though he shares the returnee's passion for woolen suits and, in many cases, for a car of his own, he is not, like the returnee, preoccupied with the quest for housing that conforms to Western standards. Except for those with extraordinary talents and family connections, the locals have had difficulty locating jobs that they feel are not beneath their dignity and which pay salaries sufficient to cover their relatively modest needs. They customarily receive a starting salary in the neighborhood of Eth$150. The more ambitious and fortunate among them have, by changing jobs, manipulating superiors, and improving skills, worked their way up to salaries in the Eth$400–$500 category. Some have become provincial teachers for a while, in order to accumulate money on which to live while shopping for a position in Addis Ababa and with which to influence some higher official to grant it to them. There remains a hard core of locals who feel they are underpaid and live in constant resentment of this situation.

This resentment has produced a general sort of negativism which characterizes many of the locals, a negativism expressed in the form of backbiting and denunciation of the higher government officials and the nobility generally. They decry social injustice and the uses of nepotism. They moralize profusely against those whom fortune has shown greater favors. But not all their social criticism is born of resentment. There are also among the locals many young men who are comfortably situated but fired by patriotic fervor with a desire for social reform.

The local is as deeply concerned about asserting his status vis-à-vis the less educated as he is to advance his position in the hierarchy. Locals are extreme-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

443
632 once-weekly market, staggered, so that the market days of over-lapping spheres do not coincide. Peasant exchange at these markets tend to be "sectional" in character; that is to say, producer-sellers bring regional specialties (such as cotton and high quality cayenne from kola lands; cereals, fresh vegetables, and livestock from highland farms), or occupational specialties (such as Falasha iron mongery and pots; the leather goods of the Fakiy, a largely endogamous artisan group). In addition to local products, peasants come to purchase imported goods (especially clothing) and the produce of distant parts of the Empire (such as salt bars from the Danakil Depression). The market is also the peasant's tie to the world market, to which he sends cattle and cattle hides.

The large market towns, with their numerous consumer crowds, offer important economic inducements to
[275] the peasant marketeer. Beyond these economic functions,
-[548] the large town offers diversions and attractions unavailable in the peasant's home parish---exotic surroundings, the temporary fellowship and entertainment of beer houses and mead halls, and the sexual companionship of the town's numerous prostitutes.

632
796 The town also attracts peasant visitors on matters unrelated to the market place. The monthly feast days of various saints of the Coptic Church are occasions for special celebrations, and these attract peasants, out of

845 (because of what she carries) on her
[539] back, she dies."

It would indeed be difficult for her to suckle two babies for two years, and to carry them on her back while fetching water and deadwood and doing all her other chores. Very likely, the weaker of twins is neglected, which greatly increases the higher natural mortality of twins. The observable fact is that one never seems to encounter adult Amhara twins.

C. Naming the Baby.

553 Since Amhara fathers pay little attention to details concerning the unweaned baby, the task of naming the baby, giving it the "world name", usually falls to the mother. She does not usually prepare a name during pregnancy. Instead, she awaits the momentuous event of birth, then decides on a name based on her predominant emotion at that time, or on a significant event occurring at the same time, or on the special wish she has for the personality or the future of her baby. All classes follow this practice, but among nobles there is an additional pattern of naming the baby after a deceased ancestor, particularly in the direct patrilineal line.

55 Common "world names" given by mothers include:

Boys

"Taamrat" - (lit. miracle), e.g. if the mother barely survived the parturition, or some other miraculous deliverance took place.

"Mallasa"- (lit. he returned), e.g. if the baby's father had been away, and the mother was overjoyed to see him return just at the time the baby was born.

551 "Metekēy" - (lit. my substitute), e. g. if the mother had lost a previous baby, especially of the same (male) sex.

"Seyum" - (lit. the one appointed to dignity), e.g. if the mother has ambitions for the boy. Common among nobles.

"Dästa" - (lit. joy).

Girls

"Almaz" - (lit. diamond)

"Mänän" - (lit. excellent, exquisite, magnificent). Common to nobles.

"Tsädal" - (lit. splendor, luster). From the Geez language.

Baptismal names, described earlier, are given by the confessor, sometimes based on the name of a deceased ancestor - especially among nobility - but are not usually used in later life unless or until the person marries by "qurban" ecclesiastical marriage, or becomes a monk or nun. Typical baptismal names are (for boys):

"Gäbrä-Mäsqäl" - (lit. Servant of the Cross)

"Gäbrä-Egziabhär"- (lit. Servant of God).

D. The long, happy nursling stage.

854 Despite the many physical ailments that endanger the life of a baby in this materially undeveloped country, the nursling stage is one in which it receives more care than at any later period. [853] The long, 2-year breastfeeding, for both boys and girls, gives them some resistance to the effects of malnutrition, vitamin shortage, diarrhea, and infections of all kinds from which older children suffer. The nursling is never out of touch with the body of the mother, or other woman or older sister. Most of the time the baby

588 rewards as agreed upon") practiced by the Shi'ites in particular.
171 (footnote 81). The Abyssinian Coptic "Fetha Nägäst" forbids concubinage; but the custom has long been widespread. "Damoz" is even recognized in the modern law of Emperor Haile Selassie.

551 Individual arrangements are freest in "damoz", also in "qurban"
585 though sometimes less so, and least in "semanya". But in all three forms of marriage, the wife retains her maiden name and does not assume that of her husband. Even Empress Menen continues her old name. Sometimes the husband's mother may try to symbolize her authority - or even affection - by giving a new name to her new daughter-in-law living in her hamlet, but the bride's kinfolk and
[602] peers will continue to use her old name. This is another, unconscious, emphasis of kinship relations over affinal ones.

588 The "damoz" is not considered contradictory to monogamy, which may explain her respectability despite prohibition of concubinage in the "Fetha Nägäst" code. Religious persons will explain the paradox away by quoting from Genesis "be fruitful and multiply".

583 In rural districts there is sometimes found a 4th form of
184 marriage, which indeed is re-enacted in some wedding ceremonies of "semanya". This form is bride capture, especially found among families too poor to defray the expenses of a wedding and cows that must be given the "semanya" couple. To cover up the shame and the poverty, the bride is "captured" and "pursued", by pre-arranged collusion. While she ostensibly goes, alone, to fetch water or gather deadwood, the groom's "mize" appear suddenly, preferably on horseback, and carry her off into the bush, while she, though ex-

Footnote 81: Donaldson, D.M.: Temporary Marriage in Iran. Moslem World, 1936, pp. 358-364. Smith, W. Robertson: Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia, 1885.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

423 estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly 181 a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rĭst*. 691

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their 771 land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts 181 are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially 771 hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the 773 angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Ḍabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder [823] is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short 181 notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination: 181 551

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangat	"Frighten"	*Latybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Çhafçhefē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

181 A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about 411 three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many pur- 481 poses—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs 482 when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or [597] standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter.

Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat*, or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which contrast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen*, meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā*, land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rīst*.

The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in such numbers that "Manzē" virtually became a synonym for "underground patriot." 829 648 186

After the liberation, as after the routing of Ahmad Grāñ's forces, the Manzē once again returned to redeem a ravished land. Slowly, the houses were rebuilt, the land was plowed once more. Churches which had been rebuilt after Grāñ's destruction only to be razed by the Italians were again put into place. Tough in his spiritual as in his physical life, the Manzē doggedly re-established the culture of his own. Now as before the occupation, a man of Manz sits on the throne, promising to let no foreigner take his country's land,* while the young braves celebrate the royal line in their festive boasting: [539]

Ya-Manz ababā, ya-Manz ababā! Yābbabāl genā!
The flower of Manz, the flower of Manz! It will bloom yet again!

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

Thus far the significance of Manz and Gondar has been discussed from the point of view of an outsider. We have attempted to assess, on the basis of the best available evidence, the respective historical and cultural roles of these two noted Amhara regions. We turn now to a different though related question, namely, the significance of these two places in the minds and feelings of Ethiopians themselves. 121

Two kinds of reaction are conspicuous. To the Ethiopian Modernist, Manz and Gondar are seen primarily as outlying pockets of conservatism. Their commitments to the past move them to resist certain changes promoted by the national government, with Manz protesting modern education and Gondar defending itself against nationalist centralization. They are regarded as backward areas, representative of the many forces that are "holding Ethiopia back," and to a certain extent are disdained.

To their inhabitants, on the other hand, these places are objects of intense loyalty. For differences of identity among the Amhara are defined chiefly in terms of their *agar*, or "home country." The size of one's *agar* is relative; it depends on the context in which the symbol is used, and may be as small as a district or as large as a province. Whatever the referent, one's *agar* signifies more than a place of residence or provenience. It means "home," and all those whose families live there are regarded with special affection, while those out- 121 186 823

* On certain festive occasions the following antiphonal chant is declaimed in praise of "Ṭaqel" (the affectionate, "horse" name of Haile Selassie): [533] [539] [551]

[Leader:] *Mīn āla taqel mīn āla?*
[Chorus:] *Agarē la-saw agarē la-saw alsatem ala!*
[Leader:] What did Ṭaqel say, what did he say?
[Chorus:] "My country to outsiders, my country to outsiders, I will not give!" said he.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 17 Accession to the throne involved two rites, anointment by oil and bestowal of the crown. Authority to conduct these rites was vested in the Egyptian archbishop, the *abuna*. The formal coronation took place in a ceremony for which in former times it was expected that the parties repair to the ancient sanctuary of Aksum. The change in status brought about through [551] coronation was symbolized by the assumption of a new name, as, for example, Rās Tafari Makonnen became Haile Selassie I. The royal insignia included a ring, worn on the right ear; the royal flag, the staff of which bore a cross resting on a ball; and special drums, trumpets, and flutes.[6] Also included was a red silk parasol known as *zhān ṭelā* (origin of the present-day Amharic word for umbrella). When the emperor was in procession they included a white horse with small silver bells at his head, a silver shield, and a white headband of muslin or fine silk.[7]

Successors to the throne were not determined according to a fixed rule like primogeniture. Membership in the Solomonian line was normally a prerequisite, and the unsuccessful reign of Yoṣṭos (1711–16) demonstrates the hazards of rule when no pretense to such affiliation could be maintained. Usually, however, there were several legitimate candidates for the position, and the absence of fixed procedures for choosing among them has meant that the death of an emperor was often a time of confusion and political improvisation. At times the monarch designated his successor and swore the grandees of the realm to an oath of support, as when Menelik named Lījj Iyāsu; at times a single powerful lord, like Rās Mikā'ēl Sehul at Gondar, was the effective king-maker; at times the judgment and interests of a number of potentates, including on occasion the queen mother, were determinant.

The role of the emperor was largely symbolic, a quality which André Caquot has stressed.

> The king is guarantor of peace and prosperity for his entire country. Here the superhuman virtue attributed to the sovereign by the Ethiopian royal ideology manifests itself most clearly. It is not so much a question of his administering the country politically as it is that he guarantee order by his very presence and the virtue inherent in him.[8]

The idea that the mere presence of the monarch was a guarantee of civil order is reflected in the idiom *agara negus* ("country of a king"), which means a tranquil land. Related to this conception is the requirement that the body of the emperor be devoid of any physical defect or deformity, so that the well-being of the body politic may be properly symbolized.

But during most of Ethiopia's history the emperor was by no means merely an awesome figurehead, aloof from the works and turmoil of his realm. It was customary for him to serve the society actively in a number of ways. He had to organize the defense of the country and lead troops into battle—if

304 the names of saints. The client generally selects designs within the range appropriate to his needs, and women favor aesthetically attractive patterns. Only the gums are undecorated with designs, but are completely blackened; even here, however, the tattooing is regarded as aesthetically pleasing. Men sometimes have their godfather's names as well as their own (which incorporates the patronym) tattooed on their wrists, so that should they die in some foreign place, the local priests will regognize them as Christians and give them a proper burial.

[551] [608] [764]

Table 5 outlines the tokwariy's practice.

*787 vide a stimulus for the layman to obtain the services of an awdunigist-using debtera; this is particularly true when messages are redundant or corroborated by other kinds of information. Appendix C provides examples of hilim motifs and messages.

*787 Infrequently, an ecclesiastical student who is beg-
*793 ging for food will deliver a spontaneous prediction (imeninant), before the house of a prospective donor.
*[192] These predictions duplicate the range of hilim messages, and refer to members of the household.

*787 The Awdunigist Texts. "Awdunigist" refers to a
*793 category of texts with which a debtera divines by means
539 of arithmetical calculations. Each text is divided into two parts. The first specifies information which is required for the debtera's calculations; the second contains the information which the debtera seeks, and is arranged as a series of numbered entries, only one of which is appropriate to the debtera's input information.

The categories of input information are:

*787 Names. Each letter of the Amharic syllabary is
*793 given a set numerical value, which like all input values,
539 remains constant for any awdunigist text used. Using
• 551 these numbers, the debtera converts each input name to the sum of the values of its constituent letters. Ego's autonym is almost always required; his father's autonym (which is ego's patrinym) and mother's autonym are fre-

* 787 * 793 539 * [551] quently required. Depending upon the contingency being investigated, the names of other individuals may also be included; for example, in divination concerning litigation, the judge's name is asked.

[805] * [192] Dates. The Amhara group years into cycles of four, naming each year after one of the four evangelists. Thus, 1956 is the year (zemene), of Yowhanis, 1957 of Matiyows, 1958 of Markows, 1959 of Luwkows, 1960 of Yowhanis, and so on. Each year is assigned a numerical value (for example, zemene Yowhanis is two). Months, days, and diurnal count (day is six, night is fourteen) each are numbered.

[823] Directions. Each of the eight cardinal and intermediary points is numbered.

The numerical values of all required input information are totled, and this total is then divided by a factor indicated in the text. The debtera's goal is the numerical remainder of this division; it is this figure that indicates which of the text's numbered entires is relevant to the subject (that is, the person about whom the debtera is divining).

* 787 539 * [192] Broadly speaking, there are two categories of awdunigist texts. The first consists of largely redundant "astrological" (kokob) texts. These texts are based on the assumption that the course of any person's life on earth can be revealed by learning with which of twelve

554 635 Considerable reduction has been the lot of the title "ras", which in the past stood for not only military marshall, but often dynastic head of a province with private armies loyal only to him, and therefore often in competition with the throne. Of the old dynastic nobilities, the following heads still hold the title "ras":

Ras Kassa and Ras Imru, both kinsmen of the present emperor; Ras Haylu of the provincial dynasty of Gojjam, who is under close supervision; Ras Seyum of the provincial dynasty of Tigre, also under close control; Ras Gäbre Haywot of Dessie province, a kinsman of the present empress. A non-member of the old dynasties has been advanced to "ras" for loyal service: Ras Abebe, war hero and now minister of war.

[554] 552 Young noblemen who have mastered the art of horsemanship, as they are expected to, still assume a "war name", called "<u>färäs sem</u>" (lit. horse name), and name their favorite steed accordingly, much like medieval knights. For example, Emperor Menelik II could be politely addresses as "Abba Dañño" (lit. Father of Judgment, his horse name) which he had assumed as a young man, after which his battle horse "dañño" was named, and which flattered him both by emphasizing his position as the country's supreme ruler and judge, and by referring to his admired record as victor in many difficult battles. Emperor Haile Selassie I assumed the horse name "Abba Taqlay" (lit. he enveloped, i.e. the enemy) when a young nobleman, but no longer uses it.

552 A favorite horse name was "Abba Dulla" (lit. father of a tough weed), named after a weed that is difficult to uproot, and that regrows despite efforts to the contrary.

714 Although rhinoceros shields have not been used for at least 20 years and with them has gone the job of the personal shieldbearer, the term "gashay"(my shield) is still used appealingly toward any male protector or paternal figure, especially by young men or by women of any age. Conversely, an older man may refer to his junnior trusted aide as "gasha jägrey", my shieldbearer.

579 Banditry (shefta), much reduced in recent years by harsh measures requiring the use of the army and capital punishment, still appears occasionally as a form of social protest. In the past, when a minor nobleman felt unjustly treated by a feudal superior, e.g. passed over in promotion, he would often "take to the bush" with his retainers, pillaging and even murdering, hoping that his ferocity would either intimidate the ruler of the province to negotiate with him, or arouse his desire to re-enlist so brave a bandit. Guerilla activities during the Italian occupation by these Amhara "arbäñoch" (lit. patriots, self-styled), led the Italians to attempt negotiations on several occasions. It was difficult to demobilize some of the disappointed, irregulars, some of whom turned shefta after the war. Since then, peasants short of cash or unhappy about parting with much produce at tax-paying time, sometimes turn into highwaymen temporarily. It is the duty of the rural, non-uniformed police ("näch läbash), the "thiefcatchers-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 776 821 rainy season, when they hover in the confinement of their grottoes just as Abyssinians in their huts. Like humans, zar spirits become active soon after the rains, when the "Mäsqäl" feasts approach, the yellow flowers carpet the landscape and the green grain begins to mature. The favorite time for zar spirits to strike is between midnight and about 3 A.M.; but some individualistic spirits specialize in the hour of sunset, and some even midday.

X794 Belief in the curative powers of the zar doctors is still widespread and strong among the Amhara. Only in the city of Addis Ababa has the present government tried to subdue it, so that devotees have to travel away from the city, for their major reunions. Many men do not like X794 562 to admit their belief in the zar spirits or that they themselves consult zar doctors. This is because of the feminine emphasis of the zar cult. Women are more often possessed, and do not hesitate to admit it; they often seem to look forward to cult membership. Grown men, however, unless afflicted with an ailment as obvious as epilepsy, are ashamed to be seen in a cult group, especially when the cult doctor is a woman. The major exceptions are the brothers of the woman zar doctor, who are often almost as pixilated by inheritance and contact with their mother as the doctor herself; the zar poet and hymn-composer who is usually a man; and the hired drummer.

b. Characteristics and Attributes of Male and Female "Zar" Spirits.

X794 776 552 The organization of the male zar spirits is more complex than that of the female ones. Moreover, several male zar spirits arrogate names to themselves that otherwise are generic: e.g. "Gurēza" - usually generic for all male zars; "Weqābē"- usually generic for all protective spirits;

794 776 552 "Madaj" for male zars that specialize in possessing women; "Wureza" for subordinate zars. Female zars are regarded as "undisciplined" and rarely organize.

The names are often personalizations of characteristics and attributes of the zars. Others are terms of flattery designed to render the zar benevolent; or based on the home region of the zar. In some cases a zar spirit has "ordered" concealment of his real name, so that a new name has had to be abstracted from Amharic, or Geez, or Arabic, or a syncretic mutilation of all three languages. Some zars prefer to be addressed by their "färäs sem" (knighthood name). Some zars, of Galla Muslim or Amharic Christian affiliation, insist that their name indicate their religious and ethnic identification. Sometimes the meaning of the name is lost, or cannot be traced readily because it is in "zar language" - itself largely a mutilation of Amharic, though this is not admitted. Finally, the poet who performs in the zar cult may think up new adjectives to describe the hoped-for benevolence of the zar, whereupon the zar spirit, pleased, adopts the adjective as a byname, or name, decreeing that henceforth he be addressed this way.

852 unbaptized during this period of ritual impurity.

852 304 Another Old Testament survival, which is considered more customary than religious, is circumsision. Boys are circumcised about a week after birth, but not usually on Wednesday or Friday fast days. In some regions, notably Gojjam, girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed by a woman in a strictly female gathering, so that the girl will not become a "selfish" wife, and will be happy in marriage. After these operations, the babies may be blessed by a priest. However, when an adult person becomes Christian, circumcision or clitoredtomy are not performed, since they are not required.

293 At baptism, the baby receives the blue neck-cord, 852 553 the "mätäb", which forever after distinguishes him from a Muslim. The priest gives or confirms the Christian name of the child, usually one that places the child under the protection and guidance of a saint or archangel, such as "Gäbre-Mikaël" (Servant of Michael). However, in later life, most children will use and be called by the "world name" given them by their mothers at time of birth, such as "Täamrat" (miracle, e.g if the husband suddenly returned from a distant and danperous trip at the time) for a boy, or "almaz" (diamond) or other sparkling name for a girl. The Christian name may be used later in life if the person becomes a priest or monk or nun, or participates in "qurban" (eucharistic marriage in church).

608 852 Every baby baptized, also every new adult convert, is given godparents. When a slave was baptised (prior

845 [539] (because of what she carries) on her back, she dies."

It would indeed be difficult for her to suckle two babies for two years, and to carry them on her back while fetching water and deadwood and doing all her other chores. Very likely, the weaker of twins is neglected, which greatly increases the higher natural mortality of twins. The observable fact is that one never seems to encounter adult Amhara twins.

C. Naming the Baby.

553 Since Amhara fathers pay little attention to details concerning the unweaned baby, the task of naming the baby, giving it the "world name", usually falls to the mother. She does not usually prepare a name during pregnancy. Instead, she awaits the momentuous event of birth, then decides on a name based on her predominant emotion at that time, or on a significant event occurring at the same time, or on the special wish she has for the personality or the future of her baby. All classes follow this practice, but among nobles there is an additional pattern of naming the baby after a deceased ancestor, particularly in the direct patrilineal line.

55 Common "world names" given by mothers include:

Boys

"Taamrat" - (lit. miracle), e.g. if the mother barely survived the parturition, or some other miraculous deliverance took place.

"Mallässä"- (lit. he returned), e.g. if the baby's father had been away, and the mother was overjoyed to see him return just at the time the baby was born.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

proverb which stresses the rights of women in this regard gives the following advice: 121* 593 586

Balāgar siṭagab yematāl ba-degger;
Tayawennā nay qitāwen yegāgger. [539]

When a peasant gets sated he beats you with wood;
Leave and come home, let him bake his own bread!

A couple who have firmly decided upon divorce need simply call in their relatives or go before the *çhĭqā shum* in order to have their property properly divided. The only recourse to judicial process is when, as often happens, disputes break out concerning the division of property. In the *damoz* form of marriage, in which there is no civil oath, divorce is yet simpler. The wife is given certain presents and a monthly salary for the duration of the marriage. When the husband has to leave for another part of the country, or if the couple quarrel, they simply separate without further ado.

Despite its heavy claim on the energies of its members, then, the Amhara kinship system is such as to make members of the nuclear family relatively independent of extended relationships, and to give the individual marriage partners important areas of independence from each other. 121* 593 594

Religious Organization

Membership in the Monophysite Church is automatic for all Amhara except a small percentage who are Muslim. This membership is symbolized by the ceremony of baptism, performed for male infants on the fortieth day and for females on the eightieth. At that time the child receives a special Christian name in addition to his regular family name. 121* 795 794 [851] [553]

Certain obligations are incumbent upon every member of the church. Foremost among these is the requirement of fasting, which begins for children of both sexes at about the age of seven and introduces a considerable element of constraint into the lives of the Amhara. Second, there is the obligation to observe the Sabbaths and the main holidays by refraining from arduous physical labor on those days. In addition, each household is obliged to contribute a certain quantity of grain to the local church every year.* [785] [796]

Apart from the rigorous fasting requirements, and the injunction not to work on holy days—a dubious hardship—the individual is relatively free of ritual obligations. The rituals demanded by the church are so manifold, and so sacred, that responsibility for them is given to the clergy, and the laymen

* In some areas this is a fixed amount per household (e.g., one or two *quana*); in others it is proportionate to the wealth of the family. It is collected by a lay official of the church, the *gend alaqā*, though sometimes by the *gabaz*.

E 175 family from common sight. The King judged cases brought before him as he sat under a huge, broad fig tree. A stone-lined waterpool was constructed under the King's balcony, and a mausoleum entombing his favorite horse. All this remained; but after three generations the skills of stonemasonry were gradually lost.

175 177 This "culture loss" was the fate also of other arts which the Portuguese had introduced. When Gondar was later abandoned, the kings returned to their military tent-cities, and titles such as "commander of the right flank" are still given to sons of nobility. One of the highest is "Dejazmach" (lit. "commander of the entrance to the ruler's tent"). Viticulture was another art introduced by the Portuguese, and the vines grew well on the "woyna dega", the middle elevation. But it too was gradually lost in the 18th century, and today raisins are imported by the clergy to produce sacramental wine. The Portuguese are also believed to have introduced the orange, which shared the same fate. At least one [262] of the spices still used in the Abyssinian pepperred meat stew (wot) may have been introduced by the Portuguese from Central America, capsicum Americani KN.

A 554 Gondar continues as a place of high prestige among the Amhara. Even noble families from Manz and Amhara Saint in Shoa try to trace their ancestry to the royal branch of Gondar.

E 175 The Gondar kings did not try to regain the territory lost to the Galla, but they did fight occasional Galla uprisings, and rebellious usurpers. Also, rival kingdoms within Coptic Abyssinia were often at war with each other, and in rebellion against the Gondar King of Kings.

181 bandry, to achieving maximum benefits with a minimum of original invention. Similarly, in non-material culture, a minimum of effort has gone into the elaboration, amendment or improvement of institutions of social organization, but a great deal of ingenuity has gone into spiritual elaborations such as the Zar-cult.

Such a disposition of human energy seems strange and out of balance particularly to the Western mind. How can it be explained?

Perhaps the major clue is contained in the Amhara proverb:

[539] "From cleverness of hand, (you get) serfdom;
from cleverness of mouth (you become) boss."

461 This has long been a basic Amhara attitude, even a
554 world view for them. The Amhara has seen much justification for associating skill of hand with slavery and near-slave status, while associating mental and spiritual skills with leadership: as military officer, judge, bishop, or zar-doctor.

If he becomes impoverished, an Amhara will go to a district where he is not known (in order not to shame his family) to work at some unskilled labor. He is then less despised than if he were to learn a skilled manual trade. For while the first can be excused as a temporary mishap, or smiled off as a lark, the latter, by his painstaking application to a manual skill, indicates a permanent association with the psychological and social patterns in the "slave category". Moreover, he may, in his apprenticeship, become associated not only with the occupation and socially lower status of his teacher, but, since the latter is

461 often a member of a socially lower ethnic group (see sec-
554 tion B), such an Amhara would become "detribalized", sus-
pected of having learned occult powers (e.g. in smith-
craft), and suspected of being no longer an observant and
563 believing Copt. As a result of his ostracism, he may then
461 very likely marry a girl from the socially lower ethnic
554 group, and his children would be social halfbreeds. If that
ethnic group were Shanqalla (negroid, ex-slave), his chil-
dren would also be racially, as well as socially, mixed, and
be relegated to the servant class. Thus the prediction of
the proverb would have come full cycle. This process can
be observed in Gondar, Addis Ababa, and wherever a market
town develops out of the more conservative, rural milieu.

566 Before the abrogation of the major feudal privileges
463 by the present emperor, the feudal lord could and did put
skilled specialists to work without specific wages or limit
of service. Moreover, the skilled specialist would often
be worse off than the unskilled serf. For while the latter
would at least be permitted, usually, to remain at his place
of origin, the skilled specialists were very often required
to accompany the feudal troops and resettle in an alien
province, cut off from their kinfolk.

Smiths had to produce and repair weapons, masons to
build churches, weavers to make togas and adornments, brew-
ers of honeywine and musician-bards to prepare feasts and
entertainments, etc. The chief quartermaster and "treasurer"
carried the title "bajirond" and was usually a skilled and
trusted master craftsman himself. In reward, he and some
of the other skilled specialists might be allocated new

[352] accumulate there when poured over the limp sheets of bread.

251 (7) Food staples must be stored out of reach of domestic animals, on horizontal slats fastened between the horizontal beam and walls. On these slats lie flat cakes of "abshelo" (pre-fermented and baked hops), bunches of sorghum, husks of maize, etc.

352 To provide additional privacy, togas can be hung across. This was done in the past particularly at dinner [754] time, to protect the eaters from the "evil eye" in the [609] presence of non-kinsmen, and is still done in some remote areas, unless the peasant prefers to postpone his meal until the stranger has gone away, so as not to offend him.

342 The tuqul is regarded as a good, sound habitation by the Amhara. It is compared to the round tent of the king and duke ("ras") which not so long ago was the center of activities (if not the actual capital) of the province and [554] country. On the other hand, reactangular or square huts, "säqäla", are regarded as carrying low prestige, little more than temporary lean-to's of hunters. The proverb indicates this low regard of a säqäla:

[539]

"Of children, the worst is the bastard;
of foods, the hardest is beans;
of clothing, the poorest is nätäla (half-toga);
of housing, the poorest is säqäla."

Response: "(but) from enemy, the bastard son will defend you;
toward better days the bean will let you survive;
in (warm) daytime, the nätäla will clothe you;
till a better is built, the säqäla will shelter you".

There are special tuquls of varying degrees of sturdiness:

824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[251] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

[263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshüm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

222
•554

wild blueberry - "agam", very common; with thorny twigs, resembling the sloe tree; found not far from rivers, on the woyna dega.

wild fig tree - "shola", or "warka", giant tree (ficus sycomorus) with small but very sweet fruit.

"qamma" - fruit resembling raisin, turns brown when ripe, sour, consumed as mild laxative.

mushroom - "engudsy", or "anguday", with white bottom. Rarely eaten.

"awut" - common, reddish or white fruit of a nettle bush, of very low prestige and consumed only in time of famine; gathered in early dry season (Mäskäräm to Ter).

Only lemons are consumed publicly without shame. They are purchased on the market. Bananas from the lowlands are also available to urban people, or "great men" who can afford them. Observers have suggested that the common nose-bleeding of Ambara may result from a Vitamin C deficiency, due to little fruit consumption.

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Collecting also provides such necessities as wild cotton in more remote areas (e.g. the Maguza district of Wolqait). Every housewife uses leaves of the "lola" bush in which to bake the festive bread "dabbo".

Wild honey is obtained from the wild bee called "tazzema" (Apis africans miaia), and used against colds as well as "heart ailments". More commonly, honey for making the alcoholic drink "tej", is obtained from a small, tiny-stinged bee (Apis dorsata), but since many of the bees are killed when they are smoked out, this process, too, is one of collecting rather than bee culture.

[278]

245 Planting of fruit is done largely in the qolla, outside Amhara areas: bananas, the large citrus("trengo"), mango, guava ("zäytun"), custard apple ("gishta") shaped like an artichoke. Cactus fruit grow wild up to the woyna dega.

226 [55H] Fishing, interestingly enough, is not despised, because it is not considered a full-time occupation. It is limited largely to the 3-month rainy season, when rivers are full and fish is plentiful. The fisherman has another source of livelihood the rest of the year, and fishes to sell at the next market or merely to increase the family food supply.

Fishing is also much easier in the rainy season because the water is muddy and the fish cannot see the fisherman--who is clearly visible in the calm, clear waterholes during the dry season. A day's catch of 30 to 50 fish in the rainy season is not rare; in the dry season the fisherman may well come home empty handed. Therefore, in the dry season the occasional fisherman who does try, often uses fish intoxicants called "yasa maskäriya", especially the dried and ground "berberra" seed (Berebera ferruginea). Fishnets, "mäyaza", are used primarily. There is no concept of fishing for sport.

224 In hunting, when it is not done for major livelihood, the c ncept of sport does exist in Amhara tradition. The pride of the hunter who has overcome a major, dangerous game, has already been mentioned. The young sons of nobles were expected to prove their mettle against this big game, if no war-raid was currently available. Before

224 Before
535 going on an elephant hunt, for example, he performed the "boasting dance", "fukkara", largely with his shoulders and upper arms, predicting his feats; and his retainers honored him by declaring their confidence in his prowess, jumping up and down in the "hota" dance, chanting repeatedly:

[539] "Elephant-killer, (to) your home-
elephant-killer, take him home".
(Hunter:) Elephant-killer (I am), to home (I'll take him)."
(Retainers:)" When it (the elephant) will be moving,
he will kill it!"

224 The elephant-killer, considered braver than the lion-
●554 killer, was called "addo" and given a special decoration to wear on forehead and upper arm by the king or feudal lord. A warrior who had killed a human enemy was called "geday" (lit. killer) and held prestige equal to the elephant-killer. Now that rifles are used in place of spears, such heroes have become more common and decorations among the Amhara have fallen into disuse.

224 Besides the big-game, edible jungle animals mentioned
825 before under "fauna", there are numerous wild game, mainly gazelles and partridges, hunted near human habitations to increase the food supply and for occasional sport:

Ethiopian duiker - "midaqwa", very common near habitations on the woyna dega, an antelope the size of a small goat, often approaching ham-
[782] lets at dusk. It is considered the "cattle" of the zar spirits, and sacrifice to them is thus called "midaqwa".

Bushbuck - "demula", similar but medium-sized ante-

273 wheat, in place of barley, after roasting, grinding and baking. "Ätta" leftovers may be used in place of abshello. A rich man may add honey at the final stage to increase the sweetness of the "tälla". To increase alcoholic content, mashella can be added. But for the average peasant it is more important to find ways of stretching the daily beer by watering it down, resulting in "asser weha", or "qerrara". A poor man who has no gesho plants and cannot afford to buy the leaves at the market, can gather leaves of the "qächämo" or "gerawa" plants which grow wild; also the root and bark of "tädjo" (Rhamnus straddo), but this is of low prestige. Interestingly enough, Muslim neighbors who are religiously forbidden alcohol, dispense with gesho or other hops, and brew a light drink in similar fashion, called "bebun" or "qärbäbbo".

Much more alcoholic is mead made from fermented honey, "tädj" (which may possibly derive its name from the [554] wild hops). It is the drink of prestige, regularly consumed only by feudal lords, and available to peasants only for feasts. While barley beer is drunk from a cow's horn, [415] mead is imbibed from a widespread, imported "berelle", a small, long-necked, decanter-shaped glass bottle which first entered this area in the last century containing Turkish perfume, traded by Arabs for the ladies of "great men". It has practical advantages: the small opening lets wax and dead bees float to the surface where a flick of the thumb can remove them; and it is much harder for the ever-present flies to enter the bottle, especially since the tip of the thumb can seal it.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[596] because the often arbitrary, confiscatory taxation have lain heaviest on the producer of the most abundant harvest.

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554 (2) The attitude despising labor as an activity for slaves or lower-class ethnic groups, especially if the labor is skilled. Acquisition of special labor skills led to enforced migration, serfdom close to slavery, as has been described. Shame is attached to it, by the Amhara. For him, only agriculture, settled animal husbandry, warfare and spiritual activity in church or healing are acceptable. Even in this group of non-ignoble occupations, there are limitations. A farmer who would try to improve the quality of his land on any but a year-to-year basis, would be very unusual and an object of ridicule. For such land would arouse the evil eye, or the envy of the feudal lord, who would increase his tribute or, in case of family freeholds("rest"), increase his extortion of services. Even though a formal "corvee" has very recently been declared illegal, the local rural statute labor cannot be changed much by the central government, especially since it usually appoints former feudal lords to administrative positions in rural districts.

Principle (1) dominates the division of labor by
[633] sex, and to some extent by age. It also sets the pattern for the need for and existence of market-places that become urban centers, places where specialist not found among the scattered hamlets can be encountered: in entertainment, in trading goods brought by caravan, in higher justice, higher church, better medicine, and recently, in the availability for some of the 8-year elementary school.

373 Little clay oil lamps are a luxury, since the fuel, often kerosene, must be bought at the market. Only churches and landowning farmers can afford it on occasion. In the church, beeswax candles, made by the women auxiliaries of the church from cotton thread and beeswax, serve for illumination at the early masses, and are surprisingly non-dripping.

372 Modern matches, made in Ethiopia under a government monopoly, are now cheaply available at all great markets, and have replaced earlier methods of making fire. The old method is still folowed in remote jungle areas such as Wolqait. There, fire is produced by friction, using a big, soft, bottom piece of "wanza" or "gerawa wood", and a branch or piece of hardwood, such as wild olive ("woyra") as the twirling or rubbing top piece. It sometimes takes an hour of effort. Even in the hamlets, where matches are available, they are saved by transporting fire from hearth to hearth in a broken potsherd (gel). Charcoal ("käsäl") is a luxury item, used sparingly only in pottery-making, occasionally to boil coffee if in a hurry or tea in urban places.

462 252 Baking is a female occupation, but becomes a source of income only in urban centers or temporarily at great markets, where restorateur-prostitutes engage in this work or hire less attractive women to do it for them. A woman who specializes in baking and selling "enjära" and other breads is called a "gägari". It is one of the very few 462 252 554 money-producing occupations in which a Coptic Amhara woman can engage. But it is low prestige, and no self-respecting

462 pater familias, certainly not a feudal "great man" or offi-
252 cial will buy from her, and a lazy housewife, even an ur-
[554] ban one, would be sharply criticized, even divorced, if
she bought the product of the "gagari". For it is believed
that her baking is carelessly done, that sand and dirt have
not been picked out carefully before and during grinding,
and the product is "fit only for Shanqalla" ex-slaves.
One thin, round, two-foot pancake of "enjära" costs 5
Ethiopian cents (US$0.02); dabbo bread of course costs
considerably more but customers are less frequent than for
the daily "enjära" bread.

283 Spinning is the task of the housewife and of all wo-
462 men attached to a household, be it a hamlet kin group, or
an all-female zar society (see chapter on spiritual healing).
On her wedding day, the bride brings with her a small, or-
namented reed basket, called "muday", in which she car-
ries her own personal little distaff, some cotton thread
on a reed bobbin that she has made, together with personal
[885] ornaments and tattooing dyes. This symbolizes that she is
ready for adult womanhood and marriage, though she may be
only 13 or 14 years old.

Carding of the raw cotton is also done by women.
They beat it, pick out the husks, then place the cotton
balls on the string of a bow called "dägan", tense the
string with a stick, then agitate the string with the neck
cut off a gourd (called "qel angät"). This loosens the
cotton so that it can be cleaned and completely dehusked.

Every afternoon the housewife takes up her spinning,
unless some special task takes her time. The distaff
"emmärt" consists of a round, solid reed or thin round

286 pulled from imported cloth. Now most of these dyes are
386 imported from Europe, and many are colorfast only in
[439] cold water (which causes little difficulty as most washing is in cold water). Such embroidery must be paid for extra, but the simple, narrow, single-colored border of the shamma, of the rural type, is included in the price.

286 For such a peasant shamma, the weaver receives
434 from Eth$5 to 8.- depending on whether or not the customer supplied all the prepared cotton. An average, experienced weaver can usually get enough orders to earn about Eth$200.- per year, in the rural area. If he does no farming other than gardening, his food cost may be Eth$140.- per annum. The average weaver is left with more cash than the farmer, who rarely has more than Eth-$30.- left in cash at the end of the year. More often the weaver also farms, since his "season" does not conflict with the major active farming season. A hard-working weaver of solid reputation has the opportunity to accumulate comparative wealth, at least theoretically, but since most rural ethnic specialists, including the Falashas, are not much concerned with commercial profit, few do. It occurs more often among Muslim town weavers.

286 The social position of the weaver, apart from his
554 ethno-religious affiliation, gives him a high place among working specialists, almost equal to that of the musician (if it were not for the fact that the weaver is usually non-Coptic). He is above the status of a smith, and there is no suspicion of black magic attached to the

286 weaver's occupation. If the weaver were to become a Copt
554 and live among Copts, he would be on a social level equal to a poor, laboring Amhara.

C. Semi-specialized and unskilled.

463 The present division of labor is still based on
563 the former feudal structure of the Amhara economy and human organization. Specialized skills are left to other ethnic groups, and, apart from non-ignoble occupations such as war, church, agriculture, healing, the Amhara reserve to themselves semi-specialized occupations and part-time labor traditionally carried out by household retainers.

The latter type of labor, dealt with in this section, can be roughly divided into three categories: (1) labor arising out of the feudal lord-peasant relationship; (2) semi-specialization "that anyone can learn", in the attitude of the Coptic Amhara; (3) temporary la-
[465] bor, for which specified wages based on Time and Energy are agreed upon, called "damoz" (a contraction of "dama-was", lit. "blood-and sweat" compensation). This term is even used for temporary marriage, during which the woman acts as cook and travelling companion.

466 The first category arises out of the obligations
[566] owed by the sharecropping "gabbar" to his feudal lord or landowning church: the former statute labor, when everyone would come with his own tools and construct a

463 prestige involved is slight--occurring only if there is
464 kinfolk nearby shamed by such manual labor. It is on a social level with the gathering of kosso-bark by a poor Amhara woman.

463 [324] Some farmers have a part-time specialty of fashioning the stone used as mano by the housewife when she grinds grain. They are called "wäqari". No shame is involved; it is considered like a hobby, like whittling away at wood.

[693 554] Some heads of farming families are adept at "talking well in court" for which they achieve great prestige--the major method of achieving prestige. They are called "täbäqa" lawyers, and not full-time specialists since all they can expect, if they win the case, is a bellyful of barley beer or an occasional gift, but they are guests of honor at the victory feasts and "men of reknown".

A large number of semi-specialists fall into the [23] category of caretakers, "täbäqi". Cowherds and shepherds, if they are grown men not useful at anything else, are included in this category.

463 265 Part-time employment is found by the former feudal chamberlain, "agafari", at big weddings of landholding peasants or in towns. They act as caterers, order the bread, meat, beer, mead, etc. They are experts at headwaiting, and know just whom to seat at what table or around which "mäsob", according to rank, and they indicate to each servant to whom to serve beer and to whom the more expensive and more noble mead. This was

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

443 177 salers, and other Muslim retailers. Here they discuss caravan trade, import and export, and local business. These Arabs speak enough Amharic for their purposes, but cannot read or write it, so that they employ temporary services of Amhara clerks, graduates or upper classmen of elementary schools, to translate and write documents relating to transactions, taxes and loans. It is these Arab traders who constitute most of the customers of provincial branches of the new State Bank of Ethiopia. Only rarely does a foreign company like Besse have a local branch, operated by East Indian managers. This is recent, while the Arab traders are the successors of former Arab slavetraders, an ancient but now abolished occupation in Ethiopia. Arab traders also serve as personal bankers to Amhara.

The broker, "mäden", may be an Amhara. This is especially true if he is the aforementioned labor broker. He acts as negotiator for business transactions, and (e.g. in the sale of major livestock) personally guarantees that the object sold was not stolen; he is required to make good the loss if it is not so. This is an important form of insurance, for which the broker may charge as little as 1%, payable usually in cash; he is also given a barley beer dinner after the transaction. He, in turn, may employ Amhara loiterers to gather around during transactions and contribute their wit to urge the buyer to close the deal.

563 443 554 The Muslim Ethiopian retailer, unlike the Arab trader, carries little prestige among Amhara. His com-

563 parative wealth may be envied, but his religion, and
443 his habit of taking several wives from ex-slave (Barya),
554 Sudanese, lowland females, places him on a level with the upper ethnic craftsmen class. The fact that his labor is not manual elevates him a bit. The full Arab from Yemen or Arabia is regarded as a foreigner, and there is little concern about him since he does not participate in the social hierarchy of the Coptic Amhara.

436 Silver coinage for major transactions, until recently, was the Maria Theresa Thaler, bearing the year 1780, even if coined much later, imported, and sometimes referred to as "machedo", sickle. The recent laws of the present emperor provide for confiscation and punishment for possession of this now illegal currency, but peasants and townsmen have them hidden and silversmiths can still obtain them with little difficulty. The habit of burying coins for safekeeping has carried over to modern paper money. Every year cases of buried paper money that decayed in the rainy season become the talk of the town. The former MT Thaler was divided as follows:

1 MT Thaler = 16" temun" silver coins of Menelik;
= the term "temun" is now used for silver ornaments, though the new Ethiopian 25¢ piece is actually used in exchange, or even in ornaments.
= 16 "gresh", the Egyptian-Turkish piastre coined in 1899, no longer used, and rarely seen.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 2. The Military Camp and its Significance in Amhara Social Structure.

The preceding section on land tenure contained a number of references to the traditional military organization and function among the Amhara. This was inevitable, for the traditional army, particularly the military camp, constituted one of the most significant pillars of Amhara social structure. Even now, when Amhara children cannot see it any more, the military [554] camp lives on as "normal social organization" in the minds of the middle-aged, and in the titles of nobility still being bestowed several times a year by the emperor.

For, as recently as 1929, it flourished in full flower, e.g. at the headquarters of the provincial dynastic head of Gojjam, Ras Haylu, and, somewhat less flagrantly, at the provincial court of the lord of Gondar (Begemdir Province), Ras Kassa.

A. The Structure and Function of the Military Camp.

701 703 The number of individuals directly involved in the totality of the pattern of the military camp was never fixed. On the contrary, the quantity involved was extremely fluid, there was much joining and deserting, and no commander ever seemed to be able to force any but his closest retainers to remain against their will. Historians believe that the army even of

701 554 It is noteworthy that the military ranking of the commoner-soldiery, which made up the rank and file of the fighters on foot, was not nearly so formal. The fortunes of war, if they did not leave him dead or maimed, could move him upward to lower nobility. Failing to achieve that, veterans could still hope for a modest fief of "gult" land, enabling him to play the "telleq saw" (great man) role over some hapless "gabbar" peasants. Meanwhile, pseudo-"telleq säw" behaved much like the proverbial sergeant of any army, making his men fear him more than any enemy, rewarding them with feasts, in this case of raw beef and medium-alcoholic mead. The only way he could maintain his following of individual-minded Amhara soldiers, each one of whom wanted to be a hero himself, was by continous personal bravery coupled with cleverness in military tactics. But here the similarity ends, for the non-noble chief of Amhara warriors had no pride of a non-commissioned officer; his ambition was to become a real "telleq säw", a minor nobleman owning "rest" lands.

782 726 521 535 Personal bravery was expressed and recalled in formal boasting, a tradition that survives to this day even for such civilian occasions as weddings. Prior to battle each potential hero would go into a personal song and dance called "fukkara". The ceremonial dance accompanying his boast proceeded as follows: Spear, or rifle, held horizontally behind head, just above shoulders; the head moves in increasingly rapid motion from right to

782 is already assured. It is also performed on Epiphany,
726 to defy human as well as spirit enemiesoof the Faith.
521
535 Before battle, it was the response of the simple soldiers, ("wätadär") to the pep-talk ("arraga") given them by the commander, encouraging them to stand their ground.

727 After thevictorious battle, the soldier could look
554 forward to taking part in the royal feasting, the "gabber", and to lording it over the local "gabbar" peasant who had to supply the means and the womenfolk. It is at least part of the basis of the pride (critics say false sense of their own worth) of the free Amhara over subject peoples, enabling evan the simplest soldier to feel that he belongs to the proprietory class. Back home, he therefore despises manual labor, and even in going into battle he used to conscript peasant boys to carry his heavy rhinoceros-hide shield ("gasha"). These boys often became replacements for slain warriors when they could secure weapons, and, in turn, recruited servants for themselves.

41! The typical weapon was the spear (the word "tor" means both war and spear) until replaced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by rifles, though late-medieval muskets and Ottoman firearms were available to a few from the Portuguese period in the 16th century. The spear, some in use as late as the Italian invasion of 1935/6, sometimes had two or three prongs. Sabers were rare, and available mostley to noble officers. They were of the curved, Damascene type. Daggers of

725 and left flanks.
701

Fanning out in all directions, detachments of light cavalry and foragers on foot, "fano", could destroy and plunder enemy land to do as much damage as possible while on the march. When re-encampment was ordered, the tent of the king or field commander was set up first, and the army divisions and followers, seeing this, grouped themselves accordingly and settled in their proper locations, distances, areas and relative positions. The quartermaster thereupon took over the functions of maintenance and supplies.[74]

[554] This pattern of "relative positions" and functions carried over into civilian life, and dominated land tenure, administration, law, social structure, organized religion, the life cycle, artistic expression, and a multitude of human relations.

C. Significence of the old Military Organization in Modern Change.

178 The spear, the rhinoceros shield and armies paid by land grants have now become memories of the past, [554] though recent past. Yet most of the attitudes and many of the roles that accompanied the old military organization still linger and dominate social organization.

[473] Much of the old land tenure is still little changed in the old-Amhara provinces, as has been pointed out.

74. Hadie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, pp. 86-7.

554 Most of the old military titles of nobility are still awarded several times each year by the present emperor, though these titles no longer have military, but only civilian, honorary, semi-administrative significance. This is partly due to the fact that the old titles, though not abrogated, have to be reaffirmed for individual members of each succeeding generation that has inherited only the moral but not the legal right to these titles. This enables each emperor to use the titles to reward, stimulate, needle and punish (through delay or withholding), a subtle weapon too pleasant for even the present liberal emperor to disavow. The only title no longer in use is that of king ("negus"), but even this had been offerred to the present Crown Prince in lieu of the future crown (he refused it to maintain his claim).

There has been a gradual increase in awarding titles to commoners, as high as "dājazmach", e.g. to reward deserving directors-general and ministers of the central administration (or, in some cases, to subdue their criticism of indolent fellow-officials of noble birth). The old semi-civilian title "blatengēta" or, "blatta", has become fully civilian, and is given to scholarly councilors who are trusted by the emperor. A famous example was "Blatta" Herouy, who served the emperor in international diplomacy at the time of the Italian invasion. Another title of warm, even more personal, appreciation, is "bitwādded" (lit. the Beloved).

554 635 Considerable reduction has been the lot of the title "ras", which in the past stood for not only military marshall, but often dynastic head of a province with private armies loyal only to him, and therefore often in competition with the throne. Of the old dynastic nobilities, the following heads still hold the title "ras":

Ras Kassa and Ras Imru, both kinsmen of the present emperor; Ras Haylu of the provincial dynasty of Gojjam, who is under close supervision; Ras Seyum of the provincial dynasty of Tigre, also under close control; Ras Gäbre Haywot of Dessie province, a kinsman of the present empress. A non-member of the old dynasties has been advanced to "ras" for loyal service: Ras Abebe, war hero and now minister of war.

[554] 552 Young noblemen who have mastered the art of horsemanship, as they are expected to, still assume a "war name", called "färäs sem" (lit. horse name), and name their favorite steed accordingly, much like medieval knights. For example, Emperor Menelik II could be politely addresses as "Abba Daño" (lit. Father of Judgment, his horse name) which he had assumed as a young man, after which his battle horse "daño" was named, and which flattered him both by emphasizing his position as the country's supreme ruler and judge, and by referring to his admired record as victor in many difficult battles. Emperor Haile Selassie I assumed the horse name "Abba Taqlay" (lit. he enveloped, i.e. the enemy) when a young nobleman, but no longer uses it.

579 in-white", to control this. Sometimes these resort to the old-fashioned and officially illegal "afarsata" collective arrest of a series of suspected hamlets.

644 701 Another old pattern that survives is the personal bodyguard of the supreme ruler, i.e. the emperor, which has now increased to a size equal in manpower to the Ethiopian army itself, and is reputed to be far better trained and equipped. Centered at the capital and a few strategic spots, with greater mobility than the army, and battle experience gained in Korea, it contains much of the Galla "balbat" element directly loyal to the present royal family. The regular army is scattered throughout the country, and is utilized against periodic uprisings in the border lowlands and escarpments, such as the desert Danakil, the Issa and the Raya Galla of the eastern escarpment who occasionnally go on the warpath after the harvest season.

554 625 701 The attitude of the common people who admire an individual hero but mock uniformed dandies, still persists, much to the annoyance of the uniformed police of the provincial towns, and of the soldiers. The non-uniformed "näch lēbash" are far more respected, and their bravery is acknowledged.

631 visors are in turn responsible to the governors of the sub-province, the "awraja gaj". It is customary that these officials be appointed from provincial nobility, of the lower grades, and this custom is still followed in the old-Amhara provinces, though not in Shoa where the central government has managed to place officers with modern elementary school education regardless of commoner origin.

[622 554] Even the çheqa shum, who is always a commoner--though owner of freehold "rest" land--has a claim to being regarded as a "telleq saw", a great man, in the local social sphere. For the higher officials and absentee landlords know that their administration and territorial organization are ultimately dependant on him, and they refrain from undermining his authority.

B. Urban Organization

632 The word for "town", "kätäma", really means "permanent camp", and points directly to its origin in the feudal social organization. When a feudal lord (high level, e.g. a "ras") became attached to one place, and was at peace for any length of time, he would order a large church to be built, creating or enlarging a church parish. Trails leading there would expand into caravan routes, and a large and varied "Saturday market" would develop. This would attract Muslim or even Arab wholesalers, who would be segregated or segregate themselves

788 the chest. The church is then "saluted" by kissing the wall, a ceremony called "sälam" in Geez. If the person wears sandals, he must remove them before entering the church itself.

[211] On the path near the church, or leading to it, there is often a conical pile of small rocks. This may indicate a church on a nearby hilltop, and this pile, "mäsalämiya", functions then as a poster of salutation. If the passerby is in a hurry on another errand, he may simply bow deeply in the direction of the church instead of going there to kiss the wall. In modern times truck-drivers will bow in that direction without stopping.

794 The individual layman usually belongs to a private sodality that holds private communion together. But he may, more informally, invite some personal friends on his personal Saint's day, especially his namesake's. Since this informal private communion is cheaper, costing only the price of a jar of beer and some roasted grain, it is more popular among the poor than the formal "mähabber" sodality. The informal private communion, called "zekert", is shared only by men, uses no drummer, no expensive wheat bread, no collection for a common purse, and usually only the personal confessor is invited from among the priesthood. But the zekert cannot be used as a means of gaining social prestige.

[554]

795 e) Religious Syncretism.

Surrounded by Muslim and "pagan" religions, and

575 796 The preferred number of charter members is 12. The reason is not certain, but some ascribe it to the 12 apostles, some so that each member has the duty and privigele of acting as host once a year. The evening itself, within each month, is preferably the host's. The host asks his confessor-priest to officiate furing the religious part of the meeting. Part of the worship always includes ceremonial drinking from a special clay cup called "ṭuwa", or "ṣuwa", which is dedicated to a saint or archangel, and from which the particular mähabbär takes its name (e.g. the "ṭuwa-ef-Gabriel mähabbär). The host has prepared a large "gan" (largest clay jar) of barley beer, which is blessed by the officiating priest. There is also ceremonial breaking of bread, the well-baked kind usually called "dabye", preferably of wheat, and half an inch thick, which, on this occasion, is referred to as "ṭadiq" (lit. offering of righteousness), or as "shellemlämi" (a reference to the cross). This bread is sometimes adorned with incised geometric designs. A poor host may substitute the common limp enjära bread, but that would lower his prestige. A rich host or one trying to gain prestige will have carpets spread on theddirt floor, and even the poorest can spread odoriferous grasses and leaves, to give the hut a clean and festive atmosphere.

[531] [554]

The members congregate at dusk, some a bit earlier because of the Amhara aversion to travel after sundown. When the confessor-priest is seen to approach, the members rise and retrape their shammas in the symbol

575 of going to church. The priest brings the holy water,
796 sprinkles the inside of the hut, and intones prayers. At the proper moments, the members prostrate themselves before the "ṭuwa" cup containing specially blessed barley beer. The "ṭadiq" bread is placed on the wicker worktable ("mäsob"), and is then divided by the confessor-priest among the members; the leftovers go to the host's wife who had baked it but who remains modestly in the background. Some of this blessed delicacy is given to the poor. The confessor absolves all present from sins, then passes the "tuwa" around so that everyone can drink from it. Then lots are drawn by means of sticks to see who the next host will be for the "ṭuwa" and "ṭadiq". The ceremonial phase is now over.

[554] Roasted barley ("qolo") and peppery stew ("woṭ") are served in as many varieties and quantities as the host can afford, and many go beyond their means to gain prestige. Drummers and chanters ("azmari") are often hired, and the noisy entertainment is heard in a a wide area, attracting many uninvited guests who sit outside the hut and hope to share in some way in the food or entertainment.

575 Women usually have their own mahabbar sodalities, and usually name them in dedication to some event in the life of the Virgin Mary ("Maryam"). But sometimes women attach themselves to a male mahabbar as a kind of auxiliary, sitting on a mat by themselves in a corner, and tolerated because of their services in preparing beer, bread and stew, or even honored if they are heir-

192 "kul kul" - to call the chickens. (Footnote 87)

"fwa fwa" - cascade, waterfall.

"tïb alä" - drop by drop ("alä", lit. he went, is the common auxiliary).

"täf täf alä" - poured liquid from a narrow-necked bottle.

"twa alä" - water falling on fire.

"cha alä" - became silent, tranquil, calm; hence - deserted village (!)

"chechch alä" - began to chant; hence - birds in the morning (Twitter).

"gwawqa alä" - knocked loudly at door

"kof kof alä"- marched with gravity (sound of shoes).

"encheq alä" - (sound of) picking feet from muddy place.

"agurämarräma" - murmured (sound of large drum), hence - rolling thunder, and incipient rebellion.

"anchabächchäba" - clapped hands rythmically, to keep time for music, or to greet a "great man" (Africa style).

"andagaddaga" - made gluglu (water through pipe).

193 Grammar, called "<u>scasso</u>" or "<u>sämasew</u>", is mastered only by the
195 traditional-educated church scholars ("mämhär") and a few members of
554 noble families. Perhaps only a few hundred individuals master all its intricacies. Emperor Haile Selassie's speeches strike the average

[192] Footnote 87 - Other calls to animals include:
"Kulel Kulel" - to call lost donkey at night.
"Kes Kes" - (or "cheg") to drive sheep on
"Kis Kis" - to drive calves on.
"Buch Buch" - call to dogs.
"Wush" - to drive loaded donkeys from path, so the master can ride through
"Chä" or "Mäch" - to get a horse or mule started when riding it.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

193 Amhara layman as esoteric and hard to understand - which causes them to
195 be respected all the more. "Soasso" literally means "ladder" in t he
554 Geez language, and the study of grammar is regarded as "uplifting", steps on the ladder of knowledge, achievable fully only by the few, but respected almost as an end in itself.

193 Special features of this grammar are the following: There is no present tense, and the future tense is used also to indicate the present, as in other Semitic languages. A completed action, in the sense of a "present that has become a past" is expressed by a gerund compound tense. Frequentatives, i.e. reduplicated syllables, are much used to indicate reiterative, intensive, augmentative and attenuative action; foreign scholars believe them to be of Cushitic origin (Footnote 87). Possessive pronouns often take the form of infixes. Among noteworthy absences in this grammar are: No male or female genders, though sex distinctions are made even in concepts of inanimate objects.

There are no "cases" in the Latin sense. There are no subjunctives. The passive and reciprocal voices take the same form, though the meanings are distinguished. A complexity that never fails to complicate matters for non-Amharic speakers (other Ethiopians as well as foreigners) is the gemination, the duplication of a number of consonants, "lala", which gives the word another meaning entirely because it changes the basic stem. The basic stem of verbs is most often a Semitic "triliteral", but through loss or gain is often changed to a "biliteral" or "quadriliteral".

The syntax of Amharic is regarded by foreign scholars as basically Cushitic, much like the vocabulary, and unlike its grammar (Footnote 88).

Footnote 87 - Leslau: Le Thème Verbal Frequentative dans les Langues Etiopiens.
Revue des Etudes Semitiques, I, PP. 15-31. Paris, 1939.

Footnote 88 - Leslau: The Influence of Cushitic on the Semitic Languages of Ethiopia. (in) Word, 1945, pp. 54-82.

195 578 Insults of category b) however, may be noisy, sound violent, involve much high-pitched repartee, with the adversaries screaming at each other. But since such individual insults are regarded as a "battle of wits", they rarely even lead to fisticuffs, though, to foreign observers, such encounters seem only a hair's breadth removed from serious bloodshed, and the adversaries seem to lean against each other physically (though now actually). For, even a severe insult is not regarded as a "fighting word", rather as an almost theatrical, almost ceremonial exchange. There may be much waving of a corner of a toga in the opponent's face, as in court. The exchange may end in mutual exhaustion, physically and nervously. The entertainment aspect is not lost on the onlookers, who thoroughly enjoy this and egg on [692] the adversaries. Sometimes curbstone arbitrators ("astaraqi") are appointed to act as "peacemakers".

[554] A person of nobility is not supposed to engage in such public battles of insult, rather employs subtle means of implied antagonism. Even a commoner Amhara may imitate the indirect behavior pattern in a situation of antagonism, e.g. to indicate to a neighbor that he is not wanted, yet without letting the public know it (thus saving face for the neighbor). He may invite him, greet him politely, ask him to wait (standing) while stools "will be brought". When no stools are brought, after some time, the neighbor leaves, never to return. The proverb says:

[539] "So that he will not talk (against us), invite him;
(yet) so that he will not eat, move him about".

In this manner, polite antagonism is indicated, without making a public enemy.

201 [77] has been introduced only since the Italian occupation.

The gesture indicating sour-bitter taste (which are not differentiated; and collectively called "mär̈ara"), consists of slowly shaking the head sideways ("tän̈äshäggäshä"); sometimes reinforced by the verbal exclamation of pain, "ayye" or "hayy!".

516 Postures differentiate between the status of the master and that of the servant. The master indicates his "free" status by sitting way back on the stool or bench, straight, in a position which would require special effort to rise and therefore emphasizes that he does not expect to have to jump up at anyone's command. A servant may not sit in presence of the master, or must sit lightly so as to be ready to perform any duty for which he may be called upon at any moment. To indicate respect, a servant carries out his duties on the run (as "on the double" in the Western armies), while the master is present.

The correct posture in sitting is called "kurkum alä", sitting "folded up"; the legs bent at the knees, the feet far back and partly hidden, since it is "rude" to sit with legs stretched out beyond the knee. But the thighs may be spread, especially when seated on a mat on the ground, even in the case of peasant women who wear the anklelength, heavy cotton gown. To sit with legs crossed (Turkish fashion) is frowned upon as the posture of "barya", the Muslim or "pagan" ex-slaves from the Sudan; considered a rude and lazy position by the Amhara. The proper posture of the Amhara, if seated on the ground, is a squatting position, on the hips, never on the heels; feet flat on the ground, knees high and spread, the toga arranged so as to cover the knees and shins even when jodphurs are worn.

201 554 Facial expression of a high-status Amhara (noble, priest, elder) assumes a stoic appearance. The jaw muscles are relaxed, the mandible slightly dropped, the eyes half-closed but alert, breathing very quiet, [195] the voice in even tone (in contrast to the strident whine of the argumentative peasant-gabbar).

201 argumentative peasant-gabbar). The body expresses almost the permanence
554 and immobility of a statue, as if the high-status person could not be surprised or dismayed by anything, certain that all things due him will come to him.

516 The famous "Nilotic stance", stork-like, in which the person stands on one leg, resting the foot of the other against the inner knee of standing leg, is found in the Amhara only among young boys, and an occasional, low-class adult.

554 In walking, nobles of the old school walk slowly, somewhat heavily,
481 as if in formal procession. Members of their retinue carry their cane, overcoat, etc. By contrast, laborers carrying heavy burdens walk catlike, largely on the instep, and fairly fast.

F. The Language of the Toga ("shamma").

201 The toga is used in so many different, formal ways by the Amhara to
291 express moods, occasion and social status in the presence of persons of differing social status, that the language of the shamma has been likened to the "language of the buffalo robe" of the Plains Indians of America (footnote 95).

The most common way of draping this usually 6 ft. long, 2-1/2 ft. wide garment can be described as "out-going"; called "tälabbäsä". The toga is draped around the upper body so that it gives a turtleneck effect, the embroidered border extends from the shoulder to the waist. This may indicate that the young wearer is in an out-going, expansive mood, considers himself a gay blade going into town in a holiday mood; when worn this way by an older man, it expresses that he is a sober, respectable citizen, in an optimistic mood, going to meet persons of equal status.

Footnote 95 - Coon, C. S.: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p. 116.

171/754 Amhara, and evil witchcraft feared by the geographically close Nilotic Azande. This is not surprising, since contact with the "Barya" people of the Nilotic Sudan is well known. In Azande society, persons who are "socially undesirable" are suspected of sorcery, but never the nobles and the rich.[130] Among the Amhara, too, [554] no "tellaq sä" (great man, noble, rich) is likely to be accused as a "buda" sorcerer, while socially low-class groups doing the despised work of ironsmithing are immediately suspected when a "buda" case arises. In both societies, Azande and Amhara, such suspicion leads to prompt interrogation of the suspect, and revenge by the kinfolk of the victim. In this type of magic, social significance, i.e. ethnic relations in Amhara territory, is considerable.

177/755 Amhara healing of the spirit is psychological, in the first place of significance. In the second place of significance is the enormous syncretism, among linguistic, ethnic, religious and racial components of the art of healing. It presents one of the few outlets for "free enterprise" available in the Amhara tradition. It is this cultural syncretism over the centuries, which, despite the political isolation of Abyssinia, has maintained and developed the spirited character of the Amhara peasant.

130. Evans-Pritchard, E.E.: Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande. London 1937.

181 one's kin by doing manual labor, made necessary in some cases by
602 poverty, leads to outmigration from the district and often even from the province. Nepotism in obtaining good positions is the norm to such an extent that failure to act in this manner would be severely criticized by the traditional Amhara as the utmost in meanness. In fact, when an Amhara wants to make a particularly derogatory remark about another ethnic group, he says that they are mean to their own kin and quarrelsome within the kin group.

[476] Cooperation and mutual aid, teamwork in agriculture, hut building, etc., are largely centered on the residential kin unit, notably the patrilocal hamlet.

554 A major culture goal in Amhara society is the assumption of the status personality of the "great man - noble" ("telleq säw"), in contra-distinction to the rustic peasant ("balagär"). However, this ambition is usually frustrated because social status is primarily inherited, along with "rest" land and the expectation of re-appointment to one's father's position and rank of nobility in the hierarchy. The door to advancement has traditionally been only through feudal warfare: loyal support of one's feudal lord was rewarded with "rest" land and higher rank. Even today a young nobleman must await formal promotion to his father's rank by the emperor, and this still contains an element of personal reward and punishment.

157 The personality of the rustic Amhara peasant is extroverted,
554 not burdened with the considerable self-restraint expected of the Amhara noble. The peasant is quick to express mirth, anger, and other emotions. He is not stodgy and slow in conversation like the proverbial peasant of Europe. In fact, because of the relative

157 absence of self-restraint, he can give free rein to the typical
554 Amhara fondness for rapid and noisy argumentation, quoting witticisms, puns and proverbs. He does not have to control his typical Amhara curiosity about non-material objects and human behavior, and can stare freely and openly. Even his servility to the noble is only formal and not internalized, for, while he bows deeply from
[57½] the hips, his eyes are raised to observe every detail of the situation (especially to see whether some reward can be wheedled).

The Amhara noble, however, is required to be at least outwardly, an introverted personality. This is expressed in formal dignity, a partly withdrawn and meditative manner, a serious (though not severe) mien. His bodily movements must be slow and deliberate; his pattern of speech must be the same. Most of the time he remains pokerfaced. He has been trained to observe by moving only his eyes,
[152] not his head. He does not express his basic emotions directly, except with social equals under proper circumstances. He must appear too proud to show curiosity, even for interesting and strange articles brought by the foreigner; he accepts them with just a dignified and appreciative nod of the head.

152 There is the principle of "noblesse oblige". The noble be-
554 haves as if his due will certainly come to him - he does not have to go and seek it. When a servant has angered him, the noble does not fly into a rage publicly, though he may have him routinely flogged later on. It is noteworthy that even the womenfolk among the nobles share this personality training. Although hysteria is
152 very common among Amhara women, it is rare among noblewomen. Even
554 in case of great emotional distress (e.g. if a child has died)
157 [304] when commoner Amhara women wail loudly, scarify themselves, and roll

152 554 158 on the ground, Amhara noblewomen weep silently or go into states of apathy. This is a more common mental ailment among nobles than hysteria, and may lead to chronic depression and even catalepsy (see Part VI).

157 554 186 However, both the peasant and the noble share certain common Amhara personality characteristics. Both take great pride in being able to "speak well in court". Homesickness is strong among both, and is very widespread. Kings and emperors, until very recently, had great difficulty in sending and keeping ambassadors abroad, for the diplomat regarded his foreign assignment as "exile". Both classes share great pride in their highland plateau, defended for many centuries against all comers. This national vanity is at least in part due to long ignorance of the world beyond (sometimes hardened into xenophobia); pride in their ancient religion and in the national epics like the Solomon-Sheba-Menelik. These are shared by Amhara of all classes.

829 Amhara concepts of government administration are aristocratic: ruled by the noble "great man", who is usually descended from a feudal warlord of past centuries. The military camp and its direct significance for traditional Amhara social structure and government has been described in Part III. At the top of the hierarchy is the king or emperor (King of Kings). At the Amhara grassroots is the peasant, who seeks justice by attaching himself to a "great man" as retainer, so that he too will be treated "with honor" by reflection. From the bottom to the top of the hierarchy of government, persons on every level perform the ceremony of "dal tenat" (lit. waiting by the gate) to obtain jobs, maintain positions, or merely to prevent doubts about personal loyalty from arising through absence. This

854 until weaning, at the
[853] age of two, the child is never removed from contact with the body
of the mother or other female relative caring for him. After
857 weaning, childhood is an age of roaming over the countryside during
the long dry season and of performing such useful tasks as pro-
tecting the harvest by shooting pebbles from slingshots at birds
and baboons.

855 The pattern of punishment is dominated by spontaneity, during
childhood as well as adolescence. A suddently enraged parent
(father or male elder) may hurl a firebrand at a child, or cuff him
roughly about the head and shoulders for as long as the rage lasts.
Sometimes real injury results, but there is no planned, coldly cal-
culated punishment, and the anger is usually quickly forgotten. The
youngster is never left in doubt when he has transgressed. Retrib-
ution comes within a split second. Parents do not hesitate to
exercise their authority and to impose their wills, when angered.
The youngster soon has a clear conception of what kind of behavior
it would be wise to avoid. Thus the youngster is presented, gradually,
with a set of values which early become rooted in his personality,
and help him to remain, later in life, in tune with his social group
and culture pattern.

●554 Individuals who chafe at the status quo, notably women and/or
562 individuals of either sex who have a talent and urge for individual
enterprise, often find their way into the "zar" cult. Cultural
participation of the female is so restricted during her life cycle,
that many emotional outlets are denied her. Monotonous daily routines
of manual labor; two years of breastfeeding after every birth; denial
of active participation in the church; derogatory views of female
intelligence on the part of the males; etc., limit the Amhara women

562 [554] to an almost sub-culture. The result is at least one real sub-culture, that of the "zar society". Many women find their way to it either through introduction by a female friend, or, if the husband forbids it, through actual or simulated hysteria or catalepsy.

888 Psychological problems of the aged have not as yet become significant in Amhara society. The male elder, and also the old woman, are respected and cared for even in senility - a stage which only a small minority reach because of the comparatively brief life span.

3. Culture Change and Amhara Society: Inertia versus Modernization; the "Change Agent"; the Amharization of Ethiopia; the New Elite; Old Values; Outlook.

178 In view of the traditional hierarchy of government among the Amhara, any major culture changes could be effectively introduced only from the apex downward. This has been the experience during the reigns of the present Emperor Haile Selassie and of his predecessor, Emperor Menelik II; One might even include the unlucky Emperor Theodore. All three recognized the role of the emperer (King of Kings) as "change agent" in culture change. In Ethiopia it has not been the dissatisfied elements who have acted for change.

The forces resisting culture change in that society were and are powerful, not because they have consciously and purposefully banded together in opposition, but by the resistance of inertia. The silent but fierce oppocition, notably from the old feudal nobility, the old and dominant heads of the Abyssinian Coptic church, and the rural elders, has long constituted an ultra-conservative immovable object: self-satisfied, fundamentalist, proud of having defended their mountain plateau for centuries, distrustful of foreign innovations.

563 178 [643 797] Wherever Emperor Menelik II conquered new areas, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he ordered the local people to build Abyssinian Coptic churches, and the Coptic priests who accompanied the troops with the sacred "tabot", consecrated the new local church and parish. These became centers of political and educational Amhara activities. Amharization was advanced not through large scale direct conversion of what was considered by the Amhara clergy a "lower" ethnic group, but through the establishment of a local, administrative, Amhara hierarchy, which the other ethnic peoples found it in their interest to emulate. They soon learned (particularly the old Galla nobility) that they could advance in the Amhara feudal-army system and regain feudal-land-tenure through loyal military service.

[554] By assimilating to this Amhara pattern, young Galla of the old nobility or of the modern-educated élite have found that they can rise in the hierarchy, and, after conversion to the Coptic Abyssinian faith, even intermarry with the ruling class.

At the same time, ethnic particularism and tribal expression of the subject ethnic groups, including the large Galla population, have been consistently discouraged by the ruling Amhara. Even [797] foreign missionaries, who are still forbidden to convert Abyssinian Copts, but may work on Muslims, "pagans", etc, have been pressed into the work of Amharizing Ethiopia. For they must preach in the Amharic language, and can distribute Bibles only in the Amharic language, even in provinces where the vast majority still understands very little or no Amharic. If they break this law, missionairies can be promptly deported.

000 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

154 There are many lepers in this country, and they do not live separated from the people, they live all together; there are many people who, out of their devotion, wash them, and tend their sores with their hands.

231 There is a great quantity of honey in all the country, and the bees are not in hives, but inside the houses, where the cultivators live, clinging to the walls on the inside, where they have a mode of egress outside, and also inside they surround the house: but they do not on this account desist from dwelling in the house, because the bees go outside. There are a great number of these swarms of bees, chiefly in the monasteries, there are also many in the woods and mountains, and the men put hives near the trees and fill them with bees, and bring them in them to the houses.

346 Since no one sits in the churches, at their doors outside of them, and within the circuit, there are always a great quantity of staves with cross pieces like a .....[1] or cripple's crutch, and each one takes his staff and leans upon it as long as he is at the offices of the church. In the churches there are many effigies painted on the walls. Effigies of [532] our Lord and our Lady, and of the apostles and patriarchs, and prophets and angels, and in all the churches St. George. They have not got solid images. There are many books in [212] the churches all written on parchment, because there is no [191] paper there, and the writing and language is Tigray,[2] which is that of the first country in which Christianity began.

In this country they are not accustomed to write to one another, neither do the officers of justice write anything. All the justice that is done, and what is ordered, is by messengers and speech. I say only that I saw the property of Prester John written down on being delivered up and received.

554 There would be much fruit and much more tillage in the country, if the great men did not ill treat the people, for

[1] *Taka.* [2] *Tigia.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

they take what they have, and they do not choose to provide more than what they require and is necessary for them. 554

In no part that he went about in were there butchers' shops, except at the Court, and no person of the common people may kill a cow (even though it is his own) without leave from the lord of the country. 253

The people speak the truth little, even when they make oath, unless they swear by the head of the King. They much fear excommunication, and if they are ordered to do something, and that it be to their prejudice, they do it from fear of excommunication. 695 [688]

The oath is administered in this manner. They go to the door of the church with two priests, and they have there incense and embers, and he who has to swear puts his hands upon the church door, and one the priests tells him of the oath to speak the truth, and that if he speaks falsely, that as the lion swallows his prey in the woods, so may his soul be swallowed by the devil; and as the wheat is broken between the stones, so may his bones be ground by the devils; and he who swears, at each thing answers Amen; and as the fire burns wood, so may your soul be burned in the fire of hell and made dust. He says Amen. And this if you do not speak truth; he says Amen. And if you speak truth, may your life be prolonged with honour, and your soul in paradise with the blest. He says Amen. And this ended, he gives his testimony.

He says that the movable feasts, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, are celebrated on the same days and seasons that we celebrate them. The birth of Christ, Circumcision, Epiphany, and other feasts of saints also agree with us, and others not. The year and months begin on the 29th day of August, on which was the beheading of St. John, and the year is of twelve months, and the month of thirty days. When the year is ended, there are five days over, which they call pagomen, which means fulfilment of the year, and in the bissextile year there are six days over; so they keep with us. 796 805

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE

The taxation in Gojjam was probably lighter than elsewhere, since, as has just been explained, soldiers were paid here by means of exemption from taxation. 651 184 661

In a study of the system round Lake Tana, mainly in Bagemdir, an Italian writer notes how, side by side with the groups of *restenyas* tracing their hereditary occupation to the first settlements, probably in the fifteenth century, other tenures had grown up. One was that of the *farasenya*[1] to whom the Emperor had made grants of certain privileges and payments amounting generally to about a tenth of the produce of the *restenya* and also the right to exact labour for his land and house and collective gifts upon important feast days. Similar rights, but not including administrative powers, were given to *gultenyas* who, while collecting all the dues owed to the government, had to pay to it an agreed quota of oxen, mules, honey, etc. Thirdly there were the grants of *maskal mariet* (lands of the cross) to the church. In all these cases the rights were often given over the heads of the *restenyas*, who would continue to cultivate their lands as before. As there might be superimposition of new rights over old at the top, there might also be added lower stages by the leasing of land by *restenyas* and others to tenants who would have to pay rent as well as tax. [554]

Side by side with these holders of what may be regarded as private rights would be the hierarchy of the governor. The private rights might cut like islands into the administrative area of his district governors or these might be the *gultenyas* or *farasenyas* themselves and so eliminate the dualism. The *chiqa-shum* who collected the tax would thus pay it either to the *Mislané*, the *gultenya*, the *farasenya* or the *alaqa* (head) of the church. The writer condemns the cumbrousness of this method, with its encouragement of peculation and exactions. The original tax of the people was one tenth of their crop, but the feudal organization had resulted in a multiplication of intermediaries whose great object was to pass on less than a tenth to the government and to exact more than a tenth from the people, enriching themselves on the margin of differences. Those who suffered most were some of the *gabars* who had to support both the church and the *farasenyas*. 651 661

An Italian writing of Ethiopian abuses and Italian reforms in 1937 is not likely to underrate the vices of the old system, but there is plenty of comparative evidence, as well as the laws of probability, to suggest that he has not greatly darkened his picture. He states that under the Italian Government, after the conquest, the upper part of the structure[2]

[1] Literally 'horseman' and corresponding, apparently, to the early English 'knight'.

[2] Grottanelli, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 14-15, 105-12.

7: Perham S-4 (no date) 1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

and thirdly its derivation from the rights of some forefather who first took possession of the land. 423

Where the *resti* land was still held by a large kindred group, the individual family had a secondary or derived ownership of a piece of land adequate to meet its needs. When a son married and set up house he applied through his father to the council which allocated a plot to him within the kindred land. Thus the hereditary right was to land within that of the *enda*, not necessarily to a particular piece of land. Sons and, in certain conditions, daughters would inherit their father's rights. Before a man could give or sell his share of land he must offer it first to members of his *enda* and then to those of his village, and this restriction might apply to a subsequent sale of the land. It seems that in some parts the control of the *enda* council was even stricter and that the individual had no more than a very restricted usufruct, with frequent reallocation by lot. 423 428

The complexities of land tenure have only to be defined in these general terms to make it necessary to list numerous qualifications and apparent inconsistencies. These cannot all be given here. Mention must, however, be made of the system of village ownership, which, as a result largely of later immigration and of heavy pressure upon the land, had in some parts overlaid or ousted the *enda* ownership and the principle of *resti*. In these units (the development of which, though not begun by the Italian Government, was encouraged by it), the village council made an equal division of its lands, which were allocated by lot in three categories according to fertility, to all inhabitants of the village, whether *restenyas* or not. There was a redistribution at periods ranging from three to seven years. Village ownership appears to have been more just and flexible than that of the *enda*, though it is not clear how it dealt with improvements and permanent crops. 423

From the social aspect it is interesting to learn that everywhere, even where village ownership had deprived the *restenyas* of their special privileges with regard to land, their personal prestige remained. The *restenyas* were the people of superior status who, however small their holdings, could claim to belong to families which descended from the first family to hold the land. This gave them a peculiar status; it endowed them with a primacy in the local councils and even, in some parts, with certain small dues and privileges; it is from their ranks alone that the village chief, the *chiqa-shum*, was chosen. 423 554

In addition to these main forms of ownership the *restenyas* could create subsidiary forms by leasing or lending their land or, especially in the case of large and absentee landlords, by introducing a number of tenants to farm their land and pay with their services, the landlord 427

[MANZ]

"People of Manz, follow me! Henceforth my title shall be *marīdāzmātch*.* 175*
Whosoever does not call me Marīdāzmātch Sebstē in the future I shall punish severely."[25]

The succession question was thus settled. After Sebstē the Shoan chieftaincy passed from father to son for seven generations without serious contests. The next question was how to increase its power.

Sebstē proved himself worthy of Nagāssi's mantle. He conquered most of the province of Yefāt and there securely established his authority. His reign was terminated by a curious accident. Sebstē's son Abbīyē, eager to replace some of the churches destroyed by Gragn, decided to build a church in honor of St. Michael in the town of Doqāqit. To this end he brought by stealth the holy ark of St. Michael from Aynē, where Sebstē was living. Sebstē could only conceive of this action as an expression of disloyalty, and set out with some troops to capture Abbīyē and reprimand him. In the ensuing encounter, to Abbīyē's dismay, one of his servants killed Sebstē.

Abbīyē thereupon became the new ruler of Shoa. Though his reign began on a note of insecurity he was able to pursue successfully the goals of his father: strengthening control of the Amhara districts of Shoa, conquering and resettling lands occupied by the Galla, and asserting Shoan independence vis-à-vis Gondar.

Despite Nagāssi's efforts to unite the Amhara enclave in northern Shoa, it was still broken up into a number of petty independent districts. Manz was no exception. Now that Nāgassi's line had established its headquarters in the lowlands southeast of Manz, some of the lords of Manz refused to live in subordination to it. Gērā had been defeated, but his grandson Golē still claimed independence. One of Abbīyē's achievements was to defeat Golē and so bring Manz once again under a regional authority. Abbīyē also moved further into Galla territory. He pushed beyond Doqāqit to Hār Ambā where he built a town. After a reign of twenty-five years he met his death on the battlefield fighting the Karayu Galla.

The novel feature of Abbīyē's reign was his relationship with Gondar. Sebstē had not gone to Gondar bearing tribute, for he declined to acknowledge the supremacy of the emperor. When Sebstē died, the emperor, then Iyāsu II, sent an expedition to Shoa to collect tribute. According to the Shoan historians, Abbīyē defeated the expedition; according to other sources, Abbīyē was spared by the intervention of the emperor.[26] In any case, his attitude toward the men who came on the expedition was conciliatory. He bade the Gondarī lords teach him the ways of Gondar's court and administration, and even made one of them a district governor. He ordered the Falasha artisans

* *Marīdāzmātch* is an honorific title that was formerly used in the province of Shoa.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

The pun here is on the word *Ṭedu*, for the name of Asfā Wassan's adversary means "the juniper." Morat soon began to pay him tribute.[29] 175* [538] [539] [195]

Asfā Wassan also accomplished much in the field of administration. He organized his realm into four large provinces, which were in turn subdivided into thirty-nine districts—half Amhara lands, half lands taken from the Galla. He improved the laws and introduced a more orderly system of finance. He supported agriculture and encouraged trade.

Such prosperity could scarcely be viewed with indifference by Gondar. Takla Giyorgis I (1779–84), who was trying vainly to restore imperial authority at Gondar, marched to Shoa with a large force. Asfā Wassan, not ready for an open clash with the emperor's troops, handled the situation with characteristic Shoan adroitness. He heaped gifts upon the emperor and his lieutenants. Protesting his fealty, he noted that if he had extended his own dominions, it had been at the expense of their common enemy, the Galla. Finally, he said he was willing to pay tribute to the emperor, but at the same time was ready if necessary to meet him in battle. The lords who accompanied Takla Giyorgis sympathized with the Shoan, and the emperor was not strong enough to prevent their defection.

Worried by a monkish prophecy that his life would be short, Asfā Wassan emptied the state coffers in order to subsidize churches and monasteries. He lived to fill them time and again, during a reign that lasted thirty-three years. Throughout that time he never forgot his church schooling, and frequently invented *qenē* to be repeated in the churches on holidays. But Asfā Wassan was a true son of Manz, and left the memory, as Harris noted, of "a great Nimrod and an unparalleled warrior."[30]

The next ruler, Wassan Sagad, was the offspring of a fortuitous union between Asfā Wassan and Woizero Atmotch Hono, a relative of the imperial family at Gondar and owner of vast properties in Wallo. En route from Manz to Ankobar at the end of his student days, Asfā Wassan was given hospitality at the home of this genteel woman. Not aware that the lady had in fact been brought by his father with the hope of siring offspring from her, Asfā Wassan spent the night with her. When she bore a son, and Asfā Wassan learned who she really was, he fled in terror to the monastery of Ferkutā. After sending scouts to all the monasteries in the area, Amhāyas had his son brought back and granted him pardon.

Wassan Sagad was thus kin to the highest nobility through his mother as well as his father. His noble blood, haughty disposition, and clever mind moved him to great ambitions. He convoked a large assembly of Amhara and Galla, and proclaimed himself Rās of Shoa.* Then he sent word to Rās Gugsa, power behind the throne at Gondar, that he was coming to fight, "for

* *Rās* is the highest ranking secular title in Abyssinia after *negus* ("king"). Cf. chap. v, p. 158. [554]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national government, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his successors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 the long rains. Children go singing from house to house in small bands, or take bunches of wild flowers to relatives, in hopes of getting a bit of *dābo*. In most homes an animal is slaughtered—in some areas superstition decrees that it be a white-headed lamb or a red chicken—and there is much eating and drinking, the basic activity of every holiday.

A little more than two weeks later the much more important festival of Masqal is observed, celebrating the discovery of the true Cross by Empress Helena. By this time the heavy rains have subsided, and the air is filled with [132] something of the spirit of spring. (Although Ethiopia lies north of the equator the summer rainy season is known as "winter" because of its coldness.) The landscape is colored by acres of yellow wildflowers, which are cut and fastened to the poles each family brings to a central clearing where a huge bonfire is built. In late afternoon, after the tepee of poles has been constructed, the priests begin the ceremony by intoning appropriate chants. Then [554] each status group circles the poles three times, in honor of the Trinity—first the local lord, then the clergy, the lesser nobility, the peasant men, women, and finally the children. In the evening the festival takes a more secular turn. The bonfire is lit, and the young braves dance around it shouting their war chants. As the fire blazes on, these fellows seize burning brands and playfully hurl them at one another.

In November the monthly St. Michael's Day is honored with special celebrations. [778] The peasants travel distances to attend the ceremonies at any church consecrated to "Mikā'ēl." Holy water and hot springs sanctified by Mikā'ēl's name are drunk and bathed in by those with many kinds of disease. The rituals involve carrying the Mikā'ēl *tābot* ("holy ark") out of the church and elaborate chanting and dancing by the clergy. After the *tābot* has been returned, in a procession in which the laymen follow shouldering their rifles (undoubtedly spears in older times), folk dancing and singing go on until late [584] afternoon. This provides an occasion for the more enterprising adolescent male to spot a potential bride, about whom he may diffidently ask his father to make inquiries.

*565 796 526 Christmas, celebrated in early January, is marked chiefly by the playing of secular games. The common word for Christmas, *gannā*, is actually the name of an outdoors game played with sticks and a wooden puck. Played by boys, young men, and occasionally elders on the afternoon of Christmas Day, *gannā* is marked by a spirit of aggressive license. Accustomed norms of deference are held in abeyance. The game is played in so rough and disorderly a manner that it often results in broken limbs and scarred faces. Staged by two teams made up on the spot, *gannā* is concluded at dusk by volleys of abusive limericks with which the victors revile their adversaries.[4]

*565 796 This is the season for special festivities on saints' days. St. Gabriel is particularly honored in December, as are St. Mary, St. George, and again St. Michael

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 776 many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

*565 776 753 [828] [845]

*565 776 Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[8]

[562]

*565 754 787 Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

*565 754 The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

[262] [789] [323] [326] [554]

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 121 177 178 75 761 motivated to live as long as possible: the monk wants to live longer in order to get closer to God by prayer, and the worldly man wants to live long enough to atone for his sins so that he may enter paradise. Health thus rates as one of the most important values. The expressions for greeting and farewell stress health. Most of the prayers and vows offered have to do with achieving health. Long, painful pilgrimages are made for cures, and much money is spent for the remedies of native practitioners and for amulets to ward off illness. This powerful desire for health and life operates as a lever to overcome the resistance to change.

*565 121 177 829 Toward the bearers of new ideas designed to satisfy this desire for reduced morbidity and mortality, however, the peasant's stance is suspicious and unsympathetic at the outset. He regards Ethiopians who have been educated by Westerners as contaminated by alien norms and beliefs. They appear to him as Ethiopians, but also as strangers—as "black *faranj*"—with their European clothes and their unorthodox eating and smoking habits. He tends to distrust their motives, to suspect them of being out to take advantage of him in some way. And he resents their overt or implicit disparagement of his way of life, particularly his practices in so sensitive an area as sanitation.

*565 121 177 744 [554] Against such obstacles one cultural factor that serves to present the health worker as an acceptable agent of change is the Amhara peasant's deference to the man of learning. The public health worker is in a position to inherit some of the awe felt for the learned *dabtarā*, especially since the health teams operate out of centers which provide therapy as well as instruction, which gives them the benefit of association with the quasi-magical powers attributed to one who performs successful treatment. In addition, he can be aided by the Amhara peasant's personal devotion to someone who has helped him and won his confidence. Whether this devotion can be stimulated depends, in the last analysis, on the character and resourcefulness of the public health workers themselves. Those who are able to communicate in a dignified manner with the peasants, who avoid dealing with them as an inferior and backward people, who refrain from flaunting the most important local norms, and who are on good terms with local authorities and respected men, have a substantial chance of being accepted after an initial period of suspicion and alienation. Thus it was that a Gojjami peasant, asked why some of the local people were hearkening to the advice of the public health team at Dabra Marqos, explained: "We have come to realize that what you tell us to do is for our own advantage, not yours." Elsewhere in Gojjam, a similar response was the eventual issue of a more pronounced initial rejection of public health workers. In the village of Dajan doors were closed against a venereal disease team which was taking blood samples of the entire population for Kahn test analysis. Popular suspicion was voiced in a number of ways; the health workers were accused of selling blood, of being missionaries, and of otherwise trying

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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THE EMERGING ADOLESCENT

While it is clear, as we have argued thus far, that a modernizing society 121
stands to benefit from retaining or redefining many aspects of its traditional culture, it is also clear that in certain areas discontinuity is indispensable if significant change is to be brought about. Just what these areas are is something which presumably varies from nation to nation, though cross-cultural regularities may perhaps be uncovered in the course of further research. In the 121
case of Ethiopia's incipient modernization, at least two subsystems of the 178
traditional social system of the ruling Amhara have already undergone some 86
sort of structural change: that of "secondary socialization," the complex of 554
processes whereby skills and values necessary for adult life are imparted to adolescents; and that of the stratification system—the complex of arrangements whereby status is allocated to members of a society in accord with the various values upheld by the society.

An important precondition for the changes which have taken place in both 121
of these areas was the establishment of a permanent capital: Addis Ababa, 178
founded by Menelik in 1887[1] and now home for nearly half a million Ethio- 179
pians. Menelik's institution of the first government school in Addis Ababa in 633
1908 marked the beginning of a slow but steady process of introducing some [871]
of Ethiopia's youth to the novel skills and norms of modern Western culture. The concentration of power in Addis Ababa through the reign of Haile 121
Selassie has diminished the status of the traditional Amhara elites and brought 178
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
831 particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the
[834] sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical
[577] courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat,* is synonymous with *guabaznat,* or "bravery.")

*883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often
[41] carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
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a different identity. Religion and warfare were the two spheres most likely to attract him. Although trade and manual arts were possibilities for those whose industry exceeded their status-consciousness, they were considered the business of other ethnic groups and normally rejected by a self-respecting Amhara. When the Amhara youth left home for a new life, he was usually heading either for the school of some church teacher or the quarters of some chieftain.

Today, as in former times, the role of priest is known from childhood as a possible model for the peasant boy. He and his companions often imitate the clergy and their ceremonies in their play. The wish to become a priest is kindled by a number of interests—desire for the material benefits accorded the clergy; curiosity about the mysteries of the church; envy of the great prestige of the clergy; hope for a better chance of going to heaven after death. During adolescence the outlook of the boy who seeks to become a priest deviates from that of the *goramsā* described above. Instead of the shrill, blood-heating *shillala* war chants he prefers the gentle hymns of the church; instead of the frenzied dancing and singing of the young braves he prefers the schooled dance of the clergy; instead of pursuing women, he is inclined to turn his head the other way when a girl appears.

The military alternative does not seem to be an ideal of Amhara children. They rarely see soldiers; and when they did in former times, it was usually in the unhappy circumstance of seeing the family's reserves plundered. It is not until the time of puberty and after that the great upsurge of aggressive instinct has turned the thoughts of many an Amhara youth to fighting. Chafing under parental domination or bristling with resentment because of being an illegitimate offspring or a stepchild, he may be anxious to turn his hostility against some enemy. He may imagine the free life of a soldier more attractive than the drudgery of the peasant's lot. In the days of feudal armies, he may have heard news about some warlord on the rise and thus have hopes, by attaching himself as a follower, of winning booty and the laurels of a hero, perhaps eventually the powers of a chieftain.

Whether the peasant boy chooses church school or the warpath, his move has frequently been an all-or-none move. The peasant boy can do nothing without the consent of his father, and normally his father will not permit him to do anything except carry on the farmwork and prepare himself to care for his parents in their old age and to inherit the family land. If there should be some sign that the son does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, the latter will do everything he can short of disinheritance—and ofttimes that—to persuade him otherwise.

And so, some restless day, eyes fixed on some alluring goal, the Amhara youth might run away and not be seen again. If he should return, it would

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the students. Rivalries and hostilities tend to get channeled along these lines, 883*
particularly along the Amhara-Tigre axis, and petty fights have erupted from 873
time to time among groups of students so divided. The Amhara students, 177
moreover, tend to interpret their numerical majority in school as self-evident 178
justification of their political superiority in the country, an interpretation sul- 186
lenly rejected by non-Amhara students who tend to be more aware of the Amhara's much smaller percentage of the national population. However, the students are regarded by their teachers, not as members of tribes, but as Ethiopians. The school authorities thus act as a countervailing force in behalf of national symbols, and their effect is considerable.[14] While entering students naturally tend to identify in the first instance with their tribes, sixty per cent of the secondary school seniors and seventy-five per cent of the college students questioned about political identifications indicated that they considered themselves Ethiopians before they considered themselves members of tribes.

The teachers also provide practical information of various sorts to assist the 883*
acculturation of their charges. They teach the etiquette of modernity, includ- 875
ing the importance of punctuality and the keeping of promises. The objects 177
and events in their own lives quietly demonstrate to the students much about 178
modern Western culture, while their use of English in and out of class accus- [576]
toms the students to the use of their country's official European language. Thus, besides promoting respect for impersonal standards and the sense of [554]
Ethiopian nationalism, the teachers fulfill a third extracurricular function of [871]
some importance: that of making the schools a vehicle for social mobility, a place to acquire that minimum of European habits which is essential for attaining high status in a modernizing society.

The total accomplishment of the teachers, however, falls short of giving the 883*
modern adolescents a coherent orientation to life. The cultural lessons they 871
transmit are neither consistent among the various schools nor closely related 177
to the situation of changing Ethiopia. The organization of education, as of everything else in Ethiopia, reflects the abiding anxiety of the government about permitting any one foreign nation to gain a monopoly in any sphere of activity. Each secondary school and college has heretofore been virtually autonomous, pursuing those policies and teaching those lessons which best fit its point of view, a point of view now guided by British culture, now by American, now by Swedish, now by French, now by Jesuit. As Margery Perham long since observed, this created a situation in which Ethiopian students have gotten "fragments from the experience and ideals of each [nation] without getting the fullest and best influence from any one national tradition."[15]

Another shortcoming of the educational program has been the relative 871
paucity of materials relating to Ethiopian realities. As one Ethiopian educator has written: "School children are at times more familiar with the history of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a 121
society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by 56
that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive frame- 178
work of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are 181
embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is [571]
in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively 565
stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and 554
wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the [463]
statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the mer- 565
chant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the 554
small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was 441
accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an 463
Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be [186]
tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels.
Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes 565
low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Low- 567
est in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from 554
the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), 463
and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced 565
sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the
society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values [181]
of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 During the reign of Haile Selassie, the infrastructure of Ethiopian society
178 has become more differentiated. A large standing army, an air force, and a
463 small navy have been recruited and trained by foreign military missions. The
[701] modernization of transport and communication has produced a sizable class of semiskilled operatives—truck drivers, airline employees, telephone operators, typesetters, etc. The expansion of government has produced a legion of clerks. In the towns tertiary occupational roles, like salesmen and barbers, have come into being, and the establishment of factories has engendered a small industrial labor force.

All such people tend to differ from the traditional lower classes in their relative enthusiasm for *selṭānē* ("civilization"). Still more enthusiastic are those who have had more intimate and prolonged exposure to the fruits of *selṭānē:* domestic servants in *faranj* homes; students of the secondary schools and colleges; Imperial Bodyguard troops who served in the Korean campaign and recently in the Congo; and highland Eritreans, whose experience under sixty years of Italian colonial administration has rendered them far more modernized than people of other provinces.

178 Similarly, the reign of Haile Selassie has witnessed the emergence of new
571 elite groups. A "new nobility" of government officials and urban plutocrats
554 has taken place beside the old. In addition, a nascent intelligentsia has at-
565 tained a precarious high status, resting mostly on the esteem of students, some military officers, and resident Westerners. The integrative dilemma of Ethiopia today has more to do with conflicts among and within its various elites than with tribal enmities or masses in revolt.*

643 Hovering over these four groups, kindred with each but superior to all,
571 has been the personality of the present emperor. Indeed, the history of
565 Ethiopia in the last four decades has for the most part been the story of Haile Selassie's efforts to direct and control the destinies of the old and new elites. The considerable success with which he has done this is a tribute, not only to his own remarkable manipulative skills, but also to the majesty of the office which he possesses. The position of *negusa nagast* has traditionally monopolized the highest reaches of the Abyssinian system of social stratification; constituting, as it were, an elite of One.

THE TRADITIONAL ORDER

643 *The Lofty Throne*

The emperor comprises an elite in the original sense of the word, for to the Ethiopians he is Elect of God (*seyuma egziābhēr*) according to the conventional Ge'ez honorific.

* Although, as was suggested earlier, tribal and religious differences *may* generate new integrative crises in the future.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

own right. Indeed, the record of rebellions by nobility as well as clergy against the emperors of Ethiopia bespeaks a persisting dualism in the Abyssinian's disposition toward the monarchy itself. In principle, the emperor is reverenced. Widely held is the sentiment expressed in the *Kebra Nagast:* "It is not a good thing for any of those who are under the dominion of a king to revile him, for retribution belongeth to God."[16] But unquestioning deference is by no means necessarily coupled with unswerving loyalty. The Abyssinian pattern differs from the Japanese, in which total loyalty to the divine monarch calls for suicide in the wake of any disgrace one might have brought upon him. The norms of fealty to the emperor have not been so deeply internalized in Ethiopia, where the pardon and reinstatement of rebels has been a common occurrence. Among Abyssinians a veneer of genuine deference has often concealed an inner consciousness of disaffection, enabling the individual to act out rebellious wishes when the opportunity or need arises. Indeed, this ambivalence has been one of the traditional impulses behind the culture pattern of wax and gold.

The Old Nobility

The Abyssinians themselves acknowledge the existence of, in addition to the emperor, two groups of persons with pre-eminent status. These are called, both in Ge'ez and Amharic, the *maḳuānnent,* or "nobility," and the *ḳāhenāt,* or "clergy." While believing the presence of a king to be a precondition of civil order, they also regard the presence of these other elites as necessary for their good life. This attitude is expressed in the Amharic saying: "Fertility of the land [is] through the *maḳuānnent;* the splendor of the church [is] through the *ḳāhenāt.*"[17]

The term *maḳuānnent* may be used to refer to all secular dignitaries between the emperor and the well-to-do landowning peasantry. In strict contemporary usage, however, the *maḳuānnent* should be distinguished from two other classes of personages, whom we may call the "royal nobility" and the "local nobility" or "gentry." The former consists of the immediate royal family (*negusāwi bētasab*) and more distant royal relatives (*masāfent*). Because of their kinship with the Solomonic line these have at times been referred to as "chiefs of Israel."[18] Although it was customary for each new king to exile all male relatives who were potential candidates for the Crown to a high mountain fortress, more distant relatives might hold provincial governorates, and women of the royal family sometimes played an important role in court politics and provincial administration. Members of the royal nobility have normally been distinguished by special titles: *ābēto* (now vulgarized as *āto,* "Mister"), *le'ul,* and *lijj* for men; and *emebēt, le'elt,* and *wayzaro* (now vulgarized in the sense of "Mrs.") for women.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 The local nobility, on the other hand, were eminences whose lives and reputations were bound to a more circumscribed locale. While the non-royal nobility, or *makuännent* in the stricter sense, performed as high dignitaries at the imperial court and governors of large provinces, the local nobility were district chiefs and judges, or even simply wealthy landowners, who enjoyed considerable deference. Though they might not be known outside of their home regions, these men were, for the mass of the population, the lords of existence. *Ka-Gondar negus / yägar ämbärās,* "the petty district chief [is obeyed] more than the Gondar king"[19] expresses folk wisdom on the subject. The Amharic terms which designate this class of men are *bālābbāt* and *shum,* terms we shall want to consider more closely below.

565 184 Despite these distinctions among members of the upper stratum of Abyssinian society, with respect to their general orientation and style of life they differed only in degree. They created and shared what might be called a "gentry subculture," even though it was not so differentiated from the general culture as was the case in Europe and China. In the present context, it will be meaningful to treat them as a single status group.

565 184 86 [576] Special manners and skills were self-consciously taught to children of the *makuännent,* most of which remain part of the gentry subculture today. An etiquette of instinctual inhibition is taught. Some attention is given, for example, to toilet training, which is spontaneous among peasant children. Spitting in public is proscribed. Physical aggression is discouraged in favor of the more subtle forms of satire and patient manipulation of others. A quiet, reserved manner of speaking is stressed, in contrast with the less inhibited and cruder self-expression of the peasantry. Dignity of comportment is expected at all times; a noble should not, for example, express great enthusiasm or surprise over anything. Sobriety is inculcated as a virtue; alcohol is *la-çhawā lijj* [293] *mādasetchā / la-bālagē māzabābatchā* ("for the nobleman's son a stimulant, for the commoner an intoxicant"). In short, the gentry subculture stresses the general ideal of bringing a child up to be conspicuously genteel, or *çhawā.*

565 184 868 [871] [534] [883] Sons of the nobility have traditionally followed a privileged curriculum.[20] They were given lessons in horseback riding and weaponry at an early age. They were also taught how to swim, an uncommon skill among the Abyssinians. Reading would often be taught, for which schooling a man of the church might be brought in as a tutor, or the boy might be sent for a while to a monastery. He might also learn how to play the *baganā,* the ten-stringed lyre used to accompany certain forms of religious and plaintive secular songs. Instead of spending his teen-age years at the plow, which was regarded as beneath his dignity, the noble boy would follow his father to court and observe the ways of litigation and the manner of passing judgments; or he might be sent as a page to the court of the king or some great lord.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of
[644] course, the imperial court. The *makuānnent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discretion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but
[492] on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shoul-
[231] dering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-
[273] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *ṭajj* pre-
[292] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos,* the dark wool cloak of the
[822] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-
[293] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abyssinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for
554 instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mā'erg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The
554 *makuānnent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary
701 Amharic the term *makuānnent* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

rās	"head" (of an army)
dajāzmātch	"general of the (king's) gate"
fitāwrāri•	"general of the vanguard"
qañnāzmātch	"general of the right wing"
gerāzmātch	"general of the left wing"
bālāmbārās	"commander of a fort"
bāshā†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shālaqā	"chief of a thousand"

• In former times the *fitāwrāri* ranked below the *gerāzmātch*.

[192] † *Bāshā* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

All these titles were conferred by the emperor. But, in addition, *makuānnent* with the rank of *rās* or *dajāzmātch* had the authority to appoint lesser officers under them. The number of troops commanded by these officers varied considerably according to circumstances. Among armies, moreover, there was great variability in status; the *fitāwrāri* of an emperor naturally enjoyed much more deference than the *fitāwrāri* of a provincial *dajāzmātch*.[23] 565 554 701 [643]

A number of other titles represented various civil functions. These included: 565 554

āfa negus	"mouth of the king" (lord chief justice)
āzāzh *liq* (Gondar) *wambar* (Shoa)	royal judges
naggādrās	"head of merchants" (customs collector and chief official over merchants)
ṭsahāfi lām *nagāsh* *shum* *ḳāntibā*	various titles given to provincial governors
malḳañña *meslanē*	local representatives of the emperor or provincial governors

A further set of titles was that given to the functionaries of the royal court. These were given for all court posts, including such offices as Server of the Mead (*ṭajj āsālāfi*). Some of these titles were found exclusively at the court of the emperor; others were imitated in noble households across the land, though again, the same title naturally carried far less prestige in the provinces than when held at the imperial court. The list of court titles varied from region to region and century to century, both in its composition and its hierarchical order.[24] At any given time and place, however, a rank order was carefully respected, and confusion over protocol could provoke altercation, as was recorded in the Chronicle of Iyāsu I (1682–1706).[25] 565 554 644

Titles (and numbers) of the principal court functionaries, in the (descending) order of importance fixed at the time of Iyāsu I, were:

behtwaddad	chief counsellor and confidant (two)
blattēn getā	chief administrator of the palace (greater and lesser [two])
rāq māsarē or *west āzāzh*	majordomo, master of ceremonies
ṭsahāfi te'ezāz	royal scribe; keeper of the seal (two)
zhāndarabā āzazh	chief of the eunuchs

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 *bajirond* — guardian of royal property, treasurer (two)
• 554 *liqa makuās* — king's double and keeper of the king's mule
644 *āggāfāri*• — protocol officer, superintendent of banquets

The status of these dignitaries may have been particularly vulnerable, depending so closely as it did on the whims of the monarch. Nonetheless their proximity to the center of imperial power gave them unique advantages. They were in a position to receive many gifts for favors and influence, as well as to come by some part of the royal revenues and to attend the royal banquets. They were consulted, together with military commanders, provincial governors, and high ecclesiastics, on important matters of state. Lands granted to them for their services enabled them to support small retinues of their own, including, in some cases, military contingents. They were normally an important factor in promoting stability and continuity during the troubled moments that usually followed the death of an emperor.[26]

565 554 The above classification of titles is meant only to provide a quick overview of their variety; no such formal compartmentation existed in the Abyssinian perspective. All the titles converged into a single hierarchy.[27] What is more, titles were not strictly connected to offices or functions, so military titles were frequently given to court or civil functionaries. This was particularly true of [644] the court of Menelik, where, for example, the Superintendent of Royal Tents bore the title *bālāmbārās* and the Chief Hand-washer that of *gerāzmātch*.[28] [635] For centuries before, moreover, provincial governors were often known by military rather than civil titles, and men holding civil titles were liable to be called to take part in military campaigns by the sovereign.

565 The sociological reality underlying this overlapping of titles among the nobility was the essentially unspecialized nature of their role. The ideal type of the *makuānnent* was at once governor, soldier, and courtier. In time of war he set forth at his own expense, with his own troops, to support the cause of the emperor, or perhaps simply to defend his own regional interests. In time of peace he might sojourn, if permitted, at the court of his king or overlord, eating and drinking with his peers, giving counsel to his liege when asked, engaged in intrigue and otherwise seeking to improve his station.

[427] When not active in warfare or the affairs of court, the nobleman would repair to his lands to supervise the agricultural production and the collection [643] of rents from his tenants. The emperors rewarded nobles who served them [423] with grants of land. The higher chieftains in turn rewarded their own fol- [427] lowers accordingly. These estates were usually held *in absentia*, the peasants

• *Āggāfāri* is an important title in the courts of provincial lords but is not mentioned in the court list of Iyāsu I, nor in that of the *Ser'āta Mangest*.

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565 taxes collected in the name of the emperor. Concerning the imposts for which
631 the peasants were liable, Plowden wrote in 1844:
661

[651] They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts—he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.[30]

Two centuries earlier, observing similar phenomena, Almeida had concluded that "generally speaking, they are all plunderers rather than governors."[31] The only restraints on their exploitative behavior have been an occasionally keen sense of Christian propriety and the limits to what an exasperated local populace will bear.

565 The existence of a predatory class who serve military functions and maintain a gentry subculture is a common enough feature of traditional agrarian societies. What is perhaps less common in the Abyssinian case is the constellation of factors relating to the recruitment of members into this elite.

High secular status in Abyssinia was dependent on a complex of possessions—land, political strength, and honorific titles—which tended to reinforce
[423] one another. The possession of much land has always been a basis for con-
[556] siderable deference in Abyssinia. As a source of produce, rents, and revenues
[662] deflected from the Crown, moreover, it was also a source of wealth to be used in building up one's political strength by rewarding able soldiers and loyal
[661] followers, and by making gifts to one's superiors. Political power was directly obtained through the acquisition of governorships. Such offices were a further
[631] basis for much deference and, through the incumbent's access to tribute, customs fees, court fees, and gifts from his subjects, of much income as well.
[554] Titles, finally, not only were universally esteemed but also entitled the bearers to a style of life which included a presumptive right to gifts and obedience from all inferiors as well as the consumption of much wealth and power.

565 For all these possessions, the Abyssinian noble was directly dependent on
643 his king (or, in the case of a lesser noble, on his overlord). His dependence was twofold: land, political office, and titles came to him as gifts from the sovereign, and, what is more, their continued possession was contingent on
[423] the sovereign's continuing favor. Abyssinian "vassals" had no legal rights to their "benefices," and lands granted them could be withdrawn and given to others as the emperor wished. At the death of a feudal beneficiary his lands

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reverted to the Crown unless specifically reconveyed to the heir by royal 565
proclamation. Political office was no less precarious. Governors were made 643
and unmade—by the traditional process known as *shum-shīr* ("appoint- [423]
demote")—in short periods of time. The powerful position of governor of [635]
the maritime province (*bāhr nagāsh*) changed hands four times during the six years that Alvares spent in Ethiopia. Even when tradition assigned a certain post to the descendants of a certain lord, the emperors were able to exert control by shifting their favor from one descendant to another from year to year. Titles, unlike land and office, were granted for life, as we observed; but [554]
they were in no case hereditary, and thus every Abyssinian's hope for a title, [428]
let alone a raise in rank, depended on the grace of the king or of his major appointees.

Given these conditions, it was not possible for the nobility to become a 565
closed, hereditary estate, or to develop a corporate identity capable of confronting the imperial will. On the contrary, thanks to the emperor's freedom [643]
to ennoble anyone whom he chose, there was a relatively high degree of social mobility, and the ranks of the upper strata were continuously being reshuffled.

Outstanding personal properties of various sorts often enabled Ethiopians of 565
low birth to rise to high positions. The emperors and great lords conferred 555
honors on those who served especially well in military expeditions, whatever 554
their origins. Menelik's promotion of two Galla prisoners to rank as his highest generals is a famous case in point. The royal favor occasionally smiled on low-born Ethiopians who excelled in such qualities as physical beauty or witty repartee.[32] Unquestionable personal loyalty was another quality in high de- [567]
mand; freed slaves were sometimes given offices and dignities, since their lack of ties to political families made them particularly trustworthy.

Abyssinians have thus cherished the idea that they could rise to a higher 565
station in life than that to which they were born. Comparatively few ever 554
tried to do so, probably, but ambitious souls were never wanting. Seeking some benefice, or the glory of a title, or a position of power that would permit them to help their kinfolk or avenge themselves for a wrong suffered at the hands of some superior, they would attach themselves to the lord whose fortunes seemed brightest at the moment and hope, by valorous service and God's favor, to arrive someday at an estimable position.[33]

Nevertheless, though ability and fortune might carry any man high in the political hierarchy, he would not thereby automatically be accepted as one of the *makuānnent*. A self-respecting man of noble family would resist marrying his daughter to a commoner or person of dubious parentage, no matter how high a rank the latter obtained. For the Abyssinian nobility did form a self-conscious status group with a certain hereditary base. Its members shared a sense of superiority, a consciousness of kind, and an attitude toward commoners such as that expressed by the governor Takla Giyorgis to the Jesuit

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565 554 Barradas: "Father, these villeins are like camels, they cry and groan when they are loaded, but in the end they carry the load that is put on them."[34] They set themselves off from the commoners, not only because of their style of life and subculture, but also because they came from well-known families.

Such sentiments were shared by the commoners. They would much rather be governed by a man from a noted family than by a person promoted from their own social level. The folkways expressed a disdain for the *nouvel arrivé,* for example, by poking fun at the office of *liqa maḳuās* (the king's double in time of battle). The *liqa maḳuās* was often a man from an unknown family, chosen because of his handsome features and resemblance to the king. The office permitted him to strut about in the king's clothes and inclined him to assume haughty airs. In some places it was customary to ridicule this upstart by referring to the minstrel, or *azmāri,* as *liqa maḳuās;* for the *azmāri,* too, was entitled to wear the kind of dress appropriate to the lord in whose banquet hall he performed, but the *azmāri* was a person of low prestige in Abyssinian society.

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643 565 554 In other words: although the emperors could appoint and depose whenever they pleased, with or without cause; and though "the land and persons of their subjects are equally their property, and every inhabitant of their kingdom is born their slave"; by itself the principle of royal favor is clearly inadequate to explain the Abyssinian pattern of social stratification. For, unlike the neighboring kingdom of Buganda, Abyssinia was not a straightforward despotism in which the dispensation of a *ḳabaḳa* was sufficient to elevate a man into the highest social stratum.[35] The claims of a quasi-hereditary noble status group have also had to be satisfied.

[171]

565 How did this status group arise, and how have its claims been expressed and justified? What has been the history of its relationship with the monarchy? The existence of this class is anchored in the actual tendency for lands, office, and titles to be given to members of the same families. In reality, the emperors frequently let such possessions pass from father to son, either because they were in too distant a region or because there was no good cause for taking them away, and on occasion drew up written charters assigning grants of land to a man and his future descendants.[36] Indeed, one form of land tenure, known as *rīsta-gult,* was precisely a sort of hereditary fief, given in exchange for military service over the generations. In certain areas, moreover, it was a matter of tradition that the governorship be given to members of a certain family. Finally, although no man inherited a title, as son of a nobleman he might inherit the culture and facilities that would give him a much better chance than any commoner to obtain a title of his own.

[423] [631] [554] [423] [631] [554] [428]

Two other aspects of Abyssinian society supported this tendency toward the development of what amounted to local dynasties of nobility. One was the prestige attached to the "chiefs of Israel," any of the nobility who could

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demonstrate some affiliation with the Solomonic line; the marriage of one of these into a local dynasty contributed an added buttress to its traditionalist claims. The other was what seems to be a still more deeply rooted disposition for decentralized hegemony based on the ancient character of the society. For, as Cerulli has recently suggested, the origins of the Ethiopian state were such as to lay the foundation for a persisting order of feudalism. The movement of South Arabs to the Eritrean coast and highlands took place, not through the conquest of an indigenous population by a united invader, as in the Norman Conquest of England, but by the intermittent emigration and settlement of distinct tribes from South Arabia into various parts of the African territory. Thus, Cerulli concludes, we see in Ethiopia "a feudalism expanded from the roots: a number of principalities or peoples which, independent on African land after their emigration, have finally been regrouped in a higher political unity, yet still conserving in the feudal system thus constituted part of their autonomy and their individuality."[27] If this is so, it would constitute an added traditional element in the sense of legitimacy of local dynastic interests.

All this suggests that we must look to two sources for the prestige of the *maḳuānnent*—that recruitment into the secular elite came from "below" as well as from "above." These two bases of noble status are indicated by the etymology of two Amharic words commonly applied to the local nobility, *shum* and *bālābbāt*. *Shum* (or *seyum*) comes from a root which means to invest with high position. The emperor, as we have seen, is *seyuma egziābhēr* ("invested by God") and he in turn is the source of authority for investing other dignitaries. The status associated with the word *shum* is therefore based on the act of investiture by a sovereign. *Bālābbāt*, on the other hand, has the literal meaning, "one who has a father"; in other words, one who has a significant father, a notable ancestry. This status refers to claims to deference which are based on birth.

Claims based on birth, moreover, were closely tied to the ownership of land and supported by local territorial allegiances. This appears most strikingly in the office of *çhĭqā shum*, the lowest level official, who is appointed, to be sure, but by the local people themselves from a small number of *bālābbāt* whose eligibility for the office rests on their inheritance of rights to certain specified pieces of land. Other local offices, like *malḳañña* and *meslanē*, were normally given by regional governors to *bālābbāt* indigenous to the area. The sacred sentiment of fealty to a monarch, whose charisma rested both on membership in a hallowed dynasty and the hallowed act of coronation, thus competed in Abyssinian souls with deeply felt sentiments of attachment to members of noted families who symbolized local rights and traditions. Abyssinian political structure at any given time was determined by the relative strength of the forces supported by these two principles of legitimacy.

Neither principle was ever realized in pure form. No matter how great his

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642 authority, the emperor could never afford to ignore the hereditary claims of
643 regional *bālābbāt* in dispensing favors and making appointments. He needed
565 a minimum of support from regional lords who commanded devoted followers, and he could not with impunity alienate any number of these at a given time. In practice, imperial favor was accorded *both* on the basis of personal loyalty and military ability, and of ascriptive claims to rank based on birth. The exercise of imperial authority was often a question simply of confirming the leadership of a locally successful *bālābbāt*.

565 With regard to regionally based strength, on the other hand, birth was not
554 a sufficient factor to assure a man a high position. (It was not even necessary, strictly speaking. Any man could attempt to build up a position of power by attracting followers. He had a much better chance, however—a chance to attain authority, and not merely force—if he came from a noted family.) If, as the son of an important lord, he inherited his father's position, he had to prove himself a suitable leader or risk being deposed by the men of the area. At the very least he had to withstand competition from his brothers. Thus, as we saw
[175] in the history of Manz, two of Nagāssi's sons were deposed before the men of Manz found in Sebstē a leader worthy of his father's mantle. Military ability, political shrewdness, and lavish generosity toward one's followers were the decisive characteristics which, together with strong ambition, could enable the son of a *bālābbāt* to attract followers and make claims of his own. With adequate forces, he could even depose a regional governor and take his place, so long as he took possession of the official drum (*nagārit*) of the office.[38] For complete legitimation, however, it was usually necessary to secure con-
[643] firmation of the rule of a locally successful *bālābbāt* by the emperor. This was the reason why Nagāssi is said to have journeyed to Gondar.

642 In terms of the distribution of political authority, then, Abyssinian history
643 may be viewed as an oscillation between the emperor's efforts to define local
565 nobles as his agents and their own efforts to attain continuity and autonomy.
175 The available sources concerning the emperors of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries suggest that their efforts were to a large extent successful. The ensuing "barbarian invasions" so weakened the empire that a more locally centered distribution of power became inevitable. At first only the scope of the monarchy was reduced, as the emperor came to govern a smaller area. In consequence, in outlying regions such as Manz, Gishē, and Merhābētē in northern Shoa, virtual sovereignty was wielded by the local *bālābbāt*. Nevertheless, for a good century after its founding Gondar served as a real imperial capital, and its emperors retained authority over the lords in their shrunken empire. Then, as the monarchy began its inexorable decline due to internal rivalries and the movement of Galla into court and capital, localism triumphed. Ethiopia's Age of the Princes (1769–1855) was as decentralized a political system as was twelfth-century France or fourteenth-century Japan.

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793 preme judges at the royal court, and the *aqābē sa'āt* ranked third—in some
644 lists, first—in the official order of precedence of all court dignitaries.[40]
[693] One other church dignitary, finally, was the *nebra ed,* chief of the sacred district of Aksum, who always enjoyed a high position at the royal court. When appointed by the emperor (instead of by the provincial governor who sometimes possessed that authority), the *nebra ed* enjoyed the rare privilege of being permitted to sit while speaking in the event of his involvement in litigation.

793 The status of the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries was based on approxi-
554 mately the same factors as those which determined the status of secular nobility: royal favor; family background, in the case of those whose fathers were important nobles or noted churchmen; and the possession of wealth, political power, and imposing titles.[41] The same was true of their regional counterparts, the *alaqā,* "chiefs" of large churches and monasteries, whose wealth, power, and leisurely mode of life gave them, in Plowden's opinion, "perhaps the most enviable position in Abyssinia."[42]

793 The status of the clergy as a whole, however, rested on three other prin-
792 ciples which are not affected by royal favor, birth, or worldly possessions.
554 These were: contact with the most sacred symbols of religious authority; ascetic piety; and religious learning. Broadly speaking, in Abyssinia these three principles have been embodied primarily in three distinct roles, namely, those of priest, monk, and *dabtārā.*

793 A normal preparation for these roles—necessarily so, in the case of the
794 priesthood—is service as a deacon. Ability to read is, now as before, a requisite qualification for the diaconate, but that requirement has in the past often been overlooked. More important has been the requirement of ordination by the *abuna.* Ordination formerly took place in the company of hundreds of other aspirants and, when there was uncertainty about the future availability of an *abuna,* even babes in arms were admitted.[43]

794 The traditional garb of the deacon is a yellowish cape made of sheepskins,
792 though on holidays the officiating deacons may be dressed in richly colored silk robes like the priests. The duties of the deacon—and they are accounted great and secret privileges—are to prepare the sacramental bread, fetch the holy water, and assist at the Mass (the performance of which normally requires two priests and three deacons).

793 On reaching puberty a deacon is no longer supposed to serve in the church,
794 for fear that he will become "impure." At that time he may decide to prepare for the priesthood. For this two qualifications must be met. He must have completed his study of reading and, ideally, of *zēmā,* the chants that are intoned in the liturgy of the Mass. These matters he may learn from the older clergy during his service as a deacon, or from his father, who, in many cases, is a priest himself. Otherwise, he goes off in search of a master. He

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793 The *dabtarā*'s way of life is more variable than that of the monk, his possibilities for income more diverse than those of the priest. He may be attached to a church as a chorister and receive a share of the church's revenues, as do the priests. Or he may donate his services to the church and earn his living [212] by secular employment. He may work as a scribe at the court of a king or nobleman. He may spend most of his time teaching, gaining support from some large church or monastery. Like many priests he may cultivate land. [434] In any case, he is likely to derive some income from the sale of amulets and from medical therapies. Some *dabtarā* are even said to have wandered about the country as hunters, performing magical services for clients as they go.

Dabtarā are not set off from the populace by special insignia. Some wind [292] a turban around their heads, as do many priests; but others may dress like ordinary peasants. If holding more prestigious posts they may be seen with fly-whisks or wearing a *barnos*. But they are known by the people, who fear and respect them. They are feared because of their magical powers, which [789] are believed capable of rendering bullets harmless and turning *ĭnjarā* to dust. [554] They are respected because of their learning, for they are the only educated status group in traditional Amhara society. If the commoner's relatively [195] impulsive *manner* of speaking is contrasted with the quiet reserve of the nobility, his relatively simple *language* is contrasted with that of the *dabtarā*, who is noted for a studied and circumspect use of language (*qāla-dabtarā*) and for larding his Amharic with literary (i.e., Ge'ez) expressions (*ya-dabtarā amārĭññā*).

793 554 183 In the case of the religious elite, then, status is in all cases achieved. While there is a natural tendency for sons of priests and *dabtarā* to follow their fathers' example, they arrive at the status in question only by fulfilling the same norms that are applied to the sons of laymen. These norms, however, differ among the different groups within the clergy. Investiture by an authority emanating from the seat of religious charisma, the Alexandrine Patriarchate, and the related ritual requirement of marriage with Communion, were the basis of priestly status, almost irrespective of the personal attainments of the candidate. Personal attainments were *all* that mattered, on the other [792] hand, in the case of monk and *dabtarā*, but they differed radically for the two statuses.

793 792 554 The qualifications and characters of monks and *dabtarā* are almost diametrically opposed. The monastic state is entered only by means of a sacred rite; the *dabtarā* is in no way ordained, and might even be a "defrocked" priest. The monk's life is normally given to sensual renunciation; the *dabtarā* is normally an acknowledged sensualist (as appears, for example, in the proverb *ḳa-mesā ya-talaya dabtarā / yādargāl serā* ["a *dabtarā* who is kept from lunch / will work intrigues"][48] and in stories which celebrate the *dabtarā*'s use of his knowledge for private erotic ends). In the monk the virtue

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of ascetic piety is stressed at the expense of knowledge. The monk need not 793
even know how to read, though if a lifelong monk he is likely to have de- 792
voted much time to traditional studies. The *dabtarā*, by contrast, lives by 554
his lore and his learning. At his best, the Abyssinian monk conveys a real sense of spiritual purity, of profound mystical bearing, of an utterly mild manner. The *dabtarā*, at his best, is a subtle conversationalist and an operator of wondrous effects.*

Thus, while the status of members of the old nobility was a compound resultant of simultaneously operating criteria—family and region, royal favor and accumulated power—the several criteria relevant to the status of the clergy operated more or less independently. This made the religious elite a more differentiated stratum.

This statement need be qualified only by the fact that, in addition to the considerations of ritual purity, ascetic piety, and traditional learning, a fourth factor influenced the status of the clergy, namely, royal favor as expressed in appointments to the high ecclesiastical offices. This factor crosscut the others, for such favor was dispensed to members of all three status groups. The *eçhagē* was always a monk; the *aqābē sa'āt* would seem to have been a *dabtarā*; the post of *alaqā* could be given to members of all three groups.

Just how these types of local clergy were related to the clergy at the na- 79
tional level in the traditional order is a question that is difficult to answer. 175
In any case, it is likely that there were conflicts among their representatives in the competition for royal favor. In the fourteenth century, the ecclesiastics of the royal entourage included only secular clergy, and their deportment was sharply criticized by Eçhagē Fileppos, who charged that "those who live in the dwelling of the Sovereign, go about proudly in subtle raiment and with ornaments of gold and silver—perishables—and are very arrogant."[49] However, once Zar'a Yā'qob had established the custom of bringing members of the convent of Dabra Libānos to the court, the monastic order was always well represented in the royal entourage as well. In the present period one sometimes hears of competition among the different groups for influence in

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* The association of impious properties with the main representative of traditional religious 779
learning may be seen as an expression of the Abyssinian's ambivalence toward knowledge as 793
such. The whole tenor of Ethiopian Orthodox religion runs counter to ratiocination and inquiry. It stresses mystery and discourages curiosity with tales like that of the man who tried to probe the mystery of the Trinity and was swallowed up by the earth—a tale commonly told to students who are learning to read. For this reason Orthodox students have frequently been quite upset by the rational theodicy taught by the Jesuit fathers at the University College.

As observed in the previous chapter, moreover, it was traditionally believed that too much learning results in madness, a belief no doubt based on the fact that older church students often drink a certain medicine to quicken their mental faculties, which sometimes deranges them (as the author has witnessed). The *dabtarā*, for their part, would seem to have thrived on this belief, benefiting from the exclusive powers and privileges gained from their esoteric knowledge.

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175 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureau-
178 cratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of
631 regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central gov-
642 ernment has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of
525 building up their positions, members of the most important noble families
631 have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of
642 Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of
646 high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as
631 regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to
693 Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the
578 behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov-
[465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the
565 aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the
554 eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of what-
[571] ever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

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directed peasantry, and suffer the consequences, no dynamic program of agricultural and social development can take place in Abyssinian areas that does not enlist the active cooperation of the local *bālābbāt* and *shum*.*

The Decline of the Clergy

Although the church was instrumental in bringing Rās Tafari to power—by relieving the nobles of their oath of allegiance to Lĭjj Iyāsu—it was as a whole not sympathetic to his policy once he began to rule. Foremost champions of tradition, the clergy viewed with suspicion Rās Tafari's interest in modern education and other reforms. So pronounced was their conservatism that his weekly *Berhānennā Salām* found it newsworthy to report the fact that the clergy of one important provincial church were actually reading the Addis Ababa newspaper each week.[57] He was wise to act gingerly at first, limiting ecclesiastical reform to such matters as publishing religious texts in Ge'ez and Amharic, and encouraging the work of foreign missionaries.

In the past three decades, however, changes of many sorts have had the effect of reducing the degree of independent authority which the clergy traditionally enjoyed. These changes included the achievement of independence from the Alexandrian Patriarchate; the weakening of the church under the Italian occupation; subjection of church administration to the central government; and competition from the secular government schools.

Rās Tafari initiated the policy of seeking independence from Alexandria in 1929, when he secured the investiture of five Ethiopian bishops. This gave indigenous clergy, for the first time, the right to ordain priests and deacons, although they remained subordinate to the Egyptian archbishop. In 1950 an Ethiopian bishop, the *eçhagē*, was consecrated as archbishop; and in 1958, culminating Haile Selassie's patient and skillful negotiations, complete autonomy from Alexandria was achieved.

The attainment of ecclesiastical independence has heightened the prestige of national church officials in Ethiopia. It has brought about a re-organization of the national church hierarchy, in which fifteen bishops now hold office, one for each of the fourteen provinces, and one in Jerusalem. At the same time it has reduced the effective freedom of the clergy as a separate status group. Deprived of the external source of legitimacy which the Egyptian *abuna* formerly provided, the clergy are now entirely subordinated to the power of the Emperor. This condition was formally articulated in the Constitution of 1955, which made the election and appointment of archbishops and bishops

* A potentially significant medium of communication between them and the central government is the Chamber of Deputies, which since 1957 has brought popularly elected notables from the provinces to Addis Ababa.

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178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

648 795 793 [792] The general position of the church had already been weakened by the events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 795 793 [643] [651] Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 871 658 793 [465] The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever government schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full-time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 178 [554] [871] [658] Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite

[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Ya-dam Demṭs*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

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recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuānnent*, Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

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175 royal will. A solid foundation for such a class was not possible, however, until
178 the central government had been sufficiently stabilized and expanded. These
565 conditions began to be met under Menelik, who established Addis Ababa in
642 the last decade of the nineteenth century and in 1907 created a number of
645 ministries. Housed in buildings inside the palace compound, the ministries were initially regarded as little more than an ornament to dress up the imperial court. Although men of some stature, like Afa Negus Nasibu and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, were named to the posts, the offices themselves did not acquire much prestige. It was no great matter when, five years after the death of Menelik, the ministers were turned out of office by a group of military officers at the instigation of Rās Tafari and sent home to their provincial estates.

175 After becoming emperor himself, however, Haile Selassie revived and en-
178 larged the ministerial system. Since the restoration, it has expanded into a
645 complex bureaucratic structure. In addition to some sixteen ministries, a
647 number of specialized government agencies have been formed, and the military and judicial hierarchies and the diplomatic corps have been considerably expanded. The rapid growth of the central government in the past two dec-
[652] ades is reflected in its budgetary expenditures, which went from about US$10 million in 1942 to an estimated US$110 million in 1962.

178 The growth of this governmental machinery has provided a new basis for
647 elite status in Ethiopia. Mobility channels now run in terms of appointments
571 in the government bureaucracy. The periodic announcement of appointments
554 by the Emperor has become the focus of public interest in Ethiopia since the
565 liberation. Every new list of appointments provides the occasion for intense gossip and *de rigueur* congratulatory parties at the homes of the favored.

178 The new class of high governmental functionaries under Haile Selassie may
565 be regarded as a transitional elite: partly traditional, partly modernizing.
571 With regard to basis of recruitment, values represented, and style of life, the new nobility present, on the one hand, a direct continuation of the old nobility; and, on the other hand, many features novel in Abyssinian society.

178 To some extent recruitment of members of the new nobility was not a
565 creation of new dignitaries, but rather an absorption of members of the old
[646] nobility into the new political organization. The recruitment of *makuānnent* into the senate, which after all is an organ of the central government, may be taken as an ambiguous instance of this. Some others were given important posts in the civil and military administrations. These include members of the princely families of Shoa, Tigre, Wag, Lasta, and Gojjam; the Bakere clan, royalty from the Galla province of Wallaga; and scions of the *makuānnent* who were important in Menelik's day or before, members of aristocratic clans which go by the names of Bēzā, Mojā, Sofanē, and Addisgē. Such persons are likely to have been awarded the old military titles for purely honorific pur-

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poses. They have been led to renounce extreme particularistic ambitions, 178 thanks to marital connections, intimidation, the lure of new benefits, and a 565 degree of nationalism, but to some extent they remain spokesmen for regional and para-dynastic interests.

Men who did not belong to the old nobility were recruited into the new 178 nobility on the basis of two criteria, loyalty and ability, with loyalty clearly the 565 more important of the two. Some men from very humble backgrounds have 554 been thus raised to the highest governmental positions through their "loyalty" to the Emperor, manifested in great part by their readiness to inform on the words and deeds of others and their obsequious and flattering manner. These have normally not been given the traditional military titles but only the titles of their office. In contrast with the carry-overs from the old nobility, still known as *masāfent* and *maḳuānnent,* these men have been called *bāla-selṭān* ("holders of power"). They have included a number of men who were [648] active in the fight against the Italians, either through the Hagara Fiqer ("National Patriotic Association," a group organized in 1935 to promote Ethiopian unity and combat Italian propaganda) or as patriotic fighters in the resistance. The Emperor also promoted to high position some men who collaborated with the Italians, relying on their earlier record as an insurance against latter-day disloyalty, and using their antagonism against the patriots as a check against excessive ambitions of the latter.

On the other hand, the new nobility includes those who, whether from high [555] family background or not, are so placed because of outstanding ability. This consideration is no longer primarily a question of military ability, but of competence in dealing with technical modern subjects and with foreign diplomats. This group may be equated with the older generation of European-educated Ethiopians. The categories of adjusted aristocrats, ambitious parvenus, and intellectual bureaucrats have thus constituted a latent subdivision among the new nobility; and tensions have from time to time been expressed along those lines.

Despite the elaboration of modern governmental structures under Haile 178 Selassie, the dominant principle of the social order has been that of royal 64 sovereignty. The entire staff of government officials has been the direct socio-logical descendant of the traditional court retinue. This was conspicuous in [175] the titles given by Menelik to a number of the original ministers: *Afa Negus* for Minister of Justice; *Azāzh* for Minister of Palace; *Bajirond* for Treasurer; and *Ṭsahāfi Te'ezāz* for Minister of Pen. These and other court titles remain in use today. The primacy of the court over all other functions appears in periodic audiences at the palace, when all high government officials and other notables are expected to pay their respects no matter what business may be pending in their offices. The chief value embodied in the status group of the new nobility as a whole has been that of loyalty to the sovereign.

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178 565 661 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 565 556 [241] [455] For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 565 556 472 [175] [648] Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families, Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *maḳuānnent* and *bāla-selṭān*. They [662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 565 369 177 [556] As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 565 554 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The

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The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shĭr*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

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178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shĭr* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court.

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand.

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time.

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be

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phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571
and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178
of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession 565
of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554
ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642]
ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177]
rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556]
imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642]
growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647]
nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701]
force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178
Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests 571
on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554
the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871
the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178
tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565
the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643]
political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178
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* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 [439]
million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

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571 511 automobile. All this permits returnees to live at a standard which, while clearly inferior to what they enjoyed abroad, is well above that of all their countrymen except the higher nobility. Their income compares favorably [465] with the prevailing monthly wages for policemen (Eth$25–$30) and district (*waradā*) governors (Eth$100), and not unfavorably with the salary earned by vice-ministers (Eth$1,000). Compared with the more sumptuous residences of the new nobility, their housing is threadbare, their staff of servants small; but usually their homes contain one or two modern appliances—a radio or phonograph, perhaps a refrigerator.

571 554 The returnees have, moreover, been shown deference from many quarters: from the modernizing sector of the public which, in its growing esteem for education, has adulated them as the most educated Ethiopians and, in the early fifties, regarded them as something of national heroes; from resident Europeans and Americans, whose perception of shared understandings with the returnees has flattered them; and from the government, which at the least has shown consistent concern for their economic security and at best has given them responsibilities and status that they would not be granted in a more modernized society without considerably more experience.

Despite such apparent advantages, however, it must be said that the returnees as a whole have so far done little either to modernize their country or even to establish themselves as a self-respecting status group. Their failure to do so has become one of the most widely discussed questions in Ethiopia in recent years, both among the more self-critical of the returnees and among critical Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian observers. Instead of being leaders of the new era, they have been little more than misfits in the old. If the central quality of the life of the new nobility has been anxiety, that of the intellectuals has been frustration. In the passionate words of one of them: "There is a wound, a boiling within each and every one of the returnees." Theirs is the frustration of modernized individuals attempting to live meaningful lives in a society that has remained essentially traditional.

571 829 The ideological aspect of this dilemma is that no synthesis of traditional and modern perspectives has yet been effected which has won the adherence of a sizable number of intellectuals and which could serve to energize their transformation of the status quo. Consensus exists only with regard to a vague sense of the inadequacy of the traditional system. There is no sense of direction. Partly this reflects deprivation due to maladjustment in personal areas, but it also represents a genuine cultural problem.

Foreign-educated Ethiopians return intellectually aware of the traditional nature of their society, but emotionally unprepared to cope with the tenacity of tradition or with the paucity of modern institutions and culture. The experience of culture shock seems greater when they return to Ethiopia than

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121 been affected by modernizing agents for but a relatively brief period and in
571 a relatively diluted fashion. The beliefs and values which the returnees
177 acquired while abroad concern national development, technical competence,
178 and individuality, while the norms of the social structure in which they must live are based on the values of loyalty to monarch, ascribed status, and authoritarian relations.

121 Of many possible types of response to such a situation of strain, four are
571 common among the Ethiopian intelligentsia. These we may designate by the
177 terms Opportunism, Withdrawal, Reformism, and Rebellion. With reference
178 to the three variables of commitment to modern goals and norms, acceptance
156 of existing authorities, and the distinction between "activity" and "passivity," these patterns may be represented schematically as in Table 14.[59]

TABLE 14

MODES OF ADAPTATION OF ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES

	Commitment to Modern Values	Acceptance of Existing Authorities	"Activity"
Opportunism	−	+	+
Withdrawal	+	−	−
Reformism	+	+	+
Rebellion	+	−	+

Opportunism is the mode of adaptation in which the returnee's commitment to modern goals and norms is eclipsed by his passion for status, power, and income. He differs from the traditional aspirant for high position in [554] Abyssinia in that two of his status qualifications are novel—residence abroad, and a university degree—and above all in that the pursuit of his personal goals entails a *renunciation* of nationalistic ideals and universalistic standards which were nurtured while abroad. For some opportunists this is no real problem: their study abroad was all along essentially a façade to be used in advancing their careers. But for the others the process of becoming an opportunist is a gradual one and attended by chronic self-recriminations, as the returnee finds himself compulsively agreeing with his superiors and flattering them on every occasion, and performing actions primarily for the sake of advancement rather than for the sake of doing a job well.

> It is impossible to go on pursuing progressive principles indiscriminately. I sometimes see my friends doing things now which we used to condemn

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brothels for dancing and more intimate relations. (Returnees normally do not have patience for the shy, traditional girls; and they are too concerned about public opinion to be seen visiting brothels. When they or the locals do visit the brothels, it is often by way of a backdoor entrance.) When they marry, the locals almost invariably choose a traditional type of wife with relatively little education and with whom they expect to have an authoritarian relationship.

In sum: the local is not so afflicted by those problems which derive from the central dilemma of the returnee—how to fulfil himself according to modern standards in an intractable, traditional environment. The local's dilemma typically lies in a different realm, that of economic and social mobility. Whereas the returnee has been given a comparatively high income and status almost as a matter of course, the local has normally started his work life with a relatively low salary and little prestige. If the returnee has felt deprived relative to the Westerners in whose society he has lived, the local has felt deprived relative to the returnee.

The local lives on a day-to-day basis at a relatively simple standard. Though he shares the returnee's passion for woolen suits and, in many cases, for a car of his own, he is not, like the returnee, preoccupied with the quest for housing that conforms to Western standards. Except for those with extraordinary talents and family connections, the locals have had difficulty locating jobs that they feel are not beneath their dignity and which pay salaries sufficient to cover their relatively modest needs. They customarily receive a starting salary in the neighborhood of Eth$150. The more ambitious and fortunate among them have, by changing jobs, manipulating superiors, and improving skills, worked their way up to salaries in the Eth$400–$500 category. Some have become provincial teachers for a while, in order to accumulate money on which to live while shopping for a position in Addis Ababa and with which to influence some higher official to grant it to them. There remains a hard core of locals who feel they are underpaid and live in constant resentment of this situation.

This resentment has produced a general sort of negativism which characterizes many of the locals, a negativism expressed in the form of backbiting and denunciation of the higher government officials and the nobility generally. They decry social injustice and the uses of nepotism. They moralize profusely against those whom fortune has shown greater favors. But not all their social criticism is born of resentment. There are also among the locals many young men who are comfortably situated but fired by patriotic fervor with a desire for social reform.

The local is as deeply concerned about asserting his status vis-à-vis the less educated as he is to advance his position in the hierarchy. Locals are extreme-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 ly meticulous about the state of their clothes. They have their shoes shined
156 several times daily, even when they are eating only one solid meal per day.
[554] They are intent on receiving the proper deference—for example, on being served properly in a hotel. This concern for status is projected in the form of
[186] an intense nationalism that considers the speedy displacement of non-Ethiopians holding important jobs in the country a more urgent need than the establishment of effective modern institutions and universalistic standards.

Some locals can be found, of course, whose problems and aspirations resemble those of the returnees, and vice versa. However, the characteristics here associated with the two types follow logically from their basic situation and have been observed sufficiently to justify this depicting of them in terms of ideal types. The distinction is further justified on the grounds that the two
[578] groups have developed a modicum of corporate identity and a degree of mutual antagonism which was particularly pronounced in the mid-fifties.

571 The returnees were at first inclined to regard their locally educated coun-
186 trymen with snobbish pride because of the keen sense of superiority which
578 study abroad conferred. It was natural, moreover, for the returnees to associate most closely with those who had shared the very important personal experience of living abroad, and so they tended to neglect their former schoolmates who never crossed the seas. At times, in fact, they scarcely bothered to exchange greetings with them.

The sense that they were being regarded as inferiors embittered the locals. At the same time they were jealous that they, too, had not had the opportunity to study abroad. These mutual incriminations were heightened by economic competition, the returnees claiming that those who stayed behind had the advantage of working their way up into significant and lucrative positions, the locals believing that a degree from abroad was an automatic entree to a good job.

The latent antagonism between locals and returnees came to a head in 1957, with the simultaneous publication in the *Voice of Ethiopia* of an article by a local criticizing returnee behavior[61] and the presentation of a play by the National Patriotic Association which caricatured them. The play, for example, showed a returnee entering the office of a minister, patting him on the back, puffing cigarette smoke into his eyes, sitting back with his feet up on the minister's desk and talking on and on disrespectfully. Another returnee was shown failing to recognize his own mother when she comes into his office, exclaiming: "Woman, get out of here!" A small group of returnees protested these insults with a petition to the Emperor, who is said to have brought some criticism to bear upon the authorities involved.

571 With the return of increasing numbers of Ethiopians from study abroad,
554 however, the prestige of a foreign degree has diminished, and the appearance of classes of locally educated A.B.'s, who have remained in the country to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

work, has further blurred the cleavage between returnees and locals. Finally, the returnees' growing awareness of their own "failure" has in many cases given them added sympathy toward the locals.

> The locals have as much right to live in the land as the returnees and as much duty to help the country. They should be given responsibility commensurate with what they are able to do. Doing serious work and being a leader do not require going abroad. We may find a leader in one of these kids. . . . In private life, I may not have much to do with them: I associate with a small group of friends, as does everyone; and you can't know everybody. But I have no contempt for the locals, and some of them are my best friends.

• • • •

> The locals are the real patriots around here and the ones from whom real action will come.

The locals, in turn, seem to have become less suspicious that the returnees are looking down on them. Yet, in more recent years, they have found different grounds on which to be critical of the returnees. They see the returnees as alienated from Ethiopian life, withdrawn from public action, and consumed with private concerns, instead of living up to expectations and exercising dynamic leadership in the transformation of Ethiopian society.

> The returnees know nothing about Ethiopia when they leave, and when they come back they are just like the *faranj*. We, who have not studied much, cannot see far. We know little more than to do our daily routine. But they, who have the vision, don't do anything. They borrow thousands of dollars when they return, to buy furniture, rent a home, get a car, and so on; and that is all they think about.

The dissatisfaction of many locals with the returnees has in fact increased their own self-esteem and ambition to exert leadership themselves.

In terms of the total pattern of stratification in Ethiopia, however, the factors uniting locals and returnees outweigh those separating them. Despite differences of emphasis, they share a basic estrangement from the traditional masses and elites and a deep antagonism toward the government and most of the new nobility. They are unanimous in feeling that something is dreadfully wrong in the state of Ethiopia. Frequently they cannot articulate just what they object to, or else they seize upon some flagrant social evil as the bête noire: with the locals tending to be most outspoken against the widespread prostitution, or alcoholism, or the abuses of the courts, or the inequalities of wealth; and the returnees tending to single out inefficient practices in administration, or nepotism, or corruption in high places. Above all, perhaps, they share an increasing sense of *impatience*, a sense of being smothered in an archaic and stagnant social order, which they designate so expressively with

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
155
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• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat*• to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[776] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

574 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
[554] *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
152

[263] • *Wat* is the sauce in which the *ĭnjarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 a matter of course. In the more covert forms of expression, however, insulting
521 is a favorite practice among Amhara. Ambiguous language and obscure
578 allusion make possible a good deal of socially admissible, and admired, insult-
[195] ing. It is chiefly due to his mastery of this genre that the Amhara have come
to idealize Alaqā Gabra Hānnā who, in the words of a psychologically sophis-
[554] ticated Ethiopian informant, by "skillful use of 'wax and gold' has defiled everything that is sacred in Abyssinian tradition: this includes Mother, God, Emperor, and Patriarch, to say nothing of the ignorant clergy, peasantry, and slaves. Gabra Hānnā . . . is the summation of the oral aggressive trend in every Abyssinian, of which the *dabtarā* in the king's court and the singer in the drink-house are only mediocre representations."

155 Wax and gold is, furthermore, the vehicle for the mode of expression which
578 Erikson calls "oral retention." Just as the Amhara tends to be tight-lipped
[195] and evasive when confronted by questions he does not feel like answering, so he finds pleasure in stubbornly withholding his meaning from his audience through employing figures and allusions which no one can understand. This may be understood as a passive form of oral aggression. For the untutored, however, the active aggressive component is probably more satisfying. Most Amhara males look forward to occasions when they can insult with impunity, such as in victory after the games at Christmas or in the setting of a drink-house, where their skillfully improvised verses are repeated and sung by a minstrel. The oral sadistic spirit of this latter scene has been captured with great fidelity by a contemporary Amhara novelist. Describing the moment in a drink-house when the minstrel begins bowing his one-stringed violin and gets ready to accept verses from the crowd, he writes: "*And now every one of them prepares a bullet of verse, and gets cocked to fire veiled insults.*"[18]

155 Two-way communication among Amhara is frequently colored by a biting
521 and intrusive manner as well. Amharic conversation gravitates toward a highly argumentative style. Casual disagreement, or even neutral deliberation over a common problem, often engenders a kind of protracted bickering
[691] to which the Amhara have given an onomatopoetic name, "*çhīqeçhīq*." In its more institutionalized form, this argumentativeness becomes litigation, which has long been regarded as the national sport of Abyssinia.

691 As the primary means of distributing land-use rights and of reducing the
182 likelihood of resort to violence in personal disputes, litigation serves functions of unmistakable importance in Amhara society. Yet the frequency and intensity with which Amhara take part in litigation suggests that it is motivated by non-rational factors in good part. Litigants have often lost many times the original value of some item under dispute in the course of pursuing litigation over it through the courts for many years. The language and colorful gestures of the court may be observed among Amhara in their homes or

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 674 any case the *shĭftā* is a man apart, who makes his home in uninhabited mountainous country or lowlands and lives by stealing cattle and robbing travelers. Some Amhara become *shĭftā* because of a passion for this way of life; this is particularly true of soldiers who, after a long campaign, prefer the continuation of a predatory and free existence to a return to the hard work of the fields. Others do so involuntarily, in order to escape punishment after committing some violence in the course of a personal dispute.

*121 674 829 554 The attitudes of civilian Amhara toward the *shĭftā* combine fear and dislike with a strong tendency toward idealization. The *shĭftā* is feared because he is a killer; if a person happens to witness him performing some act of theft or murder, he will usually keep quiet about it for fear of reprisal. He is disliked because he lives parasitically off the productive activities of others. But the *shĭftā* is widely admired, on the other hand, because he possesses a number of qualities that are dear to the Amhara. He is reputed to be an expert singer of *shĭllalā*. He is credited with unusually handsome features because, living at the expense of others as he does, he has plenty to eat and no [577] arduous work to wear him down. Above all he is *guabaz*, the great Amhara virtue that embodies bravery, fierceness, hardihood, and general male compe- [302] tence. This is symbolized by the *shĭftā*'s letting his hair grow to the proportions of a *gofarē*, the wildly thick hair style of the warrior.

*121 674 829 The Amhara's admiration for the *shĭftā* is reminiscent of American attitudes toward the outlaw in "western" films. In the Amhara case, however, this is not balanced by a corresponding idealization of a sheriff-figure as the representative of civil order. Although a feudal lord or governor who captures some *shĭftā* in his area may be admired, this admiration will be directed to his personal qualities of bravery or cunning far more than to his capacity as an agent of "law and order." There is no feeling among the Amhara that the *shĭftā* must be captured simply because he is an outlaw. Instead, a more pragmatic approach is taken: the *shĭftā* is acknowledged as a legitimate social type and is tolerated at a distance so long as his killing does not become [181] wanton or excessive. This approach, and what, in the idealization of the *shĭftā*, appears to be a tendency to identify with someone who openly flaunts the norms of civil society, bespeaks a relatively weak commitment to the value of civil order.

*121 181 186 619 The weakness of the Amhara's attachment to symbols of local community is paralleled by his parochialism with respect to more inclusive levels of community. This parochialism is manifest in diverse ways in the different social strata. Among the peasantry it appears, for example, as an aversion to arranging marriages and permitting land to pass to an Amhara from a different province. Among the clergy it has been expressed in terms of those regionally based doctrinal differences which have disrupted the church for many centuries. Among the nobility it has taken the form of incessant politi-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 sadistic component—a component that gets thrown into relief in such phe-
571 nomena as the Amhara compulsion to stone dogs and the occasional wan-
181 tonly cruel behavior of Amhara soldiers.

*121 While hierarchical relations among the Amhara are upheld to a large de-
571 gree by the subordinate's fear of physical punishment or some other deprivation,
181 a complementary disposition of perhaps greater importance is the senti-
596 ment of *respect for figures of higher status.* Family, age, wealth, and political or ecclesiastical rank are all variables which evoke feelings and gestures of deference proportionate to the vertical distance between the two parties. Many of these gestures consist of elaborations on ordinary forms of etiquette used among peers. Thus, in greeting a superior one not only uncovers one's head but also leaves it uncovered as long as one remains in his presence. If kisses are exchanged in greeting, the superior kisses first, on the cheek, while the person of lesser status kisses the superior's foot or knee. The inferior never sits while the superior stands, and often he remains standing even when the latter is seated.

Other gestures of respect are peculiar to the inferior-superior relationship. If an inferior is seated, for example, he must rise to speak when addressed by a superior. If eating in the home of a superior, he must rise when water is brought to wash his hands. If riding a mule, he must dismount and bow when encountering a nobleman riding on the way. The ritual of respect performed when entering the house of a superior has been vividly described by an Ethiopian student in the following passage:

> When someone, let us say a man of a lower social rank, wishes to enter the house of a superior to greet him or to make some private appeal he must first of all take off his shoes and then give them to his servant if he has one with him; if not he leaves them outside in a safe place. Then he must twist his *läma* [shammä] round his waist and holding the end in one hand enter the hall and crossing both arms at the lower chest, bow down very low to the ground before his host. Having done that he throws that end of his *läma* which he is holding over the back of his right or left shoulder (depending on how he wears his *läma*) and then remains standing near the wall until he is told to sit. When given permission to sit he must choose a lower place. He does not sit in any position he likes but must cross his legs, straighten himself and bow his head a bit looking most of the time at the floor.[20]

*121 Respect is further shown toward superiors through the use of special terms
181 of reference and address. A superior is always referred to and addressed in
571 the third-person-plural respect form. The term *gētotch* ("lordships") is often
596 used instead of his name or rank in reference. In addressing a superior
554 *gētāyē* ("my lord") may be used as well as *gētotch*. Superiors with titles are always addressed by their rank rather than by name. In addition, slightly

older or more prestigious males are addressed as *gāshē* ("my shield"); the corresponding term for females is *etēyē* ("my sister"). Much older people are addressed by words signifying "father" or "mother." 121* 181 571

It is true that the forms of respect toward superiors are often repeated mechanically and sometimes serve to cover up a distinctly hostile disposition toward certain superiors. They nevertheless do represent to some extent a genuine solidaristic sentiment—perhaps the most profound and influential social sentiment in the Amhara social system. It rests in the last analysis on the fact that the Amhara family develops a pronounced sense of filial devotion as well as habits of filial obedience. Amhara society can dispense with horizontal solidarities and communal attachments because it is held together, sufficiently for traditional purposes, at least, by an infinite network of "father-son" relationships. 576 [554] [593]

The egoistic element in the hierarchical pattern is further modified by a sort of joking relationship that sometimes develops between inferiors and superiors. The harsh interrogation of inferiors at times shades into a sort of wry banter; sons or servants may be called "thief" or "scoundrel" in an undertone of unmistakable affection. At times, moreover, the direction of the jesting may be reversed. Amhara servants are noted for playing practical jokes on their masters, which the latter usually appreciate when the jests are clever.[21] Here again, wax and gold is the perfect medium—for expressing aggression against a superior while at the same time appearing to maintain the respect relationship. The following couplet, attributed to Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē, aptly illustrates this genre: 121* 181 571 522 [539]

Ennānta makuānnentotch ba-mīn wat balātchu?
Eñāām ba-shurwātchen ennāntam bāssātchu.

What sauce, my lords, was on your plate?
We had but peas; 'twas fish you ate.[22]

Here the poet appears to be complimenting the nobles on their more elegant cuisine at a banquet; but there is a pun on the word *bāssātchu*, literally "with your fish," for it may also be taken to mean "you took more than your share."

Within the hierarchical pattern, finally, one finds expressed a certain amount of generosity which, as we have suggested, is relatively uncommon in relations among peers. This appears in connection with the *begging* and *almsgiving* which occur in many sectors of Amhara society. For church students beyond the elementary level, begging is the primary means of livelihood. Youths who have left home to study *zēmā* or *qenē* with a master wander about today, as in former times, carrying small baskets and pleading: "For the sake of Mary! For the sake of God!" in order to get their daily morsels. The activity is so organized that when a large number of students 121* 181 571 735

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

structured. But the marching and fighting unit seems to have been, for all 121* practical purposes, the individual soldier and his retainers. Battles were not 701 fought in a disciplined manner; the outcome depended on the sheer num- 726 bers of troops, their state of morale, and the chance of catching the enemy off guard. Except for the large-scale deployment of troops in accord with the [725] customary tactic of envelopment, there was little expectation of subordinating [703] the impulses of individual soldiers to the needs of a "team"; for the prevailing military ethic stressed rather the heroism of the individual soldier and his drive to bring back a maximum of booty and trophies.[25]

The independent status of the common soldier in mass levies was based 121* on the fact that he was primarily a peasant and thus expected to return to 701 his fields as soon as a particular campaign was over. Nor were members of the 703 more permanent armies of lords greatly constrained. Loyalty to one's lord was in many cases a lasting tie, and accounts for much of the stability that existed in such arrangements. But in general it appears to have been a factor of far less moment than was the case, for example, in feudal Japan. The Amhara soldier felt he was fighting for a lord by his own free will and, therefore, had every right to leave him when conditions justified a move. One such condition was when the lord did not reward his followers liberally enough. Another related condition was when the lord had a tendency to suffer defeat in battle. Indeed, it was not uncommon for soldiers to swarm from one side to the other during a battle when defeat for their side seemed imminent. Still another basis for deserting one's chief was the ambition of a vassal to acquire greater power, in which case he might rebel—become a [554] *shiftā*, in the original sense of the word—and build up a military force of his own in the hope either of impressing his erstwhile master sufficiently to be reinstated with greater honors, or of taking his place by vanquishing him in combat, or simply of carrying on as a free agent.

The civilian counterpart of the soldier's right of desertion or rebellion was 121* the right of judicial appeal which belonged to every free Amhara. This per- 641 tained primarily to the area of property rights. A man who suffered some 695 grievous injustice in a local court had the right of appeal, in theory at least and often in practice, to higher courts at the provincial and imperial level. There was, in addition, some possibility of relief from an inordinately oppres- 121* sive governor. He might be removed accidentally by the emperor, in the 641 continuous process of *shum-shir;* the people under his jurisdiction might [631] secure his deposition through appeals to the emperor or his overlord; or they might take arms behind one of his rebellious subordinates and overthrow him by force. Traditional Amhara society thus provided significant areas of social freedom for its citizens despite the feudal obligations that lay heavy upon them.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 Amhara religious experience. The favorite written literature consists of
156 those genres which glorify individual saints for their special powers and
776 great deeds. The *gadel* depicts the heroic struggles of saints against tempta-
*121 tions and persecutions; the *tāmher* relates their miraculous feats; and the
156 *malka,* a verse form of some fifty five-line stanzas, consists of a rhapsodic
538 description of the physical features and moral qualities of some saintly sub-
776 ject. The various *qenē* stanza types, moreover, serve largely to glorify individuals through the exotic use of religious symbolism—especially the nine-line *mawaddas,* which means "praise."

*121 While these literary genres are accessible only to the learned few, the
156 multitude also adores individual saints. Each of the saints has his particular
776 following in the population, his popularity varying according to region and to the powers for which he is famed. This idolization has been directed
*121 not only to angels and legendary figures from the past, but also, to a lesser
156 extent, to contemporaneous religious virtuosi and outstanding masters of
• 554 the religious books.

Perhaps more prominent in Amhara life has been the glorification of brave
*121 men. The Abyssinian military ethic took the form of a cult of the hero. Per-
156 sonal bravery—not discipline, training, honor, or self-sacrificing loyalty—
703 was the paramount virtue in Abyssinian warfare. The *guabaz* warrior was
[554] rewarded by his chief, praised by the minstrel, and esteemed by the populace. His bravery was ranked according to the fearfulness of the enemy vanquished. Thus, in Menelik's day the fanciest headdress was given to a noble who killed one of the fierce Danakil, a less fancy headdress being awarded the killer of the tough Raya Galla. Such actions constituted the one area in which per-
[521] sonal boasting was permitted and, in fact, institutionalized in the genre known as *fukarā.*

We are indebted to Arnauld d'Abbadie for a firsthand account of the effect of this cult of the individual hero on the orientation of the Abyssinian warrior, in a passage so rare it is worth citing at length:

> The type of combat which [the Ethiopian] prefers over all others—because it gives him the most freedom to expand his personality—is that where, due to insufficiency of terrain or other circumstances, the chiefs can engage only a part of their forces. He loves to watch the skirmishers of the two armies spy out and accost one another while declaiming their martial themes. Joyously he throws off his toga to clad himself in some military ornament . . . and to mix himself in the widely spaced lines which follow one another and rise to the attack. He loves to comprehend the rationale of the manouvers of the two parties, to be able to judge the blows, to know under which hand the victims fall, to choose from among the enemy to avenge their death, to adapt his movements to the instincts which animate his companions, and to feel the earth tremble under the charges of cavalry which come as a squall

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to change suddenly the whole configuration of battle. He loves to hear, amidst the crackle of rifle-fire, the huzzahs, the shouts, the challenges, the injuries, the encouragements, the allocutions, the piercing voice of the troubadours, and the rhythms of the flutes alternating with the lugubrious wailing of the trumpets; to know, finally, that on the hills, behind their drummers who beat out the charge in place, the two rival chiefs and the two armies are following him with their eyes, and that he may at one moment or another, return to his lord and, hurling before him some trophy, tell him, at the end of his war chant: "There! This is what I know how to do!"[36] 121* 156 703

A cult of the individual obtains, in addition, with respect to the man with a genius for outsmarting others. Men who have beguiled their foes with particular cleverness, in litigation or in political intrigues, are scarcely less celebrated than religious virtuosi or heroic warriors. Anecdotes about great feats of shrewdness are the beloved stuff of Abyssinian folk history and are twice told around the fireplace.*[37] Some lords have enjoyed great reputations simply for being such successful and gifted scoundrels. 121* 156 554 • [538]

Cleverness in words counts as much, if not more, than clever deeds. Here we confront once more the phenomenon of wax and gold, but appearing in this context as a sort of finesse in personal relations. It is a question here of individuals made memorable because of their memorable lines, their talent for swiftly and surely employing the ambiguities of Amharic to satirize, at the right moment, some personality, or social type, or aspect of the human condition. Military or political events are often remembered more for the witty verse composed by some personage on the occasion than for their historical significance. In the present century, Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē has been one of the most outstanding personalities of this sort, as was Alaqā Gabra Hānnā in the nineteenth century. [195]

INDIVIDUALISM AND MODERNITY

The Traditional Pattern

Our inquiry thus far has involved analysis of the various ways in which self-orientation is and is not manifest among the Amhara, in lieu of the more simplistic question of whether Amhara society is individualistic or not. Building on this analysis, we may now attempt a more integrated interpretation of traditional Amhara society. 121* 156

The predominant tendency in human relations among the Amhara is a disposition to seek, not unity based on affection, understanding, and/or responsi- 121* 156 181 571

* A recent study which analyzed 1,086 stories with identifiable themes, told or written by Ethiopian children in grades two through eight, revealed that "cleverness pays" was by far the most frequently recurring theme.

*278 *757 primary medicine is only potentially effective. Thus, an herbalist lacking a memeleša for a strong primary medicine can administer only relatively small quantities of the latter, for fear that its effects will *[192] prove fatal. From the perspective of his potential clients, however, the medicine will be perceived as minor or weak (tiniš). Weak medicines, medicines which do not produce violent effects, are generally associated with weak therapies, therapies with a poor record of permanent remissions. There are some effective herbal therapies practiced in the vicinity of Gondar which are not associated with violent primary medicines, but these are considered exceptional.

For each named ailment, there are a variety of rival primary medicines, each regarded as specific for that ailment. A memeleša is considered to be less specific; it may be appropriate for a number of primary medicines, and for more than a single ailment. No memeleša, however, possesses universal effectiveness.

A client's notion of a therapy's completeness is based on the therapist's demonstrated ability to process and administer (but not necessarily gather) his medica- *278 ments. It is mainly on the basis of the observable *759 completeness of a therapy that the herbalist-owner is • 654 given a practitioner title by his potential clients. That is not to say that completeness is, of itself, a

*278 *769 - 554 sufficient condition fro grading herbalists by title. Rather, it is the observed coincidence, within real therapies, of completeness together with a strong primary medicine and an effective memelesa that is relevant. This relationship will be made clear in the following paragraphs, which describe each named category of Amhara herbalist.

*[192] Medhaniyt Seci and Medhaniyt Ateci. An herbalist's professional title incorporates both the name of the ailment which he treats and the practitioner category (according to completeness of therapy) into which he fits (e.g., yianfula [disease name] medhaniyt awakiy [herbalist category]). The least of these categories is *278 *757 "medhaniyt seci". The medical activities of this practitioner are limited to gathering materia medica and presenting them to his client, together with information regarding the proper processing and administration of these ingredients. The processing required is invariably simple, involves no magical elements, often is vague about relative proportions, non-commital regarding dosages and may even lack details concerning the requisite number of repetitions. Generally, the therapist is not present during the administration of the medicaments. Before presenting the medicinals to his client, the herbalist alters the ingredients, by crumbling leaves or denuding sprigs, so that the client will be unable to

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

TABLE 4

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*759
• 554

THE MEANING OF AMHARA HERBALIST TITLES

1. Explanation of the notations used:

Gathering

G1: leafy ingredient(s) only

G2: root ingredient(s) only

G3: complex of ingredients

Processing

P1: processed by therapist

P2: processed by client

Administering

A1: therapist paints lotion

A2: therapist provides amulet

A3: therapist provides therapy other than lotion or amulet

A4: client administers therapy

Diagnosis

D: diagnosis integral to therapy (in addition to domestic diagnosis prior to therapy)

Professional reputation

R: therapist is professionally known beyond his home parish

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

TABLE 4 CONTINUED

*278
*759
• 554

2. Herbalist titles:

Ise Korac
(G1)

Sir Kofariy
(G2)

Yi (disease name) Medhaniyt Korac
(G3)

Medhaniyt Seci
(G1 or G2 or G3) and (P2)

Medhaniyt Ateci
(G1 or G2 or G3) and (P1) and (A4)

Medhaniyt Kabiy
(G3) and (P1) and (A1)

Kitab Kitabiy
(G3) and (P1) and (A2)

Medhaniyt Awakiy
(G3) and (P1) and (A1 and/or A2 and/or A3) and (D) and (R)

* 756
* 793 Literacy, per se, is not the goal of enrollment, but is
869 percieved rather as a pre-requisite for studying the
* [192] Gospels (wangel), the psalter (dawiyt), and a variety
of prayers, pursuant to participating in the Mass
(kidasiy) as an ecclesiastic of the parish.

621 Within a parish, only a minority of households send
869 boys to the church school; these are generally ristemma
* 793 households, each sending a single priest-candidate in
233 any one generation. Because attendance at the school
[602] precludes shepherding, the common lot of young boys, the
student's family must find a substitute shepherd for him;
a younger sibling is usually available for this task, but,
if not, a collateral or even non-kinsman may be obtained.
Indeed, the age at which a boy begins his studies (gener-
ally, between seven and thirteen years) is often deter-
mined by when this substitute can be found. The parish
school is suspended, however, during periods of inten-
sive agricultural activities, of harvesting, threshing,
and winnowing.

* 793 Although considerations of piety influence a man to
423 seek ordination for his son, self-interest generally do-
593 minates. The achievement of priesthood validates a
621 family's claims to church lands (yimoskol mariet). If
• 554 the neophyte's father is himself a priest, his son's or-
* [192] dination means freedom from bothersome performances in
the Mass. If the father is not a priest, but anyway

*793
423
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• 554

holds priest land because he is a ristena of a founding ambilineage of the parish, his son's ordination means that the lands or payments until now turned over to a stranger priest (in lieu of a ristena priest) can be kept within the family.

*793
621
581
[839]
*[192]
[586]

The durability of the ties which bind a priest to his natal parish are reinforced by his marriage. Most peasants are married in a "secular union" (yaluwkurban migabat), which excludes neither divorce not extra-marital sexual adventures.[21] The priest, on the other hand, must be married, and it can be only as a "communion marriage" (bikurban migabat), an indissoluble sacrament of the Church which commits the spouses to sexual fidel-

[572]

ity and forbids even remarriage. Thus, the priest is cut off from carousing in the talla houses of the town. He must instead confine his comraderie to the courtyard of the parish church, separated from the persons and experiences which might otherwise lead him away from his parish fields.

*793
621
869

Thus enrollment in the parish school is conceived

[21]Two other forms of marriage, associated with a man on travels or living in town, are yidomoz migabat (which lasts for a contractual period) and yilijinat (providing only exclusive sexual rights to the woman).

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— 86
parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, 178
by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their role as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part [87]
by teachers and peers in the government schools.

Schools at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly 875
by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, 177
England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing 873
number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization.

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on 177
the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has 178
occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative 557
of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to- 555 •
day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied with- 829
out regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affilia- 883*
tions.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of uni- 87
versal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead.

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian 873
nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to 177
associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post- 178
elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with mem- 186
bers of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of 883*
the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic [872]
pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115]

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

reverted to the Crown unless specifically reconveyed to the heir by royal proclamation. Political office was no less precarious. Governors were made and unmade—by the traditional process known as *shum-shĭr* ("appoint-demote")—in short periods of time. The powerful position of governor of the maritime province (*bāhr nagāsh*) changed hands four times during the six years that Alvares spent in Ethiopia. Even when tradition assigned a certain post to the descendants of a certain lord, the emperors were able to exert control by shifting their favor from one descendant to another from year to year. Titles, unlike land and office, were granted for life, as we observed; but they were in no case hereditary, and thus every Abyssinian's hope for a title, let alone a raise in rank, depended on the grace of the king or of his major appointees.

Given these conditions, it was not possible for the nobility to become a closed, hereditary estate, or to develop a corporate identity capable of confronting the imperial will. On the contrary, thanks to the emperor's freedom to ennoble anyone whom he chose, there was a relatively high degree of social mobility, and the ranks of the upper strata were continuously being reshuffled.

Outstanding personal properties of various sorts often enabled Ethiopians of low birth to rise to high positions. The emperors and great lords conferred honors on those who served especially well in military expeditions, whatever their origins. Menelik's promotion of two Galla prisoners to rank as his highest generals is a famous case in point. The royal favor occasionally smiled on low-born Ethiopians who excelled in such qualities as physical beauty or witty repartee.[32] Unquestionable personal loyalty was another quality in high demand; freed slaves were sometimes given offices and dignities, since their lack of ties to political families made them particularly trustworthy.

Abyssinians have thus cherished the idea that they could rise to a higher station in life than that to which they were born. Comparatively few ever tried to do so, probably, but ambitious souls were never wanting. Seeking some benefice, or the glory of a title, or a position of power that would permit them to help their kinfolk or avenge themselves for a wrong suffered at the hands of some superior, they would attach themselves to the lord whose fortunes seemed brightest at the moment and hope, by valorous service and God's favor, to arrive someday at an estimable position.[33]

Nevertheless, though ability and fortune might carry any man high in the political hierarchy, he would not thereby automatically be accepted as one of the *makuānnent*. A self-respecting man of noble family would resist marrying his daughter to a commoner or person of dubious parentage, no matter how high a rank the latter obtained. For the Abyssinian nobility did form a self-conscious status group with a certain hereditary base. Its members shared a sense of superiority, a consciousness of kind, and an attitude toward commoners such as that expressed by the governor Takla Giyorgis to the Jesuit

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

poses. They have been led to renounce extreme particularistic ambitions, 178 thanks to marital connections, intimidation, the lure of new benefits, and a 565 degree of nationalism, but to some extent they remain spokesmen for regional and para-dynastic interests.

Men who did not belong to the old nobility were recruited into the new 178 nobility on the basis of two criteria, loyalty and ability, with loyalty clearly the 565 more important of the two. Some men from very humble backgrounds have 554 been thus raised to the highest governmental positions through their "loyalty" to the Emperor, manifested in great part by their readiness to inform on the words and deeds of others and their obsequious and flattering manner. These have normally not been given the traditional military titles but only the titles of their office. In contrast with the carry-overs from the old nobility, still known as *masäfent* and *maḳuännent,* these men have been called *bäla-selṭän* ("holders of power"). They have included a number of men who were [648] active in the fight against the Italians, either through the Hagara Fiqer ("National Patriotic Association," a group organized in 1935 to promote Ethiopian unity and combat Italian propaganda) or as patriotic fighters in the resistance. The Emperor also promoted to high position some men who collaborated with the Italians, relying on their earlier record as an insurance against latter-day disloyalty, and using their antagonism against the patriots as a check against excessive ambitions of the latter.

On the other hand, the new nobility includes those who, whether from high [555] family background or not, are so placed because of outstanding ability. This consideration is no longer primarily a question of military ability, but of competence in dealing with technical modern subjects and with foreign diplomats. This group may be equated with the older generation of European-educated Ethiopians. The categories of adjusted aristocrats, ambitious parvenus, and intellectual bureaucrats have thus constituted a latent subdivision among the new nobility; and tensions have from time to time been expressed along those lines.

Despite the elaboration of modern governmental structures under Haile 178 Selassie, the dominant principle of the social order has been that of royal 64 sovereignty. The entire staff of government officials has been the direct socio-logical descendant of the traditional court retinue. This was conspicuous in [175] the titles given by Menelik to a number of the original ministers: *Aṣa Negus* for Minister of Justice; *Azäzh* for Minister of Palace; *Bajirond* for Treasurer; and *Ṭsahäfi Te'ezäz* for Minister of Pen. These and other court titles remain in use today. The primacy of the court over all other functions appears in periodic audiences at the palace, when all high government officials and other notables are expected to pay their respects no matter what business may be pending in their offices. The chief value embodied in the status group of the new nobility as a whole has been that of loyalty to the sovereign.

136 "meset", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses, does not live in colonies. It makes honey which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "tenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens.

[776 237]

Scorpion ("gint"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice.

[752]

Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins.

[241 251]

13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

231 556 Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of

231 livestock he own, and he prefers to keep it or dole it out
[556] to his children on their marriages, rather than sell it. Practically everyone has a few sheep and goats, possibly also a donkey and a horse, and, if richer, a mule, some cows and a team of two oxen.

The cattle population of Ethiopia is estimated at 18 million, or 1.2 head per person, comparable with New Zealand and Argentina.[11] However, an estimated million or more cattle die each year of rinderpest, anthrax, tick fever, etc. This limits the exportation of meat surplus almost as much as does difficulty of transportation to world markets.

412 According to the United Nations estimate, Ethiopia in
491 1950-1951 had 1 million horses, 1 million mules, 3 million donkeys. These provide the bulk of transportation, except for the few hundred heavy trucks (trente-quatros) which
491 operate on the few Italian-built roads. This modern road network has been badly damaged by the annual rains, by the overloading of trucks, and by inadequate (though improving) repairs.

241 The estimated agricultural production of Ethiopia in
1954 included:

Maize - 150,000 metric tons,

Barley - 600,000 metric tons,

Linseed - 50,000 metric tons,

Coffee - 45,800 metric tons, [12]

11. RuO, 1955, 4pp.
12. U. N. Secretariat, Statistical Office: Statistical Yearbook 1955, tables 29, 14, 15, 20, 25.

232 these cattle are resistant to diseases that killed off European cattle brought to Ethiopia by Point IV. This immunity includes poisonous grasses as well as ticks. They are resistant to changes in temperature between day and night, thrive on natural fodder of little nutritive quality, and even old cows continue to have calves for a considerable period.

233 Several factors characterize the Amhara attitude as agricultural rather than pastoral, in addition to the emphasis on the hump and the geldin-for-strength instead of for breeding. Herding is not considered a suitable occupation for a grown Amhara adult; there is no cowboy pattern at all, and cattle herding is usually assigned to boys under 12 years of age while sheep-and-goatherding is often assigned to a dimwitted simpleton. The corral is not of strong stakes, but of light, loose thornbushes.

231 556 On the other hand, cattle, especially cows, play an important role in social organization and other human relations among the Amhara. The terms for cattle and for wealth are synonymous. In marriage agreements, the kinfolk on both the bride's and the groom's side promise to contribute an equal number of cows. This means that the child of a poor farmer cannot hope to marry the offspring of a wealthy farmer, under the usual circumstances, unless the rich partner restricts his contribution to what the poor can afford, or unless the poorer manages to borrow enough cattle from a wider range of kinfolk.

To overcome boundaries of social stratification, cattle enables a peasant to present an "entrance gift"

231 [556] ("agäbba") to an important "great man", perhaps to become a "client" in his retinue for protection.

[775] In religious life, the old peasant can arrange for the peace of his soul after death by giving a cow to his Confessor or to the "qēs gabaz" the administrative priest of the parish church, to have masses recited. In criminal [682] law, a murderer in the remote rural areas can still save himself and even prevent a long and bloody feud between families, if he can borrow enough cattle, in addition to his own, to pay "blood-money", in cows, to the kin of the victim, the agreement witnessed by the presence of a "chega shum", a judge, or a priest, preferably all three. Thus there are some aspects of the cattle pattern that are reminiscent of a tribal, semi-nomadic, rather than settled territorial social organization. This becomes emphasized during the upland trek in the rainy season.

233 Though entrusted to youngsters, care of cattle is obviously a task requiring responsibility. Cattle is not taken out until one hour after sunrise, about 7 A.M., when the dew has dried. During the hot dry season, cattle rest under umbrella trees and other shade from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., so that the grazing period away from the hamlet is not long. Before dusk, by 6 P.M., they are taken into the hamlet enclosure or corrall, or even into the hut, for hyenas may come early.

The cash value of cattle is low, primarily because of the distance and poor transportation to world markets. [281] The hides, a major export item, are of low cash value because this type is not tanned, merely sundried, and "book-folded" for export.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

575 561 mahabbar is first founded, the usual pattern of an age group is generally followed, so that young-marrieds, middle-aged, and elders have their own. But since there is great prestige in being admitted to a mahabbar of older persons, partly because of the honor of associating with respected elders, partly for direct economic advantages of belonging to an old, well-endowed mahabbar, boundaries of age do not last long. Elders, on their part, desire to replace vacancies left by deceased members with younger persons, whom they can dominate.

575 [566] Some persons belong to more than one mahabbar, but generally only the relatively well-to-do freehold landowners and traders can afford the expense. It is possible to transfer to another mahabbar, but it is usually not in a person's interest to sever established relationships; human, economic and legal. In case of any difficulty, he has ready bondsman to act as "wäs" (guarantors). Most of all, the rare opportunity to express individual preference in a formal "we-group" creates personal, psychological ties that the average Amhara does not like to forego.

One of the most noteworthy and socially significant aspects of the mähabbär association is the wide variety of functions for which it can be adapted, despite--or perhaps because of--its simple structure. This is in almost complete contradistinction to most other Amhara patterns, which usually evidence a complex hierarchical structure and very specifically regulated functions. In comparison, the mahabbar is little structured.

557 household both in rural areas or towns, also to do
565 plowing for the freehold farmer and help in the harvest. Servants are usually permanently employed, and therefore do not usually leave even if the employer is behind in his monthly wage payments. Salary and food are received with a bow and cupped hands. The servant addresses the master with the extra polite "gëtoch" (lit. masters, i.e. plural), walks in front of the master's mule to make way, slightly behind him when both are on foot, and never lets his master carry anything.

Long interpersonal relations usually improve the position of the servant to master, and it is not in the servant's interest to change jobs, or to go to another area where he is unknown. A landless "gabbar" may try to attach himself to a well-to-do household as "retainer ("zëga"), without wages, doing a servant's work in the hope of occasional, seasonal gifts, a share of the produce, or, in town, a share in trade. For, a servant or retainer who is Amhara "attentam" and Coptic Christian becomes like a member of the extended family. The proverb says:

[539] "When (women) grind (grain) together,
there is no mistress".

556 Economic wealth enables each of these social
565 classes to achieve some upward social nobility, within limits. But there are not many opportunities to accumulate much wealth. Traders can raise their status
[441] in towns, despite doubful ancestry. The same is true
294 of tailors, a very recent occupation in town, where
565 foot-operated Singer sewing machines have enabled men

294 to set up shops along the main street leading to the
565 market, or at the market itself, manufacturing khaki shorts and jackets. But this is still considered shameful manual labor by the Amhara, so that he will pursue it only in another province where it does not shame his kinfolk.

556 A rich man, whose low ancestry may be whispered behind his back, is nevertheless usually treated with honor by Amhara commoners. The proverb says:

[539] "He who falls in a shallow place"
hurt will not come to him", (i.e. a rich man, even if he falls drunk in a gutter, will not be molested by ruffians, who will instead take him to his house, expecting a reward).

[539] "The water of (the rainy month) Mähasse is good,
yet no one will drink it;
the word of the poor man may be fruitful,
but no one will listen to him" (i.e.he is not appreciated, no matter how wise).

B. Age Stratification.

561 Age stratification among the Amhara ranks in emphasis between class stratification andsex stratification.

561 The social relation of old toward the young is
882 often likened by the Amhara to that of master to servant. Indeed, a young man between puberty and marriage is addressed as "ashkär", (lit. servant). A young girl of the same age is addressed and even referred to as "leǰä ǰärräd"(lit. servant maid, handmaiden).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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some fancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission.

Some zar doctors are very exacting with their regular patient-devotees, and therefore, by local standards, are quite rich. They invest in real estate such as semi-modern shacks of the "street of single girls". Many female zar doctors and some of the clever devotees own the profitable mead houses ("tej̇ bēt") described before. On the other hand, a great zar doctor is expected to show generosity and distribute part of the income to followers and assistant zar doctors, just as feudal Amhara chiefs distribute loot to their retainers, and as great zar spirits offer commensal rights to the little zars.

Because of the greed of the zar spirits, a kind of evil eye in itself, many "possess" hide their property from the zar doctor as well as the zar spirits. It is believed that their demands are never satisfied, that the more they are given the more they want, in "mäq̈wäd̈äsha" (lit. that which makes to love) gifts. Some zar spirits possessing a poor person are regarded as always on the lookout for "contagion" with a rich person, for, by putting a "touch" on him they can change "residence". Zar doctors competing with each other sometimes lure a zar away from another doctor on purpose, so that they can advertise, through the grapevine of the possessed, that a great protective zar has changed residence, thus increasing the fame and income of the ambitious zar doctor. It is well known that in times of scarcity there are few new "possessions" by the zar, while in times of abundance there are many.

A poor person, who is struck, usually by a low-status "poor man's zar", and approaches a zar doctor for treatment of his ailment, is treated but must work off the "gifts" in service, through labor. A poor man will act as a servant, run errands, weave reed baskets, etc.

X794 A poor woman will perform work such as serving coffee, sweeping,
756 fetching water and fuel, cooking, baking, brewing beer, and spinning
556 cotton thread in the house of the zar doctor.

X794 The contract arranged by the zar doctor with the zar spirit for
675 each patient devotee is regarded as having legal validity. In exchange
776 for regular gifts and services the zar spirit promises limited reposs-
ession, at regular intervals only, and self-restraint in contagion of
other members of the family of the patient at least until after her
death. After that event the zar spirit may pass on to the next
generation to assure himself continuation of the proferred gifts.

X794 Complications are explained away on the grounds that there has been
776 some trifling oversight in payment of dues or in respect; or on the
grounds that another, evil, zar has "stolen" the dues in order to make
trouble. The zar doctor never admits to error; instead, he restores
the contract by instructing the possessed to dance the "gurri" of
atonement ("yäbaṭer gurri") (lit. of the stick) if guilty; or the
"yämehrat gurri", dance of mercy and acquittal, in case of slight
[691] oversight. Some zars are as fond of litigation as most Amhara. One
zar spirit is nicknamed "wäs aggach" because he always requires a
personal guarantor, "wäs", whom he will "possess" in place of the
patient in case of default in payments.

X794 Even the judicial authorities, the provincial judges among the
694 Amhara, will occasionally recognize zar possession as a valid excuse
for violations of the law, or at least as a mitigating circumstance.
Failure to appear in court to answer a summons may be forgiven on
the grounds of "agorra" (lit. he roared, shrieked, i.e. is under
possession) that particular day. The only other equally strong excuse
would be that the person summoned had just taken kosso purgative.

795 Some dabtärä have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
556 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually
[386] made of soot, charcoal, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre-
[776] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susneos, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female
[567] of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay the murderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

These figures show that the gorges, together with the adjoining and intervening plateau, carry a considerably higher population than the rest of the plateau, the combined average being over 200 per square mile. The figures for population per church are also interesting. The gorges and the adjacent parts of the plateau contain no fewer than thirteen churches and they serve an average population of only some 650 souls each. On the other hand the churches of the general plateau, not counting those of Debra Berhan, which chiefly serve the townspeople, number only four. They must cater for about three times as many people each, and until recently many more for two of them are recent foundations.

The higher population of the gorge region is attributable to two causes: the greater productivity of the land there, and the historical fact, already referred to, that the Amharas were long forced to live in the gorges, and have re-emerged only in recent times. This is confirmed by the evidence of the churches which, in such numbers, are sure evidence of a long-established Christian population. The oldest ones are among those in the depths of the gorges; sites on the edges of gorges seem to be more recent. The few plateau churches are all relatively modern and bespeak the re-occupation by Amharas; two of them were indeed founded within the last fifteen years, and one as recently as 1945.

As can be seen from the map, sites chosen for dwellings are usually on the higher ground. The favourite sites, of which many examples can be seen on the sheet, are rocky ridges and the tops or upper slopes of hills and minor plateaus. A high place with an outlook, together with reasonable proximity to permanent water, seem to be the conditions sought after. Even the most elevated and exposed hill-tops are generally inhabited, whereas nobody tries to live on the plains near the main streams, which become very swampy in the rains. The ordinary family, together with its domestic animals, lives in a small, irregular cluster of round huts, which in this area are built of stone cemented with mud and carry a conical thatched roof. They are surrounded, as a rule, by a dry-stone wall, which may be shared by several households. Richer people may have an ornamental gatehouse at the main entry, with a little watchman's room over the gate; but such ostentation was not common.

Disregarding some of the Debra Berhan people, almost the entire population is engaged in farming which, here as elsewhere in Ethiopia, is the mainstay of existence. Some possess their own land; others hold their plots, in return for a proportion of the produce (but without any security of tenure), from absentee landowners. There is also a landless element, greatly increased through the disturbing influence of the Italian occupation, who hire themselves out as ploughmen and labourers. I had intended to measure some typical holdings in order to estimate the area actually required to support a family, but my time in the area was cut short and I never did so. As a very rough estimate I think that about 15–20 per cent. of the area is under cultivation in any one year, which would indicate an average per family of something like 4 acres. This does not include fallow land which, once re-grown with grass, cannot be distinguished at a glance from permanent pasture.

The most exposed parts of the plateau near Debra Berhan will grow two crops only, barley and broad beans, but a limited amount of wheat (a bearded

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

423 here there is no Domesday Book to give a clear point of departure and none of the successive unravellings of generations of scholars to help the inquirer. Any attempt at the simplification of the evidence must to some extent be a distortion.

Two preliminary generalizations may help to clarify the picture.

[556] Firstly it is important to remember that in Ethiopia, as in all economically backward countries where industry is negligible, almost all material wealth was the direct produce of the herdsman or the man who worked on the land with his plough and his hoe.

423 Ethiopia shared with the rest of tropical Africa a primitive peasant
466 agriculture; the difference was that there stood upon this basis a large
651 hierarchical structure of government. This meant that the cultivator
241 must, as the Ethiopians themselves express it, 'carry upon his shoulders' all that very large proportion of the population which had withdrawn themselves from work on the land. This included the Emperor; all his officials, central and provincial, great and small; the vast hierarchy of the church and the large armies of soldiers. As a result of the undeveloped economy and communications of Ethiopia, the services of the agriculturalist had for the most part to be used directly by the contribution of part of the crops or cattle from his own land or by the use of his labour upon that of another. While slave labour was widely used for domestic purposes, especially in the houses of the rich, it was not in the north used very extensively in the fields, and the main support of Ethiopian state and society was not the slave but the theoretically free cultivator, the *gabar*. The elaborate systems of land tenure and of tribute with all their provincial variations represent only the different means by which his services and produce were utilized by the government and by other classes. It was not the land but the labour of the *gabars* on the land which provided the support for provincial as well as imperial administration. Hence the importance of the forms of tenure and tribute.

423 The word *gabar* has been used as a term of reproach against Ethiopia.
466 At the end of these chapters on the provinces the reader will be in a
651 better position to judge how far this charge was just, and especially how far it accumulated evil association by the forms it assumed in the conquered south. Here the position of the northern *gabar* must be defined in its simplest terms. In theory and, at its best, in practice, the status was not synonymous with slavery or even with oppression. Literally it means one who pays *gibr* or tribute. 'There is no shame in the word "gabbar"' was the general Ethiopian opinion recorded by an observant British consul.[1] As tribute was in theory based upon land

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

29 / *The Legacy of Manz and Gondar*

The history and customs of Manz are more obviously related to its geog- 133
raphy than is the case with Gondar. The encircling wall of mountains has 132
been a source of isolation and protection, two factors of great moment in the [175]*
history of the area. Peculiar eating and clothing habits have developed in re- [184]
sponse to a climate which, owing to the altitude of Manz and its position at the edge of an escarpment that leads down to a desert of the Rift Valley, is one of the coldest in Ethiopia. The temperature often approaches the freezing point, and in the colder months (October and November) standing in the sunshine at high noon is no defense against a shrill wind that pierces the bones.

Barley is the only crop that thrives in the highest parts of Manz, though 241
wheat, beans, peas, and chick-peas grow in the slightly lower altitudes. But 262
tĕff, the grain preferred by Abyssinians for the preparation of their staple food —a kind of pancake known as *ĭnjarā*—cannot be cultivated at those heights, so the Manzē typically eats *ĭnjarā* made of barley.

Sheep are a major item in the Manz economy. The average farm has a 233
herd of 100 to 150 sheep, which provide a heavy wool as well as the Manzē's 236
favorite meat. This wool is used to make the *bānnā*, a warm blanket which 291
is wrapped around the body and constitutes the standard dress of the Manzē. 184
The *bānnā* distinguishes him from other Abyssinians, who wear a white [262]
cotton toga called *shammā*. Wealthier men wear the *barnos*, a tailored cape [556]
made of dark wool. Manzē wool is also used for the weaving of rugs which [286]
ornament the homes of the well-to-do. [352]

No dyes are used in working their wool, so a crowd of Manzēs in natural- 182
colored *bānnā* seen at a distance resembles a flock of their sheep. This is one 291
of the touches contributing to the impressive aesthetic unity of the Manz [386]
landscape. The effect is also produced by the fact that the Manzē's house is 342
built of stone, the same stone that is seen everywhere on the terrain; and its 182
conical roof is made of thatch, which makes the roof look like the piles of grain in the fields. The churches are also built of stone with thatched conical 346
roofs. Everything one sees in Manz bespeaks a harmony with the natural 182
environment.

The cold climate of Manz is invigorating. It prevents food from spoiling 132
quickly and discourages diseases which flourish in lower altitudes. The [165]
Manzē boasts that his climate keeps people healthy and gives them long lives, and indeed it is not uncommon to find men sprightly in their eighties and nineties. But only the hardy survive, for life there is as rugged as the land, [181]
and the people—like their landscape—are stony, bleak, and full of dark recesses.

Manz does not occupy so conspicuous a place in Ethiopian history as Gon- 175*
dar. Indeed, most books on Ethiopia do not even mention the area. While

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic
*565 and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[2]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom
[128] and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—
[114] with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry,
[12] using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[3]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

*565
592 The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara
[342] peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round
[343] structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land
[423] worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by
[427] hereditary right (*rĭst*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the
• [556] household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

621 At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number
602 of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the
[592] father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *çhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *ṭajj*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *ṭallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics. 565 184 868 [567] [273]

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dajāzmātch Hailu*, meaning "Dajāzmātch Hailu and his men." 565 576

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics. 565 [142]

Conspicuous consumption among the *makuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions: 565 592 357 556

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 taxes collected in the name of the emperor. Concerning the imposts for which
63 the peasants were liable, Plowden wrote in 1844:
66

[651] They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts—he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.[30]

Two centuries earlier, observing similar phenomena, Almeida had concluded that "generally speaking, they are all plunderers rather than governors."[31] The only restraints on their exploitative behavior have been an occasionally keen sense of Christian propriety and the limits to what an exasperated local populace will bear.

565 The existence of a predatory class who serve military functions and maintain a gentry subculture is a common enough feature of traditional agrarian societies. What is perhaps less common in the Abyssinian case is the constellation of factors relating to the recruitment of members into this elite.

High secular status in Abyssinia was dependent on a complex of possessions—land, political strength, and honorific titles—which tended to reinforce
[423] one another. The possession of much land has always been a basis for con-
[556] siderable deference in Abyssinia. As a source of produce, rents, and revenues
[662] deflected from the Crown, moreover, it was also a source of wealth to be used
[661] in building up one's political strength by rewarding able soldiers and loyal followers, and by making gifts to one's superiors. Political power was directly
[631] obtained through the acquisition of governorships. Such offices were a further basis for much deference and, through the incumbent's access to tribute, cus-
[554] toms fees, court fees, and gifts from his subjects, of much income as well. Titles, finally, not only were universally esteemed but also entitled the bearers to a style of life which included a presumptive right to gifts and obedience from all inferiors as well as the consumption of much wealth and power.

565 For all these possessions, the Abyssinian noble was directly dependent on
643 his king (or, in the case of a lesser noble, on his overlord). His dependence was twofold: land, political office, and titles came to him as gifts from the sovereign, and, what is more, their continued possession was contingent on
[423] the sovereign's continuing favor. Abyssinian "vassals" had no legal rights to their "benefices," and lands granted them could be withdrawn and given to others as the emperor wished. At the death of a feudal beneficiary his lands

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 565 661 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 565 556 [241] [455] For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 565 556 472 [175] [648] Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families, Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *makuānnent* and *bāla-selṭān*. They [662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 565 369 177 [556] As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 565 554 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571
and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178
of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession 565
of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554
ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642]
ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177]
rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556]
imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by
allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642]
growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647]
nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701]
force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178
Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests 571
on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554
the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871
the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178
tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565
the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643]
political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178
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* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 [439]
million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

563 The racial objection to "raising them to Christinaity"
567 (as it was called) was expressed on the principal of
797 "attestam" (of good, i.e. Amhara or Tigre physical stock). These objections still hold, but ex-slaves attached as servants to a Coptic Amhara household are now more often "raised to Christianity" if they desire it, and can then legally marry other Coptic Christians, which, however, is rare, in practice.

567 Plantation slavery was never widespread, except in the lowland, "Lazäga" district of Wolqait sub-province, where cotton and vegetables were raised on a relatively larger scale and most plateau landowners, especially feudal ones, preferred the plentiful "gabbar" services and well-established arrangements. The "gabbar" were rooted to the soil and had more to lose by leaving their birthplace than slaves would have.

The legal position of slaves, who were almost always non-Christianized gave them no protection. They were legal persons, and could not, in theory, own property, nor contract debts. In practice, some occasionally did manage to accumulate some small cattle and raise their local economic level through interpersonal contact. Slave concubines and the children they bore were usually kept in the household like family retainers, or at most given to another kinsman or to a newly-wed couple, within the kin group.

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565 <u>2) The Servant Class and Economic Considerations</u>

The servant class, "ashkär", is employed in the

557 household both in rural areas or towns, also to do
565 plowing for the freehold farmer and help in the harvest. Servants are usually permanently employed, and therefore do not usually leave even if the employer is behind in his monthly wage payments. Salary and food are received with a bow and cupped hands. The servant addresses the master with the extra polite "gētoch" (lit. masters, i.e. plural), walks in front of the master's mule to make way, slightly behind him when both are on foot, and never lets his master carry anything.

Long interpersonal relations usually improve the position of the servant to master, and it is not in the servant's interest to change jobs, or to go to another area where he is unknown, A landless "gabbar" may try to attach himself to a well-to-do household as "retainer ("zēga"), without wages, doing a servant's work in the hope of occasional, seasonal gifts, a share of the produce, or, in town, a share in trade. For, a servant or retainer who is Amhara "attentam" and Coptic Christian becomes like a member of the extended family. The proverb says:

[539] "When (women) grind (grain) together,
there is no mistress".

556 Economic wealth enables each of these social
565 classes to achieve some upward social nobility, within limits. But there are not many opportunities to accu-
[441] mulate much wealth. Traders can raise their status
294 in towns, despite doubful ancestry. The same is true
565 of tailors, a very recent occupation in town, where foot-operated Singer sewing machines have enabled men

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— 86
parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, 178
by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their role as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part [87]
by teachers and peers in the government schools.

Schools, at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly 875
by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, 177
England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing 873
number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization.

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on 177
the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has 178
occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative 557 •
of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to- 555
day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied with- 829
out regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affilia- 883*
tions.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of uni- 87
versal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead.

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian 873
nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to 177
associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post- 178
elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with mem- 186
bers of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of 883*
the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic [872]
pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115]

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

883 Programs of vocational guidance and counseling have not yet been instituted.
463 Students who manage to form clear and definite ambitions also suffer for
873 want of help, if for some reason they have been shunted away from the appropriate training program, or have been deprived of opportunities to prepare adequately for the vocations to which they aspire. Two research findings bear on this. In one study it was found that "few secondary school administrators when questioned are aware of the ambitions and desires of their students," and that less than twenty per cent of the group of secondary school students surveyed felt they had received training "suitable to their ambitions."[20] In my own survey it appeared that fewer than twenty per cent of the secondary school students expect to enter the occupation they actually want to.

*883 In addition to this discontinuity between childhood experience and the
178 hitherto unknown necessity of making some sort of vocational choice, modern
464 adolescence also involves a sharp break between the experience of post-elementary school and the process of getting on a payroll. Here the Ethiopian youth faces the problems of students everywhere as they leave school for the "real world." In at least two respects, however, his dilemma is more acute than that of his counterpart in Western societies. Because virtually all jobs are controlled
• [557] by the government, and because the government is still organized along traditional lines, the Ethiopian graduate must suddenly forget the universalistic criteria of school and acclimate himself to the traditional pattern of ingratiating oneself with those in positions of power—a pattern referred to as *daj ţenät* —if he is to gain and retain a decent job. For many graduates there is no machinery that might assist them in locating a job: no job advertisements, employment bureaus, not even effective personnel departments in most quarters.

87 The school system itself, however, does manage in certain cases to find
464 jobs for its graduates. For the foreign-educated returnees a special placement board was set up within the Ministry of Education. The locally educated are placed, if at all, by their individual schools, depending on the policy of the school, the resourcefulness of its director, the demands of the market, and current political emphases.

The outlook for graduates of the various specialized vocational programs has been in recent years as follows. A consistently high demand for teachers has assured jobs for graduates of the various teachers training programs. Graduates of the commercial school have been in great demand because of the increasing bureaucratization of government and the slight expansion of commerce. The public health college had great difficulty in the placement of its

* Since this was written the University's Department of Education has begun to produce a series of career pamphlets for secondary school students.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan. 178 565 554 [357] [557]

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners. 178 565 [867] [871] [855]

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations. 178 565 57

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"? 178 565 643

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shĭr*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any 178 631 64 565

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shīr* and *divide et impera.* "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

608 ced himself under the protection of a landowning kin group, and injuries inflicted on him thereupon can lead to a blood feud as much as if he were a consanguinal relative.

All these attempts to establish artificial kinship are motivated by the attitude that kinship, even at geographical distance, is greater security than close relations with neighbors even of the same district. The proverb says:

[539] "Your (home) country, where is it?
(It is) Mary's water. (i.e. the womb).
You are my kinfolk!"

8. Attitudes based on Social Stratification

56 Social stratification among the Amhara, as has been shown, is based on land tenure and feudal relations between nobles and peasants; on the temporal as well as spiritual power of the Coptic Abyssinian church; on the ethnic division of skilled labor; on the conquest of border areas and the past subjugation of other ethnic and racial groups; to a lesser degree on age and sex.

565 Analysis of the human relations and attitudes
184 arising out of this social stratification can be expressed in terms of class; sometimes approaching caste, because very little social mobility has been "open" to ethnic specialists in skilled labor and to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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THE OLD AND NEW ELITES

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that character-
177 izes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary
178 Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

[433] In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels; coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal [671] realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The govern- [64] mental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial [795] system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious [794] institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

121 This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratifi-
• 56 cation.
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a 121
society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by 56
that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive frame- 178
work of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are 181
embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is [571]
in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively 565
stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and 554
wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the [463]
statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the mer- 565
chant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the 554
small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was 441
accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an 463
Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be [186]
tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes 565
low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Low- 567
est in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from 554
the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), 463
and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced 565
sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values [181]
of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.

463 561 Division of labor by age is not elaborate in Amhara culture, and will be mentioned in connection with the life cycle. Children perform useful work from the age of seven on. Boys watch cattle, and the harvest against birds and baboons. Girls help in the house and take care of younger siblings. Both do the milking. Adults exercise authority and supervise the community. Elders (anyone 50 or over) are respected and do no hard work. They may supervise harvesters from high points, warn of fire or locusts because of life-long experience, reprimand shepherds. Widows very often become nuns, more often than widowers become monks. For old nuns can still do cooking and baking in monasteries, while old men would not be economically useful there, and usually are too old and illiterate to join the clergy even as acolytes. However, priests who have become widowers very often become monks and continue their former activities.

885 Girls are considered adults, for work and marriage, at 12-12; Boys usually 4-5 years later. Sons of priests and feudal families usually begin to attend church school at seven. Even today, in places where modern-type elementary schooling has become available, this pattern continues, and the sons of peasants, if they live near a town and have a chance to be entered at all, at least for the first 3 grades, are usually 11 years old in the first grade, and have already served their parents for 5 years in pastoral and harvest occupations.

Among the ethnic specialists, the harder physical labor is done by male adults in their prime, and lighter tasks allocated to children, elders and women. Thus (e.g., within one Falasha hamlet) one will usually see the adult

463 561 males in their prime occupied, in teams of five, at smithing a plowpoint; while the elder weaves a toga at his handloom, as fast or as slowly as his physical condition or pride permit. [462] Pottery is made by the Falasha womenfolk, and men do not participate other than to load finished pottery on donkeys for transportation to the customer.

A. Division of Labor by Sex.

462 Whenever uses of energy are not developed technologically, there is usually a sharp division of labor by sex, in which the routine everyday labor is largely left to women. This is true in Amhara society. Women are tied to household tasks and babies, and therefore tasks that are bound to a fixed time are usually left to women. By extension, since water-carrying is the woman's task, pottery-making is done by women of the ethnic specialist class, usually Falasha. On the other hand, tasks involving tools rather than utensils, and tasks not bound to a fixed daily routine, are usually male occupations in Amhara society.

575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men "brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship relation which is taken very literally by the more pious. Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahabbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry the widow of a mahabbar "brother", for this would be "levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church as a prechristian custom.

575 According to traditional law, the mähabbär in-
[428] herits any property left by a deceased member who leaves no blood kin (consanguinal) , in preferance to any rela-
[426 tives he might have by marriage (affinal). The mahabbar
476] acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker, making loans to members in financial need by raising internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "tazkar" memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his
[608] family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and personal problems of all kinds are discussed among "brothers" and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements between extended families having eligible youngsters are often first informally broached by women "sisters", who then agree to ask their husbands to act as intermediaries.

575 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys
561 above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind of junior mähabbär by older boys; girls above 10 years of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

575 561 mahabbar is first founded, the usual pattern of an age group is generally followed, so that young-marrieds, middle-aged, and elders have their own. But since there is great prestige in being admitted to a mahabbar of older persons, partly because of the honor of associating with respected elders, partly for direct economic advantages of belonging to an old, well-endowed mahabbar, boundaries of age do not last long. Elders, on their part, desire to replace vacancies left by deceased members with younger persons, whom they can dominate.

575 [566] Some persons belong to more than one mahabbar, but generally only the relatively well-to-do freehold landowners and traders can afford the expense. It is possible to transfer to another mahabbar, but it is usually not in a person's interest to sever established relationships; human, economic and legal. In case of any difficulty, he has ready bondsman to act as "wäs" (guarantors). Most of all, the rare opportunity to express individual preference in a formal "we-group" creates personal, psychological ties that the average Amhara does not like to forego.

One of the most noteworthy and socially significant aspects of the mähabbär association is the wide variety of functions for which it can be adapted, despite--or perhaps because of--its simple structure. This is in almost complete contradistinction to most other Amhara patterns, which usually evidence a complex hierarchical structure and very specifically regulated functions. In comparison, the mahabbar is little structured.

294 to set up shops along the main street leading to the
565 market, or at the market itself, manufacturing khaki shorts and jackets, But this is still considered shameful manual labor by the Amhara, so that he will pursue it only in another province where it does not shame his kinfolk.

556 A rich man, whose low ancestry may be whispered behind his back, is nevertheless usually treated with honor by Amhara commoners. The proverb says:

[539] "He who falls in a shallow place"
hurt will not come to him", (i.e. a rich man, even if he falls drunk in a gutter, will not be molested by ruffians, who will instead take him to his house, expecting a reward).

[539] "The water of (the rainy month) Nähasse is good,
yet no one will drink it;
the word of the poor man may be fruitful,
but no one will listen to him" (i.e.he is not appreciated, no matter how wise).

B. Age Stratification.

561 Age stratification among the Amhara ranks in emphasis between class stratification andsex stratification.

561 The social relation of old toward the young is
882 often likened by the Amhara to that of master to servant. Indeed, a young man between puberty and marriage is addressed as "ashkär", (lit. servant). A young girl of the same age is addressed and even referred to as "lejä märed"(lit. servant maid, handmaiden).

561 882 The functions of the young literally follow these terms. Even boys attending church school do pasturing of the flock before and after their lessons, and school is recessed during plowing and harvesting seasons. Elder brothers may and do discipline their juniors, despite the superficial "joking relationship" between siblings of the same sex. As "ashkär", the young bachelor is constantly at the beck and call of his father and other elders of the extended family. At feasts, the father may show affectionate approval by feeding his son hand-to-mouth, the "gursha", also given to servants and other social inferiors.

The proverb admonishes the young man to respect age, and family patriarchs watch jealously a personal friendship developing between any young man with another outside the family:

[539] "More than a trusted companion, who is unlearned, the old teacher is better".

561 Age stratification outranks sex stratification even in matters of religion. An old woman is sometimes permitted to enter the church building, especially if she has taken vows as a nun and wears the "qob". Though the [565] church would like to promote it, social attitudes criticize as ostentatious a young couple of undistinguished, commoner ancestry, who marry by "qurban" (eucharistic marriage) and wear the bright metal crown("aklil"). But a middle-aged couple, long married by "semanya", may take this honorable step without being criticized.

PART IV : The Life Cycle of the Individual

561

Like many other societies with a tradition-directed culture, the individual passing through the age-grades of life is taught well in advance what his duties and privileges are at each stage.

The age-grades, though strongly emphasized in Amhara human relationships, are not as detailed nor as sharply divided from each other as in the case of the Galla of Southern Ethiopia (the "gada" age grades).

[854] The two-year breast-feeding period is the happiest of the stages for the baby. Infancy and childhood, for both sexes, are carefree periods of experimentation, which is sharply abrogated as adolescence, a period of authoritarian obedience, approaches. [582] Even the first marriage of an individual, taking place at the very beginning of adulthood (even earlier for girls), permits only a [586 587] minimum of individual choice. Unhappy first marriages are common, and so is divorce. But after this, the fully adult man or woman can assume a freedom of choice not known since childhood. They may seek second mates, change residence, join a different "mähabbär", etc., and the grip of extended family on the individual is somewhat [885] relaxed by the short life-span of the "elder" grade. This in turn permits the middle-aged adult to be regarded and respected as an elder himself, who not only is permitted a maximum of own choice, but who can and does rule the younger grades.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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TABLE 10: Age-Grade Terms and Functions, Male and Female

Terms relating to age grades have the following connotations:
(Unless otherwise stated, terms are both address and reference).

Stage	Age	Male	Female
nursling	0 - 2	reference: "chagela", or "gelgdi"; address: "and ferey lej" (lit. one fruitful child), or "betsan" (Geez for "baby")	Same
infant	3 - 6 (post weaning)	"lej" (boy) "kutara" (unthinking urchin)	"leja" (girl)
child	over 7	same as in age past weaning (duties: herd cattle, watch harvest)	"leja-garad" (little servant maid) (duties: watch babies, fetch wood).
adolescent	14-20	"ashkär" (lit. servant) (address) (duties: run errands, carry tools, plow, care for cattle)	"genje" (lit. beautiful). (chiefly address) (age of serious flirting, braiding of hair, first marriage, first motherhood).
young adult	18-30	address of honor ("gobäz" (handsome young warrior) ("kebele" (powerful warrior) (duties: clear bush; defend kin)	
	15-25	"gemäma" (lit. neighbor, mate) vulgar reference to "mate of vulva"; male at peak of sex desire	"korada" - joking (not very polite) reference to female at peak of sex desire.
adult		"säw (man)	"sret" (woman)
elder	over 40	"chomaolyä" (elder, old man, serious, wise)	"baltet" (greying woman past menopause; age of widowhood; By extension - gum)

882 broken by bursts of frenzied activity. This is utilized by the adults both to enculturate them and bend them to their will in "training" and "service", and to use the boundless physical energy of adolescents for considerable chores of physical labor.

The adolescents do not resent this most of the time, for they accept it as flattery and acknowledgement of their growing strength; enjoy the increased attention given them in the family as full-fledged, if subordinate members; appreciate the higher status that comes with advancing age, symbolized by the obedience they themselves can command at this stage from their younger siblings who follow them like retainers follow a feudal lord.

A. The Male Adolescent: Service and Young-Warrior.

882 561 The terms of address at this stage symbolize his position exactly, and are far more significant than in reference. Terms of address used in everyday life are: "ashkär" (lit. servant), to call a young man to duties ranging from running errands to doing most of the plowing. First used as flattery for boys of about 14, it becomes exactly descriptive and in everyday use as he matures to full stature power. When this happens, at about age 18, he may be flatteringly addressed as "gobäz", signifying "handsome young warrior". (footnote 79).

883 Duties at this stage, under supervision of the father or other male kinsman, include responsible and hard work in agriculture,

[71] Footnote 72: "gobäz" in Amharic has similar connotation to "bahurim" in Hebrew: the identification of the concept of young man with young warrior (Isaiah 31:8, Jeremiah 18:21, Amos 4:10). This is pointed out by Ullendorffe: The Obelisk of Matara, p. 31.

882 has arrived at the age of making full use of the sexual organ), an
831 expression not considered polite. So is the term "gorämsa", (lit. neighbor) when used to refer to a young buck at the peak age for continuous sex desire, for it signifies the male sexual organ next to its female "mate".

883 [561] At the end of adolescence, the honorific address is "kobäle" (powerful warrior), in some regions. In the old feudal tradition, this was the age when the young man could be called to war, at about 18 to 20 and beyond, for as long as he retained his physical strength as well as skill of hand and eye. Even today, at church festivals, the "gobäz" - "kobälo" category of men perform the "hotu" and "fukkara" jump-dance and military boast, shouting "Addis Ababa" to signify loyalty, and "yebalahal jebo" ("The hyena will swallow him", i.e. any enemy), (or "wardaw shebo" crow's beak) symbolizing
883 526 their readiness to defend the sacred "tabot" of the church. On the "Temqät" festival, the young "gobäz" assemble in teams of individuals on the public plain and the church parades stop to watch their game of "guks" (or gugs), a kind of tournament fought on horseback with blunt, wooden, straight lances. They race at each other at full speed, throwing the spearlike missiles at each other at close range, and ducking at the last moment. Sometimes rhinoceros shields were used for protection, but it is considered more clever to duck. Occasionally serious wounds result, and an overeager young warrior having repeatedly caused them is prevented from taking part in the future (losing his license for recklessness, so to speak).

Usually each participant has singled out a personal opponent. They are conscious that not only the eyes of the elders, priests and feudal lords are on them, but also those of the girls who follow

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565* 602 571 181 183 [561]

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

565* 593 577 181 183

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

565* 577 779 183 181 581 586 637

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

565* 779 577 183 181

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

565* 121 82 771

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Egyptian mosques; youth dormitories and community houses in certain tribes in India; the academic and athletic youth organizations of ancient Athens and Sparta; not to mention the numerous teen-age associations of modern Western society.[3]

Here again, the adolescent Amhara is not involved in any such social forms. The advent of puberty is associated with the growing up and out of childhood groups, the gangs of shepherds who spend their days together in work and play. The girl of eleven or twelve is expected to spend all her time at home, under careful supervision. The boy of thirteen or fourteen has abandoned the shepherd's life for farming, in the company of older relatives, and soon becomes increasingly preoccupied with his private economic and erotic interests. His family elders are likely to warn him not to make friends with other youths outside the family.[4] For a number of adolescent boys to get together outside of festive occasions is, to the traditional Amhara mind, a sign that something wrong is afoot.

The absence of adolescent rites and age groups reflects the individualistic character of Amhara social organization, a subject to which we shall turn in chapter vii. Nevertheless, Amhara society catches young people in its grasp and guides them to adulthood just as firmly and surely as does a society which has many collective arrangements for its adolescents. It does this by means of a well-ordered program for growing up. The road from childhood to adulthood is one series of informal, unproblematic stages through which the growing person adjusts to progressively increased responsibilities and progressively detailed norms. After infancy, there is normally no break in continuity in the whole process.

Toward Adult Work Roles

Following a long and indulged infancy, the Amhara child is early taught the rudiments of work responsibility. At the age of three or four, children are given simple chores, such as shooing chickens from grain drying in the sun or collecting bits of firewood. Somewhat older children are expected to protect the crops against birds, farm animals, and baboons. The Amhara becomes apprenticed in the main vocation of his childhood—tending the herds—almost as soon as he can run about, and six-year-old shepherds play a crucial part in the Amhara economy.

Boys retain the responsibility for tending the herds at least until the age of twelve, but by then they have already been initiated into a number of adult work activities. At about eight or nine years the Amhara boy begins to do his share of the harvesting, sickling the wheat, barley, *tēff*, or beans and loading the crops in piles he will help transport to the threshing place. He becomes adept at directing the cattle round and round the threshing floor and at winnowing the grain from the chaff. At times he helps with the weeding.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

871 Rome and the life of Abraham Lincoln than with the geography of their immediate community or the history of their own native country."[16] While a certain amount of concentration on remote matters may be essential for introducing modern adolescents to the substance and background of modern culture, it is doubtful whether they are being prepared to relate meaningfully to the society of their adulthood if that society is not made a subject for careful consideration during their schooldays.

875 829 191 Still another limitation on the effectiveness of the teachers stems from a quite different problem, the Ethiopian's ambivalence toward foreigners. This will be overcome with the gradual Ethiopianization of the teaching force, but that cannot be achieved for at least another generation. One area in which this problem manifests itself is linguistic nationalism. English, the official language [873] of all post-elementary instruction, is still regarded as an outsider's tongue in Ethiopia, unlike other African countries where the European language in question serves the native peoples as a *lingua franca;* and many Ethiopians hope that the day will come when it will be replaced by Amharic as the medium of instruction.[17] Due to their ignorance of Amharic or other Ethiopian languages, foreign teachers are rarely able to gain the sort of closeness to their students that promotes the more profoundly beneficial sort of relationship. Because of this and a tradition of suspiciousness regarding foreigners, all but the radically Westernized students maintain a lingering mistrust of the teacher *qua* foreigner.

* 883 178 The gaps in the socialization of the modern adolescent left by the nature of his teachers and their teaching are filled to some extent by his peers. In this respect, too, modern adolescence contrasts with the traditional pattern: not only has the role of mentor and model been taken over by foreign teachers in place of the parents, but also the modern adolescent has become dependent on his peers to a degree unthinkable in traditional Amhara society.

It has been natural that the modern adolescent turn to those his own age for moral support. However much they may support the idea of his going to school as a means to a higher salary, his parents have little understanding of the new directions inherent in modern education. His foreign teachers are, at worst, preoccupied with their own narrow interests or else, at best, out of tune with the Ethiopian ethos and mentality. Older modernized Ethiopians, who should be the most sympathetic, are usually too preoccupied with their own adjustment problems to pay much attention. His schoolmates thus become his only reliable allies in the battle of growing up.

• [561] Association with age-mates is informal for the most part. There have been [573] almost no formal youth associations or clubs in Ethiopia. The teen-age gang, with its sharp boundaries and tight controls, has scarcely come into being. [572] Relations with peers thus takes the form of small groups of friends. More

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for considerable strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(396)	(40)	(197)

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

love and the image of the traditional Amhara marriage, likely as not to end in divorce. This sort of concern was expressed in a revealing way in the following statement by a twenty-year-old college student:

> The main thing I want in my wife is good character. Beauty is not so important. Of course she will be an excellent cook. But mostly I am concerned that she be the *right* one for me; I do not want to get divorced. But you can't really know if she is the right one until after ten years of married life. If after having about five or six children it turns out troublesome, I will have to leave her. A person cannot go on living that way.

In some instances, ironically, this quest for the perfect marriage leads to a rejection of the very institution of marriage itself. Seven per cent of the students questioned indicated that they do not want to get married eventually – either because they "could never afford it," they "would be happier living single," or they just *"do not want to enter a relation that will end in divorce."* Thus at a time when the stability and warmth of family life are needed more than ever, the very possibility of family is doubted.

Some Ethiopian students blame the deteriorated family and an alleged increase in divorce in their country on the impact of Western civilization. True, the introduction of the Western concept of marriage and of the rudiments of a modern occupational system have dislocated the traditional arrangements for marriage; and other related problems, to be discussed in the next chapter, plague the Western-educated elite. But Western civilization has also developed resources to begin to cope with analogous problems in its own societies, and perhaps it is not too soon to acquaint Ethiopia's youth with some of these: for example, the recent developments in man's understanding of the dynamics of marriage as well as more sophisticated conceptions of the ideal and importance of family life in modern society.

CULTURAL ORIENTATION

A generational conflict manifests itself further with respect to questions of belief, taste, and value. Because of differences on such issues, students and their parents have grown far apart. The more traditionalist of the older generation refer to the modern youth as *ya-sĭmmĭntaññā shi lĭjjotch* ("children of the eighth millennium"); that is, of that corrupt time the Amhara believe will precede the destruction of the world. The latter, in turn, refer to the old-fashioned as ignorant, uncivilized, sometimes even "savage."

Yet, as we have been suggesting, this conflict is by no means total. Amhara adolescents are too deeply attached to many aspects of their traditional culture to engage in wholesale rebellion. Because of strict childhood training they remain basically respectful toward their elders. In addition, they often prefer to champion their own traditions in the spirit of a freshly excited nationalism.

14:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the government schools. The weakening of family controls by the new school environment has slightly reduced the importance of loyalty to kin in the students' scheme of things, and has significantly reduced the moral authority of religious customs. A third sphere of norms—respect and obedience toward elders and persons of authority—is maintained by the hierarchical school system, officially headed by the Emperor himself. However, the ambiguous status of foreign teachers and their frequent inability or unwillingness to play the traditional authoritarian role tends to weaken this, for the possibility of informal, even joking, relations with foreign teachers gives Amhara students their first taste of a more relaxed relation to authority figures. (Unprepared by any other experience for such a relationship, their reaction tends to be one of exploiting the permissive teacher as much as possible while at the same time losing respect for him.)

Finally, the expectation of physical stamina and aggressiveness in the Amhara *goramsä* is carried over into the school setting but with definite modification. It prevails in the feeling that one must not tolerate insults or be cowardly. It also persists in altered form in the new pattern of athletic activities instituted by the schools. On the other hand, the greater camaraderie expected among schoolmates means that aggression must also be carefully controlled. An indication of the psychological difficulties to which the crowded yet sociable conditions of school life have given rise appears in response to the question: "What is the worst thing that could justifiably be said against you?" The most frequent sort of answer to this question relates to unchecked aggression: "Quick to anger," "quarrelsome," "ill tempered."

Of the new moral values inculcated by the school system, some of the main ones appear to be self-development via education; honesty; sportsmanship; and social responsibility.

Ethiopians often speak of the "value" (*ïlqem*) of education, meaning thereby the path to a well-paying job and a higher standard of living. But one would be mistaken to suppose that this explanation exhausts the meaning that education has for the modern adolescents. The freeing of their imagination and the exercise of previously unknown intellectual capacities prove themselves thrilling experiences for each new class of students. And their most preferred pastime is "reading," their most popular films are educational ones. A number of students spontaneously declared, when asked about the real reason they go to school, "to learn about the world" and "to learn about humanity."

In the traditional culture of Abyssinia, learning was highly valued, to be sure. But its task was to produce a class of literati capable of transmitting the hallowed beliefs and symbols. Education for the sake of inquiry as such or for personal development was never permitted in its program. If the value of

357 466 [E62] his task is fixed in advance and if an Amhara he will usually refuse to carry out any work for which he was not engaged. Women servants usually receive half the salary of a male servant. Thus only officials and relatively high-income urbanites can afford Amhara servants; servants of socially lower groups can be hired for considerably less, if themaster is willing to forego the prestige of having Amhara servants.

The urban householder, who is not surrounded by kinfolk in his residence, usually must hire a night watchman, "zebanya", who sleeps huddled in coarse shammas in front of the house or behind the outer gate. They receive the wage of day laborers. Often they are old veterans of former feudal soldiery, too decrepit for any other work, yet still fierce-looking and fierce-tongued enough to discourage thieves.

265 466 Urban teahouses, coffeehouses and mead-houses employ waiters, "asalafi", who do not have the specialization of the more prestigeful "agafari", but who have steadier jobs. Their pay is not above that of the day laborer, but they can accumulate cash more readily.

[463] 875 871 During the present generation a new element of modern-educated clerks, teachers, hospital "dressers" and government officials is gradually entering the occupational pattern of the town, though still in very small percentages. A graduate of the traditional church school of the rural areas is considered to have only the equivalent of 2 grades of elementary school. All towns now have at least one modern elementary school with 8

672 agreement must be before witnesses, again with use of the oath "Haile Selassie yemut" (May the emperor die, if I break my word). Often a judge will not release the loser of either a criminal or civil case unless he can produce a personal guarantor who will guarantee that the damages or fine will be paid.

562 672 Women, under the traditional laws, were considered legal persons but to a lesser degree than men. They could act as witnesses only of what they had actually seen or heard, and were warned not to "interpret" their testimony. Sometimes there were threatened with jail if their testimony seemed contradictory and not entirely useful. On a lower level were slaves, who were not le-
567 672 gal persons, but whose testimony on what they had directly witnessed could be heard in court, subject to evaluation by the judge.

C. Judicial personnel

693 694 (1) The Curbstone Judge. He is sometimes referred to as "yäqälaté danya" (lit. delegate judge). Two persons having a quarrel may stop a respected passerby whom they consider a peer, often a bearded "shemagalye" (elder), to arbitrate their quarrel. They stop him in his tracks by calling out "Haile Selassie yemut", or if they or he are very old fashioned and dignified, in the Geez version of the oath "Be-Hayle Selassie Amlak" ("in the name of the God of Haile Selassie").

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

796 liturgy, swaying and dancing to the rythm of their raised
346 voices, the beat of huge drums, and the tinkling of sistra.

Laymen may also occupy sections within this third enclosure, mostly near the northern end. There is no seating. Standing is required during the long services [481] that begin just before dawn and last many hours. Therefore, priests and chanters lean on "maqomya", strong bamboo crutches equipped with iron or even silver concave tops. These are also used as they sway with the rythm when the dancing is in progress. These crutches may be privately owned; but many churches own simpler ones as church utensils. When important visitors, "great men" and their guests attend, without maqomyas of their own, the chief priest usually takes those owned or used by the lesser priests to supply the Very Important Persons, to the barely disguised displeasure of the regular users.

346 Women are not admitted even into this third out-
562 er enclosure. They must remain outside the church building, in the yard, or leaning against the hard-mud wall, or, at a more pretentious church, under the outer collonade of wooden posts which support the overhanging edge of the roof. The roof, usually thatched, but of imported corrugated iron in better urban churches, is usually ornamented with an iron cross adorned with wooden or metal ostrich eggs.(This custom may be of older, African, origin.)

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874 sophy, "mäṣehäf" (lit. book), interpretation of Old and New Testament, and writings of Coptic Church Fathers.on
[538] the subject. Also studied are the "käbrä Nägäst" (epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty") and the "Fetha Nägäst", law code.

e Examinations are held orally, usually on the saint's day of the institution, which thereupon becomes graduation day. The oral degrees given are termed, "qenē", "zēma", "mäṣehaf", according to the individual's specialization, much as Western colleges grant Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, etc. degrees. Receipt of the degree is regarded only as a commencement in scholarship, for a real "mämhēr" requires 20 to 40 years of study, to complete all these branches of religious education, in view of the Amhara themselves.

872 Since little girls receive no formal education,
562 they cannot be taught nearly as much as boys, when, later in life, females aspire to become active nuns in nunneries. At most they are taught Geez prayer, with difficulty and by rote, and do nto go beyond what is taught little boys at the local parish schools.

792 Monks usually reside in landowning monasteries, except for former priest who have taken monastic vows and return to their parishes. Monasteries are headed by the "abbatachen" (lit. our father), whose official co-administrator is called "Šäbate". In personality he is usually dominant andcommanding, unlike the mild, otherworldly abbatachen; though on occasion the same person can hold both positions. Each large monastery has a

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

C. Stratification by Sex.

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Stratification by Sex among Amhara affects women of nobility often differently than women of the commoner class, but in some ways it affects both.

Well-remembered and not atypical for noblewomen is the example of Empress Taitu, who married Emperor Menelik as her 5th husband, and who led her own feudal troops into the Battle of Adua in 1896. Such deeds of noblewomen occur often in Abyssinian history. This is not surprising, for the daughters of noblemen are raised by servants with as much deference and prestige as are the sons, and consequently develop equal and even occasionally dominating personalities. Concomitant with the usual literalness in Amhara culture, a noblewoman who fulfills a male function may be addressed in the male gender. The memorial feast ("tǎzkar") of a noblewoman is as elaborate as that of a nobleman.

A noblewoman is exempt from many disabilities of her sex. She regularly rides a mule, using a man's saddle, and in this case wearing a man's jodphurs under her long cotton skirts. Unlike other women, she does not have to redrape her shamma respectfully when meeting a man of equal rank, only when going to church or before a judge. When she enters court, the commoner judge rises to greet her. When she approaches the church, the priest bows before her, and may even permit her to stand just inside the door of the outermost enclosure, usually reserved for nuns. A landowning woman-

562 which happens among middle and upper feudal nobility--
565 may herself become the founder ansponsor of a church. In this case she usually ap,oints a male administrator from among her kinsmen, or a local cheqa shum headman, to supervise the sharecropper gabbar supplying her church. She then would also exercise direct or indirect control over the qēs gobāz, the administrating priest.

A commoner or peasant woman is much more exposed
[585] to the inferior legal status of womwn. According to traditional law, the "semanya" bond with the formula of the oath "May the Emperor die" (e.g. Hayle Selassye
[675] yemut"), is not legally valid, and her contractual function has to be performed through a male kinsman. Neve theless, her legal position is by no means as
[586] weak as that of the Muslim woman. The Amhara woman may take half of her husband's movable possessions upon divorce, i.e. thecows she brought into her marriage and half theincreade of any pooled property. To protect her somewhat from wilful mistreatment at the hands of her husband, a bride is given two male protective "best men", the "mizē- but they are kinsmen of the bridegroom's!

Social inferiority of a commoner woman is also associated with her manual and menial labor, as hauler of water and hewer of wood or collector of cowdung.for fuel, and similar servant-like chores inside and out-
[854] side the hut. The baby which she carries on her back and breast-feeds for two years renders her physically dirty and often smelly. The commoner woman may not

562 The commoner woman may not
565 carry a "ḉhera" flyswitch of monkey-hair or horse-
293 hair, otherwise she will be criticized as "rudely presumptuous" and "proud". Commoner women therefore drape the shamma over their heads to be somewhat protected from flies, or cut a small branch off a eucalyptus tree. Noblewomen may carry a ḉhera, and indicate by their heavy weight that they have a houseful of servants to perform every menial task.

562 With advancing age, past menopause, the social
888 position ofthe commoner woman steadily improves. She now lords it over the younger women in the household who have taken over the menial tasks. If she has remained married to the same husband for a number of years, she is respectfully addressed as "emmä bet" (lit. mother of the house). If she is widowed, she gains prestige by taking vows as a nun. A woman who marries a priest shares some of the social dignity of his position; she is referred to as "qesenna" (from "qes", priest). Women listening to the church service have the privilege of gaining merit by shouting the shrill joyshout "ellel" at the proper times in the liturgy.

562 Kinship ties remain a strong protection to
602 women even after marriage and residence away from the parental hamlet. She is often reminded not to forget her kinship ties when she marries:

●562 "The killer? (It was) your husband;
602 The victim? (It was) your brother.
[539] Great is your pain,
never will it leave your house"

(said to a woman who promoted her husband's interests, e.g. in competition for a position with the feudal lord, over that of her brother).

562 Psychological inferiority is ascribed to all women, by Amhara men, regardless of social rank. Her weakness is regarded as biological, intellectual and moral. It is regarded as proverbial:

[98] "Vulgar Language" - "yäsyet qwanqwa" (lit. woman's language)

"Polite Language" - "yäwänd qwanqwa" (lit. man's language); modest, correct, pure, elegant language. Also called "yäwond amarena" (lit. man's Amharic).

[195] "syeto" - insult to a talkative man. (lit. womanish
"syetä" - (lit. female) - said of timber or soil that is feeble, soft, of little resistance.

[539] "Woman and donkey
(must be trained) with a stick."

"Even if a woman has knowledge,
(only a) man knows how to hold on to it."

•562 While Amhara men consider women inferior in theory, Amhara women do not necessarily accept this judgement; and, in the case of upper class or advanced age females, men admit that this judgement does not necessarily hold validity in practice.

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855 socialization by the peer group continues more regularly and fre-
867 quently and on a broader range of activities.

C. Training through the Peer-group; Patterns of Hazing.

867 Parental training during childhood is minimal, and much of enculturation is left to the peer-group which proceeds to function in little-structured fashion, largely through hazing.

Differential behavior of the sexes is largely taught this way. Little boys haze any boy who cries, or seems soft, "geltan", by darkly hinting that he "lacks something" ("täcämättälä"); and, if he is shy in talking and defending himself with his sharp tongue, "dämtalla", effeminate. To prove their physical bravery, boys burn scars ("täsaca") in their own forearms, saying that this will make them "strong", and believing that this will immunize them from showing pain or softness in public. An aggressive, clever
[562] tongue, capable of a wide repertoire of insults that will shatter the adversary's composure, and also include appropriate milder and semi-strong insults, is regarded as male behavior, as "strong" or stronger than brawn. This makes a "known man" ("ätäwäca säw"). The proverb says:

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> "The son of man, by what is he respected?
> by his seat (position)?
> Not by his seat -
> by his lip. (i.e. cleverness in argument)".

Boys are hazed by other boys for picking on little girls. Hazing is sometimes physical, sometimes by mockery, often both. If physical, it consists of shoving, wrestling, in spontaneous manner, almost never with cold formality. A boy who wants to grow up too fast beyond his peers, i.e. by showing too much preference for the company of elders, is criticized with the proverb:

576 therefore, know). Abusing people with vulgar insults ("laddäfa")
195 tends to reflect on the abuser, so that he is considered "belgena", a rude person. Such a person speaks in high-pitched, strident style, to commoners; while to social superiors he fawns and wheedles, using baby-talk such as "abbabba" (daddy) to a lord and "ammamma" or "tatay" (mummy) to a lady, in mournful tones of self-abasement and utter helplessness, begging paternal protection and forgiveness as if he were an infant that had not yet reached the "age of reason".

576 This is mocked, for the Amhara distinguishes between such servility and non-servile gestures of subordination, such as the "gursha", the bowing from the hip, and the walking backwards when departing from
[#66] the king. Servants and other employees may indicate dissatisfaction at being short-changed, by bowing not quite so deeply the next time, whereupon a wise lord or employer will take a cue, increase the wage, and see it acknowledged by a specially deep bow or knee-kiss. Otherwise, protest will take the form of "murmuring", a semi-articulate protest which may lead to open rebellion.

576 Kinship terms are sometimes employed, outside the kin context,
601 to communicate respective positions in a situation of differential social status. Thus, it is respectful to address a status superior as "ayya" (lit. "my dear elder"), used to the father or elder brother. The extension of this term is fairly recent, in line with improved communication and transportation, but the rustic still uses the more ancient version, "ayya", (which has the same meaning). Because of this, a wit who does not want to address a rustic as "ato" (Mister), sometimes addresses the ignoramus, in mock respect, as "ayya". (This cheats him out of his "entitles", reminiscent of the use of the address "Doc" by Southern Whites to Negroes, avoiding "Mister")

576 The speech pattern and etiquette to be expected from women,
195 nearly all of whom are illiterate and have no formal education, is
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562 classified by Amhara men in the category of the "balagar"; as high-pitched, strident, alternately vulgar and wheedling. The term for female, "syet", also means inconsistent. A woman's voice is not regarded as "soft", which concept is regarded as identical with "polite" and associated with "noble". Noblewomen are considered exempt from this rustic pattern of womanhood, and are expected to behave in accordance with "nobility".

b) Greetings and Address.

576 Formality in interpersonal relations is emphasised in greetings, forms of address, postures and gestures, sometimes in considerable detail and variety, since formal politeness is a culture focus among the Amhara.

Distinctions are made even in familiar address. Thus there are two ways of saying "thou": "anta" - to a child, social inferior, or semi-jokingly to emphasize intimate friendship to a social equal;

"antu" - polite "thou", used to older sibling, or by wife to respected husband.

The polite form utilizes the plural in address; and, in the case of pronouns, the third person plural. Hence :

"getoch" - (lit. masters), polite address to employer

"antu" - (thou) polite-familiar address.

"ersu" or "erswo" - (lit. he), polite "you" (singular) to male.

"erswa" - (lit. she) " " " to female.

"ersachaw" - (lit. they) " " (plural), but also used as extremely polite singular address to lord.

The use of the plural communicates that the person addressed is worth several times as much, in material or spiritual worth, as an average person.

000 The patient would recover anyway in due course.

758 The therapeutic value of convelescense ("gäggäm alä") is recognized, and patients are told to bask in the sunshine.

562 Men are more likely to let themselves be treated by the "woggesha";
756 women, who suffer more frequently from functional ailments, approach
757 the "dabtara" or "zar" doctor more often and request magical aid.

844 When birth approaches, the midwife is called, almost never the woggesha. If he is, he may not touch the genital parts of the woman, and merely advises the midwife. When labor pains begin, the patient is given a drink of mashed linseed to "relax the birth tract" and to "lessen the pain". The newborn baby is annointed with butter (often rancid), and fed some of it.

759 Other medical helpers, apprentices, or modern "dressers" may be referred to as "healers" ("fäwash"), "balä mädanit" (lit. medicine man, who knows empirical drugs and cures), "caretaker" ("astabaqi"), male nurse ("mogzit"), modern "dresser" ("astamadi"). None of these are respected professions, for they are regarded as too close to manual labor, and such practitioners usually go to other provinces where their work will not shame the family. In recent years, the more skilled ones have been coming from Eritrea.

178 Modern change has been largely indirect and partial. The new
757 laws still permit the "woggesha" to function. Penicillin and other antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription at the big "Saturday markets", for as little as ETh$2.50 (US$1.-), and the patient simply buys it, takes it to a "dresser" in the nearest town, whom he pays 1/2 dollar Ethiopian (US 20 cents), to give the injection. When symptoms disappear, e.g. in syphilis, he believes himself cured.

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X794 756 more tricky but less powerful than hers. This enables her to relieve the sufferings of her clients; without, however, curing them. For a possessive spirit can be turned into an asset - into a protective spirit once the spirit's demands are known and regularly fulfilled. Why should anyone wish to reject such a protective spirit who helps solve the problems of life and even "beautifies the face" with an inner glow? Only a few hopelessly evil demons, mostly female, need to be exorcised.

X794 562 Women, otherwise limited in cultural participation among the Amhara, particularly in the church institution where their expressive behavior and opportunity for service are almost entirely rejected, constitute a considerable majority in the zar societies, even in the top leadership; so that many men think of the zar cult as predominantly feminine, and consult zar doctors by stealth only, at night. Men have ambivalent feelings about their wives attendance: they are often jealous of the "possessive" spirit; object to the financial outlays demanded by the "zar" spirit on pain of "relapse" into the patient's catatonic, schizoid or hysterical state; object to their wives being at the doctor's hut all night during worship-sessions; but admit that their wives are thereafter easier to live with, indeed more beautiful when the "wecābi" (inspiration) "is on their face".

[182] Thus the "zar" institution affects many other Amhara institutions: Marriage and the Family; Religion; Economics; Ethnic Relations; and even linguistics.

X794 755 [832] The psychological attitude in Amhara culture which emphasizes the aspect of possession in love, and in other intense human relations, has already been pointed out in connection with "love magic", which attempts, instead of arousing love in the partner, to render him or her submissive.

X794 776 821 rainy season, when they hover in the confinement of their grottoes just as Abyssinians in their huts. Like humans, zar spirits become active soon after the rains, when the "Masqal" feasts approach, the yellow flowers carpet the landscape and the green grain begins to mature. The favorite time for zar spirits to strike is between midnight and about 3 A.M.; but some individualistic spirits specialize in the hour of sunset, and some even midday.

X794 Belief in the curative powers of the zar doctors is still widespread and strong among the Amhara. Only in the city of Addis Ababa has the present government tried to subdue it, so that devotees have to travel away from the city, for their major reunions. Many men do not like X794 562 to admit their belief in the zar spirits or that they themselves consult zar doctors. This is because of the feminine emphasis of the zar cult. Women are more often possessed, and do not hesitate to admit it; they often seem to look forward to cult membership. Grown men, however, unless afflicted with an ailment as obvious as epilepsy, are ashamed to be seen in a cult group, especially when the cult doctor is a woman. The major exceptions are the brothers of the woman zar doctor, who are often almost as pixilated by inheritance and contact with their mother as the doctor herself; the zar poet and hymn-composer who is usually a man; and the hired drummer.

b. Characteristics and Attributes of Male and Female "Zar" Spirits.

X794 776 552 The organization of the male zar spirits is more complex than that of the female ones. Moreover, several male zar spirits arrogate names to themselves that otherwise are generic: e.g. "Gureza" - usually generic for all male zars; "Neqabe"- usually generic for all protective spirits;

794 zar doctor, preferably a woman like Woyzero Salamtew. The zar complex,
772 to the Amhara mind, represents the shadow side of the visible human
[562] world, making it complete. Hence, just as the Coptic Christian (and also the Muslim) church emphasizes the male-dominated, patriarchal side of society, so does the zar complex represent the obverse, the female-dominated, matriarchal side of society.

794 This is further reinforced by the subordinate socio-psychological
562 position of the Amhara woman. She may not enter the church. Her daily labors are largely limited to routine, manual, monotonous tasks.
[565] Only noblewomen are exempt from this social position of the "commoner" female, and therefore are not found in the zar cult - which therefore has a lower-class connotation in the basically two-class Amhara society.

Socially undistinguished, "commoner" Amhara women who chafe under
[164] their social inferiority, including women of potential talent repressed in their culture, are likely to develop ailments such as melancholia, apathy, catatonic states, migraine, or hysteria. Thus the zar doctor is called in and the patient enters the zar society.

The socio-psychological improvement, even apart from medical
[755] considerations, which the woman experiences as member of a zar - devotee society, is considerable. Once her individual "zar" has been diagnosed, she has acquired an individual "self" which is respected, acknowledged, at first within, and finally even outside the zar society. For the zar society emphasizes individualism, free expression, individual enterprise; as against the outside Amhara world which suppresses it in commoners, especially in the Amhara woman. The business enterprise of the female zar doctor and many devotees has already been described.

794 562 Some women with hysterical tendencies revert to infantile behavior. In the zar society they can act this out, while protected and disciplined by the matriarchal zar doctor. Others, with a father-complex, join zar societies headed by male zar doctors. In either case they enjoy recreation and amusement with the "sibling"devotees, with whom they can gossip and enact sibbling roles, such as playfully accusing each other of minor oversights in the service of the zar; (it often takes this form).

Even her life outside the zar society becomes changed. For she is now considered as guided by a protective zar who can extend his protection to other members of the family. Her husband, even if he [826] objects to the zar, often will admit the radiant beauty of her face and her bearing, due to the "weqabi" (protective zar). As a result of her exposure to businesswomen, the menfolk in her family will not shunt her aside when talking business, or legal or kin matters. Some women devotees whose bent is more feminine, become midwives, "experts" in domestic obstetrics and primitive gynecology. There are many ways in which the woman's social status improves. No longer is she a mere hauler of water and hewer of wood. This change usually relieves her mental ailment - and this cure is ascribed to the zar doctor and the zar complex.

794 562 776 As a result, a good, protective zar is valuable, and a mother will try to pass it on to her daughter, or her own sibling, or other members of the family. To do this, the zar doctor must be consulted and a special gift given "to the zar". But a person having a protective zar is regarded as having an optional right to pass the zar on through biological inheritance and transfer for seven generations. The "zar"-

x794 562 776 [591] possessed mother thus becomes THE representative of her family toward the zar. If someone in the family sickens, her zar is consulted. Her zar has become the guardian of hearth and home. This is all the more significant since the Amhara woman has usually arrived as a stranger in her husband's patrilocal hamlet, when a very young bride.

x794 562 593 It is little wonder that many husbands object to their wives' joining a zar society. For the wife thus becomes psychologically more and more independent of the husband's control. For one thing, the wife can absent herself from the hut and even hamlet at almost any time with the excuse that her zar requires her attendance at an all-night worship meeting, lest she suffer another "attack".. Under such circumstances it is impossible to keep a wife under surveillance. More frequently zar-possessed women go to the house of the "balä zar", who may be male, in daytime, to consult him on various matters, and on their return home they extort garments and trinkets from the husband, ffor the zar".

x794 562 593 684 Many "jealous" zar spirits, interpreted by the zar doctor, actively intrigue against the husband, against the wife's catering to his wants and comforts, obedience and respect, and teach the wife how to extort the most from him. Moreover, husbands often suspect their wives' behavior under the influence of the possession by the zars. From possession by a spirit-lover to possession by a very human lover, the husbands reason (not without justification in some cases) it is only a small step. If caught, the woman might claim that she had been "under possession", and had mistaken the human lover for her spiritual "wädaj", especially in the darkness of the night. Women have been known to give this excuse brazenly when hauled before the (mänfäs gubaä (priest in charge of domestic affairs).

X 794 562 593 [548] Some women, particularly those possessed by the female zar Shanqit, learn to solicit money from strangers (as described during the convention). Some women thus gradually enter the path to prostitution, while others become independent businesswomen.

The attitude of husbands of zar-possessed wives varies and often is ambivalent. A rustic balagär often fears that if he refuses the time and money and sacrifices demanded by his wife for her zar, the neglected zar will take worse revenge (e.g. on his cattle) or will send locusts to eat his grain, or so distract his wife that she will set fire to the hut. He knows also that if he divorces her, half his cattle and other movable property will be taken by the wife. Thus it is cheaper to let her take an occasional chicken or, more rarely, a ylung goat to the zar. Some men, especially in town, are ashamed to admit that their wives frequent the house of the zar. Semi-educated men, who might themselves consult the zar doctor on some matter of business, forbid their wives to go there. This is more to protest a blow to their prestige than out of modernism, but they will divorce her if she persists.

X 794 586 798 A chronically unhappy marriage not infrequently ends in divorce by way of the zar cult. The "mänfäs gubaä" is placed in an awkward position when the husband or the wife sue for divorce from their "semanya" marriage on the grounds of zar possession. For while as priest of the Coptic church he cannot admit the reality of the zar world, there is sufficient overlap between that and the world of evil spirits in which the priest does (unofficially) believe and against which he may himself, as däbtära, have written amulets. This explains at least in part why the Coptic church ignores the zar cult, and thus

X 794 798

X 794 [798] tolerates it, as long as the residential location of the zar house is sufficiently beyond hearing distance of the church.

[562] Men are often ashamed to admit that they themselves are zar-possessed devotees. If possessed by a feminine zar, considered more stupid and ignorant than a male zar, in most cases, it is considered [782] possible to "outwit" her. A clever zar doctor may negotiate with a female zar to accept a consecrated hen, never to be slaughtered for her, merely to be looked at. The owner of the hen can then sell the eggs, and has a (totemically?) protected hen!

[787] More often, men consult zar doctors on business - though by stealth. In the town of Gondar, e.g., a man wishing to find a job for his nephew might present the problem to Lady Salamtew, who would listen quietly, accept his "frankincense money", and tell him to return on a certain day for her advice.

X 794 782 443 The economic significance of the zar cult varies, but can be considerable especially in the provincial towns. Most zar spirits, especially the powerful and clever ones, like "generosity" in sacrifices, are pleased by voluptuousness, insist on healthy animals for sacrifice, neat gifts and attire of their "horses" (a woman who is a clotheshorse would certainly be regarded as possessed), incense that has been imported from Yemen, aromatic herbs, imported perfumes, European utensils and alcoholic beverages (distilled arrak). Retail traders know this and encourage women to buy "nice things for the zar". It is well known that many women are "struck" by the spirit for the first time just after having visited ("window shopped" in the modern equivalent) a big market. No wonder zar doctors are popular with the Muslim Ethiopian retail traders, who not infrequently let them take some pancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission!

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

776 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often
174 wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the
797 pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, demoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyen"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits.[127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised tänqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only
[182] exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who hold the people in terror and exercise political power.[128]

[794 While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of
562] members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria.[129]

171 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and
754 other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

854 Until weaning, at the
[853] age of two, the child is never removed from contact with the body of the mother or other female relative caring for him. After
857 weaning, childhood is an age of roaming over the countryside during the long dry season and of performing such useful tasks as protecting the harvest by shooting pebbles from slingshots at birds and baboons.

855 The pattern of punishment is dominated by spontaneity, during childhood as well as adolescence. A suddenly enraged parent (father or male elder) may hurl a firebrand at a child, or cuff him roughly about the head and shoulders for as long as the rage lasts. Sometimes real injury results, but there is no planned, coldly calculated punishment, and the anger is usually quickly forgotten. The youngster is never left in doubt when he has transgressed. Retribution comes within a split second. Parents do not hesitate to exercise their authority and to impose their wills, when angered. The youngster soon has a clear conception of what kind of behavior it would be wise to avoid. Thus the youngster is presented, gradually, with a set of values which early become rooted in his personality, and help him to remain, later in life, in tune with his social group and culture pattern.

554 Individuals who chafe at the status quo, notably women and/or
562 individuals of either sex who have a talent and urge for individual enterprise, often find their way into the "zar" cult. Cultural participation of the female is so restricted during her life cycle, that many emotional outlets are denied her. Monotonous daily routines of manual labor; two years of breastfeeding after every birth; denial of active participation in the church; derogatory views of female intelligence on the part of the males; etc., limit the Amhara women

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

562 [554] to an almost sub-culture. The result is at least one real sub-culture, that of the "zar society". Many women find their way to it either through introduction by a female friend, or, if the husband forbids it, through actual or simulated hysteria or catalepsy.

888 Psychological problems of the aged have not as yet become significant in Amhara society. The male elder, and also the old woman, are respected and cared for even in senility - a stage which only a small minority reach because of the comparatively brief life span.

3. Culture Change and Amhara Society: Inertia versus Modernization; the "Change Agent"; the Americanization of Ethiopia; the New Elite; Old Values; Outlook.

178 In view of the traditional hierarchy of government among the Amhara, any major culture changes could be effectively introduced only from the apex downward. This has been the experience during the reigns of the present Emperor Haile Selassie and of his predecessor, Emperor Menelik II; One might even include the unlucky Emperor Theodore. All three recognized the role of the emperor (King of Kings) as "change agent" in culture change. In Ethiopia it has not been the dissatisfied elements who have acted for change.

The forces resisting culture change in that society were and are powerful, not because they have consciously and purposefully banded together in opposition, but by the resistance of inertia. The silent but fierce opposition, notably from the old feudal nobility, the old and dominant heads of the Abyssinian Coptic church, and the rural elders, has long constituted an ultra-conservative immovable object: self-satisfied, fundamentalist, proud of having defended their mountain plateau for centuries, distrustful of foreign innovations.

181 strained behavior, civilization, but which now has assumed the con-
178 notation of "modern" in the Western sense. It includes the improved
562 status of the woman, no longer a mere hewer of wood and hauler of water; and it even became formalized in 1942 when an imperial proclamation, in establishing a Consultative Committee on Legislation, gave instruction to draft new laws that would be "not repugnant to natural justice and humanity".

178 But many old values still persist even at the apex of the
576 hierarchy where the prime"change agent", the emperor, resides. Most
644 notable, to foreign observers, is the continuation of the "daj tenat" (faire l'antechambre: lit. waiting at the gate). This is the traditional palace courtyard ceremony of bowing to the emperor at least twice a week. Emperor Haile Selassie has permitted this institution to continue. Every governor-general has his own "daj tenat" court when he returns to his provincial capital; and so on down the line.

195 The traditional oath on the king's life, sworn even in petty matters and everyday affairs ("Hayle Selassye yemut", lit. May the emperor die; i.e. if I lie) is still in common use and no attempt has been made to suppress or reduce its usage. Haile Selassie well remembers that during the first half of his reign his Amhara subjects still used to swear by the name of the dead Menelik or by provincial dynasts such as Ras Ougsa.

178 Outlook: the "culture lag" between material and non-material culture that has created so many social problems in so many parts of the present-day world has not yet taken place in this society. The old attitude of accepting and enjoying trade goods without trying to reproduce what the foreigner has created, still persists. Direct exploitation of what nature provides still fills most physi-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and men who sleep there to watch, from fear of the animals 231
that roam about the villages all night: and if they did not
keep this watch nothing alive would remain which they
would not devour. The people who go to sow millet in the 241
mountains of Bisan belong to this country and the neigh- 221
bouring towns. The reason why they go and do it is this. 132
Here there are very numerous grain crops of every kind
and nature that can be mentioned, as I have already said;
and because it is near to the sea, by which go all the
provisions for Arabia, Mekkah, Zebid, Jiddah, and Toro,[1]
and other parts; and they carry the provisions to the sea to
sell them. And because in this country the winters are
divided into seasons, and the seed crops do not grow
except with the rains, they go to sow these millet
fields at the mountain of Bisan, where it is winter in the
months of February, March, and April. There is this same
winter in a mountain called Lamá, in this kingdom of the
Barnagais, which is fully eight days' journey from the
mountain of Bisan. In another country, which is named
Doba, and which is quite a month's journey from this lord-
ship of Lama, there is winter in these same months. As
for these millet fields, they require rains, and as these win-
ters happen out of season, they go and sow them where it
rains, and so profit by both winters. In this town of 346
Barua are two churches with many priests, one close to the 562
other, one is for men, the other for women. The men's
church is called St. Michael, that of the women is named
after the apostles Peter and Paul. They say that a great [644]
lord, who was then Barnagais, built the men's church, and
gave it the privilege that no woman should enter it, except
only the wife of the Barnagais, with one damsel, whenever
she went to take the communion, and even she does not
now enter the church, but takes the communion at the
door in the inner circuit with the laity, and so the

[1] Mount Sinai.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 other women do in the church of the apostles, who take it
562 in its place. I always saw the women of the Barnagais go
[644] to the women's church to take the communion with the other women, and I did not see them use the privilege which they say they have, of taking the communion, with one damsel, in the church of the men. The circuits of the churchyards join to one another; they are of very high walls. They make the sacramental bread for both churches
796 in one building, and they say the masses in both churches at the same time, and the priests who serve in one church serve also in the other; that is two thirds of the priests in the men's church, and one third in the women's church, and so they are distributed. These churches have not got tithes, but they have got much land belonging to the priests, and they put it out to profit and divide the revenues of the lands among themselves: the Barnagais gives what is necessary to the churches, such as ornaments, wax, butter, incense in sufficient quantity, and he supplies them with
[792] everything. There may be in these churches twenty priests and always twenty-two friars. I never saw a church of priests which had not got friars, nor a monastery of friars which had got priests; because the friars are so numerous that they cover the world, both in the monasteries as also in the churches, roads, and markets: they are in every place.

CAP. XXVI.—*How the priests are, and how they are ordained, and of the reverence which they pay to the churches and*
793 *their churchyards.*

684 The priests are married to one wife, and they observe the
587 law of matrimony better than the laity: they live in their houses with their wives and children. If their wife should die they do not marry again; neither can the wife, but she

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920) 1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

583 586 and divorced in this manner two or three times she is considered rather a "catch", on account perhaps of her worldly possessions which she has acquired from her previous matrimonial ventures. Then if she does not retire from the world and become a kind of nun she often indulges in the third form of marriage, a solemn religious ceremony which is really binding; it is as a general rule confined to the better class of Abyssinians.

Women, some of whom are attractive and even 562 pretty, have, speaking generally, little or no position. There are of course exceptions to this rule, and I have known cases where a wife has by her influence over her husband acquired a certain status for herself. But this is rare, and by a general though not universal rule women are even supposed to eat separately.

562 586 Nevertheless the higher-class woman manages to hold her own, and if badly treated by her husband has the right of appeal to the Church. And so far as I can gather the woman of any class can divorce her husband as easily as he can divorce her, which gives her a certain protection in itself.

562 462 357 In spite of the facility of divorce—possibly to some extent because of the mutual power to exercise it—the lot of women is not at all what one might expect; they are by no means the hewers of wood and drawers of water that one finds so extensively in Africa. They do little or no work, neither washing nor mending their husbands' clothes nor cooking; all this is done by Gourages or others of whom one or more is to be found in almost every household—other than the very poorest—and even amongst one's own servants, acting as "gentlemen's gentlemen".

562 Women of the upper classes are still to some ex-

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

tent secluded and when they go out they ride mules astride, are completely veiled or rather covered up in their *chammas* and are accompanied by an escort on foot, one or two of whom walk or trot by the side of the mule holding the lady in position. 562

Getting on to the mule is an operation that must by no means be witnessed by the profane masculine eye; I remember on the occasion of the first visit paid to my wife by an Abyssinian lady of rank I went to the entrance to speed the parting guest. To my surprise a number of members of the escort took off their *chammas* and held them all round the mule so that their mistress could climb into her saddle in complete seclusion. 492 576

But rigid as may be the rules of privacy governing the lives of women, there are no harems, and no guard of eunuchs to watch over them as in Moslem countries. 562 644

Nevertheless other Eastern customs are practised, such as circumcision among men and a mild form of clitoridectomy among women; this custom, be it observed, is not as is often supposed of Jewish origin, but probably of much more remote antiquity, and is further evidence of the Hamitic descent of the Abyssinians; according to Gibbon circumcision had been practised "by the most ancient Ethiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness" and presumably not therefore as a religious rite. 304 171

The nation as a whole has not adopted European dress, although it is worn to some extent in Addis Ababa, and by individuals who have been to Europe. They are proud of their national dress and the Emperor still encourages its use at court functions and receptions at the palace. 291 177

The distinctive feature of the dress is the *chamma*, 291

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 776 many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

*565 776 753 [828] [845]

Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[8]

*565 776 [562]

Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

*565 754 787

The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

*565 754 [262] [589] [323] [326] [554]

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, 186
and social position.

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance 562 •
rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly
held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the [565]*
wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must
still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course
for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the [539]
proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is
referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar
and trivial talk.

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time
is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of
trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells [539]
us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including
those connected with the saintly figures of Eçhē Yohānnes and Takla
Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues
and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by [841]
womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden.

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance 858
and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and [854]
cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably.
After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged
copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He
comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first
"age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges
of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders.

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each
of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. 882
The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing
after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches 885
forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This
is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is
not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age
of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and
wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. 888
Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults,
pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon [867]
learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson
was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become
when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[28] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

571 Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
584 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
834 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
178 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The tradition-al mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Although women and children do not have so much freedom, the adult male Amhara who chooses to go off by himself for some reason is not bothered. In at least two cases, moreover, the right to solitude is institutionalized: that of the monk or hermit, who is left to his meditation and prayers, and that of the student of *qenē*, who spends hour after hour in some lonely place composing his verse for the day. 121* 181 571 517 [562]

Privacy is further protected among the Amhara by the shared belief that others normally do not have a just claim to information about one's person. Even such superficial matters as one's place of origin or one's family connections are not readily disclosed on a first encounter. This differs markedly from the custom of some other groups in Ethiopia, such as the Borana Galla, among whom it is the first order of business in any conversation to identify the "vital statistics" of one another. 121* 181 571 576

The machinery of wax and gold, again, exists as a useful apparatus with which to protect one's private identity and desires. In authoritarian relations, where the superior questions the subordinate with impunity, this evasive and equivocal manner of response constitutes the latter's main defense against yielding the information sought by the questioner. The superior may feel that he has a right to the information he seeks, but, if he is a good Amhara, he understands that he may never be told the whole truth. 121* 181 195 571

Thus, viewed as a whole, Amhara society does not envelop the individual in a complex network of obligations and constraints. The institutional structure of the society is relatively thin. There are few collectivities to which the individual might belong, and fewer still to which he must belong. He can, if he chooses, live at the very periphery of society—as a hermit, a monk, a *shīftā*, a minstrel, a beggar, or, if a woman, as a solitary householder. For the typical Amhara, the main obligations are to fulfil work responsibilities in behalf of the nuclear family, the parents, and to provide income and services for landlords and chieftains. Here, too, there are important degrees of freedom. An oppressive family situation may be readily relieved by divorce; an oppressive landlord or ruler may possibly be brought to justice over time, or in extreme instances fled from; and for the oppressed vassal or retainer, there is always the alternative of running away to another master or of turning to one's own devices. As a Christian, the Amhara is required to fast a good deal; but attendance at church and membership in religious fraternal associations are voluntary, and for the religious scholar there is considerable freedom of movement. 121* 181 571

It is difficult to assess the relative weight of the few but heavy constraints that do exist in Amhara social structure and of the many areas of real independence. But in view of the considerable latitude for unconstrained action that has been described in this section, it would seem valid to characterize 121* 181

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* 753 776 Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal, are in abundance, however. Of these, the zar and ganel spirits are regarded with the greatest interest and concern. On the one hand, zars and ganels cause a great variety of ailments, often mortal ones. On the other hand, they are intelligible beings, each organized into socially structured communities of confreres and, most important to humans, they are willing to communicate information of therapeutic significance.

* 753 * 787 776 • 562 Zars select their victims carefully, most often choosing girls and women. Typically, this choice is signalled by the onset of chronic stomach pain, persisting headache, and arthritic complaints, although powerful zars are capable of sending any ailment. Once selected by a zar, a host can expect the subsequent attentions of other zars. Periodically, each of these will dramatize his domination over the human partner by sickening him and demanding tribute in the form of clothes, jewelry, and specially prepared food. Zars are visible only during the dreams of their human partners; in addition, they frequently speak through their hosts. From these sources, it is known that the zars have human forms and live in a bisexual and culturally pluralistic society which duplicates that of traditional Abyssinia. The means by which zars cause sickness is not known to humans, however.

* 753 776 782 *[192] Measles (ankalis) and smallpox (wateley) are attributed to eponymous spirits who are customarily pro-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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CHAPTER TWO

THE SECULAR HEALERS: HEALER AND SICKMAN

*192
*756 The Amhara use a set of twenty-one, non-redundant
*759 names to categorize traditional practitioners of disease
196 prophylaxis, diagnosis, and treatment. These names are
*[192] listed in table 2. The most general term employed is "Habeša hakiym" ("Abyssinian healer"), and is used to designate traditional curers as a class by distinguishing them from practitioners working in Western techniques---European physicians, Ethiopian health officers, and local injectionists. The Habeša hakiyms can be sorted into three mutually exclusive categories, each defined analytically, according to shared professional titles.

Category 1. Physical manipulation of the sickman's person is dominant, and the employment of materia medica is either absent or subordinated to these physical manipulations. These healing powers are compatible with the first and second therapeutic strategies discussed in
*[192] Chapter One. Any therapist of this category, with the exception of the awalaj (midwife), can be referred to as
• [562] "wogeyša". The exclusion of the midwife is probably a
*[192] sexual one, since practitioners known as wogeyša are almost invariably male, while the awalaj is always a woman. Operationally, healers of the first category are distinguished from one another by their different organ do-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 29]

*756 wrapped tightly around the narrow end of the horn. The
*757 leaves are rolled to form an air tight funnel ending an
*759 inch or so beyond the end of the horn. Through this herbal funnel, the agamiy sucks blood up into the horn, seals the vacuum by gripping the funnel between his incisors, and, with his lips upon the leaves, senses when the blood has risen beyond the tip of the horn. As with the midwife, the agamiy's therapy is founded on his physical skills and is devoid of professional secrets and [602] magical elements. Unlike the midwife, however, the agamiy learns his trade through an intimate apprenticeship with a cupper-kinsman.

*756 *759 The Tattooer. The tattooer (tokwariy) is generally 304 a woman who performs both prophylactic and therapeutic [562] tattoos, and although she also performs purely decorative works, aesthetic considerations are usually compounded with medical ones. The tokwariy uses either ink or a paste of carbon mixed with domestic oil; into this, the tattooer mixes whatever ground medicinals she considers appropriate to the ailment against which she is working. The tattooer rarely collects the medicaments *[278] herself. The tokwariy utilizes the services of a full-time medhaniyt korac (medicine gatherer) of the market place, for medicaments used in a wide variety of recipes (such as the sebat kelems, the "seven colors", used by the tattooer for ayni tila and yibuda basiyta). She pur-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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TABLE 5

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THE TOKWARIY'S PRACTICE

Area Tattooed	Function		
	Prophylactic	Therapeutic	Decorative
forehead (female only)			exclusive
gums	e,f	f	present
throat (female only)	a		present
breasts (female only)			exclusive
upper arm (male only)	g	g	present
forearm	b,c*,d*	b	present
back of hand	b,c*,d*	b	present
shin to ankle (female only)	b,c*,d*	b	present

*753 *756 a ganel-agent, can be explained as ganel-caused if *793 776 treated successfully by the following (real) practitioner chains:

(1)-->(2)-->(3), or (2)-->(3)

Because of their substantial fees, clients generally limit therapy consultations with strong debteras to episodes involving serious ailments. Since such ailments are very frequently traced to ganel agents (syndromes of types 1 and 2), the diagnostic relevance of the strong debtera's cures tends to be reinforced empirically.

THE BALAZAR

*753 *756 A balazar ("zar bearer") is a man or woman who has • [562] been selected as a "mount" (feres) by a zar spirit. Most often, the zar signals his interest in an individual by producing a syndrome known as kureyña. At its simplest, the ailment is characterized by chronic stomach pain, generally accompanied by headache. Within the context of Amhara nosology, these are highly ambiguous symptoms, *[192] and four alternative etiologies are possible. At its most innocuous, the ailment is classified descriptively as "hod himem ina ras mitat" (literally, "stomach ailment and Headache"), and traced to gerifta and likift pathogens. The three other etiologies are sorcery (sray), divine displeasure (mekseft), and zar possession (kureyña);

*753
*756 all are indicative of serious ailments. In a typical episode involving this syndrome, the sickman initially diagnoses the least worrisome etiology, likift or gerifta. Secular therapies are then obtained, but when these fail, a choice must be made from among the remaining etiologies.

The sickman usually finds epidemiological indications sufficient to favor one of the three etiologies.
[562] Zars, for example, are known to prefer post-pubescent fe-
[602] males (constituting over 80% of zar mounts), and individuals who are the primary relatives of recently deceased balazars. Once an individual has been mounted by a specific zar, the bond between human and zar is almost always permanent. Over the years of their association, the zar becomes familiar with the constant companions of the host, particularly her children. With the death of the balazar, the zar characteristically desires to mount someone whom he already knows well. This epidemiological evidence is confirmed by divination and often by the appearance of additional symptoms (usually swooning, sleeplessness, langour, and depression) which are associated with zar involvement.

*755 If diagnosis indicates kureyna, the sickman seeks
776 therapy from the leader (awakiy balazar) of a coterie
787 (hadra) of zar-possessed folk. At their initial meeting, the awakiy balazar is mounted by one of his zars, who at-

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131 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has
779 been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries.
[241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively
[463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm-
[286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga
[443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of
[562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin-
[423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil-
[326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields
[286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha
[162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority
[361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

361 members are unable to retain their claims to these
423 church lands (which are intimately linked to the ac-
613 quisition of leadership positions and prestige within
795 the parish) by providing priests from their own ranks. Consequently, substitutes from outside the parish must be obtained. Such is the case with ambilineage I today. According to current allocation of yikeys mariet in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, ambilineages I and V are each expected to provide three priests for the Mass. Ambilineage V currently provides its three from three ambilineage households of Lemmariet. Ambilineage I, however, currently provides only one risteña priest (a resident of Tikurmidir). Thus, members of ambilineage I using these fields have been obliged to invite two non-risteña priests to take up residence on a portion of these lands, in return for participation in the Mass.

361 Finally, these hamlets contain three female ser-
• 562 vants, unrelated to other residents of the parish. In
592 Tikurmidir, there is a single Amhara attached to a household of ambilineage I; in Lemmariet there is a "bariya" in a household of ambilineage I, and another in a household of ambilineage V.

*278 Herbalist Medicine in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet.
*757 The herbalist therapies of these two hamlets are descri-
*759 bed in Table 7. With the use of this information, the
613 following paragraphs will indicate that the professional

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(Kusil:Kabiy:k*:I+) and (Yilfiyn Baǰiyta:Kabiy:k*:I)
(Wosfat:Ateci:k*:I) and (Kowsow:Ateci:k*:I)
(Yisaal Baǰiyta:Ateci:k*:II+) and (Kurtimat:Kabiy:k*:II)
In Lemmariet:
(Koruba:Seci:i:I+) and (Mic:Seci:i:I)
(Koruba:Seci:i:I) and (Mic:Seci:i:I)
(Aynitila:Ateci:k*:II) and (Yisaal Baǰiyta:Ateci:k*:II)
(Wosfat:Ateci:k*:III) and (Yisaal Baǰiyta:Ateci:k*:III)
The combination of therapies owned by any one herbalist is recognized by Amhara as being entirely adventitious, although no secular herbalist is considered likely to own multiple therapies for a single disease-name specialty.

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*759
* [562]
[592]

Since three of Tikurmidir's herbalists are women, and two of them reside with herbalist spouses, the distribution of herbalists among households is as follows:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
[162] Household with one or more herbalists:	19	16
%of Amhara households with one or more herbalists:	56%	67%

The distribution of herbalist therapies in these hamlets is further characterized by a high degree of "redundancy", that is to say, the presence of two or more therapies directed against the same named ailment, but practiced by different herbalists:

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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162 632 of the town's total population, support themselves by
433 working among the densely packed rows of beer houses
463 and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejora-
779 tively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the
563 former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically
[197] indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinc-
[167] tively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often
[142] light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian
[443] wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants
[442] (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people,
563 predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are
463 employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal
[197] makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics.
[562] Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

632
563 bar maids.

[463]
[562] A third, numerically significant minority have come from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even [144] though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly [779] negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are [647] non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations [562] also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly [464] by girls and women working as servants for the less af- *[192] fluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Nilotes living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for [326] sale in the town's daily wood market (sir gabiya). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

632 Ward and Town. Gondar's residents divide the town
621

[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("bariya").

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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*753 he must reorder his social environment. Preference is
*755 given to either killing his persecutor or frightening
*756 him away, through the use of sorcery or mundane vio-
*793 lence. If ego is unable to accomplish this, he must himself move to some place where his talat can no longer affect him, or would no longer find it necessary to do so.

*753 With zar-caused ailments, the sickman can obtain a
*787 lasting remission of symptoms only by entering into a
776 permanent relationship with the pathogenic agent, rather than countering it. Here, the sickman withdraws from his existing moral milieu, and acknowledges, as a member of a hadra (zar coterie), a permanent dependence on the good will of the zars. Once the initial diagnosis has been confirmed and ego's zar has been successfully treated with, each succeeding disease episode binds ego still more closely to the society of zars and balazars.

[562] The social and moral consequences of accomodating zars are very different for men and for women. For women, who constitute over eighty percent of zar-possessed folk, zar familiars offer a degree of security that the host finds difficult to obtain in human society. In contrast to other purposive agents, the pathogenic motives of zars are at once transparent and manageable: Zars sicken their hosts in order to extort gifts of jewlery and clothes, and deferential performances at the

*753 *787 776 hadra meeting. While zars often cause painful and potentially mortal ailments, prognoses are favorable, since the zars' ultimate interests are served best by keeping their victims well enough to continue to meet their demands.

*753 *787 776 562 A woman who excludes zars from her disease etiologies assumes great vulnerabilities. Without zar familiars, she must build etiologies from the mortal intentions of sorcerers, poisoners, and ganels. Against these agents, a woman can generally afford to raise only weak prophylactic defenses, and the cost of expert therapy (by an awakiy debtera) is usually beyond her slender means. Unmarried townswomen are particularly vulnerable in this regard, since they are without interested mates to purchase necessary debtera therapy or to insist on etiologies consistent with the teachings of the Church.

For a man, zar possession is shameful, and the appearance of symptoms which might indicate a zar etiology (i.e., kureyña) are preferably traced to other pathogenic agents. While the hadra provides its female members with opportunities for self-assertiveness otherwise impossible, the man who accepts the suzerainty of the zars commits himself to performances and associations which contradict the customary social behavior of Amhara men. He is serateña (servant, usually female) or even bariya (slave) to zar whims, which cast him in demeaning

*753 and sexually ambiguous roles. The other, predominantly
*787 female, members of his hadra treat him as an equal,
776 rather than with the deference ordinarily shown men.
• 562 What is more, his shame is public, since the zars gener-
[292] ally demand as a sign of obeisance that a colored bor-
der be woven into the normally undecorated white toga
of Amhara men.

*753 The type of practitioner that a client consults
*755 influences the final etiology with which his disease epi-
*756 sode is finally rationalized. In the context of category
*793 three ailments, the awakiy debtera is a morally correct
choice for the male client, since his therapy is capable
of translating the disease episode into a confirmation
of the client's normative social state. Failing more
innocuous indications (generally involving ganels), the
debtera's diagnosis and cure are expected to support an
etiology of sorcery or poisoning. This marks the sick-
man as someone's talat; a man someone wishes to kill or
maim in retribution or fear; a man who has incurred a
talat's interest by demonstrating aggressive and proud
(i.e., masculine) behavior, by committing assault and
murder, by usurping land rights, or by contesting sexual
access to women.

I Messing E-5 (1951-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

224 One of the traits the Amhara shares with the older culture pattern mentioned above is contempt for those who live by hunting; though he is proud to show his prowess against major wild fauna such as the elephant, lion, leopard, rhinoceros ("awraris"), and, of course, human enemies. There is no pride in hunting gazelle and other food animals. They are left to lowland peoples or low-class ethnic groups [563] like the Woyto, who hunt the hippopotamus ("gummarēy") along the gorges of the Blue Nile (and formerly also on Lake Tana).

Hunting, in the mind of the Amhara, is connected with such low-elevation jungle areas as Wolkait, on the northwestern escarpment, where the ecology differs considerable from the highland. Here are thick forest stands, many wild fruits (such as the wild orange), much wild coffee. Cotton is one of the few crops grown there.

Until the reign of the present Emperor, decorations were given to heroes who had killed big game. In fact, up to the end of the 19th century one of the flattering terms of address to the king was "zehon", elephant, considered the king of beasts. (This has since been replaced by the address "Germawi hoy", "Oh Majesty").

224 Other game hunted in jungle-forest areas such as Wol-
136 kait include:

Greater Kudu ("agazān"), one of the largest antelopes in existence, described by Amhara as having the size and shape of an ox. European hunters have measured it as 60" at shoulder height.

Table 1. Population estimates of the 12 Ethiopian provinces

Administrative provinces	Area in square kilometers	Official estimate of population 1954	Ethnic preponderance (author's comments) Language	Religion	Additional remarks
Hararmdar	76,200	1,800,000	Amharic	Coptic	some border Muslim and highland falashas.
Gojjam	62,900	1,600,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Agau (old Cushitic)speakers
Shoa	78,700	2,100,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Gurage-speakers
Tigre	67,000	1,000,000	Galla, Tigrina.	Coptic	
Wollo	78,700	1,000,000	mostly Galla	Coptic	some Amharic
Wollega	67,200	1,000,000	Galla, Amharic	Coptic	some border Shangalla(negroid, Nilotic-speaking)
Arussi	36,000	1,000,000	Galla	Muslim-"pagan"	
Hararge	404,000	1,600,000	Galla, some Somali	Muslim-"pagan"	some Somali semi-nomad tribes
Ilubabor	50,000	1,300,000	Galla, Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"	many border Shangalla & other negroids
Kaffa	49,000	1,200,000	Galla, Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"-Muslim	many border negroes
Gemu-Gofa	39,000	900,000	Sudanese, Galla	"pagan"	border negroids
Sidamo	102,000	1,250,000	old-Cushitic (Sidamo, Wollamo)	"pagan"	some nomadic border tribes
	1,110,000	15,750,000			
(Eritrea, federated 1952)	119,000	1,100,000	Beja(Cushitic) Tigre(Semitic) Nilotic	Muslim Coptic	

I Messing E-5 (1951-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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On the basis of these figures and interpretations, little over half the population of Ethiopia proper (not including Eritrea) is Coptic and can be regarded as "Abyssinians proper": Also, of the total population of Ethiopia, about 5 million, or 1/3, are native Amharic speakers, and constitute, especially in matters of governmental administration, a sort of upper class. However, there are several qualifications that should be added to these overall conclusions.

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Until the reign of the present emperor, and during much of it, the predominant and typical division of the population was into ethnic groups, and the resulting social hierarchy was largely based on what a particular group had experienced in the wars of Menelik II: whether they were among the victors, or among the vanquished. The upper class status of Amhara, was shared by landlords, chiefs, or lord-tenants, once they received conquered territories, and was rivalled only by the other Coptic Abyssinians from Eritrea, Tigre. In general, the Coptic religion itself constituted upper class membership in the hierarchy, and non-Coptic speakers of sister-languages of Amharic, such as the Gurage, did not share in this status and during that generation remained haulers of water and hewers of wood. The Galla were the largest of the subjected peoples. It mattered little to the Amhara whether the Galla were "pagan" or faintly Islamized. The Coptic priesthood did not try to "raise them to Christianity" (in the Amharic phrase).

Each of these ethnic entities had its own hierarchy

I Messing E.-5 (1951-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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of status and prestige. The Galla had originally been cattle breeders who had taken to horses, and invaded Abyssinia and had settled there in the 17th century A.D. Their famous "gada" age-grading determined much of social status of the individual during his life cycle. Today all Galla prefer the name "Oroma" for their ethnic identity -- the term formerly used for the aristocratic class which had originally done only cattle herding and had despised even skilled labor. The Tumtu class did blacksmithing, housebuilding and weaving; lived scattered; and were more mixed with negroid slaves physically. The next lower, 3rd class, was that of the tanners, who remained "pagans", were not even fully islamized, and are regarded by some scholars as indigenous Africans, with their round conical-roof dwellings reminiscent of Negro Africa.[40] The lowest class was that of the hunters who dwelt in their own communities under their own chiefs, along streams and lakes.

The Konsola had a material and social organization somewhat similar to the early Galla. Physically resembling the Galla, they lived as semi-nomads, but bred camels as well as cattle. They still from the islands on the southeastern border of Ethiopia. In the border island below the eastern escarpment live the Danakil, a tall hamitic-speaking desert people, probably of ancient residence, pushed to this economically marginal territory by later invaders. Related to them, linguistically, are peoples on the western border of Ethiopia, living along the escarpment, the Konso

[40] Lewis, "Ethnography of Abyssinia," 1933, p.19; and Greenberg: Form of Trade.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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speaking people of Quara province who once extended at least as far into the country as Lake Tana. Below the western escarpment live Nilotic and Sudanese-speaking tribes. Perhaps the most negroid group among them are the Shangalla, on the west-southwest[47] who live in hot, moist lowlands. They once had their own African royal hierarchy. But they were preyed upon by Arab slave merchants in the past who stimulated slave raids by their neighbors. They were sold in slavery far and wide to Galla, to Amhara, etc., causing negroid strains in all Ethiopia due to the traditional concubinage. Since the present emperor has stamped out the slave trade in Ethiopia, this process is no longer repeated.

The Cushitic-speaking Wollamo (province of Sidamo) underwent a similar experience. They had their own kings until the time of Menelik II, in the very southern part of the highland. Some of this group were sold into slavery, about the turn of this century. They are dark, slender, non-negroid people with "pagan" worship in tree groves and phallic stone statuary.

Even under Menelik II some of this hierarchy began to change. As empire-builder, he rewarded, with lands and associated status, those subject peoples and chiefs who fought for him in his subsequent wars.

Out of this complex medley, the present ethnic stratification retains much of the old, Amharic-Coptic pattern, with a number of new sub-patterns, which, moreover, differ in emphasis from region to region. The following general ethnic hierarchy can be indicated, at least as it exists

47. Coon: Measuring Ethiopia, 1935, p.73.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

in the minds of most Amhara:

1. The Coptic Abyssinian, on which top level the Amharic-speaker and the Tigrina-speaker are equal except for the added Amhara prestige due to the "Solomonic Dynasty". Both consider themselves "attentām" (of noble bones). Both consider themselves superior to all other groups, notably the "conquered nations", infidels,"laboring classes" and "lower races". Both consider themselves the descendants of the Hadhrami invaders of the late pre-Christian era.

As conquerors, the Amhara believe in their superior toughness. The aphorism says:

"The aged Amhara is (powerful) like bärbärē
the aged Galla is (soft) like butter".

The word Amhara is itself derived from "amari", meaning one who is pleasing, agreeable, beautiful and gracious.

On the other hand, the services rendered by Galla cavalry to Menelik II (e.g. in his victory over the Italians at Aduwa) are well known and admitted. In reward, many of the Galla feudal nobles were permitted to retain in fief 1/4 of their land and its serfs, so that a Galla "Balbat" (landowner) class has arisen and prospered. They are in ostentatious presence at all national festivals in Addis Ababa, notably the annual coronation festival of Haile Selassie, when their young men are seen and heard, jumping with brandished spears or sticks, shouting the loyalty of the "Oromo" to "Addis Ababa" (symbolic for Menelik and Haile Selassie). Among the modern-educated Amhara, and even among many uneducated Amhara of Shoa province, intermarriage with Galla Balbat families is not rare, nowadays, especially if the Galla partner is wealthier than the Amhara, and if the Galla is the bride. This is still resis-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

ted among Amhara of Begemdir (Gondar) who refer, in consequence, to any new, unknown Shoan visitor (clerks, administrative officials) as a "Galla". But Amhara from Gondar will not be ashamed to marry a Coptic girl from Tigre.

2. Conquered peoples who are largely non-Coptic (Muslim, semi-Muslim, "pagan").

Certain distinctions are made within this second group. Full Muslims, especially merchants living in market towns, enjoy a somewhat higher prestige, as a respected minority whose leaders are received by governors and even the emperor. (Haile Selassie in recent years, has gone so far as to build mosques, e.g. in Eritrea for them, something which would have cost an earlier emperor his throne.)

At the feast of Ramadan, Muslim leaders, led by their "kadi" (ecclesiastic judge) call on the emperor to receive his good wishes. In Harar city, where Arabic is known to some of the local Muslims, they listen to Arabic radio broadcasts from the public loudspeakers outside their coffee houses on the marketplace.

The predominant Muslim rite is Melekite, but the majority of thinly islamized Galla know little about such distinctions.[48]

The Galla are the largest group in this category, but, as mentioned before, an important distinction is made between Salbat-families and others. Furthermore, the Galla of Shoa and Wollo provinces, because of their long association with Amhara, enjoy higher prestige than the Galla of Arussi and

48. Liebesney, H. J. : Literature on the Law of the Middle East. The Middle East Journal, October 1949, pp. 461-9.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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AE 563

other southern provinces, who are considered more "primitive" in their material culture, and many of whom are "pagan".

AE 711 563

Emperor Haile Selassie has urged the Coptic clergy to "raise to Christianity" even peoples despised as "unworthy" in the old pattern. As a result, peoples like the Agau (incl. the Qemant) who have long been neighbors to the western Amhara, and the laboring Gurage near Addis Ababa, have been converted and occupy status somewhere between level 1. and 2., depending on the wealth they have been able to accumulate by past labors. The Qemants have become favorites of the clergy at Gondar because of their generous donations to the local Coptic churches.

AE 563 [826]

The people of coffee-rich Jimma, in Kaffa province, enjoy respect within level 2. because they had been left with internal autonomy during the rule of Menelik II; and because they are believed to be a slightly higher physical type than other infidels (they are considered "wammate", people with wrinkles at the corner of the mouth). Perhaps due to their old wealth based on coffee, slave and gold trade, they are envied; but they are regarded as "people of dissolute moral habits" by the Amharas.

AE 463 563

3. Laboring peoples and classes; non-Coptic; despised, in the old patterns of behavior.

This includes all occupational groups that did or do the ironsmithing, leather tanning, skilled or non-skilled manual labor. Among them are the lower classes of the Galla (mentioned before); the non-Coptic Gurage; the Falasha who live in small rural communities in Begemdir province, who do most of the ironsmithing and pottery-making there, and who practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

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practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

4. Occupational hunters: lowland border peoples; negroid ex-slaves; all non-Coptic.

AE 563 224

The occupational hunting tribes are considered the most primitive, as pre-agricultural and even pre-pastoral subsisters on the bush, jungle, river gorges and deserts. Among them are the Woyto, the hunters of the Hippopotamus, which is considered by the Coptic clergy especially unclean because of the similarity to the pig. Jungles like Wolkait, in northwest Begemdir, contain such despised and feared hunters, as does the eastern lowland desert of the Danakil (Afar).

AE 563 233

Considered on a somewhat higher level within these groups are the pastoral nomads like the Somali, some of the Borana, and other southern tribes who, when they are better known to settled neighbors, are equated with class 2. When less well known, they are classed not much above hunters, and it does not matter to the Amhara that the pastoral nomads in turn look down on settled peasants.

AE 563 567

The lowest on level four are the ex-slaves, who are referred to as Shanqalla if they look negroid, or the more general "barya", i.e. slave (name of a Sudanese border tribe). Only a very poor person, possibly an outcast, cripple, etc., of the two upper classes would consider marrying a Shanqalla. Nevertheless, because of the aforementioned concubinage with female slaves, there are Shanqalla outcrops among even the Amhara of Gondar. An offspring of such a union not infrequently does marry a Shanqalla woman, after converting her to Coptic Christianity. This is pos-

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sible in modern times, though the conversion is solemnized shamefacedly by the minor clergy and with very little ado. The racial distinctions between "persons of dishonorable ancestry" are expressed in the following Amharic aphorisms:

> "(One) of unknown father
> (Two) wellaj (i.e. father Amhara, Mother Shanqalla:
> (Three) barya (i.e. full-blooded slave);
> (Four) gabecha (any half-breed, incl. half-Italian)."

In setting them side by side without distinction, the aphorism warns the hearer to look well into the ancestry of a prospective mate, for he or she may be descended from any of these classifications.

A E 609

European foreigners are not included in these classifications, especially if they belong to nationalities of recent contact with Ethiopians. But the Armenians, in contact for many centuries, appear in the upper infidel group (the term"arämani" had the connotation of "idolator, hence Cruel"). Today some of the modern Ethiopian nationalists pretend to despise them as "moneybags", while actually envying their commercial and professional talents. The term "arab" has long meant trader, caravan importer, slave dealer. The term for Protestant, probably of 19th century origin, means "enemy of Mary", because that is what impressed the Coptic Amhara most when the missionaries preached to them at that time. The old term "färänj (Frank), foreigner, is still in use, and in rural spots children will still sometimes run after a foreigner pointing fingers as if he were a strange, hence inferior, animal. But in urban usage, especially in Addis Ababa, the term is now applied officially without any derogatory connotations.

461 often a member of a socially lower ethnic group (see sec-
554 tion B), such an Amhara would become "detribalized", sus-
pected of having learned occult powers (e.g. in smith-
craft), and suspected of being no longer an observant and
563 believing Copt. As a result of his ostracism, he may then
461 very likely marry a girl from the socially lower ethnic
554 group, and his children would be social halfbreeds. If that
ethnic group were Shanqalla (negroid, ex-slave), his chil-
dren would also be racially, as well as socially, mixed, and
be relegated to the servant class. Thus the prediction of
the proverb would have come full cycle. This process can
be observed in Gondar, Addis Ababa, and wherever a market
town develops out of the more conservative, rural milieu.

566 Before the abrogation of the major feudal privileges
463 by the present emperor, the feudal lord could and did put
skilled specialists to work without specific wages or limit
of service. Moreover, the skilled specialist would often
be worse off than the unskilled serf. For while the latter
would at least be permitted, usually, to remain at his place
of origin, the skilled specialists were very often required
to accompany the feudal troops and resettle in an alien
province, cut off from their kinfolk.

Smiths had to produce and repair weapons, masons to
build churches, weavers to make togas and adornments, brew-
ers of honeywine and musician-bards to prepare feasts and
entertainments, etc. The chief quartermaster and "treasurer"
carried the title "bajirond" and was usually a skilled and
trusted master craftsman himself. In reward, he and some
of the other skilled specialists might be allocated new

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622 485 This change has also lightened the burden on the "gabbar", the tenant sharecropper. In the past it was the gabbar who had to supply the "feast" (called "gebber", with ironic truthfulness regarding the provider) for feudal troops on march, in addition to all his other burdens. The cheqa shum was responsible for its collection, for only he knew how much produce, goats, sheep, honey, etc., the peasant had left after the heavy sharecropping rent to the landlord and the "tithe" ("asrat") which is still payable to the central government (formerly to the district feudal lord).

651 There is now a new tax, the "education tax" payable even in rural areas where no government schools exist as yet, and payable in cash only, not in produce as in case of "asrat". This tax, too, is collected by the cheqa shum and delivered to the mislanē who must now issue a receipt and forward the money to the central treasury.

563 361 Ethnic considerations in the location of a hamlet in Amhara territory apply to hamlets of scattered Falashas, ironsmiths who observe Mosaic Judaism, and hamlets of the Fagi, Cushitic-speaking tanners who were "Pagan" but have recently accepted the Coptic faith and the Amharic language. Since their services are required, they are often permitted to rent land on a hill, the other side of which may contain a Coptic Amhara hamlet. Relations between these hamlets, beginning on strictly economic terms, often become as friendly as the difference between religions, low status of skilled smiths and tanners, and old supernatural [622] suspicions permit. In case of such residence, one cheqa shum may have an ethnic variety of hamlets under his domain, and may know far more about their "strange" inhabitants and their customs than the average Amhara.

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463 The rural extended family is also the residential unit, the
596 hamlet, and this principle affects the rural residence of the ethnic specialists: the Faqi tanners occupy their own hamlets, Falasha smiths theirs, and, within each ethnic hamlet, the specialists are related by kinship, usually patrilocal as well as patrilineal.

463 Principle (2) here creates the basis forthe ethnic
563 division of labor. The concern of the Amhara is not the time and effort saved by each group doing a specialized task, it is to retain prestige by not working at a skilled manual task but having social inferiors do it for them. Time is not much concern in this culture, for labor is paid by the job, not the hour. Labor is cheap, and since the material culture is relatively undeveloped technically, the work does not require the close synchronization of modern, western factories. Thus, as long as the primary source of power consists of muscular force and simple technology, the old ethnic division of labor remains satisfactory to the Amhara, and often even to the ethnic specialists whose livelihood is assured.

The Amhara has more confidence that an iron plow-point or pot made by the Falasha is well-made, or that a toga woven by a Muslim will give long wear, than he exhibits if a poor Amhara has learned the crafts and tries to sell him his products. For, he reasons, has not the ethnic workman learned his craft since childhood, from his father, who in turn has practiced and perfected it for countless generations? The Amhara purchaser suspects that a new

463 563 non-ethnic (Amhara), supplier may have done a slovenly job to pick up some quick money, even if he knew the craft. Moreover, the Amhara is convinced that the craft of the ethnic workman, especially the Falasha, is connected with black magic ("buda"), and therefore strong, though evil; while another Amhara individual who may have persuaded or hired a Falasha to teach him his craft (which occasionally has happed in very recent years), will never be taught the magical power connected with ironsmithing, not even from his own father-in-law if he intermarries into a Falasha family (which is also beginning to happen, in towns). Therefore, the product will not be "strong": if a pot it will break; if a plowpoint it will dull soon.

463 563 466 Thus, the ethnic craftsmen retain their patrons, a relationship reinforced also by the personal factor: for the Amhara customer who has established or inherited the habit of trading with a particular Falasha hamlet, where confidence has developed and even personal idiosyncrasies are known, prefers to continue to deal on this personal (or family) basis. This is particularly true since in rural areas the work done is paid for in produce, or in lieu of rent payable by the Falashas for land farmed by them and belonging to the Amhara landholding family. The limitations of this economic, or at best inter-personal relationship are mutually recognized , for neither group would mix socially or intermarry, in the rural district. The boundary line is one of religion as well as occupation and social status. As in most parts of the Middle East, the blacksmith remains an outsider. This is also true of the tanner, in Amhara society.

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000 the tanner, in Amhara society.

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The values that dominate the division of labor in Amhara territory are closely connected with social stratification, which has been described. While hunters would be at the bottom of the scale, they do not actually have much share in the economic organization. The ethnic occupation class is in the second or third class from the top, depending on how much change has taken place in the local status of "conquered populations" since the 19th century Amhara victories. Actual ex-slaves, usually negroid, are below this level, usually sharing the same status as hunters. The Coptic Amhara, who is occupationally limited occupies the top class, subdivided into feudal lords and sharecropping peasants, with landholding families in between.

But this is a dividion into classes rather than into castes. For, although occupations tend to be hereditary, and most individuals follow the ethnic specialty of their fathers, they are not under a strict obligation to do so. Emperor Theodore was a usurper of commoner origin, whose mother made a living by gathering bark of the Kosso tree, the lowest occupation of an Amhara. The ethnic classes are more strictly divided by religious identification. In the rural districts there is still no intermarriage between religious or racial groups. In town, persons of the same socio-economic level do intermarry, e.g. "woyto" hippopotamus hunters or ex-hunters, and Shanqalla ex-slaves. Both are likely to work as unskilled servants or laborers, in a town such as Gonder. In general, the class system of Amhara territory is somewhat sharper than in most Middle

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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563 East countries, but it is not the elaborate caste system of
[565] India.

463 Regional division of labor plays only a small role.
438 When it does occur, as in case of the "burnos"-weaving and carpet-making of spots in Semyen, which survived until recently, it is a case of local survival of a craft that has experienced culture loss, fallen into disuse elsewhere. This is also believed to be true with regard to viticulture which seems to have been lost during the 19th century southeast of Lake Tana. It is the story of ancient Aksum all over again, where a 1700-year old stone cistern is to this day the major water supply and a marvel to the present inhabitants, as are the obelisks, stone steps, etc. Where regional specialization does play some role, it is in a very limited sense. Certain districts of Begemdir province, for example, are more inhabited by Falashas than others, and the iron plowpoints and pottery may be preferred from there, especially in the dry season when travel is possible. The better togas are made by Muslim Ethiopians in suburban Gondar town. Hamlets of tanners are also encountered more often in the vicinity of a town like Gondar. Since so many basic crafts are handed down only in the family system, modern changes de-emphasizing the family economy, plus importation via Italian-built roads, will increasingly cause culture loss, especially in the rural districts. Already the contemptuous reference to "balagar sera" (rustic workmanship) are beginning to heard among urban Amhara (e.g. in connection with the plow and pottery).

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462 563 B. THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR.

Division of labor according to the ethnic origin of of the worker is the most distinctly organized division among the Amhara. This is based on the attitude of the [461] Amhara that labor (especially skilled labor and manual labor) is dishonorable. This attitude is reinforced by the close kinship ties which prevent a cultural deviant from shaming the members of his family by working in the district where they are known. It also reinforces the the ethnic boundary lines, and forces the non-Amhara, non-Coptic, working ethnic groups to live within the circle of their own kinfik, religious groups, and hamlets.

[281 191] One of the most despised is the class of the Faqi, the tanners, who speak old-Cushitic languages such as Agau, are considered "pagans" in religion, and are associated by their trade with the hunters, the lowest class.

326 [191] On a slightly higher level are the ironsmiths, usually of Falasha, who practice Mosaic Judaism, used to speak Quarinya, an old-Cushitic language, but use the same Semitic Geez language as the Copts in their religious worship and biblical liturgy.

563 463 754 326 [191] This use of Geez by the Falasha is puzzling to the Coptic priests, and brings about a sort of grudging respect for the Falasha, which somewhat elevates their status above that of the tanners. But they are suspected of practicing black magic in connection with their smithing of iron. Patrons take magic precautions to counteract all sorts of magic bewitchment by the Falashas whenever they have contact with them.

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463 They are especially afraid of the "buda", evil eye concept,
754 of which Falashas are believed especially capable; also of
326 their supposed ability to turn themselves into real and magic hyenas at night.

This magic power, however, is believed to make their
[323] tools "strong", and the pottery of the Falasha womenfolk "hard to break", so that their wares are preferred by the Amhara, creating a monopoly for Falasha iron tools and pottery wherever Falasha hamlets are within a day's walking distance. In some areas there are itinerant Falasha smiths, whose womenfolk make pottery at the same time. They will live in a special guest hut at the edge of an Amhara hamlet.

463 Weaving is also done by Falashas, but they have no
563 monopoly on it, as Muslim Ethiopian weavers are believed
286 by the Amhara to turn out togas that are just as good. For many centuries Muslims were permitted to reside only in segregated sections of towns, such as "AddisAlämm" of
[361] Gondar town. Though this prohibition has been lifted, most Ethiopian Muslims still reside in special quarters of towns, rarely in a rural hamlet on the Amhara plateau. They were not permitted to own land and no one would rent them any.

They see much more of the country trade routes, since it is they who do much of caravan trading, acting as guides, quartermasters and retail traders for Arab coreligionists who are the wholesalers, usually on routes leading to the Sudan, to Eritrea and to Somaliland. The Coptic Amhara consider the Ethiopian Muslims almost as foreign as the Arabs, even the descendants of Amhara who were forcefully

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563 converted to Islam by the invading Mahdi in the late 19th
286 century, some of whom never reconverted to Christianity after the end of the invasion. This latter group speaks Amharic, but the Coptic Amhara refuse to call them Amhara. In turn, the Muslims call the Copts "Kaffir", infidels, which is considered an insult. Though socially segregated, Muslim weavers are often called to make shammas in the back yard of a Coptic Amhara house, returning to their own homes at dusk.

463 In the province of Shoa, and the southern, non-Amhara
563 provinces, the Amhara conquered much land in the late 19th
464 century, acquiring millions of Galla and other "gabbar", sharecropping peasants with a status somewhat resembling that of medieval European serfs. They still constitute an important category of labor, though they can leave the land if they are willing to abandon everything (which they rarely do). During the reign of the present emperor their lot has improved, and it is the Galla who are at present experiencing the most remarkable mobility in occupation of any group in Ethiopia. The numbers affected by the change are small, but the principle of this mobility cannot be exaggerated. Even Menelik II, conqueror of the Galla, had noticed how easily he could win them over to serve under his military banner, partly because of their in-tribal dissention, partly due to their fierce loyalty to any chief to whom they have sworn allegiance. Today a number are in positions of the central government, and many Galla officials and clerks are sent out to the old Amhara provinces, even to Gondar, to govern and administer
their erstwhile conquerors

463 their erstwhile conquerors.
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The majority of the Galla are still primitive, dress in skins, use iron spears since they have few rifles, and are "pagan" or slightly islamized, in provinces south of the Amhara provinces. Their participation in the economy is largely agricultural and pastoral, both honorable occupations in the Amhara view. Their low (though rising) social status is due to their conquest, the African living patterns in their home provinces, the difference in religion and in language, but not to their occupation.

The following crafts fall under the ethnic division of labor:

563 A. Pottery-making
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[462]

This occupation can also be classed under Division of Labor by Sex, since only women, mostly Falasha women, engage in it. In the provinces where no Falasha women are available, pottery is made by Gurage or by Galla women. The only time a Coptic Amhara woman prepares a rough utensil she fashions an unsymmetrical container out of mud coarsely mixed with straw or cowdung and left to dry in the sun without firing. Compared with that, the pottery made by women of the other ethnic groups, is indeed "professional".

323 But in fact even the best pottery made by the craftswomen must be considered primitive. It belongs to the category referred to by archeologists in other areas as "women home industry". The firing is of the "first level", i.e. below 600° Centigrade. No potter's wheel is used. Glazing and waterproofing are minimal and primitive; only

411 A safer version of the throwing spear, with dull or no point, is used by the young men during their mock battle and chase at the "gänna" feast (Christmas).

326 435 The economic aspects of smithcraft could provide the smith with considerable income, since the Amhara peasants are in regular need, and since the Falasha smiths have a monopoly due to the suspicions of the magic correlation which keep Amhara from the craft. But in fact the income is not large. A team of rural smiths, 5 men, receive only Eth$1.50 for their labor in making a plowpoint, if the customer brings his own scrap, double that if the smiths have to supply it. The somewhat bigger "summer plow" costs somewhat more. The customer usually waits in a special hut of the hamlet of the smiths, and must be provided with grain and other necessities, meanwhile. Thus, while an individual smith may earn as much as Eth$400.- from his craft in a year, the additional food bill may be Eth$300.-, and most of the earnings will go to pay the rent on his land, of which he farms less than the average peasant.

Even a well-made plowpoint dulls after about 10 years. Then it is brought back and the smith cuts it down to an axe ("mäterabiya") for only 50¢ Eth. When that dulls, he cuts it down further to a slightly smaller adze ("mäqofäriya") for half that sum.

326 563 The human organization of smithcraft, particularly in the Amhara area where the Falasha are the smiths, presents peculiar problems and patterns. Where no Falasha hamlets are near, the smithing is done by itinerant Fa-

326 lasha smiths, whose women make pottery at the same time.
563 This arrangement is not liked by the Falasha because of their religious obligations, even though they reside in a special guest hut, slaughter their own sheep and use their own utensils while at work for a distant Amhara hamlet. For they rest on Saturday, work on Sunday, and the more traditional among them have to undergo elaborate purification ceremonies upon their return home.

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This alternate, itinerant pattern probably developed during recent centuries when feudal warlords forced them to accompany their troops as ordnance, at any time, often during their entire lifetimes. This continued as late as the 1920's, when Ras Gugsa still ruled the province of Begemdir (Gondar). Since Menelik's conquest of distant Galla lands, in the late 19th century, Falasha smiths have been carried off farther than ever, and sometimes never again seen by their families. Ras Gugsa wanted to please Menelik in his Amharization program in the south, and ordered Coptic churches built by the Falashas in "pagan" or Muslim Galla areas, when their wartime duties were largely over. Some were given Shanqalla females to replace their own distant families. A few rose to the position of "bäjirond" (treasurer) and were given land property in lieu of salary. Thus an exception was made for these individuals, for Falashas were not permitted to purchase land, on condition that their offspring carry on the same services in the feudal armies. Now that these services have been abrogated, there are still a few landholding Falasha families, the descendants of army-ordnance Falasha smiths.

326 563 [445] Another difficulty is that the Falasha, observing Sabbath on Saturday when the big markets are in operation, cannot market any surplus of iron products directly, even if they wanted to, and must use a middleman, usually a Muslim, who absorbs any extra profit that might accrue in town. Thus the economic significance of their craft remains entirely in the old pattern, and is not developing in a modern direction, which it might have as a result of recent Western contact, stimulation and tools. The Falasha are recasting every part of their own rifles except the barrel, and their womenfolk have attempted to make glass out of sand (with little success) and modern Yemenite clay incense burners (with more success).

C. Carpentry.

322 Carpentry has already been characterized as minimal, incidental, merely semi-occupational among the Amhara, and as a tangential task of the ironsmith toolmaker. At best, the carpenter ("tärabi") is a part-time specialist.

The riflestock, of wanza wood, made by the ironsmith, often leads to his being asked to do other special woodwork, e.g. saddlemaking. If he becomes proficient in it, he may do nothing else during part of the year, and then send the finished, wooden saddle to the faqi tanners for a leather cover. For his own labor he may charge as much as Eth$8.- a better profit than that achieved by the average ironsmith. Wanza wood (Cordia abyssinica) is also used for the legs of the "alga" bed, so that the

322 saddlemaker is usually an expert at lumbering. A well-made "korecha", wooden, skin-covered saddle, with adornements, made to order, may cost a total of Eth$25.-

D. Tanning

281 The consumption of leather articles among the Amhara is tremendous for a settled agricultural people. It is reminiscent of Hamitic-speaking tribes whose ecology is based on animal husbandry, and the technology of tanning and manufacture of leather articles is linked with that of North Africa. The ethnic group that does this specialized work in Amhara territory, the Faqi, were Cushitic (Hamitic) - speaking, and probably constitute an early group in residence in Ethiopia. Products consumed include cooking utensils especially for travelling, riding equipment, scabbards, shields, and formerly skin clothing (now worn only by itinerant monks).

281 563 797 The Faqi live in scattered hamlets of their own, the size of which is usually like the smaller Amhara ones: patrilocal residence, 5 to 6 huts at most, each occupied by a biological family. Until very recently, none of them were Coptic Christians since the Coptic priesthood considered these "pagans" on the same level as occupational hunters, too low to be "raised to Christianity". They spoke old-Cushitic languages such as Qemant and other Agau tongues, and gathered in remote tree-groves on top of hills for occasional religous worship similar to that of the "pagan" Galla. Now most of them speak or at least understand Amharic, and since 1942 some have become con-

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281 verted to Christianity due to the influence of the Emperor's
563 wishes. Socially they are now considered on a level above
[797] the hunters, and, after adopting Christianity almost on a level with other non-ethnic craftsmen. Though largely endogamous within their own Faqi class, they used to take half-Shanqalla wives, or "woyto" (hippopotamus hunters), but near urban places such as Gondar they now marry poor Amhara of doubtful ancestry, after having become Christians. They are still considered "rustic" by the Amhara townsmen, since the Faqi, like the Falasha, do not like to live in town, to avoid negative human relations and insults based on their occupation ("You Faqi").

The Faqi do not like to be called by that name and prefer the term "arabannya", which has a connotation of someone skilled in something imported, of prestigeful origin. This is perhaps well-founded for some of their finer products resemble morocco leather.

The Faqi farm little, less than the Falasha, but keep kitchen gardens. They usually do not own land- unless a family acquired some as a reward for ordnance services rendered accompanying the troops of Menelik II. The cash obtained from their products goes largely to pay rent
[231] for the land, similar to the Falasha. The Faqi try to keep as much cattle as they can afford, for the skins are valuable to them, and cow's urine is used in the process of tanning.

The basic team need not exceed three ablebodied, experienced tanners, but there are numerous little jobs for boys and older men.

E. Weaving

286 Most weaving is of cotton (Gossypium arboreum), grown in the lowlands of Ethiopia. It is of shorter staple but stronger than the Egyptian, imported from the Sudan.

286 563 [462] Weaving is man's work, and in Amhara territory is an "ethnic occupation" carried out either by Falashas or by Muslim Ethiopians. Emperor Menelik II tried to change this by encouraging Amhara men to take part in this basic and increasingly necessary activity, not only for the traditional shamma, but also for the spreading use of "qämis" shirt and jodphur trousers. But he had little success with it. Only very poor, "detribalized" Amhara (who have intermarried with socially lower ethnic groups) weave shamma togas, and cotton sheeting imports have increased steadily since Menelik II for other garments. One can therefore state that weaving remains an ethnic occupation.

286 There are two basic types of materials for shammas woven on the traditional handloom The more prevalent is the peasant-type, thick, warm, soft, tight-knit and sturdy, heavy material, that will last long; the other is thinly woven, almost like a muslin, and is preferred in towns, especially by the women who use it like a long shawl above a long dress. The latter type is more richly embroidered at the narrow borders.

When the housewife has cleaned, carded, spun and rolled the cotton thread for the warp on a warping reel,

286 weaver's occupation. If the weaver were to become a Copt
554 and live among Copts, he would be on a social level equal to a poor, laboring Amhara.

C. Semi-specialized and unskilled.

463 The present division of labor is still based on
563 the former feudal structure of the Amhara economy and human organization. Specialized skills are left to other ethnic groups, and, apart from non-ignoble occupations such as war, church, agriculture, healing, the Amhara reserve to themselves semi-specialized occupations and part-time labor traditionally carried out by household retainers.

The latter type of labor, dealt with in this section, can be roughly divided into three categories: (1) labor arising out of the feudal lord-peasant relationship; (2) semi-specialization "that anyone can learn", in the attitude of the Coptic Amhara; (3) temporary la-
[465] bor, for which specified wages based on Time and Energy are agreed upon, called "damoz" (a contraction of "dämä-wäs", lit. "blood-and sweat" compensation). This term is even used for temporary marriage, during which the woman acts as cook and travelling companion.

466 The first category arises out of the obligations
[566] owed by the sharecropping "gabbar" to his feudal lord or landowning church: the former statute labor, when everyone would come with his own tools and construct a

443 177 salers, and other Muslim retailers. Here they discuss caravan trade, import and export, and local business. These Arabs speak enough Amharic for their purposes, but cannot read or write it, so that they employ temporary services of Amhara clerks, graduates or upper classmen of elementary schools, to translate and write documents relating to transactions, taxes and loans. It is these Arab traders who constitute most of the customers of provincial branches of the new State Bank of Ethiopia. Only rarely does a foreign company like Besse have a local branch, operated by East Indian managers. This is recent, while the Arab traders are the successors of former Arab slavetraders, an ancient but now abolished occupation in Ethiopia. Arab traders also serve as personal bankers to Amhara.

The broker, "mäden", may be an Amhara. This is especially true if he is the aforementioned labor broker. He acts as negotiator for business transactions, and (e.g. in the sale of major livestock) personally guarantees that the object sold was not stolen; he is required to make good the loss if it is not so. This is an important form of insurance, for which the broker may charge as little as 1%, payable usually in cash; he is also given a barley beer dinner after the transaction. He, in turn, may employ Amhara loiterers to gather around during transactions and contribute their wit to urge the buyer to close the deal.

563 443 554 The Muslim Ethiopian retailer, unlike the Arab trader, carries little prestige among Amhara. His com-

563 parative wealth may be envied, but his religion, and
443 his habit of taking several wives from ex-slave (Barya),
554 Sudanese, lowland females, places him on a level with the upper ethnic craftsmen class. The fact that his labor is not manual elevates him a bit. The full Arab from Yemen or Arabia is regarded as a foreigner, and there is little concern about him since he does not participate in the social hierarchy of the Coptic Amhara.

436 Silver coinage for major transactions, until recently, was the Maria Theresa Thaler, bearing the year 1780, even if coined much later, imported, and sometimes referred to as "machedo", sickle. The recent laws of the present emperor provide for confiscation and punishment for possession of this now illegal currency, but peasants and townsmen have them hidden and silversmiths can still obtain them with little difficulty. The habit of burying coins for safekeeping has carried over to modern paper money. Every year cases of buried paper money that decayed in the rainy season become the talk of the town. The former MT Thaler was divided as follows:

1 MT Thaler = 16" temun" silver coins of Menelik; the term "temun" is now used for silver ornaments, though the new Ethiopian 25¢ piece is actually used in exchange, or even in ornaments.

= 16 "gresh", the Egyptian-Turkish piastre coined in 1899, no longer used, and rarely seen.

423 by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income
651
563 from their handicrafts. Among the methods of this extortion is the "initiation fee" of as much as Eth$3.- per qada, when freshly cleared from the bush. Another impressment consists of "voluntary" supplies regularly paid to the Coptic parish church in the locality, by non-Coptic ethnics. Also, the feudal landlord usually asks them for a special "pasturage fee"--as much as Eth$2.- per qada of fallow land--with the further condition that no more than two oxen (or cows) graze on each qada. Where a Coptic farmer may pay perhaps Eth$10.- tithe on his semi-fertile 50 qada, the non-Coptic farmer may be made to pay double to four times that for similar produce on an equivalent plot of land. While
[871] the new education tax is the same, the non-Coptic artisan finds it very difficult to enroll his boy in the overcrowded elementary school in the provincial capital.

423 The average "rest"-owning farmer working 10 qada
651 every year, may harvest about 50 madiga of tyeff grain,
511 selling it for Eth$150.-(In the rainy season it would bring twice that); plus 30 madiga barley, Eth$60.- plus some honey, if he has it.

If the tax-collector is his friend, his tithe may amount to as little as Eth$5 to 10, his education tax Eth$2 to 4. His land tax based on the rate of 1927 will be very low, and his pasturage, as Coptic non-artisan, free.

511 Thus he has enough for his basic needs including the purchase of a new toga (shamma) per year, and perhaps a new donkey. However, he cannot normally afford

633 the old Portuguese-type castles, even then in ruins.
[346] The new mosque, built through Italian encouragement during the occupation, overshadows both the big market and the old Muslim "ghetto" with the old mosque, at lower elevation.

●563 The local Muslim "Qadi", ecclesiastical Muslim judge,
624 regarded as their provincial temporal chief, calls on the governor-general every Tuesday. Most Muslims have not moved far from their old section, partly because it is near the big market which is their economic as well as social gathering place, partly because they, almost as much as the ethnic artisans, wish to avoid insults, mockery, and quarrels with young members of the dominant majority.

759 In addition to being a center of public announce-
743 ments, and the table of the judge for petty crimes, the market now also serves as center for the activities of modern "dressers". These medical auxiliaries set up their tables under one of the shady trees, their bottles, hypodermic needles, cotton wool, etc., clearly visible, with chairs for several patients, set apart by an enclosure of barbed wire. When an epidemic threatens, and
[731] during and after it (e.g. typhus or spotted fever), the public can obtain free injections there, or call a dresser to come to their home for a small fee.

633 Each town is divided into administrative wards, sometimes called "qäbälē", but almost invariably named after the church located in it. Thus a person will say "I am from Medhanē Alam" (church of the "Savior of the

642 the lower indirectly appointed. No elections have been held; they have been postponed to the day when "education shall have been increased". In actual practice the monarchy thus remains absolute in function, and even legislation that is not directly urged by the emperor requires his signature and cannot be overridden.

563 (d) A problem of law that did not concern the old Amhara legislative authorities but that has become, though still dormant and in abeyance, a problem in recent years, is that of juridicial privileges of sectarian minorities, particularly Ethiopian Muslims.

In the past, Muslims lived there much as they did under the "Millet" system of Ottoman Turks, i.e. under their own religious jurisdiction in all internal affairs such as personal status, inheritance, marriage, divorce, endowments, etc. In Amhara areas, the Muslim ecclesiastical judge, the "Qadi" performs the functions of the "ṭhoqa shum" and the "atbiya danya" judge for the Muslim population of his sector. He also heads their own school system of Quran schools, much as the Coptic priests head the local church schools.

563 692 There was no central Muslim organization, beyond this local structure. As part of modern centralization, the present emperor issued the "Qadi's Court Proclamation" in 1942 and 1944. It created a "Naibas" Council in Addis Ababa, to function as a traditional Muslim "Sharia" Court of Appeals above the local decisions of the Qadis. This structure, in turn, is supervised by the (Coptic) Minister of Justice of the central govern-

563 692 ment, who approves appointment to Sharia and Qadi positions.

5. Structure and Function of the Coptic Church among the Amhara.

795 The importance of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia on the life of every Amhara, of all classes, rural or urban, can hardly be exaggerated. To the Amhara, "Amhara" is synonymous with Abyssinian Christian; and the [198] liturgical language used in the church, "Geez", with "language of the free". The term used for their religion is "täwahedo", often shortened to "towado", meaning "orthodox".

To the Amhara, his church is so closely connected with his attitudes to his country, his nation, his ethnocentrism, that the severance of ties with the mother Coptic Church of Alexandria, in 1948, passed almost [779] unnoticed. Only church scholars are aware that, as part of the larger Coptic church, the break with the Western church occurred after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., ostensibly because the Copts insisted on complete fusion of the person of Christ, refusing to accept the "union, but not fusion of Deity and human spirit" of the non-Monophysite faith in the formula he pronounces when [788] slaughtering a sheep or ox: "In the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost, one divinity." The pious [224] hunter will hasten to the wounded gazelle to pronounce the formula before the animal expires, then finish it off by cutting its throat

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 184 [563] racially enslaved groups; there was, and to a considerable degree there still is, a cultural continuum among Coptic Amhara that is shared by all classes, (with the partial exception of ethnic and racially-separated groups).

A. Class Stratification.

a) Regional Distinction and Feudal Nobility.

Regional distinctions are emphasized by both nobles and peasants. The nobles from the old-Amhara districts of Amara Saynt, Länz (both in Shoa province) and of the later developed Gondar district (Gegemdir province) c nsider themselves an upper-upper class even among nobility. At least part of this status is ascribed not only to a local history of "old-nobility" contrast with "new-nobility", but totthe supposed fact that these districts were the only Amhara districts not overrun by the Galla in the 16th century.

The class of nobility is controlled, but also perpetuated, by the emperor. In every generation he gradually raises the young nobles to the rank of their fathers, as each individual advances in age. Usually it is only when the father dies that the son is appointed to full rank. He is not usually raised above it except for unusual service to the emperor. Commoners may be given modest ranks in nobility for special service, thus entering, as "new-nobility", upon the social ladder.

565 ("chäwa") of Amhara ancestry ("attentam"); and the "gabbär" sharecropper on feudal land, who is regarded as of doubtful ancestry (part-slave, or part-Galla ethnic), who is referred to as "rustic" ("balagär). While the former, usually descended from warriors who were given land many generations age, considers himself inferior only to nobility and higher church officials, the latter occupies the broad bottom base of the Amhara social pyramid. The proverb says of the rustic "gabbar":

[539] "He who honors a gabbar
will be despised by him ".

In fact there are not many who might honor a gabbar, except for some ethnic laborers and ex-slaves, both of whom occupy somewhat of an outcast position.

c) The Ethnic Classes

563 463 565 The ethnic skilled-labor class does not usually consider itself inferior to the gabbar class. This is especially true if the particular ethnic group has a non-material culture or subculture of its own, notably the Falashas who observe Mosaic Judaism.

The factor of fear of a skilled occupation, the practitioners of which are called "täbib" (lit. "knowing one ", i.e to whom secrets are revealed), enters into the class stratification. It attaches an aura of untouchability to certain occupational classes, especially if reinforced by ethnic or religious difference.

563 326 754 This combination of factors applies to the smithcraft, the "Kayla", who are suspected of witchcraft, of being

563 326 754 able to turn themselves into "buda" hyenas, and of having learned their craft from the "buda" evil spirit. Since the smiths in the old-Amhara areas are mostly Falashas, whose formal religious worship is never observed by Coptic Amhara, the Falasha smith is feared and [412] suspected of black magic. At the same time, the iron tools produced by the Falasha are much prized, not only on account of their material utility but on account of their supposed supernatural strength, endurance and "secretly revealed" workmanship. Even today, the provincial peasant will insist on obtaining his plowpoint or adze from a "real" Falasha.

563 326 The Falashas practice endogamy, as do the Coptic Amhara. But in the towns where increased contact occasionally begins to attenuate the old rules, individuals of low prestige in both groups do sometimes marry, which [797] usually results in the conversion of the Falasha partner to the majority religion. Also due to modern contact, it is beginning to happen that a Falasha teaches his craft to a non-Falasha, but the peasants often reject the output of the latter on the grounds that it isn't a "really strong, genuine Falasha article".

563 281 Somewhat similar untouchability attaches to the tanners, who are usually of local pre-Amharic, (Cushitic, e.g. Agau) descent, often still speak their ancient tongues, and until recently were never converted to Coptic Christianity. As traditionally "conquered" peoples, they are not "attentam", and Amhara endogamous rules prevail against them. The stigma against them seems to

563 rest not on any supposed supernatural powers of their
281 craft, but on theoccupation which requires them to deal with carcasses regularly, and places them in a class with the "Woyto" hippopotamus hunters of Lake Tana. However, the tanned skins produced by these "Faqi" tanners, prepared through a primitve version of making "morocco" leather, ismuch appreciated as "best workmanship" by the rural as well as town Amhara.

Like the Falasha, the "Faqi" live in hamlets of their own, usually within half a day's waling distance of a big market. They are regarded by Amhara as pagans; they gather under large trees in remote areas for their nature worship on several occasions each year. In very recent years, the urgings from the emperor and the example of Protestant missionaries have stimulated the Coptic clergy to admit them to Christianity, but, as
[97] in the case of converted Falasha, the social stigma remains attached to the convert, even if he changes his occupation. Socially he is them worse off than before, for as an outcast from his own group he feels the barbs of social discrimination more than ever. In the past, the "Faqi", like the "Falasha" did not concern themselves much about this stigma, but now the "Faqi" insist on the polite address "arabeñña" --which refers to the tanner workmanship (lit. the one who creates Arab-like, i.e. imported luxury, articles.).

[463] Occupations that can be readily learned by anyone, or that require talent rather than skill, do not connote
533 low class. A musician, "azmari", male or female, who may or may not play an instrument for accompaniment, is

[533] usually a Coptic Amhara, of more talent than skill.
286 The weaver, "shamani", though usually a Ethiopian Muslim (or Falasha), carries on his work in theopen, and anyone may learn it. It is only because it requires consistent manual labor that most Amhara shun,it.

d) Religious Minority.

794 The foremost religious minority in Amhara provinces is that of the Ethiopian Muslims. Most of them live in towns, and in the past were residentially segregated to the older parts of town, near caravan trails andbig markets. Even today, their social associations are almost exclusively with other Muslims, e.g. traders from the Sudan. Both are regarded as low-class not only by the Amhara but also by the handful of Arab wholesale traders from Yemen. As a result, negroid and semi-negroid ex-
[79] slaves (Shanqalla), especially women, often become converted to Islam in order to marry Ethiopian Muslims or Sudanese, who, as retail traders, are economically better off. The Muslim veneer of these women is very thin, and they are among the most ardent followers of the "Zar" cult.

e) Racial Minority

563 Shanqalla slaves were, [redacted], entirely below
567 the social scale, and treated as a separate caste. They were brought or purchased from the Shanqalla, negroid, people on the southwest escarpment, or from Nilotic

563 "Barya" people below the northwest escarpment, so that
567 both terms became synonymous with "slave". Because of the negroid features of the former, and the very black skin of both, they had high visibility, and did not have to be guarded closely as they could hardly escape. In view of the widespread illiteracy, manumission was almost never practiced, and such a document would be ignored by a slave trader or any Amhara who wanted to re-enslave a manumitted Shanqalla or Barya. Until slave-trading was prohibited by the present emperor, negroid slaves were still brought from the Gumuz tribe of Quara sub-province, just below the western, old-
[588] Amhara escarpment. But concubinage was so widespread that today there are more half-Shanqalla than full-blooded wx-slaves. Freed only since 1942, little change has so far taken place in their social status. In rural areas most remain with their old masters as
[464] servants or sharecroppers. In towns, they form a pool ofuunskilled labor, employed only briefly from time to time, subsisting on very little, residing in the oldest parts of theold Muslim ghetto. Some of their women have
[357] managed to raise their economic status by becoming house-maids, especially serving the women on the "street of unattached girls", or by mar ying ploygynous Muslims.

563 The Coptic church had not interested itself in
567 the status of slaves, for according to its rules a
797 Christian could not be kept in slavery, and therefore no attempt was made to convert Shanqalla or Barya slaves.

563 The racial objection to "raising them to Christinaity"
567 (as it was called) was expressed on the principal of
797 "atteätam" (of good, i.e. Amhara or Tigre physical stock). These objections still hold, but ex-slaves attached as servants to a Coptic Amhara household are now more often "raised to Christianity" if they desire it, and can then legally marry other Coptic Christians, which, however, is rare, in practice.

567 Plantation slavery was never widespread, except in the lowland, "Läzäga" district of Wolqait sub-province, where cotton and vegetables were raised on a relatively larger scale and most plateau landowners, especially feudal ones, preferred the plentiful "gabbar" services and well-established arrangements. The "gabbar" were rooted to the soil and had more to lose by leaving their birthplace than slaves would have.

The legal position of slaves, who were almost always non-Christianized gave them no protection. They were legal persons, and could not, in theory, own property, nor contract debts. In practice, some occasionally did manage to accumulate some small cattle and raise their local economic level through interpersonal contact. Slave concubines and the children they bore were usually kept in the household like family retainers, or at most given to another kinsman or to a newlywed couple, within the kin group.

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565 f) The Servant Class and Economic Considerations

The servant class, "ashkär", is employed in the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

872 easier, in practice, to gain admittance. The efforts of the em-
565 peror to give opportunities to the rural sons of poor orphans of soldiers who died fighting for their country, by opening boarding houses for them, attached to elementary schools, were defeated by the provincial feudal lords and townspeople, who managed to have their sons quartered in them instead.

Thus, traditional social stratification, both class and ethnic, affects even the modern elementary schools. In 1952 about 60,000 children, 10% girls, attended modern elementary schools in Ethiopia,
[563] and far more than half this number was Amhara. Ethnic minority groups find it very hard to have their children admitted, because the school administrators are usually Amhara. Thus, the Qemants of Gondar, for example, have found it easier to enroll their sons in the Catholic mission school operated there by Tigrean(Eritrean) priests. Other ethnic minorities have enrolled children in 7th Day Adventist and other mission schools.

871 In Addis Ababa itself the situation is quite different, however,
184 Here, traditional social stratification has far less effect, partly
565 because of the closer supervision by more modern officials of the central government, partly because the teachers in the high schools, and even in part in the elementary schools, are Europeans or Americans who emphasise social equality among students, pay no attention to family nobility, and reward only merit. Here, the son of the illiterate peasant, or occasionally even ex-slave negroid Shanqalla, may sit next to the son of an Amhara duke or a Galla "balbat". After graduation, they may be sent abroad for college or post-graduate training, based on merit, regardless of parental rank; though in social and family life the traditional social cleavages
prev

1·59 754 not find him. They vowed to waylay him some night and beat him bloody, but bystanders felt that they would cool their tempers and perhaps try to get the merchant into trouble with the local police by planting stolen goods on him - a common procedure, in the towns.

Later the same day, the Arab merchant was conducting business as usual. The rumor did not seem to have hurt him, but local grapevine had it that husbands would restrain their wives from shopping there, though they would risk sending servants. Abdulla had nothing devilish about him, except the distinguishing mark of the capped incisors. He was medium-sized, slender, calm, without any stare that might have frightened the woman. His goods were the usual town goods, ranging from imported eyeglasses to notebooks for school children, and cheap beads.

By this time the woman patient was seated on the dirt floor of her house, looking tired, worn out and dejected. She had no longer a headache, of which she had complained, but claimed to have "heartache" and swelling of the left breast. A neighboring woman was brewing coffee. Her husband's brother, who was also present, [1·24] asked my advice. I gave him some aspirin for her. She forgot her apathy for a moment and gratefully and politely nodded. Later she refused to take that strange medicine of the foreigner.

d. Ethnic Caste under Suspicion of Sorcery

754 563 The Falasha ethno-religious group has been described in connection with the division of labor, for they are the ironsmiths and potters in the Amhara regions, especially in the province of Begemdir (Gondar).

754 563 The Amhara belief in buda has been very troublesome for the Falashas, for they are believed to have inherited the practice of sorcery from their fathers along with the craft of ironsmithing. Thus, the Falashas are blamed for individual cases of magical "eating" as well as for epidemics. Such accusations have repeatedly led to "sorcerer-killings". When an Amhara patient dreams that a certain Falasha is "eating" him, he sometimes gathers his kinfolk for a sudden attack on a Falasha hamlet, demanding that the particular "sorcerer" be handed over to them. In 1936, when the country was in turmoil following the Italian invasion, Falashas of one district were so plagued by buda persecutions that they evacuated their hamlets there and moved closer to the town of Gondar, though keeping a half day's distance from the town itself in line with their tradition of self-segregation(based on their religious particularism). Even now Falashas in their hamlets keep loaded rifles handy all night.

326 563 What happens when a non-Falasha learns the trade of ironsmithing, e.g. a Gurage, which happens near Addis Ababa where no Falasha hamlets exist? He dies not become a "kayla" (ironsmith; this term is considered insulting); he is not regarded as a potential buda, because he has not inherited the trade. But, his handiwork is suspect as "unprofessional"! It is called "yärägä sera" (work of a "räga", unprofessional), which indicates that his customers are likely to hold a low opinion of the quality of his product and the endurance of his tools in those areas where Falasha-made articles are readily available. The latter is not true where no Falasha hamlets exist, so that Gurage work is appreciated near Addis Ababa.

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What happens when a Falasha gives up his Judaic religion and converts to Christianity? Does that free him from being suspected of buda? Only to a slight degree, for his Amhara neighbors refuse to forget his ancestry. In case of conversion, the Falasha becomes an outcast from his own people and usually moves to town. Only an ex-slave or a very poor Coptic woman will marry him. In the latter case, his in-laws believe that his kinship ties are still stronger than his new religion. Thus, if they have him teach them his ironsmithing trade, they believe he will not teach it properly to his affinal relatives. He can never become deacon or priest.

The buda-ironsmithing syndrome of the kayla seems based, in the Amhara mind, on the idea that a very strong power, namely the evil eye spirit, is necessary to accomplish sound work in ironsmithing. To remain powerful, the buda-ironsmith is regarded by the Amhara as requiring blood from time to time, otherwise his product, the iron plowpoint, will not stand wear and tear and the spear will break.

What happens to a Falasha who gives up his kayla trade? The stigma will remain on him, where his family is known. Therefore, some Falashas have migrated and tried to change their trade. This avoidance has not helped at all as long as they remain Falasha in religion. Those who have taken the step of conversion (e.g. as result of Protestant missionary activity in the lat 19th century) are still whispered about as Falashas by their Amhara neighbors and their social and marital associations are largely limited to other ex-Falasha, ex-ironsmith people. Assimilation has not solved the problem of ridding themselves of buda suspicion by the Coptic Amhara, though it has reduced direct, individual accusations of sorcery.

578 In the new courts established by the central government in
689 the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

326 How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda -
754 Falasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting
563 that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Falashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despiring of this manual craft onto the Falashas and believe that Falasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passersby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces
[71] of the supernatural. This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Amont the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous. Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

e. "Buda" doctors past and present

756 While the aforementioned dabtara is the most commonly
793 called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

563 178 [643 797] Wherever Emperor Menelik II conquered new areas, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he ordered the local people to build Abyssinian Coptic churches, and the Coptic priests who accompanied the troops with the sacred "tabot", consecrated the new local church and parish. These became centers of political and educational Amhara activities. Amharization was advanced not through large scale direct conversion of what was considered by the Amhara clergy a "lower" ethnic group, but through the establishment of a local, administrative, Amhara hierarchy, which the other ethnic peoples found it in their interest to emulate. They soon learned (particularly the old Galla nobility) that they could advance in the Amhara feudal-army system and regain feudal-land-tenure through loyal military service.

[554] By assimilating to this Amhara pattern, young Galla of the old nobility or of the modern-educated élite have found that they can rise in the hierarchy, and, after conversion to the Coptic Abyssinian faith, even intermarry with the ruling class.

At the same time, ethnic particularism and tribal expression of the subject ethnic groups, including the large Galla population, have been consistently discouraged by the ruling Amhara. Even [797] foreign missionaries, who are still forbidden to convert Abyssinian Copts, but may work on Muslims, "pagans", etc, have been pressed into the work of Amharizing Ethiopia. For they must preach in the Amharic language, and can distribute Bibles only in the Amharic language, even in provinces where the vast majority still understands very little or no Amharic. If they break this law, missionairies can be promptly deported.

000 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-

178 and signed modestly and anonymously "The Friends of Knowledge",
212 had been published under the auspices of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. It had been authored by the Amhara (modern-minded) noble, Ras Imru (later ambassador to the USA), the Amhara historian-grammarian Blatta Marze Hazen, and a Western scholar affiliated with the American National Council of Churches of Christ.

The conflict arose largely from the fact that most Amharic letters are directly derived from the old Geez, considered sacred because church liturgy and literature are written in it. Therefore, the Abyssinian church rejected the idea of alphabet reform as sacrilegeous. The emperor decided to postpone action indefinitely. (footnote 139).

178 It is this opposition, concentrated in the old Amhara nobil-
543 ity and clergy that has given opportunity to the loyal Galla to affiliate themselves more closely with the central government. Their modern-educated sons serve in high positions in the imperial bodyguard, army, and provincial administration. By affiliating themselves with the central government, the Galla obtain protection against the exploiting rural Amhara gentry. From the point of view of the modern central government such loyal support is greatly needed. From the point of view of the provincial, traditional Amhara, however, every young modern official sent from Addis Ababa, is now nicknamed "Galla", even if he is an Amhara.

181 Meanwhile the new elite has itself developed an indirect means
178 to introduce a new value complex, at least in Addis Ababa. This is called "seltaney", which formerly meant politeness, refined and re-

Footnote 139: Leslau, Wolf: La Réforme de l'Alphabet Éthiopien. (in) Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, vol.12,1953,pp.96-106. Rome.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint. Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns: an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputation of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north: Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses. 175

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town. 632

The surrounding grassy *alms* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June. 133

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick. 491 [137] [136]

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people. 563 175

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups. 101 563

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion 101 144

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Falasha MP9

A [157]

irony. They are a happy people with a deep love of the natural world around them.

A 563

The Tigraians of the north are different. There is something hard and seasoned about a Tigraian which makes him easily distinguishable from an Amhara. The Tigraian is rather the yeoman type. The sharper drier climate of the borders of Eritrea gives him something which recalls a little the ruggedness and shrewdness of the Castilian. There is a determined look in the Tigraian eye which contrasts with the wild and passionate glance of the Amhara. The Amhara and the Tigraians, with the kin Hadendoa of Eritrea, represent varying degrees of mixing of the Hamitic and Semitic stocks.

A 563 F 105

The Agau, on the other hand, are said to be the descendants of the pure Hamitic stock—believed to be aboriginal to the Ethiopian Highland. They may well be "the blameless Ethiopians" of the ancients. The judaised mountaineers of the Simen mountains speak an Agau dialect. There are islands of Agau in Gojjam, particularly along the line of the Western Escarpment. To the best of my knowledge these people together with the neighbouring negroid Gumuz of the Shankalla wilderness, another very primitive stock, have never been seriously studied. The language and customs of the Agau must be of considerable interest from the aspect of comparative linguistics and folklore.

The Agau villages through which we passed between the Escarpment and Njabara were miserably poor in the midst of an often fertile countryside: goitre, elephantiasis, and leprosy were rife. The people have long been a serf population under Amhara overlords; but in the tenth century they threw up the brilliant Zagwe dynasty which ruled Ethiopia for more than three centuries. The Zagwe episode in Ethiopian history seems to have represented some reaction of the older people of the Highland against the Amhara elements intruding from the north.

It may be of interest to refer here, in connection with the Agau, to the so-called Falashas or Black Jews. The main centre of the Falashas, who are Agau-speaking, has been in the Simen Mountains, but during the last century they have become scattered about all the north of the Ethiopian Highland. The religious practises of the Falashas are stated by people who have studied them to be those of the Jewish faith before the Babylonian captivity. The Falashas may therefore represent a remnant of a very old Jewish dispersion, or at least an early penetration of Jewish influences into the Ethiopian Highland.

A 173

Again it has been pointed out by Luca di Sabelli, Conte Rossini, and others that the ritual of the Coptic Church in Ethiopia retains a number of practises which were a part of the Jewish religion before the Captivity.[1] These cultural remnants from the past have a bearing on the tenacious tradition in Ethiopia that the Royal House is descended from Menelik (=ibn el-Hakim="son of the doctor" or "the sage") who was reputed to be a natural son of Solomon and Balkis (Arab) or Makeda (Ethiopian) Queen of Sheba. If this legend is rationalized it may be postulated that folk traditions of early Jewish associations were given literary form, in the early centuries of the Christian era, by Coptic monks familiar with Old Testament history.

[1] Luca di Sabelli, 'Storia d'Abissinia,' vol. 1.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Tulama MP25

A 177

In terms of historical probability it should be emphasized that at many periods during the millennium before the Christian era Jewish influences waxed strong in the interior of Arabia and along the eastern coast of the Red Sea. There was regular intercourse between the two coasts of the Red Sea and the Aksumite kingdom on the borders of Eritrea, and the Ethiopian Highland emerged as a city-state similar in character to the city-states along the Arabian coast, and in culture more than half Semitic.

600

To the north of the Syrian area the tradition of descent from the House of Solomon grew up in the royal houses of Armenia and Georgia, after the conversion of those two countries to the Christian faith. At the same time there were very ancient colonies of Jews in Georgia and Dagistan which may well have dated back to the period of the Babylonian conquest of Israel. A later spread of Jewish influences and even of Jewish elements which may be checked historically from the works of Arab geographers took place in the ninth century A.D. among the Khazars—a Turki people who had founded a state in the northern Caucasus and along the Volga.

A 174

A similar spread of Jewish influences to the Ethiopian Highland in an earlier epoch is historically no more improbable and, in terms of geography, would have been a much easier process. The fact that the present-day Falashas are Agau-speaking indicates that the Jewish infiltration, if it took place, was at a period when Agau was generally spoken on the Ethiopian Highland.

A 563 T 105

The Gallas.—The origin of the Gallas is another of the curious mysteries of African history and the Gallas themselves remain the most significant problem of the inner politics of Ethiopia. They first appeared in Ethiopia towards the end of the sixteenth century. The country had been depopulated by the long Somali wars and by the following conflict between Catholic and Coptic Orthodox arising out of the Portuguese intervention.

During the next two centuries the Gallas swarmed over all the countryside of Ethiopia. They settled in the region of the southern lakes, which at an earlier date had been colonized by the Ethiopian Kings. They reached the Escarpment overlooking the Awash valley and the neighbourhood of Harar on the borders of the Somali country. Like the Amhara they seemed to prefer the Highland and they spread over Shoa up to the canyon of the Blue Nile and north along the ridge of the Eastern Escarpment into Amhara.

In Shoa, the Imperial province of Ethiopia, people speaking Galla represent about half the population; and over Ethiopia as a whole they probably outnumber all the other racial groups.

In the eighteenth century Galla troops proved the decisive factor in the dynastic wars which covered the period of the final disintegration of the mediaeval Empire. Galla chieftains lorded it at the decadent court of Gondar; they made and unmade Emperors and married their daughters to them. But coming as invaders, the Gallas settled as peasants. In contrast with the indolent Amhara squireens, the Gallas are industrious farmers and labourers.

At the same time the Gallas had, and have, little political consciousness or racial coherence. When, in the course of the nineteenth century, Ethiopian

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Tulama MP25

T 105 T A 563 175

imperial power revived, Emperors like Theodore and, later, Menelik, re-established Amhara rule first over the central highland and later over all the Galla lands of the south. The most formidable resistance encountered by Menelik was from the Moslem Galla Sultan of Jimma. From time to time certain Galla districts resented the corrupt or vicious government of individual Amhara officials and revolted; but these revolts were the common phenomenon of a feudal state of society rather than the beginnings of a conscious Galla movement against an alien Amhara rule. In fact in the Galla countries of the south the rule of the Amhara central government has proved more stable than in the north where it had to meet the challenge of powerful Amhara lords. During the dangerous revolt of Ras Gugsa Wolye it was probably the Galla contingents which saved the throne for Haile Selassie. During the campaign of 1941 thousands of Galla guerrillas took the field against the Italians, while the northern leaders, the great Amhara aristocrats, were inclined to wait on the winner.

T 105 A 563 [198]

Gallas are everywhere in Ethiopia and there are probably few Amhara nobles who have not a strong tinge of Galla blood in their veins. Most Amhara have some knowledge of Galla (although many will not own to it), and Galla is popularly supposed to be the "love language" of Ethiopia.

I had little opportunity for investigating the subject, but I do not believe that all Galla-speaking tribes are racially Galla. In the belt of savannah country between the Mussolini Pass and Dessie I met the two sons of a Wallo Galla headman who were a pair of the most beautiful human beings I have ever seen. Copper-skinned and lithe, clad in panther pelts and leaning on their spears, they seemed apparitions out of the Bronze Age. These boys were of pure Hamitic type, rather resembling some of the fine-featured Shluh of the Moroccan Atlas. Yet, in Harar, where I had to disband a battalion of Galla Patriots who had come in from the south, I found stocky square-headed men with heavy jowls, with a fair proportion of negroid types. Incidentally they were reported to show excellent form as soldiers. They were mostly Borana and other southern Gallas.

The variety of physical types among the Gallas adds to the mystery of their origin before the sixteenth century. Some tribes have the tradition of having arrived on the east coast of Africa from over the sea, and one theory postulates the coming of the Galla from Madagascar and attempts to correlate their migration with the intrusion of Malay elements into that island. At present the origin of the Gallas remains one of the most interesting problems of African history.

A 633

Harar itself has, since mediaeval times, enjoyed the situation of a city-state. The emirate of Harar was brought within the Ethiopian Empire only by Ras Makonnen, the father of the present Emperor. It has since remained a favourite city of the Imperial family and a stronghold of their interest. On the edge of the Somali and the Galla country and commanding the way down over the lip of the Southern Escarpment into the Awash valley Harar is a meeting place for all the tribes of Ethiopia and the Arabian coast. The old walled city with its narrow crowded streets and occasional mosques and *turbés* has all the characteristics of an Arabian town, as contrasted with the open settlements of huts, gardens, and plantations which pass for towns in

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

633 Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society [191] has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and [563] Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and, [142] although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms 291 exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wander- [245] ing among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudò, 231 which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

487 The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men: the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

174 The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up [563] into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 on the sheet, or not far from it, have historical associations. Tegulet, a little to the north, was the home country of Yikuno Amlak, the Shoan prince in whose person the Solomonian line was restored to the throne of Ethiopia in the thirteenth century. Debra Berhan itself, now a rather sordid settlement on the Asmara road, is of ancient foundation, for the emperor Zar'a Yakob made it his capital in the fifteenth century. Although a somewhat cold and inhospitable place it has an obvious advantage as commanding what must always have been an important focus of routes. Even in modern times it was [491] inevitable that the Asmara road should be brought through this easy passage, avoiding the impassable gorges on the one hand and the much broken country of the higher plateau on the other.

349 Although there is no proof, and apparently no relevant tradition, I should be inclined to attribute to Zar'a Yakob some curious caves excavated in one end of a high hogsback 2 miles south-east of Debra Berhan. Unfortunately I inspected them only once and rather casually and found no opportunity to come again. There are at least two very elaborate excavations, besides some rougher ones, now partly inhabited. The two principal caves are very similar in lay-out. Entering by a roughly rounded lobby, one passes through a small hole in the rock, which admits scarcely any daylight, into the principal interior space. This is approximately circular and perhaps 25 feet in diameter. On the far side, opposite the entrance, it communicates with a smaller chamber semi-circular in form. From the main space a passage leads off, in the first cave to the right, in the second to the left; these receive no daylight at all. In the first cave the passage (which was half under water) turned twice to the right and was thus bent back on itself. It opened into several miniature cells, in shape an erect oval and only big enough for a man to stand in, each of which appeared to have opened through a small hole at the top into an upper space of some kind. The passage belonging to the second cave had basin-shaped excavations in its floor opening through small holes into spaces below. I therefore conjectured that I had here got into an upper passage such as apparently existed above the other system. Possibly these were underground chapels inspired by rock-excavated churches of the Lalibela school. As to the passages and the small spaces leading off them, with what seemed to be their ventilating arrangements, they might have been stores of some kind, or burial chambers, or special places of devotion, or hermits' cells—but these are speculations. If the mud which chokes these caves were removed something definite might be found out about them. They found a use quite recently, for at the time of the Italian invasion *tabots* and other church valuables were said to have been hidden in them.

175 In the first half of the sixteenth century the Shoan plateau, in common with a large part of Ethiopia, was occupied by Galla tribes invading from the 563 south. These Gallas were essentially horsemen and herdsmen, and it seems that, while they occupied the entire plateau, they did not seriously attempt to penetrate the gorges, into which even a mule descends with difficulty. I believe that the Amhara population became forcibly concentrated in the upper reaches of the gorges at this time, and that the dense population which resulted explains the extraordinary number of churches which came to be built there. Even to-day the greater part of the plateau between Addis

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ababa and Debra Berhan remains Galla country. The Amharas have re-occupied the region immediately around Debra Berhan, their southern limit corresponding roughly with the edge of the sheet; but the churches built to meet their needs (including the new St. Gabriel already once mentioned) are comparatively few and far between, a confirmation of the recent date of the re-colonization.

The Gallas remained in possession of the plateau country until the early nineteenth century when Sahele Selassie, king of Shoa, began to push them back. The half-dozen hill-top forts shown on the sheet almost certainly date from this time, or were reoccupied then. The capital of Shoa since the eighteenth century had been Ankober, on the edge of the great eastern escarpment, some 20 miles east of Debra Berhan. But Sahele Selassie, as part of his anti-Galla campaign founded, in about 1830, a new capital at Angolala in the midst of Galla country. He thereafter divided his time between Angolala and Ankober. A largely disused track, still well-defined in most parts, is shown crossing the sheet from Angolala in an easterly direction; this was evidently an old route joining the two capitals. Harris,[1] who conducted a British Mission to Sahele Selassie in 1841–42, visited Angolala which then contained four or five hundred huts. He also describes Sahele Selassie's two-storied "palace," built by an Albanian [2] visitor, standing on an eminence—which however the king would not inhabit, from fear of earthquakes. Angolala continued to be used by Sahele Selassie's son, king Haile Malakot, and the great Menelik, who was Haile Malakot's son, had been born here in 1843—just after the time of Harris's visit.

Not much remains now to show that Angolala was so recently the twin capital of Shoa; but the site of Sahele Salassie's house, an artificial mound crowning the ridge, is easily identified and commands a fine view of the countryside. Inside the mound is a vaulted cellar, its masonry showing clear signs of European workmanship, as also does the central stone-built element of the local church of Kidane Meheret. This work is now exposed to view as the church was burnt down during the Italian occupation. Angolala remains a well-populated area, but only a very few huts now stand among the remains of defensive walls near the old royal residence.

The young Menelik, up to the age of twelve, must have known all this country well. But at that time (1855) the newly crowned emperor Theodore, whose ambition was the unification of Ethiopia after a century and a half of anarchy and internal strife, came down from the north with the object of subjecting Shoa to his personal rule. He defeated king Haile Malakot on the plains of Atakilt, the irrigated area just south-east of Debra Berhan. Haile Malakot died immediately after the battle, and Menelik was carried away captive by Theodore—who, however, afterwards treated him as a son rather than a prisoner. For some years Menelik followed in the emperor's train, moving with him from Gondar to Debra Tabor and then to the hill-fortress of Magdala, Theodore's last capital and later the scene of his undoing. Several years before Napier's siege of 1868 Menelik had escaped from Magdala during, it is said, one of Theodore's periodic orgies. A youth in

[1] Harris, 'The Highlands of Aethiopia,' London, 1844.
[2] It is much more likely that Harris meant an Armenian.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

each of the years that I came there they gave me two 796
quarters of the fattest cow that was killed. This flesh is 782
distributed amongst the people who come to the Castar, and
the friars have none because they do not eat meat. And [784]
these cows are all brought as offerings by their breeders in
the district, who vow them to Philip. This monastery, and
the others that are subject to it, have this rule in addition,
that no females enter them, that is to say, neither women,
nor she-mules, nor cows, nor hens, nor anything else that is
female. And these cows which they kill are killed a long
way from the wall, and when I came there they came to the
distance of a cross-bow shot to take my mule, and they
took her away to their farm of Jamgargara, where Mattheus
died.

CAP. XV.—*Of the agriculture of this country, and how they preserve themselves from the wild beasts, and of the revenues of the monastery.*

The friars of this monastery, and of the other monasteries 241
subject to it, might do good works by planting trees and [792]
vines, and making gardens and orchards for their exercise;
and they do nothing. The country is ready to produce
everything, as is seen from that which is uncultivated: they
do not plant or grow anything except millet and bee-hives. [231]
When it is night, neither they nor anybody else go out from
their houses from fear of the wild beasts that are in the
country, and those who watch the millet have very high
resting places upon the trees, in which they sleep at night.
In the district of this monastery there are, in the valleys 231
between the mountains, very large herds of cows, kept by 563
Arab Moors, and there go with each herd forty or fifty
Moors, with their wives and children: and their headman is

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

231 a Christian, because the cows that they keep belong to
563 Christian gentlemen of the country of the Barnagais. These Moors have nothing else for their labour than the milk and butter which they get from the cows, and with this they maintain themselves and their wives and children. On some occasions it happened to us to sleep near these Arabs, they accosted us to ask if we wished to buy cows, and for the price allowed us to choose them. They say that these
[484] Moors, and headmen who go with them, are all robbers under the favour of the lords to whom the cows belong, and so only large caravans travel. The revenues of this
792 monastery are very large; those which I saw and heard of
631 are, chiefly, this mountain in which the monastery is situated,
361 of an extent of ten leagues, in which they sow much millet,
[243] barley, rye, and all these pay dues to the monastery, and they are also paid on the herds. On the skirts of this mountain there are many large villages, and most of them belong to the monastery, and at a distance of one or two days' journey an infinite number of places belonging to the monastery, and are called *Gultus* of the monastery, which means *coutos* or *celeiros*,[1] according to our Portugal. Don Rodrigro the ambassador and I were going on the road to the Court, a good five days' journey from this monastery, and arriving at a town which is named *Caina* we kept Saturday and Sunday in a small village which might contain twenty people, and they told us they belonged to the monastery of Bisan. Besides that town there were a hundred villages all belonging to the monastery, and that in which we halted was one of them. We were also shown
651 many of the others, and they told us that every three years
631 they paid a horse to the monastery, and that each village
792 did this, which makes thirty-three horses every year. And in order to be certain of this I went to ask it of the *Alicazi* of the monastery, which means the auditor or major-domo,

[1] *Couto*, an asylum, an enclosure; *celeiro*, a granary.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well
532 made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
491 in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John
● [563] are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

101 and these Toluma come down to the Nile, and divide Walaka and Shoa from the Nile.

651 Agow-midre pays yearly to the king in all about 1000 ounces of gold; and 1000 dabras of honey, each dabra about 60 rotol. It pays also about 1000 or 1500 cattle. Ancasha, Azena, Quaquera, and Banja, pay their quota in honey; Banja, gold; Metchakel, Ayamico's country, gold; Zigam, gold, no honey. Danguiah, Dengla, and Saccala, all are called Ancasha. Dengla pays chiefly cattle, and a large kind of sheep called Macoot. Butter is no part of the meery, but is brought as a present on paying the meery. After passing the Kelti, on the right, by the Bronti, is Atchefer, after that Quaquera, then Dengla, then Banja, then Metchakel. Tembua belongs to the Ras, and the revenue is paid to him. The first heavy stroke the Agow received of late years was Waragna, father of this Fasil, bringing Galla from beyond the Abay, and wasting their country entirely. He burnt the houses and churches, and led away captive the women and children. Under the mild government of Casmati Eshte they began to revive, but now again under Fasil they are very low.

361 Metchakel is one long day's journey, I suppose 36 miles, from Boori (Bure); it is inhabited by Galla Djawi. After these are the Basso Gallo; and the Gooderoo Galla of Kasmati Boro. His place is called Hadis Amba. These border on Gojam, Damot, and Metchakel. Gafat is not one continued country, but villages here and there. Wumbarma is Gafat. Metchakel is, however, a much more considerable country. Beyond the Nile, west of Bure, the country for a considerable distance is dry, deserted, and uninhabited, the Galla living further into the territory. All the banks are there high, steep, and unwholesome, and full of trees. These Galla are Amoro Jidda. Guesgue belongs to the Iteghe, has a nagareet, and gives the title of Kasmati. It pays 1000 cloths, 50 oxen, and 100 wakeet.

The caravans of Egypt used to go from Aidab, or Gaidab, to Dahalac, in their way to Yemen, or Jidda, the port of Mecca. Souakin is seven days south of Gaidab.

101 The Galla, west of the Abay, say, that they are descended of a Gin or devil, and a woman of the tribe of Koreish.
● 563 They are always at war with the Nareans, Abyssinians, or

[p.58]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

Mahometans. They reckon about 12,000 horse of Galla 101
between the Nile and Narea. The tribes go every seventh 563
year to the reigning house, where the council debates on the duties of government. The points agitated are, how our fathers governed, what measures are to be taken with murderers and robbers on the high-ways, how merchants are to be dealt with, &c. The young then declaim in favour of violence and injustice; after which the elders, five in number, are asked. These decide in favour of equity. The king is afterwards chosen by a plurality of voices.

Waragna, father of Fasil, was converted to Christianity. His father was Wusho (signifying a dog), of the western Galla, of the tribe Jimmali. He was a merchant; but being remarked to be brave in a battle Bacuffa had with these Galla, he was invested with the caftan, and made commander of several places on the frontiers of Damot.

The Djawi Galla of Damot, Gafat, and Metchakel, as also the Galla of Maitsha, came there, in the time of Yasous Tallac. The Basso, and other Galla of Gojam, were brought there by Hatze Fasil; others say his son Hannes.

Maitsha, from the place the Abay comes out of the lake 561
to Courtohha, is $1\frac{1}{2}$ day's march, at a moderate pace, 6 hours a day; from Courtohha, the hither part, to Samseen, one long day's journey; and from the same part to the Abay at Goutta, a very long day's journey, at a brisk pace.

The Shankala entrench their huts against surprise, and 563
burn large fires. They wear a long shield, covering nearly the whole side, and five lances each, which they throw or stab with as needed. Bows and arrows are their chief weapons. They dig up gold among reddish earth, which they burn in the fire, and gather it as it runs out in small pieces like shot. They put it next in to a small purse, or other sort of bag. Every individual is free to search for it. They are flat-nosed and flat-lipped, very black, best shaped in the upper parts, but with bad knees and legs.

The Bure way to Narea is W. in the country south by A- 487
moro. The nearest way is by Gojam and Gooderoo, performed in 30 days with loaden asses, about eight or nine miles a-day.

Harar is a very large town, has five gates, and is constant- 361
ly at war with Habbesh, or the Galla. The ridge of hills

[p. 59]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

many of the smaller units retained, like them, much of their old historical 635
and cultural identity.

The provinces do not fall very easily into administrative categories. 175
The deepest distinction is that which has just been mentioned between
the dominant Christian provinces of the old Ethiopia and those of the 563
south which were, in the main, conquered by the Shoan dynasty during 635
the second half of the last century. The dividing line runs approximately along the Blue Nile and across the middle of the modern Shoa, a little to the north of the capital. The region around the capital, though it lay just south of this line, may be regarded as having, since the reign of Sahla Selassié (1813), been progressively assimilated to Amharic society. In the vast area north of the line, below the structure of imperial power and that of the dominating and shifting ruling families there lay, still largely intact, the variegated social design of the Tigré and Amhara groups, closely interwoven with that of the ancient church and sanctioned by long custom. South of this line were Muslim and pagan people, many newly conquered, some of them partially disintegrated and dispossessed by their conquest, and all subject to a far more direct rule under the Shoan Emperor and his agents than was possible in the north. In both groups of provinces there were exceptional areas such as those of the northern Gallas, but it will be more convenient to give the Gallas a chapter to themselves as part of the south. The non-Galla southern provinces must be sub-divided into three groups, the Sidamo Hamites, the negro, and those Danakil and Somali regions, where the semi-desert nature of the country and the nomadic life of the tribes frustrated effective control by the Amharas. The northern provinces are sufficiently homogeneous for us to consider them, in very general terms, as a whole. A discussion of the administration of the provinces must be preceded by an attempt to assess the numbers and distribution of the people.

The main facts of the ethnology of the region have appeared in their 175
place in the historical introduction, but it may be useful to bring
together here some of these scattered facts. We saw that a mainly 563
Hamitic (or Cushitic) population, with negro fringes and pockets, was dominated in successive southward moving stages by those northern groups which had been mastered and stimulated by Semitic emigrants from Arabia, and how this mixed Semitic-Hamitic people had gradually spread its domination over the northern half of the present boundaries to make the Ethiopian state and nation. It has been recounted how Christianity came in the fourth century and how the great movement of Galla peoples from the east and south-east, aided by the Muslim invasions of the sixteenth century, flooded into large areas of Ethiopia.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

175 In the nineteenth century, as will be recounted in some detail in the
563 chapter on the southern provinces, the Ethiopians, and especially the Shoans, struck back and overran an immense area inhabited by Gallas, Somalis, non-Semiticized Hamites, and negroes in the south.

THE POPULATION

162 No census has ever been taken in Ethiopia and we cannot, therefore, know either the total of population within her boundaries or how to allocate the numbers to the several races, religions, and regions. All estimates are therefore nothing better than more or less informed guesses. To show the divergences in these guesses, a well-informed British consul writing in 1932 gave 5,500,000 as his figure,[1] whereas, since the liberation, a semi-official Ethiopian journal claims 12,000,000 to 13,000,000. A recent official statement by the ecclesiastical authorities claims 10,000,000 Ethiopian Christians.[2]

Special attention must be paid to the estimates of the Italians. As neighbours, adversaries and, for a short time, rulers of Ethiopia, they have had more reason and opportunity than other people to attempt such calculations.

The following estimates, obviously in very round numbers, are the official Italian figures. They cover the whole of Italian East Africa and it will therefore be necessary to consult Map 2 at the end of the book in order to see the relationship of this area with Ethiopia proper.

Province.	Population
Shoa	500,000
Eritrea	1,000,000
Amhara	1,000,000
Harar	1,600,000
Galla-Sidamo	1,600,000
Somalia	1,300,000
	7,000,000[3]

The following figures for the same area, published in the *Guida* of 1938, give the racial distribution.

[1] Makereth, p. 5. [2] *Herald*, 1 July 1946.
[3] *Annuario dell'Africa Orientale Italiana*, Rome, 1938–9, p. 597.

THE PROVINCES: GENERAL

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	Population
Abyssinians (including Agau and Beja)	2,400,000
Gallas	2,350,000
Somalis	1,400,000
Sidamo groups	1,400,000
Afar-Saho (of Danakil districts)	150,000
Negroes	1,000,000
Asiatics and Europeans	100,000[1]
	7,600,000

From both these sets of figures the relatively accurate figures for Eritrea of 757,000,[2] and for Italian Somaliland of 1,000,000,[3] may be deducted, leaving a total for Ethiopia proper of 5,243,000 according to the *Annuario* and 5,843,000 according to the *Guida*.

The British Military Administration in Ethiopia gave the number of 7,000,000 for the total population but did not say upon what calculations this figure was based.[4]

Zoli gives the following classifications for language and race for Ethiopia alone.

[563]

Language		Race	
Amhara	1,900,000	Abyssinian	2,100,000
Tigré	400,000	Galla	2,350,000
Oromo (Galla)	2,000,000	Somali	450,000
Somali	450,000	Sidamo	200,000
Sidamo	200,000	Afar	50,000
Afar (Danakil)	50,000	Negro	850,000
Miscellaneous	1,000,000		
	6,000,000		6,000,000[5]

One point of interest in comparing these latter is that they give an estimate—a highly speculative one—of the degree to which the Gallas have become assimilated to the Amharic culture as shown by their adoption of this language. We may note that Zoli estimates that forty different languages are spoken in Ethiopia, but most of these belong to very small groups in the south-west. [191]

[1] *Guida*, p. 400.
[2] Longrigg, *op. cit.*, Appendix C.
[3] This estimate was taken from *Whitaker*.
[4] Cmd. 6589/1945.
[5] Zoli, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–13.

THE PROVINCES: GENERAL

162 to very small groups in the south-west. His figures for the religions of the country have already been given.[1]

A very rough regional distribution by another Italian writer is as follows:

The original Ethiopian provinces	2,500,000–2,800,000
Galla and Sidamo areas	1,500,000–2,000,000
Harar	1,000,000
Somaliland	300,000
Danakil region	50,000
The non-Amharic north-west	100,000
The south-west (negroid regions)	600,000

This gives us a total of between 6,000,000 and 7,000,000.[2] But Almagia, like other authorities, offers this estimate in very tentative terms.

Finally, we may give de Castro's estimate of racial percentages.

[563]

Ethiopians	32·6
Gallas	42·7
Sidamo and Arab-crossed people of the south-western highlands	10·1
Somalis	6·0
Negroid and Nilotic negroes	6·6
Danakil groups	2·0
	100·0[3]

Three main points arise from a study of these various estimates.

One is that the Italian figures for the total population are very much lower than those recently mentioned by Ethiopians. An application made by the writer for the official Ethiopian figure produced a negative reply. This demographic difficulty may be one, among others, which has held up the publication of a long-promised official handbook for Ethiopia.

A second interesting feature of the estimates is that the true Ethiopian stock is almost certainly in a minority and that it is most likely to strengthen its position further, at least as the first stage, by continuing the assimilation of the Gallas which has already begun.

Thirdly, the figures repeat the impression given by the Geographical Survey of the concentration of the population upon the highlands, and the numerical insignificance of the groups inhabiting the low-lying regions of the east and south-east.

[1] See above, p. 103. [2] Almagia, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–7.
[3] de Castro, *L'Etiopia*, p. 301.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century. 181 175*

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38] 175* 633 (643)

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39] 175* 633 361 (333)

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē. [565] [351]

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna,* an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables. (792) [778]

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the 175* 633 361 563 • [186] [576]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

+175 633 streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] [361] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segre- [563] gated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter. [186] [576]

Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien [829] custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

+175 633 181 The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat,* or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which con- [551] trast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen,* meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, [691] litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā,* land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rīst.*

[795] The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the [517] center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

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[243] cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger
Preferred
millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous,
[635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil
administration of the kola is less effective than in the
highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse-
[162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial
[563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic
[567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's west-
ern periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative
tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, ob-
tained their domestic slaves from this population. Even
now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known
as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000
[136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano-
[243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals,
[231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agri-
culture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats,
and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plow-
ing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau
lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which
[243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches,
wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes
[233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 me-
ters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for
grazing.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

162 632 433 463 of the town's total population, support themselves by working among the densely packed rows of beer houses and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 779 563 [197] [167] [142] Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejoratively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinctively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 563 463 [197] [562] A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people, predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics. Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

563 bar maids.

[463] A third, numerically significant minority have come
[562] from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even
[144] though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly
[779] negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are
[647] non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations
[562] also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly
[464] by girls and women working as servants for the less af-
[192] fluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Nilotes living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for
[326] sale in the town's daily wood market (sir gabiya). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

632 621 Ward and Town. Gondar's residents divide the town

[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("bariya").

621 as a means for dicusing and strengthening a risteña
869 family's economic and social interests within the parish.
241 There are two conspicuous exceptions. Should a boy bear
[732] a physical disability so severe that he will be unable
to perform the basic subsistence activities of Amhara
men, particularly plowing, he may be enrolled in the
parish school as a prelude to a non-agricultural career
beyond his natal parish. The alternatives are few.
[463] work as an artisan is appropriate for Muslim and Falasha,
[441] but shameful for an Ambara; while employment as a mer-
[563] chant is less objectionable, the peasant is generally
without the necessary skills, contacts, and capital;
military service is beyond his abilities; thus, only the
Church and government remain. Regarding the Church, the
priesthood is closed to him, since a priest must be phy-
sically whole, and capable of standing unassisted during
[647] the performance of the Mass. The remaining ecclesiasti-
cal and government career choices assume that a boy will
achieve literacy at the parish school and subsequently
*793 depart from his natal community. The second exception
621 to the local focus of the parish school, is the small
869 number of boys who are offspring of debtera-teachers ser-
593 ving in parish churches. The ties of these men to their
parishes-of-residence are usually only professional, and
they are rarely risteñas, it is moreover their profes-
sional ethos which influences them to seek an extensive

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

539 and was always looking up intently and with concentration. One of his friends asked him, "What are you looking for?"

"Mäwča," replied the wit in his classic manner. [The literal meaning is "exit," i.e., either the exit from the trail on the tiring climb, or "the place where we emerge" from the female body.]

The Wit At Home. Home in his hut in Gondar, AG-H was one day at dusk lying on his bed.
[56] His wife had gone to the river to wash her private parts, as is the custom of the Amhara women at nightfall. Tired from the uphill climb from the valley, she rested before the hearth to dry herself, but dozed off. Soon AG-H heard a cannonade of farting, issuing from his half-conscious wife. He called out to her, "Where are you? Come to bed!"

Awakening, she said dazedly, "I am just drying myself."

To which he replied, "You are drying yourself so much that you are cracking apart."

[302] *A Woman's "Way."* [In accordance with ancient custom, women used to pluck out their pubic hair, rubbing ashes between their fingers to get a good grip while plucking.]

One day a girl student of AG-H was late for her lesson. Taking a quick short-cut across the back yard, she tumbled into the ash heap, soiling her lower toga and her legs with the ashes. She excused her appearance to her teacher, saying, "Oh, Master, I was so eager to come quickly, and now I have dirtied myself with ashes all over."

"That is *your way,"* nodded AG-H.

Only much later did the girl learn that he had meant not only the wrong way she had come, but was referring to the fact that being smudged with ashes was the natural "way" for a woman.

[564] *The Pot Of Caste.* [The women of the Falasha caste are makers of pottery, a despised occu-
[323] pation among the Coptic Amhara, though much appreciated by the Amhara, who buy all their better pots from them.]

The wife of AG-H, quarreling with a certain woman, accused her of being of Falasha ancestry and that her mother had been a pottery-maker. One day that woman returned from the river valley, carrying a large, full pot of water on her back. She saw AG-H sitting in front of his hut, and decided to take the opportunity to complain to him about the taunts of his wife.

AG-H disliked being involved in the petty quarreling of the womenfolk, but he listened quietly. As she took leave, he patted her full clay pot and said, "*This* is your work."

She thought that he meant she should not quarrel with his wife, should instead attend to her tasks of fetching water, cooking, etc. But on further reflection what had he meant? Had he accused her of being a pottery-maker herself?

Jealousy Is Dangerous. AG-H was also notorious for his prowess in bed and his fickleness in love.

One day his wife had to go far down to a valley to fetch water, since the dry season had left only water holes in the river bed. She left him in charge of their baby. Taking the baby with him, he went to the hut of his current girl friend and spent the afternoon making passionate love. As it happened, this woman also had a baby about the same age. Dusk came rapidly, and AG-H knew that his wife would soon be back. In the hurry, he took the wrong baby.

A moment after his return his wife arrived, laden with water pot and firewood. When she beheld the baby of her current rival, she became very angry and said, "This thing is not my baby! Shall I throw it in the fire?"

Calm as ever, AG-H replied: "There is a fire also in the house of his mother."

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342 sega byet - where meat is stored after sundrying in strips;

wäṭ byet - the kitchen hut;

gemja byet - the "treasury" house, general storehouse of tools and weapons, drums, decorations.

ṭej byet - honeymead brewery; talla byet - beer brewery, worked by women.

engeda byet- guest hut;

ndarash - reception hut, larger, less solid, used for banqueting;

mänyeta byet - (lit. bedroom house), the master's bedroom hut;

"mad byet" - dining hut for daily dining.

●565 352 The noble also has carpets ("sägaja") to sit on or, in feudal tents, to use as tapestry. These are carried from long distances, where specialists live, or are imported. He also has hardwood stools ("dekkwa") to sit on, cut out of solid tree trunks. In a wooden storage box he has one or several burnos, and one or several "kaba" (a dark, woolen mantle). Guests receive their coffee in small imported glazed china cups instead of clay ones, and the reed table is a "massob worq", with dyed braids of imported dyes, in geometric designs.

824 461 C. What Nature Provides: Lumbering, Hunting, Fishing, Collecting

Much of what little ingenuity goes into Amhara material culture is applied to the direct exploitation of natural resources. He would rather spend days and weeks

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

000 the tanner, in Amhara society.

463 563 565

The values that dominate the division of labor in Amhara territory are closely connected with social stratification, which has been described. While hunters would be at the bottom of the scale, they do not actually have much share in the economic organization. The ethnic occupation class is in the second or third class from the top, depending on how much change has taken place in the local status of "conquered populations" since the 19th century Amhara victories. Actual ex-slaves, usually negroid, are below this level, usually sharing the same status as hunters. The Coptic Amhara, who is occupationally limited occupies the top class, subdivided into feudal lords and sharecropping peasants, with landholding families in between.

But this is a division into classes rather than into castes. For, although occupations tend to be hereditary, and most individuals follow the ethnic specialty of their fathers, they are not under a strict obligation to do so. Emperor Theodore was a usurper of commoner origin, whose mother made a living by gathering bark of the Kosso tree, the lowest occupation of an Amhara. The ethnic classes are more strictly divided by religious identification. In the rural districts there is still no intermarriage between religious or racial groups. In town, persons of the same socio-economic level do intermarry, e.g. "woyto" hippopotamus hunters or ex-hunters, and Shangalla ex-slaves. Both are likely to work as unskilled servants or laborers, in a town such as Gonder. In general, the class system of Amhara territory is somewhat sharper than in most Middle

563 East countries, but it is not the elaborate caste system of
[565] India.

463 Regional division of labor plays only a small role.
438 When it does occur, as in case of the "burnos"-weaving and carpet-making of spots in Semyen, which survived until recently, it is a case of local survival of a craft that has experienced culture loss, fallen into disuse elsewhere. This is also believed to be true with regard to viticulture which seems to have been lost during the 19th century southeast of Lake Tana. It is the story of ancient Aksum all over again, where a 1700-year old stone cistern is to this day the major water supply and a marvel to the present inhabitants, as are the obelisks, stone steps, etc. Where regional specialization does play some role, it is in a very limited sense. Certain districts of Begemdir province, for example, are more inhabited by Falashas than others, and the iron plowpoints and pottery may be preferred from there, especially in the dry season when travel is possible. The better togas are made by Muslim Ethiopians in suburban Gondar town. Hamlets of tanners are also encountered more often in the vicinity of a town like Gondar. Since so many basic crafts are handed down only in the family system, modern changes de-emphesizing the family economy, plus importation via Italian-built roads, will increasingly cause culture loss, especially in the rural districts. Already the contemptuous reference to "balagar sera" (rustic workmanship) are beginning to heard among urban Amhara (e.g. in connection with the plow and pottery).

631 It is noteworthy that in this structure the Gover-
635 nor-general of the province is the only administrator
178 permitted to appoint the next two highest officers of his own staff (since 1942). This is in line with the consistent development since 1916, when the present emperor, then regent, began the process of sweeping away the power of the top of the feudal-provincial pyramid. The "ras" gradually lost their private armies, and were expressly forbidden, by decree in 1942, to make treaties between provinces regarding boundaries or political or military matters.

[648] Contact with foreigners was also taken out of the exclusive jurisdiction of the Governor-general of the province, since foreigners going to the provinces require permits issued by the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa; these permits have to presented to the provincial administrators before local travel is allowed . Even the control over the "Kantiba", the mayors of the major towns, was taken from the Governor-general of the province, and invested, by decree of 1942, in the "Director of Municipalities" in the Ministry of Interior. This central control over municipalities was evident in 1953, when mayors were called to Addis Ababa by the Director of Municipalities, for a reprimand from the emperor for having permitted his boarding establishments at elementary schools, intended for war orphans, to become filled with the sons of well-to-do feudal nobility.

631 The feudal nobility, though much less powerful
565 than in the past, plays a more informal, but still

631 dominant role in the rural administration. Most of the
565 "awraja gäj" and "worädä" chiefs are from medium and
lower provincial nobility. Addis Ababa, the "Senate"
646
565 or Upper House of the Parliament instituted by Emperor
Haile Selassie, is appointed from the higher nobility,
the "Mäkwonent", while the Deputies of the Lower House
are selected, with imperial approval, from the lower
country gentry, largely from the Amhara, Tigre, and Shoa
areas.

643 Many special privileges of regional nobility have
631 been abrogated by the present Emperor: The Wag Shum",
178
565 hereditary ruler of the sub-province of Wag since the
Zagwe dynasty of the 13th century, has been abrogated by
him; also the "Behär Nagash", the "King of the Sea", hereditary ruler of the Red Sea coast, was abrogated; also the Muslim Ethiopian dynasty of Jimma, which Menelik II had permitted to continue in accordance with the treaty of peaceful surrender (ostensibly because the present heir had joined the Italians).

The least changed position in the structure of administration is that of the cheqa shum, who forms its broad base.

4. Customary Law and Justice

671 The foremost characteristics of traditional Abyssinian law and justice seem to be that they are based on the power hierarchy of social structure; that they permit and even encourage considerable subjective inter-

796 transferring the blessing of the true cross to their homes.

[184 All classes participate in the parade, the bonfire
•565] and the worship. There is complete cultural continuum. Even Emperor Haile Selassie parades around the stake three times, accompanied by highest dignitaries of church and state. In the village, the ceremony awaits the arrival of the local cheqa shum and "great men". Old warriors come dressed in their lion-manes and carry the rhinoceros shields of their youth; they boast heroic deeds in the "fukkara". Priests bless the scene and the people, waving cross and incense burners, "blessing the land", so that the harvest will be rich (much as the water is blessed on Epiphany).

Women, as usual, form their own groups, in impromptu singing and rythmic handclapping. The men do not overlook them, bringing them ashes and charcoal from the blessed bonfire, from which the women make a paste with butter and smear the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

Children rise early on the day of "dämmärä" to collect their promised gifts. In groups they go from house to house, chanting:

"Let husband and wife consult with each other,
and give us gifts".

Feudal nobles used to take this occasion to acknowledge the knighthood name, the "färäs sem" of young nobles. They also gave a raw beef, "brundo" feast, to their retainers, and a big "gebber"(feast) consuming huge jars full of barley beer, pitchers of mead, and bottles of "araqi" (distilled).

608 ced himself under the protection of a landowning kin group, and injuries inflicted on him thereupon can lead to a blood feud as much as if he were a consanguinal relative.

All these attempts to establish artificial kinship are motivated by the attitude that kinship, even at geographical distance, is greater security than close relations with neighbors even of the same district. The proverb says:

[539] "Your (home) country, where is it?
(It is) Mary's water. (i.e. the womb).
You are my kinfolk!"

8. Attitudes based on Social Stratification

56 Social stratification among the Amhara, as has been shown, is based on land tenure and feudal relations between nobles and peasents; on the temporal as well as spiritual power of the Coptic Abyssinian church; on the ethnic division of skilled labor; on the conquest of border areas and the past subjugation of other ethnic and racial groups; to a lesser degree on age and sex.

565 184 Analysis of the human relations and attitudes arising out of this social stratification can be expressed in terms of class; sometimes approaching caste, because very little social mobility has been "open" to ethnic specialists in skilled labor and to

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 184 [563] racially enslaved groups; there was, and to a considerable degree there still is, a cultural continuum among Coptic Amhara that is shared by all classes, (with the partial exception of ethnic and racially-separated groups).

A. Class Stratification.

a) Regional Distinction and Feudal Nobility.

Regional distinctions are emphasized by both nobles and peasants. The nobles from the old-Amhara districts of Amara Saynt, Käntz (both in Shoa province) and of the later developed Gondar district (Gegemdir province) c nsider themselves an upper-upper class even among nobility. At least part of this status is ascribed not only to a local history of "old-nobility" contrast with "new-nobility", but totthe supposed fact that these districts were the only Amhara districts not overrun by the Galla in the 16th century.

The class of nobility is controlled, but also perpetuated, by the emperor. In every generation he gradually raises the young nobles to the rank of their fathers, as each individual advances in age. Usually it is only when the father dies that the son is appointed to full rank. He is not usually raised above it except for unusual service to the emperor. Com oners may be given modest ranks in nobility for special service, thus entering, as "new-nobility", upon the social ladder.

565 In the past, the traditional desire for personal independence of the Amhara, particularly the Amhara noble, led him to prefer residence in his own province or district, where he could rule from the apex of local hierarchy. There he imitated the emperor as much as his means permitted.

565 854 Children of nobles imbibed the tremendous pride of Amhara nobility from the time servants carried them about so that their noble feet would not be dirtied by walking, or else had their hands and feet washed by servants regularly. Boys, at about 7, would be given a private tutor, usually a young priest. At 10, when other boys are still in rags or at most wear tattered shorts, the young "balaw" (aristocrat) already was wearing full, white jodphurs.

565 178 In the provinces this pattern is still largely unchanged. But with the increase in central government power, feudal nobles find it advisable to spend the greater part of the year in Addis Ababa--more than the emperor himself desires. Young nobles who graduate from the provincial elementary schools, where their Indian teachers deferred to them as much as their Amhara teachers, have a considerable adjustment to make when they enter High School in Addis Ababa, where the European instructors grade them on individual merit alone.

b) The Peasant Class.

565 In the peasant class there is a wide distinction between the landowning ("rest") peasants who are freemen

565 ("chäwa") of Amhara ancestry ("attentam"); and the "gabbar" sharecropper on feudal land, who is regarded as of doubtful ancestry (part-slave, or part-Galla ethnic), who is referred to as "rustic" ("balagär). While the former, usually descended from warriors who were given land many generations age, considers himself inferior only to nobility and higher church officials, the latter occupies the broad bottom base of the Amhara social pyramid. The proverb says of the rustic "gabbar":

[539] "He who honors a gabbar
will be despised by him ".

In fact there are not many who might honor a gabbar, except for some ethnic laborers and ex-slaves, both of whom occupy somewhat of an outcast position.

c) The Ethnic Classes

563 463 565 The ethnic skilled-labor class does not usually consider itself inferior to the gabbar class. This is especially true if the particular ethnic group has a non-material culture or subculture of its own, notably the Falashas who observe Mosaic Judaism.

The factor of fear of a skilled occupation, the practitioners of which are called "täbib" (lit. "knowing one ", i.e to whom secrets are revealed), enters into the class stratification. It attaches an aura of untouchability to certain occupational classes, especially if reinforced by ethnic or religious difference.

563 326 754 This combination of factors applies to the smithcraft, the "kayla", who are suspected of witchcraft, of being

563 The racial objection to "raising them to Christinaity"
567 (as it was called) was expressed on the principal of
797 "atteätam" (of good, i.e. Amhara or Tigre physical stock). These objections still hold, but ex-slaves attached as servants to a Coptic Amhara household are now more often "raised to Christianity" if they desire it, and can then legally marry other Coptic Christians, which, however, is rare, in practice.

567 Plantation slavery was never widespread, except in the lowland, "Läzäga" district of Wolqait sub-province, where cotton and vegetables were raised on a relatively larger scale and most plateau landowners, especially feudal ones, preferred the plentiful "gabbar" services and well-established arrangements. The "gabbar" were rooted to the soil and had more to lose by leaving their birthplace than slaves would have.

The legal position of slaves, who were almost always non-Christianized gave them no protection. They were legal persons, and could not, in theory, own property, nor contract debts. In practice, some occasionally did manage to accumulate some small cattle and raise their local economic level through interpersonal contact. Slave concubines and the children they bore were usually kept in the household like family retainers, or at most given to another kinsman or to a newlywed couple, within the kin group.

557
565 f) The Servant Class and Economic Considerations

The servant class, "ashkär", is employed in the

557 household both in rural areas or towns, also to do
565 plowing for the freehold farmer and help in the harvest. Servants are usually permanently employed, and therefore do not usually leave even if the employer is behind in his monthly wage payments. Salary and food are received with a bow and cupped hands. The servant addresses the master with the extra polite "gētoch" (lit. masters, i.e. plural), walks in front of the master's mule to make way, slightly behind him when both are on foot, and never lets his master carry anything.

Long interpersonal relations usually improve the position of the servant to master, and it is not in the servant's interest to change jobs, or to go to another area where he is unknown, A landless "gabbar" may try to attach himself to a well-to-do household as "retainer ("zēga"), without wages, doing a servant's work in the hope of occasional, seasonal gifts, a share of the produce, or, in town, a share in trade. For, a servant or retainer who is Amhara "attentam" and Coptic Christian becomes like a member of the extended family. The proverb says:

[539] "When (women) grind (grain) together,
there is no mistress".

556 Economic wealth enables each of these social
565 classes to achieve some upward social nobility, within limits. But there are not many opportunities to accumulate much wealth. Traders can raise their status
[441] in towns, despite doubful ancestry. The same is true
294 of tailors, a very recent occupation in town, where
565 foot-operated Singer sewing machines have enabled men

294 to set up shops along the main street leading to the
555 market, or at the market itself, manufacturing khaki shorts and jackets. But this is still considered shameful manual labor by the Amhara, so that he will pursue it only in another province where it does not shame his kinfolk.

556 A rich man, whose low ancestry may be whispered behind his back, is nevertheless usually treated with honor by Amhara commoners. The proverb says:

[539] "He who falls in a shallow place"
hurt will not come to him", (i.e. a rich man, even if he falls drunk in a gutter, will not be molested by ruffians, who will instead take him to his house, expecting a reward).

[539] "The water of (the rainy month) Nähasse is good,
yet no one will drink it;
the word of the poor man may be fruitful,
but no one will listen to him" (i.e.he is not appreciated, no matter how wise).

B. Age Stratification.

561 Age stratification among the Amhara ranks in emphasis between class stratification andsex stratification.

561 The social relation of old toward the young is
882 often likened by the Amhara to that of master to servant. Indeed, a young man between puberty and marriage is addressed as "ashkär", (lit. servant). A young girl of the same age is addressed and even referred to as "leja wäräd"(lit. servant maid, handmaiden).

561 882 The functions of the young literally follow these terms. Even boys attending church school do pasturing of the flock before and after their lessons, and school is recessed during plowing and harvesting seasons. Elder brothers may and do discipline their juniors, despite the superficial "joking relationship" between siblings of the same sex. As "ashkär", the young bachelor is constantly at the beck and call of his father and other elders of the extended family. At feasts, the father may show affectionate approval by feeding his son hand-to-mouth, the "gursha", also given to servants and other social inferiors.

The proverb admonishes the young man to respect age, and family patriarchs watch jealously a personal friendship developing between any young man with another outside the family:

[539] "More than a trusted companion, who is unlearned, the old teacher is better".

561 Age stratification outranks sex stratification even in matters of religion. An old woman is sometimes permitted to enter the church building, especially if she has taken vows as a nun and wears the "qob". Though the [565] church would like to promote it, social attitudes criticize as ostentatious a young couple of undistinguished, commoner ancestry, who marry by "qurban" (eucharistic marriage) and wear the bright metal crown("aklil"). But a middle-aged couple, long married by "semanya", may take this honorable step without being criticized.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

C. Stratification by Sex.

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Stratification by Sex among Amhara affects woman of nobility often differently than women of the commoner class, but in some ways it affects both.

Well-remembered and not atypical for noblewomen is the example of Empress Taitu, who married Emperor Menelik as her 5th husband, and who led her own feudal troops into the Battle of Adua in 1896. Such deeds of noblewomen occur often in Abyssinian history. This is not surprising, for the daughters of noblemen are raised by servants with as much deference and prestige as are the sons, and consequently develop equal and even occasionally dominating personalities. Concomitant with the usual literalness in Amhara culture, a noblewoman who fulfills a male function may be addressed in the male gender. The memorial feast ("tazkar") of a noblewoman is as elaborate as that of a nobleman.

A noblewoman is exempt from many disabilities of her sex. She regularly rides a mule, using a man's saddle, and in this case wearing a man's jodphurs under her long cotton skirts. Unlike other women, she does not have to redrape her shamma respectfully when meeting a man of equal rank, only when going to church or before a judge. When she enters court, the commoner judge rises to greet her. When she approaches the church, the priest bows before her, and may even permit her to stand just inside the door of the outermost enclosure, usually reserved for nuns. A landowning woman-

562 which happens among middle and upper feudal nobility--
565 may herself become the founder ansponsor of a church. In this case she usually appoints a male administrator from among her kinsmen, or a local cheqa shum headman, to supervise the sharecropper gabbar supplying her church. She then would also exercise direct or indirect control over the qēs gobäz, the administrating priest.

A commoner or peasant woman is much more exposed
[585] to the inferior legal status of womwn. According to traditional law, the "semanya" bond with the formula of the oath "May the Emperor die" (e.g. Hayle Selassye
[675] yemut"), is not legally valid, and her contractual function has to be performed through a male kinsman. Nevertheless, her legal position is by no means as
[586] weak as that of the Muslim woman. The Amhara woman may take half of her husband's movable possessions upon divorce, i.e. thecows she brought into her marriage and half theincreade of any pooled property. To protect her somewhat from wilful mistreatment at the hands of her husband, a bride is given two male protective "best men", the "mizēn- but they are kinsmen of the bridegroom's!

Social inferiority of a commoner woman is also associated with her manual and menial labor, as hauler of water and hewer of wood or collector of cowdung.for fuel, and similar servant-like chores inside and out-
[854] side the hut. The baby which she carries on her back and breast-feeds for two years renders her physically dirty and often smelly. The commoner woman may not

562 The commoner woman may not
565 carry a "ḉhera" flyswitch of monkey-hair or horse-
293 hair, otherwise she will be criticized as "rudely presumptuous" and "proud". Commoner women therefore drape the shamma over their heads to be somewhat protected from flies, or cut a small branch off a eucalyptus tree. Noblewomen may carry a ḉhera, and indicate by their heavy weight that they have a houseful of servants to perform every menial task.

562 With advancing age, past menopause, the social
888 position of the commoner woman steadily improves. She now lords it over the younger women in the household who have taken over the menial tasks. If she has remained married to the same husband for a number of years, she is respectfully addressed as "emmä bet" (lit. mother of the house). If she is widowed, she gains prestige by taking vows as a nun. A woman who marries a priest shares some of the social dignity of his position; she is referred to as "qesenna" (from "qes", priest). Women listening to the church service have the privilege of gaining merit by shouting the shrill joyshout "ellel" at the proper times in the liturgy.

562 Kinship ties remain a strong protection to
602 women even after marriage and residence away from the parental hamlet. She is often reminded not to forget her kinship ties when she marries:

872 children of generous parents, and punishes and quite overtly
874 neglects children of poorer parents. Probably not more than 20% of the boys attend with regularity, but absentees may be punished.

872 The modern elementary school is available only at provincial capitals, and the nation's capital (the latter contains also high schools and a college). The curriculum of the elementary schools is now patterned after the American model, with Amharic and religion taught by Amhara teachers and priests, and other subjects, including English from the 3rd grade on, taught by imported teachers from India (also Europeans in Addis Ababa itself). Equipment includes blackboard ("sälēda") and chalk, but few printed books.

During the past decade, overlaps have been developing. Some church schools now also teach elementary arithmetic and Amharic writing, which the new law requires, though most in a minimal fashion or not at all. Arithmetic uses Amharic numerals, and more recently, also Arabic numerals. The first steps in this modernization had been ordered by Menelik II, but the change is still far from complete. Conversely, the students enrolling in elementary schools of provincial capitals are usually not younger than 11, as in the old tradition. Graduates of the 3-year village church school may enter in the 3rd grade of the modern elementary school, but are usually older than their classmates, so that they are 20 years old at graduation. This is often found in provincial capitals.

Only during the past decade have several girls' elementary schools been founded in some provincial capitals.

872 Since elementary schools, though increasing in number, still
565 constitute the major bottleneck in education, demand exceeding supply, (while high schools are more nearly sufficient because of fewer applicants), some of officeholders and feudal lords find it

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

872 easier, in practice, to gain admittance. The efforts of the em-
565 peror to give opportunities to the rural sons of poor orphans of soldiers who died fighting for their country, by opening boarding houses for them, attached to elementary schools, were defeated by the provincial feudal lords and townspeople, who managed to have their sons quartered in them instead.

Thus, traditional social stratification, both class and ethnic, affects even the modern elementary schools. In 1952 about 60,000 children, 10% girls, attended modern elementary schools in Ethiopia,
[563] and far more than half this number was Amhara. Ethnic minority groups find it very hard to have their children admitted, because the school administrators are usually Amhara. Thus, the Qemants of Gondar, for example, have found it easier to enroll their sons in the Catholic mission school operated there by Tigrean(Eritrean) priests. Other ethnic minorities have enrolled children in 7th Day Adventist and other mission schools.

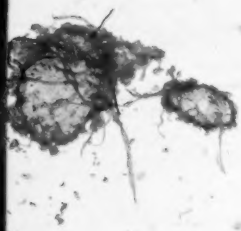
871 In Addis Ababa itself the situation is quite different, however,
184 Here, traditional social stratification has far less effect, partly
565 because of the closer supervision by more modern officials of the central government, partly because the teachers in the high schools, and even in part in the elementary schools, are Europeans or Americans who emphasise social equality among students, pay no attention to family nobility, and reward only merit. Here, the son of the illiterate peasant, or occasionally even ex-slave negroid Shanqalla, may sit next to the son of an Amhara duke or a Galla "balbat". After graduation, they may be sent abroad for college or post-graduate training, based on merit, regardless of parental rank; though in social and family life the traditional social cleavages
pre-

[794] zar doctor, preferably a woman like Woyzäro Salämtew. The zar complex,
[772] to the Amhara mind, represents the shadow side of the visible human
[562] world, making it complete. Hence, just as the Coptic Christian (and also the Muslim) church emphasizes the male-dominated, patriarchal side of society, so does the zar complex represent the obverse, the female-dominated, matriarchal side of society.

[794] This is further reinforced by the subordinate socio-psychological
[562] position of the Amhara woman. She may not enter the church. Her daily labors are largely limited to routine, manual, monotonous tasks.
[565] Only noblewomen are exempt from this social position of the "commoner" female, and therefore are not found in the zar cult - which therefore has a lower-class connotation in the basically two-class Amhara society.

Socially undistinguished, "commoner" Amhara women who chafe under
[164] their social inferiority, including women of potential talent repressed in their culture, are likely to develop ailments such as melancholia. apathy, catatonic states, migraine, or hysteria. Thus the zar doctor is called in and the patient enters the zar society.

The socio-psychological improvement, even apart from medical
[755] considerations, which the woman experiences as member of a zar-devotee society, is considerable. Once her individual "zar" has been diagnosed, she has acquired an individual "self" which is respected, acknowledged, at first within, and finally even outside the zar society. For the zar society emphasizes individualism, free expression, individual enterprise; as against the outside Amhara world which suppresses it in commoners, especially in the Amhara woman. The business enterprise of the female zar doctor and many devotees has already been described.



191 Ethiopian Folktales Ascribed to the Late Nineteenth Century Amhara Wit,
212 Alāqa Gābre-Hanna:—Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia today, is gradually be-
538 coming the *lingua franca* of the empire. Until recently it was spoken mainly on the fertile highland plateau of central and northwestern Ethiopia, in part of what was formerly known as Abyssinia. Predominantly Coptic Christian, the Amhara people have sacred writings in Ge'ez, old Ethiopic. Amharic has adapted this ancient script to its own use. The folklore of the Amhara is mainly oral (except for religious texts) and represents a crosscurrent of Mid-
[565] dle Eastern and African cultures. Traditionally, Amhara society was one of priests, feudal lords, and peasants. Lower on the social scale were non-Coptic ethnic groups who performed such important economic functions as ironsmithing and pottery-making.

538 This is reflected in the folklore. On non-religious, everyday subjects, the wit of the Am-
522 hara is peasant-like, earthy, full of tales of Rabelaisian appetites and sly solutions to human
193 problems. The Amharic language lends itself readily to puns and hidden meanings, since many verbs can have double or triple interpretations due to the hidden variations in the basic verbal stem and the absence or presence of gemination of some consonants. The listener must pay close attention. If he misinterprets the context and fails to discern the pun, he is often made the butt of the next tricky joke by those who have heard it before. The more a storyteller and wit masters the *sowaso* 'grammar' of the Amharic language, the better he can manipulate this humor.

538 A master of this art was *Alāqa* 'Chief' (an honorary title) Gābre-Hanna, a contem-
159 porary of Emperor Menelik just before the end of the nineteenth century. As far as is known, he never put into writing any of his stories, witticisms, linguistic gymnastics, and philosophical puns. But to this day the peasants and even the nobles remember his stories well and tell them so often that a number of versions have developed.

He was a native of Gondar and had all the provincial pride of the "Gondarey" in the one-time greatness of this town and district that is now back country. He lived as the time the present capital, Addis Ababa, was being built and the King of Shoa had become Emperor of Abyssinia. Like many another "Gondarey," Alāqa Gābre-Hanna pretended to disdain the newfangled importations of Emperor Menelik and the growing employment of subjugated Galla tribal chiefs at the imperial court. Jokingly, he took the liberty of referring to the Emperor's home province, Shoa, as "that Galla province." (Even today much
[491] Galliña is spoken there, a result of the sixteenth century conquest of the area by Galla tribes.) No one else would have dared such a remark, but he was popular with Emperor Menelik and especially with the Empress Taitu, and could tell them certain frank truths and tease them with irony in a semi-polite manner. However, he was not a court jester.

11: Levine MP5 Amhara MP5

• 565

[For a detailed discussion on the world of the Amhara peasant, see category 116, pp. 55-94.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

E 175 563 A 175 648

nize in it these and other important advantages for Ethiopia. These drawbacks have been those of any imperialism. During the great Amhara expansion under Menelik (1889–1913), many peoples were maltreated. Independent tribesmen were reduced to slavery; unique cultures were decimated; proud kings were dragged in the dust. Those who held down the Amhara position in these occupied territories seized land from the indigenous peoples and exploited them much as would any invader. The unfavorable reputation of the Amhara in the non-Amhara provinces has been due largely to the example of these governors and soldiers whose worst impulses were at times allowed free play.

One can scarcely single out the Amhara for criticism because of their imperialistic behavior in the past. Nor is it fair to judge the Amhara people as a whole by the character of their provincial officials in conquered areas, any more than one may judge the British, French, Portuguese, or Russian people by the behavior of certain imperious and sadistic colonial administrators. This distinction was self-evident to more discriminating observers of the Ethiopian scene like Augustus Wylde, who wrote in 1901:

A [565] [701] [157]

> There is no harder worker than the Abyssinian peasant, and no more harmless and hospitable person when left alone and properly treated; and no more truculent, worthless, conceited, lazy and useless individual than the Abyssinian soldier, who formerly did nothing but prey upon the defenceless cultivator.[3]

Indeed, if any imperialism of modern times should be granted special consideration, it might be that of the Amhara. The Amhara were to some extent merely reconquering lands that had been taken from them in earlier centuries. Furthermore, they needed additional strength to help withstand threats to their own independence. Finally, it can also be argued that if the Amhara had not conquered the other peoples now within the Ethiopian boundaries some European power might have colonized them instead.

E 563 A 648

However one may assess the fact of Amhara dominance in Ethiopia, it is a given of the present situation. It is a fact that leads naturally to two outstanding questions. One concerns the relations between the Amhara and the non-Amhara peoples of the empire: is it possible for the latter to be integrated more effectively and justly into the texture of a common national life? If not, the present state of tribal calm may prove to be but a long prelude to a wasteful storm. The question demands serious and sustained inquiry by a number of scholars, Ethiopians and foreigners alike.

E 563 178 121 A 121

The other question concerns the nature of Amhara culture, as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia, and its implications for the processes of Ethiopia's modernization now at work and yet to come. To this question we now direct our attention.

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Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē.

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna,* an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables.

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara M.

in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [771]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting-out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shīllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 183

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
831 particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the
[834] sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters
[577] are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat*, is synonymous with *guabaznat*, or "bravery.")

* 883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often
[41] carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

• 565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
463

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a different identity. Religion and warfare were the two spheres most likely to 156
attract him. Although trade and manual arts were possibilities for those whose 554
industry exceeded their status-consciousness, they were considered the busi- 463
ness of other ethnic groups and normally rejected by a self-respecting Am- [461]
hara. When the Amhara youth left home for a new life, he was usually heading either for the school of some church teacher or the quarters of some chieftain.

Today, as in former times, the role of priest is known from childhood as 793
a possible model for the peasant boy. He and his companions often imitate 554
the clergy and their ceremonies in their play. The wish to become a priest 156
is kindled by a number of interests—desire for the material benefits accorded [178]
the clergy; curiosity about the mysteries of the church; envy of the great prestige of the clergy; hope for a better chance of going to heaven after death. During adolescence the outlook of the boy who seeks to become a priest [883]*
deviates from that of the *goramsā* described above. Instead of the shrill, blood-heating *shillala* war chants he prefers the gentle hymns of the church; instead of the frenzied dancing and singing of the young braves he prefers the schooled dance of the clergy; instead of pursuing women, he is inclined to turn his head the other way when a girl appears.

The military alternative does not seem to be an ideal of Amhara children. 701
They rarely see soldiers; and when they did in former times, it was usually 156
in the unhappy circumstance of seeing the family's reserves plundered. It is 554
not until the time of puberty and after that the great upsurge of aggressive instinct has turned the thoughts of many an Amhara youth to fighting. Chafing under parental domination or bristling with resentment because of being an illegitimate offspring or a stepchild, he may be anxious to turn his hostility against some enemy. He may imagine the free life of a soldier more attractive than the drudgery of the peasant's lot. In the days of feudal armies, he may have heard news about some warlord on the rise and thus have hopes, by attaching himself as a follower, of winning booty and the laurels of a hero, perhaps eventually the powers of a chieftain.

Whether the peasant boy chooses church school or the warpath, his move 565
has frequently been an all-or-none move. The peasant boy can do nothing 593
without the consent of his father, and normally his father will not permit him 463
to do anything except carry on the farmwork and prepare himself to care for 156
his parents in their old age and to inherit the family land. If there should be some sign that the son does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, the latter will do everything he can short of disinheritance—and ofttimes that—to persuade him otherwise.

And so, some restless day, eyes fixed on some alluring goal, the Amhara youth might run away and not be seen again. If he should return, it would

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or
593 official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In
463 either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely pre-
156 paring himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which
[181] the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

882 The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of
184 Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing
871 up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adoles-
178 cence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

871 *The Welfare School*

175 Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in govern-
[799] ment provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

[648] During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

872 The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a 121
society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by 56
that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive frame- 178
work of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are 181
embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is [571]
in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively 565
stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and 554
wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as [463]
weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the mer- 565
chant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the 554
small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was 441
accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an 463
Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be [186]
tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes 565
low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Low- 567
est in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from 554
the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), 463
and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced 565
sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values [181]
of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 During the reign of Haile Selassie, the infrastructure of Ethiopian society
178 has become more differentiated. A large standing army, an air force, and a
463 small navy have been recruited and trained by foreign military missions. The
[701] modernization of transport and communication has produced a sizable class of semiskilled operatives—truck drivers, airline employees, telephone operators, typesetters, etc. The expansion of government has produced a legion of clerks. In the towns tertiary occupational roles, like salesmen and barbers, have come into being, and the establishment of factories has engendered a small industrial labor force.

All such people tend to differ from the traditional lower classes in their relative enthusiasm for *selṭānē* ("civilization"). Still more enthusiastic are those who have had more intimate and prolonged exposure to the fruits of *selṭānē:* domestic servants in *faranj* homes; students of the secondary schools and colleges; Imperial Bodyguard troops who served in the Korean campaign and recently in the Congo; and highland Eritreans, whose experience under sixty years of Italian colonial administration has rendered them far more modernized than people of other provinces.

178 Similarly, the reign of Haile Selassie has witnessed the emergence of new
571 elite groups. A "new nobility" of government officials and urban plutocrats
554 has taken place beside the old. In addition, a nascent intelligentsia has at-
565 tained a precarious high status, resting mostly on the esteem of students, some military officers, and resident Westerners. The integrative dilemma of Ethiopia today has more to do with conflicts among and within its various elites than with tribal enmities or masses in revolt.*

643 Hovering over these four groups, kindred with each but superior to all,
571 has been the personality of the present emperor. Indeed, the history of
565 Ethiopia in the last four decades has for the most part been the story of Haile Selassie's efforts to direct and control the destinies of the old and new elites. The considerable success with which he has done this is a tribute, not only to his own remarkable manipulative skills, but also to the majesty of the office which he possesses. The position of *negusa nagast* has traditionally monopolized the highest reaches of the Abyssinian system of social stratification; constituting, as it were, an elite of One.

THE TRADITIONAL ORDER

643 *The Lofty Throne*

The emperor comprises an elite in the original sense of the word, for to the Ethiopians he is Elect of God (*seyuma egziābhēr*) according to the conventional Ge'ez honorific.

* Although, as was suggested earlier, tribal and religious differences *may* generate new integrative crises in the future.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

own right. Indeed, the record of rebellions by nobility as well as clergy against the emperors of Ethiopia bespeaks a persisting dualism in the Abyssinian's disposition toward the monarchy itself. In principle, the emperor is reverenced. Widely held is the sentiment expressed in the *Kebra Nagast:* "It is not a good thing for any of those who are under the dominion of a king to revile him, for retribution belongeth to God."[16] But unquestioning deference is by no means necessarily coupled with unswerving loyalty. The Abyssinian pattern differs from the Japanese, in which total loyalty to the divine monarch calls for suicide in the wake of any disgrace one might have brought upon him. The norms of fealty to the emperor have not been so deeply internalized in Ethiopia, where the pardon and reinstatement of rebels has been a common occurrence. Among Abyssinians a veneer of genuine deference has often concealed an inner consciousness of disaffection, enabling the individual to act out rebellious wishes when the opportunity or need arises. Indeed, this ambivalence has been one of the traditional impulses behind the culture pattern of wax and gold.

The Old Nobility

The Abyssinians themselves acknowledge the existence of, in addition to the emperor, two groups of persons with pre-eminent status. These are called, both in Ge'ez and Amharic, the *makuānnent,* or "nobility," and the *kāhenāt,* or "clergy." While believing the presence of a king to be a precondition of civil order, they also regard the presence of these other elites as necessary for their good life. This attitude is expressed in the Amharic saying: "Fertility of the land [is] through the *makuānnent;* the splendor of the church [is] through the *kāhenāt.*"[17]

The term *makuānnent* may be used to refer to all secular dignitaries between the emperor and the well-to-do landowning peasantry. In strict contemporary usage, however, the *makuānnent* should be distinguished from two other classes of personages, whom we may call the "royal nobility" and the "local nobility" or "gentry." The former consists of the immediate royal family (*negusāwi bētasab*) and more distant royal relatives (*masāfent*). Because of their kinship with the Solomonic line these have at times been referred to as "chiefs of Israel."[18] Although it was customary for each new king to exile all male relatives who were potential candidates for the Crown to a high mountain fortress, more distant relatives might hold provincial governorates, and women of the royal family sometimes played an important role in court politics and provincial administration. Members of the royal nobility have normally been distinguished by special titles: *ābēto* (now vulgarized as *āto,* "Mister"), *le'ul,* and *lījj* for men; and *emebēt, le'elt,* and *wayzaro* (now vulgarized in the sense of "Mrs.") for women.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 The local nobility, on the other hand, were eminences whose lives and reputations were bound to a more circumscribed locale. While the non-royal nobility, or *maḳuānnent* in the stricter sense, performed as high dignitaries at the imperial court and governors of large provinces, the local nobility were district chiefs and judges, or even simply wealthy landowners, who enjoyed considerable deference. Though they might not be known outside of their home regions, these men were, for the mass of the population, the lords of existence. *Ka-Gondar negus / yāgar āmbārās,* "the petty district chief [is obeyed] more than the Gondar king"[19] expresses folk wisdom on the subject. The Amharic terms which designate this class of men are *bālābbāt* and *shum,* terms we shall want to consider more closely below.

565 184 Despite these distinctions among members of the upper stratum of Abyssinian society, with respect to their general orientation and style of life they differed only in degree. They created and shared what might be called a "gentry subculture," even though it was not so differentiated from the general culture as was the case in Europe and China. In the present context, it will be meaningful to treat them as a single status group.

565 184 86 [576] Special manners and skills were self-consciously taught to children of the *maḳuānnent,* most of which remain part of the gentry subculture today. An etiquette of instinctual inhibition is taught. Some attention is given, for example, to toilet training, which is spontaneous among peasant children. Spitting in public is proscribed. Physical aggression is discouraged in favor of the more subtle forms of satire and patient manipulation of others. A quiet, reserved manner of speaking is stressed, in contrast with the less inhibited and cruder self-expression of the peasantry. Dignity of comportment is expected at all times; a noble should not, for example, express great enthusiasm or surprise over anything. Sobriety is inculcated as a virtue; alcohol is *la-çhawā lījj* [293] *mādasetchā / la-bālagē māzabābatchā* ("for the nobleman's son a stimulant, for the commoner an intoxicant"). In short, the gentry subculture stresses the general ideal of bringing a child up to be conspicuously genteel, or *çhawā.*

565 184 868 [871] [534] [883] Sons of the nobility have traditionally followed a privileged curriculum.[20] They were given lessons in horseback riding and weaponry at an early age. They were also taught how to swim, an uncommon skill among the Abyssinians. Reading would often be taught, for which schooling a man of the church might be brought in as a tutor, or the boy might be sent for a while to a monastery. He might also learn how to play the *baganā,* the ten-stringed lyre used to accompany certain forms of religious and plaintive secular songs. Instead of spending his teen-age years at the plow, which was regarded as beneath his dignity, the noble boy would follow his father to court and observe the ways of litigation and the manner of passing judgments; or he might be sent as a page to the court of the king or some great lord.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *çhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *ṭajj*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *ṭallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics. 565 184 868 [567] [273]

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dajāzmātch Hailu,* meaning "Dajāzmātch Hailu and his men." 565 576

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics. 565 [142]

Conspicuous consumption among the *makuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions: 565 592 357 556

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 [644] The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of course, the imperial court. The *maḳuānnent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discretion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but [492] on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shouldering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-[231] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *ṭajj* pre-[273] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos,* the dark wool cloak of the [292] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-[822] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abys-[293] sinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 554 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mäʿerg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 554 701 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The *maḳuānnent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary Amharic the term *maḳuānnent* (singular *maḳonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

rās	"head" (of an army)
dajāzmātch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitäwrāri**	"general of the vanguard"
qañňāzmātch	"general of the right wing"
gerāzmātch	"general of the left wing"
bālāmbārās	"commander of a fort"
bāshā†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shālaqā	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitäwrāri* ranked below the *gerāzmātch*.

[192] † *Bāshā* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

All these titles were conferred by the emperor. But, in addition, *makuānnent* with the rank of *rās* or *dajāzmātch* had the authority to appoint lesser officers under them. The number of troops commanded by these officers varied considerably according to circumstances. Among armies, moreover, there was great variability in status; the *fitāwrāri* of an emperor naturally enjoyed much more deference than the *fitāwrāri* of a provincial *dajāzmātch*.[23] 565 554 701 [643]

A number of other titles represented various civil functions. These included: 565 554

āfa negus	"mouth of the king" (lord chief justice)
āzāzh *liq* (Gondar) *wambar* (Shoa)	royal judges
naggādrās	"head of merchants" (customs collector and chief official over merchants)
ṭsahāfi lām *nagāsh* *shum* *ḳāntibā*	various titles given to provincial governors
malkañña *meslanē*	local representatives of the emperor or provincial governors

A further set of titles was that given to the functionaries of the royal court. These were given for all court posts, including such offices as Server of the Mead (*ṭajj āsāllāfi*). Some of these titles were found exclusively at the court of the emperor; others were imitated in noble households across the land, though again, the same title naturally carried far less prestige in the provinces than when held at the imperial court. The list of court titles varied from region to region and century to century, both in its composition and its hierarchical order.[24] At any given time and place, however, a rank order was carefully respected, and confusion over protocol could provoke altercation, as was recorded in the Chronicle of Iyāsu I (1682–1706).[25] 565 554 644

Titles (and numbers) of the principal court functionaries, in the (descending) order of importance fixed at the time of Iyāsu I, were:

behtwaddad	chief counsellor and confidant (two)
blattēn getā	chief administrator of the palace (greater and lesser [two])
rāq māsarē or *west āzāzh*	majordomo, master of ceremonies
ṭsahāfi te'ezāz	royal scribe; keeper of the seal (two)
zhāndarabā āzazh	chief of the eunuchs

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565	*bajirond*	guardian of royal property, treasurer (two)
554	*liqa makuās*	king's double and keeper of the king's mule
644	*āggāfāri*•	protocol officer, superintendent of banquets

The status of these dignitaries may have been particularly vulnerable, depending so closely as it did on the whims of the monarch. Nonetheless their proximity to the center of imperial power gave them unique advantages. They were in a position to receive many gifts for favors and influence, as well as to come by some part of the royal revenues and to attend the royal banquets. They were consulted, together with military commanders, provincial governors, and high ecclesiastics, on important matters of state. Lands granted to them for their services enabled them to support small retinues of their own, including, in some cases, military contingents. They were normally an important factor in promoting stability and continuity during the troubled moments that usually followed the death of an emperor.[26]

565 554 The above classification of titles is meant only to provide a quick overview of their variety; no such formal compartmentation existed in the Abyssinian perspective. All the titles converged into a single hierarchy.[27] What is more, titles were not strictly connected to offices or functions, so military titles were frequently given to court or civil functionaries. This was particularly true of [644] the court of Menelik, where, for example, the Superintendent of Royal Tents bore the title *bālāmbārās* and the Chief Hand-washer that of *gerāzmātch*.[28] [635] For centuries before, moreover, provincial governors were often known by military rather than civil titles, and men holding civil titles were liable to be called to take part in military campaigns by the sovereign.

565 The sociological reality underlying this overlapping of titles among the nobility was the essentially unspecialized nature of their role. The ideal type of the *makuānnent* was at once governor, soldier, and courtier. In time of war he set forth at his own expense, with his own troops, to support the cause of the emperor, or perhaps simply to defend his own regional interests. In time of peace he might sojourn, if permitted, at the court of his king or overlord, eating and drinking with his peers, giving counsel to his liege when asked, engaged in intrigue and otherwise seeking to improve his station.

[427] When not active in warfare or the affairs of court, the nobleman would repair to his lands to supervise the agricultural production and the collection [643] of rents from his tenants. The emperors rewarded nobles who served them [423] with grants of land. The higher chieftains in turn rewarded their own fol- [427] lowers accordingly. These estates were usually held *in absentia*, the peasants

• *Āggāfāri* is an important title in the courts of provincial lords but is not mentioned in the court list of Iyāsu I, nor in that of the *Seʿāta Mangest*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.* 565 [427]

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services. [631]

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagārit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area. 565 631 [651] [534] [692]

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[29]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement. 565 631 661 [829]

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagārit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the [466] [701] [651]

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gabbār*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dēgā* (high) land, while in certain *qolā* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 taxes collected in the name of the emperor. Concerning the imposts for which
63 the peasants were liable, Plowden wrote in 1844:
66

[651] They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts—he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.[30]

Two centuries earlier, observing similar phenomena, Almeida had concluded that "generally speaking, they are all plunderers rather than governors."[31] The only restraints on their exploitative behavior have been an occasionally keen sense of Christian propriety and the limits to what an exasperated local populace will bear.

565 The existence of a predatory class who serve military functions and maintain a gentry subculture is a common enough feature of traditional agrarian societies. What is perhaps less common in the Abyssinian case is the constellation of factors relating to the recruitment of members into this elite.

High secular status in Abyssinia was dependent on a complex of possessions—land, political strength, and honorific titles—which tended to reinforce
[423] one another. The possession of much land has always been a basis for con-
[556] siderable deference in Abyssinia. As a source of produce, rents, and revenues
[662] deflected from the Crown, moreover, it was also a source of wealth to be used
[661] in building up one's political strength by rewarding able soldiers and loyal
[631] followers, and by making gifts to one's superiors. Political power was directly
[554] obtained through the acquisition of governorships. Such offices were a further basis for much deference and, through the incumbent's access to tribute, customs fees, court fees, and gifts from his subjects, of much income as well. Titles, finally, not only were universally esteemed but also entitled the bearers to a style of life which included a presumptive right to gifts and obedience from all inferiors as well as the consumption of much wealth and power.

565 For all these possessions, the Abyssinian noble was directly dependent on
643 his king (or, in the case of a lesser noble, on his overlord). His dependence was twofold: land, political office, and titles came to him as gifts from the sovereign, and, what is more, their continued possession was contingent on
[423] the sovereign's continuing favor. Abyssinian "vassals" had no legal rights to their "benefices," and lands granted them could be withdrawn and given to others as the emperor wished. At the death of a feudal beneficiary his lands

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

reverted to the Crown unless specifically reconveyed to the heir by royal 565
proclamation. Political office was no less precarious. Governors were made 643
and unmade—by the traditional process known as *shum-shĭr* ("appoint- [423]
demote")—in short periods of time. The powerful position of governor of [635]
the maritime province (*bāhr nagāsh*) changed hands four times during the six years that Alvares spent in Ethiopia. Even when tradition assigned a certain post to the descendants of a certain lord, the emperors were able to exert control by shifting their favor from one descendant to another from year to year. Titles, unlike land and office, were granted for life, as we observed; but [554]
they were in no case hereditary, and thus every Abyssinian's hope for a title, [428]
let alone a raise in rank, depended on the grace of the king or of his major appointees.

Given these conditions, it was not possible for the nobility to become a 565
closed, hereditary estate, or to develop a corporate identity capable of confronting the imperial will. On the contrary, thanks to the emperor's freedom [643]
to ennoble anyone whom he chose, there was a relatively high degree of social mobility, and the ranks of the upper strata were continuously being reshuffled.

Outstanding personal properties of various sorts often enabled Ethiopians of 565
low birth to rise to high positions. The emperors and great lords conferred 555
honors on those who served especially well in military expeditions, whatever 554
their origins. Menelik's promotion of two Galla prisoners to rank as his highest generals is a famous case in point. The royal favor occasionally smiled on low-born Ethiopians who excelled in such qualities as physical beauty or witty repartee.[32] Unquestionable personal loyalty was another quality in high de- [567]
mand; freed slaves were sometimes given offices and dignities, since their lack of ties to political families made them particularly trustworthy.

Abyssinians have thus cherished the idea that they could rise to a higher 565
station in life than that to which they were born. Comparatively few ever 554
tried to do so, probably, but ambitious souls were never wanting. Seeking some benefice, or the glory of a title, or a position of power that would permit them to help their kinfolk or avenge themselves for a wrong suffered at the hands of some superior, they would attach themselves to the lord whose fortunes seemed brightest at the moment and hope, by valorous service and God's favor, to arrive someday at an estimable position.[33]

Nevertheless, though ability and fortune might carry any man high in the political hierarchy, he would not thereby automatically be accepted as one of the *makuānnent*. A self-respecting man of noble family would resist marrying his daughter to a commoner or person of dubious parentage, no matter how high a rank the latter obtained. For the Abyssinian nobility did form a self-conscious status group with a certain hereditary base. Its members shared a sense of superiority, a consciousness of kind, and an attitude toward commoners such as that expressed by the governor Takla Giyorgis to the Jesuit

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565 554 Barradas: "Father, these villeins are like camels, they cry and groan when they are loaded, but in the end they carry the load that is put on them."[34] They set themselves off from the commoners, not only because of their style of life and subculture, but also because they came from well-known families.

Such sentiments were shared by the commoners. They would much rather be governed by a man from a noted family than by a person promoted from 565 their own social level. The folkways expressed a disdain for the *nouvel arrivé,* 554 for example, by poking fun at the office of *liqa maḳuās* (the king's double in 644 time of battle). The *liqa maḳuās* was often a man from an unknown family, chosen because of his handsome features and resemblance to the king. The office permitted him to strut about in the king's clothes and inclined him to assume haughty airs. In some places it was customary to ridicule this upstart by referring to the minstrel, or *azmāri,* as *liqa maḳuās;* for the *azmāri,* too, was entitled to wear the kind of dress appropriate to the lord in whose banquet hall he performed, but the *azmāri* was a person of low prestige in Abyssinian society.

643 In other words: although the emperors could appoint and depose when- 565 ever they pleased, with or without cause; and though "the land and persons 554 of their subjects are equally their property, and every inhabitant of their kingdom is born their slave"; by itself the principle of royal favor is clearly inadequate to explain the Abyssinian pattern of social stratification. For, unlike the [171] neighboring kingdom of Buganda, Abyssinia was not a straightforward despotism in which the dispensation of a *ḳabaḳa* was sufficient to elevate a man into the highest social stratum.[35] The claims of a quasi-hereditary noble status group have also had to be satisfied.

565 How did this status group arise, and how have its claims been expressed and justified? What has been the history of its relationship with the mon- [423] archy? The existence of this class is anchored in the actual tendency for lands, [631] office, and titles to be given to members of the same families. In reality, the [554] emperors frequently let such possessions pass from father to son, either because they were in too distant a region or because there was no good cause for taking them away, and on occasion drew up written charters assigning grants [423] of land to a man and his future descendants.[36] Indeed, one form of land tenure, known as *rīsta-gult,* was precisely a sort of hereditary fief, given in [631] exchange for military service over the generations. In certain areas, moreover, it was a matter of tradition that the governorship be given to members of a [554] certain family. Finally, although no man inherited a title, as son of a noble- [428] man he might inherit the culture and facilities that would give him a much better chance than any commoner to obtain a title of his own.

Two other aspects of Abyssinian society supported this tendency toward [554] the development of what amounted to local dynasties of nobility. One was the prestige attached to the "chiefs of Israel," any of the nobility who could

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demonstrate some affiliation with the Solomonic line; the marriage of one of these into a local dynasty contributed an added buttress to its traditionalist claims. The other was what seems to be a still more deeply rooted disposition for decentralized hegemony based on the ancient character of the society. For, as Cerulli has recently suggested, the origins of the Ethiopian state were such as to lay the foundation for a persisting order of feudalism. The movement of South Arabs to the Eritrean coast and highlands took place, not through the conquest of an indigenous population by a united invader, as in the Norman Conquest of England, but by the intermittent emigration and settlement of distinct tribes from South Arabia into various parts of the African territory. Thus, Cerulli concludes, we see in Ethiopia "a feudalism expanded from the roots: a number of principalities or peoples which, independent on African land after their emigration, have finally been regrouped in a higher political unity, yet still conserving in the feudal system thus constituted part of their autonomy and their individuality."[27] If this is so, it would constitute an added traditional element in the sense of legitimacy of local dynastic interests.

All this suggests that we must look to two sources for the prestige of the *makuännent*—that recruitment into the secular elite came from "below" as well as from "above." These two bases of noble status are indicated by the etymology of two Amharic words commonly applied to the local nobility, *shum* and *bälābbät*. *Shum* (or *seyum*) comes from a root which means to invest with high position. The emperor, as we have seen, is *seyuma egziābhēr* ("invested by God") and he in turn is the source of authority for investing other dignitaries. The status associated with the word *shum* is therefore based on the act of investiture by a sovereign. *Bälābbät*, on the other hand, has the literal meaning, "one who has a father"; in other words, one who has a significant father, a notable ancestry. This status refers to claims to deference which are based on birth.

Claims based on birth, moreover, were closely tied to the ownership of land and supported by local territorial allegiances. This appears most strikingly in the office of *çhīqā shum*, the lowest level official, who is appointed, to be sure, but by the local people themselves from a small number of *bälābbät* whose eligibility for the office rests on their inheritance of rights to certain specified pieces of land. Other local offices, like *malkaňňa* and *meslanē*, were normally given by regional governors to *bälābbät* indigenous to the area. The sacred sentiment of fealty to a monarch, whose charisma rested both on membership in a hallowed dynasty and the hallowed act of coronation, thus competed in Abyssinian souls with deeply felt sentiments of attachment to members of noted families who symbolized local rights and traditions. Abyssinian political structure at any given time was determined by the relative strength of the forces supported by these two principles of legitimacy.

Neither principle was ever realized in pure form. No matter how great his

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642 authority, the emperor could never afford to ignore the hereditary claims of
643 regional *bālābbāt* in dispensing favors and making appointments. He needed
565 a minimum of support from regional lords who commanded devoted followers, and he could not with impunity alienate any number of these at a given time. In practice, imperial favor was accorded *both* on the basis of personal loyalty and military ability, and of ascriptive claims to rank based on birth. The exercise of imperial authority was often a question simply of confirming the leadership of a locally successful *bālābbāt*.

565 With regard to regionally based strength, on the other hand, birth was not
554 a sufficient factor to assure a man a high position. (It was not even necessary, strictly speaking. Any man could attempt to build up a position of power by attracting followers. He had a much better chance, however—a chance to attain authority, and not merely force—if he came from a noted family.) If, as the son of an important lord, he inherited his father's position, he had to prove himself a suitable leader or risk being deposed by the men of the area. At the very least he had to withstand competition from his brothers. Thus, as we saw
[175] in the history of Manz, two of Nagāssi's sons were deposed before the men of Manz found in Sebstē a leader worthy of his father's mantle. Military ability, political shrewdness, and lavish generosity toward one's followers were the decisive characteristics which, together with strong ambition, could enable the son of a *bālābbāt* to attract followers and make claims of his own. With adequate forces, he could even depose a regional governor and take his place, so long as he took possession of the official drum (*naqārit*) of the office.[88] For complete legitimation, however, it was usually necessary to secure con-
[643] firmation of the rule of a locally successful *bālābbāt* by the emperor. This was the reason why Nagāssi is said to have journeyed to Gondar.

642 In terms of the distribution of political authority, then, Abyssinian history
643 may be viewed as an oscillation between the emperor's efforts to define local
565 nobles as his agents and their own efforts to attain continuity and autonomy.
175 The available sources concerning the emperors of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries suggest that their efforts were to a large extent successful. The ensuing "barbarian invasions" so weakened the empire that a more locally centered distribution of power became inevitable. At first only the scope of the monarchy was reduced, as the emperor came to govern a smaller area. In consequence, in outlying regions such as Manz, Gishē, and Merhābētē in northern Shoa, virtual sovereignty was wielded by the local *bālābbāt*. Nevertheless, for a good century after its founding Gondar served as a real imperial capital, and its emperors retained authority over the lords in their shrunken empire. Then, as the monarchy began its inexorable decline due to internal rivalries and the movement of Galla into court and capital, localism triumphed. Ethiopia's Age of the Princes (1769–1855) was as decentralized a political system as was twelfth-century France or fourteenth-century Japan.

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It was at this time that the *makuānnent* came into their own. More unabashedly than ever they constituted, not a hereditary aristocracy in corporate opposition to the king, but a plurality of proud centers of rank—partly inherited, partly achieved—enjoying virtual autonomy. To move toward a modern nation it would be necessary to brake their centrifugal force. 175 565 642

The Clergy

Like the nobility, the clergy may be divided into those who are significant at the national level and those who are primarily local dignitaries. The former reside close to the imperial court, while the latter are thickly distributed around monasteries, churches, and wildernesses all over the country. 793 792

The highest ecclesiastical authority in Abyssinia was the *abuna* who, from the time of Frumentius in the fourth century until the death of Abuna Qerlos in 1949, was with few exceptions an appointee of the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria. Chosen from the Egyptian monks of the convent of St. Anthony near the Red Sea, the *abuna* was brought, at great expense to the emperors, to live out his life in an alien land. Ignorant of the language and customs of the country, he played little part in the conduct of church affairs or in affairs of court; and when he did try to do so, his efforts were usually abruptly checked by jealous clerics and suspicious kings. His functions were purely ritual, but indispensable: he alone had authority to anoint and crown the emperor, to confer orders, and to absolve vows. From numerous revenues, rents, and fees, the *abuna* enjoyed a considerable income. Like the emperor, he was regarded as sacred because of the charisma of his office, and spent most of his time secluded from the public.[39]

Second in rank was the *eçhagē*, an appointment made by the emperor. This was the traditional title of the abbot of the convent of Dabra Libānos in Shoa, which in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gained hegemony over Abyssinian monasticism. The *eçhagē* served as administrative head of the church and had jurisdiction over all monks and monasteries. The most esteemed of the Ethiopian clergy, he tended to wield more actual power than the *abuna*. His provincial deputies, called *liqa kāhenāt*, controlled the secular clergy. This office was also bestowed by the emperor, and its functions included presenting candidates for ordination and deciding questions of protocol in connection with religious ceremonies.

In addition to these supreme dignitaries of the church, a small number of churchmen enjoyed pre-eminent status by virtue of their activities at the imperial court. These included the *àqābē sa'āt* ("guardian of the [canonical] hours"), the chief ecclesiastic at court, and during part of the reign of Zar'a Yā'qob the only official with unrestricted access to the king; the *qēs hāṭsē* ("king's chaplain"); the *liqa dabtarā* ("chief of the *dabtarā*"); and *liqa mammerān* ("chief of the learned men"). These four served as the four su- 793 644 [693]

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the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis*, a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

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FIG. 25.—*Provincial nobleman and wife*

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FIG. 26.—*"Big men" journeying with retainers* [P.174-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amda Ṭseyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum.

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[51] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas.

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest.

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict

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source of the influence enjoyed by the clergy. The latter constituted a largely autonomous status group which no emperor could afford to antagonize indefinitely. The attempt to build a more powerful central government and introduce cultural reforms thus required some alteration of their independent status as well as that of the old nobility.

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THE FEUDAL ORDER IN TRANSITION

The Decline of the Old Nobility

It must always have been the policy of the Ethiopian emperors, except for those few who did not relish the political side of their office, to seek to maximize their control over the regional nobility. They did this, we have seen, either by granting land, power, and rank to men who were completely dependent on them, or else by controlling, through military and diplomatic means, those lords whose birthright and regional strength gave them strong claims to their positions.

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During the past century, however, the idea of subordinating regional nobles to imperial control has come to be conceived more radically and has become the core of a slowly emerging ideal of a modern nation-state. Some such vision was certainly behind the tortuous career of Tēwodros II, whose policy was a reaction against the desperate disunity which the Age of the Princes brought to Abyssinia and to the growing threat from foreign powers. In Plowden's official report to the British government in 1855, he described Tēwodros' work as follows:

> The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated. He has placed soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish: thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains, more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility—a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.[54]

The task of displacing the great feudal chiefs proved to be scarcely less arduous in Ethiopia than in Europe, however. Tēwodros' high hopes were shattered against the opposing forces of regional ambitions and clerical disaffection. The national unity he won through conquest and reform did not survive to the end of his reign.

Yohānnes IV (1871–89) likewise aimed at uniting the nation, but was distracted from serious internal reform by the need to fight off the encroach-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 ments of Egyptians, Mahdists, and Europeans. His domestic policy was more
631 concerned with the imposition of religious uniformity than with political
565 transformation.
642
643 Menelik revived Tēwodros' policy of creating a band of generals loyal only to himself. He did this partly by raising capable men with no connections to high position: Rās Gobānā and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, two of his most important generals, were originally Galla prisoners. The power of the feudal chieftains he manipulated by traditional techniques, sending them to posts far removed from their home bases, and arranging political marriages. But Menelik did not decisively undercut the authority of the great provincial lords, and at his death the old political structure was still more or less intact.

The experience of these emperors was not forgotten by Haile Selassie, who seems to have made it his primary and unceasing ambition to assure his position by breaking down every sort of autonomous power where it previously existed or threatened to develop. Thanks to his policies of centralization and to modern means of transport and communication he was able to become more of an effective autocrat than any of his predecessors.

The main development during the period of his regency as Rās Tafari (1917–28) was the stiffening of his military posture. To start with he had the regional forces of Harar Province, formerly his father's governorship, which he had acquired through the favor of Empress Taitu (Menelik's wife) following Menelik's paralysis. He built up his strength by making improvements in Harar that increased his revenues and the number of his soldiers, and acquired fiefs elsewhere. Following the death of Empress Zauditu's commander of the imperial troops in 1926, he took command of these troops and brought some of his own forces into Addis Ababa. By 1928 he was strong enough to demand the title of *negus* from Zauditu and, as is well known, acceded as emperor upon her death two years later.

[204] During these years Rās Tafari was gradually promoting the idea of a transformation of the position of the old nobility. As early as 1926 a letter published in his weekly newspaper, *Berhānennā Salām,* suggested that the prevailing feudal system of provincial government be replaced by a system based on salaried administrators.[55] An actual change of that order was out of the question at that time. A contemporary American observer thus described some of the obstacles:

> Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Guksah, chief of Amhara, Dejasmatch Ayalu, powerful head of Simien, Dejasmatch Gabra Salassy of Tigre, and Ras Kassa of Shoa, are supreme lords in the rough highlands of the north country. Far removed from the central authority, thirty to forty days' journey, some of them, they are out of touch—living in a different world from that of Addis Ababa. Hundreds of lesser chiefs rally to their standards, each

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with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[58]

The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, re-established after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete.

Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*kārnē*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers.

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175 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureau-
178 cratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of
631 regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central gov-
642 ernment has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of
565 building up their positions, members of the most important noble families
631 have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of
642 Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of
646 high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as
631 regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to
693 Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the
578 behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov-
[465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the
565 aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the
554 eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national
[571] political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

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directed peasantry, and suffer the consequences, no dynamic program of agricultural and social development can take place in Abyssinian areas that does not enlist the active cooperation of the local *bālābbāt* and *shum*.*

The Decline of the Clergy

Although the church was instrumental in bringing Rās Tafari to power—by relieving the nobles of their oath of allegiance to Lĭjj Iyāsu—it was as a whole not sympathetic to his policy once he began to rule. Foremost champions of tradition, the clergy viewed with suspicion Rās Tafari's interest in modern education and other reforms. So pronounced was their conservatism that his weekly *Berhānennā Salām* found it newsworthy to report the fact that the clergy of one important provincial church were actually reading the Addis Ababa newspaper each week.[57] He was wise to act gingerly at first, limiting ecclesiastical reform to such matters as publishing religious texts in Ge'ez and Amharic, and encouraging the work of foreign missionaries.

In the past three decades, however, changes of many sorts have had the effect of reducing the degree of independent authority which the clergy traditionally enjoyed. These changes included the achievement of independence from the Alexandrian Patriarchate; the weakening of the church under the Italian occupation; subjection of church administration to the central government; and competition from the secular government schools.

Rās Tafari initiated the policy of seeking independence from Alexandria in 1929, when he secured the investiture of five Ethiopian bishops. This gave indigenous clergy, for the first time, the right to ordain priests and deacons, although they remained subordinate to the Egyptian archbishop. In 1950 an Ethiopian bishop, the *eçhagē*, was consecrated as archbishop; and in 1958, culminating Haile Selassie's patient and skillful negotiations, complete autonomy from Alexandria was achieved.

The attainment of ecclesiastical independence has heightened the prestige of national church officials in Ethiopia. It has brought about a re-organization of the national church hierarchy, in which fifteen bishops now hold office, one for each of the fourteen provinces, and one in Jerusalem. At the same time it has reduced the effective freedom of the clergy as a separate status group. Deprived of the external source of legitimacy which the Egyptian *abuna* formerly provided, the clergy are now entirely subordinated to the power of the Emperor. This condition was formally articulated in the Constitution of 1955, which made the election and appointment of archbishops and bishops

* A potentially significant medium of communication between them and the central government is the Chamber of Deputies, which since 1957 has brought popularly elected notables from the provinces to Addis Ababa.

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recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuānnent*, Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

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175 royal will. A solid foundation for such a class was not possible, however, until
178 the central government had been sufficiently stabilized and expanded. These
565 conditions began to be met under Menelik, who established Addis Ababa in
642 the last decade of the nineteenth century and in 1907 created a number of
645 ministries. Housed in buildings inside the palace compound, the ministries were initially regarded as little more than an ornament to dress up the imperial court. Although men of some stature, like Afa Negus Nasibu and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, were named to the posts, the offices themselves did not acquire much prestige. It was no great matter when, five years after the death of Menelik, the ministers were turned out of office by a group of military officers at the instigation of Rās Tafari and sent home to their provincial estates.

175 After becoming emperor himself, however, Haile Selassie revived and en-
178 larged the ministerial system. Since the restoration, it has expanded into a
645 complex bureaucratic structure. In addition to some sixteen ministries, a
647 number of specialized government agencies have been formed, and the military and judicial hierarchies and the diplomatic corps have been considerably expanded. The rapid growth of the central government in the past two dec-
[652] ades is reflected in its budgetary expenditures, which went from about US$10 million in 1942 to an estimated US$110 million in 1962.

178 The growth of this governmental machinery has provided a new basis for
647 elite status in Ethiopia. Mobility channels now run in terms of appointments
571 in the government bureaucracy. The periodic announcement of appointments
554 by the Emperor has become the focus of public interest in Ethiopia since the
565 liberation. Every new list of appointments provides the occasion for intense gossip and *de rigueur* congratulatory parties at the homes of the favored.

178 The new class of high governmental functionaries under Haile Selassie may
565 be regarded as a transitional elite: partly traditional, partly modernizing.
571 With regard to basis of recruitment, values represented, and style of life, the new nobility present, on the one hand, a direct continuation of the old nobility; and, on the other hand, many features novel in Abyssinian society.

178 To some extent recruitment of members of the new nobility was not a
565 creation of new dignitaries, but rather an absorption of members of the old
[646] nobility into the new political organization. The recruitment of *makuānnent* into the senate, which after all is an organ of the central government, may be taken as an ambiguous instance of this. Some others were given important posts in the civil and military administrations. These include members of the princely families of Shoa, Tigre, Wag, Lasta, and Gojjam; the Bakere clan, royalty from the Galla province of Wallaga; and scions of the *makuānnent* who were important in Menelik's day or before, members of aristocratic clans which go by the names of Bēzā, Mojā, Sofanē, and Addisgē. Such persons are likely to have been awarded the old military titles for purely honorific pur-

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poses. They have been led to renounce extreme particularistic ambitions, thanks to marital connections, intimidation, the lure of new benefits, and a degree of nationalism, but to some extent they remain spokesmen for regional and para-dynastic interests. 178 565/6

Men who did not belong to the old nobility were recruited into the new nobility on the basis of two criteria, loyalty and ability, with loyalty clearly the more important of the two. Some men from very humble backgrounds have been thus raised to the highest governmental positions through their "loyalty" to the Emperor, manifested in great part by their readiness to inform on the words and deeds of others and their obsequious and flattering manner. These have normally not been given the traditional military titles but only the titles of their office. In contrast with the carry-overs from the old nobility, still known as *masāfent* and *makuānnent,* these men have been called *bāla-selṭān* ("holders of power"). They have included a number of men who were active in the fight against the Italians, either through the Hagara Fiqer ("National Patriotic Association," a group organized in 1935 to promote Ethiopian unity and combat Italian propaganda) or as patriotic fighters in the resistance. The Emperor also promoted to high position some men who collaborated with the Italians, relying on their earlier record as an insurance against latter-day disloyalty, and using their antagonism against the patriots as a check against excessive ambitions of the latter. 178 565 554 [648]

On the other hand, the new nobility includes those who, whether from high family background or not, are so placed because of outstanding ability. This consideration is no longer primarily a question of military ability, but of competence in dealing with technical modern subjects and with foreign diplomats. This group may be equated with the older generation of European-educated Ethiopians. The categories of adjusted aristocrats, ambitious parvenus, and intellectual bureaucrats have thus constituted a latent subdivision among the new nobility; and tensions have from time to time been expressed along those lines. [555]

Despite the elaboration of modern governmental structures under Haile Selassie, the dominant principle of the social order has been that of royal sovereignty. The entire staff of government officials has been the direct sociological descendant of the traditional court retinue. This was conspicuous in the titles given by Menelik to a number of the original ministers: *Afa Negus* for Minister of Justice; *Azāzh* for Minister of Palace; *Bajirond* for Treasurer; and *Ṭsahāfi Te'ezāz* for Minister of Pen. These and other court titles remain in use today. The primacy of the court over all other functions appears in periodic audiences at the palace, when all high government officials and other notables are expected to pay their respects no matter what business may be pending in their offices. The chief value embodied in the status group of the new nobility as a whole has been that of loyalty to the sovereign. 178 64 [175]

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178 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the
565 new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the
661 view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in
565 terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly
556 as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like
[241] coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the
[455] traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene
565 in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well
556 as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families,
472 Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became
[175] prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to
[648] collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *maḳuānnent* and *bāla-selṭān*. They
[662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different
565 from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army
369 tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend
177 to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the
[556] more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The
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The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shĭr*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

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178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shïr* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Em-
[829] peror's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court. 178 565 [643] [662]

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand. 701 [571] [625]

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time. 701 554 [578] [571]

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be 701 648

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phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571
and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178
of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession 565
of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554
ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642]
ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177]
rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556]
imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by
allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642]
growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647]
nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701]
force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178
Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests 571
on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554
the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871
the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178
tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565
the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643]
political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178
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* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 [439]
million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

familiar with in more industrialized societies. Nor is there any disposition 571
to improvise improvements with what facilities are available. Little attention 466
is paid to the condition of offices, for example, which are normally located in dark, drab, depressing rooms. Furthermore, the operating procedures of [47]
Ethiopian administration are bound to frustrate those who have been conditioned to more rationalized systems of organization. Departments frequently operate with ex post facto budgets. Filing systems are hopelessly archaic. There is virtually no public consciousness of the importance of work *time*. 571

> Ethiopian persons are not geared to a timetable. I have to keep telling myself: "This is how we do it here." Seeing a ten-story building go up in a month, grass and all—that is not for here. . . . I get most annoyed when I cannot finish some matter as promised. Not wanting to reveal the name of my colleague or superior who is holding up the action, I have to make up excuses. Eventually I run out of excuses and this bothers me. . . . Sometimes I get angry and say: "I have given my word to someone, and must have the matter ready today; please sign it." And am told: "Oh, well, don't rush things so."

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Work relationships have frequently exasperated the returnees. There has 571
been little inclination to give technically competent employees proper juris- 466
diction over the personnel in their departments. Technically uneducated superiors have tended to make unrealistic demands—for example, requesting an immediate report on a complicated question that requires weeks to prepare. On the other hand, they have tended to assume that their age and experience are equivalent to the technical knowledge of the foreign-trained, so that technically warranted projects have been casually dismissed because they do not strike the fancy of the superior.

The returnees have not been so despondent about these conditions which, 571
after all, could be changed—than they are about the apparent futility of try- 466
ing to change them. Older employees are quick to resent alterations in the 178
accustomed order. 829

> My efforts to reform are opposed by most of the men who run the [postal] system now. Some of them have been working there for forty years or so, and they want to keep things just the way they were when mail came in on camels, because they have always done it that way.

Such resistance to change at the workaday level is tacitly supported by those [565]
in the upper echelons of authority—the new nobility. In them the returnees have found their main antagonists and from them have received their most painful lacerations.

The *shamāggelotch*, or "elders," as they are termed by the intelligentsia, 571
have by no means presented a solidary front in opposition to the young 565
modernizers. On the contrary, the attitude of the new nobility toward the 178
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

571 Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
584 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
834 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
178 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The tradition-
al mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the 181 Crown. 178 771

The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental 178 religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with 181 the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the 643 chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals 642 of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; 631 and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance 178 to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and 181 prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but inte- 565 grative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pur- [085] sued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, 178 a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient 181 technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor 571 and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard 871 of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relation- 178 ship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever 643 advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his 571 personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal 871 solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

43. E. Combes and M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (4 vols.; Paris, 1843), III, 342, call Gondar "une ville de plaisirs." Eduard Rüppell, *Reise in Abessinien* (2 vols.; Frankfurt am Main, 1838–40), II, 190, speaks of the Gondarēs' "grenzenlosen Liederlichkeit." 113
44. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 104.
45. Rüppell, *op. cit.*, II, 132.
46. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
47. "Menelik's conquests," of course, were won for the most part by trusted generals, who were men from all parts of Ethiopia. 000
48. The figure is from a local census made by the Gondar Public Health College around 1958.
49. The Ethiopian Election Board listed 88,000 families and a registration of 35,000 voters in Manz in 1957. The figures are probably exaggerated.
50. The regional association will be discussed further in chapter vii.
51. "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," *Old Societies and New States*, ed. C. Geertz (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 105–57. 113
52. "Ansprache an die Mitglieder des Vereins B'nai B'rith," *Gesammelten Werke*, XVII, 51–53.
53. *Ibid.*, and *Collected Papers*, V, 174.

CHAPTER 3: *The World of the Amhara Peasant*

1. Ernest Luther, *Ethiopia Today* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958).
2. The general methodological problem involved here is discussed in Hugo Engelmann, "The Activity Bias of Ethnography and the History of Society," *Anthropological Quarterly*, XXXIII (July, 1960), 158–63.
3. The TAT cards designed for use in Ethiopia were originally prepared by Dr. Edith Lord, US/AID, in connection with her own research there. The data on which the present study draws were obtained by administering twenty-five cards to a sample of twenty young Amhara in Manz—seventeen males and three females—ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-five years. 121 125 565
4. Cf. Samuel Alamayahu, "The Game of Gänna," *University College of Addis Ababa Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 9 (1959), pp. 9–28. 113
5. Cf. Akalou Wolde Michael, *"Buhe," UCAA Ethnological Society Bulletin*, No. 7 (1957), pp. 57–64.
6. Simon Messing, "Group Therapy and Social Status in the Zar Cult of Ethiopia," *American Anthropologist*, LX (December, 1958), 1120–26. More extensive discussion of the *zār* may be found in Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara of Ethiopia" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1957), and Michel Leiris, *La possession et ses aspects théâtraux chez les Éthiopiens de Gondar* (Paris: Plon, 1958).
7. This section draws on material previously published in D. Levine, "On the

461 often a member of a socially lower ethnic group (see sec-
554 tion B), such an Amhara would become "detribalized", sus-
pected of having learned occult powers (e.g. in smith-
craft), and suspected of being no longer an observant and
563 believing Copt. As a result of his ostracism, he may then
461 very likely marry a girl from the socially lower ethnic
554 group, and his children would be social halfbreeds. If that
ethnic group were Shanqalla (negroid, ex-slave), his chil-
dren would also be racially, as well as socially, mixed, and
be relegated to the servant class. Thus the prediction of
the proverb would have come full cycle. This process can
be observed in Gondar, Addis Ababa, and wherever a market
town develops out of the more conservative, rural milieu.

566 Before the abrogation of the major feudal privileges
463 by the present emperor, the feudal lord could and did put
skilled specialists to work without specific wages or limit
of service. Moreover, the skilled specialist would often
be worse off than the unskilled serf. For while the latter
would at least be permitted, usually, to remain at his place
of origin, the skilled specialists were very often required
to accompany the feudal troops and resettle in an alien
province, cut off from their kinfolk.

Smiths had to produce and repair weapons, masons to
build churches, weavers to make togas and adornments, brew-
ers of honeywine and musician-bards to prepare feasts and
entertainments, etc. The chief quartermaster and "treasurer"
carried the title "bajirond" and was usually a skilled and
trusted master craftsman himself. In reward, he and some
of the other skilled specialists might be allocated new

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
#63 favor, permitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qamis"
under the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
[292] rowing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the
prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled crafts-
men never rose that high but spent their lives accompany-
ing troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup
fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and em-
broiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing
183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and
specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
[754] nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also
the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoub-
tedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of
maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of
invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other
elaborations of culture.

1. Living Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("tis", or,
if several on one large hill, "mendar"), rather than a vil-
lage. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts,
with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus
the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-
isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the
other side of the same hill.

tants and their customs than the average Amhara.

571 Thus, the officials with whom the average Amhara has
624 to deal are the headman (cheqa shum), the district tax-col-
566 lector, the thiefcatcher-in white, and the judge of the nearest market town; also, the priest and/or new, young teacher of written Amharic and arithmetic for the first and second grade. Very often, the governor, who is usually a former feudal lord himself, may grant the posts of district chief (worada shum) and lieutenant (mislanē) to the lower nobility, or their sons; while they in turn draw on their loyal retainers for the more local jobs of headman and thiefcatcher-in-white. In this manner the former feudal structure of human relationships is retained in the old Amhara provinces, despite the official breakup of the system at the top levels. The former feudal chief may even still be addressed by his old title, which has been officially transformed from a military to a civilian significance, but he is still the "telleq sew" ("great man" and conservative pacesetter.

443 This pattern of residential kin-hamlets and feudal
369 relationships changes only in the urban centers which grow out of permanent market spots. The market area is usually located on a little hill, called "arada". Soon a church is built there, and a public area below the hill is cleared of bush to serve as a camping place for caravans, and as a race course for the young Amharas' horse games on Christmas, Epiphany and other feast days. On the hill, the district chief or governor builds his "palace", with a large courtyard for his retainers and office-seekers. The local judges gradually graduate from their table-beneath-the-cy-

286 weaver's occupation. If the weaver were to become a Copt
554 and live among Copts, he would be on a social level equal to a poor, laboring Amhara.

C. Semi-specialized and unskilled.

463 The present division of labor is still based on
563 the former feudal structure of the Amhara economy and human organization. Specialized skills are left to other ethnic groups, and, apart from non-ignoble occupations such as war, church, agriculture, healing, the Amhara reserve to themselves semi-specialized occupations and part-time labor traditionally carried out by household retainers.

The latter type of labor, dealt with in this section, can be roughly divided into three categories: (1) labor arising out of the feudal lord-peasant relationship; (2) semi-specialization "that anyone can learn", in the attitude of the Coptic Amhara; (3) temporary la-
[465] bor, for which specified wages based on Time and Energy are agreed upon, called "damoz" (a contraction of "dämä-wäs", lit. "blood-and sweat" compensation). This term is even used for temporary marriage, during which the woman acts as cook and travelling companion.

466 The first category arises out of the obligations
[566] owed by the sharecropping "gabbar" to his feudal lord or landowning church: the former statute labor, when everyone would come with his own tools and construct a

464 real problem, and for modern tasks has to be brought from southern provinces, or Eritrea (as the Italians, as well as Point IV have found out).

566 466 701 The pattern in the former feudal military service was one of greater pride and prestige even for the poorest Amhara. The feudal-military chief had to clothe, house and feed his men, and could never use them for hard labor, such as agriculture--especially plowing--even when he had no temporary work for them. They were quartered with peasants whom they exploited like serfs, and since the chief paid no wages, he assigned his soldiers "gult" land, often on a temporary basis, which included the peasants who usually were non-Copts and did not have the protection of either church or cheqa shum.

567 797 Though actual slavery has now been abolished, its recent existence still affects the pattern of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and introduces an important element which differs from the otherwise similar picture of early post-feudal Europe. Most of the slaves were Shanqalla (negroid) or Barya (Nilotic); plus some Galla and other south Ethiopian, more-African groups. Since they could not be sold if baptized Christian, the master was not interested in their conversion; the church despised these different lowlanders as unfit to be "raised to Christianity", in the Amhara phrase. If a master desired to free a loyal slave, the method was to have him baptized, on which occasion he would acquire a Christian godfather who would henceforth protect him from sale

567 and insist that he be declared and remain free. Until

566 [423] At the bottom of the social pyramid of land tenure was the "gabbar", the peasant, whose status resembled that of the medieval European serf. In the final step of passing tasks along, he was responsible for carrying them out, though he could shift some manual labor to the slaves under his constant supervision. The gabbar owed regular statute-labor (called "kudād" or "hudād", literally painful labor), resembling the medieval European corvee, and could also be called out for any special labor. At any moment, authority could decree that a bridge was to be built, a church to be constructed or repaired, at an appointed time and place. Thereupon every gabbar would have to appear, carrying his own tools, to work under the direction os the feudal officer, governor, or his lieutenants ("mislanē"). Heavy fines punished failure to appear for this labor.

It is peculiar, perhaps, how this system was internalized by the gabbar. If he was not on good enough terms with his neighbors to call on them for mutual aid, e.g. in housebuilding or harvesting, perhaps due to a quarrel between kin units, he could demand such aid by appealing to the "cheqa shum" (village headman) or governor's lieutenants, who would then proclaim the work as an official [689] task. The penalty for failure to appear, however, was milder; the offender was sentenced to donate a great feast to all the other participants.

566 794 Another noteworthy traditional task emphasized the feudal structure of the church. A priest in charge of periodic services, the "master of the chant", could de-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

566 794 mand of the feudal lord that deacons, choir-boys with good voices, be supplied to him. The "gultanna" could be made responsible for this, and would search the countryside for likely peasant boys. For his service in acting as music critic in examining the boys, and as their trainer, the "master of the chant" would receive a specified number of baskets of grain from the feudal lord, who, of course, passed this extra expense on down the line until the bill was finally footed by the peasant gabbar.

566 The term "gabbar" itself is closely related (perhaps derived from) "gebber", feast (especially feasting of guest by noblemen, or soldiers after victory). Indeed, it is the gabbar who supplies the materials for the feasts.

[242] In view of this regular as well as irregular exploitation, it is not surprising that the gabbar did not try to improve the land he worked, and to this day leaves more fields fallow than he works in any given year. A rank above him, the "gultanna" suffered from insecure tenure. Above him loomed the authority of the feudal warlord ("farasabya") and the shadow of landowning monasteries and parish churches. Their power, in turn, varied inversely with the power, or weakness, of the "king of kings".

423 have been her portion in case of divorce. If the deceased
428 left an infant, the widow is expected to remain with the kin
614 group of the deceased until the child is reared to adulthood. Then she may leave, taking movable belongings that are her share, but, of course, foregoing any claims on real estate. The same procedure is followed in case of her marriage again.

[848] Illegitimate sons, including children of ex-slave concubines, also have the right to inheri their share of "rest", unless the presumed father has publicly rejected them as offspring. Girls who leave the kin group upon marriage, have claims only on movable property, not land. However, if the bridegroom settles on land belonging to the bride's kin, as happens in a minority of cases, the elders will allocate him land, and the male offspring will share in the inheritace.

[852] Allocations of land by the elders to the various biological families used to be made into great events and festivities particularly for the children. This was the only time children were singled out for attention, in this adult-centered culture. Thus the purpose of firmly impressing the event on their minds, to be always remembered and defended in the future, was achieved. In the absence of written legal titles, this procedure was necessary, and is still followed in some rural districts.

C. Semi-private Real Estate--"gult".

423
566 For many centuries past, land, with the peasants occupying it, has been assigned to feudal officers and soldiers, similar to fiefs of medieval Europe. These "gult" lands also resemble in principle the "miri" state lands of

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 566 the Middle East; particularly of the Ottoman empire, where they were also refered to as "çiftliks" (peasant estates that had passed into the possession of soldiers, "siphahi", who in turn constituted fiefs assigned to officers as personal estates.[70]

423 566 701 The process which created "gult" land can be clearly observed intthe history of Abyssinia toward the end of the 19th century. Soldiers and officers in the armies of Menilek II were assigned conquered Galla lands in lieu of salary. They were free from land tax, but obliged to pay "asrat" (tithe) on produce, which tax they of course passed on to the Galla "gabbar". The sons of these veterans usually assumed the same military responsibilities when they came of age, so that the lands passed on to them on the same terms. These lands were referred to as "mädäriya" lands, and

70. Inalcik, Halil: Land problems in Turkish History. (in) Muslim World, July 1955, pp. 221-8.

423 the plots carried names associating them with the speci-
566 fic services owed by the holder of the homestead:
701

"land for the rifleman" (infantry)

"land for the guard of prisoners" (military police)

"land for the bearer of the tent" (standard bearer)

"land for the shield-bearer" (bodyguard)

"land for the forager" (quartermaster)

"land for the left flank" (i.e. platoon attacking on the left column); etc.

The "gultenna" homesteader was always on call for a new military campaign. His land was regarded as his for enjoyment of produce only, like land allocated by a father to his son upon marriage. The size of "gult" land could vary from one gasha (usually about 50 acres) for a soldier-veteran of long service, to as much as 1000 gasha for a high officer of feudal nobility. The latter could, and usually did, set aside part of his "gult" land as endowment for a monastery or church, and the gabbar on such land passed to the control of the church.

There is very little "gult" land in old-Amhara provinces dating from this period of Menelik II. If found there, it is usually older, since his conquests were farther south, southwest and southeast.

On his long and distant campaigns, Menelik II thus found his supply lines assured, for the "gultenna" was obliged to feed passing armies and to aid the military foragers. He had also to act as host to any passing "nagadras" (treasurer, customs agent) of Menelik during intervals of peace.

423 566 701 If these interludes of peace lengthened greatly, the feudal knight ("färäsenya") would often conclude a contract with his "gulteññas", which gave both parties some security in what they could expect of each other in services and privileges. This contract usually took the [427] form of "siso" (lit. one-third). The "gulteñña" thus became a sharecropper, paying 1/3 of his produce to the feudal lord after each harvest, working statute-labor for him one day in three, making his team of oxen available on a basis of one day in three, Sometimes the "gulteñña" thus became a sharecropper and little better off than the "gabbar", especially if no war service interrupted the arrangement for many years. Though he could pass on much of the labor to his own gabbars, he himself sometimes became so debt-ridden to the feudal landlord above him that his status resembled that of a Mexican peon. "Siso" contracts were rare in Shoa, where the "gulteñña" was frequently called to war, and his status as honorable and free soldier-veteran thus never faded away.

The fortunes of war ruled the life of the "gulteñña" much more than the owner of "rest" property. For if the Ras (feudal top nobility) of his province, under whom the gulteñña was fighting, lost in a war or in a rebellion, the gulteñña found himself under a newly-appointed Ras who might ignore customary relaxation of burdens, who might even confiscate the "gult" lands and make the homesteaders "gabbar" serfs, leaving them only the alternative of escaping into the bush. Outside of Shoa, (where fertile land is more expensive and more closely guarded), the

423 "gultenna" and his family might try to become squatters,
566 "chesanna", on someone's fallow land, and risk being chased away by a kin unit claiming that territory. Or, permitted to remain on his old lands, a "gultenna" might suddenly find that the new feudal lord of the province was enclosing ("kelkel", declared forbidden) land formerly used as pasturage or for agriculture, to give to his own successful soldier veterans, and exacting quotas of oxen, mules and honey from the former "gultenna".

178 As long as the "gabbar" system was still in full
423 force, the "gultenna" at least had someone to exploit in turn, to ease his own burdens. Now that the present emperor has declared the "gabbar" system ended (though much of it survives), even this relief is passing. Furthermore, the new army is salaried, so that the basic function of the "gult" system has already disappeared. The only hope the sons of "gultennas" have is to have their lands declared "rest", private property, for otherwise they will become landless. This means that they must work the land themselves and pay tithe on the produce; otherwise squatters can alienate it from them.

D. Endowed Lands -- "rest-gult".

423 The many variations of regional "rest" and "gult" lands sometimes crystallize to a combination type referred to as "rest-gult".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 712 ved to the priesthood. Within the second circle of military encampment, protected by the ring of cavalry, were housed the "bajirond" (treasurer-quartermaster-ordnance), scribes, artisans of all kinds, chamberlains ("aggafari") serving the high nobles, the military police ("zäbäna", lit. watchmen), the thornbush corrals of battle horses and the horse watchmen, cook-houses, and latrine areas for the privileged centers.[72]

The rear of the camp, as well as the rear guard during march, (called the "däjän sefra"), was usually commanded by the most trustworthy, noble councilor of the king or ras; his title was "Blatengēta" (lit. Councilor), a semi-civilian title about equivalent to Dejazmach. But unlike the latter, it was usually held by an older, wiser, less tempestuous, slow-moving gray-bearded friend of the commander-in-chief.

701 566 B. Social and Psychological Roles in Military Life: Noble Officers and Common Soldiers.

The location in camp of military officers and men thus indicated the social position of feudal nobles, soldier fief-holders, and "gabbar"-sharecroppers in civilian life. The rank-order can be listed, with some simplification, as follows:

72. Griaule, M.: Un Camp Militaire Abyssin. Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Tome IV, 1934, pp. 117-122.

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Table 4: Feudal Nobility: Title, Hierarchy, Military Rank and Function, Land Tenure

Title	Military Rank	Military Function	Land-Tenure Reward	Hierarchy of Nobility
farasenya (lit, knight on horseback)	basic in officer class	cavalry	gult fief	may be elevated to nobility, and get rest land.
balambaras (lit. lord of mountain-fortress	basic in officer class	various, active battle duties; e.g. chief of shield bearer("gasha Jägrē aläqa")	gult fief	basic rank in low nobility of owners of rest lands.(Baron).
gorazmach (lit. commander of left flank)	(lieutenant or captain)	command left flank of an army division	rest lands	basic rank of aspirants to higher nobility
ñäñazmach (lit.commander or right flank)	(major, in European equivalent)	command right flank of an army division	rest lands	next higher rand, permanent, usually inherited nobility
fitawrari (lit. commander of advance guard)	(colonel, in European equivalent)	command frontal attack of massed army division	rest lands	next higher rank. Basic rank of teen-age royalty
däjazmach (lit. commander of the gate)	(General. Duke, in Feudal Europe)	commander of army division; commander of bodyguard in camp.	rest lands	next higher rank. Rank of young royalty on reaching manhood.

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ras (lit.head)	(Marshall.Archduke in Feudal Europe)	commander-in-chief of an entire army	rest lands	next higher rank. Head of provincial dynasty. Adult royalty prior to becoming king.
negus (king)	----	commander of several armies	rest provinces	formerly independent king. No longer in existence
lej(lit."Childe")	----	(may be appointed Däjazmach or as he grows up)	Fitawrari -----	title of infant son of king of of ras. title of sons of emperor
lul (Royal Prince)	----(usually appointed to Ras, as he grows to manhood)		-----	title of sons of emperor
negusä nägäst or negus negusti (lit. king of kings)	----	commander-in chief of all armies	rest of home province (mad-byet); ruler of entire country.	assumes highest nobility on coronation.

632 566 Contact with feudal land tenure was maintained by requiring the "gultenna" of the district to come to town every three months, for a one-month statute labor, then called "wär tära", for the feudal lords now residing in town, if no war was in progress. Of course the actual labor was done largely by the "gabbar", but the gultenna was responsible. The domain of the feudal lord was called "gezat" (lit. acquisition, possession), and while this statute labor has now been abrogated, the term survives to mean "province".

632 692 The feudal chief of the province, imitating the king, would "sit in judgment" in Solomonic grandeur, usually twice a week, under a broad, shade-giving sycamore, in front of his "palace". The latter could range from a spacious tent to a stone house of round design in the ancient style (or a Portuguese-type castle of the 17th century). Surrounded by courtiers and would-be courtiers, eager to proclaim the boundless wisdom of the lord, he would also appoint smaller judges, "danya", to hear more routine cases brought in from the countryside by the cheqa shum officials. The town thus became a place where even thesimplest peasant could, at least theoretically, seek relief from excessive opression.

625 The bodyguard of the lord of the town, commanded by a "shalaqa" (lit. chief over 1000 men), could detail his men for duty as "zebanya" watchmen, of specific spots, especially near the market, and this force thus formed a kind of city police.

000 Since the town attracted the most clever "dabtara",

633 world", i.e. Jesus Christ), indicating the section of the town in which he lives.

C. Appointment to Office and Decision-Making.

566 The feudal social structure led almost invariably to paternalistic attitudes in appointment to office and in decision-making. This attitude continues in remote rural districts as well as in the most modern-appearing state offices in Addis Ababa.

661 644 The feudal lord, having conquered new lands, usually rewarded his most trusted followers with fiefs and connected privileges. For example, the newly-appointed "mälkäña", who may have previously served merely as military orderly to the warlord, as cupbearer and meatcarver, could be appointed to act as liaison officer and administrator of Galla lands, allocating 1/4 of the land to the old Galla "balbat" as "mälkäña" land of their own, and keeping the rest as his own fief. He would continue to make himself useful as tax-collector, foreman on statute-labor for the lord, as general spy for the ear of the Lord, available for any special service at any time. But he had little security of office or of land tenure, both being at the mercy of any caprice of the lord. It was therefore essential for him to spend much time at the court of the feudal lord, bowing and scraping, ever fearful that some competitor, perhaps the former "läfäfi" the herald who announced decrees and public inquiries,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

779 the nation in western patterns.
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(1) The use of the church in promoting Amhara-
[721] dominated Ethiopian nationalism. This was recognized and promoted by Emperor Menelik II who had priests carry the "tabot" into newly conquered Galla, Sidamo and other pagan and semi-Muslim areas of his new empire, giving his
[566] military conquests the character of a crusade. Churches were built in these areas, guarded by troops of occupation, made permanent by feudal grants under which the local population, made "gabbar" serfs, was permitted to remain on the land as sharecroppers and peons of the feudal church.

This use of the church has been continued, though with reduced feudal emphasis, by the present emperor.
[212] The Geez alphabet of the church, modified in Amharic usage, is the only alphabet even non-Amharic-speakers may use, if they wish to write their languages, particularly in
[643] print. By taking on the name "Haile Selassye" (Power of the Trinity), upon coronation, the present emperor re-emphasized the power of the church. Finally, on November 4th 1955, when the new liberalized Constitution of 131 articles was proclaimed, it reaffirmed that the Ethiopian "Orthodox" Church, founded in the 4th century on the doctrines of St. Mark, is the established church of the state.

659 Phase (2), begun by the present emperor as his
178 power increased, was a concurrent weakening of the temporal power of the church. At first this was gradual. In

302 attempting to grow a rich one. This rich beard - though really a full goatee - is called "tïmä aron" (lit. beard of Aaron) in Geez, and is worn with the pride of the elder. Hair is also left on the upper lip, but usually does not grow very long or rich.

301 Ornaments are worn almost exclusively by women, and often include items that also have utility; the metal or wooden pin ("walaba" or "wolba") that is stuck in the tight hair and also used to scratch; an earwax spoon of metal, suspended from the matab neckcord on which are also suspended a small cross, amulets, (keys in modern situation), etc. Necklaces ("qwad") may be of wooden beads. In recent years country women have become very fond of a necklace of imported bluish glass rings ("deba"), which can do double duty in scouring and burnishing the clay pottery. A necklace of 150 of these rings costs 50 ¢ (Ethiopian). Also widespread is the use of a beaded strap with a large button-like center ("shotälay") which is worn on the forehead as an amulet, e.g. by women who have sufferred several miscarriages. A metal bracelet, ("ambar") was formerly given to soldiers as decoration, but has now become a women's fashion, worn on upper arms or legs.

B. Fine Arts

531 Artistic expression in the fine arts bears the stamp of the
[566] feudal lord, who alone was in a position to order, encourage and reward individual craftsmen and their apprentices; and of the Abyssinian Coptic church.

The feudal lord commanded decorative arts relating to warfare, such
[282] as the previously described rhinoceros shields. Another common object is the saddlecover ("degus"), made by experienced tanners out of leather, with geometric designs impressed by hot irons; fine leather stitching; and metal ornaments fastened on by the smiths. These designs and ornaments are still found, e.g. on leather cases containing the "dawit" (Psalter) written on parchment made of tanned goatskin.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

4. Occupational hunters: lowland border peoples; negroid ex-slaves; all non-Coptic.

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The occupational hunting tribes are considered the most primitive, as pre-agricultural and even pre-pastoral subsisters on the bush, jungle, river gorges and deserts. Among them are the Woyto, the hunters of the Hippopotamus, which is considered by the Coptic clergy especially unclean because of the similarity to the pig. Jungles like Wolkait, in northwest Begemdir, contain such despised and feared hunters, as does the eastern lowland desert of the Danakil (Afar).

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Considered on a somewhat higher level within these groups are the pastoral nomads like the Somali, some of the Borana, and other southern tribes who, when they are better known to settled neighbors, are equated with class 2. When less well known, they are classed not much above hunters, and it does not matter to the Amhara that the pastoral nomads in turn look down on settled peasants.

AE 563 567

The lowest on level four are the ex-slaves, who are referred to as Shanqalla if they look negroid, or the more general "barya", i.e. slave (name of a Sudanese border tribe). Only a very poor person, possibly an outcast, cripple, etc., of the two upper classes would consider marrying a Shanqalla. Nevertheless, because of the aforementioned concubinage with female slaves, there are Shanqalla outcrops among even the Amhara of Gondar. An offspring of such a union not infrequently does marry a Shanqalla woman, after converting her to Coptic Christianity. This is pos-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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sible in modern times, though the conversion is solemnized shamefacedly by the minor clergy and with very little ado. The racial distinctions between "persons of dishonorable ancestry" are expressed in the following Amharic aphorisms:

> "(One) of unknown father
> (Two) wellaj (i.e. father Amhara, Mother Shanqalla:
> (Three) barya (i.e. full-blooded slave);
> (Four) gabecha (any half-breed, incl. half-Italian)."

In setting them side by side without distinction, the aphorism warns the hearer to look well into the ancestry of a prospective mate, for he or she may be descended from any of these classifications.

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European foreigners are not included in these classifications, especially if they belong to nationalities of recent contact with Ethiopians. But the Armenians, in contact for many centuries, appear in the upper infidel group (the term "arämani" had the connotation of "idolator, hence Cruel"). Today some of the modern Ethiopian nationalists pretend to despise them as "moneybags", while actually envying their commercial and professional talents. The term "arab" has long meant trader, caravan importer, slave dealer. The term for Protestant, probably of 19th century origin, means "enemy of Mary", because that is what impressed the Coptic Amhara most when the missionaries preached to them at that time. The old term "färänj (Frank), foreigner, is still in use, and in rural spots children will still sometimes run after a foreigner pointing fingers as if he were a strange, hence inferior, animal. But in urban usage, especially in Addis Ababa, the term is now applied officially without any derogatory connotations.

464 real problem, and for modern tasks has to be brought from southern provinces, or Eritrea (as the Italians, as well as Point IV have found out).

566 466 701 The pattern in the former feudal military service was one of greater pride and prestige even for the poorest Amhara. The feudal-military chief had to clothe, house and feed his men, and could never use them for hard labor, such as agriculture--especially plowing--even when he had no temporary work for them. They were quartered with peasants whom they exploited like serfs, and since the chief paid no wages, he assigned his soldiers "gult" land, often on a temporary basis, which included the peasants who usually were non-Copts and did not have the protection of either church or cheqa shum.

567 797 Though actual slavery has now been abolished, its recent existence still affects the pattern of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and introduces an important element which differs from the otherwise similar picture of early post-feudal Europe. Most of the slaves were Shanqalla (negroid) or Darya (Nilotic); plus some Galla and other south Ethiopian, more-African groups. Since they could not be sold if baptized Christian, the master was not interested in their conversion; the church despised these different lowlanders as unfit to be "raised to Christianity", in the Amhara phrase. If a master desired to free a loyal slave, the method was to have him baptized, on which occasion he would acquire a Christian goifather who would henceforth protect him from sale

567 and insist that he be declared and remain free. Until

567 then a slave had no legal personality and his master was responsible for any damages or crimes he might commit.

Though it was illegal, no one interfered with a master who killed his non-Christian slave. The offspring of an Amhara father and slave mother had full legitimacy and rights of inheritance, but the child of a free woman and a male slave--a rarity--remained a slave and belonged to whoever had rights over her, i.e. her husband, or her parents if she was unmarried. In the province of Godjam a slave could own his own skins, till allocated field of his own in own spare time, and trade his grain on the market, so that he resembled a serf of medieval Europe, but belonged to his master, not to the soil

464 567 Much of the labor available today in the rural Amhara provinces, especially Begemder, is of Shanqalla or semi-Shanqalla and half-Barya origin (i.e. with an Amhara father and ex-slave mother). There are many of these half-negroids because of generations of concubinage, and because of the simplicity of the ecological life of the Amhara which can be regarded as a levelling factor, and good harvests or wartime famines were almost equally enjoyed or suffered by master as well as slave. Free Amhara peasant women and slave women did the same type of work, even crushed barley together at the same time in the same hollow treetrunk (a frequent scene in paintings). Liberation, in the past, of individual slaves, was rare, for not only was it a loss to the master equal to 3 pairs of oxen, or ATE3 good huts, or

464 an entire harvest, but the slave would suddenly find
567 himself without a protector, without food and shelter, separated from his own (Shanqalla) people since birth and not knowing their language or their customs.

When liberation was decreed by Emperor Haile Selassie in 1941/2, many ex-slaves remained with their old masters or attached themselves as retainers to a new one, to have a basic livelihood and protection in court against hurt or insult from strangers. The fact that slave trading had been forbidden by Haile Selassie since 1924, and been gradually enforced since then, had increased the personal attachment of slaves not only to the master but to his entire extended family from which they could no longer be sold. After 1942, those ex-slaves who did leave their former masters often settled in makeshift shacks in towns, usually in the section formerly assigned to Muslims, and they now constitute an important potential labor supply in the towns.

463 The second category[1] includes semi-specializations
464 of some poorer Coptic Amhara who, in addition to some farming, do such work as making charcoal ("käsäl" or "dengay Käsäl"), as soon as the major harvest is over. They then move in small teams, usually kinfolk, into the drying river valleys where suitable wood is more plentiful, and later sell their product in towns, to restaurateurs, on the big and little markets, or to smiths and potters. Since this trade is "one that anyone can learn", non-occult, there is nothing slavish about it to the mind of the Amhara, and the loss of

[1] [of part time labor (see p.215, cat. 116).-Analyst]

671 Despite its apparent and proclaimed orthodoxy, occasional amendmants, either in theory or practice or both, have been made through royal decrees or common-law [588] usage. For example, concubinage has long been practiced, sometimes in the form of "dämoz" marriage, which evades the Fetha Nagast by giving the woman the status of "hired servant" receiving a periodic "wage", and in this form the practice is at present legally recognized even in the new, modern laws decreed by the present emperor.

In fact, the "Fetha Nägäst" contains an "elastic clause", which has been rediscovered under the present regime, and is cited as justification for the new, European-patterned laws which upset the ultra-conservatives. This clause advises: "Act according to your observation of the c nditions of times and seasons". This was quoted in the new Penal Code of 1930.

681 However, in the past, the draconic aspects of the criminal law in particular were most literally interpreted by many kin chiefs and feudal lords up to the beginning of the present emperor's regime. The hand of a thief was cut off, and in case of armed robbery both a hand and a foot. Rebels were similarly punished. If a person took the usual oath, "by the life of the King" and was found to have perjured himself, his tongue could be cut out. An insult to the King could be punished by [593] blinding. A father had the right of life and death over [567] his children--but not over his Christianized slaves. The latter were further protected against being sold, the penalty for which offense would be the hanging of the master

672 agreement must be before witnesses, again with use of the oath "Haile Selassie yemut" (May the emperor die, if I break my word). Often a judge will not release the loser of either a criminal or civil case unless he can produce a personal guarantor who will guarantee that the damages or fine will be paid.

562 672 Women, under the traditional laws, were considered legal persons but to a lesser degree than men. They could act as witnesses only of what they had actually seen or heard, and were warned not to "interpret" their testimony. Sometimes there were threatened with jail if their testimony seemed contradictory and not entirely useful. On a lower level were slaves, who were not le-
567 672 gal persons, but whose testimony on what they had directly witnessed could be heard in court, subject to evaluation by the judge.

C. Judicial Personnel

693 694 (1) The Curbstone Judge. He is sometimes referred to as "yägälatē danya" (lit. delegate judge). Two persons having a quarrel may stop a respected passerby whom they consider a peer, often a bearded "shemagalye" (elder), to arbitrate their quarrel. They stop him in his tracks by calling out "Haile Selassie yemut", or if they or he are very old fashioned and dignified, in the Geez version of the oath "Be-Hayle Selassie Amlak" ("in the name of the God of Haile Selassie").

[533] usually a Coptic Amhara, of more talent than skill.
286 The weaver, "shamani", though usually a Ethiopian Muslim (or Falasha), carries on his work in theopen, and anyone may learn it. It is only because it requires consistent manual labor that most Amhara shun,it.

d) Religious Minority.

794 The foremost religious minority in Amhara provinces is that of the Ethiopian Muslims. Most of them live in towns, and in the past were residentially segregated to the older parts of town, near caravan trails and big markets. Even today, their social associations are almost exclusively with other Muslims, e.g. traders from the Sudan. Both are regarded as low-class not only by the Amhara but also by the handful of Arab wholesale traders from Yemen. As a result, negroid and semi-negroid ex-
[797] slaves (Shanqalla), especially women, often become converted to Islam in order to marry Ethiopian Muslims or Sudanese, who, as retail traders, are economically better off. The Muslim veneer of these women is very thin, and they are among the most ardent followers of the "Zar" cult.

e) Racial Minority

563 Shanqalla slaves were, [redacted], entirely below
● 567 the social scale, and treated as a separate caste. They were brought or purchased from the Shanqalla, negroid, people on the southwest escarpment, or from Nilotic

563 "Barya" people below the northwest escarpment, so that
567 both terms became synonymous with "slave". Because of the negroid features of the former, and the very black skin of both, they had high visibility, and did not have to be guarded closely as they could hardly escape. In view of the widespread illiteracy, manumission was almost never practiced, and such a document would be ignored by a slave trader or any Amhara who wanted to re-enslave a manumitted Shanqalla or Barya. Until slave-trading was prohibited by the present emperor, negroid slaves were still brought from the Gumuz tribe of Guara sub-province, just below the western, old-
[588] Amhara escarpment. But concubinage was so widespread that today there are more half-Shanqalla than full-blooded wx-slaves. Freed only since 1942, little change has so far taken place in their social status. In rural areas most remain with their old masters as
[464] servants or sharecroppers. In towns, they form a pool ofunskilled labor, employed only briefly from time to time, subsisting on very little, residing in the oldest parts of theold Muslim ghetto. Some of their women have
[357] managed to raise their economic status by becoming house-maids, especially serving the women on the "street of unattached girls", or by marrying ploygynous Muslims.

563 The Coptic church had not interested itself in
567 the status of slaves, for according to its rules a
797 Christian could not be kept in slavery, and therefore no attempt was made to convert Shanqalla or Barya slaves.

563 The racial objection to "raising them to Christinaity"
567 (as it was called) was expressed on the principal of
797 "atte[illegible]tam" (of good, i.e. Amhara or Tigre physical stock). These objections still hold, but ex-slaves attached as servants to a Coptic Amhara household are now more often "raised to Christianity" if they desire it, and can then legally marry other Coptic Christians, which, however, is rare, in practice.

567 Plantation slavery was never widespread, except in the lowland, "Lëzäga" district of Wolqait sub-province, where cotton and vegetables were raised on a relatively larger scale and most plateau landowners, especially feudal ones, preferred the plentiful "gabbar" services and well-established arrangements. The "gabbar" were rooted to the soil and had more to lose by leaving their birthplace than slaves would have.

The legal position of slaves, who were almost always non-Christianized gave them no protection. They were legal persons, and could not, in theory, own property, nor contract debts. In practice, some occasionally did manage to accumulate some small cattle and raise their local economic level through interpersonal contact. Slave concubines and the children they bore were usually kept in the household like family retainers, or at most given to another kinsman or to a newlywed couple, within the kin group.

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565 f. The Servant Class and Economic Considerations

The servant class, "ashkär", is employed in the

795 Some dabtara have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
556 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually [386] made of soot, charcoat, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre- [776] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susnecs, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female [567] of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay themurderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive framework of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest. 121 56 178 181 [571]

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars. 565 554 [463]

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the merchant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Lowest in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns. 565 441 463 [186] 565 567 554 463

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior. 565 [181]

11;Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *çhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *tajj*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *ṭallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics.

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dajāzmātch Hailu*, meaning "Dajāzmātch Hailu and his men."

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics.

Conspicuous consumption among the *makuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions:

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

reverted to the Crown unless specifically reconveyed to the heir by royal proclamation. Political office was no less precarious. Governors were made and unmade—by the traditional process known as *shum-shĭr* ("appoint-demote")—in short periods of time. The powerful position of governor of the maritime province (*bähr nagäsh*) changed hands four times during the six years that Alvares spent in Ethiopia. Even when tradition assigned a certain post to the descendants of a certain lord, the emperors were able to exert control by shifting their favor from one descendant to another from year to year. Titles, unlike land and office, were granted for life, as we observed; but they were in no case hereditary, and thus every Abyssinian's hope for a title, let alone a raise in rank, depended on the grace of the king or of his major appointees.

Given these conditions, it was not possible for the nobility to become a closed, hereditary estate, or to develop a corporate identity capable of confronting the imperial will. On the contrary, thanks to the emperor's freedom to ennoble anyone whom he chose, there was a relatively high degree of social mobility, and the ranks of the upper strata were continuously being reshuffled.

Outstanding personal properties of various sorts often enabled Ethiopians of low birth to rise to high positions. The emperors and great lords conferred honors on those who served especially well in military expeditions, whatever their origins. Menelik's promotion of two Galla prisoners to rank as his highest generals is a famous case in point. The royal favor occasionally smiled on low-born Ethiopians who excelled in such qualities as physical beauty or witty repartee.[32] Unquestionable personal loyalty was another quality in high demand; freed slaves were sometimes given offices and dignities, since their lack of ties to political families made them particularly trustworthy.

Abyssinians have thus cherished the idea that they could rise to a higher station in life than that to which they were born. Comparatively few ever tried to do so, probably, but ambitious souls were never wanting. Seeking some benefice, or the glory of a title, or a position of power that would permit them to help their kinfolk or avenge themselves for a wrong suffered at the hands of some superior, they would attach themselves to the lord whose fortunes seemed brightest at the moment and hope, by valorous service and God's favor, to arrive someday at an estimable position.[33]

Nevertheless, though ability and fortune might carry any man high in the political hierarchy, he would not thereby automatically be accepted as one of the *maḳuännent*. A self-respecting man of noble family would resist marrying his daughter to a commoner or person of dubious parentage, no matter how high a rank the latter obtained. For the Abyssinian nobility did form a self-conscious status group with a certain hereditary base. Its members shared a sense of superiority, a consciousness of kind, and an attitude toward commoners such as that expressed by the governor Takla Giyorgis to the Jesuit

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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[243] Preferred cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous, [635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse- [162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial [563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic [567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000 [136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano- [243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals, [231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which [243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes [233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.

*565 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but
461 acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one
461 moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that
181 while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing
577 one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obliga-
183 tions toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level
[423] he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the
78 fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also
181 important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple
183 neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited
[262] and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be
[301] neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good
577 works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms
181 to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who
183 is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in
*565 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code
577 of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very
673 worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shame-
181 ful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect to-
183 ward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby
[626] stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

*565 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus
57 kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors
181 and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived
183 within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shir*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
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* * *

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

* * *

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

* * *

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[176] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

594 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
[554] *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
594 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[135] association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *Injarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

tants and their customs than the average Amhara.

571 Thus, the officials with whom the average Amhara has
624 to deal are the headman (cheqa shum), the district tax-col-
566 lector, the thiefcatcher-in white, and the judge of the nearest market town; also, the priest and/or new, young teacher of written Amharic and arithmetic for the first and second grade. Very often, the governor, who is usually a former feudal lord himself, may grant the posts of district chief (worāda shum) and lieutenant (mislanē) to the lower nobility, or their sons; while they in turn draw on their loyal retainers for the more local jobs of headman and thiefcatcher-in-white. In this manner the former feudal structure of human relationships is retained in the old Amhara provinces, despite the official breakup of the system at the top levels. The former feudal chief may even still be addressed by his old title, which has been officially transformed from a military to a civilian significance, but he is still the "telleq sāw" ("great man" and conservative pacesetter.

443 This pattern of residential kin-hamlets and feudal
369 relationships changes only in the urban centers which grow out of permanent market spots. The market area is usually located on a little hill, called "arada". Soon a church is built there, and a public area below the hill is cleared of bush to serve as a camping place for caravans, and as a race course for the young Amharas' horse games on Christmas, Epiphany and other feast days. On the hill, the district chief or governor builds his "palace", with a large courtyard for his retainers and office-seekers. The local judges gradually graduate from their table-beneath-the-cy-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

000 letting the audience become aware of this collusion. (footnote 93).

B. Interpersonal Etiquette and Relationships.

571 576 [602] Interpersonal etiquette among the Amhara governs particularly those relations that can be described as "secondary group", for relations within the "primary group" are governed largely by specific kinship or religious rules of behavior.

It is a rare case - and considered very sad - if a person has no kin, and must base most of his human relations on secondary- group affiliations. The latter relationship includes most prominently the "agär" (lit. country, i.e. home district). Sometimes this refers only to the immediate parish, sometimes to the "meketl worädä" sub-district; but if a person finds himself in another province he may include the entire district, "worädä"; though the concept of "agär" does not usually extend beyond this territory in any real meaning of secondary group. If a person has no kin to turn to for aid in legal trouble, or needs a "was" guarantor to secure a job, he may seek out a man from his "agär". For this reason there is motivation to observe rules of etiquette particularly with individuals in the "agar" secondary group, such as visiting or inviting them, bring them "enqutatash" gifts and flowers (through children) at New Year and "Masqal" festivals, etc. Such gifts are not given to complete strangers from a more distant territory, who are called "bada" (slightly derogatory term, with connotation of "rustic").

576 572 Interpersonal etiquette within the secondary group may lead to closer personal relations between two individuals, taking certain

Footnote 93 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Minstrel's Argot. Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1952, Vol. 72, No. 3 pp. 102-109

181 the emphasis on frequency and intensity of kin relations; the dichotomy between "rustic peasant" and "great man - noble" personality (the latter constituting a culture goal; Amhara concepts of government administration; religious fundamentalism and literalness; and last, healing of "spirit ailments" outside the officially dominant religion.

181 Attachment to the land is a major preoccupation of all Amhara:
423 Nobles and "gabbar" serfs, men and women, old and young, priest and
571 student, even of the townspeople. The complexity of land tenure (i.e. the varieties of "rest" and "gult" land) is closely connected with the social status of the residential kin group; the life cycle of the individual is largely determined by the land tenure of his family, beginning with the very kind of education he is likely to receive. By extension, a person's secondary social group consists largely of persons inhabiting or stemming from the same "agärey" (lit. my countryside), the sub-district where his family owns land or works on it.

181 Attachment to one's kin group is nearly as strong on the in-
602 dividual's maternal side as on the paternal. The greater emphasis
[591 on the latter is largely due to the predominantly patrilocal resi-
611] dence, and on patrilineal descent. Kin visiting is a primary social duty, on both the individual's paternal and maternal sides, with equal frequency and intensity. By extension, though with lesser frequency and intensity, visiting of affinal relatives, notably the wife's parents who nearly always live in another hamlet, is considered an important social duty.

Kin feuds often last for generations, particularly between land owning ("rest" tenure) kin groups. The fear of shaming ("hareät")

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

words often carry *double-entendre* as a matter of course; when he listens, he is ever on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. As one of my Ethiopian colleagues has said: "Wax and gold is anything but a formula—it is a way of life." 538 181

In essence, wax and gold is simply a more refined and stylized manifestation of the Amhara's basic manner of communicating. This manner is indirect, often secretive. Amharic conversation is larded with vague remarks like *Mīn yeshāllāl?* ("What is better?") when the speaker has failed to indicate what is the issue at hand, or *Tādyās!*, an interjection which can mean almost anything. Often, when the speaker is then quizzed about the issue at hand, he will give an answer that does not reveal what is really on his mind at all, and even when he does, the person with whom he is talking is likely to interpret his response as a disguise. 195 521 538

Wax and gold embodies this fundamental indirection in speech by means of the studied use of ambiguity. Apart from its literary and religious manifestations, wax and gold appears in the common life of the traditional Amhara on a variety of occasions and serves a number of diverse functions. 195 182 538

It provides the medium for an inexhaustible supply of humor, among a wry people who prefer the clever, double-edged remark to comic actions or incongruous situations. This includes the wit of daily life—the invention of puns and sly retorts, the telling and retelling of good anecdotes and famous lines—as well as the more formalized humor on festive occasions, where minstrels sing the *sam-ennā warq* verses extemporized by the guests. 538 195 182 522

It provides a means for insulting one's fellows in a socially approved manner, in a culture which requires fastidious etiquette in social relations and punishes direct insults by heavy fines. *Sam-ennā warq* insulting, too, has its more stylized expressions, as at the drink-house, where one may find persons competing in a prolonged exchange of more or less disguised insults, or in time of political or military conflict, when opposing lords were wont formerly to satirize one another with ambiguous couplets. 538 195 182 578

It provides a technique for defending the sphere of privacy against excessive intrusion, in a social order that thrives on rumor and gossip and puts most of its people at the mercy of superiors. While vague and evasive responses often suffice to dampen the enthusiasm of the tax collector or the curious neighbor, *sam-ennā warq* constitutes another potent weapon of self-defense. 538 195 182 571 [521]

Finally, it provides the one outlet for criticism of authority figures in a society which strictly controls every kind of overt aggression toward authority, be it parental, religious, or political. Thus it has been a safety valve for certain social tensions, enabling, for example, witty individuals to satirize the monarch himself and still live to repeat the witticism—so long as its subject was himself duly appreciative of the cleverness of the lines. 538 195 182 578 571 [687] [522]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national government, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his successors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 right to a direct audience at any time. The Emperor is known to glow with
571 pleasure when a subject with whom he is speaking reveals that he comes from Manz. The Manzēs, for their part, proudly refer to their area as *ya-negus agar* ("king's country"). They are perhaps the most devoted of all Ethiopians to the present Crown. However, many stories are told to show that this loyalty has not dissolved their intractable spirit. For example, when asked to select a representative for Ethiopia's first elected parliament in 1957, some of them were indignant: "We already have *our* representative in the capital, and if he isn't able to do the job himself, let him step down and hand it to somebody else."

871 Despite their expressed loyalty to Haile Selassie, the Manzēs stubbornly
658 oppose the program with which he is publicly most associated and whose portfolio he has retained, as Minister of Education, from 1943 to the present day. The adults of Manz object to having their children attend the government schools. In many cases where a child has elected to attend school on his own, his parents have cut off all support. The four schools in Manz thus have
[162] an enrolment far below capacity, totaling (as of 1960) less than four hundred in this area of perhaps fifty to sixty thousand families.[49] Those hardy youngsters who do attend school often do so in rags and with an empty stomach.
[857] One reason for this determined opposition to the government schools is the obvious economic one: children must stay at home to tend the herds. This is a problem all over rural Ethiopia, but still the schools in many other areas are overcrowded. Another reason is that, as we have seen, Manz was not interested in education in the old days. Few Manzēs learned to read in the church schools. When a boy showed unusual talent and interest in traditional studies he had to travel to Gondar, which often meant running away from Manz.

871 The crux of Manzē defiance of the new educational system, however, is
658 cultural fundamentalism. The Manzēs keep their children away from the
186 government schools because they fear that the students there are learning
829 something that threatens the old ways. In particular, they do not like their children to learn the language of the *faranj* ("European") or to be exposed to Ethiopians who have been taught by *faranj* and thereby infected by alien ideas. Tending the farm, keeping the fasts, defending land and self—that is the sum and substance of Manzē education, beyond which there is nothing a boy needs to learn.

829 Undoubtedly part of this dread of *faranj* learning is based on the Manzēs'
648 one experience with the white man: the Fascist occupation. As one of the
186 strongholds of patriotic resistance to the occupation, Manz and the Manzēs became the object of the invader's unyielding fury. Over miles and miles of Manz not a home or church was spared. The inhabitants were either killed, or fled to safer areas in Galla country, or joined the underground opposition—

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

zamad is highly subjective, and all constellations of *zamad* reflect the interests and affections of ego. For the quality of kinship can be attributed to persons who are not consanguineal relatives, and this is done without resorting to fictions of affiliation. The term *wandam*, for example, meaning "brother," is simply applied to any male person of about the same age to whom one feels closely attached. The term *zamad* itself is applied to anyone to whom one feels a close personal tie—even to a mere fellow-countryman whom one happens to meet in a distant region. It is thus not taking too great a liberty to translate the term *zamad* as "close ones."

The primarily subjective nature of the circle of *zamad* derives not only from the fact that it includes friends as readily as actual blood relatives. Within the bounds of consanguinity, the composition of the kin group with which a person identifies fluctuates according to his current needs, particularly with respect to land use rights. As Allan Hoben has demonstrated, corporate descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; but the fact that in this ambilineal descent system each individual may claim multiple active affiliations, and enjoys a relatively wide range of choice, means that the particular corporate descent group with which an individual affiliates in order to claim his rights varies according to what land is subject to disputation. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mothers' rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors.[9]

The next most inclusive sociological concept beyond the ego-oriented circle of *zamad* is that of *agar*, or "homeland."* The co-residents of one's *agar*, like those who comprise one's circle of *zamad*, are regarded as forming an important "in-group," outside of which all other persons are a priori rejected. Yet the Amharic concept of homeland, like that of kin, does not refer to a fixed social entity; its referent varies according to the context in which the individual chooses to use it. Thus, as we have seen, the concept of *agar* may be used to refer to one's parish, district, province, or even nation.

A more specialized dichotomy of some prominence in the outlook of the Amhara peasant hinges on variation in the altitude of homelands. Inhabitants of lowlands (*qolaññā*) and dwellers of higher regions (*dēgaññā*) tend to be conceived as polar cultural types. Different sets of habits and traits are attributed to them. Thus, according to one set of stereotypes, the *qolaññā* is viewed as a heavy drinker and hot tempered, while the *dēgaññā* is viewed as a heavy eater and inclined more to litigation than to violence. Again, the

* The less prominent category of *wagan* is intermediate between these two. *Wagan* has a primarily political connotation; it consists of one's consanguineal and affinal kin, friends and close retainers, all who may be mobilized in the event of political or military competition.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 Still another invidious distinction of considerable importance in the Am-
• 571 hara outlook is that between the "big man" (*ṭillīq saw*) and the commoner (*terā saw*). "Bigness" may be measured in terms of political power, economic wealth, ecclesiastical status, or any combination thereof. Though the peasant frequently has little affection for the big man, he customarily treats him with the greatest show of deference. No matter how unfamiliar a big man may be or from what part of the country he comes, the Amhara peasant sees him as entitled to unquestioning courtesy and obeisance. Analogous distinctions discriminate between the wealthy (*hābtām*) and the poor (*dehā*), and between the genteel (*çhawā*) and the rude (*bālagē*).

192 Yet if the Amhara takes a dim view of women, youth, and poor folk, as
828 well as non-Amhara and non-Christians, he suffers from no illusions about homo sapiens at his best—unless they are dark illusions. The generic word for "man" in Amharic, *saw*, is the subject of a number of negative associations and idiomatic uses.[12] At its worst, the word is found in an idiom that signifies the evil eye (*ya-saw ayn*), literally: the "eye of man" (or, more idiomatically, "the eye of others"). At its best, when used to signify a fully formed human being, the word *saw* characteristically appears in the plaintive saying, *Saw yallam* ("there is no human being"); in other words, an individual who fully embodies the concept of humanity does not exist. In general, one may say that the Amhara's view of human nature is dominated by his perception of man's inherent aggressiveness and untrustworthiness.

828 The Amhara believes that unformed human nature is poor raw material,
[861] and that without strict punishment throughout childhood a person will grow up to be rude and offensive toward others. As an adult, moreover, he must constantly be kept in check. The rationale commonly given for the extensive
[785] schedule of fasting is that man's nature is wicked, and only by weakening himself in this manner will he be turned away from some act of aggression against others.

828 The Amharic concept of *ṭegābaññā* illustrates this view. *Ṭegābaññā* literally
261 carries the meaning of one who has been sated with food and drink, but is normally taken to mean someone who begins to insult and pick fights with
273 others. In their use of this and related words the Amhara express the belief that aggression is the usual consequence of being sated. Insubordinate behavior on the part of a servant or political appointee is usually explained as a result of his having been too well fed. "When a peasant gets sated he hits with his stick. . . " is the first line of a number of couplets I collected among rural Amhara. The specific effect of drinking alcoholic beverages is believed to release, not Eros, but the aggressive instincts. An Amharic proverb about
[539] *ṭallā* states this directly: "One [glass] whets the appetite; two quenches it; three heats one up; four makes one quarrel; five brings fighting; six causes killing." Contrary to the view that world peace depends chiefly on filling

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*565 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but
461 acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*)
rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one
461 moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that
181 while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing
577 one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obliga-
183 tions toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level
[423] he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his
rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to
keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the
78 fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also
181 important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple
183 neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited
[262] and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be
[301] neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he
enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or
pole of the church building.

*565 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good
577 works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms
181 to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who
183 is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in
*565 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code
577 of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very
673 worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shame-
181 ful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect to-
183 ward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and
marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby
[626] stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides
some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant
avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will
say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer
humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act
of committing some *nawr*.

*565 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus
57 kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors
181 and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived
183 within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one
who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land,
wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.
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• 571
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565* 602 571 181 183 [561]

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

565* 593 577 181 183

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

565* 577 779 183 181 581 586 639

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

565* 779 577 183 181

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

565* 121 82 771

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

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ment. Of particular interest here is the fact that these officials have frequently been condemned in total terms for their alleged "selfishness" and "hypocrisy." Indeed, one of the outstanding characteristics of the modern-educated is a highly moralistic disposition which leads to a constant evaluation, and unmasking, of everyone within the broad orbit of Ethiopian political life in morally uncompromising terms. 565* 121

The sources of this disposition are complex and not fully to be explained here. One factor would seem to be the ascendance of a concern for rationality and its related insistence on integrity, in opposition to the traditional patterns of deviousness and equivocation symbolized by wax and gold. Another would seem to be a growing Rousseauan concern for the "natural rights" of the people, and the related view of the powers supporting the *ancien régime* as selfishly and hypocritically depriving the people of these rights. What the consequences of this disposition may be is a question of greater urgency. For it leads to the insistence on purity of heart as the essential political virtue, a demand which necessarily results in demoralization of public life and political fanaticism.[21]

While this sort of disposition is natural to the situation of the modern-educated, hence not simply to be wished away, it is clearly out of touch with the traditional Amhara mentality. Insofar as the modern-educated may seek alternatives to a purist, sentimental, and somewhat hysterical approach to politics, they may find themselves nourished by contact, through personal communication or through the medium of literature, with the "cooler" approach of the Amhara peasant. 565* 121 181 571 828

A feature of Amhara peasant culture discussed earlier in this chapter is the centrality of its orientation to man and to the phenomenon of human aggression in particular. To know the Amhara peasant at all closely is to appreciate how cautious he is about the intentions of others. He does not assume that he can count on others, though they may make promises. Before engaging in any secular transaction, such as lending money to a neighbor, entering into litigation, or taking on a servant, he insists on securing a guarantor (*wäss*) who agrees to make good for damages caused by the man he is backing. He does not assume that others may be benevolently disposed toward him; he suspects that behind every protestation of admiration and fealty lurks some quest for personal advantage. He does not assume that superior social status entails superior moral worth. Wryly commenting on his ambivalence toward superiors toward whom he shows such deference, he describes his posture as one of "bowing in front, and passing gas in the rear." In short, he is on guard at all times, coping with the presumed selfishness and hypocrisy of others and pursuing his own interests in a very sober and manipulative way.

At the same time the Amhara peasant's low estimate of man's potential does 565* 121 181 828

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tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than
he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bālagē* ("rude"), a trait which [861]
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [155] [571]

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838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
• 571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
831 particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the
(834) sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters
(577) are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat,* is synonymous with *guabaznat,* or "bravery.")

* 883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often
(41) carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
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the government schools. The weakening of family controls by the new school environment has slightly reduced the importance of loyalty to kin in the students' scheme of things, and has significantly reduced the moral authority of religious customs. A third sphere of norms—respect and obedience toward elders and persons of authority—is maintained by the hierarchical school system, officially headed by the Emperor himself. However, the ambiguous status of foreign teachers and their frequent inability or unwillingness to play the traditional authoritarian role tends to weaken this, for the possibility of informal, even joking, relations with foreign teachers gives Amhara students their first taste of a more relaxed relation to authority figures. (Unprepared by any other experience for such a relationship, their reaction tends to be one of exploiting the permissive teacher as much as possible while at the same time losing respect for him.)

Finally, the expectation of physical stamina and aggressiveness in the Amhara *goramsā* is carried over into the school setting but with definite modification. It prevails in the feeling that one must not tolerate insults or be cowardly. It also persists in altered form in the new pattern of athletic activities instituted by the schools. On the other hand, the greater camaraderie expected among schoolmates means that aggression must also be carefully controlled. An indication of the psychological difficulties to which the crowded yet sociable conditions of school life have given rise appears in response to the question: "What is the worst thing that could justifiably be said against you?" The most frequent sort of answer to this question relates to unchecked aggression: "Quick to anger," "quarrelsome," "ill tempered."

Of the new moral values inculcated by the school system, some of the main ones appear to be self-development via education; honesty; sportsmanship; and social responsibility.

Ethiopians often speak of the "value" (*tĭqem*) of education, meaning thereby the path to a well-paying job and a higher standard of living. But one would be mistaken to suppose that this explanation exhausts the meaning that education has for the modern adolescents. The freeing of their imagination and the exercise of previously unknown intellectual capacities prove themselves thrilling experiences for each new class of students. And their most preferred pastime is "reading," their most popular films are educational ones. A number of students spontaneously declared, when asked about the real reason they go to school, "to learn about the world" and "to learn about humanity."

In the traditional culture of Abyssinia, learning was highly valued, to be sure. But its task was to produce a class of literati capable of transmitting the hallowed beliefs and symbols. Education for the sake of inquiry as such or for personal development was never permitted in its program. If the value of

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*883 66 ical wit and activism displayed by students from other countries has embarrassed their cautious dispositions.

There are three reasons for this relative lack of politicization of the Ethiopian students. One is that, having maintained her ancient independence [648] throughout the "scramble for Africa," Ethiopia entered the twentieth century as an independent nation; and five years of Italian rule were not sufficient to shake her spirit. Ethiopian students have thus not had to participate in the anti-imperialist movement, the great school for political activism in the colonial areas.

• [571] [157] A second factor is the deeply rooted habit of total subordination to any legitimate authority. Because of this orientation there is a persisting disposition to relegate concern for all political questions to the highest authorities. [570] [829] Nearly two-thirds of the secondary students and a third of the college students maintain that one should always obey the order of a superior, arguing that "obedience is a virtue," "things would not go right otherwise," and "the Bible says so."

*883 66 641 The third reason for the almost apolitical posture of Ethiopian students has been the absence of opportunities for political expression in their country. African students from British colonies have in the past been surprised to find that their colonial situation admitted far more freedom of speech and press than Ethiopia. Teachers are expected to keep anything remotely connected with Ethiopian politics out of the classroom, and the editors are expected to keep them out of the newspapers. Nor have the students been permitted to form any kind of politically relevant associations. Even casual discussion of domestic political problems among friends has been curtailed because of the all-pervading fear of government informers.

*883 66 177 All this has not prevented Ethiopian students from being affected to a moderate degree by the libertarian and egalitarian ideals of the West. The teaching of European history in secondary school, evaluation of students' performance without respect to class or tribal affiliation, and the exercise of electing student officers in the colleges have acted to leaven the political imagination of the students. Many of them thus ventured a degree of political *883 66 829 criticism in their anonymous questionnaires. Forty-three per cent indicated disapproval of the existing differences between "big men" and the common people. Thirty-nine per cent were critical of the degree of control exerted by the government, of which group two-thirds felt that governmental controls are too strict (e.g., not permitting free expression), and one-third felt they were not strict enough (e.g., with respect to corruption and provincial administration).

*883 668 669 The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, jarred the Addis Ababa college students into an unprecedented state of political activity.[27] In response

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cation. Since the mechanism of stratification ranks all the members of a 121
society according to the value placed on their qualities and performances by 56
that society, the stratification system of a society is its most inclusive frame- 178
work of social order. Here too, however, conflicting value orientations are 181
embodied in more or less distinct status hierarchies, and it is no longer possible to find status evaluations which are shared throughout the society. It is [571]
in the composition and relations of the elites that the value conflicts in Ethiopia today are most explicit, and in their mutual adjustments that the movement toward new forms of integration is most likely to be manifest.

The traditional infrastructure of Abyssinian society was itself relatively 565
stratified. Highest in status were the landowning peasants, the older and 554
wealthier of whom merged imperceptibly into the lower stratum of the nobility. Next in order were the peasants of various situations who did not own land: sons waiting to inherit land from their parents, tenants paying rents in kind to some landlord, and agricultural laborers attached as retainers on the estates of wealthy peasants, nobles, or churches. Below them were the [463]
statuses of Abyssinians who led a more mobile sort of existence, such as weavers, minstrels, common soldiers, and beggars.

The trading class was broadly divided into two ranks, that of the mer- 565
chant (*naggādē*) whose caravans brought goods from afar, and that of the 554
small-scale peddler (*shaqātch*). The wealthier Abyssinian merchant was 441
accorded very high status, comparable at times to that of the nobility. If an 463
Arab, Armenian, or Muslim Abyssinian, however, his status would be [186]
tainted by that disesteem felt for all outside the ethnic pale. The peddlers as a class were in a low status, comparable to that of the weavers and minstrels. Below these were metalsmiths, potters, and tanners, who were sometimes 565
low caste Abyssinian artisans, sometimes Falasha or Gurage tribesmen. Low- 567
est in status were the slaves, captured in wars or raiding expeditions from 554
the Negroid tribes in the west (Shanqalla) and north (Baria and Kunama), 463
and from the Kaffa and other Cushitic groups in the south. Freed for a generation now, such people still work as household servants and retainers, or as laborers in the towns.

Such were the classes which performed the drudgery. They produced 565
sufficient surplus to sustain a fairly extensive, if not opulent, leisure class, which ministered to the more general political and cultural needs of the society. The feudal nobility and the clergy represented the paramount values [181]
of warfare and religion and shared responsibility for the maintenance of legal order. Together with the emperor, to whom they were normally subordinate, they commanded the resources and respect of the Abyssinian people and set standards for their behavior.

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565 During the reign of Haile Selassie, the infrastructure of Ethiopian society
178 has become more differentiated. A large standing army, an air force, and a
463 small navy have been recruited and trained by foreign military missions. The
[701] modernization of transport and communication has produced a sizable class of semiskilled operatives—truck drivers, airline employees, telephone operators, typesetters, etc. The expansion of government has produced a legion of clerks. In the towns tertiary occupational roles, like salesmen and barbers, have come into being, and the establishment of factories has engendered a small industrial labor force.

All such people tend to differ from the traditional lower classes in their relative enthusiasm for *selṭānē* ("civilization"). Still more enthusiastic are those who have had more intimate and prolonged exposure to the fruits of *selṭānē:* domestic servants in *faranj* homes; students of the secondary schools and colleges; Imperial Bodyguard troops who served in the Korean campaign and recently in the Congo; and highland Eritreans, whose experience under sixty years of Italian colonial administration has rendered them far more modernized than people of other provinces.

178 Similarly, the reign of Haile Selassie has witnessed the emergence of new
571 elite groups. A "new nobility" of government officials and urban plutocrats
554 has taken place beside the old. In addition, a nascent intelligentsia has at-
565 tained a precarious high status, resting mostly on the esteem of students, some military officers, and resident Westerners. The integrative dilemma of Ethiopia today has more to do with conflicts among and within its various elites than with tribal enmities or masses in revolt.*

643 Hovering over these four groups, kindred with each but superior to all,
571 has been the personality of the present emperor. Indeed, the history of
565 Ethiopia in the last four decades has for the most part been the story of Haile Selassie's efforts to direct and control the destinies of the old and new elites. The considerable success with which he has done this is a tribute, not only to his own remarkable manipulative skills, but also to the majesty of the office which he possesses. The position of *negusa nagast* has traditionally monopolized the highest reaches of the Abyssinian system of social stratification; constituting, as it were, an elite of One.

THE TRADITIONAL ORDER

643 *The Lofty Throne*

The emperor comprises an elite in the original sense of the word, for to the Ethiopians he is Elect of God (*seyuma egziābhēr*) according to the conventional Ge'ez honorific.

* Although, as was suggested earlier, tribal and religious differences *may* generate new integrative crises in the future.

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own right. Indeed, the record of rebellions by nobility as well as clergy against the emperors of Ethiopia bespeaks a persisting dualism in the Abyssinian's disposition toward the monarchy itself. In principle, the emperor is reverenced. Widely held is the sentiment expressed in the *Kebra Nagast:* "It is not a good thing for any of those who are under the dominion of a king to revile him, for retribution belongeth to God."[16] But unquestioning deference is by no means necessarily coupled with unswerving loyalty. The Abyssinian pattern differs from the Japanese, in which total loyalty to the divine monarch calls for suicide in the wake of any disgrace one might have brought upon him. The norms of fealty to the emperor have not been so deeply internalized in Ethiopia, where the pardon and reinstatement of rebels has been a common occurrence. Among Abyssinians a veneer of genuine deference has often concealed an inner consciousness of disaffection, enabling the individual to act out rebellious wishes when the opportunity or need arises. Indeed, this ambivalence has been one of the traditional impulses behind the culture pattern of wax and gold.

The Old Nobility

The Abyssinians themselves acknowledge the existence of, in addition to the emperor, two groups of persons with pre-eminent status. These are called, both in Ge'ez and Amharic, the *makuānnent,* or "nobility," and the *kāhenāt,* or "clergy." While believing the presence of a king to be a precondition of civil order, they also regard the presence of these other elites as necessary for their good life. This attitude is expressed in the Amharic saying: "Fertility of the land [is] through the *makuānnent;* the splendor of the church [is] through the *kāhenāt.*"[17]

The term *makuānnent* may be used to refer to all secular dignitaries between the emperor and the well-to-do landowning peasantry. In strict contemporary usage, however, the *makuānnent* should be distinguished from two other classes of personages, whom we may call the "royal nobility" and the "local nobility" or "gentry." The former consists of the immediate royal family (*negusāwi bētasab*) and more distant royal relatives (*masāfent*). Because of their kinship with the Solomonic line these have at times been referred to as "chiefs of Israel."[18] Although it was customary for each new king to exile all male relatives who were potential candidates for the Crown to a high mountain fortress, more distant relatives might hold provincial governorates, and women of the royal family sometimes played an important role in court politics and provincial administration. Members of the royal nobility have normally been distinguished by special titles: *ābēto* (now vulgarized as *āto,* "Mister"), *le'ul,* and *lījj* for men; and *emebēt, le'elt,* and *wayzaro* (now vulgarized in the sense of "Mrs.") for women.

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the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis*, a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

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innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amda Ṭseyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum.

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[51] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas.

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, likē the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest.

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict

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175 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureau-
178 cratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of
631 regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central gov-
642 ernment has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of
565 building up their positions, members of the most important noble families
631 have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of
642 Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of
646 high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as
631 regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to
693 Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the
578 behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov-
[465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the
565 aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the
554 eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national
[571] political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

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175 royal will. A solid foundation for such a class was not possible, however, until
178 the central government had been sufficiently stabilized and expanded. These
565 conditions began to be met under Menelik, who established Addis Ababa in
642 the last decade of the nineteenth century and in 1907 created a number of
645 ministries. Housed in buildings inside the palace compound, the ministries were initially regarded as little more than an ornament to dress up the imperial court. Although men of some stature, like Afa Negus Nasibu and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, were named to the posts, the offices themselves did not acquire much prestige. It was no great matter when, five years after the death of Menelik, the ministers were turned out of office by a group of military officers at the instigation of Rās Tafari and sent home to their provincial estates.

175 After becoming emperor himself, however, Haile Selassie revived and en-
178 larged the ministerial system. Since the restoration, it has expanded into a
645 complex bureaucratic structure. In addition to some sixteen ministries, a
647 number of specialized government agencies have been formed, and the military and judicial hierarchies and the diplomatic corps have been considerably expanded. The rapid growth of the central government in the past two dec-
[652] ades is reflected in its budgetary expenditures, which went from about US$10 million in 1942 to an estimated US$110 million in 1962.

178 The growth of this governmental machinery has provided a new basis for
647 elite status in Ethiopia. Mobility channels now run in terms of appointments
571 in the government bureaucracy. The periodic announcement of appointments
554 by the Emperor has become the focus of public interest in Ethiopia since the
565 liberation. Every new list of appointments provides the occasion for intense gossip and *de rigueur* congratulatory parties at the homes of the favored.

178 The new class of high governmental functionaries under Haile Selassie may
565 be regarded as a transitional elite: partly traditional, partly modernizing.
571 With regard to basis of recruitment, values represented, and style of life, the new nobility present, on the one hand, a direct continuation of the old nobility; and, on the other hand, many features novel in Abyssinian society.

178 To some extent recruitment of members of the new nobility was not a
565 creation of new dignitaries, but rather an absorption of members of the old
[646] nobility into the new political organization. The recruitment of *makuānnent* into the senate, which after all is an organ of the central government, may be taken as an ambiguous instance of this. Some others were given important posts in the civil and military administrations. These include members of the princely families of Shoa, Tigre, Wag, Lasta, and Gojjam; the Bakere clan, royalty from the Galla province of Wallaga; and scions of the *makuānnent* who were important in Menelik's day or before, members of aristocratic clans which go by the names of Bēzā, Mojā, Sofanē, and Addisgē. Such persons are likely to have been awarded the old military titles for purely honorific pur-

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perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court. 178 565 [643] [662]

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand. 701 [571] [625]

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time. 701 554 [578] [571]

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be 701 648

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701 more eager and impatient to modernize Ethiopia than do members of the
648 new nobility. This contrast was already apparent at the time of the Italian invasion, when Ethiopian officers were condemning the archaic practices of civilian officials who, they charged, were holding back the defense efforts. Yet the image of a progressive, solidary military elite in Ethiopia is justified no more than the image of a reactionary, solidary ministerial elite; nor should the military leaders be seen as standing in fundamental opposition to their civilian counterparts. There is much friendly intercourse between the two groups. Army officers are often related to civilian officials, by blood or by marriage. Military personnel have in a number of cases been assigned to civilian posts in the government. While the military carry on much of their social life among themselves, they also enjoy a good deal of interaction with civilians of high status at parties, dances, weddings, and funerals.

701 Like the new nobility, moreover, the military officers do not form a cohesive group with common interests and ambitions. The one group which did develop a high degree of solidarity, esprit, and common political goals—the Officers Corps of the Imperial Bodyguard—was dissolved in the wake of its defeat in the 1960 rebellion. The military men have been checked and balanced by much the same techniques as have the new nobility. As a whole, they are held together by little more than the institutionalized structure of the security forces. As such, they are in any event bound to play an important part in determining the character of the future government of Ethiopia as they are crucial now in upholding the present regime.

THE BIRTH OF AN INTELLIGENTSIA

571 The formation of a modern intellectual class in Ethiopia is still in its earliest
871 stages. Given the small number who have completed elementary school (a
162 number still under one per cent of the national population) all Ethiopians who have graduated from secondary school may for the time being be considered members of a secular educated elite, those with college and graduate degrees enjoying correspondingly higher status within this elite. The total number in this group reached an estimated six thousand in 1962, about one-fourth of whom held college degrees.

571 Equally indicative of the rudimentary condition of the Ethiopian intelli-
gentsia is the poverty of its institutional facilities and of its means of communication, both internally and with the international intellectual commu-
571 nity. As of 1961, institutions with primarily intellectual purposes were lim-
873 ited to the small college of arts and sciences, four vocational colleges, two
874 small research centers (the Pasteur Institute and the Section d'Archéologie, both financed by France and staffed mostly by non-Ethiopians), the Haile

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Selassie I theater, and the secondary level art school.* Library facilities included the National Library, with some fifty thousand volumes; the University College Library, with about forty-five; and the reading rooms of the United States Information Service, the British Center, and the Soviet Information Service. The national library also contains a historical museum, and there is a handsome and well appointed archeological museum nearby, neither of which has so far been operated with a view to encouraging public attendance.

Except for occasional lectures sponsored by the national library and the University College extension program, none of the above institutions serves as a center for intellectual communication among adult Ethiopians. It was hoped by some that with the inauguration of the Haile Selassie I University, in December, 1961, a major new center of intellectual life would be created; but the government found it difficult to push ahead with its announced concept of an integrated institution which would operate autonomously and at a high standard.

Outside these institutions, moreover, there have been few channels of communication through which Ethiopian intellectuals can develop their minds and stimulate their imaginations. There are no periodicals to serve as a medium for such communication. One possibility, the *Ethiopian Observer,* is not quite an exception. Limited resources have kept it from operating at as high a level as available talent might permit, and its basically apologetic orientation renders implausible its claims to be "A Journal of Independent Opinion." The daily newspapers which feature contributed articles—the *Ethiopian Herald,* the *Addis Zaman,* and the Amharic sections of the *Voice of Ethiopia*—have tended to exclude pieces that have anything to do with highly controversial matters. Nor are there many social occasions for the serious discussion of intellectual matters. Professional associations, clubs devoted to intellectual matters, and even informal discussion groups exist not at all or else in a very haphazard form.

Contact with the intellectual world outside Ethiopia is almost as meager. Foreign-educated Ethiopians tend to become intellectually demoralized on returning home. The loss of a taste for reading has frequently been one of the first casualties experienced by Western-educated Ethiopians on return from abroad. Only a few hardy souls attempt to maintain some sort of link with the outside world, through subscribing to such magazines as the *New Statesman, Paris Soir,* or *New Republic.* For most of them, coming home means a cessation of the most elementary intellectual functions, other

* In 1963 an Institute of Ethiopian Studies was established at Haile Selassie I University, including a substantial Ethiopiana library and museum.

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than those necessary to perform their jobs. They do not attempt to maintain and build personal libraries, though there are a few exceptions to this. The three small bookstores in Addis Ababa offer only the most insubstantial fare.

Nor, finally, have more than a handful of private individuals taken upon themselves the charge of a scholarly or literary calling. Although Marcel Cohen heralded the birth of a printed literature in Amharic as early as 1925,[58] writing is still not very important on the Ethiopian scene.* The output of original books and pamphlets in Amharic averaged less than fifteen a year over the past two decades. The presses and bookstores distribute Amharic publications indifferently at best. Much of the literary impetus produced by the desire of many Ethiopians to write, and the obvious need for good writing that would address itself to the intellectual demands of the present generation, has been sapped by economic, political, and cultural factors.

The economic factors include the high cost of printing; the diminutive market; and the absence of publishing houses. If an author wants to be read, he must normally pay for publication himself. Those who cannot must either find a patron in the Crown—frequently a highly lucrative arrangement—or resort to mimeographic duplication, or else remain unpublished. The censorship system and anxiety about spontaneous expression of any sort which has been fostered by prevailing political conditions constitute additional obstacles to literary development.

The paucity of serious writing has been the result no less of prevailing cultural conditions. The low intellectual level of his potential audience, the absence of channels for criticism, and the dearth of precedent make it difficult for the Ethiopian writer to determine good standards of writing. The confused state of Amharic, owing to regional variations and the absence of consensus on neologisms and loan words for expressing modern concepts, poses many problems on the level of sheer vocabulary. The temptation to get into print quickly, if the financial and political barriers can be hurdled, exceeds the temptation to work long and hard on an opus of quality. The desire to pontificate frequently eclipses the quest for understanding.

Those conditions which have inhibited the growth of Amharic literature—poverty, governmental reluctance to provide sufficient freedom and support, the newness of the modernizing culture, and the motivational level of the intellectuals themselves—may be viewed more broadly as responsible for the relative barrenness of Ethiopian intellectual life as a whole. Insofar as these conditions change in the coming decades, a radical change in the quality and organization of Ethiopian intellectual life may be expected. As a sociological

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* This is no longer due, however, to the negative attitude toward writing as such which was discussed in chapter iii. That traditional inhibition has been largely removed—primarily, it seems, by the postwar requirement that all legal accusations and court proceedings be set down in writing.

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phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571 and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178 of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession 565 of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554 ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642] ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177] rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556] imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642] growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647] nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701] force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178 Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests 571 on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554 the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871 the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178 tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565 the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643] political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178 571

* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 [439] million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

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178 past. The intellectuals are the product of a secular school system which is, as
571 we have seen, a structure foreign to Abyssinian tradition. Their members are
[177] drawn from all parts of Ethiopian society, and in almost no cases consist of
[871] Western-educated members of the old group of literati, the *dabtarā*. The question of their integration into what has remained an essentially traditional social system has thus been Ethiopia's main sociological dilemma during the present decade. We shall return to this question after considering the composition and general situation of the intellectual class.

571 Whatever his line of work, the Ethiopian intellectual tends to be employed
463 by the government, since employment opportunities in the private sector are
[464] still extremely limited; and where such exist, the government has often claimed priority over the intellectual's services by virtue of its having educated him. Many of the intellectuals work as public administrators, in the middle echelons of the government bureaucracy, with the titles of "assistant," "director," and "director general"; and there has been a growing tendency
[875] to appoint them in the higher levels, especially since 1961. Hundreds of them now work as teachers in the elementary and secondary schools,* and some six dozen teach at the college level. A small but growing number are employed as physicians, medical workers, engineers, and legal advisers in various government institutions. Still another group works in the small communications field—on the staffs of the various newspapers, the patriotic monthly *Menen,* and Radio Addis Ababa. The small group holding jobs outside the government works as engineers and bureaucrats in industrial firms, as employees of the Ethiopian Air Lines, or have small commercial or agricultural enterprises of their own.

571 With respect to interaction among the intellectuals, however, the most
871 important distinction among them has been the place where they received their education. Here we may speak of two main groups: those who received part of their education abroad, the "foreign-educated" or "returnees"; and those who received all their education in Ethiopia, the "local-educated" or "locals."†

The Returnees

Close to two hundred Ethiopians studied abroad prior to the Italian occu-
[177] pation. Since French was then the official European language in Ethiopia,

* About forty-five hundred Ethiopians, of varying levels of educational attainment, were teaching in government schools of all types in 1960–61, according to the Ministry of Education school census for that year.

† This term is used as a neutral descriptive category, free from any negative connotations it may have acquired when first coined by the returnees. More recently, the West African term "been-to" has been incorporated into Amharic for referring to the returnee.

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quite a few of these men went to school in France and Switzerland, while others studied in Egypt, England, the United States, and Italy. In general, this first group of returnees was enthusiastic and outspoken in their desire to modernize the country. They were emboldened by the feeling that Haile Selassie was their champion, though some of them, who took plans for a Young Ethiopia movement with them into exile during the occupation, felt a need for more radical reforms than the Emperor was willing to admit.

The pre-occupation intellectuals have no significant voice as such in Ethiopia today. Many of them were massacred by the Italians following the attempt on Graziani's life in 1937. Those who survived have been scattered, some being so thoroughly absorbed in the new nobility as to lose their identity as intellectuals, others tending to lead somewhat isolated and demoralized lives. Only the handful of older military officers, who were trained at the St. Cyr Academy in France, retain any semblance of common identity based on prewar study abroad.

In speaking of the returnees, then, we speak essentially of a group whose education abroad dates to the late forties and after. The typical postliberation returnee has studied from three to five years abroad in an English-speaking institution, under the sponsorship of the Ethiopian government; though there are many exceptions to this type.

As of June, 1959, the main countries in which some five hundred Ethiopians had studied since the mid-forties were: United States and Canada, 38 per cent; United Kingdom, 20 per cent; Lebanon (American University of Beirut), 17 per cent; Western Germany, 10 per cent; and India, 4 per cent. This pattern began to change somewhat at the end of the fifties as, in addition to these countries, Ethiopians in increasingly large numbers began to attend schools in Egypt, Italy, France, Israel, and Sweden. The subjects pursued by these students covered the whole academic spectrum—from dairying and forestry to languages and theology. Most of them, however, concentrated in one of four fields: social sciences, 30 per cent; engineering, 23 per cent; education, 12 per cent; and medical sciences, 12 per cent. Notably underrepresented in their studies were the fields of business and the natural sciences.

The length of time spent abroad varied considerably. Of the three hundred students who had returned by 1958 for whom complete information is available, 15 per cent studied abroad for only one year and 18 per cent for two years; 36 per cent were abroad from three to five years, 25 per cent from six to eight years, and 6 per cent for nine or more years. The education of about half of these students was paid for by the Ethiopian government itself. Others went on scholarships given by the United States government through AID (20 per cent); by other foreign governments, chiefly West Germany and

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571 871 177 [648] India (10 per cent); and by international organizations, chiefly WHO and ICAO (8 per cent). The others were financed privately, either by their families (8 per cent), or, in a few cases (3 per cent), by religious groups or business firms.

571 829 177 Given this variety of educational background, it is not surprising that the experience of study abroad has had a variable effect on the returnees. Their images of modernity are differently colored according to the country where they have received their higher education. Their archetypes for the modern component of language vary according to the language in which they have received their technical training.

Despite such variety—which may ultimately serve to enrich their cultural life more than to fragment it—several effects of the experience abroad appear common to nearly all the returnees. These include a radical broadening of perspective; the taste for a high standard of living; greater appreciation of political freedom; a heightened sense of Ethiopian identity; and an increase in nationalistic sentiment.

571 829 177 186 Because Ethiopian students are highly motivated to learn what goes on about them in foreign countries, their travel abroad has tended to broaden their outlooks rather than to confirm their prejudices. This expansion of perspective alters their attitude toward Ethiopia in two different ways. On the one hand, by enabling them to evaluate aspects of Ethiopian life they had previously taken for granted, it has made them more aggressively critical about conditions at home. On the other hand, it has given them a greater sense of pride about Ethiopia. They have noticed that, however advanced their host country, it had certain shortcomings of its own, a sort of observation which has tended to ease the sting of cultural inferiority inevitably felt during the stay in a more modernized society.

> Before going to the United States, I pictured it as the most perfect country on earth. We students in Ethiopia believed that everything good and beautiful comes from America. After studying there, I was disappointed in many ways. For example, I found the Americans to be hypocritical—they go to church, and don't care about religion; they talk about tolerance, and are still quite prejudiced. This was a great lesson for me. I can never be so romantic about a foreign country again, and can appreciate Ethiopia's strengths as well as its weaknesses better now.

Short travel tours sometimes had a similar effect:

> I spent several weeks in Yugoslavia. . . . And I must say—despite how backward we are here, we live much more happily than the Yugoslavs. The people themselves are wonderful—warm and generous; but their lives are miserable. That experience was really quite a surprise for me.

571 829 177 No matter what its shortcomings, the host country inevitably accustomed Ethiopians abroad to a higher standard of living than they had known at

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home—except for the difficulty of having to do without servants. Those students whose rural background and limited intellectual experience had led them to consider Addis Ababa as one of the most advanced cities in the world were often shocked by the comparison. No less shocking was the moral climate, which permitted one to express oneself freely and honestly. The taste for intellectual freedom was added to that of political freedom, as students whose horizons were limited by the meager intellectual fare at home came into hungry contact with authors like Marx and Freud, Dewey and Russell.

However much the Ethiopian students abroad might seek to lose themselves in the host culture, they were not permitted to do so. In the mirror of foreigners' regards, their identity as Ethiopians took clearer shape, transcending narrower tribal identifications. Questions about Ethiopia by foreigners aroused greater interest in Ethiopia's history and contemporary problems. A number of students were thus moved to dip into the literature on their country produced by travelers and scholars in the past, and some of them came to write theses and dissertations on problems related to Ethiopia's development.

All of these factors—broadening of perspective, acquaintance with a higher economic standard, less inhibited discussions, and greater self-consciousness as Ethiopians—contributed to a spirit of nationalist dedication. This spirit was confirmed or aroused in all but two groups of the returnees. One, consisting of children of some wealthy members of the new nobility, went abroad chiefly for the prestige and pleasure involved. For them the experience was an extended holiday; they were playboys more than students. The other group consists of those who were abroad for too short a time to have a complete educational experience—in some cases, for as little as three months. These students have tended to use the tour abroad chiefly as a weapon with which to lord it over their peers on return and otherwise to serve narrow personal ambitions. Those students, however, for whom study abroad entailed a more or less serious encounter with higher education and a more modernized culture normally experienced a swelling aspiration to serve their country. They returned home deeply critical of the status quo and determined to contribute substantially to the modernization of their society.

Ostensibly, the returnees have been well situated for making such a contribution. Thanks to prudent government policy since the early fifties, they have been enabled to enjoy a minimally comfortable standard of living. Given a monthly allowance from the moment they step off the plane, they have been automatically salaried at a scale based largely on the academic degree attained, with A.B.'s starting at Eth$450 a month and Ph.D.'s at Eth$700. In addition, provisions have been made for them to borrow money from the government in order to finance heavy investments like furniture or, more usually, an automobile.

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571 511 automobile. All this permits returnees to live at a standard which, while clearly inferior to what they enjoyed abroad, is well above that of all their countrymen except the higher nobility. Their income compares favorably [465] with the prevailing monthly wages for policemen (Eth$25–$30) and district (*waradā*) governors (Eth$100), and not unfavorably with the salary earned by vice-ministers (Eth$1,000). Compared with the more sumptuous residences of the new nobility, their housing is threadbare, their staff of servants small; but usually their homes contain one or two modern appliances—a radio or phonograph, perhaps a refrigerator.

571 554 The returnees have, moreover, been shown deference from many quarters: from the modernizing sector of the public which, in its growing esteem for education, has adulated them as the most educated Ethiopians and, in the early fifties, regarded them as something of national heroes; from resident Europeans and Americans, whose perception of shared understandings with the returnees has flattered them; and from the government, which at the least has shown consistent concern for their economic security and at best has given them responsibilities and status that they would not be granted in a more modernized society without considerably more experience.

Despite such apparent advantages, however, it must be said that the returnees as a whole have so far done little either to modernize their country or even to establish themselves as a self-respecting status group. Their failure to do so has become one of the most widely discussed questions in Ethiopia in recent years, both among the more self-critical of the returnees and among critical Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian observers. Instead of being leaders of the new era, they have been little more than misfits in the old. If the central quality of the life of the new nobility has been anxiety, that of the intellectuals has been frustration. In the passionate words of one of them: "There is a wound, a boiling within each and every one of the returnees." Theirs is the frustration of modernized individuals attempting to live meaningful lives in a society that has remained essentially traditional.

571 829 The ideological aspect of this dilemma is that no synthesis of traditional and modern perspectives has yet been effected which has won the adherence of a sizable number of intellectuals and which could serve to energize their transformation of the status quo. Consensus exists only with regard to a vague sense of the inadequacy of the traditional system. There is no sense of direction. Partly this reflects deprivation due to maladjustment in personal areas, but it also represents a genuine cultural problem.

Foreign-educated Ethiopians return intellectually aware of the traditional nature of their society, but emotionally unprepared to cope with the tenacity of tradition or with the paucity of modern institutions and culture. The experience of culture shock seems greater when they return to Ethiopia than

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when they first went abroad. Then, they were taut with anticipation, eager to learn all they could and to enjoy life in a more modern society. On return, they were dismayed to find things so "backward": "I was struck at the airport by what I saw . . . the sadness in the people's faces, their undernourishment, their despair"—and plunged into a situation where their roles are ambiguous and their convictions are assaulted daily.

571 829

The perspective acquired in the course of prolonged study and residence abroad usually generates a sharp critique of Ethiopian culture on the occasion of return. In some extreme cases, Ethiopian tradition appears devoid of any value.

> Everything in our past has been based on the oppression of the masses by the feudal lords. We must overthrow it all and start from scratch.
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> • • • •
>
> There is nothing in Ethiopian traditions that I find worth while. There has been no dynamic, no development, unless prodded from the outside or above. The music and poetry are repetitive; the social order is stagnant.

Most returnees, however, stop far short of wholesale condemnation of their traditions. They become aggravated by particular customs, such as *ĭshi naga* —Amharic for *mañana*—or certain requirements of etiquette. Nonetheless they have retained a basic attachment to their traditions which is re-awakened in the course of a somewhat painful re-adjustment.

> The main change since returning has been my education to be Ethiopian, to view things with the eyes of an Ethiopian. At first I expected things to be as we saw them in the United States; then I came to see the real concrete problems here, to be more understanding.
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> • • • •
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> The ideas I acquired abroad have not changed, only my vim and vigor. One comes to see the setbacks, the need to take two steps back in order to achieve one forward. . . . In the major areas, I identify with the old culture—in such matters as politeness, reserve, hospitality, and being concerned about one's relatives and close friends. In the minor respects, no. The elders carry some of these things to extremes. If someone dies, they go and sit for three days; we go to pay our respects for half an hour. There are a hundred and one customs that fall into this category.

A few returnees even come to acquire a nostalgic interest in the things of the old culture. They become eager to have Ethiopian history and culture studied by scholars. Some have expressed a desire to take up the study of Ge'ez and *qenē*.

All such resolutions of the cultural problem are highly personal syntheses. They remain stable only so long as the individual's life is satisfactory in other

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571 829 respects. They are not anchored in a *conscience collective*. They are islands of clarity in a sea of confusion that becomes evident in remarks like the following:

> While we were in high school here, we still followed the old beliefs. We went abroad and lost them all. Nothing has yet replaced them. We have no beliefs—in any sphere—religion, social, politics.
>
> • • • •
>
> We are all of us confused today. Perhaps it is that the change has come too fast. At any rate, we have lost our values. We don't know what is best for us to do.
>
> • • • •
>
> I don't believe there is anyone in the entire country who knows where we are heading or where we should be heading.

This confusion is the confusion of all Ethiopia today, but because the returnees became so deeply involved in Western culture while abroad they alone have experienced it so acutely. Were they engaged in satisfying work and enmeshed in family obligations, moreover, such malaise would be reduced. Precisely in these fundamental areas, however, the returnees are typically frustrated.

571 464 The burden of the returnees' frustration in work has not been to locate employment, but to find meaningful employment. It is true that several of the foreign-educated have had to wait for months, in some cases for over a year, after returning to Ethiopia before they were actually given employment. With the establishment of a placement board for returned students in the Ministry of Education about 1955, this difficulty has been minimized. The more fundamental problem has been that the institutional system has been insufficiently modernized to make proper use of individuals who had acquired specialized training abroad. There has been great variability of experience in this regard. Many of the technical intelligentsia have found suitable positions, especially those in the fields of medicine and engineering, and have led quite productive and satisfying work lives since shortly after their return. Many others, however, have been demoralized by the experience of having to occupy simple administrative positions which anyone with a little common sense could handle, or by being saddled with purely administrative responsibilities even when initially placed in a technical job. In such circumstances they have found themselves forgetting most of what they learned while abroad and felt themselves not being used.

571 466 Even when located in work broadly commensurate with their training received abroad, the returnees have been frustrated by numerous hardships in the work situation and by the difficulties of reform. As might be expected, work facilities are generally inferior to those which the returnees became

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familiar with in more industrialized societies. Nor is there any disposition to improvise improvements with what facilities are available. Little attention is paid to the condition of offices, for example, which are normally located in dark, drab, depressing rooms. Furthermore, the operating procedures of Ethiopian administration are bound to frustrate those who have been conditioned to more rationalized systems of organization. Departments frequently operate with ex post facto budgets. Filing systems are hopelessly archaic. There is virtually no public consciousness of the importance of work *time*.

> Ethiopian persons are not geared to a timetable. I have to keep telling myself: "This is how we do it here." Seeing a ten-story building go up in a month, grass and all—that is not for here. . . . I get most annoyed when I cannot finish some matter as promised. Not wanting to reveal the name of my colleague or superior who is holding up the action, I have to make up excuses. Eventually I run out of excuses and this bothers me. . . . Sometimes I get angry and say: "I have given my word to someone, and must have the matter ready today; please sign it." And am told: "Oh, well, don't rush things so."

Work relationships have frequently exasperated the returnees. There has been little inclination to give technically competent employees proper jurisdiction over the personnel in their departments. Technically uneducated superiors have tended to make unrealistic demands—for example, requesting an immediate report on a complicated question that requires weeks to prepare. On the other hand, they have tended to assume that their age and experience are equivalent to the technical knowledge of the foreign-trained, so that technically warranted projects have been casually dismissed because they do not strike the fancy of the superior.

The returnees have not been so despondent about these conditions which, after all, could be changed—than they are about the apparent futility of trying to change them. Older employees are quick to resent alterations in the accustomed order.

> My efforts to reform are opposed by most of the men who run the [postal] system now. Some of them have been working there for forty years or so, and they want to keep things just the way they were when mail came in on camels, because they have always done it that way.

Such resistance to change at the workaday level is tacitly supported by those in the upper echelons of authority—the new nobility. In them the returnees have found their main antagonists and from them have received their most painful lacerations.

The *shamaggelotch*, or "elders," as they are termed by the intelligentsia, have by no means presented a solidary front in opposition to the young modernizers. On the contrary, the attitude of the new nobility toward the

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571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

571 Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
584 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
834 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
178 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The tradition-
al mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

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furniture, etc.—are equally burdensome investments if the returnee does not 571 *
possess them. Furthermore, the traditional large wedding is still expected in 585
most cases. In the city this involves an enormous expense—as much as 511
Eth$2,000-$4,000—which often puts the groom in debt for several years.*

There are many returnees for whom these factors are excuses more than in- 571
superable obstacles, or who frankly prefer the extended bachelordom made 582
possible by the greater freedom of the modernizing sector to an uncertain
match. If, as frequently is the case, they would marry only an educated wife, [581]
they may be discouraged by the shortage of educated Ethiopian women; or
beset by too much pride, if coming from a humble background, to ask for the
hand of an educated girl who is likely to come from an upper-class family.
They may be victims of the cycle of antagonism that has developed between [578]
educated men and women in Ethiopia, the former attacking the latter for demanding too much in the way of material things and being only superficially modernized—"half-baked"—and the latter indicting the former for preferring foreign girls and unjustly neglecting Ethiopian women.

But the root of the problem is often deeper (leaving aside, for this discus- 581
sion, characterological factors). It is entwined with a basic insecurity about 178
the whole idea of marriage in the transitional atmosphere of contemporary 177
Ethiopia. Perhaps nowhere in the minds of the returnees do traditional and 571
modern norms stand in such delicate counterpoise as with regard to the question of the sort of wife one should marry and the proper type of relation to have with her. Should he prefer the traditional woman, modestly dressed and inconspicuous, or the Western ideal of a sexually attractive female? Should he have a wife who stays at home all the time, or one whom he takes along to social gatherings? Should he have a wife with whom to share interests and discuss problems, or one to order about and keep in her place? The returnees have normally been attracted by the Western marriage pattern while abroad, but it is so out of place in the Ethiopian context that many are troubled by the prospect on return. The foreign-educated man feels he should have an educated wife, but he also feels threatened by a woman who is independent, especially if she is holding a job. Such ambivalence adds an additional dimension of vulnerability to the returnee's position.

In sum: the conditions of life receptive to a modernizing intellectual 121
stratum have not yet been established in Ethiopia. The personal frustrations 571
of the returnees are an inevitable consequence of their being the bearers of 177
modern culture in a traditional oligarchical order—especially one that has 178

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* A new custom has developed in response to this problem. It has become the practice in some [178]
offices for sheets of paper to be circulated prior to a wedding in the ministry or agency where the groom is employed. Co-workers write the amount they wish to be deducted from their salaries in their behalf. Most recently, modest weddings have started to become respectable.

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121 been affected by modernizing agents for but a relatively brief period and in
571 a relatively diluted fashion. The beliefs and values which the returnees
177 acquired while abroad concern national development, technical competence,
178 and individuality, while the norms of the social structure in which they must live are based on the values of loyalty to monarch, ascribed status, and authoritarian relations.

121 Of many possible types of response to such a situation of strain, four are
571 common among the Ethiopian intelligentsia. These we may designate by the
177 terms Opportunism, Withdrawal, Reformism, and Rebellion. With reference
178 to the three variables of commitment to modern goals and norms, acceptance
156 of existing authorities, and the distinction between "activity" and "passivity," these patterns may be represented schematically as in Table 14.[59]

TABLE 14

MODES OF ADAPTATION OF ETHIOPIAN RETURNEES

	Commitment to Modern Values	Acceptance of Existing Authorities	"Activity"
Opportunism	−	+	+
Withdrawal	+	−	−
Reformism	+	+	+
Rebellion	+	−	+

Opportunism is the mode of adaptation in which the returnee's commitment to modern goals and norms is eclipsed by his passion for status, power,
[554] and income. He differs from the traditional aspirant for high position in Abyssinia in that two of his status qualifications are novel—residence abroad, and a university degree—and above all in that the pursuit of his personal goals entails a *renunciation* of nationalistic ideals and universalistic standards which were nurtured while abroad. For some opportunists this is no real problem: their study abroad was all along essentially a façade to be used in advancing their careers. But for the others the process of becoming an opportunist is a gradual one and attended by chronic self-recriminations, as the returnee finds himself compulsively agreeing with his superiors and flattering them on every occasion, and performing actions primarily for the sake of advancement rather than for the sake of doing a job well.

> It is impossible to go on pursuing progressive principles indiscriminately. I sometimes see my friends doing things now which we used to condemn

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when we were students abroad together. I wonder at times if I am losing sight of my principles altogether.

121 571 178 177 156

Withdrawal is the solution of those who have retained their principles at the expense of being effectual in action. The routes of escape are varied. One way is transferring attention to problems outside the country—to international relations, problems of pan-Africanism, or the gossip about London, Paris, and New York.

To me the independence of all African nations is more important than the progress of Ethiopia.

Some spend their energies in convivial relations with resident Westerners (diplomatic and technical assistance personnel, foreign businessmen) or in the traditional rounds of family visiting. Quite a few returnees lose themselves in card-playing or chess whenever they can, and a number have taken to heavy drinking. Often the returnee who withdraws shows no "symptoms" other than a general constriction of his life into narrow work routines and creature functions. At the same time he may be experiencing a fairly acute sense of estrangement.

Our generation is not really living. We are not "engaged." The simple weaver—most of the people in this country—are "engaged." We are not; we live from day to day. When I leave work I go to the Ras Hotel or somewhere else. I don't want to go home, there is nothing there for me. I have nothing to work for. I have no family, nor any interest in saving money.

The third type of response, Reformism, involves the attempt both to maintain principles and to be effective in action under the existing political order. This alternative places great demands on the personality system and might well be designated as the pattern of "moral heroism."

What we lack today is proper organization. In default of organization, we are forced to rely on morality.

The reformist returnee serves his country according to universalistic standards even though these norms are scarcely institutionalized; even though, in other words, he is likely to be criticized and even punished for maintaining standards in the face of demands by superiors and relatives to do otherwise, or for solving problems in a rational manner on his own initiative. Yet if he is officially disregarded or censured, his efforts do not go unnoticed by the patriotic modernizing elements of the population who, in a covert, informal system of communication, tend to establish severe judgments on the "bad guys" and the "good guys," and to idolize the latter as potential leaders.

In the case of Rebellion, finally, the attempt is made to be active in the pursuit of modern goals but in a spirit of basic alienation from the existing

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121 authorities. Except for a very few eccentric individuals who have seemed
571 oblivious to the dangers of speaking out their criticism of the status quo in
177 public, this has in the nature of current circumstances necessarily involved
178 clandestine activity. Returnees have been involved in small conspiratorial
156 groups since the mid-fifties. The December, 1960, coup d'état has been the
[669] most ambitious rebellious project to be acted out so far. Similarly motivated
[668] activities have included the duplication and distribution of subversive literature, and the formation of small groups as groundwork for an eventual political party.

Our data do not permit reliable estimates of the frequency of these different modes of adaptation among the returnees. It is important to note, however, that individuals often change from one mode to another in the course of their experience after return and that many follow more than one pattern at the same time. It is unlikely that the total number of returnees oriented primarily as rebels has ever exceeded two per cent. Most of them move in and out of phases of Reformism, Withdrawal, and Opportunism, depending to a large extent on the accidents of their appointments. A more concrete picture of their experience may be suggested by the following case study, that of a Western-educated Ethiopian who went from a phase of Withdrawal to one of Reformism tinged with Opportunism.

121 The Adjustment of "Haile": Case Study of a Returnee

571 October, 1958. Haile has recently returned from four years of study in a
159 Western country. He speaks very critically about the state of
156 things in Ethiopia. He is particularly upset by the prevailing inefficiency, the lack of industriousness, and the interminable procrastination (*Ishi naga*).

January, 1959. Haile seems deeply depressed. The ministry in which he has been placed affords him no opportunity to work effectively and the job he has bears no relation to what he was trained for. He has withdrawn more into himself, but to all outward appearances plays perfectly well, with great self-assurance, the role of the Amhara bureaucrat.

July, 1959. Now Haile is working in a different ministry, in a job somewhat more closely related to his training. He appears to feel productive and useful now, and his criticism is constructive. For example, he frequently compares the situation in the United States and Ethiopia, to show how the same sort of problem can be solved more readily in the U.S. because of its greater facilities. Though Ethiopia's comparative handicaps frustrate him, he talks of plans for the development of Ethiopia with some enthusiasm. . . . Haile complains of an

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overload of work, noting that he must not only do his own work but also rectify the mistakes made by others which are brought to him. In his whole branch of the ministry, he finds only two really effective workers besides himself, and they, too, are returnees. . . . He feels fortunate in having encountered no major opposition to the things he is doing in his work and points happily to the fact that his assistant minister has supported him throughout.

October, 1959. Haile now is saying that things are fine in Addis Ababa and stresses the great improvement that has been made during the past five years. He claims that he is getting along fine in his ministry, because his job is straight "busy work." Even so, he is not a pure "ritualist"; he has already negotiated a number of reforms in the operations of his office. His general outlook seems bright—partly, no doubt, because he is "arriving" (what with printed name-cards and a smoothly functioning job) but also because he has a pretty fiancée whom he plans to marry next year. . . . At another point, however, he shows great exasperation over the considerable conflict among factions within the ministry. He decries the nepotism practiced by the heads of these factions. He says that he tries to stay independent of their intrigues.

June, 1960. Recently Haile was given additional responsibilities in his ministry, and he expects a raise in salary soon. Although this new work is still further removed from the subjects he studied while abroad than was his previous job, he no longer complains about not being hired to do what he had been trained for or about not being used. He remains unhappy about his minister, who brings in his own men from the outside rather than promote men from the ranks—"or else I would have been a director general by now." On the other hand, he mentions with evident pleasure the fact that the Emperor sent over a gift at the time of his wedding. . . . Haile's wife is a simple, traditional sort of Ethiopian girl. He seems happy with her and with their home—an old, poorly built structure that is falling apart, but which she has taken pains to enliven with a few decorations, and has equipped with a radio. He looks forward to the prospect of building a house on their own land sometime in the future. Meanwhile, a baby is on the way. . . . The circle has come full swing. Haile talks proudly about his work, his family, and his country.

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The Locals

• 571 Ethiopians with only a secondary school education comprise a group which must be reckoned as part of a burgeoning intelligentsia. Relative to the mass of the population, their intellectual attainments are high indeed. Although their cultural level is usually lower than that of the returnees, they include a few extremely cultivated self-educated men, and others whose intense intellectual curiosity would put the average returnee to shame. Apart from such considerations, however, the fact that they are among the small number of bearers of modern culture in present-day Ethiopia suffices to justify considering them as part of a secular educated elite. The very small but growing number of graduates from Ethiopian colleges who do not go abroad for graduate study may for the present discussion be included in this group, though in some respects their situation is intermediate between the locals and the returnees.

The basic differences between the returnees and locals is that the latter never lost touch with Ethiopia. Their growth has been more closely in step with the growth of their nation. Not having been accustomed to the comforts of a more modern environment, they find it less trying to live with what Addis Ababa has to offer. Not having become so deeply attached to norms rooted in an alien culture, they need not rack themselves re-adjusting. They have been spared the extremes of "soaring and collapsing enthusiasm" which inform the experience of so many foreign-educated men in traditional societies.[60]

Their cultural orientation is far less anomic than it is patriotic. They have remained enmeshed in familiar personal nexuses, to kin and schoolmates, ethnic and regional confreres, which have minimized the disruptive effect of rapid culture diffusion. Because of their essentially particularistic orientation, they are far less perplexed about the problems of institutionalizing universalistic standards than they are enthusiastic about anything that represents indigenous achievement, such as the modern secular songs created and performed by talented members of the Imperial Bodyguard or the National Patriotic Association.

Their work life is often quite gratifying: it represents, in any case, the best that they have ever known at first hand. It is not so hard for them to get used to rudimentary facilities and procedures, or to lower standards of performance. They are supplely adaptive to the moods of their superiors and the nuances of domestic political intrigue, even though they may be moved periodically to denounce such intrigue.

The locals also tend to be more content in their sexual adjustment than the returnees. The local can live happily for a long time as a bachelor, maintaining polite and distant relations with the traditional girls and frequenting the [548]

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brothels for dancing and more intimate relations. (Returnees normally do not 571 have patience for the shy, traditional girls; and they are too concerned about [548] public opinion to be seen visiting brothels. When they or the locals do visit the brothels, it is often by way of a backdoor entrance.) When they [581] marry, the locals almost invariably choose a traditional type of wife with relatively little education and with whom they expect to have an authoritarian relationship.

In sum: the local is not so afflicted by those problems which derive from the central dilemma of the returnee—how to fulfil himself according to modern standards in an intractable, traditional environment. The local's dilemma 571 typically lies in a different realm, that of economic and social mobility. 554 Whereas the returnee has been given a comparatively high income and status almost as a matter of course, the local has normally started his work life with a relatively low salary and little prestige. If the returnee has felt deprived relative to the Westerners in whose society he has lived, the local has felt deprived relative to the returnee.

The local lives on a day-to-day basis at a relatively simple standard. Though 571 he shares the returnee's passion for woolen suits and, in many cases, for a car 511 of his own, he is not, like the returnee, preoccupied with the quest for housing 177 that conforms to Western standards. Except for those with extraordinary 571 talents and family connections, the locals have had difficulty locating jobs that 464 they feel are not beneath their dignity and which pay salaries sufficient to cover their relatively modest needs. They customarily receive a starting salary [465] in the neighborhood of Eth$150. The more ambitious and fortunate among them have, by changing jobs, manipulating superiors, and improving skills, worked their way up to salaries in the Eth$400–$500 category. Some have be- [875] come provincial teachers for a while, in order to accumulate money on which to live while shopping for a position in Addis Ababa and with which to influence some higher official to grant it to them. There remains a hard core of 571 locals who feel they are underpaid and live in constant resentment of this 156 situation.

This resentment has produced a general sort of negativism which characterizes many of the locals, a negativism expressed in the form of backbiting and denunciation of the higher government officials and the nobility generally. They decry social injustice and the uses of nepotism. They moralize profusely against those whom fortune has shown greater favors. But not all their social criticism is born of resentment. There are also among the locals many young men who are comfortably situated but fired by patriotic fervor with a desire for social reform.

The local is as deeply concerned about asserting his status vis-à-vis the less [554] educated as he is to advance his position in the hierarchy. Locals are extreme-

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571 ly meticulous about the state of their clothes. They have their shoes shined
156 several times daily, even when they are eating only one solid meal per day.
[554] They are intent on receiving the proper deference—for example, on being
served properly in a hotel. This concern for status is projected in the form of
[186] an intense nationalism that considers the speedy displacement of non-Ethiopians holding important jobs in the country a more urgent need than the establishment of effective modern institutions and universalistic standards.

Some locals can be found, of course, whose problems and aspirations resemble those of the returnees, and vice versa. However, the characteristics here associated with the two types follow logically from their basic situation and have been observed sufficiently to justify this depicting of them in terms of ideal types. The distinction is further justified on the grounds that the two
[578] groups have developed a modicum of corporate identity and a degree of mutual antagonism which was particularly pronounced in the mid-fifties.

571 The returnees were at first inclined to regard their locally *educated coun-*
186 trymen with snobbish pride because of the keen sense of superiority which
578 study abroad conferred. It was natural, moreover, for the returnees to associate most closely with those who had shared the very important personal experience of living abroad, and so they tended to neglect their former schoolmates who never crossed the seas. At times, in fact, they scarcely bothered to exchange greetings with them.

The sense that they were being regarded as inferiors embittered the locals. At the same time they were jealous that they, too, had not had the opportunity to study abroad. These mutual incriminations were heightened by economic competition, the returnees claiming that those who stayed behind had the advantage of working their way up into significant and lucrative positions, the locals believing that a degree from abroad was an automatic entree to a good job.

The latent antagonism between locals and returnees came to a head in 1957, with the simultaneous publication in the *Voice of Ethiopia* of an article by a local criticizing returnee behavior[61] and the presentation of a play by the National Patriotic Association which caricatured them. The play, for example, showed a returnee entering the office of a minister, patting him on the back, puffing cigarette smoke into his eyes, sitting back with his feet up on the minister's desk and talking on and on disrespectfully. Another returnee was shown failing to recognize his own mother when she comes into his office, exclaiming: "Woman, get out of here!" A small group of returnees protested these insults with a petition to the Emperor, who is said to have brought some criticism to bear upon the authorities involved.

571 With the return of increasing numbers of Ethiopians from study abroad,
554 however, the prestige of a foreign degree has diminished, and the appearance of classes of locally educated A.B.'s, who have remained in the country to

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work, has further blurred the cleavage between returnees and locals. Finally, the returnees' growing awareness of their own "failure" has in many cases given them added sympathy toward the locals.

> The locals have as much right to live in the land as the returnees and as much duty to help the country. They should be given responsibility commensurate with what they are able to do. Doing serious work and being a leader do not require going abroad. We may find a leader in one of these kids. . . . In private life, I may not have much to do with them: I associate with a small group of friends, as does everyone; and you can't know everybody. But I have no contempt for the locals, and some of them are my best friends.
>
> • • • •
>
> The locals are the real patriots around here and the ones from whom real action will come.

The locals, in turn, seem to have become less suspicious that the returnees are *looking down on them. Yet, in more recent years, they have found different* grounds on which to be critical of the returnees. They see the returnees as alienated from Ethiopian life, withdrawn from public action, and consumed with private concerns, instead of living up to expectations and exercising dynamic leadership in the transformation of Ethiopian society.

> The returnees know nothing about Ethiopia when they leave, and when they come back they are just like the *faranj*. We, who have not studied much, cannot see far. We know little more than to do our daily routine. But they, who have the vision, don't do anything. They borrow thousands of dollars when they return, to buy furniture, rent a home, get a car, and so on; and that is all they think about.

The dissatisfaction of many locals with the returnees has in fact increased their own self-esteem and ambition to exert leadership themselves.

In terms of the total pattern of stratification in Ethiopia, however, the factors uniting locals and returnees outweigh those separating them. Despite differences of emphasis, they share a basic estrangement from the traditional masses and elites and a deep antagonism toward the government and most of the new nobility. They are unanimous in feeling that something is dreadfully wrong in the state of Ethiopia. Frequently they cannot articulate just what they object to, or else they seize upon some flagrant social evil as the bête noire: with the locals tending to be most outspoken against the widespread prostitution, or alcoholism, or the abuses of the courts, or the inequalities of wealth; and the returnees tending to single out inefficient practices in administration, or nepotism, or corruption in high places. Above all, perhaps, they share an increasing sense of *impatience*, a sense of being smothered in an archaic and stagnant social order, which they designate so expressively with

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the Amharic phrase *ya-ḳantu weddäsē zaman*—"the era of futile flattery."

For, whatever other aspects of modern culture they have identified with, the locals and returnees are seized with the promise of its first principle: dynamism.[62] Should they join forces, among themselves and with each other, they might create the effective intelligentsia which is indispensable for realizing this dynamism in action. They would play complementary, and equally necessary, parts; the locals contributing their greater drive and closeness to traditional society, the returnees their broader perspective and skepticism toward simplistic answers and total reforms.

There are numerous obstacles to such a progressive development. Some of them represent the persistence among the intellectuals of a number of traditional pan-Abyssinian characteristics which inhibit both the exercise of creative leadership and the capacity for solidary action. The traditional context of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters which follow. The most conspicuous obstacle, however, has been the manner in which the Ethiopian government has sought to integrate the intellectuals in the social system. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Role of the Government

In the hierarchy of values which sustained the traditional Abyssinian social order, that of the transcendental religious orientation represented by the Orthodox Church may be said to have held the paramount position. This is the sense in which, as has so often been remarked, religion has been Abyssinia's only truly unifying factor throughout the centuries. Religious charisma transferred from foreign sanctuaries—the mythical Ark of the Covenant brought from Jerusalem and the archbishop periodically imported from Egypt—provided the ultimate source of legitimacy in the society, upholding the authority of a sacred Christian monarch, church-defending warlords, and a numerous and functionally differentiated clergy. It so penetrated the social system that the basic unit of Abyssinian civil life was in fact a religious one, the parish.

In retrospect it would seem that the most profound aspect of Haile Selassie's accomplishment has been to dislodge the transcendental religious value from highest place and to replace it with the system-integrative value of loyalty to the emperor.[63] His mission has been above all a secularizing one. To accomplish it he has had greatly to increase his political and economic resources; but insofar as his regime has been accepted, and not based exclusively on sheer power—which to some extent is certainly the case—the paramount value in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie has become loyalty to the emperor as a symbol of the whole society. The autonomous significance of the church has been reduced; its extra-Ethiopian source of charisma has been cut off, and its func-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the 181
Crown. 178
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The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental 178
religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with 181
the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the 643
chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals 642
of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; 631
and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance 178
to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and 181
prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but inte- 565
grative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pur- [185]
sued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, 178
a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient 181
technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor 571
and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard 871
of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relation- 178
ship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever 643
advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his 571
personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal 871
solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

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Thanks to the untiring endeavour of Your Imperial Majesty in the field of education, we now have not only elementary and secondary schools throughout the country but also different higher educational institutions providing the youth of our country with higher education. Besides this, competent students are selected and sent abroad for specialization, as a result of which the number of Ethiopian students in foreign countries is increasing. Those of us who are now standing before Your Imperial Majesty are only a few among those who have been given such an opportunity. . . .

Your Imperial Majesty's struggle is to enable Ethiopia to benefit from the advantages of modern education in order to improve the standard of living of Your people so that Ethiopia will play adequately its part in the international community. Consequently, the public services that are rendered in the reign of Your Imperial Majesty are enormously great compared with the past. This can be seen easily by the number of ministries and other government agencies established by Your Imperial Majesty. . . .[64]

[A reply by the Emperor]:

We have been deeply touched by what you have said on behalf of the returned students. From you, We expect devotion to your country and your Emperor. . . . Endeavour to profit your country from the fruits of your education. Men are in great need today. It is not enough to be labeled as "man"—one must be worthy of the name by being of use to the community. This is the real test of education.

You must get in intimate touch with the cultural heritage of your country. Familiarise yourselves with the modes of life from which you must have been estranged naturally by your absence. You must endeavour to purge yourselves gradually of alien influence in your daily lives, and so God help you.[65]

This sort of paternal relation has served not only to promote the loyalty of his educated "children" but also to check mild cases of dissidence. Grown men with sophisticated technical training who may have voiced some critical sentiments have been called in for mild reproof: "Why have you behaved thus? Did We not always bring you fruit and other things when you were at school?"

Such a policy was no doubt viable when Ethiopians with secondary education numbered in the hundreds, but it becomes increasingly implausible as the Emperor's family of educated youth multiplies into thousands. No less relevant to its long-run futility is the fact that knowledge, unlike wealth and political position, is an inalienable possession. Their knowledge gives Western-educated Ethiopians a kind of independence of the Emperor that is lacking in most of the new nobility, and that perhaps may be compared to the private armies of the feudal lords or the power of excommunication held by the church. It was awareness of this that prompted one returnee to say: "The Emperor will have to learn that our education is not a plaything he can turn on or off as he pleases."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shĕr* and *divide et impera.* "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

people. He has been the procreator of much of what demand for modernization now exists in the country, although the Italian colonial administration must also be credited for a certain amount of this demand. By the fifties, however, the growth of the demand of modernization had become self-sustaining, if only in a relatively small part of the population. At that point Haile Selassie was unwilling, or at least unable, to take the next step, to raise national development higher in the societal value hierarchy than loyalty to the Crown. Thus, a traditional oligarchy has been maintained, in which the development of a self-respecting modern intelligentsia has been effectively restrained and its decisive ascendance as a new elite has been prevented.

The paramount sociological problem in Ethiopia in the coming decades concerns whether or not this pattern will be broken. There is no guarantee that it will be. It is highly thinkable that the opportunists among the intellectuals will be absorbed into the new nobility and that a new oligarchy will entrench itself and maintain its exclusive position by increased repression.[66] The number of young people being given secondary and college education will continue to be limited to a diminutive percentage, and the deeply rooted sentiments of the mass of the population for a regime of traditional oligarchy will not be offended. Economic development will proceed at a snail's pace, and what additional wealth is produced will flow into the pockets of a small minority. One possible outcome of such an eventuality would be that the modernizing infrastructure of the society would grow increasingly restless, culminating in a revolution which installed a modernizing oligarchy.

Alternatively, modernizing forces already unleashed in the country may gather momentum and sustain a gradual breakthrough of the new order. If one were to credit the reports of many who have spoken with the Emperor at first hand, this would be his desire. But far more than imperial approval of a distant ideal is required for it to become reality. Two conditions, above all, would be essential. One is that the systematic, if unwitting, demoralization of the intellectuals would have to be ended. Some sphere would have to be created in which universalistic standards have full sway, in which a modernizing intelligentsia can maintain and develop standards and transmit them to younger elements. The most obvious way to do this would be through a university which, by guaranteed financial support, independence from political pressures, and determined operation at a high standard, could provide the Ethiopian government and people with the technical and executive intelligentsia needed for effective modernization, and could provide an environment in which a corps of "custodians of the public good," loyal to the regime but free to express criticism, might be developed. The program for such a university was carefully drawn up by the planners of the Haile Selassie I University. It remains to be seen whether the opposition which muffled that program shortly after its inception, in the spring of 1962, was motivated primarily by

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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ORALITY AND THE SEARCH FOR LEADERSHIP

121 In the previous chapter we observed that modern-educated Ethiopians, par-
571 ticularly those who were educated abroad, acquired knowledge, skills, patriotic motivation, and social position with which they might conceivably have made substantial reforms and innovations in Ethiopia's institutions. And yet, in their own eyes as in the eyes of some high government officials and foreign observers, they have done relatively little. Their behavior has been marked by a conspicuous absence of creative leadership and solidary action.

Among many of the modern-educated this alleged sin of omission has, in turn, generated an underlying current of reproach against the government and at times against themselves. We have described some features of Ethiopia's domestic political situation which have limited the freedom of modern-educated Ethiopians to carry out progressive activities. A number of them have proceeded from awareness of those limitations to placing all blame on the government for Ethiopia's slow pace of development. Others, however, have turned some if not all of that reproach inward. "It is up to us," they say, "and we have done nothing. Why have we failed? Why have we no moral backbone, no character?"

121 This chapter and the next are concerned with the basis of this latter re-
128 proach, as well as with the more general task of enriching our understanding
571 of traditional Amhara culture. We shall proceed on the assumption that insofar as modern-educated Ethiopians have failed to take decisive steps in developing their country they have been held back by other constraints and

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

limitations in addition to those imposed by the government. In the present 121
chapter we shall deal chiefly with factors which are inhibitive of creative 128
leadership, and in the chapter which follows chiefly with factors which affect 571
the capacity for solidary action.

One of the most honest and perceptive of my foreign-educated informants 571
had this to say about the absence of creative leadership among the returnees: 157

> Our maladjustment may be more our fault than that of the government. 121
> We have been led to expect everything from the government, and have become dependent to such a point that we can scarcely think or act for ourselves.

This is a remarkable and convincing piece of self-analysis. It falls short only 571
insofar as it implies that the posture of dependence on governmental author- 157
ity is something peculiar to the modern-educated. It is true that there have 181
been certain conditions such as the "welfare" character of the secondary 121
schools, which are specific to the experience of the modern-educated and which have accentuated a tendency to overdependence. But this tendency is endemic in traditional Amhara-Tigre culture, and those modern Abyssinians who exhibit it are following an inclination deeply rooted in the needs they have acquired and the culture they have internalized in their childhood.

There are various ways in which one might conceptualize this problem. 121
It is not unrelated to what other authors have referred to variously as lack 157
of achievement motivation or lack of innovational personality. The approach of this chapter will stress certain psychoanalytic concepts and insights. In so doing, it will not attempt to delineate an Amhara "basic personality," a task well beyond the scope of the present study.[1] Rather, we shall be concerned here solely with certain kinds of motivational orientation which are widely shared among the Amhara and which frequently inform their social behavior and their cultural symbolism.

Adopting the terminology developed by Erik Erikson,[2] we may rephrase 121
the point about Amhara overdependence by saying that *in Amhara action and* 155
fantasy the social modality of "getting" figures very prominently. The superior 571
is oriented chiefly to getting food, services, and deference from his inferior;[3] the inferior is oriented chiefly to getting favors from his superior. And most interaction among the Amhara is cast in the form of superior-inferior personal dyadic relations. The prominence of this modality reflects a fixation of libido on what Erikson calls a mode of approach to the environment that is "incorporative," and that originates in connection with the infant's experience with a particular part of his body, the oral zone. The central thesis of this chapter is that Amhara behavior and symbolism exhibit a very high degree of attachment of libido, not only to the organ *mode* of incorporation, but even more to the oral *zone*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ORALITY AND MODERNIZATION

121 155 571 The preoccupation with orality which appears in their traditional orientations has not disappeared among those Abyssinians who have acquired a modern education. In some respects, that experience has tended to intensify it. A state of prolonged dependence was institutionalized in the government school system. The hiring of most educated Ethiopians by the government has meant that most of them live in a position of waiting to receive their salary—or *ĭnjarā*, as they themselves put it—from the central authority. Thus the image of a bountiful father-figure has become the more firmly established. [643] While in his own person the Emperor has projected an image of vigorous leadership, he has at the same time taken pains to promote this old pattern of oral dependence, by sending gifts of food to students and of champagne to educated officials when they marry; by continuing to provide politically relevant feasts at the palace; and, like the traditional Amhara father-feeder, by frequently reminding his subjects that everything they have they owe to him. This pattern is replicated to some extent in the relations between members of the new nobility and their younger relatives and retainers.

Part of the self-reproach of some of the modern-educated Ethiopians is directed against this passive, receptive aspect of their motivational orientation. Their criticism says in effect: instead of drafting proposals to reform our departments, teaching or writing in order to educate our countrymen, or seeking to understand better the complexities of Ethiopia's current situation, we are far more likely to be found sitting about drinking coffee in our offices, sipping beer at some hotel, playing chess, savoring felicitous phrases, and going to parties where eating and drinking are invariably the main order of business.

Insofar as they are moved to take a more active approach to their situation, moreover, their effectiveness is blocked by a tendency to fall into the tradi- [578] tional oral aggressive patterns of behavior. Their manner of criticizing the government, or certain officials, is frequently one of wholesale insulting. When confronted by a difficult problem, whenever they do not fall back to [521] a posture of dependence on superiors, they incline toward argumentation, *çhĭqeçhĭq*, backbiting, and mutual incrimination. Experts in debate, they are unaccustomed to the arts of creative discussion.

121 155 It is not my intention to suggest that the phenomena examined in this chapter are in total conflict with the Ethiopians' search for leadership. Many aspects of Amhara orality are not in the least inconsistent with the demands of a modernizing culture. Many aspects of Amhara orality would appear to be of enduring value—the excellence in debate and the appreciation of literary subtlety, the preparation of fine feasts and the enjoyment of the table. And it is not necessary for a very large number of Amhara to change their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cal animosities which have weakened the nobility as a status group both in relation to the emperor and in relation to foreign countries. Another respect in which Amhara parochialism has been expressed is the addiction to regional stereotypes, according to which the Tigrean has been depicted as flighty, irresponsible, and "dry"; the Gondarē as intolerably proud; the Gojjami as sly and treacherous; and the Shoan as calculating and untrustworthy. Despite its long history as a nation, Ethiopia probably never experienced more than the dimmest stirrings of a truly national sentiment among its people; and more than once in the past century have regional lords strengthened the hand of European powers in Ethiopia by seeking their help in the combat against other local rulers.

121* 181 186 619 [829]

Self and Others

In addition to considering the extent to which the members of a society identify with the needs and symbols of their more inclusive collectivities, one may also define the individualistic disposition on the dimension of personal interaction. Egoism contrasts, in other words, not only with the disposition to perceive collective purposes as one's own, but also with the disposition to seek solidarity and mutuality in face-to-face relations.

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This aspect of egoism/solidarism is studied by surveying the more important forms of interaction that appear in a given society. In the survey of elementary social behavior among the Amhara now to be reported, two criteria were used to establish the importance of any given form: (1) the frequency with which it was observed, and (2) the extent to which it was stylized or "institutionalized." These criteria were not embodied in any systematic observational procedures; the only control over the observer's bias here is my own deliberate effort to present a balanced and accurate picture.

We may begin by considering the more solidaristic forms. Interaction among the Amhara is characterized, first of all, by a sort of *sensuous camaraderie*. The Amhara enjoy bodily contact. Members of the same sex customarily hold one another's hands for long periods while conversing, or embrace one another in casual fellowship. Crowds of commoners cheerfully huddle close to one another on the floor through the night when they have assembled for some social function and cannot return home the same day. Relatives and companions of the same sex incline to sleep in one another's arms, at least in the chillier altitudes.

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Both their style of dress and their manner of eating give the Amhara a ready way to express this comradely feeling. Their untailored cotton or wool cloth easily adapts itself to being shared. Except perhaps for individuals of high social status, the typical Amhara is ready to use his toga as a blanket-wrap for both himself and another whom he may scarcely know.

121* 571 181 291

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*121 A similar spirit is observed in Amhara commensality. Meals are customarily
• 571 eaten from a common *ĭnjarā* basket. The sauce is ladled onto the center
264 of the *ĭnjarā*, and is consumed ensemble by those sitting around the basket as
181 they dip into it with pieces of *ĭnjarā* broken off from the edges. Traditional
[829] Amhara scoff at what they regard as the excessively individualistic Western custom of sitting each person down to a separate place at the table and thus depriving the meal hour of what they feel should be its basically communal tone.

*121 At a more formal level of interaction this disposition is expressed in the
574 form of *hospitality*. Amhara hospitality is luxuriously attentive and thought-
571 ful. For example, if there is foreknowledge of a guest's arrival, he is awaited
181 at some distance from his destination and escorted with much to-do into the home. His mule is at once unsaddled and given to feed. The guest is given a place of honor in the home, and a glass of *ṭallā* is immediately brought for him. Amhara etiquette prescribes, moreover, that a glass is not properly filled unless it overflows; and it is repeatedly filled to overflowing whenever the guest has drunk some portion of the beverage. As a gratuitous gesture of good faith, the host—or his wife, or servant—tastes some of the beverage first, a sign that no "medicine" has been added. Before long the wicker table is produced, and the guest and his party are served copiously—no matter what time of day they arrive (unless, of course, it is a fasting day). When the guest has eaten to satisfaction, the host will insist that he eat some more, by repeatedly issuing injunctions like *tegābazu* ("Help yourselves!"), *mokar* ("Try!"), or *āfar sehon* ("If I become dust!"—i.e., "If you do not eat you will be condemning me to death"). The Amhara host is also likely to insist that his guest spend the night. The guest's feet will be washed, and the host's bed will be given to him, or long grass will be cut for bedding on the floor. At the time of farewell, the host and his attendants follow the guest and his party a good distance along the road. The guest continually cries, "Return! Return!" and the host agrees but continues to serve as escort.

Such hospitality is not wantonly bestowed upon the casual wayfarer. Normally it is reserved for those who qualify as worthy guests: relatives, friends,
[609] or persons of high rank. Nonetheless, there does exist among the Amhara some feeling that even the unknown stranger should be shown hospitality, for he is *ya-egziābhēr engedā* ("a guest of God"). Travelers are generally assured
[485] that somebody somewhere will show them hospitality; there are no inns in traditional Ethiopia, for it is considered wrong to exchange food and lodging for money.

*121 Related to this pattern of hospitality is a delicate sense of *respect* that the
576 Amhara displays toward all comers; often, even toward his enemies. When
571 two Amhara pass each other anywhere, they are expected to bow slightly and
181 say: "How did you pass the night?" or "How did you spend the day?" If they

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have not seen each other for some time they will say: "How have you sojourned?" and kiss each other on both cheeks. Depending on the closeness of their relationship and the interval between meetings, this introductory question will be followed by a more or less lengthy series of other questions.[13] Even when one merely passes by the home of another, he is expected to cry out his greetings from afar. 121* 576 571 181

In a number of other ways, the rough edges of social life are softened by Amhara codes of etiquette. Custom prescribes that measures of grain must be filled to overflowing at the market. Grammatical forms indicating respect are used between people who are not on intimate terms. Uncovering one's head is another way of indicating respect during the greeting. Still another form is to rise whenever someone enters the room, and wait until the new entrant has pronounced "*Bezgiĕr!*" ("By God!") and sits down before reseating oneself.

On more superficial levels of interaction, then, Amhara behavior is apparently not egoistic. In the more fundamental areas of work and serious communication, a different picture appears. 121* 571 181

Altogether there is little spontaneous *co-operation* in Amhara life. The Amhara prefers to work by himself, and, when he needs assistance, to order a subordinate to help him rather than to rely on friendly assistance from his neighbor. The distribution as well as the production of goods is carried out on an essentially individualistic basis. Each nuclear family takes care of its own provisions, even when the land being cultivated belongs to one of the parents and when more than one family lives within a single compound. (Even within the nuclear family, the proprietary sentiments of husband and wife regarding objects and land which each may own are rather lively.) 121* 181 571 476

There are exceptions to this general rule. In some Amhara areas certain co-operative work forms have become institutionalized, for example. One of these forms, called *wanfal,* is invoked when there is a considerable amount of plowing or harvesting to be done, and a group of men in a given area take turns working on each other's land. Another form of co-operative work, called *waffar,* is employed when there is some extraordinary job to be done—putting on a new roof or digging land that is too steep for plowing—which cannot readily be reciprocated. In this case a man sends word around that on a certain day those who live in the area should come to work at his place, in reward for which generous quantities of *ṭallá* and *dābo* will be given them.

Despite the existence of special forms like *wanfal* and *waffar,* co-operation is only a peripheral feature of Amhara work activity. These forms involve but a temporary coincidence of individual interests. They are not used because co-operation as such is felt to be an important and natural part of social life—as seems to be the case, for example, among the Galla of Ethiopia.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 571 [764] Spontaneous co-operation is most in evidence among the Amhara at times of crisis. When death is announced, relatives and friends promptly repair to the home of the deceased and offer their help. They build the coffin and construct a *dāss* (a temporary shelter near the house to accommodate all the expected visitors). They bring food and drink to help provide for the many who will come to pay their respects, and will similarly provide help on the occasion of the big memorial feasts to follow. Like assistance is rendered during other crises, such as prolonged illnesses or fire. Such forms of co-operation set another significant limit to egoistic orientation among the Amhara.

*121 181 156 571 578 691 It is in the realm of interaction involving serious interests, touching layers of the personality deeper than those required for the formalities of etiquette, that Amhara egoism is most conspicuous. Here everything seems to conspire against generous communication and concord of opinion. As we have already observed, the Amhara are quick to become argumentative in ordinary conversation. *Litigation* is one of the most prominent forms of interaction among the Amhara. One can scarcely spend a day in the Amhara countryside without encountering litigants, whether under a tree, at a marketplace, or in the courtyard of some lord. A nobleman can never travel about the country without being accosted on the way by litigants anxious to have him hear their stories.

*121 181 571 578 691 171 Litigation is, of course, an endemic feature of peasant civilizations. Yet there can be no doubt that for the Amhara this form embodies a basic psychological disposition that differs from that of the people of other peasant civilizations. In traditional China, to take a case of marked contrast, such interpersonal conflict, far from being relished, was deliberately avoided. The Chinese considered going to court to be an extravagance, and the village judge was one of the most underemployed members of the community. In China, parties to a dispute preferred to assemble at the teahouse and to seek a solution through *121 181 571 578 [691] [521] discussion and negotiation. The Amhara, on the other hand, seeks to maximize the opportunity for self-assertion through litigious disputes.* Ordinary sociability among the Amhara is saturated with references to litigation. Current court cases comprise one of the more common topics of conversation. Beyond litigation, *conflict* is often expressed in more violent forms. Fights with the *dulā* erupt when altercation becomes too heated. Throwing stones is another accepted mode of combat, especially among youth. Protracted enmities tend to eventuate in such acts as house-burning, assault with swords or rifles, and (according to Amhara belief, at least) poisoning.

While it is true that Amhara culture provides means and a certain amount

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* Some indication of the gross national significance of this phenomenon is afforded by the following comparison: twenty-seven high court judges are sufficient to handle the litigation for all of England and Wales; the corresponding number for Ethiopia is *one hundred and eighteen.*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of moral pressure for the reconciliation of conflict, it appears to place greater emphasis on the acting out of aggression. It does this, first of all, by defining a number of acts as offenses which justify violent retribution of some sort. Appropriation of one's land, seduction of one's wife, and injury of one's relatives are acts of this nature, and it is incumbent on the offended party to seek personal revenge or, as the Amhara put it, "to return the debt" (*bedder mammalas*). It is considered shameful to remain passive when so affronted, an attitude expressed in the following couplet:

Balaw ba-dimotfar daggmaw ba-wānzā,
Bābbāt rīstennā yallam bamīst wāzzā.

Shoot him with the dimotfar,* get him again with
a wanza,*
Taking your father's land or your wife away,
that is no joking matter.

Aggressiveness is further encouraged by the Amhara ego ideal of masculinity.[13] The identity of Amhara males is very much bound up with their capacity for aggressiveness, by both violent and verbal means. A man who has killed someone is regarded with a certain amount of veneration, and the act of killing is itself praised in verses such as:

Saw gadlu saw gadlu: saw magdal yebajāl,
Saw yālgadala saw sihēd yāngolājāl.

Kill a man! Kill a man! It is good to kill a man!
One who has not killed a man moves around
sleepily.

Similarly, verbal aggression is encouraged by the inclusion of excellence at litigation and insulting in the domain of proper male behavior.[14] The bestowal of insults is a rather stylized, if dangerous, procedure among the Amhara. According to Amhara customary law, insulting is a legal offense. The new criminal code provides for a gradation of penalties according to the seriousness of the insult, including fines which run from Eth$15 to as much as hundreds of dollars. The most serious insults include *bāryā* ("slave"); *ṭayb* ("evil-eyed artisan"); and *qomātā* ("leper"). Insults of lesser to medium degrees of seriousness include the following:

hodām	"greedy" (literally, "bellied")
wafrām	"fat"
sakārām	"drunkard"
quashāshā	"dirty"
amadām	"scaly-faced" (literally, "ashen")

* Types of rifles.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121	*arām*	"indolent" (literally, "full of feces")
181	*ya-dehā lijj*	"son of a poor man"
• 571	*ya-lēbā lijj*	"son of a thief"
578	*yat abātk*	"bastard" (literally, "where is your father?")
[673]	*waslātā*	"lazy no-good"

Other, less direct forms of insult are also widely employed. As was already mentioned, a major use of the wax-and-gold formula is to express insults in so veiled a manner that direct reprisal is unlikely. Another tactic is that of not showing someone the proper respect or in some way manipulating the forms of etiquette to his disadvantage. A favorite anecdote concerning Alaqā Gabra Hānnā illustrates the simultaneous use of both methods: the Alaqā once flattered a donkey driver by bowing quite low to greet him and calling, *Endēt adarātchu?* ("How did you spend the night?"). Only when the man proudly related the episode to his friends, so the story goes, was he made to realize that the greeting was expressed in the plural form (*-atchu*), implying that he and his donkey were being placed in the same category.[15] Still another mode of indirect insult is that known as *ashmur,* in which two friends insult each other vigorously at the top of their voices, the real object of their abuse being a third party who is within earshot.

If the Amhara is by disposition inclined to bestow insults, he is still readier
[865] to take offense at the slightest hint of one directed at him. One of the tasks of socialization among the Amhara is to sensitize the young person to the various types of insults and to motivate him to strike back when he is so offended. Insults are frequently part of a vicious circle which moves from petty disagreement to serious argument to litigation at court, *dulā* fights,
[576] and even premeditated murder. Breach of etiquette may lead to no less serious consequences. In one court case which the author observed, a man was accused and convicted for addressing his father-in-law, whom he normally addressed by the polite form *ersewo,* with the familiar form *anta* in a moment of anger.

Argumentation, litigation, insulting, and revenge comprise the hard core of social interaction among Amhara. While it is possible to exaggerate the significance of these forms in the total pattern of Amhara social life, there can be little doubt of a strongly dissentious disposition just below the surface, and often at the surface, of Amhara interpersonal relations. Still another axis along which this individualistic disposition tends to be manifest is that of deception and suspicion.

*121 The Amhara is a master at *deception.* With straight face and convincing
181 manner he will relate the most preposterous fictions. The Amhara themselves
571 tend to be aware that this is one of their characteristic activities. When, for
577 example, I replied to the query of an Amhara gentleman that some horn
[123]

goblets (which I had purchased for one dollar) had cost five dollars each, he remarked: "Ah, I see you have learned this country's art of lying well." 121* 181 571

The phenomenon in question is not an unmixed expression of egoism. At times the Amhara employ deception chiefly for reasons of considerateness, not wanting to tell the other person something that will offend him. Thus a person will agree to honor a request made by his neighbor even though he has no intention in the world of doing so; his neighbor probably understands this but still prefers an insincere "Yes" to an out-and-out "No." 577 [123]

Most of the time, however, deception is obviously being used to further one man's interests at the expense of another's. A person seeking a favor will pretend to be in much poorer straits than he actually is.* A needy traveler may pretend to be an important personage or otherwise disguise his identity in order to secure lodging for the night. An artisan, in order to obtain business, will tell his prospective customer that a certain job will be finished in two days when he has no intention of completing the work within a fortnight. To refer once again to my own experience: when I once needed to rent a mule for a week, and it was felt that the local mule owners might be reluctant to rent one for more than two or three days, I was advised by some respected Amhara men in the area that the only thing to do was to say that the mule was wanted for a few days, then on return to say that unexpected factors prevented my getting back on time. Far more imaginative plays of deception are attributed, again, to Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, who is renowned for the episode of sending word to Menelik that he was dead so that the Emperor would send money on his behalf to Gondar.

Like the indirect forms of insulting, deception has its more subtle, passive forms; deceptiveness by omitting the truth rather than committing a falsehood. One might render the basic principle that informs communication among the Amhara as: *Avoid binding commitments; maximize the degrees of freedom left after any utterance.* Questions and answers are typically couched in extremely oblique language. Unless there is some overwhelming personal advantage to be obtained from providing information, the Amhara tend to give answers—when they do not pretend not to understand the question—in terms so ambiguous as to be worthless; for example, replying to a question about the location of a certain place or person with the word *mādo* ("yonder").

The natural complement of so much deception is pronounced *suspiciousness.* Amhara are constantly on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. 121* 571 181

* One Amhara priest, for example, showed me that he had no clothes other than his single blanket in order to gain sympathy and induce me to give him something. But when he learned I had a camera, he went home promptly to get dressed for a photograph. [123]

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*121 181 • 571

> Our people always speak indirectly, in secrets. For example, a man will come, asking for the glass he loaned another man. The debtor says he will bring it in a week, that it has been broken and he will send for a new one. The man may say: "Oh, never mind. It doesn't matter to me, don't bother." The debtor will then be scared; thinking that the owner of the glass is in his stomach quite angry and ready to kill him, he will take his gun and get the man first.[16]

The suspiciousness which so colors interaction among the Amhara has been viewed by some observers primarily as an adaptive response to some very real dangers with which Ethiopia has chronically been confronted: the threat of conversion to Western forms of Christianity by European missionaries, the threat of European imperialism, and the threat of encirclement and occupation by a militant Islam. These factors have undoubtedly intensified the apprehensiveness of Ethiopia's leaders and strengthened the much publicized xenophobic attitude of the Amhara people, just as the proliferation of security networks during the postliberation period has intensified the generalized distrust on the domestic scene. But these attitudes flourish as they do because they are nurtured on the soil of a basic disinclination to trust one another that is endemic in traditional Amhara culture.

That culture is marked, *au fond*, by a sense of despair about the possibilities of concord and enduring consensus among men, and, in more practical terms, by a realization that people who spend so much of their time deceiving one another are not to be trusted very much. *Sawen mämman bakantu naw* ("it is futile to trust in man")—so runs an Amharic epigram sometimes woven ornamentally into wool rugs; and it carries a secular-practical as well as a religious-speculative meaning. This disposition is institutionalized in the custom of *wäss*, according to which any sort of civil transaction—hiring a man as a servant, or lending money, or litigating in court—involves as one of the first steps the securing of a *wäss*, or "guarantor," who agrees to make good for any damages caused by the man he is backing.[17] It also appears in the custom of continually challenging the assertions made by someone who is relating an episode, so that the speaker is forced to interlard his narration with oaths that swear by the truth of what he is saying. The Amhara tendency to "overinterpret" and impute deception appears in their conception of the very origins of their language, for informed traditional Amhara commonly believe that Amharic originated as a secret language during the reign of the legendary Falasha Queen Yodit.

[193]

*121 181 571 198

A penchant for *secrecy* is pronounced among the Amhara and constitutes still another aspect of the individualistic disposition. In culturally elaborated forms it appears in the predilection for employing secret languages, including the argots of merchants, minstrels, and *zär* victims,[18] and the secret language

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of shepherds,[19] as well as the secret formulae of magicians, the obscurantist constructions of wax and gold, and the use of Ge'ez itself in the presence of illiterates. Related to this is the great popularity of riddle games among Amhara. Personal relations, moreover, are consciously predicated on the harboring of secrets, or *mīṣṭir*. The Amhara assume that it is improper to reveal oneself fully, to disclose one's *mīṣṭir*, to anyone but a very close friend; and that, in fact, rarely happens. 121* 181 571 • [198] [524]

Given the weakness of horizontal forms of cohesion among the Amhara—sociability at mealtime, stylized politeness among equals, and co-operation in time of crisis, important though they are, cannot contain the centrifugal forces just described—the dispositions which sustain a minimum of social order among the Amhara are expressed through vertical, hierarchical forms of interaction. Here both individualistic and solidaristic forms are in evidence, the latter in the forms of deference and begging, the former in the variety of authoritarian relationships.

Perhaps the most characteristic form of interaction among the Amhara is that of *domination*. The Amhara is at his happiest when he is in a position to order someone about. The sense of domination is marked not only in relations between nobles and commoners, officers and soldiers, masters and servants, but also between husbands and wives, and parents and children. Amhara children sometimes volunteer the explanation of their desire to have children when they grow up as based on the explanation that then *they* will have youngsters of their own to command.

Connected with the passion to dominate is a predilection for administering physical punishment. In all of the relationships just mentioned corporal punishment is an integral feature, particularly so on the domestic scene. With sticks or whips, masters beat servants, teachers pupils, husbands wives, and parents children. The complete acceptance of this pattern was shown by the fact that not a single Amhara TAT respondent objected to any of the corporal punishment cards. They all assumed that the punishment depicted, including that of husband against wife and mistress against servant, was deserved, proper, and would have a salutary effect. (One of the respondents even exclaimed when regarding one of the beating scenes: "What a beautiful punishment!") The only reservations expressed concerned the possibility that the punishment might be so severe as to wound fatally the person being punished, in which case the punisher would have cause for regret. 121* 181 571 152

Whatever the functions of such patterns in controlling antisocial behavior and securing adherence to the norms of the situation, the sentiment that underlies them is primarily egoistic. The superior is interested primarily in having his own way and gratifying his ego through the sheer exercise of his power; and the motivation of the punisher probably often contains a strong 121* 181 571

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 sadistic component—a component that gets thrown into relief in such phe-
• 571 nomena as the Amhara compulsion to stone dogs and the occasional wan-
181 tonly cruel behavior of Amhara soldiers.

*121 While hierarchical relations among the Amhara are upheld to a large de-
571 gree by the subordinate's fear of physical punishment or some other deprivation,
181 a complementary disposition of perhaps greater importance is the senti-
576 ment of *respect for figures of higher status.* Family, age, wealth, and political or ecclesiastical rank are all variables which evoke feelings and gestures of deference proportionate to the vertical distance between the two parties. Many of these gestures consist of elaborations on ordinary forms of etiquette used among peers. Thus, in greeting a superior one not only uncovers one's head but also leaves it uncovered as long as one remains in his presence. If kisses are exchanged in greeting, the superior kisses first, on the cheek, while the person of lesser status kisses the superior's foot or knee. The inferior never sits while the superior stands, and often he remains standing even when the latter is seated.

Other gestures of respect are peculiar to the inferior-superior relationship. If an inferior is seated, for example, he must rise to speak when addressed by a superior. If eating in the home of a superior, he must rise when water is brought to wash his hands. If riding a mule, he must dismount and bow when encountering a nobleman riding on the way. The ritual of respect performed when entering the house of a superior has been vividly described by an Ethiopian student in the following passage:

> When someone, let us say a man of a lower social rank, wishes to enter the house of a superior to greet him or to make some private appeal he must first of all take off his shoes and then give them to his servant if he has one with him; if not he leaves them outside in a safe place. Then he must twist his *šäma* [shammä] round his waist and holding the end in one hand enter the hall and crossing both arms at the lower chest, bow down very low to the ground before his host. Having done that he throws that end of his *šäma* which he is holding over the back of his right or left shoulder (depending on how he wears his *šäma*) and then remains standing near the wall until he is told to sit. When given permission to sit he must choose a lower place. He does not sit in any position he likes but must cross his legs, straighten himself and bow his head a bit looking most of the time at the floor.[20]

*121 Respect is further shown toward superiors through the use of special terms
181 of reference and address. A superior is always referred to and addressed in
571 the third-person-plural respect form. The term *gētotch* ("lordships") is often
576 used instead of his name or rank in reference. In addressing a superior
554 *gētāyē* ("my lord") may be used as well as *gētotch.* Superiors with titles are always addressed by their rank rather than by name. In addition, slightly

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

older or more prestigious males are addressed as *gāshē* ("my shield"); the corresponding term for females is *etēyē* ("my sister"). Much older people are addressed by words signifying "father" or "mother."

It is true that the forms of respect toward superiors are often repeated mechanically and sometimes serve to cover up a distinctly hostile disposition toward certain superiors. They nevertheless do represent to some extent a genuine solidaristic sentiment—perhaps the most profound and influential social sentiment in the Amhara social system. It rests in the last analysis on the fact that the Amhara family develops a pronounced sense of filial devotion as well as habits of filial obedience. Amhara society can dispense with horizontal solidarities and communal attachments because it is held together, sufficiently for traditional purposes, at least, by an infinite network of "father-son" relationships.

The egoistic element in the hierarchical pattern is further modified by a sort of joking relationship that sometimes develops between inferiors and superiors. The harsh interrogation of inferiors at times shades into a sort of wry banter; sons or servants may be called "thief" or "scoundrel" in an undertone of unmistakable affection. At times, moreover, the direction of the jesting may be reversed. Amhara servants are noted for playing practical jokes on their masters, which the latter usually appreciate when the jests are clever.[21] Here again, wax and gold is the perfect medium—for expressing aggression against a superior while at the same time appearing to maintain the respect relationship. The following couplet, attributed to Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē, aptly illustrates this genre:

Ennānta maḳuānnentotch ba-mīn waṭ balātchu?
Eññām ba-shurwātchen ennāntam bāssātchu.

What sauce, my lords, was on your plate?
We had but peas; 'twas fish you ate.[22]

Here the poet appears to be complimenting the nobles on their more elegant cuisine at a banquet; but there is a pun on the word *bāssātchu,* literally "with your fish," for it may also be taken to mean "you took more than your share."

Within the hierarchical pattern, finally, one finds expressed a certain amount of generosity which, as we have suggested, is relatively uncommon in relations among peers. This appears in connection with the *begging* and *almsgiving* which occur in many sectors of Amhara society. For church students beyond the elementary level, begging is the primary means of livelihood. Youths who have left home to study *zēmā* or *qenē* with a master wander about today, as in former times, carrying small baskets and pleading: "For the sake of Mary! For the sake of God!" in order to get their daily morsels. The activity is so organized that when a large number of students

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 live near the same master, they divide up the neighboring countryside to
• 571 avoid duplication in their begging.
181 The ordained clergy are themselves given to begging, for items ranging
735 from contributions to the local church to petty personal effects. High-ranking
[193] visitors to their locale are customarily made the objects of such solicitations.
[533] Another type of begging is practiced by the minstrels who wander about the country with their one-stringed fiddles and fecund wit, coaxing contributions from any audience they can capture. In addition to these there are numerous professional beggars—the maimed, the diseased, and the poverty-stricken—who attach themselves to a well-attended church or monastery if they are unable to travel. The *lālibalā* is a notable type within this category of mendicants.[23]

[527] In addition to honoring the periodic appeals of beggars, "big men" are supposed to provide yearly feasts (*gĭber*) at which beggars of all the above descriptions are fed. In all these instances, the solicitation and bestowal of charity contributes a solidaristic element to the network of personal relations among the Amhara.

*121 The foregoing analysis of forms of interaction among the Amhara has
181 been undertaken in order to gain material for generalizing about a psycho-
156 logical disposition. Our unspoken, tautological assumption has been that the
571 ways in which individuals typically relate to social objects (i.e., other persons and collectivities) represent the sociologically relevant aspects of their psychology. Egoism and solidarism have been used here as concepts for depicting one dimension of "social character," using this term in the specific sense of comprising those aspects of personality which are both socially shared and constitutive of those actions that are oriented to social objects. We may now attempt to summarize the preceding discussion with the following definition of Amhara social character as it relates to the concept of individualism: The Amhara is primarily disposed to structure interaction in terms of self-assertion, dissension, and distrust, and to be indifferent to the concept of civil community. At the same time this egoistic orientation is blended with a warm and kindly sense of sociability, an occasional mood of generosity, and a refined sensibility regarding differences in status and the readiness to pay deference accordingly.

INDEPENDENCE VERSUS CONSTRAINT

*121 In the previous section we considered the nature of the individual's orientation toward others and toward collectivities in Amhara society. Our question now is the converse: what order of demands is made upon individuals by the institutions of that society? Specifically, we shall be concerned primarily with the degree to which the norms which govern institutional roles are

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 • 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[466] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, *121 641 such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms [701] under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not [689] respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the [626] barbs of public opinion.

*121 701 [702] [714] The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Synchronization and Privacy

*121 181 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is [476] scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [704] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 [591] [576] The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, [592] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters [342] (*ālfīñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

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* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Tīmqat day described in chap. iii.

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Although women and children do not have so much freedom, the adult male Amhara who chooses to go off by himself for some reason is not bothered. In at least two cases, moreover, the right to solitude is institutionalized: that of the monk or hermit, who is left to his meditation and prayers, and that of the student of *qenē*, who spends hour after hour in some lonely place composing his verse for the day.

Privacy is further protected among the Amhara by the shared belief that others normally do not have a just claim to information about one's person. Even such superficial matters as one's place of origin or one's family connections are not readily disclosed on a first encounter. This differs markedly from the custom of some other groups in Ethiopia, such as the Borana Galla, among whom it is the first order of business in any conversation to identify the "vital statistics" of one another.

The machinery of wax and gold, again, exists as a useful apparatus with which to protect one's private identity and desires. In authoritarian relations, where the superior questions the subordinate with impunity, this evasive and equivocal manner of response constitutes the latter's main defense against yielding the information sought by the questioner. The superior may feel that he has a right to the information he seeks, but, if he is a good Amhara, he understands that he may never be told the whole truth.

Thus, viewed as a whole, Amhara society does not envelop the individual in a complex network of obligations and constraints. The institutional structure of the society is relatively thin. There are few collectivities to which the individual might belong, and fewer still to which he must belong. He can, if he chooses, live at the very periphery of society—as a hermit, a monk, a *shĭftā*, a minstrel, a beggar, or, if a woman, as a solitary householder. For the typical Amhara, the main obligations are to fulfil work responsibilities in behalf of the nuclear family, the parents, and to provide income and services for landlords and chieftains. Here, too, there are important degrees of freedom. An oppressive family situation may be readily relieved by divorce; an oppressive landlord or ruler may possibly be brought to justice over time, or in extreme instances fled from; and for the oppressed vassal or retainer, there is always the alternative of running away to another master or of turning to one's own devices. As a Christian, the Amhara is required to fast a good deal; but attendance at church and membership in religious fraternal associations are voluntary, and for the religious scholar there is considerable freedom of movement.

It is difficult to assess the relative weight of the few but heavy constraints that do exist in Amhara social structure and of the many areas of real independence. But in view of the considerable latitude for unconstrained action that has been described in this section, it would seem valid to characterize

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to change suddenly the whole configuration of battle. He loves to hear, amidst the crackle of rifle-fire, the huzzahs, the shouts, the challenges, the injuries, the encouragements, the allocutions, the piercing voice of the troubadours, and the rhythms of the flutes alternating with the lugubrious wailing of the trumpets; to know, finally, that on the hills, behind their drummers who beat out the charge in place, the two rival chiefs and the two armies are following him with their eyes, and that he may at one moment or another, return to his lord and, hurling before him some trophy, tell him, at the end of his war chant: "There! This is what I know how to do!"[36] 121* 156 703

A cult of the individual obtains, in addition, with respect to the man with a genius for outsmarting others. Men who have beguiled their foes with particular cleverness, in litigation or in political intrigues, are scarcely less celebrated than religious virtuosi or heroic warriors. Anecdotes about great feats of shrewdness are the beloved stuff of Abyssinian folk history and are twice told around the fireplace.*[37] Some lords have enjoyed great reputations simply for being such successful and gifted scoundrels. 121* 156 554 [538]

Cleverness in words counts as much, if not more, than clever deeds. Here we confront once more the phenomenon of wax and gold, but appearing in this context as a sort of finesse in personal relations. It is a question here of individuals made memorable because of their memorable lines, their talent for swiftly and surely employing the ambiguities of Amharic to satirize, at the right moment, some personality, or social type, or aspect of the human condition. Military or political events are often remembered more for the witty verse composed by some personage on the occasion than for their historical significance. In the present century, Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē has been one of the most outstanding personalities of this sort, as was Alaqā Gabra Hānnā in the nineteenth century. [195]

INDIVIDUALISM AND MODERNITY

The Traditional Pattern

Our inquiry thus far has involved analysis of the various ways in which self-orientation is and is not manifest among the Amhara, in lieu of the more simplistic question of whether Amhara society is individualistic or not. Building on this analysis, we may now attempt a more integrated interpretation of traditional Amhara society. 121* 156

The predominant tendency in human relations among the Amhara is a disposition to seek, not unity based on affection, understanding, and/or responsi- 121* 156 181 571

* A recent study which analyzed 1,086 stories with identifiable themes, told or written by Ethiopian children in grades two through eight, revealed that "cleverness pays" was by far the most frequently recurring theme.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 bility, but disunity based on the assertion of personal claims. This tendency is
156 to some extent contained by feelings of politeness—an aesthetic of propriety—
181 which are manifest in many ways. It is further contained by solidaristic senti-
• 571 ments closely tied to the feelings and experience of childhood: the euphoria of mealtime, on the one hand, and, on the other, a pervasive respect for figures of authority. But neither by virtue of identifying with social groups of any sort, nor through a sentiment of brotherhood with other men does the Amhara transcend an orientation that is directed to, and by, the narrower needs of the self.

Consistent with this type of subjective disposition, the organization of Amhara society does not rely to a significant extent on co-operative arrangements or the machinery of consensus. Nor does it involve, on the basis of either a division of labor or the sharing of diffuse obligations, the customary performance of numerous functions on behalf of territorial communities or other collectivities. Its main axis of organization, rather, is that of a highly personal relationship between superior and subordinate, with the subordinate existing essentially as an extension of the ego of the superior. This means that there is a marked discontinuity in the exertion of social constraints upon individuals. Within the segments of superior-subordinate relations—husband-wife, father-son, master-servant, teacher-pupil, confessor-confessant, lord-retainer, elder-youth—domination is virtually unlimited. Thus the main social restraints are in the form of repressive obligations—more or less "forced" labor, payment of heavy revenues, fasting—enjoined by figures of authority. Horizontally, however, there are very few obligations, and this accounts for the considerable amount of independence that appears among the Amhara. The demands of superiors, furthermore, are issued on a highly personal and spontaneous basis. They are not systematic, continuous, and detailed; the authority of superiors is not "rationalized." This accounts for the absence of discipline and synchronization, which is a further source of independence from external constraints.*

It is further consistent with the Amhara's egoistic orientation that objects which transcend the self—whether human communities or other groups or transcendent realities—are not greatly esteemed. With the exception, therefore, of those pious men whose paintings and religious studies served a truly devotional purpose, Amhara culture did not prescribe a desire for anonymity in behalf of transcendent values. On the contrary, it greatly valued the outstanding or heroic individual. In participating in this cult of the individual, the Amhara was not submerging his ego for the sake of broader realities but reasserting his ego through identification with the celebrated personality.

Yet for all this adulation of the individual, this substantial degree of social

* We may put all this another way by saying that while Amhara society is highly authoritarian, it is not at all totalitarian.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

freedom, and this assertion of egoistic claims, we have seen that the Amhara care very little for genuine individuality. With the limited exception of the sphere of oral literature, they do not cherish originality or creativity. With the exception of the sphere of litigation, where every man is accorded the right to speak his piece before a judge, they do not honor the dignity of the human person. Individuality as contrasted with conformity is not an Amhara value.

The explanation of this seeming paradox is not far to seek. It is, to use the terms we have been employing here, that concern for genuine individuality is grounded on solidaristic sentiment. Respect for the autonomy and uniqueness of individual selves, including one's own self, is a cultural value that can only exist if supported by a socially shared disposition to respect the integrity and dignity of others. Egoism and individuality are not only independently varying aspects of individualism; they are, in the sense in which we have been construing the latter term here, largely incompatible.

The Challenge of Modernity

Characterization of traditional Amhara society in these terms leads naturally to two general questions concerning the relation between Amhara individualism and Ethiopia's quest for modernity. The first question concerns the relation between the individualistic aspects of Amhara society and the organizational requirements of national development; the second concerns the promotion of individuality.

Whatever priority is given to the various goals more or less implicit under the rubric of "modernization," all of them entail a substantial increase in the mobilization of energies in behalf of societal ends. Whether the primary emphasis is placed on increasing per capita income, raising standards of health and education, building up military and diplomatic strength, or devising governmental institutions more responsive to popular sentiments and more efficiently run, an absolute increase in the available quantum of socially deployable human resources is indispensable.

Our analysis of Amhara society indicates that its traditions are not conducive to the mobilization of energies in behalf of communal goals. In this it differs from other African societies, such as those celebrated by the spokesmen for "African socialism"[38]—not to mention those of other peoples in Ethiopia like the Galla and the Gurage—where more "communitary" traditions would seem to provide a more viable basis for economic and social development at the community level. At the national level, where the developmental tasks are those of institution-building and education, the situation is no different. Here the need is for large numbers of people with modern education working to some degree in concert in behalf of national goals. But, as we have observed, the modern-educated Ethiopians have so far refrained from exerting them-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 156 181 selves as a strong progressive force in the national life. This is due, we suggested in the previous chapter, to a basic passivity related to the orality syndrome in Amhara culture. The considerations raised in this chapter seem no less relevant. The egoistic disposition and organizational laissez faire characteristic of traditional Amhara society affect no less their capacity for progressive action by inhibiting the uses of solidarity.

*121 156 181 571 The atomism of the Ethiopian intelligentsia has been a conspicuous feature of their condition since they came into being. It is manifested in the basic distrust in their orientation toward one another as well as toward the rest of Ethiopian society. The regret of not being able to trust one's close friends is one of the more frequently heard confessions from their lips. The analysis presented in this chapter suggests that this reflects the attitudes and customs of traditional Amhara culture as much as it does the alleged saturation of the society with informers. That so few modern-educated Ethiopians have dared to break out of the vicious circle of distrust by daring to establish solidary relationships and to circumvent the prevailing fears and stagnation by establishing organizations of some sort is an illustration of the fact that, however much they may give lip service to the ideals of nationalism and populism, their hearts are primarily attached to winning new increments of prestige and income; in brief, to becoming director-generals.

*121 178 181 571 Yet the total picture is by no means only one of atomism and stagnation. Some of the energies needed for Ethiopia's development can be, and have been, obtained by extending the traditional principles of domination and respect for authority into new areas of activity. Successful innovations in rural sanitation or agricultural practice, for example, have come about when local big men have been convinced of the desirability of the change and have then pressured the populace, by means of their authority and prestige, to implement the new measures. While the traditional authoritarian approach may for some time to come be the most ready method of mobilizing energies for social development, it alone cannot meet all the organizational needs of changing Ethiopia. One reason is that its effects are not continuous. To a large extent it depends on the whim and the physical presence of the relevant authority figure. It is common experience in Addis Ababa that particularly pressing problems are neglected for a long while, until the Emperor turns his attention to them; the matter then will be busily attended to for the moment, but is likely to be forgotten again when pressing matters turn the Emperor's attention elsewhere. This pattern is the model for most activity throughout the society where responsibility for specific problems is not carefully institutionalized.

*121 178 Another shortcoming of the traditional political pattern is that it does not tap the potential energies now dormant in the population. Insofar as the mass of the people remain passive, involved in the developmental process only as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

749 178 come to one's funeral is particularly potent—and the transactions of the *eddīr* are strictly governed by elected officers.[39]

454 178 *Equb*.—The *equb* is a form of savings association in which weekly or monthly payments of a fixed sum are exchanged for the privilege of receiving a large lump sum at some point in the life of the group. In addition to provid- [571] ing a means of forced saving, the *equb* offers a basis for sociability when the members come together to make their payments and are provided with food and drink. Like the *eddīr*, the *equb* is believed to have originated among the [177] Gurage, and acquired wider popularity following the Italian invasion when many people needed large sums of money for rebuilding homes and purchasing livestock. The mode of operation of an *equb* has been described in the *Ethiopian Observer* as follows:

> A person desiring to start an Iqub will discuss the matter with his friends; if they agree a meeting will be called to discuss the rules and regulations of the proposed new society, and in particular the amount of money to be paid by each member, the frequency of payment and the time and place of meeting. A president, or dagna [literally, "judge"], and a money collector will be elected from among the most respected and reliable members of the group.
>
> The President then asks every member to bring one or two guarantors who will be responsible for payment in case of default for whatever reason it may be.
>
> On the appointed day all the members assemble and the secretary will call the roll. Any member unable to attend is expected to send his subscription in time. The specified sum is then handed by every member (or substitute) to the President. Any latecomer will be fined according to a pre-arranged schedule, this money being kept by the President until the end of the Iqub, when it is used for the common enjoyment of the members. The collected funds are drawn by lot, the winner receiving the total subscription of all the members. The lottery is normally effected by the members writing their names on small pieces of paper which are then placed in a hat, a blind-folded non-member then drawing out the name of the winner.
>
> After each draw, the winner is disqualified from taking part in further lotteries, but continues to pay his fee until every member has drawn his share. If he fails in this duty his guarantors have to pay.
>
> When all at length have been rewarded the time has come to set up a new Iqub.[40]

Equb have been established by members of virtually all low- and middle-income groups—clerks, merchants, servants, peasants, policemen. Their rapid increase, in response to the growing importance of money in Ethiopia's econ-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The labor movement, limited as it is, has been in the hands of Eritreans on the one hand, and primarily non-Amhara workers in the south. Student associations have been formed chiefly at the instigation and under the aegis of foreign staff members; though here, as with the professional associations, modernized Amhara have sometimes played a leading role.

Once the new associations had been introduced, the Amhara like other Ethiopians were quick to adopt and expand them. Their participation in these new associations, however, has been affected, as might be expected, by the intrusion of traditional behavior patterns. Three examples of such behavior patterns come readily to mind.

(1) While the *equb* is conceived as a kind of credit union and as a focus for communal sociability, the *co-operative* sentiment tends to be lacking among members of Amhara *equb,* at least those of which the author has any knowledge. For example, in case of dire need, an *equb* member who desires the lump sum out of turn may be forced to *buy* the amount from the weekly winner, sometimes by forfeiting as much as ten or twenty per cent of the amount. By capitalizing on the crises of others, some enterprising *equb* members are able to sell their successful claims several times. Furthermore, in the early years of their existence, *equb* were frequently faced with the problem created by members who won the money early in the cycle, left town with the money, and did not return to pay their later installments. This difficulty has been met to some extent by the requirement of securing one or two guarantors for each person who enters an *equb,* but problems of this nature have led to altercations that have brought many *equb* members into court.

(2) The behavior of members of Amhara territorial *māhebar* is essentially that of a traditional social or civil gathering. The big men are seated in places of honor; the rest of the people stand quietly by. After a protracted period of exchanging greetings and milling about, the crowd listens respectfully while one or more of the big men makes a statement, and perhaps exchanges a few words with the group's secretary; and then the gathering disbands. Although the *māhebar* is organized with respect to the attainment of specific goals, the substance of the meetings is instumental to a very slight degree. The assembly rarely involves a meeting of minds to discuss an issue or a common problem, or to work out a program of action; but exists primarily as an occasion for the resonance of primordial sentiments by virtue of shared territorial attachments.

(3) In all associations, finally, certain traditional characteristics which are incongruent with the optimum conduct of groups come to the fore. This is no less true of the modern-educated than of the traditionals. Members fail to come on time to arranged meetings or neglect to come altogether.* They

* The *equb* has attempted to check this pattern by imposing fines on members who come late.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

resist taking responsibility and showing initiative. In general, they reveal little capacity for self-discipline in a collective setting. 121* 571 156

The need for what can be accomplished through the new associations, however, transcends the intermittent obstacles to their effective functioning posed by such individualistic behavior. As modernization proceeds and as Ethiopians gain experience in these associations, one may expect that the more disruptive aspects of such behavior will be transformed in the direction of greater compliance with the implicit norms of group functioning. Amhara in the modernizing sector have no choice now but to replace the ethos of the *shiftā*, the litigant, and the wandering student with that of the president, secretary, and treasurer if they are to remain true to the ambitions that have been awakened within them. 121* 181 571

There are, moreover, a number of respects in which adequate functioning in modern groups may be supported by behavioral traits inherited from the past. Three of these traits in particular deserve to be mentioned in this context. One is the fundamentally respectful orientation toward others. This serves to reduce the outbreak of dissension among group members, and in the attitude of respect and obedience toward figures of authority provides the basis, given capable and decisive leaders, for a significant amount of concerted action among group members. A second trait of some importance is the acceptance of conflict as a natural and not particularly threatening component of human relations. This means that group members are ready to admit and deal with such conflicts as do emerge in their ranks, and are experienced in the resolution of such conflicts through the agency of elderly mediators or the more formal processes of litigation. Finally, the Amhara sense of humor—wry, realistic, attuned to the ironies of existence—introduces a salutary leavening ingredient into group process. It provides an outlet for the release of tensions in group situations and adds a certain flavor to group experience that often more than compensates for the lack of a hyperinstrumental orientation. 121* 571 156 [578] [522] [154]

The Question of Individuality 121*

Although effective modernization is unthinkable without a significant increase in solidaristic sentiments and rationalized organization, in Ethiopia as elsewhere, the fate of the other aspect of individualism discussed in this chapter—individuality as a cultural value—poses a more controversial question. If the essence of modernity is the systematic effort to control rationally man's physical and social environment, then the society of *1984* may be claimed as a possible modern utopia no less than the society in which all children go to Montessori schools and all adults paint, undergo psychoanalysis, and study Great Books. The cultivation of individuality stands as but one of many pos-

596 (private freehold), most common in the old-Amhara pro-
[428] vinces (and in Tigre). "Rest" land is inherited only by sons, not by daughters, except in the relatively rare case when a family short of young men permits a son-in-law to settle in its hamlet, whereupon some land may be inherited by the daughter who is consanguinal kin. Daughters may inherit movables such as cows, sheep, some personal belongings of their mother or father (of the father if there are no sons).

601 Kinship terms do not often differ between terms of address and reference, but often between formal and informal terms which are applied in a variety of ways ranging from authoritarian familiarity to endearments. Differences of gender are also expressed.

The generic term for kinfolk is "zämäd". Consanguinal kinfolk, on both the father's and mother's side, are called "wägän", and if they reside far away and are rarely seen the kinship is re-emphasized by the term "yäsega zämäd" (lit. kinship of one flesh). Consanguinal families sharing the same residential hamlet
[178] are called "betä zämäd" (lit. kinfolk of the house). It
[572] is noteworthy that in very recent times, in urban areas where kinship functions are somewhat attenuated, the term "zemad" has become extended to include a close personal, though not related, friend.

The affinal relationship is generically called "amachenät", a male affinal relative is addressed and referred to as "amach", a female as "ancha"; whether go i male or female.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

600 letting the audience become aware of this collusion. (footnote 93).

B. Interpersonal Etiquette and Relationships.

571 576 [602] Interpersonal etiquette among the Amhara governs particularly those relations that can be described as "secondary group", for relations within the "primary group" are governed largely by specific kinship or religious rules of behavior.

It is a rare case - and considered very sad - if a person has no kin, and must base most of his human relations on secondary- group affiliations. The latter relationship includes most prominently the "agär" (lit. country, i.e. home district). Sometimes this refers only to the immediate parish, sometimes to the "meketl worädä" sub-district; but if a person finds himself in another province he may include the entire district, "worädä"; though the concept of "agär" does not usually extend beyond this territory in any real meaning of secondary group. If a person has no kin to turn to for aid in legal trouble, or needs a "was" guarantor to secure a job, he may seek out a man from his "agär". For this reason there is motivation to observe rules of etiquette particularly with individuals in the "agar" secondary group, such as visiting or inviting them, bring them "enqutatash" gifts and flowers (through children) at New Year and "Masqal" festivals, etc. Such gifts are not given to complete strangers from a more distant territory, who are called "bada" (slightly derogatory term, with connotation of "rustic").

576 572 Interpersonal etiquette within the secondary group may lead to closer personal relations between two individuals, taking certain

Footnote 93 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Minstrel's Argot. Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1952, Vol. 72, No. 3 pp. 102-109

576 572 specific forms. This relationship is mostly that of the "balenjära" (lit. mutual breadgivers), who enjoy the privilege of visiting each other without formal prearrangement; who may call upon each other to stand personal bond ("wäs"); who are likely to ask each other to act as negotiator for the marriage of a son or daughter before the affair becomes a formal kinship matter.

The very absence of a kinship tie makes it possible for "balenjara" to negotiate arbitration of blood-money to end or prevent a bloody feud between kin groups. The intenseness of the "balenjära" relationship may range from the trusted, though casual companion, "gorämsa", usually an age-mate, with whom interpersonal relationships are frequent and regular, but not intense; to the more intense but less frequent and less regular relationships with the "wädaj", a warm friend, "tebeq wädaj", the intimate confidante, so that the two individuals become "mestirana" (mutual bosom pals) to each other. "Balenjära" address each other with "antu" (the more polite form of "thou"; and other "thou", "antä", being used for children and inferiors mostly). When walking or standing and talking to each other, "balenjära" (and also other acquaintances, if on the same social level) interlace one or two of their fingers, loosely, but enough to remain in physical communication. Like kinsmen, "balenjära" men kiss each other on t he neck when they meet after not having seen each other for some weeks. Women may also establish "balenjära" relations with other women, and go on picnics together after the harvest in the dry season, especially on church holidays, but Amhara men believe that women do not form long-lasting friendships as often as men do.

[203] Dissemination of news and rumors through the "grapevine" occurs frequently through the channel of the "balenjära", who utilize the occasion of a bit of news as justification to drop in on each other, and to share barley beer and "enjära" bread (hence the term).

576 [572] Apart from this interpersonal relationship of choice, in which two individuals establish psychological response to each other (and mutual aid) outside the kinship group, most other forms of interpersonal etiquette are patterned so formally that they can be readily learned (even by outsiders). The vagueness and ambivalence of shifting etiquette of the Western world of modern times has not yet affected Amhara culture. Even modern-educated Amhara continue to fall back to the established pattern of traditional etiquette as soon as they return to their own country.

576 a) Formal Expressions of Status of Class, Age, Sex.

In formal expression of status, be it of class, age or sex, Amhara etiquette differentiates most sharply the dominant role from the role of the subordinate.

The most dramatic expression of this is the "gursha". It is enacted by the status superior toward the status inferior, a symbolic giving of food, money, wages, or other gifts. Thus, the master who wishes to indicate fondness and favor to the servant, will stuff some morsels of food into his mouth, publicly, while at dinner. A father will do it to his children, or to his wife. A chief may do it to a visiting "great man" of inferior or equal status, but never to a superior. However, a wife who has been married for some time and feels secure enough in her status to demonstrate equality, may jokingly return the favor and feed "gursha" to her husband, but only after he has initiated the activity.

[465] Servants, when receiving wages, receive them with both hands raised above the head, with bowed head and downcast eyes, and must never look at the money, much less count it in presence of the employer; for etiquette requires that wages be regarded as "gursha". (In recent years, the term "gursha" has become used in the sense of "tip", gratuity, baksheesh.)

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

zamad is highly subjective, and all constellations of *zamad* reflect the interests 565*
and affections of ego. For the quality of kinship can be attributed to persons 156
who are not consanguineal relatives, and this is done without resorting to 602
fictions of affiliation. The term *wandam*, for example, meaning "brother," 565*
is simply applied to any male person of about the same age to whom one feels 156
closely attached. The term *zamad* itself is applied to anyone to whom one 602
feels a close personal tie—even to a mere fellow-countryman whom one 572
happens to meet in a distant region. It is thus not taking too great a liberty to translate the term *zamad* as "close ones."

The primarily subjective nature of the circle of *zamad* derives not only 565*
from the fact that it includes friends as readily as actual blood relatives. With- 602
in the bounds of consanguinity, the composition of the kin group with which 572
a person identifies fluctuates according to his current needs, particularly with 423
respect to land use rights. As Allan Hoben has demonstrated, corporate 565*
descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use 602
are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; but 423
the fact that in this ambilineal descent system each individual may claim 611
multiple active affiliations, and enjoys a relatively wide range of choice, means that the particular corporate descent group with which an individual affiliates in order to claim his rights varies according to what land is subject to disputation. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mothers' rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors.[9]

The next most inclusive sociological concept beyond the ego-oriented circle 565*
of *zamad* is that of *agar*, or "homeland."* The co-residents of one's *agar*, like 571
those who comprise one's circle of *zamad*, are regarded as forming an im- 823
portant "in-group," outside of which all other persons are a priori rejected. Yet the Amharic concept of homeland, like that of kin, does not refer to a fixed social entity; its referent varies according to the context in which the individual chooses to use it. Thus, as we have seen, the concept of *agar* may be used to refer to one's parish, district, province, or even nation.

A more specialized dichotomy of some prominence in the outlook of the 565*
Amhara peasant hinges on variation in the altitude of homelands. Inhabit- 157
ants of lowlands (*qolaññä*) and dwellers of higher regions (*dëgaññä*) tend 823
to be conceived as polar cultural types. Different sets of habits and traits are attributed to them. Thus, according to one set of stereotypes, the *qolaññä* is viewed as a heavy drinker and hot tempered, while the *dëgaññä* is viewed as a heavy eater and inclined more to litigation than to violence. Again, the

* The less prominent category of *wagon* is intermediate between these two. *Wagon* has a pri- [602]
marily political connotation; it consists of one's consanguineal and affinal kin, friends and close [572]
retainers, all who may be mobilized in the event of political or military competition.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

836 peers with the insulting term *sīlb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that
183 comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsā*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain
in part the nature of adoleseent male peer relations. A *goramsā* needs at least
• 572 one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to
[837] aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsā* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the hus-
836 band or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with
572 a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets
578 difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsā* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulā* fights.

836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquering" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding
[585] night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time
582 to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On the latter occasions, especially Masqāl and Ṭimqat, the girl may make some
[832] effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair, and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a
[584] chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Rome and the life of Abraham Lincoln than with the geography of their immediate community or the history of their own native country."[16] While a certain amount of concentration on remote matters may be essential for introducing modern adolescents to the substance and background of modern culture, it is doubtful whether they are being prepared to relate meaningfully to the society of their adulthood if that society is not made a subject for careful consideration during their schooldays.

Still another limitation on the effectiveness of the teachers stems from a quite different problem, the Ethiopian's ambivalence toward foreigners. This will be overcome with the gradual Ethiopianization of the teaching force, but that cannot be achieved for at least another generation. One area in which this problem manifests itself is linguistic nationalism. English, the official language of all post-elementary instruction, is still regarded as an outsider's tongue in Ethiopia, unlike other African countries where the European language in question serves the native peoples as a *lingua franca;* and many Ethiopians hope that the day will come when it will be replaced by Amharic as the medium of instruction.[17] Due to their ignorance of Amharic or other Ethiopian languages, foreign teachers are rarely able to gain the sort of closeness to their students that promotes the more profoundly beneficial sort of relationship. Because of this and a tradition of suspiciousness regarding foreigners, all but the radically Westernized students maintain a lingering mistrust of the teacher *qua* foreigner.

The gaps in the socialization of the modern adolescent left by the nature of his teachers and their teaching are filled to some extent by his peers. In this respect, too, modern adolescence contrasts with the traditional pattern: not only has the role of mentor and model been taken over by foreign teachers in place of the parents, but also the modern adolescent has become dependent on his peers to a degree unthinkable in traditional Amhara society.

It has been natural that the modern adolescent turn to those his own age for moral support. However much they may support the idea of his going to school as a means to a higher salary, his parents have little understanding of the new directions inherent in modern education. His foreign teachers are, at worst, preoccupied with their own narrow interests or else, at best, out of tune with the Ethiopian ethos and mentality. Older modernized Ethiopians, who should be the most sympathetic, are usually too preoccupied with their own adjustment problems to pay much attention. His schoolmates thus become his only reliable allies in the battle of growing up.

Association with age-mates is informal for the most part. There have been almost no formal youth associations or clubs in Ethiopia. The teen-age gang, with its sharp boundaries and tight controls, has scarcely come into being. Relations with peers thus takes the form of small groups of friends. More

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

than half the secondary students questioned, and well over a third of the college students, stated that the number of their friends was only one, two, three, or four. 883* 178 572

Almost all the students indicated that they prefer close, intimate, and enduring friendships to casual, impersonal, and frequently changing relationships. There is thus something of the traditional *goramsā*'s companion about these relations, in that these boys define their friends as confidants, as individuals with whom they can disclose "secrets" and discuss personal problems. But the modern relationship is much broader, for it also includes such activities as studying together; going on walks; playing athletic games; going to the movies; visiting the brothels; talking about education, life, and the future; seeing the sights around town.

The great sociological significance of these small clusters of companions, or *bālīnjarā* as they are called, is that they play a crucial part in mediating the transition from a childhood that is essentially traditional, despite exposure to certain modern subjects in school, to an adulthood that will be lived essentially in the modern sector. At the same time that they help the newcomer adjust to each local school community, they are helping him adjust to the broader subculture of modernizing Ethiopia—explaining the strange things and ideas he encounters; correcting his behavior, for example, by showing the proper use of silverware at the table; and refining his language, when necessary, from that of the rustic to that of the urbanite. Their creative function is no less important. Through countless conversations, some idle and some intense, they work to interpret and integrate stimuli coming from many sources—from movies; magazines; the example of Europeans living in Ethiopia; the behavior of government officials, as well as from their teachers—and thus form a sort of buffer between the lone adolescent and the various authoritative influences in his life. 883* 178 572 182

Despite the radical changes in the position of the Amhara adolescents described above—their complete dependence on the government school system, their tutelage under foreign instructors, and their great reliance on age-mates—the traditional pattern of adolescent submission to parental authority still runs strong. Even though most students live as boarders or in rented quarters, they maintain contact with their parents on occasional visits or at vacation time. However far removed, they remain deeply attached to their families and sensitive to the wishes of their parents. How to acquire money to send to their families is often a dominant concern in their lives. Though in most cases the parents can not provide meaningful orientation regarding adjustment to changing conditions in Ethiopia, they do give advice about how their children should behave and try to keep them faithful to traditional norms. The fact 883* 178 593

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for consider-

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(396)	(40)	(197)

able strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

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holds priest land because he is a risteña of a founding ambilineage of the parish, his son's ordination means that the lands or payments until now turned over to a stranger priest (in lieu of a risteña priest) can be kept within the family.

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[837]
*[192]
[586]

The durability of the ties which bind a priest to his natal parish are reinforced by his marriage. Most peasants are married in a "secular union" (yaluwkurban migabat), which excludes neither divorce not extra-marital sexual adventures.[21] The priest, on the other hand, must be married, and it can be only as a "communion marriage" (bikurban migabat), an indissoluble sacrament of the Church which commits the spouses to sexual fidel-

• [572]

ity and forbids even remarriage. Thus, the priest is cut off from carousing in the talla houses of the town. He must instead confine his comraderie to the courtyard of the parish church, separated from the persons and experiences which might otherwise lead him away from his parish fields.

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Thus enrollment in the parish school is conceived

[21] Two other forms of marriage, associated with a man on travels or living in town, are yidomoz migabat (which lasts for a contractual period) and yilijinat (providing only exclusive sexual rights to the woman).

*787 *793 869 judged directly according to their offensiveness to the Church, and indirectly according to the availability of morally more acceptable alternatives. Professionally, the acquisition of abinet is guided by the quality and size of the debtera's capital, and of his ability to utilize abinet which are available to him.

*755 The First Abinet. With few exceptions, a student's *787 first abinet acquisitions are herbalist therapies and com- *793 plementary digams. These early therapies address the 869 most persistent threats of his environment, ikek (scabies), saal (cough), and kurtimat (joint pains). In addition, the student frequently obtains the recipe for a stimulant which ostensibly increases his acuity for learning kiyne.

*787 These first abinet studies are generally gifts, *793 since a student rarely possesses anything beyond defer- *572 ence and abjectness with which he can appeal to a poten- 431 tial donor. He has two sources from which he can obtain 869 this knowledge. The first is a gwadeña or sympathetic balinjera. Among a student's fellows, he has a single special friend, whom he calls gwadeña. The gwadeña is his constant companion, who begs for ego when the latter is too sick to get his own food; he is completely trustworthy, and, with the exception of his money reserves gained from gramta sales and the like, whatever he possesses is at ego's disposal. The relationship is sym-

*787 *793 metrical; it is also characteristically brittle, and
431 rarely lasts beyond attendance at the kiyne school. A
• 572 student's balinjeras are, literally, his mess-mates.
869 They form an exclusive group of peers, reliable confidants
*[192] pledged to cooperation. Beyond the circle of balinjeras,
all students are implicitly towdaderiys (rivals). Between both gwadeñas and balinjeras favors are expected to be freely given and no formal accounting kept, although the latter are less committed to sharing than are the former. Because the new boy's gwadeña and balinjera are, like himself, in the first two years of the kiyne curriculum, the abinet repertoire of either consists of few studies, and these with little or no magical content. Ego's second source of abinet is an older, more knowledgeable student, who has been made aware of the novice's
*[192] difficulties, and is willing to help. The relationship between the donor and recipient here is perceived as an exchange between radat (benefactor) and taraj (beneficiary). The new boy is abject, he is without power, and faces immediate dangers and difficulties. By his gift, the donor dramatizes a status difference between himself and novices in general, differences based on the culturally significant contrast between power and dependency. The recipient, by his deferential behavior, validates the donor's self-image.

*756 *793 *[759] The debtera's advantages over the secular healer are real enough, but (with the exception of awdunigist) they are primarily professional, rather then technical. That is to say, a debtera acquires his extensive medical repertoire and utilizes it successfully as the result of experiences and opportunities that accompany his pursuit of the ecclesiastical denotata of debterahood, and of exchanges he makes with fellow debteras. Most important among the debtera's professional advantages, is his ability to 1) develop and use a highly fluid capital for acquiring medical and non-medical studies, and 2) communicate to his public his domains of competence and putative level of power.

*756 *787 *793 *[192] Abinet Capital. The debtera acquires abinet studies by 1) exercising the claims of friendship (gwadeña), 2) performing services (often combined with deferential behavior) for the abinet owner, 3) exchanging money for abinet, or 4) exchanging abinet for abinet. All, save the last, are relatively inefficient means for acquiring abinet, and are generally limited to the period of kiyne study, and perhaps the following two or three years.

• [672] Friendship is the debtera's least fluid asset, since it limits ego to a single alter for an extended period, and to the acquisition of only one or two valuable studies. To "exploit" this asset, by a sequence of alters or by an effort to tap alter's abinet resources

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more completely, is to violate the conventions of the gwadeña relationship, and to close it off to ego altogether. Moreover, the intense gwadeña relationship, which binds pairs of kiyne students is typically brittle, and is infrequent in later years when commercially valuable abinet are being acquired. Finally the gwadeña relationship is antithetical to the independent and aloof (kuruw) character associated with the man who owns strong abinet.

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The exchange of labor for abinet is difficult to arrange. An abinet owner must be found who is disposed to such exchanges, and has not already obtained someone to fulfill his needs. For the recipient, the exchange means often demeaning work over an extended period of time, with a humiliating lack of an effective quid pro quo, in order to acquire a single abinet study.

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[435]

Debteras are not reluctant to price their abinet studies, in Ethiopian dollars, for prospective purchasers. Since a man's standing as a practitioner of abinet is intimately related to the effectiveness of his individual studies, the evaluation of his abinet against a nearly universal standard of value (Ethiopian dollars) is likely to be understood as an implicit personal challenge. Thus, the owner's evaluation of his abinet is inevitably greater than any amount likely to be paid. Prices range from E$50. to E$500., immense sums relative

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

871 Rome and the life of Abraham Lincoln than with the geography of their immediate community or the history of their own native country."[16] While a certain amount of concentration on remote matters may be essential for introducing modern adolescents to the substance and background of modern culture, it is doubtful whether they are being prepared to relate meaningfully to the society of their adulthood if that society is not made a subject for careful consideration during their schooldays.

875 829 191 Still another limitation on the effectiveness of the teachers stems from a quite different problem, the Ethiopian's ambivalence toward foreigners. This will be overcome with the gradual Ethiopianization of the teaching force, but that cannot be achieved for at least another generation. One area in which this problem manifests itself is linguistic nationalism. English, the official language [893] of all post-elementary instruction, is still regarded as an outsider's tongue in Ethiopia, unlike other African countries where the European language in question serves the native peoples as a *lingua franca;* and many Ethiopians hope that the day will come when it will be replaced by Amharic as the medium of instruction.[17] Due to their ignorance of Amharic or other Ethiopian languages, foreign teachers are rarely able to gain the sort of closeness to their students that promotes the more profoundly beneficial sort of relationship. Because of this and a tradition of suspiciousness regarding foreigners, all but the radically Westernized students maintain a lingering mistrust of the teacher *qua* foreigner.

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[561] Association with age-mates is informal for the most part. There have been [573] almost no formal youth associations or clubs in Ethiopia. The teen-age gang, with its sharp boundaries and tight controls, has scarcely come into being. [572] Relations with peers thus takes the form of small groups of friends. More

i: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Table 1i: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Amhara

Month: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Month: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau	Annual Cycle of Amhara Ecological Activities (Economics, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Coptic-Abyssinian Amhara.	Cycle of Amhara Social Events	Syncretism	New, Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1 to Mäskäräm 30	Sept. 11 to Oct. 10	receding flood after rainy season; yellow "mäsqäl" daisy carpets land; spring ("tsädaye").	place beehive basket-work in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ("gai").	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ("yäMäsqäl Bäal")- public rejoicing around bonfire (dämmära). Minor: 1st Mäskäräm is St. John's Day. 11th: "Arafa" - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	Kin visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ("enqutatash") on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive promise of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		"Mäsqäl" is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
Teqemt 1 to Teqemt 30	Oct. 11 to Nov. 9	sunny growing & ripening season (ämmänä sega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ("gebs"), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ("t'illa"); sell honey to make mead ("Taj"); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Teqemt: St. Michael's Feast "Mikael"; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 5th: pilgrimage to "tebel" holy wells and waterfalls of Äbrä Mänfäs Qeddus (Abe).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ("gur-amenosh") to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving "from Jarusalem".		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Teqemt 23rd).

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539 "When kinfolk aid each other,
no trouble can sever them".

"The needle does not see her own hole
yet it serves her so well",

(said of a man, who, as is common, is generous to his brothers and sisters, yet stingy to his wife and even children).

"When the nose is hit,
the eye begins to weep",

(i.e when one relative is hurt, the others suffer with him).

602 Kin relations give the individual his greatest source of security, psychological and economic, to the Amhara mind, and protect him from the world outside. [574] Therefore, regular and frequent visiting of kinfolk is emphasized; it is one of the most frequent causes of absentiism of Amhara employees. Events of the life cycle (marriages, memorial feasts, etc.) require such visiting. The end of the rainy season is another stimulus. No other association seriously challenges the predominance of kin relations in Amhara society.

A. The Extended Family and Kinship Terms.

596 The extended patrilocal, patrilineal family usually inhabits its own hamlet, farms its own land, allocating it to its biological-nuclear families. Patriarchal elders form an informal council that can be convened in any case of need. This extended family is most typically found among owners of "rest" land

601 Cousins are simply addressed and referred to as "uncle's child" or "aunt's child", and there is no terminological difference between paternal and maternal uncles. But the informal terms mentioned above are extended to these consanguineal kinfolk for special emphasis of endearment, respect and protection. For the latter, the address "gashey" is used commonly, and a rarer, more poetic and somewhat archaic term of address would be "ambayē" (my mountain fortress).

Familiarities, teasing or endearing, in address to siblings include "abäba" (flower) for endearment to an older girl (sister); "anchi" (Thou, feminine) in teasing address of a girl to a younger, male sibling, otherwise considered an insult; "antä", (thou, male), in teasing address to a younger sister.

B. Affinal kin ("amachenät") and residence.

606 574 Affinal relatives, especially the male ego's parents-in-law, must also be visited regularly, at least once every two months in the dry season, or, if they reside too far away, at least twice a year. Gifts, (e.g. a fat sheep) must be brought, and hospitality and a feast can be expected in turn.

606 In popular Amhara opinion, the affinal villain is not so much the mother-in-law, as the step-mother-in-law. Both are addressed respectfully as "amatey" (lit. my elder mother). But it is believed that a mother, [601] desiring her daughter to be happy in marriage, will

842 birth, or later by causing its joints to swell.
843 It is considered impossible for a woman to conceive while still breastfeeding a baby. This belief is so strong that no precautions are taken, coitus proceeds as usual after the first few months, and when a pregnancy does occur it is regarded as a freak of nature and misfortune.

841 These physical matters are more discussed by women than by men. Menstruation is differentiated in several ways: "ärakkäsä" - she has become impure; "räggäma" - the (monthly) curse is on her; "edef" - the discharge of menstruation; "bädäm nat" (lit. she is in blood). Husbands are expected to shun "the dirt" and avoid sex relations during that time.

843 As a pregnancy advances, women wrap a long cotton girdle around the belly and waist, "näänät", for support, and continue this some time after childbirth.

843 574 844 About two months before a woman is about to give birth, ("ergus" - woman in advanced pregnancy), she often leaves her husband and goes to the hamlet of her parents'. There she knows she will be taken care of, fed, constantly attended, treated by the local experienced woman who acts as midwife, and not be expected to follow any of her housewifely duties such as fetching water, cooking, brewing beer, gathering fuel, etc. After birth she will usually remain at her parents' for some months, until her childbed, "aras" period (usually 80 days) is over. During this time, circumcision and clitorectomy are performed. For even good husbands are regarded as so habituated to the wifely services that they become impatient with the wife at this time.

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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 [57] Three-day visiting is the pattern in kin visiting, for it usually takes one day for initial greetings and exchange of news, slaughtering and preparation of a sheep; a second day for feasting and talks with the neighbors; a third day for preparation of leave-taking.

After one week, the "dass" are torn down. A "great man" who is father of the bride, will usually send his daughter several donkeyloads of household staples, including lentils ("shuro"), peas cooked with salt, pepper, and spices, so that she will be honored and well treated by the women under whose jurisdiction she has come. Then, after a month, he will send a messenger to ask how she is habituated to the new life. If the reply is faverable, another load of grain, butter, spices, flaxseed oil are sent.

512 The adjustment of the bride may not be easy. The night she leaves her parental roof, she takes with her, besides her skin-mat, a little basket of dyed reeds, containing her personal little distaff, spindle, and glass necklace used in scouring pottery. After a week or a few weeks of honeymoon, she is expected to participate in the women's household tasks: fetching water and fuel, baking "enjara" daily for her husband, cooking "wot", to her husband's tastes, crushing barley, grinding "tyeff", brewing beer. If she complains too soon, the womenfolk will quote the proverb:

[539] "Hardly arrived have you, young bride,
(but) already you crunch shembera (peas)"
(meaning: lazily pick at peas, instead of
doing the regular, harder work).

606 [591] The couple is expected to remain in patrilocal residence at least a year, so that the bride can be taught, by her mother-in-law, how

c) Visiting

574 602 Visiting kinfolk regularly, during the nine months of the dry season, is a prime requirement. This includes, in this order of emphasis and frequency: patrilineal kin, matrilineal kin, affinal kin.

574 606 Visits to affinal kin are less frequent and more formal. When visiting one's parents-in-law, usually twice during the dry season, the man is not supposed to come empty-handed, but should bring a sheep as a gift. He waits outside the in-law hamlet, just beyond the thornbush enclosure, and asks the children whether his father-in-law is at home. When the latter appears, the visitor enters and approaches the hut. He enters only upon invitation. There is no mother-in-law avoidance as such, but contact is reduced to a minimum, between son-in-law and mother-in-law, to achieve maximum privacy for both.

602 Flouting kinship obligation is regarded as a shameful deviation, indicating an evil character. Kinship relations represent much security for the individual, but also involve him in serious obligations, such as aiding kinsmen in blood-feuds and reprisal-raids ("bäqäl"). A person who wanders away from the kin hamlet, or from kin obligations, when his mood or irresponsibility carry him, is called "läqo" (after the soft reed that grows rapidly at the least rain, but drops when grown to maturity).

574 754 Visitors, particularly strangers, must observe certain taboos, lest they be suspected of bringing the evil eye. They should not ask the number of children, nor praise their health or good looks aloud. This is considered dangerous, because the "buda" spirit is always on the lookout for fat, juicy children so that he can magically "drink 764 their blood" and make them waste away. (Children are vulnerable to many communicable diseases).

574 576 When visiting the sick, the visitor, especially female visitors, are expected to express their sympathy in unmistakeable tones. The

574 visitors screw up their faces as if in great agony, even despair, and
576 utter the long, subdued wail "ayye". Religious expressions on such occasions are "erziabher yatnawo" (May God give you health), or "egzer yemarewo" (May God be merciful to you).

574 d) Hospitality and Dining.

539 Hospitality to kinfolk, members of the secondary group, and other travellers, in that sequence of emphasis, is a major culture focus. Numerous proverbs are often quoted, governing this behavior:

Even a poor man is expected to give what he can, even if he can offer little more than a pleasant face:

"More than his food,
his face pleased me."

Refusal of hospitality for the night is castigated:

"He has let me be eaten by the hyena" (at night).

A stingy host, who could well afford generosity, is mocked:

"He goes about, attended by 90 retainers;
but in his house famine reigns".

A host is advised to make his invitation specific as to the day:

"A dog, called for the right day,
arrives on his own feet".

574 A host is expected to urge the guest to take freely of profferred
262 food and drink. An invitation to "take coffee" is frequently the formula introducing a complete dinner. Staples readily available, unlike dinners that require preparation, include barley beer ("tella"), roasted barley grains ("gebs qolo"), roasted peas ("shembera qolo"), boiled corn grains ("mashella"), milk, eggs, limp bread ("enjira"), and except among the very poor, coffee beans, which are roasted, crushed and boiled in front of the guest.

Dinner is regarded as a feast ("doggesa" or "gebber") and should include meat and butter, so that it is impolite to invite anyone on

574 262 Wednesday or Friday when no animal products can be consumed; the months of lent also interrupt the frequency of visiting.

To honor a "great man" ("telleq säw") the host presents him with a live sheep, select, with a heavy tail, then has it slaughtered and cooked in a spicy and peppery sauce ("wot"). In place of barley beer he will offer honeywater ("bers") or even honeymead ("täj"); the bread will be served smeared with spiced butter. A poor man, forced to substitute chicken for sheep, can at least indicate that he honors the guest by giving him the choice morsel - the wing: The proverb says:

[539]

"The chicken wing

joy brings to the face".

264 Etiquette in eating follows these procedures: The hands are washed prior to consuming bread or meat (though often with not very clean, muddy river water poured from a clay pot); and washed again after the meal to remove pepper stains of the "bärbäre wot" from the fingers, lest absentminded rubbing of the eye cause painful stinging. Only the right hand is used in eating, for the left is used in the toilet. The right hand is used to rip off a piece of the limp "enjära", dip it into the meat stew, close the piece of pancake-like bread around some morsel and fish it out for immediate consumption. A knife is used only when eating "brundo" (raw beef), at a special feast, to cut off a piece held between the teeth (now, at city feasts, brundo is served pre-sliced into cubes).

Noisy eating ("gorädddima") is permitted in the old tradition as indicative of he-man behavior, but smacking of lips and ceremonial belching, though not criticized, are not emphasized. It is an old custom of Amhara hosts, still followed in rural areas, to pour a mouthful of a profferred drink into their own cupped hands and consume it, before passing the cup to the honored guest or "great man" ("ejun däqno ätta"- lit. he received (cup) with hands (under-chin) and drank). This

264 procedure, also called "ämmäsä" is in imitation of procedure at the court of nobles, and it is known that kings have always had their special cupbearers ("ämmash") who tasted the drink against possible poison, and who also removed any floating debris ("äffäta") such as beeswax from the drink.

574 575 The hospitality group on non-kin members which meets most regularly, once a month, is the "mähabbär" association, already described. Based originally on religious private communion, each member plays host once a month to drink from "Mary's cup" ("yänaryam sewa"), to feast, for chant and dance ("zäffan") and less formal gossipy entertainment and conversation ("tächäwäta").

C. Verbal Expression: Formalities; Wit; Pedagogic Riddles.

192 Emotional exclamations in everyday use are highly formalized:

Pain - "häyy häyy" (also if a painful truth "sinks in"; astonishment).

Fear - "ooyy" (especially by women, just before a fearful event happens).

Fearful surprise - "oyyi" (e.g. when someone stumbles, or has an accident).

Alarm - "errii" - (cry of alarm; also of great sorrow as in death of kin).

Skeptical surprise - "erra" ("you don't say?!"); Reply: "mut" (abbreviated from "yemut", lit. "May (the emperor die) if this is not true").

Pleasure - "essäy" (to indicate comfort, e.g. when sitting down after having climbed a long, tiring hill).

576 514 192 Formal politeness in etiquette always considers the social status of the person addressed. Thus, there are six ways of informing an inquirer that the person he seeks has gone out to defecate or urinate:

Impolite, though not vulgar: "weha afässäsä" - (lit. he poured water).

Polite: "der wätta" - lit. he went to the bush).

Polite: "äsi wätta" - (lit. he went out the door).

515 washing of the body and frequent washing of clothes, and an individual housewife who takes it upon herself to wash more than expected is noticed as different and suspected as possibly being not as respectable and innocent as she might like to appear.

388 In washing, especially of clothes, a soapwort ("endod") (pircunia abyssinica) is gathered from wild bushes the location of which is carefully remembered, for they are not planted. The yellow fruit is dried and crushed, on a flat rock above the river or in it when the water is shallow. It is mixed with water, so that a greenish-white foam results. The fingermarks, resulting from the mixing and gathering of the foam, can be seen on rocks where the sun has dried the remnant.

[574] Dry grass is used as toilet paper, usually held in the left hand.

515 302 Women fumigate their bodies frequently, in the dry season because water is short and hard to come by; in the rainy season, after bathing in the brook or river, to "get rid of the river odor". For, especially at the beginning of the rainy season, the rivers are muddy and carry much smelly debris.

There are 3 different, major kinds of fumigation wood ("yätis enchät"): Domestic incense gathered in the woods by commoner women are "abalo" and "täjo" (Rhamnus straddo); noblewomen and wealthy women aiming at prestige despise domestic woods, and insist on imported incense, primarily "etan" (Frankincense), more expensive but freely purchasable on all markets because it is used regularly in the church, during services.

302 Plucking out of pubic hair, by means of ashes held between the fingers, was considered one of the most important duties of feminine hygiene. Men might shave, though not pluck, their pubic hair, if they desired to do so for special "cleanliness". This procedure of plucking

821 animals and evil spirits give birth. It is called "näber wäldaläch" (lit. the leopard has given birth), or "jeb wäldach", (lit. the hyena has had a litter).

823 Volcanic activity, which occurs not infrequently in these mountains that are of young geological age, is interpreted as a threatened repetition of the Biblical event that swallowed Sodom, and is indeed called "Sodom" (another connotation is "greedy").

Geographical directions are taken either from the Geez, e.g. "me'erab" for west (lit. where the sun sets), and "mesraq" for east; or the location of Abyssinian provinces is used: "Semyen" for north, "Azeb" for southwest. South is "däbub" (probably Cushitic).

821 Daytime and nighttime are regarded as two very different phases of the universe, altering radically behavior of natural phenomena, [823] animals, plants, even human behavior. The phrase "the night belongs to the hyena" refers not only to the nightly roaming of that animal, but also to the roaming of evil spirits at night, as well as dangerous strangers and actual bandits. As a consequence, even the hospitable, outgoing householder of the daytime changes to sullen and suspicious behavior if strangers suddenly arrive after dark. When he must leave the hut, he carries a weapon, in the rural areas. Even in Addis Ababa, the official curfew at midnight is little resented by the average Amhara, because of this traditional pattern.

574 576 The period of a week is regarded as a time unit with regard to the primary group and kin visiting. When two members of these groups have not seen each other for more than a week, they greet each other with "endemen sänebätu" (lit. how did you spend the week away).

776 825 The world of the spirits, who also inhabit the universe in large numbers, is believed to be in close relationship with the animal

795 His social status compares to that of a "great man" (telleq säw),
756 but much of this is due to the fear in which he is held, because of his power over the supernatural world, in Amhara belief. There is fear that if someone were to offend him, he might use his powers to do evil - though black magic is not his usual metier. (The "love magic" of the däbtära has been described in relation to sex).

[539] "of insects, the worst is the scorpion;
of men, the worst is the däbtära".

[574] For the dabtara are unabashed in inviting themselves to feasts, weddings and any distribution of goods (e.g. parceling out of meat as soon as an ox has been slaughtered). In fact, they often act as if the host owed them an apology for not having sent an official invitation. Therefore, dabtara are usually invited to family feasts even if they are not kin.

795 The däbtära learns his craft through apprenticeship, beginning
756 when in the upper grades of church school. To achieve this, he
874 must be "ättentam" (of unmixed Amhara or Tigre stock), have a good chanting voice and musical ear, be good in school, and find a däbtära-teacher willing to impart his knowledge to him. At this stage in church school he begins to be permitted to learn to write; and is not punished for doodling - forbidden at lower grades for fear a student might stumble on a formula and misuse a powerful spell.

795 There is even one priestly function which the däbtära occasionally
756 carries out. That is "re-baptism". He may re-baptize a patient vic-
[783] timized by ganyän, sometimes also cases of buda, as part of exorcism.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

000 574 middle upwards hairy like lions. We passed the mountain, and went to sleep at the foot of a village called Zalote. There will be about four or five leagues from this place to the monastery from which we set out. We halted by a running river of very good water, and when our baggage had been unloaded we went to the said village to see a very honourable gentleman, the headman of it—a very old man, who was lodged here very honourably. He gave us a very [262] hospitable reception, giving us many fowls cooked in butter, and much mead, and he sent us a very large fat cow to the place of our halt. On the following day, which was Sunday, we went to say our mass at the church of the village, which is called St. Michael, a poor church, both the fabric and the ornaments. There are in this church three 793 married priests and three others, deacons,[1] that is to say, of 796 the gospel, and all are necessary, for no less can say mass. This honourable captain I met with later as a friar in the monastery of Bisan, and he left his condition and revenues to his sons, who were honourable persons; and I saw him stand at the gate outside, and he did not enter within the monastery, and there he received the communion with the novices, and when the offices of the church were ended he remained in honour with the provincial. On this Sunday we set out again in the afternoon, because the country 133 people who conducted us wished it so. Here we began to travel through flat country fallows and tillage, in the fashion of Portugal, and the bushes which are between the tilled lands are all wild olives, without other trees. We slept by some running streams, between many good villages.

[1] *Zagonaes.* Ethiopian corruption of *diakonos.*

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the Angrab and Kahha, is the Mahometan town. These rivers inclose the town on its N. and S. sides, and join on the W. On the S. E. part of it is the church of Debra-berhan. On the N. E. is Kedus Gabriel. Two suburbs above Kedus Gabriel, is Anta Naggar, the hill, where, till Yasous's time, the Tigre, in consequence of a proclamation, were obliged to halt, and not allowed to enter Gondar. 361

In Abyssinia there remains not a shadow of the hospitality, which is said to be a trait in the character of barbarous nations. 574

They divide the day into five parts (humisi). From the twilight, which is here short, it is nagga; about nine it is called selest, or the third hour; mid-day is kutter; three o'clock, tessaat; and sun-set, serk. They judge by the height of the sun, having neither clocks nor watches. The other hours mentioned in their books are counted 1, 2, 3, &c. after dawn, sun-rise, or sun-set. 805

There are two kinds of monarchy; one is absolute, where there are no written laws, but the will of the prince carried into effect by his command and force; another is, where there are laws and restraints, but these occasionally broken through. The Abyssinian government is neither of those. There are no laws: the lives of the king's subjects and their lands are *de jure* his; he is absolute and sole master of their lives and property: Yet he has no military force; this is all in the hands of the governors of provinces, whose safety lies in keeping the prince in want of every thing. It is a monstrous kind of monarchy, and to this are owing the continual wars and rebellions. While the districts were small, these were prevented; but minorities, weak reigns, &c. have united them into great ones, each of which are more than a match for the sovereign; indeed, the forty-four nagareets of Tigre united are more than a match for all Abyssinia. Damot and Agow-midre, joined to Maitsha, when they please, starve the capital, and leave the king not only without army and provisions, but even meat and clothes for himself. The Turkish and Galla wars have accelerated this state of affairs. Each of the governments have become a kind of fiefs, very rarely not granted to the family of the deceased, and that one of it most likely to be serviceable. 642 631

[p. 53]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

threw it down, cut steaks from it which they devoured 262
rapidly, and then drove the cow on again, plastering up the wound with mud. The second (which is given with a wealth of detail too revolting to repeat) was at a regular banquet at which a live cow was brought in and strips cut from it by all the guests until the animal died, which took some time.

Salt states that Pearce actually saw an example of the first instance quoted above, which he says is by no means uncommon, but he disbelieves the second instance. No other writer that I am acquainted with recounts any such instance *of his own knowledge*, and the suggestion that such a practice ever existed is hotly denied in the country. Nor could I find any evidence of the existence of such a habit either as to the present or the past. Personally I am inclined to disbelieve the stories or to regard them as gross exaggerations, or possibly as isolated instances.

Be that as it may, the raw meat dietary, however, 262
is undoubtedly very popular to-day, and it may be of 574
interest if I give an extract from my diary describing a great *Gebur*, or banquet given at the Feast of Maskal, which we attended, and at which no fewer than 15,000 soldiers and 2000 or 3000 palace retainers were fed in four relays in the great hall. This is the more interesting in that for some years past Europeans have not been admitted to the *Gebur*, and although one was held on our last visit we were not present.

The *Gebur*

"We were received by the Court Chamberlain on 574
the large stone terrace outside the *aderatch*, and after a 264

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

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short interval led through rooms wrapped in darkness to the banqueting hall, at one end of which was a large raised platform shut in by closely drawn white curtains. Here, seated on a dais, was the Empress, surrounded by Abyssinian notables, and after paying our respects to Her Majesty, Ras Tafari, and others, we were conducted to the table prepared for Europeans on one side of the platform—there were about fifteen of us. At the opposite side of the platform the Ras and the principal chiefs sat down at another table, whilst in the middle green silk curtains were drawn round the Empress' dais, so that she should be hidden from the vulgar eye whilst eating; a constant stream of attendants bearing every conceivable kind of receptacle, from beautifully wrought gold dishes to enamelled iron mugs, passed in and out of her little tent.

"After we had had an excellent, if somewhat lengthy, meal, consisting of a mixed assortment of European and Abyssinian courses, the white curtains by which the platform was shut in were pulled back, shewing the hall packed with long low tables as closely as they could be got in, the tables being covered with slabs of Abyssinian bread enclosing quantities of cooked cut-up meat.

"To the sound of bugles and trumpets the main doors were opened and in poured the chiefs with their soldiery, who had come up to Addis Ababa for the feast from all over the country; the organization was admirable, and though some 5000 men filled the hall there was no sort of scrambling or disorder whatever.

"They set to work at once on the *hors-d'œuvres*, and then the *pièces de résistance* arrived. Hundreds of pairs of men came in, each pair carrying between them a long

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

stout pole, from which hung huge pieces of red raw meat, covered with strips of red and gold cloth. 574 264

"These men stood closely together all along the tables and one on each side, so that the meat hung down from the poles over the tables just in front of the diners. The guests produced knives, and feeling the joint with their fingers to pick out a tender bit, rapidly sliced off strips of meat, which they put into their mouths, cutting off what would not go in quite close to their lips, an operation which, from personal experience, I know demands great skill if one's nose is not to suffer—as the cut is always made upwards.

"After ample libations of *tej* and *araki* (native mead, or hydromel and spirit) the diners filed out in perfect order, and the stage was cleared for the next party.

"The whole function had lasted nearly four hours and the Ras must have been heartily glad when it was over, for he had previously dined one instalment of 5000 warriors, and two more were to follow—between 17,000 and 18,000 in all partaking of the royal hospitality."

Broundo may be a nourishing form of diet tending to the development of warlike qualities, but its consumption has one serious drawback at all events, in that it is the cause of taenia (or tapeworm), a disease which is almost universal in the country. So much is this the case indeed that it is a recognized practice for all, high and low, to take monthly as a "taenicide" a dose of a plant known as *kousso*, which is so violent in its effects as to incapacitate the patient from work or occupation for the day. 164 757

Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by 000

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfatā*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor [539] Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 574 527 [575] [794] Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious fraternal association known as the *māhebar,* is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māhebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā,*" literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
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* * *

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

* * *

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

* * *

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[776] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

574 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
(554) *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.
155
152 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of

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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *Injarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 571 264 181 [829] A similar spirit is observed in Amhara commensality. Meals are customarily eaten from a common *ĭnjarā* basket. The sauce is ladled onto the center of the *ĭnjarā*, and is consumed ensemble by those sitting around the basket as they dip into it with pieces of *ĭnjarā* broken off from the edges. Traditional Amhara scoff at what they regard as the excessively individualistic Western custom of sitting each person down to a separate place at the table and thus depriving the meal hour of what they feel should be its basically communal tone.

*121 574 571 181 At a more formal level of interaction this disposition is expressed in the form of *hospitality*. Amhara hospitality is luxuriously attentive and thoughtful. For example, if there is foreknowledge of a guest's arrival, he is awaited at some distance from his destination and escorted with much to-do into the home. His mule is at once unsaddled and given to feed. The guest is given a place of honor in the home, and a glass of *ṭallā* is immediately brought for him. Amhara etiquette prescribes, moreover, that a glass is not properly filled unless it overflows; and it is repeatedly filled to overflowing whenever the guest has drunk some portion of the beverage. As a gratuitous gesture of good faith, the host—or his wife, or servant—tastes some of the beverage first, a sign that no "medicine" has been added. Before long the wicker table is produced, and the guest and his party are served copiously—no matter what time of day they arrive (unless, of course, it is a fasting day). When the guest has eaten to satisfaction, the host will insist that he eat some more, by repeatedly issuing injunctions like *tegābazu* ("Help yourselves!"), *moḳar* ("Try!"), or *āfar sehon* ("If I become dust!"—i.e., "If you do not eat you will be condemning me to death"). The Amhara host is also likely to insist that his guest spend the night. The guest's feet will be washed, and the host's bed will be given to him, or long grass will be cut for bedding on the floor. At the time of farewell, the host and his attendants follow the guest and his party a good distance along the road. The guest continually cries, "Return! Return!" and the host agrees but continues to serve as escort.

Such hospitality is not wantonly bestowed upon the casual wayfarer. Normally it is reserved for those who qualify as worthy guests: relatives, friends, [609] or persons of high rank. Nonetheless, there does exist among the Amhara some feeling that even the unknown stranger should be shown hospitality, for he is *ya-egziābhēr engedā* ("a guest of God"). Travelers are generally assured [485] that somebody somewhere will show them hospitality; there are no inns in traditional Ethiopia, for it is considered wrong to exchange food and lodging for money.

*121 576 571 181 Related to this pattern of hospitality is a delicate sense of *respect* that the Amhara displays toward all comers; often, even toward his enemies. When two Amhara pass each other anywhere, they are expected to bow slightly and say: "How did you pass the night?" or "How did you spend the day?" If they

[For information on the eddǐr (a form of welfare association) and the equb (a savings association) see categories 747 and 454 respectively.]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

659 spectacle of self-abandon of the mourners, who scream,
178 roll on the ground, cut themselves bloody, etc.; and the financial burden of excessively elaborate memorial feasts which were and sometimes still are ruinous to the families involved. To teach by example--a most effective way in a country where everyone imitates the "great man"" --the emperor himself ordered that no memorial feast be given for his own daughter who died in 1933; just some money donations were made to the priests reciting prayers for her soul.

[874] More recently, the emperor founded the Theological College of Addis Ababa, headed by an Egyptian Coptic president and some faculty members from among Egyptian Copts, to modernize the curriculum of the future leaders of the church among whom he hopes, for the first time, to find allies rather than permanent foes. The probable successor to the present Abuna (archbishop) of Ethiopia, Theophilus, is believed to share the emperor's views and has already travelled abroad several times. The emperor wishes the younger clergy to become more learned and to be able to translate the Bible from
[198] Geez into Amharic for the lay populace. He has promoted the printing of bibles in Amharic, rather than Geez, thus using religion to promote the official, national language of the state.

6. The Fraternal Association called "mahabbar".

575 This "voluntary" association of individuals, growing out of the "private communion" of the Abyssinian

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

575 church, fills several voids in Amhara social organization, and establishes links of human relationships which otherwise leave little choice to the individual of any age and sex beyond his assigned roles in the feudal system, church, and family.

Perhaps this is why there are so many facets to the "mähabbär" association, and why it is called upon by its members to fulfill so many functions that in many other human societies take separate forms. To a considerable extent the mahabbar maintains an elastic equibrium between the individual and the society. For in this association he can exercise a personal choice; he can cross boundary lines of age and sex, and occasionally even of class; here he has the rare opportunity of new experience in interpersonal relations; here he finds economic as well as emotional security; recognition of his status in a highly respectable association; the response of life-long personal friends.

575 796 The mähabbär in Abyssinia may be as old as Coptic Christianity itself in that country. It is based on the "private communion", one of the few instances in which the sacerdotal church concerns itself with the layman, probably because the time and place of mahabbar meeting leave them remote from the ritually sacred precincts of the church buildings. By the same token the mahabbar enables the church to extend a broad control over its lay members .

The religious basis of this private communion rests on the monthly meeting of its members for worship, in the hut of one of them (they take turns as hosts).

575 796 The preferred number of charter members is 12. The reason is not certain, but some ascribe it to the 12 apostles, some so that each member has the duty and privigele of acting as host once a year. The evening itself, within each month, is preferably the host's. The host asks his confessor-priest to officiate furing the religious part of the meeting. Part of the worship always includes ceremonial drinking from a special clay cup called "ṭuwa", or "ṣuwa", which is dedicated to a saint or archangel, and from which the particular mähabbär takes its name (e.g. the "ṭuwa-ef-Gabriel mähabbär). The host has prepared a large "gan" (largest clay jar) of barley beer, which is blessed by the officiating priest. There is also ceremonial breaking of bread, the well-baked kind usually called "dabye", preferably of wheat, and half an inch thick, which, on this occasion, is referred to as "ṭadiq" (lit. offering of righteousness), or as "shellemlämi" (a reference to the cross). This bread is sometimes adorned with incised geometric designs. A poor host may substitute the common limp enjära bread, but that would lower his prestige. A rich host or one trying to gain prestige will have carpets spread on theddirt floor, and even the poorest can spread odoriferous grasses and leaves, to give the hut a clean and festive atmosphere.

[531] [554]

The members congregate at dusk, some a bit earlier because of the Amhara aversion to travel after sundown. When the confessor-priest is seen to approach, the members rise and redrape their shammas in the symbol

575 of going to church. The priest brings the holy water,
796 sprinkles the inside of the hut, and intones prayers. At the proper moments, the members prostrate themselves before the "ṭuwa" cup containing specially blessed barley beer. The "ṭadiq" bread is placed on the wicker worktable ("mäsob"), and is then divided by the confessor-priest among the members; the leftovers go to the host's wife who had baked it but who remains modestly in the background. Some of this blessed delicacy is given to the poor. The confessor absolves all present from sins, then passes the "tuwa" around so that everyone can drink from it. Then lots are drawn by means of sticks to see who the next host will be for the "ṭuwa" and "ṭadiq". The ceremonial phase is now over.

[554] Roasted barley ("qolo") and peppery stew ("woṭ") are served in as many varieties and quantities as the host can afford, and many go beyond their means to gain prestige. Drummers and chanters ("azmari") are often hired, and the noisy entertainment is heard in s a wide area, attracting many uninvited guests who sit outside the hut and hope to share in some way in the food or entertainment.

575 Women usually have their own mahabbar sodalities, and usually name them in dedication to some event in the life of the Virgin Mary ("Maryam"). But sometimes women attach themselves to a male mahabbar as a kind of auxiliary, sitting on a mat by themselves in a corner, and tolerated because of their services in preparing bear, bread and stew, or even honored if they are heir-

575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men "brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship relation which is taken very literally by the more pious. Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahabbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry the widow of a mahabbar "brother", for this would be "levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church as a prechristian custom.

575 According to traditional law, the mähabbär in-
[428] herits any property left by a deceased member who leaves no blood kin (consanguinal) , in preferance to any rela-
[426 tives he might have by marriage (affinal). The mahabbar
476] acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker, making loans to members in financial need by raising internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "tazkar" memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his
[608] family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and personal problems of all kinds are discussed among "brothers" and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements between extended families having eligible youngsters are often first informally broached by women "sisters", who then agree to ask their husbands to act as intermediaries.

575 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys
561 above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind of junior mähabbär by older boys; girls above 10 years of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

575 561 mahabbar is first founded, the usual pattern of an age group is generally followed, so that young-marrieds, middle-aged, and elders have their own. But since there is great prestige in being admitted to a mahabbar of older persons, partly because of the honor of associating with respected elders, partly for direct economic advantages of belonging to an old, well-endowed mahabbar, boundaries of age do not last long. Elders, on their part, desire to replace vacancies left by deceased members with younger persons, whom they can dominate.

575 [566] Some persons belong to more than one mahabbar, but generally only the relatively well-to-do freehold landowners and traders can afford the expense. It is possible to transfer to another mahabbar, but it is usually not in a person's interest to sever established relationships; human, economic and legal. In case of any difficulty, he has ready bondsmen to act as "wäs" (guarantors). Most of all, the rare opportunity to express individual preference in a formal "we-group" creates personal, psychological ties that the average Amhara does not like to forego.

One of the most noteworthy and socially significant aspects of the mähabbär association is the wide variety of functions for which it can be adapted, despite--or perhaps because of--its simple structure. This is in almost complete contradistinction to most other Amhara patterns, which usually evidence a complex hierarchical structure and very specifically regulated functions. In comparison, the mahabbar is little structured.

264 procedure, also called "cämäsä" is in imitation of procedure at the court of nobles, and it is known that kings have always had their special cupbearers ("gänash") who tasted the drink against possible poison, and who also removed any floating debris ("gäffäta") such as beeswax from the drink.

574 The hospitality group on non-kin members which meets most
575 regularly, once a month, is the "mähabbär" association, already described. Based originally on religious private communion, each member plays host once a month to drink from "Mary's cup" ("yänaryam sewa"), to feast, for chant and dance ("zäffän") and less formal gossipy entertainment and conversation ("tächäwwäta").

C. Verbal Expression: Formalities; Wit; Pedagogic Riddles.

192 Emotional exclamations in everyday use are highly formalized:

Pain - "häyy häyy" (also if a painful truth "sinks in"; astonishment).

Fear - "woyy" (especially by women, just before a fearful event happens).

Fearful surprise - "oyyi" (e.g. when someone stumbles, or has an accident).

Alarm - "erriii" - (cry of alarm; also of great sorrow as in death of kin).

Skeptical surprise - "errä" ("you don't say?!"); Reply: "mut" (abbreviated from "yemut", lit. "May (the emperor die) if this is not true").

Pleasure - "essäy" (to indicate comfort, e.g. when sitting down after having climbed a long, tiring hill).

576 Formal politeness in etiquette always considers the social status
514 of the person addressed. Thus, there are six ways of informing an
192 inquirer that the person he seeks has gone out to defecate or urinate:

Impolite, though not vulgar: "weha afässä" - (lit. he poured water).

Polite: "der wätta" - lit. he went to the bush).

Polite: "äj wätta" - (lit. he went out the door).

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121 side are regarded with reserve and suspicion, if not hostility. For this reason
186 the word of native local authorities has always carried more weight than that
823 of imported or distant authorities. For this reason the names of bars and cafés around Addis Ababa today are to a large extent place names. For this reason
[575] the type of voluntary association which has aroused the most enthusiastic interest in Addis Ababa in recent years is the association based on a membership drawn from the same *agar*.[50] Regionalist sentiments are so intense in connection with these groups that some members of the Manz association, for example, have asserted that they would not admit to membership a person whose family originated in a district only a few kilometers outside the boundaries of Manz.

121 This type of orientation to Manz, Gondar, and the many other regions in Amhara country may be regarded as an instance of the more general phenomenon referred to above as "primordial sentiments." These are sentiments which are based on the awareness of certain given qualities shared by the members of a group, qualities such as race, language, religious affiliation, tribal affiliation, as well as region of origin. The primordial sentiments account for much of the cohesion and much of the vitality among the members of any traditional society. How these allegiances are affected in the course of modernization has considerable bearing on the future shape of the rapidly developing nations.

A number of factors inherent in modernization work to erode the primordial sentiments. Increased physical and social mobility tend to uproot the individual from the settings of family and home community in which these sentiments are produced and reinforced. Occupational position comes to replace membership in primordial groups as a primary determinant of status and identity. Secondary education, military training, and the development of national institutions and symbols promote the sentiment of nationalism to which these narrower allegiances are subordinated.

Other aspects of modernization, however, work in the opposite direction to intensify primordial sentiments. The education of members of minority groups gives them both a heightened sense of grievance and a voice with which to protest. The creation of new forms of wealth and power provides new bases for competition and conflict, processes which tend to be structured along lines already laid out by cleavages based on primordial differences. The insecurity aroused by the threat to tradition inherent in modernization also produces defensive reactions which often take the form of heightened allegiance to such groups.

This intensification of primordial loyalties during modernization presents a problem which, for all their differences, nearly all the nations of Africa and Asia have in common. Whether the critical differences revolve about language, as in India; religion, as in Lebanon; geography, as in Indonesia; or

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Selassie I theater, and the secondary level art school.* Library facilities included the National Library, with some fifty thousand volumes; the University College Library, with about forty-five; and the reading rooms of the United States Information Service, the British Center, and the Soviet Information Service. The national library also contains a historical museum, and there is a handsome and well appointed archeological museum nearby, neither of which has so far been operated with a view to encouraging public attendance.

Except for occasional lectures sponsored by the national library and the University College extension program, none of the above institutions serves as a center for intellectual communication among adult Ethiopians. It was hoped by some that with the inauguration of the Haile Selassie I University, in December, 1961, a major new center of intellectual life would be created; but the government found it difficult to push ahead with its announced concept of an integrated institution which would operate autonomously and at a high standard.

Outside these institutions, moreover, there have been few channels of communication through which Ethiopian intellectuals can develop their minds and stimulate their imaginations. There are no periodicals to serve as a medium for such communication. One possibility, the *Ethiopian Observer*, is not quite an exception. Limited resources have kept it from operating at as high a level as available talent might permit, and its basically apologetic orientation renders implausible its claims to be "A Journal of Independent Opinion." The daily newspapers which feature contributed articles—the *Ethiopian Herald*, the *Addis Zaman*, and the Amharic sections of the *Voice of Ethiopia*—have tended to exclude pieces that have anything to do with highly controversial matters. Nor are there many social occasions for the serious discussion of intellectual matters. Professional associations, clubs devoted to intellectual matters, and even informal discussion groups exist not at all or else in a very haphazard form.

Contact with the intellectual world outside Ethiopia is almost as meager. Foreign-educated Ethiopians tend to become intellectually demoralized on returning home. The loss of a taste for reading has frequently been one of the first casualties experienced by Western-educated Ethiopians on return from abroad. Only a few hardy souls attempt to maintain some sort of link with the outside world, through subscribing to such magazines as the *New Statesman*, *Paris Soir*, or *New Republic*. For most of them, coming home means a cessation of the most elementary intellectual functions, other

* In 1963 an Institute of Ethiopian Studies was established at Haile Selassie I University, including a substantial Ethiopiana library and museum.

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191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfata*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor [539] Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 594 527 [575] [794] Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious fraternal association known as the *māhebar,* is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māhebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā,*" literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

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*121 794 795 are left free to a large extent. Since every day of the month except the thirtieth is sanctified by dedication to some saint, Mass must be performed virtually every day, a norm which is actually fulfilled by churches which have a numerous clergy. The burden for individual clergymen is kept small by a system of rotation. The average parish church will have services perhaps ten to fifteen times a month, which is still too often for heavy popular attendance. Even on Sundays and the most important holidays, when the laity are expected to attend, their participation is excused by other considerations. Those who have eaten earlier in the day, who have had sexual relations the night before, or who are harboring a grudge in their "stomach" are not even supposed to come to church. If they do come, they sit outside the wall chatting with one another while the Mass is performed inside.

*121 794 795 783 Customs concerning Communion and Confession likewise give the individual a wide range of freedom. Partaking of the Communion is not required of anyone; the experience simply is available to those who are ritually pure (children, and those who have married by the *querbān*), if they are so inclined. Confession is not mandatory, but according to personal inclination. Every man has the right to choose his own personal confessor or "soul-father," though if satisfied with the one of his father, he may retain him. (A woman adopts the confessor of her husband.) The soul-father's advice may be sought when a problem arises. If a man sins—breaks the fast, works on a holiday, commits theft or murder—he is supposed to confess. If he chooses to do so, the soul-father will prescribe a certain penance—fasting an extra amount, sleeping on the floor for a period, giving something to the poor or to the church. But the initiative is entirely up to the sinner and probably more often than not he keeps the offense to himself. The proportion of Amhara who keep every fast strictly, go to church a few times a month, and confess their transgressions to the soul-father is small; in the estimate of one Amhara informant, less than five per cent.

*121 794 575 Still greater permissiveness may be observed in connection with the religious fraternal associations known as the *māhebar*. The *māhebar* consists of a group of people from the same general area, usually of the same sex, who meet once a month on the day devoted to the saint for whom the association is named. The place of meeting rotates among the homes of the members, and the soul-father of the host is always present to bless the occasion. The meetings consist of much eating, drinking, and conviviality. Membership in a *māhebar* is purely voluntary, and the individual who wishes to join one usually has a choice among several in a given area.*

For the Amhara laity, then, a few burdensome ritual and fiscal constraints

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[735] * There is a variant of the *māhebar* known as the *sanbatē*, whose members take turns in providing food for the clergy and poor folk on Sundays.

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are balanced by a fairly permissive mode of organization. For the clergy, the constraints are heavier; the fasting requirements are increased, and the priesthood involves, as we have seen, strict marital fidelity. On the other hand, the individualistic organization of the clergy is most striking.

This individualism is conspicuous already in the church schools, which are organized not on a class basis but in a series of master-pupil relations. Students begin their courses of study whenever they arrive at the residence of the master, and proceed each at his own pace. The master spends the bulk of his time with more advanced students, who in turn are used to instruct the less advanced. The pupils are very much on their own, uncontrolled either by their families, with whom they no longer reside, nor by any formal institution. The same is true of the masters, who are not subjected to any sort of outside controls. Indeed, each teacher tends to develop his own unique method of teaching, regarding as something of a personal monopoly.[24]

The ministrating clergy are likewise free from controls emanating from a broad ecclesiastical organization. Each parish church functions autonomously under the direction of a head (*alaqā*) chosen by the local clergy. (Heads of the most important churches have traditionally been appointed by the emperor.) The obligations of the priesthood are not very great. The chief duty of the priest is to take his turn in performing the Mass. His pastoral services are limited to occasional visits with his particular confessants, from whom he expects to receive regular rewards of food and drink. Otherwise, his life is much the same as that of his lay neighbors.

The role of the *dabtarā,* as we have seen, is still more flexible. *Dabtarā* who are associated with a parish church are expected to take their turns singing hymns and composing *qenē* in the outer ring of the church; but otherwise they exist as free entrepreneurs, and they need not be so attached unless they so desire.

The individualistic organization of the Ethiopian Church is most striking, perhaps, in the case of the monks, especially when compared with Christian monastic orders in the Western world. Ethiopian monks are bound by nothing other than the original conditions for assuming the role, namely, renouncing family ties and worldly possessions. The monk need not enter a monastery; he may continue to live in his old home or may take to the woods as a hermit. If he does go to live at a monastery, his life is not radically changed. The Ethiopian monastery is not an organized community, but a sacred place—the site of a large and important church, in the vicinity of which live numbers of individual monks. The monk comes and goes as he wishes, prays whenever he wants, and may live free of any obligations toward his fellow monastics and toward the rest of the society.*

* There are, however, some monasteries where a more organized and disciplined regime may be found.

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omy during the past two decades, represents a significant growth of the capacity for voluntary formal organization in the modernizing sector.[41]

Māhebar (*Regional Associations*).—A type of formal association which has sprung up in Addis Ababa in recent years, becoming popular for the first time around 1960, is known as the *māhebar*. While its name is taken from the traditional Orthodox fraternal association, in aims and organization it is different from the religious *māhebar*. While the latter is devoted to honoring one of the saints and is convened primarily for feasting and sociability, the modern *māhebar* is organized on the basis of territorial or tribal bonds and is concerned with problems of social betterment. The first *māhebar* of this kind was established by the Gurage in the fifties.* Thereafter, the idea spread to members of other groups, and Addis Ababa residents originating in Gondar, Tigre, Harar, Manz, Tagulat, Fitche and elsewhere began to form *māhebar* of their own. The basic idea behind all these *māhebar* is to make some contribution to the welfare of the provinces through projects voluntarily financed and organized by fellow-countrymen living in the metropolis. These projects have included construction of roads, schools, and hospitals; supplying books for schools; and provision of facilities for assisting inhabitants of the provinces who come to the city. Members of the various *māhebar* convene weekly or biweekly, usually on Sunday in the vicinity of one or another of the Addis Ababa churches, to discuss their projects and make their financial contributions.

Formal Associations of Foreign Inspiration

Student Associations.—The Orthodox Students Association was founded in 1958 by a convention representing all the colleges and some of the secondary schools. Its successful establishment was due in large part to the efforts of an Indian Orthodox minister who at the time was one of the Emperor's private secretaries. There is some evidence that an earlier spontaneous effort to form such a group in the early fifties was checked by the government. Members of this association have been concerned with adapting the activities of the church to contemporary needs. They criticize the established church for its use of a dead language, excessive ritualism, and lack of teaching; and have proposed that the Orthodox Church should institute Sunday schools and

* The Gurage *māhebar* remains in a class of its own, with respect to size, wealth, and ambitiousness of program. The Gurage have also pointed the way to using the *māhebar* form in a way that transcends the narrow tribal or territorial passions which it has thus far tended to canalize. This has been done through the establishment of another, project-oriented *māhebar* concerned solely with building a road from Alam Gana to Wollamo Soddo, whose membership includes Galla and Wollamo as well as Gurage. This association has already collected well over a million dollars, and has completed the construction of a bridge. It is headed by a capable Gurage army general and its activities and collections are reported regularly in the Addis Ababa press.

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575 794 178 cultivate a missionary spirit in order to reach the non-Christian peoples of Ethiopia. The association sponsors weekly religious services, featuring hymns in Amharic and talks in Amharic on religious and moral questions, and publishes a monthly journal. The Orthodox Students Association stands out as the first nationwide voluntary association in Ethiopia. It holds an annual convention which draws some three hundred students from all parts of the country.

The Ethiopian College Students Association was established in 1960 after some years of patient maneuvering by officers of the various college student governments. It attempts to represent the interests and needs of students vis-à-vis the government and to handle relations with international student organizations.

A number of student clubs have appeared from time to time within the framework of the colleges. One of the most popular and productive of these has been the Ethnological Society of the University College, founded in the early fifties by a Polish member of the college staff. Over the years it has produced several issues of an ethnological bulletin. More recently, under the framework of the new university, dramatic and choral groups have been established as well as groups like the Education Students Association and the Economics Students Association. Graduates of some of the secondary schools and colleges, moreover, have formed a small number of alumni associations.

467 178 [177] *Labor Unions.*—Although Ethiopia has for some time been a paying member of the ILO, the government has until recently strongly opposed the establishment of unions in the country. Nevertheless, due to the encouragement of labor representatives from Western and other African countries, as well as to the courageous efforts of a number of Ethiopians, several unions have at least been established and have won some degree of recognition from the government.* Trade unions were first attempted among employees of the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad and in Eritrea.[42] They now include employees of a number of factories. [357] Even household servants have formed associations that establish minimal conditions which members are obliged to demand from their employers.

814 815 875 178 *Professional Associations.*—The Ethiopian Teachers Association, with a large paper membership but scarcely any activity, was the only professional association in Ethiopia prior to the 1960 rebellion. If one may generalize from the frustrated attempts of Ethiopian doctors to establish a medical association, it would seem that the government was attempting to discourage groups of this sort as well as trade unions. Since 1961, however, the picture has changed. [759] There now exists not only a medical association, which publishes its own

* A law establishing a legal basis for labor unions was enacted by the Ethiopian parliament in 1962.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

journal, but also an engineers' association, a college teachers' association, and an Ethiopian writers' association. Earlier attempts to establish an organization of lawyers have not yet reached fruition.

National and International Service Organizations.—A final group of formal associations consists of those which include non-Ethiopian nationals as well as Ethiopians in their membership and which carry out welfare services of various sorts. The Ethiopian Red Cross, the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association, the YMCA, and the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa have been active for more than a decade. More recently, the International Christian Fellowship was formed with an eye to discussing ways of translating Christian principles into social action, and the Social Service Society has broken new ground in the welfare field with its ambitious program of relocating and rehabilitating Addis Ababa indigents.

Informal Associations

Another significant sociological development since the 1960 rebellion has been the blossoming of what might be called "mutual confidence groups." Although the public climate remains somewhat tense and generalized suspicion still prevails, a step has been taken away from the complete atomism of the pre-rebellion era. These groups consist of numbers of friends, bound by such factors as kinship, common ethnic background, relationships formed during study abroad, and occupational ties. Perhaps the most important single bond underlying these groups derives from friendships formed during the crucial experience of attending secondary school together. While for the most part these groups carry out no organized activities or structured discussions, they do provide a context in which any of the issues of the day can be discussed with fairly complete frankness and without fear of reprisal.

There are some progressive Ethiopians who would like to see these groups become the nuclei of action groups and political parties, even on an overt basis. The prevailing view among them, however, seems to be that this is as far as they can go under the present regime.

The efflorescence of voluntary associations in Ethiopia during the past half dozen years constitutes a remarkable thickening of the fabric of Ethiopian society. It may be seen as a vast, unconscious process of arousing and co-ordinating energies to meet the novel realities of Ethiopia's current historical situation. What relationship to this collective process have the individualistic features of Amhara character and society which were discussed above?

It may be observed that in virtually none of the cases cited above were the Amhara the initiators of the associational forms in question. The territorial and "project" *māhebar* were introduced into Ethiopian life by the Gurage; so, as far as present evidence indicates, were the *eddīr* and the *equb*. The labor

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The labor movement, limited as it is, has been in the hands of Eritreans on the one hand, and primarily non-Amhara workers in the south. Student associations have been formed chiefly at the instigation and under the aegis of foreign staff members; though here, as with the professional associations, modernized Amhara have sometimes played a leading role.

Once the new associations had been introduced, the Amhara like other Ethiopians were quick to adopt and expand them. Their participation in these new associations, however, has been affected, as might be expected, by the intrusion of traditional behavior patterns. Three examples of such behavior patterns come readily to mind.

(1) While the *equb* is conceived as a kind of credit union and as a focus for communal sociability, the *co-operative* sentiment tends to be lacking among members of Amhara *equb*, at least those of which the author has any knowledge. For example, in case of dire need, an *equb* member who desires the lump sum out of turn may be forced to *buy* the amount from the weekly winner, sometimes by forfeiting as much as ten or twenty per cent of the amount. By capitalizing on the crises of others, some enterprising *equb* members are able to sell their successful claims several times. Furthermore, in the early years of their existence, *equb* were frequently faced with the problem created by members who won the money early in the cycle, left town with the money, and did not return to pay their later installments. This difficulty has been met to some extent by the requirement of securing one or two guarantors for each person who enters an *equb*, but problems of this nature have led to altercations that have brought many *equb* members into court.

(2) The behavior of members of Amhara territorial *māhebar* is essentially that of a traditional social or civil gathering. The big men are seated in places of honor; the rest of the people stand quietly by. After a protracted period of exchanging greetings and milling about, the crowd listens respectfully while one or more of the big men makes a statement, and perhaps exchanges a few words with the group's secretary; and then the gathering disbands. Although the *māhebar* is organized with respect to the attainment of specific goals, the substance of the meetings is instumental to a very slight degree. The assembly rarely involves a meeting of minds to discuss an issue or a common problem, or to work out a program of action; but exists primarily as an occasion for the resonance of primordial sentiments by virtue of shared territorial attachments.

(3) In all associations, finally, certain traditional characteristics which are incongruent with the optimum conduct of groups come to the fore. This is no less true of the modern-educated than of the traditionals. Members fail to come on time to arranged meetings or neglect to come altogether.* They

* The *equb* has attempted to check this pattern by imposing fines on members who come late.

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262 For the less well-to-do, the cheapest meat is chicken, and this red pepper stew is called "qäy doro wät". Slaughtering, even of chicken, must be done by men. The pious pronounce the invocation, "In the name of the Father, the Son, the holy Ghost, one Divinity"(because of the Monophysite faith). Then the housewife takes over, removes the feathers in boiling water, singes the skin, inflates the outer skin by blowing into the cut skin near the throat. She then cleans the chicken and rubs it with pea flour. Inner organs and wings and legs are washed with salt and lemon juice, then lightly roasted. In another pan, minced red onion, red pepper and other spices are fired in butter, water is added and stirred, ground salt is powdered over it. Then boiled, shelled eggs are added. Now all chicken parts are boiled with this prepared mixture, in a deeper clay pot.

Whenever any of these vegetable or meat stews is boiled without red pepper, the stew is called "alecha", and, unless this dish is added to the menu for variety, it is considered a poor substitute. It is given to very young infants and to persons with intestinal ailments, and so constitutes a symbol for weakness. (It is a major insult to call a man "alecha", because the term also means "impotent".)

[758]

[576]

Most often alecha is boiled with chicken, "yädoro alecha". Red onion is preferred in butter, in a clay pot ("dest"). Peeled vegetables such as tomatoes (in urban areas) and water are added. The chicken, disjointed, washed and dried, is boiled in this. Powdered ginger, cloves, green pepper without seeds, sweet basil are added,

273 Since fermenting mead is too specialized for the
[272] ordinary housewife and it must usually be bought, the peasant consumes his honey-drink more often as "berz", unfermented honey water, and this is what he offers an honored guest, in addition to barley beer. If the peasant consumes mead, he usually does it away from home, at the nearest big market or town where he has gone to sell his products. For two liters of mead he has to pay as much as he receives for an entire kilo of honey (ETh$1.- or US$0.40). He cannot usually afford more and leaves after one bottle.

In the fermentation of mead, "gesho" or other hops mentioned are used. Six or seven parts of water to one part of honey, plus gesho, are stirred in a huge barrel or large imported tin can. This permits the tapping of the finished product at the bottom, as a jar would not. The first, lightly fermented mead is called "bätäha". Mead fermented several months to a year, more expensive and of higher prestige is "däräq" (lit. dry), a strong intoxicant.

272 Coffee is served black, after roasting, crushing and boiling in front of an honored guest. Salt may be added, African style, but never sugar (which, however, is added to imported tea drunk in towns). Milk is never added, but sometimes butter, even spiced butter. Coffee may grow wild, or may be purchased at the market: long-berry from Harar, or from Jimma.

● 576 A significant culture trait is connected with the serving of any drink. The servant who pours, or the host himself in case of an honored guest, pours a small mouthful into his own cupped hand and drinks it publicly. This

576 is called "qämmash", an important etiquette. Its origin may stem from the well-known oriental pattern of protecting an important personage from being poisoned, and since the feudal lord is still imitated among the Amhara, even by peasants, the custom is still prevalent in rural areas, provincial towns, and even in Addis Ababa.

E. Utensils and Tools.

322 Whenever possible, the Amhara likes to utilize direct products of nature, such as natural shape of branches, branch forks, branches at the right angle (e.g.for adzes), gradual thickening of a branch of hardwood (e.g. for ax handles). Much time is spent in the bush looking for the right wood, for there is no carpentry on any developed level. Sawing is unknown. So is splitting of wood to prepare boards, so that laborious chopping away at a log from both sides would be necessary. Nailing and gluing is still not done in rural areas. To drill a hole in wood, the blacksmith is called and burns a hole with an iron poke. Oxhide strips are used for fastening.

412 415 Therefore there are very few wooden utensils. Spoons and forks are not used by the Amhara. During dinner, pieces of enjära are ripped from the edge, to serve as spoon and fork. Then the piece is used to fish out a morsel of meat and some of the sauce of the "wot". Iron knives are used at dinner time only at a feast of "brundo", raw beef, when a red morsel is cut off just in front of the teeth.

412 415 463 Preparations of tools and utensils fall into four categories of division of labor: (1) Work done by special-

661 644 might gain in favor and edge him out with contrived accusations.

This pattern can still be observed, from the modest court of the sub-provincial governor and local judge, to the palace courtyard of the emperor himself. It is called "dāj tenāt" (lit. waiting by the gate). The frequency of appearance, in order to remain in good graces, is usually twice a week; more often if a special favor is sought. The place is preferably within a few yards [576] of a spot where the lord (or emperor) will pass. When this takes place, the courtier bows from the hips, very low. This will usually be acknowledged with a small nod. The procedure is considered essential by the aspirant for office, and by the office-holder, for these reasons:

Positive Reasons:

Reaffirmation of continued loyalty;

To indicate readiness to receive orders, pass messages, give information;

To enable the lord to play his paternalistic role (i.e. the lord can and periodically does ask whether the courtier is happy in his job or [576] wishes a new one; ettiquette requires a response of happiness at least for six months after having received a job, even if it was a demotion or an unpleasant task).

Negative Reasons:

To counteract rumors of disloyalty spread by rivals;

867 [539] "He, before becoming old,
wants to be serious".

(This is also said of a young man who saves gifts for a bride before he has chosen a girl).

When the adolescent boys take part in the aforementioned ritual mock-battles, younger boys imitate them by staging similar hazing-battles among their age peers.

Little girls are encultured in somewhat similar fashion by peers of their own sex, but more often including some older girls who patronize the younger. Girls are not taught any social graces among commoner Amharas, so that they sit shyly and wordless when in the company of men. Any girl who shows signs of daring is mocked and hazed as "gobba" (daring, enterprising female). Generally the activities of girls are less violent,. At times when boys fight their ritual mock-battles, girls dance rounds and sing in unison.

Both boys and girls are taught to be right-handed, and a "lefty" is extremely rare. They are taught to eat with the right hand, shake hands with the right, and use the left for wiping themselves with leaves after defecating. But the prohibition against use of the left hand on other occasions is not as severe as among Arabs.

[264 576 514]

[754] Both sexes fear the supernatural "buda" spirit, also in the shape of human sorcerer and magical hyena. Older boys claim they can distinguish the cry of a real hyena from that of a magical one, and sometimes scare younger children by imitating the howl.

867 302 Sex differentiation among children is expressed in the hair style. Boys wear a single coxcomb hairlock, girls a ring of hair around the shaven skull which sometimes may contain a center hair-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

000 letting the audience become aware of this collusion. (footnote 93).

B. Interpersonal Etiquette and Relationships.

571 Interpersonal etiquette among the Amhara governs particularly
576 those relations that can be described as "secondary group", for relations
[602] within the "primary group" are governed largely by specific kinship or religious rules of behavior.

It is a rare case - and considered very sad - if a person has no kin, and must base most of his human relations on secondary- group affiliations. The latter relationship includes most prominently the "agär" (lit. country, i.e. home district). Sometimes this refers only to the immediate parish, sometimes to the "meketl wor̈ada" sub-district; but if a person finds himself in another province he may include the entire district, "wor̈ada"; though the concept of "agär" does not usually extend beyond this territory in any real meaning of secondary group. If a person has no kin to turn to for aid in legal trouble, or needs a "mas" guarantor to secure a job, he may seek out a man from his "agär". For this reason there is motivation to observe rules of etiquette particularly with individuals in the "agar" secondary group, such as visiting or inviting them, bring them "enqutatash" gifts and flowers (through children) at New Year and "Masqal" festivals, etc. Such gifts are not given to complete strangers from a more distant territory, who are called "bada" (slightly derogatory term, with connotation of "rustic").

576 Interpersonal etiquette within the secondary group may lead to
572 closer personal relations between two individuals, taking certain

Footnote 93 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Minstrel's Argot. Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1952, Vol. 72, No. 3 pp. 102-109

576 572 specific forms. This relationship is mostly that of the "balenjara" (lit. mutual breadgivers), who enjoy the privilege of visiting each other without formal prearrangement; who may call upon each other to stand personal bond ("was"); who are likely to ask each other to act as negotiator for the marriage of a son or daughter before the affair becomes a formal kinship matter.

The very absence of a kinship tie makes it possible for "balenjara" to negotiate arbitration of blood-money to end or prevent a bloody feud between kin groups. The intenseness of the "balenjara" relationship may range from the trusted, though casual companion, "gorätsa", usually an age-mate, with whom interpersonal relationships are frequent and regular, but not intense; to the more intense but less frequent and less regular relationships with the "wädaj", a warm friend, "tebeq wädaj", the intimate confidante, so that the two individuals become "mestirana" (mutual bosom pals) to each other. "Balenjara" address each other with "antu" (the more polite form of "thou"; and other "thou", "anta", being used for children and inferiors mostly). When walking or standing and talking to each other, "balenjara" (and also other acquaintances, if on the same social level) interlace one or two of their fingers, loosely, but enough to remain in physical communication. Like kinsmen, "balenjara" men kiss each other on the neck when they meet after not having seen each other for some weeks. Women may also establish "balenjara" relations with other women, and go on picnics together after the harvest in the dry season, especially on church holidays, but Amhara men believe that women do not form long-lasting friendships as often as men do.

[203] Dissemination of news and rumors through the "grapevine" occurs frequently through the channel of the "balenjara", who utilize the occasion of a bit of news as justification to drop in on each other, and to share barley beer and "enjara" bread (hence the term).

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576 [572] Apart from this interpersonal relationship of choice, in which two individuals establish psychological response to each other (and mutual aid) outside the kinship group, most other forms of interpersonal etiquette are patterned so formally that they can be readily learned (even by outsiders). The vagueness and ambivalence of shifting etiquette of the Western world of modern times has not yet affected Amhara culture. Even modern-educated Amhara continue to fall back to the established pattern of traditional etiquette as soon as they return to their own country.

576 a) Formal Expressions of Status of Class, Age, Sex.

In formal expression of status, be it of class, age or sex, Amhara etiquette differentiates most sharply the dominant role from the role of the subordinate.

The most dramatic expression of this is the "gursha". It is enacted by the status superior toward the status inferior, a symbolic giving of food, money, wages, or other gifts. Thus, the master who wishes to indicate fondness and favor to the servant, will stuff some morsels of food into his mouth, publicly, while at dinner. A father will do it to his children, or to his wife. A chief may do it to a visiting "great man" of inferior or equal status, but never to a superior. However, a wife who has been married for some time and feels secure enough in her status to demonstrate equality, may jokingly return the favor and feed "gursha" to her husband, but only after he has initiated the activity.

[465] Servants, when receiving wages, receive them with both hands raised above the head, with bowed head and downcast eyes, and must never look at the money, much less count it in presence of the employer; for etiquette requires that wages be regarded as "gursha". (In recent years, the term "gursha" has become used in the sense of "tip", gratuity, baksheesh.)

576 Politeness is not considered "common", but differentiates most sharply between the behavior and expected behavior of the noble "great man" (telleq säw) and the rustic (balagär). The "great man", noble is expected to show graciousness, noblesse oblige. When a social inferior tries to kiss his feet, it is gracious to chuck him under the chin so as not to let him reach the feet, so that the kiss lands on the [593] master's knee. Fathers or mothers imitate this same etiquette when their sons, arriving or departing, try to kiss their feet in symbolic etiquette of subordination. The motion is smooth and evidently routine and well-practiced.

195 Stylistic distinctions in the speech pattern also differ between expected etiquette of a noble and rustic. It is noble to talk slowly, softly, choosing words with unworried deliberation, which indicates to the listener that the noble, a man of few and calm words, is secure in his rank and position, and does not have to worry about possible results of poor communication. A noble uses soft-and-polite language (a unified concept to the Amhara), called "yäcätalanät negeger", showing good judgement and taste ("yeluneta"). But his softness of speech has a firm and impressive quality, referred to as "läza mälkam" (lit. good tongue).

576 It is the mark of a social parvenue of "low" ancestry, if he struts ("talattätä") with an upward-turned face, and is too proud to reply politely when addressed politely. A true noble, though he will not dismount from his mule when greeted by a commoner on foot (as he would to a social equal or superior), will raise his hat a bit, or raise his toga a bit, in reply to a greeting, in which the commoner has removed from his head his toga protection from the sun.

A social inferior may not sit down in the company of seated "great men" until invited to do so twice. He is expected to be ready to join

576 the retinue of the great man, to serve as messenger, whenever the "great man" decides to go anywhere. When the great man graciously extends his hand in greeting, the social subordinate takes it lightly into his two cupped hands as if it were a precious gift, a "gursha", and permits the hand to be withdrawn soon; for the extended handholding is limited to social equals. The great man is addressed as "getoch" (lit. "masters", using the plural). When appearing before a great man, the toga ("shamma") is redraped in the fashion of appearing before the feudal lord or king, leaving the upper part of the body bare (or nowadays, covered by another garment) in a gesture of self-abasement. Bowing is from the hip, both in case of individuals and by the population at large when the "great man" passes in public.

However, self-abasement among the Amhara is not supposed to be carried to extremes, in their opinion. It does happen that an old rustic ("balägär") will show great servility (resembling that of Uncle Tomism of American Southern states). But this is quietly mocked by other onlooking Amhara commoners. Such a "balägär" may, e.g. throw his toga off his own shoulders and spread it on the ground for a bishop or other great man to walk on, later treasuring the footprints. But it is considered etiquette, especially by young church students and other youngsters, to carry the sandals of adults or priests when they are taken off before entering church.

576 195 It is the mark of the rustic (illiterate) if he is careless in the requirements of polite etiquette, for while the speech pattern of the noble is not expected of him (and would be considered affected, and is therefore never used), he is expected to remember that even he is an Amhara, and therefore somewhat "noble". He will be mocked and criticized for frequent impoliteness, such as using the term "enja" (lit. I don't know) which has the connotation of "... and I don't care", instead of the polite "alawcum" (lit. "it has not entered me", i.e. I don't

576 therefore, know). Abusing people with vulgar insults ("laddafa")
195 tends to reflect on the abuser, so that he is considered "belgena", a rude person. Such a person speaks in high-pitched, strident style, to commoners; while to social superiors he fawns and wheedles, using baby-talk such as "abbabba" (daddy) to a lord and "ammamma" or "tatay" (mummy) to a lady, in mournful tones of self-abasement and utter helplessness, begging paternal protection and forgiveness as if he were an infant that had not yet reached the "age of reason".

576 This is mocked, for the Amhara distinguishes between such servility and non-servile gestures of subordination, such as the "gursha", the bowing from the hip, and the walking backwards when departing from
[466] the king. Servants and other employees may indicate dissatisfaction at being short-changed, by bowing not quite so deeply the next time, whereupon a wise lord or employer will take a cue, increase the wage, and see it acknowledged by a specially deep bow or knee-kiss. Otherwise, protest will take the form of "murmuring", a semi-articulate protest which may lead to open rebellion.

576 Kinship terms are sometimes employed, outside the kin context,
601 to communicate respective positions in a situation of differential social status. Thus, it is respectful to address a status superior as "ayya" (lit. "my dear elder"), used to the father or elder brother. The extension of this term is fairly recent, in line with improved communication and transportation, but the rustic still uses the more ancient version, "ayya", (which has the same meaning). Because of this, a wit who does not want to address a rustic as "ato" (Mister), sometimes addresses the ignoramus, in mock respect, as "ayya". (This cheats him out of his "entitles", reminiscent of the use of the address "Doc" by Southern Whites to Negroes, avoiding "Mister")

576 The speech pattern and etiquette to be expected from women,
195 nearly all of whom are illiterate and have no formal education, is
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562 classified by Amhara men in the category of the "balagär"; as high-pitched, strident, alternately vulgar and wheedling. The term for female, "syet", also means inconsistent. A woman's voice is not regarded as "soft", which concept is regarded as identical with "polite" and associated with "noble". Noblewomen are considered exempt from this rustic pattern of womanhood, and are expected to behave in accordance with "nobility".

b) Greetings and Address.

576 Formality in interpersonal relations is emphasized in greetings, forms of address, postures and gestures, sometimes in considerable detail and variety, since formal politeness is a culture focus among the Amhara.

Distinctions are made even in familiar address. Thus there are two ways of saying "thou": "antä" - to a child, social inferior, or semi-jokingly to emphasize intimate friendship to a social equal;

"antu" - polite "thou", used to older sibling, or by wife to respected husband.

The polite form utilizes the plural in address; and, in the case of pronouns, the third person plural. Hence :

"gätoch" - (lit. masters), polite address to employer

"antu" - (thou) polite-familiar address.

"ersu" or "erswo" - (lit. he), polite "you" (singular) to male.

"erswa" - (lit. she) " " " to female.

"ersachäw" - (lit. they) " " (plural), but also used as extremely polite singular address to lord.

The use of the plural communicates that the person addressed is worth several times as much, in material or spiritual worth, as an average person.

576 The master-servant relationship terms are utilized in polite address, to indicate real or pretended servility, or simple politeness:

"gëta"! (lit. master) call to stranger on the road.

"yäne gëta"! My Master! Address to one's father, priest, great man.

The feudal terms of address have so expanded in use during the past generation, that in recent years some have come to be used as terms of politeness even to respected commoners:

"emmëtëy" - "Milady!" Formerly used to address noble lady, now polite - warm address to respected woman.

"ato" - (derived from "abyeto", with connotation of "at your service"), once used in address to princes and high feudal lords, then to respected male heads of households, now simply used as "Mister".

"woyzäro" - Lady. Term of polite reference formerly reserved for royalty, then extended to wives of all nobility, now used in reference to any married woman, who is mistress of a household.

Feudal terms used derivations of adjectives, but the only one still in official use is "Germawi Hoy" (Oh Magnificence), the proper address to the emperor.

The use of kinship terms toward non-relatives, when seeking kin-like protection, has already been described: e.g. "tatay" ("mummy"), babytalk used by adults as endearing-polite address to a woman of child-bearing age; also, by extension, as polite-jocular address to a young girl soon to approach marriage age, e.g. by a teasing young man.

Religious terms are used on many occasions in daily life, as common etiquette, often without conscious awareness that they are religious terms: When two persons meet, the common greeting is as follows:

A: "endemin allu", or "endemin nawo" (polite) -"How are you?".

B: "egzër yemäsgän, dähna nän"- "God be praised, I am well."

This interchange is repeated several times before both are assured.

576 When they have seen each other too recently to require this assurance, the greeting is simply "tenä-stellen" - Hello! (lit. "May he, i.e. God, give you health in my stead"). When spelled out, this form becomes "egziabher yestellen" (May God reward you for me), which simply means "Thank you!". When someone sneezes, others say to him "yemar" (lit. May He have mercy), to which the sneezer replies "yemarow" (May He be merciful unto you); if the sneezing continues, the interchange is reinforced with "Amen".

Other terms of politeness are:

"yeqerta" or "yeqerta bälun" - "Excuse me", e.g. when stepped on toes.

"ebakwo" - "Please" (lit. I beg you).

When asking a person, e.g. a visitor, to take a seat, five gradations of politeness can be used to indicate the level of respect:

"quch bäl" - "Sit down (somewhere)", used to young person, (utilizing the imperative grammatical form as well as the familiar singular).

"quch bälu" - "(please) sit down", (using the plural imperative to single visitor), used in inviting adult neighbor to sit.

"täqämätu" - "(Kindly) take a seat" (using plural of another verb).

"nor" - (lit. "Reside"). Very polite invitation, accompanied
"yenoru" (plural) (by low bow, to invite a great man, or long-absent friend of status; sometimes re-enforcing it further by use of the plural.

The polite reply, in acceptance to the invitation, is "bäegziabher"- (lit. Since God wills it).

It is never polite to say "no", to reject an invitation or negotiation outright. In negotiations, discouragement in a gradual manner is used to communicate politely a negative attitude; e.g. in marriage negotiations already described, in which procrastination is used. In order to avoid the impolite "yällän" (no), the Amhara prefers to say "nara" (tomorrow), or, even more politely, "eshshi naga" (allright, tomorrow). When refusing to see a visitor, or rejecting an invitation to come to a feast, the standard form of polite rejection

●576 is to excuse oneself as indisposed due to "having drunk kosso", the bitter medicine against tapeworm, which medicine indeed incapacitates the patient for several days, and which is taken frequently and even regularly. He may send a written note of apology:

> " Yaderas kakebur (May this reach the Honorable....):
>
> " I have received your esteemed invitation to dinner. Thank you very much for having (thus) honored me. Having travelled, I have drunk medicine and am unable to come. I beg you not to be annoyed with me for remaining away under those circumstances (lit. in such a difficulty)". (footnote 94)

Gestures in greeting must indicate warmth, to be polite. In shaking hands, one does not withdraw one's hand soon, but keeps holding on loosely for several minutes, while talking. Men do this, also women to women, but a man will not hold a woman's hand in greeting unless she is close blood-kin, such as sister or daughter. Men (or women to women) who have not seen each other a long time, fall on each other's necks and kiss each other on both cheeks. The principle of indicating warmth in greeting overcomes the principle of the separation of the sexes in public, so that, especially in the rural areas and the commoner class where expressive behavior in public is more tolerated than in the upper class of nobility, men may cheek-kiss women in greeting, though not in flirting which must be private.

[584] In spite of many other changes, it is still considered highly improper for a young man and young girl to hold hands when walking on a "shershar" (promenading). Not even the foreign-educated Amhara dare do this, not even in the modern center of Addis Ababa.

Footnote 94 - Ladis: An Amharic Reader, 1924, p. 276.

c) Visiting

574 602 Visiting kinfolk regularly, during the nine months of the dry season, is a prime requirement. This includes, in this order of emphasis and frequency: patrilineal kin, matrilineal kin, affinal kin.

574 606 Visits to affinal kin are less frequent and more formal. When visiting one's parents-in-law, usually twice during the dry season, the man is not supposed to come empty-handed, but should bring a sheep as a gift. He waits outside the in-law hamlet, just beyond the thornbush enclosure, and asks the children whether his father-in-law is at home. When the latter appears, the visitor enters and approaches the hut. He enters only upon invitation. There is no mother-in-law avoidance as such, but contact is reduced to a minimum, between son-in-law and mother-in-law, to achieve maximum privacy for both.

602 Flouting kinship obligation is regarded as a shameful deviation, indicating an evil character. Kinship relations represent much security for the individual, but also involve him in serious obligations, such as aiding kinsmen in blood-feuds and reprisal-raids ("bägäl"). A person who wanders away from the kin hamlet, or from kin obligations, when his mood or irresponsibility carry him, is called "läqo" (after the soft reed that grows rapidly at the least rain, but drops when grown to maturity).

574 754 Visitors, particularly strangers, must observe certain taboos, lest they be suspected of bringing the evil eye. They should not ask the number of children, nor praise their health or good looks aloud. This is considered dangerous, because the "buda" spirit is always on the lookout for fat, juicy children so that he can magically "drink [164] their blood" and make them waste away. (Children are vulnerable to many communicable diseases).

574 576 When visiting the sick, the visitor, especially female visitors, are expected to express their sympathy in unmistakeable tones. The

574 visitors screw up their faces as if in great agony, even despair, and
576 utter the long, subdued wail "ayye". Religious expressions on such occasions are "egziabher yatnawo" (May God give you health), or "egzer yemarewo" (May God be merciful to you).

574 d) Hospitality and Dining.

539 Hospitality to kinfolk, members of the secondary group, and other travellers, in that sequence of emphasis, is a major culture focus. Numerous proverbs are often quoted, governing this behavior:

Even a poor man is expected to give what he can, even if he can offer little more than a pleasant face:

"More than his food,
his face pleased me."

Refusal of hospitality for the night is castigated:

"He has let me be eaten by the hyena" (at night).

A stingy host, who could well afford generosity, is mocked:

"He goes about, attended by 90 retainers;
but in his house famine reigns".

A host is advised to make his invitation specific as to the day:

"A dog, called for the right day,
arrives on his own feet".

574 A host is expected to urge the guest to take freely of profferred
262 food and drink. An invitation to "take coffee" is frequently the formula introducing a complete dinner. Staples readily available, unlike dinners that require preparation, include barley beer ("talla"), roasted barley grains ("gebs golo"), roasted peas ("shembera golo"), boiled corn grains ("mashella"), milk, eggs, limp bread ("enjira"), and except among the very poor, coffee beans, which are roasted, crushed and boiled in front of the guest.

Dinner is regarded as a feast ("dogga" or "gebber") and should include meat and butter, so that it is impolite to invite anyone on

264 procedure, also called "gämäsä" is in imitation of procedure at the court of nobles, and it is known that kings have always had their special cupbearers ("gänash") who tasted the drink against possible poison, and who also removed any floating debris ("gäffäta") such as beeswax from the drink.

574 575 The hospitality group on non-kin members which meets most regularly, once a month, is the "mähabär" association, already described. Based originally on religious private communion, each member plays host once a month to drink from "Mary's cup" ("yänaryam sewa"), to feast, for chant and dance ("zäffän") and less formal gossipy entertainment and conversation ("tächäwäta").

C. Verbal Expression: Formalities; Wit; Pedagogic Riddles.

192 Emotional exclamations in everyday use are highly formalized:

Pain - "hayy hayy" (also if a painful truth "sinks in"; astonishment).

Fear - "woyy" (especially by women, just before a fearful event happens).

Fearful surprise - "oyyi" (e.g. when someone stumbles, or has an accident).

Alarm - "erriii" - (cry of alarm; also of great sorrow as in death of kin).

Skeptical surprise - "errä" ("you don't say?!"); Reply: "mut" (abbreviated from "yemut", lit. "May (the emperor die) if this is not true").

Pleasure - "essäy" (to indicate comfort, e.g. when sitting down after having climbed a long, tiring hill).

576 514 192 Formal politeness in etiquette always considers the social status of the person addressed. Thus, there are six ways of informing an inquirer that the person he seeks has gone out to defecate or urinate:

Impolite, though not vulgar: "weha äfässäsä" - (lit. he poured water).

Polite: "ger wätta" - (lit. he went to the bush).

Polite: "äij wätta" - (lit. he went out the door).

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576 Very Polite: "shängo wätta" - (lit. he went to a meeting).
514 Extremely Polite: "märo zorä" - (lit. he left home).
192 Extremely Polite: "shersher wätta" - (lit. he went for a walk).

522 Wit, used in court or by homespun philosophers to entertain their friends, compensates for the many formalities in this culture and society. The famous wit, Alaqa Gäbre-Hanna has already been cited.
538 Proverbs, "tärät" and riddles may be used to make a comment of esoteric meanings, understandable only to one's initiates. Proverbs fulfill a social function, beyond mere entertainment, for even philosophy, being utilized to begin any negotiation, such as for marriage. This is emphasized in proverbs on proverbs:

[539]

"Like Halleluyah before the chanting (in church),
(begin with) a proverb before the discussion".
"(to drink) mead, (first get) a container,
to talk, (begin with) a proverb".

538 Proverbs and riddles used by parents, teachers and leaders of
595 society have a pedagogic function, and can be used to reprimand and
[861] instruct. Conflict between father and son, the complexities involved, and the possibility that contrary to the major cultural assumption of parental superiority, the son may sometimes have logic on his side, is indicated by the following:

[539]

"(Says the father):

"Your Father you cannot accuse (e.g. in court, shaming yourself)
nor plow the sky,
nor roast water".

"(Replies the son):

"The father, by his own shame he will stand accused;
the sky, by lighting it is plowed;
water, in a pot it is steamed".

821 animals and evil spirits give birth. It is called "näber wäldalächh" (lit. the leopard has given birth), or "jeb wäldach", (lit. the hyena has had a litter).

823 Volcanic activity, which occurs not infrequently in these mountains that are of young geological age, is interpreted as a threatened repetition of the Biblical event that swallowed Sodom, and is indeed called "Sodom" (another connotation is "greedy").

Geographical directions are taken either from the Geez, e.g. "me'erab" for west (lit. where the sun sets), and "mesraq" for east; or the location of Abyssinian provinces is used: "Semyen" for north, "Azeb" for southwest. South is "däbub" (probably Cushitic).

821 Daytime and nighttime are regarded as two very different phases of the universe, altering radically behavior of natural phenomena, 825 animals, plants, even human behavior. The phrase "the night belongs to the hyena" refers not only to the nightly roaming of that animal, but also to the roaming of evil spirits at night, as well as dangerous strangers and actual bandits. As a consequence, even the hospitable, outgoing householder of the daytime changes to sullen and suspicious behavior if strangers suddenly arrive after dark. When he must leave the hut, he carries a weapon, in the rural areas. Even in Addis Ababa, the official curfew at midnight is little resented by the average Amhara, because of this traditional pattern.

574 576 The period of a week is regarded as a time unit with regard to the primary group and kin visiting. When two members of these groups have not seen each other for more than a week, they greet each other with "endemen säläbätu" (lit. how did you spend the week away).

776 825 The world of the spirits, who also inhabit the universe in large numbers, is believed to be in close relationship with the animal

157 absence of self-restraint, he can give free rein to the typical
554 Amhara fondness for rapid and noisy argumentation, quoting witticisms, puns and proverbs. He does not have to control his typical Amhara curiosity about non-material objects and human behavior, and can stare freely and openly. Even his servility to the noble is
[57½] only formal and not internalized, for, while he bows deeply from the hips, his eyes are raised to observe every detail of the situation (especially to see whether some reward can be wheedled).

The Amhara noble, however, is required to be at least outwardly, an introverted personality. This is expressed in formal dignity, a partly withdrawn and meditative manner, a serious (though not severe) mien. His bodily movements must be slow and deliberate; his pattern of speech must be the same. Most of the time he remains pokerfaced. He has been trained to observe by moving only his eyes,
[152] not his head. He does not express his basic emotions directly, except with social equals under proper circumstances. He must appear too proud to show curiosity, even for interesting and strange articles brought by the foreigner; he accepts them with just a dignified and appreciative nod of the head.

152 There is the principle of "noblesse oblige". The noble be-
554 haves as if his due will certainly come to him - he does not have to go and seek it. When a servant has angered him, the noble does not fly into a rage publicly, though he may have him routinely flogged later on. It is noteworthy that even the womenfolk among the nobles share this personality training. Although hysteria is
152 very common among Amhara women, it is rare among noblewomen. Even
554 in case of great emotional distress (e.g. if a child has died)
158 when commoner Amhara women wail loudly, scarify themselves, and roll
[304]

181 strained behavior, civilization, but which now has assumed the con-
178 notation of "modern" in the Western sense. It includes the improved
562 status of the woman, no longer a mere hewer of wood and hauler of water; and it even became formalized in 1942 when an imperial proclamation, in establishing a Consultative Committee on Legislation, gave instruction to draft new laws that would be "not repugnant to natural justice and humanity".

178 But many old values still persist even at the apex of the
576 hierarchy where the prime "change agent", the emperor, resides. Most
644 notable, to foreign observers, is the continuation of the "daj tenat" (faire l'antechambre: lit. waiting at the gate). This is the traditional palace courtyard ceremony of bowing to the emperor at least twice a week. Emperor Haile Selassie has permitted this institution to continue. Every governor-general has his own "daj tenat" court when he returns to his provincial capital; and so on down the line.

195 The traditional oath on the king's life, sworn even in petty matters and everyday affairs ("Hayle Selassye yemut", lit. May the emperor die; i.e. if I lie) is still in common use and no attempt has been made to suppress or reduce its usage. Haile Selassie well remembers that during the first half of his reign his Amhara subjects still used to swear by the name of the dead Menelik or by provincial dynasts such as Ras Ougsa.

178 Outlook: the "culture lag" between material and non-material culture that has created so many social problems in so many parts of the present-day world has not yet taken place in this society. The old attitude of accepting and enjoying trade goods without trying to reproduce what the foreigner has created, still persists. Direct exploitation of what nature provides still fills most physi-

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144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 212 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner [516] gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. [145] Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the [302] women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the 576 hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill 576 voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

may become a nun or remain a widow as she pleases. If a 793
priest sleeps with another woman whilst his wife is alive he 684
does not enter the church any more, nor does he enjoy its 587
goods, and remains as a layman. And this I know from having seen a priest accused before the patriarch of having slept with a woman, and I saw that the priest confessed the offence, and the patriarch commanded him not to carry a cross in his hand, nor to enter a church, nor to enjoy the liberties of the church, and to become a layman. If any priests after becoming widowers marry, they remain laymen, As it happened to Abuquer, who married Romana Orque, sister of Prester John, who I have already said was a priest, chief chaplain of Prester John, and he was disordained[1] and made a layman. He no longer enters the church, and receives the communion at the door of the church as a layman, and among the women. The sons of the priests 793
are for the most part priests, because in this country there [871]
are no schools, nor studies, nor masters to teach, and the clergy teach that little that they know to their sons: and so they make them priests without more legitimisation, neither does it seem to me that they require it, since they are legitimate sons. All are ordained by the Abima Markos, for in all the kingdoms of Ethiopia there is no other bishop or person who ordains. The orders are given in two stages, as I will relate further on. I with my own eyes saw them given many times. In all this country the churchyards are [764]
inclosed by very strong walls, that the wild beasts may not disinter the dead bodies. They show them great reverence, [576]
no man riding on a mule passes before a church, even though he is going in a great hurry, without dismounting, until he has passed the church and churchyard a good bit.

[1] *Foy desordenado e feito leigo*; not a correct expression.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XXVIII.—*How the goods arrived at the town of Barra, and of the bad equipment of the Barnagais.*

On the 3rd day of July of the said year, '20, our baggage 648
arrived at the town of Barra, where we were. We hoped to start at once, and went to speak to the Barnagais requiring him to despatch us. We met with good words from him. On the following day a gentleman from the court of Prester John arrived, and the Barnagais gave him such a reception that he forgot us. When this gentleman arrived the Barnagais went out of the town to receive him at a small hill near the houses; and there went out with him many people, and he was naked from the waist upwards. The gentleman placed himself on the highest spot above the rest, and his first words were: the King sends to salute you. At these words all went with their hand upon the ground, [576]
which is the courtesy and reverence of this country. After that, he spoke the message which he had brought, and when he had finished hearing it the Barnagais clothed himself with rich garments, and took the gentleman to his house. It is the usage of this country to hear the words which the [203]
Prester sends outside the house, and on foot, and he to whom they are sent has to be naked above the waist until they have been delivered, and if the message is one of satisfaction on the part of Prester John, as soon as it is given he at once dresses himself: if it expresses his dissatisfaction, he remains naked as when he heard it. This Barnagais is brother of the mother of Prester John. After this the ambassador, and we with him, came to speak to the Barnagais, and he sent us away saying that for the love of God we should leave him, that he was sick. When we came they did not allow us to enter, saying that he was sleeping. So much passed of this sort that the ambassador said that he ill remembered what he had sworn and promised to the Captain-major of the King of Portugal, that is to say,

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

693 he hears the parties until he has determined upon it, and then he goes and relates the cause to the Barnagais, who gives the sentence: if it is a small cause, or if the parties wish it, the Alicaxi gives sentence, and the cause is concluded. Moreover, in all judgments, whether the Barnagais or the Alicaxi judges, there must be present an honourable man, whom they call by the name of his office Malaganha, who is like a tabellion or notary of Prester John, and if either of the parties wishes to appeal, he requires from this man the certifying of the cause for Prester John and his judges. All the lords of the countries of any of the kingdoms of Prester John have an Alicaxi and a Malaganha appointed by the Prester; so also have the captains subject to the Barnagais and to the other great lords. The gentlemen who are about the house of the Barnagais, and other grandees who come on business, have this manner of coming from their abodes. Whilst at the place he is living at he mounts his mule, seven, eight, or ten men on foot go before him as far as the first gate, and there he dismounts. If he is a person of greater importance, he takes seven, eight, or ten mules, or else three or four, according as the person is. So he dismounts at the first gate, and arrives at the second, after that, if they are bidden at once to enter, they go in, if not, they sit outside like beehives in the sun, without any other pastime. All these honourable persons wear sheep skins at [292] their necks or on their shoulders, and he who wears the skin of a lion, tiger, or ounce, is more honourable. When 576 they come before the lord they take off the skin, as we take off our caps. Whilst we were in this town of Barra on a 721 market day, they made a solemn proclamation that the Barnagais intended to make war on the Nobiis, five or six days' journey from the limits of his country, towards Egypt, neighbouring to the countries of Canfilla and Dafolha,[1] which are subject to the Barnagais, as I have before mentioned.

[1] Dafilla.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

In this country there are in some parts very flat lands, and 133
in others mountainous; and altogether they are fruitful lands. There are no snowy ranges, but withal severe frosts, especially in the flat lands. In all the lands there is great [231]
breeding of cattle.

He says that he did not see the river Nile, and he reached to two days' journey from it, and the days' journey which they went were small ones, namely, four or five leagues, a little more or less. But some of those in his company reached its source, and they say that it rises in the Kingdom of Gojame, and its source is in great lakes, and where it rises there are islands, and thence it commences its course and goes to Egypt.

The time when the Nile rises in Egypt is (as they say) from the 15th day of September and later, and in all October; and the reason of this is, because the winter of Ethiopia begins from the middle of June to the middle of September, and on account of the great rains which take place in it without this winter ever changing, the Nile overflows in Egypt at that time.

It is the general custom of Prester John and all the peo- 492
ple for no man on horseback to pass a church, but before 576
they reach it they dismount, and so pass it, and lead their beasts by the bridles, and after passing they mount.

When Prester John and all his people travel, the altar and 484
the altar stone on which mass is said, all goes on the shoulders of the priests as on a litter, and there go eight priests with each altar by turns, that is, four and four: and a priest goes in front of them with a thurible, and further in front a zagonay ringing a bell, and all the people go away from the road, and those that are on horses dismount, and show reverence to the altar stone or altar.

There is no grape wine there, more than in two houses, 273
where it is made publicly, namely, in the house of Prester John and the house of the Patriarch Abima Marcos; and if

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 When miffed, or in temporary disgrace, he would request permission to return to his native
159 Gondar. Subsequently he would send excuse after excuse to the capital for refusing to go back there, until he felt that he had been sufficiently coaxed to assuage his pride as a scholar and that further hesitation might result in serious difficulties, even for him. Empress Taitu was a very powerful figure and often protected him when he had gone too far with Emperor Menelik (her fifth husband).

[114] Although the following stories have no titles except "Story of Alāqa Gābre-Hanna," I have given them names to point up the major emphasis. This material was gathered orally from Amharic-speaking peasants and nobles in the Gondar region (during my field trip to that area in 1953-54 on a grant from the Ford Foundation).

539 *The Wit And The Nituit.* AG-H didn't like the rumor going around that he had become a snob, that he didn't greet common people politely any more. One day, accompanied by his usual retinue of friends and admirers, he was greeted effusively with deep bows by a certain donkey-
● [576] driver who was known as none too bright. In return, to quash the nasty rumors, AG-H bowed just as deeply, from the hips, instead of the usual nod from one of his station in life. But, unable to resist the temptation for a witticism, he greeted the donkey-driver with the words *"Endēt adderachuh? 'How are ye?'"*

Unaware that the second person plural had been used, the proud donkey-driver was soon boasting at the nearest barley-beer hut of the honor he had received. His cronies made him repeat the exact remark, suspecting some twist. They quickly convinced the poor fool that the greeting had included him in the same class with his donkeys, and the simpleton slunk away in shame.

Another version of the story: But the donkey-driver was, after all, a proud Amhara. Realizing that he had been made a fool of, he took his walking stick, went to the house of AG-H, and beat him unmercifully. This was one time that his wit struck back at him.

Good Eating Comes First. Though greatly honored at the court of Emperor Menelik in newly-built Addis Ababa, AG-H was once again homesick for his native Gondar. Finally, he was granted permission for a leave home.

He promptly organized his small caravan and was about to mount his mule when he noticed two fat cows being taken to slaughter. Thinking of the long trip ahead without fresh beef, he decided to wait around and obtain a good share of the meat which was being rapidly parcelled out. The meat had to be washed down with a huge jugful of barley-beer and honeymead, and so the day passed with pleasant feasting. It was late afternoon when it happened that Emperor Menelik came riding by. Surprised to see the homesick scholar still in the capital, the Emperor addressed him: "I gave you permission to go, and you are still here?"

But, as usual, his wit did not fail AG-H. *"Lam gāb* 'the cows were entering,' your Majesty," he replied. (The phrase is used to indicate dusk, when the cows come home, too late to start on a trip. The cows had indeed "entered," i.e., into the stomach of AG-H; and no one could accuse him later of having told a lie to the Emperor.)

Pride Of A Man From Gondar Province. The next time AG-H became homesick occurred in the middle of the long Lenten fast. The housewives of Gondar were famous for their many spicy recipes for cooking fish in that season, and when AG-H thought of these his mouth watered and nothing pleased him any more in Shoa province.

One day he was invited to dine at the house of a noble of Shoa. The odor of fish being cooked attracted him to the cooking hut. It seemed to him that the woman cook had not properly cleaned the fish and had added too much water. He began to moan and groan.

"What's the matter?" asked his host.

Pointing to the watery fish stew, AG-H replied: "The fish are better off than I. They are *in their native state,* but I am so far from mine!"

Safety From Robbers. Once again the long rainy season was over, the rivers had receded, and the trails were passable again. AG-H managed to obtain a generous purse of Maria-Theresa thalers from the Empress and was on his perennial way back to Gondar.

He was just emerging from the lowland valley of the Abbai (Blue Nile) to climb up the escarpment of the dangerous province of Gojjam, which he had to traverse. Suddenly one of his companions spotted a band of robbers waiting at the top of the upland trail.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

tent secluded and when they go out they ride mules astride, are completely veiled or rather covered up in their *chammas* and are accompanied by an escort on foot, one or two of whom walk or trot by the side of the mule holding the lady in position. 562

Getting on to the mule is an operation that must by no means be witnessed by the profane masculine eye; I remember on the occasion of the first visit paid to my wife by an Abyssinian lady of rank I went to the entrance to speed the parting guest. To my surprise a number of members of the escort took off their *chammas* and held them all round the mule so that their mistress could climb into her saddle in complete seclusion. 492 576

But rigid as may be the rules of privacy governing the lives of women, there are no harems, and no guard of eunuchs to watch over them as in Moslem countries. 562 644

Nevertheless other Eastern customs are practised, such as circumcision among men and a mild form of clitoridectomy among women; this custom, be it observed, is not as is often supposed of Jewish origin, but probably of much more remote antiquity, and is further evidence of the Hamitic descent of the Abyssinians; according to Gibbon circumcision had been practised "by the most ancient Ethiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness" and presumably not therefore as a religious rite. 304 171

The nation as a whole has not adopted European dress, although it is worn to some extent in Addis Ababa, and by individuals who have been to Europe. They are proud of their national dress and the Emperor still encourages its use at court functions and receptions at the palace. 291 177

The distinctive feature of the dress is the *chamma*, 291

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

291 which is worn by both men and women of all ranks; and by the beauty of the *chamma* can as a rule be judged the position or state of purse of the wearer. It consists of a piece of material about three yards in length and from two to four yards in width according as to whether it is doubled or not.

291 286 The more beautiful specimens of these are hand-woven from native cotton, spun and prepared by the Abyssinian women. These are usually edged with red or mixed coloured silks, and those worn by the high priests, great chiefs, and princes and princesses have a very handsome border varying from twelve to eighteen inches wide, carried out in silks of vivid colours woven into an artistic design. They are as fine as gossamer, though large and warm; they are not as a rule sold, but if ever obtainable by Europeans cost from 200 to 500 dollars.

The more ordinary *chammas* are also woven by hand, but of imported cotton, and by comparison are of a much harder and coarser character, though still nice to look at. Natives who cannot afford the hand-woven shawl make use of a length of *abougedid* or cotton sheeting for the same purpose.

291 The *chamma*, which is not unlike the old Roman toga, is draped round the shoulders, often being brought up over the head to the eyebrow and again over the lower part of the face and nose, leaving but the eyes [576] visible. It is always lowered from the face and head as a mark of friendliness or respect, and generally when passing Europeans, though I have known Abyssinians of the anti-foreign old régime to cover up their faces more closely when passing the *Frangi*. At court those in attendance twist the garment round the waist and

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē.

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna,* an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables.

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter.

Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat*, or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which contrast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen*, meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā*, land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rīst*.

The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

"May He bring you safely from the year of Mark to the year of Luke!" 565*
Nearly every day of the month, moreover, is dedicated to some holy figure, 805 796
the main ones being: [576]

Day of Month	Name	Meaning
1st	*Ledatā*	Birth of Mary
5th	*Abbo*	St. Gabra Manfas Qeddus
7th	*Selassie*	Trinity
12th	*Mikā'ēl*	St. Michael
16th	*Kidāna Maherat*	Covenant of Mercy (for Mary)
19th	*Gabre'ēl*	St. Gabriel
21st	*Māryām*	St. Mary
23rd	*Giyorgis*	St. George
24th	*Takla Hāymānot*	St. Takla Hāymānot
27th	*Madhānē Alam*	Savior of the World
29th	*Bāla Wald*	Festival of the Son

This schedule is well implanted in the peasant's mind, so much so that the names of these holy days come to take the place of calendar dates. Thus, instead of saying "He fell sick on the fifth" or "He is due to come on the twelfth," the Amhara normally says "He fell sick on Abbo" or "He is due to come on Mikā'ēl."

Time for the Amhara is thus not a morally indifferent and qualitatively [822]
undifferentiated continuum. It is a series of occasions with more or less sacred significance. These occasions are arranged in the form of cycles. In contrast to the Catholic calendar with its different saint for each day of the year, every month in Abyssinia repeats the same set of saints' days. Each year, of course, repeats the same cycle of annual holidays. The years themselves do not run on continuously, but follow the cycle—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—again and again. For the more learned, finally, there is a twenty-eight-year cycle which must elapse before the same year begins on the same day of the week again.

The Amhara's experience of time is thus essentially cyclical. The religious 565*
calendar, the most important dimension of time for him, consists of a series 805
of epicycles, in which the monthly rounds play themselves out within the 822
larger circles of annual and quadrennial rounds. Historical events are at best 796
secondary: the seasons come and go, generations come and go, but there is not much new under the sun. The better-known prophecies foretell the return of some state of things that obtained in the past. Kassa chose the [787]
throne name of Tēwodros II because of the prophecy that a king with that name would arise to repeat the mythically fortunate reign of Tēwodros I of the fifteenth century. In this century has arisen the prophecy of another Tēwodros to come. Still another prophecy—of a short-lived invasion of Ethio-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

771 776 805 Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci for the organization of time and space.

*565 805 In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes. Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *hābashā qaṭaro* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amhara peasant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

*565 805 829 Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Amhara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

*565 538 829 When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

*565 805 796 [787] With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year. A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*) [576] representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] [231] [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭēff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā*, literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā*, preparing *ṭallā*, spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the students. Rivalries and hostilities tend to get channeled along these lines, particularly along the Amhara-Tigre axis, and petty fights have erupted from time to time among groups of students so divided. The Amhara students, moreover, tend to interpret their numerical majority in school as self-evident justification of their political superiority in the country, an interpretation sullenly rejected by non-Amhara students who tend to be more aware of the Amhara's much smaller percentage of the national population. However, the students are regarded by their teachers, not as members of tribes, but as Ethiopians. The school authorities thus act as a countervailing force in behalf of national symbols, and their effect is considerable.[14] While entering students naturally tend to identify in the first instance with their tribes, sixty per cent of the secondary school seniors and seventy-five per cent of the college students questioned about political identifications indicated that they considered themselves Ethiopians before they considered themselves members of tribes. 883* 873 177 178 186

The teachers also provide practical information of various sorts to assist the acculturation of their charges. They teach the etiquette of modernity, including the importance of punctuality and the keeping of promises. The objects and events in their own lives quietly demonstrate to the students much about modern Western culture, while their use of English in and out of class accustoms the students to the use of their country's official European language. Thus, besides promoting respect for impersonal standards and the sense of Ethiopian nationalism, the teachers fulfill a third extracurricular function of some importance: that of making the schools a vehicle for social mobility, a place to acquire that minimum of European habits which is essential for attaining high status in a modernizing society. 883* 875 177 178 [576] [554] [871]

The total accomplishment of the teachers, however, falls short of giving the modern adolescents a coherent orientation to life. The cultural lessons they transmit are neither consistent among the various schools nor closely related to the situation of changing Ethiopia. The organization of education, as of everything else in Ethiopia, reflects the abiding anxiety of the government about permitting any one foreign nation to gain a monopoly in any sphere of activity. Each secondary school and college has heretofore been virtually autonomous, pursuing those policies and teaching those lessons which best fit its point of view, a point of view now guided by British culture, now by American, now by Swedish, now by French, now by Jesuit. As Margery Perham long since observed, this created a situation in which Ethiopian students have gotten "fragments from the experience and ideals of each [nation] without getting the fullest and best influence from any one national tradition."[15] 883* 871 177

Another shortcoming of the educational program has been the relative paucity of materials relating to Ethiopian realities. As one Ethiopian educator has written: "School children are at times more familiar with the history of 871

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 The local nobility, on the other hand, were eminences whose lives and reputations were bound to a more circumscribed locale. While the non-royal nobility, or *maḳuānnent* in the stricter sense, performed as high dignitaries at the imperial court and governors of large provinces, the local nobility were district chiefs and judges, or even simply wealthy landowners, who enjoyed considerable deference. Though they might not be known outside of their home regions, these men were, for the mass of the population, the lords of existence. *Ka-Gondar negus / yāgar āmbārās,* "the petty district chief [is obeyed] more than the Gondar king"[19] expresses folk wisdom on the subject. The Amharic terms which designate this class of men are *bālābbāt* and *shum,* terms we shall want to consider more closely below.

565 184 Despite these distinctions among members of the upper stratum of Abyssinian society, with respect to their general orientation and style of life they differed only in degree. They created and shared what might be called a "gentry subculture," even though it was not so differentiated from the general culture as was the case in Europe and China. In the present context, it will be meaningful to treat them as a single status group.

565 184 86 Special manners and skills were self-consciously taught to children of the *maḳuānnent,* most of which remain part of the gentry subculture today. An etiquette of instinctual inhibition is taught. Some attention is given, for example, to toilet training, which is spontaneous among peasant children. [576] Spitting in public is proscribed. Physical aggression is discouraged in favor of the more subtle forms of satire and patient manipulation of others. A quiet, reserved manner of speaking is stressed, in contrast with the less inhibited and cruder self-expression of the peasantry. Dignity of comportment is expected at all times; a noble should not, for example, express great enthusiasm or surprise over anything. [293] Sobriety is incu cated as a virtue; alcohol is *la-çhawā lijj mādasetchā / la-bālagē māzabābatchā* ("for the nobleman's son a stimulant, for the commoner an intoxicant"). In short, the gentry subculture stresses the general ideal of bringing a child up to be conspicuously genteel, or *çhawā.*

565 184 868 Sons of the nobility have traditionally followed a privileged curriculum.[20] They were given lessons in horseback riding and weaponry at an early age. They were also taught how to swim, an uncommon skill among the Abyssinians. [871] Reading would often be taught, for which schooling a man of the church might be brought in as a tutor, or the boy might be sent for a while to a monastery. [534] He might also learn how to play the *baganā,* the ten-stringed lyre used to accompany certain forms of religious and plaintive secular songs. [883] Instead of spending his teen-age years at the plow, which was regarded as beneath his dignity, the noble boy would follow his father to court and observe the ways of litigation and the manner of passing judgments; or he might be sent as a page to the court of the king or some great lord.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *çhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *ṭajj*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *ṭallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics. 565 184 868 [567] [273]

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dajāzmātch Hailu*, meaning "Dajāzmātch Hailu and his men." 565 576

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics. 565 [142]

Conspicuous consumption among the *makuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions: 565 592 357 556

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

853 155 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning 152 adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended 853 foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbāt,* or breast- 155 father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbāt.* Used 152 metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the 155 oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. 201 The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or [832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long 155 separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati- [431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout 155 Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the 538 Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant 832 intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

The boundaries of your lips are like the sugar cane; 155
No matter how much one sucks them, one is never satisfied. 538 832

And in one of the few lyric passages in the first novel ever written in Amharic, the author resorts to the imagery of kissing in describing the beauty of an army camp at sunset: [539]

> The plain on which they had encamped was vaster than the mind's eye could measure. Except for that hill on which he stood, there were no elevations or declivities; no roots to trip or confound the foot; not a stone to discomfit the eye. It looked like a calm sea that every breeze had spared. The boundaries of heaven and earth were united by lips of love; lip to lip they were joined like the parts of fitted basketry. It appeared as though it would hurt them to separate, that they had entered a vow not to part.[5] [539]

Talking for the sake of talking is another oral outlet of which the Amhara is generally fond. "In every country," remarked Arnauld d'Abbadie, "the plowman is miserly and sly; but the Ethiopian is, in addition, particularly loquacious."[6] The simple greeting of acquaintances evokes a barrage of ritualistic conversation, a phenomenon which stunned the Englishman Harris: 155 521

> Even two old crones, who are obviously tottering on the very brink of the grave, and who are afflicted with every pain and with every sorrow entailed by the fall of our first parents, never meet in the street without indulging in a string of good wishes which are reiterated so long as their breath will permit. "How are you? How do ye do? How have you passed your time? Are you well? Are you very well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well? Are you not well?"—are questions which serve as the prelude to a thousand other interrogatories; and at each response the Deity must be invoked as to the unadulterated happiness and perfect felicity that has been unremittingly experienced since the last meeting.[7] [576]

A number of other conventions provide further opportunities for this pleasure in talking. Anecdotes and gossip are not merely reported, but are expounded at length with the aid of colorful expressions and gestures. Riddle games are enjoyed by adults as well as young people. Men vie with one another at length in a semiformalized kind of playful boasting. In the church schools all reading is done aloud, a habit which persists among many students of secondary schools when they study outside of class. [524] [876]

A related pleasure in making sounds for their own sake appears in the Amhara's delight in repeating the words or nonsense syllables of his folk songs. On a more refined level, there is his evident pleasure in lulling over and savoring the lines of a choice couplet. We have here for a whole culture an instance of what Brill has ascribed to the poets: 191 155

> Poetry is a sensuous or mystic outlet through words, or, as it were, through a chewing and sucking of nice words and phrases. The poet plays with the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 571 264 181 [829] A similar spirit is observed in Amhara commensality. Meals are customarily eaten from a common *ĭnjarā* basket. The sauce is ladled onto the center of the *ĭnjarā*, and is consumed ensemble by those sitting around the basket as they dip into it with pieces of *ĭnjarā* broken off from the edges. Traditional Amhara scoff at what they regard as the excessively individualistic Western custom of sitting each person down to a separate place at the table and thus depriving the meal hour of what they feel should be its basically communal tone.

*121 574 571 181 At a more formal level of interaction this disposition is expressed in the form of *hospitality*. Amhara hospitality is luxuriously attentive and thoughtful. For example, if there is foreknowledge of a guest's arrival, he is awaited at some distance from his destination and escorted with much to-do into the home. His mule is at once unsaddled and given to feed. The guest is given a place of honor in the home, and a glass of *ṭallā* is immediately brought for him. Amhara etiquette prescribes, moreover, that a glass is not properly filled unless it overflows; and it is repeatedly filled to overflowing whenever the guest has drunk some portion of the beverage. As a gratuitous gesture of good faith, the host—or his wife, or servant—tastes some of the beverage first, a sign that no "medicine" has been added. Before long the wicker table is produced, and the guest and his party are served copiously—no matter what time of day they arrive (unless, of course, it is a fasting day). When the guest has eaten to satisfaction, the host will insist that he eat some more, by repeatedly issuing injunctions like *tegābazu* ("Help yourselves!"), *moḳar* ("Try!"), or *āfar sehon* ("If I become dust!"—i.e., "If you do not eat you will be condemning me to death"). The Amhara host is also likely to insist that his guest spend the night. The guest's feet will be washed, and the host's bed will be given to him, or long grass will be cut for bedding on the floor. At the time of farewell, the host and his attendants follow the guest and his party a good distance along the road. The guest continually cries, "Return! Return!" and the host agrees but continues to serve as escort.

Such hospitality is not wantonly bestowed upon the casual wayfarer. Normally it is reserved for those who qualify as worthy guests: relatives, friends, [609] or persons of high rank. Nonetheless, there does exist among the Amhara some feeling that even the unknown stranger should be shown hospitality, for he is *ya-egziābhēr engedā* ("a guest of God"). Travelers are generally assured [485] that somebody somewhere will show them hospitality; there are no inns in traditional Ethiopia, for it is considered wrong to exchange food and lodging for money.

*121 576 571 181 Related to this pattern of hospitality is a delicate sense of *respect* that the Amhara displays toward all comers; often, even toward his enemies. When two Amhara pass each other anywhere, they are expected to bow slightly and say: "How did you pass the night?" or "How did you spend the day?" If they

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

have not seen each other for some time they will say: "How have you sojourned?" and kiss each other on both cheeks. Depending on the closeness of their relationship and the interval between meetings, this introductory question will be followed by a more or less lengthy series of other questions.[12] Even when one merely passes by the home of another, he is expected to cry out his greetings from afar. 121* 576 571 181

In a number of other ways, the rough edges of social life are softened by Amhara codes of etiquette. Custom prescribes that measures of grain must be filled to overflowing at the market. Grammatical forms indicating respect are used between people who are not on intimate terms. Uncovering one's head is another way of indicating respect during the greeting. Still another form is to rise whenever someone enters the room, and wait until the new entrant has pronounced "*Bezgiēr!*" ("By God!") and sits down before reseating oneself.

On more superficial levels of interaction, then, Amhara behavior is apparently not egoistic. In the more fundamental areas of work and serious communication, a different picture appears. 121* 571 181

Altogether there is little spontaneous *co-operation* in Amhara life. The Amhara prefers to work by himself, and, when he needs assistance, to order a subordinate to help him rather than to rely on friendly assistance from his neighbor. The distribution as well as the production of goods is carried out on an essentially individualistic basis. Each nuclear family takes care of its own provisions, even when the land being cultivated belongs to one of the parents and when more than one family lives within a single compound. (Even within the nuclear family, the proprietary sentiments of husband and wife regarding objects and land which each may own are rather lively.) 121* 181 571 476

There are exceptions to this general rule. In some Amhara areas certain co-operative work forms have become institutionalized, for example. One of these forms, called *wanfal,* is invoked when there is a considerable amount of plowing or harvesting to be done, and a group of men in a given area take turns working on each other's land. Another form of co-operative work, called *waffar,* is employed when there is some extraordinary job to be done—putting on a new roof or digging land that is too steep for plowing—which cannot readily be reciprocated. In this case a man sends word around that on a certain day those who live in the area should come to work at his place, in reward for which generous quantities of *ṭallā* and *dābo* will be given them.

Despite the existence of special forms like *wanfal* and *waffar,* co-operation is only a peripheral feature of Amhara work activity. These forms involve but a temporary coincidence of individual interests. They are not used because co-operation as such is felt to be an important and natural part of social life—as seems to be the case, for example, among the Galla of Ethiopia.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121	*arām*	"indolent" (literally, "full of feces")
181	*ya-dehā lijj*	"son of a poor man"
571	*ya-lēbā lijj*	"son of a thief"
578	*yat abātk*	"bastard" (literally, "where is your father?")
[673]	*waslātā*	"lazy no-good"

Other, less direct forms of insult are also widely employed. As was already mentioned, a major use of the wax-and-gold formula is to express insults in so veiled a manner that direct reprisal is unlikely. Another tactic is that of not showing someone the proper respect or in some way manipulating the forms of etiquette to his disadvantage. A favorite anecdote concerning Alaqā Gabra Hānnā illustrates the simultaneous use of both methods: the Alaqā once flattered a donkey driver by bowing quite low to greet him and calling, *Endēt adarātchu?* ("How did you spend the night?"). Only when the man proudly related the episode to his friends, so the story goes, was he made to realize that the greeting was expressed in the plural form (*-atchu*), implying that he and his donkey were being placed in the same category.[15] Still another mode of indirect insult is that known as *ashmur*, in which two friends insult each other vigorously at the top of their voices, the real object of their abuse being a third party who is within earshot.

If the Amhara is by disposition inclined to bestow insults, he is still readier
[865] to take offense at the slightest hint of one directed at him. One of the tasks of socialization among the Amhara is to sensitize the young person to the various types of insults and to motivate him to strike back when he is so offended. Insults are frequently part of a vicious circle which moves from petty disagreement to serious argument to litigation at court, *dulā* fights,
[576] and even premeditated murder. Breach of etiquette may lead to no less serious consequences. In one court case which the author observed, a man was accused and convicted for addressing his father-in-law, whom he normally addressed by the polite form *ersewo*, with the familiar form *anta* in a moment of anger.

Argumentation, litigation, insulting, and revenge comprise the hard core of social interaction among Amhara. While it is possible to exaggerate the significance of these forms in the total pattern of Amhara social life, there can be little doubt of a strongly dissentious disposition just below the surface, and often at the surface, of Amhara interpersonal relations. Still another axis along which this individualistic disposition tends to be manifest is that of deception and suspicion.

*121 The Amhara is a master at *deception*. With straight face and convincing
181 manner he will relate the most preposterous fictions. The Amhara themselves
571 tend to be aware that this is one of their characteristic activities. When, for
577 example, I replied to the query of an Amhara gentleman that some horn
[123]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 sadistic component—a component that gets thrown into relief in such phe-
571 nomena as the Amhara compulsion to stone dogs and the occasional wan-
181 tonly cruel behavior of Amhara soldiers.

*121 While hierarchical relations among the Amhara are upheld to a large de-
571 gree by the subordinate's fear of physical punishment or some other deprivation, a complementary disposition of perhaps greater importance is the senti-
181 ment of *respect for figures of higher status*. Family, age, wealth, and political
• 576 or ecclesiastical rank are all variables which evoke feelings and gestures of deference proportionate to the vertical distance between the two parties. Many of these gestures consist of elaborations on ordinary forms of etiquette used among peers. Thus, in greeting a superior one not only uncovers one's head but also leaves it uncovered as long as one remains in his presence. If kisses are exchanged in greeting, the superior kisses first, on the cheek, while the person of lesser status kisses the superior's foot or knee. The inferior never sits while the superior stands, and often he remains standing even when the latter is seated.

Other gestures of respect are peculiar to the inferior-superior relationship. If an inferior is seated, for example, he must rise to speak when addressed by a superior. If eating in the home of a superior, he must rise when water is brought to wash his hands. If riding a mule, he must dismount and bow when encountering a nobleman riding on the way. The ritual of respect performed when entering the house of a superior has been vividly described by an Ethiopian student in the following passage:

> When someone, let us say a man of a lower social rank, wishes to enter the house of a superior to greet him or to make some private appeal he must first of all take off his shoes and then give them to his servant if he has one with him; if not he leaves them outside in a safe place. Then he must twist his *Ïäma* [shammā] round his waist and holding the end in one hand enter the hall and crossing both arms at the lower chest, bow down very low to the ground before his host. Having done that he throws that end of his *Ïäma* which he is holding over the back of his right or left shoulder (depending on how he wears his *Ïäma*) and then remains standing near the wall until he is told to sit. When given permission to sit he must choose a lower place. He does not sit in any position he likes but must cross his legs, straighten himself and bow his head a bit looking most of the time at the floor.[20]

*121 Respect is further shown toward superiors through the use of special terms
181 of reference and address. A superior is always referred to and addressed in
571 the third-person-plural respect form. The term *gëtotch* ("lordships") is often
576 used instead of his name or rank in reference. In addressing a superior
554 *gëtäyë* ("my lord") may be used as well as *gëtotch*. Superiors with titles are always addressed by their rank rather than by name. In addition, slightly

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

older or more prestigious males are addressed as *gāshē* ("my shield"); the corresponding term for females is *etēyē* ("my sister"). Much older people are addressed by words signifying "father" or "mother." 121* 181 571

It is true that the forms of respect toward superiors are often repeated mechanically and sometimes serve to cover up a distinctly hostile disposition toward certain superiors. They nevertheless do represent to some extent a genuine solidaristic sentiment—perhaps the most profound and influential social sentiment in the Amhara social system. It rests in the last analysis on the fact that the Amhara family develops a pronounced sense of filial devotion as well as habits of filial obedience. Amhara society can dispense with horizontal solidarities and communal attachments because it is held together, sufficiently for traditional purposes, at least, by an infinite network of "father-son" relationships. 576 • [554] [593]

The egoistic element in the hierarchical pattern is further modified by a sort of joking relationship that sometimes develops between inferiors and superiors. The harsh interrogation of inferiors at times shades into a sort of wry banter; sons or servants may be called "thief" or "scoundrel" in an undertone of unmistakable affection. At times, moreover, the direction of the jesting may be reversed. Amhara servants are noted for playing practical jokes on their masters, which the latter usually appreciate when the jests are clever.[21] Here again, wax and gold is the perfect medium—for expressing aggression against a superior while at the same time appearing to maintain the respect relationship. The following couplet, attributed to Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē, aptly illustrates this genre: 121* 181 571 522

Ennānta maḳuānnentotch ba-mīn waṭ balātchu? [539]
Eññām ba-shurwātchen ennāntam bāssātchu.

What sauce, my lords, was on your plate?
We had but peas; 'twas fish you ate.[22]

Here the poet appears to be complimenting the nobles on their more elegant cuisine at a banquet; but there is a pun on the word *bāssātchu,* literally "with your fish," for it may also be taken to mean "you took more than your share."

Within the hierarchical pattern, finally, one finds expressed a certain amount of generosity which, as we have suggested, is relatively uncommon in relations among peers. This appears in connection with the *begging* and *almsgiving* which occur in many sectors of Amhara society. For church students beyond the elementary level, begging is the primary means of livelihood. Youths who have left home to study *zēmā* or *qenē* with a master wander about today, as in former times, carrying small baskets and pleading: "For the sake of Mary! For the sake of God!" in order to get their daily morsels. The activity is so organized that when a large number of students 121* 181 571 735

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Synchronization and Privacy

*121 181 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is [476] scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [704] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 [591] • [576] The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, [592] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters [342] (*ĭlfĭñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Ṭimqat day described in chap. iii.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Although women and children do not have so much freedom, the adult male Amhara who chooses to go off by himself for some reason is not bothered. In at least two cases, moreover, the right to solitude is institutionalized: that of the monk or hermit, who is left to his meditation and prayers, and that of the student of *qenē*, who spends hour after hour in some lonely place composing his verse for the day. 121* 181 571 517 [562]

Privacy is further protected among the Amhara by the shared belief that others normally do not have a just claim to information about one's person. Even such superficial matters as one's place of origin or one's family connections are not readily disclosed on a first encounter. This differs markedly from the custom of some other groups in Ethiopia, such as the Borana Galla, among whom it is the first order of business in any conversation to identify the "vital statistics" of one another. 121* 181 571 576

The machinery of wax and gold, again, exists as a useful apparatus with which to protect one's private identity and desires. In authoritarian relations, where the superior questions the subordinate with impunity, this evasive and equivocal manner of response constitutes the latter's main defense against yielding the information sought by the questioner. The superior may feel that he has a right to the information he seeks, but, if he is a good Amhara, he understands that he may never be told the whole truth. 121* 181 195 571

Thus, viewed as a whole, Amhara society does not envelop the individual in a complex network of obligations and constraints. The institutional structure of the society is relatively thin. There are few collectivities to which the individual might belong, and fewer still to which he must belong. He can, if he chooses, live at the very periphery of society—as a hermit, a monk, a *shīftā*, a minstrel, a beggar, or, if a woman, as a solitary householder. For the typical Amhara, the main obligations are to fulfil work responsibilities in behalf of the nuclear family, the parents, and to provide income and services for landlords and chieftains. Here, too, there are important degrees of freedom. An oppressive family situation may be readily relieved by divorce; an oppressive landlord or ruler may possibly be brought to justice over time, or in extreme instances fled from; and for the oppressed vassal or retainer, there is always the alternative of running away to another master or of turning to one's own devices. As a Christian, the Amhara is required to fast a good deal; but attendance at church and membership in religious fraternal associations are voluntary, and for the religious scholar there is considerable freedom of movement. 121* 181 571

It is difficult to assess the relative weight of the few but heavy constraints that do exist in Amhara social structure and of the many areas of real independence. But in view of the considerable latitude for unconstrained action that has been described in this section, it would seem valid to characterize 121* 181

*278 *759 plete therapy. Sometimes the herbalist cites in addition the fees which he recives, as recognition of these "expert" abilities, and even of his client's satisfaction with the therapy. In practice, a nominal fee is almost always paid, whatever the therapy's success. The medhaniyt seci receives a token fee of perhaps E$.50 to E$1., and probably no more than three to five times that amount for a successful cure. Although the medhaniyt awakiy's token fee is no larger, he can expect five to ten times that amount for a successful cure. Actually, the medhaniyt seci and the medhaniyt ateci almost always offer weak primary medicines for serious ailments; when they do provide a strong medicine, it is generally for a non-serious ailment.

Beyond this, there is little non-medical behavior to set off one secular healer from another. The social identity of the secular healer is defined dyadically. The dyad includes only healer and client, and is generally contingent, lasting for the duration of the medical activities. Further, the recruitment of secular healers entails no other significant social identity. Behavior between healer and client is commonplace but correct, generally without signs of special deference but with full measure of the elaborate greetings normatively given to men of respectability, indistinguishable from those exchanged between land-owning peasants (ristenas). Spe-

• [576] *[192]

*278 *759 • 576 cial deference, perhaps the consequence of a medhaniyt awakiy's magnaminity in freely reducing his fee for a particular client, rarely extends to even addressing the healer by the mildly honorific title of "gita" in greeting.

*278 *767 *759 Medhaniyt Korac. Herbalists usually perform all activities associated with their therapies, except when processing and administration are delegated to their clients. This is not invariably the case, however. *(192) There are a number of medicaments which are either used in widely-owned recipes for non-serious ailments (such as the enkowkow seeds used against tapeworm), or appear as common ingredients in a wide range of recipes. Frequently, an herbalist can more conveniently obtain such medicaments from a professional medicine gatherer (the medhaniyt korac) than he can gather and store them himself. Sometimes, an herbalist utilizes the medhaniyt korac's services because his therapy identifies a con- *(192) stituent medicament only by its generic name; as a consequence of this, the herbalist does not know the names of the medicament's constituent botanicals (for example, the medicament known as sebat kelems, the "seven colors"). Similarly, the herbalist may be unfamiliar with the provenience or appearance of botanicals called for in his therapy. Strictly speaking, the medhaniyt korac offers no therapeutic assistance beyond providing medicaments.

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[MANZ]

*175 643 nable. As the rainy season was approaching, Haile Malakot retreated to Shoa, where he fell sick and died. For the first time since Nagāssi, Shoa was left without an effective leader. Tēwodros marched into Manz from Wallo, and Shoa capitulated with little struggle. Eleven-year-old Menelik, son of Haile Malakot, was taken hostage.

Ten years later Menelik escaped from the camp of Tēwodros and regained Shoa. Slowly and carefully he built up his power. Tēwodros' reign raced to its tragic end. Takla Giyorgis II reigned briefly at Gondar, the last emperor to sit there. Yohānnes IV of Tigre governed the country for seventeen years. When Yohānnes died, Negus Menelik was forty-five and ready. Nagāssi's seed, eight generations later, reached the throne of all Ethiopia on November 3, 1889.

CULTURAL PROFILES

The Manzē Ethos

*175 185 The goals of Nagāssi and his descendants, apart from simple increase of power, were to recover the lands taken from their fathers and to stiffen the authority of Christianity in Shoa. Their success was virtually unbroken by [181] reason of exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance. These are ideals and qualities embodied par excellence in the people of Manz.

423 Sanctity of *rīst*, or land inherited from one's parents, is a cardinal value in the Manzē scheme of things. Such land must not be given or sold to anyone 181 who is not a close relative. People generations removed from actual residents [428] of Manz still retain claims to family land there, still cherish the idea that if they so desired they could go back and live on it. As an urbanized Manzē once told his nephew in Addis Ababa: "No matter how far you travel abroad, no matter how long you stay away, you will always be able to think of your [539] family land in Manz as your true home." This sentiment is expressed in a proverb:

> *Ya-Manz rīst be-shi amatu/la-bālabētu.*
> Manz *rīst* to the thousandth year/belongs to the owner.

A squatter may fight to keep his land from falling to some stranger who claims it as having belonged to his grandfather, but in his heart he respects the values that support such a claim.

[577] By Manzē standards the good man is thus one who defends the land of his fathers, seeing that it is not sold to outsiders or that foreigners do not come to [685] take it. If someone plows another's land without permission, he must be punished. If the matter can be settled through litigation, well and good; if it requires recourse to violence, so be it. To let such an offense go unavenged [691] would be the worst sort of shame. Grievances concerning their "hereditary

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rĭst*.

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination:

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Çhaçhefē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many purposes—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

411 standing at the long church services. Above all it is a weapon of offense and
181 defense, and every Amhara male is supposed to be skilled in its use. When the *dulā* is so employed in Manz, the *bānnā* blanket is usually wrapped around the left arm to form a quick shield, the *dulā* raised high with the right to bring down on the adversary's cranium. The blows are sometimes fatal. The Manzēs are proud of their facility with the lethal stick, and nearly every district in Manz boasts that it is real "*dulā* country."

726 The Manzēs also excel at *shīllalā*, the Abyssinian war chant. This is a
533 form of boastful verse—partly intoned, partly shouted—which is declaimed by
181 warriors to "heat their blood" before hitting the warpath. Children in Manz start practicing *shīllalā* almost as soon as they leave the breast. The following
[539] is a good specimen of Manz *shīllalā:*

> *Agarātchn Māmā agarātchn Lālo wanzātchn Dangazē;*
> *Mān abātu yāzzāl imbi senīl gizē.*

> Our land is Māmā, our land is Lālo, our stream the Dangazē;
> What father will order us when *imbi* we say!

Imbi is an interjection used by children to express "No!" There is a double pun in this couplet. *Mān abātu* ("Who is the father?") is a profane idiom meaning "bastard." "To say *imbi*" is another idiom, meaning "to refuse." The second line may thus be also rendered as:

> What bastard dare shove us around when we tell him to keep off our lands!

181 The Manzē code asks that a man be ready to defend his land and church
865 by force. It does not approve wanton aggression. But the Manzē's disposition
152 is notoriously aggressive, for his emotional life is relatively devoid of warmth
[577] and, on the other hand, fighting is so highly rewarded. Children are urged to be adept with the *dulā*. Their temper tantrums are welcomed as signs that they are brave. As a result the men of Manz are often overcome by the impulse toward physical aggression; assault and murder are recurrent events on their fields and trails and at their marketplaces. The discrepancy between the *norm* of physical bravery, which is operative *in certain specified circumstances,* and the *general character trait* of aggressiveness comprises a major theme in their emotional life: they feel obliged to look for justification for the aggressive actions which they have been conditioned to want to carry out. This disposition is illustrated in the words of the Manzē youth who said:

> I want very much to kill somebody. The only problem is I'm not strong enough. Perhaps one day I will be. Why is it all right to kill? People kill sheep, don't they? And sheep are innocent, they don't know anything, don't do any wrong. But man knows, he knows much, and still he does wrong: every man is bad. I wouldn't kill everybody, only the bad ones. If I had an enemy, I would kill him. Maybe I will become a soldier, and kill my country's enemies.

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holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services. 565* 346 341 181 796 822 [778]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery. 565* 822 181 361 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order. 565* 822 181 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities. 565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable 565* 156 157 [577]

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*565 156 157 man, as we shall see in more detail below, includes the quality of leaving others alone.

• [577] This strong sense of self is confirmed and symbolized by two conspicuous *565 156 411 Amhara customs: carrying staves and going on trips. A staff, like a pipe, affirms the ego in two ways. As a piece of personal property right at hand, it stimulates a sense of pride of ownership; as something external yet confronting the person, it makes the ego more conscious of its bounded reality. Such sensations are daily experiences for the Amhara peasant, who is rarely separated from the staff in one form or other. When he leaves his homestead he normally carries the hard *dulā*, a potential weapon of defense that likewise affirms his ego by bolstering self-confidence in a dangerous world. He braces the *dulā* against his back as he treks along, or holds it against the [481] front of his shoulder like a rifle. Older men walk using it as a cane. A special kind of staff made of softer wood (*zang*) is carried by pious and elderly [481] men. Participants in devotional services lean on still another type of staff (*maquāmiyā*) which is distributed in the church for that purpose.

*565 156 484 Traveling is another custom which affirms the ego, at least when one travels spontaneously and not in organized company. As the individual moves past various stimuli, his self-consciousness is heightened by the contrast between a persisting ego and a constantly changing environment. As a traveler par excellence—and a long traveler, unless social rank requires the presence of retainers—the Amhara peasant frequently removes himself from familiar home settings and confronts an outside world. He loves to go on the road and will travel at the slightest provocation. For him a distance of two or three hours by foot is like the American's trip to the corner drugstore. Whether to visit relatives or pay respects after death, to go to market or to court, to get holy water at a distant church, or to look after land in a far away district, the Amhara peasant is on the move dozens of times each year, often for trips involving two or three days of travel.

*565 156 829 602 609 Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and culture, one may for the moment say that the personal ego is the central object in the Amhara peasant's view of society. Exactly what might be meant by this statement and in what respects it needs qualification are questions that will be taken up in the concluding chapter. If it is so, certainly the next most prominent social object in his world is the circle of close ones, or *zamad*. *Zamad* refers in the first instance to consanguineal kin, and is distinguished from the category of those who are strangers, or *bā'ed*. This is perhaps the most important of all the sociological distinctions made by the Amhara: the former, *zamad*, are seen as entitled to the warmest hospitality, while toward *bā'ed* indifference and suspicion are appropriate responses.

*565 156 602 This does not mean that the kin group is a corporate entity whose interests and identity transcend that of the individual. On the contrary, the notion of

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people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war. 828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance. 565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā,* or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin." 565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz,* a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days. 565* 461 [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[13] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

*565 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but
461 acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one
461 moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that
181 while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing
• 577 one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obliga-
183 tions toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level
[423] he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the
78 fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also
181 important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab,* a simple
183 neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited
[262] and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be
[301] neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good
577 works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms
181 to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who
183 is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in
*565 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code
577 of "shames," or *nawr.* Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very
673 worst *nawr.* Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shame-
181 ful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect to-
183 ward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby
[626] stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr.*

*565 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus
57 kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors
181 and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived
183 within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 Among *zamad,* however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.
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Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [771]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shīllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 [183]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

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been employed as a medium for promulgating new ideas or discussing contemporary problems. Another feature of Amhara culture that helps to account for the mental inertia of the peasantry is its emphasis on the value of deference and obedience to authority. The Amhara typically rely on legitimate authority figures to define appropriate responses to new situations, and regard the delegation of powers as a diminution of the status of such authorities. The peasant has thus refrained from initiating changes in the public domain because the prerogative of taking initiative is generally reserved to ecclesiastical and political authorities.

Receptivity to Change

Consideration of the peasant's readiness to follow the lead of legitimate authorities already points to an inadequacy of the second stereotype we have mentioned: that which sees the peasant as hopelessly ignorant and backward, hence intractable from the viewpoint of a program of modernization. For while the Amhara peasant is likely to resist the efforts of some unknown official from Addis Ababa to introduce change in his local environment, he does tend to follow the directives and imitate the example of the local authorities whom he knows and who shape the course of decisions and sanctions at the local level. Thus it is, for example, that the eucalyptus tree—imported by Emperor Menelik, taken to the provinces by nobles, and eventually planted by individual peasants—has come to dot the Amhara countryside. How quickly such change can take place is shown by the recent acceptance of photography in many provincial regions. In 1950, peasants in many Amhara areas strenuously objected to having their pictures taken, in part at least for fear of the camera as bearer of the evil eye. By 1960, visitors to some of these same areas were being deluged with requests for photographs. In the interim these peasants had been exposed to numerous photographs of the Emperor and high government officials and had observed their local authorities seizing every chance they could to be photographed.

Yet it is clear that the Amhara peasant will not imitate everything that is accepted by his traditional authorities. When a new custom strikes him as too outlandish his resistance can become adamant, as was abundantly demonstrated when the court of Susneyos carried out its ill-fated conversion to Catholicism. In analyzing the peasant's receptivity to change it is important to distinguish as independent variables: (1) the degree of acceptability of the *agents* of change, and (2) the extent to which the proposed change is congruent with traditional beliefs and values.

The whole question of the nature of peasant opposition and receptivity to modernizing programs may be discussed most realistically by focusing on a concrete area of attempted change. The material I have assembled is most detailed for the case of public health, an area to which the government has

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586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought 885 into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have re- [851] sulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or [586] else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a com- [587] plete adult, a *mulu sēt* or *mulu saw*.

From Generation to Generation

867 Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

[577] The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profes- [779] sion of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

867 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central 779 symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern 785 a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout matura- 262 tion. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early 577 age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

867 At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction 779 of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or 793 confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may 577 either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her [785] husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing [688] penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than
he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bālagē* ("rude"), a trait which [861]
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [155] [671]

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838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
831 particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the
[834] sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters
• [577] are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat*, is synonymous with *guabaznat*, or "bravery.")

*883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often
[141] carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
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*883 177 178 [535] [533] [276] cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

*883 177 184 Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

*883 517 178 177 AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women	85	15	0	(700)
Food	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry	67	26	7	(700)
Music	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†	40	58	2	(700)
Dance	38	56	6	(700)
Drink	24	56	20	(700)
Painting	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gursha*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically identical.

*883 177 [184] school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

*883 517 178 *Morals.*—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the government schools. The weakening of family controls by the new school environment has slightly reduced the importance of loyalty to kin in the students' scheme of things, and has significantly reduced the moral authority of religious customs. A third sphere of norms—respect and obedience toward elders and persons of authority—is maintained by the hierarchical school system, officially headed by the Emperor himself. However, the ambiguous status of foreign teachers and their frequent inability or unwillingness to play the traditional authoritarian role tends to weaken this, for the possibility of informal, even joking, relations with foreign teachers gives Amhara students their first taste of a more relaxed relation to authority figures. (Unprepared by any other experience for such a relationship, their reaction tends to be one of exploiting the permissive teacher as much as possible while at the same time losing respect for him.)

Finally, the expectation of physical stamina and aggressiveness in the Amhara *goramsä* is carried over into the school setting but with definite modification. It prevails in the feeling that one must not tolerate insults or be cowardly. It also persists in altered form in the new pattern of athletic activities instituted by the schools. On the other hand, the greater camaraderie expected among schoolmates means that aggression must also be carefully controlled. An indication of the psychological difficulties to which the crowded yet sociable conditions of school life have given rise appears in response to the question: "What is the worst thing that could justifiably be said against you?" The most frequent sort of answer to this question relates to unchecked aggression: "Quick to anger," "quarrelsome," "ill tempered."

Of the new moral values inculcated by the school system, some of the main ones appear to be self-development via education; honesty; sportsmanship; and social responsibility.

Ethiopians often speak of the "value" (*ïqem*) of education, meaning thereby the path to a well-paying job and a higher standard of living. But one would be mistaken to suppose that this explanation exhausts the meaning that education has for the modern adolescents. The freeing of their imagination and the exercise of previously unknown intellectual capacities prove themselves thrilling experiences for each new class of students. And their most preferred pastime is "reading," their most popular films are educational ones. A number of students spontaneously declared, when asked about the real reason they go to school, "to learn about the world" and "to learn about humanity."

In the traditional culture of Abyssinia, learning was highly valued, to be sure. But its task was to produce a class of literati capable of transmitting the hallowed beliefs and symbols. Education for the sake of inquiry as such or for personal development was never permitted in its program. If the value of

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*883 871 178

this new sort of education exists but dimly in the minds of the older students, that is largely because the school system has made grades and diplomas the end of scholastic activity.

*883 577 178 871

The fact that the value of truth is to some extent institutionalized in the schools—at least in the demand for correct answers to examination questions—gives honesty a novel importance for the modern adolescents. It does in fact appear that "honesty" is the most highly valued of the six character traits presented in the questionnaire. (See Table 11.) Numerous teachers, however,

*883 577

TABLE 11

QUALITIES PREFERRED BY STUDENTS AS REPRESENTING THE BEST KINDS OF CHARACTER

Quality	Per Cent Checking Quality as Either First or Second Choice		
	Secondary School		College Males
	Males	Females	
Honest	65	73	86
Polite	27	30	18
Smiling, sociable	26	43	28
Patriotic	22	10	19
Kind, generous	21	10	12
Humble, modest	10	15	21
Number	(390)	(38)	(190)

*883 577 178 871

report that the students tend to prevaricate on every convenient occasion. This tendency is the product of a tradition in which the culture hero is not George Washington, who "could not tell a lie," but Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, master of deceit, and of a life outside the classroom in which equivocation and deception are the rule. The effort of Ethiopian students to shake the legacy of wax and gold and incorporate the more austere ideal of truth for truth's sake is fraught with pathos. Some of them have frankly conceded that the task belongs to another generation, by naming "honesty" as the thing they want their children most to have that they did not have.

Another ideal which the Ethiopian students have adopted—slowly, but with growing success—is that of sportsmanship or fair play. In Amhara culture the goal, not the manner of fighting, is what is important. The government school system, however, has taught students to play fairly in accord with

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fixed rules and to respect their opponents. Until a few years ago, the imperfect acceptance of these norms was shown by the frequent fights between opposing school teams following soccer and basketball games. But gradually a new tradition of athletic activity has been building up in the schools, and with it the related norms have started to gain greater acceptance. 883* 577 178 871

Still another value that the school experience has promoted is that of social responsibility. Most students are very grateful to the government for having provided them with schooling and related benefits, and they feel a keen obligation to show their gratitude by serving their country. They have also become conscious of the great needs of their people for economic and social development. In Amhara society, service was expected in behalf of the family and, except for mass levies in time of warfare, usually stopped there. The modern adolescents are still mindful of their obligations to their parents and siblings, but have now included broader ideals of social service in their moral orientation. When asked what they expect to bring most satisfaction in their lives, the students named "improvement of local community" more often than any other category except "career or occupation." (See Table 4.) When asked what they would do with a million dollars, more than a third answered in terms of purely social enterprises, such as building schools and hospitals, helping the poor and orphaned; and many others indicated private enterprises with specifically social purposes, such as improving agriculture and building factories to provide employment. 883* 641 577 185 (593)

It is difficult to determine how deeply the value of social responsibility has been internalized. In their public declarations, at any rate, the students wax eloquent in propounding ideals of good citizenship. They urge themselves to prepare for introducing modern ways to the uneducated; to return to the villages, integrate themselves with the old society, and lead them gently to better ways; to fight discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and social class; to solve the problem of corruption and bribery in the government; and to promote national solidarity.

Politics.—The Amhara adolescent has little occasion to develop specifically political attitudes, since his customary political world has been coterminous with subordination to legitimate local and national authorities, and defense of his country against invaders. Unless he was the son of a nobleman involved in struggles for power, there have rarely been any political issues to engage his attention. 883* 66

A host of issues, domestic and international, have by contrast been thrust upon the modern adolescent. Yet in comparison with students from the other countries of Africa and the Middle East, his political orientation is relatively undeveloped. Ethiopian students at regional or international gatherings of students have in the past tended to feel somewhat out of place, for the polit-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 ical wit and activism displayed by students from other countries has em-
66 barrassed their cautious dispositions.

There are three reasons for this relative lack of politicization of the Ethiopian students. One is that, having maintained her ancient independence
[648] throughout the "scramble for Africa," Ethiopia entered the twentieth century as an independent nation; and five years of Italian rule were not sufficient to shake her spirit. Ethiopian students have thus not had to participate in the anti-imperialist movement, the great school for political activism in the colonial areas.

[571] A second factor is the deeply rooted habit of total subordination to any
[157] legitimate authority. Because of this orientation there is a persisting disposition to relegate concern for all political questions to the highest authorities.
[570] Nearly two-thirds of the secondary students and a third of the college stu-
[829] dents maintain that one should always obey the order of a superior, arguing that "obedience is a virtue," "things would not go right otherwise," and "the Bible says so."

*883 The third reason for the almost apolitical posture of Ethiopian students
66 has been the absence of opportunities for political expression in their country.
641 African students from British colonies have in the past been surprised to find that their colonial situation admitted far more freedom of speech and press than Ethiopia. Teachers are expected to keep anything remotely connected with Ethiopian politics out of the classroom, and the editors are expected to keep them out of the newspapers. Nor have the students been permitted to form any kind of politically relevant associations. Even casual discussion of domestic political problems among friends has been curtailed because of the all-pervading fear of government informers.

*883 All this has not prevented Ethiopian students from being affected to a
66 moderate degree by the libertarian and egalitarian ideals of the West. The
177 teaching of European history in secondary school, evaluation of students' performance without respect to class or tribal affiliation, and the exercise of electing student officers in the colleges have acted to leaven the political imagination of the students. Many of them thus ventured a degree of political
*883 criticism in their anonymous questionnaires. Forty-three per cent indicated
66 disapproval of the existing differences between "big men" and the common
829 people. Thirty-nine per cent were critical of the degree of control exerted by the government, of which group two-thirds felt that governmental controls are too strict (e.g., not permitting free expression), and one-third felt they were not strict enough (e.g., with respect to corruption and provincial administration).

*883 The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, jarred the Addis Ababa col-
668 lege students into an unprecedented state of political activity.[27] In response
669

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
155
539

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[176] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

594 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
(554) *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
594 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
(135) association, and holds an annual feast (*zĭker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *ĭnjarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

consequence of substantial loss of accustomed mother love at the time of 121
weaning—a mild but chronic state of mourning which gives a depressive un- 155
dertone to the rest of life—is certainly one of the more evident characteristics 858
of most Amhara.[22] At the same time the Amhara child is made anxious about
his actual oral gratifications. He no longer eats whenever he wants to, but [264]
only after he has waited for the adults to finish their meal. He is no longer
entitled to the choicest food, mother's milk, but to poorer food and leftovers.
And he is made increasingly aware of the adult anxieties about eating connected with the fasting requirements, and with the food shortages of the rainy season.

Applying the Whiting-Child hypotheses in the light of these observations 121
one may characterize the development of an ambivalent preoccupation with 155
the oral zone by Amhara as follows: an initially very high level of oral satisfaction enjoyed during the nursing period makes oral gratification a particularly attractive source of pleasure as well as a desired refuge for the psyche under the pressure of later deprivations; while the emotional and nutritional deprivations which the Amhara child experiences toward the end of the nursing period and thereafter undermine the sense of security acquired during his indulged infancy and make him anxious about the fount of that security, oral gratification.*

Whatever the precise ontogenetic basis of this phenomenon may prove to 121
be, the Amhara's ambivalent preoccupation with orality is projected at the 155
cultural level in the form of two contrasting human ideals. The secular 577 •
masculine ideal in Amhara culture is a hero of oral gratification and prowess. He is a man who eats much and drinks much, and who excels in litigation, in declaiming the martial chants, and in composing veiled insults. The religious ideal, on the other hand, is a hero of oral renunciation. The most devout Amhara are considered those who keep all of the fasts, even the esoteric ones; or even, as monks and ascetics, live on a fasting diet the year round—
in the extreme case, feed on leaves as hermits. The association of religious [173]
virtuosity with oral renunciation reaches its logical climax in legends about Gabra Manfas Qeddus ("Servant of the Holy Spirit"), the most hallowed Amhara saint. In contrast with the normal Amhara boy who nurses for close to three years, Gabra Manfas Qeddus is said to have been at his mother's breast for only three months, when a bird swept down one day and carried him away.

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* While this formulation may leave more questions unanswered than it solves—a purely behaviorist formula inevitably neglects the dynamics of defensive operations and the significance of ambivalence—it carries us as far as our data permit and may provide a useful point of departure for further discussion and investigation of Amhara psychology.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 674 any case the *shĭftā* is a man apart, who makes his home in uninhabited mountainous country or lowlands and lives by stealing cattle and robbing travelers. Some Amhara become *shĭftā* because of a passion for this way of life; this is particularly true of soldiers who, after a long campaign, prefer the continuation of a predatory and free existence to a return to the hard work of the fields. Others do so involuntarily, in order to escape punishment after committing some violence in the course of a personal dispute.

*121 674 829 554 The attitudes of civilian Amhara toward the *shĭftā* combine fear and dislike with a strong tendency toward idealization. The *shĭftā* is feared because he is a killer; if a person happens to witness him performing some act of theft or murder, he will usually keep quiet about it for fear of reprisal. He is disliked because he lives parasitically off the productive activities of others. But the *shĭftā* is widely admired, on the other hand, because he possesses a number of qualities that are dear to the Amhara. He is reputed to be an expert singer of *shĭllalā*. He is credited with unusually handsome features because, living at the expense of others as he does, he has plenty to eat and no [577] arduous work to wear him down. Above all he is *guabaz*, the great Amhara virtue that embodies bravery, fierceness, hardihood, and general male competence. [302] This is symbolized by the *shĭftā*'s letting his hair grow to the proportions of a *gofarē*, the wildly thick hair style of the warrior.

*121 674 829 The Amhara's admiration for the *shĭftā* is reminiscent of American attitudes toward the outlaw in "western" films. In the Amhara case, however, this is not balanced by a corresponding idealization of a sheriff-figure as the representative of civil order. Although a feudal lord or governor who captures some *shĭftā* in his area may be admired, this admiration will be directed to his personal qualities of bravery or cunning far more than to his capacity as an agent of "law and order." There is no feeling among the Amhara that the *shĭftā* must be captured simply because he is an outlaw. Instead, a more pragmatic approach is taken: the *shĭftā* is acknowledged as a legitimate social type and is tolerated at a distance so long as his killing does not become wanton or excessive. [181] This approach, and what, in the idealization of the *shĭftā*, appears to be a tendency to identify with someone who openly flaunts the norms of civil society, bespeaks a relatively weak commitment to the value of civil order.

*121 181 186 619 The weakness of the Amhara's attachment to symbols of local community is paralleled by his parochialism with respect to more inclusive levels of community. This parochialism is manifest in diverse ways in the different social strata. Among the peasantry it appears, for example, as an aversion to arranging marriages and permitting land to pass to an Amhara from a different province. Among the clergy it has been expressed in terms of those regionally based doctrinal differences which have disrupted the church for many centuries. Among the nobility it has taken the form of incessant politi-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of moral pressure for the reconciliation of conflict, it appears to place greater emphasis on the acting out of aggression. It does this, first of all, by defining a number of acts as offenses which justify violent retribution of some sort. Appropriation of one's land, seduction of one's wife, and injury of one's relatives are acts of this nature, and it is incumbent on the offended party to seek personal revenge or, as the Amhara put it, "to return the debt" (*bedder mammalas*). It is considered shameful to remain passive when so affronted, an attitude expressed in the following couplet:

Balaw ba-dimotfar daggmaw ba-wānzā,
Bābbāt rīstennā yallam bamīst wāzzā.

Shoot him with the dimotfar,* get him again with
a wanza,*
Taking your father's land or your wife away,
that is no joking matter.

Aggressiveness is further encouraged by the Amhara ego ideal of masculinity.[13] The identity of Amhara males is very much bound up with their capacity for aggressiveness, by both violent and verbal means. A man who has killed someone is regarded with a certain amount of veneration, and the act of killing is itself praised in verses such as:

Saw gadlu saw gadlu: saw magdal yebajāl,
Saw yālgadala saw sihēd yāngolājāl.

Kill a man! Kill a man! It is good to kill a man!
One who has not killed a man moves around
sleepily.

Similarly, verbal aggression is encouraged by the inclusion of excellence at litigation and insulting in the domain of proper male behavior.[14] The bestowal of insults is a rather stylized, if dangerous, procedure among the Amhara. According to Amhara customary law, insulting is a legal offense. The new criminal code provides for a gradation of penalties according to the seriousness of the insult, including fines which run from Eth$15 to as much as hundreds of dollars. The most serious insults include *bāryā* ("slave"); *ṭayb* ("evil-eyed artisan"); and *qomātā* ("leper"). Insults of lesser to medium degrees of seriousness include the following:

hodām	"greedy" (literally, "bellied")
wafrām	"fat"
sakārām	"drunkard"
quashāshā	"dirty"
amadām	"scaly-faced" (literally, "ashen")

* Types of rifles.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121	*arām*	"indolent" (literally, "full of feces")
181	*ya-dehā lijj*	"son of a poor man"
571	*ya-lēbā lijj*	"son of a thief"
578	*yat abātk*	"bastard" (literally, "where is your father?")
[673]	*waslātā*	"lazy no-good"

Other, less direct forms of insult are also widely employed. As was already mentioned, a major use of the wax-and-gold formula is to express insults in so veiled a manner that direct reprisal is unlikely. Another tactic is that of not showing someone the proper respect or in some way manipulating the forms of etiquette to his disadvantage. A favorite anecdote concerning Alaqā Gabra Hānnā illustrates the simultaneous use of both methods: the Alaqā once flattered a donkey driver by bowing quite low to greet him and calling, *Endēt adarātchu?* ("How did you spend the night?"). Only when the man proudly related the episode to his friends, so the story goes, was he made to realize that the greeting was expressed in the plural form (*-atchu*), implying that he and his donkey were being placed in the same category.[15] Still another mode of indirect insult is that known as *ashmur,* in which two friends insult each other vigorously at the top of their voices, the real object of their abuse being a third party who is within earshot.

If the Amhara is by disposition inclined to bestow insults, he is still readier
[865] to take offense at the slightest hint of one directed at him. One of the tasks of socialization among the Amhara is to sensitize the young person to the various types of insults and to motivate him to strike back when he is so offended. Insults are frequently part of a vicious circle which moves from petty disagreement to serious argument to litigation at court, *dulā* fights,
[576] and even premeditated murder. Breach of etiquette may lead to no less serious consequences. In one court case which the author observed, a man was accused and convicted for addressing his father-in-law, whom he normally addressed by the polite form *ersewo,* with the familiar form *anta* in a moment of anger.

Argumentation, litigation, insulting, and revenge comprise the hard core of social interaction among Amhara. While it is possible to exaggerate the significance of these forms in the total pattern of Amhara social life, there can be little doubt of a strongly dissentious disposition just below the surface, and often at the surface, of Amhara interpersonal relations. Still another axis along which this individualistic disposition tends to be manifest is that of deception and suspicion.

*121 The Amhara is a master at *deception.* With straight face and convincing
181 manner he will relate the most preposterous fictions. The Amhara themselves
571 tend to be aware that this is one of their characteristic activities. When, for
• 577 example, I replied to the query of an Amhara gentleman that some horn
[123]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

goblets (which I had purchased for one dollar) had cost five dollars each, he remarked: "Ah, I see you have learned this country's art of lying well." 121* 181

The phenomenon in question is not an unmixed expression of egoism. At times the Amhara employ deception chiefly for reasons of consideration, not wanting to tell the other person something that will offend him. Thus a person will agree to honor a request made by his neighbor even though he has no intention in the world of doing so; his neighbor probably understands this but still prefers an insincere "Yes" to an out-and-out "No." 571 507* [123]

Most of the time, however, deception is obviously being used to further one man's interests at the expense of another's. A person seeking a favor will pretend to be in much poorer straits than he actually is.* A needy traveler may pretend to be an important personage or otherwise disguise his identity in order to secure lodging for the night. An artisan, in order to obtain business, will tell his prospective customer that a certain job will be finished in two days when he has no intention of completing the work within a fortnight. To refer once again to my own experience: when I once needed to rent a mule for a week, and it was felt that the local mule owners might be reluctant to rent one for more than two or three days, I was advised by some respected Amhara men in the area that the only thing to do was to say that the mule was wanted for a few days, then on return to say that unexpected factors prevented my getting back on time. Far more imaginative plays of deception are attributed, again, to Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, who is renowned for the episode of sending word to Menelik that he was dead so that the Emperor would send money on his behalf to Gondar.

Like the indirect forms of insulting, deception has its more subtle, passive forms; deceptiveness by omitting the truth rather than committing a falsehood. One might render the basic principle that informs communication among the Amhara as: *Avoid binding commitments; maximize the degrees of freedom left after any utterance.* Questions and answers are typically couched in extremely oblique language. Unless there is some overwhelming personal advantage to be obtained from providing information, the Amhara tend to give answers—when they do not pretend not to understand the question—in terms so ambiguous as to be worthless; for example, replying to a question about the location of a certain place or person with the word *mādo* ("yonder").

The natural complement of so much deception is pronounced *suspiciousness.* Amhara are constantly on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. 121* 571 181

* One Amhara priest, for example, showed me that he had no clothes other than his single blanket in order to gain sympathy and induce me to give him something. But when he learned I had a camera, he went home promptly to get dressed for a photograph. [123]

511 prestige items of luxury, such as a mule, a fine saddle, and he would not want to "waste" his money on imported snadals. His expenses for shelter and furnishings are almost nil in terms of cash, and even a beer jar can be purchased for Eth$1.- in rural areas.

423 His basic needs filled with a minimum of labor,
578 and his wants few, the "rest"-owning Amhara farmer views modern land measurement with suspicion. He fears that disputed land with vague boundaries will be declared government land and be redistributed. In the absence of written deeds; dependence on remembered local traditions and natural landmarks; and the practice of letting fallow land revert to bush to be cleared anew every few years, disputes are many at any time. Rumors from southern areas where courts have for several years now recognized tithe receipts as evidence of ownership, reinforces these fears. Alienation of any part of one's land is strongly objected to as loss of prestige and weakening of kin bonds. As a result, there is little appreciation among "rest"-holding Amhara of Begemdir for the efforts of the emperor, to replace vague "status" of land tenure with assured "contract", to have real estate deeds issued and registered, to end the tax exemptions of feudal lords and the church, to institute uniform land taxes, etc. Any general change, they feel, is bound to raise the socio-economic level of non-Coptic ethnic minorities and depress their own.

423 Several land laws were included in the Penal

701 as great a military figure as Emperor Menelik II was
703 close to falling apart at the time of his great victory over the invading Italians in 1896. The Amhara resists discipline except for short-lived adulation of a military hero who inspires him; he comes to fight, not to wait; even today, in the modern army, Ethiopian officers characterize the Amhara soldier as fearless, brave, but unwilling to take orders and having a tendency to act as an individual in battle. He is characterized as almost opposite from the patient Galla soldier who takes orders and cooperates smoothly with his military outfit, but rarely takes initiative.

[578] Regional clannishness, easily stirred by news from the home district, was another motive that could cause large segments of a traditional Amhara army to vanish almost overnight. A third development that would whittle away an army gradually was the almost inevitable outcome of having been stationed in one vicinity too long. In this case, the countryside was soon stripped bare by the military foragers, the "gabbar" was suffering famine himself, as if a vast cloud of locusts had nibbled away every leaf ("gonäçhçhäfä"). A fourth [727] motive, related to the first, might be loss of confidence in the strength and wisdom of their chief, in which case the soldiers not wanting to return home without glory took to the woods and became bandits ("shefta"). The latter were a major problem after every war. Even a liberal statesman like Ras Imru, as governor of Gondar after the liberation of the country in World War II, found harsh measures the only remedy.

587 knowing both, has preferred her!

[588] A deserted wife, angry that her husband has found another, will often take a lover to buy her "a sheep for Epiphany", butter for her hair, and cotton for her distaff.

578 587 The following relationships are called "gobban", rivals, to each other:

"Semanya" versus "damoz" wife;

Man A, whose divorced wife lives with man B. The men are "gobban".

Woman X, whose divorced husband lives with, or married, woman Y.

"Semanya" and "damoz" wives, versus new concubine, "gärad", fearing permanency.

One "gärad" against another, (also called "wushemma").

But only "semanya" wives are regarded as legal rivals.

842 586 When a woman is barren, she may follow the biblical example and ask her husband to take a servant girl, "gärad" to have children with her. A "semanya" wife may be divorced on grounds of barrenness, but "with honor", taking half of their communal property with her. Amhara peasants believe that women become barren in the towns because of "loose living". [588] A woman divorced on grounds of barrenness will often have sexual intercourse with many men, hoping that she will conceive and thus have the blame of barrenness taken from her.

848 A bastard, "diogla" has full inheritance rights if his father acknowledges him. Bastards are believed to be of violent tempers, like "Muhammad Gran" (the Galla Muslim chief who devastated much of Ethiopia in the 16th century, reputedly a bastard).

586 When suing for divorce, either partner appeals to the "mänfäs qidus" (colloquially "mäddie amay"), the "soul-counselor" priest, who has jurisdiction even over "semanya" marriages. Only he can

197 192 most of its syntax, morphology (such as the "frequentative"), phonology such as considerable onomatopoetry and monosyllabic words (though some of these may have been carried in Geez also). The result of this linguistic blend is a number of expressive choices somewhat analogous to the choice in English between Anglo-Saxon cognates and Latin-French cognates: e.g. the word "sun" can be expressed as "sahay" (from Geez) or "jembar" (from Cushitic). Amhara people use these alternates in many ways: to emphasize distinction between "sacred" and "profane", between the philosophic and the prosaic.

578 197 186 For, to the mind of the Amhara, Geez and its derivatives are spiritually connected with the church liturgy, with philosophy. Even in the present situation of change, feudal conservatives and the church have banded together most strongly against the suggested simplification of the Amharic alphabet (which is recommended for quicker learning, expecially by illiterate adults of other ethnic groups in Ethiopia; and for devising typewriters). This traditional, religious conservatism is now being reinforced by the new and incipient group of nationalistic, linguistic purists, who bemoan the introduction of more and more European cognates. But the latter group is still small and does not have nearly the political power of the old-style religious conservatives.

197 Finally, the often-repeated qualification with regard to the effect of regional differences applies to linguistic matters also. In different regions, derivations from different Cushitic languages affect all phases of the language, particularly the lexical.

192 b) Lexical, Grammatical and Syntactical Phases.

The Amharic vocabulary is rich in onomatopoetic terms which have been formalized:

524 Boys, from the "age of reason" onward, tease each other with riddles in endless inventive games, such as:

[539] "(Question)":

"In its youth, white hair,
in its maturity, brown,
in its old age, red.
What is it?"

"(Reply)": "Wot". (Red-golden peppersauce).

538 Like medieval bards, Amhara entertainers (azmari) and talented individuals tell of incredible and wonderful happenings of all kinds, stories called "tarik" (synonymous, in Amharic, with history). Often these use as their base historical or pseudo-historical events, and expand on them, experimenting with persons, plots, additional details, etc. Very popular bases are the Royal Chronicles of Abyssinia, "tarik nägäst", fanciful stories about Alexander the Great, and Biblical plots, especially Apocryphal.

D. Artistic Expression: The Art of Insult and Mockery.

195 A person who is clever at the art of insult is given grudging
578 admiration even by his opponents, and is called "bämälasy lachä" (lit. one who shaves with his tongue). He can insult or mock so subtly that he may leave non-initiates in doubt, yet have full effect on the victim. On the other hand, a coarse person who insults people indiscriminately, regardless of propriety of person or circumstance, is despised ("märta af").

Mockery is sometimes used for positive as well as negative purposes, especially in pedagogy, but insults are always more or less negative. Mockery, if used to teach a lesson, often employs proverbs;
578 using metaphors, so that the person criticized must think - which
195 might lead to his mending his ways:
539 To mock a useless act: "(it is like) a comb on a shaven head,
(like) trousers to carry dung in".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

To mock false pride:

"A blind man, when he became (too) proud, (to accept help) on his toga defecated".

To mock aggressiveness beyond social station, especially in a young man:

"The mouse that wants to die,
goes to touch the nose of the cat".

Insults, however, do not have this benevolent, educative quality. Instead, they are antagonistic - though in carefully differentiated degrees. In general, an insult may be extremely severe, severe, medium severe, or light, in degree. Insults are considered of greater weight when directed at persons of higher status, (more severe).

There are two major categories of insults:

a) Insults directed at the group to which the insulted person belongs: his racial (usually slave-descent); religious (non-Coptic); ethnic (linguistic-regional) stereotype.

b) Insults directed at his individual personality shortcomings, intended to shame him for having failed to measure up to what is expected of him in society.

Racial insults commonly include:

"shembora ras" (lit. peahead, i.e. peppercorn hair) or "barya täqur" (slave hair), both severe insults referring to slave ancestry, by reference to hair typical of the Shanqalla (negroid tribe in the border lowland). This is now a jail offense.

"täqwara" (lit. dark one). Light insult directed at Shanqalla ex-slave, teasingly.

"wellaj" (half-slave). Severe insult directed at a person of doubtful ancestry.

Religious insults; often involved also in ethnic insults:

"afotam" (lit. sheathed, encased) - uncircumcised. Directed at "pagan" lowlanders, and lower ethnic castes such as the "Faqi" tanners. Medium severe.

195 "kaffir" (infidel). Insult used by islamized Abyssinians and Arabs against Coptic Abyssinians. Severe insult which may lead to bloodshed.

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"Wayto" - has the connotation of "one who will eat anything". Refers to the hippopotamus hunters on Lake Tana and the lower Blue Nile. Medium severe insult. (People who subsist on hunting are despised.)

There is also a whispered insult relating to supernatural black magic, "buda", used against persons accused of descent from ironsmiths (e.g. Falasha).

b) Insults directed against individual shortcomings include:

Weak, soft, womanish (directed at a man):

"syēto" - womanish. Directed at chattering male. Medium severe.

"lïmata syēt" (lit. begging woman). Severe. Directed at flatterer and feigner.

"dumetan" (lit. full of flour), suggesting that he is a coward, who would prefer woman's work, such as grinding, to male behavior.

Generally unsteady character:

"zälïbabeda" - unsteady person. Severe insult.

"jebrarra" - childish, silly jabberer, or a drunk. Severe insult for a man.

"bäsedeb zärrätta" - speechless, e.g. man who cannot reply to insult.

"arho" (lit. wandering minstrel woman), prey to many evils. Medium severe.

"kïmatta" - vagabond, loafer. Medium severe.

Mannish (directed at a woman):

"mändïmïnda" - Severe insult directed at a shrewish, aggressive woman.

195 578 Stupidity:

"dängworo"(lit. deaf). Fool. Frequently used. Medium to severe.

"dengay ras" (lit. stone head). Slow-witted person. Light insult if directed at a youngster, medium toward low-prestige adult, severe toward other adult males.

Laziness:

"zefeq" - Medium severe insult, directed at woman who evades her chores, and who dresses in her best embroidered toga on a weekday.

Hypocrisy:

"zembam ïeba" (lit. thief with eyes full of flies): Directed at cunning man who pretends not to see but looks out to take what he should not; like a "blind" thief in the night. Medium severe.

"wälmatta" - vain flatterer, good-for-nothing. Severe insult.

Bastard:

"men abbatu" (lit. who is his father). Very frequently used especially by lower class, even against balky mules to "let off steam", but nevertheless considered very severe insult.

Grossness:

"yähanus feträt" (lit. Creature of Thursday, i.e. the day the animals were created). Directed at animal-like behavior. Severe insult.

Supernatural insult:

"ganänam" - full of evil spirits. Severe insult.

Insults of category a) may lead to serious brawls, even kin feuds, for insults against the group are regarded as affecting also the following generations:

[539] "(If the father is hated), the child will not be kissed, when he (the child) speaks, no one will smile".

195 ¶ Insults of category b) however, may be noisy, sound violent,
578 involve much high-pitched repartee, with the adversaries screaming at each other. But since such individual insults are regarded as a "battle of wits", they rarely even lead to fisticuffs, though, to foreign observers, such encounters seem only a hair's breadth removed from serious bloodshed, and the adversaries seem to lean against each other physically (though now actually). For, even a severe insult is not regarded as a "fighting word", rather as an almost theatrical, almost ceremonial exchange. There may be much waving of a corner of a toga in the opponent's face, as in court. The exchange may end in mutual exhaustion, physically and nervously. The entertainment aspect is not lost on the onlookers, who thoroughly enjoy this and egg on
[692] the adversaries. Sometimes curbstone arbitrators ("astaraqi") are appointed to act as "peacemakers".

[554] A person of nobility is not supposed to engage in such public battles of insult, rather employs subtle means of implied antagonism. Even a commoner Amhara may imitate the indirect behavior pattern in a situation of antagonism, e.g. to indicate to a neighbor that he is not wanted, yet without letting the public know it (thus saving face for the neighbor). He may invite him, greet him politely, ask him to wait (standing) while stools "will be brought". When no stools are brought, after some time, the neighbor leaves, never to return. The proverb says:

[539] "So that he will not talk (against us), invite him;
(yet) so that he will not eat, move him about".

In this manner, polite antagonism is indicated, without making a public enemy.

524 girls, or two girls holding each other by the hand and spinning like a top. Sometimes somewhat older girls meet boys with whom they have established an experimental "joking relationship" ("tawaza"), and play house, building little huts out in the fields during the dry season, within the hamlet in the rainy season. This free experimentation comes to an end just before adolescence, when their relationships become more formal and more supervised.

Imitations of parental activities fill much of children's playtime. Little boys play "farmer", weave rainhoods of reeds and "broadcast" seeds (actually pebbles). Little boys begin to practice the "art of insult" (brain, not only brawn) e.g. such ethnocentric insults as the following:

[186
578]

	Question: "Where are you from?"
Reply: "Begemdir",	Response: "Land of shysters and quibblers."
"Shoa",	"Land of liars and traitors."
"Gojjam",	"Land of sorcerers (buda)."
"Gondar",	"Gossipers and blabbermouths."
"Gurage",	"Land of tricksters."
"Tigre",	"Land of hotheads."

524
754 The culture's fear of black magic, especially "buda", is reflected in children's games, such as:

A: "Buda, buda, what do you eat?"

B: "Meat" (or, imitating the sorcerer's hidden language, "cakes").

A: "What do you drink?"

B: "Blood" (or, paraphrased, "pure water"). Whereupon boy B howls like a hyena (the "horse" of buda), sprints toward boy A, who flees.

524
831 When no adults are present, boys play games imitating the sex life of animals, sometimes highly imaginary, e.g. the "coitus of baboons" ("Yatota boddosh"):

Seated and facing each other, two boys lift each other with their feet,

578 In the new courts established by the central government in
689 the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

326 How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda -
754 Falasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting
563 that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Falashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despising of this manual craft onto the Falashas and believe that Falasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passersby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces
[71] of the supernatural. This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Amont the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous. Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

e. "Buda" doctors past and present

756 While the aforementioned dabtara is the most commonly
793 called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor
[49] road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada
Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here
Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint.
[132] Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or
eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's
[361] capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns:
an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and
[231] dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputa-
tion of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

175 Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia
since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and
Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was
always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the
[103] Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means
"my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably
beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem
[632] father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military
headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest.
Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern
Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation.
To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment over-
looking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the
turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to
[563] internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north
route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important
motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab.
During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor
had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less
fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara
country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north:
[578] Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum
of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean
[635] border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the
Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support
[662] of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

north-west of Zanjira near the upper margin of the sheet. The church clings to the side of a steep little hill which stands almost isolated among vast gorges and commands the grandest panorama imaginable of this tormented country. The hill is joined to Zanjira by a narrow causeway little lower than the general plateau, flat on top and dropping away in cliffs on either side, so regular that it almost seems artificial. Harris records a saying which evidently refers to this place: "from Iteghe you can see the Echeghe" (*i.e.* the chief of the monks, who then lived in Gondar). To be sure, one does seem to overlook a great part of the world from this point of vantage.

Every church is the centre of a radiating system of small paths (not shown on the map) chiefly used by people coming to service. There are of course regular Sunday services, but these are not very well attended. More important are the special festivals observed on certain dates of the Ethiopian month, which may fall on any day of the week. In this area the monthly festivals universally observed, on which no work could be done, were those of St. Michael, St. Mary, and St. George, on the 12th, 21st, and 23rd respectively, as well as "Bal Wold," a commemoration of the Birth of Christ, on the 29th of each month. Of still greater significance in the life of the people are the annual festivals, falling on the same day of the month as the monthly ones but in certain months only. On these annual festivals nearly the whole population makes its way to the churches dedicated to the particular saint commemorated. Often they will visit the local *tebel* or Holy Water and bathe there early in the morning before service. Going on to the church, all remain outside, for there would be no room for such a crowd within the cramped passages of the church itself. In the middle of the morning the *tabot* or ark is brought out and ceremonial dances held before it. Finally, before the service ends, it will be carried three times round the church in procession, attended by magnificent crosses and gaudy umbrellas. These are occasions of great popular excitement and rejoicing, and the congregations are often enormous. The long service over, they break up into gossiping groups, and go back to social lunches in each other's huts.

Enough has been said to show how large a part is played among these people by the Church and its priesthood. The country has indeed been described as priest-ridden, the people as over-dominated or even enslaved by the Church. If so, this servitude, at least in the country, is still a willing and unquestioned one. It is also true to say that without the Church the social structure of this countryside would fall to pieces, and life would lose not only its coherence but nearly all its variety and colour.

It was mentioned above that, to meet the needs of an increasing plateau population, several new churches had been founded in recent times in the area covered by the map. Two of these were established by "division" of a church which already existed in the gorge. Each original church had two *tabots* one of which was removed for the new foundation, for no church can exist without a *tabot* or altar-slab, this being the only part of the church which is consecrated. Thus the Mariam of the Tallak Amba plateau was derived from the Mariam half-way down the cliff about a mile to the north-east; and similarly a new Ghiorghis of the plateau, just east of Daloti, from the Ghiorghis in the gorge below. Of these "divisions," both of which took place

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

shortly before the Italian invasion of 1935, the first was accomplished peacefully; but not the second. According to the story told me, the *tabot* of the lower Ghiorghis had been borrowed and carried in solemn procession on the plateau in order to ward off a swarm of locusts which were damaging the crops there. This measure was successful, and the plateau people determined to keep the *tabot* which had proved itself so powerful. The people of the gorge would not agree, and tried to recapture their *tabot*. The plateau party however successfully defended it by force of arms, and later built a little church to house it. It was not unusual to attribute specific powers to *tabots*: for instance, that of Dimbaro Mariam (a little east of the north-east corner of the sheet) used to be carried to war by the emperors, attended by a retinue of priests and scribes, to bring success in battle.

The last church to be founded in these parts was the new St. Gabriel, on a prominent hill-top in the district of Dilila near the south-east corner of the sheet. I came upon it when first following the upper course of the Beressa in December 1946. As I approached the foot of the hill I learnt from passers-by that a new church had been built upon it, and that the foundress herself, a certain great lady from Addis Ababa, was at that moment on the hill. Climbing a rocky track to the top, I saw a cluster of new huts and the still unfinished building of the church. Nearby was a large canvas awning stretched rather clumsily between rough stone walls. Under the awning I found the lady herself, short and stout and genial, sitting on a camp chair; around her, squatting on the ground, was a deferential assembly of local dignitaries, personal retainers and priests. After the fluster caused by my unexpected arrival had died down, I had a talk with the worthy lady who, having just presided at a mid-day meal, now plied me with very welcome refreshment. She had been born and bred in this very place. Having spent most of her life elsewhere, and somehow acquired a certain amount of wealth, she had returned in later life to her place of birth and founded this church only the year before my visit. It met a need, she said, for the area lacked a church, and no other St. Gabriel existed anywhere in the neighbourhood. As it chanced, I had come on the day after St. Gabriel's annual festival (which is the 19th of Tahisas, or, in European style, the 28th of December). She expressed great regret that I had not been present at the festival itself, when big crowds had come from Debra Berhan and from all the surrounding country.

This incident seemed to me interesting as demonstrating the tenacity of the local religious tradition in Ethiopia. After all the upheaval and disruption of Italian occupation and the Second World War, the hold of the ancient Church over the Amhara people seemed unweakened. The Church was able to extend its influence in an area not yet well served as readily as ever. It was still an appropriate act for a pious person to found a new church in a lonely place. Perhaps these things are not surprising, for the Church has been the main support and inspiration of Ethiopian unity since the earliest Christian times. It has always been the focal centre of the national sentiment, the fount of renewed resistance to aggression, the main force, in fact, which has maintained Ethiopia's independence and made of it, as Menelik himself once said, an island of Christianity in the great Islamic sea.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

words often carry *double-entendre* as a matter of course; when he listens, he is ever on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. As one of my Ethiopian colleagues has said: "Wax and gold is anything but a formula—it is a way of life." 538 181

In essence, wax and gold is simply a more refined and stylized manifestation of the Amhara's basic manner of communicating. This manner is indirect, often secretive. Amharic conversation is larded with vague remarks like *Min yeshällä?* ("What is better?") when the speaker has failed to indicate what is the issue at hand, or *Tädyäs!*, an interjection which can mean almost anything. Often, when the speaker is then quizzed about the issue at hand, he will give an answer that does not reveal what is really on his mind at all, and even when he does, the person with whom he is talking is likely to interpret his response as a disguise. 195 521 538

Wax and gold embodies this fundamental indirection in speech by means of the studied use of ambiguity. Apart from its literary and religious manifestations, wax and gold appears in the common life of the traditional Amhara on a variety of occasions and serves a number of diverse functions. 195 182 538

It provides the medium for an inexhaustible supply of humor, among a wry people who prefer the clever, double-edged remark to comic actions or incongruous situations. This includes the wit of daily life—the invention of puns and sly retorts, the telling and retelling of good anecdotes and famous lines—as well as the more formalized humor on festive occasions, where minstrels sing the *sam-ennä warq* verses extemporized by the guests. 538 195 182 522

It provides a means for insulting one's fellows in a socially approved manner, in a culture which requires fastidious etiquette in social relations and punishes direct insults by heavy fines. *Sam-ennä warq* insulting, too, has its more stylized expressions, as at the drink-house, where one may find persons competing in a prolonged exchange of more or less disguised insults, or in time of political or military conflict, when opposing lords were wont formerly to satirize one another with ambiguous couplets. 538 195 182 578

It provides a technique for defending the sphere of privacy against excessive intrusion, in a social order that thrives on rumor and gossip and puts most of its people at the mercy of superiors. While vague and evasive responses often suffice to dampen the enthusiasm of the tax collector or the curious neighbor, *sam-ennä warq* constitutes another potent weapon of self-defense. 538 195 182 571 [521]

Finally, it provides the one outlet for criticism of authority figures in a society which strictly controls every kind of overt aggression toward authority, be it parental, religious, or political. Thus it has been a safety valve for certain social tensions, enabling, for example, witty individuals to satirize the monarch himself and still live to repeat the witticism—so long as its subject was himself duly appreciative of the cleverness of the lines. 538 195 182 578 571 [687] [522]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

TRADITION AND MODERNITY

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Insofar as Ethiopia is committed to the pursuit of modernity, she cannot fail to be embarrassed to some extent by the wax-and-gold complex. For nothing could be more at odds with the ethos of modernization, if not with its actuality, than a cult of ambiguity.[9]

It is true, of course, that cultural formations analogous to wax and gold in their exploitation of ambiguity have been prominent throughout the history of the West, not to mention the whole non-Western world. The Christian tradition has always made much of parables and allegories. The classical teaching of rhetoric, following Cicero, placed great stress on the use of paradox; and a major philosophical tradition, stretching from Plato to Marx, has been founded on a logic which assumes that reality can be known only by combining opposite concepts and that any single term is subject to dual interpretation. The flowering of symbolist literature, to take a more recent example, created an audience as partial to subtle allusion and *double-entendre* as the most obscurantist proponent of *weṣṭa wayrā*.

Yet there can be little doubt that the pace-setting spirit of modern Western culture rests on a commitment to unambiguous communication. It is predicated on the proposition that A must be A or not be A. It was no accident that one of the more characteristic philosophical movements of the present century, logical positivism, should have had as its primary motif the desire to maximize precision in the use of language. For the decisive institutions of the modern world—technologies based on logico-experimental science, rational legal systems, and bureaucratic organizations in government, commerce, and industry—depend intimately on the unambiguous definition of terms and the utmost clarity of expression. Whether the task be one of constructing a legal contract, outlining a job description, designing a nuclear reactor, classifying genera and species, or defining variables and their interrelations, these characteristic modern activities are informed by the need and intention to eliminate, as far as possible, all traces of linguistic ambiguity.

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The incorporation of these aspects of modern culture into Ethiopian life must inevitably produce a certain amount of strain in a culture which makes such thoroughgoing use of analogy and equivocation. Indeed, tension generated by this issue has been manifest in a variety of ways. Among the modern-educated Ethiopians, one finds demands for greater clarity in the specification of responsibilities in administration. One finds increased impatience with the devious, equivocal talk involved in joint action of any sort. One finds a slowly growing disposition to structure and fulfil expectations in literal terms, and occasional outbursts of protest against the vagueness and the conspiratorial mentality of those schooled only in the traditional way. In order to escape what they feel are the burdensome subtleties of Amharic,

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in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [791]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shillalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 [183]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

836 peers with the insulting term *ālb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that
183 comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsā*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain
572 in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *goramsā* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to
[837] aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsā* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the hus-
836 band or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with
572 a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets
• 578 difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsā* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulā* fights.

836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquer-
[585] ing" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age
582 of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On
[832] the latter occasions, especially Masqāl and Ṭīmqat, the girl may make some effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair,
[584] and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amda Ṭseyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum. 565 792 793 571 182

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[51] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas. 423 795 182 175

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest. 565 792 793 571 182

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict 792 793 643 578

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

792 did erupt between the secular and religious powers. In that event both groups
793 had recourse to powerful weapons: the former, violence; the latter, excom-
643 munication. The history of Ethiopia records numerous instances of the flog-
578 ging or execution of clergy by secular authorities. The action of Fāsiladas
[115] (1632–67), who reportedly "caused seven thousand priests to be thrown headlong from the top of the mountain Balbau for having revolted against him,"[52] would represent but one of the more extreme instances of such violent retribution. Short of violence, the kings at least had other means at their disposal for controlling the clergy: the power to withhold benefices, the right to imprison church officials, the final authority on doctrinal questions, and the ability to block a united front on the part of the clergy by pitting high church officials against each other.

792 On the other hand, infringement on the rights of churches and monasteries,
793 gross civil injustice, or radical departure from religious tradition could on
578 occasion evoke surprisingly effective retaliation by the clergy. D'Abbadie provides some extremely illuminating passages on this matter, from which the following have been extracted:

> More than once have I been present at debates of this nature; I have seen these men of the church, weak and without arms amidst men of war, pleading in the name of the law, indicting the menacing covetousness of the surrounding soldiery, invoking eloquently reprobation against their powerful adversaries, and leading them to disavow themselves that force which constituted their pride. . . .
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> In the case of an open violation of an asylum, the regular clergy got aroused; the most venerable monks abandoned their solitude, assembled the parish clergy, went into the camps, and generally they obtained justice. When the real culprit was the Dajāzmātch, they brought him to repentance, or else excommunicated him, threatened his servants with anathema if they continued to serve him, put the province under interdict and, aided by the monks of the neighboring provinces, stirred up national reprobation against him.[53]

792 The clergy had other resources which it could employ against the emperor
793 himself. It could influence royal policy through highly placed advisers.
578 Through the *abuna* it could exact certain promises from a prospective em-
643 peror as a condition of coronation. Perhaps most important, the clergy could, through its hold over public opinion, turn the populace against the sovereign. As we have seen, this power proved decisive in the encounters between church and monarch in the reigns of Za Dengel and Susneyos, and contributed significantly to the downfall of Tēwodros and Lĭjj Iyāsu.

643 While therefore the emperor may well have been "supreme in all causes,
792 ecclesiastical and civil," he was far from being the sole, or even the decisive,
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175 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureau-
178 cratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of
631 regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central gov-
642 ernment has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of
565 building up their positions, members of the most important noble families
631 have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of
642 Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of
646 high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as
631 regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to
693 Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the
578 behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov-
[465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the
565 aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the
554 eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national
[571] political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court. 178 565 [643] [662]

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand. 701 [571] [625]

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time. 701 554 [578] [571]

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be 701 648

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

furniture, etc.—are equally burdensome investments if the returnee does not possess them. Furthermore, the traditional large wedding is still expected in most cases. In the city this involves an enormous expense—as much as Eth$2,000–$4,000—which often puts the groom in debt for several years.*

There are many returnees for whom these factors are excuses more than insuperable obstacles, or who frankly prefer the extended bachelordom made possible by the greater freedom of the modernizing sector to an uncertain match. If, as frequently is the case, they would marry only an educated wife, they may be discouraged by the shortage of educated Ethiopian women; or beset by too much pride, if coming from a humble background, to ask for the hand of an educated girl who is likely to come from an upper-class family. They may be victims of the cycle of antagonism that has developed between educated men and women in Ethiopia, the former attacking the latter for demanding too much in the way of material things and being only superficially modernized—"half-baked"—and the latter indicting the former for preferring foreign girls and unjustly neglecting Ethiopian women.

But the root of the problem is often deeper (leaving aside, for this discussion, characterological factors). It is entwined with a basic insecurity about the whole idea of marriage in the transitional atmosphere of contemporary Ethiopia. Perhaps nowhere in the minds of the returnees do traditional and modern norms stand in such delicate counterpoise as with regard to the question of the sort of wife one should marry and the proper type of relation to have with her. Should he prefer the traditional woman, modestly dressed and inconspicuous, or the Western ideal of a sexually attractive female? Should he have a wife who stays at home all the time, or one whom he takes along to social gatherings? Should he have a wife with whom to share interests and discuss problems, or one to order about and keep in her place? The returnees have normally been attracted by the Western marriage pattern while abroad, but it is so out of place in the Ethiopian context that many are troubled by the prospect on return. The foreign-educated man feels he should have an educated wife, but he also feels threatened by a woman who is independent, especially if she is holding a job. Such ambivalence adds an additional dimension of vulnerability to the returnee's position.

In sum: the conditions of life receptive to a modernizing intellectual stratum have not yet been established in Ethiopia. The personal frustrations of the returnees are an inevitable consequence of their being the bearers of modern culture in a traditional oligarchical order—especially one that has

* A new custom has developed in response to this problem. It has become the practice in some offices for sheets of paper to be circulated prior to a wedding in the ministry or agency where the groom is employed. Co-workers write the amount they wish to be deducted from their salaries in their behalf. Most recently, modest weddings have started to become respectable.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 ly meticulous about the state of their clothes. They have their shoes shined
156 several times daily, even when they are eating only one solid meal per day.
[554] They are intent on receiving the proper deference—for example, on being
served properly in a hotel. This concern for status is projected in the form of
[186] an intense nationalism that considers the speedy displacement of non-Ethiopians holding important jobs in the country a more urgent need than the establishment of effective modern institutions and universalistic standards.

Some locals can be found, of course, whose problems and aspirations resemble those of the returnees, and vice versa. However, the characteristics here associated with the two types follow logically from their basic situation and have been observed sufficiently to justify this depicting of them in terms of ideal types. The distinction is further justified on the grounds that the two
[578] groups have developed a modicum of corporate identity and a degree of mutual antagonism which was particularly pronounced in the mid-fifties.

571 The returnees were at first inclined to regard their locally educated coun-
186 trymen with snobbish pride because of the keen sense of superiority which
578 study abroad conferred. It was natural, moreover, for the returnees to associate most closely with those who had shared the very important personal experience of living abroad, and so they tended to neglect their former schoolmates who never crossed the seas. At times, in fact, they scarcely bothered to exchange greetings with them.

The sense that they were being regarded as inferiors embittered the locals. At the same time they were jealous that they, too, had not had the opportunity to study abroad. These mutual incriminations were heightened by economic competition, the returnees claiming that those who stayed behind had the advantage of working their way up into significant and lucrative positions, the locals believing that a degree from abroad was an automatic entree to a good job.

The latent antagonism between locals and returnees came to a head in 1957, with the simultaneous publication in the *Voice of Ethiopia* of an article by a local criticizing returnee behavior[61] and the presentation of a play by the National Patriotic Association which caricatured them. The play, for example, showed a returnee entering the office of a minister, patting him on the back, puffing cigarette smoke into his eyes, sitting back with his feet up on the minister's desk and talking on and on disrespectfully. Another returnee was shown failing to recognize his own mother when she comes into his office, exclaiming: "Woman, get out of here!" A small group of returnees protested these insults with a petition to the Emperor, who is said to have brought some criticism to bear upon the authorities involved.

571 With the return of increasing numbers of Ethiopians from study abroad,
554 however, the prestige of a foreign degree has diminished, and the appearance of classes of locally educated A.B.'s, who have remained in the country to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shĭr* and *divide et impera*. "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Mary intervened, placing on the empty side for good deeds a goblet of water which Balaya Sab had once given to a sick beggar out of pity; and the Eater of Men was saved. In the pictorial representation of this legend, Balaya Sab is portrayed cutting off pieces of human flesh with a curved knife in the manner in which raw beef is attacked at the Amhara table. 155 266 773

Most Amhara know some sort of tale about a cannibal. The topic is familiar enough that they are able to invent new ones. One boy told me he made up the following story to explain the nature of cannibals to his younger brother: 155 266 538

> Once there was a cannibal. He lived among many people. He had no food in his house; he was poor. But even if he had not been poor, he just liked to eat the flesh of man. In his house was a big hole which he covered with a carpet. He would invite somebody into his house and tell him to sit down on the chair over the hole. When the person sat down and fell into the hole, he would climb down by a ladder and eat him. In this way he ate all the people in his village one by one—about a hundred people. When he had eaten all the people in his village he returned to live in the forest, because there was nobody left to eat.

The cannibal motif appears in more subtle form in the parlor game known as *gabatā*, in which the aim is to accumulate as many pebbles as possible by moving them around a board with six holes on each side. In *gabatā* the active acquisition of pebbles is called "eating" and the passive acquisition is "drinking." Similarly, those who play chess or checkers refer to the process of taking a man as "eating" him. It is notable, moreover, that the Amhara version of the old riddle about how to transport a certain number of incompatible objects across the river in one boat is posed in terms of three human beings and three cannibals. 155 266 524

Oral sadism is further manifest among the Amhara by the nature of their speech. The Amhara are not only loquacious but also tend, both in manner of delivery and in content of conversation, to be biting and intrusive. Backbiting, insulting, arguing, and litigating are among their more characteristic modes of self-expression. 155 521 191

Backbiting and insulting, and the fear of being the victim of such activities, are the focus of much attention in Amhara culture. Concern about the former is expressed in a number of Amharic proverbs: 155 521 578 [539]

> If the mouth lacks work, it will backbite a friend.
>
> If you praise a man once, you will be in trouble if you backbite him later.
>
> If a man is a backbiter, listen for my sake when he talks to you.

Straightforward insults erupt the polite surface of Amhara social relations only under unusually heated circumstances, though it is customary for social superiors to direct a certain amount of abusive banter at their inferiors as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 a matter of course. In the more covert forms of expression, however, insulting
521 is a favorite practice among Amhara. Ambiguous language and obscure
578 allusion make possible a good deal of socially admissible, and admired, insult-
[195] ing. It is chiefly due to his mastery of this genre that the Amhara have come to idealize Alaqā Gabra Hānnā who, in the words of a psychologically sophis-
[554] ticated Ethiopian informant, by "skillful use of 'wax and gold' has defiled everything that is sacred in Abyssinian tradition: this includes Mother, God, Emperor, and Patriarch, to say nothing of the ignorant clergy, peasantry, and slaves. Gabra Hānnā . . . is the summation of the oral aggressive trend in every Abyssinian, of which the *dabtarā* in the king's court and the singer in the drink-house are only mediocre representations."

155 Wax and gold is, furthermore, the vehicle for the mode of expression which
578 Erikson calls "oral retention." Just as the Amhara tends to be tight-lipped
[195] and evasive when confronted by questions he does not feel like answering, so he finds pleasure in stubbornly withholding his meaning from his audience through employing figures and allusions which no one can understand. This may be understood as a passive form of oral aggression. For the untutored, however, the active aggressive component is probably more satisfying. Most Amhara males look forward to occasions when they can insult with impunity, such as in victory after the games at Christmas or in the setting of a drink-house, where their skillfully improvised verses are repeated and sung by a minstrel. The oral sadistic spirit of this latter scene has been captured with great fidelity by a contemporary Amhara novelist. Describing the moment in a drink-house when the minstrel begins bowing his one-stringed violin and gets ready to accept verses from the crowd, he writes: "*And now every one of them prepares a bullet of verse, and gets cocked to fire veiled insults.*"[18]

155 Two-way communication among Amharà is frequently colored by a biting
521 and intrusive manner as well. Amharic conversation gravitates toward a highly argumentative style. Casual disagreement, or even neutral deliberation over a common problem, often engenders a kind of protracted bickering
[691] to which the Amhara have given an onomatopoetic name, "*çhīqeçhīq*." In its more institutionalized form, this argumentativeness becomes litigation, which has long been regarded as the national sport of Abyssinia.

691 As the primary means of distributing land-use rights and of reducing the
182 likelihood of resort to violence in personal disputes, litigation serves functions of unmistakable importance in Amhara society. Yet the frequency and intensity with which Amhara take part in litigation suggests that it is motivated by non-rational factors in good part. Litigants have often lost many times the original value of some item under dispute in the course of pursuing litigation over it through the courts for many years. The language and colorful gestures of the court may be observed among Amhara in their homes or

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ORALITY AND MODERNIZATION

121 155 571 The preoccupation with orality which appears in their traditional orientations has not disappeared among those Abyssinians who have acquired a modern education. In some respects, that experience has tended to intensify it. A state of prolonged dependence was institutionalized in the government school system. The hiring of most educated Ethiopians by the government has meant that most of them live in a position of waiting to receive their salary—or *ĭnjarā*, as they themselves put it—from the central authority. Thus the image of a bountiful father-figure has become the more firmly established. [643] While in his own person the Emperor has projected an image of vigorous leadership, he has at the same time taken pains to promote this old pattern of oral dependence, by sending gifts of food to students and of champagne to educated officials when they marry; by continuing to provide politically relevant feasts at the palace; and, like the traditional Amhara father-feeder, by frequently reminding his subjects that everything they have they owe to him. This pattern is replicated to some extent in the relations between members of the new nobility and their younger relatives and retainers.

Part of the self-reproach of some of the modern-educated Ethiopians is directed against this passive, receptive aspect of their motivational orientation. Their criticism says in effect: instead of drafting proposals to reform our departments, teaching or writing in order to educate our countrymen, or seeking to understand better the complexities of Ethiopia's current situation, we are far more likely to be found sitting about drinking coffee in our offices, sipping beer at some hotel, playing chess, savoring felicitous phrases, and going to parties where eating and drinking are invariably the main order of business.

Insofar as they are moved to take a more active approach to their situation, moreover, their effectiveness is blocked by a tendency to fall into the traditional oral aggressive patterns of behavior. [508] Their manner of criticizing the government, or certain officials, is frequently one of wholesale insulting. When confronted by a difficult problem, whenever they do not fall back to a posture of dependence on superiors, they incline toward argumentation, [521] *çhĭqeçhĭq*, backbiting, and mutual incrimination. Experts in debate, they are unaccustomed to the arts of creative discussion.

121 155 It is not my intention to suggest that the phenomena examined in this chapter are in total conflict with the Ethiopians' search for leadership. Many aspects of Amhara orality are not in the least inconsistent with the demands of a modernizing culture. Many aspects of Amhara orality would appear to be of enduring value—the excellence in debate and the appreciation of literary subtlety, the preparation of fine feasts and the enjoyment of the table. And it is not necessary for a very large number of Amhara to change their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 571 [764] Spontaneous co-operation is most in evidence among the Amhara at times of crisis. When death is announced, relatives and friends promptly repair to the home of the deceased and offer their help. They build the coffin and construct a *dāss* (a temporary shelter near the house to accommodate all the expected visitors). They bring food and drink to help provide for the many who will come to pay their respects, and will similarly provide help on the occasion of the big memorial feasts to follow. Like assistance is rendered during other crises, such as prolonged illnesses or fire. Such forms of co-operation set another significant limit to egoistic orientation among the Amhara.

*121 181 156 571 • 578 691 It is in the realm of interaction involving serious interests, touching layers of the personality deeper than those required for the formalities of etiquette, that Amhara egoism is most conspicuous. Here everything seems to conspire against generous communication and concord of opinion. As we have already observed, the Amhara are quick to become argumentative in ordinary conversation. *Litigation* is one of the most prominent forms of interaction among the Amhara. One can scarcely spend a day in the Amhara countryside without encountering litigants, whether under a tree, at a marketplace, or in the courtyard of some lord. A nobleman can never travel about the country without being accosted on the way by litigants anxious to have him hear their stories.

*121 181 571 578 691 171 Litigation is, of course, an endemic feature of peasant civilizations. Yet there can be no doubt that for the Amhara this form embodies a basic psychological disposition that differs from that of the people of other peasant civilizations. In traditional China, to take a case of marked contrast, such interpersonal conflict, far from being relished, was deliberately avoided. The Chinese considered going to court to be an extravagance, and the village judge was one of the most underemployed members of the community. In China, parties to a dispute preferred to assemble at the teahouse and to seek a solution through *121 181 571 578 discussion and negotiation. The Amhara, on the other hand, seeks to maximize the opportunity for self-assertion through litigious disputes.* Ordinary sociability among the Amhara is saturated with references to litigation. Current court cases comprise one of the more common topics of conversation. [691] [521] Beyond litigation, *conflict* is often expressed in more violent forms. Fights with the *dulā* erupt when altercation becomes too heated. Throwing stones is another accepted mode of combat, especially among youth. Protracted enmities tend to eventuate in such acts as house-burning, assault with swords or rifles, and (according to Amhara belief, at least) poisoning.

While it is true that Amhara culture provides means and a certain amount

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* Some indication of the gross national significance of this phenomenon is afforded by the following comparison: twenty-seven high court judges are sufficient to handle the litigation for all of England and Wales; the corresponding number for Ethiopia is *one hundred and eighteen.*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of moral pressure for the reconciliation of conflict, it appears to place greater emphasis on the acting out of aggression. It does this, first of all, by defining a numb[illegible] acts as offenses which justify violent retribution of some sort. App[illegible] one's land, seduction of one's wife, and injury of one's relatives [illegible] this [illegible], and it is incumbent on the offended party to seek pe[illegible] or, [illegible] Amhara put it, "to return the debt" (*bedder mamm[illegible]*) [illegible] is considered shameful to remain passive when so affronted, an attitude expressed in the following couplet:

Balāw bā-dīmotfar daggmaw ba-wānzā,
Bābbāt rīstennā yallam bamīst wāzzā.

Shoot him with the dimotfar,* get him again with
a wanza,*
Taking your father's land or your wife away,
that is no joking matter.

Aggressiveness is further encouraged by the Amhara ego ideal of masculinity.[13] The identity of Amhara males is very much bound up with their capacity for aggressiveness, by both violent and verbal means. A man who has killed someone is regarded with a certain amount of veneration, and the act of killing is itself praised in verses such as:

Saw gadlu saw gadlu: saw magdal yebajāl,
Ṣaw yālgadala saw sihēd yāngolājāl.

Kill a man! Kill a man! It is good to kill a man!
One who has not killed a man moves around
sleepily.

Similarly, verbal aggression is encouraged by the inclusion of excellence at litigation and insulting in the domain of proper male behavior.[14] The bestowal of insults is a rather stylized, if dangerous, procedure among the Amhara. According to Amhara customary law, insulting is a legal offense. The new criminal code provides for a gradation of penalties according to the seriousness of the insult, including fines which run from Eth$15 to as much as hundreds of dollars. The most serious insults include *bāryā* ("slave"); *ṭayb* ("evil-eyed artisan"); and *qomātā* ("leper"). Insults of lesser to medium degrees of seriousness include the following:

hodām	"greedy" (literally, "bellied")
wafrām	"fat"
sakārām	"drunkard"
quashāshā	"dirty"
amadām	"scaly-faced" (literally, "ashen")

* Types of rifles.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121	*arām*	"indolent" (literally, "full of feces")
181	*ya-dehā lijj*	"son of a poor man"
571	*ya-lēbā lijj*	"son of a thief"
578	*yat abāt̨*	"bastard" (literally, "where is your father?")
[673]	*waslātā*	"lazy no-good"

Other, less direct forms of insult are also widely employed. As was already mentioned, a major use of the wax-and-gold formula is to express insults in so veiled a manner that direct reprisal is unlikely. Another tactic is that of not showing someone the proper respect or in some way manipulating the forms of etiquette to his disadvantage. A favorite anecdote concerning Alaqā Gabra Hānnā illustrates the simultaneous use of both methods: the Alaqā once flattered a donkey driver by bowing quite low to greet him and calling, *Endēt adarātchu?* ("How did you spend the night?"). Only when the man proudly related the episode to his friends, so the story goes, was he made to realize that the greeting was expressed in the plural form (*-atchu*), implying that he and his donkey were being placed in the same category.[18] Still another mode of indirect insult is that known as *ashmur*, in which two friends insult each other vigorously at the top of their voices, the real object of their abuse being a third party who is within earshot.

If the Amhara is by disposition inclined to bestow insults, he is still readier
[865] to take offense at the slightest hint of one directed at him. One of the tasks of socialization among the Amhara is to sensitize the young person to the various types of insults and to motivate him to strike back when he is so offended. Insults are frequently part of a vicious circle which moves from petty disagreement to serious argument to litigation at court, *dulā* fights,
[576] and even premeditated murder. Breach of etiquette may lead to no less serious consequences. In one court case which the author observed, a man was accused and convicted for addressing his father-in-law, whom he normally addressed by the polite form *ersewo*, with the familiar form *anta* in a moment of anger.

Argumentation, litigation, insulting, and revenge comprise the hard core of social interaction among Amhara. While it is possible to exaggerate the significance of these forms in the total pattern of Amhara social life, there can be little doubt of a strongly dissentious disposition just below the surface, and often at the surface, of Amhara interpersonal relations. Still another axis along which this individualistic disposition tends to be manifest is that of deception and suspicion.

*121 The Amhara is a master at *deception*. With straight face and convincing
181 manner he will relate the most preposterous fictions. The Amhara themselves
571 tend to be aware that this is one of their characteristic activities. When, for
577 example, I replied to the query of an Amhara gentleman that some horn
[123]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

resist taking responsibility and showing initiative. In general, they reveal little capacity for self-discipline in a collective setting. 121* 571 156

The need for what can be accomplished through the new associations, however, transcends the intermittent obstacles to their effective functioning posed by such individualistic behavior. As modernization proceeds and as Ethiopians gain experience in these associations, one may expect that the more disruptive aspects of such behavior will be transformed in the direction of greater compliance with the implicit norms of group functioning. Amhara in the modernizing sector have no choice now but to replace the ethos of the *shiftā*, the litigant, and the wandering student with that of the president, secretary, and treasurer if they are to remain true to the ambitions that have been awakened within them. 121* 181 571

There are, moreover, a number of respects in which adequate functioning in modern groups may be supported by behavioral traits inherited from the past. Three of these traits in particular deserve to be mentioned in this context. One is the fundamentally respectful orientation toward others. This serves to reduce the outbreak of dissension among group members, and in the attitude of respect and obedience toward figures of authority provides the basis, given capable and decisive leaders, for a significant amount of concerted action among group members. A second trait of some importance is the acceptance of conflict as a natural and not particularly threatening component of human relations. This means that group members are ready to admit and deal with such conflicts as do emerge in their ranks, and are experienced in the resolution of such conflicts through the agency of elderly mediators or the more formal processes of litigation. Finally, the Amhara sense of humor—wry, realistic, attuned to the ironies of existence—introduces a salutary leavening ingredient into group process. It provides an outlet for the release of tensions in group situations and adds a certain flavor to group experience that often more than compensates for the lack of a hyperinstrumental orientation. 121* 571 156 [578] [522] [154]

The Question of Individuality 121*

Although effective modernization is unthinkable without a significant increase in solidaristic sentiments and rationalized organization, in Ethiopia as elsewhere, the fate of the other aspect of individualism discussed in this chapter—individuality as a cultural value—poses a more controversial question. If the essence of modernity is the systematic effort to control rationally man's physical and social environment, then the society of *1984* may be claimed as a possible modern utopia no less than the society in which all children go to Montessori schools and all adults paint, undergo psychoanalysis, and study Great Books. The cultivation of individuality stands as but one of many pos-

552 A favorite horse name was "Abba Dulla" (lit. father of a tough weed), named after a weed that is difficult to uproot, and that regrows despite efforts to the contrary.

714 Although rhinoceros shields have not been used for at least 20 years and with them has gone the job of the personal shieldbearer, the term "gashay"(my shield) is still used appealingly toward any male protector or paternal figure, especially by young men or by women of any age. Conversely, an older man may refer to his junnior trusted aide as "gasha jägrey", my shieldbearer.

579 Banditry (shefta), much reduced in recent years by harsh measures requiring the use of the army and capital punishment, still appears occasionally as a form of social protest. In the past, when a minor nobleman felt unjustly treated by a feudal superior, e.g. passed over in promotion, he would often "take to the bush" with his retainers, pillaging and even murdering, hoping that his ferocity would either intimidate the ruler of the province to negotiate with him, or arouse his desire to re-enlist so brave a bandit. Guerilla activities during the Italian occupation by these Amhara "arbañ-ñoch" (lit. patriots, self-styled), led the Italians to attempt negotiations on several occasions. It was difficult to demobilize some of the disappointed, irregulars, some of whom turned shefta after the war. Since then, peasants short of cash or unhappy about parting with much produce at tax-paying time, sometimes turn into highwaymen temporarily. It is the duty of the rural, non-uniformed police ("näch lëbash), the "thiefcatchers-

579 in-white", to control this. Sometimes these resort to the old-fashioned and officially illegal "afarsata" collective arrest of a series of suspected hamlets.

644 701 Another old pattern that survives is the personal bodyguard of the supreme ruler, i.e. the emperor, which has now increased to a size equal in manpower to the Ethiopian army itself, and is reputed to be far better trained and equipped. Centered at the capital and a few strategic spots, with greater mobility than the army, and battle experience gained in Korea, it contains much of the Galla "balbat" element directly loyal to the present royal family. The regular army is scattered throughout the country, and is utilized against periodic uprisings in the border lowlands and escarpments, such as the desert Danakil, the Issa and the Raya Galla of the eastern escarpment who occasionnally go on the warpath after the harvest season.

554 625 701 The attitude of the common people who admire an individual hero but mock uniformed dandies, still persists, much to the annoyance of the uniformed police of the provincial towns, and of the soldiers. The non-uniformed "näch lëbash" are far more respected, and their bravery is acknowledged.

691 Typical cases most frequently heard are debts, small thefts, improper measures at the market, plowing across a neighbor's border ("wäsän gafi", i.e. border-pusher), grain eaten by a neighbor's cow, and the severity of mutual insults that had been exchanged during a hostile argument. Details argued about are often petty, such as: how good was the fence; just how much grain was eaten; how much was actually consumed?

[579] More serious is the loss incurred from the outlaw bandit, traditionally called "bär zägi", (lit. the one who shut the gate), or "dur gäbba" (the one who fled [685] to the bush). The most frequent case involves debtor and creditor. Until very recently, the creditor could chain the debtor to him, and in rural areas one sometimes still sees their togas knotted together. This was uncomfortable for the creditor who had to feed the debtor. Even now that chaining is not permitted, a plaintiff still has to feed the defendent he has caused to be placed in jail (e.g. for theft) while awaiting trial. While he feeds him little and often spoiled food, he must keep him alive, and this acts as a deterrent against light accusation, except on the part of a wealthy "great man" accuser.

695 701 Special gestures, bodily motions, and drapings of the toga are still followed in the traditional way when going "bedanya fit", before the judge. The toga is draped ready for action, so that the accuser, or witness, can hold one corner at arm's length, step forward with heavy tread, and wave the bunched end of the em-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

These changes in the definition of marriage have produced tremendous tensions and heartache in the relations between generations. Deprived of authority in the occupational sphere, parents of modern adolescents cling with all the more pride to their traditional rights and obligations in the sphere of getting their children properly married. They often nag their children to leave school and get married while young. They stand determined to select their children's mates. If they do admit some consideration for their children's desires on the matter, they insist that any prospective spouse measure up to traditional criteria. As a result, disagreements between students and their parents revolve around the subject of marriage more frequently than anything else.

883* 178 58 • 593

TABLE 7

883* 582

DISPOSITION OF STUDENTS TOWARD TRIBAL AND RELIGIOUS EXOGAMY

		Secondary School		College Males
		Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	(per cent)
Willingness to marry a person of a different religion.	Yes	29	33	60
	No	71	67	40
Willingness to marry a person of a different tribe....	Yes	64	73	84
	No	36	27	16
Number.....	.....	(392)	(40)	(194)

Modern adolescents, however, have by no means wholly rejected traditional attitudes and sentiments concerning marriage and courtship. Although a number of students say they want to marry for the modern reason of finding personal happiness through a satisfying love relation, many more indicate that they are chiefly inspired by the traditional motives of wanting to beget children. Most of them wish to continue the custom of having large families, the most frequently mentioned numbers of children desired being "four" and "more than six."*

883* 178 581 842

The modern boys still widely share the traditional expectation that their

883* 178 581

* The mean number of children desired by the college students in my sample is 4.23. This figure exceeds those of all the national college groups reported by Gillespie and Allport except Egypt and South African Bantu.

583 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official.
184 After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the cheqa shum present.

[589] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these
656 traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in
[584] the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

178 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among
871 young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage
●581 with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 husbands "Who are you to give me orders - I can read as well as
581 you". Therefore such girls are avoided as brides.
871

But fully educated young men, in Addis Ababa, especially those who have returned from abroad with graduate degrees, complain that there are not enough educated girls for them to marry. There is now a girl's high school in Addis Ababa, but the supply of educated girls is still far below the demand by educated men who do not wish their wives to sit shy and wordless in modern-urban, international social gatherings.

Another modern difficulty arises in cases where the modern-educated young man is the son of an illiterate peasant, or a "rustic" one, and is ashamed to ask his father and similar kinfolk to negotiate the marriage. For even in the city the traditional "semanya" is the basic and most common form of marriage.

584 a) "Semanya" Marriage Negotiations.

Sometimes the young man decides on a girl and asks his father to begin negotiations. Or the parents, feeling that the time has come, begin to send out feelers. In either case, it is the young man's father who initiates formal negotiations with the father and kinfolk of the bride; though not, at first, directly.

The father of the young man may gather his "enjärä"-friends, "who dine at each other's table", or kinsmen, or both, and appoint a "näggär abbat" (lit. father of the affair) as intermediary.

Before matters go further, the kin group tries to find out and examine three factors of the prospective match:
1) Health of the family, such as absence of leprosy, venereal disease and other diseases belived to be inherited; 2) Land property -

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

273 The first part of the process is to grind the tocusso, after which they take a fourth part of it, and knead it with water and leaven, as if to make bread. This they put in a jar to ferment for two days, at the end of which they make a good many thin large cakes, and dry them on the fire till they become as hard as a stone, then break them down into crumbs, and put them in a large vessel full of water, capable of holding six times the volume of the grain; or for one jar of grain, the vessel holds five of water, and one for the quantity of grain. At the same time that they put in the bruised bread, as above-mentioned, into that quantity of water, the other things should be got ready to go in also. The grain ought to be fermented for two days, then dried in the sun, and afterwards ground into meal. The Ghesh leaves are ground likewise. The remainder of the meal, or those three-fourths that were not used to make the bread, must be put into a hollow oven, over a fire, with a small quantity of water, and constantly stirred with a stick, until it become a paste; and when the water is dried up, more is put in, constantly stirring the mass until it become black like a coal. The whole so prepared, the crumbs, the mass, and the leaves, are put together into the large jar, and let alone for a day, after which it is poured off, and preserved in jars well stopped. At the end of seven or eight days this liquor begins to be too strong, and is best when fresh, two or three days old.

584 *Marriage.* Marriage is not considered in Abyssinia as a sacrament, yet the church ordains some rules to be observed, [581] in order that the man and the woman may be faithful towards one another. The ordinary method of marriage among people of condition, and among those who most fear God, is the following: The man, when he resolves to marry a girl, sends some person to her father to ask his daughter in marriage. It seldom happens that she is refused; and when she is granted, the future husband is called into the girl's house, and an oath is taken reciprocally by the parties, that they will maintain due fidelity to one another. Then the father of the bride presents to the bridegroom the fortune that he will give: it consists of a particular sum of gold, some oxen, sheep, or horses, &c. according to the circumstances of the people. Then the bridegroom is obliged to find surety

p. 48

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565* 602 571 181 183 [561]

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

565* 593 577 181 183

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

565* 577 779 183 181 581 586 639

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

565* 779 577 183 181

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz,* brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad,* or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

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The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

may ask around to learn the identity of her father and then present the matter hopefully to his own father. 883* 584

Despite this possibility of concession to the boy's amorous desires, the interests of the father are decisive in the selection of a marriage mate, and traditionally the boy has not even known what his bride looks like until the wedding itself. The boy who dares to choose a wife on his own commits an offense for which the father has the moral right to curse and disinherit him. Marriage is regarded as a bond between families, not individuals, and the families of prospective brides are carefully inspected before the father agrees to a contract of betrothal. In making his choice, the father looks for a family whose economic level is at least as high as, if not slightly higher, than his own. He makes certain that the family does not have members who are leprous or who practice the manual crafts associated with the evil eye. He sends a messenger to visit the family on some pretext, for the purpose of determining the character of the girl and her parents. If there is any consanguine relation between the two families, he makes sure that the prospective bride and groom are separated by more than seven generations; that is, they must not have a common great-great-grandparent. A further consideration might be whether there has been any strife or rivalry between the two families, in which case the father may want to try to resolve it by means of a "political" marriage. 584 584 581 [582]

Once the father has decided upon a suitable mate for his son, with the advice of the mother and perhaps other relatives, he sends one or more intermediaries, usually elders, to speak on his behalf with the girl's father. The interview is conducted with considerable circumlocution, the petitioners veiling their true purpose until late in the conversation and the girl's father displaying reluctance to grant their request. Often no agreement is reached at this meeting, and the petitioning party must wait to ask a second time. If the girl's father is unwilling to give her hand, he will beg off with some polite excuse, such as that the girl is too young or that he has already promised her to someone else. If he is willing, a date for a formal betrothal is set, at which time the boy and his father together with a group of elders and other relatives repair to the home of the girl's father. After the boy gives presents to the girl's parents, the two fathers discuss their respective contributions of land, cattle, and other goods to the prospective household. When these economic arrangements are settled, a contract for marriage is sworn before witnesses and a date for the wedding is agreed upon, leaving ample time for the two families to vie in preparing sumptuous feasts for the occasion. If the girl is quite young, as long as two or three years may elapse between engagement and marriage. 584

The wedding festivities commence at the home of the girl's father. After 585

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

graduates in the late fifties, but the government's implementation of a program of public health centers has opened up increasing opportunities for their employment. Graduates of the school of social work have been placed in positions with little difficulty. 87 464

On the other hand, in those areas in which the government has shown little or no interest the school authorities have been hard put to find employment for their graduates. This was shown most dramatically in the case of the now defunct community development training project at Majete, whose graduates were allowed to drift into oblivion due to the absence of an effective community development program in the country. Those who have completed courses of study in agriculture have not been extensively employed by the government because of chronic disorganization and neglect in the Ministry of Agriculture, while lack of capital and know-how has tended to keep them from private agricultural enterprise. Graduates of the technical and engineering schools have been having some difficulty in entering the work force due to the slow pace of Ethiopia's industrial development. Graduates of general academic programs, finally, and those who drop out before completing some course of study, tend to be left to their own devices.

While the modernizing sector, then, has introduced the revolutionary notion of vocation and has institutionalized means of training young Ethiopians for modern work roles, it has not yet provided adequate mechanisms either for guiding them into and through the training programs or for employing them properly once they are trained. 178 463 464

Preparation for Marriage

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Conditions of growing up in the modernizing sector have disrupted the harmonious pattern of Amhara adolescence also with respect to entrance into adult family roles. Conflicts arise both from postponement of the normal age for marriage and from radically new ideas about the nature of marriage. [582] [581]

The modern adolescent typically expects to marry at an age that is at least eight to ten years older than his traditional counterpart. While Amhara girls have traditionally married in their early teens, girls in the senior class of secondary school now say they expect to marry in their early twenties. Amhara boys have traditionally married around the age of twenty, but those in post-elementary schools now expect to marry in their late twenties or early thirties. 883* 178 582

This shift is due to a desire to attain as much education as possible, and above all, for the boys, to the precarious economic position of modern adolescents. While living on his father's farm an Amhara boy could marry early with the assurance of having enough land to work to support his family at least at subsistence level. The modern boy who finishes secondary school or [871]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 178 582 college, however, has no assets beyond his diploma in most cases. He must wait a number of years to achieve the beginnings of financial stability.

*883 178 581 584 The students' conception of marriage, moreover, reflects a still more profound change. They are no longer content to regard the selection of a mate as a matter to be arranged by parents in accord with their own interests and standards. They reject the old-fashioned Amhara marriage in which romantic love plays no part and divorce is common. Most of them insist on the right to choose their own spouses, and they tend to approach that choice with criteria

TABLE 6

QUALITIES MOST DESIRED BY STUDENTS IN A FUTURE WIFE OR HUSBAND*

Quality	Per Cent Checking Quality as Either First or Second Choice		
	Secondary Schools		College Males
	Males	Females	
Educated	48	75	41
Shares my opinions and beliefs	44	48	43
Religious	34	25	19
Good companion	25	30	45
Beautiful	15	0	22
Kind and generous	15	13	9
Wealthy	4	2	5
Will impress my friends socially	3	2	2
Number	(385)	(39)	(191)

* Related to Gillespie-Allport question No. 17.

which differ from those of their parents. Instead of following such traditional criteria as good upbringing, family background, and wealth, a number of modern adolescents aspire to find spouses who, above all else, are educated, who share their opinions and beliefs, and who will be good companions. (See [582] Table 6.) Even such strong aversions as those against tribal and religious exogamy have receded somewhat before the new ideal of marriage founded on romantic love.* The figures in Table 7 are indicative of the diffusion of this ideal as well as of the growth of a sentiment of Ethiopian nationality.

* Although Amhara men have customarily had sexual relations with non-Amhara women and produce countless offspring from them, the latter have not been considered appropriate choices for marriage, except in very high strata where the marriage served a purpose primarily political.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

These changes in the definition of marriage have produced tremendous tensions and heartache in the relations between generations. Deprived of authority in the occupational sphere, parents of modern adolescents cling with all the more pride to their traditional rights and obligations in the sphere of getting their children properly married. They often nag their children to leave school and get married while young. They stand determined to select their children's mates. If they do admit some consideration for their children's desires on the matter, they insist that any prospective spouse measure up to traditional criteria. As a result, disagreements between students and their parents revolve around the subject of marriage more frequently than anything else. 883* 178 58 593

TABLE 7 883* 582

DISPOSITION OF STUDENTS TOWARD TRIBAL AND RELIGIOUS EXOGAMY

		Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
		Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Willingness to marry a person of a different religion.	Yes	29	33	60
	No	71	67	40
Willingness to marry a person of a different tribe....	Yes	64	73	84
	No	36	27	16
Number.....		(392)	(40)	(194)

Modern adolescents, however, have by no means wholly rejected traditional attitudes and sentiments concerning marriage and courtship. Although a number of students say they want to marry for the modern reason of finding personal happiness through a satisfying love relation, many more indicate that they are chiefly inspired by the traditional motives of wanting to beget children. Most of them wish to continue the custom of having large families, the most frequently mentioned numbers of children desired being "four" and "more than six."* 883* 178 581 842

The modern boys still widely share the traditional expectation that their 883* 178 581

* The mean number of children desired by the college students in my sample is 4.23. This figure exceeds those of all the national college groups reported by Gillespie and Allport except Egypt and South African Bantu.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 178 581 brides be virgin. Related norms greatly restrict their quest for romantic love. Since Ethiopian society still expects its maidens to be shy and retiring, and to avoid social relations with boys outside their families, the boys find few *883 834 178 opportunities for getting to know members of the opposite sex. Even in those few situations where sociability between the sexes is publicly permitted, ingrained tendencies to segregate the sexes persist. The most liberal context for such sociability, the University College campus, has witnessed relatively little interaction between male and female students. In spite of their occasional resolutions to act more boldly, the college boys have in the past tended to shy away from the co-eds except during such rare formal events as a college dance or off-campus parties.

883 836 178 548 834 This is not to say that modern adolescent males have no opportunity for premarital sexuality. On the contrary, their opportunities in this regard are perhaps better than ever. The proliferation of brothels in Ethiopia's urban centers makes sexual initiation easy, almost a routine event. Students also frequent these houses for social entertainment, dancing to swing and Latin rhythms, and sipping beer or soft drinks. Thus the continued sanctions against social intercourse in more respectable forms work to sharpen the Amhara dichotomy between decency and sexuality, and leave modern boys with a double standard that separates the marriageable girls from the enjoyable ones.

*883 178 581 584 [152] The idea that marriage should be founded on romantic love has brought greater anxiety as well as hope into the lives of Ethiopian adolescents. This anxiety is due in part to the above-mentioned inhibitions against that easy commerce of the sexes which so facilitates the discovery of a suitable love object. It also reflects a certain ambivalence toward the new ideal, based on a lingering attachment to the authority of the old system. This was manifest, for example, in the response to a college debate on the topic, "Resolved: that the custom of letting the parents choose a spouse for the children should be maintained," that took place in 1959. Although on anonymous questionnaires *90 per cent* of the college students said they will probably decide whom to marry themselves, and only 3 per cent said the decision would be made by parents or other relatives, in voting on the matter after the debate the students (in contrast to the judges who awarded the negative debaters) publicly declared themselves 42 per cent affirmative, 41 per cent negative, with 17 per cent abstaining.

*883 178 581 584 586 Anxiety regarding the new conception of marriage, finally, is also connected with a new-fashioned fear of divorce. The mind of the modern adolescent vacillates between the ideal of an abiding marital relationship based on

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152 * Due perhaps to the greater importance of their peers, sexual accomplishments have now become a frequent topic of conversation and a matter for boasting among modern adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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love and the image of the traditional Amhara marriage, likely as not to end in divorce. This sort of concern was expressed in a revealing way in the following statement by a twenty-year-old college student:

> The main thing I want in my wife is good character. Beauty is not so important. Of course she will be an excellent cook. But mostly I am concerned that she be the *right* one for me; I do not want to get divorced. But you can't really know if she is the right one until after ten years of married life. If after having about five or six children it turns out troublesome, I will have to leave her. A person cannot go on living that way.

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In some instances, ironically, this quest for the perfect marriage leads to a rejection of the very institution of marriage itself. Seven per cent of the students questioned indicated that they do not want to get married eventually—either because they "could never afford it," they "would be happier living single," or they just *"do not want to enter a relation that will end in divorce."* Thus at a time when the stability and warmth of family life are needed more than ever, the very possibility of family is doubted.

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Some Ethiopian students blame the deteriorated family and an alleged increase in divorce in their country on the impact of Western civilization. True, the introduction of the Western concept of marriage and of the rudiments of a modern occupational system have dislocated the traditional arrangements for marriage; and other related problems, to be discussed in the next chapter, plague the Western-educated elite. But Western civilization has also developed resources to begin to cope with analogous problems in its own societies, and perhaps it is not too soon to acquaint Ethiopia's youth with some of these: for example, the recent developments in man's understanding of the dynamics of marriage as well as more sophisticated conceptions of the ideal and importance of family life in modern society.

CULTURAL ORIENTATION

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A generational conflict manifests itself further with respect to questions of belief, taste, and value. Because of differences on such issues, students and their parents have grown far apart. The more traditionalist of the older generation refer to the modern youth as *ya-sĭmmĭntañña shi lĭjjotch* ("children of the eighth millennium"); that is, of that corrupt time the Amhara believe will precede the destruction of the world. The latter, in turn, refer to the old-fashioned as ignorant, uncivilized, sometimes even "savage."

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Yet, as we have been suggesting, this conflict is by no means total. Amhara adolescents are too deeply attached to many aspects of their traditional culture to engage in wholesale rebellion. Because of strict childhood training they remain basically respectful toward their elders. In addition, they often prefer to champion their own traditions in the spirit of a freshly excited nationalism.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

571 Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
584 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
834 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
178 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The tradition-
al mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

furniture, etc.—are equally burdensome investments if the returnee does not 571
possess them. Furthermore, the traditional large wedding is still expected in 585
most cases. In the city this involves an enormous expense—as much as 511
Eth$2,000–$4,000—which often puts the groom in debt for several years.*

There are many returnees for whom these factors are excuses more than in- 571
superable obstacles, or who frankly prefer the extended bachelordom made 582
possible by the greater freedom of the modernizing sector to an uncertain
match. If, as frequently is the case, they would marry only an educated wife, [581]
they may be discouraged by the shortage of educated Ethiopian women; or
beset by too much pride, if coming from a humble background, to ask for the
hand of an educated girl who is likely to come from an upper-class family.
They may be victims of the cycle of antagonism that has developed between [578]
educated men and women in Ethiopia, the former attacking the latter for de-
manding too much in the way of material things and being only superficially
modernized—"half-baked"—and the latter indicting the former for preferring
foreign girls and unjustly neglecting Ethiopian women.

But the root of the problem is often deeper (leaving aside, for this discus- 581
sion, characterological factors). It is entwined with a basic insecurity about 178
the whole idea of marriage in the transitional atmosphere of contemporary 177
Ethiopia. Perhaps nowhere in the minds of the returnees do traditional and 571
modern norms stand in such delicate counterpoise as with regard to the ques-
tion of the sort of wife one should marry and the proper type of relation to
have with her. Should he prefer the traditional woman, modestly dressed and
inconspicuous, or the Western ideal of a sexually attractive female? Should he
have a wife who stays at home all the time, or one whom he takes along to
social gatherings? Should he have a wife with whom to share interests and
discuss problems, or one to order about and keep in her place? The returnees
have normally been attracted by the Western marriage pattern while abroad,
but it is so out of place in the Ethiopian context that many are troubled by the
prospect on return. The foreign-educated man feels he should have an edu-
cated wife, but he also feels threatened by a woman who is independent,
especially if she is holding a job. Such ambivalence adds an additional dimen-
sion of vulnerability to the returnee's position.

In sum: the conditions of life receptive to a modernizing intellectual 121
stratum have not yet been established in Ethiopia. The personal frustrations 571
of the returnees are an inevitable consequence of their being the bearers of 177
modern culture in a traditional oligarchical order—especially one that has 178

* A new custom has developed in response to this problem. It has become the practice in some [178]
offices for sheets of paper to be circulated prior to a wedding in the ministry or agency where
the groom is employed. Co-workers write the amount they wish to be deducted from their
salaries in their behalf. Most recently, modest weddings have started to become respectable.

brothels for dancing and more intimate relations. (Returnees normally do not have patience for the shy, traditional girls; and they are too concerned about public opinion to be seen visiting brothels. When they or the locals do visit the brothels, it is often by way of a backdoor entrance.) When they marry, the locals almost invariably choose a traditional type of wife with relatively little education and with whom they expect to have an authoritarian relationship.

In sum: the local is not so afflicted by those problems which derive from the central dilemma of the returnee—how to fulfil himself according to modern standards in an intractable, traditional environment. The local's dilemma typically lies in a different realm, that of economic and social mobility. Whereas the returnee has been given a comparatively high income and status almost as a matter of course, the local has normally started his work life with a relatively low salary and little prestige. If the returnee has felt deprived relative to the Westerners in whose society he has lived, the local has felt deprived relative to the returnee.

The local lives on a day-to-day basis at a relatively simple standard. Though he shares the returnee's passion for woolen suits and, in many cases, for a car of his own, he is not, like the returnee, preoccupied with the quest for housing that conforms to Western standards. Except for those with extraordinary talents and family connections, the locals have had difficulty locating jobs that they feel are not beneath their dignity and which pay salaries sufficient to cover their relatively modest needs. They customarily receive a starting salary in the neighborhood of Eth$150. The more ambitious and fortunate among them have, by changing jobs, manipulating superiors, and improving skills, worked their way up to salaries in the Eth$400–$500 category. Some have become provincial teachers for a while, in order to accumulate money on which to live while shopping for a position in Addis Ababa and with which to influence some higher official to grant it to them. There remains a hard core of locals who feel they are underpaid and live in constant resentment of this situation.

This resentment has produced a general sort of negativism which characterizes many of the locals, a negativism expressed in the form of backbiting and denunciation of the higher government officials and the nobility generally. They decry social injustice and the uses of nepotism. They moralize profusely against those whom fortune has shown greater favors. But not all their social criticism is born of resentment. There are also among the locals many young men who are comfortably situated but fired by patriotic fervor with a desire for social reform.

The local is as deeply concerned about asserting his status vis-à-vis the less educated as he is to advance his position in the hierarchy. Locals are extreme-

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holds priest land because he is a ristena of a founding ambilineage of the parish, his son's ordination means that the lands or payments until now turned over to a stranger priest (in lieu of a ristena priest) can be kept within the family.

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[839]
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[586]

The durability of the ties which bind a priest to his natal parish are reinforced by his marriage. Most peasants are married in a "secular union" (yaluwkurban migabat), which excludes neither divorce not extra-marital sexual adventures.[21] The priest, on the other hand, must be married, and it can be only as a "communion marriage" (bikurban migabat), an indissoluble sacrament of the Church which commits the spouses to sexual fidelity and forbids even remarriage. Thus, the priest is cut off from carousing in the talla houses of the town. He must instead confine his comraderie to the courtyard of the parish church, separated from the persons and experiences which might otherwise lead him away from his parish fields.

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Thus enrollment in the parish school is conceived

[21] Two other forms of marriage, associated with a man on travels or living in town, are yidomoz migabat (which lasts for a contractual period) and yilijinat (providing only exclusive sexual rights to the woman).

575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men "brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship relation which is taken very literally by the more pious. Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahebbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry the widow of a mahabtar "brother", for this would be "levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church as a prechristian custom.

575 According to traditional law, the mähabbär in-
[428] herits any property left by a deceased member who leaves no blood kin (consanguinal) , in preferance to any rela-
[426 tives he might have by marriage (affinal). The mahabbar
476] acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker, making loans to members in financial need by raising internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "tazkar" memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his
[608] family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and personal problems of all kinds are discussed among "brothers" and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements between extended families having eligible youngsters are often first informally broached by women "sisters", who then agree to ask their husbands to act as intermediaries.

575 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys
561 above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind of junior mähabbär by older boys; girls above 10 years of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART IV : The Life Cycle of the Individual

561

Like many other societies with a tradition-directed culture, the individual passing through the age-grades of life is taught well in advance what his duties and privileges are at each stage.

The age-grades, though strongly emphasized in Amhara human relationships, are not as detailed nor as sharply divided from each other as in the case of the Galla of Southern Ethiopia (the "gada" age grades).

[854] The two-year breast-feeding period is the happiest of the stages for the baby. Infancy and childhood, for both sexes, are carefree periods of experimentation, which is sharply abrogated as adolescence, a period of authoritarian obedience, approaches. [582] Even the first marriage of an individual, taking place at the very beginning of adulthood (even earlier for girls), permits only a [586 587] minimum of individual choice. Unhappy first marriages are common, and so is divorce. But after this, the fully adult man or woman can assume a freedom of choice not known since childhood. They may seek second mates, change residence, join a different "mähabär", etc., and the grip of extended family on the individual is somewhat [885] relaxed by the short life-span of the "elder" grade. This in turn permits the middle-aged adult to be regarded and respected as an elder himself, who not only is permitted a maximum of own choice, but who can and does rule the younger grades.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

584 door event of the year, the church parades on Epiphany ("Temqat"),
796 in connection with the "guks" tournament of the young men. Dressed up in holiday fashion, the "qonjo" girls eagerly follow the fortunes of their preferred boy friends. When no elders are within hearing, some girls direct teasing shouts of encouragement at the young men, even occasionally "ellel" (reserved for church ritual earlier that day). This day is the climax of the informal courtship - serious flirting season, in mid-January.

The third and final occasion occurs on Easter, "Fassika", at the very end of the dry season, just before social activities move indoors. For this holy day, the girls have once more washed their
[302] garments despite the shortage of water, reddened their palms, prepared the hairdo. Everyone is in a happy mood, for the long lenten season is over, and meat is consumed in greater quantities than at any other time. There is an element of urgency in social relations, for this is the second and final marriage season, and soon all social life and kin visiting comes to an end for four long,dreary, rainy, chilly months.

It is on the basis of such informal courtship, climaxed on these three annual occasions but continuing in-between, that a young man requests his father to initiate negotiations for marriage by sending an intermediary to the girl's family. If the match seems suitable to the elders, negotiations begin.

4. Adulthood and Marriage: Dominance of the Kin.

582 A girl's first marriage nearly always takes place before she is fully adult, physically as well as in maturity of character; while the bridegroom, though also young, is physically adult and in

582 his late 'teens. The difference in what is considered "suitable age" is thus five or more years, for the girl may be as young as 13 or 14 in the still prevailing (though officially now outlawed) tradition. The reason is not only the earlier maturing of the girl, but partly the emphasis of protecting her virginity until marriage, partly the attitude that the groom must "tame" his bride - and the younger the better.

597 608 Consanguinal ties continue stronger, after marriage, than conjugal ties. The "artificial kinship" created at this period of the life cycle is that of the bride's "best man" ("mizē") who is sworn to protect her even against her husband, and who is in a good position to do so as a residential kinsman of the husband. This emphasis on consanguinal ties even after marriage is similar to other parts of the Middle East (footnote 80), and also Africa.

885 A fully adult man ("säw") and woman ("syet") are honorifically addressed, e.g. in church usage, as "acmä adam" for man (from Geez "Adam"), "acmä hawan" for woman (from Geez for "Eve), and the connotation is that they have passed the hot-blooded "gobäz" and "qonjo" stage and have become reasonable, calm, responsible persons who know the etiquette of their culture and have become fully cognizant of proper behavior at all forseeable events in the life cycle.

583 585 A. Marriage Patterns

There are three predominant types of marriage:

Footnote 80: Patqi, Raphael: Relationship Patterns among the Arabs. Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. 2, May 1951, pp. 180-5

583 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official.
184 After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the cheqa shum present.

[589] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these
656 traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in
[584] the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

178 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among
871 young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage
581 with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 857 868 Somewhat later, when he reaches ten or eleven, the Amhara boy begins to accustom himself to the plow, perhaps trying his hand at it from time to time while his father rests for lunch. Intermittently his ability increases, and by the age of fourteen or so—earlier if the family is short of help—he is given a regular share of the plowing. This may be limited to one or two hours a day at first, but before many seasons elapse he is ready to undertake a full day's work, along with his older relatives.

*883 868 In his mid-teens the Amhara boy is normally given a small part of his father's land to use for himself. The boy has full charge of plowing and harvesting this land and selling the crops at market. The crops or money he [434] earns thereby is referred to as *gulammā* ("private possession") and is set aside for helping him to get started on his own later on. Eventually the *gulammā* will be used to purchase new clothes, an ox, and presents for his bride. Year by year the father may add a bit more land for the boy's private management, though all together it does not often amount to a very large quantity; he may produce, say, 150 to 200 liters of grain for his *gulammā* in a year (in the Amhara system of measures, about 2 *dāwlā*). When he has saved enough [582] grain to fill a *riq*, a large wicker storage bin plastered inside with cow dung, he is considered ready to get married and strike out on his own.

By the time a boy begins to accumulate his *gulammā* he has learned nearly everything he needs to know for performing the work which will be expected of him as an adult. In his late teens the education is completed, through the mastery of such special techniques as fashioning the yoke and wooden attachments for the plow, and constructing the walls and roof for a house.

The work life of the Amhara peasant is thus a simple continuation of activities with which he has long been familiar. The same is true, *mutatis* [463] *mutandis*, for those who, following their fathers' footsteps, become priests or sorcerers, governors or warriors, artisans or traders. In these cases, moreover, the foregoing pattern applies to a great extent, since the latter roles are often combined with an agricultural economic base and way of life. (Special aspects of some of these variant patterns will be discussed below.)

857 868 This pattern of gradually increased work responsibility is conspicuous in the case of girls. While shepherding and other childhood tasks are shared by both sexes, the Amhara girl begins to do distinctively female work at about six or seven. First she learns to clear seeds from cotton, and to spin, by hand. Later on she is introduced to the more taxing female chores, like fetching water and grinding grain. The progressive increase of the girl's work load is visibly illustrated by the graduated sizes of clay jugs used for carrying water. When she begins to fetch water, the young girl carries a tiny jug, [415] called a *gambo*. As she becomes older and stronger she is given a larger size, a small *enserā*. Finally, the mature female carries the large *enserā*, a jug that holds as much as twenty liters.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *ĭnjarā*. Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make good *doro wat*, a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

836 peers with the insulting term *sīlb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that
183 comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsā*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain
572 in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *goramsā* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to
[837] aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsā* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the hus-
836 band or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with
572 a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets
578 difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsā* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulā* fights.

836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquer-
[585] ing" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time
582 to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On the latter occasions, especially Masqāl and Tīmqat, the girl may make some
[832] effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair, and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a
[584] chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

may ask around to learn the identity of her father and then present the matter hopefully to his own father. 883* 584

Despite this possibility of concession to the boy's amorous desires, the interests of the father are decisive in the selection of a marriage mate, and traditionally the boy has not even known what his bride looks like until the wedding itself. The boy who dares to choose a wife on his own commits an offense for which the father has the moral right to curse and disinherit him. 584

Marriage is regarded as a bond between families, not individuals, and the families of prospective brides are carefully inspected before the father agrees to a contract of betrothal. In making his choice, the father looks for a family whose economic level is at least as high as, if not slightly higher, than his own. He makes certain that the family does not have members who are leprous or who practice the manual crafts associated with the evil eye. He sends a messenger to visit the family on some pretext, for the purpose of determining the character of the girl and her parents. If there is any consanguine relation between the two families, he makes sure that the prospective bride and groom are separated by more than seven generations; that is, they must not have a common great-great-grandparent. A further consideration might be whether there has been any strife or rivalry between the two families, in which case the father may want to try to resolve it by means of a "political" marriage. 584 581 [582]

Once the father has decided upon a suitable mate for his son, with the advice of the mother and perhaps other relatives, he sends one or more intermediaries, usually elders, to speak on his behalf with the girl's father. The interview is conducted with considerable circumlocution, the petitioners veiling their true purpose until late in the conversation and the girl's father displaying reluctance to grant their request. Often no agreement is reached at this meeting, and the petitioning party must wait to ask a second time. If the girl's father is unwilling to give her hand, he will beg off with some polite excuse, such as that the girl is too young or that he has already promised her to someone else. If he is willing, a date for a formal betrothal is set, at which time the boy and his father together with a group of elders and other relatives repair to the home of the girl's father. After the boy gives presents to the girl's parents, the two fathers discuss their respective contributions of land, cattle, and other goods to the prospective household. When these economic arrangements are settled, a contract for marriage is sworn before witnesses and a date for the wedding is agreed upon, leaving ample time for the two families to vie in preparing sumptuous feasts for the occasion. If the girl is quite young, as long as two or three years may elapse between engagement and marriage. 584

The wedding festivities commence at the home of the girl's father. After 585

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

graduates in the late fifties, but the government's implementation of a program of public health centers has opened up increasing opportunities for their employment. Graduates of the school of social work have been placed in positions with little difficulty. 87 464

On the other hand, in those areas in which the government has shown little or no interest the school authorities have been hard put to find employment for their graduates. This was shown most dramatically in the case of the now defunct community development training project at Majete, whose graduates were allowed to drift into oblivion due to the absence of an effective community development program in the country. Those who have completed courses of study in agriculture have not been extensively employed by the government because of chronic disorganization and neglect in the Ministry of Agriculture, while lack of capital and know-how has tended to keep them from private agricultural enterprise. Graduates of the technical and engineering schools have been having some difficulty in entering the work force due to the slow pace of Ethiopia's industrial development. Graduates of general academic programs, finally, and those who drop out before completing some course of study, tend to be left to their own devices.

While the modernizing sector, then, has introduced the revolutionary notion of vocation and has institutionalized means of training young Ethiopians for modern work roles, it has not yet provided adequate mechanisms either for guiding them into and through the training programs or for employing them properly once they are trained. 178 463 464

Preparation for Marriage 883*

Conditions of growing up in the modernizing sector have disrupted the harmonious pattern of Amhara adolescence also with respect to entrance into adult family roles. Conflicts arise both from postponement of the normal age for marriage and from radically new ideas about the nature of marriage. 178 [582] [581]

The modern adolescent typically expects to marry at an age that is at least eight to ten years older than his traditional counterpart. While Amhara girls have traditionally married in their early teens, girls in the senior class of secondary school now say they expect to marry in their early twenties. Amhara boys have traditionally married around the age of twenty, but those in post-elementary schools now expect to marry in their late twenties or early thirties. 883* 178 582

This shift is due to a desire to attain as much education as possible, and above all, for the boys, to the precarious economic position of modern adolescents. While living on his father's farm an Amhara boy could marry early with the assurance of having enough land to work to support his family at least at subsistence level. The modern boy who finishes secondary school or [871]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 178 college, however, has no assets beyond his diploma in most cases. He must 582 wait a number of years to achieve the beginnings of financial stability.

*883 178 581 584 The students' conception of marriage, moreover, reflects a still more profound change. They are no longer content to regard the selection of a mate as a matter to be arranged by parents in accord with their own interests and standards. They reject the old-fashioned Amhara marriage in which romantic love plays no part and divorce is common. Most of them insist on the right to choose their own spouses, and they tend to approach that choice with criteria

TABLE 6

QUALITIES MOST DESIRED BY STUDENTS IN A FUTURE WIFE OR HUSBAND*

Quality	Per Cent Checking Quality as Either First or Second Choice		
	Secondary Schools		College Males
	Males	Females	
Educated	48	75	41
Shares my opinions and beliefs	44	48	43
Religious	34	25	19
Good companion	25	30	45
Beautiful	15	0	22
Kind and generous	15	13	9
Wealthy	4	2	5
Will impress my friends socially	3	2	2
Number	(385)	(39)	(191)

* Related to Gillespie-Allport question No. 17.

which differ from those of their parents. Instead of following such traditional criteria as good upbringing, family background, and wealth, a number of modern adolescents aspire to find spouses who, above all else, are educated, who share their opinions and beliefs, and who will be good companions. (See 582 Table 6.) Even such strong aversions as those against tribal and religious exogamy have receded somewhat before the new ideal of marriage founded on romantic love.* The figures in Table 7 are indicative of the diffusion of this ideal as well as of the growth of a sentiment of Ethiopian nationality.

* Although Amhara men have customarily had sexual relations with non-Amhara women and produce countless offspring from them, the latter have not been considered appropriate choices for marriage, except in very high strata where the marriage served a purpose primarily political.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

These changes in the definition of marriage have produced tremendous tensions and heartache in the relations between generations. Deprived of authority in the occupational sphere, parents of modern adolescents cling with all the more pride to their traditional rights and obligations in the sphere of getting their children properly married. They often nag their children to leave school and get married while young. They stand determined to select their children's mates. If they do admit some consideration for their children's desires on the matter, they insist that any prospective spouse measure up to traditional criteria. As a result, disagreements between students and their parents revolve around the subject of marriage more frequently than anything else. 883* 178 58 593

TABLE 7 883* 582

DISPOSITION OF STUDENTS TOWARD TRIBAL AND RELIGIOUS EXOGAMY

		Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
		Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Willingness to marry a person of a different religion	Yes	29	33	60
	No	71	67	40
Willingness to marry a person of a different tribe	Yes	64	73	84
	No	36	27	16
Number		(392)	(40)	(194)

Modern adolescents, however, have by no means wholly rejected traditional attitudes and sentiments concerning marriage and courtship. Although a number of students say they want to marry for the modern reason of finding personal happiness through a satisfying love relation, many more indicate that they are chiefly inspired by the traditional motives of wanting to beget children. Most of them wish to continue the custom of having large families, the most frequently mentioned numbers of children desired being "four" and "more than six."* 883* 178 581 842

The modern boys still widely share the traditional expectation that their 883* 178 581

* The mean number of children desired by the college students in my sample is 4.23. This figure exceeds those of all the national college groups reported by Gillespie and Allport except Egypt and South African Bantu.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

furniture, etc.—are equally burdensome investments if the returnee does not 571
possess them. Furthermore, the traditional large wedding is still expected in 585
most cases. In the city this involves an enormous expense—as much as 511
Eth$2,000–$4,000—which often puts the groom in debt for several years.*

There are many returnees for whom these factors are excuses more than in- 571
superable obstacles, or who frankly prefer the extended bachelordom made 582
possible by the greater freedom of the modernizing sector to an uncertain
match. If, as frequently is the case, they would marry only an educated wife, [581]
they may be discouraged by the shortage of educated Ethiopian women; or
beset by too much pride, if coming from a humble background, to ask for the
hand of an educated girl who is likely to come from an upper-class family.
They may be victims of the cycle of antagonism that has developed between [578]
educated men and women in Ethiopia, the former attacking the latter for demanding too much in the way of material things and being only superficially modernized—"half-baked"—and the latter indicting the former for preferring foreign girls and unjustly neglecting Ethiopian women.

But the root of the problem is often deeper (leaving aside, for this discus- 581
sion, characterological factors). It is entwined with a basic insecurity about 178
the whole idea of marriage in the transitional atmosphere of contemporary 177
Ethiopia. Perhaps nowhere in the minds of the returnees do traditional and 571
modern norms stand in such delicate counterpoise as with regard to the question of the sort of wife one should marry and the proper type of relation to have with her. Should he prefer the traditional woman, modestly dressed and inconspicuous, or the Western ideal of a sexually attractive female? Should he have a wife who stays at home all the time, or one whom he takes along to social gatherings? Should he have a wife with whom to share interests and discuss problems, or one to order about and keep in her place? The returnees have normally been attracted by the Western marriage pattern while abroad, but it is so out of place in the Ethiopian context that many are troubled by the prospect on return. The foreign-educated man feels he should have an educated wife, but he also feels threatened by a woman who is independent, especially if she is holding a job. Such ambivalence adds an additional dimension of vulnerability to the returnee's position.

In sum: the conditions of life receptive to a modernizing intellectual 121
stratum have not yet been established in Ethiopia. The personal frustrations 571
of the returnees are an inevitable consequence of their being the bearers of 177
modern culture in a traditional oligarchical order—especially one that has 178

* A new custom has developed in response to this problem. It has become the practice in some [178]
offices for sheets of paper to be circulated prior to a wedding in the ministry or agency where the groom is employed. Co-workers write the amount they wish to be deducted from their salaries in their behalf. Most recently, modest weddings have started to become respectable.

634 635 Parish and Hamlet. The highland zones can be divided along three complementary social dimensions---po-
*[192] litical, ecclesiastical, and economic. Politically, the province is divided into awraja (sub-province), warada (district of a sub-province), and meketel warada (sub-
632 district). The meketel warada consists of fifteen to
361 thirty parishes (deber). The parish, in turn, is com-
*[192] posed of three to ten hamlets (mender), each consisting
592 of ten to fifty households (bet). Most households consist of husband, wife, unmarried sons, and pre-pubscent daughters[11]; a minority of households consist of aged spouses only, or of widowed individuals living by them-
592 selves. Characteristically, the households of a hamlet
361 are dispersed, so that any one is perhaps 100 to 300 meters from its closest neighbors.

647 While officials of the provincial and sub-provincial governments are generally out-landers appointed by the central government, administrators of the warada and meketel warada are usually members of the local gen-
*[192] try. Within the parish, civil administration is in the hands of the ceka šum, a petty administrator who imple-

• [582] [591] [11]Since it is common for a girl to marry at 11 or 12, but to delay the virilocal move until age 15 or 16, the natal household may include a married daughter.

647 [192] ments decisions that come down from the mekstel warada or warada.[12] Incumbency tends to rotate among the senior 611 423 risteñas of the parish. Amhara trace genealogies ambilineally to the original recipients of primary land rights (rist) to local fields. Ambilineages are traced from these apical ancestory through those descendants (risteñas) who have made effective claims to the fields of the original estates. Over time, it is the genealogical links associated with land claims which tend to be [582] remembered, to the exclusion of other descent ties. Similarly, it is these links which are examined most carefully in deciding whether a proposed marriage would be properly exogamous (i.e., ideally excluding descendants of the sixth ascending generation).[13]

*793 From the perspective of the Amhara peasant, the ecclesiastical organization of Begemder consists of two levels, the bishopric (located in Gondar, the provincial

[12] A fereseña, rural policeman, is also a resident farmer of the parish.

[13] Hoben (1963:116-117) considers these matters in detail, and notes that occasionally the boundaries of exogamous unions are contracted to include the descendants of the fifth and even fourth ascending generations.

734 his hamlet to become a mendicant, begging from alms-
[735] givers at the gates of large and famous churches. Even
[823] the sickman whose economic circumstances enable him to
[778] remain at home may depart, to seek an efficacious tebel spring, once locally available therapies prove ineffective.

*753 Among the ailments of this category, leprosy is
734 considered particularly loathsome. In the abstract, it is associated with a hereditary vector; in practice, the leper's neighbors fear contact with him, and the sickman who remains at home is physically segregated in a hut of
• [582] his own, away from other residents of the hamlet. Be-
[166] cause marriages are difficult to arrange for the primary relatives of lepers, the son of a leper frequently chooses to move away from the paternal hamlet to some place where his family's affliction is unknown.

*753 The absence of more profound moral consequences for either category of ailment can be explained, first, by the fact that associations existing between the sickman and sanction-wielding supernaturals are unaffected by either illness or cure, since those maladies are linked to non-purposive pathogenic agencies, such as gerifta
* [755] and likift. Further, effective cures are either secular,
* [757] and thus require the therapeutic assistance of no
[778] sanction-wielding supernaturals, or, in the case of tebel therapies, rely on only the socially sanctioned supernaturals of the Church.

231 gland of the animal was packed in cowhorns, and exported as a fixer for scents and perfumes. But the average Amhara farmer does not keep civet cat (zebat).

Livestock is perhaps even more important economic property than land. Since land tenure is uncertain and complicated and since the produce from land is usually consumed by rent, taxes, obligations, and food for the family, any capital surplus and private property is largely expressed in livestock, particularly in the absence of valuable tools. [42] Also, land is at best owned by a man's kin, while livestock is personal property.

231 436 Livestock prices at the rural and provincial-urban markets are still quoted in Mariah Theresa Thalers, although the actual coin is now illegal and may not be used in transactions. The compromise that has developed is to quote MT thalers for livestock only, and to pay in paper or coins of the present legal Ethiopian currency at the rate of Ethiopian $1.50 per MT 1. --(U.S.$0.60). MT Thalers are quoted for sale only, because of the significance of such a transaction, while rent is quoted in modern Ethiopian dollars.

231 583 Cattle: An Amhara peasant may own from 1 to 150 cows, mean about 5. A rich peasant may own about 50 cows, a few bulls, a dozen oxen, 5 mules, over 50 sheep and and goats. In giving his daughter in marriage he may pridefully give her 20 cows, especially if the groom contributes an equal number. A poor peasant may be hard put to give his daughter 3 cows, which is a respectable minimum, and may have to borrow two cows to fill that, but he can hold off fulfillment of the contribution until a few

231 [583] months after the wedding, when it seems certain the marriage will last.

231 435 A good, milk-giving cow is worth 50 MT, but an old cow ready for slaughter brings only 15 MT. A farmer needs at least 2 oxen for plowing, and a well-to-do farmer may have about 8. Oxen are not contributed in marriage, but are loaned or given to the groom by his father at the time land is allocated to him for plowing. A good, strong ox is worth 40 MT, but hardly ever is such a one for sale; instead, he is more commonly traded for two male calves. An old ox for slaughter can be bought for 15 MT, and if the skin is still good it may be sold in turn for up to four MT. Thus beef is much more expensive than sheep or goat meat, and is reserved for feasts.

Mule: The average peasant may own one mule, or none at all, since even a small Ethiopian mule costs 40 MT, and a Senaar mule as much as 80 MT. Feudal lords have several. Mules are rented to caravans for ETH$1.-per day; double that if the borrower is a foreigner. Relatives borrow free of charge.

Sheep: These bring from ETH$3 - $6 depending on season more than on quality, though a heavy fattail helps. The sheepskin alone can be resold for ETH$1.50, so that the meat is very cheap and within reach of almost everybne's pocketbook. The average farmer keeps perhaps a dozen sheep used

883 pasturing, housebuilding, packing and unpacking of mules on trips to the market and caravans. Able-bodied and semi-skilled, he is at the beck and call of any male kinsman, whenever the call "antä gobäz" (thou, warrior) resounds.

882 But he is still considered "half-baked", not fully skilled, strong but not wise, capable of carrying out orders but not of giving them because impatient and unable to foresee all consequences. The proverbs say:

[539] "The heart of the gobäz is in his chest" (meaning he is brave but does not reflect, in his head, the consequences of his deeds).

"A village full of young men
in one year it will become a desert".

"A young chief;
fog in (the month of) Hedar; (harvest month in dry season) (both) ruin the country".

[583] In return for his services, the young man hopes that his father will be generous in allocating a large and fertile plot of land to him upon marriage; also many cows, so he can ask an equal number from the bride's family.

883 In these services, particularly in transportation of goods and in housebuilding, he may be working in a team with other young men, his former playmates. But hazing is rare at this stage and considered childish, as is unrestrained shouting and pushing, especially within sight and hearing of full adults.

882 Sexual activities after puberty are much more secretive than
831 before, go on at night rather than in daytime, and are discussed only in whispers. Puberty is called" abälä mätän därrsä (lit. he.

582 his late 'teens. The difference in what is considered "suitable age" is thus five or more years, for the girl may be as young as 13 or 14 in the still prevailing (though officially now outlawed) tradition. The reason is not only the earlier maturing of the girl, but partly the emphasis of protecting her virginity until marriage, partly the attitude that the groom must "tame" his bride - and the younger the better.

597 Consanguinal ties continue stronger, after marriage, than
608 conjugal ties. The "artificial kinship" created at this period of the life cycle is that of the bride's "best man" ("mizē") who is sworn to protect her even against her husband, and who is in a good position to do so as a residential kinsman of the husband. This emphasis on consanguinal ties even after marriage is similar to other parts of the Middle East (footnote 80), and also Africa.

885 A fully adult man ("säw") and woman ("svēt") are honorifically addressed, e.g. in church usage, as "acmä adam" for man (from Geez "Adam"), "acmä hawwa" for woman (from Geez for "Eve"), and the connotation is that they have passed the hot-blooded "gobäz" and "qonjo" stage and have become reasonable, calm, responsible persons who know the etiquette of their culture and have become fully cognizant of proper behavior at all forseeable events in the life cycle.

583 A. Marriage Patterns
585

There are three predominant types of marriage:

Footnote 80: Patai, Raphael: Relationship Patterns among the Arabs. Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. 2, May 1951, pp. 189-5

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

583 585 1) the eucharistic church marriage, "gurban", engaged in only by a minority, such as some of the nobility, some of the older persons, and all of the priesthood; 2) the kin-negotiated ("civil") marriage, "semanya", sworn before the cheqa shum headman, and most [588] common; 3) the temporary marriage, for which the man engages to pay regular housekeeping wages, "demoz", especially common among those who travel to markets.

585 "Semanya" literally means "80", and is thus also called the "eighty-bond marriage". This refers to the oath which includes the phrase "May the Emperor die", perjury against which used to be penalized by what was then the enormous sum of 80 Maria Theresa Thalers. It is also called "bäserat", by"contract"). This is the most common form of marriage, dominated by a complexity of kinship arrangements (described in detail below), and divorce is possible through similar negotiations and "parcelling out" of both goods and children. There is a minimum of individual emphasis in this marriage negotiation, especially in a first marriage, for the kin of both sides must be satisfied and "honored", though there is some element of original choice through informal courtship. The church takes cognizance by sending a priest to bless the couple.

"Gurban" marriage is not urged by the church on laymen, partly because of the sacerdotal character of the church, partly because the eucharistic sacraments are considered so holy that only serious, [586] mature, fully adult persons are advised to engage in it, and divorce cannot be granted. At this sacrament, the couple is rebaptized, and [587] may, on all church holy days, wear the "aklil" crown. Widows and widowers may remarry, but a priest who becomes a widower is expected to assume monkhood. The priest who blesses a "semanya"

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

588 rewards as agreed upon") practiced by the Shi'ites in particular.
171 (footnote 81). The Abyssinian Coptic "Fetha Nagast" forbids concubinage; but the custom has long been widespread. "Damoz" is even recognized in the modern law of Emperor Haile Selassie.

551 Individual arrangements are freest in "damoz", also in "qurban"
585 though sometimes less so, and least in "semanya". But in all three forms of marriage, the wife retains her maiden name and does not assume that of her husband. Even Empress Menen continues her old name. Sometimes the husband's mother may try to symbolize her authority - or even affection - by giving a new name to her new daughter-in-law living in her hamlet, but the bride's kinfolk and
[602] peers will continue to use her old name. This is another, unconscious, emphasis of kinship relations over affinal ones.

588 The "damoz" is not considered contradictory to monogamy, which may explain her respectability despite prohibition of concubinage in the "Fetha Nagast" code. Religious persons will explain the paradox away by quoting from Genesis "be fruitful and multiply".

583 In rural districts there is sometimes found a 4th form of
184 marriage, which indeed is re-enacted in some wedding ceremonies of "semanya". This form is bride capture, especially found among families too poor to defray the expenses of a wedding and cows that must be given the "semanya" couple. To cover up the shame and the poverty, the bride is "captured" and "pursued", by pre-arranged collusion. While she ostensibly goes, alone, to fetch water or gather deadwood, the groom's "mize" appear suddenly, preferably on horseback, and carry her off into the bush, while she, though ex-

Footnote 81: Donaldson, D.M.: Temporary Marriage in Iran. Moslem World, 1936, pp. 358-364. Smith, W. Robertson: Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia, 1885.

583 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official.
184 After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the cheqa shum present.

[589] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these
656 traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in [584] the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

178 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among
871 young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage
581 with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

584 about the economic arrangements to which both sides contribute equally, for "honor"; for setting up the couple on a sound economic basis; and to assure property to the bride in case of divorce or widowhood. "Semanya" marriage among Amhara usually begins on an economic basis of half-and-half ("bal ekkul") contributions from both kin groups. The kinsmen of the bride would be ashamed to accept more of dowry (macha) for her than they are able to contribute, lest she be treated disrespectfully by the groom's kinfolk later on who might say: "She was bought like a "damoz", whenever there is a quarrel. For there is no lobola custom in the one-sided African way. Conversely, a man who marries for cows is mocked:

[539]

"Seeing her cattle, he married a bad one;
when the cattle died,
his trouble was double".

583 Cows are usually the major item of discussion of property changing hands at marriage. Negotiations finally fix the number of cows each will contribute ("kabatosh bakabtē") (lit. "your property is mine"), usually payable gradually as down payment and in installments, as a further guarantee that the marriage is working out and that there are no complaints (e.g. that the bride actually proved to be a virgin as promised).

Even a poor peasant will try to beg and borrow among his kin, lest he be shamed, so that he can match the dowry of the in-laws with 3 to 5 cows. A rich farmer may give as many as 30 cows to his child, thus requiring the in-laws to match this. A stubborn father can use this means to discourage a match that his youngster has set his heart on; knowing full well that the in-laws, if not rich

583 enough to match him, will be ashamed and cancel the match at this point to save face, while no one can really blame the "generous" father. As a result, most weddings take place on the same economic level.

A really kind father can, however, reduce the number of cows he officially promises, to enable the poorer in-laws to match it. A desparate youngster running up against a stubborn father sometimes appeals to the kinfolk of his or her mother for cows, but this is usually more difficult to obtain, for cows contributed by the patrilineal-patrilocal kin remain in the same hamlet while matrilineally contributed cows are taken out of the hamlet.

Other gifts set down in the dowry, before witnesses or in writing, include new shammas (togas), new jodphurs("surri"), perhaps some donkeys, and a mule. In the case of noblemen, gifts include embroidered shirts, silver crosses for the bride's necklace, gold and silver rings, silver hairpins, a "burnos" (hooded, black woolen coat), a kaba (mantle of woolen or imported chintz cloth), an imported, foldable umbrella. In the past, gifts to the groom included a fine rhinoceros shield with gold-plated ornaments, spears, a rifle, oxen, a good horse, slaves (before abolition), mules, embroidered garments, embroidered saddle, etc. Since then, some of these tradional gifts have been replaced by city and imported items, bought in the Armenian and Greek shops of Addis Ababa, but provincial Amhara are resisting some of these intrusions, (pushed by traders), saying that it should not appear that the bride is bought.

584 While kinship prestige and economic arrangements are considered of primary importance in the "semonya" marriage, once these nego-

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER V

SOME OF THEIR HABITS & CUSTOMS—(*continued*)

As the people are Christians they are of course monogamists, but though they have only one wife at a time, they often have, unfortunately for the race, many wives one after the other, and as a natural corollary the women have a series of husbands. This is due to their appallingly lax marriage laws and to the ridiculous facilities for divorce, advantages which do not apply to the Gallas, who "enjoy" two or three or more wives at a time, but then they are not Christians. 587 586

Marriage amongst the Abyssinians exists in three forms. Firstly, the man selects a bride, and without any form of ceremony they live together, he supplying her with small amounts of money in addition to a home and the necessaries of life, and when either of them so desires they come to a mutual agreement and separate as easily as they united. 583 586

Secondly, there is the civil marriage. In this case there is a contract made before the *Shum* (or "Mayor") when the properties of the would-be bride and bridegroom are specified, and an arrangement is made as to division in case of divorce, though usually they agree to divide things equally. In the event of divorce this division is carried out to the letter, and should there, for example, be amongst other things only one cooking pot, this is halved. When a woman has been "married"

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

583 586 and divorced in this manner two or three times she is considered rather a "catch", on account perhaps of her worldly possessions which she has acquired from her previous matrimonial ventures. Then if she does not retire from the world and become a kind of nun she often indulges in the third form of marriage, a solemn religious ceremony which is really binding; it is as a general rule confined to the better class of Abyssinians.

562 Women, some of whom are attractive and even pretty, have, speaking generally, little or no position. There are of course exceptions to this rule, and I have known cases where a wife has by her influence over her husband acquired a certain status for herself. But this is rare, and by a general though not universal rule women are even supposed to eat separately.

562 586 Nevertheless the higher-class woman manages to hold her own, and if badly treated by her husband has the right of appeal to the Church. And so far as I can gather the woman of any class can divorce her husband as easily as he can divorce her, which gives her a certain protection in itself.

562 462 357 In spite of the facility of divorce—possibly to some extent because of the mutual power to exercise it—the lot of women is not at all what one might expect; they are by no means the hewers of wood and drawers of water that one finds so extensively in Africa. They do little or no work, neither washing nor mending their husbands' clothes nor cooking; all this is done by Gourages or others of whom one or more is to be found in almost every household—other than the very poorest—and even amongst one's own servants, acting as "gentlemen's gentlemen".

562 Women of the upper classes are still to some ex-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

For the groom, too, marriage means a gratifying boost toward adult status, symbolized by his receiving from the bride's parents distinctively adult male possessions—a *kutā*, perhaps a *barnos*, and a rifle if they can afford it. 585 885

Such is the basic pattern of betrothal and marriage among the Amhara, though many of the details vary from province to province.[6] There are, in addition, certain traditional alternatives to this standard procedure. One of these involves the solemnization of the marriage oath by taking Communion, a rite necessary for a marriage to be counted as legal by the Church, and followed by the ordained clergy and the most pious families. Another form requires no oath at all; the husband is simply expected to provide a salary and clothes for his wife. This procedure is followed chiefly by soldiers and traders, and by those who are marrying for the second time. 583 585 184

Still another type of marriage is that known as *qoṭ assīr* ("ten beds") in which the boy goes to live with the girl's family while both are quite young. In this case the boy has his work apprenticeship under the girl's father. After several years, when the girl reaches puberty, a second wedding ceremony will take place—this time at the home of the groom's parents—and the union will be consummated. This type of arrangement tends to be made when the boy's family is too poor to provide enough to get him started on his own, or if the girl's father has no son to help him with the work.

There is, finally, a form of marriage by abduction. If the girl's father does not grant the request of the emissaries of the boy's father, and if the boy's father is still interested, the boy may go with two or three friends to capture her when she is on the way to market or fetching water. When this happens, the couple will approach the girl's parents after they have been married for some time and seek a reconciliation. Occasionally poor families have deliberate recourse to this form of marriage, arranging in advance a bride capture so as to avoid having to prepare the expensive wedding feasts.[7]

Although marriage marks the termination of childhood for the Amhara, it does not by itself signify the full attainment of adulthood. The newly wed couple lives at first in the home of the boy's father, and to truly "arrive" they must establish their own separate household. If the boy's family is wealthy, he may have his own house ready by the time of the wedding. More often, the couple spends a certain amount of time—a few months, or in some cases as much as two or three years—living in the home of the groom's father until their own house is built. To tarry unduly in the father's house, however, is considered a mark of laziness and a great shame. 591 585 [885]

Furthermore, because of the somewhat arbitrary manner in which the spouses are chosen for each other, there is often a serious problem of post-marital adjustment, a problem not rendered any less difficult by the proximity of the girl's mother-in-law. The divorce pattern is well known among 585 606 586

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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

Hedar 1 to Hedar 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "työff" for bread; "nug" and "talba" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Hedar: "Mikael" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Qwusqwam"-clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Hien" Festival at Aksum; Nuns' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikael": fresh togas, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). 21st: Church student holiday.		
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 8	Summer ("balg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate scorched landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "tyoff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus' coming), esp. at Qulubi near Dire Daua. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Ledät", or "Gänna"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Gänna") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).		19th: Emp. Haile Selessi travels to Qulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional toga and Jodphurs.
Ṭer 1 to Ṭer 30	Jan. 9 to Feb. 7	Height of dry summer ("bälg"). Some sluggish rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shenbera), plant (gomän) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ṭer is "Ṭemqät"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially created pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Gezrät"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Giyergis" (St. George) 21st: "Astärye Maryam" (Mary)	Taxgatherers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("guga") women are coiffured, henna-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary Pentecost ("mayrär") among Falashas as harvest fest. 12th Monday	On Epiphany, Jan. 19th (11th Ṭer), Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in traditional costume.

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Yäkatit 1 to Yäkatit 30	Feb. 6 to Mar. 9	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adja gebs") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before lenten season) 11th-20th ("abed amus").	Lenten Fast "kudade" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tom" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day Fast of Niniwah ("Tsomä Nänïwe"). 16th is feast "Kedana Mehrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and spices, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 16th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
Mägabit 1 to Mägabit 30	Mar. 10 to April 8	dry; burning of bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, because of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 19th "Debrä Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Aläm" -(Savior)	Youngsters pasturing cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
Miyazya 1 to Miyazya 30	April 9 to May 8	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bäga"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron plowpoints and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("hamamat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent,"seqlät". Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services eve of the 17th, Fassika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qstäna") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tensaä") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season from Easter to heavy rains, so unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palms, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("qenchebt") games.	17th: Muslims (on Easter) celebrate "Sheykh Abader" water saint.	27th:(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("mämäläs bäal") entry into Addis Ababa

575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men "brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship relation which is taken very literally by the more pious. Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahabbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry the widow of a mahabbar "brother", for this would be "levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church as a prechristian custom.

575 According to traditional law, the mähabbär in-
[428] herits any property left by a deceased member who leaves no blood kin (consanguinal), in preferance to any rela-
[426 476] tives he might have by marriage (affinal). The mahabbar acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker, making loans to members in financial need by raising internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "taz-
[608] kar" memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and personal problems of all kinds are discussed among "brothers" and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements between extended families having eligible youngsters are often first informally broached by women "sisters", who then agree to ask their husbands to act as intermediaries.

575 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys
561 above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind of junior mähabbär by older boys; girls above 10 years of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

883 The random play activity of younger girls gives play to more structured activities. Girls still work and play in groups but seek to meet groups of young men somewhat older than themselves. Flirting becomes patterned and self-conscious, and behavior in the presence of elders more subdued. Aggressive playfulness, disregarded often before puberty, is severely criticized henceforth.

883 584 Saturday afternoons are preferred times for the gathering of "qonje" girls, for they then go greater distances into the bush to fetch firewood for Sunday. Usually the girls, age 13 to 16, sing loudly so as to attract the group of young men, age 15 to 20, who thereupon follow them at a certain distance. From time to time, the girls, leading the boys on, stop, and dance around like playful little girls, alternately holding each other by the hand, or spinning like a top. This is a signal to the boys to approach, as if by accident, and couples begin to break off from the group to go for a "shershsher", a promenade, while still gathering deadwood. Since the boys are from nearby hamlets, the youngsters and their parents know each other.

584 796 In the annual cycle of events, three occasions are utilized as landmarks of opportunity in serious flirting, informal courtship, leading to the rapidly ensuing first marriage of the adolescent girl.

The first occurs on "Mikaēl", St. Michael's day, on the 12th day of the month of Hedar, which is celebrated as a kind of Thanksgiving day, for it falls just after the major harvest is completed, in late November. For all ages it is a day of picnics, out in the open, under a bright sunny sky in the first part of the dry season, before the green grass is entirely scorched yellow. Togas have been

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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freshly washed. The day begins with chanting in the church at dawn, parading of the local "tabot" of Mikaël, accompanied by the "ellel" joyshout of the women. Large shelters ("dass") are set up in the open, about noontime, and feasting and beer drinking continues until the late evening.

This day is awaited and prepared for by the adolescent girls who have just concluded their task of watching the harvest from elevated platforms guarding the maturing crop. On this day they use the platforms as shelters, under which they invite their boy friends. The girls bring live chickens, the boys kill them, pronouncing the religious formula over the chickens. The girls then cook them in earthenware pots with appropriate spices and pepper, thus advertising their abilities in cooking and housewifely arts. The girls wear a fresh hairdo, often pomaded (sometimes for the first time) with "ades" - boiled and perfumed butter; their palms reddened with "ensosela" like a grown woman, and lemons and "ades" odorific branches in the folds of their freshly washed heavy cotton frocks. Prepared in this fashion, they begin to attract the boys even while the elders are still in church during morning services. A group of girls will gather within sight of the churchyard, shouting "ellel" at the proper times, dancing their girlish rounds. As soon as they can, the young men thereupon detach themselves from the churchyard or outer enclosure, surround the girls, and feel out their individual popularity by teasing and tickling their chosen girls with olive branches. If a girl agrees to consider a boy, she gives him a lemon or an "ades" branch, which invites him to a "shershsher" at her platform-shelter.

The second annual occasion presents itself on the biggest out-

584 door event of the year, the church parades on Epiphany ("Temqat"),
796 in connection with the "guka" tournament of the young men. Dressed up in holiday fashion, the "qonjo" girls eagerly follow the fortunes of their preferred boy friends. When no elders are within hearing, some girls direct teasing shouts of encouragement at the young men, even occasionally "ellel" (reserved for church ritual earlier that day). This day is the climax of the informal courtship - serious flirting season, in mid-January.

The third and final occasion occurs on Easter, "Fassika", at the very end of the dry season, just before social activities move indoors. For this holy day, the girls have once more washed their
[302] garments despite the shortage of water, reddened their palms, prepared the hairdo. Everyone is in a happy mood, for the long lenten season is over, and meat is consumed in greater quantities than at any other time. There is an element of urgency in social relations, for this is the second and final marriage season, and soon all social life and kin visiting comes to an end for four long,dreary, rainy, chilly months.

It is on the basis of such informal courtship, climaxed on these three annual occasions but continuing in-between, that a young man requests his father to initiate negotiations for marriage by sending an intermediary to the girl's family. If the match seems suitable to the elders, negotiations begin.

4. Adulthood and Marriage: Dominance of the Kin.

582 A girl's first marriage nearly always takes place before she is fully adult, physically as well as in maturity of character; while the bridegroom, though also young, is physically adult and in

583 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official.
184 After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the cheqa shum present.

[584] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these
656 traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in
[584] the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

178 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among
871 young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage
581 with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

178 husbands "who are you to give me orders - I can read as well as
581 you". Therefore such girls are avoided as brides.
871

But fully educated young men, in Addis Ababa, especially those who have returned from abroad with graduate degrees, complain that there are not enough educated girls for them to marry. There is now a girl's high school in Addis Ababa, but the supply of educated girls is still far below the demand by educated men who do not wish their wives to sit shy and wordless in modern-urban, international social gatherings.

Another modern difficulty arises in cases where the modern-educated young man is the son of an illiterate peasant, or a "rustic" one, and is ashamed to ask his father and similar kinfolk to negotiate the marriage. For even in the city the traditional "semanya" is the basic and most common form of marriage.

584 a) "Semanya" Marriage Negotiations.

Sometimes the young man decides on a girl and asks his father to begin negotiations. Or the parents, feeling that the time has come, begin to send out feelers. In either case, it is the young man's father who initiates formal negotiations with the father and kinfolk of the bride; though not, at first, directly.

The father of the young man may gather his "enjärä"-friends, "who dine at each other's table", or kinsmen, or both, and appoint a "näggär abbat" (lit. father of the affair) as intermediary.

Before matters go further, the kin group tries to find out and examine three factors of the prospective match:
1) Health of the family, such as absence of leprosy, venereal disease and other diseases belived to be inherited; 2) Land property -

584 preferably "rest" freehold, size of kin group and their relations and reputation, and cattle that might be asked for to match the contributions of the groom's kin; 3) "attentan" (lit. of good bones) - the question whether the kin are of "good stock", and not in part descended from non-Amhara, especially not from slave stock such as Shanqalla or Barya.

Once this is ascertained to satisfaction, the "naggar abbat" embarks on a series of visits to the house of the bride's father, speaking with great politeness, some flattery, putting him in a good mood, speaking in general terms, making philosophic observations, quoting appropriate proverbs in the conversation.

After this visit has been repeated, without any specific request, the host begins to realize that a very serious matter is at hand. He usually guesses what it is, but waits until the visiter, who is usually accompanied by one or two kinsmen or close friends, says: "We came to ask a serious matter; if you permit us, we shall speak of it". Permission granted, the "naggar abbat" continues: "We came to seek your kinship, your daughter and our son, so-and-so". Since it is impolite to refuse outright, and, on the other hand, not "proper" to give one's child away too readily, the host replies: "Let me consult with my kinsmen". Later, he can refuse or procrastinate by saying: "She is yet too young". When they come again the next year, he can say: "Someone else has preceded you, and I have accepted the initial gift". The latter is a small token of little value, serving mainly to indicate symbolically that the girl is spoken for.

If the kinsmen on both sides agree to the match, the "naggar abbat" and companions, on succeeding visits, begin negotiations

584 about the economic arrangements to which both sides contribute equally, for "honor"; for setting up the couple on a sound economic basis; and to assure property to the bride in case of divorce or widowhood. "Semanya" marriage among Amhara usually begins on an economic basis of half-and-half ("bal ekkul") contributions from both kin groups. The kinsmen of the bride would be ashamed to accept more of dowry (gacha) for her than they are able to contribute, lest she be treated disrespectfully by the groom's kinfolk later on who might say: "She was bought like a "damoz", whenever there is a wuarrel. For there is no lobola custom in the one-sided African way. Conversely, a man who marries for cows is mocked:

[539]

"Seeing her cattle, he married a bad one;
when the cattle died,
his trouble was double".

583 Cows are usually the major item of discussion of property changing hands at marriage. Negotiations finally fix the number of cows each will contribute ("kābetesh bākābtā") (lit. "your property is mine"), usually payable gradually as down payment and in installments, as a further guarantee that the marriage is working out and that there are no complaints (e.g. that the bride actually proved to be a virgin as promised).

Even a poor peasant will try to beg and borrow among his kin, lest he be shamed, so that he can match the dowry of the in-laws with 3 to 5 cows. A rich farmer may give as many as 30 cows to his child, thus requiring the in-laws to match this. A stubborn father can use this means to discourage a match that his youngster has set his heart on; knowing full well that the in-laws, if not rich

583 enough to match him, will be ashamed and cancel the match at this point to save face, while no one can really blame the "generous" father. As a result, most weddings take place on the same economic level.

A really kind father can, however, reduce the number of cows he officially promises, to enable the poorer in-laws to match it. A desparate youngster running up against a stubborn father sometimes appeals to the kinfolk of his or her mother for cows, but this is usually more difficult to obtain, for cows contributed by the patrilineal-patrilocal kin remain in the same hamlet while matrilineally contributed cows are taken out of the hamlet.

Other gifts set down in the dowry, before witnesses or in writing, include new shammas (togas), new jodphurs("surri"), perhaps some donkeys, and a mule. In the case of noblemen, gifts include embroidered shirts, silver crosses for the bride's necklace, gold and silver rings, silver hairpins, a "burnos" (hooded, black woolen coat), a kaba (mantle of woolen or imported chintz cloth), an imported, foldable umbrella. In the past, gifts to the groom included a fine rhinoceros shield with gold-plated ornaments, spears, a rifle, oxen, a good horse, slaves (before abolition), mules, embroidered garments, embroidered saddle, etc. Since then, some of these tradional gifts have been replaced by city and imported items, bought in the Armenian and Greek shops of Addis Ababa, but provincial Amhara are resisting some of these intrusions, (pushed by traders), saying that it should not appear that the bride is bought.

584 While kinship prestige and economic arrangements are considered of primary importance in the "semanya" marriage, once these nego-

584 tiations are concluded, preparations are made to ensure the spiritual and emotional well-being of the couple. A bridegroom is warned to study the character of his prospective mother-in-law, for it is believed that her daughter will take after her:

"Observe her mother,

before you let the daughter enter (the house)."

584 But the importance of the sworn best men, the "mizē", in protecting
608 the bride after the marriage, is considered even more important, due to the patrilocal residence. They are called the protectors of her "teeth and arms", ready to rush to her aid even against the husband when she shouts for help. On the other hand, to balance the situation, they are chosen from among the groom's closest relatives, e.g. first cousins (patrilineal), so that they won't be likely to seduce the girl. The two "mize" have to take the vow of excommunication before the "mänfäs qubē" (lit. soul counsel) priest, in front of the parents of the girl and the groom, that they will regard her as a sister, that they will treat her as their own sisters, that they will come night or day when she calls. This formal, literal bond of artificial kinship is strong, and the bride affectionately addresses the "mize" as "gashey" (lit. my shield, i.e. by protector) much as she would an uncle or other grown kinsman. The proverb says:

[539]

"For confession - go to the priest,

for (selfless) love - go to the mize".

These "mize" become protectors not only of the bride, but, in consequence, of the marriage of the couple. For, if the groom needs a "wās", a personal guarantor-bondsman for employment or if in legal trouble, the mize can hardly refuse this service as they are now doubly bound. The mize pattern thus increases security and stability

584 608 for all concerned, and is reinforced by the public social sanction given the "swearing - in".

b) "Semanya" Wedding Procedure

585 The wedding consists largely of a formal recapitulation of all the negotiations in public, by the two kingroups involved, sometimes at considerable length, confirmed in a monosyllabic expression from bride and groom. The other major activities are feasting in both hamlets involved, a re-enactment of bride capture at nightfall, and the signs of virginity signifying that the "fortress is just taken".

The preferred day for weddings is Sunday, so that the deflowering, taking place after nightfall which is considered part of Monday, will not take place on the Lord's day. (footnote 82). For the same reason, weddings do not take place on Saturday; nor in lent, a period of mourning; nor on Wednesday or Friday fast days.

Preparations for feasting and gathering are made at both hamlets involved. At both places a "dass" shelter is erected on a square staked out with tall saplings, covered with leafy branches against the sun, with fragrant grasses on the ground. Relatives are invited, but strangers are kept away for fear of the evil eye.

The wedding guests among peasants begin to arrive about noon, Sunday, and are received, at the hamlet of the groom, under the men's "dass". The women occupy a neighboring "dass", busily cooking the meat sauce "wot". The groom remains inside a hut and does not appear until shortly before he has to leave for the hamlet of the

Footnote 82: Sunday is also wedding day of Christians of Lebanon. See - Feghali, Michel: La Famille Catholique au Liban. RETP, 6, pp. 291-308, Paris, 1925.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

576 is to excuse oneself as indisposed due to "having drunk kosso", the bitter medicine against tapeworm, which medicine indeed incapacitates the patient for several days, and which is taken frequently and even regularly. He may send a written note of apology:

> " Yaderas käkebur (May this reach the Honorable....):
>
> " I have received your esteemed invitation to dinner. Thank you very much for having (thus) honored me. Having travelled, I have drunk medicine and am unable to come. I beg you not to be annoyed with me for remaining away under those circumstances (lit. in such a difficulty)". (footnote 94)

Gestures in greeting must indicate warmth, to be polite. In shaking hands, one does not withdraw one's hand soon, but keeps holding on loosely for several minutes, while talking. Men do this, also women to women, but a man will not hold a woman's hand in greeting unless she is close blood-kin, such as sister or daughter. Men (or women to women) who have not seen each other a long time, fall on each other's necks and kiss each other on both cheeks. The principle of indicating warmth in greeting overcomes the principle of the separation of the sexes in public, so that, especially in the rural areas and the commoner class where expressive behavior in public is more tolerated than in the upper class of nobility, men may cheek-kiss women in greeting, though not in flirting which must be private.

● 584 In spite of many other changes, it is still considered highly improper for a young man and young girl to hold hands when walking on a "shersher" (promenading). Not even the foreign-educated Amhara dare do this, not even in the modern center of Addis Ababa.

Footnote 94 - Eadie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, p. 276.

834 occasionally affects non-prostitutes also. Arab traders, particularly, like to joke with Coptic Amhara women when the latter come to their stores; such as teasingly to refuse to hand over goods after purchase has been made, or, if the customer finds the price on a desired item too high, suggesting that payment might be made "another way". These fixed stores, located near the daily or Saturday markets, feature luxuries rather than what are considered necessities; e.g. sandals, tea, sugar, raisins, necklaces, imported chocolate, etc. A woman deserted by her husband, or divorced, might succumb. On the other hand, Muslim women are much more segregated from menfolk, so that there is little opportunity for an Amhara male to break the rule with a Muslim female.

836 Virginity ("dengel") is expected of girls at first marriage, which occurs about the age of 14 or 15. If she is found by the husband not to be a virgin, and he feels sure of it and insists on his rights, he can divorce her, or go to court against her kinfolk claiming damages as high as Eth$200 - 300. This is rare, however, for at that age most girls are too young to have had much opportunity for complete sexual

584 intercourse. The courtship, apart from the above-described occasions during watch in the fields and on festives - when they are very formal -, consists of what adults condescendingly and smilingly refer to as "addarrat", love-whisperings, considered adolescent, during which the boy and girl alternate between childish whisperings and playful hitting at each other. The term is not used for love-making of adults or married couples.

587 Very different is the courtship of the girl after her first divorce, which frequently occurs when her personality matures, often while she is still in her twenties. She prefers an experienced lover.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

273 The first part of the process is to grind the tocusso, after which they take a fourth part of it, and knead it with water and leaven, as if to make bread. This they put in a jar to ferment for two days, at the end of which they make a good many thin large cakes, and dry them on the fire, till they become as hard as a stone, then break them down into crumbs, and put them in a large vessel full of water, capable of holding six times the volume of the grain; or for one jar of grain, the vessel holds five of water, and one for the quantity of grain. At the same time that they put in the bruised bread, as above-mentioned, into that quantity of water, the other things should be got ready to go in also. The grain ought to be fermented for two days, then dried in the sun, and afterwards ground into meal. The Ghesh leaves are ground likewise. The remainder of the meal, or those three-fourths that were not used to make the bread, must be put into a hollow oven, over a fire, with a small quantity of water, and constantly stirred with a stick, until it become a paste; and when the water is dried up, more is put in, constantly stirring the mass until it become black like a coal. The whole so prepared, the crumbs, the mass, and the leaves, are put together into the large jar, and let alone for a day, after which it is poured off, and preserved in jars well stopped. At the end of seven or eight days this liquor begins to be too strong, and is best when fresh, two or three days old.

584 [581] *Marriage.* Marriage is not considered in Abyssinia as a sacrament, yet the church ordains some rules to be observed, in order that the man and the woman may be faithful towards one another. The ordinary method of marriage among people of condition, and among those who most fear God, is the following: The man, when he resolves to marry a girl, sends some person to her father to ask his daughter in marriage. It seldom happens that she is refused; and when she is granted, the future husband is called into the girl's house, and an oath is taken reciprocally by the parties, that they will maintain due fidelity to one another. Then the father of the bride presents to the bridegroom the fortune that he will give: it consists of a particular sum of gold, some oxen, sheep, or horses, &c. according to the circumstances of the people. Then the bridegroom is obliged to find surety

p. 48

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

for the said goods; which is some one of his friends that presents himself, and becomes answerable for him in case he should wish to dismiss his wife, and be not able, through dissipation, or otherwise, to restore all that he has gotten. 584

Further, at the time when they display the fortune of the bride, the husband is obliged to promise a certain sum of money, or an equivalent in effects, to his wife, in case he should chuse to abandon her, or separate himself from her. This must also be confirmed by an oath of the future husband, and of his surety. A certain time, of twenty or thirty days, is determined also by a reciprocal oath, that on the last of these they will go together to church, and receive the sacrament. When all these matters are concluded, the future spouse appoints the marriage-day, and then returns home. When that day arrives, the intended husband goes again to his bride's house, where she appears, and shews him her moveables (mobiglia), or clothes; and he must promise and swear a-new the fore-mentioned articles; and that he will use his wife well; never leave her without meat, or cloathing; keep her in a good house, &c. all which his surety must confirm. When this is over, the bridegroom takes his lady on his shoulders, and carries her off to his house. If it be at a distance, he does the same thing, but only goes entirely round about the bride's house; then sets her down, and returns her into it. After this ceremony, a solemn banquet takes place, consisting of raw beef and bread, and honey-wine, or hydromel, or another beveridge from grain, called bouza, a sort of beer very sour and disgusting. The feast being ended, the parties mount each a mule, and ride to the bridegroom's house, where is concluded all the ceremony necessary to marriage before they live together. When they have lived together during the appointed term of twenty or thirty days, they must both appear at church, and declare before the priest that they are husband and wife, and that they are come to receive the sacrament. The priest, without more ado, celebrates mass; they communicate, and return home. 585

After some time, although both have sworn to live all their life faithful to one another, they take the liberty to separate; if it is the husband who wishes to get off, he, or his surety, must pay the wife that which she brought, and 586

[p. 49]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 the long rains. Children go singing from house to house in small bands, or take bunches of wild flowers to relatives, in hopes of getting a bit of *dābo*. In most homes an animal is slaughtered—in some areas superstition decrees that it be a white-headed lamb or a red chicken—and there is much eating and drinking, the basic activity of every holiday.

A little more than two weeks later the much more important festival of Masqal is observed, celebrating the discovery of the true Cross by Empress Helena. By this time the heavy rains have subsided, and the air is filled with [132] something of the spirit of spring. (Although Ethiopia lies north of the equator the summer rainy season is known as "winter" because of its coldness.) The landscape is colored by acres of yellow wildflowers, which are cut and fastened to the poles each family brings to a central clearing where a huge bonfire is built. In late afternoon, after the tepee of poles has been con- [554] structed, the priests begin the ceremony by intoning appropriate chants. Then each status group circles the poles three times, in honor of the Trinity—first the local lord, then the clergy, the lesser nobility, the peasant men, women, and finally the children. In the evening the festival takes a more secular turn. The bonfire is lit, and the young braves dance around it shouting their war chants. As the fire blazes on, these fellows seize burning brands and playfully hurl them at one another.

In November the monthly St. Michael's Day is honored with special cele- [778] brations. The peasants travel distances to attend the ceremonies at any church consecrated to "Mikā'ēl." Holy water and hot springs sanctified by Mikā'ēl's name are drunk and bathed in by those with many kinds of disease. The rituals involve carrying the Mikā'ēl *tābot* ("holy ark") out of the church and elaborate chanting and dancing by the clergy. After the *tābot* has been returned, in a procession in which the laymen follow shouldering their rifles (undoubtedly spears in older times), folk dancing and singing go on until late [584] afternoon. This provides an occasion for the more enterprising adolescent male to spot a potential bride, about whom he may diffidently ask his father to make inquiries.

*565 796 526 Christmas, celebrated in early January, is marked chiefly by the playing of secular games. The common word for Christmas, *gannā*, is actually the name of an outdoors game played with sticks and a wooden puck. Played by boys, young men, and occasionally elders on the afternoon of Christmas Day, *gannā* is marked by a spirit of aggressive license. Accustomed norms of deference are held in abeyance. The game is played in so rough and disorderly a manner that it often results in broken limbs and scarred faces. Staged by two teams made up on the spot, *gannā* is concluded at dusk by volleys of abusive limericks with which the victors revile their adversaries.[4]

*565 796 This is the season for special festivities on saints' days. St. Gabriel is particularly honored in December, as are St. Mary, St. George, and again St. Michael

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

836 peers with the insulting term *šīlb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that
183 comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsā*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain
572 in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *goramsā* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to
[837] aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsā* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the hus-
836 band or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with
572 a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets
578 difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsā* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulā* fights.

836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquering" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding
[585] night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time
582 to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On the latter occasions, especially Masqāl and Ṭīmqat, the girl may make some
[832] effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair, and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a
[584] chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in wh[illegible] case he

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

may ask around to learn the identity of her father and then present the matter hopefully to his own father. 883* 584

Despite this possibility of concession to the boy's amorous desires, the interests of the father are decisive in the selection of a marriage mate, and traditionally the boy has not even known what his bride looks like until the wedding itself. The boy who dares to choose a wife on his own commits an offense for which the father has the moral right to curse and disinherit him. Marriage is regarded as a bond between families, not individuals, and the families of prospective brides are carefully inspected before the father agrees to a contract of betrothal. In making his choice, the father looks for a family whose economic level is at least as high as, if not slightly higher, than his own. He makes certain that the family does not have members who are leprous or who practice the manual crafts associated with the evil eye. He sends a messenger to visit the family on some pretext, for the purpose of determining the character of the girl and her parents. If there is any consanguine relation between the two families, he makes sure that the prospective bride and groom are separated by more than seven generations; that is, they must not have a common great-great-grandparent. A further consideration might be whether there has been any strife or rivalry between the two families, in which case the father may want to try to resolve it by means of a "political" marriage. 584 584 581 [582]

Once the father has decided upon a suitable mate for his son, with the advice of the mother and perhaps other relatives, he sends one or more intermediaries, usually elders, to speak on his behalf with the girl's father. The interview is conducted with considerable circumlocution, the petitioners veiling their true purpose until late in the conversation and the girl's father displaying reluctance to grant their request. Often no agreement is reached at this meeting, and the petitioning party must wait to ask a second time. If the girl's father is unwilling to give her hand, he will beg off with some polite excuse, such as that the girl is too young or that he has already promised her to someone else. If he is willing, a date for a formal betrothal is set, at which time the boy and his father together with a group of elders and other relatives repair to the home of the girl's father. After the boy gives presents to the girl's parents, the two fathers discuss their respective contributions of land, cattle, and other goods to the prospective household. When these economic arrangements are settled, a contract for marriage is sworn before witnesses and a date for the wedding is agreed upon, leaving ample time for the two families to vie in preparing sumptuous feasts for the occasion. If the girl is quite young, as long as two or three years may elapse between engagement and marriage. 584

The wedding festivities commence at the home of the girl's father. After 585

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 178 582 college, however, has no assets beyond his diploma in most cases. He must wait a number of years to achieve the beginnings of financial stability.

*883 178 581 584 The students' conception of marriage, moreover, reflects a still more profound change. They are no longer content to regard the selection of a mate as a matter to be arranged by parents in accord with their own interests and standards. They reject the old-fashioned Amhara marriage in which romantic love plays no part and divorce is common. Most of them insist on the right to choose their own spouses, and they tend to approach that choice with criteria

TABLE 6

QUALITIES MOST DESIRED BY STUDENTS IN A FUTURE WIFE OR HUSBAND*

Quality	Per Cent Checking Quality as Either First or Second Choice		
	Secondary Schools		College Males
	Males	Females	
Educated	48	75	41
Shares my opinions and beliefs	44	48	43
Religious	34	25	19
Good companion	25	30	45
Beautiful	15	0	22
Kind and generous	15	13	9
Wealthy	4	2	5
Will impress my friends socially	3	2	2
Number	(385)	(39)	(191)

* Related to Gillespie-Allport question No. 17.

which differ from those of their parents. Instead of following such traditional criteria as good upbringing, family background, and wealth, a number of modern adolescents aspire to find spouses who, above all else, are educated, who share their opinions and beliefs, and who will be good companions. (See [582] Table 6.) Even such strong aversions as those against tribal and religious exogamy have receded somewhat before the new ideal of marriage founded on romantic love.* The figures in Table 7 are indicative of the diffusion of this ideal as well as of the growth of a sentiment of Ethiopian nationality.

* Although Amhara men have customarily had sexual relations with non-Amhara women and produce countless offspring from them, the latter have not been considered appropriate choices for marriage, except in very high strata where the marriage served a purpose primarily political.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 brides be virgin. Related norms greatly restrict their quest for romantic love.
178 Since Ethiopian society still expects its maidens to be shy and retiring, and to
581 avoid social relations with boys outside their families, the boys find few
*883 opportunities for getting to know members of the opposite sex. Even in those
834 few situations where sociability between the sexes is publicly permitted, in-
178 grained tendencies to segregate the sexes persist. The most liberal context for such sociability, the University College campus, has witnessed relatively little interaction between male and female students. In spite of their occasional resolutions to act more boldly, the college boys have in the past tended to shy away from the co-eds except during such rare formal events as a college dance or off-campus parties.

*883 This is not to say that modern adolescent males have no opportunity for
836 premarital sexuality. On the contrary, their opportunities in this regard are
178 perhaps better than ever. The proliferation of brothels in Ethiopia's urban
548 centers makes sexual initiation easy, almost a routine event.* Students also
834 frequent these houses for social entertainment, dancing to swing and Latin rhythms, and sipping beer or soft drinks. Thus the continued sanctions against social intercourse in more respectable forms work to sharpen the Amhara dichotomy between decency and sexuality, and leave modern boys with a double standard that separates the marriageable girls from the enjoyable ones.

*883 The idea that marriage should be founded on romantic love has brought
178 greater anxiety as well as hope into the lives of Ethiopian adolescents. This
581 anxiety is due in part to the above-mentioned inhibitions against that easy
584 commerce of the sexes which so facilitates the discovery of a suitable love
[152] object. It also reflects a certain ambivalence toward the new ideal, based on a lingering attachment to the authority of the old system. This was manifest, for example, in the response to a college debate on the topic, "Resolved: that the custom of letting the parents choose a spouse for the children should be maintained," that took place in 1959. Although on anonymous questionnaires *90 per cent* of the college students said they will probably decide whom to marry themselves, and only 3 per cent said the decision would be made by parents or other relatives, in voting on the matter after the debate the students (in contrast to the judges who awarded the negative debaters) publicly declared themselves 42 per cent affirmative, 41 per cent negative, with 17 per cent abstaining.

*883 Anxiety regarding the new conception of marriage, finally, is also con-
178 nected with a new-fashioned fear of divorce. The mind of the modern adoles-
581 cent vacillates between the ideal of an abiding marital relationship based on
586

152 * Due perhaps to the greater importance of their peers, sexual accomplishments have now become a frequent topic of conversation and a matter for boasting among modern adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

571 Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
584 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
834 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
178 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The tradition-al mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

872 has the photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie and the traditional Gospel of St. John in Geez. Priests now often teach the beginnings of basic arithmetic, in church schools.

783 In adult life, the church affects the layman less through participation in worship than through his individual confessor, the "näfs abbat", (lit. soul father). Each person is supposed to see him at least once a month, and he soon becomes a personal advisor, confidante, marriage counselor, etc. Therefore, even when a person changes residence, he often maintains this relationship to his "näfs abbat". If he were to take on a new one, the penalty assigned for sins (which the confessor keeps as a sort of fee) would be higher. His regular confessor, who knows his financial condition, asks little beyond the seasonal and festival gifts considered his due. In time of trouble, the regular confessor will appear as a character witness in court, or as "wäs" (guarantor) to help him obtain employment or to keep him out of jail pending trial.

585 Most laymen, are not married by eucharistic marriage in church (the "qurban"). There is no social or religious stigma to marrying outside the church; in fact the priest comes to the secular ceremony ("semanya") to bless the couple. But it does mean technical excommunication, and the couple cannot wear the "aklil" crown at church festivals and parades.

763 As a further result, such a couple cannot receive full last rites, though the confessor-priest will come

which happens among middle and upper feudal nobility--
may herself become the founder mspons or of a church.
In this case she usually ap,oints a male administrator
from among her kinsmen, or a local cheqa shum headman,
to supervise the sharecropper gabbar supplying her
church. She then would also exercise direct or indirect
control over the qēs gobāz, the administrating priest.

A commoner or peasant woman is much more exposed
to the inferior legal status of womwn. According to
traditional law, the "semanya" bond with the formula
of the oath "May the Emperor die" (e.g. Hayle Selassye
yemut"), is not legally valid, and her contractual
function has to be performed through a male kinsman.
Nevertheless, her legal position is by no means as
weak as that of the Muslim woman. The Amhara woman
may take half of her husband's movable possessions
upon divorce, i.e. thecows she brought into her marriage
and half theincreade of any pooled property. To pro-
tect her somewhat from wilful mistreatment at the hands
of her husband, a bride is given two male protective
"best man", the "mizēn- but they are kinsmen of the
bridegroom's!

Social inferiority of a commoner woman is also
associated with her manual and menial labor, as hauler
of water and hewer of wood or collector of cowdung.for
fuel, and similar servant-like chores inside and out-
side the hut. The baby which she carries on her back
and breast-feeds for two years renders her physically
dirty and often smelly. The commoner woman may not

582 his late 'teens. The difference in what is considered "suitable age" is thus five or more years, for the girl may be as young as 13 or 14 in the still prevailing (though officially now outlawed) tradition. The reason is not only the earlier maturing of the girl, but partly the emphasis of protecting her virginity until marriage, partly the attitude that the groom must "tame" his bride - and the younger the better.

597 Consanguinal ties continue stronger, after marriage, than
608 conjugal ties. The "artificial kinship" created at this period of the life cycle is that of the bride's "best man" ("misō") who is sworn to protect her even against her husband, and who is in a good position to do so as a residential kinsman of the husband. This emphasis on consanguinal ties even after marriage is similar to other parts of the Middle East (footnote 80), and also Africa.

885 A fully adult man ("sew") and woman ("sytē") are honorifically addressed, e.g. in church usage, as "acmā adam" for man (from Geez "Adam"), "acmā hawwa" for woman (from Geez for "Eve"), and the connotation is that they have passed the hot-blooded "gobāz" and "qonje" stage and have become reasonable, calm, responsible persons who know the etiquette of their culture and have become fully cognizant of proper behavior at all forseeable events in the life cycle.

583 A. Marriage Patterns
585

There are three predominant types of marriage:

Footnote 80: Patai, Raphael: Relationship Patterns among the Arabs. Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. 2, May 1951, pp. 180-5

583 585 1) the eucharistic church marriage, "gurban", engaged in only by a minority, such as some of the nobility, some of the older persons, and all of the priesthood; 2) the kin-negotiated ("civil") marriage, "semanya", sworn before the chega shum headman, and most [588] common; 3) the temporary marriage, for which the man engages to pay regular housekeeping wages, "damoz", especially common among those who travel to markets.

585 "Semanya" literally means "80", and is thus also called the "eighty-bond marriage". This refers to the oath which includes the phrase "May the Emperor die", perjury against which used to be penalized by what was then the enormous sum of 80 Maria Theresa Thalers. It is also called "beserai", by "contract"). This is the most common form of marriage, dominated by a complexity of kinship arrangements (described in detail below), and divorce is possible through similar negotiations and "parcelling out" of both goods and children. There is a minimum of individual emphasis in this marriage negotiation, especially in a first marriage, for the kin of both sides must be satisfied and "honored", though there is some element of original choice through informal courtship. The church takes cognizance by sending a priest to bless the couple.

"Gurbān" marriage is not urged by the church on laymen, partly because of the sacerdotal character of the church, partly because the eucharistic sacraments are considered so holy that only serious, [586] mature, fully adult persons are advised to engage in it, and divorce cannot be granted. At this sacrament, the couple is rebaptized, and [587] may, on all church holy days, wear the "aklil" crown. Widows and widowers may remarry, but a priest who becomes a widower is expected to assume monkhood. The priest who blesses a "semanya"

585 bride and groom merely expresses the prayerful wish that "God will show the way" to the lay couple toward "qurban", in time. In fact, middle-aged couples who have gone through several divorces and have finally decided definitely to spend the rest of their days together, may take the "aklil" in "qurban". Qurban for lay people, e.g. deacons, is performed usually only 40 days after their "semanya", to make certain that their marriage bond is strong and real and that no rift has arisen (e.g. if the bride had been found not a virgin).

588 487 "Damoz" marriage (lit. wage) is what the term implies. Most commonly the arrangement is from month to month, but may be for longer or shorter periods, such as the duration of a caravan trip, or an extended stay at a major market, where the "damoz" wife offers the best and often the only available hotel and restaurant services. (She is similar to the Biblical lady in the city of Jericho). The term is a contraction of "damawaz" (lit. "blood - and - sweat") [465] compensation. Her wages vary greatly from region to region, and have considerably increased in recent years, for even the new, modern law recognized her claim. In the past she did well if she received ETH$5.-per month in addition to housekeeping expenses, but [675] now some obtain ETH$20.- from traders. The agreement is made orally but before witnesses, so that she can go to court if the man defaults on his payments. If they separate at the expiration of the contract, she has no right to half his property as does the semanya [428] wife, but if there are children conceived during her contract, the children can make a claim for part of the father's inheritance should he die.

588 rewards as agreed upon") practiced by the Shi'ites in particular.
171 (footnote 81). The Abyssinian Coptic "Fetha Nagast" forbids concubinage; but the custom has long been widespread. "Damos" is even recognized in the modern law of Emperor Haile Selassie.

551 Individual arrangements are freest in "damos", also in "qurban"
585 though sometimes less so, and least in "semanya". But in all three forms of marriage, the wife retains her maiden name and does not assume that of her husband. Even Empress Menen continues her old name. Sometimes the husband's mother may try to symbolize her authority - or even affection - by giving a new name to her new daughter-in-law living in her hamlet, but the bride's kinfolk and
[602] peers will continue to use her old name. This is another, unconscious, emphasis of kinship relations over affinal ones.

588 The "damos" is not considered contradictory to monogamy, which may explain her respectability despite prohibition of concubinage in the "Fetha Nagast" code. Religious persons will explain the paradox away by quoting from Genesis "be fruitful and multiply".

583 In rural districts there is sometimes found a 4th form of
184 marriage, which indeed is re-enacted in some wedding ceremonies of "semanya". This form is bride capture, especially found among families too poor to defray the expenses of a wedding and cows that must be given the "semanya" couple. To cover up the shame and the poverty, the bride is "captured" and "pursued", by pre-arranged collusion. While she ostensibly goes, alone, to fetch water or gather deadwood, the groom's "mize" appear suddenly, preferably on horseback, and carry her off into the bush, while she, though ex-

Footnote 81: Donaldson, D.M.: Temporary Marriage in Iran. Moslem World, 1936, pp. 358-364. Smith, W. Robertson: Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia, 1885.

584
608 for all concerned, and is reinforced by the public social sanction given the "swearing - in".

b) "Semanya" Wedding Procedure

585 The wedding consists largely of a formal recapitulation of all the negotiations in public, by the two kingroups involved, sometimes at considerable length, confirmed in a monosyllabic expression from bride and groom. The other major activities are feasting in both hamlets involved, a re-enactment of bride capture at nightfall, and the signs of virginity signifying that the "fortress is just taken".

The preferred day for weddings is Sunday, so that the deflowering, taking place after nightfall which is considered part of Monday, will not take place on the Lord's day. (footnote 82). For the same reason, weddings do not take place on Saturday; nor in lent, a period of mourning; nor on Wednesday or Friday fast days.

Preparations for feasting and gathering are made at both hamlets involved. At both places a "dass" shelter is erected on a square staked out with tall saplings, covered with leafy branches against the sun, with fragrant grasses on the ground. Relatives are invited, but strangers are kept away for fear of the evil eye.

The wedding guests among peasants begin to arrive about noon, Sunday, and are received, at the hamlet of the groom, under the men's "dass". The women occupy a neighboring "dass", busily cooking the meat sauce "wot". The groom remains inside a hut and does not appear until shortly before he has to leave for the hamlet of the

Footnote 82: Sunday is also wedding day of Christians of Lebanon. See - Feghali, Michel: La Famille Catholique au Liban. RETP, 6, pp. 291-308, Paris, 1925.

585 bride. Each guest brings a number of "enjärä" breads, perhaps a dozen, and they leave cash contributions with the host, at least ETH$1-3. The afternoon is largely spent consuming barley-beer ("talla") of which the women have previously brewed huge jarsful. Particularly the "mizä" and the young men who will soon race across the countryside to fetch the bride, drink their fill to "be strong" and light and gay on their feet later on. The groom has been fed on meat and butter, to be strong; while the bride fasts to be "weak". The more old-fashioned elders, especially those not kinsmen, sit in a corner, and eat and drink there, draped off by spread-out tofas.

585 864 Sex information for the groom is one of the duties of the "mizä", who are usually older than he and married, but not of his parental generation, (particularly the older chief mize of the two, the "ser mizä", though sometimes the second "mize", called "galgal mizä"). If necessary, they are even expected to assist in the deflowering of a recalcitrant bride who suffers last-minute fright, by holding her down so that the groom can consumate the marriage that night. The bride is given no such outright information, and can only guess what will happen to her from whisperings of other girls and from what she has observed in the hut at night of intimacies of the parents on the raised "alga" bed. She may well be confused and frightened, but this is regarded as praiseworthy, as virtuous. Her nails are trimmed down to the skin just before the wedding, so that she cannot scratch, then placed in hot butter to heal and be smooth.

585 About three hours before nightfall, about 4PM (unless the bride's hamlet is too far away, in which case earlier), the groom appears before the "dass" of his patrilineal kin, dressed in a new, well-

585 made, blue-bordered "kuta" (double toga). His hair has been trimmed short, so that he will not appear like a rustic woodsman. His mize flank him, and henceforth never part from his side during the wedding proceedings. All three approach the groom's father, bow from the hip in greeting. A patrilineal elder addresses the groom in serious tones, reminding him that his obligations to his father continue although he will now be founding a house of his own. Then the father addresses his blessing to him, more briefly. In reply, the son makes the motion of kissing the father's feet, which the latter deftly prevents by tucking him under the chin so that the kiss lands on the knee. He also kisses the knee of the [826] elder (the knee is regarded as the seat of strength). Then the groom and mize sit down about a minute, to symbolize having taken part in the initial festivities.

492 585 Meanwhile the escort saddle the biggest mule, preferable a strong, huge, "Senaar" mule. The groom bids farewell to the father and elder kinsmen, most of whom remain behind, though at least one elder kinsman rides along to act as spokesman, usually the "näggär abbat" who can best recapitulate the negotiations. The young "gobäz" escort run along on foot, brandishing their long sticks (formerly spears), shouting war shouts. A Senaar mule can go at a fast trot, so that the men on foot must keep on a run. The elder kinsman rides a smaller, Ethiopian mule.

585 Like a fast-moving army on the attack, the group crosses fields, trails, hills, valleys, finally stops in the valley below the hill on which the bride's hamlet is located. Here they catch their breath, shake off the dust, arrange their togas in "outgoing" fashion, go behind a bush to satisfy the call of nature after so much beer-

585 drinking. The "naggar abbat" now ascends the hill alone, to announce the peaceful intent of the arrived party. The bride's kin take formal cognizance of the arrival, but act as they did not know what the matter is all about. This initiates the formal recapitulation of the main points of the negotiation.

Permission is given for the party to climb up, and they stop before the "dass" shelter of the bride's family where a similar gathering of elders, kinfolk, males, females, are seated and drinking beer, in their separate groups. The groom is hidden by the mise who step in front of him within the groom's crowd standing in front of the shelter. The bride is still hidden in her parental tent.

In the presence of the cheqa shum, sometimes also the confessor-priest, the seated elder of the bride's asks: "Why have you come, my friends?". The groom's elder kinsman replies: "To ask for your girl so-and-so, to marry a son of our clan".

Question: "Who will the groom be?"

Reply: "So-and-so, son of so-and-so".

Question: "What have you in your hands?"

The reply enumerates the concmic agreements of the previous negotiation, and often a dabtara writes it all down. Finally, the bride's elder pronounces "Eshshi" (O.K.), and invites the groom's party in, without however seating them or offering drink. For first the young couple has to ratify the agreement. The groom is now revealed and takes the solemn oath, "May the Emperor die", such-and-such a girl is henceforth my wife". This is the "Semanya" oath. The groom's elder kinsman affirms: "Hayle Selassie yemut". The bride's kinsmen affirm: "Hayle Selassye yemut".

By this time night has fallen, little lamps are lit, and the

585 heavily veiled bride, unable to see through the heavy toga over her head and figure, is led to the center of the "dass" before the elders, to shouts of "allel" by the women. For in rural areas it is still considered shameful to take the bride away in daylight. Her kinfolk say to her: "Say that so-and-so is your husband". She is expected to whisper it shyly, so that her words are repeated by witnesses that she, too, has taken the "Semanya" oath. This is greeted by "ellel" joyshout of the women.

Next, the "mizē" are sworn in. The bride's father or elder say to the bridegroom: "Call for us two guarantors for her eyes, head and teeth". Whereupon the "mizē" step forward and take the oath.

Now the groom's party is invited to sit down, room is made for them, and beer and meat stew are passed to them.

The formal boasting, the "fukkara" dance and chant, is begun by the bride's kinsmen, then quickly taken up by the groom's kinsmen. Each side recites feats of bravery, renown, warriors, holy priests, "great men" in the ancestry and kin of the side to which it belongs. Spears or firearms are brandished, held behind the neck, while epic battles are recited in poetic form and exaggeration. Each tries to surpass the other in this friendly contest, (footnote 83), but mock each other's deficiencies in composition of verses or recitation.

The groom affirms by oath that he will "do good and not evil" to his bride, that they will live together: "I, by my shield, she

[17] Footnote 83: Similar boasting contests are common in the Middle East.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 by her spindle" ("bärashay bäenzert"), with their pooled property and strength. In front of the confessor-priest, the groom extinguishes a light, saying: "May God extinguish me like this flame, if I break my oath to her". He gives the mize, if he can afford it, a neck-cord with a silver cross or ring on it, which the latter places around the bride's neck. For the groom does not touch the bride at her parental shelter.

Permission is finally given by the bride's elders to leave, and her spokesman proclaims: "Our daughter we herewith give to your son. Haile Selassye yemut".

The Senaar mule is quickly saddled, and after the groom has mounted, the heavily veiled bride is lifted behind him by the mize, so that she clasps the groom's waist. She is wearing jodphurs as noblewomen do when riding. Waving sticks and shouting war cries, the escort runs before and on both sides of the couple, lighting the way with resinous torches.

Arrived at the "dass" of the groom, the bride sits with him in a corner, flanked by the everpresent "mizä", while loud boasting, "hotu" jumping, "fukkara" boasting, beer-drinking and feasting continue until about 3A.M. About an hour before that, the section in which the bride and groom are sitting is curtained off by means of togas, so that they can sleep together in privacy. Gradually the other celebrants drop off to sleep, heavy with beer, around the fire, all over the "dass", like a guard of honor for the bridal couple. Some of the young men, "gobaz" amuse themselves with
585 831 teasing games, such as "mock-court" in which the loser is fined beer or honey or a goat (footnote 84); or with sexual buffoonery

Footnote 84: In Harar, southwest Ethiopia, a mock-lawsuit is held in which the loser must provide the drinks for a week after the wedding. See- Leslau: A Wedding Lawsuit in Harar. (Bibφ)

585 [33] such as imitating the coitus of a donkey by holding a stick between the legs like a donkey's penis, and two other sticks held vertically to symbolize the vulva, teasing the bridegroom with enacted awkwardness until the actors find the "entrance". But finally the young men follow their elders in deep sleep.

The bride is expected to be, in fact contracted for, a virgin, "dengel". If she is not, there are several possibilities. The groom may lover her so much, or may be so ashamed, that he will keep silent. If he complains, the marriage can be forthwith annulled, in front of witnesses. In this case the shame is great for the bride, and she might be severely beaten. The "signs of virginity" are called "kebber" (lit. honor). The groom or the mize have the right to examine the clothing for blood, and the mize sometimes wave the trophy with glad shouting "The fortress is broken", even take the trophy with them 3 days later on their visit to the bride's family to bring the glad tidings, which honor the bride's kin, and collect their reward.

Since the bride is usually very young at her first marriage, she often suffers considerable pain. Usually she sits up quietly the next morning, in the corner of the "dass", with a serious face, while husband appears gay as the "victor". She is usually ashamed to cry out at night, among these strangers. When the sun rises, the groom and his friends walk some distance away to fulfill calls of nature, and discuss the "victory". When they return, the bride goes with some of the girls, but quietly and without boasting.

The following two or three nights, the bride and groom will have more privacy in a newly-built hut of their own, the "chagola" of "musherra" (honeymoon hut), because, as the saying goes, "the

585 bride will cry out for many nights because of the pain". But is is also believed that this painful initiation into marriage bodes well for marital happiness, for, if later the husband neglects or mistreats her, she will remind him of his victory: "Remember you were my first, you were the one who hurt me".

184 585 In towns, several different customs prevail, and modern change, partly in imitation of nobility, partly in imitation of the Italians during their brief occupation, has seeped in, through eager, though partial, imitation.

In town the wedding ("serg") is more elaborate. Instead of the "dass" shelter, a large canvas tent is borrowed. Men and women still occupy separate tents. But the wedding takes place in daylight, in mid-afternoon, after which the unveiled bride, seated next to the groom, is driven in a rented automobile through the town, followed by other celebrants in varying conveyances or on foot. Before that, there is less boasting by kinsmen warriors and more by hired "azmari" minstrels, male or female, who entertain the wedding guests. If male they often accompany their impromptu verses with the single-string "masenqo" violin; if female, with the native banjo, the "qrar". They permit themselves such liberties as nudging the guests, singing flirtatiously, even aggressively at them, singing praises to rich individuals, the bride and groom, and kinsmen, to extort cash gifts from them.

There are tables and benches inside the tent at which guests are seated by the clever ushers, the hired "agafari" (lit. chamberlain), according to social status and official position in town. The ones of high status, including Europeans, are seated at the host's table (usually the groom's), and are served honey-mead ("tej")

184 instead of barley-beer, and the best of available meat dishes.
585 In return, the wealthier guests are expected to leave larger cash gifts as they leave. It is in this tent that the "semanya" marriage is performed, and the bridal couple blessed by the "manfas qubad" priest, who will later watch over their marriage. His blessing is the same as that in the rural hamlet:

[539]

> "May God make you capable of begetting, of conception, for office-holding, for honor,
> for the communion and the flesh of the Lord.
> May God guide you to truth and make you kin with Abraham and Sarah".

Though the bride in town may be called out from the women's tent, and thus be the only female eating with the men, seated next to the groom, they still act shy with each other in public. Men like to believe that, though there are no tears in public, brides weep silently, out of fear; - the "vanquished sex". But the groom does not yet patronise her in public with the "gursha", hand to mouth feeding, as he will starting some weeks after.

c) Post-Wedding Adjustments and Kin Relations.

585 After the traditional rural wedding, the "dass" remains standing for a week, in both the groom's and the bride's hamlets, to shelter visitors. After two full days of marriage have passed, the mize go to the bride's hamlet to report on her well-being, adjustment and good treatment. They are feted and sleep in the "dass". The next day they return, carrying an invitation to the bridal couple and a specified number of companions (which is usually exceeded!) to come to the bride's hamlet for a 3-day visit, the "mals".

585 [57] Three-day visiting is the pattern in kin visiting, for it usually takes one day for initial greetings and exchange of news, slaughtering and preparation of a sheep; a second day for feasting and talks with the neighbors; a third day for preparation of leave-taking.

After one week, the "dass" are torn down. A "great man" who is father of the bride, will usually send his daughter several donkeyloads of household staples, including lentils ("shure"), peas cooked with salt, pepper, and spices, so that she will be honored and well treated by the women under whose jurisdiction she has come. Then, after a month, he will send a messenger to ask how she is habituated to the new life. If the reply is favorable, another load of grain, butter, spices, flaxseed oil are sent.

512 The adjustment of the bride may not be easy. The night she leaves her parental roof, she takes with her, besides her skin-mat, a little basket of dyed reeds, containing her personal little distaff, spindle, and glass necklace used in scouring pottery. After a week or a few weeks of honeymoon, she is expected to participate in the women's household tasks: fetching water and fuel, baking "enjara" daily for her husband, cooking "wot", to her husband's tastes, crushing barley, grinding "tyeff", brewing beer. If she complains too soon, the womenfolk will quote the proverb:

[539] "Hardly arrived have you, young bride,
(but) already you crunch shembera (peas)"
(meaning: lazily pick at peas, instead of
doing the regular, harder work).

606 [591] The couple is expected to remain in patrilocal residence at least a year, so that the bride can be taught, by her mother-in-law, how

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

business of petitions, and few are without wives. This 621
causes many single women to live here, and when they are 443
old they have another resource, for in this town every Tuesday there is a great market or fair at which three or four hundred persons are brought together; and all the old women and some young ones have measures to measure wheat and salt, and they go to the market to measure and gain their living; they give hospitality to those that sleep there that day, and also take care for them of what remains to be sold for the next market day. There is another 595
reason why there are many women in this town, it is 688
because the men who have plenty of food to eat keep two or three wives; and this is not forbidden to them by the King nor by their magistrates, only by the Church. Every man who has more than one wife does not enter the church, nor does he receive any sacrament: and they hold him to be excommunicated. For a year and a half a nephew of mine and I lodged in the house of a man named Ababitay, and he had three wives still alive and acquaintances of ours, friends in honourable friendship: they said that he had had seven wives and thirty children of them. Nobody forbade them, except the Church, as has been said, which did not give them the benefit of the sacraments; and before our departure, he put away from him, and from intercourse with him, two wives, and remained with one, that is to say, the one he had last, who was the youngest, and already they gave him the sacraments, and he entered the church like anybody else, and as though he had not had more than one wife. On this account there are many women in this town, because the men are well off and are like courtiers; and they take two or three, or more if it pleases them. In this [586]
country marriages are not fixed, because they separate for any cause. I saw people married, and was at a marriage 585
which was not in a church, and it was done in this manner. On the open space before some houses they placed a bed-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

585 stead, and seated upon it the bridegroom and the bride, and there came thither three priests, and they began a chaunt with Hallelujah, and then continued the chaunt, the three priests walking three times round the bedstead on which the couple were seated. Then they cut a lock of hair from the head of the bridegroom, and another from the head of the bride. They wetted these locks with mead, and placed the hair of the bridegroom on the head of the bride, and that of the bride on the head of the bridegroom, on the place from which they had cut them, and then sprinkled them with holy water: after that they kept their festivities and wedding feasts. At night they put them in a house, and for a month from that time no one saw the bride, except one man only whom they call the best man,[1] who remains all this month with the married couple, and when this month is ended the man or best friend goes away. If she is an honourable woman she does not go out of the house for [784] five or six months, nor remove a black veil from her face: [843] and if before that she becomes pregnant she removes the veil. When these months are ended, even though she is not pregnant, she removes the veil.

CAP. XXI.—*Of their marriages and benedictions, and of their contracts, and how they separate from their wives, and the wives from them, and it is not thought strange.*

I saw the Abima Marcos, whom they call Pope, giving blessings in the church, that is to say, before the principal door; the bride and bridegroom were also seated on a bedstead, and the Abima walked round them with incense and cross, and laid his hands on their heads, telling them to observe that which God had commanded in the gospel; and that they were no longer two

[1] *Padrinho.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

separate persons, but two in one flesh; and that so in like 585
manner should their hearts and wills be. There they remained until mass had been said, and he gave them the communion, and bestowed on them the blessing. And this I saw done in the town of Dara, in the Kingdom of Xoa.[1] I saw another performed in the town of Çequete, in the Kingdom of the Barnagais. When they make these marriages they 586
enter into contracts, as for instance: If you leave me or I [675]
you, that one that causes the separation shall pay such a penalty. And they set the penalty according to the persons, so much gold or silver, or so many mules, or cloths, or cows, or goats, or so many measures of wood. And if either of them separate, that one immediately seeks a cause of separation for such and such reasons, so that few incur the penalty, and so they separate when they please, both the husbands and the wives. If there are any that observe the marriage rule, they are the priests, who never can separate, and cultivators, who have an affection for their wives because they help them to bring up their sons, and to harrow and weed their tillage, and at night when they come to their house they find a welcome reception: thus in effect or perforce they are married for the whole of their lives. As I said that they imposed penalties at marriages, the first Barnagais that we knew, whose name was Dori, separated from his wife, and paid her the penalty of a hundred gold ounces, which were a thousand cruzados, and he married another woman. And the wife that he separated from married a noble gentleman who was named Aaron, a brother of the said Barnagais. Both the brothers had sons, known to us, of this woman, and these were, or are, great lords, both are brothers of the mother of Prester John, whom all of us knew. All of us who were there knew Romana Orque,[2] sister of the Prester John, who is a noble lady married to a great lord, a noble young gentleman. In our time she

[1] Shoa. [2] *Rumanâ Wark*, the golden pomegranate.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

for the said goods; which is some one of his friends that presents himself, and becomes answerable for him in case he should wish to dismiss his wife, and be not able, through dissipation, or otherwise, to restore all that he has gotten. 584

Further, at the time when they display the fortune of the bride, the husband is obliged to promise a certain sum of money, or an equivalent in effects, to his wife, in case he should chuse to abandon her, or separate himself from her. This must also be confirmed by an oath of the future husband, and of his surety. A certain time, of twenty or thirty days, is determined also by a reciprocal oath, that on the last of these they will go together to church, and receive the sacrament. When all these matters are concluded, the future spouse appoints the marriage-day, and then returns home. When that day arrives, the intended husband goes again to his bride's house, where she appears, and shews him her moveables (mobiglia), or clothes; and he must promise and swear a-new the fore-mentioned articles; and that he will use his wife well; never leave her without meat, or cloathing; keep her in a good house, &c. all which his surety must confirm. When this is over, the bridegroom takes his lady on his shoulders, and carries her off to his house. If it be at a distance, he does the same thing, but only goes entirely round about the bride's house; then sets her down, and returns her into it. After this ceremony, a solemn banquet takes place, consisting of raw beef and bread, and honey-wine, or hydromel, or another beveridge from grain, called bouza, a sort of beer very sour and disgusting. The feast being ended, the parties mount each a mule, and ride to the bridegroom's house, where is concluded all the ceremony necessary to marriage before they live together. When they have lived together during the appointed term of twenty or thirty days, they must both appear at church, and declare before the priest that they are husband and wife, and that they are come to receive the sacrament. The priest, without more ado, celebrates mass; they communicate, and return home. 585

After some time, although both have sworn to live all their life faithful to one another, they take the liberty to separate; if it is the husband who wishes to get off, he, or his surety, must pay the wife that which she brought, and 586

[p. 49]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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586 likewise the sum stipulated in case of separation. If they have had children, the boys always go with the mother, even if there were but an only child; if there be no boys, she takes none of the girls. When the separation comes from the lady, the husband is liable to no restitution, provided he has been always faithful to the married state, as promised; but if it is on account of his bad conduct, or irregular life, that she forms this resolution, he is always subject to his promise and the above-mentioned articles.

It sometimes happens that the husband and wife, mutually, without any cause of ill-will, agree to part; in this case, the effects brought by the wife are united with the sum stipulated by the husband; then divided into equal shares, of which the parties take each one, and return to their former places of abode.

585 This is the established form of those marriages which are said to be celebrated justly, and according to the church. But, with regard to inferior people, these seldom take place; in proof of which I can mention what a person of credit asserted, who had lived twenty-five years in this country. He affirmed, that in all that time he had not seen, nor known, of a marriage at the church, in the places where he lived, except one single instance. I may add to his the testimony of a priest in Tigre, who swore solemnly, that in all Addua, the capital of that province, he was the only man who was married according to the church, that is, in the forementioned manner.

The ordinary way of marrying is this: When two persons ****. Here the MS. breaks of; L. Balugani having been either interrupted, or weary of the subject. It is to be regretted, that he has not given the manner in which the bulk of a nation, very little influenced by Christianity, perform one of the most essential ceremonies in life. His account of the marriage of the church is confirmed by Gregory of Hagara-Christos, in Ludolph's Abyssinian History and Commentary.

It may be gathered from various hints in Mr Bruce's papers, that the Abyssinian peasants and soldiers marry in a few minutes. No settlement, portion, or surety, being necessary, they eat an ox, or two or three sheep raw; the favourite method of cutting pieces from them, while alive, being

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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preferred; a great deal of bouza is drunk on the occasion; 585
dancing, shouting, and various kinds of licentiousness, are practised; if a priest be near, he sprinkles them with holy water, and repeats a hallelujah. The company join in the benediction; and no delicacy of manners constrains either the parties, or the guests. The bride does not appear abroad till about ten days after her marriage. These connections are easily dissolved; but the king's judges, and the governors of provinces, take care that the children shall be maintained by their parents, or others. Judgment is given in all matters by the civil courts; nothing being left to the clergy but the decision of matters fixed by the canons (kanoun), or positive law of the church.

The sons of the royal family confined in Wechne are allowed to marry, but it is only by connivance. No persons of rank give their daughters to these exiles. On the other hand, the Ozoros, or princesses, are given away to every great man in the kingdom, and their marriages and divorces are scandalously frequent. The ceremony at the marriage of a prince, or princess, is as follows *: The match having been settled previously, according to the views of the court, preparations are made for the festival, which is generally held during the rainy season, while the country is secure and abandoned to pleasure. The king being seated on the throne, in the large hall of audience, the parties are introduced before him, with their respective attendants. After kissing his hand, they are all magnificently clothed in dresses of brocade, or other rich stuffs, with presents of knives, &c. corresponding to their habits. The crown is sometimes set on their heads; they receive the benediction of the kees hatse, or king's almoner; after which they retire clothed with the caftan, and mount horses given them by the king, on which they ride in great state, in the midst of acclamations of joy and prosperity, to the house of the bridegroom. A banquet, or dinner, is prepared there; in the course of which, many oxen are slaughtered at the door, in order to furnish *brind*, which is served up, reeking from the animal. Deep drinking then commences; in which the ladies and gentlemen indulge together to a degree incredible, because it is un-

* Introd. to the small MS. Chronicle.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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585 known, in Europe. These marriages are, by no means, permanent: Many of the Ozoros, who always rule their husbands, marry as often as they please; dissolving the marriage preceding at the dictates of convenience, or fancy. But notwithstanding the general licentiousness, there are found several faithful wives and mothers, who are content to deviate from the common example.

766 When any of the king's children dies, it is the custom to hang the audience-chamber with tapestry and curtains, and spread carpets on the floor. The king, having entered, sits on the throne, and the *itsogerd*, a set of professed mourners [167] of the female sex, along with the nobles and household-servants, attend. One of the licaonte, a priest, reads over a list of the former kings with great solemnity, adding, after every name, "May the Lord have mercy on his soul, even to the fifth generation." The assembly reply, "Amen, ycoune, so let it be." At last he says, "Greatly may the Lord have mercy on the soul of ***, who died this day;" on which the Ozoros and their women, the mourners, the household, and the nobles, all set up a loud and general cry of lamentation, and weep for some time. If the person has died in the camp, or city, the coffin is brought before the king, but if not, he performs the ceremony without it. It is afterwards carried out with sendic and nagareet, and buried by the Betwudet, or Billetana-gueta dakakin, in the manner which shall be afterwards mentioned.

361 Koscam * is the richest church in Abyssinia; it is situated on the banks of Kahha, below a ruinous palace, or house, of the king. There are about 40 houses in the village, all belonging to the principal Kuaragna, the party of the queen. All the Kuaragna, Eshtè, Eusebius, and the rest, had their troops drawn up to attack Michael when called to Gondar by Joas, at the advice of Lubo. They designed to engage him on the Angrab, but failed completely. The residing people at Koscam, after Joas's death, were in great fear of Michael, and wore a hood, or cowl, like the monks. Gondar is 2¾ miles, perhaps 3, at its greatest length, and nowhere above a mile broad. The palace is in the centre. Below the town, on the S. W. at the conflux of

* From this to the end, wholly in the words of Mr Bruce.

[p. 52]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭimqat,* means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭimqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā,* grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household.

The program for Ṭimqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized.

By noon on Ṭimqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭimqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter.

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings.

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

836 peers with the insulting term *šlb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that
183 comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsä*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain
572 in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *goramsä* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to
[837] aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsä* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the husband or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with
836 a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets
572 difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible
578 females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsä* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulä* fights.

836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquering" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding
[585] night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time
582 to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On the latter occasions, especially Masqäl and Ṭimqat, the girl may make some
[832] effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair, and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a
[584] chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

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may ask around to learn the identity of her father and then present the matter hopefully to his own father.

Despite this possibility of concession to the boy's amorous desires, the interests of the father are decisive in the selection of a marriage mate, and traditionally the boy has not even known what his bride looks like until the wedding itself. The boy who dares to choose a wife on his own commits an offense for which the father has the moral right to curse and disinherit him. Marriage is regarded as a bond between families, not individuals, and the families of prospective brides are carefully inspected before the father agrees to a contract of betrothal. In making his choice, the father looks for a family whose economic level is at least as high as, if not slightly higher, than his own. He makes certain that the family does not have members who are leprous or who practice the manual crafts associated with the evil eye. He sends a messenger to visit the family on some pretext, for the purpose of determining the character of the girl and her parents. If there is any consanguine relation between the two families, he makes sure that the prospective bride and groom are separated by more than seven generations; that is, they must not have a common great-great-grandparent. A further consideration might be whether there has been any strife or rivalry between the two families, in which case the father may want to try to resolve it by means of a "political" marriage.

Once the father has decided upon a suitable mate for his son, with the advice of the mother and perhaps other relatives, he sends one or more intermediaries, usually elders, to speak on his behalf with the girl's father. The interview is conducted with considerable circumlocution, the petitioners veiling their true purpose until late in the conversation and the girl's father displaying reluctance to grant their request. Often no agreement is reached at this meeting, and the petitioning party must wait to ask a second time. If the girl's father is unwilling to give her hand, he will beg off with some polite excuse, such as that the girl is too young or that he has already promised her to someone else. If he is willing, a date for a formal betrothal is set, at which time the boy and his father together with a group of elders and other relatives repair to the home of the girl's father. After the boy gives presents to the girl's parents, the two fathers discuss their respective contributions of land, cattle, and other goods to the prospective household. When these economic arrangements are settled, a contract for marriage is sworn before witnesses and a date for the wedding is agreed upon, leaving ample time for the two families to vie in preparing sumptuous feasts for the occasion. If the girl is quite young, as long as two or three years may elapse between engagement and marriage.

The wedding festivities commence at the home of the girl's father. After

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

• 585 a certain amount of ritualized delay, the groom and his party are admitted. The groom is not supposed to have seen his bride previously, and is at first shown only a number of similarly dressed maids, among whom sits his fiancée. The maids are then concealed by a curtain or in another room while one of the best men, called *mizē*, determines through various ruses which of the girls is the bride. She is revealed to the groom by being carried out on the back of the *mizē*.

The civil service itself is quite simple, consisting of an oath in the name of the emperor or of some deity that "she is my wife" and "he is my husband," the latter often uttered in so faint a voice that it must be interpreted by one of the bride's relatives. After the oaths and a certain amount of feasting, the couple and the groom's party depart for the home of the groom's parents, where another celebration is under way.

After the festivities the bride and groom retire to a hut which has been set aside for them for the first week or so of their marriage. The experience of the wedding night cannot be very pleasant for the bride. For the first time in her life she is far from the familiar setting of her parental home. She [864] has had little or no sexual instruction, other than the knowledge that sexual [831] matters are "rude" and that she is supposed to resist her husband's advances as fiercely as possible. The groom, on the other hand, has been taught to regard the nuptial night as a battle in which the bride must be forcibly overcome. If somewhat anxious himself, he at least has the moral, and sometimes the physical, support of his two or three *mizē*. If he is unable to accomplish the defloration, he may call in the first *mizē*—usually a married relative or friend with some experience—who will perform the task. When at last the bride has been conquered, the *mizē* take the bloodstained cloth as proof of the girl's virginity. Their triumphant chant—*ber ambār sabara-lewo*, "he has broken the silver bracelet for you" (for the bride's parents)—is the signal for further rejoicing and revelry among the wedding guests. On the morrow groom and friends discuss the conquest with masculine glee, and the bride remains embarrassed and cowed.

[831] The trauma of the wedding night does not appear to do irreparable damage to the girl, however, for Amhara women have the reputation for enjoying sexuality as fully as the men. Indeed, some Amhara maintain that the girl will respect neither her groom nor herself if she does not put up a fight 585 until subdued. With the consummation of her marriage, moreover, the 885 Amhara girl has become a woman, a *sēt*. This represents a considerable elevation of her status and permits her to acquire certain distinctively adult possessions, usually presented to her by the groom. Traditionally these have included a dress, a double-layered toga (*kuṭā*), a headband, a mirror, a leg bracelet, a ring, an umbrella, and, in wealthier families, a colored silk robe.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

For the groom, too, marriage means a gratifying boost toward adult status, 585 symbolized by his receiving from the bride's parents distinctively adult male 885 possessions—a *kuti*, perhaps a *barnos*, and a rifle if they can afford it.

Such is the basic pattern of betrothal and marriage among the Amhara, 583 though many of the details vary from province to province.[6] There are, in 585 addition, certain traditional alternatives to this standard procedure. One of 184 these involves the solemnization of the marriage oath by taking Communion, a rite necessary for a marriage to be counted as legal by the Church, and followed by the ordained clergy and the most pious families. Another form requires no oath at all; the husband is simply expected to provide a salary and clothes for his wife. This procedure is followed chiefly by soldiers and traders, and by those who are marrying for the second time.

Still another type of marriage is that known as *qoṭ assir* ("ten beds") in which the boy goes to live with the girl's family while both are quite young. In this case the boy has his work apprenticeship under the girl's father. After several years, when the girl reaches puberty, a second wedding ceremony will take place—this time at the home of the groom's parents—and the union will be consummated. This type of arrangement tends to be made when the boy's family is too poor to provide enough to get him started on his own, or if the girl's father has no son to help him with the work.

There is, finally, a form of marriage by abduction. If the girl's father does not grant the request of the emissaries of the boy's father, and if the boy's father is still interested, the boy may go with two or three friends to capture her when she is on the way to market or fetching water. When this happens, the couple will approach the girl's parents after they have been married for some time and seek a reconciliation. Occasionally poor families have deliberate recourse to this form of marriage, arranging in advance a bride capture so as to avoid having to prepare the expensive wedding feasts.[7]

Although marriage marks the termination of childhood for the Amhara, 591 it does not by itself signify the full attainment of adulthood. The newly wed 585 couple lives at first in the home of the boy's father, and to truly "arrive" [885] they must establish their own separate household. If the boy's family is wealthy, he may have his own house ready by the time of the wedding. More often, the couple spends a certain amount of time—a few months, or in some cases as much as two or three years—living in the home of the groom's father until their own house is built. To tarry unduly in the father's house, however, is considered a mark of laziness and a great shame.

Furthermore, because of the somewhat arbitrary manner in which the 585 spouses are chosen for each other, there is often a serious problem of post- 606 marital adjustment, a problem not rendered any less difficult by the proximity of the girl's mother-in-law. The divorce pattern is well known among 586

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571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

571 Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
584 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
834 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
178 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The tradition-al mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

• 585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

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furniture, etc.—are equally burdensome investments if the returnee does not 571
possess them. Furthermore, the traditional large wedding is still expected in 585 *
most cases. In the city this involves an enormous expense—as much as 511
Eth$2,000-$4,000—which often puts the groom in debt for several years.*

There are many returnees for whom these factors are excuses more than in- 571
superable obstacles, or who frankly prefer the extended bachelordom made 582
possible by the greater freedom of the modernizing sector to an uncertain
match. If, as frequently is the case, they would marry only an educated wife, [581]
they may be discouraged by the shortage of educated Ethiopian women; or
beset by too much pride, if coming from a humble background, to ask for the
hand of an educated girl who is likely to come from an upper-class family.
They may be victims of the cycle of antagonism that has developed between [578]
educated men and women in Ethiopia, the former attacking the latter for demanding too much in the way of material things and being only superficially modernized—"half-baked"—and the latter indicting the former for preferring foreign girls and unjustly neglecting Ethiopian women.

But the root of the problem is often deeper (leaving aside, for this discus- 581
sion, characterological factors). It is entwined with a basic insecurity about 178
the whole idea of marriage in the transitional atmosphere of contemporary 179
Ethiopia. Perhaps nowhere in the minds of the returnees do traditional and 571
modern norms stand in such delicate counterpoise as with regard to the question of the sort of wife one should marry and the proper type of relation to have with her. Should he prefer the traditional woman, modestly dressed and inconspicuous, or the Western ideal of a sexually attractive female? Should he have a wife who stays at home all the time, or one whom he takes along to social gatherings? Should he have a wife with whom to share interests and discuss problems, or one to order about and keep in her place? The returnees have normally been attracted by the Western marriage pattern while abroad, but it is so out of place in the Ethiopian context that many are troubled by the prospect on return. The foreign-educated man feels he should have an educated wife, but he also feels threatened by a woman who is independent, especially if she is holding a job. Such ambivalence adds an additional dimension of vulnerability to the returnee's position.

In sum: the conditions of life receptive to a modernizing intellectual 121
stratum have not yet been established in Ethiopia. The personal frustrations 571
of the returnees are an inevitable consequence of their being the bearers of 179
modern culture in a traditional oligarchical order—especially one that has 178

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* A new custom has developed in response to this problem. It has become the practice in some [178]
offices for sheets of paper to be circulated prior to a wedding in the ministry or agency where the groom is employed. Co-workers write the amount they wish to be deducted from their salaries in their behalf. Most recently, modest weddings have started to become respectable.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 shown by the vagueness of Amhara kin terminology. The term for brother,
602 *wandam*, also applies to all the male relatives of one's generation and even
601 to one's close friends. Similarly, the terms for uncle and aunt (*agot* and *akeste*) are sometimes used for nephew, niece, and cousin as well; and often these terms are simply replaced by the abstract generic word for kin, *zamad*.

*121 The extent of reciprocal obligations among kin outside the nuclear family is
602 a function primarily of the amount of spontaneous affection that exists among the individuals concerned and how close they happen to live to each other. Relatives on good terms with one another normally take turns visiting one another and eating together on holidays. They help one another in the event of sickness, death, fire, litigation, and murder. Orphaned or economically burdensome children are often farmed out to the households of more successful relatives.

*121 These activities are based on voluntary reciprocity or good will. In its
602 formal structure, the Amhara kinship system stresses the independence of
593 the nuclear family. Although it occasionally happens that married brothers live in a single large compound under the moral authority of their father or an older brother, who is known as its *alaqā* and is responsible for the compound's payment of taxes, each nuclear family lives in separate quarters and produces and consumes its own supply of food by working its own separate acreage of land.

*121 Within the nuclear family itself, the ties that bind are limited by certain
594 fundamental safeguards of individual rights. One is the institution of private
421 property. The land which each partner brings into a marriage or later acquires through bequests remains his own until death. If they should separate, each takes his own land, and the goods acquired by the household during their marriage are divided equally between them. There is also the provision of *gĭl*, a quantity of property that either or both of the spouses may designate, prior to getting married, as strictly private property and indivisible in case of divorce. In the event that a nuclear family enters one of the modern savings associations or *equb* (to be discussed below), husband and wife join as separate members.

*121 The possibility of divorce is another safeguard of individual rights within
593 the nuclear family. Only in the *querbān* type of marriage is divorce forbidden.
586 This form is normally restricted to priests and very devout, usually older, people; and even then divorces sometimes occur, the couple preferring the displeasure of the church to a life of continued antagonism. The standard
[585] sort of marriage is the *samānya* or contract form, in which the equivalent of a simple "I do" concludes the match and a simple "I do not" legitimates divorce. The divorce may be initiated by either husband or wife. An Amharic

423 614 of land settlement resembles the Middle Eastern (Arab) "musha's" land tenure.

No individual or nuclear family can sell, or otherwise alienate, "rest" land belonging to the kin group. He may ask them for permission to do so, but in Amhara provinces this is usually refused. On the other hand, if he moves to a different province (which has happened particularly since Menelik's borderland conquests), his kinfolk will hold his claim in trust so that a returning grandson can claim his rights in full. He can even do this, in some cases of particularly strong and proud families, if the inheritance is on his mother's side.

It is interesting that the Biblical principle of the kinsman-redeemer of the land is still in force among the Amhara, in the same spirit. Cases of this kind have arisen increasingly in the past decade, because of the emperor's efforts to settle landless squatters, who have worked fallow land and have paid tithe for several years. If such formerly fallow land belonged to "rest" kin groups, they try to evict the squatters through legal(or sometimes illegal) means, thus "redeeming the land" for the kin group.

423 428 614 For purposes of inheritance, landholding kin usually include all descendants to the "fourth house", i.e. the great-grandsons. After that, disputes usually arise. If no kin survives-- a very rare occurrence--the partners of the "mähabber" sodality to which the deceased belonged, have a final claim, before the land reverts to the regional authority. Affinal relations, except for the mate who shares equally with children of the deceased, are not considred kin for purposes of inheritance of land. If there are no children, [584] the wife has user claims up to half the estate, which would have been her portion in case of divorce.

671 The intent of these guiding principles and defini-
696 tions were to aid the judge to arrive at a just verdict, preferably a "Solomonic" one. Guides were considered desirable, perhaps due to the absence of the principle of any law of precedence. The emphasis was on the "Code", and this was reinforced by the culture pattern of "literalness", in behavior.

In effect, however, these guides have enabled both draconic or bribed (and therefore lenient) judges to interpret the law with considerable subjectivity. Clever talkers-in-court never fail to use their ability to sway the public audience, which usually has a tremendous effect on the judge.

671 The effect of the "Fetha Nägäst" was to link the
777 church and state. There were usually 12 provincial chief justices, "wombär", in allusion, apparently, to the 12 apostles. The "Fetha Nagäst" ruled all marriage, even
586 684 the non-ecclesiastical "semanya" marriage outside the church premises. Divorce proceedings in the old-Amhara areas still can be carried through only with agreement of the "<u>mänfäs agway</u>", the soul-confessor, one of the priests of the parish, although no divorce is possible in a church marriage.

This "mänfäs agway" receives a small salary from the state; he can summon local state police if the accused mate has refused to appear, to bring him by force. If the divorce is granted, the "mänfäs agway" usually sentences both mates to a fine of Eth$5.- payable to him, on the grounds that both are technically lawbreakers for

586 684 having "torn the marriage agreement". Furthermore, the woman can bring religious pressure to bear on the "manfas agway" if he hesitates in granting the divorce, by publicly ripping off her blue neckcord, the "mätäb", symbol of Christianity, thus threatening to run off to the Muslims because her mistreatment has become completely unendurable. Since the "Fetha Nägäst" also covers Guardianship, the "mänfäs agway" decides to whom children of a broken marriage are to be assigned: usually children under 7 years of age go to the mother, but an older child may be asked to indicate a choice. Boys over 10 usually are given to the father.

671 The new law codes of Emperor Hailé Selassie I are patterned after European, modern codes and are in the process of more comprehensive codification at present. What has been done so far will be described later.

675 B. Contracts, Oath, and the Legal Person, in Abyssinian Traditional Law.

A contract, called "kedan" (the same word is used for "Testament" in Biblical reference), does not have to be written, and usually is not. But it must be witnessed, preferably by more than one reliable person, preferably male. The contracting parties formally announce their agreement, then touch their palms lightly, (ej mätta). If the contract is a last will and testament, the Confessor ("mänfäs agway") holds the thumb of the testator while the will is formally spoken aloud.

7. Family and Kinship in Social Organization.

602 The emphasis on the extended family and kin relations among the Amhara can hardly be exagerated. In all problems of life the Amhara first turns to family and kin. While the partilineal-patrilocal extended family is considered of first importance, consanguinal kinfolk on themother's side rank only slightly less in obligation and duties owed by the individual, and in benefits for which he can appeal. In contrast, affinal relationships are regarded as considerably less important [428] in obligations and benefits,. This attitude is reinforced by the traditional law which emphasized inheritance in consanguineal relationships, even distant ones, over [589] closer affinal relatives; and by the relatively easy divorce from the common "semanya" marriage.

602 539 Proverbs emphasizing various aspects of kin relations abound and are constantly cited as advice in problems, and in "socializing " and "enculturating" the young:

"The liar to win over,
to his brother and sister appeal",

(i.e., do not appeal to the judge, whom the liar may fool; but to his siblings, whom he cannot fool).

"Quarrels within the kinfolk,
(are like) insects on cabbage",

(i.e. they do not strike at the root, are not really destructive).

"Relatives and medicine,
in days of trouble seek them."

606 instruct her to be a good wife; while a stepmother is assumed to have no such desire, and is likely to tell her stepdaughter not to"make so much fuss"over her husband. If the latter were to follow such advice, she would soon be criticized by her husband's parents whose residential hamlet she usually shares. Stepmothers are very common due to the frequency of divorce and the shorter lifespan of women.

597 584 165

606 628 Affinal relatives are expected to come to a person's aid if he becomes involved in a blood feud, patticularly if his consanguinal kin are few or weak. Since there is no pattern of individual duelling, even distant kin become involved readily, as a point of honor.

591 Residence of male persons is usually patrilocal-patrilineal, i.e. in the consanguinal line. But if a young bridegroom finds that his own father has little good land to allocate him in his parental hamlet upon his marriage, he may elect to seek better facilities by establishing residence at the bride's patrilocal hamlet. She is usuallyv very happy about this latter residence, for her kin will protect her even if she wrongs her husband (e.g. by taking a lover in subsequent years). Conversely, thehusband tries to avoid such a situation, for reasons of happiness as well as prestige.

562 which happens among middle and upper feudal nobility--
565 may herself become the founder ansponsor of a church. In this case she usually appoints a male administrator from among her kinsmen, or a local cheqa shum headman, to supervise the sharecropper gabbar supplying her church. She then would also exercise direct or indirect control over the qēs gobāz, the administrating priest.

A commoner or peasant woman is much more exposed
[585] to the inferior legal status of womwn. According to traditional law, the "semanya" bond with the formula of the oath "May the Emperor die" (e.g. Hayle Selassye
[675] yemut"), is not legally valid, and her contractual function has to be performed through a male kinsman. Nevertheless, her legal position is by no means as
[586] weak as that of the Muslim woman. The Amhara woman may take half of her husband's movable possessions upon divorce, i.e. thecows she brought into her marriage and half theincreade of any pooled property. To protect her somewhat from wilful mistreatment at the hands of her husband, a bride is given two male protective "best men", the "mizē"- but they are kinsmen of the bridegroom's!

Social inferiority of a commoner woman is also associated with her manual and menial labor, as hauler of water and hewer of wood or collector of cowdung.for fuel, and similar servant-like chores inside and out-
[854] side the hut. The baby which she carries on her back and breast-feeds for two years renders her physically dirty and often smelly. The commoner woman may not

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

PART IV : The Life Cycle of the Individual

561

Like many other societies with a tradition-directed culture, the individual passing through the age-grades of life is taught well in advance what his duties and privileges are at each stage.

The age-grades, though strongly emphasized in Amhara human relationships, are not as detailed nor as sharply divided from each other as in the case of the Galla of Southern Ethiopia (the "gada" age grades).

[854] The two-year breast-feeding period is the happiest of the stages for the baby. Infancy and childhood, for both sexes, are carefree periods of experimentation, which is sharply abrogated as adolescence, a period of authoritarian obedience, approaches.

[582] Even the first marriage of an individual, taking place at the very beginning of adulthood (even earlier for girls), permits only a minimum of individual choice. Unhappy first marriages are common, [586 587] and so is divorce. But after this, the fully adult man or woman can assume a freedom of choice not known since childhood. They may seek second mates, change residence, join a different "mähabär", etc., and the grip of extended family on the individual is somewhat relaxed by the short life-span of the "elder" grade. This in turn [885] permits the middle-aged adult to be regarded and respected as an elder himself, who not only is permitted a maximum of own choice, but who can and does rule the younger grades.

593 [539] like to order me about?).

"He who talks before his father does,

his mouth will become like that of a leper".

Older brothers may discipline younger siblings, but there is less emphasis on the privileges of the first-born than in Arab countries. The Amhara is aware that younger brothers may often become more honored, richer and wiser later in life:

[539] "Formerly, he (the older) pulled his (the younger's) ear, later on, the horn of the other (the younger) became bigger".

586 In case of divorce, which is frequent, children not staying with one of the parents are quickly taken by kinfolk. Thus, children are often raised by their grandparents, paternal or maternal, who often are young enough to have small children of their own. It is not even rare to see children of a divorcee by her first marriage may be raised by the family of her second husband even after she has divorced and left him also. This is more likely to happen in a town, where the consanguinal kin ties are weakened due to absence of the factor of kin residence, than in the residential kin hamlet. (Foreign observers have paraphrased an old English saying and adapted it to this situation in Abyssinia:

B. Pregnancy, Birth, Circumcision.

842 843 According to popular observation, 25% of all women, especially in the towns, are barren, and another 25% have frequent miscarriages. There are many precautions taken against these mishaps. A pregnant woman may wear extra cowrie shells, "zagol"; in addition to amulets written against the evil spirit "tela" (lit. shadow, an envious female spirit) which brings miscarriages, kills babies at

583 585 1) the eucharistic church marriage, "qurban", engaged in only by a minority, such as some of the nobility, some of the elder persons, and all of the priesthood; 2) the kin-negotiated ("civil") marriage, "semanya", sworn before the cheqa shum headman, and most [588] common; 3) the temporary marriage, for which the man engages to pay regular housekeeping wages, "demoz", especially common among those who travel to markets.

585 "Semanya" literally means "80", and is thus also called the "eighty-bend marriage". This refers to the oath which includes the phrase "May the Emperor die", perjury against which used to be penalized by what was then the enormous sum of 80 Maria Theresa Thalers. It is also called "bäserat", by "contract"). This is the most common form of marriage, dominated by a complexity of kinship arrangements (described in detail below), and divorce is possible through similar negotiations and "parcelling out" of both goods and children. There is a minimum of individual emphasis in this marriage negotiation, especially in a first marriage, for the kin of both sides must be satisfied and "honored", though there is some element of original choice through informal courtship. The church takes cognizance by sending a priest to bless the couple.

"Qurbān" marriage is not urged by the church on laymen, partly because of the sacerdotal character of the church, partly because the eucharistic sacraments are considered so holy that only serious, [586] mature, fully adult persons are advised to engage in it, and divorce cannot be granted. At this sacrament, the couple is rebaptised, and [587] may, on all church holy days, wear the "aklil" crown. Widows and widowers may remarry, but a priest who becomes a widower is expected to assume monkhood. The priest who blesses a "semanya"

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 hind on the ancestral lands.

166 This succession of events has taken place so often in Amhara
361 history, that very few old settlements have remained on the same
[591] spot for even a century. As a result, many regional varieties of "patrilocal residence" have developed, and even "matrilocal residence" is not excluded, though most bridegrooms would shun such a fate. Also, the land tenure of the Amhara has become complex and replete with litigation, because of the amorphous definition of "byet", which sometimes emphasizes the consanguineal aspect, sometimes the residential, of kinship after marriage.

B. Problems of the Married Couple and Divorce.

586 When a couple has remained married for a number of years, people say they are "rägga" (lit. coagulated), stuck on each other. For divorce of a first marriage is common as the partners mature.

If her husband neglects her, wanders off, is a drunkard, or beats her too often, a woman may decide to initiate divorce proceedings. A man may do so if she is disobedient, e.g. wanders off to town without his permission.

587 If a man takes a "damoz" wife in addition to his "semanya" wife, the latter has no recourse in court. But if he takes another "semanya" wife, she can have him arrested, if she can locate him, for breaking his oath. She then angrily accuses him of doing a stupid thing, "you married one ox hump (shanna) above the other". He may be fined, but his first marriage may still remain valid. If a "semanya" wife hears that her husband has a previous wife, she often laughs, flattered, mocking the other woman by saying: "I married on top of her and not below" - for evidently, the man,

587 knowing both, has preferred her!

[588] A deserted wife, angry that her husband has found another, will often take a lover to buy her "a sheep for Epiphany", butter for her hair, and cotton for her distaff.

578 The following relationships are called "gobban", rivals, to
587 each other:

"Semanya" versus "damoz" wife;

Man A, whose divorced wife lives with man B. The men are "gobban".

Woman X, whose divorced husband lives with, or married, woman Y.

"Semanya" and "damoz" wives, versus new concubine, "gärad", fearing permanency.

One "gärad" against another, (also called "wushemma").

But only "semanya" wives are regarded as legal rivals.

842 When a woman is barren, she may follow the biblical example
586 and ask her husband to take a servant girl, "gärad" to have children with her. A "semanya" wife may be divorced on grounds of barrenness, but "with honor", taking half of their communal property with her. Amhara peasants believe that women become barren in the towns because of "loose living". A woman divorced on grounds of barrenness
[588] will often have sexual intercourse with many men, hoping that she will conceive and thus have the blame of barrenness taken from her.

848 A bastard, "diosla" has full inheritance rights if his father acknowledges him. Bastards are believed to be of violent tempers, like "Muhammad Gran" (the Galla Muslim chief who devastated much of Ethiopia in the 16th century, reputedly a bastard).

586 When suing for divorce, either partner appeals to the "mänfäs gubäz" (colloquially "mänfäs amway"), the "soul-counselor" priest, who has jurisdiction even over "semanya" marriages. Only he can

586 issue the traditional divorce, "mäftat" (lit. freeing, i.e. to marry another) dissolving "semanya" marriages. But before doing so he tries to reconcile the couple, quoting proverbs, calling on kin elders, postponing the case time and again to let them "cool off". One mate can summon the other before him by appealing to the "manfas gubae" to issue a summons, and if the mate refuses to come, police can be sent to bring him by force.

A desperate wife can bring pressure on the "manfäs gubäe" by appealing to him as a priest, tearing off her "matab" neckcord signifying Coptic faith, and threatening to turn Muslim. This is interpreted to signify that she is "nearly out of her mind with suffering".

If the divorce is granted, each mate must pay a fine of ETH$5.-, for technically they have "torn the marriage oath". The divorce is witnessed by the mäsö, the kin of each mate, and the chega shum. Half the husband's property goes to her, particularly of their communal property and its increase, except items called "gil" which they had agreed in writing not to divide and retain as individual property. Unweaned babies remain with the mother, also, usually, children below the "age of reason" (ages 7 to 10). The husband will often take older children, especially sons. If he permanently has injured his wife's eye, or hand, he must pay her damages, even if there is no divorce. The formula of divorce, pronounced by each mate, is "May the Emperor die, I have divorced you".

586
548 In rural areas and in the past, a woman almost always returned to her kinfolk. But since the growth of towns, many divorced women have been drawn to the easier livelihood of the "street of single girls" in towns, where they live in shacks, and serve as short-term

586 "dance" wives and innkeepers, offering bed, board and home comforts
548 to traders and transients. By treating some customers well, they hope to find another husband. When no clients are available, they still earn some income by brewing beer and selling it. They wash themselves and their clothing far more often than peasant women, and pay servants to do the heavy labor and cleaning for them. They leave their children with their kinfolk, sometimes sending money. If she were to remain with her kinfolk herself, family pressure would be great for her to remarry quickly, very likely a more undesirable husband than the first.

587 If and when she does remarry, she usually has few of the social safeguards of her first, virgin marriage. There are no "mis" to protect her, the "ānfās gubāē" will not be as sympathetic in marital disputes, and the new husband may take her far away from her kinfolk. But by this time she has matured, at least in experience, and is far more capable of protecting her own interests, economically as well as emotionally, than in her first marriage.

5. The Age of Dominance: The Elder:

888 The term "shemagelyē" signifies an elder; serious, wise, past the prime of physical strength but more energetic and persistent in determining and commanding human relations, particularly within the residential kin group, than ever before. He is treated with great respect.

887 He is one of the dominant elders who rule the kin group, parcel out land for usufruct to biological family units, make decisions in marriage negotiations and other personal affairs involving the family. In town, they act as judges on higher levels. Among the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X 794 562 573 E48

Some women, particularly those possessed by the female zar Shanqit, learn to solicit money from strangers (as described during the convention). Some women thus gradually enter the path to prostitution, while others become independent businesswomen.

The attitude of husbands of zar-possessed wives varies and often is ambivalent. A rustic balagär often fears that if he refuses the time and money and sacrifices demanded by his wife for her zar, the neglected zar will take worse revenge (e.g. on his cattle) or will send locusts to eat his grain, or so distract his wife that she will set fire to the hut. He knows also that if he divorces her, half his cattle and other movable property will be taken by the wife. Thus it is cheaper to let her take an occasional chicken or, more rarely, a ylang goat to the zar. Some men, especially in town, are ashamed to admit that their wives frequent the house of the zar. Semi-educated men, who might themselves consult the zar doctor on some matter of business, forbid their wives to go there. This is more to protest a blow to their prestige than out of modernism, but they will divorce her if she persists.

X 794 586 798

A chronically unhappy marriage not infrequently ends in divorce by way of the zar cult. The "mänfäs gubaä" is placed in an awkward position when the husband or the wife sue for divorce from their "semanya" marriage on the grounds of zar possession. For while as priest of the Coptic church he cannot admit the reality of the zar world, there is sufficient overlap between that and the world of evil spirits in which the priest does (unofficially) believe and against which he may himself, as däbtara, have written amulets. This explains at least in part why the Coptic church ignores the zar cult, and thus

X 794 798

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

business of petitions, and few are without wives. This 621
causes many single women to live here, and when they are 443
old they have another resource, for in this town every Tuesday there is a great market or fair at which three or four hundred persons are brought together; and all the old women and some young ones have measures to measure wheat and salt, and they go to the market to measure and gain their living; they give hospitality to those that sleep there that day, and also take care for them of what remains to be sold for the next market day. There is another 595
reason why there are many women in this town, it is 688
because the men who have plenty of food to eat keep two or three wives; and this is not forbidden to them by the King nor by their magistrates, only by the Church. Every man who has more than one wife does not enter the church, nor does he receive any sacrament: and they hold him to be excommunicated. For a year and a half a nephew of mine and I lodged in the house of a man named Ababitay, and he had three wives still alive and acquaintances of ours, friends in honourable friendship: they said that he had had seven wives and thirty children of them. Nobody forbade them, except the Church, as has been said, which did not give them the benefit of the sacraments; and before our departure, he put away from him, and from intercourse with him, two wives, and remained with one, that is to say, the one he had last, who was the youngest, and already they gave him the sacraments, and he entered the church like anybody else, and as though he had not had more than one wife. On this account there are many women in this town, because the men are well off and are like courtiers: and they take two or three, or more if it pleases them. In this [586]
country marriages are not fixed, because they separate for any cause. I saw people married, and was at a marriage 585
which was not in a church, and it was done in this manner. On the open space before some houses they placed a bed-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

separate persons, but two in one flesh; and that so in like 585
manner should their hearts and wills be. There they remained until mass had been said, and he gave them the communion, and bestowed on them the blessing. And this I saw done in the town of Dara, in the Kingdom of Xoa.[1] I saw another performed in the town of Çequete, in the Kingdom of the Barnagais. When they make these marriages they 586
enter into contracts, as for instance: If you leave me or I [675]
you, that one that causes the separation shall pay such a penalty. And they set the penalty according to the persons, so much gold or silver, or so many mules, or cloths, or cows, or goats, or so many measures of wood. And if either of them separate, that one immediately seeks a cause of separation for such and such reasons, so that few incur the penalty, and so they separate when they please, both the husbands and the wives. If there are any that observe the marriage rule, they are the priests, who never can separate, and cultivators, who have an affection for their wives because they help them to bring up their sons, and to harrow and weed their tillage, and at night when they come to their house they find a welcome reception: thus in effect or perforce they are married for the whole of their lives. As I said that they imposed penalties at marriages, the first Barnagais that we knew, whose name was Dori, separated from his wife, and paid her the penalty of a hundred gold ounces, which were a thousand cruzados, and he married another woman. And the wife that he separated from married a noble gentleman who was named Aaron, a brother of the said Barnagais. Both the brothers had sons, known to us, of this woman, and these were, or are, great lords, both are brothers of the mother of Prester John, whom all of us knew. All of us who were there knew Romana Orque,[2] sister of the Prester John, who is a noble lady married to a great lord, a noble young gentleman. In our time she

[1] Shoa. [2] *Rumanâ Wark*, the golden pomegranate.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

586 separated from this husband and married a man more than forty years of age, who is one of the great lords of the court; the title of this one whom she married is Abuquer, and his father Cabeata. This is the greatest lord there is in the court. Thus I saw and knew many of these separations; I have named these because they are of great personages. [587] And because I said that Aaron married the wife of his brother, let not him that reads it be amazed, because it is the usage of the country. They do not think it strange for [607] a brother to sleep with the wife of his brother. This Aaron moreover had sons of her who had been the wife of his brother, and he left her and married another to whom he is now married.

CAP. XXII.—*Of the manner of baptism and circumcision, and how they carry the dead to their burial.*

304 Circumcision is done by anybody without any ceremony, only they say that so they find it written in the books, that God commanded circumcision. And let not the reader of this be amazed—they also circumcise the females as well as the males, which was not in the Old Law. Baptism they do 851 in this manner: they baptize males at forty days, and females at sixty days after their birth, and if they die before they go without baptism. I, many times and in many places, used to tell them that they committed a great error, and went against what the Gospel says: Quod natum est ex carne caro est; et quod natum est ex spiritu spiritus est. They answered me many times that the faith of their mother sufficed for them, and the communion which she received whilst in a state of pregnancy.[1] They perform this baptism

[1] This opinion of the Abyssinians appears to have anticipated the Sorbonne judgment of 1733, given in the 20th chapter of *Tristram Shandy*.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

for the said goods; which is some one of his friends that presents himself, and becomes answerable for him in case he should wish to dismiss his wife, and be not able, through dissipation, or otherwise, to restore all that he has gotten. 584

Further, at the time when they display the fortune of the bride, the husband is obliged to promise a certain sum of money, or an equivalent in effects, to his wife, in case he should chuse to abandon her, or separate himself from her. This must also be confirmed by an oath of the future husband, and of his surety. A certain time, of twenty or thirty days, is determined also by a reciprocal oath, that on the last of these they will go together to church, and receive the sacrament. When all these matters are concluded, the future spouse appoints the marriage-day, and then returns home. When that day arrives, the intended husband goes again to his bride's house, where she appears, and shews him her moveables (mobiglia), or clothes; and he must promise and swear a-new the fore-mentioned articles; and that he will use his wife well; never leave her without meat, or cloathing; keep her in a good house, &c. all which his surety must confirm. When this is over, the bridegroom takes his lady on his shoulders, and carries her off to his house. If it be at a distance, he does the same thing, but only goes entirely round about the bride's house; then sets her down, and returns her into it. After this ceremony, a solemn banquet takes place, consisting of raw beef and bread, and honey-wine, or hydromel, or another beveridge from grain, called bouza, a sort of beer very sour and disgusting. The feast being ended, the parties mount each a mule, and ride to the bridegroom's house, where is concluded all the ceremony necessary to marriage before they live together. When they have lived together during the appointed term of twenty or thirty days, they must both appear at church, and declare before the priest that they are husband and wife, and that they are come to receive the sacrament. The priest, without more ado, celebrates mass; they communicate, and return home. 585

After some time, although both have sworn to live all their life faithful to one another, they take the liberty to separate; if it is the husband who wishes to get off, he, or his surety, must pay the wife that which she brought, and 586

[p. 49]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

586 likewise the sum stipulated in case of separation. If they have had children, the boys always go with the mother, even if there were but an only child; if there be no boys, she takes none of the girls. When the separation comes from the lady, the husband is liable to no restitution, provided he has been always faithful to the married state, as promised; but if it is on account of his bad conduct, or irregular life, that she forms this resolution, he is always subject to his promise and the above-mentioned articles.

It sometimes happens that the husband and wife, mutually, without any cause of ill-will, agree to part; in this case, the effects brought by the wife are united with the sum stipulated by the husband; then divided into equal shares, of which the parties take each one, and return to their former places of abode.

585 This is the established form of those marriages which are said to be celebrated justly, and according to the church. But, with regard to inferior people, these seldom take place; in proof of which I can mention what a person of credit asserted, who had lived twenty-five years in this country. He affirmed, that in all that time he had not seen, nor known, of a marriage at the church, in the places where he lived, except one single instance. I may add to his the testimony of a priest in Tigre, who swore solemnly, that in all Addua, the capital of that province, he was the only man who was married according to the church, that is, in the forementioned manner.

The ordinary way of marrying is this: When two persons ****. Here the MS. breaks of; L. Balugani having been either interrupted, or weary of the subject. It is to be regretted, that he has not given the manner in which the bulk of a nation, very little influenced by Christianity, perform one of the most essential ceremonies in life. His account of the marriage of the church is confirmed by Gregory of Hagara-Christos, in Ludolph's Abyssinian History and Commentary.

It may be gathered from various hints in Mr Bruce's papers, that the Abyssinian peasants and soldiers marry in a few minutes. No settlement, portion, or surety, being necessary, they eat an ox, or two or three sheep raw; the favourite method of cutting pieces from them, while alive, being

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER V

SOME OF THEIR HABITS & CUSTOMS—(*continued*)

As the people are Christians they are of course monogamists, but though they have only one wife at a time, they often have, unfortunately for the race, many wives one after the other, and as a natural corollary the women have a series of husbands. This is due to their appallingly lax marriage laws and to the ridiculous facilities for divorce, advantages which do not apply to the Gallas, who "enjoy" two or three or more wives at a time, but then they are not Christians. 587 586

Marriage amongst the Abyssinians exists in three forms. Firstly, the man selects a bride, and without any form of ceremony they live together, he supplying her with small amounts of money in addition to a home and the necessaries of life, and when either of them so desires they come to a mutual agreement and separate as easily as they united. 583 586

Secondly, there is the civil marriage. In this case there is a contract made before the *Shum* (or "Mayor") when the properties of the would-be bride and bridegroom are specified, and an arrangement is made as to division in case of divorce, though usually they agree to divide things equally. In the event of divorce this division is carried out to the letter, and should there, for example, be amongst other things only one cooking pot, this is halved. When a woman has been "married"

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

583 and divorced in this manner two or three times she is
586 considered rather a "catch", on account perhaps of her worldly possessions which she has acquired from her previous matrimonial ventures. Then if she does not retire from the world and become a kind of nun she often indulges in the third form of marriage, a solemn religious ceremony which is really binding; it is as a general rule confined to the better class of Abyssinians.

Women, some of whom are attractive and even
562 pretty, have, speaking generally, little or no position. There are of course exceptions to this rule, and I have known cases where a wife has by her influence over her husband acquired a certain status for herself. But this is rare, and by a general though not universal rule women are even supposed to eat separately.

Nevertheless the higher-class woman manages to
562 hold her own, and if badly treated by her husband has
586 the right of appeal to the Church. And so far as I can gather the woman of any class can divorce her husband as easily as he can divorce her, which gives her a certain protection in itself.

In spite of the facility of divorce—possibly to some
562 extent because of the mutual power to exercise it—the
462 lot of women is not at all what one might expect; they
357 are by no means the hewers of wood and drawers of water that one finds so extensively in Africa. They do little or no work, neither washing nor mending their husbands' clothes nor cooking; all this is done by Gourages or others of whom one or more is to be found in almost every household—other than the very poorest —and even amongst one's own servants, acting as "gentlemen's gentlemen".

562 Women of the upper classes are still to some ex-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified stru-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

For the groom, too, marriage means a gratifying boost toward adult status, 585
symbolized by his receiving from the bride's parents distinctively adult male 885
possessions—a *ḳutā*, perhaps a *barnos*, and a rifle if they can afford it.

Such is the basic pattern of betrothal and marriage among the Amhara, 583
though many of the details vary from province to province.[6] There are, in 585
addition, certain traditional alternatives to this standard procedure. One of 184
these involves the solemnization of the marriage oath by taking Communion, a rite necessary for a marriage to be counted as legal by the Church, and followed by the ordained clergy and the most pious families. Another form requires no oath at all; the husband is simply expected to provide a salary and clothes for his wife. This procedure is followed chiefly by soldiers and traders, and by those who are marrying for the second time.

Still another type of marriage is that known as *qoṭ assīr* ("ten beds") in which the boy goes to live with the girl's family while both are quite young. In this case the boy has his work apprenticeship under the girl's father. After several years, when the girl reaches puberty, a second wedding ceremony will take place—this time at the home of the groom's parents—and the union will be consummated. This type of arrangement tends to be made when the boy's family is too poor to provide enough to get him started on his own, or if the girl's father has no son to help him with the work.

There is, finally, a form of marriage by abduction. If the girl's father does not grant the request of the emissaries of the boy's father, and if the boy's father is still interested, the boy may go with two or three friends to capture her when she is on the way to market or fetching water. When this happens, the couple will approach the girl's parents after they have been married for some time and seek a reconciliation. Occasionally poor families have deliberate recourse to this form of marriage, arranging in advance a bride capture so as to avoid having to prepare the expensive wedding feasts.[7]

Although marriage marks the termination of childhood for the Amhara, 591
it does not by itself signify the full attainment of adulthood. The newly wed 585
couple lives at first in the home of the boy's father, and to truly "arrive" [885]
they must establish their own separate household. If the boy's family is wealthy, he may have his own house ready by the time of the wedding. More often, the couple spends a certain amount of time—a few months, or in some cases as much as two or three years—living in the home of the groom's father until their own house is built. To tarry unduly in the father's house, however, is considered a mark of laziness and a great shame.

Furthermore, because of the somewhat arbitrary manner in which the 585
spouses are chosen for each other, there is often a serious problem of post- 606
marital adjustment, a problem not rendered any less difficult by the proximity of the girl's mother-in-law. The divorce pattern is well known among 586

586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have resulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a complete adult, a *mulu sĕt* or *mulu saw*.

885 [851] [586] [581]

From Generation to Generation

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Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profession of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

[577] [709]

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Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout maturation. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

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At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

[785] [688]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 178 581 brides be virgin. Related norms greatly restrict their quest for romantic love. Since Ethiopian society still expects its maidens to be shy and retiring, and to avoid social relations with boys outside their families, the boys find few *883 834 178 opportunities for getting to know members of the opposite sex. Even in those few situations where sociability between the sexes is publicly permitted, ingrained tendencies to segregate the sexes persist. The most liberal context for such sociability, the University College campus, has witnessed relatively little interaction between male and female students. In spite of their occasional resolutions to act more boldly, the college boys have in the past tended to shy away from the co-eds except during such rare formal events as a college dance or off-campus parties.

883 836 178 548 834 This is not to say that modern adolescent males have no opportunity for premarital sexuality. On the contrary, their opportunities in this regard are perhaps better than ever. The proliferation of brothels in Ethiopia's urban centers makes sexual initiation easy, almost a routine event. Students also frequent these houses for social entertainment, dancing to swing and Latin rhythms, and sipping beer or soft drinks. Thus the continued sanctions against social intercourse in more respectable forms work to sharpen the Amhara dichotomy between decency and sexuality, and leave modern boys with a double standard that separates the marriageable girls from the enjoyable ones.

*883 178 581 584 [152] The idea that marriage should be founded on romantic love has brought greater anxiety as well as hope into the lives of Ethiopian adolescents. This anxiety is due in part to the above-mentioned inhibitions against that easy commerce of the sexes which so facilitates the discovery of a suitable love object. It also reflects a certain ambivalence toward the new ideal, based on a lingering attachment to the authority of the old system. This was manifest, for example, in the response to a college debate on the topic, "Resolved: that the custom of letting the parents choose a spouse for the children should be maintained," that took place in 1959. Although on anonymous questionnaires *90 per cent* of the college students said they will probably decide whom to marry themselves, and only 3 per cent said the decision would be made by parents or other relatives, in voting on the matter after the debate the students (in contrast to the judges who awarded the negative debaters) publicly declared themselves 42 per cent affirmative, 41 per cent negative, with 17 per cent abstaining.

*883 178 58 586 152 Anxiety regarding the new conception of marriage, finally, is also connected with a new-fashioned fear of divorce. The mind of the modern adolescent vacillates between the ideal of an abiding marital relationship based on

* Due perhaps to the greater importance of their peers, sexual accomplishments have now become a frequent topic of conversation and a matter for boasting among modern adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

love and the image of the traditional Amhara marriage, likely as not to end in divorce. This sort of concern was expressed in a revealing way in the following statement by a twenty-year-old college student: 883* 581 586 178 [052]

> The main thing I want in my wife is good character. Beauty is not so important. Of course she will be an excellent cook. But mostly I am concerned that she be the *right* one for me; I do not want to get divorced. But you can't really know if she is the right one until after ten years of married life. If after having about five or six children it turns out troublesome, I will have to leave her. A person cannot go on living that way.

In some instances, ironically, this quest for the perfect marriage leads to a rejection of the very institution of marriage itself. Seven per cent of the students questioned indicated that they do not want to get married eventually—either because they "could never afford it," they "would be happier living single," or they just *"do not want to enter a relation that will end in divorce."* Thus at a time when the stability and warmth of family life are needed more than ever, the very possibility of family is doubted. 883* 178 581 589

Some Ethiopian students blame the deteriorated family and an alleged increase in divorce in their country on the impact of Western civilization. True, the introduction of the Western concept of marriage and of the rudiments of a modern occupational system have dislocated the traditional arrangements for marriage; and other related problems, to be discussed in the next chapter, plague the Western-educated elite. But Western civilization has also developed resources to begin to cope with analogous problems in its own societies, and perhaps it is not too soon to acquaint Ethiopia's youth with some of these: for example, the recent developments in man's understanding of the dynamics of marriage as well as more sophisticated conceptions of the ideal and importance of family life in modern society. 581 177

CULTURAL ORIENTATION

A generational conflict manifests itself further with respect to questions of belief, taste, and value. Because of differences on such issues, students and their parents have grown far apart. The more traditionalist of the older generation refer to the modern youth as *ya-ämmïntaññä shi ïjjotch* ("children of the eighth millennium"); that is, of that corrupt time the Amhara believe will precede the destruction of the world. The latter, in turn, refer to the old-fashioned as ignorant, uncivilized, sometimes even "savage." 561

Yet, as we have been suggesting, this conflict is by no means total. Amhara adolescents are too deeply attached to many aspects of their traditional culture to engage in wholesale rebellion. Because of strict childhood training they remain basically respectful toward their elders. In addition, they often prefer to champion their own traditions in the spirit of a freshly excited nationalism. 883* 561 178

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 602 601 shown by the vagueness of Amhara kin terminology. The term for brother, *wandam*, also applies to all the male relatives of one's generation and even to one's close friends. Similarly, the terms for uncle and aunt (*agot* and *akeste*) are sometimes used for nephew, niece, and cousin as well; and often these terms are simply replaced by the abstract generic word for kin, *zamad*.

*121 602 The extent of reciprocal obligations among kin outside the nuclear family is a function primarily of the amount of spontaneous affection that exists among the individuals concerned and how close they happen to live to each other. Relatives on good terms with one another normally take turns visiting one another and eating together on holidays. They help one another in the event of sickness, death, fire, litigation, and murder. Orphaned or economically burdensome children are often farmed out to the households of more successful relatives.

*121 602 593 These activities are based on voluntary reciprocity or good will. In its formal structure, the Amhara kinship system stresses the independence of the nuclear family. Although it occasionally happens that married brothers live in a single large compound under the moral authority of their father or an older brother, who is known as its *alaqā* and is responsible for the compound's payment of taxes, each nuclear family lives in separate quarters and produces and consumes its own supply of food by working its own separate acreage of land.

*121 594 421 Within the nuclear family itself, the ties that bind are limited by certain fundamental safeguards of individual rights. One is the institution of private property. The land which each partner brings into a marriage or later acquires through bequests remains his own until death. If they should separate, each takes his own land, and the goods acquired by the household during their marriage are divided equally between them. There is also the provision of *gīl*, a quantity of property that either or both of the spouses may designate, prior to getting married, as strictly private property and indivisible in case of divorce. In the event that a nuclear family enters one of the modern savings associations or *equb* (to be discussed below), husband and wife join as separate members.

*121 593 586 [585] The possibility of divorce is another safeguard of individual rights within the nuclear family. Only in the *querbān* type of marriage is divorce forbidden. This form is normally restricted to priests and very devout, usually older, people; and even then divorces sometimes occur, the couple preferring the displeasure of the church to a life of continued antagonism. The standard sort of marriage is the *samānya* or contract form, in which the equivalent of a simple "I do" concludes the match and a simple "I do not" legitimates divorce. The divorce may be initiated by either husband or wife. An Amharic

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

proverb which stresses the rights of women in this regard gives the following advice: 121* 593 586 [539]

> *Balāgar sitagab yemataū ba-degger;*
> *Tayawennā nay qitāwen yegāgger.*

> When a peasant gets sated he beats you with wood;
> Leave and come home, let him bake his own bread!

A couple who have firmly decided upon divorce need simply call in their relatives or go before the *çhīqā shum* in order to have their property properly divided. The only recourse to judicial process is when, as often happens, disputes break out concerning the division of property. In the *damoz* form of marriage, in which there is no civil oath, divorce is yet simpler. The wife is given certain presents and a monthly salary for the duration of the marriage. When the husband has to leave for another part of the country, or if the couple quarrel, they simply separate without further ado.

Despite its heavy claim on the energies of its members, then, the Amhara kinship system is such as to make members of the nuclear family relatively independent of extended relationships, and to give the individual marriage partners important areas of independence from each other. 121* 593 594

Religious Organization

Membership in the Monophysite Church is automatic for all Amhara except a small percentage who are Muslim. This membership is symbolized by the ceremony of baptism, performed for male infants on the fortieth day and for females on the eightieth. At that time the child receives a special Christian name in addition to his regular family name. 121* 795 794 [851] [553]

Certain obligations are incumbent upon every member of the church. Foremost among these is the requirement of fasting, which begins for children of both sexes at about the age of seven and introduces a considerable element of constraint into the lives of the Amhara. Second, there is the obligation to observe the Sabbaths and the main holidays by refraining from arduous physical labor on those days. In addition, each household is obliged to contribute a certain quantity of grain to the local church every year.* [785] [796]

Apart from the rigorous fasting requirements, and the injunction not to work on holy days—a dubious hardship—the individual is relatively free of ritual obligations. The rituals demanded by the church are so manifold, and so sacred, that responsibility for them is given to the clergy, and the laymen

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*In some areas this is a fixed amount per household (*e.g.*, one or two *qusse*); in others it is proportionate to the wealth of the family. It is collected by a lay official of the church, the *grad alaqā*, though sometimes by the *gabaz*.

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holds priest land because he is a ristena of a founding ambilineage of the parish, his son's ordination means that the lands or payments until now turned over to a stranger priest (in lieu of a ristena priest) can be kept within the family.

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• [586]

The durability of the ties which bind a priest to his natal parish are reinforced by his marriage. Most peasants are married in a "secular union" (yaluwkurban migabat), which excludes neither divorce not extramarital sexual adventures.[21] The priest, on the other hand, must be married, and it can be only as a "communion marriage" (bikurban migabat), an indissoluble sacrament of the Church which commits the spouses to sexual fidelity and forbids even remarriage. Thus, the priest is cut off from carousing in the talla houses of the town. He must instead confine his comraderie to the courtyard of the parish church, separated from the persons and experiences which might otherwise lead him away from his parish fields.

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Thus enrollment in the parish school is conceived

[21] Two other forms of marriage, associated with a man on travels or living in town, are yidomoz migabat (which lasts for a contractual period) and yilijinat (providing only exclusive sexual rights to the woman).

PART IV : The Life Cycle of the Individual

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Like many other societies with a tradition-directed culture, the individual passing through the age-grades of life is taught well in advance what his duties and privileges are at each stage.

The age-grades, though strongly emphasized in Amhara human relationships, are not as detailed nor as sharply divided from each other as in the case of the Galla of Southern Ethiopia (the "gada" age grades).

[854] The two-year breast-feeding period is the happiest of the stages for the baby. Infancy and childhood, for both sexes, are carefree periods of experimentation, which is sharply abrogated as adolescence, a period of authoritarian obedience, approaches. [582] Even the first marriage of an individual, taking place at the very beginning of adulthood (even earlier for girls), permits only a [586 minimum of individual choice. Unhappy first marriages are common, [587] and so is divorce. But after this, the fully adult man or woman can assume a freedom of choice not known since childhood. They may seek second mates, change residence, join a different "mähabär", etc., and the grip of extended family on the individual is somewhat relaxed by the short life-span of the "elder" grade. This in turn [885] permits the middle-aged adult to be regarded and respected as an elder himself, who not only is permitted a maximum of own choice, but who can and does rule the younger grades.

583 585 1) the eucharistic church marriage, "qurban", engaged in only by a minority, such as some of the nobility, some of the older persons, and all of the priesthood; 2) the kin-negotiated ("civil") marriage, "semanya", sworn before the cheqa shum headman, and most [588] common; 3) the temporary marriage, for which the man engages to pay regular housekeeping wages, "damot", especially common among those who travel to markets.

585 "Semanya" literally means "80", and is thus also called the "eighty-bond marriage". This refers to the oath which includes the phrase "May the Emperor die", perjury against which used to be penalized by what was then the enormous sum of 80 Maria Theresa Thalers. It is also called "bässrat", by"contract"). This is the most common form of marriage, dominated by a complexity of kinship arrangements (described in detail below), and divorce is possible through similar negotiations and "parcelling out" of both goods and children. There is a minimum of individual emphasis in this marriage negotiation, especially in a first marriage, for the kin of both sides must be satisfied and "honored", though there is some element of original choice through informal courtship. The church takes cognizance by sending a priest to bless the couple.

"Qurbān" marriage is not urged by the church on laymen, partly because of the sacerdotal character of the church, partly because the eucharistic sacraments are considered so holy that only serious, [586] mature, fully adult persons are advised to engage in it, and divorce cannot be granted. At this sacrament, the couple is rebaptised, and [587] may, on all church holy days, wear the "aklil" crown. Widows and widowers may remarry, but a priest who becomes a widower is expected to assume monkhood. The priest who blesses a "semanya"

423 hind on the ancestral lands.

166 This succession of events has taken place so often in Amhara
361 history, that very few old settlements have remained on the same
[591] spot for even a century. As a result, many regional varieties of "patrilocal residence" have developed, and even "matrilocal residence" is not excluded, though most bridegrooms would shun such a fate. Also, the land tenure of the Amhara has become complex and replete with litigation, because of the amorphous definition of "gyet", which sometimes emphasizes the consanguineal aspect, sometimes the residential, of kinship after marriage.

B. Problems of the Married Couple and Divorce.

586 When a couple has remained married for a number of years, people say they are "rägga" (lit. coagulated), stuck on each other. For divorce of a first marriage is common as the partners mature.

If her husband neglects her, wanders off, is a drunkard, or beats her too often, a woman may decide to initiate divorce proceedings. A man may do so if she is disobedient, e.g. wanders off to town without his permission.

587 If a man takes a "damos" wife in addition to his "semanya" wife, the latter has no recourse in court. But if he takes another "semanya" wife, she can have him arrested, if she can locate him, for breaking his oath. She then angrily accuses him of doing a stupid thing, "you married one ox hump (shanna) above the other". He may be fined, but his first marriage may still remain valid. If a "semanya" wife hears that her husband has a previous wife, she often laughs, flattered, mocking the other woman by saying: "I married on top of her and not below" - for evidently, the man,

587 knowing both, has preferred her;

[588] A deserted wife, angry that her husband has found another, will often take a lover to buy her "a sheep for Epiphany", butter for her hair, and cotton for her distaff.

578 The following relationships are called "gobban", rivals, to
587 each other:

"Semanya" versus "damos" wife;

Man A, whose divorced wife lives with man B. The men are "gobban".

Woman X, whose divorced husband lives with, or married, woman Y.

"Semanya" and "damos" wives, versus new concubine, "gärad", fearing permanency.

One "gärad" against another, (also called "wushemma").

But only "semanya" wives are regarded as legal rivals.

842 When a woman is barren, she may follow the biblical example
586 and ask her husband to take a servant girl, "gärad" to have children with her. A "semanya" wife may be divorced on grounds of barrenness, but "with honor", taking half of their communal property with her. Amhara peasants believe that women become barren in the towns be-
[588] cause of "loose living". A woman divorced on grounds of barrenness will often have sexual intercourse with many men, hoping that she will conceive and thus have the blame of barrenness taken from her.

848 A bastard, "dicala" has full inheritance rights if his father acknowledges him. Bastards are believed to be of violent tempers, like "Muhammad Gran" (the Galla Muslim chief who devastated much of Ethiopia in the 16th century, reputedly a bastard).

586 When suing for divorce, either partner appeals to the "mänfäs qubä" (colloquially "mänfäs awway"), the "soul-counselor" priest, who has jurisdiction even over "semanya" marriages. Only he can

586 "damoz" wives and innkeepers, offering bed, board and home comforts
548 to traders and transients. By treating some customers well, they hope to find another husband. When no clients are available, they still earn some income by brewing beer and selling it. They wash themselves and their clothing far more often than peasant women, and pay servants to do the heavy labor and cleaning for them. They leave their children with their kinfolk, sometimes sending money. If she were to remain with her kinfolk herself, family pressure would be great for her to remarry quickly, very likely a more undesirable husband than the first.

587 If and when she does remarry, she usually has few of the social safeguards of her first, virgin marriage. There are no "mis̄ to protect her, the "mānfās gubāē" will not be as sympathetic in marital disputes, and the new husband may take her far away from her kinfolk. But by this time she has matured, at least in experience, and is far more capable of protecting her own interests, economically as well as emotionally, than in her first marriage.

5. The Age of Dominance: The Elder:

888 The term "shemagelē" signifies an elder; serious, wise, past the prime of physical strength but more energetic and persistent in determining and commanding human relations, particularly within the residential kin group, than ever before. He is treated with great respect.

887 He is one of the dominant elders who rule the kin group, parcel out land for usufruct to biological family units, make decisions in marriage negotiations and other personal affairs involving the family. In town, they act as judges on higher levels. Among the

834 occasionally affects non-prostitutes also. Arab traders, particularly, like to joke with Coptic Amhara women when the latter come to their stores: such as teasingly to refuse to hand over goods after purchase has been made, or, if the customer finds the price on a desired item too high, suggesting that payment might be made "another way". These fixed stores, located near the daily or Saturday markets, feature luxuries rather than what are considered necessities; e.g. sandals, tea, sugar, raisins, necklaces, imported chocolate, etc. A woman deserted by her husband, or divorced, might succumb. On the other hand, Muslim women are much more segregated from menfolk, so that there is little opportunity for an Amhara male to break the rule with a Muslim female.

836 Virginity ("demrel") is expected of girls at first marriage, which occurs about the age of 14 or 15. If she is found by the husband not to be a virgin, and he feels sure of it and insists on his rights, he can divorce her, or go to court against her kinfolk claiming damages as high as Eth$200 - 300. This is rare, however, for at that age most girls are too young to have had much opportunity for complete sexual

584 intercourse. The courtship, apart from the above-described occasions during watch in the fields and on festives - when they are very formal -, consists of what adults condescendingly and smilingly refer to as "addiarrat", love-whisperings, considered adolescent, during which the boy and girl alternate between childish whisperings and playful hitting at each other. The term is not used for love-making of adults or married couples.

587 Very different is the courtship of the girl after her first divorce, which frequently occurs when her personality matures, often while she is still in her twenties. She prefers an experienced lover.

587 The proverb says:

[539] "He who knows not how to kiss,
his nose he will blow on you."

The divorcée often develope strategy and techniques to win a man of her choice: She may give him a ring to remind him of her when he is away from her; when he visits her, she feeds him "ergo" (thick buttermilk), so he will be sleepy and remain at her house, rather than go to his men friends to gamble. Women have a proverb about men:

[539] "Like a child, (he is attracted) by the ring,
like a cat, (he is attracted) by milk."

If she has a mother who is a good cook, the divorcee will employ this attraction, saying:

[539] "More than the flesh of the daughter,
(he is attracted by)
the butter (i.e. cooking) of the mother."

[832] When this fails, she may enlist the supernatural aid of love amulets, "mistafaqer", purchased from the dabtara scribe with the man's name inscribed, to inspire love for her in him; and in addition to the fee, may treat the dabtara to beer and sweets to enlist his greatest power on her behalf.

588 If her lover is already married, she may nevertheless establish a "sweetheart" ("wushemma") relationship with him, though she has no claim on "damoz" wages or recognition of this temporary wifehood. This is also one of the few cases in which a woman will try not to have children.

548 588 However, a divorcee who was divorced largely on account of her barrenness - and about 25% of the townswomen are barren at least for some years - will try to have a child, even out of wedlock. She will then very likely join the "unattached women" in the streets inhabited

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

586 separated from this husband and married a man more than forty years of age, who is one of the great lords of the court; the title of this one whom she married is Abuquer, and his father Cabeata. This is the greatest lord there is in the court. Thus I saw and knew many of these separations; I have named these because they are of great personages. [587] And because I said that Aaron married the wife of his brother, let not him that reads it be amazed, because it is the usage of the country. They do not think it strange for [607] a brother to sleep with the wife of his brother. This Aaron moreover had sons of her who had been the wife of his brother, and he left her and married another to whom he is now married.

CAP. XXII.—*Of the manner of baptism and circumcision, and how they carry the dead to their burial.*

304 Circumcision is done by anybody without any ceremony, only they say that so they find it written in the books, that God commanded circumcision. And let not the reader of this be amazed—they also circumcise the females as well as the males, which was not in the Old Law. Baptism they do 851 in this manner: they baptize males at forty days, and females at sixty days after their birth, and if they die before they go without baptism. I, many times and in many places, used to tell them that they committed a great error, and went against what the Gospel says: Quod natum est ex carne caro est; et quod natum est ex spiritu spiritus est. They answered me many times that the faith of their mother sufficed for them, and the communion which she received whilst in a state of pregnancy.[1] They perform this baptism

[1] This opinion of the Abyssinians appears to have anticipated the Sorbonne judgment of 1733, given in the 20th chapter of *Tristram Shandy*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 other women do in the church of the apostles, who take it
562 in its place. I always saw the women of the Barnagais go
[644] to the women's church to take the communion with the other women, and I did not see them use the privilege which they say they have, of taking the communion, with one damsel, in the church of the men. The circuits of the churchyards join to one another; they are of very high
796 walls. They make the sacramental bread for both churches in one building, and they say the masses in both churches at the same time, and the priests who serve in one church serve also in the other; that is two thirds of the priests in the men's church, and one third in the women's church, and so they are distributed. These churches have not got tithes, but they have got much land belonging to the priests, and they put it out to profit and divide the revenues of the lands among themselves: the Barnagais gives what is necessary to the churches, such as ornaments, wax, butter, incense in sufficient quantity, and he supplies them with
[792] everything. There may be in these churches twenty priests and always twenty-two friars. I never saw a church of priests which had not got friars, nor a monastery of friars which had got priests; because the friars are so numerous that they cover the world, both in the monasteries as also in the churches, roads, and markets: they are in every place.

CAP. XXVI.—*How the priests are, and how they are ordained, and of the reverence which they pay to the churches and*
793 *their churchyards.*

684 The priests are married to one wife, and they observe the
587 law of matrimony better than the laity: they live in their houses with their wives and children. If their wife should die they do not marry again; neither can the wife, but she

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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may become a nun or remain a widow as she pleases. If a 793
priest sleeps with another woman whilst his wife is alive he 684
does not enter the church any more, nor does he enjoy its 587
goods, and remains as a layman. And this I know from
having seen a priest accused before the patriarch of having
slept with a woman, and I saw that the priest confessed the
offence, and the patriarch commanded him not to carry a
cross in his hand, nor to enter a church, nor to enjoy the
liberties of the church, and to become a layman. If any
priests after becoming widowers marry, they remain laymen,
As it happened to Abuquer, who married Romana Orque,
sister of Prester John, who I have already said was a priest,
chief chaplain of Prester John, and he was disordained[1] and
made a layman. He no longer enters the church, and
receives the communion at the door of the church as a
layman, and among the women. The sons of the priests 793
are for the most part priests, because in this country there [871]
are no schools, nor studies, nor masters to teach, and the
clergy teach that little that they know to their sons: and
so they make them priests without more legitimisation,
neither does it seem to me that they require it, since they
are legitimate sons. All are ordained by the Abima Markos,
for in all the kingdoms of Ethiopia there is no other bishop
or person who ordains. The orders are given in two stages,
as I will relate further on. I with my own eyes saw them
given many times. In all this country the churchyards are [764]
inclosed by very strong walls, that the wild beasts may not
disinter the dead bodies. They show them great reverence, [576]
no man riding on a mule passes before a church, even
though he is going in a great hurry, without dismounting,
until he has passed the church and churchyard a good bit.

[1] *Foy desordenado e feito leigo*; not a correct expression.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER V

SOME OF THEIR HABITS & CUSTOMS—(*continued*)

As the people are Christians they are of course monogamists, but though they have only one wife at a time, they often have, unfortunately for the race, many wives one after the other, and as a natural corollary the women have a series of husbands. This is due to their appallingly lax marriage laws and to the ridiculous facilities for divorce, advantages which do not apply to the Gallas, who "enjoy" two or three or more wives at a time, but then they are not Christians. 587 586

Marriage amongst the Abyssinians exists in three forms. Firstly, the man selects a bride, and without any form of ceremony they live together, he supplying her with small amounts of money in addition to a home and the necessaries of life, and when either of them so desires they come to a mutual agreement and separate as easily as they united. 583 586

Secondly, there is the civil marriage. In this case there is a contract made before the *Shum* (or "Mayor") when the properties of the would-be bride and bridegroom are specified, and an arrangement is made as to division in case of divorce, though usually they agree to divide things equally. In the event of divorce this division is carried out to the letter, and should there, for example, be amongst other things only one cooking pot, this is halved. When a woman has been "married"

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought
885 into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have re-
[851] sulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or
[586] else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a com-
[587] plete adult, a *mulu sēt* or *mulu taw*.

From Generation to Generation

867 Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

[577] The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profes-
[779] sion of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

867 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central
779 symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern
785 a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout matura-
262 tion. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early
577 age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

867 At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction
779 of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or
793 confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may
577 either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her
[785] husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing
[688] penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

632 Since the town attracted the most clever "debtära",
[799] many of whom were herbologists, it was also a center where "medical aid", sometimes quite effective, could be obtained, and attracted patients from far and wide.

[463] Ethnic craftsmen would settle in hamlets within walking distance of the town, to provide iron tools, tanned leather, sun umbrellas, etc., without, however, exposing themselves to mockery, insults and occasional assaults by living in the town itself.

632 517 The town developed as a social center, and center for entertainment, almost inevitably. First, religious feasts such as the Epiphany parades and the tournaments on the public commons on "ganna" (Christmas) attracted the populace; and youngsters as well as adult loafers found themarket scenes fascinating. Secndly, the Arab traders liked to discuss business and news over tea or
[265] coffee. So "teahouses " (shay bet") sprang up near the Saturday market, serving snacks also to many a male at odds with his wife, and excluding all womenfolk. Con-
632 648 588 versely, the mead house, ("tej bet") provided evening entertainment with female singers and dancers (azmari) for the all-male clientele, and waitresses easily available for sexual entertainment. Moreover, every town had at least one "street of unattached women", who catered to travellers or visiting peasants as innkeepers, restaurateurs, and as temporary wives; they were usually divorcees, who hoped to find another husband, and to settle down again to regular married life.

632 178 Except for some of the feudal arrangements, most of this town pattern of social organization is still

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

671 Despite its apparent and proclaimed orthodoxy, occasional amendmants, either in theory or practice or both, have been made through royal decrees or common-law usage. For example, concubinage has long been practiced, [588] sometimes in the form of "dämoz" marriage, which evades the Fetha Nagast by giving the woman the status of "hired servant" receiving a periodic "wage", and in this form the practice is at present legally recognized even in the new, modern laws decreed by the present emperor.

In fact, the "Fetha Nägäst" contains an "elastic clause", which has been rediscovered under the present regime, and is cited as justification for the new, European-patterned laws which upset the ultra-conservatives. This clause advises: "Act according to your observation of the c nditions of times and seasons". This was quoted in the new Penal Code of 1930.

681 However, in the past, the draconic aspects of the criminal law in particular were most literally interpreted by many kin chiefs and feudal lords up to the beginning of the present emperor's regime. The hand of a thief was cut off, and in case of armed robbery both a hand and a foot. Rebels were similarly punished. If a person took the usual oath, "by the life of the King" and was found to have perjured himself, his tongue could be cut out. An insult to the king could be punished by blinding. A father had the right of life and death over [543 567] his children--but not over his Christianized slaves. The latter were further protected against being sold, the penalty for which offense could be the hanging of the master.

563 "Barya" people below the northwest escarpment, so that
567 both terms became synonymous with "slave". Because of the negroid features of the former, and the very black skin of both, they had high visibility, and did not have to be guarded closely as they could hardly escape. In view of the widespread illiteracy, manumission was almost never practiced, and such a document would be ignored by a slave trader or any Amhara who wanted to re-enslave a manumitted Shanqalla or Barya. Until slave-trading was prohibited by the present emperor, negroid slaves were still brought from the Gumuz tribe of Quara sub-province, just below the western, old-Amhara escarpment. But concubinage was so widespread
[588] that today there are more half-Shanqalla than full-blooded wx-slaves. Freed only since 1942, little change has so far taken place in their social status. In rural areas most remain with their old masters as
[464] servants or sharecroppers. In towns, they form a pool ofuunskilled labor, employed only briefly from time to time, subsisting on very little, residing in the oldest parts of theold Muslim ghetto. Some of their women have
[57] managed to raise their economic status by becoming house-maids, espceially serving the women on the "street of unattached girls", or by mar ying ploygynous Muslims.

563 The Coptic church had not interested itself in
567 the status of slaves, for according to its rules a
797 Chriatian could not be kept in slavery, and therefore no attempt was made to convert Shanqalla or Barya slaves.

1. The Beginning of Life.

842 A. The Desire for Children: adoption.

Children are greatly desired by the Amhara, and a childless home is regarded as under a heavenly curse. Children are regarded as continuing the "byet", the residential extended family; as a source of riches from childhood on when they begin economic tasks; as a source of comfort and security in old age; as defenders in feuds and wars; even after the death of parents, children help them into heaven by means of "täskar".

[583] When a woman is barren, and amulets have proven no cure for her, she may give her husband a concubine, "gärad" (lit. servant maid), so that he will not feel deprived of fatherhood and begin

597 to hate her. Or she may adopt a child, preferably an orphan of kinfolk or a well-known family, by taking the child to the confessor-priest and swearing the oath of ecclesiastical adoption, whereupon the child becomes "yägal kidan lej" (lit. contract-child). This may include the ceremony of "breast-mother", "yätut ennat", previously described. Less fortunate is the foster child, not formally adopted, who lives with the foster parents, guards the crops and herds the cows, but is more completely dependent on the good will of the "bread mother", "enjera ennat".

593 Fathers, whether natural or adopted, expect complete obedience from their children, particularly after they have arrived at the "age of reason". Fathers feel defensively obliged to maintain their authority; as the proverbs say of a father addressing the

593 son:

539 "Sheep! If I do not eat you, you would devour me", said the hyena". (meaning: perhaps you'd

583 585 1) the eucharistic church marriage, "qurban", engaged in only by a minority, such as some of the nobility, some of the older persons, and all of the priesthood; 2) the kin-negotiated ("civil") marriage, "semanya", sworn before the cheqa shum headman, and most [588] common; 3) the temporary marriage, for which the man engages to pay regular housekeeping wages, "damoz", especially common among those who travel to markets.

585 "Semanya" literally means "80", and is thus also called the "eighty-bond marriage". This refers to the oath which includes the phrase "May the Emperor die", perjury against which used to be penalized by what was then the enormous sum of 80 Maria Theresa Thalers. It is also called "bäserat", by "contract"). This is the most common form of marriage, dominated by a complexity of kinship arrangements (described in detail below), and divorce is possible through similar negotiations and "parcelling out" of both goods and children. There is a minimum of individual emphasis in this marriage negotiation, especially in a first marriage, for the kin of both sides must be satisfied and "honored", though there is some element of original choice through informal courtship. The church takes cognizance by sending a priest to bless the couple.

"Qurbān" marriage is not urged by the church on laymen, partly because of the sacerdotal character of the church, partly because the eucharistic sacraments are considered so holy that only serious, [586] mature, fully adult persons are advised to engage in it, and divorce cannot be granted. At this sacrament, the couple is rebaptised, and [587] may, on all church holy days, wear the "aklil" crown. Widows and widowers may remarry, but a priest who becomes a widower is expected to assume monkhood. The priest who blesses a "semanya"

585 bride and groom merely expresses the prayerful wish that "God will show the way" to the lay couple toward "qurban", in time. In fact, middle-aged couples who have gone through several divorces and have finally decided definitely to spend the rest of their days together, may take the "aklil" in "qurban". Qurban for lay people, e.g. deacons, is performed usually only 40 days after their "semanya", to make certain that their marriage bond is strong and real and that no rift has arisen (e.g. if the bride had been found not a virgin).

•588 487 "Damoz" marriage (lit. wage) is what the term implies. Most commonly the arrangement is from month to month, but may be for longer or shorter periods, such as the duration of a caravan trip, or an extended stay at a major market, where the "damoz" wife offers the best and often the only available hotel and restaurant services. (She is similar to the Biblical lady in the city of Jericho). The term is a contraction of "dammwaz" (lit. "blood - and - sweat") [465] compensation. Her wages vary greatly from region to region, and have considerably increased in recent years, for even the new, modern law recognized her claim. In the past she did well if she received ETH$5.-per month in addition to housekeeping expenses, but [675] now some obtain ETH$20.- from traders. The agreement is made orally but before witnesses, so that she can go to court if the man defaults on his payments. If they separate at the expiration of the contract, she has no right to half his property as does the semanya [428] wife, but if there are children conceived during her contract, the children can make a claim for part of the father's inheritance should he die.

588 The "damoz" temporary wife is usually recruited from a lower class than that of the man, of landless family. But often she is merely a divorcee, who "lives alone" in a street inhabited by women of similar status in the town, who are in-between marriages, and make a living serving transients with bed and board, giving them the comforts of home, cooking, baking, cleaning. They are not considered good-time prostitutes of the mead-houses ("toj-bet"), and are therefore much more respected.

[548]

588 487 178 Respectably-married ("semanya") man would, in the past, take on a "damoz" wife to accompany them on caravan trips, to spare the "semanya" wife the discomforts and perils of the journey. Now that trucks travel comparatively fast from province to province, the travelling "damoz" wife has become rare, but the residential "damoz" wife continues in the towns much as before, and "semanya" wives are therefore not as tolerant of them as they once were when they appreciated their husbands' efforts to spare them discomfort. For, they reasoned, "who else will cook for him, how will he eat?".

588 848 The "damoz" wife's children are fully legitimate. She is far higher in status than the simple concubine ("<u>yachen ered</u>"), lit. the servant-maid of the thigh), who was and is often a permanent member of the household, often of doubtful or half-Shanqalla ancestry, who has no damoz rights, and whose children have no rights of recognition beyond what the master cares to give them. (The concubine is also called "tara" or "tarata" in some districts).

588 171 The respectability or semi-respectability of the "damoz" wife compares to the Persian "ssighe", and the Arab Muslim temporary wife permitted in the Quran (IV:28 - "And in so far as you have derived pleasure from these women for a stipulated time, give them their

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

588 rewards as agreed upon") practiced by the Shi'ites in particular.
171 (footnote 81). The Abyssinian Coptic "Fetha Nagast" forbids concubinage; but the custom has long been widespread. "Damoz" is even recognised in the modern law of Emperor Haile Selassie.

551 Individual arrangements are freest in "damoz", also in "qurbam"
585 though sometimes less so, and least in "semanya". But in all three forms of marriage, the wife retains her maiden name and does not assume that of her husband. Even Empress Menen continues her old name. Sometimes the husband's mother may try to symbolise her authority - or even affection - by giving a new name to her new daughter-in-law living in her hamlet, but the bride's kinfolk and
[602] peers will continue to use her old name. This is another, unconscious, emphasis of kinship relations over affinal ones.

588 The "damoz" is not considered contradictory to monogamy, which may explain her respectability despite prohibition of concubinage in the "Fetha Nagast" code. Religious persons will explain the paradox away by quoting from Genesis "be fruitful and multiply".

583 In rural districts there is sometimes found a 4th form of
184 marriage, which indeed is re-enacted in some wedding ceremonies of "semanya". This form is bride capture, especially found among families too poor to defray the expenses of a wedding and cows that must be given the "semanya" couple. To cover up the shame and the poverty, the bride is "captured" and "pursued", by pre-arranged collusion. While she ostensibly goes, alone, to fetch water or gather deadwood, the groom's "mize" appear suddenly, preferably on horseback, and carry her off into the bush, while she, though ex-

Footnote 81: Donaldson, D.M.: Temporary Marriage in Iran. Moslem World, 1936, pp. 358-364. Smith, W. Robertson: Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia, 1885.

587 knowing both, has preferred her;

[588] A deserted wife, angry that her husband has found another, will often take a lover to buy her "a sheep for Epiphany", butter for her hair, and cotton for her distaff.

578 587 The following relationships are called "gobban", rivals, to each other:

"Semanya" versus "damoz" wife;

Man A, whose divorced wife lives with man B. The men are "gobban".

Woman X, whose divorced husband lives with, or married, woman Y.

"Semanya" and "damoz" wives, versus new concubine, "gärad", fearing permanency.

One "gärad" against another, (also called "wushemma").

But only "semanya" wives are regarded as legal rivals.

842 586 When a woman is barren, she may follow the biblical example and ask her husband to take a servant girl, "gärad" to have children with her. A "semanya" wife may be divorced on grounds of barrenness, but "with honor", taking half of their communal property with her. Amhara peasants believe that women become barren in the towns because of "loose living". A woman divorced on grounds of barrenness [588] will often have sexual intercourse with many men, hoping that she will conceive and thus have the blame of barrenness taken from her.

848 A bastard, "dicala" has full inheritance rights if his father acknowledges him. Bastards are believed to be of violent tempers, like "Muhammad Gran" (the Galla Muslim chief who devastated much of Ethiopia in the 16th century, reputedly a bastard).

586 When suing for divorce, either partner appeals to the "mänfäs qubaä" (colloquially "mänfäs awway"), the "soul-counselor" priest, who has jurisdiction even over "semanya" marriages. Only he can

B. Sex in Amhara Culture.

588
548 The extension of the concept of "temporary wife" to prostitution has already been touched upon in connection with the entertainment aspect of sex. It is this extension which imposes on this activity a character- [illegible] pattern, involving the "unattached woman's" hoping to find [illegible] husband [illegible] meanwhile serving transient travellers with food, [illegible], and even some wifely affect. In return for this partial constraint, the culture pattern rewards the "unattached woman" prostitute with certain minimal respectability. She may actually break the curse of barrenness of a first marriage by bearing a child, and thus finding it easier to find another husband. She also has the chance to experiment in sex, learning from travellers, and teaching the local townsmen and peasants. Most terms meaning prostitute are therefore matter-of-fact, and not insulting ("shärmuta" - the most polite reference, regarded as an Arabic loanword; "gälänota"; "amänzera" (lit. recipient of the seed); "lagärbäqa" (lit. "to the whole country", public woman). However, references to "loose personality, e.g. "mäsässerya syät" are insulting.

834 A strong constraint placed on the temporary wife - prostitute, as on any other Amhara, is against her sexual intercourse with a Muslim. Infraction of this rule would bring immediate and severe ostracism. Since many of her potential clients are travelling traders, many of whom are Muslims, the temptation is strong to ignore that rule. But if she does, she can seek reinstatement in Amhara-Coptic society, which she is considered to have renounced in consummating a union with a Muslim, by appealing penitently to her confessor, who may then agree to re-baptise her, which is considered necessary.. This will lift the ban of ostracism against her, on her social level.

This religious ban against sexual intercourse with a non-Copt

587 The proverb says:

[539] "He who knows not how to kiss,

his nose he will blow on you."

The divorcée often develops strategy and techniques to win a man of her choice: She may give him a ring to remind him of her when he is away from her; when he visits her, she feeds him "ergo" (thick buttermilk), so he will be sleepy and remain at her house, rather than go to his men friends to gamble. Women have a proverb about men:

[539] "Like a child, (he is attracted) by the ring,

like a cat, (he is attracted) by milk."

If she has a mother who is a good cook, the divorcee will employ this attraction, saying:

[539] "More than the flesh of the daughter,

(he is attracted by)

the butter (i.e. cooking) of the mother."

[832] When this fails, she may enlist the supernatural aid of love amulets, "mistafaqer", purchased from the dabtara scribe with the man's name inscribed, to inspire love for her in him; and in addition to the fee, may treat the dabtara to beer and sweets to enlist his greatest power on her behalf.

588 If her lover is already married, she may nevertheless establish a "sweetheart" ("yushemma") relationship with him, though she has no claim on "danoz" wages or recognition of this temporary wifehood. This is also one of the few cases in which a woman will try not to have children.

548 588 However, a divorcee who was divorced largely on account of her barrenness - and about 25% of the townswomen are barren at least for some years - will try to have a child, even out of wedlock. She will then very likely join the "unattached women" in the streets inhabited

548 588 by them in the towns. Divorcees who are young and still attractive often do not want to return to their kinfolk, especially if they have seen town life and the kin life in remote rural hamlets. Like men doing manual labor, she may go to another district or even province to avoid shaming them. On this street she will usually begin by brewing daily barley beer, or even expand this to a small restaurant-inn performing the housekeeping tasks which she has been taught since early childhood and which are the only trade she knows. Occasionally she will then take in a travelling trader for 3 days or more, cook and bake and brew beer for him, also sleep with him if he desires. She hopes, not rarely with success, that one or the other will make the relationship permanent.

831 Men take great pride in virility, but also in sexual technique. They liken the activity to expertly "riding a horse" ("afärräs" lit. [842] he rode her like a horse, is used for "defloration"). Men believe that it is frequency of intercourse, each night or several times each night, that brings conception. The popular, vulgar name for coitus is "bädda" (related to "bädäbbäda", he beat, whipped; shook with fever). Variations in sexual technique are referred to as "mett" (lit. hits). An impotent male is mocked as "alecha" (lit. sauce without pepper).

There is a sharp distinction between references that are "rude", consisting of direct references to sexual organs and activities; and veiled language used to refer to such matters, if at all, before an elder, priest, or upper-class person. The former is referred to as "säfär gal" (lit. light matters), connoting "shameful matters". This includes such direct names as "gela" for penis ("jälla" is even more vulgar), "säqela ferey" (lit. fruit of the penis) for testicles, "ema" for vulva. Curiously enough, overt loud expression of these terms are heard only from little boys, e.g. when, during the rainy season, they

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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313

"Balla", after weeks of searching, a strong tree trunk is selected, after weeks of searching, to serve as center port for the new tuqul.

"Tequr enqhät" (Pygeum Africanum), actually light red (lit. black wood), a porous hardwood, commonly available, which seasons well.

[278
589]

Rosewood, "Kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica) the search for which is a major occupation and livelihood of poor widows, since the bark and twigs are consumed against tapeworm. It is a heavy wood which can take a fine polish, thus more commonly used in noble homes. It is commonly available, at edge of "dega" upland forest.

"qarqaha", a bamboo of river valleys, can grow up to 5" in diameter, commonly used as major posts in tents of feudal lords during their military campaigns.

"yäbäräha shemäl" (bambusa abyssinica), lit. "bamboo of the jungle", a strong bamboo from the qolla lowland, traded from there in former times to serve as a staff for the spear; now used by shepherds as staff, and to fend off dogs, also for some simple furniture.

[778]

Male wood is also called "täbot enqhät" because hardwood is used to make the tabot, the sacred tablet inscribed with the name of a church, placed in the inner sanctum, symbolizing the Ark of Moses in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem.

583 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official.
184 After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the cheqa shum present.

[589] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these
656 traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in
[584] the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

178 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among
871 young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage
581 with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

love and the image of the traditional Amhara marriage, likely as not to end in divorce. This sort of concern was expressed in a revealing way in the following statement by a twenty-year-old college student:

> The main thing I want in my wife is good character. Beauty is not so important. Of course she will be an excellent cook. But mostly I am concerned that she be the *right* one for me; I do not want to get divorced. But you can't really know if she is the right one until after ten years of married life. If after having about five or six children it turns out troublesome, I will have to leave her. A person cannot go on living that way.

In some instances, ironically, this quest for the perfect marriage leads to a rejection of the very institution of marriage itself. Seven per cent of the students questioned indicated that they do not want to get married eventually—either because they "could never afford it," they "would be happier living single," or they just *"do not want to enter a relation that will end in divorce."* Thus at a time when the stability and warmth of family life are needed more than ever, the very possibility of family is doubted.

Some Ethiopian students blame the deteriorated family and an alleged increase in divorce in their country on the impact of Western civilization. True, the introduction of the Western concept of marriage and of the rudiments of a modern occupational system have dislocated the traditional arrangements for marriage; and other related problems, to be discussed in the next chapter, plague the Western-educated elite. But Western civilization has also developed resources to begin to cope with analogous problems in its own societies, and perhaps it is not too soon to acquaint Ethiopia's youth with some of these: for example, the recent developments in man's understanding of the dynamics of marriage as well as more sophisticated conceptions of the ideal and importance of family life in modern society.

CULTURAL ORIENTATION

A generational conflict manifests itself further with respect to questions of belief, taste, and value. Because of differences on such issues, students and their parents have grown far apart. The more traditionalist of the older generation refer to the modern youth as *ya-sĭmmĭntaññä shi lĭjjotch* ("children of the eighth millennium"); that is, of that corrupt time the Amhara believe will precede the destruction of the world. The latter, in turn, refer to the old-fashioned as ignorant, uncivilized, sometimes even "savage."

Yet, as we have been suggesting, this conflict is by no means total. Amhara adolescents are too deeply attached to many aspects of their traditional culture to engage in wholesale rebellion. Because of strict childhood training they remain basically respectful toward their elders. In addition, they often prefer to champion their own traditions in the spirit of a freshly excited nationalism.

361 tornadoes in the rainy season, is another ecological consideration.

591 [621] The hamlet is always a kinship unit, usually patrilocal and patrilineal. When a young man marries, his father will give him a cow or two, as he will to his daughter. But only the son will receive the use of part of his father's rented (or owned) fields to support his new family. Thus he will usually build his hut near his father's, father's brother's, and paternal grandfather's. In exceptional cases, when no land is available at his father's, the bridegroom may agree to establish himself at his wife's hamlet, but this is rare since the feeling is that he will always remain a subjugated, barely tolerated, henpecked and ill-treated figure. A proud Amhara male, even a "gabbar" (peasant ex-serf), would not agree to such a condition and insists on patriarchal status at least within his own biological family of creation. He would much rather continue to obey his father than his new father-in-law. Consanguinal kinship feelings are so strong that it is a common assumption that no in-law could really mean well and be unselfishly well-disposed to the newcomer. Only when warfare has killed off the adult males in a hamlet, male inlaws move in.

[606]

592 Each hut is inhabited by a biological family, usually father and mother, about three children who have survived infant mortality, and perhaps an aged parent or old, widowed kinswoman of the husband's.

602 Patrilineal kinship relations are often related also to administrative considerations. On church-owned land, the peasants who live on the hillside below the church, who

606 instruct her to be a good wife; while a stepmother is assumed to have no such desire, and is likely to tell her stepdaughter not to"make so much fuss"over her husband. If the latter were to follow such advice, she would soon be criticized by her husband's parents whose residential hamlet she usually shares. Stepmothers are very common due to the frequency of divorce and the shorter lifespan of women.

[597 586 165]

606 628 Affinal relatives are expected to come to a person's aid if he becomes involved in a blood feud, particularly if his consanguinal kin are few or weak. Since there is no pattern of individual duelling, even distant kin become involved readily, as a point of honor.

591 Residence of male persons is usually patrilocal-patrilineal, i.e. in the consanguinal line. But if a young bridegroom finds that his own father has little good land to allocate him in his parental hamlet upon his marriage, he may elect to seek better facilities by establishing residence at the bride's patrilocal hamlet. She is usuallyv very happy about this latter residence, for her kin will protect her even if she wrongs her husband (e.g. by taking a lover in subsequent years). Conversely, thehusband tries to avoid such a situation, for reasons of happiness as well as prestige.

585 [571] Three-day visiting is the pattern in kin visiting, for it usually takes one day for initial greetings and exchange of news, slaughtering and preparation of a sheep; a second day for feasting and talks with the neighbors; a third day for preparation of leave-taking.

After one week, the "dass" are torn down. A "great man" who is father of the bride, will usually send his daughter several donkeyloads of household staples, including lentils ("shuro"), peas cooked with salt, pepper, and spices, so that she will be honored and well treated by the women under whose jurisdiction she has come. Then, after a month, he will send a messenger to ask how she is habituated to the new life. If the reply is favorable, another load of grain, butter, spices, flaxseed oil are sent.

512 The adjustment of the bride may not be easy. The night she leaves her parental roof, she takes with her, besides her skin-mat, a little basket of dyed reeds, containing her personal little distaff, spindle, and glass necklace used in scouring pottery. After a week or a few weeks of honeymoon, she is expected to participate in the women's household tasks: fetching water and fuel, baking "enjara" daily for her husband, cooking "wot", to her husband's tastes, crushing barley, grinding "tyeff", brewing beer. If she complains too soon, the womenfolk will quote the proverb:

[539] "Hardly arrived have you, young bride,
(but) already you crunch shembera (peas)"
(meaning: lazily pick at peas, instead of
doing the regular, harder work).

606 [591] The couple is expected to remain in patrilocal residence at least a year, so that the bride can be taught, by her mother-in-law, how

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 hind on the ancestral lands.
166
361 This succession of events has taken place so often in Amhara history, that very few old settlements have remained on the same
[591] spot for even a century. As a result, many regional varieties of "patrilocal residence" have developed, and even "matrilocal residence" is not excluded, though most bridegrooms would shun such a fate. Also, the land tenure of the Amhara has become complex and replete with litigation, because of the amorphous definition of "byet", which sometimes emphasizes the consanguineal aspect, sometimes the residential, of kinship after marriage.

B. Problems of the Married Couple and Divorce.

586 When a couple has remained married for a number of years, people say they are "räggä" (lit. coagulated), stuck on each other. For divorce of a first marriage is common as the partners mature.

If her husband neglects her, wanders off, is a drunkard, or beats her too often, a woman may decide to initiate divorce proceedings. A man may do so if she is disobedient, e.g. wanders off to town without his permission.

587 If a man takes a "damor" wife in addition to his "semanya" wife, the latter has no recourse in court. But if he takes another "semanya" wife, she can have him arrested, if she can locate him, for breaking his oath. She then angrily accuses him of doing a stupid thing, "you married one ox hump (shanna) above the other". He may be fined, but his first marriage may still remain valid. If a "semanya" wife hears that her husband has a previous wife, she often laughs, flattered, mocking the other woman by saying: "I married on top of her and not below" - for evidently, the man,

x 794 562 776 [691] possessed mother thus becomes THE representative of her family toward the zar. If someone in the family sickens, her zar is consulted. Her zar has become the guardian of hearth and home. This is all the more significant since the Amhara woman has usually arrived as a stranger in her husband's patrilocal hamlet, when a very young bride.

x 794 562 593 It is little wonder that many husbands object to their wives' joining a zar society. For the wife thus becomes psychologically more and more independent of the husband's control. For one thing, the wife can absent herself from the hut and even hamlet at almost any time with the excuse that her zar requires her attendance at an all-night worship meeting, lest she suffer another "attack".. Under such circumstances it is impossible to keep a wife under surveillance. More frequently zar-possessed women go to the house of the "balä zar", who may be male, in daytime, to consult him on various matters, and on their return home they extort garments and trinkets from the husband, ffor the zar".

x 794 562 593 684 Many "jealous" zar spirits, interpreted by the zar doctor, actively intrigue against the husband, against the wife's catering to his wants and comforts, obedience and respect, and teach the wife how to extort the most from him. Moreover, husbands often suspect their wives' behavior under the influence of the possession by the zars. From possession by a spirit-lover to possession by a very human lover, the husbands reason (not without justification in some cases) it is only a small step. If caught, the woman might claim that she had been "under possession", and had mistaken the human lover for her spiritual "wädaj", especially in the darkness of the night. Women have been known to give this excuse brazenly when hauled before the (mänäs gubäë" (priest in charge of domestic affairs).

181 the emphasis on frequency and intensity of kin relations; the dichotomy between "rustic peasant" and "great man - noble" personality (the latter constituting a culture goal; Amhara concepts of government administration; religious fundamentalism and literalness; and last, healing of "spirit ailments" outside the officially dominant religion.

181 Attachment to the land is a major preoccupation of all Amhara:
423 Nobles and "gabbar" serfs, men and women, old and young, priest and
571 student, even of the townspeople. The complexity of land tenure (i.e. the varieties of "rest" and "gult" land) is closely connected with the social status of the residential kin group; the life cycle of the individual is largely determined by the land tenure of his family, beginning with the very kind of education he is likely to receive. By extension, a person's secondary social group consists largely of persons inhabiting or stemming from the same "agärey" (lit. my countryside), the sub-district where his family owns land or works on it.

181 Attachment to one's kin group is nearly as strong on the in-
602 dividual's maternal side as on the paternal. The greater emphasis
[591 on the latter is largely due to the predominantly patrilocal resi-
611] dence, and on patrilineal descent. Kin visiting is a primary social duty, on both the individual's paternal and maternal sides, with equal frequency and intensity. By extension, though with lesser frequency and intensity, visiting of affinal relatives, notably the wife's parents who nearly always live in another hamlet, is considered an important social duty.

Kin feuds often last for generations, particularly between land owning ("rest" tenure) kin groups. The fear of shaming ("harerät")

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

For the groom, too, marriage means a gratifying boost toward adult status, 585
symbolized by his receiving from the bride's parents distinctively adult male 885
possessions—a *ḳutā*, perhaps a *barnos*, and a rifle if they can afford it.

Such is the basic pattern of betrothal and marriage among the Amhara, 583
though many of the details vary from province to province.[6] There are, in 585
addition, certain traditional alternatives to this standard procedure. One of 184
these involves the solemnization of the marriage oath by taking Communion, a rite necessary for a marriage to be counted as legal by the Church, and followed by the ordained clergy and the most pious families. Another form requires no oath at all; the husband is simply expected to provide a salary and clothes for his wife. This procedure is followed chiefly by soldiers and traders, and by those who are marrying for the second time.

Still another type of marriage is that known as *qoṭ asär* ("ten beds") in which the boy goes to live with the girl's family while both are quite young. In this case the boy has his work apprenticeship under the girl's father. After several years, when the girl reaches puberty, a second wedding ceremony will take place—this time at the home of the groom's parents—and the union will be consummated. This type of arrangement tends to be made when the boy's family is too poor to provide enough to get him started on his own, or if the girl's father has no son to help him with the work.

There is, finally, a form of marriage by abduction. If the girl's father does not grant the request of the emissaries of the boy's father, and if the boy's father is still interested, the boy may go with two or three friends to capture her when she is on the way to market or fetching water. When this happens, the couple will approach the girl's parents after they have been married for some time and seek a reconciliation. Occasionally poor families have deliberate recourse to this form of marriage, arranging in advance a bride capture so as to avoid having to prepare the expensive wedding feasts.[7]

Although marriage marks the termination of childhood for the Amhara, 591 •
it does not by itself signify the full attainment of adulthood. The newly wed 585
couple lives at first in the home of the boy's father, and to truly "arrive" [885]
they must establish their own separate household. If the boy's family is wealthy, he may have his own house ready by the time of the wedding. More often, the couple spends a certain amount of time—a few months, or in some cases as much as two or three years—living in the home of the groom's father until their own house is built. To tarry unduly in the father's house, however, is considered a mark of laziness and a great shame.

Furthermore, because of the somewhat arbitrary manner in which the 585
spouses are chosen for each other, there is often a serious problem of post- 606
marital adjustment, a problem not rendered any less difficult by the proximity of the girl's mother-in-law. The divorce pattern is well known among 586

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkār*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [764] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [601]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Synchronization and Privacy

*121 181 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same [476] time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [504] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 • [591] [576] The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are iso- [592] lated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, [342] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters (*ʿālfāñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

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* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Ṭimqat day described in chap. iii.

634 635 Parish and Hamlet. The highland zones can be divided along three complementary social dimensions---po-
*[192] litical, ecclesiastical, and economic. Politically, the province is divided into awraja (sub-province), warada (district of a sub-province), and meketel warada (sub-
632 district). The meketel warada consists of fifteen to
361 thirty parishes (deber). The parish, in turn, is com-
*[192] posed of three to ten hamlets (mender), each consisting
592 of ten to fifty households (bet). Most households consist of husband, wife, unmarried sons, and pre-pubscent daughters[11]; a minority of households consist of aged spouses only, or of widowed individuals living by them-
592 selves. Characteristically, the households of a hamlet
361 are dispersed, so that any one is perhaps 100 to 300 meters from its closest neighbors.

647 While officials of the provincial and sub-provincial governments are generally out-landers appointed by the central government, administrators of the warada and meketel warada are usually members of the local gen-
*[192] try. Within the parish, civil administration is in the hands of the ceka ǂum, a petty administrator who imple-

[582] [11] Since it is common for a girl to marry at 11 or
[591] 12, but to delay the virilocal move until age 15 or 16, the natal household may include a married daughter.

361 tornadoes in the rainy season, is another ecological consideration.

591 [621] The hamlet is always a kinship unit, usually patrilocal and patrilineal. When a young man marries, his father will give him a cow or two, as he will to his daughter. But only the son will receive the use of part of his father's rented (or owned) fields to support his new family. Thus he will usually build his hut near his father's, father's brother's, and paternal grandfather's. In exceptional cases, when no land is available at his father's, the bridegroom may agree to establish himself at his wife's hamlet, but this is rare since the feeling is that he will always remain a subjugated, barely tolerated, henpecked and ill-treated figure. A proud Amhara male, even a "gabbar" (peasant ex-serf), would not agree to such a condition and insists on patriarchal status at least within his own biological family of creation. He would much rather continue to obey his father than his new father-in-law. Consan- [606] guinal kinship feelings are so strong that it is a common assumption that no in-law could really mean well and be unselfishly well-disposed to the newcomer. Only when warfare has killed off the adult males in a hamlet, male inlaws move in.

● 592 Each hut is inhabited by a biological family, usually father and mother, about three children who have survived infant mortality, and perhaps an aged parent or old, widowed kinswoman of the husband's.

602 Patrilineal kinship relations are often related also to administrative considerations. On church-owned land, the peasants who live on the hillside below the church, who

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic
*565 and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[3]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom
[128] and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—
[114] with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our
[12] account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry, using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[4]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

*565
• 592 The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara
[342] peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round
[343] structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land
[423] worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by
[427] hereditary right (*rĭst*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the
[556] household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

621 At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number
602 of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the
[592] father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chīqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chīqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chīqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chīqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chīqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chīqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 194

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *ṭhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *ṭaǰǰ*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *ṭallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics. 565 184 868 [567] [273]

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dajāzmāch Hailu*, meaning "Dajāzmāch Hailu and his men." 565 596

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics. 565 [142]

Conspicuous consumption among the *makuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions: 565 592 357 556

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Synchronization and Privacy

*121 181 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is [474] scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [704] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 [591] [576] The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, [592] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters [342] (*ilfiñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

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* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Tīmqat day described in chap. iii.

634 635 Parish and Hamlet. The highland zones can be divided along three complementary social dimensions---po-
*[192] litical, ecclesiastical, and economic. Politically, the province is divided into awraja (sub-province), warada (district of a sub-province), and meketel warada (sub-
632 district). The meketel warada consists of fifteen to
361 thirty parishes (deber). The parish, in turn, is com-
*[192] posed of three to ten hamlets (mender), each consisting
592 of ten to fifty households (bet). Most households consist of husband, wife, unmarried sons, and pre-pubscent daughters[11]; a minority of households consist of aged spouses only, or of widowed individuals living by them-
592 selves. Characteristically, the households of a hamlet
361 are dispersed, so that any one is perhaps 100 to 300 meters from its closest neighbors.

647 While officials of the provincial and sub-provincial governments are generally out-landers appointed by the central government, administrators of the warada and meketel warada are usually members of the local gen-
*[192] try. Within the parish, civil administration is in the hands of the ceka Sum, a petty administrator who imple-

[582] [591] [11]Since it is common for a girl to marry at 11 or 12, but to delay the virilocal move until age 15 or 16, the natal household may include a married daughter.

632 [796] [346] motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' eponymic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "government" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means [691] [423] litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

[161] [592]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total population	151	95
Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by [613] [592] [162] risteñas. These households are distributed among the hamlets' ambilineages as follows:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

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• 592
613
[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total risteñas households	31	21

[423] In each of the hamlets, there are two households be-
*[192] longing to Amhara tenant farmers (timeneña), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the risteñas
[779] whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two addition-
[433] al timeneña households, whose members are Muslims. These
[286] households are headed by brothers who supplement their
*[192] agricultural activities by weaving the Yama (toga) for local Christians.

*793 Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are
361 believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the
423 use of such fields, known as yikeys mariet ("priest's
795 land"), is given to local priests in return for parti-
*[192] cipating in the Masses of the parish church. In prac-
[613] tice, rist-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of yikeys mariet by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

*793

361 members are unable to retain their claims to these
423 church lands (which are intimately linked to the ac-
613 quisition of leadership positions and prestige within
795 the parish) by providing priests from their own ranks. Consequently, substitutes from outside the parish must be obtained. Such is the case with ambilineage I today. According to current allocation of yikeya mariet in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, ambilineages I and V are each expected to provide three priests for the Mass. Ambilineage V currently provides its three from three ambilineage households of Lemmariet. Ambilineage I, however, currently provides only one ristena priest (a resident of Tikurmidir). Thus, members of ambilineage I using these fields have been obliged to invite two non-ristena priests to take up residence on a portion of these lands, in return for participation in the Mass.

361 Finally, these hamlets contain three female ser-
562 vants, unrelated to other residents of the parish. In
• 592 Tikurmidir, there is a single Amhara attached to a household of ambilineage I; in Lemmariet there is a "bariya" in a household of ambilineage I, and another in a household of ambilineage V.

*278 Herbalist Medicine in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet.
*757 The herbalist therapies of these two hamlets are descri-
*759 bed in Table 7. With the use of this information, the
613 following paragraphs will indicate that the professional

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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*759

759 (Kusil:Kabiy:k:I+) and (Yilfiyn Baǰiyta:Kabiy:k*:I)
(Wosfat:Ateci:k*:I) and (Kowsow:Ateci:k*:I)
(Yisaal Baǰiyta:Ateci:k*:II+) and (Kurtimat:Kabiy:k*:II)
In Lemmariet:
(Koruba:Seci:i:I+) and (Mic:Seci:i:I)
(Koruba:Seci:i:I) and (Mic:Seci:i:I)
(Aynitila:Ateci:k*:II) and (Yisaal Baǰiyta:Ateci:k*:II)
(Wosfat:Ateci:k*:III) and (Yisaal Baǰiyta:Ateci:k*:III)
The combination of therapies owned by any one herbalist is recognized by Amhara as being entirely adventitious, although no secular herbalist is considered likely to own multiple therapies for a single disease-name specialty.

*278 Since three of Tikurmidir's herbalists are women,
*759 and two of them reside with herbalist spouses, the dis-
[562] tribution of herbalists among households is as follows:
* [592]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
[162] Household with one or more herbalists:	19	16
%of Amhara households with one or more herbalists:	56%	67%

The distribution of herbalist therapies in these hamlets is further characterized by a high degree of "redundancy", that is to say, the presence of two or more therapies directed against the same named ailment, but practiced by different herbalists:

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621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by risteñas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [198] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households); and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Ṣankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibañas, eight as wood cutters,

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621

592 two as talla sellers, and one each as mat seller, carpen-
463 ter, day laborer, and pensioner.

*278 The practice of herbalist therapies in ward and
*759 town contrasts significantly with the situation in rural
369 hamlet and parish. The relatively dense population of the town has important consequences. In the countryside, the closest herbalist needed for a specific episode may be a day's walk from the client's home; in the town several may be found within an hour's walk. The increase in herbalist therapies is not directly proportional to the increased population of town over countryside, however.

*278 In Gabrael sebeka, for example, only eighteen households
*759 (41% of the total) contain one or more herbalists. Many
632 townfolk are forced to abstain from practicing herbalist therapies, because, as out-landers, they are unable or disinclined to locate needed botanicals. Also, significant numbers of townsfolk practice non-secular therapies, particularly as balazars.

*278 Further, although there are more redundant herbalist
*759 therapies potentially available to the townsman, he re-
369 mains ignorant of many of them. The peasant locates him-
203 self within a network of several core kinsmen and neigh-
602 bors upon whom he depends for information regarding herbalist chains. The townsman finds his place in a social matrix in which kinship ties are greatly diluted by dis-
632 tance. In Gabrael sebeka, for example, thirty-two house-
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* 592
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621
632 holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town.

[613] In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-
[423] agricultural employment for their subsistence needs,
[241] there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

*278 Kinship ties are an important means by which the
*769 peasant acquires and communicates information necessary
203 for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every
602 herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own
369 "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant
613 herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an
*278 agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like
*769
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671 Despite its apparent and proclaimed orthodoxy, occasional amendments, either in theory or practice or both, have been made through royal decrees or common-law usage. For example, concubinage has long been practiced, [588] sometimes in the form of "dämoz" marriage, which evades the Fetha Nagast by giving the woman the status of "hired servant" receiving a periodic "wage", and in this form the practice is at present legally recognized even in the new, modern laws decreed by the present emperor.

In fact, the "Fetha Nägäst" contains an "elastic clause", which has been rediscovered under the present regime, and is cited as justification for the new, European-patterned laws which upset the ultra-conservatives. This clause advises: "Act according to your observation of the c nditions of times and seasons". This was quoted in the new Penal Code of 1930.

681 However, in the past, the draconic aspects of the criminal law in particular were most literally interpreted by many kin chiefs and feudal lords up to the beginning of the present emperor's regime. The hand of a thief was cut off, and in case of armed robbery both a hand and a foot. Rebels were similarly punished. If a person took the usual oath, "by the life of the King" and was found to have perjured himself, his tongue could be cut out. An insult to the king could be punished by blinding. A father had the right of life and death over [543 567] his children--but not over his Christianized slaves. The latter were further protected against being sold, the penalty for which offense could be the hanging of the master.

1. The Beginning of Life.

842 A. The Desire for Children: adoption.

Children are greatly desired by the Amhara, and a childless home is regarded as under a heavenly curse. Children are regarded as continuing the "byet", the residential extended family; as a source of riches from childhood on when they begin economic tasks; as a source of comfort and security in old age; as defenders in feuds and wars; even after the death of parents, children help them into heaven by means of "tizkar".

[588] When a woman is barren, and amulets have proven no cure for her, she may give her husband a concubine, "šärä" (lit. servant maid), so that he will not feel deprived of fatherhood and begin

597 to hate her. Or she may adopt a child, preferably an orphan of kinfolk or a well-known family, by taking the child to the confessor-priest and swearing the oath of ecclesiastical adoption, whereupon the child becomes "yäqal kidan lej" (lit. contract-child). This may include the ceremony of "breast-mother", "yätut ennat", previously described. Less fortunate is the foster child, not formally adopted, who lives with the foster parents, guards the crops and herds the cows, but is more completely dependent on the good will of the "bread mother", "enjera ennat".

593 Fathers, whether natural or adopted, expect complete obedience from their children, particularly after they have arrived at the "age of reason". Fathers feel defensively obliged to maintain their authority; as the proverbs say of a father addressing the

593 son:

539 "Sheep! If I do not eat you, you would devour me", said the hyena". (meaning: perhaps you'd

593 [539] like to order me about?).

"He who talks before his father does,
his mouth will become like that of a leper".

Older brothers may discipline younger siblings, but there is less emphasis on the privileges of the first-born than in Arab countries. The Amhara is aware that younger brothers may often become more honored, richer and wiser later in life:

[539] "Formerly, he (the older) pulled his (the younger's) ear, later on, the horn of the other (the younger) became bigger".

586 In case of divorce, which is frequent, children not staying with one of the parents are quickly taken by kinfolk. Thus, children are often raised by their grandparents, paternal or maternal, who often are young enough to have small children of their own. It is not even rare to see children of a divorcee by her first marriage may be raised by the family of her second husband even after she has divorced and left him also. This is more likely to happen in a town, where the consanguinal kin ties are weakened due to absence of the factor of kin residence, than in the residential kin hamlet. (Foreign observers have paraphrased an old English saying and adapted it to this situation in Abyssinia:

B. Pregnancy, Birth, Circumcision.

842 843 According to popular observation, 25% of all women, especially in the towns, are barren, and another 25% have frequent miscarriages. There are many precautions taken against these mishaps. A pregnant woman may wear extra cowrie shells, "zagol"; in addition to amulets written against the evil spirit "tela" (lit. shadow, an envious female spirit) which brings miscarriages, kills babies at

576 Politeness is not considered "common", but differentiates most sharply between the behavior and expected behavior of the noble "great man" (telleq säw) and the rustic (balagär). The "great man", noble is expected to show graciousness, noblesse oblige. When a social inferior tries to kiss his feet, it is gracious to chuck him under the chin so as not to let him reach the feet, so that the kiss lands on the
[593] master's knee. Fathers or mothers imitate this same etiquette when their sons, arriving or departing, try to kiss their feet in symbolic etiquette of subordination. The motion is smooth and evidently routine and well-practiced.

195 Stylistic distinctions in the speech pattern also differ between expected etiquette of a noble and rustic. It is noble to talk slowly, softly, choosing words with unworried deliberation, which indicates to the listener that the noble, a man of few and calm words, is secure in his rank and position, and does not have to worry about possible results of poor communication. A noble uses soft-and-polite language (a unified concept to the Amhara), called "yäcätalanät negeger", showing good judgement and taste ("yelumeta"). But his softness of speech has a firm and impressive quality, referred to as "läza mälkäm" (lit. good tongue).

576 It is the mark of a social parvenue of "low" ancestry, if he struts ("čälattätä") with an upward-turned face, and is too proud to reply politely when addressed politely. A true noble, though he will not dismount from his mule when greeted by a commoner on foot (as he would to a social equal or superior), will raise his hat a bit, or raise his toga a bit, in reply to a greeting, in which the commoner has removed from his head his toga protection from the sun.

A social inferior may not sit down in the company of seated "great men" until invited to do so twice. He is expected to be ready to join

576 Very Polite: "shango watta" - (lit. he went to a meeting).
514 Extremely Polite: "guaro sorā" - (lit. he left home).
192 Extremely Polite: "shershar watta" - (lit. he went for a walk).

522 Wit, used in court or by homespun philosophers to entertain their friends, compensates for the many formalities in this culture and society. The famous wit, Alāqa Gābre-Hanna has already been cited.
538 Proverbs, "tarat" and riddles may be used to make a comment of esoteric meanings, understandable only to one's initiates. Proverbs fulfill a social function, beyond mere entertainment, for even philosophy, being utilized to begin any negotiation, such as for marriage. This is emphasized in proverbs on proverbs:

[539]

"Like Halleluyah before the chanting (in church),
(begin with) a proverb before the discussion".
"(to drink) mead, (first get) a container,
to talk, (begin with) a proverb".

538 Proverbs and riddles used by parents, teachers and leaders of
•593 society have a pedagogic function, and can be used to reprimand and
[86] instruct. Conflict between father and son, the complexities involved, and the possibility that contrary to the major cultural assumption of parental superiority, the son may sometimes have logic on his side, is indicated by the following:

[539] "(Says the father):

"Your Father you cannot accuse (e.g. in court, shaming yourself)
nor plow the sky,
nor roast water".

"(Replies the son):

"The father, by his own shame he will stand accused;
the sky, by lighting it is plowed;
water, in a pot it is steamed".

x 794 562 776 [591] possessed mother thus becomes THE representative of her family toward the zar. If someone in the family sickens, her zar is consulted. Her zar has become the guardian of hearth and home. This is all the more significant since the Amhara woman has usually arrived as a stranger in her husband's patrilocal hamlet, when a very young bride.

x 794 562 593 It is little wonder that many husbands object to their wives' joining a zar society. For the wife thus becomes psychologically more and more independent of the husband's control. For one thing, the wife can absent herself from the hut and even hamlet at almost any time with the excuse that her zar requires her attendance at an all-night worship meeting, lest she suffer another "attack".. Under such circumstances it is impossible to keep a wife under surveillance. More frequently zar-possessed women go to the house of the "balä zar", who may be male, in daytime, to consult him on various matters, and on their return home they extort garments and trinkets from the husband, "for the zar".

x 794 562 593 684 Many "jealous" zar spirits, interpreted by the zar doctor, actively intrigue against the husband, against the wife's catering to his wants and comforts, obedience and respect, and teach the wife how to extort the most from him. Moreover, husbands often suspect their wives' behavior under the influence of the possession by the zars. From possession by a spirit-lover to possession by a very human lover, the husbands reason (not without justification in some cases) it is only a small step. If caught, the woman might claim that she had been "under possession", and had mistaken the human lover for her spiritual "wädaj", especially in the darkness of the night. Women have been known to give this excuse brazenly when hauled before the (mänfäs gubaä" (priest in charge of domestic affairs).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X 794 563 593 E48

Some women, particularly those possessed by the female zar Shanqit, learn to solicit money from strangers (as described during the convention). Some women thus gradually enter the path to prostitution, while others become independent businesswomen.

The attitude of husbands of zar-possessed wives varies and often is ambivalent. A rustic balagār often fears that if he refuses the time and money and sacrifices demanded by his wife for her zar, the neglected zar will take worse revenge (e.g. on his cattle) or will send locusts to eat his grain, or so distract his wife that she will set fire to the hut. He knows also that if he divorces her, half his cattle and other movable property will be taken by the wife. Thus it is cheaper to let her take an occasional chicken or, more rarely, a young goat to the zar. Some men, especially in town, are ashamed to admit that their wives frequent the house of the zar. Semi-educated men, who might themselves consult the zar doctor on some matter of business, forbid their wives to go there. This is more to protest a blow to their prestige than out of modernism, but they will divorce her if she persists.

X 794 586 798

A chronically unhappy marriage not infrequently ends in divorce by way of the zar cult. The "mänfäs gubaē" is placed in an awkward position when the husband or the wife sue for divorce from their "semanya" marriage on the grounds of zar possession. For while as priest of the Coptic church he cannot admit the reality of the zar world, there is sufficient overlap between that and the world of evil spirits in which the priest does (unofficially) believe and against which he may himself, as däbtärä, have written amulets. This explains at least in part why the Coptic church ignores the zar cult, and thus

X 794 798

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565* 602 571 181 183 [561]

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

565* 593 577 181 183

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

565* 577 779 183 181 581 586 139

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

565* 779 577 183 181

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

565* 121 82 771

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than
he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bälagē* ("rude"), a trait which [861]
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [155]
[671]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

a different identity. Religion and warfare were the two spheres most likely to attract him. Although trade and manual arts were possibilities for those whose industry exceeded their status-consciousness, they were considered the business of other ethnic groups and normally rejected by a self-respecting Amhara. When the Amhara youth left home for a new life, he was usually heading either for the school of some church teacher or the quarters of some chieftain.

Today, as in former times, the role of priest is known from childhood as a possible model for the peasant boy. He and his companions often imitate the clergy and their ceremonies in their play. The wish to become a priest is kindled by a number of interests—desire for the material benefits accorded the clergy; curiosity about the mysteries of the church; envy of the great prestige of the clergy; hope for a better chance of going to heaven after death. During adolescence the outlook of the boy who seeks to become a priest deviates from that of the *gorumsä* described above. Instead of the shrill, blood-heating *shillala* war chants he prefers the gentle hymns of the church; instead of the frenzied dancing and singing of the young braves he prefers the schooled dance of the clergy; instead of pursuing women, he is inclined to turn his head the other way when a girl appears.

The military alternative does not seem to be an ideal of Amhara children. They rarely see soldiers; and when they did in former times, it was usually in the unhappy circumstance of seeing the family's reserves plundered. It is not until the time of puberty and after that the great upsurge of aggressive instinct has turned the thoughts of many an Amhara youth to fighting. Chafing under parental domination or bristling with resentment because of being an illegitimate offspring or a stepchild, he may be anxious to turn his hostility against some enemy. He may imagine the free life of a soldier more attractive than the drudgery of the peasant's lot. In the days of feudal armies, he may have heard news about some warlord on the rise and thus have hopes, by attaching himself as a follower, of winning booty and the laurels of a hero, perhaps eventually the powers of a chieftain.

Whether the peasant boy chooses church school or the warpath, his move has frequently been an all-or-none move. The peasant boy can do nothing without the consent of his father, and normally his father will not permit him to do anything except carry on the farmwork and prepare himself to care for his parents in their old age and to inherit the family land. If there should be some sign that the son does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, the latter will do everything he can short of disinheritance—and ofttimes that—to persuade him otherwise.

And so, some restless day, eyes fixed on some alluring goal, the Amhara youth might run away and not be seen again. If he should return, it would

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely preparing himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adolescence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

The Welfare School

Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in government provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

than half the secondary students questioned, and well over a third of the college students, stated that the number of their friends was only one, two, three, or four. 883* 178 572

Almost all the students indicated that they prefer close, intimate, and enduring friendships to casual, impersonal, and frequently changing relationships. There is thus something of the traditional *goramsä*'s companion about these relations, in that these boys define their friends as confidants, as individuals with whom they can disclose "secrets" and discuss personal problems. But the modern relationship is much broader, for it also includes such activities as studying together; going on walks; playing athletic games; going to the movies; visiting the brothels; talking about education, life, and the future; seeing the sights around town.

The great sociological significance of these small clusters of companions, or *bällänjarä* as they are called, is that they play a crucial part in mediating the transition from a childhood that is essentially traditional, despite exposure to certain modern subjects in school, to an adulthood that will be lived essentially in the modern sector. At the same time that they help the newcomer adjust to each local school community, they are helping him adjust to the broader subculture of modernizing Ethiopia—explaining the strange things and ideas he encounters; correcting his behavior, for example, by showing the proper use of silverware at the table; and refining his language, when necessary, from that of the rustic to that of the urbanite. Their creative function is no less important. Through countless conversations, some idle and some intense, they work to interpret and integrate stimuli coming from many sources—from movies; magazines; the example of Europeans living in Ethiopia; the behavior of government officials, as well as from their teachers—and thus form a sort of buffer between the lone adolescent and the various authoritative influences in his life. 883* 178 572 182

Despite the radical changes in the position of the Amhara adolescents described above—their complete dependence on the government school system, their tutelage under foreign instructors, and their great reliance on age-mates—the traditional pattern of adolescent submission to parental authority still runs strong. Even though most students live as boarders or in rented quarters, they maintain contact with their parents on occasional visits or at vacation time. However far removed, they remain deeply attached to their families and sensitive to the wishes of their parents. How to acquire money to send to their families is often a dominant concern in their lives. Though in most cases the parents can not provide meaningful orientation regarding adjustment to changing conditions in Ethiopia, they do give advice about how their children should behave and try to keep them faithful to traditional norms. The fact 883* 178 593

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that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for consider-

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(396)	(40)	(197)

able strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

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society: to create engineers and mechanics, doctors and nurses, economists and educators. With regard to the familiar occupations of the old order, the schools' task is to engender a new breed of practitioner—farmers versed in modern methods of agriculture, soldiers disciplined and geared to modern techniques, clergy cognizant of ecumenical Christianity, clerks who can type and take shorthand, and government officials with some modern education.

What is most revolutionary is that the schools introduce not only new subject matters for careers, but the very notion of vocation itself—of life work as

TABLE 4

SOURCES OF FUTURE SATISFACTION CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS*

Source from Which Students Expect Most Satisfaction in Life	Secondary School: Males (per cent)		Secondary School: Females (per cent)		College Males (per cent)	
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Career or occupation	34	12	30	9	44	17
Improvement of local community	30	27	16	36	22	28
Religious beliefs and activities	13	20	16	21	5	7
Participation in national and international affairs	10	24	13	20	8	26
Family relationships	8	10	20	9	17	14
Leisure-time, recreational activities	5	7	5	5	3	8
Number	(394)		(40)		(195)	

* Based on question 27 in the Gillespie-Allport questionnaire.

something which one *chooses*, trains for in a specific manner, and derives satisfaction from pursuing.* This orientation departs radically from the traditional expectation of inheriting the work of one's father as a matter of course. Whereas, as we have noted, the Amhara son traditionally carried on his father's work, except in rare cases where there were special reasons for not doing so, only *seven per cent* of the boys in my sample indicated that

* When asked what they expected to give most satisfaction in their lives, the students most frequently named "career or occupation" (out of six alternatives). When asked what they considered most desirable in choosing an occupation, they named "work that is really interesting" most frequently (out of six alternatives). See Tables 4 and 5.

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they expected to enter the same occupation as their fathers. This figure is much smaller than that obtained from a cross-cultural study of youth by James Gillespie and Gordon Allport, who found that "approximately a third of the male students in all our samples [a total of 1,168, drawn from the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, Egypt, Mexico, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, and Israel] expect to enter the same occupations as their fathers, or ones closely related."[18] In part, the Ethiopian figure simply reflects the preparation for types of work which did not exist for previous generations.

TABLE 5

OCCUPATIONAL CONDITIONS MOST DESIRED BY STUDENTS

Conditions Which Students Consider Most Desirable in Choosing Future Occupations	Secondary School				College Males (per cent)	
	Males (per cent)		Females (per cent)			
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Interesting work	56	24	63	17	63	18
Job security	19	26	23	11	14	31
Chance to acquire much money	12	11	3	11	10	16
Prestige	7	9	8	17	7	5
Pleasant work companions	4	26	3	30	3	27
Good boss	2	4	0	14	3	3
Number	(325)		(40)		(113)	

But since it also represents numerous cases where the boy's occupational interest is a traditional one—where, in other words, one finds sons of soldiers and government officials planning to become farmers, sons of farmers planning to be teachers, and sons of priests and teachers planning to be soldiers and administrators—this figure may be interpreted as indicative of a very general rejection of parental influence with respect to occupational choice.

Parents of the modern adolescents are unhappy about this diminution of their traditional authority, especially so when their children opt for some of the more "outlandish" modern occupations. Their disapproval sometimes takes the form of urging their children to quit school and get married. Often it is expressed in the form of direct criticism of the occupation in question. Nearly two-fifths of the secondary school males questioned about this indicated that their parents did not approve of the occupation they wished to enter. As

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might be expected, the incidence of disapproval was highest among the students of the Gondar secondary school (fifty-eight per cent), whose parents are presumably more traditionalist than those of the Addis Ababa boys, and the students of the technical school (fifty-six per cent), whose occupational interests, involving manual labor and technical skills, are felt to resemble those artisan pursuits traditionally disesteemed by the Amhara.

Time is on the side of the students. As Ethiopia develops and education spreads, the advantages of prolonged training and modern occupations will become increasingly apparent to the parents. For some time to come, however, their resentment of the dependence of youth on foreigners and Western-educated Ethiopians for occupational guidance will continue to generate social tensions and impede the socialization process.

The harmonious pattern of preparation for adult work roles found in traditional Amhara society has been further disrupted under the new school system at at least two points: the point at which occupational commitments are made, and the point of entry into the work force.

The modern adolescent is supposed to choose which of several kinds of schools, representing a variety of vocational commitments, he wishes to enter upon successful completion of the eighth-grade exam. Quite often his choice is dictated by wholly irrelevant factors. For example, it may be made on the basis of which of the available schools promises the best standard of living.[19] Or it may be made for him by the school system, for one finds cases where the student's preferences are disregarded and he is placed in whatever school and vocational program happens to be able to accommodate him.

Even when the student's choice is relatively free from such extraneous determinants, however, it is usually difficult for him to make a meaningful decision. Eight grades of a rudimentary curriculum is hardly an adequate basis for choosing from a variety of unfamiliar vocations. So it is "fate" that guides most youngsters into one or another of the secondary school programs. The problem of choice recurs, for a much smaller number, when commitments are again required for entrance into the colleges. At this point meaningful decisions are often made, but perhaps more often they are spun from a skein of bewilderment. One secondary school graduate summed up the situation by saying, "Foreigners frequently ask young educated Ethiopians, 'What do you want to become?' How do we know? This whole business of *choosing* is entirely new to us, and we know very little about the alternatives that we have now. It is all very confusing."

So far the modernizing sector has provided little, beyond vocational pamphlets in the school libraries and an occasional school debate on the respective values of different occupations, to help orient the students on these matters.

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These changes in the definition of marriage have produced tremendous tensions and heartache in the relations between generations. Deprived of authority in the occupational sphere, parents of modern adolescents cling with all the more pride to their traditional rights and obligations in the sphere of getting their children properly married. They often nag their children to leave school and get married while young. They stand determined to select their children's mates. If they do admit some consideration for their children's desires on the matter, they insist that any prospective spouse measure up to traditional criteria. As a result, disagreements between students and their parents revolve around the subject of marriage more frequently than anything else.

883* 178 58 593

TABLE 7

DISPOSITION OF STUDENTS TOWARD TRIBAL AND RELIGIOUS EXOGAMY

883* 582

		Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
		Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Willingness to marry a person of a different religion.	Yes	29	33	60
	No	71	67	40
Willingness to marry a person of a different tribe....	Yes	64	73	84
	No	36	27	16
Number.....	.....	(392)	(40)	(194)

Modern adolescents, however, have by no means wholly rejected traditional attitudes and sentiments concerning marriage and courtship. Although a number of students say they want to marry for the modern reason of finding personal happiness through a satisfying love relation, many more indicate that they are chiefly inspired by the traditional motives of wanting to beget children. Most of them wish to continue the custom of having large families, the most frequently mentioned numbers of children desired being "four" and "more than six."*

883* 178 581 842

The modern boys still widely share the traditional expectation that their

883* 178 581

* The mean number of children desired by the college students in my sample is 4.23. This figure exceeds those of all the national college groups reported by Gillespie and Allport except Egypt and South African Bantu.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

fixed rules and to respect their opponents. Until a few years ago, the imperfect acceptance of these norms was shown by the frequent fights between opposing school teams following soccer and basketball games.[1] But gradually a new tradition of athletic activity has been building up in the schools, and with it the related norms have started to gain greater acceptance. 883* 577 178 871

Still another value that the school experience has promoted is that of social responsibility. Most students are very grateful to the government for having provided them with schooling and related benefits, and they feel a keen obligation to show their gratitude by serving their country. They have also become conscious of the great needs of their people for economic and social development. In Amhara society, service was expected in behalf of the family and, except for mass levies in time of warfare, usually stopped there. The modern adolescents are still mindful of their obligations to their parents and siblings, but have now included broader ideals of social service in their moral orientation. When asked what they expect to bring most satisfaction in their lives, the students named "improvement of local community" more often than any other category except "career or occupation." (See Table 4.) When asked what they would do with a million dollars, more than a third answered in terms of purely social enterprises, such as building schools and hospitals, helping the poor and orphaned; and many others indicated private enterprises with specifically social purposes, such as improving agriculture and building factories to provide employment. 883* 641 577 185 (593)

It is difficult to determine how deeply the value of social responsibility has been internalized. In their public declarations, at any rate, the students wax eloquent in propounding ideals of good citizenship. They urge themselves to prepare for introducing modern ways to the uneducated; to return to the villages, integrate themselves with the old society, and lead them gently to better ways; to fight discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and social class; to solve the problem of corruption and bribery in the government; and to promote national solidarity.

Politics.—The Amhara adolescent has little occasion to develop specifically political attitudes, since his customary political world has been coterminous with subordination to legitimate local and national authorities, and defense of his country against invaders. Unless he was the son of a nobleman involved in struggles for power, there have rarely been any political issues to engage his attention. 883* 66

A host of issues, domestic and international, have by contrast been thrust upon the modern adolescent. Yet in comparison with students from the other countries of Africa and the Middle East, his political orientation is relatively undeveloped. Ethiopian students at regional or international gatherings of students have in the past tended to feel somewhat out of place, for the polit-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

older or more prestigious males are addressed as *gāshē* ("my shield"); the corresponding term for females is *etēyē* ("my sister"). Much older people are addressed by words signifying "father" or "mother."

It is true that the forms of respect toward superiors are often repeated mechanically and sometimes serve to cover up a distinctly hostile disposition toward certain superiors. They nevertheless do represent to some extent a genuine solidaristic sentiment—perhaps the most profound and influential social sentiment in the Amhara social system. It rests in the last analysis on the fact that the Amhara family develops a pronounced sense of filial devotion as well as habits of filial obedience. Amhara society can dispense with horizontal solidarities and communal attachments because it is held together, sufficiently for traditional purposes, at least, by an infinite network of "father-son" relationships.

The egoistic element in the hierarchical pattern is further modified by a sort of joking relationship that sometimes develops between inferiors and superiors. The harsh interrogation of inferiors at times shades into a sort of wry banter; sons or servants may be called "thief" or "scoundrel" in an undertone of unmistakable affection. At times, moreover, the direction of the jesting may be reversed. Amhara servants are noted for playing practical jokes on their masters, which the latter usually appreciate when the jests are clever.[21] Here again, wax and gold is the perfect medium—for expressing aggression against a superior while at the same time appearing to maintain the respect relationship. The following couplet, attributed to Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē, aptly illustrates this genre:

Ennānts makuānnentotch ba-mīn wat balātchu?
Eññām ba-shurwātchen ennāntam bāssātchu.

What sauce, my lords, was on your plate?
We had but peas; 'twas fish you ate.[22]

Here the poet appears to be complimenting the nobles on their more elegant cuisine at a banquet; but there is a pun on the word *bāssātchu*, literally "with your fish," for it may also be taken to mean "you took more than your share."

Within the hierarchical pattern, finally, one finds expressed a certain amount of generosity which, as we have suggested, is relatively uncommon in relations among peers. This appears in connection with the *begging* and *almsgiving* which occur in many sectors of Amhara society. For church students beyond the elementary level, begging is the primary means of livelihood. Youths who have left home to study *zēmā* or *qenē* with a master wander about today, as in former times, carrying small baskets and pleading: "For the sake of Mary! For the sake of God!" in order to get their daily morsels. The activity is so organized that when a large number of students

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkär*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [764] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [601]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 602 601 shown by the vagueness of Amhara kin terminology. The term for brother, *wandam*, also applies to all the male relatives of one's generation and even to one's close friends. Similarly, the terms for uncle and aunt (*agot* and *akeste*) are sometimes used for nephew, niece, and cousin as well; and often these terms are simply replaced by the abstract generic word for kin, *zamad*.

*121 602 The extent of reciprocal obligations among kin outside the nuclear family is a function primarily of the amount of spontaneous affection that exists among the individuals concerned and how close they happen to live to each other. Relatives on good terms with one another normally take turns visiting one another and eating together on holidays. They help one another in the event of sickness, death, fire, litigation, and murder. Orphaned or economically burdensome children are often farmed out to the households of more successful relatives.

*121 602 593 These activities are based on voluntary reciprocity or good will. In its formal structure, the Amhara kinship system stresses the independence of the nuclear family. Although it occasionally happens that married brothers live in a single large compound under the moral authority of their father or an older brother, who is known as its *alaqā* and is responsible for the compound's payment of taxes, each nuclear family lives in separate quarters and produces and consumes its own supply of food by working its own separate acreage of land.

*121 594 421 Within the nuclear family itself, the ties that bind are limited by certain fundamental safeguards of individual rights. One is the institution of private property. The land which each partner brings into a marriage or later acquires through bequests remains his own until death. If they should separate, each takes his own land, and the goods acquired by the household during their marriage are divided equally between them. There is also the provision of *gīl*, a quantity of property that either or both of the spouses may designate, prior to getting married, as strictly private property and indivisible in case of divorce. In the event that a nuclear family enters one of the modern savings associations or *equb* (to be discussed below), husband and wife join as separate members.

*121 593 586 The possibility of divorce is another safeguard of individual rights within the nuclear family. Only in the *querbān* type of marriage is divorce forbidden. This form is normally restricted to priests and very devout, usually older, people; and even then divorces sometimes occur, the couple preferring the displeasure of the church to a life of continued antagonism. The standard [585] sort of marriage is the *samānya* or contract form, in which the equivalent of a simple "I do" concludes the match and a simple "I do not" legitimates divorce. The divorce may be initiated by either husband or wife. An Amharic

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proverb which stresses the rights of women in this regard gives the following advice: 121* 593 586

Balāgar sitagab yemaṭāl bo-degger;
Tayawennā nay qitāwen yegāgg-. [539]

When a peasant gets sated he beats you with wood;
Leave and come home, let him bake his own bread!

A couple who have firmly decided upon divorce need simply call in their relatives or go before the *çhīqā shum* in order to have their property properly divided. The only recourse to judicial process is when, as often happens, disputes break out concerning the division of property. In the *damoz* form of marriage, in which there is no civil oath, divorce is yet simpler. The wife is given certain presents and a monthly salary for the duration of the marriage. When the husband has to leave for another part of the country, or if the couple quarrel, they simply separate without further ado.

Despite its heavy claim on the energies of its members, then, the Amhara kinship system is such as to make members of the nuclear family relatively independent of extended relationships, and to give the individual marriage partners important areas of independence from each other. 121* 593 594

Religious Organization

Membership in the Monophysite Church is automatic for all Amhara except a small percentage who are Muslim. This membership is symbolized by the ceremony of baptism, performed for male infants on the fortieth day and for females on the eightieth. At that time the child receives a special Christian name in addition to his regular family name. 121* 795 794 [851] [553]

Certain obligations are incumbent upon every member of the church. Foremost among these is the requirement of fasting, which begins for children of both sexes at about the age of seven and introduces a considerable element of constraint into the lives of the Amhara. Second, there is the obligation to observe the Sabbaths and the main holidays by refraining from arduous physical labor on those days. In addition, each household is obliged to contribute a certain quantity of grain to the local church every year.* [785] [796]

Apart from the rigorous fasting requirements, and the injunction not to work on holy days—a dubious hardship—the individual is relatively free of ritual obligations. The rituals demanded by the church are so manifold, and so sacred, that responsibility for them is given to the clergy, and the laymen

*In some areas this is a fixed amount per household (e.g., one or two *quana*); in others it is proportionate to the wealth of the family. It is collected by a lay official of the church, the *gend alaqā*, though sometimes by the *gabaz*.

*278 *759 874 Occasionally, an herbalist, particularly a medhaniyt awakiy, will utilize an apprentice as his medhaniyt korac. This is usually a close kinsman, a son or nephew, who has been taken to gather medicinals on previous occasions, and is thus familiar with their appearance and location. As an apprentice, he relieves the herbalist of the burden of gathering botanicals, which often involves trips to the hot and malarial lowlands. At the same time, the apprentice gradually becomes acquainted with various pharmacological details of the therapy.

*278 *759 No terminological distinction is made between herbalists who rely on a medhaniyt korac and those who do not. The client, in fact, is usually unaware of the situation in specific cases.

*278 *759 778 Classed together with other herbalists is the maker of herbal amulets, the kitab kitabiy. In most cases, the herbal amulet (kitab) is part of a complex therapy which includes, as a final step, the presentation to the sick-man of a leather pouch containing a sample of all or some of the ingredients of the primary medicine. The amulet is worn around the neck, on the girdle, or fastened beneath an armpit. In this context, the amulet performs a prophylactic function, for it protects the now vulnerable client against a recurrence of the ailment. Certain of these therapists also provide these prophylactic amulets to clients who have never had the ailment in

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet	Inter-hamlet
Number of redundant herbal therapies % of total:	14 (54%)	13(65%)	40 (91%)

For most therapies, redundancy is accidental; herbalists practicing the same disease-name specialty simply happen to reside in the same hamlet and there is no (known) genetic link between their therapies. In the two hamlets, however, there are twelve therapies each of which shares a genetic tie with one or more other therapies.

[593] Most of these link father with son:

(Koruba:Seci:i:I+) with
(Koruba:Seci:i:I)

(Mic:Seci:i:I+) with
(Mic:Seci:i:I) (same herbalist as above entry)

(Wosfat:Seci/ateci:i:III) with
(Wosfat:Seci:i:III)

(Yisaal Basiyta:Ateci:k*:II) with
(Yisaal Basiyta:Ateci:k*:II)

The father in each of these cases is a relatively old man (late sixties, mid-fifties, and mid-sixties, respectively), and who no longer wishes to bother with collecting the medicaments necessary for his therapy. So, even though the father in each case is remembered as an herbalist in the disease name specialty, it is the son who has taken over the practice (an eldest sibling in these three cases). None of these therapies has an impressive reputation for effectiveness, a consideration

* 756
* 793 Literacy, per se, is not the goal of enrollment, but is
869 percieved rather as a pre-requisite for studying the
* [192] Gospels (wangel), the psalter (dawiyt), and a variety of prayers, pursuant to participating in the Mass (kidasiy) as an ecclesiastic of the parish.

621 Within a parish, only a minority of households send
869 boys to the church school; these are generally ristena
* 793 households, each sending a single priest-candidate in
233 any one generation. Because attendance at the school
[602] precludes shepherding, the common lot of young boys, the student's family must find a substitute shepherd for him; a younger sibling is usually available for this task, but, if not, a collateral or even non-kinsman may be obtained. Indeed, the age at which a boy begins his studies (generally, between seven and thirteen years) is often determined by when this substitute can be found. The parish school is suspended, however, during periods of intensive agricultural activities, of harvesting, threshing, and winnowing.

* 793 Although considerations of piety influence a man to
423 seek ordination for his son, self-interest generally do-
• 693 minates. The achievement of priesthood validates a
621 family's claims to church lands (yimoskel mariet). If
554 the neophyte's father is himself a priest, his son's or-
* [192] dination means freedom from bothersome performances in the Mass. If the father is not a priest, but anyway

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holds priest land because he is a ristena of a founding ambilineage of the parish, his son's ordination means that the lands or payments until now turned over to a stranger priest (in lieu of a ristena priest) can be kept within the family.

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The durability of the ties which bind a priest to his natal parish are reinforced by his marriage. Most peasants are married in a "secular union" (yaluwkurban migabat), which excludes neither divorce not extramarital sexual adventures.[21] The priest, on the other hand, must be married, and it can be only as a "communion marriage" (bikurban migabat), an indissoluble sacrament of the Church which commits the spouses to sexual fidelity and forbids even remarriage. Thus, the priest is cut off from carousing in the talla houses of the town. He must instead confine his comraderie to the courtyard of the parish church, separated from the persons and experiences which might otherwise lead him away from his parish fields.

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Thus enrollment in the parish school is conceived

[21] Two other forms of marriage, associated with a man on travels or living in town, are yidomoz migabat (which lasts for a contractual period) and yilijinat (providing only exclusive sexual rights to the woman).

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*793 621 869 241 [732] as a means for dicusing and strengthening a risteña family's economic and social interests within the parish. There are two conspicuous exceptions. Should a boy bear a physical disability so severe that he will be unable to perform the basic subsistence activities of Amhara men, particularly plowing, he may be enrolled in the parish school as a prelude to a non-agricultural career beyond his natal parish. The alternatives are few. [463] [441] [563] work as an artisan is appropriate for Muslim and Falasha, but shameful for an Amhara; while employment as a merchant is less objectionable, the peasant is generally without the necessary skills, contacts, and capital; military service is beyond his abilities; thus, only the Church and government remain. Regarding the Church, the priesthood is closed to him, since a priest must be physically whole, and capable of standing unassisted during [647] the performance of the Mass. The remaining ecclesiastical and government career choices assume that a boy will achieve literacy at the parish school and subsequently *793 621 869 593 depart from his natal community. The second exception to the local focus of the parish school, is the small number of boys who are offspring of debtera-teachers serving in parish churches. The ties of these men to their parishes-of-residence are usually only professional, and they are rarely risteñas, it is moreover their professional ethos which influences them to seek an extensive

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ecclesiastical education for their sons.

However, it is not only the cripple and blind, or the landless sons of full-time ecclesiastics who find in the parish school the means to leave the agricultural community. In reality, they constitute only a minority of the boys who leave the parish. For among those who are the physically-whole offspring of ristenas, there are some who find objectionable the prospect of a life-time as a farmer, subordinated to a father's wishes and interests, and bound to a single woman. Where such inchoate dissatisfaction exists, it may be further stimulated by the parish teacher, particularly if he is a debtera.

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The teaching at the parish school is performed by a local priest or monk[22] who is competent in the required subjects. In the absence of a suitable local man, a stranger monk or debtera is employed. The debtera is a Church scholar of sorts, who also leads the chanting of the liturgy during the performance of the Mass. He is an important model for the restive student, for his life provides an alternative and challenge to the social

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[22] A "monk" (manakwosa) is a mature unmarried deacon, a widowed priest, or a layman who has renounced material acquisitions and has vowed celibacy. Only the first two are literate and, therefore, potential teachers. There are, in addition, anchorites (bahatahwy).

869 sident student by familiarizing him with the network of churches, monasteries, and academies which constitute the stations along which the student will progress once he leaves his natal parish.

*[192] The completion of psalter (dawiyd) is frequently considered a sign of the student's readiness to be tested by the local bishop (abuna) for certification as a deacon. The boy is fifteen or sixteen by this time, and the recipient of church fields in return for his performance in the Mass; with his marriage a few years later, he becomes a priest. The boy bent on a debtera career generally waits until he has been certified a deacon, since this is considered a prerequisite for enrollment in his first debtera school.

*793 With the exceptions already cited, a man is certain
869 to oppose his son's departure, since, sentiment aside,
621 the boy's move usually represents a significant economic
• 593 loss. When he leaves his natal parish, he does so sec-
166 retly, journeying to a distant debtera, in order to conceal his new residence from his father. Thus, he begins his debtera career without kinfolk or friends to protect him, without resources to meet his subsistence needs.[23]

[871] [23]Since liberation, government (secular) schools
[178] have offered an alternative to an ecclesiastical education
[369] pursuant to government employment. The effects of this have been limited, however, since only an estimated 3% pass beyond the eighth grade (ESA 1965:198). In addition children of townsmen and non-Amhara are disproportionately represented in these classes.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

business of petitions, and few are without wives. This 621
causes many single women to live here, and when they are 443
old they have another resource, for in this town every Tuesday there is a great market or fair at which three or four hundred persons are brought together; and all the old women and some young ones have measures to measure wheat and salt, and they go to the market to measure and gain their living; they give hospitality to those that sleep there that day, and also take care for them of what remains to be sold for the next market day. There is another 595
reason why there are many women in this town, it is 688
because the men who have plenty of food to eat keep two or three wives; and this is not forbidden to them by the King nor by their magistrates, only by the Church. Every man who has more than one wife does not enter the church, nor does he receive any sacrament: and they hold him to be excommunicated. For a year and a half a nephew of mine and I lodged in the house of a man named Ababitay, and he had three wives still alive and acquaintances of ours, friends in honourable friendship: they said that he had had seven wives and thirty children of them. Nobody forbade them, except the Church, as has been said, which did not give them the benefit of the sacraments; and before our departure, he put away from him, and from intercourse with him, two wives, and remained with one, that is to say, the one he had last, who was the youngest, and already they gave him the sacraments, and he entered the church like anybody else, and as though he had not had more than one wife. On this account there are many women in this town, because the men are well off and are like courtiers: and they take two or three, or more if it pleases them. In this [586]
country marriages are not fixed, because they separate for any cause. I saw people married, and was at a marriage 585
which was not in a church, and it was done in this manner. On the open space before some houses they placed a bed-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

2. The Division of Labor.

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462 Besides the dimensions of time and space, the factor of the use of energy is important in material culture. The Amhara of Ethiopia still uses the force of their own muscles as the primary source of industrial power, and their material culture has thus remained basically unchanged, especially in the aspect of human organization of labor.

There is sharp seasonal division of labor among the Amhara, already described in connection with agriculture, the major occupation. This is largely determined by the climate, the heavy rains and little rains, the long dry season; and the very limited conquest of nature by the people in this area, which does not go beyond occasional irrigation ditches. As a result, the seasonal division of labor follows every minute change in the ewather, differs womewhat from year to year depending on early or late onset of the rains. The human organization aspect of agriculture and feasts remains ruled by the weather, which dominates the ecological and religious calendar of activities.

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463 Human organization of labor among the Amhara seems
596 to follow two major principles: (1), Extension of the family organization. The extended family is self-sufficient in most needs for food, shelter, and the spinning of cotton for clothing. Salt and raw cotton are the only basic purchases, and only the services of smith, potter, tanner and weaver are actually essential, though there are a few other cultural elaborations. The extended family is also the major producing unit, in agriculture and animal husbandry. It has traditionally limited its own production

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[597] because the often arbitrary, confiscatory taxation have lain heaviest on the producer of the most abundant harvest.

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554 (2) The attitude despising labor as an activity for slaves or lower-class ethnic groups, especially if the labor is skilled. Acquisition of special labor skills led to enforced migration, serfdom close to slavery, as has been described. Shame is attached to it, by the Amhara. For him, only agriculture, settled animal husbandry, warfare and spiritual activity in church or healing are acceptable. Even in this group of non-ignoble occupations, there are limitations. A farmer who would try to improve the quality of his land on any but a year-to-year basis, would be very unusual and an object of ridicule. For such land would arouse the evil eye, or the envy of the feudal lord, who would increase his tribute or, in case of family freeholds("rest"), increase his extortion of services. Even though a formal "corvee" has very recently been declared illegal, the local rural statute labor cannot be changed much by the central government, especially since it usually appoints former feudal lords to administrative positions in rural districts.

Principle (1) dominates the division of labor by [633] sex, and to some extent by age. It also sets the pattern for the need for and existence of market-places that become urban centers, places where specialist not found among the scattered hamlets can be encountered: in entertainment, in trading goods brought by caravan, in higher justice, higher church, better medicine, and recently, in the availability for some of the 8-year elementary school.

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463 The rural extended family is also the residential unit, the
596 hamlet, and this principle affects the rural residence of the ethnic specialists: the Faqi tanners occupy their own hamlets, Falasha smiths theirs, and, within each ethnic hamlet, the specialists are related by kinship, usually patrilocal as well as patrilineal.

463 Principle (2) here creates the basis forthe ethnic
563 division of labor. The concern of the Amhara is not the time and effort saved by each group doing a specialized task, it is to retain prestige by not working at a skilled manual task but having social inferiors do it for them. Time is not much concern in this culture, for labor is paid by the job, not the hour. Labor is cheap, and since the material culture is relatively undeveloped technically, the work does not require the close synchronization of modern, Western factories. Thus, as long as the primary source of power consists of muscular force and simple technology, the old ethnic division of labor remains satisfactory to the Amhara, and often even to the ethnic specialists whose livelihood is assured.

The Amhara has more confidence that an iron plow-point or pot made by the Falasha is well-made, or that a toga woven by a Muslim will give long wear, than he exhibits if a poor Amhara has learned the crafts and tries to sell him his products. For, he reasons, has not the ethnic workman learned his craft since childhood, from his father, who in turn has practiced and perfected it for countless generations? The Amhara purchaser suspects that a new

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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"When kinfolk aid each other,
no trouble can sever them".

"The needle does not see her own hole
yet it serves her so well",

(said of a man, who, as is common, is generous to his brothers and sisters, yet stingy to his wife and even children).

"When the nose is hit,
the eye begins to weep",

(i.e when one relative is hurt, the others suffer with him).

602 Kin relations give the individual his greatest source of security, psychological and economic, to the Amhara mind, and protect him from the world outside. [574] Therefore, regular and frequent visiting of kinfolk is emphasized; it is one of the most frequent causes of absentiism of Amhara employees. Events of the life cycle (marriages, memorial feasts, etc.) require such visiting. The end of the rainy season is another stimulus. No other association seriously challenges the predominance of kin relations in Amhara society.

A. The Extended Family and Kinship Terms.

● 596 The extended patrilocal, patrilineal family usually inhabits its own hamlet, farms its own land, allocating it to its biological-nuclear families. Patriarchal elders form an informal council that can be convened in any case of need. This extended family is most typically found among owners of "rest" land'

596 (private freehold), most common in the old-Amhara pro-
[428] vinces (and in Tigre). "Rest" land is inherited only by sons, not by daughters, except in the relatively rare case when a family short of young men permits a son-in-law to settle in its hamlet, whereupon some land may be inherited by the daughter who is consanguinal kin. Daughters may inherit movables such as cows, sheep, some personal belongings of their mother or father (of the father if there are no sons).

601 Kinship terms do not often differ between terms of address and reference, but often between formal and informal terms which are applied in a variety of ways ranging from authoritarian familiarity to endearments. Differences of gender are also expressed.

The generic term for kinfolk is "zämäd". Consanguinal kinfolk, on both the father's and mother's side, are called "wägän", and if they reside far away and are rarely seen the kinship is re-emphasized by the term "yäsega zämäd" (lit. kinship of one flesh). Consanguinal families sharing the same residential hamlet
[178] are called "betä zämäd" (lit. kinfolk of the house). It
[572] is noteworthy that in very recent times, in urban areas where kinship functions are somewhat attenuated, the term "zamad" has become extended to include a close personal, though not related, friend.

The affinal relationship is generically called "amachenät", a male affinal relative is addressed and referred to as "amach", a female as "amcha"; whether ego is male or female.

606 to be a "good wife", to do "everything right", to learn what her husband likes. If she does not obey her mother-in-law, she is criticized as "rude", and the women say that the groom will "divorce her soon".

423 596 After the marriage, and especially after she bears children, a wife is regarded as a charter member of her husband's "byet" (lit. house), his family of procreation, continuing his patrilineal kinship unit, regardless of whether they move to residence elsewhere or not. Nevertheless, it is the "byet" that is the landholding unit among most "rest"-owning Amhara, and each biological unit within it receives an allocation of land for usufruct; the limit of one able-bodied plowman is regarded as 5-10 "qada". Thus, the biological family of procreation does not own land, nor does it control it, until, with the death of elders and advancing age, it becomes the "family of orientation" to which a succeeding generation must give obedience.

596 422 Meanwhile, however, the biological family unit does own the cattle and other mobile goods with which they started their married life, and the increase therefrom. This gives them some partial economic independence.

[731] 423 166 361 When, due to war, epidemics (e.g. malaria), or famine (erosion), a "byet" decides to abandon, for the time being, the ancestral lands, and migrates to another district, it usually huddles together in one or a minimum of residential hamlets, sometimes for several generations, until times are better. Then it buds off so rapidly that soon only a few huts remain on the location of the original hamlet of refuge. Thereupon kinsmen may claim "betäna" rights of usufruct from more distant kinfolk who had remained be-

606 instruct her to be a good wife; while a stepmother is assumed to have no such desire, and is likely to tell her stepdaughter not to"make so much fuss"over her husband. If the latter were to follow such advice, she would soon be criticized by her husband's parents whose residential hamlet she usually shares. Stepmothers are very common due to the frequency of divorce and the shorter lifespan of women.

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606 628 Affinal relatives are expected to come to a person's aid if he becomes involved in a blood feud, particularly if his consanguinal kin are few or weak. Since there is no pattern of individual duwlling, even distant kin become involved readily, as a point of honor.

591 Residence of male persons is usually patrilocal-patrilineal, i.e. in the consanguinal line. But if a young bridegroom finds that his own father has little good land to allocate him in his parental hamlet upon his marriage, he may elect to seek better facilities by establishing residence at the bride's patrilocal hamlet. She is usuallyv very happy about this latter residence, for her kin will protect her even if she wrongs her husband (e.g. by taking a lover in subsequent years). Conversely, thehusband tries to avoid such a situation, for reasons of happiness as well as prestige.

C. Artificial Kinship.

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In view of the emphasis of seeking security in the kinship relation, it is not surprising that Amhara society has formalized several ways of establishing artificial kinship, a process called "zämäd honä".

Adoption is permitted, regulated, mediated, and even encouraged by the church, provided the person or child to be adopted is both Abyssinian Christian, and "ättentäm" (lit. of good bones; ie. not a negroid Shanqalla or some other foreign race).

There are two degrees of adoption: "breast-parenthood", the complete adoption; and "bread-parenthood" by step-parents.

Full adoption provides a "breast-father" (yäṭuṭ abbat), or a "breast-mother" ("yäṭuṭ ennat"), or both. In the traditional, provincial, public ceremony of adoption, this expression was literally enacted. In the presence of the elders of the kin group, the Confessor, and the ḉheqa shum, the new parent (male or female) coated his or her nipples with honey and simulated breast-feeding, even if the child was already in adolescence. The adoptee was then referred to as "yäṭuṭ lej" (lit. breast child). At the ceremony the new parents swear to make no distinction in treatment between the adopted and the consanguinal children; and the adoptee, if old enough "for reason" (about ages 7 to ten and over), swears to obey his new parents, tend them in sickness, and bury them as would a son.

Reasons forthe adoption of a "breast-child" may

608 be the "mother's" barrenness, or a man's wish to be
597 taken care of in his old age, or both. Obversely, an adolescent orphan may himself take the initiative in selecting a prospective breast-parent, attaching himself to him, ingratiating himself with gifts of honey, etc. After adoption, the "breast-child" is literally considered like a blood relative, and may not marry his new "sibling" -by-adoption.

This prohibition does not apply to the "bread-parent" relation. A bread-father ("anjara abbat"), and bread-mother ("enjara ennat") are considered not truly "artificial kinship" of permanence. It is a step-parent relationship, arising out of divorce and remarriage of parents, or a man's last will asking a close friend tottake care of his children, in war or famine, or sickness. Youngsters do not often take the initiative to establish this relationship, for it does not usually provide the security of the breast-parenthood. The proverb says:

[539] "Bread-mother, what will move you?
(you are tough) like a gut!".

608 Another, mild, form of artificial kinship is established to give security and guarantee against ill-treatment to the bride, in the persons of the "mizē", two kinsmen of the groom who take an oath to regard and protect her like a sister in her new residential hamlet.

In the broadest sense, kinfolk also includes the retainer, usually a landless peasant, who has pla-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

1. The Beginning of Life.

842 A. The Desire for Children: adoption.

Children are greatly desired by the Amhara, and a childless home is regarded as under a heavenly curse. Children are regarded as continuing the "byet", the residential extended family; as a source of riches from childhood on when they begin economic tasks; as a source of comfort and security in old age; as defenders in feuds and wars; even after the death of parents, children help them into heaven by means of "täzkar".

[588] When a woman is barren, and amulets have proven no cure for her, she may give her husband a concubine, "gärad" (lit. servant maid), so that he will not feel deprived of fatherhood and begin

597 to hate her. Or she may adopt a child, preferably an orphan of kinfolk or a well-known family, by taking the child to the confessor-priest and swearing the oath of ecclesiastical adoption, whereupon the child becomes "yägal kidan lej" (lit. contract-child). This may include the ceremony of "breast-mother", "yätut ennat", previously described. Less fortunate is the foster child, not formally adopted, who lives with the foster parents, guards the crops and herds the cows, but is more completely dependent on the good will of the "bread mother", "enjara ennat".

593 Fathers, whether natural or adopted, expect complete obedience from their children, particularly after they have arrived at the "age of reason". Fathers feel defensively obliged to maintain their authority; as the proverbs say of a father addressing the

593 son:

539 "Sheep! If I do not eat you, you would devour me", said the hyena". (meaning: perhaps you'd

582 his late 'teens. The difference in what is considered "suitable age" is thus five or more years, for the girl may be as young as 13 or 14 in the still prevailing (though officially now outlawed) tradition. The reason is not only the earlier maturing of the girl, but partly the emphasis of protecting her virginity until marriage, partly the attitude that the groom must "tame" his bride - and the younger the better.

597 Consanguinal ties continue stronger, after marriage, than
608 conjugal ties. The "artificial kinship" created at this period of the life cycle is that of the bride's "best man" ("mizä") who is sworn to protect her even against her husband, and who is in a good position to do so as a residential kinsman of the husband. This emphasis on consanguinal ties even after marriage is similar to other parts of the Middle East (footnote 80), and also Africa.

885 A fully adult man ("säw") and woman ("sät") are honorifically addressed, e.g. in church usage, as "aqwä adam" for man (from Geez "Adam"), "aqwä hawwa" for woman (from Geez for "Eve"), and the connotation is that they have passed the hot-blooded "gobäz" and "qonjo" stage and have become reasonable, calm, responsible persons who know the etiquette of their culture and have become fully cognizant of proper behavior at all forseeable events in the life cycle.

583 A. Marriage Patterns
585 There are three predominant types of marriage:

Footnote 80: Patai, Raphael: Relationship Patterns among the Arabs. Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. 2, May 1951, pp. 180-5

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

853 155 152 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning adoption.

861 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 853 155 152 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbät*, or breast-father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbät*. Used metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 155 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 201 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or [832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 155 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati- [431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 155 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 538 832 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] *The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

596 (private freehold), most common in the old-Amhara pro-
[428] vinces (and in Tigre). "Rest" land is inherited only by sons, not by daughters, except in the relatively rare case when a family short of young men permits a son-in-law to settle in its hamlet, whereupon some land may be inherited by the daughter who is consanguinal kin. Daughters may inherit movables such as sows, sheep, some personal belongings of their mother or father (of the father if there are no sons).

601 Kinship terms do not often differ between terms of address and reference, but often between formal and informal terms which are applied in a variety of ways ranging from authoritarian familiarity to endearments. Differences of gender are also expressed.

The generic term for kinfolk is "zämäd". Consanguinal kinfolk, on both the father's and mother's side, are called "wägän", and if they reside far away and are rarely seen the kinship is re-emphasized by the term "yäsega zämäd" (lit. kinship of one flesh). Consanguinal families sharing the same residential hamlet
[178] are called "betä zämäd" (lit. kinfolk of the house). It
[572] is noteworthy that in very recent times, in urban areas where kinship functions are somewhat attenuated, the term "zamad" has become extended to include a close personal, though not related, friend.

The affinal relationship is generically called "amachenät", a male affinal relative is addressed and referred to as "amach", a female as "ancha"; whether ego is male or female.

Table 9: Kinship Terms of Special Significance

Formal Term(address&reference)		Informal Address	Function
abbat	father	baba (endearing) (original babytalk)	protective; used also to address elders who are non-related, to beg protection(like a helpless baby).
ennat	mother	tatay (endearing, originally babytalk)	respectful; used also to address unrelated women, to indicate respect by placing them in senior position.
"yännat lej" (lit. my mother's child)	uterine brother		to stress, in reference, the uterine sibling, from among other siblings.
		amatey (lit. my elder mother)	"tatey" can always be used toward consanguinally related women, but an unrelated woman who is married and has born a child should be addressed as "amatey".
ayyat -- ayyay	grandfather		respectful; used also by juniors in addressing elder brother, father, father's brother, mother's brother; also by long-time servant retainers to the master; or to respectfully endear oneself to an unrelated elder.
amita	grandmother	tatay	respectful and endearing; related to "amatey". tatay used only in consanguinal address.

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qedem ayyat	great-grandfather (lit. before grandfather)	respectful: usually used only in reference to patrilineal line, or to an unusually famous person in the matrilineal line.
zär	ancestor	term of reference to consanguineal ancestor, especially male.
warsa	brother's wife	used by male ego, whom she calls the same. The term indicates mutual inheritance, and "levirate", ~~but~~ a warsa woman who has born sons and becomes a widow, remains in residence and is thus "inherited" together with her cows.
goban	co-wife, rival (reciprocal term)	used by Muslim Amharic-speakers, to whom polygyny is permitted.

•601 Cousins are simply addressed and referred to as "uncle's child" or "aunt's child", and there is no terminological difference between paternal and maternal uncles. But the informal terms mentioned above are extended to these consanguineal kinfolk for special emphasis of endearment, reapect and protection. For the latter, the address "gashey" is used commonly, and a rarer, more poetic and somewhat archaic term of address would be "ambayë" (my mountain fortress).

Familiarities, teasing or endearing, in address to siblings include "abäba" (flower) for endearment to an older girl (sister); "anchi" (Thou, feminine) in teasing address of a girl to a younger, male sibling, otherwise considered an insult; "antä ", (thou, male), in teasing address to a younger sister.

B. Affinal Kin ("amachenät") and Residence.

606 574 Affinal relatives, especially the male ego's parents-in-law, must also be visited regularly, at least once every two months in the dry season, or, if they reside too far away, at least twice a year. Gifts, (e.g. a fat sheep) must be brought, and hospitality and a feast can be expected in turn.

606 In popular Amhara opinion, the affinal villain is not so much the mother-in-law, as the step-mother-in-

[601] law. Both are addressed respectfully as "amatey" (lit. my elder mother). But it is believed that a mother, desiring her daughter to be happy in marriage, will

576 therefore, know). Abusing people with vulgar insults ("laddäfa")
195 tends to reflect on the abuser, so that he is considered "belgena", a rude person. Such a person speaks in high-pitched, strident style, to commoners; while to social superiors he fawns and wheedles, using baby-talk such as "abbabba" (daddy) to a lord and "annanna" or "tatay" (mummy) to a lady, in mournful tones of self-abasement and utter helplessness, begging paternal protection and forgiveness as if he were an infant that had not yet reached the "age of reason".

576 This is mocked, for the Amhara distinguishes between such servility and non-servile gestures of subordination, such as the "gursha", the bowing from the hip, and the walking backwards when departing from
[#64] the king. Servants and other employees may indicate dissatisfaction at being short-changed, by bowing not quite so deeply the next time, whereupon a wise lord or employer will take a cue, increase the wage, and see it acknowledged by a specially deep bow or knee-kiss. Otherwise, protest will take the form of "murmuring", a semi-articulate protest which may lead to open rebellion.

576 Kinship terms are sometimes employed, outside the kin context,
●601 to communicate respective positions in a situation of differential social status. Thus, it is respectful to address a status superior as "ayya" (lit. "my dear elder"), used to the father or elder brother. The extension of this term is fairly recent, in line with improved communication and transportation, but the rustic still uses the more ancient version, "ayya", (which has the same meaning). Because of this, a wit who does not want to address a rustic as "ato" (Mister), sometimes addresses the ignoramus, in mock respect, as "ayya". (This cheats him out of his "entitles", reminiscent of the use of the address "Doc" by Southern Whites to Negroes, avoiding "Mister")

576 The speech pattern and etiquette to be expected from women,
195 nearly all of whom are illiterate and have no formal education, is
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkār*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [744] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [201]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 shown by the vagueness of Amhara kin terminology. The term for brother,
602 *wandam*, also applies to all the male relatives of one's generation and even
• 601 to one's close friends. Similarly, the terms for uncle and aunt (*agot* and *akeste*) are sometimes used for nephew, niece, and cousin as well; and often these terms are simply replaced by the abstract generic word for kin, *zamad*.
*121 The extent of reciprocal obligations among kin outside the nuclear family is
602 a function primarily of the amount of spontaneous affection that exists among the individuals concerned and how close they happen to live to each other. Relatives on good terms with one another normally take turns visiting one another and eating together on holidays. They help one another in the event of sickness, death, fire, litigation, and murder. Orphaned or economically burdensome children are often farmed out to the households of more successful relatives.

*121 These activities are based on voluntary reciprocity or good will. In its
602 formal structure, the Amhara kinship system stresses the independence of
593 the nuclear family. Although it occasionally happens that married brothers live in a single large compound under the moral authority of their father or an older brother, who is known as its *alaqā* and is responsible for the compound's payment of taxes, each nuclear family lives in separate quarters and produces and consumes its own supply of food by working its own separate acreage of land.

*121 Within the nuclear family itself, the ties that bind are limited by certain
594 fundamental safeguards of individual rights. One is the institution of private
42 property. The land which each partner brings into a marriage or later acquires through bequests remains his own until death. If they should separate, each takes his own land, and the goods acquired by the household during their marriage are divided equally between them. There is also the provision of *gīl*, a quantity of property that either or both of the spouses may designate, prior to getting married, as strictly private property and indivisible in case of divorce. In the event that a nuclear family enters one of the modern savings associations or *equb* (to be discussed below), husband and wife join as separate members.

*121 The possibility of divorce is another safeguard of individual rights within
593 the nuclear family. Only in the *querbān* type of marriage is divorce forbidden.
586 This form is normally restricted to priests and very devout, usually older, people; and even then divorces sometimes occur, the couple preferring the displeasure of the church to a life of continued antagonism. The standard
[585] sort of marriage is the *samānya* or contract form, in which the equivalent of a simple "I do" concludes the match and a simple "I do not" legitimates divorce. The divorce may be initiated by either husband or wife. An Amharic

361 tornadoes in the rainy season, is another ecological consideration.

591 [621] The hamlet is always a kinship unit, usually patrilocal and patrilineal. When a young man marries, his father will give him a cow or two, as he will to his daughter. But only the son will receive the use of part of his father's rented (or owned) fields to support his new family. Thus he will usually build his hut near his father's, father's brother's, and paternal grandfather's. In exceptional cases, when no land is available at his father's, the bridegroom may agree to establish himself at his wife's hamlet, but this is rare since the feeling is that he will always remain a subjugated, barely tolerated, henpecked and ill-treated figure. A proud Amhara male, even a "gabbar" (peasant ex-serf), would not agree to such a condition and insists on patriarchal status at least within his own biological family of creation. He would much rather continue [606] to obey his father than his new father-in-law. Consanguinal kinship feelings are so strong that it is a common assumption that no in-law could really mean well and be unselfishly well-disposed to the newcomer. Only when warfare has killed off the adult males in a hamlet, male inlaws move in.

592 Each hut is inhabited by a biological family, usually father and mother, about three children who have survived infant mortality, and perhaps an aged parent or old, widowed kinswoman of the husband's.

● 602 Patrilineal kinship relations are often related also to administrative considerations. On church-owned land, the peasants who live on the hillside below the church, who

●602 farm the land and use church pasturage in the valley, are often the sons of the brothers of the priest, if not his own sons--an Amhara form of nepotism.

417 231 Each hamlet is usually fenced in ("jägol"-thorny fence) against night-roving hyenas, and may contain, besides living huts and store huts, a cattle corral ("magwa") though at least the calves and the family mule are taken into the living hut at night. The kitchen garden may also have an enclosure of cut thornbushes, protection against ravages by domestic cattle; and ther usually is at least one fierce reddish-brown dog (with white underside). Solid fences of stakes fixed straight in the ground ("gärägärä") are usually used only around churches.

632 622 While the head of each hamlet is the head of the residential, extended family, the administrative head of a series of hamlets is appointed by the governor of the province (formerly by the feudal lord). This appointed headman, chega shum (lit. "appointed one over the soil") may administer as few as two hamlets, or as many as fifty, with the mode about 8 to 10. In sparsely populated, less fertile or very mountainous territory his domain may be greater, but in most cases his area is within sight so that he can even maintain contact during the rainy season. His area is properly called "mändär" and constitutes the nearest approach to the village concept. If his territory is on church land, it is referred to as "and debber agär" (lit. land in support of a certain holy place) since very often this land has been donated for that purpose in the last will of a pious elderly landowner, and is something like parish

423 The richest farmer in the rural vicinity of Gondar,
427 a member of the Qemant (Cushitic-speaking) ethnic group, owns 8 gasha (about 400 acres), which is considered fabulous wealth by his Amhara neighbors. However, with the aid of his sons and servants, he cultivates only one gasha at any given time. He parcels out the remaining 7 gasha, except for some fallow land, to landless tenant farmers, many of them ex-slaves, usually in plots no bigger than 10 qada (about 4 acres), which is considered the limit one man can plow and seed without help. The rent they pay him consists of one "madiga " of tyeff grain (about 25 kilo); payable by each. Each also pays him 1/2 madiga of barley, referred to as "qolo", tribute to his "household". His agents also collect the 10% tithe, in produce, which he is expected to pass on to the government, and the new Eth$4.- education tax. He invest part of his profits in cows for his increasing herds.

423 For purposes of taxation, of peasants, the govern-
651 ment treasury must rely on the judgment of the headman, ("cheqa shum"), who is difficult to check because the land is unmeasured and a "gasha" is a flexible concept. Therefore, his supervisor, usually the mislane, can only base a check on past, customary payments.

[602] Taxcollectors are known to be generous when deal-
423 ing with even distant kinfolk, or with priests and
651 their relatives, and to even out the receipts by pres-
653 sure on low-class ethnic minorities, justifying this by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income from their handicrafts.

7. Family and Kinship in Social Organization.

602 The emphasis on the extended family and kin relations among the Amhara can hardly be exagerated. In all problems of life the Amhara first turns to family and kin. While the partilineal-patrilocal extended family is considered of first importance, consanguinal kinfolk on themother's side rank only slightly less in obligation and duties owed by the indifidual, and in benefits for which he can appeal. In contrast, affinal relationships are regarded as considerably less important [428] in obligations and benefits,. This attitude is reinforced by the traditional law which emphasized inheritance in consanguineal relationships, even distant ones, over [589] closer affinal relatives; and by the relatively easy divorce from the common "semanya" marriage.

602 539 Proverbs emphasizing various aspects of kin relations abound and are constantly cited as advice in problems, and in "socializing " and "enculturating" the young:

"The liar to win over,
to his brother and sister appeal",

(i.e., do not appeal to the judge, whom the liar may fool; but to his siblings, whom he cannot fool).

"Quarrels within the kinfolk,
(are like) insects on cabbage",

(i.e. they do not strike at the root, are not really destructive).

"Relatives and medicine,
in days of trouble seek them."

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"When kinfolk aid each other,
no trouble can sever them".

"The needle does not see her own hole
yet it serves her so well",

(said of a man, who, as is common, is generous to his brothers and sisters, yet stingy to his wife and even children).

"When the nose is hit,
the eye begins to weep",

(i.e when one relative is hurt, the others suffer with him).

602 Kin relations give the individual his greatest source of security, psychological and economic, to the Amhara mind, and protect him from the world outside. [574] Therefore, regular and frequent visiting of kinfolk is emphasized; it is one of the most frequent causes of absentiism of Amhara employees. Events of the life cycle (marriages, memorial feasts, etc.) require such visiting. The end of the rainy season is another stimulus. No other association seriously challenges the predominance of kin relations in Amhara society.

A. The Extended Family and Kinship Terms.

596 The extended patrilocal, patrilineal family usually inhabits its own hamlet, farms its own land, allocating it to its biological-nuclear families. Patriarchal elders form an informal council that can be convened in any case of need. This extended family is most typically found among owners of "rest" land

562 The commoner woman may not
565 carry a "ḉera" flyswitch of monkey-hair or horse-
293 hair, otherwise she will be criticized as "rudely presumptuous" and "proud". Commoner women therefore drape the shamma over their heads to be somewhat protected from flies, or cut a small branch off a eucalyptus tree. Noblewomen may carry a ḉera, and indicate by their heavy weight that they have a houseful of servants to perform every menial task.

562 With advancing age, past menopause, the social
888 position ofthe commoner woman steadily improves. She now lords it over the younger women in the household who have taken over the menial tasks. If she has remained married to the same husband for a number of years, she is respectfully addressed as "emmā bēt" (lit. mother of the house). If she is widowed, she gains prestige by taking vows as a nun. A woman who marries a priest shares some of the social dignity of his position; she is referred to as "qesenna" (from "qēs", priest). Women listening to the church service have the privilege of gaining merit by shouting the shrill joyshout "ellel" at the proper times in the liturgy.

562 Kinship ties remain a strong protection to
602 women even after marriage and residence away from the parental hamlet. She is often, reminded not to forget her kinship ties when she marries:

562 "The killer? (It was) your husband;
•602 The victim? (It was) your brother.
[539] Great is your pain,
never will it leave your house"

(said to a woman who promoted her husband's interests, e.g. in competition for a position with the feudal lord, over that of her brother).

562 Psychological inferiority is ascribed to all women, by Amhara men, regardless of social rank. Her weakness is regarded as biological, intellectual and moral. It is regarded as proverbial:

[98] "Vulgar Language" - "yäsyet qwanqwa" (lit. woman's language)

"Polite Language" - "yäwänd qwanqwa" (lit. man's language); modest, correct, pure, elegant language. Also called "yäwond amarena" (lit. man's Amharic).

[195] "syeto" - insult to a talkative man. (lit. womanish
"syete" - (lit. female) - said of timber or soil that is feeble, soft, of little resistance.

[539] "Woman and donkey
(must be trained) with a stick."

"Even if a woman has knowledge,
(only a) man knows how to hold on to it."

588 rewards as agreed upon") practiced by the Shi'ites in particular.
171 (footnote 81). The Abyssinian Coptic "Fetha Nägäst" forbids concubinage; but the custom has long been widespread. "Damoz" is even recognised in the modern law of Emperor Haile Selassie.

551 Individual arrangements are freest in "damoz", also in "qurban"
585 though sometimes less so, and least in "semanya". But in all three forms of marriage, the wife retains her maiden name and does not assume that of her husband. Even Empress Menen continues her old name. Sometimes the husband's mother may try to symbolize her authority - or even affection - by giving a new name to her new daughter-in-law living in her hamlet, but the bride's kinfolk and
● [602] peers will continue to use her old name. This is another, unconscious, emphasis of kinship relations over affinal ones.

588 The "damoz" is not considered contradictory to monogamy, which may explain her respectability despite prohibition of concubinage in the "Fetha Nägäst" code. Religious persons will explain the paradox away by quoting from Genesis "be fruitful and multiply".

583 In rural districts there is sometimes found a 4th form of
184 marriage, which indeed is re-enacted in some wedding ceremonies of "semanya". This form is bride capture, especially found among families too poor to defray the expenses of a wedding and cows that must be given the "semanya" couple. To cover up the shame and the poverty, the bride is "captured" and "pursued", by pre-arranged collusion. While she ostensibly goes, alone, to fetch water or gather deadwood, the groom's "mize" appear suddenly, preferably on horseback, and carry her off into the bush, while she, though ex-

Footnote 81: Donaldson, D.M.: Temporary Marriage in Iran. Moslem World, 1936, pp. 358-364. Smith, W. Robertson: Kinship and Marriage in early Arabia, 1885.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

000 letting the audience become aware of this collusion. (footnote 93).

B. Interpersonal Etiquette and Relationships.

571 576 [602] Interpersonal etiquette among the Amhara governs particularly those relations that can be described as "secondary group", for relations within the "primary group" are governed largely by specific kinship or religious rules of behavior.

It is a rare case - and considered very sad - if a person has no kin, and must base most of his human relations on secondary- group affiliations. The latter relationship includes most prominently the "agär" (lit. country, i.e. home district). Sometimes this refers only to the immediate parish, sometimes to the "meketl worädä" sub-district; but if a person finds himself in another province he may include the entire district, "worädä"; though the concept of "agär" does not usually extend beyond this territory in any real meaning of secondary group. If a person has no kin to turn to for aid in legal trouble, or needs a "ras" guarantor to secure a job, he may seek out a man from his "agär". For this reason there is motivation to observe rules of etiquette particularly with individuals in the "agar" secondary group, such as visiting or inviting them, bring them "enqutatash" gifts and flowers (through children) at New Year and "Masqal" festivals, etc. Such gifts are not given to complete strangers from a more distant territory, who are called "bada" (slightly derogatory term, with connotation of "rustic").

576 572 Interpersonal etiquette within the secondary group may lead to closer personal relations between two individuals, taking certain

Footnote 93 - Leslau: An Ethiopian Minstrel's Argot. Journal of the American Oriental Society, 1952, Vol. 72, No. 3 pp. 102-109

c) Visiting

574 Visiting kinfolk regularly, during the nine months of the dry
602 season, is a prime requirement. This includes, in this order of emphasis and frequency: patrilineal kin, matrilineal kin, affinal kin.

574 Visits to affinal kin are less frequent and more formal. When
606 visiting one's parents-in-law, usually twice during the dry season, the man is not supposed to come empty-handed, but should bring a sheep as a gift. He waits outside the in-law hamlet, just beyond the thornbush enclosure, and asks the children whether his father-in-law is at home. When the latter appears, the visitor enters and approaches the hut. He enters only upon invitation. There is no mother-in-law avoidance as such, but contact is reduced to a minimum, between son-in-law and mother-in-law, to achieve maximum privacy for both.

602 Flouting kinship obligation is regarded as a shameful deviation, indicating an evil character. Kinship relations represent much security for the individual, but also involve him in serious obligations, such as aiding kinsman in blood-feuds and reprisal-raids ("bäggäl"). A person who wanders away from the kin hamlet, or from kin obligations, when his mood or irresponsibility carry him, is called "läqo" (after the soft reed that grows rapidly at the least rain, but drops when grown to maturity).

574 Visitors, particularly strangers, must observe certain taboos,
754 lest they be suspected of bringing the evil eye. They should not ask the number of children, nor praise their health or good looks aloud. This is considered dangerous, because the "buda" spirit is always on the lookout for fat, juicy children so that he can magically "drink
[69] their blood" and make them waste away. (Children are vulnerable to many communicable diseases).

574 When visiting the sick, the visitor, especially female visitors,
576 are expected to express their sympathy in unmistakeable tones. The

181 the emphasis on frequency and intensity of kin relations; the dichotomy between "rustic peasant" and "great man - noble" personality (the latter constituting a culture goal; Amhara concepts of government administration; religious fundamentalism and literalness; and last, healing of "spirit ailments" outside the officially dominant religion.

181 Attachment to the land is a major preoccupation of all Amhara:
423 Nobles and "gabbar" serfs, men and women, old and young, priest and
571 student, even of the townspeople. The complexity of land tenure (i.e. the varieties of "rest" and "gult" land) is closely connected with the social status of the residential kin group; the life cycle of the individual is largely determined by the land tenure of his family, beginning with the very kind of education he is likely to receive. By extension, a person's secondary social group consists largely of persons inhabiting or stemming from the same "agärew" (lit. my countryside), the sub-district where his family owns land or works on it.

181 Attachment to one's kin group is nearly as strong on the in-
●602 dividual's maternal side as on the paternal. The greater emphasis
[591 on the latter is largely due to the predominantly patrilocal resi-
611] dence, and on patrilineal descent. Kin visiting is a primary social duty, on both the individual's paternal and maternal sides, with equal frequency and intensity. By extension, though with lesser frequency and intensity, visiting of affinal relatives, notably the wife's parents who nearly always live in another hamlet, is considered an important social duty.

Kin feuds often last for generations, particularly between land owning ("rest" tenure) kin groups. The fear of shaming ("harärät")

181 one's kin by doing manual labor, made necessary in some cases by
602 poverty, leads to outmigration from the district and often even from the province. Nepotism in obtaining good positions is the norm to such an extent that failure to act in this manner would be severely criticized by the traditional Amhara as the utmost in meanness. In fact, when an Amhara wants to make a particularly derogatory remark about another ethnic group, he says that they are mean to their own kin and quarrelsome within the kin group.

[476] Cooperation and mutual aid, teamwork in agriculture, hut building, etc., are largely centered on the residential kin unit, notably the patrilocal hamlet.

554 A major culture goal in Amhara society is the assumption of the status personality of the "great man - noble" ("telleq säw"), in contra-distinction to the rustic peasant ("balägär"). However, this ambition is usually frustrated because social status is primarily inherited, along with "rest" land and the expectation of re-appointment to one's father's position and rank of nobility in the hierarchy. The door to advancement has traditionally been only through feudal warfare: loyal support of one's feudal lord was rewarded with "rest" land and higher rank. Even today a young nobleman must await formal promotion to his father's rank by the emperor, and this still contains an element of personal reward and punishment.

157 The personality of the rustic Amhara peasant is extroverted,
554 not burdened with the considerable self-restraint expected of the Amhara noble. The peasant is quick to express mirth, anger, and other emotions. He is not stodgy and slow in conversation like the proverbial peasant of Europe. In fact, because of the relative

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic
*565 and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[3]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom
[128] and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—
[114] with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our
[12] account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry, using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[4]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

*565
592 The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara
[342] peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round
[343] structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land
[423] worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by
[427] hereditary right (*rist*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the
[556] household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

621 At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number
• 602 of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the
[592] father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society.

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market.

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods.

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes.

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chīqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chīqā shum*.

Traditionally the *chīqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chīqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chīqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life.

The district over which a *chīqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 156 157 man, as we shall see in more detail below, includes the quality of leaving others alone.

[577] This strong sense of self is confirmed and symbolized by two conspicuous
*565 156 411 Amhara customs: carrying staves and going on trips. A staff, like a pipe, affirms the ego in two ways. As a piece of personal property right at hand, it stimulates a sense of pride of ownership; as something external yet confronting the person, it makes the ego more conscious of its bounded reality. Such sensations are daily experiences for the Amhara peasant, who is rarely separated from the staff in one form or other. When he leaves his homestead he normally carries the hard *dulā*, a potential weapon of defense that likewise affirms his ego by bolstering self-confidence in a dangerous world. He braces the *dulā* against his back as he treks along, or holds it against the
[481] front of his shoulder like a rifle. Older men walk using it as a cane. A special kind of staff made of softer wood (*zang*) is carried by pious and elderly
[481] men. Participants in devotional services lean on still another type of staff (*maqukmiyā*) which is distributed in the church for that purpose.

*565 156 484 Traveling is another custom which affirms the ego, at least when one travels spontaneously and not in organized company. As the individual moves past various stimuli, his self-consciousness is heightened by the contrast between a persisting ego and a constantly changing environment. As a traveler par excellence—and a lone traveler, unless social rank requires the presence of retainers—the Amhara peasant frequently removes himself from familiar home settings and confronts an outside world. He loves to go on the road and will travel at the slightest provocation. For him a distance of two or three hours by foot is like the American's trip to the corner drugstore. Whether to visit relatives or pay respects after death, to go to market or to court, to get holy water at a distant church, or to look after land in a far away district, the Amhara peasant is on the move dozens of times each year, often for trips involving two or three days of travel.

*565 156 829 • 602 609 Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and culture, one may for the moment say that the personal ego is the central object in the Amhara peasant's view of society. Exactly what might be meant by this statement and in what respects it needs qualification are questions that will be taken up in the concluding chapter. If it is so, certainly the next most prominent social object in his world is the circle of close ones, or *zamad*. *Zamad* refers in the first instance to consanguineal kin, and is distinguished from the category of those who are strangers, or *bā'ed*. This is perhaps the most important of all the sociological distinctions made by the Amhara: the former, *zamad*, are seen as entitled to the warmest hospitality, while toward *bā'ed* indifference and suspicion are appropriate responses.

*565 156 602 This does not mean that the kin group is a corporate entity whose interests and identity transcend that of the individual. On the contrary, the notion of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

zamad is highly subjective, and all constellations of ***zamad*** reflect the interests and affections of ego. For the quality of kinship can be attributed to persons who are not consanguineal relatives, and this is done without resorting to fictions of affiliation. The term ***wandem***, for example, meaning "brother," is simply applied to any male person of about the same age to whom one feels closely attached. The term ***zamad*** itself is applied to anyone to whom one feels a close personal tie—even to a mere fellow-countryman whom one happens to meet in a distant region. It is thus not taking too great a liberty to translate the term ***zamad*** as "close ones."

The primarily subjective nature of the circle of ***zamad*** derives not only from the fact that it includes friends as readily as actual blood relatives. Within the bounds of consanguinity, the composition of the kin group with which a person identifies fluctuates according to his current needs, particularly with respect to land use rights. As Allan Hoben has demonstrated, corporate descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; but the fact that in this ambilineal descent system each individual may claim multiple active affiliations, and enjoys a relatively wide range of choice, means that the particular corporate descent group with which an individual affiliates in order to claim his rights varies according to what land is subject to disputation. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mothers' rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors.[9]

The next most inclusive sociological concept beyond the ego-oriented circle of ***zamad*** is that of ***agar***, or "homeland."* The co-residents of one's ***agar***, like those who comprise one's circle of ***zamad***, are regarded as forming an important "in-group," outside of which all other persons are a priori rejected. Yet the Amharic concept of homeland, like that of kin, does not refer to a fixed social entity; its referent varies according to the context in which the individual chooses to use it. Thus, as we have seen, the concept of ***agar*** may be used to refer to one's parish, district, province, or even nation.

A more specialized dichotomy of some prominence in the outlook of the Amhara peasant hinges on variation in the altitude of homelands. Inhabitants of lowlands (***qolaññā***) and dwellers of higher regions (***dēgaññā***) tend to be conceived as polar cultural types. Different sets of habits and traits are attributed to them. Thus, according to one set of stereotypes, the ***qolaññā*** is viewed as a heavy drinker and hot tempered, while the ***dēgaññā*** is viewed as a heavy eater and inclined more to litigation than to violence. Again, the

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* The less prominent category of ***wogas*** is intermediate between these two. ***Wogas*** has a primarily political connotation; it consists of one's consanguineal and affinal kin, friends and close retainers, all who may be mobilized in the event of political or military competition.

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*565 461 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ärräsä*) rather than to plow (*ärräsä*) himself.

*565 461 181 577 183 [423] If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obligations toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 78 181 183 [362] [301] Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mätab*, a simple neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 577 181 183 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in

*565 577 673 181 183 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shameful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect toward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides [626] some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntä*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*häfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

*565 57 181 183 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakäm*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 602 571 181 183 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.

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565* 602 571 181 183 [561]

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

565* 593 577 181 183

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

565* 577 779 183 181 581 586 637

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

565* 779 577 183 181

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

565* 121 82 771

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkār*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [764] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [601]

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*121 shown by the vagueness of Amhara kin terminology. The term for brother,
- 602 *wandam,* also applies to all the male relatives of one's generation and even
601 to one's close friends. Similarly, the terms for uncle and aunt (*agot* and *akeste*) are sometimes used for nephew, niece, and cousin as well; and often these terms are simply replaced by the abstract generic word for kin, *zamad.*

*121 The extent of reciprocal obligations among kin outside the nuclear family is
602 a function primarily of the amount of spontaneous affection that exists among the individuals concerned and how close they happen to live to each other. Relatives on good terms with one another normally take turns visiting one another and eating together on holidays. They help one another in the event of sickness, death, fire, litigation, and murder. Orphaned or economically burdensome children are often farmed out to the households of more successful relatives.

*121 These activities are based on voluntary reciprocity or good will. In its
602 formal structure, the Amhara kinship system stresses the independence of
593 the nuclear family. Although it occasionally happens that married brothers live in a single large compound under the moral authority of their father or an older brother, who is known as its *alaqā* and is responsible for the compound's payment of taxes, each nuclear family lives in separate quarters and produces and consumes its own supply of food by working its own separate acreage of land.

*121 Within the nuclear family itself, the ties that bind are limited by certain
594 fundamental safeguards of individual rights. One is the institution of private
421 property. The land which each partner brings into a marriage or later acquires through bequests remains his own until death. If they should separate, each takes his own land, and the goods acquired by the household during their marriage are divided equally between them. There is also the provision of *gīl,* a quantity of property that either or both of the spouses may designate, prior to getting married, as strictly private property and indivisible in case of divorce. In the event that a nuclear family enters one of the modern savings associations or *equb* (to be discussed below), husband and wife join as separate members.

*121 The possibility of divorce is another safeguard of individual rights within
593 the nuclear family. Only in the *querbān* type of marriage is divorce forbidden.
586 This form is normally restricted to priests and very devout, usually older, people; and even then divorces sometimes occur, the couple preferring the displeasure of the church to a life of continued antagonism. The standard
[585] sort of marriage is the *samānya* or contract form, in which the equivalent of a simple "I do" concludes the match and a simple "I do not" legitimates divorce. The divorce may be initiated by either husband or wife. An Amharic

wrapped tightly around the narrow end of the horn. The leaves are rolled to form an air tight funnel ending an inch or so beyond the end of the horn. Through this herbal funnel, the agamiy sucks blood up into the horn, seals the vacuum by gripping the funnel between his incisors, and, with his lips upon the leaves, senses when the blood has risen beyond the tip of the horn. As with the midwife, the agamiy's therapy is founded on his physical skills and is devoid of professional secrets and magical elements. Unlike the midwife, however, the agamiy learns his trade through an intimate apprenticeship with a cupper-kinsman.

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The Tattooer. The tattooer (tokwariy) is generally a woman who performs both prophylactic and therapeutic tattoos, and although she also performs purely decorative works, aesthetic considerations are usually compounded with medical ones. The tokwariy uses either ink or a paste of carbon mixed with domestic oil; into this, the tattooer mixes whatever ground medicinals she considers appropriate to the ailment against which she is working. The tattooer rarely collects the medicaments herself. The tokwariy utilizes the services of a full-time medhaniyt korac (medicine gatherer) of the market place, for medicaments used in a wide variety of recipes (such as the sebat kelems, the "seven colors", used by the tattooer for ayni tila and yibuda basiyta). She pur-

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*278 *759 peutic effectiveness. The uniformity of the chirurgeons' healing powers can be traced to the fact that their operations are relatively simple and easily learned. [602] A man begins his apprenticeship while still a youth, under the tutledge of a senior kinsman. Generally, he does not assume professional status until his mentor has died or retired, or until he has moved beyond the natal parish and out of the range of possible competition with his healer-kinsman. In either event, the apprenticeship is lengthy enough to ensure technical mastery, within the limits set by the healer's natural abili-[752] ties. The tagañ (bonesetter) is an exception, since his operations are by no means simple, and his natural skills more significantly affect his success as a therapist. Thus, there are more considerable differences in healing powers among tagañs than among other chirurgeons.

Second among these differences setting chirurgeon apart from herbalist are the criteria which healers each employ to decide whether a specific disease episode is appropriate to his therapy. The medical domain of a chirurgeon can be defined exclusively according to symptomatic criteria, grouped into unambiguous syndromes. *278 *767 *759 Therapeutic failure can usually be explained only in terms of the chirurgeon's lack of competence. For the herbalist, symptomatic criteria, by themselves, are ambiguous. The symptomatic definition of each herbalist

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*756 all are indicative of serious ailments. In a typical episode involving this syndrome, the sickman initially diagnoses the least worrisome etiology, likift or gerifta. Secular therapies are then obtained, but when these fail, a choice must be made from among the remaining etiologies.

The sickman usually finds epidemiological indications sufficient to favor one of the three etiologies. [562] Zars, for example, are known to prefer post-pubescent fe- [602] males (constituting over 80% of zar mounts), and individuals who are the primary relatives of recently deceased balazars. Once an individual has been mounted by a specific zar, the bond between human and zar is almost always permanent. Over the years of their association, the zar becomes familiar with the constant companions of the host, particularly her children. With the death of the balazar, the zar characteristically desires to mount someone whom he already knows well. This epidemiological evidence is confirmed by divination and often by the appearance of additional symptoms (usually swooning, sleeplessness, langour, and depression) which are associated with zar involvement.

*755 If diagnosis indicates kureyña, the sickman seeks
776 therapy from the leader (awakiy balazar) of a coterie
787 (hadra) of zar-possessed folk. At their initial meeting, the awakiy balazar is mounted by one of his zars, who at-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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*757 which is mainly responsible for the junior wosfat
*759 therapist to limit his therapy to simply providing the unprocessed medicaments.

*278 One of the remaining redundant pairs,
*757 (Ikek:Kabiy:k':I) with (Ikek:Kabiy:k':I) links two
869 brothers of Lemmariet, who obtained the therapy from a
• [602] member of their mother's natal ambilineage core. The remaining redundant therapies are all traced to a single individual, Asfow (now deceased):

Therapy notation	Asfow's link to herbalist
(Koruba:Seci/Ateci:i:I+)	FaFa, via Asfow's first Wi
(Koruba:Seci/Ateci:i:I)	MoFa, via Asfow's second Wi
(Koruba:Seci:i:I+)	SiHu, Si is Asfow's second Wi
(Koruba:Seci:i:I)	FaSiHu, Fa is preceeding entry

Only in a minority of cases is a professional therapy transmitted to two or more residents of a parish who may practice it in comeptition with one another. Asfow did this by transmitting his therapy to three individuals whose geneaological ties to one another proved remote enough to preclude the tacit agreement which might enable closer kinsmen to vest exclusive professional rights in a single individual. Asfow's actions can be traced to two considerations. First, this therapy has low commercial value; it has a poor reputation for effectiveness, and it addresses an acute ailment, koruba (a fatal pox). Because a kuruba episode is character-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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two as talla sellers, and one each as mat seller, carpenter, day laborer, and pensioner.

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The practice of herbalist therapies in ward and town contrasts significantly with the situation in rural hamlet and parish. The relatively dense population of the town has important consequences. In the countryside, the closest herbalist needed for a specific episode may be a day's walk from the client's home; in the town several may be found within an hour's walk. The increase in herbalist therapies is not directly proportional to the increased population of town over countryside, however.

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In Gabrael sebeka, for example, only eighteen households (41% of the total) contain one or more herbalists. Many townfolk are forced to abstain from practicing herbalist therapies, because, as out-landers, they are unable or disinclined to locate needed botanicals. Also, significant numbers of townsfolk practice non-secular therapies, particularly as balazars.

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Further, although there are more redundant herbalist therapies potentially available to the townsman, he remains ignorant of many of them. The peasant locates himself within a network of several core kinsmen and neighbors upon whom he depends for information regarding herbalist chains. The townsman finds his place in a social matrix in which kinship ties are greatly diluted by distance. In Gabrael sebeka, for example, thirty-two house-

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holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town. [613] In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-[423] agricultural employment for their subsistence needs, [241] there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

*278 Kinship ties are an important means by which the
*759 peasant acquires and communicates information necessary
203 for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every
602 herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own
369 "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant
613 herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an
*278 agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like
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Literacy, per se, is not the goal of enrollment, but is perceived rather as a pre-requisite for studying the Gospels (wangel), the psalter (daviyt), and a variety of prayers, pursuant to participating in the Mass (kidasiy) as an ecclesiastic of the parish.

Within a parish, only a minority of households send boys to the church school; these are generally ristemma households, each sending a single priest-candidate in any one generation. Because attendance at the school precludes shepherding, the common lot of young boys, the student's family must find a substitute shepherd for him; a younger sibling is usually available for this task, but, if not, a collateral or even non-kinsman may be obtained. Indeed, the age at which a boy begins his studies (generally, between seven and thirteen years) is often determined by when this substitute can be found. The parish school is suspended, however, during periods of intensive agricultural activities, of harvesting, threshing, and winnowing.

Although considerations of piety influence a man to seek ordination for his son, self-interest generally dominates. The achievement of priesthood validates a family's claims to church lands (yimoskol mariet). If the neophyte's father is himself a priest, his son's ordination means freedom from bothersome performances in the Mass. If the father is not a priest, but anyway

*278 *759 874 [593] [604] [222] Occasionally, an herbalist, particularly a medhaniyt awakiy, will utilize an apprentice as his medhaniyt korac. This is usually a close kinsman, a son or nephew, who has been taken to gather medicinals on previous occasions, and is thus familiar with their appearance and location. As an apprentice, he relieves the herbalist of the burden of gathering botanicals, which often involves trips to the hot and malarial lowlands. At the same time, the apprentice gradually becomes acquainted with various pharmacological details of the therapy.

*278 *759 No terminological distinction is made between herbalists who rely on a medhaniyt korac and those who do not. The client, in fact, is usually unaware of the situation in specific cases.

*278 *759 778 *[192] Classed together with other herbalists is the maker of herbal amulets, the kitab kitabiy. In most cases, the herbal amulet (kitab) is part of a complex therapy which includes, as a final step, the presentation to the sick-man of a leather pouch containing a sample of all or some of the ingredients of the primary medicine. The amulet is worn around the neck, on the girdle, or fastened beneath an armpit. In this context, the amulet performs a prophylactic function, for it protects the now vulnerable client against a recurrence of the ailment. Certain of these therapists also provide these prophylactic amulets to clients who have never ahd the ailment in

361 tornadoes in the rainy season, is another ecological consideration.

591 [621] The hamlet is always a kinship unit, usually patrilocal and patrilineal. When a young man marries, his father will give him a cow or two, as he will to his daughter. But only the son will receive the use of part of his father's rented (or owned) fields to support his new family. Thus he will usually build his hut near his father's, father's brother's, and paternal grandfather's. In exceptional cases, when no land is available at his father's, the bridegroom may agree to establish himself at his wife's hamlet, but this is rare since the feeling is that he will always remain a subjugated, barely tolerated, henpecked and ill-treated figure. A proud Amhara male, even a "gabbar" (peasant ex-serf), would not agree to such a condition and insists on patriarchal status at least within his own biological family of creation. He would much rather continue to obey his father than his new father-in-law. [608] Consanguinal kinship feelings are so strong that it is a common assumption that no in-law could really mean well and be unselfishly well-disposed to the newcomer. Only when warfare has killed off the adult males in a hamlet, male inlaws move in.

592 Each hut is inhabited by a biological family, usually father and mother, about three children who have survived infant mortality, and perhaps an aged parent or old, widowed kinswomen of the husband's.

602 Patrilineal kinship relations are often related also to administrative considerations. On church-owned land, the peasants who live on the hillside below the church, who

601 Cousins are simply addressed and referred to as "uncle's child" or "aunt's child", and there is no terminological difference between paternal and maternal uncles. But the informal terms mentioned above are extended to these consanguineal kinfolk for special emphasis of endearment, respect and protection. For the latter, the address "gashey" is used commonly, and a rarer, more poetic and somewhat archaic term of address would be "ambayē" (my mountain fortress).

Familiarities, teasing or endearing, in address to siblings include "abäba" (flower) for endearment to an elder girl (sister); "anchi" (Thou, feminine) in teasing address of a girl to a younger, male sibling, otherwise considered an insult; "antä", (thou, male), in teasing address to a younger sister.

B. Affinal Kin ("amachenät") and Residence.

606 574 Affinal relatives, especially the male ego's parents-in-law, must also be visited regularly, at least once every two months in the dry season, or, if they reside too far away, at least twice a year. Gifts, (e.g. a fat sheep) must be brought, and hospitality and a feast can be expected in turn.

606 In popular Amhara opinion, the affinal villain is not so much the mother-in-law, as the step-mother-in-law. Both are addressed respectfully as "amatey" (lit. my elder mother). But it is believed that a mother, desiring her daughter to be happy in marriage, will

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606 instruct her to be a good wife; while a stepmother is assumed to have no such desire, and is likely to tell her stepdaughter not to"make so much fuss"over her husband. If the latter were to follow such advice, she would soon be criticized by her husband's parents whose residential hamlet she usually shares. Stepmothers are very common due to the frequency of divorce and the shorter lifespan of women.

591 587 165

606 628 Affinal relatives are expected to come to a person's aid if he becomes involved in a blood feud, particularly if his consanguinal kin are few or weak. Since there is no pattern of individual duelling, even distant kin become involved readily, as a point of honor.

591 Residence of male persons is usually patrilocal-patrilineal, i.e. in the consanguinal line. But if a young bridegroom finds that his own father has little good land to allocate him in his parental hamlet upon his marriage, he may elect to seek better facilities by establishing residence at the bride's patrilocal hamlet. She is usuallyv very happy about this latter residence, for her kin will protect her even if she wrongs her husband (e.g. by taking a lover in subsequent years). Conversely, thehusband tries to avoid such a situation, for reasons of happiness as well as prestige.

585 [579] Three-day visiting is the pattern in kin visiting, for it usually takes one day for initial greetings and exchange of news, slaughtering and preparation of a sheep; a second day for feasting and talks with the neighbors; a third day for preparation of leave-taking.

After one week, the "dass" are torn down. A "great man" who is father of the bride, will usually send his daughter several donkeyloads of household staples, including lentils ("shure"), peas cooked with salt, pepper, and spices, so that she will be honored and well treated by the women under whose jurisdiction she has come. Then, after a month, he will send a messenger to ask how she is habituated to the new life. If the reply is favorable, another load of grain, butter, spices, flaxseed oil are sent.

512 The adjustment of the bride may not be easy. The night she leaves her parental roof, she takes with her, besides her skin-mat, a little basket of dyed reeds, containing her personal little distaff, spindle, and glass necklace used in scouring pottery. After a week or a few weeks of honeymoon, she is expected to participate in the women's household tasks: fetching water and fuel, baking "enjara" daily for her husband, cooking "wot", to her husband's tastes, crushing barley, grinding "tyeff", brewing beer. If she complains too soon, the womenfolk will quote the proverb:

[539] "Hardly arrived have you, young bride,
(but) already you crunch shembera (peas)"
(meaning: lazily pick at peas, instead of
doing the regular, harder work).

606 [591] The couple is expected to remain in patrilocal residence at least a year, so that the bride can be taught, by her mother-in-law, how

606 to be a "good wife", to do "everything right", to learn what her husband likes. If she does not obey her mother-in-law, she is criticized as "rude", and the women say that the groom will "divorce her soon".

423 596 After the marriage, and especially after she bears children, a wife is regarded as a charter member of her husband's "byet" (lit. house), his family of procreation, continuing his patrilineal kinship unit, regardless of whether they move to residence elsewhere or not. Nevertheless, it is the "byet" that is the landholding unit among most "rest"-owning Amhara, and each biological unit within it receives an allocation of land for usufruct; the limit of one able-bodied plowman is regarded as 5-10 "qada". Thus, the biological family of procreation does not own land, nor does it control it, until, with the death of elders and advancing age, it becomes the "family of orientation" to which a succeeding generation must give obedience.

596 422 Meanwhile, however, the biological family unit does own the cattle and other mobile goods with which they started their married life, and the increase therefrom. This gives them some partial economic independence.

[731] 423 166 361 When, due to war, epidemics (e.g. malaria), or famine (erosion), a "byet" decides to abandon, for the time being, the ancestral lands, and migrates to another district, it usually huddles together in one or a minimum of residential hamlets, sometimes for several generations, until times are better. Then it buds off so rapidly that soon only a few huts remain on the location of the original hamlet of refuge. Thereupon kinsmen may claim "betana" rights of usufruct from more distant kinfolk who had remained be-

e) Visiting

574 602 Visiting kinfolk regularly, during the nine months of the dry season, is a prime requirement. This includes, in this order of emphasis and frequency: patrilineal kin, matrilineal kin, affinal kin.

574 606 Visits to affinal kin are less frequent and more formal. When visiting one's parents-in-law, usually twice during the dry season, the man is not supposed to come empty-handed, but should bring a sheep as a gift. He waits outside the in-law hamlet, just beyond the thornbush enclosure, and asks the children whether his father-in-law is at home. When the latter appears, the visitor enters and approaches the hut. He enters only upon invitation. There is no mother-in-law avoidance as such, but contact is reduced to a minimum, between son-in-law and mother-in-law, to achieve maximum privacy for both.

602 Flouting kinship obligation is regarded as a shameful deviation, indicating an evil character. Kinship relations represent much security for the individual, but also involve him in serious obligations, such as aiding kinsmen in blood-feuds and reprisal-raids ("bägäl"). A person who wanders away from the kin hamlet, or from kin obligations, when his mood or irresponsibility carry him, is called "läqo" (after the soft reed that grows rapidly at the least rain, but drops when grown to maturity).

574 764 Visitors, particularly strangers, must observe certain taboos, lest they be suspected of bringing the evil eye. They should not ask the number of children, nor praise their health or good looks aloud. This is considered dangerous, because the "boda" spirit is always on the lookout for fat, juicy children so that he can magically "drink [764] their blood" and make them waste away. (Children are vulnerable to many communicable diseases).

574 576 When visiting the sick, the visitor, especially female visitors, are expected to express their sympathy in unmistakeable tones. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

For the groom, too, marriage means a gratifying boost toward adult status, symbolized by his receiving from the bride's parents distinctively adult male possessions—a *kutā*, perhaps a *barnos*, and a rifle if they can afford it. 585 885

Such is the basic pattern of betrothal and marriage among the Amhara, though many of the details vary from province to province.[6] There are, in addition, certain traditional alternatives to this standard procedure. One of these involves the solemnization of the marriage oath by taking Communion, a rite necessary for a marriage to be counted as legal by the Church, and followed by the ordained clergy and the most pious families. Another form requires no oath at all; the husband is simply expected to provide a salary and clothes for his wife. This procedure is followed chiefly by soldiers and traders, and by those who are marrying for the second time. 583 585 184

Still another type of marriage is that known as *qoṭ asär* ("ten beds") in which the boy goes to live with the girl's family while both are quite young. In this case the boy has his work apprenticeship under the girl's father. After several years, when the girl reaches puberty, a second wedding ceremony will take place—this time at the home of the groom's parents—and the union will be consummated. This type of arrangement tends to be made when the boy's family is too poor to provide enough to get him started on his own, or if the girl's father has no son to help him with the work.

There is, finally, a form of marriage by abduction. If the girl's father does not grant the request of the emissaries of the boy's father, and if the boy's father is still interested, the boy may go with two or three friends to capture her when she is on the way to market or fetching water. When this happens, the couple will approach the girl's parents after they have been married for some time and seek a reconciliation. Occasionally poor families have deliberate recourse to this form of marriage, arranging in advance a bride capture so as to avoid having to prepare the expensive wedding feasts.[7]

Although marriage marks the termination of childhood for the Amhara, it does not by itself signify the full attainment of adulthood. The newly wed couple lives at first in the home of the boy's father, and to truly "arrive" they must establish their own separate household. If the boy's family is wealthy, he may have his own house ready by the time of the wedding. More often, the couple spends a certain amount of time—a few months, or in some cases as much as two or three years—living in the home of the groom's father until their own house is built. To tarry unduly in the father's house, however, is considered a mark of laziness and a great shame. 591 585 [885]

Furthermore, because of the somewhat arbitrary manner in which the spouses are chosen for each other, there is often a serious problem of post-marital adjustment, a problem not rendered any less difficult by the proximity of the girl's mother-in-law. The divorce pattern is well known among 585 606 586

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

586 separated from this husband and married a man more than forty years of age, who is one of the great lords of the court; the title of this one whom she married is Abuquer, and his father Cabeata. This is the greatest lord there is in the court. Thus I saw and knew many of these separations; I have named these because they are of great personages. [587] And because I said that Aaron married the wife of his brother, let not him that reads it be amazed, because it is the usage of the country. They do not think it strange for [607] a brother to sleep with the wife of his brother. This Aaron moreover had sons of her who had been the wife of his brother, and he left her and married another to whom he is now married.

CAP. XXII.—*Of the manner of baptism and circumcision, and how they carry the dead to their burial.*

304 Circumcision is done by anybody without any ceremony, only they say that so th[illegible]nd it written in the books, that God commanded circumcision. And let not the reader of this be amazed—they also circumcise the females as well as the males, which was not in the Old Law. Baptism they do 851 in this manner: they baptize males at forty days, and females at sixty days after their birth, and if they die before they go without baptism. I, many times and in many places, used to tell them that they committed a great error, and went against what the Gospel says: Quod natum est ex carne caro est; et quod natum est ex spiritu spiritus est. They answered me many times that the faith of their mother sufficed for them, and the communion which she received whilst in a state of pregnancy.[1] They perform this baptism

[1] This opinion of the Abyssinians appears to have anticipated the Sorbonne judgment of 1733, given in the 20th chapter of *Tristram Shandy*.

852 unbaptized during this period of ritual impurity.

852 304 Another Old Testament survival, which is considered more customary than religious, is circumsision. Boys are circumcised about a week after birth, but not usually on Wednesday or Friday fast days. In some regions, notably Gojjam, girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed by a woman in a strictly female gathering, so that the girl will not become a "selfish" wife, and will be happy in marriage. After these operations, the babies may be blessed by a priest. However, when an adult person becomes Christian, circumcision or clitoredtomy are not performed, since they are not required.

293 At baptism, the baby receives the blue neck-cord, 852 553 the "mätäb", which forever after distinguishes him from a Muslim. The priest gives or confirms the Christian name of the child, usually one that places the child under the protection and guidance of a saint or archangel, such as "Gäbre-Mikaël" (Servant of Michael). However, in later life, most children will use and be called by the "world name" given them by their mothers at time of birth, such as "Taamrat" (miracle, e.g if the husband suddenly returned from a distant and dangerous trip at the time) for a boy, or "almaz" (diamond) or other sparkling name for a girl. The Christian name may be used later in life if the person becomes a priest or monk or nun, or participates in "qurban" (eucharistic marriage in church).

608 852 Every baby baptized, also every new adult convert, is given godparents. When a slave was baptised (prior

608 to the abolition of 1942), the godparents usually ob-
852 tained his freedom. The relationship is one of artificial kinship. To symbolize this literally, the godfather and godmother clasp the right thumb of the baby and swear by the Trinity that they will not distinguish between their own children and the godchild.

783 At first baptism, baby or adult, the entire body is immersed or bathed in holy water. Every year, on the festival of "Ṭemqät" (Epiphany), the sprinkling of the crowd with baptismal water is considered re-baptism, to wash away any breach with Christianity during the year. A woman who has had sexual intercourse with a Muslim must undergo complete baptism, otherwise the neighbors and the church will ostracize her. A person severely ill and considered possessed by demons is rebaptized.

872 At five, boys and girls begin useful functions in the family economy, and therefore boys are often 10 years old before they begin to go to church school. This schooling takes place under the shady cypress trees in the churchyard, under the direction of a young priest or däbtära. The method is rote learning of Geez and Amharic reading, and liturgy, beginning with the Gospel of St. John: "mäläktä yohanesä hawareya". Usually neither translation from the Geez liturgical language nor writing are taught. Graduates of this 3-year school qualify to serve as deacons. In recent years, they may then enter the 3rd grade of a government elementary school. Even church students now use the one-page printed "fidäl" (alphabet) in Geez-Amharic script, which, in addition,

575 esses or belong to prestige families. Women members
608 are considered "sisters" of the fraternity, and men "brothers". This establishes an artificial kinship relation which is taken very literally by the more pious. Therefore, a husband and wife never belong to the same
[582] mahabbar. Among the more pious, a member may not marry the widow of a mahabbar "brother", for this would be "levirate" which is expressly prohibited by the church as a prechristian custom.

575 According to traditional law, the mähabbär in-
[428] herits any property left by a deceased member who leaves no blood kin (consanguinal) , in preferance to any rela-
[426 tives he might have by marriage (affinal). The mahabbar
476] acts as a mutual aid society for its members, as banker, making loans to members in financial need by raising internal subscriptions, and will even pay for the "tazkar" memorial feast 40 days after a member's death if his
[608] family cannot afford to do it properly. Family and personal problems of all kinds are discussed among "brothers" and "sisters", thus crossing the usual kinship
[584] lines of confidence and trust. Marriage arrangements between extended families having eligible youngsters are often first informally broached by women "sisters", who then agree to ask their husbands to act as intermediaries.

575 When children reach the "age of reason" (boys
561 above 7 years of age) they may be accepted into a kind of junior mähabbär by older boys; girls above 10 years of age into junior sororities of older girls. When a

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

C. Artificial Kinship.

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In view of the emphasis of seeking security in the kinship relation, it is not surprising that Amhara society has formalized several ways of establishing artificial kinship, a process called "zämäd honä".

Adoption is permitted, regulated, mediated, and even encouraged by the church, provided the person or child to be adopted is both Abyssinian Christian, and "ättäntäm" (lit. of good bones; ie. not a negroid Shanqalla or some other foreign race).

There are two degrees of adoption: "breast-parenthood", the complete adoption; and "bread-parenthood" by step-parents.

Full adoption provides a "breast-father" (yäṭuṭ abbat), or a "breast-mother" ("yäṭuṭ ennat"), or both. In the traditional, provincial, public ceremony of adoption, this expression was literally enacted. In the presence of the elders of the kin group, the Confessor, and the ḉheqa shum, the new parent (male or female) coated his or her nipples with honey and simulated breast-feeding, even if the child was already in adolescence. The adoptee was then referred to as "yäṭuṭ lej" (lit. breast child). At the ceremony the new parents swear to make no distinction in treatment between the adopted and the consanguinal children; and the adoptee, if old enough "for reason" (about ages 7 to ten and over), swears to obey his new parents, tend them in sickness, and bury them as would a son.

Reasons forthe adoption of a "breast-child" may

608 be the "mother's" barrenness, or a man's wish to be
597 taken care of in his old age, or both. Obversely, an adolescent orphan may himself take the initiative in selecting a prospective breast-parent, attaching himself to him, ingratiating himself with gifts of honey, etc. After adoption, the "breast-child" is literally considered like a blood relative, and may not marry his new "sibling" -by-adoption.

This prohibition does not apply to the "bread-parent" relation. A bread-father ("anjara abbat"), and bread-mother ("enjara ennat") are considered not truly "artificial kinship" of permanence. It is a step-parent relationship, arising out of divorce and remarriage of parents, or a man's last will asking a close friend tottake care of his children, in war or famine, or sickness. Youngsters do not often take the initiative to establish this relationship, for it does not usually provide the security of the breast-parent-hood. The proverb says:

[539] "Bread-mother, what will move you?
(you are tough) like a gut!".

608 Another, mild, form of artificial kinship is established to give security and guarantee against ill-treatment to the bride, in the persons of the "mizē", two kinsmen of the groom who take an oath to regard and protect her like a sister in her new residential hamlet.

In the broadest sense, kinfolk also includes the retainer, usually a landless peasant, who has pla-

●608 ced himself under the protection of a landowning kin group, and injuries inflicted on him thereupon can lead to a blood feud as much as if he were a consanguinal relative.

All these attempts to establish artificial kinship are motivated by the attitude that kinship, even at geographical distance, is greater security than close relations with neighbors even of the same district. The proverb says:

[539] "Your (home) country, where is it?
(It is) Mary's water. (i.e. the womb).
You are my kinfolk!"

8. Attitudes based on Social Stratification

56 Social stratification among the Amhara, as has been shown, is based on land tenure and feudal relations between nobles and peasants; on the temporal as well as spiritual power of the Coptic Abyssinian church; on the ethnic division of skilled labor; on the conquest of border areas and the past subjugation of other ethnic and racial groups; to a lesser degree on age and sex.

565 184 Analysis of the human relations and attitudes arising out of this social stratification can be expressed in terms of class; sometimes approaching caste, because very little social mobility has been "open" to ethnic specialists in skilled labor and to

582 his late 'teens. The difference in what is considered "suitable age" is thus five or more years, for the girl may be as young as 13 or 14 in the still prevailing (though officially now outlawed) tradition. The reason is not only the earlier maturing of the girl, but partly the emphasis of protecting her virginity until marriage, partly the attitude that the groom must "tame" his bride - and the younger the better.

597 608 Consanguinal ties continue stronger, after marriage, than conjugal ties. The "artificial kinship" created at this period of the life cycle is that of the bride's "best man" ("mizō") who is sworn to protect her even against her husband, and who is in a good position to do so as a residential kinsman of the husband. This emphasis on consanguinal ties even after marriage is similar to other parts of the Middle East (footnote 80), and also Africa.

886 A fully adult man ("sāw") and woman ("syōt") are honorifically addressed, e.g. in church usage, as "acmā adam" for man (from Geez "Adam"), "acmā hawwa" for woman (from Geez for "Eve"), and the connotation is that they have passed the hot-blooded "gobāz" and "qonjo" stage and have become reasonable, calm, responsible persons who know the etiquette of their culture and have become fully cognizant of proper behavior at all forseeable events in the life cycle.

583 585 A. Marriage Patterns

There are three predominant types of marriage:

Footnote 80: Patai, Raphael: Relationship Patterns among the Arabs. Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. 2, May 1951, pp. 180-5

584 tiations are concluded, preparations are made to ensure the spiritual and emotional well-being of the couple. A bridegroom is warned to study the character of his prospective mother-in-law, for it is believed that her daughter will take after her:

"Observe her mother,

before you let the daughter enter (the house)."

584 But the importance of the sworn best men, the "mizē", in protecting
608 the bride after the marriage, is considered even more important, due to the patrilocal residence. They are called the protectors of her "teeth and arms", ready to rush to her aid even against the husband when she shouts for help. On the other hand, to balance the situation, they are chosen from among the groom's closest relatives, e.g. first cousins (patrilineal), so that they won't be likely to seduce the girl. The two "mize" have to take the vow of excommunication before the "mänfäs gubaē" (lit. soul counsel) priest, in front of the parents of the girl and the groom, that they will regard her as a sister, that they will treat her as their own sisters, that they will come night or day when she calls. This formal, literal bond of artificial kinship is strong, and the bride affectionately addresses the "mize" as "gashey" (lit. my shield, i.e. by protector) much as she would an uncle or other grown kinsman. The proverb says:

[539]

"For confession - go to the priest,

for (selfless) love - go to the mize".

These "mize" become protectors not only of the bride, but, in consequence, of the marriage of the couple. For, if the groom needs a "wäs", a personal guarantor-bondsman for employment or if in legal trouble, the mize can hardly refuse this service as they are now doubly bound. The mize pattern thus increases security and stability

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

584 608 for all concerned, and is reinforced by the public social sanction given the "swearing - in".

b) "Semanya" Wedding Procedure

585 The wedding consists largely of a formal recapitulation of all the negotiations in public, by the two kingroups involved, sometimes at considerable length, confirmed in a monosyllabic expression from bride and groom. The other major activities are feasting in both hamlets involved, a re-enactment of bride capture at nightfall, and the signs of virginity signifying that the "fortress is just taken".

The preferred day for weddings is Sunday, so that the deflowering, taking place after nightfall which is considered part of Monday, will not take place on the Lord's day. (footnote 82). For the same reason, weddings do not take place on Saturday; nor in lent, a period of mourning; nor on Wednesday or Friday fast days.

Preparations for feasting and gathering are made at both hamlets involved. At both places a "dass" shelter is erected on a square staked out with tall saplings, covered with leafy branches against the sun, with fragrant grasses on the ground. Relatives are invited, but strangers are kept away for fear of the evil eye.

The wedding guests among peasants begin to arrive about noon, Sunday, and are received, at the hamlet of the groom, under the men's "dass". The women occupy a neighboring "dass", busily cooking the meat sauce "wot". The groom remains inside a hut and does not appear until shortly before he has to leave for the hamlet of the

Footnote 82: Sunday is also wedding day of Christians of Lebanon. See - Feghali, Michel: La Famille Catholique au Liban. RETP, 6, pp. 291-308, Paris, 1925.

888 young, "not-yet-serious" young woman, partly because there is no
792 career involved, as there is in case of young men who become monks. Though there are usually fewer widows than widowers (due to the mortality in connection with childbirth), the lot of a widow is not a happy one. The proverb says:

[539] "How that my fortune (husband) has died,
what will my mother-in-law give me?"

888 Without the kin group, an aging man, especially if sick, blind
736 or crippled, has little protection. The church is not eager to have
[792] him as a monk, for it can recruit younger men for its service, as a career, and an old man is much less useful in the churchyard than an old woman. He may, especially if landless, or in town, be reduced to beggary. There he sits at the approaches to the churches, repeating his demanding, ceaseless litany: "Selä Medhane Aläm, selä Maryam, selä Giyorgis" (For sake of the Savior, of Mary, of St. George), stretching out an open hand. Sometimes he may send out a child to beg for him, either because he is too bashful, or is using it as a technique. Little boys will thus attach themselves to a potential donor, repeating "babba, babba" (babytalk for "daddy").
[508] They have already learned the concept of artificial kinship to establish human relationships.

6. The End of Life: Eulogy; Memorial Services and Feasts.

763 When an elder is close to death, other elders from among his nearest kin come with his confessor, and say to him: "Confess yourself". When he has done so, they ask him for his last will: "What do you give to your children, and for your soul (i.e. to the church, through the confessor, to the poor)". While fields and cattle are given to the descendants, (the former only in patrilineal descent), personal belongings such as oxhide mats, shamma

I: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 "ellel" as shrilly as they do outside church during Coptic services.
535 Exhausted, the powerful woman finally collapsed, and the curtain was
796 quickly drawn to hide her during her recovery.

X794 Several other zar doctors demonstrated their individual "fukkara"
796 activities. But more and more participants grew inattentive, and some began to doze. Lady Salämtew declared the session ended at about
[513] 3 A.M. The women bedded down right on the floor or the mud bench, while the men who lived nearby went home, and others rolled up in blankets and skins just outside the house, under the overhanging roof. It was a cold night, usual during cloudless month of Yäkatit.

The season of the roaming zar spirits had once again been concluded, not to revive in full vigor until after the rainy season half a year later. At the convention much protection had been gained, and old protection reinforced against the many mischievous zars that might plague people in the meantime.

d) Social Aspects of the Zar Cult.

X794 The groups of chronically possessed persons who meet regularly
608 as devotees of the zars, in the "wädaja" (lit. love feast), constitute what are called "aqwäddäsh" (sometimes "aqtächa"), face-to-face societies. Their interpersonal relationships soon become social, much like the mähabbär communal worship society of the church. Both establish bonds which, to the Amhara mind, become "artificial kinship". Not infrequently this leads to the establishment of bonds of actual affinal kinship (as described earlier).

X794 The parallel can also be applied to an understanding of the
772 leadership involved. Much like the mähabbär is led and blessed by the priest-confessor, so the zar society is led and blessed by the

304 the names of saints. The client generally selects designs within the range appropriate to his needs, and women favor aesthetically attractive patterns. Only the gums are undecorated with designs, but are completely blackened; even here, however, the tattooing is regarded as aesthetically pleasing. Men sometimes have their godfather's names as well as their own (which incorporates the patronym) tattooed on their wrists, so that should they die in some foreign place, the local priests will regognize them as Christians and give them a proper burial.

Table 5 outlines the tokwariy's practice.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

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sible in modern times, though the conversion is solemnized shamefacedly by the minor clergy and with very little ado. The racial distinctions between "persons of dishonorable ancestry" are expressed in the following Amharic aphorisms:

> "(One) of unknown father
> (Two) wellaj (i.e. father Amhara, Mother Shanqalla:
> (Three) barya (i.e. full-blooded slave);
> (Four) gabecha (any half-breed, incl. half-Italian)."

In setting them side by side without distinction, the aphorism warns the hearer to look well into the ancestry of a prospective mate, for he or she may be descended from any of these classifications.

A
E
609

European foreigners are not included in these classifications, especially if they belong to nationalities of recent contact with Ethiopians. But the Armenians, in contact for many centuries, appear in the upper infidel group (the term "arämani" had the connotation of "idolator, hence Cruel"). Today some of the modern Ethiopian nationalists pretend to despise them as "moneybags", while actually envying their commercial and professional talents. The term "arab" has long meant trader, caravan importer, slave dealer. The term for Protestant, probably of 19th century origin, means "enemy of Mary", because that is what impressed the Coptic Amhara most when the missionaries preached to them at that time. The old term "färänj (Frank), foreigner, is still in use, and in rural spots children will still sometimes run after a foreigner pointing fingers as if he were a strange, hence inferior, animal. But in urban usage, especially in Addis Ababa, the term is now applied officially without any derogatory connotations.

[352] accumulate there when poured over the limp sheets of bread.

251 (7) Food staples must be stored out of reach of domestic animals, on horizontal slats fastened between the horizontal beam and walls. On these slats lie flat cakes of "abshelo" (pre-fermented and baked hops), bunches of sorghum, husks of maize, etc.

352 To provide additional privacy, togas can be hung across. This was done in the past particularly at dinner [354] time, to protect the eaters from the "evil eye" in the [609] presence of non-kinsmen, and is still done in some remote areas, unless the peasant prefers to postpone his meal until the stranger has gone away, so as not to offend him.

342 The tuqul is regarded as a good, sound habitation by the Amhara. It is compared to the round tent of the king and duke ("ras") which not so long ago was the center of activities (if not the actual capital) of the province and country. On the other hand, reactangular or square huts, [554] "säqäla", are regarded as carrying low prestige, little more than temporary lean-to's of hunters. The proverb indicates this low regard of a säqäla:

[539]

"Of children, the worst is the bastard;
of foods, the hardest is beans;
of clothing, the poorest is nätäla (half-toga);
of housing, the poorest is säqäla."

Response: "(but) from enemy, the bastard son will defend you;
toward better days the bean will let you survive;
in (warm) daytime, the nätäla will clothe you;
till a better is built, the säqäla will shelter you".

There are special tuquls of varying degrees of sturdiness:

243 [251] expose a full granary to the mercy of the feudal lord and passing soldiers.

Before threshing can begin, about a month after the end of the rainy season, a flat, circular area is marked out with rocks. Cowdung is stamped into the wetted floor, and the sun hardens the ground into cement-like consistency in one day. This threshing floor, called "awdema", is usually big enough to accommodate at least 4 oxen that are now driven over the grain, abreast but not tied, walking in a steady circle all day long, a procedure called "mabärayät". On the third day, winnowing (called "mäshin") takes place, by means of wooden pitchforks cut from a hardwood bush without carpentry (thus usually two-pronged), and a semi-circular winnowing fan about 2 feet long and not quite as wide, made of oxhide that has been stretched on a wooden, semi-circular frame. The threshed grain is covered overnight with branches, to protect it from wind.

On the fourth day, the grain is swept up with simple whiskbrooms made of stalks (e.g. those of wild oats). All these procedures are done as quickly as possible, partly to protect the crop during this stage of maximum vulnerability from birds and baboons, partly because of fear [54 609] of the evil eye. If an unrelated stranger passes at this time, the farmer sprinkles him with water to avert the possible evil eye. Formerly spitting was the procedure.

In that season many small threshing grounds dot the landscape, especially on river flood plains. Here the plots are usually not more than 100-200 yards long. A minimum team of three men can usually do the job described in four days. Only one person is needed to drive the

754 The actual name, "buda", is considered taboo, for it is dangerous
776 and might attract him, when uttered aloud. Since this spirit is
[784] always male, his name is paraphrased as "the man's eye" ("yäsäw ayn"), "shadow eye" (aynä ṭela); and a victim is paraphrased "the man's victim" ("yäsäw gällabi"). Even the term "smith" is used, sometimes indirectly, for further security. Thus, to accuse someone of sorcery, a security-minded Amhara says pointedly, in his presence: "As for me, I am not the son of a smith".

754 The first attitude toward strangers is therefore one of caution,
609 lest he be a carrier of "buda". The suspicion is confirmed if the stranger has intelligent eyes, darting eyes, shining eyes, or if he stares curiously without saying much. It is confirmed if he seems skilled manually, for then he may be a "ṭabib" (lit. trained person, technologically wise), hiding the fact that he was born into the ironsmith caste. It is less disturbing if he openly reveals himself as an ironsmith, for then he lives segregated in a hamlet of his own ethnic group, and when contact must be established for trade (purchase of iron tools and pottery), certain "precautions" against being struck by the evil eye can be taken; extra-vulnerable persons such as pregnant women can be kept from contact; and all transactions will be carried on in full daylight.

754 The "buda" is regarded as preferring to strike and feast on
776 women, especially beautiful ones, and to feed, cannibal-style, on
[609] fat, beautiful children. The stranger therefore should never praise the health or beauty of children, or of women, out loud. Mothers
[89] hide their children at the approach of a stranger. Nice new garments
[64] on a child also attract the buda, and this is one reason why children under 5, when infant mortality is highest, are given only rags to wear, and are permitted to be dirty most of the time.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

361 I have tried to describe a small section of the old Shoan people in their geographical and historic setting. But this small community, living along the broken edges of the Shoan plateau, typifies the much larger unity of the Amhara nation. Mostly they live in country which resembles either the plateau or the gorges, for they are a mountain people and will not live in the low country; and over most of the Ethiopian highlands their way of life, while varying in detail, is fundamentally the same. Everywhere outside the towns the force of tradition is incomparably stronger than any modern influence, so that life remains, in essentials, what it has been for centuries. I have never come across such a staunch (not to say arrogant) conservatism—a conservatism centred mostly round the old Church which, now as ever, organizes the life of the community. The manifestations of modernity and progress, which now attract some attention in the larger towns, hardly affect the rural picture, and the rural population is content without them. I myself was content without them too, for I valued very highly the experience of sharing the life of a community whose customs, founded on the most ancient traditions, belong essentially to an earlier and to me a congenial age. This was one of the compensations for living in a country where life is necessarily a strain, since the inquisitive foreigner is not really welcome.

181

[609]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

rusalem. The Falasha again declare, that their circumcision was that commonly practised at Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, and in use among them when they left Palestine, and came into Abyssinia. 304 171

The circumcision of the Abyssinians is performed with a sharp knife, or razor. There is no laceration with the nails, no formula or repetition of words, nor any religious ceremony at the time of the operation, nor is it done at any particular age, and generally it is a woman that is the surgeon. The Falasha say, they perform it sometimes with the edge of a sharp stone; sometimes with a knife or razor, and at other times with the nails of their fingers; and for this purpose they have the nails of their little fingers of an immoderate length. At the time of the operation, the priest chants a hymn, or verse, importing, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast ordained circumcision!" This is performed on the eighth day, and is a religious rite, according to the first institution by God to Abraham.

The Abyssinians pretend theirs is not so; and, being pressed for the reason, they tell you it is because Christ and the apostles were circumcised, though they do not hold it necessary to salvation. But it is the objection they constantly make against eating out of the same plate, or drinking out of the same cup, with strangers, that they are uncircumcised; while, with the Egyptians or the Cophts, though equally strangers, they make no such difficulty. In the time of the Jesuits, when the Roman Catholic religion was abolished, and liberty given them to return to their old worship, their priests proclaimed a general circumcision; and the populace, in the first days of their fury, or triumph, murdered many Catholics, by stabbing them with a lance in that part, as they met them, repeating, in derision, the Jewish hymn, or ejacula- 304 609

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

304 tion, "Blessed is the Lord that hath ordained circum-
609 cision!" so that, I believe, their indifference in this article is rather owing to not being contradicted; just as they are careless about every other part of religion, unless such as have been revived in their minds by disputes with the Jesuits, and kept up since, in part, among their clergy. But none of them pretend that circumcision arises from necessity of any kind, or from any obstruction or impediment to procreation, or that it becomes necessary for cleanliness, or from the heat of climate.

304 None of these reasons, constantly alleged in Europe, are ever to be heard of here; nor do I believe they have the smallest foundation any where: and this, I think, should weigh strongly in favour of the account Scripture gives of it. Examining the origin of this ceremony, independent of this revelation, I will never believe that man, or nations of men, rashly submitted to a disgraceful, sometimes dangerous, and always painful operation, unless there had been proposed, as a consequence, some reward for submitting to, or some punishment for refusing it, which balanced in their minds the pain and danger, as well as disgrace, of that operation.

All the inhabitants of the globe agree in considering it shameful to expose that part of their body, even to men; and in the East, where, from climate, you are allowed, and, from respect to your superiors, the generality of men are forced to go naked, all agree in covering their waist, which is called their *nakedness*, though it is really the only part of their body that is covered. We see even that there a curse * at-

* Gen. chap. ix. ver. 22.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920) 1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

The Abyssinian calendar for *their* current year (leap year for them) accordingly compares with ours as shewn on the previous page; and in the last month given, the calendar resumes its normal correspondence with ours as, owing to the occurrence of our leap year, February has an extra day in 1936. 805

Apart from their language, there are many customs and practices amongst the Abyssinians which differentiate them sharply from most of the other peoples of Africa, and not the least interesting of these are clearly traceable to their ancient connection with Israel, of which they speak with pride in their old records. 171

For example, much of their religious pageantry, which is described in detail elsewhere, is undoubtedly a remarkable survival of rites which must have been introduced by the earliest Jewish arrivals, such as the Dance of the Priests, their ceremonies connected with the Tabot, and many others. Similarly, their method of slaughtering cattle for food, the division of animals into clean and unclean, etc., are all indications pointing in the same direction.

Their dislike of Jews to-day is accordingly the more remarkable, and must be due to the sanguinary wars which took place from the fourth to the tenth centuries between the newly-converted Christians and those who remained Jews. 609

Among other customs which are peculiar and interesting, pride of place must surely be given to their fondness for raw meat or *broundo*. This form of diet is preferred to any other by the mass of the population, and indeed by practically all sections thereof, beef being liked better than mutton. 262

When we were on trek our men could be given no

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935.
MP5 Amhara MP5

793 They have always been bitterly opposed to pro-
176 gress and to innovations, more so as regards changes in their own Church than as regards the introduction into the land of alien religions, strange to say. Thus for example a learned individual, a very religious layman whom I knew, had been accused by the priests of expounding the Gospels in a manner somewhat different to that generally accepted, and as a result he was imprisoned for three years. His views on the subject of his own Church were instructive!

On the other hand they are by no means so in-
793 tolerant to other religious beliefs and efforts in the
●609 country; they are not fanatical, and if left alone and not interfered with are not markedly anti-foreign. Individually I have always found them quite pleasant and friendly, and I am bound to say that Mr Wylde, who met a great many of them in various parts of the country, seemed vastly to prefer them to European missionaries. But as a body I think they are—to put it mildly—an unfortunate institution, and so far as their possessions are concerned, treatment on the lines adopted by our Henry VIII would seem to be overdue.

609 Moslems, Jews, and others practise their religion
795 in peace. I have seen religious processions of the followers of Islam on their feast days pass through the streets shouting and singing completely free from molestation, and on the occasion of my last visit I saw a mosque which was on the verge of completion being constructed in one of the principal streets of Addis Ababa.

It is rather remarkable that in spite of the bitter religious warfare in which they have been engaged for centuries Abyssinians should be so tolerant of their

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

age-long enemies and should allow them to profess their faith openly as they do, when one considers the havoc wrought by Moslem invasions and Galla inroads.

Even the Falasha Jewish ironworkers in the north, who are doubly regarded with dislike and suspicion as being Jews and as being possessed of supernatural powers, are treated with tolerance, though avoided.

No doubt this happy result is contributed to so far as Moslems are concerned by the fact that in Abyssinia they do not appear to be strict or fanatical—in pleasing contrast to their behaviour elsewhere. Mr Wyman Bury tells a delightful story in exemplification of this latter frame of mind. A pilgrim to Mecca, a plump and prosperous Moslem merchant at Aden in ordinary life, was gazing from the deck of the ship in rapt enthusiasm at Jeddah, which against the sun-scorched country beyond looked like a stale bridecake on a dust-heap. "Oh, the sacred land," he crooned "the blessed land, where pigs and Christians cannot live."

The Abyssinians still have a church in Rome, a monastery in Jerusalem, and monasteries and Ethiopic texts were discovered in the Libyan desert by the German explorer Falls.

The Abyssinian Church endeavours to maintain friendly relations with the other Christian communities: interesting examples of this are the missions sent to the Pope by the Emperor Menelik in 1906 and by the late Empress in 1921. A mission was also in Jerusalem at the close of 1922 in connection with some ancient rights of the Abyssinian Church regarding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other holy places; under the Turkish régime these rights had been transferred to the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 156 157 man, as we shall see in more detail below, includes the quality of leaving others alone.

[577] This strong sense of self is confirmed and symbolized by two conspicuous *565 156 411 Amhara customs: carrying staves and going on trips. A staff, like a pipe, affirms the ego in two ways. As a piece of personal property right at hand, it stimulates a sense of pride of ownership; as something external yet confronting the person, it makes the ego more conscious of its bounded reality. Such sensations are daily experiences for the Amhara peasant, who is rarely separated from the staff in one form or other. When he leaves his homestead he normally carries the hard *dulā*, a potential weapon of defense that likewise affirms his ego by bolstering self-confidence in a dangerous world. He braces the *dulā* against his back as he treks along, or holds it against the [481] front of his shoulder like a rifle. Older men walk using it as a cane. A special kind of staff made of softer wood (*zang*) is carried by pious and elderly [481] men. Participants in devotional services lean on still another type of staff (*maquāmiyā*) which is distributed in the church for that purpose.

Traveling is another custom which affirms the ego, at least when one *565 156 484 travels spontaneously and not in organized company. As the individual moves past various stimuli, his self-consciousness is heightened by the contrast between a persisting ego and a constantly changing environment. As a traveler par excellence—and a lone traveler, unless social rank requires the presence of retainers—the Amhara peasant frequently removes himself from familiar home settings and confronts an outside world. He loves to go on the road and will travel at the slightest provocation. For him a distance of two or three hours by foot is like the American's trip to the corner drugstore. Whether to visit relatives or pay respects after death, to go to market or to court, to get holy water at a distant church, or to look after land in a far away district, the Amhara peasant is on the move dozens of times each year, often for trips involving two or three days of travel.

*565 156 829 602 609 Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and culture, one may for the moment say that the personal ego is the central object in the Amhara peasant's view of society. Exactly what might be meant by this statement and in what respects it needs qualification are questions that will be taken up in the concluding chapter. If it is so, certainly the next most prominent social object in his world is the circle of close ones, or *zamad*. *Zamad* refers in the first instance to consanguineal kin, and is distinguished from the category of those who are strangers, or *bā'ed*. This is perhaps the most important of all the sociological distinctions made by the Amhara: the former, *zamad*, are seen as entitled to the warmest hospitality, while toward *bā'ed* indifference and suspicion are appropriate responses.

*565 156 602 This does not mean that the kin group is a corporate entity whose interests and identity transcend that of the individual. On the contrary, the notion of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [171]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shillalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 [183]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful physical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argument also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fasting prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ţegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are expressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Traditional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ţayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well-known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

*121 571 264 181 [829] A similar spirit is observed in Amhara commensality. Meals are customarily eaten from a common *ĭnjarā* basket. The sauce is ladled onto the center of the *ĭnjarā*, and is consumed ensemble by those sitting around the basket as they dip into it with pieces of *ĭnjarā* broken off from the edges. Traditional Amhara scoff at what they regard as the excessively individualistic Western custom of sitting each person down to a separate place at the table and thus depriving the meal hour of what they feel should be its basically communal tone.

*121 574 571 181 At a more formal level of interaction this disposition is expressed in the form of *hospitality*. Amhara hospitality is luxuriously attentive and thoughtful. For example, if there is foreknowledge of a guest's arrival, he is awaited at some distance from his destination and escorted with much to-do into the home. His mule is at once unsaddled and given to feed. The guest is given a place of honor in the home, and a glass of *ṭallā* is immediately brought for him. Amhara etiquette prescribes, moreover, that a glass is not properly filled unless it overflows; and it is repeatedly filled to overflowing whenever the guest has drunk some portion of the beverage. As a gratuitous gesture of good faith, the host—or his wife, or servant—tastes some of the beverage first, a sign that no "medicine" has been added. Before long the wicker table is produced, and the guest and his party are served copiously—no matter what time of day they arrive (unless, of course, it is a fasting day). When the guest has eaten to satisfaction, the host will insist that he eat some more, by repeatedly issuing injunctions like *tegābazu* ("Help yourselves!"), *mokar* ("Try!"), or *āfar sehon* ("If I become dust!"—i.e., "If you do not eat you will be condemning me to death"). The Amhara host is also likely to insist that his guest spend the night. The guest's feet will be washed, and the host's bed will be given to him, or long grass will be cut for bedding on the floor. At the time of farewell, the host and his attendants follow the guest and his party a good distance along the road. The guest continually cries, "Return! Return!" and the host agrees but continues to serve as escort.

Such hospitality is not wantonly bestowed upon the casual wayfarer. Normally it is reserved for those who qualify as worthy guests: relatives, friends, [609] or persons of high rank. Nonetheless, there does exist among the Amhara some feeling that even the unknown stranger should be shown hospitality, for he is *ya-egziābhēr engedā* ("a guest of God"). Travelers are generally assured [485] that somebody somewhere will show them hospitality; there are no inns in traditional Ethiopia, for it is considered wrong to exchange food and lodging for money.

*121 576 571 181 Related to this pattern of hospitality is a delicate sense of *respect* that the Amhara displays toward all comers; often, even toward his enemies. When two Amhara pass each other anywhere, they are expected to bow slightly and say: "How did you pass the night?" or "How did you spend the day?" If they

181 the emphasis on frequency and intensity of kin relations; the dichotomy between "rustic peasant" and "great man - noble" personality (the latter constituting a culture goal; Amhara concepts of government administration; religious fundamentalism and literalness; and last, healing of "spirit ailments" outside the officially dominant religion.

181 Attachment to the land is a major preoccupation of all Amhara:
423 Nobles and "gabbar" serfs, men and women, old and young, priest and
571 student, even of the townspeople. The complexity of land tenure (i.e. the varieties of "rest" and "gult" land) is closely connected with the social status of the residential kin group; the life cycle of the individual is largely determined by the land tenure of his family, beginning with the very kind of education he is likely to receive. By extension, a person's secondary social group consists largely of persons inhabiting or stemming from the same "agärey" (lit. my countryside), the sub-district where his family owns land or works on it.

181 Attachment to one's kin group is nearly as strong on the in-
602 dividual's maternal side as on the paternal. The greater emphasis
[591 on the latter is largely due to the predominantly patrilocal resi-
611] dence, and on patrilineal descent. Kin visiting is a primary social duty, on both the individual's paternal and maternal sides, with equal frequency and intensity. By extension, though with lesser frequency and intensity, visiting of affinal relatives, notably the wife's parents who nearly always live in another hamlet, is considered an important social duty.

Kin feuds often last for generations, particularly between land owning ("rest" tenure) kin groups. The fear of shaming ("harerät")

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

zamad is highly subjective, and all constellations of *zamad* reflect the interests and affections of ego. For the quality of kinship can be attributed to persons who are not consanguineal relatives, and this is done without resorting to fictions of affiliation. The term *wəndəm*, for example, meaning "brother," is simply applied to any male person of about the same age to whom one feels closely attached. The term *zamad* itself is applied to anyone to whom one feels a close personal tie—even to a mere fellow-countryman whom one happens to meet in a distant region. It is thus not taking too great a liberty to translate the term *zamad* as "close ones."

The primarily subjective nature of the circle of *zamad* derives not only from the fact that it includes friends as readily as actual blood relatives. Within the bounds of consanguinity, the composition of the kin group with which a person identifies fluctuates according to his current needs, particularly with respect to land use rights. As Allan Hoben has demonstrated, corporate descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; but the fact that in this ambilineal descent system each individual may claim multiple active affiliations, and enjoys a relatively wide range of choice, means that the particular corporate descent group with which an individual affiliates in order to claim his rights varies according to what land is subject to disputation. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mothers' rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors.[9]

The next most inclusive sociological concept beyond the ego-oriented circle of *zamad* is that of *agar*, or "homeland."* The co-residents of one's *agar*, like those who comprise one's circle of *zamad*, are regarded as forming an important "in-group," outside of which all other persons are a priori rejected. Yet the Amharic concept of homeland, like that of kin, does not refer to a fixed social entity; its referent varies according to the context in which the individual chooses to use it. Thus, as we have seen, the concept of *agar* may be used to refer to one's parish, district, province, or even nation.

A more specialized dichotomy of some prominence in the outlook of the Amhara peasant hinges on variation in the altitude of homelands. Inhabitants of lowlands (*qolaññā*) and dwellers of higher regions (*dəgaññā*) tend to be conceived as polar cultural types. Different sets of habits and traits are attributed to them. Thus, according to one set of stereotypes, the *qolaññā* is viewed as a heavy drinker and hot tempered, while the *dəgaññā* is viewed as a heavy eater and inclined more to litigation than to violence. Again, the

* The less prominent category of *wəgən* is intermediate between these two. *Wəgən* has a primarily political connotation; it consists of one's consanguineal and affinal kin, friends and close retainers, all who may be mobilized in the event of political or military competition.

11:Levine Z-4.5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkär*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [764] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [601]

[617] [illegible]ents decisions that come down from the *meketel warada* or *warada*.[12] Incumbency tends to rotate among the senior *ristenas* of the parish. Amhara trace genealogies ambilineally to the original recipients of primary land rights (*rist*) to local fields. Ambilineages are traced from these apical ancestory through those descendants (*ristenas*) who have made effective claims to the fields of the original estates. Over time, it is the genealogical links associated with land claims which tend to be [582] remembered, to the exclusion of other descent ties. Similarly, it is these links which are examined most carefully in deciding whether a proposed marriage would be properly exogamous (i.e., ideally excluding descendants of the sixth ascending generation).[13]

*793 From the perspective of the Amhara peasant, the ecclesiastical organization of Begemder consists of two levels, the bishopric (located in Gondar, the provincial

[12] A *feresena*, rural policeman, is also a resident farmer of the parish.

[13] Hoben (1963:116-117) considers these matters in detail, and notes that occasionally the boundaries of exogamous unions are contracted to include the descendants of the fifth and even fourth ascending generations.

632 [796] [346] motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' eponymic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "government" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means [691] [423] litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

[161] [592]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total population	151	95
Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by [613] [592] [162] risteñas. These households are distributed among the hamlets' ambilineages as follows:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

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[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total risteñas households	31	21

[423] In each of the hamlets, there are two households be-
*[192] longing to Amhara tenant farmers (timeneña), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the risteñas
[779] whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two addition-
[433] al timeneña households, whose members are Muslims. These
[286] households are headed by brothers who supplement their
*[192] agricultural activities by weaving the šama (toga) for local Christians.

*793 Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are
361 believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the
423 use of such fields, known as yikeys mariet ("priest's
795 land"), is given to local priests in return for parti-
*[192]
[613] cipating in the Masses of the parish church. In practice, rist-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of yikeys mariet by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

361 members are unable to retain their claims to these
423 church lands (which are intimately linked to the ac-
• 613 quisition of leadership positions and prestige within
795 the parish) by providing priests from their own ranks. Consequently, substitutes from outside the parish must be obtained. Such is the case with ambilineage I today. According to current allocation of yikeys mariet in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, ambilineages I and V are each expected to provide three priests for the Mass. Ambilineage V currently provides its three from three ambilineage households of Lemmariet. Ambilineage I, however, currently provides only one risteña priest (a resident of Tikurmidir). Thus, members of ambilineage I using these fields have been obliged to invite two non-risteña priests to take up residence on a portion of these lands, in return for participation in the Mass.

361 Finally, these hamlets contain three female ser-
562 vants, unrelated to other residents of the parish. In
592 Tikurmidir, there is a single Amhara attached to a household of ambilineage I; in Lemmariet there is a "bariya" in a household of ambilineage I, and another in a household of ambilineage V.

*278 Herbalist Medicine in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet.
*757 The herbalist therapies of these two hamlets are descri-
*759 bed in Table 7. With the use of this information, the
613 following paragraphs will indicate that the professional

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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therapies practiced in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet (like those of Begemder Amhara hamlets in general) are fairly evenly distributed among resident ambilineages and households. A significant consequence of this distribution is a general understanding by all residents of the pharmacological, therapeutic, and diagnostic notions of Amhara medicine, and the inhibition of separate professional and lay cultures, at least with regards to secular therapies. A second consequence is that the differential healing powers of herbalists are perceived in clients and herbalists in specific, symptomatically bound contexts, divorced from notions of diffuse and widely relevant healing powers.

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A majority of the herbalists of Tikurmidir and Lemmariet practice a single professional therapy:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total therapies:	26	20
Total herbalists:	20	16

No herbalist of these hamlets practices more than two professional therapies, thus there are ten herbalists practicing multiple therapies. The combinations of therapies practiced in these hamlets are as follows:

In Tikurmidir:

(Aynitila:Seci:k:T) and (Yibuda Baziyta:Seci:k:T+)

(Aynitila:Seci:k:I) and (Demikitir:Ateci:k:I)

(Nikersa:Kitabiy:A:I+) and (Kuntina:Kabiy:k*:I+)

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 1A 1

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TABLE 7

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A ROSTER OF SECULAR HERBALISTS OF TWO RURAL HAMLETS OF BEGEMDER

1. Explanation of the notations used:

Therapeutic notations:

Seci:	Medhaniyt Seci (provider of unprocessed medicaments)
Ateci:	Medhaniyt Ateci (provider of processed medicaments)
Kabiy:	Medhaniyt Kabiy (painter of processed medicaments)
Kitabiy:	Kitab Kitabiy (amulet maker)

Pharmacological notations:

i:	Ise Korac ("stalk cutter")
s:	Sir Korac ("root digger")
k:	Yi_Medhaniyt Korac ("medicine cutter for the_ailment")

Grade notations:

A:	Medhaniyt Awakiy ("medicine expert")
°:	Herbalist claims Medhaniyt Awakiy title, but is professionally unknown beyond the parish

Ambilineage notations:

I to IV:	ambilineage designation
T:	Amhara tenant farmer

Client notation:

+:	Clients are attracted from beyond the herbalist's own hamlet and immediate environs

For example, the notation "Seci/Ateci:k:I" signifies an herbalist who offers a therapy as either a Medhaniyt Seci or Medhaniyt Ateci, who is also known as a Medhaniyt Korac by virtue of the complex of ingredients used in his therapy, and who is a member of ambilineage I.

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TABLE 7 CONTINUED

*278 2. The roster:
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Disease-Name Specialty	Grade and Ambilineage of Herbalist	
	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Aynitila (chronic anxiety affecting ability to engage in ordinary social intercourse)	Seci:k:II+ Seci:k:T	Ateci:k*:II
Demiketir (profuse external bleeding)	Seci/Ateci:k:I	
Ibac (running sore, particularly on lower leg)	Seci/Kabiy:i:I	
Ikek (scabies)	Kabiy:k*:I Kabiy:k*:II	Kabiy:k*:I Kabiy:k*:I
Hod Himem (stomach ailment marked by local pain)	Ateci:i:I	Seci:i:I
Kosow (tapeworm)	Ateci:i:II Ateci:k*:I	
Koruba (small pox)	Seci/Ateci:i:I+ Seci/Ateci:i:I	Seci:i:I+ Seci:i:I
Kuntina (leprosy)	Kabiy:k*:I+	
Kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints)	Kabiy:k*:II	Kabiy:k*:V

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TABLE 7 Continued

Disease-Name Specialty	Grade and Ambilineage of Herbalist	
	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Kusil (infected cut)	Kabiy:k*:II+ Kabiy:k*:III+	
Mers (poison)	Ateci:k*:IV+	
Nic (bothersome skin inflammations and rashes)	Seci/Kabiy:i:I+	Seci:i:I
Nikersa (septicemia with a prodromal carbuncle)	Kitabiy:A:I+	
Ras Mitat (headache caused by gerifta)	Seci:s:I	Ateci:s:VI
Wosfat (wosfat biting stomach wall and adjacent organs)	Ateci:s:I Ateci:k*:I	Seci:s:II Ateci:i:III Ateci:i:III Ateci:k*:II
Wuwgat (localized body pain)	Ateci:s:T	
Yibuda Baŝiyta (buda possession)	Seci:k:T+	Ateci:k:IV
Yibt Wuwŝa Baŝiyta (rabies)	Ateci/Kabiy:i:III[15] Ateci:k*:I	Ateci:k*:I

[15]This therapy also used for snakebite.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

TABLE 7 CONTINUED

*278 *753 *766 *759 • 613 Disease-Name Specialty	Grade and Ambilineage of Herbalist	
	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Yilfiyn Baŝiyta (swollen and painful extremeties following a prodromal cut; often pre-gangrenous)	Kabiy:k*:I	Seci/Kabiy:i:V
Yisaal Baŝiyta (sustained and severe coughing)	Ateci:k*:II+	Ateci:k*:II Ateci:k*:II Ateci:k*:II

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holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town. In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-agricultural employment for their subsistence needs, there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

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[423]
[241]

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Kinship ties are an important means by which the peasant acquires and communicates information necessary for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like

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B. Private Property - "rest".

423 "Rest", at least since the days of the Fetha Nägäst and probably earlier, is a form of freehold, with rights and privileges resembling those of a medieval European entail. It is inherited. It is normally free from any statute-labor, It can be expropriated only for rebellion, or certain segments for a public utility such as roadways. The owner has to pay land taxes and a tithe on produce, but can and does pass them on to his tenant.

423 614 The most important factor regarding "rest" is that it is usually owned by a kinship group, predominantly the patrilineal-patrilocal kin. Land of such a kin group is often referred to as "yäwel märet" (lit. partnership land), and this has led some foreign observers mistakenly to regard Amhara land tenure as communal property. It is that only in a very restricted sense. An individual whose kin have died becomes sole proprietor. At the other extreme, if the next generation has become too numerous, a process of "sharing out" can take place, in which new kinship units "bud off" after the death of a patriarch.

Every few years the elders of a patrilocal kin group allocate land to individuals and to biological (nuclear) families, according to their manpower and to their needs. A father, on the marriage of his son, allocates him some of the kin's "rest" land that he individually holds at the time, so that the son can enjoy the produce of his own labors. In some ways this form

423 614 of land settlement resembles the Middle Eastern (Arab) "musha's" land tenure.

No individual or nuclear family can sell, or otherwise alienate, "rest" land belonging to the kin group. He may ask them for permission to do so, but in Amhara provinces this is usually refused. On the other hand, if he moves to a different province (which has happened particularly since Menelik's borderland conquests), his kinfolk will hold his claim in trust so that a returning grandson can claim his rights in full. He can even do this, in some cases of particularly strong and proud families, if the inheritance is on his mother's side.

It is interesting that the Biblical principle of the kinsman-redeemer of the land is still in force among the Amhara, in the same spirit. Cases of this kind have arisen increasingly in the past decade, because of the emperor's efforts to settle landless squatters, who have worked fallow land and have paid tithe for several years. If such formerly fallow land belonged to "rest" kin groups, they try to evict the squatters through legal(or sometimes illegal) means, thus "redeeming the land" for the kin group.

423 428 614 For purposes of inheritance, landholding kin usually include all descendants to the "fourth house", i.e. the great-grandsons. After that, disputes usually arise. If no kin survives-- a very rare occurrence--the partners of the "mahabber" sodality to which the deceased belonged, have a final claim, before the land reverts to the regional authority. Affinal relations, except for the mate who shares equally with children of the deceased, are not considred kin for purposes of inheritance of land. If there are no children, [584] the wife has user claims up to half the estate, which would have been her portion in case of divorce.

423 have been her portion in case of divorce. If the deceased
428 left an infant, the widow is expected to remain with the kin
614 group of the deceased until the child is reared to adulthood. Then she may leave, taking movable belongings that are her share, but, of course, foregoing any claims on real estate. The same procedure is followed in case of her marriage again.

[848] Illegitimate sons, including children of ex-slave concubines, also have the right to inheri their share of "rest", unless the presumed father has publicly rejected them as offspring. Girls who leave the kin group upon marriage, have claims only on movable property, not land. However, if the bridegroom settles on land belonging to the bride's kin, as happens in a minority of cases, the elders will allocate him land, and the male offspring will share in the inheritace.

[852] Allocations of land by the elders to the various biological families used to be made into great events and festivities particularly for the children. This was the only time children were singled out for attention, in this adult-cantered culture. Thus the purpose of firmly impressing the event on their minds, to be always remembered and defended in the future, was achieved. In the absence of written legal titles, this procedure was necessary, and is still followed in some rural districts.

C. Semi-private Real Estate--"gult".

423 For many centuries past, land, with the peasants
566 occupying it, has been assigned to feudal officers and soldiers, similar to fiefs of medieval Europe. These "gult" lands also resemble in principle the "miri" state lands of

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

651 661 had been removed, leaving the heads of villages and districts in direct contact with the Italian resident.

114 Our third example comes from Eritrea. No excuse is needed for this excursion beyond the present borders of Ethiopia, since the Eritrean plateau was until fifty years ago a part, and one of the oldest parts, of the Ethiopian state, and this region may again revert to its former status. In addition, however, we have the great advantage that Dr. Nadel, an anthropologist of experience and authority, has had the opportunity in this region under the British military administration to make a thorough investigation of a land tenure closely resembling that of northern Ethiopia.[1]

621 614 On the Eritrean plateau the most characteristic unit was the *enda*, a number of families which claimed to have descended from a single ancestor. This group was not static; it might decline or be dispersed, or it might thrive and reach a size when it became necessary to break up and form new *endas*. It was not an administrative unit, but in certain matters it acted as a unity through meetings of its elders. The administrative unit, the village, generally covered several *endas*, though these may have all descended from a parent *enda*. The village unit might also cut across *endas*.

423 651 [631] Above the village administrations, in the days before the Italian conquest, came the hierarchy of the Emperor, his governors and deputy governors. These were often strangers from the south though local chiefs might be promoted to imperial positions. The imperial taxation had to be delivered to these officers, and the Emperor might arbitrarily cut out estates in *gult* for their support, or for that of monasteries or colonies of soldiers posted in these outlying regions to support the Emperor's power.

423 These rights may be regarded as extraneous to the underlying customary tenures which are divided by Dr. Nadel into three, ownership by the individual (which generally meant the individual family); by the kindred, or *enda*, and by the village. The first two types of ownership might, owing to the blurring of the edges between the three groups by growth or decline, shade off into each other.

In his discussion of family ownership Dr. Nadel gives us an authoritative definition of *resti*, which may cover ownership ranging from that of an individual to that of a large kinship group. This tenure was held by the people to be the most fundamental and sacred, and its characteristics were firstly its relative absoluteness; secondly its hereditary nature,

[1] Nadel, S. F., 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau', *Africa*, vol. 16, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 1–22, 99–109. The succeeding pages are closely based on this concise report.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national government, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his successors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Mānzēs. The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 referents are relative: a man living at 7,500 feet may be considered *qolaññā*
157 by one living at 10,000 and *dēgaññā* by one living at 6,000 feet.
823 The broadest membership circle that the Amhara peasant normally thinks
*565 in terms of is that of the ethnic group consisting of all Amhara.[10] The ethnic
186 self-conception of the Amhara is one which stresses certain physical and cul-
• 619 tural characteristics, thanks to which he regards himself as superior to all non-Abyssinian groups in Ethiopia as well as to all non-Ethiopian nationals. With regard to race, the Amhara consider themselves distinctly more handsome than both the white man and the Negro man, to both of whom they apply derisive epithets. Their cultural identity is defined chiefly with respect to religion and language.

186 To all Amhara except a small minority who are Muslim, the name of their
771 ethnic group is synonymous with "Christian." The term signifies Ethiopian Orthodox Christian; for the Amhara peasant, "Catholic" and "Protestant" are equivalent to "Muslim" and "pagan" as terms designating so many kinds of heathens. And being an Ethiopian Christian is to the Amhara a mark of superiority in at least two respects: it means belonging to a chosen people, heirs to the Jews and sole bearers of authentic Christianity; and it means being an adept in praying and fasting, which to the Amhara are peculiarly Abyssinian arts. This orientation has motivated a certain amount of exclusion-
[798] ism vis-à-vis non-Christian Ethiopians. The latter are disdained because they are not Christian, while at the same time the particularistic cast of Abyssinian Christianity has made the Amhara somewhat reluctant to proselytize and
186 admit non-Abyssinians to the fold. A similar exclusiveness colors the Amhara's sentiments about his language. Knowledge of Amharic is considered another index of superiority, and the Amhara look down on Ethiopians who do not speak Amharic or who speak it with an accent.

The Amhara claim superiority over other Ethiopian peoples in connection with certain other aspects of culture besides religion and language, although most Amhara peasants have very little knowledge about the other ethnic groups in the country.[11] Occupational hunters and pastoral nomads are ridiculed, for example, because of their ignorance of the arts of farming and of eating *ĭnjarā*. Vis-à-vis Europeans, on the other hand, the Amhara's self-image tends to stress qualities of bravery and toughness. Insofar as he has had contact with foreigners, the Amhara has become self-conscious about his rugged way of life—his hot foods, endurance on trips, courage in revenge, and virile longevity—and looks down on the softness of the European.

Being an Amhara is thus belonging to a superior category of human beings. This is not simple ethnocentrism; it reflects rather a basically aristocratic orientation that is repeated within the Amhara fold. It is not only members of other ethnic and religious groups who are considered inferior,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

instance, as contrasted with sentiments of mutuality and solidarity; in the second, as contrasted with a condition of numerous social obligations and constraints; in the third, as contrasted with anonymity and conformity. In so doing our attention will necessarily be directed to disparate orders of phenomena. The empirical referent of these three concepts of individualism will be studied as follows: 121* 181

(1) *Egoism.*—The degree of individualistic disposition among the Amhara will be examined in terms of two measures: the extent to which individuals are attached to collective symbols and interests, and the extent to which interpersonal relations take non-solidaristic forms.

(2) *Independence.*—The degree of individualistic social organization will be examined with reference to the different institutional foci of Amhara life, and measured by the extent to which role definitions are permissive rather than prescriptive; the possibility of voluntary as opposed to compulsory associations; and the possibilities for the protection of individual rights.

(3) *Individuality.*—The degree of individuality will be measured by the extent to which originality and heroic excellence are valued in the media of self-development and self-expression customary in Amhara culture.

EGOISM VERSUS SOLIDARISM

Self and Community

121* 181 619 186

To what extent are the Amhara bound to one another by a sense of community, and to what extent are their actions guided by a sense of identification with collective symbols and needs? One conspicuous area of such commitment lies in the realm of religious affiliation. The Amhara manifest a strong sense of solidarity with their coreligionists over against all those who do not wear a *mätab* and who have not been baptized. They are deeply attached to the several symbols of the church—the church building itself, the compound in which it is enclosed, the holy ark, and all representatives of ecclesiastical authority—and react to violations of the dignity and purity of their religious symbols as to a personal affront. On certain ceremonial occasions they march in procession around the church shouldering rifles and spears, indicating their determination to defend by force the integrity of their religious objects. In cases where church membership has been channeled along the lines of schismatic orders, the Amhara—particularly the monks—have defended their doctrines faithfully and have at times suffered martyrdom. 121* 181 771 186

With respect to their territorial and linguistic groups, the Amhara seem similarly attached to their collective symbols, if with somewhat less passion than in the religious case. As we have seen, the Amhara has a keen sense of identification with his native locale, or *ägär*, and is readily disposed to defend it against all comers. The expression *yägärē lïjj* ("child of my country" or 121* 181 186 619

*121 *Landsmann*) regularly evokes considerable sentiment. There is also a
181 strong sense of solidarity based on the use of Amharic—both among the
186 Amhara as a whole vis-à-vis other Ethiopians who either do not know
619 Amharic or speak it imperfectly, and among regional dialect groups. The people of Gojjam and of the Gondar area are particularly chauvinistic with regard to the quality of their Amharic.

*121 This attachment to symbols of religion, territory, and language is impor-
181 tant in providing a basis for identity and morale. Yet these attachments are
621 of relatively little import in shaping a self-transcending orientation in the day-to-day activities of the Amhara; for the crucial context of these activities is the local community, and in the civic sphere the Amhara manifest very little solidarity. Indeed, it may be said that the Amhara have virtually no sense of "community" at all, for the concept can scarcely be rendered in idiomatic Amharic.

*121 The absence of community sentiment among the Amhara is implied by
181 their ecology. Not only did the Amhara fail to produce extensive and durable
361 urban centers (with the limited exception of Gondar) but their country is
621 even barren of that frequent cornerstone of peasant life, the village. The Amhara have distributed themselves thinly, scattering in groups of fours and fives up and down their mountains and plateaus. Larger aggregations are found on the estates of noblemen, but these constitute expanded private households rather than civic communities. The Amhara justify this dispersion of their population on the grounds that wide spaces are needed for the grazing of livestock and that a man needs to live on the land he farms. But herding and farming have been carried out well enough elsewhere by people living together in villages, and it is quite probable that this ecological pattern is due as much as anything else to the Amhara's preference for not having too much association with those outside his immediate kin group. In his own words, the Amhara prefers the kind of neighbor who "does not push the boundaries" (*wassan aynakām*), and believes, as noted earlier, that *bēt-ennā māqbar labetchāw naw* ("home and the grave are by oneself"). It is a preference manifest in such solitary living arrangements as that of divorced women who sometimes live by themselves in the country, eking out a living by spinning cotton or brewing spirits, and in the age-old predilection of Abyssinian monks for anchoritism.

*121 The moral counterpart of this ecological pattern is a preoccupation with
181 private interests that leaves little room for the consideration of communal
156 needs. According to the Amhara vocabulary of motives, social action is moti-
157 vated first and foremost by the pursuit of *ṭīqem*, or narrowly conceived self-interest.[9] This matter-of-fact acceptance of egoistic motivation among the Amhara appears during what is a common occurrence: the shameless subversion of occasions which are set up to consider communal problems and to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 674 any case the *shīftā* is a man apart, who makes his home in uninhabited mountainous country or lowlands and lives by stealing cattle and robbing travelers. Some Amhara become *shīftā* because of a passion for this way of life; this is particularly true of soldiers who, after a long campaign, prefer the continuation of a predatory and free existence to a return to the hard work of the fields. Others do so involuntarily, in order to escape punishment after committing some violence in the course of a personal dispute.

*121 674 829 954 The attitudes of civilian Amhara toward the *shīftā* combine fear and dislike with a strong tendency toward idealization. The *shīftā* is feared because he is a killer; if a person happens to witness him performing some act of theft or murder, he will usually keep quiet about it for fear of reprisal. He is disliked because he lives parasitically off the productive activities of others. But the *shīftā* is widely admired, on the other hand, because he possesses a number of qualities that are dear to the Amhara. He is reputed to be an expert singer of *shīllalā*. He is credited with unusually handsome features because, living at the expense of others as he does, he has plenty to eat and no [577] arduous work to wear him down. Above all he is *guabas*, the great Amhara virtue that embodies bravery, fierceness, hardihood, and general male compe- [302] tence. This is symbolized by the *shīftā*'s letting his hair grow to the proportions of a *gofarē*, the wildly thick hair style of the warrior.

*121 674 829 The Amhara's admiration for the *shīftā* is reminiscent of American attitudes toward the outlaw in "western" films. In the Amhara case, however, this is not balanced by a corresponding idealization of a sheriff-figure as the representative of civil order. Although a feudal lord or governor who captures some *shīftā* in his area may be admired, this admiration will be directed to his personal qualities of bravery or cunning far more than to his capacity as an agent of "law and order." There is no feeling among the Amhara that the *shīftā* must be captured simply because he is an outlaw. Instead, a more pragmatic approach is taken: the *shīftā* is acknowledged as a legitimate social type and is tolerated at a distance so long as his killing does not become [181] wanton or excessive. This approach, and what, in the idealization of the *shīftā*, appears to be a tendency to identify with someone who openly flaunts the norms of civil society, bespeaks a relatively weak commitment to the value of civil order.

*121 181 186 619 The weakness of the Amhara's attachment to symbols of local community is paralleled by his parochialism with respect to more inclusive levels of community. This parochialism is manifest in diverse ways in the different social strata. Among the peasantry it appears, for example, as an aversion to arranging marriages and permitting land to pass to an Amhara from a different province. Among the clergy it has been expressed in terms of those regionally based doctrinal differences which have disrupted the church for many centuries. Among the nobility it has taken the form of incessant politi-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cal animosities which have weakened the nobility as a status group both in relation to the emperor and in relation to foreign countries. Another respect in which Amhara parochialism has been expressed is the addiction to regional stereotypes, according to which the Tigrean has been depicted as flighty, irresponsible, and "dry"; the Gondarē as intolerably proud; the Gojjami as sly and treacherous; and the Shoan as calculating and untrustworthy. Despite its long history as a nation, Ethiopia probably never experienced more than the dimmest stirrings of a truly national sentiment among its people; and more than once in the past century have regional lords strengthened the hand of European powers in Ethiopia by seeking their help in the combat against other local rulers.

121* 181 186 619 829

Self and Others

In addition to considering the extent to which the members of a society identify with the needs and symbols of their more inclusive collectivities, one may also define the individualistic disposition on the dimension of personal interaction. Egoism contrasts, in other words, not only with the disposition to perceive collective purposes as one's own, but also with the disposition to seek solidarity and mutuality in face-to-face relations.

121* 156 571

This aspect of egoism/solidarism is studied by surveying the more important forms of interaction that appear in a given society. In the survey of elementary social behavior among the Amhara now to be reported, two criteria were used to establish the importance of any given form: (1) the frequency with which it was observed, and (2) the extent to which it was stylized or "institutionalized." These criteria were not embodied in any systematic observational procedures; the only control over the observer's bias here is my own deliberate effort to present a balanced and accurate picture.

We may begin by considering the more solidaristic forms. Interaction among the Amhara is characterized, first of all, by a sort of *sensuous camaraderie*. The Amhara enjoy bodily contact. Members of the same sex customarily hold one another's hands for long periods while conversing, or embrace one another in casual fellowship. Crowds of commoners cheerfully huddle close to one another on the floor through the night when they have assembled for some social function and cannot return home the same day. Relatives and companions of the same sex incline to sleep in one another's arms, at least in the chillier altitudes.

121* 571 826 181

Both their style of dress and their manner of eating give the Amhara a ready way to express this comradely feeling. Their untailored cotton or wool cloth easily adapts itself to being shared. Except perhaps for individuals of high social status, the typical Amhara is ready to use his toga as a blanket-wrap for both himself and another whom he may scarcely know.

121* 571 181 291

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
463 favor, permitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qamis"
under the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
[292] rowing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the
prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled crafts-
men never rose that high but spent their lives accompany-
ing troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup
fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and em-
broiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing
183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and
specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
[754] nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also
the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoub-
tedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of
maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of
invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other
elaborations of culture.

1. Living Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

●621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("tis", or,
if several on one large hill, "mändär"), rather than a vil-
lage. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts,
with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus
the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-
isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the
other side of the same hill.

361 tornadoes in the rainy season, is another ecological consideration.

591 [602] The hamlet is always a kinship unit, usually patrilocal and patrilineal. When a young man marries, his father will give him a cow or two, as he will to his daughter. But only the son will receive the use of part of his father's rented (or owned) fields to support his new family. Thus he will usually build his hut near his father's, father's brother's, and paternal grandfather's. In exceptional cases, when no land is available at his father's, the bridegroom may agree to establish himself at his wife's hamlet, but this is rare since the feeling is that he will always remain a subjugated, barely tolerated, henpecked and ill-treated figure. A proud Amhara male, even a "gabbar" (peasant ex-serf), would not agree to such a condition and insists on patriarchal status at least within his own biological family of creation. He would much rather continue [606] to obey his father than his new father-in-law. Consanguinal kinship feelings are so strong that it is a common assumption that no in-law could really mean well and be unselfishly well-disposed to the newcomer. Only when warfare has killed off the adult males in a hamlet, male inlaws move in.

592 Each hut is inhabited by a biological family, usually father and mother, about three children who have survived infant mortality, and perhaps an aged parent or old, widowed kinswoman of the husband's.

602 Patrilineal kinship relations are often related also to administrative considerations. On church-owned land, the peasants who live on the hillside below the church, who

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Ambara MP5

804 night. And if it is distant they say, you will arrive in a *sambete*, that is a week, and so they define it according to the distances. When I said that from Barua to Barra there 484 were from three and a half up to four leagues, that was according to our opinion, and it would not be more. We afterwards travelled there many times, and we started from one town and dined at the other, and did our business and returned to the town we had started from by daylight. The people of the country reckon this as a day's journey, because they travel very slowly. Between these two towns [241] there is very remarkable country, tilled fields of wheat, barley, millet, pulse, lentils, and all other sorts of vegetables which the country possesses unknown to us. From the [361] road from one place to the other more than fifty towns are to be seen: I say large towns and very good ones, all on 224 heights. In these plains and fields there are herds of wild cattle, forty or fifty in a herd. It is a chase that is very pleasant for the Portuguese, but the country people are able to do them little hurt, although they receive from them much injury to their crops.

CAP. XX.—*Of the town of Barua, and of the women and their traffic, and of the marriages which are made outside of the churches.*

621 This town of Barua in which we were staying, and where later we passed more time, may have three hundred hearths and more, a great part of them belonging to women, because this is like a court in many respects. One is that people of the Prester's court never go from here, and as many as come are not without wives. The other is because this is the residence and seat of the Barnagais, and there are continually in his house three hundred mounted men and upwards, and as many more who come every day for

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

business of petitions, and few are without wives. This 621
causes many single women to live here, and when they are 443
old they have another resource, for in this town every Tuesday there is a great market or fair at which three or four hundred persons are brought together; and all the old women and some young ones have measures to measure wheat and salt, and they go to the market to measure and gain their living; they give hospitality to those that sleep there that day, and also take care for them of what remains to be sold for the next market day. There is another 595
reason why there are many women in this town, it is 688
because the men who have plenty of food to eat keep two or three wives; and this is not forbidden to them by the King nor by their magistrates, only by the Church. Every man who has more than one wife does not enter the church, nor does he receive any sacrament: and they hold him to be excommunicated. For a year and a half a nephew of mine and I lodged in the house of a man named Ababitay, and he had three wives still alive and acquaintances of ours, friends in honourable friendship: they said that he had had seven wives and thirty children of them. Nobody forbade them, except the Church, as has been said, which did not give them the benefit of the sacraments; and before our departure, he put away from him, and from intercourse with him, two wives, and remained with one, that is to say, the one he had last, who was the youngest, and already they gave him the sacraments, and he entered the church like anybody else, and as though he had not had more than one wife. On this account there are many women in this town, because the men are well off and are like courtiers: and they take two or three, or more if it pleases them. In this [586]
country marriages are not fixed, because they separate for any cause. I saw people married, and was at a marriage 585
which was not in a church, and it was done in this manner. On the open space before some houses they placed a bed-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 he had, since he was Arraz of the Chaufas, that is, head or
701 captain of the men at arms, was to go about like a man at
631 arms. In the fashion that he went, there followed behind him twenty or thirty men with spears and bucklers, so that he goes about the court like a provost with his men. I knew another Arraz Tagale, and Arraz Jacob, lords of large lands, and many other Xuums, lords of lands, but without titles. Thus the Barnagais is the lord of many
643 lords, and of many lands and people, and so he and all
631 these lords that have been mentioned are subject to the
651 Prester John, and he removes and appoints them as he
439 pleases: so they pay to him large dues. As all these lords and their lordships are on the side of Egypt and Arabia, from whence come the good horses, and the brocades and the silks, they pay in these same goods: that is to say, horses, brocades, and other silks. They come to the Barnagais with all these dues, and the Barnagais to Prester John, and pays for himself and for the others, in each year, a hundred and fifty horses; as to the brocades and silks, it cannot be known how much they amount to, only I heard say that they were many; I also heard that they pay a large sum of cotton cloths from India for the customs which they levy in the port of Arquiqno.

CAP. XXV.—*Of their method of guarding their herds from wild beasts, and how there are two winters in this country: and of two churches that are in the town of Barua.*

● [621] The settlement of this town of Barua and of those
231 adjoining it, is this. There are ten, twelve, or fifteen houses, and one walled and closed yard, served by a gate: in this yard they shut up their domestic cows which they use for their milk and butter, and also small flocks, and mules and asses. They keep the gate well fastened, and a great fire,

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that 681
they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester 793
John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means em- 643
peror, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some 752
sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, 757
they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thou- 621
sand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and 361
there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and 342
all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and courtyards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others 352
on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without 415
napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black 264
earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others 262
eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, 252
and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is 373
much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which 314
they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 000

[1] *Abegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

own. The soldier was generally freed from all taxes except the tithe and this might be excused where he provided his own horse and weapons. 701 [651]

Not only was there great variety in the arrangements but they were by no means static even in the conservative north. An example of this may be given from Gojjam. Here under Ras Hailu and his father, the *Negus* Tekla Haimanot, the soldiers were simply local men who, being exempted from tithes and other dues to the government, cultivated their own land and did three months' service a year at the governor's headquarters. After Ras Hailu's rebellion and his deposition in 1932 on grounds of misrule, Ras Imru, the Emperor's kinsman, was sent in his place. Although he was said to be a much more enlightened governor, the people murmured because he brought with him his 'foreign' Shoan army which oppressed the *gabars* who had to support it. This is an example of how, in the face of the complexities of the social situation, an ostensibly reforming measure might be frustrated.

PRIVATE TENURE

The main forces by which land and tribute were held by what may be called the public elements of the national life of Ethiopia, the Emperor, the church, the governor and his assistants, and the soldiers, have been very briefly indicated. The picture, even in this outline form, would not be complete without some reference to tenure by private persons, especially by those small farmers and peasant cultivators by whose work the rest were nourished. 423

The position of the *gabar* has been defined in relation to the rest of the community. When, in the northern provinces, we examine this class in their own right we find that it presented the most enduring strands in the texture of Ethiopian society and that its composition leads us back to the tribal past.

Over large parts of the northern provinces, especially those that were not too seriously disturbed or overlaid by Galla invasions, the land was held by groups of peasant holders, generally under the leadership of one or more families, and any inquiries about their origin would lead almost at once to romantic personal stories that may date, or appear to date, from some centuries before. These stories would explain how that group had come to be where it was and how its forefathers had first occupied the land. 423 621

These groups held by *rest*, that is, by hereditary right. They held as a group which had preserved some of the close ties of an original kinship group even though in the course of time it had absorbed many

7: Perham S-4 (no date) 1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

651 661 had been removed, leaving the heads of villages and districts in direct contact with the Italian resident.

114 Our third example comes from Eritrea. No excuse is needed for this excursion beyond the present borders of Ethiopia, since the Eritrean plateau was until fifty years ago a part, and one of the oldest parts, of the Ethiopian state, and this region may again revert to its former status. In addition, however, we have the great advantage that Dr. Nadel, an anthropologist of experience and authority, has had the opportunity in this region under the British military administration to make a thorough investigation of a land tenure closely resembling that of northern Ethiopia.[1]

●621 614 On the Eritrean plateau the most characteristic unit was the *enda*, a number of families which claimed to have descended from a single ancestor. This group was not static; it might decline or be dispersed, or it might thrive and reach a size when it became necessary to break up and form new *endas*. It was not an administrative unit, but in certain matters it acted as a unity through meetings of its elders. The administrative unit, the village, generally covered several *endas*, though these may have all descended from a parent *enda*. The village unit might also cut across *endas*.

423 651 [621] Above the village administrations, in the days before the Italian conquest, came the hierarchy of the Emperor, his governors and deputy governors. These were often strangers from the south though local chiefs might be promoted to imperial positions. The imperial taxation had to be delivered to these officers, and the Emperor might arbitrarily cut out estates in *gult* for their support, or for that of monasteries or colonies of soldiers posted in these outlying regions to support the Emperor's power.

423 These rights may be regarded as extraneous to the underlying customary tenures which are divided by Dr. Nadel into three, ownership by the individual (which generally meant the individual family); by the kindred, or *enda*, and by the village. The first two types of ownership might, owing to the blurring of the edges between the three groups by growth or decline, shade off into each other.

In his discussion of family ownership Dr. Nadel gives us an authoritative definition of *resti*, which may cover ownership ranging from that of an individual to that of a large kinship group. This tenure was held by the people to be the most fundamental and sacred, and its characteristics were firstly its relative absoluteness; secondly its hereditary nature,

[1] Nadel, S. F., 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau', *Africa*, vol. 16, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 1–22, 99–109. The succeeding pages are closely based on this concise report.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 other hand, has hitherto been impeded by two characteristics of humanistic
*565 and social studies. The historian's view has been limited by his reliance on written records that deal chiefly with the activities of men of power and the conceptions of literati. The ethnographer or traveler who tries to give the peasantry its due has usually concentrated on the more evident and accessible facts of custom—activities related to work, play, kinship, and ritual. The peasant's inner feelings and notions have perforce been neglected.[3]

In default of a widely disseminated sensibility to peasant realities, modernizing Ethiopians have thus come to view the peasantry in terms of misleading stereotypes: either romantically, as an embodiment of virtue, awaiting only proper leadership to realize their suppressed aspirations for freedom, justice, and progress; or else as inhabitants of a dark hinterland, barbarous in custom
[128] and blind with superstition. In this chapter we shall attempt a more empirical account of one part of the Ethiopian peasant's world—that of the Amhara—
[114] with particular emphasis on the beliefs and values of the peasant himself. Our
[12] account is based on seven months of residence among the Amhara peasantry, using the observational techniques of participant observation, discreet questioning, analysis of folk expressions, and Thematic Apperception Tests (TAT).[4]

THE INSTITUTIONAL SETTING OF PEASANT LIFE

*565 592 The homestead is the basic ecological and social unit of the Amhara
[342] peasantry. The average homestead consists of from one to six small round
[343] structures, built of wattle (or stone, as in Manz) and capped with conical thatched roofs. A well-equipped homestead will have one building for eating and sleeping, one for animals, one for grain storage, one as a kitchen, and one for entertaining guests; though for many peasants all these functions are served by a single large building. The homestead is normally located on land
[423] worked by the peasant. While most peasants plow land whose use is theirs by
[427] hereditary right (*rist*), some are tenants on estates owned by the king, lords, monasteries, or older relatives.

The smallest homesteads consist simply of husband, wife, and unmarried children. Sometimes a young married son will remain within the family home and, much less frequently, a young married daughter. Occasionally an older relative will be sustained there, or a younger relative will be brought up there. One or more servants—slaves, until a generation ago—complete the
[556] household. The wealthier the peasant, the more relatives and servants will be found in the homestead.

* 621 At times hamlets will be formed by the clustering of households of a number
602 of married brothers or other kin. These tend to have a patriarchal cast; if the
[592] father is no longer living, the oldest male relative usually assumes jurisdiction for the affairs of the hamlet. But the nucleated village, contrary to erroneous

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chīqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chīqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chīqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chīqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chīqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [641] [178]

The district over which a *chīqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 794

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chīqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chīqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 ### *The Daily Round*
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Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *ṭēff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *injarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 *Landsmann*) regularly evokes considerable sentiment. There is also a
181 strong sense of solidarity based on the use of Amharic—both among the
186 Amhara as a whole vis-à-vis other Ethiopians who either do not know
619 Amharic or speak it imperfectly, and among regional dialect groups. The people of Gojjam and of the Gondar area are particularly chauvinistic with regard to the quality of their Amharic.

*121 This attachment to symbols of religion, territory, and language is impor-
181 tant in providing a basis for identity and morale. Yet these attachments are
621 of relatively little import in shaping a self-transcending orientation in the day-to-day activities of the Amhara; for the crucial context of these activities is the local community, and in the civic sphere the Amhara manifest very little solidarity. Indeed, it may be said that the Amhara have virtually no sense of "community" at all, for the concept can scarcely be rendered in idiomatic Amharic.

*121 The absence of community sentiment among the Amhara is implied by
181 their ecology. Not only did the Amhara fail to produce extensive and durable
361 urban centers (with the limited exception of Gondar) but their country is
621 even barren of that frequent cornerstone of peasant life, the village. The Amhara have distributed themselves thinly, scattering in groups of fours and fives up and down their mountains and plateaus. Larger aggregations are found on the estates of noblemen, but these constitute expanded private households rather than civic communities. The Amhara justify this dispersion of their population on the grounds that wide spaces are needed for the grazing of livestock and that a man needs to live on the land he farms. But herding and farming have been carried out well enough elsewhere by people living together in villages, and it is quite probable that this ecological pattern is due as much as anything else to the Amhara's preference for not having too much association with those outside his immediate kin group. In his own words, the Amhara prefers the kind of neighbor who "does not push the boundaries" (*wassan aynakām*), and believes, as noted earlier, that *bēt-ennā māqbar labetchāw naw* ("home and the grave are by oneself"). It is a preference manifest in such solitary living arrangements as that of divorced women who sometimes live by themselves in the country, eking out a living by spinning cotton or brewing spirits, and in the age-old predilection of Abyssinian monks for anchoritism.

*121 The moral counterpart of this ecological pattern is a preoccupation with
181 private interests that leaves little room for the consideration of communal
156 needs. According to the Amhara vocabulary of motives, social action is moti-
157 vated first and foremost by the pursuit of *fīqem*, or narrowly conceived self-interest.[9] This matter-of-fact acceptance of egoistic motivation among the Amhara appears during what is a common occurrence: the shameless subversion of occasions which are set up to consider communal problems and to

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

563 bar maids.

[463] A third, numerically significant minority have come
[562] from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even
[144] though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly
[779] negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are
[649] non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations
[562] also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly
[464] by girls and women working as servants for the less af-
*[192] fluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Nilotes living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for
[326] sale in the town's daily wood market (sir gabiya). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

632 Ward and Town. Gondar's residents divide the town
• 621

[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("bariya").

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• 621 into sixty-five named wards (sebekas). The social and demographic character of wards varies considerably, and it is useful to describe them in terms of two contrasting types. At one extreme, the ward resembles a kind
[241] of urban parish. It contains an eponymous Church; and
[423] a majority of residents are ristoñas, members of land-owning ambilineages who support themselves by farming and renting homesteads on their lands. But even these wards contrast with rural parishes on several counts.
*[492] The ward is generally compact in size, and internally
[463] undivided beyond the homestead (bet). Within it live out-landers who work outside the ward in exclusively non-agricultural occupations. Further, while the parish is administered in detail by residents, the ward relies upon non-resident agents of the municipality for its administration.

At the other extreme, are the town's "non-corporate"
[648] wards. During the Italian occupation, several of
[175] Gondar's parish-like wards were sequestered by the invaders as building sites. After liberation, the Imperial government divided each of these wards into tracts, which were deliniated according to the buildings upon them. Tracts were then given as grants (yaribeña mariet, "hero's land") to supporters of the government-in-exile, who were often non-residents of Gondar. In time, the pre-war boundaries of such wards were no longer regarded

632 621 relevant by townsfolk, and tracts, alone or in combination, came to be redesignated as "ward". Typically, the non-corporate wards encompass no agricultural lands, and includes no church within its boundaries. None of its resident families are ristenas or even related to one another, and each tends to associate itself with a church [779] according to cirteria other than residence. Indeed, in some, Muslims occupy homesteads within an otherwise Christian ward.

Most of Gondar's wards are today without any corporate identity, and serve simply as convenient place names or as occasional indicators of affluence and occupation. Although the meaning of many ward names is forgotten now, the names of others remain appropriately descriptive. Some denote the residents' occupation; * [192] (the "place of the superior beer", "encoye mosk", which is occupied by beer houses). Others retain the name of an eponymic church (as in Rufael sebeka).

Non-corporate wards are not a recent innovation. From its founding in the seventeenth century, Gondar has included such sebekas---given over to beer houses and mead halls, to liegemen and warriors, and to a variety of artisans. The last war and its aftermath have only extended such areas and have encouraged ristenas to build residences on their lands for out-landers unable to find housing elsewhere in town.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by risteñas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [198] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Ñankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibañas, eight as wood cutters,

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two as talla sellers, and one each as mat seller, carpenter, day laborer, and pensioner.

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The practice of herbalist therapies in ward and town contrasts significantly with the situation in rural hamlet and parish. The relatively dense population of the town has important consequences. In the countryside, the closest herbalist needed for a specific episode may be a day's walk from the client's home; in the town several may be found within an hour's walk. The increase in herbalist therapies is not directly proportional to the increased population of town over countryside, however.

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In Gabrael sebeka, for example, only eighteen households (41% of the total) contain one or more herbalists. Many townfolk are forced to abstain from practicing herbalist therapies, because, as out-landers, they are unable or disinclined to locate needed botanicals. Also, significant numbers of townsfolk practice non-secular therapies, particularly as balazars.

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Further, although there are more redundant herbalist therapies potentially available to the townsman, he remains ignorant of many of them. The peasant locates himself within a network of several core kinsmen and neighbors upon whom he depends for information regarding herbalist chains. The townsman finds his place in a social matrix in which kinship ties are greatly diluted by distance. In Gabrael sebeka, for example, thirty-two house-

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holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town. In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-agricultural employment for their subsistence needs, there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

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Kinship ties are an important means by which the peasant acquires and communicates information necessary for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like

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12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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* 756 * 793 Literacy, per se, is not the goal of enrollment, but is
869 perceived rather as a pre-requisite for studying the
* [192] Gospels (wengel), the psalter (dawiyt), and a variety
of prayers, pursuant to participating in the Mass
(kidasiy) as an ecclesiastic of the parish.

* 621 Within a parish, only a minority of households send
869 boys to the church school; these are generally ristena
* 793 households, each sending a single priest-candidate in
233 any one generation. Because attendance at the school
[602] precludes shepherding, the common lot of young boys, the
student's family must find a substitute shepherd for him;
a younger sibling is usually available for this task, but,
if not, a collateral or even non-kinsman may be obtained.
Indeed, the age at which a boy begins his studies (gener-
ally, between seven and thirteen years) is often deter-
mined by when this substitute can be found. The parish
school is suspended, however, during periods of inten-
sive agricultural activities, of harvesting, threshing,
and winnowing.

* 793 Although considerations of piety influence a man to
423 seek ordination for his son, self-interest generally do-
593 minates. The achievement of priesthood validates a
621 family's claims to church lands (yimoskol mariet). If
554 the neophyte's father is himself a priest, his son's or-
* [192] dination means freedom from bothersome performances in
the Mass. If the father is not a priest, but anyway

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holds priest land because he is a ristena of a founding ambilineage of the parish, his son's ordination means that the lands or payments until now turned over to a stranger priest (in lieu of a ristena priest) can be kept within the family.

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The durability of the ties which bind a priest to his natal parish are reinforced by his marriage. Most peasants are married in a "secular union" (yaluwkurban migabat), which excludes neither divorce not extra-marital sexual adventures.[21] The priest, on the other hand, must be married, and it can be only as a "communion marriage" (bikurban migabat), an indissoluble sacrament of the Church which commits the spouses to sexual fidel-

[572]

ity and forbids even remarriage. Thus, the priest is cut off from carousing in the talla houses of the town. He must instead confine his comraderie to the courtyard of the parish church, separated from the persons and experiences which might otherwise lead him away from his parish fields.

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Thus enrollment in the parish school is conceived

[21] Two other forms of marriage, associated with a man on travels or living in town, are yidomoz migabat (which lasts for a contractual period) and yilijinat (providing only exclusive sexual rights to the woman).

*793 621 869 241 [732] as a means for diesing and strengthening a risteña family's economic and social interests within the parish. There are two conspicuous exceptions. Should a boy bear a physical disability so severe that he will be unable to perform the basic subsistence activities of Amhara men, particularly plowing, he may be enrolled in the parish school as a prelude to a non-agricultural career beyond his natal parish. The alternatives are few. [463] [441] [563] work as an artisan is appropriate for Muslim and Falasha, but shameful for an Amhara; while employment as a merchant is less objectionable, the peasant is generally without the necessary skills, contacts, and capital; military service is beyond his abilities; thus, only the Church and government remain. Regarding the Church, the priesthood is closed to him, since a priest must be physically whole, and capable of standing unassisted during [647] the performance of the Mass. The remaining ecclesiastical and government career choices assume that a boy will achieve literacy at the parish school and subsequently *793 621 869 593 depart from his natal community. The second exception to the local focus of the parish school, is the small number of boys who are offspring of debtera-teachers serving in parish churches. The ties of these men to their parishes-of-residence are usually only professional, and they are rarely risteñas, it is moreover their professional ethos which influences them to seek an extensive

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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ecclesiastical education for their sons.

However, it is not only the cripple and blind, or the landless sons of full-time ecclesiastics who find in the parish school the means to leave the agricultural community. In reality, they constitute only a minority of the boys who leave the parish. For among those who are the physically-whole offspring of ristenas, there are some who find objectionable the prospect of a life-time as a farmer, subordinated to a father's wishes and interests, and bound to a single woman. Where such inchoate dissatisfaction exists, it may be further stimulated by the parish teacher, particularly if he is a debtera.

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The teaching at the parish school is performed by a local priest or monk[22] who is competent in the required subjects. In the absence of a suitable local man, a stranger monk or debtera is employed. The debtera is a Church scholar of sorts, who also leads the chanting of the liturgy during the performance of the Mass. He is an important model for the restive student, for his life provides an alternative and challenge to the social

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[22] A "monk" (manakwosa) is a mature unmarried deacon, a widowed priest, or a layman who has renounced material acquisitions and has vowed celibacy. Only the first two are literate and, therefore, potential teachers. There are, in addition, anchorites (bahatahwy).

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expectations that have gone unquestioned by other members of the boy's community. Significantly, the debtera is observed to enjoy a wide range of acquaintances beyond the peasants of the parish; he is a man known to have travelled throughout the northern highlands, to study at famous churches and monasteries, to visit great towns and markets. Beyond this, he is a man who has acquired power and prestige while free from the constraints of parental authority, as a member of an association of equals living beyond the bounds of the rigid status hierarchy of traditional Ethiopia.

For many students, it is the prospect of ending their studies rather than their wanderlust which they find discomforting. As a priest, a man is unlikely to progress in his knowledge of the liturgy and the scriptures, for he is neither likely to find a suitable teacher in his home region, nor are his agricultural, ecclesiastical and familial responsibilities likely to allow him the leisure to participate in such studies. What is more, the debtera-teacher, in casual remarks, paints the priesthood as a poor choice for the bright student; he is neither loath to comment upon what he considers priestly ignorance, nor is he reluctant to encourage his better students in the fulfillment of what he regards as their superior abilities.

The debtera provides a second service for the dis-

869 sident student by familiarizing him with the network of churches, monasteries, and academies which constitute the stations along which the student will progress once he leaves his natal parish.

*[192] The completion of psalter (dawiyd) is frequently considered a sign of the student's readiness to be tested by the local bishop (abuna) for certification as a deacon. The boy is fifteen or sixteen by this time, and the recipient of church fields in return for his performance in the Mass; with his marriage a few years later, he becomes a priest. The boy bent on a debtera career generally waits until he has been certified a deacon, since this is considered a prerequisite for enrollment in his first debtera school.

*793 With the exceptions already cited, a man is certain
869 to oppose his son's departure, since, sentiment aside,
• 621 the boy's move usually represents a significant economic
593 loss. When he leaves his natal parish, he does so sec-
166 retly, journeying to a distant debtera, in order to conceal his new residence from his father. Thus, he begins his debtera career without kinfolk or friends to protect him, without resources to meet his subsistence needs.[23]

[871] [23]Since liberation, government (secular) schools
[178] have offered an alternative to an ecclesiastical education
[369] pursuant to government employment. The effects of this have been limited, however, since only an estimated 3% pass beyond the eighth grade (ESA 1965:198). In addition children of townsmen and non-Amhara are disproportionately represented in these classes.

602 farm the land and use church pasturage in the valley, are often the sons of the brothers of the priest, if not his own sons--an Amhara form of nepotism.

417 231 Each hamlet is usually fenced in ("jägol"-thorny fence) against night-roving hyenas, and may contain, besides living huts and store huts, a cattle corral ("magwa") though at least the calves and the family mule are taken into the living hut at night. The kitchen garden may also have an enclosure of cut thornbushes, protection against ravages by domestic cattle; and thar usually is at least one fierce reddish-brown dog (with white underside). Solid fences of stakes fixed straight in the ground ("gäräggärä") are usually used only around churches.

632 622 While the head of each hamlet is the head of the residential, extended family, the administrative head of a series of hamlets is appointed by the governor of the province (formerly by the feudal lord). This appointed headman, chega shum (lit. "appointed one over the soil") may administer as few as two hamlets, or as many as fifty, with the mode about 8 to 10. In sparsely populated, less fertile or very mountainous territory his domain may be greater, but in most cases his area is within sight so that he can even maintain contact during the rainy season. His area is properly called "mändär" and constitutes the nearest approach to the village concept. If his territory is on church land, it is referred to as "and debber agär" (lit. land in support of a certain holy place) since very often this land has been donated for that purpose in the last will of a pious elderly landowner, and is something like parish

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622 land. When a person is asked where he is from, he will often give the local name for his "and debber agar" of origin.

634 The chega shum, village headmen, are supervised by the district chief, "worada shum", who is also appointed by the

625 governor. The district chief in turn appoints his own police, called "nach lebash" (lit. "thiefcathers in white"), who wear no special uniforms, merely the usual white togas, and carry rifles, in the use of which they are expert. They are used not only against petty thieves but against more dangerous bandits also. Their efficiency is commonly regarded as far superior to that of the uniformed urban police. Usually there is one nach lebash per half-district ("mekatl worada") or two per district, unless an increase in banditry ("shifta") requires more.

651 Taxes, paid often in produce but increasingly in cash, are collected from each chega shum, but not by the district chief himself. For this task the governor has appointed a lieutenant, "mislane", per district ("worada"), who ranks equal with the worada shum and expects aid from the latter. Usually the mislane is a stranger to the district and himself a sort of glorified retainer and account-keeper from the court of the governor of the sub-province ("awraja") who has appointed him; while the district chief is a local man who may conspire with his village headmen to keep local prosperity from the knowledge of the governor's central office. The latter therefore has to rely on the cleverness of his lieutenants, the "mislane".

622
651 The administrative pyramid rests squarely on the shoulders of the chega shum. He collects local dues for

622 both the central government and the local church. Where
651 the land has not been officially measured, which is the usual case in old Amhara territory, the mislane must rely on him for information necessary to the assessment of taxes. The cheqa shum is expected also to supervise customs evasion
622 when caravans or smugglers move through his territory. He
692 mediates between landlord and tenant in their endless little disagreement. In fact, his activities resemble those of an Elizabethan "Justice of the Peace".

He decides local disputes, in civil cases; officiates at the most common type of marriage, the "semanya" (an agreement between two kinship groups); he reads out government proclamations and decrees of the emperor at the nearest rural market place, including the call to arms in case of war. He can also indict a criminal and bring him before the "danya" the judge of the nearest market town, or to the "judges on circuit" accompanying the governor on his annual inspec-
622 tion tour during the dry season. Usually the cheqa shum is a local landlord himself, unless he has been given the post as a special favor for services rendered to the governor.

[701] Until the diminution of feudal privileges during the past decade, the cheqa shum was also responsible for providing the military-feudal chiefs and their troops with provisions when they were on march, making it unnecessary for
[485] them to depend on supply lines. Now that army troops receive regular salaries, he still has to play host to travelling officials for their personal needs, since there are no rural hotels. They do not pay him except by promises of future favors.

1: Messing, E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 485 This change has also lightened the burden on the "gabbar", the tenant sharecropper. In the past it was the gabbar who had to supply the "feast" (called "gebber", with ironic truthfulness regarding the provider) for feudal troops on march, in addition to all his other burdens. The cheqa shum was responsible for its collection, for only he knew how much produce, goats, sheep, honey, etc., the peasant had left after the heavy sharecropping rent to the landlord and the "tithe" ("asrat") which is still payable to the central government (formerly to the district feudal lord).

651 There is now a new tax, the "education tax" payable even in rural areas where no government schools exist as yet, and payable in cash only, not in produce as in case of "asrat". This tax, too, is collected by the cheqa shum and delivered to the mislanē who must now issue a receipt and forward the money to the central treasury.

563 361 Ethnic considerations in the location of a hamlet in Amhara territory apply to hamlets of scattered Falashas, ironsmiths who observe Mosaic Judaism, and hamlets of the Faqi, Cushitic-speaking tanners who were "Pagan" but have recently accepted the Coptic faith and the Amharic language. Since their services are required, they are often permitted to rent land on a hill, the other side of which may contain a Coptic Amhara hamlet. Relations between these hamlets, beginning on strictly economic terms, often become as friendly as the difference between religions, low status of skilled smiths and tanners, and old supernatural [622] suspicions permit. In case of such residence, one cheqa shum may have an ethnic variety of hamlets under his domain, and may know far more about their "strange" inhabitants and their customs than the average Amhara.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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3. Public Administration and Territorial Organization

The social structure supported by the pillars of traditional land tenure and feudal army organization, is maintained by a third pillar, public administration and the old territorial organization. However, all three are now in process of gradual, and uneven, transition, partly resembling analogous developments in Europe at the end of the feudal Middle Ages.

A. Rural Administration

622 Much as the hierarchical pyramid of land tenure and the old army of the Amhara rested on the broad back of the "gabbar", so does rural organization still rest ultimately on the broad base of the rural official known as "ḉheqa shum" (lit. appointee over the soil). He might be regarded as village headman, though in view of the residential pattern of scattered hamlets ("ṭis"), his area includes a collection of them, collectively known as "mändär" (village). This may coincide, in the old-Amhara provinces, with the church parishes known as "ānd debber agär".

Although appointed by the governor of the province, and supervised by the intermediate district chief ("worädä gäz", or "worädä shum", or "mislanē", i.e. governor's deputy, or lieutenant), the cheqa shum is regarded as the agent of the highest administrative power, formerly the "ras" of the province; or the king ("negus"); now the emperor. In thetraditional pattern

622 he has been able to accuse the governor himself when called before the uppermost ruler, e.g. after an unsuccessful rebellion, thus freeing himself from any involvement in the guilt. It is he who orders a crier 303 to proclaim the latest decrees of the emperor at the big marketplace within his area.

His function has been likened to those of an Elizabethan Justice of the peace, and there are indeed partial analogies. Among the duties of the ḉheqa shum are:

Proclamation of imperial decrees; including call to arms in case of war;

Officiating at weddings ("semanya", outside church) arranged between kin groups;

Presiding over the village Council of Elders(chilot);

Supervising local "gabbar" on their statute-labor and impressments;

Aiding the "mislanē" in collection of taxes;

Assisting the local priests in collection of dues on church lands;

Estimating the fertility of land, in assessments of land tax;

Mediating between landlord and tenant in case of disagreements (basing himself largely on local custom and unwritten law);

Facilitating efforts of "näch lēbash" police in pursuit of bandits (shefta);

Arresting local criminals and bringing them before the "danya"(judge) at the nearest market

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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center of town;

Acting as host to travelling officials and guests of the government (usually taking the supplies from local peasants);

Collecting government revenues on caravan trails passing through his area, especially import and export duties, and passing them on to the "nägadras" (lit. officer over commerce).

Assisting the "nägadras" in collection of various market dues, on honey, togas ("shamma"), sale of domestic animals, pottery, pepper, spices, etc., if sold at the formal market.

The cheqa shum is thus available for any additional services the central government wishes to apply to the grassroots of the population, and this perhaps explains why the position of the cheqa shum is the least changed of all traditional appointments to office.

He still receives no salary, but enjoys the traditional benefits of his office: Freedom from land tax; actual, though not legal near-freedom fromthe "asrat" produce tax; (he is freed from taxes because he is said to pay taxes "with his legs" in carrying out orders); withholding part of his collections; customary, though illegal, "kickbacks" from his activity in assessing land for taxes; small gifts for officiating at "semanya" weddings; rewards for arbitrating cases by retaining the "wager" of the loser; participating, with his household, in feasts arranged for passing government officials and

622 guests; small gifts from Muslim traders at the big market in his domain; etc.

It is still customary that a son of the cheqa shum be appointed to his father's post after him, unless there is some specific reason for deciding otherwise. Thus the ḉheqa shum has been a major stabilizing factor in Amhara history, surviving warlords, feudal families, rebel governors, provincial dynasties. When Menelik II conquered Galla lands, he found it useful to appoint similar village headman, "qoro", from among the Galla. The Italians, too, during their brief conquest, maintained the office of the ḉheqa shum, to avoid chaotic conditions, only occasional and tangential reference is made to the ḉheqa shum, which in practice confirms him in his customary role.

Since the ḉheqa shum usually owns land in his domain, sometimes a woman, sole survivor of the family, is appointed cheqa shum, especially if she is a generous donor to the local church and thus has a powerful ally. In this case she will hold her office in "honorary" capacity, appointing a man to represent her when making the tours and in dealings with menfolk. But she will usually not appoint her own husband, because their private property is regarded as potentially separate (e.g. in case of ultimate divorce).

631 As indicated before, several cheqa shum, of a half-district (yämeketl wäräda) or a district (wäräda) are supervised by their superior, the lieutenant of the governor, often called "mislanē". These district super-

631 visors are in turn responsible to the governors of the sub-province, the "awraja gaj". It is customary that these officials be appointed from provincial nobility, of the lower grades, and this custom is still followed in the old-Amhara provinces, though not in Shoa where the central government has managed to place officers with modern elementary school education regardless of commoner origin.

[622 554] Even the çheqa shum, who is always a commoner--though owner of freehold "rest" land--has a claim to being regarded as a "telleq saw", a great man, in the local social sphere. For the higher officials and absentee landlords know that their administration and territorial organization are ultimately dependant on him, and they refrain from undermining his authority.

B. Urban Organization

632 The word for "town", "kätäma", really means "permanent camp", and points directly to its origin in the feudal social organization. When a feudal lord (high level, e.g. a "ras") became attached to one place, and was at peace for any length of time, he would order a large church to be built, creating or enlarging a church parish. Trails leading there would expand into caravan routes, and a large and varied "Saturday market" would develop. This would attract Muslim or even Arab wholesalers, who would be segregated or segregate themselves

693 694 If the quarrel is a civil matter, the curbstone judge usually acts merely as arbitrator ("aqoran"). He is rewarded by the loser, who has forfeited his "wager", usually with several "berellē" (glass bottles) of beer.

If, however, personal injury or some other criminal matter seems involved, or if no mutually satisfactory adjustment can be reached, the arbitrator may tie their togas together with a knot, and refer the matter to the cheqa shum.

693 622 The latter then sits as informal judge, to decide whether the matter should be referred to a regular formal judge, the "danya". Meanwhile he tries to arbitrate the case, with the power of his office as village headman lending him added prestige. In church-owned territory he may be a priest. Sometimes he is one of the local Confessors ("mänfäs agway"), particularly if it is a marital quarrel. Each of these offices lends the cheqa shum added prestige, for there is no formal sep-
[779] aration of church and state organization at the base of the social pyramid.

693 694 (2) The Indicting, Examining Judge. He is called "atbiya danya" (lit. handwashing judge), and his functions are broad, and vary between rural and town locale and between districts and regions. Sometimes the cheqa shum performs this function himself. In town, the atbiya danya may sit under a sycamore at the market, so that any tradesman or purchaser can complain to him about unfair weights or attempted theft. He can issue an immediate "fetem", an injunction to cease and desist.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

635 661 lived in passing and upon which he could levy purveyance. His passage was an affair of pomp, in which important ladies had to be considered and a retinue taken, which might swell to many hundreds of soldiers and servants with all their families, slaves, and transport animals. Such journeys were veritable expeditions, not to be undertaken lightly. A journey right across the country might take several weeks, and in parts the rains made travel laborious or impossible for some five months of the year. The difficulty of communication gave the governor an independence of which he made full use. Governors of ancient divisions with a tradition of autonomy and governors from the royal family were generally allowed to rule with little interference. In this century [177 206 507] the main provincial capitals were connected with Addis Ababa by telephone and this, with aeroplanes, which were just beginning to come into use before 1935, were the first threats to the isolation of the governors, which has since, in most parts, been so greatly diminished by the Italian roads. The Emperor had his agents who kept a watch upon governors and reported upon their doings; this kind of espionage was a highly developed system in Ethiopia. The governors on their side kept representatives in the capital. But this did nothing to overcome what several observers have remarked as the besetting sin of Ethiopian administration, the refusal to take any constructive responsibility. Governors of the old school were mainly concerned with the conservation of their own power, the collection of their tribute, and the fulfilment of their military duties. It would have been quite outside their range of thought to initiate new ideas of reform or to put down time-honoured abuses. Some of the governors spent much of their time at Addis Ababa and their deputies tended to be even more conservative in their use of authority than their masters.

635 Although the emphasis here is upon administration, it must not be forgotten that the governor was historically and in Ethiopian eyes primarily a high military officer and his civil duties were no more than the necessary accompaniment of his command. He had—as was shown anew in 1935—to raise and lead his provincial army in war. Some description has, however, already been given of the army, and there will be no need to discuss it further in this chapter except in the next section in relation to land tenure.

622 THE VILLAGE CHIEF

We have seen that by 1935 it was rare for a great local landed potentate to hold the highest provincial office; in most instances this was held by the Emperor's nominees. But this was not the only link the Emperor

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: GENERAL

claimed with the provinces. It was at a lower level that his official hierarchy was, in theory, in continuous contact with the regional and hereditary element. The governors' deputies and their assistants in the still smaller districts might or might not be local men, but when we come to the heads of villages or groups of villages we find that the leader and representative of the people and the lowest agent of the Emperor and his governor were united in the person of the *chiqa-shum*. 622

This officer was universal in Tigré, Amhara, and most of Galla country though in the latter this title was not always used. Because of his close association with the customary agrarian societies there were local variations in his status and duties. In general character and importance, even though the analogy is not exact, the *chiqa-shum* occupied something like the position of the Elizabethan justice of the peace. In his office central and local authority met. He was responsible to the governor's district chief for the proper performance by his own community of their duties and especially for their payments to the proper authorities of tithe and tax and of dues in kind and labour. He was the judge to whom, if wayside arbitration failed, the litigants would first apply. He would be present at local weddings; would preside at meetings of the village council, and would be especially concerned with all transfers or allocations of land and disputes about it. He would see that orders from the higher authorities were proclaimed by a crier in the village. [692] [203]

According to an Ethiopian account he is 'the officer of the district, living upon the soil as one joined to it'.[1] He is the agent of the Emperor. 'He will be an Amhara and may accuse even the Governor. If a man touches or strikes him, he (i.e. the striker) will not pay compensation, but all his goods will be confiscated.'[2] Coulbeaux defines him as 'le maire de la commune . . . tuteur, père même'. He manages the affairs of the village like his own, and his patriarchal authority is sacred. He is generally the genealogical chief of the community, and calls the village council together under a tree.[3] Certainly these village chiefs, representing continuity of tradition and the sedentary agricultural life, were the stabilizing factor in a system in which changing governors, roving armies, and a distant Emperor played the more dramatic, but often the more superficial, parts. This especially struck Plowden. 'There is in each village', he wrote, 'one hereditary officer that cannot be displaced on any pretence; and it is this institution alone that preserves some appearance of order in the absence of all written documents, amidst the whirl of revolutions and the rapid succession of dynasties and gover- [687]

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 42. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 184. [3] Coulbeaux, vol. 1, pp. 35–6.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

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622 nors.'[1] An interesting confirmation of this comes from a later date: the British minister in 1939 reported that after two years of bitter experience the Italians found they could not run the country without the co-operation of the Ethiopians at the village level, and were trying to restore the village organization.

The Emperor claimed to appoint the *chiqa-shum* but we may assume that in this and in the other matters discussed in this chapter he intervened to do so when and where he had the power. The *shum* was generally too small a man to attract imperial attention and a strong governor would, without doubt, play his part in the matter. According to Krapf the *shum* was appointed by the governor at the request of the villagers [435] and paid twenty pieces of rock salt, then valued at one dollar, for the appointment which he held only for a year.[2] The choice, whether made by Emperor or governor, was clearly limited by the character of the office; its value depended upon the local status and representative capacity of the holder. In some communities the appointment might be for a period or even for life, but it was also a widespread custom in the north for the office to rotate yearly amongst the leading men of a few families, generally those whose prestige rested upon their descent from the family which founded the group. There were, of course, a number of privileges and perquisites in the form of gifts for the *shum*. There were differences in his official rewards; in some areas he got no more than exemption from taxes. In a vivid Ethiopian comment, 'he . . . pays tribute only with his legs, running up, and down to carry the orders of the Government'.[3] In other parts, however, it appears that he retained some proportion of the taxes he collected for the government. It would be very valuable if further investigation could be made into this obscure but all-important office and into the position which, after all that has happened since 1935, it holds to-day.

[1] Hotten, p. 157.
[2] Krapf, J. L., and Isenberg, C. W., *Journals*, 1843, p. 280.
[3] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chīqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chīqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chīqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chīqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chīqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chīqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 794

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 ### *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[182] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

000 tants and their customs than the average Amhara.

571 Thus, the officials with whom the average Amhara has
624 to deal are the headman (cheqa shum), the district tax-col-
566 lector, the thiefcatcher-in white, and the judge of the nearest market town; also, the priest and/or new, young teacher of written Amharic and arithmetic for the first and second grade. Very often, the governor, who is usually a former feudal lord himself, may grant the posts of district chief (worada shum) and lieutenant (mislanõ) to the lower nobility, or their sons; while they in turn draw on their loyal retainers for the more local jobs of headman and thiefcatcher-in-white. In this manner the former feudal structure of human relationships is retained in the old Amhara provinces, despite the official breakup of the system at the top levels. The former feudal chief may even still be addressed by his old title, which has been officially transformed from a military to a civilian significance, but he is still the "telleq saw" ("great man" and conservative pacesetter.

443 This pattern of residential kin-hamlets and feudal
369 relationships changes only in the urban centers which grow out of permanent market spots. The market area is usually located on a little hill, called "arada". Soon a church is built there, and a public area below the hill is cleared of bush to serve as a camping place for caravans, and as a race course for the young Amharas' horse games on Christmas, Epiphany and other feast days. On the hill, the district chief or governor builds his "palace", with a large courtyard for his retainers and office-seekers. The local judges gradually graduate from their table-beneath-the-cy-

633 the old Portuguese-type castles, even then in ruins.
[346] The new mosque, built through Italian encouragement during the occupation, overshadows both the big market and the old Muslim "ghetto" with the old mosque, at lower elevation.

563 The local Muslim "Qadi", ecclesiastical Muslim judge,
624 regarded as their provincial temporal chief, calls on the governor-general every Tuesday. Most Muslims have not moved far from their old section, partly because it is near the big market which is their economic as well as social gathering place, partly because they, almost as much as the ethnic artisans, wish to avoid insults, mockery, and quarrels with young members of the dominant majority.

759 In addition to being a center of public announce-
743 ments, and the table of the judge for petty crimes, the market now also serves as center for the activities of modern "dressers". These medical auxiliaries set up their tables under one of the shady trees, their bottles, hypodermic needles, cotton wool, etc., clearly visible, with chairs for several patients, set apart by an enclosure of barbed wire. When an epidemic threatens, and
[731] during and after it (e.g. typhus or spotted fever), the public can obtain free injections there, or call a dresser to come to their home for a small fee.

633 Each town is divided into administrative wards, sometimes called "qäbälē", but almost invariably named after the church located in it. Thus a person will say "I am from Medhanē Aläm" (church of the "Savior of the

632
622 land. When a person is asked where he is from, he will often give the local name for his "and debber agar" of origin.

634 The cheqa shum, village headmen, are supervised by the district chief, "worädä shum", who is also appointed by the
625 governor. The district chief in turn appoints his own police, called "näch lëbash" (lit. "thiefcathers in white"), who wear no special uniforms, merely the usual white togas, and carry rifles, in the use of which they are expert. They are used not only against petty thieves but against more dangerous bandits also. Their efficiency is commonly regarded as far superior to that of the uniformed urban police. Usually there is one näch lëbash per half-district ("meketl worädä") or two per district, unless an increase in banditry ("shifta") requires more.

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622
651 The administrative pyramid rests squarely on the shoulders of the cheqa shum. He collects local dues for

579 in-white", to control this. Sometimes these resort to the old-fashioned and officially illegal "afarsata" collective arrest of a series of suspected hamlets.

644 701 Another old pattern that survives is the personal bodyguard of the supreme ruler, i.e. the emperor, which has now increased to a size equal in manpower to the Ethiopian army itself, and is reputed to be far better trained and equipped. Centered at the capital and a few strategic spots, with greater mobility than the army, and battle experience gained in Korea, it contains much of the Galla "balbat" element directly loyal to the present royal family. The regular army is scattered throughout the country, and is utilized against periodic uprisings in the border lowlands and escarpments, such as the desert Danakil, the Issa and the Raya Galla of the eastern escarpment who occasionnally go on the warpath after the harvest season.

554 625 701 The attitude of the common people who admire an individual hero but mock uniformed dandies, still persists, much to the annoyance of the uniformed police of the provincial towns, and of the soldiers. The non-uniformed "näch lēbash" are far more respected, and their bravery is acknowledged.

632 Contact with feudal land tenure was maintained
566 by requiring the "gultenna" of the district to come to town every three months, for a one-month statute labor, then called "wär tära", for the feudal lords now residing in town, if no war was in progress. Of course the actual labor was done largely by the "gabbar", but the gultenna was responsible. The domain of the feudal lord was called "gezat" (lit. acquisition, possession), and while this statute labor has now been abrogated, the term survives to mean "province".

632 The feudal chief of the province, imitating the
692 king, would "sit in judgment" in Solomonic grandeur, usually twice a week, under a broad, shade-giving sycamore, in front of his "palace". The latter could range from a spacious tent to a stone house of round design in the ancient style (or a Portuguese-type castle of the 17th century). Surrounded by courtiers and would-be courtiers, eager to proclaim the boundless wisdom of the lord, he would also appoint smaller judges, "danya", to hear more toutine cases brought in from the countryside by the cheqa shum officials. The town thus became a place where even thesimplest peasant could, at least theoretically, seek relief from excessive opression.

[625] The bodyguard of the lord of the town, commanded by a "shalaqa" (lit. chief over 1000 men), could detail his men for duty as "zebanya" watchmen, of specific spots, especially near the market, and this force thus formed a kind of city police.

000 Since the town attracted the most clever "dabtara",

632 little changed. Modern developments are merely super-
[178] imposed on this pattern, mostly due to recent decrees
633 of the central government at Addis Ababa. This city had itself grown out of a modest village on top of Entoto mountain in the 1880's, when Menelik II transferred it to the hilly floodplain just below because the population flocking to his court soon after his early military victories had caused a severe fuel and water shortage on the hilltop. The fondness of the empress for the hot volcanic springs at the somewhat lower water table were another reason for the transfer.

The old title of "kantiba", mayor, was given only to those of most important urban centers, notably Addis Ababa and Gondar, and this traditinn has also been maintained. Although the mayors are now supervised by a young, modern-educated "Director of Municipalities" located in the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa, who may visit them or call them in for conferences and instructions, the appointment to "kantiba" is still made directly by the emperor.

[625] The urban chief of police is still called "ahalä-qa after the former title of the chief of bodyguard, and his subordinate officers are called "shambäl", the title used by Emperor Menelik II for the chief of his most select bodyguard("zebäna") of 300 men.

The kantiba can convene a traditional council of elders, called "chilot" (now often referred to as "commissions", after the Italian occupation), which includes the chief of police and top judges, to hear and discuss

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

D. Traditional Methods of Investigation of Crimes.

694 [789] Two factors are noteworthy in the traditional method of investigating crimes. One is the use of the supernatural in tracing the criminal's trail; the other is participation of the Coptic church, once the suspect is caught. While recent, modern instructions from the central government try to suppress the former, neither factor has lost much of its power over the attitudes and beliefs of nearly all rural Amhara, even townspeople.

625 691 a) The thiefcatcher, "lēbashay", recently outlawed officially, was a hereditary office, passed from father to son, thus entrusted only to Amhara (or other Abyssinian Branches). This inheritance, however, much like inheritance of feudal fief ("gult"), had to be re-acknowledged in every generation. The heir, grown to maturity, would take his father's medicine bag, "korojo", travel to the head "lebashay" at the capital (of the province or country), and request renewal of license. This license could be withdrawn at any time, on complaints from the local headman, the cheqa shum, that the thiefcatcher had become corrupt, e.g. that he was in league with thieves and was so unsuccessful that he must be using fake medicine.

789 694 The magic involved in the procedure was "sympathetic magic", for the effort made was one of acting out all of the movements of the thief, from re-enactment of the crime itself, on the spot where it was committed, tracing his trail of flight, eating where he ate, and even resting in a state of sleep to indicate when and

694 (b) Collective arrest, "<u>afärsata</u>" was officially
672 discontinued only furing the past decade, and may well be re-established in any local emergency. It is usually applied only in cases of murder. The district administrator or governor could order the judges to arrest an area, then fence in all the men, and decree that "not a cow be milked nor a baby suckled", in the traditional phrase, until the investigation is completed. Every person was interrogated individually, and made to swear, before priests brought from the Coptic church, the oath of excommunication, "<u>aggäzazät</u>": "May He (i.e. God), perforate me as the Cross" ("endä mäsqälu yebäsasäñ"), if thefull truth be withheld.

When the culprit finally confessed, due to the tremendous social pressure on him, he was chained and sometimes thrown into a dungeon until trial. The cheqa shum was made responsible for guarding him, and could be assessed heavy damages, even full blood-money, if the murderer escaped. If the murderer was not found, the entire hamlet or territory under collective arrest could be sentenced to pay the "blood-money", unless they could prove that the murderer must have been a "passing bandit". Even then the cheqa shum might be fined for not having been watchful enough. At present he is somewhat relieved from this duty by the local officer, a semi-feudal "farasanna", whose only job is to look out for bandits and prevent anyone from shooting off his rifle, lest a bloody feud break out and everyone become trigger-happy. This
625 is in rural areas. In towns, the police, uniformed in

625 khaki shorts and with shoes, are now made responsible for guarding the peace.

E. Litigation

691 The Amhara, especially the male, is trained not to suffer any injustice silently (unless temporarily powerless before a "great man"). No matter how lowly his socio-economic class status, he loves to engage in litigation. Observers have sometimes described it as a national pastime. Even children at play argue (fictional) cases, with enthusiasm, debating their cause before their own "judges", draping and undraping a rag from their shoulders, much like adults do their toga, in this activity.

A man is proud to be regarded as one who "speaks well in court". Therefore, he will be ashamed to let [693] another speak for him, and the legal profession flourishes only in Addis Ababa before modern courts, in which modern laws are involved, using European (Greek, Armenian, etc.) lawyers. However, a woman or a timid man, or a timid ex-slave could hire a man who "speaks well in court".

This debate is followed in both civil and criminal cases, before the "danya" or "wombär", and every individual involved, including the gurarantor "(was"), cheqa shum, lebashay, etc., have an opportunity to argue as well as testify.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shir* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court. 178 565 [643] [662]

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand. 701 [571] [625]

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time. 701 554 [578] [571]

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be 701 648

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but
461 acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*)
rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one
461 moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that
181 while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing
577 one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obliga-
183 tions toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level
[423] he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his
rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to
keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the
78 fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also
181 important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mātab*, a simple
183 neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited
[262] and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be
[301] neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he
enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or
pole of the church building.

*565 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good
577 works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms
181 to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who
183 is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in
*565 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code
577 of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very
673 worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shame-
181 ful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect to-
183 ward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and
marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby
[626] stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides
some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant
avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will
say (*yelugntā*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*hāfrat*) or suffer
humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act
of committing some *nawr*.

*565 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus
57 kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors
181 and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived
183 within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one
who does not touch others (*saw aynakām*). He does not touch another's land,
wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 Among *samad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [262]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [754]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away [609]
from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well-known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant [776]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[166] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, *121 641 such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms [701] under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not 689 respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the [626] barbs of public opinion.

*121 701 [702] [714] The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

671 pretation of the part of the judge; and that they make no sharp distinctions between civil and criminal legal procedures--perhaps because both cases are considered equally disturbing to the society.

A. Abyssinian Law Codes.

The legal patterns of behavior that one can observe in actual practice seem often based on considerations of an unwritten kinship common law reminiscent of the Arab bedouin; at other times of the prestige-power of medieval feudal lords or of African chiefs who "can do no wrong". This pattern was probably little challenged until the 13th century A.D., when the power of the church increased so vastly with the resumption of power of the "Solomonic Dynasty".The earlier pattern was one of absolute power, quick decisions, swift punishment, much of it remained until the 20th century, and, in remote old-Amhara areas, to this day. It is referred to as "Sïbawi heg" (Man-made Law).

671 627 To this older, unwritten code belongs the practice of "blood money", payable to the kinfolk of the murder victim, provided they are willing to accept payment in place of bloody revenge. A weaker kin group usually accepts, but a stronger would be ashamed to take money in place of a life, and resulting feuds, taking dozens of lives, have been known to continue for half a century in remote rural areas. The old price used to be the "semanya" (lit. 80, i.e. 80 Maria Theresa Thalers), as much as a common man could be expected to

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

671 [627] accumulate in a lifetime. The present price is usually Eth$1000.-.

[696] This practice is so strong that even at present a judge of a semi-modern court in Addis Ababa will suspend a prison sentence for involuntary manslaughter on condition that the murderer accumulate this sum and pay it to the victim's kinfolk--a wise decision preventing a new chain of murders. Recently a uniformed policeman in Addis Ababa, who was under this sentence for just that crime, made his tour among resident Europeans in the business district, begging money, with a letter in English explaining his need, signed by his own superior officer!

635 692 The absolute powers of the "ras" or "negus" in the past were limited only by the geographical boundaries of their effective military and administrative realms. All of them sat in judgment of their subjects, and combined legislative, judicial and executive powers in their persons. But each subject had the right to appeal directly to this highest authority against unjust treatment by a lower officer, provided he could throw himself in the path of the ruler and catch his attention. This right to "abyät" ("Hear me") continues to this day.

697 Nearly all "ras" and "negus" of the past maintained political prisons for their noble relatives who might become contenders to the throne. These prisons were not walled, but located on inaccessible mountain tops, "amba", and sometimes referred to as "wäheni". One such "wäheni" was located at a place called Geshan, in the old, smaller, Begemdir district, and was used by the kings of Gondar

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

symbolize communal solidarities by the forthright assertion of individual claims and grievances. 121* 181

In virtually every instance of a consideration of communal projects or needs that the author observed or heard of, the dominant characteristic of the discussion was a vigorous and uncompromising assertion of individual claims. If it was a question of allotting spaces in a new marketplace, each discussant was vociferating that the portion allotted to him was insufficient. If it was a question of securing more land for various communal purposes, the various property owners involved orated against contributing a square foot unless reimbursed at some preposterous figure. If it was a scene in court or a police station, everyone with any personal grievance, real or imagined, felt it perfectly proper to interrupt at any point and give vent to his opinion. If it was a question of rebuilding a ravaged church or constructing a road, personal disputations undermined all efforts toward communal action. If it was simply a ceremonial occasion, the peaceful setting one might have expected was shattered by the airing of private disputes. 156 157

> Today a new church building was dedicated. It was built to replace one that had been destroyed more than two decades ago by the Italians. People from all over the area made the journey to attend this celebration. All night long and well into the morning the priests and *debtarā* sang and danced, accompanied as usual by sistrums and drums. Later in the morning, after the church had been officially sanctified, everyone was assembled in the open space in the church compound to listen to some verses composed in honor of the event by one of the local *bālābbāt*, a man who had been a key figure in getting the church rebuilt. He had scarcely finished reciting his poem when a woman in the audience spoke up in anger, arguing that the new church would involve more taxes and in some way would affect her property rights adversely. While he was trying to pacify her, others interrupted and began airing grievances of their own. What was to have been the climax of an occasion for the expression of communal solidarity ended as a bedlam of argument.[10]

The one area in which communal sentiments have seemed fairly strong among the Amhara has been in connection with the pursuit of outlaws. It is customary—in some Amhara districts, at least—for the local inhabitants to band together in informal posses when threatened by the presence of one or more *shiftā*, or "outlaws." Yet even here, in his attitudes toward the *shiftā*, the Amhara reveals an ambivalence regarding the maintenance of civil order and security. 121* 181 156 157 604 627 [829]

The term *shiftā* had, in former times, primarily a political connotation. It referred to someone who rebelled against his feudal superior and was applied only to persons of relatively high status.[11] More recently the term has been vulgarized and broadened to include any sort of outlaw in the rural areas. In 121* 674 [178]

606 instruct her to be a good wife; while a stepmother is assumed to have no such desire, and is likely to tell her stepdaughter not to"make so much fuss"over her husband. If the latter were to follow such advice, she would soon be criticized by her husband's parents whose residential hamlet she usually shares. Stepmothers are very common due to the frequency of divorce and the shorter lifespan of women.

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606 628 Affinal relatives are expected to come to a person's aid if he becomes involved in a blood feud, particularly if his consanguinal kin are few or weak. Since there is no pattern of individual duelling, even distant kin become involved readily, as a point of honor.

591 Residence of male persons is usually patrilocal-patrilineal, i.e. in the consanguinal line. But if a young bridegroom finds that his own father has little good land to allocate him in his parental hamlet upon his marriage, he may elect to seek better facilities by establishing residence at the bride's patrilocal hamlet. She is usually very happy about this latter residence, for her kin will protect her even if she wrongs her husband (e.g. by taking a lover in subsequent years). Conversely, thehusband tries to avoid such a situation, for reasons of happiness as well as prestige.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

TABLE 7

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A ROSTER OF SECULAR HERBALISTS OF TWO RURAL HAMLETS OF BEGEMDER

1. Explanation of the notations used:

Therapeutic notations:

Seci:	Medhaniyt Seci (provider of unprocessed medicaments)
Ateci:	Medhaniyt Ateci (provider of processed medicaments)
Kabiy:	Medhaniyt Kabiy (painter of processed medicaments)
Kitabiy:	Kitab Kitabiy (amulet maker)

Pharmacological notations:

i:	Ise Korac ("stalk cutter")
s:	Sir Korac ("root digger")
k:	Yi_Medhaniyt Korac ("medicine cutter for the_ailment")

Grade notations:

A:	Medhaniyt Awakiy ("medicine expert")
*:	Herbalist claims Medhaniyt Awakiy title, but is professionally unknown beyond the parish

Ambilineage notations:

I to IV:	ambilineage designation
T:	Amhara tenant farmer

Client notation:

+:	Clients are attracted from beyond the herbalist's own hamlet and immediate environs

For example, the notation "Seci/Ateci:k:I" signifies an herbalist who offers a therapy as either a Medhaniyt Seci or Medhaniyt Ateci, who is also known as a Medhaniyt Korac by virtue of the complex of ingredients used in his therapy, and who is a member of ambilineage I.

*757 his mentor restricted her professional services to
[869] clients from outside the parish.

Among the herbalist therapies practiced in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, there are, predictably, those which provide successful cures or satisfactory palliatives for certain non-serious ailments (particularly, wosfat, kosow, kurtimat, and wuwgat). Since this repertoire of disease-name specialties is found in most Amhara hamlets, a client generally need go no farther than a hamlet herbalist for treatment. Beyond these, the assortment of therapies
*[192] practiced in any hamlet is adventitious; for example, epidemiologically, pharmacologically, and prognostically it is no more explicable for kuntina (leprosy) and koruba (fatal pox) therapies to be practiced in Tikurmidir than for timan anišše (elephantiasis) or weresiyn (typhus) to be found in their stead. The character of a particular assortment ofherapies within a region has important professional consequences for the herbalists of this area.
• [628] Where an herbalist practices a therapy in the absence of redundant therapies, he can expect to attract clients from the entire area of his exclusive practice, even though his therapy may be a weak one. Thus, the contrast between a therapy serving only clients of the herbalist's hamlet and a therapy serving a wider population cannot always be explained on the basis of differences of healing power, but in many cases may also depend upon whether

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redundant therapies are present or absent in the surrounding area.

Of the forty-six therapies which are practiced in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, thirty-five (75%) attract clients only from the area of the herbalist's hamlet, as a result of redundancy within the hamlet itself or its environs. Of the eleven therapies of Tikurmidir and Lemmariet which attract clients from Kidus Yowhannis parish and its environs, ten are practiced in the absence of redundant therapies within this area; none of the ten is characterized by conspicuous therapeutic success. One of these, Mers:Ateci:k*&IV, is professionally known even beyond the parish's environs. Owing to the "heterogeneous" nature of the mers pathogen, the treatment of mers (poisoning beginning with nausea and vomiting and leading to madness, ibidet) is generally considered curable only by a debtera, and herbalist remedies are infrequent (see Table 1). In the case of this therapy, the herbalist's noteriety has been supported in part by the tendency of potential clients to associate his therapy with the practice of powerful debteras. This therapy's repute is further served, technically, by the presence of a pharmacologically complex memeleša. But here, again, the therapy is anamalous; for, according to the logic of Amhara medicine, a therapy against mers must consist of a memeleša alone. In such therapies,

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*757 the memeleśa counters the effect of the poison, which
• 628 stands in the place that the primary medicine would in any other internally administered herbalist therapy.

The remaining therapy attracting clients from beyond the hamlet is Nikersa:kitabiy:A:I, and is the hamlet's best example of a therapy of medhaniyt awakiy grade. As an "amulet therapy", it has no memeleśa, nor does it allow for a diagnosis to the administration of the therapy. The grading of such therapies is dependent upon criteria of efficacity and professional reputation; this nikersa therapy is regarded as relatively effective and it attracts clients from all Woggera, in spite of the presence of redundant therapies within this area.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN URBAN BEGEMDER

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Less than 5% of the province's people are classified "urban" by Government census.[16] Half of these townfolk live in Gondar, the provincial capital. Although Gondar is the administrative, ecclesiastical, and commercial center of Begemder, its demographic and social character-

[16] 56,000 out of a total of 1.24 million (EAS1965: 23-24).

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pearing more or less rapidly, mostly in favor of Amharic. 191
They include Argobba, Adare or Harari, Gurage, Gafat. 197

2. The Land.

A. Geographical Location.

The Empire of Ethiopia(south of Eritrea) is located in 131
the northeastern part of Africa, roughly between 5° and 15°
north latitude, and 33° -43° east longitude. Prior to the
federation of Eritrea in 1952, which added about 45,000 sq.
miles and brought access to the Red Sea, Ethiopia had 350,000
sq. miles of landlocked territory. It was roughly the size
of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

It is a mountainous kingdom, separated from the Red Sea 133
and the Gulf of Aden on the northeast and the Indian Ocean
on the southeast by hot lowland deserts; a steep escarpment
borders all along the western area down to the hot lowland
of the Sudan. This mountain fortress type of landscape has
enabled the plateau people to retain their independence
against would-be invaders.

Today the political territory of Ethiopia is divided into 631
12 administrative provinces (Taqlai Gezat), each under a
Governor-General appointed by the Emperor. Each province is
subdivided into several(usually six) sub-provinces (Awrajja
Gezat), ruled by a governor similarly appointed.

Three of the 12 provinces are Amharic-speaking; the 191
national language has recently become the lingua franca for
the larger centers of population in the other provinces also.

B. Climate, Climatic Zones, and Topography. 192

Climate and topography are closely inter-related in

178 is more affected because of orders sent with increasing rapidity and urgency from the central government at Addis Ababa. Sometimes the central government itself gives conservative lip service to some old structure, while quietly modernizing the function.

1. Land Tenure

A. Political Aspects of the Old Tradition:

● 631 For many centuries Abyssinia was a confederation of states governed by princes, who recognized the superiority of one of them--the "king of kings"; except for occasional centralization of power in the hands of a particular monarch. Only in very recent times, since the late 19th century, does centralization seem to have developed with greater permanency.

631 423 As a result of this social structure, every subject is in some way a functionary of the ruling power. This may infringe on his private property at any time, and he is bound to various labors and obligations. In principle, all land is considered the ultimate property of the power ruling at the top of the social pyramid.

423 All land tenure is therefore considered subject to the final approval of the "king of kings". This [71] principle was recognized in the ancient law code "Fetha Nagast", which, however, formally recognized the principle of private land property, to be expropriated only in case of rebellion. Private land property was further reaffirmed by clause 9 of the Penal Code of 1930, and

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 631

3. Public Administration and Territorial Organization

The social structure supported by the pillars of traditional land tenure and feudal army organization, is maintained by a third pillar, public administration and the old territorial organization. However, all three are now in process of gradual, and uneven, transition, partly resembling analogous developments in Europe at the end of the feudal Middle Ages.

A. Rural Administration

622 Much as the hierarchical pyramid of land tenure and the old army of the Amhara rested on the broad back of the "gabbar", so does rural organization still rest ultimately on the broad base of the rural official known as "ḉheqa shum" (lit. appointee over the soil). He might be regarded as village headman, though in view of the residential pattern of scattered hamlets ("ṭis"), his area includes a collection of them, collectively known as "mänd̈ar" (village). This may coincide, in the old-Amhara provinces, with the church parishes known as "ānd debber agär".

Although appointed by the governor of the province, and supervised by the intermediate district chief ("worāda gäj", or "worāda shum", or "mislanē", i.e. governor's deputy, or lieutenant), the cheqa shum is regarded as the agent of the highest administrative power, formerly the "ras" of the province; or the king ("negus"); now the emperor. In thetraditional pattern

622 guests; small gifts from Muslim traders at the big market in his domain; etc.

It is still customary that a son of the cheqa shum be appointed to his father's post after him, unless there is some specific reason for deciding otherwise. Thus the cheqa shum has been a major stabilizing factor in Amhara history, surviving warlords, feudal families, rebel governors, provincial dynasties. When Menelik II conquered Galla lands, he found it useful to appoint similar village headman, "qoro", from among the Galla. The Italians, too, during their brief conquest, maintained the office of the cheqa shum, to avoid chaotic conditions, only occasional and tangential reference is made to the cheqa shum, which in practice confirms him in his customary role.

Since the cheqa shum usually owns land in his domain, sometimes a woman, sole survivor of the family, is appointed cheqa shum, especially if she is a generous donor to the local church and thus has a powerful ally. In this case she will hold her office in "honorary" capacity, appointing a man to represent her when making the tours and in dealings with menfolk. But she will usually not appoint her own husband, because their private property is regarded as potentially separate (e.g. in case of ultimate divorce).

631 As indicated before, several cheqa shum, of a half-district (yämeketl wärädä) or a district (wärädä) are supervised by their superior, the lieutenant of the governor, often called "mislänä". These district super-

631 visors are in turn responsible to the governors of the sub-province, the "awraja gaj". It is customary that these officials be appointed from provincial nobility, of the lower grades, and this custom is still followed in the old-Amhara provinces, though not in Shoa where the central government has managed to place officers with modern elementary school education regardless of commoner origin.

[622 554] Even the çheqa shum, who is always a commoner--though owner of freehold "rest" land--has a claim to being regarded as a "telleq saw", a great man, in the local social sphere. For the higher officials and absentee landlords know that their administration and territorial organization are ultimately dependant on him, and they refrain from undermining his authority.

B. Urban Organization

632 The word for "town", "kätäma", really means "permanent camp", and points directly to its origin in the feudal social organization. When a feudal lord (high level, e.g. a "ras") became attached to one place, and was at peace for any length of time, he would order a large church to be built, creating or enlarging a church parish. Trails leading there would expand into caravan routes, and a large and varied "Saturday market" would develop. This would attract Muslim or even Arab wholesalers, who would be segregated or segregate themselves

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Ambara MP5

631 Provincial administration can be summarized as
635 follows:

Table 6: The New, Centralized, Provincial Administration.

Location:	Administrator:	Staff:	
Provincial Capital-urban-center of province.	"ṭäqlay gäj" (Governor-general) appoints lower office-holders; often absent, at court of Emperor.	Director-General, appointed by cent. govt.; always in residence.	Secretary-general "wana ṭsähafi" appointed by central govt.; always in residence. Does most of routine adminis.
Administers mostly from provincial capital	"awraja gäj" governor of sub-province (e.g. 6 in Begemdir province) Appointed by Governor-general.	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from District capital.	"wor̈äda gäj", district chief. (24 in Begemdir province) sometimes old "mislanē". Appointed by Governor-general	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from District capital.	"yäameketl wor̈äda gäj" chief of about 1/10 of the district. (255 in Begemdir province). Position must be confirmed by Governor-general, through "däj tenat"	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from own village.	"cheqa shum" headman of "mändär" or "ānd debber agär". Confirmed by Governor-general.	Can improvise unpaid staff.	

631 It is noteworthy that in this structure the Gover-
635 nor-general of the province is the only administrator
178 permitted to appoint the next two highest officers of his own staff (since 1942). This is in line with the consistent development since 1916, when the present emperor, then regent, began the process of sweeping away the power of the top of the feudal-provincial pyramid. The "ras" gradually lost their private armies, and were expressly forbidden, by decree in 1942, to make treaties between provinces regarding boundaries or political or military matters.

[648] Contact with foreigners was also taken out of the exclusive jurisdiction of the Governor-general of the province, since foreigners going to the provinces require permits issued by the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa; these permits have to presented to the provincial administrators before local travel is allowed . Even the control over the "Kantiba", the mayors of the major towns, was taken from the Governor-general of the province, and invested, by decree of 1942, in the "Director of Municipalities" in the Ministry of Interior. This central control over municipalities was evident in 1953, when mayors were called to Addis Ababa by the Director of Municipalities, for a reprimand from the emperor for having permitted his boarding establishments at elementary schools, intended for war orphans, to become filled with the sons of well-to-do feudal nobility.

631 The feudal nobility, though much less powerful
565 than in the past, plays a more informal, but still

631 565 dominant role in the rural administration. Most of the "awraja gäj" and "worädä" chiefs are from medium and lower provincial nobility. In Addis Ababa, the "Senate" 646 565 or Upper House of the Parliament instituted by Emperor Haile Selassie, is appointed from the higher nobility, the "Mäkwonent", while the Deputies of the Lower House are selected, with imperial approval, from the lower country gentry, largely from the Amhara, Tigre, and Shoa areas.

643 631 178 565 Many special privileges of regional nobility have been abrogated by the present Emperor: The Wag Shum", hereditary ruler of the sub-province of Wag since the Zagwe dynasty of the 13th century, has been abrogated by him; also the "Behär Nagash", the "King of the Sea", hereditary ruler of the Red Sea coast, was abrogated; also the Muslim Ethiopian dynasty of Jimma, which Menelik II had permitted to continue in accordance with the treaty of peaceful surrender (ostensibly because the present heir had joined the Italians).

The least changed position in the structure of administration is that of the cheqa shum, who forms its broad base.

4. Customary Law and Justice

671 The foremost characteristics of traditional Abyssinian law and justice seem to be that they are based on the power hierarchy of social structure; that they permit and even encourage considerable subjective inter-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

231 a Christian, because the cows that they keep belong to
563 Christian gentlemen of the country of the Barnagais. These Moors have nothing else for their labour than the milk and butter which they get from the cows, and with this they maintain themselves and their wives and children. On some occasions it happened to us to sleep near these Arabs, they accosted us to ask if we wished to buy cows, and for the price allowed us to choose them. They say that these
[484] Moors, and headmen who go with them, are all robbers under the favour of the lords to whom the cows belong, and so only large caravans travel. The revenues of this
792 monastery are very large; those which I saw and heard of
● 631 are, chiefly, this mountain in which the monastery is situated,
361 of an extent of ten leagues, in which they sow much millet,
[243] barley, rye, and all these pay dues to the monastery, and they are also paid on the herds. On the skirts of this mountain there are many large villages, and most of them belong to the monastery, and at a distance of one or two days' journey an infinite number of places belonging to the monastery, and are called *Gultus* of the monastery, which means *coutos* or *celeiros*,[1] according to our Portugal. Don Rodrigro the ambassador and I were going on the road to the Court, a good five days' journey from this monastery, and arriving at a town which is named *Caina* we kept Saturday and Sunday in a small village which might contain twenty people, and they told us they belonged to the monastery of Bisan. Besides that town there were a hundred villages all belonging to the monastery, and that in which we halted was one of them. We were also shown
651 many of the others, and they told us that every three years
631 they paid a horse to the monastery, and that each village
792 did this, which makes thirty-three horses every year. And in order to be certain of this I went to ask it of the *Alicazi* of the monastery, which means the auditor or major-domo,

[1] *Couto*, an asylum, an enclosure; *celeiro*, a granary.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

because he receives, and does justice: he told me that it was true that they paid the said horses. I asked why the monastery wanted so many horses, since they did not ride on them. He told me that they were obliged to pay horses, but that they did not give him horses, but paid fifty cows for each horse, and that this due of horses was so because these were villages of the King which paid him this due, and as he had endowed the monastery with these villages, between the monastery and the villagers this due of horses had been transmuted into cows. And over and above these dues of cows they also pay dues on fruits. Besides, at fifteen days' journey from the monastery, in the kingdom of Tigre mahom, there is a very large town belonging to the monastery named Aadete, which may be a large dukedom. This pays every year sixty horses, and an infinite number of dues and customs. In this district there are always more than a thousand friars of the monastery, because there are many churches in it, and the monastery is much favoured there. Of these friars some are very good, honourable, and devout, and others are not such. Besides these dues of horses paid to this monastery and to others, there are many villages belonging to the King which pay dues of the said horses, because this is always his due, and there are villages neighbouring to Egypt in which are large and good horses, and others near Arabia in which they are very good, but not so much so as those of Egypt.

CAP. XVI.—*How the friars impeded our departure, and of what happened to us on the road.*

Returning therefore to our journey; whilst we were still at the monastery of St. Michael there arrived the man sent by the Barnagais to take us away, and with him two of our Portuguese, on the fourth day of the month of June; and he

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

136 this town of Barua, a man was lying asleep at night at the door of his enclosure, and his little son was with him, keeping his cows, and a lion came and killed this man without anyone perceiving it, and he ate his nose and opened his heart, without touching the child. The people of the country were greatly afraid, and said that he would remain with a taste for man's flesh,[1] and that no one would escape from him. The Lord was pleased that he never did any more harm. We used to go hunting at that time near this place, and we never found any lion, but we found ounces and tigers; we did them no harm, neither did they do us any.

CAP. XXIV.—*Of the lordship of the Barnagais, and of the lords and captains who are at his orders and commands, and of the dues which they pay.*

643 The lordship of the Barnagais is in this manner: its title
631 is that of King, because nagais means King, and bar means sea, so Barnagais means King of the Sea. When they give him the rulership they give it him with a crown of gold on his head, but it does not last longer than what the Prester John pleases. For in our time, which was a stay of six years, there were here four Barnagais, that is to say, when we arrived Dori was Barnagais; he died, and at his death the crown came to Bulla, his son, a youth of ten or twelve years of age, by order of the Prester John. When they crowned him he was at once summoned to court, and while he was at the court Prester John took away his sovereignty and gave it to a noble gentleman, who was named Arraz annubiata. This man held it two years, and they took from him this lordship and made him the greatest lord of the court, which is Betudete,[2] and the lordship of Barnagais was given to

[1] *Cevado*, literally, allured.

[2] The favourite or preferred, *Bitwaddad*, because he was liked.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

another lord, who was named Adiby, who was now Bar- 643
nagais. Beneath the Barnagais are some great lords whom 631
they call Xuums, which means captains; and these are, first, Xuum Cire, a very great captaincy, he is now married to a sister of Prester John. We never went to this country and Xuumeta because it is distant and out of the way. There 643
is another Xuumeta named Ceruil. We knew this lordship, 701
and they say that its Xuum brings into the field fifteen 631
thousand spearmen with shields and archers. Also Xuum Cama, and Buno Xuum, and Xuum bono. These Xumetas had been one, and on account of its being large, and the Prester having misgivings that they might set themselves up against the Barnagais, he made it into two, and even yet each of them is very large. They say that this lordship which is now two was the dominion of Queen Candace, without having been larger in her time. She was the first Christian that there was in this country, and whom the Lord called powerful. Also two other captaincies, one is named Dafilla, the other Canfila; these two border on Egypt, and their captains are like lords of the marches. All these captains before mentioned are of kettledrums, [534]
which nobody except great lords can carry: and all these serve with the Barnagais in wars when he goes to them, and wherever he may go. They have other great gentlemen under their command who are called Arraz,[1] which means heads. We knew one of these, who was named Arraz Aderaan, he is head over fifteen thousand men at arms, whom they name chavas. I saw this Arraz Aderaan twice at the court, both times I saw him before the gate of the [292]
Prester John going without a shirt, and from his waist downwards a very good silk cloth, and on his shoulders the skin of a lion, in his right hand a spear, and in his left hand [411]
a shield. I asked how it was so great a lord went about in that manner, they told me that the greatest honour

[1] *Ar-ras.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 he had, since he was Arraz of the Chaufas, that is, head or
701 captain of the men at arms, was to go about like a man at
631 arms. In the fashion that he went, there followed behind him twenty or thirty men with spears and bucklers, so that he goes about the court like a provost with his men. I knew another Arraz Tagale, and Arraz Jacob, lords of large lands, and many other Xnums, lords of lands, but without titles. Thus the Barnagais is the lord of many
643 lords, and of many lands and people, and so he and all
631 these lords that have been mentioned are subject to the
651 Prester John, and he removes and appoints them as he
439 pleases: so they pay to him large dues. As all these lords and their lordships are on the side of Egypt and Arabia, from whence come the good horses, and the brocades and the silks, they pay in these same goods: that is to say, horses, brocades, and other silks. They come to the Barnagais with all these dues, and the Barnagais to Prester John, and pays for himself and for the others, in each year, a hundred and fifty horses; as to the brocades and silks, it cannot be known how much they amount to, only I heard say that they were many; I also heard that they pay a large sum of cotton cloths from India for the customs which they levy in the port of Arquiquo.

CAP. XXV.—*Of their method of guarding their herds from wild beasts, and how there are two winters in this country: and of two churches that are in the town of Barua.*

[621] The settlement of this town of Barua and of those
291 adjoining it, is this. There are ten, twelve, or fifteen houses, and one walled and closed yard, served by a gate: in this yard they shut up their domestic cows which they use for their milk and butter, and also small flocks, and mules and asses. They keep the gate well fastened, and a great fire,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the Angrab and Kahha, is the Mahometan town. These rivers inclose the town on its N. and S. sides, and join on the W. On the S. E. part of it is the church of Debra-berhan. On the N. E. is Kedus Gabriel. Two suburbs above Kedus Gabriel, is Anta Naggar, the hill, where, till Yasous's time, the Tigre, in consequence of a proclamation, were obliged to halt, and not allowed to enter Gondar. 361

In Abyssinia there remains not a shadow of the hospitality, which is said to be a trait in the character of barbarous nations. 574

They divide the day into five parts (humisi). From the twilight, which is here short, it is nagga; about nine it is called selest, or the third hour; mid-day is kutter; three o'clock, tessaat; and sun-set, serk. They judge by the height of the sun, having neither clocks nor watches. The other hours mentioned in their books are counted 1, 2, 3, &c. after dawn, sun-rise, or sun-set. 805

There are two kinds of monarchy; one is absolute, where there are no written laws, but the will of the prince carried into effect by his command and force; another is, where there are laws and restraints, but these occasionally broken through. The Abyssinian government is neither of those. There are no laws: the lives of the king's subjects and their lands are *de jure* his; he is absolute and sole master of their lives and property: Yet he has no military force; this is all in the hands of the governors of provinces, whose safety lies in keeping the prince in want of every thing. It is a monstrous kind of monarchy, and to this are owing the continual wars and rebellions. While the districts were small, these were prevented; but minorities, weak reigns, &c. have united them into great ones, each of which are more than a match for the sovereign; indeed, the forty-four nagareets of Tigre united are more than a match for all Abyssinia. Damot and Agow-midre, joined to Maitsha, when they please, starve the capital, and leave the king not only without army and provisions, but even meat and clothes for himself. The Turkish and Galla wars have accelerated this state of affairs. Each of the governments have become a kind of fiefs, very rarely not granted to the family of the deceased, and that one of it most likely to be serviceable. 642 631

[p. 53]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

[643] Harar is now ruled over by the Emperor's second son. While it is clearly difficult to deduce constitutional rules from conflicts at this 635 level, turning our glance to a lower one we may note that in addition to the few examples of continuity, many others could be given of frequent changes of governorship, even in the north, by both Menelik[1] and Haile Selassié. These would illustrate their ability to act upon these rights in this way, at those times in their reigns when they were strong enough to do so.

It is interesting to consider more closely the exact position as to the distribution of governorships on the eve of the Italian invasion. For convenience the south, which must be discussed in somewhat more detail later, has for this purpose been included with the north. According to an authoritative Italian writer, the number of provinces was thirty-two; of these, six might be regarded as being headed by governors of local hereditary status. They were Wag, Tigré (divided between two local notables), Wallaga, the small region of Beni-Shangul under local Muslim governors, and Salale under Ras Kassa. Eastern and southern Shoa was a royal dominion; Wallo, Harar, and Ogaden were also personal fiefs of the Emperor governed by his sons. The remaining twenty-one provinces were all under the Emperor's men, governors appointed by him from among his closest relatives and supporters, including a few of the 'new' younger and more progressive officials.[2] This analysis would suggest that, by the end of the first part of his reign, Haile Selassié, as far as appointments of governors were concerned, had succeeded in controlling very directly some two-thirds of the country.

631 Mr. de Halpert, however, in information supplied to the writer, is critical of these categories as being too exact. He points out that in the 635 Ethiopia of 1935 it was almost impossible to say which division was a province and which a district. Tigré, Shoa, and Gojjam, as ancient kingdoms, were really subdivided into a number of administrative districts. He would also dispute the exact significance of some of the appointments. Without discussing these points in further detail, it may at least be assumed that the provinces and districts could be roughly divided into those that were more and those that were less closely under imperial control and that the former were the more numerous and were upon the increase.

THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR

635 The governor then, according to theory, was appointed and dismissed

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 487.

[2] Zoli, 'L'Impero Italiano dell'Africa Orientale', *Bollettino della R. Società Geografica Italiana*, series VII, vol. 1, no. 8, pp. 473–84.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

651 661 had been removed, leaving the heads of villages and districts in direct contact with the Italian resident.

114 Our third example comes from Eritrea. No excuse is needed for this excursion beyond the present borders of Ethiopia, since the Eritrean plateau was until fifty years ago a part, and one of the oldest parts, of the Ethiopian state, and this region may again revert to its former status. In addition, however, we have the great advantage that Dr. Nadel, an anthropologist of experience and authority, has had the opportunity in this region under the British military administration to make a thorough investigation of a land tenure closely resembling that of northern Ethiopia.[1]

621 614 On the Eritrean plateau the most characteristic unit was the *enda*, a number of families which claimed to have descended from a single ancestor. This group was not static; it might decline or be dispersed, or it might thrive and reach a size when it became necessary to break up and form new *endas*. It was not an administrative unit, but in certain matters it acted as a unity through meetings of its elders. The administrative unit, the village, generally covered several *endas*, though these may have all descended from a parent *enda*. The village unit might also cut across *endas*.

423 651 [C3] Above the village administrations, in the days before the Italian conquest, came the hierarchy of the Emperor, his governors and deputy governors. These were often strangers from the south though local chiefs might be promoted to imperial positions. The imperial taxation had to be delivered to these officers, and the Emperor might arbitrarily cut out estates in *gult* for their support, or for that of monasteries or colonies of soldiers posted in these outlying regions to support the Emperor's power.

423 These rights may be regarded as extraneous to the underlying customary tenures which are divided by Dr. Nadel into three, ownership by the individual (which generally meant the individual family); by the kindred, or *enda*, and by the village. The first two types of ownership might, owing to the blurring of the edges between the three groups by growth or decline, shade off into each other.

In his discussion of family ownership Dr. Nadel gives us an authoritative definition of *resti*, which may cover ownership ranging from that of an individual to that of a large kinship group. This tenure was held by the people to be the most fundamental and sacred, and its characteristics were firstly its relative absoluteness; secondly its hereditary nature,

[1] Nadel, S. F., 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau', *Africa*, vol. 16, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 1–22, 99–109. The succeeding pages are closely based on this concise report.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

times brought dissension to the state, the legitimate Crown was triumphant most of the time. 175*

In the history of Ethiopian literature the period has been called a Golden Age.[1] The important works composed during this time include *The Glory of Kings,* which contains the story of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon, and their offspring, Menelik I, legendary first king of Ethiopia; *The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth,* a compilation of occult theology and numerology, with a Miltonic account of the struggle between Michael and Satan; *The Christian Romance of Alexander the Great,* a fantastic portrayal of Alexander as a Christian hero who traverses the Land of Darkness and the miraculous Land of the Living; the moralizing tracts of the greatest emperor of the period, Zar'a Yā'qob; as well as numerous lives of saints and translations of Christian writings from Arabic. 175* 538

Connoisseurs of Ethiopian art attribute the most original and refined paintings to the latter part of this period. Using translucent colors and austere shapes and design, Ethiopian monks brought to expression an intense spirituality in the form of miniatures in illuminated manuscripts.[2] 175* 532

At the same time this was the Heroic Age of Ethiopian warfare. Amda Ṭseyon vanquished sixteen Muslim chiefs to the south and west; the valor of Sayfa Ar'ed was celebrated in medieval Arab tales of chivalry; Dāwit I pushed his victories against the Muslims as far as Zeila on the Gulf of Aden. Improved military equipment and organization under Yeshāq brought the imperial forces to a new level of discipline and power, which Yeshāq used to establish his authority in many southern areas. Zar'a Yā'qob, famous for endowing churches and monasteries and for encouraging literature and art, was a successful warrior in his own right. 175* 648

A close-up of Ethiopia at the height of its medieval synthesis is provided by Father Francisco Alvares, Portuguese emissary to Abyssinia during the years 1520–27.[3] We see a prosperous kingdom, its far-flung dominions headed by hereditary rulers and royal appointees, all of whom pay tribute in kind to the emperor. The tribute consists of horses and mules, blankets and cloths, silk stuffs and gold, all in impressive amounts. The provincial heads, and the armies they must make available, live off the land they govern. The numerous priests and monks are supported by lands granted them by the king. Justice is administered at three levels, with the possibility of appeal from the local judge, to the provincial governor, to the royal court itself. The king's mobile camp, large as a town, is his capital, so that he spends his years marching about from one corner of his domain to another. 175* 64 631 [651] [69]

The monarch at the time of Alvares' visit was Lebna Dengel (1508–40), a man of pride and temper. He refused to heed counsel that the kingdom was imperiled by threats from the outside. Indeed, legend has it that he was discontented with the prevailing civil harmony and begged God to send an ad- 175* 643

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.* 565 [427]

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services. [631]

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagärit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area. 565 631 [651] [534] [692]

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[20]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement. 565 631 661 [829]

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagärit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the [466] [701] [651]

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gabbär*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dägä* (high) land, while in certain *qolä* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 taxes collected in the name of the emperor. Concerning the imposts for which
• 63 the peasants were liable, Plowden wrote in 1844:
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[651] They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts—he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.[30]

Two centuries earlier, observing similar phenomena, Almeida had concluded that "generally speaking, they are all plunderers rather than governors."[31] The only restraints on their exploitative behavior have been an occasionally keen sense of Christian propriety and the limits to what an exasperated local populace will bear.

565 The existence of a predatory class who serve military functions and maintain a gentry subculture is a common enough feature of traditional agrarian societies. What is perhaps less common in the Abyssinian case is the constellation of factors relating to the recruitment of members into this elite.

High secular status in Abyssinia was dependent on a complex of possessions—land, political strength, and honorific titles—which tended to reinforce
[423] one another. The possession of much land has always been a basis for con-
[556] siderable deference in Abyssinia. As a source of produce, rents, and revenues
[662] deflected from the Crown, moreover, it was also a source of wealth to be used
[661] in building up one's political strength by rewarding able soldiers and loyal followers, and by making gifts to one's superiors. Political power was directly
[631] obtained through the acquisition of governorships. Such offices were a further basis for much deference and, through the incumbent's access to tribute, customs fees, court fees, and gifts from his subjects, of much income as well.
[554] Titles, finally, not only were universally esteemed but also entitled the bearers to a style of life which included a presumptive right to gifts and obedience from all inferiors as well as the consumption of much wealth and power.

565 For all these possessions, the Abyssinian noble was directly dependent on
643 his king (or, in the case of a lesser noble, on his overlord). His dependence was twofold: land, political office, and titles came to him as gifts from the sovereign, and, what is more, their continued possession was contingent on
[423] the sovereign's continuing favor. Abyssinian "vassals" had no legal rights to their "benefices," and lands granted them could be withdrawn and given to others as the emperor wished. At the death of a feudal beneficiary his lands

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 Barradas: "Father, these villeins are like camels, they cry and groan when they
554 are loaded, but in the end they carry the load that is put on them."[34] They set themselves off from the commoners, not only because of their style of life and subculture, but also because they came from well-known families.

Such sentiments were shared by the commoners. They would much rather be governed by a man from a noted family than by a person promoted from
565 their own social level. The folkways expressed a disdain for the *nouvel arrivé,*
554 for example, by poking fun at the office of *liqa makuās* (the king's double in
644 time of battle). The *liqa makuās* was often a man from an unknown family, chosen because of his handsome features and resemblance to the king. The office permitted him to strut about in the king's clothes and inclined him to assume haughty airs. In some places it was customary to ridicule this upstart by referring to the minstrel, or *azmāri,* as *liqa makuās;* for the *azmāri,* too, was entitled to wear the kind of dress appropriate to the lord in whose banquet hall he performed, but the *azmāri* was a person of low prestige in Abyssinian society.

643 In other words: although the emperors could appoint and depose when-
565 ever they pleased, with or without cause; and though "the land and persons
554 of their subjects are equally their property, and every inhabitant of their kingdom is born their slave"; by itself the principle of royal favor is clearly inadequate to explain the Abyssinian pattern of social stratification. For, unlike the
[171] neighboring kingdom of Buganda, Abyssinia was not a straightforward despotism in which the dispensation of a *kabaka* was sufficient to elevate a man into the highest social stratum.[35] The claims of a quasi-hereditary noble status group have also had to be satisfied.

565 How did this status group arise, and how have its claims been expressed and justified? What has been the history of its relationship with the mon-
[423] archy? The existence of this class is anchored in the actual tendency for lands,
[631] office, and titles to be given to members of the same families. In reality, the
[554] emperors frequently let such possessions pass from father to son, either because they were in too distant a region or because there was no good cause for taking them away, and on occasion drew up written charters assigning grants
[423] of land to a man and his future descendants.[36] Indeed, one form of land tenure, known as *rista-gult,* was precisely a sort of hereditary fief, given in
[631] exchange for military service over the generations. In certain areas, moreover, it was a matter of tradition that the governorship be given to members of a
[554] certain family. Finally, although no man inherited a title, as son of a noble-
[428] man he might inherit the culture and facilities that would give him a much better chance than any commoner to obtain a title of his own.

Two other aspects of Abyssinian society supported this tendency toward
[554] the development of what amounted to local dynasties of nobility. One was the prestige attached to the "chiefs of Israel," any of the nobility who could

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

demonstrate some affiliation with the Solomonic line; the marriage of one of these into a local dynasty contributed an added buttress to its traditionalist claims. The other was what seems to be a still more deeply rooted disposition for decentralized hegemony based on the ancient character of the society. For, as Cerulli has recently suggested, the origins of the Ethiopian state were such as to lay the foundation for a persisting order of feudalism. The movement of South Arabs to the Eritrean coast and highlands took place, not through the conquest of an indigenous population by a united invader, as in the Norman Conquest of England, but by the intermittent emigration and settlement of distinct tribes from South Arabia into various parts of the African territory. Thus, Cerulli concludes, we see in Ethiopia "a feudalism expanded from the roots: a number of principalities or peoples which, independent on African land after their emigration, have finally been regrouped in a higher political unity, yet still conserving in the feudal system thus constituted part of their autonomy and their individuality."[27] If this is so, it would constitute an added traditional element in the sense of legitimacy of local dynastic interests.

All this suggests that we must look to two sources for the prestige of the *makuānnent*—that recruitment into the secular elite came from "below" as well as from "above." These two bases of noble status are indicated by the etymology of two Amharic words commonly applied to the local nobility, *shum* and *bālābbāt*. *Shum* (or *seyum*) comes from a root which means to invest with high position. The emperor, as we have seen, is *seyuma egziābhēr* ("invested by God") and he in turn is the source of authority for investing other dignitaries. The status associated with the word *shum* is therefore based on the act of investiture by a sovereign. *Bālābbāt*, on the other hand, has the literal meaning, "one who has a father"; in other words, one who has a significant father, a notable ancestry. This status refers to claims to deference which are based on birth.

Claims based on birth, moreover, were closely tied to the ownership of land and supported by local territorial allegiances. This appears most strikingly in the office of *çhīqā shum*, the lowest level official, who is appointed, to be sure, but by the local people themselves from a small number of *bālābbāt* whose eligibility for the office rests on their inheritance of rights to certain specified pieces of land. Other local offices, like *malkaññā* and *meslanē*, were normally given by regional governors to *bālābbāt* indigenous to the area. The sacred sentiment of fealty to a monarch, whose charisma rested both on membership in a hallowed dynasty and the hallowed act of coronation, thus competed in Abyssinian souls with deeply felt sentiments of attachment to members of noted families who symbolized local rights and traditions. Abyssinian political structure at any given time was determined by the relative strength of the forces supported by these two principles of legitimacy.

Neither principle was ever realized in pure form. No matter how great his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

source of the influence enjoyed by the clergy. The latter constituted a largely autonomous status group which no emperor could afford to antagonize indefinitely. The attempt to build a more powerful central government and introduce cultural reforms thus required some alteration of their independent status as well as that of the old nobility.

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THE FEUDAL ORDER IN TRANSITION

The Decline of the Old Nobility

It must always have been the policy of the Ethiopian emperors, except for those few who did not relish the political side of their office, to seek to maximize their control over the regional nobility. They did this, we have seen, either by granting land, power, and rank to men who were completely dependent on them, or else by controlling, through military and diplomatic means, those lords whose birthright and regional strength gave them strong claims to their positions.

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During the past century, however, the idea of subordinating regional nobles to imperial control has come to be conceived more radically and has become the core of a slowly emerging ideal of a modern nation-state. Some such vision was certainly behind the tortuous career of Tēwodros II, whose policy was a reaction against the desperate disunity which the Age of the Princes brought to Abyssinia and to the growing threat from foreign powers. In Plowden's official report to the British government in 1855, he described Tēwodros' work as follows:

> The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated. He has placed soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish: thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains, more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility—a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.[54]

The task of displacing the great feudal chiefs proved to be scarcely less arduous in Ethiopia than in Europe, however. Tēwodros' high hopes were shattered against the opposing forces of regional ambitions and clerical disaffection. The national unity he won through conquest and reform did not survive to the end of his reign.

Yohānnes IV (1871–89) likewise aimed at uniting the nation, but was distracted from serious internal reform by the need to fight off the encroach-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 ments of Egyptians, Mahdists, and Europeans. His domestic policy was more
• 631 concerned with the imposition of religious uniformity than with political
565 transformation.
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643 Menelik revived Tēwodros' policy of creating a band of generals loyal only to himself. He did this partly by raising capable men with no connections to high position: Rās Gobānā and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, two of his most important generals, were originally Galla prisoners. The power of the feudal chieftains he manipulated by traditional techniques, sending them to posts far removed from their home bases, and arranging political marriages. But Menelik did not decisively undercut the authority of the great provincial lords, and at his death the old political structure was still more or less intact.

The experience of these emperors was not forgotten by Haile Selassie, who seems to have made it his primary and unceasing ambition to assure his position by breaking down every sort of autonomous power where it previously existed or threatened to develop. Thanks to his policies of centralization and to modern means of transport and communication he was able to become more of an effective autocrat than any of his predecessors.

The main development during the period of his regency as Rās Tafari (1917–28) was the stiffening of his military posture. To start with he had the regional forces of Harar Province, formerly his father's governorship, which he had acquired through the favor of Empress Taitu (Menelik's wife) following Menelik's paralysis. He built up his strength by making improvements in Harar that increased his revenues and the number of his soldiers, and acquired fiefs elsewhere. Following the death of Empress Zauditu's commander of the imperial troops in 1926, he took command of these troops and brought some of his own forces into Addis Ababa. By 1928 he was strong enough to demand the title of *negus* from Zauditu and, as is well known, acceded as emperor upon her death two years later.

[204] During these years Rās Tafari was gradually promoting the idea of a transformation of the position of the old nobility. As early as 1926 a letter published in his weekly newspaper, *Berhānennā Salām*, suggested that the prevailing feudal system of provincial government be replaced by a system based on salaried administrators.[55] An actual change of that order was out of the question at that time. A contemporary American observer thus described some of the obstacles:

> Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Guksah, chief of Amhara, Dejasmatch Ayalu, powerful head of Simien, Dejasmatch Gabra Salassy of Tigre, and Ras Kassa of Shoa, are supreme lords in the rough highlands of the north country. Far removed from the central authority, thirty to forty days' journey, some of them, they are out of touch—living in a different world from that of Addis Ababa. Hundreds of lesser chiefs rally to their standards, each

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> with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[56]

The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, reestablished after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete.

Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*kärnē*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 178 631 642 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureaucratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central government has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 525 631 642 646 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of building up their positions, members of the most important noble families have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 631 693 578 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov- [465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 565 554 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of what- [571] ever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shir*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
• 631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shir* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the 181
Crown. 178
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The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental 178
religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with 181
the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the 643
chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals 642
of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; 631
and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance 178
to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and 181
prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but inte- 565
grative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pur- 085
sued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, 178
a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient 181
technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor 571
and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard 871
of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relation- 178
ship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever 643
advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his 571
personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal 871
solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

structured. But the marching and fighting unit seems to have been, for all 121*
practical purposes, the individual soldier and his retainers. Battles were not 701
fought in a disciplined manner; the outcome depended on the sheer num- 726
bers of troops, their state of morale, and the chance of catching the enemy
off guard. Except for the large-scale deployment of troops in accord with the [725]
customary tactic of envelopment, there was little expectation of subordinating [703]
the impulses of individual soldiers to the needs of a "team"; for the prevailing
military ethic stressed rather the heroism of the individual soldier and his
drive to bring back a maximum of booty and trophies.[28]

The independent status of the common soldier in mass levies was based 121*
on the fact that he was primarily a peasant and thus expected to return to 701
his fields as soon as a particular campaign was over. Nor were members of the 703
more permanent armies of lords greatly constrained. Loyalty to one's lord
was in many cases a lasting tie, and accounts for much of the stability that
existed in such arrangements. But in general it appears to have been a factor
of far less moment than was the case, for example, in feudal Japan. The
Amhara soldier felt he was fighting for a lord by his own free will and,
therefore, had every right to leave him when conditions justified a move.
One such condition was when the lord did not reward his followers liberally
enough. Another related condition was when the lord had a tendency to
suffer defeat in battle. Indeed, it was not uncommon for soldiers to swarm
from one side to the other during a battle when defeat for their side seemed
imminent. Still another basis for deserting one's chief was the ambition of a [554]
vassal to acquire greater power, in which case he might rebel—become a
shiftā, in the original sense of the word—and build up a military force of
his own in the hope either of impressing his erstwhile master sufficiently
to be reinstated with greater honors, or of taking his place by vanquishing
him in combat, or simply of carrying on as a free agent.

The civilian counterpart of the soldier's right of desertion or rebellion was 121*
the right of judicial appeal which belonged to every free Amhara. This per- 641
tained primarily to the area of property rights. A man who suffered some 695
grievous injustice in a local court had the right of appeal, in theory at least
and often in practice, to higher courts at the provincial and imperial level.
There was, in addition, some possibility of relief from an inordinately oppres- 121*
sive governor. He might be removed accidentally by the emperor, in the 641
continuous process of *shum-shir;* the people under his jurisdiction might [631]
secure his deposition through appeals to the emperor or his overlord; or they
might take arms behind one of his rebellious subordinates and overthrow
him by force. Traditional Amhara society thus provided significant areas of
social freedom for its citizens despite the feudal obligations that lay heavy
upon them.

602 farm the land and use church pasturage in the valley, are often the sons of the brothers of the priest, if not his own sons--an Amhara form of nepotism.

417 231 Each hamlet is usually fenced in ("jägol"-thorny fence) against night-roving hyenas, and may contain, besides living huts and store huts, a cattle corral ("magwa") though at least the calves and the family mule are taken into the living hut at night. The kitchen garden may also have an enclosure of cut thornbushes, protection against ravages by domestic cattle; and ther usually is at least one fierce reddish-brown dog (with white underside). Solid fences of stakes fixed straight in the ground ("gärräggärä") are usually used only around churches.

632 622 While the head of each hamlet is the head of the residential, extended family, the administrative head of a series of hamlets is appointed by the governor of the province (formerly by the feudal lord). This appointed headman, chewa shum (lit. "appointed one over the soil") may administer as few as two hamlets, or as many as fifty, with the mode about 8 to 10. In sparsely populated, less fertile or very mountainous territory his domain may be greater, but in most cases his area is within sight so that he can even maintain contact during the rainy season. His area is properly called "mändär" and constitutes the nearest approach to the village concept. If his territory is on church land, it is referred to as "and debber agär" (lit. land in support of a certain holy place) since very often this land has been donated for that purpose in the last will of a pious elderly landowner, and is something like parish

632
622 land. When a person is asked where he is from, he will often give the local name for his "and debber agar" of origin.

634 The cheqa shum, village headmen, are supervised by the district chief, "worada shum", who is also appointed by the
625 governor. The district chief in turn appoints his own police, called "nach lebash" (lit. "thiefcathers in white"), who wear no special uniforms, merely the usual white togas, and carry rifles, in the use of which they are expert. They are used not only against petty thieves but against more dangerous bandits also. Their efficiency is commonly regarded as far superior to that of the uniformed urban police. Usually there is one nach lebash per half-district ("mekatl worada") or two per district, unless an increase in banditry ("shifta") requires more.

651 Taxes, paid often in produce but increasingly in cash, are collected from each cheqa shum, but not by the district chief himself. For this task the governor has appointed a lieutenant, "mislane", per district ("worada"), who ranks equal with the worada shum and expects aid from the latter. Usually the mislane is a stranger to the district and himself a sort of glorified retainer and account-keeper from the court of the governor of the sub-province ("awraja") who has appointed him; while the district chief is a local man who may conspire with his village headmen to keep local prosperity from the knowledge of the governor's central office. The latter therefore has to rely on the cleverness of his lieutenants, the "mislane".

622
651 The administrative pyramid rests squarely on the shoulders of the cheqa shum. He collects local dues for

875 grades, in the Amhara areas, sometimes also in the south.
871 Most elementary school teachers in the provincial capitals are East Indians, except that Amharic and Coptic religion are taught by Amhara. A graduate of an elementary school can take a job as a teacher himself and begin with a wage of Eth$125.-a month; or as a municipal clerk with about equal income, which places them in the upper income group. Even a graduate of the 5th grade can earn Eth$50.- as a clerk on the bottom rung of the "educated". Or he may secure a teaching job in a church school near his home, and then go to the court of the bishop and wait about ("daj tena") until the great man notices him and confirms him in his job.

871 In view of the high cash value of modern education, almost everyone wishes to enter, though fathers are still reluctant to part with the services of their sons, in cattle herding and harvest-watching, until the boys are 11 years old, so that graduates of elementary schools are frequently 19 years old. The elementary schools are still so few (though increasing) that only the sons of influential "great men" usually manage to be admitted. Secondary schools are available primarily in Addis Ababa, not in provincial Amhara capitals, and there nearly all the teachers are Europeans. Graduates of secondary schools become upper-level government officials.

464 The preference of Amhara individuals to hire on
632 only for temporary labor, if at all, finds its expression and variation in the market town. Here many events that bring variety into his fairly monotonous rural life,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

464 632 happen and can be talked about. Here caravans arrive with all kinds of trade goods, and though the Amhara is not a trader in his culture pattern, he does hire on as transportation helper, and will have his own donkey carry some goods for sale.

443 There is a small daily market in each town. Where no town is near, one day a week a small rural market takes place (e.g. every Tuesday at Laqwamiya in the district of Seqelt) so that farmer and trader can meet Monday through Friday, at these markets set up at crossroads, in a grove of trees, or near a church center.

The big Saturday market takes place in a town terminal of caravan routes; nowadays at the end of an Italian road, also, e.g. at Qolarba in Dembea, where Italian trente-quatro trucks carry imports and exports to Asmara, Eritrea, and the coast, while caravans carry goods from and to the Sudan. Gondar town is an older and bigger Saturday market. To these markets are brought surplus farm products. All routes lead to it, and the well-to-do ride there on mules, their servants beating out a road for them among pack donkeys and pedestrians. In return, Ethiopian retailers (often Muslim) sell goods bought from Arab wholesalers.

While there is some duplication of items of sale at these markets, the daily markets specialize in items used by or obtained from the household: fresh butter sold on a leaf, to put on the hair; melted butter for cooking in "wot"; red bärbärē pods of varying strength,

631 visors are in turn responsible to the governors of the sub-province, the "awraja gaj". It is customary that these officials be appointed from provincial nobility, of the lower grades, and this custom is still followed in the old-Amhara provinces, though not in Shoa where the central government has managed to place officers with modern elementary school education regardless of commoner origin.

[622 554] Even the çheqa shum, who is always a commoner--though owner of freehold "rest" land--has a claim to being regarded as a "telleq saw", a great man, in the local social sphere. For the higher officials and absentee landlords know that their administration and territorial organization are ultimately dependant on him, and they refrain from undermining his authority.

B. Urban Organization

632 The word for "town", "kätäma", really means "permanent camp", and points directly to its origin in the feudal social organization. When a feudal lord (high level, e.g. a "ras") became attached to one place, and was at peace for any length of time, he would order a large church to be built, creating or enlarging a church parish. Trails leading there would expand into caravan routes, and a large and varied "Saturday market" would develop. This would attract Muslim or even Arab wholesalers, who would be segregated or segregate themselves

632 not far from the market. A smaller daily market for retail items would develop, so commerce proceeded even on a daily basis. A larger church school, to include some higher grades, would be set up by priests and Däbtära (scribe-choristers).

632 712 On account of the floods in the rainy season, most of this town would be on a higher level, preferably a butte overlooking a river valley from which drinking water could be brought every day. On this fertile flood plain, just below the town, there would be some grass even at the gheight of the dry season, so that the cows owned by urban citizens would always find some pasture. [423] On this floodplain a "commons" was set aside, which no one could "enclose" for private use. It was called "ad-[425] däbabay" or even "yähezb addäbabay", and served as camping place for caravans, for temporary storage space of their goods and their mules, donkeys or camels, prior to the slow climb up the butte to the Saturday market. This arrangement also had the advantage of military security for the town, protecting it from sneak attack of an enemy under guise of a caravan, which was not permitted to proceed upward into town until dawn. For the Amhara town, unlike the Muslim towns in the south, were not walled.

632 651 This arrangement also permitted the "nägadras" the collector of duties for the central power of the province, to keep control of the merchandise entering and leaving the market.

632 Contact with feudal land tenure was maintained
566 by requiring the "gultenna" of the district to come to town every three months for a one-month statute labor, then called "wär tära", for the feudal lords now residing in town, if no war was in progress. Of course the actual labor was done largely by the "gabbar", but the gultenna was responsible. The domain of the feudal lord was called "gezat" (lit. acquisition, possession), and while this statute labor has now been abrogated, the term survives to mean "province".

632 The feudal chief of the province, imitating the
692 king, would "sit in judgment" in Solomonic grandeur, usually twice a week, under a broad, shade-giving sycamore, in front of his "palace". The latter could range from a spacious tent to a stone house of round design in the ancient style (or a Portuguese-type castle of the 17th century). Surrounded by courtiers and would-be courtiers, eager to proclaim the boundless wisdom of the lord, he would also appoint smaller judges, "danya", to hear more toutine cases brought in from the countryside by the cheqa shum officials. The town thus became a place where even thesimplest peasant could, at least theoretically, seek relief from excessive opression.

[625] The bodyguard of the lord of the town, commanded by a "shalaqa" (lit. chief over 1000 men), could detail his men for duty as "zebanya" watchmen, of specific spots, especially near the market, and this force thus formed a kind of city police.

000 Since the town attracted the most clever "dabtara",

632 Since the town attracted the most clever "dabtara",
[759] many of whom were herbologists, it was also a center where "medical aid", sometimes quite effective, could be obtained, and attracted patients from far and wide.

[463] Ethnic craftsmen would settle in hamlets within walking distance of the town, to provide iron tools, tanned leather, sun umbrellas, etc., without, however, exposing themselves to mockery, insults and occasional assaults by living in the town itself.

632 517 The town developed as a social center, and center for entertainment, almost inevitably. First, religious feasts such as the Epiphany parades and the tournaments on the public commons on "ganna" (Christmas) attracted the populace; and youngsters as well as adult loafers found themarket scenes fascinating. Secndly, the Arab traders liked to discuss business and news over tea or
[265] coffee. So "teahouses " (shay bet") sprang up near the Saturday market, serving snacks also to many a male at odds with his wife, and excluding all womenfolk. Con-
632 648 versely, the mead house, ("tej bet") provided evening
588 entertainment with female singers and dancers (azmari) for the all-male clientele, and waitresses easily available for sexual entertainment. Moreover, every town had at least one "street of unattached women", who catered to travellers or visiting peasants as innkeepers, restaurateurs, and as temporary wives; they were usually divorcees, who hoped to find another husband, and to settle down again to regular married life.

632 178 Except for some of the feudal arrangements, most of this town pattern of social organization is still

632 little changed. Modern developments are merely super-
[178] imposed on this pattern, mostly due to recent decrees
633 of the central government at Addis Ababa. This city had itself grown out of a modest village on top of Entoto mountain in the 1880's, when Menelik II transferred it to the hilly floodplain just below because the population flocking to his court soon after his early military victories had caused a severe fuel and water shortage on the hilltop. The fondness of the empress for the hot volcanic springs at the somewhat lower water table were another reason for the transfer.

The old title of "kantiba", mayor, was given only to those of most important urban centers, notably Addis Ababa and Gondar, and this traditinn has also been maintained. Although the mayors are now supervised by a young, modern-educated "Director of Municipalities" located in the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa, who may visit them or call them in for conferences and instructions, the appointment to "kantiba" is still made directly by the emperor.

[625] The urban chief of police is still called "ahalāqa after the former title of the chief of bodyguard, and his subordinate officers are called "shambāl", the title used by Emperor Menelik II for the chief of his most select bodyguard("zebāna") of 300 men.

The kantiba can convene a traditional council of elders, called "chilot" (now often referred to as "commissions", after the Italian occupation), which includes the chief of police and top judges, to hear and discuss

133 the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor
[491] road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint.
[132] Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's
[361] capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns: an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and
[231] dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputation of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

175 Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'état* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the
[103] Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem
[632] father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to
[563] internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north:
[578] Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean
[635] border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support
[662] of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses. 175

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town. 632

The surrounding grassy *alus* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June. 133

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick. 491 [137] [136]

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people. 563 175

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups. 101 563

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion 101 144

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

PREFACE

121 This dissertation describes the medical beliefs and practices of an Amhara population of northwestern Ethio-
114 pia. The field research upon which it is based was con-
131 ducted from January to December, 1966, in the highland area of Begemder province that extends from Gorgora, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, to Debark, overlooking
101 the Takassie valley (see Map 3). This region is occupied
144 by four ethnic groups, the Amhara, Abyssinian Muslims,
197 Falasha (Abyssinian Jews), and Agaw (former pagans). All
131 are racially indistinguishable from one another, and speak a common language, Amharic. North of the Takassie River live the Tigre, a people closely related to the Amhara and, like the latter, Coptic Christians.

101 The Amhara, who are the most numerous of Begemder's peoples, also inhabit much of the highland plateau extending to the south, into Gojam and Shoa provinces, and to
231 the east, into Wollo province. Most Amhara are rural folk
241 who practice a mixed agricultural economy, gorwing grains
621 and pulses; raising sheep, goats, and cattle. The Amhara
• 632 countryside is divided into parishes. A parish is composed of several hamlets whose residents live on dispersed homesteads, and share important social and econo-
369 mic ties through their parish's church. In addition to these rural folk, Amhara constitute a majority among the townspeople of highland Begemder.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

townspeople of highland Begemder.

Field research was concentrated in the vicintiy of Gondar, the largest of the province's towns, and imperial capital during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Today, it is the provincial capital and an important ecclesiastical center, housing several famous churches and reknowned ecclesiastical academies. The town is also the home of many of the province's most famous healers. Extended research was also conducted in the Woggera region north of Gondar, in the rural hamlets discussed in Chapter Three. The division of research efforts between town and countryside reflects the important urban and rural aspects of Amhara medical practices with regard to the distribution of practitioners.

Through observation and inquiry, this field research sought, first, to elicit a description of the social and natural environments in which Amhara perceive pathogenic, prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic forces to operate. A second concern was to examine how Amhara select elements from these environments, and arrange them into etiologies with which to explain particular disease episodes. On the one hand, this meant collecting abstract, conscious etiological models used by Amhara; on the other hand, it meant recognizing etiologies that are constructed pragmatically and piecemeal, in the course of prophylactic and therapeutic failures and successes. Fi-

634 635 Parish and Hamlet. The highland zones can be divided along three complementary social dimensions---po-
*[192] litical, ecclesiastical, and economic. Politically, the province is divided into awraja (sub-province), warada (district of a sub-province), and meketel warada (sub-
632 district). The meketel warada consists of fifteen to
361 thirty parishes (deber). The parish, in turn, is com-
*[192] posed of three to ten hamlets (mender), each consisting
592 of ten to fifty households (bet). Most households consist of husband, wife, unmarried sons, and pre-pubscent daughters[11]; a minority of households consist of aged spouses only, or of widowed individuals living by them-
592 selves. Characteristically, the households of a hamlet
361 are dispersed, so that any one is perhaps 100 to 300 meters from its closest neighbors.

647 While officials of the provincial and sub-provincial governments are generally out-landers appointed by the central government, administrators of the warada and meketel warada are usually members of the local gen-
*[192] try. Within the parish, civil administration is in the hands of the ceka Yum, a petty administrator who imple-

[582] [591] [11] Since it is common for a girl to marry at 11 or 12, but to delay the virilocal move until age 15 or 16, the natal household may include a married daughter.

*793 capital) and the parishes. The social identity of the
*793 parish tends to be defined in terms of the ties linking
794 its residents to the parish church. The church must be provided with sufficient clergy for the performance of the weekly Mass, as well as Masses on feast days and on occasions which mark a sacrament of the Church. This amounts to perhaps three Masses every week, each of which must be conducted by at least two priests (keys) and three deacons (diyakon). Ideally, these ecclesiastics are recruited from among the parish's ristoñas, in return for the use of fields belonging to the parish church.
[776] The tie between residents of a parish and its eponymous church is further strengthened by the tendency of these people to confine their public ritual performances to the church, to favor the church's saint (reified in the arc, tabot) with private appeals for protection against illness and other misfortunes, to donate gifts to it when such appeals have been answered, to bury their dead in its churchyard, to pay towards the salary of a church teacher (astemariy) of the syllabary, and perhaps for a teacher (memher) of advanced Church subjects as well, and, lastly, to contribute in tithes (generally cereals and other foodstuffs) and labor towards the proper maintenance of the church.

443 Parish and Town. The highland zones can be concep-
632 tualized as a series of overlapping market spheres, each

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

443
632 centered in a town and extending outward to include those areas from which peasants come to buy and sell.
[132] The size of the town's sphere contracts and expands sea-
[484] sonally, reaching its nadir furing the rainy season, when overland travel becomes difficult owning to deep mud and raging torrents. Then, travelling is infrequent and confined to the market town closest to a peasant's home parish. Although market trips are more frequent during the remainder of the year, most terminate at the closest market. These relatively short trips are favored when grain is brought to the mills located on the periphery
[796] of most market sites. The spheres of the larger towns (Gondar, Debre Tabor, Dabat) reach maximum size on the market days which preceed the great celebrations of the Coptic Church---Meskal (which celebrates the discovery of the True Cross, and follows the end of the rains), Michaelmas (November), Timkat (feast of the Epiphany, and preceeding the Lenten fast), and Easter. Map 3 indicates the extreme limits for market spheres of the towns of the Begemder highlands.

[491] The highland market towns are strung along the province's only all-weather motor road.[14] Each offers a

[648] [14] This road, built during the Italian occupation (1936-1941), runs north to Asmara (capital of Eritrea) and (since the 1960's) south to Addis Ababa (the national capital). A dry season road links the highland towns to Metemma on the Sudan border.

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632 once-weekly market, staggered, so that the market days of over-lapping spheres do not coincide. Peasant exchange at these markets tend to be "sectional" in character; that is to say, producer-sellers bring regional specialties (such as cotton and high quality cayenne from kola lands; cereals, fresh vegetables, and livestock from highland farms), or occupational specialties (such as Falasha iron mongery and pots; the leather goods of the Fakiy, a largely endogamous artisan group). In addition to local products, peasants come to purchase imported goods (especially clothing) and the produce of distant parts of the Empire (such as salt bars from the Danakil Depression). The market is also the peasant's tie to the world market, to which he sends cattle and cattle hides.

The large market towns, with their numerous consumer crowds, offer important economic inducements to
[275] the peasant marketeer. Beyond these economic functions,
[548] the large town offers diversions and attractions unavailable in the peasant's home parish---exotic surroundings, the temporary fellowship and entertainment of bear houses and mead halls, and the sexual companionship of the town's numerous prostitutes.

632 The town also attracts peasant visitors on matters
796 unrelated to the market place. The monthly feast days of various saints of the Coptic Church are occasions for special celebrations, and these attract peasants, out of

• 632 motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' eponymic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "government" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total population	151	95
Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by risteñas. These households are distributed among the hamlets' ambilineages as follows:

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

*278
*757 the memeleṡa counters the effect of the poison, which
628 stands in the place that the primary medicine would in any other internally administered herbalist therapy.

The remaining therapy attracting clients from beyond the hamlet is Nikersa:kitabiy:A:I, and is the hamlet's best example of a therapy of medhaniyt awakiy grade. As an "amulet therapy", it has no memeleṡa, nor does it allow for a diagnosis to the administration of the therapy. The grading of such therapies is dependent upon criteria of efficacity and professional reputation; this nikersa therapy is regarded as relatively effective and it attracts clients from all Woggera, in spite of the presence of redundant therapies within this area.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN URBAN BEGEMDER

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• 632
[369]
Less than 5% of the province's people are classified "urban" by Government census.[16] Half of these townfolk live in Gondar, the provincial capital. Although Gondar is the administrative, ecclesiastical, and commercial center of Begemder, its demographic and social character-

[16] 56,000 out of a total of 1.24 million (EAS1965: 23-24).

162
632 istics are, except for differences in scale, approximated by most of the other provincial towns situated in predominantly Amhara areas.[17]

632 <u>The People of the Town</u>. Approximately three-
463 quarters of Gondar's residents are Amhara, born in either Begemder or adjacent Gojam provinces. Most Amhara townsmen are government employees (clerks, messengers, teachers, and judicial functionaries); a lesser number enjoy some ecclesiastical identity, and others are local rentiers, often supplementing their incomes with government or Church employment. A smaller number work in miscellaneous, unskilled occupations, notably as watchmen (<u>zibaña</u>) at the households of affluent co-religionists.

162
632 Three quarters of Gondar's adult Amhara are women.
463 A minority of them are the spouses or dependents of lo-
433 cal Amhara townsmen, and confine their daily activities to domestic duties. A still smaller number are rentiers, or the recipients of stipends from mature sons living elsewhere. The remaining Amhara townswomen, perhaps 40%

[17] Thus excluding Chilga (urban center for the Kemant Agaw region) and Metemma (a border town of the Sudanese lowlands).

162 632 433 463 of the town's total population, support themselves by working among the densely packed rows of beer houses and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 779 563 [197] [159] [142] Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejoratively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinctively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants [443] [142] (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 563 463 [197] [562] A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people, predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics. Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

bar maids.

A third, numerically significant minority have come from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly by girls and women working as servants for the less affluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Kilotes living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for sale in the town's daily wood market (<u>sir gabiya</u>). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

<u>Ward and Town</u>. Gondar's residents divide the town

[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("<u>bariya</u>").

• 632
621 into sixty-five named wards (sebekas). The social and demographic character of wards varies considerably, and it is useful to describe them in terms of two contrasting types. At one extreme, the ward resembles a kind
[241] of urban parish. It contains an eponymous Church; and
[423] a majority of residents are risteñas, members of landowning ambilineages who support themselves by farming and renting homesteads on their lands. But even these wards contrast with rural parishes on several counts.
*[492] The ward is generally compact in size, and internally
[463] undivided beyond the homestead (bet). Within it live out-landers who work outside the ward in exclusively non-agricultural occupations. Further, while the parish is administered in detail by residents, the ward relies upon non-resident agents of the municipality for its administration.

At the other extreme, are the town's "non-corporate"
[648] wards. During the Italian occupation, several of
[175] Gondar's parish-like wards were sequestered by the invaders as building sites. After liberation, the Imperial government divided each of these wards into tracts, which were deliniated according to the buildings upon them. Tracts were then given as grants (yaribeña mariet, "hero's land") to supporters of the government-in-exile, who were often non-residents of Gondar. In time, the pre-war boundaries of such wards were no longer regarded

632 621 relevant by townsfolk, and tracts, alone or in combination, came to be redesignated as "ward". Typically, the non-corporate wards encompass no agricultural lands, and includes no church within its boundaries. None of its resident families are ristenas or even related to one another, and each tends to associate itself with a church [779] according to cirteria other than residence. Indeed, in some, Muslims occupy homesteads within an otherwise Christian ward.

Most of Gondar's wards are today without any corporate identity, and serve simply as convenient place names or as occasional indicators of affluence and occupation. Although the meaning of many ward names is forgotten now, the names of others remain appropriately descriptive. Some denote the residents' occupation; [192] (the "place of the superior beer", "encoye mosk", which is occupied by beer houses). Others retain the name of an eponymic church (as in Rufael sebeka).

Non-corporate wards are not a recent innovation. From its founding in the seventeenth century, Gondar has included such sebekas---given over to beer houses and mead halls, to liegemen and warriors, and to a variety of artisans. The last war and its aftermath have only extended such areas and have encouraged ristenas to build residences on their lands for out-landers unable to find housing elsewhere in town.

• 632
621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's
eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are
not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen.
[241] Until liberation, it was occupied by ristenas and cul-
[423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the
[198] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly,
[795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields,
[342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in
[463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten
[161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born
632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it-
621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from
592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam
(five households), and from Wollo (five households); b)
Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two house-
holds); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Ǝankella
(one household). On the average, the ward's adult resi-
dents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen
[241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house-
[793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and
[463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing
in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported
by occupations which depend upon daily contact with
[463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household
heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government em-
ployment, five work as zibaña, eight as wood cutters,

* 632
621
592 two as talla sellers, and one each as mat seller, carpen-
463 ter, day laborer, and pensioner.

* 278 The practice of herbalist therapies in ward and
* 759 town contrasts significantly with the situation in rural
369 hamlet and parish. The relatively dense population of the town has important consequences. In the countryside, the closest herbalist needed for a specific episode may be a day's walk from the client's home; in the town several may be found within an hour's walk. The increase in herbalist therapies is not directly proportional to the increased population of town over countryside, however.
* 278 In Gabrael sebeka, for example, only eighteen households
* 759 (41% of the total) contain one or more herbalists. Many
632 townfolk are forced to abstain from practicing herbalist therapies, because, as out-landers, they are unable or disinclined to locate needed botanicals. Also, significant numbers of townsfolk practice non-secular therapies, particularly as balazars.

* 278 Further, although there are more redundant herbalist
* 759 therapies potentially available to the townsman, he re-
369 mains ignorant of many of them. The peasant locates him-
203 self within a network of several core kinsmen and neigh-
602 bors upon whom he depends for information regarding herbalist chains. The townsman finds his place in a social matrix in which kinship ties are greatly diluted by dis-
632 tance. In Gabrael sebeka, for example, thirty-two house-
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621
632

holds (73% of the total) are without kinship ties to any other of the ward's households. Although many of these residents have kinsmen in other parts of Gondar, few have more than one or two relatives in the town. In addition, because most townfolk rely upon non-agricultural employment for their subsistence needs, there is a concomitant disinterest in ambilineage fields. A consequence is a weakening of the important economic bonds which otherwise link kinsmen to one another.

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423
241

*278 Kinship ties are an important means by which the
*769 peasant acquires and communicates information necessary
203 for constructing herbalist chains. Since almost every
602 herbalist therapy of the rural parish enjoys its own
369 "pedigree", or trans-generational reputation, the peasant
613 herbalist is provided with means for 1) publicly validating his therapeutic claims, and 2) communicating the existence of the therapy to his potential clients. Potential clients frequently associate the ownership of a famous herbalist therapy with the members of a specific ambilineage, often identifiable by name. Both the ambilineage (whose identity is linked to its fields) and its medical reputation (which is tied to the ambilineage) are attached to a particular location. Since residence is most often viripatrilocal, the transmission of such therapeutic reputations is characterized by an
*278 agnatic bias. The male therapist moving to town, like
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177 known as kusil and ibac. In addition, Western therapy
178 is sought for ailments which are serious and chronic, but for which traditional cures offer a poor prognosis or only palliatives. For these ailments (in particular, leprosy, kumtina; chronic coughing, yisaal basiyta, including tuberculosis, yilib basiyta; and a variety of stomach ailments, yihod himem and migaña), Western medicine is believed to offer prognosis equal to that of powerful traditional non-secular therapies, but not necessarily superior to them.

The injectionist's therapy is considered a variety of Western medicine. Injections are provided in the town's single pharmacia and by a handful of free-lance injectionists. All offer the same therapy, injection with what the client believes to be a uniform medicament, generally unidentifiable beyond "merify".[19] Injectionist therapy is favored for primary syphilis (kitin) and "fevers" (weba).

*278 The town herbalist's foremost traditional competi-
*759 tors are the weak debtera and the balazar. The relative
632 concentration of these therapists in towns is indicated by the following: In Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, there

[19] Most often, it is penicillin.

*278 *969 • 632 are no debtera therapists, and, although there are several women who are members of zar coteries (and are, thus, balazar) none publicly practiced therapies which might have been obtained from zars or fellow balazars. In contrast, the following non-secular therapies are practiced in Gabrael sebeka:

	Non-secular therapies	Herbalist therapies
Balazar 1	7	
Balazar 2	7	
Balazar 3	8	
Debtera 1	6	
Debtera 2[20]	10	
Total	40	31
% of all therapies of Gabrael sebeka	56%	44%

*278 *969 369 In summary, then, herbalists figure less prominantly in the town than in the countryside. The townsman more frequently omits them from relevant practitioner chains, or limits them to the initial consultation in such chains. 369 However, from the perspective of the system of Amhara 75 medical beliefs, this contrast between town and country

[20] In ecclesiastical terms, this man is not entitled to the title of "debtera".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

462 463 [596] because the often arbitrary, confiscatory taxation have lain heaviest on the producer of the most abundant harvest.

462 463 554 (2) The attitude despising labor as an activity for slaves or lower-class ethnic groups, especially if the labor is skilled. Acquisition of special labor skills led to enforced migration, serfdom close to slavery, as has been described. Shame is attached to it, by the Amhara. For him, only agriculture, settled animal husbandry, warfare and spiritual activity in church or healing are acceptable. Even in this group of non-ignoble occupations, there are limitations. A farmer who would try to improve the quality of his land on any but a year-to-year basis, would be very unusual and an object of ridicule. For such land would arouse the evil eye, or the envy of the feudal lord, who would increase his tribute or, in case of family freeholds("rest"), increase his extortion of services. Even though a formal "corvee" has very recently been declared illegal, the local rural statute labor cannot be changed much by the central government, especially since it usually appoints former feudal lords to administrative positions in rural districts.

Principle (1) dominates the division of labor by [633] sex, and to some extent by age. It also sets the pattern for the need for and existence of market-places that become urban centers, places where specialist not found among the scattered hamlets can be encountered: in entertainment, in treding goods brought by caravan, in higher justice, higher church, better medicine, and recently, in the availability for some of the 8-year elementary school.

632 little changed. Modern developments are merely super-
[178] imposed on this pattern, mostly due to recent decrees
633 of the central government at Addis Ababa. This city
had itself grown out of a modest village on top of En-
toto mountain in the 1880's, when Menelik II transfer-
red it to the hilly floodplain just below because the
population flocking to his court soon after his early
military victories had caused a severe fuel and water
shortage on the hilltop. The fondness of the empress
for the hot volcanic springs at the somewhat lower wa-
ter table were another reason for the transfer.

The old title of "kantiba", mayor, was given only
to those of most important urban centers, notably Addis
Ababa and Gondar, and this traditinn has also been main-
tained. Although the mayors are now supervised by a
young, modern-educated "Director of Municipalities"
located in the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa, who
may visit them or call them in for conferences and in-
structions, the appointment to "kantiba" is still made
directly by the emperor.

[625] The urban chief of police is still called "shalä-
qa after the former title of the chief of bodyguard, and
his subordinate officers are called "shambäl", the title
used by Emperor Menelik II for the chief of his most
select bodyguard("zebäna") of 300 men.

The kantiba can convene a traditional council of
elders, called "chilot" (now often referred to as "com-
missions", after the Italian occupation), which includes
the chief of police and top judges, to hear and discuss

633 such modern problems as : increase in the number of hours of daily electricity; extension of city boundaries to include many scattered hamlets (e.g. of ethnic artisans) so as to be given to the rural "näch lëbash" (thiefcatchers in white) with regard to the latest reawakening of an old family feud (dëm mällässä) that threatens bloodshed; to increase municipal tax revenues; what to do about accompanying official visitors, nosy foreigners, visiting dignitaries, etc.; whether to abandon the insect-infested olf prison or try to rebuild it; etc.

[643] Once or twice a year the emperor himself can be expected, with his retinue, requiring careful preparations and bringing much tension in advance to the urban officials. Sometimes he may address the people at large on the old "yëhezb addëbabay", which must be marked out and cleared. If the town is also the provincial capital, the emperor can be expected to examine not only that office, but the heads of the sub-provinces, judges, elementary school, the provincial hospital; etc.

633 798 Religious tolerance, decreed by the emperor, now permits such ethnoreligious minorities as the Muslims to reside wherever they please. In the past they were restricted to a section of the town, usually the part between the floodplain and the big market. For example, in the old city of Gondar, this section, locally called 633 "Addis Alëm" (lit. New world) was assigned them. Despite its name, this is the oldest section, and was probably named so over a century ago because it was newer than

633 the old Portuguese-type castles, even then in ruins.

[346] The new mosque, built through Italian encouragement during the occupation, overshadows both the big market and the old Muslim "ghetto" with the old mosque, at lower elevation.

563 624 The local Muslim "Qadi", ecclesiastical Muslim judge, regarded as their provincial temporal chief, calls on the governor-general every Tuesday. Most Muslims have not moved far from their old section, partly because it is near the big market which is their economic as well as social gathering place, partly because they, almost as much as the ethnic artisans, wish to avoid insults, mockery, and quarrels with young members of the dominant majority.

759 743 In addition to being a center of public announcements, and the table of the judge for petty crimes, the market now also serves as center for the activities of modern "dressers". These medical auxiliaries set up their tables under one of the shady trees, their bottles, hypodermic needles, cotton wool, etc., clearly visible, with chairs for several patients, set apart by an enclosure of barbed wire. When an epidemic threatens, and [731] during and after it (e.g. typhus or spotted fever), the public can obtain free injections there, or call a dresser to come to their home for a small fee.

633 Each town is divided into administrative wards, sometimes called "qäbälē", but almost invariably named after the church located in it. Thus a person will say "I am from Medhanē Aläm" (church of the "Savior of the

633 world", i.e. Jesus Christ), indicating the section of the town in which he lives.

C. Appointment to Office and Decision-Making.

566 The feudal social structure led almost invariably to paternalistic attitudes in appointment to office and in decision-making. This attitude continues in remote rural districts as well as in the most modern-appearing state offices in Addis Ababa.

661 644 The feudal lord, having conquered new lands, usually rewarded his most trusted followers with fiefs and connected privileges. For example, the newly-appointed "mälkäña", who may have previously served merely as military orderly to the warlord, as cupbearer and meatcarver, could be appointed to act as liaison officer and administrator of Galla lands, allocating 1/4 of the land to the old Galla "balbat" as "mälkäña" land of their own, and keeping the rest as his own fief. He would continue to make himself useful as tax-collector, foreman on statute-labor for the lord, as general spy for the ear of the Lord, available for any special service at any time. But he had little security of office or of land tenure, both being at the mercy of any caprice of the lord. It was therefore essential for him to spend much time at the court of the feudal lord, bowing and scraping, ever fearful that some competitor, perhaps the former "läfäri" the herald who announced decrees and public inquiries,

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Tulama MP25

T 105 T A 563 175

imperial power revived, Emperors like Theodore and, later, Menelik, re-established Amhara rule first over the central highland and later over all the Galla lands of the south. The most formidable resistance encountered by Menelik was from the Moslem Galla Sultan of Jimma. From time to time certain Galla districts resented the corrupt or vicious government of individual Amhara officials and revolted; but these revolts were the common phenomenon of a feudal state of society rather than the beginnings of a conscious Galla movement against an alien Amhara rule. In fact in the Galla countries of the south the rule of the Amhara central government has proved more stable than in the north where it had to meet the challenge of powerful Amhara lords. During the dangerous revolt of Ras Gugsa Wolye it was probably the Galla contingents which saved the throne for Haile Selassie. During the campaign of 1941 thousands of Galla guerrillas took the field against the Italians, while the northern leaders, the great Amhara aristocrats, were inclined to wait on the winner.

T 105 A 563 [198]

Gallas are everywhere in Ethiopia and there are probably few Amhara nobles who have not a strong tinge of Galla blood in their veins. Most Amhara have some knowledge of Galla (although many will not own to it), and Galla is popularly supposed to be the "love language" of Ethiopia.

I had little opportunity for investigating the subject, but I do not believe that all Galla-speaking tribes are racially Galla. In the belt of savannah country between the Mussolini Pass and Dessie I met the two sons of a Wallo Galla headman who were a pair of the most beautiful human beings I have ever seen. Copper-skinned and lithe, clad in panther pelts and leaning on their spears, they seemed apparitions out of the Bronze Age. These boys were of pure Hamitic type, rather resembling some of the fine-featured Shluh of the Moroccan Atlas. Yet, in Harar, where I had to disband a battalion of Galla Patriots who had come in from the south, I found stocky square-headed men with heavy jowls, with a fair proportion of negroid types. Incidentally they were reported to show excellent form as soldiers. They were mostly Borana and other southern Gallas.

The variety of physical types among the Gallas adds to the mystery of their origin before the sixteenth century. Some tribes have the tradition of having arrived on the east coast of Africa from over the sea, and one theory postulates the coming of the Galla from Madagascar and attempts to correlate their migration with the intrusion of Malay elements into that island. At present the origin of the Gallas remains one of the most interesting problems of African history.

A 633

Harar itself has, since mediaeval times, enjoyed the situation of a city-state. The emirate of Harar was brought within the Ethiopian Empire only by Ras Makonnen, the father of the present Emperor. It has since remained a favourite city of the Imperial family and a stronghold of their interest. On the edge of the Somali and the Galla country and commanding the way down over the lip of the Southern Escarpment into the Awash valley Harar is a meeting place for all the tribes of Ethiopia and the Arabian coast. The old walled city with its narrow crowded streets and occasional mosques and *turbés* has all the characteristics of an Arabian town, as contrasted with the open settlements of huts, gardens, and plantations which pass for towns in

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

633 Ethiopia. There is a special Hararene language of which an Italian society
[191] has published texts. It appears to be a corrupt mixture of Amharic and
Arabic in the Amharic script. The women of Harar, in whom Somali and
[563] Galla blood predominates, are noted for their beauty. In contrast with the
uniform white cotton skirts and innumerable petticoats and draperies of the
frizzed Amhara ladies, the Hararenes wear a variety of bright colours and,
[142 although Moslem, they go with their faces unveiled and shoulders and bosoms
291] exposed. Hair is worn flat in stylized curls. Their skins are often of a
beautiful rose-bronze hue.

Harar is situated about 6000 feet above sea-level and its climate is one of the most equable in the world. The fertile red soil provides an abundance of the fruits of the earth and the gardens which slope down round the old walls of the city offer a variety of colour. Many pleasant hours can be spent wander-
[245] ing among them and talking to the cheerful friendly people. Harar is famous
for its delicious coffee; and the donkeys of the district of Mount Condudo,
231 which rises to 9000 feet some 20 miles to the east of Harar, are reputed to be the finest in Ethiopia. The jackasses of Condudo are much sought after for the procreation of mules, and the whole life of the Ethiopian Highland still depends on the mule.

487 The Ethiopian Highland lies in close proximity to two of the oldest routes along which have passed the commerce and the changing cultures of men: the Red Sea and the Nile. Yet the Ethiopian Highland and its peoples have remained remote. The same conditions of history apply to the Riffian Atlas overlooking the Straits into the Mediterranean and to the great Caucasian massif which flanks the ways round the Black Sea and across the Caspian.

174 The presence of varied racial elements in mountain areas has generally
been explained as the remnants of former peoples who have been driven up
[563] into the hills as fugitives. This may be in part true. Yet I am inclined to
believe that the mountains have been rather the human reservoirs from which successive floods of men have poured down, like the spring waters, into the neighbouring lowlands. There are many historical examples of this process. In Moorish history successive dynasties were recruited from the mountain Berbers and it was the Berbers who provided the man-power for the Moslem conquest of Spain. The function of the Albanians in repopulating a devastated Greece was remarked by the historian Finlay; and they have for centuries contributed numerous and warlike elements to the populations of the Near East. The same role was played by Caucasian mountaineers in both the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires, in Egypt, and in Persia. Mountain peoples generally breed in excess of the capacity of the terrain to support their offspring.

I submit, then, that the Ethiopian Highlands represented just such a reservoir of primitive human material—a reservoir which must have made an important contribution, in prehistoric times, to the peopling of the Nile basin. In fact the Ethiopian Highland and the Moroccan Atlas, with the intervening massifs which rise out of the Sahara, like Jebel Adrar, Tibesti, and Darfur, may well have been the primitive homeland of the Hamitic-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

dolphus put it.[4] At length, unable to witness the further decimation of his people because of religious controversies, Susneyos abdicated in favor of his son Fāsil. Fāsil lost little time in deporting the Jesuits and restoring the Orthodox status quo. 175* 648 799 643

Recovery

In the wake of all these collisions, Ethiopia made two valiant attempts to regain equilibrium and glory: through the splendor of Gondar in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and through the force of three emperors of the nineteenth century—Tēwodros II, Yohānnes IV of Tigre, and Menelik II of Shoa. 175* 648 643

Gondar was founded as a new and stationary capital by Fāsil. It served as imperial headquarters for many generations. Later, the kingdom of Tigre knew a resurgence of power that led to control of the empire under Yohānnes (1872–89). His castle at Makalle symbolized one last rally for the north—after an interregnum of a thousand years—before being eclipsed by the Shoan throne.

The shock which began with the invasions of Ahmad Grañ shattered Ethiopia's medieval synthesis once and for all. The political consequence of those disruptions was an increase in provincialism, reaching its climax in the famous "Age of the Princes" (1755–1855) when each province had its own sovereign and for all practical purposes was a polity unto itself. The Solomonic line, the matrix of Ethiopian political unity, was splintered in several directions, leaving contenders in each of the provinces. Though the official imperial line remained at Gondar, Tigre was able to reassert its ancient claims and Gojjam recurrently voiced its separatism, and what may be called the "House of Manz" came to compete with Gondar as a center of national consciousness. 175* 178 635

This political division was accompanied by a peculiar cultural bifurcation. Elements of the national culture that had been rather evenly distributed before Ahmad Grāñ now became relatively specialized in Gondar and Manz. The recovery of Ethiopia produced a geographical division of manners and morals as well as several lines of Solomonic royalty. 175* 184

HISTORICAL PROFILES

The Role of Gondar 175* 633

Gondar is the only city in Ethiopia with charm and character expressive of Amhara culture. Even today, despite modern accretions, the remnants of its castles, walls, bridges, and sanctuaries transmit a stately calm, redolent of past nobility and African grandeur. 175* 361

The town is situated on a flat volcanic ridge at seven thousand feet above

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 361 sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

[132] Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most [312] pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā [132] twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, some- [241]

*175 643 TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāsi (Nagāsē Kristos)	Abēto	169?–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebstē (Sebstyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbiyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Takla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwofilos	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yostos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāhla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	***		***
		Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

*175 361 [132] [241] [231] times three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and livestock are produced in abundance.

The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's *175 time of power.[5] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The towns- • 633 people of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, [162] and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more [463] conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he [173] was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose [361] name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

the proximity to water, the protective rings of mountains, and the healthy distance from Galla tribes. 175* 633 • 361

When Fāsil arrived at Gondar, then no more than an insignificant village, he pitched his tent near a large sycamore. This magnificent tree, one of the landmarks of Gondar, became the site of popular celebrations on holidays. Not far from this tree Fāsil decided to construct his castle, the largest and best preserved of the castles of Gondar. Thus began an ambitious program of building, which included the construction of seven churches, a number of bridges over the streams around Gondar, and a large bath, next to which Fāsil placed a three-story pavilion. In the course of the following century Fāsil's successors added many more buildings, including a total of twenty-one additional churches. Of the secular buildings, the castles of Bakāffā and Empress Mantuāb and the "Recreation Hall" of Dāwit III were the most outstanding. 175* 633 361 643

In their political endeavors, Gondar's monarchs began by upholding the Abyssinian tradition of a warrior king. Though unable to secure definitive victories over his enemies, Fāsil was continually joining battle with them. He spent all but five of his thirty-five years of rule on the warpath. The reign of Yohānnes the Pious was marked more by religious than military preoccupations, but warfare on a small scale was carried out during half the years he ruled. Yohānnes' son, Iyāsu the Great, seized the spear with renewed vigor and brought Gondar to the pinnacle of its might. Iyāsu's campaigns carried him to far parts of the empire, some of which were not again to be visited by a triumphant Amhara king until two centuries later. 175* 643

On Iyāsu's return from one of his famous field tours, Gondar suffered a misfortune that ushered in a long era of political disorganization. Learning that his favorite concubine had died and been buried while he was away, the grief-stricken Iyāsu withdrew to one of the monastic islands of Lake Ṭānā. His son, Takla Hāymānot, took advantage of the situation to have himself proclaimed emperor; and shortly after, probably encouraged by those of the clergy who mistrusted Iyāsu's sympathy for Catholicism, he had his father assassinated on the isle.

The next four emperors had short and brutish reigns. Takla Hāymānot, Tēwoflos, and Yoṣṭos were occupied mainly with the quashing of conspiracy and rebellion. Even so, they had time for the favored sports of hunting wild animals and raiding Galla and Negroid tribes. Dāwit III, it seems, did not even accomplish that. The chief slaughter in his reign was of the local clergy; he brought Muslim Galla to massacre hundreds of the monks and priests of Gondar, for they had opposed his theological views. All four emperors ended ignobly. Takla Hāymānot was stabbed to death; Tēwoflos was probably poisoned; Yoṣṭos, not of the Solomonic line, was forcibly deposed; and Dāwit III was poisoned. Bakāffā was more careful to protect himself from pretend-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[illegible]rs than were his predecessors. He spent his days breaking the power of the feudal [illegible] and strengthening the hand of the monarchy, and died a natural death.

Iyāsu II was the last of the Gondar emperors to rule with full power. He, too, had to spend much of his military energy suppressing conspirators. One pretender maintained a long siege of Gondar, and although his troops never succeeded in storming the castle, they destroyed much of the capital. After checking the rebels, Iyāsu II withdrew from the political affairs and became absorbed in private pursuits. Later, stung by the popular ridicule of his inactivity, he launched a major campaign against the Fung kingdom of Senaar. The net result of that venture was eighteen thousand dead and the depletion of his treasury. The subsequent subdual of Lāstā, a rebel region for generations, and Iyāsu's raids against tribes in the Atbārā district were not sufficient to redeem that defeat or restore the force of Gondar.

The political history of Gondar after the assassination of Iyāsu the Great is that of a fairly steady decline. The power of the monarchy was weakened by frequent coups d'état: no fewer than twenty-five emperors were deposed in the century and a half between Iyāsu I and Tēwodros. The power of central government was weakened by the increased strength of the nobles, each pursuing his personal interests. The power of the Abyssinian nation was weakened by the influx of Galla, who entered Gondar as prisoners and mercenary troops and finally, with the marriage of Iyāsu II to the daughter of a Galla chieftain, reached the royal court itself. The succession of emperors after Iyāsu II is largely a list of figureheads, living their brief spells in the dreary pomp into which the court had fallen, while the real power was wielded by independent lords throughout the land.

*175 643 633 517

The history of Gondar, however, is more than a chronicle of military expeditions and political intrigues. It is above all a history of the Amhara's most concentrated attempt to cultivate their religious and aesthetic culture, some aspect of which stimulated most of Gondar's sovereigns.

Fāsil, we have seen, was greatly interested in architecture. In addition to his many constructions in and around Gondar, he rebuilt the old cathedral at Aksum, which had been in ruins since the pillage of Ahmad Grāñ. Fāsil's interest in religion, moreover, extended beyond the building of churches. He sought to promote the integrity of the Ethiopian Church by expelling the Jesuits, and assisted its restoration by fixing rules for the ministration of church services.

Yohānnes the Pious was devoted to the furtherance of religious studies. He built a library to house religious manuscripts, as well as two new churches. Possessed of an unusual decorative bent, he had the walls of the library covered with a yellowish plaster and raised designs in stucco, and he himself painted miniatures on some of the manuscripts. His queen, Sebla Wangel,

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sponsored the translation of works from Arabic. Among these were *Laws of the Kings*, a collection of civil and canon laws which became the official basis for judication, and a penitential manual, *Spiritual Medicine*, the last major production in Ge'ez literature. 175* 643 517 [633]

Yohānnes also continued Fāsil's work of "purifying" the church. He decreed that descendants of the Portuguese must leave Ethiopia unless they joined the Orthodox Church and that Muslims must reside apart, either in their own villages or in ghettos. Ordained as a priest before becoming emperor, Yohānnes followed keenly the theological disputes of his day. Toward the end of his reign he convoked a synod in Gondar to discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit in Christ, the chief theological question in Ethiopian history. [798] [793] [779]

Iyāsu I, like many of Ethiopia's rulers, appears to have been moved by deep religious feeling. Describing Iyāsu's religiosity, one of the priests of Gondar wrote an eulogy a few years after his death: 175* 643 781

> The king used to stand at the window of his palace . . . and listen from his tower on high to the singing of the priests and learned men, to their gentle hymns which moistened the bones by their exceeding tenderness. When their offerings pleased him greatly he was pierced with affection for them and drawn by the harmony of their heavenly peace. For this reason . . . he would prepare for them dinners filled with delights, and bid them eat with him in his royal chambers, ornamented all about with the beauty of pure gold and wrought silver. He would take off his gold necklace and present it to them. He adorned them with garments of purple and of staffs interwoven with gold from the treasury of his kingdom. . . . None of the kings before him had done such as he, and none of the clergy of yore had been treated as were his priests and learned men. After the dinners, the king and his priests together sang hymns of joy and jubilation all night long in the palace—in their time of pleasure, in the sweetness of divine ministry.*

Iyāsu the Great did much to establish Gondar as the most important center of religious culture in Ethiopia. To this end he brought outstanding priests and learned men from all over the country to his capital. From Gojjam, for example, he brought the great master of religious verse, Kiflē Yohānnes, whose lines are remembered even today. The number of teachers in Gondar in his time exceeded five hundred; there were one hundred and fifty at his church Dabra Berhān Selassie alone.* It was under Iyāsu I that the classic subject matter of the higher religious studies in Abyssinia—*zēmā* ("religious 175* 643 633 517

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* Dabra Berhān Selassie, one of the two churches built by Iyāsu I, is the only one of the original churches of Gondar which survived later conflagrations of the city. The original paintings which covered its walls have been preserved, as well as the remarkable ceiling from which rows of wide-eyed angels look down from between wooden beams. The church provides separate places for nobility and commoners, and a balcony for the emperor. [846]

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+175 chant"), *qenē*, and *tergum* ("interpretation")—is said to have received its
643 definitive organization.
• 633
517 Dāwit III appears to have had a pronounced interest in Amharic folk song, for the more perfect enjoyment of which he built a special hall in the imperial compound. Because of this he has been called "Dāwit the Singer"—no term of praise in a land where minstrelsy is looked down on and where serious deportment is expected of royalty. Actually, this epithet, with its connotation of "playboy," was not deserved. Dāwit was a religious man, and in his brief reign built two churches. Knowledgeable Gondarēs today insist that, at first, even the priests were happy to join him in the amusement hall to listen to the one-stringed fiddles and the witty songs. Only after Dāwit's partiality to the
[798] Unctionist doctrine (that the humanity of Christ was made divine through the unction of the Holy Spirit) led him to persecute the Unionist clergy (who hold that humanity and divinity are blended in the single nature of Christ) did they abuse his music hall and tarnish his name.[7]

[341] Interest in architecture was revived by Bakāffā. He constructed a long U-shaped castle which, together with the new castle of his Empress Mantuāb, completed the major complex of buildings in Gondar. Mantuāb's castle is
[532] noted for bas-reliefs of the Ethiopian Cross, while her other castle at nearby Qusquam is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting saints and animals as well.

The tastes of Iyāsu II were especially refined. He cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He built a large and handsome church. He began to construct a palace, in the lavish
[344] decoration of which he took a personal interest. Budge writes of this:

> A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the walls of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts . . . with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. . . . Iyāsu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen.[8]

+175 The decline of imperial power at Gondar after Iyāsu II did not produce a
633 slackening of the cultural activities that had been concentrated there. During
517 the reign of Takla Hāymānot II (1769–77), for example, when the actual
[643] power at Gondar was in the hands of a lord from Tigre, seven more churches
[874] were built. One of these, Ba'ātā Māryām, eventually became one of the most famous schools for the teaching of *aquāqum* ("religious dance"), and in its heyday boasted 276 masters. Another, Abi Egzi, became noted for instruction in *tergum*, and is still a leading school for such studies.

[538] The composition of verse, in forms which had become canonized during the early Gondar period, continued to flourish. As political turmoil often

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kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth century: 175* 633 517 538 [539]

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of Joha, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts. 175* 633 517 53

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā*, or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā*. 175* 159 993 633

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām*, the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere. [535] [178]

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā [214] [538]

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left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor Menelik.

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army, turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar.* The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar during his few years in power (1869–72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum*, though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā*. The civil order, however, was thoroughly demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces.

At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance from the old capital—began as follows:

> O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.[11]

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the northeast horn of Shoa Province.[12] It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.[13]

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* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century. 181 175*

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38] 175* 633 • [643]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39] 175* 633 361 [333]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē. [565] [351]

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna*, an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables. [792] [178]

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the 175* 633 361 563 [186] [576]

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streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter.

Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat*, or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which contrast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen*, meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā*, land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rist*.

The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

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priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[48]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 flux of many Muslims and Galla, a migration favored by its urban situation.
• 633 Manz, surrounded by hostile Galla, was forced for survival to cultivate its
067 fighting powers, and for ultimate security to reconquer the surrounding areas.
*175 It was aided in this by whatever special geographical and cultural factors
181 helped to produce the peculiarly militant and defiant character of the Manzē. But because of the annihilation of most of Shoa's churches and monasteries in the sixteenth century, and the isolation of Manz from the renascence of Amhara culture at Gondar, it was left illiterate and culturally impoverished. Its religious life remained limited to a narrow adherence to the ritual requirements of Ethiopian Christianity.

*175 The dispersion of the Solomonic line over the several provinces was thus
181 accompanied by the formation of distinct mores for Manz and Gondar. There
184 is evidence that the differences were quite pronounced by the early nineteenth century. Just a few years before the fierce inhabitants of Manz sped to the rescue of Sāhla Selassie against the rebel Matako, Gondar was similarly threatened by a rebel band under a man named Mersu. Compare Rüppell's account of the behavior of the Gondarēs:

> In this general alarm the pitifulness of the local inhabitants was all too conspicuous. Far from uniting to defend their property with arms against the dreaded plunder—which would have been easy, in as much as there were at least four hundred rifles in Gondar, while not a single one of Mersu's men possessed a firearm—instead they carried the rifles into the churches, in order to keep them from being plundered along with the other booty.[48]

The distinction between Manz and Gondar suggested here is drawn in terms of "ideal types"—generalized dispositions which will, of course, not be true in every case and which will be found elsewhere in Ethiopia to a greater
*175 or lesser degree. It is interesting to note that in their own stereotypes, Ethiopians
829 tend to view the Manzēs as fighters, the Gondarēs as literati, but not vice
181 versa. Thus, an officer of the Imperial Bodyguard who commanded Ethiopian
184 troops in the Korean War has said:

> The Manzēs were excellent soldiers. They were independent, not so ready to obey commands as the Galla, but they had good ideas about fighting and were very brave in the battlefield. The soldiers from Gondar tended to be independent and insubordinate, too, but they were not very good soldiers, either.*

On the other hand, Ethiopians commonly consider Manz as much a land of the backward as they regard Gondar the home of the learned. Krapf observed

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* This stereotype of the Gondarē is combatted by Garimā Tīfara's book, *The Gondarē with His Shield* (*Gondarē Be-Gābdur* [Addis Ababa: Tasfā Gabra Selassie Press, 1957]), which records in great detail the contributions of individual Gondarēs to the fight against the enemy during the Italian occupation.

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*175 flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax
18 and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

633 *Gondar Today*

177 A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was
648 made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

633 After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953
[874] with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college.
[648] The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utilities as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty
[162] thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

633 With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a
871 modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aquāquām*
178 and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

633 Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine
771 church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other
793 cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national government, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his successors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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The Emerging Adolescent

While it is clear, as we have argued thus far, that a modernizing society stands to benefit from retaining or redefining many aspects of its traditional culture, it is also clear that in certain areas discontinuity is indispensable if significant change is to be brought about. Just what these areas are is something which presumably varies from nation to nation, though cross-cultural regularities may perhaps be uncovered in the course of further research. In the case of Ethiopia's incipient modernization, at least two subsystems of the traditional social system of the ruling Amhara have already undergone some sort of structural change: that of "secondary socialization," the complex of processes whereby skills and values necessary for adult life are imparted to adolescents; and that of the stratification system—the complex of arrangements whereby status is allocated to members of a society in accord with the various values upheld by the society.

An important precondition for the changes which have taken place in both of these areas was the establishment of a permanent capital: Addis Ababa, founded by Menelik in 1887[1] and now home for nearly half a million Ethiopians. Menelik's institution of the first government school in Addis Ababa in 1908 marked the beginning of a slow but steady process of introducing some of Ethiopia's youth to the novel skills and norms of modern Western culture. The concentration of power in Addis Ababa through the reign of Haile Selassie has diminished the status of the traditional Amhara elites and brought

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to

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622 land. When a person is asked where he is from, he will often give the local name for his "and debber agar" of origin.

● 634 The cheqa shum, village headmen, are supervised by the district chief, "worädä shum", who is also appointed by the
625 governor. The district chief in turn appoints his own police, called "näch lëbash" (lit. "thiefcathers in white"), who wear no special uniforms, merely the usual white togas, and carry rifles, in the use of which they are expert. They are used not only against petty thieves but against more dangerous bandits also. Their efficiency is commonly regarded as far superior to that of the uniformed urban police. Usually there is one näch lëbash per half-district ("meketl worädä") or two per district, unless an increase in banditry ("shifta") requires more.

651 Taxes, paid often in produce but increasingly in cash, are collected from each cheqa shum, but not by the district chief himself. For this task the governor has appointed a lieutenant, "mislanë", per district ("worädä"), who ranks equal with the worädä shum and expects aid from the latter. Usually the mislanë is a stranger to the district and himself a sort of glorified retainer and account-keeper from the court of the governor of the sub-province ("awraja") who has appointed him; while the district chief is a local man who may conspire with his village headman to keep local prosperity from the knowledge of the governor's central office. The latter therefore has to rely on the cleverness of his lieutenants, the "mislanë".

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651 The administrative pyramid rests squarely on the shoulders of the cheqa shum. He collects local dues for

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

THREE LOCAL EXAMPLES OF TENURE

423 Three local examples will illustrate tenure. The first is from Gojjam under Ras Hailu.[1] The province was divided into fourteen districts. 634 Most of these were in turn divided into two or three sub-districts. In each of the fourteen districts was a district governor (*abagaz*), who generally bore the title of *dejazmach*, and an assistant or deputy (*Mislané*). These men, appointed solely at the governor's will, were in general charge of the administration and jurisdiction of the district. Beside them functioned the *gulta gaji*, who was always a local man whose title was hereditary in certain families. He oversaw the collection of taxes, settled small cases between the *gabars*, and acted as liaison between the government and the people. He appointed as assistants a *chiqa-shum* for each village-group, an office which was held for a year and rotated among heads of families.

651 The list of the tributes paid to the various officials is very indefinite as to the amount and is of value only as indicating very generally the complexity of the system rather than the exact weight of the burden carried by the peasantry or the proportions taken by the different officers. Taxes and payments were divided as follows between the various authorities.

Government	Tithe in grain.
	Tax of $2 on each pair of oxen.
	afarsata fines.[2]
	Tax of $1 on each hut.
Abagaz (district governor)	Court Fees.
	Labour dues.
	Dues for use by men and cattle of warm mineral springs.
Mislané (deputy)	*Irbo* (a proportion of the government tax paid in kind).
	A proportion of the court fees paid to the *abagaz*.
	Labour dues.
Gulta gaji (hereditary chief)	A proportion of the grain crop of his district.
Chiqa-shum (village head)	His reward was exemption from taxation during year of office.[3]

[1] From information obtained locally by F. de Halpert. [2] See p. 149.

[3] It may be of some slight help in interpreting the money payments to note that the penal code of 1930 equates a quarter of a dollar with one day's work of an unskilled labourer. (Clause 6.)

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[For historical information on the region of Manz in Shoa Province, along with its succession of leaders, its warfare with the Galla, and internal strife, see category 175.]

634 635 Parish and Hamlet. The highland zones can be divided along three complementary social dimensions---po-
*[192] litical, ecclesiastical, and economic. Politically, the province is divided into awraja (sub-province), warada (district of a sub-province), and meketel warada (sub-
632 district). The meketel warada consists of fifteen to
361 thirty parishes (deber). The parish, in turn, is com-
*[192] posed of three to ten hamlets (mender), each consisting
592 of ten to fifty households (bet). Most households consist of husband, wife, unmarried sons, and pre-pubscent daughters[11]; a minority of households consist of aged spouses only, or of widowed individuals living by them-
592 selves. Characteristically, the households of a hamlet
361 are dispersed, so that any one is perhaps 100 to 300 meters from its closest neighbors.

647 While officials of the provincial and sub-provincial governments are generally out-landers appointed by the central government, administrators of the warada and meketel warada are usually members of the local gen-
*[192] try. Within the parish, civil administration is in the hands of the ceka Yum, a petty administrator who imple-

[582] [11]Since it is common for a girl to marry at 11 or
[591] 12, but to delay the virilocal move until age 15 or 16, the natal household may include a married daughter.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MPS Amhara MPS
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Table 1. Population Estimates of the 12 Ethiopian Provinces

Administrative Province	Area in Square Kilometers	Official estimate of population 1954	Ethnic Preponderance (author's comments) Language	Religion	Additional Remarks
Begemder	78,200	1,800,000	Amharic	Coptic	some border Muslim and highland Falashas.
Gojjam	62,900	1,600,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Agau (old Cushitic)speakers
Shoa	78,700	2,100,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Gurage-speakers
Tigre	67,000	1,000,000	Galla, Tigrina.	Coptic	
Wollo	78,700	1,000,000	mostly Galla	Coptic	some Amharic
Wollega	67,200	1,000,000	Galla,Amharic	Coptic	some border Shanqalla(negroid, Nilotic-speaking)
Arussi	36,000	1,000,000	Galla	Muslim-"pagan"	
Hararge	404,000	1,600,000	Galla, some Somali	Muslim-"pagan"	some Somali semi-nomad tribes
Ilubabor	50,000	1,300,000	Galla, Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"	many border Shanqalla & other negroids
Kaffa	49,000	1,200,000	Galla,Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"-Muslim	many border negroid
Gamu-Gofa	39,000	900,000	Sudanese,Galla	"pagan"	border negroids
Sidamo	102,000	1,250,000	old-Cushitic (Sidamo,Wollamo)	"pagan"	some nomadic border tribes
	1,110,000	15,750,000			
(Eritrea, federated 1952)	119,000	1,100,000	Bedja(Cushitic) Tigre(Semitic) Nilotic	Muslim Coptic	

554 635 Considerable reduction has been the lot of the title "ras", which in the past stood for not only military marshall, but often dynastic head of a province with private armies loyal only to him, and therefore often in competition with the throne. Of the old dynastic nobilities, the following heads still hold the title "ras":

Ras Kassa and Ras Imru, both kinsmen of the present emperor; Ras Haylu of the provincial dynasty of Gojjam, who is under close supervision; Ras Seyum of the provincial dynasty of Tigre, also under close control; Ras Gäbre Haywot of Dessie province, a kinsman of the present empress. A non-member of the old dynasties has been advanced to "ras" for loyal service: Ras Abebe, war hero and now minister of war.

[554] 562 Young noblemen who have mastered the art of horsemanship, as they are expected to, still assume a "war name", called "<u>färäs sem</u>" (lit. horse name), and name their favorite steed accordingly, much like medieval knights. For example, Emperor Menelik II could be politely addresses as "Abba Daño" (lit. Father of Judgment, his horse name) which he had assumed as a young man, after which his battle horse "daño" was named, and which flattered him both by emphasizing his position as the country's supreme ruler and judge, and by referring to his admired record as victor in many difficult battles. Emperor Haile Selassie I assumed the horse name "Abba Taqlay" (lit. he enveloped, i.e. the enemy) when a young nobleman, but no longer uses it.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Provincial administration can be summarized as follows:

Table 6: The New, Centralized, Provincial Administration.

Location:	Administrator:	Staff:	
Provincial Capital-urban-center of province.	"täqlay gäj" (Governor-general) appoints lower office-holders; often absent, at court of Emperor.	Director-General, appointed by cent. govt.; always in residence.	Secretary-general "wana tsähafi" appointed by central govt.; always in residence. Does most of routine adminis.
Administers mostly from provincial capital	"awraja gäj" governor of sub-province (e.g. 6 in Begemdir province) Appointed by Governor-general.	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from District capital.	"wäräda gäj", district chief. (24 in Begemdir province) sometimes old "mislanä". Appointed by Governor-general	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from District capital.	"yäneketl wäräda gäj" chief of about 1/10 of the district. (255 in Begemdir province). Position must be confirmed by Governor-general, through "däj tenat"	Appoints own staff.	
Administers from own village.	"cheqa shum" headman of "mändär" or "änd debber agär". Confirmed by Governor-general.	Can improvise unpaid staff.	

631 It is noteworthy that in this structure the Gover-
635 nor-general of the province is the only administrator
178 permitted to appoint the next two highest officers of his own staff (since 1942). This is in line with the consistent development since 1916, when the present emperor, then regent, began the process of sweeping away the power of the top of the feudal-provincial pyramid. The "ras" gradually lost their private armies, and were expressly forbidden, by decree in 1942, to make treaties between provinces regarding boundaries or political or military matters.

[648] Contact with foreigners was also taken out of the exclusive jurisdiction of the Governor-general of the province, since foreigners going to the provinces require permits issued by the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa; these permits have to presented to the provincial administrators before local travel is allowed . Even the control over the "Kantiba", the mayors of the major towns, was taken from the Governor-general of the province, and invested, by decree of 1942, in the "Director of Municipalities" in the Ministry of Interior. This central control over municipalities was evident in 1953, when mayors were called to Addis Ababa by the Director of Municipalities, for a reprimand from the emperor for having permitted his boarding establishments at elementary schools, intended for war orphans, to become filled with the sons of well-to-do feudal nobility.

631 The feudal nobility, though much less powerful
565 than in the past, plays a more informal, but still

671 [627] accumulate in a lifetime. The present price is usually Eth$1000.-.

[696] This practice is so strong that even at present a judge of a semi-modern court in Addis Ababa will suspend a prison sentence for involuntary manslaughter on condition that the murderer accumulate this sum and pay it to the victim's kinfolk—a wise decision preventing a new chain of murders. Recently a uniformed policeman in Addis Ababa, who was under this sentence for just that crime, made his tour among resident Europeans in the business district, begging money, with a letter in English explaining his need, signed by his own superior officer!

635 692 The absolute powers of the "ras" or "negus" in the past were limited only by the geographical boundaries of their effective military and administrative realms. All of them sat in judgment of their subjects, and combined legislative, judicial and executive powers in their persons. But each subject had the right to appeal directly to this highest authority against unjust treatment by a lower officer, provided he could throw himself in the path of the ruler and catch his attention. This right to "abyät" ("Hear me") continues to this day.

697 Nearly all "ras" and "negus" of the past maintained political prisons for their noble relatives who might become contenders to the throne. These prisons were not walled, but located on inaccessible mountain tops, "amba", and sometimes referred to as "wäheni". One such "wäheni" was located at a place called Geshan, in the old, smaller, Begemdir district, and was used by the kings of Gondar

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie-Debra Tabor
[491] road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos-Addis Ababa road. Here Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint.
[132] Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's
[341] capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns: an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and
[231] dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputation of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia
175 since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'état* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the
[103] Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem
[632] father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to
[563] internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south-north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929-31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north:
[578] Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean
[635] border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support
[662] of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE PROVINCES: GENERAL

PROVINCIAL DIVISIONS BEFORE 1935

635 Ethiopia has been presented hitherto from the centre and the provinces have been viewed outwards from Addis Ababa, the headquarters of the Emperor and the main scene of his reforms. To understand the difficulties that lay, and that still lie, before him in extending these reforms, it is necessary, in so far as the scanty and capriciously distributed information allows, to make some general study of provincial administration. The judicial and military aspects have already been discussed. As the conditions in the conquered provinces of the south differ in important features from those of the north, they will be treated separately, though it should be remembered that the north, as the ancient realm of the governing people, provides the dominant type of provincial administration and that the south represents a modification of this rather than an independent system.

For administrative purposes the country was divided into a large number of provinces and districts. The distinction between the two was not always clear, and their numbers and boundaries seem to have been altered frequently. The units were of uneven size and some of them appear to have followed either historical or geographical divisions or lines of tribal distribution. The great traditional northern divisions were modified by the later arrangements, but they were not obliterated to the same extent as were the old French provinces under Napoleon's administrative pattern.[1] Shoa, Gojjam, and Tigré, with its peculiar language, stood out from the rest for their size and importance, but

[1] No official maps of Ethiopia before 1935 are available, and map 1 has been made by F. de Halpert. It was necessary to include this in addition to the map of the 1945 divisions, not only because of its historical interest, but also because it contains some names of historical or tribal importance which have been dropped out of the new, simplified map.

[pp 1-261 not processed]

THE PROVINCES: GENERAL

many of the smaller units retained, like them, much of their old historical 635
and cultural identity.

The provinces do not fall very easily into administrative categories. 175
The deepest distinction is that which has just been mentioned between
the dominant Christian provinces of the old Ethiopia and those of the 563
south which were, in the main, conquered by the Shoan dynasty during 635
the second half of the last century. The dividing line runs approximately along the Blue Nile and across the middle of the modern Shoa, a little to the north of the capital. The region around the capital, though it lay just south of this line, may be regarded as having, since the reign of Sahla Selassié (1813), been progressively assimilated to Amharic society. In the vast area north of the line, below the structure of imperial power and that of the dominating and shifting ruling families there lay, still largely intact, the variegated social design of the Tigré and Amhara groups, closely interwoven with that of the ancient church and sanctioned by long custom. South of this line were Muslim and pagan people, many newly conquered, some of them partially disintegrated and dispossessed by their conquest, and all subject to a far more direct rule under the Shoan Emperor and his agents than was possible in the north. In both groups of provinces there were exceptional areas such as those of the northern Gallas, but it will be more convenient to give the Gallas a chapter to themselves as part of the south. The non-Galla southern provinces must be sub-divided into three groups, the Sidamo Hamites, the negro, and those Danakil and Somali regions, where the semi-desert nature of the country and the nomadic life of the tribes frustrated effective control by the Amharas. The northern provinces are sufficiently homogeneous for us to consider them, in very general terms, as a whole. A discussion of the administration of the provinces must be preceded by an attempt to assess the numbers and distribution of the people.

The main facts of the ethnology of the region have appeared in their 175
place in the historical introduction, but it may be useful to bring
together here some of these scattered facts. We saw that a mainly 563
Hamitic (or Cushitic) population, with negro fringes and pockets, was dominated in successive southward moving stages by those northern groups which had been mastered and stimulated by Semitic emigrants from Arabia, and how this mixed Semitic-Hamitic people had gradually spread its domination over the northern half of the present boundaries to make the Ethiopian state and nation. It has been recounted how Christianity came in the fourth century and how the great movement of Galla peoples from the east and south-east, aided by the Muslim invasions of the sixteenth century, flooded into large areas of Ethiopia.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

643 the 600 years or more of which we have reliable knowledge, neither side until this century seems to have gained upon the other.

●635 The crucial question was the appointment of the provincial governor. In theory his position was entirely dependent upon the Emperor. In all polities to which the word feudal can, in however general a sense, be applied, land tenure and land tribute were closely allied with the holding of office. It was the constant effort of the Emperors to insist both upon this connection and upon their right to grant and to withdraw both office and tenure. It is more convenient, however, so long as the complementary nature of the two is borne in mind, to deal first with the office of provincial governor and then with land-tenure and tribute.

Most European kings of the middle ages were obliged to recognize the right of great feudal nobles to the hereditary succession of large territorial lordships which were sometimes linked with high central offices and were, in practice, impossible to divide from great provincial powers. In Ethiopia, by contrast, few instances could be quoted in which provincial governors succeeded in passing on their positions and the lands which went with them for more than three or four generations. The most striking exception—one that goes far to prove the rule—was that of the ruler of Wag who, retaining in this conservative country something of the divinity which once had hedged his family, that of the original Zagwé dynasty which ousted the Solomonian line from its imperial authority, was allowed very special privileges. It is probable that with most ruling families, the laxity with regard to marital relations and legitimate succession, which, as we saw, obscured the imperial genealogy, was a deterrent to the building up of strong lineages.

The keynote is struck in one of the earliest examples, that given by Alvarez, of the great office of *Bahr-nagash*, ('king of the sea', i.e. the northern marches province near the coast). 'For in our time, which was a stay of six years', he writes, 'there were here four *Barnagais*, that is to say, when we arrived Dori was *Barnagais*; he died, and at his death the crown came to Bulla, his son, a youth of ten to twelve years of age, by order of the Prester John.[1] When they crowned him he was at once summoned to court, and while he was at the Court Prester John took away his sovereignty and gave it to a noble gentleman. . . . This man held it two years, and they took from him his lordship and made him the greatest lord of the Court . . . and the lordship of *Barnagais* was given to another lord. . . .'[2] And again, 'The Prester John deposes them and appoints them whenever he pleases, with or without cause. . . . I saw great lords turned out of their lordships, and others put into them,

[1] I.e. the Emperor. [2] Alvarez, pp. 52–3.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

and I saw them together, and they appeared to be good friends. (God knows their hearts.)'[1] 'And it is so usual', wrote d'Almeyda in the next century, 'for the Emperor to chop, change, and take . . . the lands any man has and to bestow them on another, that it is never thought much of, and very often one plows, another sows, and a third reaps.'[2] Yet practice was never quite the same as theory. The Emperor's claim to make grants of land and office depending solely upon his will waxed and waned according to the changing balance of the social and political forces. Thus we find Ludolphus, while stating the general rule, remarking that there were some prefectures which the Emperor would have to bestow upon another member of the same family. He names six of these, including that of the *Bahr-nagash* and the *Wag-Shum*. Ludolphus has more to tell of the Emperor's views on this question. 'Moreover they presume that Hereditary Dignity is an obstacle to Virtue; that Men are more certainly made, than born great; and that they will prove more faithful, whom they have raised from the Dust, than such as claim their fortunes from their Ancestors.'[3]

To trace the changing movements in this tug-of-war would require a recapitulation of the involved internal struggles, battles of kites and crows, which fill the chronicles and the political details of which are no more interesting than those of our Wars of the Roses. Only a few important phases need be picked out. From d'Almeyda and Ludolphus we must pass on to the eighteenth century, when the royal power fell very low. Ras Mikael of Tigré, who dominates Bruce's story as Satan dominates Paradise Lost, was not a man an Emperor could dismiss; on the contrary he himself dismissed, and, indeed, murdered, more than one Emperor. At this time, even the Gallas of Damot could insist upon the son of the former Galla governor succeeding to the governorship and they killed the Emperor's uncle who was sent to take over the province.[4] The kingdom of Shoa, as we saw in the historical introduction, was all but independent, and though its rulers paid lip service to the King of Kings in Gondar, none of these dared challenge the solid power and hereditary succession of this dynasty.

The Galla mayors of the palace at Gondar struggled to raise the power of the decadent Solomonian rulers. One of these attempts to curb the growth of hereditary succession to offices and lands and to make a bid for the favour of the people against their lords, is of special interest in our context. Ras Gugsa passed the following decree in 1800:

'The land belongs to God. Man has only its usufruct. He fertilizes it by his labours: he passes: it swallows him and grows green again in

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 93. [2] Tellez, p. 63. [3] Ludolphus, p. 235.
[4] Jones and Monroe, pp. 122–3.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

Gojjam when its king, Takla Haimanot, died in 1901. He wished to break up this large kingdom, but he did so only partially, leaving the eastern part to the son of the dead king. He also made it a habit to keep powerful chiefs waiting about at court, a favourite method of French kings and one that Theodore had applied to him in his own youth. The *Wag-Shum* was again deprived of his ancient hereditary succession by the Empress Taitu, in favour of her own nominee; but the *Shum* was later restored. As Menelik's physical power declined, so did his control until, during his last years, the provincial governors again became largely independent. Imperial authority over the governors declined still further under the unstable Lij Yasu, and was only very gradually restored in a new form by Haile Selassié. 175

We have seen that even the present Emperor had to pay some attention to the hereditary position of great families in those northern regions which had a traditional jealousy of Shoa and in which opposition and rebellion were most likely to appear. In his early days as Regent the provincial governors still remained very independent. Ras Hailu, for instance, did not come near the capital for years. Provincial tribute was very low. Chiefs were allowed to rule the country with which their family had been associated until some misdeed or act of disloyalty brought deposition. Hence Haile Selassié confirmed Ras Hailu in his father's position in Gojjam, and punished his contumacy with disinheritance and imprisonment only later when he was strong enough for this action. Similarly he felt obliged to confirm Ras Seyum in his ancestral lordship of Tigré. It was the decision to grant Ras Seyum, at the expense of his cousin *Dejazmach* Haile Selassié Gugsa, the lion's share of the family lands, which threw the latter into the arms of the Italians in 1935. Ras Gugsa Wallié's position in the provinces of Lasta and Bagemdir was based upon family connections, and when he was killed during his rebellion in 1930 the substitution of Ras Kassa was appropriate because of his connection with the former rulers of Lasta through his mother. Ras Kassa's son was made governor of Bagemdir in 1942 in recognition, presumably, of the family connection.

The present Emperor himself might be given as the representative of a branch of the royal line which has held the great province of Harar since his father Ras Makonnen conquered it and was confirmed in its lordship by his cousin Menelik. The lands and governorship of this province were inherited by Makonnen's eldest son and, upon his death, went to the younger brother, Tafari. Though Lij Yasu, when he came of age, transferred this potential rival to a south-west province, Tafari had left behind him in Harar an army that was loyal to his house, and when the clash came it rallied to him and Lij Yasu lost his throne. 643 [635]

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THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

[643] Harar is now ruled over by the Emperor's second son. While it is clearly difficult to deduce constitutional rules from conflicts at this 635 level, turning our glance to a lower one we may note that in addition to the few examples of continuity, many others could be given of frequent changes of governorship, even in the north, by both Menelik[1] and Haile Selassié. These would illustrate their ability to act upon these rights in this way, at those times in their reigns when they were strong enough to do so.

It is interesting to consider more closely the exact position as to the distribution of governorships on the eve of the Italian invasion. For convenience the south, which must be discussed in somewhat more detail later, has for this purpose been included with the north. According to an authoritative Italian writer, the number of provinces was thirty-two; of these, six might be regarded as being headed by governors of local hereditary status. They were Wag, Tigré (divided between two local notables), Wallaga, the small region of Beni-Shangul under local Muslim governors, and Salale under Ras Kassa. Eastern and southern Shoa was a royal dominion; Wallo, Harar, and Ogaden were also personal fiefs of the Emperor governed by his sons. The remaining twenty-one provinces were all under the Emperor's men, governors appointed by him from among his closest relatives and supporters, including a few of the 'new' younger and more progressive officials.[2] This analysis would suggest that, by the end of the first part of his reign, Haile Selassié, as far as appointments of governors were concerned, had succeeded in controlling very directly some two-thirds of the country.

Mr. de Halpert, however, in information supplied to the writer, is 631 critical of these categories as being too exact. He points out that in the 635 Ethiopia of 1935 it was almost impossible to say which division was a province and which a district. Tigré, Shoa, and Gojjam, as ancient kingdoms, were really subdivided into a number of administrative districts. He would also dispute the exact significance of some of the appointments. Without discussing these points in further detail, it may at least be assumed that the provinces and districts could be roughly divided into those that were more and those that were less closely under imperial control and that the former were the more numerous and were upon the increase.

THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR

635 The governor then, according to theory, was appointed and dismissed

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 487.

[2] Zoli, 'L'Impero Italiano dell'Africa Orientale', *Bollettino della R. Societa Geografica Italiana*, series VII, vol. 1, no. 8, pp. 473–84.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

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by the Emperor and was his representative in the province. His exact title varied. He might rise to the height of that of *Negus*; he might be a ras. More frequently in recent years he held the next title in rank, that of *dejazmach*. He was the general of the provincial army, the judge and the administrator. He was paid no salary. He paid himself, his entourage, and his soldiers from the tribute of the province. On the pecuniary side, in addition to the tithes and other tribute, he collected the profits of justice and the tolls on the borders of his province. The tolls being collected from the merchants would be one of his few sources of cash, especially before this century.[1] 635 [651]

It has already been said that no estimate is possible of the proportion of tribute passed on by the governors to the Emperor. It seems probable, however, that where any tribute was paid the amount varied according to the arrangements made between the Emperor and the governor and probably also, from time to time, according to the needs and the power of the Emperor and the advisability of appeasing him with tribute. It is certain that large caravans taking rich gifts of cloth, horses, mules, and gold ceased long before this century to come in to the Emperor from any of the northern provinces.[2] 651

The governor, especially if he were a local grandee, was a very great man. The Ethiopians, like many other peoples, love the trappings of power. It was the ambition of most men to wear fine clothes and to have at least one or two slaves or servants to run beside the stirrup. The governors naturally aimed at reproducing as far as they could the style of the Emperor's palace. They lived at the highest level they could afford, each with a court of his own and a circle of officials of his own appointment, whose titles were current only in the province. When they gave out lands and offices to their followers they tried, like the Emperor, to prevent these becoming hereditary and aimed at unsettling their holders from time to time.[3] Ethiopians tended to gravitate round the households of a great man with its hospitality, its atmosphere of movement, of security and opportunity. The governor's headquarters would be crowded with supporters, suitors, the soldiers of his personal bodyguard, priests, musicians, jesters, servants, and slaves. Upon festivals he kept open house and like his Emperor gave great feasts of raw meat and mead. A description of the lavish hospitality of the Ras of Angote given in the sixteenth century[4] reads almost word for word the same as those of the entertainments described by other travellers 400 years later. 635 661

When a governor travelled, especially upon taking up or leaving his appointment, it was a serious affair for the country upon which he

[1] Rüppel, E., *Reise in Abessinien*, Frankfurt, 1838–40, vol. 2, p. 35.
[2] See above, pp. 191–3. [3] Hotten, pp. 145–6. [4] Alvarez, pp. 136–7.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

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635 661 lived in passing and upon which he could levy purveyance. His passage was an affair of pomp, in which important ladies had to be considered and a retinue taken, which might swell to many hundreds of soldiers and servants with all their families, slaves, and transport animals. Such journeys were veritable expeditions, not to be undertaken lightly. A journey right across the country might take several weeks, and in parts the rains made travel laborious or impossible for some five months of the year. The difficulty of communication gave the governor an independence of which he made full use. Governors of ancient divisions with a tradition of autonomy and governors from the royal family were generally allowed to rule with little interference. In this century 177 206 507 the main provincial capitals were connected with Addis Ababa by telephone and this, with aeroplanes, which were just beginning to come into use before 1935, were the first threats to the isolation of the governors, which has since, in most parts, been so greatly diminished by the Italian roads. The Emperor had his agents who kept a watch upon governors and reported upon their doings; this kind of espionage was a highly developed system in Ethiopia. The governors on their side kept representatives in the capital. But this did nothing to overcome what several observers have remarked as the besetting sin of Ethiopian administration, the refusal to take any constructive responsibility. Governors of the old school were mainly concerned with the conservation of their own power, the collection of their tribute, and the fulfilment of their military duties. It would have been quite outside their range of thought to initiate new ideas of reform or to put down time-honoured abuses. Some of the governors spent much of their time at Addis Ababa and their deputies tended to be even more conservative in their use of authority than their masters.

635 Although the emphasis here is upon administration, it must not be forgotten that the governor was historically and in Ethiopian eyes primarily a high military officer and his civil duties were no more than the necessary accompaniment of his command. He had—as was shown anew in 1935—to raise and lead his provincial army in war. Some description has, however, already been given of the army, and there will be no need to discuss it further in this chapter except in the next section in relation to land tenure.

622 THE VILLAGE CHIEF

We have seen that by 1935 it was rare for a great local landed potentate to hold the highest provincial office; in most instances this was held by the Emperor's nominees. But this was not the only link the Emperor

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423 when combined they represented the most coveted of all tenures as well as the one most weakening to the imperial authority.

From the different kinds of grant made to the various classes, the governors, the churches, the soldiers and others, for various purposes, arose the many categories of land tenure.

THE GOVERNOR AND THE LAND

636 651 661 423 The position of the provincial governor was relatively simple. He collected the whole of the Emperor's tribute within the province (in so far as this had not already been granted away by a process which will be examined presently), and he used it for the support of his administration, which meant of himself, his deputies, judges, messengers, and above all, the soldiery. As we have seen in the chapter upon public finance, it is impossible to generalize upon the proportion of tribute which the governor sent on to his Emperor except that it varied with the distribution of power at any given time between the two of them, and in the north might range from the refusal by a distant and almost autonomous governor to send anything but perhaps a token payment to the large tributes in kind and in money which are described by observers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It is frequently stated in the European accounts of Ethiopia that the office of governor, like all other offices, was sold by the Emperor and by this method, injurious as it was, he would be sure of at least some return. He would also have an interest in frequent changes of office; the governor's interest would consequently be in extorting all he could from his province as rapidly as possible. 'They are generally more like robbers than governors', was the conclusion of one witness.[1] 'The governors purchase their Commissions, or to speak properly their privilege of pillaging the Provinces" concludes another.[2] 'You are governor of Ras el Feel', the Emperor's secretary announced to Bruce. 'I hope you will never see it. It is a hot, unwholesome country, full of Mahometans, but its gold is as good as any Christian gold whatever.'[3]

That these exactions continued into Haile Selassié's day was shown by the measures he took in his endeavours to reform the provincial administration. These exactions would certainly be less in the northern provinces where the governor was dealing with an ancient society, that of his own people, in which all relationships and tributes were sanctified by long established custom.

The governor would parcel out the tribute he controlled amongst his many lieutenants in the districts and amongst his own and the Emperor's

[1] Tellez. p. 53. [2] Lobo, *op. cit.*, p. 263. [3] Bruce, vol. 3, p. 365.

1 [not processed. - Analyst]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
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soldiers. He would also have, like the Emperor, official estates set aside 635
for the upkeep of his large household and it would be these he would 651
be most anxious to retain if he lost his governorship. For these estates 661
he could call up the labour of soldiers and *gabars*.[1] Parkyns recorded 423
in the mid-nineteenth century that for his estates the governor could
exact one day's work for clearing, one for sowing, two for cleaning,
and two for harvesting, and this was still the custom in this century.[2]
Instead of cultivating his estates directly by using labour in this way, [427]
the governor might lease his land to tenants who would pay him a stated
proportion of the crop as rent. According to one authority in the north,
governors claimed that one tenth of all privately owned land should also
be cultivated for him and he would himself choose the lands. Where,
as in Tigré, the governorship tended to remain for a period in the same
family this was not so grave an injury to the province, but if a governor
from outside were sent in the people might not dare to demand back
the lands from the local family and were obliged to set aside new lands
for their new governor.[3] Besides the governor's estates there would be
others attached to the various offices of his assistants.

In addition to their more regular dues from the people it was customary for governors and their assistants to demand special gifts from time to time, such as a sheep from each village at Easter and at the festival of the true cross.

THE CHURCH AND THE ARMY

The Emperors were always extremely generous to the church, even if 794
they had not gone so far as to allocate that third of the original legend 423
which the famous cleric Takla Haimanot claimed in 1270. Every priest, 651
monk, *debtera*, and deacon, in so far as he was excused from the work
of the fields, required that land furnished with slaves or *gabars* should
be set aside for his support. A vast total of land was burdened with
this service. The piety of Emperors warred here with their political
interests—at one moment they were moved to give, at another to resume
their gifts. But it was not easy to assert the royal claim against monasteries which were undying corporations or against churches which needed permanent endowment and were, moreover, served by priests determined to pass on their lands with their offices to their sons. Moreover, the very character of the grants protected them. Their most

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–91.
[2] Parkyns, M., *Life in Abyssinia*, 1853, vol. 2, p. 230. Also Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
[3] Rossini, pp. 107–8.

11: Levine

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[For historical information on the region of Manz in Shoa Province, along with its succession of leaders, its warfare with the Galla, and internal strife, see category 175.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

dolphus put it.[4] At length, unable to witness the further decimation of his people because of religious controversies, Susneyos abdicated in favor of his son Fāsil. Fāsil lost little time in deporting the Jesuits and restoring the Orthodox status quo. 175* 648 797 643

Recovery

In the wake of all these collisions, Ethiopia made two valiant attempts to regain equilibrium and glory: through the splendor of Gondar in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and through the force of three emperors of the nineteenth century—Tēwodros II, Yohānnes IV of Tigre, and Menelik II of Shoa. 175* 648 643

Gondar was founded as a new and stationary capital by Fāsil. It served as imperial headquarters for many generations. Later, the kingdom of Tigre knew a resurgence of power that led to control of the empire under Yohānnes (1872–89). His castle at Makalle symbolized one last rally for the north—after an interregnum of a thousand years—before being eclipsed by the Shoan throne.

The shock which began with the invasions of Ahmad Grañ shattered Ethiopia's medieval synthesis once and for all. The political consequence of those disruptions was an increase in provincialism, reaching its climax in the famous "Age of the Princes" (1755–1855) when each province had its own sovereign and for all practical purposes was a polity unto itself. The Solomonic line, the matrix of Ethiopian political unity, was splintered in several directions, leaving contenders in each of the provinces. Though the official imperial line remained at Gondar, Tigre was able to reassert its ancient claims and Gojjam recurrently voiced its separatism, and what may be called the "House of Manz" came to compete with Gondar as a center of national consciousness. 175* 178 635

This political division was accompanied by a peculiar cultural bifurcation. Elements of the national culture that had been rather evenly distributed before Ahmad Grāñ now became relatively specialized in Gondar and Manz. The recovery of Ethiopia produced a geographical division of manners and morals as well as several lines of Solomonic royalty. 175* 184

HISTORICAL PROFILES

The Role of Gondar 175* 633

Gondar is the only city in Ethiopia with charm and character expressive of Amhara culture. Even today, despite modern accretions, the remnants of its castles, walls, bridges, and sanctuaries transmit a stately calm, redolent of past nobility and African grandeur.

The town is situated on a flat volcanic ridge at seven thousand feet above 175* 361

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national government, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his successors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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bəjirond	guardian of royal property, treasurer (two)
liqa makuās	king's double and keeper of the king's mule
*āggāfāri**	protocol officer, superintendent of banquets

The status of these dignitaries may have been particularly vulnerable, depending so closely as it did on the whims of the monarch. Nonetheless their proximity to the center of imperial power gave them unique advantages. They were in a position to receive many gifts for favors and influence, as well as to come by some part of the royal revenues and to attend the royal banquets. They were consulted, together with military commanders, provincial governors, and high ecclesiastics, on important matters of state. Lands granted to them for their services enabled them to support small retinues of their own, including, in some cases, military contingents. They were normally an important factor in promoting stability and continuity during the troubled moments that usually followed the death of an emperor.[26]

565 554 The above classification of titles is meant only to provide a quick overview of their variety; no such formal compartmentation existed in the Abyssinian perspective. All the titles converged into a single hierarchy.[27] What is more, titles were not strictly connected to offices or functions, so military titles were frequently given to court or civil functionaries. This was particularly true of [644] the court of Menelik, where, for example, the Superintendent of Royal Tents bore the title *bālāmbārās* and the Chief Hand-washer that of *gerāsmāch*.[28] [635] For centuries before, moreover, provincial governors were often known by military rather than civil titles, and men holding civil titles were liable to be called to take part in military campaigns by the sovereign.

565 The sociological reality underlying this overlapping of titles among the nobility was the essentially unspecialized nature of their role. The ideal type of the *makuānnent* was at once governor, soldier, and courtier. In time of war he set forth at his own expense, with his own troops, to support the cause of the emperor, or perhaps simply to defend his own regional interests. In time of peace he might sojourn, if permitted, at the court of his king or overlord, eating and drinking with his peers, giving counsel to his liege when asked, engaged in intrigue and otherwise seeking to improve his station.

[427] When not active in warfare or the affairs of court, the nobleman would repair to his lands to supervise the agricultural production and the collection [643] of rents from his tenants. The emperors rewarded nobles who served them [423] with grants of land. The higher chieftains in turn rewarded their own fol- [427] lowers accordingly. These estates were usually held *in absentia*, the peasants

* *Āggāfāri* is an important title in the courts of provincial lords but is not mentioned in the court list of Iyāsu I, nor in that of the *Sərʿātu Mangəśt*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

reverted to the Crown unless specifically reconveyed to the heir by royal 565
proclamation. Political office was no less precarious. Governors were made 643
and unmade—by the traditional process known as *shum-shir* ("appoint- [423]
demote")—in short periods of time. The powerful position of governor of [635]
the maritime province (*bähr nagäsh*) changed hands four times during the six years that Alvares spent in Ethiopia. Even when tradition assigned a certain post to the descendants of a certain lord, the emperors were able to exert control by shifting their favor from one descendant to another from year to year. Titles, unlike land and office, were granted for life, as we observed; but [554]
they were in no case hereditary, and thus every Abyssinian's hope for a title, [428]
let alone a raise in rank, depended on the grace of the king or of his major appointees.

Given these conditions, it was not possible for the nobility to become a 565
closed, hereditary estate, or to develop a corporate identity capable of confronting the imperial will. On the contrary, thanks to the emperor's freedom [643]
to ennoble anyone whom he chose, there was a relatively high degree of social mobility, and the ranks of the upper strata were continuously being reshuffled.

Outstanding personal properties of various sorts often enabled Ethiopians of 565
low birth to rise to high positions. The emperors and great lords conferred 555
honors on those who served especially well in military expeditions, whatever 554
their origins. Menelik's promotion of two Galla prisoners to rank as his highest generals is a famous case in point. The royal favor occasionally smiled on low-born Ethiopians who excelled in such qualities as physical beauty or witty repartee.[22] Unquestionable personal loyalty was another quality in high de- [567]
mand; freed slaves were sometimes given offices and dignities, since their lack of ties to political families made them particularly trustworthy.

Abyssinians have thus cherished the idea that they could rise to a higher 565
station in life than that to which they were born. Comparatively few ever 554
tried to do so, probably, but ambitious souls were never wanting. Seeking some benefice, or the glory of a title, or a position of power that would permit them to help their kinfolk or avenge themselves for a wrong suffered at the hands of some superior, they would attach themselves to the lord whose fortunes seemed brightest at the moment and hope, by valorous service and God's favor, to arrive someday at an estimable position.[23]

Nevertheless, though ability and fortune might carry any man high in the political hierarchy, he would not thereby automatically be accepted as one of the *makuännent*. A self-respecting man of noble family would resist marrying his daughter to a commoner or person of dubious parentage, no matter how high a rank the latter obtained. For the Abyssinian nobility did form a self-conscious status group with a certain hereditary base. Its members shared a sense of superiority, a consciousness of kind, and an attitude toward commoners such as that expressed by the governor Takla Giyorgis to the Jesuit

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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[243] Preferred cereals cannot be grown here, instead sorghum, finger millet, and white tef (Eragrostis teff; an indigenous, [635] tiny-grained cereal) are produced. Moreover, the civil administration of the kola is less effective than in the highlands. Of the three zones, kola is the most sparse-[162] ly populated, and the only one to contain a substantial [563] indigenous non-Hamitic population. These are a Nilotic [567] people, horticulturalists living on the province's western periphery. Highlanders refer to them by a putative tribal nomer, "Shankella", and, until recent times, obtained their domestic slaves from this population. Even now, Nilotes living in the highlands are popularly known as bariya, "slave".

Weyna dega lands are located between 1800 and 3000 [136] meters. This is parkland beyond the range of the ano-[243] pheles mosquito, and ideal for growing preferred cereals, [231] wheat and red teff. Here, as in the other zones, agriculture is complemented by the raising of sheep, goats, and chickens for food; cattle for meat, milk, and plowing; donkeys to carry burdens across the broken plateau lands; and horses and mules as mounts.

Dega lands are the sections of the plateau which [243] extend beyond the 3000 meter mark. In their lower reaches, wheat and red teff are grown, but at higher altitudes [233] barley is the dominant cereal. The lands above 4000 meters cannot be cultivated, although some are used for grazing.

634 635 Parish and Hamlet. The highland zones can be divided along three complementary social dimensions---po-
*[192] litical, ecclesiastical, and economic. Politically, the province is divided into awraja (sub-province), warada (district of a sub-province), and meketel warada (sub-
632 district). The meketel warada consists of fifteen to
361 thirty parishes (deber). The parish, in turn, is com-
*[192] posed of three to ten hamlets (mender), each consisting
592 of ten to fifty households (bet). Most households consist of husband, wife, unmarried sons, and pre-pubscent daughters[11]; a minority of households consist of aged spouses only, or of widowed individuals living by them-
592 selves. Characteristically, the households of a hamlet
361 are dispersed, so that any one is perhaps 100 to 300 meters from its closest neighbors.

647 While officials of the provincial and sub-provincial governments are generally out-landers appointed by the central government, administrators of the warada and meketel warada are usually members of the local gen-
*[192] try. Within the parish, civil administration is in the hands of the ceka Zum, a petty administrator who imple-

[582] [591] [11]Since it is common for a girl to marry at 11 or 12, but to delay the virilocal move until age 15 or 16, the natal household may include a married daughter.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

times brought dissension to the state, the legitimate Crown was triumphant 175*
most of the time.

In the history of Ethiopian literature the period has been called a Golden 175*
Age.[1] The important works composed during this time include *The Glory of* 538
Kings, which contains the story of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon, and their offspring, Menelik I, legendary first king of Ethiopia; *The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth,* a compilation of occult theology and numerology, with a Miltonic account of the struggle between Michael and Satan; *The Christian Romance of Alexander the Great,* a fantastic portrayal of Alexander as a Christian hero who traverses the Land of Darkness and the miraculous Land of the Living; the moralizing tracts of the greatest emperor of the period, Zar'a Yā'qob; as well as numerous lives of saints and translations of Christian writings from Arabic.

Connoisseurs of Ethiopian art attribute the most original and refined paint- 175*
ings to the latter part of this period. Using translucent colors and austere 532
shapes and design, Ethiopian monks brought to expression an intense spirituality in the form of miniatures in illuminated manuscripts.[2]

At the same time this was the Heroic Age of Ethiopian warfare. Amda 175*
Ṭseyon vanquished sixteen Muslim chiefs to the south and west; the valor of 648
Sayfa Ar'ed was celebrated in medieval Arab tales of chivalry; Dāwit I pushed his victories against the Muslims as far as Zeila on the Gulf of Aden. Improved military equipment and organization under Yeshāq brought the imperial forces to a new level of discipline and power, which Yeshāq used to establish his authority in many southern areas. Zar'a Yā'qob, famous for endowing churches and monasteries and for encouraging literature and art, was a successful warrior in his own right.

A close-up of Ethiopia at the height of its medieval synthesis is provided 175*
by Father Francisco Alvares, Portuguese emissary to Abyssinia during the 64 •
years 1520–27.[3] We see a prosperous kingdom, its far-flung dominions headed 631
by hereditary rulers and royal appointees, all of whom pay tribute in kind to [651]
the emperor. The tribute consists of horses and mules, blankets and cloths, silk stuffs and gold, all in impressive amounts. The provincial heads, and the armies they must make available, live off the land they govern. The numerous priests and monks are supported by lands granted them by the king. Justice [69]
is administered at three levels, with the possibility of appeal from the local judge, to the provincial governor, to the royal court itself. The king's mobile camp, large as a town, is his capital, so that he spends his years marching about from one corner of his domain to another.

The monarch at the time of Alvares' visit was Lebna Dengel (1508–40), a 175*
man of pride and temper. He refused to heed counsel that the kingdom was 643
imperiled by threats from the outside. Indeed, legend has it that he was discontented with the prevailing civil harmony and begged God to send an ad-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national government, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his successors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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The Old and New Elites

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that character-
170 izes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary
178 Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

[433] In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels: coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal [671] realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The govern- [64] mental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial [795] system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious [794] institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

121 This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratifi-
56 cation.
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

poses. They have been led to renounce extreme particularistic ambitions, thanks to marital connections, intimidation, the lure of new benefits, and a degree of nationalism, but to some extent they remain spokesmen for regional and para-dynastic interests. 178 565

Men who did not belong to the old nobility were recruited into the new nobility on the basis of two criteria, loyalty and ability, with loyalty clearly the more important of the two. Some men from very humble backgrounds have been thus raised to the highest governmental positions through their "loyalty" to the Emperor, manifested in great part by their readiness to inform on the words and deeds of others and their obsequious and flattering manner. These have normally not been given the traditional military titles but only the titles of their office. In contrast with the carry-overs from the old nobility, still known as *masäfent* and *makuännent*, these men have been called *bäläseltän* ("holders of power"). They have included a number of men who were active in the fight against the Italians, either through the Hagara Fiqer ("National Patriotic Association," a group organized in 1935 to promote Ethiopian unity and combat Italian propaganda) or as patriotic fighters in the resistance. The Emperor also promoted to high position some men who collaborated with the Italians, relying on their earlier record as an insurance against latter-day disloyalty, and using their antagonism against the patriots as a check against excessive ambitions of the latter. 178 565 554 [648]

On the other hand, the new nobility includes those who, whether from high family background or not, are so placed because of outstanding ability. This consideration is no longer primarily a question of military ability, but of competence in dealing with technical modern subjects and with foreign diplomats. This group may be equated with the older generation of European-educated Ethiopians. The categories of adjusted aristocrats, ambitious parvenus, and intellectual bureaucrats have thus constituted a latent subdivision among the new nobility; and tensions have from time to time been expressed along those lines. [555]

Despite the elaboration of modern governmental structures under Haile Selassie, the dominant principle of the social order has been that of royal sovereignty. The entire staff of government officials has been the direct sociological descendant of the traditional court retinue. This was conspicuous in the titles given by Menelik to a number of the original ministers: *Aṣa Negus* for Minister of Justice; *Azäzh* for Minister of Palace; *Bajirond* for Treasurer; and *Ṭsahäfi Te'ezäz* for Minister of Pen. These and other court titles remain in use today. The primacy of the court over all other functions appears in periodic audiences at the palace, when all high government officials and other notables are expected to pay their respects no matter what business may be pending in their offices. The chief value embodied in the status group of the new nobility as a whole has been that of loyalty to the sovereign. 178 64 [195]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shir*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
• 64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shĭr* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chĭqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chĭqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chĭqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chĭqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chĭqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chĭqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 794

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fixed rules and to respect their opponents. Until a few years ago, the imperfect acceptance of these norms was shown by the frequent fights between opposing school teams following soccer and basketball games. But gradually a new tradition of athletic activity has been building up in the schools, and with it the related norms have started to gain greater acceptance. 883* 577 178 871

Still another value that the school experience has promoted is that of social responsibility. Most students are very grateful to the government for having provided them with schooling and related benefits, and they feel a keen obligation to show their gratitude by serving their country. They have also become conscious of the great needs of their people for economic and social development. In Amhara society, service was expected in behalf of the family and, except for mass levies in time of warfare, usually stopped there. The modern adolescents are still mindful of their obligations to their parents and siblings, but have now included broader ideals of social service in their moral orientation. When asked what they expect to bring most satisfaction in their lives, the students named "improvement of local community" more often than any other category except "career or occupation." (See Table 4.) When asked what they would do with a million dollars, more than a third answered in terms of purely social enterprises, such as building schools and hospitals, helping the poor and orphaned; and many others indicated private enterprises with specifically social purposes, such as improving agriculture and building factories to provide employment. 883* 641 577 185 [593]

It is difficult to determine how deeply the value of social responsibility has been internalized. In their public declarations, at any rate, the students wax eloquent in propounding ideals of good citizenship. They urge themselves to prepare for introducing modern ways to the uneducated; to return to the villages, integrate themselves with the old society, and lead them gently to better ways; to fight discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and social class; to solve the problem of corruption and bribery in the government; and to promote national solidarity.

Politics.—The Amhara adolescent has little occasion to develop specifically political attitudes, since his customary political world has been coterminous with subordination to legitimate local and national authorities, and defense of his country against invaders. Unless he was the son of a nobleman involved in struggles for power, there have rarely been any political issues to engage his attention. 883* 66

A host of issues, domestic and international, have by contrast been thrust upon the modern adolescent. Yet in comparison with students from the other countries of Africa and the Middle East, his political orientation is relatively undeveloped. Ethiopian students at regional or international gatherings of students have in the past tended to feel somewhat out of place, for the polit-

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*883 66 ical wit and activism displayed by students from other countries has embarrassed their cautious dispositions.

There are three reasons for this relative lack of politicization of the Ethiopian students. One is that, having maintained her ancient independence [648] throughout the "scramble for Africa," Ethiopia entered the twentieth century as an independent nation; and five years of Italian rule were not sufficient to shake her spirit. Ethiopian students have thus not had to participate in the anti-imperialist movement, the great school for political activism in the colonial areas.

[571] A second factor is the deeply rooted habit of total subordination to any [157] legitimate authority. Because of this orientation there is a persisting disposition to relegate concern for all political questions to the highest authorities. [577] Nearly two-thirds of the secondary students and a third of the college stu- [829] dents maintain that one should always obey the order of a superior, arguing that "obedience is a virtue," "things would not go right otherwise," and "the Bible says so."

*883 66 The third reason for the almost apolitical posture of Ethiopian students has been the absence of opportunities for political expression in their country. • 641 African students from British colonies have in the past been surprised to find that their colonial situation admitted far more freedom of speech and press than Ethiopia. Teachers are expected to keep anything remotely connected with Ethiopian politics out of the classroom, and the editors are expected to keep them out of the newspapers. Nor have the students been permitted to form any kind of politically relevant associations. Even casual discussion of domestic political problems among friends has been curtailed because of the all-pervading fear of government informers.

*883 66 All this has not prevented Ethiopian students from being affected to a moderate degree by the libertarian and egalitarian ideals of the West. The 177 teaching of European history in secondary school, evaluation of students' performance without respect to class or tribal affiliation, and the exercise of electing student officers in the colleges have acted to leaven the political imagination of the students. Many of them thus ventured a degree of political *883 criticism in their anonymous questionnaires. Forty-three per cent indicated 66 disapproval of the existing differences between "big men" and the common 829 people. Thirty-nine per cent were critical of the degree of control exerted by the government, of which group two-thirds felt that governmental controls are too strict (e.g., not permitting free expression), and one-third felt they were not strict enough (e.g., with respect to corruption and provincial administration).

*883 The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, jarred the Addis Ababa col- 668 lege students into an unprecedented state of political activity.[27] In response 669

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

appeared to the students as the source of their new goods; of their learning, 883*
health, and well-being. Because of a feeling that "he supplies everything" 121
and "he is my guardian," students of all grades have been among the most 178
sincere and enthusiastic supporters of Haile Selassie. So their adoption of 643
Western patterns has from the outset been legitimated by the highest tradi- [177]
tional authority, and the harshness of the culture clash has been softened by the symbolization of both tradition and modernity in the Imperial Person. Here the traditional pattern of "functional deviance" re-asserts itself. The 883*
adolescent rebels against the traditional demands of his parents, but expends 121
that deviant energy on behalf of legitimate symbols of the national society. 178

Related to this was a strong sense of national purposiveness. *Agarēnennā* 883*
negusēn tammrē iredālhu ("Having studied, I will serve my country and 121
my king")—this was the motto of most Ethiopian students in the forties and 641
fifties. The conspicuous needs of their country provided clear goals in terms 178
of which students felt they were preparing themselves.

Still another motive force was the need for personal justification. The many 883*
students who in a sense deserted their home villages or families in order to 121
spend years in school carried with them an ambition eventually to show the 178
folks back home that they were right after all. This involved the conviction 871
that going to school was the right, at times the righteous, thing: a blind faith that simply by continuing along the road of education they would make good in the world and return home some day as a sort of hero. Here, too, is an echo of the old deviant pattern: the renegade returning home, after many years, as a successful churchman or warlord.

The economic situation, finally, was encouraging for students. It seemed [464]
for many years that advanced training, including study abroad, would be available for whoever qualified, and that the demand for educated personnel was so great that the job opportunities for students would be endless.

By 1961, however, all these sources of adolescent morale—royal legitima- 883*
tion, national purpose, personal justification, and economic opportunity—had 121
been to some extent undercut. Some of the changing circumstances have al- 178
ready been referred to. The effect of the rebellion of December, 1960, and its 871
aftermath was to weaken the tie between Haile Selassie and the post-elemen- 643
tary students. With his moral authority somewhat undermined, the students could no longer use him to symbolize a conflict-free transition to modernity. Nor could they any longer count on him to "supply everything" indefinitely: in the summer of 1962 the Emperor announced the immediate suspension of room and board benefits for the students of the University College.

The students' outlook has further been rendered less sanguine by the con- 883*
fusion attending the political crisis of the sixties. They no longer feel the 121
keen sense of national purpose, to serve "country and king." Their ideals in 178
this regard were already weakening before the rebellion by virtue of increased [641]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 • 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[466] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, *121 641 such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms [701] under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not [689] respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the [626] barbs of public opinion.

*121 701 [702] [714] The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

structured. But the marching and fighting unit seems to have been, for all 121* practical purposes, the individual soldier and his retainers. Battles were not 701 fought in a disciplined manner; the outcome depended on the sheer num- 726 bers of troops, their state of morale, and the chance of catching the enemy off guard. Except for the large-scale deployment of troops in accord with the [725] customary tactic of envelopment, there was little expectation of subordinating the impulses of individual soldiers to the needs of a "team"; for the prevailing [703] military ethic stressed rather the heroism of the individual soldier and his drive to bring back a maximum of booty and trophies.[28]

The independent status of the common soldier in mass levies was based 121* on the fact that he was primarily a peasant and thus expected to return to 701 his fields as soon as a particular campaign was over. Nor were members of the 703 more permanent armies of lords greatly constrained. Loyalty to one's lord was in many cases a lasting tie, and accounts for much of the stability that existed in such arrangements. But in general it appears to have been a factor of far less moment than was the case, for example, in feudal Japan. The Amhara soldier felt he was fighting for a lord by his own free will and, therefore, had every right to leave him when conditions justified a move. One such condition was when the lord did not reward his followers liberally enough. Another related condition was when the lord had a tendency to suffer defeat in battle. Indeed, it was not uncommon for soldiers to swarm from one side to the other during a battle when defeat for their side seemed imminent. Still another basis for deserting one's chief was the ambition of a [554] vassal to acquire greater power, in which case he might rebel—become a *shiftā*, in the original sense of the word—and build up a military force of his own in the hope either of impressing his erstwhile master sufficiently to be reinstated with greater honors, or of taking his place by vanquishing him in combat, or simply of carrying on as a free agent.

The civilian counterpart of the soldier's right of desertion or rebellion was 121* the right of judicial appeal which belonged to every free Amhara. This per- 641 tained primarily to the area of property rights. A man who suffered some 695 grievous injustice in a local court had the right of appeal, in theory at least and often in practice, to higher courts at the provincial and imperial level. There was, in addition, some possibility of relief from an inordinately oppres- 121* sive governor. He might be removed accidentally by the emperor, in the 641 continuous process of *shum-shir;* the people under his jurisdiction might [631] secure his deposition through appeals to the emperor or his overlord; or they might take arms behind one of his rebellious subordinates and overthrow him by force. Traditional Amhara society thus provided significant areas of social freedom for its citizens despite the feudal obligations that lay heavy upon them.

64 178 But on lower levels the old practices continue, though more subtly and through indirect negotiations.

661 662 In decision-making, nothing seems to have changed. The paternalistic attitudes continue, and only very few of the modern-educated young aspirants really hope for and expect a modernization in the direction of greater efficiency. Only European advisors are outspoken on the subject, among themselves. Ethiopian students who return from university study abroad, return immediately to the "däj tenat" pattern. Twice a week they bow before the emperor as he leaves the High Court. Very kindly he greets them, usually by name, asks each after his well-being and that of his family. Later when a job has been assigned them, he asks whether they are satisfied, sometimes even inviting them to tell him if they are worried about something. The "father" role is taken literally on both sides.

Office-holders rarely make even petty decisions themselves. Instead, they take the matter to their superior, who is thus swamped with little details which waste his time. But it enables him to keep control through frequent personal contact and reaffirmation of the superordinate-subordinate relationship, and he in turn does "däj tenat" to his superior.

Office-seekers in the provincial capital maintain a grapevine service for information on the infrequent return of the governor-general from residence or "conferences" in Addis Ababa. Then they besiege his head-

661 642 quarters by the hundreds, employing messengers to spy out his daily movements and private life that might develop some entrance to him. They even do this when the job has already been given them by a lower officer, for the positive and negative reasons mentioned above. Court orders are usually unobtainable, even by such highly-placed officials as the modern-educated manager of the provincial branch of the State Bank of Ethiopia, without the personal intervention of the governor-general.

Both rural and urban administrations are considerably slowed by this pattern of appointments and decision making, but the old patterns of human relations, and values accompanying and often determining the social organization, can be expected to continue for some time in the future. In this case resistance to change seems complete.

D. The State and the Crown

643 The emperor, "Negusä Nägäst (lit. King of Kings, in the Geez language), used to be primus inter pares, one of several kings whom they had chosen as their superior, or whose military might left no doubt as to his supremacy. At present there is no "negus", and even the "ras" have lost their power together with their private armies. The monarchy thus reigns supreme, theoretically limited only by the voluntary Constitutions granted by

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

212 to facilitate the teaching of Amharic to non-Amharic Ethiopians, illiterates, and for typing.

642 779 This latter change has not been made largely because of theopposition of the Abyssinian church. The Emperor is officially "Defender of the Faith". His connection with the church follows Old Testament patterns during the reigns of David and Solomon. The "tabot " (ark), which Emperor Menelik I supposedly spirited away from the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem to its secret place at Aksum, is regarded as guarding the liberty of the countryto this day. Church and State are thus intimately connected, and when Mussolini threatened Ethiopia, the Emperor and his chieftains swore to defend the "tabot" with their lives. After liberation, the Coptic Abyssinian church was reaffirmed as the State church, though weakened in its temporal powers(esp. feudal land tenure). When the last link with Alexandria was severed a few years ago, the Abyssinian church became fully the established state church.

173 The traditional epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty", the book "Käbrä Nägäst", is still honored officially, and taken literally by the people. It contains an extension of the Biblical story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to the court of King Solomon, and claims she conceived a son, Menelik I, the first Abyssinian ruler of the Solomonic Dynasty. The book may possibly date from the 13th century, justifying the resumption of this dynasty.

693 and thus not a contender for the throne. He was the chief justice, for he could hear appeals even from the highest court in the land, and act as arbitrator and judge in high-level quarrels between feudal lords and even involving the king himself. His role as chief counselor of the king has now been taken by the "Tsahafi" (lit. scribe), who has risen to that position from that of long-time private secretary, at present Wolda-Giyorgis.

692 The present High Court has original and appellate jurisdiction over all cases in Ethiopia, criminal as well as civil. Majority opinion of the judges prevails. In 1942 a Supreme Imperial Court was appointed to hear appeals from the High Court, but it convenes only intermittently. A secret Crown Court is called together in special treason cases affecting the old nobility, or the officers of the new army.

671 177 A new Civil Law Code is still being worked out, by a series of European jurists invited for that purpose. Meanwhile new decrees are published intermittently in the official "Negarit Gazeta" (lit. the drum gazette), in both Amharic and English. The Attorney-General is a foreigner (for some time Mr. Nathan Marein), but the Minister of Justice, the Legislative Consultative Committee and the President of the High Court are Ethiopians, with a range of modern education from very little to average.

642 The Constitution of 1931, further liberalized in 1955, was a free-will gift of the Emperor. It established a Parliament of two houses, the upper directly appointed,

692 the lower indirectly appointed. No elections have been held; they have been postponed to the day when "education shall have been increased". In actual practice the monarchy thus remains absolute in function, and even legislation that is not directly urged by the emperor requires his signature and cannot be overridden.

563 (d) A problem of law that did not concern the old Amhara legislative authorities but that has become, though still dormant and in abeyance, a problem in recent years, is that of juridicial privileges of sectarian minorities, particularly Ethiopian Muslims.

In the past, Muslims lived there much as they did under the "Millet" system of Ottoman Turks, i.e. under their own religious jurisdiction in all internal affairs such as personal status, inheritance, marriage, divorce, endowments, etc. In Amhara areas, the Muslim ecclesiastical judge, the "Qadi" performs the functions of the "çheqa shum" and the "atbiya danya" judge for the Muslim population of his sector. He also heads their own school system of Quran schools, much as the Coptic priests head the local church schools.

563 692 There was no central Muslim organization, beyond this local structure. As part of modern centralization, the present emperor issued the "Qadi's Court Proclamation" in 1942 and 1944. It created a "Naibas" Council in Addis Ababa, to function as a traditional Muslim "Sharia" Court of Appeals above the local decisions of the Qadis. This structure, in turn, is supervised by the (Coptic) Minister of Justice of the central govern-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the Angrab and Kahha, is the Mahometan town. These rivers inclose the town on its N. and S. sides, and join on the W. On the S. E. part of it is the church of Debra-berhan. On the N. E. is Kedus Gabriel. Two suburbs above Kedus Gabriel, is Anta Naggar, the hill, where, till Yasous's time, the Tigre, in consequence of a proclamation, were obliged to halt, and not allowed to enter Gondar. 361

In Abyssinia there remains not a shadow of the hospitality, which is said to be a trait in the character of barbarous nations. 574

They divide the day into five parts (humisi). From the twilight, which is here short, it is nagga; about nine it is called selest, or the third hour; mid-day is kutter; three o'clock, tessaat; and sun-set, serk. They judge by the height of the sun, having neither clocks nor watches. The other hours mentioned in their books are counted 1, 2, 3, &c. after dawn, sun-rise, or sun-set. 805

There are two kinds of monarchy; one is absolute, where there are no written laws, but the will of the prince carried into effect by his command and force; another is, where there are laws and restraints, but these occasionally broken through. The Abyssinian government is neither of those. There are no laws: the lives of the king's subjects and their lands are *de jure* his; he is absolute and sole master of their lives and property: Yet he has no military force; this is all in the hands of the governors of provinces, whose safety lies in keeping the prince in want of every thing. It is a monstrous kind of monarchy, and to this are owing the continual wars and rebellions. While the districts were small, these were prevented; but minorities, weak reigns, &c. have united them into great ones, each of which are more than a match for the sovereign; indeed, the forty-four nagareets of Tigre united are more than a match for all Abyssinia. Damot and Agow-midre, joined to Maitsha, when they please, starve the capital, and leave the king not only without army and provisions, but even meat and clothes for himself. The Turkish and Galla wars have accelerated this state of affairs. Each of the governments have become a kind of fiefs, very rarely not granted to the family of the deceased, and that one of it most likely to be serviceable. 642 631

[p. 53]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5 •
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

I

INTRODUCTION

AMHARA TRADITION AND ETHIOPIA'S MODERNIZATION

THE FACT OF AMHARA DOMINANCE

Of the many traditions which are alive in the empire of Ethiopia—those of the nomadic Danakil and the sedentary Wollamo, the hippopotamus-eating Woyto and the ensete-eating Gurage, the age-graded Konso and the patrilineal Somali, the Judaic Falasha and the Muslim Bani 'Amer, and many others—clearly the dominant tradition is that of the people known throughout history to the outside world as the Abyssinians. Living on the temperate highland massif in the northern and central regions of the country, these people have gained their subsistence through the plow cultivation of cereal grains; have organized their polity as a feudal kingdom, and have remained steadfast in their Monophysite Christian faith since its introduction to the land in the fourth century.

The Abyssinians comprise two linguistic and geographical groups—the Amhara and the Tigre.* The Tigre inhabit the northern part of Ethiopia, above the Takazzē River; their lands fall in what are now the province of Tigre and the former Italian colony of Eritrea. Their language, Tigrinya, is

* Abyssinians object to the term "Abyssinian," since it has been used pejoratively by foreigners, even though they do use its indigenous counterpart, *"Hâbashâ,"* among themselves. The term apparently derives from the name of one of the South Arabian tribes which migrated to Ethiopia in antiquity—the Habashat. In deference to this objection, I shall use the compound "Amhara-Tigre" in place of "Abyssinian" wherever feasible. The name "Ethiopia" will be used consistently to refer to the national polity which, throughout its history, has included other peoples and traditions as well as the Amhara-Tigre.

[The Abyssinians, composed of Amhara and Tigre--Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

demonstrate some affiliation with the Solomonic line; the marriage of one of these into a local dynasty contributed an added buttress to its traditionalist claims. The other was what seems to be a still more deeply rooted disposition for decentralized hegemony based on the ancient character of the society. For, as Cerulli has recently suggested, the origins of the Ethiopian state were such as to lay the foundation for a persisting order of feudalism. The movement of South Arabs to the Eritrean coast and highlands took place, not through the conquest of an indigenous population by a united invader, as in the Norman Conquest of England, but by the intermittent emigration and settlement of distinct tribes from South Arabia into various parts of the African territory. Thus, Cerulli concludes, we see in Ethiopia "a feudalism expanded from the roots: a number of principalities or peoples which, independent on African land after their emigration, have finally been regrouped in a higher political unity, yet still conserving in the feudal system thus constituted part of their autonomy and their individuality."[87] If this is so, it would constitute an added traditional element in the sense of legitimacy of local dynastic interests.

All this suggests that we must look to two sources for the prestige of the *makuānnent*—that recruitment into the secular elite came from "below" as well as from "above." These two bases of noble status are indicated by the etymology of two Amharic words commonly applied to the local nobility, *shum* and *bālābbāt*. *Shum* (or *seyum*) comes from a root which means to invest with high position. The emperor, as we have seen, is *seyuma egziābhēr* ("invested by God") and he in turn is the source of authority for investing other dignitaries. The status associated with the word *shum* is therefore based on the act of investiture by a sovereign. *Bālābbāt*, on the other hand, has the literal meaning, "one who has a father"; in other words, one who has a significant father, a notable ancestry. This status refers to claims to deference which are based on birth.

Claims based on birth, moreover, were closely tied to the ownership of land and supported by local territorial allegiances. This appears most strikingly in the office of *çhīqā shum*, the lowest level official, who is appointed, to be sure, but by the local people themselves from a small number of *bālābbāt* whose eligibility for the office rests on their inheritance of rights to certain specified pieces of land. Other local offices, like *malkaññā* and *meslanē*, were normally given by regional governors to *bālābbāt* indigenous to the area. The sacred sentiment of fealty to a monarch, whose charisma rested both on membership in a hallowed dynasty and the hallowed act of coronation, thus competed in Abyssinian souls with deeply felt sentiments of attachment to members of noted families who symbolized local rights and traditions. Abyssinian political structure at any given time was determined by the relative strength of the forces supported by these two principles of legitimacy.

Neither principle was ever realized in pure form. No matter how great his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

642 authority, the emperor could never afford to ignore the hereditary claims of
643 regional *bālābbāt* in dispensing favors and making appointments. He needed
565 a minimum of support from regional lords who commanded devoted followers, and he could not with impunity alienate any number of these at a given time. In practice, imperial favor was accorded *both* on the basis of personal loyalty and military ability, and of ascriptive claims to rank based on birth. The exercise of imperial authority was often a question simply of confirming the leadership of a locally successful *bālābbāt*.

565 With regard to regionally based strength, on the other hand, birth was not
554 a sufficient factor to assure a man a high position. (It was not even necessary, strictly speaking. Any man could attempt to build up a position of power by attracting followers. He had a much better chance, however—a chance to attain authority, and not merely force—if he came from a noted family.) If, as the son of an important lord, he inherited his father's position, he had to prove himself a suitable leader or risk being deposed by the men of the area. At the very least he had to withstand competition from his brothers. Thus, as we saw
[175] in the history of Manz, two of Nagāssi's sons were deposed before the men of Manz found in Sebstē a leader worthy of his father's mantle. Military ability, political shrewdness, and lavish generosity toward one's followers were the decisive characteristics which, together with strong ambition, could enable the son of a *bālābbāt* to attract followers and make claims of his own. With adequate forces, he could even depose a regional governor and take his place, so long as he took possession of the official drum (*nagārit*) of the office.[88] For complete legitimation, however, it was usually necessary to secure con-
[643] firmation of the rule of a locally successful *bālābbāt* by the emperor. This was the reason why Nagāssi is said to have journeyed to Gondar.

642 In terms of the distribution of political authority, then, Abyssinian history
643 may be viewed as an oscillation between the emperor's efforts to define local
565 nobles as his agents and their own efforts to attain continuity and autonomy.
175 The available sources concerning the emperors of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries suggest that their efforts were to a large extent successful. The ensuing "barbarian invasions" so weakened the empire that a more locally centered distribution of power became inevitable. At first only the scope of the monarchy was reduced, as the emperor came to govern a smaller area. In consequence, in outlying regions such as Manz, Gishē, and Merhābētē in northern Shoa, virtual sovereignty was wielded by the local *bālābbāt*. Nevertheless, for a good century after its founding Gondar served as a real imperial capital, and its emperors retained authority over the lords in their shrunken empire. Then, as the monarchy began its inexorable decline due to internal rivalries and the movement of Galla into court and capital, localism triumphed. Ethiopia's Age of the Princes (1769–1855) was as decentralized a political system as was twelfth-century France or fourteenth-century Japan.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

It was at this time that the *makuānnent* came into their own. More unabashedly than ever they constituted, not a hereditary aristocracy in corporate opposition to the king, but a plurality of proud centers of rank—partly inherited, partly achieved—enjoying virtual autonomy. To move toward a modern nation it would be necessary to brake their centrifugal force. 175 565 642

The Clergy

Like the nobility, the clergy may be divided into those who are significant at the national level and those who are primarily local dignitaries. The former reside close to the imperial court, while the latter are thickly distributed around monasteries, churches, and wildernesses all over the country. 793 792

The highest ecclesiastical authority in Abyssinia was the *abuna* who, from the time of Frumentius in the fourth century until the death of Abuna Qerlos in 1949, was with few exceptions an appointee of the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria. Chosen from the Egyptian monks of the convent of St. Anthony near the Red Sea, the *abuna* was brought, at great expense to the emperors, to live out his life in an alien land. Ignorant of the language and customs of the country, he played little part in the conduct of church affairs or in affairs of court; and when he did try to do so, his efforts were usually abruptly checked by jealous clerics and suspicious kings. His functions were purely ritual, but indispensable: he alone had authority to anoint and crown the emperor, to confer orders, and to absolve vows. From numerous revenues, rents, and fees, the *abuna* enjoyed a considerable income. Like the emperor, he was regarded as sacred because of the charisma of his office, and spent most of his time secluded from the public.[39]

Second in rank was the *eçhagē*, an appointment made by the emperor. This was the traditional title of the abbot of the convent of Dabra Libānos in Shoa, which in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gained hegemony over Abyssinian monasticism. The *eçhagē* served as administrative head of the church and had jurisdiction over all monks and monasteries. The most esteemed of the Ethiopian clergy, he tended to wield more actual power than the *abuna*. His provincial deputies, called *liqa kāhenāt*, controlled the secular clergy. This office was also bestowed by the emperor, and its functions included presenting candidates for ordination and deciding questions of protocol in connection with religious ceremonies.

In addition to these supreme dignitaries of the church, a small number of churchmen enjoyed pre-eminent status by virtue of their activities at the imperial court. These included the *aqābē sa'āt* ("guardian of the [canonical] hours"), the chief ecclesiastic at court, and during part of the reign of Zar'a Yā'qob the only official with unrestricted access to the king; the *qēs hāṭsē* ("king's chaplain"); the *liqa dabtarā* ("chief of the *dabtarā*"); and *liqa mammerān* ("chief of the learned men"). These four served as the four su- 793 644 [693]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

source of the influence enjoyed by the clergy. The latter constituted a largely autonomous status group which no emperor could afford to antagonize indefinitely. The attempt to build a more powerful central government and introduce cultural reforms thus required some alteration of their independent status as well as that of the old nobility.

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THE FEUDAL ORDER IN TRANSITION

The Decline of the Old Nobility

It must always have been the policy of the Ethiopian emperors, except for those few who did not relish the political side of their office, to seek to maximize their control over the regional nobility. They did this, we have seen, either by granting land, power, and rank to men who were completely dependent on them, or else by controlling, through military and diplomatic means, those lords whose birthright and regional strength gave them strong claims to their positions.

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During the past century, however, the idea of subordinating regional nobles to imperial control has come to be conceived more radically and has become the core of a slowly emerging ideal of a modern nation-state. Some such vision was certainly behind the tortuous career of Tēwodros II, whose policy was a reaction against the desperate disunity which the Age of the Princes brought to Abyssinia and to the growing threat from foreign powers. In Plowden's official report to the British government in 1855, he described Tēwodros' work as follows:

> The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated. He has placed soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish: thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains, more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility—a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.[84]

The task of displacing the great feudal chiefs proved to be scarcely less arduous in Ethiopia than in Europe, however. Tēwodros' high hopes were shattered against the opposing forces of regional ambitions and clerical disaffection. The national unity he won through conquest and reform did not survive to the end of his reign.

Yohānnes IV (1871–89) likewise aimed at uniting the nation, but was distracted from serious internal reform by the need to fight off the encroach-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 ments of Egyptians, Mahdists, and Europeans. His domestic policy was more
631 concerned with the imposition of religious uniformity than with political
565 transformation.

• 642 Menelik revived Tēwodros' policy of creating a band of generals loyal only
643 to himself. He did this partly by raising capable men with no connections to high position: Rās Gobānā and Fitāwrari Hābta Giyorgis, two of his most important generals, were originally Galla prisoners. The power of the feudal chieftains he manipulated by traditional techniques, sending them to posts far removed from their home bases, and arranging political marriages. But Menelik did not decisively undercut the authority of the great provincial lords, and at his death the old political structure was still more or less intact.

The experience of these emperors was not forgotten by Haile Selassie, who seems to have made it his primary and unceasing ambition to assure his position by breaking down every sort of autonomous power where it previously existed or threatened to develop. Thanks to his policies of centralization and to modern means of transport and communication he was able to become more of an effective autocrat than any of his predecessors.

The main development during the period of his regency as Rās Tafari (1917–28) was the stiffening of his military posture. To start with he had the regional forces of Harar Province, formerly his father's governorship, which he had acquired through the favor of Empress Taitu (Menelik's wife) following Menelik's paralysis. He built up his strength by making improvements in Harar that increased his revenues and the number of his soldiers, and acquired fiefs elsewhere. Following the death of Empress Zauditu's commander of the imperial troops in 1926, he took command of these troops and brought some of his own forces into Addis Ababa. By 1928 he was strong enough to demand the title of *negus* from Zauditu and, as is well known, acceded as emperor upon her death two years later.

During these years Rās Tafari was gradually promoting the idea of a
[204] transformation of the position of the old nobility. As early as 1926 a letter published in his weekly newspaper, *Berhānennā Salām*, suggested that the prevailing feudal system of provincial government be replaced by a system based on salaried administrators.[55] An actual change of that order was out of the question at that time. A contemporary American observer thus described some of the obstacles:

> Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Guksah, chief of Amhara, Dejasmatch Ayalu, powerful head of Simien, Dejasmatch Gabra Salassy of Tigre, and Ras Kassa of Shoa, are supreme lords in the rough highlands of the north country. Far removed from the central authority, thirty to forty days' journey, some of them, they are out of touch—living in a different world from that of Addis Ababa. Hundreds of lesser chiefs rally to their standards, each

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

> with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[50]

The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, reestablished after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete.

Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*kārnē*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureau-
178 cratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of
631 regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central gov-
642 ernment has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of
565 building up their positions, members of the most important noble families
631 have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of
642 Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of
646 high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as
631 regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to
693 Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the
578 behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov-
[465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the
565 aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the
554 eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national
[571] political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

directed peasantry, and suffer the consequences, no dynamic program of agricultural and social development can take place in Abyssinian areas that does not enlist the active cooperation of the local *bālābbāt* and *shum*.*

The Decline of the Clergy

Although the church was instrumental in bringing Rās Tafari to power—by relieving the nobles of their oath of allegiance to Lījj Iyāsu—it was as a whole not sympathetic to his policy once he began to rule. Foremost champions of tradition, the clergy viewed with suspicion Rās Tafari's interest in modern education and other reforms. So pronounced was their conservatism that his weekly *Berhānennā Salām* found it newsworthy to report the fact that the clergy of one important provincial church were actually reading the Addis Ababa newspaper each week.[57] He was wise to act gingerly at first, limiting ecclesiastical reform to such matters as publishing religious texts in Ge'ez and Amharic, and encouraging the work of foreign missionaries.

In the past three decades, however, changes of many sorts have had the effect of reducing the degree of independent authority which the clergy traditionally enjoyed. These changes included the achievement of independence from the Alexandrian Patriarchate; the weakening of the church under the Italian occupation; subjection of church administration to the central government; and competition from the secular government schools.

Rās Tafari initiated the policy of seeking independence from Alexandria in 1929, when he secured the investiture of five Ethiopian bishops. This gave indigenous clergy, for the first time, the right to ordain priests and deacons, although they remained subordinate to the Egyptian archbishop. In 1950 an Ethiopian bishop, the *eçhagē*, was consecrated as archbishop; and in 1958, culminating Haile Selassie's patient and skillful negotiations, complete autonomy from Alexandria was achieved.

The attainment of ecclesiastical independence has heightened the prestige of national church officials in Ethiopia. It has brought about a re-organization of the national church hierarchy, in which fifteen bishops now hold office, one for each of the fourteen provinces, and one in Jerusalem. At the same time it has reduced the effective freedom of the clergy as a separate status group. Deprived of the external source of legitimacy which the Egyptian *abuna* formerly provided, the clergy are now entirely subordinated to the power of the Emperor. This condition was formally articulated in the Constitution of 1955, which made the election and appointment of archbishops and bishops

* A potentially significant medium of communication between them and the central government is the Chamber of Deputies, which since 1957 has brought popularly elected notables from the provinces to Addis Ababa.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

The general position of the church had already been weakened by the 648 795 793 [792] events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 795 793 [643] [651] Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 871 658 793 The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever government schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full-[465] time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 178 [554] [871] [658] Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite

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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endälkätchaw, *Ya-dam Demṭs*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endälkätchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuānnent,* Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 royal will. A solid foundation for such a class was not possible, however, until
178 the central government had been sufficiently stabilized and expanded. These
665 conditions began to be met under Menelik, who established Addis Ababa in
642 the last decade of the nineteenth century and in 1907 created a number of
645 ministries. Housed in buildings inside the palace compound, the ministries were initially regarded as little more than an ornament to dress up the imperial court. Although men of some stature, like Afa Negus Nasibu and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, were named to the posts, the offices themselves did not acquire much prestige. It was no great matter when, five years after the death of Menelik, the ministers were turned out of office by a group of military officers at the instigation of Rās Tafari and sent home to their provincial estates.

175 After becoming emperor himself, however, Haile Selassie revived and en-
178 larged the ministerial system. Since the restoration, it has expanded into a
645 complex bureaucratic structure. In addition to some sixteen ministries, a
647 number of specialized government agencies have been formed, and the military and judicial hierarchies and the diplomatic corps have been considerably expanded. The rapid growth of the central government in the past two dec-
[652] ades is reflected in its budgetary expenditures, which went from about US$10 million in 1942 to an estimated US$110 million in 1962.

178 The growth of this governmental machinery has provided a new basis for
647 elite status in Ethiopia. Mobility channels now run in terms of appointments
571 in the government bureaucracy. The periodic announcement of appointments
554 by the Emperor has become the focus of public interest in Ethiopia since the
565 liberation. Every new list of appointments provides the occasion for intense gossip and *de rigueur* congratulatory parties at the homes of the favored.

178 The new class of high governmental functionaries under Haile Selassie may
565 be regarded as a transitional elite: partly traditional, partly modernizing.
571 With regard to basis of recruitment, values represented, and style of life, the new nobility present, on the one hand, a direct continuation of the old nobility; and, on the other hand, many features novel in Abyssinian society.

178 To some extent recruitment of members of the new nobility was not a
565 creation of new dignitaries, but rather an absorption of members of the old
[646] nobility into the new political organization. The recruitment of *makuānnent* into the senate, which after all is an organ of the central government, may be taken as an ambiguous instance of this. Some others were given important posts in the civil and military administrations. These include members of the princely families of Shoa, Tigre, Wag, Lasta, and Gojjam; the Bakere clan, royalty from the Galla province of Wallaga; and scions of the *makuānnent* who were important in Menelik's day or before, members of aristocratic clans which go by the names of Bēzā, Mojā, Sofanē, and Addisgē. Such persons are likely to have been awarded the old military titles for purely honorific pur-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571
and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178
of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession 565
of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554
ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642]
ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177]
rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556]
imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642]
growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647]
nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701]
force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178
Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests 571
on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554
the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871
the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178
tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565
the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643]
political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178
571

* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957. [439]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the 181 Crown. 178 771

The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental 178 religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with 181 the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the 643 chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals 642 of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; 631 and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance 178 to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and 181 prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but inte- 565 grative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pur- [085] sued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, 178 a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient 181 technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor 571 and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard 871 of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relation- 178 ship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever 643 advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his 571 personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal 871 solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[466] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, *121 641 such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms [701] under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not [689] respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the [626] barbs of public opinion.

*121 701 [702] [714] The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

*793 badly distort, and over-simplify the course of his career. For them, the contradictions are never reconciled, and remain a source of the awe with which they regard the debtera.

The debtera's career is, in fact, marked by years of deprivation and misery, of powerlessness and vulnerability before the forces of his social and physical environments. It is a life whose course is dominated by three interdependent interests. The first of these is the pursuit of the ecclesiastical goals which are the denotata of debtera-hood. The physical mobility and desperate insecurity which characterize the student's pursuit of the ecclesiastical goals eventually produce two valuable commercial assets for him---the acquisition of basic mercantile skills, and the willingness to face real dangers, both physical and moral. It is his capitalization of these assets that constitutes the second dominant interest. Ultimately, it is a life in which the pursuit and exercise of power, of the ability to control and influence the forces of his social and physical environments, that become dominant.

*756 In Ethiopian society legitimate power is descended
*793 from the Almighty, and mediated through the Emperor and
• 642 his designated officers. The mundane sources of such power are, first, the possession of rights to fields sufficient to attract and reward personal supporters,

*793 and, second, the exercise of political prerogative,
[642] delegated by the state, with which to bestow favors and to direct sanctions. The debtera seeks power elsewhere, for he is a man without fields, kinfolk, or politically significant ties. It is in this quest, that he travels the path of apparent contradiction and real compromise, a path which ends in an attempt to wrest power from satanic sources, unmediated by any moral authority, and to legitimize it sui generis.

This chapter describes the debtera's life history, in terms of the sequence of recruitment criteria which an individual must meet before becoming a debtera, the decisions which he must make between alternative career paths, the knowledge, skills, and power which are acquired by the man who follows the path to debtera-hood.

Deferred to the concluding chapter is a comparison between the debtera-healer and the secular practitioner, and a description of the culmination of the debtera's quest for power, the satanic contract.

LEAVING THE PARISH

[869] Among the services provided at the parish church is
*[192] instruction in the Amhara syllabary (fidal), and the ecclesiastical subjects required for ordination as a deacon (diyakon) and, subsequently, as a priest (keys).

633 such modern problems as : increase in the number of hours of daily electricity; extension of city boundaries to include many scattered hamlets (e.g. of ethnic artisans) so as to be given to the rural "näch lebash" (thiefcatchers in white) with regard to the latest reawakening of an old family feud (däm mällässä) that threatens bloodshed; to increase municipal tax revenues; what to do about accompanying official visitors, nosy foreigners, visiting dignitaries, etc.; whether to abandon the insect-infested olf prison or try to rebuild it; etc.

[43] Once or twice a year the emperor himself can be expected, with his retinue, requiring careful preparations and bringing much tension in advance to the urban officials. Sometimes he may address the people at large on the old "yähezb addäbabay", which must be marked out and cleared. If the town is also the provincial capital, the emperor can be expected to examine not only that office, but the heads of the sub-provinces, judges, elementary school, the provincial hospital; etc.

633 798 Religious tolerance, decreed by the emperor, now permits such ethnoreligious minorities as the Muslims to reside wherever they please. In the past they were restricted to a section of the town, usually the part between the floodplain and the big market. For example, in the old city of Gondar, this section, locally called 633 "Addis Aläm" (lit. New world) was assigned them. Despite its name, this is the oldest section, and was probably named so over a century ago because it was newer than

661 quarters by the hundreds, employing messengers to spy
642 out his daily movements and private life that might develop some entrance to him. They even do this when the job has already been given them by a lower officer, for the positive and negative reasons mentioned above. Court orders are usually unobtainable, even by such highly-placed officials as the modern-educated manager of the provincial branch of the State Bank of Ethiopia, without the personal intervention of the governor-general.

Both rural and urban administrations are considerably slowed by this pattern of appointments and decision making, but the old patterns of human relations, and values accompanying and often determining the social organization, can be expected to continue for some time in the future. In this case resistance to change seems complete.

D. The State and the Crown

643 The emperor, "Negusä Nägäst (lit. King of Kings, in the Geez language), used to be primus inter pares, one of several kings whom they had chosen as their superior, or whose military might left no doubt as to his supremacy. At present there is no "negus", and even the "ras" have lost their power together with their private armies. The monarchy thus reigns supreme, theoretically limited only by the voluntary Constitutions granted by

643 Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1931 and 1955.

His "Solomonic Dynasty" claims descent from the Biblical Queen of Sheba, known to Abyssinian tradition as "Makeda", or "Azeb", and her son, Menelik I. The proper reference to the emperor is "Atse", to the empress, "Itäge" (lit. Master, Mistress, i.e., of the country), used before the name. If no name follows the designation, the title "jan" is used (possibly from the Geez "däyyänä", he judges, or from the Cushitic "zehon", elephant, king of beasts). In address, the appelation used for the emperor is "Germawi hoy!" (Oh, Magnificence), formerly "Jan hoy!" (Oh, Elephant).

645 The Council of Elders, "chelot", referred to in village and town, also applies to the Crown Council of State. It consists, in addition to the emperor, of the Abuna, the archbishop of the State; those "ras" who have survived the centralization of recent years, notably the conservative kinsman of the emperor, Ras Kassa, and his liberal kinsman, Ras Imru; the powerful, reputedly chauvinistic, Minister of the Pen, Wolds Giyorgis; and several cabinet Ministers included more for decoration than expected contributions. Next to the emperor himself, this is the highest policy-making body at present, dominating, on important issues, the legislative, judicial and executive framework of the bicameral Parliament and cabinet. Serious problems discussed in the Crown
212 Council have ranged from disaffection in high places, to the question of whether or not the old Geez-Amharic alphabet of 276 and more syllables should be simplified

631 565 dominant role in the rural administration. Most of the "awraja gäj" and "worädä" chiefs are from medium and lower provincial nobility. In Addis Ababa, the "Senate" 646 565 or Upper House of the Parliament instituted by Emperor Haile Selassie, is appointed from the higher nobility, the "Mäkwonant", while the Deputies of the Lower House are selected, with imperial approval, from the lower country gentry, largely from the Amhara, Tigre, and Shoa areas.

643 631 178 565 Many special privileges of regional nobility have been abrogated by the present Emperor: The Wag Shum", hereditary ruler of the sub-province of Wag since the Zagwe dynasty of the 13th century, has been abrogated by him; also the "Behär Nagash", the "King of the Sea", hereditary ruler of the Red Sea coast, was abrogated; also the Muslim Ethiopian dynasty of Jimma, which Menelik II had permitted to continue in accordance with the treaty of peaceful surrender (ostensibly because the present heir had joined the Italians).

The least changed position in the structure of administration is that of the cheqa shum, who forms its broad base.

4. Customary Law and Justice

671 The foremost characteristics of traditional Abyssinian law and justice seem to be that they are based on the power hierarchy of social structure; that they permit and even encourage considerable subjective inter-

695 The traditional oath, "May the ruler die" (If I lie), is still in full use. This oath is called "semanya". As mentioned above, perjury was once a very serious offense, even a capital one, later was penalized by substitution of "blood money", i.e. 80 Thalers fine. Until recently, provincial farmers still invoked the name of the head of their old provincial dynasty in this oath, the "ras", or the name of the long-dead Menelik II. Since 1941, however, the name of the present emperor is universally used, "Haile Selassie yemut". It is in a very real sense a form of acknowledgement of the supreme power of the ruler, whose supreme power over and above the feudal system is regarded, traditionally, as a protection from chaos, lawlessness and uprisings that destroy and cause suffering. The proverb says:

[643]

[539] "When the emperor dies,
with whom will there be judging?".

The oath "Haile Selassie yemut" is used also to arrest lawbreakers, much as English police might arrest "in the name of the king".

672 Another old legal tradition still in full force is that of the "wās", the personal guarantor. To obtain a loan or a job, the applicant must always present at least one reputable guarantor, who is then personally responsible for making up any default or damage or misbehavior, and who can even be jailed in case the culprit escapes. He acts as personal bondsman for a defendant, to avoid his being held for trial in jail. This "wās"

694 dual's case, the "gubba" gift, continued, and it is often
[661] identical with a bribe. At the same time, the old cus-
178 tom which served as a last resort to a poor person to
have his injustice rectified, by appearing with a heavy
stone perched on the back of his neck almost crushing
him, was abrogated because Europeans looked on this as
primitive. The poor man thus has lost his few safeguards,
and now is losing even the right to beg and to create a
traffic hazard by throwing himself before the vehicle of
[171] the great man and shouting "abyet". (The practice of
carrying the rock resembles that of innocently accused
Arab Beduin who appear pressing a blade against their
necks to demonstrate and shout their innocence.

178 Transition thus proceeds in unequal shifts, with
671 many culture lags. Modernization of law and justice
643 proceeds from the top, Addis Ababa, down the pyramid.
One of the reasons for the circuit-riding of the emperor
himself is to remind the chiefs of his realm of his
all-seeing and all-hearing power, just as was done in
the past. He acts as inspector-general.

The Emperor and his High Court in Addis Ababa stil
give lip service to the Fetha Nägäst Code. But in prac-
tice, this amounts to little more than rationalization
for the benefit of the ultra-conservative Amhara nobles.
693 The position of the "afä negus" (lit. Mouthpiece of the
King), who traditionally was the guardian of theFetha Nä-
gäst code, has now become honorary in practice. In the
past he was the second-most powerful person in the realm,
trusted partly because he was not of the ruling family

779 the nation in Western patterns.

659 (1) The use of the church in promoting Amhara-

[721] dominated Ethiopian nationalism. This was recognized and promoted by Emperor Menelik II who had priests carry the "tabot" into newly conquered Galla, Sidamo and other pagan and semi-Muslim areas of his new empire, giving his

[564] military conquests the character of a crusade. Churches were built in these areas, guarded by troops of occupation, made permanent by feudal grants under which the local population, made "gabbar" serfs, was permitted to remain on the land as sharecroppers and peons of the feudal church.

This use of the church has been continued, though with reduced feudal emphasis, by the present emperor.

[212] The Geez alphabet of the church, modified in Amharic usage, is the only alphabet even non-Amharic-speakers may use, if they wish to write their languages, particularly in

[643] print. By taking on the name "Haile Selassye" (Power of the Trinity), upon coronation, the present emperor re-emphasized the power of the church. Finally, on November 4th 1955, when the new liberalized Constitution of 131 articles was proclaimed, it reaffirmed that the Ethiopian "Orthodox" Church, founded in the 4th century on the doctrines of St. Mark, is the established church of the state.

659 Phase (2), begun by the present emperor as his

178 power increased, was a concurrent weakening of the temporal power of the church. At first this was gradual. In

178 With the gradual increase in their personal and military power, the imperial "change agents" have been able to introduce certain modern reforms. Their direct orders have been fulfilled in haste, as long as they supervised them personally. This was and is in accordance with the old concept of the government hierarchy, according to which the "great man" at the apex must be quickly obeyed as long as he is on the spot. The moment his attention is turned to some other matter, and he is not physically supervising the change, the status quo is largely resumed. In this connection Chapple and Coon's definition of equilibrium is apt:

> "Equilibrium is that state of a system...such that, when a small force is impressed upon it, a change takes place within it, and once this force is removed, the system returns to approximately its previous state."
>
> (Footnote 137)

Foreign educated students are largely descendants of the Amhara ruling nobility; although they have been motivated toward certain specific reforms, they fall back into their old noble-family patterns soon after their return.

178 643 In order to modernize the country, the Imperial "change agent" is faced with the task of establishing centralized control. For he is not only King of the Amhara, but "King of Kings" of all Ethiopia, a nation still far from homogeneous. Emperor Menelik II started to link the heterogeneous country through military conquest of the Galla and other ethnic entities, and, farsightedly, through the establishment of telegraph and telephone communication with at least his major provincial captials. Emperor Haile Selassie has continued this process, not only through direct orders and proclamations, but by means of the cultural Amharization of Ethiopia.

Footnote 137: Chapple & Coon: Principles of Anthropology, p. 704

563 178 [643 797] Wherever Emperor Menelik II conquered new areas, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he ordered the local people to build Abyssinian Coptic churches, and the Coptic priests who accompanied the troops with the sacred "Labot", consecrated the new local church and parish. These became centers of political and educational Amhara activities. Amharization was advanced not through large, scale direct conversion of what was considered by the Amhara clergy a "lower" ethnic group, but through the establishment of a local, administrative, Amhara hierarchy, which the other ethnic peoples found it in their interest to emulate. They soon learned (particularly the old Galla nobility) that they could advance in the Amhara feudal-army system and regain feudal-land-tenure through loyal military service.

[554] By assimilating to this Amhara pattern, young Galla of the old nobility or of the modern-educated élite have found that they can rise in the hierarchy, and, after conversion to the Coptic Abyssinian faith, even intermarry with the ruling class.

At the same time, ethnic particularism and tribal expression of the subject ethnic groups, including the large Galla population, [797] have been consistently discouraged by the ruling Amhara. Even foreign missionaries, who are still forbidden to convert Abyssinian Copts, but may work on Muslims, "pagans", etc, have been pressed into the work of Amharizing Ethiopia. For they must preach in the Amharic language, and can distribute Bibles only in the Amharic language, even in provinces where the vast majority still understands very little or no Amharic. If they break this law, missionairies can be promptly deported.

000 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-
645 larly since his return from exile in 1941, has proceeded to build
[643] a base for the modernization of his country through the creation of a modern-educated new élite. The only portfolio he holds personally in his own cabinet is that of Minister of Education (though the other ministers ask his guidance on even the most minute matters). It is this group which is beginning to bridge the gulf between the ethnic cleavages, and which is trying to enlarge Amhara loyalty to an Ethiopian nationalism. Its members give lip service to the still powerful Coptic church: they smoke publicly, but they will break the lenten fast only in secret, eat pork only when not in the public eye, and still refrain from walking arm-in-arm with a female in public. But when sent to the provinces to modernise the administration, they quietly make gradual but cumulative inroads against the temporal power of the church and against the feudal landowning gentry, on the basis of imperial proclamations and numerous directives. (Footnote 138)

643 This change is only in the initial stages. Some of the most
178 fundamental decisions by the present emperor, notably the abolition
779 of the "gabbar" (serf-like) system, and the measurement and registration of the land, have been most strongly resisted in the old-Amhara provinces, where these edicts have still not been enforced.

As a result, the emperor has often tried to proceed by indirect means. Just as he has utilised the foreign missionaries in his Amharization program, so has he tried to utilise the Abyssinian clergy in his modernization program. He has appointed an Egyptian Coptic clergyman-educator to head the new Theological College of

Footnote 138: For details see: Messing, Simon D.: Changing Ethiopia (in) The Middle East Journal, vol.9, no.4, Autumn 1955, pp. 413-432.

643 Addis Ababa. He has repeatedly urged the Abyssinian clergy to
178 take up the practice of preaching in church, on such subjects as
779 reduction of the violent mourning for the dead and the ruinous "taskar" memorial feasts; and admission of women into the church building. In Addis Ababa, a few modern-style churches have agreed to do this out of respect for his presence. But the provincial churches have retained their sacerdotal character and have not, except on occasions of brief imperial visits, adopted these innovations. The clergy has also resisted (by means of the "inertia" previously described) the urgings of the emperor to convert masses
[797] of the "lower" ethnic groups to Coptic Abyssinian Christianity. Only sporadically have small-scale conversions taken place. The emperor seems to recognize the value of expanding the nominal State Religion, Coptic Abyssinian Christianity, to a real national church, as a pillar of national solidarity and national loyalty.

178 The new élite, small in number, but actively supporting the
212 emperor's policies, and even occasionally beginning to become impatient with the circumspection and quiet, indirect, subtlety of Emperor Haile Selassie, has for some years raised the issue of the simplification of the Amhara alphabet. They had assumed that there would be much less opposition to such a worthwhile change than to big issues like abolition of the "gabbar" and changes in land tenure. The present alphabet, which consists of 259 syllables composed of 37 consonants and a minimum of 7 vowels, makes it difficult to teach writing to illiterate adults, children, and non-Amharic speakers, or to design typewriters. But the new, young, modern elite could not have been more mistaken in their optimism. The matter became a cause celebre, despite the fact that the proposal, published in 1948 in an Amharic booklet "Reform of the Alphabet",

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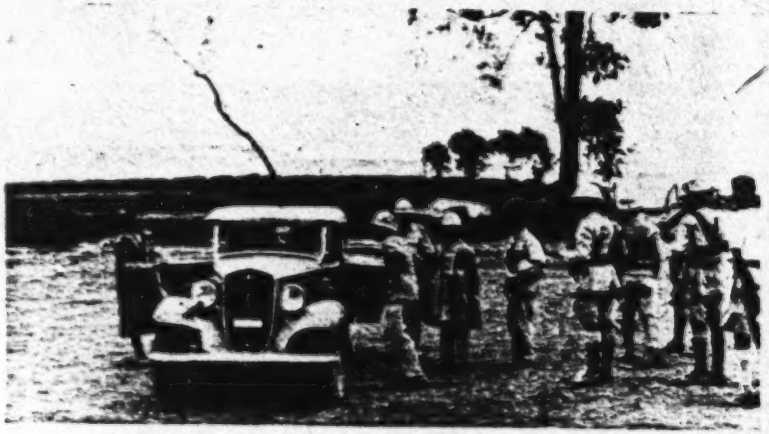

The Emperor and Colonel Wingate at Debra Markos, April 1941

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Household Cavalry

Patriots entering Debra Tabor, July 1941

[Facing p. 5]

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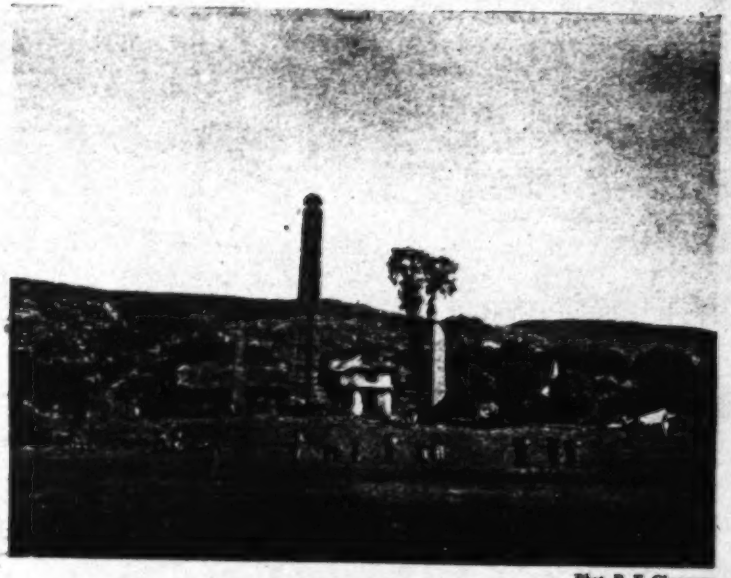

Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, monoliths

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Phot. R. E. Cheesman

Aksum, King's coronation throne and four pillars, Abunas' throne in background

[Facing p. 13]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

136 this town of Barua, a man was lying asleep at night at the door of his enclosure, and his little son was with him, keeping his cows, and a lion came and killed this man without anyone perceiving it, and he ate his nose and opened his heart, without touching the child. The people of the country were greatly afraid, and said that he would remain with a taste for man's flesh,[1] and that no one would escape from him. The Lord was pleased that he never did any more harm. We used to go hunting at that time near this place, and we never found any lion, but we found ounces and tigers; we did them no harm, neither did they do us any.

CAP. XXIV.—*Of the lordship of the Barnagais, and of the lords and captains who are at his orders and commands, and of the dues which they pay.*

643 The lordship of the Barnagais is in this manner: its title
63 is that of King, because nagais means King, and bar means sea, so Barnagais means King of the Sea. When they give him the rulership they give it him with a crown of gold on his head, but it does not last longer than what the Prester John pleases. For in our time, which was a stay of six years, there were here four Barnagais, that is to say, when we arrived Dori was Barnagais; he died, and at his death the crown came to Bulla, his son, a youth of ten or twelve years of age, by order of the Prester John. When they crowned him he was at once summoned to court, and while he was at the court Prester John took away his sovereignty and gave it to a noble gentleman, who was named Arraz anubiata. This man held it two years, and they took from him this lordship and made him the greatest lord of the court, which is Betudete,[2] and the lordship of Barnagais was given to

[1] *Cevado*, literally, allured.

[2] The favourite or preferred, *Bitwaddad*, because he was liked.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

another lord, who was named Adiby, who was now Bar- 643
nagais. Beneath the Barnagais are some great lords whom 631
they call Xuums, which means captains; and these are, first, Xuum Cire, a very great captaincy, he is now married to a sister of Prester John. We never went to this country and Xuumeta because it is distant and out of the way. There 643
is another Xuumeta named Ceruil. We knew this lordship, 701
and they say that its Xuum brings into the field fifteen 631
thousand spearmen with shields and archers. Also Xuum Cama, and Buno Xuum, and Xuum bono. These Xumetas had been one, and on account of its being large, and the Prester having misgivings that they might set themselves up against the Barnagais, he made it into two, and even yet each of them is very large. They say that this lordship which is now two was the dominion of Queen Candace, without having been larger in her time. She was the first Christian that there was in this country, and whom the Lord called powerful. Also two other captaincies, one is named Dafilla, the other Canfila; these two border on Egypt, and their captains are like lords of the marches. All these captains before mentioned are of kettledrums, [534]
which nobody except great lords can carry: and all these serve with the Barnagais in wars when he goes to them, and wherever he may go. They have other great gentlemen under their command who are called Arraz,[1] which means heads. We knew one of these, who was named Arraz Aderaan, he is head over fifteen thousand men at arms, whom they name chavas. I saw this Arraz Aderaan twice at the court, both times I saw him before the gate of the [292]
Prester John going without a shirt, and from his waist downwards a very good silk cloth, and on his shoulders the skin of a lion, in his right hand a spear, and in his left hand [411]
a shield. I asked how it was so great a lord went about in that manner, they told me that the greatest honour

[1] *Ar-ras.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Ambara MP5

643 he had, since he was Arraz of the Chaufas, that is, head or
701 captain of the men at arms, was to go about like a man at
631 arms. In the fashion that he went, there followed behind him twenty or thirty men with spears and bucklers, so that he goes about the court like a provost with his men. I knew another Arraz Tagale, and Arraz Jacob, lords of large lands, and many other Xuums, lords of lands, but without titles. Thus the Barnagais is the lord of many
643 lords, and of many lands and people, and so he and all
631 these lords that have been mentioned are subject to the
651 Prester John, and he removes and appoints them as he
439 pleases: so they pay to him large dues. As all these lords and their lordships are on the side of Egypt and Arabia, from whence come the good horses, and the brocades and the silks, they pay in these same goods: that is to say, horses, brocades, and other silks. They come to the Barnagais with all these dues, and the Barnagais to Prester John, and pays for himself and for the others, in each year, a hundred and fifty horses; as to the brocades and silks, it cannot be known how much they amount to, only I heard say that they were many; I also heard that they pay a large sum of cotton cloths from India for the customs which they levy in the port of Arquiquo.

CAP. XXV.—*Of their method of guarding their herds from wild beasts, and how there are two winters in this country: and of two churches that are in the town of Barua.*

[621] The settlement of this town of Barua and of those
231 adjoining it, is this. There are ten, twelve, or fifteen houses, and one walled and closed yard, served by a gate: in this yard they shut up their domestic cows which they use for their milk and butter, and also small flocks, and mules and asses. They keep the gate well fastened, and a great fire,

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that 681
they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of
others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality
the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he
was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester 793
John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is
nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester
who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means em- 643
peror, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some 752
sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, 757
they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein,
and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw
blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure
themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thou- 621
sand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and 361
there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without num-
ber. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and 342
all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and court-
yards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others 352
on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table.
They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without 415
napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black 264
earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for
drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others 262
eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, 252
and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is 373
much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make
candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which 314
they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like
Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 000

[1] *Akegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and so receive absolution. They pray in the churches of 796
the canons as in those of the friars. Friars do not marry, [782]
canons and priests do so. When the canons live together 793
in the circuit they eat in their houses, and the friars eat in community. The chiefs of these churches are called Licacanate. The wives of the canons have houses outside of the circuit, where they go to live with them: the son of a canon remains a canon, and the son of a priest not, except he chooses later to become one. No tithes are paid to any church, they live on the large properties which the churches and monasteries possess. Complaints against the clergy [694]
are dealt with before the secular justice.

The vestment is made like a shirt, and the stole with a 292
hole in the middle, and put over the head; they have no maniple, nor amice, nor girdle; priests and friars all have [302]
their heads shaved, and the beards not. The friars say mass with their hats on their heads, and the priests with their heads bare.

In no church is more than one mass said, and no mass is 794
said for alms, not even for the dead. When any person dies, the priests come with cross and holy water and incense, and recite certain prayers for him, and carry him off to burial very hurriedly: next day they bring offerings: the churchyards are all closed, so that nothing can enter them.

Prester John has no determined place of abode, he 643
always goes about the country in tents, and he will always have in his camp five or six tents among good and common ones: and there will always be at Court of people for the 644
horses and mules from fifty thousand upwards.

The kitchen of Prester John is a good crossbow shot behind his quarters, and they bring his food in this manner: all that he has to eat comes in porringers and dishes of very black earthenware on wooden trays, and pages bring them, and above the pages come a pallium of silk, which covers them so that these viands come with reverence.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well
532 made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
491 in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John
[563] are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: GENERAL

THE EMPEROR AND THE GOVERNOR

In the fifth chapter of this book some description was given of the character of the Ethiopian monarchy. This survey was made, as it were, from the throne. To complete the picture it is necessary to review the imperial power from the standpoint of the provinces. 643

We have seen that the Emperor, however low his authority may have fallen in fact from time to time, was always recognized in theory as absolute, the King of Kings, the supreme leader of the army, the head of the church, and the disposer of all lands and offices. It is this last facet of the kingship that must now be examined: it should give further insight into the manner in which the rulers of Ethiopia were able to rise to the high eminence reserved for them by this conservative and religious people. It was the periodic assertion of the royal power under strong rulers which prevented the rise of anything approaching the powerful hereditary lordships of medieval Europe.

It is, indeed, remarkable that this should have been so. It was the primitive economy which in medieval Europe made it difficult for a king to accumulate and control the material resources required for the upkeep of a central army and a central bureaucracy. Yet, in Ethiopia, this condition was greatly aggravated by geography and was prolonged by her political isolation right into this century. This meant that, although the Ethiopian provincial rases were never able to establish for long their position as over-mighty subjects, the Emperors upon their side were unable to consolidate, century after century, the authority of the imperial government. The two elements remained in a permanent tension; the balance swayed from one decade to another, and through

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 the 600 years or more of which we have reliable knowledge, neither side until this century seems to have gained upon the other.

635 The crucial question was the appointment of the provincial governor. In theory his position was entirely dependent upon the Emperor. In all polities to which the word feudal can, in however general a sense, be applied, land tenure and land tribute were closely allied with the holding of office. It was the constant effort of the Emperors to insist both upon this connection and upon their right to grant and to withdraw both office and tenure. It is more convenient, however, so long as the complementary nature of the two is borne in mind, to deal first with the office of provincial governor and then with land-tenure and tribute.

Most European kings of the middle ages were obliged to recognize the right of great feudal nobles to the hereditary succession of large territorial lordships which were sometimes linked with high central offices and were, in practice, impossible to divide from great provincial powers. In Ethiopia, by contrast, few instances could be quoted in which provincial governors succeeded in passing on their positions and the lands which went with them for more than three or four generations. The most striking exception—one that goes far to prove the rule—was that of the ruler of Wag who, retaining in this conservative country something of the divinity which once had hedged his family, that of the original Zagwé dynasty which ousted the Solomonian line from its imperial authority, was allowed very special privileges. It is probable that with most ruling families, the laxity with regard to marital relations and legitimate succession, which, as we saw, obscured the imperial genealogy, was a deterrent to the building up of strong lineages.

The keynote is struck in one of the earliest examples, that given by Alvarez, of the great office of *Bahr-nagash*, ('king of the sea', i.e. the northern marches province near the coast). 'For in our time, which was a stay of six years', he writes, 'there were here four *Barnagais*, that is to say, when we arrived Dori was *Barnagais*; he died, and at his death the crown came to Bulla, his son, a youth of ten to twelve years of age, by order of the Prester John.[1] When they crowned him he was at once summoned to court, and while he was at the Court Prester John took away his sovereignty and gave it to a noble gentleman. . . . This man held it two years, and they took from him his lordship and made him the greatest lord of the Court . . . and the lordship of *Barnagais* was given to another lord. . . .'[2] And again, 'The Prester John deposes them and appoints them whenever he pleases, with or without cause. . . . I saw great lords turned out of their lordships, and others put into them,

[1] I.e. the Emperor. [2] Alvarez, pp. 52–3.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

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Gojjam when its king, Takla Haimanot, died in 1901. He wished to break up this large kingdom, but he did so only partially, leaving the eastern part to the son of the dead king. He also made it a habit to keep powerful chiefs waiting about at court, a favourite method of French kings and one that Theodore had applied to him in his own youth. The *Wag-Shum* was again deprived of his ancient hereditary succession by the Empress Taitu, in favour of her own nominee; but the *Shum* was later restored. As Menelik's physical power declined, so did his control until, during his last years, the provincial governors again became largely independent. Imperial authority over the governors declined still further under the unstable Lij Yasu, and was only very gradually restored in a new form by Haile Selassié. 175

We have seen that even the present Emperor had to pay some attention to the hereditary position of great families in those northern regions which had a traditional jealousy of Shoa and in which opposition and rebellion were most likely to appear. In his early days as Regent the provincial governors still remained very independent. Ras Hailu, for instance, did not come near the capital for years. Provincial tribute was very low. Chiefs were allowed to rule the country with which their family had been associated until some misdeed or act of disloyalty brought deposition. Hence Haile Selassié confirmed Ras Hailu in his father's position in Gojjam, and punished his contumacy with disinheritance and imprisonment only later when he was strong enough for this action. Similarly he felt obliged to confirm Ras Seyum in his ancestral lordship of Tigré. It was the decision to grant Ras Seyum, at the expense of his cousin *Dejazmach* Haile Selassié Gugsa, the lion's share of the family lands, which threw the latter into the arms of the Italians in 1935. Ras Gugsa Wallié's position in the provinces of Lasta and Bagemdir was based upon family connections, and when he was killed during his rebellion in 1930 the substitution of Ras Kassa was appropriate because of his connection with the former rulers of Lasta through his mother. Ras Kassa's son was made governor of Bagemdir in 1942 in recognition, presumably, of the family connection.

The present Emperor himself might be given as the representative of a branch of the royal line which has held the great province of Harar since his father Ras Makonnen conquered it and was confirmed in its lordship by his cousin Menelik. The lands and governorship of this province were inherited by Makonnen's eldest son and, upon his death, went to the younger brother, Tafari. Though Lij Yasu, when he came of age, transferred this potential rival to a south-west province, Tafari had left behind him in Harar an army that was loyal to his house, and when the clash came it rallied to him and Lij Yasu lost his throne. 643 [635]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

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THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

[643] Harar is now ruled over by the Emperor's second son. While it is clearly difficult to deduce constitutional rules from conflicts at this 635 level, turning our glance to a lower one we may note that in addition to the few examples of continuity, many others could be given of frequent changes of governorship, even in the north, by both Menelik[1] and Haile Selassié. These would illustrate their ability to act upon these rights in this way, at those times in their reigns when they were strong enough to do so.

It is interesting to consider more closely the exact position as to the distribution of governorships on the eve of the Italian invasion. For convenience the south, which must be discussed in somewhat more detail later, has for this purpose been included with the north. According to an authoritative Italian writer, the number of provinces was thirty-two; of these, six might be regarded as being headed by governors of local hereditary status. They were Wag, Tigré (divided between two local notables), Wallaga, the small region of Beni-Shangul under local Muslim governors, and Salale under Ras Kassa. Eastern and southern Shoa was a royal dominion; Wallo, Harar, and Ogaden were also personal fiefs of the Emperor governed by his sons. The remaining twenty-one provinces were all under the Emperor's men, governors appointed by him from among his closest relatives and supporters, including a few of the 'new' younger and more progressive officials.[2] This analysis would suggest that, by the end of the first part of his reign, Haile Selassié, as far as appointments of governors were concerned, had succeeded in controlling very directly some two-thirds of the country.

Mr. de Halpert, however, in information supplied to the writer, is 631 critical of these categories as being too exact. He points out that in the 635 Ethiopia of 1935 it was almost impossible to say which division was a province and which a district. Tigré, Shoa, and Gojjam, as ancient kingdoms, were really subdivided into a number of administrative districts. He would also dispute the exact significance of some of the appointments. Without discussing these points in further detail, it may at least be assumed that the provinces and districts could be roughly divided into those that were more and those that were less closely under imperial control and that the former were the more numerous and were upon the increase.

THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR

635 The governor then, according to theory, was appointed and dismissed

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 487.

[2] Zoli, 'L'Impero Italiano dell'Africa Orientale', *Bollettino della R. Societa Geografica Italiana*, series VII, vol. I, no. 8, pp. 473–84.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

651 ordinate officials which varied from province to province. There were also the heavy dues of purveyance to passing officials, soldiers and even private travellers, whose records are full of evidence of the readiness with which through the centuries this burdensome obligation was accepted. Some of these dues were not easily to be distinguished from the further requirements in kind and in labour which a tenant might owe, in addition, as rent to a private landlord.

THE EMPEROR AND THE LAND

423 From the *gabar*, who formed the basis of the system of land tenure, we return to the Emperor at its apex. The conflict as to whether provincial office was held personally and terminally at the royal will was reproduced in the closely complementary question of the usage and ownership of land and its dues by which alone office could be supported. Here, in theory as well as in practice, the Emperor was less successful in maintaining his claims. It was true that land and office generally went together, but land-holding was wider than office-holding; it was more complex and it affected more people. Moreover, while office was highly desirable, the earth, meeting all necessities, was the main object and, once acquired, was held with the utmost tenacity.

423 The theory maintained by the Emperors was that they owned all the land in the country and that it was therefore all held at their will. 643 'He takes and gives all lands at pleasure' we read in Tellez.[1] 'The King's authority is so unlimited', wrote Lobo, 'that no Man can in this country be called with Justice Proprietor of anything, nor doth any Man when he Sows his Field know that he shall Reap it.'[2] Numerous authorities follow these early observers in this view. The assumption was that no land could be private property and therefore heritable. The most authoritative challenge to this theory was to be found in the ancient *Fetha Nagast* itself: in this, private property was formally recognized.[3] Turning to the latest age we find that a clause (article 27) of the constitution of 1931 runs as follows: 'Except in cases of public utility determined by law, no-one shall be entitled to deprive an Ethiopian subject of the movable or landed property which he holds.' Between these dates stretches the long struggle of the crown to counter these rights and to retain control over the lands granted out on various terms to the several categories of subjects.

[1] Tellez, p. 53.

[2] Lobo, J., *A Voyage to Abyssinia* (translated by Mr. Le Grand), 1735, p. 263.

[3] Guidi, p. 361. Quoted by M. de Coppet in Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE

According to one legend, when Menelik I returned from his visit to his father Solomon, he divided the land into three parts, one for the crown, one for the church and the other for the laity. Certainly, as regards the first part of the division, the Emperors retained vast estates as the royal domain. These tended to be most numerous in the region of the imperial headquarters and became less so towards the periphery of the country. We saw in the chapter upon public finance that the estates from which it was possible to supply the royal household with grain, honey, *tej*, etc., were known as *mad-bet*. These estates included also wide pastoral areas which carried the royal herds. There were numerous large estates scattered about the country which the Emperor had granted to members of his own family and so long as these remained closely bound to him they were, politically, as useful as his personal domain. 423 643

From his royal domains the Emperor took all the produce that could be delivered to him. With the conquest of the southern lands and the arrival of the railway he was able to grow and to sell coffee. Outside his domains, in spite of his frequent claims, the Emperor was only able to make effective claim to waste, lapsed, conquered, and confiscated lands. Sometimes individuals or groups, holding private heritable land, would ask the Emperor to take it over as royal land in order to protect themselves from the rapacity of some local lord or the claims of some other group. In Dembea the people did this because the Emperor was allotting so much of their land to the churches against their will and they felt that if it was royal land he would not be so generous with it.[1] An unsuccessful rebellion would give an excellent opportunity for him to regain some of his lost land by means of confiscation. What he resumed with one hand he was always giving away with the other into what was in fact, if not in theory, private ownership. He still retained over this, of course, his rights to taxation. This consisted, as we have seen, in the tithe, a tenth of the produce, which was generally confined to grain, and to a land-tax which varied in amount and character from time to time and from place to place. He also reserved the right to make special levies. [651]

Within the vast terminology referring to Ethiopian land tenure there are two terms which must be defined and kept before the reader. The one is *rest*, which means hereditary ownership, and the other is *gult* which describes land in which the Emperor had granted away some or all of his rights to tribute. (There is a conflict of authorities as to whether the Emperor had ever granted away his tithe as well as his tax upon *gult* land.) Clearly either of these kinds of tenure was very desirable; 423

[1] Rossini, pp. 104–5.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

related to Ge'ez, the ancient and liturgical language of Ethiopia, much as Italian is related to Latin.[1] It was in Tigre country that, during the first seven centuries A.D., the kingdom of Aksum reached heights of civilization never again attained in Ethiopia's history. Because of the antiquity of their region and the glory of their past, the Tigre are to some extent the cultural aristocrats of Ethiopia.

The Amhara inhabit vast areas of what are today the provinces of Bagemder, Gojjam, Wallo, and Shoa. Their language, Amharic, is the official language of Ethiopia.* Since the beginning of what is called the restored Solomonid Dynasty (1270), all but one of the emperors of Ethiopia have been Amhara.† The exception was a Tigre, Emperor Yohānnes IV (1872–89), though he sojourned for many years at Dabra Tābor in Amhara country, and Amharic was commonly spoken at his court.

The differences between Amhara and Tigre culture have not yet been studied systematically. Even so, one can say that their differences are not nearly so great as what the two groups have in common. Language forms the chief difference. Like Ge'ez and Tigrinya, Amharic is a Semitic language, ultimately descended from old South Arabic, but Amharic has been molded to a greater degree by indigenous Cushitic tongues. Other differences relate to minor variations in custom, greater communal orientation in some Tigre areas, and differences in temperament. But the two groups share the legacy of Aksum, the Ethiopic alphabet, Ge'ez literature, Monophysite Christianity, similar political and social institutions, and the same style of life. One would be justified in treating their traditional Abyssinian culture as a unity, as virtually all authors have done in the past.

In this book, however, I have chosen to focus on Amhara culture as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia. This has been done, first of all, because of my limited competence to deal with Tigre materials, since I am neither familiar with Tigrinya nor fortunate enough to have done field work in Tigre areas. But a less fortuitous reason is that any serious account of contemporary Ethiopia must begin with the fact of Amhara dominance. With respect to numbers, true, the Amhara are in a minority: Amhara probably comprise no more than one-quarter of Ethiopia's total population (now estimated at around twenty-two million). Their dominance is to be measured, rather, in political and cultural terms. On the political side it is manifest in the perpetuation of the Amhara monarchy and the preponderance of Amhara in top political offices. On the cultural side it appears in the spread of Amhara customs throughout the empire by officials, soldiers, settlers, and teachers, and in

* English is the second official language.

† A number of Amhara emperors since the mid-eighteenth century were partly of Galla stock, however.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

times brought dissension to the state, the legitimate Crown was triumphant most of the time. 175*

In the history of Ethiopian literature the period has been called a Golden Age.[1] The important works composed during this time include *The Glory of Kings,* which contains the story of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon, and their offspring, Menelik I, legendary first king of Ethiopia; *The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth,* a compilation of occult theology and numerology, with a Miltonic account of the struggle between Michael and Satan; *The Christian Romance of Alexander the Great,* a fantastic portrayal of Alexander as a Christian hero who traverses the Land of Darkness and the miraculous Land of the Living; the moralizing tracts of the greatest emperor of the period, Zar'a Yā'qob; as well as numerous lives of saints and translations of Christian writings from Arabic. 175* 538

Connoisseurs of Ethiopian art attribute the most original and refined paintings to the latter part of this period. Using translucent colors and austere shapes and design, Ethiopian monks brought to expression an intense spirituality in the form of miniatures in illuminated manuscripts.[2] 175* 532

At the same time this was the Heroic Age of Ethiopian warfare. Amda Ṭseyon vanquished sixteen Muslim chiefs to the south and west; the valor of Sayfa Ar'ed was celebrated in medieval Arab tales of chivalry; Dāwit I pushed his victories against the Muslims as far as Zeila on the Gulf of Aden. Improved military equipment and organization under Yeshāq brought the imperial forces to a new level of discipline and power, which Yeshāq used to establish his authority in many southern areas. Zar'a Yā'qob, famous for endowing churches and monasteries and for encouraging literature and art, was a successful warrior in his own right. 175* 648

A close-up of Ethiopia at the height of its medieval synthesis is provided by Father Francisco Alvares, Portuguese emissary to Abyssinia during the years 1520–27.[3] We see a prosperous kingdom, its far-flung dominions headed by hereditary rulers and royal appointees, all of whom pay tribute in kind to the emperor. The tribute consists of horses and mules, blankets and cloths, silk stuffs and gold, all in impressive amounts. The provincial heads, and the armies they must make available, live off the land they govern. The numerous priests and monks are supported by lands granted them by the king. Justice is administered at three levels, with the possibility of appeal from the local judge, to the provincial governor, to the royal court itself. The king's mobile camp, large as a town, is his capital, so that he spends his years marching about from one corner of his domain to another. 175* 64 631 [651] [69]

The monarch at the time of Alvares' visit was Lebna Dengel (1508–40), a man of pride and temper. He refused to heed counsel that the kingdom was imperiled by threats from the outside. Indeed, legend has it that he was discontented with the prevailing civil harmony and begged God to send an ad- 175* 643

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 versary, so that his people might be roused from their peacetime habits and
• 643 the nation could have a chance to prove its might. Ethiopia never fully recovered from the shock that came in the middle of his reign.

*175 *Shock*
648 Amhara-Tigre society was convulsed by one disaster after another during the succeeding century. In 1527 began a series of conflicts with the Muslim kingdom of Adal led by a fearful warrior, Imam Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi, surnamed Grāñ. Equipped with firearms from the Ottoman Turks and hordes of Somali soldiers, Ahmad Grāñ proceeded to overrun Ethiopia, causing destruction and massacre wherever he tread. Only after most of the country had been laid waste, its inhabitants forced to embrace Islam, its churches looted and burned, was Ahmad Grāñ at last killed. His troops were routed by an Ethiopian force that had been revived by the expedition of Portuguese match-lockmen under Christopher da Gama.

The wars with Ahmad Grāñ left the country impoverished and disorganized. In this state it lay vulnerable to another shock: the massive tribal movements of the Galla from the south. The Galla advanced through periodic invasions of their warrior age groups. Coming first in furtive raids, then concerted warfare, finally by slow migration, these hardy nomads managed to penetrate deeply into Amhara lands. By 1563 the Galla had invaded over a third of the empire.

Ethiopia was further shaken in 1557 when the Ottoman Turks occupied the port of Massawa. This action introduced a problem that was to harass Ethiopia intermittently until the present: the danger of occupation by European powers. The Ethiopians were able to repulse the Turkish invader as he pushed farther inland, but Massawa remained in foreign hands until 1941.

*175 In seeking to recover from the destruction wrought by Grāñ's holy war,
648 a number of emperors turned to European Christian powers for religious
797 support as well as for political and technical assistance. Some of them became
643 converts to Catholicism and, encouraged by Portuguese Jesuit missionaries, attempted to promote the new faith among their subjects. The outcome was only further bloodshed. Emperor Za Dengel's conversion in 1603 aroused civil strife and led to his downfall at the hands of nobles who did not share his Catholic sympathies. More serious trouble appeared during the reign of Susneyos (1607–32). He, too, adopted the Roman faith, and allowed one of the more impetuous Jesuits, Alphonzo Mendez, to direct a number of reforms in the Ethiopian Church. Mendez insisted that all priests be reordained by himself, that the population be rebaptized, and that the liturgy be rewritten. He forbade circumcision, and defined the previously unknown crime of witchcraft. Such measures antagonized the populace and provoked "horrid uproars, bloody wars, and the slaughter of many great Personages," as Lu-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

dolphus put it.[4] At length, unable to witness the further decimation of his people because of religious controversies, Susneyos abdicated in favor of his son Fāsil. Fāsil lost little time in deporting the Jesuits and restoring the Orthodox status quo. 175* 648 797 643

Recovery

In the wake of all these collisions, Ethiopia made two valiant attempts to regain equilibrium and glory: through the splendor of Gondar in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and through the force of three emperors of the nineteenth century—Tēwodros II, Yohānnes IV of Tigre, and Menelik II of Shoa. 175* 648 643

Gondar was founded as a new and stationary capital by Fāsil. It served as imperial headquarters for many generations. Later, the kingdom of Tigre knew a resurgence of power that led to control of the empire under Yohānnes (1872–89). His castle at Makalle symbolized one last rally for the north—after an interregnum of a thousand years—before being eclipsed by the Shoan throne.

The shock which began with the invasions of Ahmad Grañ shattered Ethiopia's medieval synthesis once and for all. The political consequence of those disruptions was an increase in provincialism, reaching its climax in the famous "Age of the Princes" (1755–1855) when each province had its own sovereign and for all practical purposes was a polity unto itself. The Solomonic line, the matrix of Ethiopian political unity, was splintered in several directions, leaving contenders in each of the provinces. Though the official imperial line remained at Gondar, Tigre was able to reassert its ancient claims and Gojjam recurrently voiced its separatism, and what may be called the "House of Manz" came to compete with Gondar as a center of national consciousness. 175* 178 635

This political division was accompanied by a peculiar cultural bifurcation. Elements of the national culture that had been rather evenly distributed before Ahmad Grāñ now became relatively specialized in Gondar and Manz. The recovery of Ethiopia produced a geographical division of manners and morals as well as several lines of Solomonic royalty. 175* 184

HISTORICAL PROFILES

The Role of Gondar 175* 633

Gondar is the only city in Ethiopia with charm and character expressive of Amhara culture. Even today, despite modern accretions, the remnants of its castles, walls, bridges, and sanctuaries transmit a stately calm, redolent of past nobility and African grandeur.

The town is situated on a flat volcanic ridge at seven thousand feet above 175* 361

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 361 sea level. It is surrounded by three rings of high mountains, which afforded military protection in times past and today provide handsome scenery. Only toward the south is a direct land route alluring, as the ridge descends toward the fertile plains of Dambiyā and the waters of Ṭānā, largest lake in Ethiopia.

[132] Because of its intermediate altitude, Gondar escapes the chill of higher regions and the intense sun of the lowlands: its climate is among the most [312] pleasant in Ethiopia. Water is supplied by two streams—the Angarab and the Qīha—which enclose the town, then flow together down to Lake Ṭānā [132] twenty-one miles away. Adequate rains throughout the year assure two, some- [241]

*175 643 TABLE 1

THE HOUSES OF GONDAR AND MANZ

Gondarine Emperors Who Ruled with Full Power		The Line of Independent Shoan Rulers		
Name	Dates of Reign	Name	Highest Rank Attained	Dates of Reign
Fāsil (Fāsiladas)	1632–67	Nagāsi (Nagāsē Kristos)	Abēto	1697–1703
Yohānnes I (the Pious)	1667–82	Sebstē (Sebstyānos)	Marīdāzmātch	1705–20
Iyāsu I (the Great)	1682–1706	Abbāyē	Marīdāzmātch	1720–45
Tākla Hāymānot I	1706–8	Amhāyas (Amhā Iyasus)	Marīdāzmātch	1745–75
Tēwofilos	1708–11	Asfā Wassan	Marīdāzmātch	1775–1808
Yoṣṭos	1711–16	Wassan Sagad	Rās	1808–13
Dāwit III (the Singer)	1716–21	Sāhla Selassie	Negus	1813–47
Bakāffā (the Inexorable)	1721–30	Haile Malakot	Negus	1847–55
Iyāsu II (the Little)	1730–55	***		***
		Menelik II		
		As ruler of Shoa	Negus	1865–89
		As emperor of Ethiopia	Negusa Nagast	1889–1913

*175 361 [132] [241] [231] times three, crops in the hinterland. Ṭēff and other grains, oilseed, honey, and livestock are produced in abundance.

The population of Gondar approached seventy thousand during the city's *175 633 time of power.[8] Thereafter it declined to but a few thousands. The towns- [162] people of Gondar have been chiefly traders, priests, scribes, soldiers, artisans, [463] and drink-house proprietresses. Like the inhabitants of Aksum, they are more conscious of Ethiopian history than people elsewhere in the country, as well they might be.

Gondar was founded by Emperor Fāsil about 1635. Legend says that he [193] was inspired to plant his capital there because of a prophecy that Ethiopia would attain its greatest power if its capital were established in a place whose [361] name began with the syllable *Go*. More practical considerations were surely

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

the proximity to water, the protective rings of mountains, and the healthy distance from Galla tribes. 175* 633 361

When Fāsil arrived at Gondar, then no more than an insignificant village, he pitched his tent near a large sycamore. This magnificent tree, one of the landmarks of Gondar, became the site of popular celebrations on holidays. Not far from this tree Fāsil decided to construct his castle, the largest and best preserved of the castles of Gondar. Thus began an ambitious program of building, which included the construction of seven churches, a number of bridges over the streams around Gondar, and a large bath, next to which Fāsil placed a three-story pavilion. In the course of the following century Fāsil's successors added many more buildings, including a total of twenty-one additional churches. Of the secular buildings, the castles of Bakāffā and Empress Mantuāb and the "Recreation Hall" of Dāwit III were the most outstanding. 175* 633 361 643 •

In their political endeavors, Gondar's monarchs began by upholding the Abyssinian tradition of a warrior king. Though unable to secure definitive victories over his enemies, Fāsil was continually joining battle with them. He spent all but five of his thirty-five years of rule on the warpath. The reign of Yohānnes the Pious was marked more by religious than military preoccupations, but warfare on a small scale was carried out during half the years he ruled. Yohānnes' son, Iyāsu the Great, seized the spear with renewed vigor and brought Gondar to the pinnacle of its might. Iyāsu's campaigns carried him to far parts of the empire, some of which were not again to be visited by a triumphant Amhara king until two centuries later. 175* 643

On Iyāsu's return from one of his famous field tours, Gondar suffered a misfortune that ushered in a long era of political disorganization. Learning that his favorite concubine had died and been buried while he was away, the grief-stricken Iyāsu withdrew to one of the monastic islands of Lake Ṭānā. His son, Takla Hāymānot, took advantage of the situation to have himself proclaimed emperor; and shortly after, probably encouraged by those of the clergy who mistrusted Iyāsu's sympathy for Catholicism, he had his father assassinated on the isle.

The next four emperors had short and brutish reigns. Takla Hāymānot, Tēwoflos, and Yosṭos were occupied mainly with the quashing of conspiracy and rebellion. Even so, they had time for the favored sports of hunting wild animals and raiding Galla and Negroid tribes. Dāwit III, it seems, did not even accomplish that. The chief slaughter in his reign was of the local clergy; he brought Muslim Galla to massacre hundreds of the monks and priests of Gondar, for they had opposed his theological views. All four emperors ended ignobly. Takla Hāymānot was stabbed to death; Tēwoflos was probably poisoned; Yosṭos, not of the Solomonic line, was forcibly deposed; and Dāwit III was poisoned. Bakāffā was more careful to protect himself from pretend-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

*175 ers than were his predecessors. He spent his days breaking the power of the
• 643 feudal lords and strengthening the hand of the monarchy, and died a natural death.

Iyāsu II was the last of the Gondar emperors to rule with full power. He, too, had to spend much of his military energy suppressing conspirators. One pretender maintained a long siege of Gondar, and although his troops never succeeded in storming the castle, they destroyed much of the capital. After checking the rebels, Iyāsu II withdrew from the political affairs and became absorbed in private pursuits. Later, stung by the popular ridicule of his inactivity, he launched a major campaign against the Fung kingdom of Senaar. The net result of that venture was eighteen thousand dead and the depletion of his treasury. The subsequent subdual of Lāstā, a rebel region for generations, and Iyāsu's raids against tribes in the Athārā district were not sufficient to redeem that defeat or restore the force of Gondar.

The political history of Gondar after the assassination of Iyāsu the Great is that of a fairly steady decline. The power of the monarchy was weakened by frequent coups d'état: no fewer than twenty-five emperors were deposed in the century and a half between Iyāsu I and Tēwodros. The power of central government was weakened by the increased strength of the nobles, each pursuing his personal interests. The power of the Abyssinian nation was weakened by the influx of Galla, who entered Gondar as prisoners and mercenary troops and finally, with the marriage of Iyāsu II to the daughter of a Galla chieftain, reached the royal court itself. The succession of emperors after Iyāsu II is largely a list of figureheads, living their brief spells in the dreary pomp into which the court had fallen, while the real power was wielded by independent lords throughout the land.

*175 The history of Gondar, however, is more than a chronicle of military ex-
643 peditions and political intrigues. It is above all a history of the Amhara's
633 most concentrated attempt to cultivate their religious and aesthetic culture,
517 some aspect of which stimulated most of Gondar's sovereigns.

Fāsil, we have seen, was greatly interested in architecture. In addition to his many constructions in and around Gondar, he rebuilt the old cathedral at Aksum, which had been in ruins since the pillage of Ahmad Grāñ. Fāsil's interest in religion, moreover, extended beyond the building of churches. He sought to promote the integrity of the Ethiopian Church by expelling the Jesuits, and assisted its restoration by fixing rules for the ministration of church services.

Yohānnes the Pious was devoted to the furtherance of religious studies. He built a library to house religious manuscripts, as well as two new churches. Possessed of an unusual decorative bent, he had the walls of the library covered with a yellowish plaster and raised designs in stucco, and he himself painted miniatures on some of the manuscripts. His queen, Sebla Wangel,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

sponsored the translation of works from Arabic. Among these were *Laws of the Kings,* a collection of civil and canon laws which became the official basis for judication, and a penitential manual, *Spiritual Medicine,* the last major production in Ge'ez literature. 175* 643 517 [633]

Yohānnes also continued Fāsil's work of "purifying" the church. He decreed that descendants of the Portuguese must leave Ethiopia unless they joined the Orthodox Church and that Muslims must reside apart, either in their own villages or in ghettos. Ordained as a priest before becoming emperor, Yohānnes followed keenly the theological disputes of his day. Toward the end of his reign he convoked a synod in Gondar to discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit in Christ, the chief theological question in Ethiopian history. [798] [793] [779]

Iyāsu I, like many of Ethiopia's rulers, appears to have been moved by deep religious feeling. Describing Iyāsu's religiosity, one of the priests of Gondar wrote an eulogy a few years after his death: 175* 643 781

> The king used to stand at the window of his palace . . . and listen from his tower on high to the singing of the priests and learned men, to their gentle hymns which moistened the bones by their exceeding tenderness. When their offerings pleased him greatly he was pierced with affection for them and drawn by the harmony of their heavenly peace. For this reason . . . he would prepare for them dinners filled with delights, and bid them eat with him in his royal chambers, ornamented all about with the beauty of pure gold and wrought silver. He would take off his gold necklace and present it to them. He adorned them with garments of purple and of staffs interwoven with gold from the treasury of his kingdom. . . . None of the kings before him had done such as he, and none of the clergy of yore had been treated as were his priests and learned men. After the dinners, the king and his priests together sang hymns of joy and jubilation all night long in the palace—in their time of pleasure, in the sweetness of divine ministry.[8]

Iyāsu the Great did much to establish Gondar as the most important center of religious culture in Ethiopia. To this end he brought outstanding priests and learned men from all over the country to his capital. From Gojjam, for example, he brought the great master of religious verse, Kīfflē Yohānnes, whose lines are remembered even today. The number of teachers in Gondar in his time exceeded five hundred; there were one hundred and fifty at his church Dabra Berhān Selassie alone.* It was under Iyāsu I that the classic subject matter of the higher religious studies in Abyssinia—*zēmā* ("religious 175* 643 633 517

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* Dabra Berhān Selassie, one of the two churches built by Iyāsu I, is the only one of the original churches of Gondar which survived later conflagrations of the city. The original paintings which covered its walls have been preserved, as well as the remarkable ceiling from which rows of wide-eyed angels look down from between wooden beams. The church provides separate places for nobility and commoners, and a balcony for the emperor. [346]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 chant"), *qenē*, and *tergum* ("interpretation")—is said to have received its
•643 definitive organization.
633
517 Dāwit III appears to have had a pronounced interest in Amharic folk song, for the more perfect enjoyment of which he built a special hall in the imperial compound. Because of this he has been called "Dāwit the Singer"—no term of praise in a land where minstrelsy is looked down on and where serious deportment is expected of royalty. Actually, this epithet, with its connotation of "playboy," was not deserved. Dāwit was a religious man, and in his brief reign built two churches. Knowledgeable Gondarēs today insist that, at first, even the priests were happy to join him in the amusement hall to listen to the one-stringed fiddles and the witty songs. Only after Dāwit's partiality to the
[798] Unctionist doctrine (that the humanity of Christ was made divine through the unction of the Holy Spirit) led him to persecute the Unionist clergy (who hold that humanity and divinity are blended in the single nature of Christ) did they abuse his music hall and tarnish his name.[7]

[341] Interest in architecture was revived by Bakāffā. He constructed a long U-shaped castle which, together with the new castle of his Empress Mantuāb, completed the major complex of buildings in Gondar. Mantuāb's castle is
[532] noted for bas-reliefs of the Ethiopian Cross, while her other castle at nearby Qusquam is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting saints and animals as well.

The tastes of Iyāsu II were especially refined. He cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He built a large and handsome church. He began to construct a palace, in the lavish
[344] decoration of which he took a personal interest. Budge writes of this:

> A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the walls of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts . . . with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. . . . Iyāsu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen.[8]

*175 The decline of imperial power at Gondar after Iyāsu II did not produce a
633 slackening of the cultural activities that had been concentrated there. During
517 the reign of Takla Hāymānot II (1769–77), for example, when the actual
[643] power at Gondar was in the hands of a lord from Tigre, seven more churches
[874] were built. One of these, Ba'ātā Māryām, eventually became one of the most famous schools for the teaching of *aquāquām* ("religious dance"), and in its heyday boasted 276 masters. Another, Abi Egzi, became noted for instruction in *tergum*, and is still a leading school for such studies.

[538] The composition of verse, in forms which had become canonized during the early Gondar period, continued to flourish. As political turmoil often

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 633 left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor Menelik.

[159] [993] Alaqā Gabra Hānnā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army, turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar.* The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar during his few years in power (1869–72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

*175 633 The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum*, though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā*. The civil order, however, was thoroughly demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces. [166]

*175 633 643 648 At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance from the old capital—began as follows:

> O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.[11]

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

131 133 Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the northeast horn of Shoa Province.[12] It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.[13]

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* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

grandson of Gērā. Thanks to the intercession of his mother, Sāhla Selassie was able to reach his truculent kinsmen. In response to his appeal for help against the Galla forces, the Manzēs came in great numbers and saved the day. A vivid reconstruction of the final battle is provided by Harris: 175* 648

> [Matako] and his gallant sons were everywhere in the thickest of the fight. His shout, rising high over the storm, animated the faint-hearted, and his presence roused to new life and exertion the successful partisan. Many of the Amhara bands were already reeling from the repeated shock of the wild riders of the Hawash [the Galla horsemen], when suddenly, in the very heat of the action, a large body of warriors, clothed in black mantles, and armed with long heavy spears, rushed down the hill on foot, and, prostrating themselves as they passed the royal unbrellas, descended fresh into the arena. The fierce inhabitants of Mans had sped to the rescue from their hereditary estates, and their savage ferocity and reckless bravery was well known throughout the land. The relations and the household retainers of the rebel attempted to breast the storm, but they were scattered like autumnal leaves before the angry blast; and the chief arrived to the succour only to behold the spot strewed with the bodies of his stoutest partisans. . . . A panic seized the pagans; and, dismayed and brokenhearted, they fled tumultously in every direction.[35]

Of the arts of peace, Sāhla Selassie was particularly absorbed in the development of manual crafts. He brought masons and carpenters from Gondar and took a personal interest in the work of his metalsmiths. He was eager to learn of European technical skills and showed much hospitality to missions from the British and French governments, with whom he concluded treaties of friendship and commerce. 175*

In Gondar, Sāhla Selassie's province was known as "the most populous and most wisely governed" in the country.[36] His assumption of the title of *negus* had been urged by some of the Gondar nobility and clergy, for they looked to him for help in combatting the spread of Islamic influence by the Muslim Galla chief, Rās 'Ali. Sāhla Selassie needed little urging; his sights were set on the highest title of all—*negusa nagast* ("king of kings," or "emperor"). Yet he, like his father, was premature. Two more generations were to be needed before that triumph. 175* 643

Abyssinia could not wait. The dissolution of imperial power and the inroads of Islam had proceeded too far. Unification of the country under a powerful monarch was the obvious need of the day. The process was begun by a rebel from Qwārā, who vanquished in turn the Rāses of Gojjam, Bagemder, and Tigre, and proclaimed himself emperor in 1855 as Tēwodros II.

Shoa could not long remain untouched by Tēwodros. The successor to Sāhla Selassie, his son Haile Malakot, tried to save Shoa's autonomy by leading an expedition to fight Tēwodros in Wallo, but found his camp impreg-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

*175 nable. As the rainy season was approaching, Haile Malakot retreated to Shoa,
• 643 where he fell sick and died. For the first time since Nagāssi, Shoa was left without an effective leader. Tēwodros marched into Manz from Wallo, and Shoa capitulated with little struggle. Eleven-year-old Menelik, son of Haile Malakot, was taken hostage.

Ten years later Menelik escaped from the camp of Tēwodros and regained Shoa. Slowly and carefully he built up his power. Tēwodros' reign raced to its tragic end. Takla Giyorgis II reigned briefly at Gondar, the last emperor to sit there. Yohānnes IV of Tigre governed the country for seventeen years. When Yohānnes died, Negus Menelik was forty-five and ready. Nagāssi's seed, eight generations later, reached the throne of all Ethiopia on November 3, 1889.

CULTURAL PROFILES

The Manzē Ethos

*175 The goals of Nagāssi and his descendants, apart from simple increase of
185 power, were to recover the lands taken from their fathers and to stiffen the authority of Christianity in Shoa. Their success was virtually unbroken by
[181] reason of exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance. These are ideals and qualities embodied par excellence in the people of Manz.

423 Sanctity of *rīst*, or land inherited from one's parents, is a cardinal value in
181 the Manzē scheme of things. Such land must not be given or sold to anyone who is not a close relative. People generations removed from actual residents
[428] of Manz still retain claims to family land there, still cherish the idea that if they so desired they could go back and live on it. As an urbanized Manzē once told his nephew in Addis Ababa: "No matter how far you travel abroad, no matter how long you stay away, you will always be able to think of your
[539] family land in Manz as your true home." This sentiment is expressed in a proverb:

> *Ya-Manz rīst be-shi amatu/la-bālabētu.*
> Manz *rīst* to the thousandth year/belongs to the owner.

A squatter may fight to keep his land from falling to some stranger who claims it as having belonged to his grandfather, but in his heart he respects the values that support such a claim.

[577] By Manzē standards the good man is thus one who defends the land of his fathers, seeing that it is not sold to outsiders or that foreigners do not come to
[685] take it. If someone plows another's land without permission, he must be punished. If the matter can be settled through litigation, well and good; if it requires recourse to violence, so be it. To let such an offense go unavenged
[691] would be the worst sort of shame. Grievances concerning their "hereditary

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century. 181 175*

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38] 175* 633 [643]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39] 175* 633 361 [333]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē. [565] [351]

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna*, an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables. [192] [178]

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the 175* 633 361 563 [186] [576]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national government, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāsi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his successors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 571 right to a direct audience at any time. The Emperor is known to glow with pleasure when a subject with whom he is speaking reveals that he comes from Manz. The Manzēs, for their part, proudly refer to their area as *ya-negus agar* ("king's country"). They are perhaps the most devoted of all Ethiopians to the present Crown. However, many stories are told to show that this loyalty has not dissolved their intractable spirit. For example, when asked to select a representative for Ethiopia's first elected parliament in 1957, some of them were indignant: "We already have *our* representative in the capital, and if he isn't able to do the job himself, let him step down and hand it to somebody else."

871 658 Despite their expressed loyalty to Haile Selassie, the Manzēs stubbornly oppose the program with which he is publicly most associated and whose portfolio he has retained, as Minister of Education, from 1943 to the present day. The adults of Manz object to having their children attend the government schools. In many cases where a child has elected to attend school on his own, his parents have cut off all support. The four schools in Manz thus have [162] an enrolment far below capacity, totaling (as of 1960) less than four hundred in this area of perhaps fifty to sixty thousand families.[40] Those hardy youngsters who do attend school often do so in rags and with an empty stomach.

[857] One reason for this determined opposition to the government schools is the obvious economic one: children must stay at home to tend the herds. This is a problem all over rural Ethiopia, but still the schools in many other areas are overcrowded. Another reason is that, as we have seen, Manz was not interested in education in the old days. Few Manzēs learned to read in the church schools. When a boy showed unusual talent and interest in traditional studies he had to travel to Gondar, which often meant running away from Manz.

871 658 186 829 The crux of Manzē defiance of the new educational system, however, is cultural fundamentalism. The Manzēs keep their children away from the government schools because they fear that the students there are learning something that threatens the old ways. In particular, they do not like their children to learn the language of the *faranj* ("European") or to be exposed to Ethiopians who have been taught by *faranj* and thereby infected by alien ideas. Tending the farm, keeping the fasts, defending land and self—that is the sum and substance of Manzē education, beyond which there is nothing a boy needs to learn.

829 648 186 Undoubtedly part of this dread of *faranj* learning is based on the Manzēs' one experience with the white man: the Fascist occupation. As one of the strongholds of patriotic resistance to the occupation, Manz and the Manzēs became the object of the invader's unyielding fury. Over miles and miles of Manz not a home or church was spared. The inhabitants were either killed, or fled to safer areas in Galla country, or joined the underground opposition—

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 829 186 178 new African nations is proving to be an effective agency for reducing such prejudices among the students. The broader political identity afforded by pan-Africanism may in turn be promoting a more genuine national feeling among the younger educated Ethiopians, a feeling of solidarity that begins to encompass all the ethnic groups in their land.

*883 829 Still another sphere in which the Ethiopian students have had some room for the development of political values has been the study of history. The students were therefore asked to name the persons in Ethiopian and in world history whom they most liked and disliked, and to explain why.

The three most liked figures in Ethiopian history were Haile Selassie, mentioned by 36 per cent of the respondents; Tēwodros (30 per cent); and Menelik (16 per cent). Named much less frequently were Yohānnes (mostly by Tigre students); military heroes of Menelik's day, and of the resistance during the Italian occupation; and church figures, especially Abuna Peṭros (the great Orthodox martyr of the occupation).

*883 829 643 The reasons given for naming Haile Selassie include the wide variety of respects for which his reign has been praised. He is liked for uniting Ethiopia, supporting education, fighting for the country's freedom, introducing modern civilization, and generally "helping the country." The reasons given extend to expressions of very personal attachment, such as "he gives me education," "he supplies everything," and "he is my guardian."

The reasons given for liking Tēwodros or Menelik best are more circumscribed, and they are balanced by a number of other responses in which these two emperors are named as the most *disliked* persons in Ethiopian history (Tēwodros, 7 per cent; Menelik, 4 per cent). Tēwodros is liked chiefly because of his bravery and his attempt to unite the nation, while he is disliked because of his cruelty. Menelik is liked chiefly because of his defense of the country at Adowa and his efforts to modernize Ethiopia and introduce education; and he is disliked for having sold parts of the country to Europeans. Yohānnes is mentioned about the same number of times in both categories (2 per cent): positively, for his courage in battle and his Christian zeal and, negatively, for his intolerance in persecuting non-Christians.

*883 829 Lījj Iyāsu (11 per cent) and Ahmad Grāñ (8 per cent) are the most disliked figures in Ethiopian history. They are associated with specific offenses: Iyāsu with being an "incompetent ruler," "encouraging Islam," and "chasing after women," and Grāñ with burning churches and massacring Christians. Three other persons in this category are Sultan Ibrahim (5 per cent), for selling the port of Assab; Dajāzmātch Haile Selassie Gugsa (4 per cent), for fighting on the side of the Italians in 1935; and Yodit (2 per cent), the legendary queen who is said to have sacked Aksum in the tenth century.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 men and outstanding commoners in the vicinity of the royal court. But with
871 the importation of hundreds of foreign teachers, the establishment of an ex-
178 tensive system of secondary schools and colleges, and the provision of economic support for thousands of post-elementary students, a real structural change came about. Although the school system remained completely subordinate to the throne, it introduced a number of processes that had a dynamic of their own.

*883 As we have seen, these new socialization processes have subjected the
121 modern adolescents to many sorts of conflict and strain. They have been
178 placed in conflict with their parents, and hence within themselves, on the basic issues of work and, particularly, marriage. They have been subjected to the simultaneous appeal of traditional and modern patterns in virtually all aspects of culture. They have been forced to make choices in numerous areas, while their traditional counterparts have customarily been prevented from making any kind of choice at all.

It might seem that such a situation would breed a troubled generation, distraught and disoriented, knowing what we do about the psychological hazards of rapid culture change. And indeed, among the modern adolescents of the fifties, one might find classical cases of anomie and identity diffusion, boys who confess, "Nothing seems worthwhile to me . . . I am confused, being brought up as I was on the traditional beliefs without questioning and then suddenly being forced to ask questions," or, "The problem of choosing the work I should go into is my only real problem right now, but because of it I find it hard to make decisions about anything. If this suffering is the price of freedom, I am not sure it is worth the price."

Such cases, however, were the exception, not the rule. Most of the students were working hard to get ahead in the world or enjoying their newly acquired freedom and camaraderie. Almost all our respondents had ready answers concerning the sort of work they want to go into, and what they
[828] would do if they could have any wish granted. Comparing themselves with their elders, they presented a positive self-image. They regarded themselves as more "civilized," "well built," and "generous" than their parents' generation, albeit somewhat lazier and less polite; and in comparison with Ethiopians a decade older, saw themselves as "better educated," "more clever," "more adventurous," and better able to "enjoy life." Nearly all of them (92 per cent) said that they felt either "enthusiastic" or "hopeful" about their
[181] personal future. So one could characterize the Ethiopian post-elementary students of the fifties as relatively buoyant, clear-headed, self-confident, and enjoying their situation of culture contact and change far more than suffering it. How may this be explained?

[643] One great source of their strength was a sense of dependence on the Emperor. As founder of the Ethiopian school system, Haile Selassie has

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appeared to the students as the source of their new goods; of their learning, 883*
health, and well-being. Because of a feeling that "he supplies everything" 121
and "he is my guardian," students of all grades have been among the most 178
sincere and enthusiastic supporters of Haile Selassie. So their adoption of 643 •
Western patterns has from the outset been legitimated by the highest tradi- [177]
tional authority, and the harshness of the culture clash has been softened
by the symbolization of both tradition and modernity in the Imperial Person.
Here the traditional pattern of "functional deviance" re-asserts itself. The 883*
adolescent rebels against the traditional demands of his parents, but expends 121
that deviant energy on behalf of legitimate symbols of the national society. 178

Related to this was a strong sense of national purposiveness. *Agərēnennā* 883*
negusēn tammrē iredālhu ("Having studied, I will serve my country and 121
my king")—this was the motto of most Ethiopian students in the forties and 641
fifties. The conspicuous needs of their country provided clear goals in terms 178
of which students felt they were preparing themselves.

Still another motive force was the need for personal justification. The many 883*
students who in a sense deserted their home villages or families in order to 121
spend years in school carried with them an ambition eventually to show the 178
folks back home that they were right after all. This involved the conviction 871
that going to school was the right, at times the righteous, thing: a blind
faith that simply by continuing along the road of education they would
make good in the world and return home some day as a sort of hero. Here,
too, is an echo of the old deviant pattern: the renegade returning home, after
many years, as a successful churchman or warlord.

The economic situation, finally, was encouraging for students. It seemed [464]
for many years that advanced training, including study abroad, would be
available for whoever qualified, and that the demand for educated personnel
was so great that the job opportunities for students would be endless.

By 1961, however, all these sources of adolescent morale—royal legitima- 883*
tion, national purpose, personal justification, and economic opportunity—had 121
been to some extent undercut. Some of the changing circumstances have al- 178
ready been referred to. The effect of the rebellion of December, 1960, and its 871
aftermath was to weaken the tie between Haile Selassie and the post-elemen- 643
tary students. With his moral authority somewhat undermined, the students
could no longer use him to symbolize a conflict-free transition to modernity.
Nor could they any longer count on him to "supply everything" indefinitely:
in the summer of 1962 the Emperor announced the immediate suspension of
room and board benefits for the students of the University College.

The students' outlook has further been rendered less sanguine by the con- 883*
fusion attending the political crisis of the sixties. They no longer feel the 121
keen sense of national purpose, to serve "country and king." Their ideals in 178
this regard were already weakening before the rebellion by virtue of increased [641]

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565 During the reign of Haile Selassie, the infrastructure of Ethiopian society
178 has become more differentiated. A large standing army, an air force, and a
463 small navy have been recruited and trained by foreign military missions. The
[701] modernization of transport and communication has produced a sizable class of semiskilled operatives—truck drivers, airline employees, telephone operators, typesetters, etc. The expansion of government has produced a legion of clerks. In the towns tertiary occupational roles, like salesmen and barbers, have come into being, and the establishment of factories has engendered a small industrial labor force.

All such people tend to differ from the traditional lower classes in their relative enthusiasm for *selṭänē* ("civilization"). Still more enthusiastic are those who have had more intimate and prolonged exposure to the fruits of *selṭänē*: domestic servants in *faranj* homes; students of the secondary schools and colleges; Imperial Bodyguard troops who served in the Korean campaign and recently in the Congo; and highland Eritreans, whose experience under sixty years of Italian colonial administration has rendered them far more modernized than people of other provinces.

178 Similarly, the reign of Haile Selassie has witnessed the emergence of new
571 elite groups. A "new nobility" of government officials and urban plutocrats
554 has taken place beside the old. In addition, a nascent intelligentsia has at-
565 tained a precarious high status, resting mostly on the esteem of students, some military officers, and resident Westerners. The integrative dilemma of Ethiopia today has more to do with conflicts among and within its various elites than with tribal enmities or masses in revolt.*

• 643 Hovering over these four groups, kindred with each but superior to all,
571 has been the personality of the present emperor. Indeed, the history of
565 Ethiopia in the last four decades has for the most part been the story of Haile Selassie's efforts to direct and control the destinies of the old and new elites. The considerable success with which he has done this is a tribute, not only to his own remarkable manipulative skills, but also to the majesty of the office which he possesses. The position of *negusa nagast* has traditionally monopolized the highest reaches of the Abyssinian system of social stratification; constituting, as it were, an elite of One.

THE TRADITIONAL ORDER

643 *The Lofty Throne*

The emperor comprises an elite in the original sense of the word, for to the Ethiopians he is Elect of God (*seyuma eguäbhär*) according to the conventional Ge'ez honorific.

* Although, as was suggested earlier, tribal and religious differences may generate new integrative crises in the future.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

conventional Ge'ez honorific. Sanctity of the imperial office is an antique 643
theme, deriving apparently from pagan ideas of divine kingship which were 17
transplanted from South Arabia in the first millennium B.C. along with other aspects of Sabaean culture.[1] But the working ideology which has upheld [538]
this conception during the period of Amhara hegemony draws on Semitic motifs of later origin, motifs which received their classic formulation in the fourteenth century national epic, *Kebra Nagast* (*The Glory of Kings*).

The effect of the *Kebra Nagast* is to make the Ethiopian emperor both physical descendant and spiritual successor to the kings of Israel. The genealogical tie is argued by the legendary union of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, whose offspring, Menelik I, is held to have fathered the line of royalty which allegedly ruled at Aksum and was restored in the thirteenth century. The transfer of religious mission is shown both in a prophetic dream attributed to Solomon, in which God's favor passes from Israel to Ethiopia, and in the story of Menelik's theft from Jerusalem of the most sacred symbol of the Judaic mission, the Ark of the Covenant.* Furthermore, while at the time the *Kebra Nagast* was written the Ethiopian monarch was presented as a friendly cousin of the "king of Rome"—an echo of the sixth-century alliance between Caleb of Ethiopia and Justin I of Byzantium[2]—thereafter he came to be regarded as successor to the latter as well, and hence the sole defender of the true Christian faith.

The Ethiopians have elaborated on this exalted conception of their mon- 643
archy in other literary forms.[3] In royal chronicles and hymns of praise which 538
span seven centuries, the emperors are celebrated for superlative beauty and 17
superhuman powers. In splendor of countenance they are likened to the sun; in awesomeness of power, to the lion; in religious character and divine force, to the kings of Israel and, at times, to God Himself.

In life as well as in literature the person of the emperor was clad with an 643
aura of sanctity. Ethiopian subjects have had to prostrate themselves and 17
refrain from lifting their eyes in his presence. An analogous show of deference was expected when they received royal messages from afar; the recipient had to hear the message outside his home, standing, and naked above the waist.[4] The emperors rarely permitted themselves to be seen in public, and were often secluded by curtains while eating or drinking. They were not addressed directly, but through an interlocutor. Zar'a Yā'qob, whose [644]
officers were said to have kissed the earth each time they heard the sound of his voice, carried the demand for social distance so far that pages attached to his court were not permitted to have contact with anybody from outside, and were put to death if they dared to fraternize with local inhabitants.[5]

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* The orthodox still maintain that the original ark containing the stone tablets of the Law is located at Aksum. It is symbolized by the *tābot* found in every Ethiopian church. [778]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

• 643 17 Accession to the throne involved two rites, anointment by oil and bestowal of the crown. Authority to conduct these rites was vested in the Egyptian archbishop, the *abuna*. The formal coronation took place in a ceremony for which in former times it was expected that the parties repair to the ancient sanctuary of Aksum. The change in status brought about through [551] coronation was symbolized by the assumption of a new name, as, for example, Rās Tafari Makonnen became Haile Selassie I. The royal insignia included a ring, worn on the right ear; the royal flag, the staff of which bore a cross resting on a ball; and special drums, trumpets, and flutes.[6] Also included was a red silk parasol known as *zhān ṭelā* (origin of the present-day Amharic word for umbrella). When the emperor was in procession they included a white horse with small silver bells at his head, a silver shield, and a white headband of muslin or fine silk.[7]

Successors to the throne were not determined according to a fixed rule like primogeniture. Membership in the Solomonian line was normally a prerequisite, and the unsuccessful reign of Yoṣṭos (1711–16) demonstrates the hazards of rule when no pretense to such affiliation could be maintained. Usually, however, there were several legitimate candidates for the position, and the absence of fixed procedures for choosing among them has meant that the death of an emperor was often a time of confusion and political improvisation. At times the monarch designated his successor and swore the grandees of the realm to an oath of support, as when Menelik named Lījj Iyāsu; at times a single powerful lord, like Rās Mikā'ēl Sehul at Gondar, was the effective king-maker; at times the judgment and interests of a number of potentates, including on occasion the queen mother, were determinant.

The role of the emperor was largely symbolic, a quality which André Caquot has stressed.

> The king is guarantor of peace and prosperity for his entire country. Here the superhuman virtue attributed to the sovereign by the Ethiopian royal ideology manifests itself most clearly. It is not so much a question of his administering the country politically as it is that he guarantee order by his very presence and the virtue inherent in him.[8]

The idea that the mere presence of the monarch was a guarantee of civil order is reflected in the idiom *agaru negus* ("country of a king"), which means a tranquil land. Related to this conception is the requirement that the body of the emperor be devoid of any physical defect or deformity, so that the well-being of the body politic may be properly symbolized.

But during most of Ethiopia's history the emperor was by no means merely an awesome figurehead, aloof from the works and turmoil of his realm. It was customary for him to serve the society actively in a number of ways. He had to organize the defense of the country and lead troops into battle—if

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

necessary, to die on the battlefield, as did Galāwdēwos, Yohānnes IV, and others. He had to maintain a minimum of political order, balancing off contending ambitions and subduing rebellious elements. Another important function was that of ultimate arbiter in judicial disputes.* As guardian of the church, moreover, he was active in endowing monasteries and churches and in resolving doctrinal disputes among the clergy.

To carry out these and related functions the emperor needed great wealth and political power. When the monarchy was intact he could command wealth from many sources: from the country-wide land tax (*gĭber*), in the form of honey, grain, or livestock, or such special fiscal assignments as saddles, plowshares, spears, ink, or tent pegs;[9] from assessed tithes on produce; in tribute from subject peoples, either in currency (gold, salt bars, etc.) or in kind; in revenues from traders; and from gifts from new appointees and hopeful office seekers. In theory, moreover, all the land of the empire belonged to its ruler; and, in fact, a good part of it was at his direct disposal, either for cultivation as royal estates or to distribute as compensation to those who served him.

The political power of the emperor was grounded in his command of troops supported by the royal bounty. In addition, he could command the troops of all the lords subject to his authority. Through frequent tours around the country he was able to reassert his hegemony from time to time in distant regions. But even from afar, a strong monarch could usually exert great control thanks to his authority to appoint or demote at a moment's notice any officer of the realm. As Alvares observed:

> No great lord of lands, if he is in them, can leave them, or set out for the Court on any account without being summoned by the [emperor]; and being summoned he will not fail to come for any reason. And when he sets out from the land of which he is the lord, he does not leave either wife or children or any property there, because he goes away in the expectation of never returning, since . . . [the emperor] gives when he pleases, and takes away when he pleases.[10]

The ideology of sacred monarchy served to legitimate theoretically boundless demands for wealth and power as well as to provide identity and morale for the body politic. It justified, too, occasional "deviant" behavior on the part of the monarch, virtually the only person with sufficient authority to innovate in this intensely conservative culture. The emperor has always been a primary agent of cultural innovation in Abyssinia, from the time of Ēzānā, who adopted Christianity in the fourth century; to Zar'a Yā'qob in the fifteenth

* To this day Haile Selassie devotes several hours a week to hearing court appeals in a session known as *chelot*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 17 [461] century, who instituted a number of monthly holidays and prescribed new liturgical texts; to Menelik, who introduced vaccination and the eucalyptus tree in the twentieth century. For more than a century now kings and emperors have attempted to combat the traditional Abyssinian repugnance for manual labor by themselves engaging in arduous physical work on numerous occasions.[11] Haile Selassie has followed a pattern with abundant precedents in introducing the many changes which have characterized his reign.[12]

As object of Abyssinia's highest esteem, symbol of its most cherished values, possessor of supreme wealth and power, and author of new norms, the emperor of Ethiopia thus qualifies as an elite in the more technical, sociological sense of the word as well as in its original sense of "being chosen."[13] Indeed, if more extreme interpretations of the emperor's significance are to be credited, he might even be viewed as the fountainhead of high status for all other elites. Thus Bruce, in a famous passage, declares:

> The Kings of Abyssinia are above all laws. They are supreme in all causes, ecclesiastical and civil; the land and persons of all their subjects are equally their property and every inhabitant of the kingdom is born their slave; *if he bears a higher rank it is by the king's gift; for his nearest relations are accounted nothing better.* [Italics mine.][14]

Such an interpretation, however, is more ideological than analytic. Throughout Ethiopian history one can discern definite limits to royal authority, and bases of elite status other than imperial favor.

121 643 17 It is true, as Margery Perham [illegible] sets forth, that a primitive state of technology and severe geographical obstacles prevented the realization of imperial power to the degree that the royal ideology would have permitted.[15] Yet this failure of the monarchy "to build up any kind of administrative framework through which to exercise the absolute powers with which, by tradition and consent, it was endowed" was not simply a matter of wanting techniques. It also reflected the importance of ultimate values other than that of anointed royalty in Abyssinian culture.

121 643 17 1971 The primary sociological limit to imperial authority was the commitment of the Abyssinian people to the tradition of their church. Religious conversion was one change which, at least in the period of Amhara hegemony, could no longer be tolerated. Za Dengel (1603–4) and Susneyos (1607–32) were brought down because of their forthright conversion to Catholicism, and the overthrow of Lĭjj Iyāsu in 1917 was legitimated on the alleged grounds that he had become a practicing Muslim. The decline in power of Tēwodros II (1855–68) was due in no small measure to the fact that his cavalier policy toward the clergy resulted in his being branded an enemy of the church.

121 643 17 A second limit on imperial authority lay in the perennial tendency of certain regional families to become endowed with an aura of legitimacy in their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

own right. Indeed, the record of rebellions by nobility as well as clergy against the emperors of Ethiopia bespeaks a persisting dualism in the Abyssinian's disposition toward the monarchy itself. In principle, the emperor is reverenced. Widely held is the sentiment expressed in the *Kebra Nagast:* "It is not a good thing for any of those who are under the dominion of a king to revile him, for retribution belongeth to God."[16] But unquestioning deference is by no means necessarily coupled with unswerving loyalty. The Abyssinian pattern differs from the Japanese, in which total loyalty to the divine monarch calls for suicide in the wake of any disgrace one might have brought upon him. The norms of fealty to the emperor have not been so deeply internalized in Ethiopia, where the pardon and reinstatement of rebels has been a common occurrence. Among Abyssinians a veneer of genuine deference has often concealed an inner consciousness of disaffection, enabling the individual to act out rebellious wishes when the opportunity or need arises. Indeed, this ambivalence has been one of the traditional impulses behind the culture pattern of wax and gold.

The Old Nobility

The Abyssinians themselves acknowledge the existence of, in addition to the emperor, two groups of persons with pre-eminent status. These are called, both in Ge'ez and Amharic, the *makuānnent,* or "nobility," and the *kāhenāt,* or "clergy." While believing the presence of a king to be a precondition of civil order, they also regard the presence of these other elites as necessary for their good life. This attitude is expressed in the Amharic saying: "Fertility of the land [is] through the *makuānnent;* the splendor of the church [is] through the *kāhenāt.*"[17]

The term *makuānnent* may be used to refer to all secular dignitaries between the emperor and the well-to-do landowning peasantry. In strict contemporary usage, however, the *makuānnent* should be distinguished from two other classes of personages, whom we may call the "royal nobility" and the "local nobility" or "gentry." The former consists of the immediate royal family (*negusāwi bētasab*) and more distant royal relatives (*masāfent*). Because of their kinship with the Solomonic line these have at times been referred to as "chiefs of Israel."[18] Although it was customary for each new king to exile all male relatives who were potential candidates for the Crown to a high mountain fortress, more distant relatives might hold provincial governorates, and women of the royal family sometimes played an important role in court politics and provincial administration. Members of the royal nobility have normally been distinguished by special titles: *ābēto* (now vulgarized as *āto,* "Mister"), *le'ul,* and *lijj* for men; and *emebēt, le'elt,* and *wayzaro* (now vulgarized in the sense of "Mrs.") for women.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

All these titles were conferred by the emperor. But, in addition, *makuānnent* with the rank of *rās* or *dajāzmātch* had the authority to appoint lesser officers under them. The number of troops commanded by these officers varied considerably according to circumstances. Among armies, moreover, there was great variability in status; the *fitāwrāri* of an emperor naturally enjoyed much more deference than the *fitāwrāri* of a provincial *dajāzmātch*.[23]

A number of other titles represented various civil functions. These included:

āfa negus	"mouth of the king" (lord chief justice)
āzāzh, *liq* (Gondar), *wambar* (Shoa)	royal judges
naggādrās	"head of merchants" (customs collector and chief official over merchants)
ṭsahāfi lām, *nagāsh*, *shum*, *ḳānnibā*	various titles given to provincial governors
malkaña, *meslanē*	local representatives of the emperor or provincial governors

A further set of titles was that given to the functionaries of the royal court. These were given for all court posts, including such offices as Server of the Mead (*ṭajj āsālāfi*). Some of these titles were found exclusively at the court of the emperor; others were imitated in noble households across the land, though again, the same title naturally carried far less prestige in the provinces than when held at the imperial court. The list of court titles varied from region to region and century to century, both in its composition and its hierarchical order.[24] At any given time and place, however, a rank order was carefully respected, and confusion over protocol could provoke altercation, as was recorded in the Chronicle of Iyāsu I (1682–1706).[25]

Titles (and numbers) of the principal court functionaries, in the (descending) order of importance fixed at the time of Iyāsu I, were:

behtwaddad	chief counsellor and confidant (two)
blattēn getā	chief administrator of the palace (greater and lesser [two])
rāq māsarē or *wesṭ āzāzh*	majordomo, master of ceremonies
ṭsahāfi te'ezāz	royal scribe; keeper of the seal (two)
zhāndarabā āzazh	chief of the eunuchs

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565 554 644

bajirond	guardian of royal property, treasurer (two)
liqa maḳuās	king's double and keeper of the king's mule
*āggāfāri**	protocol officer, superintendent of banquets

The status of these dignitaries may have been particularly vulnerable, depending so closely as it did on the whims of the monarch. Nonetheless their proximity to the center of imperial power gave them unique advantages. They were in a position to receive many gifts for favors and influence, as well as to come by some part of the royal revenues and to attend the royal banquets. They were consulted, together with military commanders, provincial governors, and high ecclesiastics, on important matters of state. Lands granted to them for their services enabled them to support small retinues of their own, including, in some cases, military contingents. They were normally an important factor in promoting stability and continuity during the troubled moments that usually followed the death of an emperor.[26]

565 554 The above classification of titles is meant only to provide a quick overview of their variety; no such formal compartmentation existed in the Abyssinian perspective. All the titles converged into a single hierarchy.[27] What is more, titles were not strictly connected to offices or functions, so military titles were frequently given to court or civil functionaries. This was particularly true of [644] the court of Menelik, where, for example, the Superintendent of Royal Tents bore the title *bālāmbārās* and the Chief Hand-washer that of *gerāzmāch*.[28] [635] For centuries before, moreover, provincial governors were often known by military rather than civil titles, and men holding civil titles were liable to be called to take part in military campaigns by the sovereign.

565 The sociological reality underlying this overlapping of titles among the nobility was the essentially unspecialized nature of their role. The ideal type of the *maḳuānnent* was at once governor, soldier, and courtier. In time of war he set forth at his own expense, with his own troops, to support the cause of the emperor, or perhaps simply to defend his own regional interests. In time of peace he might sojourn, if permitted, at the court of his king or overlord, eating and drinking with his peers, giving counsel to his liege when asked, engaged in intrigue and otherwise seeking to improve his station.

[427] When not active in warfare or the affairs of court, the nobleman would repair to his lands to supervise the agricultural production and the collection [643] of rents from his tenants. The emperors rewarded nobles who served them [423] with grants of land. The higher chieftains in turn rewarded their own fol- [427] lowers accordingly. These estates were usually held *in absentia*, the peasants

* *Āggāfāri* is an important title in the courts of provincial lords but is not mentioned in the court list of Iyāsu I, nor in that of the *Sera'āta Mangest*.

565 taxes collected in the name of the emperor. Concerning the imposts for which
63 the peasants were liable, Plowden wrote in 1844:
66
[651]

> They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts—he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.[80]

Two centuries earlier, observing similar phenomena, Almeida had concluded that "generally speaking, they are all plunderers rather than governors."[81] The only restraints on their exploitative behavior have been an occasionally keen sense of Christian propriety and the limits to what an exasperated local populace will bear.

565 The existence of a predatory class who serve military functions and maintain a gentry subculture is a common enough feature of traditional agrarian societies. What is perhaps less common in the Abyssinian case is the constellation of factors relating to the recruitment of members into this elite.

High secular status in Abyssinia was dependent on a complex of possessions—land, political strength, and honorific titles—which tended to reinforce
[423] one another. The possession of much land has always been a basis for con-
[556] siderable deference in Abyssinia. As a source of produce, rents, and revenues
[662] deflected from the Crown, moreover, it was also a source of wealth to be used
[661] in building up one's political strength by rewarding able soldiers and loyal followers, and by making gifts to one's superiors. Political power was directly
[631] obtained through the acquisition of governorships. Such offices were a further basis for much deference and, through the incumbent's access to tribute, cus-
[554] toms fees, court fees, and gifts from his subjects, of much income as well. Titles, finally, not only were universally esteemed but also entitled the bearers to a style of life which included a presumptive right to gifts and obedience from all inferiors as well as the consumption of much wealth and power.

565 For all these possessions, the Abyssinian noble was directly dependent on
643 his king (or, in the case of a lesser noble, on his overlord). His dependence was twofold: land, political office, and titles came to him as gifts from the sovereign, and, what is more, their continued possession was contingent on
[423] the sovereign's continuing favor. Abyssinian "vassals" had no legal rights to their "benefices," and lands granted them could be withdrawn and given to others as the emperor wished. At the death of a feudal beneficiary his lands

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[80]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis*, a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

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reverted to the Crown unless specifically reconveyed to the heir by royal 565
proclamation. Political office was no less precarious. Governors were made 643
and unmade—by the traditional process known as *shum-shir* ("appoint- [423]
demote")—in short periods of time. The powerful position of governor of
the maritime province (*bähr nagäsh*) changed hands four times during the [635]
six years that Alvares spent in Ethiopia. Even when tradition assigned a certain post to the descendants of a certain lord, the emperors were able to exert control by shifting their favor from one descendant to another from year to year. Titles, unlike land and office, were granted for life, as we observed; but [554]
they were in no case hereditary, and thus every Abyssinian's hope for a title, [428]
let alone a raise in rank, depended on the grace of the king or of his major appointees.

Given these conditions, it was not possible for the nobility to become a 565
closed, hereditary estate, or to develop a corporate identity capable of confronting the imperial will. On the contrary, thanks to the emperor's freedom [643]
to ennoble anyone whom he chose, there was a relatively high degree of social mobility, and the ranks of the upper strata were continuously being reshuffled.

Outstanding personal properties of various sorts often enabled Ethiopians of 565
low birth to rise to high positions. The emperors and great lords conferred 555
honors on those who served especially well in military expeditions, whatever 554
their origins. Menelik's promotion of two Galla prisoners to rank as his highest generals is a famous case in point. The royal favor occasionally smiled on low-born Ethiopians who excelled in such qualities as physical beauty or witty repartee.[32] Unquestionable personal loyalty was another quality in high de- [567]
mand; freed slaves were sometimes given offices and dignities, since their lack of ties to political families made them particularly trustworthy.

Abyssinians have thus cherished the idea that they could rise to a higher 565
station in life than that to which they were born. Comparatively few ever 554
tried to do so, probably, but ambitious souls were never wanting. Seeking some benefice, or the glory of a title, or a position of power that would permit them to help their kinfolk or avenge themselves for a wrong suffered at the hands of some superior, they would attach themselves to the lord whose fortunes seemed brightest at the moment and hope, by valorous service and God's favor, to arrive someday at an estimable position.[33]

Nevertheless, though ability and fortune might carry any man high in the political hierarchy, he would not thereby automatically be accepted as one of the *makuännent*. A self-respecting man of noble family would resist marrying his daughter to a commoner or person of dubious parentage, no matter how high a rank the latter obtained. For the Abyssinian nobility did form a self-conscious status group with a certain hereditary base. Its members shared a sense of superiority, a consciousness of kind, and an attitude toward commoners such as that expressed by the governor Takla Giyorgis to the Jesuit

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565 554 Barradas: "Father, these villeins are like camels, they cry and groan when they are loaded, but in the end they carry the load that is put on them."[84] They set themselves off from the commoners, not only because of their style of life and subculture, but also because they came from well-known families.

Such sentiments were shared by the commoners. They would much rather be governed by a man from a noted family than by a person promoted from their own social level. The folkways expressed a disdain for the *nouvel arrivé,* 565 554 for example, by poking fun at the office of *liqa maḳuās* (the king's double in 644 time of battle). The *liqa maḳuās* was often a man from an unknown family, chosen because of his handsome features and resemblance to the king. The office permitted him to strut about in the king's clothes and inclined him to assume haughty airs. In some places it was customary to ridicule this upstart by referring to the minstrel, or *azmāri,* as *liqa maḳuās;* for the *azmāri,* too, was entitled to wear the kind of dress appropriate to the lord in whose banquet hall he performed, but the *azmāri* was a person of low prestige in Abyssinian society.

• 643 565 554 In other words: although the emperors could appoint and depose whenever they pleased, with or without cause; and though "the land and persons of their subjects are equally their property, and every inhabitant of their kingdom is born their slave"; by itself the principle of royal favor is clearly inadequate to explain the Abyssinian pattern of social stratification. For, unlike the [171] neighboring kingdom of Buganda, Abyssinia was not a straightforward despotism in which the dispensation of a *ḳabaḳa* was sufficient to elevate a man into the highest social stratum.[85] The claims of a quasi-hereditary noble status group have also had to be satisfied.

565 How did this status group arise, and how have its claims been expressed and justified? What has been the history of its relationship with the monarchy? The existence of this class is anchored in the actual tendency for lands, [423] [631] office, and titles to be given to members of the same families. In reality, the emperors frequently let such possessions pass from father to son, either be- [554] cause they were in too distant a region or because there was no good cause for taking them away, and on occasion drew up written charters assigning grants of land to a man and his future descendants.[86] Indeed, one form of land [423] tenure, known as *rista-gult,* was precisely a sort of hereditary fief, given in exchange for military service over the generations. In certain areas, moreover, [631] it was a matter of tradition that the governorship be given to members of a [554] certain family. Finally, although no man inherited a title, as son of a noble- [428] man he might inherit the culture and facilities that would give him a much better chance than any commoner to obtain a title of his own.

Two other aspects of Abyssinian society supported this tendency toward [554] the development of what amounted to local dynasties of nobility. One was the prestige attached to the "chiefs of Israel," any of the nobility who could

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demonstrate some affiliation with the Solomonic line; the marriage of one of these into a local dynasty contributed an added buttress to its traditionalist claims. The other was what seems to be a still more deeply rooted disposition for decentralized hegemony based on the ancient character of the society. For, as Cerulli has recently suggested, the origins of the Ethiopian state were such as to lay the foundation for a persisting order of feudalism. The movement of South Arabs to the Eritrean coast and highlands took place, not through the conquest of an indigenous population by a united invader, as in the Norman Conquest of England, but by the intermittent emigration and settlement of distinct tribes from South Arabia into various parts of the African territory. Thus, Cerulli concludes, we see in Ethiopia "a feudalism expanded from the roots: a number of principalities or peoples which, independent on African land after their emigration, have finally been regrouped in a higher political unity, yet still conserving in the feudal system thus constituted part of their autonomy and their individuality."[37] If this is so, it would constitute an added traditional element in the sense of legitimacy of local dynastic interests.

All this suggests that we must look to two sources for the prestige of the *maḳuānnent*—that recruitment into the secular elite came from "below" as well as from "above." These two bases of noble status are indicated by the etymology of two Amharic words commonly applied to the local nobility, *shum* and *bālābbāt*. *Shum* (or *seyum*) comes from a root which means to invest with high position. The emperor, as we have seen, is *seyuma egziābhēr* ("invested by God") and he in turn is the source of authority for investing other dignitaries. The status associated with the word *shum* is therefore based on the act of investiture by a sovereign. *Bālābbāt*, on the other hand, has the literal meaning, "one who has a father"; in other words, one who has a significant father, a notable ancestry. This status refers to claims to deference which are based on birth.

Claims based on birth, moreover, were closely tied to the ownership of land and supported by local territorial allegiances. This appears most strikingly in the office of *çhīqā shum*, the lowest level official, who is appointed, to be sure, but by the local people themselves from a small number of *bālābbāt* whose eligibility for the office rests on their inheritance of rights to certain specified pieces of land. Other local offices, like *malḳaññā* and *meslanē*, were normally given by regional governors to *bālābbāt* indigenous to the area. The sacred sentiment of fealty to a monarch, whose charisma rested both on membership in a hallowed dynasty and the hallowed act of coronation, thus competed in Abyssinian souls with deeply felt sentiments of attachment to members of noted families who symbolized local rights and traditions. Abyssinian political structure at any given time was determined by the relative strength of the forces supported by these two principles of legitimacy.

Neither principle was ever realized in pure form. No matter how great his

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642 authority, the emperor could never afford to ignore the hereditary claims of
643 regional *bālābbāt* in dispensing favors and making appointments. He needed
565 a minimum of support from regional lords who commanded devoted followers, and he could not with impunity alienate any number of these at a given time. In practice, imperial favor was accorded *both* on the basis of personal loyalty and military ability, and of ascriptive claims to rank based on birth. The exercise of imperial authority was often a question simply of confirming the leadership of a locally successful *bālābbāt*.

565 With regard to regionally based strength, on the other hand, birth was not
554 a sufficient factor to assure a man a high position. (It was not even necessary, strictly speaking. Any man could attempt to build up a position of power by attracting followers. He had a much better chance, however—a chance to attain authority, and not merely force—if he came from a noted family.) If, as the son of an important lord, he inherited his father's position, he had to prove himself a suitable leader or risk being deposed by the men of the area. At the very least he had to withstand competition from his brothers. Thus, as we saw
[175] in the history of Manz, two of Nagāssi's sons were deposed before the men of Manz found in Sebstē a leader worthy of his father's mantle. Military ability, political shrewdness, and lavish generosity toward one's followers were the decisive characteristics which, together with strong ambition, could enable the son of a *bālābbāt* to attract followers and make claims of his own. With adequate forces, he could even depose a regional governor and take his place, so long as he took possession of the official drum (*nagārit*) of the office.[88] For complete legitimation, however, it was usually necessary to secure con-
[643] firmation of the rule of a locally successful *bālābbāt* by the emperor. This was the reason why Nagāssi is said to have journeyed to Gondar.

642 In terms of the distribution of political authority, then, Abyssinian history
643 may be viewed as an oscillation between the emperor's efforts to define local
565 nobles as his agents and their own efforts to attain continuity and autonomy.
175 The available sources concerning the emperors of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries suggest that their efforts were to a large extent successful. The ensuing "barbarian invasions" so weakened the empire that a more locally centered distribution of power became inevitable. At first only the scope of the monarchy was reduced, as the emperor came to govern a smaller area. In consequence, in outlying regions such as Manz, Gishē, and Merhābētē in northern Shoa, virtual sovereignty was wielded by the local *bālābbāt*. Nevertheless, for a good century after its founding Gondar served as a real imperial capital, and its emperors retained authority over the lords in their shrunken empire. Then, as the monarchy began its inexorable decline due to internal rivalries and the movement of Galla into court and capital, localism triumphed. Ethiopia's Age of the Princes (1769–1855) was as decentralized a political system as was twelfth-century France or fourteenth-century Japan.

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innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amdä Ṭseyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum. 565 792 793 571 182

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[61] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas. 423 795 182 175

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest. 565 792 793 571 182

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict 792 793 643 578

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792 did erupt between the secular and religious powers. In that event both groups
793 had recourse to powerful weapons: the former, violence; the latter, excom-
• 643 munication. The history of Ethiopia records numerous instances of the flog-
578 ging or execution of clergy by secular authorities. The action of Fāsiladas
[175] (1632–67), who reportedly "caused seven thousand priests to be thrown head-
long from the top of the mountain Balbau for having revolted against him,"[82] would represent but one of the more extreme instances of such violent retribution. Short of violence, the kings at least had other means at their disposal for controlling the clergy: the power to withhold benefices, the right to imprison church officials, the final authority on doctrinal questions, and the ability to block a united front on the part of the clergy by pitting high church officials against each other.

792 On the other hand, infringement on the rights of churches and monasteries,
793 gross civil injustice, or radical departure from religious tradition could on
578 occasion evoke surprisingly effective retaliation by the clergy. D'Abbadie provides some extremely illuminating passages on this matter, from which the following have been extracted:

> More than once have I been present at debates of this nature; I have seen these men of the church, weak and without arms amidst men of war, pleading in the name of the law, indicting the menacing covetousness of the surrounding soldiery, invoking eloquently reprobation against their powerful adversaries, and leading them to disavow themselves that force which constituted their pride. . . .
>
> In the case of an open violation of an asylum, the regular clergy got aroused; the most venerable monks abandoned their solitude, assembled the parish clergy, went into the camps, and generally they obtained justice. When the real culprit was the Dajāzmātch, they brought him to repentance, or else excommunicated him, threatened his servants with anathema if they continued to serve him, put the province under interdict and, aided by the monks of the neighboring provinces, stirred up national reprobation against him.[83]

792 The clergy had other resources which it could employ against the emperor
793 himself. It could influence royal policy through highly placed advisers.
578 Through the *abuna* it could exact certain promises from a prospective em-
643 peror as a condition of coronation. Perhaps most important, the clergy could, through its hold over public opinion, turn the populace against the sovereign. As we have seen, this power proved decisive in the encounters between church and monarch in the reigns of Za Dengel and Susneyos, and contributed significantly to the downfall of Tēwodros and Lĭjj Iyāsu.

643 While therefore the emperor may well have been "supreme in all causes,
792 ecclesiastical and civil," he was far from being the sole, or even the decisive,
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

source of the influence enjoyed by the clergy. The latter constituted a largely autonomous status group which no emperor could afford to antagonize indefinitely. The attempt to build a more powerful central government and introduce cultural reforms thus required some alteration of their independent status as well as that of the old nobility.

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THE FEUDAL ORDER IN TRANSITION

The Decline of the Old Nobility

It must always have been the policy of the Ethiopian emperors, except for those few who did not relish the political side of their office, to seek to maximize their control over the regional nobility. They did this, we have seen, either by granting land, power, and rank to men who were completely dependent on them, or else by controlling, through military and diplomatic means, those lords whose birthright and regional strength gave them strong claims to their positions.

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During the past century, however, the idea of subordinating regional nobles to imperial control has come to be conceived more radically and has become the core of a slowly emerging ideal of a modern nation-state. Some such vision was certainly behind the tortuous career of Tēwodros II, whose policy was a reaction against the desperate disunity which the Age of the Princes brought to Abyssinia and to the growing threat from foreign powers. In Plowden's official report to the British government in 1853, he described Tēwodros' work as follows:

> The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated. He has placed soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish: thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains, more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility—a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.[84]

The task of displacing the great feudal chiefs proved to be scarcely less arduous in Ethiopia than in Europe, however. Tēwodros' high hopes were shattered against the opposing forces of regional ambitions and clerical disaffection. The national unity he won through conquest and reform did not survive to the end of his reign.

Yohānnes IV (1871–89) likewise aimed at uniting the nation, but was distracted from serious internal reform by the need to fight off the encroach-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 ments of Egyptians, Mahdists, and Europeans. His domestic policy was more
631 concerned with the imposition of religious uniformity than with political
565 transformation.
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643 Menelik revived Tēwodros' policy of creating a band of generals loyal only to himself. He did this partly by raising capable men with no connections to high position: Rās Gobānā and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, two of his most important generals, were originally Galla prisoners. The power of the feudal chieftains he manipulated by traditional techniques, sending them to posts far removed from their home bases, and arranging political marriages. But Menelik did not decisively undercut the authority of the great provincial lords, and at his death the old political structure was still more or less intact.

The experience of these emperors was not forgotten by Haile Selassie, who seems to have made it his primary and unceasing ambition to assure his position by breaking down every sort of autonomous power where it previously existed or threatened to develop. Thanks to his policies of centralization and to modern means of transport and communication he was able to become more of an effective autocrat than any of his predecessors.

The main development during the period of his regency as Rās Tafari (1917–28) was the stiffening of his military posture. To start with he had the regional forces of Harar Province, formerly his father's governorship, which he had acquired through the favor of Empress Taitu (Menelik's wife) following Menelik's paralysis. He built up his strength by making improvements in Harar that increased his revenues and the number of his soldiers, and acquired fiefs elsewhere. Following the death of Empress Zauditu's commander of the imperial troops in 1926, he took command of these troops and brought some of his own forces into Addis Ababa. By 1928 he was strong enough to demand the title of *negus* from Zauditu and, as is well known, acceded as emperor upon her death two years later.

[204] During these years Rās Tafari was gradually promoting the idea of a transformation of the position of the old nobility. As early as 1926 a letter published in his weekly newspaper, *Berhānennā Salām*, suggested that the prevailing feudal system of provincial government be replaced by a system based on salaried administrators.[88] An actual change of that order was out of the question at that time. A contemporary American observer thus described some of the obstacles:

> Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Guksah, chief of Amhara, Dejasmatch Ayalu, powerful head of Simien, Dejasmatch Gabra Salassy of Tigre, and Ras Kassa of Shoa, are supreme lords in the rough highlands of the north country. Far removed from the central authority, thirty to forty days' journey, some of them, they are out of touch—living in a different world from that of Addis Ababa. Hundreds of lesser chiefs rally to their standards, each

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejesmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[64] 175 631 565 642 643

The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, reestablished after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete. 175 178 565 631 701

Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*kārnē*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers. 175 178 651 652 565 631

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

directed peasantry, and suffer the consequences, no dynamic program of agricultural and social development can take place in Abyssinian areas that does not enlist the active cooperation of the local *bālābbāt* and *shum*.* 178 565 554

The Decline of the Clergy

Although the church was instrumental in bringing Rās Tafari to power—by relieving the nobles of their oath of allegiance to Lījj Iyāsu—it was as a whole not sympathetic to his policy once he began to rule. Foremost champions of tradition, the clergy viewed with suspicion Rās Tafari's interest in modern education and other reforms. So pronounced was their conservatism that his weekly *Berhānennā Salām* found it newsworthy to report the fact that the clergy of one important provincial church were actually reading the Addis Ababa newspaper each week.[97] He was wise to act gingerly at first, limiting ecclesiastical reform to such matters as publishing religious texts in Ge'ez and Amharic, and encouraging the work of foreign missionaries. 178 643 795 793 [797]

In the past three decades, however, changes of many sorts have had the effect of reducing the degree of independent authority which the clergy traditionally enjoyed. These changes included the achievement of independence from the Alexandrian Patriarchate; the weakening of the church under the Italian occupation; subjection of church administration to the central government; and competition from the secular government schools.

Rās Tafari initiated the policy of seeking independence from Alexandria in 1929, when he secured the investiture of five Ethiopian bishops. This gave indigenous clergy, for the first time, the right to ordain priests and deacons, although they remained subordinate to the Egyptian archbishop. In 1950 an Ethiopian bishop, the *eçhagē*, was consecrated as archbishop; and in 1958, culminating Haile Selassie's patient and skillful negotiations, complete autonomy from Alexandria was achieved.

The attainment of ecclesiastical independence has heightened the prestige of national church officials in Ethiopia. It has brought about a re-organization of the national church hierarchy, in which fifteen bishops now hold office, one for each of the fourteen provinces, and one in Jerusalem. At the same time it has reduced the effective freedom of the clergy as a separate status group. Deprived of the external source of legitimacy which the Egyptian *abuna* formerly provided, the clergy are now entirely subordinated to the power of the Emperor. This condition was formally articulated in the Constitution of 1955, which made the election and appointment of archbishops and bishops 178 795 793 [643] [642]

* A potentially significant medium of communication between them and the central government is the Chamber of Deputies, which since 1957 has brought popularly elected notables from the provinces to Addis Ababa.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

The general position of the church had already been weakened by the 648 events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of 795 many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those 793 of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the [792] Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the 795 clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree 793 which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed [643] properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes [651] at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, 178 has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever govern- 871 ment schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to 658 be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased 793 prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full- [965] time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as 178 ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and [554] has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas [871] like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite [658]

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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Ya-dam Demṭs*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

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The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shir*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

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178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shir* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court.

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand.

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time.

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be

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phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal followings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Westernized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approximately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military force, and economic advance.*

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been continuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the

* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 32.—*Haile Selassie as a boy with his father, Râs Makonnen*

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FIG. 33.—*The Emperor attending a ceremony at the University College*

[P. 206-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the Amharic phrase *ya-ḳantu weddāsē zaman*—"the era of futile flattery."

For, whatever other aspects of modern culture they have identified with, the locals and returnees are seized with the promise of its first principle: dynamism.[62] Should they join forces, among themselves and with each other, they might create the effective intelligentsia which is indispensable for realizing this dynamism in action. They would play complementary, and equally necessary, parts; the locals contributing their greater drive and closeness to traditional society, the returnees their broader perspective and skepticism toward simplistic answers and total reforms.

There are numerous obstacles to such a progressive development. Some of them represent the persistence among the intellectuals of a number of traditional pan-Abyssinian characteristics which inhibit both the exercise of creative leadership and the capacity for solidary action. The traditional context of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters which follow. The most conspicuous obstacle, however, has been the manner in which the Ethiopian government has sought to integrate the intellectuals in the social system. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Role of the Government

In the hierarchy of values which sustained the traditional Abyssinian social order, that of the transcendental religious orientation represented by the Orthodox Church may be said to have held the paramount position. This is the sense in which, as has so often been remarked, religion has been Abyssinia's only truly unifying factor throughout the centuries. Religious charisma transferred from foreign sanctuaries—the mythical Ark of the Covenant brought from Jerusalem and the archbishop periodically imported from Egypt—provided the ultimate source of legitimacy in the society, upholding the authority of a sacred Christian monarch, church-defending warlords, and a numerous and functionally differentiated clergy. It so penetrated the social system that the basic unit of Abyssinian civil life was in fact a religious one, the parish.

In retrospect it would seem that the most profound aspect of Haile Selassie's accomplishment has been to dislodge the transcendental religious value from highest place and to replace it with the system-integrative value of loyalty to the emperor.[63] His mission has been above all a secularizing one. To accomplish it he has had greatly to increase his political and economic resources; but insofar as his regime has been accepted, and not based exclusively on sheer power—which to some extent is certainly the case—the paramount value in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie has become loyalty to the emperor as a symbol of the whole society. The autonomous significance of the church has been reduced; its extra-Ethiopian source of charisma has been cut off, and its func-

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tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the Crown.

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The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

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In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but integrative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pursued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

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Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relationship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

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Thanks to the untiring endeavour of Your Imperial Majesty in the field of education, we now have not only elementary and secondary schools throughout the country but also different higher educational institutions providing the youth of our country with higher education. Besides this, competent students are selected and sent abroad for specialization, as a result of which the number of Ethiopian students in foreign countries is increasing. Those of us who are now standing before Your Imperial Majesty are only a few among those who have been given such an opportunity. . . .

Your Imperial Majesty's struggle is to enable Ethiopia to benefit from the advantages of modern education in order to improve the standard of living of Your people so that Ethiopia will play adequately its part in the international community. Consequently, the public services that are rendered in the reign of Your Imperial Majesty are enormously great compared with the past. This can be seen easily by the number of ministries and other government agencies established by Your Imperial Majesty. . . .[64]

[A reply by the Emperor]:

We have been deeply touched by what you have said on behalf of the returned students. From you, We expect devotion to your country and your Emperor. . . . Endeavour to profit your country from the fruits of your education. Men are in great need today. It is not enough to be labeled as "man"—one must be worthy of the name by being of use to the community. This is the real test of education.

You must get in intimate touch with the cultural heritage of your country. Familiarise yourselves with the modes of life from which you must have been estranged naturally by your absence. You must endeavour to purge yourselves gradually of alien influence in your daily lives, and so God help you.[65]

This sort of paternal relation has served not only to promote the loyalty of his educated "children" but also to check mild cases of dissidence. Grown men with sophisticated technical training who may have voiced some critical sentiments have been called in for mild reproof: "Why have you behaved thus? Did We not always bring you fruit and other things when you were at school?"

Such a policy was no doubt viable when Ethiopians with secondary education numbered in the hundreds, but it becomes increasingly implausible as the Emperor's family of educated youth multiplies into thousands. No less relevant to its long-run futility is the fact that knowledge, unlike wealth and political position, is an inalienable possession. Their knowledge gives Western-educated Ethiopians a kind of independence of the Emperor that is lacking in most of the new nobility, and that perhaps may be compared to the private armies of the feudal lords or the power of excommunication held by the church. It was awareness of this that prompted one returnee to say: "The Emperor will have to learn that our education is not a plaything he can turn on or off as he pleases."

But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shïr* and *divide et impera*. "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

people. He has been the procreator of much of what demand for modernization now exists in the country, although the Italian colonial administration must also be credited for a certain amount of this demand. By the fifties, however, the growth of the demand of modernization had become self-sustaining, if only in a relatively small part of the population. At that point Haile Selassie was unwilling, or at least unable, to take the next step, to raise national development higher in the societal value hierarchy than loyalty to the Crown. Thus, a traditional oligarchy has been maintained, in which the development of a self-respecting modern intelligentsia has been effectively restrained and its decisive ascendance as a new elite has been prevented.

The paramount sociological problem in Ethiopia in the coming decades concerns whether or not this pattern will be broken. There is no guarantee that it will be. It is highly thinkable that the opportunists among the intellectuals will be absorbed into the new nobility and that a new oligarchy will entrench itself and maintain its exclusive position by increased repression.[68] The number of young people being given secondary and college education will continue to be limited to a diminutive percentage, and the deeply rooted sentiments of the mass of the population for a regime of traditional oligarchy will not be offended. Economic development will proceed at a snail's pace, and what additional wealth is produced will flow into the pockets of a small minority. One possible outcome of such an eventuality would be that the modernizing infrastructure of the society would grow increasingly restless, culminating in a revolution which installed a modernizing oligarchy.

Alternatively, modernizing forces already unleashed in the country may gather momentum and sustain a gradual breakthrough of the new order. If one were to credit the reports of many who have spoken with the Emperor at first hand, this would be his desire. But far more than imperial approval of a distant ideal is required for it to become reality. Two conditions, above all, would be essential. One is that the systematic, if unwitting, demoralization of the intellectuals would have to be ended. Some sphere would have to be created in which universalistic standards have full sway, in which a modernizing intelligentsia can maintain and develop standards and transmit them to younger elements. The most obvious way to do this would be through a university which, by guaranteed financial support, independence from political pressures, and determined operation at a high standard, could provide the Ethiopian government and people with the technical and executive intelligentsia needed for effective modernization, and could provide an environment in which a corps of "custodians of the public good," loyal to the regime but free to express criticism, might be developed. The program for such a university was carefully drawn up by the planners of the Haile Selassie I University. It remains to be seen whether the opposition which muffled that program shortly after its inception, in the spring of 1962, was motivated primarily by

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ORALITY AND MODERNIZATION

121 The preoccupation with orality which appears in their traditional orientations
155 has not disappeared among those Abyssinians who have acquired a modern
571 education. In some respects, that experience has tended to intensify it. A state of prolonged dependence was institutionalized in the government school system. The hiring of most educated Ethiopians by the government has meant that most of them live in a position of waiting to receive their salary—or *ĭnjarā*, as they themselves put it—from the central authority. Thus the image of a bountiful father-figure has become the more firmly established.
[643] While in his own person the Emperor has projected an image of vigorous leadership, he has at the same time taken pains to promote this old pattern of oral dependence, by sending gifts of food to students and of champagne to educated officials when they marry; by continuing to provide politically relevant feasts at the palace; and, like the traditional Amhara father-feeder, by frequently reminding his subjects that everything they have they owe to him. This pattern is replicated to some extent in the relations between members of the new nobility and their younger relatives and retainers.

Part of the self-reproach of some of the modern-educated Ethiopians is directed against this passive, receptive aspect of their motivational orientation. Their criticism says in effect: instead of drafting proposals to reform our departments, teaching or writing in order to educate our countrymen, or seeking to understand better the complexities of Ethiopia's current situation, we are far more likely to be found sitting about drinking coffee in our offices, sipping beer at some hotel, playing chess, savoring felicitous phrases, and going to parties where eating and drinking are invariably the main order of business.

Insofar as they are moved to take a more active approach to their situation, moreover, their effectiveness is blocked by a tendency to fall into the tradi-
[578] tional oral aggressive patterns of behavior. Their manner of criticizing the government, or certain officials, is frequently one of wholesale insulting. When confronted by a difficult problem, whenever they do not fall back to
[521] a posture of dependence on superiors, they incline toward argumentation, *çhĭqeçhĭq*, backbiting, and mutual incrimination. Experts in debate, they are unaccustomed to the arts of creative discussion.

121 It is not my intention to suggest that the phenomena examined in this
155 chapter are in total conflict with the Ethiopians' search for leadership. Many aspects of Amhara orality are not in the least inconsistent with the demands of a modernizing culture. Many aspects of Amhara orality would appear to be of enduring value—the excellence in debate and the appreciation of literary subtlety, the preparation of fine feasts and the enjoyment of the table. And it is not necessary for a very large number of Amhara to change their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tion has prompted the hasty erection of new self-justificatory defenses and an extreme touchiness about being considered "primitive" or "backward." This sensitivity has been exacerbated by the fact that European politicians in pursuit of their colonial interests, and foreign journalists in pursuit of sensational stories, have shown no compunctions about dwelling on and exaggerating some of the more unflattering aspects of Ethiopian culture. In such an emotional climate, the attempt to be objective about one's country and one's self, to engage in self-examination that is both sympathetic and critical, can be carried out only by efforts that are profoundly heroic. 121* 156 181

The situation has scarcely been improved, moreover, by the form taken by the "cult of the individual" in contemporary Ethiopia. The centralization of power has been accompanied by a radical centralization of prestige. The cult of personality occasioned by the ascendance of Haile Selassie overshadows all public life in Ethiopia. It is manifest in the ubiquitous photographs; the naming of countless streets, plazas, schools, and other institutions after him; and in the unremitting praise and adulation accorded him in all public speeches and mass media. Other individuals have normally been accorded recognition only by virtue of their proximity to him, while individuals possessing attainments in their own right, and thus some claim to public attention, have deliberately been kept in the shadows. Domestic news conveyed through the press and radio has largely consisted of the minutiae of the Emperor's daily activities, including such matters as the exact time at which he performs any public function and all the words he speaks on any occasion. This cult of personality has further been advanced in the Ethiopian press by its adherence to a number of conventions respecting the person of the Emperor, such as that of placing the name of the Emperor at the beginning of any article in which he is mentioned; capitalizing all references to the Emperor, including all pronouns; and attributing all developments and progress reported in the newspapers to the initiative and foresight of the Emperor and his government.[48] 121* 181 156 643

The political implications of this phenomenon need not concern us here. Whether the monopolization of prestige as well as power by the Emperor may have a primarily beneficial effect, through providing an authoritative symbol that can link the multifarious elements of the Ethiopian state; or whether, as was the case with Bismarck, the elimination of other possible pre-eminent personalities is laying the basis for a leadership vacuum for which the coming generation may pay dearly, is a question that cannot yet be answered. In this context we are concerned only with establishing the point that the ascendance of a cult of personality such as now obtains in Ethiopia eliminates not only the bestowal of public esteem for authentic individual performance, but also deprives the people of exercise in a crucial prerequisite

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of individuality—loyal criticism toward the government, one's friends, and one's self.

Besides the efforts of those courageous Ethiopians who, in exile abroad or living in inner exile at home, have steadfastly worked to develop their powers of integrity and their capacities of independent judgment, there is but one force that holds any promise of increasing the scope of personal autonomy and creativity in Ethiopia, and that is education. The fate of Ethiopia one and two generations hence is linked, more closely than members of large, industrialized societies can readily appreciate, with a single small institution: the Haile Selassie I University. As pinnacle of the country's educational system, it sets the standards, prepares the teachers, and devises many of the innovations to be used throughout the nation's schools. No less important, its relative independence from the national government gives it a certain leeway to pursue policies based primarily on academic considerations. The Ministry of Education, which administers all other secular schools in the country, is necessarily more subjected to the routine pressures of domestic politics. The university, on the other hand, by virtue of its many expatriate staff members and its dependence on outside financial help, is more intimately tied to international academic standards and practices. While a growing number of qualified Ethiopians have joined its staff, for some time to come the University will necessarily be greatly dependent on assistance from academic men from other countries. In any event, it is likely to remain in continuous contact with the outside world by virtue of its participation in the international community of scholars. This condition may give it a degree of autonomy and insulation that can but further the patient development of Ethiopia's most sorely needed asset: cadres of individuals who can resist the facile slogans of the day and work to provide for Ethiopia's great transformation the benefits of enlightened aims and realistic practices.

579 in-white", to control this. Sometimes these resort to the old-fashioned and officially illegal "afarsata" collective arrest of a series of suspected hamlets.

644 701 Another old pattern that survives is the personal bodyguard of the supreme ruler, i.e. the emperor, which has now increased to a size equal in manpower to the Ethiopian army itself, and is reputed to be far better trained and equipped. Centered at the capital and a few strategic spots, with greater mobility than the army, and battle experience gained in Korea, it contains much of the Galla "balbat" element directly loyal to the present royal family. The regular army is scattered throughout the country, and is utilized against periodic uprisings in the border lowlands and escarpments, such as the desert Danakil, the Issa and the Raya Galla of the eastern escarpment who occasionnally go on the warpath after the harvest season.

554 625 701 The attitude of the common people who admire an individual hero but mock uniformed dandies, still persists, much to the annoyance of the uniformed police of the provincial towns, and of the soldiers. The non-uniformed "näch lēbash" are far more respected, and their bravery is acknowledged.

638 world", i.e. Jesus Christ), indicating the section of the town in which he lives.

C. Appointment to Office and Decision-Making.

566 The feudal social structure led almost invariably to paternalistic attitudes in appointment to office and in decision-making. This attitude continues in remote rural districts as well as in the most modern-appearing state offices in Addis Ababa.

661 644 The feudal lord, having conquered new lands, usually rewarded his most trusted followers with fiefs and connected privileges. For example, the newly-appointed "mälkäña", who may have previously served merely as military orderly to the warlord, as cupbearer and meatcarver, could be appointed to act as liaison officer and administrator of Galla lands, allocating 1/4 of the land to the old Galla "balbat" as "mälkäña" land of their own, and keeping the rest as his own fief. He would continue to make himself useful as tax-collector, foreman on statute-labor for the lord, as general spy for the ear of the Lord, available for any special service at any time. But he had little security of office or of land tenure, both being at the mercy of any caprice of the lord. It was therefore essential for him to spend much time at the court of the feudal lord, bowing and scraping, ever fearful that some competitor, perhaps the former "läfäri" the herald who announced decrees and public inquiries,

ight gain in favor and edge him out with contrived accusations.

his pattern can still be observed, from the modest court of the sub-provincial governor and local judge, to the palace courtyard of the emperor himself. It is called "dži tenāt" (lit. waiting by the gate). The frequency of appearance, in order to remain in good graces, is usually twice a week; more often if a special favor is sought. The place is preferably within a few yards [576] of a spot where the lord (or emperor) will pass. When this takes place, the courtier bows from the hips, very low. This will usually be acknowledged with a small nod. The procedure is considered essential by the aspirant for office, and by the office-holder, for these reasons:

Positive Reasons:

Reaffirmation of continued loyalty;

To indicate readiness to receive orders, pass messages, give information;

To enable the lord to play his paternalistic role (i.e. the lord can and periodically does ask whether the courtier is happy in his job or [576] wishes a new one; ettiquette requires a response of happiness at least for six months after having received a job, even if it was a demotion or an unpleasant task).

Negative Reasons:

To counteract rumors of disloyalty spread by rivals;

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this would almost certainly happen in case of repeated absences;

To prevent the ruler from forgetting, or to pretend having forgotten, a position of favor promised to the applicant. This follow-up also indicates tenacity, a positive point.

To keep the ruler from thinking that the office-holder has become so proud and independent that he has forgotten the "father" from whom all good things come.

To counteract plots being hatched in his absence, which would not benefit him.

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Another old requirement in appointment to office, which now is in force primarily in the district capitals and rural areas only, is the gift, "shum gänzäb" (lit. money for appointment), paid to the chief at the time of application.

Until very recently , the newly-appointed governor-general of a province would decree a "shum shir", a general, automatic abrogation of all office holdings left by the preceding regime; this enabled the new governor to appoint his own followers, courtiers, retainers, poor relations, etc., in office; but in practice he usually reappointed most of the former officials, down to the many "cheqa shum" headmen, on payment of an appropriate "shum gänzäb". In recent years this practice has been curtailed at the upper levels; for both the director-general of the province, and the secretary-general are now appointed by the central government in Addis Ababa.

181 strained behavior, civilization, but which now has assumed the con-
178 notation of "modern" in the Western sense. It includes the improved
[562] status of the woman, no longer a mere hewer of wood and hauler of water; and it even became formalized in 1942 when an imperial proclamation, in establishing a Consultative Committee on Legislation, gave instruction to draft new laws that would be "not repugnant to natural justice and humanity".

178 But many old values still persist even at the apex of the
576 hierarchy where the prime "change agent", the emperor, resides. Most
644 notable, to foreign observers, is the continuation of the "daj tenat" (faire l'antechambre: lit. waiting at the gate). This is the traditional palace courtyard ceremony of bowing to the emperor at least twice a week. Emperor Haile Selassie has permitted this institution to continue. Every governor-general has his own "daj tenat" court when he returns to his provincial capital; and so on down the line.

195 The traditional oath on the king's life, sworn even in petty matters and everyday affairs ("Hayle Selassye yemut", lit. May the emperor die; i.e. if I lie) is still in common use and no attempt has been made to suppress or reduce its usage. Haile Selassie well remembers that during the first half of his reign his Amhara subjects still used to swear by the name of the dead Menelik or by provincial dynasts such as Ras Gugsa.

178 Outlook: the "culture lag" between material and non-material culture that has created so many social problems in so many parts of the present-day world has not yet taken place in this society. The old attitude of accepting and enjoying trade goods without trying to reproduce what the foreigner has created, still persists. Direct exploitation of what nature provides still fills most physi-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Ambara MP5

144 of Semitic blood. There is rather more of the Semite in the Tigraian and the Amhara than in the Shoan and the Gojjami. The Tigraian language has come [197] much under Semitic influences, and there are many common elements in Amharic and Arabic: not only in vocabulary but also in syntax. The Amharic 20 alphabet, with over two hundred and fifty odd letters, is a very exact instrument for rendering the language. It is derived from one of the old Semitic alphabets of the Middle East. Amharic has many explosive sounds which [194] often give the impression that the speaker is excited and indignant when he is not, and with the impatient foreigner this can sometimes lead to misunderstandings.

142 Physically the Amhara is slight and light-boned with regular rather delicate features. He has quick almost bird-like movements and his manner [516] gives the impression which I cannot describe better than by the word fluttering. The hair and beard has the characteristic Hamitic corrugation. [145] Men often go iron grey in middle life, but seldom white. The hair of the women is artificially frizzed and dressed with butter-grease to fix it. This [302] gives them a gollywog appearance.

The Amhara have the most charming manners and they like to stand on 157 ceremony. They have a complicated social hierarchy and always dismount 576 as a salutation to superior persons. They will also touch with their lips the hands or knees of superiors. At the same time they have the naturally easy 644 and democratic outlook of the East; and the poorest man will expect attention and the right of access to a Ras, or even to the Emperor. The approaches to the palace at Addis Ababa were lined with sometimes quite humble people, farmers and soldiers, waiting an opportunity to secure the Emperor's decision on some matter.

157 To respond to his ceremonial manners is an easy way to the heart of the 576 Ethiopian. At the same time they are quick to take offence and their shrill voices are soon raised in anger.

147 The frail physique and mercurial temperament of the Amhara is doubtless the result of the rarefied alpine atmosphere and of a diet predominantly of [262] grain paste seasoned with strong condiments—which they vary from time to time with orgies on practically raw meat. But fragile as they look, the Amhara are, nevertheless, extremely hardy. They will sleep out in all weathers with nothing to cover them but their thin cotton robes; they are remarkable runners and can maintain a jog trot all day; they are like goats on the hillside.

153 I believe the Amhara to be naturally intelligent with a brain which only awaits proper training and development. During the five years of the Italian occupation, no small proportion of the population of Addis Ababa [191] acquired a fair knowledge of Italian. I knew a boy of twenty who, in addition to excellent English, was proficient in Arabic, Somali, Galla, and Swahili. He came, of course, from Harar, which is a great metropolis for peoples from all round the Red Sea. Abyssinian recruits acquired a knowledge of Morse with remarkable facility.

157 When it is possible to overcome the linguistic difficulty and get on friendly terms with Ethiopians, they prove delightful companions, naturally kind, generous and friendly, with a charming sense of humour and often a nice

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

their cattle, and I was not popular with them. I had forty or fifty of my own servants, and I always made one of these come along with me with a spare mule and a rifle in case I saw something to shoot on my daily expeditions. It was not until the expedition was over and I was back again in Addis Ababa that it came out quite casually that every night over a camp fire the "victim"—that is to say, the particular servant who was to go with me next day—was compelled solemnly to make his will and divide his miserable property, with the rest of the servants as witnesses, because they were convinced that it was only a question of time before I was slaughtered by the Abyssinian army, together with the servant who would be with me. These people had no particular cause to love me, but they never complained and never refused to go.

I remember the Emperor Haile Selassie when he was a small boy in the entourage of Menelik. He and his cousin Lej Iyasu, the emperor whom in due course he deposed, were there with other small boys, and they used to wear those black satin cloaks, such as you have seen in the Emperor's portraits, with little gold or brass buttons, a very fine white scarf showing, and beautifully white cotton trousers. In their efforts to please the Emperor Menelik the Europeans used to send all sorts of consignments of our goods. One consignment which came along was a whole case of gibus or opera hats. Some enterprising man had made these of a kind of patent leather. The ordinary opera hats of silk were rather dull in appearance, but the new patent leather hats did not catch the fashion in Paris or London, and so they were shipped to Abyssinia. I gave them to Menelik, whereupon he made all these small boys in the court wear these shiny opera hats. In the result, although many would think they looked ridiculous, they appeared to me extraordinarily like the small boys of my own school so far as headgear was concerned, and I thought they suited them perfectly well.

The Abyssinians were beautifully mannered, they were very receptive, and, as exemplified by their present Emperor, many of them have all the best instincts of civilization in them. Helped as they have been by the very remarkable individuals whom Captain Allen has mentioned: Boustead, Pilkington, Thesiger, Sandford, and others, they have done great things for their country, and will do yet more; and that is one of the good results that has come out of this war.

In your name I wish to thank our lecturer of this evening for his very delightful lecture.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ababa and Debra Berhan remains Galla country. The Amharas have re-occupied the region immediately around Debra Berhan, their southern limit corresponding roughly with the edge of the sheet; but the churches built to meet their needs (including the new St. Gabriel already once mentioned) are comparatively few and far between, a confirmation of the recent date of the re-colonization. 175 563

The Gallas remained in possession of the plateau country until the early nineteenth century when Sahele Selassie, king of Shoa, began to push them back. The half-dozen hill-top forts shown on the sheet almost certainly date from this time, or were reoccupied then. The capital of Shoa since the eighteenth century had been Ankober, on the edge of the great eastern escarpment, some 20 miles east of Debra Berhan. But Sahele Selassie, as part of his anti-Galla campaign founded, in about 1830, a new capital at Angolala in the midst of Galla country. He thereafter divided his time between Angolala and Ankober. A largely disused track, still well-defined in most parts, is shown crossing the sheet from Angolala in an easterly direction; this was evidently an old route joining the two capitals. Harris,[1] who conducted a British Mission to Sahele Selassie in 1841–42, visited Angolala which then contained four or five hundred huts. He also describes Sahele Selassie's two-storied "palace," built by an Albanian[2] visitor, standing on an eminence—which however the king would not inhabit, from fear of earthquakes. Angolala continued to be used by Sahele Selassie's son, king Haile Malakot, and the great Menelik, who was Haile Malakot's son, had been born here in 1843—just after the time of Harris's visit. 175 [563] [712] [487] [644]

Not much remains now to show that Angolala was so recently the twin capital of Shoa; but the site of Sahele Salassie's house, an artificial mound crowning the ridge, is easily identified and commands a fine view of the countryside. Inside the mound is a vaulted cellar, its masonry showing clear signs of European workmanship, as also does the central stone-built element of the local church of Kidane Meheret. This work is now exposed to view as the church was burnt down during the Italian occupation. Angolala remains a well-populated area, but only a very few huts now stand among the remains of defensive walls near the old royal residence. 172 177

The young Menelik, up to the age of twelve, must have known all this country well. But at that time (1855) the newly crowned emperor Theodore, whose ambition was the unification of Ethiopia after a century and a half of anarchy and internal strife, came down from the north with the object of subjecting Shoa to his personal rule. He defeated king Haile Malakot on the plains of Atakilt, the irrigated area just south-east of Debra Berhan. Haile Malakot died immediately after the battle, and Menelik was carried away captive by Theodore—who, however, afterwards treated him as a son rather than a prisoner. For some years Menelik followed in the emperor's train, moving with him from Gondar to Debra Tabor and then to the hill-fortress of Magdala, Theodore's last capital and later the scene of his undoing. Several years before Napier's siege of 1868 Menelik had escaped from Magdala during, it is said, one of Theodore's periodic orgies. A youth in 175

[1] Harris, 'The Highlands of Aethiopia,' London, 1844. [13]

[2] It is much more likely that Harris meant an Armenian.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and men who sleep there to watch, from fear of the animals 231
that roam about the villages all night: and if they did not
keep this watch nothing alive would remain which they
would not devour. The people who go to sow millet in the 241
mountains of Bisan belong to this country and the neigh- 221
bouring towns. The reason why they go and do it is this. 132
Here there are very numerous grain crops of every kind
and nature that can be mentioned, as I have already said;
and because it is near to the sea, by which go all the
provisions for Arabia, Mekkah, Zebid, Jiddah, and Toro,[1]
and other parts; and they carry the provisions to the sea to
sell them. And because in this country the winters are
divided into seasons, and the seed crops do not grow
except with the rains, they go to sow these millet
fields at the mountain of Bisan, where it is winter in the
months of February, March, and April. There is this same
winter in a mountain called Lama, in this kingdom of the
Barnagais, which is fully eight days' journey from the
mountain of Bisan. In another country, which is named
Doba, and which is quite a month's journey from this lord-
ship of Lama, there is winter in these same months. As
for these millet fields, they require rains, and as these win-
ters happen out of season, they go and sow them where it
rains, and so profit by both winters. In this town of 346
Barua are two churches with many priests, one close to the 562
other, one is for men, the other for women. The men's
church is called St. Michael, that of the women is named
after the apostles Peter and Paul. They say that a great
lord, who was then Barnagais, built the men's church, and [644]
gave it the privilege that no woman should enter it, except
only the wife of the Barnagais, with one damsel, whenever
she went to take the communion, and even she does not
now enter the church, but takes the communion at the
door in the inner circuit with the laity, and so the

[1] Mount Sinai.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 other women do in the church of the apostles, who take it
562 in its place. I always saw the women of the Barnagais go
[644] to the women's church to take the communion with the other women, and I did not see them use the privilege which they say they have, of taking the communion, with one damsel, in the church of the men. The circuits of the churchyards join to one another; they are of very high
796 walls. They make the sacramental bread for both churches in one building, and they say the masses in both churches at the same time, and the priests who serve in one church serve also in the other; that is two thirds of the priests in the men's church, and one third in the women's church, and so they are distributed. These churches have not got tithes, but they have got much land belonging to the priests, and they put it out to profit and divide the revenues of the lands among themselves: the Barnagais gives what is necessary to the churches, such as ornaments, wax, butter, incense in sufficient quantity, and he supplies them with
[792] everything. There may be in these churches twenty priests and always twenty-two friars. I never saw a church of priests which had not got friars, nor a monastery of friars which had got priests; because the friars are so numerous that they cover the world, both in the monasteries as also in the churches, roads, and markets: they are in every place.

CAP. XXVI.—*How the priests are, and how they are ordained, and of the reverence which they pay to the churches and*
793 *their churchyards.*

684 The priests are married to one wife, and they observe the
587 law of matrimony better than the laity: they live in their houses with their wives and children. If their wife should die they do not marry again; neither can the wife, but she

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and so receive absolution. They pray in the churches of 796
the canons as in those of the friars. Friars do not marry, [782]
canons and priests do so. When the canons live together 793
in the circuit they eat in their houses, and the friars eat in
community. The chiefs of these churches are called Lica-
canate. The wives of the canons have houses outside of the
circuit, where they go to live with them: the son of a
canon remains a canon, and the son of a priest not, except
he chooses later to become one. No tithes are paid to any
church, they live on the large properties which the churches
and monasteries possess. Complaints against the clergy [694]
are dealt with before the secular justice.

The vestment is made like a shirt, and the stole with a 292
hole in the middle, and put over the head; they have no
maniple, nor amice, nor girdle; priests and friars all have [302]
their heads shaved, and the beards not. The friars say
mass with their hats on their heads, and the priests with
their heads bare.

In no church is more than one mass said, and no mass is 794
said for alms, not even for the dead. When any person dies,
the priests come with cross and holy water and incense,
and recite certain prayers for him, and carry him off to
burial very hurriedly: next day they bring offerings: the
churchyards are all closed, so that nothing can enter them.

Prester John has no determined place of abode, he 643
always goes about the country in tents, and he will always
have in his camp five or six tents among good and common
ones: and there will always be at Court of people for the 644
horses and mules from fifty thousand upwards.

The kitchen of Prester John is a good crossbow shot
behind his quarters, and they bring his food in this manner:
all that he has to eat comes in porringers and dishes of
very black earthenware on wooden trays, and pages bring
them, and above the pages come a pallium of silk, which
covers them so that these viands come with reverence.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

644 *King's Household.* The Serachmasery is Yesous Alaka*; he anoints the king at the coronation, and has ten ounces of gold for his salary. The Licaonte vote standing before the King and the Ras, but before the Billetana-gueta dakakin, and other meconem, sitting. Four licaonte and four azajes only vote before the king. The Palambaras was of old, in Tigre, called Lik sof. The Baal-magwass goes immediately before the king, dressed as the king, and his face, as the king's, half-covered. All his actions are imputed to the king; and when he kills an enemy in fight, it is said the king killed him. Shalaka are the heads of the king's soldiers, who are called by respective names, as Gimja-bet, Werk-saccala, &c. Azaje are officers over the king's household and revenues. The servants of the Licaonte are called Firaje and Baalheg; they vote with the Licaonte, and before them in civil causes. Rakmasery is superintendant of the bread, and the Shum mes of the wine, or hydromel. The Tersemba Azaje is the judge, or, as it is called, Dabna of the Wezizir, or nobles; Dimshas is an officer under him. Of the officers called Hadug, there are two; these are the king's wakeels, in the Abuna's house, and have one-third of his revenues.

Gera and Kanya wust-Azaje. He is the person, who, in capital crimes, accuses for the king; and is always one of the Licaonte, the most remarkable for his experience and discernment. Debena-bet haits is the person that executes, by his servants, all criminals at Debabay; he has the guard there at night, and, about three in the morning, gives the signal of the approach of day to the officers of the king's house by about 30 smacks of a whip, to drive away the hyænas and beasts of prey, that come to Debabye, the place of execution, in search of carcases. He has also the right of sending expresses to Gondar of the king's victories, and brings with him the heads, pudenda, &c. of traitors, which are exposed on the tree at the place of execution; at which time the merchants, both Mahometan and Christian, give presents, which, on great occasions, amount to 10 wakeas from each Moslem, and the same from the Atary, or Christian merchants. The viceroy, or kasmati of Ti-

* A church within, or near the palace.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

gre, drinks out of a golden cup, as keeper of the law at Axum. There are 12 nagareets in Tigre, and forty-four persons are invested with the Ras-werk. 644

Church affairs. The Abuna is appointed by proclamation of the king, and is deposed at his pleasure. He holds of no other person. He ordains priests and deacons within the kingdom, consecrates churches, altars (tabot), &c. His revevenue was once very considerable, esteemed one-third of the revenues of the kingdom; but as those princes, who made the grants, resided in Shoa, or in the south of Tigre, the principal lands are in those provinces, adjoining to the royal residence. Now, the southern provinces are all in the hands of the Galla, as well as part of Tigre, and the governor, or Ras, has assumed the rest; so that of 400 oz. of gold once paid by Tigre, the Abuna, in my time, got only twenty-five, one-third of which went to the king's wakeel in his house. The Abuna appoints no officer, civil, or ecclesiastical; the king, or governor, does all. The king appoints officers, called Alaka, who administer in all cases the revenue of churches and convents; and this person is the judge of differences and suits among the priests and monks of his church, or fraternity, from whom lies no appeal but to the King, or to the Ras, who is understood to represent him. This Alaka is, or is not, a monk, or priest, at the king's pleasure. Of those who are called monks, are the communities of Debra Libanos, or Azazo, as it is now called, Waldubba, Werkleva, Damo, Mahabar Selasse, &c. These live in villages in these places, and reside or not as they please. The rest of that name are those who are ordained on any illness, disappointment, or advanced in life. The monks are ordained by the Itchegue, the others by any ordinary priest. Neither take any vow. The women of Waldubba are of the first kind, and all women past pleasure compose the second. There are many instances of both orders renouncing and marrying. 793 794

All persons, as well ecclesiastical as civil, are subject to the same laws, judgment, and tribunal, without exception, be the cause of whatever nature it may be. The Abuna, or Itchegue, have none of them a tribunal, nor can they take cognizance of any cause; especially the Abuna, who has, as I have said, an officer in his house appointed by the king, who pu- 692

[p. 155]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

tent secluded and when they go out they ride mules 562
astride, are completely veiled or rather covered up in their *chammas* and are accompanied by an escort on foot, one or two of whom walk or trot by the side of the mule holding the lady in position.

Getting on to the mule is an operation that must by 492
no means be witnessed by the profane masculine eye; 576
I remember on the occasion of the first visit paid to my wife by an Abyssinian lady of rank I went to the entrance to speed the parting guest. To my surprise a number of members of the escort took off their *chammas* and held them all round the mule so that their mistress could climb into her saddle in complete seclusion.

But rigid as may be the rules of privacy governing 562
the lives of women, there are no harems, and no guard 644
of eunuchs to watch over them as in Moslem countries.

Nevertheless other Eastern customs are practised, 304
such as circumcision among men and a mild form of 171
clitoridectomy among women; this custom, be it observed, is not as is often supposed of Jewish origin, but probably of much more remote antiquity, and is further evidence of the Hamitic descent of the Abyssinians; according to Gibbon circumcision had been practised "by the most ancient Ethiopians, from motives of health and cleanliness" and presumably not therefore as a religious rite.

The nation as a whole has not adopted European 291
dress, although it is worn to some extent in Addis 177
Ababa, and by individuals who have been to Europe. They are proud of their national dress and the Emperor still encourages its use at court functions and receptions at the palace.

The distinctive feature of the dress is the *chamma*, 291

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

conventional Ge'ez honorific. Sanctity of the imperial office is an antique theme, deriving apparently from pagan ideas of divine kingship which were transplanted from South Arabia in the first millennium B.C. along with other aspects of Sabaean culture.[1] But the working ideology which has upheld this conception during the period of Amhara hegemony draws on Semitic motifs of later origin, motifs which received their classic formulation in the fourteenth century national epic, *Kebra Nagast* (*The Glory of Kings*).

The effect of the *Kebra Nagast* is to make the Ethiopian emperor both physical descendant and spiritual successor to the kings of Israel. The genealogical tie is argued by the legendary union of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, whose offspring, Menelik I, is held to have fathered the line of royalty which allegedly ruled at Aksum and was restored in the thirteenth century. The transfer of religious mission is shown both in a prophetic dream attributed to Solomon, in which God's favor passes from Israel to Ethiopia, and in the story of Menelik's theft from Jerusalem of the most sacred symbol of the Judaic mission, the Ark of the Covenant.* Furthermore, while at the time the *Kebra Nagast* was written the Ethiopian monarch was presented as a friendly cousin of the "king of Rome"—an echo of the sixth-century alliance between Caleb of Ethiopia and Justin I of Byzantium[2]—thereafter he came to be regarded as successor to the latter as well, and hence the sole defender of the true Christian faith.

The Ethiopians have elaborated on this exalted conception of their monarchy in other literary forms.[3] In royal chronicles and hymns of praise which span seven centuries, the emperors are celebrated for superlative beauty and superhuman powers. In splendor of countenance they are likened to the sun; in awesomeness of power, to the lion; in religious character and divine force, to the kings of Israel and, at times, to God Himself.

In life as well as in literature the person of the emperor was clad with an aura of sanctity. Ethiopian subjects have had to prostrate themselves and refrain from lifting their eyes in his presence. An analogous show of deference was expected when they received royal messages from afar; the recipient had to hear the message outside his home, standing, and naked above the waist.[4] The emperors rarely permitted themselves to be seen in public, and were often secluded by curtains while eating or drinking. They were not addressed directly, but through an interlocutor. Zar'a Yā'qob, whose officers were said to have kissed the earth each time they heard the sound of his voice, carried the demand for social distance so far that pages attached to his court were not permitted to have contact with anybody from outside, and were put to death if they dared to fraternize with local inhabitants.[5]

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* The orthodox still maintain that the original ark containing the stone tablets of the Law is located at Aksum. It is symbolized by the *tābot* found in every Ethiopian church.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

own right. Indeed, the record of rebellions by nobility as well as clergy against the emperors of Ethiopia bespeaks a persisting dualism in the Abyssinian's disposition toward the monarchy itself. In principle, the emperor is reverenced. Widely held is the sentiment expressed in the *Kebra Nagast:* "It is not a good thing for any of those who are under the dominion of a king to revile him, for retribution belongeth to God."[16] But unquestioning deference is by no means necessarily coupled with unswerving loyalty. The Abyssinian pattern differs from the Japanese, in which total loyalty to the divine monarch calls for suicide in the wake of any disgrace one might have brought upon him. The norms of fealty to the emperor have not been so deeply internalized in Ethiopia, where the pardon and reinstatement of rebels has been a common occurrence. Among Abyssinians a veneer of genuine deference has often concealed an inner consciousness of disaffection, enabling the individual to act out rebellious wishes when the opportunity or need arises. Indeed, this ambivalence has been one of the traditional impulses behind the culture pattern of wax and gold.

The Old Nobility

The Abyssinians themselves acknowledge the existence of, in addition to the emperor, two groups of persons with pre-eminent status. These are called, both in Ge'ez and Amharic, the *makuānnent,* or "nobility," and the *kāhenāt,* or "clergy." While believing the presence of a king to be a precondition of civil order, they also regard the presence of these other elites as necessary for their good life. This attitude is expressed in the Amharic saying: "Fertility of the land [is] through the *makuānnent;* the splendor of the church [is] through the *kāhenāt.*"[17]

The term *makuānnent* may be used to refer to all secular dignitaries between the emperor and the well-to-do landowning peasantry. In strict contemporary usage, however, the *makuānnent* should be distinguished from two other classes of personages, whom we may call the "royal nobility" and the "local nobility" or "gentry." The former consists of the immediate royal family (*negusāwi bētasab*) and more distant royal relatives (*masāfent*). Because of their kinship with the Solomonic line these have at times been referred to as "chiefs of Israel."[18] Although it was customary for each new king to exile all male relatives who were potential candidates for the Crown to a high mountain fortress, more distant relatives might hold provincial governorates, and women of the royal family sometimes played an important role in court politics and provincial administration. Members of the royal nobility have normally been distinguished by special titles: *ābēto* (now vulgarized as *āto,* "Mister"), *le'ul,* and *lijj* for men; and *emebēt, le'elt,* and *wayzero* (now vulgarized in the sense of "Mrs.") for women.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of
[644] course, the imperial court. The *makuānnent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discre-
[492] tion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shoul-
[231] dering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-
[213] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *tajj* pre-
[292] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos*, the dark wool cloak of the
[822] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-
[293] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abyssinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for
554 instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mäʿerg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The
554 *makuānnent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary
701 Amharic the term *makuānnent* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

rās	"head" (of an army)
dajāzmātch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitāwrāri**	"general of the vanguard"
qañāzmātch	"general of the right wing"
gerāzmātch	"general of the left wing"
bālāmbārās	"commander of a fort"
bāshā†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shālaqā	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitāwrāri* ranked below the *gerāzmātch*.

[192] † *Bāshā* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

All these titles were conferred by the emperor. But, in addition, *makuānnent* with the rank of *rās* or *dajāzmātch* had the authority to appoint lesser officers under them. The number of troops commanded by these officers varied considerably according to circumstances. Among armies, moreover, there was great variability in status; the *fitāwrāri* of an emperor naturally enjoyed much more deference than the *fitāwrāri* of a provincial *dajāzmātch*.[23]

A number of other titles represented various civil functions. These included:

āfa negus	"mouth of the king" (lord chief justice)
āzāzh *liq* (Gondar) *wambar* (Shoa)	royal judges
naggādrās	"head of merchants" (customs collector and chief official over merchants)
ṭsahāfi lām *nagāsh* *shum* *ḳāntibā*	various titles given to provincial governors
malkaññā *meslanē*	local representatives of the emperor or provincial governors

A further set of titles was that given to the functionaries of the royal court. These were given for all court posts, including such offices as Server of the Mead (*ṭajj āsālläfi*). Some of these titles were found exclusively at the court of the emperor; others were imitated in noble households across the land, though again, the same title naturally carried far less prestige in the provinces than when held at the imperial court. The list of court titles varied from region to region and century to century, both in its composition and its hierarchical order.[24] At any given time and place, however, a rank order was carefully respected, and confusion over protocol could provoke altercation, as was recorded in the Chronicle of Iyāsu I (1682-1706).[25]

Titles (and numbers) of the principal court functionaries, in the (descending) order of importance fixed at the time of Iyāsu I, were:

behtwaddad	chief counsellor and confidant (two)
blattēn getā	chief administrator of the palace (greater and lesser [two])
rāq māsarē or *wesṭ āzāzh*	majordomo, master of ceremonies
ṭsahāfi te'ezāz	royal scribe; keeper of the seal (two)
zhāndarabā āzazh	chief of the eunuchs

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565	*bəǰirond*	guardian of royal property, treasurer (two)
554	*liqa makuās*	king's double and keeper of the king's mule
• 644	*āggāfāri**	protocol officer, superintendent of banquets

The status of these dignitaries may have been particularly vulnerable, depending so closely as it did on the whims of the monarch. Nonetheless their proximity to the center of imperial power gave them unique advantages. They were in a position to receive many gifts for favors and influence, as well as to come by some part of the royal revenues and to attend the royal banquets. They were consulted, together with military commanders, provincial governors, and high ecclesiastics, on important matters of state. Lands granted to them for their services enabled them to support small retinues of their own, including, in some cases, military contingents. They were normally an important factor in promoting stability and continuity during the troubled moments that usually followed the death of an emperor.[26]

565 554 The above classification of titles is meant only to provide a quick overview of their variety; no such formal compartmentation existed in the Abyssinian perspective. All the titles converged into a single hierarchy.[27] What is more, titles were not strictly connected to offices or functions, so military titles were frequently given to court or civil functionaries. This was particularly true of [644] the court of Menelik, where, for example, the Superintendent of Royal Tents bore the title *bālāmbārās* and the Chief Hand-washer that of *gerāzmātch*.[28] [635] For centuries before, moreover, provincial governors were often known by military rather than civil titles, and men holding civil titles were liable to be called to take part in military campaigns by the sovereign.

565 The sociological reality underlying this overlapping of titles among the nobility was the essentially unspecialized nature of their role. The ideal type of the *makuānnent* was at once governor, soldier, and courtier. In time of war he set forth at his own expense, with his own troops, to support the cause of the emperor, or perhaps simply to defend his own regional interests. In time of peace he might sojourn, if permitted, at the court of his king or overlord, eating and drinking with his peers, giving counsel to his liege when asked, engaged in intrigue and otherwise seeking to improve his station.

[427] When not active in warfare or the affairs of court, the nobleman would repair to his lands to supervise the agricultural production and the collection [643] of rents from his tenants. The emperors rewarded nobles who served them [423] with grants of land. The higher chieftains in turn rewarded their own fol- [427] lowers accordingly. These estates were usually held *in absentia*, the peasants

* *Āggāfāri* is an important title in the courts of provincial lords but is not mentioned in the court list of Iyāsu I, nor in that of the *Sərʿāta Mangəst*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 Barradas: "Father, these villeins are like camels, they cry and groan when they
554 are loaded, but in the end they carry the load that is put on them."[34] They set themselves off from the commoners, not only because of their style of life and subculture, but also because they came from well-known families.

Such sentiments were shared by the commoners. They would much rather be governed by a man from a noted family than by a person promoted from
565 their own social level. The folkways expressed a disdain for the *nouvel arrivé*,
554 for example, by poking fun at the office of *liqa maḳuās* (the king's double in
• 644 time of battle). The *liqa maḳuās* was often a man from an unknown family, chosen because of his handsome features and resemblance to the king. The office permitted him to strut about in the king's clothes and inclined him to assume haughty airs. In some places it was customary to ridicule this upstart by referring to the minstrel, or *azmāri*, as *liqa maḳuās;* for the *azmāri*, too, was entitled to wear the kind of dress appropriate to the lord in whose banquet hall he performed, but the *azmāri* was a person of low prestige in Abyssinian society.

643 In other words: although the emperors could appoint and depose when-
565 ever they pleased, with or without cause; and though "the land and persons
554 of their subjects are equally their property, and every inhabitant of their kingdom is born their slave"; by itself the principle of royal favor is clearly inadequate to explain the Abyssinian pattern of social stratification. For, unlike the
[171] neighboring kingdom of Buganda, Abyssinia was not a straightforward despotism in which the dispensation of a *ḳabaḳa* was sufficient to elevate a man into the highest social stratum.[35] The claims of a quasi-hereditary noble status group have also had to be satisfied.

565 How did this status group arise, and how have its claims been expressed and justified? What has been the history of its relationship with the mon-
[423] archy? The existence of this class is anchored in the actual tendency for lands,
[631] office, and titles to be given to members of the same families. In reality, the
[554] emperors frequently let such possessions pass from father to son, either because they were in too distant a region or because there was no good cause for taking them away, and on occasion drew up written charters assigning grants
[423] of land to a man and his future descendants.[36] Indeed, one form of land tenure, known as *rīsta-gult*, was precisely a sort of hereditary fief, given in
[631] exchange for military service over the generations. In certain areas, moreover, it was a matter of tradition that the governorship be given to members of a
[554] certain family. Finally, although no man inherited a title, as son of a noble-
[428] man he might inherit the culture and facilities that would give him a much better chance than any commoner to obtain a title of his own.

Two other aspects of Abyssinian society supported this tendency toward
[554] the development of what amounted to local dynasties of nobility. One was the prestige attached to the "chiefs of Israel," any of the nobility who could

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

It was at this time that the *makuānnent* came into their own. More unabashedly than ever they constituted, not a hereditary aristocracy in corporate opposition to the king, but a plurality of proud centers of rank—partly inherited, partly achieved—enjoying virtual autonomy. To move toward a modern nation it would be necessary to brake their centrifugal force. 175 565 642

The Clergy

Like the nobility, the clergy may be divided into those who are significant at the national level and those who are primarily local dignitaries. The former reside close to the imperial court, while the latter are thickly distributed around monasteries, churches, and wildernesses all over the country. 793 792

The highest ecclesiastical authority in Abyssinia was the *abuna* who, from the time of Frumentius in the fourth century until the death of Abuna Qerlos in 1949, was with few exceptions an appointee of the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria. Chosen from the Egyptian monks of the convent of St. Anthony near the Red Sea, the *abuna* was brought, at great expense to the emperors, to live out his life in an alien land. Ignorant of the language and customs of the country, he played little part in the conduct of church affairs or in affairs of court; and when he did try to do so, his efforts were usually abruptly checked by jealous clerics and suspicious kings. His functions were purely ritual, but indispensable: he alone had authority to anoint and crown the emperor, to confer orders, and to absolve vows. From numerous revenues, rents, and fees, the *abuna* enjoyed a considerable income. Like the emperor, he was regarded as sacred because of the charisma of his office, and spent most of his time secluded from the public.[39]

Second in rank was the *eçhagē*, an appointment made by the emperor. This was the traditional title of the abbot of the convent of Dabra Libānos in Shoa, which in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gained hegemony over Abyssinian monasticism. The *eçhagē* served as administrative head of the church and had jurisdiction over all monks and monasteries. The most esteemed of the Ethiopian clergy, he tended to wield more actual power than the *abuna*. His provincial deputies, called *liqa kāhenāt*, controlled the secular clergy. This office was also bestowed by the emperor, and its functions included presenting candidates for ordination and deciding questions of protocol in connection with religious ceremonies.

In addition to these supreme dignitaries of the church, a small number of churchmen enjoyed pre-eminent status by virtue of their activities at the imperial court. These included the *aqābē sa'āt* ("guardian of the [canonical] hours"), the chief ecclesiastic at court, and during part of the reign of Zar'a Yā'qob the only official with unrestricted access to the king; the *qēs hāṭsē* ("king's chaplain"); the *liqa dabtarā* ("chief of the *dabtarā*"); and *liqa mammerān* ("chief of the learned men"). These four served as the four su- 793 644 [693]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 preme judges at the royal court, and the *aqābē sa'āt* ranked third—in some
• 644 lists, first—in the official order of precedence of all court dignitaries.[40]
[693] One other church dignitary, finally, was the *nebra ed*, chief of the sacred district of Aksum, who always enjoyed a high position at the royal court. When appointed by the emperor (instead of by the provincial governor who sometimes possessed that authority), the *nebra ed* enjoyed the rare privilege of being permitted to sit while speaking in the event of his involvement in litigation.

793 The status of the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries was based on approxi-
554 mately the same factors as those which determined the status of secular nobility: royal favor; family background, in the case of those whose fathers were important nobles or noted churchmen; and the possession of wealth, political power, and imposing titles.[41] The same was true of their regional counterparts, the *alaqā*, "chiefs" of large churches and monasteries, whose wealth, power, and leisurely mode of life gave them, in Plowden's opinion, "perhaps the most enviable position in Abyssinia."[42]

793 The status of the clergy as a whole, however, rested on three other prin-
792 ciples which are not affected by royal favor, birth, or worldly possessions.
554 These were: contact with the most sacred symbols of religious authority; ascetic piety; and religious learning. Broadly speaking, in Abyssinia these three principles have been embodied primarily in three distinct roles, namely, those of priest, monk, and *dabtārā*.

793 A normal preparation for these roles—necessarily so, in the case of the
794 priesthood—is service as a deacon. Ability to read is, now as before, a requisite qualification for the diaconate, but that requirement has in the past often been overlooked. More important has been the requirement of ordination by the *abuna*. Ordination formerly took place in the company of hundreds of other aspirants and, when there was uncertainty about the future availability of an *abuna*, even babes in arms were admitted.[43]

794 The traditional garb of the deacon is a yellowish cape made of sheepskins,
792 though on holidays the officiating deacons may be dressed in richly colored silk robes like the priests. The duties of the deacon—and they are accounted great and secret privileges—are to prepare the sacramental bread, fetch the holy water, and assist at the Mass (the performance of which normally requires two priests and three deacons).

793 On reaching puberty a deacon is no longer supposed to serve in the church,
794 for fear that he will become "impure." At that time he may decide to prepare for the priesthood. For this two qualifications must be met. He must have completed his study of reading and, ideally, of *zēmā*, the chants that are intoned in the liturgy of the Mass. These matters he may learn from the older clergy during his service as a deacon, or from his father, who, in many cases, is a priest himself. Otherwise, he goes off in search of a master. He

178 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-
645 larly since his return from exile in 1941, has proceeded to build
[643] a base for the modernization of his country through the creation of a modern-educated new élite. The only portfolio he holds personally in his own cabinet is that of Minister of Education (though the other ministers ask his guidance on often the most minute matters). It is this group which is beginning to bridge the gulf between the ethnic cleavages, and which is trying to enlarge Amhara loyalty to an Ethiopian nationalism. Its members give lip service to the still powerful Coptic church: they smoke publicly, but they will break the lenten fast only in secret, eat pork only when not in the public eye, and still refrain from walking arm-in-arm with a female in public. But when sent to the provinces to modernize the administration, they quietly make gradual but cumulative inroads against the temporal power of the church and against the feudal landowning gentry, on the basis of imperial proclamations and numerous directives. (Footnote 138)

643 This change is only in the initial stages. Some of the most
178 fundamental decisions by the present emperor, notably the abolition
779 of the "gabbar" (serf-like) system, and the measurement and registration of the land, have been most strongly resisted in the old-Amhara provinces, where these edicts have still not been enforced.

As a result, the emperor has often tried to proceed by indirect means. Just as he has utilized the foreign missionaries in his Amharization program, so has he tried to utilize the Abyssinian clergy in his modernization program. He has appointed an Egyptian Coptic clergyman-educator to head the new Theological College of

Footnote 138: For details see: Messing, Simon D.: Changing Ethiopia (in) The Middle East Journal, vol.9, no.4, Autumn 1955, pp. 413-432.

643 Emperor Haile Selassie I in 1931 and 1955.

His "Solomonic Dynasty" claims descent from the Biblical Queen of Sheba, known to Abyssinian tradition as "Makeda", or "Azeb", and her son, Menelik I. The proper reference to the emperor is "Atse", to the empress, "Itägä" (lit. Master, Mistress, i.e., of the country), used before the name. If no name follows the designation, the title "Jan" is used (possibly from the Geez "dayyänä", he judges, or from the Cushitic "zehon", elephant, king of beasts). In address, the appelation used for the emperor is "Germawi hoy!" (Oh, Magnificence), formerly "Jan hoy!" (Oh, Elephant).

645 The Council of Elders, "shelot", referred to in village and town, also applies to the Crown Council of State. It consists, in addition to the emperor, of the Abuna, the archbishop of the State; those "ras" who have survived the centralization of recent years, notably the conservative kinsman of the emperor, Ras Kassa, and his liberal kinsman, Ras Imru; the powerful, reputedly chauvinistic, Minister of the Pen, Wolds Giyorgis; and several cabinet Ministers included more for decoration than expected contributions. Next to the emperor himself, this is the highest policy-making body at present, dominating, on important issues, the legislative, judicial and executive framework of the bicameral Parliament and cabinet. Serious problems discussed in the Crown
212 Council have ranged from disaffection in high places, to the question of whether or not the old Geez-Amharic alphabet of 276 and more syllables should be simplified

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuānnent*, Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 178 665 642 645 royal will. A solid foundation for such a class was not possible, however, until the central government had been sufficiently stabilized and expanded. These conditions began to be met under Menelik, who established Addis Ababa in the last decade of the nineteenth century and in 1907 created a number of ministries. Housed in buildings inside the palace compound, the ministries were initially regarded as little more than an ornament to dress up the imperial court. Although men of some stature, like Afa Negus Nasibu and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, were named to the posts, the offices themselves did not acquire much prestige. It was no great matter when, five years after the death of Menelik, the ministers were turned out of office by a group of military officers at the instigation of Rās Tafari and sent home to their provincial estates.

175 178 645 647 After becoming emperor himself, however, Haile Selassie revived and enlarged the ministerial system. Since the restoration, it has expanded into a complex bureaucratic structure. In addition to some sixteen ministries, a number of specialized government agencies have been formed, and the military and judicial hierarchies and the diplomatic corps have been considerably expanded. The rapid growth of the central government in the past two decades is reflected in its budgetary expenditures, which went from about US$10 million in 1942 to an estimated US$110 million in 1962. [652]

178 647 571 554 565 The growth of this governmental machinery has provided a new basis for elite status in Ethiopia. Mobility channels now run in terms of appointments in the government bureaucracy. The periodic announcement of appointments by the Emperor has become the focus of public interest in Ethiopia since the liberation. Every new list of appointments provides the occasion for intense gossip and *de rigueur* congratulatory parties at the homes of the favored.

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631 dominant role in the rural administration. Most of the
565 "awraja gäj" and "worädä" chiefs are from medium and
646 lower provincial nobility. In Addis Ababa, the "Senate"
565 or Upper House of the Parliament instituted by Emperor Haile Selassie, is appointed from the higher nobility, the "Mäkwonent", while the Deputies of the Lower House are selected, with imperial approval, from the lower country gentry, largely from the Amhara, Tigre, and Shoa areas.

643 Many special privileges of regional nobility have
631 been abrogated by the present Emperor: The Wag Shum",
178 hereditary ruler of the sub-province of Wag since the
565 Zagwe dynasty of the 13th century, has been abrogated by him; also the "Behär Nagash", the "King of the Sea", hereditary ruler of the Red Sea coast, was abrogated; also the Muslim Ethiopian dynasty of Jimma, which Menelik II had permitted to continue in accordance with the treaty of peaceful surrender (ostensibly because the present heir had joined the Italians).

The least changed position in the structure of administration is that of the cheqa shum, who forms its broad base.

4. Customary Law and Justice

671 The foremost characteristics of traditional Abyssinian law and justice seem to be that they are based on the power hierarchy of social structure; that they permit and even encourage considerable subjective inter-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureau-
178 cratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of
631 regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central gov-
642 ernment has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of
825 building up their positions, members of the most important noble families
631 have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of
642 Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of
646 high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as
631 regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to
693 Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the
578 behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov-
[465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the
565 aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the
554 eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national
[571] political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous 643
sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly 571
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speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive [597]
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vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, [669]
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This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of moderniza- 121
tion. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the 643
establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a 178
parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, [347] [346]
above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young [666] people. [871]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 656 supporters of the central government.

The descendants of these balbats, now educated in 423 the high schools of Addis Ababa, are being sent into even 447 the old-Amhara provinces at present, by Emperor Haile 651 Selassie, to act as salaried collectors for the central treasury ("Gemja-Bet") (so that the function of the former malkana has again come full circle, though the term is no longer used for the office). In fact, the new centralized tax-gathering has ended the office of the old, provincial "mälkäña", and they, much like the "gultäñña", can only hope to have their lands affirmed as "rest". This they can hope to achieve only if they work the lands themselves and pay tithe on produce, otherwise it may be lost to squatters. Their final security of tenure, by contract instead of vague status (they have lost the latter), will come only when the lands are measured and modern titles issued, which has not yet happened in the old-Amhara areas that resist this. The non-resistant Galla balbats of Shoa province are thus more secure in tenure, and will remain so as long as the central government is strong.

423 Measurement of land is called, traditionally, "throw- 804 ing the rope" ("yase gämäd"). This rope may be made of cordage, plant fibers, traditionally 40 elbow lengths long. In northern districts it is sometimes made of plaited oxhide, and called "qäläd".

423 The "rope was thrown" widely in Galla lands conquered by Menelik II, Three-quarters of these lands were then divided into gashas of 80-100 acres each, and

829 pattern continues in full force even at present. As a result, the high official is as hesitant about delegating authority downward (which might build up a potential rival), as the inferior in the hierarchy fears to accept delegated authority (lest the superior repent of his grant and suspect rebellion). In consequence, daily problems, even routine ones, are regularly referred for decision to the superior in the hierarchy of government.

812 The authoritarian "literalness" which characterizes so many Amhara attitudes may at least in part be the effect of religious fundamentalism. Until recently, the "Fetha Nagast" criminal and [681] civil code was literally enforced, including the cutting off of hands for theft and of feet for rebellion. Biblical passages are interpreted literally, by the priests. In monasteries, the monks exclude the presence of even female animals such as cows.

[779] The church, sacerdotal in its concepts and rituals, does not feel that it owes an explanation to anyone; and "literalness" has remained unchallenged (except during the relatively brief Portuguese episode). In the Amhara view, there is a direct and unilateral connection between cause and effect, and paradoxes that result from such oversimplifications are ignored: e.g. the tallest obelisk at Aksum, which has fallen and broken into several large pieces, is claimed to have been "pushed" over by the Falasha Queen Judith, despite the fact that another, almost as tall, still stands nearby. [682] Homicide, especially if accidental, is blamed on the "zenuēn" spirits who pushed the murderer's hand.

• 647 Literal obedience dominates the governmental administration, for no subordinate would arrogate to himself the privilege of "interpret" the spirit of the law handed down by the official of superior status.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal followings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Westernized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approximately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military force, and economic advance.*

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been continuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the

* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

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But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shir* and *divide et impera*. "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

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of individuality—loyal criticism toward the government, one's friends, and one's self.

Besides the efforts of those courageous Ethiopians who, in exile abroad or living in inner exile at home, have steadfastly worked to develop their powers of integrity and their capacities of independent judgment, there is but one force that holds any promise of increasing the scope of personal autonomy and creativity in Ethiopia, and that is education. The fate of Ethiopia one and two generations hence is linked, more closely than members of large, industrialized societies can readily appreciate, with a single small institution: the Haile Selassie I University. As pinnacle of the country's educational system, it sets the standards, prepares the teachers, and devises many of the innovations to be used throughout the nation's schools. No less important, its relative independence from the national government gives it a certain leeway to pursue policies based primarily on academic considerations. The Ministry of Education, which administers all other secular schools in the country, is necessarily more subjected to the routine pressures of domestic politics. The university, on the other hand, by virtue of its many expatriate staff members and its dependence on outside financial help, is more intimately tied to international academic standards and practices. While a growing number of qualified Ethiopians have joined its staff, for some time to come the University will necessarily be greatly dependent on assistance from academic men from other countries. In any event, it is likely to remain in continuous contact with the outside world by virtue of its participation in the international community of scholars. This condition may give it a degree of autonomy and insulation that can but further the patient development of Ethiopia's most sorely needed asset: cadres of individuals who can resist the facile slogans of the day and work to provide for Ethiopia's great transformation the benefits of enlightened aims and realistic practices.

634 635 Parish and Hamlet. The highland zones can be divided along three complementary social dimensions---political, ecclesiastical, and economic. Politically, the province is divided into awraja (sub-province), warada (district of a sub-province), and meketel warada (sub-district). The meketel warada consists of fifteen to thirty parishes (deber). The parish, in turn, is composed of three to ten hamlets (mender), each consisting of ten to fifty households (bet). Most households consist of husband, wife, unmarried sons, and pre-pubscent daughters[11]; a minority of households consist of aged spouses only, or of widowed individuals living by themselves. Characteristically, the households of a hamlet are dispersed, so that any one is perhaps 100 to 300 meters from its closest neighbors.

[192] 632 361 [192] 592 592 361

• 647 While officials of the provincial and sub-provincial governments are generally out-landers appointed by the central government, administrators of the warada and meketel warada are usually members of the local gentry. Within the parish, civil administration is in the hands of the ceka Zum, a petty administrator who imple-

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[582] [591] [11] Since it is common for a girl to marry at 11 or 12, but to delay the virilocal move until age 15 or 16, the natal household may include a married daughter.

*647 [192] ments decisions that come down from the *meketel warada* or *warada*.[12] Incumbency tends to rotate among the senior 611 423 *ristenas* of the parish. Amhara trace genealogies ambilineally to the original recipients of primary land rights (*rist*) to local fields. Ambilineages are traced from these apical ancestory through those descendants (*ristenas*) who have made effective claims to the fields of the original estates. Over time, it is the genealogical links associated with land claims which tend to be [582] remembered, to the exclusion of other descent ties. Similarly, it is these links which are examined most carefully in deciding whether a proposed marriage would be properly exogamous (i.e., ideally excluding descendants of the sixth ascending generation).[13]

*793 From the perspective of the Amhara peasant, the ecclesiastical organization of Begemder consists of two levels, the bishopric (located in Gondar, the provincial

[12] A *feresena*, rural policeman, is also a resident farmer of the parish.

[13] Hoben (1963:116-117) considers these matters in detail, and notes that occasionally the boundaries of exogamous unions are contracted to include the descendants of the fifth and even fourth ascending generations.

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bar maids.

[463]
[562] A third, numerically significant minority have come from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even [144] though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly [779] negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are [649] non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations [562] also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly [464] by girls and women working as servants for the less affluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Nilotes [192] living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for [324] sale in the town's daily wood market (<u>sir gabiya</u>). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

632
621 <u>Ward and Town</u>. Gondar's residents divide the town

[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("<u>bariya</u>").

*793 621 869 241 [732] as a means for dicusing and strengthening a ristеña family's economic and social interests within the parish. There are two conspicuous exceptions. Should a boy bear a physical disability so severe that he will be unable to perform the basic subsistence activities of Amhara men, particularly plowing, he may be enrolled in the parish school as a prelude to a non-agricultural career beyond his natal parish. The alternatives are few. [463] [441] [563] work as an artisan is appropriate for Muslim and Falasha, but shameful for an Amhara; while employment as a merchant is less objectionable, the peasant is generally without the necessary skills, contacts, and capital; military service is beyond his abilities; thus, only the Church and government remain. Regarding the Church, the priesthood is closed to him, since a priest must be physically whole, and capable of standing unassisted during [647] the performance of the Mass. The remaining ecclesiastical and government career choices assume that a boy will achieve literacy at the parish school and subsequently *793 621 869 593 depart from his natal community. The second exception to the local focus of the parish school, is the small number of boys who are offspring of debtera-teachers serving in parish churches. The ties of these men to their parishes-of-residence are usually only professional, and they are rarely ristеñas, it is moreover their professional ethos which influences them to seek an extensive

436

- 2 "alad", Menelik half-thaler, no longer used.
- 4 "rub", quarter MT Thalers, no longer in use, but still occasionally quoted.

The term "gresh" is still used in its probable derivative, the well-known "gursha", meaning tip given to a servant, etc., apparently replacing an earlier term. Also, it is interesting that Gresham's Law functions also in Ethiopia: The new coinage, once accepted (rather than fear of prosecution) drove the old MT Thaler out of circulation. Furthermore, from time to time certain items of the new coinage become particularly popular for some temporary reason, and then are hoarded and absent from circulation.

471 In traditional Amhara material culture there is an absence of such processing industries, (except for specializations mentioned), as soap factories, flour mills, brick factories, textile factories, timber mills, sugar industries, power industries (no windmills), though the essentials for such industries exist. Foreigners have, in recent decades, built a few small ones at major centers of population, since Menelik and the present Emperor began handing out concessions. There are economic and national reasons, e.g. the law that foreigners may only rent but not buy real estate. The present government of Ethiopia has a monopoly on and produces matches and cigarettes. Whether private or public, processing industries can be expected to increase gradually and bring about

632 Since the town attracted the most clever "dibtara",
[194] many of whom were herbologists, it was also a center where "medical aid", sometimes quite effective, could be obtained, and attracted patients from far and wide.

[463] Ethnic craftsmen would settle in hamlets within walking distance of the town, to provide iron tools, tanned leather, sun umbrellas, etc., without, however, exposing themselves to mockery, insults and occasional assaults by living in the town itself.

632 517 The town developed as a social center, and center for entertainment, almost inevitably. First, religious feasts such as the Epiphany parades and the tournaments on the public commons on "ganna" (Christmas) attracted the populace; and youngsters as well as adult loafers found themarket scenes fascinating. Secondly, the Arab traders liked to discuss business and news over tea or coffee. So "teahouses " (shay bet") sprang up near the [265] Saturday market, serving snacks also to many a male at odds with his wife, and excluding all womenfolk. Con-
632 648 588 versely, the mead house, ("tej bet") provided evening entertainment with female singers and dancers (azmari) for the all-male clientele, and waitressos easil, available for sexual entertainment. Moreover, every town had at least one "street of unattached women", who catered to travellers or visiting peasants as innkeepers, restaurateurs, and as temporary wives; they were usually divorcees, who hoped to find another husbend, and to settle down again to regular married life.

632 178 Except for some of the feudal arrangements, most of this town pattern of social organization is still

631 It is noteworthy that in this structure the Gover-
635 nor-general of the province is the only administrator
178 permitted to appoint the next two highest officers of his own staff (since 1942). This is in line with the consistent development since 1916, when the present emperor, then regent, began the process of sweeping away the power of the top of the feudal-provincial pyramid. The "ras" gradually lost their private armies, and were expressly forbidden, by decree in 1942, to make treaties between provinces regarding boundaries or political or military matters.

[648] Contect with foreigners was also taken out of the exclusive jurisdiction of the Governor-general of the province, since foreigners going to the provinces require permits issued by the Ministry of Interior in Addis Ababa; these permits have to presented to the provincial administrators before local travel is allowed . Even the control over the "Kantiba", the mayors of the major towns, was taken from the Governor-general of the province, and invested, by decree of 1942, in the "Director of Municipalities" in the Ministry of Interior. This central control over municipalities was evident in 1953, when mayors were called to Addis Ababa by the Director of Municipalities, for a reprimand from the emperor for having permitted his boarding establishments at elementary schools, intended for war orphans, to become filled with the sons of well-to-do feudal nobility.

631 The feudal nobility, though much less powerful
565 than in the past, plays a more informal, but still

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 could see the forests blazing on the flanks of Belaia from the bombs dropped by the Savoias in their unsuccessful attempts to search out the Emperor's camp.

The wooded flanks of the Western Escarpment of the Ethiopian plateau overlook the plains of the Sudan. The top of the Escarpment is 4000–5000 feet above sea-level, and the gap opposite Mambuk village which we climbed is about 2000 feet above the level of the Shankalla plain, which rises steadily in a series of low rocky corrugations all the way from the Dinder river some 100 miles to the west. From the top of the Escarpment the fertile plains of Gojjam stretch for another 100 miles to the canyon of the Blue Nile. There is a fall of about 5000 feet to the great ravine with its subtropical vegetation from the dusty upland round Debra Markos. From the western edge of the Blue Nile Scarp it is a whole day's march down to the river for loaded animals, and more than a day's march up the eastern bank on to the Salale plateau at Shafartak.

The Ethiopian Highland is a series of plateaux separated by deep canyons such as that of the Blue Nile. The eastern edge of the Highland is the western edge of the great African rift. There is a parallel rift from lake Tana along the canyon of the Blue Nile to the Southern Lakes of Ethiopia and it is continued through the East African lake system down to lake Tanganyika. A series of north–south and east–west faults divide up the Ethiopian highland into separated plateaux. The Awash valley, running west–east, and really connecting the north–south rifting with the Red Sea basin, flows in the most notable of these. The different plateaux are sometimes connected by narrow necks of land or panhandles: for instance the neck connecting the plateau of Debra Zebit with that of Debra Tabor is hardly more than 100 yards across with a sheer drop south-west to the ravine of the Bashilo and north to that of the Gash or Takkaze.

133 These peculiar geographical conditions explain much in Ethiopian history.
177 The great line of the Escarpment, overlooking the Red Sea depression on the east and the Sudan plains to the west, has protected the population of the
648 uplands from penetration by foreign armies until modern times. The only successful conquest of Ethiopia was that of Muhammad Gran, the "left-handed," a Somali chieftain who is reputed to have had an Ethiopian father. The Somali-Arab armies which were really the spearhead of Turkish imperialism on the Red Sea in the great days of the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, penetrated the Ethiopian Highland by the Awash valley in a series of campaigns which lasted for about half a century. In the end the great altitudes and the inclement rainy seasons probably restored their independence to the Ethiopians. In general, it may be said that the Highlanders have never been able to conquer and hold the hot lowlands of the Red Sea and the Arabs and Somalis have never been able to maintain themselves on the upland plateau. Only in the subtropical region of the southern lakes as far as the Dadessa valley and Jimma has there been any important penetration of Islamic influences.

133 Foreign influences, Semitic and that peculiar early Ethiopian or Eritrean
177 civilization known as Aksumite, have come in from the north over the easier

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XVIII.—*How we arrived at the town of Barua, and how the Ambassador went in search of the Barnagais, and of the manner of his state.* 648

We reached the town of Barua,[1] which will be three leagues from the village of Zalote, on the 28th day of June. This town is the chief place of the country and kingdom of the Barnagais, in which are his principal palaces, which they call Beteneguz,[2] which means house of the king. On this day that we arrived here the Barnagais departed hence, before our arrival, to another town, the chief place of another district, which is named Barra, and the town is called Çeruel. It seemed to us that his departure was in order not to have to receive us, and some told us that he had gone away with pain in his eyes. We were very well lodged for this country, in good large houses of one story, terraced above. On the third day of our arrival, Don Rodrigo the ambassador determined on going to see the Barnagais; and we went with him, five of us on mules, and reached the place where he was staying at vespers. The distance to this place from that at which we were halting might be three and a half or four leagues, and we went to dismount before his palace, close to the door of a church, where we offered our prayers. Then we went our way to the palace, or Beteneguz, as they call it, thinking that we should at once speak to him; and they did not allow us to enter, saying that he was sleeping. And although we waited a good bit we had no means of speaking to him. We went to rest in a goat shed, in which we barely found room; and they gave us two ox-hides with the hair on to sleep upon, and for supper bread, and wine of the country in abundance, and a sheep. On the following day we waited a long time for them to call us, and a message came for us to come. Then in the outer gate we found three men like porters,

[1] *Dibarua*, hillock seen from afar. [2] *Bait en-neyus.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Ambara MP5

648 each one with his whip[1] in his hand, and they would not let us enter, saying that we should give them some pepper, and they kept us for a good while at the gate. Passing through this gate we arrived at another, at which stood three other porters who seemed more honourable persons; these made us wait more than half an hour standing on a little straw, and the heat was so great it killed us. Upon this the ambassador sent to say that he should bid us come in or he would return to his abode. Then the message went by one who seemed to be of higher position, and word came that we should enter. The Barnagais was in this manner, in a [342] large house of one story (for in this country there are not [352] houses of several stories), sitting on a bedstead, as is their custom, fitted with poor curtains; he had sore eyes, and his wife was sitting at the head of the bedstead. Having made our obeisance, the ambassador offered him a *master* to cure him; and he said that he had no need of him, as though he did not thank him for it. Upon this the ambassador asked him as a favour, and required on the part of Prester John, that he should order equipment to be given us for our journey, assuring him how much service he would be doing in this way to the king of Portugal, which would be well repaid to him by the King and by his Captain-major; and he, the ambassador, would tell Prester John the honour and favour which he received from him. The Barnagais asking what it was that we required, the ambassador said he wanted oxen and asses for baggage, and mules for the Portuguese. To this the Barnagais replied that he could not give any mules, and that we might buy them ourselves; that he would give orders for the rest, and would send a son of his with us to the court of Prester John, and with that he gave us our dismissal.

[1] *Azorague*, a kurbach, or whip of hide, *cravache*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XIX.—*How they gave us to eat in the house of the Barnagais, and how in this country the journeys are not reckoned by leagues.* 648

When we were out of the house where the Barnagais was, they made us sit down in the receiving room of another house on mats on the ground, and they brought here a [264] large trencher of barley meal, but little kneaded, and a [262] horn of mead. And, since we had not seen such food, we would not eat it; but when we were more accustomed to the country we ate it readily. Without eating of this, we arose and came to our resting-place and then set out. This might be at two hours before midday. Having gone on our road half a league or more there came to us a man running and telling us to wait; that the mother of the Barnagais was sending us food, and took it as a misfortune our coming away without eating and not accepting the food they gave us, which was that customary in the country. We waited, and the food came to us, that is to say, five large rolls of wheat bread and a horn of mead. Let not anyone be [415] amazed who hears of a horn of wine, because for the great lords and Prester John cows' horns are their cups for wine, and there are horns holding five or six canadas.[1] Besides this, the mother of the Barnagais sent us some of the same [262] kneaded flour, and now we ate some of it. This meal is of parched barley, made into flour, and they mix it up with very little water, and so eat it. After this banquet we made our way to the town of Barua, where our goods and companions had remained. In this country, and in all the 804 kingdoms of Prester John, there are no leagues, and if you ask how far it is from this place to such a place, they say: If you depart in the morning at sunrise, you will arrive when the sun is in such a place; and if you travel slowly you will arrive there when they shut up the cows, that is at

[1] A Portuguese measure equal to about three pints.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XXVII.—*How we departed from Barua, and of the bad equipment we had until we arrived at Barra.*

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We were at Barua the first time, without their giving us equipment for our departure, for eleven days; we departed on the 28th day of June 1520, joyful and contented, because we were travelling on our way; and those that conducted us went with our baggage a distance of half a league, saying that their bounds went no further, and that another town had to take us further on. As I said, it was in June, in the force of the winter of this country, and they set us down, and our goods, in a plain, and very heavy rain. The ambassador and three of us went on the road to Barra to speak to the Barnagais, the factor and clerk and the other Portuguese remaining with our goods. As soon as we arrived we went to the palace of the Barnagais to tell him what his vassals were doing to us. They did not give us an opportunity to speak to him that day. On the following day we did not sleep in the morning, and went to speak to him: as soon as we spoke to him he told us he would at once send for the goods. He ordered it to be brought a distance of a league and a half, in which it passed through three districts, by reason of the great population which is in that country, and they came and placed the baggage in another plain, where they let it remain four days in the rain and storms. In these days the ambassador and those that were with him were not quiet: at one time we went to the baggage, which was a league and a half off from us, at other times at our resting place, at others in the house of the Barnagais, to require him to send for these goods which belonged to the King, and were going to Prester John, or to tell us that he did not choose, and we would have it set on fire, and go our way disembarrassed. His speech was always fair, but the fruits of it never came. When four days were completed he sent for the goods.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XXVIII.—*How the goods arrived at the town of Barra, and of the bad equipment of the Barnagais.*

On the 3rd day of July of the said year, '20, our baggage 648 arrived at the town of Barra, where we were. We hoped to start at once, and went to speak to the Barnagais requiring him to despatch us. We met with good words from him. On the following day a gentleman from the court of Prester John arrived, and the Barnagais gave him such a reception that he forgot us. When this gentleman arrived the Barnagais went out of the town to receive him at a small hill near the houses; and there went out with him many people, and he was naked from the waist upwards. The gentleman placed himself on the highest spot above the rest, and his first words were: the King sends to salute you. At these words all went with their hand upon the ground, [576] which is the courtesy and reverence of this country. After that, he spoke the message which he had brought, and when he had finished hearing it the Barnagais clothed himself with rich garments, and took the gentleman to his house. It is the usage of this country to hear the words which the [203] Prester sends outside the house, and on foot, and he to whom they are sent has to be naked above the waist until they have been delivered, and if the message is one of satisfaction on the part of Prester John, as soon as it is given he at once dresses himself: if it expresses his dissatisfaction, he remains naked as when he heard it. This Barnagais is brother of the mother of Prester John. After this the ambassador, and we with him, came to speak to the Barnagais, and he sent us away saying that for the love of God we should leave him, that he was sick. When we came they did not allow us to enter, saying that he was sleeping. So much passed of this sort that the ambassador said that he ill remembered what he had sworn and promised to the Captain-major of the King of Portugal, that is to say,

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Ambara MP5

648 to assist us and order equipment to be given us for our journey, that he forgot all this, and also that he was not mindful of the friendship which they had established and sworn, since he did so little for the affairs of the King of Portugal. Neither on this account did he make any more haste, but always excused himself with his guest, and with being ill. On the 6th of July seven or eight horsemen arrived, very gaily caparisoned, these were Moors, and seemed to be honourable persons, they came from other countries, and brought many very beautiful horses, which they were bringing to pay as tribute which they owed to Prester John and the Barnagais. As the arrival of the Moors redounded to his profit, neither his guests nor his sickness impeded him. The great reception and honour which the Barnagais paid to these Moors gave us great trouble. The ambassador had told him that he wanted
648 twelve mules, and asked him to order them to be lent: he
661 said that he could not lend them, and that we should buy them. When we wished to buy these mules which the people of the country were selling to us, the servants of the Barnagais came and interrupted the purchase, telling the vendors not to sell them, and that if they sold them they would be punished, and the gold would be taken away from them, for in this country money is not current. This happened in such manner that the rumour of it spread throughout the country, and the people told us that even if they wished to sell to us they did not dare, from fear of the Barnagais, because he wished to sell his own mules, and therefore forbade their selling them. (He has another method with
436 the people of his country.) In all the kingdoms of Prester John money is not current, but only gold by weight, and the principal weight is called *ouquia*,[1] and this, which is an ounce, makes in weight ten cruzados, and for change there is a half ouquia, and from twelve drachms to ten make

[1] A gold coin in some parts of Africa.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

age-long enemies and should allow them to profess their faith openly as they do, when one considers the havoc wrought by Moslem invasions and Galla inroads. 609 795

Even the Falasha Jewish ironworkers in the north, who are doubly regarded with dislike and suspicion as being Jews and as being possessed of supernatural powers, are treated with tolerance, though avoided.

No doubt this happy result is contributed to so far as Moslems are concerned by the fact that in Abyssinia they do not appear to be strict or fanatical—in pleasing contrast to their behaviour elsewhere. Mr Wyman Bury tells a delightful story in exemplification of this latter frame of mind. A pilgrim to Mecca, a plump and prosperous Moslem merchant at Aden in ordinary life, was gazing from the deck of the ship in rapt enthusiasm at Jeddah, which against the sun-scorched country beyond looked like a stale bridecake on a dust-heap. "Oh, the sacred land," he crooned "the blessed land, where pigs and Christians cannot live."

The Abyssinians still have a church in Rome, a monastery in Jerusalem, and monasteries and Ethiopic texts were discovered in the Libyan desert by the German explorer Falls. 794

The Abyssinian Church endeavours to maintain friendly relations with the other Christian communities: interesting examples of this are the missions sent to the Pope by the Emperor Menelik in 1906 and by the late Empress in 1921. A mission was also in Jerusalem at the close of 1922 in connection with some ancient rights of the Abyssinian Church regarding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other holy places; under the Turkish régime these rights had been transferred to the 794 648

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

Coptic community. The present Emperor himself visited Jerusalem recently.

Possibly owing to ignorance and lack of education, the Church does not make any missionary efforts of its own amongst its subject races of Moslems and pagans, and up to recent years it did not tolerate, or at all events welcome, such efforts on the part of others. This is perhaps hardly surprising, for much of the missionary enterprise known to the Abyssinians had mingled politics with religious efforts, and had interfered in matters which had better have been left alone.

The Jesuits were expelled in 1633, and some who would not go were killed. The Protestant missionaries were expelled in 1838. Theodore can hardly have been said to have welcomed missionaries, though so far from expelling them he chained them up and would not let them go. King John expelled them again in 1886, and Menelik barely tolerated them, although a French mission has been established continuously in Tigré for a good many years.

But quite recently more missionaries have been allowed to start operations, especially in the Galla districts, and the Americans are particularly to the fore in this work in Addis Ababa and elsewhere. In addition, there is a French mission at Harrar and a convent at Addis Ababa, mainly educational and non-proselytizing, and a Swedish mission at the latter town of a similar character.

So far I do not think there is much trace of success by any of these institutions, but on the other hand there is evidence to shew (and my impressions are confirmed by American, Swedish, and French writers) that Islam, as in other parts of Africa, is making progress among

11: Levine

MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For historical information on the region of Manz in Shoa Province, along with its succession of leaders, its warfare with the Galla, and internal strife, see category 175.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5 •
Ethiopia MP1

the continuous Amharization of the peoples of the empire through the required use of Amharic in schools and government offices and through the substitution of Amharic names for indigenous place-names in many parts of the country. If the national institutions and culture of Ethiopia are essentially Abyssinian, more particularly they are Amhara.[2]

E 121 563 177 A 121 177

The domination of Ethiopian national life by the Amhara, and the related fact that the modern Ethiopian nation was the creation of the Amhara and not of European colonists, are characteristics which distinguish Ethiopia from all other African societies. For Ethiopia is the only country in Africa with a large number of ethnic groups where one of these groups has imposed its rule and its language over the rest and has preserved indigenous national institutions, elites, and culture patterns from displacement by Western forms and authorities.

E 175 563 A 175 E [178]

This condition has imparted a basically conservative tone to the character of public life in Ethiopia, especially when compared to the new nations of sub-Saharan Africa. Because Ethiopians did not have to participate in the postwar struggle for independence, they did not experience the rise of agitational politics or the related phenomenon of political parties or movements. As a corollary of this, the Ethiopian populace was not exposed to oratory promising dynamic social and economic changes, and therefore developed no mass base of support for populist leaders who might seek to promote more rapid forms of change.

E 175 178 [181]

Yet if modernization has proceeded more slowly in Ethiopia than elsewhere in Africa—and speed in such matters has at times been associated with recklessness—the pattern of virtually unbroken Amhara rule for at least seven centuries stands in refreshing contrast to the somewhat anguished struggle for nationality within the new nations. Elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa no indigenous cultural tradition exists at the national level. There are many degrees to this cultural fragmentation. At one extreme are countries such as the Ivory Coast which, with some sixty disparate tribal groups in a population of about three million, can as yet appeal only to French culture as a basis for unity at the national level. Somewhat less fragmented are the nations, like Nigeria, in which a small number of important tribal traditions dominate the national scene. Still more consolidated is Uganda, whose kingdom of Buganda has long supported a strong quasi-national tradition, but whose non-Baganda tribes have remained largely outside the pale.

E 619 175 563 [178] A 175

In Ethiopia, by contrast, Amhara rule has long provided a minimal basis for national unity. While this rule has been secured by coercive means, it has accustomed the various tribes in Ethiopia to live under a common sovereignty and to some extent has enabled their leaders to communicate with one another by means of a common native tongue.

A E [648] •

One need not be blind to the drawbacks of Amhara dominance to recog-

E 175 563 A 175 648

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

E 175 563 A 175 648

nize in it these and other important advantages for Ethiopia. These drawbacks have been those of any imperialism. During the great Amhara expansion under Menelik (1889–1913), many peoples were maltreated. Independent tribesmen were reduced to slavery; unique cultures were decimated; proud kings were dragged in the dust. Those who held down the Amhara position in these occupied territories seized land from the indigenous peoples and exploited them much as would any invader. The unfavorable reputation of the Amhara in the non-Amhara provinces has been due largely to the example of these governors and soldiers whose worst impulses were at times allowed free play.

One can scarcely single out the Amhara for criticism because of their imperialistic behavior in the past. Nor is it fair to judge the Amhara people as a whole by the character of their provincial officials in conquered areas, any more than one may judge the British, French, Portuguese, or Russian people by the behavior of certain imperious and sadistic colonial administrators. This distinction was self-evident to more discriminating observers of the Ethiopian scene like Augustus Wylde, who wrote in 1901:

A [565] [701] [157]

> There is no harder worker than the Abyssinian peasant, and no more harmless and hospitable person when left alone and properly treated; and no more truculent, worthless, conceited, lazy and useless individual than the Abyssinian soldier, who formerly did nothing but prey upon the defenceless cultivator.[8]

Indeed, if any imperialism of modern times should be granted special consideration, it might be that of the Amhara. The Amhara were to some extent merely reconquering lands that had been taken from them in earlier centuries. Furthermore, they needed additional strength to help withstand threats to their own independence. Finally, it can also be argued that if the Amhara had not conquered the other peoples now within the Ethiopian boundaries some European power might have colonized them instead.

E 563 A 648

However one may assess the fact of Amhara dominance in Ethiopia, it is a given of the present situation. It is a fact that leads naturally to two outstanding questions. One concerns the relations between the Amhara and the non-Amhara peoples of the empire: is it possible for the latter to be integrated more effectively and justly into the texture of a common national life? If not, the present state of tribal calm may prove to be but a long prelude to a wasteful storm. The question demands serious and sustained inquiry by a number of scholars, Ethiopians and foreigners alike.

E 563 178 121 A 121

The other question concerns the nature of Amhara culture, as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia, and its implications for the processes of Ethiopia's modernization now at work and yet to come. To this question we now direct our attention.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

times brought dissension to the state, the legitimate Crown was triumphant most of the time. 175*

In the history of Ethiopian literature the period has been called a Golden Age.[1] The important works composed during this time include *The Glory of Kings*, which contains the story of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon, and their offspring, Menelik I, legendary first king of Ethiopia; *The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth*, a compilation of occult theology and numerology, with a Miltonic account of the struggle between Michael and Satan; *The Christian Romance of Alexander the Great*, a fantastic portrayal of Alexander as a Christian hero who traverses the Land of Darkness and the miraculous Land of the Living; the moralizing tracts of the greatest emperor of the period, Zar'a Yā'qob; as well as numerous lives of saints and translations of Christian writings from Arabic. 175* 538

Connoisseurs of Ethiopian art attribute the most original and refined paintings to the latter part of this period. Using translucent colors and austere shapes and design, Ethiopian monks brought to expression an intense spirituality in the form of miniatures in illuminated manuscripts.[2] 175* 532

At the same time this was the Heroic Age of Ethiopian warfare. Amda Ṭseyon vanquished sixteen Muslim chiefs to the south and west; the valor of Sayfa Ar'ed was celebrated in medieval Arab tales of chivalry; Dāwit I pushed his victories against the Muslims as far as Zeila on the Gulf of Aden. Improved military equipment and organization under Yeshāq brought the imperial forces to a new level of discipline and power, which Yeshāq used to establish his authority in many southern areas. Zar'a Yā'qob, famous for endowing churches and monasteries and for encouraging literature and art, was a successful warrior in his own right. 175* 648

A close-up of Ethiopia at the height of its medieval synthesis is provided by Father Francisco Alvares, Portuguese emissary to Abyssinia during the years 1520–27.[3] We see a prosperous kingdom, its far-flung dominions headed by hereditary rulers and royal appointees, all of whom pay tribute in kind to the emperor. The tribute consists of horses and mules, blankets and cloths, silk stuffs and gold, all in impressive amounts. The provincial heads, and the armies they must make available, live off the land they govern. The numerous priests and monks are supported by lands granted them by the king. Justice is administered at three levels, with the possibility of appeal from the local judge, to the provincial governor, to the royal court itself. The king's mobile camp, large as a town, is his capital, so that he spends his years marching about from one corner of his domain to another. 175* 64 631 [651] [69]

The monarch at the time of Alvares' visit was Lebna Dengel (1508–40), a man of pride and temper. He refused to heed counsel that the kingdom was imperiled by threats from the outside. Indeed, legend has it that he was discontented with the prevailing civil harmony and begged God to send an ad- 175* 643

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 643 versary, so that his people might be roused from their peacetime habits and the nation could have a chance to prove its might. Ethiopia never fully recovered from the shock that came in the middle of his reign.

*175 648 *Shock*

Amhara-Tigre society was convulsed by one disaster after another during the succeeding century. In 1527 began a series of conflicts with the Muslim kingdom of Adal led by a fearful warrior, Imam Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi, surnamed Grāñ. Equipped with firearms from the Ottoman Turks and hordes of Somali soldiers, Ahmad Grāñ proceeded to overrun Ethiopia, causing destruction and massacre wherever he tread. Only after most of the country had been laid waste, its inhabitants forced to embrace Islam, its churches looted and burned, was Ahmad Grāñ at last killed. His troops were routed by an Ethiopian force that had been revived by the expedition of Portuguese match-lockmen under Christopher da Gama.

The wars with Ahmad Grāñ left the country impoverished and disorganized. In this state it lay vulnerable to another shock: the massive tribal movements of the Galla from the south. The Galla advanced through periodic invasions of their warrior age groups. Coming first in furtive raids, then concerted warfare, finally by slow migration, these hardy nomads managed to penetrate deeply into Amhara lands. By 1563 the Galla had invaded over a third of the empire.

Ethiopia was further shaken in 1557 when the Ottoman Turks occupied the port of Massawa. This action introduced a problem that was to harass Ethiopia intermittently until the present: the danger of occupation by European powers. The Ethiopians were able to repulse the Turkish invader as he pushed farther inland, but Massawa remained in foreign hands until 1941.

*175 648 797 643 In seeking to recover from the destruction wrought by Grāñ's holy war, a number of emperors turned to European Christian powers for religious support as well as for political and technical assistance. Some of them became converts to Catholicism and, encouraged by Portuguese Jesuit missionaries, attempted to promote the new faith among their subjects. The outcome was only further bloodshed. Emperor Za Dengel's conversion in 1603 aroused civil strife and led to his downfall at the hands of nobles who did not share his Catholic sympathies. More serious trouble appeared during the reign of Susneyos (1607–32). He, too, adopted the Roman faith, and allowed one of the more impetuous Jesuits, Alphonzo Mendez, to direct a number of reforms in the Ethiopian Church. Mendez insisted that all priests be reordained by himself, that the population be rebaptized, and that the liturgy be rewritten. He forbade circumcision, and defined the previously unknown crime of witchcraft. Such measures antagonized the populace and provoked "horrid uproars, bloody wars, and the slaughter of many great Personages," as Lu-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

dolphus put it.[4] At length, unable to witness the further decimation of his people because of religious controversies, Susneyos abdicated in favor of his son Fāsil. Fāsil lost little time in deporting the Jesuits and restoring the Orthodox status quo. 175* 648 • 797 643

Recovery

In the wake of all these collisions, Ethiopia made two valiant attempts to regain equilibrium and glory: through the splendor of Gondar in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and through the force of three emperors of the nineteenth century—Tēwodros II, Yohānnes IV of Tigre, and Menelik II of Shoa. 175* 648 643

Gondar was founded as a new and stationary capital by Fāsil. It served as imperial headquarters for many generations. Later, the kingdom of Tigre knew a resurgence of power that led to control of the empire under Yohānnes (1872–89). His castle at Makalle symbolized one last rally for the north—after an interregnum of a thousand years—before being eclipsed by the Shoan throne.

The shock which began with the invasions of Ahmad Grañ shattered Ethiopia's medieval synthesis once and for all. The political consequence of those disruptions was an increase in provincialism, reaching its climax in the famous "Age of the Princes" (1755–1855) when each province had its own sovereign and for all practical purposes was a polity unto itself. The Solomonic line, the matrix of Ethiopian political unity, was splintered in several directions, leaving contenders in each of the provinces. Though the official imperial line remained at Gondar, Tigre was able to reassert its ancient claims and Gojjam recurrently voiced its separatism, and what may be called the "House of Manz" came to compete with Gondar as a center of national consciousness. 175* 178 635

This political division was accompanied by a peculiar cultural bifurcation. Elements of the national culture that had been rather evenly distributed before Ahmad Grāñ now became relatively specialized in Gondar and Manz. The recovery of Ethiopia produced a geographical division of manners and morals as well as several lines of Solomonic royalty. 175* 184

HISTORICAL PROFILES

The Role of Gondar

Gondar is the only city in Ethiopia with charm and character expressive of Amhara culture. Even today, despite modern accretions, the remnants of its castles, walls, bridges, and sanctuaries transmit a stately calm, redolent of past nobility and African grandeur. 175* 633

The town is situated on a flat volcanic ridge at seven thousand feet above 175* 361

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 633 left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor Menelik.

[159] [193] Alaqā Gabra Hānnā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army, turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar.* The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar during his few years in power (1869–72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

*175 633 [648] The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum*, though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā*. The civil order, however, was thoroughly demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces.

*175 633 643 648 [166] At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance from the old capital—began as follows:

> O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.[11]

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

131 133 Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the northeast horn of Shoa Province.[12] It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.[13]

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* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 I am the descendant of Nagāssi, and who put you, a Galla, on the throne of my fathers?"[31] He began his campaign by sending an expedition against the Wallo Galla, who were dependents of Rās Gugsa. But before he was able to persuade the reluctant Shoan nobility to venture forth against Gondar, Wassan Sagad's ambitions were cut short, in the fifth year of his reign, by the dagger of a slave.

The assassination of Wassan Sagad brought Shoa a moment of anarchy. In the absence of central authority, vicious passions were unleashed—"at Debra Libanos alone there fell no fewer than eight hundred victims to private animosity, of whose murder no account was ever taken."[32] The Galla burned hamlets over a wide area; they captured the heir apparent and prevented him from reaching the Shoan capital, then at Qundi. At this point Sāhla Selassie, younger son of the late *rās*, left the seclusion of his studies and presented himself to the Shoan nobility. His daring and quick wit won their consent. They named him Rās of Shoa at eighteen years, and he soon began to style himself as king (*negus*) of Shoa as well.

In the ensuing decades Sāhla Selassie completed the process of conquering and consolidating Shoa that his father had initiated. His rule was strong and beneficent, though tribes which did not pay tribute were shown no mercy. He led forays into Galla country three times a year, during which delinquent or independent settlements suffered sudden and total devastation.

*175 648 [669] A major crisis during the reign of Sāhla Selassie was the rebellion of one of his commanders, a man named Matako. Matako had risen to high position from that of minor retainer by dint of his fighting ability, but he antagonized the king by requesting that the king's daughter be married to his son. This was a double breach of etiquette, for the king's daughter would normally be given only to someone from a high-ranking family, and in any case the request should be tendered by some mediating elders, not in person. In the wake of the tension that ensued, Sāhla Selassie had Matako imprisoned. Matako escaped, however, and raised an army of Galla tribesmen to fight his campaign for revenge. The royal forces were in serious trouble. Sāhla Selassie sent a desperate message to the people of Manz: "My brothers, my relations, come and help me!"[33]

Such help could not be taken for granted. The men of Manz were then, as ever, fiercely independent, unwilling to subordinate themselves to distant authorities. At the time of Sāhla Selassie, in fact, Krapf observed that

> [His Majesty's] power and influence in that part of his dominions is very limited and loose. The Mansians openly declare, "We know little about Sahela Selassieh." Nobody would venture to say so in Efat.[34]

Still, the Shoan line had been infused with new Manzē blood by the marriage of Sāhla Selassie's father to Zanaba Warq, the grand-daughter of Golē,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

grandson of Gērā. Thanks to the intercession of his mother, Sāhla Selassie was able to reach his truculent kinsmen. In response to his appeal for help against the Galla forces, the Manzēs came in great numbers and saved the day. A vivid reconstruction of the final battle is provided by Harris: 175* 648

> [Matako] and his gallant sons were everywhere in the thickest of the fight. His shout, rising high over the storm, animated the faint-hearted, and his presence roused to new life and exertion the successful partisan. Many of the Amhara bands were already reeling from the repeated shock of the wild riders of the Hawash [the Galla horsemen], when suddenly, in the very heat of the action, a large body of warriors, clothed in black mantles, and armed with long heavy spears, rushed down the hill on foot, and, prostrating themselves as they passed the royal unbrellas, descended fresh into the arena. The fierce inhabitants of Mans had sped to the rescue from their hereditary estates, and their savage ferocity and reckless bravery was well known throughout the land. The relations and the household retainers of the rebel attempted to breast the storm, but they were scattered like autumnal leaves before the angry blast; and the chief arrived to the succour only to behold the spot strewed with the bodies of his stoutest partisans. . . . A panic seized the pagans; and, dismayed and brokenhearted, they fled tumultously in every direction.[35]

Of the arts of peace, Sāhla Selassie was particularly absorbed in the development of manual crafts. He brought masons and carpenters from Gondar and took a personal interest in the work of his metalsmiths. He was eager to learn of European technical skills and showed much hospitality to missions from the British and French governments, with whom he concluded treaties of friendship and commerce. 175*

In Gondar, Sāhla Selassie's province was known as "the most populous and most wisely governed" in the country.[36] His assumption of the title of *negus* had been urged by some of the Gondar nobility and clergy, for they looked to him for help in combatting the spread of Islamic influence by the Muslim Galla chief, Rās 'Ali. Sāhla Selassie needed little urging; his sights were set on the highest title of all—*negusa nagast* ("king of kings," or "emperor"). Yet he, like his father, was premature. Two more generations were to be needed before that triumph. 175* 643

Abyssinia could not wait. The dissolution of imperial power and the inroads of Islam had proceeded too far. Unification of the country under a powerful monarch was the obvious need of the day. The process was begun by a rebel from Qwārā, who vanquished in turn the Rāses of Gojjam, Bagemder, and Tigre, and proclaimed himself emperor in 1855 as Tēwodros II.

Shoa could not long remain untouched by Tēwodros. The successor to Sāhla Selassie, his son Haile Malakot, tried to save Shoa's autonomy by leading an expedition to fight Tēwodros in Wallo, but found his camp impreg-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

Gondar Today

A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953 with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college. The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utilities as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aqūdquām* and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 right to a direct audience at any time. The Emperor is known to glow with
571 pleasure when a subject with whom he is speaking reveals that he comes from Manz. The Manzēs, for their part, proudly refer to their area as *ya-negus agar* ("king's country"). They are perhaps the most devoted of all Ethiopians to the present Crown. However, many stories are told to show that this loyalty has not dissolved their intractable spirit. For example, when asked to select a representative for Ethiopia's first elected parliament in 1957, some of them were indignant: "We already have *our* representative in the capital, and if he isn't able to do the job himself, let him step down and hand it to somebody else."

871 Despite their expressed loyalty to Haile Selassie, the Manzēs stubbornly
658 oppose the program with which he is publicly most associated and whose portfolio he has retained, as Minister of Education, from 1943 to the present day. The adults of Manz object to having their children attend the government schools. In many cases where a child has elected to attend school on his own, his parents have cut off all support. The four schools in Manz thus have
[162] an enrolment far below capacity, totaling (as of 1960) less than four hundred in this area of perhaps fifty to sixty thousand families.[49] Those hardy youngsters who do attend school often do so in rags and with an empty stomach.

[857] One reason for this determined opposition to the government schools is the obvious economic one: children must stay at home to tend the herds. This is a problem all over rural Ethiopia, but still the schools in many other areas are overcrowded. Another reason is that, as we have seen, Manz was not interested in education in the old days. Few Manzēs learned to read in the church schools. When a boy showed unusual talent and interest in traditional studies he had to travel to Gondar, which often meant running away from Manz.

871 The crux of Manzē defiance of the new educational system, however, is
658 cultural fundamentalism. The Manzēs keep their children away from the
186 government schools because they fear that the students there are learning
829 something that threatens the old ways. In particular, they do not like their children to learn the language of the *faranj* ("European") or to be exposed to Ethiopians who have been taught by *faranj* and thereby infected by alien ideas. Tending the farm, keeping the fasts, defending land and self—that is the sum and substance of Manzē education, beyond which there is nothing a boy needs to learn.

829 Undoubtedly part of this dread of *faranj* learning is based on the Manzēs'
648 one experience with the white man: the Fascist occupation. As one of the
186 strongholds of patriotic resistance to the occupation, Manz and the Manzēs became the object of the invader's unyielding fury. Over miles and miles of Manz not a home or church was spared. The inhabitants were either killed, or fled to safer areas in Galla country, or joined the underground opposition—

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in such numbers that "Manzē" virtually became a synonym for "underground patriot." 829 648 186

After the liberation, as after the routing of Ahmad Grāñ's forces, the Manzē once again returned to redeem a ravished land. Slowly, the houses were rebuilt, the land was plowed once more. Churches which had been rebuilt after Grāñ's destruction only to be razed by the Italians were again put into place. Tough in his spiritual as in his physical life, the Manzē doggedly re-established the culture of his own. Now as before the occupation, a man of Manz sits on the throne, promising to let no foreigner take his country's land,* while the young braves celebrate the royal line in their festive boasting: [539]

Ya-Manz ababā, ya-Manz ababā! Yābbabāl genā!
The flower of Manz, the flower of Manz! It will bloom yet again!

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

Thus far the significance of Manz and Gondar has been discussed from the point of view of an outsider. We have attempted to assess, on the basis of the best available evidence, the respective historical and cultural roles of these two noted Amhara regions. We turn now to a different though related question, namely, the significance of these two places in the minds and feelings of Ethiopians themselves. 121

Two kinds of reaction are conspicuous. To the Ethiopian Modernist, Manz and Gondar are seen primarily as outlying pockets of conservatism. Their commitments to the past move them to resist certain changes promoted by the national government, with Manz protesting modern education and Gondar defending itself against nationalist centralization. They are regarded as backward areas, representative of the many forces that are "holding Ethiopia back," and to a certain extent are disdained.

To their inhabitants, on the other hand, these places are objects of intense loyalty. For differences of identity among the Amhara are defined chiefly in terms of their *agar*, or "home country." The size of one's *agar* is relative; it depends on the context in which the symbol is used, and may be as small as a district or as large as a province. Whatever the referent, one's *agar* signifies more than a place of residence or provenience. It means "home," and all those whose families live there are regarded with special affection, while those out- 121 186 823

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* On certain festive occasions the following antiphonal chant is declaimed in praise of "Ṭaqel" (the affectionate, "horse" name of Haile Selassie): [533] [539] [551]

[Leader:] *Min āla ṭaqel min āla?*
[Chorus:] *Agarē la-zaw agarē la-zaw alazem ala!*
[Leader:] What did Ṭaqel say, what did he say?
[Chorus:] "My country to outsiders, my country to outsiders, I will not give!" said he.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

paid increased attention in recent years. A new phase of public health endeavor in this decade was marked by the imposition of a nationwide health tax in 1960.

Health has become a prime objective in Ethiopia's modernization program because of a growing realization that the wide prevalence of malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, intestinal parasites, syphilis, trachoma, leprosy, and other diseases continues to sap the vitality of the nation's productive forces and to visit misery on countless peasant families. The public health forces in Ethiopia (Ministry of Public Health, WHO mission, and AID Public Health Division) have long understood that Ethiopia's health needs cannot be met by piecemeal therapy. They have undertaken a program of preventive measures by preparing public health teams in the medical college at Gondar. The college trains health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians within a common framework, so that when they go into the field they will understand each other's tasks from the start. The first public health center employing such a team was opened in the late fifties; Ethiopia's Second Five-Year Plan envisions one such center for every fifty thousand people by 1967.

The objective of these public health workers is to transmit a number of instructions—concerning personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, early care for illness, and isolation of contagious diseases—which are at variance with customary beliefs and practices. Experience with comparable programs elsewhere suggests that the success of such health teams is by no means assured.[18] What are the forces working for and against the acceptance of these new instructions by the Amhara peasantry? Both negative and positive factors may be identified with respect to each of the three general categories previously referred to: the general outlook regarding change; attitudes toward the agents of change; and degree of compatibility between the new cultural items and the old.

The Amhara peasant's general resistance to change may be presumed operative here as elsewhere, particularly since health practices are often associated with religious beliefs and sentiments. Defense of indigenous therapies has in fact become a significant channel for the expression of traditionalist sentiment, a channel that has even been utilized on occasion in the Addis Ababa newspapers.[19] And a general posture of resistance to changes in the field of health is supported by the interests of traditional practitioners, *dabtarā* and *ṭanquāy*, who are in danger of losing clientele if modern-trained health workers come to win their allegiance.

Counter to this conservative drag, on the other hand, is the peasant's powerful desire for one basic change in his life circumstances, namely, the reduction of morbidity and mortality. Despite his idyllic conception of paradise and his frequent contention that life on earth is something of little value, the Amhara wants to avoid death. Even from the religious point of view he is

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or
593 official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In
463 either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely pre-
156 paring himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which
[181] the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

882 The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of
184 Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing
871 up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adoles-
178 cence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

The Welfare School

871 Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a
175 small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in govern-
[797] ment provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

[648] During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

872 The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 66 ical wit and activism displayed by students from other countries has embarrassed their cautious dispositions.

There are three reasons for this relative lack of politicization of the Ethiopian students. One is that, having maintained her ancient independence [548] throughout the "scramble for Africa," Ethiopia entered the twentieth century as an independent nation; and five years of Italian rule were not sufficient to shake her spirit. Ethiopian students have thus not had to participate in the anti-imperialist movement, the great school for political activism in the colonial areas.

[571] [157] A second factor is the deeply rooted habit of total subordination to any legitimate authority. Because of this orientation there is a persisting disposition to relegate concern for all political questions to the highest authorities. [577] [829] Nearly two-thirds of the secondary students and a third of the college students maintain that one should always obey the order of a superior, arguing that "obedience is a virtue," "things would not go right otherwise," and "the Bible says so."

*883 66 641 The third reason for the almost apolitical posture of Ethiopian students has been the absence of opportunities for political expression in their country. African students from British colonies have in the past been surprised to find that their colonial situation admitted far more freedom of speech and press than Ethiopia. Teachers are expected to keep anything remotely connected with Ethiopian politics out of the classroom, and the editors are expected to keep them out of the newspapers. Nor have the students been permitted to form any kind of politically relevant associations. Even casual discussion of domestic political problems among friends has been curtailed because of the all-pervading fear of government informers.

*883 66 177 All this has not prevented Ethiopian students from being affected to a moderate degree by the libertarian and egalitarian ideals of the West. The teaching of European history in secondary school, evaluation of students' performance without respect to class or tribal affiliation, and the exercise of electing student officers in the colleges have acted to leaven the political imagination of the students. Many of them thus ventured a degree of political *883 66 829 criticism in their anonymous questionnaires. Forty-three per cent indicated disapproval of the existing differences between "big men" and the common people. Thirty-nine per cent were critical of the degree of control exerted by the government, of which group two-thirds felt that governmental controls are too strict (e.g., not permitting free expression), and one-third felt they were not strict enough (e.g., with respect to corruption and provincial administration).

*883 668 669 The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, jarred the Addis Ababa college students into an unprecedented state of political activity.[27] In response

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

The general position of the church had already been weakened by the 648 events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of 795 many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those 793 of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the [792] Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the 795 clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree 793 which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed [643] properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes [651] at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, 871 has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever govern- 658 ment schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to 793 be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full- [465] time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as 178 ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and [554] has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas 871 like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite [658]

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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Yə-dam Dəmṭ*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

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poses. They have been led to renounce extreme particularistic ambitions, thanks to marital connections, intimidation, the lure of new benefits, and a degree of nationalism, but to some extent they remain spokesmen for regional and para-dynastic interests. 178 565

Men who did not belong to the old nobility were recruited into the new nobility on the basis of two criteria, loyalty and ability, with loyalty clearly the more important of the two. Some men from very humble backgrounds have been thus raised to the highest governmental positions through their "loyalty" to the Emperor, manifested in great part by their readiness to inform on the words and deeds of others and their obsequious and flattering manner. These have normally not been given the traditional military titles but only the titles of their office. In contrast with the carry-overs from the old nobility, still known as *masāfent* and *makuānnient*, these men have been called *bālaselṭān* ("holders of power"). They have included a number of men who were active in the fight against the Italians, either through the Hagara Fiqer ("National Patriotic Association," a group organized in 1935 to promote Ethiopian unity and combat Italian propaganda) or as patriotic fighters in the resistance. The Emperor also promoted to high position some men who collaborated with the Italians, relying on their earlier record as an insurance against latter-day disloyalty, and using their antagonism against the patriots as a check against excessive ambitions of the latter. 178 565 554 [648]

On the other hand, the new nobility includes those who, whether from high family background or not, are so placed because of outstanding ability. This consideration is no longer primarily a question of military ability, but of competence in dealing with technical modern subjects and with foreign diplomats. This group may be equated with the older generation of European-educated Ethiopians. The categories of adjusted aristocrats, ambitious parvenus, and intellectual bureaucrats have thus constituted a latent subdivision among the new nobility; and tensions have from time to time been expressed along those lines. [555]

Despite the elaboration of modern governmental structures under Haile Selassie, the dominant principle of the social order has been that of royal sovereignty. The entire staff of government officials has been the direct sociological descendant of the traditional court retinue. This was conspicuous in the titles given by Menelik to a number of the original ministers: *Afa Negus* for Minister of Justice; *Azāzh* for Minister of Palace; *Bajirond* for Treasurer; and *Ṭsahāfi Te'ezāz* for Minister of Pen. These and other court titles remain in use today. The primacy of the court over all other functions appears in periodic audiences at the palace, when all high government officials and other notables are expected to pay their respects no matter what business may be pending in their offices. The chief value embodied in the status group of the new nobility as a whole has been that of loyalty to the sovereign. 178 64 [195]

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178 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the
565 new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the
661 view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in
565 terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly
556 as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like
[241] coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to specu-
[455] late in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene
565 in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well
556 as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families,
472 Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became
[175] prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to
[648] collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *makuānnent* and *bāla-selṭān*. They
[662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different
565 from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army
369 tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend
177 to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the
[556] more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The
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perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court. 178 565 [643] [662]

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand. 701 [571] [625]

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time. 701 564 [578] [571]

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be 701 648

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701 more eager and impatient to modernize Ethiopia than do members of the
• 648 new nobility. This contrast was already apparent at the time of the Italian invasion, when Ethiopian officers were condemning the archaic practices of civilian officials who, they charged, were holding back the defense efforts. Yet the image of a progressive, solidary military elite in Ethiopia is justified no more than the image of a reactionary, solidary ministerial elite; nor should the military leaders be seen as standing in fundamental opposition to their civilian counterparts. There is much friendly intercourse between the two groups. Army officers are often related to civilian officials, by blood or by marriage. Military personnel have in a number of cases been assigned to civilian posts in the government. While the military carry on much of their social life among themselves, they also enjoy a good deal of interaction with civilians of high status at parties, dances, weddings, and funerals.

701 Like the new nobility, moreover, the military officers do not form a cohesive group with common interests and ambitions. The one group which did develop a high degree of solidarity, esprit, and common political goals—the Officers Corps of the Imperial Bodyguard—was dissolved in the wake of its defeat in the 1960 rebellion. The military men have been checked and balanced by much the same techniques as have the new nobility. As a whole, they are held together by little more than the institutionalized structure of the security forces. As such, they are in any event bound to play an important part in determining the character of the future government of Ethiopia as they are crucial now in upholding the present regime.

THE BIRTH OF AN INTELLIGENTSIA

571 The formation of a modern intellectual class in Ethiopia is still in its earliest
871 stages. Given the small number who have completed elementary school (a
162 number still under one per cent of the national population) all Ethiopians who have graduated from secondary school may for the time being be considered members of a secular educated elite, those with college and graduate degrees enjoying correspondingly higher status within this elite. The total number in this group reached an estimated six thousand in 1962, about one-fourth of whom held college degrees.

571 Equally indicative of the rudimentary condition of the Ethiopian intelligentsia is the poverty of its institutional facilities and of its means of communication, both internally and with the international intellectual commu-
571 nity. As of 1961, institutions with primarily intellectual purposes were lim-
873 ited to the small college of arts and sciences, four vocational colleges, two
874 small research centers (the Pasteur Institute and the Section d'Archéologie, both financed by France and staffed mostly by non-Ethiopians), the Haile

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Selassie I theater, and the secondary level art school.* Library facilities included the National Library, with some fifty thousand volumes; the University College Library, with about forty-five; and the reading rooms of the United States Information Service, the British Center, and the Soviet Information Service. The national library also contains a historical museum, and there is a handsome and well appointed archeological museum nearby, neither of which has so far been operated with a view to encouraging public attendance.

Except for occasional lectures sponsored by the national library and the University College extension program, none of the above institutions serves as a center for intellectual communication among adult Ethiopians. It was hoped by some that with the inauguration of the Haile Selassie I University, in December, 1961, a major new center of intellectual life would be created; but the government found it difficult to push ahead with its announced concept of an integrated institution which would operate autonomously and at a high standard.

Outside these institutions, moreover, there have been few channels of communication through which Ethiopian intellectuals can develop their minds and stimulate their imaginations. There are no periodicals to serve as a medium for such communication. One possibility, the *Ethiopian Observer*, is not quite an exception. Limited resources have kept it from operating at as high a level as available talent might permit, and its basically apologetic orientation renders implausible its claims to be "A Journal of Independent Opinion." The daily newspapers which feature contributed articles—the *Ethiopian Herald*, the *Addis Zaman*, and the Amharic sections of the *Voice of Ethiopia*—have tended to exclude pieces that have anything to do with highly controversial matters. Nor are there many social occasions for the serious discussion of intellectual matters. Professional associations, clubs devoted to intellectual matters, and even informal discussion groups exist not at all or else in a very haphazard form.

Contact with the intellectual world outside Ethiopia is almost as meager. Foreign-educated Ethiopians tend to become intellectually demoralized on returning home. The loss of a taste for reading has frequently been one of the first casualties experienced by Western-educated Ethiopians on return from abroad. Only a few hardy souls attempt to maintain some sort of link with the outside world, through subscribing to such magazines as the *New Statesman*, *Paris Soir*, or *New Republic*. For most of them, coming home means a cessation of the most elementary intellectual functions, other

* In 1963 an Institute of Ethiopian Studies was established at Haile Selassie I University, including a substantial Ethiopiana library and museum.

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quite a few of these men went to school in France and Switzerland, while others studied in Egypt, England, the United States, and Italy. In general, this first group of returnees was enthusiastic and outspoken in their desire to modernize the country. They were emboldened by the feeling that Haile Selassie was their champion, though some of them, who took plans for a Young Ethiopia movement with them into exile during the occupation, felt a need for more radical reforms than the Emperor was willing to admit.

The pre-occupation intellectuals have no significant voice as such in Ethiopia today. Many of them were massacred by the Italians following the attempt on Graziani's life in 1937. Those who survived have been scattered, some being so thoroughly absorbed in the new nobility as to lose their identity as intellectuals, others tending to lead somewhat isolated and demoralized lives. Only the handful of older military officers, who were trained at the St. Cyr Academy in France, retain any semblance of common identity based on prewar study abroad.

In speaking of the returnees, then, we speak essentially of a group whose education abroad dates to the late forties and after. The typical postliberation returnee has studied from three to five years abroad in an English-speaking institution, under the sponsorship of the Ethiopian government; though there are many exceptions to this type.

As of June, 1959, the main countries in which some five hundred Ethiopians had studied since the mid-forties were: United States and Canada, 38 per cent; United Kingdom, 20 per cent; Lebanon (American University of Beirut), 17 per cent; Western Germany, 10 per cent; and India, 4 per cent. This pattern began to change somewhat at the end of the fifties as, in addition to these countries, Ethiopians in increasingly large numbers began to attend schools in Egypt, Italy, France, Israel, and Sweden. The subjects pursued by these students covered the whole academic spectrum—from dairying and forestry to languages and theology. Most of them, however, concentrated in one of four fields: social sciences, 30 per cent; engineering, 23 per cent; education, 12 per cent; and medical sciences, 12 per cent. Notably underrepresented in their studies were the fields of business and the natural sciences.

The length of time spent abroad varied considerably. Of the three hundred students who had returned by 1958 for whom complete information is available, 15 per cent studied abroad for only one year and 18 per cent for two years; 36 per cent were abroad from three to five years, 25 per cent from six to eight years, and 6 per cent for nine or more years. The education of about half of these students was paid for by the Ethiopian government itself. Others went on scholarships given by the United States government through AID (20 per cent); by other foreign governments, chiefly West Germany and

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571 India (10 per cent); and by international organizations, chiefly WHO and
871 ICAO (8 per cent). The others were financed privately, either by their
177 families (8 per cent), or, in a few cases (3 per cent), by religious groups or
[648] business firms.

571 Given this variety of educational background, it is not surprising that the
829 experience of study abroad has had a variable effect on the returnees. Their
177 images of modernity are differently colored according to the country where they have received their higher education. Their archetypes for the modern component of language vary according to the language in which they have received their technical training.

Despite such variety—which may ultimately serve to enrich their cultural life more than to fragment it—several effects of the experience abroad appear common to nearly all the returnees. These include a radical broadening of perspective; the taste for a high standard of living; greater appreciation of political freedom; a heightened sense of Ethiopian identity; and an increase in nationalistic sentiment.

571 Because Ethiopian students are highly motivated to learn what goes on
829 about them in foreign countries, their travel abroad has tended to broaden
177 their outlooks rather than to confirm their prejudices. This expansion of per-
186 spective alters their attitude toward Ethiopia in two different ways. On the one hand, by enabling them to evaluate aspects of Ethiopian life they had previously taken for granted, it has made them more aggressively critical about conditions at home. On the other hand, it has given them a greater sense of pride about Ethiopia. They have noticed that, however advanced their host country, it had certain shortcomings of its own, a sort of observation which has tended to ease the sting of cultural inferiority inevitably felt during the stay in a more modernized society.

> Before going to the United States, I pictured it as the most perfect country on earth. We students in Ethiopia believed that everything good and beautiful comes from America. After studying there, I was disappointed in many ways. For example, I found the Americans to be hypocritical—they go to church, and don't care about religion; they talk about tolerance, and are still quite prejudiced. This was a great lesson for me. I can never be so romantic about a foreign country again, and can appreciate Ethiopia's strengths as well as its weaknesses better now.

Short travel tours sometimes had a similar effect:

> I spent several weeks in Yugoslavia. . . . And I must say—despite how backward we are here, we live much more happily than the Yugoslavs. The people themselves are wonderful—warm and generous; but their lives are miserable. That experience was really quite a surprise for me.

571 No matter what its shortcomings, the host country inevitably accustomed
829 Ethiopians abroad to a higher standard of living than they had known at
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centered in a town and extending outward to include those areas from which peasants come to buy and sell. [132] The size of the town's sphere contracts and expands sea- [484] sonally, reaching its nadir furing the rainy season, when overland travel becomes difficult owning to deep mud and raging torrents. Then, travelling is infrequent and confined to the market town closest to a peasant's home parish. Although market trips are more frequent during the remainder of the year, most terminate at the closest market. These relatively short trips are favored when grain is brought to the mills located on the periphery [796] of most market sites. The spheres of the larger towns (Gondar, Debre Tabor, Dabat) reach maximum size on the market days which preceed the great celebrations of the Coptic Church---Meskal (which celebrates the discovery of the True Cross, and follows the end of the rains), Michaelmas (November), Timkat (feast of the Epiphany, and preceeding the Lenten fast), and Easter. Map 3 indicates the extreme limits for market spheres of the towns of the Begemder highlands.

[491] The highland market towns are strung along the province's only all-weather motor road.[14] Each offers a

[648] [14] This road, built during the Italian occupation (1936-1941), runs north to Asmara (capital of Eritrea) and (since the 1960's) south to Addis Ababa (the national capital). A dry season road links the highland towns to Metemma on the Sudan border.

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621 into sixty-five named wards (sebekas). The social and demographic character of wards varies considerably, and it is useful to describe them in terms of two contrasting types. At one extreme, the ward resembles a kind
[241] of urban parish. It contains an eponymous Church; and
[423] a majority of residents are risteñas, members of landowning ambilineages who support themselves by farming and renting homesteads on their lands. But even these wards contrast with rural parishes on several counts.
*[892] The ward is generally compact in size, and internally
[463] undivided beyond the homestead (bet). Within it live out-landers who work outside the ward in exclusively non-agricultural occupations. Further, while the parish is administered in detail by residents, the ward relies upon non-resident agents of the municipality for its administration.

At the other extreme, are the town's "non-corporate"
[648] wards. During the Italian occupation, several of
[175] Gondar's parish-like wards were sequestered by the invaders as building sites. After liberation, the Imperial government divided each of these wards into tracts, which were deliniated according to the buildings upon them. Tracts were then given as grants (yaribeña mariet, "hero's land") to supporters of the government-in-exile, who were often non-residents of Gondar. In time, the pre-war boundaries of such wards were no longer regarded

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Hedar 1 to Hedar 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "teff" for bread; "mug" and "talbo" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Hedar: "Mikael" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Qwesqwam"-clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Ilma" Festival at Akaum; Beme' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikael": fresh togas, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). Mist: Church student holiday.	
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 8	Summer ("balg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate scrubbed landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "teff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus' coming), esp. at Gulubi near Dire Dawa. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Lodit", or "Ilma"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Ganna") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).	19th: Emp. Haile Selassi travels to Gulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional togs and judgmnts.
Ter 1 to Ter 30	Jan. 9 to Feb. 7	Height of dry summer ("bilg"). Some sluggish rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shembera), plant (gomin) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ter is "Tenqit"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially erected pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Gerrh"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Giyorgis" (St. George) Mist: "Ashkye Maryam" (Mary)	Tenqahewers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("gugs") women are coiffured, hennaed-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary:On Epiphany, Jan. 19th Pentecost (11th Ter), ("Sayrha") among Falashas as harvest ceremony Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in fest. 12th traditional costume.

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622 land. When a person is asked where he is from, he will often give the local name for his "and debber agar" of origin.

634 The cheqa shum, village headmen, are supervised by the district chief, "worada shum", who is also appointed by the

625 governor. The district chief in turn appoints his own police, called "nach lebash" (lit. "thiefcathers in white"), who wear no special uniforms, merely the usual white togas, and carry rifles, in the use of which they are expert. They are used not only against petty thieves but against more dangerous bandits also. Their efficiency is commonly regarded as far superior to that of the uniformed urban police. Usually there is one nach lebash per half-district ("mekatl worada") or two per district, unless an increase in banditry ("shifta") requires more.

● 651 Taxes, paid often in produce but increasingly in cash, are collected from each cheqa shum, but not by the district chief himself. For this task the governor has appointed a lieutenant, "mislane", per district ("worada"), who ranks equal with the worada shum and expects aid from the latter. Usually the mislane is a stranger to the district and himself a sort of glorified retainer and account-keeper from the court of the governor of the sub-province ("awraja") who has appointed him; while the district chief is a local man who may conspire with his village headmen to keep local prosperity from the knowledge of the governor's central office. The latter therefore has to rely on the cleverness of his lieutenants, the "mislane".

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651 The administrative pyramid rests squarely on the shoulders of the cheqa shum. He collects local dues for

622 both the central government and the local church. Where
651 the land has not been officially measured, which is the usual case in old Amhara territory, the mislane must rely on him for information necessary to the assessment of taxes. The cheqa shum is expected also to supervise customs evasion
622 when caravans or smugglers move through his territory. He
692 mediates between landlord and tenant in their endless little disagreement. In fact, his activities resemble those of an Elizabethan "Justice of the Peace".

He decides local disputes, in civil cases; officiates at the most common type of marriage, the "semanya" (an agreement between two kinship groups); he reads out government proclamations and decrees of the emperor at the nearest rural market place, including the call to arms in case of war. He can also indict a criminal and bring him before the "danya" the judge of the nearest market town, or to the "judges on circuit" accompanying the governor on his annual inspec-
622 tion tour during the dry season. Usually the cheqa shum is a local landlord himself, unless he has been given the post as a special favor for services rendered to the governor.

[701] Until the diminution of feudal privileges during the past decade, the cheqa shum was also responsible for providing the military-feudal chiefs and their troops with provisions when they were on march, making it unnecessary for
[485] them to depend on supply lines. Now that army troops receive regular salaries, he still has to play host to travelling officials for their personal needs, since there are no rural hotels. They do not pay him except by promises of future favors.

622 485 This change has also lightened the burden on the "gabbar", the tenant sharecropper. In the past it was the gabbar who had to supply the "feast" (called "gebber", with ironic truthfulness regarding the provider) for feudal troops on march, in addition to all his other burdens. The cheqa shum was responsible for its collection, for only he knew how much produce, goats, sheep, honey, etc., the peasant had left after the heavy sharecropping rent to the landlord and the "tithe" ("asrat") which is still ppayable to the central government (formerly to the district feudal lord).

● 651 There is now a new tax, the "education tax" payable even in rural areas where no government schools exist as yet, and payable in cash only, not in produce as in case of "asrat". This tax, too, is collected by the cheqa shum and delivered to the mislenē who must now issue a receipt and forward the money to the central treasury.

563 361 Ethnic considerations in the location of a hamlet in Amhara territory apply to hamlets of scattered Falashas, ironsmiths who observe Mosaic Judaism, and hamlets of the Faqi, Cushitic-speaking tanners who were "Pagan" but have recently accepted the Coptic faith and the Amharic language. Since their services are required, they are often permitted to rent land on a hill, the other side of which may contain a Coptic Amhara hamlet. Relations between these hamlets, beginning on strictly economic terms, often become as friendly as the difference between religions, low status of skilled smiths and tanners, and old supernatural [622] suspicions permit. In case of such residence, one cheqa shum may have an ethnic variety of hamlets under his domain, and may know far more about their "strange" inhabitants and their customs than the average Amhara.

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443 or green ones for "alecha" meat sauce; tyeff grain; imported and native spices; linseed and nug oil seeds; firewood; chickens; donkeys and sheep and goats, but no more expensive livestock. Approaching feasts, fasts and rainy season change the emphasis and variety of products and activities.

438 The big Saturday market emphasizes items of long-distance trade such as salt, from the lowland plain of Areho, in Danakil, bordering on French Somaliland. Bricks of this coarse-grained salt "Amolye" were formerly used as money, their value increasing with the distance from the place of origin. This has been gradually discontinued during the reign of the present Emperor, and salt is now also imported in crushed pebbles from the Sudan, called "Senar" after the area of origin. The big bar has become rare, is called "lemädäw", and costs from Eth$4.- for a big one to Eth 50¢ for a little one.

438 439 Coffee comes from Jimma. Raw cotton is sold by weight, from the Matamma border of the Sudan, brought on camel back. Spices (e.g. abusda) and incense come from as far as Yemen. Razor blades come from England. Imports from the Sudan include much cotton cloth: "abujedid" for shirt-making, more expensive cotton "stock" material, and now also khaki cloth for shorts and modern bush jackets.

439 [65] Import duty is high, as much as Eth$9.- per "taqa", about 45 meters. Some raw cotton is domestic, from the Setit market of the Wolkait jungle border. "Taqa"

435 tyeff in Gondar brings as little as Eth$10.- but in Addis Ababa Eth$30.- and more. Nug seed bring as much as Eth$30. per 100 kilos even at the Gondar market, a rural production area. Gesho, hops, brings as much as Eth$1.- per kilo; some semi-urban farmers grow it as a parttime cash crop (also the drug plant "chat" chewed by Muslims). Other products sold by the farmer include honey, peas, beans, maize, sorghum, dagussa, spices, beeswax, chickens brought by farm women, and recently also eggs; milk, butter, livestock big and small, goat-gut ("jemat") for cordage and the "qrar" banjo. Big livestock (cows, oxen and mules) are traded only at big Saturday markets, also the fat-tailed sheep or old cow for the Sunday dinner. At the end of long fasts edible livestock is in much demand

[490] and prices may double. It is also noteworthy that despite the poor roads, modern truck transportation is so efficient economically in comparison with traditional caravans, that prices for comparable imported and long-distance domestic products are on the same scale at the big Saturday markets.

443 [492] The big market is also an important governmental administrative center, especially the judicial organization. From ancient times this has been the location of the formally appointed judge, the "dayna", to arbitrate disputes that the curbstone judge has not settled, and to hear cases against accused thieves. Here the

443 651 governor's trade chief, the "nägad-ras", acts as collector of revenue and supervisor of trade practices. He fixes and alters tolls on trails and river crossings,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Ambara MP5

and observes the travelling traders, the "mängädänna". Both chiefs, especially the danya, sit under broad, shady trees on the market. Nearby is the gibbet, from which criminals were publicly hung until less than a decade ago. Recent additions to the market scene include a few modern tables and chairs at which treasury clerks from Addis Ababa receive import and other duties; and, within a barbed wire fence, government "dressers" of the health department from time to time, especially in epidemics, give free typhus and other injections to anyone applying and diagnosed sick.

Trade practices of the Amhara differ from much of the Middle East, especially from the Arab. The Amhara is too proud to badger a customer, and the profit motive is not as storng--he is not concerned with financial gain. The Amhara is not concerned at monetary loss in a trade transaction but his temper is aroused if he fears that he has been bettered, outwitted and made the laughing stock of others. If he has sold to a foreigner at only a little above the usual price instead of double or triple, his competitors at the market will jeer at him. In this case he will try to undo the trade, claiming linguistic misunderstanding.

As a result of this fear of being shamed, producers of native articles will not bring manufactured goods to market unless they have a previous firm order, after which the customer has to wait. It is craftsman's trade rather than commercial. This is even true of members of ethnic low-class producers, tanners, saddlemakers, smiths,

423 He could do with "mäd-bet" lands as he pleased, without
656 interference from kin groups, the church, or other local-feudal dynasties.

654 Thus the present emperor, when he was still merely
656 regent, and a young man in his twenties, began his pro-
423 gram of modernization and centralization in his own "mad-bet" in Harar province. He organized the coffee-growing of that area as a cash crop for export, and, more significantly, reduced the burdens on the "gabbar", improved security of tenure, appointed supervisors to see that matters would not slip back, and instructed them to report to him as the central power. He also set up elementary schools in several locations. At regular intervals he toured his lands personally. As a result, "gabbar" from neighboring feudal estates were eager to have the protection of his "mäd-bet".

423 These efforts were a departure from the traditional
656 pattern of high feudal nobles on their "mäd-bet" (though, on the other hand, no one could criticize him for doing as he pleased on his own "household land"). The others appointed trustees, "täwälaj", usually 12, to administer their land, while they remained absentee landlords at the court of the "king of kings". These trustees were u usually appointed from patriarchal elders and lowest nobility, and were responsible for the support of the parish churches of their area, with priest, deacons, däbtära (scribe-choristers), etc.

423 In the traditional pattern there was another means
● 651 of exercising some central control, through the collection

423 of land taxes and tithe, provided these were not entirely
651 claimed by powerful local feudal nobility or the church. These tax-collectors, who often lived dangerously, were given land as reward for services; this land was called "mälkäña" land. They also acted as overseers of stature-labor, "hudäd". They were usually free from both land tax and tithe on their own territory, and, although their sons could inherit the job and the land that went with it, their security of tenure was even weaker than that of the "gultenna". Partly this was due to the ever-shifting power factors, for, when the central power was weak or distracted by a distant war, the tax-collector might find himself working as a provincial functionary, intermediate between the cheqa shum (headman) and the provincial feudal lords.

423 When central power was greatly strengthened in
656 the days of Menelik II, there was a considerable increase in "malkana" lands. This was particularly the case in lands he had conquered from the Galla landlords ("balbat"). He expropriated 3/4 of their lands for distribution among his military veterans, but in consolation granted the balbats the remaining 1/4 as "mälkäña" land. This freed them from taxes, enabled them to pass their remaining landholdings on to their sons, and turned them into loyal subjects of the central power which alone could protect their tenure from future expropriation. The outcome of this amazingly Solomonic solution of an age-old problem of land tenure in a feudal country has turned the Galla balbats today into the most reliable

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 658 supporters of the central government.

The descendants of these balbats, now educated in 423 the high schools of Addis Ababa, are being sent into even 447 the old-Amhara provinces at present, by Emperor Haile 651 Selassie, to act as salaried collectors for the central treasury ("Gemja-Bet") (so that the function of the former malkana has again come full circle, though the term is no longer used for the office). In fact, the new centralized tax-gathering has ended the office of the old, provincial "mälkäña", and they, much like the "gultäñña", can only hope to have their lands affirmed as "rest". This they can hope to achieve only if they work the lands themselves and pay tithe on produce, otherwise it may be lost to squatters. Their final security of tenure, by contract instead of vague status (they have lost the latter), will come only when the lands are measured and modern titles issued, which has not yet happened in the old-Amhara areas that resist this. The non-resistant Galla balbats of Shoa province are thus more secure in tenure, and will remain so as long as the central governis strong.

423 Measurement of land is called, traditionally, "throw-804 ing the rope" ("yase gämäd"). This rope may be made of cordage, plant fibers, traditionally 40 elbow lengths long. In northern districts it is sometimes made of plaited oxhide, and called "qäläd".

423 The "rope was thrown" widely in Galla lands conquered by Menelik II, Three-quarters of these lands were then divided into gashas of 80-100 acres each, and

423 the peasants occupying them were allocated as "gabbar" to soldiers and officers. A soldier-veteran who had family might have received 2 to 5 families "gabbar"; officers 7 to 10, district commanders 30 and more "gabbar" families, governors hundreds of gabbar. From the gabbar's point of view, this constituted little change in his lot, for he had served the Galla balbat in similar ways. Gabbar were also allocated to the Coptic churches built on the new territories. Menelik II regarded these new parishes and buildings as permanent outposts of Amhara society in the Galla south.

423 651 The first emperor to strengthen central power, in modern times, and to begin land reforms, was Emperor Theodore. In the 1850's and 1860's he instituted a new office, still retained. This was the appointment of trusted lieutenants, "mislanē", to act as tax-collectors, in place of the uncertain "malkana" who were always being subdued by regional feudal powers. He appointed as "mislanē" persons from different regions, who would own no fealty to local lords, and could be relied upon to owe personal loyalty directly to the central power that had appointed them. This was the first type of officer not rewarded by land grants, but receiving salary out of the taxes he had collected. At present, a century later, the office of "mislanē" is little changed, except that he is now directly responsible to the provincial governor who is himself an appointee of the Emperor and who is frequently shifted to another province to prevent him from growing local roots.

423 The richest farmer in the rural vicinity of Gondar,
427 a member of the Qemant (Cushitic-speaking) ethnic group, owns 8 gasha (about 400 acres), which is considered fabulous wealth by his Amhara neighbors. However, with the aid of his sons and servants, he cultivates only one gasha at any given time. He parcels out the remaining 7 gasha, except for some fallow land, to landless tenant farmers, many of them ex-slaves, usually in plots no bigger than 10 qada (about 4 acres), which is considered the limit one man can plow and seed without help. The rent they pay him consists of one "madiga " of tyeff grain (about 25 kilo); payable by each. Each also pays him 1/2 madiga of barley, referred to as "qolo", tribute to his "household". His agents also collect the 10% tithe, in produce, which he is expected to pass on to the government, and the new Eth$4.- education tax. He invest part of his profits in cows for his increasing herds.

423 For purposes of taxation, of peasants, the govern-
651 ment treasury must rely on the judgment of the headman, ("cheqa shum"), who is difficult to check because the land is unmeasured and a "gasha" is a flexible concept. Therefore, his supervisor, usually the mislane, can only base a check on past, customary payments.

[602] Taxcollectors are known to be generous when deal-
423 ing with even distant kinfolk, or with priests and
651 their relatives, and to even out the receipts by pres-
653 sure on low-class ethnic minorities, justifying this by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income from their handicrafts.

423 by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income
651 from their handicrafts. Among the methods of this
563 extortion is the "initiation fee" of as much as Eth$3.- per qada, when freshly cleared from the bush. Another impressment consists of "voluntary" supplies regularly paid to the Coptic parish church in the locality, by non-Coptic ethnics. Also, the feudal landlord usually asks them for a special "pasturage fee"--as much as Eth$2.- per qada of fallow land--with the further condition that no more than two oxen (or cows) graze on each qada. Where a Coptic farmer may pay perhaps Eth$10.- tithe on his semi-fertile 50 qada, the non-Coptic farmer may be made to pay double to four times that for similar produce on an equivalent plot of land. While
[871] the new education tax is the same, the non-Coptic artisan finds it very difficult to enroll his boy in the overcrowded elementary school in the provincial capital.

423 The average "rest"-owning farmer working 10 qada
651 every year, may harvest about 50 madiga of tyeff grain,
511 selling it for Eth$150.-(In the rainy season it would bring twice that); plus 30 madiga barley, Eth$60.- plus some honey, if he has it.

If the tax-collector is his friend, his tithe may amount to as little as Eth$5 to 10, his education tax Eth$2 to 4. His land tax based on the rate of 1927 will be very low, and his pasturage, as Coptic non-artisan, free.

511 Thus he has enough for his basic needs including the purchase of a new toga (shamma) per year, and perhaps a new donkey. However, he cannot normally afford

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 Code of 1930 of the central government. "Rest" land was protected by a provision that it could not be sold without permission of the district judge. This assured that the transaction would be public, enabling the kinfolk to protest. In the provinces of Begemdir, Semyen and Gojjam, where land was considered plentiful, most land consisted of freehold "rest", which remained unsurveyed, and in practice virtually unsaleable. In Shoa province, much land formerly held by veterans and officials ("gultennas") has reverted to the government. But most "gabbar" tenants still owe the 2/3 of produce previously paid. The tenants of the descendants of "gultennas" can become owners only by purchasing the land; meanwhile their income goes to pay the rent, the tithe, etc., leaving no capital to accumulate.

423 651 Under this Code the church was still exempt from land tax on its huge holdings. The laws of 1944 abrogated this exemption, but the amendment of 1947 partially restored the right of the church to claim "voluntary contributions" locally, from recipients of benefits such as education. The law of 1944 was a victory for the resisting provincial Amhara peasants, in that it limited, temporarily, the land taxes of Begemdir, Semyen and Gojjam (also the Coptic province of Tigre) to the low rate of 1927. The tithe could continue to be on an "estimated" basis. All taxes permitted "scaling" according to fertility.

Thus the old immunities and inequalities in

423 [651] taxation of landholdings have been only partially swept away. Enforcement in the old-Amhara provinces is lax. The "gabbar" system, abolished by decree after the emperor's return in 1941, continues as the broad basis of land occupancy, and as a major pillar of social structure, with only little, gradual change.

632 not far from the market. A smaller daily market for retail items would develop, so commerce proceeded even on a daily basis. A larger church school, to include some higher grades, would be set up by priests and Däbtära (scribe-choristers).

632 712 On account of the floods in the rainy season, most of this town would be on a higher level, preferably a butte overlooking a river valley from which drinking water could be brought every day. On this fertile flood plain, just below the town, there would be some grass even at the gheight of the dry season, so that the cows owned by urban citizens would always find some pasture. [423] On this floodplain a "commons" was set aside, which no one could "enclose" for private use. It was called "ad-[425] däbabay" or even "yähezb addäbabay", and served as camping place for caravans, for temporary storage space of their goods and their mules, donkeys or camels, prior to the slow climb up the butte to the Saturday market. This arrangement also had the advantage of military security for the town, protecting it from sneak attack of an enemy under guise of a caravan, which was not permitted to proceed upward into town until dawn. For the Amhara town, unlike the Muslim towns in the south, were not walled.

632 651 This arrangement also permitted the "nägadraa", the collector of duties for the central power of the province, to keep control of the merchandise entering and leaving the market.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

E. Administration and Tax Structure in Transition.

Imposition of tributes and taxes is the traditional yardstick by which the central power of Middle Eastern as well as African rulers has been measured, in their eyes and those of their subjects! On the basis of this yardstick the old Abyssinian rulers, even including the mighty Menelik II, enjoyed very little permanent central power, and their administrative decrees rarely outlasted their individual careers.

Repeated attempts have been made by the present ruler of Ethiopia to establish some uniform tax structure, replacing old feudal tributes. Some progress has been painfully made, but it seems that this particular phase of administration will long remain among the most change-resistent. Much of the tax system and enforcement can be described as chaotic, and this is particularly true in the proud, old Amhara provinces.

The first attempt of the central government to impose a direct tax on the individual citizen occurred in 1934, requiring every adult to pay a minimum of Eth$1.- per year, with income taxes as high as 20% on all cash salaries and feudal dues. The tax was highly unpopular, and hardly enforced. After return from exile, when his power was greater, the emperor resolved to take the administration of tax-collecting out of the hands of the provincial governors and to entrust the task to officials of the central Ministry of Finance. Collection houses of the central treasury, "gemja byet" were set up in

65 modern structures abandoned by the Italians in provincial capitals, were carefully guarded by military police, and placed in charge of treasury clerks from Addis Ababa who had a modern high school education. This form of administration continues at present.

The attempt was made by the central government, at about the same time (1942/1943) to set up a system for the land tax, based on fertility, which, it was hoped, would be more acceptable to the traditional-minded rural population. This tax was Eth$15.-for "lämm"(fat, i.e., fertile); Eth$10.-for semifertile ("Lämm tyeff"), and Eth$5.- for relatively poor but still usable agricultural land ("tyeff"); per "gasha" (80-100 acres). But the old-Amhara provinces resisted the measurement of their lands for this purpose, and in 1944 the amended decree permitted a different, lower,(older) rate of taxation, both in land tax and in produce tax ("asrat"), to apply to the old-Amhara provinces. Even this, however, is only partially enforced, since it is difficult to collect from the more remote, mountainous, rural districts where the feudal kin groups and local churches jealously guard their old vested interests. Moreover, the"Galla"clerks sent from Addis Ababa rarely dare to go far beyond the provincial capitals, leaving rural collections to the old "mislane",

As a result, the tax structure in the old-Amhara provinces is a medley of the old and the new, often in accordance with the distance from the provincial capital, Land rents and tithes still pass into and through

● 651 the hands of the feudal landlords, mostly in produce, though the new Education Tax is paid in cash. The sales tax on horses, mules, donkeys and cattle, collected at the big markets by the old "nägadras" is now supposed to be accumulated at the "gemja bet" of the provincial capital, to be forwarded to Addis Ababa once every month, sometimes after deduction of expenses incurred locally by the central government. The same procedure is followed with income taxes, which, in a provincial capital such as Gondar, are stated officially as averaging Eth$1.50 per taxpayer per year.

651 441 [494] The highest local income tax is paid by the local branch of the widespread trading company of Besse Co., which has a monopoly on gasoline sales, and does trucking, imports and exports from the provinces, and which pays Eth$750.-per annum in Gondar, a very small percentage of its actual income. [505] The next-highest local taxpayer is Navigatana Co, formerly of Italian origin, which controls the diesel boats which monopolize modern traffic across Lake Tana. [494] The third-highest local taxpayer is an Arab wholesale merchant, who operates at irregular intervals in import, export, and trucking, westward to the Sudan and eastward to Eritrea, on the Italian-built roads.

651 But in the strictly rural, agricultural environment, tributes and taxes are still measured per "madiga" (lit. potful) of tyeff grain, received by the feudal landlord ("balbat") or landowning local church. The amounts are largely determined by local custom and tra-

651 dition; with fertility of soil, size of plot, size of harvest in a given year, constituting merely secondary considerations. For the tribute is regarded as payment
651 427 also for the right to squat on the land, to gather deadwood and cowdung for fuel, wood and nature-grown fibers for utensils, pasture cattle and donkeys, build a hut, use the water in the brook. Consequently, a greedy landlord parcels out his land in smallest possible plots, to receive as much profit as possible, and he is aided and abetted in this by the poor tenants who are so jealous of each other that they complain if their neighboring tenant has been granted more land than he can farm without servants. The tribute for such a minimum plot to the landlord thus takes the form of a "quitrent" (now that the statute-labor has been abrogated officially, though not always actually):

1 madiga of grain (usually tyeff), referred to as "amsho"

plus 1/2 madiga of "qolo" (usually barley, for roasted condiments or beer-making).

651 Only in export duties and import tariffs does the
439 central government have full control. Export taxes, ranging usually from 28 - 50% on coffee, the major valuable export, are levied and collected by the Ministry of Finance. This product comes from the southwest, Jimma sub-province, or Harar, in the southeast, both areas conquered by Menelik II from the Galla, and therefore under more unchallenged central administration.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

651 439 Import duties are collected on the relatively limited routes of access to the country, e.g. on cotton sheeting, and on modern "luxury" items imported for Europeans in Addis Ababa.

202 Communications were recognized by both Emperor Menelik II and Haile Selassie I as one of the foremost bottlenecks. At the turn of the present century and in some areas even later, messages and orders from and to provincial administrators were still carried by the traditional runner on horseback, carrying the message wedged in the top of a cleft stick, which assured safe conduct even through valleys dominated by bandits. Menelik 206 II introduced telegraph and telephone service at least to the major provincial capitals, and this has been improved since, though the rural district headquarters often still are without either form of modern communication, not to speak of the rural hinterland.

796 857 [589] from the bin of peas
fill me up."

Thereupon the householder gives them a handful of shembera peas, which they roast to "qolo", and this symbol, too, is considered to invite a good crop.

796 805 The 5th or last day of Pagumēn is the annual feast day of St. John. The "tabot" from his church is carried to water very early in the morning, and the men bathe in the river. The old year is symbolically buried, in some regions, by ceremonial burial of the book "Lefafa Ṭsedeq" (Scroll of Righteousness) which resembles in part the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. The day is traditionally also the end of the fiscal budget year, on which the nagadras, the appointee over commerce, had to pay the feudal tribute to his lord (at least a large jar of beer and 20 enjara breads) in addition to squaring his accounts. [65]

That evening torches are lit, for this is the beginning of a new year.

c) The Religious Life Cycle of the Lay Individual.

852 Baptism usually occurs after 40 days for boys, still later for girl babies, sometimes as long as 80 days. This practice is based on Old Testament patterns, and more directly, on the period of 40 days that the Virgin Mary herself had to segregate herself from the Temple after the birth of Jesus. (The Falasha Jews of Abyssinia is concerned less that a baby might die

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

231 a Christian, because the cows that they keep belong to
563 Christian gentlemen of the country of the Barnagais. These Moors have nothing else for their labour than the milk and butter which they get from the cows, and with this they maintain themselves and their wives and children. On some occasions it happened to us to sleep near these Arabs, they accosted us to ask if we wished to buy cows, and for the price allowed us to choose them. They say that these
[984] Moors, and headmen who go with them, are all robbers under the favour of the lords to whom the cows belong, and so only large caravans travel. The revenues of this
792 monastery are very large; those which I saw and heard of
631 are, chiefly, this mountain in which the monastery is situated,
361 of an extent of ten leagues, in which they sow much millet,
[243] barley, rye, and all these pay dues to the monastery, and they are also paid on the herds. On the skirts of this mountain there are many large villages, and most of them belong to the monastery, and at a distance of one or two days' journey an infinite number of places belonging to the monastery, and are called *Gultus* of the monastery, which means *coutos* or *celeiros*,[1] according to our Portugal. Don Rodrigro the ambassador and I were going on the road to the Court, a good five days' journey from this monastery, and arriving at a town which is named *Oaina* we kept Saturday and Sunday in a small village which might contain twenty people, and they told us they belonged to the monastery of Bisan. Besides that town there were a hundred villages all belonging to the monastery, and that in which we halted was one of them. We were also shown
651 many of the others, and they told us that every three years
631 they paid a horse to the monastery, and that each village
792 did this, which makes thirty-three horses every year. And in order to be certain of this I went to ask it of the *Alicazi* of the monastery, which means the auditor or major-domo,

[1] *Couto*, an asylum, an enclosure; *celeiro*, a granary.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

because he receives, and does justice: he told me that it was true that they paid the said horses. I asked why the monastery wanted so many horses, since they did not ride on them. He told me that they were obliged to pay horses, but that they did not give him horses, but paid fifty cows for each horse, and that this due of horses was so because these were villages of the King which paid him this due, and as he had endowed the monastery with these villages, between the monastery and the villagers this due of horses had been transmuted into cows. And over and above these dues of cows they also pay dues on fruits. Besides, at fifteen days' journey from the monastery, in the kingdom of Tigre mahom, there is a very large town belonging to the monastery named Aadete, which may be a large dukedom. This pays every year sixty horses, and an infinite number of dues and customs. In this district there are always more than a thousand friars of the monastery, because there are many churches in it, and the monastery is much favoured there. Of these friars some are very good, honourable, and devout, and others are not such. Besides these dues of horses paid to this monastery and to others, there are many villages belonging to the King which pay dues of the said horses, because this is always his due, and there are villages neighbouring to Egypt in which are large and good horses, and others near Arabia in which they are very good, but not so much so as those of Egypt.

651 631 792

CAP. XVI.—*How the friars impeded our departure, and of what happened to us on the road.*

Returning therefore to our journey; whilst we were still at the monastery of St. Michael there arrived the man sent by the Barnagais to take us away, and with him two of our Portuguese, on the fourth day of the month of June; and he

484

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 he had, since he was Arraz of the Chaufas, that is, head or
701 captain of the men at arms, was to go about like a man at
631 arms. In the fashion that he went, there followed behind him twenty or thirty men with spears and bucklers, so that he goes about the court like a provost with his men. I knew another Arraz Tagale, and Arraz Jacob, lords of large lands, and many other Xuums, lords of lands, but without titles. Thus the Barnagais is the lord of many
643 lords, and of many lands and people, and so he and all
631 these lords that have been mentioned are subject to the
651 Prester John, and he removes and appoints them as he
439 pleases: so they pay to him large dues. As all these lords and their lordships are on the side of Egypt and Arabia, from whence come the good horses, and the brocades and the silks, they pay in these same goods: that is to say, horses, brocades, and other silks. They come to the Barnagais with all these dues, and the Barnagais to Prester John, and pays for himself and for the others, in each year, a hundred and fifty horses; as to the brocades and silks, it cannot be known how much they amount to, only I heard say that they were many; I also heard that they pay a large sum of cotton cloths from India for the customs which they levy in the port of Arquiquo.

CAP. XXV.—*Of their method of guarding their herds from wild beasts, and how there are two winters in this country: and of two churches that are in the town of Barua.*

[621] The settlement of this town of Barua and of those
291 adjoining it, is this. There are ten, twelve, or fifteen houses, and one walled and closed yard, served by a gate: in this yard they shut up their domestic cows which they use for their milk and butter, and also small flocks, and mules and asses. They keep the gate well fastened, and a great fire,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

317 one ounce to ten of gold, which gives it a very pale colour.

703 N. B. This observation is sufficiently confirmed by the colour of those links that still remain of the honorary gold chain conferred on Mr Bruce by the king of Abyssinia. These links are of a paler hue than a common guinea, rather coarsely made, and unpolished. Gold chains, called in Habbesh sunsulé, are a mark of dignity bestowed by the sovereign on the most meritorious persons in his army. It is usual to give a splendid suit of clothes at the same time, an Egyptian and Persian custom; vide Genesis, xli. 42. and Esther, viii. 15.

●651 Wechne, in Belessen, is about 34 or 35 miles, a long day's journey from Emfras. There is paid, to maintain the royal family on the mountain, 250 ounces gold, and 730 cloths (this means webs of cotton cloth, called shuma). This is an old establishment. None are permitted to go up but the women carrying water. There was formerly a cistern, but it is now in ruins, and useless. There are near 300 persons there; and all the exiles are allowed to marry. Bacuffa escaped by help of his sister.

793 Extreme unction is unknown in Abyssinia; that is, the anointing with oil. However, when a person is attacked
792 with sickness, which threatens death, he often puts on a monk's hood, as a token that in case of recovery, he will abandon the world, and then receives the last sacrament, or rather he does so before putting it on; and it is generally the custom to distribute all his moveables to the churches, which the priests appropriate. These are traces of extreme unction. The great men ofen renounce the hood, and return to their former life.

792 N. B. The Abyssinian MS. histories are full of these instances, in which the great men, when disappointed in politics, retire to Waldubba, or other deserts, to live as monks. The distribution of goods and money made by the kings, when sick, to the churches, occurs in almost every reign. Before Yasous II. died, the Chronicle says, that he had given away every thing he had, in this way, except the crown on his head. When Joas was proclaimed, the Iteghe his grandmother wished to give a present to the poor, as usual at the begin-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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101 and these Toluma come down to the Nile, and divide Walaka and Shoa from the Nile.

651 Agow-midre pays yearly to the king in all about 1000 ounces of gold; and 1000 dabras of honey, each dabra about 60 rotol. It pays also about 1000 or 1500 cattle. Ancasha, Azena, Quaquera, and Banja, pay their quota in honey; Banja, gold; Metchakel, Ayamico's country, gold; Zigam, gold, no honey. Danguiah, Dengla, and Saccala, all are called Ancasha. Dengla pays chiefly cattle, and a large kind of sheep called Macoot. Butter is no part of the meery, but is brought as a present on paying the meery. After passing the Kelti, on the right, by the Bronti, is Atchefer, after that Quaquera, then Dengla, then Banja, then Metchakel. Temhua belongs to the Ras, and the revenue is paid to him. The first heavy stroke the Agow received of late years was Waragna, father of this Fasil, bringing Galla from beyond the Abay, and wasting their country entirely. He burnt the houses and churches, and led away captive the women and children. Under the mild government of Casmati Eshte they began to revive, but now again under Fasil they are very low.

361 Metchakel is one long day's journey, I suppose 36 miles, from Boori (Bure); it is inhabited by Galla Djawi. After these are the Basso Gallo; and the Gooderoo Galla of Kasmati Boro. His place is called Hadis Amba. These border on Gojam, Damot, and Metchakel. Gafat is not one continued country, but villages here and there. Wumbarma is Gafat. Metchakel is, however, a much more considerable country. Beyond the Nile, west of Bure, the country for a considerable distance is dry, deserted, and uninhabited, the Galla living further into the territory. All the banks are there high, steep, and unwholesome, and full of trees. These Galla are Amoro Jidda. Guesgue belongs to the Iteghe, has a nagareet, and gives the title of Kasmati. It pays 1000 cloths, 50 oxen, and 100 wakeet.

The caravans of Egypt used to go from Aidab, or Gaidab, to Dahalac, in their way to Yemen, or Jidda, the port of Mecca. Souakin is seven days south of Gaidab.

101 The Galla, west of the Abay, say, that they are descended of a Gin or devil, and a woman of the tribe of Koreish.
563 They are always at war with the Nareans, Abyssinians, or

[p.58]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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rains of Naasse and Hamlie, it never overflows at the springs, 361
nor do the fountains seem larger. He remembered the accession of Hatze Yasous to the throne, and was about 80 years old. The east side of the Nile is less barren than the west side. Aformasha is not barren.

Singular custom. The Betwudet (in Habesh), upon the 651 ●
death of any Wiziro, is obliged to pay the expences of the 766
ceremony, called Misle, which amounts to 100 oxen, 3000 loaves of wheat bread, 20 jars hydromel, wood, &c. the whole about 60 ounces of gold. The ceremony is this: A sort of figure, resembling the defunct, is placed upon horseback, in his usual dress, and so carried in procession about the outer court of the palace, with the royal standard (sendick) carried before it, and the nagareet beating. This is called, in this country, "burying with sendick and nagareet;" for which the Betwudet has 1200 ardeb of wheat yearly out of the Attekolla.

The route of the Islam merchants, S. is by two ways, with 487
loaden asses, 8 or 9 miles per day. The way by Gojam is performed in 30 days to Sebou, and thence for other 10 to Narea. The Kibby, or Zebee, rises in Narea. Coffee, of different kinds, grows there in abundance, and the Galla feed on it. They use the lex talionis, but their internal justice is strict. They are very scrupulous of oaths: Wauke Laftan, by heaven and earth, is one of the most solemn. There are three races of Galla, the Guangoul in Angot, north-east of Begemder; Mahomet Ali, another farther west than the Guangoul, towards Amhara; and a third, Mahomet, brother of Lubo, west of Amhara. The rest are pagans; but when converted are said to be better Christians than the native Abyssinians.

Mahabar Selasse is four commodious days journey from 133
Gondar, in the line of Tchemmera and Tenkel. Near it pass the rivers Shimfa and Gandova, the last of which has several very high cataracts; it joins to the Shankala, and is about two days journey from Tchemmera. Both rivers fall into the Nile.

The river Bashilo separates Amhara from Begemder; the Mashilla, a river of Gojam, and the river Nefasse, fall into the Nile at the same place. In the country of the Galla west of Damot, across or west of the Abay, there is little

[p. 61]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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133 water, and near the banks of the river the country is desert.

Damot pays 800 ounces (wakea) of gold; formerly 1000. 651 Gojam 80 ounces, and 70 mules. Lasta 1000 ounces; these last years it pays no more, being at present annexed to Begemder. Tigre pays 400 ounces in salt and cotton cloths. Walcait 1500 ounces in cotton cloths.

131 The latitude of Adderghey is 13° 24′ 56″; of Macara, on 361 Lamalmon, 13° 6′ 8″; of Gondar, 12° 34′ 30″; of Emfras, 12° 12′ 38″; of the fountains, 10° 58′ 58″.

Note at Lobeia.—The Arabs are fond of music, especially 000 vocal; for they have no instruments but a kind of flute, of the size of a German flute, which gives a wild and not unmelodious sound, and the cymbal or drum, with ten pieces fixed to its sides, which is chiefly used in cadence in dancing, or for symphonies. Their vocal music, or songs, are upon first hearing disagreeable; but it rarely happens that one who has a good ear is not soon fond of them. They are all upon love; at least I never heard any that had war for their subject; some have religion, and are sung by their Shekhs, or saints. The former have effects upon their hearers nearly as extravagant as the ancient music produced. They have no music in parts, and have absolutely no idea of harmonical composition.

[p. 81-end have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

[p. 62]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
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by the Emperor and was his representative in the province. His exact 635
title varied. He might rise to the height of that of *Negus*; he might be a ras. More frequently in recent years he held the next title in rank, that of *dejazmach*. He was the general of the provincial army, the judge and the administrator. He was paid no salary. He paid himself, his entourage, and his soldiers from the tribute of the province. On the pecuniary side, in addition to the tithes and other tribute, he collected [651] the profits of justice and the tolls on the borders of his province. The tolls being collected from the merchants would be one of his few sources of cash, especially before this century.[1]

It has already been said that no estimate is possible of the proportion of tribute passed on by the governors to the Emperor. It seems 651
probable, however, that where any tribute was paid the amount varied according to the arrangements made between the Emperor and the governor and probably also, from time to time, according to the needs and the power of the Emperor and the advisability of appeasing him with tribute. It is certain that large caravans taking rich gifts of cloth, horses, mules, and gold ceased long before this century to come in to the Emperor from any of the northern provinces.[2]

The governor, especially if he were a local grandee, was a very great 635
man. The Ethiopians, like many other peoples, love the trappings of power. It was the ambition of most men to wear fine clothes and to 661
have at least one or two slaves or servants to run beside the stirrup. The governors naturally aimed at reproducing as far as they could the style of the Emperor's palace. They lived at the highest level they could afford, each with a court of his own and a circle of officials of his own appointment, whose titles were current only in the province. When they gave out lands and offices to their followers they tried, like the Emperor, to prevent these becoming hereditary and aimed at unsettling their holders from time to time.[3] Ethiopians tended to gravitate round the households of a great man with its hospitality, its atmosphere of movement, of security and opportunity. The governor's headquarters would be crowded with supporters, suitors, the soldiers of his personal bodyguard, priests, musicians, jesters, servants, and slaves. Upon festivals he kept open house and like his Emperor gave great feasts of raw meat and mead. A description of the lavish hospitality of the Ras of Angote given in the sixteenth century[4] reads almost word for word the same as those of the entertainments described by other travellers 400 years later.

When a governor travelled, especially upon taking up or leaving his appointment, it was a serious affair for the country upon which he

[1] Rüppel, E., *Reise in Abessinien*, Frankfurt, 1838–40, vol. 2, p. 35.
[2] See above, pp. 191–3. [3] Hotten, pp. 145–6. [4] Alvarez, pp. 136–7.

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423 here there is no Domesday Book to give a clear point of departure and none of the successive unravellings of generations of scholars to help the inquirer. Any attempt at the simplification of the evidence must to some extent be a distortion.

Two preliminary generalizations may help to clarify the picture.

[556] Firstly it is important to remember that in Ethiopia, as in all economically backward countries where industry is negligible, almost all material wealth was the direct produce of the herdsman or the man who worked on the land with his plough and his hoe.

423 Ethiopia shared with the rest of tropical Africa a primitive peasant
466 agriculture; the difference was that there stood upon this basis a large hierarchical structure of government. This meant that the cultivator
● 651 must, as the Ethiopians themselves express it, 'carry upon his shoulders'
241 all that very large proportion of the population which had withdrawn themselves from work on the land. This included the Emperor; all his officials, central and provincial, great and small; the vast hierarchy of the church and the large armies of soldiers. As a result of the undeveloped economy and communications of Ethiopia, the services of the agriculturalist had for the most part to be used directly by the contribution of part of the crops or cattle from his own land or by the use of his labour upon that of another. While slave labour was widely used for domestic purposes, especially in the houses of the rich, it was not in the north used very extensively in the fields, and the main support of Ethiopian state and society was not the slave but the theoretically free cultivator, the *gabar*. The elaborate systems of land tenure and of tribute with all their provincial variations represent only the different means by which his services and produce were utilized by the government and by other classes. It was not the land but the labour of the *gabars* on the land which provided the support for provincial as well as imperial administration. Hence the importance of the forms of tenure and tribute.

423 The word *gabar* has been used as a term of reproach against Ethiopia.
466 At the end of these chapters on the provinces the reader will be in a better position to judge how far this charge was just, and especially
651 how far it accumulated evil association by the forms it assumed in the conquered south. Here the position of the northern *gabar* must be defined in its simplest terms. In theory and, at its best, in practice, the status was not synonymous with slavery or even with oppression. Literally it means one who pays *gibr* or tribute. 'There is no shame in the word "gabbar"' was the general Ethiopian opinion recorded by an observant British consul.[1] As tribute was in theory based upon land

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

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not the person, it has been said that high notables and the Emperor himself might, in strict technicality, be called *gabars*, since they might hold land burdened with some *gabar* service. Moreover—again in the theory—*gabars* were not, like the serf, tied to the soil; they could leave their land and seek a new holding elsewhere. 423 466 651

The position can be put in another way. The Ethiopian, like the Englishman, owed dues to the central government or to its representative; firstly, he owed the Emperor tribute and tithe for his land; secondly, he owed the equivalent of local rates, and, thirdly, when he was a tenant, he owed rent. The only difference, it might be said, was that the Ethiopian paid all these dues in grain, honey, firewood, stock, or labour instead of in money. The difference was, however, fundamental. In the absence of central control or uniformity and in situations where the *gabar*, the man who provided all this tribute in kind with his own hands, happened to be in a weak position, the form of payment opened the way to all kinds of extortion.

Mrs. Sandford, who with her husband ran a farm for many years in Galla country near the capital and was therefore in a position to provide very authoritative evidence upon this subject, gives the following account of the *gabars*, presumably those in her district. They owed the governor or soldiers to whom they were allotted both produce and services: these might be one day's labour out of three, eight or ten days; the provision of timber for building the master's house and grass for its thatching; firewood and one fifth of the grain crop in addition to the Emperor's tenth. This, she concludes, might have been reasonable especially if the *gabars* could have dared to use their right of appeal. 'But in fact the abuse proved stronger than the system.' The masters exacted more than their due 'and the system was in practice as extortionate as those of old Roman days. Officer and soldier were equally rapacious, . . .' The *gabar* dared not appeal. Coming from a witness of such experience and of such devotion to Ethiopia, this evidence carries weight.[1] 661 651 423 466

The tithe of grain was owed to the Emperor by every subject unless he were exempted on account of his other services to state or church. This grain was collected on the threshing floors and stored in the governor's official granaries; it was used mainly for the sustenance of the soldiers. Since such a bulky product could hardly be carried far in Ethiopia there was very little market in cereals. Pastoral tribes were expected to pay their tithe in stock. There was also a tribute of produce or labour, or both, which was nearly always taken by the governor or his representative and there were further dues or presents to the sub- 651

[1] Sandford, pp. 48–9.

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651 ordinate officials which varied from province to province. There were also the heavy dues of purveyance to passing officials, soldiers and even private travellers, whose records are full of evidence of the readiness with which through the centuries this burdensome obligation was accepted. Some of these dues were not easily to be distinguished from the further requirements in kind and in labour which a tenant might owe, in addition, as rent to a private landlord.

THE EMPEROR AND THE LAND

423 From the *gabar*, who formed the basis of the system of land tenure, we return to the Emperor at its apex. The conflict as to whether provincial office was held personally and terminally at the royal will was reproduced in the closely complementary question of the usage and ownership of land and its dues by which alone office could be supported. Here, in theory as well as in practice, the Emperor was less successful in maintaining his claims. It was true that land and office generally went together, but land-holding was wider than office-holding; it was more complex and it affected more people. Moreover, while office was highly desirable, the earth, meeting all necessities, was the main object and, once acquired, was held with the utmost tenacity.

423 643 The theory maintained by the Emperors was that they owned all the land in the country and that it was therefore all held at their will. 'He takes and gives all lands at pleasure' we read in Tellez.[1] 'The King's authority is so unlimited', wrote Lobo, 'that no Man can in this country be called with Justice Proprietor of anything, nor doth any Man when he Sows his Field know that he shall Reap it.'[2] Numerous authorities follow these early observers in this view. The assumption was that no land could be private property and therefore heritable. The most authoritative challenge to this theory was to be found in the ancient *Fetha Nagast* itself: in this, private property was formally recognized.[3] Turning to the latest age we find that a clause (article 27) of the constitution of 1931 runs as follows: 'Except in cases of public utility determined by law, no-one shall be entitled to deprive an Ethiopian subject of the movable or landed property which he holds.' Between these dates stretches the long struggle of the crown to counter these rights and to retain control over the lands granted out on various terms to the several categories of subjects.

[1] Tellez, p. 53.
[2] Lobo, J., *A Voyage to Abyssinia* (translated by Mr. Le Grand), 1735, p. 263.
[3] Guidi, p. 361. Quoted by M. de Coppet in Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

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According to one legend, when Menelik I returned from his visit to his father Solomon, he divided the land into three parts, one for the crown, one for the church and the other for the laity. Certainly, as regards the first part of the division, the Emperors retained vast estates as the royal domain. These tended to be most numerous in the region of the imperial headquarters and became less so towards the periphery of the country. We saw in the chapter upon public finance that the estates from which it was possible to supply the royal household with grain, honey, *tef*, etc., were known as *mad-bet*. These estates included also wide pastoral areas which carried the royal herds. There were numerous large estates scattered about the country which the Emperor had granted to members of his own family and so long as these remained closely bound to him they were, politically, as useful as his personal domain. 423 643

From his royal domains the Emperor took all the produce that could be delivered to him. With the conquest of the southern lands and the arrival of the railway he was able to grow and to sell coffee. Outside his domains, in spite of his frequent claims, the Emperor was only able to make effective claim to waste, lapsed, conquered, and confiscated lands. Sometimes individuals or groups, holding private heritable land, would ask the Emperor to take it over as royal land in order to protect themselves from the rapacity of some local lord or the claims of some other group. In Dembea the people did this because the Emperor was allotting so much of their land to the churches against their will and they felt that if it was royal land he would not be so generous with it.[1] An unsuccessful rebellion would give an excellent opportunity for him to regain some of his lost land by means of confiscation. What he resumed with one hand he was always giving away with the other into what was in fact, if not in theory, private ownership. He still retained over this, of course, his rights to taxation. This consisted, as we have seen, in the tithe, a tenth of the produce, which was generally confined to grain, and to a land-tax which varied in amount and character from time to time and from place to place. He also reserved the right to make special levies. [651]

Within the vast terminology referring to Ethiopian land tenure there are two terms which must be defined and kept before the reader. The one is *rest*, which means hereditary ownership, and the other is *gult* which describes land in which the Emperor had granted away some or all of his rights to tribute. (There is a conflict of authorities as to whether the Emperor had ever granted away his tithe as well as his tax upon *gult* land.) Clearly either of these kinds of tenure was very desirable; 423

[1] Rossini, pp. 104–5.

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423 when combined they represented the most coveted of all tenures as well as the one most weakening to the imperial authority.

From the different kinds of grant made to the various classes, the governors, the churches, the soldiers and others, for various purposes, arose the many categories of land tenure.

THE GOVERNOR AND THE LAND

636 651 661 423 The position of the provincial governor was relatively simple. He collected the whole of the Emperor's tribute within the province (in so far as this had not already been granted away by a process which will be examined presently), and he used it for the support of his administration, which meant of himself, his deputies, judges, messengers, and above all, the soldiery. As we have seen in the chapter upon public finance, it is impossible to generalize upon the proportion of tribute which the governor sent on to his Emperor except that it varied with the distribution of power at any given time between the two of them, and in the north might range from the refusal by a distant and almost autonomous governor to send anything but perhaps a token payment to the large tributes in kind and in money which are described by observers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It is frequently stated in the European accounts of Ethiopia that the office of governor, like all other offices, was sold by the Emperor and by this method, injurious as it was, he would be sure of at least some return. He would also have an interest in frequent changes of office; the governor's interest would consequently be in extorting all he could from his province as rapidly as possible. 'They are generally more like robbers than governors', was the conclusion of one witness.[1] 'The governors purchase their Commissions, or to speak properly their privilege of pillaging the Provinces" concludes another.[2] 'You are governor of Ras el Feel', the Emperor's secretary announced to Bruce. 'I hope you will never see it. It is a hot, unwholesome country, full of Mahometans, but its gold is as good as any Christian gold whatever.'[3]

That these exactions continued into Haile Selassié's day was shown by the measures he took in his endeavours to reform the provincial administration. These exactions would certainly be less in the northern provinces where the governor was dealing with an ancient society, that of his own people, in which all relationships and tributes were sanctified by long established custom.

The governor would parcel out the tribute he controlled amongst his many lieutenants in the districts and amongst his own and the Emperor's

[1] Tellez, p. 53. [2] Lobo, *op. cit.*, p. 263. [3] Bruce, vol. 3, p. 365.

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soldiers. He would also have, like the Emperor, official estates set aside 635
for the upkeep of his large household and it would be these he would 651
be most anxious to retain if he lost his governorship. For these estates 661
he could call up the labour of soldiers and *gabars*.[1] Parkyns recorded 423
in the mid-nineteenth century that for his estates the governor could
exact one day's work for clearing, one for sowing, two for cleaning,
and two for harvesting, and this was still the custom in this century.[2]
Instead of cultivating his estates directly by using labour in this way, [427]
the governor might lease his land to tenants who would pay him a stated
proportion of the crop as rent. According to one authority in the north, governors claimed that one tenth of all privately owned land should also be cultivated for him and he would himself choose the lands. Where, as in Tigré, the governorship tended to remain for a period in the same family this was not so grave an injury to the province, but if a governor from outside were sent in the people might not dare to demand back the lands from the local family and were obliged to set aside new lands for their new governor.[3] Besides the governor's estates there would be others attached to the various offices of his assistants.

In addition to their more regular dues from the people it was customary for governors and their assistants to demand special gifts from time to time, such as a sheep from each village at Easter and at the festival of the true cross.

THE CHURCH AND THE ARMY

The Emperors were always extremely generous to the church, even if 794
they had not gone so far as to allocate that third of the original legend 423
which the famous cleric Takla Haimanot claimed in 1270. Every priest, 651
monk, *debtera*, and deacon, in so far as he was excused from the work of the fields, required that land furnished with slaves or *gabars* should be set aside for his support. A vast total of land was burdened with this service. The piety of Emperors warred here with their political interests—at one moment they were moved to give, at another to resume their gifts. But it was not easy to assert the royal claim against monasteries which were undying corporations or against churches which needed permanent endowment and were, moreover, served by priests determined to pass on their lands with their offices to their sons. Moreover, the very character of the grants protected them. Their most

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–91.
[2] Parkyns, M., *Life in Abyssinia*, 1853, vol. 2, p. 230. Also Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
[3] Rossini, pp. 107–8.

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794 frequent form was that of *samonanya*, lands given to support the service
423 of the mass. The Emperors had granted much *gult* to the churches and
651 thus gave them the power to keep all the royal tribute from it and even to administer justice and to retain its proceeds. Even where this grant had not been made as *rest-gult* it was not easy to regain control of it and the convention was that, when such land was taken back by the Emperor, an equivalent estate should be granted.[1]

It should be remembered that land was not held collectively by the church but, as in England, by the individual 'parish' churches or monasteries or by the Abuna and the *Ichegé*, who between them held very large estates, and by other ecclesiastics.

701 Military service, regarded in this chapter from the aspect of land
423 tenure, was a universal obligation upon land unless the land was held by the church and specially exempted. The obligation was on the land rather than on the person, so that if a woman held a piece of land which had to supply soldiers it was her duty to raise and equip them. There were many different kinds of military tenure because each type of service was attached to special pieces of land and called by different names which need not be listed here. There was, for example, land which supplied the following services—the fusilier, the artilleryman, the muleteer, the porter transporting baggage, the bearer of the red tent or the Emperor's tent poles, the makers of gunpowder, the quartermaster, the forager, and many other military needs. It was even specially laid down for each piece of land whether its soldiers should fight in the centre or the left or right wings of the army.[2]

Estates would have to give the service of soldiers in varying numbers from the single man to a thousand or more. Those who owed these large numbers were, of course, very important people, and in Shoa at least it was probable that the man liable for a thousand would be a holder of *gult* over a considerable area.[3] Parcels of land might be allotted to 'regular' soldiers to support them while on service, or given as a reward for service, generally with a continuing obligation to provide a soldier of some special type.

It will be seen that there was no uniform system for the raising or support of the soldiers, especially as these were serving different masters. Thus in one province there might be part of the Emperor's army as well as the governor's provincial army, while both the latter and his district governors would have their personal bodyguards. Though in the north the serving soldiers were generally supported out of the tithes, they might be quartered directly upon the people or given lands of their

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, pp. 611–13. [2] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–90.
[3] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 612; also de Castro, pp. 281 ff.

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own. The soldier was generally freed from all taxes except the tithe and this might be excused where he provided his own horse and weapons. 701 [651]

Not only was there great variety in the arrangements but they were by no means static even in the conservative north. An example of this may be given from Gojjam. Here under Ras Hailu and his father, the *Negus* Tekla Haimanot, the soldiers were simply local men who, being exempted from tithes and other dues to the government, cultivated their own land and did three months' service a year at the governor's headquarters. After Ras Hailu's rebellion and his deposition in 1932 on grounds of misrule, Ras Imru, the Emperor's kinsman, was sent in his place. Although he was said to be a much more enlightened governor, the people murmured because he brought with him his 'foreign' Shoan army which oppressed the *gabars* who had to support it. This is an example of how, in the face of the complexities of the social situation, an ostensibly reforming measure might be frustrated.

PRIVATE TENURE

The main forces by which land and tribute were held by what may be called the public elements of the national life of Ethiopia, the Emperor, the church, the governor and his assistants, and the soldiers, have been very briefly indicated. The picture, even in this outline form, would not be complete without some reference to tenure by private persons, especially by those small farmers and peasant cultivators by whose work the rest were nourished. 423

The position of the *gabar* has been defined in relation to the rest of the community. When, in the northern provinces, we examine this class in their own right we find that it presented the most enduring strands in the texture of Ethiopian society and that its composition leads us back to the tribal past.

Over large parts of the northern provinces, especially those that were not too seriously disturbed or overlaid by Galla invasions, the land was held by groups of peasant holders, generally under the leadership of one or more families, and any inquiries about their origin would lead almost at once to romantic personal stories that may date, or appear to date, from some centuries before. These stories would explain how that group had come to be where it was and how its forefathers had first occupied the land. 423 621

These groups held by *rest*, that is, by hereditary right. They held as a group which had preserved some of the close ties of an original kinship group even though in the course of time it had absorbed many

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down the resistance of the undisturbed customary societies in favour of his own centralized control. Thus in Wallo, an ancient Galla region, the people had been organized into seven districts under the rule of seven of the original families. When Menelik first wrested its allegiance from John he had to conciliate these local leaders, but later, when he became stronger, he weakened them and had the land measured and more evenly distributed. In 1916 when the *Negus* Mikael was defeated after an attempt to rebel, Wallo was parcelled out under generals, and soldiers were put in by the central government. 423

MEASUREMENT AND INHERITANCE

Before concluding this general account some answer must be given to the questions as to whether there was any survey and registration and what were the rules of inheritance? 423

There was, of course, no survey as the term is understood in England. There was a measurement, a *gasha*, which was the equivalent of 80 to 100 acres, and in some parts of the country and notably, as we shall see, in parts of the conquered south the land had been measured. In Ethiopian terms, 'the cord had been thrown', sometimes once and sometimes a second time, with more accuracy, after the land had been cleared and farmed. Measurement of the land gave the Emperor and his officers greater control over it and its resources and the prime mover in this process had been Menelik. [804]

In the north, measurement has been by no means universal. In Gojjam, most stubborn and independent of provinces, and in Bagemdir there was no general measurement of land. In other northern provinces it appears that when estates were granted in recent times by the Emperor, especially those in *rest-gult* tenure, they were measured and registered. Small estates and the lands held by groups of *restenyas*, divided and at times redivided, were distinguished by natural landmarks and registered in men's minds or they might be entered into parish registers. The new land-tax of 1944 was based upon the unit of the *gasha*, but it is very doubtful whether measurement had been sufficiently carried through by this date to make it possible to execute the law upon this basis. [651]

With regard to inheritance, we have seen that this was only held to be permissible for *rest* land though in fact it was far more widely applied. It was not permissible to leave land away from the family or the group, or equally to give or sell it, without the permission of those chiefly interested. In leaving land the owner could allocate as much as two thirds to his favourite child—and in some parts this could be a daughter—while the rest was divided equally between the other children. 423 428

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THREE LOCAL EXAMPLES OF TENURE

423 634 Three local examples will illustrate tenure. The first is from Gojjam under Ras Hailu.[1] The province was divided into fourteen districts. Most of these were in turn divided into two or three sub-districts. In each of the fourteen districts was a district governor (*abagaz*), who generally bore the title of *dejazmach*, and an assistant or deputy (*Mislané*). These men, appointed solely at the governor's will, were in general charge of the administration and jurisdiction of the district. Beside them functioned the *gulta gaji*, who was always a local man whose title was hereditary in certain families. He oversaw the collection of taxes, settled small cases between the *gabars*, and acted as liaison between the government and the people. He appointed as assistants a *chiqa-shum* for each village-group, an office which was held for a year and rotated among heads of families.

●651 The list of the tributes paid to the various officials is very indefinite as to the amount and is of value only as indicating very generally the complexity of the system rather than the exact weight of the burden carried by the peasantry or the proportions taken by the different officers. Taxes and payments were divided as follows between the various authorities.

Government	Tithe in grain.
	Tax of $2 on each pair of oxen.
	afarsata fines.[2]
	Tax of $1 on each hut.
Abagaz (district governor)	Court Fees.
	Labour dues.
	Dues for use by men and cattle of warm mineral springs.
Mislané (deputy)	*Irbo* (a proportion of the government tax paid in kind).
	A proportion of the court fees paid to the *abagaz*.
	Labour dues.
Gulta gaji (hereditary chief)	A proportion of the grain crop of his district.
Chiqa-shum (village head)	His reward was exemption from taxation during year of office.[3]

[1] From information obtained locally by F. de Halpert. [2] See p. 149.

[3] It may be of some slight help in interpreting the money payments to note that the penal code of 1930 equates a quarter of a dollar with one day's work of an unskilled labourer. (Clause 6.)

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THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE

The taxation in Gojjam was probably lighter than elsewhere, since, as has just been explained, soldiers were paid here by means of exemption from taxation. 651 184

In a study of the system round Lake Tana, mainly in Bagemdir, an Italian writer notes how, side by side with the groups of *restenyas* tracing their hereditary occupation to the first settlements, probably in the fifteenth century, other tenures had grown up. One was that of the *farasenya*[1] to whom the Emperor had made grants of certain privileges and payments amounting generally to about a tenth of the produce of the *restenya* and also the right to exact labour for his land and house and collective gifts upon important feast days. Similar rights, but not including administrative powers, were given to *gultenyas* who, while collecting all the dues owed to the government, had to pay to it an agreed quota of oxen, mules, honey, etc. Thirdly there were the grants of *maskal mariet* (lands of the cross) to the church. In all these cases the rights were often given over the heads of the *restenyas*, who would continue to cultivate their lands as before. As there might be superimposition of new rights over old at the top, there might also be added lower stages by the leasing of land by *restenyas* and others to tenants who would have to pay rent as well as tax. 661 [554]

Side by side with these holders of what may be regarded as private rights would be the hierarchy of the governor. The private rights might cut like islands into the administrative area of his district governors or these might be the *gultenyas* or *farasenyas* themselves and so eliminate the dualism. The *chiqa-shum* who collected the tax would thus pay it either to the *Mislané*, the *gultenya*, the *farasenya* or the *alaqa* (head) of the church. The writer condemns the cumbrousness of this method, with its encouragement of peculation and exactions. The original tax of the people was one tenth of their crop, but the feudal organization had resulted in a multiplication of intermediaries whose great object was to pass on less than a tenth to the government and to exact more than a tenth from the people, enriching themselves on the margin of differences. Those who suffered most were some of the *gabars* who had to support both the church and the *farasenyas*. 651 661

An Italian writing of Ethiopian abuses and Italian reforms in 1937 is not likely to underrate the vices of the old system, but there is plenty of comparative evidence, as well as the laws of probability, to suggest that he has not greatly darkened his picture. He states that under the Italian Government, after the conquest, the upper part of the structure[2]

[1] Literally 'horseman' and corresponding, apparently, to the early English 'knight'.

[2] Grottanelli, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 14–15, 105–12.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
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651 661 had been removed, leaving the heads of villages and districts in direct contact with the Italian resident.

114 Our third example comes from Eritrea. No excuse is needed for this excursion beyond the present borders of Ethiopia, since the Eritrean plateau was until fifty years ago a part, and one of the oldest parts, of the Ethiopian state, and this region may again revert to its former status. In addition, however, we have the great advantage that Dr. Nadel, an anthropologist of experience and authority, has had the opportunity in this region under the British military administration to make a thorough investigation of a land tenure closely resembling that of northern Ethiopia.[1]

621 614 On the Eritrean plateau the most characteristic unit was the *enda*, a number of families which claimed to have descended from a single ancestor. This group was not static; it might decline or be dispersed, or it might thrive and reach a size when it became necessary to break up and form new *endas*. It was not an administrative unit, but in certain matters it acted as a unity through meetings of its elders. The administrative unit, the village, generally covered several *endas*, though these may have all descended from a parent *enda*. The village unit might also cut across *endas*.

423 651 [631] Above the village administrations, in the days before the Italian conquest, came the hierarchy of the Emperor, his governors and deputy governors. These were often strangers from the south though local chiefs might be promoted to imperial positions. The imperial taxation had to be delivered to these officers, and the Emperor might arbitrarily cut out estates in *gult* for their support, or for that of monasteries or colonies of soldiers posted in these outlying regions to support the Emperor's power.

423 These rights may be regarded as extraneous to the underlying customary tenures which are divided by Dr. Nadel into three, ownership by the individual (which generally meant the individual family); by the kindred, or *enda*, and by the village. The first two types of ownership might, owing to the blurring of the edges between the three groups by growth or decline, shade off into each other.

In his discussion of family ownership Dr. Nadel gives us an authoritative definition of *resti*, which may cover ownership ranging from that of an individual to that of a large kinship group. This tenure was held by the people to be the most fundamental and sacred, and its characteristics were firstly its relative absoluteness; secondly its hereditary nature,

[1] Nadel, S. F., 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau', *Africa*, vol. 16, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 1–22, 99–109. The succeeding pages are closely based on this concise report.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

times brought dissension to the state, the legitimate Crown was triumphant 175*
most of the time.

In the history of Ethiopian literature the period has been called a Golden 175*
Age.[1] The important works composed during this time include *The Glory of* 538
Kings, which contains the story of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon, and their offspring, Menelik I, legendary first king of Ethiopia; *The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth*, a compilation of occult theology and numerology, with a Miltonic account of the struggle between Michael and Satan; *The Christian Romance of Alexander the Great*, a fantastic portrayal of Alexander as a Christian hero who traverses the Land of Darkness and the miraculous Land of the Living; the moralizing tracts of the greatest emperor of the period, Zar'a Yā'qob; as well as numerous lives of saints and translations of Christian writings from Arabic.

Connoisseurs of Ethiopian art attribute the most original and refined paint- 175*
ings to the latter part of this period. Using translucent colors and austere 532
shapes and design, Ethiopian monks brought to expression an intense spirituality in the form of miniatures in illuminated manuscripts.[2]

At the same time this was the Heroic Age of Ethiopian warfare. Amda 175*
Tseyon vanquished sixteen Muslim chiefs to the south and west; the valor of 648
Sayfa Ar'ed was celebrated in medieval Arab tales of chivalry; Dāwit I pushed his victories against the Muslims as far as Zeila on the Gulf of Aden. Improved military equipment and organization under Yeshāq brought the imperial forces to a new level of discipline and power, which Yeshāq used to establish his authority in many southern areas. Zar'a Yā'qob, famous for endowing churches and monasteries and for encouraging literature and art, was a successful warrior in his own right.

A close-up of Ethiopia at the height of its medieval synthesis is provided 175*
by Father Francisco Alvares, Portuguese emissary to Abyssinia during the 64
years 1520–27.[3] We see a prosperous kingdom, its far-flung dominions headed 631
by hereditary rulers and royal appointees, all of whom pay tribute in kind to [651]
the emperor. The tribute consists of horses and mules, blankets and cloths, silk stuffs and gold, all in impressive amounts. The provincial heads, and the armies they must make available, live off the land they govern. The numerous priests and monks are supported by lands granted them by the king. Justice [69]
is administered at three levels, with the possibility of appeal from the local judge, to the provincial governor, to the royal court itself. The king's mobile camp, large as a town, is his capital, so that he spends his years marching about from one corner of his domain to another.

The monarch at the time of Alvares' visit was Lebna Dengel (1508–40), a 175*
man of pride and temper. He refused to heed counsel that the kingdom was 643
imperiled by threats from the outside. Indeed, legend has it that he was discontented with the prevailing civil harmony and begged God to send an ad-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

paid increased attention in recent years. A new phase of public health endeavor in this decade was marked by the imposition of a nationwide health tax in 1960.

Health has become a prime objective in Ethiopia's modernization program because of a growing realization that the wide prevalence of malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, intestinal parasites, syphilis, trachoma, leprosy, and other diseases continues to sap the vitality of the nation's productive forces and to visit misery on countless peasant families. The public health forces in Ethiopia (Ministry of Public Health, WHO mission, and AID Public Health Division) have long understood that Ethiopia's health needs cannot be met by piecemeal therapy. They have undertaken a program of preventive measures by preparing public health teams in the medical college at Gondar. The college trains health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians within a common framework, so that when they go into the field they will understand each other's tasks from the start. The first public health center employing such a team was opened in the late fifties; Ethiopia's Second Five-Year Plan envisions one such center for every fifty thousand people by 1967.

The objective of these public health workers is to transmit a number of instructions—concerning personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, early care for illness, and isolation of contagious diseases—which are at variance with customary beliefs and practices. Experience with comparable programs elsewhere suggests that the success of such health teams is by no means assured.[18] What are the forces working for and against the acceptance of these new instructions by the Amhara peasantry? Both negative and positive factors may be identified with respect to each of the three general categories previously referred to: the general outlook regarding change; attitudes toward the agents of change; and degree of compatibility between the new cultural items and the old.

The Amhara peasant's general resistance to change may be presumed operative here as elsewhere, particularly since health practices are often associated with religious beliefs and sentiments. Defense of indigenous therapies has in fact become a significant channel for the expression of traditionalist sentiment, a channel that has even been utilized on occasion in the Addis Ababa newspapers.[19] And a general posture of resistance to changes in the field of health is supported by the interests of traditional practitioners, *dabtarā* and *tanquāy*, who are in danger of losing clientele if modern-trained health workers come to win their allegiance.

Counter to this conservative drag, on the other hand, is the peasant's powerful desire for one basic change in his life circumstances, namely, the reduction of morbidity and mortality. Despite his idyllic conception of paradise and his frequent contention that life on earth is something of little value, the Amhara wants to avoid death. Even from the religious point of view he is

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

necessary, to die on the battlefield, as did Galāwdēwos, Yohānnes IV, and others. He had to maintain a minimum of political order, balancing off contending ambitions and subduing rebellious elements. Another important function was that of ultimate arbiter in judicial disputes.* As guardian of the church, moreover, he was active in endowing monasteries and churches and in resolving doctrinal disputes among the clergy.

To carry out these and related functions the emperor needed great wealth and political power. When the monarchy was intact he could command wealth from many sources: from the country-wide land tax (*gĭber*), in the form of honey, grain, or livestock, or such special fiscal assignments as saddles, plowshares, spears, ink, or tent pegs;* from assessed tithes on produce; in tribute from subject peoples, either in currency (gold, salt bars, etc.) or in kind; in revenues from traders; and from gifts from new appointees and hopeful office seekers. In theory, moreover, all the land of the empire belonged to its ruler; and, in fact, a good part of it was at his direct disposal, either for cultivation as royal estates or to distribute as compensation to those who served him.

The political power of the emperor was grounded in his command of troops supported by the royal bounty. In addition, he could command the troops of all the lords subject to his authority. Through frequent tours around the country he was able to reassert his hegemony from time to time in distant regions. But even from afar, a strong monarch could usually exert great control thanks to his authority to appoint or demote at a moment's notice any officer of the realm. As Alvares observed:

> No great lord of lands, if he is in them, can leave them, or set out for the Court on any account without being summoned by the [emperor]; and being summoned he will not fail to come for any reason. And when he sets out from the land of which he is the lord, he does not leave either wife or children or any property there, because he goes away in the expectation of never returning, since . . . [the emperor] gives when he pleases, and takes away when he pleases.[10]

The ideology of sacred monarchy served to legitimate theoretically boundless demands for wealth and power as well as to provide identity and morale for the body politic. It justified, too, occasional "deviant" behavior on the part of the monarch, virtually the only person with sufficient authority to innovate in this intensely conservative culture. The emperor has always been a primary agent of cultural innovation in Abyssinia, from the time of Ēzānā, who adopted Christianity in the fourth century; to Zar'a Yā'qob in the fifteenth

* To this day Haile Selassie devotes several hours a week to hearing court appeals in a session known as *chelot*.

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who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.*

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services.

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagärit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area.

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[29]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement.

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagärit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gebbär*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dïgä* (high) land, while in certain *qolä* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

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565 63 66 taxes collected in the name of the emperor. Concerning the imposts for which the peasants were liable, Plowden wrote in 1844:

[651] They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts—he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.[80]

Two centuries earlier, observing similar phenomena, Almeida had concluded that "generally speaking, they are all plunderers rather than governors."[81] The only restraints on their exploitative behavior have been an occasionally keen sense of Christian propriety and the limits to what an exasperated local populace will bear.

565 The existence of a predatory class who serve military functions and maintain a gentry subculture is a common enough feature of traditional agrarian societies. What is perhaps less common in the Abyssinian case is the constellation of factors relating to the recruitment of members into this elite.

High secular status in Abyssinia was dependent on a complex of possessions—land, political strength, and honorific titles—which tended to reinforce one another. The possession of much land has always been a basis for considerable deference in Abyssinia. As a source of produce, rents, and revenues deflected from the Crown, moreover, it was also a source of wealth to be used in building up one's political strength by rewarding able soldiers and loyal followers, and by making gifts to one's superiors. Political power was directly obtained through the acquisition of governorships. Such offices were a further basis for much deference and, through the incumbent's access to tribute, customs fees, court fees, and gifts from his subjects, of much income as well. Titles, finally, not only were universally esteemed but also entitled the bearers to a style of life which included a presumptive right to gifts and obedience from all inferiors as well as the consumption of much wealth and power.

[423] [556] [662] [661] [631] [554]

565 643 For all these possessions, the Abyssinian noble was directly dependent on his king (or, in the case of a lesser noble, on his overlord). His dependence was twofold: land, political office, and titles came to him as gifts from the sovereign, and, what is more, their continued possession was contingent on the sovereign's continuing favor. Abyssinian "vassals" had no legal rights to their "benefices," and lands granted them could be withdrawn and given to others as the emperor wished. At the death of a feudal beneficiary his lands

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> with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[56]

The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, reestablished after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete.

Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*kärnë*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers.

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178 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promul-
795 gate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those
793 concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."
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643

The general position of the church had already been weakened by the
648 events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of
795 many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those
793 of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the
[792] Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and Ingbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the
795 clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree
793 which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed
[643] properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes
[651] at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally,
871 has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever govern-
658 ment schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to
793 be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full-
[965] time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as
178 ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and
[554] has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas
[871] like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite
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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkačaw, *Ye-dam Demṭ*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkačaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

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Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 • 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[466] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, *121 such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation 641 for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms [701] under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not [689] respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the [626] barbs of public opinion.

*121 701 [702] [714] The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

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> with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[28]

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 178 665 642 645 royal will. A solid foundation for such a class was not possible, however, until the central government had been sufficiently stabilized and expanded. These conditions began to be met under Menelik, who established Addis Ababa in the last decade of the nineteenth century and in 1907 created a number of ministries. Housed in buildings inside the palace compound, the ministries were initially regarded as little more than an ornament to dress up the imperial court. Although men of some stature, like Afa Negus Nasibu and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, were named to the posts, the offices themselves did not acquire much prestige. It was no great matter when, five years after the death of Menelik, the ministers were turned out of office by a group of military officers at the instigation of Rās Tafari and sent home to their provincial estates.

175 178 645 647 After becoming emperor himself, however, Haile Selassie revived and enlarged the ministerial system. Since the restoration, it has expanded into a complex bureaucratic structure. In addition to some sixteen ministries, a number of specialized government agencies have been formed, and the military and judicial hierarchies and the diplomatic corps have been considerably expanded. The rapid growth of the central government in the past two decades is reflected in its budgetary expenditures, which went from about US$10 [652] million in 1942 to an estimated US$110 million in 1962.

178 647 571 554 565 The growth of this governmental machinery has provided a new basis for elite status in Ethiopia. Mobility channels now run in terms of appointments in the government bureaucracy. The periodic announcement of appointments by the Emperor has become the focus of public interest in Ethiopia since the liberation. Every new list of appointments provides the occasion for intense gossip and *de rigueur* congratulatory parties at the homes of the favored.

178 565 571 The new class of high governmental functionaries under Haile Selassie may be regarded as a transitional elite: partly traditional, partly modernizing. With regard to basis of recruitment, values represented, and style of life, the new nobility present, on the one hand, a direct continuation of the old nobility; and, on the other hand, many features novel in Abyssinian society.

178 565 [646] To some extent recruitment of members of the new nobility was not a creation of new dignitaries, but rather an absorption of members of the old nobility into the new political organization. The recruitment of *makuānnent* into the senate, which after all is an organ of the central government, may be taken as an ambiguous instance of this. Some others were given important posts in the civil and military administrations. These include members of the princely families of Shoa, Tigre, Wag, Lasta, and Gojjam; the Bakere clan, royalty from the Galla province of Wallaga; and scions of the *makuānnent* who were important in Menelik's day or before, members of aristocratic clans which go by the names of Bēzā, Mojā, Sofanē, and Addisgē. Such persons are likely to have been awarded the old military titles for purely honorific pur-

423 The richest farmer in the rural vicinity of Gondar,
427 a member of the Qemant (Cushitic-speaking) ethnic group, owns 8 gasha (about 400 acres), which is considered fabulous wealth by his Amhara neighbors. However, with the aid of his sons and servants, he cultivates only one gasha at any given time. He parcels out the remaining 7 gasha, except for some fallow land, to landless tenant farmers, many of them ex-slaves, usually in plots no bigger than 10 qada (about 4 acres), which is considered the limit one man can plow and seed without help. The rent they pay him consists of one "madiga " of tyeff grain (about 25 kilo); payable by each. Each also pays him 1/2 madiga of barley, referred to as "qolo", tribute to his "household". His agents also collect the 10% tithe, in produce, which he is expected to pass on to the government, and the new Eth$4.- education tax. He invest part of his profits in cows for his increasing herds.

423 For purposes of taxation, of peasants, the govern-
651 ment treasury must rely on the judgment of the headman, ("cheqa shum"), who is difficult to check because the land is unmeasured and a "gasha" is a flexible concept. Therefore, his supervisor, usually the mislane, can only base a check on past, customary payments.

[602] Taxcollectors are known to be generous when deal-
423 ing with even distant kinfolk, or with priests and
651 their relatives, and to even out the receipts by pres-
653 sure on low-class ethnic minorities, justifying this by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income from their handicrafts.

423 He could do with "mäd-bet" lands as he pleased, without
656 interference from kin groups, the church, or other local-feudal dynasties.

654 Thus the present emperor, when he was still merely
656 regent, and a young man in his twenties, began his pro-
423 gram of modernization and centralization in his own "mad-bet" in Harar province. He organized the coffee-growing of that area as a cash crop for export, and, more significantly, reduced the burdens on the "gabbar", improved security of tenure, appointed supervisors to see that matters would not slip back, and instructed them to report to him as the central power. He also set up elementary schools in several locations. At regular intervals he toured his lands personally. As a result, "gabbar" from neighboring feudal estates were eager to have the protection of his "mäd-bet".

423 These efforts were a departure from the traditional
656 pattern of high feudal nobles on their "mäd-bet" (though, on the other hand, no one could criticize him for doing as he pleased on his own "household land"). The others appointed trustees, "täwälaj", usually 12, to administer their land, while they remained absentee landlords at the court of the "king of kings". These trustees were u usually appointed from patriarchal elders and lowest nobility, and were responsible for the support of the parish churches of their area, with priest, deacons, däbtära (scribe-choristers), etc.

423 In the traditional pattern there was another means
651 of exercising some central control, through the collection

184 which ended with his unsuccessful rebellion of 1929,
423 much land was "rest-gult", and there were many kinds of tax exemptions for heirs of veterans, who often paid only the tithe on grain and a small tax on cattle.

In Begemdir province (capital: Gondar), most of the land also remains unmeasured, for the same reason. Much of the land is "rest" owned by kin groups who guard it jealously against alienation; and the old church lands are are regarded as "rest". In the southwestern, lower, section of Gondar town and some nearby rural land, "rest" is owned by Ethiopian Muslims, mostly traders, who purchased it from the church, long ago. In scattered rural areas some families of ethnic specialists like the Falasha smiths own land considered "rest-gult", given to their ancestors in reward for services rendered Menelik's armies in the 19th century. This process has been discontinued (artisans are now in business for themselves and are supposed to pay a trade tax to the central government), and most Falashas live under very uncertain terms of tenure, paying tithe and other taxes, which worries the Amhara claimants to this territory.

F. Crown Lands and Efforts to Centralize Land Tenure.

423
656 In the old tradition of land tenure, the king held some very personal land, inherited or conquered, for the support of the royal household, "mēd-bēt". He added to it by confiscating land of unsuccessful feudal rebels.

423 He could do with "mād-bēt" lands as he pleased, without
656 interference from kin groups, the church, or other local-feudal dynasties.

654 Thus the present emperor, when he was still merely
656 regent, and a young man in his twenties, began his pro-
423 gram of modernization and centralization in his own "mad-bet" in Harar province. He organized the coffee-growing of that area as a cash crop for export, and, more significantly, reduced the burdens on the "gabbar", improved security of tenure, appointed supervisors to see that matters would not slip back, and instructed them to report to him as the central power. He also set up elementary schools in several locations. At regular intervals he toured his lands personally. As a result, "gabbar" from neighboring feudal estates were eager to have the protection of his "mād-bēt".

423 These efforts were a departure from the traditional
656 pattern of high feudal nobles on their "mād-bēt" (though, on the other hand, no one could criticize him for doing as he pleased on his own "household land"). The others appointed trustees, "tāwālaj", usually 12, to administer their land, while they remained absentee landlords at the court of the "king of kings". These trustees were u usually appointed from patriarchal elders and lowest nobility, and were responsible for the support of the parish churches of their area, with priest, deacons, dābtāra (scribe-choristers), etc.

423 In the traditional pattern there was another means
651 of exercising some central control, through the collection

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 of land taxes and tithe, provided these were not entirely
651 claimed by powerful local feudal nobility or the church. These tax-collectors, who often lived dangerously, were given land as reward for services; this land was called "mälkäña" land. They also acted as overseers of stature-labor, "hudäd". They were usually free from both land tax and tithe on their own territory, and, although their sons could inherit the job and the land that went with it, their security of tenure was even weaker than that of the "gultäñña". Partly this was due to the ever-shifting power factors, for, when the central power was weak or distracted by a distant war, the tax-collector might find himself working as a provincial functionary, intermediate between the cheqa shum (headman) and the provincial feudal lords.

423 When central power was greatly strengthened in
656 the days of Menelik II, there was a considerable increase in "malkana" lands. This was particularly the case in lands he had conquered from the Galla landlords ("balbat"). He expropriated 3/4 of their lands for distribution among his military veterans, but in consolation granted the balbats the remaining 1/4 as "mälkäña" land. This freed them from taxes, enabled them to pass their remaining landholdings on to their sons, and turned them into loyal subjects of the central power which alone could protect their tenure from future expropriation. The outcome of this amazingly Solomonic solution of an age-old problem of land tenure in a feudal country has turned the Galla balbats today into the most reliable

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 ●656 supporters of the central government.

The descendants of these balbats, now educated in
423 the high schools of Addis Ababa, are being sent into even
647 the old-Amhara provinces at present, by Emperor Haile
651 Selassie, to act as salaried collectors for the central treasury ("Gemja-Bet") (so that the function of the former malkana has again come full circle, though the term is no longer used for the office). In fact, the new centralized tax-gathering has ended the office of the old, provincial "mälkäña", and they, much like the "gultänna", can only hope to have their lands affirmed as "rest". This they can hope to achieve only if they work the lands themselves and pay tithe on produce, otherwise it may be lost to squatters. Their final security of tenure, by contract instead of vague status (they have lost the latter), will come only when the lands are measured and modern titles issued, which has not yet happened in the old-Amhara areas that resist this. The non-resistant Galla balbats of Shoa province are thus more secure in tenure, and will remain so as long as the central governis strong.

423 Measurement of land is called, traditionally, "throw-
804 ing the rope" ("yase gäzäd"). This rope may be made of cordage, plant fibers, traditionally 40 elbow lengths long. In northern districts it is sometimes made of plaited oxhide, and called "qälad".

423 The "rope was thrown" widely in Galla lands conquered by Menelik II, Three-quarters of these lands were then divided into gashas of 80-100 acres each, and

583 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official.
184 After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semenya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semenya", with the chega shum present.

[584] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existent, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these
656 traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in
[584] the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

178 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among
871 young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage
581 with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shir* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

than those necessary to perform their jobs. They do not attempt to maintain and build personal libraries, though there are a few exceptions to this. The three small bookstores in Addis Ababa offer only the most insubstantial fare.

Nor, finally, have more than a handful of private individuals taken upon themselves the charge of a scholarly or literary calling. Although Marcel Cohen heralded the birth of a printed literature in Amharic as early as 1925,[68] writing is still not very important on the Ethiopian scene.* The output of original books and pamphlets in Amharic averaged less than fifteen a year over the past two decades. The presses and bookstores distribute Amharic publications indifferently at best. Much of the literary impetus produced by the desire of many Ethiopians to write, and the obvious need for good writing that would address itself to the intellectual demands of the present generation, has been sapped by economic, political, and cultural factors.

The economic factors include the high cost of printing; the diminutive market; and the absence of publishing houses. If an author wants to be read, he must normally pay for publication himself. Those who cannot must either find a patron in the Crown—frequently a highly lucrative arrangement—or resort to mimeographic duplication, or else remain unpublished. The censorship system and anxiety about spontaneous expression of any sort which has been fostered by prevailing political conditions constitute additional obstacles to literary development.

The paucity of serious writing has been the result no less of prevailing cultural conditions. The low intellectual level of his potential audience, the absence of channels for criticism, and the dearth of precedent make it difficult for the Ethiopian writer to determine good standards of writing. The confused state of Amharic, owing to regional variations and the absence of consensus on neologisms and loan words for expressing modern concepts, poses many problems on the level of sheer vocabulary. The temptation to get into print quickly, if the financial and political barriers can be hurdled, exceeds the temptation to work long and hard on an opus of quality. The desire to pontificate frequently eclipses the quest for understanding.

Those conditions which have inhibited the growth of Amharic literature—poverty, governmental reluctance to provide sufficient freedom and support, the newness of the modernizing culture, and the motivational level of the intellectuals themselves—may be viewed more broadly as responsible for the relative barrenness of Ethiopian intellectual life as a whole. Insofar as these conditions change in the coming decades, a radical change in the quality and organization of Ethiopian intellectual life may be expected. As a sociological

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* This is no longer due, however, to the negative attitude toward writing as such which was discussed in chapter iii. That traditional inhibition has been largely removed—primarily, it seems, by the postwar requirement that all legal accusations and court proceedings be set down in writing.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shir* and *divide et impera*. "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 right to a direct audience at any time. The Emperor is known to glow with
571 pleasure when a subject with whom he is speaking reveals that he comes from Manz. The Manzēs, for their part, proudly refer to their area as *ya-negus agar* ("king's country"). They are perhaps the most devoted of all Ethiopians to the present Crown. However, many stories are told to show that this loyalty has not dissolved their intractable spirit. For example, when asked to select a representative for Ethiopia's first elected parliament in 1957, some of them were indignant: "We already have *our* representative in the capital, and if he isn't able to do the job himself, let him step down and hand it to somebody else."

871 Despite their expressed loyalty to Haile Selassie, the Manzēs stubbornly
658 oppose the program with which he is publicly most associated and whose portfolio he has retained, as Minister of Education, from 1943 to the present day. The adults of Manz object to having their children attend the government schools. In many cases where a child has elected to attend school on his own, his parents have cut off all support. The four schools in Manz thus have
[162] an enrolment far below capacity, totaling (as of 1960) less than four hundred in this area of perhaps fifty to sixty thousand families.[40] Those hardy youngsters who do attend school often do so in rags and with an empty stomach.

[857] One reason for this determined opposition to the government schools is the obvious economic one: children must stay at home to tend the herds. This is a problem all over rural Ethiopia, but still the schools in many other areas are overcrowded. Another reason is that, as we have seen, Manz was not interested in education in the old days. Few Manzēs learned to read in the church schools. When a boy showed unusual talent and interest in traditional studies he had to travel to Gondar, which often meant running away from Manz.

871 The crux of Manzē defiance of the new educational system, however, is
658 cultural fundamentalism. The Manzēs keep their children away from the
186 government schools because they fear that the students there are learning
829 something that threatens the old ways. In particular, they do not like their children to learn the language of the *farenj* ("European") or to be exposed to Ethiopians who have been taught by *farenj* and thereby infected by alien ideas. Tending the farm, keeping the fasts, defending land and self—that is the sum and substance of Manzē education, beyond which there is nothing a boy needs to learn.

829 Undoubtedly part of this dread of *farenj* learning is based on the Manzēs'
648 one experience with the white man: the Fascist occupation. As one of the strongholds of patriotic resistance to the occupation, Manz and the Manzēs
186 became the object of the invader's unyielding fury. Over miles and miles of Manz not a home or church was spared. The inhabitants were either killed, or fled to safer areas in Galla country, or joined the underground opposition—

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promul-
795 gate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those
793 concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."
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The general position of the church had already been weakened by the
648 events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of
795 many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those
793 of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the
[792] Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the
795 clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree
793 which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed
643 properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes
[651] at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally,
871 has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever govern-
658 ment schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to
793 be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full-
[465] time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as
178 ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and
554 has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas
871 like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite
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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkačaw, *Ye-dam Demṭ*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkačaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makwānnent,* Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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course know what is going on, ignore the whole matter, just as they ignore the Zar worship.

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Parallels to such religious syncretism are found not only in Egypt, but also in Syria, where Christian women go on short-range pilgrimage to the tomb of "weli" saints and smear mud from holy springs on their faces on a certain day of the Christian religious calendar.[79] This takes place in rural areas of Homs, but even near Damascus Muslims take part in celebrating the day of the Feast of the Cross in September.[80] Just as in visits to the tomb of water saints in Muslim Algeria,[81] the pilgrimage to Sheykh Abader is believed to bring on the light rains, which usually begin about that time, making early plowing and a good harvest possible. This is equally desired by both Muslims and Copts, just as individual good health is desired by both. Perhaps this unexpressed recognition explains the paradox of this religious syncretism.

f) The Church and the Present National State.

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Three phases can be distinguished in the recent relations of the Abyssinian church and the Amharic "Solomonic Dynasty" which the church returned to power in the 13th century but which now attempts to modernize

79. Gaulmier, J.: Pélérinages Populaires à Hama. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, 1931, Vol.1, pp.137-152.
80. Tresse, R.: Usages Saisonnières. Revue d'Etudes Orientales 1937, pp. 1-4; Lecerf & Tresse: Les Arada de Damas. BEO, 7-8, pp.236-264.
81. Probst-Biraben, J.H.: Pour La Pluie de Printemps en Algerie. En Terre d'Islam, 22, 1942, pp. 264-272.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

779 the nation in Western patterns.

659 (1) The use of the church in promoting Amhara-

[721] dominated Ethiopian nationalism. This was recognized and promoted by Emperor Menelik II who had priests carry the "tabot" into newly conquered Galla, Sidamo and other pagan and semi-Muslim areas of his new empire, giving his

[564] military conquests the character of a crusade. Churches were built in these areas, guarded by troops of occupation, made permanent by feudal grants under which the local population, made "gabbar" serfs, was permitted to remain on the land as sharecroppers and peons of the feudal church.

This use of the church has been continued, though with reduced feudal emphasis, by the present emperor.

[212] The Geez alphabet of the church, modified in Amharic usage, is the only alphabet even non-Amharic-speakers may use, if they wish to write their languages, particularly in

[643] print. By taking on the name "Haile Selassye" (Power of the Trinity), upon coronation, the present emperor re-emphasized the power of the church. Finally, on November 4th 1955, when the new liberalized Constitution of 131 articles was proclaimed, it reaffirmed that the Ethiopian "Orthodox" Church, founded in the 4th century on the doctrines of St. Mark, is the established church of the state.

659 Phase (2), begun by the present emperor as his

178 power increased, was a concurrent weakening of the temporal power of the church. At first this was gradual. In

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

659 In 176 many criminal cases, culprits who had sought asylum [687] from the police of the state by entering a churchyard and sounding the resonant stone bells to announce to the pursuers that they had placed themselves under the protection of the church, were taken away by force, despite the protests of the priests. This so deteriorated some of the temporal power of the church that persons involved in kin bloodfeuds were also no longer safe in [688] church confines. Conversely, the traditional request of priests to law enforcement agencies of the state to arrest violaters of church rules (e.g. adulterers) now go unheeded except in remote rural areas, and even there such a prisoner is no longer held and sentenced to an [689] indefinite term on such a charge. Fines and imprisonment for violation of the Sabbath or for working on a saint's day, also are no longer enforceable.

An official extreme in this direction was reached in 1942, when, a year after his victorious return, Emperor Haile Selassie issued a series of decrees stripping the church of all feudal power, and most of its temporal power, except in the town of Aksum. Under these decrees, church land could henceforth be taxed by the state, though the taxes were to be used to administer church maintenance and education; church courts could levy only spiritual penalties, not money fines; the Central Treasury of the state was to administer rents from church lands. All statute-labor ("gabbar") rights of the church over sharecropping peasants living on its former feudal estates were abrogated.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

659 178 spectacle of self-abandon of the mourners, who scream, roll on the ground, cut themselves bloody, etc.; and the financial burden of excessively elaborate memorial feasts which were and sometimes still are ruinous to the families involved. To teach by example--a most effective way in a country where everyone imitates the "great man"" --the emperor himself ordered that no memorial feast be given for his own daughter who died in 1933; just some money donations were made to the priests reciting prayers for her soul.

[874] More recently, the emperor founded the Theological College of Addis Ababa, headed by an Egyptian Coptic president and some faculty members from among Egyptian Copts, to modernize the curriculum of the future leaders of the church among whom he hopes, for the first time, to find allies rather than permanent foes. The probable successor to the present Abuna (archbishop) of Ethiopia, Theophilus, is believed to share the emperor's views and has already travelled abroad several times. The emperor wishes the younger clergy to become more learned and to be able to translate the Bible from Geez into Amharic for the lay populace. He has promoted the printing of bibles in Amharic, rather than Geez, thus using religion to promote the official, national language of the state. [198]

6. The Fraternal Association called "mähabbär".

575 This "voluntary" association of individuals, growing out of the "private communion" of the Abyssinian

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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It took two years for the leadership of the church to recover from this shock and to bring pressure on the emperor, through his kinsman, the aging but still powerful Ras Kassa. In 1944 further decrees partly returned certain limited temporal rights of the church (such as the right to ask sharecroppers on church land for food supplies, fuel, repair of the local churches) in return for religious services and church education. Little actual change has taken place in the rural, old-Amhara provinces, but even there the priests now enforce their demands in subtler fashion, usually making heavier demands on recent peasants in their areas rather than on old-established families.

Thus, in effect, the state now rules the church from the top. Both Emperors Menelik II and Haile Selassye I refused to be crowned in the church capital, Aksum, preferring their own state capital, Addis Ababa.

Phase (3) represents the more subtle handling of the relations with the church by the present emperor, to utilize the church's structure and function to promote his policies of centralization and modernization.

Already mentioned, the request of the emperor to the sacerdotal church to copy from the Western church the function of preaching ethics to the common lay people, has had little effect. Somewhat more successful has been his repeated request, passed informally through the church hierarchy by word of mouth rather than published decree, to restrain the excesses of the "täzkar" memorial feast. These excesses include both the public

11:Levine Z-4.5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

fixed rules and to respect their opponents. Until a few years ago, the imperfect acceptance of these norms was shown by the frequent fights between opposing school teams following soccer and basketball games.[9] But gradually a new tradition of athletic activity has been building up in the schools, and with it the related norms have started to gain greater acceptance.

Still another value that the school experience has promoted is that of social responsibility. Most students are very grateful to the government for having provided them with schooling and related benefits, and they feel a keen obligation to show their gratitude by serving their country. They have also become conscious of the great needs of their people for economic and social development. In Amhara society, service was expected in behalf of the family and, except for mass levies in time of warfare, usually stopped there. The modern adolescents are still mindful of their obligations to their parents and siblings, but have now included broader ideals of social service in their moral orientation. When asked what they expect to bring most satisfaction in their lives, the students named "improvement of local community" more often than any other category except "career or occupation." (See Table 4.) When asked what they would do with a million dollars, more than a third answered in terms of purely social enterprises, such as building schools and hospitals, helping the poor and orphaned; and many others indicated private enterprises with specifically social purposes, such as improving agriculture and building factories to provide employment.

It is difficult to determine how deeply the value of social responsibility has been internalized. In their public declarations, at any rate, the students wax eloquent in propounding ideals of good citizenship. They urge themselves to prepare for introducing modern ways to the uneducated; to return to the villages, integrate themselves with the old society, and lead them gently to better ways; to fight discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and social class; to solve the problem of corruption and bribery in the government; and to promote national solidarity.

Politics.—The Amhara adolescent has little occasion to develop specifically political attitudes, since his customary political world has been coterminous with subordination to legitimate local and national authorities, and defense of his country against invaders. Unless he was the son of a nobleman involved in struggles for power, there have rarely been any political issues to engage his attention.

A host of issues, domestic and international, have by contrast been thrust upon the modern adolescent. Yet in comparison with students from the other countries of Africa and the Middle East, his political orientation is relatively undeveloped. Ethiopian students at regional or international gatherings of students have in the past tended to feel somewhat out of place, for the polit-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 ical wit and activism displayed by students from other countries has em-
66 barrassed their cautious dispositions.

There are three reasons for this relative lack of politicization of the Ethiopian students. One is that, having maintained her ancient independence
[548] throughout the "scramble for Africa," Ethiopia entered the twentieth century as an independent nation; and five years of Italian rule were not sufficient to shake her spirit. Ethiopian students have thus not had to participate in the anti-imperialist movement, the great school for political activism in the colonial areas.

[571] A second factor is the deeply rooted habit of total subordination to any
[157] legitimate authority. Because of this orientation there is a persisting disposition to relegate concern for all political questions to the highest authorities.
[577] Nearly two-thirds of the secondary students and a third of the college stu-
[829] dents maintain that one should always obey the order of a superior, arguing that "obedience is a virtue," "things would not go right otherwise," and "the Bible says so."

*883 The third reason for the almost apolitical posture of Ethiopian students
66 has been the absence of opportunities for political expression in their country.
641 African students from British colonies have in the past been surprised to find that their colonial situation admitted far more freedom of speech and press than Ethiopia. Teachers are expected to keep anything remotely connected with Ethiopian politics out of the classroom, and the editors are expected to keep them out of the newspapers. Nor have the students been permitted to form any kind of politically relevant associations. Even casual discussion of domestic political problems among friends has been curtailed because of the all-pervading fear of government informers.

*883 All this has not prevented Ethiopian students from being affected to a
66 moderate degree by the libertarian and egalitarian ideals of the West. The
177 teaching of European history in secondary school, evaluation of students' performance without respect to class or tribal affiliation, and the exercise of electing student officers in the colleges have acted to leaven the political imagination of the students. Many of them thus ventured a degree of political
*883 criticism in their anonymous questionnaires. Forty-three per cent indicated
66 disapproval of the existing differences between "big men" and the common
829 people. Thirty-nine per cent were critical of the degree of control exerted by the government, of which group two-thirds felt that governmental controls are too strict (e.g., not permitting free expression), and one-third felt they were not strict enough (e.g., with respect to corruption and provincial administration).

*883 The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, jarred the Addis Ababa col-
668 lege students into an unprecedented state of political activity.[27] In response
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633 world", i.e. Jesus Christ), indicating the section of the town in which he lives.

C. Appointment to Office and Decision-Making.

566 The feudal social structure led almost invariably to paternalistic attitudes in appointment to office and in decision-making. This attitude continues in remote rural districts as well as in the most modern-appearing state offices in Addis Ababa.

661 644 The feudal lord, having conquered new lands, usually rewarded his most trusted followers with fiefs and connected privileges. For example, the newly-appointed "mälkäña", who may have previously served merely as military orderly to the warlord, as cupbearer and meatcarver, could be appointed to act as liaison officer and administrator of Galla lands, allocating 1/4 of the land to the old Galla "balbat" as "mälkäña" land of their own, and keeping the rest as his own fief. He would continue to make himself useful as tax-collector, foreman on statute-labor for the lord, as general spy for the ear of the Lord, available for any special service at any time. But he had little security of office or of land tenure, both being at the mercy of any caprice of the lord. It was therefore essential for him to spend much time at the court of the feudal lord, bowing and scraping, ever fearful that some competitor, perhaps the former "läfäri" the herald who announced decrees and public inquiries,

661 644 might gain in favor and edge him out with contrived accusations.

This pattern can still be observed, from the modest court of the sub-provincial governor and local judge, to the palace courtyard of the emperor himself. It is called "dži tenāt" (lit. waiting by the gate). The frequency of appearance, in order to remain in good graces, is usually twice a week; more often if a special favor is sought. The place is preferably within a few yards [576] of a spot where the lord (or emperor) will pass. When this takes place, the courtier bows from the hips, very low. This will usually be acknowledged with a small nod. The procedure is considered essential by the aspirant for office, and by the office-holder, for these reasons:

Positive Reasons:

Reaffirmation of continued loyalty;

To indicate readiness to receive orders, pass messages, give information;

To enable the lord to play his paternalistic role (i.e. the lord can and periodically does ask whether the courtier is happy in his job or [576] wishes a new one; ettiquette requires a response of happiness at least for six months after having received a job, even if it was a demotion or an unpleasant task).

Negative Reasons:

To counteract rumors of disloyalty spread by rivals;

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this would almost certainly happen in case of repeated absences;

To prevent the ruler from forgetting, or to pretend having forgotten, a position of favor promised to the applicant. This follow-up also indicates tenacity, a positive point.

To keep the ruler from thinking that the office-holder has become so proud and independent that he has forgotten the "father" from whom all good things come.

To counteract plots being hatched in his absence, which would not benefit him.

66/ 178 Another old requirement in appointment to office, which now is in force primarily in the district capitals and rural areas only, is the gift, "shum gänzäb" (lit. money for appointment), paid to the chief at the time of application.

Until very recently , the newly-appointed governor-general of a province would decree a "shum shir", a general, automatic abrogation of all office holdings left by the preceding regime; this enabled the new governor to appoint his own followers, courtiers, retainers, poor relations, etc., in office; but in practice he usually reappointed most of the former officials, down to the many "cheqa shum" headmen, on payment of an appropriate "shum gänzäb". In recent years this practice has been curtailed at the upper levels; for both the director-general of the province, and the secretary-general are now appointed by the central government in Addis Ababa.

But on lower levels the old practices continue, though more subtly and through indirect negotiations.

In decision-making, nothing seems to have changed. The paternalistic attitudes continue, and only very few of the modern-educated young aspirants really hope for and expect a modernization in the direction of greater efficiency. Only European advisors are outspoken on the subject, among themselves. Ethiopian students who return from university study abroad, return immediately to the "dǎj tenat" pattern. Twice a week they bow before the emperor as he leaves the High Court. Very kindly he greets them, usually by name, asks each after his well-being and that of his family. Later when a job has been assigned them, he asks whether they are satisfied, sometimes even inviting them to tell him if they are worried about something. The "father" role is taken literally on both sides.

Office-holders rarely make even petty decisions themselves. Instead, they take the matter to their superior, who is thus swamped with little details which waste his time. But it enables him to keep control through frequent personal contact and reaffirmation of the superordinate-subordinate relationship, and he in turn does "dǎj tenat" to his superior.

Office-seekers in the provincial capital maintain a grapevine service for information on the infrequent return of the governor-general from residence or "conferences" in Addis Ababa. Then they besiege his head-

661 quarters by the hundreds, employing messengers to spy
642 out his daily movements and private life that might develop some entrance to him. They even do this when the job has already been given them by a lower officer, for the positive and negative reasons mentioned above. Court orders are usually unobtainable, even by such highly-placed officials as the modern-educated manager of the provincial branch of the State Bank of Ethiopia, without the personal intervention of the governor-general.

Both rural and urban administrations are considerably slowed by this pattern of appointments and decision making, but the old patterns of human relations, and values accompanying and often determining the social organization, can be expected to continue for some time in the future. In this case resistance to change seems complete.

D. The State and the Crown

643 The emperor, "Negusä Nägäst (lit. King of Kings, in the Geez language), used to be primus inter pares, one of several kings whom they had chosen as their superior, or whose military might left no doubt as to his supremacy. At present there is no "negus", and even the "ras" have lost their power together with their private armies. The monarchy thus reigns supreme, theoretically limited only by the voluntary Constitutions granted by

was forfeited by the loser. Under the old system a poor man who could not, even with the aid of kinsmen, raise his bet to equal that of his richer opponent, had little recourse to justice except the "abyet".

[66] The old system also left wide opportunities for bribing of judges, for the borderline between a public "wager" and private bribe was thin. In rural areas the pattern of "wager" still persists. But most danya now officiate in the towns, in a "ferd-byēt" (lit. Judgment-House), often an Italian-built administrative building; and the court procedure has taken on a more modern pattern, through the gradual effect of the pressure in this direction from Addis Ababa. His fines may range from Eth$25.- to Eth$500.-; prison sentences from one month to one year.

The "danya" is a regular judge in that he sits in judgment all year long, at regular intervals. Wednesdays and Fridays are preferred, because they are light "fast-days", on which the "mind is not weighted down with food", according to the traditional attitude. Thus, time and place and frequency of function of the "danya" are formally established in the judicial structure, and form the broad base of this part of social organization.

(4) The Appeals Judge, "wombär" (or, "wänbär", or "wänbär", lit. seat), does not sit as regularly in the "ferd-byet". Several times a year (at least once) he travels on a judicial circuit, and also accompanies the governor-general on his inspection tours. Tradi-

695 701 broidered edge of the Shamma toward the face of the accused, or even toward the face of the judge; shouting, in the latter case: "May He (God) make you see clearly! (Egziabhēr yasaywo). While he waves his right hand forward, his right foot thunders forward also, maintaining his position by leaning on the staff with his left arm. Meanwhile, the adversary leans mutely on his staff, as if he were in church leaning quietly on his "maqomya", but indicated nonchalance and indifference toward the raving of the accuser. A method of the defendant to influence the judge with his sincerity, in the traditional way, is to throw his pre-arranged toga off his shoulders, baring them in the middle of arguing his defense, to indicate that he surrenders his shoulders to the flogging that the judge might order, in complete confidence that his innocence must be evident to the judge.

695 661 Until very recently, and in remote rural districts even today, the wager, or bet on the outcome, was an essential factor in legislation. It took the place of court fees, for the loser forfeited his bet to the judge. This was the salary of the judge. Without this wager, it was not possible to go to court. The poor man was at a great disadvantage since he could not, even with help of his kinsmen, keep raising the bets to equal those of his wealthier adversary. To limit such judicial excesses, Emperor Menelik II decreed that wagers had to consist of tangible items such as honey, horse, mule, with a fixed cash equivalent (Eth$1.-, $10.-, $20.- in this order), and judges were urged to exercise fairness. Prohibition

695 of the practice now often leads to more secret and sub-
661 tle bribing of the judge. For the old wager was open to the public, and a great source of public recreation and entertainment, accompanied by great noise and flashes of wit.

The danya would gravely enter every wager in his register. While the case was in progress, bets could be raised by signalling from the audience (partly consisting of interested kinfolk) instead of shouting them out, which was not always preferred:

"I agree to be his guarantor" - point finger at accused and strike own breast;

"I bet honey against him" -point finger at adversary and lick palm;

"I bet a horse" - wave both extended hands as if galloping;

"I bet a mule" - hold hands near ear, moving up and down.

The judge had to take into consideration not only the winnings he would take, or the secret reward from the winner of the case, but also the shifting views of the audience. Thus the participating, arguing audience formed a sort of informal jury. Sometimes the danya might actually recess the court and call upon several elders from the audience to consult privately with him, or to help him assess the amount of damages to be awarded.

If dissatisfied with the outcome of the case, the loser might shout his protest "yegbäñ" (lit. enter me, i.e. on another trial), usually taking it to a high-

605 er court, if he felt he had the means. In this case
661 the judge might sometimes not appropriate the wager for fear of having to surrender it again later.

539 There are numerous proverbs characterizing roles
691 in litigation, and counseling behavior and decisions to be made in certain situations:

"The young lawyer,
in the beginning he acclaims to heaven;
later on, he will look to the ground"
(Moral: always choose an old, experienced lawyer, with many reserve tricks up his sleeve).

"Don't seize the tail of the leopard;
but if you did, don't let go."
(Meaning: Don't go to court against a good talker, or "great man", or wealthy adversary; but once started, fight as hard as hard as you can, or else he will ruin you).

"Even if you know how,
against the judge do not debate".
"Judge, why your partiality?
the loser must pay you (anyway)".

"One witness need not make you tremble,
(just as) a one-eyed (person)cannot dance well."

[17] The pattern of the wager resembles, in part, that of the "khabdh" of Arab bedouin.[76]

76. Ibid.

681 178 671 According to this change, mutilation of thieves was forbidden; the chaining of debtor to creditor was abrogated; flogging was reduced in frequency and quantity; the area that could fall under collective arrest, "afärsata", was limited; the legal validity of evidence from the "lebäshay" was indirectly abrogated. In 1933, the emperor further limited days, hours, and distances of the "afärsata". Capital punishment had been centralized in 1930.

It is noteworthy that in several cases old practices were for the first time acknowledged in writing, despite the continuing hesitancy to admit publicly any practice that European observers might regard as primitive. Thus, blood-money in place of blood-feud was decreed legal in 1930

426 671 178 Liberalization was also legalized by regarding civil law. In 1923 the Law of Loans fixed maximum interest at 9%. As usual , this was found to be too far a departure from practice for enforcement, and it was later raised to 12%. One of the last decrees prior to Italian hostilities, provided, in May 1935, for the abrogation of statute-labor, permitting the tenant (gabbar) to make a small payment (resembling a quitrent) instead.

694 661 178 (b) The pattern of judges riding circuit continued unabated, from the end of the harvest in the month of Tahsas (about November) until Easter. Sometimes judicial councils, "<u>gubaä</u>" were available in towns for appeals. But the old custom of bringing a gift to the "great man" to interest him in the indivi-

694 dual's case, the "gubba" gift, continued, and it is often
[161] identical with a bribe. At the same time, the old cus-
178 tom which served as a last resort to a poor person to
have his injustice rectified, by appearing with a heavy
stone perched on the back of his neck almost crushing
him, was abrogated because Europeans looked on this as
primitive. The poor man thus has lost his few safeguards,
and now is losing even the right to beg and to create a
traffic hazard by throwing himself before the vehicle of
[171] the great man and shouting "abyet". (The practice of
carrying the rock resembles that of innocently accused
Arab Beduin who appear pressing a blade against their
necks to demonstrate and shout their innocence.

178 Transition thus proceeds in unequal shifts, with
671 many culture lags. Modernization of law and justice
643 proceeds from the top, Addis Ababa, down the pyramid.
One of the reasons for the circuit-riding of the emperor
himself is to remind the chiefs of his realm of his
all-seeing and all-hearing power, just as was done in
the past. He acts as inspector-general.

The Emperor and his High Court in Addis Ababa stil
give lip service to the Fetha Nägäst Code. But in prac-
tice, this amounts to little more than rationalization
for the benefit of the ultra-conservative Amhara nobles.
693 The position of the "afä negus" (lit. Mouthpiece of the
King), who traditionally was the guardian of theFetha Nä-
gäst code, has now become honorary in practice. In the
past he was the second-most powerful person in the realm,
trusted partly because he was not of the ruling family

Often
743 most of his income is derived from writing "ketäb", amu-
[789] lets on goatskin parchment, worn by ailing persons on their neck-cord, or by women, in leather containers fastened to belt straps around the waist. The priest do forbid this amulet-writing activity, which is sometimes (not without reason) suspect not only of "white" magic, but also black magic. Let the priests ignore and overlook this, as they have done for centuries, perhaps because in this way they obtain the "dabtara's" other services free of cost.

The däbtära is often feared by the common people because of his power, both medical and supernatural. In recent years, with the suppression of the "tänkway" witch-doctor, the clientele of the debtara has actually increased, for now there is no one but the dabtara to exorcise "buda" (magic hyena, werewolf) possession, to protect from the evil eye, or to curse and capture thieves, Moreover, it is respectable to go to the däbtära, who operates in the shadow of the church, who associates with holy priests and even drinks beer with them at feasts. No gossip can attach to a man seen entering the hut of the dabtara, for his errand may be decent and even sacred.

[66] Most däbtära reap full benefits from the awe in which they are held. They even transgress etiquette when it suits their purposes. If uninvited at a wedding or other festivity, they often "crash" the party, and expect to be and are given seats of honor and the choicest food and mead.

793 Parish priests, (unlike mämhär scholars) are also
[66] not bashful about demanding their due (produce tithe, sheep, honey, even cash) from their tenants of church land. Sardonic peasant humor expresses this in the proverb:

[39] "The bashful priest,
the blind donkey,
(are one)" . (i.e. both would be helpless and starve to death).

532 Among artisans who do specialist work for the
346 church is the artist of church paintings, usually highly colorful and realistic scenes from the suffering of the saints, in morbid and gory detail; the beauties of heaven and the trinity; the horrors of hell ruled by a chained, soul-munching Satan; etc. These religious and semi-religious story illustrations and legends are painted on canvas and then attached to the inside of church walls.

874 Church students are usually boys 10 years or over (never girls), who at first learn the Geez-Amharid alphabet, reading Geez without translating, beginning with the Epistle of the Apostle John. They are taught by rote, memorizing by chanting the portions out loud. There is very little writing in the early grades, and experimentation is traditionally discouraged, for fear that the boys might use their new-won learning to write magic amulets. Before examinations, church studetns stimulate
874 their mental processes by eating the leaf of a Datura
276 weed resembling a Jimson weed called "astänager" (lit. to stimulate talk) which is also used by däbtära in exor-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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648 to assist us and order equipment to be given us for our journey, that he forgot all this, and also that he was not mindful of the friendship which they had established and sworn, since he did so little for the affairs of the King of Portugal. Neither on this account did he make any more haste, but always excused himself with his guest, and with being ill. On the 6th of July seven or eight horsemen arrived, very gaily caparisoned, these were Moors, and seemed to be honourable persons, they came from other countries, and brought many very beautiful horses, which they were bringing to pay as tribute which they owed to Prester John and the Barnagais. As the arrival of the Moors redounded to his profit, neither his guests nor his sickness impeded him. The great reception and honour which the Barnagais paid to these Moors gave us great trouble. The ambassador had told him that he wanted
648 twelve mules, and asked him to order them to be lent: he
661 said that he could not lend them, and that we should buy them. When we wished to buy these mules which the people of the country were selling to us, the servants of the Barnagais came and interrupted the purchase, telling the vendors not to sell them, and that if they sold them they would be punished, and the gold would be taken away from them, for in this country money is not current. This happened in such manner that the rumour of it spread throughout the country, and the people told us that even if they wished to sell to us they did not dare, from fear of the Barnagais, because he wished to sell his own mules, and therefore forbade their selling them. (He has another method with
436 the people of his country.) In all the kingdoms of Prester John money is not current, but only gold by weight, and the principal weight is called *ouquia*,[1] and this, which is an ounce, makes in weight ten cruzados, and for change there is a half ouquia, and from twelve drachms to ten make

[1] A gold coin in some parts of Africa.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

by the Emperor and was his representative in the province. His exact 635
title varied. He might rise to the height of that of *Negus*; he might be a ras. More frequently in recent years he held the next title in rank, that of *dejazmach*. He was the general of the provincial army, the judge and the administrator. He was paid no salary. He paid himself, his entourage, and his soldiers from the tribute of the province. On the pecuniary side, in addition to the tithes and other tribute, he collected [651] the profits of justice and the tolls on the borders of his province. The tolls being collected from the merchants would be one of his few sources of cash, especially before this century.[1]

It has already been said that no estimate is possible of the proportion of tribute passed on by the governors to the Emperor. It seems 651
probable, however, that where any tribute was paid the amount varied according to the arrangements made between the Emperor and the governor and probably also, from time to time, according to the needs and the power of the Emperor and the advisability of appeasing him with tribute. It is certain that large caravans taking rich gifts of cloth, horses, mules, and gold ceased long before this century to come in to the Emperor from any of the northern provinces.[2]

The governor, especially if he were a local grandee, was a very great man. The Ethiopians, like many other peoples, love the trappings of 635 661
power. It was the ambition of most men to wear fine clothes and to have at least one or two slaves or servants to run beside the stirrup. The governors naturally aimed at reproducing as far as they could the style of the Emperor's palace. They lived at the highest level they could afford, each with a court of his own and a circle of officials of his own appointment, whose titles were current only in the province. When they gave out lands and offices to their followers they tried, like the Emperor, to prevent these becoming hereditary and aimed at unsettling their holders from time to time.[3] Ethiopians tended to gravitate round the households of a great man with its hospitality, its atmosphere of movement, of security and opportunity. The governor's headquarters would be crowded with supporters, suitors, the soldiers of his personal bodyguard, priests, musicians, jesters, servants, and slaves. Upon festivals he kept open house and like his Emperor gave great feasts of raw meat and mead. A description of the lavish hospitality of the Ras of Angote given in the sixteenth century[4] reads almost word for word the same as those of the entertainments described by other travellers 400 years later.

When a governor travelled, especially upon taking up or leaving his appointment, it was a serious affair for the country upon which he

[1] Rüppel, E., *Reise in Abessinien*, Frankfurt, 1838–40, vol. 2, p. 35.
[2] See above, pp. 191–3. [3] Hotten, pp. 145–6. [4] Alvarez, pp. 136–7.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

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635 lived in passing and upon which he could levy purveyance. His passage
661 was an affair of pomp, in which important ladies had to be considered and a retinue taken, which might swell to many hundreds of soldiers and servants with all their families, slaves, and transport animals. Such journeys were veritable expeditions, not to be undertaken lightly. A journey right across the country might take several weeks, and in parts the rains made travel laborious or impossible for some five months of the year. The difficulty of communication gave the governor an independence of which he made full use. Governors of ancient divisions with a tradition of autonomy and governors from the royal family were generally allowed to rule with little interference. In this century
[177 the main provincial capitals were connected with Addis Ababa by
206] telephone and this, with aeroplanes, which were just beginning to come
507] into use before 1935, were the first threats to the isolation of the governors, which has since, in most parts, been so greatly diminished by the Italian roads. The Emperor had his agents who kept a watch upon governors and reported upon their doings; this kind of espionage was a highly developed system in Ethiopia. The governors on their side kept representatives in the capital. But this did nothing to overcome what several observers have remarked as the besetting sin of Ethiopian administration, the refusal to take any constructive responsibility. Governors of the old school were mainly concerned with the conservation of their own power, the collection of their tribute, and the fulfilment of their military duties. It would have been quite outside their range of thought to initiate new ideas of reform or to put down time-honoured abuses. Some of the governors spent much of their time at Addis Ababa and their deputies tended to be even more conservative in their use of authority than their masters.

635 Although the emphasis here is upon administration, it must not be forgotten that the governor was historically and in Ethiopian eyes primarily a high military officer and his civil duties were no more than the necessary accompaniment of his command. He had—as was shown anew in 1935—to raise and lead his provincial army in war. Some description has, however, already been given of the army, and there will be no need to discuss it further in this chapter except in the next section in relation to land tenure.

622 THE VILLAGE CHIEF

We have seen that by 1935 it was rare for a great local landed potentate to hold the highest provincial office; in most instances this was held by the Emperor's nominees. But this was not the only link the Emperor

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not the person, it has been said that high notables and the Emperor himself might, in strict technicality, be called *gabars*, since they might hold land burdened with some *gabar* service. Moreover—again in the theory—*gabars* were not, like the serf, tied to the soil; they could leave their land and seek a new holding elsewhere. 423 466 651

The position can be put in another way. The Ethiopian, like the Englishman, owed dues to the central government or to its representative; firstly, he owed the Emperor tribute and tithe for his land; secondly, he owed the equivalent of local rates, and, thirdly, when he was a tenant, he owed rent. The only difference, it might be said, was that the Ethiopian paid all these dues in grain, honey, firewood, stock, or labour instead of in money. The difference was, however, fundamental. In the absence of central control or uniformity and in situations where the *gabar*, the man who provided all this tribute in kind with his own hands, happened to be in a weak position, the form of payment opened the way to all kinds of extortion.

Mrs. Sandford, who with her husband ran a farm for many years in Galla country near the capital and was therefore in a position to provide very authoritative evidence upon this subject, gives the following account of the *gabars*, presumably those in her district. They owed the governor or soldiers to whom they were allotted both produce and services: these might be one day's labour out of three, eight or ten days; the provision of timber for building the master's house and grass for its thatching; firewood and one fifth of the grain crop in addition to the Emperor's tenth. This, she concludes, might have been reasonable especially if the *gabars* could have dared to use their right of appeal. 'But in fact the abuse proved stronger than the system.' The masters exacted more than their due 'and the system was in practice as extortionate as those of old Roman days. Officer and soldier were equally rapacious, . . .' The *gabar* dared not appeal. Coming from a witness of such experience and of such devotion to Ethiopia, this evidence carries weight.[1] 661 651 423 466

The tithe of grain was owed to the Emperor by every subject unless he were exempted on account of his other services to state or church. This grain was collected on the threshing floors and stored in the governor's official granaries; it was used mainly for the sustenance of the soldiers. Since such a bulky product could hardly be carried far in Ethiopia there was very little market in cereals. Pastoral tribes were expected to pay their tithe in stock. There was also a tribute of produce or labour, or both, which was nearly always taken by the governor or his representative and there were further dues or presents to the sub- 651

[1] Sandford, pp. 48–9.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
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423 when combined they represented the most coveted of all tenures as well as the one most weakening to the imperial authority.

From the different kinds of grant made to the various classes, the governors, the churches, the soldiers and others, for various purposes, arose the many categories of land tenure.

THE GOVERNOR AND THE LAND

636 651 661 423 The position of the provincial governor was relatively simple. He collected the whole of the Emperor's tribute within the province (in so far as this had not already been granted away by a process which will be examined presently), and he used it for the support of his administration, which meant of himself, his deputies, judges, messengers, and above all, the soldiery. As we have seen in the chapter upon public finance, it is impossible to generalize upon the proportion of tribute which the governor sent on to his Emperor except that it varied with the distribution of power at any given time between the two of them, and in the north might range from the refusal by a distant and almost autonomous governor to send anything but perhaps a token payment to the large tributes in kind and in money which are described by observers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It is frequently stated in the European accounts of Ethiopia that the office of governor, like all other offices, was sold by the Emperor and by this method, injurious as it was, he would be sure of at least some return. He would also have an interest in frequent changes of office; the governor's interest would consequently be in extorting all he could from his province as rapidly as possible. 'They are generally more like robbers than governors', was the conclusion of one witness.[1] 'The governors purchase their Commissions, or to speak properly their privilege of pillaging the Provinces" concludes another.[2] 'You are governor of Ras el Feel', the Emperor's secretary announced to Bruce. 'I hope you will never see it. It is a hot, unwholesome country, full of Mahometans, but its gold is as good as any Christian gold whatever.'[3]

That these exactions continued into Haile Selassié's day was shown by the measures he took in his endeavours to reform the provincial administration. These exactions would certainly be less in the northern provinces where the governor was dealing with an ancient society, that of his own people, in which all relationships and tributes were sanctified by long established custom.

The governor would parcel out the tribute he controlled amongst his many lieutenants in the districts and amongst his own and the Emperor's

[1] Tellez, p. 53. [2] Lobo, *op. cit.*, p. 263. [3] Bruce, vol. 3, p. 365.

1 [not processed - Analyst]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

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soldiers. He would also have, like the Emperor, official estates set aside 635
for the upkeep of his large household and it would be these he would 651
be most anxious to retain if he lost his governorship. For these estates 661
he could call up the labour of soldiers and *gabars*.[1] Parkyns recorded 423
in the mid-nineteenth century that for his estates the governor could
exact one day's work for clearing, one for sowing, two for cleaning,
and two for harvesting, and this was still the custom in this century.[2]
Instead of cultivating his estates directly by using labour in this way, [427]
the governor might lease his land to tenants who would pay him a stated
proportion of the crop as rent. According to one authority in the north,
governors claimed that one tenth of all privately owned land should also
be cultivated for him and he would himself choose the lands. Where,
as in Tigré, the governorship tended to remain for a period in the same
family this was not so grave an injury to the province, but if a governor
from outside were sent in the people might not dare to demand back
the lands from the local family and were obliged to set aside new lands
for their new governor.[3] Besides the governor's estates there would be
others attached to the various offices of his assistants.

In addition to their more regular dues from the people it was customary for governors and their assistants to demand special gifts from time to time, such as a sheep from each village at Easter and at the festival of the true cross.

THE CHURCH AND THE ARMY

The Emperors were always extremely generous to the church, even if 794
they had not gone so far as to allocate that third of the original legend 423
which the famous cleric Takla Haimanot claimed in 1270. Every priest, 651
monk, *debtera*, and deacon, in so far as he was excused from the work
of the fields, required that land furnished with slaves or *gabars* should
be set aside for his support. A vast total of land was burdened with
this service. The piety of Emperors warred here with their political
interests—at one moment they were moved to give, at another to resume
their gifts. But it was not easy to assert the royal claim against monasteries which were undying corporations or against churches which
needed permanent endowment and were, moreover, served by priests
determined to pass on their lands with their offices to their sons.
Moreover, the very character of the grants protected them. Their most

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–91.

[2] Parkyns, M., *Life in Abyssinia*, 1853, vol. 2, p. 230. Also Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

[3] Rossini, pp. 107–8.

THE NORTHERN PROVINCES: LAND TENURE

The taxation in Gojjam was probably lighter than elsewhere, since, as has just been explained, soldiers were paid here by means of exemption from taxation. 651 184 661

In a study of the system round Lake Tana, mainly in Bagemdir, an Italian writer notes how, side by side with the groups of *restenyas* tracing their hereditary occupation to the first settlements, probably in the fifteenth century, other tenures had grown up. One was that of the *farasenya*[1] to whom the Emperor had made grants of certain privileges and payments amounting generally to about a tenth of the produce of the *restenya* and also the right to exact labour for his land and house and collective gifts upon important feast days. Similar rights, but not including administrative powers, were given to *gultenyas* who, while collecting all the dues owed to the government, had to pay to it an agreed quota of oxen, mules, honey, etc. Thirdly there were the grants of *maskal mariet* (lands of the cross) to the church. In all these cases the rights were often given over the heads of the *restenyas*, who would continue to cultivate their lands as before. As there might be superimposition of new rights over old at the top, there might also be added lower stages by the leasing of land by *restenyas* and others to tenants who would have to pay rent as well as tax. [554]

Side by side with these holders of what may be regarded as private rights would be the hierarchy of the governor. The private rights might cut like islands into the administrative area of his district governors or these might be the *gultenyas* or *farasenyas* themselves and so eliminate the dualism. The *chiqa-shum* who collected the tax would thus pay it either to the *Mislané*, the *gultenya*, the *farasenya* or the *alaqa* (head) of the church. The writer condemns the cumbrousness of this method, with its encouragement of peculation and exactions. The original tax of the people was one tenth of their crop, but the feudal organization had resulted in a multiplication of intermediaries whose great object was to pass on less than a tenth to the government and to exact more than a tenth from the people, enriching themselves on the margin of differences. Those who suffered most were some of the *gabars* who had to support both the church and the *farasenyas*. 651 661

An Italian writing of Ethiopian abuses and Italian reforms in 1937 is not likely to underrate the vices of the old system, but there is plenty of comparative evidence, as well as the laws of probability, to suggest that he has not greatly darkened his picture. He states that under the Italian Government, after the conquest, the upper part of the structure[2]

[1] Literally 'horseman' and corresponding, apparently, to the early English 'knight'.

[2] Grottanelli, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 14–15, 105–12.

651 had been removed, leaving the heads of villages and districts in direct
661 contact with the Italian resident.

114 Our third example comes from Eritrea. No excuse is needed for this excursion beyond the present borders of Ethiopia, since the Eritrean plateau was until fifty years ago a part, and one of the oldest parts, of the Ethiopian state, and this region may again revert to its former status. In addition, however, we have the great advantage that Dr. Nadel, an anthropologist of experience and authority, has had the opportunity in this region under the British military administration to make a thorough investigation of a land tenure closely resembling that of northern Ethiopia.[1]

621 On the Eritrean plateau the most characteristic unit was the *enda*, a
614 number of families which claimed to have descended from a single ancestor. This group was not static; it might decline or be dispersed, or it might thrive and reach a size when it became necessary to break up and form new *endas*. It was not an administrative unit, but in certain matters it acted as a unity through meetings of its elders. The administrative unit, the village, generally covered several *endas*, though these may have all descended from a parent *enda*. The village unit might also cut across *endas*.

423 Above the village administrations, in the days before the Italian
651 conquest, came the hierarchy of the Emperor, his governors and deputy
[631] governors. These were often strangers from the south though local chiefs might be promoted to imperial positions. The imperial taxation had to be delivered to these officers, and the Emperor might arbitrarily cut out estates in *gult* for their support, or for that of monasteries or colonies of soldiers posted in these outlying regions to support the Emperor's power.

423 These rights may be regarded as extraneous to the underlying customary tenures which are divided by Dr. Nadel into three, ownership by the individual (which generally meant the individual family); by the kindred, or *enda*, and by the village. The first two types of ownership might, owing to the blurring of the edges between the three groups by growth or decline, shade off into each other.

In his discussion of family ownership Dr. Nadel gives us an authoritative definition of *resti*, which may cover ownership ranging from that of an individual to that of a large kinship group. This tenure was held by the people to be the most fundamental and sacred, and its characteristics were firstly its relative absoluteness; secondly its hereditary nature,

[1] Nadel, S. F., 'Land Tenure on the Eritrean Plateau', *Africa*, vol. 16, nos. 1 and 2, pp. 1–22, 99–109. The succeeding pages are closely based on this concise report.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chīqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chīqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chīqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chīqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chīqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chīqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 794

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.*

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services.

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagārit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area.

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[20]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement.

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagārit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gubbār*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dīgā* (high) land, while in certain *qolā* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MPS Amhara MPS

565 taxes collected in the name of the emperor. Concerning the imposts for which
63 the peasants were liable, Plowden wrote in 1844:
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[651] They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts—he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.[80]

Two centuries earlier, observing similar phenomena, Almeida had concluded that "generally speaking, they are all plunderers rather than governors."[81] The only restraints on their exploitative behavior have been an occasionally keen sense of Christian propriety and the limits to what an exasperated local populace will bear.

565 The existence of a predatory class who serve military functions and maintain a gentry subculture is a common enough feature of traditional agrarian societies. What is perhaps less common in the Abyssinian case is the constellation of factors relating to the recruitment of members into this elite.

High secular status in Abyssinia was dependent on a complex of possessions—land, political strength, and honorific titles—which tended to reinforce
[423] one another. The possession of much land has always been a basis for con-
[556] siderable deference in Abyssinia. As a source of produce, rents, and revenues
[662] deflected from the Crown, moreover, it was also a source of wealth to be used in building up one's political strength by rewarding able soldiers and loyal
[661] followers, and by making gifts to one's superiors. Political power was directly obtained through the acquisition of governorships. Such offices were a further
[631] basis for much deference and, through the incumbent's access to tribute, customs fees, court fees, and gifts from his subjects, of much income as well.
[594] Titles, finally, not only were universally esteemed but also entitled the bearers to a style of life which included a presumptive right to gifts and obedience from all inferiors as well as the consumption of much wealth and power.

565 For all these possessions, the Abyssinian noble was directly dependent on
643 his king (or, in the case of a lesser noble, on his overlord). His dependence was twofold: land, political office, and titles came to him as gifts from the sovereign, and, what is more, their continued possession was contingent on
[423] the sovereign's continuing favor. Abyssinian "vassals" had no legal rights to their "benefices," and lands granted them could be withdrawn and given to others as the emperor wished. At the death of a feudal beneficiary his lands

178 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the
565 new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the
• 661 view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in
565 terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly
556 as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like
[241] coffee and *chat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the
[455] traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene
565 in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well
556 as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families,
472 Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became
[175] prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to
[648] collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *mekuanent* and *bälo-seltän*. They
[662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different
565 from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army
369 tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend
177 to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the
[556] more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The
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2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

133 the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie-Debra Tabor
[491] road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada
Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos-Addis Ababa road. Here
Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint.
[132] Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or
eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's
[364] capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns:
an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and
[231] dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputa-
tion of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

175 Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia
since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and
Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'état* in the '20s the lord of Salale was
always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the
[103] Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means
"my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably
[632] beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem
father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to
[563] internal security. The Wagara class in fact lie athwart the main south-north
route from Addis Ababa to Adowa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929-31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north:
[578] Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum
of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean
[635] border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the
Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support
[662] of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Adowa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[43]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 63 66 taxes collected in the name of the emperor. Concerning the imposts for which the peasants were liable, Plowden wrote in 1844:

[651] They pay a certain portion in kind to the Ras, or other great chief, and sometimes a regular tax in money; besides this, they must furnish oxen to plough the king's lands. Their immediate governor then takes his share in kind of every grain (say a fifth), and feeds besides a certain number of soldiers at the expense of each householder: he has rights to oxen, sheep, goats, butter, honey, and every other requisite for subsistence; he must be received with joy and feasting by his subjects whenever he visits them, and can demand from them contributions on fifty pretexts—he is going on a campaign, or has just returned from one; he has lost a horse, or married a wife; his property has been consumed by fire, or he has lost his all in battle; or the sacred duty of a funeral banquet cannot be fulfilled without their aid.[80]

Two centuries earlier, observing similar phenomena, Almeida had concluded that "generally speaking, they are all plunderers rather than governors."[81] The only restraints on their exploitative behavior have been an occasionally keen sense of Christian propriety and the limits to what an exasperated local populace will bear.

565 The existence of a predatory class who serve military functions and maintain a gentry subculture is a common enough feature of traditional agrarian societies. What is perhaps less common in the Abyssinian case is the constellation of factors relating to the recruitment of members into this elite.

High secular status in Abyssinia was dependent on a complex of possessions—land, political strength, and honorific titles—which tended to reinforce [423] one another. The possession of much land has always been a basis for considerable deference in Abyssinia. As a source of produce, rents, and revenues [556] deflected from the Crown, moreover, it was also a source of wealth to be used [662] in building up one's political strength by rewarding able soldiers and loyal [661] followers, and by making gifts to one's superiors. Political power was directly obtained through the acquisition of governorships. Such offices were a further [631] basis for much deference and, through the incumbent's access to tribute, customs fees, court fees, and gifts from his subjects, of much income as well. [554] Titles, finally, not only were universally esteemed but also entitled the bearers to a style of life which included a presumptive right to gifts and obedience from all inferiors as well as the consumption of much wealth and power.

565 643 For all these possessions, the Abyssinian noble was directly dependent on his king (or, in the case of a lesser noble, on his overlord). His dependence was twofold: land, political office, and titles came to him as gifts from the sovereign, and, what is more, their continued possession was contingent on the sovereign's continuing favor. Abyssinian "vassals" had no legal rights to [423] their "benefices," and lands granted them could be withdrawn and given to others as the emperor wished. At the death of a feudal beneficiary his lands

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178 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the
565 new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the
661 view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in
565 terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly
556 as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like
[241] coffee and *ɛhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the
[455] traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene
565 in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well
556 as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families,
472 Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became
[175] prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to
[648] collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *makuännent* and *bäla-ɛeltän*. They
[662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different
565 from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army
369 tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend
177 to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the
[556] more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The
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178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shir* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court.

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand.

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time.

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be

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But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shir* and *divide et impera*. "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

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*883 66 ical wit and activism displayed by students from other countries has embarrassed their cautious dispositions.

There are three reasons for this relative lack of politicization of the Ethiopian students. One is that, having maintained her ancient independence [548] throughout the "scramble for Africa," Ethiopia entered the twentieth century as an independent nation; and five years of Italian rule were not sufficient to shake her spirit. Ethiopian students have thus not had to participate in the anti-imperialist movement, the great school for political activism in the colonial areas.

[571] A second factor is the deeply rooted habit of total subordination to any [157] legitimate authority. Because of this orientation there is a persisting disposition to relegate concern for all political questions to the highest authorities. [577] Nearly two-thirds of the secondary students and a third of the college stu- [829] dents maintain that one should always obey the order of a superior, arguing that "obedience is a virtue," "things would not go right otherwise," and "the Bible says so."

*883 66 641 The third reason for the almost apolitical posture of Ethiopian students has been the absence of opportunities for political expression in their country. African students from British colonies have in the past been surprised to find that their colonial situation admitted far more freedom of speech and press than Ethiopia. Teachers are expected to keep anything remotely connected with Ethiopian politics out of the classroom, and the editors are expected to keep them out of the newspapers. Nor have the students been permitted to form any kind of politically relevant associations. Even casual discussion of domestic political problems among friends has been curtailed because of the all-pervading fear of government informers.

*883 66 177 All this has not prevented Ethiopian students from being affected to a moderate degree by the libertarian and egalitarian ideals of the West. The teaching of European history in secondary school, evaluation of students' performance without respect to class or tribal affiliation, and the exercise of electing student officers in the colleges have acted to leaven the political imagination of the students. Many of them thus ventured a degree of political *883 66 829 criticism in their anonymous questionnaires. Forty-three per cent indicated disapproval of the existing differences between "big men" and the common people. Thirty-nine per cent were critical of the degree of control exerted by the government, of which group two-thirds felt that governmental controls are too strict (e.g., not permitting free expression), and one-third felt they were not strict enough (e.g., with respect to corruption and provincial administration).

*883 668 669 The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, jarred the Addis Ababa college students into an unprecedented state of political activity.[27] In response

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to the rebel leaders' appeal for a show of public support, hundreds of students 883*
staged a demonstration on behalf of the coup. Except for occasional school 668 •
strikes in the past, this was the first time that Ethiopian students had ever 669
taken part in any sort of organized political process. The novelty of the experience was reflected in the confusion on many faces as they marched through the streets of the capital, chanting a militant refrain and carrying placards that celebrated "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" and "Our Country's Peaceful Change." For some, the experience was quite unreal; it was as though they were behaving thus because that is how one is supposed to behave at a time of revolution. Not a few of the participants actually regretted the coup but went along because, as one put it: "The coup has taken place; my friends are for it; so what is one to do?"

Even so, there was a moment of genuine political engagement for all when the student demonstrators proceeded to the army headquarters with the vain plea to forestall civil violence and join the new regime installed by the Imperial Bodyguard. Though they were turned away by bayonets, that moment gave the students the intoxicating taste of direct political expression. Subsequently, the army's abrupt suppression of the rebels left these students in an awkward position. All who took part in the demonstration were required to write letters of apology to the Emperor as a condition of being readmitted to study. They did so, and returned to school; but they have never been the same again. Though on the surface they appear to have reverted to the apolitical, passive orientation of the pre-coup days, occasional oratorical contests and poetry readings have given expression to a sharpened criticism of the government and greater restlessness in the student body.

Because of the relative absence of information and discussion pertaining to 883*
domestic political questions heretofore, Ethiopian students have tended to 829
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On the general question of war and peace they seem to be influenced by the high value given to warfare in traditional Ethiopia. As many as forty per cent of all the students consider war "sometimes a good thing." This sentiment is somewhat stronger among the secondary school students than among the college students, but even the latter show a higher percentage of choice for this response than any of the national groups in the Gillespie-Allport study—except perhaps Egypt. (See Table 12.)

In their attitudes toward the "big three" world powers, the Ethiopian stu- 883*
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571 oblivious to the dangers of speaking out their criticism of the status quo in
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178 clandestine activity. Returnees have been involved in small conspiratorial
156 groups since the mid-fifties. The December, 1960, coup d'état has been the
[669] most ambitious rebellious project to be acted out so far. Similarly motivated
[668] activities have included the duplication and distribution of subversive literature, and the formation of small groups as groundwork for an eventual political party.

Our data do not permit reliable estimates of the frequency of these different modes of adaptation among the returnees. It is important to note, however, that individuals often change from one mode to another in the course of their experience after return and that many follow more than one pattern at the same time. It is unlikely that the total number of returnees oriented primarily as rebels has ever exceeded two per cent. Most of them move in and out of phases of Reformism, Withdrawal, and Opportunism, depending to a large extent on the accidents of their appointments. A more concrete picture of their experience may be suggested by the following case study, that of a Western-educated Ethiopian who went from a phase of Withdrawal to one of Reformism tinged with Opportunism.

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571 The Adjustment of "Haile": Case Study of a Returnee
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October, 1958. Haile has recently returned from four years of study in a Western country. He speaks very critically about the state of things in Ethiopia. He is particularly upset by the prevailing inefficiency, the lack of industriousness, and the interminable procrastination (*Ishi naga*).

January, 1959. Haile seems deeply depressed. The ministry in which he has been placed affords him no opportunity to work effectively and the job he has bears no relation to what he was trained for. He has withdrawn more into himself, but to all outward appearances plays perfectly well, with great self-assurance, the role of the Amhara bureaucrat.

July, 1959. Now Haile is working in a different ministry, in a job somewhat more closely related to his training. He appears to feel productive and useful now, and his criticism is constructive. For example, he frequently compares the situation in the United States and Ethiopia, to show how the same sort of problem can be solved more readily in the U.S. because of its greater facilities. Though Ethiopia's comparative handicaps frustrate him, he talks of plans for the development of Ethiopia with some enthusiasm. . . . Haile complains of an

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[For historical information on the region of Manz in Shoa Province, along with its succession of leaders, its warfare with the Galla, and internal strife, see category 175.]

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*175 I am the descendant of Nagāssi, and who put you, a Galla, on the throne of my fathers?"[81] He began his campaign by sending an expedition against the Wallo Galla, who were dependents of Rās Gugsa. But before he was able to persuade the reluctant Shoan nobility to venture forth against Gondar, Wassan Sagad's ambitions were cut short, in the fifth year of his reign, by the dagger of a slave.

The assassination of Wassan Sagad brought Shoa a moment of anarchy. In the absence of central authority, vicious passions were unleashed—"at Debra Libanos alone there fell no fewer than eight hundred victims to private animosity, of whose murder no account was ever taken."[82] The Galla burned hamlets over a wide area; they captured the heir apparent and prevented him from reaching the Shoan capital, then at Qundi. At this point Sāhla Selassie, younger son of the late *rās*, left the seclusion of his studies and presented himself to the Shoan nobility. His daring and quick wit won their consent. They named him Rās of Shoa at eighteen years, and he soon began to style himself as king (*negus*) of Shoa as well.

In the ensuing decades Sāhla Selassie completed the process of conquering and consolidating Shoa that his father had initiated. His rule was strong and beneficent, though tribes which did not pay tribute were shown no mercy. He led forays into Galla country three times a year, during which delinquent or independent settlements suffered sudden and total devastation.

*175 648 [669] A major crisis during the reign of Sāhla Selassie was the rebellion of one of his commanders, a man named Matako. Matako had risen to high position from that of minor retainer by dint of his fighting ability, but he antagonized the king by requesting that the king's daughter be married to his son. This was a double breach of etiquette, for the king's daughter would normally be given only to someone from a high-ranking family, and in any case the request should be tendered by some mediating elders, not in person. In the wake of the tension that ensued, Sāhla Selassie had Matako imprisoned. Matako escaped, however, and raised an army of Galla tribesmen to fight his campaign for revenge. The royal forces were in serious trouble. Sāhla Selassie sent a desperate message to the people of Manz: "My brothers, my relations, come and help me!"[83]

Such help could not be taken for granted. The men of Manz were then, as ever, fiercely independent, unwilling to subordinate themselves to distant authorities. At the time of Sāhla Selassie, in fact, Krapf observed that

> [His Majesty's] power and influence in that part of his dominions is very limited and loose. The Mansians openly declare, "We know little about Sahela Selassieh." Nobody would venture to say so in Efat.[84]

Still, the Shoan line had been infused with new Manzē blood by the marriage of Sāhla Selassie's father to Zanaba Warq, the grand-daughter of Golē,

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shir* and *divide et impera*. "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by *fear* and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Ambara MP5

178 is more affected because of orders sent with increasing rapidity and urgency from the central government at Addis Ababa. Sometimes the central government itself gives conservative lip service to some old structure, while quietly modernizing the function.

1. Land Tenure

A. Political Aspects of the Old Tradition:

631 For many centuries Abyssinia was a confederation of states governed by princes, who recognized the superiority of one of them--the "king of kings"; except for occasional centralization of power in the hands of a particular monarch. Only in very recent times, since the late 19th century, does centralization seem to have developed with greater permanency.

631 423 As a result of this social structure, every subject is in some way a functionary of the ruling power. This may infringe on his private property at any time, and he is bound to various labors and obligations. In principle, all land is considered the ultimate property of the power ruling at the top of the social pyramid.

423 All land tenure is therefore considered subject to the final approval of the "king of kings". This [71] principle was recognized in the ancient law code "Fetha Nagast", which, however, formally recognized the principle of private land property, to be expropriated only in case of rebellion. Private land property was further reaffirmed by clause 9 of the Penal Code of 1930, and

631 dominant role in the rural administration. Most of the
565 "awraja gäj" and "wordda" chiefs are from medium and
lower provincial nobility. In Addis Ababa, the "Senate"
646 or Upper House of the Parliament instituted by Emperor
565 Haile Selassie, is appointed from the higher nobility,
the "Mäkwonent", while the Deputies of the Lower House
are selected, with imperial approval, from the lower
country gentry, largely from the Amhara, Tigre, and Shoa
areas.

643 Many special privileges of regional nobility have
631 been abrogated by the present Emperor: The Wag Shum",
178 hereditary ruler of the sub-province of Wag since the
565 Zagwe dynasty of the 13th century, has been abrogated by
him; also the "Behär Nagash", the "King of the Sea", hereditary ruler of the Red Sea coast, was abrogated; also the Muslim Ethiopian dynasty of Jimma, which Menelik II had permitted to continue in accordance with the treaty of peaceful surrender (ostensibly because the present heir had joined the Italians).

The least changed position in the structure of administration is that of the cheqa shum, who forms its broad base.

4. Customary Law and Justice

671 The foremost characteristics of traditional Abyssinian law and justice seem to be that they are based on the power hierarchy of social structure; that they permit and even encourage considerable subjective inter-

671 pretation of the part of the judge; and that they make no sharp distinctions between civil and criminal legal procedures--perhaps because both cases are considered equally disturbing to the society.

A. Abyssinian Law Codes.

The legal patterns of behavior that one can observe in actual practice seem often based on considerations of an unwritten kinship common law reminiscent of the Arab bedouin; at other times of the prestige-power of medieval feudal lords or of African chiefs who "can do no wrong". This pattern was probably little challenged until the 13th century A.D., when the power of the church increased so vastly with the resumption of power of the "Solomonic Dynasty".The earlier pattern was one of absolute power, quick decisions, swift punishment, Much of it remained until the 20th century, and, in remote old-Amhara areas, to this day. It is referred to as "Sebawi heg" (Man-made Law).

671
627 To this older, unwritten code belongs the practice of "blood money", payable to the kinfolk of the murder victim, provided they are willing to accept payment in place of bloody revenge. A weaker kin group usually accepts, but a stronger would be ashamed to take money in place of a life, and resulting feuds, taking dozens of lives, have been known to continue for half a century in remote rural areas. The old price used to be the "semanya" (lit. 80, i.e. 80 Maria Theresa Thalers), as much as a common man could be expected to

accumulate in a lifetime. The present price is usually Eth$1000.-.

This practice is so strong that even at present a judge of a semi-modern court in Addis Ababa will suspend a prison sentence for involuntary manslaughter on condition that the murderer accumulate this sum and pay it to the victim's kinfolk--a wise decision preventing a new chain of murders. Recently a uniformed policeman in Addis Ababa, who was under this sentence for just that crime, made his tour among resident Europeans in the business district, begging money, with a letter in English explaining his need, signed by his own superior officer!

The absolute powers of the "ras" or "negus" in the past were limited only by the geographical boundaries of their effective military and administrative realms. All of them sat in judgment of their subjects, and combined legislative, judicial and executive powers in their persons. But each subject had the right to appeal directly to this highest authority against unjust treatment by a lower officer, provided he could throw himself in the path of the ruler and catch his attention. This right to "abyet" ("Hear me") continues to this day.

Nearly all "ras" and "negus" of the past maintained political prisons for their noble relatives who might become contenders to the throne. These prisons were not walled, but located on inaccessible mountain tops, "amba", and sometimes referred to as "wäheni". One such "wäheni" was located at a place called Geshan, in the old, smaller, Begemdir district, and was used by the kings of Gondar

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

697 from the 16th-17th centuries. When this area, which had been a sort of frontier area, became too settled, the political prison was transferred farther northwest to the edge of the escarpment leading down to the Sudan, between Chelga and Metemma.

671 175 779 A formal, written law code was superimposed on the earlier unwritten one in the 13th century, when the Abyssinian church extended its ecclesiastical code to cover also the temporal judicial behavior of lords as well as commoners, in all phases of life. This is referred to as "yäbaherya heg" (lit. the Law from Overseas), regarded as including "Moral Law" (i.e.Church Law).

This code, called the "Fetha Nägäst"(Law of the Kings) was basically derived from Roman Canon Law of Constantine, formulated at the Coptic Synod in Egypt in the 9th and 10th centuries, then translated in 1239, by Al-Safi Abu Al-Fada'il, into the Arabic language which the Copts of Egypt had by that time adopted for their own worship also. The code was a blend of Canons of the Coptic church councils, the Justinian Code, and theBible.

It was brought to Abyssinia during the reign of King Zera-Yaqob, and translated into Geez, then in its final stages as a spoken language, by the Abyssinian priest Petros Gäbre-Egzer. The Fetha Nägäst" became the official supreme law of the land when Bishop Takla-Haymanot resurrected the "Solomonic Dynasty" about that time. Of course the Abyssinian church officially believes that the "Fetha Nägäst" is much older, and that it has never been altered.

671 779 The Code consists of 51 chapters, of which 22 deal with

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

671 church rules and 29 with civil and criminal law, without
779 any distinctions between these categories:

Table 7: The Old Abyssinian Law Code: Civil-Criminal and Ecclesiastical Content.

Ecclesiastical Content:	Civil-Criminal Content:
Duties of the Church	The Sick
Divine Literature	Food, Clothing, Dwelling, Occupations, suitable for the faithful.
Christening	
Patriarchs, Bishops, Priesthood	Marriage, Dowry; Prohibition of Concubinage
Deaconship and Under-Deaconship	
Commandments for all Believers	Loans free from interest; Mortgage; Bail
The Confession of Faith	Deposit; Power of Attorney
Circumcision and other Religious customs	Liberty; Slavery; Emancipation
Monks and Nuns	Guardianship
Martyrs; Confessors; Renegades	Society; Community of the faithful
Mass; Eucharist; Prayer; Fasting	
Endowments and Pious Foundations	Constraining a Person by Force
The Holy Days	Lost and Disappeared Property
Alms	Judge and Witnesses
The Tithe; First Fruits	Worshippers; Blasphemers; Sorcerers; Murderers
Administration and Income of the Church.	Thieves; Drunkards; Usurer
	The Disobedient Son
	Sexual Relations
	The Abused
	Tenancy and Land Serfdom The Will and Inheritance Public Roads; Plots; Buildings; Water.

•671 Despite its apparent and proclaimed orthodoxy, occasional amendments, either in theory or practice or both, have been made through royal decrees or common-law usage. For example, concubinage has long been practiced, [588] sometimes in the form of "dämoz" marriage, which evades the Fetha Nagast by giving the woman the status of "hired servant" receiving a periodic "wage", and in this form the practice is at present legally recognized even in the new, modern laws decreed by the present emperor.

In fact, the "Fetha Nägäst" contains an "elastic clause", which has been rediscovered under the present regime, and is cited as justification for the new, European-patterned laws which upset the ultra-conservatives. This clause advises: "Act according to your observation of the c nditions of times and seasons". This was quoted in the new Penal Code of 1930.

681 However, in the past, the draconic aspects of the criminal law in particular were most literally interpreted by many kin chiefs and feudal lords up to the beginning of the present emperor's regime. The hand of a thief was cut off, and in case of armed robbery both a hand and a foot. Rebels were similarly punished. If a person took the usual oath, "by the life of the King" and was found to have perjured himself, his tongue could be cut out. An insult to the king could be punished by blinding. A father had the right of life and death over [593 567] his children--but not over his Christianized slaves. The latter were further protected against being sold, the penalty for which offense could be the hanging of the master.

671 The intent of these guiding principles and defini-
696 tions were to aid the judge to arrive at a just verdict, preferably a "Solomonic" one. Guides were considered desirable, perhaps due to the absence of the principle of any law of precedence. The emphasis was on the "Code", and this was reinforced by the culture pattern of "literalness", in behavior.

In effect, however, these guides have enabled both draconic or bribed (and therefore lenient) judges to interpret the law with considerable subjectivity. Clever talkers-in-court never fail to use their ability to sway the public audience, which usually has a tremendous effect on the judge.

671 The effect of the "Fetha Nägäst" was to link the
777 church and state. There were usually 12 provincial chief justices, "wombär", in allusion, apparently, to the 12 apostles. The "Fetha Nagäst" ruled all marriage, even
586 684 the non-ecclesiastical "semanya" marriage outside the church premises. Divorce proceedings in the old-Amhara areas still can be carried through only with agreement of the "mänfäs agway", the soul-confessor, one of the priests of the parish, although no divorce is possible in a church marriage.

This "mänfäs agway" receives a small salary from the state; he can summon local state police if the accused mate has refused to appear, to bring him by force. If the divorce is granted, the "mänfäs agway" usually sentences both mates to a fine of Eth$5.- payable to him, on the grounds that both are technically lawbreakers for

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

586 684 having "torn the marriage agreement". Furthermore, the woman can bring religious pressure to bear on the "manfas agway" if he hesitates in granting the divorce, by publicly ripping off her blue neckcord, the "mätäb", symbol of Christianity, thus threatening to run off to the Muslims because her mistreatment has become completely unendurable. Since the "Fetha Nägäst" also covers Guardianship, the "mänfäs agway" decides to whom children of a broken marriage are to be assigned: usually children under 7 years of age go to the mother, but an older child may be asked to indicate a choice. Boys over 10 usually are given to the father.

671 The new law codes of Emperor Hailé Selassie I are patterned after European, modern codes and are in the process of more comprehensive codification at present. What has been done so far will be described later.

675 B. Contracts, Oath, and the Legal Person, in Abyssinian Traditinnal Law.

A contract, called "kedan" (the same word is used for "Testament" in Biblical reference), does not have to be written, and usually is not. But it must be witnessed, preferably by more than one reliable person, preferably male. The contracting parties formally announce their agreement, then touch their palms lightly, (ej mätta). If the contract is a last will and testament, the Confessor ("mänfäs agway") holds the thumb of the testator while the will is formally spoken aloud.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

F. Law and Justice in Transition.

178 671 Emperor Menelik II had tried to limit what Europeans considered draconic penalties and procedures. Emperor Haile Selassie I continued to adjust tribal law to modern conditions, and, as his power increased, expressed the principle, in the Penal Code of 1935: "By learning European practice, (the people) may attain to higher degrees of knowledge, because the basis of our code of laws in many places fits with the European code". Both emperors, while introducing modern acculturation in law and justice, quite consciously, did not, it is clear, abrogate the old tradition. They could not have done so in practice, despite the growing power of the central monarchy. For the traditional values and attitudes, particularly among the Amhara, are still largely intact.

The transitinn can be analyzed as proceeding in four phases: (a) The abrogation of draconic penalties and procedures; (b) continuing customary law and justice, (officially and unofficially); (c) Modernization from the top down; (d) Sectarian privileges to resident minorities.

681 178 671 (a) During the reign of Menelik II enforcement of the old draconic penalties continued. The hand of a thief was cut off, and he was thereafter called "dush" (lit. stump). Cattle rustlers, "dandä", were punished the same way. It was not rare to see mutilated persons, hand or foot or both, in those days. It was not until the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie I that the Penal Code of 1930 could have been decreed and enforced.

681 178 671 According to this change, mutilation of thieves was forbidden; the chaining of debtor to creditor was abrogated; flogging was reduced in frequency and quantity; the area that could fall under collective arrest, "afärsata", was limited; the legal validity of evidence from the "lebäshay" was indirectly abrogated. In 1933, the emperor further limited days, hours, and distances of the "afärsata". Capital punishment had been centralized in 1930.

It is noteworthy that in several cases old practices were for the first time acknowledged in writing, despite the continuing hesitancy to admit publicly any practice that European observers might regard as primitive. Thus, blood-money in place of blood-feud was decreed legal in 1930

426 671 178 Liberalization was also legalized by regarding civil law. In 1923 the Law of Loans fixed maximum interest at 9%. As usual , this was found to be too far a departure from practice for enforcement, and it was later raised to 12%. One of the last decrees prior to Italian hostilities, provided, in May 1935, for the abrogation of statute-labor, permitting the tenant (gabbar) to make a small payment (resembling a quitrent) instead.

694 661 178 (b) The pattern of judges riding circuit continued unabated, from the end of the harvest in the month of Tahsas (about November) until Easter. Sometimes judicial councils, "<u>cubaē</u>" were available in towns for appeals. But the old custom of bringing a gift to the "great man" to interest him in the indivi-

694 dual's case, the "gubba" gift, continued, and it is often
[661] identical with a bribe. At the same time, the old cus-
178 tom which served as a last resort to a poor person to
have his injustice rectified, by appearing with a heavy
stone perched on the back of his neck almost crushing
him, was abrogated because Europeans looked on this as
primitive. The poor man thus has lost his few safeguards,
and now is losing even the right to beg and to create a
[171] the great man and shouting "abyet". (The practice of
carrying the rock resembles that of innocently accused
Arab Beduin who appear pressing a blade against their
necks to demonstrate and shout their innocence.

178 Transition thus proceeds in unequal shifts, with
671 many culture lags. Modernization of law and justice
643 proceeds from the top, Addis Ababa, down the pyramid.
One of the reasons for the circuit-riding of the emperor
himself is to remind the chiefs of his realm of his
all-seeing and all-hearing power, just as was done in
the past. He acts as inspector-general.

The Emperor and his High Court in Addis Ababa stil
give lip service to the Fetha Nägäst Code. But in prac-
tice, this amounts to little more than rationalization
for the benefit of the ultra-conservative Amhara nobles.
693 The position of the "afä negus" (lit. Mouthpiece of the
King), who traditionally was the guardian of the Fetha Nä-
gäst code, has now become honorary in practice. In the
past he was the second-most powerful person in the realm,
trusted partly because he was not of the ruling family

693 and thus not a contender for the throne. He was the chief justice, for he could hear appeals even from the highest court in the land, and act as arbitrator and judge in high-level quarrels between feudal lords and even involving the king himself. His role as chief counselor of the king has now been taken by the "Tsahafi" (lit. scribe), who has risen to that position from that of long-time private secretary, at present Wolda-Giyorgis.

692 The present High Court has original and appellate jurisdiction over all cases in Ethiopia, criminal as well as civil. Majority opinion of the judges prevails. In 1942 a Supreme Imperial Court was appointed to hear appeals from the High Court, but it convenes only intermittently. A secret Crown Court is called together in special treason cases affecting the old nobility, or the officers of the new army.

671 177 A new Civil Law Code is still being worked out, by a series of European jurists invited for that purpose. Meanwhile new decrees are published intermittently in the official "Negarit Gazeta" (lit. the drum gazette), in both Amharic and English. The Attorney-General is a foreigner (for some time Mr. Nathan Marein), but the Minister of Justice, the Legislative Consultative Committee and the President of the High Court are Ethiopians, with a range of modern education from very little to average.

642 The Constitution of 1931, further liberalized in 1955, was a free-will gift of the Emperor. It established a Parliament of two houses, the upper directly appointed,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

186 828 Pride in group, military unit; less emphasis on individual heroism.

Steadier temperament; endurance rather than burst of energy.

"If you treat him as a friend, he will serve you faithfully."

186 779 The religious ethnocentrism of the Amhara is based on their belief that their nation, ruled by the "Solomonic Dynasty", became heir to the "Chosen People" ruled by the House of David, when the latter refused to accept Christ. This is not always clear to the illiterate Amhara, but even he emphasizes this intertwined ethnic and religious principle of his ethnocentrism when he regards the name "Amhara" as signifying both, as he always does.

[304] While the Amhara no longer regards circumcision ("gezrat") as the symbol of entering the Covenant of the Faith, as does the Old Testament and the Jewish religion, he does follow this procedure a week after birth; and an uncircumcised man ("lembut") is called several insulting names and regarded as almost on a level with African Shangalla slaves who are also uncircumcised. Circumcision therefore has an intertwined ethnic and religious significance.

671 Amhara legal philosophy, guarded by the church, and expressed therefore in the Geez terminology, analyses the universe as follows:

Natural Law - "tabayawi heg"

Man-made Law - (similar to common law) - "sabawi heg"

Moral Law (particularly Coptic law) - "yabaherya heg" (lit. Law from overseas).

186 Ethnocentrism of the Amhara has for several centuries been consciously directed particularly against the attacking Muslims. The "mitab" neckcord is believed directly the result of one such purposeful development. Numerous proverbs emphasize the stereotype of the Muslim as the breaker of Amhara religious order as well as social order, and the promoter of lawlessness. Even proverbs such as the following,

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

to be necessary for ordination: ~~payment of moderate~~ 793
fees ranging up to $5 (about 10s. to-day) appears to be all that is required. In this direction matters do not seem to have progressed much since Bruce wrote in 1790 giving the following description of an ordination:

"A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who they are, and they tell him they want to be deacons (*debtera*). On this with a small iron cross on his hands after making two or three signs, he blows with his mouth twice or thrice upon them, saying, 'Let them be deacons'. I saw once all the army of Begemder made deacons, just returned from shedding the blood of 10,000 men, thus drawn up in Aylo Meidan, and the Abouna standing at the Church of St. Raphael, about a quarter of a mile distant from them. With these mingled about 1000 women, who consequently, having part of the same blast and brandishment of the Cross, were as good deacons as the rest."

It is highly regrettable in the interests of Abyssinia 793
that the priesthood, being what they are, should exercise so much power and influence. This is no doubt 693
attributable to a variety of causes, to tradition, wealth, land ownership, and also to the fact that they (or some of them) are the only persons in the country who understand the ancient Geze language in which the Code of Law (the *Fetha Nagast*) and other similar [671] works are written. This gives them a great "pull", and one result is that they are an indispensable adjunct to all the judges, who are very much in their hands.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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The Old and New Elites

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that character-
179 izes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary
178 Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

[433] In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels: coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal [671] realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The govern- [64] mental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious [795] [794] institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

121 This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratifi-
56
178 cation.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The effect of this literature has not been, as David Riesman suggests is true of the written word generally, an individualizing one. It did not serve to "help liberate the reader from his group and its emotions, and allow the contemplation of alternative responses and the trying on of new emotions."[31] It has served rather to buttress conformity, by rekindling identification with the sacred symbols of the society. Ethiopian religious literature does not invite introspection; it is a corpus to be venerated and solemnly rehearsed. When a devout Ethiopian reads his daily or weekly portion from some writing such as the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David) or the *Weddāssē Māryām* (*Praise of Mary*), he is said to be "repeating" the text—*Dāwit yedaggemāl*. Most of those who learn to read the words of these writings do not understand the Ge'ez in which they are composed.

A similar function has been performed by the secular literature, which runs primarily in praise of royalty and thus has served to uphold the political status quo. The earliest Ethiopian writings are inscriptions of the Aksumite kings dating from the fourth century A.D. Here, in a style that is to persist through the ages, the royal deeds are recounted in meticulous detail and endowed with the highest morality.[32] Ge'ez chronicles were composed in this manner for most of the emperors after the thirteenth century. The earliest specimens of written Amharic consist of hymns in praise of the Emperor Amde Ṭseyon (1314–44).

Two other written works put the capstone on this conservative structure. The *Kebra Nagast*, the Ethiopian national epic, has served chiefly to legitimate the royal line that came to power in the thirteenth century and to cement once and for all the union of monarchy and church. The *Fetha Nagast*, the traditional legal code based on various canon and civil laws compiled in medieval Egypt, has served not as a working code for the adjudication of court cases but as an embellishment of *de facto* decisions, imparting to the judge an increment of authority by virtue of his ritual of referring to them.

Because of the relative sterility of Abyssinian written literature, art, dance, and music, many observers have concluded that Abyssinian culture provides no outlets for truly creative expression.[33] This judgment is not just. The Abyssinian genius freely discloses itself in the stories, verse, and proverbs that make up its very rich *oral* literature. Within this oral tradition, especially in its verse, a good deal of original expression and personalized commentary may be found.

Ethiopic verse comprises a wide variety of forms which differ according to subject and occasion. Classical *qenē*, Ge'ez verse in praise of some holy figure or political leader, is composed by *dabtarā* on certain religious or political holidays. More playful verses of praise are sung in Amharic by *dabtarā* or minstrels on festive occasions. In such verses the poet may in-

681 master. Such verdicts were still carried out during the reign of Emperor Menelik II who died in 1913, though he tried to reduce the literal enforcement of the more draconic parts of the Code.

It is noteworthy that the application of the "Fetha Nägäst" was supposed to be based on the biblical principle of Luke, that punishment should be applied according to the knowledge of the offender, not according to the seriousness of the offense. This was reaffirmed in the Penal Code of 1930 (though in effect this new code abrogated much else of the Fetha Nägäst), as follows:

672 692 The following are degrees of relative culpability, in accordance with which degrees of punishment are to be determined on a declining scale:

The man who knows the law
the forgetful person (unstable personality)
the "balagär" (rustic peasant)
the (otherworldly) monk
the poor and ignorant person (illiterates)
the stranger
the ignorant woman
the imbecile or invalid
the Ethiopian from a non-Amharic-speaking province
the child below age 12.

The judge was also permitted and encouraged to take the emotional personality of the offender into consideration(without indicated scale) , such as:

The oppressive person
the lawless
the proud
the envious
the treacherous
the revengeful
the intemperate
the quarrelsome
the careless
the bullying

695 The traditional oath, "May the ruler die" (If I lie), is still in full use. This oath is called "semanya". As mentioned above, perjury was once a very serious offense, even a capital one, later was penalized by substitution of "blood money", i.e. 80 Thalers fine. Until recently, provincial farmers still invoked the name of the head of their old provincial dynasty in this oath, the "ras", or the name of the long-dead Menelik II. Since 1941, however, the name of the present emperor is [643] universally used, "Haile Selassie yemut". It is in a very real sense a form of acknowledgement of the supreme power of the ruler, whose supreme power over and above the feudal system is regarded, traditionally, as a protection from chaos, lawlessness and uprisings that destroy and cause suffering. The proverb says:

[539] "When the emperor dies,
with whom will there be judging?".

The oath "Haile Selassie yemut" is used also to arrest lawbreakers, much as English police might arrest "in the name of the king".

672 Another old legal tradition still in full force is that of the "wäs", the personal guarantor. To obtain a loan or a job, the applicant must always present at least one reputable guarantor, who is then personally responsible for making up any default or damage or misbehavior, and who can even be jailed in case the culprit escapes. He acts as personal bondsman for a defendant, to avoid his being held for trial in jail. This "wäs"

672 agreement must be before witnesses, again with use of the oath "Haile Selassie yemut" (May the emperor die, if I break my word). Often a judge will not release the loser of either a criminal or civil case unless he can produce a personal guarantor who will guarantee that the damages or fine will be paid.

562 672 Women, under the traditional laws, were considered legal persons but to a lesser degree than men. They could act as witnesses only of what they had actually seen or heard, and were warned not to "interpret" their testimony. Sometimes there were threatened with jail if their testimony seemed contradictory and not entirely useful. On a lower level were slaves, who were not le-
567 672 gal persons, but whose testimony on what they had directly witnessed could be heard in court, subject to evaluation by the judge.

C. Judicial Personnel

693 694 (1) The Curbstone Judge. He is sometimes referred to as "yäqälatē danya" (lit. delegate judge). Two persons having a quarrel may stop a respected passerby whom they consider a peer, often a bearded "shemagälye" (elder), to arbitrate their quarrel. They stop him in his tracks by calling out "Haile Selassie yemut", or if they or he are very old fashioned and dignified, in the Geez version of the oath "Be-Hayle Selassie Amlak" ("in the name of the God of Haile Selassie").

694 (b) Collective arrest, "afärsata" was officially
672 discontinued only during the past decade, and may well be re-established in any local emergency. It is usually applied only in cases of murder. The district administrator or governor could order the judges to arrest an area, then fence in all the men, and decree that "not a cow be milked nor a baby suckled", in the traditional phrase, until the investigation is completed. Every person was interrogated individually, and made to swear, before priests brought from the Coptic church, the oath of excommunication, "aggäzazät": "May He (i.e. God), perforate me as the Cross" ("endä mäsqälu yebäsasan"), if thefull truth be withheld.

When the culprit finally confessed, due to the tremendous social pressure on him, he was chained and sometimes thrown into a dungeon until trial. The cheqa shum was made responsible for guarding him, and could be assessed heavy damages, even full blood-money, if the murderer escaped. If the murderer was not found, the entire hamlet or territory under collective arrest could be sentenced to pay the "blood-money", unless they could prove that the murderer must have been a "passing bandit". Even then the cheqa shum might be fined for not having been watchful enough. At present he is somewhat relieved from this duty by the local officer, a semi-feudal "farasanna", whose only job is to look out for bandits and prevent anyone from shooting off his rifle, lest a bloody feud break out and everyone become trigger-happy. This
625 is in rural areas. In towns, the police, uniformed in

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war. 828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance. 565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā*, or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin." 565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz*, a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days. 565* 461 [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[13] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

*565 461 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārasa*) rather than to plow (*ārasa*) himself.

*565 461 181 577 183 [423] If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obligations toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 78 181 183 [262] [301] Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mätab*, a simple neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 577 181 183 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shameful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect toward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntä*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*häfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

*565 57 181 183 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakäm*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 602 571 181 183 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of moral pressure for the reconciliation of conflict, it appears to place greater emphasis on the acting out of aggression. It does this, first of all, by defining a number of acts as offenses which justify violent retribution of some sort. Appropriation of one's land, seduction of one's wife, and injury of one's relatives are acts of this nature, and it is incumbent on the offended party to seek personal revenge or, as the Amhara put it, "to return the debt" (*bedder mammalas*). It is considered shameful to remain passive when so affronted, an attitude expressed in the following couplet:

Balaw ba-dimotfar daggmaw ba-wānzā,
Bābbāt rīstennā yallam bamīst wāzzā.

Shoot him with the dimotfar,* get him again with
a wanza,*
Taking your father's land or your wife away,
that is no joking matter.

Aggressiveness is further encouraged by the Amhara ego ideal of masculinity.[13] The identity of Amhara males is very much bound up with their capacity for aggressiveness, by both violent and verbal means. A man who has killed someone is regarded with a certain amount of veneration, and the act of killing is itself praised in verses such as:

Saw gadlu saw gadlu: saw magdal yebajāl,
Saw yālgadala saw sihēd yāngolājāl.

Kill a man! Kill a man! It is good to kill a man!
One who has not killed a man moves around
sleepily.

Similarly, verbal aggression is encouraged by the inclusion of excellence at litigation and insulting in the domain of proper male behavior.[14] The bestowal of insults is a rather stylized, if dangerous, procedure among the Amhara. According to Amhara customary law, insulting is a legal offense. The new criminal code provides for a gradation of penalties according to the seriousness of the insult, including fines which run from Eth$15 to as much as hundreds of dollars. The most serious insults include *bāryā* ("slave"); *ṭayb* ("evil-eyed artisan"); and *qomātā* ("leper"). Insults of lesser to medium degrees of seriousness include the following:

hodām	"greedy" (literally, "bellied")
wafrām	"fat"
saḳārām	"drunkard"
quashāshā	"dirty"
amadām	"scaly-faced" (literally, "ashen")

* Types of rifles.

X794 so that the patient "does not get hurt" in the violent twirling
776 (much as "mizā" protect a wife against her husband). The zar spirit appreciates these acknowledgements and is thus open to negotiations, especially during the "honeymoon".

Only rarely does a male zar "possess" a male human. In this case it is considered not very difficult to come to terms with him and turn him into a protective spirit, through regular financial sacrifices, special attire, and other physical adjustments. Zar doctors seek out powerful male zars whom they need as protective and guiding spirits in their profession. Powerful warriors who have seemed to have a charmed life are believed under such protection - which makes a male more
[674] masculine. Consistently successful thieves who always seem to elude capture are believed to be under such protection. This is said to frighten even the police (or at least offers a ready alibi).

X794 A patient under active treatment by a "zar" doctor is called
755 "tamami" (lit. the one being cared for). The first step in the procedure is the diagnosis, i.e. the identification of the specific zar personality that has possessed the patient. This is usually done at night, for the "zar" hide in daytime and roam at night - their element.

When darkness has fallen, the patient is brought to the hut of the zar doctor. Here the zar disciples, mostly women, are assembled, seated quietly, perhaps talking in subdued tones, or spinning cotton thread. Incense is burning, there is a low, rythmic drum beat, occasionally
X794 broken by chants accompanied by rythmic handclapping. Member after
755 member rises individually, "when the spirit moves her" and begins to
535 perform her "gurri", with slight variations according to her particular zar. The "gurri" is a movement that begins with the shoulders (typical

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

symbolize communal solidarities by the forthright assertion of individual claims and grievances. 121* 181

In virtually every instance of a consideration of communal projects or needs that the author observed or heard of, the dominant characteristic of the discussion was a vigorous and uncompromising assertion of individual claims. If it was a question of allotting spaces in a new marketplace, each discussant was vociferating that the portion allotted to him was insufficient. If it was a question of securing more land for various communal purposes, the various property owners involved orated against contributing a square foot unless reimbursed at some preposterous figure. If it was a scene in court or a police station, everyone with any personal grievance, real or imagined, felt it perfectly proper to interrupt at any point and give vent to his opinion. If it was a question of rebuilding a ravaged church or constructing a road, personal disputations undermined all efforts toward communal action. If it was simply a ceremonial occasion, the peaceful setting one might have expected was shattered by the airing of private disputes. 156 157

> Today a new church building was dedicated. It was built to replace one that had been destroyed more than two decades ago by the Italians. People from all over the area made the journey to attend this celebration. All night long and well into the morning the priests and *dabtarā* sang and danced, accompanied as usual by sistrums and drums. Later in the morning, after the church had been officially sanctified, everyone was assembled in the open space in the church compound to listen to some verses composed in honor of the event by one of the local *bālābbāt*, a man who had been a key figure in getting the church rebuilt. He had scarcely finished reciting his poem when a woman in the audience spoke up in anger, arguing that the new church would involve more taxes and in some way would affect her property rights adversely. While he was trying to pacify her, others interrupted and began airing grievances of their own. What was to have been the climax of an occasion for the expression of communal solidarity ended as a bedlam of argument.[10]

The one area in which communal sentiments have seemed fairly strong among the Amhara has been in connection with the pursuit of outlaws. It is customary—in some Amhara districts, at least—for the local inhabitants to band together in informal posses when threatened by the presence of one or more *shĭftā*, or "outlaws." Yet even here, in his attitudes toward the *shĭftā*, the Amhara reveals an ambivalence regarding the maintenance of civil order and security. 121* 181 156 157 674 627 [829]

The term *shĭftā* had, in former times, primarily a political connotation. It referred to someone who rebelled against his feudal superior and was applied only to persons of relatively high status.[11] More recently the term has been vulgarized and broadened to include any sort of outlaw in the rural areas. In 121* 674 [178]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 any case the *shĭftā* is a man apart, who makes his home in uninhabited mou-
• 674 tainous country or lowlands and lives by stealing cattle and robbing travelers. Some Amhara become *shĭftā* because of a passion for this way of life; this is particularly true of soldiers who, after a long campaign, prefer the continuation of a predatory and free existence to a return to the hard work of the fields. Others do so involuntarily, in order to escape punishment after committing some violence in the course of a personal dispute.

*121 The attitudes of civilian Amhara toward the *shĭftā* combine fear and dis-
674 like with a strong tendency toward idealization. The *shĭftā* is feared because
829 he is a killer; if a person happens to witness him performing some act of
954 theft or murder, he will usually keep quiet about it for fear of reprisal. He is disliked because he lives parasitically off the productive activities of others. But the *shĭftā* is widely admired, on the other hand, because he possesses a number of qualities that are dear to the Amhara. He is reputed to be an expert singer of *shĭllalā*. He is credited with unusually handsome features because, living at the expense of others as he does, he has plenty to eat and no
[577] arduous work to wear him down. Above all he is *guabaz*, the great Amhara virtue that embodies bravery, fierceness, hardihood, and general male compe-
[302] tence. This is symbolized by the *shĭftā*'s letting his hair grow to the proportions of a *gofarē*, the wildly thick hair style of the warrior.

*121 The Amhara's admiration for the *shĭftā* is reminiscent of American atti-
674 tudes toward the outlaw in "western" films. In the Amhara case, however,
829 this is not balanced by a corresponding idealization of a sheriff-figure as the representative of civil order. Although a feudal lord or governor who captures some *shĭftā* in his area may be admired, this admiration will be directed to his personal qualities of bravery or cunning far more than to his capacity as an agent of "law and order." There is no feeling among the Amhara that the *shĭftā* must be captured simply because he is an outlaw. Instead, a more pragmatic approach is taken: the *shĭftā* is acknowledged as a legitimate social type and is tolerated at a distance so long as his killing does not become
[181] wanton or excessive. This approach, and what, in the idealization of the *shĭftā*, appears to be a tendency to identify with someone who openly flaunts the norms of civil society, bespeaks a relatively weak commitment to the value of civil order.

*121 The weakness of the Amhara's attachment to symbols of local community
181 is paralleled by his parochialism with respect to more inclusive levels of
186 community. This parochialism is manifest in diverse ways in the different
619 social strata. Among the peasantry it appears, for example, as an aversion to arranging marriages and permitting land to pass to an Amhara from a different province. Among the clergy it has been expressed in terms of those regionally based doctrinal differences which have disrupted the church for many centuries. Among the nobility it has taken the form of incessant politi-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121	*arām*	"indolent" (literally, "full of feces")
181	*ya-dehā lijj*	"son of a poor man"
571	*ya-lēbā lijj*	"son of a thief"
578	*yat abātk*	"bastard" (literally, "where is your father?")
[673]	*waslātā*	"lazy no-good"

Other, less direct forms of insult are also widely employed. As was already mentioned, a major use of the wax-and-gold formula is to express insults in so veiled a manner that direct reprisal is unlikely. Another tactic is that of not showing someone the proper respect or in some way manipulating the forms of etiquette to his disadvantage. A favorite anecdote concerning Alaqā Gabra Hānnā illustrates the simultaneous use of both methods: the Alaqā once flattered a donkey driver by bowing quite low to greet him and calling, *Endēt adarātchu?* ("How did you spend the night?"). Only when the man proudly related the episode to his friends, so the story goes, was he made to realize that the greeting was expressed in the plural form (*-atchu*), implying that he and his donkey were being placed in the same category.[15] Still another mode of indirect insult is that known as *ashmur,* in which two friends insult each other vigorously at the top of their voices, the real object of their abuse being a third party who is within earshot.

If the Amhara is by disposition inclined to bestow insults, he is still readier
[865] to take offense at the slightest hint of one directed at him. One of the tasks of socialization among the Amhara is to sensitize the young person to the various types of insults and to motivate him to strike back when he is so offended. Insults are frequently part of a vicious circle which moves from petty disagreement to serious argument to litigation at court, *dulā* fights,
[576] and even premeditated murder. Breach of etiquette may lead to no less serious consequences. In one court case which the author observed, a man was accused and convicted for addressing his father-in-law, whom he normally addressed by the polite form *ersewo,* with the familiar form *anta* in a moment of anger.

Argumentation, litigation, insulting, and revenge comprise the hard core of social interaction among Amhara. While it is possible to exaggerate the significance of these forms in the total pattern of Amhara social life, there can be little doubt of a strongly dissentious disposition just below the surface, and often at the surface, of Amhara interpersonal relations. Still another axis along which this individualistic disposition tends to be manifest is that of deception and suspicion.

*121 The Amhara is a master at *deception.* With straight face and convincing
181 manner he will relate the most preposterous fictions. The Amhara themselves
571 tend to be aware that this is one of their characteristic activities. When, for
577 example, I replied to the query of an Amhara gentleman that some horn
[123]

586 684 having "torn the marriage agreement". Furthermore, the woman can bring religious pressure to bear on the "manfas agway" if he hesitates in granting the divorce, by publicly ripping off her blue neckcord, the "mätäb", symbol of Christianity, thus threatening to run off to the Muslims because her mistreatment has become completely unendurable. Since the "Fetha Nägäst" also covers Guardianship, the "mänfäs agway" decides to whom children of a broken marriage are to be assigned: usually children under 7 years of age go to the mother, but an older child may be asked to indicate a choice. Boys over 10 usually are given to the father.

671 The new law codes of Emperor Hailé Selassie I are patterned after European, modern codes and are in the process of more comprehensive codification at present. What has been done so far will be described later.

675 B. Contracts, Oath, and the Legal Person, in Abyssinian Traditional Law.

A contract, called "kedan" (the same word is used for "Testament" in Biblical reference), does not have to be written, and usually is not. But it must be witnessed, preferably by more than one reliable person, preferably male. The contracting parties formally announce their agreement, then touch their palms lightly, (ej mätta). If the contract is a last will and testament, the Confessor ("mänfäs agway") holds the thumb of the testator while the will is formally spoken aloud.

562 which happens among middle and upper feudal nobility--
565 may herself become the founder ~~m~~sponsor of a church. In this case she usually ap,oints a male administrator from among her kinsmen, or a local cheqa shum headman, to supervise the sharecropper gabbar supplying her church. She then would also exercise direct or indirect control over the qēs gobāz, the administrating priest.

A commoner or peasant woman is much more exposed
[585] to the inferior legal status of womwn. According to traditional law, the "semanya" bond with the formula of the oath "May the Emperor die" (e.g. Hayle Selassye
[675] yemut"), is not legally valid, and her contractual function has to be performed through a male kinsman. Neve:theless, her legal position is by no means as
[586] weak as that of the Muslim woman. The Amhara woman may take half of her husband's movable possessions upon divorce, i.e. thecows she brought into her marriage and half theincreade of any pooled property. To protect her somewhat from wilful mistreatment at the hands of her husband, a bride is given two male protective "best men", the "mizēn- but they are kinsmen of the bridegroom's!

Social inferiority of a commoner woman is also associated with her manual and menial labor, as hauler of water and hewer of wood or collector of cowdung.for fuel, and similar servant-like chores inside and out-
[854] side the hut. The baby which she carries on her back and breast-feeds for two years renders her physically dirty and often smelly. The commoner woman may not

585 bride and groom merely expresses the prayerful wish that "God will show the way" to the lay couple toward "qurban", in time. In fact, middle-aged couples who have gone through several divorces and have finally decided definitely to spend the rest of their days together, may take the "aklil" in "qurban". Qurban for lay people, e.g. deacons, is performed usually only 40 days after their "semanya", to make certain that their marriage bond is strong and real and that no rift has arisen (e.g. if the bride had been found not a virgin).

588 487 "Damoz" marriage (lit. wage) is what the term implies. Most commonly the arrangement is from month to month, but may be for longer or shorter periods, such as the duration of a caravan trip, or an extended stay at a major market, where the "damoz" wife offers the best and often the only available hotel and restaurant services. (She is similar to the Biblical lady in the city of Jericho). The term is a contraction of "damawag" (lit. "blood - and - sweat") [465] compensation. Her wages vary greatly from region to region, and have considerably increased in recent years, for even the new, modern law recognized her claim. In the past she did well if she received ETH$5.-per month in addition to housekeeping expenses, but [675] now some obtain ETH$20.- from traders. The agreement is made orally but before witnesses, so that she can go to court if the man defaults on his payments. If they separate at the expiration of the contract, she has no right to half his property as does the semanya [428] wife, but if there are children conceived during her contract, the children can make a claim for part of the father's inheritance should he die.

201 675 196 Symbolism in commerce serves to give legal validity to a trade agreement, since bystanders thus become witnesses. When buyer and seller agree, the right hands are waved up and down, which attracts attention, then palm touches on palm (with fingers stretched away). This may or may not be reinforced by the verbal oath "Hayle Selassye yemut" (May the emperor die, if I lie). This commercial symbolism is followed especially in important transactions, such as livestock.

201 196 Symbolism in political life takes the form of rythmic handclapping, ("anchchätächchähä"), not to be confused with Western applause. It is performed as a greeting, as acknowledgement of superordination. It does not follow public proclamation. These are greeted with respectful silence, but women may indicate actual or pretended joy with their joyshout "ellel". Amhara public opinion ("astäyäyät") sometimes signals negative reaction to official proclamations by "murmuring" in a delayed stage-whisper, and though officialdom traditionally pretends to ignore public opinion, it usually employs paid listeners who mix with the public to trace any "murmuring" to its sources. For, in the past, ignored murmurings frequently led to rebellions.

Anger, whether silent or accompanying verbal battles, is signalled by wide opening of the eyes ("afättätä"), or a furious, intent stare ("täfattätä").

201 Directional signs are made by moving eyelids and eyelashes, particularly by nobles or persons imitating their subtle ways. To communicate "get rid of this person", I want to talk to you alone", the eyelids wink up and down ("taqqäsä"); to signal "come out of the hut, I want to talk to you outside", the pupils and eyelashes work in the direction of the door. Men may give such signals as frequently as women.

201 177 The signal of expressing desire to enter consists of knocking with the entire fist ("körakkomä" - onomatopoetic). Finger-knocking

X794 756 556 A poor woman will perform work such as serving coffee, sweeping, fetching water and fuel, cooking, baking, brewing beer, and spinning cotton thread in the house of the zar doctor.

X794 675 776 The contract arranged by the zar doctor with the zar spirit for each patient devotee is regarded as having legal validity. In exchange for regular gifts and services the zar spirit promises limited repossession, at regular intervals only, and self-restraint in contagion of other members of the family of the patient at least until after her death. After that event the zar spirit may pass on to the next generation to assure himself continuation of the preferred gifts.

X794 776 Complications are explained away on the grounds that there has been some trifling oversight in payment of dues or in respect; or on the grounds that another, evil, zar has "stolen" the dues in order to make trouble. The zar doctor never admits to error; instead, he restores the contract by instructing the possessed to dance the "gurri" of atonement ("yäbäter gurri") (lit. of the stick) if guilty; or the "yämehrat gurri", dance of mercy and acquittal, in case of slight [691] oversight. Some zars are as fond of litigation as most Amhara. One zar spirit is nicknamed "wäs aggach" because he always requires a personal guarantor, "wäs", whom he will "possess" in place of the patient in case of default in payments.

X794 694 Even the judicial authorities, the provincial judges among the Amhara, will occasionally recognize zar possession as a valid excuse for violations of the law, or at least as a mitigating circumstance. Failure to appear in court to answer a summons may be forgiven on the grounds of "agorra" (lit. he roared, shrieked, i.e. is under possession) that particular day. The only other equally strong excuse would be that the person summoned had just taken kosso purgative.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

separate persons, but two in one flesh; and that so in like 585
manner should their hearts and wills be. There they remained until mass had been said, and he gave them the communion, and bestowed on them the blessing. And this I saw done in the town of Dara, in the Kingdom of Xoa.[1] I saw another performed in the town of Çequete, in the Kingdom of the Barnagais. When they make these marriages they 586
enter into contracts, as for instance: If you leave me or I [675]
you, that one that causes the separation shall pay such a penalty. And they set the penalty according to the persons, so much gold or silver, or so many mules, or cloths, or cows, or goats, or so many measures of wood. And if either of them separate, that one immediately seeks a cause of separation for such and such reasons, so that few incur the penalty, and so they separate when they please, both the husbands and the wives. If there are any that observe the marriage rule, they are the priests, who never can separate, and cultivators, who have an affection for their wives because they help them to bring up their sons, and to harrow and weed their tillage, and at night when they come to their house they find a welcome reception: thus in effect or perforce they are married for the whole of their lives. As I said that they imposed penalties at marriages, the first Barnagais that we knew, whose name was Dori, separated from his wife, and paid her the penalty of a hundred gold ounces, which were a thousand cruzados, and he married another woman. And the wife that he separated from married a noble gentleman who was named Aaron, a brother of the said Barnagais. Both the brothers had sons, known to us, of this woman, and these were, or are, great lords, both are brothers of the mother of Prester John, whom all of us knew. All of us who were there knew Romana Orque,[2] sister of the Prester John, who is a noble lady married to a great lord, a noble young gentleman. In our time she

[1] Shoa. [2] *Rumanâ Wark*, the golden pomegranate.

671 Despite its apparent and proclaimed orthodoxy, occasional amendments, either in theory or practice or both, have been made through royal decrees or common-law usage. For example, concubinage has long been practiced, [588] sometimes in the form of "dämoz" marriage, which evades the Fetha Nagast by giving the woman the status of "hired servant" receiving a periodic "wage", and in this form the practice is at present legally recognized even in the new, modern laws decreed by the present emperor.

In fact, the "Fetha Nägäst" contains an "elastic clause", which has been rediscovered under the present regime, and is cited as justification for the new, European-patterned laws which upset the ultra-conservatives. This clause advises: "Act according to your observation of the c nditions of times and seasons". This was quoted in the new Penal Code of 1930.

681 However, in the past, the draconic aspects of the criminal law in particular were most literally interpreted by many kin chiefs and feudal lords up to the beginning of the present emperor's regime. The hand of a thief was cut off, and in case of armed robbery both a hand and a foot. Rebels were similarly punished. If a person took the usual oath, "by the life of the King" and was found to have perjured himself, his tongue could be cut out. An insult to the king could be punished by blinding. A father had the right of life and death over [593 567] his children--but not over his Christianized slaves. The latter were further protected against being sold, the penalty for which offense could be the hanging of the master.

681 master. Such verdicts were still carried out during the reign of Emperor Menelik II who died in 1913, though he tried to reduce the literal enforcement of the more draconic parts of the Code.

It is noteworthy that the application of the "Fetha Nägäst" was supposed to be based on the biblical principle of Luke, that punishment should be applied according to the knowledge of the offender, not according to the seriousness of the offense. This was reaffirmed in the Penal Code of 1930 (though in effect this new code abrogated much else of the Fetha Nägäst), as follows:

672 692 The following are degrees of relative culpability, in accordance with which degrees of punishment are to be determined on a declining scale:

The man who knows the law
the forgetful person (unstable personality)
the "balagär" (rustic peasant)
the (otherworldly) monk
the poor and ignorant person (illiterates)
the stranger
the ignorant woman
the imbecile or invalid
the Ethiopian from a non-Amharic-speaking province
the child below age 12.

The judge was also permitted and encouraged to take the emotional personality of the offender into consideration(without indicated scale) , such as:

The oppressive person
the lawless
the proud
the envious
the treacherous
the revengeful
the intemperate
the quarrelsome
the careless
the bullying

693 was forfeited by the loser. Under the old system a poor man who could not, even with the aid of kinsmen, raise his bet to equal that of his richer opponent, had little recourse to justice except the "abyet".

[661] The old system also left wide opportunities for bribing of judges, for the borderline between a public "wager" and private bribe was thin. In rural areas the pattern of "wager" still persists. But most danya now officiate in the towns, in a "ferd-byet" (lit. Judgment-House), often an Italian-built administrative building; and the court procedure has taken on a more modern pattern, through the gradual effect of the pressure in this direction from Addis Ababa. His fines may range from [681] Eth.$25.- to Eth.$500.-; prison sentences from one month to one year.

The "danya" is a regular judge in that he sits in judgment all year long, at regular intervals. Wednesdays and Fridays are preferred, because they are light "fast-days", on which the "mind is not weighted down with food", according to the traditional attitude. Thus, time and place and frequency of function of the "danya" are formally established in the judicial structure, and form the broad base of this part of social organization.

(4) The Appeals Judge, "wombär" (or, "wänbär", or "wänbär", lit. seat), does not sit as regularly in the "ferd-byet". Several times a year (at least once) he travels on a judicial circuit, and also accompanies the governor-general on his inspection tours. Tradi-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

693 tionally the country of Abyssinia had 12 wombär, possibly in allusion to the 12 apostles (as in the "mähabbär" sodality). In the past the wombar were appointed by the "ras" or the "negus". At present they are still usually appointed by the governor-general of the province, who is their immediate superior, and whom they besiege in "daj tenat" for this high office. The old "ras" or "negus" usually had two wombar sit at each side of the throne, but the one sitting at the lord's right, the "qän wombär", outranked the one sitting at his left ("gera wombär"). This seniority in seating is still followed at the court of the modern-attired governor-general. The latter usually reappoints new wombar when he is himself assigned to another province, and since the wombar resides in the provincial capital, he is a permanent part of his official retinue during his tour of office there.

The wombar usually goes on circuit after the main harvest, and "sits" at major market towns to hear appeals. Formerly, the provincial "ras" would sit under the old fig tree, flanked by his wombars, and hold court even on capital punishment cases. The latter are now referred
[681] to Addis Ababa, to the High Court. But the wombar is now empowered to assess damages or fines up to Eth$2000.-, to pass prison sentences up to 5 years, and lashes up to 25 (the latter usually in assault cases).

694 Though the principle of "habeas corpus" did not exist in the traditional law, kinfolk of the accused being held by a danya a long time without trial could go to the wombär's court in the town he resided in, and by

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

F. Law and Justice in Transition.

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Emperor Menelik II had tried to limit what Europeans considered draconic penalties and procedures. Emperor Haile Selassie I continued to adjust tribal law to modern conditions, and, as his power increased, expressed the principle, in the Penal Code of 1935: "By learning European practice, (the people) may attain to higher degrees of knowledge, because the basis of our code of laws in many places fits with the European code". Both emperors, while introducing modern acculturation in law and justice, quite consciously, did not, it is clear, abrogate the old tradition. They could not have done so in practice, despite the growing power of the central monarchy. For the traditional values and attitudes, particularly among the Amhara, are still largely intact.

The transitinn can be analyzed as proceeding in four phases: (a) The abrogation of draconic penalties and procedures; (b) continuing customary law and justice, (officially and unofficially); (c) Modernization from the top down; (d) Sectarian privileges to resident minorities.

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(a) During the reign of Menelik II enforcement of the old draconic penalties continued. The hand of a thief was cut off, and he was thereafter called "dush" (lit. stump). Cattle rustlers, "dandā", were punished the same way. It was not rare to see mutilated persons, hand or foot or both, in those days. It was not until the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie I that the Penal Code of 1930 could have been decreed and enforced.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

681 According to this change, mutilation of thieves was
178 forbidden; the chaining of debtor to creditor was abro-
671 gated; flogging was reduced in frequency and quantity; the area that could fall under collective arrest, "afärsata", was limited; the legal validity of evidence from the "lebäshay" was indirectly abrogated. In 1933, the emperor further limited days, hours, and distances of the "afärsata". Capital punishment had been centralized in 1930.

It is noteworthy that in several cases old practices were for the first time acknowledged in writing, despite the continuing hesitancy to admit publicly any practice that European observers might regard as primitive. Thus, blood-money in place of blood-feud was decreed legal in 1930

426 Liberalization was also legalized by regarding
671 civil law. In 1923 the Law of Loans fixed maximum in-
178 terest at 9%. As usual , this was found to be too far a departure from practice for enforcement, and it was later raised to 12%. One of the last decrees prior to Italian hostilities, provided, in May 1935, for the abrogation of statute-labor, permitting the tenant (gabbar) to make a small payment (resembling a quitrent) instead.

694 (b) The pattern of judges riding circuit con-
661 tinued unabated, from the end of the harvest in the
178 month of Tahsas (about November) until Easter. Sometimes judicial councils, "<u>gubaē</u>" were available in towns for appeals. But the old custom of bringing a gift to the "great man" to interest him in the indivi-

829 pattern continues in full force even at present. As a result, the high official is as hesitant about delegating authority downward (which might build up a potential rival), as the inferior in the hierarchy fears to accept delegated authority (lest the superior repent of his grant and suspect rebellion). In consequence, daily problems, even routine ones, are regularly referred for decision to the superior in the hierarchy of government.

812 The authoritarian "literalness" which characterizes so many Amhara attitudes may at least in part be the effect of religious fundamentalism. Until recently, the "Fetha Nagast" criminal and [681] civil code was literally enforced, including the cutting off of hands for theft and of feet for rebellion. Biblical passages are interpreted literally, by the priests. In monasteries, the monks exclude the presence of even female animals such as cows.

[779] The church, sacerdotal in its concepts and rituals, does not feel that it owes an explanation to anyone; and "literalness" has remained unchallenged (except during the relatively brief Portuguese episode). In the Amhara view, there is a direct and unilateral connection between cause and effect, and paradoxes that result from such oversimplifications are ignored: e.g. the tallest obelisk at Aksum, which has fallen and broken into several large pieces, is claimed to have been "pushed" over by the Falasha Queen Judith, despite the fact that another, almost as tall, still stands nearby. [682] Homicide, especially if accidental, is blamed on the "kenyēn" spirits who pushed the murderer's hand.

647 Literal obedience dominates the governmental administration, for no subordinate would arrogate to himself the privilege of "interpret" the spirit of the law handed down by the official of superior status.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that 681
they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of
others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality
the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he
was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester 793
John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is
nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester
who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means em- 643
peror, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some 752
sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, 757
they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein,
and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw
blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure
themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thou- 621
sand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and 361
there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without num-
ber. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and 342
all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and court-
yards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others 352
on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table.
They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without 415
napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black 264
earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for
drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others 262
eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, 252
and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is 373
much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make
candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which 314
they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like
Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 000

[1] *Akegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis,* a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of moral pressure for the reconciliation of conflict, it appears to place greater emphasis on the acting out of aggression. It does this, first of all, by defining a number of acts as offenses which justify violent retribution of some sort. Appropriation of one's land, seduction of one's wife, and injury of one's relatives are acts of this nature, and it is incumbent on the offended party to seek personal revenge or, as the Amhara put it, "to return the debt" (*bedder mammalas*). It is considered shameful to remain passive when so affronted, an attitude expressed in the following couplet: [539]

Balaw ba-dimotfar daggmaw ba-wānzā,
Bābbāt ristennā yallam bamīst wāzzā.

Shoot him with the dimotfar,* get him again with
a wanza,*
Taking your father's land or your wife away,
that is no joking matter.

Aggressiveness is further encouraged by the Amhara ego ideal of masculinity.[13] The identity of Amhara males is very much bound up with their capacity for aggressiveness, by both violent and verbal means. A man who has killed someone is regarded with a certain amount of veneration, and the act of killing is itself praised in verses such as: [539]

Saw gadlu saw gadlu: saw magdal yebajāl,
Saw yālgadala saw sihēd yāngolājāl.

Kill a man! Kill a man! It is good to kill a man!
One who has not killed a man moves around
sleepily.

Similarly, verbal aggression is encouraged by the inclusion of excellence at litigation and insulting in the domain of proper male behavior.[14] The bestowal of insults is a rather stylized, if dangerous, procedure among the Amhara. According to Amhara customary law, insulting is a legal offense. The new criminal code provides for a gradation of penalties according to the seriousness of the insult, including fines which run from Eth$15 to as much as hundreds of dollars. The most serious insults include *bāryā* ("slave"); *ṭayb* ("evil-eyed artisan"); and *qomātā* ("leper"). Insults of lesser to medium degrees of seriousness include the following:

hodām	"greedy" (literally, "bellied")
wafrām	"fat"
sakārām	"drunkard"
quashāshā	"dirty"
amadām	"scaly-faced" (literally, "ashen")

* Types of rifles.

TK It is therefore likely that the ganyēn idea was brought to the
177 Abyssinian highlands from Southern Arabia about 500 B.C., superimposed on the earlier "buda" and "zar" beliefs, but reduced to the bottom scale of the spirit world with the coming of Coptic Christianity in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D.[122]

TK The ganyēn are considered by the Amhara wholly evil. In personality they are choleric, male quickly aroused to aggressive rage. They are believed to be of dark complexion. They are so tough "they can eat stones". They attack men far more often than women and in daylight rather than at night, (exact opposite of the zar). They cause neither hysteria nor apathy, rather they cause their victim to run amok.

682 As a result, the legal significance of the ganyēn possession
754 in Amhara society is considerable. Almost every apprehended murderer claims that the ganyen "pushed his hand". He thus "was not himself". In the old tradition, if evidence for actual ganyen possession was deemed sufficient, the excuse brough sufficient mitigation so that the kin of the murdered individual could accept blood-money from the murderer and his kin without a blood-feud and without losing prestige. In such a case, the priest-confessor or "mänfäs gubaē, acting as intermediary, would go to the bereaved kin and beg forgiveness for the crime. If they agreed, the "danya" (judge) would set the "semanya", (the amount of blood-money); formerly a minimum of 80 Maria-Theresa Thalers (now Eth$1000 = US $4000).[1/2] It is noteworthy that this tradition is so strong that even the modern Ethiopian court in Addis Ababa often sets the damages for

122. See MacDonald, D.D.: "Djinn", (in) Encyclopedia of Islam, pp. 1045-1046, and Trimmingham: Islam in Ethiopia, p. 260.

1/2 [valuation given here is not in agreement with that given elsewhere - probably should read "US $1440)."-Analyst]

682 754 manslaughter of an average citizen, killed e.g. in an automobile accident, or by a trigger-happy policeman, at "samanya" on its present monetary level.

755 Other types of ganyen disease are forms of epilepsy, "haut mal", referred to by the Amhara as "ganyän yaẓä" (lit. the ganyen has seized him; plural is "aganent". In this case, a dabtara is often called in and tries to exorcise the evil spirit with magic formulae; sometimes the woggesha doctor tries to intoxicate the patient with [278] a paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha), which drug finally lets him have some rest. In contrast, the method of the täqway is literally a bag of tricks.

755 756 789 In his role as magician, the täqway is called "qumäMa" (from "qomä", he stood up), for he tries to identify the personality of the evil spirit from his abode; e.g. in the water of a brook, or a waterhole in the river, or under a certain tree, etc. The magician is also considered an expert on fire and lightning. When a person is struck by lightning, "mäbräq" (lit. Thunder), [761] the priests consider it heavenly punishment and in the past even refused to bury the victim in the churchyard; thus the täqway is called in. His treatment consists of moving the victim quickly to the fireplace - for he regards fire and warm ashes as the counteracting principle. If a house is on fire in town, it is still believed that the magician, standing on the roof of a neighboring house with a mirror, can prevent the spreading of the fire by causing the flames to recoil.

Cases of drowning are his specialty also. This too is considered by the church a heavenly punishment for hidden crimes, for the victim is regarded as having been surrendered to the "demons";

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

829 pattern continues in full force even at present. As a result, the high official is as hesitant about delegating authority downward (which might build up a potential rival), as the inferior in the hierarchy fears to accept delegated authority (lest the superior repent of his grant and suspect rebellion). In consequence, daily problems, even routine ones, are regularly referred for decision to the superior in the hierarchy of government.

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5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

692 nishes all persons by that authority, even those of the Abuna's family, without any sort of deference paid to him; and this, as appears by the judges, or king's records, is of very ancient standing. The king calls an assembly of the clergy when he pleases, generally with the advice of the Abuna, and there is none considered legal if he is not present, if in the kingdom.

[682] Welled Hayrat (Ras Michael's son) was excommunicated for killing a refugee at the Abuna's feet, in consequence of which he confiscated the Abuna's villages in Tigre, nor was the curse ever taken off *. The Itchegue, or prior of the
693 monks, if he be chosen a lay-man, must be ordained by the
793 Abuna. He is named by the king, who nominates all superiors of monasteries. The Lika-cahanat, or chief of the priests, is ordained by the Abuna and Itchegue, who both hold a corner of a scarf put upon him. He is an inquisitor of morals among the priests, and has so much salt and cloth from each district. A priest at his ordination pays three salts to the Abuna. He comes to the house of the latter, enters, and kisses the threshold. The Abuna, sitting on a sofa at one end of the room, reads the Scriptures to himself. Then having paid his salt, the person retires and kisses the threshhold, returning without imposition of hands, or any ceremony. Old men are made priests, and young men deacons by a simple jussit. More probable accounts say, that there is only one salt paid, that the person stands at the door, while the Abuna, having made the sign of the cross, holding it in his hand, says, "I have ordained you a priest." The person then enters the room, kisses the cushion of the sofa, and retires. Many are ordained that can neither read nor write.

[764] The Abyssinians have an office for the dead; and worship
778 pictures of saints, even such as are not consecrated. This we had an opportunity of seeing, every time we were obliged to draw some Madonna. All those that saw it, kissed the
000 ground before it, with their foreheads on the earth. The

* The Abuna's house is a kind of sanctuary, in which criminals are protected from massacre, not from trial. They are sometimes tried there by the royal judges, or dragged from it to the tribunal.

[p.56]

231 [556] ("agäbba") to an important "great man", perhaps to become a "client" in his retinue for protection.

[775] In religious life, the old peasant can arrange for the peace of his soul after death by giving a cow to his Confessor or to the "qēs gabaz" the administrative priest of the parish church, to have masses recited. [682] In criminal law, a murderer in the remote rural areas can still save himself and even prevent a long and bloody feud between families, if he can borrow enough cattle, in addition to his own, to pay "blood-money", in cows, to the kin of the victim, the agreement witnessed by the presence of a "cheqa shum", a judge, or a priest, preferably all three. Thus there are some aspects of the cattle pattern that are reminiscent of a tribal, semi-nomadic, rather than settled territorial social organization. This becomes emphasized during the upland trek in the rainy season.

233 Though entrusted to youngsters, care of cattle is obviously a task requiring responsibility. Cattle is not taken out until one hour after sunrise, about 7 A.M., when the dew has dried. During the hot dry season, cattle rest under umbrella trees and other shade from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., so that the grazing period away from the hamlet is not long. Before dusk, by 6 P.M., they are taken into the hamlet enclosure or corrall, or even into the hut, for hyenas may come early.

The cash value of cattle is low, primarily because of the distance and poor transportation to world markets. [281] The hides, a major export item, are of low cash value because this type is not tanned, merely sundried, and "book-folded" for export.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war. 828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance. 565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā,* or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin." 565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz,* a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days. 565* 461 [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[13] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

671 The intent of these guiding principles and defini-
696 tions were to aid the judge to arrive at a just verdict, preferably a "Solomonic" one. Guides were considered desirable, perhaps due to the absence of the principle of any law of precedence. The emphasis was on the "Code", and this was reinforced by the culture pattern of "literalness", in behavior.

In effect, however, these guides have enabled both draconic or bribed (and therefore lenient) judges to interpret the law with considerable subjectivity. Clever talkers-in-court never fail to use their ability to sway the public audience, which usually has a tremendous effect on the judge.

671 The effect of the "Fetha Nägäst" was to link the
777 church and state. There were usually 12 provincial chief justices, "wombär", in allusion, apparently, to the 12 apostles. The "Fetha Nagäst" ruled all marriage, even
586 684 the non-ecclesiastical "semanya" marriage outside the church premises. Divorce proceedings in the old-Amhara areas still can be carried through only with agreement of the "mänfäs agway", the soul-confessor, one of the priests of the parish, although no divorce is possible in a church marriage.

This "mänfäs agway" receives a small salary from the state; he can summon local state police if the accused mate has refused to appear, to bring him by force. If the divorce is granted, the "mänfäs agway" usually sentences both mates to a fine of Eth$5.- payable to him, on the grounds that both are technically lawbreakers for

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

586 684 having "torn the marriage agreement". Furthermore, the woman can bring religious pressure to bear on the "manfas agway" if he hesitates in granting the divorce, by publicly ripping off her blue neckcord, the "mätäb", symbol of Christianity, thus threatening to run off to the Muslims because her mistreatment has become completely unendurable. Since the "Fetha Nägäst" also covers Guardianship, the "mänfäs agway" decides to whom children of a broken marriage are to be assigned: usually children under 7 years of age go to the mother, but an older child may be asked to indicate a choice. Boys over 10 usually are given to the father.

671 The new law codes of Emperor Hailé Selassie I are patterned after European, modern codes and are in the process of more comprehensive codification at present. What has been done so far will be described later.

675 B. Contracts, Oath, and the Legal Person, in Abyssinian Traditional Law.

A contract, called "kedan" (the same word is used for "Testament" in Biblical reference), does not have to be written, and usually is not. But it must be witnessed, preferably by more than one reliable person, preferably male. The contracting parties formally announce their agreement, then touch their palms lightly, (ej mätta). If the contract is a last will and testament, the Confessor ("mänfäs agway") holds the thumb of the testator while the will is formally spoken aloud.

x794 possessed mother thus becomes THE representative of her family toward
562 the zar. If someone in the family sickens, her zar is consulted. Her
776 zar has become the guardian of hearth and home. This is all the more
[591] significant since the Amhara woman has usually arrived as a stranger in her husband's patrilocal hamlet, when a very young bride.

x794 It is little wonder that many husbands object to their wives'
562 joining a zar society. For the wife thus becomes psychologically
593 more and more independent of the husband's control. For one thing, the wife can absent herself from the hut and even hamlet at almost any time with the excuse that her zar requires her attendance at an all-night worship meeting, lest she suffer another "attack".. Under such circumstances it is impossible to keep a wife under surveillance. More frequently zar-possessed women go to the house of the "balä zar", who may be male, in daytime, to consult him on various matters, and on their return home they extort garments and trinkets from the husband, ffor the zar".

x794 Many "jealous" zar spirits, interpreted by the zar doctor,
562 actively intrigue against the husband, against the wife's catering
593 to his wants and comforts, obedience and respect, and teach the wife
684 how to extort the most from him. Moreover, husbands often suspect their wives' behavior under the influence of the possession by the zars. From possession by a spirit-lover to possession by a very human lover, the husbands reason (not without justification in some cases) it is only a small step. If caught, the woman might claim that she had been "under possession", and had mistaken the human lover for her spiritual "wädaj", especially in the darkness of the night. Women have been known to give this excuse brazenly when hauled before the (mänfäs gubaä" (priest in charge of domestic affairs).

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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346 other women do in the church of the apostles, who take it
562 in its place. I always saw the women of the Barnagais go
[644] to the women's church to take the communion with the other women, and I did not see them use the privilege which they say they have, of taking the communion, with one damsel, in the church of the men. The circuits of the churchyards join to one another; they are of very high
796 walls. They make the sacramental bread for both churches in one building, and they say the masses in both churches at the same time, and the priests who serve in one church serve also in the other; that is two thirds of the priests in the men's church, and one third in the women's church, and so they are distributed. These churches have not got tithes, but they have got much land belonging to the priests, and they put it out to profit and divide the revenues of the lands among themselves: the Barnagais gives what is necessary to the churches, such as ornaments, wax, butter, incense in sufficient quantity, and he supplies them with
[792] everything. There may be in these churches twenty priests and always twenty-two friars. I never saw a church of priests which had not got friars, nor a monastery of friars which had got priests; because the friars are so numerous that they cover the world, both in the monasteries as also in the churches, roads, and markets: they are in every place.

CAP. XXVI.—*How the priests are, and how they are ordained, and of the reverence which they pay to the churches and*
793 *their churchyards.*

● 684 The priests are married to one wife, and they observe the
587 law of matrimony better than the laity: they live in their houses with their wives and children. If their wife should die they do not marry again; neither can the wife, but she

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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may become a nun or remain a widow as she pleases. If a 793
priest sleeps with another woman whilst his wife is alive he 684
does not enter the church any more, nor does he enjoy its 587
goods, and remains as a layman. And this I know from
having seen a priest accused before the patriarch of having
slept with a woman, and I saw that the priest confessed the
offence, and the patriarch commanded him not to carry a
cross in his hand, nor to enter a church, nor to enjoy the
liberties of the church, and to become a layman. If any
priests after becoming widowers marry, they remain laymen,
As it happened to Abuquer, who married Romana Orque,
sister of Prester John, who I have already said was a priest,
chief chaplain of Prester John, and he was disordained[1] and
made a layman. He no longer enters the church, and
receives the communion at the door of the church as a
layman, and among the women. The sons of the priests 793
are for the most part priests, because in this country there [871]
are no schools, nor studies, nor masters to teach, and the
clergy teach that little that they know to their sons: and
so they make them priests without more legitimisation,
neither does it seem to me that they require it, since they
are legitimate sons. All are ordained by the Abima Markos,
for in all the kingdoms of Ethiopia there is no other bishop
or person who ordains. The orders are given in two stages,
as I will relate further on. I with my own eyes saw them
given many times. In all this country the churchyards are [764]
inclosed by very strong walls, that the wild beasts may not
disinter the dead bodies. They show them great reverence, [576]
no man riding on a mule passes before a church, even
though he is going in a great hurry, without dismounting,
until he has passed the church and churchyard a good bit.

[1] *Foy desordenado e feito leigo*; not a correct expression.

789 to make jerky motions, increasing in speed, acting "hot
694 on the trail", whereupon the lēbashay seized the loose end of the girdle. The boy pulled in one direction, and the group followed. When he entered a house, he re-enacted the activities of the thief in complete detail, including sleeping in his bed, until the lebashay prodded him to "awake" and continue the trail, saying 3 times "aderas" (get going, arrive). The boy jumped up, roughly pushed anyone in his way regardless of the normal respectful etiquette of behavior toward a "great man", and continued the chase. When he entered a hamlet or compound, everyone had to "sit", no one could leave. The boy would approach every individual, make magic contact with him by pushing him with the knee (regarded as the seat of manly power). If he seemed distracted, the lebashay might slap the boy, much as one would an unruly dog. In crossing brooks, the boy was carried across, since water was believed to draw away the power from the medicine, making him lose his "scent". If water did inadvertently splash on him, another boy had to be drugged to continue the trail. Lemons were also believed to affect the power of the medicine.

685 When the thief was found, and confessed, he had
696 to pay the fee of the lebashay, fixed during Emperor Menelik II restraining laws to a maximum of Eth$6.-; the thief also was to post two personal guarantors to guarantee that he would return the stolen item and appear in court. The lēbashay could decide to accept these conditions and release him, or turn him over to

685 the "danya". Interestingly enough, if the thief did
696 not have money on hand to pay the fee of the lēbashay, it was the responsibility of the victim who had originally requested his services to pay him on the spot, and try to collect later from the thief. This had the effect of eliminating complaints of petty theft from setting this costly process in motion.

694 It seems that amateur thieves were often caught
789 by this process, and usually confessed, feeling helpless when confronted with such "powerful" means of detection. Professional thieves, particularly in the towns, who were known to have evaded detection, were and are believed to have obtained a powerful magic antidote from a dabtara scribe.

694 When all methods of detection have failed, the
787 distraught victim has a last resort. He may go to the nearest "<u>tänkwa</u>", a practicer of black magic, and ask him to divine by throwing his bones. This , too, is now prohibited, but still goes on, though not as openly as before. Failing even in this, the victim may go to the Coptic church and there, having purchased incense
[754] and given a gift, pronounce a solemn curse, "<u>säbätē masdäfat</u>", on the thief.

171 The pattern of the <u>lēbashay</u> has been traced by
694 some observers to ancient Greek parallels, by others to the Arab bedouin "djirra" or "kassas" thief seeker who also tracks murderers in tribal feuds. The tankwas seem of more typically African witchcraft pattern.

691 Typical cases most frequently heard are debts, small thefts, improper measures at the market, plowing across a neighbor's border ("wäsän gafi", i.e. border-pusher), grain eaten by a neighbor's cow, and the severity of mutual insults that had been exchanged during a hostile argument. Details argued about are often petty, such as: how good was the fence; just how much grain was eaten; how much was actually consumed?

[579] More serious is the loss incurred from the outlaw bandit, traditionally called "bär zägi", (lit. the one who shut the gate), or "dur gäbba" (the one who fled to the bush). The most frequent case involves debtor and creditor. Until very recently, the creditor could chain the debtor to him, and in rural areas one sometimes still sees their togas knotted together. This was uncomfortable for the creditor who had to feed the debtor. Even now that chaining is not permitted, a plaintiff still has to feed the defendent he has caused to be placed in jail (e.g. for theft) while awaiting trial. While he feeds him little and often spoiled food, he must keep him alive, and this acts as a deterrent against light accusation, except on the part of a wealthy "great man" accuser.

695 701 Special gestures, bodily motions, and drapings of the toga are still followed in the traditional way when going "bedanya fit", before the judge. The toga is draped ready for action, so that the accuser,or witness, can hold one corner at arm's length, step forward with heavy tread, and wave the bunched end of the em-

291 When doing physical labor - "boddäna" - lift toga above shoulders to free arms;

- "adägaddäga" - knot toga across chest; wrap-around. (also to tie shammas of debtors to creditors, or prisoners to guard's).

[411] To parry blows - "näkkäta" - wrapping toga around left forearm, as shield.

Preparing for battle - "adägaddäga" (see above): knotting shamma across chest, after wrapping it tightly around the waist.

When cold - "zeqzeq läbläsä" - doubling a heavy shamma (called "kuta" or "derreb") to wrap oneself in completely, even covering covering head, at night.

When hot - a light shamma of muslin ("nätäla") may be rolled around the head - "tämättämä". Hence, the turban of priests is called "nätämtämiya", a tight wrap-around of the head by muslin.

[535] When dancing - before "däbtära" (scribe-choristers) begin to dance, in church, they first drape the toga tightly ("shäbäsh-häbä"), so that the flaps will not drop from the shoulders during the motion.

[765] In mourning - while dancing the funeral motion, accompanying the improvised eulogy, women approach each other holding their own togas outward and horizontal, like huge wings, (as if they were holding a spear like men dancing the "fukkara" boast dance).

201 291 178 685 Some of these expressive ways of draping the shamma are falling into disuse in the towns where the people are more affected by what passes as "modern dress". However, an interesting increase in one way of draping the shamma can be noticed in recent years: Now that debtors are no

201
29/ longer chained to creditors, more frequent knotting-together of the
178
685 shamma is taking place, instead.

G. Dance, Chant, Musical Instruments.

535 Amhara dancing falls into three categories: religious dancing, military dance, and the entertainment dance performed by professionals. The first type has already been described in the section on the church.

Military dancing falls into two main categories: the "fukkara" boasting dance accompanied by boasting chant; and the "hotu" loyalty dance accompanied by shouts.

The "fukkara" is the war-boast, before or after battle, and on other occasions, of the individual warrior boasting of himself, sometimes of his kin group. It used to be danced with a spear, now with a stick or rifle. This is held horizontally over the shoulders. During the dance the head moves sideways, right and left. Defiance is shouted at the enemy, be it human, animal, or a supernatural spirit.

In the zar cult, the victory dance ("gurri") of the spirit just after he has entered the body of the possessed, is regarded so much as the "fukkara" type of dance, that the zar gives his identity away by his own version of "boasting" - whereupon the "disease" is diagnosed.

The hotu loyalty dance, by contrast, is a collective dance, most often a jump-dance, in which the multitude of warriors, brandishing their weapons, try to cast fear on the enemy by numbers, sound, and expression of intense loyalty to their common leader. The name itself is composed of "ho", onomatopoetic for shouting, "ta" signifying the collective suffix (all together). The following are common variations:

"Cho - cho" - simple shouting in unison, ("qärärto").

"Yebähalal Jeb-o" - "The hyena will swallow him (i.e. the enemy)."

"Wärdaw sheb-o" - "crow's beak" (i.e. the vultures will feed on the enemy).

"Addis Ababa" - (lit. "New Flower", name of capital) - shout of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

*175 643 nable. As the rainy season was approaching, Haile Malakot retreated to Shoa, where he fell sick and died. For the first time since Nagāssi, Shoa was left without an effective leader. Tēwodros marched into Manz from Wallo, and Shoa capitulated with little struggle. Eleven-year-old Menelik, son of Haile Malakot, was taken hostage.

Ten years later Menelik escaped from the camp of Tēwodros and regained Shoa. Slowly and carefully he built up his power. Tēwodros' reign raced to its tragic end. Takla Giyorgis II reigned briefly at Gondar, the last emperor to sit there. Yohānnes IV of Tigre governed the country for seventeen years. When Yohānnes died, Negus Menelik was forty-five and ready. Nagāssi's seed, eight generations later, reached the throne of all Ethiopia on November 3, 1889.

CULTURAL PROFILES

The Manzē Ethos

*175 185 The goals of Nagāssi and his descendants, apart from simple increase of power, were to recover the lands taken from their fathers and to stiffen the authority of Christianity in Shoa. Their success was virtually unbroken by [181] reason of exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance. These are ideals and qualities embodied par excellence in the people of Manz.

423 Sanctity of *rīst*, or land inherited from one's parents, is a cardinal value in 181 the Manzē scheme of things. Such land must not be given or sold to anyone who is not a close relative. People generations removed from actual residents [428] of Manz still retain claims to family land there, still cherish the idea that if they so desired they could go back and live on it. As an urbanized Manzē once told his nephew in Addis Ababa: "No matter how far you travel abroad, no matter how long you stay away, you will always be able to think of your [539] family land in Manz as your true home." This sentiment is expressed in a proverb:

> *Ya-Manz rīst be-shi amatu/la-bālabētu.*
> Manz *rīst* to the thousandth year/belongs to the owner.

A squatter may fight to keep his land from falling to some stranger who claims it as having belonged to his grandfather, but in his heart he respects the values that support such a claim.

[577] By Manzē standards the good man is thus one who defends the land of his fathers, seeing that it is not sold to outsiders or that foreigners do not come to take it. If someone plows another's land without permission, he must be • [685] punished. If the matter can be settled through litigation, well and good; if it requires recourse to violence, so be it. To let such an offense go unavenged [691] would be the worst sort of shame. Grievances concerning their "hereditary

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war. 828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance. 565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā*, or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin." 565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz*, a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days. 565* 461 [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[13] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

423 'foreigners', and even though, within the group ownership, there was
461 individual and family ownership of the land.

The allocation of and the succession to the land was governed by ancient custom. This custom varied greatly because, as d'Abbadie said, 'In Ethiopia one of the despairs of the traveller, who thinks he knows the country, is to discover, sometimes by chance, that such and such a community, comprising a family, a part of a village, or district is of a different origin from the population which surrounds it.' In internal land and family matters, it would keep its own private law.[1] In some communities there were meetings at fixed intervals of three to seven years according to the region and at which the reallocation between families of the different types of land, which was in several categories according to its fertility, was arranged. Apart from these adjustments by agreement, land went from father to son. Land transactions were announced by the public crier and registered, generally by [217] entry in a Bible or other book, in the 'parish' church. The penal code ●[687] of 1930 decreed up to three years' imprisonment for failure to register transactions in hereditary land,[2] but this decree may not have been fully effective in the provinces by 1935. Transactions were always carried out before witnesses. These sometimes included young children who might [262] be given a feast of the delicacy of fried grain in order to fix the event in their memories.

Landmatters, indeed, were settled within such land-holding groups with little intervention from higher authority so long as all its members gave what was due to the government or to the representative of the government. Their relations with this representative would be through their family and the heads of their family group and it is obvious that a community with this degree of autonomy in the vital matters of land and tribute, in addition to the minor legislative and judicial powers already described,[3] might be regarded as largely self-governing in local matters. Such *restenya*, or hereditary land-holders, were further fortified in their position by the recognition of private property in the *Fetha Nagast*. In Menelik's later days, his council confirmed this position by a decree in which it was promised that except in cases of rebellion and treason even criminals should not be dispossessed from such tenure.[4] This provision was repeated in clause 9 of the penal code of 1930. It is probable that it was unbroken settlement by an Amhara tribal community which alone could offer effective resistance to royal and other
423 pressure.

The Emperor would, however, seize every opportunity of breaking

[1] d'Abbadie, *op. cit.*, p. 90. [2] Clause 458. [3] See above, p. 142.
[4] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 611.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Ambara MP5

words often carry *double-entendre* as a matter of course; when he listens, he 538
is ever on the lookout for latent meanings and hidden motives. As one of my 181
Ethiopian colleagues has said: "Wax and gold is anything but a formula—it is a way of life."

In essence, wax and gold is simply a more refined and stylized manifesta- 195
tion of the Amhara's basic manner of communicating. This manner is indi- 521
rect, often secretive. Amharic conversation is larded with vague remarks 538
like *Min yeshällal?* ("What is better?") when the speaker has failed to indicate what is the issue at hand, or *Tädyäs!*, an interjection which can mean almost anything. Often, when the speaker is then quizzed about the issue at hand, he will give an answer that does not reveal what is really on his mind at all, and even when he does, the person with whom he is talking is likely to interpret his response as a disguise.

Wax and gold embodies this fundamental indirection in speech by means 195
of the studied use of ambiguity. Apart from its literary and religious mani- 182
festations, wax and gold appears in the common life of the traditional Am- 538
hara on a variety of occasions and serves a number of diverse functions.

It provides the medium for an inexhaustible supply of humor, among a 538
wry people who prefer the clever, double-edged remark to comic actions or 195
incongruous situations. This includes the wit of daily life—the invention of 182
puns and sly retorts, the telling and retelling of good anecdotes and famous 522
lines—as well as the more formalized humor on festive occasions, where minstrels sing the *sam-ennä warq* verses extemporized by the guests.

It provides a means for insulting one's fellows in a socially approved man- 538
ner, in a culture which requires fastidious etiquette in social relations and 195
punishes direct insults by heavy fines. *Sam-ennä warq* insulting, too, has its 182
more stylized expressions, as at the drink-house, where one may find persons 578
competing in a prolonged exchange of more or less disguised insults, or in time of political or military conflict, when opposing lords were wont formerly to satirize one another with ambiguous couplets.

It provides a technique for defending the sphere of privacy against exces- 538
sive intrusion, in a social order that thrives on rumor and gossip and puts 195
most of its people at the mercy of superiors. While vague and evasive re- 182
sponses often suffice to dampen the enthusiasm of the tax collector or the 571
curious neighbor, *sam-ennä warq* constitutes another potent weapon of self- [521]
defense.

Finally, it provides the one outlet for criticism of authority figures in a 538
society which strictly controls every kind of overt aggression toward author- 195
ity, be it parental, religious, or political. Thus it has been a safety valve for 182
certain social tensions, enabling, for example, witty individuals to satirize 578
the monarch himself and still live to repeat the witticism—so long as its sub- 571
ject was himself duly appreciative of the cleverness of the lines. [687] [522]

659 In 178 many criminal cases, culprits who had sought asylum [696] from the police of the state by entering a churchyard and sounding the resonant stone bells to announce to the pursuers that they had placed themselves under the protection of the church, were taken away by force, despite the protests of the priests. This so deteriorated some of the temporal power of the church that persons involved in kin bloodfeuds were also no longer safe in [688] church confines. Conversely, the traditional request of priests to law enforcement agencies of the state to arrest violaters of church rules (e.g. adulterers) now go unheeded except in remote rural areas, and even there such a prisoner is no longer held and sentenced to an [688] indefinite term on such a charge. Fines and imprisonment for violation of the Sabbath or for working on a saint's day, also are no longer enforceable.

An official extreme in this direction was reached in 1942, when, a year after his victorious return, Emperor Haile Selassie issued a series of decrees stripping the church of all feudal power, and most of its temporal power, except in the town of Aksum. Under these decrees, church land could henceforth be taxed by the state, though the taxes were to be used to administer church maintenance and education; church courts could levy only spiritual penalties, not money fines; the Central Treasury of the state was to administer rents from church lands. All statute-labor ("gabbar") rights of the church over sharecropping peasants living on its former feudal estates were abrogated.

x794 796 262 areqi, and also round, solid wheat discs (Qitta")- the unleavened bread of travelers, expensive when made of wheat.

x794 781 [782] About midight, the convention proceeds, with the poet intoning the call for the female zar "Shazqit (see table for her characteristics):

Poet: "Dance, round and round, brave one;

Shanqit, we are calling; brave one".

Both men and women clap more fiercely than over, in quick rythm Suddenly the servant woman who had served the latest refreshments stiffens with a jerk, screams, and lets the tray slide from her hand. She is about to be possessed by the female zar of her class and occupation. This "gurri" is infantile in character. The young woman begins to skip about the room like a young goat or an overly gay little girl. She teasingly pokes at the men, again and again, until a few copper coins are given her. When this happens, she jumps high with glee. But a moment later she is back, pouting, demanding some sweets, asking for honey. Given some, she devours it, and dances a victory dance, flipping about on tiptoe. The drumbeat quickens. Finally she falls exhausted, her zar now in full possession of her.

x794 796 688 There is another hush, awaiting further demonstrations. But there is an unscheduled interlude which reinforces discipline. The woman who had danced the "pagan" gurri had left shortly afterward, ostensibly for a call of nature, but had hot returned until now, far too long an absence without permission. Seeing her enter, Lady Salamtew rises, shouting angrily, walkes toward her and heats her on the upper back with the heavy strap, several times, rather hard. The victim stands with bowed head, not stirring under the punishment, evidently

X 794 realizing that her "zar" had insulted the powerful one of Salamtew.
796 Back on her throne, Lady Säläämtew harshly admonishes the audience for
[688] dozing, for whispering, for laughing, and some for having taken food and drink during the previous "gurri". This inattentiveness is an insult to her zar, and she threatens to recess the convention if it continues. But then she sugarcoats the threat by calling for another round of refreshments.

[853] Some of the babies in the rear had cried, and were nursed by their mothers. This had also been done by some of the possessed women previously, sometimes within half an hour after the exhausting "gurri". Motherhood and zar devotion evidently did not conflict.

[123] Lady Säläämtu used this intermission to send the foreigner word promising "I shall appoint you a zar as your weqabi (protective spirit)". When she saw that he had drunk some of the barley beer which she had ordered to be served on the tablet of her zar. This time she addressed him in the female gender again, just as she had used a male gender in addressing her female devotees. The zars are believed to enjoy playing their game of turning nature upside down.

X 794 About 1A.M., everyone rose, except the poet and the drummer.
535 Fresh incense was heaped on the burners. Tired and partly intoxi-
796 cated members of the audience were shaken awake. For now they were to witness the "fukkara", the individualistic "boasting dance" of Lady Säläämtew's zar. It was a spastic bobbing up-and-down dance, similar to the "hotu" dance of warriors. The drum beat faster and
[293] faster, Lady Säläämtew seemed to forget her dignity, but still waved her strap, the symbol of her seniority, while the devotees shouted

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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business of petitions, and few are without wives. This 621
causes many single women to live here, and when they are 443
old they have another resource, for in this town every Tuesday there is a great market or fair at which three or four hundred persons are brought together; and all the old women and some young ones have measures to measure wheat and salt, and they go to the market to measure and gain their living; they give hospitality to those that sleep there that day, and also take care for them of what remains to be sold for the next market day. There is another 595
reason why there are many women in this town, it is 688
because the men who have plenty of food to eat keep two or three wives; and this is not forbidden to them by the King nor by their magistrates, only by the Church. Every man who has more than one wife does not enter the church, nor does he receive any sacrament: and they hold him to be excommunicated. For a year and a half a nephew of mine and I lodged in the house of a man named Ababitay, and he had three wives still alive and acquaintances of ours, friends in honourable friendship: they said that he had had seven wives and thirty children of them. Nobody forbade them, except the Church, as has been said, which did not give them the benefit of the sacraments; and before our departure, he put away from him, and from intercourse with him, two wives, and remained with one, that is to say, the one he had last, who was the youngest, and already they gave him the sacraments, and he entered the church like anybody else, and as though he had not had more than one wife. On this account there are many women in this town, because the men are well off and are like courtiers: and they take two or three, or more if it pleases them. In this [586]
country marriages are not fixed, because they separate for any cause. I saw people married, and was at a marriage 585
which was not in a church, and it was done in this manner. On the open space before some houses they placed a bed-

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

they take what they have, and they do not choose to provide more than what they require and is necessary for them. 554

In no part that he went about in were there butchers' shops, except at the Court, and no person of the common people may kill a cow (even though it is his own) without leave from the lord of the country. 253

The people speak the truth little, even when they make oath, unless they swear by the head of the King. They much fear excommunication, and if they are ordered to do something, and that it be to their prejudice, they do it from fear of excommunication. 695 [688]

The oath is administered in this manner. They go to the door of the church with two priests, and they have there incense and embers, and he who has to swear puts his hands upon the church door, and one the priests tells him of the oath to speak the truth, and that if he speaks falsely, that as the lion swallows his prey in the woods, so may his soul be swallowed by the devil; and as the wheat is broken between the stones, so may his bones be ground by the devils; and he who swears, at each thing answers Amen; and as the fire burns wood, so may your soul be burned in the fire of hell and made dust. He says Amen. And this if you do not speak truth; he says Amen. And if you speak truth, may your life be prolonged with honour, and your soul in paradise with the blest. He says Amen. And this ended, he gives his testimony.

He says that the movable feasts, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, are celebrated on the same days and seasons that we celebrate them. The birth of Christ, Circumcision, Epiphany, and other feasts of saints also agree with us, and others not. The year and months begin on the 29th day of August, on which was the beheading of St. John, and the year is of twelve months, and the month of thirty days. When the year is ended, there are five days over, which they call pagomen, which means fulfilment of the year, and in the bissextile year there are six days over; so they keep with us. 796 805

586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have re-
885 [851] sulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or [586] else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a com-
[587] plete adult, a *mulu sēt* or *mulu saw*.

From Generation to Generation

867 Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

[577] The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profes-
[779] sion of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

867 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central
779 symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern
785 a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout matura-
262 tion. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early
577 age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

867 At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction
779 of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or
793 confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may
577 either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her
[785] husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing
[688] penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

566 [423] At the bottom of the social pyramid of land tenure was the "gabbar", the peasant, whose status resembled that of the medieval European serf. In the final step of passing tasks along, he was responsible for carrying them out, though he could shift some manual labor to the slaves under his constant supervision. The gabbar owed regular statute-labor (called "kudād" or "hudād", literally painful labor), resembling the medieval European corvee, and could also be called out for any special labor. At any moment, authority could decree that a bridge was to be built, a church to be constructed or repaired, at an appointed time and place. Thereupon every gabbar would have to appear, carrying his own tools, to work under the direction os the feudal officer, governor, or his lieutenants ("mislanē"). Heavy fines punished failure to appear for this labor.

It is peculiar, perhaps, how this system was internalized by the gabbar. If he was not on good enough terms with his neighbors to call on them for mutual aid, e.g. in housebuilding or harvesting, perhaps due to a quarrel between kin units, he could demand such aid by appealing to the "cheqa shum" (village headman) or governor's lieutenants, who would then proclaim the work as an official [689] task. The penalty for failure to appear, however, was milder; the offender was sentenced to donate a great feast to all the other participants.

566 794 Another noteworthy traditional task emphasized the feudal structure of tha church. A priest in charge of periodic services, the "master of the chant", could de-

578 In the new courts established by the central government in
● 689 the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

326 How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda -
754 Falasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting
563 that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Falashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despising of this manual craft onto the Falashas and believe that Falasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passersby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces
[71] of the supernatural. This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Amont the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous. Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

e. "Buda" doctors past and present

756 While the aforementioned dabtara is the most commonly
793 called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

755 buda out of him: seating the patient in ashes - the natural
756 abode of the buda - to entice the evil spirit to leave through the anus. The latter is regarded as the preferred pathway of the buda - the opposite principle of the soul which is believed to leave through the head. Sometimes the tanqway orders that the person accused of buda sorcery be brought before him and made to spit upon the patient, which breaks the spell if he has actually [689] cast it. Since 1942 the government has branded the "tänqway" as a fraud. As a result, the business of the still respectable däbtära and also the woggesha has increased in treating cases of buda.

C. Evil-Spirit Disease ("ganyän") and the diviner ("tänqwar")

756 While the aforementioned tänqway is, or used to be, called in
776 occasionally to exorcise a buda, his major specialties are the exorcising of "ganyän" evil spirits who have a very different character, and the divining of lost or stolen goods.

Of all spirit doctors, the tänqway occupies the lowest social position. He is "uneducated" for he uses no books and in fact is almost always illiterate. His methods are nearly identical with those of African "witch-doctors" and include such methods as throwing of bones and animal parts, for divining.

776 The major principle of both the tänqway diviner and the ganyän
777 spirits he specialized in, seem to be regional; the activity one of geographical orientation. For the ganyän, considered inferior to zar and buda spirits in power, are localized, evil genies. The term itself is etymologically related to the Arabic "djinn", local evil genies, though actually derived from the Geez "janyen"), and the concept is also similar: most ganyen are either water-spirits or fire-spirits.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[166] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, *121 such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation 641 for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms [701] under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not • 689 respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the [626] barbs of public opinion.

The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Un- *121 like the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their 701 warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide [702] his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came [714] of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

times brought dissension to the state, the legitimate Crown was triumphant most of the time. 175*

In the history of Ethiopian literature the period has been called a Golden Age.[1] The important works composed during this time include *The Glory of Kings,* which contains the story of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon, and their offspring, Menelik I, legendary first king of Ethiopia; *The Book of the Mysteries of Heaven and Earth,* a compilation of occult theology and numerology, with a Miltonic account of the struggle between Michael and Satan; *The Christian Romance of Alexander the Great,* a fantastic portrayal of Alexander as a Christian hero who traverses the Land of Darkness and the miraculous Land of the Living; the moralizing tracts of the greatest emperor of the period, Zar'a Yā'qob; as well as numerous lives of saints and translations of Christian writings from Arabic. 175* 538

Connoisseurs of Ethiopian art attribute the most original and refined paintings to the latter part of this period. Using translucent colors and austere shapes and design, Ethiopian monks brought to expression an intense spirituality in the form of miniatures in illuminated manuscripts.[2] 175* 532

At the same time this was the Heroic Age of Ethiopian warfare. Amda Ṭseyon vanquished sixteen Muslim chiefs to the south and west; the valor of Sayfa Ar'ed was celebrated in medieval Arab tales of chivalry; Dāwit I pushed his victories against the Muslims as far as Zeila on the Gulf of Aden. Improved military equipment and organization under Yeshāq brought the imperial forces to a new level of discipline and power, which Yeshāq used to establish his authority in many [illegible]hern areas. Zar'a Yā'qob, famous for endowing churches and monasteries and for encouraging literature and art, was a successful warrior in his own right. 175* 648

A close-up of Ethiopia at the height of its medieval synthesis is provided by Father Francisco Alvares, Portuguese emissary to Abyssinia during the years 1520–27.[3] We see a prosperous kingdom, its far-flung dominions headed by hereditary rulers and royal appointees, all of whom pay tribute in kind to the emperor. The tribute consists of horses and mules, blankets and cloths, silk stuffs and gold, all in impressive amounts. The provincial heads, and the armies they must make available, live off the land they govern. The numerous priests and monks are supported by lands granted them by the king. Justice is administered at three levels, with the possibility of appeal from the local judge, to the provincial governor, to the royal court itself. The king's mobile camp, large as a town, is his capital, so that he spends his years marching about from one corner of his domain to another. 175* 64 631 [651] [69]

The monarch at the time of Alvares' visit was Lebna Dengel (1508–40), a man of pride and temper. He refused to heed counsel that the kingdom was imperiled by threats from the outside. Indeed, legend has it that he was discontented with the prevailing civil harmony and begged God to send an ad- 175* 643

233 the season usually coincides with lent, when milk, as an animal food, is prohibited to the Coptic Amhara, anyway. Sometimes a wooden trough ("gända") is made out of a tree trunk, and after the cows have drunk, the sheep are permitted to use it. Milking is done in a very tightly woven 237 415 reed container ("gerera") "waterproofed" by smoking (then called "qwacha" or "chocho").

233 423 691 Sometimes a large extended family will try to enclose a reserved pasturage for itself, by means of rock markers, within a "bota" that had been general pasturage. This almost invariably leads to litigation, but it is not rare in districts where landholding Amhara families of long residence feel very attached to a particular territory, e.g. in hamlets near Gondar (Awura, Addis Alam vicinity, Lidäta) and in the Länz district of Shoa.

231 The cattle of the Amhara is the humped variety (Bos Indicus, or, Zebu), which has apparently replaced the earlier cattle of Ethiopia, the unhumped Bos Primigenius.[61]

The hump of the oxen is much prized, and they are bred for it, as well as for strength in plow-pulling, but there is no breeding to obtain good milkers. The predominant attitude is that of agriculturists, not of pastoralists. The hump of the ox is utilized in plowing, to keep the yoke from slipping off; in fact, in lowlands where horses are occasionally used for plowing, an artificial hump of straw, reeds, etc., is made to hold the customary 251 yoke. The hump is also a choice bit for eating, "shänya 262 läjegena" -- hump to the brave (warrior), still served to

61. Bettini, T. M.: Die Rindzucht in Italienisch - Ostafrika. Koloniale Volkerkunde, Wien, 1944.

D. Traditional Methods of Investigation of Crimes.

694 [789] Two factors are noteworthy in the traditional method of investigating crimes. One is the use of the supernatural in tracing the criminal's trail; the other is participation of the Coptic church, once the suspect is caught. While recent, modern instructions from the central government try to suppress the former, neither factor has lost much of its power over the attitudes and beliefs of nearly all rural Amhara, even townspeople.

625 691 a) The thiefcatcher, "lēbashay", recently outlawed officially, was a hereditary office, passed from father to son, thus entrusted only to Amhara (or other Abyssinian Branches). This inheritance, however, much like inheritance of f eudal fief ("gult"), had to be re-acknowledged in every generation. The heir, grown to maturity, would take his father's medicine bag, "korojo", travel to the head "lebashay" at the capital (of the province or country), and request renewal of license. This license could be withdrawn at any time, on complaints from the local headman, the ḉheqa shum, that the thiefcatcher had become corrupt, e.g. that he was in league with thieves and was so unsuccessful that he must be using fake medicine.

789 694 The magic involved in the procedure was "sympathetic magic", for the effort made was one of acting out all of the movements of the thief, from re-enactment of the crime itself, on the spot where it was committed, tracing his trail of flight, eating where he ate, and even resting in a state of sleep to indicate when and

625 khaki shorts and with shoes, are now made responsible for guarding the peace.

E. Litigation

691 The Amhara, especially the male, is trained not to suffer any injustice silently (unless temporarily powerless before a "great man"). No matter how lowly his socio-economic class status, he loves to engage in litigation. Observers have sometimes described it as a national pastime. Even children at play argue (fictional) cases, with enthusiasm, debating their cause before their own "judges", draping and undraping a rag from their shoulders, much like adults do their toga, in this activity.

A man is proud to be regarded as one who "speaks well in court". Therefore, he will be ashamed to let another speak for him, and the legal profession flourishes only in Addis Ababa before modern courts, in which modern laws are involved, using European (Greek, Armenian, etc.) lawyers. However, a woman or a timid man, or a timid ex-slave could hire a man who "speaks well in court". [693]

This debate is followed in both civil and criminal cases, before the "danya" or "wombär", and every individual involved, including the gurarantor "(was"), cheqa shum, lēbashay, etc., have an opportunity to argue as well as testify.

691 Typical cases most frequently heard are debts, small thefts, improper measures at the market, plowing across a neighbor's border ("wäsän gafi", i.e. border-pusher), grain eaten by a neighbor's cow, and the severity of mutual insults that had been exchanged during a hostile argument. Details argued about are often petty, such as: how good was the fence; just how much grain was eaten; how much was actually consumed?

[579] More serious is the loss incurred from the outlaw bandit, traditionally called "bär zägi", (lit. the one who shut the gate), or "dur gäbba" (the one who fled [685] to the bush). The most frequent case involves debtor and creditor. Until very recently, the creditor could chain the debtor to him, and in rural areas one sometimes still sees their togas knotted together. This was uncomfortable for the creditor who had to feed the debtor. Even now that chaining is not permitted, a plaintiff still has to feed the defendent he has caused to be placed in jail (e.g. for theft) while awaiting trial. While he feeds him little and often spoiled food, he must keep him alive, and this acts as a deterrent against light accusation, except on the part of a wealthy "great man" accuser.

695 701 Special gestures, bodily motions, and drapings of the toga are still followed in the traditional way when going "bedanya fit", before the judge. The toga is draped ready for action, so that the accuser, or witness, can hold one corner at arm's length, step forward with heavy tread, and wave the bunched end of the em-

695 661 er court, if he felt he had the means. In this case the judge might sometimes not appropriate the wager for fear of having to surrender it again later.

539 691 There are numerous proverbs characterizing roles in litigation, and counseling behavior and decisions to be made in certain situations:

"The young lawyer,
in the beginning he acclaims to heaven;
later on, he will look to the ground"
(Moral: always choose an old, experienced lawyer, with many reserve tricks up his sleeve).

"Don't seize the tail of the leopard;
but if you did, don't let go."
(Meaning: Don't go to court against a good talker, or "great man", or wealthy adversary; but once started, fight as hard as hard as you can, or else he will ruin you).

"Even if you know how,
against the judge do not debate".
"Judge, why your partiality?
the loser must pay you (anyway)".

"One witness need not make you tremble,
(just as) a one-eyed (person)cannot dance well."

[17] The pattern of the wager resembles, in part, that of the "khabdh" of Arab bedouin.[76]

76. Ibid.

X794 756 556 A poor woman will perform work such as serving coffee, sweeping, fetching water and fuel, cooking, baking, brewing beer, and spinning cotton thread in the house of the zar doctor.

X794 675 776 The contract arranged by the zar doctor with the zar spirit for each patient devotee is regarded as having legal validity. In exchange for regular gifts and services the zar spirit promises limited repossession, at regular intervals only, and self-restraint in contagion of other members of the family of the patient at least until after her death. After that event the zar spirit may pass on to the next generation to assure himself continuation of the preferred gifts.

X794 776 Complications are explained away on the grounds that there has been some trifling oversight in payment of dues or in respect; or on the grounds that another, evil, zar has "stolen" the dues in order to make trouble. The zar doctor never admits to error; instead, he restores the contract by instructing the possessed to dance the "gurri" of atonement ("yäbaṭer gurri") (lit. of the stick) if guilty; or the "yämehrat gurri", dance of mercy and acquittal, in case of slight [691] oversight. Some zars are as fond of litigation as most Amhara. One zar spirit is nicknamed "wäs aggach" because he always requires a personal guarantor, "wäs", whom he will "possess" in place of the patient in case of default in payments.

X794 694 Even the judicial authorities, the provincial judges among the Amhara, will occasionally recognize zar possession as a valid excuse for violations of the law, or at least as a mitigating circumstance. Failure to appear in court to answer a summons may be forgiven on the grounds of "agorra" (lit. he roared, shrieked, i.e. is under possession) that particular day. The only other equally strong excuse would be that the person summoned had just taken kosso purgative.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

(MANZ)

*175 643 nable. As the rainy season was approaching, Haile Malakot retreated to Shoa, where he fell sick and died. For the first time since Nagāssi, Shoa was left without an effective leader. Tēwodros marched into Manz from Wallo, and Shoa capitulated with little struggle. Eleven-year-old Menelik, son of Haile Malakot, was taken hostage.

Ten years later Menelik escaped from the camp of Tēwodros and regained Shoa. Slowly and carefully he built up his power. Tēwodros' reign raced to its tragic end. Takla Giyorgis II reigned briefly at Gondar, the last emperor to sit there. Yohānnes IV of Tigre governed the country for seventeen years. When Yohānnes died, Negus Menelik was forty-five and ready. Nagāssi's seed, eight generations later, reached the throne of all Ethiopia on November 3, 1889.

CULTURAL PROFILES

The Manzē Ethos

*175 185 The goals of Nagāssi and his descendants, apart from simple increase of power, were to recover the lands taken from their fathers and to stiffen the authority of Christianity in Shoa. Their success was virtually unbroken by [181] reason of exceptional soldierly prowess and political perseverance. These are ideals and qualities embodied par excellence in the people of Manz.

423 Sanctity of *rīst*, or land inherited from one's parents, is a cardinal value in the Manzē scheme of things. Such land must not be given or sold to anyone 181 who is not a close relative. People generations removed from actual residents [428] of Manz still retain claims to family land there, still cherish the idea that if they so desired they could go back and live on it. As an urbanized Manzē once told his nephew in Addis Ababa: "No matter how far you travel abroad, no matter how long you stay away, you will always be able to think of your [539] family land in Manz as your true home." This sentiment is expressed in a proverb:

> *Ya-Manz rīst be-shi amatu/la-bālabētu.*
> Manz *rīst* to the thousandth year/belongs to the owner.

A squatter may fight to keep his land from falling to some stranger who claims it as having belonged to his grandfather, but in his heart he respects the values that support such a claim.

[577] By Manzē standards the good man is thus one who defends the land of his fathers, seeing that it is not sold to outsiders or that foreigners do not come to [685] take it. If someone plows another's land without permission, he must be punished. If the matter can be settled through litigation, well and good; if it requires recourse to violence, so be it. To let such an offense go unavenged [691] would be the worst sort of shame. Grievances concerning their "hereditary

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

423
estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly 181
a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rĭst.* 691

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their 771
land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts 181
are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found
there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially 771
hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the 773
angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[27] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gēra Meder [823]
is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short 181
notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination: 181 551

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Cḥafcḥefē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow"). 181

A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā,* a hardwood staff about 411
three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā.* It has many pur- 481
poses—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs 482
when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or [599]
standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter.

Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat*, or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which contrast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen*, meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā*, land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rīst*.

The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories.

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense.

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.)

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver.

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression.

The Yearly Cycle

The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 a matter of course. In the more covert forms of expression, however, insulting
521 is a favorite practice among Amhara. Ambiguous language and obscure
598 allusion make possible a good deal of socially admissible, and admired, insult-
[195] ing. It is chiefly due to his mastery of this genre that the Amhara have come
to idealize Alaqā Gabra Hānnā who, in the words of a psychologically sophis-
[554] ticated Ethiopian informant, by "skillful use of 'wax and gold' has defiled everything that is sacred in Abyssinian tradition: this includes Mother, God, Emperor, and Patriarch, to say nothing of the ignorant clergy, peasantry, and slaves. Gabra Hānnā . . . is the summation of the oral aggressive trend in every Abyssinian, of which the *dabtarā* in the king's court and the singer in the drink-house are only mediocre representations."

155 Wax and gold is, furthermore, the vehicle for the mode of expression which
598 Erikson calls "oral retention." Just as the Amhara tends to be tight-lipped
[195] and evasive when confronted by questions he does not feel like answering, so he finds pleasure in stubbornly withholding his meaning from his audience through employing figures and allusions which no one can understand. This may be understood as a passive form of oral aggression. For the untutored, however, the active aggressive component is probably more satisfying. Most Amhara males look forward to occasions when they can insult with impunity, such as in victory after the games at Christmas or in the setting of a drink-house, where their skillfully improvised verses are repeated and sung by a minstrel. The oral sadistic spirit of this latter scene has been captured with great fidelity by a contemporary Amhara novelist. Describing the moment in a drink-house when the minstrel begins bowing his one-stringed violin and gets ready to accept verses from the crowd, he writes: "*And now every one of them prepares a bullet of verse, and gets cocked to fire veiled insults.*"[18]

155 Two-way communication among Amhara is frequently colored by a biting
521 and intrusive manner as well. Amharic conversation gravitates toward a highly argumentative style. Casual disagreement, or even neutral deliberation over a common problem, often engenders a kind of protracted bickering to which the Amhara have given an onomatopoetic name, "*çhiqeçhiq*." In
[691] its more institutionalized form, this argumentativeness becomes litigation, which has long been regarded as the national sport of Abyssinia.

691 As the primary means of distributing land-use rights and of reducing the
182 likelihood of resort to violence in personal disputes, litigation serves functions of unmistakable importance in Amhara society. Yet the frequency and intensity with which Amhara take part in litigation suggests that it is motivated by non-rational factors in good part. Litigants have often lost many times the original value of some item under dispute in the course of pursuing litigation over it through the courts for many years. The language and colorful gestures of the court may be observed among Amhara in their homes or

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

at social gatherings in the course of discussions about nearly any subject. One 691
cannot but conclude that the Amhara litigate to a large extent because for 182
them it is an intrinsically pleasurable activity. At times, in fact, the forms of 517
litigation are acted out as in a game. *Teṭāyaq*, for example, analogous to the 524
Western process of cross-examination and a beloved feature of traditional 695
court procedure, is sometimes practiced at parties though it has been out- 178
lawed in modern courts.[19] Two men will face a "judge" and try to bedevil each other with sly questions and preposterous claims. The content of the dispute is of no matter; it may be sheer nonsense.

Amhara litigants are ingenious at expressing themselves. They do so with 155
gestures, intonation, and timing that achieve considerable dramatic effect. 537
They are delighted to perform at the slightest provocation. The following 691
incident, recorded during a morning at court in Manz, illustrates that dimen- 695
sion of Amhara litigation which consists of the inherently gratifying expression of oral aggression:

> The defendant had been accused of plowing the plaintiff's land without permission. In fact, however, the plaintiff had given the defendant previous permission to plow there—in front of a group of elders who testified accordingly. The judge therefore ruled against the plaintiff. The plaintiff said he would appeal this decision, because the permission he granted had not been registered in the governor's office and, besides, he had some other complaint to bring against the defendant.
>
> At this point someone in the audience rose and said: "That is all. The judge has ruled against you, and the case is finished." Whereupon the plaintiff told this speaker that he should keep quiet, that his speaking out was against the law, that he had bothered him when the case was tried before a lower level judge previously and should bother him no more. Instead of hushing up, the speaker left his position against the wall and stood next to the defendant, asserting that he would speak in behalf of the latter.
>
> The plaintiff then accused this man of talking out of turn. The judge acknowledged this accusation and called for witnesses. Instantly half a dozen or more men jumped to their feet, eyes bursting with excitement and pride as before a battle, and volunteered to witness against the speaker. One by one, with a great show of oratory, they said their pieces against the man who had spoken out of turn. More than once the judge had to urge these witnesses to stop talking after the evidence had been presented. By this time the substance of the original dispute seemed to have been completely forgotten.

Oral Ambivalence

Much as the oral zone is favored by the Amhara as a center for positive 155
gratifications, both of the passive-receptive and the active-aggressive sort, such

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

FIG. 34—Offering a gunshi

FIG. 35—Singing out the master's gunshi

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FIG. 36—Amhara litigants [P. 238-A]

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 571 [764] Spontaneous co-operation is most in evidence among the Amhara at times of crisis. When death is announced, relatives and friends promptly repair to the home of the deceased and offer their help. They build the coffin and construct a *dāsi* (a temporary shelter near the house to accommodate all the expected visitors). They bring food and drink to help provide for the many who will come to pay their respects, and will similarly provide help on the occasion of the big memorial feasts to follow. Like assistance is rendered during other crises, such as prolonged illnesses or fire. Such forms of co-operation set another significant limit to egoistic orientation among the Amhara.

*121 181 156 571 578 691 It is in the realm of interaction involving serious interests, touching layers of the personality deeper than those required for the formalities of etiquette, that Amhara egoism is most conspicuous. Here everything seems to conspire against generous communication and concord of opinion. As we have already observed, the Amhara are quick to become argumentative in ordinary conversation. *Litigation* is one of the most prominent forms of interaction among the Amhara. One can scarcely spend a day in the Amhara countryside without encountering litigants, whether under a tree, at a marketplace, or in the courtyard of some lord. A nobleman can never travel about the country without being accosted on the way by litigants anxious to have him hear their stories.

121 181 571 578 691 171 Litigation is, of course, an endemic feature of peasant civilizations. Yet there can be no doubt that for the Amhara this form embodies a basic psychological disposition that differs from that of the people of other peasant civilizations. In traditional China, to take a case of marked contrast, such interpersonal conflict, far from being relished, was deliberately avoided. The Chinese considered going to court to be an extravagance, and the village judge was one of the most underemployed members of the community. In China, parties to a dispute preferred to assemble at the teahouse and to seek a solution through discussion and negotiation. The Amhara, on the other hand, seeks to maximize the opportunity for self-assertion through litigious disputes. Ordinary sociability among the Amhara is saturated with references to litigation. Current court cases comprise one of the more common topics of conversation.

*121 181 571 578 [69] [521] Beyond litigation, *conflict* is often expressed in more violent forms. Fights with the *dulā* erupt when altercation becomes too heated. Throwing stones is another accepted mode of combat, especially among youth. Protracted enmities tend to eventuate in such acts as house-burning, assault with swords or rifles, and (according to Amhara belief, at least) poisoning.

While it is true that Amhara culture provides means and a certain amount

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* Some indication of the gross national significance of this phenomenon is afforded by the following comparison: twenty-seven high court judges are sufficient to handle the litigation for all of England and Wales; the corresponding number for Ethiopia is *one hundred and eighteen*.

632 [796] motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' epony-
[346] mic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "government" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means [691] [423] litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

[161] [592]	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total population	151	95
Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by [613] risteñas. These households are distributed among the [592] hamlets' ambilineages as follows:
[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

622 both the central government and the local church. Where
651 the land has not been officially measured, which is the usual case in old Amhara territory, the mislane must rely on him for information necessary to the assessment of taxes. The cheqa shum is expected also to supervise customs evasion
622 when caravans or smugglers move through his territory. He
692 mediates between landlord and tenant in their endless little disagreement. In fact, his activities resemble those of an elizabethan "Justice of the Peace".

He decides local disputes, in civil cases; officiates at the most common type of marriage, the "semanya" (an agreement between two kinship groups); he reads out government proclamations and decrees of the emperor at the nearest rural market place, including the call to arms in case of war. He can also indict a criminal and bring him before the "danya" the judge of the nearest market town, or to the "judges on circuit" accompanying the governor on his annual inspec-
622 tion tour during the dry season. Usually the cheqa shum is a local landlord himself, unless he has been given the post as a special favor for services rendered to the governor.

[701] Until the diminution of feudal privileges during the past decade, the cheqa shum was also responsible for providing the military-feudal chiefs and their troops with provisions when they were on march, making it unnecessary for
[485] them to depend on supply lines. Now that army troops receive regular salaries, he still has to play host to travelling officials for their personal needs, since there are no rural hotels. They do not pay him except by promises of future favors.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

632 Contact with feudal land tenure was maintained
566 by requiring the "gultenna" of the district to come to town every three months, for a one-month statute labor, then called "war tara", for the feudal lords now residing in town, if no war was in progress. Of course the actual labor was done largely by the "gabbar", but the gultenna was responsible. The domain of the feudal lord was called "gezat" (lit. acquisition, possession), and while this statute labor has now been abrogated, the term survives to mean "province".

632 The feudal chief of the province, imitating the
692 king, would "sit in judgment" in Solomonic grandeur, usually twice a week, under a broad, shade-giving sycamore, in front of his "palace". The latter could range from a spacious tent to a stone house of round design in the ancient style (or a Portuguese-type castle of the 17th century). Surrounded by courtiers and would-be courtiers, eager to proclaim the boundless wisdom of the lord, he would also appoint smaller judges, "danya", to hear more toutine cases brought in from the countryside by the cheqa shum officials. The town thus became a place where even thesimplest peasant could, at least theoretically, seek relief from excessive opression.
[625] The bodyguard of the lord of the town, commanded by a "shalaqa" (lit. chief over 1000 men), could detail his men for duty as "mebanya" watchmen, of specific spots, especially near the market, and this force thus formed a kind of city police.

000 Since the town attracted the most clever "dabtara",

671 [627] accumulate in a lifetime. The present price is usually Eth$1000.-.

[696] This practice is so strong that even at present a judge of a semi-modern court in Addis Ababa will suspend a prison sentence for involuntary manslaughter on condition that the murderer accumulate this sum and pay it to the victim's kinfolk--a wise decision preventing a new chain of murders. Recently a uniformed policeman in Addis Ababa, who was under this sentence for just that crime, made his tour among resident Europeans in the business district, begging money, with a letter in English explaining his need, signed by his own superior officer!

635 692 The absolute powers of the "ras" or "negus" in the past were limited only by the geographical boundaries of their effective military and administrative realms. All of them sat in judgment of their subjects, and combined legislative, judicial and executive powers in their persons. But each subject had the right to appeal directly to this highest authority against unjust treatment by a lower officer, provided he could throw himself in the path of the ruler and catch his attention. This right to "abyöt" ("Hear me") continues to this day.

697 Nearly all "ras" and "negus" of the past maintained political prisons for their noble relatives who might become contenders to the throne. These prisons were not walled, but located on inaccessible mountain tops, "amba", and sometimes referred to as "wäheni". One such "wäheni" was located at a place called Geshan, in the old, smaller, Begemdir district, and was used by the kings of Gondar

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

681 master. Such verdicts were still carried out during the reign of Emperor Menelik II who died in 1913, though he tried to reduce the literal enforcement of the more draconic parts of the Code.

It is noteworthy that the application of the "Fetha Nägäst" was supposed to be based on the biblical principle of Luke, that punishment should be applied according to the knowledge of the offender, not according to the seriousness of the offense. This was reaffirmed in the Penal Code of 1930 (though in effect this new code abrogated much else of the Fetha Nägäst), as follows:

672 The following are degrees of relative culpability,
692 in accordance with which degrees of punishment are to be determined on a declining scale:

The man who knows the law
the forgetful person (unstable personality)
the "balagär" (rustic peasant)
the (otherworldly) monk
the poor and ignorant person (illiterates)
the stranger
the ignorant woman
the imbecile or invalid
the Ethiopian from a non-Amharic-speaking province
the child below age 12.

The judge was also permitted and encouraged to take the emotional personality of the offender into consideration(without indicated scale) , such as:

The oppressive person
the lawless
the proud
the envious
the treacherous
the revengeful
the intemperate
the quarrelsome
the careless
the bullying

694 appearing regularly, early and late, for many days, bowing before him in "dāj tenat", call his attention to the injustice, whereupon he would usually order the negligent or wicked danya to produce the prisoner and to explain the evidence against him. But a prisoner without the protection of kinfolk or of priests of the church, who could intercede in this fashion, was in a helpless situation. This in part explains the cnntinuing emphasis on and power of kinship relationships and of the church, in all phases of life and social organization.

692 (5) The High Court of the central government, in Addis Ababa, combines the features of the traditional private court of the king, sometimes called "chelot" (Council), and of a modern Supreme Court. Nowadays, several of the judges are European jurists of considerable experience. Capital punishment cases, e.g. murder, slave trading, armed banditry, are heard before this court, since thr right to capital punishment has been taken from the "ras". This court is public or semi-public, and its decisions are often publicly announced. However, there is also a secret "Crown Council" (also called "chelot"), which convenes at the invitation and order of the emperor, usually on state matters affecting the monarchy, such as cases of treason.

693 and thus not a contender for the throne. He was the chief justice, for he could hear appeals even from the highest court in the land, and act as arbitrator and judge in high-level quarrels between feudal lords and even involving the king himself. His role as chief counselor of the king has now been taken by the "Tsahafi" (lit. scribe), who has risen to that position from that of long-time private secretary, at present Wolda-Giyorgis.

692 The present High Court has original and appellate jurisdiction over all cases in Ethiopia, criminal as well as civil. Majority opinion of the judges prevails. In 1942 a Supreme Imperial Court was appointed to hear appeals from the High Court, but it convenes only intermittently. A secret Crown Court is called together in special treason cases affecting the old nobility, or the officers of the new army.

671 177 A new Civil Law Code is still being worked out, by a series of European jurists invited for that purpose. Meanwhile new decrees are published intermittently in the official "Negarit Gazeta" (lit. the drum gazette), in both Amharic and English. The Attorney-General is a foreigner (for some time Mr. Nathan Marein), but the Minister of Justice, the Legislative Consultative Committee and the President of the High Court are Ethiopians, with a range of modern education from very little to average.

642 The Constitution of 1931, further liberalized in 1955, was a free-will gift of the Emperor. It established a Parliament of two houses, the upper directly appointed,

692 the lower indirectly appointed. No elections have been held; they have been postponed to the day when "education shall have been increased". In actual practice the monarchy thus remains absolute in function, and even legislation that is not directly urged by the emperor requires his signature and cannot be overridden.

563 (d) A problem of law that did not concern the old Amhara legislative authorities but that has become, though still dormant and in abeyance, a problem in recent years, is that of juridicial privileges of sectarian minorities, particularly Ethiopian Muslims.

In the past, Muslims lived there much as they did under the "Millet" system of Ottoman Turks, i.e. under their own religious jurisdiction in all internal affairs such as personal status, inheritance, marriage, divorce, endowments, etc. In Amhara areas, the Muslim ecclesiastical judge, the "Qadi" performs the functions of the "çhoqa shum" and the "atbiya danya" judge for the Muslim population of his sector. He also heads their own school system of Quran schools, much as the Coptic priests head the local church schools.

563 692 There was no central Muslim organization, beyond this local structure. As part of modern centralization, the present emperor issued the "Qadi's Court Proclamation" in 1942 and 1944. It created a "Naibas" Council in Addis Ababa, to function as a traditional Muslim "Sharia" Court of Appeals above the local decisions of the Qadis. This structure, in turn, is supervised by the (Coptic) Minister of Justice of the central govern-

563 692 ment, who approves appointment to Sharia and Qadi positions.

5. Structure and Function of the Coptic Church among the Amhara.

795 The importance of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia on the life of every Amhara, of all classes, rural or urban, can hardly be exaggerated. To the Amhara, "Amhara" is synonymous with Abyssinian Christian; and the [198] liturgical language used in the church, "Geez", with "language of the free". The term used for their religion is "tăwahedo", often shortened to "towado", meaning "orthodox".

To the Amhara, his church is so closely connected with his attitudes to his country, his nation, his ethnocentrism, that the severance of ties with the mother Coptic Church of Alexandria, in 1948, passed almost [779] unnoticed. Only church scholars are aware that, as part of the larger Coptic church, the break with the Western church occurred after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., ostensibly because the Copts insisted on complete fusion of the person of Christ, refusing to accept the "union, but not fusion of Deity and human spirit" of the non-Monophysite faith in the formula he pronounces when [788] slaughtering a sheep or ox: "In the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost, one divinity." The pious [224] hunter will hasten to the wounded gazelle to pronounce the formula before the animal expires, then finish it off by cutting its throat

195 578 Insults of category b) however, may be noisy, sound violent, involve much high-pitched repartee, with the adversaries screaming at each other. But since such individual insults are regarded as a "battle of wits", they rarely even lead to fisticuffs, though, to foreign observers, such encounters seem only a hair's breadth removed from serious bloodshed, and the adversaries seem to lean against each other physically (though now actually). For, even a severe insult is not regarded as a "fighting word", rather as an almost theatrical, almost ceremonial exchange. There may be much waving of a corner of a toga in the opponent's face, as in court. The exchange may end in mutual exhaustion, physically and nervously. The entertainment aspect is not lost on the onlookers, who thoroughly enjoy this and egg on [592] the adversaries. Sometimes curbstone arbitrators ("astaraqi") are appointed to act as "peacemakers".

[554] A person of nobility is not supposed to engage in such public battles of insult, rather employs subtle means of implied antagonism. Even a commoner Amhara may imitate the indirect behavior pattern in a situation of antagonism, e.g. to indicate to a neighbor that he is not wanted, yet without letting the public know it (thus saving face for the neighbor). He may invite him, greet him politely, ask him to wait (standing) while stools "will be brought". When no stools are brought, after some time, the neighbor leaves, never to return. The proverb says:

[539] "So that he will not talk (against us), invite him;
(yet) so that he will not eat, move him about".

In this manner, polite antagonism is indicated, without making a public enemy.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

gre, drinks out of a golden cup, as keeper of the law at Axum. There are 12 nagareets in Tigre, and forty-four persons are invested with the Ras-werk. 644

Church affairs. The Abuna is appointed by proclamation of the king, and is deposed at his pleasure. He holds of no other person. He ordains priests and deacons within the kingdom, consecrates churches, altars (tabot), &c. His revenue was once very considerable, esteemed one-third of the revenues of the kingdom; but as those princes, who made the grants, resided in Shoa, or in the south of Tigre, the principal lands are in those provinces, adjoining to the royal residence. Now, the southern provinces are all in the hands of the Galla, as well as part of Tigre, and the governor, or Ras, has assumed the rest; so that of 400 oz. of gold once paid by Tigre, the Abuna, in my time, got only twenty-five, one-third of which went to the king's wakeel in his house. The Abuna appoints no officer, civil, or ecclesiastical; the king, or governor, does all. The king appoints officers, called Alaka, who administer in all cases the revenue of churches and convents; and this person is the judge of differences and suits among the priests and monks of his church, or fraternity, from whom lies no appeal but to the King, or to the Ras, who is understood to represent him. This Alaka is, or is not, a monk, or priest, at the king's pleasure. Of those who are called monks, are the communities of Debra Libanos, or Azazo, as it is now called, Waldubba, Werkleva, Damo, Mahabar Selasse, &c. These live in villages in these places, and reside or not as they please. The rest of that name are those who are ordained on any illness, disappointment, or advanced in life. The monks are ordained by the Itchegue, the others by any ordinary priest. Neither take any vow. The women of Waldubba are of the first kind, and all women past pleasure compose the second. There are many instances of both orders renouncing and marrying. 793 794

All persons, as well ecclesiastical as civil, are subject to the same laws, judgment, and tribunal, without exception, be the cause of whatever nature it may be. The Abuna, or Itchegue, have none of them a tribunal, nor can they take cognizance of any cause; especially the Abuna, who has, as I have said, an officer in his house appointed by the king, who pu- 692

[p. 55]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

692 nishes all persons by that authority, even those of the Abuna's family, without any sort of deference paid to him; and this, as appears by the judges, or king's records, is of very ancient standing. The king calls an assembly of the clergy when he pleases, generally with the advice of the Abuna, and there is none considered legal if he is not present, if in the kingdom.

[682] Welled Hayrat (Ras Michael's son) was excommunicated for killing a refugee at the Abuna's feet, in consequence of which he confiscated the Abuna's villages in Tigre, nor was the curse ever taken off *. The Itchegue, or prior of the 693 monks, if he be chosen a lay-man, must be ordained by the 793 Abuna. He is named by the king, who nominates all superiors of monasteries. The Lika-cahanat, or chief of the priests, is ordained by the Abuna and Itchegue, who both hold a corner of a scarf put upon him. He is an inquisitor of morals among the priests, and has so much salt and cloth from each district. A priest at his ordination pays three salts to the Abuna. He comes to the house of the latter, enters, and kisses the threshold. The Abuna, sitting on a sofa at one end of the room, reads the Scriptures to himself. Then having paid his salt, the person retires and kisses the threshhold, returning without imposition of hands, or any ceremony. Old men are made priests, and young men deacons by a simple jussit. More probable accounts say, that there is only one salt paid, that the person stands at the door, while the Abuna, having made the sign of the cross, holding it in his hand, says, "I have ordained you a priest." The person then enters the room, kisses the cushion of the sofa, and retires. Many are ordained that can neither read nor write.

[764] The Abyssinians have an office for the dead; and worship 778 pictures of saints, even such as are not consecrated. This we had an opportunity of seeing, every time we were obliged to draw some Madonna. All those that saw it, kissed the 000 ground before it, with their foreheads on the earth. The

* The Abuna's house is a kind of sanctuary, in which criminals are protected from massacre, not from trial. They are sometimes tried there by the royal judges, or dragged from it to the tribunal.

[p. 56]

claimed with the provinces. It was at a lower level that his official hierarchy was, in theory, in continuous contact with the regional and hereditary element. The governors' deputies and their assistants in the still smaller districts might or might not be local men, but when we come to the heads of villages or groups of villages we find that the leader and representative of the people and the lowest agent of the Emperor and his governor were united in the person of the *chiqa-shum*. 622

This officer was universal in Tigré, Amhara, and most of Galla country though in the latter this title was not always used. Because of his close association with the customary agrarian societies there were local variations in his status and duties. In general character and importance, even though the analogy is not exact, the *chiqa-shum* occupied something like the position of the Elizabethan justice of the peace. In his office central and local authority met. He was responsible to the governor's district chief for the proper performance by his own community of their duties and especially for their payments to the proper authorities of tithe and tax and of dues in kind and labour. He was the judge to whom, if wayside arbitration failed, the litigants would first apply. He would be present at local weddings; would preside at meetings of the village council, and would be especially concerned with all transfers or allocations of land and disputes about it. He would see that orders from the higher authorities were proclaimed by a crier in the village. [692] [203]

According to an Ethiopian account he is 'the officer of the district, living upon the soil as one joined to it'.[1] He is the agent of the Emperor. 'He will be an Amhara and may accuse even the Governor. If a man touches or strikes him, he (i.e. the striker) will not pay compensation, but all his goods will be confiscated.'[2] Coulbeaux defines him as 'le maire de la commune . . . tuteur, père même'. He manages the affairs of the village like his own, and his patriarchal authority is sacred. He is generally the genealogical chief of the community, and calls the village council together under a tree.[3] Certainly these village chiefs, representing continuity of tradition and the sedentary agricultural life, were the stabilizing factor in a system in which changing governors, roving armies, and a distant Emperor played the more dramatic, but often the more superficial, parts. This especially struck Plowden. 'There is in each village', he wrote, 'one hereditary officer that cannot be displaced on any pretence; and it is this institution alone that preserves some appearance of order in the absence of all written documents, amidst the whirl of revolutions and the rapid succession of dynasties and gover- [687]

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 42. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 184. [3] Coulbeaux, vol. 1, pp. 35–6.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

necessary, to die on the battlefield, as did Galāwdēwos, Yohānnes IV, and others. He had to maintain a minimum of political order, balancing off contending ambitions and subduing rebellious elements. Another important function was that of ultimate arbiter in judicial disputes.* As guardian of the church, moreover, he was active in endowing monasteries and churches and in resolving doctrinal disputes among the clergy.

To carry out these and related functions the emperor needed great wealth and political power. When the monarchy was intact he could command wealth from many sources: from the country-wide land tax (*gĭber*), in the form of honey, grain, or livestock, or such special fiscal assignments as saddles, plowshares, spears, ink, or tent pegs;[9] from assessed tithes on produce; in tribute from subject peoples, either in currency (gold, salt bars, etc.) or in kind; in revenues from traders; and from gifts from new appointees and hopeful office seekers. In theory, moreover, all the land of the empire belonged to its ruler; and, in fact, a good part of it was at his direct disposal, either for cultivation as royal estates or to distribute as compensation to those who served him.

The political power of the emperor was grounded in his command of troops supported by the royal bounty. In addition, he could command the troops of all the lords subject to his authority. Through frequent tours around the country he was able to reassert his hegemony from time to time in distant regions. But even from afar, a strong monarch could usually exert great control thanks to his authority to appoint or demote at a moment's notice any officer of the realm. As Alvares observed:

> No great lord of lands, if he is in them, can leave them, or set out for the Court on any account without being summoned by the [emperor]; and being summoned he will not fail to come for any reason. And when he sets out from the land of which he is the lord, he does not leave either wife or children or any property there, because he goes away in the expectation of never returning, since . . . [the emperor] gives when he pleases, and takes away when he pleases.[10]

The ideology of sacred monarchy served to legitimate theoretically boundless demands for wealth and power as well as to provide identity and morale for the body politic. It justified, too, occasional "deviant" behavior on the part of the monarch, virtually the only person with sufficient authority to innovate in this intensely conservative culture. The emperor has always been a primary agent of cultural innovation in Abyssinia, from the time of Ēzānā, who adopted Christianity in the fourth century; to Zar'a Yā'qob in the fifteenth

* To this day Haile Selassie devotes several hours a week to hearing court appeals in a session known as *chelot*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.* 565 [427]

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services. [631]

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagārit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area. 565 631 [651] [534] [692]

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[29]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement. 565 631 661 [829]

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagārit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the [466] [701] [651]

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gabbār*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dēgā* (high) land, while in certain *qolā* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

463 prestige involved is alight--occurring only if there is
464 kinfolk nearby shamed by such manual labor. It is on a social level with the gathering of kosso-bark by a poor Amhara woman.

463 Some farmers have a part-time specialty of fashion-
[324] ing the stone used as mano by the housewife when she grinds grain. They are called "wäqari". No shame is involved; it is considered like a hobby, like whittling away at wood.

¶693 Some heads of farming families are adept at "talk-
554 ing well in court" for which they achieve great prestige--the major method of achieving prestige. They are called "täbäqa" lawyers, and not full-time specialists since all they can expect, if they win the case, is a bellyful of barley beer or an occasional gift, but they are guests of honor at the victory feasts and "men of reknown".

A large number of semi-specialists fall into the
[23] category of caretakers, "täbäqi". Cowherds and shepherds, if they are grown men not useful at anything else, are included in this category.

463 Part-time employment is found by the former feudal
265 chamberlain, "agafari", at big weddings of landholding peasants or in towns. They act as caterers, order the bread, meat, beer, mead, etc. They are experts at headwaiting, and know just whom to seat at what table or around which "mäsob", according to rank, and they indicate to each servant to whom to serve beer and to whom the more expensive and more noble mead. This was

672 agreement must be before witnesses, again with use of the oath "Haile Selassie yemut" (May the emperor die, if I break my word). Often a judge will not release the loser of either a criminal or civil case unless he can produce a personal guarantor who will guarantee that the damages or fine will be paid.

562 672 Women, under the traditional laws, were considered legal persons but to a lesser degree than men. They could act as witnesses only of what they had actually seen or heard, and were warned not to "interpret" their testimony. Sometimes there were threatened with jail if their testimony seemed contradictory and not entirely useful. On a lower level were slaves, who were not le-

567 672 gal persons, but whose testimony on what they had directly witnessed could be heard in court, subject to evaluation by the judge.

C. Judicial Personnel

693 694 (1) The Curbstone Judge. He is sometimes referred to as "yäqälatē danya" (lit. delegate judge). Two persons having a quarrel may stop a respected passerby whom they consider a peer, often a bearded "shemagalye" (elder), to arbitrate their quarrel. They stop him in his tracks by calling out "Haile Selassie yemut", or if they or he are very old fashioned and dignified, in the Geez version of the oath "Be-Hayle Selassie Amlak" ("in the name of the God of Haile Selassie").

693 694 If the quarrel is a civil matter, the curbstone judge usually acts merely as arbitrator ("agoran"). He is rewarded by the loser, who has forfeited his "wager", usually with several "berellē" (glass bottles) of beer.

If, however, personal injury or some other criminal matter seems involved, or if no mutually satisfactory adjustment can be reached, the arbitrator may tie their togas together with a knot, and refer the matter to the cheqa shum.

693 622 The latter then sits as informal judge, to decide whether the matter should be referred to a regular formal judge, the "danya". Meanwhile he tries to arbitrate the case, with the power of his office as village headman lending him added prestige. In church-owned territory he may be a priest. Sometimes he is one of the local Confessors ("mānfās agway"), particularly if it is a marital quarrel. Each of these offices lends the cheqa shum added prestige, for there is no formal separation [719] of church and state organization at the base of the social pyramid.

693 694 (2) The Indicting, Examining Judge. He is called "atbiya danya" (lit. handwashing judge), and his functions are broad, and vary between rural and town locale and between districts and regions. Sometimes the cheqa shum performs this function himself. In town, the atbiya danya may sit under a sycamore at the market, so that any tradesman or purchaser can complain to him about unfair weights or attempted theft. He can issue an immediate "feten," an injunction to cease and desist.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

693 He can summon an offender for later, formal trial be-
694 fore the "danya", and can also summon witnesses to appear. He can order the market police to arrest offenders, or fine them on the spot (up to Eth$25.-). His position somewhat resembles the Arab Bedouin Arifa local judge.[75]

693 In recent years, the "atbiya danya" is sometimes a very young man who is semi-educated, graduate of an 8-year modern elemantary school of the provincial capital, who is familiar, or expected to be, with all the latest decrees of the emperor. He thus becomes an "agent of change". But since he has never lived outside the province, he still follows the old pattern of literal interpretation of decrees, with little or vague awareness of thespirit or intent of the new laws. Often he is overzealous, with the brashness of an adolescent promoting half-understood modernization, which annoys or amuses the older, often less modern-educated "danya". Sometimes he functions as police magistrate.

(3) The formal Judge, "dānya". The threat of legal prosecution, "bādanya fit"(before the judge) is often heard in ordinary quarrels, which, however, rarely get this far. The "danya" is appointed by the "awraja shum", the administrative head of the sub-province, in most cases, and he now receives a modest salary. Formerly his income was entirely dependent on the "wagers" placed by plaintiff and defendant, which they had to enter in order to have their case heard at all, and which

75. Bouvat, L.: Le Droit Coutumier des Tribus Bedouines de Syrie. Revue du Monde Musulman, 1921. Tome 43, pp.27-45.

693 was forfeited by the loser. Under the old system a poor man who could not, even with the aid of kinsmen, raise his bet to equal that of his richer opponent, had little recourse to justice except the "abyet".

[661] The old system also left wide opportunities for bribing of judges, for the borderline between a public "wager" and private bribe was thin. In rural areas the pattern of "wager" still persists. But most danya now officiate in the towns, in a "ferd-byet" (lit. Judgment-House), often an Italian-built administrative building; and the court procedure has taken on a more modern pattern, through the gradual effect of the pressure in this direction from Addis Ababa. His fines may range from [681] Eth$25.- to Eth$500.-; prison sentences from one month to one year.

The "danya" is a regular judge in that he sits in judgment all year long, at regular intervals. Wednesdays and Fridays are preferred, because they are light "fast-days", on which the "mind is not weighted down with food", according to the traditinnal attitude. Thus, time and place and frequency of function of the "danya" are formally established in the judicial structure, and form the broad base of this part of social organization.

(4) The Appeals Judge, "wombär" (or, "wänbär", or "wänbär", lit. seat), does not sit as regularly in the "ferd-byet". Several times a year (at least once) he travels on a judicial circuit, and also accompanies the governor-general on his inspection tours. Tradi-

693 tionally the country of Abyssinia had 12 wombär, possibly in allusion to the 12 apostles (as in the "mähabbär" sodality). In the past the wombar were appointed by the "ras" or the "negus". At present they are still usually appointed by the governor-general of the province, who is their immediate superior, and whom they besiege in "daj tenat" for this high office. The old "ras" or "negus" usually had two wombar sit at each side of the throne, but the one sitting at the lord's right, the "qän wombär", outranked the one sitting at his left ("gera wombär"). This seniority in seating is still followed at the court of the modern-attired governor-general. The latter usually reappoints new wombar when he is himself assigned to another province, and since the wombar resides in the provincial capital, he is a permanent part of his official retinue during his tour of office there.

The wombar usually goes on circuit after the main harvest, and "sits" at major market towns to hear appeals. Formerly, the provincial "ras" would sit under the old fig tree, flanked by his wombars, and hold court even on capital punishment cases. The latter are now referred to Addis Ababa, to the High Court. But the wombar is [681] now empowered to assess damages or fines up to Eth$2000.-, to pass prison sentences up to 5 years, and lashes up to 25 (the latter usually in assault cases).

694 Though the principle of "habeas corpus" did not exist in the traditional law, kinfolk of the accused being held by a danya a long time without trial could go to the wombär's court in the town he resided in, and by

625 khaki shorts and with shoes, are now made responsible for guarding the peace.

E. Litigation

691 The Amhara, especially the male, is trained not to suffer any injustice silently (unless temporarily powerless before a "great man"). No matter how lowly his socio-economic class status, he loves to engage in litigation. Observers have sometimes described it as a national pastime. Even children at play argue (fictional) cases, with enthusiasm, debating their cause before their own "judges", draping and undraping a rag from their shoulders, much like adults do their toga, in this activity.

A man is proud to be regarded as one who "speaks well in court". Therefore, he will be ashamed to let [693] another speak for him, and the legal profession flourishes only in Addis Ababa before modern courts, in which modern laws are involved, using European (Greek, Armenian, etc.) lawyers. However, a woman or a timid man, or a timid ex-slave could hire a man who "speaks well in court".

This debate is followed in both civil and criminal cases, before the "danya" or "wombär", and every individual involved, including the gurarantor "(was"), cheqe shum, lebashay, etc., have an opportunity to argue as well as testify.

694 dual's case, the "gubba" gift, continued, and it is often
[66] identical with a bribe. At the same time, the old cus-
178 tom which served as a last resort to a poor person to
have his injustice rectified, by appearing with a heavy
stone perched on the back of his neck almost crushing
him, was abrogated because Europeans looked on this as
primitive. The poor man thus has lost his few safeguards,
and now is losing evan the right to beg and to create a
traffic hazard by throwing himself before the vehicle of
[17] the great man and shouting "abyet". (The practice of
carrying the rock resembles that of innocently accused
Arab Beduin who appear pressing a blade against their
necks to demonstrate and shout their innocence.

178 Transition thus proceeds in unequal shifts, with
671 many culture lags. Modernization of law and justice
643 proceeds from the top, Addis Ababa, down the pyramid.
One of the reasons for the circuit-riding of the emperor
himself is to remind the chiefs of his realm of his
all-seeing and all-hearing power, just as was done in
the past. He acts as inspector-general.

The Emperor and his High Court in Addis Ababa stil
give lip service to the Fetha Nägäst Code. But in prac-
tice, this amounts to little more than rationalization
for the benefit of the ultra-conservative Amhara nobles.
693 The position of the "afä negus" (lit. Mouthpiece of the
King), who traditionally was the guardian of theFatha Nä-
gäst code, has now become honorary in practice. In the
past he was the second-most powerful person in the realm,
trusted partly because he was not of the ruling family

693 and thus not a contender for the throne. He was the chief justice, for he could hear appeals even from the highest court in the land, and act as arbitrator and judge in high-level quarrels between feudal lords and even involving the king himself. His role as chief counselor of the king has now been taken by the "Tsahafi" (lit. scribe), who has risen to that position from that of long-time private secretary, at present Wolda-Giyorgis.

692 The present High Court has original and appellate jurisdiction over all cases in Ethiopia, criminal as well as civil. Majority opinion of the judges prevails. In 1942 a Supreme Imperial Court was appointed to hear appeals from the High Court, but it convenes only intermittently. A secret Crown Court is called together in special treason cases affecting the old nobility, or the officers of the new army.

671 177 A new Civil Law Code is still being worked out, by a series of European jurists invited for that purpose. Meanwhile new decrees are published intermittently in the official "Negarit Gazeta" (lit. the drum gazette), in both Amharic and English. The Attorney-General is a foreigner (for some time Mr. Nathan Marein), but the Minister of Justice, the Legislative Consultative Committee and the President of the High Court are Ethiopians, with a range of modern education from very little to average.

642 The Constitution of 1931, further liberalized in 1955, was a free-will gift of the Emperor. It established a Parliament of two houses, the upper directly appointed,

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

this, that they do not cut their beard, and the laity shave 793
below the chin and the throat. There are other priests, [302]
whom they call Debeteraas, which means canons; these belong to great churches, which are like their cathedrals or collegiate churches, and are not monasteries. These are very well dressed, and at once appear as what they are: these do not go to the fairs and markets.

CAP. XXX.—*Of the state of the Barnagais and manner of his house, and how he ordered a proclamation to be made to go against the Nobiis,*[1] *and the method of his justice.*

The service of this Barnagais is very poor in state, although he is a great lord and has the title of king. As many times as we spoke to him we always found him seated on a bedstead beneath a coverlid, and himself covered with hairy cotton cloths which they name *basutos*; they are good for the country, and there are some here of a high price. Behind the sides of the bedstead, walls, without anything except four swords hung each on a pole, and two great books, also suspended on poles. In front of the bedstead, mats on the floor, upon which sit those who come; the houses rarely swept, his wife always seated on a mat near the head of the bedstead, many people always before him, the great people seated on mats. In sight of his [231]
bedstead stand four horses, one always saddled, and the others covered, not caparisoned for war, but as horses are in the stables. In these houses of his are two inclosures, and each one has its gate, and in it porters with whips in their hands, and in the one nearest to him are smarter porters. Between these gates, the inner one and the outer 693
one, is always his Alicaxi, which means his judge, hearing causes and administering justice. If the cause is important,

[1] Nubians.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

692 nishes all persons by that authority, even those of the Abuna's family, without any sort of deference paid to him; and this, as appears by the judges, or king's records, is of very ancient standing. The king calls an assembly of the clergy when he pleases, generally with the advice of the Abuna, and there is none considered legal if he is not present, if in the kingdom.

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793 Abuna. He is named by the king, who nominates all superiors of monasteries. The Lika-cahanat, or chief of the priests, is ordained by the Abuna and Itchegue, who both hold a corner of a scarf put upon him. He is an inquisitor of morals among the priests, and has so much salt and cloth from each district. A priest at his ordination pays three salts to the Abuna. He comes to the house of the latter, enters, and kisses the threshold. The Abuna, sitting on a sofa at one end of the room, reads the Scriptures to himself. Then having paid his salt, the person retires and kisses the threshhold, returning without imposition of hands, or any ceremony. Old men are made priests, and young men deacons by a simple jussit. More probable accounts say, that there is only one salt paid, that the person stands at the door, while the Abuna, having made the sign of the cross, holding it in his hand, says, "I have ordained you a priest." The person then enters the room, kisses the cushion of the sofa, and retires. Many are ordained that can neither read nor write.

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4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

693 he hears the parties until he has determined upon it, and then he goes and relates the cause to the Barnagais, who gives the sentence: if it is a small cause, or if the parties wish it, the Alicaxi gives sentence, and the cause is concluded. Moreover, in all judgments, whether the Barnagais or the Alicaxi judges, there must be present an honourable man, whom they call by the name of his office Malaganha, who is like a tabellion or notary of Prester John, and if either of the parties wishes to appeal, he requires from this man the certifying of the cause for Prester John and his judges. All the lords of the countries of any of the kingdoms of Prester John have an Alicaxi and a Malaganha appointed by the Prester; so also have the captains subject to the Barnagais and to the other great lords. The gentlemen who are about the house of the Barnagais, and other grandees who come on business, have this manner of coming from their abodes. Whilst at the place he is living at he mounts his mule, seven, eight, or ten men on foot go before him as far as the first gate, and there he dismounts. If he is a person of greater importance, he takes seven, eight, or ten mules, or else three or four, according as the person is. So he dismounts at the first gate, and arrives at the second, after that, if they are bidden at once to enter, they go in, if not, they sit outside like beehives in the sun, without any other pastime. All these honourable persons wear sheep skins at [292] their necks or on their shoulders, and he who wears the skin of a lion, tiger, or ounce, is more honourable. When 576 they come before the lord they take off the skin, as we take off our caps. Whilst we were in this town of Barra on a 721 market day, they made a solemn proclamation that the Barnagais intended to make war on the Nobiis, five or six days' journey from the limits of his country, towards Egypt, neighbouring to the countries of Canfilla and Dafolha,[1] which are subject to the Barnagais, as I have before mentioned.

[1] Dafilla.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

to be necessary for ordination: payment of moderate fees ranging up to $5 (about 10s. to-day) appears to be all that is required. In this direction matters do not seem to have progressed much since Bruce wrote in 1790 giving the following description of an ordination: 793

"A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who they are, and they tell him they want to be deacons (*debtera*). On this with a small iron cross on his hands after making two or three signs, he blows with his mouth twice or thrice upon them, saying, 'Let them be deacons'. I saw once all the army of Begemder made deacons, just returned from shedding the blood of 10,000 men, thus drawn up in Aylo Meidan, and the Abouna standing at the Church of St. Raphael, about a quarter of a mile distant from them. With these mingled about 1000 women, who consequently, having part of the same blast and brandishment of the Cross, were as good deacons as the rest."

It is highly regrettable in the interests of Abyssinia that the priesthood, being what they are, should exercise so much power and influence. This is no doubt attributable to a variety of causes, to tradition, wealth, land ownership, and also to the fact that they (or some of them) are the only persons in the country who understand the ancient Geze language in which the Code of Law (the *Fetha Nagast*) and other similar works are written. This gives them a great "pull", and one result is that they are an indispensable adjunct to all the judges, who are very much in their hands. 793 693 [671]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

It was at this time that the *makuānnent* came into their own. More unabashedly than ever they constituted, not a hereditary aristocracy in corporate opposition to the king, but a plurality of proud centers of rank—partly inherited, partly achieved—enjoying virtual autonomy. To move toward a modern nation it would be necessary to brake their centrifugal force. 175 565 642

The Clergy

Like the nobility, the clergy may be divided into those who are significant at the national level and those who are primarily local dignitaries. The former reside close to the imperial court, while the latter are thickly distributed around monasteries, churches, and wildernesses all over the country. 793 792

The highest ecclesiastical authority in Abyssinia was the *abuna* who, from the time of Frumentius in the fourth century until the death of Abuna Qerlos in 1949, was with few exceptions an appointee of the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria. Chosen from the Egyptian monks of the convent of St. Anthony near the Red Sea, the *abuna* was brought, at great expense to the emperors, to live out his life in an alien land. Ignorant of the language and customs of the country, he played little part in the conduct of church affairs or in affairs of court; and when he did try to do so, his efforts were usually abruptly checked by jealous clerics and suspicious kings. His functions were purely ritual, but indispensable: he alone had authority to anoint and crown the emperor, to confer orders, and to absolve vows. From numerous revenues, rents, and fees, the *abuna* enjoyed a considerable income. Like the emperor, he was regarded as sacred because of the charisma of his office, and spent most of his time secluded from the public.[29]

Second in rank was the *eçhagē*, an appointment made by the emperor. This was the traditional title of the abbot of the convent of Dabra Libānos in Shoa, which in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gained hegemony over Abyssinian monasticism. The *eçhagē* served as administrative head of the church and had jurisdiction over all monks and monasteries. The most esteemed of the Ethiopian clergy, he tended to wield more actual power than the *abuna*. His provincial deputies, called *liqa ḳāhenāt*, controlled the secular clergy. This office was also bestowed by the emperor, and its functions included presenting candidates for ordination and deciding questions of protocol in connection with religious ceremonies.

In addition to these supreme dignitaries of the church, a small number of churchmen enjoyed pre-eminent status by virtue ~~of~~ their activities at the imperial court. These included the *aqābē sa'āt* ("guardian of the [canonical] hours"), the chief ecclesiastic at court, and during part of the reign of Zar'a Yā'qob the only official with unrestricted access to the king; the *qēs hāṭsē* ("king's chaplain"); the *liqa dabtarā* ("chief of the *dabtarā*"); and *liqa mammerān* ("chief of the learned men"). These four served as the four su- 793 644 [693]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 preme judges at the royal court, and the *aqābē sa'āt* ranked third—in some
644 lists, first—in the official order of precedence of all court dignitaries.[40]
[693] One other church dignitary, finally, was the *nebra ed*, chief of the sacred district of Aksum, who always enjoyed a high position at the royal court. When appointed by the emperor (instead of by the provincial governor who sometimes possessed that authority), the *nebra ed* enjoyed the rare privilege of being permitted to sit while speaking in the event of his involvement in litigation.

793 The status of the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries was based on approxi-
554 mately the same factors as those which determined the status of secular nobility: royal favor; family background, in the case of those whose fathers were important nobles or noted churchmen; and the possession of wealth, political power, and imposing titles.[41] The same was true of their regional counterparts, the *alaqā*, "chiefs" of large churches and monasteries, whose wealth, power, and leisurely mode of life gave them, in Plowden's opinion, "perhaps the most enviable position in Abyssinia."[42]

793 The status of the clergy as a whole, however, rested on three other prin-
792 ciples which are not affected by royal favor, birth, or worldly possessions.
554 These were: contact with the most sacred symbols of religious authority; ascetic piety; and religious learning. Broadly speaking, in Abyssinia these three principles have been embodied primarily in three distinct roles, namely, those of priest, monk, and *dabtārā*.

793 A normal preparation for these roles—necessarily so, in the case of the
794 priesthood—is service as a deacon. Ability to read is, now as before, a requisite qualification for the diaconate, but that requirement has in the past often been overlooked. More important has been the requirement of ordination by the *abuna*. Ordination formerly took place in the company of hundreds of other aspirants and, when there was uncertainty about the future availability of an *abuna*, even babes in arms were admitted.[43]

794 The traditional garb of the deacon is a yellowish cape made of sheepskins,
792 though on holidays the officiating deacons may be dressed in richly colored silk robes like the priests. The duties of the deacon—and they are accounted great and secret privileges—are to prepare the sacramental bread, fetch the holy water, and assist at the Mass (the performance of which normally requires two priests and three deacons).

793 On reaching puberty a deacon is no longer supposed to serve in the church,
794 for fear that he will become "impure." At that time he may decide to prepare for the priesthood. For this two qualifications must be met. He must have completed his study of reading and, ideally, of *zēmā*, the chants that are intoned in the liturgy of the Mass. These matters he may learn from the older clergy during his service as a deacon, or from his father, who, in many cases, is a priest himself. Otherwise, he goes off in search of a master. He

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

175 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureau-
178 cratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of
631 regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central gov-
642 ernment has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of
525 building up their positions, members of the most important noble families
631 have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of
642 Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of
646 high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as
631 regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to
693 Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the
578 behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict gov-
[465] ernor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

178 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the
565 aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the
554 eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national
[571] political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

672 agreement must be before witnesses, again with use of the oath "Haile Selassie yemut" (May the emperor die, if I break my word). Often a judge will not release the loser of either a criminal or civil case unless he can produce a personal guarantor who will guarantee that the damages or fine will be paid.

562 672 Women, under the traditional laws, were considered legal persons but to a lesser degree than men. They could act as witnesses only of what they had actually seen or heard, and were warned not to "interpret" their testimony. Sometimes there were threatened with jail if their testimony seemed contradictory and not entirely useful. On a lower level were slaves, who were not le-

567 672 gal persons, but whose testimony on what they had directly witnessed could be heard in court, subject to evaluation by the judge.

C. Judicial Personnel

693 694 (1) The Curbstone Judge. He is sometimes referred to as "yäqälatē danya" (lit. delegate judge). Two persons having a quarrel may stop a respected passerby whom they consider a peer, often a bearded "shemagalye" (elder), to arbitrate their quarrel. They stop him in his tracks by calling out "Haile Selassie yemut", or if they or he are very old fashioned and dignified, in the Geez version of the oath "Be-Hayle Selassie Amlak" ("in the name of the God of Haile Selassie").

693 694 If the quarrel is a civil matter, the curbstone judge usually acts merely as arbitrator ("aqoran"). He is rewarded by the loser, who has forfeited his "wager", usually with several "berellē" (glass bottles) of beer.

If, however, personal injury or some other criminal matter seems involved, or if no mutually satisfactory adjustment can be reached, the arbitrator may tie their togas together with a knot, and refer the matter to the cheqa shum.

693 692 The latter then sits as informal judge, to decide whether the matter should be referred to a regular formal judge, the "danya". Meanwhile he tries to arbitrate the case, with the power of his office as village headman lending him added prestige. In church-owned territory he may be a priest. Sometimes he is one of the local Confessors ("mānfās agway"), particularly if it is a marital quarrel. Each of these offices lends the cheqa shum added prestige, for there is no formal sep-
[779] aration of church and state organization at the base of the social pyramid.

693 694 (2) The Indicting, Examining Judge. He is called "atbiya danya" (lit. handwashing judge), and his functions are broad, and vary between rural and town locale and between districts and regions. Sometimes the cheqa shum performs this function himself. In town, the atbiya danya may sit under a sycamore at the market, so that any tradesman or purchaser can complain to him about unfair weights or attempted theft. He can issue an immediate "feten," an injunction to cease and desist.

693 He can summon an offender for later, formal trial be-
694 fore the "danya", and can also summon witnesses to appear. He can order the market police to arrest offenders, or fine them on the spot (up to Eth$25.-). His position somewhat resembles the Arab Bedouin Arifa local judge.[75]

693 In recent years, the "atbiya danya" is sometimes a very young man who is semi-educated, graduate of an 8-year modern elementary school of the provincial capital, who is familiar, or expected to be, with all the latest decrees of the emperor. He thus becomes an "agent of change". But since he has never lived outside the province, he still follows the old pattern of literal interpretation of decrees, with little or vague awareness of thespirit or intent of the new laws. Often he is overzealous, with the brashness of an adolescent promoting half-understood modernization, which annoys or amuses the older, often less modern-educated "danya". Sometimes he functions as police magistrate.

(3) The formal Judge, "dānya". The threat of legal prosecution, "bādanya fit"(before the judge) is often heard in ordinary quarrels, which, however, rarely get this far. The "danya" is appointed by the "awraja shum", the administrative head of the sub-province, in most cases, and he now receives a modest salary. Formerly his income was entirely dependent on the "wagers" placed by plaintiff and defendant, which they had to enter in order to have their case heard at all, and which

75. Bouvat, L.: Le Droit Coutumier des Tribus Bedouines de Syrie. Revue du Monde Musulman, 1921. Tome 43, pp.27-45.

693 tionally the country of Abyssinia had 12 wombär, possibly in allusion to the 12 apostles (as in the "mähabbär" sodality). In the past the wombar were appointed by the "ras" or the "negus". At present they are still usually appointed by the governor-general of the province, who is their immediate superior, and whom they besiege in "dej tenat" for this high office. The old "ras" or "negus" usually had two wombar sit at each side of the throne, but the one sitting at the lord's right, the "qän wombär", outranked the one sitting at his left ("gera wombär"). This seniority in seating is still followed at the court of the modern-attired governor-general. The latter usually reappoints new wombar when he is himself assigned to another province, and since the wombar resides in the provincial capital, he is a permanent part of his official retinue during his tour of office there.

The wombar usually goes on circuit after the main harvest, and "sits" at major market towns to hear appeals. Formerly, the provincial "ras" would sit under the old fig tree, flanked by his wombars, and hold court even on capital punishment cases. The latter are now referred to Addis Ababa, to the High Court. But the womber is [681] now empowered to assess damages or fines up to Eth$2000.-, to pass prison sentences up to 5 years, and lashes up to 25 (the latter usually in assault cases).

694 Though the principle of "habeas corpus" did not exist in the traditional law, kinfolk of the accused being held by a danya a long time without trial could go to the wombär's court in the town he resided in, and by

691 appearing regularly, early and late, for many days, bowing before him in "dij tenat", call his attention to the injustice, whereupon he would usually order the negligent or wicked danye to produce the prisoner and to explain the evidence against him. But a prisoner without the protection of kinfolk or of priests of the church, who could intercede in this fashion, was in a helpless situation. This in part explains the continuing emphasis on and power of kinship relationships and of the church, in all phases of life and social organization.

692 (5) The High Court of the central government, in Addis Ababa, combines the features of the traditional private court of the king, sometimes called "chelot" (Council), and of a modern Supreme Court. Nowadays, several of the judges are European jurists of considerable experience. Capital punishment cases, e.g. murder, slave trading, armed banditry, are heard before this court, since thr right to capital punishment has been taken from the "ras". This court is public or semi-public, and its decisions are often publicly announced. However, there is also a secret "Crown Council" (also called "chelot"), which convenes at the invitation and order of the emperor, usually on state matters affecting the monarchy, such as cases of treason.

D. Traditional Methods of Investigation of Crimes.

694 [789] Two factors are noteworthy in the traditional method of investigating crimes. One is the use of the supernatural in tracing the criminal's trail; the other is participation of the Coptic church, once the suspect is caught. While recent, modern instructions from the central government try to suppress the former, neither factor has lost much of its power over the attitudes and beliefs of nearly all rural Amhara, even townspeople.

625 691 a) The thiefcatcher, "lōbashay", recently outlawed officially, was a hereditary office, passed from father to son, thus entrusted only to Amhara (or other Abyssinian Branches). This inheritance, however, much like inheritance of f eudal fief ("gult"), had to be re-acknowledged in every generation. The heir, grown to maturity, would take his father's medicine bag, "korojo", travel to the head "lebashay" at the capital (of the province or country), and request renewal of license. This license could be withdrawn at any time, on complaints from the local headman, the cheqa shum, that the thiefcatcher had become corrupt, e.g. that he was in league with thieves and was so unsuccessful that he must be using fake medicine.

789 694 The magic involved in the procedure was "sympathetic magic", for the effort made was one of acting out all of the movements of the thief, from re-enactment of the crime itself, on the spot where it was committed, tracing his trail of flight, eating where he ate, and even resting in a state of sleep to indicate when and

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

789 where the thief had slept, until he was caught.
694

The thiefcatcher directed this procedure, but did not drug himself. For that puppose he selected a boy about the age of a deacon, i.e. 10 to 15, for it was believed that puberty spoiled the sensitivity and "unblemished innocence" of the boy. This boy was never taught the secret of his power. Often he was a young slave (more recently ex-slave), who had been selected on account of his particular suggestibility. It was be-
[278] lieved that years of this repeated drugging made him a permanent addict, slowed his mental functions and even sent him occasionally into raving fits; so that a person who had served as "tracer" for the lebashay could not be a witness in court.

When complaint of a theft reached the lēbashay from within his "territory", he went to the ḉheqa shum or other local administrative official, and asked permission to begin his investigation. Together, they as well as the local "aṭbiya danya" judge and witnesses (if it was grand larceny) went to the place where the crime had been committed. The boy, young enough never to have had manly sexual intercourse with a woman, was now given the drug to drink. The lēbashay tied the boy's waist with a girdle, leaving 3 to 4 yards hanging down, (to be used later to maintain control like a chain in curbing a dog).

The boy was now given a hornful of milk to drink, in which a black powder from the medicine bag had been dissolved. It did not take long before the boy began

789 to make jerky motions, increasing in speed, acting "hot
694 on the trail", whereupon the lēbashay seized the loose end of the girdle. The boy pulled in one direction, and the group followed. When he entered a house, he re-enacted the activities of the thief in complete detail, including sleeping in his bed, until the lebashay prodded him to "awake" and continue the trail, saying 3 times "aderas" (get going, arrive). The boy jumped up, roughly pushed anyone in his way regardless of the normal respectful etiquette of behavior toward a "great man", and continued the chase. When he entered a hamlet or compound, everyone had to "sit", no one could leave. The boy would approach every individual, make magic contact with him by pushing him with the knee (regarded as the seat of manly power). If he seemed distracted, the lebashay might slap the boy, much as one would an unruly dog. In crossing brooks, the boy was carried across, since water was believed to draw away the power from the medicine, making him lose his "scent". If water did inadvertently splash on him, another boy had to be drugged to continue the trail. Lemons were also believed to affect the power of the medicine.

685 When the thief was found, and confessed, he had
696 to pay the fee of the lebashay, fixed during Emperor Menelik II restraining laws to a maximum of Eth$6.-; the thief also was to post two personal guarantors to guarantee that he would return the stolen item and appear in court. The lēbashay could decide to accept these conditions and release him, or turn him over to

685 the "danya". Interestingly enough, if the thief did
696 not have money on hand to pay the fee of the lēbashay, it was the responsibility of the victim who had originally requested his services to pay him on the spot, and try to collect later from the thief. This had the effect of eliminating complaints of petty theft from setting this costly process in motion.

694 It seems that amateur thieves were often caught
789 by this process, and usually confessed, feeling helpless when confronted with such "powerful" means of detection. Professional thieves, particularly in the towns, who were known to have evaded detection, were and are believed to have obtained a powerful magic antidote from a dabtara scribe.

694 When all methods of detection have failed, the
787 distraught victim has a last resort. He may go to the nearest "tänkwa", a practicer of black magic, and ask him to divine by throwing his bones. This , too, is now prohibited, but still goes on, though not as openly as before. Failing even in this, the victim may go to the Coptic church and there, having purchased incense
[754] and given a gift, pronounce a solemn curse, "säbätē masdäfat", on the thief.

171 The pattern of the lēbashay has been traced by
694 some observers to ancient Greek parallels, by others to the Arab bedouin "djirra" or "kassas" thief seeker who also tracks murderers in tribal feuds. The tankwas seem of more typically African witchcraft pattern.

694 (b) Collective arrest, "afärsata" was officially
672 discontinued only furing the past decade, and may well be re-established in any local emergency. It is usually applied only in cases of murder. The district administrator or governor could order the judges to arrest an area, then fence in all the men, and decree that "not a cow be milked nor a baby suckled", in the traditional phrase, until the investigation is completed. Every person was interrogated individually, and made to swear, before priests brought from the Coptic church, the oath of excommunication, "aggäzazät": "May He (i.e. God), perforate me as the Cross" ("endä mäsqälu yebäsasän"), if thefull truth be withheld.

When the culprit finally confessed, due to the tremendous social pressure on him, he was chained and sometimes thrown into a dungeon until trial. The cheqa shum was made responsible for guarding him, and could be assessed heavy damages, even full blood-money, if the murderer escaped. If the murderer was not found, the entire hamlet or territory under collective arrest could be sentenced to pay the "blood-money", unless they could prove that the murderer must have been a "passing bandit". Even then the cheqa shum might be fined for not having been watchful enough. At present he is somewhat relieved from this duty by the local officer, a semi-feudal "farasanna", whose only job is to look out for bandits and prevent anyone from shooting off his rifle, lest a bloody feud break out and everyone become trigger-happy. This
625 is in rural areas. In towns, the police, uniformed in

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

681 178 671 According to this change, mutilation of thieves was forbidden; the chaining of debtor to creditor was abrogated; flogging was reduced in frequency and quantity; the area that could fall under collective arrest, "afärsata", was limited; the legal validity of evidence from the "lebäshay" was indirectly abrogated. In 1933, the emperor further limited days, hours, and distances of the "afärsata". Capital punishment had been centralized in 1930.

It is noteworthy that in several cases old practices were for the first time acknowledged in writing, despite the continuing hesitancy to admit publicly any practice that European observers might regard as primitive. Thus, blood-money in place of blood-feud was decreed legal in 1930

426 671 178 Liberalization was also legalized by regarding civil law. In 1923 the Law of Loans fixed maximum interest at 9%. As usual , this was found to be too far a departure from practice for enforcement, and it was later raised to 12%. One of the last decrees prior to Italian hostilities, provided, in May 1935, for the abrogation of statute-labor, permitting the tenant (gabbar) to make a small payment (resembling a quitrent) instead.

694 661 178 (b) The pattern of judges riding circuit continued unabated, from the end of the harvest in the month of Tahsas (about November) until Easter. Sometimes judicial councils, "<u>gubaē</u>" were available in towns for appeals. But the old custom of bringing a gift to the "great man" to interest him in the indivi-

694 dual's case, the "gubba" gift, continued, and it is often
[661] identical with a bribe. At the same time, the old cus-
178 tom which served as a last resort to a poor person to
have his injustice rectified, by appearing with a heavy
stone perched on the back of his neck almost crushing
him, was abrogated because Europeans looked on this as
primitive. The poor man thus has lost his few safeguards,
and now is losing even the right to beg and to create a
traffic hazard by throwing himself before the vehicle of
[171] the great man and shouting "abyet". (The practice of
carrying the rock resembles that of innocently accused
Arab Beduin who appear pressing a blade against their
necks to demonstrate and shout their innocence.

178 Transition thus proceeds in unequal shifts, with
671 many culture lags. Modernization of law and justice
643 proceeds from the top, Addis Ababa, down the pyramid.
One of the reasons for the circuit-riding of the emperor
himself is to remind the chiefs of his realm of his
all-seeing and all-hearing power, just as was done in
the past. He acts as inspector-general.

The Emperor and his High Court in Addis Ababa stil
give lip service to the Fetha Nägäst Code. But in prac-
tice, this amounts to little more than rationalization
for the benefit of the ultra-conservative Amhara nobles.
693 The position of the "afä negus" (lit. Mouthpiece of the
King), who traditionally was the guardian of theFatha Nä-
gäst code, has now become honorary in practice. In the
past he was the second-most powerful person in the realm,
trusted partly because he was not of the ruling family

X794 756 556 A poor woman will perform work such as serving coffee, sweeping, fetching water and fuel, cooking, baking, brewing beer, and spinning cotton thread in the house of the zar doctor.

X794 675 776 The contract arranged by the zar doctor with the zar spirit for each patient devotee is regarded as having legal validity. In exchange for regular gifts and services the zar spirit promises limited repossession, at regular intervals only, and self-restraint in contagion of other members of the family of the patient at least until after her death. After that event the zar spirit may pass on to the next generation to assure himself continuation of the preferred gifts.

X794 776 Complications are explained away on the grounds that there has been some trifling oversight in payment of dues or in respect; or on the grounds that another, evil, zar has "stolen" the dues in order to make trouble. The zar doctor never admits to error; instead, he restores the contract by instructing the possessed to dance the "gurri" of atonement ("yäbaṭer gurri") (lit. of the stick) if guilty; or the "yäzehrat gurri", dance of mercy and acquittal, in case of slight [691] oversight. Some zars are as fond of litigation as most Amhara. One zar spirit is nicknamed "wäs aggach" because he always requires a personal guarantor, "wäs", whom he will "possess" in place of the patient in case of default in payments.

X794 694 Even the judicial authorities, the provincial judges among the Amhara, will occasionally recognize zar possession as a valid excuse for violations of the law, or at least as a mitigating circumstance. Failure to appear in court to answer a summons may be forgiven on the grounds of "agorra" (lit. he roared, shrieked, i.e. is under possession) that particular day. The only other equally strong excuse would be that the person summoned had just taken kosso purgative.

755 and the worst and most numerous ganyen are regarded as water spirits,
756 e.g. at the Blue Nile and everywhere also during the long rainy
789 season.
[776]

After diagnosing the identity and origin of the specific
755 ganyen, the tänqway tries to exorcise the demon by treating him
776 with contempt (exactly opposite to treatment given the "zar"). Instead of feeding the spirit a succulent "mäqwädäshä" (love gift), the ganyän - possessed person is fed a lunch of ashes. For a ganyen that is a fire-spirit, is attracted by ashes, his element, and may thus be induced to leave the body of the patient in order to feast. The tänqway follows this method even in cases of buda as indicated before.

The next step in treatment consists of "fixing" the ganyän somewhere else, so that he will not return into the body of the victim. This is done by the scapegoat technique; e.g. by fixing the demon into the body of a chicken, killing it, throwing the carcass away where the hyenas will eat it; or transferring the water-spirit to another locality.

756 Besides his role as a healer of ganyän, the major activity
[787] of the tänqway is as diviner of lost or stolen goods. It is not polite to use the term "tänqway" in his presence, instead he is politely addressed as "awaqi" (lit. knower, wise man). Since he usually makes it his business to know what goes on among professional thieves, his insight into such matters is sometimes indeed considerable; but also contributes to his bad social reputation. In "diagnosing" the case, the tanqway acts as detective, studies the place
[694] of the crime, investigates neighbors and finally draws seashells (zagol Lebsu") and bones from his bag and throws them, to read additional information from their driection and mutual position.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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and so receive absolution. They pray in the churches of 796
the canons as in those of the friars. Friars do not marry, [782]
canons and priests do so. When the canons live together 793
in the circuit they eat in their houses, and the friars eat in community. The chiefs of these churches are called Licacanate. The wives of the canons have houses outside of the circuit, where they go to live with them: the son of a canon remains a canon, and the son of a priest not, except he chooses later to become one. No tithes are paid to any church, they live on the large properties which the churches and monasteries possess. Complaints against the clergy [694]
are dealt with before the secular justice.

The vestment is made like a shirt, and the stole with a 292
hole in the middle, and put over the head; they have no maniple, nor amice, nor girdle; priests and friars all have [302]
their heads shaved, and the beards not. The friars say mass with their hats on their heads, and the priests with their heads bare.

In no church is more than one mass said, and no mass is 794
said for alms, not even for the dead. When any person dies, the priests come with cross and holy water and incense, and recite certain prayers for him, and carry him off to burial very hurriedly: next day they bring offerings: the churchyards are all closed, so that nothing can enter them.

Prester John has no determined place of abode, he 643
always goes about the country in tents, and he will always have in his camp five or six tents among good and common ones: and there will always be at Court of people for the 644
horses and mules from fifty thousand upwards.

The kitchen of Prester John is a good crossbow shot behind his quarters, and they bring his food in this manner: all that he has to eat comes in porringers and dishes of very black earthenware on wooden trays, and pages bring them, and above the pages come a pallium of silk, which covers them so that these viands come with reverence.

695 The traditional oath, "May the ruler die" (If I lie), is still in full use. This oath is called "semanya". As mentioned above, perjury was once a very serious offense, even a capital one, later was penalized by substitution of "blood money", i.e. 80 Thalers fine. Until recently, provincial farmers still invoked the name of the head of their old provincial dynasty in this oath, the "ras", or the name of the long-dead Menelik II. Since 1941, however, the name of the present emperor is universally used, "Haile Selassié yemut". It is in a very real sense a form of acknowledgement of the supreme power of the ruler, whose supreme power over and above the feudal system is regarded, traditionally, as a protection from chaos, lawlessness and uprisings that destroy and cause suffering. The proverb says:

[643]

[539] "When the emperor dies,
with whom will there be judging?".

The oath "Haile Selassie yemut" is used also to arrest lawbreakers, much as English police might arrest "in the name of the king".

672 Another old legal tradition still in full force is that of the "wās", the personal guarantor. To obtain a loan or a job, the applicant must always present at least one reputable guarantor, who is then personally responsible for making up any default or damage or misbehavior, and who can even be jailed in case the culprit escapes. He acts as personal bondsman for a defendant, to avoid his being held for trial in jail. This "wās"

691 Typical cases most frequently heard are debts, small thefts, improper measures at the market, plowing across a neighbor's border ("wäsän gafi", i.e. border-pusher), grain eaten by a neighbor's cow, and the severity of mutual insults that had been exchanged during a hostile argument. Details argued about are often petty, such as: how good was the fence; just how much grain was eaten; how much was actually consumed?

[579] More serious is the loss incurred from the outlaw bandit, traditionally called "bär zägi", (lit. the one who shut the gate), or "dur gäbba" (the one who fled [685] to the bush). The most frequent case involves debtor and creditor. Until very recently, the creditor could chain the debtor to him, and in rural areas one sometimes still sees their togas knotted together. This was uncomfortable for the creditor who had to feed the debtor. Even now that chaining is not permitted, a plaintiff still has to feed the defendent he has caused to be placed in jail (e.g. for theft) while awaiting trial. While he feeds him little and often spoiled food, he must keep him alive, and this acts as a deterrent against light accusation, except on the part of a wealthy "great man" accuser.

695 701 Special gestures, bodily motions, and drapings of the toga are still followed in the traditional way when going "bedanya fit", before the judge. The toga is draped ready for action, so that the accuser, or witness, can hold one corner at arm's length, step forward with heavy tread, and wave the bunched end of the em-

695 701 broidered edge of the Shamma toward the face of the accused, or even toward the face of the judge; shouting, in the latter case: "May He (God) make you see clearly! (Egziabhēr yasaywo). While he waves his right hand forward, his right foot thunders forward also, maintaining his position by leaning on the staff with his left arm. Meanwhile, the adversary leans mutely on his staff, as if he were in church leaning quietly on his "maqomya", but indicated nonchalance and indifference toward the raving of the accuser. A method of the defendant to influence the judge with his sincerity, in the traditional way, is to throw his pre-arranged toga off his shoulders, baring them in the middle of arguing his defense, to indicate that he surrenders his shoulders to the flogging that the judge might order, in complete confidence that his innocence must be evident to the judge.

695 661 Until very recently, and in remote rural districts even today, the wager, or bet on the outcome, was an essential factor in legislation. It took the place of court fees, for the loser forfeited his bet to the judge. This was the salary of the judge. Without this wager, it was not possible to go to court. The poor man was at a great disadvantage since he could not, even with help of his kinsmen, keep raising the bets to equal those of his wealthier adversary. To limit such judicial excesses, Emperor Menelik II decreed that wagers had to consist of tangible items such as honey, horse, mule, with a fixed cash equivalent (Eth$1.-, $10.-, $20.- in this order), and judges were urged to exercise fairness. Prohibition

695 of the practice now often leads to more secret and sub-
LCI tle bribing of the judge. For the old wager was open to the public, and a great source of public recreation and entertainment, accompanied by great noise and flashes of wit.

The danya would gravely enter every wager in his register. While the case was in progress, bets could be raised by signalling from the audience (partly consisting of interested kinfolk) instead of shouting them out, which was not always preferred:

"I agree to be his guarantor" - point finger at accused and strike own breast;

"I bet honey against him" -point finger at adversary and lick palm;

"I bet a horse" - wave both extended hands as if gallopping;

"I bet a mule" - hold hands near ear, moving up and down.

The judge had to take into consideration not only the winnings he would take, or the secret reward from the winner of the case, but also the shifting views of the audience. Thus the participating, arguing audience formed a sort of informal jury. Sometimes the danya might actually recess the court and call upon several elders from the audience to consult privately with him, or to help him assess the amount of damages to be awarded.

If dissatisfied with the outcome of the case, the loser might shout his protest "yegbañ" (lit. enter me, i.e. on another trial), usually taking it to a high-

695 661 er court, if he felt he had the means. In this case the judge might sometimes not appropriate the wager for fear of having to surrender it again later.

539 691 There are numerous proverbs characterizing roles in litigation, and counseling behavior and decisions to be made in certain situations:

"The young lawyer,
in the beginning he acclaims to heaven;
later on, he will look to the ground"
(Moral: always choose an old, experienced lawyer, with many reserve tricks up his sleeve).

"Don't seize the tail of the leopard;
but if you did, don't let go."
(Meaning: Don't go to court against a good talker, or "great man", or wealthy adversary; but once started, fight as hard as hard as you can, or else he will ruin you).

"Even if you know how,
against the judge do not debate".
"Judge, why your partiality?
the loser must pay you (anyway)".

"One witness need not make you tremble,
(just as) a one-eyed (person)cannot dance well."

[17] The pattern of the wager resembles, in part, that of the "khabdh" of Arab bedouin.[76]

76. Ibid.

E. Gestures and Postures.

201 Meaningful gestures accompany speech quite often among Amhara, occasionally substitute for speech, though not often. Amhara is too proud of ability for self-expression to forego speech in any but sharp dominance-subordination situations, in which case he may resort to non-verbal signs.

Gestures may take the form of signs, signals or symbols, and often emphasize status domination, e.g. noble versus commoner peasant; or patriarchal versus younger generation; or master toward servant.

To symbolize affect, the dominant person may lift part of his toga off his own body and cover the head and shoulders of the subordinate, e.g. a younger person, or a female. This gesture symbolizes protection, shielding, expressed as "gashey" (my shield). Affect can also be symbolized by the "gursha" (described earlier).

201 695 Formal antagonism appears most clearly in court "before the judge" ("badanya fit"). When appearing on the stand, the speaking adversary folds his toga so that he has an ample piece of cloth available to wave in the face of the silent adversary, and, to emphasize his protest and revolt against injustice, even in the face of the judge until restrained. He may raise his "wager" to emphasize the justice of his case and his certainty as to the outcome; using the following signals:

"I bet honey" - by licking his palm,

"I bet a horse" - extending arms and waving hands to imitate gallop,

"I bet a mule" - by raising hands to ears, indicating long ears of a mule, and moving them up and down.

The judge carefully notes the wagers in his book, since he will receive the wager of the loser, and, except for a "tax" to the governor, can keep most of it, in the old tradition.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

they take what they have, and they do not choose to pro- 554
vide more than what they require and is necessary for them.

In no part that he went about in were there butchers' 253
shops, except at the Court, and no person of the common people may kill a cow (even though it is his own) without leave from the lord of the country.

The people speak the truth little, even when they make 695
oath, unless they swear by the head of the King. They much fear excommunication, and if they are ordered to do [688]
something, and that it be to their prejudice, they do it from fear of excommunication.

The oath is administered in this manner. They go to the door of the church with two priests, and they have there incense and embers, and he who has to swear puts his hands upon the church door, and one the priests tells him of the oath to speak the truth, and that if he speaks falsely, that as the lion swallows his prey in the woods, so may his soul be swallowed by the devil; and as the wheat is broken between the stones, so may his bones be ground by the devils; and he who swears, at each thing answers Amen; and as the fire burns wood, so may your soul be burned in the fire of hell and made dust. He says Amen. And this if you do not speak truth; he says Amen. And if you speak truth, may your life be prolonged with honour, and your soul in paradise with the blest. He says Amen. And this ended, he gives his testimony.

He says that the movable feasts, Easter, Ascension, Pen- 796
tecost, are celebrated on the same days and seasons that we 805
celebrate them. The birth of Christ, Circumcision, Epiphany, and other feasts of saints also agree with us, and others not. The year and months begin on the 29th day of August, on which was the beheading of St. John, and the year is of twelve months, and the month of thirty days. When the year is ended, there are five days over, which they call pagomen, which means fulfilment of the year, and in the bissextile year there are six days over; so they keep with us.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

at social gatherings in the course of discussions about nearly any subject. One 691
cannot but conclude that the Amhara litigate to a large extent because for 182
them it is an intrinsically pleasurable activity. At times, in fact, the forms of {517}
litigation are acted out as in a game. *Teṭāyaq*, for example, analogous to the {524}
Western process of cross-examination and a beloved feature of traditional {695}
court procedure, is sometimes practiced at parties though it has been out- {178}
lawed in modern courts.[19] Two men will face a "judge" and try to bedevil each other with sly questions and preposterous claims. The content of the dispute is of no matter; it may be sheer nonsense.

Amhara litigants are ingenious at expressing themselves. They do so with 155
gestures, intonation, and timing that achieve considerable dramatic effect. 537
They are delighted to perform at the slightest provocation. The following 691
incident, recorded during a morning at court in Manz, illustrates that dimen- 695
sion of Amhara litigation which consists of the inherently gratifying expression of oral aggression:

> The defendant had been accused of plowing the plaintiff's land without permission. In fact, however, the plaintiff had given the defendant previous permission to plow there—in front of a group of elders who testified accordingly. The judge therefore ruled against the plaintiff. The plaintiff said he would appeal this decision, because the permission he granted had not been registered in the governor's office and, besides, he had some other complaint to bring against the defendant.
>
> At this point someone in the audience rose and said: "That is all. The judge has ruled against you, and the case is finished." Whereupon the plaintiff told this speaker that he should keep quiet, that his speaking out was against the law, that he had bothered him when the case was tried before a lower level judge previously and should bother him no more. Instead of hushing up, the speaker left his position against the wall and stood next to the defendant, asserting that he would speak in behalf of the latter.
>
> The plaintiff then accused this man of talking out of turn. The judge acknowledged this accusation and called for witnesses. Instantly half a dozen or more men jumped to their feet, eyes bursting with excitement and pride as before a battle, and volunteered to witness against the speaker. One by one, with a great show of oratory, they said their pieces against the man who had spoken out of turn. More than once the judge had to urge these witnesses to stop talking after the evidence had been presented. By this time the substance of the original dispute seemed to have been completely forgotten.

Oral Ambivalence

Much as the oral zone is favored by the Amhara as a center for positive 155
gratifications, both of the passive-receptive and the active-aggressive sort, such

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

structured. But the marching and fighting unit seems to have been, for all 121* practical purposes, the individual soldier and his retainers. Battles were not 701 fought in a disciplined manner; the outcome depended on the sheer num- 726 bers of troops, their state of morale, and the chance of catching the enemy off guard. Except for the large-scale deployment of troops in accord with the [725] customary tactic of envelopment, there was little expectation of subordinating [703] the impulses of individual soldiers to the needs of a "team"; for the prevailing military ethic stressed rather the heroism of the individual soldier and his drive to bring back a maximum of booty and trophies.[25]

The independent status of the common soldier in mass levies was based 121* on the fact that he was primarily a peasant and thus expected to return to 701 his fields as soon as a particular campaign was over. Nor were members of the 703 more permanent armies of lords greatly constrained. Loyalty to one's lord was in many cases a lasting tie, and accounts for much of the stability that existed in such arrangements. But in general it appears to have been a factor of far less moment than was the case, for example, in feudal Japan. The Amhara soldier felt he was fighting for a lord by his own free will and, therefore, had every right to leave him when conditions justified a move. One such condition was when the lord did not reward his followers liberally enough. Another related condition was when the lord had a tendency to suffer defeat in battle. Indeed, it was not uncommon for soldiers to swarm from one side to the other during a battle when defeat for their side seemed imminent. Still another basis for deserting one's chief was the ambition of a [554] vassal to acquire greater power, in which case he might rebel—become a *shĭftā,* in the original sense of the word—and build up a military force of his own in the hope either of impressing his erstwhile master sufficiently to be reinstated with greater honors, or of taking his place by vanquishing him in combat, or simply of carrying on as a free agent.

The civilian counterpart of the soldier's right of desertion or rebellion was 121* the right of judicial appeal which belonged to every free Amhara. This per- 641 tained primarily to the area of property rights. A man who suffered some 695 grievous injustice in a local court had the right of appeal, in theory at least and often in practice, to higher courts at the provincial and imperial level. There was, in addition, some possibility of relief from an inordinately oppres- 121* sive governor. He might be removed accidentally by the emperor, in the 641 continuous process of *shum-shĭr;* the people under his jurisdiction might [631] secure his deposition through appeals to the emperor or his overlord; or they might take arms behind one of his rebellious subordinates and overthrow him by force. Traditional Amhara society thus provided significant areas of social freedom for its citizens despite the feudal obligations that lay heavy upon them.

and observes the travelling traders, the "mangadanna". Both chiefs, especially the denya, sit under broad, shady trees on the market. Nearby is the gibbet, from which criminals were publicly hung until less than a decade ago. Recent additions to the market scene include a few modern tables and chairs at which treasury clerks from Addis Ababa receive import and other duties; and, within a barbed wire fence, government "dressers" of the health department from time to time, especially in epidemics, give free typhus and other injections to anyone applying and diagnosed sick.

Trade practices of the Amhara differ from much of the Middle East, especially from the Arab, The Amhara is too proud to badger a customer, and the profit motive is not as storng--he is not concerned with financial gain. The Amhara is not concerned at monetary loss in a trade transaction but his temper is aroused if he fears that he has been bettered, outwitted and made the laughing stock of others. If he has sold to a foreigner at only a little above the usual price instead of double or triple, his competitors at the market will jeer at him. In this case he will try to undo the trade, claiming linguistic misunderstanding.

As a result of this fear of being shamed, producers of native articles will not bring manufactured goods to market unless they have a previous firm order, after which the customer has to wait. It is craftsman's trade rather than commercial. This is even true of members of ethnic low-class producers, tanners, saddlemakers, smiths,

671 [627] accumulate in a lifetime. The present price is usually Eth$1000.-.

[695] This practice is so strong that even at present a judge of a semi-modern court in Addis Ababa will suspend a prison sentence for involuntary manslaughter on condition that the murderer accumulate this sum and pay it to the victim's kinfolk—a wise decision preventing a new chain of murders. Recently a uniformed policeman in Addis Ababa, who was under this sentence for just that crime, made his tour among resident Europeans in the business district, begging money, with a letter in English explaining his need, signed by his own superior officer!

635 692 The absolute powers of the "ras" or "negus" in the past were limited only by the geographical boundaries of their effective military and administrative realms. All of them sat in judgment of their subjects, and combined legislative, judicial and executive powers in their persons. But each subject had the right to appeal directly to this highest authority against unjust treatment by a lower officer, provided he could throw himself in the path of the ruler and catch his attention. This right to "abyöt" ("Hear me") continues to this day.

697 Nearly all "ras" and "negus" of the past maintained political prisons for their noble relatives who might become contenders to the throne. These prisons were not walled, but located on inaccessible mountain tops, "amba", and sometimes referred to as "wäheni". One such "wäheni" was located at a place called Geshan, in the old, smaller, Begemdir district, and was used by the kings of Gondar

671 696 The intent of these guiding principles and definitions were to aid the judge to arrive at a just verdict, preferably a "Solomonic" one. Guides were considered desirable, perhaps due to the absence of the principle of any law of precedence. The emphasis was on the "Code", and this was reinforced by the culture pattern of "literalness", in behavior.

In effect, however, these guides have enabled both draconic or bribed (and therefore lenient) judges to interpret the law with considerable subjectivity. Clever talkers-in-court never fail to use their ability to sway the public audience, which usually has a tremendous effect on the judge.

671 777 The effect of the "Fetha Nägäst" was to link the church and state. There were usually 12 provincial chief justices, "wombär", in allusion, apparently, to the 12 apostles. The "Fetha Nägäst" ruled all marriage, even 586 684 the non-ecclesiastical "semanya" marriage outside the church premises. Divorce proceedings in the old-Amhara areas still can be carried through only with agreement of the "mänfäs agway", the soul-confessor, one of the priests of the parish, although no divorce is possible in a church marriage.

This "mänfäs agway" receives a small salary from the state; he can summon local state police if the accused mate has refused to appear, to bring him by force. If the divorce is granted, the "mänfäs agway" usually sentences both mates to a fine of Eth$5.- payable to him, on the grounds that both are technically lawbreakers for

789 to make jerky motions, increasing in speed, acting "hot
694 on the trail", whereupon the lēbashay seized the loose end of the girdle. The boy pulled in one direction, and the group followed. When he entered a house, he re-enacted the activities of the thief in complete detail, including sleeping in his bed, until the lebashay prodded him to "awake" and continue the trail, saying 3 times "aderas" (get going, arrive). The boy jumped up, roughly pushed anyone in his way regardless of the normal respectful etiquette of behavior toward a "great man", and continued the chase. When he entered a hamlet or compound, everyone had to "sit", no one could leave. The boy would approach every individual, make magic contact with him by pushing him with the knee (regarded as the seat of manly power). If he seemed distracted, the lebashay might slap the boy, much as one would an unruly dog. In crossing brooks, the boy was carried across, since water was believed to draw away the power from the medicine, making him lose his "scent". If water did inadvertently splash on him, another boy had to be drugged to continue the trail. Lemons were also believed to affect the power of the medicine.

685 When the thief was found, and confessed, he had
696 to pay the fee of the lebashay, fixed during Emperor Menelik II restraining laws to a maximum of Eth$6.-; the thief also was to post two personal guarantors to guarantee that he would return the stolen item and appear in court. The lēbashay could decide to accept these conditions and release him, or turn him over to

685 the "danya". Interestingly enough, if the thief did
696 not have money on hand to pay the fee of the lēbashay, it was the responsibility of the victim who had originally requested his services to pay him on the spot, and try to collect later from the thief. This had the effect of eliminating complaints of petty theft from setting this costly process in motion.

694 It seems that amateur thieves were often caught
789 by this process, and usually confessed, feeling helpless when confronted with such "powerful" means of detection. Professional thieves, particularly in the towns, who were known to have evaded detection, were and are believed to have obtained a powerful magic antidote from a dabtara scribe.

694 When all methods of detection have failed, the
787 distraught victim has a last resort. He may go to the nearest "tänkwa", a practicer of black magic, and ask him to divine by throwing his bones. This , too, is now prohibited, but still goes on, though not as openly as before. Failing even in this, the victim may go to the Coptic church and there, having purchased incense
[754] and given a gift, pronounce a solemn curse, "säbätē masdäfat", on the thief.

171 The pattern of the lēbashay has been traced by
694 some observers to ancient Greek parallels, by others to the Arab bedouin "djirra" or "kassas" thief seeker who also tracks murderers in tribal feuds. The tankwas seem of more typically African witchcraft pattern.

659 In 178 many criminal cases, culprits who had sought asylum [695] from the police of the state by entering a churchyard and sounding the resonant stone bells to announce to the pursuers that they had placed themselves under the protection of the church, were taken away by force, despite the protests of the priests. This so deteriorated some of the temporal power of the church that persons involved in kin bloodfeuds were also no longer safe in [688] church confines. Conversely, the traditional request of priests to law enforcement agencies of the state to arrest violaters of church rules (e.g. adulterers) now go unheeded except in remote rural areas, and even there such a prisoner is no longer held and sentenced to an [689] indefinite term on such a charge. Fines and imprisonment for violation of the Sabbath or for working on a saint's day, also are no longer enforceable.

An official extreme in this direction was reached in 1942, when, a year after his victorious return, Emperor Haile Selassie issued a series of decrees stripping the church of all feudal power, and most of its temporal power, except in the town of Aksum. Under these decrees, church land could henceforth be taxed by the state, though the taxes were to be used to administer church maintenance and education; church courts could levy only spiritual penalties, not money fines; the Central Treasury of the state was to administer rents from church lands. All statute-labor ("gabbar") rights of the church over sharecropping peasants living on its former feudal estates were abrogated.

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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

697 from the 16th-17th centuries. When this area, which had been a sort of frontier area, became too settled, the political prison was transferred farther northwest to the edge of the escarpment leading down to the Sudan, between Chelga and Metemma.

671 175 779 A formal, written law code was superimposed on the earlier unwritten one in the 13th century, when the Abyssinian church extended its ecclesiastical code to cover also the temporal judicial behavior of lords as well as commoners, in all phases of life. This is referred to as "yäbaherya heg" (lit. the Law from Overseas), regarded as including "Moral Law" (i.e.Church Law).

This code, called the "Fetha Nägäst"(Law of the Kings) was basically derived from Roman Canon Law of Constantine, formulated at the Coptic Synod in Egypt in the 9th and 10th centuries, then translated in 1239, by Al-Safi Abu Al-Fada'il, into the Arabic language which the Copts of Egypt had by that time adopted for their own worship also. The code was a blend of Canons of the Coptic church councils, the Justinian Code, and theBible.

It was brought to Abyssinia during the reign of King Zera-Yaqob, and translated into Geez, then in its final stages as a spoken language, by the Abyssinian priest Petros Gäbre-Egzer. The Fetha Nägäst" became the official supreme law of the land when Bishop Takla-Haymanot resurrected the "Solomonic Dynasty" about that time. Of course the Abyssinian church officially believes that the "Fetha Nägäst" is much older, and that it has never been altered.

671 779 The Code consists of 51 chapters, of which 22 deal with

622 both the central government and the local church. Where
651 the land has not been officially measured, which is the usual case in old Amhara territory, the mislane must rely on him for information necessary to the assessment of taxes. The cheqa shum is expected also to supervise customs evasion
622 when caravans or smugglers move through his territory. He
692 mediates between landlord and tenant in their endless little disagreement. In fact, his activities resemble those of an Elizabethan "Justice of the Peace".

He decides local disputes, in civil cases; officiates at the most common type of marriage, the "semanya" (an agreement between two kinship groups); he reads out government proclamations and decrees of the emperor at the nearest rural market place, including the call to arms in case of war. He can also indict a criminal and bring him before the "danya" the judge of the nearest market town, or to the "judges on circuit" accompanying the governor on his annual inspec-
622 tion tour during the dry season. Usually the cheqa shum is a local landlord himself, unless he has been given the post as a special favor for services rendered to the governor.

● [701] Until the diminution of feudal privileges during the past decade, the cheqa shum was also responsible for providing the military-feudal chiefs and their troops with provisions when they were on march, making it unnecessary for
[485] them to depend on supply lines. Now that army troops receive regular salaries, he still has to play host to travelling officials for their personal needs, since there are no rural hotels. They do not pay him except by promises of future favors.

464 real problem, and for modern tasks has to be brought from southern provinces, or Eritrea (as the Italians, as well as Point IV have found out).

526 466 701 The pattern in the former feudal military service was one of greater pride and prestige even for the poorest Amhara. The feudal-military chief had to clothe, house and feed his men, and could never use them for hard labor, such as agriculture--especially plowing--even when he had no temporary work for them. They were quartered with peasants whom they exploited like serfs, and since the chief paid no wages, he assigned his soldiers "gult" land, often on a temporary basis, which included the peasants who usually were non-Copts and did not have the protection of either church or cheqa shum.

567 797 Though actual slavery has now been abolished, its recent existence still affects the pattern of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and introduces an important element which differs from the otherwise similar picture of early post-feudal Europe. Most of the slaves were Shanqalla (negroid) or Barya (Nilotic); plus some Galla and other south Ethiopian, more-African groups. Since they could not be sold if baptized Christian, the master was not interested in their conversion; the church despised these different lowlanders as unfit to be "raised to Christianity", in the Amhara phrase. If a master desired to free a loyal slave, the method was to have him baptized, on which occasion he would acquire a Christian godfather who would henceforth protect him from sale

567 and insist that he be declared and remain free. Until

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 566 the Middle East; particularly of the Ottoman empire, where they were also refered to as "giftliks" (peasant estates that had passed into the possession of soldiers, "siphhi", who in turn constituted fiefs assigned to officers as personal estates.[70]

423 566 701 The process which created "gult" land can be clearly observed intthe history of Abyssinia toward the end of the 19th century. Soldiers and officers in the armies of Menilek II were assigned conquered Galla lands in lieu of salary. They were free from land tax, but obliged to pay "asrat" (tithe) on produce, which tax they of course passed on to the Galla "gabbar". The sons of these veterans usually assumed the same military responsibilities when they came of age, so that the lands passed on to them on the same terms. These lands were referred to as "madariya" lands, and

70. Inalcik, Halil: Land Problems in Turkish History. (in) Muslim World, July 1955, pp. 221-8.

423 the plots carried names associating them with the speci-
566 fic services owed by the holder of the homestead:
701

"land for the rifleman" (infantry)

"land for the guard of prisoners" (military police)

"land for the bearer of the tent" (standard bearer)

"land for the shield-bearer" (bodyguard)

"land for the forager" (quartermaster)

"land for the left flank" (i.e. platoon attacking on the left column); etc.

The "gultenna" homesteader was always on call for a new military campaign. His land was regarded as his for enjoyment of produce only, like land allocated by a father to his son upon marriage. The size of "gult" land could vary from one gasha (usually about 50 acres) for a soldier-veteran of long service, to as much as 1000 gasha for a high officer of feudal nobility. The latter could, and usually did, set aside part of his "gult" land as endowment for a monastery or church, and the gabbar on such land passed to the control of the church.

There is very little "gult" land in old-Amhara provinces dating from this period of Menelik II. If found there, it is usually older, since his conquests were farther south, southwest and southeast.

On his long and distant campaigns, Menelik II thus found his supply lines assured, for the "gultenna" was obliged to feed passing armies and to aid the military foragers. He had also to act as host to any passing "nagadras" (treasurer, customs agent) of Menelik during intervals of peace.

423 If these interludes of peace lengthened greatly,
566 the feudal knight ("färäsenya") would often conclude a
701 contract with his "gulteñnas", which gave both parties
some security in what they could expect of each other in
services and privileges. This contract usually took the
[427] form of "siso" (lit. one-third). The "gulteñña" thus
became a sharecropper, paying 1/3 of his produce to the
feudal lord after each harvest, working statute-labor
for him one day in three, making his team of oxen avail-
able on a basis of one day in three, Sometimes the "gul-
teñña" thus became a sharecropper and little better off
than the "gabbar", especially if no war service inter-
rupted the arrangement for many years. Though he could
pass on much of the labor to his own gabbars, he himself
sometimes became so debt-ridden to the feudal landlord
above him that his status resembled that of a Mexican
peon. "Siso" contracts were rare in Shoa, where the
"gulteñña" was frequently called to war, and his status
as honorable and free soldier-veteran thus never faded
away.

The fortunes of war ruled the life of the "gulteñña"
much more than the owner of "rest" property. For if the
Ras (feudal top nobility) of his province, under whom
the gulteñña was fighting, lost in a war or in a rebellion,
the gulteñña found himself under a newly-appointed Ras
who might ignore customary relaxation of burdens, who
might even confiscate the "gult" lands and make the home-
steaders "gabbar" serfs, leaving them only the alternative
of escaping into the bush. Outside of Shoa, (where fertile
land is more expensive and more closely guarded), the

423 "gultenna" and his family might try to become squatters,
566 "chesanna", on someone's fallow land, and risk being cha-
701 sed away by a kin unit claiming that territory. Or, permitted to remain on his old lands, a "gultenna" might suddenly find that the new feudal lord of the province was enclosing ("kelkel", declared forbidden) land formerly used as pasturage or for agriculture, to give to his own successful soldier veterans, and exacting quotas of oxen, mules and honey from the former "gultenna".

178 As long as the "gabbar" system was still in full
423 force, the "gultenna" at least had someone to exploit in turn, to ease his own burdens. Now that the present emperor has declared the "gabbar" system ended (though much of it survives), even this relief is passing. Furthermore, the new army is salaried, so that the basic function of the "gult" system has already disappeared. The only hope the sons of "gultennas" have is to have their lands declared "rest", private property, for otherwise they will become landless. This means that they must work the land themselves and pay tithe on the produce; otherwise squatters can alienate it from them.

D. Endowed Lands -- "rest-gult".

423 The many variations of regional "rest"and "gult" lands sometimes crystallize to a combination type referred to as "rest-gult".

701 2. The Military Camp and its Significance in Amhara Social Structure.

The preceding section on land tenure contained a number of references to the traditional military organization and function among the Amhara. This was inevitable, for the traditional army, particularly the military camp, constituted one of the most significant pillars of Amhara social structure. Even now, when Amhara children cannot see it any more, the military [554] camp lives on as "normal social organization" in the minds of the middle-aged, and in the titles of nobility still being bestowed several times a year by the emperor.

For, as recently as 1929, it flourished in full flower, e.g. at the headquarters of the provincial dynastic head of Gojjam, Ras Haylu, and, somewhat less flagrantly, at the provincial court of the lord of Gondar (Begemdir Province), Ras Kassa.

701 703 A. The Structure and Function of the Military Camp.

The number of individuals directly involved in the totality of the pattern of the military camp was never fixed. On the contrary, the quantity involved was extremely fluid, there was much joining and deserting, and no commander ever seemed to be able to force any but his closest retainers to remain against their will. Historians believe that the army even of

701 as great a military figure as Emperor Menelik II was
703 close to falling apart at the time of his great victory over the invading Italians in 1896. The Amhara resists discipline except for short-lived adulation of a military hero who inspires him; he comes to fight, not to wait; even today, in the modern army, Ethiopian officers characterize the Amhara soldier as fearless, brave, but unwilling to take orders and having a tendency to act as an individual in battle. He is characterized as almost opposite from the patient Galla soldier who takes orders and cooperates smoothly with his military outfit, but rarely takes initiative.

[578] Regional clannishness, easily stirred by news from the home district, was another motive that could cause large segments of a traditional Amhara army to vanish almost overnight. A third development that would whittle away an army gradually was the almost inevitable outcome of having been stationed in one vicinity too long. In this case, the countryside was soon stripped bare by the military foragers, the "gabbar" was suffering famine himself, as if a vast cloud of locusts had nibbled away every leaf ("gonäçhchäfä"). A fourth
[727] motive, related to the first, might be loss of confidence in the strength and wisdom of their chief, in which case the soldiers not wanting to return home without glory took to the woods and became bandits ("shefta"). The latter were a major problem after every war. Even a biberal statesman like Ras Imru, as governor of Gondar after the liberation of the country in World War II, found harsh measures the only remedy.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Ambara MP5

701 found harsh measures the only remedy.

With these qualifications, the quantity involved in a military camp of a provincial "Ras" (lit. head, actually marshall of high nobility as well as traditional leader of military forces of a province) would consist of several thousand soldiers; plus a huge ring of huts of camp followers, artisans, impressed local gabbar", their womenfolk serving as combination cook-concubine, and thornbush corrals for pack mules and donkeys. It resembled a medieval European army encamped, but with Middle Eastern and African overtones.

For example, the Ras himself would have to make frequent personal inspection tours of storehouses and major activities, if he did not want disorganization. In his presence, his men would fall all over themselves, running to carry out his orders instantly, to curry his favor. In his absence, his officers and men would relax after the fashion of free men, to their way of thinking. A chief, asked about the number of men under his command, would reply "many", not so much for reasons of concealment and pride (i.e. "the number of my men is without end"), but because he often did not know, nor care. However he knew exactly how many rifles he had in his command.[72]

712 The inner center of the camp contained the big, round tent ("das", tent of joy) of the "ras"; a guest and banquet tent for noble visitors ("adarash"); the tent of the sacred "tabot" (wooden tablet from the Holy of Holies of a church) and the chief

72. Grieule, M.: Le Travail en Abyssinie. Revue Internat. du Travail, 23, Fev. 1931, p.5.

712 clergy; storehouse for the best military and civilian equipment ("eqa byet"); and the separate food establishments of the household of the ras: meat hut ("sega byet"), mead hut ("ṭäj byet"), cooking hut ("woṭ byet"); and the baking hut ("anjära byet").

712 701 In front of this center, the bodyguard was encamped, led by the "däjazmach" (lit. guardian of the gate), the highest rank after the "ras", usually a young nobleman aspiring to the higher rank upon the death of the "ras" who was usually his kinsman, sometimes his own father. To the right of the center camped the "qänyazmach" (lit. guardian of the right), the next highest rank, who, in battle, commanded the right flank of the attacking army. To the left of the center camped the "gerazmach" (lit. guardian of the left), next in rank, commander of the left flank of the attacking army.

701 All these commanders belonged to high nobility, in this order, and were granted conquered lands, quantity and quality of the land being allocated as fiefs in the order of rank. Sometimes "battlefield commissions" would reward an individual military officer of commoner origin, and elevate him to "gerazmach", with rights to an appropriate fief. More often the gerazmach was a distant kinsman of the ras, perhaps a "poor relation".

Each of these nobles commanded a division that included cavalry, which consisted of "färäsenya" (lit. horsemen, i.e. knights), whose services were usually

701 rewarded by a "gu̇ṭenna" fief. Their immediate commander in frontal attack was a military officer, "fitawrari" (lit. advance guard), a high rank of military nobility, and the starting rank of all young nobles upon reaching military age. Common soldiers, who did not own a horse and a rifle necessary to elevation to knighthood, made up the infantry. They were the last to benefit from the division of lands,

701 712 In camp, the cavalry usually ringed the center of feudal nobility and bodyguard. Outside this ring were the numerous lean-to huts ("gojo") or somewhat sturdier "säqäla" huts of the common soldiery, their hearths of rocks, and their concubine-cook womenfolk. Each minor chieftain imitated his superiors by grouping retainers around his tent,with himself at the top of a little social, hierarchical pyramid, He acted the "telleq säw" (lit. great man), generous in his rewards, but terrible in his anger. He might wear a lion mane.

Thus the camp consisted of three concentric rings, much as did the church, which may or may not have been a coincidence, but which to this day dominates the traditional Amhara view of feudal organized society. In fact, the "tabot" from the Holy of Holies, inner sanctum of the church, was physically represented inside the innermost center of encampment, serving as militarySchapel.

Special privilege characterized the second circle, much like the "mäqdäs" of the church reser-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 ved to the priesthood. Within the second circle of
712 military encampment, protected by the ring of cavalry, were housed the "bajirond" (treasurer-quartermaster-ordnance), scribes, artisans of all kinds, chamberlains ("aggafari") serving the high nobles, the military police ("zäbäna", lit. watchmen), the thornbush corrals of battle horses and the horse watchmen, cookhouses, and latrine areas for the privileged centers.[72]

The rear of the camp, as well as the rear guard during march, (called the "däjän sefra"), was usually commanded by the most trustworthy, noble councilor of the king or ras; his title was "Blatengēta" (lit. Councilor), a semi-civilian title about equivalent to Dejazmach. But unlike the latter, it was usually held by an older, wiser, less tempestuous, slow-moving gray-bearded friend of the commander-in-chief.

701 566 B. Social and Psychological Roles in Military Life: Noble Officers and Common Soldiers.

The location in camp of military officers and men thus indicated the social position of feudal nobles, soldier fief-holders, and "gabbar"-sharecroppers in civilian life. The rank-order can be listed, with some simplification, as follows:

72. Grieule, M.: Un Camp Militaire Abyssin. Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Tome IV, 1934, pp. 117-122.

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Table 4: Feudal Nobility: Title, Hierarchy, Military Rank and Function, Land Tenure

Title	Military Rank	Military Function	Land-Tenure Reward	Hierarchy of Nobility
farasenya (lit, knight on horseback)	basic in officer class	cavalry	gult fief	may be elevated to nobility, and get rest land.
balambaras (lit. lord of mountain-fortress	basic in officer class	various, active battle duties; e.g. chief of shield bearer("gasha Jägrē aläqa")	gult fief	basic rank in low nobility of owners of rest lands.(Baron).
gerazmach (lit. commander of left flank)	(lieutenant or captain)	command left flank of an army division	rest lands	basic rank of aspirants to higher nobility
ʔäñazmach (lit.commander or right flank)	(major, in European equivalent)	command right flank of an army division	rest lands	next higher rand, permanent, usually inherited nobility
fitawrari (lit. commander of advance guard)	(colonel, in European equivalent)	command frontal attack of massed army division	rest lands	next higher rank. Basic rank of teen-age royalty
däjazmach (lit. commander of the gate)	(General. Duke, in Feudal Europe)	commander of army division; commander of bodyguard in camp.	rest lands	next higher rank. Rank of young royalty on reaching manhood.

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ras (lit.head)	(Marshall.Archduke in Feudal Europe)	commander-in-chief of an entire army	rest lands	next higher rank. Head of provincial dynasty. Adult royalty prior to becoming king.
negus (king)	----	commander of several armies	rest provinces	formerly independent king. No longer in existence
lej(lit."Childe")	----	(may be appointed Däjazmach or as he grows up)	Fitawrari -----	title of infant son of king or of ras. title of sons of emperor
lul (Royal Prince)	----(usually appointed to Ras, as he grows to manhood)		-----	title of sons of emperor
negusä nägäst or negus negusti (lit. king of kings)	----	commander-in chief of all armies	rest of home province (mad-byet); ruler of entire country.	assumes highest nobility on coronation.

701 It is noteworthy that the military ranking of the com-
554 moner-soldiery, which made up the rank and file of the fighters on foot, was not nearly so formal. The fortunes of war, if they did not leave him dead or maimed, could move him upward to lower nobility. Failing to achieve that, veterans could still hope for a modest fief of "gult" land, enabling him to play the "telleq saw" (great man) role over some hapless "gabbar" peasants. Meanwhile, pseudo-"telleq säw" behaved much like the proverbial sergeant of any army, making his men fear him more than any enemy, rewarding them with feasts, in this case of raw beef and medium-alcoholic mead. The only way he could maintain his following of individual-minded Amhara soldiers, each one of whom wanted to be a hero himself, was by continous personal bravery coupled with cleverness in military tactics. But here the similarity ends, for the non-noble chief of Amhara warriors had no pride of a non-commissioned officer; his ambition was to become a real "telleq säw", a minor nobleman owning "rest" lands.

782 Personal bravery was expressed and recalled in
726 formal boasting, a tradition that survives to this day
521 even for such civilian occasions as weddings. Prior to
535 battle each potential hero would go into a personal song and dance called "fukkara". The ceremonial dance accompanying his boast proceeded as follows: Spear, or rifle, held horizontally behind head, just above shoulders; the head moves in increasingly rapid motion from right to

various shapes were somewhat more common. Long lances and shorter throwing spears, both with fine, long iron heads, were in use. Round rhinoceros shields belonging to officers were often ornamented carefully with brass or even silver or gold plates arranged in geometric patterns; circles; colorful velvet embroidery, granted as reward gifts for special bravery. Crown-like bands worn around forehead and skull, of gold, silver or lion-mane, were given to officers as decorations for bravery.

More lasting awards were available only in the form of "gult" fiefs.

Table 5: Land Tenure of Artisans and Chaplains.

Title and Rank	Function	Reward in Land Tenure
bajirond (lit. treasurer)	(ethnic-origin) quartermaster, chief of artisans	"rest-gult" lands, inheritable.
qēs (priest)	army chaplain, carrier of sacred "tabot" (representing home church, and symbolizing the ark of the ancient Israelites.	"rest-gult" land, given to parish church.

The Amhara army on the march (or any Abyssinian army) has been described as resembling a migrating people rather than a disciplined-looking army. Supplies and equipment crawling over the landscape on donkey or human carriers, might amount to two-thirds of the army. Servants, priests, women and children, household utensils, cattle and sheep, huge jars of beer, etc., seemed to surround the main military caval-

725 ry and footsoldiers and main tents in all directions.[73] But there was a central structure, and well-understood functioning of parts.

725 701 Only officers from the dejaamach upward could announce the signal for mobilization and decampment, through the sound of drums and bugles. The time and place of assembly would be announced beforehand. The Council of War would meet and decide strategy as well as tactics: Who should fight where, and what secret signals were to be used. This Council usually consisted of the king, the ras commanders of armies, the dejazmach commanders of main divisions, and the blatengeta of the rear guard. After that, the young commanders of the advance guards, "fitawrari", who understood tactics, received their orders, and were sent two to three days ahead of the main body, for reconnaissance or to maintain contact with the enemy. The cavalry would protect the right and left flanks of the main body, commanded by appropriate gerazmach's, qanazmach's and fitawraris.

The main body, "gädam ṭor", was directly commanded by the king. In his absence, a temporary commander-in-chief was elected by the Council of War, with the title "abägaz", or "yäṭor ṭäqlay" (lit. war chief). The main body also included the stores ("eqa"), the quartermaster ("bajirond") and his artisans, and the priests with the tabot. Finally, the rear guard protected from unexpected enemy attack, buried the dead, picked up the weary and wounded, and was itself organized into right

73. Rohrer: Beiträge.... 1932, p.117.

725 and left flanks.

701 Fanning out in all directions, detachments of light cavalry and foragers on foot, "fano", could destroy and plunder enemy land to do as much damage as possible while on the march. When re-encampment was ordered, the tent of the king or field commander was set up first, and the army divisions and followers, seeing this, grouped themselves accordingly and settled in their proper locations, distances, areas and relative positions. The quartermaster thereupon took over the functions of maintenance and supplies.[74]

[554] This pattern of "relative positions" and functions carried over into civilian life, and dominated land tenure, administration, law, social structure, organized religion, the life cycle, artistic expression, and a multitude of human relations.

C. Significance of the old Military Organization in Modern Change.

178 The spear, the rhinoceros shield and armies paid by land grants have now become memories of the past, [554] though recent past. Yet most of the attitudes and many of the roles that accompanied the old military organization still linger and dominate social organization.

[473] Much of the old land tenure is still little changed in the old-Amhara provinces, as has been pointed out.

74. Bedie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, pp. 86-7.

579 in-white", to control this. Sometimes these resort to the old-fashioned and officially illegal "afarsata" collective arrest of a series of suspected hamlets.

644 701 Another old pattern that survives is the personal bodyguard of the supreme ruler, i.e. the emperor, which has now increased to a size equal in manpower to the Ethiopian army itself, and is reputed to be far better trained and equipped. Centered at the capital and a few strategic spots, with greater mobility than the army, and battle experience gained in Korea, it contains much of the Galla "balbat" element directly loyal to the present royal family. The regular army is scattered throughout the country, and is utilized against periodic uprisings in the border lowlands and escarpments, such as the desert Danakil, the Issa and the Raya Galla of the eastern escarpment who occasionnally go on the warpath after the harvest season.

554 625 701 The attitude of the common people who admire an individual hero but mock uniformed dandies, still persists, much to the annoyance of the uniformed police of the provincial towns, and of the soldiers. The non-uniformed "näch lēbash" are far more respected, and their bravery is acknowledged.

691 Typical cases most frequently heard are debts, small thefts, improper measures at the market, plowing across a neighbor's border ("wäsän gafi", i.e. border-pusher), grain eaten by a neighbor's cow, and the severity of mutual insults that had been exchanged during a hostile argument. Details argued about are often petty, such as: how good was the fence; just how much grain was eaten; how much was actually consumed?

[579] More serious is the loss incurred from the outlaw bandit, traditionally called "bär zägi", (lit. the one who shut the gate), or "dur gäbba" (the one who fled [685] to the bush). The most frequent case involves debtor and creditor. Until very recently, the creditor could chain the debtor to him, and in rural areas one sometimes still sees their togas knotted together. This was uncomfortable for the creditor who had to feed the debtor. Even now that chaining is not permitted, a plaintiff still has to feed the defendent he has caused to be placed in jail (e.g. for theft) while awaiting trial. While he feeds him little and often spoiled food, he must keep him alive, and this acts as a deterrent against light accusation, except on the part of a wealthy "great man" accuser.

695 701 Special gestures, bodily motions, and drapings of the toga are still followed in the traditional way when going "bedanya fit", before the judge. The toga is draped ready for action, so that the accuser, or witness, can hold one corner at arm's length, step forward with heavy tread, and wave the bunched end of the em-

695 701 broidered edge of the Shamma toward the face of the accused, or even toward the face of the judge; shouting, in the latter case: "May He (God) make you see clearly! (Egziabhēr yasaywo). While he waves his right hand forward, his right foot thunders forward also, maintaining his position by leaning on the staff with his left arm. Meanwhile, the adversary leans mutely on his staff, as if he were in church leaning quietly on his "maqomya", but indicated nonchalance and indifference toward the raving of the accuser. A method of the defendant to influence the judge with his sincerity, in the traditional way, is to throw his pre-arranged toga off his shoulders, baring them in the middle of arguing his defense, to indicate that he surrenders his shoulders to the flogging that the judge might order, in complete confidence that his innocence must be evident to the judge.

695 661 Until very recently, and in remote rural districts even today, the wager, or bet on the outcome, was an essential factor in legislation. It took the place of court fees, for the loser forfeited his bet to the judge. This was the salary of the judge. Without this wager, it was not possible to go to court. The poor man was at a great disadvantage since he could not, even with help of his kinsmen, keep raising the bets to equal those of his wealthier adversary. To limit such judicial excesses, Emperor Menelik II decreed that wagers had to consist of tangible items such as honey, horse, mule, with a fixed cash equivalent (Eth$1.-, $10.-, $20.- in this order), and judges were urged to exercise fairness. Prohibition

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Ambara MP5

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The Emperor and Colonel Wingate at Debra Markos, April 1941

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Household Cavalry

Patriots entering Debra Tabor, July 1941

[Facing p. 5]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

another lord, who was named Adiby, who was now Bar- 643
nagais. Beneath the Barnagais are some great lords whom 631
they call Xuums, which means captains; and these are, first, Xuum Cire, a very great captaincy, he is now married to a sister of Prester John. We never went to this country and Xuumeta because it is distant and out of the way. There 643
is another Xuumeta named Ceruil. We knew this lordship, 701
and they say that its Xuum brings into the field fifteen 631
thousand spearmen with shields and archers. Also Xuum Cama, and Buno Xuum, and Xuum bono. These Xumetas had been one, and on account of its being large, and the Prester having misgivings that they might set themselves up against the Barnagais, he made it into two, and even yet each of them is very large. They say that this lordship which is now two was the dominion of Queen Candace, without having been larger in her time. She was the first Christian that there was in this country, and whom the Lord called powerful. Also two other captaincies, one is named Dafilla, the other Canfila; these two border on Egypt, and their captains are like lords of the marches. All these captains before mentioned are of kettledrums, [534]
which nobody except great lords can carry: and all these serve with the Barnagais in wars when he goes to them, and wherever he may go. They have other great gentlemen under their command who are called Arraz,[1] which means heads. We knew one of these, who was named Arraz Aderaan, he is head over fifteen thousand men at arms, whom they name chavas. I saw this Arraz Aderaan twice at the court, both times I saw him before the gate of the [292]
Prester John going without a shirt, and from his waist downwards a very good silk cloth, and on his shoulders the skin of a lion, in his right hand a spear, and in his left hand [411]
a shield. I asked how it was so great a lord went about in that manner, they told me that the greatest honour

[1] *Ar-ras.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 he had, since he was Arraz of the Chaufas, that is, head or
701 captain of the men at arms, was to go about like a man at
631 arms. In the fashion that he went, there followed behind him twenty or thirty men with spears and bucklers, so that he goes about the court like a provost with his men. I knew another Arraz Tagale, and Arraz Jacob, lords of large lands, and many other Xuums, lords of lands, but without titles. Thus the Barnagais is the lord of many
643 lords, and of many lands and people, and so he and all
631 these lords that have been mentioned are subject to the
651 Prester John, and he removes and appoints them as he
439 pleases: so they pay to him large dues. As all these lords and their lordships are on the side of Egypt and Arabia, from whence come the good horses, and the brocades and the silks, they pay in these same goods: that is to say, horses, brocades, and other silks. They come to the Barnagais with all these dues, and the Barnagais to Prester John, and pays for himself and for the others, in each year, a hundred and fifty horses; as to the brocades and silks, it cannot be known how much they amount to, only I heard say that they were many; I also heard that they pay a large sum of cotton cloths from India for the customs which they levy in the port of Arquiquo.

CAP. XXV.—*Of their method of guarding their herds from wild beasts, and how there are two winters in this country: and of two churches that are in the town of Barua.*

[621] The settlement of this town of Barua and of those
231 adjoining it, is this. There are ten, twelve, or fifteen houses, and one walled and closed yard, served by a gate: in this yard they shut up their domestic cows which they use for their milk and butter, and also small flocks, and mules and asses. They keep the gate well fastened, and a great fire,

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

own. The soldier was generally freed from all taxes except the tithe and this might be excused where he provided his own horse and weapons. 701 [651]

Not only was there great variety in the arrangements but they were by no means static even in the conservative north. An example of this may be given from Gojjam. Here under Ras Hailu and his father, the *Negus* Tekla Haimanot, the soldiers were simply local men who, being exempted from tithes and other dues to the government, cultivated their own land and did three months' service a year at the governor's headquarters. After Ras Hailu's rebellion and his deposition in 1932 on grounds of misrule, Ras Imru, the Emperor's kinsman, was sent in his place. Although he was said to be a much more enlightened governor, the people murmured because he brought with him his 'foreign' Shoan army which oppressed the *gabars* who had to support it. This is an example of how, in the face of the complexities of the social situation, an ostensibly reforming measure might be frustrated.

PRIVATE TENURE

The main forces by which land and tribute were held by what may be called the public elements of the national life of Ethiopia, the Emperor, the church, the governor and his assistants, and the soldiers, have been very briefly indicated. The picture, even in this outline form, would not be complete without some reference to tenure by private persons, especially by those small farmers and peasant cultivators by whose work the rest were nourished. 423

The position of the *gabar* has been defined in relation to the rest of the community. When, in the northern provinces, we examine this class in their own right we find that it presented the most enduring strands in the texture of Ethiopian society and that its composition leads us back to the tribal past.

Over large parts of the northern provinces, especially those that were not too seriously disturbed or overlaid by Galla invasions, the land was held by groups of peasant holders, generally under the leadership of one or more families, and any inquiries about their origin would lead almost at once to romantic personal stories that may date, or appear to date, from some centuries before. These stories would explain how that group had come to be where it was and how its forefathers had first occupied the land. 423 621

These groups held by *rest*, that is, by hereditary right. They held as a group which had preserved some of the close ties of an original kinship group even though in the course of time it had absorbed many

7: Perham S-4 (no date) 1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

1184 423 651 frequent form was that of *samonanya*, lands given to support the service of the mass. The Emperors had granted much *gult* to the churches and thus gave them the power to keep all the royal tribute from it and even to administer justice and to retain its proceeds. Even where this grant had not been made as *rest-gult* it was not easy to regain control of it and the convention was that, when such land was taken back by the Emperor, an equivalent estate should be granted.[1]

It should be remembered that land was not held collectively by the church but, as in England, by the individual 'parish' churches or monasteries or by the Abuna and the *Ichegé*, who between them held very large estates, and by other ecclesiastics.

● 701 423 Military service, regarded in this chapter from the aspect of land tenure, was a universal obligation upon land unless the land was held by the church and specially exempted. The obligation was on the land rather than on the person, so that if a woman held a piece of land which had to supply soldiers it was her duty to raise and equip them. There were many different kinds of military tenure because each type of service was attached to special pieces of land and called by different names which need not be listed here. There was, for example, land which supplied the following services—the fusilier, the artilleryman, the muleteer, the porter transporting baggage, the bearer of the red tent or the Emperor's tent poles, the makers of gunpowder, the quartermaster, the forager, and many other military needs. It was even specially laid down for each piece of land whether its soldiers should fight in the centre or the left or right wings of the army.[2]

Estates would have to give the service of soldiers in varying numbers from the single man to a thousand or more. Those who owed these large numbers were, of course, very important people, and in Shoa at least it was probable that the man liable for a thousand would be a holder of *gult* over a considerable area.[3] Parcels of land might be allotted to 'regular' soldiers to support them while on service, or given as a reward for service, generally with a continuing obligation to provide a soldier of some special type.

It will be seen that there was no uniform system for the raising or support of the soldiers, especially as these were serving different masters. Thus in one province there might be part of the Emperor's army as well as the governor's provincial army, while both the latter and his district governors would have their personal bodyguards. Though in the north the serving soldiers were generally supported out of the tithes, they might be quartered directly upon the people or given lands of their

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, pp. 611–13. [2] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–90.
[3] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 612; also de Castro, pp. 281 ff.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

E 175 563 A 175 648

nize in it these and other important advantages for Ethiopia. These drawbacks have been those of any imperialism. During the great Amhara expansion under Menelik (1889–1913), many peoples were maltreated. Independent tribesmen were reduced to slavery; unique cultures were decimated; proud kings were dragged in the dust. Those who held down the Amhara position in these occupied territories seized land from the indigenous peoples and exploited them much as would any invader. The unfavorable reputation of the Amhara in the non-Amhara provinces has been due largely to the example of these governors and soldiers whose worst impulses were at times allowed free play.

One can scarcely single out the Amhara for criticism because of their imperialistic behavior in the past. Nor is it fair to judge the Amhara people as a whole by the character of their provincial officials in conquered areas, any more than one may judge the British, French, Portuguese, or Russian people by the behavior of certain imperious and sadistic colonial administrators. This distinction was self-evident to more discriminating observers of the Ethiopian scene like Augustus Wylde, who wrote in 1901:

A [565] [701] [157]

> There is no harder worker than the Abyssinian peasant, and no more harmless and hospitable person when left alone and properly treated; and no more truculent, worthless, conceited, lazy and useless individual than the Abyssinian soldier, who formerly did nothing but prey upon the defenceless cultivator.[8]

Indeed, if any imperialism of modern times should be granted special consideration, it might be that of the Amhara. The Amhara were to some extent merely reconquering lands that had been taken from them in earlier centuries. Furthermore, they needed additional strength to help withstand threats to their own independence. Finally, it can also be argued that if the Amhara had not conquered the other peoples now within the Ethiopian boundaries some European power might have colonized them instead.

E 563 A 648

However one may assess the fact of Amhara dominance in Ethiopia, it is a given of the present situation. It is a fact that leads naturally to two outstanding questions. One concerns the relations between the Amhara and the non-Amhara peoples of the empire: is it possible for the latter to be integrated more effectively and justly into the texture of a common national life? If not, the present state of tribal calm may prove to be but a long prelude to a wasteful storm. The question demands serious and sustained inquiry by a number of scholars, Ethiopians and foreigners alike.

E 563 178 121 A 121

The other question concerns the nature of Amhara culture, as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia, and its implications for the processes of Ethiopia's modernization now at work and yet to come. To this question we now direct our attention.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

a different identity. Religion and warfare were the two spheres most likely to 156
attract him. Although trade and manual arts were possibilities for those whose 554
industry exceeded their status-consciousness, they were considered the busi- 463
ness of other ethnic groups and normally rejected by a self-respecting Am- [461]
hara. When the Amhara youth left home for a new life, he was usually heading either for the school of some church teacher or the quarters of some chieftain.

Today, as in former times, the role of priest is known from childhood as 793
a possible model for the peasant boy. He and his companions often imitate 554
the clergy and their ceremonies in their play. The wish to become a priest 156
is kindled by a number of interests—desire for the material benefits accorded [178]
the clergy; curiosity about the mysteries of the church; envy of the great prestige of the clergy; hope for a better chance of going to heaven after death. During adolescence the outlook of the boy who seeks to become a priest [883]*
deviates from that of the *goramsä* described above. Instead of the shrill, blood-heating *shillala* war chants he prefers the gentle hymns of the church; instead of the frenzied dancing and singing of the young braves he prefers the schooled dance of the clergy; instead of pursuing women, he is inclined to turn his head the other way when a girl appears.

The military alternative does not seem to be an ideal of Amhara children. 701 •
They rarely see soldiers; and when they did in former times, it was usually 156
in the unhappy circumstance of seeing the family's reserves plundered. It is 554
not until the time of puberty and after that the great upsurge of aggressive instinct has turned the thoughts of many an Amhara youth to fighting. Chafing under parental domination or bristling with resentment because of being an illegitimate offspring or a stepchild, he may be anxious to turn his hostility against some enemy. He may imagine the free life of a soldier more attractive than the drudgery of the peasant's lot. In the days of feudal armies, he may have heard news about some warlord on the rise and thus have hopes, by attaching himself as a follower, of winning booty and the laurels of a hero, perhaps eventually the powers of a chieftain.

Whether the peasant boy chooses church school or the warpath, his move 565
has frequently been an all-or-none move. The peasant boy can do nothing 593
without the consent of his father, and normally his father will not permit him 463
to do anything except carry on the farmwork and prepare himself to care for 156
his parents in their old age and to inherit the family land. If there should be some sign that the son does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, the latter will do everything he can short of disinheritance—and ofttimes that—to persuade him otherwise.

And so, some restless day, eyes fixed on some alluring goal, the Amhara youth might run away and not be seen again. If he should return, it would

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 During the reign of Haile Selassie, the infrastructure of Ethiopian society
178 has become more differentiated. A large standing army, an air force, and a
463 small navy have been recruited and trained by foreign military missions. The
[701] modernization of transport and communication has produced a sizable class of semiskilled operatives—truck drivers, airline employees, telephone operators, typesetters, etc. The expansion of government has produced a legion of clerks. In the towns tertiary occupational roles, like salesmen and barbers, have come into being, and the establishment of factories has engendered a small industrial labor force.

All such people tend to differ from the traditional lower classes in their relative enthusiasm for *selṭänē* ("civilization"). Still more enthusiastic are those who have had more intimate and prolonged exposure to the fruits of *selṭänē:* domestic servants in *faranj* homes; students of the secondary schools and colleges; Imperial Bodyguard troops who served in the Korean campaign and recently in the Congo; and highland Eritreans, whose experience under sixty years of Italian colonial administration has rendered them far more modernized than people of other provinces.

178 Similarly, the reign of Haile Selassie has witnessed the emergence of new
571 elite groups. A "new nobility" of government officials and urban plutocrats
554 has taken place beside the old. In addition, a nascent intelligentsia has at-
565 tained a precarious high status, resting mostly on the esteem of students, some military officers, and resident Westerners. The integrative dilemma of Ethiopia today has more to do with conflicts among and within its various elites than with tribal enmities or masses in revolt.*

643 Hovering over these four groups, kindred with each but superior to all,
591 has been the personality of the present emperor. Indeed, the history of
565 Ethiopia in the last four decades has for the most part been the story of Haile Selassie's efforts to direct and control the destinies of the old and new elites. The considerable success with which he has done this is a tribute, not only to his own remarkable manipulative skills, but also to the majesty of the office which he possesses. The position of *negusa nagast* has traditionally monopolized the highest reaches of the Abyssinian system of social stratification; constituting, as it were, an elite of One.

THE TRADITIONAL ORDER

643 *The Lofty Throne*

The emperor comprises an elite in the original sense of the word, for to the Ethiopians he is Elect of God (*seyuma egziäbhēr*) according to the conventional Ge'ez honorific.

* Although, as was suggested earlier, tribal and religious differences *may* generate new integrative crises in the future.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 [644] The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of course, the imperial court. The *makuännent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discretion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but [492] on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shouldering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-[231] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *tajj* pre-[273] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos*, the dark wool cloak of the [292] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-[822] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abys-[293] sinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 554 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mäerg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 554 701 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The *makuännent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary Amharic the term *makuännent* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

räs	"head" (of an army)
dajäzmätch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitäwräri**	"general of the vanguard"
qañnäzmätch	"general of the right wing"
geräzmätch	"general of the left wing"
bälämbäräs	"commander of a fort"
bäshä†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shälaqä	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitäwräri* ranked below the *geräzmätch*.

[192] † *Bäshä* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

All these titles were conferred by the emperor. But, in addition, *makuānnent* with the rank of *rās* or *dajāzmātch* had the authority to appoint lesser officers under them. The number of troops commanded by these officers varied considerably according to circumstances. Among armies, moreover, there was great variability in status; the *fitāwrāri* of an emperor naturally enjoyed much more deference than the *fitāwrāri* of a provincial *dajāzmātch*.[23] 565 554 701 [643]

A number of other titles represented various civil functions. These included: 565 554

āfa negus	"mouth of the king" (lord chief justice)
āzāzh *liq* (Gondar) *wambar* (Shoa)	royal judges
naggādrās	"head of merchants" (customs collector and chief official over merchants)
ṭsahāfi lām *nagāsh* *shum* *ḳāntibā*	various titles given to provincial governors
malkaññā *meslanē*	local representatives of the emperor or provincial governors

A further set of titles was that given to the functionaries of the royal court. These were given for all court posts, including such offices as Server of the Mead (*ṭajj āsālāfi*). Some of these titles were found exclusively at the court of the emperor; others were imitated in noble households across the land, though again, the same title naturally carried far less prestige in the provinces than when held at the imperial court. The list of court titles varied from region to region and century to century, both in its composition and its hierarchical order.[24] At any given time and place, however, a rank order was carefully respected, and confusion over protocol could provoke altercation, as was recorded in the Chronicle of Iyāsu I (1682–1706).[25] 565 554 644

Titles (and numbers) of the principal court functionaries, in the (descending) order of importance fixed at the time of Iyāsu I, were:

behtwaddad	chief counsellor and confidant (two)
blattēn getā	chief administrator of the palace (greater and lesser [two])
rāq māsarē or *wesṭ āzāzh*	majordomo, master of ceremonies
ṭsahāfi te'ezāz	royal scribe; keeper of the seal (two)
zhāndarabā āzazh	chief of the eunuchs

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who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.* 565 [427]

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services. [631]

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagärit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area. 565 631 [651] [534] [692]

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[20]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement. 565 631 661 [829]

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagärit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the [466] [701] [651]

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gebbär*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dägä* (high) land, while in certain *qolä* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

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> with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[68]

The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, reestablished after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete.

Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*kārnē*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers.

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perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court.

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand.

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time.

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be

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701 more eager and impatient to modernize Ethiopia than do members of the
648 new nobility. This contrast was already apparent at the time of the Italian invasion, when Ethiopian officers were condemning the archaic practices of civilian officials who, they charged, were holding back the defense efforts. Yet the image of a progressive, solidary military elite in Ethiopia is justified no more than the image of a reactionary, solidary ministerial elite; nor should the military leaders be seen as standing in fundamental opposition to their civilian counterparts. There is much friendly intercourse between the two groups. Army officers are often related to civilian officials, by blood or by marriage. Military personnel have in a number of cases been assigned to civilian posts in the government. While the military carry on much of their social life among themselves, they also enjoy a good deal of interaction with civilians of high status at parties, dances, weddings, and funerals.

701 Like the new nobility, moreover, the military officers do not form a cohesive group with common interests and ambitions. The one group which did develop a high degree of solidarity, esprit, and common political goals—the Officers Corps of the Imperial Bodyguard—was dissolved in the wake of its defeat in the 1960 rebellion. The military men have been checked and balanced by much the same techniques as have the new nobility. As a whole, they are held together by little more than the institutionalized structure of the security forces. As such, they are in any event bound to play an important part in determining the character of the future government of Ethiopia as they are crucial now in upholding the present regime.

THE BIRTH OF AN INTELLIGENTSIA

571 The formation of a modern intellectual class in Ethiopia is still in its earliest
871 stages. Given the small number who have completed elementary school (a
162 number still under one per cent of the national population) all Ethiopians who have graduated from secondary school may for the time being be considered members of a secular educated elite, those with college and graduate degrees enjoying correspondingly higher status within this elite. The total number in this group reached an estimated six thousand in 1962, about one-fourth of whom held college degrees.

571 Equally indicative of the rudimentary condition of the Ethiopian intelligentsia is the poverty of its institutional facilities and of its means of communication, both internally and with the international intellectual commu-
571 nity. As of 1961, institutions with primarily intellectual purposes were lim-
873 ited to the small college of arts and sciences, four vocational colleges, two
874 small research centers (the Pasteur Institute and the Section d'Archéologie, both financed by France and staffed mostly by non-Ethiopians), the Haile

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phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571
and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178
of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession 565
of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554
ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642]
ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177]
rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556]
imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642]
growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647]
nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701] •
force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178
Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests 571
on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554
the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871
the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178
tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565
the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643]
political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178
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* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 [439]
million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[466] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, *121 641 such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not [701] 689 respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the [626] barbs of public opinion.

*121 701 [702] [714] The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

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structured. But the marching and fighting unit seems to have been, for all 121* practical purposes, the individual soldier and his retainers. Battles were not 701 fought in a disciplined manner; the outcome depended on the sheer num- 726 bers of troops, their state of morale, and the chance of catching the enemy off guard. Except for the large-scale deployment of troops in accord with the [725] customary tactic of envelopment, there was little expectation of subordinating [703] the impulses of individual soldiers to the needs of a "team"; for the prevailing military ethic stressed rather the heroism of the individual soldier and his drive to bring back a maximum of booty and trophies.[25]

The independent status of the common soldier in mass levies was based 121* on the fact that he was primarily a peasant and thus expected to return to 701 his fields as soon as a particular campaign was over. Nor were members of the 703 more permanent armies of lords greatly constrained. Loyalty to one's lord was in many cases a lasting tie, and accounts for much of the stability that existed in such arrangements. But in general it appears to have been a factor of far less moment than was the case, for example, in feudal Japan. The Amhara soldier felt he was fighting for a lord by his own free will and, therefore, had every right to leave him when conditions justified a move. One such condition was when the lord did not reward his followers liberally enough. Another related condition was when the lord had a tendency to suffer defeat in battle. Indeed, it was not uncommon for soldiers to swarm from one side to the other during a battle when defeat for their side seemed imminent. Still another basis for deserting one's chief was the ambition of a [554] vassal to acquire greater power, in which case he might rebel—become a *shīftā,* in the original sense of the word—and build up a military force of his own in the hope either of impressing his erstwhile master sufficiently to be reinstated with greater honors, or of taking his place by vanquishing him in combat, or simply of carrying on as a free agent.

The civilian counterpart of the soldier's right of desertion or rebellion was 121* the right of judicial appeal which belonged to every free Amhara. This per- 641 tained primarily to the area of property rights. A man who suffered some 695 grievous injustice in a local court had the right of appeal, in theory at least and often in practice, to higher courts at the provincial and imperial level. There was, in addition, some possibility of relief from an inordinately oppres- 121* sive governor. He might be removed accidentally by the emperor, in the 641 continuous process of *shum-shīr;* the people under his jurisdiction might [631] secure his deposition through appeals to the emperor or his overlord; or they might take arms behind one of his rebellious subordinates and overthrow him by force. Traditional Amhara society thus provided significant areas of social freedom for its citizens despite the feudal obligations that lay heavy upon them.

080

Mule and Hotchkiss gun crossing Blue Nile

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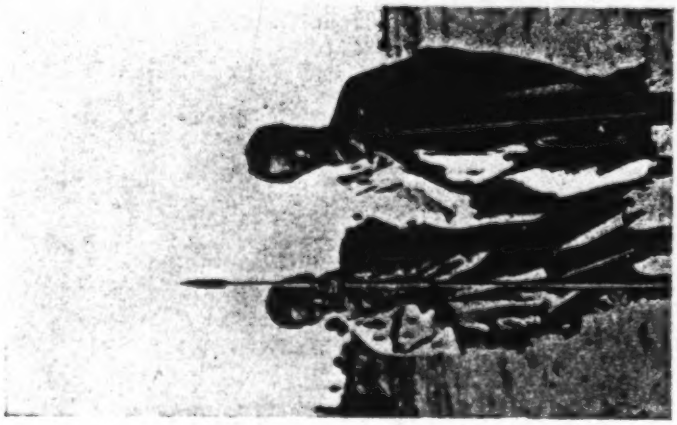

Gojjamis, Matakal

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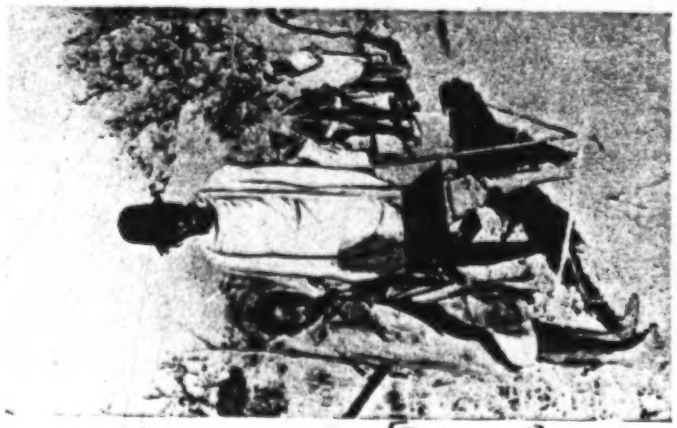

Gojjam notable and boy learning trade of war by carrying weapons

[Facing p. 7]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 2. The Military Camp and its Significance in Amhara Social Structure.

The preceding section on land tenure contained a number of references to the traditional military organization and function among the Amhara. This was inevitable, for the traditional army, particularly the military camp, constituted one of the most significant pillars of Amhara social structure. Even now, when Amhara children cannot see it any more, the military [554] camp lives on as "normal social organization" in the minds of the middle-aged, and in the titles of nobility still being bestowed several times a year by the emperor.

For, as recently as 1929, it flourished in full flower, e.g. at the headquarters of the provincial dynastic head of Gojjam, Ras Haylu, and, somewhat less flagrantly, at the provincial court of the lord of Gondar (Begemdir Province), Ras Kassa.

701 A. The Structure and Function of the Military Camp.

703 The number of individuals directly involved in the totality of the pattern of the military camp was never fixed. On the contrary, the quantity involved was extremely fluid, there was much joining and deserting, and no commander ever seemed to be able to force any but his closest retainers to remain against their will. Historians believe that the army even of

701 as great a military figure as Emperor Menelik II was
703 close to falling apart at the time of his great victory over the invading Italians in 1896. The Amhara resists discipline except for short-lived adulation of a military hero who inspires him; he comes to fight, not to wait; even today, in the modern army, Ethiopian officers characterize the Amhara soldier as fearless, brave, but unwilling to take orders and having a tendency to act as an individual in battle. He is characterized as almost opposite from the patient Galla soldier who takes orders and cooperates smoothly with his military outfit, but rarely takes initiative.

[578] Regional clannishness, easily stirred by news from the home district, was another motive that could cause large segments of a traditional Amhara army to vanish almost overnight. A third development that would whittle away an army gradually was the almost inevitable outcome of having been stationed in one vicinity too long. In this case, the countryside was soon stripped bare by the military foragers, the "gabbar" was suffering famine himself, as if a vast cloud of locusts had nibbled away every leaf ("gonäqhchäfä"). A fourth
[727] motive, related to the first, might be loss of confidence in the strength and wisdom of their chief, in which case the soldiers not wanting to return home without glory took to the woods and became bandits ("shefta"). The latter were a major problem after every war. Even a biberal statesman like Ras Imru, as governor of Gondar after the liberation of the country in World War II, found harsh measures the only remedy.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

317 one ounce to ten of gold, which gives it a very pale colour.

N. B. This observation is sufficiently confirmed by the
703 colour of those links that still remain of the honorary gold chain conferred on Mr Bruce by the king of Abyssinia. These links are of a paler hue than a common guinea, rather coarsely made, and unpolished. Gold chains, called in Habbesh sunsulé, are a mark of dignity bestowed by the sovereign on the most meritorious persons in his army. It is usual to give a splendid suit of clothes at the same time, an Egyptian and Persian custom; vide Genesis, xli. 42. and Esther, viii. 15.

Wechne, in Belessen, is about 34 or 35 miles, a long
651 day's journey from Emfras. There is paid, to maintain the royal family on the mountain, 250 ounces gold, and 730 cloths (this means webs of cotton cloth, called shuma). This is an old establishment. None are permitted to go up but the women carrying water. There was formerly a cistern, but it is now in ruins, and useless. There are near 300 persons there; and all the exiles are allowed to marry. Bacuffa escaped by help of his sister.

Extreme unction is unknown in Abyssinia; that is, the
793 anointing with oil. However, when a person is attacked
792 with sickness, which threatens death, he often puts on a monk's hood, as a token that in case of recovery, he will abandon the world, and then receives the last sacrament, or rather he does so before putting it on; and it is generally the custom to distribute all his moveables to the churches, which the priests appropriate. These are traces of extreme unction. The great men ofen renounce the hood, and return to their former life.

792 N. B. The Abyssinian MS. histories are full of these instances, in which the great men, when disappointed in politics, retire to Waldubba, or other deserts, to live as monks. The distribution of goods and money made by the kings, when sick, to the churches, occurs in almost every reign. Before Yasous II. died, the Chronicle says, that he had given away every thing he had, in this way, except the crown on his head. When Joas was proclaimed, the Iteghe his grandmother wished to give a present to the poor, as usual at the begin-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 Amhara religious experience. The favorite written literature consists of
156 those genres which glorify individual saints for their special powers and
776 great deeds. The *gadel* depicts the heroic struggles of saints against tempta-
*121 tions and persecutions; the *tāmher* relates their miraculous feats; and the
156 *malka*, a verse form of some fifty five-line stanzas, consists of a rhapsodic
538 description of the physical features and moral qualities of some saintly sub-
776 ject. The various *qenē* stanza types, moreover, serve largely to glorify individuals through the exotic use of religious symbolism—especially the nine-line *mawaddas*, which means "praise."

*121 While these literary genres are accessible only to the learned few, the
156 multitude also adores individual saints. Each of the saints has his particular
776 following in the population, his popularity varying according to region
*121 and to the powers for which he is famed. This idolization has been directed
156 not only to angels and legendary figures from the past, but also, to a lesser
554 extent, to contemporaneous religious virtuosi and outstanding masters of the religious books.

*121 Perhaps more prominent in Amhara life has been the glorification of brave
156 men. The Abyssinian military ethic took the form of a cult of the hero. Per-
• 703 sonal bravery—not discipline, training, honor, or self-sacrificing loyalty—
[554] was the paramount virtue in Abyssinian warfare. The *guabaz* warrior was rewarded by his chief, praised by the minstrel, and esteemed by the populace. His bravery was ranked according to the fearfulness of the enemy vanquished. Thus, in Menelik's day the fanciest headdress was given to a noble who killed one of the fierce Danakil, a less fancy headdress being awarded the killer of the tough Raya Galla. Such actions constituted the one area in which per-
[521] sonal boasting was permitted and, in fact, institutionalized in the genre known as *fukarā*.

We are indebted to Arnauld d'Abbadie for a firsthand account of the effect of this cult of the individual hero on the orientation of the Abyssinian warrior, in a passage so rare it is worth citing at length:

> The type of combat which [the Ethiopian] prefers over all others—because it gives him the most freedom to expand his personality—is that where, due to insufficiency of terrain or other circumstances, the chiefs can engage only a part of their forces. He loves to watch the skirmishers of the two armies spy out and accost one another while declaiming their martial themes. Joyously he throws off his toga to clad himself in some military ornament . . . and to mix himself in the widely spaced lines which follow one another and rise to the attack. He loves to comprehend the rationale of the manouvers of the two parties, to be able to judge the blows, to know under which hand the victims fall, to choose from among the enemy to avenge their death, to adapt his movements to the instincts which animate his companions, and to feel the earth tremble under the charges of cavalry which come as a squall

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to change suddenly the whole configuration of battle. He loves to hear, amidst the crackle of rifle-fire, the huzzahs, the shouts, the challenges, the injuries, the encouragements, the allocutions, the piercing voice of the troubadours, and the rhythms of the flutes alternating with the lugubrious wailing of the trumpets; to know, finally, that on the hills, behind their drummers who beat out the charge in place, the two rival chiefs and the two armies are following him with their eyes, and that he may at one moment or another, return to his lord and, hurling before him some trophy, tell him, at the end of his war chant: "There! This is what I know how to do!"[86] 121* 156 703 •

A cult of the individual obtains, in addition, with respect to the man with a genius for outsmarting others. Men who have beguiled their foes with particular cleverness, in litigation or in political intrigues, are scarcely less celebrated than religious virtuosi or heroic warriors. Anecdotes about great feats of shrewdness are the beloved stuff of Abyssinian folk history and are twice told around the fireplace.*[87] Some lords have enjoyed great reputations simply for being such successful and gifted scoundrels. 121* 156 554 [538]

Cleverness in words counts as much, if not more, than clever deeds. Here we confront once more the phenomenon of wax and gold, but appearing in this context as a sort of finesse in personal relations. It is a question here of individuals made memorable because of their memorable lines, their talent for swiftly and surely employing the ambiguities of Amharic to satirize, at the right moment, some personality, or social type, or aspect of the human condition. Military or political events are often remembered more for the witty verse composed by some personage on the occasion than for their historical significance. In the present century, Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē has been one of the most outstanding personalities of this sort, as was Alaqā Gabra Hānnā in the nineteenth century. [195]

INDIVIDUALISM AND MODERNITY

The Traditional Pattern

Our inquiry thus far has involved analysis of the various ways in which self-orientation is and is not manifest among the Amhara, in lieu of the more simplistic question of whether Amhara society is individualistic or not. Building on this analysis, we may now attempt a more integrated interpretation of traditional Amhara society. 121* 156

The predominant tendency in human relations among the Amhara is a disposition to seek, not unity based on affection, understanding, and/or responsi- 121* 156 181 591

* A recent study which analyzed 1,086 stories with identifiable themes, told or written by Ethiopian children in grades two through eight, revealed that "cleverness pays" was by far the most frequently recurring theme.

Synchronization and Privacy

*121 181 571 The degree of independence that exists in Amhara society may be further assessed by focusing on certain abstract properties of its organization as well as on the concrete institutions just discussed. In this context two variables are particularly relevant. One, degree of synchronization, concerns the extent to which the behavior of the individuals in group activities is strictly controlled and co-ordinated. The other concerns the extent to which the individual may be free from the intrusion of others when he desires privacy.

Except in the area of protocol and etiquette at the royal court, synchronization is conspicuously lax among the Amhara. Ample scope is left for individual whim and impulse in nearly every area of concerted activity. Groups of people going on a trip, for example, make little attempt to start at the same time or to keep abreast of each other. Carefully co-ordinated teamwork is [476] scarcely known in manual labor. Military units proceed, not in squads and [704] platoons, but as masses of individuals.

*121 181 571 533 535 The lack of synchronization in singing and dancing is perhaps the most striking case of all, for in these activities the participating individuals are supposed to be performing in unison. Yet the choirs of *dabtarā* sing with little regard for the standard line; each chorister sings as the spirit moves him, and the resulting cacophony is punctuated from time to time as some voice stands out by intoning a phrase with new energy a few beats before or after the majority of his fellows. A similar phenomenon occurs in dance, where what apparently is intended to be a symmetry of motion appears rather as a cohort of individual movements.* The impression left by such performances is that the Amhara accord a high degree of independence to the individual whenever he does take part in collective enterprises.

*121 181 571 [591] [576] The Amhara likewise maintain a high degree of respect for individual privacy, despite the hierarchical character of their society. This is shown, first, in the expectation that each nuclear family should inhabit its separate dwelling. The individual home is regarded with great respect; no one, not even a relative, presumes to enter another's home without being properly acknowledged and escorted inside. When possible, private quarters are isolated from those where guests are entertained. The ideal Amhara household, [592] found among the well-to-do, contains separate buildings for private quarters [342] (*ĭlfĭñ*) and for the hall where company is received and entertained (*addārāsh*).

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* At times, it may be noted, when more complex ceremonies permit a plurality of musical and choreographic themes to be going on simultaneously, despite the lack of synchronization the over-all aesthetic effect is often quite impressive. Such is the case, for example, in the ceremonial procession on Ṭimqat day described in chap. iii.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

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*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

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701 found harsh measures the only remedy.

With these qualifications, the quantity involved in a military camp of a provincial "Ras" (lit. head, actually marshall of high nobility as well as traditional leader of military forces of a province) would consist of several thousand soldiers; plus a huge ring of huts of camp followers, artisans, impressed local gabbar", their womenfolk serving as combination cook-concubine, and thornbush corrals for pack mules and donkeys. It resembled a medieval European army encamped, but with Middle Eastern and African overtones.

For example, the Ras himself would have to make frequent personal inspection tours of storehouses and major activities, if he did not want disorganization. In his presence, his men would fall all over themselves, running to carry out his orders instantly, to curry his favor. In his absence, his officers and men would relax after the fashion of free men, to their way of thinking. A chief, asked about the number of men under his command, would reply "many", not so much for reasons of concealment and pride (i.e. "the number of my men is without end"), but because he often did not know, nor care. However he knew exactly how many rifles he had in his command.[72]

712 The inner center of the camp contained the big, round tent ("das", tent of joy) of the "ras"; a guest and banquet tent for noble visitors ("adarash"); the tent of the sacred "tabot" (wooden tablet from the Holy of Holies of a church) and the chief

72. Grieule, M.: Le Travail en Abyssinie. Revue Internat. du Travail, 23, Fev. 1931, p.5.

712 clergy; storehouse for the best military and civilian equipment ("eqa byet"); and the separate food establishments of the household of the ras: meat hut ("sega byet"), mead hut ("täj byet"), cooking hut ("wot byet"); and the baking hut ("enjära byet").

712 701 In front of this center, the bodyguard was encamped, led by the "däjazmach" (lit. guardian of the gate), the highest rank after the "ras", usually a young nobleman aspiring to the higher rank upon the death of the "ras" who was usually his kinsman, sometimes his own father. To the right of the center camped the "qänyazmach" (lit. guardian of the right), the next highest rank, who, in battle, commanded the right flank of the attacking army. To the left of the center camped the "gerazmach" (lit. guardian of the left), next in rank, commander of the left flank of the attacking army.

701 All these commanders belonged to high notility, in this order, and were granted conquered lands, quantity and quality of the land being allocated as fiefs in the order of rank. Sometimes "battlefield commissions" would reward an individual military officer of commoner origin, and elevate him to "gerazmach", with rights to an appropriate fief. More often the gerazmach was a distant kinsman of the ras, perhaps a "poor relation".

Each of these nobles commanded a division that included cavalry, which consisted of "färäsenya" (lit. horsemen, i.e. knights), whose services were usually

701 rewarded by a "gušteňňa" fief. Their immediate commander in frontal attack was a military officer, "fitawrari" (lit. advance guard), a high rank of military nobility, and the starting rank of all young nobles upon reaching military age. Common soldiers, who did not own a horse and a rifle necessary to elevation to knighthood, made up the infantry. They were the last to benefit from the division of lands,

701 712 In camp, the cavalry usually ringed the center of feudal nobility and bodyguard. Outside this ring were the numerous lean-to huts ("gojo") or somewhat sturdier "säqäla" huts of the common soldiery, their hearths of rocks, and their concubine-cook womenfolk. Each minor chieftain imitated his superiors by grouping retainers around his tent,with himself at the top of a little social, hierarchical pyramid, He acted the "telleq säw" (lit. great man), generous in his rewards, but terrible in his anger. He might wear a lion mane.

Thus the camp consisted of three concentric rings, much as did the church, which may or may not have been a coincidence, but which to this day dominates the traditional Amhara view of feudal organized society. In fact, the "tabot" from the Holy of Holies, inner sanctum of the church, was physically represented inside the innermost center of encampment, serving as militaryChapel.

Special privilege characterized the second circle, much like the "mäqdäs" of the church reser-

701 712 ved to the priesthood. Within the second circle of military encampment, protected by the ring of cavalry, were housed the "bajirond" (treasurer-quartermaster-ordnance), scribes, artisans of all kinds, chamberlains ("aggafari") serving the high nobles, the military police ("zäbäna", lit. watchmen), the thornbush corrals of battle horses and the horse watchmen, cook-houses, and latrine areas for the privileged centers.[72]

The rear of the camp, as well as the rear guard during march, (called the "däjän sefra"), was usually commanded by the most trustworthy, noble councilor of the king or ras; his title was "Blatengëta" (lit. Councilor), a semi-civilian title about equivalent to Dejazmach. But unlike the latter, it was usually held by an older, wiser, less tempestuous, slow-moving gray-bearded friend of the commander-in-chief.

701 566 B. Social and Psychological Roles in Military Life: Noble Officers and Common Soldiers.

The location in camp of military officers and men thus indicated the social position of feudal nobles, soldier fief-holders, and "gabbar"-sharecroppers in civilian life. The rank-order can be listed, with some simplification, as follows:

72. Griaule, M.: Un Camp Militaire Abyssin. Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Tome IV, 1934, pp. 117-122.

632 not far from the market. A smaller daily market for retail items would develop, so commerce proceeded even on a daily basis. A larger church school, to include some higher grades, would be set up by priests and Däbtära (scribe-choristers).

632 712 On account of the floods in the rainy season, most of this town would be on a higher level, preferably a butte overlooking a river valley from which drinking water could be brought every day. On this fertile flood plain, just below the town, there would be some grass even at the gheight of the dry season, so that the cows owned by urban citizens would always find some pasture. [423] On this floodplain a "commons" was set aside, which no one could "enclose" for private use. It was called "ad-[485] däbabay" or even "yähezb addäbabay", and served as camping place for caravans, for temporary storage space of their goods and their mules, donkeys or camels, prior to the slow climb up the butte to the Saturday market. This arrangement also had the advantage of military security for the town, protecting it from sneak attack of an enemy under guise of a caravan, which was not permitted to proceed upward into town until dawn. For the Amhara town, unlike the Muslim towns in the south, were not walled.

632 651 This arrangement also permitted the "nägadras" the collector of duties for the central power of the province, to keep control of the merchandise entering and leaving the market.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

137 *Buddleia*, a large St. John's Wort and a handsome red Aloe, comes out in the course of the year. There is a very striking giant thistle (*Echinops*). During the rains lilies, orchids, and red-hot-pokers (*Kniphofia*) come up in plenty. Many typically temperate genera occur in the mountain grasslands, examples being a low-growing wild rose, ladies' mantle (*Alchemilla*) and mullein (*Verbascum*).

133 The lower plateau, which is the more extensive part and the only type of country seen from the motor road, is comparatively flat and therefore has [497] naturally been traversed at all times by the main routes between north and south. The streams meander through broad, shallow valleys which, being [231] swampy and almost impassable in the rains, are uninhabited, but much used [311] for grazing. The main streams, following the dip of the lava beds, flow north-west. Well-marked tributaries are few, and after heavy rain the water simply drains away over the general surface. Here and there are small secondary plateaus, standing two to three hundred feet above the general level; their slopes where not too steep are well populated and their flat tops largely under cultivation. Good examples are the village areas of Fajji and Aloberet shown on the map. These small plateaus, as well as all the edges of gorges in the [135] north-west corner of the sheet, are capped with a very hard layer of basalt which (as I found to my great annoyance when making the compass survey) contains an abundance of magnetic iron. A hundred years ago, as several [325] travellers have recorded, these rocks were used for iron-smelting, but the industry has long since been abandoned.

As we follow the streams upwards into the higher part of the plateau the character of the country changes. The broad plains narrow down and disappear, and the streams, more recently entrenched, flow in narrow valleys and little ravines; some of them might be thought quite striking if it were not for the severe standard of comparison afforded by the huge gorges below. The country is broken up into hills, usually steep-sided and flat-topped, and rocky hogsbacks. This kind of country is to be seen in the south-east corner of the sheet. The most interesting feature here is the wedge of country left standing up between the Beressa river and its large tributary the Maka. It has been cut away sharply on either side and forms, in its narrower part, a high ridge between the valleys. One of the highest points was appropriated [712] long ago for a fort (near the village of Dilila) and was again used as such, by both parties at different times, during the Italian régime. The other high [346] point (a prominent hill farther to the south-east, near the edge of the sheet) has recently been crowned with a church dedicated to the archangel Gabriel.

The third and most interesting type of country is that of the gorges, which cut into the almost level plateau with such remarkable abruptness that they resemble scoopings in a lump of cheese made with a sharp-edged gouge. At the head of each gorge the streams form a series of falls, or in some cases a single big fall of 400 feet or so; even higher falls, up to 600 feet, can be seen elsewhere. Everywhere the upper walls of the gorges, which are basaltic, fall precipitously, and often form vertical cliffs several hundred feet high. So sharply defined are these gorge-edges that a heedless person walking on the plateau might, in some places, fall over them into the abyss. The walls do not however drop away continuously to the stream at the bottom; at a certain level, or in some valleys at more than one level, a horizontal shelf is

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ababa and Debra Berhan remains Galla country. The Amharas have re-occupied the region immediately around Debra Berhan, their southern limit corresponding roughly with the edge of the sheet; but the churches built to meet their needs (including the new St. Gabriel already once mentioned) are comparatively few and far between, a confirmation of the recent date of the re-colonization. 175 563

The Gallas remained in possession of the plateau country until the early nineteenth century when Sahele Selassie, king of Shoa, began to push them back. The half-dozen hill-top forts shown on the sheet almost certainly date from this time, or were reoccupied then. The capital of Shoa since the eighteenth century had been Ankober, on the edge of the great eastern escarpment, some 20 miles east of Debra Berhan. But Sahele Selassie, as part of his anti-Galla campaign founded, in about 1830, a new capital at Angolala in the midst of Galla country. He thereafter divided his time between Angolala and Ankober. A largely disused track, still well-defined in most parts, is shown crossing the sheet from Angolala in an easterly direction; this was evidently an old route joining the two capitals. Harris,[1] who conducted a British Mission to Sahele Selassie in 1841–42, visited Angolala which then contained four or five hundred huts. He also describes Sahele Selassie's two-storied "palace," built by an Albanian [2] visitor, standing on an eminence—which however the king would not inhabit, from fear of earthquakes. Angolala continued to be used by Sahele Selassie's son, king Haile Malakot, and the great Menelik, who was Haile Malakot's son, had been born here in 1843—just after the time of Harris's visit. 175 [563] [712] [487] [644]

Not much remains now to show that Angolala was so recently the twin capital of Shoa; but the site of Sahele Salassie's house, an artificial mound crowning the ridge, is easily identified and commands a fine view of the countryside. Inside the mound is a vaulted cellar, its masonry showing clear signs of European workmanship, as also does the central stone-built element of the local church of Kidane Meheret. This work is now exposed to view as the church was burnt down during the Italian occupation. Angolala remains a well-populated area, but only a very few huts now stand among the remains of defensive walls near the old royal residence. 172 177

The young Menelik, up to the age of twelve, must have known all this country well. But at that time (1855) the newly crowned emperor Theodore, whose ambition was the unification of Ethiopia after a century and a half of anarchy and internal strife, came down from the north with the object of subjecting Shoa to his personal rule. He defeated king Haile Malakot on the plains of Atakilt, the irrigated area just south-east of Debra Berhan. Haile Malakot died immediately after the battle, and Menelik was carried away captive by Theodore—who, however, afterwards treated him as a son rather than a prisoner. For some years Menelik followed in the emperor's train, moving with him from Gondar to Debra Tabor and then to the hill-fortress of Magdala, Theodore's last capital and later the scene of his undoing. Several years before Napier's siege of 1868 Menelik had escaped from Magdala during, it is said, one of Theodore's periodic orgies. A youth in 175

[1] Harris, 'The Highlands of Aethiopia,' London, 1844. [113]

[2] It is much more likely that Harris meant an Armenian.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Published by the Royal Geographical Society

[End map II-A]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[End map II-B]

SHOAN PLATEAU
Buxton

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services. 565* 346 341 181 796 822 [778]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery. 565* 822 181 361 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order. 565* 822 181 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities. 565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable 565* 156 157 [577]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

784 He says that during all Passion week they are dressed in black or blue, and do not speak to one another for grief, saying that Judas by a kiss of peace betrayed his Lord.

532 Although there are in the churches effigies painted on all
784 the walls, and also crosses, nevertheless on no cross is a crucifix painted, neither have they any of solid carving; because they say they are not deserving to see Christ crucified.

792 All the priests, friars, and gentlemen carry crosses in their
778 hands, both on foot and on horseback; and the laymen of the people and lower people carry crosses round their necks. Every priest and friar carries a little horn of copper with holy water, and the hosts where they arrive beg of them water and a blessing, and they give it. Before they eat they throw drops of water on the food, and also in the drinking vases.

411 Their arms are assagays, few swords, a few shirts of mail, long and narrow; our Portuguese say that they are not of good mail.

There are many bows and arrows, they have no feathers like ours; there are very few helmets and casques. Those that there are have come since they have had intercourse with the Portuguese. There are plenty of strong bucklers;
● 713 there are no cannon, except two swivel guns which we brought them. At our departure there were fourteen muskets at Court, which they bought from the Turks who come there to trade. The Prester ordered whatever they asked to be given for them, and ordered men to be taught to shoot.

534 There are trumpets, but not good ones; there are many drums of copper which come from Cairo, and others of wood which have leather on both sides; there are tambourines like ours, and large cymbals which they sound. There are flutes and some instruments with chords, square like harps, which they call David moçanquo, which means the harp of David. They play these to the Prester, and not well.

441 various shapes were somewhat more common. Long lances and shorter throwing spears, both with fine, long iron
714 heads, were in use. Round rhinoceros shields belonging to officers were often ornamented carefully with brass or even silver or gold plates arranged in geometric patterns; circles; colorful velvet embroidery, granted as reward gifts for special bravery. Crown-like bands worn around forehead and skull, of gold, silver or lion-mane, were given to officers as decorations for bravery.

More lasting awards were available only in the form of "gult" fiefs.

701 Table 5: Land Tenure of Artisans and Chaplains.

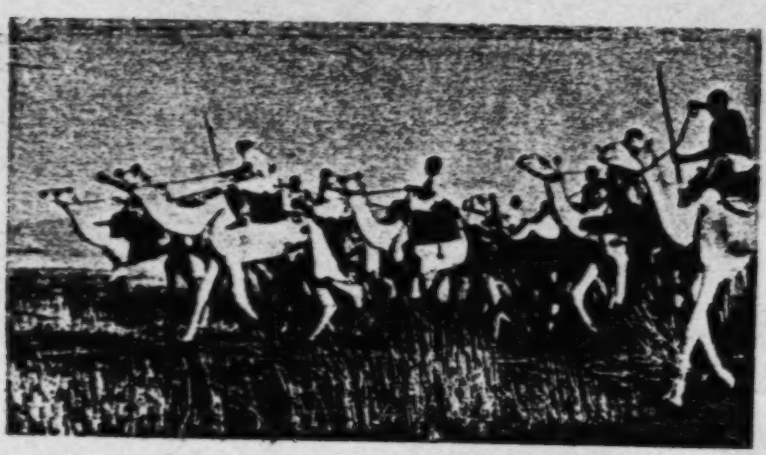
Title and Rank	Function	Reward in Land Tenure
bajirond (lit. treasurer)	(ethnic-origin) quartermaster, chief of artisans	"rest-gult" lands, inheritable.
qēs (priest)	army chaplain, carrier of sacred "tabot" (representing home church, and symbolizing the ark of the ancient Israelites.	"rest-gult" land, given to parish church.

725 The Amhara army on the march (or any Abyssinian army) has been described as resembling a migrating people rather than a disciplined-looking army. Supplies and equipment crawling over the landscape on donkey or human carriers, might amount to two-thirds of the army. Servants, priests, women and children, household utensils, cattle and sheep, huge jars of beer, etc., seemed to surround the main military caval-

552 A favorite horse name was "Abba Dulla" (lit. father of a tough weed), named after a weed that is difficult to uproot, and that regrows despite efforts to the contrary.

●714 Although rhinoceros shields have not been used for at least 20 years and with them has gone the job of the personal shieldbearer, the term "gashay"(my shield) is still used appealingly toward any male protector or paternal figure, especially by young men or by women of any age. Conversely, an older man may refer to his junnior trusted aide as "gasha jägrey", my shieldbearer.

579 Banditry (shefta), much reduced in recent years by harsh measures requiring the use of the army and capital punishment, still appears occasionally as a form of social protest. In the past, when a minor nobleman felt unjustly treated by a feudal superior, e.g. passed over in promotion, he would often "take to the bush" with his retainers, pillaging and even murdering, hoping that his ferocity would either intimidate the ruler of the province to negotiate with him, or arouse his desire to re-enlist so brave a bandit. Guerilla activities during the Italian occupation by these Amhara "arbaňňoch" (lit. patriots, self-styled), led the Italians to attempt negotiations on several occasions. It was difficult to demobilize some of the disappointed, irregulars, some of whom turned shefta after the war. Since then, peasants short of cash or unhappy about parting with much produce at tax-paying time, sometimes turn into highwaymen temporarily. It is the duty of the rural, non-uniformed police ("näch lebash), the "thiefcatchers-



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Camels flattening landing ground at Matahal

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Captain Pilkington's Wallos on parade, October 1941

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Men of Gaint [Facing p. 6]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

These Nobiis are neither Moors, nor Jews, nor Christians. 721
It is said that they had been Christians, and had lost their faith, and are thus without any faith. They say that there is among these Nobiis much fine gold. They said that but a short time ago they had killed a son of the Barnagais, and that he wished to go and avenge his death. I heard say that in the frontier districts of these Nobiis there were four or five hundred horsemen, very great warriors, and that it is a country very well supplied with provisions, and it cannot be otherwise because it is on this and the further side of the Nile, which they say is a very fertile country. The proclamation said that he would set out in fifty days from that time: but up to this there had been no muster nor movement of arms. This would be because in the country there are not many, and few people possess them except the Chavas, who are the men at arms. These [411]
men have javelins, bows and arrows. These great lords
have a few swords, hangers, and shirts of mail (not many of [714]
them). On the occasion of this little revolt, the Barnagais asked the ambassador for swords, and the ambassador gave him his own, which he wore on the road, and which was very good, and he still persistently begged another rich sword with ornaments which he carried with him, saying he wanted it for the war he was going to make, and the ambassador not being able to excuse himself, it suited him to buy another from his companions with gilt ends and a velvet scabbard, which he gave him instead of his own. And in the house where we kept our goods, and where our Portuguese slept, which was a house without doors, on the following night they stole from them two swords and a helmet. All this would be on account of the war.

[pp. 66-400 have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[166] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, *121 641 such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms [701] under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not [689] respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the [626] barbs of public opinion.

*121 701 [702] The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came [714] of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

779 the nation in Western patterns.
659

(1) The use of the church in promoting Amhara-dominated Ethiopian nationalism. This was recognized and promoted by Emperor Menelik II who had priests carry the "tabot" into newly conquered Galla, Sidamo and other pagan and semi-Muslim areas of his new empire, giving his military conquests the character of a crusade. Churches were built in these areas, guarded by troops of occupation, made permanent by feudal grants under which the local population, made "gabbar" serfs, was permitted to remain on the land as sharecroppers and peons of the feudal church.

This use of the church has been continued, though with reduced feudal emphasis, by the present emperor. The Geez alphabet of the church, modified in Amharic usage, is the only alphabet even non-Amharic-speakers may use, if they wish to write their languages, particularly in print. By taking on the name "Haile Selassye" (Power of the Trinity), upon coronation, the present emperor re-emphasized the power of the church. Finally, on November 4th 1955, when the new liberalized Constitution of 131 articles was proclaimed, it reaffirmed that the Ethiopian "Orthodox" Church, founded in the 4th century on the doctrines of St. Mark, is the established church of the state.

659 Phase (2), begun by the present emperor as his
178 power increased, was a concurrent weakening of the temporal power of the church. At first this was gradual. In

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

693 he hears the parties until he has determined upon it, and then he goes and relates the cause to the Barnagais, who gives the sentence: if it is a small cause, or if the parties wish it, the Alicaxi gives sentence, and the cause is concluded. Moreover, in all judgments, whether the Barnagais or the Alicaxi judges, there must be present an honourable man, whom they call by the name of his office Malaganha, who is like a tabellion or notary of Prester John, and if either of the parties wishes to appeal, he requires from this man the certifying of the cause for Prester John and his judges. All the lords of the countries of any of the kingdoms of Prester John have an Alicaxi and a Malaganha appointed by the Prester; so also have the captains subject to the Barnagais and to the other great lords. The gentlemen who are about the house of the Barnagais, and other grandees who come on business, have this manner of coming from their abodes. Whilst at the place he is living at he mounts his mule, seven, eight, or ten men on foot go before him as far as the first gate, and there he dismounts. If he is a person of greater importance, he takes seven, eight, or ten mules, or else three or four, according as the person is. So he dismounts at the first gate, and arrives at the second, after that, if they are bidden at once to enter, they go in, if not, they sit outside like beehives in the sun, without any other pastime. All these honourable persons wear sheep skins at [292] their necks or on their shoulders, and he who wears the skin of a lion, tiger, or ounce, is more honourable. When 576 they come before the lord they take off the skin, as we take off our caps. Whilst we were in this town of Barra on a 721 market day, they made a solemn proclamation that the Barnagais intended to make war on the Nobiis, five or six days' journey from the limits of his country, towards Egypt, neighbouring to the countries of Canfilla and Dafolha,[1] which are subject to the Barnagais, as I have before mentioned.

[1] Dafilla.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

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men have javelins, bows and arrows. These great lords
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them). On the occasion of this little revolt, the Barnagais asked the ambassador for swords, and the ambassador gave him his own, which he wore on the road, and which was very good, and he still persistently begged another rich sword with ornaments which he carried with him, saying he wanted it for the war he was going to make, and the ambassador not being able to excuse himself, it suited him to buy another from his companions with gilt ends and a velvet scabbard, which he gave him instead of his own. And in the house where we kept our goods, and where our Portuguese slept, which was a house without doors, on the following night they stole from them two swords and a helmet. All this would be on account of the war.

[pp. 66-480 have not been processed for the files.-Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to the rebel leaders' appeal for a show of public support, hundreds of students staged a demonstration on behalf of the coup. Except for occasional school strikes in the past, this was the first time that Ethiopian students had ever taken part in any sort of organized political process. The novelty of the experience was reflected in the confusion on many faces as they marched through the streets of the capital, chanting a militant refrain and carrying placards that celebrated "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" and "Our Country's Peaceful Change." For some, the experience was quite unreal; it was as though they were behaving thus because that is how one is supposed to behave at a time of revolution. Not a few of the participants actually regretted the coup but went along because, as one put it: "The coup has taken place; my friends are for it; so what is one to do?"

Even so, there was a moment of genuine political engagement for all when the student demonstrators proceeded to the army headquarters with the vain plea to forestall civil violence and join the new regime installed by the Imperial Bodyguard. Though they were turned away by bayonets, that moment gave the students the intoxicating taste of direct political expression. Subsequently, the army's abrupt suppression of the rebels left these students in an awkward position. All who took part in the demonstration were required to write letters of apology to the Emperor as a condition of being readmitted to study. They did so, and returned to school; but they have never been the same again. Though on the surface they appear to have reverted to the apolitical, passive orientation of the pre-coup days, occasional oratorical contests and poetry readings have given expression to a sharpened criticism of the government and greater restlessness in the student body.

Because of the relative absence of information and discussion pertaining to domestic political questions heretofore, Ethiopian students have tended to have slightly more knowledge and interest regarding international politics. On the general question of war and peace they seem to be influenced by the high value given to warfare in traditional Ethiopia. As many as forty per cent of all the students consider war "sometimes a good thing." This sentiment is somewhat stronger among the secondary school students than among the college students, but even the latter show a higher percentage of choice for this response than any of the national groups in the Gillespie-Allport study—except perhaps Egypt. (See Table 12.)

In their attitudes toward the "big three" world powers, the Ethiopian students seem to be most favorably disposed toward the United States, secondly toward the Soviet Union, and thirdly toward Great Britain. (See Table 13.) The United States is liked because it "helps other countries," has a high standard of living, and is "advanced in civilization"; while it is disliked because of its color discrimination and its being "aggressive," "rude," "boast-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 829

ful," and "loud-mouthed." England is liked because it is "highly civilized" and has a "good form of government"; but it is disesteemed because of its waning power, on the one hand, and its "cunning" and "treachery," and being imperialist, on the other. Russia is admired because of its power, its achievements in science, and its rapid attainment of "civilization." It is disliked, on the other hand, for being "aggressive" and "fostering war," and because of its "bad form of government" and its "atheism."

*883 829 • 721 171

TABLE 12

ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS FROM ETHIOPIA AND SEVEN OTHER COUNTRIES TOWARD WAR*

Country	Institution	Sex	War Is			Number
			Needless and Preventable (per cent)	A Necessary Evil (per cent)	Sometimes a Good Thing (per cent)	
Ethiopia	Secondary schools	M	46	11	43	(302)
	Secondary schools	F	46	18	36	(39)
	Colleges	M	45	20	35	(199)
Egypt	Higher Training College	M	31	34	34	(29)
	Women Teachers' Institute	F	39	35	26	(31)
France	University of Bordeaux	M	65	26	9	(105)
		F	74	26	0	(23)
Italy	Catholic University of the Sacred Heart	M	61	26	13	(39)
		F	46	44	10	(37)
Japan	Secondary school and colleges, Kyoto	M	72	16	8	(95)
		F	58	37	4	(119)
Mexico	National University of Mexico	M	51	23	26	(106)
		F	58	24	18	(103)
New Zealand	Victoria University College	M	72	16	12	(74)
		F	72	12	16	(51)
United States	Miami University	M	69	22	9	(112)
		F	64	33	3	(91)

* The Japanese data appear in Stoetzel, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
For the data on the other countries I am greatly indebted to a personal communication from Professor James Gillespie.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[80]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis*, a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

411 various shapes were somewhat more common. Long lances and shorter throwing spears, both with fine, long iron 714 heads, were in use. Round rhinoceros shields belonging to officers were often ornamented carefully with brass or even silver or gold plates arranged in geometric patterns; circles; colorful velvet embroidery, granted as reward gifts for special bravery. Crown-like bands worn around forehead and skull, of gold, silver or lion-mane, were given to officers as decorations for bravery.

More lasting awards were available only in the form of "gult" fiefs.

701 Table 5: Land Tenure of Artisans and Chaplains.

Title and Rank	Function	Reward in Land Tenure
bajirond (lit. treasurer)	(ethnic-origin) quartermaster, chief of artisans	"rest-gult" lands, inheritable.
qēs (priest)	army chaplain, carrier of sacred "tabot" (representing home church, and symbolizing the ark of the ancient Israelites.	"rest-gult" land, given to parish church.

725 The Amhara army on the march (or any Abyssinian army) has been described as resembling a migrating people rather than a disciplined-looking army. Supplies and equipment crawling over the landscape on donkey or human carriers, might amount to two-thirds of the army. Servants, priests, women and children, household utensils, cattle and sheep, huge jars of beer, etc., seemed to surround the main military caval-

725 ry and footsoldiers and main tents in all directions.[73] But there was a central structure, and well-understood functioning of parts.

725 701 Only officers from the dejasmach upward could announce the signal for mobilization and decampment, through the sound of drums and bugles. The time and place of assembly would be announced beforehand. The Council of War would meet and decide strategy as well as tactics: Who should fight where, and what secret signals were to be used. This Council usually consisted of the king, the ras commanders of armies, the dejazmach commanders of main divisions, and the blatengeta of the rear guard. After that, the young commanders of the advance guards, "fitawrari", who understood tactics, received their orders, and were sent two to three days ahead of the main body, for reconnaissance or to maintain contact with the enemy. The cavalry would protect the right and left flanks of the main body, commanded by appropriate gerazmach's, qanazmach's and fitawraris.

The main body, "gädam ṭor", was directly commanded by the king. In his absence, a temporary commander-in-chief was elected by the Council of War, with the title "abägaz", or "yäṭor täqlay" (lit. war chief). The main body also included the stores ("eqa"), the quartermaster ("bajirond") and his artisans, and the priests with the tabot. Finally, the rear guard protected from unexpected enemy attack, buried the dead, picked up the weary and wounded, and was itself organized into right

73. Rohrer: Beiträge.... 1932, p.117.

725 and left flanks.
701 Fanning out in all directions, detachments of light cavalry and foragers on foot, "fano", could destroy and plunder enemy land to do as much damage as possible while on the march. When re-encampment was ordered, the tent of the king or field commander was set up first, and the army divisions and followers, seeing this, grouped themselves accordingly and settled in their proper locations, distances, areas and relative positions. The quartermaster thereupon took over the functions of maintenance and supplies.[74]

[554] This pattern of "relative positions" and functions carried over into civilian life, and dominated land tenure, administration, law, social structure, organized religion, the life cycle, artistic expression, and a multitude of human relations.

C. Significance of the old Military Organization in Modern Change.

178 The spear, the rhinoceros shield and armies paid by land grants have now become memories of the past, [554] though recent past. Yet most of the attitudes and many of the roles that accompanied the old military organization still linger and dominate social organization.

[473] Much of the old land tenure is still little changed in the old-Amhara provinces, as has been pointed out.

74. Bedie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, pp. 86-7.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

structured. But the marching and fighting unit seems to have been, for all 121*
practical purposes, the individual soldier and his retainers. Battles were not 701
fought in a disciplined manner; the outcome depended on the sheer num- 726
bers of troops, their state of morale, and the chance of catching the enemy
off guard. Except for the large-scale deployment of troops in accord with the [725]
customary tactic of envelopment, there was little expectation of subordinating
the impulses of individual soldiers to the needs of a "team"; for the prevailing [703]
military ethic stressed rather the heroism of the individual soldier and his
drive to bring back a maximum of booty and trophies.[35]

The independent status of the common soldier in mass levies was based 121*
on the fact that he was primarily a peasant and thus expected to return to 701
his fields as soon as a particular campaign was over. Nor were members of the 703
more permanent armies of lords greatly constrained. Loyalty to one's lord
was in many cases a lasting tie, and accounts for much of the stability that
existed in such arrangements. But in general it appears to have been a factor
of far less moment than was the case, for example, in feudal Japan. The
Amhara soldier felt he was fighting for a lord by his own free will and,
therefore, had every right to leave him when conditions justified a move.
One such condition was when the lord did not reward his followers liberally
enough. Another related condition was when the lord had a tendency to
suffer defeat in battle. Indeed, it was not uncommon for soldiers to swarm
from one side to the other during a battle when defeat for their side seemed
imminent. Still another basis for deserting one's chief was the ambition of a [554]
vassal to acquire greater power, in which case he might rebel—become a
shiftā, in the original sense of the word—and build up a military force of
his own in the hope either of impressing his erstwhile master sufficiently
to be reinstated with greater honors, or of taking his place by vanquishing
him in combat, or simply of carrying on as a free agent.

The civilian counterpart of the soldier's right of desertion or rebellion was 121*
the right of judicial appeal which belonged to every free Amhara. This per- 641
tained primarily to the area of property rights. A man who suffered some 695
grievous injustice in a local court had the right of appeal, in theory at least
and often in practice, to higher courts at the provincial and imperial level.
There was, in addition, some possibility of relief from an inordinately oppres- 121*
sive governor. He might be removed accidentally by the emperor, in the 641
continuous process of *shum-shir;* the people under his jurisdiction might [631]
secure his deposition through appeals to the emperor or his overlord; or they
might take arms behind one of his rebellious subordinates and overthrow
him by force. Traditional Amhara society thus provided significant areas of
social freedom for its citizens despite the feudal obligations that lay heavy
upon them.

701 It is noteworthy that the military ranking of the com-
554 moner-soldiery, which made up the rank and file of the fighters on foot, was not nearly so formal. The fortunes of war, if they did not leave him dead or maimed, could move him upward to lower nobility. Failing to achieve that, veterans could still hope for a modest fief of "gult" land, enabling him to play the "telleq saw" (great man) role over some hapless "gabbar" peasants. Meanwhile, pseudo-"telleq säw" behaved much like the proverbial sergeant of any army, making his men fear him more than any enemy, rewarding them with feasts, in this case of raw beef and medium-alcoholic mead. The only way he could maintain his following of individual-minded Amhara soldiers, each one of whom wanted to be a hero himself, was by continous personal bravery coupled with cleverness in military tactics. But here the similarity ends, for the non-noble chief of Amhara warriors had no pride of a non-commissioned officer; his ambition was to become a real "telleq säw", a minor nobleman owning "rest" lands.

782 Personal bravery was expressed and recalled in
● 726 formal boasting, a tradition that survives to this day
521 even for such civilian occasions as weddings. Prior to
535 battle each potential hero would go into a personal song and dance called "fukkara". The ceremonial dance accompanying his boast proceeded as follows: Spear, or rifle, held horizontally behind head, just above shoulders; the head moves in increasingly rapid motion from right to

782 left, while boasts are shouted rythmically. Personal
●726 boasts are interspersed with shouts of loyalty to the
521 emperor ("Addis Ababa! Addis Ababa!"), or recalling
535 past loyal bravery in the service of a provincial chieftain. Fukkara is performed also before the military games of "ganna" on Christmas, and outside the church on Epiphany (Temqat), to express the readiness of the young warriors to defend the faith, and on weddings to boast of warrior ancestors and so impress the in-laws.

The song and dance is also referred to as "dan-
[533] kira " (stomping); to distinguish it from the tamer entertainment song, "zafan" performed by female "azmari" who perform accompanied by a violin ("masenqo") or banjo ("qrar"), often recounting tales of renown in ballad form. The "fukkara" in military life takes place before the "joy tent" ("das") of the king, before the "denkwan" (from diwan, round cotton or hair tent) of feudal lords on the march; or, in honor of a successful "killer" ("gedday") of a lion, rhinoceros, elephant or human enemy, in presence of the trophy.

[727] The dance after the victorious battle is called "hoto". It is a simple jumping up and down, brandishing spear, rifle or stick vertically, reminiscent of the Central and West African dancing to exhaustion. It is accompanied by refrains, shouted frequently in response to impromptu poetry made up to celebrate the event, such as "yebahalal jebo" (the hyena will swallow him, i.e. the slain enemy). This refrain is also used before the battle, to defy the enemy and pretend that victory

782 is already assured. It is also performed on Epiphany,
726 to defy human as well as spirit enemiesoof the Faith.
521
535 Before battle, it was the response of the simple soldiers, ("wätadär") to the pep-talk ("arraga") given them by the commander, encouraging them to stand their ground.

727 After thevictorious battle, the soldier could look
554 forward to taking part in the royal feasting, the "gabber", and to lording it over the local "gabbar" peasant who had to supply the means and the womenfolk. It is at least part of the basis of the pride (critics say false sense of their own worth) of the free Amhara over subject peoples, enabling evan the simplest soldier to feel that he belongs to the proprietory class. Back home, he therefore despises manual labor, and even in going into battle he used to conscript peasant boys to carry his heavy rhinoceros-hide shield ("gasha"). These boys often became replacements for slain warriors when they could secure weapons, and, in turn, recruited servants for themselves.

411 The typical weapon was the spear (the word "tor" means both war and spear) until replaced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by rifles, though late-medieval muskets and Ottoman firearms were available to a few from the Portuguese period in the 16th century. The spear, some in use as late as the Italian invasion of 1935/6, sometimes had two or three prongs. Sabers were rare, and available mostley to noble officers. They were of the curved, Damascene type. Daggers of

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[For historical information on the region of Manz in Shoa Province, along with its succession of leaders, its warfare with the Galla, and internal strife, see category 175.]

411 standing at the long church services. Above all it is a weapon of offense and
181 defense, and every Amhara male is supposed to be skilled in its use. When the *dulā* is so employed in Manz, the *bānā* blanket is usually wrapped around the left arm to form a quick shield, the *dulā* raised high with the right to bring down on the adversary's cranium. The blows are sometimes fatal. The Manzēs are proud of their facility with the lethal stick, and nearly every district in Manz boasts that it is real "*dulā* country."

• 726 The Manzēs also excel at *shillalā*, the Abyssinian war chant. This is a
533 form of boastful verse—partly intoned, partly shouted—which is declaimed by
181 warriors to "heat their blood" before hitting the warpath. Children in Manz start practicing *shillalā* almost as soon as they leave the breast. The following
[539] is a good specimen of Manz *shillalā:*

> *Agarātchu Māmā agarātchu Lālo wunzātchu Dangazē;*
> *Mān abātu yāzzāl imbi senll gizē.*

> Our land is Māmā, our land is Lālo, our stream the Dangazē;
> What father will order us when *imbi* we say!

Imbi is an interjection used by children to express "No!" There is a double pun in this couplet. *Mān abātu* ("Who is the father?") is a profane idiom meaning "bastard." "To say *imbi*" is another idiom, meaning "to refuse." The second line may thus be also rendered as:

> What bastard dare shove us around when we tell him to keep off our lands!

181 The Manzē code asks that a man be ready to defend his land and church
865 by force. It does not approve wanton aggression. But the Manzē's disposition
152 is notoriously aggressive, for his emotional life is relatively devoid of warmth
[577] and, on the other hand, fighting is so highly rewarded. Children are urged to be adept with the *dulā*. Their temper tantrums are welcomed as signs that they are brave. As a result the men of Manz are often overcome by the impulse toward physical aggression; assault and murder are recurrent events on their fields and trails and at their marketplaces. The discrepancy between the *norm* of physical bravery, which is operative *in certain specified circumstances,* and the *general character trait* of aggressiveness comprises a major theme in their emotional life: they feel obliged to look for justification for the aggressive actions which they have been conditioned to want to carry out. This disposition is illustrated in the words of the Manzē youth who said:

> I want very much to kill somebody. The only problem is I'm not strong enough. Perhaps one day I will be. Why is it all right to kill? People kill sheep, don't they? And sheep are innocent, they don't know anything, don't do any wrong. But man knows, he knows much, and still he does wrong: every man is bad. I wouldn't kill everybody, only the bad ones. If I had an enemy, I would kill him. Maybe I will become a soldier, and kill my country's enemies.

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations 155
which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged 152
ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which [763]
occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news [764]
evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and [726] boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive 155
fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training* 757
and Personality. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[18] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general [539] principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy 155
water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of 755
affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of 155
prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. 751
Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute 155
magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit 789
use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human 261
problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formula- [191]
tion, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a [173] baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ĭnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution
789 of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of
261 eating something or presenting food to someone.[14] It is a theme conspicuous
173 in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amlāk (1270-85). According to *The Book of the*
[539] *Riches of Kings,* Yekuno Amlāk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zāgwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[15]

155 *Oral Sadism*

152 In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the envi-
201 ronment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When
155 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong
152 biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following
726 refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:
[539]

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[16]

155 The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagi-
266 nation. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the
773 story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater
[532] of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, [642] the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*nag-gasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[466] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, *121 641 such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms [701] under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not [689] respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the [626] barbs of public opinion.

*121 701 [702] [714] The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

structured. But the marching and fighting unit seems to have been, for all practical purposes, the individual soldier and his retainers. Battles were not fought in a disciplined manner; the outcome depended on the sheer numbers of troops, their state of morale, and the chance of catching the enemy off guard. Except for the large-scale deployment of troops in accord with the customary tactic of envelopment, there was little expectation of subordinating the impulses of individual soldiers to the needs of a "team"; for the prevailing military ethic stressed rather the heroism of the individual soldier and his drive to bring back a maximum of booty and trophies.[28]

The independent status of the common soldier in mass levies was based on the fact that he was primarily a peasant and thus expected to return to his fields as soon as a particular campaign was over. Nor were members of the more permanent armies of lords greatly constrained. Loyalty to one's lord was in many cases a lasting tie, and accounts for much of the stability that existed in such arrangements. But in general it appears to have been a factor of far less moment than was the case, for example, in feudal Japan. The Amhara soldier felt he was fighting for a lord by his own free will and, therefore, had every right to leave him when conditions justified a move. One such condition was when the lord did not reward his followers liberally enough. Another related condition was when the lord had a tendency to suffer defeat in battle. Indeed, it was not uncommon for soldiers to swarm from one side to the other during a battle when defeat for their side seemed imminent. Still another basis for deserting one's chief was the ambition of a vassal to acquire greater power, in which case he might rebel—become a *shīftā,* in the original sense of the word—and build up a military force of his own in the hope either of impressing his erstwhile master sufficiently to be reinstated with greater honors, or of taking his place by vanquishing him in combat, or simply of carrying on as a free agent.

The civilian counterpart of the soldier's right of desertion or rebellion was the right of judicial appeal which belonged to every free Amhara. This pertained primarily to the area of property rights. A man who suffered some grievous injustice in a local court had the right of appeal, in theory at least and often in practice, to higher courts at the provincial and imperial level. There was, in addition, some possibility of relief from an inordinately oppressive governor. He might be removed accidentally by the emperor, in the continuous process of *shum-shīr;* the people under his jurisdiction might secure his deposition through appeals to the emperor or his overlord; or they might take arms behind one of his rebellious subordinates and overthrow him by force. Traditional Amhara society thus provided significant areas of social freedom for its citizens despite the feudal obligations that lay heavy upon them.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 538 156 [126] sinuate insults through the ambiguities of his compliments, as was illustrated above. *Shillalā*, declaimed to arouse male courage before battle, is also heard at weddings and other festive occasions. Another type of exclamatory verse (*ho-berē*) is sung by the peasant at harvest time as he drives his cattle around the threshing floor. Verse of sorrow (*engurguro*) is intoned at time of bereavement or during moments of loneliness. Finally, in the conviviality of a drink-house enlivened by a minstrel, alone at work, or with a group of friends on various occasions, the Amhara finds that verse provides a medium for thoughts on almost any subject—people, places, animals, weather, love, work, and death. The following poem illustrates an important quality found in many of these verses, pessimism and irony, especially common in verses about love.

[539] Fish on the cliff, baboons in the sea;
The ass after honey, while hay draws the bee;
On a baking-pan of wax, butter to see;
Or a monk from Zegamel monastery
In the pagan land of Metcha to bury;
With an unsuited person in love to be;
Thus has it ended, my affair with thee.
Leave it, forget it, just let it rest—
A hapless ass at a hyena's breast.

[533] These various sorts of verse may be either sung or spoken. The auditory [534] effect is often enhanced by the accompaniment of musical instruments. When serious *qenē* has been recited by its author in church, it is usually repeated by a chorus of *dabtarā* singing to the slow beat of drums and sistrums. The sad strains of *engurgo* are sometimes accompanied by the mellow ten-stringed lyre, while an instrumental background for livelier subjects may be provided by the Abyssinian banjo or one-stringed violin.

Throughout these varieties of verse forms, certain conventions are followed. Most important, the lines are supposed to rhyme; that is, end with the same consonant-plus-vowel. Inferior poets achieve this rhyme at the expense of the words they use. In addition, proper rhythm must be maintained; the lines must not "break." This means that the flow of the line must be smooth and that the metrical pattern in one line—based on the number of accents, not syllables[34]—should be paralleled by the others. A poet who breaks his lines is satirized by being dubbed a "lion."

While observing these rules—and, in the case of *qenē*, the much more complicated rules pertaining to stanza forms and poetic figures—the Amhara poet *must also be original*. In the production of verse, individuality is explicitly emphasized. Poets who use verses composed by others—this is primarily true of students of *qenē*—are insulted with the term *lēbā* ("thief"). Similarly, a poet should not repeat himself. If he repeats the same word

701 as great a military figure as Emperor Menelik II was
703 close to falling apart at the time of his great victory over the invading Italians in 1896. The Amhara resists discipline except for short-lived adulation of a military hero who inspires him; he comes to fight, not to wait; even today, in the modern army, Ethiopian officers characterize the Amhara soldier as fearless, brave, but unwilling to take orders and having a tendency to act as an individual in battle. He is characterized as almost opposite from the patient Galla soldier who takes orders and cooperates smoothly with his military outfit, but rarely takes initiative.

[578] Regional clannishness, easily stirred by news from the home district, was another motive that could cause large segments of a traditional Amhara army to vanish almost overnight. A third development that would whittle away an army gradually was the almost inevitable outcome of having been stationed in one vicinity too long. In this case, the countryside was soon stripped bare by the military foragers, the "gabbar" was suffering famine himself, as if a vast cloud of locusts had nibbled away every leaf ("gonäqhchäfä"). A fourth
[727] motive, related to the first, might be loss of confidence in the strength and wisdom of their chief, in which case the soldiers not wanting to return home without glory took to the woods and became bandits ("shefta"). The latter were a major problem after every war. Even a biberal statesman like Ras Imru, as governor of Gondar after the liberation of the country in World War II, found harsh measures the only remedy.

782 left, while boasts are shouted rythmically. Personal
726 boasts are interspersed with shouts of loyalty to the
521
535 emperor ("Addis Ababa! Addis Ababa!"), or recalling past loyal bravery in the service of a provincial chieftain. Fukkara is performed also before the military games of "ganna" on Christmas, and outside the church on Epiphany (Temqät), to express the readiness of the young warriors to defend the faith, and on weddings to boast of warrior ancestors and so impress the in-laws.

The song and dance is also referred to as "dan-
[533] kira " (stomping); to distinguish it from the tamer entertainment song, "zafan" performed by female "azmari" who perform accompanied by a violin ("masenqo") or banjo ("qrar"), often recounting tales of renown in ballad form. The "fukkara" in military life takes place before the "joy tent" ("das") of the king, before the "denkwan" (from diwan, round cotton or hair tent) of feudal lords on the march; or, in honor of a successful "killer" ("gedday") of a lion, rhinoceros, elephant or human enemy, in presence of the trophy.

● [727] The dance after the victorious battle is called "hoto". It is a simple jumping up and down, brandishing spear, rifle or stick vertically, reminiscent of the Central and West African dancing to exhaustion. It is accompanied by refrains, shouted frequently in response to impromptu poetry made up to celebrate the event, such as "yebahalal jebo" (the hyena will swallow him, i.e. the slain enemy). This refrain is also used before the battle, to defy the enemy and pretend that victory

782 is already assured. It is also performed on Epiphany,
726 to defy human as well as spirit enemiesoof the Faith.
521
535 Before battle, it was the response of the simple soldiers, ("wätadär") to the pep-talk ("arraga") given them by the commander, encouraging them to stand their ground.

727 After thevictorious battle, the soldier could look
554 forward to taking part in the royal feasting, the "gabber", and to lording it over the local "gabbar" peasant who had to supply the means and the womenfolk. It is at least part of the basis of the pride (critics say false sense of their own worth) of the free Amhara over subject peoples, enabling evan the simplest soldier to feel that he belongs to the proprietory class. Back home, he therefore despises manual labor, and even in going into battle he used to conscript peasant boys to carry his heavy rhinoceros-hide shield ("gasha"). These boys often became replacements for slain warriors when they could secure weapons, and, in turn, recruited servants for themselves.

441 The typical weapon was the spear (the word "ṭor" means both war and spear) until replaced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by rifles, though late-medieval muskets and Ottoman firearms were available to a few from the Portuguese period in the 16th century. The spear, some in use as late as the Italian invasion of 1935/6, sometimes had two or three prongs. Sabers were rare, and available mostley to noble officers. They were of the curved, Damascene type. Daggers of

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

BOOK V.—CONTINUED.

CHAP. XII.

State of Religion—Circumcision, Excision, &c.

346 THERE is no country in the world in which there are so many churches as in Abyssinia. Though the country is very mountainous, and consequently the view much obstructed, it is very seldom you see less than five or six churches; and, if you are on a commanding ground, five times that number. Every great [783] man, that dies, thinks he has atoned for all his wickedness if he leaves a fund to build a church, or has built one in his lifetime. The king builds many. Where- 346 ever a victory is gained, there a church* is erected in •727 the very field, stinking with the putrid bodies of the slain. Formerly this was only the case when the ene-

* The oldest churches in Habbesh are those in the province of Tigre. Axum, now in ruins, possessed many before the Adelan war. A list of these is given in the Appendix of Kebir Neguste, or Chronicle of Axum; and of the lands which they possessed, as given by several kings. E.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 my was Pagan or Infidel; now the same is observed
[727] when the victories are over Christians.

346 The situation of a church is always chosen near
running water, for the convenience of their purifica-
351 tions and ablutions, in which they observe strictly the
[783] Levitical law. They are always placed upon the top of some beautiful, round hill, which is surrounded entirely with rows of the oxycedrus, or Virginia cedar, which grows here in great beauty and perfection, and is called Arz *. There is nothing adds so much to the beauty of the country as these churches, and the plantations about them.

In the middle of this plantation of cedars is interspersed, at proper distances, a number of those beautiful trees called Cusso, which grow very high, and are all extremely picturesque.

346 All the churches are round, with thatched roofs;
their summits are perfect cones; the outside is surrounded by a number of wooden pillars, which are nothing else than the trunks of the cedar-tree, and are placed to support the edifice, about eight feet of the roof projecting beyond the wall of the church, which forms an agreeable walk, or colonade, around it in hot weather, or in rain. The inside of the church is in several divisions, according as is prescribed by the law of Moses. The first is a circle somewhat wider than the inner one; here the congregation sit and pray. Within this is a square, and that square is divided by a veil or curtain, in which is another very

* Ludolf, in his dictionary, says, this word, in Hebrew, signifies any tall tree. In this, however, he is mistaken. The translators did not, indeed, know what tree it was, and so have said this to cover their ignorance; but Arz is as exclusively the oxycedrus, as is an oak or an elm when so named. Arz is indeed a tall tree, but every tall tree is not Arz, which is the Virginia berry-bearing cedar.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

79 the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intel-
175 lectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

121 Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was com-
79 pounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment
571 be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

779 The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of
793 practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity
182 barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

779 Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an
721 inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed
571 against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of
182 a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms
[681] of *lex talionis*, a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of
[921] the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

779 The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the sym-
721 bolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person
182 the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—
643 Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

565 With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic
792 accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes.
793 Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial
571 amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to
182

633 the old Portuguese-type castles, even then in ruins.
[346] The new mosque, built through Italian encouragement during the occupation, overshadows both the big market and the old Muslim "ghetto" with the old mosque, at lower elevation.

563 The local Muslim "Qadi", ecclesiastical Muslim judge,
624 regarded as their provincial temporal chief, calls on the governor-general every Tuesday. Most Muslims have not moved far from their old section, partly because it is near the big market which is their economic as well as social gathering place, partly because they, almost as much as the ethnic artisans, wish to avoid insults, mockery, and quarrels with young members of the dominant majority.

759 In addition to being a center of public announce-
743 ments, and the table of the judge for petty crimes, the market now also serves as center for the activities of modern "dressers". These medical auxiliaries set up their tables under one of the shady trees, their bottles, hypodermic needles, cotton wool, etc., clearly visible, with chairs for several patients, set apart by an enclosure of barbed wire. When an epidemic threatens, and
[731] during and after it (e.g. typhus or spotted fever), the public can obtain free injections there, or call a dresser to come to their home for a small fee.

633 Each town is divided into administrative wards, sometimes called "qäbälē", but almost invariably named after the church located in it. Thus a person will say "I am from Medhanē Aläm" (church of the "Savior of the

606 to be a "good wife", to do "everything right", to learn what her husband likes. If she does not obey her mother-in-law, she is criticized as "rude", and the women say that the groom will "divorce her soon".

423 After the marriage, and especially after she bears children,
596 a wife is regarded as a charter member of her husband's "byet" (lit. house), his family of procreation, continuing his patrilineal kinship unit, regardless of whether they move to residence elsewhere or not. Nevertheless, it is the "byet" that is the landholding unit among most "rest"-owning Amhara, and each biological unit within it receives an allocation of land for usufruct; the limit of one able-bodied plowman is regarded as 5-10 "qada". Thus, the biological family of procreation does not own land, nor does it control it, until, with the death of elders and advancing age, it becomes the "family of orientation" to which a succeeding generation must give obedience.

596 Meanwhile, however, the biological family unit does own the
422 cattle and other mobile goods with which they started their married life, and the increase therefrom. This gives them some partial economic independence.

● [731] When, due to war, epidemics (e.g. malaria), or famine (erosion),
423 a "byet" decides to abandon, for the time being, the ancestral
166 lands, and migrates to another district, it usually huddles to-
361 gether in one or a minimum of residential hamlets, sometimes for several generations, until times are better. Then it buds off so rapidly that soon only a few huts remain on the location of the original hamlet of refuge. Thereupon kinsmen may claim "betäha" rights of usufruct from more distant kinfolk who had remained be-

621 as a means for diesing and strengthening a risteña
869 family's economic and social interests within the parish.
241 There are two conspicuous exceptions. Should a boy bear
• [732] a physical disability so severe that he will be unable
to perform the basic subsistence activities of Amhara
men, particularly plowing, he may be enrolled in the
parish school as a prelude to a non-agricultural career
beyond his natal parish. The alternatives are few.
[463] work as an artisan is appropriate for Muslim and Falasha,
[441] but shameful for an Amhara; while employment as a mer-
[563] chant is less objectionable, the peasant is generally
without the necessary skills, contacts, and capital;
military service is beyond his abilities; thus, only the
Church and government remain. Regarding the Church, the
priesthood is closed to him, since a priest must be phy-
sically whole, and capable of standing unassisted during
[647] the performance of the Mass. The remaining ecclesiasti-
cal and government career choices assume that a boy will
achieve literacy at the parish school and subsequently
*793 depart from his natal community. The second exception
621 to the local focus of the parish school, is the small
869 number of boys who are offspring of debtera-teachers ser-
593 ving in parish churches. The ties of these men to their
parishes-of-residence are usually only professional, and
they are rarely risteñas, it is moreover their profes-
sional ethos which influences them to seek an extensive

*755
*764 application. In a medical context, he is adept in all
*793 but the chirurgeon's domain, and his works are perceived as strong. In addition to therapy, he is an expert diag-
[754] nostician, and giver of prophylaxis. Finally, the debtera's medical powers are perceived as only an aspect of the more general powers he possesses, and which he displays in various non-medical works affecting property, interpersonal relations, and, importantly, the sending of illness.

*756 Reconstructing the Debtera's Biography. Laymen find
*793 confirmation of the putatively necessary ties which bind
• 732 debtera to ganel in the relatively high proportion of physically aberrant debteras. Laymen explain these disabilities as evidence of the mischief played by the capricious ganels on their debtera partners. While debteras constitute only a minute portion of the highland population, they are a highly visible one. Debteras, particularly abinet-practicing ones, tend to live in towns. There, they advertize their presence for the multitudes, during the performance of the Mass, in the churchyard conversing among colleagues, or as a center from which their students circulate on their daily begging. For the layman, the appearance of achondroplastic, pituitary, and tubercular dwarfs, of cripples with shrivelled limbs---all professional confreres and all living within the radius of two or three miles---bears impressive wit-

[illegible] to the ganel-tainted character of the debtera.
*732 The layman simplifies the debtera's career by sup-
*756 posing that most debteras (certainly the abinet-prac-
*793 ticing ones) are former priests, men who broke their priestly vows by committing adultery. Impelled by shame to leave the natal community along a path of increasingly sinful deeds, they are morally spoiled even before becoming debteras. In reality, only a very small proportion of debteras have been recruited this way, for such men are generally ill-suited in age, intellect, and temperament to the lengthy, arduous, and often demeaning apprenticeship required of the debtera. The breaking of priestly vows, is, in addition, a very serious matter, and few men would have the temerity to mock the supernaturals of the Church a second time.

TECHNICAL AND MORAL ASPECTS OF GANEL-DERIVED POWER

*756
*793
*755
77x The layman's distinction between fragmented secular healing powers and the generic power of the debtera is based on the misconception that the complicity of ganels stands behind the awakiy debtera's medical superiority. In reality, the debtera acquires his repertoire of herbal therapies, digans, kifat recipes, and awdunigist texts individually or in small numbers, from fellow practitioners. Further, although the ties between an awakiy

*756
*793

ailments are limited to redefining the sickman's domestic responsibilities, and are traced mainly to a loss of vigor resulting from his malady.

*756 These ailments can be sorted into two catogories.
*793 Included in the first are all maladies whose physical
*753 effects are trivial, and most of those ailments whose effects are acute (whether serious, such as koruba pox, or non-serious, such as catarrh). These ailments are infrequently brought to an awakiy debtera, because either they are susceptible to effective and relatively inexpensive secular therapies, or they run courses too brief for a client to determine whether an awakiy debtera's services are necessary or to arrange for the administration of his therapy. The person who has been restored to health after such ailments returns to the personal and social states he enjoyed prior to the disease episode.

• 734 In the second category are chronic and serious ailments that are characterized by both visible physical destruction and poor prognosis (e.g., leprosy and elephantiasis). The person suffering such an ailment also experiences the progressive constriction of his social field, as the effects of his ailment prevent him from resuming his normal economic and social responsibili-
[936] ties. Where a family's resources are insufficient to maintain non-productive adults, the sickman must leave

* 734 his hamlet to become a mendicant, begging from alms-
[735] [823] [798] givers at the gates of large and famous churches. Even the sickman whose economic circumstances enable him to remain at home may depart, to seek an efficacious tebel spring, once locally available therapies prove ineffective.

*763 Among the ailments of this category, leprosy is
734 considered particularly loathsome. In the abstract, it is associated with a hereditary vector; in practice, the leper's neighbors fear contact with him, and the sickman who remains at home is physically segregated in a hut of
[582] [166] his own, away from other residents of the hamlet. Because marriages are difficult to arrange for the primary relatives of lepers, the son of a leper frequently chooses to move away from the paternal hamlet to some place where his family's affliction is unknown.

*753 The absence of more profound moral consequences for either category of ailment can be explained, first, by the fact that associations existing between the sickman and sanction-wielding supernaturals are unaffected by either illness or cure, since these maladies are linked to non-purposive pathogenic agencies, such as gerifta
* [755] and likift. Further, effective cures are either secular,
* [757] and thus require the therapeutic assistance of no
[778] sanction-wielding supernaturals, or, in the case of tebel therapies, rely on only the socially sanctioned supernaturals of the Church.

888 young, "not-yet-serious" young woman, partly because there is no
792 career involved, as there is in case of young men who become monks. Though there are usually fewer widows than widowers (due to the mortality in connection with childbirth), the lot of a widow is not a happy one. The proverb says:

[539] "Now that my fortune (husband) has died,
what will my mother-in-law give me?"

888 Without the kin group, an aging man, especially if sick, blind
735 or crippled, has little protection. The church is not eager to have
[792] him as a monk, for it can recruit younger men for its service, as a career, and an old man is much less useful in the churchyard than an old woman. He may, especially if landless, or in town, be reduced to beggary. There he sits at the approaches to the churches, repeating his demanding, ceaseless litany: "Selä Medhane Aläm, selä Maryam, selä Giyorgis" (For sake of the Savior, of Mary, of St. George), stretching out an open hand. Sometimes he may send out a child to beg for him, either because he is too bashful, or is using it as a technique. Little boys will thus attach themselves to a potential donor, repeating "babba, babba" (babytalk for "daddy").
[608] They have already learned the concept of artificial kinship to establish human relationships.

4. The End of Life: Eulogy; Memorial Services and Feasts.

763 When an elder is close to death, other elders from among his nearest kin come with his confessor, and say to him: "Confess yourself". When he has done so, they ask him for his last will: "What do you give to your children, and for your soul (i.e. to the church, through the confessor, to the poor)". While fields and cattle are given to the descendants, (the former only in patrilineal descent), personal belongings such as cowhide mats, shamma

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 There are many royal farms belonging to the Prester,
735 in which a great quantity of bread is gathered, which is given to honourable persons, and the poor, and to poor monasteries and churches, without Prester John making any profit of the produce and revenue of these farms, but only alms.

241 In all the country there is much bread, wheat and barley; in other lands there is more millet than wheat or barley, in these, and where wheat and barley, there is much taff and dagusha (seeds not known to us), pulse, beans, pease, and all vegetables; and in other lands all sorts of grain and vegetables in great quantity and abundance. There are
312 many water springs, but no fountains made of stone. In the town of Aquaxumo, where the Queens Saba and Candacia were, there are many wells and tanks made with good masonry.

In the town of Aquaxumo there are images very well
532 made, and figures of lions and dogs, and oxen, and other antiquities made of stone. In this town Queen Candacia became a Christian by the advice of her eunuch, whom St. Philip baptized by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In all this country there is no bridge of stone or of wood;
491 in no part of the kingdoms or lordships of Prester John
[563] are there Jews. There are infinite quantities of sugar canes,
137 and they do not know how to make it; grapes and peaches are ripe in the month of February and end in April: there are many oranges, lemons and citrons, and few pot herbs, because they do not plant them.

136 Animals, namely lions, ounces, tigers, wolves, deer, antas,[1] wild cows, foxes, lynxes,[2] wild boars, porcupines, civet cats, roedeer, gazelles, elephants, and other animals not known to us, of which the country is full, except two which I never saw there, namely bears and rabbits.

Birds, partridges of three kinds, like ours, other fowls

[1] *Anta* is a South American animal. [2] Probably hyænas.

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
271 Food and water, sleep and the night.
155
539

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *ĭnjarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
271 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *ĭnjarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālĭnjarā,* is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the
[176] host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *ṭonin,* is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[12]

574 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
[554] *panem,* if not *circenses.* The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A mān's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *ĭnjarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*sĭḳer*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
152

[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *ĭnjarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

older or more prestigious males are addressed as *gāshē* ("my shield"); the corresponding term for females is *etēyē* ("my sister"). Much older people are addressed by words signifying "father" or "mother." 121* 181 571

It is true that the forms of respect toward superiors are often repeated mechanically and sometimes serve to cover up a distinctly hostile disposition toward certain superiors. They nevertheless do represent to some extent a genuine solidaristic sentiment—perhaps the most profound and influential social sentiment in the Amhara social system. It rests in the last analysis on the fact that the Amhara family develops a pronounced sense of filial devotion as well as habits of filial obedience. Amhara society can dispense with horizontal solidarities and communal attachments because it is held together, sufficiently for traditional purposes, at least, by an infinite network of "father-son" relationships. 576 [554] [593]

The egoistic element in the hierarchical pattern is further modified by a sort of joking relationship that sometimes develops between inferiors and superiors. The harsh interrogation of inferiors at times shades into a sort of wry banter; sons or servants may be called "thief" or "scoundrel" in an undertone of unmistakable affection. At times, moreover, the direction of the jesting may be reversed. Amhara servants are noted for playing practical jokes on their masters, which the latter usually appreciate when the jests are clever.[21] Here again, wax and gold is the perfect medium—for expressing aggression against a superior while at the same time appearing to maintain the respect relationship. The following couplet, attributed to Naggādrās Tassamā Eshatē, aptly illustrates this genre: 121* 181 571 522

Ennānta maḳuānnentotch ba-mīn waṭ balātchu?
Eññām ba-shurwātchen ennāntam bāssātchu.

What sauce, my lords, was on your plate?
We had but peas; 'twas fish you ate.[22]

[539]

Here the poet appears to be complimenting the nobles on their more elegant cuisine at a banquet; but there is a pun on the word *bāssātchu,* literally "with your fish," for it may also be taken to mean "you took more than your share."

Within the hierarchical pattern, finally, one finds expressed a certain amount of generosity which, as we have suggested, is relatively uncommon in relations among peers. This appears in connection with the *begging* and *almsgiving* which occur in many sectors of Amhara society. For church students beyond the elementary level, begging is the primary means of livelihood. Youths who have left home to study *zēmā* or *qenē* with a master wander about today, as in former times, carrying small baskets and pleading: "For the sake of Mary! For the sake of God!" in order to get their daily morsels. The activity is so organized that when a large number of students 121* 181 571 735

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 live near the same master, they divide up the neighboring countryside to
571 avoid duplication in their begging.
181 The ordained clergy are themselves given to begging, for items ranging
• 735 from contributions to the local church to petty personal effects. High-ranking
[193] visitors to their locale are customarily made the objects of such solicitations.
[533] Another type of begging is practiced by the minstrels who wander about the country with their one-stringed fiddles and fecund wit, coaxing contributions from any audience they can capture. In addition to these there are numerous professional beggars—the maimed, the diseased, and the poverty-stricken—who attach themselves to a well-attended church or monastery if they are unable to travel. The *lālibalā* is a notable type within this category of mendicants.[23]

[527] In addition to honoring the periodic appeals of beggars, "big men" are supposed to provide yearly feasts (*gĭber*) at which beggars of all the above descriptions are fed. In all these instances, the solicitation and bestowal of charity contributes a solidaristic element to the network of personal relations among the Amhara.

*121 The foregoing analysis of forms of interaction among the Amhara has
181 been undertaken in order to gain material for generalizing about a psycho-
156 logical disposition. Our unspoken, tautological assumption has been that the
571 ways in which individuals typically relate to social objects (i.e., other persons and collectivities) represent the sociologically relevant aspects of their psychology. Egoism and solidarism have been used here as concepts for depicting one dimension of "social character," using this term in the specific sense of comprising those aspects of personality which are both socially shared and constitutive of those actions that are oriented to social objects. We may now attempt to summarize the preceding discussion with the following definition of Amhara social character as it relates to the concept of individualism: The Amhara is primarily disposed to structure interaction in terms of self-assertion, dissension, and distrust, and to be indifferent to the concept of civil community. At the same time this egoistic orientation is blended with a warm and kindly sense of sociability, an occasional mood of generosity, and a refined sensibility regarding differences in status and the readiness to pay deference accordingly.

INDEPENDENCE VERSUS CONSTRAINT

*121 In the previous section we considered the nature of the individual's orientation toward others and toward collectivities in Amhara society. Our question now is the converse: what order of demands is made upon individuals by the institutions of that society? Specifically, we shall be concerned primarily with the degree to which the norms which govern institutional roles are

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 794 795 are left free to a large extent. Since every day of the month except the thirtieth is sanctified by dedication to some saint, Mass must be performed virtually *121 79 every day, a norm which is actually fulfilled by churches which have a numerous clergy. The burden for individual clergymen is kept small by a system of rotation. The average parish church will have services perhaps ten to fifteen times a month, which is still too often for heavy popular attendance. Even on Sundays and the most important holidays, when the laity are expected to attend, their participation is excused by other considerations. Those who have eaten earlier in the day, who have had sexual relations the night before, or who are harboring a grudge in their "stomach" are not even supposed to come to church. If they do come, they sit outside the wall chatting with one another while the Mass is performed inside.

*121 794 795 783 Customs concerning Communion and Confession likewise give the individual a wide range of freedom. Partaking of the Communion is not required of anyone; the experience simply is available to those who are ritually pure (children, and those who have married by the *querbān*), if they are so inclined. Confession is not mandatory, but according to personal inclination. Every man has the right to choose his own personal confessor or "soul-father," though if satisfied with the one of his father, he may retain him. (A woman adopts the confessor of her husband.) The soul-father's advice may be sought when a problem arises. If a man sins—breaks the fast, works on a holiday, commits theft or murder—he is supposed to confess. If he chooses to do so, the soul-father will prescribe a certain penance—fasting an extra amount, sleeping on the floor for a period, giving something to the poor or to the church. But the initiative is entirely up to the sinner and probably more often than not he keeps the offense to himself. The proportion of Amhara who keep every fast strictly, go to church a few times a month, and confess their transgressions to the soul-father is small; in the estimate of one Amhara informant, less than five per cent.

*121 794 575 Still greater permissiveness may be observed in connection with the religious fraternal associations known as the *māhebar*. The *māhebar* consists of a group of people from the same general area, usually of the same sex, who meet once a month on the day devoted to the saint for whom the association is named. The place of meeting rotates among the homes of the members, and the soul-father of the host is always present to bless the occasion. The meetings consist of much eating, drinking, and conviviality. Membership in a *māhebar* is purely voluntary, and the individual who wishes to join one usually has a choice among several in a given area.*

For the Amhara laity, then, a few burdensome ritual and fiscal constraints

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[735] * There is a variant of the *māhebar* known as the *senbatī*, whose members take turns in providing food for the clergy and poor folk on Sundays.

*793 869 876 criteria. His personal interest means to the student rapid advancement through the curriculum, dining at the master's table, and enjoying privileged information of a non-ecclesiastical nature. Without his patronship, a student is committed to years of uncertainty and physical misery, scraping to meet his subsistence needs, paying his "tuition" in demeaning services, such as gathering the master's wood and tilling his garden, and in deferential performances, particularly washing the master's feet and those of his visitors.

*793 869 The kiyne student is further troubled by the many ailments which are his lot. He lives, with one or two [342] of his mates, in a wretched lean-to of twigs and wild grasses, which proves to be poor protection against the [291] [525] cold winter rains. Often he owns only the toga on his back, and it, like him, remains unwashed for the dura- [164] tion of the long dry season. Thus, ikek (scrofula) becomes his badge, and kurtimat (joint pains) and weba [262] (fever) his recurrent companions. The student's diet *[192] is his special concern, since it conspicuously lacks the combination of wholesome wot (stew) and injera (pancake- [735] [164] like bread) necessary to sustain good health. He obtains most of his food by begging in the town and local hamlets, where he generally receives scraps of stale injera bread, always inadequate and potentially pathogenic (i.e., likift bearing, threatening fever and

severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based ingredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat. His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals, and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain (kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint (night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the context of the student's nocturnal activities.

There is also danger from animals, the vicious and often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs; from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for nocturnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the exception of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's patronage, or who receive parental support, the young scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure, kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for

*793 869 222 five weeks before it is ready to be woven into a tsifit, a food hamper and table around which the Amhara meal is eaten. Because the students cannot afford so long a hiatus from their studies, the grasses are dried only a week or so, in order to lighten them for the trip back [735] to the highlands. During their stay in the lowlands, the students support themselves by begging food from local farmers. Enterprising students often gather twice the amount of gramta they can carry, leaving the surplus to be taken up to the highlands in January.

*793 869 The gramta is brought to the student's hut at the kiyne school for storage and drying. Although the stu- [442] dents are anxious to sell immediately upon drying, both price and demand are low then, since the weavers, peasant [286] women, have no leisure for tsifit making until March. In *[192] the meanwhile, the student makes either traditional umbrellas of gramta for sale at the regional market, or seleyen, shrouds which he sells in the churchyard to mourners.

[434] Students also beg crops, a portion of which they consume and the remainder of which is sold at market. For a four week period, during October and November, the student begs a traditional double handful of pulses from farmers. During a two to three month period from February to April, students beg cereals and other crops (especially, cayenne). Because the amounts of produce

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obtained are often considerable (100 kilos and more), arrangements must be made for obtaining a donkey.

[735] However great his needs may be, a student cannot
[442] expect to participate in all of these activities, since this would leave insufficient time for his kiyne studies. However, gramta gathering and pulse begging are sometimes both engaged in during a single year.

Thus, the young debtera student finds himself transported from the benign enviornment of his natal parish to one in which only self-reliance and resourcefulness can secure his chosen goals and maintain his physical well-being. Ultimately, he must make a bitter choice
[442] between professional and material satisfaction. The
[735] profits from gramta sales, and the foodstuffs he has begged would much ameliorate his misery. Yet, in spite of his pressing subsistence requirements, the student sets aside only a minor portion of his profits for these needs. He exchanges most of these goods for money, which he retains as a fluid and durable capital with which to purchase necessary professional articles (mainly books) and to support his future commercial ventures. During the years of his kiyne studies, his assets accumulate at the rate of perhaps E$25. per annum.[25]

[25] A significant sum where per capita gross national product is E$116. (EAS:134); E$1.=U.S.$0.40.

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*756 228
*793 example of ganel calling.

*756 The Ecclesiastical Identity. While the secular
*793 healer is indistinguishable from other peasants, the debtera is conspicuous by his ecclesiastical identity, with his distinctive dress, liturgical performances at the Mass, and conversational presence in the churchyard.

*756 The memher teacher of kiyne is most visible of all deb-
*793 teras, not so much by his appearance as through all the
875 activities of his ubiquitous students. The services of these students are generally indispensible to establishing, and often maintaining, public recognition of the
[735] debtera's cliams to the "awakiy" title. These students depend on the charity of local folk for much of their sustenance. In order to avoid over-exploiting the generosity of one area, or neglecting another, the students customarily devise a circuit composed of town wards and surrounding hamlets, through which they systematically beg, in pairs of gwadoñas. Their visits, weighted in favor of the more affluent folk, serve the debtera memher's abinet practice in two ways. First, they advertise the debtera's presence and communicate information about his abinet services. Laymen are generally reluctant to approach a debtera directly, until learning whether he is capable of providing desired services and is also willing to do so. By posing questions to the mendicant students, the debtera's public obtains infor-

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ailments are limited to redefining the sickman's domestic responsibilities, and are traced mainly to a loss of vigor resulting from his malady.

*756 These ailments can be sorted into two catogories.
*793 Included in the first are all maladies whose physical
*763 effects are trivial, and most of those ailments whose effects are acute (whether serious, such as koruba pox, or non-serious, such as catarrh). These ailments are infrequently brought to an awakiy debtera, because either they are susceptible to effective and relatively inexpensive secular therapies, or they run courses too brief for a client to determine whether an awakiy debtera's services are necessary or to arrange for the administration of his therapy. The person who has been restored to health after such ailments returns to the personal and social states he enjoyed prior to the disease episode.

734 In the second category are chronic and serious ailments that are characterized by both visible physical destruction and poor prognosis (e.g., leprosy and elephantiasis). The person suffering such an ailment also experiences the progressive constriction of his social field, as the affects of his ailment prevent him from resuming his normal economic and social responsibili-
[735] ties. Where a family's resources are insufficient to maintain non-productive adults, the sickman must leave

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9 [735] his hamlet to become a mendicant, begging from alms-
[823] givers at the gates of large and famous churches. Even
[778] the sickman whose economic circumstances enable him to remain at home may depart, to seek an efficacious tebel spring, once locally available therapies prove ineffective.

*753 Among the ailments of this category, leprosy is
734 considered particularly loathsome. In the abstract, it is associated with a hereditary vector; in practice, the leper's neighbors fear contact with him, and the sickman who remains at home is physically segregated in a hut of
[582] his own, away from other residents of the hamlet. Be-
[166] cause marriages are difficult to arrange for the primary relatives of lepers, the son of a leper frequently chooses to move away from the paternal hamlet to some place where his family's affliction is unknown.

*753 The absence of more profound moral consequences for either category of ailment can be explained, first, by the fact that associations existing between the sickman and sanction-wielding supernaturals are unaffected by either illness or cure, since these maladies are linked to non-purposive pathogenic agencies, such as gerifta
* [755] and likift. Further, effective cures are either secular,
* [757] and thus require the therapeutic assistance of no
[778] sanction-wielding supernaturals, or, in the case of tebel therapies, rely on only the socially sanctioned supernaturals of the Church.

164 in their *Voyage en Abyssinie*:

> "vers la fin de la saison des pluies, l'atmosphère humide, la terre détrempée et féconde en miasme pernicieux, font du pays un séjour funeste . . . " (Tigre and Lake Tsana).
>
> (Toward the end of the rainy season, the humid atmosphere and the soil, which is soaked and productive of a pernicious miasma, turn the country into a fatal region.)

Blanc (1869) states that Massawa is almost uninhabitable because of malaria, and that this is true, too, of the narrow, densely wooded and damp river valleys in the interior of the country. He gives the T'akazze Valley a particularly bad reputation. It was known before the arrival of the Italians that most places below an elevation of 6,000 feet, especially river valleys, were likely to be malarious.

164 742 The Italians were primarily interested in settling a large group of small farmers in Ethiopia. It was, therefore, of paramount interest to them to find places where malaria would not interfere with agricultural development. A number of surveys were undertaken by first rate Italian malariologists beginning with the investigation by Lega, Raffaele and Canalis in 1936, which covered the Asmara-Addis Ababa road, the railway line from Addis Ababa to Diredawa, and parts of Italian Somaliland. In the following years intensive malarial surveys were made. Through the Malaria Institute "E. Marchiafava" in Rome, research centers were set up in Agordat and Diredawa. Much of the work was carried out under the leadership of Corradetti, who personally covered large parts of northern and northeastern Ethiopia. The British malariologist, Bagster Wilson, has recently published the results of his experiences in Ethiopia.

164 Summing up, it may be said that below 3,000 feet, near permanent collections of water, malaria is endemic. It becomes epidemic during the rainy seasons: the "big" rains from July to October, and the "small" rains in February and March. In the semi-

[p. 713 B]

164 the country at the moment. It should, however, be kept in mind, that with the opening of communication lines and increased traffic and travel, leprosy must be controlled, otherwise it will increase.

Typhus Fever

Typhus fever is known to occur in at least three forms. Classical louse-borne typhus is endemic on the high plateau. Major Ecke of the American Typhus Commission visited Ethiopia in 1944 and found that, while the occurrence of murine typhus has not been scientifically proved, it is extremely likely that this form plays an important rôle. Recently a number of cases of tick typhus have been reported from southern Ethiopia.

The Central Laboratory in Addis Ababa
164 has isolated four local strains of rickettsia.
● 742 One of these has been constantly orchitic for 52 passages through guinea-pigs, while the other three were non-orchitic.

Cases fall clinically in two main groups.
164 One has a fulminant course with a very high mortality; the other is extremely mild. The high mortality among Italian laborers in the early days of the occupation (sometimes reaching 20 percent) was no doubt due to louse-borne typhus. Fatality in hospitals in Addis Ababa ranged from five to thirty-five percent. Typhus occurs in Ethiopia in the cold, wet months of July, August and September. Surveys have shown that lousiness is almost universal.

During the Italian occupation a large
751 scale vaccination campaign with Weigl vaccine was undertaken. This vaccine has recently been replaced by American vaccine, and large scale vaccination has been carried out since 1945.

Relapsing Fever

164 In 1868, relapsing fever broke out in India and Hirsch (1886) states that it may have been introduced by Napier's soldiers returning from Ethiopia. The disease is no doubt old in Africa, where it occurs in both louse-borne and tick-borne forms.

[p.717A]

633 the old Portuguese-type castles, even then in ruins.

[34] The new mosque, built through Italian encouragement during the occupation, overshadows both the big market and the old Muslim "ghetto" with the old mosque, at lower elevation.

583 The local Muslim "Qadi", ecclesiastical Muslim judge,
624 regarded as their provincial temporal chief, calls on the governor-general every Tuesday. Most Muslims have not moved far from their old section, partly because it is near the big market which is their economic as well as social gathering place, partly because they, almost as much as the ethnic artisans, wish to avoid insults, mockery, and quarrels with young members of the dominant majority.

759 In addition to being a center of public announce-
743 ments, and the table of the judge for petty crimes, the market now also serves as center for the activities of modern "dressers". These medical auxiliaries set up their tables under one of the shady trees, their bottles, hypodermic needles, cotton wool, etc., clearly visible, with chairs for several patients, set apart by an enclosure of barbed wire. When an epidemic threatens, and

[73] during and after it (e.g. typhus or spotted fever), the public can obtain free injections there, or call a dresser to come to their home for a small fee.

683 Each town is divided into administrative wards, sometimes called "qābālē", but almost invariably named after the church located in it. Thus a person will say "I am from Medhanē Ālem" (church of the "Savior of the

178 757 This attitude is of course deplored by the Western physicians who know of it. But modern medical treatment is still little available outside the major towns. Patients come to hospitals often only as a last resort, fearing to be separated from kinfolk and exposed to treatment by strangers, so that mortality in hospitals is high, which reinforces the fears. At present there are probably no more than 50 hospitals in all Ethiopia, and only a few hundred Western physicians. Both are heavily concentrated in Addis Ababa, so that the field of the "woggesha" has not shrunk at all.

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164 B. Common Ailments and their Treatment.

757 756 755 The more common ailments and procedures followed by the "woggesha" and "dabtara", (practitioners who occasionally overlap in specialties but almost never in treatment), include the following (see next page):

175 Ucciali. A wave of patriotism swept the country and armies were gathered to meet the Italian invasion. On March 1, the Italians were practically annihilated by a vastly superior Ethiopian Army.

Ethiopia had been put on the map.
177 Ménelik was interested in getting foreign help in a number of technical fields, and among the many technical experts traveling in the country during the next twenty years there were also a goodly number of physicians. The different diplomatic missions in the new capital, Addis Ababa, often had their own physicians and with Russian assistance the Emperor founded the first small hospital in the capital. Among the medical writers of this period were Chabaneix (1901), the well-known British medical historian, Charles Singer (1905), who traveled through southwestern Ethiopia to Addis Ababa in 1904, and the French Railway physician, Doreau (1909).

Mission societies sent medical mission-
797 aries to Ethiopia during the following years,
● 743 and French and Greek physicians, particularly, settled more and more in the capital and in Dire-Dawa, the French railroad town on the Addis-Ababa-Jibuti line. The French Government opened a hospital in Harar and the Italian Government at first kept a clinic in Addis Ababa which, in the early thirties, was enlarged to "The Italian Hospital." Ras Tafari, who had governed as a regent, with Menelik's widow, Zauditu, as Empress, was crowned Emperor in 1930, under the name Haile Selassie I. During his reign Ethiopia slowly has been emerging as a modern state. He early realized that the health of his people was of vital importance for the future of the country. In 1924, he founded the Beit Saida Hospital, which he entrusted to the Swed-

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797 ish surgeon, Kurt Hanner. In 1927, the American Presbyterian Mission opened a
743 100-bed hospital at Gullale on the outskirts of the capital. This hospital was staffed with American Mission doctors. In 1934 the "Zauditu Memorial Hospital" was founded by the Government. This hospital was run by the Seventh-Day Adventists chiefly as a maternity hospital. Helped by the American Society for Lepers, the Sudan Interior Mission and the Ethiopian Government, in 1934, founded a leprosarium at Akaki, near Addis Ababa. In
[874] 1935, the beginning of a school for "Medical Assistants" was set up in the Menelik Lycee, but this work was interrupted by the war. In the interior of Ethiopia medicine had also progressed. There were a number of mission hospitals, of which the most important were the Swedish Mission Hospital (Tafari Makonnen) in Harar and another Swedish Mission Hospital in Lekemti. The French Railroad had its own hospital in Diredawa.

744 Public health work was still very primitive. A public health committee, consisting of three physicians and a pharmacist, had been set up in Addis Ababa as the "Commission de l'Hygiène Publique." This com-

[p. 711a]

10: Barkhuus D-5 (1944-1945) 1947 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Typical huts for lepers at the Akaki Leprosarium near Addis Ababa.

[p. 711a]

744 during the Italian occupation, 1936 to 1941. The first year of the "conquest" was considered "a period of orientation and preparation." Demobilization of the Italian military sanitary service was carried out, while the civilian organization had not as yet been completed.

In the whole of East Africa, the Italians
743 had a medical staff of approximately 1,000 men. The provinces comprising Italian East Africa were: (1) Eritrea somewhat larger than before, (2) Somalia, (3) Shoa, (4) Harar, (5) Amara, and (6) Galla and Sidamo. The Italians had the problem of making the country safe for their own people. A large number of hospitals, dispensaries and mobile sanitary units were set up. The plan called for a large (at least 600 beds) regional hospital in each of the six regions. None of the regional hospitals in Ethiopia were finished, but some, like the one in the Galla Sidamo region (Jimma), were already partly in use at the time of the Italian defeat. The Italians have made much capital out of the "civilizing effort in the field of medicine." It is true that the figures for treatment of sick persons supplied by Italian medical authorities, indicate a great deal of interest in the native population. This interest must, however, be taken with a grain of salt on the basis of actual findings on the spot. For example, it is indicated almost constantly that a very much larger number of natives received hospital treatment than did Italians. When the U. S. Technical Project examined the hospital in Jimma, it was, however, discovered that, while a grandiose hospital had been under development for the Italians, no real hospital existed for the Ethiopians, apart from some temporary, insanitary buildings. These barracks carried a magnificent name and figured with a large number of beds for natives in the Italian reports, but the obvious fact was that essentially nothing had been done for the native population.

114 Much nosological work was prepared by the Italians in the different regions of

[p. 712 A]

164 was highest with 72 percent, followed by Addis Ababa with 52 percent. The actual number of persons tested is not known, but it was at least several thousand.

Unfortunately, there can be no doubt that pulmonary tuberculosis here, as elsewhere in Africa, is on the increase. The opening up of the country, the movement of the population during the war, and the arrival of many Europeans without proper health examination has furthered this increase, which will continue with the beginning of industrialization in the urban regions unless far-reaching measures are taken at a very early time.

The U. S. Technical Project had opportunity to observe numerous cases of open pulmonary tuberculosis, not only in the larger towns, but also in remote villages. So far there are no facilities for dealing with these sources of danger to the community. Left to itself, tuberculosis is likely to become the most important health problem in Ethiopia within the next decade.

Leprosy

Leprosy is an old disease in Ethiopia. It is mentioned by almost all the early writers. Rueppell (1840) saw it in Gondar; Rochet (1841) describes it as due to the climate; Aubert-Roche (1845-46) found it extremely common in Ethiopia; and Kirk (1843) treated 23 lepers in Ancober in 1842. Finding a number of lepers at Lake Tsana, Blanc (1869) revived the old "fish theory."

The exact number of lepers present in Ethiopia today is difficult to estimate, but is likely to run into several thousands. There is a leprosy camp in Harar with about 150 lepers, and it is likely that there are about as many left in Harar town. Addis Ababa has about 300 lepers under treatment in a leprosarium, and another 200 living in a community on the outskirts of the city. No satisfactory control, however, is possible at the moment. Most of the leprosy seen is of the nodular and mixed form, but macular-anaesthetic cases are not rare. Leprosy does not endanger

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*767 • 743 177 A government hospital, located on the edge of Gondar provides the most important non-traditional therapies. Most townsfolk regard hospital therapy with considerable apprehension, because of its strangeness and of numerous apochryphal tales describing its thera-
*757 177 178 pies. Nevertheless, the Amhara does not dispute the power of Western medicine, at least regarding some ailments. This respect is largely explained by the demonstrated successes of Western medicine, and the fact that, operationally, it coincides with certain traditional no-
*[192] tions of what powerful therpies should be like. In particular, the violent introjective mode associated with the most commonly experienced of hospital therapies, merify (injection), is regarded as consistent with notions of strong therapies. Moreover, the practitioner of Western medicine, like powerful traditional healers, is characterized by a general mastery over an extensive disease domain, through abstruse sources of power. Western therapy is not in general well integrated into traditional medical beliefs, but tends to be considered mainly from a pragmatic perspective. Thus, hospital therapy is a likely choice for ailments against which it has repeatedly demonstrated successful cures and against which traditional healers are predictably less successful. Conspicuous here are abscesses, ulcerations, and other superficial but potentially serious infections,

515 may last 9 months, there is very little bathing, and only hands are washed, in muddy water brought from the river or
514 brook, before and after meals. There are no latrine ditches. Feces are deposited behind thorny bushes 1/4 mile from the hamlet at most, while urination at night proceeds within the hamlet. This practice is followed even in towns and in Addis Ababa. Fortunately the strong sun carbonizes the feces in the dry season, and the strong rain in that season sweeps it away. There is no caste of sweepers, and no attention is paid to human or animal feces, except for the manure of oxen and cows. The latter is hand-pressed into cakes and used as fuel.

364 Hyenas, jackals and vultures are not interfered
825 with, as their services in removing carcasses of animal origin are well appreciated.

165 Abundant sunlight during 9 months of the year, coupled with the scanty clothing of small children, probably gives them their best chance of survival in addition to the long breast-feeding. Nevertheless infant mortality is very high, and in an average family half the babies born die before reaching the age of 5.

164 Flea infestation of humans can be described as
136 complete. This opens the way to flea-born typhus, especially on the highland plateau. Lice are somewhat less general, since they are not regarded by the Amhara as inevitable as fleas. Thus, an Amhara whose hair is infected
136 with lice (e.g. during a stay in prisons which are always
164 lice-infected), he may shave his hair. But louse-born re-
744 lapsing fever epidemics recur from time to time, and the

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164 government has now made free injections available at "big
[544] markets" of provincial towns. Bedbugs are also prevalent, of the bloodsucking variety. They are considered a nussance by the Amhara, but all that is done is to air the "alga" bed in the sunlight, which merely reduces the infestation temporarily. Flies are also abundant and very aggressive, so that a flyswitch ("cher") is kept in motion for comfort. Contagious diseases spread readily. Just after each rainy season, malarial mosquitoes have caused epidemics up to levels of 5,000 feet, on the shore of overflowing lakes and rivers.

511 In the majority of cases, some livestock is taken
[23] into the living hut (tuqul) everynight. The tuqul has, of course, an unwashable mud floor, no windows or chimney, soot-blackened ceiling, cobwebs in corners. There is no change of clothing at night, merely an added "kutta" or sheepskin, against the cold. Aside from drinking cups, there are no individual utensils.

164 Towns, including provincial towns, are centers for
[548] the spread of syphilis and other venereal diseases, due to the existence of entire streets of "women in-between mar-
[759] riages" who act as restauranteurs-prostitutes. When surface lesions appear, the native "wogasha" is consulted; or since the Italian invasion made the "needle" popular, the modern government medical personnel is approached. But patients usually cease to continue treatment when surface lesions disappear.[67]

Eating "brundo", raw beef, at feasts, almost always leads to tapeworm and other taenia infestation. Fortunately

67. Guthe, Th: Venerial Disease in Ethiopia. W.H.O.Bulletin, Vol.2, 1949, pp. 85-138.

797 ish surgeon, Kurt Hanner. In 1927, the American Presbyterian Mission opened a
743 100-bed hospital at Gullale on the outskirts of the capital. This hospital was staffed with American Mission doctors. In 1934 the "Zauditu Memorial Hospital" was founded by the Government. This hospital was run by the Seventh-Day Adventists chiefly as a maternity hospital. Helped by the American Society for Lepers, the Sudan Interior Mission and the Ethiopian Government, in 1934, founded a leprosarium at Akaki, near Addis Ababa. In
[874] 1935, the beginning of a school for "Medical Assistants" was set up in the Menelik Lycee, but this work was interrupted by the war. In the interior of Ethiopia medicine had also progressed. There were a number of mission hospitals, of which the most important were the Swedish Mission Hospital (Tafari Makonnen) in Harar and another Swedish Mission Hospital in Lekemti. The French Railroad had its own hospital in Diredawa.

Public health work was still very primi-
● 744 tive. A public health committee, consisting of three physicians and a pharmacist, had been set up in Addis Ababa as the "Commission de l'Hygiène Publique." This com-

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744 mittee was presided over by the Minister of the Interior and a number of public health laws had been issued.

It will thus be seen that in the short period of his reign from 1930 to 1935, when the Italo-Ethiopian War broke out, Emperor Haile Selassie I had achieved considerable improvement in the medical situation. It has often been stated by Italian writers that Ethiopia had no medical facilities whatsoever. Comparisons are constantly being made with what Italy had to offer its citizens in the medical field, not with what was offered at this period to Africans in the surrounding countries.

During the Italo-Ethiopian War, medical services in Ethiopia were found totally inadequate to help the country in its defense. An appeal went out through the International Red Cross, and a large number of countries contributed Red Cross ambulances with medical staffs to Ethiopia. Foremost among these were Great Britain, Holland, Sweden and Norway. After the defeat of the Ethiopian forces, most of this foreign personnel had to leave and the Italians set up a new medical organization.

It is not necessary to discuss here in any detail the medical services in Ethiopia

[p.711b]

744 during the Italian occupation, 1936 to 1941. The first year of the "conquest" was considered "a period of orientation and preparation." Demobilization of the Italian military sanitary service was carried out, while the civilian organization had not as yet been completed.

743 In the whole of East Africa, the Italians had a medical staff of approximately 1,000 men. The provinces comprising Italian East Africa were: (1) Eritrea somewhat larger than before, (2) Somalia, (3) Shoa, (4) Harar, (5) Amara, and (6) Galla and Sidamo. The Italians had the problem of making the country safe for their own people. A large number of hospitals, dispensaries and mobile sanitary units were set up. The plan called for a large (at least 600 beds) regional hospital in each of the six regions. None of the regional hospitals in Ethiopia were finished, but some, like the one in the Galla Sidamo region (Jimma), were already partly in use at the time of the Italian defeat. The Italians have made much capital out of the "civilizing effort in the field of medicine." It is true that the figures for treatment of sick persons supplied by Italian medical authorities, indicate a great deal of interest in the native population. This interest must, however, be taken with a grain of salt on the basis of actual findings on the spot. For example, it is indicated almost constantly that a very much larger number of natives received hospital treatment than did Italians. When the U. S. Technical Project examined the hospital in Jimma, it was, however, discovered that, while a grandiose hospital had been under development for the Italians, no real hospital existed for the Ethiopians, apart from some temporary, insanitary buildings. These barracks carried a magnificent name and figured with a large number of beds for natives in the Italian reports, but the obvious fact was that essentially nothing had been done for the native population.

114 Much nosological work was prepared by the Italians in the different regions of

[p. 712 A]

114 Ethiopia. Eritrea and especially Italian Somaliland had been used by the School of Tropical Medicine in Bologna as a study ground, and to this was now added the much more varied and interesting field of Ethiopian nosography. The Italian studies, amounting to over 500, have been carefully analyzed by the U. S. Technical Project in Ethiopia. With few exceptions, especially in the field of malariology, the Italian work was careless, inexact, with a tendency to unwarranted generalizations.

While a number of excellent Italian physicians worked in East Africa, it would seem that, on the whole, publication was not encouraged unless it would further the Fascist cause. It would thus not be justified to judge Italian medical work here solely on the writings of the more politically minded party members. It does, however, remain a fact that, considering the very large group of medical men who worked in Ethiopia for over five years, we have precious little exact medical information about this country.

744 759 Today, the medical services of Ethiopia are being reorganized. The Government is attempting to obtain the necessary medical personnel, build hospitals and carry out public health programs. It is still too early to judge any achievements. The problems are many and the Ethiopian Government is handicapped through the complete lack of native Ethiopian physicians. Such physicians will not be available for at least another decade.

114 During and after World War II, military authorities had reason to take an interest in Ethiopian nosography and a number of articles were published in this field; prominent among these was Manson-Bahr's "The Prevalent Diseases of Italian East Africa" (1941). The U. S. Technical Project had opportunity to make a number of its own studies and much of the following information is based on this work.

164 If one may speak of social diseases in the sense of diseases of immediate impor-

[p. 712B]

164 The epidemiology of diphtheria in Africa is still little known. Schick tests have shown high immunity among Ethiopian children, but the occurrence of cases of clinical diphtheria in the native population is unknown.

Every year rabies has claimed a large number of Ethiopians. Until 1927 no treatment was available nearer than Cairo. [744] Since then, treatment has been given in Addis Ababa. The number of rabid dogs in Ethiopia is very large, but little is known of the number of persons bitten outside the capital. It is estimated that approximately 100 persons receive treatment in Addis Ababa every month.

Dengue is common in the northern part of the Harar plateau. It was found quite commonly among Italians at Diredawa and I can remember several fellow travelers coming down with this disease after a night spent in that town. Some control has been attempted since 1943, but until a health service is organized, effective control will not be possible.

Disease terms in Amharic:

164 192 A number of diseases have clear terms in the Amharic language. Of the venereal diseases, syphilis is referred to as *kitigne* in its early form while later manifestations are called *worde*. The rheumatic pains, *kurtemaat*, so frequently complained of, are often syphilitic. Gonorrhoea is generally called *chapto* (actually to squeeze, or it squeezes me). The word for malaria is *wobah* (r). *Nidad* (i.e., it caught fire) is also used, but may be used for several types of fever. Relapsing fever is called *mitch* and is generally differentiated by the population from typhus fever which is called *tessibo*. Smallpox is called *fantata* and chicken-pox is recognized as a distinct disease called *kuffin*. Diarrhoea is called *tekmat*, which literally means "what makes to sit down." In asking a patient whether he has fever, the word *tekusat* is used. The patient with fever will generally have put a band dipped in cold water around his head.

[A723B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 been employed as a medium for promulgating new ideas or discussing con-
121 temporary problems. Another feature of Amhara culture that helps to account
178 for the mental inertia of the peasantry is its emphasis on the value of def-
181 erence and obedience to authority. The Amhara typically rely on legitimate
[212] authority figures to define appropriate responses to new situations, and regard
[577] the delegation of powers as a diminution of the status of such authorities. The peasant has thus refrained from initiating changes in the public domain because the prerogative of taking initiative is generally reserved to ecclesiastical and political authorities.

*565 *Receptivity to Change*

121 Consideration of the peasant's readiness to follow the lead of legitimate
177 authorities already points to an inadequacy of the second stereotype we have
178 mentioned: that which sees the peasant as hopelessly ignorant and backward, hence intractable from the viewpoint of a program of modernization. For while the Amhara peasant is likely to resist the efforts of some unknown official from Addis Ababa to introduce change in his local environment, he does tend to follow the directives and imitate the example of the local authorities whom he knows and who shape the course of decisions and sanctions at the
[137] local level. Thus it is, for example, that the eucalyptus tree—imported by Emperor Menelik, taken to the provinces by nobles, and eventually planted by individual peasants—has come to dot the Amhara countryside. How quickly such change can take place is shown by the recent acceptance of photography in many provincial regions. In 1950, peasants in many Amhara areas strenuously objected to having their pictures taken, in part at least for fear of the camera as bearer of the evil eye. By 1960, visitors to some of these same areas were being deluged with requests for photographs. In the interim these peasants had been exposed to numerous photographs of the Emperor and high government officials and had observed their local authorities seizing every chance they could to be photographed.

Yet it is clear that the Amhara peasant will not imitate everything that is accepted by his traditional authorities. When a new custom strikes him as too outlandish his resistance can become adamant, as was abundantly demonstrated when the court of Susneyos carried out its ill-fated conversion to Catholicism. In analyzing the peasant's receptivity to change it is important to distinguish as independent variables: (1) the degree of acceptability of the *agents* of change, and (2) the extent to which the proposed change is congruent with traditional beliefs and values.

The whole question of the nature of peasant opposition and receptivity to modernizing programs may be discussed most realistically by focusing on
[744] a concrete area of attempted change. The material I have assembled is most detailed for the case of public health, an area to which the government has

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

paid increased attention in recent years. A new phase of public health endeavor in this decade was marked by the imposition of a nationwide health tax in 1960.

Health has become a prime objective in Ethiopia's modernization program because of a growing realization that the wide prevalence of malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, intestinal parasites, syphilis, trachoma, leprosy, and other diseases continues to sap the vitality of the nation's productive forces and to visit misery on countless peasant families. The public health forces in Ethiopia (Ministry of Public Health, WHO mission, and AID Public Health Division) have long understood that Ethiopia's health needs cannot be met by piecemeal therapy. They have undertaken a program of preventive measures by preparing public health teams in the medical college at Gondar. The college trains health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians within a common framework, so that when they go into the field they will understand each other's tasks from the start. The first public health center employing such a team was opened in the late fifties; Ethiopia's Second Five-Year Plan envisions one such center for every fifty thousand people by 1967.

The objective of these public health workers is to transmit a number of instructions—concerning personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, early care for illness, and isolation of contagious diseases—which are at variance with customary beliefs and practices. Experience with comparable programs elsewhere suggests that the success of such health teams is by no means assured.[18] What are the forces working for and against the acceptance of these new instructions by the Amhara peasantry? Both negative and positive factors may be identified with respect to each of the three general categories previously referred to: the general outlook regarding change; attitudes toward the agents of change; and degree of compatibility between the new cultural items and the old.

The Amhara peasant's general resistance to change may be presumed operative here as elsewhere, particularly since health practices are often associated with religious beliefs and sentiments. Defense of indigenous therapies has in fact become a significant channel for the expression of traditionalist sentiment, a channel that has even been utilized on occasion in the Addis Ababa newspapers.[19] And a general posture of resistance to changes in the field of health is supported by the interests of traditional practitioners, *dabtarā* and *ṭanqudy*, who are in danger of losing clientele if modern-trained health workers come to win their allegiance.

Counter to this conservative drag, on the other hand, is the peasant's powerful desire for one basic change in his life circumstances, namely, the reduction of morbidity and mortality. Despite his idyllic conception of paradise and his frequent contention that life on earth is something of little value, the Amhara wants to avoid death. Even from the religious point of view he is

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 121 177 178 75 761 motivated to live as long as possible: the monk wants to live longer in order to get closer to God by prayer, and the worldly man wants to live long enough to atone for his sins so that he may enter paradise. Health thus rates as one of the most important values. The expressions for greeting and farewell stress health. Most of the prayers and vows offered have to do with achieving health. Long, painful pilgrimages are made for cures, and much money is spent for the remedies of native practitioners and for amulets to ward off illness. This powerful desire for health and life operates as a lever to overcome the resistance to change.

*565 121 177 829 Toward the bearers of new ideas designed to satisfy this desire for reduced morbidity and mortality, however, the peasant's stance is suspicious and unsympathetic at the outset. He regards Ethiopians who have been educated by Westerners as contaminated by alien norms and beliefs. They appear to him as Ethiopians, but also as strangers—as "black *farangj*"—with their European clothes and their unorthodox eating and smoking habits. He tends to distrust their motives, to suspect them of being out to take advantage of him in some way. And he resents their overt or implicit disparagement of his way of life, particularly his practices in so sensitive an area as sanitation.

*565 121 177 • 744 [554] Against such obstacles one cultural factor that serves to present the health worker as an acceptable agent of change is the Amhara peasant's deference to the man of learning. The public health worker is in a position to inherit some of the awe felt for the learned *dabtarā*, especially since the health teams operate out of centers which provide therapy as well as instruction, which gives them the benefit of association with the quasi-magical powers attributed to one who performs successful treatment. In addition, he can be aided by the Amhara peasant's personal devotion to someone who has helped him and won his confidence. Whether this devotion can be stimulated depends, in the last analysis, on the character and resourcefulness of the public health workers themselves. Those who are able to communicate in a dignified manner with the peasants, who avoid dealing with them as an inferior and backward people, who refrain from flaunting the most important local norms, and who are on good terms with local authorities and respected men, have a substantial chance of being accepted after an initial period of suspicion and alienation. Thus it was that a Gojjami peasant, asked why some of the local people were hearkening to the advice of the public health team at Dabra Marqos, explained: "We have come to realize that what you tell us to do is for our own advantage, not yours." Elsewhere in Gojjam, a similar response was the eventual issue of a more pronounced initial rejection of public health workers. In the village of Dajan doors were closed against a venereal disease team which was taking blood samples of the entire population for Kahn test analysis. Popular suspicion was voiced in a number of ways; the health workers were accused of selling blood, of being missionaries, and of otherwise trying

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to cheat the locals. The health officer in charge of the team then brought some of the objectors to the mobile laboratory, patiently explained what was going on, and how it would benefit the people. Before long word got around that these outsiders were not so evil after all, and the doors of Dajan opened. 565* 121 177 744

Given the possibility that the Amhara peasant may come to acknowledge the public health worker as a legitimate agent of change, what about the discrepancy between the ideas advanced by the public health workers and the ideas of his traditional culture? The conception of the causation of illness is radically different in the two cultures. Since the peasant views the etiology of disease as a function of the will of supernatural beings, on what grounds could he adhere to prophylactic measures based on naturalistic conceptions? 565* 121 177 753 744

Valid though our characterization of the peasant's concept of causation may be, it is nevertheless a very simplified one. It is unlikely that any world view is totally devoid of some sort of naturalistic explanations, just as, conversely, well-educated moderns often cling to residues of "superstition." Though the Amhara's general framework for understanding causation is not naturalistic, he does possess a number of specific notions which can be interpreted as naturalistic or protonaturalistic. Here are some examples:

(1) The belief that an excessively dirty house brings sickness (even though in practice animals are permitted to urinate and defecate indoors and strings of soot to hang from the rafters). [231]

(2) A vague notion that the daily washing of hands, mouth, and feet is related to health. [515]

(3) The concept of *metch*, an ailment involving fever and pains, believed to come from exposure to dirty places as well as excessive exposure to the sun (though the devil is often thought to be the conveyer of the ailment).

(4) The concept of *gershā*, a notion that a convalescent is liable to relapse unless he refrains from eating unaccustomed foods, resumes work slowly, stays out of the sun, and washes his body and clothes. [758]

(5) A latent concept of contagion, found in: (a) the belief that smelling the urine of another will give one a cold, (b) the belief that the breath of a typhus patient will communicate his disease, and (c) the custom of referring to all diseases which can be given by one person to another as "*zār* sickness."

Even when the explanations set forth by the health workers deviate too much from what the peasant can possibly conceive as plausible, there may still be grounds to justify his accepting some strange advice through an appeal to more familiar beliefs and interests less directly related to the matter at hand. Thus, while peasants have been reluctant to accept the sanitarian's argument that diseases will be prevented by sanitizing the water supply through building wells, they have often been persuaded to build wells by the prospect of securing a more convenient source of water.

Measuring the relative strength of forces supporting and opposing change 565* 121 177

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

objects of manipulation, their own creative energies will go unused. Only when their personal aspirations can be linked with co-operative endeavors or collective projects will their participation be sufficiently motivated to draw forth new sources of energy. 121* 178

The traditional approach, moreover, does not take into account the available intelligence of the population. It neither takes advantage of the understanding of immediate problems possessed by those concerned nor responds to their pressing needs and interests. The result is failure to make improvements in areas ripe for change, and antagonism or frustration of the elements of the population involved.

Given the relative ineffectuality and unresponsiveness of traditional methods of mobilization, and the new demands for concerted action unleashed by the process of urbanization and the growth of modern aspirations, it is natural that new forms of association should emerge to fill the sociological vacuum. That these new associations have been late in coming merely reflects the tenacity of traditional habits and institutions, as well as the reluctance of the government to permit the formation of groups which might have any sort of political or parapolitical ambitions. But during the past decade, and particularly since the rebellion of December, 1960, a variety of novel associational forms have come into being or have significantly diffused throughout the country. These associations may be described under three general categories: (1) formal associations of indigenous inspiration, (2) formal associations of foreign inspiration, and (3) informal associations.

Formal Associations of Indigenous Inspiration

Eddīr.—Probably the oldest and most widely diffused of the modern associations in Ethiopia, the *eddīr* is a form of welfare institution. Its functions are primarily to help defray the cost of funerals; to assist families in the event of the death, illness, unemployment, or imprisonment of their breadwinners; and to help in the case of loss due to fire. Members of an *eddīr* are obliged to contribute to a common fund and to attend the funerals of other members. (Twenty-five cents a month is not an uncommon payment, although in rural centers the contributions are often solicited only in time of need.) The institution is said to have originated among the Gurage and to have become more widely adopted during the Italian invasion, when many people who were killed had no relatives to bury them. Since then *eddīr* have been established in towns all over the country, fulfilling the vital functions which were performed by kin in the traditional countryside. They are organized on a territorial basis, in villages, towns, and city quarters; on an ethnic basis, as among the Dorze and Wollamo peoples; and even on an institutional basis, as among the employees of some government ministries. Often considerable moral pressure is exerted on townsfolk to become members—the threat of having no one 747 178 [177]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

• 747 178 come to one's funeral is particularly potent—and the transactions of the *eddïr* are strictly governed by elected officers.[39]

454 178 *Equb.*—The *equb* is a form of savings association in which weekly or monthly payments of a fixed sum are exchanged for the privilege of receiving a large lump sum at some point in the life of the group. In addition to provid- [571] ing a means of forced saving, the *equb* offers a basis for sociability when the members come together to make their payments and are provided with food and drink. Like the *eddïr*, the *equb* is believed to have originated among the [777] Gurage, and acquired wider popularity following the Italian invasion when many people needed large sums of money for rebuilding homes and purchasing livestock. The mode of operation of an *equb* has been described in the *Ethiopian Observer* as follows:

> A person desiring to start an Iqub will discuss the matter with his friends; if they agree a meeting will be called to discuss the rules and regulations of the proposed new society, and in particular the amount of money to be paid by each member, the frequency of payment and the time and place of meeting. A president, or dagna [literally, "judge"], and a money collector will be elected from among the most respected and reliable members of the group.
>
> The President then asks every member to bring one or two guarantors who will be responsible for payment in case of default for whatever reason it may be.
>
> On the appointed day all the members assemble and the secretary will call the roll. Any member unable to attend is expected to send his subscription in time. The specified sum is then handed by every member (or substitute) to the President. Any latecomer will be fined according to a pre-arranged schedule, this money being kept by the President until the end of the Iqub, when it is used for the common enjoyment of the members. The collected funds are drawn by lot, the winner receiving the total subscription of all the members. The lottery is normally effected by the members writing their names on small pieces of paper which are then placed in a hat, a blind-folded non-member then drawing out the name of the winner.
>
> After each draw, the winner is disqualified from taking part in further lotteries, but continues to pay his fee until every member has drawn his share. If he fails in this duty his guarantors have to pay.
>
> When all at length have been rewarded the time has come to set up a new Iqub.[40]

Equb have been established by members of virtually all low- and middle-income groups—clerks, merchants, servants, peasants, policemen. Their rapid increase, in response to the growing importance of money in Ethiopia's econ-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

journal, but also an engineers' association, a college teachers' association, and an Ethiopian writers' association. Earlier attempts to establish an organization of lawyers have not yet reached fruition.

National and International Service Organizations.—A final group of formal associations consists of those which include non-Ethiopian nationals as well as Ethiopians in their membership and which carry out welfare services of various sorts. The Ethiopian Red Cross, the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association, the YMCA, and the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa have been active for more than a decade. More recently, the International Christian Fellowship was formed with an eye to discussing ways of translating Christian principles into social action, and the Social Service Society has broken new ground in the welfare field with its ambitious program of relocating and rehabilitating Addis Ababa indigents.

Informal Associations

Another significant sociological development since the 1960 rebellion has been the blossoming of what might be called "mutual confidence groups." Although the public climate remains somewhat tense and generalized suspicion still prevails, a step has been taken away from the complete atomism of the pre-rebellion era. These groups consist of numbers of friends, bound by such factors as kinship, common ethnic background, relationships formed during study abroad, and occupational ties. Perhaps the most important single bond underlying these groups derives from friendships formed during the crucial experience of attending secondary school together. While for the most part these groups carry out no organized activities or structured discussions, they do provide a context in which any of the issues of the day can be discussed with fairly complete frankness and without fear of reprisal.

There are some progressive Ethiopians who would like to see these groups become the nuclei of action groups and political parties, even on an overt basis. The prevailing view among them, however, seems to be that this is as far as they can go under the present regime.

The efflorescence of voluntary associations in Ethiopia during the past half dozen years constitutes a remarkable thickening of the fabric of Ethiopian society. It may be seen as a vast, unconscious process of arousing and co-ordinating energies to meet the novel realities of Ethiopia's current historical situation. What relationship to this collective process have the individualistic features of Amhara character and society which were discussed above?

It may be observed that in virtually none of the cases cited above were the Amhara the initiators of the associational forms in question. The territorial and "project" *māhebar* were introduced into Ethiopian life by the Gurage; so, as far as present evidence indicates, were the *eddīr* and the *equb*. The labor

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Table II: Bodily Ailments, Symptoms, Practitioners, Diagnoses, Treatment.

Ailment	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Diagnosis or Symptoms	Treatment
snakebite	"ebab"(snake) "gwlmit", very poisonous but rare; "täwarwari ebab", lowland cave snake (also "asil"), very poisonous, but rare on plateau. "talba ebab" brownish flax-snake, common, not poisonous, but believed to be. "zändo" (large python), not poisonous, infrequently encountered.	woggesha dabtära: prevents snakebite by writing amulet "Abuna Batra Maryam", and wrapping it in "tonätla" (mistletoe) leaves that keep snakes away. In presence of snake, lets shadow fall on it to immobilize it, saying: "He is born of virgin, without conception by a father, a and He has saved us; but it, that has misled Eve, the snake..."(which scares the snake away).	fang marks	cuts wound with razor (arab melach), also may cut flesh away. No sucking of blood for fear of poison. Stop bleeding with "let" leaves. Smears oily "nug" - cake on, for healing.
tonsilitis, chronic sore throat	"angar", or "entel" (lit. uvula)	woggesha	pain in throat, regarded as "sick uvula"	rips out part of soft palate with wire.
toothache	"lemam yazä" (lit. the rot has seized it).	woggesha	toothache	"kills the demon that bites" by inserting a caustic medicine that eats into the gum; (actually a counter-irritant).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
Ear infection	"qenqen" or "qetqet"	woggesha	diagnosed as "buzzing insect that got into patient's ear".	"kills insect in ear" by caustic drops; (actually a counter-irritant)
cough (human) (donkey)		woggesha		drink expectorant made from aloes ("erä"). feed donkey roasted "qärcho", a yellow thistle weed that grows in plowed fields.
tuberculosis (esp. pulmonary). 30% incidence estimated by Italians.	"mäggäna" (Galla: "arwe karhamu)	dabtära	coughing blood, leaving patient limp. Diagnosed as "threshhold demon named 'mäggäna', who entered patient in early morning", or "red snake in belly".	Purgative, made of root of rhubarb "mäqmäqo" (Rumex abyssinicus), boiled in butter. Magic "sacrifice of threshhold" of chicken or goat, and fumigation of hut with "woggärt". Spraying of holy water. If all are dead, abandon the hut. (Also, cauterization with hot pin).
tapeworm (taenia saginata) Very common.	"wäsfat"	woggesha	noticed in stool; or, prophylactic after every "brundo" (raw beef) feast; or every 2 months.	Purgative (Vermifuge) made of "kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica, Quassia amara), prepared from the dry flowers, bark and twigs of this rosacious highland tree, while swallowing a dozen "enqoqo" seeds like pills. Produces a 3-day painful diarrhea.

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
bacterial dysentery. Very common.		woggesha	diarrhea	Only black tyeff grain may be eaten. If not cured, drink boiled leaves of "zärch embway" thistle (Solanum marginatum).
dysentery. Very common, esp. in market towns	"teqmat" (lit. what makes to sit down)	woggesha	diarrhea with blood	Purgative made of hottest "bärbärë" pepper called "mitmitta" (Capsicum abyssinicum) with smallest pods, taken in the evening together with raw beef ("brundo") after a day of complete fasting; the next morning, drink purgative kosso with engoqo pills.
intestinal disturbances colic	angorba	woggesha	pains, much salivation	drink tea of "teferendo" bush, or of "tembälal" (Jasminum floribundum); or of "amerra" root (used also in tatooing as astringent). In mild cases, chew leaf of "tena adam" garden plant and swallow the juice.

(constipation, etc., is treated with mineral salt "ashal chäw," now with "English salt" (Epsom).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
heart ailment. occasionally.	"leb bäsheta" (lit. heart sickness)	woggesha	pains in heart region	antispasmotic drink made of honey of the wild bee "tazzema" (Apis Africana miaia).
conjunctivitis, trachoma, ophthalmia, eye diseases Very common.	"Mädära" or "Aynät" (female demons)	däbtära	eye inflammation, pain, incipient blindness	apply juice of "Ketketa" flower (Dodonea viscosa) by means of cotton cloth; then take vapor bath. Or use juice of aloes ("rät"). Rub wrinkled leaves of "käsyē" (resembles thyme). Wear amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of the demon.
headache, migraine, neuralgia. Very common.	"feltät"	woggesha däbtära		Inhale fumes of burning leaves of "woggärt" plant or "gizewa" bush(which resembles elderberry). Shave area in back of head, make small incision with horn, sucking the blood. On Mary's birthday, leave chickpeas or other food for the birds.
hemorrhoids. common.	"kentarot"	woggesha	pains, (mostly in adults)	Astringent shrinks piles; made of the juice of certain secret roots, applied daily for a week.

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
bleeding from wounds		woggesha		apply rolled and crumbled leaf of "let" plant to wound, to stop bleeding. apply aloes ("rät") to promote formation of scar tissue.
excessive menstrual bleeding	"yädam abennät"	woggesha dabtara	diagnosed as female demon "Werselya"	Hang magic root under garment. Root bears name of illness, drives it away. Amulets.
miscarriage	"yädam terät"	dabtara	demon Werselya	Peel this root and wear it. Amulets
barrenness Incidence as high as 25%	"yädam tefat"	dabtara	demon Werselya, believed to have "stopped patient's menstruation."	Specially written amulet, referring to King Susneyos' formula, hung on the neckcord.
chigger, sandflea infection. Common, esp. in dry lowland.	"moyalä"	woggesha		Pick out whole organism with needle, without breaking it.
muscular dystrophy, & other paralytic diseases.	"gwaya ankätäkkätäw" (lit. the gwaya plant has broken him).		diagnosed as due to "having walked through a field of this plant", or "having spilled water in which it was boiled, on one's leg". Symptoms: cross legged, pigeontoed walk.	No certain cure. Sometimes treated like the "mech" disease (general functional ailment).

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Ailment	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
paralysis	"sefat"	woggesha dabtära	stroke, often fatal	No certain cure, Amulets.
struck by lightning	"mäbräq	woggesha dabtära	found unconcious diagnosed as "struck by thunder".	Carried to fireplace, kept warm. If patient dies, regarded as heavenly punishment, for hidden crime.
visible syphilis (early stage). Incidence syphilis 50-80% estimated by Italians.	"qiten"	woggesha dabtära	syphilitic sores	1st stage of treatment: Smear resin on sores, or "käbrä" (sulphur). Intensive eating of bärbärä pepper (Capsicum abyssinicum) in order to salivate, for the disease is believed to come out with saliva; also the purgative kosso (as in cases of tapeworm), for same reason. (Magic): sacrifice male, black goat (to demon), drink its blood and eat it, for this omnivorous animal has eaten a variety of herbs that may help. Then purge 4 months. 2nd stage: Sweatcure at hot springs("filowa"), dedicated to a saint, for 40 days. Refrain from salt, drink much water. In some cases, drink sarsaparilla root (Smilax mauritanica) - (possibly recent diffusion).

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Ailments	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
chronic syphilis (including "benign syphilis" resembling Arab "bejel"; neuro syphilis extremely rare. Chronic and inherited syphilis believed common by physicians.	"verdä"	dabtära woggesha		Prophylactic treatment obtained by some from dabtära before exposure to syphilis is kept secret. Cures include crushing of "bessana" root with Kosso, ratio 1 : 2, which is dissolved in pure barley beer "talla gebs". This purgative is believed to bring out germ with diarrhea or vomiting.
gonorrhea (common - esp. in market towns)	"phäbet" or "chebet" (lit. it squeezes me)	woggesha	believed caused from having urinated in sunshine. Symptom: pain and urinating with difficulty.	Same cure with "bessana" root purgative as in chronic syphilis.
smallpox other pox (occasional epidemics, now rarer)	"fäntata" "litä"	woggesha	believed caused by morning-threshhold demon "mäggäña" (See tuberculosis)	Vesicant to "bring out the rash" by rubbing "käbrä" (sulphur) on sores, or, if unavailable, saffron. Patient must not touch water until healed. Neighbors wait until after 7A.M. to brink cakes of food, so that they will not encounter the morning demon "mäggäña" on threshhold.

Variolation with "kuffeñ" (mild pox or chicken pox, or taken from pus of sick person) especially in epidemics; sores are rubbed with honey.

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
abscess or running sore	"quncher"	woggesha	believed caused by urine of certain moth.	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur or resin. Ointment made from leaves of "enqoqo" bush used as anti scabies. Purgatives made from "bessana" leaves or from juice of euphorbia candelabra ("golqwal"), drunk in fresh barley beer.
impetigo	"chefe"	woggesha	believed caused by washing in "bad water"	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur.
white sore on hand; itch.	"lekäft"	woggesha	believed caused by having left water uncovered overhight, and washing hand in it the next morning. Pain, tendons affected. Believed non-contageous.	apply astringent leaf-compresses, e.g. from the "däreh embway" flower with the little red fruit; or of the "embway" (yellow thistle).
other sore on hand	"chafe"	woggesha	believed contageous form of "lekaft"; much feared.	Cover sore with nug oil paste, and salt, to keep it from spreading.
scrofula	"näqärsa"	woggesha	symptoms on neck	"bring out rash" by rubbing with sulphur.

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Ailments	Amharic Name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
leprosy (occasionally).	"lefe", "qomata", "läma"	woggesha	discoloration of skin, loss of nails, etc.	Combination of treatment of other sores. (Now treated by WHO with injection of sulphetrone, etc.).
scarlet fever (rare)	"lash"	woggesha dabtara	Peeling skin, sometimes falling hair, in children. Believed caused by female demon that specializes in hurting children.	"bring out rash" by applying sulphur to the itchy skin. Dabtara provides prophylactic as well as curative amulet against this demon.
typhus fever; If epidemic: (common in highlands)	"talalafi basheta", "yanafa basheta" "tassebo"	dabtara	Believed caused by certain demons.	Amulets. (Now free injections and immunization by government "dressers" at town markets).
relapsing fever (Fatality higher than typhus; louse-born in highland, tick-born in lowland).	"mech" or "mechdar"	dabtara woggasha	Patient believed struck by the demon of "hot fog", ("mech gittaw"). Same term used for sunstroke, and pneumonia. Symptoms include headaches, vomiting, violent fever, soon fatal. Illness believed brought on by sunstroke or eating spicy foods or green corn without washing mouth.	Febrifuge prepared from roasted "halgab" plant (which resembles mint), collected with great secrecy in the bush. "Mech madhanit" (lit. Mech medicine) also uses other plants, the leaves of which are squeezed, and the juice is drunk, sniffed, and rubbed over body, with formulae being pronounced (magic)

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
malaria (common below 5000 ft. endemic below 3000 ft; epidemics in lowland market towns.	"nedad" (lit. burn) "tekwesat" (fever, generic) "woba" (boil)	woggesha	fever	Patient drinks febrifuge made from min-like herbs boiled in butter. Band with cold water placed on head.
rheumatism (common)	"qerṭemat"	däbtära	believed caused by "buda" evil spirit	Drive evil spirit away with disagreeable odor of "chequn" plant stuffed in nose.
		zar doctor	if believed due to possession by "lasy zar"	Bribe the "adbar" outdoor zar spirit or the "qolä" zar with sacrifice of food.
arthritis or deforming rheumatism	"rih"	priest		Rebaptize patient at holy well ("täbäl"); or advise him to go to a hot mineral spring dedicated to a saint ("filowa") for sweat cure.
rickets	"tela"	däbtära	swelling of bony joints; believed caused by demon of evil eye.	Amulet.
yellow jaundice	"wof zorräbbat" (lit. the bird turned directions over him	däbtära	skin discoloration, thick urin.	Amulet.

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
puerperal fever	"tekwesat" (generic, fever)	dabtära	believed caused by female, jealous, demon "Karima".	Amulet reciting victory of Solomon over Karima.
delirium	"buda" (evil spirit)	dabtära	believed due to "buda" possession.	Intoxicant drug "astänager" Thornapple Jimsonwee (Datura stramonium) (lit. that which makes to talk) is drunk by patient so that he reveals the name of the specific evil spirit; then it can be exorcised.
epilepsy	"yäbarya bäsheta" "yabuda basheta" (evil spirit disease) (haut gal) "ganyän yazä" (lit. the djinn have seized him) "ebd" (have enslaved him)	dabtära	spasms, convulsions.	Same treatment as in delirium and rheumatism, or both.
			running amok, violent	Cast out "ganyän" by spells and exorcism. Or eat intoxicant paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha) root. Exorcism of "buda" or "ganyen".
(St. Vitus)	"nägärgar", or naqatqat"			

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Ailments	Amharic name	Practitioner	Symptoms or Diagnosis	Treatment
hysteria	"zar" (spirit, benign or evil)	zar doctor	(see zar cult) and "buda"	(see zar cult); Stimulant "asē faris" (stramoine datura) (lit. wood of Persia) is often preliminary treatment. The effect is agitated somnambulism, enabling patient to see the future, and the (evil) spirits that have attached themselves to him; esp. the "aynā tela" (lit. shadow eye), usually in shape of a woman, who spoils well-laid plans. Once her name is revealed, dābtāra throws cold water on patient to reawaken.
chronic apathy (catalepsy)	"Zegerteya" (female demon)	zar doctor dābtāra	(see zar cult) and "buda"	(see zar cult) and "buda"
insanity	"Waddegeni" (female demon)	zar doctor	(see zar cult)	(see zar cult)
amok			(see "ganyen")	

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

paid increased attention in recent years. A new phase of public health endeavor in this decade was marked by the imposition of a nationwide health tax in 1960. 565* 121 177 178

Health has become a prime objective in Ethiopia's modernization program because of a growing realization that the wide prevalence of malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, intestinal parasites, syphilis, trachoma, leprosy, and other diseases continues to sap the vitality of the nation's productive forces and to visit misery on countless peasant families. The public health forces in Ethiopia (Ministry of Public Health, WHO mission, and AID Public Health Division) have long understood that Ethiopia's health needs cannot be met by piecemeal therapy. They have undertaken a program of preventive measures by preparing public health teams in the medical college at Gondar. The college trains health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians within a common framework, so that when they go into the field they will understand each other's tasks from the start. The first public health center employing such a team was opened in the late fifties; Ethiopia's Second Five-Year Plan envisions one such center for every fifty thousand people by 1967. 744 [651] [164] [648] [874]

The objective of these public health workers is to transmit a number of instructions—concerning personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, early care for illness, and isolation of contagious diseases—which are at variance with customary beliefs and practices. Experience with comparable programs elsewhere suggests that the success of such health teams is by no means assured.[18] What are the forces working for and against the acceptance of these new instructions by the Amhara peasantry? Both negative and positive factors may be identified with respect to each of the three general categories previously referred to: the general outlook regarding change; attitudes toward the agents of change; and degree of compatibility between the new cultural items and the old.

The Amhara peasant's general resistance to change may be presumed operative here as elsewhere, particularly since health practices are often associated with religious beliefs and sentiments. Defense of indigenous therapies has in fact become a significant channel for the expression of traditionalist sentiment, a channel that has even been utilized on occasion in the Addis Ababa newspapers.[19] And a general posture of resistance to changes in the field of health is supported by the interests of traditional practitioners, *dabtarā* and *ṭanquāy*, who are in danger of losing clientele if modern-trained health workers come to win their allegiance. 565* 121 177 178 75

Counter to this conservative drag, on the other hand, is the peasant's powerful desire for one basic change in his life circumstances, namely, the reduction of morbidity and mortality. Despite his idyllic conception of paradise and his frequent contention that life on earth is something of little value, the Amhara wants to avoid death. Even from the religious point of view he is [061]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 121 177 178 • 75 761 motivated to live as long as possible: the monk wants to live longer in order to get closer to God by prayer, and the worldly man wants to live long enough to atone for his sins so that he may enter paradise. Health thus rates as one of the most important values. The expressions for greeting and farewell stress health. Most of the prayers and vows offered have to do with achieving health. Long, painful pilgrimages are made for cures, and much money is spent for the remedies of native practitioners and for amulets to ward off illness. This powerful desire for health and life operates as a lever to overcome the resistance to change.

*565 121 177 829 Toward the bearers of new ideas designed to satisfy this desire for reduced morbidity and mortality, however, the peasant's stance is suspicious and unsympathetic at the outset. He regards Ethiopians who have been educated by Westerners as contaminated by alien norms and beliefs. They appear to him as Ethiopians, but also as strangers—as "black *faranj*"—with their European clothes and their unorthodox eating and smoking habits. He tends to distrust their motives, to suspect them of being out to take advantage of him in some way. And he resents their overt or implicit disparagement of his way of life, particularly his practices in so sensitive an area as sanitation.

*565 121 177 744 (554) Against such obstacles one cultural factor that serves to present the health worker as an acceptable agent of change is the Amhara peasant's deference to the man of learning. The public health worker is in a position to inherit some of the awe felt for the learned *dabtarā*, especially since the health teams operate out of centers which provide therapy as well as instruction, which gives them the benefit of association with the quasi-magical powers attributed to one who performs successful treatment. In addition, he can be aided by the Amhara peasant's personal devotion to someone who has helped him and won his confidence. Whether this devotion can be stimulated depends, in the last analysis, on the character and resourcefulness of the public health workers themselves. Those who are able to communicate in a dignified manner with the peasants, who avoid dealing with them as an inferior and backward people, who refrain from flaunting the most important local norms, and who are on good terms with local authorities and respected men, have a substantial chance of being accepted after an initial period of suspicion and alienation. Thus it was that a Gojjami peasant, asked why some of the local people were hearkening to the advice of the public health team at Dabra Marqos, explained: "We have come to realize that what you tell us to do is for our own advantage, not yours." Elsewhere in Gojjam, a similar response was the eventual issue of a more pronounced initial rejection of public health workers. In the village of Dajan doors were closed against a venereal disease team which was taking blood samples of the entire population for Kahn test analysis. Popular suspicion was voiced in a number of ways; the health workers were accused of selling blood, of being missionaries, and of otherwise trying

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

search and only to the highest grades of secondary school and college, three 883*
questions regarding unscientific beliefs were included. In a pilot study of 815
sixty secondary school seniors and juniors, 42 per cent held the belief that "a 178
person can be made sick by the evil eye of a *budā*," and 33 per cent believed 177
that "too much learning results in madness." To the one question asked of 125
my entire sample: "Do you believe that some learned *dabtarā* can cause rain to fall or stop?," 16 per cent of 500 secondary and 7 per cent of 200 college seniors and juniors said "Yes."

This persistence among the educated youth of traditional beliefs which run 883*
counter to the consensus of modern scientists has been attributed by Lord to 815
the inadequacies of the Ethiopian school system. This is as might be expected, 871
inasmuch as most Ethiopian teachers have had relatively little education 178
themselves and the curriculum has necessarily been somewhat improvised and 177
incomplete. Officials of the Ministry of Education have labored to overcome these deficiencies, and certain changes were in fact made in consequence of Lord's study which aim at combating the more dysfunctional of the prevailing superstitions.

It seems likely, however, that certain irrational dispositions are also in- 121
volved here, dispositions to maintain the unscientific beliefs in spite of im- 815
provements in teaching methods and materials. One would predict this on the 178
basis of general sociological understanding of the consequences of rapid social 177
change. The disruption of the traditional belief systems brought about by the sudden dissemination of scientific beliefs inevitably creates insecurity, and a common reaction to such insecurity is to cling with increased tenacity to some of the old-fashioned beliefs which are closely identified with the traditional culture.[23]

One area in which this defensive "revivalism" can be observed in Ethiopia 178
is that of medicine. Many Ethiopians who have received modern secondary 75
education maintain that Western medicine, while useful in many cases, repre- 815
sents only one possible approach to the problem of sickness and health.[24] 177
Thus, fifty-seven per cent of the secondary students questioned asserted that traditional Ethiopian medicines are effective all or most of the time, although such therapies include the eating of rancid butter to cure malaria or drinking holy water to cure serious functional disorders. Dr. Lord herself has reported an episode which throws much light on the psychology of this reaction:

> An Ethiopian colleague, a former teacher, warned me against drinking water in a certain provincial town on penalty of my catching malaria. He was challenged thus: "You are one of the better educated persons in Ethiopia; don't you know the cause of malaria?" He quickly, and eruditely, gave all the known scientific facts about malaria. Then he added, "You people from the United States (and the United Nations) think that this (the scientif-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the water in places where the Anopheles breed."[25]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

Taste.—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from extreme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions. Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are preferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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121 nally, data were gathered relating to the modes of acquiring, exercising, validating, and conserving powers of prophylaxis, diagnosis, and therapy. Here, as in the other areas of data gathering, a necessary distinction was made between the perceptions of practitioners and those of their clients.

*793 869 • 75 197 539 While the secular medical traditions of Ethiopia are exclusively oral, powerful cleric healers known as debteras have traditionally employed diagnositc, prophylactic, and therapeutic texts written in Ge'ez, the language of the Church, and in the vernacular. Numerous *793 114 127 debtera texts gave been collected in the libraries of Europe and the United States, and valuable translations, most notably by Marcel Griaule, Deborah Lifchitz, and Stefan Strelcyn, have been published. These published translations, together with translations made in the field with the assistance of clerics, have been utilized in the writing of those sections of Chapter Four dealing with the debtera's medical texts.

121 171 Although the focus of this dissertation is limited to the region in which field research was conducted, it should not be overlooked that the Amhara share important cultural affinities with peoples, now largely Islamic, occupying lands extending from the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.

000 The highlands of Begemder, Tigre, and Eritrea form

128 diagnostic, and therapeutic practices. The final step of the chapter compares these etiology types with the strategies used by healers for countering the effects of pathogenic agencies.

• 76 827 Amhara healer and layman use common sets of physiological and pathological notions; neither physiology nor pathology is conceived as a coherent body of knowledge in its own right, however. The Amhara does not often verbalize these notions, and, when he does, it is in ad hoc contexts, generally intrinsic to the selection of prophylaxis or the administration of therapy. Thus, set down on the following pages as discrete subjects, Amhara physiology and pathology appear as collections of relatively simple notions, and of limited explanatory power when compared with the medical systems of other historical civilizations. Unlike those systems, the organization of Amhara medical beliefs and practices is dominated by concepts of practitioner power, its sources [128] and its therapeutic and prophylactic expressions. Those subjects are dealt with in the remaining chapters of this dissertation

AMHARA PHYSIOLOGY AND PATHOGENIC AGENCIES

829 Although most Amhara can identify the grosser body organs by name, even the knowledgeable anatomist can as-

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TABLE 3

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THE MEDICAL DOMAINS OF PRACTITIONERS

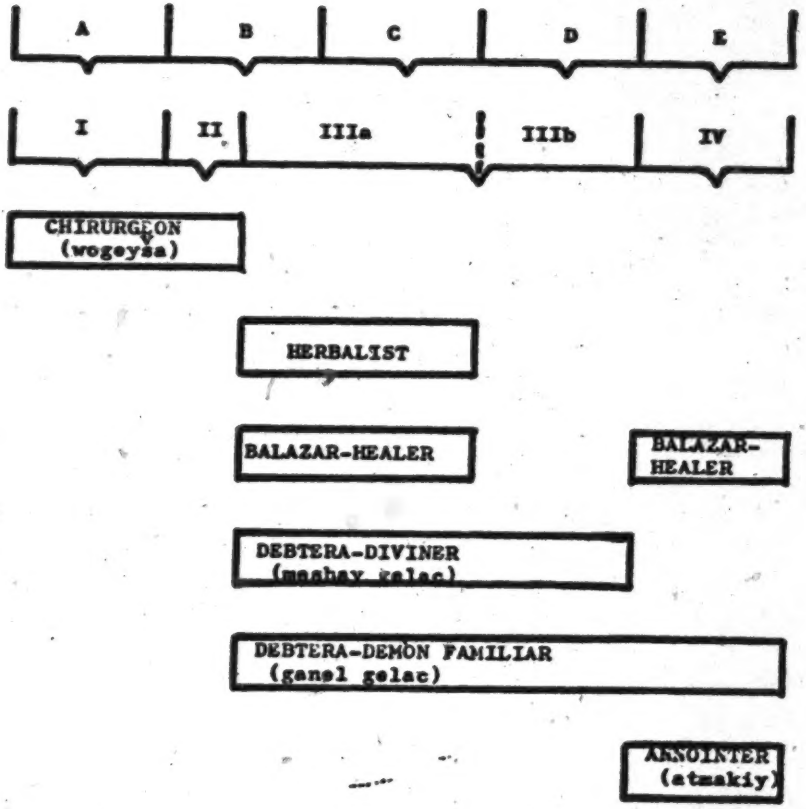

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TABLE 3 CONTINUED

75 Key to Table 3

ETIOLOGY TYPE (therapeutically significant feature)

A inappropriate alignment of body parts

B introjection or contact with inanimate pathogen

C introjection of self-conscious pathogenic agent

D introjection of heterogeneous inanimate pathogen

E magical or demonical causation

THERAPEUTIC STRATEGY (characteristic activity)

I physical manipulation of body parts

II excision of affected organ

IIIa expulsion or neutralization of the pathogenic substance

IIIb identification and expulsion of the pathogenic substance

IV persuade or compel the causal agent

*759 therapies, for example, some practitioners contend that
[752] the single diagnostic massage for fracture is insufficient for setting a broken bone. They claim that a massage on each of three successive days is required; two days massage will not soften the bone enough for proper ailgnment, while four days massage may distort it. Similar numerological considerations in tagañ therapies relate to the manufacture of medicaments, the duration of the splinting period, the number of days during which atwit is consumed, and the number of repetitions required by the final massage. Because these numerological elements are considered inextricably bound, sometimes diffusely, to one or more other components of a therapy, they cannot be freely inserted into the therapies of other tagañs.

THE HERBALIST

• 75 The Amhara herbalist treats ailments caused by the ingestion or introjection of pathogenic substances into a victim, and by his superficial contact with such substances. In this section, ailments characterized by ingested or introjected pathogenic substances will be considered first. The assumptions made by Amhara herbal medicine are relatively simple here: In order to obtain a remission of the disease symptoms, the responsible

• 75 pathogen must be first identified and then expelled physically through one of the body's orifices. Most often, an emetic or purge is used to this end, although some therapies remove the pathogenic substance with diaphoretics, diuretics, or a combination of these medicines.

Amhara Pharmacology

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*759 Living within the region served by the Gondar market, an area of perhaps 50 km radius from the town, there are found a collection of herbalists who, as a body, own therapies for every ailment the Begemder Amhara regard as treatable by herbal medicine. Moreover, for any one of these ailments, there are several local herbalists, each claiming a distinctive herbal therapy for the sickness. (The distribution of herbalists is the subject of the following chapter, and presupposes an acquaintance with herbalist nomenclature, which is considered later in this
*757 chapter.) From a pharmacological point of view, the ef-
*278 fectiveness of any one herbal therapy is the produce of the following: 1) the strength of each active ingredient included in the "primary medicine" (<u>medhaniyt</u>); 2) techniques of gathering, processing, and administering the primary medicine. In the following paragraphs, each of these considerations is discussed in turn.

*278 <u>Materia Medica</u>. 1) Nearly all primary medicines

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provided by kinsmen, neighbors, and lower grade herbalists who are familiar with the identity of professional colleagues in their own disease-name specialties. A client sometimes has difficulty finding local herbalists with which to staff a desired herbalist chain. The ("weak") debtera is often a "convenient" choice to fill this deficiency. He is a member of a class of practitioners who are famous for practicing therapies for a wide variety of ailments. Moreover, the debtera is conspicuous. In ecclesiastical performances, divination, and providing prophylactic amulets, he is observed and patronized by many residents of the district in which he lives. Thus, although potential clients may not know his therapeutic repertoire in detail, he is considered a potentially relevant practitioner about whom clients are always likely to make active inquiries.

The empirical chain is the product of non-medical as well as medical considerations. The client's non-medical interests include the cost of therapy, the discomfort associated with the therapy, and the distance which the client might have to travel to reach the therapist. Lower grade herbalists are always less expensive and generally less painful than higher grade ones, and the client is more likely to find a lower grade herbalist in his vicinity. So far as non-medical factors are considered in isolation, initial consultation with a

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lower grade herbalist is favored.

There are no obvious non-medical advantages, neither relative nor absolute, for the client who chooses a higher grade herbalist. An herbalist initiates the patient into no relationships which endure beyond the length of the therapy. The onset of a disease episode, particularly one characterized by a serious ailment, has important consequences for the relationships between the sickman and members of his household, and between him and other individuals to whom he is bound by important rights and obligations. These changes are generally perceived in terms of non-participation by the sickman, particularly in affective and subsistence contexts. However, consultation with an herbalist does not itself significantly affect the relationships. Submission to herbalist therapy, for example, does not validate a claim to a particular sickman state, since this is determined within the domestic unit, prior to professional consul-
*[763] tation. Repeated therapeutic failure, far from discrediting the sickman's claims, can only escalate the seriousness of the epidose, moving it etiologically to the domain of ganela and zars---agents more worrisome prognostically than those against whom the herbalist works.

*756 The Weak Debtera-Healer in Table 6. In the ab-
*793 stract, laymen define the medical identity of all
776 debtera-healers in terms of associations with spirit

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 93]

*278 *769 632 are no debtera therapists, and, although there are several women who are members of zar coteries (and are, thus, balazar) none publicly practiced therapies which might have been obtained from zars or fellow balazars. In contrast, the following non-secular therapies are practiced in Gabrael sebeka:

	Non-secular therapies	Herbalist therapies
Balazar 1	7	
Balazar 2	7	
Balazar 3	8	
Debtera 1	6	
Debtera 2[20]	10	
Total	40	31
% of all therapies of Gabrael sebeka	56%	44%

*278 *769 369 In summary, then, herbalists figure less prominantly in the town than in the countryside. The townsman more frequently omits them from relevant practitioner chains, or limits them to the initial consultation in such chains. 369 However, from the perspective of the system of Amhara 75 medical beliefs, this contrast between town and country

[20] In ecclesiastical terms, this man is not entitled to the title of "debtera".

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5 .
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369 has no important consequences, and, in terms of Amhara
• 75 medical practices, the contrast is statistical rather than substantive.

*787 *793 869 *[278] is better able to obtain new abinet, since him own growing repertoire increases the possibility of arranging abinet exchanges with other debteras. Moreover he is better equiped to utilize them; he has learned much of the Ethiopian herbal pharmacopeia, and is able to identify botanicals by the Ge'ez nomers with which they are frequently designated in the recipes of abinet therapies [198] and kitabs. Similarly, his mastery of Ge'ez makes possible the acquisition of complex digams.

• 75 639 *[192] In addition to acquiring individual recipes, debtera-healers also seek out encyclopaedic treatices. These are inventories of recipes, bearing Ge'ez titles such as "book of medicine for diseases for all parts of the body" (metshafe medhaniyt lekwiylown deweyate akalat). In these books, recipes are grouped according to diseases; the diseases are, in turn, classified according to the part of the body that they affect, ar- [177] ranged from head to feet. Stefan Strelcyn (1965), after close examination of four such manuscripts, has commented on the substantial uniformity of their contents and the remarkable similarities which they share with the third and fourth books of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine.

*793 *765 *756 While such treatises contain hundreds of recipes, their significance for the practice of Abyssinian medicine is limited by the character of their pathogenic interests. As seen by his clients, the debtera's thera-

months, and years (gemene) which are non-propitious for the subject's well-being, 2) the age to which the subject will probably live and the age (always markedly longer) to which he may live if appropriate prophylaxes are employed, 3) bad omens (often indicated as a color of men, animals, or land), 4) dangerous places and environmental conditions. (The text likewise indicated propitious dates, omens, and places.) In addition, the text describes the subject's social persona and the responses it will (eventually) elicit from the people with whom he interacts.

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While the kokob text addresses a variety of interests, the texts of the second awdunigist category are more specialized. From a medical point of view, these texts can be divided into the following six types, according to the services that each provides:

1. These are exclusively medical texts, providing detailed information of prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic utility, and coinciding with the range of medical interests considered by the kokob text. This information is relevant to the period specified by the debtera in his calculations.

[774] 2. These texts name the saints, angels, and biblical persons who are particularly disposed to assisting the subject. Although this information is not exclusively of medical relevance, it is useful for constructing the

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Ambara MP5
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kitab and addressing personal petitions by the client.

3. These texts provide prognosis for the subject's (unspecified) ailments. Prognoses are generally given as combinations of the following oppositions: a)life : death, b)(if life,) complete recovery : lingering ailment or disability, c)(if complete recovery,) rapid recovery : slow recovery.

4. These texts indicate medical information, generally specifying pathogenic agents and named ailments, which threaten this subject during the period specified by the debtera in his calculations. The information is, however, cursory and often mixed with matters of no real medical significance.

5. These texts provide general indications of the dangers and misfortunes which threaten the subject, but fail to indicate whether these misfortunes affect the subject's health. Such texts enable the debtera to inquire about periods (year or month of a specific year) which are of special interest to the debtera and his client. Here, the debtera includes in his calculations the numerical values of the year or month and year about which the inquiry is being made. Often, these texts also indicate what segment of the specified period is particularly threatening.

6. These texts provide no information of likely medical importance, but consider matters such as propi-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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*787 539 • 75 tious occupations, journeys and marriages (thus paralling information also given in the kokob text).

Appendix D provides illustrations of medically relevant information which can be obtained from awdunigist texts.

*787 *278 *755 *993 539 In the main, a debtera acquires awdunigist texts individually, just as he collects digams, kitab recipes, and herbalist therapies.[30] Awdunigist repertoires therefore vary in comprehensiveness from debtera to debtera.

*787 539 178 437 Moreover, "definitive" versions of awdunigist texts are unknown; whatever their common origins may have been, extant texts are probably unique products of many adventitious deletions and additions. Deletions are most likely when texts are transmitted from seller to buyer. At that time, details are sometimes withheld by the seller, in order to secure additional payments, or as a bond

[30] Over the last three decades, the accessibility of awdunigist texts has been affected by the publication, in Asmara, of a collection of these texts. Most are in Amharic, but perhaps a quarter are in Ge'ez entirely or in part. Although many debteras demean these texts, they are in fact used, particularly by "weak" debteras. Public illiteracy, ignorance of the book's existence, of where it can be obtained, of the precise manipulations it requires, together with the limited utility its contents hold for the layman, and the fear of putative satanic associations have prevented its diffusion to the debtera's public, however.

796 795 held high, and everyone acclaims the miracle. Everyone tries to obtainssome of the water to drink; the bottom of the hole keeps filling up for some time. Later, mud from the hole is passed around on green leaves, [751] and many, especially women, smear it on their foreheads, against sickness, demons, and barrenness which afflicts many of the townswomen. Some older Muslims recite prayers. The mood is generally gay, and the women banter happily from an hour after sunrise to high noon, when the feast is over, Then all begin to return to Gondar town, after pledging gifts for the next celebration of the saint's day, provided he has fulfilled their prayers.

Meanwhile, Copts, mostly women, including many barren ones, have joined the Muslim women on the hill. No special notice is taken of them; they are tolerated, and not insulted as they would be on other occasions. The Copts bring their own live sheep and the few Coptic men present slaughter them apart from the Muslims, so that their formula "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, One Divinity", is not heard. The Christian women and children also smear some of the saint's mud on their foreheads, and also vow donations to the next Sheykh Abader feast if their prayers are fulfilled. [783] They bear the tell-tale marks until they reach their own homes in Gondar, and are not punished for what otherwise might at least require re-baptism. Like Muslims, they even bring mud, rocks, and water from the saint's hill to their ill kinfolk. Coptic men do not flaunt their participation so freely. The Coptic priests, who of

832 to be ends of the twig, actually magic paste, "accidentally" hitting her. They pay for their beer, and leave. The next day, the dabtara takes his skeptical client past the same beer-hut, and lo and behold, the woman calls out an invitation to them, and refuses payment for the beer consumed. The client is now convinced.

This love magic is done secretly because it is considered highly unethical. At least the dabtara is expected to "release" the person "helplessly bewitched" after a while, and not leave the victim in this condition forever.

The dabtara is believed to know, from books on magic, not only the efficacy of barns and plants, but also of animals. His favorite animal is believed to be the chameleon ("zälbabäda"), particularly in love magic, ordered by women. The animal is dried, crushed to powder, and the woman then mixes this with her urine. She must read the formula out loud, containing her name and the name of her husband or the man she wishes to hold against all rivals, then throw the mixture in the air - to be carried by the winds and spirits.

751 The dabtara is believed also to have medicinal magic. Some "careful" men, before going to the adventures of the mead-house ("täj-bet"), go to his house to drink a magic potion to protect them from venereal disease that night.

828 When a woman consistently acts like a man, or a man like a woman,
838 it is believed that there is some biological "mistake of God". In the case of a woman, she is likely to be blamed and even insulted, called "mannish" ("wändawände"). This term is used if she acts independent, takes interest only in masculine weapons and activities, and speaks in hard, insubordinate ways. If she is physically a tall, powerful virago, she is called "wändärad" (lit. male-female), a female with too much

754 776 and are permitted to be dirty most of the time. As for males, the buda also likes to feast on healthy-looking, fat, handsome warriors [753] and chiefs. "Buda" is the general diagnosis when a person always known as healthy suddenly sickens and dies. Therefore it is feared even by the bravest warriors.

754 776 178 Even at present, when "modernization" is proceeding from the central government, "buda" belief has not shrunk. It has simply expanded to take in modern attractions. Thus, police officers in the provincial towns are believed to have attracted "buda", who has developed a taste for officers in nice, new uniforms; and is believed to be "greedy" for healthy-looking boys doing modern gymnastics in their new elementary schools, eager to consume their physical prowess and grace. Even rich, strong, fat, gay, well dressed Europeans are regarded as vulnerable, but less so because "they do not fear him". Fear attracts him too.

"Buda" is most active in August, at the height of the rainy season. [821] His favorite time to strike is just after a heavy thunderstorm, when tornado-like gusts of wind seem to pull up the hut and try to pull the roof off. This would enable "buda" to "see" his victims better, and cannibalize them.

● 751 754 776 Many ways of trying to prevent victimization by "buda", or at least of reducing one's vulnerability, have been devised over the centuries. To reduce vulnerability, one should not appear too happy, too gay. One should not become an object of open admiration, or of envy and jealousy. One should further paraphrase the tabooed word "buda", by saying "watch your eyes". Newlyweds, who are very vulnerable, should cover their glowing faces for ten days, to keep

751 their happiness from showing. Eating and drinking in the open makes one
754 extremely vulnerable, because this arouses buda's greed, and at the
776 same time makes it easier to penetrate the victim's body, through the wide open mouth and unguarded nose. Therefore, old-time Amhara cover their faces when eating in front of strangers.

751 This attempt to reduce vulnerability is closely related to some
754 of the "language of the shamma" (toga). In the presence of strangers,
291 this can be draped in the fashion that indicates "reserve" - covering the mouth, or even nose and mouth, with the front section of the toga, which has been draped in a turtleneck. When travelling in strange districts, which are doubly dangerous because of cast-out buda spirits hidden by exorcisers along trails, a strong-smelling
[824] herb pushed in the nostril, is often used as a prophylactic. The most commonly used of these herbs is "tena adam" (lit. health of Adam, i.e. mankind). The mouth should be kept closed, or covered. In a fearful situation, he may say "shadow, may it not fall on me". Touching iron, considered specially "strong", also helps. Children are warned to stay away from strangers, and never to leave a baby unattended, lest "buda will eat you". The term "eat" is regularly used for buda possession (not for zar possession), for it indicates consumption.

751 Typhus ("talalafi basheta") and severe epilepsy ("yabuda basheta")
754 the latter literally ascribed to buda (lit. buda disease) are the most
174 common ailments promptly diagnosed as "buda" "eating". Evidently
[164] Amhara doctors long ago observed that covering the mouth and nose and staying away from possibly infected strangers reduced the exposure to certain contagious diseases; they then proceeded to envelop this observation in the culture pattern, including the draping of the toga and stopping up the nose, and not eating uncovered in the presence of strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

177 The "seal of Solomon" (actually the 6-pointed star of David) often
755 appears on Amhara amulets (e.g. against Karina). Even Hebrew-
789 appearing characters are found on amulets (a widespread custom in the Middle East.) [125] As might be expected, Hebrew traits are even more emphasized among the Falashas, who begin every amulet with: "Blessed be the God of Israel, God of all Creatures; prayer against.....".

Arabic influence has served primarily as a carrier. Directly derived from the Arabs are the 12 signs of the Zodiac, found on Abyssinian amulets. Carried was the "seal of Alexander".

Christian mythology and hagiology predominates in the cosmology of the amulets of the dabtara. Many of them begin with the formula: "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity; prayer against.....". Deniers of Christ who are suspected as sorcerers, are often personified in these amulets as Falasha or Barya. Christian martyrs and saints, Abyssinian or "from Jerusalem", are appealed to for intercession against demons. The following are frequently encountered in amulets:

776 Abuna (bishop) Batra Maryam, Abyssinian saint, against snakebite (pro-
177 phylactic); St. George, "Qeddus Giyorgis", shown spearing a monster
755 (an old idea possibly dating to the Bel-Marduk battle among ancient Babylonians, and Ra and Horus in ancient Egypt).

St. Sebastian is often depicted in drawings, and appealed to against the Kagana and other threshhold demons. To keep out disease and
[751] evil, this amulet is often placed above the entrance to a hut; but not in the doorway itself, if someone inside is already sick, for this would block the exit of the demon.

125. Reich, Sigismund: Quatre Coups Magiques. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, Vol. 7-8, pp. 159-175. Institut Francais de Damas, 1937-8.

164 the country at the moment. It should, however, be kept in mind, that with the opening of communication lines and increased traffic and travel, leprosy must be controlled, otherwise it will increase.

Typhus Fever

Typhus fever is known to occur in at least three forms. Classical louse-borne typhus is endemic on the high plateau. Major Ecke of the American Typhus Commission visited Ethiopia in 1944 and found that, while the occurrence of murine typhus has not been scientifically proved, it is extremely likely that this form plays an important rôle. Recently a number of cases of tick typhus have been reported from southern Ethiopia.

The Central Laboratory in Addis Ababa
164 has isolated four local strains of rickettsia.
742 One of these has been constantly orchitic for 52 passages through guinea-pigs, while the other three were non-orchitic.

Cases fall clinically in two main groups.
164 One has a fulminant course with a very high mortality; the other is extremely mild. The high mortality among Italian laborers in the early days of the occupation (sometimes reaching 20 percent) was no doubt due to louse-borne typhus. Fatality in hospitals in Addis Ababa ranged from five to thirty-five percent. Typhus occurs in Ethiopia in the cold, wet months of July, August and September. Surveys have shown that lousiness is almost universal.

During the Italian occupation a large
751 scale vaccination campaign with Weigl vaccine was undertaken. This vaccine has recently been replaced by American vaccine, and large scale vaccination has been carried out since 1945.

Relapsing Fever

In 1868, relapsing fever broke out in
164 India and Hirsch (1886) states that it may have been introduced by Napier's soldiers returning from Ethiopia. The disease is no doubt old in Africa, where it occurs in both louse-borne and tick-borne forms.

[p.717A]

164

Elephantiasis with secondary fungus and bacterial infection.

around Massawa (Eritrea) was shown early in the war by Mahaffy and Sams. Too little work has so far been done in Ethiopia to express any definite opinion on the occurrence of yellow fever in this country. A series of sera taken in the Jimma region proved negative, but recently a case has been described from the Dagobur region (Ogaden), and a few positive sera have been found. For practical purposes Ethiopia is in the yellow fever area of Africa.

Smallpox

164 Smallpox is an old disease in Ethiopia. It is possible that an outbreak of smallpox
●751 in 370 A.D. in Arabia was connected with the Abyssinian invasion of this country. Hirsch (1886) states that one of the most intense foci of smallpox is found on African soil in the countries of the Nile basin, Egypt, Nubia, Kordofan and the Abyssinian Highlands. Rochet d'Hericourt (1841) describes the variolation practised in Shoa at the time of his visit:

> "They take pus from a sick person and make an incision on the leg of the person to receive the variolation. The virus is introduced into the incision, which is then covered with cotton."

[p.719A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training and Personality*. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[18] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formulation, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ïnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

758

• 751 758 the sunlight.[6] After the disease symptoms have disappeared, and the convalescent has regained his former vitality, some precautions may still be followed to prevent the return of the original syndrome, to which he [262] may have developed a vulnerability. For example, the former sickman may be forbidden to eat one or more of the foodstuffs which were included among the materia [178] medica of his cure. Often, an amulet containing dried materia medica of the primary medicine is also worn.

*278 Pharmacological Combinations. In the abstract, Amhara pharmacology can be considered as a corpus of discrete and varied instructions for a) conserving the latent healing power of botanicals, and b) converting this power into therapeutically effective agents. Seen from this perspective, Amhara pharmacolog y has the potential for a large number of logically possible combinations of instructions, ranging from those with few directions of any kind, to combinations with elaborate instructions in each pharmacological category. Although, empirically, Amhara herbal therapies probably fall short of the potential number of combinations, the combinations charac-

[757] [834] [6]Primary syphilis, in particular, sets elaborate requirements---the removal of all hair from the body, head, and face; in addition, there is a period of abstinence from coitus.

*278 *761 304 chases more exotic ingredients from an herbalist (in this transaction, acting as medhaniyt korac) who is known to treat the relevant ailment. Medicaments are mixed with the tokwariy's ink for all instances of therapeutic tat-
*755 tooing. The decision to include medicaments in prophy-
*757 lactic tattooing reflects the tokwariy's alternative stra-
304 tegies. In the first of these, the tattooing aims to drive away the pathogenic agent, by a combination of de-
*[278] signs. These designs are associated with the pathogen in "conventional" or pragmatic terms only; the medicaments used in tattooing are derived from herbalist therapies in which the medicament assisted in expelling the pathogen from the sickman. The second strategy is directed against purposive agents, those responsible for yisow syn and yibuda basiyta (discussed in chapter one). Here no medicaments are used, and the designs aim to distract the agent's attention and his disease-causing eye from vulnerable areas of the potential victim's body, particu-
304 larly away from his mouth. Children under ten are
302 rarely tattooed, but are protected from these agents by
* 751 bizarre haircuts (for example, three asymmetrically ar-
856 ranged patches of hair on an otherwise shaven skull, or a single patch on the brow), likewise intended to draw attention to less vulnerable body areas.

304 A variety of motifs are utilized by the tokwariy, necklaces of "beads", geometric decorations, crosses, and

*756 prior to professional consultation. Rather, it comments
*793 incompletely on the appropriateness of a therapy already
*759 applied, choosing between "household diagnosis is correct", and "household diagnosis is possilby incorrect". On the other hand, the debtera diagnoses by means of awdunigist, and can provide information concerning the choice of an effective therapy. Moreover, the debtera is generally consulted for serious ailments, many of which are identifiable as cases of poisoning (mera) or sorcery (aray) which have been instigated by a human enemy of the sickman. Here, the debtera diagnoses not only the correct disease-name, but also indicates the
• [751] probable identity of the malfactor.[32] Beyond its incidental therapeutic value, this is necessary for preventing the future occurence of this syndrome or an analogous one, by directing prophylaxis against the pathogenic agency and counter-measures (i.e., physical or magical assault, change of residence, or reconciliation) regarding the sickman's human persecutor.

*[787] Awdunigist addresses a client's congenital vulnera-
[539] bilities, whether or not these have been actually

[32] The debtera "assists" in identifying this individual, by indicating various characteristics, but does not actually name him.

breached. Thus, the information it provides regarding pathogenesis is equally relevant and detailed for prescribing prophylaxis, as it is for selecting therapy. The secular healer, in contrast, is unequipped to prescribe prophylaxis, except for the inconclusive and preliminary indications given by the hilimefoc. In addition to prescribing prophylaxes, the debtera provides protective kitabs for a great variety of medical contingencies. Among secular healers, only the tokwariy (tattooist) is able to perform prophylactic works, and these provide very imperfect protection against only a small number of ailments.

Laymen assess differences between their own medical procedures and those of debtera-healers most precisely with regards to the preparation and administration of therapy. Most details regarding the preparation and administration of the debtera's medical works are unavailable, directly at least, to the layman. In these areas, he perceives the debtera's medical works by means of a series of semblances, linking the "asmat" (magic) which appear in secular therapies with the esoteric activities the debtera is known or assumed to perform in his own therapies. Among the important "asmat" of secular therapies are the use of prescribed instruments for gathering and processing of medicaments, the special condition of the gatherer, the numerological content of pharmacology

*793 The debtera-healer faces two practical obstacles
• [951] to obtaining public recognition of his power. First, his most frequent works are prophylactic kitabs; however, prophylactic success can be assessed only over a period of many years.[45] Second, the overt expression of abinet powers is often prosaic, without visible signs
*[787] of the extraordinary forces at work. These two diffi-
[539] culties in communicating his power are met, in part, by the debtera's display of esoteria during diagnosis, when he manipulates avdunigist texts in the presence of his clients, and during the preparation of therapy, when the otherwise secretive debtera sends his client to obtain some exotic ingredient which is necessary for the work.

*756 Mithat. The debtera goes beyond these displays,
*793 however, to simulate, through the use of mithat, dramatic
*755 demonstrations of his putative magical powers (asmat). The debtera distinguishes mithat from other abinet subjects by the fact that mithat require no recitation or ritual beyond the spurious performances required to impress his public, and that the mundane materials used in the work are sufficient to produce the desired effects.

[434] [45] The sale of kitabs usually provides the abinet-using debtera with the greatest portion of his income.

136 "meset", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses, does not live in colonies. It makes honey which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "tenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens.

[776 237]

Scorpion ("gint"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice.

[752]

Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins.

[241 251]

13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

231 556 Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

582

757 The pulse is of no interest to the woggesha (unlike ancient medicine in Asia). He relies as heavily on violent purgatives as the ancient Egyptians, and on cauterization (much in the ancient Hippocratic tradition).

The enema, widespread in Asia, is not used. But the intestinal purgatives against tapeworm, especially the famous "kosso" (Quassia abyssinica), have been developed to complex sequences in medical cure. Butter is used as an ointment and mild laxative, sometimes boiled with specific herbs.

The instruments used by the "woggesha" are very simple: a sharp knife, simple forceps or pliers, wire for ripping (e.g. the soft palate), the horn of a cow or antelope or zebra (called "wäsänt") for cupping ("äggärä"). The latter procedure is not used often, it is tried primarily to cure a chronic headache, by shaving an area on the rear of the skull, making a small incision, and drawing the blood by means of the horn. Artificial nosebleeds are also occasionally produced ("ärämärä"). But drawing blood is done in great secrecy, for the patient is ashamed to have it become known that his "blood is bad". Instead of applying leeches, some patients are taken to a waterhole or lowland lake known to contain leeches, where they expose the sick part of the body in the water, waiting for the leeches to fasten themselves.

752 Some "woggesha" have a great reputation for having saved patients bitten by snakes. The fact is that most Amhara, living on the highland plateau, rarely encounter a really poisonous snake, and suffer most often from the harmless (though painful) bite of the "talba" snake. The patient would recover anyway in due course.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means emperor, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thousand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and courtyards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

*753 Here, again, the consequent ailments are caused by contact-irritation. Although urine-mists can cause pubic sores, more frequently gerifta-mists are inhaled, to affect the body internally. In this role, the mist may irritate the walls of the respiratory tract, causing sneezing and coughing, and penatrate to the heart, where it induces severe local pain, rapid pulsation and its attendant effects.

*753 Some humans also possess illness-causing abilities.
*278 Laymen often know recipes for poisons which can be added
• 762 to a victim's food and drink. Although the inventory of such recipes is great, the poisons' effects tend to be uniform, differing mainly in the rapidity with which death is brought about: Once ingested, the toxin agonizes and destroys the digestive wosfat; simultaneously, it wahses up to chafe the heart into intensive overactivity. Symptomatically, the victim experiences nausea, vomiting, lassitude, and---owing to the heart's cognitive function---severe disoreintation. When a poison fails to produce a rapid and painful death, the victim's demise is preceeded by several weeks of indiscriminate and aggressive anti-social behavior as a consequence of the heart's deterioration.

*753 Amhara sorcerors can cause a great variety of ail-
754 ments, as well as other misfortunes not directly affecting the victim's physical well-being. Knowledge of

*753 *755 provide information from which therapeutic strategies *757 can be tailored. Amhara use four broad strategies, each linked to a specific etiological context.

• 752 The first of these therapeutic strategies seeks a remission of symptoms by returning the body's parts (generally the limbs and extremeties) to their appro- *[192] priate positions. For example, excessive walking may dislocate jimat cords of the lower leg from their channels, producing painful lameness (setir, "sprain"). Blood flows into the empty channels, preventing the jimat from returning to their customary locations. Therapy begins with the removal, by cupping, of intrusive blood. An herbal bath is then applied locally to "soften" muscle and jimat, and the latter are then massaged into the now unoccupied channels. This strategy coincides with the afflictions characterized by etiology A, and includes broken bones and muscle paralysis as well.

*753 A second strategy calls for the excision of cer- 752 tain body parts. Excision is limited to diseased tonsils, uvula, and teeth; conditions which are explained by an etiology of type B. These ailments are most often caused by gerifta which has fallen onto the afflicted region. Unlike the situation with other gerifta-caused ailments, there is no other effective therapeutic strategy here, and a reasonably good post-operative prognosis can be assumed.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*753 *767 A third strategy is associated with etiologies B, C, and D. Remission of symptoms is obtained by removing the pathogenic substance from contact with the sickman's person. If a homogeneous and inanimate pathogenic substance has been ingested by the sickman (etiology B), the therapeutic strategy is to expel it physically through one or more of the sickman's body orifices. Most often, an emetic or purge is used, although inhalants and fumitories are also employed and diaphoretic *[192] effects are sometimes sought. A few pathogenic substances, such as that associated with anfula (an influenza-like ailment), are removed with the blood, by cupping over the area of the body which the pathogen is known to favor. Where the pathogenic substance has been in contact with the sickman's skin rather than being internal, lustrations, poultices, ointments, and medical powders are applied.

*753 *755 Where the introjected pathogen is the self-conscious agent found in etiology C (i.e., the buda), the strategy remains essentially the same. However, the practitioner must, in dialogue with the disease agent, convince the buda to quit the sickman. To this end, the practitioner • 752 uses a fumitory offensive to the introjected agent. Ailments of type D etiology (i.e., mers, poison) impose a special requirement on the therapist. There are numerous toxic formulae, and, although all produce similar symp-

752 tomatic effects, each is believed to be complemented by a unique antidote. Cure therefore demands that the poison be identified in order for the antidote to be obtained.

*753 A fourth therapeutic strategy is directed against
*755 ailments of etiology E, where ganel and zar have caused ailments by unknown means. Here, a remission of symptoms is sought by convincing (a zar) or forcing (a ganel) to moderate or relinquish his influence over the sickman.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

THE WOGEYŠA (CHIRURGEON)

*757 Wogeyšas are divided into three named categories,
*759 the tagañ, the intil korac, and the yiters medhaniyt
*192 awakiy. Practitioners in each category diagnose a set of related ailments, perform therapeutic operations to remedy them, and administer prophylaxis to prevent the development of ailments to which the therapy makes the sickman vulnerable. Laymen have little difficulty in selecting an appropriate kind of wogeyša, since the ailments treated by each category of wogeyša are characterized by unambiguous syndromes which are easily identified by laymen. In addition, a wogeyša's range of medical competence is defined symptomatically; that is to say, his therapies are relevant to the entire range of etiological facts which can be associated with each syndrome he treats. This contrasts with herbalist therapies which are each tied to a specific pathogenic agent, so that often symptomatic information is of itself insufficient for determining whether the therapy of a particular category of herbalist is appropriate to the disease episode at hand. The following paragraphs describe the sequence of activities which characterize the professional activities of each category of wogeyša.

*759 For the layman, the symptoms of fracture (sebero)
• 752 and therapeutically related ailments are distinctive

*759
• 752 enough to limit selection of a practitioner to the tagañ, bonesetter. Symptomatically, these ailments are experienced by the Amhara as 1) severe local pain and 2) the inability to move the affected areas (generally limbs, extremeties, and joints). As with other categories of wogeyba, the tagañ's range of competence, symptomatically defined, is clear cut from the layman's point of view. There are ailments not treatable by a tagañ, although characterized by one or the other of these symptoms. In these instances, however, the two symptoms do not appear in combination, but are accompanied by other symptoms which fall unequivocally beyond
*[192] the tagañ's competence. Kofa, for example, is an ailment not treated by the tagañ, although it is characterized by an inability to move the limbs. This syndrome includes, however, high fever and generalized pain, both beyond the tagañ's therapeutic powers. On his arrival at the sickman's, the tagañ conducts his own diagnosis, examining the affected area and looking for other relevant symptoms. His interest is not so much to confirm the generic character of the ailment, as to discover its specific nature (sometimes classifiable under a disease name with which laymen are unfamiliar), and to evaluate the complexities of the specific case. A fracture (sebero) always involves more than a broken

• 762 bone, for jimat cords in the area of the break are invariably stretched and malaligned. It is the twisted jimat, in fact, which prevent the sickman from moving the affected area, and whose effects the tagañ knows
*[192] to be symptomatically dominant. Thus, the tagañ seeks to learn whether a bone has actually been broken, whether only jimat are involved (a condition known as walemta), or whether an organ other than bone has distorted the jimat (for example, intrusive blood in an ailment known as setir).

The diagnosis and operation are conducted in the sickman's hut, away from the sun, and are attended by sufficient man---relatives and neighbors of the sickman, and companions of the tagañ---to restrain the sickman while the practitioner works over him. No anaesthetics
*[753] are used during any part of the treatment. Before his
*[192] diagnosis, the tagañ cleanses the affected area with water, since dirt is associated with both gerifta-caused effects and certain superficial infections, known as kusil, that often follow contusions and other injuries to
*[278] the skin. After cleansing, the area is massaged with an unguent, made of domestic oils or fat, into which the leaves of medicaments have been minced and mixed. This unguent softens muscle and jimat, allowing the tagañ to palpate the region for his diagnosis.

Most tagañs reckon the diagnostic massage also

• 752 capable of rendering bone and jimat supple enough to be manipulated into their appropriate positions. It is important that the bone be set precisely, for if improperly aligned it will stretch the jimat and cause them to twist once more, bringing a recurrence of the original symptoms.

[413] [177] If palpation or visual inspection indicate that the bone has splintered, an incision is made over the break and the splinters are removed with an instrument specially brought for this purpose. These instruments are of European manufacture and exotic by local standards, ranging from cosmetic tweezers to surgical forceps. After the bone has been set and the jimat moved into their proper relationships, a wooden splint is secured over the fracture and is tied with strips of toga cloth.

*[757] *[278] *[192] When an incision is made, an herbal poultice is placed over the cut and wrapped beneath the splint, as a precaution against subsequent infection (kusil). Every tagañ owns a recipe for an unguent, and the medicaments used in it are kept a professional secret. However, not all tagañs have recipes for kusil prophylaxis. Without the latter, a tagañ who wishes to treat compound fractures must obtain the services of an herbalist whose specialty is the treatment of kusil. Similarly the tagañ who is able to treat compound fractures

*759 without the assistance of another practitioner is him-
• 762 self identifiable as a kusil herbalist (yikusil medhaniyt awakiy), a non-wogeyša professional identity.

752 While the splint is worn, the sickman is directed
262 to eat quantities of a restorative (atmit); for frac-
*[192] ture, this consists of fatty meats, which are believed conducive to the mending of bones. After the splint has been removed, the affected region is regularly massaged with the unguent compound which had been used during diagnosis and therapy. The massage aims to restore normal flexibility to the affected body part. Some therapists continue the atmit regimen during this period and even beyond it.

*759 Alone among Amhara secular practitioners, the
752 tagañ practices a therapy which immobilizes the sickman for an extended period. During recuperation, therapeutic massages must continue, and the instability of the sickman's jimat preclude his moving about. When a tagañ is famous for difficult therapies, such as breaking and resetting improperly set bones or treating paralyzed limbs, he attracts sickmen from great dis-
[758] tances. Since these sickmen cannot leave the tagañ until pronounced cured, they require access to local accomodations and the assistance of a relative or servant to prepare their meals and tend to other personal

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needs.[1]

* 759 The wogeysa's remaining therapies---excision of
+753 tonsils (ankar) and teeth---are characterized by simpler
752 diagnosis and treatment than are the tagañ's works.
[843] Swollen and inflamed tonsils (komahaw) may be caused by
* [192] gerifta; in infants, however, the condition may be congenital, brought on by the over-exertions of the child's mother during pregnancy. It is considered a potentially mortal affliction, since the sickman is unable to swallow and loses weight rapidly; eventually the organ bursts and death follows. Tonsils are excised with the assistance of a reed through which a loop of horse
[413] hair has been slipped. With this, the offending organ
[199] is held fast, and excised by whatever type of blade the therapist regards as most efficacious (e.g., a razor, imported 'Arab' knife, or fragment of glass).[2] Kusil

[1]During 1966, the foremost tagañ of Begemder had the following sickmen living simultaneously in three huts which he had erected on his fields; 1) a woman from Woggera (see map 1), with a fractured clavicle, assisted by her daughter; 2) a four year old boy, with a shoulder injury, accompanied by both parents; 3) a woman with a broken fore-arm, from Belsea, assisted by a locally acquired servant; 4) a woman from Tigre, with an immobile right arm, assisted by a locally acquired servant.

[2]In the Gondar area, both tonsils and uvula are classified as 'ankar'. Elsewhere in Begemder, they are often distinguished as 'ankar' and 'intil'. Therapeutically, diseased tonsils and uvula are treated the same, and a wogeysa capable of treating one invariably treats the other.

*753 39
*759 is considered a potential, but not immediate danger
• 752 following excision. If an ankar korac ("tonsil cut-
*[278] ter") is also a kusil herbalist, he may smear a pro-
phylactic unguent over the face of the excision, but
*(192] prophylaxis is not generally given. Even when kusil
does occur (the syndrome known as yiankar mokusil),
it is expected to regress either without any treat-
ment, or by benefit of a commonly known herbal infu-
[865] sion. A young child is considered too small and
frail to endure this operation and the subsequent
period of increased vulnerability to gerifta and kusil.
* [278] In such cases, the child is given a palliative to drink;
in addition, a portion of the ingredients used in the
drink is prepared as an unguent, and rubbed onto the
affected area, against that time when the child will
be old enough to withstand the operation.

*[192] The dental wogeyša is known as a "yiters medhaniyt
awlakiy". As with other wogeyša-treated ailments, tooth-
ache can be traced to multiple causes, whose identifica-
tion is only marginally important to the practitioner.
Toothache is caused either by sun-borne gerifta or by
an intrusive worm whose presence is made apparent by
[413] the caries it bores out. The ultimate and most success-
[177] ful therapy of the yiters medhaniyt awlakiy is extrac-
* [278] tion, with the use of European dental pliers. Because
of the pain associated with this operation, laymen often

*753 *759 *278 • 752 *(192] use local applications of commonly known palliatives, until subsequent discomfort obliges them to consult a tooth extractor.[3] In addition to simple toothache (yiters himem), gerifta may result in rheumatoid pain (kurtimat) in the cheek teeth and adjacent jaw, accompanied by swollen, itching gums. Although herbal poultices are available for this syndrome, only tooth ex-
*759 traction promises permanent relief. The yiters medhaniyt
752 awlakiy also treats the newly irrupted teeth of year-old
846 infants. The upper lateral incisors are believed to often cause infants severe pain, resulting in incessant
[413] crying, diarrhea and failure to suckle properly. To remedy this dangerous situation, the practitioner removes the offending teeth using an awl-like implement. In each of these dental operations, kusil is considered no real danger, and prophylaxis is not given.

*759 Toothache is perhaps the only ailment for which
752 wogeyša and herbalist (see below) both offer therapies.
*[278] The differences here are illuminating: The dental wogeyša's therapy is only incidentally concerned with causes,

[3]In the abstract, these palliatives (distilled spirits known as arakiy and ginger root) are only effective against the intrusive worm, but in reality they are used even when evidence of the worm agent (til), i.e., caries, are not apparent.

*759 and his therapeutic domain is defined symptomatically
• 752 to include all tooth ailments; the herbalist's therapy
*[278] is limited to destroying the intrusive worm (by local application of the ember of a selected herbal) and removing it (with an herbal gargle).

*759 None of the three categories of wogeyšas (boneset-
*757 ter, tonsil excisor, tooth extractor) is graded internally with regard to therapeutic differences, as is the case with herbalists. There is sufficient technical uniformity among wogeyšas of each category so that laymen cannot distinguish the therapeutic procedures of, say, one ankar korac against those of another.

To be sure, there are some technical differences among the practitioners of a single named specialty---in the composition of medicaments (e.g., unguents), the instruments which are used, and the numerological content of therapies---but the advantage which any of these give a practitioner is in itself never sufficient to explain his record of therapeutic success. It is rather a wogeyša's manual skills as a manipulator of errant body parts or as an excisor of diseased ones which is believed to set him apart from his less successful colleagues.

The wogeyša's numerological information indicates optimal amounts of therapy, neither too slight to produce a remission of symptoms, nor so excessive that a new un-
[762] desireable condition is caused the sickman. In tagañ

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*759 therapies, for example, some practitioners contend that
• [752] the single diagnostic massage for fracture is insufficient for setting a broken bone. They claim that a massage on each of three successive days is required; two days massage will not soften the bone enough for proper ailgnment, while four days massage may distort it. Similar numerological considerations in tagañ therapies relate to the manufacture of medicaments, the duration of the splinting period, the number of days during which atmit is consumed, and the number of repetitions required by the final massage. Because these numerological elements are considered inextricably bound, sometimes diffusely, to one or more other components of a therapy, they cannot be freely inserted into the therapies of other tagañs.

THE HERBALIST

76 The Amhara herbalist treats ailments caused by the ingestion or introjection of pathogenic substances into a victim, and by his superficial contact with such substances. In this section, ailments characterized by ingested or introjected pathogenic substances will be considered first. The assumptions made by Amhara herbal medicine are relatively simple here: In order to obtain a remission of the disease symptoms, the responsible

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*757 is then slain and thrown along the roadside or trail.[7] Chapter one describes an analogous therapy for ankalis (measles), involving the preparation of foodstuffs.

*759 Such offerings are more conspicuously a part of thera-
*793 pies performed by balazar-healers or directed by debtera-healers, since these therapists are able to determine the particular offering regarded as most desireable by the causal agent.

*757 Finally, two household techniques, supplementary to professional therapies, are each limited to a single disease agent, which is responsible for a single named ailment. In the first, an attempt is made to frighten away the introjected agent by exposing it to a substance
* [752] that it abhors. Here, the sickman has been bitten or
* [192] slavered upon by a rabid dog (matfow wuwša). He must submerge himself in running water, lest he be later overwhelmed by this hydrophobic dog-like agent now within
* [192] him. The second household technique attempts to eject the introjected agent for jaundice (yilliliyt bašiyta) by verbal means. Here, the sickman must, unawares, incorporate (i.e., eat) the physical aspect of the causal agent (a bat), and then expel its incorporeal aspect

[7] If the swollen nodes co-occur with other symptoms, such as superficial infection (kusil), professional therapy is simultaneously obtained for the latter ailment.

*755 *756 This procedure, of three horn-fulls twice a day, *759 is known as gomac, and is characteristic of all of the *759 agamiy's cuppings. Cupping is also performed for anfula, *[192] an influenza-like syndrome. Here, the pathogenic substance (baǂiyta) is a moving target which must be followed over the sickman's trunk. Cupping begins over that side of the chest experiencing the greatest discomfort. The baǂiyta typically flees from the agamiy's horn to the other half of the chest; the sickman tracing its movement with his finger until the agamiy sees the impression of the baǂiyta, and recommences sucking. The baǂiyta's final flight always takes it over the sickman's upper back, where the agamiy cups for a third and final time. No incisions are made for anfula, and here the extruded blood is examined for evidence of white substances (being [752] the baǂiyta), in addition to coagulated material. The cupper also treats snake bite, chronic pain (wuwgat), and tender swelling of the leg (igoribac).

*765 The agamiy's second therapeutic strategy is used *764 while assisting the chirurgeon in drawing out intrusive *769 blood responsible for distorting jimat cords (an ailment *759 known as setir). Here, the chirurgeon selects the loca- 752 *[192] tion for the incision; the gomac procedure is followed, and the extruded fluid is examined for evidence of the hardened intrusive blood (tikur waha), whose removal is necessary before the jimat can be properly aligned

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through the chirurgeon's massage.

Bleeding is regarded as a fatiguing experience for the client, and must be followed by a rest of two or three days. Bleeding for ras mitat is considered an exception, and no rest is required. However, the sickman is particularly vulnerable to gerifta during recuperation and, so, cannot leave his hut for fear of a relapse.

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The cupper is unique among lay practitioners in several respects. First, he occasionally works under the direction of another category of practitioner, the tagan (wogeyša). Second, there are special physical requirements; the agamiy must have all of his incisors, and the upper and lower teeth must meet in an unbroken plane. Third, the agamiy exposes himself to certain dangers in the performance of this therapy. Because he must remove a pathogenic substance through the medium of the sickman's blood, there is the danger that, should any of the blood enter his own mouth, the agamiy may himself fall ill with the ailment he is treating. In addition, contact with this blood threatens those chronic ailments from which the sickman suffers (such as the rheumatoid pains associated with kitin, syphilis).

The agamiy's cup is a short, hollow bovine horn, whose tip has been removed. Selected leaves, which have been dried and then steeped to make them pliable, are

*278 *759 peutic effectiveness. The uniformity of the chirurgeons' healing powers can be traced to the fact that their operations are relatively simple and easily learned. [602] A man begins his apprenticeship while still a youth, under the tutledge of a senior kinsman. Generally, he does not assume professional status until his mentor has died or retired, or until he has moved beyond the natal parish and out of the range of possible competition with his healer-kinsman. In either event, the apprenticeship is lengthy enough to ensure technical mastery, within the limits set by the healer's natural abilities. [752] The tagañ (bonesetter) is an exception, since his operations are by no means simple, and his natural skills more significantly affect his success as a therapist. Thus, there are more considerable differences in healing powers among tagañs than among other chirurgeons.

Second among these differences setting chirurgeon apart from herbalist are the criteria which healers each employ to decide whether a specific disease episode is appropriate to his therapy. The medical domain of a chirurgeon can be defined exclusively according to symptomatic criteria, grouped into unambiguous syndromes. *278 *767 *759 Therapeutic failure can usually be explained only in terms of the chirurgeon's lack of competence. For the herbalist, symptomatic criteria, by themselves, are ambiguous. The symptomatic definition of each herbalist

000 intend to profit from her curing.

NARRATIVE 3

*757 While out playing, ten year old Tesfahun and two
• 752 companions were bitten by a dog. After they returned to their ward, Tesfahun told his mother, Berey, what had happened; and the woman took him to a nearby stream. She directed him to wade into it, so that he would not develop the fear of water that is characteristic of the later stages of rabies (yimatfow wuwša bašiyta), when the introjected dog-like spirit agent begins to make its
*278 hydrophobic presence felt. In her village there lived
*757 a yimatfow wuwša bašiyta medhaniyt seci. From this her-
*759 balist, Berey received a root with the directions that, once it had been ground and mixed with water, it must be
*278 immediately consumed or would loose its potency. On the
*755 next day, before she had an opportunity to prepare the
*756 infusion, Berey fell into a conversation with a neighbor
*757 regarding the previous day's happenings. The neighbor,
*759 a Muslim, remarked that a fukura (here, a Muslim healer analogous to a "weak" debtera) living in another ward was famous for his ability to treat rabies. Tesfahun was taken to the fukura, who commanded him to undress and gaze into the practitioner's mirror. While the boy stared at it, the fukura, who was a blind man, did like-

PART VI: HEALING BODY AND SPIRIT

753 177 The "living museum" aspect of Abyssinian culture is perhaps nowhere so evident as in Abyssinian medicine. Both basic concepts and practical functions recall much that has been derived with little change (though much culture loss) from ancient Egypt, the ancient Near East, ancient Greek culture, plus regional ecological developments in Abyssinia itself.

753 756 Many ailments are regarded by the Amhara as closely interwoven in the body and spirit of the patient, and in fact, frequently no sharp distinction is made between bodily and spiritual ailments; so that the same illness may sometimes be treated by the surgeon-herbologist ("wozzesha"), and if not successfully cured, by the practitioner of exorcising magic, the "dabtera" scribe; or the practitioner of sympathetic magic, of the "zar" cult; or even the sorcerer, the "tanqway". Only the latter is considered illegal. However, a fairly clear distinction is made between organic ailments and functional ailments, and on the basis of whichever preliminary diagnosis is made, it is decided which practitioner to call in first.

756 The association of the dabtara with the church has increased his activities in recent years from that of amulet-writer and herbologist to many of the functions of outright magic, particularly since the tanqway has become illegal. The dabtara always seems to have enjoyed the highest respectability and trust of any of the practitioners, for, as in ancient Greece, his activity in the official religion is believed to extend over the ills of the body and over the world of the spirits.

753 There is no philosophical basis for the development of medical systems among the Amhara, no reasoned system. Their medical concepts are pre-Galen, at most Aristotelian. The dabtara have, or, in some cases claim

756 to have, books handed down from past centuries, containing secret formulas, recipes, pharmacopeia of an intermingled empirical and magical nature. They warn inquirers that the public revelation of th these secrets would create great social dangers at the hands of the irresponsible.

171 In the days of ancient Egypt, Abyssinia was a supplier of materials for embalming, such as incense, myrrh, etc. It is therefore little wonder that much of Abyssinian medicine resembles that of ancient Egypt, e.g. the strong emphasis on purgatives used regularly.

753 The Amhara shares with peasants in many other parts of the world his belief in "strong" medicine, powerful in taste or heroic in effect or both. Since the Italian invasion, his belief in injections, which bring such miraculously quick results, has assumed magical proportions. Generally he distrusts and fears new medicines.

1. Healing the Body

A. The Surgeon-Herbologist-Empiricist ("woggesha"): Utilizing Nature.

759 Unlike the other medical practioners mentioned earlier, the woggesha does not try to dominate nature; he specializes in utilizing what nature provides and in lending a helping hand. He is most often the first consulted, a kind of general practitioner, family doctor; and since he refrains from magical undertakings, he is neither feared nor suspected of witchcraft, which the other practioners, even the dabtara, often are.

Like the dabtara, the woggesha is often an expert herbologist, called "agabi serar" (lit. who knows the work of nature). While walking in the bush, along brooks in the valley or in the "dega"

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

753 An important part of diagnosis is the decision whether an ailment is contagious ("fera") or not, and whether it is inherited, congenital ("quranna") or not. If inherited, marriages with such families are despised as not "attentam" (good stock), the same term used for descent from slaves or other "race" or both.

759 In general, the woggesha is most often called in organic ailments;
757 shares with the "dabtara" the practice of functional ailments; while the latter shares with the "zar" doctor the treatment of mental ailments.

2. Healing the Spirit

A. The "Zar" cult of supernatural spirits, its institution and cosmology.

754 755 One of the most complex developments of Amhara non-material culture, to which a great deal of mental ingenuity is devoted, is the healing of mental ailments. But this goes far beyond treatment and cure. The "zar" doctors do not limit themselves to treating some of the aforementioned mental ailments. They organise the afflicted, before, during and after "cure", into "zar" societies, which bear the earmarks of a religious cult, and to which the individual belongs henceforth until his or her (more often her) death. Here he finds the warm companionship of the fellow-afflicted; opportunity for expressive behavior; the religious feeling of having been of service; the personal attention of a personal possessive and protective spirit; and the visible leadership of the "zar" doctor who heads the organizational unit.

794 756 The zar doctor often a matriarch, differs only in degree from her flock; for she, too, must be possessed, must be forever afflicted by spirits. But she has managed to learn to control them, call upon her more powerful protective spirits to aid her against evil spirits,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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There are male "zars" and female ones. The latter are considered more dangerous and more difficult to placate. Usually a "zar" spirit prefers to "possess" a human of the opposite sex, which results in a magical coitus, and causes epilectic seizures or catatonic states. In the latter case, usually a woman being "slept with" by a jealous male "zar", she seems drowsy and "turned within herself", disinterested in the environment, forgetting to eat. In the former case, the magical coitus sends her into orgasms of twisted arms and legs; or sometimes, twirling frenziedly; sometimes moving on all fours, emitting raucous sounds, biting the unwary, while being "ridden like a horse" by the "zar".

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The "zars" of today are regarded as having geographical homelands. In abyssinia their central location is believed to be in the province of Tigre, where they prefer woodland grottoes on the highland plateau, and where, if taken off guard under certain circumstances, they can become temporarily visible. Some zar doctors even narrow this central headquarters to a locality known as "Halawal" near the existing town of Makalle. On occasion the "zar" spirits there are believed to hold dances, even orgies. But most often they live in families, much like human Abyssinians, though on a superhuman level. They can ride elephants, [825] lions, etc, to whom they refer as "farāsay" (lit. my horse), the same term they use to humans whom they "ride" during possession. But they despise the hyena, which is the "horse" of the evil "buda" spirit. The "cattle" of the zar spirits consists of wild gazelles, antelopes - the wild relatives of cattle domesticated by humans. Zar spirits are fond of peppery sauce ("wot") and "enjāra" bread much like Abyssinians. Tree stumps serve them as tables. They like the flowers and green

X794 756 repression and penalty, for no layman can know whether or not it is the spirit who speaks through the doctor in any given situation.

X794 164 The most frequent types of mental afflictions which the "zar" doctor is called upon to treat are forms of hysteria (mostly in women), catatonic states (also mostly in women), and violent forms of possession including epileptic states (mostly in men). But he also treats some functional ailments, notably rheumatism, which is believed to have been caused by a "lazy zar" who wants his "horse" to stay in one place.

X794 776 753 Though every person is considered a potential "horse" for a zar, certain personality types are considered particularly vulnerable to possession by evil zars: persons with sad, returing, malancholic natures; women who feel unloved and neglected by their husbands and thus offer little resistance to a male "zar lover"; persons who wish to escape, e.g. chronic drunkards.

X794 753 758 Apathy, leading to catatonic states if not treated, indicates incipient possession by an evil zar. The patient, often a woman, withdraws into a corner, sits there huddled up, refuses to accept food. Until a zar doctor can be persuaded to come and take on the case, family and friends try to give the patient first aid. For, if she were to remain long in this state, it is believed that her "zar" could "ride" her to death. Therefore, relatives and neighbors come quickly, sing to the patient, entertain her, promise her whatever her heart desires, and generally try to create a merry atmosphere. Finally they try to lure the patient into watching them dance, and try to raise the patient playfully, so as to join them. The patient is never left alone until the doctor comes.

X 794 164 753 Psychotic cases among women usually assume a domineering male personality, such as believing themselves to be the ruthless Emperor Theodore, or the bloody Ras Mikael of Tigre. The zar doctor, however, elicits the confession of a "zar", so that he can treat the case.

Hysteria is believed mostly due to possession by female zars, who are more mischievous, silly and irresponsible than evil. If such a female zar possesses a male patient, he will manifest characteristics regarded as feminine, such as silly gaiety, and teasing behavior. If [838] not "awakened" quickly, such a state may become chronic and gradually destroy his masculinity. More common is hysteria among women, in which case the possession manifests itself as reversion to infantile behavior: the patient talks babytalk, skips about like a young goat and shamelessly demands little gifts even from strangers and passers-by. The patient must be humored, given gifts or at least promises, for the zar, speaking through the patient, may say: "If you don't give me this, I will kill my horse" (the patient).

Violent forms of possession may manifest themselves by aggression directed against the patient himself, such as beating himself, hitting the head against the wall, eating dirt, trying to climb the wall, wanting to run out at night to roam with hyenas. In some cases, if accompanied by nosebleed, or "weeping blood", this is diagnosed as "buda" and becomes a case for the dabtara practitioner. In cases of running amok, with aggression directed against others, it may be diagnosed as "ganyen" (djinn) and be treated either by the dabtara, zar doctor, or tanqway sorcerer.

X 794 776 758 The most common form of possession, particularly in women, begins with a kind of incubation. The male zar possessing her is jealous of her human husband, wants her to obtain a divorce and join a zar society

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 TK 153 cultivating the spirit. If she is already pregnant, the zar may cause a miscarriage; either because he wants his human mate "pure", or to take revenge on the husband for miserly refusal of a chicken or young goat requested by the wife for the "zar" sacrifice - which may cause the zar to take the fetus as his "äqwädäsha" (lit. love gift).

When a male zar appears to a human female in a dream, he takes the form of a husband visiting his wife, if he is in a benevolent mood; if [231] angry, he takes the form of a black dog (though Ethiopian dogs are reddish) or of a snake. The actual possession, in this relationship is a magical coitus, expressed in the violently sensuous "gurri" dance. Some women possessed by a male zar drape their shamma (toga) in male fashion; some even put on ornaments of oldtime male warriors (lion mane, leopard skin), male jodphurs - all at the request of her male "zar", in which case she is actually "dressing" him.

X794 TK A woman who sleeps alone risks being struck by a male zar, and even neighbors sometimes admit having heard a "spirit visitor" at [845] night. When a baby is born deformed, it is regarded as the result [844] of a magical coitus. Male zar spirits avoid menstruating women, and during this period they may not sit on the skin of an animal that has been sacrificed to the zar. Male zar prefer to possess beautiful human females, and add to their beauty; so that some male [832] connoisseurs of female beauty claim that a woman's glowing charms leave her when her protective zar ("waqabi") leaves her. Therefore, there is some ambivalence in the hostility of human husbands to the possession of their wives by male zars; which may contribute to the frequency of such possession. For, at least, the neglected wife is then no longer ignored and may even become the center of attraction.

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Possession of a man by a female zar occurs less often but is much more difficult to treat. Magical coitus in this case may render him impotent with human females. In some cases it manifests itself in nocturnal emissions of semen (wet dreams). It is believed that if a zar doctor (or a male patient) is possessed by a female zar at a young enough age, prior to puberty (which is very rare), he will develop female secondary sex characteristics, such as incipient breasts; some even say menstruation. Only zar doctors feel they have sufficient control over the situation to invite female zars to possess them, for the value of a few protective female zars as revealers of occult secrets is great.

Female zars are regarded as "uneducated" and "undisciplined"; none of them are believed to have "studied in Jerusalem" where many wise male zars are believed to have gone to school. Many female zars therefore never can become protective spirits. At most they can be flattered by special chants, and bribed to remain inactive, i.e. seated on the back of the "horse". More female than male zars are downright evil.

[753]
[843]

This is especially true when a female zar possesses a human female. This is most often due to jealousy, and is so diagnosed if a woman suffers a series of miscarriages. For, while male zars are regarded as "striking the shoulder", female zars immediately" strike at the genitals".

One of the basic relationships with a zar spirit of the opposite sex, the "magical coitus", is solemnized by the zar doctor in a "marriage communion". The possessed is then referred to as "mushärra" (newlywed), and is attended by two "mizä" (best men, like in a human wedding) from among the circle of the society of the possessed, who ever thereafter are in attendance every time another possession occurs,

754 and are permitted to be dirty most of the time. As for males, the
776 buda also likes to feast on healthy-looking, fat, handsome warriors
[53] and chiefs. "Buda" is the general diagnosis when a person always known as healthy suddenly sickens and dies. Therefore it is feared even by the bravest warriors.

754 Even at present, when "modernization" is proceeding from the
776 central government, "buda" belief has not shrunk. It has simply
178 expanded to take in modern attractions. Thus, police officers in the provincial towns are believed to have attracted "buda", who has developed a taste for officers in nice, new uniforms; and is believed to be "greedy" for healthy-looking boys doing modern gymnastics in their new elementary schools, eager to consume their physical prowess and grace. Even rich, strong, fat, gay, well dressed Europeans are regarded as vulnerable, but less so because "they do not fear him". Fear attracts him too.

"Buda" is most active in August, at the height of the rainy season.
[82] His favorite time to strike is just after a heavy thunderstorm, when tornado-like gusts of wind seem to pull up the hut and try to pull the roof off. This would enable "buda" to "see" his victims better, and cannibalize them.

751 Many ways of trying to prevent victimization by "buda", or at
754 least of reducing one's vulnerability, have been devised over the
776 centuries. To reduce vulnerability, one should not appear too happy, too gay. One should not become an object of open admiration, or of envy and jealousy. One should further paraphrase the tabooed word "buda", by saying "watch your eyes". Newlyweds, who are very vulnerable, should cover their glowing faces for ten days, to keep

754 [64] Spitting or coughing blood (which may be tuberculosis?) is regarded as another sure sympton of buda, especially the demon "Wagshum". The buda is believed to cause widespread epidemics, if he is powerful and many vulnerable victims are in the area.

776 754 Certain buda are believed to have very specialized "educated" tastes. One likes to rob the voice of debtara choristers who chants harmoniously in church (perhaps in revenge for the same debtara's part-time, extracurricular activity as exorciser), whereupon the voice will begin to croak and steadily grow worse, until the singer cannot even carry a tune. When a cow gradually [825] stops giving milk, despite a big udder, this is ascribed to the special taste of an "educated" buda.

c. Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis

755 [753] Sometimes the victim declares that he has had a dream in which a certain suspected person, e.g. an ironsmith, has been "eating" him. This can become very dangerous for the accused.

The question which diagnosis has to solve is not "what's eating you?", but "who is eating you?"; for the buda spirit and sorcerer are one person.

When the exorciser appears, the "buda" reacts violently. Even apathetic patients suddenly break out in violent peals of laughter, howl like a hyena, crawl about on all fours. The exorciser begins to question the "buda" to find out his personal identity. The "buda" replies through the mouth of the victim, in a hoarse voice, which is attested by all Amhara onlookers as "not the normal voice of the victim". The diagnostic procedure is a battle of wits between the exorciser and the "buda". The

773 On the way he found an old witch. Interrogating her, St. Susneyos
789 learned that Wersalya had gone into a garden. Finally, he found the demon sitting under a tree. He speared and mortally wounded her. Before expiring she promised never to afflict anyone who carried the inscribed name of Saint Susneyos.

The effectiveness of the amulet lies therefore in reminding the female demon of her promise to Susneyos.

789 Other common designs include angels with fiery swords (sometimes seen also incised upon wooden church doors); the cross over sun and moon; and the evil eye, sometimes oval, sometimes in profile, but often round with a red iris (symbolizing the magic drinking of blood).

A typical formula against the demon of epilepsy, "barya", reads as follows:

> "You (actually "he", polite), Barya, who steals the heart of man (i.e. renders insane),
> who darkens the eye,
> who comes as shadow by nighttime,
> I put a spell on you, and curse you by ...(name of saint or angel)."

776 There are three common categories in the cosmology of demon
753 diseases treated by amulets:
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(1) General evil-eye disease, referred to generically as "buda" - particularly in cases of puzzling functional and mental ailments - or identified and diagnosed by the name of a demon - particularly in fevers and paralysis.

(2) The demons of epilepsy, "Barya".

(3) Gynecological ailments, ascribed to specific female demons.

Amulets are collectively referred to as "ketab" (lit. writings, in Geez).

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 776 many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

*565 776 753 [828] [845]

*565 776 [562] Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[6]

*565 754 787 Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

*565 754 [262] [789] [323] [326] [554] The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to cheat the locals. The health officer in charge of the team then brought some of the objectors to the mobile laboratory, patiently explained what was going on, and how it would benefit the people. Before long word got around that these outsiders were not so evil after all, and the doors of Dajan opened. 565* 121 177 744

Given the possibility that the Amhara peasant may come to acknowledge the public health worker as a legitimate agent of change, what about the discrepancy between the ideas advanced by the public health workers and the ideas of his traditional culture? The conception of the causation of illness is radically different in the two cultures. Since the peasant views the etiology of disease as a function of the will of supernatural beings, on what grounds could he adhere to prophylactic measures based on naturalistic conceptions? 565* 121 177 753 • 744

Valid though our characterization of the peasant's concept of causation may be, it is nevertheless a very simplified one. It is unlikely that any world view is totally devoid of some sort of naturalistic explanations, just as, conversely, well-educated moderns often cling to residues of "superstition." Though the Amhara's general framework for understanding causation is not naturalistic, he does possess a number of specific notions which can be interpreted as naturalistic or protonaturalistic. Here are some examples:

(1) The belief that an excessively dirty house brings sickness (even though in practice animals are permitted to urinate and defecate indoors and strings of soot to hang from the rafters). [231]

(2) A vague notion that the daily washing of hands, mouth, and feet is related to health. [515]

(3) The concept of *metch*, an ailment involving fever and pains, believed to come from exposure to dirty places as well as excessive exposure to the sun (though the devil is often thought to be the conveyer of the ailment).

(4) The concept of *gerthā*, a notion that a convalescent is liable to relapse unless he refrains from eating unaccustomed foods, resumes work slowly, stays out of the sun, and washes his body and clothes. [758]

(5) A latent concept of contagion, found in: (a) the belief that smelling the urine of another will give one a cold, (b) the belief that the breath of a typhus patient will communicate his disease, and (c) the custom of referring to all diseases which can be given by one person to another as "*zār* sickness."

Even when the explanations set forth by the health workers deviate too much from what the peasant can possibly conceive as plausible, there may still be grounds to justify his accepting some strange advice through an appeal to more familiar beliefs and interests less directly related to the matter at hand. Thus, while peasants have been reluctant to accept the sanitarian's argument that diseases will be prevented by sanitizing the water supply through building wells, they have often been persuaded to build wells by the prospect of securing a more convenient source of water.

Measuring the relative strength of forces supporting and opposing change 565* 121 177

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes 155
to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the 853
negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for 853
a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. 862
Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If 155
another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-suck- 853
ing is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may 854
be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara 155
are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no mat- [856]
ter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting [125] the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is [753] •
he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on [776]
the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional 155
atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and 855
punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his 853
earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional 853
security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary 152
symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." 155
The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly repli- 831
cate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

12: Young

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[For information on theory of disease, see category 116, pp. 5-26, 35-40, 91-99, 116-118, 182-183, 190, 195-196, and 231-246.]

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW OF AMHARA DISEASE BELIEFS

128 This chapter describes the "natural" environment in which the Amhara set their system of disease beliefs. The description is in five steps, opening with an account of human physiology as it is conceived by the Amhara. This is followed by an enumeration of the agencies held responsible for transforming the man of good health into a sickman. Each pathogenic agency is described in terms of its physiological effects and symptomatic expressions. As its third step, this chapter considers these symptoms from a nosological point of view, that is, with regards to the rules by which symptoms are grouped under specific disease names, and by which these classifications are related to one another to form a disease-name taxonomy. [753] The Amhara disease-name taxonomy is simple, and by itself reveals relatively little about the system of disease beliefs of which it is a part. For this, a fourth step is required. Here, the specific disease-names are considered from an etiological perspective, in terms of the explanations associated with the onset of various ailments. In the text, a typology of five etiologies is described. The etiologies are unnamed, but implicit throughout the range of Amhara prophylactic,

827 sign functions to only a few of these. Among these organs, the heart is considered primary. First, it inspirits and regulates all other organ activity by means of the vital heat which it pulsates and radiates through-
*753 out the body. While pulsing within normal frequencies,
827 sufficient heat is generated to sustain good health
*[192] (tena); more rapid pulsing produces excessive heat which is perceived externally as fever (tukusat). When cardiac hyper-activity is of great intensity and persistence, the heart's ability to exert its authority over the subordinate organs is progressively reduced; this is expressed
827 symptomatically as chronic fatigue and lassitude. In ad-
*[192] dition to this vitalizing function, the heart controls body movement through the jirat cords, a term including veins, arteries, tendons, and ligaments. The heart is also capable of limited movement downward, backward, and
* [763] can spin in place. These movements have no febrile effect but since the heart is the seat of the intellect, these motions often lead to mental disorientation and confusion.

Heart and blood share no special tie, nor is the
*[192] latter's vascular confinement appreciated. Anatomically, the blood is instead associated with a reservoir organ (yidem sir, "blood's root") located at the base of the
[841] skull. Functionally, the blood's most specific association is with procreation, for maternal blood is necessary to nourish the homonculus to infancy. Because the re-

*755 *756 *793 *[278] mation, the debtera's powers are derived from his intimacy with spirit beings, the ganels.

[776] The therapeutic usefulness of the debtera's familiars is believed to be related to the ability of ganels to produce a wide variety of ailments. Some of these ailments coincide symptomatically with ailments treatable by herbalists (although they are etiologically distinct), other of these ailments can be cured by herbalists' therapies, and yet other ailments caused by ganels are symptomatically distinct from any ailments treatable by herbalists. These relationships between practitioner, etiology, and syndrome are diagrammed and annotated in Table 6.

*755 *756 *793 776 From the perspective of the client, the debtera is therapeutically effective because he can force or cajole his familiars to communicate therapeutically significant information (including pharmacological information) and to give other assistance. The debtera's power is conceived by the clients in terms of his ability to control his familiars. The most powerful debtera is the ganel gelac, a practitioner whose therapies the client can never divorce from direct associations with ganel familiars. For the "weaker" debtera, however, it is only in the abstract that clients posit a causal role for spirit familiars in any episode that such a debtera treats successfully. In the context of actual disease episodes,

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[For the religious functions of the dabtara in the Ethiopian church, see category 793.]

754 158 of her blood, her health, life itself. The eyes of the victim are glazed, the nostrils distended, the face may wear a ghastly smile, and the body may be inflexible, or else in a nervous tremor. Relatives and "bread-companions" become terrified and run to the exorciser, often a dabtara, bringing him a gift called "ageba" (lit. entrance, i.e. visiting fee). By the time he arrives, the victim may be in contortions on the ground - being eaten by the buda. Some patients may try to hurt themselves, though others do not. When restrained, the patient may fight against the restraint, and women patients bite and scratch the restrainers.

Another classic case is total apathy, refusal to eat, and resistance even to the zar doctor, followed by sudden revival at night and the urge to run out and roam with the hyenas. Zar doctors explain this as a "zar being attached by a buda". An exorciser is then called in.

A common symptom of less violent character is nosebleed, which is very common. Persons vulnerable to this take care to [824] stuff smelly plants into the nose when on the trail. Such protective plants are collectively called "yäbuda reyan" (smells against the buda).

[851] Boys, when hazing the children of an ironsmith or suspected sorcerer sometimes force garlic ("chequn") into the nose of the child with such force as to cause nosebleed, saying "now give up the blood you have stolen". Garlic is believed to have the power 754 824 to stop a buda and is therefore buried under the door of a suspected sorcerer, e.g. an itinerant smith travelling his circuit of customers; this is believed toprevent the buda from going out at night "to feed".

754 [164] Spitting or coughing blood (which may be tuberculosis?) is regarded as another sure symptom of buda, especially the demon "mäggäna". The buda is believed to cause widespread epidemics, if he is powerful and many vulnerable victims are in the area.

776 754 Certain buda are believed to have very specialized "educated" tastes. One likes to rob the voice of debtara choristers who chants harmoniously in church (perhaps in revenge for the same debtara's part-time, extracurricular activity as exorciser), whereupon the voice will begin to croak and steadily grow worse, until the singer cannot even carry a tune. When a cow gradually [825] stops giving milk, despite a big udder, this is ascribed to the special taste of an "educated" buda.

e. Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis

755 [753] Sometimes the victim declares that he has had a dream in which a certain suspected person, e.g. an ironsmith, has been "eating" him. This can become very dangerous for the accused.

The question which diagnosis has to solve is not "what's eating you?", but "who is eating you?"; for the buda spirit and sorcerer are one person.

When the exorciser appears, the "buda" reacts violently. Even apathetic patients suddenly break out in violent peals of laughter, howl like a hyena, crawl about on all fours. The exorciser begins to question the "buda" to find out his personal identity. The "buda" replies through the mouth of the victim, in a hoarse voice, which is attested by all Amhara onlookers as "not the normal voice of the victim". The diagnostic procedure is a battle of wits between the exorciser and the "buda". The

755 certain Christian words which the buda fears. Some also slaughter a sheep or fowl, eat it roasted, then burn the bones so as not to attract the buda again.

Sometimes a reluctant buda is transferred bodily to a spot on a trail outside the hamlet. There a root of a bush is twisted - the signature of the buda and expression of his greedy intent. Whoever passes unprotected is pounced on by the hungry buda.

755 789 Written amulets (ketab") are hung on the neckcord or around the waist to assure successful prognosis. The writing and sale of these amulets is one of the most common extracurricular activities of the dabtara scribe and often his most lucrative income-producing work. Hence the dabtara is feared, for he can use his power for good or ill. The amulets contain such formulae as "besem Aw, Wold, M'änfäs Qeddus" (In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Ghost); mystic names of archangels; formulae in Amharic, Geez, even Arabic of sorts. Church scholars with the title "mäshär" (professor) are believed to be able to write even more powerful amulets, for it is believed that God gave 1000 special "medicines" to Jesus on Christmas (a sort of birthday gift) and that Jesus and the angels taught these "medicines" to the mäshär. Another advantage of their amulets is that the mashar are never suspected of using their power for ill. In either case, the name of the person to be protected is written in the amulet; so that it cannot be transferred or sold without erasure and the new name.

159 754 As noted, women in the age group 15 to 30 are the most often struck. The following case was observed by the author in the town of Gondar. The patient was a 27 year old married woman, Zawditu Bogale (her first name meant "Queenie"). She was the mother of

159 two children, both beyond the infant stage. She lived in one of
•754 the typical town structures of wooden posts, hard-mud walls, dirt floor, and corrugated iron roof.

During the night when she was first "struck", she screamed that she was being eaten by a buda. She howled like a hyena and wanted to run outside. Her husband and neighbors tied her up and feared that she was going to die. She threw herself on the ground and seemed in great inner pain. Her husband ran to the Addis Alem section, in the middle of the night, despite curfew and dangers, to fetch the woggesha doctor, to obtain strong smelling herbs. The woggesha came as soon as dawn arrived, for he had had some experience with buda cases. The woman patient spoke with a convincing male voice. Finally she revealed the name of the sorcerer who had placed the spell on her. She accused an Arab merchant, one of several who operated permanent stalls at the daily market. She exclaimed: "I am Abdulla Abdul Hijazi". She (correctly) identified his residence as the 3rd shop from the left corner". She boasted, still in male voice: "I am drinking her blood with my golden teeth".

As it turned out, there was indeed an Arab merchant by that name at that location, who had his two incisors capped with gold crowns, a rarity so far inland where no dentist offices existed, but common enough on the coast among Arabs of means.

The day before the attack, the woman had been shopping for sandals at this Arab's shop and several others, but had made no purchase since the prices were too high for her.

Once the patient had revealed the identity of the sorcerer, she was untied. Early in the morning the husband and his brother set out to look for the accused Arab, located his place, but could

1·59 not find him. They vowed to waylay him some night and beat him
754 bloody, but bystanders felt that they would cool their tempers and perhaps try to get the merchant into trouble with the local police by planting stolen goods on him - a common procedure, in the towns.

Later the same day, the Arab merchant was conducting business as usual. The rumor did not seem to have hurt him, but local grapevine had it that husbands would restrain their wives from shopping there, though they would risk sending servants. Abdulla had nothing devilish about him, except the distinguishing mark of the capped incisors. He was medium-sized, slender, calm, without any stare that might have frightened the woman. His goods were the usual town goods, ranging from imported eyeglasses to notebooks for school children, and cheap beads.

By this time the woman patient was seated on the dirt floor of her house, looking tired, worn out and dejected. She had no longer a headache, of which she had complained, but claimed to have "heartache" and swelling of the left breast. A neighboring woman was brewing coffee. Her husband's brother, who was also present,
[1·24] asked my advice. I gave him some aspirin for her. She forgot her apathy for a moment and gratefully and politely nodded. Later she refused to take that strange medicine of the foreigner.

d. Ethnic Caste under Suspicion of Sorcery

754 The Falasha ethno-religious group has been described
563 in connection with the division of labor, for they are the ironsmiths and potters in the Amhara regions, especially in the province of Begemdir (Gondar).

754 The Amhara belief in buda has been very troublesome for the
563 Falashas, for they are believed to have inherited the practice of sorcery from their fathers along with the craft of ironsmithing. Thus, the Falashas are blamed for individual cases of magical "eating" as well as for epidemics. Such accusations have repeatedly led to "sorcerer-killings". When an Amhara patient dreams that a certain Falasha is "eating" him, he sometimes gathers his kinfolk for a sudden attack on a Falasha hamlet, demanding that the particular "sorcerer" be handed over to them. In 1936, when the country was in turmoil following the Italian invasion, Falashas of one district were so plagued by buda persecutions that they evacuated their hamlets there and moved closer to the town of Gondar, though keeping a half day's distance from the town itself in line with their tradition of self-segregation(based on their religious particularism). Even now Falashas in their hamlets keep loaded rifles handy all night.

326 What happens when a non-Falasha learns the trade of ironsmithing,
563 e.g. a Curagē, which happens near Addis Ababa where no Falasha hamlets exist? He dies not become a "kayla" (ironsmith; this term is considered insulting); he is not regarded as a potential buda, because he has not inherited the trade. But, his handiwork is suspect as "unprofessional"! It is called "yärägä sera" (work of a "räga", unprofessional), which indicates that his customers are likely to hold a low opinion of the quality of his product and the endurance of his tools in those areas where Falasha-made articles are readily available. The latter is not true where no Falasha hamlets exist, so that Curage work is appreciated near Addis Ababa.

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What happens when a Falasha gives up his Judaic religion and converts to Christianity? Does that free him from being suspected of buda? Only to a slight degree, for his Amhara neighbors refuse to forget his ancestry. In case of conversion, the Falasha becomes an outcast from his own people and usually moves to town. Only an ex-slave or a very poor Coptic woman will marry him. In the latter case, his in-laws believe that his kinship ties are still stronger than his new religion. Thus, if they have him teach them his ironsmithing trade, they believe he will not teach it properly to his affinal relatives. He can never become deacon or priest.

The buda-ironsmithing syndrome of the kayla seems based, in the Amhara mind, on the idea that a very strong power, namely the evil eye spirit, is necessary to accomplish sound work in ironsmithing. To remain powerful, the buda-ironsmith is regarded by the Amhara as requiring blood from time to time, otherwise his product, the iron plowpoint, will not stand wear and tear and the spear will break.

What happens to a Falasha who gives up his kayla trade? The stigma will remain on him, where his family is known. Therefore, some Falashas have migrated and tried to change their trade. This avoidance has not helped at all as long as they remain Falasha in religion. Those who have taken the step of conversion (e.g. as result of Protestant missionary activity in the lat 19th century) are still whispered about as Falashas by their Amhara neighbors and their social and marital associations are largely limited to other ex-Falasha, ex-ironsmith people. Assimilation has not solved the problem of ridding themselves of buda suspicion by the Coptic Amhara, though it has reduced direct, individual accusations of sorcery.

578 In the new courts established by the central government in
689 the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

326 How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda -
754 Falasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting
563 that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Falashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despizing of this manual craft onto the Falashas and believe that Falasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passersby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces
[71] of the supernatural. This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Amont the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous, Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

e. "Buda" doctors past and present

756 While the aforementioned dabtara is the most commonly
793 called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

TK It is therefore likely that the ganyēn idea was brought to the
177 Abyssinian highlands from Southern Arabia about 500 B.C., superimposed on the earlier "buda" and "zar" beliefs, but reduced to the bottom scale of the spirit world with the coming of Coptic Christianity in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D.[122]

TK The ganyēn are considered by the Amhara wholly evil. In personality they are choleric, male quickly aroused to aggressive rage. They are believed to be of dark complexion. They are so tough "they can eat stones". They attack men far more often than women and in daylight rather than at night, (exact opposite of the zar). They cause neither hysteria nor apathy, rather they cause their victim to run amok.

682 As a result, the legal significance of the ganyēn possession
754 in Amhara society is considerable. Almost every apprehended murderer claims that the ganyen "pushed his hand". He thus "was not himself". In the old tradition, if evidence for actual ganyen possession was deemed sufficient, the excuse brough sufficient mitigation so that the kin of the murdered individual could accept blood-money from the murderer and his kin without a blood-feud and without losing prestige. In such a case, the priest-confessor or "mānfās gubaē, acting as intermediary, would go to the bereaved kin and beg forgiveness for the crime. If they agreed, the "danya" (judge) would set the "sēmanya", (the amount of blood-money); formerly a minimum of 80 Maria-Theresa Thalers (now Eth$1000 = US $4000). 1/2
It is noteworthy that this tradition is so strong that even the modern Ethiopian court in Addis Ababa often sets the damages for

122. See MacDonald, D.D.: "Djinn", (in) Encyclopedia of Islam, pp. 1045-1046, and Trimmingham: Islam in Ethiopia, p. 260.

1/2 [valuation given here is not in agreement with that given elsewhere — probably should read "US $460)." — Analyst]

682 manslaughter of an average citizen, killed e.g. in an automobile
754 accident, or by a trigger-happy policeman, at "semanya" on its present monetary level.

755 Other types of ganyen disease are forms of epilepsy, "haut mal", referred to by the Amhara as "ganyen yazi" (lit. the ganyen has seized him; plural is "aganent". In this case, a dabtara is often called in and tries to exorcise the evil spirit with magic formulae; sometimes the woggesha doctor tries to intoxicate the patient with
[778] a paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha), which drug finally lets him have some rest. In contrast, the method of the täqway is literally a bag of tricks.

755 In his role as magician, the täqway is called "qumma" (from
756 "qomä", he stood up), for he tries to identify the personality of
789 the evil spirit from his abode; e.g. in the water of a brook, or a waterhole in the river, or under a certain tree, etc. The magician is also considered an expert on fire and lightning. When a person is struck by lightning, "mäbräq" (lit. Thunder),
[761] the priests consider it heavenly punishment and in the past even refused to bury the victim in the churchyard; thus the täqway is called in. His treatment consists of moving the victim quickly to the fireplace - for he regards fire and warm ashes as the counteracting principle. If a house is on fire in town, it is still believed that the magician, standing on the roof of a neighboring house with a mirror, can prevent the spreading of the fire by causing the flames to recoil.

Cases of drowning are his specialty also. This too is considered by the church a heavenly punishment for hidden crimes, for the victim is regarded as having been surrendered to the "demons";

776 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often
174 wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the
797 pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, denoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyen" - where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits. [127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised tänqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only
[182] exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who hold the people in terror and exercise political power. [128]

[794 While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of
562] members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria. [129]

171 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and
754 other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

171/754 Ambara, and evil witchcraft feared by the geographically close Nilotic Azande. This is not surprising, since contact with the "Barya" people of the Nilotic Sudan is well known. In Azande society, persons who are "socially undesirable" are suspected of sorcery, but never the nobles and the rich.[130] Among the Ambara, too, [554] no "tellaq sew" (great man, noble, rich) is likely to be accused as a "buda" sorcerer, while socially low-class groups doing the despised work of ironsmithing are immediately suspected when a "buda" case arises. In both societies, Azande and Ambara, such suspicion leads to prompt interrogation of the suspect, and revenge by the kinfolk of the victim. In this type of magic, social significance, i.e. ethnic relations in Ambara territory, is considerable.

177/755 Ambara healing of the spirit is psychological, in the first place of significance. In the second place of significance is the enormous syncretism, among linguistic, ethnic, religious and racial components of the art of healing. It presents one of the few outlets for "free enterprise" available in the Ambara tradition. It is this cultural syncretism over the centuries, which, despite the political isolation of Abyssinia, has maintained and developed the spirited character of the Ambara peasant.

130. Evans-Pritchard, E.E.: Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande. London 1937.

136 The lowland is also the habitat of poisonous snakes, rare on the upland. They are usually lumped under the name "yäqolla ebäb" (lowland snake), and include the very poisonous cobra ("funjit"). This species is avoided, but the large, non-poisonous python ("zändo") is prized for its skin and is an export item sought out by some hunters.

136 364 A second category of fauna are the animals sometimes referred to by foreigners as the "sanitation squad". They protect the health of the population by cleaning up carcasses of donkeys left dead in their tracks; leftovers from butchering, etc. No one ever hunts these animals, though everyone is familiar with them, as they or their traces are common sights in urban as well as rural areas. It is only since the increase in motor traffic that hyenas no longer penetrate at night into the heart of Addis Ababa itself. These animals include:

136 [825] Hyena ("djebb"), spotted, often quite large, feeds mainly on carrion but on occasion attacks domestic animals, small children, and even shepherds [754] sleeping in the open. In black magic, the hyena is "ridden" by the buda spirit, and many Amhara believe that they can distinguish the call of a real hyena from one into which a blacksmith has turned himself. This is why no one will open his hut at night to a strange. Hyena holes are also found in potter's fields, where the poor and strangers are buried outside churchyards, for hyenas smell out and eat recently buried corpses. Passers-by piously try to fill the holes with stones to prevent the hyenas from returning.

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
4[illegible] [illegible]mitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qamis"
[illegible] the [illegible]on shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
[illegible] [illegible]ing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the
prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled crafts-
men never rose that high but spent their lives accompany-
ing troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup
fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and em-
broiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara(still continuing
183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and
specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
[754] nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also
the spiritually conceived"evil eye". Both factors undoub-
tedly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of
maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of
invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other
elaborations of culture.

[illegible] Village Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("tis", or,
if several on one large hill, "mender"), rather than a vil-
lage. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts,
with the mode about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus
the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-
isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the
other side of the same hill.

[35] accumulate there when poured over the limp sheets of bread.

261 (7) Food staples must be stored out of reach of domestic animals, on horizontal slats fastened between the horizontal beam and walls. On these slats lie flat cakes of "abshelo" (pre-fermented and baked hops), bunches of sorghum, husks of maize, etc.

352 To provide additional privacy, togas can be hung across. This was done in the past particularly at dinner [754] time, to protect the eaters from the "evil eye" in the [609] presence of non-kinsmen, and is still done in some remote areas, unless the peasant prefers to postpone his meal until the stranger has gone away, so as not to offend him.

342 The tuqul is regarded as a good, sound habitation by the Amhara. It is compared to the round tent of the king and duke ("ras") which not so long ago was the center of activities (if not the actual capital) of the province and [554] country. On the other hand, reactangular or square huts, "sägäla", are regarded as carrying low prestige, little more than temporary lean-to's of hunters. The proverb indicates [539] this low regard of a sägäla:

> "Of children, the worst is the bastard;
> of foods, the hardest is beans;
> of clothing, the poorest is nätäla (half-toga);
> of housing, the poorest is sägäla."

Response: "(but) from enemy, the bastard son will defend you;
toward better days the bean will let you survive;
in (warm) daytime, the nätäla will clothe you;
till a better is built, the sägäla will shelter you".

There are special tuquls of varying degrees of sturdiness:

243
[251] expose a full granary to the mercy of the feudal lord and passing soldiers.

Before threshing can begin, about a month after the end of the rainy season, a flat, circular area is marked out with rocks. Cowdung is stamped into the wetted floor, and the sun hardens the ground into cement-like consistency in one day. This threshing floor, called "awdema", is usually big enough to accommodate at least 4 oxen that are now driven over the grain, abreast but not tied, walking in a steady circle all day long, a procedure called "mabärayät". On the third day, winnowing (called "mäshin") takes place, by means of wooden pitchforks cut from a hardwood bush without carpentry (thus usually two-pronged), and a semi-circular winnowing fan about 2 feet long and not quite as wide, made of oxhide that has been stretched on a wooden, semi-circular frame. The threshed grain is covered overnight with branches, to protect it from wind.

On the fourth day, the grain is swept up with simple whiskbrooms made of stalks (e.g. those of wild oats). All these procedures are done as quickly as possible, partly to protect the crop during this stage of maximum vulnerability from birds and baboons, partly because of fear
[254 609] of the evil eye. If an unrelated stranger passes at this time, the farmer sprinkles him with water to avert the possible evil eye. Formerly spitting was the procedure.

In that season many small threshing grounds dot the landscape, especially on river flood plains. Here the plots are usually not more than 100-200 yards long. A minimum team of three men can usually do the job described in four days. Only one person is needed to drive the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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B. THE ETHNIC DIVISION OF LABOR.

Division of labor according to the ethnic origin of of the worker is the most distinctly organized division among the Amhara. This is based on the attitude of the Amhara that labor (especially skilled labor and manual labor) is dishonorable. This attitude is reinforced by the close kinship ties which prevent a cultural deviant from shaming the members of his family by working in the district where they are known. It also reinforces the the ethnic boundary lines, and forces the non-Amhara, non-Coptic, working ethnic groups to live within the circle of their own kinfik, religious groups, and hamlets.

[281 191] One of the most despised is the class of the Faqi, the tanners, who speak old-Cushitic languages such as Agau, are considered "pagans" in religion, and are associated by their trade with the hunters, the lowest class.

326 191 On a slightly higher level are the ironsmiths, usually of Falasha, who practice Mosaic Judaism, used to speak Quarinya, an old-Cushitic language, but use the same Semitic Geez language as the Copts in their religious worship and biblical liturgy.

563 463 754 326 [191] This use of Geez by the Falasha is puzzling to the Coptic priests, and brings about a sort of grudging respect for the Falasha, which somewhat elevates their status above that of the tanners. But they are suspected of practicing black magic in connection with their smithing of iron. Patrons take magic precautions to counteract all sorts of magic bewitchment by the Falashas whenever they have contact with them.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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463 They are especially afraid of the "buda", evil eye concept,
754 of which Falashas are believed especially capable; also of
326 their supposed ability to turn themselves into real and magic hyenas at night.

This magic power, however, is believed to make their [323] tools "strong", and the pottery of the Falasha womenfolk "hard to break", so that their wares are preferred by the Amhara, creating a monopoly for Falasha iron tools and pottery wherever Falasha hamlets are within a day's walking distance. In some areas there are itinerant Falasha smiths, whose womenfolk make pottery at the same time. They will live in a special guest hut at the edge of an Amhara hamlet.

463 Weaving is also done by Falashas, but they have no
563 monopoly on it, as Muslim Ethiopian weavers are believed
286 by the Amhara to turn out togas that are just as good. For many centuries Muslims were permitted to reside only in segregated sections of towns, such as "AddisAlem" of Gondar town. Though this prohibition has been lifted, [361] most Ethiopian Muslims still reside in special quarters of towns, rarely in a rural hamlet on the Amhara plateau. They were not permitted to own land and no one would rent them any.

They see much more of the country trade routes, since it is they who do much of caravan trading, acting as guides, quartermasters and retail traders for Arab coreligionists who are the wholesalers, usually on routes leading to the Sudan, to Eritrea and to Somaliland. The Coptic Amhara consider the Ethiopian Muslims almost as foreign as the Arabs, even the descendants of Amhara who were forcefully

685 the "danya". Interestingly enough, if the thief did
696 not have money on hand to pay the fee of the lēbashay, it was the responsibility of the victim who had originally requested his services to pay him on the spot, and try to collect later from the thief. This had the effect of eliminating complaints of petty theft from setting this costly process in motion.

694 It seems that amateur thieves were often caught
789 by this process, and usually confessed, feeling helpless when confronted with such "powerful" means of detection. Professional thieves, particularly in the towns, who were known to have evaded detection, were and are believed to have obtained a powerful magic antidote from a dabtara scribe.

694 When all methods of detection have failed, the
787 distraught victim has a last resort. He may go to the nearest "tänkwa", a practicer of black magic, and ask him to divine by throwing his bones. This , too, is now prohibited, but still goes on, though not as openly as before. Failing even in this, the victim may go to the Coptic church and there, having purchased incense
[754] and given a gift, pronounce a solemn curse, "säbätē masdäfat", on the thief.

171 The pattern of the lēbashay has been traced by
694 some observers to ancient Greek parallels, by others to the Arab bedouin "djirra" or "kassas" thiefseeker who also tracks murderers in tribal feuds. The tankwas seem of more typically African witchcraft pattern.

565 ("chäwa") of Amhara ancestry ("aṭṭenṭam"); and the "gabbar" sharecropper on feudal land, who is regarded as of doubtful ancestry (part-slave, or part-Galla ethnic), who is referred to as "rustic" ("balagär). While the former, usually descended from warriors who were given land many generations age, considers himself inferior only to nobility and higher church officials, the latter occupies the broad bottom base of the Amhara social pyramid. The proverb says of the rustic "gabbar":

[539] "He who honors a gabbar
will be despised by him ".

In fact there are not many who might honor a gabbar, except for some ethnic laborers and ex-slaves, both of whom occupy somewhat of an outcast position.

c) The Ethnic Classes

563 The ethnic skilled-labor class does not usually
463 consider itself inferior to the gabbar class. This is
565 especially true if the particular ethnic group has a non-material culture or subculture of its own, notably the Falashas who observe Mosaic Judaism.

The factor of fear of a skilled occupation, the practitioners of which are called "täbib" (lit. "knowing one ", i.e to whom secrets are revealed), enters into the class stratification. It attaches an aura of untouchability to certain occupational classes, especially if reinforced by ethnic or religious difference.

563 This combination of factors applies to the smithcraft,
326 the "kayla", who are suspected of withchcraft; of being
754

563 326 754 able to turn themselves into "buda" hyenas, and of having learned their craft from the "buda" evil spirit. Since the smiths in the old-Amhara areas are mostly Falashas, whose formal religious worship is never observed by Coptic Amhara, the Falasha smith is feared and [412] suspected of black magic. At the same time, the iron tools produced by the Falasha are much prized, not only on account of their material utility but on account of their supposed supernatural strength, endurance and "secretly revealed" workmanship. Even today, the provincial peasant will insist on obtaining his plowpoint or adze from a "real" Falasha.

563 326 The Falashas practice endogamy, as do the Coptic Amhara. But in the towns where increased contact occasionally begins to attenuate the old rules, individuals of low prestige in both groups do sometimes marry, which [497] usually results in the conversion of the Falasha partner to the majority religion. Also due to modern contact, it is beginning to happen that a Falasha teaches his craft to a non-Falasha, but the peasants often reject the output of the latter on the grounds that it isn't a "really strong, genuine Falasha article".

563 281 Somewhat similar untouchability attaches to the tanners, who are usually of local pre-Amharic, (Cushitic, e.g. Agau) descent, often still speak their ancient tongues, and until recently were never converted to Coptic Christianity. As traditionally "conquered" peoples, they are not "attentam", and Amhara endogamous rules prevail against them. The stigma against them seems to

867 [539] "He, before becoming old,
wants to be serious".

(This is also said of a young man who saves gifts for a bride before he has chosen a girl).

When the adolescent boys take part in the aforementioned ritual mock-battles, younger boys imitate them by staging similar hazing-battles among their age peers.

Little girls are encultured in somewhat similar fashion by peers of their own sex, but more often including some older girls who patronize the younger. Girls are not taught any social graces among commoner Amharas, so that they sit shyly and wordless when in the company of men. Any girl who shows signs of daring is mocked and hazed as "gobba" (daring, enterprising female). Generally the activities of girls are less vident,. At times when boys fight their ritual mock-battles, girls dance rounds and sing in unison.

Both boys and girls are taught to be right-handed, and a "lefty" is extremely rare. They are taught to eat with the right hand, shake hands with the right, and use the left for wiping themselves with leaves after defecating. But the prohibition against use of the left hand on other occasions is not as severe as among Arabs.

[264 576 514]

[754] Both sexes fear the supernatural "buda" spirit, also in the shape of human sorcerer and magical hyena. Older boys claim they can distinguish the cry of a real hyena from that of a magical one, and sometimes scare younger children by imitating the howl.

867 302 Sex differentiation among children is expressed in the hair style. Boys wear a single coxcomb hairlock, girls a ring of hair around the shaven skull which sometimes may contain a center hair-

e) Visiting

574 602 Visiting kinfolk regularly, during the nine months of the dry season, is a prime requirement. This includes, in this order of emphasis and frequency: patrilineal kin, matrilineal kin, affinal kin.

574 606 Visits to affinal kin are less frequent and more formal. When visiting one's parents-in-law, usually twice during the dry season, the man is not supposed to come empty-handed, but should bring a sheep as a gift. He waits outside the in-law hamlet, just beyond the thornbush enclosure, and asks the children whether his father-in-law is at home. When the latter appears, the visitor enters and approaches the hut. He enters only upon invitation. There is no mother-in-law avoidance as such, but contact is reduced to a minimum, between son-in-law and mother-in-law, to achieve maximum privacy for both.

602 Flouting kinship obligation is regarded as a shameful deviation, indicating an evil character. Kinship relations represent much security for the individual, but also involve him in serious obligations, such as aiding kinsmen in blood-feuds and reprisal-raids ("bäqäl"). A person who wanders away from the kin hamlet, or from kin obligations, when his mood or irresponsibility carry him, is called "läqe" (after the soft reed that grows rapidly at the least rain, but drops when grown to maturity).

574 754 Visitors, particularly strangers, must observe certain taboos, lest they be suspected of bringing the evil eye. They should not ask the number of children, nor praise their health or good looks aloud. This is considered dangerous, because the "buda" spirit is always on the lookout for fat, juicy children so that he can magically "drink [764] their blood" and make them waste away. (Children are vulnerable to many communicable diseases).

574 576 When visiting the sick, the visitor, especially female visitors, are expected to express their sympathy in unmistakeable tones. The

524 girls, or two girls holding each other by the hand and spinning like a top. Sometimes somewhat older girls meet boys with whom they have established an experimental "joking relationship" ("täwäza"), and play house, building little huts out in the fields during the dry season, within the hamlet in the rainy season. This free experimentation comes to an end just before adolescence, when their relationships become more formal and more supervised.

Imitations of parental activities fill much of children's playtime. Little boys play "farmer", weave rainhoods of reeds and "broadcast" seeds (actually pebbles). Little boys begin to practice the "art of insult" (brain, not only brawn) e.g. such ethnocentric insults as the following:

[186
578]

	Question: "Where are you from?"
Reply: "Begemdir",	Response: "Land of shysters and quibblers."
"Shoa",	"Land of liars and traitors."
"Gojjam",	"Land of sorcerers (buda)."
"Gondar",	"Gossipers and blabbermouths."
"Gurage",	"Land of tricksters."
"Tigre",	"Land of hotheads."

524 754 The culture's fear of black magic, especially "buda", is reflected in children's games, such as:

A: "Buda, buda, what do you eat?"

B: "Meat" (or, imitating the sorcerer's hidden language, "cakes").

A: "What do you drink?"

B: "Blood" (or, paraphrased, "pure water"). Whereupon boy B howls like a hyena (the "horse" of buda), sprints toward boy A, who flees.

524 831 When no adults are present, boys play games imitating the sex life of animals, sometimes highly imaginary, e.g. the "coitus of baboons" ("yätota teddosh"):

Seated and facing each other, two boys lift each other with their feet,

828 imbecility - "leb defen" (lit. whose heart is stopped up).

828 201 Certain emotions are expressed by certain patterned physiological signals, often unconsciously:

Anger may be expressed unconsciously by biting the lower lip, or one's finger. Also by knitting the brow ("fir kosättälä"), from the painful expression that results from drinking the purgative drug kosso, so that a person who perpetually goes about with a frown is said to have a face "as if he had eaten kosso", a "kosso face" ("kosso fit"). Melancholy is expressed in a wrinkled facial expression ("fit chändädda").

The symbolic significance of the eye has been referred to in a number of connections. Timidity, and respect in the young, is expressed by "turning the eyes to the dust" ("syn afar"). Impatience, by shifting the glance rapidly ("ärämmätä"), without making impatient body movements which would be "lower class". Directional signals may be consciously given ("syn ätäggäsä") by eye movements already described; and observation out of the corner of one's eye ("syn tägärämmätä") is a finely developed Amhara subtlety. The sorcerer's eye ("yäsäw syn" lit. "the man's eye," to avoid the sinister name of the "buda" evil spirit) is greatly feared; particularly when it stares and seems to pop ("syn tägolaggälä").

[754]

The "left" position is considered the embarassing side ("gera ärabba") (perhaps because the right side is always the honorable, or because it would be embarrassing to place someone so that he would have to take food with the left hand which is used in the toilet). Left-handedness is extremely rare. When some undertaking turns out badly, the saying is "The matter has turned left" ("nägär gera honä").

827 Physiological functions carried out without repression are considered low-class and low-ethnic by the Amhara. Only a low-class

T54 T76 [784] The actual name, "buda", is considered taboo, for it is dangerous and might attract him, when uttered aloud. Since this spirit is always male, his name is paraphrased as "the man's eye" ("yäsäw ayn"), "shadow eye" (aynä ṭela); and a victim is paraphrased "the man's victim" ("yäsäw gällabi"). Even the term "smith" is used, sometimes indirectly, for further security. Thus, to accuse someone of sorcery, a security-minded Amhara says pointedly, in his presence: "As for me, I am not the son of a smith".

T54 609 The first attitude toward strangers is therefore one of caution, lest he be a carrier of "buda". The suspicion is confirmed if the stranger has intelligent eyes, darting eyes, shining eyes, or if he stares curiously without saying much. It is confirmed if he seems skilled manually, for then he may be a "ṭabib" (lit. trained person, technologically wise), hiding the fact that he was born into the ironsmith caste. It is less disturbing if he openly reveals himself as an ironsmith, for then he lives segregated in a hamlet of his own ethnic group, and when contact must be established for trade (purchase of iron tools and pottery), certain "precautions" against being struck by the evil eye can be taken; extra-vulnerable persons such as pregnant women can be kept from contact; and all transactions will be carried on in full daylight.

T54 T76 [609] The "buda" is regarded as preferring to strike and feast on women, especially beautiful ones, and to feed, cannibal-style, on fat, beautiful children. The stranger therefore should never praise the health or beauty of children, or of women, out loud. Mothers [89] hide their children at the approach of a stranger. Nice new garments [164] on a child also attract the buda, and this is one reason why children under 5, when infant mortality is highest, are given only rags to wear, and are permitted to be dirty most of the time.

754 and are permitted to be dirty most of the time. As for males, the
776 buda also likes to feast on healthy-looking, fat, handsome warriors
[753] and chiefs. "Buda" is the general diagnosis when a person always known as healthy suddenly sickens and dies. Therefore it is feared even by the bravest warriors.

754 Even at present, when "modernization" is proceeding from the
776 central government, "buda" belief has not shrunk. It has simply
178 expanded to take in modern attractions. Thus, police officers in the provincial towns are believed to have attracted "buda", who has developed a taste for officers in nice, new uniforms; and is believed to be "greedy" for healthy-looking boys doing modern gymnastics in their new elementary schools, eager to consume their physical prowess and grace. Even rich, strong, fat, gay, well dressed Europeans are regarded as vulnerable, but less so because "they do not fear him". Fear attracts him too.

"Buda" is most active in August, at the height of the rainy season.
[821] His favorite time to strike is just after a heavy thunderstorm, when tornado-like gusts of wind seem to pull up the hut and try to pull the roof off. This would enable "buda" to "see" his victims better, and cannibalize them.

751 Many ways of trying to prevent victimization by "buda", or at
754 least of reducing one's vulnerability, have been devised over the
776 centuries. To reduce vulnerability, one should not appear too happy, too gay. One should not become an object of open admiration, or of envy and jealousy. One should further paraphrase the tabooed word "buda", by saying "watch your eyes". Newlyweds, who are very vulnerable, should cover their glowing faces for ten days, to keep

751 their happiness from showing. Eating and drinking in the open makes one
● 754 extremely vulnerable, because this arouses buda's greed, and at the
776 same time makes it easier to penetrate the victim's body, through the wide open mouth and unguarded nose. Therefore, old-time Amhara cover their faces when eating in front of strangers.

751 This attempt to reduce vulnerability is closely related to some
754 of the "language of the shamma" (toga). In the presence of strangers,
291 this can be draped in the fashion that indicates "reserve" - covering the mouth, or even nose and mouth, with the front section of the toga, which has been draped in a turtleneck. When travelling in strange districts, which are doubly dangerous because of cast-out buda spirits hidden by exorcisers along trails, a strong-smelling
[824] herb pushed in the nostril, is often used as a prophylactic. The most commonly used of these herbs is "tena adam" (lit. health of Adam, i.e. mankind). The mouth should be kept closed, or covered. In a fearful situation, he may say "shadow, may it not fall on me". Touching iron, considered specially "strong", also helps. Children are warned to stay away from strangers, and never to leave a baby unattended, lest "buda will eat you". The term "eat" is regularly used for buda possession (not for zar possession), for it indicates consumption.

751 Typhus ("tälälafi bäsheta") and severe epilepsy ("yäbuda bäsheta")
754 the latter literally ascribed to buda (lit. buda disease) are the most
174 common ailments promptly diagnosed as "buda" "eating". Evidently
[164] Amhara doctors long ago observed that covering the mouth and nose and staying away from possibly infected strangers reduced the exposure to certain contagious diseases; they then proceeded to envelop this observation in the culture pattern, including the draping of the toga and stopping up the nose, and not eating uncovered in the presence of strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

T76 Certain districts are regarded as "breeding places" of the buda;
754 the entire province of Gojjam is so regarded by Amhara of Gondar and other areas. The "buda" spirits are believed to have their headquarters in Gojjam, their schools where they study techniques of finding and trapping victims, and new methods to resist interrogation by the exorcists who try to induce the "buda" to reveal his name, i.e. that of the human sorcerer through whose body the "buda" makes contact and "eats" (sometimes through initiative of the buda, sometimes called through the ill-will of the sorcerer for a certain human victim). The people of Gojjam (even the Amhara there!) are considered "educated" buda, more sophisticated and less crude, but more dangerous because more clever (note: equivalent to "Jerusalem-educated" zar!). The Gojjam "buda" can "eat" even at long idstance, and are not hampered by the dimension of time. Thus, a visitor from Gojjam who has been offended (e.g. by not having been offerred a seat or a drink or by having been refused hospitality) on his return home, months later, may "eat" the offender at long distance. Even years and oceans can be crossed by a sufficiently "educated" buda; even the foreigner, years later and across the sea, may be affected, according to Amhara belief.

In the Galla provinces, the "buda" are believed by the Amhara to be crude and uneducated. The Amhara does not fear the Galla on this score, as much as he would fear a strange Amhara from Gojjam or a Falasha ironsmith. But the "buda" of Galla areas are believed to turn themselves into hyenas at night and to eat corpses of humans more often; and if they capture a live Amhara stranger, force him to remain as a servant, drugged (like a zombie)/

T76 The same "methods" are ascribed to Falasha ironsmiths who live
T54 in their own hamlets in the Amhara regions. The Falasha, who are regarded as having some secret "education" of their own (actually Mosaic Judaism), are believed to be able to turn a victim into a donkey and make him do a donkey's work, then turn him back to a human in their own hamlet, and make him do a servant's work. In case rescue nears, the Falashas are believed to be able to turn him into one of the many large pots that always lie about a Falasha hamlet where the women make pottery for sale.

Thus the buda complex contains many facets: medical-regional-ecological (Gojjam's Blue Nile is a major caravan route that can bring infectious diseases) - ethnic - religious - Middle Eastern evil eye complex - African fear of the ironsmith. All this is fitted into the Amhara cosmology of the supernatural.

Though closely interconnected in the Amhara mind, some of these facets will be considered in separate detail.

T54 b. <u>Symptoms of "buda" disease</u>.
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The classic symptoms of "buda" disease follow the following sequence. The victim, usually a young woman between the age of 15 and 30, complains of utter fatigue and a heavy head. An hour or so later, she breaks out in hysterical frenzy, wild laughter, stares with wild, empty eyes, moves about restlessly as if driven by some inner demon. An hour or so later, she complains of intestinal cramps, and cringes under the violence of the pain. Her fingers are clenched so that the thumbs are not visible - (regarded as sure sign of the "buda"). For, it is believed, her thumbs have been grasped by the buda that is eating her and he won't let anyone else see them lest his "food" be taken from him. This is called "tänäbbäzä", stolen by force, for the buda is robbing the victim

many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[8]

Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought. 565* 754 [825] [789]

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him. 756 755 756 787 [754]

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils. 756 789 [824] [787]

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind. 771 776 805

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [262]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābañňā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [754]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly suck- [609]
ing his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well- [776]
known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

*753 Here, again, the consequent ailments are caused by contact-irritation. Although urine-mists can cause pubic sores, more frequently gerifta-mists are inhaled, to affect the body internally. In this role, the mist may irritate the walls of the respiratory tract, causing sneezing and coughing, and penatrate to the heart, where it induces severe local pain, rapid pulsation and its attendant effects.

*753 Some humans also possess illness-causing abilities.
*278 Laymen often know recipes for poisons which can be added
762 to a victim's food and drink. Although the inventory of such recipes is great, the poisons' effects tend to be uniform, differing mainly in the rapidity with which death is brought about: Once ingested, the toxin agonizes and destroys the digestive wosfat; simultaneously, it wahses up to chafe the heart into intensive overactivity. Symptomatically, the victim experiences nausea, vomiting, lassitude, and---owing to the heart's cognitive function---severe disoreintation. When a poison fails to produce a rapid and painful death, the victim's demise is preceeded by several weeks of indiscriminate and aggressive anti-social behavior as a consequence of the heart's deterioration.

*753 Amhara sorcerors can cause a great variety of ail-
• 754 ments, as well as other misfortunes not directly affecting the victim's physical well-being. Knowledge of

*755 *753 ensorcelling spells and rituals is mainly limited to certain debteras, the Coptic scholars among whom the *755 ganel's human intimates are also found. Since laymen 539 are generally illiterate and unfamiliar with the litur- [212] gical language (Ge'ez) in which spells are composed, they are unable to master the long lists of magical names and injunctions which are associated with powerful spells. Consequently, although laymen occasionally own ensorcelling spells and rituals, these spells are generally abbreviated and invariably weak. In addition, lay-owned spells and rituals are usually obtained from questionable sources, since the layman is unlikely to possess a medium appropriate for "purchasing" such knowledge.

*753 Human illness-causing powers may be inherited or * 754 congenital, as well as learned. In Begemder Province, inherited powers are limited to budas, Falasha wer-hyenas. The buda's dangerous abilities reach full potency after pubescence, when the hyenas' nocturnal cries compel him to spend the night with them feasting upon disinterred human cadavers. At dawn, the buda returns home, assuming a benign demeanor until his morbid attentions are [826] fixed upon a living victim. Many of these are persons * [192] of "good blood" (tiruw dem sew), individuals who have inherited the light and unblemished complexion favored by Amhara, although other attractive physical features

also excite the buda's interests. The buda's remaining victims are people he sees eating ordrinking in public, particularly while the buda himself is hungry or thirsty. In all cases, the buda concentrates upon the part of his victim's anatomy that initially attracted him, and through it introjects his invisible buda aspect into the victim's abdomen. Unknown by the victim, the buda sets about dining on the latter's viscera; only later that day do the initial symptoms---nausea, vomiting, torpor---become evident. By nightfall, the unique symptoms of buda possession begin. The victim no longer complains of nausea, and vomiting ceases; now oblivious of his surroundings, he alternates periods of vacant staring with violent frenzies, during which he attempts to tear off his clothes and seeks reunion with the roaming hyenas. If forcibly restrained, he grits his teeth edge-to-edge, rigidly holds his flexed limbs close to his body, and compresses fingers against palms, thumbs inward; to onlookers, he appears as a human hyena. At dawn, the victim's frenzy dissipates, and he lies abed, greatly fatigued by the nocturnal exertions and severly weakened by the buda's feasting. At nightfall, the frenetic drama is repeated, and, unless the buda is exorcised soon, the victim's death becomes certain.

*[192] Yisew ayn ("the person's eye") shares important similarities with buda powers. It is exercised involun-

• 754 tarily, and, in the case of yisew ayn, this power is usually unknown to its possessor. The victim of yisew ayn may have "good blood" or, more frequently, he may have been observed while eating or drinking (milk being the most commonly mentioned beverage). Like the buda, the bearer of yisew ayn stares intensely at his victim, who subsequently develops symptoms of chronic fatigue, abdominal cramps, headache, and occasional vomiting. These similarities are attended by important contrasts: Yisew ayn is congenitally acquired, and is not limited to any segment of the population. Its victims are sometimes people whose finery, rather than physical attractiveness, has drawn the yisew ayn's interest. Although its pathogenic mode is only vaguely understood, there is [26] no agent introjection. Lastly, it is considerably less serious than buda possession; there are no nocturnal seizures alternating with diurnal lassitude, and child victims often experience an eccentric syndrome---eating ashes, clay, and charcoal---for which there is no buda possession analogy.

*753 Certain ailments result from contagion (telalafiy), *[192] that is, the transmission of a disease substance (basiyta) from a sickman to another human recipient, without need for a mediating agent. Telalafiy is linked to dermatological symptoms (septacemia, hemorrhagic ulcer, scrofula, carbuncles, venereal chancre, shenkroid, gonorrhea,

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* 759 cological specifics are kept secret, herbalists are not always adverse to commenting in public on the type of specialized equipment or esoteric knowledge that they possess (that, for example, he obtains medicinal roots with a digging stick of a "certain" exotic wood). By these means, the categories of pharmacological elaboration enter into common knowledge, while the specifics are retained by their owners.

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801 There is a third and final category of associations, numerological ones. Certain numbers (particularly three and seven) appear in therapies with greater frequency than do others. But this again represents only a statistical abstraction, largely unappreciated by the herbalist because of his familiarity with a very limited number of therapies. Here as in the other categories of pharmacological associations, the symbolism expressed by specific links is obscure and, so, unavailable to the herbalist for generating new associations. Thus, the combination of riverine stones, the number three, pitted mortars, and specific medicaments within a single therapy can only be "conventionally" explained by the herbalist.

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* 754 The herbalist who would "elaborate" his therapy is confronted by more than technical obstacles, however. A secular healer who betrays a speculative interest in the regularities of Amhara pharmacology can only excite his fellows to compare him with the debtera, and inevitably

*759 *754 to circulate accusations of occultism (asmateña), of daemonic aspirations, and eventually of sorcery.

*298 *757 A relationship between a therapy's pharmacological complexity and its therapeutic success is not always necessary. That is to say, therapies effective against serious ailments are generally assumed to be pharmacologically elaborate. However, some simple therapies, ones which cite only medicaments and the bare physical operations necessary for processing and applying them, are likewise entirely adequate for bringing about a remission in disease symptoms, although such therapies are limited *[192] to non-serious ailments. For example, a widely-known therapy for dwarf tapeworm infestation (kowsol) prescribes that the herbalist obtain a quantity of enkowkow seeds, a medicament readily and inexpensively purchaseable from a medhaniyt korac (professional medicament gatherer) of the market place. These seeds the herbalist grinds, mixes with water, and gives to the sickman. Once the medicine's purgative effect has ended, the infusion is drunk again, for a total of four applications. Although pharmacologically simple, it is considered a certain cure for kowsol.

*298 *757 *759 In the end, the Amhara herbalist finds it inconvenient to consider any of his therapies as an amalgan of discrete manipulable elements. Instead, he considers pharmacological details to be diffusely integrated

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEBTERA LIFE HISTORY

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*793 To his public, the debtera is most remarkable for his embodiment of so many significant contradictions. As an ecclesiastic, he is indispensible to the Church; he ensures its permanence by training boys for the priesthood, he enriches it with the fruits of his scholarly labors, and he sustains it by leading the performance of the Mass. Yet, he is often regarded by the laity as a breaker of priestly vows, an adulterer, and an intimate of the ganels against which the Church's existence stands opposed. He is a healer of the sick; he divines the future and provides an impressive variety of pro-
• [754] phylaxes for clients. He is also the most notorious sorcerer in the land, and appears oblivious to the certain fate which satanic friendship and ensorcelling entail for him.

To explain these contradictions is to discover the sources of the debtera's reputation as the most powerful of Ambara healers, a reputation which he enjoys in spite of the fact that his therapies are pharmacologically little different from those practiced by secular herbalists. Becuage this observation depends upon familiarity with the debtera's professional life history, it is denied to the debtera's public, who only dimly perceive,

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*764 application. In a medical context, he is adept in all
*793 but the chirurgeon's domain, and his works are perceived as strong. In addition to therapy, he is an expert diag-
• [754] nostician, and giver of prophylaxis. Finally, the debtera's medical powers are perceived as only an aspect of the more general powers he possesses, and which he displays in various non-medical works affecting property, interpersonal relations, and, importantly, the sending of illness.

*756 Reconstructing the Debtera's Biography. Laymen find
*793 confirmation of the putatively necessary ties which bind
732 debtera to ganel in the relatively high proportion of physically aberrant debteras. Laymen explain these disabilities as evidence of the mischief played by the capricious ganels on their debtera partners. While debteras constitute only a minute portion of the highland population, they are a highly visible one. Debteras, particularly abinet-practicing ones, tend to live in towns. There, they advertize their presence for the multitudes, during the performance of the Mass, in the churchyard conversing among colleagues, or as a center from which their students circulate on their daily begging. For the layman, the appearance of achondroplastic, pituitary, and tubercular dwarfs, of cripples with shrivelled limbs---all professional confreres and all living within the radius of two or three miles---bears impressive wit-

*756 *793 *755 776 debtera and ganels are real enough, they do not conform with the layman's notions of intimacy and friendship. Rather, they are either 1) specific and impersonal, in the case of offensive works (kifat), or 2) episodic and manipulative, in the case of ganel pulling (sabiy).

The following paragraphs of this section describe these abinet activities which involve the complicity of ganels and consider them in terms of instrumental value and moral significance to the debtera.

*753 *764 *[192] Kifat Works. Kifat (literally "evil") works are abinet which send illness, death, and other misfortunes onto selected victims. Illnesses caused by kifat works are inevitably serious, and coincide symptomatically with ailments that have non-kifat work etiologies. They fall into three categories. The first includes ailments which are characterized by combinations of severe and prolonged stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, headache, diarrhea, fever, and kijet (nightmares); these ailments are difficult for the layman to diagnose correctly; they are resistant to secular therapy, and are all considered potentially mortal. Kifat works of the second category produce ibidet (madness), and are expressed symptomatically as compulsions to either wander about aimlessly, or to sit incoherently in a single place. Ibidet is also caused by mers (poison potions), for which kifat work

*753 owning debteras (as well as occasional laymen) possess
• 754 recipes. The third variety of pathogenic kifat works
[842] sends sexual maladies. Sterility, considered a very
[833] serious ailment, is sent to women only. Impotency affects both sexes; it is experienced by women as uncontrollable crying when approached or touched by any man, and is often confused with aynitila.

754 The most commonly owned non-pathogenic kifat works belong to a category known as "amderab". These works enable the operator to send onto his victim's house and fields misfortunes of fire, water (as destructive hail and rain storms), earth (as rains of stones and clods), air (as destructive winds), and putrification (as noxious odors). Other non-pathogenic kifat works have a domestic aspect (e.g., prepared foods are continually spoiled, food stores are consumed at an unnatural rate, servants grow discontent with the master's household, and domestic animals wander away); a mercantile aspect (e.g., trading rivals find it difficult to sell their goods, rival talla sellers find their newly prepared beer turning to a pitch-like consistency); or bring misfortunes at the hands of other human agents (e.g., the victim's son is made a wastrel, kenezereña, the victim repeatedly and unintentionally incurs the enmity of people, the victim exposes himself to ambush by enemies).

At its simplest, a kifat work requires a recitation,

• 754 concomitant with the manipulation of prescribed materials. The recitation consists mainly of strings of ganel asmat names, repeated a prescribed number of times, in conjunction with the victim's name.[33] Significantly, the recitation includes no information about the operator (or his client), and is devoid of the supplication and contriteness which characterizes the digams of inoffensive abinet. The materials and accompanying activities of the kifat work replicate the familiar dichotomy between "contagious" magic (e.g., pathogenic kifat works often call for a sample of the victim's hair, clothing, or feces) and "sympathetic" magic (e.g., "Cut him as I cut this stalk," "Twist his guts as I twist this root).[34] Pathogenic kifat works are sent in either of two ways. In the first, a malady is sent from a distance, and the kifat work operation ends with the recitation and manipulation of the materials at the debtera's rooms. Such

[33] Frequently, this is a multiple of the numbers associated with the asmat names of inoffensive abinet (e.g., seven times seven repititions).

[34] Often, the symbolism of kifat works are more obvious to the operator, than is the case with inoffensive abinet.

• 754 kifat works require special conditions of the operator, generally that he remain chaste for a designated period prior to the operation, and often require that the kifat work is performed in a room where no sexual relations have taken place. In the second type of pathogenic kifat works, recitation and manipulation are followed by burying the materials (denkero) close by the victim's place of sleeping and eating, generally beneath the threshhold of his hut. Non-pathogenic kifat works are sent from a distance only.

*787 754 539 Competence in the use of awdunigist texts is considered a prerequisite for the effective use of kifat works, and laymen are well aware of the anti-therapeutic uses of these texts. If attack by a kifat work is to succeed, information must be obtained beforehand regarding the special vulnerabilities of the intended victim. For this information, the debtera turns to awdunigist, reading it just as he would for a client, noting periods of danger, ailments, misfortunes, and pharmacological information. This information is used to select an appropriate type of unhappiness; in addition, it indicates effective materials for the operation of the kifat works, particularly regarding characteristics of animals to be sacrificed or whose organs are to be used.

*956 *793 764 Acquiring and Using Kifat Works. The considerations which influence a debtera to acquire inoffensive abinet

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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+756 +793 • 754 studies are likewise persuasive regarding the collection of kifat works: The debtera is threatened by serious dangers, and he lacks an effective, less controversial alternative. Thus, his early acquisitions of kifat works are intended to be an implicit threat against those student rivals (towdadariy), who would assault and ruin him by magical and mundane means. A man generally begins his repertoire of kifat works before leaving the kiyne school. Once begun, there are strong inducements to expand it, since a repertoire of kifat works can be effective, particularly against students knowledgeable in abinet, only if it includes works sufficiently varied to threaten the intended victim's prophylactic defenses. Subsequently, an extensive repertoire of kifat works remains a valuable asset for a debtera who is developing a commercially remunerative abinet practice. The threat of sanctions by kifat works is his ultimate guarantee for the honesty of other debteras during abinet exchanges. Similarly, the threat of kifat works guarantees payment [426] by laymen for the debtera's services. Often, these services extend beyond the performance of abinet and include the lending of money at interest.[35] Finally, kifat works

[35] Capitalizing on his cash reserves, awakiy debteras sometimes lend money, customarily at an interest rate of 30% for three months.

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*756
*793 are considered attractive increments to a man's abinet
• 954 repertoire, for subsequent exchanges with debteras, and as remunerative services for clients (although by no means all owners of kifat works offer them as a commercial service).

A user of kifat works identifies the potentially immoral aspects of such works as the invocation of ganels and sending of misfortunes. However, he perceives his own use of kifat works as morally neutral and pragmatically justified, analogous to more prosaic techniques, such as the use of firearms: The invocation of ganels is perfunctory, and implicates neither debtera nor client in any personal way. The debtera conceives kifat goals as either defensive or retributive, in either case legitimate. Where kifat works are offered as a commercial service, the debtera's perspective is confirmed in two ways. First, the client seeking his kifat services inevitably provides a self-seeking reconstruction of the difficulties that obliged him to seek this assistance. Further, debtera and client explicitly consider the degree of injury which would be commensurate with the offense of the chosen victim; whether it should be a mortal ailment, a painful lingering sickness, or a property loss; whether it should be visited on the principal offender, his

* 756
* 793 child, or his livestock.[36] (In reality, the client's
* 754 selection is more likely to be determined by considerations of cost than of casuistry.) The debtera may further dissociate himself from the morality of a particular episode, by giving the client the sorcery bundle, with directions for its use. The debtera owning kifat considers the transmission of kifat knowledge during abinet exchange to be more fraught with moral danger than his use of it. To preclude this obstacle to the easy exchange of abinet, the recipient customarily foreswears the use of the kifat work unless he is pressed by persecutors and without alternatives.

* 776 Pulling Ganels. Ganels are organized into a simple
* [192] hierarchy composed of individually named commanders (azmac) and anonymous subordinates (tazaj). Supreme among ganels is the fallen angel Satanael. His several hundred lieutenants are divided into ganels responsible for sending specific ailments or misfortunes, and local commanders who repose in the lakes, rivers, and mountain tops of Ethiopia. The multitude of subordinate ganels are the immediate bearers of sickness and misfortune; their

[36] The debtera is not expected to provide any detailed information, such as the identity of the specific ailment of misfortune he intends to send.

776 work is done at the direction of the commanders, or is struck adventitiously as the opportunity arises.

*755 A debtera calls ganels to obtain either information
*756 or the promise of services. Only ganel commanders are
*793 summoned. In contrast to their ganel subordinates, they
• 754 are more difficult to call, and more cunning. However, they alone possess the therapeutically useful information which the debtera desires, whether for a specific disease episode at hand, or a disease category associated with ganel causal agents. The information which the debtera obtains supplements abinet that he already owns, and does not constitute complete therapies. The debtera also calls ganels to direct them to command subordinates to perform pathogenic works against persons he wishes to strike down, or to desist from afflicting the debtera's client.

*756 Ganel-calling abinet works consist of three sets of
*793 activities. First a specific, named commander is "pulled"
*787 from his repose into the debtera's presence (thus, the
*[192] title "ganel sabiy", "demon puller", by which such debteras are popularly known).[37] It is easiest to call a

[37]This title is interchangeable with "ganel aciwac" ("converser with the ganel"), and "ganel gelac" ("revealer of the ganel").

*793 from one another along two dimensions (disease name specialty and healing power), debteras are distinguished along only one, differential power. This tends to have a conservative effect upon the layman's valuation of the medical abilities of awakiy debteras, relative to those *756 of secular healers. That is to say, in any disease epi-*793 sode, the prophylactic or therapeutic failure of one *754 awakiy debtera is perceived as evidence of the success of the kifat work of another awakiy debtera; the balance between the two is a matter of quantitative differences of power. This contrasts with the situation of secular herbalists, whose therapeutic failures eventually persuade the sickman to consult a class of practitioners whose healing powers are considered more effective than are theirs (vide the "herbalist chains" discussed in chapter three). On the other hand, therapeutic failure by an awakiy debtera generally leads to a search for a debtera more powerful than the kifat sender. Both laymen and debteras recognize that some ailments caused by kifat works can be lifted only by the sender of the kifat who must retrace the steps of his kifat performance.[44]

[44] For example, severe stomach pain is produced, inter alia, by inserting a copper wire into a cactus lobe; the pain persists until either the victim has perished or the wire has been removed.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

APPENDIX B

HERBALIST THERAPY FOR YIBUDA BAŠIYTA (BUDA POSSESSION)

754 The buda is a human, male or female, who shares a
[825] kinship of sorts with the hyena. When at night he hears their calls, he is irresistably attracted to run about with them. Like the hyena, he strongly desires to eat of human flesh and blood, but his cravings are not malevolent, and he often regrets this compulsion. The buda trait is most often passed down within families; in Begemder Province, it is limited to Falasha families.[52]
[856] The buda trait is present at birth, but like an individual's other capacities, reaches full potency at its bearer's physical maturity.

In his nocturnal guise, the buda bears his human
[302] face upon a hyena's body. The first time an individual runs with the hyenas, he (or she) is obliged to cut his hair short, in the fashion of Falasha women; the subsequent transition from wer-hyena form to human appearance is accomplished on the following morning with the aid of a secret medicine. The buda is, however, most dangerous, when in his prosaic human form, he produces the buda syn-

[52] Elsewhere in Ethiopia, buda accusations are directed against local endogamous iron working peoples.

754 drome in a victim.

[826] *[192] The buda is attracted to 1) persons of "good blood" (tiruw dem sew: someone with a light, clear and unblemished complexion, or, by extension, with another particularly attractive, konjow, aspect of his body) and [264] 2) persons observed eating or drinking, particularly when the buda is hungry or thirsty. While concentrating on that aspect of the victim which attracted him (e.g., the face of the child of good blood, or the diner's mouth), the buda introjects his invisible self into the victim's body. Once inside, he sets to eating the viscera, simultaneously laying eggs from which prodigious numbers of wosfat hatch out. About two-thirds of his victims are children of ten years or less.

*753 754 His victim is never aware of the disease act taking place, and symptoms of the ailment appear only later in the day, as the wosfat hatched by the buda vent their rapacity on the sickman's stomach and heart. Thus, he experiences nausea, vomiting and fatigue. At nightfall the first of the ailment's dramatic symptoms appear, as the buda acknowledges his presence.[53] Complaints of nausea and stomach pain stop, as the sickman grows oblivious to

[53] Bibuda tabolac, "seized by the buda", is also a common nomer for this ailment.

*753 his surroundings, stares vacantly before him. It is now
• 754 that the buda cries out, through the sickman's lips, in a hyena call, and passivity gives way to vigorous attempts by the sickman to tear off his clothes and join the roaming hyenas once more. Now the sickman must be restrained forcibly, tied down if no longer a child. While restrained, he characteristically grits his teeth edge to edge, and presses fingers against palms, thumbs drawn inward, in facimile of a hyena; occasionally blood flows from his nose. Next morning, the sickman becomes more lucid but is greatly fatigued from the nightime exertions.

*278 The yibuda basiyta medhaniyt awakiy begins his
*755 therapy with an herbal inhalent against the introjected buda. The herbals are either ground and placed in a sachet, crushed in the therapist's fingers and stuffed into the sickman's nostrils, or made into an infusion in which a cloth is wetted and inserted into the nostrils. The inhalent torments the buda like fire; his struggles to escape it are reflected in the sickman's writhing and blathering. The buda is wily and tries to hide in an unaffected part of the sickman's body. The therapist holds the buda fast, by seizing the sickman's stiffened thumbs to which the buda customarily secures himself in order to better eat at the victim's viscera. Simultaneously, the therapist presses a piece of unfired iron

754 [64] Spitting or coughing blood (which may be tuberculosis?) is regarded as another sure symptom of buda, especially the demon "aggam". The buda is believed to cause widespread epidemics, if he is powerful and many vulnerable victims are in the area.

776 754 Certain buda are believed to have very specialized "educated" tastes. One likes to rob the voice of dabtara choristers who chants harmoniously in church (perhaps in revenge for the same dabtara's part-time, extracurricular activity as exorciser), whereupon the voice will begin to croak and steadily grow worse, until the singer cannot even carry a tune. When a cow gradually [825] stops giving milk, despite a big udder, this is ascribed to the special taste of an "educated" buda.

c. Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis

755 [753] Sometimes the victim declares that he has had a dream in which a certain suspected person, e.g. an ironsmith, has been "eating" him. This can become very dangerous for the accused.

The question which diagnosis has to solve is not "what's eating you?", but "who is eating you?"; for the buda spirit and sorcerer are one person.

When the exorciser appears, the "buda" reacts violently. Even apathetic patients suddenly break out in violent peals of laughter, howl like a hyena, crawl about on all fours. The exorciser begins to question the "buda" to find out his personal identity. The "buda" replies through the mouth of the victim, in a hoarse voice, which is attested by all Amhara onlookers as "not the normal voice of the victim". The diagnostic procedure is a battle of wits between the exorciser and the "buda". The

The latter tries to evade, first through deliberate misinformation, then by removing himself physically. He does this by calming his victim, who says that there is nothing wrong with him, that he merely wants to go out a moment. But everyone knows this is just to lure the victim outside, make him stumble in the darkness and, brought to a fall, devour him at leisure. Consequently, the patient is tied up "to prevent escape of the buda". But every time a hyena howls, the patient tries to break loose to join his "brethren".

Forceful means in the diagnosis may include nearly choking the patient to put pressure on the buda to reveal himself or risk the premature death of his victim. A smoky fire is made of mule dung, the patient is held over it, togas are piled on top of him to prevent the smoke from dissipating. Naturally, the patient begins to choke and cough, but he is not released until he begs cessation of this ordeal with Christian formulae such as "sela Maryam" (for Mary's sake). This indicates that the buda is surrendering and ready to cooperate. To quelch the spirit even more, strong herbs are smelled and the exorciser may insult the buda in the most vulgar and obscene terms. This rattles the buda ("salärfälärä", lit. he talked disconnected nonsense), so that he cannot develop a defensive strategy. Finally, at the threat of further punishment, the buda gives a name.

The treatment consists of negotiation to cast the buda out entirely. The buda is asked what his demands are. The first request is usually something very difficult to obtain, or something very filthy, e.g. "food" consisting of dung of donkey or even hyena.

755 Serious cases sometimes evidence utter self-abasement, but this impresses the audience as a sign of a genuine, sincere case. Finally, the exorciser negotiates a date at which the buda will leave, usually not more than a week later. Unlike the zar, the buda is made to swear that he will not return.

The next step in treatment is to make certain that the buda [789] will not return. Often the sacrifice of a black chicken is made. the animal, still alive, is turned around the head of the victim, until the greedy buda enters the body of the chicken. Then the chicken is rapidly smashed to the ground. If it dies at once, it is a good omen that the buda has accepted the transfer, the substitute, and is leaving. Another good omen is the release of the exorciser is a debtara, he says:

> "I command you, buda, in the name of the holy Trinity, the 12 apostles and the 318 bishops of the Council (of Nicea) to leave this person".

If the buda responds, he leaves with a flourish, such as showing his strength for the last time by causing his victim to pick up a huge rock, which would normally take several men to lift; then leaving the victim in a faint. To scare the buda further off, rifles may be discharged at this time. Often the patient is beaten severely, even wounded in the hip with a spear, "to let the buda escape"; this also makes things unpleasant and prevents a renewed attack.

When the victim recovers from his faint, he is asked his name, and gives his usual name. This is proof that he is "himself again". He claims to have no memory of what went on during the attack. As further proof of recovery the patient may be asked to pronounce

755 certain Christian words which the buda fears. Some also slaughter a sheep or fowl, eat it roasted, then burn the bones so as not to attract the buda again.

Sometimes a reluctant buda is transferred bodily to a spot on a trail outside the hamlet. There a root of a bush is twisted - the signature of the buda and expression of his greedy intent. Whoever passes unprotected is pounced on by the hungry buda.

755 789 Written amulets (ketab") are hung on the neckcord or around the waist to assure successful prognosis. The writing and sale of these amulets is one of the most common extracurricular activities of the dabtara scribe and often his most lucrative income-producing work. Hence the dabtara is feared, for he can use his power for good or ill. The amulets contain such formulas as "besem Aw, Wold, M'ānfēs Qeddus" (In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Ghost); mystic names of archangels; formulas in Amharic, Geez, even Arabic of sorts. Church scholars with the title "mēmhēr" (professor) are believed to be able to write even more powerful amulets, for it is believed that God gave 1000 special "medicines" to Jesus on Christmas (a sort of birthday gift) and that Jesus and the angels taught these "medicines" to the mēmhēr. Another advantage of their amulets is that the mēmhēr are never suspected of using their power for ill. In either case, the name of the person to be protected is written in the amulet; so that it cannot be transferred or sold without erasure and the new name.

159 754 As noted, women in the age group 15 to 30 are the most often struck. The following case was observed by the author in the town of Gondar. The patient was a 27 year old married woman, Zewditu Bogale (her first name meant "Queenie"). She was the mother of

158 Sometimes cases of buda possession are brought in to the
[159] government hospital at Gondar where two European physicians are in charge. They have diagnosed the shrieking, wildly beating type of case as "hysteria"; and the apathetic type of buda case as "catalepsy". In the latter case they have observed absence of reflex responses on eye and knee, almost no pulse, faint heart-beat, low blood pressure; sometimes a stupor in which the patient has no control over bowel movements and urinating. In severe cases of this kind there is a suspension of sensation and will, and muscles are so rigid that limbs keep any position they are placed in by the doctor.

●755 In one memorable case, a hysteria patient, a man, had been gradually quieted by a Coptic Amhara priest called in by the European doctors at the hospital, who knew the effectiveness of this from past experience. All the priest had done was to hold the hand of the patient and quietly recite prayers in the Geez language, (which the lay patient could not understand). When the priest tired of this, the regular hospital priest was called in to continue this "treatment". But at sunrise the next morning the patient had disappeared out the window. The hospital "dressers" (male, semi-trained nurses) explained that the patient probably would go a long distance from this area, to escape the severe beating his kinfolk would give him - the "post-operative" treatment meted out to patients recovering from buda possession to "discourage the buda from returning".

755 In the rural areas the "tänqway" is still sometimes called
756 in to treat buda cases, though this is not his major specialty. He is what has been called a "witch-doctor", professional sorcerer, and diviner. He usually treats the patient by frightening the

755 buda out of him: seating the patient in ashes - the natural
756 abode of the buda - to entice the evil spirit to leave through the anus. The latter is regarded as the preferred pathway of the buda - the opposite principle of the soul which is believed to leave through the head. Sometimes the tanqway orders that the person accused of buda sorcery be brought before him and made to spit upon the patient, which breaks the spell if he has actually cast it. Since 1942 the government has branded the "tänqway" as [689] a fraud. As a result, the business of the still respectable dabtärä and also the woggesha has increased in treating cases of buda.

C. Evil-Spirit Disease ("ganyän") and the diviner ("tänqwar")

756 While the aforementioned tänqway is, or used to be, called in
776 occasionally to exorcise a buda, his major specialties are the exorcising of "ganyän" evil spirits who have a very different character, and the divining of lost or stolen goods.

Of all spirit doctors, the tänqway occupies the lowest social position. He is "uneducated" for he uses no books and in fact is almost always illiterate. His methods are nearly identical with those of African "witch-doctors" and include such methods as throwing of bones and animal parts, for divining.

776 The major principle of both the tänqway diviner and the ganyän
777 spirits he specialized in, seem to be regional; the activity one of geographical orientation. For the ganyän, considered inferior to zar and buda spirits in power, are localized, evil genies. The term itself is etymologically related to the Arabic "djinn", local evil genies, though actually derived from the Geez "janyen"), and the concept is also similar: most ganyen are either water-spirits or fire-spirits.

682 754 manslaughter of an average citizen, killed e.g. in an automobile accident, or by a trigger-happy policeman, at "semanya" on its present monetary level.

755 Other types of ganyen disease are forms of epilepsy, "haut mal", referred to by the Amhara as "ganyen yäzä" (lit. the ganyen has seized him; plural is "aganent". In this case, a dabtara is often called in and tries to exorcise the evil spirit with magic formulae; sometimes the woggesha doctor tries to intoxicate the patient with [278] a paste of "asärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha), which drug finally lets him have some rest. In contrast, the method of the täqway is literally a bag of tricks.

755 756 789 In his role as magician, the täqway is called "qumma" (from "qäma", he stood up), for he tries to identify the personality of the evil spirit from his abode; e.g. in the water of a brook, or a waterhole in the river, or under a certain tree, etc. The magician is also considered an expert on fire and lightning. When a person is struck by lightning, "mäbräq" (lit. Thunder), [761] the priests consider it heavenly punishment and in the past even refused to bury the victim in the churchyard; thus the täqway is called in. His treatment consists of moving the victim quickly to the fireplace - for he regards fire and warm ashes as the counteracting principle. If a house is on fire in town, it is still believed that the magician, standing on the roof of a neighboring house with a mirror, can prevent the spreading of the fire by causing the flames to recoil.

Cases of drowning are his specialty also. This too is considered by the church a heavenly punishment for hidden crimes, for the victim is regarded as having been surrendered to the "demons";

755 and the worst and most numerous ganyen are regarded as water spirits,
756 e.g. at the Blue Nile and everywhere also during the long rainy
789 season.
[776]

After diagnosing the identity and origin of the specific
755 ganyen, the tänqway tries to exercise the demon by treating him
776 with contempt (exactly opposite to treatment given the "zar").
Instead of feeding the spirit a succulent "mäqwädäshä" (love gift),
the ganyän - possessed person is fed a lunch of ashes. For a ganyen
that is a fire-spirit, is attracted by ashes, his element, and may
thus be induced to leave the body of the patient in order to feast.
The tänqway follows this method even in cases of buda as indicated
before.

The next step in treatment consists of "fixing" the ganyän
somewhere else, so that he will not return into the body of the
victim. This is done by the scapegoat technique; e.g. by fixing the
demon into the body of a chicken, killing it, throwing the carcass
away where the hyenas will eat it; or transferring the water-spirit
to another locality.

756 Besides his role as a healer of ganyän, the major activity
[787] of the tänqway is as diviner of lost or stolen goods. It is not
polite to use the term "tänqway" in his presence, instead he is
politely addressed as "awaqi" (lit. knower, wise man). Since he
usually makes it his business to know what goes on among professional
thieves, his insight into such matters is sometimes indeed consider-
[694] able; but also contributes to his bad social reputation. In "diag-
nosing" the case, the tanqway acts as detective, studies the place
of the crime, investigates neighbors and finally draws seashells
(zagol Lebsu") and bones from his bag and throws them, to read
additional information from their driection and mutual position.

773 On the way he found an old witch. Interrogating her, St. Susneyos
789 learned that Werzelya had gone into a garden. Finally, he found the demon sitting under a tree. He speared and mortally wounded her. Before expiring she promised never to afflict anyone who carried the inscribed name of Saint Susneyos.

The effectiveness of the amulet lies therefore in reminding the female demon of her promise to Susneyos.

789 Other common designs include angels with fiery swords (sometimes seen also incised upon wooden church doors); the cross over sun and moon; and the evil eye, sometimes oval, sometimes in profile, but often round with a red iris (symbolizing the magic drinking of blood).

A typical formula against the demon of epilepsy, "barya", reads as follows:

> "You (actually "he", polite), Barya, who steals the heart of man (i.e. renders insane),
> who darkens the eye,
> who comes as shadow by nighttime,
> I put a spell on you, and curse you by ...(name of saint or angel)."

776 There are three common categories in the cosmology of demon
753 diseases treated by amulets:
755

(1) General evil-eye disease, referred to generically as "buda" - particularly in cases of puzzling functional and mental ailments - or identified and diagnosed by the name of a demon - particularly in fevers and paralysis.

(2) The demons of epilepsy, "Barya".

(3) Gynecological ailments, ascribed to specific female demons.

Amulets are collectively referred to as "ketab" (lit. writings, in Geez).

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Table 13: The Scribe as Healer: Demons, their Individual Specialities, Exorcism.

category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Buda"	evil eye	fevers (mech mättaw); functional ailments; hysteria, catalepsy	eye with bloody-red iris; ironsmith ethnics		powerful amulet; Christian re-baptising of patient: exorcism
(1)	"Mäganä"	threshhold demon in early mourning	spitting blood (tuberculosis) through "red snake in belly". Amebic dysentery.		Buda	amulet of St. Sebastian as prophylactic smoke of "wogärt" plant which snake hates, in hut. Carry dead through hole in wall (in Gojjam), so demon cannot find way back to infect others in family. Spraying with holy water.
(1)	"Dänqara Mätal"	household demon	infectious disease, highly contageous within hut. (Endangers travellers.)			amulet as prophylactic. Lure demon out of the hut through trail of chicken feathers, lemons and perfume, onto trail, where it is transferred to travellers.
(1)	"Nädara", "Äynät"	evil eye, female demon	eye diseases, esp. ophthalmia	red eyes	Buda	amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of this demon

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Aynä Ṭela" (lit. Shadow Eye)	evil eye, female demon	blocks projects; blocks learning of students; causes sleepwalking; likes to attack men. Confuses protective zar spirits so they cannot help.		Zar	amulet "tesherta hebuat". intoxicant plant "esä fara" (see Zar).
(1)	"Eqabē Seray"	evil eye, male demon	Various mischief; can turn himself into human figure	Non-Copt neighbors; Barya, ironsmith ethnics	Buda	Christian amulet.
(1)	"Dabbas"	Household demon	undefined illness and death; "aroused when thirsty"			Christian amulet.
(2)	"Barya"	dancing demons; their chief "Legēwon" has red eyes and is "buda"	epilepsy, haut mal ("ḥemama barya"), esp. in male victims.	Barya tribe of Nilotic lowlands. Symbol: tornado	Zar, Buda	Amulet with angel of fiery sword (Christian).
(2)	"Tegrida"	restless demon	epilepsy, petit mal; causes "falling-down sickness"			Christian amulet.

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	affiliation of demon's; or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(3)	"Werselya"	female demon	attacks women: barreness through stopped menstruation which "prevents conception", 'yädam tefat); bleeding from uterus (menorrhagia); miscarriage.	Barya tribe negress		amulet with legend of her promise to Saint Susneyos. It is suspended from the Christian neckcord "mätäb".
(3)	"Karina"	female demon	attacks women who have just given birth (puerperal fever).			amulet recalling her defeat at the hands of King Solomon.
(3)	"Shotälay"	female demon, subordinate.	causes stillbirth		Zar	exorcism
(3)	"Tegertoya", "Teggerta", "Kaddegeni"	female demon	attacks women after childbirth through puerperal fever or catalepsy (postnatal depression).		Zar, Buda	prophylactic amulet; quiet cooperation with Zar doctor who tries cajoling the spirit through the patient (See zar).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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5. Summary of the debtara's syncretism in healing the spirit.

It is clear from the above that a number of ancient spirit cosmologies have contributed to, and survived in, Amhara healing practices: Ancient Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Arab, Christian, and African. In fact, the syncretism has been so complex, for so many centuries, that it would be impossible to trace all the roots, with any degree of valid certainty. However, several traces do stand out and their etiology bears significantly on present function.

The book "Lefafa Tsedeq" of the Coptic Abyssinian Church (lit. Book of Righteous Life, in Geez), contains spells and formulae attributed to Jesus Christ and Mary, but actually showing influences from the Egyptian "Book of the Dead". Its function among the Amhara is entirely in the context of funerals and funeral mass during memorial services.

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Much of the Greek-Byzantine influence may have entered directly at the time Abyssinia was christianized; but more came via Arabic, later. This includes patches of Greek mythology, legends in connection with the New Testament, and traces of the astrological work of claudius Ptolemy (about 150 A.D. in origin), known in the West as Almagest". [123]

Hebrew influence is most commonly encountered with reference to the mystic powers of King Solomon, who occupies about the same role in Amhara spirit cosmology as in Jewish mythology (Kabala). Amhara amulets refer, e.g. to the "fishnet of Solomon", in which he could catch demons as readily as a fisherman catches fish in the rainy season. The powers of archangels, e.g. Fenuel, Gabriel, etc., are very similar to Jewish cabalistic ideas, [124]

123. See Strelcyn, S: Un magicien grec en Ethiopie. Journal Asiatique, 1951, p. 175-192
124. Walker, John: Folk Medicines in Modern Egypt. London 1934.

177 755 789 The "seal of Solomon" (actually the 6-pointed Star of David) often appears on Amhara amulets (e.g. against Karina). Even Hebrew-appearing characters are found on amulets (a widespread custom in the Middle East.) [125] As might be expected, Hebrew traits are even more emphasized among the Falashas, who begin every amulet with: "Blessed be the God of Israel, God of all Creatures; prayer against.....".

Arabic influence has served primarily as a carrier. Directly derived from the Arabs are the 12 signs of the Zodiac, found on Abyssinian amulets. Carried was the "seal of Alexander".

Christian mythology and hagiology predominates in the cosmology of the amulets of the dabtara. Many of them begin with the formula: "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity; prayer against.....". Deniers of Christ who are suspected as sorcerers, are often personified in these amulets as Falasha or Barya. Christian martyrs and saints, Abyssinian or "from Jerusalem", are appealed to for intercession against demons. The following are frequently encountered in amulets:

776 177 755 Abuna (bishop) Batra Maryam, Abyssinian saint, against snakebite (prophylactic); St. George, "Qeddus Giyorgis", shown spearing a monster (an old idea possibly dating to the Bel-Marduk battle among ancient Babylonians, and Ra and Horus in ancient Egypt).

St. Sebastian is often depicted in drawings, and appealed to against the Kagana and other threshhold demons. To keep out disease and evil, this amulet is often placed above the entrance to a hut; but not in the doorway itself, if someone inside is already sick, for this would block the exit of the demon. [751]

125. Reich, Sigismund: Quatre Coups Magiques. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, Vol. 7-8, pp. 159-175. Institut Francais de Damas, 1937-8.

171/754 Amhara, and evil witchcraft feared by the geographically close Nilotic Azande. This is not surprising, since contact with the "Barya" people of the Nilotic Sudan is well known. In Azande society, persons who are "socially undesirable" are suspected of sorcery, but never the nobles and the rich.[130] Among the Amhara, too, [554] no "telleq sew" (great man, noble, rich) is likely to be accused as a "buda" sorcerer, while socially low-class groups doing the despised work of ironsmithing are immediately suspected when a "buda" case arises. In both societies, Azande and Amhara, such suspicion leads to prompt interrogation of the suspect, and revenge by the kinfolk of the victim. In this type of magic, social significance, i.e. ethnic relations in Amhara territory, is considerable.

177/755 Amhara healing of the spirit is psychological, in the first place of significance. In the second place of significance is the enormous syncretism, among linguistic, ethnic, religious and racial components of the art of healing. It presents one of the few outlets for "free enterprise" available in the Amhara tradition. It is this cultural syncretism over the centuries, which, despite the political isolation of Abyssinia, has maintained and developed the spirited character of the Amhara peasant.

130. Evans-Pritchard, E.E.: Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande. London 1937.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

did not move at once into his other house some miles 181
away he would die. So on a bitterly cold night the poor old gentleman was removed to his other place, a course of action which, needless to say, resulted in his death.

They still believe in the efficacy of writing the sick 155
person's name on a certain kind of tree; and one of our friends told me that his own "boy" had done this when he (my friend) was ill, and attributed his recovery entirely to this cause. Another European who was very ill was cured (so said his "boy") by the latter obtaining from a native priest a piece of paper upon which the sick man's name was written. The "boy" had actually paid the priest the (for him) very large sum of three dollars for the paper.

And yet another example that came to my notice was that of a "boy" in the employ of a friend of mine who was suffering from lung trouble and was being attended, quite successfully, by a European doctor. As the "boy" did not think he was getting well fast enough he called in his priest, who advised him to swallow a cupful of petrol! Needless to say, the result was death.

So that in point of fact the Abyssinian priest does not appear to differ very much from the South African witch-doctor, and indeed of the two I should be inclined to give pride of place to the latter, so far as medical practice is concerned at all events.

[pp. 198-end have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

252 262 the last a few minutes before the wot is ready. Some add capsicum at the same time.

Liver and stomach, especially of sheep and goat, are eaten, but spleen and milt are considered hard to digest and are given to dogs. In general, interior organs are not prestigeful.

Raw beef, "brundo", is still featured at special feasts such as weddings, religious feasts like "täzkär", [64] as it was featured at feasts of warriors in the past. This brings much tapeworm infection, but the risk is taken because it is believed that "brundo" makes strong like no [755] other food. The painful purgative cure is undergone every two months with "kosso", still a major institution among the Amhara.

To cool the palate linings and tongue from the bär-bärē, curdled milk, "ergo", is consumed right afterwards. [515] Hands are carefully washed, for touching the eyes with fingers stained from the spiced stew makes them smart.

Fish, much eaten only in the rainy season, is also boiled in wot, often after slight prefrying in talba (linseed oil); lentils (mesr) are often added.

Lentils become very important in the long lenten season [784] and on every Wednesday and Friday, when the average Amhara still abstains from meat, milk, eggs and other animal products, for religious (Coptic fast) reasons. The staple food during these periods is a porridge called "shero": mashed peas seasoned with spices, onion and vegetable oil.

Another vegetarian staple is "nefro", consisting of peas, chick peas, sorghum, all boiled and eaten as ker-

795 led by a comparatively tolerant and rarely learned clergy, even loyal and observant Abyssinian Christians frequently follow practices of other religions without being ostracized or even criticized.

755 In the middle of the preparations for "Mäsqäl", the Feast of the Cross, emotionally ill or despondent patients believed to be possessed by an "evil" Zar or "Buda" spirit, are taken by their relatives into the incipient sunshine and deposited at a spot where trails form a crossroad. A doctor of the "Zar" religious cult (see later description) performs incantations, using incense to lure the Zar. Then a chicken is slaughtered, with the Christian formula pronounced over it. This cure is believed to be particularly effective if the Zar spirit is a Coptic Christian himself, who will then feed on the properly slaughtered chicken and leave the patient alone.

796 On Fassika, the Coptic Easter, Ethiopian Muslims
795 living in Coptic provinces have an equivalent feast, in which many Coptic Christian women andd small children passively participate only a few hours after they have returned home from all-night prayers at the church. Even more curious is the fact that this particular Ethiopian-Muslim holy day celebrated near Gonder the day of a Muslim saint called "Sheykh Abäder", is celebrated according to the Coptic, not the Muslim, calendar. (There is a parallel to such calendar syncretism in Egypt, where the founder of a dervish order, Ahmed il-Badawi, is celebrated at his tomb according to the Coptic calendar.[78]

78. Littmann, E.: Ahmed il-Badawi; ein Lied auf den ägyptischen Nationalheiligen. Akad. Wiss. u. Lit., Mainz, 1950, No. 3.

776 kingdom. The hyena ("jeb") is regarded as acting sometimes as the
825 "horse" of the evil spirit or human sorcerer, sometimes as a werewolf-like creature, when the evil spirit or human sorcerer assumes its form at night, or makes use of its powerful, hypnotic eyes to "draw the [755] blood" magically from the living victim. The concept of the magical hyena is much used in diagnosis and treatment of mental ailments. It is the most common wild animal, seen and heard at night, and the holes it burrows under fresh human graves are regarded as visible evidence of the character of the hyena. The fear in which the spiritual world is held is symbolized in the hyena; it is whispered about in connection with suspected ethnic craft groups such as the smiths; or shouted out loud in military unison ("yabahalal jebo") in challenge.

825 Aspects of the animal world which cause great "wonderment" among homespun Amhara "shemagalye" philosophers are types of animal behavior that seem so human. "Bird language" is given a variety of popular interpretations (footnote 102). Baboons, which are a constant annoyance and therefore familiar, are wondered about in part because of their human-like social organization headed by "great man" chiefs ("ämäre").

But it is a great insult to call a person a "creature of Thursday" (when animals were created, according to the Bible).

186 B. Amhara Ideas about Human Races and Amhara Ethnocentrism.

829 The dualism of the Amhara culture pattern rules also their view of the human races with which they are familiar, and their own

Footnote 102 - Leslau: Popular Interpretations of Bird Sounds in Ethiopia. Journal of American Folklore, 1952, Vol. 65, pp. 361-4.

178 This attitude is of course deplored by the Western physicians who know
757 of it. But modern medical treatment is still little available outside the major towns. Patients come to hospitals often only as a last resort, fearing to be separated from kinfolk and exposed to treatment by strangers, so that mortality in hospitals is high, which reinforces
[743] the fears. At present there are probably no more than 50 hospitals in all Ethiopia, and only a few hundred Western physicians. Both are heavily concentrated in Addis Ababa, so that the field of the "woggesha" has not shrunk at all.

164 B. Common Ailments and their Treatment.

757 The more common ailments and procedures followed by the "woggesha"
756 and "dabtara", (practitioners who occasionally overlap in specialties
755 but almost never in treatment), include the following (see next page):

753 An important part of diagnosis is the decision whether an ailment is contagious ("fera") or not, and whether it is inherited, congenital ("quranna") or not. If inherited, marriages with such families are despised as not "attentam" (good stock), the same term used for descent from slaves or other "race" or both.

759 In general, the woggesha is most often called in organic ailments;
757 shares with the "dabtara" the practice of functional ailments; while the latter shares with the "zar" doctor the treatment of mental ailments.

2. Healing the Spirit

x794 A. The "Zar" cult of supernatural spirits, its institution and cosmology.

755 One of the most complex developments of Amhara non-material culture, to which a great deal of mental ingenuity is devoted, is the healing of mental ailments. But this goes far beyond treatment and cure. The "zar" doctors do not limit themselves to treating some of the aforementioned mental ailments. They organise the afflicted, before, during and after "cure", into "zar" societies, which bear the earmarks of a religious cult, and to which the individual belongs henceforth until his or her (more often her) death. Here he finds the warm companionship of the fellow-afflicted; opportunity for expressive behavior; the religious feeling of having been of service; the personal attention of a personal possessive and protective spirit; and the visible leadership of the "zar" doctor who heads the organizational unit.

x794 The zar doctor often a matriarch, differs only in degree from
756 her flock; for she, too, must be possessed, must be forever afflicted by spirits. But she has managed to learn to control them, call upon her more powerful protective spirits to aid her against evil spirits,

X794 756 more tricky but less powerful than hers. This enables her to relieve the sufferings of her clients; without, however, curing them. For a possessive spirit can be turned into an asset - into a protective spirit once the spirit's demands are known and regularly fulfilled. Why should anyone wish to reject such a protective spirit who helps solve the problems of life and even "beautifies the face" with an inner glow? Only a few hopelessly evil demons, mostly female, need to be exorcised.

X794 562 Women, otherwise limited in cultural participation among the Amhara, particularly in the church institution where their expressive behavior and opportunity for service are almost entirely rejected, constitute a considerable majority in the zar societies, even in the top leadership; so that many men think of the zar cult as predominantly feminine, and consult zar doctors by stealth only, at night. Men have ambivalent feelings about their wives attendance: they are often jealous of the "possessive" spirit; object to the financial outlays demanded by the "zar" spirit on pain of "relapse" into the patient's catatonic, schizoid or hysterical state; object to their wives being at the doctor's hut all night during worship-sessions; but admit that their wives are thereafter easier to live with, indeed more beautiful when the "wəqābi" (inspiration) "is on their face".

[182] Thus the "zar" institution affects many other Amhara institutions: Marriage and the Family; Religion; Economics; Ethnic Relations; and even linguistics.

X794 755 [832] The psychological attitude in Amhara culture which emphasizes the aspect of possession in love, and in other intense human relations, has already been pointed out in connection with "love magic", which attempts, instead of arousing love in the partner, to render him or her submissive.

x794 755 In the zar cult, there is no attempt to win the love of the spirit, or to love him or her in turn; rather it is a game of cajoling, tricking, bribing the patient out of the condition of total submission into one of partial control; and then forever renting one's mortgaged mental health through permanent financial payments. But there is the added recompense of gaining an invisible protector, who, as financial partner, has a permanent interest in the success of the partnership; plus the recompense of the human fellowship.

x794 773 776 According to the mythology of the "zar"cult, the "zar" spirits originated in the Biblical Garden of Eden at the same time man was created. They assumed physical form when Eve began to bear children. Eve is believed to have had 30 children. One day, when God the Creator came to visit, and began to count the children, Eve (evidently fearing the evil eye), hid the 15 most beautiful ones. God, being all-knowing, realized this, and became angry. As punishment, He decreed that the 15 hidden children always remain hidden, invisible, night creatures, for all eternity. The present-day zar spirits are believed descended from them. The "zar" spirits are more powerful and more beautiful than man, know remedies for all ailments, but envy their uglier and weaker human brothers and sisters who are "daytime" children of the light. Some "zar" spirits have thus become malevolent, though many can be cajoled and bribed into "forgiveness" (a word much used in the cult ceremony). Others are inclined to be benevolent, and, if their pity is touched, may reveal secret remedies, in dreams or during possession, e.g. to a mother for her sick child.

x 794 Every zar has an individual name and personality. Thus, one of
776 the first tasks of the "zar doctor" is to diagnose. This is done in a
755 variety of complex procedures: "Playing along" with the spirit's desires expressed through the mouth of the actions of the possessed; or, in case of intermittent possession, a cult session during which the "zar" is lured to re-possess and re-inhabit the body of the patient, in public, where the zar doctor can observe every phase of the sequence of possession, and thus, on the basis of long experience, detect the peculiarities of the particular "zar" spirits. Once identified, gradual and limited "control" of the particular spirit can then be established, and a "modus vivendi" created.

a) <u>The "Zar" doctor: patients: procedures of healing: basic "zar" personalities.</u>

x 794 The work of the "zar" doctor consists of three parts: identifying
755 the spirit who "rides" the patient "like a monkey" (the same metaphor used by drug addicts in Western countries, e.g. in the movie "Man with the Golden Arm"); after this diagnosis follows the "cultivation", negotiation, establishment of friendly relations with the spirit (treatment); finally the establishment of life-long protective cult relationships (prognosis; socio-mental hygiene).

x 794 The boundary line between the chronic "zar" patient and the "zar"
756 doctor is regarded as a thin one. Both are referred to as "bala zar" (lit. mastered by the zar). Both are equally "possessed", by one or several spirits, but the healer has turned his weakness into a profession, by learning more and more about the various spirits; the types of patients; how to achieve some control over the situation instead of being controlled by it or even destroyed by it. The doctor

X794 756 "zar" is a Muslim, is covered with a flaming-colored turban. Unlike other Amhara men, he wears an ear-ring, of bright metal, in one ear. He seems absent-minded, distracted inward-looking, greets no one. However, when greeted, he may reply with a tirade, in "zar" language. Sometimes he claims to have just returned from a magical voyage, e.g. to have just visited the home country of a visiting foreigner, so that he knows all about it.

X794 756 755 Male zar doctors often develop a sharp, staring or shrewd Mephistophelian look, so that their effect on a patient who generally fears the evil eye is almost hypnotic even when the doctor is not in a trance. As a result, even stubborn patients in the grip of a new hysteria stop their shrieking when startled by the appearance of such a figure in the hut. Without saying a word, the doctor grasps the upper arm of the patient (for male "zars" attack the shoulders first, squatting on the back of the patient like a baby on the mother's back). When the patient, usually a woman, has been sufficiently subdued by the stare, the doctor loosens his grip and lightly begins to caress the upper arm and shoulder. This shows that he is unafraid to make contact with the spirit and that the situation is well in hand.

X794 756 A male zar doctor had, in the recent past, a place of honor at the table of feudal chiefs who often consulted them - perhaps more because of the doctors' knowledge of humans and public opinion than because of their spirit world. Even today, the social status and income of a zar doctor in rural areas and provincial towns is high, and he can afford such expensive European attire and apparel as a folding umbrella, laced shoes, a ring of silver or gold, etc. He may break rules of politeness, even utter mild insults and commit familiarities without

X794 so that the patient "does not get hurt" in the violent twirling
776 (much as "miss" protect a wife against her husband). The zar spirit appreciates these acknowledgements and is thus open to negotiations, especially during the "honeymoon".

Only rarely does a male zar "possess" a male human. In this case it is considered not very difficult to come to terms with him and turn him into a protective spirit, through regular financial sacrifices, special attire, and other physical adjustments. Zar doctors seek out powerful male zars whom they need as protective and guiding spirits in their profession. Powerful warriors who have seemed to have a charmed life are believed under such protection - which makes a male more
[674] masculine. Consistently successful thieves who always seem to elude capture are believed to be under such protection. This is said to frighten even the police (or at least offers a ready alibi).

X794 A patient under active treatment by a "zar" doctor is called
755 "tamami" (lit. the one being cared for). The first step in the procedure is the diagnosis, i.e. the identification of the specific zar personality that has possessed the patient. This is usually done at night, for the "zar" hide in daytime and roam at night - their element.

When darkness has fallen, the patient is brought to the hut of the zar doctor. Here the zar disciples, mostly women, are assembled, seated quietly, perhaps talking in subdued tones, or spinning cotton thread. Incense is burning, there is a low, rythmic drum beat, occasionally
X794 broken by chants accompanied by rythmic handclapping. Member after
755 member rises individually, "when the spirit moves her" and begins to
535 perform her "gurri", with slight varistions according to her particular zar. The "gurri" is a movement that begins with the shoulders (typical

794 of Ambara dancing), while the performer is yet seated, and continues
755 while she rises. Head and shoulders move forward and backward, sometimes
535 in horizontal direction, sometimes rotating clockwise, sometimes counterclockwise. Nearing the orgiastic climax, the possessed proceeds to twirl like a top, faster and faster, until she drops in a heap. Habitues can go on for 20 minutes, and be ready for another movement an hour later.

While watching this over and over again, the patient may herself in time be moved to do likewise, though at first clumsily. This is a good sign, for it means that her zar has consented to dismount from his "riding" position, and is beginning to "descend" into the possessed person itself. The "gurri" is regarded as the "victory dance" of the zar, much like a hunter who has wounded and felled his deer. There is a strong element of struggle in the "gurri" dance, like the frantic death-
[831] throes of an animal about to surrender its individual existence. It is also the climax of the magical coitus (much like the bride who is "conquered" on her wedding night).

794 The patient is now in a trancelike state, considered in communica-
755 tion and partly identified with the zar, but yet open to urgings by the doctor. More incense is burned, close by, to make the new and as-yet unidentified zar feel cozy and put him in a benevolent, cooperative mood. Great care must be taken prior to the diagnosis. For this reason no poetry is sung to him and no gift given as yet, for the wrong king might insult him - he insists on his own, individual cult. When the patient dances subsequent "gurri", the zar doctor becomes increasingly certain whether the zar is male, or female, evil or mischievous, "neglected" or offended.

X794 755 535 The specific personality and identity of the zar is revealed later during the course of the diagnosis, when the zar, using the body of the patient, dances the "fukkara" dance. This is considered the equivalent of the "boasting dance" of the Amhara warrior on the eve of battle, which goes by the same name. Thus the zar reveals his "farä̈s sem" (war name; lit. horse name, i.e. knighthood name), much like an Amhara feudal knight. Since formal "boasting" is highly individualistic, this means that the zar has come out of hiding, like a warrior who emerges from ambush. The dance itself is just as individualistic and irregular, therefore called "dankira", and may include the brandishing of sticks (as if they were spears) or jumping up and down.

X794 755 Once the patient has proceeded to such expressive behavior, the zar doctor claims that he "knows" the identity of the zar. The doctor now asks the zar a series of leading questions, and the patient usually does not fail to respond with the "truthful" answers. Finally the name of the zar is openly proclaimed. Certain zars are stubborn, hide their identity in various subterfuges, so that the battle of wits between the zar doctor and the zar is a lengthy and difficult one. But the former nearly always wins out and announces his diagnosis.

Thereupon the zar doctor proceeds to decide what course of treatment to follow. The zar is asked, through the mouth of the patient, what [782] offense has been committed against him; what he would like to receive as "mäqwädäsha" love-gift in order to "pardon" the iniquity, or as damages for the "insult" or "neglect". Finally the zar is asked what he will demand in regular offerings in order to remain on good terms with the possessed, to plague her less and only at regular intervals, and, perhaps, to become her protective spirit. On the basis of the replies, the patient is

794 assessed membership fees in the zar congregation headed by that parti-
755 cular zar doctor. The patient thus becomes a devotee of the zar ("yäzar wälaj").

794 Demands of the individual zars range from very simple to very com-
782 plex. If he is a light-colored zar, he may demand the annual sacrifice
755 of a light-colored goat; if dark, of a black goat. Frequently the
776 demand includes personal attire for the possessed, such as certain trinkets, glass bead necklaces, metal hairpins, specific hairstyles - all of them attention-getters. The zar warns that he will come and check on the observance of these demands from time to time, and punish any shortcomings with severe suffering.

Sacrifices, "derka", in which a goat or a chicken is slaughtered, are at least partly consumed by the patient (through whom the zar consumes the donation). Sometimes several sacrifices have to be observed as part of one "mäqwädäsha", to appease weaker zar spirits that linger about the more powerful ones, awaiting a vulnerable moment in which to pounce upon the patient, unless pacified.

Some zars are vegetarian, require ablutions in vegetable water, in which mashed vegetables and chewed "chat" ("qat", a drugplant) have been mixed; others perversely like the bitter vermifuge plant kosso and insist that it be placed in the coffee consumed by the possessed patient; still others have made the lemon or the sycamore their symbol.

More zars are carnivorous. One whose symbol (resembling a totem) is a lion, will demand the sacrifice of a tawny-colored goat, or demand
794 that one of that color be kept in sight at all times so that he can
776 "look" at it. For zars are very fond of using their sight. The wild
755 animals of the bush are considered the "cattle" of the zar, and some
825

~~194~~ 776 755 [825] specialize in "drinking" magically the milk of the lioness or female elephant, etc. When zars appear in dreams, cats and jackals often represent female zars, snakes male zars. But the animals are merely forms which the zars assume temporarily, while the zar spirits themselves retain their demanding-protective identity permanently.

[756] Some zar doctors are considered far more experienced, clever, or specialized than others, so that stubborn cases are referred to them. One of the most stubborn is the zar of epilepsie, called "barya" (lit. Barya tribesman, hence, slave). This zar is believed to have his home in the Nilotic lowlands below the northwest escarpment, a desert and near-desert area inhabited by the Barya people. There this zar is believed in contact with "ganyen" (djinn), from whom he has acquired his evil character. Prognosis in this case is more limited, and all the zar doctor can do is to negotiate an agreement with "barya" to afflict the patient less frequently. Even the diagnosis is difficult, for the patient often has to be restrained, even tied up, and special herbs and procedures are required.

Another difficult case is the patient possessed by several different zars at the same time, which confuses the diagnosis. In this case, the cleverness, experience and diplomacy of the diagnostician are severly taxed, to unravel the tangle, and treat each zar without insulting and neglecting any of the others. The usual procedure is to appease the most powerful one, e.g. "awolye", first, and enlist him as guardian spirit against the others. A really powerful and arrogant zar doctor can go so far as to attempt to treat the personalities of the minor zars themselves. Thus he may give them a severe talking to

X794 776 ●755 (actually directed at the patient), and "train" the minor zars to do their individual "gurri" somewhat differently, more "correctly". This "treining" may include occasional beating of the "horse" of the zar (the patient).

Another advanced and complicated technique used by highly experienced zar doctors, in certain stubborn cases, is to transfer a stubborn zar from one patient of the zar congregation to a "stronger" member, so that the effect will be more controllable. This transfer is made on the principle of contagion. But a zar doctor is not supposed to inoculate a person with a really evil zar, for that would make him a sorcerer and set both the chief zar doctors and mankind in general against him.

Only in case of such a completely evil zar does the zar doctor attempt complete exorcism, considered a very dangerous form of spiritual surgery. During a somber ceremony, which lacks the gaiety of the usual [782] zar society, a black hen is killed, the evil zar is lured to feed on the body of the bloody animal, and the cadaver is quickly thrown in the bush, a thicket, or the river. This transfer is called "danqara", is tangential to the zar cult, and more related to "buda" and "tänqway" complexes (described later).

[787] Occasionally an old and experienced zar doctor, especially if a man, is asked to perform divination. If his personal zar happens to be "adept at prophecy", especially if he has been "educated at Jerusalem", the zar doctor may agree to put the question before him.

X794 776 821 Seasonal variations are considered very important in treatment procedures, for the zar spirits are regarded to be as much dominated by the climate as are humans. They are dormant or inactive during the 3-month

×794 zar doctor, preferably a woman like Woyzäro Salämtew. The zar complex,
772 to the Amhara mind, represents the shadow side of the visible human
[562] world, making it complete. Hence, just as the Coptic Christian (and also the Muslim) church emphasizes the male-dominated, patriarchal side of society, so does the zar complex represent the obverse, the female-dominated, matriarchal side of society.

×794 This is further reinforced by the subordinate socio-psychological
562 position of the Amhara woman. She may not enter the church. Her daily labors are largely limited to routine, manual, monotonous tasks.
[566] Only noblewomen are exempt from this social position of the "commoner" female, and therefore are not found in the zar cult - which therefore has a lower-class connotation in the basically two-class Amhara society.

Socially undistinguished, "commoner" Amhara women who chafe under
[164] their social inferiority, including women of potential talent repressed in their culture, are likely to develop ailments such as melancholia, apathy, catatonic states, migraine, or hysteria. Thus the zar doctor is called in and the patient enters the zar society.

The socio-psychological improvement, even apart from medical
[755] considerations, which the woman experiences as member of a zar - devotee society, is considerable. Once her individual "zar" has been diagnosed, she has acquired an individual "self" which is respected, acknowledged, at first within, and finally even outside the zar society. For the zar society emphasizes individualism, free expression, individual enterprise; as against the outside Amhara world which suppresses it in commoners, especially in the Amhara woman. The business enterprise of the female zar doctor and many devotees has already been described.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations 155
which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged 152
ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which [763]
occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news [764]
evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and [726]
boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive 155
fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training* 757
and Personality. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[13] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general [539]
principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy 155
water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of 755
affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of 155
prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. 751
Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute 155
magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit 789
use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human 261
problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formula- [191]
tion, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a [173]
baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ĭnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

12: Young MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For information on magical and mental therapy, see category 116, pp. xix, 6, 11, 23-26, 57, 73-80, 87-89, 96-99, 156-171, 174-175, 182, 185, 190-195, 202, 208-210, 223-236, 240-241, and 246-249.]

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[For the religious functions of the dabtara in the Ethiopian church, see category 793.]

PART VI: HEALING BODY AND SPIRIT

753 The "living museum" aspect of Abyssinian culture is perhaps nowhere
/77 so evident as in Abyssinian medicine. Both basic concepts and practical functions recall much that has been derived with little change (though much culture loss) from ancient Egypt, the ancient Near East, ancient Greek culture, plus regional ecological developments in Abyssinia itself.

753 Many ailments are regarded by the Amhara as closely interwoven
756 in the body and spirit of the patient, and in fact, frequently no sharp distinction is made between bodily and spiritual ailments; so that the same illness may sometimes be treated by the surgeon-herbologist ("wogresha"), and if not successfully cured, by the practitioner of exorcising magic, the "dabtara" scribe; or the practitioner of sympathetic magic, of the "zar" cult; or even the sorcerer, the "tanqway". Only the latter is considered illegal. However, a fairly clear distinction is made between organic ailments and functional ailments, and on the basis of whichever preliminary diagnosis is made, it is decided which practitioner to call in first.

756 The association of the dabtara with the church has increased his activities in recent years from that of amulet-writer and herbologist to many of the functions of outright magic, particularly since the tanqway has become illegal. The dabtara always seems to have enjoyed the highest respectability and trust of any of the practitioners, for, as in ancient Greece, his activity in the official religion is believed to extend over the ills of the body and over the world of the spirits.

753 There is no philosophical basis for the development of medical systems among the Amhara, no reasoned system. Their medical concepts are pre-Galen, at most Aristotelian. The dabtara have, or, in some cases claim

756 to have, books handed down from past centuries, containing secret formulae, recipes, pharmacopeia of an intermingled empirical and magical nature. They warn inquirers that the public revelation of th these secrets would create great social dangers at the hands of the irresponsible.

171 In the days of ancient Egypt, Abyssinia was a supplier of materials for embalming, such as incense, myrrh, etc. It is therefore little wonder that much of Abyssinian medicine resembles that of ancient Egypt, e.g. the strong emphasis on purgatives used regularly.

753 The Amhara shares with peasants in many other parts of the world his belief in "strong" medicine, powerful in taste or heroic in effect or both. Since the Italian invasion, his belief in injections, which bring such miraculously quick results, has assumed magical proportions. Generally he distrusts and fears new medicines.

1. Healing the Body

A. The Surgeon-Herbologist-Empiricist ("woggesha"): Utilizing Nature.

759 Unlike the other medical practioners mentioned earlier, the woggesha does not try to dominate nature; he specializes in utilizing what nature provides and in lending a helping hand. He is most often the first consulted, a kind of general practitioner, family doctor; and since he refrains from magical undertakings, he is neither feared nor suspected of witchcraft, which the other practioners, even the dabtara, often are.

Like the dabtara, the woggesha is often an expert herbologist, called "agabi zerar" (lit. who knows the work of nature). While walking in the bush, along brooks in the valley or in the "daga"

000 The patient would recover anyway in due course.

758 The therapeutic value of convalescense ("zärräm alä") is recognized, and patients are told to bask in the sunshine.

562 756 757 Men are more likely to let themselves be treated by the "woggesha"; women, who suffer more frequently from functional ailments, approach the "dabtarä" or "zar" doctor more often and request magical aid.

844 When birth approaches, the midwife is called, almost never the woggesha. If he is, he may not touch the genital parts of the woman, and merely advises the midwife. When labor pains begin, the patient is given a drink of mashed linseed to "relax the birth tract" and to "lessen the pain". The newborn baby is annointed with butter (often rancid), and fed some of it.

759 Other medical helpers, apprentices, or modern "dressers" may be referred to as "healers" ("fäwäsh"), "balä mädänit" (lit. medicine man, who knows empirical drugs and cures), "caretaker" ("astabaqi"), male nurse ("mogzit"), modern "dresser" ("astamami"). None of these are respected professions, for they are regarded as too close to manual labor, and such practitioners usually go to other provinces where their work will not shame the family. In recent years, the more skilled ones have been coming from Eritrea.

178 757 Modern change has been largely indirect and partial. The new laws still permit the "woggesha" to function. Penicillin and other antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription at the big "Saturday markets", for as little as ETh$2.50 (US$1.-), and the patient simply buys it, takes it to a "dresser" in the nearest town, whom he pays 1/2 dollar Ethiopian (US 20 cents), to give the injection. When symptoms disappear, e.g. in syphilis, he believes himself cured.

178 This attitude is of course deplored by the Western physicians who know
757 of it. But modern medical treatment is still little available outside the major towns. Patients come to hospitals often only as a last resort, fearing to be separated from kinfolk and exposed to treatment by strangers, so that mortality in hospitals is high, which reinforces
[743] the fears. At present there are probably no more than 50 hospitals in all Ethiopia, and only a few hundred Western physicians. Both are heavily concentrated in Addis Ababa, so that the field of the "woggesha" has not shrunk at all.

164 B. Common Ailments and their Treatment.

757 The more common ailments and procedures followed by the "woggesha"
756 and "dabtärä", (practitioners who occasionally overlap in specialties
755 but almost never in treatment), include the following (see next page):

753 An important part of diagnosis is the decision whether an ailment is contagious ("fera") or not, and whether it is inherited, congenital ("quranna") or not. If inherited, marriages with such families are despised as not "attentam" (good stock), the same term used for descent from slaves or other "race" or both.

759 In general, the woggesha is most often called in organic ailments;
757 shares with the "dabtara" the practice of functional ailments; while the latter shares with the "zar" doctor the treatment of mental ailments.

2. Healing the Spirit

A. The "Zar" cult of supernatural spirits, its institution and cosmology.

754 755 One of the most complex developments of Amhara non-material culture, to which a great deal of mental ingenuity is devoted, is the healing of mental ailments. But this goes far beyond treatment and cure. The "zar" doctors do not limit themselves to treating some of the aforementioned mental ailments. They organise the afflicted, before, during and after "cure", into "zar" societies, which bear the earmarks of a religious cult, and to which the individual belongs henceforth until his or her (more often her) death. Here he finds the warm companionship of the fellow-afflicted; opportunity for expressive behavior; the religious feeling of having been of service; the personal attention of a personal possessive and protective spirit; and the visible leadership of the "zar" doctor who heads the organisational unit.

754 The zar doctor often a matriarch, differs only in degree from
● 756 her flock; for she, too, must be possessed, must be forever afflicted by spirits. But she has managed to learn to control them, call upon her more powerful protective spirits to aid her against evil spirits,

X794 756 more tricky but less powerful than bars. This enables her to relieve the sufferings of her clients; without, however, curing them. For a possessive spirit can be turned into an asset - into a protective spirit once the spirit's demands are known and regularly fulfilled. Why should anyone wish to reject such a protective spirit who helps solve the problems of life and even "beautifies the face" with an inner glow? Only a few hopelessly evil demons, mostly female, need to be exorcised.

X794 562 Women, otherwise limited in cultural participation among the Amhara, particularly in the church institution where their expressive behavior and opportunity for service are almost entirely rejected, constitute a considerable majority in the zar societies, even in the top leadership; so that many men think of the zar cult as predominantly feminine, and consult zar doctors by stealth only, at night. Men have ambivalent feelings about their wives attendance: they are often jealous of the "possessive" spirit; object to the financial outlays demanded by the "zar" spirit on pain of "relapse" into the patient's catatonic, schizoid or hysterical state; object to their wives being at the doctor's hut all night during worship-sessions; but admit that their wives are thereafter easier to live with, indeed more beautiful when the "wechi" (inspiration) "is on their face".

[182] Thus the "zar" institution affects many other Amhara institutions: Marriage and the Family; Religion; Economics; Ethnic Relations; and even linguistics.

X794 755 [832] The psychological attitude in Amhara culture which emphasizes the aspect of possession in love, and in other intense human relations, has already been pointed out in connection with "love magic", which attempts, instead of arousing love in the partner, to render him or her submissive.

x794 Every zar has an individual name and personality. Thus, one of
776 the first tasks of the "zar doctor" is to diagnose. This is done in a
755 variety of complex procedures: "Playing along" with the spirit's desires expressed through the mouth of the actions of the possessed; or, in case of intermittent possession, a cult session during which the "zar" is lured to re-possess and re-inhabit the body of the patient, in public, where the zar doctor can observe every phase of the sequence of possession, and thus, on the basis of long experience, detect the peculiarities of the particular "zar" spirits. Once identified, gradual and limited "control" of the particular spirit can then be established, and a "modus vivendi" created.

a) <u>The "Zar" doctor: patients: procedures of healing: basic "zar" personalities.</u>

x794 The work of the "zar" doctor consists of three parts: identifying
755 the spirit who "rides" the patient "like a monkey" (the same metaphor used by drug addicts in Western countries, e.g. in the movie "Man with the Golden Arm"); after this diagnosis follows the "cultivation", negotiation, establishment of friendly relations with the spirit (treatment); finally the establishment of life-long protective cult relationships (prognosis; socio-mental hygiene).

x794 The boundary line between the chronic "zar" patient and the "zar"
756 doctor is regarded as a thin one. Both are referred to as "bala zar" (lit. mastered by the zar). Both are equally "possessed", by one or several spirits, but the healer has turned his weakness into a profession, by learning more and more about the various spirits; the types of patients; how to achieve some control over the situation instead of being controlled by it or even destroyed by it. The doctor

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must have a talent for this work, and learn it through long apprenticeship, while serving an experienced "zar" doctor as monitor in the cult. In time, a "zar" doctor will identify his own personality more and more with the most powerful of the spirits that possess him, or the one that possesses him most habitually, and will even derive his professional name from that individual "zar", e.g. "balä qolē" (lit. possessed by the non-dancing household-protective "zar" named "qolē"; hence - Doctor Qolē).

Much as in other skilled occupations among the Amhara, the "zar" doctor is regarded as particularly capable if he has inherited his profession, preferably from his mother. After apprenticeship, the new doctor receives his power by contagion, i.e. from his mother or older zar doctor who place the hands on the head of the graduate. In many cases this enables the "monkey" to slide from the teacher to the "zar" graduate, especially if the teacher is the mother, so that the new doctor can start out with a protective spirit of high calibre. Zar doctors lacking this inheritance sometimes claim that they have derived their extraordinary powers from having been kidnapped by a zar in early childhood (which zar spirits are fond of doing for the pleasure that looking at a "visible" child is said to give them); and having retained the power and privilege of communicating with his erstwhile foster-parent even after his release. This claim is more often made by male zar doctors than by female ones, for the latter usually inherit the profession from their mothers.

A zar doctor, especially a male one, is regarded as particularly arrogant in personality. When walking on a trail, he walks in great strides. His hair stands up stiff like that of a warrior, or, if his

X794 756 "zar" is a Muslim, is covered with a flaming-colored turban. Unlike other Amhara men, he wears an ear-ring, of bright metal, in one ear. He seems absent-minded, distracted inward-looking, greets no one. However, when greeted, he may reply with a tirade, in "zar" language. Sometimes he claims to have just returned from a magical voyage, e.g. to have just visited the home country of a visiting foreigner, so that he knows all about it.

X794 756 755 Male zar doctors often develop a sharp, staring or shrewd Mephistophelian look, so that their effect on a patient who generally fears the evil eye is almost hypnotic even when the doctor is not in a trance. As a result, even stubborn patients in the grip of a new hysteria stop their shrieking when startled by the appearance of such a figure in the hut. Without saying a word, the doctor grasps the upper arm of the patient (for male "zars" attack the shoulders first, squatting on the back of the patient like a baby on the mother's back). When the patient, usually a woman, has been sufficiently subdued by the stare, the doctor loosens his grip and lightly begins to caress the upper arm and shoulder. This shows that he is unafraid to make contact with the spirit and that the situation is well in hand.

X794 756 A male zar doctor had, in the recent past, a place of honor at the table of feudal chiefs who often consulted them - perhaps more because of the doctors' knowledge of humans and public opinion than because of their spirit world. Even today, the social status and income of a zar doctor in rural areas and provincial towns is high, and he can afford such expensive European attire and apparel as a folding umbrella, laced shoes, a ring of silver or gold, etc. He may break rules of politeness, even utter mild insults and commit familiarities without

X794 repression and penalty, for no layman can know whether or not it is
756 the spirit who speaks through the doctor in any given situation.

X794 The most frequent types of mental afflictions which the "zar"
164 doctor is called upon to treat are forms of hysteria (mostly in women), catatonic states (also mostly in women), and violent forms of possession including epileptic states (mostly in men). But he also treats some functional ailments, notably rheumatism, which is believed to have been caused by a "lazy zar" who wants his "horse" to stay in one place.

X794 Though every person is considered a potential "horse" for a zar,
776 certain personality types are considered particularly vulnerable to
753 possession by evil zars: persons with sad, returing, melancholic natures; women who feel unloved and neglected by their husbands and thus offer little resistance to a male "zar lover"; persons who wish to escape, e.g. chronic drunkards.

X794 Apathy, leading to catatonic states if not treated, indicates
753 incipient possession by an evil zar. The patient, often a woman,
758 withdraws into a corner, sits there huddled up, refuses to accept food. Until a zar doctor can be persuaded to come and take on the case, family and friends try to give the patient first aid. For, if she were to remain long in this state, it is believed that her "zar" could "ride" her to death. Therefore, relatives and neighbors come quickly, sing to the patient, entertain her, promise her whatever her heart desires, and generally try to create a merry atmosphere. Finally they try to lure the patient into watching them dance, and try to raise the patient playfully, so as to join them. The patient is never left alone until the doctor comes.

794 776 755 [325] specialize in "drinking" magically the milk of the lioness or female elephant, etc. When zars appear in dreams, cats and jackals often represent female zars, snakes male zars. But the animals are merely forms which the zars assume temporarily, while the zar spirits themselves retain their demanding-protective identity permanently.

[756] Some zar doctors are considered far more experienced, clever, or specialized than others, so that stubborn cases are referred to them. One of the most stubborn is the zar of epilepsie, called "barya" (lit. Barya tribesman, hence, slave). This zar is believed to have his home in the Nilotic lowlands below the northwest escarpment, a desert and near-desert area inhabited by the Barya people. There this zar is believed in contact with "ganyen" (djinn), from whom he has acquired his evil character. Prognosis in this case is more limited, and all the zar doctor can do is to negotiate an agreement with "barya" to afflict the patient less frequently. Even the diagnosis is difficult, for the patient often has to be restrained, even tied up, and special herbs and procedures are required.

Another difficult case is the patient possessed by several different zars at the same time, which confuses the diagnosis. In this case, the cleverness, experience and diplomacy of the diagnostician are severly taxed, to unravel the tangle, and treat each zar without insulting and neglecting any of the others. The usual procedure is to appease the most powerful one, e.g. "awolye", first, and enlist him as guardian spirit against the others. A really powerful and arrogant zar doctor can go so far as to attempt to treat the personalities of the minor zars themselves. Thus he may give them a severe talking to

X794 776 From this complex array of the plaguing - but often also protective-spirit world, it becomes clear that there is a great deal of significance in the zar cult beyond mere healing of mental ailments; even beyond the organizing of patients into groups of devotees - a kind of group therapy with religious overtones. There is an extension of the acquired "protection" so that some zars become not only protective spirits of individuals, but patron saints of certain social groups in Amhara society, e.g. some specialize in the rich and noble, some in the poor or low-class; some in hunters and warriors; etc. But although religious affiliations are usually identified sharply, there is considerable crossing of the lines in the spirit world so that Coptic Christian spirits may have Muslim names, and even practice religious intermarriage. Another important contribution made by the [812] zar cult is that it orders nature, explains nature to the Amhara mind, yet allows enough flexibility (e.g. in regional variations, and the continuously increasing and decreasing power of individual zars) to admit new information, new revelations, to be fitted into the traditional construct. For example, in the 1930's the dominant zar spirit in Gondar was Sayfu Changar (ascertained by a French expedition); in 1953/1954 it was Aweliya. Since zar spirits can have successful and unsuccessful careers, so can humans; hence, new ideas, even modern ones, can be fitted into the spiritual world.

But the major character of the "zar" complex is that of a healing cult.

X794 ●756 796 c. <u>The Annual Convention ("amat bal") of the "Zar" Doctors; Voluntary Possession in the "Zar" Cult.</u>

On the 23rd night of the month of Yakatit, the day before the beginning of the Coptic Christian lent, the "zar" doctors of Gondar hold

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their annual convention,("amat bal", lit. the annual event). This is about the time when the rest of the Christian world celebrates its mardi Gras, Carnevale, Fasching. The timing of the convention is probably no accident, for there be, as, the day after the noisy Convention, the period of "kudadē" (lit. suffering) in the life of Christ, priests would hardly permit the noisy and gay celebration during lent.

The convention takes place in Addis Alām (lit. new world), the oldest section of Gondar town, once restricted to Muslims and other non-Copts.

Unlike Western Conventions of doctors and scientists, the zar Convention does not consist of calm, objective, sometimes monoonotous and even icy presentations. Instead, in the convention of "zar" doctors new techniques are subjectively demonstrated on participant zar devotees who are chronically possessed; diagnostic aids are utilized in actual treatment of actual patients; new poetry to cajole specific spirits is recited in ecstatic chants to the beat of the drum, while the audience joins in with refrain-chanting and rythmic handclapping. It is a super - "wādāja" (lit. love-feast) of the zar cult, bigger and better than ordinary zar cult activities, and introducing new experience, but in principle follows the same basic procedures of luring protective zars into public "possession" of the afflicted, and enlisting them in the diagnosis and treatment of ailments caused by evil or mischievous zar spirits.

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In view of the esoteric elements in the zar cult, it is little wonder that the "amat bal" is restricted to zar doctors and permanent devotees. Therefore it was not easy for a "European" observer like the

X794 present author to be permitted to attend this all-night session.
756 Careful negotiations through a trusted intermediary person had to be
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796 arranged ahead of time. For at any time the chief of the zar doctors could end the negotiations on the ground that some of the "zar" spirits would be offended or repelled, and refuse to come into full possession of their "horses" in the presence of a stranger. An additional antagonistic element was fear of the local police detectives, who, though they do not interfere with the zar cult, have orders from the self-concious central government not to let foreigners witness it.

X794 The chief zar doctor of Gondar in the present generation is the
756 Lady (woyzäro?) Sälämtew, She is renowned even outside the entire province (Begemdir-Semyen), as far as Tigre province and even in Addis Ababa. This is perhaps more due to her position than her own initiative, for Gondar has long been considered the city of powerful spirits and traditions. She leaves most healing activities to her disciple "balä zar", except for very stubborn cases. More often she is busy as "consultant", for many clients, even non-devotees of the zar cult, bring their family or business or litigation problems to her. She herself is possessed by several powerful, protective male zars, to whom she ascribes her various powers, from whom she receives inspiration, the spirit of enterprise, courage to experiment in perfect comfort and security without the fear of the evil eye which hampers other individuals engaging in anything new.

She is not afraid of the pinpricks of medium and minor "zar" spirits, for her whole like is devoted to the service of the most powerful ones. One of the latter has strong Coptic Christian affiliations and learning, and guides her in her cautious and unofficial

X794 relations with the priests of the Abyssinian Coptic church; e.g. by
@756 whispering to her when to give them private feasts, and how to guide observant Amhara clients - married couples in domestic strife - so as not to come into conflict with the "mänfäs gubaë" (lit. soul father, confessor, who would normally arbitrate such a case for the church).

Another of her powerful zars teaches her medicine, and specializes in the diagnosis of difficult cases of possession. Still another is a specialist on what the other zars prefer as sacrifices, taboos, poetry, and how to negotiate with each of them; (i.e. he teaches her how to function like a priestess).

Another of her zars specializes in business advice: when to buy and sell what; when and how to invest in caravans, or invest in construction of town houses. Occasionally she also takes incidental advice from low-status spirits such as Shanqit, who gives her minor hints on how to be a good hostess when entertaining a "telleq säw" (great man) who comes to her in secret; and on how to manage her large household.

Lady Sälämtu's posture, when not undergoing possession herself, is one of benign self-assurance, not unlike the calm, almost phlegmatic composure of Amhara nobles who act as if everything must come to them. For Lady Salamtew appears sincere and certain of being able to draw on her private reservoir of protective zar spirits almost any night she chooses.

X794 The writer's negotiations with her were conducted through his
756 guide, himself a native of the Addis Aläm section of Gondar, and who,
123 though young, occupied some status as "educated" (seven grades of modern
115 elementary school). Moreover, he was not unknown to Lady Salamtew, for his father, a well-known "wogäsha" doctor in Gondar, had often referred

794 756 123 [116] patients to her when his organic medicines had not helped. It was this guide who hit on the idea of flattering Lady Salämtew by notifying her that the foreigner was sick, suffering from severe headaches, sleeplessness and chronic intestinal cramps - (all common ailments in her practice), and that he would trust only her for treatment. Whether or not Lady Salamtew believed this, it indicated to her that the foreigner would fit himself into the framework and procedures of her zar cult, and not become a disturbing element that might "offend" her zar spirits.

The guide had taken the further precaution of negotiating with her through her brothers, who were willing to encourage her to accept, in the hope of gifts and rewards. As a result, Lady Salamtew accepted in principle; but in line with the unhurried dignity of her position she had the foreigner informed that he should send the guide again at a later time when she would make known the conditions under which he might attend the "amat bal" convention. In appreciation for having reached this point in the negotiation, the guide left her brothers with some "eṭan gänzäb" (money for frankincense).

The next step was reached when Lady Salamtu expressed the wish to have the foreigner appear before her, some days before the convention, so that she could look him over.

794 756 123 361 [343] Her house, a semimodern affair of hard-mud walls, is reached by a steep downhill trail from the Gondar town market. On the lower level (the old section of Gondar called "Addis Alam") many houses and huts are built on the foundations of stone houses destroyed by the dervishes in the late 19th century. This section, once restricted to Muslim and other non-Coptic minorities, is now largely inhabited by Muslim Ethiopian weavers and retail traders, many ex-slaves of Sudanese or part-Shanqalla

x794 descent, and a few poor Amhara Coptic families, as well as some Amhara
756 who do business there, such as the "wogasha" doctor. Various elements
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361 which do not wish to be under too close scrutiny by the church or the police prefer to live in this section. Here the "zar" societies can pound their drums as loudly as the cult requires, for only muffled sounds will rise to the Coptic part of the town.

x794 After stooping to pass through the somewhat low entrance to the
756 house of Lady Salamtew, the visitor finds himself in a room larger
123 than he had anticipated. He is told to remove his shoes, (as if this were a church or mosque). The room is lit by numerous little clay oil lamps even in daytime - a considerable luxury, - for windows have been carefully avoided or boarded up to assure privacy. On the mud-benches around the wall sit a number of women; others sit on mats on the hard-mud floor. An Amhara male visitor in European type suit, who has just consulted the Lady Salamtu, leaves hurriedly. Lady Salamtu is seated on a raised platform at the far end of the room, behind a curtain, and another area in front of her stage is marked off by a long, thin wooden beam embedded in the floor. The women devotees in the room are busily spinning cotton with their little distaffs, and, since it is still afternoon and not yet "zar time", whisper and gossip with each other freely. Some take time out to suckle their babies, often without rising.

Someone has gone behind the curtain and whispered to her that the foreigner and his guide have arrived. She promptly pulls the curtain aside, but pretends to pay no special attention to the visitor. Her active zars have not possessed her at this time, and she therefore appears absent-minded. She sits on a slightly raised seat on the small

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stage, her legs crossed almost Turkish fashion, very unlike the usual Amhara posture. She is in her late forties, a rather stocky, powerful woman. Her features are heavy, and she seems at least half-Sudanese. She reinforces the non-Amhara, alien aspects of her appearance by wearing large, yellow, metal bracelets and anklets, and a Muslim-type deep red print cloth over her hair and shoulders. The dirt floor of her platform is covered with sheepskins. Whoever rises is careful not to turn her back to Lady Salamtu. Whenever she moves, there is an attentive hush in the whisperings. In the far corner the smoke of incense rises slightly and blends with the light smoke of the oil lamps.

The only males in the room are the two brothers of Lady Salamtu, and it is with them that the guide begins his whispered negotiations. The visit is brief. Before leaving, the guide advises the foreigner to leave Lady Salamtew some "frankincense money." The foreigner understands that he is to give it to her directly - which is a faux pas - and crosses over the separating beam to place the money in her hand. Only after several days does he learn that this was a breach of protocol, for by touching her hand he might have removed one of her valuable zars "by contagion".

Some days later the negotiators make known their conditions for permitting the foreigner to witness the "amat bal" annual convention. He is to send: three dollars worth of imported incense including frankincense, sandalwood, also sesame seeds; one dollar's worth of coffee beans; a small amount of gunpowder which is pleasing to one of her zars; one bottle of "araqi" (arrak) distilled liquor. The foreigner is forbidden to take any written notes (which a foreign missionary had one done) on the grounds that this is displeasing to the zar. He is warned

X794 not to cross the boundary in front of the stage again. He is not to
75 approach the house until well after nightfall, and is to come by a
123 back trail, so as not to be seen by passersby.

X794 Thus, after nightfall on the 23rd of the month of Yäkatit, he
796 climbed over eroded back trails down to the "Kokit" section of Addis
123 Alämä and approached the house of Lady Sälämtu where her devotees were assembled. It was 7:30 P.M. More oil lamps had been lit. There were about 20 women, but a male zar doctor with talents in poetry and chanting sat near the stage, wearing a white turban much like a Coptic Abyssinian priest. A powerful male drummer had been hired for the occasion.

X794 Lady Sälämtew still took no official notice of the foreigner, for
796 her zar had not yet "descended", and without that she was just a hollow
[123] shell, a mute "horse". One of her brothers motioned the foreigner politely to a seat on the mudbench that ringed the wall. There was much subdued whispering, as if a momentous event was about to take place. The hairdo of several of the women devotees and doctors had
[302] been specially arranged to honor their individual zars: those not permitted to cut their hair had plaited it into a braid ("zuroch") surrounding the skull; others had shaved a circle in the middle (called "gucho"), like a little girl.

X794 Other preparations and paraphenalia included the ritual coffee
796 trays ("gända"), which symbolized the wooden "tabot" (sacred tablet)
778 of the holy Coptic city of Aksum, and which were dedicated to several zars including Säyfu Čhängär and Rahälo. The ancient mother of many zars, named "Werär" was believed to have stolen the original "tabot"

x 794 from Aksum (just as Menelik I is regarded by the Coptic Abyssinians to
796 have brought it to Aksum from Solomon's Holy of Holies at the temple
798 in Jerusalem). But the tabot of the zars also symbolized the outdoor tree stump which serves the invisible zar spirits as a table. Thus, partaking of refreshments from the coffee trays constituted a kind of communion with the zar spirit to whom the tray was dedicated, although this was done only during intermissions of the cult services. On one tablet, the "araqi" supplied by the foreigner stood ready.

x 794 In the corners, more types of incense were burning than before.
796 In addition to "etan" (frankincense), the domestic Ethiopian "bukbuka"
782 was sending up clouds of perfumed smoke. Leaves of "wogart", believed pleasing to the zar that causes headaches and neuralgic pains, were occasionally placed on the clay incense burners. From time to time, some imported pebbles of yellow sulphur ("kabrē" or "din") sent up acrid smoke. But the sweet odor of most types of incense predominated most of the time.

x 794 About 8:30, the drummer brought his heavy drum down from beneath the
796 solidly built roof, and began to drum slowly, rythmically, still subdued.
● 756 The curtain was lowered, but the shadow of Lady Salamtew behind it could
781 still be vaguely seen. Suddenly raucous grunts began to be heard from
533 behind the curtain, emanating from Woyzärō Salämtew. This meant that her first major zar had arrived, and was beginning to descend into her, performing the magical coitus. Her joyshouts became louder, higher-pitched, turning to shrieks, quicker and quicker. She was beginning to perform the "gurri" victory dance of the zar who had conquered her.

Immediately the women devotees began to handclap rythmically, gradually quickening their tempo, in time to the twisting and turning

X794 of Lady Salamtew's body. The twisting began like an embrace, with her
796 head thrown back, rotating movements of the chest, followed by a
●756 rythmic forward bump of belly and hips. Her ecstatic shrieks varied
781 from pain to exultation (like the "ellel" of women in the Coptic church service). Encouraging shouts came from individual women in the audience, and some raised their holiday - reddened palms in prayerful joy. As the climax approached, the jerky twisting of Lady Salamtew's body gradually changed to smoother movements of the limbs. She was now well in tune with her zar, and he was comfortable within her. The excitement in the audience changed to warm and glowing emotion at the same time. Then Lady Salamtew emitted a loud scream, and dropped in a heap. The drum stopped abruptly. There was a sudden hush in the audience. The strong sweet odor of generously burned incense pervaded the consciousness and its smoke leisurely curled upward.

X794 It was only a matter of minutes before Lady Salamtew recovered.
756 Her brother pulled the curtain to one side. Her eyes were bright with
796 curiosity as she glanced about the house as if she had just arrived. She had lost her absent-minded appearance, for now the zar acted and spoke through her. Suddenly she appeared to notice the foreigner for the first time, smiled and waved a friendly greeting. Her voice was still husky, but warm, as she called out "how are you" in understandable Amharic, rather than her esoteric "zar language"; this was a courtesy, though
[195] she used the female familiar gender (the zar often uses the inverted
[123] genders in address). She further inquired whether the foreigner was sitting in comfort, and how his health was today (hinting at the "ailments" he had used as a pretext). Then she ordered the handmaidens to offer the foreigner t̄alla (barley beer), and coffee, on one of the zar coffee trays.

X794 ⊕786 796 She then proceeded to greet the individual zar doctors and devotees as if she had been absent a long time. Each rose and bowed deeply to her. Barley beer was now passed around freely, while coffee beans were being roasted and crushed, in preparation for the next intermission.

X794 782 796 [533] Refreshed and heartened, the male zar doctor serving as poet now began to chant the hymns he had composed in honor of "aweliya" the chief male zar of Lady Salamtew. The rytha was as formal as the hymns chanted by the dabtara in the Coptic Abyssinian church, but contained Arabic loanwords borrowed from the traders' vernacular. The audience quickly leaned the response and accompanied the responsive chant with rythmic handclapping:

Poet: "Salaam" (lit. "Peace", greeting; similar in Geez and Arabic languages).

Crowd: "Salaam Alēkum" (lit."Peace be with you", in Arabic).

Poet (continuing in Amharic): "Enter, warrior; enter warrior! "

Crowd: (repeats the same words).

Poet: "Lord Aweliya, what have I given to him (polite address) that he may be merciful to me?"

Crowd: (repeats same chant in more wailing pitch).

Poet: "Flower (synonym for youth), oh zar, flower!"

Crowd: (repeats)

Poet: He is Lord of Sera, Lord of Mora is he". (Polite address).

Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "He, bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Crowd: "Bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Poet: "Like a lion, like a leopard, when he roars!"

Crowd: (repeats).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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some fancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission.

Some zar doctors are very exacting with their regular patient-devotees, and therefore, by local standards, are quite rich. They invest in real estate such as semi-modern shacks of the "street of single girls". Many female zar doctors and some of the clever devotees own the profitable mead houses ("tej̄ bēt") described before. On the other hand, a great zar doctor is expected to show generosity and distribute part of the income to followers and assistant zar doctors, just as feudal Amhara chiefs distribute loot to their retainers, and as great zar spirits offer commensal rights to the little zars.

Because of the greed of the zar spirits, a kind of evil eye in itself, many "possess" hide their property from the zar doctor as well as the zar spirits. It is believed that their demands are never satisfied, that the more they are given the more they want, in "mäqwädäsha" (lit. that which makes to love) gifts. Some zar spirits possessing a poor person are regarded as always on the lookout for "contagion" with a rich person, for, by putting a "touch" on him they can change "residence". Zar doctors competing with each other sometimes lure a zar away from another doctor on purpose, so that they can advertise, through the grapevine of the possessed, that a great protective zar has changed residence, thus increasing the fame and income of the ambitious zar doctor. It is well known that in times of scarcity there are few new "possessions" by the zar, while in times of abundance there are many.

A poor person, who is struck, usually by a low-status "poor man's zar", and approaches a zar doctor for treatment of his ailment, is treated but must work off the "gifts" in service, through labor. A poor man will act as a servant, run errands, weave reed baskets, etc.

X794 A poor woman will perform work such as serving coffee, sweeping,
●756 fetching water and fuel, cooking, baking, brewing beer, and spinning
556 cotton thread in the house of the zar doctor.

X794 The contract arranged by the zar doctor with the zar spirit for
675 each patient devotee is regarded as having legal validity. In exchange
776 for regular gifts and services the zar spirit promises limited reposse-
ssion, at regular intervals only, and self-restraint in contagion of other members of the family of the patient at least until after her death. After that event the zar spirit may pass on to the next generation to assure himself continuation of the preferred gifts.

X794 Complications are explained away on the grounds that there has been
776 some trifling oversight in payment of dues or in respect; or on the grounds that another, evil, zar has "stolen" the dues in order to make trouble. The zar doctor never admits to error; instead, he restores the contract by instructing the possessed to dance the "gurri" of atonement ("yäbaṭer gurri") (lit. of the stick) if guilty; or the "yämehrat gurri", dance of mercy and acquittal, in case of slight
[691] oversight. Some zars are as fond of litigation as most Amhara. One zar spirit is nicknamed "wäs aggach" because he always requires a personal guarantor, "wäs", whom he will "possess" in place of the patient in case of default in payments.

X794 Even the judicial authorities, the provincial judges among the
694 Amhara, will occasionally recognize zar possession as a valid excuse for violations of the law, or at least as a mitigating circumstance. Failure to appear in court to answer a summons may be forgiven on the grounds of "agorra" (lit. he roared, shrieked, i.e. is under possession) that particular day. The only other equally strong excuse would be that the person summoned had just taken kosso purgative.

578 In the new courts established by the central government in
689 the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

326 How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda -
754 Falasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting
563 that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Falashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despising of this manual craft onto the Falashas and believe that Falasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passersby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces
[71] of the supernatural. This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Amont the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous, Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

a. "Buda" doctors past and present

756 While the aforementioned dabtara is the most commonly
793 called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

158 Sometimes cases of buda possession are brought in to the
[159] government hospital at Gondar where two European physicians are in charge. They have diagnosed the shrieking, wildly beating type of case as "hysteria"; and the apathetic type of buda case as "catalepsy". In the latter case they have observed absence of reflex responses on eye and knee, almost no pulse, faint heart-beat, low blood pressure; sometimes a stupor in which the patient has no control over bowel movements and urinating. In severe cases of this kind there is a suspension of sensation and will, and muscles are so rigid that limbs keep any position they are placed in by the doctor.

755 In one memorable case, a hysteria patient, a man, had been gradually quieted by a Coptic Amhara priest called in by the European doctors at the hospital, who knew the effectiveness of this from past experience. All the priest had done was to hold the hand of the patient and quietly recite prayers in the Geez language, (which the lay patient could not understand). When the priest tired of this, the regular hospital priest was called in to continue this "treatment". But at sunrise the next morning the patient had disappeared out the window. The hospital "dressers" (male, semi-trained nurses) explained that the patient probably would go a long distance from this area, to escape the severe beating his kinfolk would give him - the "post-operative" treatment meted out to patients recovering from buda possession to "discourage the buda from returning".

755 In the rural areas the "tänqway" is still sometimes called
756 in to treat buda cases, though this is not his major specialty. He is what has been called a "witch-doctor", professional sorcerer, and diviner. He usually treats the patient by frightening the

755 buda out of him: seating the patient in ashes - the natural
756 abode of the buda - to entice the evil spirit to leave through the anus. The latter is regarded as the preferred pathway of the buda - the opposite principle of the soul which is believed to leave through the head. Sometimes the tanqway orders that the person accused of buda sorcery be brought before him and made to spit upon the patient, which breaks the spell if he has actually
[689] cast it. Since 1942 the government has branded the "tänqway" as a fraud. As a result, the business of the still respectable dabtära and also the woggesha has increased in treating cases of buda.

C. Evil-Spirit Disease ("ganyän") and the diviner ("tänqway")

756 While the aforementioned tänqway is, or used to be, called in
776 occasionally to exorcise a buda, his major specialties are the exorcising of "ganyän" evil spirits who have a very different character, and the divining of lost or stolen goods.

Of all spirit doctors, the tänqway occupies the lowest social position. He is "uneducated" for he uses no books and in fact is almost always illiterate. His methods are nearly identical with those of African "witch-doctors" and include such methods as throwing of bones and animal parts, for divining.

776 The major principle of both the tänqway diviner and the ganyän
777 spirits he specialized in, seem to be regional; the activity one of geographical orientation. For the ganyän, considered inferior to zar and buda spirits in power, are localized, evil genies. The term itself is etymologically related to the Arabic "djinn", local evil genies, though actually derived from the Geez "janyen"), and the concept is also similar: most ganyen are either water-spirits or fire-spirits.

682 manslaughter of an average citizen, killed e.g. in an automobile
754 accident, or by a trigger-happy policeman, at "semanya" on its present monetary level.

755 Other types of ganyen disease are forms of epilepsy, "haut mal", referred to by the Amhara as "ganyen yaẓi" (lit. the ganyen has seized him; plural is "aganent". In this case, a dabtara is often called in and tries to exorcise the evil spirit with magic formulae; sometimes the woggesha doctor tries to intoxicate the patient with
[278] a paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha), which drug finally lets him have some rest. In contrast, the method of the ṭänqway is literally a bag of tricks.

755 In his role as magician, the ṭänqway is called "qumma" (from
● 756 "qäma", he stood up), for he tries to identify the personality of
789 the evil spirit from his abode; e.g. in the water of a brook, or a waterhole in the river, or under a certain tree, etc. The magician is also considered an expert on fire and lightning. When a person is struck by lightning, "mäbräq" (lit. Thunder),
[761] the priests consider it heavenly punishment and in the past even refused to bury the victim in the churchyard; thus the ṭänqway is called in. His treatment consists of moving the victim quickly to the fireplace - for he regards fire and warm ashes as the counteracting principle. If a house is on fire in town, it is still believed that the magician, standing on the roof of a neighboring house with a mirror, can prevent the spreading of the fire by causing the flames to recoil.

Cases of drowning are his specialty also. This too is considered by the church a heavenly punishment for hidden crimes, for the victim is regarded as having been surrendered to the "demons";

755 and the worst and most numerous ganyen are regarded as water spirits,
756 e.g. at the Blue Nile and everywhere also during the long rainy
789 season.
[776]

After diagnosing the identity and origin of the specific
755 ganyen, the tänqway tries to exercise the demon by treating him
776 with contempt (exactly opposite to treatment given the "zar"). Instead of feeding the spirit a succulent "mäqwädäshä" (love gift), the ganyän - possessed person is fed a lunch of ashes. For a ganyen that is a fire-spirit, is attracted by ashes, his element, and may thus be induced to leave the body of the patient in order to feast. The tänqway follows this method even in cases of buda as indicated before.

The next step in treatment consists of "fixing" the ganyän somewhere else, so that he will not return into the body of the victim. This is done by the scapegoat technique; e.g. by fixing the demon into the body of a chicken, killing it, throwing the carcass away where the hyenas will eat it; or transferring the water-spirit to another locality.

756 Besides his role as a healer of ganyän, the major activity
[787] of the tänqway is as diviner of lost or stolen goods. It is not polite to use the term "tänqway" in his presence, instead he is politely addressed as "awäqi" (lit. knower, wise man). Since he usually makes it his business to know what goes on among professional thieves, his insight into such matters is sometimes indeed considerable; but also contributes to his bad social reputation. In "diagnosing" the case, the tanqway acts as detective, studies the place
[694] of the crime, investigates neighbors and finally draws seashells (zagol Lebsu") and bones from his bag and throws them, to read additional information from their driection and mutual position.

•756 His clientele in this role consists largely of women, who often come to him with petty problems, whom he can charge little for his services, but who provide him with a regular, though modest, income. A ṭänqway, unlike zar doctor or dabtara, never becomes rich. Also, both peasant women and townswomen go to him to have their personal fortunes told. He sympathizes with them in their marital quarrels, encourages them to be disobedient to their husbands and to bring him money and gifts withheld from the husband. Consequently, men consider the ṭänqway a wrecker of marriage, and so does the church. The proverb says:

[539] "Lying ṭänqway,
the house he destroys".

Men do consult him on the occasion of stolen property, but are ashamed to be seen going to his house. They go secretly.

There is a significant element of competition between the ṭänqway and the dabtärä, though the latter is considered far superior, "educated", and is now actually driving the ṭänqway out of much of his business.

In the popular Amhara mind, the ṭänqway is regarded as fearful of the dabtärä. For the latter can undo the success of the former through magic formulae written in Geez, copies from secret Geez books. With such a formula, the dabtärä can go to the river, call the gänyän water-spirits and instruct them to steal the "bag of tricks" of the ṭänqway, or to refuse to come when called by the ṭänqway. The dabtara disdains to use the bag of tricks, regarded as primitive and when he captures it will destroy it. Conversely, if a dabtara has "charmed" a thief by giving him a specially written amulet against capture by the police, nothing the tanqway can do

756 will trace the thief or the stolen goods. Also, the active intercession for a better future, which the dabtara can achieve to some extent by appealing to saints and angels whose secret names he knows from his books in Geez, is considered far superior to the mere fortune-telling of the täänqway.

D. The Scribe (dabtäre) as Healer

795 a. Summing up the position of the dabtäre

756 In many ways the social position and activities of the dabtara symbolize the syncretic character of Amhara culture. His official function is that of semi-lay staff of the Coptic Abyssinian church. He serves as scribe, chorister, translator from Geez to Amharic; the church could not do without him. His official rewards are meager, mostly a parcaling out of what the priests receive. Thus his major income comes from his unofficial, extracurricular activities as healer. The copyist of church works logically becomes the writer of amulets. This brings him in touch with the cosmology of supernatural spirits, some of which are considered in the realm of zar, buda, ganyän and with doctors ranging from the empiricist woggesha to the exorciser-sorcerer täänqway. It may seem surprising that there is not more competition between these specialist. The fact is that the dabtäre, enjoying the greatest respectability among healers because of his association with the church, can afford to be and is generous to all except the täänqway, and in fact enjoys his position as uncrowned king of healers. He is the only healer, apart from the empiricist-surgeon "woggesha", to whose house men clients and patients walk publicly in broad daylight without fearing loss of prestige.

795 His social status compares to that of a "great man" (telleq sāw),
756 but much of this is due to the fear in which he is held, because of his power over the supernatural world, in Amhara belief. There is fear that if someone were to offend him, he might use his powers to do evil - though black magic is not his usual metier. (The "love magic" of the dabtärä has been described in relation to sex).

[539] "of insects, the worst is the scorpion;
of man, the worst is the dabtärä".

[574] For the dabtara are unabashed in inviting themselves to feasts, weddings and any distribution of goods (e.g. parceling out of meat as soon as an ox has been slaughtered). In fact, they often act as if the host owed them an apology for not having sent an official invitation. Therefore, dabtara are usually invited to family feasts even if they are not kin.

795 The dabtärä learns his craft through apprenticeship, beginning
756 when in the upper grades of church school. To achieve this, he
874 must be "ättäntäm" (of unmixed Amhara or Tigre stock), have a good chanting voice and musical ear, be good in school, and find a dabtärä-teacher willing to impart his knowledge to him. At this stage in church school he begins to be permitted to learn to write; and is not punished for doodling - forbidden at lower grades for fear a student might stumble on a formula and misuse a powerful spell.

795 There is even one priestly function which the dabtärä occasionally
756 carries out. That is "re-baptism". He may re-baptize a patient vic-
[783] timized by ganyän, sometimes also cases of buda, as part of exorcism.

795 Some dabtärä have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
556 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually [386] made of soot, charcoat, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre- [716] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susneos, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female [56] of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay themurderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

177 [776] contained in the aforementioned book "Lefafa Tsedeq".

African cosmology underlies much of this syncretism. Some is probably old-Cushitic, antedating the Geez-speakers. Some evidently has been carried into Ethiopia by the Galla. Caravan routes and the slave trade have long maintained contact with Central Africa, and some amulets resemble the "grisgris" of West Africa.[126]

756 [177] The dabtara thus has many tools and sources for his trade. He can use the books of the church, in Geez which he alone understands; saints, angels and martyrs; translated Arabic myths - including many of Graeco-Christian origin; cabalistic Hebrew cosmology; he can call on the mystical elements of nature: fire, water, earth, and air, without knowing that ancient system.

No wonder that some dabtara specialize and work out syncretic systems of their own. The more esoteric the source and the manner and atmosphere of writing, the more admiration and faith does it call forth. Some dabtara secretly cooperate with zar doctor colleagues. Some develop rituals of their own, such as writing amulets only on specified days of the week. Some go so far in their syncretism as to invite (secretly of course) a non-Copt, such as a Muslim or a Falasha, to write certain texts for him, on the amulets; or the interfaith colleagues exchange their handiwork! For the efficacy of the esoteric is regarded as double. Amulet-writers of the three faiths are curious about each other's magical powers, and while the ordinary individual will shun and fear such "comparative religion", the doctors feel protected sufficiently to risk such "free enterprise" contact.

126. See Lifscyz: Amulettes Ethiopiennes. Minotaur, Vol. 2, 1934, p. 71-73

776 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often
174 wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the
797 pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, demoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyēn"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits.[127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised t̤ānqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only
[182] exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who hold the people in terror and exercise political power.[128]

[794 While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of
562] members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria.[129]

171 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and
754 other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 [164] [785] hazardous. Moisture and chill lower the resistance of man and beast to respiratory infections. The weekly fasting schedule is resumed, and the more devout observe the thirty-day fast of the Disciples. In August, finally, the sixteen-day fast in honor of the Assumption of Mary is observed by everyone older than six or seven years.

*565 796 526 On the thirteenth day of that fast occurs the strange holiday of Buhē. Before and during this day, which is marked by the baking of special *dābo* for the shepherds, the countryside crackles with the reports of shepherds' whips. In this season when the humid air lends an explosive sound, the shepherds crack their whips for fun; but older boys and men join in great whipping battles on Buhē,* in which two teams lash each other until the members of one can stand it no more. On the evenings of Buhē, small bonfires are lit all over the countryside, and more *dābo* is eaten and whips cracked.[5] A few days later the fast of the Assumption is over. Young and old look forward to the end of the rains and the festivities that commence with the new year.

*565 These are the days and years of the Amhara peasant. Some other aspects of his life that come to the fore when more analytic perspectives are applied will be discussed in later chapters. But this calendar of activities forms the immediately observable setting for the "inner world" of the Amhara peasantry: those ideas, sentiments, and values which constitute its outlook on life.

THE WORLD OF MEANING

The Natural Universe

*565 772 [538] The Amhara peasant is not familiar with most of the cosmological notions found in the Great Tradition of Abyssinian culture, as transmitted through books like *Qalamsis* and *Aksimareos* and the oral traditions of learned churchmen. It is unusual for him to have a precise image of the layers of water, fire, and air beneath the earth, and it is still less likely for him to be familiar with the complicated hierarchy of invisible worlds, watery skies, and seven "real" heavens which are enumerated in the Abyssinian cosmology. He [821] believes that stars influence human affairs, but leaves the possession of astrological knowledge to the *dabtarā*. The presence of cultural specialists who [756] know about such matters has relieved him of the burden of dealing with ideas about the cosmos, ideas which are more widely diffused in more homogeneous societies.

The peasant's working conception of the cosmos is thus a very simplified version of that of his Great Tradition, together with certain pagan notions. Like his more learned countrymen, he divides the universe into two main parts: the world, *alam*, consisting of the earth, sun, moon, and stars; and

[178] * This custom is now extinct in many Amhara areas.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

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* The act of writing was considered to be inherently *shameful*: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and manumitths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writ was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *debtard*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *debtard*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

12: Young

MP5 Amhara MP5

• 756

[For information on psychotherapists, see category 116, pp. xvi, 23, 27-30, 73-79, 87-99, 115-118, 139-142, 162, 174-179, 187-195, 198-236, and 240-241.]

• 756

[For additional materials on medical practitioners, see category 759.]

759 upland, he notices and remembers the location of plants and roots, which supply him with much of his pharmacopeia. His sense of direction is trained and therefore seems uncanny to the layman. Moreover, not infrequently he actually transplants certain wild plants, so that he can always find them; sufficiently far from residential habitations so that they are not easily found or consumed by cattle or playful boys. A good rule for distance is how far the crowing of a rooster can be heard - for some plants are believed to lose their magical power if disturbed by this sound.

[825 824]

The "woggesha" usually learns his craft from his father, while serving him as apprentice. But at present the most popular "woggesha" in the town of Gondar is a well-known former bandit, who has gained an enviable reputation as a skilled surgeon. The "woggesha" is usually a diplomat in his human relations, much like the old-time Western family doctor. He usually tries to remain on good terms with the local church, and often invites the local dabtare to dinner at his house, especially on saints' days, to avoid their competitive hostility and to discuss some cases on a "professional" level.

In his capacity as surgeon, the "woggesha" sets fractures, cuts abscesses, pulls teeth (now with European pliers). But some of his practices are severely condemned by European doctors who object particularly to the woggesha's frequent ripping out of part of the soft palate to cure tonsilitis and chronic sore throat, often causing blood poisoning. Nevertheless, the present government still permits the woggesha to function "in his own district", for otherwise most people would be left without any medical empiricist.

[757]

757 The pulse is of no interest to the woggesha (unlike ancient medicine in Asia). He relies as heavily on violent purgatives as the ancient Egyptians, and on cauterization (much in the ancient Hippocratic tradition).

The enema, widespread in Asia, is not used. But the intestinal purgatives against tapeworm, especially the famous "kosso" (Quassia abyssinica), have been developed to complex sequences in medical cure. Butter is used as an ointment and mild laxative, sometimes boiled with specific herbs.

The instruments used by the "woggesha" are very simple: a sharp knife, simple forceps or pliers, wire for ripping (e.g. the soft palate), the horn of a cow or antelope or zebra (called "wäsänt") for cupping ("äzzärä"). The latter procedure is not used often, it is tried primarily to cure a chronic headache, by shaving an area on the rear of the skull, making a small incision, and drawing the blood by means of the horn. Artificial nosebleeds are also occasionally produced ("ämäzzärä"). But drawing blood is done in great secrecy, for the patient is ashamed to have it become known that his "blood is bad". Instead of applying leeches, some patients are taken to a waterhole or lowland lake known to contain leeches, where they expose the sick part of the body in the water, waiting for the leeches to fasten themselves.

752 Some "woggesha" have a great reputation for having saved patients bitten by snakes. The fact is that most Amhara, living on the highland plateau, rarely encounter a really poisonous snake, and suffer most often from the harmless (though painful) bite of the "talba" snake. The patient would recover anyway in due course.

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758 The therapeutic value of convalescense ("zärzär alä") is recognized, and patients are told to bask in the sunshine.

562 Men are more likely to let themselves be treated by the "woggesha";
756 women, who suffer more frequently from functional ailments, approach
757 the "dabtarä" or "zar" doctor more often and request magical aid.

844 When birth approaches, the midwife is called, almost never the woggesha. If he is, he may not touch the genital parts of the woman, and merely advises the midwife. When labor pains begin, the patient is given a drink of mashed linseed to "relax the birth tract" and to "lessen the pain". The newborn baby is annointed with butter (often rancid), and fed some of it.

759 Other medical helpers, apprentices, or modern "dressers" may be referred to as "healers" ("äwash"), "balä mädanit" (lit. medicine man, who knows empirical drugs and cures), "caretaker" ("astabaqi"), male nurse ("mogzit"), modern "dresser" ("astamami"). None of these are respected professions, for they are regarded as too close to manual labor, and such practitioners usually go to other provinces where their work will not shame the family. In recent years, the more skilled ones have been coming from Eritrea.

178 Modern change has been largely indirect and partial. The new
757 laws still permit the "woggesha" to function. Penicillin and other antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription at the big "Saturday markets", for as little as ETh$2.50 (US$1.-), and the patient simply buys it, takes it to a "dresser" in the nearest town, whom he pays 1/2 dollar Ethiopian (US 20 cents), to give the injection. When symptoms disappear, e.g. in syphilis, he believes himself cured.

178 This attitude is of course deplored by the Western physicians who know
757 of it. But modern medical treatment is still little available outside the major towns. Patients come to hospitals often only as a last resort, fearing to be separated from kinfolk and exposed to treatment by strangers, so that mortality in hospitals is high, which reinforces
[743] the fears. At present there are probably no more than 50 hospitals in all Ethiopia, and only a few hundred Western physicians. Both are heavily concentrated in Addis Ababa, so that the field of the "woggesha" has not shrunk at all.

164 B. Common Ailments and their Treatment.

757 The more common ailments and procedures followed by the "woggesha"
756 and "dabtärä", (practitioners who occasionally overlap in specialties
755 but almost never in treatment), include the following (see next page):

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

753 An important part of diagnosis is the decision whether an ailment is contagious ("fera") or not, and whether it is inherited, congenital ("quranna") or not. If inherited, marriages with such families are despised as not "attentam" (good stock), the same term used for descent from slaves or other "race" or both.

759 In general, the woggasha is most often called in organic ailments;
757 shares with the "dabtara" the practice of functional ailments; while the latter shares with the "zar" doctor the treatment of mental ailments.

2. Healing the Spirit

x794 A. The "Zar" cult of supernatural spirits, its institution and cosmology.

755 One of the most complex developments of Amhara non-material culture, to which a great deal of mental ingenuity is devoted, is the healing of mental ailments. But this goes far beyond treatment and cure. The "zar" doctors do not limit themselves to treating some of the aforementioned mental ailments. They organise the afflicted, before, during and after "cure", into "zar" societies, which bear the earmarks of a religious cult, and to which the individual belongs henceforth until his or her (more often her) death. Here he finds the warm companionship of the fellow-afflicted; opportunity for expressive behavior; the religious feeling of having been of service; the personal attention of a personal possessive and protective spirit; and the visible leadership of the "zar" doctor who heads the organizational unit.

x794 The zar doctor often a matriarch, differs only in degree from
756 her flock; for she, too, must be possessed, must be forever afflicted by spirits. But she has managed to learn to control them, call upon her more powerful protective spirits to aid her against evil spirits,

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church. 681

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him. 793

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means emperor, and he is called Neguz, which means king. 643

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves. 752 757

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thousand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and courtyards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There 621 361 342 352 415 264 262 252 373 314 000

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

stout pole, from which hung huge pieces of red raw meat, covered with strips of red and gold cloth. 514 264

"These men stood closely together all along the tables and one on each side, so that the meat hung down from the poles over the tables just in front of the diners. The guests produced knives, and feeling the joint with their fingers to pick out a tender bit, rapidly sliced off strips of meat, which they put into their mouths, cutting off what would not go in quite close to their lips, an operation which, from personal experience, I know demands great skill if one's nose is not to suffer—as the cut is always made upwards.

"After ample libations of *tej* and *araki* (native mead, or hydromel and spirit) the diners filed out in perfect order, and the stage was cleared for the next party.

"The whole function had lasted nearly four hours and the Ras must have been heartily glad when it was over, for he had previously dined one instalment of 5000 warriors, and two more were to follow—between 17,000 and 18,000 in all partaking of the royal hospitality."

Broundo may be a nourishing form of diet tending to the development of warlike qualities, but its consumption has one serious drawback at all events, in that it is the cause of taenia (or tapeworm), a disease which is almost universal in the country. So much is this the case indeed that it is a recognized practice for all, high and low, to take monthly as a "taenicide" a dose of a plant known as *kousso*, which is so violent in its effects as to incapacitate the patient from work or occupation for the day. 164 757

Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by 000

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations 155
which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged 152
ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which [763]
occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news [764]
evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and [726]
boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive 155
fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training* 757 •
and Personality. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[18] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general [539]
principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy 155
water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of 755
affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of 155
prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. 751
Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute 155
magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit 789
use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human 261
problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formula- [191]
tion, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a [173]
baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ĭnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

757

[For information on medical therapy, see category 116, pp. xix, 23-25, 33, 36, 41-43, 47-59, 62, 68-87, 113-115, 119-125, 135-136, 189-192, and 237-243.]

758 49
751 the sunlight.[6] After the disease symptoms have disap-
758 peared, and the convalescent has regained his former vi-
tality, some precautions may still be followed to pre-
vent the return of the original syndrome, to which he
[262] may have developed a vulnerability. For example, the
former sickman may be forbidden to eat one or more of
the foodstuffs which were included among the materia
[978] medica of his cure. Often, an amulet containing dried
materia medica of the primary medicine is also worn.

*278 Pharmacological Combinations. In the abstract, Amhara pharmacology can be considered as a corpus of discrete and varied instructions for a) conserving the latent healing power of botanicals, and b) converting this power into therapeutically effective agents. Seen from this perspective, Amhara pharmacolog y has the potential for a large number of logically possible combinations of instructions, ranging from those with few directions of any kind, to combinations with elaborate instructions in each pharmacological category. Although, empirically, Amhara herbal therapies probably fall short of the potential number of combinations, the combinations charac-

[757] [834] [6]Primary syphilis, in particular, sets elaborate requirements---the removal of all hair from the body, head, and face; in addition, there is a period of abstinence from coitus.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Ambara MP5

252
262 For the less well-to-do, the cheapest meat is chicken, and this red pepper stew is called "qëy doro wat". Slaughtering, even of chicken, must be done by men. The pious pronounce the invocation, "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity"(because of the Monophysite faith). Then the housewife takes over, removes the feathers in boiling water, singes the skin, inflates the outer skin by blowing into the cut skin near the throat. She then cleans the chicken and rubs it with pea flour. Inner organs and wings and legs are washed with salt and lemon juice, then lightly roasted. In another pan, minced red onion, red pepper and other spices are fired in butter, water is added and stirred, ground salt is powdered over it. Then boiled, shelled eggs are added. Now all chicken parts are boiled with this prepared mixture, in a deeper clay pot.

Whenever any of these vegetable or meat stews is boiled without red pepper, the stew is called "alecha", and, unless this dish is added to the menu for variety, it [758] is considered a poor substitute. It is given to very young infants and to persons with intestinal ailments, and so [576] constitutes a symbol for weakness. (It is a major insult to call a man "alecha", because the term also means "impotent".)

Most often alecha is boiled with chicken, "yëdoro alecha". Red onion is preferred in butter, in a clay pot ("dest"). Peeled vegetables such as tomatoes (in urban areas) and water are added. The chicken, disjointed, washed and dried, is boiled in this. Powdered ginger, cloves, green pepper without seeds, sweet basil are added,

and observes the travelling traders, the "mängädänna". Both chiefs, especially the danya, sit under broad, shady trees on the market. Nearby is the gibbet, from which criminals were publicly hung until less than a decade ago. Recent additions to the market scene include a few modern tables and chairs at which treasury clerks from Addis Ababa receive import and other duties; and, within a barbed wire fence, government "dressers" of the health department from time to time, especially in epidemics, give free typhus and other injections to anyone applying and diagnosed sick.

Trade practices of the Amhara differ from much of the Middle East, especially from the Arab, The Amhara is too proud to badger a customer, and the profit motive is not as storng--he is not concerned with financial gain. The Amhara is not concerned at monetary loss in a trade transaction but his temper is aroused if he fears that he has been bettered, outwitted and made the laughing stock of others. If he has sold to a foreigner at only a little above the usual price instead of double or triple, his competitors at the market will jeer at him. In this case he will try to undo the trade, claiming linguistic misunderstanding.

As a result of this fear of being shamed, producers of native articles will not bring manufactured goods to market unless they have a previous firm order, after which the customer has to wait. It is craftsman's trade rather than commercial. This is even true of members of ethnic low-class producers, tanners, saddlemakers, smiths,

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X794 756 repression and penalty, for no layman can know whether or not it is the spirit who speaks through the doctor in any given situation.

X794 164 The most frequent types of mental afflictions which the "zar" doctor is called upon to treat are forms of hysteria (mostly in women), catatonic states (also mostly in women), and violent forms of possession including epileptic states (mostly in men). But he also treats some functional ailments, notably rheumatism, which is believed to have been caused by a "lazy zar" who wants his "horse" to stay in one place.

X794 776 753 Though every person is considered a potential "horse" for a zar, certain personality types are considered particularly vulnerable to possession by evil zars: persons with sad, returing, melancholic natures; women who feel unloved and neglected by their husbands and thus offer little resistance to a male "zar lover"; persons who wish to escape, e.g. chronic drunkards.

X794 753 758 Apathy, leading to catatonic states if not treated, indicates incipient possession by an evil zar. The patient, often a woman, withdraws into a corner, sits there huddled up, refuses to accept food. Until a zar doctor can be persuaded to come and take on the case, family and friends try to give the patient first aid. For, if she were to remain long in this state, it is believed that her "zar" could "ride" her to death. Therefore, relatives and neighbors come quickly, sing to the patient, entertain her, promise her whatever her heart desires, and generally try to create a merry atmosphere. Finally they try to lure the patient into watching them dance, and try to raise the patient playfully, so as to join them. The patient is never left alone until the doctor comes.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to cheat the locals. The health officer in charge of the team then brought some of the objectors to the mobile laboratory, patiently explained what was going on, and how it would benefit the people. Before long word got around that these outsiders were not so evil after all, and the doors of Dajan opened. 565* 121 177 744

Given the possibility that the Amhara peasant may come to acknowledge the public health worker as a legitimate agent of change, what about the discrepancy between the ideas advanced by the public health workers and the ideas of his traditional culture? The conception of the causation of illness is radically different in the two cultures. Since the peasant views the etiology of disease as a function of the will of supernatural beings, on what grounds could he adhere to prophylactic measures based on naturalistic conceptions? 565* 121 177 753 744

Valid though our characterization of the peasant's concept of causation may be, it is nevertheless a very simplified one. It is unlikely that any world view is totally devoid of some sort of naturalistic explanations, just as, conversely, well-educated moderns often cling to residues of "superstition." Though the Amhara's general framework for understanding causation is not naturalistic, he does possess a number of specific notions which can be interpreted as naturalistic or protonaturalistic. Here are some examples:

(1) The belief that an excessively dirty house brings sickness (even though in practice animals are permitted to urinate and defecate indoors and strings of soot to hang from the rafters). [231]

(2) A vague notion that the daily washing of hands, mouth, and feet is related to health. [515]

(3) The concept of *metch*, an ailment involving fever and pains, believed to come from exposure to dirty places as well as excessive exposure to the sun (though the devil is often thought to be the conveyer of the ailment).

(4) The concept of *gershā*, a notion that a convalescent is liable to relapse unless he refrains from eating unaccustomed foods, resumes work slowly, stays out of the sun, and washes his body and clothes. [758]

(5) A latent concept of contagion, found in: (a) the belief that smelling the urine of another will give one a cold, (b) the belief that the breath of a typhus patient will communicate his disease, and (c) the custom of referring to all diseases which can be given by one person to another as "*sār* sickness."

Even when the explanations set forth by the health workers deviate too much from what the peasant can possibly conceive as plausible, there may still be grounds to justify his accepting some strange advice through an appeal to more familiar beliefs and interests less directly related to the matter at hand. Thus, while peasants have been reluctant to accept the sanitarian's argument that diseases will be prevented by sanitizing the water supply through building wells, they have often been persuaded to build wells by the prospect of securing a more convenient source of water.

Measuring the relative strength of forces supporting and opposing change 565* 121 177

*759 without the assistance of another practitioner is him-
752 self identifiable as a kusil herbalist (yikusil medhaniyt awakiy), a non-wogeyña professional identity.

752 While the splint is worn, the sickman is directed
262 to eat quantities of a restorative (atmit); for frac-
*[192] ture, this consists of fatty meats, which are believed conducive to the mending of bones. After the splint has been removed, the affected region is regularly massaged with the unguent compound which had been used during diagnosis and therapy. The massage aims to restore normal flexibility to the affected body part. Some therapists continue the atmit regimen during this period and even beyond it.

*759 Alone among Amhara secular practitioners, the
752 tagañ practices a therapy which immobilizes the sickman for an extended period. During recuperation, therapeutic massages must continue, and the instability of the sickman's jimat preclude his moving about. When a tagañ is famous for difficult therapies, such as breaking and resetting improperly set bones or treating paralyzed limbs, he attracts sickmen from great dis-
[758] tances. Since these sickmen cannot leave the tagañ until pronounced cured, they require access to local accomodations and the assistance of a relative or servant to prepare their meals and tend to other personal

+769
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• 788

needs.[1]

+ 759 The wogeysa's remaining therapies---excision of
+ 753 tonsils (ankar) and teeth---are characterized by simpler
752 diagnosis and treatment than are the tagañ's works.
[843] Swollen and inflamed tonsils (komahaw) may be caused by
+ [192] gerifta; in infants, however, the condition may be congenital, brought on by the over-exertions of the child's mother during pregnancy. It is considered a potentially mortal affliction, since the sickman is unable to swallow and loses weight rapidly; eventually the organ bursts and death follows. Tonsils are excised with the assistance of a reed through which a loop of horse
[413] hair has been slipped. With this, the offending organ
[197] is held fast, and excised by whatever type of blade the therapist regards as most efficacious (e.g., a razor, imported 'Arab' knife, or fragment of glass).[2] Kusil

[1]During 1966, the foremost tagañ of Begemder had the following sickmen living simultaneously in three huts which he had erected on his fields; 1) a woman from Woggera (see map 1), with a fractured clavicle, assisted by her daughter; 2) a four year old boy, with a shoulder injury, accompanied by both parents; 3) a woman with a broken fore-arm, from Belsea, assisted by a locally acquired servant; 4) a woman from Tigre, with an immobile right arm, assisted by a locally acquired servant.

[2]In the Gondar area, both tonsils and uvula are classified as 'ankar'. Elsewhere in Begemder, they are often distinguished as 'ankar' and 'intil'. Therapeutically, diseased tonsils and uvula are treated the same, and a wogeysa capable of treating one invariably treats the other.

*278 *767 time of day during which the sickman is expected to consume the medicaments (often on rising, or before going to bed), the relevant numerological details (e.g., the medicaments are to be eaten seven times daily for seven *[192] days), and the manner of application. Therapies may establish that medicaments be consumed in a unitary form (e.g., eaten together with injera bread), in multiple forms (e.g., eaten with bread, drunk with talla beer, and washed with as with a lotion) and, if in multiple forms, whether applied at the same or different therapeutic sessions.[5]

• 758 Therapies also designate regimens to be followed once the pathogenic substance has been successfully removed [833] from the sickman. Frequently, regimens for convalescence *[192] following serious (kobodo) ailments direct the recuperant to rest in some isolated place, away from any populated area, where he will be safe from the shadows of humans, particularly those fresh from coitus. Some regimens require him to sit in a darkened hut, others place him beside the hearth fire, while still others have him rest in

[5]Only therapy for buda possession (see below), requires the application of different, discrete medical preparations at the same therapeutic sessions.

751 758 the sunlight.[6] After the disease symptoms have disappeared, and the convalescent has regained his former vitality, some precautions may still be followed to prevent the return of the original syndrome, to which he [262] may have developed a vulnerability. For example, the former sickman may be forbidden to eat one or more of the foodstuffs which were included among the materia [978] medica of his cure. Often, an amulet containing dried materia medica of the primary medicine is also worn.

*278 Pharmacological Combinations. In the abstract, Amhara pharmacology can be considered as a corpus of discrete and varied instructions for a) conserving the latent healing power of botanicals, and b) converting this power into therapeutically effective agents. Seen from this perspective, Amhara pharmacolog y has the potential for a large number of logically possible combinations of instructions, ranging from those with few directions of any kind, to combinations with elaborate instructions in each pharmacological category. Although, empirically, Amhara herbal therapies probably fall short of the potential number of combinations, the combinations charac-

[757] [834] [6]Primary syphilis, in particular, sets elaborate requirements---the removal of all hair from the body, head, and face; in addition, there is a period of abstinence from coitus.

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through the chirurgeon's massage.

Bleeding is regarded as a fatiguing experience for the client, and must be followed by a rest of two or three days. Bleeding for ras mitat is considered an exception, and no rest is required. However, the sickman is particularly vulnerable to gerifta during recuperation and, so, cannot leave his hut for fear of a relapse.

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The cupper is unique among lay practitioners in several respects. First, he occasionally works under the direction of another category of practitioner, the tagan (wogeyša). Second, there are special physical requirements; the agamiy must have all of his incisors, and the upper and lower teeth must meet in an unbroken plane. Third, the agamiy exposes himself to certain dangers in the performance of this therapy. Because he must remove a pathogenic substance through the medium of the sickman's blood, there is the danger that, should any of the blood enter his own mouth, the agamiy may himself fall ill with the ailment he is treating. In addition, contact with this blood threatens those chronic ailments from which the sickman suffers (such as the rheumatoid pains associated with kitin, syphilis).

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The agamiy's cup is a short, hollow bovine horn, whose tip has been removed. Selected leaves, which have been dried and then steeped to make them pliable, are

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

APPENDIX A

FOUR CLIENT NARRATIVES DESCRIBING HERBALIST THERAPIES

NARRATIVE 1

*278 *767 *759 Taamrat realized that he had contracted ceebt (gonorrhea), for the symptoms were unambiguous: Urination was difficult, he was unable to sit or walk about properly, and he could feel the burning sensation in his bladder caused by the gerifta which had lodged there. Taamrat consulted an herbalist living in an adjacent hamlet, who was known as a yiceebt medhaniyt awakiy by his neighbors. The herbalist prepared an infusion of roots and leaves, and gave this to Taamrat to drink. He also directed the sickman to drink much whey, so that the disease agent could be flushed from his body. The infusion was a strong purgative and diuretic, and the herbalist told the sickman that he could observe in Taamrat's urine the tiny eggs that the gerifta had produced in the bladder. In addition, evidence of blood in the urine also indicated that the disease agent's hold on Tamraat was being loosened. Taamrat was given a single dose of [758] the infusion, but no memeleša. The therapy greatly fatigued Taamrat, and his wife was instructed to feed him quantities of chicken liver as a restorative (atmit). Taamrat believed that the therapy had severely strained

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it. Bogalec decided to take the boy to a yikoruba medhaniyt seci who lived in a nearby hamlet, who was re-
*278 puted to be able to recognize koruba. The herbalist, a
*759 woman, was consulted within hours of the irruptions, for
*767 Bogalec knew that koruba advances rapidly and, after a day's time, is no longer susceptible to treatment. The herbalist examined the irruptions, diagnosed the ailment as koruba, and gave Bogalec a leaf with directions that it be ground, mixed with hydromel (birz) and given to the child in small increments. The infusion was a strong emetic and purge, and, since there was no memeleša, Bogalec had to watch the child carefully lest he be overcome by the therapy. After two applications, Bogalec stopped, for fear that a third would kill the child.
[758] The boy was afterwards fed a liver restorative. During his recuperation, Bogalec and her husband took care not to speak the word "koruba" before the boy; in addition, he was given no talla beer. Either action could have in-
[435] duced a fatal relapse.[30] The herbalist asked for and received a fee of E$1., but told Bogalec that the money would be given to the parish church, since she did not intend to profit from her curing.

[30] A similar injunction is followed for certain other ailments, even where there is no present danger, particularly "kuntina" (leprosy).

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[For the religious functions of the dabtara in the Ethiopian church, see category 793.]

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164 government has now made free injections available at "big
[714] markets" of provincial towns. Bedbugs are also prevalent, of the bloodsucking variety. They are considered a nuisance by the Amhara, but all that is done is to air the "alga" bed in the sunlight, which merely reduces the infestation temporarily. Flies are also abundant and very aggressive, so that a flyswitch ("cherd") is kept in motion for comfort. Contagious diseases spread readily. Just after each rainy season, malarial mosquitoes have caused epidemics up to levels of 5,000 feet, on the shore of overflowing lakes and rivers.

511 In the majority of cases, some livestock is taken
[23] into the living hut (tuqul) everynight. The tuqul has, of course, an unwashable mud floor, no windows or chimney, soot-blackened ceiling, cobwebs in corners. There is no change of clothing at night, merely an added "kutta" or sheepskin, against the cold. Aside from drinking cups, there are no individual utensils.

164 Towns, including provincial towns, are centers for
[548] the spread of syphilis and other venereal diseases, due to the existence of entire streets of "women in-between marriages" who act as restauranteurs-prostitutes. When sur-
[759] face lesions appear, the native "wogasha" is consulted; or since the Italian invasion made the "needle" popular, the modern government medical personnel is approached. But patients usually cease to continue treatment when surface lesions disappear.[67]

Eating "brundo", raw beef, at feasts, almost always leads to tapeworm and other taenia infestation. Fortunately

67. Guthe, Th: Venerial Disease in Ethiopia. W.H.O.Bulletin, Vol.2, 1949, pp. 85-138.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

632 Since the town attracted the most clever "dibtara",
[759] many of whom were herbologists, it was also a center where "medical aid", sometimes quite effective, could be obtained, and attracted patients from far and wide.

[463] Ethnic craftsmen would settle in hamlets within walking distance of the town, to provide iron tools, tanned leather, sun umbrellas, etc., without, however, exposing themselves to mockery, insults and occasional assaults by living in the town itself.

632 517 The town developed as a social center, and center for entertainment, almost inevitably. First, religious feasts such as the Epiphany parades and the tournaments on the public commons on "ganna" (Christmas) attracted the populace; and youngsters as well as adult loafers found themarket scenes fascinating. Secndly, the Arab traders liked to discuss business and news over tea or
[265] coffee. So "teahouses " (shay bet") sprang up near the Saturday market, serving snacks also to many a male at odds with his wife, and excluding all womenfolk. Con-
632 648 versely, the mead house, ("tej bet") provided evening
588 entertainment with female singers and dancers (azmari) for the all-male clientele, and waitresses easily available for sexual entertainment. Moreover, every town had at least one "street of unattached women", who catered to travellers or visiting peasants as innkeepers, restaurateurs, and as temporary wives; they were usually divorcees, who hoped to find another husband, and to settle down again to regular married life.

632 178 Except for some of the feudal arrangements, most of this town pattern of social organization is still

633 the old Portuguese-type castles, even then in ruins.
[346] The new mosque, built through Italian encouragement during the occupation, overshadows both the big market and the old Muslim "ghetto" with the old mosque, at lower elevation.

563 The local Muslim "Qadi", ecclesiastical Muslim judge,
624 regarded as their provincial temporal chief, calls on the governor-general every Tuesday. Most Muslims have not moved far from their old section, partly because it is near the big market which is their economic as well as social gathering place, partly because they, almost as much as the ethnic artisans, wish to avoid insults, mockery, and quarrels with young members of the dominant majority.

759 In addition to being a center of public announce-
743 ments, and the table of the judge for petty crimes, the market now also serves as center for the activities of modern "dressers". These medical auxiliaries set up their tables under one of the shady trees, their bottles, hypodermic needles, cotton wool, etc., clearly visible, with chairs for several patients, set apart by an enclosure of barbed wire. When an epidemic threatens, and
[73] during and after it (e.g. typhus or spotted fever), the public can obtain free injections there, or call a dresser to come to their home for a small fee.

633 Each town is divided into administrative wards, sometimes called "qäbälē", but almost invariably named after the church located in it. Thus a person will say "I am from Medhanē Aläm" (church of the "Savior of the

756 to have, books handed down from past centuries, containing secret formulae, recipes, pharmacopeia of an intermingled empirical and magical nature. They warn inquirers that the public revelation of th these secrets would create great social dangers at the hands of the irresponsible.

171 In the days of ancient Egypt, Abyssinia was a supplier of materials for embalming, such as incense, myrrh, etc. It is therefore little wonder that much of Abyssinian medicine resembles that of ancient Egypt, e.g. the strong emphasis on purgatives used regularly.

753 The Amhara shares with peasants in many other parts of the world his belief in "strong" medicine, powerful in taste or heroic in effect or both. Since the Italian invasion, his belief in injections, which bring such miraculously quick results, has assumed magical proportions. Generally he distrusts and fears new medicines.

1. Healing the Body

A. The Surgeon-Herbologist-Empiricist ("woggesha"): Utilizing Nature.

● 759 Unlike the other medical practioners mentioned earlier, the woggesha does not try to dominate nature; he specializes in utilizing what nature provides and in lending a helping hand. He is most often the first consulted, a kind of general practitioner, family doctor; and since he refrains from magical undertakings, he is neither feared nor suspected of witchcraft, which the other practioners, even the dabtara, often are.

Like the dabtara, the woggesha is often an expert herbologist, called "aqabi geray" (lit. who knows the work of nature). While walking in the bush, along brooks in the valley or in the "dega"

759 upland, he notices and remembers the location of plants and roots, which supply him with much of his pharmacopeia. His sense of direction is trained and therefore seems uncanny to the layman. Moreover, not infrequently he actually transplants certain wild plants, so that he can always find them; sufficiently far from residential habitations so that they are not easily found or consumed by cattle or playful boys. A good rule for distance is how far the crowing of a rooster [825 824] can be heard - for some plants are believed to lose their magical power if disturbed by this sound.

The "woggesha" usually learns his craft from his father, while serving him as apprentice. But at present the most popular "woggesha" in the town of Gondar is a well-known former bandit, who has gained an enviable reputation as a skilled surgeon. The "woggesha" is usually a diplomat in his human relations, much like the old-time Western family doctor. He usually tries to remain on good terms with the local church, and often invites the local dabtara to dinner at his house, especially on saints' days, to avoid their competitive hostility and to discuss some cases on a "professional" level.

In his capacity as surgeon, the "woggesha" sets fractures, cuts abscesses, pulls teeth (now with European pliers). But some of his [757] practices are severely condemned by European doctors who object particularly to the woggesha's frequent ripping out of part of the soft palate to cure tonsilitis and chronic sore throat, often causing blood poisoning. Nevertheless, the present government still permits the woggesha to function "in his own district", for otherwise most people would be left without any medical empiricist.

000 The patient would recover anyway in due course.

758 The therapeutic value of convalescense ("wärrem alä") is recognized, and patients are told to bask in the sunshine.

562 Men are more likely to let themselves be treated by the "woggesha";
756 women, who suffer more frequently from functional ailments, approach
757 the "dabtarä" or "zar" doctor more often and request magical aid.

844 When birth approaches, the midwife is called, almost never the woggesha. If he is, he may not touch the genital parts of the woman, and merely advises the midwife. When labor pains begin, the patient is given a drink of mashed linseed to "relax the birth tract" and to "lessen the pain". The newborn baby is annointed with butter (often rancid), and fed some of it.

● 759 Other medical helpers, apprentices, or modern "dressers" may be referred to as "healers" ("fäwash"), "balä mädanit" (lit. medicine man, who knows empirical drugs and cures), "caretaker" ("astabaqi"), male nurse ("mogzit"), modern "dresser" ("astamami"). None of these are respected professions, for they are regarded as too close to manual labor, and such practitioners usually go to other provinces where their work will not shame the family. In recent years, the more skilled ones have been coming from Eritrea.

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757 Modern change has been largely indirect and partial. The new laws still permit the "woggesha" to function. Penicillin and other antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription at the big "Saturday markets", for as little as ETh$2.50 (US$1.-), and the patient simply buys it, takes it to a "dresser" in the nearest town, whom he pays 1/2 dollar Ethiopian (US 20 cents), to give the injection. When symptoms disappear, e.g. in syphilis, he believes himself cured.

753 An important part of diagnosis is the decision whether an ailment is contagious ("fera") or not, and whether it is inherited, congenital ("quranna") or not. If inherited, marriages with such families are despised as not "attentam" (good stock), the same term used for descent from slaves or other "race" or both.

759 In general, the woggesha is most often called in organic ailments;
757 shares with the "dabtara" the practice of functional ailments; while the latter shares with the "zar" doctor the treatment of mental ailments.

2. Healing the Spirit

x 754 A. The "Zar" cult of supernatural spirits, its institution and cosmology.

755 One of the most complex developments of Amhara non-material culture, to which a great deal of mental ingenuity is devoted, is the healing of mental ailments. But this goes far beyond treatment and cure. The "zar" doctors do not limit themselves to treating some of the aforementioned mental ailments. They organise the afflicted, before, during and after "cure", into "zar" societies, which bear the earmarks of a religious cult, and to which the individual belongs henceforth until his or her (more often her) death. Here he finds the warm companionship of the fellow-afflicted; opportunity for expressive behavior; the religious feeling of having been of service; the personal attention of a personal possessive and protective spirit; and the visible leadership of the "zar" doctor who heads the organizational unit.

x 754 The zar doctor often a matriarch, differs only in degree from
756 her flock; for she, too, must be possessed, must be forever afflicted by spirits. But she has managed to learn to control them, call upon her more powerful protective spirits to aid her against evil spirits,

158 Sometimes cases of buda possession are brought in to the
[159] government hospital at Gondar where two European physicians are in charge. They have diagnosed the shrieking, wildly beating type of case as "hysteria"; and the apathetic type of buda case as "catalepsy". In the latter case they have observed absence of reflex responses on eye and knee, almost no pulse, faint heart-beat, low blood pressure; sometimes a stupor in which the patient has no control over bowel movements and urinating. In severe cases of this kind there is a suspension of sensation and will, and muscles are so rigid that limbs keep any position they are placed in by the doctor.

755 In one memorable case, a hysteria patient, a man, had been gradually quieted by a Coptic Amhara priest called in by the European doctors at the hospital, who knew the effectiveness of this from past experience. All the priest had done was to hold the hand of the patient and quietly recite prayers in the Geez language, (which the lay patient could not understand). When the priest tired of this, the regular hospital priest was called in to continue this "treatment". But at sunrise the next morning the patient had disappeared out the window. The hospital "dressers" (male, semi-trained nurses) explained that the patient probably would go a long distance from this area, to escape the severe beating his kinfolk would give him - the "post-operative" treatment meted out to patients recovering from buda possession to "discourage the buda from returning".

755 In the rural areas the "tänqway" is still sometimes called
756 in to treat buda cases, though this is not his major specialty. He is what has been called a "witch-doctor", professional sorcerer, and diviner. He usually treats the patient by frightening the

114 Ethiopia. Eritrea and especially Italian Somaliland had been used by the School of Tropical Medicine in Bologna as a study ground, and to this was now added the much more varied and interesting field of Ethiopian nosography. The Italian studies, amounting to over 500, have been carefully analyzed by the U. S. Technical Project in Ethiopia. With few exceptions, especially in the field of malariology, the Italian work was careless, inexact, with a tendency to unwarranted generalizations.

While a number of excellent Italian physicians worked in East Africa, it would seem that, on the whole, publication was not encouraged unless it would further the Fascist cause. It would thus not be justified to judge Italian medical work here solely on the writings of the more politically minded party members. It does, however, remain a fact that, considering the very large group of medical men who worked in Ethiopia for over five years, we have precious little exact medical information about this country.

744 759 Today, the medical services of Ethiopia are being reorganized. The Government is attempting to obtain the necessary medical personnel, build hospitals and carry out public health programs. It is still too early to judge any achievements. The problems are many and the Ethiopian Government is handicapped through the complete lack of native Ethiopian physicians. Such physicians will not be available for at least another decade.

114 During and after World War II, military authorities had reason to take an interest in Ethiopian nosography and a number of articles were published in this field; prominent among these was Manson-Bahr's "The Prevalent Diseases of Italian East Africa" (1941). The U. S. Technical Project had opportunity to make a number of its own studies and much of the following information is based on this work.

164 If one may speak of social diseases in the sense of diseases of immediate impor-

[p. 712 B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cultivate a missionary spirit in order to reach the non-Christian peoples of Ethiopia. The association sponsors weekly religious services, featuring hymns in Amharic and talks in Amharic on religious and moral questions, and publishes a monthly journal. The Orthodox Students Association stands out as the first nationwide voluntary association in Ethiopia. It holds an annual convention which draws some three hundred students from all parts of the country.

The Ethiopian College Students Association was established in 1960 after some years of patient maneuvering by officers of the various college student governments. It attempts to represent the interests and needs of students vis-à-vis the government and to handle relations with international student organizations.

A number of student clubs have appeared from time to time within the framework of the colleges. One of the most popular and productive of these has been the Ethnological Society of the University College, founded in the early fifties by a Polish member of the college staff. Over the years it has produced several issues of an ethnological bulletin. More recently, under the framework of the new university, dramatic and choral groups have been established as well as groups like the Education Students Association and the Economics Students Association. Graduates of some of the secondary schools and colleges, moreover, have formed a small number of alumni associations.

Labor Unions.—Although Ethiopia has for some time been a paying member of the ILO, the government has until recently strongly opposed the establishment of unions in the country. Nevertheless, due to the encouragement of labor representatives from Western and other African countries, as well as to the courageous efforts of a number of Ethiopians, several unions have at last been established and have won some degree of recognition from the government.* Trade unions were first attempted among employees of the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad and in Eritrea.[48] They now include employees of a number of factories. Even household servants have formed associations that establish minimal conditions which members are obliged to demand from their employers.

Professional Associations.—The Ethiopian Teachers Association, with a large paper membership but scarcely any activity, was the only professional association in Ethiopia prior to the 1960 rebellion. If one may generalize from the frustrated attempts of Ethiopian doctors to establish a medical association, it would seem that the government was attempting to discourage groups of this sort as well as trade unions. Since 1961, however, the picture has changed. There now exists not only a medical association, which publishes its own

* A law establishing a legal basis for labor unions was enacted by the Ethiopian parliament in 1962.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

journal, but also an engineers' association, a college teachers' association, and an Ethiopian writers' association. Earlier attempts to establish an organization of lawyers have not yet reached fruition.

National and International Service Organizations.—A final group of formal associations consists of those which include non-Ethiopian nationals as well as Ethiopians in their membership and which carry out welfare services of various sorts. The Ethiopian Red Cross, the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association, the YMCA, and the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa have been active for more than a decade. More recently, the International Christian Fellowship was formed with an eye to discussing ways of translating Christian principles into social action, and the Social Service Society has broken new ground in the welfare field with its ambitious program of relocating and rehabilitating Addis Ababa indigents.

Informal Associations

Another significant sociological development since the 1960 rebellion has been the blossoming of what might be called "mutual confidence groups." Although the public climate remains somewhat tense and generalized suspicion still prevails, a step has been taken away from the complete atomism of the pre-rebellion era. These groups consist of numbers of friends, bound by such factors as kinship, common ethnic background, relationships formed during study abroad, and occupational ties. Perhaps the most important single bond underlying these groups derives from friendships formed during the crucial experience of attending secondary school together. While for the most part these groups carry out no organized activities or structured discussions, they do provide a context in which any of the issues of the day can be discussed with fairly complete frankness and without fear of reprisal.

There are some progressive Ethiopians who would like to see these groups become the nuclei of action groups and political parties, even on an overt basis. The prevailing view among them, however, seems to be that this is as far as they can go under the present regime.

The efflorescence of voluntary associations in Ethiopia during the past half dozen years constitutes a remarkable thickening of the fabric of Ethiopian society. It may be seen as a vast, unconscious process of arousing and co-ordinating energies to meet the novel realities of Ethiopia's current historical situation. What relationship to this collective process have the individualistic features of Amhara character and society which were discussed above?

It may be observed that in virtually none of the cases cited above were the Amhara the initiators of the associational forms in question. The territorial and "project" *mähebar* were introduced into Ethiopian life by the Gurage; so, as far as present evidence indicates, were the *eddïr* and the *equb*. The labor

12: Young MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For information on medical personnel, see category 116, pp. 23, 27-30, 33-43, 51-67, 70-92, 113-121, 132-137, 187, 191-193, 213, and 237-242.]

682 754 manslaughter of an average citizen, killed e.g. in an automobile accident, or by a trigger-happy policeman, at "semanya" on its present monetary level.

755 Other types of ganyen disease are forms of epilepsy, "haut mal", referred to by the Amhara as "ganyän yäzä" (lit. the ganyen has seized him; plural is "aganent". In this case, a dabtara is often called in and tries to exorcise the evil spirit with magic formulae; sometimes the woggesha doctor tries to intoxicate the patient with [278] a paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha), which drug finally lets him have some rest. In contrast, the method of the täänqway is literally a bag of tricks.

755 In his role as magician, the täänqway is called "qumma" (from 756 "qäma", he stood up), for he tries to identify the personality of 789 the evil spirit from his abode; e.g. in the water of a brook, or a waterhole in the river, or under a certain tree, etc. The magician is also considered an expert on fire and lightning. When a person is struck by lightning, "mäbräq" (lit. Thunder), [761] the priests consider it heavenly punishment and in the past even refused to bury the victim in the churchyard; thus the täänqway is called in. His treatment consists of moving the victim quickly to the fireplace - for he regards fire and warm ashes as the counteracting principle. If a house is on fire in town, it is still believed that the magician, standing on the roof of a neighboring house with a mirror, can prevent the spreading of the fire by causing the flames to recoil.

Cases of drowning are his specialty also. This too is considered by the church a heavenly punishment for hidden crimes, for the victim is regarded as having been surrendered to the "demons";

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

paid increased attention in recent years. A new phase of public health endeavor in this decade was marked by the imposition of a nationwide health tax in 1960.

Health has become a prime objective in Ethiopia's modernization program because of a growing realization that the wide prevalence of malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, intestinal parasites, syphilis, trachoma, leprosy, and other diseases continues to sap the vitality of the nation's productive forces and to visit misery on countless peasant families. The public health forces in Ethiopia (Ministry of Public Health, WHO mission, and AID Public Health Division) have long understood that Ethiopia's health needs cannot be met by piecemeal therapy. They have undertaken a program of preventive measures by preparing public health teams in the medical college at Gondar. The college trains health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians within a common framework, so that when they go into the field they will understand each other's tasks from the start. The first public health center employing such a team was opened in the late fifties; Ethiopia's Second Five-Year Plan envisions one such center for every fifty thousand people by 1967.

The objective of these public health workers is to transmit a number of instructions—concerning personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, early care for illness, and isolation of contagious diseases—which are at variance with customary beliefs and practices. Experience with comparable programs elsewhere suggests that the success of such health teams is by no means assured.[18] What are the forces working for and against the acceptance of these new instructions by the Amhara peasantry? Both negative and positive factors may be identified with respect to each of the three general categories previously referred to: the general outlook regarding change; attitudes toward the agents of change; and degree of compatibility between the new cultural items and the old.

The Amhara peasant's general resistance to change may be presumed operative here as elsewhere, particularly since health practices are often associated with religious beliefs and sentiments. Defense of indigenous therapies has in fact become a significant channel for the expression of traditionalist sentiment, a channel that has even been utilized on occasion in the Addis Ababa newspapers.[19] And a general posture of resistance to changes in the field of health is supported by the interests of traditional practitioners, *dabtarā* and *tanquāy*, who are in danger of losing clientele if modern-trained health workers come to win their allegiance.

Counter to this conservative drag, on the other hand, is the peasant's powerful desire for one basic change in his life circumstances, namely, the reduction of morbidity and mortality. Despite his idyllic conception of paradise and his frequent contention that life on earth is something of little value, the Amhara wants to avoid death. Even from the religious point of view he is

·11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 121 177 178 75 761 motivated to live as long as possible: the monk wants to live longer in order to get closer to God by prayer, and the worldly man wants to live long enough to atone for his sins so that he may enter paradise. Health thus rates as one of the most important values. The expressions for greeting and farewell stress health. Most of the prayers and vows offered have to do with achieving health. Long, painful pilgrimages are made for cures, and much money is spent for the remedies of native practitioners and for amulets to ward off illness. This powerful desire for health and life operates as a lever to overcome the resistance to change.

*565 121 177 829 Toward the bearers of new ideas designed to satisfy this desire for reduced morbidity and mortality, however, the peasant's stance is suspicious and unsympathetic at the outset. He regards Ethiopians who have been educated by Westerners as contaminated by alien norms and beliefs. They appear to him as Ethiopians, but also as strangers—as "black *farang*"—with their European clothes and their unorthodox eating and smoking habits. He tends to distrust their motives, to suspect them of being out to take advantage of him in some way. And he resents their overt or implicit disparagement of his way of life, particularly his practices in so sensitive an area as sanitation.

*565 121 177 744 [554] Against such obstacles one cultural factor that serves to present the health worker as an acceptable agent of change is the Amhara peasant's deference to the man of learning. The public health worker is in a position to inherit some of the awe felt for the learned *dabtarā*, especially since the health teams operate out of centers which provide therapy as well as instruction, which gives them the benefit of association with the quasi-magical powers attributed to one who performs successful treatment. In addition, he can be aided by the Amhara peasant's personal devotion to someone who has helped him and won his confidence. Whether this devotion can be stimulated depends, in the last analysis, on the character and resourcefulness of the public health workers themselves. Those who are able to communicate in a dignified manner with the peasants, who avoid dealing with them as an inferior and backward people, who refrain from flaunting the most important local norms, and who are on good terms with local authorities and respected men, have a substantial chance of being accepted after an initial period of suspicion and alienation. Thus it was that a Gojjami peasant, asked why some of the local people were hearkening to the advice of the public health team at Dabra Marqos, explained: "We have come to realize that what you tell us to do is for our own advantage, not yours." Elsewhere in Gojjam, a similar response was the eventual issue of a more pronounced initial rejection of public health workers. In the village of Dajan doors were closed against a venereal disease team which was taking blood samples of the entire population for Kahn test analysis. Popular suspicion was voiced in a number of ways; the health workers were accused of selling blood, of being missionaries, and of otherwise trying

872 has the photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie and the traditional Gospel of St. John in Geez. Priests now often teach the beginnings of basic arithmetic, in church schools.

783 In adult life, the church affects the layman less through participation in worship than through his individual confessor, the "näfs abbat", (lit. soul father). Each person is supposed to see him at least once a month, and he soon becomes a personal advisor, confidante, marriage counselor, etc. Therefore, even when a person changes residence, he often maintains this relationship to his "näfs abbat". If he were to take on a new one, the penalty assigned for sins (which the confessor keeps as a sort of fee) would be higher. His regular confessor, who knows his financial condition, asks little beyond the seasonal and festival gifts considered his due. In time of trouble, the regular confessor will appear as a character witness in court, or as "wäs" (guarantor) to help him obtain employment or to keep him out of jail pending trial.

585 Most laymen, are not married by eucharistic marriage in church (the "qurban"). There is no social or religious stigma to marrying outside the church; in fact the priest comes to the secular ceremony ("semanya") to bless the couple. But it does mean technical excommunication, and the couple cannot wear the "aklil" crown at church festivals and parades.

763 As a further result, such a couple cannot receive full last rites, though the confessor-priest will come

763 to hear confession and pray at the bedside. To become eligible for full last rites, elderly pious persons often take vows as monks or nuns.

764 If the deceased was a priest or monk, the arms are tied across the chest in the sign of the cross. For a lay person they are tied across the middle of the body. Eyes and mouth are closed. The corpse is tied in a mat. No permanent gravestones are set in the churchyard where most members of the congregation are buried (poor non-
765 members are buried in the bush). In the case of a "great man", the grave is sometimes marked for some years, and the skull and bones later sent to a sacred monastery for storage under a cave-ledge. In a few years the place of burial is usually obliterated by the rains, unless rocks have been gradually piled on it as a memorial.

At the burial, the priest chants from the book "mäṣehafä genzät", the funeral book which begins with
766 the "fetät", the prayer for absolution of sins. For a priest or monk, the parchment "lefafä ṣedeq" (Band-let of Righteousness) is spread over the body. It is an early Coptic Book of the Dead, containing spells and formulae that apparently originated in Egypt, dating partly to early periods.

The confessor-priest prays for the ascension of the soul, as the body is lowered into the grave. Neighbors express condolence to the kinfolk wishing that no further tribulations hit them. This is returned with the wish "May you have a burier in your old age, who will give "täzkar" for you". The confessor inherits

888 young, "not-yet-serious" young woman, partly because there is no
792 career involved, as there is in case of young men who become monks. Though there are usually fewer widows then widowers (due to the mortality in connection with childbirth), the lot of a widow is not a happy one. The proverb says:

[539] "How that my fortune (husband) has died,
what will my mother-in-law give me?"

888 Without the kin group, an aging man, especially if sick, blind
735 or crippled, has little protection. The church is not eager to have
[792] him as a monk, for it can recruit younger men for its service, as a career, and an old man is much less useful in the churchyard than an old woman. He may, especially if landless, or in town, be reduced to beggary. There he sits at the approaches to the churches, repeating his demanding, ceaseless litany: "Selä Madhane Aläm, selä Maryam, selä Giyorgis" (For sake of the Savior, of Mary, of St. George), stretching out an open hand. Sometimes he may send out a child to beg for him, either because he is too bashful, or is using it as a technique. Little boys will thus attach themselves to a potential donor, repeating "babba, babba" (babytalk for "daddy").
[608] They have already learned the concept of artificial kinship to establish human relationships.

6. The End of Life: Eulogy; Memorial Services and Feasts.

763 When an elder is close to death, other elders from among his nearest kin come with his confessor, and say to him: "Confess yourself". When he has done so, they ask him for his last will: "What do you give to your children, and for your soul (i.e. to the church, through the confessor, to the poor)". While fields and cattle are given to the descendants, (the former only in patrilineal descent), personal belongings such as oxhide mats, shamma

763 (tegas), horncups, etc, usually are given to the confessor, also some cash. In return, the confessor gives last rites, absolving the dying from sin, and, after death, assigns a burial place in the churchyard if the deceased was a member of the parish. A circumference of rocks is set around the grave, but no permanent gravestones, so that after a few years the growth of bush and the rains have obscured the spot. Exceptions are only in case of noblemen, "tallesaw", (great man) where markings are remembered long enough to permit digging up the bones if they wanted them sent to some holy monastery, such as Dabra Libanos. Non-members of the parish, especially if poor, are buried in the bush some distance from the residential area.

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[763] The confessor stays with the dying, praying until the last moment. When death sets in, the eyes and lips are closed, the corpse is washed, the big toes and thumbs are tied, the arms folded in a cross, so that the hands cover the sexual parts. The body is wrapped in a shamma, and tied in a mat of palm branches or bread reeds, (called "salyen"); tied on top of the head, across area of the eyes, neck, biceps, forearm, waist, thigh, below knee, and over the heel. The corpse is placed on the bed ("alga", carried to church, entering at the north gate as "salute" to the church, the mass is chanted, incense is burned in raising clouds, then the corpse is buried in a comparatively shallow grave which is covered with earth and then rocks. It is usually not marked with a name.

765 The moment death has set in, women run screaming out of the hut to announce their grief, wailing loudly and incessantly. In some areas they still scratch and cut themselves till blood flows, though the emperor's urging of restraint is reducing this. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive 155
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A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy 155
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In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute 155
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764 personal belongings such as shamma, horncup, oxhide bed-cover.

765 The tǎzkar is the memorial feast 40 days after death, on which, under favorable conditions, the soul is believed to be freed from purgatory. Preparations for this feast are made almost as soon as the funeral is over. Kinfolk and neighbors bring food and drink, but despite that, tazkar feasts are often costly, far beyond the economic means of poorer families. Money must be given to the priests who recite the "fetät", the prayer for absolution. It is the responsibility not only of direct descendants, but of the entire kinfolk to arrange for a "tǎzkar", and it is a great shame when a person has no tazkar. No tazkar is made for unbaptized babies; for violaters of the fasts of Wednesday, Friday and lent; for suicides. Also, when a person dies what is considered a particularly unnatural death, by drowning, fire, lightning, etc., the priests have to decide whether a tazkar can be held, or whether the death was some special punishment for some great capital crime that had gone undetected.

d) "Saluting the church", and Private Communion.

766 Though lay individuals do not usually participate in church worship, going to the "betä kristyan" (church) is a formal affair. The shamma is redraped when entering the churchyard, so as to form a cross-wise fold over

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c. Summary of the dabtara's syncretism in healing the spirit.

It is clear from the above that a number of ancient spirit cosmologies have contributed to, and survived in, Amhara healing practices: Ancient Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Arab, Christian, and African. In fact, the syncretism has been so complex, for so many centuries, that it would be impossible to trace all the roots, with any degree of valid certainty. However, several traces do stand out and their etiology bears significantly on present function.

The book "Lefafa Tsedeq" of the Coptic Abyssinian Church (lit. Book of Righteous Life, in Geez), contains spells and formulae attributed to Jesus Christ and Mary, but actually showing influences [764] from the Egyptian "Book of the Dead". Its function among the Amhara is entirely in the context of funerals and funeral mass during memorial services.

Much of the Greek-Byzantine influence may have entered directly at the time Abyssinia was christianized; but more came via Arabic, later. This includes patches of Greek mythology, legends in connection with the New Testament, and traces of the astrological work of claudius Ptolemy (about 150 A.D. in origin), known in the West as Almagest". [123]

Hebrew influence is most commonly encountered with reference to the mystic powers of King Solomon, who occupies about the same role in Amhara spirit cosmology as in Jewish mythology (Kabala). Amhara amulets refer, e.g. to the "fishnet of Solomon", in which he could catch demons as readily as a fisherman catches fish in the rainy season. The powers of archangels, e.g. Fenuel, Gabriel, etc., are very similar to Jewish cabalistic ideas, [124]

123. See Strelcyn, S: Un magicien grec en Ethiopie. Journal Asiatique, 1951, p. 175-192
124. Walker, John: Folk Medicines in Modern Egypt. London 1934.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

000 a burn, because their colour is dark. On the occasion of
764 death, I never saw great personages borne away; but of small people, and of others rather better, an infinite number. Their burials are in this manner. They do not use candles after death, but much incense. They carry them away wrapped up[1] in a shroud, and some of the more honoured have over the shroud tanned ox-hides, and are placed on trestles. The priests come for them, and pray shortly, and then set out at once with them on the way to the church, with cross, thurible, and holy water, running so that a man cannot catch them up. They do not bring the dead man into the church, but place him close to the grave; they do not use our office for him, nor do they recite psalms, neither do they say anything from the Book of Job. I asked what it was that they prayed; they told me that they read the Gospel of St. John all complete. And so they give him to the grave with their incense and holy water, and they do not say mass for the defunct, nor of devotion for any living person, nor more than one mass a day in each church; and all are communicants, as many as go to it.

CAP. XXIII.—*Of the situation of the town of Barua, chief place of the kingdom of the Barnagais, and of his hunting.*

361 This town of Barua is very good, and it is situated on a very high rock above a river, upon which are situated the king's houses, which they call Beteneguz, which means houses of the king. They are well situated in the manner of a fortress. All the rest is a great plain and an infinite number of large villages at the extremities of the
[231] fields. There is much breeding of all sorts of flocks, cows, goats and sheep, and of much game of all sorts

[1] *Enrorilhados for enrodilhados.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

may become a nun or remain a widow as she pleases. If a 793
priest sleeps with another woman whilst his wife is alive he 684
does not enter the church any more, nor does he enjoy its 587
goods, and remains as a layman. And this I know from having seen a priest accused before the patriarch of having slept with a woman, and I saw that the priest confessed the offence, and the patriarch commanded him not to carry a cross in his hand, nor to enter a church, nor to enjoy the liberties of the church, and to become a layman. If any priests after becoming widowers marry, they remain laymen, As it happened to Abuquer, who married Romana Orque, sister of Prester John, who I have already said was a priest, chief chaplain of Prester John, and he was disordained[1] and made a layman. He no longer enters the church, and receives the communion at the door of the church as a layman, and among the women. The sons of the priests 793
are for the most part priests, because in this country there [871]
are no schools, nor studies, nor masters to teach, and the clergy teach that little that they know to their sons: and so they make them priests without more legitimisation, neither does it seem to me that they require it, since they are legitimate sons. All are ordained by the Abima Markos, for in all the kingdoms of Ethiopia there is no other bishop or person who ordains. The orders are given in two stages, as I will relate further on. I with my own eyes saw them given many times. In all this country the churchyards are [764]
inclosed by very strong walls, that the wild beasts may not disinter the dead bodies. They show them great reverence, [576]
no man riding on a mule passes before a church, even though he is going in a great hurry, without dismounting, until he has passed the church and churchyard a good bit.

[1] *Foy desordenado e feito leigo*; not a correct expression.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

that you are heartily sorry that it happened, I do not reckon that you are further liable in the crime of sacrilege, than if the wine had not been consecrated at all. You are to humble yourself, and sincerely regret that so irreverent an accident happened in your hands, and in your time; but as you did not intend it, and could not prevent it, the consequence of an accident, where inattention is exceedingly culpable, will be imputed to you, and nothing further." 796 782

The priest declared to me, with great earnestness, that he never did believe that the elements in the eucharist were converted by consecration into the real body and blood of Christ. He said, however, that he believed this to be the Roman Catholic faith, but it never was his; and that he conceived the bread was bread, and the wine was wine, even after consecration. From this example, which occurred merely accidentally, and was not the fruit of interrogation or curiosity, it appears to me, whatever the Jesuits say, some at least among the Abyssinians do not believe the real presence in the eucharist; but further I am not enough informed to give a positive opinion. To follow this investigation more curiously would have been attended with a considerable degree of danger; and therefore I have stated my only means of knowledge, and leave my readers entirely to the freedom of their own opinion, and to after inquiry and information.

The Abyssinians are not all agreed about the state of souls before the resurrection of the body. The opinion which generally prevails is, that there is no third state: but that, after the example of the thief, the souls of good men enjoy the beatific vision immediately upon the separation from the body. But I must here observe, that their practice and books do both contradict this; for, as often as any person dies, alms are given, and prayers are offered for the souls 764 775

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

764 775 of those departed, which would be vain did they believe they were already in the presence of God, and in possession of the greatest bliss possible, wanting nothing to complete it. "Remember," says their liturgy, "O Lord! the souls of thy servants, our father Abba Matthias, and the rest of our saints, Abba Salama, and Abba Jacob." In another place, "Remember, O Lord! the kings of Ethiopia, Abreha, and Atzbeha, Caleb, and Guebra Mascal." And again, "Release, O, Lord! our father Antonius, and Abba Macarius." If this is not directly acknowledging a separate state, it can have no meaning at all.

904 171 I have already said, that the Agaazi, the predecessors of those people that settled in Tigre from the mountains of the Habab, were shepherds adjoining to the Red Sea; that they speak the language Geez, and are the only people in Abyssinia in possession of letters; that these are all circumcised, both men and women. The former term, as applied to men, is commonly known to every one the least acquainted with the Jewish history. The latter is, as far as I know, a rite merely Gentile; although in Africa, at least that part adjoining to Egypt and the Red Sea, it is much more known and more universally practised than the other. This I shall call *excision*, that I may express this uncommon operation by as decent a word as possible. The Falasha likewise submit to both.

These nations, however they agree in their rite, differ in their accounts of the time they received this ceremony, as well as the manner of performing it. The Abyssinians of Tigre say, that they received it from Ishmael's family and his descendants, with whom they were early connected in their trading voyages. They say also, that the queen of Saba, and all the women of that coast, had suffered excision at the usual time of life, before puberty, and before her journey to Je-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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692 nishes all persons by that authority, even those of the Abuna's family, without any sort of deference paid to him; and this, as appears by the judges, or king's records, is of very ancient standing. The king calls an assembly of the clergy when he pleases, generally with the advice of the Abuna, and there is none considered legal if he is not present, if in the kingdom.

[682] Welled Hayrat (Ras Michael's son) was excommunicated for killing a refugee at the Abuna's feet, in consequence of which he confiscated the Abuna's villages in Tigre, nor was the curse ever taken off *. The Itchegue, or prior of the
693 monks, if he be chosen a lay-man, must be ordained by the
793 Abuna. He is named by the king, who nominates all superiors of monasteries. The Lika-cahanat, or chief of the priests, is ordained by the Abuna and Itchegue, who both hold a corner of a scarf put upon him. He is an inquisitor of morals among the priests, and has so much salt and cloth from each district. A priest at his ordination pays three salts to the Abuna. He comes to the house of the latter, enters, and kisses the threshold. The Abuna, sitting on a sofa at one end of the room, reads the Scriptures to himself. Then having paid his salt, the person retires and kisses the threshhold, returning without imposition of hands, or any ceremony. Old men are made priests, and young men deacons by a simple jussit. More probable accounts say, that there is only one salt paid, that the person stands at the door, while the Abuna, having made the sign of the cross, holding it in his hand, says, "I have ordained you a priest." The person then enters the room, kisses the cushion of the sofa, and retires. Many are ordained that can neither read nor write.

[764] The Abyssinians have an office for the dead; and worship
778 pictures of saints, even such as are not consecrated. This we had an opportunity of seeing, every time we were obliged to draw some Madonna. All those that saw it, kissed the
000 ground before it, with their foreheads on the earth. The

* The Abuna's house is a kind of sanctuary, in which criminals are protected from massacre, not from trial. They are sometimes tried there by the royal judges, or dragged from it to the tribunal.

[p.56]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 181 571 [764] Spontaneous co-operation is most in evidence among the Amhara at times of crisis. When death is announced, relatives and friends promptly repair to the home of the deceased and offer their help. They build the coffin and construct a *dāss* (a temporary shelter near the house to accommodate all the expected visitors). They bring food and drink to help provide for the many who will come to pay their respects, and will similarly provide help on the occasion of the big memorial feasts to follow. Like assistance is rendered during other crises, such as prolonged illnesses or fire. Such forms of co-operation set another significant limit to egoistic orientation among the Amhara.

*121 181 156 571 578 691 It is in the realm of interaction involving serious interests, touching layers of the personality deeper than those required for the formalities of etiquette, that Amhara egoism is most conspicuous. Here everything seems to conspire against generous communication and concord of opinion. As we have already observed, the Amhara are quick to become argumentative in ordinary conversation. *Litigation* is one of the most prominent forms of interaction among the Amhara. One can scarcely spend a day in the Amhara countryside without encountering litigants, whether under a tree, at a marketplace, or in the courtyard of some lord. A nobleman can never travel about the country without being accosted on the way by litigants anxious to have him hear their stories.

121 181 571 578 691 171 Litigation is, of course, an endemic feature of peasant civilizations. Yet there can be no doubt that for the Amhara this form embodies a basic psychological disposition that differs from that of the people of other peasant civilizations. In traditional China, to take a case of marked contrast, such interpersonal conflict, far from being relished, was deliberately avoided. The Chinese considered going to court to be an extravagance, and the village judge was one of the most underemployed members of the community. In China, parties to a dispute preferred to assemble at the teahouse and to seek a solution through discussion and negotiation. The Amhara, on the other hand, seeks to maximize the opportunity for self-assertion through litigious disputes. Ordinary sociability among the Amhara is saturated with references to litigation. Current court cases comprise one of the more common topics of conversation.

*121 181 571 578 [691] [521] Beyond litigation, *conflict* is often expressed in more violent forms. Fights with the *dulā* erupt when altercation becomes too heated. Throwing stones is another accepted mode of combat, especially among youth. Protracted enmities tend to eventuate in such acts as house-burning, assault with swords or rifles, and (according to Amhara belief, at least) poisoning.

While it is true that Amhara culture provides means and a certain amount

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* Some indication of the gross national significance of this phenomenon is afforded by the following comparison: twenty-seven high court judges are sufficient to handle the litigation for all of England and Wales; the corresponding number for Ethiopia is *one hundred and eighteen*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. [121]*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. [121]* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*sazkār*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. [121]* 593 [888] [704] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is [121]* 602 [593] [591] [611] [601]

304 the names of saints. The client generally selects designs within the range appropriate to his needs, and women favor aesthetically attractive patterns. Only the gums are undecorated with designs, but are completely blackened; even here, however, the tattooing is regarded as aesthetically pleasing. Men sometimes have their godfather's names as well as their own (which incorporates the patronym) tattooed on their wrists, so that should they die in some foreign place, the local priests will regognize them as Christians and give them a proper burial.

[58] [608] [764]

Table 5 outlines the tokwariy's practice.

291 [435] Raw cotton and cotton sheeting have long been imported, and still are, but the toga (shamma), probably the oldest of the Abyssinian cotton garments, is made domestically, from cotton spun by the housewife and woven on the handloom of the weaver.

The cotton clothing now considered "traditional" is always white. The explanation given by the pious is that white is the expression of mourning, because of the passing from the earth of Jesus Christ. [125]

[294] Tailoring is done by poor semi-specialized Amhara men at "big markets". Garments are made with great care, to follow the traditional style and also fit well. There are no new fashions in these costumes, for the prevalent pattern is conservative: to be properly dressed for the occasion, in the style of one's forebears. Variety exists in trousers: the jodphurs which reach to the bare feet, as former clothing of feudal lords, are more prestigeful than the wide peasant trousers that narrow to the leg just below the knee. The shirt, worn kneelength above the trousers, similarly narrows on the forearm, and is therefore called "aj tebab" (lit. narrow-sleeve) in the vernacular, instead of "qamis", the proper name (possibly from French chemise, though no Amhara would admit this foreign name for his "traditional" shirt). The only untailored garment is the toga, but this is used for expression of moods and situational conditions (see "language of the shamma").

296 Laundering is done in or near riverbeds, or brooks, by women, housewives or female ex-slaves, using the dried

764 personal belongings such as shamma, horncup, oxhide bed-cover.

765 The tazkar is the memorial feast 40 days after death, on which, under favorable conditions, the soul is believed to be freed from purgatory. Preparations for this feast are made almost as soon as the funeral is over. Kinfolk and neighbors bring food and drink, but despite that, tazkar feasts are often costly, far beyond the economic means of poorer families. Money must be given to the priests who recite the "fetät", the prayer for absolution. It is the responsibility not only of direct descendants, but of the entire kinfolk to arrange for a "tazkar", and it is a great shame when a person has no tazkar. No tazkar is made for unbaptized babies; for violaters of the fasts of Wednesday, Friday and lent; for suicides. Also, when a person dies what is considered a particularly unnatural death, by drowning, fire, lightning, etc., the priests have to decide whether a tazkar can be held, or whether the death was some special punishment for some great capital crime that had gone undetected.

d) "Saluting the church", and Private Communion.

768 Though lay individuals do not usually participate in church worship, going to the "betä kristyan" (church) is a formal affair. The shamma is redraped when entering the churchyard, so as to form a cross-wise fold over

763 (togas), horncups, etc, usually are given to the confessor, also some cash. In return, the confessor gives last rites, absolving the dying from sin, and, after death, assigns a burial place in the churchyard if the deceased was a member of the parish. A circumference of rocks is set around the grave, but no permanent gravestones, so that after a few years the growth of bush and the rains have obscured the spot. Exceptions are only in case of noblemen, "tellaqsäw", (great men) where markings are remembered long enough to permit digging up the bones if they wanted them sent to some holy monastery, such as Dabra Libanos. Non-members of the parish, especially if poor, are buried in the bush some distance from the residential area.

764

[763] The confessor stays with the dying, praying until the last moment. When death sets in, the eyes and lips are closed, the corpse is washed, the big toes and thumbs are tied, the arms folded in a cross, so that the hands cover the sexual parts. The body is wrapped in a shamma, and tied in a mat of palm branches or bread reeds, (called "säläyen"); tied on top of the head, across area of the eyes, neck, biceps, forearm, waist, thigh, below knee, and over the heel. The corpse is placed on the bed ("alga", carried to church, entering at the north gate as "salute" to the church, the mass is chanted, incense is burned in raising clouds, then the corpse is buried in a comparatively shallow grave which is covered with earth and then rocks. It is usually not marked with a name.

765 The moment death has set in, women run screaming out of the hut to announce their grief, wailing loudly and incessantly. In some areas they still scratch and cut themselves till blood flows, though the emperor's urging of restraint is reducing this. The

765 hands are thrown into the air in a gesture of loss and abandonment in grief, and the mourners leap into the air, dancing about in semi-formal style, as if suffering such intense inner pain that they cannot stand in one place. Some roll on the ground, some hit themselves with rocks.

Men wail and dance in somewhat more restrained fashion, which soon turns into a more formal eulogy. Whenever another kinsman or neighbor arrives on the scene, both men and women fall on each other's necks (mostly of the same sex), in a gesture of mutual condolence. Both men and women break into semi-chanted eulogies, praising the goodness of the departed, recalling past bereavements, even the deaths of saints and great warriors not related to them.

This more formal funeral chant, impromptu though it is, is called "arqedo". It consists of plaintive chants in the mode called "mërëged sëma", is accompanied by slow rythmic dance movements in which the knees are raised high, by refrains, rythmic handclapping, and, in case of a "great man", even by drums. The funeral chant is repeated when the corpse is carried in farewell procession around the church, and for many days thereafter as kinsmen arrive from afar for condolence.

Professional weepers, "alqash", who are always female, are employed only by families of "telleq sëw" (great men). They are adept at impromptu composition of poetry, as well as equipped with powerful and trained lungs.

Endowments and bequests to the church, by noblemen, are handled by the "qës gobaz" of the nearest church, but if no large, well-organized church is near, the governor of the province may appoint a local "choqa shum", or a higher state officer, to handle the bequest.

000 bequest.

765 Mourning is well organized and elaborate. Women shave their heads in many regions. Their shammas are dyed black, or at least dirtied, or, in towns, worn upside down with black borders. Even women calling on a mourner disarray their togas in sympathy before entering. Since it is considered shameful to mourn alone, kinfolk come from afar, and they as well as neighbors, bring enjara, barley beer, meat stew, coffee, even cash to contribute to the fee of the priests and expenses of "tazkar" (memorial services and feasts). Thus the mourning turns into a feast, which in turn attracts large numbers of people, including non-relatives, free-loaders and multitudes of beggars.

The biggest formal "tazkar" is held on the 40th day after death, when the soul is believed to have its earliest opportunity to be freed from purgatory. Masses are chanted in the church, and priests and chanters are rewarded with money, barley-beer, and a place of honor at the big feast. The rectangular shelter, "dass" (used in weddings), is erected once again, of young treetrunks, covered with the branches, and odoriferous grasses are spread on the ground. Women sit in their own groups; and the odors of their spiced pepper stewpots, and the large quantities of barley beer consumed, soon give both men and women, kinfolk and visitors, an atmosphere of a feast rather than that of mourning.

At the "tazkar" for a deceased noblewoman held on the meadows of the monastery of Dabra Libanos, more than 5,000 peasants were feasted. Even peasants in modest circumstances fete more than 100 persons, slaughter about 5 sheep and two old oxen, contribute dozens of huge jarsful of barley-beer, hundreds of enjara breads. As a

765 result, the "taskar" is the greatest single economic consumption in the life cycle, and not infrequently brings economic ruin, so that measures to restrain it have often been urged. But since everyone wants to imitate the "great man" (noble) and no one wants to appear to mourn too lightly, taskars continue elaborate. They are also major social events.

Lesser taskar memorial services and feasts are observed, especially by the noblemen and well-to-do, on the 7th day after death, and on the 12th and 30th days, 6 months, one year, and 7 years after the passing. Upon leaving, the condolents say to the mourners: "May God give rest to his soul".

Even in more modern Addis Ababa, little has changed in the taskar pattern, except that the aforementioned physical violence is now reduced.

291 Men doing physical labor - "boddäna" - lift toga above shoulders to free arms;

- "adägäddäga" - knot toga across chest; wrap-around. (also to tie shammas of debtors to creditors, or prisoners to guard's).

[411] To parry blows - "näkäta" - wrapping toga around left forearm, as shield.

Preparing for battle - "adäräddäga" (see above): knotting shamma across chest, after wrapping it tightly around the waist.

When cold - "zeqzeq läbbäsä" - doubling a heavy shamma (called "kuta" or "derreb") to wrap oneself in completely, even covering covering head, at night.

When hot - a light shamma of muslin ("nätäla") may be rolled around the head - "tämättäma". Hence, the turban of priests is called "mätämtämiya", a tight wrap-around of the head by muslin.

[535] When dancing - before "däbtära" (scribe-choristers) begin to dance, in church, they first drape the toga tightly ("shäbäsh-häbä"), so that the flaps will not drop from the shoulders during the motion.

[765] In mourning - while dancing the funeral motion, accompanying the improvised eulogy, women approach each other holding their own togas outward and horizontal, like huge wings, (as if they were holding a spear like men dancing the "fukkara" boast dance).

201 291 178 685 Some of these expressive ways of draping the shamma are falling into disuse in the towns where the people are more affected by what passes as "modern dress". However, an interesting increase in one way of draping the shamma can be noticed in recent years: Now that debtors are no

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the imperfection was, by all manner of means, to be removed; so that the Catholics, as well as the Cophts, in Egypt, undergo excision ever since. This is done with a knife, or razor, by women, generally when the child is about eight years old *. 304

There is another ceremony, with which I shall close, and this regards the women also, and I shall call it *incision*. This is an usage frequent, and still retained among the Jews, though positively prohibited by the law: "Thou shalt not cut thy face for the sake of, or on account of, the dead †." As soon as a near relation dies in Abyssinia, a brother or parent, cousin-german or lover, every woman in that relation, with the nail of her little finger, which she leaves long on purpose, cuts the skin of both her temples, about the size of a sixpence; and therefore you see either a wound or a scar in every fair face in Abyssinia; and in the dry season, when the camp is out, from the loss of friends, they seldom have liberty to heal, till peace and the army return, with the rains. 304 765

The Abyssinians, like the ancient Egyptians, their first colony, in computing their time, have continued the use of the solar year. Diodorus Siculus says, "They do not reckon their time by the moon, but according to the sun; that thirty days constitute their month, to which they add five days and the fourth part of a day, and this completes their year. 805

These five days were, by the Egyptians, called Nici, and by the Greeks, Epagomeni, which signifies, days

* The reader will observe, by the obscurity of this passage, that it is with reluctance I have been determined to mention it at all; but as it is an historical fact, which has had material consequences, I have thought it not allowable to omit it altogether. Any naturalist, wishing for more particular information, may consult the French copy.

† Deut. chap. xiv. ver. 1.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

throw the end over the right shoulder from back to front. As a general rule, however, women turn them up on the left shoulder, whilst men free their right arm and shoulder. They make, floating in the breeze, a very picturesque addition to the costume of the wearers. 291

Very little difference is apparent in the dress of the Ethiopian men and women of any class. This is made of imported white cotton materials of varying design and quality, and consists of roomy trousers tied round the waist and tightened in from calf to ankle, and a loose shirt reaching below the knee. The latter is worn longer by the women, with some coloured silk embroidery round neck and cuffs; this embroidery is also carried out round the bottom of the trousers, which are tightly fastened at the ankle with tiny silver or gold buttons. The shirts of both men and women have very close-fitting sleeves from elbow to wrist, which are also buttoned, the men's shirts being finished with high tight neck-bands which give them a clean, smart appearance.

Sometimes I have seen, though rarely, the shirt and trousers, and even the *chamma*, worn in pink or blue or even yellow. This is a sign of mourning—white is otherwise the universal rule. [765]

Most Abyssinians wear a head-covering of sorts. In the case of the people this generally consists of a piece of white muslin twisted round or tied over the head; I have also, though rarely, seen them wearing straw hats of native manufacture, and, still more rarely, a sort of brown woollen cap with a tuft, not unlike a fez in shape. The better-class Abyssinian, of both sexes, sometimes affects a wide-brimmed soft grey or black felt hat of European manufacture.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

291 The Abyssinian lady and gentleman are frequently to be seen with a black satin three-quarter mantle, ornamented by a little gold braid round the neck and generally a coloured silk lining. In the rainy season a black woollen-hooded cape or *burnous* is donned by all classes, women wearing the hood at the back, and men sporting theirs on their left shoulder. The *burnous* is also a sign of mourning, for which purpose people of every class wear it.

765 515 296 A further, and less pleasant, sign of mourning is for the bereaved one to refrain from washing his clothes; but I only observed this practice in connection with servants and persons of humble position. Ordinarily they are very keen on washing their white garments, and even on trek there was a great "clean-up" whenever we stayed in camp for an extra twenty-four hours. The day before our return into Addis was always the occasion for the most lavish use of soap and water, and the *safari* on arrival looked really quite smart, the men all having donned spotless white *chammas*, shirt, and trousers for the occasion, when, I am bound to say, they looked externally a good deal cleaner than our travel-stained garments allowed us to do.

293 A cartridge belt of various colours and designs, from the plain native leather to the gold and silk embroidered specimen, is more or less generally worn by the men, and its value is also often an indication to the position or means of the wearer. In its place women use a girdle of some sort, to which is attached their keys, ear-cleaners, head-scratchers, and small silver ornaments. Parasols of neatly plaited grass, intermixed with coloured cottons, are carried frequently by both sexes in all seasons. These are quite picturesque, and no doubt serve their

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permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. [121]*

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Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. [121]* 593 462 [889]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkär*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. [121]* 593 [888] [704] [765]

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With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is [121]* 602 [593] [591] [611] [201]

763 to hear confession and pray at the bedside. To become eligible for full last rites, elderly pious persons often take vows as monks or nuns.

764 If the deceased was a priest or monk, the arms are tied across the chest in the sign of the cross. For a lay person they are tied across the middle of the body. Eyes and mouth are closed. The corpse is tied in a mat. No permanent gravestones are set in the churchyard where most members of the congregation are buried (poor non-
765 members are buried in the bush). In the case of a "great man", the grave is sometimes marked for some years, and the skull and bones later sent to a sacred monastery for storage under a cave-ledge. In a few years the place of burial is usually obliterated by the rains, unless rocks have been gradually piled on it as a memorial.

At the burial, the priest chants from the book "mäsehafä genzät", the funeral book which begins with
766 the "fetät", the prayer for absolution of sins. For a priest or monk, the parchment "lefafä sedeq" (Bandlet of Righteousness) is spread over the body. It is an early Coptic Book of the Dead, containing spells and formulae that apparently originated in Egypt, dating partly to early periods.

The confessor-priest prays for the ascension of the soul, as the body is lowered into the grave. Neighbors express condolence to the kinfolk wishing that no further tribulations hit them. This is returned with the wish "May you have a burier in your old age, who will give "täzkar" for you". The confessor inherits

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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585 known, in Europe. These marriages are, by no means, permanent: Many of the Ozoros, who always rule their husbands, marry as often as they please; dissolving the marriage preceding at the dictates of convenience, or fancy. But notwithstanding the general licentiousness, there are found several faithful wives and mothers, who are content to deviate from the common example.

When any of the king's children dies, it is the custom to
●766 hang the audience-chamber with tapestry and curtains, and spread carpets on the floor. The king, having entered, sits on the throne, and the *itoogerd*, a set of professed mourners
[167] of the female sex, along with the nobles and household-servants, attend. One of the licaonte, a priest, reads over a list of the former kings with great solemnity, adding, after every name, "May the Lord have mercy on his soul, even to the fifth generation." The assembly reply, "Amen, ycoune, so let it be." At last he says, "Greatly may the Lord have mercy on the soul of ***, who died this day;" on which the Ozoros and their women, the mourners, the household, and the nobles, all set up a loud and general cry of lamentation, and weep for some time. If the person has died in the camp, or city, the coffin is brought before the king, but if not, he performs the ceremony without it. It is afterwards carried out with sendic and nagareet, and buried by the Betwudet, or Billetana-gueta dakakin, in the manner which shall be afterwards mentioned.

Koscam * is the richest church in Abyssinia; it is situated
361 on the banks of Kahha, below a ruinous palace, or house, of the king. There are about 40 houses in the village, all belonging to the principal Kuaragna, the party of the queen. All the Kuaragna, Eshte, Eusebius, and the rest, had their troops drawn up to attack Michael when called to Gondar by Joas, at the advice of Lubo. They designed to engage him on the Angrab, but failed completely. The residing people at Koscam, after Joas's death, were in great fear of Michael, and wore a hood, or cowl, like the monks. Gondar is 2¾ miles, perhaps 3, at its greatest length, and nowhere above a mile broad. The palace is in the centre. Below the town, on the S. W. at the conflux of

* From this to the end, wholly in the words of Mr Bruce.

[p. 52]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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rains of Naasse and Hamlie, it never overflows at the springs, 361
nor do the fountains seem larger. He remembered the accession of Hatze Yasous to the throne, and was about 80 years old. The east side of the Nile is less barren than the west side. Aformasha is not barren.

Singular custom. The Betwudet (in Habesh), upon the 651
death of any Wiziro, is obliged to pay the expences of the 766
ceremony, called Misle, which amounts to 100 oxen, 3000 loaves of wheat bread, 20 jars hydromel, wood, &c. the whole about 60 ounces of gold. The ceremony is this: A sort of figure, resembling the defunct, is placed upon horseback, in his usual dress, and so carried in procession about the outer court of the palace, with the royal standard (sendick) carried before it, and the nagareet beating. This is called, in this country, "burying with sendick and nagareet;" for which the Betwudet has 1200 ardeb of wheat yearly out of the Attekolla.

The route of the Islam merchants, S. is by two ways, with 487
loaden asses, 8 or 9 miles per day. The way by Gojam is performed in 30 days to Sebou, and thence for other 10 to Narea. The Kibby, or Zebee, rises in Narea. Coffee, of different kinds, grows there in abundance, and the Galla feed on it. They use the lex talionis, but their internal justice is strict. They are very scrupulous of oaths: Wauke Laftan, by heaven and earth, is one of the most solemn. There are three races of Galla, the Guangoul in Angot, north-east of Begemder; Mahomet Ali, another farther west than the Guangoul, towards Amhara; and a third, Mahomet, brother of Lubo, west of Amhara. The rest are pagans; but when converted are said to be better Christians than the native Abyssinians.

Mahabar Selasse is four commodious days journey from 133
Gondar, in the line of Tchemmera and Tenkel. Near it pass the rivers Shimfa and Gandova, the last of which has several very high cataracts; it joins to the Shankala, and is about two days journey from Tchemmera. Both rivers fall into the Nile.

The river Bashilo separates Amhara from Begemder; the Mashilla, a river of Gojam, and the river Nefasse, fall into the Nile at the same place. In the country of the Galla west of Damot, across or west of the Abay, there is little

[p. 61]

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585 known, in Europe. These marriages are, by no means, permanent: Many of the Ozoros, who always rule their husbands, marry as often as they please; dissolving the marriage preceding at the dictates of convenience, or fancy. But notwithstanding the general licentiousness, there are found several faithful wives and mothers, who are content to deviate from the common example.

766 When any of the king's children dies, it is the custom to hang the audience-chamber with tapestry and curtains, and spread carpets on the floor. The king, having entered, sits on the throne, and the *itesgerd*, a set of professed mourners [167] of the female sex, along with the nobles and household-servants, attend. One of the licaonte, a priest, reads over a list of the former kings with great solemnity, adding, after every name, "May the Lord have mercy on his soul, even to the fifth generation." The assembly reply, "Amen, ycoune, so let it be." At last he says, "Greatly may the Lord have mercy on the soul of ***, who died this day;" on which the Ozoros and their women, the mourners, the household, and the nobles, all set up a loud and general cry of lamentation, and weep for some time. If the person has died in the camp, or city, the coffin is brought before the king, but if not, he performs the ceremony without it. It is afterwards carried out with sendic and nagareet, and buried by the Betwudet, or Billetana-gueta dakakin, in the manner which shall be afterwards mentioned.

361 Koscam * is the richest church in Abyssinia; it is situated on the banks of Kahha, below a ruinous palace, or house, of the king. There are about 40 houses in the village, all belonging to the principal Kuaragna, the party of the queen. All the Kuaragna, Eshtè, Eusebius, and the rest, had their troops drawn up to attack Michael when called to Gondar by Joas, at the advice of Lubo. They designed to engage him on the Angrab, but failed completely. The residing people at Koscam, after Joas's death, were in great fear of Michael, and wore a hood, or cowl, like the monks. Gondar is 2¾ miles, perhaps 3, at its greatest length, and nowhere above a mile broad. The palace is in the centre. Below the town, on the S. W. at the conflux of

* From this to the end, wholly in the words of Mr Bruce.

[p. 52]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[43]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

X 794 771 The religious and ethnic syncretism of the zar cult is evident from the descriptions given above. This is not too surprising, partly because of the great age of the cult, partly because of the emphasis on "free enterprise" in the zar cult.

X 794 776 The cosmology of the zar spirits themselves indicates considerable crossing of boundary lines. Some live in regions other than their ancestral homes. Some have "married" zar spirits of other religions, or have produced "offspring" of mixed "ethnic ancestry". But despite this crossing, most zar spirits are identified with a specific religious, or ethnic, or religious affiliation.

X 794 776 781 The human patients, however, are not bound to join a zar spirit of their own affiliation. Very often they do not. This is one of the forms of "free experimentation" - though not on purpose, and unconscious in most cases. A mistreated Amhara wife often joins a predominantly Muslim zar society because "possessed by a Muslim zar"; yet continues as a Coptic Christian in ordinary life. Christian Amhara people believe that Muslim girls about the age of puberty very often become zar possessed, not infrequently by a Coptic zar. Some Coptic zars are believed to take special interest in religious festivals, and if they possess a Coptic woman they may "inspire" her to dance in public outside the church on Ṭenqät (Epiphany).

Several of the more powerful, male, Coptic Christian zars are regarded as "educated in Jerusalem". Their demands are more subtle: e.g. in place of the unimaginative staple demand of pagan zars for a chicken sacrifice, Christian "Jerusalem-trained" zars may require the purchase of a coffee cup of a certain specified color, from which the "possessed" alone may drink.

x794 776 781 177 771 Yet despite this hierarchy of spirits, in the static construct of the zar cosmology, the factor of syncretism dominates the dynamic functions. As a result, a Coptic woman possessed by a Muslim zar may wear the colorful print head shawl of the Muslim woman; and even a Falasha woman, living in a semi-isolated Falasha hamlet, may suddenly refuse to shave her head (which is required of wives by Falasha religious law) and will braid it in the fashion of a Coptic Amhara woman without serious ostracism by her kinfolk which would be her punishment otherwise. At the wadaja ceremony, like the one at the convention, Coptic women and doctors chant hymns modelled after Muslim worship, refer to the zar as "prophet", and use Arabic loanwords, to flatter and cajole a Christian zar !

x794 776 771 Finally, religious syncretism in the zar cult is often intertwined with Christian cosmology and hagiology. Thus, Zar Sayd-Qadr, of Muslim origin, has become synonymous with Jesus Christ; The legendary Amhara Christian saint Gäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus is believed to have been an ally and advisor of the powerful Zar Säyfu Çhängär. The archangels Mikaël and Gabriël, who are given feasts on taskar memorials for Coptic Christian departed souls, are regarded in the zar cult as "commander of the right house" and "commander of the left house" of zars (patterned on the human, tradional Abyssinian army). The Christian zar Abba Yosef if believed to join other Copts in bathing in the river to celebrate Ṭəmqät (Epiphany). Christian zar spirits remain dormant during the lenten season.

[798] In view of this, it is perhaps not too surprising that the Coptic Church of Abyssinia remains passive, in effect tolerant by default, toward the zar cult and its social institution.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

312 the downward side but is sloped on the up-hill side and therefore triangular in section. The filling-up of the empty space behind the wall, to the new terrace level, may be partly accomplished by hand but tends to be left to nature. During the rains, especially on the steeper slopes, there is a continuous downward movement of soil, which is arrested by the terrace walls and the pockets above them gradually fill up. In the course of centuries an immense amount of simple terracing of this kind has been done, the effect being to accentuate the existing irregularities of the steeper slopes. The landscape has certainly been greatly modified in this way, but it is often impossible to tell at first sight whether a given feature is natural, or partly or wholly due to terracing. It is obvious that such terracing has not only provided additional acreage for agriculture but also served the useful purpose of saving many steep slopes from excessive erosion. In several parts of Ethiopia, including this area, I have seen slopes under cultivation which were so steep that the soil, when loosened and disturbed, would slide away downhill. At first sight one would suppose that such slopes must be completely denuded after a few seasons' rain. The fact that this does not happen is due, I believe, to the vast abundance of stones in these soils, every one of which acts as a minute barrier arresting the flow of water and silt. Nevertheless such slopes, unless terraced, clearly cannot survive indefinitely under cultivation.

443 Surplus produce is brought in to the big weekly market at Debra Berhan
[487] which is both the commercial and the social centre of the whole district; all the main routes radiate from it. Every Saturday morning these routes are thronged with market-goers, who can be seen moving along in an almost continuous stream, the well-to-do mounted on mules, the majority on foot, some driving laden donkeys and pack-mules. The products of this countryside are few, and there is little food surplus, but some wheat and barley come to market, also eggs and chickens and a good deal of butter. Some honey (used in making the local mead or *tej*) comes in, and beeswax is collected for export. Firewood, a scarce commodity on the plateau, is carried in in quantity. *Gesho*, the fermenting agent, comes up from the gorges. There is plenty of earthenware, made on the plateau nearby. From the district of Menz to the north come excellent felt blankets and burnouses. Traders from farther afield bring salt from the desert, partly in the bars which used formerly to pass as currency, and raw cotton and spices from the eastern plains. Textiles and other imported goods now find their way to this market by lorry.

When, in the course of the afternoon, the market crowds begin to stream homewards, one may identify the few simple wares they have bought or bartered. Some have a bag or a bar of salt, some raw cotton for spinning or a piece of cotton cloth, some a fresh supply of coffee-beans, some a bottle of kerosene or a cake of soap. Many have acquired earthenware water-pots or
[323] cooking vessels; the large round platters (*matad*) 18 inches across, on which
[482] the local bread is baked, stand out conspicuously for they are always carried, for safety, on the head.

● 771 It still remains to describe the most potent of the influences which shape the life of the country-bred Amhara—that of the Church. The priests, of

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

whom many hard things have been said by prejudiced travellers, play so essential a part in almost every aspect of rural life that the community simply cannot be imagined without them. Christenings, funerals and periodic commemorations of the dead are ceremonies of enormous importance which must, of course, be conducted by priests, and their presence is deemed desirable at the higher forms of civil marriage. The *mahabar* or Private Communion, an old social institution deeply rooted among these people, cannot be held unless priests are present, nor can oaths be sworn, or public inquiries made, without them. The traditional customs of the Ethiopian Church, based on those of the Copts but strongly influenced by Judaistic practices, still retain their hold, some would say a strangle-hold, over the rural population. Many long fasts are rigorously observed, besides weekly ones on Wednesdays and Fridays; so are a multiplicity of feast-days when no work may be done, though Saturday is not always observed, as it used to be, as a workless day equivalent to Sunday.

I have already spoken of the large number of churches scattered over this area, especially in the northern half of the sheet, among the gorges. When first wandering about the district I had no idea they were so numerous. But while making the survey I continually came across new ones, and the last two, those nearest the north-east and north-west corners of the sheet, were discovered only while filling in the final detail. They brought the total for this small area up to twenty. They are not elaborate buildings, nor do they conform to the ordinary western conception of a church. They are indeed round huts, quite uninfluenced by the rectangular form (deriving from a very ancient tradition) which exists in the northern part of the country.[1] Some are built in masonry, some in mud-and-stick, and the slightly more pretentious have an outer colonnade of wooden uprights supporting the edge of the roof. Inside one finds two concentric passages surrounding the *makdas*, or Holy of Holies, which only priests may enter. In the distance one can usually recognize a country church by its fine conical thatched roof, which is much bigger than that of any ordinary hut, and is crowned by a sort of double cone carrying a complicated cross, often ornamented with ostrich eggs.

Of the twenty churches, seven were dedicated to the Virgin Mary (Mariam), four to St. George (Ghiorghis), and three to the Archangel Michael, and these are, in general, the most popular dedications. The principal church in Debra Berhan was ; Selassie (Trinity), that of Angolala a Kidane Meheret (Covenant of Mercy). There was one St. John, one St. Gabriel, and one each dedicated to the most famous of Ethiopian saints—"Abo" and Tekla Haymanot. Splendid sites have been chosen for most of these churches, the chief consideration having been, it would seem, visibility from afar. The plateau churches are invariably raised on a conspicuous ridge or hill-top. Many are beautifully situated on the shelves in the gorges, or overlooking these. Some again are placed on the extreme edge of a gorge—such are Saria Mikael in the north-east of the sheet and the old St. George, just north of Debra Berhan, now unfortunately moved nearer the town (both sites are marked on the map).

Perhaps the most striking of all these sites is that of Iteghe Mariam, to the

[1] D. R. Buxton, "The Christian Antiquities of Northern Ethiopia," *Archaeologia*, 92 (1947) 1–42.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

346 north-west of Zanjira near the upper margin of the sheet. The church clings to the side of a steep little hill which stands almost isolated among vast gorges and commands the grandest panorama imaginable of this tormented country. The hill is joined to Zanjira by a narrow causeway little lower than the general plateau, flat on top and dropping away in cliffs on either side, so regular that it almost seems artificial. Harris records a saying which evidently refers to this place: "from Iteghe you can see the Echeghe" (*i.e.* the chief of the monks, who then lived in Gondar). To be sure, one does seem to overlook a great part of the world from this point of vantage.

[787] Every church is the centre of a radiating system of small paths (not shown on the map) chiefly used by people coming to service. There are of course 796 regular Sunday services, but these are not very well attended. More important are the special festivals observed on certain dates of the Ethiopian month, which may fall on any day of the week. In this area the monthly festivals universally observed, on which no work could be done, were those of St. Michael, St. Mary, and St. George, on the 12th, 21st, and 23rd respectively, as well as "Bal Wold," a commemoration of the Birth of Christ, on the 29th of each month. Of still greater significance in the life of the people are the annual festivals, falling on the same day of the month as the monthly ones but in certain months only. On these annual festivals nearly the whole population makes its way to the churches dedicated to the particular saint [783] commemorated. Often they will visit the local *tebel* or Holy Water and bathe there early in the morning before service. Going on to the church, all remain outside, for there would be no room for such a crowd within the cramped passages of the church itself. In the middle of the morning the *tabot* or ark is brought out and ceremonial dances held before it. Finally, before the service ends, it will be carried three times round the church in procession, attended by magnificent crosses and gaudy umbrellas. These are occasions of great popular excitement and rejoicing, and the congregations are often enormous. The long service over, they break up into gossiping groups, and go back to social lunches in each other's huts.

●771 Enough has been said to show how large a part is played among these people by the Church and its priesthood. The country has indeed been described as priest-ridden, the people as over-dominated or even enslaved by the Church. If so, this servitude, at least in the country, is still a willing and unquestioned one. It is also true to say that without the Church the social structure of this countryside would fall to pieces, and life would lose not only its coherence but nearly all its variety and colour.

346 It was mentioned above that, to meet the needs of an increasing plateau 794 population, several new churches had been founded in recent times in the area covered by the map. Two of these were established by "division" of a 578 church which already existed in the gorge. Each original church had two *tabots* one of which was removed for the new foundation, for no church can exist without a *tabot* or altar-slab, this being the only part of the church which is consecrated. Thus the Mariam of the Tallak Amba plateau was derived from the Mariam half-way down the cliff about a mile to the north-east; and similarly a new Ghiorghis of the plateau, just east of Daloti, from the Ghiorghis in the gorge below. Of these "divisions," both of which took place

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

shortly before the Italian invasion of 1935, the first was accomplished peacefully; but not the second. According to the story told me, the *tabot* of the lower Ghiorghis had been borrowed and carried in solemn procession on the plateau in order to ward off a swarm of locusts which were damaging the crops there. This measure was successful, and the plateau people determined to keep the *tabot* which had proved itself so powerful. The people of the gorge would not agree, and tried to recapture their *tabot*. The plateau party however successfully defended it by force of arms, and later built a little church to house it. It was not unusual to attribute specific powers to *tabots*: for instance, that of Dimbaro Mariam (a little east of the north-east corner of the sheet) used to be carried to war by the emperors, attended by a retinue of priests and scribes, to bring success in battle.

The last church to be founded in these parts was the new St. Gabriel, on a prominent hill-top in the district of Dilila near the south-east corner of the sheet. I came upon it when first following the upper course of the Beressa in December 1946. As I approached the foot of the hill I learnt from passers-by that a new church had been built upon it, and that the foundress herself, a certain great lady from Addis Ababa, was at that moment on the hill. Climbing a rocky track to the top, I saw a cluster of new huts and the still unfinished building of the church. Nearby was a large canvas awning stretched rather clumsily between rough stone walls. Under the awning I found the lady herself, short and stout and genial, sitting on a camp chair; around her, squatting on the ground, was a deferential assembly of local dignitaries, personal retainers and priests. After the fluster caused by my unexpected arrival had died down, I had a talk with the worthy lady who, having just presided at a mid-day meal, now plied me with very welcome refreshment. She had been born and bred in this very place. Having spent most of her life elsewhere, and somehow acquired a certain amount of wealth, she had returned in later life to her place of birth and founded this church only the year before my visit. It met a need, she said, for the area lacked a church, and no other St. Gabriel existed anywhere in the neighbourhood. As it chanced, I had come on the day after St. Gabriel's annual festival (which is the 19th of Tahissa, or, in European style, the 28th of December). She expressed great regret that I had not been present at the festival itself, when big crowds had come from Debra Berhan and from all the surrounding country.

This incident seemed to me interesting as demonstrating the tenacity of the local religious tradition in Ethiopia. After all the upheaval and disruption of Italian occupation and the Second World War, the hold of the ancient Church over the Amhara people seemed unweakened. The Church was able to extend its influence in an area not yet well served as readily as ever. It was still an appropriate act for a pious person to found a new church in a lonely place. Perhaps these things are not surprising, for the Church has been the main support and inspiration of Ethiopian unity since the earliest Christian times. It has always been the focal centre of the national sentiment, the fount of renewed resistance to aggression, the main force, in fact, which has maintained Ethiopia's independence and made of it, as Menelik himself once said, an island of Christianity in the great Islamic sea.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER XV

THE NATIONAL CHURCH & RELIGION OF ABYSSINIA

•171 Few institutions of a religious character could be more picturesque than the National Church of Abyssinia, but when that has been said little more can be advanced in its favour. It has been alleged by a recent visitor to the country that "Ethiopian Christianity is of a kind which Dean Stanley described as hardly capable of going lower without ceasing to be Christianity", and I am not prepared to quarrel with the statement.

Yet, such as it is, it is exceedingly rich and powerful and its influence is still very strong to-day; and great as is the part played by various forms of religious belief in shaping the destinies of many countries in the world, few I think can have affected a country's history as much as in Abyssinia.

There is little doubt but that that country owes the maintenance of its position of independence for so long largely to the fact that, one of the first of the peoples of Africa to embrace Christianity, it has maintained a form of that faith for nearly 1600 years. This fact added to the impregnable nature of its mountain fastnesses, and the warlike character of its people,-has caused the country to be regarded somewhat differently to the bulk of the nations of Africa, and has contributed to its escape up till now from the fate of partition amongst European powers which has overtaken the rest of the continent.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

That the whole fabric of the original tenets of their Church is overlaid with a mass of gross superstition is unfortunately only too obvious; it is due, doubtless, to the vicissitudes through which the Church has passed, to the perpetual and invincible ignorance of the bulk of the priesthood, and to the composite nature of their Church tradition, consisting, as it does, of a pagan, Egyptian, Jewish, Coptic, and Latin evolution. That elements of all these forms of worship enter into their present-day religion cannot be doubted by those who have witnessed their ceremonies, examined their ecclesiastical robes and furniture, and studied their customs. And, indeed, it would be strange if it were not so, for this ancient people are themselves a combination of a number of different strains and races, drawn from both Asia and Africa, combining to form not only an interesting historical study, but a curious and baffling modern problem in the world of to-day, into which they have only comparatively recently emerged.

Originally pagan of course, the country adopted Judaism nearly 1000 B.C., and about the time of the birth of Christ the mythological beliefs of Greece appear to have been introduced, without, however, effecting the supersession of the Jewish faith.

It was in the early part of the fourth century (A.D. 330 is the generally accepted date) that the conversion of Ethiopia from Judaism to Christianity is reported to have been effected as the result of the visit to that country of some shipwrecked Christians. Being successful in converting the sovereign and the Court, they aspired to extend their sway over the whole country, and accordingly one of them returned to Egypt, obtained the assistance of the Alexandrian authorities, was

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

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nominated Bishop of Ethiopia, and induced the Abyssinian people to join the Alexandrian or Coptic branch of the Church.

According to Abyssinian tradition the first introduction of Christianity took place at an even earlier date. It is alleged that Matthew the Evangelist visited the northern districts of the country about A.D. 30 and attempted the conversion of the people; apparently, however, he made only few converts to the new doctrines and was eventually turned out. A further slight extension of the new faith is claimed to have been made a few years later; indeed Alvarez, writing in 1527, refers to Ethiopian books and traditions which describe Candace as the first Christian queen of the country and as having had her principal residence near Axum. Her conversion was alleged to have been due to a eunuch in her service who was sent by her to Jerusalem, and there met with Philip and was baptized by him as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles. This would be about A.D. 34, or some three hundred years before the generally accepted date.

I do not propose to enter into the merits of this latter claim, nor even into the claim that Abyssinia became christianized by divine inspiration during Christ's childhood without the aid of any missionaries (!); nor is it my purpose to trace the history of the Church from its inception up to now. Suffice it to say that it has passed through many vicissitudes, and that for hundreds of years the Abyssinians had to fight for the maintenance of their religion against external and internal foes. The main attacks were the great Moslem invasion of 1528 which swept over the country and all but engulfed it, followed by the invasion of the pagan

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

Galla, which came very near to being successful and which would in that event have resulted in blotting out Christianity in the country. And finally, the third attack on their particular form of Christianity, though not on Christianity itself, came from the Portuguese missionaries, who, arriving towards the middle of the sixteenth century, produced a good deal of effect on the religious life of the country. They actually succeeded in inducing one king to renounce the Alexandrian doctrine, to profess publicly his belief in Roman Catholicism, and to proclaim this faith as the national religion. But the success was short-lived; public opinion, bitterly outraged, would not tolerate the supersession of the old doctrines, and the king was compelled to restore the national faith by public proclamation. His son, who succeeded him shortly afterwards, completed the work by expelling the Jesuits.

In spite of these attacks the Abyssinians retain their faith unaltered to this day, though owing to their later conquests their rule extends over a larger number of non-Christian subjects than there are Abyssinians. The Somals, Danakil, and some of the Galla (in Harrar and Djimma) are Moslems; the Shankala and other Galla (in Boran, Arussi and Walega) are pagan, the latter believing in a form of supreme deity they call *Wak* or *Wakwe*, and a number of minor spirits or *Sarosh*. The Falasha are Jews.

Many of the Galla (in Wollo for example) were converted to Christianity by the Emperor Menelik, but his methods hardly seem to have been such as to inspire the converts with any profound or reasoned conviction of the merits of that faith. When he conquered a Galla country the inhabitants had to become Christians lest

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

worse should befall them, and the process was rapid and simple—immersion in the nearest stream, circumcision, and generally the tying of a piece of blue silk cord round the neck.

The form of Christianity professed by Abyssinia is the monophysite, which was condemned as a "heresy" by the Council of Chalcedon in 450. This doctrine recognizes only one nature in Christ, against the view which has maintained itself as orthodox that the divine and human natures co-existed in him. But in spite of the thunders of Chalcedon the Abyssinians have held to their doctrine, although controversies as to a single, dual, and even threefold nature have raged in the country right up to the time of Theodore, who possessed decided views on the subject, and exercised drastic methods in giving effect to them.

The Church is to all intents and purposes an independent one, its only link with the Coptic Church in Egypt, on which it is nominally dependent, being the appointment by Alexandria of the Archbishop, or Abouna: he is an Egyptian, and once appointed he is supposed never to leave the country.

Tradition relates that the appointment of a foreign Abouna was laid down as a cardinal principle by the great Abyssinian ecclesiastic and national saint, Tekla Haimanot, in the thirteenth century in order to maintain connection between Abyssinia and the outside world, and to avoid internal rivalry in the nomination to the headship of the Church. Be that as it may, the Abyssinians attach considerable importance to their connection with the Alexandrian Church through their Abouna; this may be gauged from the fact that the Treaty between England, Egypt, and Abyssinia, made

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER XVI

THE NATIONAL CHURCH AND RELIGION OF ABYSSINIA (*continued*)

346 BRUCE wrote that there was no country in the world
•771 where there were so many churches, and I have seen an estimate which I should think was well under the mark —of 3000 for Shoa, 1100 for Gojam, and 2600 for the districts of Gondar and Axum. For even small villages have two or three churches each, and it is a popular axiom that he who has erected a church has atoned for every sin. And to each of this legion of churches are attached many priests who live in remarkably simple—to put it mildly—accommodation in the precincts.

346 The buildings themselves are quite unpretentious, being small circular erections built of the stone that abounds everywhere in the country, covered with pointed thatched roofs surmounted by a cross on the points of which ostrich eggs are generally impaled. The Abyssinians show a considerable measure of reverence
[788] to their churches, outwardly at all event. I have frequently seen men of importance stop their retinue when passing the church, dismount, and kiss the earth.

The principal modern church in Abyssinia is that of St. George, the patron saint of Abyssinia, at Addis Ababa. It is a stone-built edifice, octagonal in shape, surmounted by a large central dome; it is of no particular style of architecture, though it approximates to the Greek, and externally it is not very pleasing to

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

796 "Then they blessed a lot of long grass they had, and
527 gave it to us and we distributed it amongst the staff. Every servant there tied his piece of grass tightly round his head and wore it all day—they all seemed highly delighted."

• 111 But in spite of their strict observance of feasts and their pride in the fact of their being Christians, I cannot really think that they could in any sense of the word be described as a really religious people, their lives being in no way a reflection of their theoretical beliefs. Their religion is overlaid with a thick layer of superstition, some of which is merely curious, but some apt to have dangerous results. Thus they wear their charms and amulets suspended round their necks by a silken cord (never leather, which is used by Mohammedans for this purpose); they have a strong belief in the power of the "evil eye"; they will not look at a person eating, they will not start on journeys on certain days, and they believe that certain houses are inhabited by evil spirits and will not live in them.

781 We came across some curious examples of this latter superstition. Two important Abyssinian nobles had built in their grounds quite nice stone and mortar houses in the European style. These houses were lying empty, and their owners were living in native built *tukuls*, for the reason that their tame priests had told them that evil would befall them if they moved into their new residences.

Another and more serious example was that of a chief who was very ill with pneumonia. He was just getting over it when in the middle of one night his priest told him that he had had a vision to the effect that if he

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rĭst*.

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination:

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Ṣhafṣhefē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibāṭchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many purposes—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[43]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax
18 and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

633 *Gondar Today*

177 A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was
648 made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

633 After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953
[874] with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college.
[648] The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utilities as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty
[162] thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

633 With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a
871 modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aquāquām*
178 and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

633 Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine
771 church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen.
793 The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one 633 711 young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found 993 in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provin- 633 cial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle 635 problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their 186 city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national govern- 633 ment, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the 619 symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted 633 that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given 554 Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his succes- (64) sors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland 643 of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. 571 The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

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world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[1]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

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• 771 776 805 Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci for the organization of time and space.

*565 805 In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes. Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *hābashā qaṭaro* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amhara peasant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

*565 805 829 Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Amhara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

*565 538 829 When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

*565 805 776 [787] With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year. A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*) [576] representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

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*565 157 823 referents are relative: a man living at 7,500 feet may be considered *qolaññā* by one living at 10,000 and *dēgaññā* by one living at 6,000 feet.

*565 186 619 The broadest membership circle that the Amhara peasant normally thinks in terms of is that of the ethnic group consisting of all Amhara.[10] The ethnic self-conception of the Amhara is one which stresses certain physical and cultural characteristics, thanks to which he regards himself as superior to all non-Abyssinian groups in Ethiopia as well as to all non-Ethiopian nationals. With regard to race, the Amhara consider themselves distinctly more handsome than both the white man and the Negro man, to both of whom they apply derisive epithets. Their cultural identity is defined chiefly with respect to religion and language.

186 To all Amhara except a small minority who are Muslim, the name of their ethnic group is synonymous with "Christian." The term signifies Ethiopian Orthodox Christian; for the Amhara peasant, "Catholic" and "Protestant" are equivalent to "Muslim" and "pagan" as terms designating so many kinds of heathens. And being an Ethiopian Christian is to the Amhara a mark of superiority in at least two respects: it means belonging to a chosen people, heirs to the Jews and sole bearers of authentic Christianity; and it means being an adept in praying and fasting, which to the Amhara are peculiarly Abyssinian arts. This orientation has motivated a certain amount of exclusionism vis-à-vis non-Christian Ethiopians. The latter are disdained because they are not Christian, while at the same time the particularistic cast of Abyssinian Christianity has made the Amhara somewhat reluctant to proselytize and admit non-Abyssinians to the fold. A similar exclusiveness colors the Amhara's sentiments about his language. Knowledge of Amharic is considered another index of superiority, and the Amhara look down on Ethiopians who do not speak Amharic or who speak it with an accent.

The Amhara claim superiority over other Ethiopian peoples in connection with certain other aspects of culture besides religion and language, although most Amhara peasants have very little knowledge about the other ethnic groups in the country.[11] Occupational hunters and pastoral nomads are ridiculed, for example, because of their ignorance of the arts of farming and of eating *ĭnjarā*. Vis-à-vis Europeans, on the other hand, the Amhara's self-image tends to stress qualities of bravery and toughness. Insofar as he has had contact with foreigners, the Amhara has become self-conscious about his rugged way of life—his hot foods, endurance on trips, courage in revenge, and virile longevity—and looks down on the softness of the European.

Being an Amhara is thus belonging to a superior category of human beings. This is not simple ethnocentrism; it reflects rather a basically aristocratic orientation that is repeated within the Amhara fold. It is not only members of other ethnic and religious groups who are considered inferior,

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565* 602 571 181 183 [561]

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

565* 593 577 181 183

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

565* 577 779 183 181 581 586 639

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

565* 779 577 183 181

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

565* 121 82 771

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 121 82 • 771 ment on the subject, by following some of the suggestions advanced by Robert Redfield for the comparison of world views.[15]

"What does a people confront as it looks out on the world?" Redfield asks. After proposing a triangle of general objects confronted by all peoples—man, nature, and God—he goes on to suggest two specific questions: (1) Are these objects viewed as parts of a common matrix, each infusing the other, or are they viewed as separate and distinct entities? (2) Are they viewed as equally significant, or is special attention paid to one at the expense of the others?

As a point of departure for discussing the world view of the Amhara peasant as a whole, we may consider Redfield's characterization of the "primitive world view." In his account of a generalized primitive world view, Redfield posits that man, nature, and God are perceived as parts of an indissoluble unity, lacking really distinct identities. In the primitive outlook nature is personalized; the supernatural infuses the natural; and man's actions and traits resemble those of the deities. If this is so, then one may say that the Amhara peasant has passed beyond this primitive conception in the direction of differentiating man, nature, and God; but he has not proceeded very far. His God is conceived as a transcendental, self-sufficient Being, abstracted from particular earthly manifestations, and dwelling only at the crown of heaven. He sees nature as having a character and imposing demands of its own, not as a bearer of divine and human properties. He sees man as lacking the powers and virtues of divine beings and at the same time different in kind and higher in status than anything which exists in nature. Yet while these three objects are endowed with distinct identities and autonomous natures, they are conceived as closely and continuously interdependent. Much of what takes place in nature, such as a flood or a bad harvest, is attributed to divine agency, and the character of certain natural objects, like groves of trees and pools of water, is colored by associations with the supernatural. In human affairs, supernatural beings of various sorts are constantly active, and in the case of the *tābot*, the holy ark, a divine object has been thoroughly personalized. Man's life, moreover, is seen as intimately bound up with the vicissitudes of nature, and a personal relationship subsists between man and his friends and enemies in the animal world. In short, the Amhara looks on man, nature, and God as *separate but closely interconnected entities.*

[181] While each of these three entities is an object of great significance to the Amhara peasant, moreover, it may be said that man is regarded as the most significant of the three; and in particular, the problem of *human aggression* may be identified as the dominant theme in the Amhara peasant's outlook on life.

Nature, to the Amhara peasant, presents no outstanding challenge, no perplexing problem, no compelling attraction. Nature is to be adjusted to carefully and quietly. God and other supernatural beings become crucial objects

in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [791]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shillalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 [183]

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So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indication of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

Religion.—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "religion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether. Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer dependent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of the various missions in Ethiopia.* In recent years a third alternative has fired

* In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the imagination of some other students: attempting to reform the Orthodox Church from within. This has been done within the framework of the Orthodox Students Association, which will be discussed further in chapter vii.

Science.—Of all the aspects of Western culture to which they have been exposed, Ethiopia's students have been most receptive to the teachings of natural science. They tend to regard it as the most important single benefit which Ethiopia can gain from Western civilization. After religion, morals, and manners, "science" is the response students give most often to the question: "What specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

TABLE 8

EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS OBSERVE TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Practice	Secondary School (per cent)	College (per cent)
Follow the fasts:		
All the time	38	16
Most of the time	26	23
Sometimes	27	24
Not at all	9	37
Go to church (mosque):		
More than once a week	9	2
Once a week	59	40
Less than once a week	25	36
Not at all	7	22
Bow to church (mosque):		
Always	28	9
Some/most of the time	50	38
Not at all	22	53
Pray:		
Twice or more daily	64	40
Once a day	22	23
Once or twice a week	6	14
Once or twice a month	5	10
Not at all	3	13
Number	(485)	(195)

Disagreement on such questions as the nature of solar eclipses, the descent of man, and the etiology of disease is common between the modern adolescents and their own parents. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the scientific imagination has yet displaced traditional thought patterns in the minds of Ethiopian students, or that scientific beliefs have fully replaced

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 century, who instituted a number of monthly holidays and prescribed new
17 liturgical texts; to Menelik, who introduced vaccination and the eucalyptus
tree in the twentieth century. For more than a century now kings and em-
[461] perors have attempted to combat the traditional Abyssinian repugnance for manual labor by themselves engaging in arduous physical work on numerous occasions.[11] Haile Selassie has followed a pattern with abundant precedents in introducing the many changes which have characterized his reign.[12]

As object of Abyssinia's highest esteem, symbol of its most cherished values, possessor of supreme wealth and power, and author of new norms, the emperor of Ethiopia thus qualifies as an elite in the more technical, sociological sense of the word as well as in its original sense of "being chosen."[13] Indeed, if more extreme interpretations of the emperor's significance are to be credited, he might even be viewed as the fountainhead of high status for all other elites. Thus Bruce, in a famous passage, declares:

> The Kings of Abyssinia are above all laws. They are supreme in all causes, ecclesiastical and civil; the land and persons of all their subjects are equally their property and every inhabitant of the kingdom is born their slave; *if he bears a higher rank it is by the king's gift; for his nearest relations are accounted nothing better.* [Italics mine.][14]

Such an interpretation, however, is more ideological than analytic. Throughout Ethiopian history one can discern definite limits to royal authority, and bases of elite status other than imperial favor.

121 It is true, as Margery Perham ably sets forth, that a primitive state of tech-
643 nology and severe geographical obstacles prevented the realization of imperial
17 power to the degree that the royal ideology would have permitted.[15] Yet this failure of the monarchy "to build up any kind of administrative framework through which to exercise the absolute powers with which, by tradition and consent, it was endowed" was not simply a matter of wanting techniques. It also reflected the importance of ultimate values other than that of anointed royalty in Abyssinian culture.

121 The primary sociological limit to imperial authority was the commitment
643 of the Abyssinian people to the tradition of their church. Religious conversion
17 was one change which, at least in the period of Amhara hegemony, could no
• 771 longer be tolerated. Za Dengel (1603–4) and Susneyos (1607–32) were brought down because of their forthright conversion to Catholicism, and the overthrow of Lĭjj Iyāsu in 1917 was legitimated on the alleged grounds that he had become a practicing Muslim. The decline in power of Tēwodros II (1855–68) was due in no small measure to the fact that his cavalier policy toward the clergy resulted in his being branded an enemy of the church.

121 A second limit on imperial authority lay in the perennial tendency of cer-
643 tain regional families to become endowed with an aura of legitimacy in their
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the Amharic phrase *ya-ḳantu weddāsē zaman*—"the era of futile flattery."

For, whatever other aspects of modern culture they have identified with, the locals and returnees are seized with the promise of its first principle: dynamism.[82] Should they join forces, among themselves and with each other, they might create the effective intelligentsia which is indispensable for realizing this dynamism in action. They would play complementary, and equally necessary, parts; the locals contributing their greater drive and closeness to traditional society, the returnees their broader perspective and skepticism toward simplistic answers and total reforms.

There are numerous obstacles to such a progressive development. Some of them represent the persistence among the intellectuals of a number of traditional pan-Abyssinian characteristics which inhibit both the exercise of creative leadership and the capacity for solidary action. The traditional context of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters which follow. The most conspicuous obstacle, however, has been the manner in which the Ethiopian government has sought to integrate the intellectuals in the social system. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Role of the Government

In the hierarchy of values which sustained the traditional Abyssinian social order, that of the transcendental religious orientation represented by the Orthodox Church may be said to have held the paramount position. This is the sense in which, as has so often been remarked, religion has been Abyssinia's only truly unifying factor throughout the centuries. Religious charisma transferred from foreign sanctuaries—the mythical Ark of the Covenant brought from Jerusalem and the archbishop periodically imported from Egypt—provided the ultimate source of legitimacy in the society, upholding the authority of a sacred Christian monarch, church-defending warlords, and a numerous and functionally differentiated clergy. It so penetrated the social system that the basic unit of Abyssinian civil life was in fact a religious one, the parish.

In retrospect it would seem that the most profound aspect of Haile Selassie's accomplishment has been to dislodge the transcendental religious value from highest place and to replace it with the system-integrative value of loyalty to the emperor.[83] His mission has been above all a secularizing one. To accomplish it he has had greatly to increase his political and economic resources; but insofar as his regime has been accepted, and not based exclusively on sheer power—which to some extent is certainly the case—the paramount value in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie has become loyalty to the emperor as a symbol of the whole society. The autonomous significance of the church has been reduced; its extra-Ethiopian source of charisma has been cut off, and its func-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the 181
Crown. 178
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The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental 178
religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with 181
the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the 643
chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals 642
of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; 631
and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance 178
to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and 181
prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but inte- 565
grative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pur- 085]
sued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, 178
a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient 181
technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor 571
and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard 871
of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relation- 178
ship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever 643
advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his 571
personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal 871
solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

instance, as contrasted with sentiments of mutuality and solidarity; in the second, as contrasted with a condition of numerous social obligations and constraints; in the third, as contrasted with anonymity and conformity. In so doing our attention will necessarily be directed to disparate orders of phenomena. The empirical referent of these three concepts of individualism will be studied as follows: 121* 181

(1) *Egoism.*—The degree of individualistic disposition among the Amhara will be examined in terms of two measures: the extent to which individuals are attached to collective symbols and interests, and the extent to which interpersonal relations take non-solidaristic forms.

(2) *Independence.*—The degree of individualistic social organization will be examined with reference to the different institutional foci of Amhara life, and measured by the extent to which role definitions are permissive rather than prescriptive; the possibility of voluntary as opposed to compulsory associations; and the possibilities for the protection of individual rights.

(3) *Individuality.*—The degree of individuality will be measured by the extent to which originality and heroic excellence are valued in the media of self-development and self-expression customary in Amhara culture.

EGOISM VERSUS SOLIDARISM

Self and Community

121* 181 619 186

To what extent are the Amhara bound to one another by a sense of community, and to what extent are their actions guided by a sense of identification with collective symbols and needs? One conspicuous area of such commitment lies in the realm of religious affiliation. The Amhara manifest a strong sense of solidarity with their coreligionists over against all those who do not wear a *mätab* and who have not been baptized. They are deeply attached to the several symbols of the church—the church building itself, the compound in which it is enclosed, the holy ark, and all representatives of ecclesiastical authority—and react to violations of the dignity and purity of their religious symbols as to a personal affront. On certain ceremonial occasions they march in procession around the church shouldering rifles and spears, indicating their determination to defend by force the integrity of their religious objects. In cases where church membership has been channeled along the lines of schismatic orders, the Amhara—particularly the monks—have defended their doctrines faithfully and have at times suffered martyrdom. 121* 181 771 186

With respect to their territorial and linguistic groups, the Amhara seem similarly attached to their collective symbols, if with somewhat less passion than in the religious case. As we have seen, the Amhara has a keen sense of identification with his native locale, or *ägar,* and is readily disposed to defend it against all comers. The expression *yägarē lïjj* ("child of my country" or 121* 181 186 619

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

19. Thus, an eighth-grade student in Manz explained the popularity of the Jimma Agricultural School by saying, "The boys all want to go there because it is run by the Americans, and a school run by Americans means that everything is done right—food and clothes are properly distributed, and so on."
20. Shack, *op. cit.*, p. 417.
21. In response to a question on their attitudes toward the priests, sixty juniors and seniors of Tafari Makonnen Secondary School replied as follows (1959): 40 per cent were unequivocally proclerical; 22 per cent were ambivalent, expressing awareness of both good and bad elements in the clergy; and 18 per cent were primarily anticlerical, calling the priests "incompetent," "opposed to modernization," and "not supported by the people." (The rest were no answers or noncommittal.)
22. Edith Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-scientific Beliefs in Ethiopia," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XLVII, Second-Half (May, 1958), 339–54.
23. Cf. Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (rev. ed.; Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954), chaps. vii and xiv.
24. Cf. chap. iii, p. 89, and note 19.
25. Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-Scientific Beliefs," typescript version, pp. 6–7.
26. A sophisticated expression of this approach to Ethiopian painting has been published by an Ethiopian student in France. Cf. Berhanu Abbaba, "La peinture éthiopienne: point de vue d'un Éthiopien," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, II, No. 1 (1961), 160–65.
27. For a brief account of this historic event cf. Lipsky *et al.*, *Ethiopia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962), pp. 210–12.
28. Edgar Z. Friedenberg, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).
29. *Diagnosis of Our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), chap. iii.

CHAPTER 5: *The Old and New Elites*

1. C. Conti Rossini, "La regalità sacra in Abissinia," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, XXI (1948), 12–31.
2. A. Vasiliev, "Justin I (518–527) and Abyssinia," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXXIII (1933), 67–77; *Justin the First* (Harvard, 1950), pp. 299–302.
3. A. Caquot, "La royauté sacrale en Éthiopie," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 205–19.
4. F. Alvares, *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford (2 vols.; Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961), I, 122.
5. "The Chronicle of the Emperor Zara Yaqob," *Ethiopia Observer*, V, No. 2 (1961), 153.
6. J. Varenbergh, *Studien zur äthiopischen Reichsordnung* (Strassburg, 1916), p. 3.
7. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; Edinburgh, 1790), III, 237.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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"ellel" as shrilly as they do outside church during Coptic services. Exhausted, the powerful woman finally collapsed, and the curtain was quickly drawn to hide her during her recovery.

X 794 796

Several other zar doctors demonstrated their individual "fukkara" activities. But more and more participants grew inattentive, and some began to doze. Lady Salämtew declared the session ended at about 3 A.M. The women bedded down right on the floor or the mud bench, while the men who lived nearby went home, and others rolled up in blankets and skins just outside the house, under the overhanging roof. It was a cold night, usual during cloudless month of Yäkatit.

[513]

The season of the roaming zar spirits had once again been concluded, not to revive in full vigor until after the rainy season half a year later. At the convention much protection had been gained, and old protection reinforced against the many mischievous zars that might plague people in the meantime.

d) Social Asrects of the Zar Cult.

X 794 608

The groups of chronically possessed persons who meet regularly as devotees of the zars, in the "wädaja" (lit. love feast), constitute what are called "aqwädash" (sometimes "aqtächa"), face-to-face societies. Their interpersonal relationships soon become social, much like the mähabbär communal worship society of the church. Both establish bonds which, to the Amhara mind, become "artificial kinship". Not infrequently this leads to the establishment of bonds of actual affinal kinship (as described earlier).

X 794 712

The parallel can also be applied to an understanding of the leadership involved. Much like the mähabbär is led and blessed by the priest-confessor, so the zar society is led and blessed by the

x794 zar doctor, preferably a woman like Woyzero Salamtew. The zar complex,
● 772 to the Amhara mind, represents the shadow side of the visible human
[562] world, making it complete. Hence, just as the Coptic Christian (and also the Muslim) church emphasizes the male-dominated, patriarchal side of society, so does the zar complex represent the obverse, the female-dominated, matriarchal side of society.

x794 562 This is further reinforced by the subordinate socio-psychological position of the Amhara woman. She may not enter the church. Her daily labors are largely limited to routine, manual, monotonous tasks.
[566] Only noblewomen are exempt from this social position of the "commoner" female, and therefore are not found in the zar cult - which therefore has a lower-class connotation in the basically two-class Amhara society.

Socially undistinguished, "commoner" Amhara women who chafe under
[164] their social inferiority, including women of potential talent repressed in their culture, are likely to develop ailments such as melancholia, apathy, catatonic states, migraine, or hysteria. Thus the zar doctor is called in and the patient enters the zar society.

The socio-psychological improvement, even apart from medical
[755] considerations, which the woman experiences as member of a zar - devotee society, is considerable. Once her individual "zar" has been diagnosed, she has acquired an individual "self" which is respected, acknowledged, at first within, and finally even outside the zar society. For the zar society emphasizes individualism, free expression, individual enterprise; as against the outside Amhara world which suppresses it in commoners, especially in the Amhara woman. The business enterprise of the female zar doctor and many devotees has already been described.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 [164] [185] hazardous. Moisture and chill lower the resistance of man and beast to respiratory infections. The weekly fasting schedule is resumed, and the more devout observe the thirty-day fast of the Disciples. In August, finally, the sixteen-day fast in honor of the Assumption of Mary is observed by everyone older than six or seven years.

*565 796 526 On the thirteenth day of that fast occurs the strange holiday of Buhē. Before and during this day, which is marked by the baking of special *dābo* for the shepherds, the countryside crackles with the reports of shepherds' whips. In this season when the humid air lends an explosive sound, the shepherds crack their whips for fun; but older boys and men join in great whipping battles on Buhē,* in which two teams lash each other until the members of one can stand it no more. On the evenings of Buhē, small bonfires are lit all over the countryside, and more *dābo* is eaten and whips cracked.[8] A few days later the fast of the Assumption is over. Young and old look forward to the end of the rains and the festivities that commence with the new year.

*565 These are the days and years of the Amhara peasant. Some other aspects of his life that come to the fore when more analytic perspectives are applied will be discussed in later chapters. But this calendar of activities forms the immediately observable setting for the "inner world" of the Amhara peasantry: those ideas, sentiments, and values which constitute its outlook on life.

THE WORLD OF MEANING

The Natural Universe

*565 • 772 [538] The Amhara peasant is not familiar with most of the cosmological notions found in the Great Tradition of Abyssinian culture, as transmitted through books like *Qalamsis* and *Aksimareos* and the oral traditions of learned churchmen. It is unusual for him to have a precise image of the layers of water, fire, and air beneath the earth, and it is still less likely for him to be familiar with the complicated hierarchy of invisible worlds, watery skies, and seven "real" heavens which are enumerated in the Abyssinian cosmology. He [821] believes that stars influence human affairs, but leaves the possession of astro- [756] logical knowledge to the *dabtarā*. The presence of cultural specialists who know about such matters has relieved him of the burden of dealing with ideas about the cosmos, ideas which are more widely diffused in more homogeneous societies.

The peasant's working conception of the cosmos is thus a very simplified version of that of his Great Tradition, together with certain pagan notions. Like his more learned countrymen, he divides the universe into two main parts: the world, *alam*, consisting of the earth, sun, moon, and stars; and

[178] * This custom is now extinct in many Amhara areas.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

heaven, *samāy*, the abode of supernatural beings and the souls of the dead. 565* The earth is seen as flat, though some believe its shape to be square, others 772 think it is round like a disc, and still others imagine it to extend without limit. [823] That the terrain of Ethiopia is so obviously not flat is explained by reference to the great flood, after which the parts which dried quickly became high- [773] lands (*dēgā*), the parts slow to dry becoming lowlands (*qolā*). The peasant explains the greater heat of the lowlands by saying that they receive less wind [821] than the highlands.

Beneath the earth's surface is an obscure area called *maq*, a depth to which [775] the bodies of evildoers drop after burial. There is also a large subterranean ocean, *weqniyānos*, into which all the rivers and lakes on earth descend. The [823] earth itself is held up, according to some, by a Y-shaped piece of wood; accord- [539] ing to others, by two serpents; still another view is that no support is needed other than the will of God, as the saying indicates:

> Ay, My God! Lord who stretched forth the heavens without a pillar, and the earth without tent-pegs.

The rotation of the sun *above* the earth causes the alternation of night and 565* day. The imagery of this rotation is that of someone going home at night and 821 coming out in the morning. Attitudes toward the sun are quite ambivalent. The sun is appreciated for dispersing the morning chill and for causing seed to germinate, but it is feared as a source of sickness and death.*

The moon is highly regarded, which is probably a vestige of pre-Christian [174] moon worship. At the Ethiopian latitude the moon is functional, for its bright [484] illumination facilitates night travel, especially desirable in the hotter regions. Beyond this, the moon is considered a powerful agent. It is chief of the sky, commander of an army of stars and it is the force which causes crops to grow after the sun has brought forth seedlings.

In the heavenly realm there are two regions located on either side of God's 565* dwelling-place. To the right is an area where good souls repair for an eternity 772 of ease after being judged shortly after the death of their bodies. Known both 775 as the "kingdom of heaven" and "paradise"—terms which refer to quite different spheres in the Orthodox cosmology but are fused in the vulgar mind —it is regarded as a home where food and clothes are plentiful and freely distributed. To the left is the place where wicked souls are taken by the devil to be scorched eternally in the fire of Gehenna, also called *Sī'ol* (again a fusion of concepts which are distinct for the learned). This treatment of the damned is made worse by alternate dippings in icy water, though some believe that the wicked souls get a respite from their tortures on weekends.

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* The TAT's revealed a great dread of the sun; nearly every respondent interpreted one or another [125] of the cards in terms of the sun's dangerousness.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

772 As for the beginning and end of the world, all Amhara believe that the
[184] world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium
[773] arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside
[775] down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

565 The Amhara peasant's view of nature is matter-of-fact. There are a few
82 traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy
[778] places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration
[241] of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.*

[192] The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws
[784] of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and
[241] they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

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[125] * All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge over-
[157] looking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

×794 755 In the zar cult, there is no attempt to win the love of the spirit, or to love him or her in turn; rather it is a game of cajoling, tricking, bribing the patient out of the condition of total submission into one of partial control; and then forever renting one's mortgaged mental health through permanent financial payments. But there is the added recompense of gaining an invisible protector, who, as financial partner, has a permanent interest in the success of the partnership; plus the recompense of the human fellowship.

×794 ●773 776 According to the mythology of the "zar"cult, the "zar" spirits originated in the Biblical Garden of Eden at the same time man was created. They assumed physical form when Eve began to bear children. Eve is believed to have had 30 children. One day, when God the Creator came to visit, and began to count the children, Eve (evidently fearing the evil eye), hid the 15 most beautiful ones. God, being all-knowing, realized this, and became angry. As punishment, He decreed that the 15 hidden children always remain hidden, invisible, night creatures, for all eternity. The present-day zar spirits are believed descended from them. The "zar" spirits are more powerful and more beautiful than man, know remedies for all ailments, but envy their uglier and weaker human brothers and sisters who are "daytime" children of the light. Some "zar" spirits have thus become malevolent, though many can be cajoled and bribed into "forgivveness" (a word much used in the cult ceremony). Others are inclined to be benevolent, and, if their pity is touched, may reveal secret remedies, in dreams or during possession, e.g. to a mother for her sick child.

795 Some dabtärä have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
556 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually [384] made of soot, charcoal, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre- [776] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susneos, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female [567] of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

●773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay themurderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

773 On the way he found an old witch. Interrogating her, St. Susnayos
789 learned that Wersalya had gone into a garden. Finally, he found the demon sitting under a tree. He speared and mortally wounded her. Before expiring she promised never to afflict anyone who carried the inscribed name of Saint Susnayos.

The effectiveness of the amulet lies therefore in reminding the female demon of her promise to Susnayos.

789 Other common designs include angels with fiery swords (sometimes seen also incised upon wooden church doors); the cross over sun and moon; and the evil eye, sometimes oval, sometimes in profile, but often round with a red iris (symbolizing the magic drinking of blood).

A typical formula against the demon of epilepsy, "barya", reads as follows:

> "You (actually "he", polite), Barya, who steals the heart of man (i.e. renders insane),
> who darkens the eye,
> who comes as shadow by nighttime,
> I put a spell on you, and curse you by ...(name of saint or angel)."

776 There are three common categories in the cosmology of demon
753 diseases treated by amulets:
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(1) General evil-eye disease, referred to generically as "buda" - particularly in cases of puzzling functional and mental ailments - or identified and diagnosed by the name of a demon - particularly in fevers and paralysis.

(2) The demons of epilepsy, "Barya".

(3) Gynecological ailments, ascribed to specific female demons.

Amulets are collectively referred to as "ketab" (lit. writings, in Geez).

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rist*.

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[87] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination:

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Aṭdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Ḉhaḉhefā	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asugadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many purposes—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Beneath the earth's surface is an obscure area called *maq*, a depth to which [775] the bodies of evildoers drop after burial. There is also a large subterranean [823] ocean, *weqniyānos*, into which all the rivers and lakes on earth descend. The earth itself is held up, according to some, by a Y-shaped piece of wood; accord- [539] ing to others, by two serpents; still another view is that no support is needed other than the will of God, as the saying indicates:

> Ay, My God! Lord who stretched forth the heavens without a pillar, and the earth without tent-pegs.

The rotation of the sun *above* the earth causes the alternation of night and 565* day. The imagery of this rotation is that of someone going home at night and 821 coming out in the morning. Attitudes toward the sun are quite ambivalent. The sun is appreciated for dispersing the morning chill and for causing seed to germinate, but it is feared as a source of sickness and death.*

The moon is highly regarded, which is probably a vestige of pre-Christian [174] moon worship. At the Ethiopian latitude the moon is functional, for its bright [484] illumination facilitates night travel, especially desirable in the hotter regions. Beyond this, the moon is considered a powerful agent. It is chief of the sky, commander of an army of stars and it is the force which causes crops to grow after the sun has brought forth seedlings.

In the heavenly realm there are two regions located on either side of God's 565* dwelling-place. To the right is an area where good souls repair for an eternity 772 of ease after being judged shortly after the death of their bodies. Known both 775 as the "kingdom of heaven" and "paradise"—terms which refer to quite different spheres in the Orthodox cosmology but are fused in the vulgar mind —it is regarded as a home where food and clothes are plentiful and freely distributed. To the left is the place where wicked souls are taken by the devil to be scorched eternally in the fire of Gehenna, also called *Sī'ol* (again a fusion of concepts which are distinct for the learned). This treatment of the damned is made worse by alternate dippings in icy water, though some believe that the wicked souls get a respite from their tortures on weekends.

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[184] world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium
[773] arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside
[775] down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

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82 traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy
[778] places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration
[241] of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.*

[192] The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws
[184] of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and
[241] they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

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[125] [157] * All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge overlooking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution
789 of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of
261 eating something or presenting food to someone.[16] It is a theme conspicuous
173 in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85). According to *The Book of the*
[539] *Riches of Kings*, Yekuno Amlāk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zāgwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[18]

155 *Oral Sadism*

152 In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the envi-
201 ronment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When
155 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong
152 biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following
726 refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:
[539]

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[18]

155 The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagi-
266 nation. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the
• 773 story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater
[532] of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary*.[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Mary intervened, placing on the empty side for good deeds a goblet of water which Balaya Sab had once given to a sick beggar out of pity; and the Eater of Men was saved. In the pictorial representation of this legend, Balaya Sab is portrayed cutting off pieces of human flesh with a curved knife in the manner in which raw beef is attacked at the Amhara table. 155 266 773

Most Amhara know some sort of tale about a cannibal. The topic is familiar enough that they are able to invent new ones. One boy told me he made up the following story to explain the nature of cannibals to his younger brother: 155 266 538

> Once there was a cannibal. He lived among many people. He had no food in his house; he was poor. But even if he had not been poor, he just liked to eat the flesh of man. In his house was a big hole which he covered with a carpet. He would invite somebody into his house and tell him to sit down on the chair over the hole. When the person sat down and fell into the hole, he would climb down by a ladder and eat him. In this way he ate all the people in his village one by one—about a hundred people. When he had eaten all the people in his village he returned to live in the forest, because there was nobody left to eat.

The cannibal motif appears in more subtle form in the parlor game known as *gabatā*, in which the aim is to accumulate as many pebbles as possible by moving them around a board with six holes on each side. In *gabatā* the active acquisition of pebbles is called "eating" and the passive acquisition is "drinking." Similarly, those who play chess or checkers refer to the process of taking a man as "eating" him. It is notable, moreover, that the Amhara version of the old riddle about how to transport a certain number of incompatible objects across the river in one boat is posed in terms of three human beings and three cannibals. 155 266 524

Oral sadism is further manifest among the Amhara by the nature of their speech. The Amhara are not only loquacious but also tend, both in manner of delivery and in content of conversation, to be biting and intrusive. Backbiting, insulting, arguing, and litigating are among their more characteristic modes of self-expression. 155 521 191

Backbiting and insulting, and the fear of being the victim of such activities, are the focus of much attention in Amhara culture. Concern about the former is expressed in a number of Amharic proverbs: 155 521 578 [539]

> If the mouth lacks work, it will backbite a friend.
>
> If you praise a man once, you will be in trouble if you backbite him later.
>
> If a man is a backbiter, listen for my sake when he talks to you.

Straightforward insults erupt the polite surface of Amhara social relations only under unusually heated circumstances, though it is customary for social superiors to direct a certain amount of abusive banter at their inferiors as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 gratifications are not enjoyed wholly without conflict. In actuality, traits which reflect anxiety about the prospect of oral gratification are no less conspicuous in Amhara culture than the phenomena we have just been discussing.

155 Negative attitudes regarding oral gratification appear, first of all, in the
262 scope and variety of the restrictions placed on eating. From both their Judaic and their Christian traditions the Abyssinians have taken over nearly every restriction on eating available. The chief exception to this is the Judaic injunction against eating blood, which Abyssinian custom permits. But they have retained intact the Semitic ban on unclean animals—those which lack a split hoof, upper teeth, or do not chew the cud. Their dread of pork is so strong that to some extent they feel closer to Muslims, who also avoid pork, than to Western Christians.

155 They have likewise retained and elaborated on the norms concerning fast-
785 ing found in early Christianity. With respect to the number and harshness of the fasts it prescribes, Amhara-Tigre custom is probably the strictest in the world. In the rigor of its fasting laws the Ethiopian Church surpasses its sister religions of Eastern Orthodoxy—the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, and Indian Orthodox Churches. On fasting days no food or drink is to be tasted before early afternoon. Thereafter, no sort of meat, fowl, milk, or eggs may be eaten, which reduces the Amhara's post meridiem diet on fasting days to grains and pulse.

Such fasting days occur on every Wednesday and Friday of the year, except those which come during the eight weeks after Easter. There are, in addition, many special fasts in the course of the year. Some of these, like the month-long fast before Pentecost and the two months prior to Christmas, are observed only by clergy and elders. Others must be observed by everyone, though children are led into them gradually. These universal fasts include the eight weeks before Easter, plus a three-day fast during the week before Lent; two days before Christmas; and sixteen days preceding the festival of the Assumption of Mary in August. Total abstinence is prescribed for a period of forty-eight hours before Easter. All together, the ordinary Amhara is supposed to fast 165 days each year; for the devout person the total approaches 250 days.

155 The taboo on the use of tobacco presents another area in which oral grati-
276 fication is suppressed. Two myths are told to explain this taboo. One is that
773 the tobacco plant originally grew out of the intestines of the heretic Arius.
784 The other is that on the day of the Crucifixion all plants except tobacco withered and died. In any case, smoking is regarded as a grave sin among traditional Amhara, and one who has been suspected of using tobacco is not permitted to kiss the Cross.

121 One could argue that these taboos and fasting customs are simply cultural
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231 [556] ("agäbba") to an important "great man", perhaps to become a "client" in his retinue for protection.

[775] In religious life, the old peasant can arrange for the peace of his soul after death by giving a cow to his Confessor or to the "qēs gabaz" the administrative priest of the parish church, to have masses recited. In criminal [682] law, a murderer in the remote rural areas can still save himself and even prevent a long and bloody feud between families, if he can borrow enough cattle, in addition to his own, to pay "blood-money", in cows, to the kin of the victim, the agreement witnessed by the presence of a "cheqa shum", a judge, or a priest, preferably all three. Thus there are some aspects of the cattle pattern that are reminiscent of a tribal, semi-nomadic, rather than settled territorial social organization. This becomes emphasized during the upland trek in the rainy season.

233 Though entrusted to youngsters, care of cattle is obviously a task requiring responsibility. Cattle is not taken out until one hour after sunrise, about 7 A.M., when the dew has dried. During the hot dry season, cattle rest under umbrella trees and other shade from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., so that the grazing period away from the hamlet is not long. Before dusk, by 6 P.M., they are taken into the hamlet enclosure or corrall, or even into the hut, for hyenas may come early.

The cash value of cattle is low, primarily because of the distance and poor transportation to world markets. [281] The hides, a major export item, are of low cash value because this type is not tanned, merely sundried, and "book-folded" for export.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

that you are heartily sorry that it happened, I do not 796
reckon that you are further liable in the crime of sa- 782
crilege, than if the wine had not been consecrated at all. You are to humble yourself, and sincerely regret that so irreverent an accident happened in your hands, and in your time; but as you did not intend it, and could not prevent it, the consequence of an accident, where inattention is exceedingly culpable, will be imputed to you, and nothing further."

The priest declared to me, with great earnestness, that he never did believe that the elements in the eucharist were converted by consecration into the real body and blood of Christ. He said, however, that he believed this to be the Roman Catholic faith, but it never was his; and that he conceived the bread was bread, and the wine was wine, even after consecration. From this example, which occurred merely accidentally, and was not the fruit of interrogation or curiosity, it appears to me, whatever the Jesuits say, some at least among the Abyssinians do not believe the real presence in the eucharist; but further I am not enough informed to give a positive opinion. To follow this investigation more curiously would have been attended with a considerable degree of danger; and therefore I have stated my only means of knowledge, and leave my readers entirely to the freedom of their own opinion, and to after inquiry and information.

The Abyssinians are not all agreed about the state 764
of souls before the resurrection of the body. The 775
opinion which generally prevails is, that there is no third state: but that, after the example of the thief, the souls of good men enjoy the beatific vision immediately upon the separation from the body. But I must here observe, that their practice and books do both contradict this; for, as often as any person dies, alms are given, and prayers are offered for the souls

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764 of those departed, which would be vain did they be-
lieve they were already in the presence of God, and
● 775 in possession of the greatest bliss possible, wanting nothing to complete it. "Remember," says their liturgy, "O Lord! the souls of thy servants, our father Abba Matthias, and the rest of our saints, Abba Salama, and Abba Jacob." In another place, "Remember, O Lord! the kings of Ethiopia, Abreha, and Atzbeha, Caleb, and Guebra Mascal." And again, "Release, O, Lord! our father Antonius, and Abba Macarius." If this is not directly acknowledging a separate state, it can have no meaning at all.

304 I have already said, that the Agaazi, the predeces-
171 sors of those people that settled in Tigre from the mountains of the Habab, were shepherds adjoining to the Red Sea; that they speak the language Geez, and are the only people in Abyssinia in possession of letters; that these are all circumcised, both men and women. The former term, as applied to men, is commonly known to every one the least acquainted with the Jewish history. The latter is, as far as I know, a rite merely Gentile; although in Africa, at least that part adjoining to Egypt and the Red Sea, it is much more known and more universally practised than the other. This I shall call *excision*, that I may express this uncommon operation by as decent a word as possible. The Falasha likewise submit to both.

These nations, however they agree in their rite, differ in their accounts of the time they received this ceremony, as well as the manner of performing it. The Abyssinians of Tigre say, that they received it from Ishmael's family and his descendants, with whom they were early connected in their trading voyages. They say also, that the queen of Saba, and all the women of that coast, had suffered excision at the usual time of life, before puberty, and before her journey to Je-

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with the saint for whom it has been named, and personalized. The extent to which the ark is regarded as human is shown by the following remark of a peasant who looked at the picture of a church on a TAT card and explained: "When the ark has been given incense, it will be happy. . . . If this church is given a new roof, the ark will be very happy and give *ïnjarä* to the people." 565* 778

The saints and the *tābot* which represent them are the objects of much veneration and prayer. They figure so prominently in the Amhara's outlook that at times they appear to be on a par with *Egziābhēr* himself. Two differences may be noted, however. The saints do not take the initiative in interfering in human affairs, as does *Egziābhēr*, but intervene only when appealed to. Their function, moreover, is that of protecting and healing spirits; it is not their portion to administer the punishments which *Egziābhēr* inflicts on those who disobey the religious laws, though they may mete out punishment to someone who breaks a vow he has made to them. 565* 776 778 782

Malevolent spirits, on the other hand, do intervene in human affairs without being invited. Of the evil spirits, the devil—known as *Diabolos*, *Sayṭān*, or *Agannent*, which are names of different spirits to the learned but counted the same in the peasant's mind—is the most powerful. He is imagined as a dark, Negroid type, the least favored sort of racial stock in Ethiopia. He dwells in deep waters, woods, and caves, and likes to roam about at noon and at midnight, especially near dirty places. Amhara avoid going near a lake or pool known to harbor the devil, for fear of being pulled in and drowned. They likewise stay away from dirty places at noon, for fear that he will make them sick. The devil brings epileptic fits. He tries to push people into fire. He also tries to harm human beings by tempting them to some misdeed—stealing, murder, getting drunk—and then have them suffer the consequences. Finally, when the human soul appears for judgment after death, he strives to gain possession of the soul and put it into the fire. Sometimes he is pictured as chewing the souls he manages to obtain. 565* 776 [829] [823] [828] [775]

Despite his inimical gestures toward the human race, the devil is respected as well as feared, for he has much power. Many peasants pray to him for this reason. In time of sickness some choose *Sayṭān*, rather than (or in addition to] *Giyorgis* or *Māryām*, as the one to whom they pray and make promises. On New Year's Day, Christmas, and Easter, prayers to *Sayṭān* are surreptitiously repeated in many quarters. One of these prayers runs: "My lord, bring me through the year. Guard me. If you keep me this year in peace and bring me through the year, I will give you more." Certain individuals are on especially good terms with the devil. They pray to him often, and he visits them from time to time and does favors for them; they are his "friends." When such a person dies, his son often continues the relationship. 565* 776 782

Another kind of spirit producing ill effects is the *zār*. *Zār* spirits are of 565* 776

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Northeastern Buffalo ("gosha"), fairly small in size, in wet lowlands.

Hartebeest ("tora"), a tall, slimmer antelope with inward-turned horns which the Amhara describes as being big as a zebra, dangerous, but becoming rare.

Wildcats ("demmat"), including the serval cat ("dēro"), hunted for their skins.

Civet cat ("terīn"), of the mongoose family, trapped for its musk gland.

Leopard ("nābber"), whose beautifully spotted skin is an export item.

Colobus monkey ("gurēza"), now one of the protected animals, but still hunted freely in remote jungle areas for its black-and-white coat, sold freely even in the streets of Addis Ababa. From its tail hair the famous "ṭchera" flyswitch is made for the nobles who can afford to pay for it, instead of the horsetail substitute. This coat is also exported.

823 The jungle is regarded by the Amhara as the place of refuge of dangerous bandits, outcasts, and rebels against noble chieftains and kings; also, as the place inhabited by socially inferior ethnic groups; and, spiritually, as the [792] place inhabited by many powerful "zar" spirits (see Part VI, Section 2.). who "ride" leopards and lions and "milk" female elephants.

136 "meset", small white termite which eats wood.

Flying beetles: "enzezza" (onomatopoetic) resembled big bee, eats holes into wooden beams of houses, does not live in colonies. It makes honey which is despised as "wild" by the Amhara, but zar spirits are believed fond of it, especially in the bush. A greenish variety, "tenzizza", the cockchafer, makes no honey, and is eaten by chickens.

[776 237]

Scorpion ("gint"), though mainly a lowland animal, is found also in river valleys on the plateau. It is considered very poisonous especially to cows who swallow it while grazing and are said to die from it. Brown, finger-length, it hides under rocks. Its sting must be "pulled from the wound", in Amhara practice.

[752]

Wild rodents abound in rural areas, and rats which harbor fleas are common along trade routes. They are also a danger to crops, and one of the reasons why threshed grain is stored in the living-hut, in huge, mud-hardened grain bins.

[241 251]

13 The ecological provinces of Ethiopia can be summarized as follows:

(1) Alpine, high-plateau type.

(2) Forests rich in fauna, and mountain savanna.

(3) Desert or near-desert savanna in lowlands, with belts of tropical forest along the rivers.

231 556 Domestication of animals, as mentioned before, is very old in Ethiopia. To this day, the wealth even of long-settled Amhara peasants is judged according to the number of

805 Gregorian, so that, prior to September 11th, the Western 1956 A.D. corresponds to the Abyssinian 1948 A.M., "amätä mehrät" (year of grace). The same year is regarded by the Abyssinian church as 7448 "amäta aläm" (year of Creation); and 1672 "semaëtat amät" (era of martyrs). There is a 4-year cycle of apostles, so that 1954 A.D. (1946 A.M.) was the year of Mark, "zämmänä marqos wängelawi".

796 805 In the annual cycle of religious events, the dates of each holy day are further commemorated by monthly repetition of a shadow-like monor holyday. Christmas is commemorated every month on the 29th, because it falls on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This reminder is utilized also in everyday layman's tamporal affairs, and the agreement to meeti is expressed by individuals as "I shall meet you on Täklä Haymanot", since everyone knows this means the 24th day of the month. The following religious dates are commonly utilized by the laymen for secular purposes:

Table 8: Dates of the Religious Calendar Utilized for Secular Purposes.

796 805 796

1st day of the month	- "Ledäta", birthday of the Virgin Mary.
5th	- "Abbo", or "Gabra Manfas Qeddus". Both important saints, whose actual anniversaries fall in the rainy season.
12th	- "Mikaël", as a reminder of the miracles ascribed to this arch-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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angel. On his actual day, a popular public picnic is held--a major social event.

16th - "Kidanä Mehrät" (Covenant of Mercy). This is a preferred monthly day on which mahabber sodalities like to gather for private group communion.

19th day of the month- "Tahsas Gabriël". Reminder of the miracles ascribed to this archangel.

21st - "Sionä Maryam". Reminder of the annual event of the revelation of Mary after her death.

23rd - "Giyorgis". St. George's day.

24th - "Täklä Haymanot". Abyssinian head of church, now sainted, who re-established the "Solomon Dynasty."

27th - "Medhane Aläm" (Redeemer of the World), i.e. Jesus.

28th - "Emmanuel". Another reference to Jesus.

29th - "Bäala Egziabhär" (Festival of God), or, "Balä Wold", festival of the birth of Jesus, monthly reminder of Christmas.

796 When the floods of the rainy season recede in early September, the yellow daisy carpets the pasture and the tall green grain begins to mature, the new year begins, with the month Mäskäräm. This heralds the first

796 holy day of the year, "Masqal", Feast of the Cross, on the 17th, and all who can prepare new garments. The countryside is freshly washed from 3 months of rains, and the sun is welcomed. It seems as if nature herself is beginning a new year, another annual cycle.

From St. John's Day, the first day of the year, children begin to gather the plentiful wildflowers, and to bring them to kinfolk across brooks which are again [B2W] passable. These bouquets of daisies, "Masqal ababa" i.e. Masqal flower, are considered "engutatash" (lit. take this tribute). This symbolism is linked to the first plant brought by the dove to the ark ofNoah after the floods, which plant is said to have been the flower "engecha"; others say it is because King Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba a pearl of the type "enqwe".

In return, the children expect promises of gifts of new clothing for the Masqal feast. Even adults give "gursha" gifts to each other, of food or other items, and the increasingly generous sunshine and raised level of emotion inclines to generosity. Elders and old women who have turned nun bless every visiting kinsman withthe [788] formula:

> "Blessed be He, (who) from time to time (one year to the next) has let you pass (in good fortune)."

796 The "Masqal" Feast of the Cross, in Abyssinian
776 church tradition, dated back to an early Christian Queen "Beleni" (Helena) who sponsored an expedition to Palestine to seek the true cross of the curcifixion. When she found it, she decided to announce the joyous news to her

796 own people and to the Christians of Constantinople.
[779] Therefore, she ordered that a tall pole be erected, crowned with a burning torch, called "dämmärä". The present procedure re-enacts this traditional tale, for on the afternoon preceding the 17th huge poles are stacked up, parades circle them, and in the evening the stacks are set afire, lighting up the landscape.

In preparation, some days before Masqal, peasants and townsmen go to the bush to cut long sticks, so that they will not have to subsist on cabbage (the
[292] food of poverty). Even the poorest can bring the plentiful yellow "masqal" daisies, tied to the top of the poles. The stacks are formed on public areas, such as a marketplace, in front of the church, etc. Adults and children parade around them at least 3 times, wearing their best new garments and trinkets, This is an occasion for girls to be seen at their prettiest, and for young braves to boast.

Some of the young men form into groups and dance
[535] the "hoya-hoya", refrains of past or future brave deeds. Warriors perform the loyalty jumping-dande shouting "Addis Ababa". Sometimes, when the resinous torches are lit, mock battles develop. Little girls dance rings-around-the-rosy, while little boys may take the occasion to burn scars on their forearms as prodf of courage and to be "strong". Pious elders take a brand from the lit bonfire and rekindle their home hearths, in the hope of

796 food of the feast prepared by the losing side.
526 In the evening "fires of joy" are lit, where the rain-drenched, weary and sore contestants and others can dry out, drink barley beer, and are supposed to forget and forgive the hostilities. Some may still boast of individual feats of heroism, in Amhara warrior style; others will sulk. But generally the day ends in harmony, after the excitement which itself was a welcome break in the monotonous hibernation of the rainy season.

796 The end of the annual cycle coincides with the end of the rainy season. The last 5 days (in leap years 6 days) are added after the end of the last month, and are called "Pagumēn" or "Qwagmē". On the 3rd day the [776] annual festival of St. Raphael, called "geddus Rufāēl", the water saint, takes place. The rain, which still falls [821] heavily that day, is considered "ṭebel" (holy water) and to have the power to dull the poison of snakes so [787] that their bites will not be fatal. Much rain during Pagumēn is taken as an omen that the crops will be good.

796 This day is final examination day for the boys
874 who have attended church school long enough to be promoted to "deacon". They are examined in correct chanting of liturgy and prayers. To be mentally wide awake they often go to the dabtara beforehand, and, for a small gift, obtain the stimulating herb "esa fars" (lit. Persian wood) or drink boiled "astänagär" (lit. the plant that makes to talk), which also helps to overcome stage-fright.

796 The younger children go from hut to hut, chanting:
857 "In the name of Rufael,
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532 The actual church paintings are in oils, and they are the most amazing products of Abyssinian art. They are highly formalized compositions, which is the chief concern of the artist, but accuracy of significant detail, expression and action, is also important. (To the foreigner the scenes and persons portrayed at first look naive and childlike.) Some scenes, if showing continuous developments of the story told, are arranged in strips like American comic strips, with the words spoken by the characters written in Amharic near the mouth of the speaker; names of sacred figures are written in Gees, so that no one can misread the story portrayed.

Among frequent subjects are scenes from the Bible, especially New Testament, portrayed realistically even to teardrops and drops of blood; and the lives of saints. Thus, the Abyssinian saint Takla Haymanot is shown one-legged, for he lost the other on a mission. Biblical characters are portrayed as light or light-brown of skin, and [776] God is shown as a long-bearded Mediterranean-or-European-looking elder. Abyssinians are shown as brown in coloring, other Africans as black with peppercorn hair. One of the most frequent strips is the subject of the voyage of the Queen of Sheba to the court of Solomon, the conception of the prince Menelik I, and his miraculous return after reaching adulthood. This is semi-religious, but acceptable because of the "Solomonic Dynasty" acting as defender of the faith. By extension however, battle scenes showing Abyssinians defeating the Italian invaders in 1896, also "heathen" Shanqalla and Danakil, are occasionally seen and have become common for the tourist trade.

One of the noteworthy symbolisms in these oil paintings is the traditional portrayal of infidels, evil beings, demons, sinners, and torturers of Christian saints - in profile. By contrast, all good Christians are painted full-face. In profile, only one eye is shown, which may be one of the possible explanations - reduction of the power

821 animals and evil spirits give birth. It is called "näber wäldaläch" (lit. the leopard has given birth), or "jeb wäldach", (lit. the hyena has had a litter).

823 Volcanic activity, which occurs not infrequently in these mountains that are of young geological age, is interpreted as a threatened repetition of the Biblical event that swallowed Sodom, and is indeed called "Sodom" (another connotation is "greedy").

Geographical directions are taken either from the Gees, e.g. "me'erab" for west (lit. where the sun sets), and "mesrag" for east; or the location of Abyssinian provinces is used: "Semyen" for north, "Azeb" for wouthwest. South is "däbub" (probably Cushitic).

821 Daytime and nighttime are regarded as two very different phases of the universe, altering radically behavior of natural phenomena, animals, plants, even human behavior. The phrase "the night belongs to the hyena" refers not only to the nightly roaming of that animal, but also to the roaming of evil spirits at night, as well as dangerous strangers and actual bandits. As a consequence, even the hospitable, outgoing householder of the daytime changes to sullen and suspicious behavior if strangers suddenly arrive after dark. When he must leave the hut, he carries a weapon, in the rural areas. Even in Addis Ababa, the official curfew at midnight is little resented by the average Amhara, because of this traditional pattern.

574 576 The period of a week is regarded as a time unit with regard to the primary group and kin visiting. When two members of these groups have not seen each other for more than a week, they greet each other with "endemen sänebätu" (lit. how did you spend the week away).

776 825 The world of the spirits, who also inhabit the universe in large numbers, is believed to be in close relationship with the animal

776 kingdom. The hyena ("jeb") is regarded as acting sometimes as the
825 "horse" of the evil spirit or human sorcerer, sometimes as a werewolf-like creature, when the evil spirit or human sorcerer assumes its form at night, or makes use of its powerful, hypnotic eyes to "draw the
[755] blood" magically from the living victim. The concept of the magical hyena is much used in diagnosis and treatment of mental ailments. It is the most common wild animal, seen and heard at night, and the holes it burrows under fresh human graves are regarded as visible evidence of the character of the hyena. The fear in which the spiritual world is held is symbolized in the hyena; it is whispered about in connection with suspected ethnic craft groups such as the smiths; or shouted out loud in military unison ("yabahalal jebo") in challenge.

825 Aspects of the animal world which cause great "wonderment" among homespun Amhara "shemagalye" philosophers are types of animal behavior that seem so human. "Bird language" is given a variety of popular interpretations (footnote 102). Baboons, which are a constant annoyance and therefore familiar, are wondered about in part because of their human-like social organization headed by "great man" chiefs ("ganare").

But it is a great insult to call a person a "creature of Thursday" (when animals were created, according to the Bible).

186 B. Amhara Ideas about Human Races and Amhara Ethnocentrism.

829 The dualism of the Amhara culture pattern rules also their view of the human races with which they are familiar, and their own

Footnote 102 - Leslau: Popular Interpretations of Bird Sounds in Ethiopia. Journal of American Folklore, 1952, Vol. 65, pp. 361-4.

812 willing to testify against him. Ras Imru ordered that he be made to
[539] vomit, and on the basis of this evidence convicted him on the spot.

While the clever arguer in court, who is acclaimed, may be merely "clever", the truly wise man is conceived as one whose words are few but weighty:

[539] "Man, by what can he be valued?
by his speech can he be valued".

Hence, in the games of growing children, the hazing pattern is gradually replaced by verbal contests, and the winner or "better man" is not necessarily the physically stronger but he who can out-insult and out-argue the other.

However, individualistic non-conformity in ordinary persons is criticized, and regarded as rendering such persons shiftless, unstable and impermanent.

Finally, different regions of Amhara-populated areas are believed to be specialized in specific types of personalities; e.g. the dabtara scribes of Entoto, where the capital of Addis Ababa is located now, have long had the reputation of special cleverness, speaking in riddles which make understanding painful, when they deign to converse at all with ordinary Amhara commoners:

[539] "The wise men of Entoto,
talk just once a year,
(and then) always (bitingly) bitter".

[77] Special skill of hand or mind is generally believed, for good or ill, to come from the world and functions of the spirits.

x 794 755 In the zar cult, there is no attempt to win the love of the spirit, or to love him or her in turn; rather it is a game of cajoling, tricking, bribing the patient out of the condition of total submission into one of partial control; and then forever renting one's mortgaged mental health through permanent financial payments. But there is the added recompense of gaining an invisible protector, who, as financial partner, has a permanent interest in the success of the partnership; plus the recompense of the human fellowship.

x 794 773 776 According to the mythology of the "zar"cult, the "zar" spirits originated in the Biblical Garden of Eden at the same time man was created. They assumed physical form when Eve began to bear children. Eve is believed to have had 30 children. One day, when God the Creator came to visit, and began to count the children, Eve (evidently fearing the evil eye), hid the 15 most beautiful ones. God, being all-knowing, realized this, and became angry. As punishment, He decreed that the 15 hidden children always remain hidden, invisible, night creatures, for all eternity. The present-day zar spirits are believed descended from them. The "zar" spirits are more powerful and more beautiful than man, know remedies for all ailments, but envy their uglier and weaker human brothers and sisters who are "daytime" children of the light. Some "zar" spirits have thus become malevolent, though many can be cajoled and bribed into "forgiveness" (a word much used in the cult ceremony). Others are inclined to be benevolent, and, if their pity is touched, may reveal secret remedies, in dreams or during possession, e.g. to a mother for her sick child.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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There are male "zars" and female ones. The latter are considered more dangerous and more difficult to placate. Usually a "zar" spirit prefers to "possess" a human of the opposite sex, which results in a magical coitus, and causes epilectic seizures or catatonic states. In the latter case, usually a woman being "slept with" by a jealous male "zar", she seems drowsy and "turned within herself", disinterested in the environment, forgetting to eat. In the former case, the magical coitus sends her into orgasms of twisted arms and legs; or sometimes, twirling frenziedly; sometimes moving on all fours, emitting raucous sounds, biting the unwary, while being "ridden like a horse" by the "zar".

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The "zars" of today are regarded as having geographical homelands. In abyssinia their central location is believed to be in the province of Tigre, where they prefer woodland grottoes on the highland plateau, and where, if taken off guard under certain circumstances, they can become temporarily visible. Some zar doctors even narrow this central headquarters to a locality known as "Halawel" near the existing town of Makalle. On occasion the "zar" spirits there are believed to hold dances, even orgies. But most often they live in families, much like human Abyssinians, though on a superhuman level. They can ride elephants, [825] lions, etc, to whom they refer as "farāsey" (lit. my horse), the same term they use to humans whom they "ride" during possession. But they despise the hyena, which is the "horse" of the evil "buda" spirit. The "cattle" of the zar spirits consists of wild gazelles, antelopes - the wild relatives of cattle domesticated by humans. Zar spirits are fond of peppery sauce ("wot") and "enjāra" bread much like Abyssinians. Tree stumps serve them as tables. They like the flowers and green

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woods of the Abyssinian highlands very much, being of lowland desert origin themselves.

They can fly, dive, have hands that are strong as iron, and are wiser than humans. But their social institutions are not much better than man's. Their children must go to school to learn, just like human children. Their social hierachy is much like that of Abyssinia, with kings, chiefs, chamberlains, and a servant class. They have wars among themselves in which they can be killed by other, stronger and shrewder zars. Even their individual personalities may have serious shortcomings: generally a distinction is made between small-statured, evil, ignorant, very dark-skinned zars, and tall, noble, educated, light-skinned zars. The latter resemble their ancestors, while the others have degenerated. The zars are divided into ethnic groups and religions, so that there are Christian, Muslim, Falasha and pagan zars. They are curious about humans of other religions, e.g. a Christian zar may "possess" a human who is Muslim and make him act and dress like a Christian (and vice versa). Diseases, especially functional and mental ailments, emanate from the zars, but so do the remedies.

The superhuman attributes of the "zar" spirits are largely in achievements of material culture, in which the human Amhara is so little developed; in non-material aspects of culture, such as governing society, and in personality, no greatly superior level is visualized.

[164] No human being is considered entirely invulnerable to "zar" possession, not even foreigners. Moreover, "mild possessions" hit every human some time during a lifetime, though this may pass with relatively little notice.

x794 Every zar has an individual name and personality. Thus, one of
•776 the first tasks of the "zar doctor" is to diagnose. This is done in a
755 variety of complex procedures: "Playing along" with the spirit's desires expressed through the mouth of the actions of the possessed; or, in case of intermittent possession, a cult session during which the "zar" is lured to re-possess and re-inhabit the body of the patient, in public, where the zar doctor can observe every phase of the sequence of possession, and thus, on the basis of long experience, detect the peculiarities of the particular "zar" spirits. Once identified, gradual and limited "control" of the particular spirit can then be established, and a "modus vivendi" created.

a) <u>The "Zar" doctor: patients: procedures of healing: basic "zar" personalities.</u>

x794 The work of the "zar" doctor consists of three parts: identifying
755 the spirit who "rides" the patient "like a monkey" (the same metaphor used by drug addicts in Western countries, e.g. in the movie "Man with the Golden Arm"); after this diagnosis follows the "cultivation", negotiation, establishment of friendly relations with the spirit (treatment); finally the establishment of life-long protective cult relationships (prognosis; socio-mental hygiene).

x794 The boundary line between the chronic "zar" patient and the "zar"
756 doctor is regarded as a thin one. Both are referred to as "bala zar" (lit. mastered by the zar). Both are equally "possessed", by one or several spirits, but the healer has turned his weakness into a profession, by learning more and more about the various spirits; the types of patients; how to achieve some control over the situation instead of being controlled by it or even destroyed by it. The doctor

X 794 756 repression and penalty, for no layman can know whether or not it is the spirit who speaks through the doctor in any given situation.

X 794 164 The most frequent types of mental afflictions which the "zar" doctor is called upon to treat are forms of hysteria (mostly in women), catatonic states (also mostly in women), and violent forms of possession including epileptic states (mostly in men). But he also treats some functional ailments, notably rheumatism, which is believed to have been caused by a "lazy zar" who wants his "horse" to stay in one place.

X 794 ●776 753 Though every person is considered a potential "horse" for a zar, certain personality types are considered particularly vulnerable to possession by evil zars: persons with sad, returing, melancholic natures; women who feel unloved and neglected by their husbands and thus offer little resistance to a male "zar lover"; persons who wish to escape, e.g. chronic drunkards.

X 794 753 758 Apathy, leading to catatonic states if not treated, indicates incipient possession by an evil zar. The patient, often a woman, withdraws into a corner, sits there huddled up, refuses to accept food. Until a zar doctor can be persuaded to come and take on the case, family and friends try to give the patient first aid. For, if she were to remain long in this state, it is believed that her "zar" could "ride" her to death. Therefore, relatives and neighbors come quickly, sing to the patient, entertain her, promise her whatever her heart desires, and generally try to create a merry atmosphere. Finally they try to lure the patient into watching them dance, and try to raise the patient playfully, so as to join them. The patient is never left alone until the doctor comes.

X 794 164 753 Psychotic cases among women usually assume a domineering male personality, such as believing themselves to be the ruthless Emperor Theodore, or the bloody Ras Mikael of Tigre. The zar doctor, however, elicits the confession of a "zar", so that he can treat the case.

Hysteria is believed mostly due to possession by female zars, who are more mischievous, silly and irresponsible than evil. If such a female zar possesses a male patient, he will manifest characteristics regarded as feminine, such as silly gaiety, and teasing behavior. If [839] not "awakened" quickly, such a state may become chronic and gradually destroy his masculinity. More common is hysteria among women, in which case the possession manifests itself as reversion to infantile behavior: the patient talks babytalk, skips about like a young goat and shamelessly demands little gifts even from strangers and passers-by. The patient must be humored, given gifts or at least promises, for the zar, speaking through the patient, may say: "If you don't give me this, I will kill my horse" (the patient).

Violent forms of possession may manifest themselves by aggression directed against the patient himself, such as beating himself, hitting the head against the wall, eating dirt, trying to climb the wall, wanting to run out at night to roam with hyenas. In some cases, if accompanied by nosebleed, or "weeping blood", this is diagnosed as "buda" and becomes a case for the dabtara practitioner. In cases of running amok, with aggression directed against others, it may be diagnosed as "ganyen" (djinn) and be treated either by the dabtara, zar doctor, or tanqway sorcerer.

X 794 776 753 The most common form of possession, particularly in women, begins with a kind of incubation. The male zar possessing her is jealous of her human husband, wants her to obtain a divorce and join a zar society

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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cultivating the spirit. If she is already pregnant, the zar may cause a miscarriage; either because he wants his human mate "pure", or to take revenge on the husband for miserly refusal of a chicken or young goat requested by the wife for the "zar" sacrifice - which may cause the zar to take the fetus as his "mäqwädäsha" (lit. love gift).

When a male zar appears to a human female in a dream, he takes the form of a husband visiting his wife, if he is in a benevolent mood; if angry, he takes the form of a black dog (though Ethiopian dogs are reddish) or of a snake. The actual possession, in this relationship is a magical coitus, expressed in the violently sensuous "gurri" dance. Some women possessed by a male zar drape their shamma (toga) in male fashion; some even put on ornaments of oldtime male warriors (lion mane, leopard skin), male jodphurs - all at the request of her male "zar", in which case she is actually "dressing" him.

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A woman who sleeps alone risks being struck by a male zar, and even neighbors sometimes admit having heard a "spirit visitor" at night. When a baby is born deformed, it is regarded as the result of a magical coitus. Male zar spirits avoid menstruating women, and during this period they may not sit on the skin of an animal that has been sacrificed to the zar. Male zar prefer to possess beautiful human females, and add to their beauty; so that some male connoisseurs of female beauty claim that a woman's glowing charms leave her when her protective zar ("weqabi") leaves her. Therefore, there is some ambivalence in the hostility of human husbands to the possession of their wives by male zars; which may contribute to the frequency of such possession. For, at least, the neglected wife is then no longer ignored and may even become the center of attraction.

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Possession of a man by a female zar occurs less often but is much more difficult to treat. Magical coitus in this case may render him impotent with human females. In some cases it manifests itself in nocturnal emissions of semen (wet dreams). It is believed that if a zar doctor (or a male patient) is possessed by a female zar at a young enough age, prior to puberty (which is very rare), he will develop female secondary sex characteristics, such as incipient breasts; some even say menstruation. Only zar doctors feel they have sufficient control over the situation to invite female zars to possess them, for the value of a few protective female zars as revealers of occult secrets is great.

Female zars are regarded as "uneducated" and "undisciplined"; none of them are believed to have "studied in Jerusalem" where many wise male zars are believed to have gone to school. Many female zars therefore never can become protective spirits. At most they can be flattered by special chants, and bribed to remain inactive, i.e. seated on the back of the "horse". More female than male zars are downright evil.

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This is especially true when a female zar possesses a human female. This is most often due to jealousy, and is so diagnosed if a woman suffers a series of miscarriages. For, while male zars are regarded as "striking the shoulder", female zars immediately" strike at the genitals".

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One of the basic relationships with a zar spirit of the opposite sex, the "magical coitus", is solemnized by the zar doctor in a "marriage communion". The possessed is then referred to as "mushärra" (newlywed), and is attended by two "mizä" (best men, like in a human wedding) from among the circle of the society of the possessed, who ever thereafter are in attendance every time another possession occurs,

X 794 so that the patient "does not get hurt" in the violent twirling
776 (much as "mizz" protect a wife against her husband). The zar spirit appreciates these acknowledgements and is thus open to negotiations, especially during the "honeymoon".

Only rarely does a male zar "possess" a male human. In this case it is considered not very difficult to come to terms with him and turn him into a protective spirit, through regular financial sacrifices, special attire, and other physical adjustments. Zar doctors seek out powerful male zars whom they need as protective and guiding spirits in their profession. Powerful warriors who have seemed to have a charmed life are believed under such protection - which makes a male more
[64] masculine. Consistently successful thieves who always seem to elude capture are believed to be under such protection. This is said to frighten even the police (or at least offers a ready alibi).

X 794 A patient under active treatment by a "zar" doctor is called
755 "tamami" (lit. the one being cared for). The first step in the procedure is the diagnosis, i.e. the identification of the specific zar personality that has possessed the patient. This is usually done at night, for the "zar" hide in daytime and roam at night - their element.

When darkness has fallen, the patient is brought to the hut of the zar doctor. Here the zar disciples, mostly women, are assembled, seated quietly, perhaps talking in subdued tones, or spinning cotton thread. Incense is burning, there is a low, rythmic drum beat, occasionally broken by chants accompanied by rythmic handclapping. Member after
X 794 member rises individually, "when the spirit moves her" and begins to
755 perform her "gurri", with slight variations according to her particular
535 zar. The "gurri" is a movement that begins with the shoulders (typical

X 794 765 assessed membership fees in the zar congregation headed by that particular zar doctor. The patient thus becomes a devotee of the zar ("yäzar walaj").

X 794 782 765 776 Demands of the individual zars range from very simple to very complex. If he is a light-colored zar, he may demand the annual sacrifice of a light-colored goat; if dark, of a black goat. Frequently the demand includes personal attire for the possessed, such as certain trinkets, glass bead necklaces, metal hairpins, specific hairstyles - all of them attention-getters. The zar warns that he will come and check on the observance of these demands from time to time, and punish any shortcomings with severe suffering.

Sacrifices, "derka", in which a goat or a chicken is slaughtered, are at least partly consumed by the patient (through whom the zar consumes the donation). Sometimes several sacrifices have to be observed as part of one "säqwäqäqha", to appease weaker zar spirits that linger about the more powerful ones, awaiting a vulnerable moment in which to pounce upon the patient, unless pacified.

Some zars are vegetarian, require ablutions in vegetable water, in which mashed vegetables and chewed "chat" ("qat", a drugplant) have been mixed; others perversely like the bitter vermifuge plant kosso and insist that it be placed in the coffee consumed by the possessed patient; still others have made the lemon or the sycamore their symbol.

More zars are carnivorous. One whose symbol (resembling a totem) is a lion, will demand the sacrifice of a tawny-colored goat, or demand X 794 776 765 825 that one of that color be kept in sight at all times so that he can "look" at it. For zars are very fond of using their sight. The wild animals of the bush are considered the "cattle" of the zar, and some

X794 776 755 [329] specialize in "drinking" magically the milk of the lioness or female elephant, etc. When zars appear in dreams, cats and jackals often represent female zars, snakes male zars. But the animals are merely forms which the zars assume temporarily, while the zar spirits themselves retain their demanding-protective identity permanently.

[756] Some zar doctors are considered far more experienced, clever, or specialized than others, so that stubborn cases are referred to them. One of the most stubborn is the zar of epilepsie, called "barya" (lit. Barya tribesman, hence, slave). This zar is believed to have his home in the Nilotic lowlands below the northwest escarpment, a desert and near-desert area inhabited by the Barya people. There this zar is believed in contact with "ganyen" (djinn), from whom he has acquired his evil character. Prognosis in this case is more limited, and all the zar doctor can do is to negotiate an agreement with "barya" to afflict the patient less frequently. Even the diagnosis is difficult, for the patient often has to be restrained, even tied up, and special herbs and procedures are required.

Another difficult case is the patient possessed by several different zars at the same time, which confuses the diagnosis. In this case, the cleverness, experience and diplomacy of the diagnostician are severly taxed, to unravel the tangle, and treat each zar without insulting and neglecting any of the others. The usual procedure is to appease the most powerful one, e.g. "awolye", first, and enlist him as guardian spirit against the others. A really powerful and arrogant zar doctor can go so far as to attempt to treat the personalities of the minor zars themselves. Thus he may give them a severe talking to

X794 (actually directed at the patient), and "train" the minor zars to do
•776 their individual "gurri" somewhat differently, more "correctly".
735 This "training" may include occasional beating of the "horse" of the zar (the patient).

Another advanced and complicated technique used by highly experienced zar doctors, in certain stubborn cases, is to transfer a stubborn zar from one patient of the zar congregation to a "stronger" member, so that the effect will be more controllable. This transfer is made on the principle of contagion. But a zar doctor is not supposed to inoculate a person with a really evil zar, for that would make him a sorcerer and set both the chief zar doctors and mankind in general against him.

Only in case of such a completely evil zar does the zar doctor attempt complete exorcism, considered a very dangerous form of spiritual surgery. During a somber ceremony, which lacks the gaiety of the usual
[782] zar society, a black hen is killed, the evil zar is lured to feed on the body of the bloody animal, and the cadaver is quickly thrown in the bush, a thicket, or the river. This transfer is called "danqara", is tangential to the zar cult, and more related to "buda" and "tänqway" complexes (described later).

[787] Occasionally an old and experienced zar doctor, especially if a man, is asked to perform divination. If his personal zar happens to be "adept at prophecy", especially if he has been "educated at Jerusalem", the zar doctor may agree to put the question before him.

X794 Seasonal variations are considered very important in treatment pro-
776 cedures, for the zar spirits are regarded to be as much dominated by the
821 climate as are humans. They are dormant or inactive during the 3-month

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rainy season, when they hover in the confinement of their grottoes just as Abyssinians in their huts. Like humans, zar spirits become active soon after the rains, when the "Masqal" feasts approach, the yellow flowers carpet the landscape and the green grain begins to mature. The favorite time for zar spirits to strike is between midnight and about 3 A.M.; but some individualistic spirits specialize in the hour of sunset, and some even midday.

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Belief in the curative powers of the zar doctors is still widespread and strong among the Amhara. Only in the city of Addis Ababa has the present government tried to subdue it, so that devotees have to travel away from the city, for their major reunions. Many men do not like

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to admit their belief in the zar spirits or that they themselves consult zar doctors. This is because of the feminine emphasis of the zar cult. Women are more often possessed, and do not hesitate to admit it; they often seem to look forward to cult membership. Grown men, however, unless afflicted with an ailment as obvious as epilepsy, are ashamed to be seen in a cult group, especially when the cult doctor is a woman. The major exceptions are the brothers of the woman zar doctor, who are often almost as pixilated by inheritance and contact with their mother as the doctor herself; the zar poet and hymn-composer who is usually a man; and the hired drummer.

b. Characteristics and Attributes of Male and Female "Zar" Spirits.

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The organization of the male zar spirits is more complex than that of the female ones. Moreover, several male zar spirits arrogate names to themselves that otherwise are generic: e.g. "Gurša" - usually generic for all male zars; "Neqabe"- usually generic for all protective spirits;

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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"Wadaj" for male zars that specialize in possessing women; "Wuresa" for subordinate zars. Female zars are regarded as "undisciplined" and rarely organize.

The names are often personalizations of characteristics and attributes of the zars. Others are terms of flattery designed to render the zar benevolent; or based on the home region of the zar. In some cases a zar spirit has "ordered" concealment of his real name, so that a new name has had to be abstracted from Amharic, or Geez, or Arabic, or a syncretic mutilation of all three languages. Some zars prefer to be addressed by their "färäs sem" (knighthood name). Some zars, of Galla Muslim or Amharic Christian affiliation, insist that their name indicate their religious and ethnic identification. Sometimes the meaning of the name is lost, or cannot be traced readily because it is in "zar language" - itself largely a mutilation of Amharic, though this is not admitted. Finally, the poet who performs in the zar cult may think up new adjectives to describe the hoped-for benevolence of the zar, whereupon the zar spirit, pleased, adopts the adjective as a byname, or name, decreeing that henceforth he be addressed this way.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Ambara MP5
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Table 12: The Zar Spirits: Their Powers, Social Status, Personalities, Specializations.

Male Zars

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Weqābē (also generic for all protective zar spirits); addressed "bärzäwo Weqābē" - (polite, "by your protection, guiding spirit).	great	high; "educated".	some regard him as originally Galla, But "later educated"	protective	beard; manly beauty so male devotees don't shave.	protects; brings beauty to face of possessed women. Brings "luck". Can predict the future.
Gurēza (lit. colobus monkey), generic name of all male zars; addressed as "mushirra" (lit. bridegroom, Sire).	medium to great	varies with his role.	undefined	mischievous-playful.	monkey	can be turned into a protective spirit, if sufficiently catered to with gifts, and flattery.
Wädaj (lit. lover) also generic for male zars that specialise in possessing women	subordinate to powerful zars.	mostly Muslim		fickle and promiscuous	"ghat" leaf (typically chewed by Muslims)	most common protective Zar of possessed women, who are married or divorced.

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult.	Attributes; Major Concerns Specializations
Wurēza (also Werēza, generic for subordinate zars, those serving as pages to powerful zars or still "students")	little power	low; (but some have potentialities).	often Coptic Christian.	resembles adolescent boys and young-warrior personalities.		immature in development, but getting "educated" and therefore potentially of value as protectors.
Aweliya (from Arabic "waliy" - Saint) (sometimes generic adjective)	great	high	unlimited; regional center at Gondar (town).	tough; can be made protective; generally irascible.	lioness, female elephant, his "cattle".	At present the chief zar possessing Lady Salāmtu, chief zar doctor in Gondar (Begemdir).
Sāyfu Ḉhängär (lit. sword, whipping stick; Arabic). Brother of evil, powerful female zar Rahēlo.	great	High nobility (Commander of Right Guard of zars).	Coptic Christian, friend of Ethiopian Saint Gābre-Mānfās-Qeddus.	"educated at Jerusalem" can be powerfully protective.	the lemon tree; his "gända" (mystic coffee tray symbolises the "tabot" of the church.	Adept at medicines, therefore powerful protector; also as commander over many "wädaj" zars whom he can restrain, and to whom he allocates gifts of incense, etc.
Mälak (lit. angel, from Geez language)	medium	medium	of Geez (Semitic) affiliation, hence Coptic Christian	mystic; has veiled original identity	horse (his old name "Färäs", horse, is tabooed by his own order.	appears in dreams in the shape of a horse.

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in cult	Attributes; Major Concerns Specializations
Abba Yosef	great but vulnerable to Coptic religious appeal	medium	religious Copt; in company of Säyfu Čhängär, hence "educated".	very jealous; purist. Can be made protective, (even restrained through amulet of däbbära, since he is religious Copt)		causes miscarriages in married women out of jealousy for husband and as "purist". Undergoes baptism every Tämqät (Epiphany), blesses the pool of water like bishop.
Adbar (supposed to mean "protect me") in zar language; "guardian" in Galla language)	medium	medium	religious Copt of ancient times. Dwells in shady churchyards.	outdoor spirit but lazy. Educated, but old and inactive. Can become protective.	trees that give shade.	causes rheumatism, to "keep his horse from moving". Requires sheep sacrifice under shady tree consecrated to him.
Rom-Näddad (lit. flame from Rome; also: malaria (fever)	medium	medium	Christian; in company of Säyfu Čhängär.	educated in Jerusalem; when made protective, teaches use of medicinal herbs.	flame, fire, fever.	regarded as having taught mankind the use of fire and cooking, from his own flame on a rock in the Red Sea. Can make fire by striking his forehead with a finger.
Abba Qwaqas	med.	med.	Coptic Christian	when made protective, inspires success in business caravans, mead houses, construction, real estate.		likes to possess women who have masculine tendencies whom he makes wear jodphurs. (Devotees of this zar are often women operators of mead houses).

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Sayd Qadr	med.	med.	Christian	rarely protective; easily angered.	noon	causes indigestion; esp. at midday, when he likes to "descent" into his possessed (this is the hour when food is first taken on "fast days").
Qolē	great	high	believed to be of Galla ethnic origin, lowland jungle region.	terrible when angry; stubborn, does not perform "gurri" easily. When made protective, spirit of "hearth and home"; and aids hunters, by "laming" the game.		neglect causes him to destroy harvests, kill cattle, abort women, bring locusts; at other times he is "lazy zar" causing rheumatism. Requires animal sacrifice under sycamore.
Barya (lit. slave)	sometimes great	low	believed from Nilotic Sudan of "Barya" (negroid) people, whence he has come to wreak vengeance for the enslavement of his people by the Amhara.	evil, very stubborn, never protective; at most agrees to plague the patient less. Sometimes attacks in group, led by their chief "Legewon", like a tornado, who has red eyes.	tornado	causes epilepsy ("hemama barya") especially in men, whom he prefers to possess. The convulsions are his orgies. But he is vulnerable to spellbinding formulae of dabtara.

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "Zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Ganyu (lit. tonsure) addressed as "Dämmänä"-cloud	med.	low	home in bamboo forest of Western escarpment near Metemma (Sudan border); Galla.	Can be made protective spirit.	cloud ("Dämmänä") also bamboo.	feeds on bamboo; only plagues on occasion, especially caravans passing through his district.
Qallechcha	med.	low	Galla Muslim, from Wollega province.	Rarely protective, but has power only in limited regions. When protective, teaches rare medicines and healing.		requires offerings under special trees consecrated to him: is fond of blood esp. of chickens.
Gran Sellatä (lit. left-handed hem).	medium	low	"pagan"	when protective teaches effective healing. Considered wise.		specialist on desires of other zars, expert on their animal sacrifices. Can aid zar doctors in their negotiations with other zars.
Shäh Anbäso (sometimes synonym for Awaliya) (lit. lion)	great	high	Muslim, but with Christian relatives.	rarely protective. Considered negative side of Awaliya zar.	lion	requires tawny goat as sacrifice, to symbolize lion. Was husband of "Rahälo. Commands 98 zars of the "house of the left guard".

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations.
Shäh Ambo (lit. Chief Snake)	med.	med.	Muslim	rarely protective	snake	appears in dreams by his symbol, the snake.
Wäyane	med.	low		evil spirit		inspires rebellion among warriors against chiefs; among feudal lords against king.
Weshenger	med.	low		mischievous, but not evil		likes to cause sudden, violent rain, rendering caravans helpless in the mud.
Kabrä (lit. glory, honored one)	med.	med.	believed to have his home in Tigrä province.	protective spirit for hunters.		hunting
Coomari (lit. the proud, vain, defiant	med.	low	lives in bush	can become protecliive	big male of baboon family-"gämäre"	warlike and leadership qualities.
Ber Alänga (lit. silver whip)	med.	med.		very greedy; rarely protective except for very rich patients.		interested in economic exploitation. The "rich man's zar".

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Name	Power	Social Status of the "Zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special (totemic?) symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major concerns/ Specializations
Azzaj Deba (lit. Commander of the poor)	med.	low	lives in ashes and dirty hovels	very distrustful; will not negotiate unless guarantor ("was") has been posted whom he will plague in case of non-payment. Can become protective.		the "poor man's zar".

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Female Zars

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations.
Rahēlo	very great, Chief female zar.	high	once carried off by the "ganyēn" (djinn) to the Blue Nile, but saved by her brother Sāyfu Çhāngar; however, impregnated in the rape, she gave birth to the evil "zars of the left guard". Christian, yet was married to Muslim Shēh Anbāso.	evil, never becomes protective.	lemon tree (like her brother).	causes miscarriages, preferably in rich or noblewomen, for she is a snob. Amulets and formulae of sāhtāra may have power against her.
Shanqit	mad.	low; servant of Rahelo	Shanqalla (lowland negroid tribe below southwest border). Considered "pagan".	fickle like all female zars, but can become protective.		possesses only ex-slave and very low-class women. If protective, will teach how to be a good hostess, which Shanqit has learned while serving Rahelo.

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specialisations.
Shoṭ̣alay	great	med.	no special affiliation; ranges unlimited.	very evil, never protective.		renders women sterile and barren, even kills babies. Drinks blood magically, causing victim to waste away (like "buda"). Hence zar doctors try to exorcise her completely, by transferring the possession onto a chicken, killing it in the open, throwing it away.
Ayṃ Ṭela (lit. shadow eye. Hence-evil eye).	med.	low	no special affiliation.	evil, never protective, but not very powerful when alone. Parasitic zar, waiting for the spoils left by other zars.		general troublemaker. Tries to prevent patient from entering trance properly, confusing the "diagnosis", confusing other zars when about to reveal their names. Likes to attack men that have been attacked by other zars and thus weakened.

Name	Power	Social Status of the "zar"	Regional, Religious, Ethnic Affiliation of the "zar"	Personality of the "zar"	Special symbol in the cult	Attributes; Major Concerns; Specializations
Sawädayt	little	low	regional in watercourses and lakes and the sea.	regarded as mermaid, half-fish as result of intercourse she had with Gädewon, king of the sea.		occasionally endangers people crossing streams or exposed to drowning.
Teggerta (also called Waddegani)	great	med.	considered universal	evil, but can be cajoled by continuous attention and cultivation. Treated also by amulets of däbtära.		causes apathy, depression, datatonic states, esp. in women, esp. after childbirth. Patient must be coaxed with delicacies, bright ornaments, music and dancing. Also causes psychotic delusions, in either men or women.

X794 JK From this complex array of the plaguing - but often also protective-spirit world, it becomes clear that there is a great deal of significance in the zar cult beyond mere healing of mental ailments; even beyond the organizing of patients into groups of devotees - a kind of group therapy with religious overtones. There is an extension of the acquired "protection" so that some zars become not only protective spirits of individuals, but patron saints of certain social groups in Amhara society, e.g. some specialize in the rich and noble, some in the poor or low-class; some in hunters and warriors; etc. But although religious affiliations are usually identified sharply, there is considerable crossing of the lines in the spirit world so that Coptic Christian spirits may have Muslim names, and even practice religious intermarriage. Another important contribution made by the [812] zar cult is that it orders nature, explains nature to the Amhara mind, yet allows enough flexibility (e.g. in regional variations, and the continuously increasing and decreasing power of individual zars) to admit new information, new revelations, to be fitted into the traditional construct. For example, in the 1930's the dominant zar spirit in Gondar was Šäyfu Čhängär (ascertained by a French expedition); in 1953/1954 it was Aweliya. Since zar spirits can have successful and unsuccessful careers, so can humans; hence, new ideas, even modern ones, can be fitted into the spiritual world.

But the major character of the "zar" complex is that of a healing cult.

X794 756 796 c. <u>The Annual Convention ("amat bal") of the "Zar" Doctors; Voluntary Possession in the "Zar" Cult.</u>

On the 23rd night of the month of Yäkatit, the day before the beginning of the Coptic Christian lent, the "zar" doctors of Gondar hold

x 714 562 Some women with hysterical tendencies revert to infantile behavior. In the zar society they can act this out, while protected and disciplined by the matriarchal zar doctor. Others, with a father-complex, join zar societies headed by male zar doctors. In either case they enjoy recreation and amusement with the "sibling"devotees, with whom they can gossip and enact sibbling roles, such as playfully accusing each other of minor oversights in the service of the zar; (it often takes this form).

Even her life outside the zar society becomes changed. For she is now considered as guided by a protective zar who can extend his protection to other members of the family. Her husband, even if he [804] objects to the zar, often will admit the radiant beauty of her face and her bearing, due to the "weqabi" (protective zar). As a result of her exposure to businesswomen, the menfolk in her family will not shunt her aside when talking business, or legal or kin matters. Some women devotees whose bent is more feminine, become midwives, "experts" in domestic obstetrics and primitive gynecology. There are many ways in which the woman's social status improves. No longer is she a mere hauler of water and hewer of wood. This change usually relieves her mental ailment - and this cure is ascribed to the zar doctor and the zar complex.

x 714 562 776 As a result, a good, protective zar is valuable, and a mother will try to pass it on to her daughter, or her own sibling, or other members of the family. To do this, the zar doctor must be consulted and a special gift given "to the zar". But a person having a protective zar is regarded as having an optional right to pass the zar on through biological inheritance and transfer for seven generations. The "zar"-

possessed mother thus becomes THE representative of her family toward the zar. If someone in the family sickens, her zar is consulted. Her zar has become the guardian of hearth and home. This is all the more significant since the Amhara woman has usually arrived as a stranger in her husband's patrilocal hamlet, when a very young bride.

It is little wonder that many husbands object to their wives' joining a zar society. For the wife thus becomes psychologically more and more independent of the husband's control. For one thing, the wife can absent herself from the hut and even hamlet at almost any time with the excuse that her zar requires her attendance at an all-night worship meeting, lest she suffer another "attack".. Under such circumstances it is impossible to keep a wife under surveillance. More frequently zar-possessed women go to the house of the "balä zar", who may be male, in daytime, to consult him on various matters, and on their return home they extort garments and trinkets from the husband, "for the zar".

Many "jealous" zar spirits, interpreted by the zar doctor, actively intrigue against the husband, against the wife's catering to his wants and comforts, obedience and respect, and teach the wife how to extort the most from him. Moreover, husbands often suspect their wives' behavior under the influence of the possession by the zars. From possession by a spirit-lover to possession by a very human lover, the husbands reason (not without justification in some cases) it is only a small step. If caught, the woman might claim that she had been "under possession", and had mistaken the human lover for her spiritual "wädaj", especially in the darkness of the night. Women have been known to give this excuse brazenly when hauled before the (mänfäs gubaä" (priest in charge of domestic affairs).

X794 756 556 A poor woman will perform work such as serving coffee, sweeping, fetching water and fuel, cooking, baking, brewing beer, and spinning cotton thread in the house of the zar doctor.

X794 675 776 The contract arranged by the zar doctor with the zar spirit for each patient devotes is regarded as having legal validity. In exchange for regular gifts and services the zar spirit promises limited repossession, at regular intervals only, and self-restraint in contagion of other members of the family of the patient at least until after her death. After that event the zar spirit may pass on to the next generation to assure himself continuation of the preferred gifts.

X794 776 Complications are explained away on the grounds that there has been some trifling oversight in payment of dues or in respect; or on the grounds that another, evil, zar has "stolen" the dues in order to make trouble. The zar doctor never admits to error; instead, he restores the contract by instructing the possessed to dance the "gurri" of atonement ("yäbäter gurri") (lit. of the stick) if guilty; or the "yämäshrat gurri", dance of mercy and acquittal, in case of slight [691] oversight. Some zars are as fond of litigation as most Amhara. One zar spirit is nicknamed "wäs aggach" because he always requires a personal guarantor, "wäs", whom he will "possess" in place of the patient in case of default in payments.

X794 694 Even the judicial authorities, the provincial judges among the Amhara, will occasionally recognize zar possession as a valid excuse for violations of the law, or at least as a mitigating circumstance. Failure to appear in court to answer a summons may be forgiven on the grounds of "agorra" (lit. he roared, shrieked, i.e. is under possession) that particular day. The only other equally strong excuse would be that the person summoned had just taken kosso purgative.

X 794 771 The religious and ethnic syncretism of the zar cult is evident from the descriptions given above. This is not too surprising, partly because of the great age of the cult, partly because of the emphasis on "free enterprise" in the zar cult.

X 794 776 The cosmology of the zar spirits themselves indicates considerable crossing of boundary lines. Some live in regions other than their ancestral homes. Some have "married" zar spirits of other religions, or have produced "offspring" of mixed "ethnic ancestry". But despite this crossing, most zar spirits are identified with a specific religious, or ethnic, or religious affiliation.

X 794 776 781 The human patients, however, are not bound to join a zar spirit of their own affiliation. Very often they do not. This is one of the forms of "free experimentation" - though not on purpose, and unconscious in most cases. A mistreated Amhara wife often joins a predominantly Muslim zar society because "possessed by a Muslim zar"; yet continues as a Coptic Christian in ordinary life. Christian Amhara people believe that Muslim girls about the age of puberty very often become zar possessed, not infrequently by a Coptic zar. Some Coptic zars are believed to take special interest in religious festivals, and if they possess a Coptic woman they may "inspire" her to dance in public outside the church on Ṭemqät (Epiphany).

Several of the more powerful, male, Coptic Christian zars are regarded as "educated in Jerusalem". Their demands are more subtle: e.g. in place of the unimaginative staple demand of pagan zars for a chicken sacrifice, Christian "Jerusalem-trained" zars may require the purchase of a coffee cup of a certain specified color, from which the "possessed" alone may drink.

x794 776 781 177 771 Yet despite this hierarchy of spirits, in the static construct of the zar cosmology, the factor of syncretism dominates the dynamic functions. As a result, a Coptic woman possessed by a Muslim zar may wear the colorful print head shawl of the Muslim woman; and even a Falasha woman, living in a semi-isolated Falasha hamlet, may suddenly refuse to shave her head (which is required of wives by Falasha religious law) and will braid it in the fashion of a Coptic Amhara woman without serious ostracism by her kinfolk which would be her punishment otherwise. At the wadaja ceremony, like the one at the convention, Coptic women and doctors chant hymns modelled after Muslim worship, refer to the zar as "prophet", and use Arabic loanwords, to flatter and cajole a Christian zar !

x794 776 771 Finally, religious syncretism in the zar cult is often intertwined with Christian cosmology and hagiology. Thus, Zar Sayd-Qadr, of Muslim origin, has become synonymous with Jesus Christ; The legendary Amhara Christian saint Gäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus is believed to have been an ally and advisor of the powerful Zar Säyfu Čhängär. The archangels Mikaël and Gabriël, who are given feasts on taskar memorials for Coptic Christian departed souls, are regarded in the zar cult as "commander of the right house" and "commander of the left house" of zars (patterned on the human, tradional Abyssinian army). The Christian zar Abba Yosef if believed to join other Copts in bathing in the river to celebrate Ṭemqät (Epiphany). Christian zar spirits remain dormant diring the lenten season.

[798] In view of this, it is perhaps not too surprising that the Coptic Church of Abyssinia remains passive, in effect tolerant by default, toward the zar cult and its social institution.

754 776 E. Evil-Eye Sickness ("Buda") and its Healing.

Even "zar" spirits are considered vulnerable to the evil-eye sickness, the most feared of all ailments. The human patient must either be cured or will die. The evil spirits, collectively named "buda" - though that name is taboo - are never benign, and must be exorcised. Buda possessions are less common than "zar". The most common method of the "evil-eye buda is to "drink the blood" of his victim, magically, so that he will slowly waste away. The buda spirit does this by draining the victim through the magic power of the evil eye.

a) Basic Concepts of "buda".

"Buda" is the personification of the evil eye, a concept that includes the evil spirit itself; the sorcerer, regarded as most commonly a male member of the professional, ethnic ironsmith caste passing on the power of the evil eye from generation to generation; and the "magical hyena" which serves the sorcerer as his favorite "horse", but into which he can also change himself at night. The hyena is, of course, the most typical and most active night-animal, and its habit of digging into fresh graves to consume the corpses, which can be observed almost daily, seems to confirm the connection in the Amhara mind.

[7] The foreign observer is reminded of the similarity to the were-wolf concept of medieval Europe, which was also regarded as personified in some ethnic minority; and the common evil-eye concept still casting fear all over the Middle East. [121]

121. Zisler, R.: Man into Wolf. London 1951
Jaussen, J.A.: Le Mauvais Deil. Revue Biblique, 33, Paris 1924, pp. 396-407

T54 The actual name, "buda", is considered taboo, for it is dangerous
T76 and might attract him, when uttered aloud. Since this spirit is
[78] always male, his name is paraphrased as "the man's eye" ("yäsäw ayn"), "shadow eye" (aynä ṭela); and a victim is paraphrased "the man's victim" ("yäsäw gällabi"). Even the term "smith" is used, sometimes indirectly, for further security. Thus, to accuse someone of sorcery, a security-minded Amhara says pointedly, in his presence: "As for me, I am not the son of a smith".

T54 The first attitude toward strangers is therefore one of caution,
609 lest he be a carrier of "buda". The suspicion is confirmed if the stranger has intelligent eyes, darting eyes, shining eyes, or if he stares curiously without saying much. It is confirmed if he seems skilled manually, for then he may be a "ṭabib" (lit. trained person, technologically wise), hiding the fact that he was born into the ironsmith caste. It is less disturbing if he openly reveals himself as an ironsmith, for then he lives segregated in a hamlet of his own ethnic group, and when contact must be established for trade (purchase of iron tools and pottery), certain "precautions" against being struck by the evil eye can be taken; extra-vulnerable persons such as pregnant women can be kept from contact; and all transactions will be carried on in full daylight.

T54 The "buda" is regarded as preferring to strike and feast on
T76 women, especially beautiful ones, and to feed, cannibal-style, on
[609] fat, beautiful children. The stranger therefore should never praise the health or beauty of children, or of women, out loud. Mothers
[89] hide their children at the approach of a stranger. Nice new garments
[64] on a child also attract the buda, and this is one reason why children under 5, when infant mortality is highest, are given only rags to wear, and are permitted to be dirty most of the time.

754 and are permitted to be dirty most of the time. As for males, the
776 buda also likes to feast on healthy-looking, fat, handsome warriors
[53] and chiefs. "Buda" is the general diagnosis when a person always known as healthy suddenly sickens and dies. Therefore it is feared even by the bravest warriors.

754 Even at present, when "modernization" is proceeding from the
776 central government, "buda" belief has not shrunk. It has simply
178 expanded to take in modern attractions. Thus, police officers in the provincial towns are believed to have attracted "buda", who has developed a taste for officers in nice, new uniforms; and is believed to be "greedy" for healthy-looking boys doing modern gymnastics in their new elementary schools, eager to consume their physical prowess and grace. Even rich, strong, fat, gay, well dressed Europeans are regarded as vulnerable, but less so because "they do not fear him". Fear attracts him too.

"Buda" is most active in August, at the height of the rainy season.
[82] His favorite time to strike is just after a heavy thunderstorm, when tornado-like gusts of wind seem to pull up the hut and try to pull the roof off. This would enable "buda" to "see" his victims better, and cannibalize them.

751 Many ways of trying to prevent victimization by "buda", or at
754 least of reducing one's vulnerability, have been devised over the
776 centuries. To reduce vulnerability, one should not appear too happy, too gay. One should not become an object of open admiration, or of envy and jealousy. One should further paraphrase the tabooed word "buda", by saying "watch your eyes". Newlyweds, who are very vulnerable, should cover their glowing faces for ten days, to keep

751 their happiness from showing. Eating and drinking in the open makes one
754 extremely vulnerable, because this arouses buda's greed, and at the
776 same time makes it easier to penetrate the victim's body, through the wide open mouth and unguarded nose. Therefore, old-time Amhara cover their faces when eating in front of strangers.

751 This attempt to reduce vulnerability is closely related to some
754 of the "language of the shamma" (toga). In the presence of strangers,
291 this can be draped in the fashion that indicates "reserve" - covering the mouth, or even nose and mouth, with the front section of the toga, which has been draped in a turtleneck. When travelling in strange districts, which are doubly dangerous because of cast-out buda spirits hidden by exorcisers along trails, a strong-smelling
[824] herb pushed in the nostril, is often used as a prophylactic. The most commonly used of these herbs is "tena adam" (lit. health of Adam, i.e. mankind). The mouth should be kept closed, or covered. In a fearful situation, he may say "shadow, may it not fall on me". Touching iron, considered specially "strong", also helps. Children are warned to stay away from strangers, and never to leave a baby unattended, lest "buda will eat you". The term "eat" is regularly used for buda possession (not for zar possession), for it indicates consumption.

751 Typhus ("tälälafi bäsheta") and severe epilepsy ("yäbuda bäsheta")
754 the latter literally ascribed to buda (lit. buda disease) are the most
174 common ailments promptly diagnosed as "buda" "eating". Evidently
[164] Amhara doctors long ago observed that covering the mouth and nose and staying away from possibly infected strangers reduced the exposure to certain contagious diseases; they then proceeded to envelop this observation in the culture pattern, including the draping of the toga and stopping up the nose, and not eating uncovered in the presence of strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

776 Certain districts are regarded as "breeding places" of the buda;
754 the entire province of Gojjam is so regarded by Amhara of Gondar and other areas. The "buda" spirits are believed to have their headquarters in Gojjam, their schools where they study techniques of finding and trapping victims, and new methods to resist interrogation by the exorcists who try to induce the "buda" to reveal his name, i.e. that of the human sorcerer through whose body the "buda" makes contact and "eats" (sometimes through initiative of the buda, sometimes called through the ill-will of the sorcerer for a certain human victim). The people of Gojjam (even the Amhara there!) are considered "educated" buda, more sophisticated and less crude, but more dangerous because more clever (note: equivalent to "Jerusalem-educated" zar!). The Gojjam "buda" can "eat" even at long idstance, and are not hampered by the dimension of time. Thus, a visitor from Gojjam who has been offended (e.g. by not having been offerred a seat or a drink or by having been refused hospitality) on his return home, months later, may "eat" the offender at long distance. Even years and oceans can be crossed by a sufficiently "educated" buda; even the foreigner, years later and across the sea, may be affected, according to Amhara belief.

In the Galla provinces, the "buda" are believed by the Amhara to be crude and uneducated. The Amhara does not fear the Galla on this score, as much as he would fear a strange Amhara from Gojjam or a Falasha ironsmith. But the "buda" of Galla areas are believed to turn themselves into hyenas at night and to eat corpses of humans more often; and if they capture a live Amhara stranger, force him to remain as a servant, drugged (like a zombie)/

776 754 The same "methods" are ascribed to Falasha ironsmiths who live in their own hamlets in the Amhara regions. The Falasha, who are regarded as having some secret "education" of their own (actually Mosaic Judaism), are believed to be able to turn a victim into a donkey and make him do a donkey's work, then turn him back to a human in their own hamlet, and make him do a servant's work. In case rescue nears, the Falashas are believed to be able to turn him into one of the many large pots that always lie about a Falasha hamlet where the women make pottery for sale.

Thus the buda complex contains many facets: medical-regional-ecological (Gojjam's Blue Nile is a major caravan route that can bring infectious diseases) - ethnic - religious - Middle Eastern evil eye complex - African fear of the ironsmith. All this is fitted into the Amhara cosmology of the supernatural.

Though closely interconnected in the Amhara mind, some of these facets will be considered in separate detail.

754 158 b. Symptoms of "buda" disease.

The classic symptoms of "buda" disease follow the following sequence. The victim, usually a young woman between the age of 15 and 30, complains of utter fatigue and a heavy head. An hour or so later, she breaks out in hysterical frenzy, wild laughter, stares with wild, empty eyes, moves about restlessly as if driven by some inner demon. An hour or so later, she complains of intestinal cramps, and cringes under the violence of the pain. Her fingers are clenched so that the thumbs are not visible - (regarded as sure sign of the "buda"). For, it is believed, her thumbs have been grasped by the buda that is eating her and he won't let anyone else see them lest his "food" be taken from him. This is called "tänäbbäzä", stolen by force, for the buda is robbing the victim

754 [K4] Spitting or coughing blood (which may be tuberculosis?) is regarded as another sure symptom of buda, especially the demon "mäggäna". The buda is believed to cause widespread epidemics, if he is powerful and many vulnerable victims are in the area.

776 754 Certain buda are believed to have very specialized "educated" tastes. One likes to rob the voice of dabtara choristers who chants harmoniously in church (perhaps in revenge for the same dabtara's part-time, extracurricular activity as exorciser), whereupon the voice will begin to croak and steadily grow worse, until the singer cannot even carry a tune. When a cow gradually [825] stops giving milk, despite a big udder, this is ascribed to the special taste of an "educated" buda.

c. Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis

755 [753] Sometimes the victim declares that he has had a dream in which a certain suspected person, e.g. an ironsmith, has been "eating" him. This can become very dangerous for the accused.

The question which diagnosis has to solve is not "what's eating you?", but "who is eating you?"; for the buda spirit and sorcerer are one person.

When the exorciser appears, the "buda" reacts violently. Even apathetic patients suddenly break out in violent peals of laughter, howl like a hyena, crawl about on all fours. The exorciser begins to question the "buda" to find out his personal identity. The "buda" replies through the mouth of the victim, in a hoarse voice, which is attested by all Amhara onlookers as "not the normal voice of the victim". The diagnostic procedure is a battle of wits between the exorciser and the "buda". The

755 buda out of him: seating the patient in ashes - the natural
756 abode of the buda - to entice the evil spirit to leave through the anus. The latter is regarded as the preferred pathway of the buda - the opposite principle of the soul which is believed to leave through the head. Sometimes the tanqway orders that the person accused of buda sorcery be brought before him and made to spit upon the patient, which breaks the spell if he has actually cast it. Since 1942 the government has branded the "tänqway" as [689] a fraud. As a result, the business of the still respectable däbtära and also the woggesha has increased in treating cases of buda.

C. Evil-Spirit Disease ("ganyän") and the diviner ("tänqway")

756 While the aforementioned tänqway is, or used to be, called in
●776 occasionally to exorcise a buda, his major specialties are the exorcising of "ganyän" evil spirits who have a very different character, and the divining of lost or stolen goods.

Of all spirit doctors, the tänqway occupies the lowest social position. He is "uneducated" for he uses no books and in fact is almost always illiterate. His methods are nearly identical with those of African "witch-doctors" and include such methods as throwing of bones and animal parts, for divining.

776 The major principle of both the tänqway diviner and the ganyän
777 spirits he specialized in, seem to be regional; the activity one of geographical orientation. For the ganyän, considered inferior to zar and buda spirits in power, are localized, evil genies. The term itself is etymologically related to the Arabic "djinn", local evil genies, though actually derived from the Geez "janyen"), and the concept is also similar: most ganyen are either water-spirits or fire-spirits.

TK It is therefore likely that the ganyēn idea was brought to the
177 Abyssinian highlands from Southern Arabia about 500 B.C., superimposed on the earlier "buda" and "zar" beliefs, but reduced to the bottom scale of the spirit world with the coming of Coptic Christianity in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D.[122]

TK The ganyēn are considered by the Amhara wholly evil. In personality they are choleric, male quickly aroused to aggressive rage. They are believed to be of dark complexion. They are so tough "they can eat stones". They attack men far more often than women and in daylight rather than at night, (exact opposite of the zar). They cause neither hysteria nor apathy, rather they cause their victim to run amok.

682 As a result, the legal significance of the ganyēn possession
754 in Amhara society is considerable. Almost every apprehended murderer claims that the ganyen "pushed his hand". He thus "was not himself". In the old tradition, if evidence for actual ganyen possession was deemed sufficient, the excuse brough sufficient mitigation so that the kin of the murdered individual could accept blood-money from the murderer and his kin without a blood-feud and without losing prestige. In such a case, the priest-confessor or "mänfäs gubä", acting as intermediary, would go to the bereaved kin and beg forgiveness for the crime. If they agreed, the "danya" (judge) would set the "semanya", (the amount of blood-money); formerly a minimum of 80 Maria-Theresa Thalers (now Eth$1000 = US $4000). 1/4
It is noteworthy that this tradition is so strong that even the modern Ethiopian court in Addis Ababa often sets the damages for

122. See MacDonald, D.D.: "Djinn", (in) Encyclopedia of Islam, pp. 1043-1046, and Trimmingham: Islam in Ethiopia, p. 260.

1/4 [valuation given here is not in agreement with that given elsewhere — probably should read "US $440)." — Analyst]

755 and the worst and most numerous ganyen are regarded as water spirits,
756 e.g. at the Blue Nile and everywhere also during the long rainy
789 season.

After diagnosing the identity and origin of the specific
755 ganyen, the tänqway tries to exorcise the demon by treating him
776 with contempt (exactly opposite to treatment given the "zar"). Instead of feeding the spirit a succulent "mäqwädäshä" (love gift), the ganyän - possessed person is fed a lunch of ashes. For a ganyen that is a fire-spirit, is attracted by ashes, his element, and may thus be induced to leave the body of the patient in order to feast. The tänqway follows this method even in cases of buda as indicated before.

The next step in treatment consists of "fixing" the ganyän somewhere else, so that he will not return into the body of the victim. This is done by the scapegoat technique; e.g. by fixing the demon into the body of a chicken, killing it, throwing the carcass away where the hyenas will eat it; or transferring the water-spirit to another locality.

756 Besides his role as a healer of ganyän, the major activity
[787] of the tänqway is as diviner of lost or stolen goods. It is not polite to use the term "tänqway" in his presence, instead he is politely addressed as "awaqi" (lit. knower, wise man). Since he usually makes it his business to know what goes on among professional thieves, his insight into such matters is sometimes indeed considerable; but also contributes to his bad social reputation. In "diag-
[694] nosing" the case, the tanqway acts as detective, studies the place of the crime, investigates neighbors and finally draws seashells (sagol Lebsu") and bones from his bag and throws them, to read additional information from their direction and mutual position.

795 Some dabtärä have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
556 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually [386] made of soot, charcoal, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre- [716] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susneos, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female [56] of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay the murderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

773 On the way he found an old witch. Interrogating her, St. Susneyos
789 learned that Werzelya had gone into a garden. Finally, he found the demon sitting under a tree. He speared and mortally wounded her. Before expiring she promised never to afflict anyone who carried the inscribed name of Saint Susneyos.

The effectiveness of the amulet lies therefore in reminding the female demon of her promise to Susneyos.

789 Other common designs include angels with fiery swords (sometimes seen also incised upon wooden church doors); the cross over sun and moon; and the evil eye, sometimes oval, sometimes in profile, but often round with a red iris (symbolizing the magic drinking of blood).

A typical formula against the demon of epilepsy, "barya", reads as follows:

> "You (actually "he", polite), Barya, who steals the heart of man (i.e. renders insane),
> who darkens the eye,
> who comes as shadow by nighttime,
> I put a spell on you, and curse you by ...(name of saint or angel)."

776 There are three common categories in the cosmology of demon
753 diseases treated by amulets:
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(1) General evil-eye disease, referred to generically as "buda" - particularly in cases of puzzling functional and mental ailments - or identified and diagnosed by the name of a demon - particularly in fevers and paralysis.

(2) The demons of epilepsy, "Barya".

(3) Gynecological ailments, ascribed to specific female demons.

Amulets are collectively referred to as "ketab" (lit. writings, in Geez).

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Table 13: The Scribe as Healer: Demons, their Individual Specialties, Exorcism.

category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Buda"	evil eye	fevers (mach mättaw); functional ailments; hysteria, catalepsy	eye with bloody-red iris; ironsmith ethnics		powerful amulet; Christian re-baptising of patient: exorcism
(1)	"Läqäna"	threshhold demon in early mourning	spitting blood (tuberculosis) through "red snake in belly". Amebic dysentery.		Buda	amulet of St. Sebastian as prophylactic smoke of "wogärt" plant which snake hates, in hut. Carry dead through hole in wall (in Gojjam), so demon cannot find way back to infect others in family. Spraying with holy water.
(1)	"Dänqara Mäṭal"	household demon	infectious disease, highly contageous within hut. (Endangers travellers.)			amulet as prophylactic. Lure demon out of the hut through trail of chicken feathers, lemons and perfume, onto trail, where it is transferred to travellers.
(1)	"Nädara", "Ayniät"	evil eye, female demon	eye diseases, esp. ophthalmia	red eyes	Buda	amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of this demon

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Aynä Ṭəla" (lit. Shadow Eye)	evil eye, female demon	blocks projects; blocks learning of students; causes sleepwalking; likes to attack men. Confuses protective zar spirits so they cannot help.		Zar	amulet "temhertä hebuat". intoxicant plant "esk fars" (see Zar).
(1)	"Eqabē Seray"	evil eye, male demon	Various mischief; can turn himself into human figure	Non-Copt neighbors; Barya, ironsmith ethnics	Buda	Christian amulet.
(1)	"Dabbas"	Household demon	undefined illness and death; "aroused when thirsty"			Christian amulet.
(2)	"Barya"	dancing demons; their chief "Legēwon" has red eyes and is "buda"	epilepsy, haut mal ("ḥemamma barya"), esp. in male victims.	Barya tribe of Nilotic lowlands. Symbol: tornado.	Zar, Buda	Amulet with angel of fiery sword (Christian).
(2)	"Tegrida"	restless demon	epilepsy, petit mal; causes "falling-down sickness"			Christian amulet.

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	affiliation of demon's; or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(3)	"Werzelya"	female demon	attacks women: barreness through stopped menstruation which "prevents conception", 'yldam tefat); bleeding from uterus (menorrhagia); miscarriage.	Barya tribe negress		amulet with legend of her promise to Saint Susnayos. It is suspended from the Christian neckcord "Mätäb".
(3)	"Karina"	female demon	attacks women who have just given birth (puerperal fever).			amulet recalling her defeat at the hands of King Solomon.
(3)	"Shotälay"	female demon, subordinate.	causes stillbirth		Zar	exorcism
(3)	"Tegarteya", "Teggerta", "Kaddegeni"	female demon	attacks women after childbirth through puerperal fever or catalepsy (postnatal depression).		Zar, Buda	prophylactic amulet; quiet cooperation with Zar doctor who tries cajoling the spirit through the patient (See zar).

177 The "seal of Solomon" (actually the 6-pointed star of David) often
755 appears on Amhara amulets (e.g. against Karina). Even Hebrew-
789 appearing characters are found on amulets (a widespread custom in the Middle East.) [125] As might be expected, Hebrew traits are even more emphasized among the Falashas, who begin every amulet with: "Blessed be the God of Israel, God of all Creatures; prayer against.....".

Arabic influence has served primarily as a carrier. Directly derived from the Arabs are the 12 signs of the Zodiac, found on Abyssinian amulets. Carried was the "seal of Alexander".

Christian mythology and hagiology predominates in the cosmology of the amulets of the dabtara. Many of them begin with the formula: "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity; prayer against.....". Deniers of Christ who are suspected as sorcerers, are often personified in these amulets as Falasha or Barya. Christian martyrs and saints, Abyssinian or "from Jerusalem", are appealed to for intercession against demons. The following are frequently encountered in amulets:

776 Abuna (bishop) Batra Maryam, Abyssinian saint, against snakebite (pro-
177 phylactic); St. George, "Qeidus Giyorgis", shown spearing a monster
755 (an old idea possibly dating to the Bel-Marduk battle among ancient Babylonians, and Ra and Horus in ancient Egypt).

St. Sebastian is often depicted in drawings, and appealed to against the Kagana and other threshhold demons. To keep out disease and
[751] evil, this amulet is often placed above the entrance to a hut; but not in the doorway itself, if someone inside is already sick, for this would block the exit of the demon.

125. Reich, Sigismund: Quatre Coups Magiques. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, Vol. 7-8, pp. 159-175. Institut Francais de Damas, 1937-8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Gabra Manfas Qeddus (lit. Saint Servant-of-Soul), an Amhara saint from the province of Shoa, who was a saint from birth, and who, instead of dying the usual way, entered heaven in bodily shape.

Takla Haymanot, the foremost Abyssinian saint, and an actual historical figure. An Amhara bishop from Shoa province, he lived in the 13th century and founded the still existing monaster of Dabra Libanos. He too is regarded as a saint from birth. His sacred spring at the monastery is regarded as powerful holy water, and those who cannot make the pilgrimage, as far as Addis Ababa (about 150 kilometers away), have water brought in Chianti bottles. The bones of important persons are sometimes unearthed and sent to rest under cave ledges at this monaster. Many austerities, miracles, conversions of heathens, and even temporary conversion of the devil himself are ascribed to him. On church paintings and amulets, Haymanot is depicted with one leg missing, lost during a martyrdom, but with wings which protected him from falling down the steep mountains of Abyssinia.

Tewodros (St. Theodor), regarded as the founder of the Abyssinian monastery of Dabra Maryam. But the name is also used as a synonym for another Messiah, who, according to a 14th century Abyssinian book "Feqqara Iyasus" (lit. Love of Jesus) will some day come from the east, conquer the world, usher in a long period of peace and prosperity, preceding the final catastrophy. (Probably with this tradition in mind, the usurper Kassa had himself crowned Emperor Theodore, in 1855).

Jesus Christ himself is regarded as a powerful magician, more powerful than the powerful magicians Moses and Solomon, over animate as well as inanimate matter. The curative spells used by Jesus are

177 contained in the aforementioned book "Lefafa Tsedeq".

[776] African cosmology underlies much of this syncretism. Some is probably old-Cushitic, antedating the Geez-speakers. Some evidently has been carried into Ethiopia by the Galla. Caravan routes and the slave trade have long maintained contact with Central Africa, and some amulets resemble the "grisgris" of West Africa.[126]

756 [177] The dabtara thus has many tools and sources for his trade. He can use the books of the church, in Geez which he alone understands; saints, angels and martyrs; translated Arabic myths - including many of Graeco-Christian origin; cabalistic Hebrew cosmology; he can call on the mystical elements of nature: fire, water, earth, and air, without knowing that ancient system.

No wonder that some dabtara specialize and work out syncretic systems of their own. The more esoteric the source and the manner and atmosphere of writing, the more admiration and faith does it call forth. Some dabtara secretly cooperate with zar doctor colleagues. Some develop rituals of their own, such as writing amulets only on specified days of the week. Some go so far in their syncretism as to invite (secretly of course) a non-Copt, such as a Muslim or a Falasha, to write certain texts for him, on the amulets; or the interfaith colleagues exchange their handiwork! For the efficacy of the esoteric is regarded as double. Amulet-writers of the three faiths are curious about each other's magical powers, and while the ordinary individual will shun and fear such "comparative religion", the doctors feel protected sufficiently to risk such "free enterprise" contact.

126. See Lifeczyz Amulettes Ethiopiennes. Minotaur, Vol. 2, 1934, p. 71-73

776 174 797 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, demoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyen"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holidpy is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits. [127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised tänqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 [182] Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who held the people in terror and exercise political power. [128]

[794 562] While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria. [129]

171 754 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopie". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

000 status.

181 The Amhara concern with spirits seems motivated not by the
776 negative emotion of fear, but toward an understanding of the universe; toward healing; toward patterns of individual free enterprise under the guidance of protective spirits (regarded by the "zar" doctors and "zar" societies somewhat as patron saints).

181 Inventive intelligence, constrained in Amhara culture from developing material objects, applies itself to nonmaterial culture goals: to etiquette and other fine points of human relations; to speaking well in court; witticisms and proverbs; to entertaining with homiletic and riddles ranging from the ribald to the philosophic; to the development of special argots for the professions
[87] of minstrelsy, medicine and commerce. Education is regarded by they Amhara as a highly desirable means to (non-material) achievement. The desire to be regarded as intelligent is even greater than the profit motive, in Amhara culture; so that there is greater fear of being mocked at than being bested in a trade exchange. Producers would rather undersupply a market than risk having to carry any goods back home. The worst mockery and insult is to be regarded as intellectually inferior.

855 C. Some Psychological Consideration: arising from the Life Cycle.

Infancy and childhood, until adolescence, are years of free experimentation for the young Amhara, years with a minimum of supervision by adults, and maximum exposure to training by the peer-group and slightly older youngsters. The child does not live in a world of giants, but learns to handle his (not very complex) universe
000 through the give-and-take of his age-mates. Until weaning, at the

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

whom many hard things have been said by prejudiced travellers, play so 771
essential a part in almost every aspect of rural life that the community simply cannot be imagined without them. Christenings, funerals and periodic commemorations of the dead are ceremonies of enormous importance which must, of course, be conducted by priests, and their presence is deemed desirable at the higher forms of civil marriage. The *mahabar* or Private Communion, an old social institution deeply rooted among these people, cannot be held unless priests are present, nor can oaths be sworn, or public inquiries made, without them. The traditional customs of the Ethiopian Church, based on those of the Copts but strongly influenced by Judaistic practices, still retain their hold, some would say a strangle-hold, over the rural population. Many long fasts are rigorously observed, besides weekly ones on Wednesdays and Fridays; so are a multiplicity of feast-days when no work may be done, though Saturday is not always observed, as it used to be, as a workless day equivalent to Sunday.

I have already spoken of the large number of churches scattered over this 346
area, especially in the northern half of the sheet, among the gorges. When first wandering about the district I had no idea they were so numerous. But while making the survey I continually came across new ones, and the last two, those nearest the north-east and north-west corners of the sheet, were discovered only while filling in the final detail. They brought the total for this small area up to twenty. They are not elaborate buildings, nor do they conform to the ordinary western conception of a church. They are indeed round huts, quite uninfluenced by the rectangular form (deriving from a very ancient tradition) which exists in the northern part of the country.[1] Some are built in masonry, some in mud-and-stick, and the slightly more pretentious have an outer colonnade of wooden uprights supporting the edge of the roof. Inside one finds two concentric passages surrounding the *makdas*, or Holy of Holies, which only priests may enter. In the distance one can usually recognize a country church by its fine conical thatched roof, which is much bigger than that of any ordinary hut, and is crowned by a sort of double cone carrying a complicated cross, often ornamented with ostrich eggs.

Of the twenty churches, seven were dedicated to the Virgin Mary (Mariam), [776]
four to St. George (Ghiorghis), and three to the Archangel Michael, and these are, in general, the most popular dedications. The principal church in Debra Berhan was a Selassie (Trinity), that of Angolala a Kidane Meheret (Covenant of Mercy). There was one St. John, one St. Gabriel, and one each dedicated to the most famous of Ethiopian saints—"Abo" and Tekla Haymanot. Splendid sites have been chosen for most of these churches, the chief consideration having been, it would seem, visibility from afar. The plateau churches are invariably raised on a conspicuous ridge or hill-top. Many are beautifully situated on the shelves in the gorges, or overlooking these. Some again are placed on the extreme edge of a gorge—such are Saria Mikael in the north-east of the sheet and the old St. George, just north of Debra Berhan, now unfortunately moved nearer the town (both sites are marked on the map).

Perhaps the most striking of all these sites is that of Iteghe Mariam, to the

[1] D. R. Buxton, "The Christian Antiquities of Northern Ethiopia," *Archaeologia*, 92 (1947) 1–42. [113]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

792 thuribles of copper. When mass was said, I saw a great gold chalice and gold spoon, with which they administered the communion. Of the three hundred friars who came to this monastery, very few were those that I knew as belonging to it: and I asked some of my friends how it was, that with so large a number of friars in the monastery as they said, they were not present at such a feast. They told me that even though there were more than they had said, that they were scattered about in these monasteries and churches, and markets, to seek for their living, because that could not be in the monastery whilst they were young men; and when they were old men, and could not walk, they came to die in the monastery. On that day I saw the habit put on seventeen young men. There is a tomb in this
778 monastery which they say is of an Abba or provincial of
776 this monastery who is named Philip, and they give him the merits of a Saint, saying that there was a King Prester John who commanded that Saturday should not be observed in his kingdoms and lordships, and this Abba Philip went to that King Prester with his friars, and undertook to show how God had commanded that Saturday should be kept, and that whoever did not keep it should die by stoning, and that he would maintain this before all the fathers of Ethiopia: and he made it good before the King. Therefore
796 they say that he was a Saint for making Saturday to be
782 kept, and they treat him as a Saint, and they hold a feast for him every year, in the month of July, which they call *Castar* Philip, which means funeral or memorial of Philip.[1] On this account the people of this monastery are the most Judaizing of all the kingdoms of Prester John. I came twice to this Castar of Philip, at which they did me much honour, and they kill many cows at this feast. In one year they killed thirty, and in another year twenty-eight, and in

[1] *Castar* should be *Teskar*; Mansfield Parkyns calls it a sort of funereal feast, where charities are bestowed on the poor and the priests.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

drastic changes on the familiar natural order. Insofar as there is a special affect regarding nature, it takes the form of a sentimentalization of the useful—as in the great respect felt for young cattle, the thrill aroused by the sight of newly sprouted grain, and the deep nostalgia about one's land. 565* 82

The Supernatural

The peasant's conception of God is closer to that of the learned clergy than is his cosmology, since the Abyssinian clergy have tended to avoid systematic theology, believing that to probe too deeply into the nature of God verges on blasphemy. Abyssinians view God above all as *mystery*. 565* 776 [793] [779]

Nevertheless, they do have a sense of the various attributes of their God. God is the creator of the world. He is, as the name *Egziabhēr* signifies, Lord of the earth; and He is Lord of the seas, Lord of the King of Kings, and Lord of the angels. He is eternal and possesses knowledge without limit.

The Amhara peasant has a keen awareness that wherever one goes, God is there. "If you say no one is looking," goes an Amharic saying, "still God will see you." This consciousness of God's presence is reflected in the habit of referring to God scores of times every day. A number of common expressions contain references to God:

For greeting and farewell	"May He give you health for me."
For showing gratitude	"May God give you for me."
For responding to queries about one's health	"God be praised!"
For thanksgiving after meals	"Be praised, my Lord!"
For swearing by a statement that has been challenged	"By God! By the Savior!"

Prayers to God are spoken on numerous occasions. God's blessing is sought when an animal is slaughtered, when a group of people sits to eat, when a new house is begun, and when it is completed. Each day begins with a prayer something like this: "May He cause me to spend the day in peace. May He keep trouble from me. May He pardon my sins." When the peasant begins planting, he also prays: "God bless the seed; feed me, keeping birds away from it; bless it for the mouth of man." 565* 782 776

It is probably the attribute of God's omnipotence, however, that appears most vivid to the Amhara mind. Everything that happens reflects His active will. The thunder expresses His anger, a flood the visitation of His wrath upon the sinful. He is ever active, bringing births and deaths, prosperity and hunger, leading one traveler to safety and another to disaster. He controls the homeliest details of everyday life. One boy, troubled that he was not selling his goods in the market, confessed that God must be angry with him about something. Another, asked what he wanted to do the following year, replied: 565* 776

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 776 "If God wants me to, I may go to school; but it is hard to know what God will want."

*565 782 776 As a corollary of this outlook, the main way for man to achieve anything on earth is to pray to the Almighty. If one prays properly, God's power can be invoked to punish one's foes. In former times at least, the peasant went to church and prayed for vengeance, then expected his enemy to fall sick or die. If he could not pray effectively himself, he would give money to a priest and the latter would do the job for him. It is commonly believed by the Amhara peasantry today that their praying and fasting were a major factor in ridding the country of the Italian invaders.

*565 776 This conception of deity is at heart that of the early Old Testament, a powerful Lord who punishes, rewards, and avenges. But it is suffused with the pagan feeling for a plurality of deities. The Amhara is constantly aware of a number of supernatural beings other than *Egziābhēr* who affect his life for better or for worse.

Some of these are the simple agents of God in everyday affairs. Each individual receives at birth a pair of guardian angels of his own sex, one for daytime and one for night. They serve to protect him from accidents, sickness, and enemies. When some misfortune befalls a person, it is because God has ordered his guardian angels to neglect their duties.

More important are the many supernatural beings with wills of their own. Among the benevolent spirits the main figures are:

Mikā'ēl	The archangel Michael
Gabre'ēl	The archangel Gabriel
Giyorgis	St. George
Madhānē Alam	Savior of the World
Selassie	Trinity
Māryām	St. Mary
Abbo	Gabra Manfas Qeddus, an Abyssinian saint
Takla Hāymānot	Another Abyssinian saint

Most Amhara are particularly devoted to some one of these sacred figures. Partiality to one or another may be due to the fact that it is the patron saint of one's father, or represented in one's Christian name, or commemorated by the church in one's area. In time of sickness, a man will drink holy water [782] from the church of a certain saint, and make a vow, for example, "If Giyorgis cures me, I will give money to the church in his name, I will kill a lamb for him, and I will drink in a Giyorgis *māhebar* ("religious fraternal association") every month thereafter."

*565 778 These sacred figures are represented by numerous holy arks, or *tābot*. A *tābot* is a hollow oblong box containing some sacred script. It is identified

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

with the saint for whom it has been named, and personalized. The extent to which the ark is regarded as human is shown by the following remark of a peasant who looked at the picture of a church on a TAT card and explained: "When the ark has been given incense, it will be happy. . . . If this church is given a new roof, the ark will be very happy and give *ĭnjarā* to the people." 565* 778

The saints and the *tābot* which represent them are the objects of much veneration and prayer. They figure so prominently in the Amhara's outlook that at times they appear to be on a par with *Egziābhēr* himself. Two differences may be noted, however. The saints do not take the initiative in interfering in human affairs, as does *Egziābhēr*, but intervene only when appealed to. Their function, moreover, is that of protecting and healing spirits; it is not their portion to administer the punishments which *Egziābhēr* inflicts on those who disobey the religious laws, though they may mete out punishment to someone who breaks a vow he has made to them. 565* 776 778 782

Malevolent spirits, on the other hand, do intervene in human affairs without being invited. Of the evil spirits, the devil—known as *Diabolos*, *Sayṭān*, or *Agannent*, which are names of different spirits to the learned but counted the same in the peasant's mind—is the most powerful. He is imagined as a dark, Negroid type, the least favored sort of racial stock in Ethiopia. He dwells in deep waters, woods, and caves, and likes to roam about at noon and at midnight, especially near dirty places. Amhara avoid going near a lake or pool known to harbor the devil, for fear of being pulled in and drowned. They likewise stay away from dirty places at noon, for fear that he will make them sick. The devil brings epileptic fits. He tries to push people into fire. He also tries to harm human beings by tempting them to some misdeed—stealing, murder, getting drunk—and then have them suffer the consequences. Finally, when the human soul appears for judgment after death, he strives to gain possession of the soul and put it into the fire. Sometimes he is pictured as chewing the souls he manages to obtain. 565* 776 [829] [823] [828] [775]

Despite his inimical gestures toward the human race, the devil is respected as well as feared, for he has much power. Many peasants pray to him for this reason. In time of sickness some choose *Sayṭān*, rather than (or in addition to] *Giyorgis* or *Māryām*, as the one to whom they pray and make promises. On New Year's Day, Christmas, and Easter, prayers to *Sayṭān* are surreptitiously repeated in many quarters. One of these prayers runs: "My lord, bring me through the year. Guard me. If you keep me this year in peace and bring me through the year, I will give you more." Certain individuals are on especially good terms with the devil. They pray to him often, and he visits them from time to time and does favors for them; they are his "friends." When such a person dies, his son often continues the relationship. 565* 776 782

Another kind of spirit producing ill effects is the *zār*. *Zār* spirits are of 565* 776

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*565 many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or
• 776 unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and
*565 mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and
776 smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer
753 of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a
[828] trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands.
[845] When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

*565 Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through
776 constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage,
[562] offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[6]

*565 Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who
754 manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves pos-
787 sessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

*565 The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the
754 home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out
[262] of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork
[189] are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been
[323] kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such
[326] artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is
[554] important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

771 Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci
796 for the organization of time and space.
805

In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes.
*565 Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the
805 effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *kābashā qaṭero* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amh[redacted]ant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

*565 Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Am-
805 hara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that
829 happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

*565 When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold
538 around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance
829 of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

*565 With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is
805 acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a
796 ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year.
[787] A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*)
[576] representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

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ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes 155
to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the 853
negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for 853
a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. 862
Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If 155
another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-suck- 853
ing is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may 854
be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara 155
are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no mat- [856]
ter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting [125] the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is [753] he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on [176] the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional 155
atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and 856
punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his 853
earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional 853
security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary 152
symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." 155
The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly repli- 861
cate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

261 To make me forget you, this medicine is right:
291 Food and water, sleep and the night.
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539

• • •

Love and porridge must be taken while hot;
Once cool, those who would taste are a lot.

• • •

The *Injarā* I have, my lass;
I wait for you the *wat** to pass.†

• • •

Your father and your mother have vowed to keep from meat;
But you, their very daughter, innards do you eat.‡

261 Eating and drinking provide expressive symbolism in social interaction as
264 well as in verse. They form the primary axis of social life among the Amhara.
291 The exchange of *gurshā* is but a specialized form of the general pattern of
155 expressing sociability through feeding and being fed. Camaraderie consists to
57 a large extent of eating from the same *Injarā* basket, and the etymology of the word for "friend," *bālīnjarā*, is the same as that for the English "com-
[273] panion," someone with whom one shares bread. At any indoor gathering barley beer is served continuously. The visit of a guest at any time of day calls for "a little coffee," a euphemism for as much food and drink as the host can command. In some Amhara areas a special kind of spirit, the *tonin*,
[176] is assigned the specific task of punishing persons who infringe the etiquette of dispensing and receiving food.[18]

574 From this it is but a short step to politics and morals. The production of
155 large banquets is one of the essential arts of government in Abyssinia—
(554) *panem*, if not *circenses*. The stature of a big man depends partly upon the number of persons who customarily dine at his expense. A man's Christian-
577 ity, moreover, is judged by his generosity in feeding others, a virtue that is
554 eulogized at times by parading his *Injarā* baskets around the field. A truly
574 Christian Amhara is known by the regularity and scale with which he pre-
155 pares memorial feasts for his departed kin, drinks in some religious fraternal
[735] association, and holds an annual feast (*zīker*) in which food is distributed to the poor.

155 Oral activity is prominent, moreover, not only as a primary source of
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[263] * *Wat* is the sauce in which the *Injarā* is dipped.

† The gold meaning is: "I'll wait for you until the others leave."

‡ "To eat someone's innards" is an idiom meaning: "to make him fall in love." The gold meaning is thus: "You made me love you."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [762]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābañā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [754]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away [609]
from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well-known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant [716]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *çhirāq* is some-
158 times evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still an-
[116] other figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away
[187] a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

121 Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions
155 of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted
[853] earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara
121 practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new
155 baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a
862 bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

121 Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of suck-
155 ing and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects
146 as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

121 The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible
155 area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discon-
858 tinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in a piece of verse, he is derided as an "ant." Once he has composed a certain verse, he is supposed to discard it and compose something new the next time. 121* 156 538

The composition of original verse is by no means restricted to a class of professional poets. Every good Amhara is more or less adept at it. Extemporizing verse is a favorite activity at feasts, weddings, and in the aimless camaraderie of the drink-house. Sometimes a minstrel is on hand to begin the entertainment, but the usual pattern is for him to be fed verses extemporized by others present which he then embellishes with music. Even currently, with popular culture being manufactured and distributed out of Addis Ababa, urbanized Amhara place great value on the invention of new lyrics to suit the most popular tunes of the day.

Such verses customarily have not been written down. When unusually clever verses were invented, they were transmitted by word of mouth through the country and over generations. Or some individual would be noted for "owning" some couplet he composed or memorized, and people would turn to him whenever they wanted to hear it. Only in recent decades have some Ethiopians sought to preserve these verses in more durable manner by committing them to print.

Thus it is that, contrary to Riesman's correlation of the spoken word with traditionalistic functions and the written word with individualizing ones, and contrary to the common conception of the oral tradition as inherently rigid and unchanging,[86] oral literature provides the sole area in Amhara culture where conformity to existing works is shunned and the highest premium is placed on individuality.

Cultural Heroes

The last dimension of individualism to be treated here concerns the extent to which a society is inclined to single out individual personalities for special renown. We have seen that Amhara culture places little value on the moral worth of the individual as such, in that—with the limited exception of poetry—it does not encourage the development and expression of a distinctive and authentic self. And it might seem, from a superficial reading of Ethiopian history and culture, that the pre-eminent position of the emperor precluded anything like a general tendency to glorify outstanding individuals other than the sovereign. Yet our picture of Amhara culture cannot be complete without acknowledging the substantial place it has traditionally given to what may be called a "cult of the individual." For, with respect to at least three different qualities—saintliness, bravery, and cleverness—the Amhara have a marked tendency to idealize and remember outstanding individuals. 121* 156 181

The idolization of saintly individuals has been an important part of 121* 156 776

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Ambhara MP5

*121 Amhara religious experience. The favorite written literature consists of
156 those genres which glorify individual saints for their special powers and
• 776 great deeds. The *gadel* depicts the heroic struggles of saints against tempta-
*121 tions and persecutions; the *sāmber* relates their miraculous feats; and the
156 *malka*, a verse form of some fifty five-line stanzas, consists of a rhapsodic
538 description of the physical features and moral qualities of some saintly sub-
776 ject. The various *qenē* stanza types, moreover, serve largely to glorify individuals through the exotic use of religious symbolism—especially the nine-line *mawaddas*, which means "praise."

*121 While these literary genres are accessible only to the learned few, the
156 multitude also adores individual saints. Each of the saints has his particular
776 following in the population, his popularity varying according to region
*121 and to the powers for which he is famed. This idolization has been directed
156 not only to angels and legendary figures from the past, but also, to a lesser
554 extent, to contemporaneous religious virtuosi and outstanding masters of the religious books.

*121 Perhaps more prominent in Amhara life has been the glorification of brave
156 men. The Abyssinian military ethic took the form of a cult of the hero. Per-
703 sonal bravery—not discipline, training, honor, or self-sacrificing loyalty—
[554] was the paramount virtue in Abyssinian warfare. The *guabaz* warrior was rewarded by his chief, praised by the minstrel, and esteemed by the populace. His bravery was ranked according to the fearfulness of the enemy vanquished. Thus, in Menelik's day the fanciest headdress was given to a noble who killed one of the fierce Danakil, a less fancy headdress being awarded the killer of the tough Raya Galla. Such actions constituted the one area in which per-
[521] sonal boasting was permitted and, in fact, institutionalized in the genre known as *fukarā*.

We are indebted to Arnauld d'Abbadie for a firsthand account of the effect of this cult of the individual hero on the orientation of the Abyssinian warrior, in a passage so rare it is worth citing at length:

> The type of combat which [the Ethiopian] prefers over all others—because it gives him the most freedom to expand his personality—is that where, due to insufficiency of terrain or other circumstances, the chiefs can engage only a part of their forces. He loves to watch the skirmishers of the two armies spy out and accost one another while declaiming their martial themes. Joyously he throws off his toga to clad himself in some military ornament . . . and to mix himself in the widely spaced lines which follow one another and rise to the attack. He loves to comprehend the rationale of the manouvers of the two parties, to be able to judge the blows, to know under which hand the victims fall, to choose from among the enemy to avenge their death, to adapt his movements to the instincts which animate his companions, and to feel the earth tremble under the charges of cavalry which come as a squall

* 753 Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal
* 776 are in abundance, however. Of these, the zar and ganel spirits are regarded with the greatest interest and concern. On the one hand, zars and ganels cause a great variety of ailments, often mortal ones. On the other hand, they are intelligible beings, each organized into socially structured communities of confreres and, most important to humans, they are willing to communicate information of therapeutic significance.

* 753 Zars select their victims carefully, most often
* 787 choosing girls and women. Typically, this choice is sig-
776 malled by the onset of chronic stomach pain, persisting
562 headache, and arthritic complaints, although powerful zars are capable of sending any ailment. Once selected by a zar, a host can expect the subsequent attentions of other zars. Periodically, each of these will dramatize his domination over the human partner by sickening him and demanding tribute in the form of clothes, jewelry, and specially prepared food. Zars are visible only during the dreams of their human partners; in addition, they frequently speak through their hosts. From these sources, it is known that the zars have human forms and live in a bisexual and culturally pluralistic society which duplicates that of traditional Abyssinia. The means by which zars cause sickness is not known to humans, however.

* 753 Measles (ankalis) and smallpox (wateley) are at-
776 tributed to eponymous spirits who are customarily pro-
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*[192]

*753 pitiated with zar-favored foodstuffs. Because of this,
• 776 they are loosely associated with the zars. Unlike the
782 latter, however, they are vague phantoms with whom no
* [755] communication is possible; their demands are known from
* [192] convention and, once satiated, leave the sickman permanently.

776 Zars contrast with ganels in several significant
779 respects. The zar lives in a world which parallels but is distinct from man's own; it is a world whose existence, together with that of the zars themselves, is denied by
* [192] the Coptic Church. The ganel's existence is entirely earth-bound, and he is identified by the Church as the Abyssinian satan (seytan). Whereas it is the zar which initiates ties with his human host, the ganel is forced into such relationships by his human partner. The zar's host may be anyone, the ganel's partner is always a male ecclesiastic who possesses a store of esoteric knowledge.

* 753 The ganel's appearance is known from scriptural
776 references and, in addition, they are infrequently seen.
[539] When visible, the ganel appears as a tall and thin black-
* [192] man, Nilotic except for certain details. Descriptions by laymen are generally hearsay, since madness (ibidet) strikes the unprotected human who looks on a ganel; if the glance is returned, the effects are mortal. So dangerous is the ganel's person that even contact with his shadow leaves the victim stammering and given over to

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*[192]

undefineable fear and anxiety (*ayni tila*); the *ganel*'s shadow is sufficient to render the constitutionally frail child feeble-minded (*muñ*). Although *ganels* in nocturnal ambush sometimes strike blows resulting in epileptic seizures or apoplexy, and although their human partners may oblige them to send almost any ailment, most *ganel*-caused sicknesses result from indirect contact with their malignant persons (*likift*).

Likift refers to the transformation of innocuous substances into morbid or corrosive stuffs, through contact with certain agents. The ganel is the most virulent of these agents, and the most serious form of *ganel-likift* results from the ingestion of food which has been tasted by him. Frequently, this is food which has been left uncovered overnight. Once in the stomach, the *likift*-substance interferes with digestion and produces acute diarrhea. Simultaneously, it washes up to affect the contiguous heart, which reacts to this irritant
*[192] with rapid pulsations and pain. The sickman (*himemteña*) becomes greatly fatigued by this cardiac activity and finds it particularly difficult to breathe; the combination of pain, fatigue, and *wosfat* attrition leads in turn to anorexia. Since the *likift*-substance works on contact, washing with *ganel*-touched water results in a variety of skin ailments---septacemia, hemorrhagic and acute ulcers, scabies, scrofula and, infrequently, lep-

*753
• 776 rosy.

*753 825 Likift-powers are also associated with crawling insects, spiders, lizards, and the infrequent highland snake. As with the ganel, these creepers are innately contaminating, either through direct contact with their persons, or indirectly through media which they have touched---such as clothing and water---or which they have *[192] expelled---such as uring and saliva. This likift results in ringworm, varioloid and exzemoid skin diseases; because of their inherent toxicity, these creatures are also frequent ingredients in poisonous infusions (yijeseb).

*753 776 825 Sometimes, it is problematic whether the conditions which attract the attentions of ganel and creeper are not themselves sufficient to produce certain syndromes. For example, serious stomach pain, bloat, and feverish coughing are linked to the consumption of stale food or soured talla beer; these substances are, in turn, favorites of ganels. Similarly, the stench of bodily filth appeals to ganel and creeper, and is a common precursor to scabies and various rashes. However, both spoiled foodstuffs and filth are believed noxious enough to produce these ailments, without requiring the assistance of ganels or creepers.

*753 821 The notion of contact-pathogenicity which characterizes likift is also associated with a sun-borne agency known as gerifta. There is an important difference be-

*192 *756 *759 mains---bone and jimat, teeth and jaws, tonsils and uvula, womb and associated organs.

*192 196 Category 2. Therapeutic success relies on the use of medicaments; practitioners of this category utilize the third therapeutic strategy. Although no single term properly distinguishes these therapists from other categories of practitioners, they are, as a class, described by a common set of professional titles. Each title consists of three terms. The first indicates the name of the ailment for which the practitioner owns a therapy. Unlike other categories of practitioners, professional titles among these therapists are specific for single named ailments, rather than for a range of ailments. The second term is always the word "medhaniyt" ("medicament"). The maker of therapeutic amulets is the single exception to this (e.g., yidemaketir kitab kitabiy, "amulet maker for post-partum bleeding"). The final term indicates the format and "completeness" of the herbal therapy practiced. Thus, the "yianfula medhaniyt awakiy" is the "medicine expert for the ailment known as anfula".

*[776] Category 3. Therapeutic success derives from the practitioner's intimacy with spirit beings (ganel, zar, or saint of the Church) and his familiarity with magic (asmat); he relies upon the fourth therapeutic strategy.

*[793] The term "tonkway" is sometimes used to denote the most prominant practitioners of this category, the debtera-

841 woman's kinswomen who hold her down, the midwife repeatedly massages the woman's abdomen until the baby has emerged. The umbilical cord is knotted close to the baby and again near the mother, and then severed in the middle. The midwife then squeezes the woman's abdomen to eject the afterbirth, inserts her hand up the vagina to extract any remaining portion, and then passes the organ to an assistant who takes it outside
846 for burial. The midwife then turns to the infant, washes it and carefully "shapes" its eyes, nose, and head into desireable conformations. Finally, the mother's body is washed.

*759 The midwife's therapy is conspicuously lacking
844 in the secret and magical elements characteristic of herbalist therapies. It is, in addition, the only Amhara medical specialty which can be acquired without formal tuteledge, by observing and assisting established midwives in delivering infants.

843 Pregnancy and childbirth are considered dangerous
844 experiences. Gerifta is a special threat: Nakedness
[821] under the sun may cause the fetus to turn in the womb and threaten breach birth, and urinating in the sun can
[845] induce premature labor. Childbirth is sometimes the setting for divine punishment by means of breach birth.
[776] The pregnant woman is also a favorite victim of ganela, typically, she experiences great hemorrhaging, severe

843 844 pain, loss of her senses, inability to move her limbs
• [792] in an often fatal ailment known as sarakian. The mid-
*959 wife is powerless in these contingencies; instead, it
*793 is the herbalist or debtera who must be consulted. Thus,
846 the sinj medhaniyt awakiy provides an infusion which the
[278] post-partuitive mother drinks to eject a recalcitrant
[778] afterbirth (sinj), and the yidemaketir kitabiy provides
[792] an herbal amulet to be tied around the waist of the female suffering from post-partum hemorrhaging (demaketir).

*755 The cupper. The cupper (agamiy) assumes either of
*756 two therapeutic strategies, depending upon the ailment
*757 he is treating. Like the herbalist, he may attempt to
*759 draw the pathogenic substance out from the sickman's
*[192] body. For severe headache (ras mitat: literally, head-gerifta), he shaves a circle of one inch diameter on the sickman's occiput, makes a single incision with a razor or other favored knife, places his cup of horn over the incision, sucks out a required number of hornfulls (usually three) of blood, and pours the blood into a
*[192] waiting basin of water. The extruded blood is then examined for clotting (tikur waha: dark water) which is regarded as evidence that the pathogenic substance is being removed. Later that day, the agamiy returns to repeat his therapy. The occiput is chosen for bleeding because of its proximity to the body's blood reservoir (yidem sir), located at the nape.

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mation, the debtera's powers are derived from his intimacy with spirit beings, the ganels.

• [776] The therapeutic usefulness of the debtera's familiars is believed to be related to the ability of ganels to produce a wide variety of ailments. Some of these ailments coincide symptomatically with ailments treatable by herbalists (although they are etiologically distinct), other of these ailments can be cured by herbalists' therapies, and yet other ailments caused by ganels are symptomatically distinct from any ailments treatable by herbalists. These relationships between practitioner, etiology, and syndrome are diagrammed and annotated in Table 6.

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From the perspective of the client, the debtera is therapeutically effective because he can force or cajole his familiars to communicate therapeutically significant information (including pharmacological information) and to give other assistance. The debtera's power is conceived by the clients in terms of his ability to control his familiars. The most powerful debtera is the ganel gelac, a practitioner whose therapies the client can never divorce from direct associations with ganel familiars. For the "weaker" debtera, however, it is only in the abstract that clients posit a causal role for spirit familiars in any episode that such a debtera treats successfully. In the context of actual disease episodes,

*755 *766 the connection between the weak debtera, his familiars,
*793 and his therapies is, at most, tacit, and unarticulated.
• [776] More often, clients ignore the tie altogether, and conveniently assimilate this debtera into position (8) of the logically maximal chain.

The diagnostic significance of this move does not detain the client. Therapeutic success is in itself regarded as sufficient, and diagnostic speculation is not indulged. Therapeutic failure, likewise, tends to be interpreted in pragmatic terms only, indicating that the services of a more powerful healer must be obtained if
*[278] the sickman is to be cured. Probably, the choice will be a ganel gelac, but it is possible that even an herbalist of reknown will be chosen.

*278 Real herbalist chains are, then constructed by
*766 clients on an ad hoc basis. In constructing his herbal-
*759 ist chain, the client is dependent upon, first, the ac-
203 tual distribution of relevant practitioners within his environs, and, second, persons who can communicate this information to him. A client knows the herbal specialties of most residents of his own hamlet, and of the more prominent healers of the parish in which his hamlet is located. Beyond the parish, however, he knows the names of few secular practitioners, and these few are healers with whom he has stood previously as a client. To build his chain, he must often rely on information

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lower grade herbalist is favored.

There are no obvious non-medical advantages, neither relative nor absolute, for the client who chooses a higher grade herbalist. An herbalist initiates the patient into no relationships which endure beyond the length of the therapy. The onset of a disease episode, particularly one characterized by a serious ailment, has important consequences for the relationships between the sickman and members of his household, and between him and other individuals to whom he is bound by important rights and obligations. These changes are generally perceived in terms of non-participation by the sickman, particularly in affective and subsistence contexts. However, consultation with an herbalist does not itself significantly affect the relationships. Submission to herbalist therapy, for example, does not validate a claim to a particular sickman state, since this is determined within the domestic unit, prior to professional consul-
*[753] tation. Repeated therapeutic failure, far from discrediting the sickman's claims, can only escalate the seriousness of the epidose, moving it etiologically to the domain of ganels and zars---agents more worrisome prognostically than those against whom the herbalist works.

*756 The Weak Debtera-Healer in Table 6. In the ab-
+793 stract, laymen define the medical identity of all
• 776 debtera-healers in terms of associations with spirit

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 93]

*753 than A.

Syndrome 3: This syndrome is caused by likift, and the ganel is considered a likely (non-purposive) agent.

*[192] Syndrome 4: This syndrome is produced by contact with dirty (kowšaša) objects or places (e.g., hearth ashes, excreta, filthy clothing). Association with ganels is at most implicit, since such places are considered favorite resting places of these beings.

Syndrome 5: The association with ganels is most

*[192] tenuous here. Ayni šefin bašiyta, for example, may be brought about by either an eye-lash which has taken root in the sickman's eye, or by over-exposure to the smoke of domestic fires. Ganels could be invoked to explain why this particular sickman was involved in this particular disease episode. Recourse to this explanation is unlikely, however, since the ganel characteristically acts as a purposive, non-adventitious agent in syndromes of types 1 and 2 (i.e., where the ganel is the sole or alternative causal agent whose disease causing is direct and unmediated through ganel-likift).

*753 The Strong Debtera in Table 6. To the potential
*756 client, the tie between a powerful debtera-healer (ganel
*793 gelac) and his ganel familiars is necessary and sufficient
*776 to explain this debtera's therapeutic successes. Even syndromes of type 4, although not customarily linked to

*753 *756 a ganel-agent, can be explained as ganel-caused if *793 treated successfully by the following (real) practitioner *776 chains:

(1)-->(2)-->(3), or (2)-->(3)

Because of their substantial fees, clients generally limit therapy consultations with strong debteras to episodes involving serious ailments. Since such ailments are very frequently traced to ganel agents (syndromes of types 1 and 2), the diagnostic relevance of the strong debtera's cures tends to be reinforced empirically.

THE BALAZAR

*753 *756 A balazar ("zar bearer") is a man or woman who has [562] been selected as a "mount" (feres) by a zar spirit. Most often, the zar signals his interest in an individual by producing a syndrome known as kureyña. At its simplest, the ailment is characterized by chronic stomach pain, generally accompanied by headache. Within the context of Amhara nosology, these are highly ambiguous symptoms, *[192] and four alternative etiologies are possible. At its most innocuous, the ailment is classified descriptively as "hod himem ina ras mitat" (literally, "stomach ailment and headache"), and traced to gerifta and likift pathogens. The three other etiologies are sorcery (sray), divine displeasure (mekseft), and zar possession (kureyña);

*753 *756 all are indicative of serious ailments. In a typical episode involving this syndrome, the sickman initially diagnoses the least worrisome etiology, likift or gerifta. Secular therapies are then obtained, but when these fail, a choice must be made from among the remaining etiologies.

The sickman usually finds epidemiological indications sufficient to favor one of the three etiologies. [562] [602] Zars, for example, are known to prefer post-pubescent females (constituting over 80% of zar mounts), and individuals who are the primary relatives of recently deceased balazars. Once an individual has been mounted by a specific zar, the bond between human and zar is almost always permanent. Over the years of their association, the zar becomes familiar with the constant companions of the host, particularly her children. With the death of the balazar, the zar characteristically desires to mount someone whom he already knows well. This epidemiological evidence is confirmed by divination and often by the appearance of additional symptoms (usually swooning, sleeplessness, langour, and depression) which are associated with zar involvement.

*755 *776 787 If diagnosis indicates kureyña, the sickman seeks therapy from the leader (awakiy balazar) of a coterie (hadra) of zar-possessed folk. At their initial meeting, the awakiy balazar is mounted by one of his zars, who at-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Ambhara MP5
Begemder

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tempts to communicate with the sickman's supposed zar. The object of the dialogue is, first, to identify the sickman's zar by name. In the abstract, the zars are believed to be multitudinous, but in practice the members of a hadra will be acquainted with only a score or so of these spirits. Each of these zars is named, and recognized for his social identity (e.g., sex, age, occupation, religion), his characteristic attitude towards human mounts, and his ability to influence the conduct of other zars. The initial dialogue further attempts to learn what precisely the spirit wishes in return for ceasing to afflict his host. Often a sickman's zar is unresponsive, and the sickman must undergo a regimen, often lasting several weeks, at the home of the hadra leader. During this period, the sickman is induced to sleep for long stretches of time. During this period a decoction of cat (Catha edulis Forsk) is given the sickman to drink.[10] This regimen is maintained until the unruly zar has been "socialized" and is prepared to converse intelligibly (in zar argot) through his host. Conversely, some zars reveal their identities rapidly and explicit-

[10] Interestingly, when eaten fresh the leaves of cat appear to act as a wakefulness-producing stimulant (Hill 1965:17).

*755 *776 787 ly, so that the sickman is afflicted with the kureyña symptoms for only a short time before the zar is successfully engaged in conversation.

*753 *756 *756 776 Zars demand periodic gifts (mainly jewlry and clothing), and regular attendance at the hadra of the awakiy balazar who first contacted the sickman's zar. At the hadra meetings, special foods favored by the zars are served, and members are mounted by their familiars. The zar who is neglected punishes his host with a recurrence of kureyña or some other ailment, until his requirements are fulfilled.

A hadra leader is frequently possessed by ten or more zars; characteristically, all are cooperative, and several are powerful zars, capable of influencing the behavior of weaker spirits. In contrast, other members of the hadra are each mounted by one or two less resolute and often capricious zars. The zars of the hadra leader are helpful in persuading the zars of hadra members to define what gifts they demand in return for a surcease in their pathogenic activities. Through his familiars, the awakiy balazar learns therapies for ailments with which hadra members are afflicted by their zars. These therapies are often necessary, but never sufficient, to bring about cures, since they remove only the immediate causes of the sickman's ailments. The awakiy balazar occasionally provides therapeutic services for individu

*753 *755 *756 • 776 als who are not members of his hadra, and, more frequently, provides divinatory services for clients.

For each of its members, the hadra, comprising its human and zar members, becomes the group within which her most important social relationships beyond the family are found. In a medical context, the hadra develops into an exclusive and self-sufficient group, in which the balazars trace all of their serious physical ailments to the displeasure of their zars, and find all necessary prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic assistance in the hadra leader.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SECULAR HEALERS IN RURAL BEGEMDER

131 133 Within the 74,200 square kilometers of Begemder Province are found a diversity of physical conditions, from the hot and parched western lowlands, through the fertile and temperate highland plateau, ascending to the cold and empty mountain reaches of Ras Dashan. The people of Begemder divide its lands into three ecological zones, as indicated by map 1.

Kola lands are located between elevations of 600 and 1800 meters. The highlander considers kola to be a *[192] disagreeable region; it is unhealthful because of malaria (often referred to as yisudan basiyta, "the Sudanese disease), and unpleasant in its excessive heat. Preferred

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 103]

*793 capital) and the parishes. The social identity of the
*793 parish tends to be defined in terms of the ties linking
794 its residents to the parish church. The church must be provided with sufficient clergy for the performance of the weekly Mass, as well as Masses on feast days and on occasions which mark a sacrament of the Church. This amounts to perhaps three Masses every week, each of which must be conducted by at least two priests (keys) and three deacons (diyakon). Ideally, these ecclesiastics are recruited from among the parish's risteñas, in return for the use of fields belonging to the parish church.
[776] The tie between residents of a parish and its eponymous church is further strengthened by the tendency of these people to confine their public ritual performances to the church, to favor the church's saint (reified in the arc, tabot) with private appeals for protection against illness and other misfortunes, to donate gifts to it when such appeals have been answered, to bury their dead in its churchyard, to pay towards the salary of a church teacher (astomariy) of the syllabary, and perhaps for a teacher (memher) of advanced Church subjects as well, and, lastly, to contribute in tithes (generally cereals and other foodstuffs) and labor towards the proper maintenance of the church.

443 Parish and Town. The highland zones can be concep-
632 tualized as a series of overlapping market spheres, each

*793 869 severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably [262] the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based in- [164] gredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat. [735] His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals, *[192] and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain (kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent [164] wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints *[192] (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint (night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the context of the student's nocturnal activities.

[231] There is also danger from animals, the vicious and [735] often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs; [776] from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting [514] to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for nocturnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the exception of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's patronage, or who receive parental support, the young scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their [221] subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains [222] have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure, *[192] kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for

months, and years (gemene) which are non-propitious for the subject's well-being, 2) the age to which the subject will probably live and the age (always markedly longer) to which he may live if appropriate prophylaxes are employed, 3) bad omens (often indicated as a color of men, animals, or land), 4) dangerous places and environmental conditions. (The text likewise indicated propitious dates, omens, and places.) In addition, the text describes the subject's social persona and the responses it will (eventually) elicit from the people with whom he interacts.

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While the kokob text addresses a variety of interests, the texts of the second awdunigist category are more specialized. From a medical point of view, these texts can be divided into the following six types, according to the services that each provides:

1. These are exclusively medical texts, providing detailed information of prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic utility, and coinciding with the range of medical interests considered by the kokob text. This information is relevant to the period specified by the debtera in his calculations.

• [794] 2. These texts name the saints, angels, and biblical persons who are particularly disposed to assisting the subject. Although this information is not exclusively of medical relevance, it is useful for constructing the

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*756
*793 ness to the ganel-tainted character of the debtera.
732 The layman simplifies the debtera's career by sup-
*756 posing that most debteras (certainly the abinet-prac-
*793 ticing ones) are former priests, men who broke their priestly vows by committing adultery. Impelled by shame to leave the natal community along a path of increasingly sinful deeds, they are morally spoiled even before becoming debteras. In reality, only a very small proportion of debteras have been recruited this way, for such men are generally ill-suited in age, intellect, and temperament to the lengthy, arduous, and often demeaning apprenticeship required of the debtera. The breaking of priestly vows, is, in addition, a very serious matter, and few men would have the temerity to mock the supernaturals of the Church a second time.

TECHNICAL AND MORAL ASPECTS OF GANEL-DERIVED POWER

*756
*793 The layman's distinction between fragmented secular
*755 healing powers and the generic power of the debtera is
• 776 based on the misconception that the complicity of ganels stands behind the awakiy debtera's medical superiority. In reality, the debtera acquires his repertoire of herbal therapies, digams, kifat recipes, and awdunigist texts individually or in small numbers, from fellow practitioners. Further, although the ties between an awakiy

*756 *793 *755 • 776 debtera and ganels are real enough, they do not conform with the layman's notions of intimacy and friendship. Rather, they are either 1) specific and impersonal, in the case of offensive works (kifat), or 2) episodic and manipulative, in the case of ganel pulling (gabiy).

The following paragraphs of this section describe these abinet activities which involve the complicity of ganels and consider them in terms of instrumental value and moral significance to the debtera.

*753 764 *[192] Kifat Works. Kifat (literally "evil") works are abinet which send illness, death, and other misfortunes onto selected victims. Illnesses caused by kifat works are inevitably serious, and coincide symptomatically with ailments that have non-kifat work etiologies. They fall into three categories. The first includes ailments which are characterized by combinations of severe and prolonged stomach pain, nausea and vomiting, headache, diarrhea, fever, and kijet (nightmares); these ailments are difficult for the layman to diagnose correctly; they are resistant to secular therapy, and are all considered potentially mortal. Kifat works of the second category produce ibidet (madness), and are expressed symptomatically as compulsions to either wander about aimlessly, or to sit incoherently in a single place. Ibidet is also caused by mers (poison potions), for which kifat work

*756 *793 754 child, or his livestock.[36] (In reality, the client's selection is more likely to be determined by considerations of cost than of casuistry.) The debtera may further dissociate himself from the morality of a particular episode, by giving the client the sorcery bundle, with directions for its use. The debtera owning kifat considers the transmission of kifat knowledge during abinet exchange to be more fraught with moral danger than his use of it. To preclude this obstacle to the easy exchange of abinet, the recipient customarily foreswears the use of the kifat work unless he is pressed by persecutors and without alternatives.

*776 [192] Pulling Ganels. Ganels are organized into a simple hierarchy composed of individually named commanders (azmac) and anonymous subordinates (tazaj). Supreme among ganels is the fallen angel Satanael. His several hundred lieutenants are divided into ganels responsible for sending specific ailments or misfortunes, and local commanders who repose in the lakes, rivers, and mountain tops of Ethiopia. The multitude of subordinate ganels are the immediate bearers of sickness and misfortune; their

[36] The debtera is not expected to provide any detailed information, such as the identity of the specific ailment of misfortune he intends to send.

• 716 work is done at the direction of the commanders, or is struck adventitiously as the opportunity arises.

*755 A debtera calls ganels to obtain either information
*756 or the promise of services. Only ganel commanders are
*793 summoned. In contrast to their ganel subordinates, they
754 are more difficult to call, and more cunning. However, they alone possess the therapeutically useful information which the debtera desires, whether for a specific disease episode at hand, or a disease category associated with ganel causal agents. The information which the debtera obtains supplements abinet that he already owns, and does not constitute complete therapies. The debtera also calls ganels to direct them to command subordinates to perform pathogenic works against persons he wishes to strike down, or to desist from afflicting the debtera's client.

*756 Ganel-calling abinet works consist of three sets of
*793 activities. First a specific, named commander is "pulled"
*787 from his repose into the debtera's presence (thus, the
*[192] title "ganel sabiy", "demon puller", by which such debteras are popularly known).[37] It is easiest to call a

[37]This title is interchangeable with "ganel aciwac" ("converser with the ganel"), and "ganel gelac" ("revealer of the ganel").

*766 *793 tions of awdunigist).

*776 *[192] The destructive power of ganels is the shadow of divine grace. Although the goodness of divine power is perfect, divine intentions are realized through the promise of sanctions (mekseft), as well as grace. The ganels are utilized for the operation of these sanctions. *[192] Christians are each protected by a pair of angel guardians (maliket), in the command of the Almighty. Divine displeasure is expressed by removing these guardians from the principal or his children.[40] Once a breach is opened, ganels are certain to attack, for they pursue their destructive goals indiscriminately, striking where opportunity, rather than special interest beckons.[41]

[40]Not all cases of ganel assaults can be traced to divine motives, however. Occasionally, ganels are able to outwit or overwhelm an individual's angel guardians, particularly when a debtera forces them to attack a vulnerable target. The precise balance between a man's assets (guardian angels, kitab protectors) and deficits (vulnerabilities indicated by awdunigist, ganel sabiy influence on ganels) is never a matter of speculation in specific episodes, however.

[792] [41]Generally, very holy monks, in lives of seclusion and prayer given over entirely to the Almighty, are singled out by ganels, for physical assaults and temptations of the flesh.

*753 *755 *756 *793 he must reorder his social environment. Preference is given to either killing his persecutor or frightening him away, through the use of sorcery or mundane violence. If ego is unable to accomplish this, he must himself move to some place where his talat can no longer affect him, or would no longer find it necessary to do so.

*753 *787 *776 With zar-caused ailments, the sickman can obtain a lasting remission of symptoms only by entering into a permanent relationship with the pathogenic agent, rather than countering it. Here, the sickman withdraws from his existing moral milieu, and acknowledges, as a member of a hadra (zar coterie), a permanent dependence on the good will of the zars. Once the initial diagnosis has been confirmed and ego's zar has been successfully treated with, each succeeding disease episode binds ego still more closely to the society of zars and balazars.

[562] The social and moral consequences of accomodating zars are very different for men and for women. For women, who constitute over eighty percent of zar-possessed folk, zar familiars offer a degree of security that the host finds difficult to obtain in human society. In contrast to other purposive agents, the pathogenic motives of zars are at once transparent and manageable: Zars sicken their hosts in order to extort gifts of jewlery and clothes, and deferential performances at the

*753 *787 • 776 hadra meeting. While zars often cause painful and potentially mortal ailments, prognoses are favorable, since the zars' ultimate interests are served best by keeping their victims well enough to continue to meet their demands.

*753 *787 776 562 A woman who excludes zars from her disease etiologies assumes great vulnerabilities. Without zar familiars, she must build etiologies from the mortal intentions of sorcerers, poisoners, and ganels. Against these agents, a woman can generally afford to raise only weak prophylactic defenses, and the cost of expert therapy (by an awakiy debtera) is usually beyond her slender means. Unmarried townswomen are particularly vulnerable in this regard, since they are without interested mates to purchase necessary debtera therapy or to insist on etiologies consistent with the teachings of the Church.

For a man, zar possession is shameful, and the appearance of symptoms which might indicate a zar etiology (i.e., kureyña) are preferably traced to other pathogenic agents. While the hadra provides its female members with opportunities for self-assertiveness otherwise impossible, the man who accepts the suzerainty of the zars commits himself to performances and associations which contradict the customary social behavior of Amhara men. He is serateña (servant, usually female) or even bariya (slave) to zar whims, which cast him in demeaning

*753 and sexually ambiguous roles. The other, predominantly
*789 female, members of his hadra treat him as an equal,
• 776 rather than with the deference ordinarily shown men.
562 What is more, his shame is public, since the zars gener-
[292] ally demand as a sign of obeisance that a colored bor-
der be woven into the normally undecorated white toga
of Amhara men.

*753 The type of practitioner that a client consults
*755 influences the final etiology with which his disease epi-
*756 sode is finally rationalized. In the context of category
*793 three ailments, the awakiy debtera is a morally correct
choice for the male client, since his therapy is capable
of translating the disease episode into a confirmation
of the client's normative social state. Failing more
innocuous indications (generally involving ganels), the
debtera's diagnosis and cure are expected to support an
etiology of sorcery or poisoning. This marks the sick-
man as someone's talat; a man someone wishes to kill or
maim in retribution or fear; a man who has incurred a
talat's interest by demonstrating aggressive and proud
(i.e., masculine) behavior, by committing assault and
murder, by usurping land rights, or by contesting sexual
access to women.

342 hut. The door is equipped with projecting pivots on top and bottom, the ends turning in two troughs carved into the door-frame.

The overhanging roof protects most of the wall from being damaged by driving rain, and the darkness inside is also a protection against the sun-loving flies. The average hut needs re-thatching every 5 to 8 years, and an additional coating of clay plaster mixed with straw every 2 to 3 years. Old huts, abandoned due to fire, war, death [777] by sickness, etc., are considered unlucky and are not rebuilt. Sometimes their remaining walls are used as windbreaks for garden crops.

Interior architecture consists of the following:

(1) a high-fencelike partition of bamboo ("mäqa") to give privacy to the master and his wife, usually center-right from the door, with a special high elevation on which the bed of the couple is set; another high partition, usually to the left of the door or toward the rear, for nighttime shelter for calves, goats or the family mule. This fencelike, permanent partition is called "get" or "gedgedda";

352 (2) a solid clay bench which runs along half the interior of the walls, on one or both sides of the door, about 16 inches high, called "mädäb", usually covered with sheepskins. On this clay bench men sit during the day with visitor, while sipping barley beer, and at night the children sleep on them, covering themselves with the sheepskins;

(3) on top of a center-rear elevation of rock and clay, up to 42" high, rests the "alga", the master's bed, 15"-30" high. It consists of a wooden frame on four wooden

671 696 The intent of these guiding principles and definitions were to aid the judge to arrive at a just verdict, preferably a "Solomonic" one. Guides were considered desirable, perhaps due to the absence of the principle of any law of precedence. The emphasis was on the "Code", and this was reinforced by the culture pattern of "literalness", in behavior.

In effect, however, these guides have enabled both draconic or bribed (and therefore lenient) judges to interpret the law with considerable subjectivity. Clever talkers-in-court never fail to use their ability to sway the public audience, which usually has a tremendous effect on the judge.

671 777 The effect of the "Fetha Nägäst" was to link the church and state. There were usually 12 provincial chief justices, "wombär", in allusion, apparently, to the 12 apostles. The "Fetha Nägäst" ruled all marriage, even 586 684 the non-ecclesiastical "semanya" marriage outside the church premises. Divorce proceedings in the old-Amhara areas still can be carried through only with agreement of the "mänfäs agway", the soul-confessor, one of the priests of the parish, although no divorce is possible in a church marriage.

This "mänfäs agway" receives a small salary from the state; he can summon local state police if the accused mate has refused to appear, to bring him by force. If the divorce is granted, the "mänfäs agway" usually sentences both mates to a fine of Eth$5.- payable to him, on the grounds that both are technically lawbreakers for

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

MODERNIZATION AND THE PEASANT

*565 121 At the beginning of this chapter we alluded to stereotyped views of the peasantry held by modern-educated Ethiopians who have no meaningful communication with them. It may be fruitful at this point to consider the relationship between the peasant's world and Ethiopia's quest for modernity in the form of a series of critical responses to these stereotypes.

Three views of the peasantry are of particular relevance. One sees the peasant as exploited, hence potentially progressive; one sees the peasant as uneducated, hence reactionary; and a third sees the peasant as traditionalist, hence irrelevant to Ethiopia's modernizing culture. In responding to these opinions we shall discuss, first, the peasant's conservatism; second, areas of the peasant's receptivity to change; and, finally, aspects of peasant culture which may have a positive value for Ethiopia in transition.

Peasant Conservatism

Those who eulogize the simple integrity of peasant life and regret the peasant's suppressed condition in a social order pejoratively termed "feudal" at times maintain that with a radical change of leadership in the government the peasantry would respond with renewed economic initiative and progressive orientation. Given leaders they can trust, it is argued, the Amhara peasants would support radical efforts to restructure their lives and would participate meaningfully in democratic political procedures designed to promote social change.

*565 121 178 181 This view overlooks the fact, which has impressed travelers of many centuries in Ethiopia, that the Abyssinian peasant clings to his traditional ways with unruffled tenacity. The flavor of his conservatism may be illustrated by the following conversation with an unusually open-minded peasant in Manz. The man was complaining about the dangers presented by a little stream between his home and the local church during the rainy season. "If you can't put up some kind of bridge," I suggested, "why do you not stretch a heavy rope across it so people can hold on to something and not be swept away?" "That is a good idea," he replied, "but we just do not do that sort of thing around here."

Such behavior has been explained by many observers, Ethiopians and foreigners alike, as due to simple laziness. No peasant can afford to be simply lazy, however. The roots of this inertia go deeper. They touch a number of fundamental features in Amhara peasant culture which orient the peasantry against the introduction of novelty.

*565 121 777 178 One of these is the concept of fate (*eddīl*) which the Amhara invoke to account for the ups and downs of their lives. *Eddīl* appears to signify the working of God's will insofar as it affects human purposes, and is to be re-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

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"Balla", after weeks of searching, a strong tree trunk is selected, after weeks of searching, to serve as center port for the new tuqul.

"Tequr enchät" (Pygeum Africanum), actually light red (lit. black wood), a porous hardwood, commonly available, which seasons well.

[278
589]

Rosewood, "Kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica) the search for which is a major occupation and livelihood of poor widows, since the bark and twigs are consumed against tapeworm. It is a heavy wood which can take a fine polish, thus more commonly used in noble homes. It is commonly available, at edge of "dega" upland forest.

"qarqaha", a bamboo of river valleys, can grow up to 5" in diameter, commonly used as major posts in tents of feudal lords during their military campaigns.

"yäbäraha shemäl" (bambusa abyssinica), lit. "bamboo of the jungle", a strong bamboo from the qolla lowland, traded from there in former times to serve as a staff for the spear; now used by shepherds as staff, and to fend off dogs, also for some simple furniture.

Male wood is also called "tabot enchät" because hardwood is used to make the tabot, the sacred tablet inscribed with the name of a church, placed in the inner sanctum, symbolizing the Ark of Moses in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem.

[778]

824 313 Female woods ("enest enchat") are preferred and much more used than hardwoods, if the purposes permit, because they are more easily worked:

"Ted" (Juniperus Procera), or (Juniperus Phoenicoea) pencil cedar, is popular as a tall conifer, easy to split, moisture-resistent in rainy season, termite-resistent. It is one of the most important woods, and the only one of the traditional woods that is actually planted and protected by cut thornbushes against goats (which like to feed on the nursling). The grown tree resembles the cypress, and is the landmark of churches, churchyards and church schools. Thus the tree assumes a kind of sacredness, perhaps since pre-Christian times. In the tuqul it is often used as the horizontal, transversal beam. [778]

"Zigba" (Podocarpus elongata, or, Podocarpus gracilor) is a tall conifer of similar properties, with stringy, tough wood, used to make the alga bedsteads and other furniture.

"Ketketta" (Dodonea viscosa) is used for small carpentry, walking sticks; due to its slightly resinous but long-lasting qualities for torch parade at Kasqal or wedding festivities. The leaves have household uses. [313]

"Qwara" (Erytrina tomentosa), used for slats in simple carpentry.

824 313 417 "Qenchub" bush, which resembles the euphorbia but grows at higher altitudes and is tougher, is cut and

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

A. The Structure of Church Organization.

346
778 a) The Church buildings and design.

The traditional church building is round, designed on a pattern of three concentric circles. This combines the round pattern of the African hut, though much larger in this case, with the functional design of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. Like the latter, each church has a Holy of Holies ("geddesta geddusan"), a closed inner sanctum, which may be entered only by upper priesthood
[782] or the day's officiating priest. He carries burning and smoking incense in a metal or clay censer, while he marches around the sacred wooden tablet, the "tabot", located there. On the tabot, which may not be seen by layman's eyes, are inscribed, in Geez, the name of the saint to whom the particular (parish) church is dedicated, plus magical names of angels and geometric symbolism and phrases from both the Old and New Testament. The "tabot" represents symbolically the Ark of Moses kept by the ancient Israelites in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem

346 The second circumference, the "mäqdäs", can be
[788] seen from the outside through several doorless openings. Here the priests perform the eucharist, hidden from the public gaze by portable white linen screens. The "maqdas" is restricted only during services.

796 Within the third, walled-in circumference, the
346 "taza", called also "gene mahlet" (lit. reciting-place of devotional poetry), the chorister-scribes ("dabtara") congregate while they chant devotional poetry and other

713 beneath kneelength shirt ("qämis") and shamma; often
292 they wear sandals. They usually let a full beard grow
as richly as it will. Another private symbol of priest-
[293] ly nobility is an abbreviated "maqomya" leaning staff, shorter, without crutch, topped by an ivory knob and equipped as a walking stick, called "sände kahanat", with an iron point at the bottom.

In church parades, priests and deacons add colorfully embroidered garments of imported and embroidered velvet, rayon, silk, brocade, etc., often cut like the ancient leopard-skin in sleeveless capes which hang from the shoulders over front and back. If of domestic origin, the holy day garments are dyed black or red. Embroidery is of gold or silver thread, and sometimes includes gold or silver filigree plates in geometric patterns (e.g.the
[293] sun). On such occasions the ordinary sun umbrella ("jantela") of reeds gives way to a colorful umbrella of imported cloth, in which red and gold predominate. It is now often attached to the ribs of a modern umbrella. The black cape ("kaba") is held across the chest with a metal (often silver) clasp or chain.

293 On such holy day parades, clergy and upper-class
778 persons married in a eucharistic ceremony ("qurban"), wear the metal crown, "akill". This is one of the most valuable of each church's possessions, always locked in the church when not in use, usually donated by noble sponsors. They are usually made of silver, or at least of brass, and the older more traditiona ones are shaped in tiered stories of circles narrowing toward the top

293 story. Later ones imitate European crowns.
778

In parades tall crosses of bright metal are carried, Like most Abyssinian priestly hand crosses, they are so ornamented with further cross designs that they appear to the Abyssinian as "perforated"; hence the common expression "perforated as the cross" (where a Westerner would use the symbol of the sieve). Priests and monks always carry a handcross, which they hold out to a passing acquaintance to kiss, thepproper greeting toward clergy, even on ordinary days. Smaller crosses are [789] used by the public as amulets against evil spirits. The larger crosses, with their ornamental supports, forming perforated circles and squares, sometimes contain engraved verses. [325] The method of casting is the"cire perdue", which is also used to cast the concave tops of the "maqomya" crutch. [534] In front of old churches, resonant stones are suspended from poles, and when struck, act as bells to summon for the service.

778 Other metal church utensils include the censers in which incense is burned during the services, swung by the officiating priest. They may be of brass, silver, iron, even clay in poorer churches. They are often equipped with numerous small bells. Very common is [534] the sistrum, called "sänassel" (onomatopoetic), a rattle instrument reminscent of ancient Egypt, usually of brass, 8 inches long, with a straight wooden handle, the metal frame cast in "cire perdue", often by Falasha smiths. The frame is perforated like a cross. The tinkling disks, [177] which glide along the cross-wire between the sides of the frame

778 the frame, are now often cut from modern tin cans.

The ceremonial drinking cup used in the eucharist is the "ṭewa", usually made of metal. But if used in the "mähabber" communal sodality outside the church, it is often of horn or clay, about 4½ inches high, 5 inches diameter at top, 1½ inches at bottom. On the latter occasion it is filled with barley beer or "berz" (honey-
[788] water). This is given the peasant at plowing time to confer blessing upon him, thus called "marǎs baggo" (for spring plowing).

Other equipment belonging to the church may be a wooden pulpit for reading (not preaching), some tin
[373] oil-lamps or the old wick-like candles (called "twär").
778 Very important are the drums, huge affairs carried by
534 the younger dancers during worship, suspended from shoulder straps. The barrel-like "nägarit", of which the average church has three (or must borrow them), usually has a height of at least 30 inches, a diameter of 15 inches. It is made of "wanza" wood (olive or other hardwood), with tanned oxhide moistened and stretched tightly across both ends. The drummer operates it with the flat of his fingers and top of flat palm. Another type is the "kabaro" drum, in which one end is bigger than the other. The drums and the swaying maqomya sticks keep time during the chanting. Trumpets are used only for parades, to herald the march, but not in accompaniment.

778 When not in use, most of these utensils are loc-
34 ked in a little treasure house, called "bätalehem" (in
251

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

778 346 251 Geez). Here the bread and wine used in the eucharist are prepared and stored with great secrecy. The utensils of the nearby cooking hut, the baking pan "metad" and large clay jars for barley beer, are also stored here. Supplies of tyeff, barley, wheat, beans, peas, may also be stored.

779 186 In recent years, church parades feature prominantly the flag of the nation, the red-green-yellow of the central government, emphasizing in modern ways the close union of church and state that has long been traditional in Abyssinia.

(e) Worship and Devotional Poetry.

533 796 The musical chants and notations studies formally have already been outlined in connection with church education.

Church hymns, including devotional poetry, are called "qene" in a generic rather than specifically accurate sense. A collection of them is contained in the book "qubaē qana", and they are sung in a special mode. The chief mode is called "selt". It has three variations:

(1) "geez" - short tones, dedicated to the "Father";

(2) "ezel" - mournful tones in minor key, dedicated to the "Son" 's passion;

(3) "araray" - long, drawn-out tones, dedicated to the "Holy Ghost".

These variations are interlaced, for special results, and for specific occasions. The mass, "qeddase" (lit. sanctification) is chanted in a mode bearing the

X794 756 123 not to cross the boundary in front of the stage again. He is not to approach the house until well after nightfall, and is to come by a back trail, so as not to be seen by passersby.

X794 796 123 Thus, after nightfall on the 23rd of the month of Yäkatit, he climbed over eroded back trails down to the "Kokit" section of Addis Aläm and approached the house of Lady Säläntu where her devotees were assembled. It was 7:30 P.M. More oil lamps had been lit. There were about 20 women, but a male zar doctor with talents in poetry and chanting sat near the stage, wearing a white turban much like a Coptic Abyssinian priest. A powerful male drummer had been hired for the occasion.

X794 796 [123] Lady Säläntew still took no official notice of the foreigner, for her zar had not yet "descended", and without that she was just a hollow shell, a mute "horse". One of her brothers motioned the foreigner politely to a seat on the mudbench that ringed the wall. There was much subdued whispering, as if a momentous event was about to take place. The hairdo of several of the women devotees and doctors had [302] been specially arranged to honor their individual zars: those not permitted to cut their hair had plaited it into a braid ("surosh") surrounding the skull; others had shaved a circle in the middle (called "gucho"), like a little girl.

X794 796 778 Other preparations and paraphenalia included the ritual coffee trays ("gända"), which symbolized the wooden "tabot" (sacred tablet) of the holy Coptic city of Aksum, and which were dedicated to several zars including Säyfu Ṭhängär and Rahelo. The ancient mother of many zars, named "Werär" was believed to have stolen the original "tabot"

×794 796 778 from Aksum (just as Menelik I is regarded by the Coptic Abyssinians to have brought it to Aksum from Solomon's Holy of Holies at the temple in Jerusalem). But the tabot of the zars also symbolized the outdoor tree stump which serves the invisible zar spirits as a table. Thus, partaking of refreshments from the coffee trays constituted a kind of communion with the zar spirit to whom the tray was dedicated, although this was done only during intermissions of the cult services. On one tablet, the "araqi" supplied by the foreigner stood ready.

×794 796 782 In the corners, more types of incense were burning than before. In addition to "etan" (frankincense), the domestic Ethiopian "bukbuka" was sending up clouds of perfumed smoke. Leaves of "wogart", believed pleasing to the zar that causes headaches and neuralgic pains, were occasionally placed on the clay incense burners. From time to time, some imported pebbles of yellow sulphur ("kabrē" or "din") sent up acrid smoke. But the sweet odor of most types of incense predominated most of the time.

×794 796 756 781 [533] About 8:30, the drummer brought his heavy drum down from beneath the solidly built roof, and began to drum slowly, rythmically, still subdued. The curtain was lowered, but the shadow of Lady Salamtew behind it could still be vaguely seen. Suddenly raucous grunts began to be heard from behind the curtain, emanating from Woyzärō Salämtew. This meant that her first major zar had arrived, and was beginning to descend into her, performing the magical coitus. Her joyshouts became louder, higher-pitched, turning to shrieks, quicker and quicker. She was beginning to perform the "gurri" victory dance of the zar who had conquered her.

Immediately the women devotees began to handclap rythmically, gradually quickening their tempo, in time to the twisting and turning

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

346
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Church at Abo, Baressa gorge

291
778
793

Monk and deacon receiving offerings [Facing p. 170]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

shortly before the Italian invasion of 1935, the first was accomplished peacefully; but not the second. According to the story told me, the *tabot* of the lower Ghiorghis had been borrowed and carried in solemn procession on the plateau in order to ward off a swarm of locusts which were damaging the crops there. This measure was successful, and the plateau people determined to keep the *tabot* which had proved itself so powerful. The people of the gorge would not agree, and tried to recapture their *tabot*. The plateau party however successfully defended it by force of arms, and later built a little church to house it. It was not unusual to attribute specific powers to *tabots*: for instance, that of Dimbaro Mariam (a little east of the north-east corner of the sheet) used to be carried to war by the emperors, attended by a retinue of priests and scribes, to bring success in battle.

The last church to be founded in these parts was the new St. Gabriel, on a prominent hill-top in the district of Dilila near the south-east corner of the sheet. I came upon it when first following the upper course of the Beressa in December 1946. As I approached the foot of the hill I learnt from passers-by that a new church had been built upon it, and that the foundress herself, a certain great lady from Addis Ababa, was at that moment on the hill. Climbing a rocky track to the top, I saw a cluster of new huts and the still unfinished building of the church. Nearby was a large canvas awning stretched rather clumsily between rough stone walls. Under the awning I found the lady herself, short and stout and genial, sitting on a camp chair; around her, squatting on the ground, was a deferential assembly of local dignitaries, personal retainers and priests. After the fluster caused by my unexpected arrival had died down, I had a talk with the worthy lady who, having just presided at a mid-day meal, now plied me with very welcome refreshment. She had been born and bred in this very place. Having spent most of her life elsewhere, and somehow acquired a certain amount of wealth, she had returned in later life to her place of birth and founded this church only the year before my visit. It met a need, she said, for the area lacked a church, and no other St. Gabriel existed anywhere in the neighbourhood. As it chanced, I had come on the day after St. Gabriel's annual festival (which is the 19th of Tahissas, or, in European style, the 28th of December). She expressed great regret that I had not been present at the festival itself, when big crowds had come from Debra Berhan and from all the surrounding country.

This incident seemed to me interesting as demonstrating the tenacity of the local religious tradition in Ethiopia. After all the upheaval and disruption of Italian occupation and the Second World War, the hold of the ancient Church over the Amhara people seemed unweakened. The Church was able to extend its influence in an area not yet well served as readily as ever. It was still an appropriate act for a pious person to found a new church in a lonely place. Perhaps these things are not surprising, for the Church has been the main support and inspiration of Ethiopian unity since the earliest Christian times. It has always been the focal centre of the national sentiment, the fount of renewed resistance to aggression, the main force, in fact, which has maintained Ethiopia's independence and made of it, as Menelik himself once said, an island of Christianity in the great Islamic sea.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

They say the prayers by heart and
without light, except in the lamps or chandeliers, for they 796 782
have not got lamps. They burn butter in these chandeliers, [373]
for they have not got oil. They pray or chaunt very loud, [354]
without art of singing, and they do not recite (alternate) [257]
verses, but all sing straight on. Their prayers are psalms, and
on feast days besides psalms they recite prose, according as [533]
the feast is so is the prose. They always stand in the churches; at matins they only say one single lesson: this is said by a priest or a friar, rather shouted than intoned, and he reads this lesson before the principal entrance. When this lesson is finished, on Saturdays, Sundays, and 792
feast days, they make a procession with four or five crosses 796
on their poles, and a cross not so much raised as carried like a stick in the left hand, because they carry a thurible in the right hand, since as many as carry a cross carry a thurible, there are always as many thuribles as crosses. They wear some silk cloaks, not well made, because they [292]
are not wider than the width of a piece of damask, or other silk from top to bottom. Before the breast, a cross piece to the flanks on each side, of any other stuff and of any colour, even though it should not match the principal part, and of this principal part a good ell hangs behind dragging on the ground. They make this procession through the circuit, which is like a cloister. This being ended, on the said Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts, he who has to say mass enters with two others into the chancel; they bring out an [778]
effigy of Our Lady, which they have in ancient pictures in all churches and monasteries. He who has to say mass places himself in the centre of the transept with his face towards the principal entrance, and the image in his hands held before his breast: and those who stand by his sides hold lighted candles in their hands, and all the others commence a chaunt like prose, and all walk, shouting and leaping as if dancing[1]. they hold hands and go round, before the

[1] *Como em chacota*, dancing and singing, *i.e.*, not reverentially.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

792 thuribles of copper. When mass was said, I saw a great gold chalice and gold spoon, with which they administered the communion. Of the three hundred friars who came to this monastery, very few were those that I knew as belonging to it: and I asked some of my friends how it was, that with so large a number of friars in the monastery as they said, they were not present at such a feast. They told me that even though there were more than they had said, that they were scattered about in these monasteries and churches, and markets, to seek for their living, because that could not be in the monastery whilst they were young men; and when they were old men, and could not walk, they came to die in the monastery. On that day I saw the habit put on seventeen young men. There is a tomb in this 778 monastery which they say is of an Abba or provincial of 776 this monastery who is named Philip, and they give him the merits of a Saint, saying that there was a King Prester John who commanded that Saturday should not be observed in his kingdoms and lordships, and this Abba Philip went to that King Prester with his friars, and undertook to show how God had commanded that Saturday should be kept, and that whoever did not keep it should die by stoning, and that he would maintain this before all the fathers of Ethiopia: and he made it good before the King. Therefore 796 they say that he was a Saint for making Saturday to be 782 kept, and they treat him as a Saint, and they hold a feast for him every year, in the month of July, which they call *Castar* Philip, which means funeral or memorial of Philip.[1] On this account the people of this monastery are the most Judaizing of all the kingdoms of Prester John. I came twice to this Castar of Philip, at which they did me much honour, and they kill many cows at this feast. In one year they killed thirty, and in another year twenty-eight, and in

[1] *Castar* should be *Teskar*; Mansfield Parkyns calls it a sort of funereal feast, where charities are bestowed on the poor and the priests.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

784 He says that during all Passion week they are dressed in black or blue, and do not speak to one another for grief, saying that Judas by a kiss of peace betrayed his Lord.

532 Although there are in the churches effigies painted on all
784 the walls, and also crosses, nevertheless on no cross is a crucifix painted, neither have they any of solid carving; because they say they are not deserving to see Christ crucified.

792 All the priests, friars, and gentlemen carry crosses in their
778 hands, both on foot and on horseback; and the laymen of the people and lower people carry crosses round their necks. Every priest and friar carries a little horn of copper with holy water, and the hosts where they arrive beg of them water and a blessing, and they give it. Before they eat they throw drops of water on the food, and also in the drinking vases.

411 Their arms are assagays, few swords, a few shirts of mail, long and narrow; our Portuguese say that they are not of good mail.

There are many bows and arrows, they have no feathers like ours; there are very few helmets and casques. Those that there are have come since they have had intercourse with the Portuguese. There are plenty of strong bucklers;
713 there are no cannon, except two swivel guns which we brought them. At our departure there were fourteen muskets at Court, which they bought from the Turks who come there to trade. The Prester ordered whatever they asked to be given for them, and ordered men to be taught to shoot.

534 There are trumpets, but not good ones; there are many drums of copper which come from Cairo, and others of wood which have leather on both sides; there are tambourines like ours, and large cymbals which they sound. There are flutes and some instruments with chords, square like harps, which they call David moçanquo, which means the harp of David. They play these to the Prester, and not well.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

692 nishes all persons by that authority, even those of the Abuna's family, without any sort of deference paid to him; and this, as appears by the judges, or king's records, is of very ancient standing. The king calls an assembly of the clergy when he pleases, generally with the advice of the Abuna, and there is none considered legal if he is not present, if in the kingdom.

[682] Welled Hayrat (Ras Michael's son) was excommunicated for killing a refugee at the Abuna's feet, in consequence of which he confiscated the Abuna's villages in Tigre, nor was the curse ever taken off *. The Itchegue, or prior of the
693 monks, if he be chosen a lay-man, must be ordained by the
793 Abuna. He is named by the king, who nominates all superiors of monasteries. The Lika-cahanat, or chief of the priests, is ordained by the Abuna and Itchegue, who both hold a corner of a scarf put upon him. He is an inquisitor of morals among the priests, and has so much salt and cloth from each district. A priest at his ordination pays three salts to the Abuna. He comes to the house of the latter, enters, and kisses the threshold. The Abuna, sitting on a sofa at one end of the room, reads the Scriptures to himself. Then having paid his salt, the person retires and kisses the threshhold, returning without imposition of hands, or any ceremony. Old men are made priests, and young men deacons by a simple jussit. More probable accounts say, that there is only one salt paid, that the person stands at the door, while the Abuna, having made the sign of the cross, holding it in his hand, says, "I have ordained you a priest." The person then enters the room, kisses the cushion of the sofa, and retires. Many are ordained that can neither read nor write.

[764] The Abyssinians have an office for the dead; and worship
●778 pictures of saints, even such as are not consecrated. This we had an opportunity of seeing, every time we were obliged to draw some Madonna. All those that saw it, kissed the
000 ground before it, with their foreheads on the earth. The

* The Abuna's house is a kind of sanctuary, in which criminals are protected from massacre, not from trial. They are sometimes tried there by the royal judges, or dragged from it to the tribunal.

[p.56]

6: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

AG-H quickly ducked behind a bush. He placed the purse in his *gäbäte*, the lengthwise half of a gourd which all travelers carry for mixing their ration of crushed linseed (called *tälba*) with water. He wrapped this in a piece of colorful imported silk that he had bought as a gift for his home church. Flattening the package as much as possible, he placed it on his head in the manner of the Abyssinian priests when they carry the *tabot*, the sacred tablet which is taken from the inner sanctum of the church to a pool of water on the day of the saint after whom the church is named. With his free hand he quickly folded his daytime toga in the manner of one going to church and borrowed the largest cross his companions were carrying. Holding it before him like a weapon, and looking serious, holy, and unafraid, AG-H led the caravan as he climbed up the trail in a slow, dignified manner.

When the bandits drew near, they bowed politely. AG-H stopped and gave them the cross to kiss. They asked respectfully to which saint his *tabot* had been consecrated. He replied with the most common one, *Qeddus Giyorgis* 'St. George.' Then they wanted to know which parish church it was from. By this time the old wit had returned to AG-H, and he answered: *"Yätalba masha Giyorgis"* 'St. George of the linseed-paste.'

The bandits nodded gravely and escorted him all the way up the escarpment, explaining that the area was dangerous and full of organized bandits. Some days later they learned how they had been fooled, and forever after they were on the lookout for AG-H on the banks of the Blue Nile.

Poetic Revenge. AG-H had spoken a candid truth once too often and was in official disgrace with Emperor Menelik. As usual, when miffed, he retired to Gondar.

But this time, having left Addis Ababa unofficially and quickly, his finances were low. Adding to his discomfiture was the news, brought to him by a friend from the capital some months later, that Menelik was amusing himself by telling stories of the misdeeds and follies of AG-H.

An idea of poetic revenge came to him. He instructed his friend to go to the Emperor and report that AG-H had died and that his kinsmen in Gondar were too poor to hold a fitting *täzkar*, a big memorial feast held forty days after death.

Empress Taitu was first to hear of the sudden death of her favorite. She promptly stormed into the chambers of Emperor Menelik, much as she had stormed into the battle of Adua against the Italians shortly before, riding with the troops of her own province. "You murderer," she shouted at the Emperor, "you broke his heart, you banned him from the court." She threw up her hands in misery, wailed as if a close kinsman had died, moving back and forth, chanting aloud about the goodness of the deceased. After a while this began to affect even the iron Menelik. At this point the messenger brought up the rest of his news, the *täzkar* problem. Menelik promptly gave him the huge sum of ten thousand thalers, to assuage his own feelings of guilt and to calm the Empress.

For a while AG-H enjoyed the fruits of his revenge back in Gondar. But he knew that he could not hide forever. Moreover, his generosity to kinsmen, neighbors, and transient monks was such that before long his money was gone.

So one day he reappeared in Addis Ababa. When he first approached the Empress, the stout woman almost fainted. She immediately sent a messenger to the Emperor. Unwilling to believe the news, he sent the messenger back to ask whether the Empress was feeling well. Thereupon, she took AG-H by the hand and stormed into Menelik's chamber. The Emperor was too shocked and surprised to be angry. He managed to inquire, "How is it that the dead arise from the grave?"

With a deep bow, AG-H replied: "Your Majesty, it is not uncommon in our Christian religion to arise from the dead" [alluding to the resurrection of Jesus].

Another version: While in disgrace, and living in Gondar, the newly-rich AG-H neglected his field, wasted his money and, toward the end of the rainy season, his wife and children were starving. So he sent his long-suffering wife to Addis Ababa with the false story of his death and need for *täzkar* money. Explaining his reappearance later, AG-H said, "Your Majesty, I so longed to see the faces of your Majesties again that I was not at peace in the earth and had to return."

A third version: "Your Majesty, they had so many rules and regulations up there [pointing to heaven] that I preferred to return and live under the rules of Your Majesty."

Sex On The Hill. Women are forgetful creatures. Sometimes they don't even remember that they don't wear trousers under their cotton skirts. One day AG-H was climbing up a steep trail in the company of men and women. A connoisseur of female flesh, he kept behind the women

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

main purpose, but of course they cannot be closed up. 293
Ordinary umbrellas are never used by the Abyssinians, though huge and brilliant coloured umbrellas are used by priests and other important personages on ceremonial occasions.

On feast days the chiefs and other functionaries at 292
Court change their cotton shirt for one of silk or satin, gorgeously embroidered in gold and silver, and in various colours. And finally a pelerine of bright-coloured cloth of velvet, or, better still, of lion or black leopard skin ornamented in silver and silver-gilt, is permitted to be worn by those only whom it is desired to distinguish on account of specially meritorious conduct, generally in war.

The full-dress costume of a Ras or Dejazmach, with 293
bristling lion's mane head-dress, velvet cape with lion's mane collar, embroidered in gold and silver-gilt, and gala shield and sword-scabbard covered with velvet and embossed with silver-gilt ornamentation, is a really magnificent one, and the appearance of Dejazmach Nado, the envoy to King George in 1919, at Buckingham Palace in this dress caused quite a sensation.

Mention must also be made of one article which is 301
an indispensable adjunct to the dress of every Christian 778
Abyssinian, and that is the *matab*, a silken cord carrying an amulet or charm, which is worn round the neck as the badge of their faith.

The gentler sex affect as much jewellery of all sorts, 301
bracelets, rings, anklets, necklaces, earrings, etc., as they are able to procure; these are of native make as already described. As a general rule they have extraordinarily small *attaches*, and of all the native bracelets that we collected in and round Addis Ababa none

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

the eye. Its beauty was not increased by the addition of a corrugated iron annexe for the purpose of seating some of the foreign guests at the Emperor's coronation. 346

The Abouna was good enough to arrange for us to visit the church, and we were received with ceremony by a number of priests, who were exceedingly kind and enabled us to make a thorough inspection, and even allowed us to take some photographs (which unfortunately, owing to the bad light, did not come out). They showed us everything with great enthusiasm and begged us to return "when a great feast was in progress". The building consists of three portions, a sort of outer gallery, an inner court, and finally the Holy Place or Holy of Holies, an inner chamber in the centre of the building in which rests the *Tabot* or representative of the Ark of the Covenant to which only the priests are allowed access. 346 778

The priests threw open the doors of the Holy Place for us to see in; it contained a kind of altar where the Sacraments are kept, and was surrounded by priests in very gorgeous vestments, burning incense and holding big crosses and crucifixes. 778 788

In one of the galleries a service was proceeding. Two priests were beating with their hands very big drums made of wood and hide; many others were shaking their curious little brass cymbals; and all were chanting, swaying their bodies, and slowly waving their praying-sticks. The time was really good, and the chant was rhythmic and tuneful, and not at all unmelodious. 796 534

The galleries were profusely decorated with huge life-size paintings depicting mainly scenes from the Scriptures, scenes from the life of Christ, the miracles, etc.; one dreadfully realistic picture of the Massacre 353 532

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

353 532 of the Innocents was very striking. There was also a portrait of the Emperor Menelik, and of other noted characters in Abyssinian history; the likenesses of royal and other famous persons are frequently to be found on the walls or among the possessions of the principal churches.

• 778 In this connection an amusing incident is told by Stern. King Sehala Selassie had been given by Captain Harris' mission to the Court of Shoa, a portrait of Queen Victoria. This had been carefully guarded for many years amongst his treasures until his death, some time after which his successor, King Haile Malekot, presented it to the principal church at Ankober where the people used to flock on grand festivities to worship it as the representation of the Virgin Mary!

The *Tabot*, to which reference has been made, is the object of much veneration and has to be blessed or consecrated prior to being used in the particular church to which it is allocated. In one case the priest in charge of the church had committed a murder, and the *Tabot* had to be sent up to Addis to be reconsecrated before it could be used again.

796 785 The most prominent features of the practice of their religion are the fasts, feasts, and pageants; and each of these is sufficiently remarkable. A very large part of the year—about 150 days—falls under the category of fast or feast, and both are strictly observed. During their fasts they are forbidden not only meat, but also butter and milk and eggs, and it is really surprising to see to what an extent this rigid abstinence is followed, especially as the fasting periods are lengthy, that prior to Easter lasting forty days.

For a day or so immediately prior to the main feast,

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

796 ments, whilst their shaggy little ponies curveted and plunged like mad things.

Dressed in his magnificent Abyssinian robes, carrying a modern rifle, and mounted on a wonderfully caparisoned black mule, Ras Tafari rode slowly up to the tent and took his seat on the throne surrounded by hundreds of gorgeously clad notables, and facing what was perhaps the most striking contingent of all, the priests, ranged on three sides of a square in front of the throne. Those on the opposite side of the square were all in white; those on the right and left wore robes of such dazzling colouring that in the sun's bright rays it almost hurt one's eyes to look at them. Red, blue, green, orange, purple, every imaginable colour, thickly covered with heavy gold and silver embroideries, and gold ornaments and head-dresses. And as if this orgy of colour were not enough, servants held scores of gaudy coloured gold-embroidered and much befringed and tasselled umbrellas over them.

796 778 534 Many of the priests carried magnificent crosses of gold and silver, others their long silver or ivory-handled praying-sticks, whilst some held various musical bell-like instruments, and about half a dozen managed large drums—things about three feet high made of silver with copper bands. Particularly striking were the dresses of ten young boys bearing golden crowns, symbolical of the ten commandments; while the *Tabots* brought from the neighbouring churches were very gorgeously bedecked. It was a wonderful and barbaric sight.

796 535 And then the Dance of the Priests began. Low chanting without music at first, followed by slow graceful movements of all their hundreds of arms in fine

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[38]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[39]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē.

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna,* an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[40] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables.

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 the long rains. Children go singing from house to house in small bands, or take bunches of wild flowers to relatives, in hopes of getting a bit of *dābo*. In most homes an animal is slaughtered—in some areas superstition decrees that it be a white-headed lamb or a red chicken—and there is much eating and drinking, the basic activity of every holiday.

A little more than two weeks later the much more important festival of Masqal is observed, celebrating the discovery of the true Cross by Empress Helena. By this time the heavy rains have subsided, and the air is filled with something of the spirit of spring. (Although Ethiopia lies north of the [132] equator the summer rainy season is known as "winter" because of its coldness.) The landscape is colored by acres of yellow wildflowers, which are cut and fastened to the poles each family brings to a central clearing where a huge bonfire is built. In late afternoon, after the tepee of poles has been constructed, the priests begin the ceremony by intoning appropriate chants. Then [554] each status group circles the poles three times, in honor of the Trinity—first the local lord, then the clergy, the lesser nobility, the peasant men, women, and finally the children. In the evening the festival takes a more secular turn. The bonfire is lit, and the young braves dance around it shouting their war chants. As the fire blazes on, these fellows seize burning brands and playfully hurl them at one another.

In November the monthly St. Michael's Day is honored with special celebrations. The peasants travel distances to attend the ceremonies at any [778] church consecrated to "Mikā'ēl." Holy water and hot springs sanctified by Mikā'ēl's name are drunk and bathed in by those with many kinds of disease. The rituals involve carrying the Mikā'ēl *tābot* ("holy ark") out of the church and elaborate chanting and dancing by the clergy. After the *tābot* has been returned, in a procession in which the laymen follow shouldering their rifles (undoubtedly spears in older times), folk dancing and singing go on until late [584] afternoon. This provides an occasion for the more enterprising adolescent male to spot a potential bride, about whom he may diffidently ask his father to make inquiries.

*565 796 526 Christmas, celebrated in early January, is marked chiefly by the playing of secular games. The common word for Christmas, *gannā*, is actually the name of an outdoors game played with sticks and a wooden puck. Played by boys, young men, and occasionally elders on the afternoon of Christmas Day, *gannā* is marked by a spirit of aggressive license. Accustomed norms of deference are held in abeyance. The game is played in so rough and disorderly a manner that it often results in broken limbs and scarred faces. Staged by two teams made up on the spot, *gannā* is concluded at dusk by volleys of abusive limericks with which the victors revile their adversaries.[4]

*565 796 This is the season for special festivities on saints' days. St. Gabriel is particularly honored in December, as are St. Mary, St. George, and again St. Michael

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭimqat*, means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭimqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā*, grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household.

The program for Ṭimqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized.

By noon on Ṭimqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭimqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter.

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings.

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and

[772] As for the beginning and end of the world, all Amhara believe that the
[184] world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium
[773] arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside
[775] down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

*565 The Amhara peasant's view of nature is matter-of-fact. There are a few
82 traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy
• [778] places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration
[241] of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.*

[792] The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws
[784] of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and
[241] they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

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[125] [157] * All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge overlooking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 776 "If God wants me to, I may go to school; but it is hard to know what God will want."

*565 782 776 As a corollary of this outlook, the main way for man to achieve anything on earth is to pray to the Almighty. If one prays properly, God's power can be invoked to punish one's foes. In former times at least, the peasant went to church and prayed for vengeance, then expected his enemy to fall sick or die. If he could not pray effectively himself, he would give money to a priest and the latter would do the job for him. It is commonly believed by the Amhara peasantry today that their praying and fasting were a major factor in ridding the country of the Italian invaders.

*565 776 This conception of deity is at heart that of the early Old Testament, a powerful Lord who punishes, rewards, and avenges. But it is suffused with the pagan feeling for a plurality of deities. The Amhara is constantly aware of a number of supernatural beings other than *Egziābhēr* who affect his life for better or for worse.

Some of these are the simple agents of God in everyday affairs. Each individual receives at birth a pair of guardian angels of his own sex, one for daytime and one for night. They serve to protect him from accidents, sickness, and enemies. When some misfortune befalls a person, it is because God has ordered his guardian angels to neglect their duties.

More important are the many supernatural beings with wills of their own. Among the benevolent spirits the main figures are:

Miḳā'ēl	The archangel Michael
Gabre'ēl	The archangel Gabriel
Giyorgis	St. George
Madhānē Alam	Savior of the World
Selassie	Trinity
Māryām	St. Mary
Abbo	Gabra Manfas Qeddus, an Abyssinian saint
Taḳla Hāymānot	Another Abyssinian saint

Most Amhara are particularly devoted to some one of these sacred figures. Partiality to one or another may be due to the fact that it is the patron saint of one's father, or represented in one's Christian name, or commemorated by the church in one's area. In time of sickness, a man will drink holy water [782] from the church of a certain saint, and make a vow, for example, "If Giyorgis cures me, I will give money to the church in his name, I will kill a lamb for him, and I will drink in a Giyorgis *māhebar* ("religious fraternal association") every month thereafter."

*565 778 These sacred figures are represented by numerous holy arks, or *tābot*. A *tābot* is a hollow oblong box containing some sacred script. It is identified

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

with the saint for whom it has been named, and personalized. The extent to which the ark is regarded as human is shown by the following remark of a peasant who looked at the picture of a church on a TAT card and explained: "When the ark has been given incense, it will be happy. . . . If this church is given a new roof, the ark will be very happy and give *Injarā* to the people." 565* 778

The saints and the *tābot* which represent them are the objects of much veneration and prayer. They figure so prominently in the Amhara's outlook that at times they appear to be on a par with *Egziābhēr* himself. Two differences may be noted, however. The saints do not take the initiative in interfering in human affairs, as does *Egziābhēr*, but intervene only when appealed to. Their function, moreover, is that of protecting and healing spirits; it is not their portion to administer the punishments which *Egziābhēr* inflicts on those who disobey the religious laws, though they may mete out punishment to someone who breaks a vow he has made to them. 565* 776 778 782

Malevolent spirits, on the other hand, do intervene in human affairs without being invited. Of the evil spirits, the devil—known as *Diabolos*, *Sayṭān*, or *Agannent*, which are names of different spirits to the learned but counted the same in the peasant's mind—is the most powerful. He is imagined as a dark, Negroid type, the least favored sort of racial stock in Ethiopia. He dwells in deep waters, woods, and caves, and likes to roam about at noon and at midnight, especially near dirty places. Amhara avoid going near a lake or pool known to harbor the devil, for fear of being pulled in and drowned. They likewise stay away from dirty places at noon, for fear that he will make them sick. The devil brings epileptic fits. He tries to push people into fire. He also tries to harm human beings by tempting them to some misdeed—stealing, murder, getting drunk—and then have them suffer the consequences. Finally, when the human soul appears for judgment after death, he strives to gain possession of the soul and put it into the fire. Sometimes he is pictured as chewing the souls he manages to obtain. 565* 776 [829] [823] [828] [775]

Despite his inimical gestures toward the human race, the devil is respected as well as feared, for he has much power. Many peasants pray to him for this reason. In time of sickness some choose *Sayṭān*, rather than (or in addition to] *Giyorgis* or *Māryām*, as the one to whom they pray and make promises. On New Year's Day, Christmas, and Easter, prayers to *Sayṭān* are surreptitiously repeated in many quarters. One of these prayers runs: "My lord, bring me through the year. Guard me. If you keep me this year in peace and bring me through the year, I will give you more." Certain individuals are on especially good terms with the devil. They pray to him often, and he visits them from time to time and does favors for them; they are his "friends." When such a person dies, his son often continues the relationship. 565* 776 782

Another kind of spirit producing ill effects is the *zār*. *Zār* spirits are of 565* 776

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 805 796 822 787 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [81] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 18 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 342 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services. 565* 346 341 181 796 822 [778]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *ras*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery. 565* 822 181 361 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order. 565* 822 181 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities. 565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable 565* 156 157 [577]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

conventional Ge'ez honorific. Sanctity of the imperial office is an antique 643
theme, deriving apparently from pagan ideas of divine kingship which were 17
transplanted from South Arabia in the first millennium B.C. along with other aspects of Sabaean culture.[1] But the working ideology which has upheld [538]
this conception during the period of Amhara hegemony draws on Semitic motifs of later origin, motifs which received their classic formulation in the fourteenth century national epic, *Kebra Nagast* (*The Glory of Kings*).

The effect of the *Kebra Nagast* is to make the Ethiopian emperor both physical descendant and spiritual successor to the kings of Israel. The genealogical tie is argued by the legendary union of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, whose offspring, Menelik I, is held to have fathered the line of royalty which allegedly ruled at Aksum and was restored in the thirteenth century. The transfer of religious mission is shown both in a prophetic dream attributed to Solomon, in which God's favor passes from Israel to Ethiopia, and in the story of Menelik's theft from Jerusalem of the most sacred symbol of the Judaic mission, the Ark of the Covenant.* Furthermore, while at the time the *Kebra Nagast* was written the Ethiopian monarch was presented as a friendly cousin of the "king of Rome"—an echo of the sixth-century alliance between Caleb of Ethiopia and Justin I of Byzantium[2]—thereafter he came to be regarded as successor to the latter as well, and hence the sole defender of the true Christian faith.

The Ethiopians have elaborated on this exalted conception of their mon- 643
archy in other literary forms.[3] In royal chronicles and hymns of praise which 538
span seven centuries, the emperors are celebrated for superlative beauty and 17
superhuman powers. In splendor of countenance they are likened to the sun; in awesomeness of power, to the lion; in religious character and divine force, to the kings of Israel and, at times, to God Himself.

In life as well as in literature the person of the emperor was clad with an 643
aura of sanctity. Ethiopian subjects have had to prostrate themselves and 17
refrain from lifting their eyes in his presence. An analogous show of deference was expected when they received royal messages from afar; the recipient had to hear the message outside his home, standing, and naked above the waist.[4] The emperors rarely permitted themselves to be seen in public, and were often secluded by curtains while eating or drinking. They were not addressed directly, but through an interlocutor. Zar'a Yā'qob, whose [644]
officers were said to have kissed the earth each time they heard the sound of his voice, carried the demand for social distance so far that pages attached to his court were not permitted to have contact with anybody from outside, and were put to death if they dared to fraternize with local inhabitants.[5]

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* The orthodox still maintain that the original ark containing the stone tablets of the Law [998]
is located at Aksum. It is symbolized by the *tābot* found in every Ethiopian church.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

builds a tiny thatch hut near the home of his tutor, wears ragged, unsheared 793
sheepskins, and gets his meals by begging. He lives thus for a year or two, 794
until he has mastered the fourteen varieties of chants used in the various masses, and perhaps special chants like the *Praise of Mary* (*Weddāssē Māryām*) which are sung on holidays.

The other, and more important, qualification for the priesthood is marriage according to the law of the church. After a deacon has been married in the customary manner and lived with his wife for at least forty days, their marriage must be solemnized by the celebration of the Eucharist. Thereafter he may not divorce her or remarry if she dies.

With these conditions satisfied, the candidate for priesthood may travel to 793
the *abuna* and be ordained. He acquires thereby the power to bind and to absolve, and is granted full knowledge of the mysteries of the *tābot*. The new priest attaches himself to a church, and is given his share of the monthly assignments for conducting the Mass. This is his main responsibility, though as he grows older he will also acquire confessants to whom he will give advice and assign penances.

Apart from these duties, the life of an Abyssinian priest in many ways resembles that of his lay neighbors. He plows his fields and harvests his crops. He may do business at the markets, or add to his income by weaving. Perhaps the chief difference in his manner of life is the habit of spending time in the "gate of peace," a little building near the church where the clergy assemble after services for hours of drinking *ṭallā* and idle conversation.

In reward for his services—and this is normally the chief inducement to become a priest—the priest is given a share of the revenues in kind brought in from lands owned and managed by the church. He may also be given some land owned by the church to cultivate for himself. In addition, he [431]
receives gifts in kind from his confessants periodically, is entitled to take part in the various feasts to which priests are regularly invited, and is likely to receive some bequest from time to time.*

The insignia of the priest are modest, but they suffice to inform the stranger 793
that here is a man to be shown special respect: a white turban wrapped 292
around the head and a cross carried in the hand, to be kissed by all comers. 293
Older priests often carry a fly-whisk made of horsehair, and a wicker sun 778
umbrella.

Though there are devout and kindly men among them, the Ethiopian 793
priests have never been particularly noted for their moral qualities. Often they are ungenerous and scheming, and ready to exploit their position at the expense of the laity. They are poorly educated in their own tradition, stuttering

* A sheep, or at least a sheepskin—insurance that the Memorial Mass will be properly performed on the fortieth day after the donor's death.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 and misreading sacred texts in a language they have never understood. They
[293] are notorious drinkers, so much so that a modern Ethiopian novelist has one of his characters, a priest, ask: "If one stops drinking, what else is left in this world?"[44]

Nevertheless, the prestige of the priests was unassailable in Amhara culture. Whatever their personal life, they represented the value of ritual sanctity, which made it possible for the Mass to be performed in the local churches. So long as they had been duly ordained and did not break their lawful marriage bond, they were part of a sacred class. Combes and Tamisier remarked upon this in the 1830's:

> Despite all their vices, these priests manage to make themselves respected; when they pass along the roads, the faithful bow deeply to them, and in no matter what gathering they appear, everyone rises and hurries to kiss their hands.[45]

793 Privileged contact with the sacred symbols of the church—ordination by the
• 798 sacrosanct *abuna,* exclusive access to the *tābot,* and officiation at the Eucharist —gave the priests an authority that was independent both of political dispensation and of personal accomplishment.

793 Other groups within the clergy have been highly esteemed for quite differ-
792 ent reasons. Those who become monks carry great weight because they embody the virtue of ascetic piety. The *dabtarā,* on the other hand, are respected for their erudition.

792 Monks usually come from two kinds of background: unwed deacons desiring to spend their lives as monks, and priests whose wives have died. But previous ecclesiastical connection is not necessary for the monastic calling, nor is the ability to read required. The essential qualification is the willingness to renounce the world. The word for becoming a monk (*manakwasa*) means to renounce earthly things. A prospective monk may be of the sort described by one of Walker's informants:

> An old man who has married many wives and divorced them one by one, may say, "Henceforth it suffices me! Let the world remain lost to me! I am to turn my face to God!"[46]

In earlier times the monastic life was sought by men from all walks of life, including lords, soldiers, even emperors, in consequence of some grievous affliction, or perhaps a vow made in time of trouble, or excessive *Weltschmerz.*

Heads of monasteries have the jurisdiction to confer the monastic status. One who desires this status bequeathes his worldly possessions and goes
[292] through a ceremony in the church in which his body is declared dead. The symbol of the monastic state is a little cloth skullcap (*askēma*). Once he has become a monk, an Ethiopian is a legal nonentity. This frees him from all

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

17 peoples who penetrated deep into the highlands, making many converts among the Christians. Even after the defeat of the Muslim armies in the sixteenth century and the subsequent rennaisance of the Ethiopian polity, relations with the Islamic world persisted, augmented now by the presence of Abyssinian Muslims permanently settled in the highlands.

*755 Within the context of Ethiopian medicine, these
*787 widespread cultural affinities are most obvious in the
+793 works of the cleric healer (the debtera), and in the
177 practices of the zar possession cult. For example, in their numerological operations, the debtera's divinatory texts repeat the gematria manipulations of the Kabbalah, while the ideology which rationalized these formulations clearly reiterates the astrological lore of Islamic sa-
177 vants. Similarly, affinities are obvious between Ethio-
• 778 pian and Islamic amulets, in their construction, in the design of talismanic devices, and in the ends for which
*757 they are manufactured. Nor is evidence of the transla-
177 tion of Islamic medical treatises into Ge'ez and Amharic
539 lacking. Here, however, these works, particularly regarding humoral theory, have enjoyed only a very limited diffusion, and have been subordinated to indigenous medi-
*787 cal notions. Finally, the zar cult, in whose coteries many of Begemder's women belong, is no local phenomenon, but appears in one form or another throughout this entire culture area.

758

751 the sunlight.[6] After the disease symptoms have disap-
758 peared, and the convalescent has regained his former vitality, some precautions may still be followed to prevent the return of the original syndrome, to which he
[262] may have developed a vulnerability. For example, the former sickman may be forbidden to eat one or more of the foodstuffs which were included among the materia
• [778] medica of his cure. Often, an amulet containing dried materia medica of the primary medicine is also worn.

*278 Pharmacological Combinations. In the abstract, Amhara pharmacology can be considered as a corpus of discrete and varied instructions for a) conserving the latent healing power of botanicals, and b) converting this power into therapeutically effective agents. Seen from this perspective, Amhara pharmacolog y has the potential for a large number of logically possible combinations of instructions, ranging from those with few directions of any kind, to combinations with elaborate instructions in each pharmacological category. Although, empirically, Amhara herbal therapies probably fall short of the potential number of combinations, the combinations charac-

[757] [834] [6]Primary syphilis, in particular, sets elaborate requirements---the removal of all hair from the body, head, and face; in addition, there is a period of abstinence from coitus.

*278 *759 874 [593] [604] [222] Occasionally, an herbalist, particularly a medhaniyt awakiy, will utilize an apprentice as his medhaniyt korac. This is usually a close kinsman, a son or nephew, who has been taken to gather medicinals on previous occasions, and is thus familiar with their appearance and location. As an apprentice, he relieves the herbalist of the burden of gathering botanicals, which often involves trips to the hot and malarial lowlands. At the same time, the apprentice gradually becomes acquainted with various pharmacological details of the therapy.

*278 *759 No terminological distinction is made between herbalists who rely on a medhaniyt korac and those who do not. The client, in fact, is usually unaware of the situation in specific cases.

*278 *759 • 778 *[192] Classed together with other herbalists is the maker of herbal amulets, the kitab kitabiy. In most cases, the herbal amulet (kitab) is part of a complex therapy which includes, as a final step, the presentation to the sickman of a leather pouch containing a sample of all or some of the ingredients of the primary medicine. The amulet is worn around the neck, on the girdle, or fastened beneath an armpit. In this context, the amulet performs a prophylactic function, for it protects the now vulnerable client against a recurrence of the ailment. Certain of these therapists also provide these prophylactic amulets to clients who have never ahd the ailment in

*278 *759 • 778 [842] *[192]

question. Finally, herbal amulets are used in at least one context, to end excessive post-partuitive hemhorrhaging (dem iketir), as the sole therapy. In the abstract, at least, a yidemiketir kitabiy whose therapy had proven efficacious could also be referred to as a yidemiketir medhaniyt awakiy.

*278 *759

Herbalists are also grouped by means of a second series of descriptive nomers. These names ostensibly distinguish herbalists according to the botanical ingredients of their primary medicines. Thus, the ise korac is a "green stem cutter", and the medhaniyt (or sir) kofariy is a "medicine (or root) digger". The final label is yi (disease name) medhaniyt korac, "the medicine cutter for the (designated) ailment", and refers to herbalists whose recipes incorporate a variety of medicaments, including non-botanical ingredients. Any one of these three types of herbalists may also be described as either a medhaniyt seci or medhaniyt ateci, according to criteria already discussed. Only the yi (disease name) medhaniyt korac, however, can---if he practices an appropriate therapy---be referred to as a medhaniyt awakiy. The practice of medhaniyt (or sir) kowfariy and ise korac therapies, is characterized by weak medicines; strong primary medicines, when used, are directed against non-serious ailments for which effective therapies are relatively common. In both cases, the

pain, loss of her senses, inability to move her limbs in an often fatal ailment known as sarakian. The midwife is powerless in these contingencies; instead, it is the herbalist or debtera who must be consulted. Thus, the sinj medhaniyt awakiy provides an infusion which the post-partuitive mother drinks to eject a recalcitrant afterbirth (sinj), and the yidemaketir kitabiy provides an herbal amulet to be tied around the waist of the female suffering from post-partum hemorrhaging (demaketir).

The cupper. The cupper (agamiy) assumes either of two therapeutic strategies, depending upon the ailment he is treating. Like the herbalist, he may attempt to draw the pathogenic substance out from the sickman's body. For severe headache (ras mitat: literally, head-gerifta), he shaves a circle of one inch diameter on the sickman's occiput, makes a single incision with a razor or other favored knife, places his cup of horn over the incision, sucks out a required number of hornfulls (usually three) of blood, and pours the blood into a waiting basin of water. The extruded blood is then examined for clotting (tikur waha: dark water) which is regarded as evidence that the pathogenic substance is being removed. Later that day, the agamiy returns to repeat his therapy. The occiput is chosen for bleeding because of its proximity to the body's blood reservoir (yidem sir), located at the nape.

ized by a duration of only twenty-four hours from first prodromes to its termination, clients can be expected only from the parish and its immediate environs. Since clients of the herbalist's own parish are rarely expected to pay for any but the cure of a Medhaniyt Awakiy, the practice of this koruba therapy is likely to amount to little more than a modest presentation given by the herbalist.

In contrast, Nikersa:Kitabiy:A:I is a valuable therapy directed against a serious but not acute ailment. [778] This therapy consists of an amulet containing a variety of exotic materials, and of instructions for washing the affected area. The therapy was brought to Tikurmidir by Berey, the second wife of Asfow. Once Berey's eldest son, Gitahun, reached adolescence, his mother used him as her medhaniyt korac for gathering the amulet materials and as her apprentice in the manufacutre of the "pharmacologically" elaborate amulet container. Later, when Gitahun's own eldest son, Ayialuw, reached adolescence, he replaced his father as Berey's medhaniyt korac. After Berey's death, Gitahun, then in his fifties, began his practice of the nikersa therapy, retaining Ayialuw as medhaniyt korac and apprentice. Had the therapy addressed a more common ailment, it is likely that Gitahun would have begun practicing it prior to his mother's death, initially serving neighbors and kinsmen, while

*793 addition, he blesses houses against ganels with readings
869 from appropriate books of the Church, and sprinkles the
433 house with water he has sanctified with his reading and spittle.

*793 Finally, there is the largest category of students,
*756 those who choose the path of compromise and abinet. It
869 is from their ranks that the debtera-healer emerges.

THE ABINET WORKS: PROPHYLAXIS AND THERAPY

*787 Abinet are a class of recondite works directed at the satisfaction of some personal desire; their efficacy is obtained wholly or in large measure by invoking the assistance of super-humans (most often of the Church, but sometimes ganels), usually in contexts beyond those
*[755] permitted by the Church. Abinet subjects include thera-
• [778] peutic performances (medhaniyt ina digam), and proph-
*[192] ylactic amulets (kitab), divinatory texts (awdumigist), academic (timhirt) abinet, other inoffensive commercial works destructive works sending sickness and other misfortunes (kifat), and techniques for forcing the appearance and cooperation of ganels (ganel gelac).

Table eight indicates the constituent techniques of each category of abinet. The remaining paragraphs of this section consider those abinet works which address the therapeutic and prophylactic interests of the deb-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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TABLE 8

ABINET CATEGORIES AND ACTIVITIES

1. Abinet Categories

Key:

x=always present (x)=frequently present o=absent

	CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS					
	"Herbal Therapy"	Digam Read	Digam Write	Telsem	Manipulation of text	Other
Abinet						
A. Debtera therapy (preparation)	x	x	o	o	o	o
B. Kitab amulet (preparation)	(x)	(x)	x	x	o	o
C. Awdunigist divination	o	o	o	o	x	o
D. Academic abinet	(x)	(x)	o	o	o	o
E. Other commercial, inoffensive works	o	x	o	o	o	x
F. Kifat destructive works	o	x	o	o	o	x
G. Ganel-calling	o	x	o	o	o	x

*787 client's conubial interests, and 8) enabling accurate
*793 divination through dreams.[28]

DIVINING WITH AWDUNIGIST

*756
*787 More than anything, it is the ability to manipu-
*793 late awdunigist texts on behalf of a client that communi-
539 cates a man's transition from an amulet writing student serving lowland peasants with a few simple kitabs, to a weak (tinis) debtera providing services to a highland
*[192] public. According to those debteras who have not accompanied him along the abinet path, such a debtera has now become a "tonkway", a "seer" classified together with the heterodoxical and despised balazar, tarnished by the proscribed manipulation of supernatural powers. These clerics consider the use of awdunigist objectionable,

• [778] [28] Written digams and kitabs are largely confined to contingencies for which the client carries the amulet on his person. A client's agricultural interests (for example, protection from locust, birds, and rodents), in contrast, are safeguarded otherwise. Here, the client's fields are often sprinkled with the debtera's infusion, over which digams have been read. In addition, a portion of the infusion is placed in a vessel and secreted among his fields, in order to secure sustained protection. Analogous abinet are worked for the client's other property interests (for example, safeguarding from theft).

*756 *787 *793 from the debtera's perspective. Beginning with simple herbal remedies and ending with ganel pulling, the awakiy debtera's moral compromises are gradual and continuous. Although ganel pulling represents his only direct contact with demon helpers, his previous and continuing kifat performances make the debtera no stranger to the casuistry of ganel complicity. Beyond this, however, there is an important moral unity to the debtera's abinet works, whether they are produced by the power of divine beings or ganels. An abinet career is founded on a debtera's readiness to conceive of supernaturally derived power as a morally neutral commodity. As he exploits such power, he is constrained less by its intrinsic moral character than by its instrumental limitations. The debtera's accomplishment is to transmute the moral nature of the power he depends upon for his works. This he does by exerting his will over it, and directing it onto the objects and contingencies that he has selected.

*755 *793 • 778 792 823 *[192] Inviolability of Divine Power: The Atmakiy. The goodness (moges) of divine power is unblemished and its enjoyment is determined by divine will (yi'Igziyabiher yimozgin). The attitude of the pious man towards this will is supplicatory; towards this power, he is a passive recipient and a disinterested custodian. In a medical context, the atmakiy is exemplary. The atmakiy

*755 • 778 823 *[793] [792] ("baptizer") is a priest or monk who provides sanctified healing waters for sickmen. By reading from appropriate liturgical texts, any literate ecclesiastic can sanctify ordinary water drawn from a river, or the water of a spring (tebel) known to have divine curing powers. Sanctified common water is generally dispensed in the courtyard of a church, by a resident cleric serving as atmakiy for the occasion. No atmakiy has exclusive rights to the tebel at which he works, since he is only the representative of the church or monastery in whose parish the tebel is located. An atmakiy provides no medical services beyond dispensing sanctified water or overseeing the tebel. According to the atmakiy, as the sickman bathes, the divine fires of the water repel the ganels responsible for his ailment. *[192] The layman, however, does not conceive the effectiveness of these waters so narrowly, but sees them as the medium for a divine grace (moges) unbounded by specific etiological notions. Consequently, although sanctified waters are used most commonly against madness (ibidet) and epilepsy (ganel yazow), both caused by ganels, they are also applied against serious, chronic ailments with which ganels are not generally associated (e.g., leprosy). Usually the sickman turns to sanctified waters as a last resort, after he has exhausted all other therapies he can afford. A sickman continues to bathe with the waters of a single church or tebel, until he has

*755 *778 823 obtained a remission of his symptoms, or concedes that these particular waters are inadequate to his special needs. Tebel waters are much stronger than ordinary water, therapeutic failure with common water is generally followed with baths at a nearby tebel. Should the sickman likewise fail to obtain a cure here, often he journeys out to test the famous tebel springs about which he learns along the way. Some springs are known to be particularly effective against specific ailments, but, laymen are generally uncertain whether the effects of sanctified waters are cumulative or whether it is the divine grace of a single tebel that a sickman must seek.[39]

*756 *793 Manipulation of Divine Power: The Debtera. In contrast, the debtera's attitude towards divine power and divine will is largely manipulative, in spite of his supplicatory recitations. He works to abstract this power (through the mechanical application of verbal formulae, augmented by asmat), concentrate it (though the non-verbal elaborations of his abinet), and direct it (according to the demands of commerce and the indica-

[39] Occasionally, the sickman responds to a tebel with convulsive behavior, as the ganel afflicting him agonizes about.

734 his hamlet to become a mendicant, begging from alms-
[735] [823] givers at the gates of large and famous churches. Even
[778] the sickman whose economic circumstances enable him to remain at home may depart, to seek an efficacious tebel spring, once locally available therapies prove ineffective.

*753 Among the ailments of this category, leprosy is
734 considered particularly loathsome. In the abstract, it is associated with a hereditary vector; in practice, the leper's neighbors fear contact with him, and the sickman who remains at home is physically segregated in a hut of
[582] his own, away from other residents of the hamlet. Be-
[166] cause marriages are difficult to arrange for the primary relatives of lepers, the son of a leper frequently chooses to move away from the paternal hamlet to some place where his family's affliction is unknown.

*753 The absence of more profound moral consequences for either category of ailment can be explained, first, by the fact that associations existing between the sickman and sanction-wielding supernaturals are unaffected by either illness or cure, since these maladies are linked to non-purposive pathogenic agencies, such as gerifta
* [755] and likift. Further, effective cures are either secular,
* [757] and thus require the therapeutic assistance of no
[778] sanction-wielding supernaturals, or, in the case of tebel therapies, rely on only the socially sanctioned supernaturals of the Church.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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PART I : Land, History and People

1. General Orientation:

A. Definition of Terms:

The Amhara culture dealt with in this study is to a considerable extent identified with the culture formerly [17] referred to as "Abyssinian". Actually, the Abyssinian culture, heir to the cultural blending of ancient Semitic and African traits, has developed into several sub-cultures of which the Amhara culture is the major one. Another important sub-culture would be that of the Tigre-speaking population of Eritrea.

The term "Abyssinia", which was the official name of the country until the 20th century, is possibly derived from the name the centrally-located river Awash, which flows in the Rift Valley bisecting the country, losing itself in the eastern lowland desert on its way to the Red Sea coast. Another explanation derives it from the Habashat, one of the Semitic tribes from Hadhramaut, which crossed over the Bab El Mandeb about 500 B.C. A third explanation derives the name from the Arabic term signifying racial mixture.

The present Emperor preferred the official name Ethiopia, the political frontiers of which include the territory of non-Abyssinian peoples like the Galla, conquered by Abyssinia in the late 19th century. "Ethiopia", derived from the Greek term signifying "people with sunburned faces", was used in classical antiquity to describe all Africa south of the Sahara.

The religion of the Amhara and most other "Abyssinian" peoples is an early, Monophysite form of Christianity, often

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

referred to as "Coptic", although the Abyssinian Copts prefer the term "Towado" meaning Orthodox. The term Copt is derived from the Greek term for "Egyptian." Since the Coptic Metropolitan of Alexandria, Egypt, was also head of the Abyssinian Church and appointed all Abyssinian archbishops until recent years of the reign of the present Emperor, there is some justification for the use of the term Coptic. It will be so used in this study, to indicate the "Abyssinian Church of Ethiopia".

In books on Ethiopia, one often finds the term "Amhara" used in a broad sense as synonymous with Abyssinian Coptic Christian. Although the Amhara in their ethnocentrism also use it in this sense, it is not good usage in the author's opinion. The Tigrinya-speaking peoples of the province of Tigre are also good "Copts", in religious belief and observance; however, they differ from the Amhara in many phases of culture, and, according to native opinion, in personality". Therefore, the term Amhara is used in this study only for the Amharic-speaking, Coptic population of the provinces of Begemdir(Gondar), Gojjam, and parts of Shoa. Formerly, all three provinces were included in a territorial unit called Amhara; hence the name.

B. Linguistic Definitions

There are three major linguistic families in Ethiopia: Cushitic, Semitic and Nilotic. Cushitic is predominant, roughly speaking, in the southern half of modern Ethiopia, including Galla, Somali, Sidamo, Agau, etc. Nilotic languages predominate along the northern and western escarp-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
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Table 1. Population Estimates of the 12 Ethiopian Provinces

Administrative Province	Area in Square Kilometers	Official estimate of population 1954	Ethnic Preponderance (author's comments) Language	Religion	Additional Remarks
Begemder	78,200	1,800,000	Amharic	Coptic	some border Muslim and highland Falashas.
Gojjam	62,900	1,600,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Agau (old Cushitic)speakers
Shoa	78,700	2,100,000	Amharic	Coptic	some Gurage-speakers
Tigre	67,000	1,000,000	Galla, Tigrina.	Coptic	
Wollo	78,700	1,000,000	mostly Galla	Coptic	some Amharic
Wollega	67,200	1,000,000	Galla,Amharic	Coptic	some border Shanqalla(negroid, Nilotic-speaking)
Arussi	36,000	1,000,000	Galla	Muslim-"pagan"	
Hararge	404,000	1,600,000	Galla, some Somali	Muslim-"pagan"	some Somali semi-nomad tribes
Ilubabor	50,000	1,300,000	Galla, Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"	many border Shanqalla & other negroids
Kaffa	49,000	1,200,000	Galla,Nilotic old-Cushitic	"pagan"-Muslim	many border negroid
Gemu-Gofa	39,000	900,000	Sudanese,Galla	"pagan"	border negroids
Sidamo	102,000	1,250,000	old-Cushitic (Sidamo,Wollamo)	"pagan"	some nomadic border tribes
	1,110,000	15,750,000			
(Eritrea, federated 1952)	119,000	1,100,000	Bedja(Cushitic) Tigre(Semitic) Nilotic	Muslim Coptic	

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

212 to facilitate the teaching of Amharic to non-Amharic Ethiopians, illiterates, and for typing.

642 This latter change has not been made largely because of theopposition of the Abyssinian church. The Emperor is officially "Defender of the Faith". His connection with the church follows Old Testament patterns during the reigns of David and Solomon. The "tabot " (ark), which Emperor Menelik I supposedly spirited away from the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem to its secret place at Aksum, is regarded as guarding the liberty of the countryto this day. Church and State are thus intimately connected, and when Mussolini threatened Ethiopia, the Emperor and his chieftains swore to defend the "tabot" with their lives. After liberation, the Coptic Abyssinian church was reaffirmed as the State church, though weakened in its temporal powers(esp. feudal land tenure). When the last link with Alexandria was severed a few years ago, the Abyssinian church became fully the established state church.

173 The traditional epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty", the book "Käbrä Nägäst", is still honored officially, and taken literally by the people. It contains an extension of the Biblical story of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to the court of King Solomon, and claims she conceived a son, Menelik I, the first Abyssinian ruler of the Solomonic Dynasty. The book may possibly date from the 13th century, justifying the resumption of this dynasty.

697 from the 16th-17th centuries. When this area, which had been a sort of frontier area, became too settled, the political prison was transferred farther northwest to the edge of the escarpment leading down to the Sudan, between Chelga and Metemma.

671 175 779 A formal, written law code was superimposed on the earlier unwritten one in the 13th century, when the Abyssinian church extended its ecclesiastical code to cover also the temporal judicial behavior of lords as well as commoners, in all phases of life. This is referred to as "yäbaherya heg" (lit. the Law from Overseas), regarded as including "Moral Law" (i.e.Church Law).

This code, called the "Fetha Nägäst"(Law of the Kings) was basically derived from Roman Canon Law of Constantine, formulated at the Coptic Synod in Egypt in the 9th and 10th centuries, then translated in 1239, by Al-Safi Abu Al-Fada'il, into the Arabic language which the Copts of Egypt had by that time adopted for their own worship also. The code was a blend of Canons of the Coptic church councils, the Justinian Code, and theBible.

It was brought to Abyssinia during the reign of King Zera-Yaqob, and translated in Geez, then in its final stages as a spoken language, by the Abyssinian priest Petros Gäbre-Egzer. The Fetha Nägäst" became the official supreme law of the land when Bishop Takla-Haymanot resurrected the "Solomonic Dynasty" about that time. Of course the Abyssinian church officially believes that the "Fetha Nägäst" is much older, and that it has never been altered.

671 779 The Code consists of 51 chapters, of which 22 deal with

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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church rules and 29 with civil and criminal law, without any distinctions between these categories:

Table 7: The Old Abyssinian Law Code: Civil-Criminal and Ecclesiastical Content.

Ecclesiastical Content:	Civil-Criminal Content:
Duties of the Church	The Sick
Divine Literature	Food, Clothing, Dwelling, Occupations, suitable for the faithful.
Christening	
Patriarchs, Bishops, Priesthood	Marriage, Dowry; Prohibition of Concubinage
Deaconship and Under-Deaconship	
Commandments for all Believers	Loans free from interest; Mortgage; Bail
The Confession of Faith	Deposit; Power of Attorney
Circumcision and other Religious customs	Liberty; Slavery; Emancipation
Monks and Nuns	Guardianship
Martyrs; Confessors; Renegades	Society; Community of the faithful
Mass;Eucharist;Prayer;Fasting	
Endowments and Pious Foundations	Constraining a Person by Force
The Holy Days	Lost and Disappeared Property
Alms	Judge and Witnesses
The Tithe; First Fruits	Worshippers; Blasphemers; Sorcerers; Murderers
Administration and Income of the Church.	Thieves; Drunkards; Usurer
	The Disobedient Son
	Sexual Relations
	The Abused
	Tenancy and Land Serfdom The Will and Inheritance Public Roads; Plots; Buildings; Water.

693 If the quarrel is a civil matter, the curbstone
694 judge usually acts merely as arbitrator ("agoran"). He is rewarded by the loser, who has forfeited his "wager", usually with several "berellē" (glass bottles) of beer.

If, however, personal injury or some other criminal matter seems involved, or if no mutually satisfactory adjustment can be reached, the arbitrator may tie their togas together with a knot, and refer the matter to the cheqa shum.

693 The latter then sits as informal judge, to decide
622 whether the matter should be referred to a regular formal judge, the "danya". Meanwhile he tries to arbitrate the case, with the power of his office as village headman lending him added prestige. In church-owned territory he may be a priest. Sometimes he is one of the local Confessors ("mānfās agway"), particularly if it is a marital quarrel. Each of these offices lends the cheqa shum added prestige, for there is no formal sep-
[779] aration of church and state organization at the base of the social pyramid.

693 (2) The Indicting, Examining Judge. He is cal-
694 led "aṭbiya danya" (lit. handwashing judge), and his functions are broad, and vary between rural and town locale and between districts and regions. Sometimes the cheqa shum performs this function himself. In town, the aṭbiya danya may sit under a sycamore at the market, so that any tradesman or purchaser can complain to him about unfair weights or attempted theft. He can issue an immediate "fetem," an injunction to cease and desist.

563
692 ment, who approves appointment to Sharia and Qadi positions.

5. Structure and Function of the Coptic Church among the Amhara.

795 The importance of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia on the life of every Amhara, of all classes, rural or urban, can hardly be exaggerated. To the Amhara, "Amhara" is synonymous with Abyssinian Christian; and the [198] liturgical language used in the church, "Geez", with "language of the free". The term used for their religion is "tăwahedo", often shortened to "towado", meaning "orthodox".

To the Amhara, his church is so closely connected with his attitudes to his country, his nation, his ethnocentrism, that the severance of ties with the mother Coptic Church of Alexandria, in 1948, passed almost [579] unnoticed. Only church scholars are aware that, as part of the larger Coptic church, the break with the Western church occurred after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., ostensibly because the Copts insisted on complete fusion of the person of Christ, refusing to accept the "union, but not fusion of Deity and human spirit" of the non-Monophysite faith in the formula he pronounces when [788] slaughtering a sheep or ox: "In the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost, one divinity." The pious [224] hunter will hasten to the wounded gazelle to pronounce the formula before the animal expires, then finish it off by cutting its throat

795 off by cutting its throat.

It may be that the use of the formula became emphatic centuries ago, as an equivalent-though-distinctive counterpart to the Muslim formula "Iin the name of Allah the all-merciful, and Muhammad hid his prophet". Another such distinction is almost certainly the blue neck-cord, "mätäb" which both male and female Abyssinian Cäpts wear to distinguish them from Muslims. But their other religious laws and taboos seem to date back to the Old Testament observances of Judaism, notable the taboo on the pig, which is not even raised outside (European Addis Ababa.

[71] [293] [784]

795 779 As a consequence of the religiosity of the people, the rules of the church have the force of law, unchallenged especially in the rural areas. Even the more modernized administration and new legislation has made little change in the close inter-relation of church and state functions, at the grassroots level. This inter-relation is even closer in the form of social pressure. Foreign observers have remarked that without this church organization the social structure of the country would fall to pieces and lose its coherence.

795 Another significant factor is the large number of persons consecrated, or partly consecrated to the church service. Besides priests, monks and nuns there are boy deacons and church students, chorister-scribes, and other semi-laymen attached to the church, whose total number has been estimated at from 10% to 20% of the population, particularly the male population.

778 Geez). Here the bread and wine used in the eucharist are
346 prepared and stored with great secrecy. The utensils of
251 the nearby cooking hut, the baking pan "metad" and large clay jars for barley beer, are also stored here. Supplies of tyeff, barley, wheat, beans, peas, may also be stored.

779 In recent years, church parades feature prominant-
186 ly the flag of the nation, the red-green-yellow of the central government, emphasizing in modern ways the close union of church and state that has long been traditional in Abyssinia.

(e) Worship and Devotional Poetry.

533 The musical chants and notations studies formally
796 have already been outlined in connection with church education.

Church hymns, including devotional poetry, are called "qene" in a generic rather than specifically accurate sense. A collection of them is contained in the book "qubaé qana", and they are sung in a special mode. The chief mode is called "selt". It has three variations:

(1) "geez" - short tones, dedicated to the "Father";

(2) "ezel" - mournful tones in minor key, dedicated to the "Son" 's passion;

(3) "araray" - long, drawn-out tones, dedicated to the "Holy Ghost".

These variations are interlaced, for special results, and for specific occasions. The mass, "qeddase" (lit. sanctification) is chanted in a mode bearing the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

•779 B. The Functions of the Church in the Life of the Lay Public.

a) Sacerdotal Emphasis.

From the structure of the Abyssinian Church, the sacerdotal emphasis is evident, and even more so in the function and routines affecting the lay public. Church worship is regarded as a "temple" worship of the deity and saints, rather than as congregational worship. The latter idea seems entirely absent.

Discussions of religious philosophy, even of ethics, is limited to the higher grades of church schools, particularly monasteries. The view seems to regard such knowledge as confusing to the lay mind, even dangerous: the layman had far better listen and obey what filters down to him. There is no tradition of sermon or preaching. The ordinary parish priest usually knows barely enough liturgy for regular services, leaving occasional translations up to the dabtara. Nevertheless, the priest is supposed to influence the public indirectly, through living a holy life. Often he is the only local Christian who has married by "qurban" and is thus on good, eucharistic terms with the church, while the layman is technically excommunicated for having married by Zsemanya". More directly, he exerts influence as the arbiter of domestic quarrels, etc. He lends dignity to life through the rites of passage, particularly the series of memorial ("tăzkar") feasts.

779 The sacerdotal emphasis is so strong that efforts of the emperor to introduce preaching(of ethics, restraint in mourning, etc.) have been quietly ignored by the church, except for some polite and occasional attempts to please the emperor in Addis Ababa by fulfilling his wish in his own church.

b) The Annual Cycle of the Church Calendar, and its function.

805 The calend ar of Abyssinia is based on the Julian calendar of Rome, but the year begins September 11th, following the ancient Egyptian usage. The year has 12 months of 20 days each, plus 5 or 6 intercalar days at the end (the extra day once every 4 years). Historically this calendar probably came to Abyssinia from Alexandria, early in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. However, Syrian usage was followed by the Abyssinian church in the practice of establishing feast and fast days in commemoration of martyrs under Diocletian and Syrian bishops of that period.

After Islam conquered Egypt, ecclesiastical computations continued to arrive, though often interrupted, through the Coptic Abuna sent from Alexandria, These computations arrived in the Arabic language, were translated into Geez, and collectively called "Abushaker" (Father of the Moon), after the book originally compiled by the author Demetros, who claimed to have received them by revelation from the Holy Ghost.

This calendar is about 7 to 8 years behind the

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

TA 795

course know what is going on, ignore the whole matter, just as they ignore the Zar worship.

795 TA 8

Parallels to such religious syncretism are found not only in Egypt, but also in Syria, where Christian women go on short-range pilgrimage to the tomb of "weli" saints and smear mud from holy springs on their faces on a certain day of the Christian religious calendar.[79] This takes place in rural areas of Homs, but even near Damascus Muslims take part in celebrating the day of the Feast of the Cross in September.[80] Just as in visits to the tomb of water saints in Muslim Algeria,[81] the pilgrimage to Sheykh Abader is believed to bring on the light rains, which usually begin about that time, making early plowing and a good harvest possible. This is equally desired by both Muslims and Copts, just as individual good health is desired by both. Perhaps this unexpressed recognition explains the paradox of this religious syncretism.

f) The Church and the Present National State.

TA 659

Three phases can be distinguished in the recent relations of the Abyssinian church and the Amharic "Solomonic Dynasty" which the church returned to power in the 13th century but which now attempts to modernize

79. Gaulmier, J.: Pèlérinages Populaires à Hama. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, 1931, Vol.1, pp.137-152.
80. Tresse, R.: Usages Saisonnières. Revue d'Etudes Orientales 1937, pp. 1-4; Lecerf & Tresse: Les Arada de Damas. BEO, 7-8, pp.236-264.
81. Probst-Biraben, J.H.: Pour La Pluie de Printemps en Algerie. En Terre d'Islam, 22, 1942, pp. 264-272.

779 the nation in Western patterns.

659 (1) The use of the church in promoting Amhara-
[721] dominated Ethiopian nationalism. This was recognized and promoted by Emperor Menelik II who had priests carry the "tabot" into newly conquered Galla, Sidamo and other pagan and semi-Muslim areas of his new empire, giving his
[566] military conquests the character of a crusade. Churches were built in these areas, guarded by troops of occupation, made permanent by feudal grants under which the local population, made "gabbar" serfs, was permitted to remain on the land as sharecroppers and peons of the feudal church.

This use of the church has been continued, though with reduced feudal emphasis, by the present emperor.
[212] The Geez alphabet of the church, modified in Amharic usage, is the only alphabet even non-Amharic-speakers may use, if they wish to write their languages, particularly in
[643] print. By taking on the name "Haile Selassye" (Power of the Trinity), upon coronation, the present emperor re-emphasized the power of the church. Finally, on November 4th 1955, when the new liberalized Constitution of 131 articles was proclaimed, it reaffirmed that the Ethiopian "Orthodox" Church, founded in the 4th century on the doctrines of St. Mark, is the established church of the state.

659 Phase (2), begun by the present emperor as his
178 power increased, was a concurrent weakening of the temporal power of the church. At first this was gradual. In

186 828 Pride in group, military unit; less emphasis on individual heroism.

Steadier temperament; endurance rather than burst of energy.

"If you treat him as a friend, he will serve you faithfully."

186 779 The religious ethnocentrism of the Amhara is based on their belief that their nation, ruled by the "Solomonic Dynasty", became heir to the "Chosen People" ruled by the House of David, when the latter refused to accept Christ. This is not always clear to the illiterate Amhara, but even he emphasizes this intertwined ethnic and religious principle of his ethnocentrism when he regards the name "Amhara" as signifying both, as he always does.

[304] While the Amhara no longer regards circumcision ("zemrat") as the symbol of entering the Covenant of the Faith, as does the Old Testament and the Jewish religion, he does follow this procedure a week after birth; and an uncircumcised man ("lembut") is called several insulting names and regarded as almost on a level with African Shanqalla slaves who are also uncircumcised. Circumcision therefore has an intertwined ethnic and religious significance.

671 Amhara legal philosophy, guarded by the church, and expressed therefore in the Geez terminology, analyses the universe as follows:

Natural Law - "tabayawi heg"

Man-made Law - (similar to common law) - "sahawi heg"

Moral Law (particularly Coptic law) - "yabaherya heg" (lit. Law from overseas).

186 Ethnocentrism of the Amhara has for several centuries been consciously directed particularly against the attacking Muslims. The "matab" neckcord is believed directly the result of one such purposeful development. Numerous proverbs emphasize the stereotype of the Muslim as the breaker of Amhara religious order as well as social order, and the promoter of lawlessness. Even proverbs such as the following,

826 A very thin person ("jemmatam") is regarded as being full of tendons, nerves and veins, all of which are generically called "jemmat"; they are conceived as running through the body like the fibers of a tree.

The beard comes late, and since a good chin whisker is rare before the age of 30, it is regarded as a sign of maturity. The proverb says:

[539] "Beard, lacking to the teacher;
cypress, lacking to the church; (i.e. symbol of the churchyard) (are one)." (i.e. neither will be fully respected.)

[779] The dichotomy of the human body, in the religion, considers the upper part holy; and the lower part, which serves sex and defecation, as profane. To illustrate one who serves two masters, the proverb says:

[539] "Above the hips - the tabot (sacred tablet of the church), below the hips - idols."

No distinction is made in body hair, whether it is usually scanty underarm hair ("cheggum") or pubic hair, except that the latter was supposed to be plucked out by women. Despite the distinction of sacred and profane body parts, this distinction does not apply to archangels and saints, every part of whose body is lauded in some of the liturgy, e.g. in the book "Malek Mikael" which eulogizes also the body of this archangel.

Abnormalities of the human body are attributed to the effect of the supernatural. In the case of a new-born child, abnormality of body is attributed to an evil spirit, especially a male "zar" who has magically possessed the mother and who is jealous of the human husband whom he regards as his rival. In case of transvestites, who are always believed to be hermaphrodites ("fenafel"), the abnormality is actually referred to as a "mistake of God".

829 pattern continues in full force even at present. As a result, the high official is as hesitant about delegating authority downward (which might build up a potential rival), as the inferior in the hierarchy fears to accept delegated authority (lest the superior repent of his grant and suspect rebellion). In consequence, daily problems, even routine ones, are regularly referred for decision to the superior in the hierarchy of government.

812 The authoritarian "literalness" which characterises so many Amhara attitudes may at least in part be the effect of religious fundamentalism. Until recently, the "Fetha Nagast" criminal and [681] civil code was literally enforced, including the cutting off of hands for theft and of feet for rebellion. Biblical passages are interpreted literally, by the priests. In monasteries, the monks exclude the presence of even female animals such as cows.

[579] The church, sacerdotal in its concepts and rituals, does not feel that it owes an explanation to anyone; and "literalness" has remained unchallenged (except during the relatively brief Portuguese episode). In the Amhara view, there is a direct and unilateral connection between cause and effect, and paradoxes that result from such oversimplifications are ignored: e.g. the tallest obelisk at Aksum, which has fallen and broken into several large pieces, is claimed to have been "pushed" over by the Falasha Queen Judith, despite the fact that another, almost as tall, still stands nearby. [602] Homicide, especially if accidental, is blamed on the "zaren" spirits who pushed the murderer's hand.

647 Literal obedience dominates the governmental administration, for no subordinate would arrogate to himself the privilege of "interpret" the spirit of the law handed down by the official of superior status.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-
645 larly since his return from exile in 1941, has proceeded to build
[643] a base for the modernization of his country through the creation of a modern-educated new élite. The only portfolio he holds personally in his own cabinet is that of Minister of Education (though the other ministers ask his guidance on even the most minute matters). It is this group which is beginning to bridge the gulf between the ethnic cleavages, and which is trying to enlarge Amhara loyalty to an Ethiopian nationalism. Its members give lip service to the still powerful Coptic church: they smoke publicly, but they will break the lenten fast only in secret, eat pork only when not in the public eye, and still refrain from walking arm-in-arm with a female in public. But when sent to the provinces to modernize the administration, they quietly make gradual but cumulative inroads against the temporal power of the church and against the feudal landowning gentry, on the basis of imperial proclamations and numerous directives. (Footnote 138)

643 This change is only in the initial stages. Some of the most
178 fundamental decisions by the present emperor, notably the abolition
779 of the "gabbar" (serf-like) system, and the measurement and registration of the land, have been most strongly resisted in the old-Amhara provinces, where these edicts have still not been enforced.

As a result, the emperor has often tried to proceed by indirect means. Just as he has utilized the foreign missionaries in his Amharization program, so has he tried to utilize the Abyssinian clergy in his modernization program. He has appointed an Egyptian Coptic clergyman-educator to head the new Theological College of

Footnote 138: For details see: Messing, Simon D.: Changing Ethiopia (in) The Middle East Journal, vol.9, no.4, Autumn 1955, pp. 413-432.

643 178 779 Addis Ababa. He has repeatedly urged the Abyssinian clergy to take up the practice of preaching in church, on such subjects as reduction of the violent mourning for the dead and the ruinous "tazkar" memorial feasts; and admission of women into the church building. In Addis Ababa, a few modern-style churches have agreed to do this out of respect for his presence. But the provincial churches have retained their sacerdotal character and have not, except on occasions of brief imperial visits, adopted these innovations. The clergy has also resisted (by means of the "inertia" previously described) the urgings of the emperor to convert masses [79] of the "lower" ethnic groups to Coptic Abyssinian Christianity. Only sporadically have small-scale conversions taken place. The emperor seems to recognize the value of expanding the nominal State Religion, Coptic Abyssinian Christianity, to a real national church, as a pillar of national solidarity and national loyalty.

178 212 The new élite, small in number, but actively supporting the emperor's policies, and even occasionally beginning to become impatient with the circumspection and quiet, indirect, subtlety of Emperor Haile Selassie, has for some years raised the issue of the simplification of the Amhara alphabet. They had assumed that there would be much less opposition to such a worthwhile change than to big issues like abolition of the "gabbar" and changes in land tenure. The present alphabet, which consists of 259 syllables composed of 37 consonants and a minimum of 7 vowels, makes it difficult to teach writing to illiterate adults, children, and non-Amharic speakers, or to design typewriters. But the new, young, modern elite could not have been more mistaken in their optimism. The matter became a cause celebre, despite the fact that the proposal, published in 1948 in an Amharic booklet "Reform of the Alphabet",

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

Abuna, Tecla Haimanout knew that very soon no set of people would be more shamefully ignorant than those priests, even in the most common dogmas of their profession. He hoped, therefore, by a considerable stipend, to tempt some men of learning to accept of this place, to give his countenance to learning and religion among them. 793

The Arabic canon*, which is preserved by the Abyssinian church, and said to be of the council of Nice, should certainly be attributed to this Abuna, and is a forgery in, or very soon after, his time; for, it is plain this canon took place about the year 1300, that it was lawful to elect an Abuna, who was a native of Abyssinia before this prohibition, otherwise it would not have been applied. Abuna Tecla Haimanout was an Abyssinian by birth, and he was Abuna; the prohibition, therefore, had not then taken place: but, as no Abyssinian was afterwards chosen, it must certainly be a work of his time; for it is impossible a canon should be made by the council of Nice, settling the rank of a bishop in a nation, which, for above 200 years after that general council, were not Christians. 793 175 779

As the Abuna very seldom understands the language, he has no share of the government, but goes to the palace on days of ceremony, or when he has any favour to ask, or complaint to make. He is much fallen in esteem from what he was formerly, chiefly from his own little intrigues, his ignorance, avarice, and want of firmness. His greatest employment is in ordinations. A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand, from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who these are? and they tell him that they want to be deacons. On this, with a small iron cross in his hand, 793

* See Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 2. No. 17.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

than the Abuna. There are, after these, chief priests 793
and scribes, as in the Jewish church: the last of these, the ignorant, careless copiers of the holy scriptures.

The monks here do not live in convents, as in Europe, but in separate houses round their church, and 793 794
each cultivates a part of the property they have in land. The priests have their maintenance assigned to them in kind, and do not labour. A steward, being a layman, is placed among them by the king, who receives all the rents belonging to the churches, and gives to the priests the portion that is their due; but neither the Abuna, nor any other churchman, has any business with the revenues of churches, nor can touch them.

The articles of the faith of the Abyssinians have 175
been inquired into and discussed with so much keenness in the beginning of this century, that I fear I 779
should disoblige some of my readers were I to pass this subject without notice.

Their first bishop, Frumentius, being ordained about the year 333, and instructed in the religion of the Greeks of the church of Alexandria by St Athanasius, then sitting in the chair of St Mark, it follows, that the true religion of the Abyssinians, which they received on their conversion to Christianity, is that of the Greek church; and every rite, or ceremony, in the Abyssinian church may be found and traced up to its origin in the Greek church, while both of them were orthodox.

Frumentius preserved Abyssinia untainted with heresy till the day of his death. We find, from a letter preserved in the works of St Athanasius, that Constantius, the heretical Greek emperor, wished St Athanasius to deliver him up, which that patriarch refused to do: indeed, at that time, it was not in his power.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

175 Soon after this, Arianism, and a number of other
779 heresies, each in their turn, were brought by the monks from Egypt, and infected the church of Abyssinia. A great part of these heresies, in the beginning, were certainly owing to the difference of the languages in those times, and especially the two words Nature and Person, than which no two words were ever more equivocal in every language into which they have been translated. Either of these words, in our own language, is a sufficient example of what I have said; and, in fact, we have adopted them from the Latin. If we had adopted the signification of these words in religion from the Greek, and applied the Latin words of Person and Nature to common and material cases, perhaps we had done better. Neither of them has ever yet been translated into the Abyssinian, so as to be understood to mean the same thing in different places. This for a time was, in a certain degree, remedied, or understood, by the free access they had, for several ages, both to Cairo and Jerusalem, where their books were revised and corrected, and many of the principal orthodox opinions inculcated. But, since the conquest of Arabia and Egypt by Sultan Selim, in 1516, the communication between Abyssinia and these two countries hath been very precarious and dangerous, if not entirely cut off; and now, as to doctrine, I am perfectly convinced they are in every respect to the full as great heretics as ever the Jesuits represented them. And I am confident, if any Catholic missionaries attempt to instruct them again, they will soon lose the use of letters, and the little knowledge they yet have of religion, from the prejudice only, and fear of incurring a danger they are not sufficiently acquainted with to follow the means of avoiding it.

779 The two natures in Christ, the two persons, their unity, their equality, the inferiority of the manhood,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

doctrines, and definitions of the time of St Athanasius, 779 ● are all wrapt up in tenfold darkness, and inextricable from amidst the thick clouds of heresy and ignorance of language. Nature is often mistaken for person, and person for nature; the same of the human substance. It is monstrous to hear their reasoning upon it. One would think, that every different monk, every time he talks, purposely broaches some new heresy. Scarce one of them that ever I conversed with, and those of the very best of them, would suffer it to be said, that Christ's body was perfectly like ours. Nay, it was easily seen, that, in their hearts, they went still further, and were very loth to believe, if they did believe at all, that the body of the Virgin Mary and St Anne were perfectly human.

Not to trouble the reader further with these uninteresting particulars and distinctions, I shall only add, that the Jesuits, in the account they give of the heresies, ignorance, and obstinacy of the Abyssinian clergy, have not misrepresented them, in the imputations made against them, either in point of faith or of morals. Whether, this being the case, the mission they undertook of themselves into that country, gave them authority to destroy the many with a view to convert the few, is a question to be resolved hereafter; I believe it did not; and that the tares and the wheat should have been suffered to grow together till a hand of more authority, guided by unerring judgement, pulled them, with that portion of safety he had pre-ordained for both.

The Protestant writers again unfairly triumph over their adversaries, the Catholics, by asking, Why all that noise about the two natures in Christ? It is plain, say they, from passages in the Haimanout Abou, and their other tracts upon orthodox belief, that they acknowledge that Christ was perfect God and perfect

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

● 779 man, of a rational soul and human flesh subsisting, and that all the confessions of unity, co-equality, and inferiority, are there expressed in the clearest manner as received in the Greek church. What necessity was there for more; and what need of disputing upon these points, already so fully settled?

This, I beg leave to say, is unfair; for, though it is true, that, at the time of collecting the Haimanout Abou, and at the time when St Athanasius, St Cyril, and St Chrysostom wrote, the explanation of these points was uniform in favour of orthodoxy, and that while access could easily be had to Jerusalem, or Alexandria, then Greek and Christian cities, difficulties, if any arose, were easily resolved; yet, at the time the Jesuits came, those books were very rare in the country, and the contents of them so far from being understood, that they were applied to the support of the grossest heresies, from the misinterpretation of the ignorant monks of these latter times. That the Abyssinians had been orthodox availed nothing: they were then become as ignorant of the doctrines of St Athanasius and St Cyril, as if those fathers had never wrote; and it is their religion at this period which the Jesuits condemn, not that of the church of Alexandria, when in its purity under the first patriarchs; and, to complete all their misfortunes, no access to Jerusalem is any longer open to them, and very rarely communication with Cairo.

On the other hand, the Jesuits, who found that the Abyssinians were often wrong in some things, were resolved to deny that they could be right in any thing; and, from attacking their tenets, they fell upon their ceremonies received in the Greek church at the same time with Christianity; and, in this dispute they shewed great ignorance and malevolence, which they supported by the help of falsehood and invention.—

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

I shall take notice of only one instance in many, because it has been insisted upon by both parties with unusual vehemence, and very little candour. 779

It was settled by the first general council, that one baptism only was necessary for the regeneration of man, for freeing him from the sin of our first parents, and listing him under the banner of Christ; "I confess one baptism for the remissions of sins," says the Symbol. Now, it was maintained by the Jesuits, that in Abyssinia, once every year, they baptized all grown people, or adults. I shall, as briefly as possible, set down what I myself saw while on the spot. 783 796

The small river, running between the town of Adowa and the church, had been dammed up for several days; the stream was scanty, so that it scarcely overflowed. It was in some places three feet deep, in some, perhaps, four, or little more. Three large tents were pitched the morning before the feast of the Epiphany; one, on the north, for the priests to repose in during intervals of the service, and, besides this, one to communicate in: on the south there was a third tent for the monks and priests of another church to rest themselves in their turn. About twelve clock at night the monks and priests met together, and began their prayers and psalms at the water-side, one party relieving each other. At dawn of day the governor, Welleta Michael, came hither with some soldiers to raise men for Ras Michael, then on his march against Waragna Fasil, and sat down on a small hill by the water-side, the troops all skirmishing on foot and on horseback around them.

As soon as the sun began to appear, three large crosses of wood were carried by three priests dressed in their sacerdotal vestments, and who, coming to the side of the river, dipt the cross into the water, and all this time the firing, skirmishing, and praying went on to-

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

175 worse should befall them, and the process was rapid and
171 simple—immersion in the nearest stream, circumcision, and generally the tying of a piece of blue silk cord round the neck.

• 179 The form of Christianity professed by Abyssinia is the monophysite, which was condemned as a "heresy" by the Council of Chalcedon in 450. This doctrine recognizes only one nature in Christ, against the view which has maintained itself as orthodox that the divine and human natures co-existed in him. But in spite of the thunders of Chalcedon the Abyssinians have held to their doctrine, although controversies as to a single, dual, and even threefold nature have raged in the country right up to the time of Theodore, who possessed decided views on the subject, and exercised drastic methods in giving effect to them.

193 The Church is to all intents and purposes an independent one, its only link with the Coptic Church in Egypt, on which it is nominally dependent, being the appointment by Alexandria of the Archbishop, or Abouna: he is an Egyptian, and once appointed he is supposed never to leave the country.

Tradition relates that the appointment of a foreign Abouna was laid down as a cardinal principle by the great Abyssinian ecclesiastic and national saint, Tekla Haimanot, in the thirteenth century in order to maintain connection between Abyssinia and the outside world, and to avoid internal rivalry in the nomination to the headship of the Church. Be that as it may, the Abyssinians attach considerable importance to their connection with the Alexandrian Church through their Abouna; this may be gauged from the fact that the Treaty between England, Egypt, and Abyssinia, made

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

I

INTRODUCTION

AMHARA TRADITION AND ETHIOPIA'S MODERNIZATION

THE FACT OF AMHARA DOMINANCE

Of the many traditions which are alive in the empire of Ethiopia—those of the nomadic Danakil and the sedentary Wollamo, the hippopotamus-eating Woyto and the ensete-eating Gurage, the age-graded Konso and the patrilineal Somali, the Judaic Falasha and the Muslim Bani 'Amer, and many others—clearly the dominant tradition is that of the people known throughout history to the outside world as the Abyssinians. Living on the temperate highland massif in the northern and central regions of the country, these people have gained their subsistence through the plow cultivation of cereal grains, have organized their polity as a feudal kingdom, and have remained steadfast in their Monophysite Christian faith since its introduction to the land in the fourth century.

The Abyssinians comprise two linguistic and geographical groups—the Amhara and the Tigre.* The Tigre inhabit the northern part of Ethiopia, above the Takazzē River; their lands fall in what are now the province of Tigre and the former Italian colony of Eritrea. Their language, Tigrinya, is

* Abyssinians object to the term "Abyssinian," since it has been used pejoratively by foreigners, even though they do use its indigenous counterpart, "*Hābashā*," among themselves. The term apparently derives from the name of one of the South Arabian tribes which migrated to Ethiopia in antiquity—the Habashat. In deference to this objection, I shall use the compound "Amhara-Tigre" in place of "Abyssinian" wherever feasible. The name "Ethiopia" will be used consistently to refer to the national polity which, throughout its history, has included other peoples and traditions as well as the Amhara-Tigre.

1. [The Abyssinians, composed of Amhara and Tigre--Analyst]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

sponsored the translation of works from Arabic. Among these were *Laws of the Kings*, a collection of civil and canon laws which became the official basis for judication, and a penitential manual, *Spiritual Medicine*, the last major production in Ge'ez literature. 175* 643 517 [633]

Yohānnes also continued Fāsil's work of "purifying" the church. He decreed that descendants of the Portuguese must leave Ethiopia unless they joined the Orthodox Church and that Muslims must reside apart, either in their own villages or in ghettos. Ordained as a priest before becoming emperor, Yohānnes followed keenly the theological disputes of his day. Toward the end of his reign he convoked a synod in Gondar to discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit in Christ, the chief theological question in Ethiopian history. [798] [793] [779]

Iyāsu I, like many of Ethiopia's rulers, appears to have been moved by deep religious feeling. Describing Iyāsu's religiosity, one of the priests of Gondar wrote an eulogy a few years after his death: 175* 643 781

> The king used to stand at the window of his palace . . . and listen from his tower on high to the singing of the priests and learned men, to their gentle hymns which moistened the bones by their exceeding tenderness. When their offerings pleased him greatly he was pierced with affection for them and drawn by the harmony of their heavenly peace. For this reason . . . he would prepare for them dinners filled with delights, and bid them eat with him in his royal chambers, ornamented all about with the beauty of pure gold and wrought silver. He would take off his gold necklace and present it to them. He adorned them with garments of purple and of staffs interwoven with gold from the treasury of his kingdom. . . . None of the kings before him had done such as he, and none of the clergy of yore had been treated as were his priests and learned men. After the dinners, the king and his priests together sang hymns of joy and jubilation all night long in the palace—in their time of pleasure, in the sweetness of divine ministry.*

Iyāsu the Great did much to establish Gondar as the most important center of religious culture in Ethiopia. To this end he brought outstanding priests and learned men from all over the country to his capital. From Gojjam, for example, he brought the great master of religious verse, Kīffē Yohānnes, whose lines are remembered even today. The number of teachers in Gondar in his time exceeded five hundred; there were one hundred and fifty at his church Dabra Berhān Selassie alone.* It was under Iyāsu I that the classic subject matter of the higher religious studies in Abyssinia—*zēmā* ("religious 175* 643 633 517

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* Dabra Berhān Selassie, one of the two churches built by Iyāsu I, is the only one of the original churches of Gondar which survived later conflagrations of the city. The original paintings which covered its walls have been preserved, as well as the remarkable ceiling from which rows of wide-eyed angels look down from between wooden beams. The church provides separate places for nobility and commoners, and a balcony for the emperor. [346]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

drastic changes on the familiar natural order. Insofar as there is a special affect regarding nature, it takes the form of a sentimentalization of the useful—as in the great respect felt for young cattle, the thrill aroused by the sight of newly sprouted grain, and the deep nostalgia about one's land. 565* 82

The Supernatural

The peasant's conception of God is closer to that of the learned clergy than is his cosmology, since the Abyssinian clergy have tended to avoid systematic theology, believing that to probe too deeply into the nature of God verges on blasphemy. Abyssinians view God above all as *mystery*. 565* 776 [793] [779]

Nevertheless, they do have a sense of the various attributes of their God. God is the creator of the world. He is, as the name *Egziābhēr* signifies, Lord of the earth; and He is Lord of the seas, Lord of the King of Kings, and Lord of the angels. He is eternal and possesses knowledge without limit.

The Amhara peasant has a keen awareness that wherever one goes, God is there. "If you say no one is looking," goes an Amharic saying, "still God will see you." This consciousness of God's presence is reflected in the habit of referring to God scores of times every day. A number of common expressions contain references to God:

For greeting and farewell	"May He give you health for me."
For showing gratitude	"May God give you for me."
For responding to queries about one's health	"God be praised!"
For thanksgiving after meals	"Be praised, my Lord!"
For swearing by a statement that has been challenged	"By God! By the Savior!"

Prayers to God are spoken on numerous occasions. God's blessing is sought when an animal is slaughtered, when a group of people sits to eat, when a new house is begun, and when it is completed. Each day begins with a prayer something like this: "May He cause me to spend the day in peace. May He keep trouble from me. May He pardon my sins." When the peasant begins planting, he also prays: "God bless the seed; feed me, keeping birds away from it; bless it for the mouth of man." 565* 782 776

It is probably the attribute of God's omnipotence, however, that appears most vivid to the Amhara mind. Everything that happens reflects His active will. The thunder expresses His anger, a flood the visitation of His wrath upon the sinful. He is ever active, bringing births and deaths, prosperity and hunger, leading one traveler to safety and another to disaster. He controls the homeliest details of everyday life. One boy, troubled that he was not selling his goods in the market, confessed that God must be angry with him about something. Another, asked what he wanted to do the following year, replied: 565* 776

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have resulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a complete adult, a *mulu sēt* or *mulu saw*.

885 [851] [586] [587]

From Generation to Generation

867 Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profession of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

[577] [779]

867 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout maturation. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

779 785 262 577

867 At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

779 793 577 [785] [688]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than
he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bālagē* ("rude"), a trait which [861]
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [155]
[671]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of ascetic piety is stressed at the expense of knowledge. The monk need not 793
even know how to read, though if a lifelong monk he is likely to have de- 792
voted much time to traditional studies. The *dabtarā*, by contrast, lives by 554
his lore and his learning. At his best, the Abyssinian monk conveys a real sense of spiritual purity, of profound mystical bearing, of an utterly mild manner. The *dabtarā*, at his best, is a subtle conversationalist and an operator of wondrous effects.*

Thus, while the status of members of the old nobility was a compound resultant of simultaneously operating criteria—family and region, royal favor and accumulated power—the several criteria relevant to the status of the clergy operated more or less independently. This made the religious elite a more differentiated stratum.

This statement need be qualified only by the fact that, in addition to the considerations of ritual purity, ascetic piety, and traditional learning, a fourth factor influenced the status of the clergy, namely, royal favor as expressed in appointments to the high ecclesiastical offices. This factor crosscut the others, for such favor was dispensed to members of all three status groups. The *eçhagē* was always a monk; the *aqābē sa'āt* would seem to have been a *dabtarā;* the post of *alaqā* could be given to members of all three groups.

Just how these types of local clergy were related to the clergy at the na- 79
tional level in the traditional order is a question that is difficult to answer. 175
In any case, it is likely that there were conflicts among their representatives in the competition for royal favor. In the fourteenth century, the ecclesiastics of the royal entourage included only secular clergy, and their deportment was sharply criticized by Eçhagē Fileppos, who charged that "those who live in the dwelling of the Sovereign, go about proudly in subtle raiment and with ornaments of gold and silver—perishables—and are very arrogant."[49] However, once Zar'a Yā'qob had established the custom of bringing members of the convent of Dabra Libānos to the court, the monastic order was always well represented in the royal entourage as well. In the present period one sometimes hears of competition among the different groups for influence in

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* The association of impious properties with the main representative of traditional religious 779 *
learning may be seen as an expression of the Abyssinian's ambivalence toward knowledge as 793
such. The whole tenor of Ethiopian Orthodox religion runs counter to ratiocination and inquiry. It stresses mystery and discourages curiosity with tales like that of the man who tried to probe the mystery of the Trinity and was swallowed up by the earth—a tale commonly told to students who are learning to read. For this reason Orthodox students have frequently been quite upset by the rational theodicy taught by the Jesuit fathers at the University College.

As observed in the previous chapter, moreover, it was traditionally believed that too much learning results in madness, a belief no doubt based on the fact that older church students often drink a certain medicine to quicken their mental faculties, which sometimes deranges them (as the author has witnessed). The *dabtarā*, for their part, would seem to have thrived on this belief, benefiting from the exclusive powers and privileges gained from their esoteric knowledge.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis*, a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [262]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [154]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away [609]
from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well- [716]
known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

*753 pitiated with zar-favored foodstuffs. Because of this,
776 they are loosely associated with the zars. Unlike the
782 latter, however, they are vague phantoms with whom no
* [755] communication is possible; their demands are known from
* [192] convention and, once satiated, leave the sickman perma-
nently.

776 Zars contrast with ganels in several significant
• 779 respects. The zar lives in a world which parallels but
is distinct from man's own; it is a world whose existence,
together with that of the zars themselves, is denied by
* [192] the Coptic Church. The ganel's existence is entirely
earth-bound, and he is identified by the Church as the
Abyssinian satan (seytan). Whereas it is the zar which
initiates ties with his human host, the ganel is forced
into such relationships by his human partner. The zar's
host may be anyone, the ganel's partner is always a male
ecclesiastic who possesses a store of esoteric knowledge.

* 763 The ganel's appearance is known from scriptural
776 references and, in addition, they are infrequently seen.
[539] When visible, the ganel appears as a tall and thin black-
* [192] man, Nilotic except for certain details. Descriptions
by laymen are generally hearsay, since madness (ibidet)
strikes the unprotected human who looks on a ganel; if
the glance is returned, the effects are mortal. So dan-
gerous is the ganel's person that even contact with his
shadow leaves the victim stammering and given over to

*753 grazing. Both highland zones are considered ideal for
131 human habitation. While residents of the dega zone oc-
133 casionally comment on what they regard as the uncomfor-
821 table summer heat of the weyna dega, at the same time
it is acknowledged that the rainy season (kiramt) is more
burdensome in the dega. The rains last from May to
September and are marked by temperatures in the mid-
thirties in dega lands and perhaps ten to fifteen degrees
warmer in the weyna dega. This season is regarded as a
particularly bad time for kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints),
whose severity is considered greatest in the dega zone.
Epidemiologically, the dega is also associated with a
relatively high incidence of yinifas basiyta ("the wind
disease"), an ailment described in Chapter One.

131 Although reliable population estimates are lacking,
101 the weyna dega and dega zones contain perhaps 85% of
161 Begemder's people. These rural highlands are occupied
197 by five ethnic groups, racially indistinguishable from
144 one another and, with an exception, now speaking a com-
mon Semetic language, Amharic. The Amhara are the most
numerous of Begemder's highland peoples, and extend into
the provinces of Gojam and Shoa, to the south. Within
the Begemder highlands, they occupy the area south of
latitude 13°30'. North of this line live the Tigre, a
related people who speak a cognate language, Tigrinya.
101 Both Amhara and Tigre are Coptic Christians, and from
131
• 779

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

101 131 their combined ranks the political elite of Ethiopia has
• 779 been historically recruited. Third among the highland peoples are the Agaw. It appears likely that they are the descendants of the original Hamitic population of this region, and only during the last century have most Begemder Agaw been converted from their indigenous religious beliefs to membership in the Coptic Church. Within Begemder, they constitute a majority of the inhabitants of three non-contiguous areas. Fourth among highlanders are the rural Muslims, indigenous people who have been converted to Islam over the last five centuries.
[241] While the rural Amhara, Tigre, and Agaw are exclusively
[463] farmers, these Muslims divide their energies between farm-
[286] ing and working as artisans, mainly weavers of the toga
[443] cloth; Muslim women are prominant among the traders of
[562] the weekly markets held throughout the province. Least numerous of the highland people are the Falasha, Abyssin-
[423] ian Jews following a Mosaic creed. A despised and humil-
[326] iated people, the Falasha farm only rented fields
[286] (timene), and work as smiths as well as weavers; Falasha
[162] women are potters. Although the Falasha are localized in several regions, they nowhere constitute a majority
[361] of an area's residents. Like the Abyssinian Muslims, they reside either in hamlets of their own, apart from Amhara, or in peripheral homesteads of otherwise Christian hamlets. These distributions are summarized in Map2.

361
592
613
[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total *risteñas* households	31	21

[423] In each of the hamlets, there are two households be-
*[192] longing to Amhara tenant farmers (*timeneña*), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the *risteñas*
• [779] whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two addition-
[433] al *timeneña* households, whose members are Muslims. These
[286] households are headed by brothers who supplement their
*[192] agricultural activities by weaving the *Yama* (toga) for local Christians.

*793 Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are
361 believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the
423 use of such fields, known as *yikeys mariet* ("priest's
795 land"), is given to local priests in return for parti-
*[192] cipating in the Masses of the parish church. In prac-
[613] tice, *rist*-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of *yikeys mariet* by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Ambara MP5
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162 632 433 463 of the town's total population, support themselves by working among the densely packed rows of beer houses and mead halls which are found along the approaches to, and in the vicinity of, the arada, the weekly market area. A portion of these women alternate periods of beer selling with work as servants in Amhara households.

632 779 563 [197] [167] [142] Gondar's Muslims include both Abyssinians (pejoratively, "Jabartiy", "half-caste") and Arabs. While the former are mono-lingual Amharic speakers and physically indistinguishable from Amhara, the latter are distinctively dressed, bilingual in Amharic and Arabic, often light-skinned, and either immigrants from South Arabia or the descendants of immigrants and their Abyssinian wives. Arab men are the town's most affluent merchants [443] [442] (who often make a weekly circuit of provincial markets with their goods), shop-keepers, and wholesalers. Arab women are secluded at home. In the main, Gondar's Muslims are residentially nucleated in Addis Allem, a settlement on the town's southern perimeter and contiguous to the arada.

632 563 463 [197] [562] A substantial number of Tigrinya-speaking people, predominantly Eritrean, live in Gondar. The men are employed mainly as artisans (carpenters, masons, sandal makers, tailors, tinkers), laborers, and ecclesiastics. Because of their relative sophistication, Eritrean women are popular servants for affluent townsmen, and as

563 bar maids.

[463] A third, numerically significant minority have come
[562] from the provinces of Wollo to the east, and from Shoa and those areas still farther south. Local Amhara classify them together pejoratively as "Galla"[18], even
[144] though many are in fact true Amhara. Although these "Galla" vary as to physical type, most are indistinguishable from local Amhara, and only a minority are markedly
[779] negroid. Most are Copts or Muslims, although a few are
[647] non-Coptic Christians. Most of the men are government employees, generally members of the provincial gendarmerie, which is headquartered in Gondar.

Three additional, numerically small, populations
[562] also reside in Gondar. The Agaw are represented mainly
[464] by girls and women working as servants for the less af-
*[192] fluent townsfolk, and as beer sellers. Of the Nilotes living here, the women work as servants for poor townsfolk, and both sexes haul wood from distant areas for
[326] sale in the town's daily wood market (sir gabiya). The very few Falasha in Gondar are iron-mongers.

632 Ward and Town. Gondar's residents divide the town
621

[18] The predominant ethnic group of southern Ethiopia, and, to Gondari Amhara, half-pagan and negroid ("bariya").

632
621 relevant by townsfolk, and tracts, alone or in combination, came to be redesignated as "ward". Typically, the non-corporate wards encompass no agricultural lands, and includes no church within its boundaries. None of its resident families are ristenas or even related to one another, and each tends to associate itself with a church [779] according to cirteria other than residence. Indeed, in some, Muslims occupy homesteads within an otherwise Christian ward.

Most of Gondar's wards are today without any corporate identity, and serve simply as convenient place names or as occasional indicators of affluence and occupation. Although the meaning of many ward names is forgotten now, the names of others remain appropriately descriptive. Some denote the residents' occupation; [192] (the "place of the superior beer", "encoye mosk", which is occupied by beer houses). Others retain the name of an eponymic church (as in Rufael sebeka).

Non-corporate wards are not a recent innovation. From its founding in the seventeenth century, Gondar has included such sebekas---given over to beer houses and mead halls, to liegemen and warriors, and to a variety of artisans. The last war and its aftermath have only extended such areas and have encouraged ristenas to build residences on their lands for out-landers unable to find housing elsewhere in town.

*278 unable to move the buda beyond incoherent ramblings, or
*755 may be content to stimulate the buda to no response at all; or a wily buda may, in spite of an otherwise adequate therapy, retain his hold on the sickman. Any one reason is sufficient to explain either a failure to obtain even a temporary remission of symptoms or, what amounts to the same thing etiologically, a recurrence of symptoms. Success now may require a more powerful therapy, substituting a fumitory for the inhalant.

*[192] The sickman is restrained as before. A fumitory pot containing smoking herbals is placed before him, and a heavy toga (maviy) is thrown over both the sickman's head and the fumitory pot, in a tent-like fashion. The fumitory pot is replaced periodically so that the buda is given no respite. Even during interrogation he is not allowed to rise from the toga. Profuse perspiration is not uncommon, and is considered an indication that the disease substance is being driven out of the sickman's body. The format of interrogation is altered in that the buda's desires are no longer solicited; rather, his immediate departure is demanded upon threat of continued exposure to the fumitory. The buda's departure is followed by a strong purge, as before.

*755 If, in spite of all, therapy fails, the victim's
• 779 close kinsmen may seek out the responsible Falasha-buda. The buda's identity is known from the therapeutic inter-

*755 *979 rogation, or is perhaps provided by a professional diviner, or is reached through speculation and coincidence. Here, family and friends of the sickman threaten the unfortunate Falasha with his life should the sickman die; if the sickman is already dead, the suspect may be waylaid outright. Frequently, however, the identity of the bude is unknown; evidence may be circumstantial and inconclusive, or may point to a transient Falasha (from a distant and unidentified hamlet).

*755 Finally, therapeutic failure may have resulted from an inaccurate diagnosis, either cunningly manipulated by a zar or ganel, or the result of premature conclusions drawn from ambiguous symptomatic information.

*565 leisurely style of life of his social superiors. He would prefer, if he could but
461 acquire the necessary servants and corvée labor, to "cause to plow" (*ās-ārass*) rather than to plow (*ārass*) himself.

*565 If, in sketching the Amhara peasant's conception of the "good life," one
461 moves from the sphere of goals to that of norms and values, one may say that
181 while work as such is not conceived as an absolute value, the work of plowing
577 one's land is regarded as a primary moral responsibility. The peasant's obliga-
183 tions toward his land extend beyond working it, moreover. At the local level
[423] he is supposed to keep it within his family, and should be ready to defend his rights to land use against all comers. At the national level he should help to keep the land "free"; that is, out of the hands of all foreigners.

*565 Obligations toward the deity are mostly of a ritual nature. Observing the
• 78 fasts and avoiding forbidden foods are perhaps most important of all. It is also
181 important to wear the symbol of the Ethiopian Christian, the *mätäb*, a simple
183 neckcord often holding a wrought silver cross. The church should be visited
[262] and heavy work avoided on the appropriate holy days. Prayers should not be
[301] neglected. When one passes by a church he should bow three times; when he enters a church compound he should "greet" the ark by kissing some stone or pole of the church building.

*565 The Amhara's ideal of Christian piety does, however, include certain good
577 works which should be carried out in order to gain God's favor—giving alms
181 to the indigent, visiting the sick or the prisoner, and aiding the wayfarer (who
183 is referred to as a "guest of God"). But such injunctions play a slight part in
*565 the Amhara's rhetoric of social morality when compared to his extensive code
577 of "shames," or *nawr*. Stealing and breaking the fasts are among the very
673 worst *nawr*. Other *nawr* include murder without good reason or by a shame-
181 ful means like poison; adultery; insulting or not showing proper respect to-
183 ward others; failing to observe the conventions concerning engagement and marriage; failing to revenge offenses; and gossiping about others and thereby
[626] stirring up trouble. Though the sense of being shamed before God provides some measure of internal self-control in these matters, the Amhara peasant avoids immoral acts primarily for fear of being the victim of what others will say (*yelugntä*), so that he will not be "seized by shame" (*häfrat*) or suffer humiliation (*wardat*). His prime moral concern is not to be caught in the act of committing some *nawr*.

*565 Positive moral obligations to persons outside the circle of close ones are thus
57 kept to a minimum. Following the conventions of respect toward superiors
181 and peers is all that is enjoined. The good life for the Amhara peasant is lived
183 within a minimal, Hobbesian order. The ideal neighbor is defined as one who does not touch others (*saw aynakäm*). He does not touch another's land, wife, money, or personal feelings.

*565 Among *zamad*, however, a much warmer ideal of human relations obtains.
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×794 from Aksum (just as Menelik I is regarded by the Coptic Abyssinians to
796 have brought it to Aksum from Solomon's Holy of Holies at the temple
778 in Jerusalem). But the tabot of the zars also symbolized the outdoor tree stump which serves the invisible zar spirits as a table. Thus, partaking of refreshments from the coffee trays constituted a kind of communion with the zar spirit to whom the tray was dedicated, although this was done only during intermissions of the cult services. On one tablet, the "araqi" supplied by the foreigner stood ready.

×794 In the corners, more types of incense were burning than before.
796 In addition to "etan" (frankincense), the domestic Ethiopian "bukbuka"
782 was sending up clouds of perfumed smoke. Leaves of "wogart", believed pleasing to the zar that causes headaches and neuralgic pains, were occasionally placed on the clay incense burners. From time to time, some imported pebbles of yellow sulphur ("kabrē" or "din") sent up acrid smoke. But the sweet odor of most types of incense predominated most of the time.

×794 About 8:30, the drummer brought his heavy drum down from beneath the
796 solidly built roof, and began to drum slowly, rythmically, still subdued.
756 The curtain was lowered, but the shadow of Lady Salamtew behind it could
●781 still be vaguely seen. Suddenly raucous grunts began to be heard from
[533] behind the curtain, emanating from Woyzärö Salämtew. This meant that her first major zar had arrived, and was beginning to descend into her, performing the magical coitus. Her joyshouts became louder, higher-pitched, turning to shrieks, quicker and quicker. She was beginning to perform the "gurri" victory dance of the zar who had conquered her.

Immediately the women devotees began to handclap rythmically, gradually quickening their tempo, in time to the twisting and turning

X794 of Lady Salamtew's body. The twisting began like an embrace, with her
796 head thrown back, rotating movements of the chest, followed by a
756 rythmic forward bump of belly and hipsl Her ecstatic shrieks varied
781 from pain to exultation (like the "ellel" of women in the Coptic church service). Encouraging shouts came from individual women in the audience, and some raised their holiday - reddened palms in prayerful joy. As the climax approached, the jerky twisting of Lady Salamtew's body gradually changed to smoother movements of the limbs. She was now well in tune with her zar, and he was comfortable within her. The excitement in the audience changed to warm and glowing emotion at the same time. Then Lady Salamtew emitted a loud scream, and dropped in a heap. The drum stopped abruptly. There was a sudden hush in the audience. The strong sweet odor of generously burned incense pervaded the consciousness and its smoke leisurely curled upward.

X794 It was only a matter of minutes before Lady Salamtew recovered.
756 Her brother pulled the curtain to one side. Her eyes were bright with
796 curiosity as she glanced about the house as if she had just arrived. She had lost her absent-minded appearance, for now the zar acted and spoke through her. Suddenly she appeared to notice the foreigner for the first time, smiled and waved a friendly greeting. Her voice was still husky, but warm, as she called out "how are you" in understandable Amharic, rather than her esoteric "zar language"; this was a courtesy, though
[95] she used the female familiar gender (the zar often uses the inverted
[23] genders in address). She further inquired whether the foreigner was sitting in comfort, and how his health was today (hinting at the "ailments" he had used as a pretext). Then she ordered the handmaidens to offer the foreigner t̄alla (barley beer), and coffee, on one of the zar coffee trays.

X 777 782 796 Crowd: "Amēn".

Poet: "Raya, Raya, we are calling;

Azābo, Azābo, we are calling!"

Crowd: "May you be".

Poet: "This will bring him to me;

now it will entice him!"

Crowd: "Amēn".

Poet: "Azābo ! Raya ! I am calling!"

X 777 781 796 When he stops there is an expectant hush. A woman zar doctor seated on a mat amid the crowd begins to sway backward and forward, still in a sitting position. All eyes turn to her, for this is the beginning of the "gurri" of her zar, and the spirit is beginning to move her. She begins to rise, still swaying. Her neighbors hold her lightly for a moment and remove her long necklaces which have metal objects attached that might hurt her or someone else in the spinning movements that are to follow. Now fully on her feet, the possessed begins to twirl, emitting hoarse shrieks. She spins faster and faster, like a top. Several times she slows a little, raises her arms rythmically, and contorts head, then chest, belly and hips, while her zar descends into magic coitus with her. Each time she spins again, to the ever faster tythm of the drum and the rythmic handclapping. The other women encourage her on to the orgiastic climax with shouts of "ahun" (now) and "yehun" (let it be). Her shrieks turn to long whines. After about 15 minutes of this "gurri", she falls in a heap, suddenly, exhausted, shouting "ahun" (now) herself with her last effort, then lies silent and motionless.

x794 782 796 The poet now lures the "pagan" zar Ganyu, whose home is in a bamboo forest in the Metemma lowland of the eastern escarpment of Ethiopia.

Poet: "Tall bamboo you (lit. he) will eat; bamboo you will devour;
Lord, named "Dämäna" (lit. cloud), from where you devour bamboo;
Ganyu, Ganyu, Ganyu, pure honey (flattering synonym for healer) I
dance eyaho, eyaho dance, Oh Ganyu!"

Thereupon one of the women devotees who has shaved a tonsure in the center of her skull ("Ganyu" comes from "ganye", meaning tonsure), which is the visible requirement he makes of those whom he "possesses", begins to rise. The "gurri" she dances differs only in details from the one performed for the Galla zar spirits.

It is now 11:00 P.M. The various male zars expected on the program for the evening have now "descended". It is time for the female zars to begin making their descent, which is safe, now that many protective male zars are about.

x794 796 ●781 Word is whispered around that a male and a female zar who "will bite" are about to attack some of the possessed. Everyone rises and crowds close to the wall, leaving the hearth and the center of the room free. Only Lady Salämtew seems unafraid. She calls out a warning to the foreigner, in her husky voice but in friendly tone, advising him to stand on the bench so as not to be bitten. "Ayzäw" (be well, be of good courage, be of good cheer) she calls out to the foreigner, using the polite address, and forgetting to use the familiar 2nd person singular feminine, which is her privilege.

[124] [125]

This time the possession begins differently. Two women detach themselves from the frightened crowd almost simultaneously. Both

x794 woman cower on all fours, snarl at each other, snort like angry
796 leopards, showing their teeth. They crouch like wildcats about to spring
781 at each other, their faces turned to the ground, and eying each other only intermittently. A shallow, large clay dish filled with barley beer is set on the floor for them, and the two antagonists compete with each other in lapping up the drink like cats.

One of the women is possessed by an evil female zar, the other by a mean male zar. The male zar snaps at the female zar, who is of equal power and status. Appearing stimulated by the drink, they chase each other about the room, still cowering, snorting, attacking, retreating, finally grasping each other in a battle clinch, and actually nipping at each other. When this happens, the Lady Salamtu rises quickly, and descends into the arena wielding a thick leather strap. The contestants roll on and off one another and begin to bite seriously, but before damage is done, Lady Salamtu swishes her strap, pulls them apart or separates them with light blows.

This battle is accompanied with drumbeat and rythmic handclapping by the crowd. The contestants do not rejoin battle but roam very rapidly as if blind and lost, sniffing the ground as if they depended on the sense of smell, until they fall exhausted in a heap. But a few moments later they run to Lady Salamtew, kiss her hand, and prostrate themselves before her on the dirt floor in front of the platform. Thus the female and minor zars pay homage to the powerful male zars that possess Lady Salamtew, and acknowledge that they have learned to keep within bounds and not do very severe damage.

x794 It is now 11:30 P.M. and a brief recess is announced. A young,
796 part-Sudanese servant woman, and ex-slave, serves coffee, barley beer,
262

x794 796 262 areqi, and also round, solid wheat discs (Qitta")- the unleavened bread of travelers, expensive when made of wheat.

x794 ●781 [782] About midight, the convention proceeds, with the poet intoning the call for the female zar "Shazqit (see table for her characteristics):

Poet: "Dance, round and round, brave one;

Shanqit, we are calling; brave one".

Both men and women clap more fiercely than over, in quick rythm Suddenly the servant woman who had served the latest refreshments stiffens with a jerk, screams, and lets the tray slide from her hand. She is about to be possessed by the female zar of her class and occupation. This "gurri" is infantile in character. The young woman begins to skip about the room like a young goat or an overly gay little girl. She teasingly pokes at the men, again and again, until a few copper coins are given her. When this happens, she jumps high with glee. But a moment later she is back, pouting, demanding some sweets, asking for honey. Given some, she devours it, and dances a victory dance, flipping about on tiptoe. The drumbeat quickens. Finally she falls exhausted, her zar now in full possession of her.

x794 796 688 There is another hush, awaiting further demonstrations. But there is an unscheduled interlude which reinforces discipline. The woman who had danced the "pagan" gurri had left shortly afterward, ostensibly for a call of nature, but had not returned until now, far too long an absence without permission. Seeing her enter, Lady Salamtew rises, shouting angrily, walkes toward her and beats her on the upper back with the heavy strap, several times, rather hard. The victim stands with bowed head, not stirring under the punishment, evidently

X794 771 The religious and ethnic syncretism of the zar cult is evident from the descriptions given above. This is not too surprising, partly because of the great age of the cult, partly because of the emphasis on "free enterprise" in the zar cult.

X794 776 The cosmology of the zar spirits themselves indicates considerable crossing of boundary lines. Some live in regions other than their ancestral homes. Some have "married" zar spirits of other religions, or have produced "offspring" of mixed "ethnic ancestry". But despite this crossing, most zar spirits are identified with a specific religious, or ethnic, or religious affiliation.

X794 776 781 The human patients, however, are not bound to join a zar spirit of their own affiliation. Very often they do not. This is one of the forms of "free experimentation" - though not on purpose, and unconscious in most cases. A mistreated Amhara wife often joins a predominantly Muslim zar society because "possessed by a Muslim zar"; yet continues as a Coptic Christian in ordinary life. Christian Amhara people believe that Muslim girls about the age of puberty very often become zar possessed, not infrequently by a Coptic zar. Some Coptic zars are believed to take special interest in religious festivals, and if they possess a Coptic woman they may "inspire" her to dance in public outside the church on Ṭemqät (Epiphany).

Several of the more powerful, male, Coptic Christian zars are regarded as "educated in Jerusalem". Their demands are more subtle: e.g. in place of the unimaginative staple demand of pagan zars for a chicken sacrifice, Christian "Jerusalem-trained" zars may require the purchase of a coffee cup of a certain specified color, from which the "possessed" alone may drink.

x 794 776 781 177 771 Yet despite this hierarchy of spirits, in the static construct of the zar cosmology, the factor of syncretism dominates the dynamic functions. As a result, a Coptic woman possessed by a Muslim zar may wear the colorful print head shawl of the Muslim woman; and even a Falasha woman, living in a semi-isolated Falasha hamlet, may suddenly refuse to shave her head (which is required of wives by Falasha religious law) and will braid it in the fashion of a Coptic Amhara woman without serious ostracism by her kinfolk which would be her punishment otherwise. At the wadaja ceremony, like the one at the convention, Coptic women and doctors chant hymns modelled after Muslim worship, refer to the zar as "prophet", and use Arabic loanwords, to flatter and cajole a Christian zar !

x 794 776 771 Finally, religious syncretism in the zar cult is often intertwined with Christian cosmology and hagiology. Thus, Zar Sayd-Qadr, of Muslim origin, has become synonymous with Jesus Christ; The legendary Amhara Christian saint Gäbrä Manfäs Qeddus is believed to have been an ally and advisor of the powerful Zar Säyfu Changär. The archangels Mikäel and Gabriel, who are given feasts on taskar memorials for Coptic Christian departed souls, are regarded in the zar cult as "commander of the right house" and "commander of the left house" of zars (patterned on the human, tradional Abyssinian army). The Christian zar Abba Yosef if believed to join other Copts in bathing in the river to celebrate Tenqät (Epiphany). Christian zar spirits remain dormant during the lenten season.

[798] In view of this, it is perhaps not too surprising that the Coptic Church of Abyssinia remains passive, in effect tolerant by default, toward the zar cult and its social institution.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

sponsored the translation of works from Arabic. Among these were *Laws of the Kings,* a collection of civil and canon laws which became the official basis for judication, and a penitential manual, *Spiritual Medicine,* the last major production in Ge'ez literature. 175* 643 517 [633]

Yohānnes also continued Fāsil's work of "purifying" the church. He decreed that descendants of the Portuguese must leave Ethiopia unless they joined the Orthodox Church and that Muslims must reside apart, either in their own villages or in ghettos. Ordained as a priest before becoming emperor, Yohānnes followed keenly the theological disputes of his day. Toward the end of his reign he convoked a synod in Gondar to discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit in Christ, the chief theological question in Ethiopian history. [798] [793] [779]

Iyāsu I, like many of Ethiopia's rulers, appears to have been moved by deep religious feeling. Describing Iyāsu's religiosity, one of the priests of Gondar wrote an eulogy a few years after his death: 175* 643 781

> The king used to stand at the window of his palace . . . and listen from his tower on high to the singing of the priests and learned men, to their gentle hymns which moistened the bones by their exceeding tenderness. When their offerings pleased him greatly he was pierced with affection for them and drawn by the harmony of their heavenly peace. For this reason . . . he would prepare for them dinners filled with delights, and bid them eat with him in his royal chambers, ornamented all about with the beauty of pure gold and wrought silver. He would take off his gold necklace and present it to them. He adorned them with garments of purple and of staffs interwoven with gold from the treasury of his kingdom. . . . None of the kings before him had done such as he, and none of the clergy of yore had been treated as were his priests and learned men. After the dinners, the king and his priests together sang hymns of joy and jubilation all night long in the palace—in their time of pleasure, in the sweetness of divine ministry.[6]

Iyāsu the Great did much to establish Gondar as the most important center of religious culture in Ethiopia. To this end he brought outstanding priests and learned men from all over the country to his capital. From Gojjam, for example, he brought the great master of religious verse, Kīflē Yohānnes, whose lines are remembered even today. The number of teachers in Gondar in his time exceeded five hundred; there were one hundred and fifty at his church Dabra Berhān Selassie alone.* It was under Iyāsu I that the classic subject matter of the higher religious studies in Abyssinia—*zēmā* ("religious 175* 643 633 517

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* Dabra Berhān Selassie, one of the two churches built by Iyāsu I, is the only one of the original churches of Gondar which survived later conflagrations of the city. The original paintings which covered its walls have been preserved, as well as the remarkable ceiling from which rows of wide-eyed angels look down from between wooden beams. The church provides separate places for nobility and commoners, and a balcony for the emperor. [346]

224 Before
535 going on an elephant hunt, for example, he performed the "boasting dance", "fukkara", largely with his shoulders and upper arms, predicting his feats; and his retainers honored him by declaring their confidence in his prowess, jumping up and down in the "hota" dance, chanting repeatedly:

[539] "Elephant-killer, (to) your home-
elephant-killer, take him home".
(Hunter:) Elephant-killer (I am), to home (I'll take him)."
(Retainers:)" When it (the elephant) will be moving,
he will kill it!"

224 The elephant-killer, considered braver than the lion-
554 killer, was called "addo" and given a special decoration to wear on forehead and upper arm by the king or feudal lord. A warrior who had killed a human enemy was called "geday" (lit. killer) and held prestige equal to the elephant-killer. Now that rifles are used in place of spears, such heroes have become more common and decorations among the Amhara have fallen into disuse.

224 Besides the big-game, edible jungle animals mentioned
825 before under "fauna", there are numerous wild game, mainly gazelles and partridges, hunted near human habitations to increase the food supply and for occasional sport:

Ethiopian duiker - "midaqwa", very common near habitations on the woyna dega, an antelope the size of a small goat, often approaching hamlets at dusk. It is considered the "cattle" of the zar spirits, and sacrifice to them is thus called "midaqwa".

[782]

Bushbuck - "dekula", similar but medium-sized ante-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 It is noteworthy that the military ranking of the com-
[illegible]ner-soldiery, which made up the rank and file of the
[illegible]ters on foot, was not nearly so formal. The for-
tunes of war, if they did not leave him dead or maimed,
could move him upward to lower nobility. Failing to
achieve that, veterans could still hope for a modest
fief of "gult" land, enabling him to play the "telleq
saw" (great man) role over some hapless "gabbar" peas-
ants. Meanwhile, pseudo-"telleq säw" behaved much like
the proverbial sergeant of any army, making his men
fear him more than any enemy, rewarding them with feasts,
in this case of raw beef and medium-alcoholic mead.
The only way he could maintain his following of indivi-
dual-minded Amhara soldiers, each one of whom wanted to
be a hero himself, was by continous personal bravery
coupled with cleverness in military tactics. But here
the similarity ends, for the non-noble chief of Amhara
warriors had no pride of a non-commissioned officer;
his ambition was to become a real "telleq säw", a minor
nobleman owning "rest" lands.

782 Personal bravery was expressed and recalled in
726 formal boasting, a tradition that survives to this day
521 even for such civilian occasions as weddings. Prior to
635 battle each potential hero would go into a personal song
and dance called "fukkara". The ceremonial dance accom-
panying his boast proceeded as follows: Spear, or rifle,
held horizontally behind head, just above shoulders; the
head moves in increasingly rapid motion from right to

782 726 521 535 left, while boasts are shouted rythmically. Personal boasts are interspersed with shouts of loyalty to the emperor ("Addis Ababa! Addis Ababa!"), or recalling past loyal bravery in the service of a provincial chieftain. Fukkara is performed also before the military games of "ganna" on Christmas, and outside the church on Epiphany (Temqāt), to express the readiness of the young warriors to defend the faith, and on weddings to boast of warrior ancestors and so impress the in-laws.

[533] The song and dance is also referred to as "dankira " (stomping); to distinguish it from the tamer entertainment song, "zafan" performed by female "azmari" who perform accompanied by a violin ("masenqo") or banjo ("qrar"), often recounting tales of renown in ballad form. The "fukkara" in military life takes place before the "joy tent" ("das") of the king, before the "denkwan" (from diwan, round cotton or hair tent) of feudal lords on the march; or, in honor of a successful "killer" ("gedday") of a lion, rhinoceros, elephant or human enemy, in presence of the trophy.

[727] The dance after the victorious battle is called "hoto". It is a simple jumping up and down, brandishing spear, rifle or stick vertically, reminiscent of the Central and West African dancing to exhaustion. It is accompanied by refrains, shouted frequently in response to impromptu poetry made up to celebrate the event, such as "yebahalal jebo" (the hyena will swallow him, i.e. the slain enemy). This refrain is also used before the battle, to defy the enemy and pretend that victory

722 is already assured. It is also performed on Epiphany,
726 to defy human as well as spirit enemiesoof the Faith.
521
535 Before battle, it was the response of the simple soldiers, ("wätadär") to the pep-talk ("arraga") given them by the commander, encouraging them to stand their ground.

727 After thevictorious battle, the soldier could look
554 forward to taking part in the royal feasting, the "gabber", and to lording it over the local "gabbar" peasant who had to supply the means and the womenfolk. It is at least part of the basis of the pride (critics say false sense of their own worth) of the free Amhara over subject peoples, enabling evan the simplest soldier to feel that he belongs to the proprietory class. Back home, he therefore despises manual labor, and even in going into battle he used to conscript peasant boys to carry his heavy rhinoceros-hide shield ("gasha"). These boys often became replacements for slain warriors when they could sedure weapons, and, in turn, recruited servants for themselves.

411 The typical weapon was the spear (the word "tor" means both war and spear) until replaced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by rifles, though late-medieval muskets and Ottoman firearms were available to a few from the Portuguese period in the 16th century. The spear, some in use as late as the Italian invasion of 1935/6, sometimes had two or three prongs. Sabers were rare, and available mostley to noble officers. They were of the curved, Damascene type. Daggers of

A. The Structure of Church Organization.

346
778 a) The Church buildings and design.

The traditional church building is round, designed on a pattern of three concentric circles. This combines the round pattern of the African hut, though much larger in this case, with the functional design of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. Like the latter, each church has a Holy of Holies ("geddesta geddusan"), a closed inner sanctum, which may be entered only by upper priesthood
[782] or the day's officiating priest. He carries burning and smoking incense in a metal or clay censer, while he marches around the sacred wooden tablet, the "tabot", located there. On the tabot, which may not be seen by layman's eyes, are inscribed, in Geez, the name of the saint to whom the particular (parish) church is dedicated, plus magical names of angels and geometric symbolism and phrases from both the Old and New Testament. The "tabot" represents symbolically the Ark of Moses kept by the ancient Israelites in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem

346 The second circumference, the "mäqdäs", can be
[788] seen from the outside through several doorless openings. Here the priests perform the eucharist, hidden from the public gaze by portable white linen screens. The "maqdas" is restricted only during services.

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346 Within the third, walled-in circumference, the "taza", called also "gene mahlet" (lit. reciting-place of devotional poetry), the chorister-scribes ("dabtära") congregate while they chant devotional poetry and other

X 794 755 535 The specific personality and identity of the zar is revealed later during the course of the diagnosis, when the zar, using the body of the patient, dances the "fukkara" dance. This is considered the equivalent of the "boasting dance" of the Amhara warrior on the eve of battle, which goes by the same name. Thus the zar reveals his "färä sem" (war name; lit. horse name, i.e. knighthood name), much like an Amhara feudal knight. Since formal "boasting" is highly individualistic, this means that the zar has come out of hiding, like a warrior who emerges from ambush. The dance itself is just as individualistic and irregular, therefore called "dankira", and may include the brandishing of sticks (as if they were spears) or jumping up and down.

X 794 755 Once the patient has proceeded to such expressive behavior, the zar doctor claims that he "knows" the identity of the zar. The doctor now asks the zar a series of leading questions, and the patient usually does not fail to respond with the "truthful" answers. Finally the name of the zar is openly proclaimed. Certain zars are stubborn, hide their identity in various subterfuges, so that the battle of wits between the zar doctor and the zar is a lengthy and difficult one. But the former nearly always wins out and announces his diagnosis.

Thereupon the zar doctor proceeds to decide what course of treatment to follow. The zar is asked, through the mouth of the patient, what [782] offense has been committed against him; what he would like to receive as "äqwädäsha" love-gift in order to "pardon" the iniquity, or as damages for the "insult" or "neglect". Finally the zar is asked what he will demand in regular offerings in order to remain on good terms with the possessed, to plague her less and only at regular intervals, and, perhaps, to become her protective spirit. On the basis of the replies, the patient is

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 assessed membership fees in the zar congregation headed by that parti-
755 cular zar doctor. The patient thus becomes a devotee of the zar ("yäzar
walaj").

X794 Demands of the individual zars range from very simple to very com-
782 plex. If he is a light-colored zar, he may demand the annual sacrifice
755 of a light-colored goat; if dark, of a black goat. Frequently the
776 demand includes personal attire for the possessed, such as certain trinkets, glass bead necklaces, metal hairpins, specific hairstyles - all of them attention-getters. The zar warns that he will come and check on the observance of these demands from time to time, and punish any shortcomings with severe suffering.

Sacrifices, "derka", in which a goat or a chicken is slaughtered, are at least partly consumed by the patient (through whom the zar consumes the donation). Sometimes several sacrifices have to be observed as part of one "äqwädäsha", to appease weaker zar spirits that linger about the more powerful ones, awaiting a vulnerable moment in which to pounce upon the patient, unless pacified.

Some zars are vegetarian, require ablutions in vegetable water, in which mashed vegetables and chewed "chat" ("qat", a drugplant) have been mixed; others perversely like the bitter vermifuge plant kosso and insist that it be placed in the coffee consumed by the possessed patient; still others have made the lemon or the sycamore their symbol.

More zars are carnivorous. One whose symbol (resembling a totem) is a lion, will demand the sacrifice of a tawny-colored goat, or demand
X794 that one of that color be kept in sight at all times so that he can
776 "look" at it. For zars are very fond of using their sight. The wild
755 animals of the bush are considered the "cattle" of the zar, and some
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X794 (actually directed at the patient), and "train" the minor zars to do
776 their individual "gurri" somewhat differently, more "correctly".
755 This "training" may include occasional beating of the "horse" of the zar (the patient).

Another advanced and complicated technique used by highly experienced zar doctors, in certain stubborn cases, is to transfer a stubborn zar from one patient of the zar congregation to a "stronger" member, so that the effect will be more controllable. This transfer is made on the principle of contagion. But a zar doctor is not supposed to inoculate a person with a really evil zar, for that would make him a sorcerer and set both the chief zar doctors and mankind in general against him.

Only in case of such a completely evil zar does the zar doctor attempt complete exorcism, considered a very dangerous form of spiritual surgery. During a somber ceremony, which lacks the gaiety of the usual
•[782] zar society, a black hen is killed, the evil zar is lured to feed on the body of the bloody animal, and the cadaver is quickly thrown in the bush, a thicket, or the river. This transfer is called "danqara", is tangential to the zar cult, and more related to "buda" and "tänqway" complexes (described later).

[787] Occasionally an old and experienced zar doctor, especially if a man, is asked to perform divination. If his personal zar happens to be "adept at prophecy", especially if he has been "educated at Jerusalem", the zar doctor may agree to put the question before him.

X794 Seasonal variations are considered very important in treatment pro-
776 cedures, for the zar spirits are regarded to be as much dominated by the
821 climate as are humans. They are dormant or inactive during the 3-month

×794 796 778 from Aksum (just as Menelik I is regarded by the Coptic Abyssinians to have brought it to Aksum from Solomon's Holy of Holies at the temple in Jerusalem). But the tabot of the zars also symbolized the outdoor tree stump which serves the invisible zar spirits as a table. Thus, partaking of refreshments from the coffee trays constituted a kind of communion with the zar spirit to whom the tray was dedicated, although this was done only during intermissions of the cult services. On one tablet, the "araqi" supplied by the foreigner stood ready.

×794 796 782 In the corners, more types of incense were burning than before. In addition to "ṭan" (frankincense), the domestic Ethiopian "bukbuka" was sending up clouds of perfumed smoke. Leaves of "wogart", believed pleasing to the zar that causes headaches and neuralgic pains, were occasionally placed on the clay incense burners. From time to time, some imported pebbles of yellow sulphur ("kabrē" or "din") sent up acrid smoke. But the sweet odor of most types of incense predominated most of the time.

×794 796 756 781 [533] About 8:30, the drummer brought his heavy drum down from beneath the solidly built roof, and began to drum slowly, rythmically, still subdued. The curtain was lowered, but the shadow of Lady Salamtew behind it could still be vaguely seen. Suddenly raucous grunts began to be heard from behind the curtain, emanating from Woyzärö Sälämtew. This meant that her first major zar had arrived, and was beginning to descend into her, performing the magical coitus. Her joyshouts became louder, higher-pitched, turning to shrieks, quicker and quicker. She was beginning to perform the "gurri" victory dance of the zar who had conquered her.

Immediately the women devotees began to handclap rythmically, gradually quickening their tempo, in time to the twisting and turning

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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She then proceeded to greet the individual zar doctors and devotees as if she had been absent a long time. Each rose and bowed deeply to her. Barley beer was now passed around freely, while coffee beans were being roasted and crushed, in preparation for the next intermission.

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Refreshed and heartened, the male zar doctor serving as poet now began to chant the hymns he had composed in honor of "aweliya" the chief male zar of Lady Salamtew. The rythm was as formal as the hymns chanted by the dabtara in the Coptic Abyssinian church, but contained Arabic loanwords borrowed from the traders' vernacular. The audience quickly leaned the response and accompanied the responsive chant with rythmic handclapping:

Poet: "Salaam" (lit. "Peace", greeting; similar in Geez and Arabic languages).

Crowd: "Salaam Alēkum" (lit."Peace be with you", in Arabic).

Poet (continuing in Amharic): "Enter, warrior; enter warrior! "

Crowd: (repeats the same words).

Poet: "Lord Aweliya, what have I given to him (polite address) that he may be merciful to me?"

Crowd: (repeats same chant in more wailing pitch).

Poet: "Flower (synonym for youth), oh zar, flower!"

Crowd: (repeats)

Poet: He is Lord of Sera, Lord of Mora is he". (Polite address).

Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "He, bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Crowd: "Bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Poet: "Like a lion, like a leopard, when he roars!"

Crowd: (repeats).

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Poet: "My witness (also can mean "faith"), Aweliya; my witness!"

Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "May it be, to be healed, let me be!"

Crowd: (repeats)

Poet: "My prophet, my prophet, peace be with you".

Crowd: (repeats).

Now that Aweliya has been greeted and his protection invoked, individual "bala zar" (zar doctors as well as chronically possessed patient-devotees) can invite and lure their individual zars to take public "possession" of the devotee, who then dances the individual "gurri" victory dance of the particular zar. In luring the zar, they invite him with incense that he likes and with poetry composed by the zar doctor who serves as the poet of the convention.

It is now 9:30 P.M. Now that Aweliya, a Coptic zar is present, the poet invites Galla zar spirits from the Raya and Azabo territory of eastern Ethiopia:

Poet (chanting): "Aweliya, you are merciful, merciful you are;
my Lord, you are merciful".

Crowd: "Yehun" (lit. "May he be", polite address; this is a frequent refrain).

Poet: "If we believe in you, if we have faith, Aweliya, you will be merciful!"

Crowd: "Amēn".

Poet: "Hear, oh prophet, we greet you; hear, oh prophet, we greet you!"

Crowd: "May you be" (greeted).

Poet: "The coffee has boiled,
the pilgrimage has been fulfilled;
hear, oh prophet, we greet you".

x 794 Crowd: "Amēn".

782 Poet: "Raya, Raya, we are calling;

796 Azābo, Azābo, we are calling!"

Crowd: "May you be".

Poet: "This will bring him to me;

now it will entice him!"

Crowd: "Amēn".

Poet: "Azābo ! Raya ! I am calling!"

x 794 When he stops there is an expectant hush. A woman zar doctor

781 seated on a mat amid the crowd begins to sway backward and forward, still

796 in a sitting position. All eyes turn to her, for this is the beginning of the "gurri" of her zar, and the spirit is beginning to move her. She begins to rise, still swaying. Her neighbors hold her lightly for a moment and remove her long necklaces which have metal objects attached that might hurt her or someone else in the spinning movements that are to follow. Now fully on her feet, the possessed begins to twirl, omitting hoarse shrieks. She spins faster and faster, like a top. Several times she slows a little, raises her arms rythmically, and contorts head, then chest, belly and hips, while her zar descends into magic coitus with her. Each time she spins again, to the ever faster tyths of the drum and the rythmic handclapping. The other women encourage her on to the orgiastic climax with shouts of "ahun" (now) and "yehun" (let it be). Her shrieks turn to long whines. After about 15 minutes of this "gurri", she falls in a heap, suddenly, exhausted, shouting "ahun" (now) herself with her last effort, then lies silent and motionless.

x 794 782 796 The poet now lures the "pagan" zar Gamyu, whose home is in a bamboo forest in the Metemma lowland of the eastern escarpment of Ethiopia.

Poet: "Tall bamboo you (lit. he) will eat; bamboo you will devour;
Lord, named "Dämäna" (lit. cloud), from where you devour bamboo;
Gamyu, Gamyu, Gamyu, pure honey (flattering synonym for healer) I
dance eyaho, eyaho dance, Oh Gamyu!"

Thereupon one of the women devotees who has shaved a tonsure in the center of her skull ("Gamyu" comes from "gamye", meaning tonsure), which is the visible requirement he makes of those whom he "possesses", begins to rise. The "gurri" she dances differs only in details from the one performed for the Galla zar spirits.

It is now 11:00 P.M. The various male zars expected on the program for the evening have now "descended". It is time for the female zars to begin making their descent, which is safe, now that many protective male zars are about.

x 794 796 781 Word is whispered around that a male and a female zar who "will bite" are about to attack some of the possessed. Everyone rises and crowds close to the wall, leaving the hearth and the center of the room free. Only Lady Salämtew seems unafraid. She calls out a warning to the [124] foreigner, in her husky voice but in friendly tone, advising him to stand on the bench so as not to be bitten. "Ayzäw" (be well, be of good courage, be of good cheer) she calls out to the foreigner, using the [195] polite address, and forgetting to use the familiar 2nd person singular feminine, which is her privilege.

This time the possession begins differently. Two women detach themselves from the frightened crowd almost simultaneously. Both

x794 796 262 areqi, and also round, solid wheat discs (Citta")- the unleavened bread of travelers, expensive when made of wheat.

About midight, the convention proceeds, with the poet intoning

x794 781 the call for the female zar "Shasqit (see table for her characteristics):

[782] Poet: "Dance, round and round, brave one;

Shanqit, we are calling; brave one".

Both men and women clap more fiercely than over, in quick rythm Suddenly the servant woman who had served the latest refreshments stiffens with a jerk, screams, and lets the tray slide from her hand. She is about to be possessed by the female zar of her class and occupation. This "gurri" is infantile in character. The young woman begins to skip about the room like a young goat or an overly gay little girl. She teasingly pokes at the men, again and again, until a few copper coins are given her. When this happens, she jumps high with glee. But a moment later she is back, pouting, demanding some sweets, asking for honey. Given some, she devours it, and dances a victory dance, flipping about on tiptoe. The drumbeat quickens. Finally she falls exhausted, her zar now in full possession of her.

x794 796 688 There is another hush, awaiting further demonstrations. But there is an unscheduled interlude which reinforces discipline. The woman who had danced the "pagan" gurri had left shortly afterward, ostensibly for a call of nature, but had not returned until now, far too long an absence without permission. Seeing her enter, Lady Salamtew rises, shouting angrily, walkes toward her and heats her on the upper back with the heavy strap, several times, rather hard. The victim stands with bowed head, not stirring under the punishment, evidently

X 794 [798] tolerates it, as long as the residential location of the zar house is sufficiently beyond hearing distance of the church.

[562] Men are often ashamed to admit that they themselves are zar-possessed devotees. If possessed by a feminine zar, considered more stupid and ignorant than a male zar, in most cases, it is considered [782] possible to "outwit" her. A clever zar doctor may negotiate with a female zar to accept a consecrated hen, never to be slaughtered for her, merely to be looked at. The owner of the hen can then sell the eggs, and has a (totemically?) protected hen!

[787] More often, men consult zar doctors on business - though by stealth. In the town of Gondar, e.g., a man wishing to find a job for his nephew might present the problem to Lady Salamtew, who would listen quietly, accept his "frankincense money", and tell him to return on a certain day for her advice.

X 794 782 443 The economic significance of the zar cult varies, but can be considerable especially in the provincial towns. Most zar spirits, especially the powerful and clever ones, like "generosity" in sacrifices, are pleased by voluptuousness, insist on healthy animals for sacrifice, neat gifts and attire of their "horses" (a woman who is a clotheshorse would certainly be regarded as possessed), incense that has been imported from Yemen, aromatic herbs, imported perfumes, European utensils and alcoholic beverages (distilled arrak). Retail traders know this and encourage women to buy "nice things for the zar". It is well known that many women are "struck" by the spirit for the first time just after having visited ("window shopped" in the modern equivalent) a big market. No wonder zar doctors are popular with the Muslim Ethiopian retail traders, who not infrequently let them take

Same pancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission!

755 Serious cases sometimes evidence utter self-abasement, but this impresses the audience as a sign of a genuine, sincere case. Finally, the exorciser negotiates a date at which the buda will leave, usually not more than a week later. Unlike the zar, the buda is made to swear that he will not return.

The next step in treatment is to make certain that the buda [756] will not return. Often the sacrifice of a black chicken is made. the animal, still alive, is turned around the head of the victim, until the greedy buda enters the body of the chicken. Then the chicken is rapidly smashed to the ground. If it dies at once, it is a good omen that the buda has accepted the transfer, the substitute, and is leaving. Another good omen is the release of the exorciser is a dabtara, he says:

> "I command you, buda, in the name of the holy Trinity, the 12 apostles and the 318 bishops of the Council (of Nicea) to leave this person".

If the buda responds, he leaves with a flourish, such as showing his strength for the last time by causing his victim to pick up a huge rock, which would normally take several men to lift; then leaving the victim in a faint. To scare the buda further off, rifles may be discharged at this time. Often the patient is beaten severely, even wounded in the hip with a spear, "to let the buda escape"; this also makes things unpleasant and prevents a renewed attack.

When the victim recovers from his faint, he is asked his name, and gives his usual name. This is proof that he is "himself again". He claims to have no memory of what went on during the attack. As further proof of recovery the patient may be asked to pronounce

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346 very well closed; all appears to be vaulted. The church has a chancel and a transept, in the centre transept are curtains from end to end; and there are other curtains before the side doors, from wall to wall. They are curtains of silk: the entrance through these curtains is in three places, they are open in the middle, and they reach one to another, also they can be entered close to the walls. In the said three entrances there are little bells suspended to the curtains themselves, and nobody can enter by any part without these bells ringing. Here there is not more than one altar, which is in the chancel: this has a stand on four props, and the altar reaches to these four props. This stand is covered over above as though with a vault, and there is an altar stone which they call *tabuto*. Upon this altar stone there is a basin of copper, very large and flat below, and with low sides. This basin also reaches to the supports of the stand, which are disposed in a square. Within this large basin there is another smaller one. This stand has curtains hanging down from it to the ground, that is, at the back and sides, which screen the altar, except that in front it is open. One can go all round the altar. The bells are of
534 stone, and in this manner: long thin stones, suspended by cords passed through them, and they strike them with sticks made for the purpose, and they make a sound as of cracked bells heard at a distance. Also at festivals they take the basins from the altar and strike them with sticks, and they help to make a sound. They have also other iron bells, not round, but with two sides, they have a clapper which strikes first on one side and then on the other, and it makes a noise as of helving a mattock. They also have other small ill-made bells, which they carry in their hands at processions, and they ring the whole of them at the festivals. On other days the bells of stones and iron are
782 used. In all churches and monasteries they ring for matins
796 two hours before dawn. They say the prayers by heart and

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They say the prayers by heart and
without light, except in the lamps or chandeliers, for they 796 782
have not got lamps. They burn butter in these chandeliers, [373]
for they have not got oil. They pray or chaunt very loud, [354]
without art of singing, and they do not recite (alternate) [257]
verses, but all sing straight on. Their prayers are psalms, and
on feast days besides psalms they recite prose, according as [533]
the feast is so is the prose. They always stand in the
churches; at matins they only say one single lesson: this
is said by a priest or a friar, rather shouted than intoned,
and he reads this lesson before the principal entrance.
When this lesson is finished, on Saturdays, Sundays, and 792
feast days, they make a procession with four or five crosses 796
on their poles, and a cross not so much raised as carried
like a stick in the left hand, because they carry a thurible
in the right hand, since as many as carry a cross carry a
thurible, there are always as many thuribles as crosses.
They wear some silk cloaks, not well made, because they [292]
are not wider than the width of a piece of damask, or other
silk from top to bottom. Before the breast, a cross piece to
the flanks on each side, of any other stuff and of any colour,
even though it should not match the principal part, and of
this principal part a good ell hangs behind dragging on the
ground. They make this procession through the circuit,
which is like a cloister. This being ended, on the said
Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts, he who has to say mass
enters with two others into the chancel; they bring out an
effigy of Our Lady, which they have in ancient pictures in all [778]
churches and monasteries. He who has to say mass places
himself in the centre of the transept with his face towards
the principal entrance, and the image in his hands held
before his breast: and those who stand by his sides hold
lighted candles in their hands, and all the others commence
a chaunt like prose, and all walk, shouting and leaping as if
dancing[1], they hold hands and go round, before the

[1] *Como em chacota*, dancing and singing, *i.e.*, not reverentially.

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796 image,[1] and at the sound of that chaunt or prose which they sing, they also ring the little bells and sound the cymbals to the same tune. Each time that they pass before the image they make a great reverence to it. Certainly it has a good appearance and causes devotion, from being a thing done for the praise of the Lord God. There also proceed crosses and thuribles in this feast as in the procession. When this is ended, 796 which lasts a good while, they put by the picture and go to 782 a small building which is on the North side, and of the gospel according to our mass; and outside the covered circuit, where they make the bread which they call *corbom*, and we *hostia*. They carry cross, thurible, and bell, and bring thence the bread of wheat flour, and without leaven, made at that moment, very white and nice, of the size and roundness of a patena, in this monastery in which are few people. In other monasteries and churches, where there are many people, they make large loaves, and many of them according to the people, because all are communicants who go to the church. According to the width of the bread they make its thickness, from half a finger's breadth to an inch, or larger. They bring this loaf in a small vase, which is one of those of the altar, covered with a cloth, and with the cross and thurible, sounding a bell. Behind the church, that is, behind the chancel,[2] in that circuit which is like a cloister, nobody must remain unless he were in holy orders, and all the others must be before the principal entrance in another large circuit, which all the churches have; for near this, which is like a cloister, anybody who likes may stand. Whilst bringing the bread, as many as are in the church or in its circuit, when they hear the bell, bow their heads until the bell is silent, which is when they place the wafer on the altar with the small vase in which they brought

[1] *Como quem anda per mdos diante da imagem.* According to the Spanish translation of Miguel de Salves. Saragossa, 1561.

[2] *Oussia.*

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it. They place this vase in the other larger one, and cover the bread with a dark cloth, after the fashion of a *corporale*. They have a silver chalice in this monastery, and so in all honourable churches and monasteries there are silver chalices, some have them of gold: in poor churches, which they call churches of *Balgues*, that is, of rustics, there are copper chalices. The vases are very wide and ill made, and they have not got patenas. They put into the chalice wine of raisins, in large quantities, because as many as partake of the communion of the body also partake of the blood. He who has to say mass begins it with Hallelujah in a loud voice, rather shouted than sung; all respond and continue the chaunt. He of the mass is silent and continues his benedictions, which he does with his small cross, which he holds in his hand. Those who are outside sing as well as those who are inside the church and cloister, up to a certain distance. Here one of those who is at the altar, takes a book and goes to read the epistle at the principal door of the church. When it is ended, he who read it at once begins a chaunt as a response; those who are at the altar, or in the church, follow him. This ended, he who says the mass takes a book from the altar, and gives it to him who has to read the gospel, and he bows his head and begs a blessing. After he has received it he goes to the place where the epistle was read, and with him two others, one with a cross and thurible, the other with a bell. They read the gospel, and likewise the epistle, fast and loud, as much so as the tongue can speak and the voice be raised. Returning to the altar, on the way another chaunt commences, and those that accompany them join in it. On reaching the altar they give the book to kiss to him who says the mass, and they deposit the book in its place; because at the altar they say nothing from a book. Then he who says mass takes the thurible, or they give it into his hand, and he incenses the altar above it, and then takes

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796 several turns round it, giving incense. When these circuits
782 and incensing are ended, he turns to the altar and gives many blessings with the cross, and then uncovers the bread which was covered up, and which is for the sacrament: they take it with both hands, and let go the right hand and it remains in the left hand: with the thumb of the right hand he makes five marks like little hollows, that is to say, one in the upper part, one in the middle, another at the lower part, another on the left, and another on the right hand, and then he consecrates in his language, and with our own very words, and does not elevate it. He does as much with the chalice, and says over it our own very words, in his language: and again covers it, and takes the sacrament of the bread in his hands and divides it in the middle, and of the part which remains in his left hand, from the top of it he takes a very small portion, and places the other pieces one upon another. The priest takes this small portion for himself, and also takes a portion of the sacrament of the blood. After that he takes the vase with the sacrament covered up and gives it to him who read the gospel, and likewise takes the chalice with the sacrament and gives it to him who read the epistle. He then administers the communion to the priests who are near the altar, taking the sacrament in very small portions from the vase which the deacon holds in his right hand, and as often as he administers it the sub-deacon takes of the blood with a spoon of gold, or silver, or copper, according to the church, and gives a very small quantity to the person who has received the body. There is also on one side another priest with a ewer of holy water, and the person who has received the communion puts out the palm of his hand and he pours some of that holy water, and with it he washes his mouth and swallows it. This being done all go to the altar with this sacrament before the first curtain, and in this manner they give the communion to those that are there, and thence to

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those who are at the other curtain, and thence to the 796
secular people who are at the principal door, both men and 782
women, if it is a church to which women come. At the giving of the communion, and likewise at all the offices of the church, all are standing up. When they come to receive the communion, all come with their hands raised before their shoulders, and the palms forward. As soon as each one receives the sacrament of the blood he takes the said water as has been said, and so generally as many as are communicants. Before mass they wash their hands with the water which is in all the churches and monasteries. The priest who said the mass, and those who stood with him at the altar, when the communion is ended, return to the altar, and wash the vase in which the sacrament was, with the water which remains in the ewer, which they say is blessed, this water they pour into the chalice, and the priest who said mass takes it all. This done, one of these ministers of the altar takes a cross and a bell, and beginning a low chaunt goes to the principal entrance, where the epistle and gospel were read, and the administering the communion ended, and as many as are in the church, and outside of it, bow their heads, and go away in peace. They say this is the blessing, without this no one goes away. On Saturdays and Sundays, and feast days, in all the churches and monasteries, blessed bread is distributed. The method which they have in this small monastery, which will not [192] have more than 20 or 25 friars, is that which is followed in all the monasteries and churches, great and small. The office of the mass, exclusive of the processions, is short; and the mass on week days is quickly finished.

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CAP. XII.—*Where and how the bread of the Sacrament is made, and of a Procession they made, and of the pomp with which the mass is said, and of entering into the church.*

182 The making of this sacramental bread is in this manner.
252 The building in which it is made, in all churches and
[346] monasteries, is, as I said above, on the gospel side, outside of the church and its circuit, which is like a cloister, in the space contained by the other outer circuit, which is not covered in, which space serves for a churchyard. All the churches and monasteries have such a building, and it does not contain anything else except what is requisite for this purpose; that is to say, a mortar for pounding wheat, a machine for making very clean flour, and such as is required for such a purpose, for they do not prepare this sacrament from flour or wheat on which women have laid their hands. They have pots for preparing the paste, which they make thicker than ours. They have a furnace, as for distilling water, and upon it a plate of iron, and in some churches of copper, and in other poor churches of clay. This plate is round and of a good size; they place fire underneath it, and when it is hot clean it with a waxed cloth, pour on it a portion of paste, and spread it out with a wooden spoon of such size as they intend to make the bread, and they make it very round. When it is set they take it off and place it on end, then they make another in the same way. When this second one is set, they take the first and place it upon it, that is to say, the side of the first which was uppermost they put upon the top of the other, fresh with fresh, and so the bread remains one whole one, and they do nothing more than make it round and turn it from one side to the other, and move it about on the plate, that it may bake on both sides and on the circumference. In this manner they make one or as many as they wish. In this same
[273] house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a machine for pressing.

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house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a machine for pressing. In this same house the blessed bread is made which is given away on Saturdays and Sundays and feast days; and on great feasts, such as Christmas, Easter, Our Lady of August, etc., they carry this bread of the sacrament with a pallium,[1] bell, and cross devoutly. Before they enter the church with it they go round the church by the circuit like a cloister; when it is not a feast they enter the church at once and without the pallium. On a Saturday before Ascension these friars made a procession; and from being in a new country it seemed to us very good, and they did it in this way. They took crosses, and the altar stone covered with a silk cloth, a friar carried it on his head, which was also covered with the said cloths; and they carried books and bells, and thuribles, and holy water; and all went chaunting to some millet fields: there they made their devotions and cries after the fashion of litanies, and with this procession they returned to the monastery. We asked why they did that, and they said that the animals ate their millet, and so they went to pour out holy water and pray God to drive them out. In this country he that says the mass has no other difference from the deacon and sub-deacon in his vestments than a long stole with an opening in the middle to allow the head to pass through; before and behind it reaches to the ground. The friars say mass with hair on their heads; the priests do not wear hair, and are shaven and so say mass. Also, both friars and priests say mass barefooted, nobody enters the church with his feet shod, and they allege for this what God said to Moses: "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for thou art on holy ground."

782 796 793 292 796 [302]

[1] Under a canopy.

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792 thuribles of copper. When mass was said, I saw a great gold chalice and gold spoon, with which they administered the communion. Of the three hundred friars who came to this monastery, very few were those that I knew as belonging to it: and I asked some of my friends how it was, that with so large a number of friars in the monastery as they said, they were not present at such a feast. They told me that even though there were more than they had said, that they were scattered about in these monasteries and churches, and markets, to seek for their living, because that could not be in the monastery whilst they were young men; and when they were old men, and could not walk, they came to die in the monastery. On that day I saw the habit put on seventeen young men. There is a tomb in this
778 monastery which they say is of an Abba or provincial of
776 this monastery who is named Philip, and they give him the merits of a Saint, saying that there was a King Prester John who commanded that Saturday should not be observed in his kingdoms and lordships, and this Abba Philip went to that King Prester with his friars, and undertook to show how God had commanded that Saturday should be kept, and that whoever did not keep it should die by stoning, and that he would maintain this before all the fathers of Ethiopia: and he made it good before the King. Therefore
796 they say that he was a Saint for making Saturday to be
782 kept, and they treat him as a Saint, and they hold a feast for him every year, in the month of July, which they call *Castar* Philip, which means funeral or memorial of Philip.[1] On this account the people of this monastery are the most Judaizing of all the kingdoms of Prester John. I came twice to this Castar of Philip, at which they did me much honour, and they kill many cows at this feast. In one year they killed thirty, and in another year twenty-eight, and in

[1] *Castar* should be *Teskar*; Mansfield Parkyns calls it a sort of funereal feast, where charities are bestowed on the poor and the priests.

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each of the years that I came there they gave me two 796
quarters of the fattest cow that was killed. This flesh is 782
distributed amongst the people who come to the Castar, and
the friars have none because they do not eat meat. And [184]
these cows are all brought as offerings by their breeders in
the district, who vow them to Philip. This monastery, and
the others that are subject to it, have this rule in addition,
that no females enter them, that is to say, neither women,
nor she-mules, nor cows, nor hens, nor anything else that is
female. And these cows which they kill are killed a long
way from the wall, and when I came there they came to the
distance of a cross-bow shot to take my mule, and they
took her away to their farm of Jamgargara, where Mattheus
died.

CAP. XV.—*Of the agriculture of this country, and how they preserve themselves from the wild beasts, and of the revenues of the monastery.*

The friars of this monastery, and of the other monasteries 241
subject to it, might do good works by planting trees and [192]
vines, and making gardens and orchards for their exercise;
and they do nothing. The country is ready to produce
everything, as is seen from that which is uncultivated: they
do not plant or grow anything except millet and bee-hives. [231]
When it is night, neither they nor anybody else go out from
their houses from fear of the wild beasts that are in the
country, and those who watch the millet have very high
resting places upon the trees, in which they sleep at night.
In the district of this monastery there are, in the valleys 231
between the mountains, very large herds of cows, kept by 563
Arab Moors, and there go with each herd forty or fifty
Moors, with their wives and children: and their headman is

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and so receive absolution. They pray in the churches of 796
the canons as in those of the friars. Friars do not marry, [782]
canons and priests do so. When the canons live together 793
in the circuit they eat in their houses, and the friars eat in community. The chiefs of these churches are called Licacanate. The wives of the canons have houses outside of the circuit, where they go to live with them: the son of a canon remains a canon, and the son of a priest not, except he chooses later to become one. No tithes are paid to any church, they live on the large properties which the churches and monasteries possess. Complaints against the clergy [694]
are dealt with before the secular justice.

The vestment is made like a shirt, and the stole with a 292
hole in the middle, and put over the head; they have no maniple, nor amice, nor girdle; priests and friars all have [302]
their heads shaved, and the beards not. The friars say mass with their hats on their heads, and the priests with their heads bare.

In no church is more than one mass said, and no mass is 794
said for alms, not even for the dead. When any person dies, the priests come with cross and holy water and incense, and recite certain prayers for him, and carry him off to burial very hurriedly: next day they bring offerings: the churchyards are all closed, so that nothing can enter them.

Prester John has no determined place of abode, he 643
always goes about the country in tents, and he will always have in his camp five or six tents among good and common ones: and there will always be at Court of people for the 644
horses and mules from fifty thousand upwards.

The kitchen of Prester John is a good crossbow shot behind his quarters, and they bring his food in this manner: all that he has to eat comes in porringers and dishes of very black earthenware on wooden trays, and pages bring them, and above the pages come a pallium of silk, which covers them so that these viands come with reverence.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

small division answering to the holy of holies. This 346
is so narrow, that none but the priests can go into it.
You are bare-footed whenever you enter the church;
and, if bare-footed, you may go through every part of 783
it, if you have any such curiosity, provided you are pure, i. e. have not been concerned with women for 24 hours before, or touched carrion, or dead bodies (a curious assemblage of ideas); for in that case you are not to go within the precincts, or outer circumference of the church, but stand and say your prayers at an awful distance among the cedars.

All persons of both sexes, under Jewish disqualifications, are obliged to observe this distance; and this is always a place belonging to the church, where, unless in Lent, you see the greatest part of the congregation; but this is left to your own conscience; and, if there was either great inconvenience in the one situation, or great satisfaction in the other, the cause would be otherwise.

When you go to the church, you put off your shoes 782
before your first entering the outer precinct; but you must leave a servant there with them, or else they will be stolen, if good for any thing, by the priests and monks before you come out of the church. At entry you kiss the threshold, and two door-posts, go in and say what prayer you please; that finished, you come out again, and your duty is over. The churches 532
are full of pictures, painted on parchment, and nailed 346
upon the walls, in a manner little less slovenly than you see paltry prints in beggarly country ale-houses. There has been always a sort of painting known among the scribes, a daubing much inferior to the worst of our sign-painters. Sometimes, for a particular church, they get a number of pictures of saints, on skins of parchment, ready finished from Cairo, in a style very little superior to these performances of

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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The Abyssinians receive the holy sacrament in both kinds, in unleavened bread, and in the grape bruised with the husk together as it grows, so that it is a kind of marmalade, and is given in a flat spoon. Whatever they may pretend, some mixture seems necessary to keep it from fermentation in the state that it is in, unless the dried cluster is fresh bruised just before it is used; for it is little more fluid than the common marmalade of confectioners; but it is perfectly the grape as it grew, bruised stones and skin together. Some means, however, have been used, as I suppose, to prevent fermentation, and make it keep; and though this is constantly denied, I have often thought I tasted with a flavour that was not natural to the grape itself. 796 782

It is a mistake that there is no wine in Abyssinia; for a quantity of excellent strong wine is made at Dreeda, south-west from Gondar about thirty miles, which would more than supply the quantity necessary for the celebration of the eucharist in all Abyssinia twenty times over. The people themselves are not fond of wine, and plant the vine in one place only; and in this they have been imitated by the Egyptians, their colony; but a small black grape, of an excellent flavour, grows plentifully wild in every wood in Tigre. 273

Large pieces of bread are given to the communicants, in proportion to their quality; and I have seen great men, who, though they open their mouths as wide as conveniently a man can do, yet from the respect the priest bore him, such a portion of the loaf was put into his mouth, that water ran from his eyes, from the incapacity of chewing it; which, however, he does as indecently, and with full as much noise, as he eats at table. 796 782

After receiving the sacrament of the eucharist in

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782 both kinds, a pitcher of water is brought, of which
796 the communicant drinks a large draught; and well he needs it to wash down the quantity of bread he has just swallowed. He then retires from the steps of the inner division, upon which the administering priest stands, and, turning his face to the wall of the church, in private, says some prayer with seeming decency and attention.

The Romanists doubt of the validity of the Abyssinian consecration of the elements; because in their liturgy it is plainly said, "Lord, put thy hand upon this cup, and bless it, and sanctify it, and purify it, that in it may be made thy holy blood;" and of the bread they say, "Bless this saucer, or plate, that in it may be made thy holy body." And in their prayer they say, "Change this bread, that it may be made thy pure body which is joined with this cup of thy precious blood." The Jesuits doubt of the validity of this consecration, because it is said, "this *bread* is my body;" and over the wine, "this *cup* is my blood;" whereas, to operate a true transubstantiation, they should say over the bread, "this is my body."

For my own part, I leave it to the reverend fathers, who are the best judges, what is necessary to operate this miracle of transubstantiation. The reality of the thing itself is denied by all Protestant churches, has been often doubted by others, has been ridiculed by lay-writers, and can never be a matter, I believe, of thorough conviction, much less of proof, to any. The dignity of the subject, on which it touches nearly, as well as tenderness for our brethren on the continent, an article of whose faith it is, should always screen it from being treated with pleasantry, whatever we believe, or whether we believe it or not.

M. Ludolf thinks, that the words I have set down are a proof the Abyssinians do not believe in transub-

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stantiation. For my part, from those very words, I cannot think any thing is clearer than that they do; the bread is upon the plate; they pray that the plate may be blessed, "That in it the bread may be made God's holy body*;" and of the wine they say, "That it may be made thy holy blood:" and in their prayer they say, "Change this bread, that it may be made thy body;" and again, "May the Holy Ghost shine upon this bread, that it may be made the body of Christ our God, and that this cup may be changed and become the blood, not the *symbol*, of the blood of Christ our God." With all respect to Mr Ludolf's opinion, I must think that, though the benediction prayed upon the patine, spoon, and chalice, is but an aukward expression, yet, if I understand the language, *converte* and *immutetur* are literal translations of the Ethiopic, and seem to pray for a transubstantiation as directly as words will admit, whether they believe in it or not; nor, as far as I know, can any stronger or more expressive be found to substitute in their place.

I shall finish this subject (which is not in my province, and which I have mentioned, because I know it is a matter which some of my readers desire information upon) by an anecdote that happened a few months before my coming into Abyssinia, as it was accidentally told me by the priest of Adowa the very day of the Epiphany, and which Janni vouched to be true, and to have seen.

The Sunday before Ras Michael's departure for Gondar from Adowa, he went to church in great pomp, and there received the sacrament. There happened to be such a crowd to see him, that the wine, part of the consecrated elements, was thrown down

* See the Ethiopic liturgies passim. Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 5.

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796 and spilt upon the steps whereon the communicants
782 stood at receiving. Some straw or hay was instantly gathered and sprinkled upon it to cover it, and the communicants continued the service till the end, treading that grass under foot.

This giving great offence to Janni, and some few priests that lived with him, it was told Michael, who, without explaining himself, said only, "As to the fact of throwing the hay, they are a parcel of hogs, and know no better." These few words had stuck in the stomach of the priest of Adowa, who, with great secrecy, and as a mark of friendship, begged I would give him my opinion what he should have done, or rather, what would have been done in my country? I told him, "That the answer to his question depended upon two things, which, being known, his difficulties would very easily be solved. If you do believe that the wine spilt by the mob upon the steps, and trod under foot afterwards, was really the blood of Jesus Christ, then you was guilty of a most horrid crime, and you should cry upon the mountains to cover you, and ages of atonement are not sufficient to expiate it. You should, in the mean time, have railed the place round with iron, or built it round with stone, that no foot, or any thing else but the dew of heaven, could have fallen upon it, or you should have brought in the river upon the place that would have washed it all to the sea, and covered it ever after from sacrilegious profanation. But if, on the contrary, you believe (as many Christian churches do), that the wine (notwithstanding consecration) remained in the cup nothing more than wine, but was only the symbol, or type, of Christ's blood of the New Testament, then the spilling it upon the steps, and the treading upon it afterwards, having been merely accidental, and out of your power to prevent, being so far from your wish

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that you are heartily sorry that it happened, I do not reckon that you are further liable in the crime of sacrilege, than if the wine had not been consecrated at all. You are to humble yourself, and sincerely regret that so irreverent an accident happened in your hands, and in your time; but as you did not intend it, and could not prevent it, the consequence of an accident, where inattention is exceedingly culpable, will be imputed to you, and nothing further." 796 782

The priest declared to me, with great earnestness, that he never did believe that the elements in the eucharist were converted by consecration into the real body and blood of Christ. He said, however, that he believed this to be the Roman Catholic faith, but it never was his; and that he conceived the bread was bread, and the wine was wine, even after consecration. From this example, which occurred merely accidentally, and was not the fruit of interrogation or curiosity, it appears to me, whatever the Jesuits say, some at least among the Abyssinians do not believe the real presence in the eucharist; but further I am not enough informed to give a positive opinion. To follow this investigation more curiously would have been attended with a considerable degree of danger; and therefore I have stated my only means of knowledge, and leave my readers entirely to the freedom of their own opinion, and to after inquiry and information.

The Abyssinians are not all agreed about the state of souls before the resurrection of the body. The opinion which generally prevails is, that there is no third state: but that, after the example of the thief, the souls of good men enjoy the beatific vision immediately upon the separation from the body. But I must here observe, that their practice and books do both contradict this; for, as often as any person dies, alms are given, and prayers are offered for the souls 764 775

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622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chīqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chīqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tēff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man
[782] of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *injarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

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*565 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [244] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening [182] prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children [513] settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the em- [352] bers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

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in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭimqat*, means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭimqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā*, grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household.

The program for Ṭimqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized.

By noon on Ṭimqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭimqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter.

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings.

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and

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drastic changes on the familiar natural order. Insofar as there is a special affect regarding nature, it takes the form of a sentimentalization of the useful—as in the great respect felt for young cattle, the thrill aroused by the sight of newly sprouted grain, and the deep nostalgia about one's land. 565* 82

The Supernatural

The peasant's conception of God is closer to that of the learned clergy than is his cosmology, since the Abyssinian clergy have tended to avoid systematic theology, believing that to probe too deeply into the nature of God verges on blasphemy. Abyssinians view God above all as *mystery*. 565* 776 [793] [779]

Nevertheless, they do have a sense of the various attributes of their God. God is the creator of the world. He is, as the name *Egziābhēr* signifies, Lord of the earth; and He is Lord of the seas, Lord of the King of Kings, and Lord of the angels. He is eternal and possesses knowledge without limit.

The Amhara peasant has a keen awareness that wherever one goes, God is there. "If you say no one is looking," goes an Amharic saying, "still God will see you." This consciousness of God's presence is reflected in the habit of referring to God scores of times every day. A number of common expressions contain references to God:

For greeting and farewell	"May He give you health for me."
For showing gratitude	"May God give you for me."
For responding to queries about one's health	"God be praised!"
For thanksgiving after meals	"Be praised, my Lord!"
For swearing by a statement that has been challenged	"By God! By the Savior!"

Prayers to God are spoken on numerous occasions. God's blessing is sought when an animal is slaughtered, when a group of people sits to eat, when a new house is begun, and when it is completed. Each day begins with a prayer something like this: "May He cause me to spend the day in peace. May He keep trouble from me. May He pardon my sins." When the peasant begins planting, he also prays: "God bless the seed; feed me, keeping birds away from it; bless it for the mouth of man." 565* 782 • 776

It is probably the attribute of God's omnipotence, however, that appears most vivid to the Amhara mind. Everything that happens reflects His active will. The thunder expresses His anger, a flood the visitation of His wrath upon the sinful. He is ever active, bringing births and deaths, prosperity and hunger, leading one traveler to safety and another to disaster. He controls the homeliest details of everyday life. One boy, troubled that he was not selling his goods in the market, confessed that God must be angry with him about something. Another, asked what he wanted to do the following year, replied: 565* 776

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*565 776 "If God wants me to, I may go to school; but it is hard to know what God will want."

*565 782 776 As a corollary of this outlook, the main way for man to achieve anything on earth is to pray to the Almighty. If one prays properly, God's power can be invoked to punish one's foes. In former times at least, the peasant went to church and prayed for vengeance, then expected his enemy to fall sick or die. If he could not pray effectively himself, he would give money to a priest and the latter would do the job for him. It is commonly believed by the Amhara peasantry today that their praying and fasting were a major factor in ridding the country of the Italian invaders.

*565 776 This conception of deity is at heart that of the early Old Testament, a powerful Lord who punishes, rewards, and avenges. But it is suffused with the pagan feeling for a plurality of deities. The Amhara is constantly aware of a number of supernatural beings other than *Egziābhēr* who affect his life for better or for worse.

Some of these are the simple agents of God in everyday affairs. Each individual receives at birth a pair of guardian angels of his own sex, one for daytime and one for night. They serve to protect him from accidents, sickness, and enemies. When some misfortune befalls a person, it is because God has ordered his guardian angels to neglect their duties.

More important are the many supernatural beings with wills of their own. Among the benevolent spirits the main figures are:

Miḳā'ēl	The archangel Michael
Gabre'ēl	The archangel Gabriel
Giyorgis	St. George
Madhānē Alam	Savior of the World
Selassie	Trinity
Māryām	St. Mary
Abbo	Gabra Manfas Qeddus, an Abyssinian saint
Taḳla Hāymānot	Another Abyssinian saint

Most Amhara are particularly devoted to some one of these sacred figures. Partiality to one or another may be due to the fact that it is the patron saint of one's father, or represented in one's Christian name, or commemorated by the church in one's area. In time of sickness, a man will drink holy water [782] from the church of a certain saint, and make a vow, for example, "If Giyorgis cures me, I will give money to the church in his name, I will kill a lamb for him, and I will drink in a Giyorgis *māhebar* ("religious fraternal association") every month thereafter."

*565 778 These sacred figures are represented by numerous holy arks, or *tābot*. A *tābot* is a hollow oblong box containing some sacred script. It is identified

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with the saint for whom it has been named, and personalized. The extent to which the ark is regarded as human is shown by the following remark of a peasant who looked at the picture of a church on a TAT card and explained: "When the ark has been given incense, it will be happy. . . . If this church is given a new roof, the ark will be very happy and give *ïnjarä* to the people." 565* 778

The saints and the *tābot* which represent them are the objects of much veneration and prayer. They figure so prominently in the Amhara's outlook that at times they appear to be on a par with *Egziābhēr* himself. Two differences may be noted, however. The saints do not take the initiative in interfering in human affairs, as does *Egziābhēr*, but intervene only when appealed to. Their function, moreover, is that of protecting and healing spirits; it is not their portion to administer the punishments which *Egziābhēr* inflicts on those who disobey the religious laws, though they may mete out punishment to someone who breaks a vow he has made to them. 565* 776 778 782

Malevolent spirits, on the other hand, do intervene in human affairs without being invited. Of the evil spirits, the devil—known as *Diabolos*, *Sayṭān*, or *Agannent*, which are names of different spirits to the learned but counted the same in the peasant's mind—is the most powerful. He is imagined as a dark, Negroid type, the least favored sort of racial stock in Ethiopia. He dwells in deep waters, woods, and caves, and likes to roam about at noon and at midnight, especially near dirty places. Amhara avoid going near a lake or pool known to harbor the devil, for fear of being pulled in and drowned. They likewise stay away from dirty places at noon, for fear that he will make them sick. The devil brings epileptic fits. He tries to push people into fire. He also tries to harm human beings by tempting them to some misdeed—stealing, murder, getting drunk—and then have them suffer the consequences. Finally, when the human soul appears for judgment after death, he strives to gain possession of the soul and put it into the fire. Sometimes he is pictured as chewing the souls he manages to obtain. 565* 776 [829] [823] [828] [775]

Despite his inimical gestures toward the human race, the devil is respected as well as feared, for he has much power. Many peasants pray to him for this reason. In time of sickness some choose *Sayṭān*, rather than (or in addition to] *Giyorgis* or *Māryām*, as the one to whom they pray and make promises. On New Year's Day, Christmas, and Easter, prayers to *Sayṭān* are surreptitiously repeated in many quarters. One of these prayers runs: "My lord, bring me through the year. Guard me. If you keep me this year in peace and bring me through the year, I will give you more." Certain individuals are on especially good terms with the devil. They pray to him often, and he visits them from time to time and does favors for them; they are his "friends." When such a person dies, his son often continues the relationship. 565* 776 782

Another kind of spirit producing ill effects is the *zār*. *Zār* spirits are of 565* 776

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853 155 152 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 853 155 152 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *tuṭ abbāt*, or breast-father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *tuṭ abbāt*. Used metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 155 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 201 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or [832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 155 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati- [431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 155 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 538 832 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] *The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

*753 776 Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal, are in abundance, however. Of these, the zar and ganel spirits are regarded with the greatest interest and concern. On the one hand, zars and ganels cause a great variety of ailments, often mortal ones. On the other hand, they are intelligible beings, each organized into socially structured communities of confreres and, most important to humans, they are willing to communicate information of therapeutic significance.

*753 *787 776 562 Zars select their victims carefully, most often choosing girls and women. Typically, this choice is signalled by the onset of chronic stomach pain, persisting headache, and arthritic complaints, although powerful zars are capable of sending any ailment. Once selected by a zar, a host can expect the subsequent attentions of other zars. Periodically, each of these will dramatize his domination over the human partner by sickening him and demanding tribute in the form of clothes, jewelry, and specially prepared food. Zars are visible only during the dreams of their human partners; in addition, they frequently speak through their hosts. From these sources, it is known that the zars have human forms and live in a bisexual and culturally pluralistic society which duplicates that of traditional Abyssinia. The means by which zars cause sickness is not known to humans, however.

*753 776 *782 *[192] Measles (ankalis) and smallpox (wateley) are attributed to eponymous spirits who are customarily pro-

* 753 pitiated with zar-favored foodstuffs. Because of this,
776 they are loosely associated with the zars. Unlike the
• 782 latter, however, they are vague phantoms with whom no
* [755] communication is possible; their demands are known from
* [192] convention and, once satiated, leave the sickman permanently.

776 Zars contrast with ganels in several significant
779 respects. The zar lives in a world which parallels but is distinct from man's own; it is a world whose existence, together with that of the zars themselves, is denied by
* [192] the Coptic Church. The ganel's existence is entirely earth-bound, and he is identified by the Church as the Abyssinian satan (seytan). Whereas it is the zar which initiates ties with his human host, the ganel is forced into such relationships by his human partner. The zar's host may be anyone, the ganel's partner is always a male ecclesiastic who possesses a store of esoteric knowledge.

* 753 The ganel's appearance is known from scriptural
776 references and, in addition, they are infrequently seen.
[539] When visible, the ganel appears as a tall and thin black-
* [192] man, Nilotic except for certain details. Descriptions by laymen are generally hearsay, since madness (ibidet) strikes the unprotected human who looks on a ganel; if the glance is returned, the effects are mortal. So dangerous is the ganel's person that even contact with his shadow leaves the victim stammering and given over to

*787 *755 539 woven by a virgin or a post-menopausal woman, are frequently relevant questions. Before giving the kitab to his client, the debtera may find it useful to recite a digam over it, perhaps accompanying this recitation with some activity, such as walking a designated numberof circuits around a church. Finally, the knowledgeable debtera can prescribe the part of the client's body where the kitab will work most effectively, on the arm, around the neck, at the groin or armpit, whether right side or left.

• 782 Although laymen recite prayers which are analogous to the debtera's digams, they are exclusively verbal and without asmat. Amhara customarily pray on retiring and waking; there are also occasional prayers after meals. Prayers at home are always performed by individuals, and are directed to the Almighty, Jesus, Mary, and the saints of the Church. Prayers to the Almighty either thank Him for fulfilling requests made in previous prayers, or ask for special favors. The layman asks for protection from imminent danger and unknown enemies, for injury to those hostile to him, for wealth (especially land), good fortune, and long life; his most frequent request, however, is that his good health and that of other members of his household be maintained or restored. Prayers to saints are usually to Kidus Makael, Kidus Yowhanis, Kidus Gebre Menfis, and, particularly, the eponymous saint of the

782 supplicant's parish. Prayers to the saints ask intervention with the Almighty on the supplicant's behalf, and thank the saints for fulfilling previous requests. Although prayers are not formalized, a specific request often takes the form of a three-fold appeal during a single session, first addressing the appropriate saint, then Jesus, and finally the Almighty.

ACQUIRING ABINET

*787 *793 869 A boy rarely begins his debtera career with the conscious intention of learning abinet. His first studies are acquired almost inadvertently, and subsequent abinet are obtained only gradually. Yet, the types of abinet which he eventually acquires are never adventitiously determined. As he collects abinet throughout his professional career, the debtera is continually guided by the ways in which he perceives and weighs his instrumental and moral interests in these studies, and by the degree to which he is constrained by the character of his professional capital. Instrumentally, a distinction is made between abinet which directly satisfy some immediate personal needs of the debtera, and those works which enable the debtera to provide a service for others without transmitting technical knowledge of the abinet at the same time. Morally, abinet are

*787 539 stars his destiny is linked.[29] For this, the debtera must know the subject's automyn, the year (zemene) and month of his birth, and whether he was born during the day or night; division is by twelve. Here, the text indicates both the name of the subject's star, and a variety of information relevant to all people who are bound to *[755a] this star. Among this information, the following medical data figure prominently: 1) Prophylactic and diagnostic notations specifying the ailments and pathogenic *[755] agents which threaten the subject; 2) prophylactic notations regarding the manufacture of the kitab, its appropriate digam (indicated by generic title), and the construction of an effective telsem most appropriate to the * [782] subject; 3) therapeutic notations regarding pharmacology *[218] and the choice of suitable sacrifices (indicated in terms of color, combination of colors, animals, combinations of animals, substitute animals).

The text further stimulates and focuses prophylactic interests, by indicating the following concomitants of illnesses which threaten for the future: 1) The days,

[29] Stars one, five and nine are identified by name with fire; two, six, and ten with earth; three, seven and eleven with air; four, eight and twelve with water. Debteras trace the origins of awdunigist variously to the [193] court of Solomon and to certain monasteries of medieval Ethiopia.

*756 *787 *793 ganel out of doors, by the side of the lake or river in which he lives. When clients attend, however, the ganel is pulled in the debtera's room, since preparations for controlling the demon are easier to arrange, and a tedi-
[833] ous journey is avoided. The ganel puller is often required to observe a period of chastity prior to contacting the ganel, and if the ganel is called into a room, it must be a place where sexual relations are never had.

A ganel-calling session begins with the recitation of texts, composed mainly or exclusively of asmat words. Unlike abinet recitations in other contexts, the debtera's text is repeated until the desired effect is ob-
[782] tained (i.e., the ganel has been pulled). In addition to the recitation, an animal (most commonly a chicken) favored by the ganel is sacrificed. A debtera's initial attempt to pull a ganel often requires recitations over a week or more, until success is obtained. Once the ganel has been called successfully, subsequent sessions take less time. An experienced debtera can call a ganel familiar in less than an hour, although even he must expect lengthy recitations when attempting to reach a ganel with whom he has not yet conversed.

The debtera perceives these activities as a mixture of compulsion (through asmat) and blandishments (by the sacrifice), that oblige the ganel to assume a cooperative attitude. Once a ganel has responded positively to a

326 lasha smiths, whose women make pottery at the same time.
563 This arrangement is not liked by the Falasha because of their religious obligations, even though they reside in a special guest hut, slaughter their own sheep and use their own utensils while at work for a distant Amhara hamlet. For they rest on Saturday, work on Sunday, and the more traditional among them have to undergo elaborate purification ceremonies upon their return home.

[783]

This alternate, itinerant pattern probably developed during recent centuries when feudal warlords forced them to accompany their troops as ordnance, at any time, often during their entire lifetimes. This continued as late as the 1920's, when Ras Gugsa still ruled the province of Begemdir (Gondar). Since Menelik's conquest of distant Galla lands, in the late 19th century, Falasha smiths have been carried off farther than ever, and sometimes never again seen by their families. Ras Gugsa wanted to please Menelik in his Amharization program in the south, and ordered Coptic churches built by the Falashas in "pagan" or Muslim Galla areas, when their wartime duties were largely over. Some were given Shanqalla females to replace their own distant families. A few rose to the position of "bäjirond" (treasurer) and were given land property in lieu of salary. Thus an exception was made for these individuals, for Falashas were not permitted to purchase land, on condition that their offspring carry on the same services in the feudal armies. Now that these services have been abrogated, there are still a few landholding Falasha families, the descendants of army-ordnance Falasha smiths.

793 also performs masses on specific occasions, including memorials and holy days, chants part of the liturgy, reads (but usually does not know how to translate) biblical portions from both New and Old Testament in the Geez language. Before performing the eucharist, the officiating priest is expected to abstain from sexual intercourse for 1 to 3 days, for this is regarded as polluting him (an Old Testament survival). Before such occasions he takes care to sleep on the mudbench of his hut, rather than on his "alga" bed. This procedure is followed Saturday night, before a baby's babtism, before giving ritual ablution to the dying, etc. He is also expected to wash his body before giving the eucharist (but in the dry season this is often overlooked).

A learned priest, more scholarly than the parish administrator or guardian of his flock, is given the special title "mämhär" (roughly, "professor"). He is usually an expert on the hymn book "degwa", and is employed in teaching it to upper grades in church school. When he becomes a monk, he is oftenappointed to "abbatachen" (lit. our father), abbot of a monastery, where his mild disposition enables him to keep the peace among hotheaded, ambitious monks, some of whom regard monasticism as a career. If the "mamher" continues to advance his knowledge of church literature and history and legends (e.g. the life of the saints), he receives the title "liq". He is usually one of the few Amhara who really know and understand Geez well, including the subtle shades of meaning of the many diverse grammatical forms;

793
198

608 852 to the abolition of 1942), the godparents usually obtained his freedom. The relationship is one of artificial kinship. To symbolize this literally, the godfather and godmother clasp the right thumb of the baby and swear by the Trinity that they will not distinguish between their own children and the godchild.

●783 At first baptism, baby or adult, the entire body is immersed or bathed in holy water. Every year, on the festival of "Ṭemqät" (Epiphany), the sprinkling of the crowd with baptismal water is considered re-baptism, to wash away any breach with Christianity during the year. A woman who has had sexual intercourse with a Muslim must undergo complete baptism, otherwise the neighbors and the church will ostracize her. A person severely ill and considered possessed by demons is rebaptized.

872 At five, boys and girls begin useful functions in the family economy, and therefore boys are often 10 years old before they begin to go to church school. This schooling takes place under the shady cypress trees in the churchyard, under the direction of a young priest or däbtärä. The method is rote learning of Geez and Amharic reading, and liturgy, beginning with the Gospel of St. John: "mäläktä yohanesä hawareya". Usually neither translation from the Geez liturgical language nor writing are taught. Graduates of this 3-year school qualify to serve as deacons. In recent years, they may then enter the 3rd grade of a government elementary school. Even church students now use the one-page printed "fidäl" (alphabet) in Geez-Amharic script, which, in addition,

872 has the photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie and the traditional Gospel of St. John in Geez. Priests now often teach the beginnings of basic arithmetic, in church schools.

783 In adult life, the church affects the layman less through participation in worship than through his individual confessor, the "näfs abbat", (lit. soul father). Each person is supposed to see him at least once a month, and he soon becomes a personal advisor, confidante, marriage counselor, etc. Therefore, even when a person changes residence, he often maintains this relationship to his "näfs abbat". If he were to take on a new one, the penalty assigned for sins (which the confessor keeps as a sort of fee) would be higher. His regular confessor, who knows his financial condition, asks little beyond the seasonal and festival gifts considered his due. In time of trouble, the regular confessor will appear as a character witness in court, or as "wäs" (guarantor) to help him obtain employment or to keep him out of jail pending trial.

585 Most laymen, are not married by eucharistic marriage in church (the "qurban"). There is no social or religious stigma to marrying outside the church; in fact the priest comes to the secular ceremony ("semanya") to bless the couple. But it does mean technical excommunication, and the couple cannot wear the "aklil" crown at church festivals and parades.

763 As a further result, such a couple cannot receive full last rites, though the confessor-priest will come

776 775 held high, and everyone acclaims the miracle. Everyone tries to obtainssome of the water to drink; the bottom of the hole keeps filling up for some time. Later, mud from the hole is passed around on green leaves, [751] and many, especially women, smear it on their foreheads, against sickness, demons, and barrenness which afflicts many of the townswomen. Some older Muslims recite prayers. The mood is generally gay, and the women banter happily from an hour after sunrise to high noon, when the feast is over, Then all begin to return to Gondar town, after pledging gifts for the next celebration of the saint's day, provided he has fulfilled their prayers.

Meanwhile, Copts, mostly women, including many barren ones, have joined the Muslim women on the hill. No special notice is taken of them; they are tolerated, and not insulted as they would be on other occasions. The Copts bring their own live sheep and the few Coptic men present slaughter them apart from the Muslims, so that their formula "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, One Divinity", is not heard. The Christian women and children also smear some of the saint's mud on their foreheads, and also vow donations to the next Sheykh Abader feast if their prayers are fulfilled. They bear the tell-tale marks until they reach their [783] own homes in Gondar, and are not punished for what otherwise might at least require re-baptism. Like Muslims, they even bring mud, rocks, and water from the saint's hill to their ill kinfolk. Coptic men do not flaunt their participation so freely. The Coptic priests, who of

795 His social status compares to that of a "great man" (telleq säw),
756 but much of this is due to the fear in which he is held, because of his power over the supernatural world, in Amhara belief. There is fear that if someone were to offend him, he might use his powers to do evil - though black magic is not his usual metier. (The "love magic" of the däbtärä has been described in relation to sex).

[59] "of insects, the worst is the scorpion;
of men, the worst is the däbtärä".

[57] For the dabtara are unabashed in inviting themselves to feasts, weddings and any distribution of goods (e.g. parceling out of meat as soon as an ox has been slaughtered). In fact, they often act as if the host owed them an apology for not having sent an official invitation. Therefore, dabtara are usually invited to family feasts even if they are not kin.

795 The däbtärä learns his craft through apprenticeship, beginning
756 when in the upper grades of church school. To achieve this, he
874 must be "ättäntäm" (of unmixed Amhara or Tigre stock), have a good chanting voice and musical ear, be good in school, and find a däbtärä-teacher willing to impart his knowledge to him. At this stage in church school he begins to be permitted to learn to write; and is not punished for doodling - forbidden at lower grades for fear a student might stumble on a formula and misuse a powerful spell.

795 There is even one priestly function which the däbtärä occasionally
756 carries out. That is "re-baptism". He may re-baptize a patient vic-
[168] timized by ganyäh, sometimes also cases of buda, as part of exorcism.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

346 north-west of Zanjira near the upper margin of the sheet. The church clings to the side of a steep little hill which stands almost isolated among vast gorges and commands the grandest panorama imaginable of this tormented country. The hill is joined to Zanjira by a narrow causeway little lower than the general plateau, flat on top and dropping away in cliffs on either side, so regular that it almost seems artificial. Harris records a saying which evidently refers to this place: "from Iteghe you can see the Echeghe" (*i.e.* the chief of the monks, who then lived in Gondar). To be sure, one does seem to overlook a great part of the world from this point of vantage.

[787] Every church is the centre of a radiating system of small paths (not shown on the map) chiefly used by people coming to service. There are of course 796 regular Sunday services, but these are not very well attended. More important are the special festivals observed on certain dates of the Ethiopian month, which may fall on any day of the week. In this area the monthly festivals universally observed, on which no work could be done, were those of St. Michael, St. Mary, and St. George, on the 12th, 21st, and 23rd respectively, as well as "Bal Wold," a commemoration of the Birth of Christ, on the 29th of each month. Of still greater significance in the life of the people are the annual festivals, falling on the same day of the month as the monthly ones but in certain months only. On these annual festivals nearly the whole population makes its way to the churches dedicated to the particular saint [783] commemorated. Often they will visit the local *tebel* or Holy Water and bathe there early in the morning before service. Going on to the church, all remain outside, for there would be no room for such a crowd within the cramped passages of the church itself. In the middle of the morning the *tabot* or ark is brought out and ceremonial dances held before it. Finally, before the service ends, it will be carried three times round the church in procession, attended by magnificent crosses and gaudy umbrellas. These are occasions of great popular excitement and rejoicing, and the congregations are often enormous. The long service over, they break up into gossiping groups, and go back to social lunches in each other's huts.

771 Enough has been said to show how large a part is played among these people by the Church and its priesthood. The country has indeed been described as priest-ridden, the people as over-dominated or even enslaved by the Church. If so, this servitude, at least in the country, is still a willing and unquestioned one. It is also true to say that without the Church the social structure of this countryside would fall to pieces, and life would lose not only its coherence but nearly all its variety and colour.

346 It was mentioned above that, to meet the needs of an increasing plateau 794 population, several new churches had been founded in recent times in the area covered by the map. Two of these were established by "division" of a 578 church which already existed in the gorge. Each original church had two *tabots* one of which was removed for the new foundation, for no church can exist without a *tabot* or altar-slab, this being the only part of the church which is consecrated. Thus the Mariam of the Tallak Amba plateau was derived from the Mariam half-way down the cliff about a mile to the north-east; and similarly a new Ghiorghis of the plateau, just east of Daloti, from the Ghiorghis in the gorge below. Of these "divisions," both of which took place

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

BOOK V.—CONTINUED.

CHAP. XII.

State of Religion—Circumcision, Excision, &c.

346 THERE is no country in the world in which there are so many churches as in Abyssinia. Though the country is very mountainous, and consequently the view much obstructed, it is very seldom you see less than five or six churches; and, if you are on a commanding ground, five times that number. Every great [783] man, that dies, thinks he has atoned for all his wickedness if he leaves a fund to build a church, or has built one in his lifetime. The king builds many. Where- 346 ever a victory is gained, there a church* is erected in 727 the very field, stinking with the putrid bodies of the slain. Formerly this was only the case when the ene-

* The oldest churches in Habbesh are those in the province of Tigre. Axum, now in ruins, possessed many before the Adelan war. A list of these is given in the Appendix of Kebir Neguste, or Chronicle of Axum; and of the lands which they possessed, as given by several kings. E.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 my was Pagan or Infidel; now the same is observed
[727] when the victories are over Christians.

346 The situation of a church is always chosen near
running water, for the convenience of their purifica-
351 tions and ablutions, in which they observe strictly the
[783] Levitical law. They are always placed upon the top of some beautiful, round hill, which is surrounded entirely with rows of the oxycedrus, or Virginia cedar, which grows here in great beauty and perfection, and is called Arz *. There is nothing adds so much to the beauty of the country as these churches, and the plantations about them.

In the middle of this plantation of cedars is interspersed, at proper distances, a number of those beautiful trees called Cusso, which grow very high, and are all extremely picturesque.

346 All the churches are round, with thatched roofs; their summits are perfect cones; the outside is surrounded by a number of wooden pillars, which are nothing else than the trunks of the cedar-tree, and are placed to support the edifice, about eight feet of the roof projecting beyond the wall of the church, which forms an agreeable walk, or colonade, around it in hot weather, or in rain. The inside of the church is in several divisions, according as is prescribed by the law of Moses. The first is a circle somewhat wider than the inner one; here the congregation sit and pray. Within this is a square, and that square is divided by a veil or curtain, in which is another very

* Ludolf, in his dictionary, says, this word, in Hebrew, signifies any tall tree. In this, however, he is mistaken. The translators did not, indeed, know what tree it was, and so have said this to cover their ignorance; but Arz is as exclusively the oxycedrus, as is an oak or an elm when so named. Arz is indeed a tall tree, but every tall tree is not Arz, which is the Virginia berry-bearing cedar.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

small division answering to the holy of holies. This 346
is so narrow, that none but the priests can go into it. You are bare-footed whenever you enter the church; 783
and, if bare-footed, you may go through every part of it, if you have any such curiosity, provided you are pure, i. e. have not been concerned with women for 24 hours before, or touched carrion, or dead bodies (a curious assemblage of ideas); for in that case you are not to go within the precincts, or outer circumference of the church, but stand and say your prayers at an awful distance among the cedars.

All persons of both sexes, under Jewish disqualifications, are obliged to observe this distance; and this is always a place belonging to the church, where, unless in Lent, you see the greatest part of the congregation; but this is left to your own conscience; and, if there was either great inconvenience in the one situation, or great satisfaction in the other, the cause would be otherwise.

When you go to the church, you put off your shoes 782
before your first entering the outer precinct; but you must leave a servant there with them, or else they will be stolen, if good for any thing, by the priests and monks before you come out of the church. At entry you kiss the threshold, and two door-posts, go in and say what prayer you please; that finished, you come out again, and your duty is over. The churches 532
are full of pictures, painted on parchment, and nailed 346
upon the walls, in a manner little less slovenly than you see paltry prints in beggarly country ale-houses. There has been always a sort of painting known among the scribes, a daubing much inferior to the worst of our sign-painters. Sometimes, for a particular church, they get a number of pictures of saints, on skins of parchment, ready finished from Cairo, in a style very little superior to these performances of

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

I shall take notice of only one instance in many, because it has been insisted upon by both parties with unusual vehemence, and very little candour. 779

It was settled by the first general council, that one baptism only was necessary for the regeneration of man, for freeing him from the sin of our first parents, and listing him under the banner of Christ; "I confess one baptism for the remissions of sins," says the Symbol. Now, it was maintained by the Jesuits, that in Abyssinia, once every year, they baptized all grown people, or adults. I shall, as briefly as possible, set down what I myself saw while on the spot. 783 796

The small river, running between the town of Adowa and the church, had been dammed up for several days; the stream was scanty, so that it scarcely overflowed. It was in some places three feet deep, in some, perhaps, four, or little more. Three large tents were pitched the morning before the feast of the Epiphany; one, on the north, for the priests to repose in during intervals of the service, and, besides this, one to communicate in: on the south there was a third tent for the monks and priests of another church to rest themselves in their turn. About twelve clock at night the monks and priests met together, and began their prayers and psalms at the water-side, one party relieving each other. At dawn of day the governor, Welleta Michael, came hither with some soldiers to raise men for Ras Michael, then on his march against Waragna Fasil, and sat down on a small hill by the water-side, the troops all skirmishing on foot and on horseback around them.

As soon as the sun began to appear, three large crosses of wood were carried by three priests dressed in their sacerdotal vestments, and who, coming to the side of the river, dipt the cross into the water, and all this time the firing, skirmishing, and praying went on to-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

783 gether. The priests with the crosses returned, one
796 of their number before them carrying something less than an English quart of water in a silver cup, or chalice; when they were about fifty yards from Welleta Michael, that general stood up, and the priest took as much water as he could hold in his hand, and sprinkled it upon his head, holding the cup at the same time to Welleta Michael's mouth to taste; after which the priest received it back again, saying, at the same time, "Gzier ybarak," which is simply, "May God bless you." Each of the three crosses was then brought forward to Welleta Michael, and he kissed them. The ceremony of sprinkling the water was then repeated to all the great men in the tent, all cleanly dressed as in gala. Some of them, not contented with aspersion, received the water in the palms of their hands joined, and drank it there; more water was brought for those that had not partaken of the first; and, after the whole of the governor's company was sprinkled, the crosses returned to the river, their bearers singing hallelujahs, and the skirmishing and firing continuing.

Janni, my Greek friend, had recommended me to the priest of Adowa; and, as the governor had placed me by him, I had an opportunity, for both these reasons, of being served among the first. My friend, the priest, sprinkled water upon my head, and gave me his blessing in the same words he had used to the others; but, as I saw it was not necessary to drink, I declined putting the cup to my lips, for two reasons; one, because I knew the Abyssinians have a scruple to eat or drink after strangers; the other, because I apprehended the water was not perfectly clean; for no sooner had the crosses first touched the pool, and the cup filled from the clean part for the governor, than two or three hundred boys, calling themselves *deacons*,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

plunged in with only a white cloth, or rag, tied round their middle; in all other respects they were perfectly naked. All their friends and relations (indeed everybody) went close down to the edge of the pool, where water was thrown upon them, at first decently enough, by boys of the town, and those brought on purpose as deacons; but, after the better sort of people had received the aspersion, the whole was turned into a riot, the boys, muddying the water, threw it round them upon every one they saw well-dressed or clean. The governor retreated first, then the monks, and then the crosses, and left the brook in possession of the boys and blackguards, who rioted there till two o'clock in the afternoon.

I must, however, observe, that, a very little time after the governor had been sprinkled, two horses and two mules, belonging to Ras Michael and Ozoro Esther, came and were washed. Afterwards the soldiers went in and bathed their horses and guns; those who had wounds bathed them also. I saw no women in the bath uncovered, even to the knee; nor did I see any person of the rank of decent servants go into the water at all, except with the horses. Heaps of platters and pots, that had been used by Mahometans or Jews, were brought thither likewise to be purified; and thus the whole ended.

I saw this ceremony performed afterwards at Kahha, near Gondar, in presence of the king, who drank some of the water, and was sprinkled by the priests; then took the cup in his hand, and threw the rest that was left upon Amha Yasous *, saying, "I will be your deacon;" and this was thought a high compli-

* Prince of Shoa, often spoken of in the sequel.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Ambara MP5

783 ment, the priest giving him his blessing at the same
796 time, but offering him no more water.

I shall now state, in his own words, the account given of this by Alvarez, chaplain to the Portuguese embassy, under Don Roderigo de Lima.

The king had invited Don Roderigo de Lima, the Portuguese ambassador, to be present at the celebration of the festival of the Epiphany. They went about a mile and a half from their former station, and encamped upon the side of a pond, which had been prepared for the occasion. Alvarez says, that, in their way, they were often asked by those they met or overtook, "Whether or not they were going to be baptized?" to which the chaplain and his company answered in the negative, as having been already once baptized in their childhood.

"In the night," says he, "a great number of priests assembled about the pond, roaring and singing with a view of blessing the water. After midnight the baptism began. The Abuna Mark, the king and queen, were the first that went into the lake; they had each a piece of cotton cloth about their middle, which was just so much more than the rest of the people had. At the sun-rising the baptism was most thronged; after which, when Alvarez * came, the lake was full of holy water, into which they had poured oil."

It should seem, from this outset of his narrative, that he was not at the lake till the ceremony was half over, and did not see the benediction of the water at all, nor the curious exhibition of the King, Queen, and Abuna, and their cotton cloths. As for the circumstance of the oil being poured into the water, I

* Vide Alvarez's narrative in his account of the embassy of Don Roderigo de Lima, page 155.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

will not positively contradict it; for, though I was 783
early there, it might have escaped me if it was done 796
in the dark. However, I never heard it mentioned as part of the ceremony; and it is probable I should, if any such thing was really practised; neither was I in time to have seen it at Kahha.

"Before the pond a scaffold was built, covered round with planks, within which sat the king, looking towards the pond, his face covered with blue taffeta, while an old man, who was the king's tutor, was standing in the water up to the shoulders, naked as he was born, and half dead with cold, for it had frozen violently in the night. All those that came near him he took by the head and plunged them in the water, whether men or women, saying, in his own language, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Now Shoa, where the king was then, is in lat. 8° N. and the sun was in 22° south declination, advancing northward, so the sun was, on the day of the Epiphany, within 30° of the zenith of the bathing-place. The thermometer of Fahrenheit rises at Gondar about that time to 68°, so in Shoa it cannot rise to less than [132] 70°, for Gondar is in lat. 12° N. that is 4° farther northward, so it is not possible water should freeze, nor did I ever see ice in Abyssinia, not even on the highest or coldest mountains. January is one of the hottest months in the year, day and night the sky is perfectly serene, nor is there a long disproportioned winter night. At Shoa the days are equal to the nights, at least as to sense, even in the month of January.

The baptism, Alvarez says, began at midnight, and the old tutor dipt every person under water, taking him by the head, saying, "I baptize thee in the name

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

783 of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
796 It was most thronged at sun-rise, and ended about nine o'clock; a long time for an old man to stand in frozen water.

The number (as women were promiscuously admitted) could not be less than 40,000; so that even the nine hours this baptist-general officiated, he must have had exercise enough to keep him warm, if 40,000 (many of them naked beauties) passed through his hands.

The women were stark naked before the men, not even the rag about them. Without such a proper medium as frozen water, I fear it would not have contributed much to the interests of religion to have trusted a priest (even an old one) among so many bold and naked beauties, especially as he had the first six hours of them in the dark.

783 The Abuna, the king, and queen, were the three
796 first baptized, all three being absolutely naked, having
291 only a cotton cloth round their middle. I am sure
831 there never could be a greater deviation from the manners of any kingdom, than this is from those of Abyssinia. The king is always covered; you seldom see any part of him but his eyes. The queen and every woman in Abyssinia, in public and private, (I mean where nothing is intended but conversation) are covered to the chin. It is a disgrace to them to have even their feet seen by strangers; and their arms and hands are concealed even to their nails. A curious circumstance, therefore, it would have been for the king to be so liberal of his queen's charms, while he covers his own face with blue taffeta; but to imagine that the Abuna, a Coptish monk, bred in the desert of St Macarius, would expose himself naked among naked women, contrary to the usual custom of the celebration he observes in his own church, is monstrous, and

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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must exceed all belief whatever. As the Abuna Mark too was of the reasonable age of 110 years, he might, I think, have dispensed at that time of life with a bathing gown, especially as it was frost. 783 786 [298] [831]

The old man in the pond repeated the formula, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in his own language; and Alvarez, it is plain, understood not one word of Abyssinian. Yet, on the other hand, he speaks Latin to the king, who wonderfully understands him, and answers as decisively on the merits of the dispute as if he had been educated in the Sorbonne. "Confiteor unum baptizma," says Alvarez *, was a constitution of the Nicene council under Pope Leo. Right, says the king, whose church, however, anathematized Leo and the council he presided at; which both the king and Alvarez should have known was not the Nicene council, though the words of the symbol quoted are thought to be part of a confession framed by that assembly.

"Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit salvus erit," says Alvarez. "You say right," answers the king, "as to baptism; these are the words of our Saviour; but this present ceremony was lately invented by a grandfather of mine, in favour of such as have turned Moors, and are desirous again of becoming Christians."

I should think, in the first place, this answer of the king should have let Alvarez see no baptism was intended there; or, if it was a re-baptism, it only took place in favour of those who had turned Moors, and must therefore have been but partial. If this was really the case, what had the king, queen, and Abuna,

* Vid. Alvarez, hoc loco. Ramusio. Viaggi. p. 254.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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783 to do in it? Sure they had neither apostatized, nor
796 was the company of apostates a very creditable society for them.

Alvarez, to persuade us this is real baptism, says that oil was thrown into the pond before he came. He will not charge himself with having seen this, and it is probably a falsehood. But he knew it was an essential in baptism in all the churches in the East; so indeed is salt, which he should have said was here used likewise: then he would have had all the materials of Greek baptism; and this salt might have contributed to cooling the water, that had frozen under the rays of a burning sun.

Alvarez must have seen, that not only men and women go to be washed in the pool, but horses, cows, mules, and a prodigious number of asses. Are these baptised? I would wish to know the formula the reverend baptist-general used on their occasion.

There is but one church where I ever saw sacred rites, or something like baptism, conferred upon asses; it is, I think, at Rome, on St Andrew's or St Patrick's day. It should be St Balaam's, if he was in the Roman kalender as high as he is in the Abyssinian. In that church (it is, I think, on Monte Cavallo) all sorts of asses, about and within Rome, are gathered together, and showers of holy water and blessings rained by a priest upon them. What is the formula I do not know; although it is a joke put upon strangers, especially of one nation, to assemble them there; or whether the two churches of Rome and Abyssinia differ so much in this as in other points of discipline, I am not informed; but the rationality and decency of such a ceremony being the same in all churches, the service performed at the time should be the same likewise.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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I will not then have any scruple to say, that this whole account of Alvarez is a gross fiction; that no baptism, or any thing like baptism, is meant by the ceremony; that a man is no more baptised by keeping the anniversary of our Saviour's baptism, than he is crucified by keeping his crucifixion. The commemoration of our Saviour's baptism on the epiphany, and the blessing the waters that day, is an old observance of the eastern church, formerly performed in public in Egypt, as now in Ethiopia. Since that of Alexandria fell into the hands of Mahometans, the fear of insult and profanation has obliged them to confine this ceremony, and all other processions, within the walls of their churches, in each of which there is constantly a place devoted to this use. Those that cannot attend the ceremony of aspersion in the church, especially sick or infirm people, have the water sent to them, and a large contribution is made for the patriarch, or bishop; yet nobody ever took it into their heads to tax either Greek or Armenian with a repetition of baptism.

Monsieur de Tournefort *, in his travels through the Levant, gives you a figure of the Greek priest, who blesses the water in a peculiar habit, with a pastoral staff in his hand.

But, besides this, various falsehoods have likewise been propagated about the manner of baptism practised in Abyssinia; all in order to impugn the validity of it, and to excuse the rash conduct of the Jesuits for re-baptising all the Abyssinians, as if they had been a Jewish and Pagan people that never had been baptised at all. The violation of this article of the creed, or confession of Nice, was a cause of great offence to the

* Tournef. tom. i. p. 111.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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783 796 Abyssinians, and of the misfortunes that happened afterwards. The whole of the Abyssinian service of baptism is in their liturgy. The Jesuits had plenty of copies in their hands, and could have pointed out the part of the service that was heretical, if they had pleased; they did not pretend, however, to do this, and their silence condemns them.

As for the idle stories that are told of the words pronounced, such as,—" I baptise you in the name of the Holy Trinity,"—" In the name of Peter and Paul,"—" I baptise you in the water of Jordan," —" May God baptise you,"—" May God wash you," and many others, they are all invented by the Jesuits, to excuse the repetition of baptism in Abyssinia, which there was no sort of occasion for, as they might have examined the words and form in the liturgies, which are in every church; and I must here only observe, that if, as the chaplain Alvarez says, the priest in the pool, on the festival of the Epiphany, was so fond of the proper words, as even at that time, to say " I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," the words he quotes to shew that this immersion in water on the Epiphany is a real baptism, I cannot comprehend why they should vary them to other words, when nothing but baptism is meant. But this I can bear evidence of, that, in no time when I was present, as I have above a hundred times been, at the baptism both of adults and infants, aye, and of apostates too, I never heard other words pronounced than the orthodox baptismal ones, " I baptise thee in the name of " the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," immerging the child in pure water, into which they first pour a small quantity of oil of olives, in the form of a cross.

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principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by those who are sick, or dying. 794

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The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

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Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wetchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma; 131 361 101

[p. 67]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 794 795 are left free to a large extent. Since every day of the month except the thirtieth is sanctified by dedication to some saint, Mass must be performed virtually *121 79 every day, a norm which is actually fulfilled by churches which have a numerous clergy. The burden for individual clergymen is kept small by a system of rotation. The average parish church will have services perhaps ten to fifteen times a month, which is still too often for heavy popular attendance. Even on Sundays and the most important holidays, when the laity are expected to attend, their participation is excused by other considerations. Those who have eaten earlier in the day, who have had sexual relations the night before, or who are harboring a grudge in their "stomach" are not even supposed to come to church. If they do come, they sit outside the wall chatting with one another while the Mass is performed inside.

*121 794 795 783 Customs concerning Communion and Confession likewise give the individual a wide range of freedom. Partaking of the Communion is not required of anyone; the experience simply is available to those who are ritually pure (children, and those who have married by the *querbān*), if they are so inclined. Confession is not mandatory, but according to personal inclination. Every man has the right to choose his own personal confessor or "soul-father," though if satisfied with the one of his father, he may retain him. (A woman adopts the confessor of her husband.) The soul-father's advice may be sought when a problem arises. If a man sins—breaks the fast, works on a holiday, commits theft or murder—he is supposed to confess. If he chooses to do so, the soul-father will prescribe a certain penance—fasting an extra amount, sleeping on the floor for a period, giving something to the poor or to the church. But the initiative is entirely up to the sinner and probably more often than not he keeps the offense to himself. The proportion of Amhara who keep every fast strictly, go to church a few times a month, and confess their transgressions to the soul-father is small; in the estimate of one Amhara informant, less than five per cent.

*121 794 575 Still greater permissiveness may be observed in connection with the religious fraternal associations known as the *māhebar*. The *māhebar* consists of a group of people from the same general area, usually of the same sex, who meet once a month on the day devoted to the saint for whom the association is named. The place of meeting rotates among the homes of the members, and the soul-father of the host is always present to bless the occasion. The meetings consist of much eating, drinking, and conviviality. Membership in a *māhebar* is purely voluntary, and the individual who wishes to join one usually has a choice among several in a given area.*

For the Amhara laity, then, a few burdensome ritual and fiscal constraints

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[735] * There is a variant of the *māhebar* known as the *senbatē*, whose members take turns in providing food for the clergy and poor folk on Sundays.

252 262 the last a few minutes before the wot is ready. Some add capsicum at the same time.

Liver and stomach, especially of sheep and goat, are eaten, but spleen and milt are considered hard to digest and are given to dogs. In general, interior organs are not prestigeful.

Raw beef, "brundo", is still featured at special feasts such as weddings, religious feasts like "täzkär", [K4] as it was featured at feasts of warriors in the past. This brings much tapeworm infection, but the risk is taken because it is believed that "brundo" makes strong like no [755] other food. The painful purgative cure is undergone every two months with "kosso", still a major institution among the Amhara.

To cool the palate linings and tongue from the bär-bärē, curdled milk, "ergo", is consumed right afterwards. [515] Hands are carefully washed, for touching the eyes with fingers stained from the spiced stew makes them smart.

Fish, much eaten only in the rainy season, is also boiled in wot, often after slight prefrying in talba (linseed oil); lentils (mesr) are often added.

Lentils become very important in the long lenten sea- [784] son and on every Wednesday and Friday, when the average Amhara still abstains from meat, milk, eggs and other animal products, for religious (Coptic fast) reasons. The staple food during these periods is a porridge called "shero": mashed peas seasoned with spices, onion and vegetable oil.

Another vegetarian staple is "nefro", consisting of peas, chick peas, sorghum, all boiled and eaten as ker-

795 off by cutting its throat.

It may be that the use of the formula became emphatic centuries ago, as an equivalent-though-distinctive counterpart to the Muslim formula "Iin the name of Allah the all-merciful, and Muhammad hid his prophet". Another such distinction is almost certainly the blue neck-cord, "mätäb" which both male and female Abyssinian Capts wear to distinguish them from Muslims. But their other religious laws and taboos seem to date back to the Old Testament observances of Judaism, notable the taboo on the pig, which is not even raised outside (European Addis Ababa.

[17] [293] [584]

795 779 As a consequence of the religiosity of the people, the rules of the church have the force of law, unchallenged especially in the rural areas. Even the more modernized administration and new legislation has made little change in the close inter-relation of church and state functions, at the grassroots level. This inter-relation is even closer in the form of social pressure. Foreign observers have remarked that without this church organization the social structure of the country would fall to pieces and lose its coherence.

795 Another significant factor is the large number of persons consecrated, or partly consecrated to the church service. Besides priests, monks and nuns there are boy deacons and church students, chorister-scribes, and other semi-laymen attached to the church, whose total number has been estimated at from 10% to 20% of the population, particularly the male population.

754 The actual name, "buda", is considered taboo, for it is dangerous
776 and might attract him, when uttered aloud. Since this spirit is
[784] always male, his name is paraphrased as "the man's eye" ("yäsäw ayn"), "shadow eye" (aynä ṭela); and a victim is paraphrased "the man's victim" ("yäsäw gällabi"). Even the term "smith" is used, sometimes indirectly, for further security. Thus, to accuse someone of sorcery, a security-minded Amhara says pointedly, in his presence: "As for me, I am not the son of a smith".

754 The first attitude toward strangers is therefore one of caution,
609 lest he be a carrier of "buda". The suspicion is confirmed if the stranger has intelligent eyes, darting eyes, shining eyes, or if he stares curiously without saying much. It is confirmed if he seems skilled manually, for then he may be a "ṭabib" (lit. trained person, technologically wise), hiding the fact that he was born into the ironsmith caste. It is less disturbing if he openly reveals himself as an ironsmith, for then he lives segregated in a hamlet of his own ethnic group, and when contact must be established for trade (purchase of iron tools and pottery), certain "precautions" against being struck by the evil eye can be taken; extra-vulnerable persons such as pregnant women can be kept from contact; and all transactions will be carried on in full daylight.

754 The "buda" is regarded as preferring to strike and feast on
776 women, especially beautiful ones, and to feed, cannibal-style, on
[609] fat, beautiful children. The stranger therefore should never praise the health or beauty of children, or of women, out loud. Mothers
[859] hide their children at the approach of a stranger. Nice new garments
[164] on a child also attract the buda, and this is one reason why children under 5, when infant mortality is highest, are given only rags to wear, and are permitted to be dirty most of the time.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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CAP. XIII.—*How in all the churches and monasteries in the country of Prester John only one mass is said each day; and of the situation of the monastery of Bisam where we buried Mattheus; and of the fast of Lent.*

796 In the monastery of St. Michael, where we were staying, we said mass each day, not in the monastery, but in the circuit which is like a cloister. In this country they do not say more than one mass in each church or monastery. The friars came to our mass with great devotion, as it appeared; and they supplied a thurible and incense, because we had not brought any with us, and they do not think mass is properly said without incense; and they said that they approved of all, except that we had only one priest to say mass; because among them not less than three, five, or or seven stand at the altar to say mass. They also were surprised at our coming into the church with our shoes on, and still more at our spitting in it. In this manner we said 796 mass every day up to Trinity Sunday, and when we in- 784 tended to say mass on the following Monday they did not allow us to say it, at which we were much scandalised and aggrieved, and it seemed to us that they had some evil suspicion of us, not knowing why they so acted. Later we learned how they preserved some things of the Old Law together with the New; such as that of the fast of Lent, which they began on Monday after Sexagesima Sunday, that is, ten days before the beginning of our Lent; and so they make fifty days of Lent. They say they take these days in anticipation for the Saturdays when they do not keep the fast. When they fast they eat at night, and because all fast they say mass at night, because all have to take the communion. Likewise, as they take fifty days' fast in Lent, so they take as many days after Easter which are not fast days. Then, when there is no fast, they say mass in the morning. This secret we did not know, and

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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we had no one to explain it to us: as soon as their liberty not to fast had ended, their mass could not be said, except at night, and so they did not consent to our saying it; thus we felt aggrieved without cause. This time having ended and Trinity passed by, all priests and friars are obliged to fast every day except Saturdays and Sundays. They keep this fast up to Christmas Day, and as all fast they say mass at night. They allege for this the supper of Christ, when He consecrated His true Body, having been a fast time, and almost night. The general people, that is secular men and women, are obliged to fast from Trinity to Advent, Wednesdays and Fridays of each week, and from Christmas day to the Purification of Our Lady, which they call the feast of Simeon,[1] they have no fast. The first three days after the Purification, not being Saturday or Sunday, are great fast days for priests, friars, and laymen. They say that in these three days they do not eat more than once: it is called the penitence of Niniveh. At the end of these three days, up to the beginning of Lent, they again fast as from after Trinity. During Advent and the whole of Lent, priests, friars, lay friars, men and women, small and great, sound and sick, all fast. Thus from Easter to Trinity, and from Christmas to the Purification, they say mass in the morning, because there is no fast, and all the other time at night, because they are fasting. Where we buried Matthens is a great and honourable monastery, which is named Bisam, and its patron, Jesus. From the monastery where we stayed to this is a league of very precipitous country. It is on a very high rock, and looking round all sides of it there appear like the depths of hell. The monastery house is very large in bulk, and larger in revenues, and this monastery is very well fitted. The fashion of this house is of three large and beautiful naves, with their arches and vaulted roofs. They appear to be of wood, and because all

[1] *Symam.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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each of the years that I came there they gave me two 796
quarters of the fattest cow that was killed. This flesh is 782
distributed amongst the people who come to the Castar, and
the friars have none because they do not eat meat. And [784]
these cows are all brought as offerings by their breeders in
the district, who vow them to Philip. This monastery, and
the others that are subject to it, have this rule in addition,
that no females enter them, that is to say, neither women,
nor she-mules, nor cows, nor hens, nor anything else that is
female. And these cows which they kill are killed a long
way from the wall, and when I came there they came to the
distance of a cross-bow shot to take my mule, and they
took her away to their farm of Jamgargara, where Mattheus
died.

CAP. XV.—*Of the agriculture of this country, and how they preserve themselves from the wild beasts, and of the revenues of the monastery.*

The friars of this monastery, and of the other monasteries 241
subject to it, might do good works by planting trees and [792]
vines, and making gardens and orchards for their exercise;
and they do nothing. The country is ready to produce
everything, as is seen from that which is uncultivated: they
do not plant or grow anything except millet and bee-hives. [231]
When it is night, neither they nor anybody else go out from
their houses from fear of the wild beasts that are in the
country, and those who watch the millet have very high
resting places upon the trees, in which they sleep at night.
In the district of this monastery there are, in the valleys 231
between the mountains, very large herds of cows, kept by 563
Arab Moors, and there go with each herd forty or fifty
Moors, with their wives and children: and their headman is

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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585 stead, and seated upon it the bridegroom and the bride, and there came thither three priests, and they began a chaunt with Hallelujah, and then continued the chaunt, the three priests walking three times round the bedstead on which the couple were seated. Then they cut a lock of hair from the head of the bridegroom, and another from the head of the bride. They wetted these locks with mead, and placed the hair of the bridegroom on the head of the bride, and that of the bride on the head of the bridegroom, on the place from which they had cut them, and then sprinkled them with holy water: after that they kept their festivities and wedding feasts. At night they put them in a house, and for a month from that time no one saw the bride, except one man only whom they call the best man,[1] who remains all this month with the married couple, and when this month is ended the man or best friend goes away. If she is an honourable woman she does not go out of the house for [784] five or six months, nor remove a black veil from her face: [843] and if before that she becomes pregnant she removes the veil. When these months are ended, even though she is not pregnant, she removes the veil.

CAP. XXI.—*Of their marriages and benedictions, and of their contracts, and how they separate from their wives, and the wives from them, and it is not thought strange.*

I saw the Abima Marcos, whom they call Pope, giving blessings in the church, that is to say, before the principal door; the bride and bridegroom were also seated on a bedstead, and the Abima walked round them with incense and cross, and laid his hands on their heads, telling them to observe that which God had commanded in the gospel; and that they were no longer two

[1] *Padrinho.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

000 of Braga, put to Francisco Alvarez, chaplain of the king our sovereign, respecting some particulars of the country of Prester John, beyond those which the said Francisco Alvarez has written in his book; the said Francisco Alvarez having gone to the said Prester in the company of Don Rodrigo de Lima, who went as ambassador to the said Prester, on account of the death of Duarte Galvam, who was sent there by the King Don Manuel, may he be in holy glory; which persons reached the port of Masua, an island in the Red Sea, close to the town of Arquico, country of the Prester, on the 27th day of April 1520, and they passed six[1] years in the said country and lordships of the Prester, and they returned to embark at the said port of Masua, close to Arquico, in the year 1526 on the 28th day of April; and the said Francisco Alvarez came to this city of Braga to be confirmed in the benefice which the King our sovereign gave him. He remained in it some days, and the said Francisco Alvarez reached this city of Braga on the 30th July, of the year 1529.

264 He[1] said that usually the people do not eat only once a
262 day, and this at night, and that the monks and clergy fast
● 784 strictly during Lent, so that many only eat three times in the week, namely, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, that they do not drink wine of grapes nor of honey, and that they drink other beverages which are made of other vegetables.

In Lent they eat neither meat not milk, nor eggs nor butter, even though they are near dying, they eat vegetables and some few fruits which are in the country. All the men and women, great and small, fast all the Wednesdays and Fridays in the year; this is not to be understood from Christmas to the Purification of Our Lady, nor from Easter to Trinity, when there is no fast. Friars, priests, gentlemen and noblemen, fast all the week excepting Saturday and Sunday.

[1] Should be seven years.

1 [the author, i.e., Alvarez]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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784 He says that during all Passion week they are dressed in black or blue, and do not speak to one another for grief, saying that Judas by a kiss of peace betrayed his Lord.

532 Although there are in the churches effigies painted on all
784 the walls, and also crosses, nevertheless on no cross is a crucifix painted, neither have they any of solid carving; because they say they are not deserving to see Christ crucified.

792 All the priests, friars, and gentlemen carry crosses in their
778 hands, both on foot and on horseback; and the laymen of the people and lower people carry crosses round their necks. Every priest and friar carries a little horn of copper with holy water, and the hosts where they arrive beg of them water and a blessing, and they give it. Before they eat they throw drops of water on the food, and also in the drinking vases.

411 Their arms are assagays, few swords, a few shirts of mail, long and narrow; our Portuguese say that they are not of good mail.

There are many bows and arrows, they have no feathers like ours; there are very few helmets and casques. Those that there are have come since they have had intercourse with the Portuguese. There are plenty of strong bucklers;
713 there are no cannon, except two swivel guns which we brought them. At our departure there were fourteen muskets at Court, which they bought from the Turks who come there to trade. The Prester ordered whatever they asked to be given for them, and ordered men to be taught to shoot.

534 There are trumpets, but not good ones; there are many drums of copper which come from Cairo, and others of wood which have leather on both sides; there are tambourines like ours, and large cymbals which they sound. There are flutes and some instruments with chords, square like harps, which they call David moçanquo, which means the harp of David. They play these to the Prester, and not well.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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[p. 57]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

772 As for the beginning and end of the world, all Amhara believe that the
[184] world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium
[773] arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside
[775] down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

*565 The Amhara peasant's view of nature is matter-of-fact. There are a few
82 traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy
[778] places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration
[241] of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.*

[192] The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws
• [784] of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and
[241] they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

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[125] * All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge over-
[157] looking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 gratifications are not enjoyed wholly without conflict. In actuality, traits which reflect anxiety about the prospect of oral gratification are no less conspicuous in Amhara culture than the phenomena we have just been discussing.

155 262 Negative attitudes regarding oral gratification appear, first of all, in the scope and variety of the restrictions placed on eating. From both their Judaic and their Christian traditions the Abyssinians have taken over nearly every restriction on eating available. The chief exception to this is the Judaic injunction against eating blood, which Abyssinian custom permits. But they have retained intact the Semitic ban on unclean animals—those which lack a split hoof, upper teeth, or do not chew the cud. Their dread of pork is so strong that to some extent they feel closer to Muslims, who also avoid pork, than to Western Christians.

155 785 They have likewise retained and elaborated on the norms concerning fasting found in early Christianity. With respect to the number and harshness of the fasts it prescribes, Amhara-Tigre custom is probably the strictest in the world. In the rigor of its fasting laws the Ethiopian Church surpasses its sister religions of Eastern Orthodoxy—the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, and Indian Orthodox Churches. On fasting days no food or drink is to be tasted before early afternoon. Thereafter, no sort of meat, fowl, milk, or eggs may be eaten, which reduces the Amhara's post meridiem diet on fasting days to grains and pulse.

Such fasting days occur on every Wednesday and Friday of the year, except those which come during the eight weeks after Easter. There are, in addition, many special fasts in the course of the year. Some of these, like the month-long fast before Pentecost and the two months prior to Christmas, are observed only by clergy and elders. Others must be observed by everyone, though children are led into them gradually. These universal fasts include the eight weeks before Easter, plus a three-day fast during the week before Lent; two days before Christmas; and sixteen days preceding the festival of the Assumption of Mary in August. Total abstinence is prescribed for a period of forty-eight hours before Easter. All together, the ordinary Amhara is supposed to fast 165 days each year; for the devout person the total approaches 250 days.

155 276 773 784 The taboo on the use of tobacco presents another area in which oral gratification is suppressed. Two myths are told to explain this taboo. One is that the tobacco plant originally grew out of the intestines of the heretic Arius. The other is that on the day of the Crucifixion all plants except tobacco withered and died. In any case, smoking is regarded as a grave sin among traditional Amhara, and one who has been suspected of using tobacco is not permitted to kiss the Cross.

121 784 785 155 One could argue that these taboos and fasting customs are simply cultural

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [862]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābañňā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [154]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away [609]
from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well- [776]
known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāç*, a giant

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

353 of the Innocents was very striking. There was also a
532 portrait of the Emperor Menelik, and of other noted characters in Abyssinian history; the likenesses of royal and other famous persons are frequently to be found on the walls or among the possessions of the principal churches.

778 In this connection an amusing incident is told by Stern. King Sehala Selassie had been given by Captain Harris' mission to the Court of Shoa, a portrait of Queen Victoria. This had been carefully guarded for many years amongst his treasures until his death, some time after which his successor, King Haile Malekot, presented it to the principal church at Ankober where the people used to flock on grand festivities to worship it as the representation of the Virgin Mary!

The *Tabot*, to which reference has been made, is the object of much veneration and has to be blessed or consecrated prior to being used in the particular church to which it is allocated. In one case the priest in charge of the church had committed a murder, and the *Tabot* had to be sent up to Addis to be reconsecrated before it could be used again.

796 The most prominent features of the practice of their
785 religion are the fasts, feasts, and pageants; and each of these is sufficiently remarkable. A very large part of the year—about 150 days—falls under the category of fast or feast, and both are strictly observed. During their fasts they are forbidden not only meat, but also butter and milk and eggs, and it is really surprising to see to what an extent this rigid abstinence is followed, especially as the fasting periods are lengthy, that prior to Easter lasting forty days.

For a day or so immediately prior to the main feast,

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

that is, at the end of a long period of fasting, they eat nothing at all, and so far do they carry this rule that sometimes one or two of our older servants have become so weak that they have had to go home and remain in bed, so exhausted were they.

On Wednesdays and Fridays they eat no meat, and wherever they are or whatever they are doing they adhere firmly to this rule. I was immensely struck by this when on trek; for example, one day we had bought an ox for our men and on Thursday they had had a great raw meat banquet. The next day being Friday they would not touch an atom of the quantities of raw meat hung round the camp, though they had had a long and tiring march and had nothing else to eat. One of the men, who was really ill, would not drink a drop of the fresh milk we had prescribed for him, though he was excessively weak and could not retain anything else.

Their feasts are observed just as whole-heartedly, and obviously with more enthusiasm, inasmuch as much eating and drinking and no work are the order of the day. Their main feasts are New Year, the Feast of the Cross or *Maskal*, *Temkat* (Epiphany), and Easter.

Their New Year's Day, the 1st Maskaram, falls on the 11th September (or the 12th in the European year preceding our Leap year) and is a great feast, and of course a general holiday, the religious side of which is strongly marked, the Empress and the Court attending the Church of St. George in state.

No work is done, and there is much eating, an oasis of plenty in the desert of fasting which starts again on the day after New Year's Day, and continues until the end of the month. Bands of grown-up people and groups of children wander round serenading the differ-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] [231] [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *tĕff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā*, literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā*, preparing *ṭallā*, spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭimqat*, means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭimqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā*, grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household. 565* 796 [296]

The program for Ṭimqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized. [178] [851]

By noon on Ṭimqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭimqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter. [585] [785] [461] [782] [785]

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings. [261] [785] [241] [585]

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and [821] [164]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 [164] [185] hazardous. Moisture and chill lower the resistance of man and beast to respiratory infections. The weekly fasting schedule is resumed, and the more devout observe the thirty-day fast of the Disciples. In August, finally, the sixteen-day fast in honor of the Assumption of Mary is observed by everyone older than six or seven years.

*565 796 526 On the thirteenth day of that fast occurs the strange holiday of Buhē. Before and during this day, which is marked by the baking of special *dābo* for the shepherds, the countryside crackles with the reports of shepherds' whips. In this season when the humid air lends an explosive sound, the shepherds crack their whips for fun; but older boys and men join in great whipping battles on Buhē,* in which two teams lash each other until the members of one can stand it no more. On the evenings of Buhē, small bonfires are lit all over the countryside, and more *dābo* is eaten and whips cracked.[8] A few days later the fast of the Assumption is over. Young and old look forward to the end of the rains and the festivities that commence with the new year.

*565 These are the days and years of the Amhara peasant. Some other aspects of his life that come to the fore when more analytic perspectives are applied will be discussed in later chapters. But this calendar of activities forms the immediately observable setting for the "inner world" of the Amhara peasantry: those ideas, sentiments, and values which constitute its outlook on life.

THE WORLD OF MEANING

The Natural Universe

*565 772 [538] The Amhara peasant is not familiar with most of the cosmological notions found in the Great Tradition of Abyssinian culture, as transmitted through books like *Qalamsis* and *Aksimareos* and the oral traditions of learned churchmen. It is unusual for him to have a precise image of the layers of water, fire, and air beneath the earth, and it is still less likely for him to be familiar with the complicated hierarchy of invisible worlds, watery skies, and seven "real" heavens which are enumerated in the Abyssinian cosmology. He [821] believes that stars influence human affairs, but leaves the possession of astro- [756] logical knowledge to the *dabtarā*. The presence of cultural specialists who know about such matters has relieved him of the burden of dealing with ideas about the cosmos, ideas which are more widely diffused in more homogeneous societies.

The peasant's working conception of the cosmos is thus a very simplified version of that of his Great Tradition, together with certain pagan notions. Like his more learned countrymen, he divides the universe into two main parts: the world, *alam*, consisting of the earth, sun, moon, and stars; and

[178] * This custom is now extinct in many Amhara areas.

*565 571 Still another invidious distinction of considerable importance in the Amhara outlook is that between the "big man" (*ṣillīq saw*) and the commoner (*terā saw*). "Bigness" may be measured in terms of political power, economic wealth, ecclesiastical status, or any combination thereof. Though the peasant frequently has little affection for the big man, he customarily treats him with the greatest show of deference. No matter how unfamiliar a big man may be or from what part of the country he comes, the Amhara peasant sees him as entitled to unquestioning courtesy and obeisance. Analogous distinctions discriminate between the wealthy (*hābtām*) and the poor (*dehā*), and between the genteel (*çhawā*) and the rude (*bālagē*).

192 828 Yet if the Amhara takes a dim view of women, youth, and poor folk, as well as non-Amhara and non-Christians, he suffers from no illusions about homo sapiens at his best—unless they are dark illusions. The generic word for "man" in Amharic, *saw*, is the subject of a number of negative associations and idiomatic uses.[12] At its worst, the word is found in an idiom that signifies the evil eye (*ya-saw ayn*), literally: the "eye of man" (or, more idiomatically, "the eye of others"). At its best, when used to signify a fully formed human being, the word *saw* characteristically appears in the plaintive saying, *Saw yallam* ("there is no human being"); in other words, an individual who fully embodies the concept of humanity does not exist. In general, one may say that the Amhara's view of human nature is dominated by his perception of man's inherent aggressiveness and untrustworthiness.

828 861 The Amhara believes that unformed human nature is poor raw material, and that without strict punishment throughout childhood a person will grow up to be rude and offensive toward others. As an adult, moreover, he must constantly be kept in check. The rationale commonly given for the extensive [785] schedule of fasting is that man's nature is wicked, and only by weakening himself in this manner will he be turned away from some act of aggression against others.

828 261 273 The Amharic concept of *ṭegābaññā* illustrates this view. *Ṭegābaññā* literally carries the meaning of one who has been sated with food and drink, but is normally taken to mean someone who begins to insult and pick fights with others. In their use of this and related words the Amhara express the belief that aggression is the usual consequence of being sated. Insubordinate behavior on the part of a servant or political appointee is usually explained as a result of his having been too well fed. "When a peasant gets sated he hits with his stick. . . " is the first line of a number of couplets I collected among rural Amhara. The specific effect of drinking alcoholic beverages is believed to release, not Eros, but the aggressive instincts. An Amharic proverb about [539] *ṭallā* states this directly: "One [glass] whets the appetite; two quenches it; three heats one up; four makes one quarrel; five brings fighting; six causes killing." Contrary to the view that world peace depends chiefly on filling

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [771]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shīllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 [183]

586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought
885 into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have re-
[851] sulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or
[586] else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a com-
[587] plete adult, a *mulu sēt* or *mulu saw*.

From Generation to Generation

867 Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

[577] The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profes-
[779] sion of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

867 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central
779 symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern
785 a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout matura-
262 tion. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early
577 age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

867 At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction
779 of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or
793 confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may
577 either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her
[785] husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing
[688] penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bälagä* ("rude"), a trait which [861]
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[3]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [155] [671]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tax obligations and any debts he may have incurred, for which advantage many have become monks for other than spiritual motives.[47] 792

No specific duties or obligations are required of a monk. Abyssinian monks have spent their years in a variety of ways. One extreme is anchoritism. Many have become hermits, feeding only on roots and herbs, and have sought even greater self-mortification by such practices as standing for long periods in icy water or wearing iron girdles lined with points. Others have lived somewhat closer to human society, wandering about the country as mendicants or making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Others have attached themselves, for shorter or longer periods, to monasteries, spending long periods in prayer and fasting and doing some humble work like collecting wood or, if formerly a priest, assisting at the Mass with the other priests. A few have proselytized in non-Christian areas. Some monks, on the other hand, have left the world only to rejoin it at a higher level. These become advisers to grandees or themselves serve as governors of districts. 792 785

Whatever the shortcomings of individual monks, the monastic calling as a whole has enjoyed the highest esteem in Ethiopia. Monks have exerted a great influence on the thinking and behavior of the people. Itinerant hermits have harangued the people to live more pious lives. The counsel of monks has been of help to rulers in time of trouble. The prophecies of monks have been influential in setting the pattern of hopes and fears about the future. 792

The role of the *dabtarā* is quite different. The *dabtarā*'s combination of functions is unusual—he is at once chorister, poet, dancer, herbologist, scribe, and wizard. It is also remarkable that so indispensable a functionary in the Ethiopian Church has no formal position in the church hierarchy. 793

With its characteristic forbearance toward human frailty, Amhara culture has established in the *dabtarā* a religious vocation in which special knowledge is required but holiness is not expected. The vocation is thus sought by those who do not care to be bound by the strict conditions of the priesthood, or by priests who have found these conditions too much to live with, so have been divorced or remarried. Recruitment into the role is informal: there are no rites of ordination, nor is there any particular point at which a man becomes or ceases to be a *dabtarā*.

Becoming a *dabtarā* mainly entails a course of study beyond that minimal level required for the priests. The full course of traditional studies includes the vast corpus of religious chants; *āquāquām* ("religious dance"); Ge'ez grammar and *qenē;* and study of some two dozen religious books. Mastery of the entire curriculum, which takes at least twenty to thirty years according to traditional methods of pedagogy, is rarely accomplished. In addition the student acquires other knowledge sub rosa from private tutors: knowledge of writing, preparation of magic formulae, and the use of herbs.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 gratifications are not enjoyed wholly without conflict. In actuality, traits which reflect anxiety about the prospect of oral gratification are no less conspicuous in Amhara culture than the phenomena we have just been discussing.

155 262 Negative attitudes regarding oral gratification appear, first of all, in the scope and variety of the restrictions placed on eating. From both their Judaic and their Christian traditions the Abyssinians have taken over nearly every restriction on eating available. The chief exception to this is the Judaic injunction against eating blood, which Abyssinian custom permits. But they have retained intact the Semitic ban on unclean animals—those which lack a split hoof, upper teeth, or do not chew the cud. Their dread of pork is so strong that to some extent they feel closer to Muslims, who also avoid pork, than to Western Christians.

155 785 They have likewise retained and elaborated on the norms concerning fasting found in early Christianity. With respect to the number and harshness of the fasts it prescribes, Amhara-Tigre custom is probably the strictest in the world. In the rigor of its fasting laws the Ethiopian Church surpasses its sister religions of Eastern Orthodoxy—the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, and Indian Orthodox Churches. On fasting days no food or drink is to be tasted before early afternoon. Thereafter, no sort of meat, fowl, milk, or eggs may be eaten, which reduces the Amhara's post meridiem diet on fasting days to grains and pulse.

Such fasting days occur on every Wednesday and Friday of the year, except those which come during the eight weeks after Easter. There are, in addition, many special fasts in the course of the year. Some of these, like the month-long fast before Pentecost and the two months prior to Christmas, are observed only by clergy and elders. Others must be observed by everyone, though children are led into them gradually. These universal fasts include the eight weeks before Easter, plus a three-day fast during the week before Lent; two days before Christmas; and sixteen days preceding the festival of the Assumption of Mary in August. Total abstinence is prescribed for a period of forty-eight hours before Easter. All together, the ordinary Amhara is supposed to fast 165 days each year; for the devout person the total approaches 250 days.

155 276 773 784 The taboo on the use of tobacco presents another area in which oral gratification is suppressed. Two myths are told to explain this taboo. One is that the tobacco plant originally grew out of the intestines of the heretic Arius. The other is that on the day of the Crucifixion all plants except tobacco withered and died. In any case, smoking is regarded as a grave sin among traditional Amhara, and one who has been suspected of using tobacco is not permitted to kiss the Cross.

121 784 785 155 One could argue that these taboos and fasting customs are simply cultural

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [262]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [754]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly sucking his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away [609]
from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well- [776]
known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

proverb which stresses the rights of women in this regard gives the following advice: 121* 593 586

Balāgar sisgab yemastāl ba-degger;
Teyawennā nay qitāwen yegāgger. [539]

When a peasant gets sated he beats you with wood;
Leave and come home, let him bake his own bread!

A couple who have firmly decided upon divorce need simply call in their relatives or go before the *chīqā shum* in order to have their property properly divided. The only recourse to judicial process is when, as often happens, disputes break out concerning the division of property. In the *damoz* form of marriage, in which there is no civil oath, divorce is yet simpler. The wife is given certain presents and a monthly salary for the duration of the marriage. When the husband has to leave for another part of the country, or if the couple quarrel, they simply separate without further ado.

Despite its heavy claim on the energies of its members, then, the Amhara kinship system is such as to make members of the nuclear family relatively independent of extended relationships, and to give the individual marriage partners important areas of independence from each other. 121* 593 594

Religious Organization

Membership in the Monophysite Church is automatic for all Amhara except a small percentage who are Muslim. This membership is symbolized by the ceremony of baptism, performed for male infants on the fortieth day and for females on the eightieth. At that time the child receives a special Christian name in addition to his regular family name. 121* 795 794 [851] [553]

Certain obligations are incumbent upon every member of the church. Foremost among these is the requirement of fasting, which begins for children of both sexes at about the age of seven and introduces a considerable element of constraint into the lives of the Amhara. Second, there is the obligation to observe the Sabbaths and the main holidays by refraining from arduous physical labor on those days. In addition, each household is obliged to contribute a certain quantity of grain to the local church every year.* [785] [796]

Apart from the rigorous fasting requirements, and the injunction not to work on holy days—a dubious hardship—the individual is relatively free of ritual obligations. The rituals demanded by the church are so manifold, and so sacred, that responsibility for them is given to the clergy, and the laymen

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*In some areas this is a fixed amount per household (e.g., one or two *qunna*); in others it is proportionate to the wealth of the family. It is collected by a lay official of the church, the *gend alaqā*, though sometimes by the *gabar*.

685 the "danya". Interestingly enough, if the thief did
696 not have money on hand to pay the fee of the lēbashay, it was the responsibility of the victim who had originally requested his services to pay him on the spot, and try to collect later from the thief. This had the effect of eliminating complaints of petty theft from setting this costly process in motion.

694 It seems that amateur thieves were often caught
789 by this process, and usually confessed, feeling helpless when confronted with such "powerful" means of detection. Professional thieves, particularly in the towns, who were known to have evaded detection, were and are believed to have obtained a powerful magic antidote from a dabtara scribe.

694 When all methods of detection have failed, the
787 distraught victim has a last resort. He may go to the nearest "tänkwa", a practicer of black magic, and ask him to divine by throwing his bones. This , too, is now prohibited, but still goes on, though not as openly as before. Failing even in this, the victim may go to the Coptic church and there, having purchased incense
[754] and given a gift, pronounce a solemn curse, "säbätē masdäfat", on the thief.

171 The pattern of the lēbashay has been traced by
694 some observers to ancient Greek parallels, by others to the Arab bedouin "djirra" or "kassas" thief seeker who also tracks murderers in tribal feuds. The tankwas seem of more typically African witchcraft pattern.

796 food of the feast prepared by the losing side.
526 In the evening "fires of joy" are lit, where the rain-drenched, weary and sore contestants and others can dry out, drink barley beer, and are supposed to forget and forgive the hostilities. Some may still boast of individual feats of heroism, in Amhara warrior style; others will sulk. But generally the day ends in harmony, after the excitement which itself was a welcome break in the monotonous hibernation of the rainy season.

796 The end of the annual cycle coincides with the end of the rainy season. The last 5 days (in leap years 6 days) are added after the end of the last month, and are called "Pagumēn" or "Qwagmē". On the 3rd day the [77] annual festival of St. Raphael, called "qeddus Rufaēl", the water saint, takes place. The rain, which still falls [82] heavily that day, is considered "ṭebel" (holy water) and to have the power to dull the poison of snakes so [78] that their bites will not be fatal. Much rain during Pagumēn is taken as an omen that the crops will be good.

796 This day is final examination day for the boys 874 who have attended church school long enough to be promoted to "deacon". They are examined in correct chanting of liturgy and prayers. To be mentally wide awake they often go to the dabtara beforehand, and, for a small gift, obtain the stimulating herb "esa fars" (lit. Persian wood) or drink boiled "astänagär" (lit. the plant that makes to talk), which also helps to overcome stage-fright.

796 The younger children go from hut to hut, chanting:
857 "In the name of Rufael,
539

821 caused the tender plant to sprout; therefore, cereal grains just
[243] beginning to sprout are called "charäqwa". Full moon is a good time
[484] to travel, avoiding the heat of the day especially in the hot lowlands where travel in daytime is almost impossible; also it is safer since approaching or ambushing bandits can be more readily seen than earlier or later in the lunar cycle.

Dawn is personified, regarded as a young day being suckled ("täbba") by the warm and expansive sun, after chill of the night on the plateau.

●787 However, the working out of astrological systems is left to the dabtara, who collects his knowledge from "secret" books (in Gees), more often actually from apprenticeship and extracurricular activities while in church school, and uses it in writing especially powerful and expensive amulets.

821 The various kinds of rain are almost as important to the Amhara as snows to the Eskimo and sands to the desert Arab. For the Amhara with his primitive plowing, has to wait until the right kind of light rain loosens the sunbaked soil; and his simple hut is little protection from the heavy rains. He therefore studies clouds and wind direction in relation to topography. The fine and penetrating rain ("zeg yalä zenab") permits the use of the common scratch-plow, and seeding. The heavy rainy season brings downpours, and is also accompanied by strong gusts of wind ("wächafo") and tornadoes. When the thunderstorm ends and a rainbow appears, it seems as if the earth had been reprieved, so that the rainbow is called "maryam mäqänät" (lit. the jealousy of Mary; i.e. her intercession, in the Geez language). However, when a rainbow occurs while it is still raining, the interpretation is more animistic, for it is regarded as an unnatural event, heralding the moment at which wild

X794 776 755 (actually directed at the patient), and "train" the minor zars to do their individual "gurri" somewhat differently, more "correctly". This "training" may include occasional beating of the "horse" of the zar (the patient).

Another advanced and complicated technique used by highly experienced zar doctors, in certain stubborn cases, is to transfer a stubborn zar from one patient of the zar congregation to a "stronger" member, so that the effect will be more controllable. This transfer is made on the principle of contagion. But a zar doctor is not supposed to inoculate a person with a really evil zar, for that would make him a sorcerer and set both the chief zar doctors and mankind in general against him.

Only in case of such a completely evil zar does the zar doctor attempt complete exorcism, considered a very dangerous form of spiritual surgery. During a somber ceremony, which lacks the gaiety of the usual [782] zar society, a black hen is killed, the evil zar is lured to feed on the body of the bloody animal, and the cadaver is quickly thrown in the bush, a thicket, or the river. This transfer is called "danqara", is tangential to the zar cult, and more related to "buda" and "tänqway" complexes (described later).

[787] Occasionally an old and experienced zar doctor, especially if a man, is asked to perform divination. If his personal zar happens to be "adept at prophecy", especially if he has been "educated at Jerusalem", the zar doctor may agree to put the question before him.

X794 776 821 Seasonal variations are considered very important in treatment procedures, for the zar spirits are regarded to be as much dominated by the climate as are humans. They are dormant or inactive during the 3-month

X 794 [798] tolerates it, as long as the residential location of the zar house is sufficiently beyond hearing distance of the church.

[562] Men are often ashamed to admit that they themselves are zar-possessed devotees. If possessed by a feminine zar, considered more stupid and ignorant than a male zar, in most cases, it is considered [782] possible to "outwit" her. A clever zar doctor may negotiate with a female zar to accept a consecrated hen, never to be slaughtered for her, merely to be looked at. The owner of the hen can then sell the eggs, and has a (totemically?) protected hen!

[787] More often, men consult zar doctors on business - though by stealth. In the town of Gondar, e.g., a man wishing to find a job for his nephew might present the problem to Lady Salamtew, who would listen quietly, accept his "frankincense money", and tell him to return on a certain day for her advice.

X 794 782 443 The economic significance of the zar cult varies, but can be considerable especially in the provincial towns. Most zar spirits, especially the powerful and clever ones, like "generosity" in sacrifices, are pleased by voluptuousness, insist on healthy animals for sacrifice, neat gifts and attire of their "horses" (a woman who is a clothershorse would certainly be regarded as possessed), incense that has been imported from Yemen, aromatic herbs, imported perfumes, European utensils and alcoholic beverages (distilled arrak). Retail traders know this and encourage women to buy "nice things for the zar". It is well known that many women are "struck" by the spirit for the first time just after having visited ("window shopped" in the modern equivalent) a big market. No wonder zar doctors are popular with the Muslim Ethiopian retail traders, who not infrequently let them take some fancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission!

755 and the worst and most numerous ganyen are regarded as water spirits,
756 e.g. at the Blue Nile and everywhere also during the long rainy
789 season.
[776]

After diagnosing the identity and origin of the specific
755 ganyen, the ẗänqway tries to exorcise the demon by treating him
776 with contempt (exactly opposite to treatment given the "zar"). Instead of feeding the spirit a succulent "mäqwädäshä" (love gift), the ganyän - possessed person is fed a lunch of ashes. For a ganyen that is a fire-spirit, is attracted by ashes, his element, and may thus be induced to leave the body of the patient in order to feast. The ẗänqway follows this method even in cases of buda as indicated before.

The next step in treatment consists of "fixing" the ganyän somewhere else, so that he will not return into the body of the victim. This is done by the scapegoat technique; e.g. by fixing the demon into the body of a chicken, killing it, throwing the carcass away where the hyenas will eat it; or transferring the water-spirit to another locality.

756 Besides his role as a healer of ganyän, the major activity
[787] of the ẗänqway is as diviner of lost or stolen goods. It is not polite to use the term "ẗänqway" in his presence, instead he is politely addressed as "awäqi" (lit. knower, wise man). Since he usually makes it his business to know what goes on among professional thieves, his insight into such matters is sometimes indeed considerable; but also contributes to his bad social reputation. In "diag-
[694] nosing" the case, the tanqway acts as detective, studies the place of the crime, investigates neighbors and finally draws seashells (zagol Lebsu") and bones from his bag and throws them, to read additional information from their driection and mutual position.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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796 "Then they blessed a lot of long grass they had, and
527 gave it to us and we distributed it amongst the staff. Every servant there tied his piece of grass tightly round his head and wore it all day—they all seemed highly delighted."

771 But in spite of their strict observance of feasts and their pride in the fact of their being Christians, I cannot really think that they could in any sense of the word be described as a really religious people, their lives being in no way a reflection of their theoretical beliefs. Their religion is overlaid with a thick layer of superstition, some of which is merely curious, but some apt to have dangerous results. Thus they wear their charms and amulets suspended round their necks by a silken cord (never leather, which is used by Mohammedans for this purpose); they have a strong belief in the power of the "evil eye"; they will not look at a person eating, they will not start on journeys on certain days, and they believe that certain houses are inhabited by evil spirits and will not live in them.

•787 We came across some curious examples of this latter superstition. Two important Abyssinian nobles had built in their grounds quite nice stone and mortar houses in the European style. These houses were lying empty, and their owners were living in native built *tukuls*, for the reason that their tame priests had told them that evil would befall them if they moved into their new residences.

Another and more serious example was that of a chief who was very ill with pneumonia. He was just getting over it when in the middle of one night his priest told him that he had had a vision to the effect that if he

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did not move at once into his other house some miles 181
away he would die. So on a bitterly cold night the poor old gentleman was removed to his other place, a course of action which, needless to say, resulted in his death.

They still believe in the efficacy of writing the sick 155
person's name on a certain kind of tree; and one of our friends told me that his own "boy" had done this when he (my friend) was ill, and attributed his recovery entirely to this cause. Another European who was very ill was cured (so said his "boy") by the latter obtaining from a native priest a piece of paper upon which the sick man's name was written. The "boy" had actually paid the priest the (for him) very large sum of three dollars for the paper.

And yet another example that came to my notice was that of a "boy" in the employ of a friend of mine who was suffering from lung trouble and was being attended, quite successfully, by a European doctor. As the "boy" did not think he was getting well fast enough he called in his priest, who advised him to swallow a cupful of petrol! Needless to say, the result was death.

So that in point of fact the Abyssinian priest does not appear to differ very much from the South African witch-doctor, and indeed of the two I should be inclined to give pride of place to the latter, so far as medical practice is concerned at all events.

[pp. 198-end have not been processed for the files.- Analyst]

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many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[9]

Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

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world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

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771 796 805 Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci for the organization of time and space.

*565 805 In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes. Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *hābashā qaṭaro* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amhara peasant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

*565 805 829 Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Amhara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

*565 538 829 When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

*565 805 796 With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year. A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important [787] holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*) [576] representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

"May He bring you safely from the year of Mark to the year of Luke!" 565* Nearly every day of the month, moreover, is dedicated to some holy figure, 805 the main ones being: 796 [576]

Day of Month	Name	Meaning
1st	*Ledatā*	Birth of Mary
5th	*Abbo*	St. Gabra Manfas Qeddus
7th	*Selassie*	Trinity
12th	*Mikā'ēl*	St. Michael
16th	*Kidāna Maherat*	Covenant of Mercy (for Mary)
19th	*Gabre'ēl*	St. Gabriel
21st	*Māryām*	St. Mary
23rd	*Giyorgis*	St. George
24th	*Takla Hāymānot*	St. Takla Hāymānot
27th	*Madhānē Alam*	Savior of the World
29th	*Bāla Wald*	Festival of the Son

This schedule is well implanted in the peasant's mind, so much so that the names of these holy days come to take the place of calendar dates. Thus, instead of saying "He fell sick on the fifth" or "He is due to come on the twelfth," the Amhara normally says "He fell sick on Abbo" or "He is due to come on Mikā'ēl."

Time for the Amhara is thus not a morally indifferent and qualitatively undifferentiated continuum. It is a series of occasions with more or less sacred significance. These occasions are arranged in the form of cycles. In contrast to the Catholic calendar with its different saint for each day of the year, every month in Abyssinia repeats the same set of saints' days. Each year, of course, repeats the same cycle of annual holidays. The years themselves do not run on continuously, but follow the cycle—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—again and again. For the more learned, finally, there is a twenty-eight-year cycle which must elapse before the same year begins on the same day of the week again. [822]

The Amhara's experience of time is thus essentially cyclical. The religious 565* calendar, the most important dimension of time for him, consists of a series 805 of epicycles, in which the monthly rounds play themselves out within the 822 larger circles of annual and quadrennial rounds. Historical events are at best 796 secondary: the seasons come and go, generations come and go, but there is not much new under the sun. The better-known prophecies foretell the return of some state of things that obtained in the past. Kassa chose the [787] throne name of Tēwodros II because of the prophecy that a king with that name would arise to repeat the mythically fortunate reign of Tēwodros I of the fifteenth century. In this century has arisen the prophecy of another Tēwodros to come. Still another prophecy—of a short-lived invasion of Ethio-

*565 805 796 822 789 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ţerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ţerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [181] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 181 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 346 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

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[For information on revelation and divination, see category 116, pp. xix, 5, 156-186, 190-192, 198, 202-217, 221, 223, 234-236, and 251-257.]

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*756 all are indicative of serious ailments. In a typical episode involving this syndrome, the sickman initially diagnoses the least worrisome etiology, likift or gerifta. Secular therapies are then obtained, but when these fail, a choice must be made from among the remaining etiologies.

The sickman usually finds epidemiological indications sufficient to favor one of the three etiologies.
[562] Zars, for example, are known to prefer post-pubescent fe-
[602] males (constituting over 80% of zar mounts), and individuals who are the primary relatives of recently deceased balazars. Once an individual has been mounted by a specific zar, the bond between human and zar is almost always permanent. Over the years of their association, the zar becomes familiar with the constant companions of the host, particularly her children. With the death of the balazar, the zar characteristically desires to mount someone whom he already knows well. This epidemiological evidence is confirmed by divination and often by the appearance of additional symptoms (usually swooning, sleeplessness, langour, and depression) which are associated with zar involvement.

*755 If diagnosis indicates kureyña, the sickman seeks
776 therapy from the leader (awakiy balazar) of a coterie
• 787 (hadra) of zar-possessed folk. At their initial meeting, the awakiy balazar is mounted by one of his zars, who at-

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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tempts to communicate with the sickman's supposed zar. The object of the dialogue is, first, to identify the sickman's zar by name. In the abstract, the zars are believed to be multitudinous, but in practice the members of a hadra will be acquainted with only a score or so of these spirits. Each of these zars is named, and recognized for his social identity (e.g., sex, age, occupation, religion), his characteristic attitude towards human mounts, and his ability to influence the conduct of other zars. The initial dialogue further attempts to learn what precisely the spirit wishes in return for ceasing to afflict his host. Often a sickman's zar is unresponsive, and the sickman must undergo a regimen, often lasting several weeks, at the home of the hadra leader. During this period, the sickman is induced to sleep for long stretches of time. During this period a decoction of cat (Catha edulis Forsk) is given the sickman to drink.[10] This regimen is maintained until the unruly zar has been "socialized" and is prepared to converse intelligibly (in zar argot) through his host. Conversely, some zars reveal their identities rapidly and explicit-

[10] Interestingly, when eaten fresh the leaves of cat appear to act as a wakefulness-producing stimulant (Hill 1965:17).

*755 776 ly, so that the sickman is afflicted with the kureyña
• 787 symptoms for only a short time before the zar is successfully engaged in conversation.

*753 *755 *756 776 Zars demand periodic gifts (mainly jewlry and clothing), and regular attendance at the hadra of the awakiy balazar who first contacted the sickman's zar. At the hadra meetings, special foods favored by the zars are served, and members are mounted by their familiars. The zar who is neglected punishes his host with a recurrence of kureyña or some other ailment, until his requirements are fulfilled.

A hadra leader is frequently possessed by ten or more zars; characteristically, all are cooperative, and several are powerful zars, capable of influencing the behavior of weaker spirits. In contrast, other members of the hadra are each mounted by one or two less resolute and often capricious zars. The zars of the hadra leader are helpful in persuading the zars of hadra members to define what gifts they demand in return for a surcease in their pathogenic activities. Through his familiars, the awakiy balazar learns therapies for ailments with which hadra members are afflicted by their zars. These therapies are often necessary, but never sufficient, to bring about cures, since they remove only the immediate causes of the sickman's ailments. The awakiy balazar occasionally provides therapeutic services for individu-

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692 ment, who approves appointment to Sharia and Qadi positions.

5. Structure and Function of the Coptic Church among the Amhara.

795 The importance of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia on the life of every Amhara, of all classes, rural or urban, can hardly be exaggerated. To the Amhara, "Amhara" is synonymous with Abyssinian Christian; and the [198] liturgical language used in the church, "Geez", with "language of the free". The term used for their religion is "tewahedo", often shortened to "towado", meaning "orthodox".

To the Amhara, his church is so closely connected with his attitudes to his country, his nation, his ethnocentrism, that the severance of ties with the mother Coptic Church of Alexandria, in 1948, passed almost [779] unnoticed. Only church scholars are aware that, as part of the larger Coptic church, the break with the Western church occurred after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., ostensibly because the Copts insisted on complete fusion of the person of Christ, refusing to accept the "union, but not fusion of Deity and human spirit" of the non-Monophysite faith in the formula he pronounces when [788] slaughtering a sheep or ox: "In the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost, one divinity." The pious [224] hunter will hasten to the wounded gazelle to pronounce the formula before the animal expires, then finish it off by cutting its throat

A. The Structure of Church Organization.

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778 a) The Church buildings and design.

The traditional church building is round, designed on a pattern of three concentric circles. This combines the round pattern of the African hut, though much larger in this case, with the functional design of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. Like the latter, each church has a Holy of Holies ("qeddesta qeddusan"), a closed inner sanctum, which may be entered only by upper priesthood
[782] or the day's officiating priest. He carries burning and smoking incense in a metal or clay censer, while he marches around the sacred wooden tablet, the "tabot", located there. On the tabot, which may not be seen by layman's eyes, are inscribed, in Geez, the name of the saint to whom the particular (parish) church is dedicated, plus magical names of angels and geometric symbolism and phrases from both the Old and New Testament. The "tabot" represents symbolically the Ark of Moses kept by the ancient Israelites in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem

346 The second circumference, the "mäqdäs", can be
[788] seen from the outside through several doorless openings. Here the priests perform the eucharist, hidden from the public gaze by portable white linen screens. The "maqdas" is restricted only during services.

796 Within the third, walled-in circumference, the
346 "taza", called also "qeñe mahlēt" (lit. reciting-place of devotional poetry), the chorister-scribes ("dābtära") congregate while they chant devotional poetry and other

778 the frame, are now often cut from modern tin cans.

The ceremonial drinking cup used in the eucharist is the "ṭewa", usually made of metal. But if used in the "mähabber" communal sodality outside the church, it is often of horn or clay, about 4½ inches high, 5 inches diameter at top, 1½ inches at bottom. On the latter occasion it is filled with barley beer or "berz" (honey-water). This is given the peasant at plowing time to [788] confer blessing upon him, thus called "maras baggo" (for spring plowing).

Other equipment belonging to the church may be a wooden pulpit for reading (not preaching), some tin [373] oil-lamps or the old wick-like candles (called "twär"). 778 Very important are the drums, huge affairs carried by 534 the younger dancers during worship, suspended from shoulder straps. The barrel-like "<u>nägarit</u>", of which the average church has three (or must borrow them), usually has a height of at least 30 inches, a diameter of 15 inches. It is made of "wanza" wood (olive or other hardwood), with tanned oxhide moistened and stretched tightly across both ends. The drummer operates it with the flat of his fingers and top of flat palm. Another type is the "<u>kabaro</u>" drum, in which one end is bigger than the other. The drums and the swaying maqomya sticks keep time during the chanting. Trumpets are used only for parades, to herald the march, but not in accompaniment.

778 When not in use, most of these utensils are loc- 344 251 ked in a little treasure house, called "bätalehem" (in

796 holy day of the year, "Masqal", Feast of the Cross, on the 17th, and all who can prepare new garments. The countryside is freshly washed from 3 months of rains, and the sun is welcomed. It seems as if nature herself is beginning a new year, another annual cycle.

From St. John's Day, the first day of the year, children begin to gather the plentiful wildflowers, and to bring them to kinfolk across brooks which are again [B24] passable. These bouquets of daisies, "Masqal ababa" i.e. Masqal flower, are considered "engutatash" (lit. take this tribute). This symbolism is linked to the first plant brought by the dove to the ark of Noah after the floods, which plant is said to have been the flower "engecha"; others say it is because King Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba a pearl of the type "enqwe".

In return, the children expect promises of gifts of new clothing for the Masqal feast. Even adults give "gursha" gifts to each other, of food or other items, and the increasingly generous sunshine and raised level of emotion inclines to generosity. Elders and old women who have turned nun bless every visiting kinsman with the [188] formula:

> "Blessed be He, (who) from time to time (one year to the next) has let you pass (in good fortune)."

796 The "Masqal" Feast of the Cross, in Abyssinian 776 church tradition, dated back to an early Christian Queen "Eleni" (Helena) who sponsored an expedition to Palestine to seek the true cross of the curcifixion. When she found it, she decided to announce the joyous news to her

764 personal belongings such as shamma, horncup, oxhide bed-cover.

765 The tazkar is the memorial feast 40 days after death, on which, under favorable conditions, the soul is believed to be freed from purgatory. Preparations for this feast are made almost as soon as the funeral is over. Kinfolk and neighbors bring food and drink, but despite that, tazkar feasts are often costly, far beyond the economic means of poorer families. Money must be given to the priests who recite the "fetät", the prayer for absolution. It is the responsibility not only of direct descendants, but of the entire kinfolk to arrange for a "tazkar", and it is a great shame when a person has no tazkar. No tazkar is made for unbaptized babies; for violaters of the fasts of Wednesday, Friday and lent; for suicides. Also, when a person dies what is considered a particularly unnatural death, by drowning, fire, lightning, etc., the priests have to decide whether a tazkar can be held, or whether the death was some special punishment for some great capital crime that had gone undetected.

d) "Saluting the church", and Private Communion.

● 788 Though lay individuals do not usually participate in church worship, going to the "betä kristyan" (church) is a formal affair. The shamma is redraped when entering the churchyard, so as to form a cross-wise fold over

788 the chest. The church is then "saluted" by kissing the wall, a ceremony called "säläm" in Geez. If the person wears sandals, he must remove them before entering the church itself.

[211] On the path near the church, or leading to it, there is often a conical pile of small rocks. This may indicate a church on a nearby hilltop, and this pile, "mäsläläämiya", functions then as a poster of salutation. If the passerby is in a hurry on another errand, he may simply bow deeply in the direction of the church instead of going there to kiss the wall. In modern times truck-drivers will bow in that direction without stopping.

794 The individual layman usually belongs to a private sodality that holds private communion together. But he may, more informally, invite some personal friends on his personal Saint's day, especially his namesake's. Since this informal private communion is cheaper, costing only the price of a jar of beer and some roasted grain, it is more popular among the poor than the formal "mäläbber" sodality. The informal private communion, called "zekert", is shared only by men, uses no drummer, no expensive wheat bread, no collection for a common purse, and usually only the personal confessor is invited from among the priesthood. But the zekert cannot be used as a means of gaining social prestige. [554]

795 e) Religious Syncretism.

Surrounded by Muslim and "pagan" religions, and

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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course know what is going on, ignore the whole matter, just as they ignore the Zar worship.

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Parallels to such religious syncretism are found not only in Egypt, but also in Syria, where Christian women go on short-range pilgrimage to the tomb of "weli" saints and smear mud from holy springs on their faces on a certain day of the Christian religious calendar.[79] This takes place in rural areas of Homs, but even near Damascus Muslims take part in celebrating the day of the Feast of the Cross in September.[80] Just as in visits to the tomb of water saints in Muslim Algeria,[81] the pilgrimage to Sheykh Abader is believed to bring on the light rains, which usually begin about that time, making early plowing and a good harvest possible. This is equally desired by both Muslims and Copts, just as individual good health is desired by both. Perhaps this unexpressed recognition explains the paradox of this religious syncretism.

f) The Church and the Present National State.

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Three phases can be distinguished in the recent relations of the Abyssinian church and the Amharic "Solomonic Dynasty" which the church returned to power in the 13th century but which now attempts to modernize

79. Gaulmier, J.: Pélérinages Populaires à Hama. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, 1931, Vol.1, pp.137-152.
80. Tresse, R.: Usages Saisonnières. Revue d'Etudes Orientales 1937, pp. 1-4; Lecerf & Tresse: Les Arada de Damas. EEO, 7-8, pp.236-264.
81. Probst-Biraben, J.H.: Pour La Pluie de Printemps en Algerie. En Terre d'Islam, 22, 1942, pp. 264-272.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

by Admiral Sir William Hewett with King John in 1884, expressly provides that "H.H. the Khedive engages to grant all the facilities which H.M. the Negusa Negus may require in the matter of appointing Abounas for Ethiopia". 793

His is the power to crown kings, and no priest can be ordained without him. He officiates at all the big religious festivals, and his influence in the councils of state is reported to be considerable.

Mr Winwood Reade, in his book *The Martyrdom of Man*, states that "by way of blessing he (the Abouna) spits upon his congregation, who believe that the episcopal virtue resides in the saliva and not as we think in the finger-ends". I am bound to say we never saw or heard of this particular form of benediction while we were there, but even if it were so, it would not be so very surprising in view of the fact that, as everyone knows, at the baptism of children Roman Catholic priests to this day moisten their thumbs with their saliva and touch the child's nostrils therewith when they are baptizing it. 788

Up to the time of King Abreha, when the conversion of the country to Christianity took place, the head of the then existing religion was in accordance with Mosaic practice the High Priest. The nomination of a Bishop or Abouna followed, and functions were divided between the two, the Abouna being regarded as the chief in matters of religion proper, settling all questions of dogma and theology, whilst the High Priest controlled the Church staff and property. A further functionary known as the *Itcheque* was created in the thirteenth century, and duties were divided amongst these three up to the time of the Emperor 793

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

CHAPTER XVI

THE NATIONAL CHURCH AND RELIGION OF ABYSSINIA (*continued*)

346 BRUCE wrote that there was no country in the world
TTI *where there were so many churches*, and I have seen an estimate which I should think was well under the mark —of 3000 for Shoa, 1100 for Gojam, and 2600 for the districts of Gondar and Axum. For even small villages have two or three churches each, and it is a popular axiom that he who has erected a church has atoned for every sin. And to each of this legion of churches are attached many priests who live in remarkably simple—to put it mildly—accommodation in the precincts.

346 The buildings themselves are quite unpretentious, being small circular erections built of the stone that abounds everywhere in the country, covered with pointed thatched roofs surmounted by a cross on the points of which ostrich eggs are generally impaled. The Abyssinians show a considerable measure of reverence to their churches, outwardly at all event. I have
• [788] frequently seen men of importance stop their retinue when passing the church, dismount, and kiss the earth.

The principal modern church in Abyssinia is that of St. George, the patron saint of Abyssinia, at Addis Ababa. It is a stone-built edifice, octagonal in shape, surmounted by a large central dome; it is of no particular style of architecture, though it approximates to the Greek, and externally it is not very pleasing to

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

the eye. Its beauty was not increased by the addition 346
of a corrugated iron annexe for the purpose of seating some of the foreign guests at the Emperor's coronation.

The Abouna was good enough to arrange for us to visit the church, and we were received with ceremony by a number of priests, who were exceedingly kind and enabled us to make a thorough inspection, and even allowed us to take some photographs (which unfortunately, owing to the bad light, did not come out). They showed us everything with great enthusiasm and begged us to return "when a great feast was in progress". The building consists of three portions, a sort 346
of outer gallery, an inner court, and finally the Holy 778
Place or Holy of Holies, an inner chamber in the centre of the building in which rests the *Tabot* or representative of the Ark of the Covenant to which only the priests are allowed access.

The priests threw open the doors of the Holy Place 778
for us to see in; it contained a kind of altar where the 788
Sacraments are kept, and was surrounded by priests in very gorgeous vestments, burning incense and holding big crosses and crucifixes.

In one of the galleries a service was proceeding. 796
Two priests were beating with their hands very big 534
drums made of wood and hide; many others were shaking their curious little brass cymbals; and all were chanting, swaying their bodies, and slowly waving their praying-sticks. The time was really good, and the chant was rhythmic and tuneful, and not at all unmelodious.

The galleries were profusely decorated with huge 353
life-size paintings depicting mainly scenes from the 532
Scriptures, scenes from the life of Christ, the miracles, etc.; one dreadfully realistic picture of the Massacre

*278 222 iron, or in the "Arab" style, or the product of Falasha smiths, that it be double-edged, or have a handle of horn or some exotic wood. Similarly, recipes requiring roots may state that they be dug with a spade of specified characteristics, or with a digging stick of special wood. As for the gatherer, in some recipes, he is a vir-
[801] gin boy, in others naked or facing east. Circumstantially, recipes established the day of the week on which the herbal may be obtained, and numerological details, such as the number of locations from which a particular herbal is to be gathered, and the number of samples to be taken from
[788] each place. Finally, the gatherer may be required to recite, and perhaps repeat, a designated common prayer before cutting or digging the botanical.

+278 824 Once gathered, medicaments must be processed using the equipment and following the procedures specified by the recipe as being necessary for releasing the healing powers from their botanical confinement and for guarding them from dilution or loss. Botanicals may be required fresh or dried, crushed or ground or whole, soaked or decocted or simply mixed with other medicaments, strained through cloth or not further refined. Occasionally, recipes direct that medicaments be cooked with mead or distilled spirits, but it is the liquid (or tincture) which is discarded. In other recipes, botanicals, particularly leaves, require no processing other than being chewed or

D. Traditional Methods of Investigation of Crimes.

694 [789] Two factors are noteworthy in the traditional method of investigating crimes. One is the use of the supernatural in tracing the criminal's trail; the other is participation of the Coptic church, once the suspect is caught. While recent, modern instructions from the central government try to suppress the former, neither factor has lost much of its power over the attitudes and beliefs of nearly all rural Amhara, even townspeople.

625 691 a) The thiefcatcher, "lēbashay", recently outlawed officially, was a hereditary office, passed from father to son, thus entrusted only to Amhara (or other Abyssinian Branches). This inheritance, however, much like inheritance of f eudal fief ("gult"), had to be re-acknowledged in every generation. The heir, grown to maturity, would take his father's medicine bag, "korojo", travel to the head "lebashay" at the capital (of the province or country), and request renewal of license. This license could be withdrawn at any time, on complaints from the local headman, the ḉheqa shum, that the thiefcatcher had become corrupt, e.g. that he was in league with thieves and was so unsuccessful that he must be using fake medicine.

789 694 The magic involved in the procedure was "sympathetic magic", for the effort made was one of acting out all of the movements of the thief, from re-enactment of the crime itself, on the spot where it was committed, tracing his trail of flight, eating where he ate, and even resting in a state of sleep to indicate when and

789 694 where the thief had slept, until he was caught.

The thiefcatcher directed this procedure, but did not drug himself. For that puppose he selected a boy about the age of a deacon, i.e. 10 to 15, for it was believed that puberty spoiled the sensitivity and "unblemished innocence" of the boy. This boy was never taught the secret of his power. Often he was a young slave (more recently ex-slave), who had been selected on account of his particular suggestibility. It was be- [278] lieved that years of this repeated drugging made him a permanent addict, slowed his mental functions and even sent him occasionally into raving fits; so that a person who had served as "tracer" for the lebashay could not be a witness in court.

When complaint of a theft reached the lēbashay from within his "territory", he went to the ḉheqa shum or other local administrative official, and asked permission to begin his investigation. Together, they as well as the local "aṭbiya danya" judge and witnesses (if it was grand larceny) went to the place where the crime had been committed. The boy, young enough never to have had manly sexual intercourse with a woman, was now given the drug to drink. The lēbashay tied the boy's waist with a girdle, leaving 3 to 4 yards hanging down, (to be used later to maintain control like a chain in curbing a dog).

The boy was now given a hornful of milk to drink, in which a black powder from the medicine bag had been dissolved. It did not take long before the boy began

789 to make jerky motions, increasing in speed, acting "hot
694 on the trail", whereupon the lēbashay seized the loose end of the girdle. The boy pulled in one direction, and the group followed. When he entered a house, he re-enacted the activities of the thief in complete detail, including sleeping in his bed, until the lebashay prodded him to "awake" and continue the trail, saying 3 times "aderas" (get going, arrive). The boy jumped up, roughly pushed anyone in his way regardless of the normal respectful etiquette of behavior toward a "great man", and continued the chase. When he entered a hamlet or compound, everyone had to "sit", no one could leave. The boy would approach every individual, make magic contact with him by pushing him with the knee (regarded as the seat of manly power). If he seemed distracted, the lebashay might slap the boy, much as one would an unruly dog. In crossing brooks, the boy was carried across, since water was believed to draw away the power from the medicine, making him lose his "scent". If water did inadvertently splash on him, another boy had to be drugged to continue the trail. Lemons were also believed to affect the power of the medicine.

685 When the thief was found, and confessed, he had
696 to pay the fee of the lebashay, fixed during Emperor Menelik II restraining laws to a maximum of Eth$6.-; the thief also was to post two personal guarantors to guarantee that he would return the stolen item and appear in court. The lēbashay could decide to accept these conditions and release him, or turn him over to

685 the "danya". Interestingly enough, if the thief did
696 not have money on hand to pay the fee of the lēbashay, it was the responsibility of the victim who had originally requested his services to pay him on the spot, and try to collect later from the thief. This had the effect of eliminating complaints of petty theft from setting this costly process in motion.

694 It seems that amateur thieves were often caught
789 by this process, and usually confessed, feeling helpless when confronted with such "powerful" means of detection. Professional thieves, particularly in the towns, who were known to have evaded detection, were and are believed to have obtained a powerful magic antidote from a dabtara scribe.

694 When all methods of detection have failed, the
787 distraught victim has a last resort. He may go to the nearest "tänkwa", a practitioner of black magic, and ask him to divine by throwing his bones. This , too, is now prohibited, but still goes on, though not as openly as before. Failing even in this, the victim may go to the Coptic church and there, having purchased incense
[754] and given a gift, pronounce a solemn curse, "säbätē masdäfat", on the thief.

171 The pattern of the lēbashay has been traced by
694 some observers to ancient Greek parallels, by others to the Arab bedouin "djirra" or "kassas" thief seeker who also tracks murderers in tribal feuds. The tankwas seem of more typically African witchcraft pattern.

Often
793 most of his income is derived from writing "ketäb", amu-
[789] lets on goatskin parchment, worn by ailing persons on their neck-cord, or by women, in leather containers fastened to belt straps around the waist. The priest do forbid this amulet-writing activity, which is sometimes (not without reason) suspect not only of "white" magic, but also black magic. Let the priests ignore and overlook this, as they have done for centuries, perhaps because in this way they obtain the "dabtara's" other services free of cost.

The däbtära is often feared by the common people because of his power, both medical and supernatural. In recent years, with the suppression of the "täkway" witch-doctor, the clientele of the debtara has actually increased, for now there is no one but the dabtara to exorcise "buda" (magic hyena, werewolf) possession, to protect from the evil eye, or to curse and capture thieves. Moreover, it is respectable to go to the däbtära, who operates in the shadow of the church, who associates with holy priests and even drinks beer with them at feasts. No gossip can attach to a man seen entering the hut of the dabtara, for his errand may be decent and even sacred.

[66] Most däbtära reap full benefits from the awe in which they are held. They even transgress etiquette when it suits their purposes. If uninvited at a wedding or other festivity, they often "crash" the party, and expect to be and are given seats of honor and the choicest food and mead.

293 story. Later ones imitate European crowns.
778 In parades tall crosses of bright metal are carried, Like most Abyssinian priestly hand crosses, they are so ornamented with further cross designs that they appear to the Abyssinian as "perforated"; hence the common expression "perforated as the cross" (where a Westerner would use the symbol of the sieve). Priests and monks always carry a handcross, which they hold out to a passing acquaintance to kiss, thepproper greeting toward clergy, even on ordinary days. Smaller crosses are [789] used by the public as amulets against evil spirits. The larger crosses, with their ornamental supports, forming perforated circles and squares, sometimes contain engra- [325] ved verses. The method of casting is the"cire perdue", which is also used to cast the concave tops of the "ma- [534] qomya" crutch. In front of old churches, resonant stones are suspended from poles, and when struck, act as bells to summon for the service.

778 Other metal church utensils include the censers in which incense is burned during the services, swung by the officiating priest. They may be of brass, silver, iron, even clay in poorer churches. They are often equipped with numerous small bells. Very common is [534] the sistrum, called "sänässel" (onomatopoetic), a rattle instrument reminscent of ancient Egypt, usually of brass, 8 inches long, with a straight wooden handle, the metal frame cast in "cire perdue", often by Falasha smiths. [177] The frame is perforated like a cross. The tinkling disks, which glide along the cross-wire between the sides of the frame

796 smoky, incense-filled church, to reach home and begin the feasting on meat. Sheep are rapidly slaughtered all over the area, fires are lit, pepper stew is boiling everywhere, and the vast jars of barley beer, injära, coffee, and milk and butter are consumed. This feasting, often ruinous to the digestion, continues for some time, for the Wednesday and Friday fasts are abrogated for the next 50 days.

With regained strength, fired by good food and [526] beer, the young men begin games of javelin throwing. Ball games ("qenchebtä") continue the entire following week, when the heavy feasting still keeps work to a minimum.

The last outdoor picnic before the rains takes place occurs on the 1st day of the month of "Genbot", when the "Ledäta" (birthday) of the Virgin Mary is celebrated. The leafy outdoor shelter, "dass", is erected for this occasion. Both women and men take part, though in separate groups. At the end of the day, some women [789] "clean house" of evil spirits, to keep them away while shut in during the rainy season. This is done by casting boiled "nefro" porridge into the bush, telling the personified sickness to go after it.

[262] During the next church holydays, fish, particularly the "senro", become staples of the menu of priests and others, since rivers begin to fill with water and fish are more plentiful. There is a church festival "räbbä kahnat" (lit. inventory of the priests), a purely internal affair,

844 During parturition, the midwife usually sits on the ground in such a position that the baby will drop into her lap. The mother usually kneels. Sometimes incense is lit to lure the baby out, and to attract protective "zar" spirits. It is believed that both embryo and placenta consist of menstrual blood that has not come out and become coagulated like buttermilk; fermented with the male semen, like yeast. The placenta, "adäf" (discharged dirty part), also called "räengedä lej" (lit. host of the child), is buried out of sight. The baby is immediately fed butter, anointed with butter, and wrapped loosely in a warm toga. Meanwhile the mother is tightly bound in the long cotton [789] girdle, "lest her back hurt". In some areas, iron tools or weapons are placed close to her, to frighten off demons which fear iron.

[842] If the baby is a boy, women emerge from the huts shouting "ellel". The father, usually waiting nearby, is summoned. There is merriment and drinking and "fukkara" dancing among men in the evening.

304 852 Circumcision ("gezrat") of boys takes place a week after birth, and is of less religious significance than the baptism which follows some weeks later. It is a simple operation of removal of the foreskin, usually carried out by a "wogäsha" (native herbologist-surgeon) or other skilled man. Uncircumcised persons, e.g. Shanqalla from the lowlands, are insulted as "arotam" (sheathed); even the Italians were referred to as "wäshäla", a reference to having foreskins; less insulting is the factual ter "gurzam" (uncircumcised).

755 certain Christian words which the buda fears. Some also slaughter a sheep or fowl, eat it roasted, then burn the bones so as not to attract the buda again.

Sometimes a reluctant buda is transferred bodily to a spot on a trail outside the hamlet. There a root of a bush is twisted - the signature of the buda and expression of his greedy intent. Whoever passes unprotected is pounced on by the hungry buda.

755 789 Written amulets (ketab") are hung on the neckcord or around the waist to assure successful prognosis. The writing and sale of these amulets is one of the most common extracurricular activities of the dabtara scribe and often his most lucrative income-producing work. Hence the dabtara is feared, for he can use his power for good or ill. The amulets contain such formulae as "besem Aw, Wold, M'anfäs Qeddus" (In the name of the Father, Son, Holy Ghost); mystic names of archangels; formulae in Amharic, Geez, even Arabic of sorts. Church scholars with the title "mämhär" (professor) are believed to be able to write even more powerful amulets, for it is believed that God gave 1000 special "medicines" to Jesus on Christmas (a sort of birthday gift) and that Jesus and the angels taught these "medicines" to the mämhär. Another advantage of their amulets is that the mamher are never suspected of using their power for ill. In either case, the name of the person to be protected is written in the amulet; so that it cannot be transferred or sold without erasure and the new name.

159 754 As noted, women in the age group 15 to 30 are the most often struck. The following case was observed by the author in the town of Gondar. The patient was a 27 year old married woman, Zawditu Bogale (her first name meant "Queenie"). She was the mother of

682 754 manslaughter of an average citizen, killed e.g. in an automobile accident, or by a trigger-happy policeman, at "semanya" on its present monetary level.

755 Other types of ganyen disease are forms of epilepsy, "haut mal", referred to by the Amhara as "ganyen yazä" (lit. the ganyen has seized him; plural is "aganent". In this case, a dabtara is often called in and tries to exorcise the evil spirit with magic formulae; sometimes the woggesha doctor tries to intoxicate the patient with [278] a paste of "assärkush täbbätäbkush" (Cissus adenautha), which drug finally lets him have some rest. In contrast, the method of the täqway is literally a bag of tricks.

755 756 ●.789 In his role as magician, the täqway is called "qumMa" (from "qomä", he stood up), for he tries to identify the personality of the evil spirit from his abode; e.g. in the water of a brook, or a waterhole in the river, or under a certain tree, etc. The magician is also considered an expert on fire and lightning. When a person is struck by lightning, "mäbräq" (lit. Thunder), [761] the priests consider it heavenly punishment and in the past even refused to bury the victim in the churchyard; thus the täqway is called in. His treatment consists of moving the victim quickly to the fireplace - for he regards fire and warm ashes as the counteracting principle. If a house is on fire in town, it is still believed that the magician, standing on the roof of a neighboring house with a mirror, can prevent the spreading of the fire by causing the flames to recoil.

Cases of drowning are his specialty also. This too is considered by the church a heavenly punishment for hidden crimes, for the victim is regarded as having been surrendered to the "demons";

755 and the worst and most numerous ganyen are regarded as water spirits,
756 e.g. at the Blue Nile and everywhere also during the long rainy
789 season.
[776]

After diagnosing the identity and origin of the specific
755 ganyen, the tänqway tries to exorcise the demon by treating him
776 with contempt (exactly opposite to treatment given the "zar"). Instead of feeding the spirit a succulent "mäqwädäshä" (love gift), the ganyän - possessed person is fed a lunch of ashes. For a ganyen that is a fire-spirit, is attracted by ashes, his element, and may thus be induced to leave the body of the patient in order to feast. The tänqway follows this method even in cases of buda as indicated before.

The next step in treatment consists of "fixing" the ganyän somewhere else, so that he will not return into the body of the victim. This is done by the scapegoat technique; e.g. by fixing the demon into the body of a chicken, killing it, throwing the carcass away where the hyenas will eat it; or transferring the water-spirit to another locality.

756 Besides his role as a healer of ganyän, the major activity
[787] of the tänqway is as diviner of lost or stolen goods. It is not polite to use the term "tänqway" in his presence, instead he is politely addressed as "awaqi" (lit. knower, wise man). Since he usually makes it his business to know what goes on among professional thieves, his insight into such matters is sometimes indeed considerable; but also contributes to his bad social reputation. In "diag-
[694] nosing" the case, the tanqway acts as detective, studies the place of the crime, investigates neighbors and finally draws seashells (zagol Lebsu") and bones from his bag and throws them, to read additional information from their driection and mutual position.

795 Some dabtärs have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
556 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

● 789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually [386] made of soot, charcoal, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre- [776] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susneos, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female [567] of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay themurderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

773 On the way he found an old witch. Interrogating her, St. Susneyos
789 learned that Werzelya had gone into a garden. Finally, he found the demon sitting under a tree. He speared and mortally wounded her. Before expiring she promised never to afflict anyone who carried the inscribed name of Saint Susneyos.

The effectiveness of the amulet lies therefore in reminding the female demon of her promise to Susneyos.

789 Other common designs include angels with fiery swords (sometimes seen also incised upon wooden church doors); the cross over sun and moon; and the evil eye, sometimes oval, sometimes in profile, but often round with a red iris (symbolizing the magic drinking of blood).

A typical formula against the demon of epilepsy, "barya", reads as follows:

> "You (actually "he", polite), Barya, who steals the heart of man (i.e. renders insane),
> who darkens the eye,
> who comes as shadow by nighttime,
> I put a spell on you, and curse you by ...(name of saint or angel)."

776 There are three common categories in the cosmology of demon
753 diseases treated by amulets:
755

(1) General evil-eye disease, referred to generically as "buda" - particularly in cases of puzzling functional and mental ailments - or identified and diagnosed by the name of a demon - particularly in fevers and paralysis.

(2) The demons of epilepsy, "Barya".

(3) Gynecological ailments, ascribed to specific female demons.

Amulets are collectively referred to as "ketab" (lit. writings, in Geez).

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Table 13: The Scribe as Healer: Demons, their Individual Specialties, Exorcism.

category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Buda"	evil eye	fevers (mech mättaw); functional ailments; hysteria, catalepsy	eye with bloody-red iris; ironsmith ethnics		powerful amulet; Christian re-baptising of patient: exorcism
(1)	"Mägana"	threshhold demon in early mourning	spitting blood (tuberculosis) through "red snake in belly". Amebic dysentery.		Buda	amulet of St. Sebastian as prophylactic smoke of "wogärt" plant which snake hates, in hut. Carry dead through hole in wall (in Gojjam), so demon cannot find way back to infect others in family. Spraying with holy water.
(1)	"Dänqara Mätal"	household demon	infectious disease, highly contageous within hut. (Endangers travellers.)			amulet as prophylactic. Lure demon out of the hut through trail of chicken feathers, lemons and perfume, onto trail, where it is transferred to travellers.
(1)	"Nädara", "Aynät"	evil eye, female demon	eye diseases, esp. ophthalmia	red eyes	Buda	amulet recalling Jesus breaking the spell of this demon

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	demon's affiliation or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(1)	"Ayna Tela" (lit. Shadow Eye)	evil eye, female demon	blocks projects; blocks learning of students; causes sleepwalking; likes to attack men. Confuses protective zar spirits so they cannot help.		Zar	amulet "temherta habust". intoxicant plant "esk fars" (see Zar).
(1)	"Eqabe Seray"	evil eye, male demon	Various mischief; can turn himself into human figure	Non-Copt neighbors; Barya, ironsmith ethnics	Buda	Christian amulet.
(1)	"Dabbas"	Household demon	undefined illness and death; "aroused when thirsty"			Christian amulet.
(2)	"Barya"	dancing demons; their chief "Legewon" has red eyes and is "buda"	epilepsy, haut mal ("pesama barya"), esp. in male victims.	Barya tribe of Nilotic lowlands. Symbol: tornado	Zar, Buda	Amulet with angel of fiery sword (Christian).
(2)	"Tegrida"	restless demon	epilepsy, petit mal; causes "falling-down sickness"			Christian amulet.

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category	name of demon	demonic character	demonic disease specialty	affiliation of demon's; or symbol	syncretism (other demons)	dabtara amulet and counteracting principle
(3)	"Werzelya"	female demon	attacks women: barreness through stopped menstruation which "prevents conception", 'yEdam tefat); bleeding from uterus (menorrhagia); miscarriage.	Barya tribe negress		amulet with legend of her promise to Saint Sumeyes. It is suspended from the Christian necklace "mitib".
(3)	"Karima"	female demon	attacks women who have just given birth (puerperal fever).			amulet recalling her defeat at the hands of King Solomon.
(3)	"Shotilay"	female demon, subordinate.	causes stillbirth		Zar	exorcism
(3)	"Tegertaya", "Teggerta", "Waddegani"	female demon	attacks women after childbirth through puerperal fever or catalepsy (postnatal depression).		Zar, Buda	prophylactic amulet; quiet cooperation with Zar doctor who tries cajoling the spirit through the patient (See zar).

177 The "seal of Solomon" (actually the 6-pointed star of David) often
755 appears on Amhara amulets (e.g. against Karina). Even Hebrew-
789 appearing characters are found on amulets (a widespread custom in the Middle East.) [125] As might be expected, Hebrew traits are even more emphasized among the Falashas, who begin every amulet with: "Blessed be the God of Israel, God of all Creatures; prayer against.....".

Arabic influence has served primarily as a carrier. Directly derived from the Arabs are the 12 signs of the Zodiac, found on Abyssinian amulets. Carried was the "seal of Alexander".

Christian mythology and hagiology predominates in the cosmology of the amulets of the dabtara. Many of them begin with the formula: "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, one Divinity; prayer against.....". Deniers of Christ who are suspected as sorcerers, are often personified in these amulets as Falasha or Barya. Christian martyrs and saints, Abyssinian or "from Jerusalem", are appealed to for intercession against demons. The following are frequently encountered in amulets:

776 Abuna (bishop) Batra Maryam, Abyssinian saint, against snakebite (pro-
177 phylactic); St. George, "Qeddus Giyorgis", shown spearing a monster
755 (an old idea possibly dating to the Bel-Marduk battle among ancient Babylonians, and Ra and Horus in ancient Egypt).

St. Sebastian is often depicted in drawings, and appealed to against the Magana and other threshhold demons. To keep out disease and
[751] evil, this amulet is often placed above the entrance to a hut; but not in the doorway itself, if someone inside is already sick, for this would block the exit of the demon.

125. Reich, Sigismund: Quatre Coups Magiques. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, Vol. 7-8, pp. 159-175. Institut Francais de Damas, 1937-8.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

shortly before the Italian invasion of 1935, the first was accomplished peacefully; but not the second. According to the story told me, the *tabot* of the lower Ghiorghis had been borrowed and carried in solemn procession on the plateau in order to ward off a swarm of locusts which were damaging the crops there. This measure was successful, and the plateau people determined to keep the *tabot* which had proved itself so powerful. The people of the gorge would not agree, and tried to recapture their *tabot*. The plateau party however successfully defended it by force of arms, and later built a little church to house it. It was not unusual to attribute specific powers to *tabots*: for instance, that of Dimbaro Mariam (a little east of the north-east corner of the sheet) used to be carried to war by the emperors, attended by a retinue of priests and scribes, to bring success in battle.

The last church to be founded in these parts was the new St. Gabriel, on a prominent hill-top in the district of Dilila near the south-east corner of the sheet. I came upon it when first following the upper course of the Beressa in December 1946. As I approached the foot of the hill I learnt from passers-by that a new church had been built upon it, and that the foundress herself, a certain great lady from Addis Ababa, was at that moment on the hill. Climbing a rocky track to the top, I saw a cluster of new huts and the still unfinished building of the church. Nearby was a large canvas awning stretched rather clumsily between rough stone walls. Under the awning I found the lady herself, short and stout and genial, sitting on a camp chair; around her, squatting on the ground, was a deferential assembly of local dignitaries, personal retainers and priests. After the fluster caused by my unexpected arrival had died down, I had a talk with the worthy lady who, having just presided at a mid-day meal, now plied me with very welcome refreshment. She had been born and bred in this very place. Having spent most of her life elsewhere, and somehow acquired a certain amount of wealth, she had returned in later life to her place of birth and founded this church only the year before my visit. It met a need, she said, for the area lacked a church, and no other St. Gabriel existed anywhere in the neighbourhood. As it chanced, I had come on the day after St. Gabriel's annual festival (which is the 19th of Tahisas, or, in European style, the 28th of December). She expressed great regret that I had not been present at the festival itself, when big crowds had come from Debra Berhan and from all the surrounding country.

This incident seemed to me interesting as demonstrating the tenacity of the local religious tradition in Ethiopia. After all the upheaval and disruption of Italian occupation and the Second World War, the hold of the ancient Church over the Amhara people seemed unweakened. The Church was able to extend its influence in an area not yet well served as readily as ever. It was still an appropriate act for a pious person to found a new church in a lonely place. Perhaps these things are not surprising, for the Church has been the main support and inspiration of Ethiopian unity since the earliest Christian times. It has always been the focal centre of the national sentiment, the fount of renewed resistance to aggression, the main force, in fact, which has maintained Ethiopia's independence and made of it, as Menelik himself once said, an island of Christianity in the great Islamic sea.

many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[8]

Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

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* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

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793 The *dabtarā*'s way of life is more variable than that of the monk, his possibilities for income more diverse than those of the priest. He may be attached to a church as a chorister and receive a share of the church's revenues, as do the priests. Or he may donate his services to the church and earn his living [212] by secular employment. He may work as a scribe at the court of a king or nobleman. He may spend most of his time teaching, gaining support from some large church or monastery. Like many priests he may cultivate land. [434] In any case, he is likely to derive some income from the sale of amulets and from medical therapies. Some *dabtarā* are even said to have wandered about the country as hunters, performing magical services for clients as they go.

Dabtarā are not set off from the populace by special insignia. Some wind [892] a turban around their heads, as do many priests; but others may dress like ordinary peasants. If holding more prestigious posts they may be seen with fly-whisks or wearing a *barnos*. But they are known by the people, who fear and respect them. They are feared because of their magical powers, which [789] are believed capable of rendering bullets harmless and turning *ĭnjarā* to dust. [554] They are respected because of their learning, for they are the only educated status group in traditional Amhara society. If the commoner's relatively [195] impulsive *manner* of speaking is contrasted with the quiet reserve of the nobility, his relatively simple *language* is contrasted with that of the *dabtarā*, who is noted for a studied and circumspect use of language (*qāla-dabtarā*) and for larding his Amharic with literary (i.e., Ge'ez) expressions (*ya-dabtarā amärïññā*).

793 554 183 In the case of the religious elite, then, status is in all cases achieved. While there is a natural tendency for sons of priests and *dabtarā* to follow their fathers' example, they arrive at the status in question only by fulfilling the same norms that are applied to the sons of laymen. These norms, however, differ among the different groups within the clergy. Investiture by an authority emanating from the seat of religious charisma, the Alexandrine Patriarchate, and the related ritual requirement of marriage with Communion, were the basis of priestly status, almost irrespective of the personal attainments of the candidate. Personal attainments were *all* that mattered, on the other [792] hand, in the case of monk and *dabtarā*, but they differed radically for the two statuses.

793 792 554 The qualifications and characters of monks and *dabtarā* are almost diametrically opposed. The monastic state is entered only by means of a sacred rite; the *dabtarā* is in no way ordained, and might even be a "defrocked" priest. The monk's life is normally given to sensual renunciation; the *dabtarā* is normally an acknowledged sensualist (as appears, for example, in the proverb *ḳa-mesā ya-talaya dabtarā / yādargāl serā* ["a *dabtarā* who is kept from lunch / will work intrigues"][40] and in stories which celebrate the *dabtarā*'s use of his knowledge for private erotic ends). In the monk the virtue

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pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations 155
which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged 152
ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which [763]
occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news [764]
evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and [726]
boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive 155
fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training* 757
and Personality. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[13] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general [539]
principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy 155
water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of 755
affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of 155
prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. 751
Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute 155
magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit 789
use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human 261
problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formula- [191]
tion, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Ahmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a [173]
baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *ĭnjarā* at one sitting. A num-

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155 ber of Amhara folk tales, moreover, have as their central theme the resolution
789 of conflict or the attainment of mastery over the environment by means of
261 eating something or presenting food to someone.[14] It is a theme conspicuous
173 in the legend which celebrates the ascendance of the first of the Shoan Amhara emperors, Yekuno Amläk (1270–85). According to *The Book of the*
[539] *Riches of Kings,* Yekuno Amläk ate by chance the head of a rooster which had been set out for a king of the rival Zägwē Dynasty:

> And this youth Yakuno Amlak found the head of the cock which the woman had left by the fire-place, and he took it and ate it, and it filled his belly, and it made him an exalted person and so mighty a man that he was superior to every other man of might, and it made his face to shine like the light of the sun, and his majesty filled all the other servants of the king with awe, and all the people feared him, and they marvelled at him, and they loved him exceedingly, and they placed him in their hearts, and they recognized that the grace of God was upon him, and they said, "What is the thing which hath come upon this young man?"[15]

155 *Oral Sadism*

152 In addition to subserving a passive, receptive mode of relating to the envi-
201 ronment, preoccupation with the oral zone also figures in Amhara culture as the locus of a variety of aggressive modes of behavior and fantasy. Hostility is expressed by a number of oral gestures. Sticking out the tongue and spitting on the ground in front of somebody, for example, are two forms of non-verbal insult. Biting the lower lip is an indication of anger. Touching the tongue, and then forehead, chin, and cheeks, signifies "You just wait!" When
155 fighting, men sometimes bite one another's ears. The activation of a strong
152 biting impulse in situations of military combat is suggested by the following
726 refrain from an Amhara martial declaration, recorded over a century ago:
[539]

> Oh brothers, you are hungry and thirsty! Oh true sons of my mother,
> Are you not birds of prey? Come on! There is the enemy's flesh.
> And I, I will be the rider to butcher for you! Forward,
> And if you lack hydromel, I will give you my blood to drink.[16]

155 The theme of cannibalism appears in various forms in the Amhara imagi-
266 nation. One of the common subjects of traditional Amhara painting is the
773 story of the cannibal Balaya Sab. His name is in Ge'ez, and means "Eater
[532] of Men." The story about him derives from one of the old legends collected in *The Miracles of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*[17] Balaya Sab was a wicked man who fed on the flesh of humans. At his death he appeared before St. George, who measured his evil deeds against his good deeds on a large scale. On the side of evil deeds were placed the souls of all those he had eaten, so heavy a weight that the devil began to make ready to carry him off to hell. Then

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155 cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *çhirāq* is some-
152 times evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still an-
[716] other figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away
[789] a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

121 Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions
155 of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted
[853] earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara
121 practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new
155 baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a
862 bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

121 Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of suck-
155 ing and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian
146 children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

121 The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible
155 area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discon-
858 tinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible

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622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
• 79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

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of ascetic piety is stressed at the expense of knowledge. The monk need not 793
even know how to read, though if a lifelong monk he is likely to have de- 792
voted much time to traditional studies. The *dabtarā,* by contrast, lives by 554
his lore and his learning. At his best, the Abyssinian monk conveys a real sense of spiritual purity, of profound mystical bearing, of an utterly mild manner. The *dabtarā,* at his best, is a subtle conversationalist and an operator of wondrous effects.*

Thus, while the status of members of the old nobility was a compound resultant of simultaneously operating criteria—family and region, royal favor and accumulated power—the several criteria relevant to the status of the clergy operated more or less independently. This made the religious elite a more differentiated stratum.

This statement need be qualified only by the fact that, in addition to the considerations of ritual purity, ascetic piety, and traditional learning, a fourth factor influenced the status of the clergy, namely, royal favor as expressed in appointments to the high ecclesiastical offices. This factor crosscut the others, for such favor was dispensed to members of all three status groups. The *eçhagē* was always a monk; the *aqābē sa'āt* would seem to have been a *dabtarā;* the post of *alaqā* could be given to members of all three groups.

Just how these types of local clergy were related to the clergy at the na- 79 •
tional level in the traditional order is a question that is difficult to answer. 175
In any case, it is likely that there were conflicts among their representatives in the competition for royal favor. In the fourteenth century, the ecclesiastics of the royal entourage included only secular clergy, and their deportment was sharply criticized by Eçhagē Fileppos, who charged that "those who live in the dwelling of the Sovereign, go about proudly in subtle raiment and with ornaments of gold and silver—perishables—and are very arrogant."[40] However, once Zar'a Yā'qob had established the custom of bringing members of the convent of Dabra Libānos to the court, the monastic order was always well represented in the royal entourage as well. In the present period one sometimes hears of competition among the different groups for influence in

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* The association of impious properties with the main representative of traditional religious 779
learning may be seen as an expression of the Abyssinian's ambivalence toward knowledge as 793
such. The whole tenor of Ethiopian Orthodox religion runs counter to ratiocination and inquiry. It stresses mystery and discourages curiosity with tales like that of the man who tried to probe the mystery of the Trinity and was swallowed up by the earth—a tale commonly told to students who are learning to read. For this reason Orthodox students have frequently been quite upset by the rational theodicy taught by the Jesuit fathers at the University College.

As observed in the previous chapter, moreover, it was traditionally believed that too much learning results in madness, a belief no doubt based on the fact that older church students often drink a certain medicine to quicken their mental faculties, which sometimes deranges them (as the author has witnessed). The *dabtarā,* for their part, would seem to have thrived on this belief, benefiting from the exclusive powers and privileges gained from their esoteric knowledge.

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the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis,* a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

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*121 794 795 are left free to a large extent. Since every day of the month except the thirtieth is sanctified by dedication to some saint, Mass must be performed virtually *121 79 every day, a norm which is actually fulfilled by churches which have a numerous clergy. The burden for individual clergymen is kept small by a system of rotation. The average parish church will have services perhaps ten to fifteen times a month, which is still too often for heavy popular attendance. Even on Sundays and the most important holidays, when the laity are expected to attend, their participation is excused by other considerations. Those who have eaten earlier in the day, who have had sexual relations the night before, or who are harboring a grudge in their "stomach" are not even supposed to come to church. If they do come, they sit outside the wall chatting with one another while the Mass is performed inside.

*121 794 795 783 Customs concerning Communion and Confession likewise give the individual a wide range of freedom. Partaking of the Communion is not required of anyone; the experience simply is available to those who are ritually pure (children, and those who have married by the *querbān*), if they are so inclined. Confession is not mandatory, but according to personal inclination. Every man has the right to choose his own personal confessor or "soul-father," though if satisfied with the one of his father, he may retain him. (A woman adopts the confessor of her husband.) The soul-father's advice may be sought when a problem arises. If a man sins—breaks the fast, works on a holiday, commits theft or murder—he is supposed to confess. If he chooses to do so, the soul-father will prescribe a certain penance—fasting an extra amount, sleeping on the floor for a period, giving something to the poor or to the church. But the initiative is entirely up to the sinner and probably more often than not he keeps the offense to himself. The proportion of Amhara who keep every fast strictly, go to church a few times a month, and confess their transgressions to the soul-father is small; in the estimate of one Amhara informant, less than five per cent.

*121 794 575 Still greater permissiveness may be observed in connection with the religious fraternal associations known as the *māhebar*. The *māhebar* consists of a group of people from the same general area, usually of the same sex, who meet once a month on the day devoted to the saint for whom the association is named. The place of meeting rotates among the homes of the members, and the soul-father of the host is always present to bless the occasion. The meetings consist of much eating, drinking, and conviviality. Membership in a *māhebar* is purely voluntary, and the individual who wishes to join one usually has a choice among several in a given area.*

For the Amhara laity, then, a few burdensome ritual and fiscal constraints

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[735] * There is a variant of the *māhebar* known as the *senbatī*, whose members take turns in providing food for the clergy and poor folk on Sundays.

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destroy the crops of a village in a week. Shouting is not sufficient to scare them off when there are many. When the small baboon families held off by the boys threaten to grow into a troop, farmers use their rifles.

Hare ("ṭenchäl") is also called the "enemy of ṭiēff" because it likes to feed on that main crop of the farmer. It is a nocturnal animal, perhaps because of its natural enemies, the ever-present birds of prey.

Yellow Sparrow ("mänäkusit"), lit. "little monk", because its yellow coloring resembles the saffron toga formerly worn by monks.

[792]

Flax snake ("yätalba ebäb") is of the light-brown color of flax-seed, on which it likes to feed. It is also called "kurfafeya", because when disturbed, it makes a sound like "fuff". Its bite is considered mildly poisonous by the Amhara but requiring the services of a native "wogäsha" (surgeon), who thus acquires a reputation for his "cure" against this actually non-poisonous snake.

[825]

Locust (anbäṭa), occurs less often than the other dangers, but when it comes, in huge swarms of a 3-inch species, the results are devastating, causing major famines. (The usual route of the locust is arrival from the lowland eastern border, through the Great Rift valley (Awash), up the plateau, in January, just after the main harvest. It withdraws to the dry lowlands for egg-

793 also performs masses on specific occasions, including memorials and holy days, chants part of the liturgy, reads (but usually does not know how to translate) biblical portions from both New and Old Testament in the Geez language. Before performing the eucharist, the of-
[183] ficiating priest is expected to abstain from sexual intercourse for 1 to 3 days, for this is regarded as polluting him (an Old Testament survival). Before such occasions he takes care to sleep on the mudbench of his hut, rather than on his "alga" bed. This procedure is followed Saturday night, before a baby's babtism, before giving ritual ablution to the dying, etc. He is also expected to wash his body before giving the eucharist (but in the dry season this is often overlooked).

A learned priest, more scholarly than the parish administrator or guardian of his flock, is given the special title "mämhär" (roughly, "professor"). He is usually an expert on the hymn book "degwa", and is employed in teaching it to upper grades in church school.
[192] When he becomes a monk, he is oftenappointed to "abbatachen" (lit. our father), abbot of a monastery, where his mild disposition enables him to keep the peace among hotheaded, ambitious monks, some of whom regard monasticism as a career. If the "mamher" continues to advance his knowledge of church literature and history and legends (e.g. the life of the saints), he receives the title "liq". He is usually one of the few Amhara who really
793 198 know and understand Geez well, including the subtle shades of meaning of the many diverse grammatical forms;

874 chasing the bewitched, and which seems to have an effect similar to benzedrine.

Examinations include fluency in reading Geez and in reciting by heart Gospels, Lives of Saints, and Ethics ("sirak"), the last particularly in the upper grades. In still higher grades they learn devotional poetry ("qene"), including composition, and "zäma", church liturgical music in correct tones and notes.

874 For more advanced study, the boys interested in a career in the church have to go to monastery schools. At the old and famous Amhara monastery of Dabra Libanos the number of students may reach 500 at any given time. They earn their keep by serving the monks, begging in the vicinity, and eating as much as they can when a noble family arrives to give a memorial feast, "tazkar", in honor of a departed soul. Often the students do not possess a good shamma, and therefore have adopted the ancient clothing of sheepskins over their rags, to keep themselves warm and to be identified more easily when they go begging. Begging, they carry a small basket on the left arm and, leaning on a maqomya stick with the right, chant ecstatic church melodies until the housewives fill the baskets with enjara or parched barley ("qolo").

Those who serve the monks, carrying water, washing their clothes, carrying their food, water, etc., receive part of the monk's daily ration("dergo"). The 874 students usually graduate by age 18 to 20, and then decide whether to take monastic vows or return home to

874 sophy, "mäṣehäf" (lit. book), interpretation of Old and New Testament, and writings of Coptic Church Fathers on the subject. Also studied are the "Käbrä Nägäst" (epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty") and the "Fetha Nägäst", law code.

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e Examinations are held orally, usually on the saint's day of the institution, which thereupon becomes graduation day. The oral degrees given are termed, "qeñe", "zema", "mäṣehaf", according to the individual's specialization, much as Western colleges grant Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, etc. degrees. Receipt of the degree is regarded only as a commencement in scholarship, for a real "mämhär" requires 20 to 40 years of study, to complete all these branches of religious education, in view of the Amhara themselves.

872 Since little girls receive no formal education,
562 they cannot be taught nearly as much as boys, when, later in life, females aspire to become active nuns in nunneries. At most they are taught Geez prayer, with difficulty and by rote, and do nto go beyond what is taught little boys at the local parish schools.

792 Monks usually reside in landowning monasteries, except for former priest who have taken monastic vows and return to their parishes. Monasteries are headed by the "abbatachen" (lit. our father), whose official co-administrator is called "Säbate". In personality he is usually dominant andcommanding, unlike the mild, otherworldly abbatachen; though on occasion the same person can hold both positions. Each large monastery has a

792 council of elder monks

If a nunnery is attached to the monastery (e.g by common ownership of land), they are separated by riverbeds, steep hill, etc., and have their own pasturage meadows, and their own chapels.

262 792 465 The staple foods are beans and peas, consumed in large quantities, usually boiled as "nefro" (the staple hot dish of fasting periods), and a specially thick, nutritious bread, "dabbye". The latter is at least 1-½ feet in diameter, at least half an inch thick. It is cut into quarters, and each monk receives a specified number of quarters according to his monastic rank. Thus, older, high-level monks who need less food have much surplus with which to engage the services of church students, or even trade with peasants for occasional chickens, honey, spices, etc. The range is from a mere one-quarter for the lowliest monk to 12 quarters for the head of the monastery, plus proportional distribution of "nefro".

Barley-beer is also similarly rationed out, on permitted occasions. Cotton cloth (abujedid) and shamma or natala togas are distributed once a year, preferably in time for the masqal holyday.

792 The chanting of prayers and poetry permeates the atmosphere, from 3 A.M. when the monk supervisor of the day enters the kitchen, humming the pre-dawn chants, to long after nightfall when students still practice for exams.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

J92 Nunneries are similarly organized, headed by an abess, but the average age is much higher, since becoming a nun is far less a career than becoming a monk, and typically chosen by women who have been unhappy in marriage or have been widowed. Virgin nuns are extremely rare.

There are also laywomen who serve as volunteers and for the occasional spiritual and temporal benefits that result from association with a large nunnery-monastery, which still represents a major business organization, trading post, produce and commodities exchange, etc. "Gabbar" sharecrop tenants supply cereals, services, etc.

[292] The baking is done largely by nuns and laywomen, who also cook and brew barley beer, and milk cows. The last is particularly essential on non-fast periods when milk consumption is permitted. Monastic rules are so severe, that no female animals are permitted inside the monk's area; no cows, mares, bitches, etc. This is the literalness with which the separation of the sexes is enforced!

Finally, there is a non-functional clergy, a relatively small number of hermits. They usually live under cave-ledges, near brooks, in forest land near monasteries. The monks come daily to bring them food, leaving it at a respectful distance. These hermits, called "babetawi", are paradoxically regarded as "loving mankind", as praying for the well-being of all "orthodox"

792 believers, but as quick in anger when a human face disturbs their solitude. Legends tell of hermits who, receiving a "call", returned to the temporal world as prophets and leaders of men. But this is regarded as rare. During their lifetime the hermits are held in awe, and even after their death they are believed to haunt their earthy cave-ledges, so that passers-by talk in whispers only, and fear to come too close.

(d) Utensils of the Church.

793 The headgear of the priests, "mätämtämiya", is a
292 turban-like affair, basically a white muslin wrapped around the head or the cylindrical cap ("qob"). Monks wear the "qob" without the muslin, and, in many monasteries, used to dye their "qob" as well as their robes
[829] yellow. In recent years the yellow color is falling into disuse, and white--believed to be the color of mourning for the passing of Christ, is worn alternately with black caps and capes. Black is evidently due to acculturation. It first entered in the form of imported chintz capes for the bishops and upper clergy in the time of Menelik II, and has spread, due to the Italian occupation.

Like noblemen, middle and higher clergy wear the kaba, the heavy , woolen, sleeveless cape, and carry an especially good "chera" (flyswitch) of guresa-monkey hair. Priests wear the narrow white jodphurs at all times,

887 nobility they have moved as high in position as their inherited potential allows.

886 In appearance he usually grows a chin beard, which comes late, usually not before the age of thirty, and is greying when a man becomes a "shemagalyē" at about 40. At that time he is usually a grandfather.

As ruler at the apex of his own social pyramid, he is limited only by direct physical strength, in which no one expects him to excel. But if a former warrior, he may be vain and not admit his fading physical strength, and try to show that he can still hold up against young men in warlike games. This is the only time when an elder is occasionally mocked, as "mbärra" (lit. he struts).

888 Dependency in old age is no problem among rural kin groups living on settled land, whether their own or rented. Even in senility, the elder is respected and cared for; even when, as he himself admits, he is "good only for guarding chickens" (tertes alä" - became senile).

888 However, dependency of an old woman is a more difficult prob-
● 792 lem, though she, too, is generally cared for. But since she has no functions of leadership, her status lacks the positive, if she becomes a widow, and is too weak to perform the household labors
[45] of women. Also, woman fade physically more rapidly than men. As a result, the "mbälät" or "beltät", a greying woman past menopause, or widow of serious mind and spirit, often takes vows as a nun, wears the "qob" of a nun though continuing in her old residence, and spends much time in the churchyard, working in the "betelehem" hut where beer and bread for church use are prepared. Nuns are always old women, partly because it is not considered proper for a

888 young, "not-yet-serious" young woman, partly because there is no
792 career involved, as there is in case of young men who become monks.
Though there are usually fewer widows than widowers (due to the mortality in connection with childbirth), the lot of a widow is not a happy one. The proverb says:

[539] "Now that my fortune (husband) has died,
what will my mother-in-law give me?"

888 Without the kin group, an aging man, especially if sick, blind
735 or crippled, has little protection. The church is not eager to have
[792] him as a monk, for it can recruit younger men for its service, as a career, and an old man is much less useful in the churchyard than an old woman. He may, especially if landless, or in town, be reduced to beggary. There he sits at the approaches to the churches, repeating his demanding, ceaseless litany: "Selä Medhane Aläm, selä Maryam, selä Giworgis" (For sake of the Savior, of Mary, of St. George), stretching out an open hand. Sometimes he may send out a child to beg for him, either because he is too bashful, or is using it as a technique. Little boys will thus attach themselves to a potential donor, repeating "babba, babba" (babytalk for "daddy").
[608] They have already learned the concept of artificial kinship to establish human relationships.

6. The End of Life: Eulogy; Memorial Services and Feasts.

763 When an elder is close to death, other elders from among his nearest kin come with his confessor, and say to him: "Confess yourself". When he has done so, they ask him for his last will: "What do you give to your children, and for your soul (i.e. to the church, through the confessor, to the poor)". While fields and cattle are given to the descendants, (the former only in patrilineal descent), personal belongings such as cowhide mats, shamma

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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They say the prayers by heart and
without light, except in the lamps or chandeliers, for they 796 782
have not got lamps. They burn butter in these chandeliers, [373]
for they have not got oil. They pray or chaunt very loud, [354]
without art of singing, and they do not recite (alternate) [237]
verses, but all sing straight on. Their prayers are psalms, and
on feast days besides psalms they recite prose, according as [533]
the feast is so is the prose. They always stand in the
churches; at matins they only say one single lesson: this
is said by a priest or a friar, rather shouted than intoned,
and he reads this lesson before the principal entrance.
When this lesson is finished, on Saturdays, Sundays, and 792
feast days, they make a procession with four or five crosses 796
on their poles, and a cross not so much raised as carried
like a stick in the left hand, because they carry a thurible
in the right hand, since as many as carry a cross carry a
thurible, there are always as many thuribles as crosses.
They wear some silk cloaks, not well made, because they [292]
are not wider than the width of a piece of damask, or other
silk from top to bottom. Before the breast, a cross piece to
the flanks on each side, of any other stuff and of any colour,
even though it should not match the principal part, and of
this principal part a good ell hangs behind dragging on the
ground. They make this procession through the circuit,
which is like a cloister. This being ended, on the said
Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts, he who has to say mass
enters with two others into the chancel; they bring out an [778]
effigy of Our Lady, which they have in ancient pictures in all
churches and monasteries. He who has to say mass places
himself in the centre of the transept with his face towards
the principal entrance, and the image in his hands held
before his breast: and those who stand by his sides hold
lighted candles in their hands, and all the others commence
a chaunt like prose, and all walk, shouting and leaping as if
dancing[1] they hold hands and go round, before the

[1] *Como em chacota*, dancing and singing, *i.e.*, not reverentially.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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those who are at the other curtain, and thence to the 796
secular people who are at the principal door, both men and 782
women, if it is a church to which women come. At the giving of the communion, and likewise at all the offices of the church, all are standing up. When they come to receive the communion, all come with their hands raised before their shoulders, and the palms forward. As soon as each one receives the sacrament of the blood he takes the said water as has been said, and so generally as many as are communicants. Before mass they wash their hands with the water which is in all the churches and monasteries. The priest who said the mass, and those who stood with him at the altar, when the communion is ended, return to the altar, and wash the vase in which the sacrament was, with the water which remains in the ewer, which they say is blessed, this water they pour into the chalice, and the priest who said mass takes it all. This done, one of these ministers of the altar takes a cross and a bell, and beginning a low chaunt goes to the principal entrance, where the epistle and gospel were read, and the administering the communion ended, and as many as are in the church, and outside of it, bow their heads, and go away in peace. They say this is the blessing, without this no one goes away. On Saturdays and Sundays, and feast days, in all the churches and monasteries, blessed bread is distributed. The method which they have in this small monastery, which will not [192] have more than 20 or 25 friars, is that which is followed in all the monasteries and churches, great and small. The office of the mass, exclusive of the processions, is short; and the mass on week days is quickly finished.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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346 is painted, it is not certain whether it is stone or wood. It has two sets of cloisters round the body of the church, both
346 covered in, and much painted with figures of apostles,
532 patriarchs, prophets, and many things of the Old Law, and
353 many angels, and St. George on horseback, who is in all the churches. This monastery also possesses a great cloth, like a piece of tapestry, on which is the crucifix and effigy of Our Lady and the apostles, and other figures of patriarchs and prophets, and each one has his Latin name written, so that no man of the country made it. It has many small and ancient pictures, not well made, and they are not upon the altars, for it is not their custom: they keep them in a
[212] sacristy, mixed up with many books, and they bring them out on feast days. There is in this monastery a very large kitchen and bakehouse, also a very large refectory, in which
792 they eat. They mostly eat three and three[1] in a large dish,
262 it is not deep, but flat like a tray, and their food is very
[264] poor. The bread is of maize and barley, and other grain which they call *taffo*,[2] a small black grain. They make this bread round, and of the size and roundness of a citron,[3] and they give three of these to each friar: to the novices they give three loaves to two of them, it is a matter of amazement how they can maintain themselves. They also give them a few vegetables, without salt or oil. Of this food they send to a great many old pensioners, who do not come to the refectory. Besides seeing these things when we
792 buried Matthens, I saw them many times, because I came there to pass time with the friars, principally on feast days, when we were near there. In this way I learned about them and their property, and revenues and customs. In my opinion there were generally always a hundred friars in this

[1] By threes.

[2] Mansfield Parkins calls it teff, the species of corn most esteemed in this country.

[3] Zamboa, not referred to in Selves' translation.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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monastery, most of them old men of great age, and as dry 792
as wood; very few young men. This monastery is entirely
surrounded by a wall, and this wall is closed with two [346]
gates, which are always locked.

CAP. XIV.—*How the monastery of Bisan is the head of six monasteries, of the number of the brothers, and ornaments, of the "castar"*[1] *which they do to Philip, whom they call a Saint.*

This monastery is the head of six monasteries, which are 792
around it in these mountains; the furthest off is at a 793
distance of three leagues from it, and all are subject to it, and are governed and ruled by it. In each of them is a David, that is a guardian appointed by the Abbot or provincial of this monastery, who is also David under the Abba. I always heard say that there were in this monastery 792
three thousand friars, and because I doubted it much I came here to keep the feast of our Lady of August, in order to see if they would come together. Certainly I rejoiced to see the riches of this monastery, and the procession which they made: in my judgment the friars did not exceed three hundred, and most of them were very old. There is a circuit to this monastery which surrounds the two
which are like cloisters covered in, and this one which is not [346]
covered in was on that occasion all covered in with brocades and inferior brocades, and velvets of Mekkah, all long pieces, sewn one to another in order that they might shelter the whole circuit. They made a very beautiful procession through this canopied circuit; all wore cloaks of
the same stuffs, brocades, and velvets of Mekkah, badly [292]
made as I mentioned above. They carried fifty small crosses of silver, of bad workmanship, and as many

[1] Should be *teskar*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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●792 thuribles of copper. When mass was said, I saw a great gold chalice and gold spoon, with which they administered the communion. Of the three hundred friars who came to this monastery, very few were those that I knew as belonging to it: and I asked some of my friends how it was, that with so large a number of friars in the monastery as they said, they were not present at such a feast. They told me that even though there were more than they had said, that they were scattered about in these monasteries and churches, and markets, to seek for their living, because that could not be in the monastery whilst they were young men; and when they were old men, and could not walk, they came to die in the monastery. On that day I saw the habit put on seventeen young men. There is a tomb in this
778 monastery which they say is of an Abba or provincial of
776 this monastery who is named Philip, and they give him the merits of a Saint, saying that there was a King Prester John who commanded that Saturday should not be observed in his kingdoms and lordships, and this Abba Philip went to that King Prester with his friars, and undertook to show how God had commanded that Saturday should be kept, and that whoever did not keep it should die by stoning, and that he would maintain this before all the fathers of Ethiopia: and he made it good before the King. Therefore
796 they say that he was a Saint for making Saturday to be
782 kept, and they treat him as a Saint, and they hold a feast for him every year, in the month of July, which they call *Castar* Philip, which means funeral or memorial of Philip.[1] On this account the people of this monastery are the most Judaizing of all the kingdoms of Prester John. I came twice to this Castar of Philip, at which they did me much honour, and they kill many cows at this feast. In one year they killed thirty, and in another year twenty-eight, and in

[1] *Castar* should be *Teskar*; Mansfield Parkyns calls it a sort of funereal feast, where charities are bestowed on the poor and the priests.

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each of the years that I came there they gave me two 796
quarters of the fattest cow that was killed. This flesh is 782
distributed amongst the people who come to the Castar, and
the friars have none because they do not eat meat. And [184]
these cows are all brought as offerings by their breeders in
the district, who vow them to Philip. This monastery, and
the others that are subject to it, have this rule in addition,
that no females enter them, that is to say, neither women,
nor she-mules, nor cows, nor hens, nor anything else that is
female. And these cows which they kill are killed a long
way from the wall, and when I came there they came to the
distance of a cross-bow shot to take my mule, and they
took her away to their farm of Jamgargara, where Mattheus
died.

CAP. XV.—*Of the agriculture of this country, and how they preserve themselves from the wild beasts, and of the revenues of the monastery.*

The friars of this monastery, and of the other monasteries 241
subject to it, might do good works by planting trees and [192]
vines, and making gardens and orchards for their exercise;
and they do nothing. The country is ready to produce
everything, as is seen from that which is uncultivated: they
do not plant or grow anything except millet and bee-hives. [231]
When it is night, neither they nor anybody else go out from
their houses from fear of the wild beasts that are in the
country, and those who watch the millet have very high
resting places upon the trees, in which they sleep at night.
In the district of this monastery there are, in the valleys 231
between the mountains, very large herds of cows, kept by 563
Arab Moors, and there go with each herd forty or fifty
Moors, with their wives and children: and their headman is

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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231 a Christian, because the cows that they keep belong to
563 Christian gentlemen of the country of the Barnagais. These Moors have nothing else for their labour than the milk and butter which they get from the cows, and with this they maintain themselves and their wives and children. On some occasions it happened to us to sleep near these Arabs, they accosted us to ask if we wished to buy cows, and for the price allowed us to choose them. They say that these
[484] Moors, and headmen who go with them, are all robbers under the favour of the lords to whom the cows belong, and so only large caravans travel. The revenues of this
792 monastery are very large; those which I saw and heard of
631 are, chiefly, this mountain in which the monastery is situated,
361 of an extent of ten leagues, in which they sow much millet,
[243] barley, rye, and all these pay dues to the monastery, and they are also paid on the herds. On the skirts of this mountain there are many large villages, and most of them belong to the monastery, and at a distance of one or two days' journey an infinite number of places belonging to the monastery, and are called *Gultus* of the monastery, which means *coutos* or *celeiros*,[1] according to our Portugal. Don Rodrigro the ambassador and I were going on the road to the Court, a good five days' journey from this monastery, and arriving at a town which is named *Caina* we kept Saturday and Sunday in a small village which might contain twenty people, and they told us they belonged to the monastery of Bisan. Besides that town there were a hundred villages all belonging to the monastery, and that in which we halted was one of them. We were also shown
651 many of the others, and they told us that every three years
631 they paid a horse to the monastery, and that each village
792 did this, which makes thirty-three horses every year. And in order to be certain of this I went to ask it of the *Alicazi* of the monastery, which means the auditor or major-domo,

[1] *Couto*, an asylum, an enclosure; *celeiro*, a granary.

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because he receives, and does justice: he told me that it was true that they paid the said horses. I asked why the monastery wanted so many horses, since they did not ride on them. He told me that they were obliged to pay horses, but that they did not give him horses, but paid fifty cows for each horse, and that this due of horses was so because these were villages of the King which paid him this due, and as he had endowed the monastery with these villages, between the monastery and the villagers this due of horses had been transmuted into cows. And over and above these dues of cows they also pay dues on fruits. Besides, at fifteen days' journey from the monastery, in the kingdom of Tigre mahom, there is a very large town belonging to the monastery named Aadete, which may be a large dukedom. This pays every year sixty horses, and an infinite number of dues and customs. In this district there are always more than a thousand friars of the monastery, because there are many churches in it, and the monastery is much favoured there. Of these friars some are very good, honourable, and devout, and others are not such. Besides these dues of horses paid to this monastery and to others, there are many villages belonging to the King which pay dues of the said horses, because this is always his due, and there are villages neighbouring to Egypt in which are large and good horses, and others near Arabia in which they are very good, but not so much so as those of Egypt.

CAP. XVI.—*How the friars impeded our departure, and of what happened to us on the road.*

Returning therefore to our journey; whilst we were still at the monastery of St. Michael there arrived the man sent by the Barnagais to take us away, and with him two of our Portuguese, on the fourth day of the month of June; and he

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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346 other women do in the church of the apostles, who take it
562 in its place. I always saw the women of the Barnagais go
[644] to the women's church to take the communion with the other women, and I did not see them use the privilege which they say they have, of taking the communion, with one damsel, in the church of the men. The circuits of the churchyards join to one another; they are of very high
796 walls. They make the sacramental bread for both churches in one building, and they say the masses in both churches at the same time, and the priests who serve in one church serve also in the other; that is two thirds of the priests in the men's church, and one third in the women's church, and so they are distributed. These churches have not got tithes, but they have got much land belonging to the priests, and they put it out to profit and divide the revenues of the lands among themselves: the Barnagais gives what is necessary to the churches, such as ornaments, wax, butter, incense in sufficient quantity, and he supplies them with
[792] everything. There may be in these churches twenty priests and always twenty-two friars. I never saw a church of priests which had not got friars, nor a monastery of friars which had got priests; because the friars are so numerous that they cover the world, both in the monasteries as also in the churches, roads, and markets: they are in every place.

CAP. XXVI.—*How the priests are, and how they are ordained, and of the reverence which they pay to the churches and*
793 *their churchyards.*

684 The priests are married to one wife, and they observe the
587 law of matrimony better than the laity: they live in their houses with their wives and children. If their wife should die they do not marry again; neither can the wife, but she

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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443 places which are chief towns of districts, every week. The fairs consist of bartering one thing for another, as for instance, an ass for a cow, and that which is of least value gives to the other two or three measures of bread. By means of bread they buy stuffs, and with stuffs they buy mules and cows, and whatever they want, for salt, incense, pepper, myrrh, camphor, and other small articles.[1] They buy fowls and capons, and whatever they need or want to buy is all to be found at these fairs in exchange for others, 792 for there is no current money. The principal merchants 292 at these fairs are priests, friars, and nuns. The friars are decent in their habits, which are full, and reaching to the ground. Some wear yellow habits of coarse cotton stuff, others habits of tanned goat skins like wide breeches,[2] also yellow. The nuns also wear the same habits; the friars wear, besides, capes of the fashion of Dominican friars, of the same yellow skins or stuffs, they wear hats; and the nuns wear neither capes nor hats, but [302] only the habit, and are shaven with a razor; and they wear a leather strap wound or fastened round the head. When they are old women they wear fillets[3] round their heads over their tonsures. These nuns are not cloistered, nor do they live together in convents, but in villages, and in the monasteries of the friars, on account of belonging to those houses and order. The order is all one, and the nuns give obedience where they receive their habits. With regard to entering churches and monasteries, the nuns do not enter except as other women do. There is a great multitude of nuns, as well as of friars; they say that some of them are 793 very holy women, and others are not so. The priests show very 302 little difference from the laity in their dress, because all [292] wear a good cloth wrapped round, like smart men, and their difference is that they carry a cross in their hand, and are shaven, and the laity wear long hair. The priests also have

[1] *Bechugarias.* [2] *Zafoens* or *Safoens.* [3] *Tufas.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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136 is no fish there except very little from the rivers; There from the sea none.

795 There are no monasteries except of St. Anthony, and
792 not of any other order, as some friars say who come from there.

291 The gentlemen, monks, canons, and priests are clothed; most of the other people are bare from the waist upwards, and a sheepskin on the shoulders, with the front and hind feet tied together.

792 Most of the monasteries are situated on high mountains,
346 or in great ravines; they have large revenues and juris-
[262] diction. In many monasteries they do not eat meat all the year, and fish very few times, as they have not go it in the country. The services of these monasteries are psalms and prose, and so it is done in the churches of the canons.

796 Every church has two curtains, one on this side of the altar with little bells, and no one but priests enter inside this curtain; and another curtain in the middle of the church. And no one but persons in orders enter the church, and many gentlemen and honourable persons are ordained in order to enter the church. They go to the door of all the churches and monasteries to read the epistles and gospels, and they say them rapidly, and there they give the communion to the people.

The priests consecrate at the altar, and do not show the sacrament. When the priest who says mass comes to take the communion, he takes a particle from the top, and the other two large parts he leaves for the communion of the people. All the people who come to the church have to receive the communion every day, or else not come to church. When the communion is ended, they give them a little blessed water with which they wash their mouths.

Nobody sits down in the church, nor do they enter it shod; they do not hem or spit, nor do they let any dog or other animal come into the church. They confess standing,

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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784 He says that during all Passion week they are dressed in black or blue, and do not speak to one another for grief, saying that Judas by a kiss of peace betrayed his Lord.

532 Although there are in the churches effigies painted on all
784 the walls, and also crosses, nevertheless on no cross is a crucifix painted, neither have they any of solid carving; because they say they are not deserving to see Christ crucified.

792 All the priests, friars, and gentlemen carry crosses in their
778 hands, both on foot and on horseback; and the laymen of the people and lower people carry crosses round their necks. Every priest and friar carries a little horn of copper with holy water, and the hosts where they arrive beg of them water and a blessing, and they give it. Before they eat they throw drops of water on the food, and also in the drinking vases.

411 Their arms are assagays, few swords, a few shirts of mail, long and narrow; our Portuguese say that they are not of good mail.

There are many bows and arrows, they have no feathers like ours; there are very few helmets and casques. Those that there are have come since they have had intercourse with the Portuguese. There are plenty of strong bucklers;
713 there are no cannon, except two swivel guns which we brought them. At our departure there were fourteen muskets at Court, which they bought from the Turks who come there to trade. The Prester ordered whatever they asked to be given for them, and ordered men to be taught to shoot.

534 There are trumpets, but not good ones; there are many drums of copper which come from Cairo, and others of wood which have leather on both sides; there are tambourines like ours, and large cymbals which they sound. There are flutes and some instruments with chords, square like harps, which they call David moçanquo, which means the harp of David. They play these to the Prester, and not well.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

317 one ounce to ten of gold, which gives it a very pale colour.

703 N. B. This observation is sufficiently confirmed by the colour of those links that still remain of the honorary gold chain conferred on Mr Bruce by the king of Abyssinia. These links are of a paler hue than a common guinea, rather coarsely made, and unpolished. Gold chains, called in Habbesh sunsulé, are a mark of dignity bestowed by the sovereign on the most meritorious persons in his army. It is usual to give a splendid suit of clothes at the same time, an Egyptian and Persian custom; vide Genesis, xli. 42. and Esther, viii. 15.

651 Wechne, in Belessen, is about 34 or 35 miles, a long day's journey from Emfras. There is paid, to maintain the royal family on the mountain, 250 ounces gold, and 730 cloths (this means webs of cotton cloth, called shuma). This is an old establishment. None are permitted to go up but the women carrying water. There was formerly a cistern, but it is now in ruins, and useless. There are near 300 persons there; and all the exiles are allowed to marry. Bacuffa escaped by help of his sister.

793 Extreme unction is unknown in Abyssinia; that is, the anointing with oil. However, when a person is attacked
●792 with sickness, which threatens death, he often puts on a monk's hood, as a token that in case of recovery, he will abandon the world, and then receives the last sacrament, or rather he does so before putting it on; and it is generally the custom to distribute all his moveables to the churches, which the priests appropriate. These are traces of extreme unction. The great men ofen renounce the hood, and return to their former life.

792 N. B. The Abyssinian MS. histories are full of these instances, in which the great men, when disappointed in politics, retire to Waldubba, or other deserts, to live as monks. The distribution of goods and money made by the kings, when sick, to the churches, occurs in almost every reign. Before Yasous II. died, the Chronicle says, that he had given away every thing he had, in this way, except the crown on his head. When Joas was proclaimed, the Iteghe his grandmother wished to give a present to the poor, as usual at the begin-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

ning of a reign; which she could not do, until one of the nobles supplied her with a sum of money. There were only a few derims left in the treasury. 792

Abyssinian Harvests. They first sow barley from the end of April to the beginning of May, or later; that is, towards the first rains. This ripens in the rains in June; and is carried off the fields into the house, that it may not rot. Then they sow fitches, which likewise ripen in the rains after. In September they sow wheat, or teff, which is cut down in December; and, if they have water, they sow barley, or fitches, again in January. In Woggora (a very fertile province), there is seed-time, and harvest, and plowing, in every month in the year; water being easily diverted to the grounds. The rent paid to the king for the ground is one-tenth of what they reap, yet, with all this, they are all poor; for a harvest, at a medium, is about twenty after one; and they sometimes, nay, very often, scarce reap the seed. They never manure the ground; and there are great quantities of rats, and innumerable ants, that consume their corn at different, nay, at all periods of its growth. All their five harvests do not, in produce, equal one Egyptian one; and they are at five times the labour. In the several villages, living, in general, is very miserable; and, in general, people of consideration scarcely know any other diet than teff bread and bouza. [511] [262] Whether this teff is black, or white, is the whole difference between the diet of master and servant. 241

Abyssinian Dress. The principal part of the dress of the natives is a large cotton cloth, 24 peek (cubits) in length, and one and a half in breadth, with a blue and yellow stripe round the bottom of it. This blue is not dyed; but the Surat blue cloths are unravelled and woven for this purpose; and the yellow they dye with sûf, the yellow thistle. The best for ordinary wear costs 10 salts, or 1¼ pataka, about 6s. 6d. [435] English. It is called Kuara, as probably coming from that province. They are very beautiful and light. The other pieces of dress are breeches, which reach to their mid-thighs; and girt with a white girdle of cloth to the common people; but the better sort have red Indian cotton cloths for breeches; and silk, or worsted coloured girdles from the Levant. When they ride, they only hold their stirrups between their great and 291 492

[p. 45]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

793 Menelik, who made the Abouna supreme head of all matters; the *Itcheque* second with residence at the great national monastery of Debra Libanos; and the High Priest third in the hierarchy.

794 The wealth and influence of the Church are enormous, a state of affairs due to the prescience of Tekla
793 Haimanot, to whom reference has already been made.
792 This remarkable man is supposed to have negotiated the restoration of the Solomonean line after three hundred years of deposition, and his modest price seems to have been a perpetual grant to the Church of one-third of the country. As a result the extent of the Church lands is tremendous: not only do monasteries, convents, and churches cover the country but great areas belong to them, and the revenues accruing therefrom are utilized to maintain an almost unbelievable number of monks, priests, and *debtera*. The numbers of these people were given to me by Abyssinians as over a million—this is of course absurd—but I was assured on good authority that over a quarter of the male population are included in these categories of parasites. And parasites they are, for they serve no useful purpose and exist on the taxes raised from the people working on the land: they do no work themselves and are even exempted from military service. They are on the whole ignorant and illiterate, for while some of them can read, very few indeed can write.

793 Monks are not supposed to marry: priests are
792 allowed to marry once, and in fact do so: *debtera* are free as laymen; but I do not think that the lives of many of them could profitably be held up as examples for the people to follow.

793 No examination and little or no preparation seem

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Perhaps this sort of disposition was not unrelated to the part Manz played in sparking the restoration of Amhara rule in Shoa, thereby preparing the way for the dramatic resurgence and expansion of the Ethiopian state at the end of the nineteenth century. 181 175*

The Gondarē Ethos

The unique character of Gondar derives first of all from the fact that it was a city. During the whole period of Ethiopian history reviewed in this chapter, the Gondar period was the only time in which the emperors resided in a fixed capital, and Gondar was the only permanent population center that grew beyond the contours of a large village. As in ancient Egypt before the rise of Thebes, the concept of the city had played scarcely any role in the political thinking of the Amhara, and so anomalous was the rise of Gondar that Ludolphus, writing in the fifth decade after the founding of Gondar, could not believe stories that Gondar was a large city and predicted that "perhaps in a few years there will be nothing to be seen of it."[66] 175* 633 [643]

Like many oriental cities, Gondar consisted more of a collection of small homogeneous societies than of a diffused heterogeneous urban population. The city was divided into several quarters, each of which lived its own life. The imperial compound was of course foremost of these. It contained the great complex of buildings erected during more than a hundred years, from Fāsil to Iyāsu II, and was the seat of affairs of state. The compound was separated from the rest of the city by a stone wall, whose twelve well-guarded gates each served a special function or class of people.[68] 175* 633 361 [333]

The nobility resided in a quarter known as Gaing Bēt. Here the dwellings were spaced at comfortable distances, and nearly every house was surrounded by a garden. Abyssinians of lower rank lived in the more densely populated sections of Faras Bēt and Denkākē. [565] [351]

The Christian hierarchy had its own quarters. The *abuna*, an Egyptian monk appointed by the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria as spiritual head of the Ethiopian Church, lived with his retinue in one sector.[69] Another area, Eçhagē Bēt, was reserved for the Amhara monk who served as administrative head of the Church. Each church compound, moreover, was the focus of another residential section, where its clergy kept their modest huts. The Eçhage Bēt and the church compounds were considered sanctuaries and thus, in theory at least, were secure from plunderers. The Gondarēs and wealthy people from the country used these areas as a safety vault for their valuables. [192] [178]

The ethnic groups which settled in Gondar had their respective ghettos. The Muslims lived in the lower part of the city adjacent to the river Qīha, which was convenient for their ritual ablutions. They were looked down on by the Christians, and meat slaughtered by one group would not be touched by the other. Poncet observed that when an Abyssinian met a Muslim in the 175* 633 361 563 [186] [576]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

It was at this time that the *maḳwānnent* came into their own. More unabashedly than ever they constituted, not a hereditary aristocracy in corporate opposition to the king, but a plurality of proud centers of rank—partly inherited, partly achieved—enjoying virtual autonomy. To move toward a modern nation it would be necessary to brake their centrifugal force. 175 565 642

The Clergy

Like the nobility, the clergy may be divided into those who are significant at the national level and those who are primarily local dignitaries. The former reside close to the imperial court, while the latter are thickly distributed around monasteries, churches, and wildernesses all over the country. 793 792

The highest ecclesiastical authority in Abyssinia was the *abuna* who, from the time of Frumentius in the fourth century until the death of Abuna Qerlos in 1949, was with few exceptions an appointee of the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria. Chosen from the Egyptian monks of the convent of St. Anthony near the Red Sea, the *abuna* was brought, at great expense to the emperors, to live out his life in an alien land. Ignorant of the language and customs of the country, he played little part in the conduct of church affairs or in affairs of court; and when he did try to do so, his efforts were usually abruptly checked by jealous clerics and suspicious kings. His functions were purely ritual, but indispensable: he alone had authority to anoint and crown the emperor, to confer orders, and to absolve vows. From numerous revenues, rents, and fees, the *abuna* enjoyed a considerable income. Like the emperor, he was regarded as sacred because of the charisma of his office, and spent most of his time secluded from the public.[80]

Second in rank was the *eçhagē*, an appointment made by the emperor. This was the traditional title of the abbot of the convent of Dubra Libānos in Shoa, which in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gained hegemony over Abyssinian monasticism. The *eçhagē* served as administrative head of the church and had jurisdiction over all monks and monasteries. The most esteemed of the Ethiopian clergy, he tended to wield more actual power than the *abuna*. His provincial deputies, called *liqa ḳāhenāt*, controlled the secular clergy. This office was also bestowed by the emperor, and its functions included presenting candidates for ordination and deciding questions of protocol in connection with religious ceremonies.

In addition to these supreme dignitaries of the church, a small number of churchmen enjoyed pre-eminent status by virtue of their activities at the imperial court. These included the *aqābē sāʿāt* ("guardian of the [canonical] hours"), the chief ecclesiastic at court, and during part of the reign of Zarʾa Yāʿqob the only official with unrestricted access to the king; the *qēs ḥāṭsē* ("king's chaplain"); the *liqa dabtarā* ("chief of the *dabtarā*"); and *liqa mammerān* ("chief of the learned men"). These four served as the four su- 793 644 [693]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 preme judges at the royal court, and the *aqābē sa'āt* ranked third—in some
644 lists, first—in the official order of precedence of all court dignitaries.[40]
[693] One other church dignitary, finally, was the *nebra ed*, chief of the sacred district of Aksum, who always enjoyed a high position at the royal court. When appointed by the emperor (instead of by the provincial governor who sometimes possessed that authority), the *nebra ed* enjoyed the rare privilege of being permitted to sit while speaking in the event of his involvement in litigation.

793 The status of the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries was based on approxi-
554 mately the same factors as those which determined the status of secular nobility: royal favor; family background, in the case of those whose fathers were important nobles or noted churchmen; and the possession of wealth, political power, and imposing titles.[41] The same was true of their regional counterparts, the *alaqā*, "chiefs" of large churches and monasteries, whose wealth, power, and leisurely mode of life gave them, in Plowden's opinion, "perhaps the most enviable position in Abyssinia."[42]

793 The status of the clergy as a whole, however, rested on three other prin-
792 ciples which are not affected by royal favor, birth, or worldly possessions.
554 These were: contact with the most sacred symbols of religious authority; ascetic piety; and religious learning. Broadly speaking, in Abyssinia these three principles have been embodied primarily in three distinct roles, namely, those of priest, monk, and *dabtārā*.

793 A normal preparation for these roles—necessarily so, in the case of the
794 priesthood—is service as a deacon. Ability to read is, now as before, a requisite qualification for the diaconate, but that requirement has in the past often been overlooked. More important has been the requirement of ordination by the *abuna*. Ordination formerly took place in the company of hundreds of other aspirants and, when there was uncertainty about the future availability of an *abuna*, even babes in arms were admitted.[43]

794 The traditional garb of the deacon is a yellowish cape made of sheepskins,
792 though on holidays the officiating deacons may be dressed in richly colored silk robes like the priests. The duties of the deacon—and they are accounted great and secret privileges—are to prepare the sacramental bread, fetch the holy water, and assist at the Mass (the performance of which normally requires two priests and three deacons).

793 On reaching puberty a deacon is no longer supposed to serve in the church,
794 for fear that he will become "impure." At that time he may decide to prepare for the priesthood. For this two qualifications must be met. He must have completed his study of reading and, ideally, of *zēmā*, the chants that are intoned in the liturgy of the Mass. These matters he may learn from the older clergy during his service as a deacon, or from his father, who, in many cases, is a priest himself. Otherwise, he goes off in search of a master. He

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 and misreading sacred texts in a language they have never understood. They
[293] are notorious drinkers, so much so that a modern Ethiopian novelist has one of his characters, a priest, ask: "If one stops drinking, what else is left in this world?"[44]

Nevertheless, the prestige of the priests was unassailable in Amhara culture. Whatever their personal life, they represented the value of ritual sanctity, which made it possible for the Mass to be performed in the local churches. So long as they had been duly ordained and did not break their lawful marriage bond, they were part of a sacred class. Combes and Tamisier remarked upon this in the 1830's:

> Despite all their vices, these priests manage to make themselves respected; when they pass along the roads, the faithful bow deeply to them, and in no matter what gathering they appear, everyone rises and hurries to kiss their hands.[45]

793 Privileged contact with the sacred symbols of the church—ordination by the
798 sacrosanct *abuna*, exclusive access to the *tābot*, and officiation at the Eucharist —gave the priests an authority that was independent both of political dispensation and of personal accomplishment.

793 Other groups within the clergy have been highly esteemed for quite differ-
792 ent reasons. Those who become monks carry great weight because they embody the virtue of ascetic piety. The *dabtarā*, on the other hand, are respected for their erudition.

792 Monks usually come from two kinds of background: unwed deacons desiring to spend their lives as monks, and priests whose wives have died. But previous ecclesiastical connection is not necessary for the monastic calling, nor is the ability to read required. The essential qualification is the willingness to renounce the world. The word for becoming a monk (*manakwasa*) means to renounce earthly things. A prospective monk may be of the sort described by one of Walker's informants:

> An old man who has married many wives and divorced them one by one, may say, "Henceforth it suffices me! Let the world remain lost to me! I am to turn my face to God!"[46]

In earlier times the monastic life was sought by men from all walks of life, including lords, soldiers, even emperors, in consequence of some grievous affliction, or perhaps a vow made in time of trouble, or excessive *Weltschmerz*.

Heads of monasteries have the jurisdiction to confer the monastic status. One who desires this status bequeathes his worldly possessions and goes
[292] through a ceremony in the church in which his body is declared dead. The symbol of the monastic state is a little cloth skullcap (*askēma*). Once he has become a monk, an Ethiopian is a legal nonentity. This frees him from all

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tax obligations and any debts he may have incurred, for which advantage many have become monks for other than spiritual motives.[67] 792

No specific duties or obligations are required of a monk. Abyssinian monks have spent their years in a variety of ways. One extreme is anchoritism. Many have become hermits, feeding only on roots and herbs, and have sought even greater self-mortification by such practices as standing for long periods in icy water or wearing iron girdles lined with points. Others have lived somewhat closer to human society, wandering about the country as mendicants or making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Others have attached themselves, for shorter or longer periods, to monasteries, spending long periods in prayer and fasting and doing some humble work like collecting wood or, if formerly a priest, assisting at the Mass with the other priests. A few have proselytized in non-Christian areas. Some monks, on the other hand, have left the world only to rejoin it at a higher level. These become advisers to grandees or themselves serve as governors of districts. 792 785

Whatever the shortcomings of individual monks, the monastic calling as a whole has enjoyed the highest esteem in Ethiopia. Monks have exerted a great influence on the thinking and behavior of the people. Itinerant hermits have harangued the people to live more pious lives. The counsel of monks has been of help to rulers in time of trouble. The prophecies of monks have been influential in setting the pattern of hopes and fears about the future. 792

The role of the *dabtarā* is quite different. The *dabtarā*'s combination of functions is unusual—he is at once chorister, poet, dancer, herbologist, scribe, and wizard. It is also remarkable that so indispensable a functionary in the Ethiopian Church has no formal position in the church hierarchy. 793

With its characteristic forbearance toward human frailty, Amhara culture has established in the *dabtarā* a religious vocation in which special knowledge is required but holiness is not expected. The vocation is thus sought by those who do not care to be bound by the strict conditions of the priesthood, or by priests who have found these conditions too much to live with, so have been divorced or remarried. Recruitment into the role is informal: there are no rites of ordination, nor is there any particular point at which a man becomes or ceases to be a *dabtarā*.

Becoming a *dabtarā* mainly entails a course of study beyond that minimal level required for the priests. The full course of traditional studies includes the vast corpus of religious chants; *āquāquām* ("religious dance"); Ge'ez grammar and *qenē;* and study of some two dozen religious books. Mastery of the entire curriculum, which takes at least twenty to thirty years according to traditional methods of pedagogy, is rarely accomplished. In addition the student acquires other knowledge sub rosa from private tutors: knowledge of writing, preparation of magic formulae, and the use of herbs.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 The *dabtarā*'s way of life is more variable than that of the monk, his possibilities for income more diverse than those of the priest. He may be attached to a church as a chorister and receive a share of the church's revenues, as do the priests. Or he may donate his services to the church and earn his living [212] by secular employment. He may work as a scribe at the court of a king or nobleman. He may spend most of his time teaching, gaining support from some large church or monastery. Like many priests he may cultivate land. [434] In any case, he is likely to derive some income from the sale of amulets and from medical therapies. Some *dabtarā* are even said to have wandered about the country as hunters, performing magical services for clients as they go.

Dabtarā are not set off from the populace by special insignia. Some wind [792] a turban around their heads, as do many priests; but others may dress like ordinary peasants. If holding more prestigious posts they may be seen with fly-whisks or wearing a *barnos*. But they are known by the people, who fear [789] and respect them. They are feared because of their magical powers, which are believed capable of rendering bullets harmless and turning *ĭnjarā* to dust. [554] They are respected because of their learning, for they are the only educated status group in traditional Amhara society. If the commoner's relatively [195] impulsive *manner* of speaking is contrasted with the quiet reserve of the nobility, his relatively simple *language* is contrasted with that of the *dabtarā*, who is noted for a studied and circumspect use of language (*qāla-dabtarā*) and for larding his Amharic with literary (i.e., Ge'ez) expressions (*ya-dabtarā amārĭñňā*).

793 In the case of the religious elite, then, status is in all cases achieved. While 569 there is a natural tendency for sons of priests and *dabtarā* to follow their 183 fathers' example, they arrive at the status in question only by fulfilling the same norms that are applied to the sons of laymen. These norms, however, differ among the different groups within the clergy. Investiture by an authority emanating from the seat of religious charisma, the Alexandrine Patriarchate, and the related ritual requirement of marriage with Communion, were the basis of priestly status, almost irrespective of the personal attainments of the candidate. Personal attainments were *all* that mattered, on the other [792] hand, in the case of monk and *dabtarā*, but they differed radically for the two statuses.

793 The qualifications and characters of monks and *dabtarā* are almost dia- 792 metrically opposed. The monastic state is entered only by means of a sacred 554 rite; the *dabtarā* is in no way ordained, and might even be a "defrocked" priest. The monk's life is normally given to sensual renunciation; the *dabtarā* is normally an acknowledged sensualist (as appears, for example, in the proverb *ka-mesā ya-talaya dabtarā / yādargāl serā* ["a *dabtarā* who is kept from lunch / will work intrigues"][48] and in stories which celebrate the *dabtarā*'s use of his knowledge for private erotic ends). In the monk the virtue

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

of ascetic piety is stressed at the expense of knowledge. The monk need not 793
even know how to read, though if a lifelong monk he is likely to have de- 792 •
voted much time to traditional studies. The *dabtarā*, by contrast, lives by 554
his lore and his learning. At his best, the Abyssinian monk conveys a real sense of spiritual purity, of profound mystical bearing, of an utterly mild manner. The *dabtarā*, at his best, is a subtle conversationalist and an operator of wondrous effects.*

Thus, while the status of members of the old nobility was a compound resultant of simultaneously operating criteria—family and region, royal favor and accumulated power—the several criteria relevant to the status of the clergy operated more or less independently. This made the religious elite a more differentiated stratum.

This statement need be qualified only by the fact that, in addition to the considerations of ritual purity, ascetic piety, and traditional learning, a fourth factor influenced the status of the clergy, namely, royal favor as expressed in appointments to the high ecclesiastical offices. This factor crosscut the others, for such favor was dispensed to members of all three status groups. The *eçhagē* was always a monk; the *aqābē sa'āt* would seem to have been a *dabtarā;* the post of *alaqā* could be given to members of all three groups.

Just how these types of local clergy were related to the clergy at the na- 79
tional level in the traditional order is a question that is difficult to answer. 175
In any case, it is likely that there were conflicts among their representatives in the competition for royal favor. In the fourteenth century, the ecclesiastics of the royal entourage included only secular clergy, and their deportment was sharply criticized by Eçhagē Fileppos, who charged that "those who live in the dwelling of the Sovereign, go about proudly in subtle raiment and with ornaments of gold and silver—perishables—and are very arrogant."[49] However, once Zar'a Yā'qob had established the custom of bringing members of the convent of Dabra Libānos to the court, the monastic order was always well represented in the royal entourage as well. In the present period one sometimes hears of competition among the different groups for influence in

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* The association of impious properties with the main representative of traditional religious 779
learning may be seen as an expression of the Abyssinian's ambivalence toward knowledge as 793
such. The whole tenor of Ethiopian Orthodox religion runs counter to ratiocination and inquiry. It stresses mystery and discourages curiosity with tales like that of the man who tried to probe the mystery of the Trinity and was swallowed up by the earth—a tale commonly told to students who are learning to read. For this reason Orthodox students have frequently been quite upset by the rational theodicy taught by the Jesuit fathers at the University College.

As observed in the previous chapter, moreover, it was traditionally believed that too much learning results in madness, a belief no doubt based on the fact that older church students often drink a certain medicine to quicken their mental faculties, which sometimes deranges them (as the author has witnessed). The *dabtarā*, for their part, would seem to have thrived on this belief, benefiting from the exclusive powers and privileges gained from their esoteric knowledge.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis*, a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amda Ṭseyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum.

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[51] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas.

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest.

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

792 did erupt between the secular and religious powers. In that event both groups
793 had recourse to powerful weapons: the former, violence; the latter, excom-
643 munication. The history of Ethiopia records numerous instances of the flog-
578 ging or execution of clergy by secular authorities. The action of Fāsiladas
[715] (1632–67), who reportedly "caused seven thousand priests to be thrown head-
long from the top of the mountain Balbau for having revolted against him,"[58]
would represent but one of the more extreme instances of such violent retri-
bution. Short of violence, the kings at least had other means at their disposal
for controlling the clergy: the power to withhold benefices, the right to
imprison church officials, the final authority on doctrinal questions, and the
ability to block a united front on the part of the clergy by pitting high
church officials against each other.

792 On the other hand, infringement on the rights of churches and monasteries,
793 gross civil injustice, or radical departure from religious tradition could on
578 occasion evoke surprisingly effective retaliation by the clergy. D'Abbadie
provides some extremely illuminating passages on this matter, from which
the following have been extracted:

> More than once have I been present at debates of this nature; I have seen these men of the church, weak and without arms amidst men of war, pleading in the name of the law, indicting the menacing covetousness of the surrounding soldiery, invoking eloquently reprobation against their powerful adversaries, and leading them to disavow themselves that force which constituted their pride. . . .
>
> In the case of an open violation of an asylum, the regular clergy got aroused; the most venerable monks abandoned their solitude, assembled the parish clergy, went into the camps, and generally they obtained justice. When the real culprit was the Dajāzmātch, they brought him to repentance, or else excommunicated him, threatened his servants with anathema if they continued to serve him, put the province under interdict and, aided by the monks of the neighboring provinces, stirred up national reprobation against him.[58]

792 The clergy had other resources which it could employ against the emperor
793 himself. It could influence royal policy through highly placed advisers.
578 Through the *abuna* it could exact certain promises from a prospective em-
643 peror as a condition of coronation. Perhaps most important, the clergy could,
through its hold over public opinion, turn the populace against the sov-
ereign. As we have seen, this power proved decisive in the encounters be-
tween church and monarch in the reigns of Za Dengel and Susneyos, and
contributed significantly to the downfall of Tēwodros and Lījj Iyāsu.

643 While therefore the emperor may well have been "supreme in all causes,
792 ecclesiastical and civil," he was far from being the sole, or even the decisive,
793

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

source of the influence enjoyed by the clergy. The latter constituted a largely autonomous status group which no emperor could afford to antagonize indefinitely. The attempt to build a more powerful central government and introduce cultural reforms thus required some alteration of their independent status as well as that of the old nobility.

643 792 793

THE FEUDAL ORDER IN TRANSITION

The Decline of the Old Nobility

It must always have been the policy of the Ethiopian emperors, except for those few who did not relish the political side of their office, to seek to maximize their control over the regional nobility. They did this, we have seen, either by granting land, power, and rank to men who were completely dependent on them, or else by controlling, through military and diplomatic means, those lords whose birthright and regional strength gave them strong claims to their positions.

175 631 565 643 642

During the past century, however, the idea of subordinating regional nobles to imperial control has come to be conceived more radically and has become the core of a slowly emerging ideal of a modern nation-state. Some such vision was certainly behind the tortuous career of Tēwodros II, whose policy was a reaction against the desperate disunity which the Age of the Princes brought to Abyssinia and to the growing threat from foreign powers. In Plowden's official report to the British government in 1855, he described Tēwodros' work as follows:

> The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated. He has placed soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish: thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains, more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility—a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.[84]

The task of displacing the great feudal chiefs proved to be scarcely less arduous in Ethiopia than in Europe, however. Tēwodros' high hopes were shattered against the opposing forces of regional ambitions and clerical disaffection. The national unity he won through conquest and reform did not survive to the end of his reign.

Yohānnes IV (1871–89) likewise aimed at uniting the nation, but was distracted from serious internal reform by the need to fight off the encroach-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

648 795 793 The general position of the church had already been weakened by the events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the [792] Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 795 793 643 [651] Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 871 658 793 The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever government schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full-[465] time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 178 [554] [871] [658] Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite

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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Ya-dam Demṭ*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 30.—*A widower who has become a monk*

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FIG. 31.—*A group of clergy*

[P. 206-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

are balanced by a fairly permissive mode of organization. For the clergy, the constraints are heavier; the fasting requirements are increased, and the priesthood involves, as we have seen, strict marital fidelity. On the other hand, the individualistic organization of the clergy is most striking.

This individualism is conspicuous already in the church schools, which are organized not on a class basis but in a series of master-pupil relations. Students begin their courses of study whenever they arrive at the residence of the master, and proceed each at his own pace. The master spends the bulk of his time with more advanced students, who in turn are used to instruct the less advanced. The pupils are very much on their own, uncontrolled either by their families, with whom they no longer reside, nor by any formal institution. The same is true of the masters, who are not subjected to any sort of outside controls. Indeed, each teacher tends to develop his own unique method of teaching, regarding it as something of a personal monopoly.[24]

The ministrating clergy are likewise free from controls emanating from a broad ecclesiastical organization. Each parish church functions autonomously under the direction of a head (*alaqā*) chosen by the local clergy. (Heads of the most important churches have traditionally been appointed by the emperor.) The obligations of the priesthood are not very great. The chief duty of the priest is to take his turn in performing the Mass. His pastoral services are limited to occasional visits with his particular confessants, from whom he expects to receive regular rewards of food and drink. Otherwise, his life is much the same as that of his lay neighbors.

The role of the *dabtarā*, as we have seen, is still more flexible. *Dabtarā* who are associated with a parish church are expected to take their turns singing hymns and composing *qenē* in the outer ring of the church; but otherwise they exist as free entrepreneurs, and they need not be so attached unless they so desire.

The individualistic organization of the Ethiopian Church is most striking, perhaps, in the case of the monks, especially when compared with Christian monastic orders in the Western world. Ethiopian monks are bound by nothing other than the original conditions for assuming the role, namely, renouncing family ties and worldly possessions. The monk need not enter a monastery; he may continue to live in his old home or may take to the woods as a hermit. If he does go to live at a monastery, his life is not radically changed. The Ethiopian monastery is not an organized community, but a sacred place—the site of a large and important church, in the vicinity of which live numbers of individual monks. The monk comes and goes as he wishes, prays whenever he wants, and may live free of any obligations toward his fellow monastics and toward the rest of the society.*

* There are, however, some monasteries where a more organized and disciplined regime may be found.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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ecclesiastical education for their sons.

However, it is not only the cripple and blind, or the landless sons of full-time ecclesiastics who find in the parish school the means to leave the agricultural community. In reality, they constitute only a minority of the boys who leave the parish. For among those who are the physically-whole offspring of ristenas, there are some who find objectionable the prospect of a life-time as a farmer, subordinated to a father's wishes and interests, and bound to a single woman. Where such inchoate dissatisfaction exists, it may be further stimulated by the parish teacher, particularly if he is a debtera.

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The teaching at the parish school is performed by a local priest or monk[22] who is competent in the required subjects. In the absence of a suitable local man, a stranger monk or debtera is employed. The debtera is a Church scholar of sorts, who also leads the chanting of the liturgy during the performance of the Mass. He is an important model for the restive student, for his life provides an alternative and challenge to the social

*[192]

[22] A "monk" (manakwosa) is a mature unmarried deacon, a widowed priest, or a layman who has renounced material acquisitions and has vowed celibacy. Only the first two are literate and, therefore, potential teachers. There are, in addition, anchorites (bahatahwy).

*756
*787 By mid-way in a debtera's career, the capabilities of
*793 his abinet repertoire are sufficient to make the continued assistance of ganel familiars largely redundant. The loss of familiars does not affect the abinet powers which the debtera already holds. Most have been obtained without ganel complicity and do not rely on ganels for their effectiveness; others (kifat works) invoke ganels mechanically and do not require their good will; last, the abinet information already gained from ganels is unaffected by the loss of the daemons. The dissolution of this bond brings no special dangers; it instigates no retribution by the familiar, nor does it increase the debtera's vulnerability to ganel assaults. Finally, by utilizing his abinet repertoire to simulate ganel associations, the debtera is able to prevent public disclosure of the loss of real ties.

Moral Content of Debtera-Ganel Bond. The acquisition of ganel familiars represents an important technical discontinuity in a man's abinet career, since a purposively induced hallucinatory state is experienced
[792] in no other abinet work. In other contexts, ganels are also directly encountered, particularly by monks, but in no other encounter are preparations made beforehand for restraining the ganel once he appears, or for obtaining desired services from him during the meeting.

Morally, the discontinuity is not so great, at least

*756 *787 *793 from the debtera's perspective. Beginning with simple herbal remedies and ending with ganel pulling, the awakiy debtera's moral compromises are gradual and continuous. Although ganel pulling represents his only direct contact with demon helpers, his previous and continuing kifat performances make the debtera no stranger to the casuistry of ganel complicity. Beyond this, however, there is an important moral unity to the debtera's abinet works, whether they are produced by the power of divine beings or ganels. An abinet career is founded on a debtera's readiness to conceive of supernaturally derived power as a morally neutral commodity. As he exploits such power, he is constrained less by its intrinsic moral character than by its instrumental limitations. The debtera's accomplishment is to transmute the moral nature of the power he depends upon for his works. This he does by exerting his will over it, and directing it onto the objects and contingencies that he has selected.

*755 *793 778 • 792 823 *[192] Inviolability of Divine Power: The Atmakiy. The goodness (moges) of divine power is unblemished and its enjoyment is determined by divine will (yi'Igziyabiher yimozgin). The attitude of the pious man towards this will is supplicatory; towards this power, he is a passive recipient and a disinterested custodian. In a medical context, the atmakiy is exemplary. The atmakiy

*755 778 823 ("baptizer") is a priest or monk who provides sanctified healing waters for sickmen. By reading from appropriate *[793] liturgical texts, any literate ecclesiastic can sanctify • [792] ordinary water drawn from a river, or the water of a spring (tebèl) known to have divine curing powers. Sanctified common water is generally dispensed in the courtyard of a church, by a resident cleric serving as atmakiy for the occasion. No atmakiy has exclusive rights to the tebel at which he works, since he is only the representative of the church or monastery in whose parish the tebel is located. An atmakiy provides no medical services beyond dispensing sanctified water or overseeing the tebel. According to the atmakiy, as the sickman bathes, the divine fires of the water repel the ganels responsible for *[192] his ailment. The layman, however, does not conceive the effectiveness of these waters so narrowly, but sees them as the medium for a divine grace (moges) unbounded by specific etiological notions. Consequently, although sanctified waters are used most commonly against madness (ibidet) and epilepsy (ganel yazow), both caused by ganels, they are also applied against serious, chronic ailments with which ganels are not generally associated (e.g., leprosy). Usually the sickman turns to sanctified waters as a last resort, after he has exhausted all other therapies he can afford. A sickman continues to bathe with the waters of a single church or tebel, until he has

tions of awdunigist).

796 The destructive power of ganels is the shadow of di-
*[192] vine grace. Although the goodness of divine power is perfect, divine intentions are realized through the promise of sanctions (mekseft), as well as grace. The ganels are utilized for the operation of these sanctions.
*[192] Christians are each protected by a pair of angel guardians (maliket), in the command of the Almighty. Divine displeasure is expressed by removing these guardians from the principal or his children.[40] Once a breach is opened, ganels are certain to attack, for they pursue their destructive goals indiscriminately, striking where opportunity, rather than special interest beckons.[41]

[40] Not all cases of ganel assaults can be traced to divine motives, however. Occasionally, ganels are able to outwit or overwhelm an individual's angel guardians, particularly when a debtera forces them to attack a vulnerable target. The precise balance between a man's assets (guardian angels, kitab protectors) and deficits (vulnerabilities indicated by awdunigist, ganel sabiy influence on ganels) is never a matter of speculation in specific episodes, however.

• [792] [41] Generally, very holy monks, in lives of seclusion and prayer given over entirely to the Almighty, are singled out by ganels, for physical assaults and temptations of the flesh.

[For the secular activities of the dabtara such as chorister, poet, dancer, herbologist, scribe, and wizard, see also categories 212, 756, 754, 759, 538, 533, and 535.]

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 Such types of land tenure arose in the past when a king awarded land for personal service, or in gratitude, as "gult" land, without specifying the conditions under which such land might pass to the heirs of the recipient.

423 794 Land donated to the church, in areas far from a monastery or parish that could easily administer it, sometimes belong in this category. In gratitude for victory, a king would sometimes establish ecclesiastical fiefs, "rim", for the support of officiating priests and boy deacons. The most famous endowment of this kind occurred in 1270 A.D., when archbishop Täklä Haymanot received 1/3 of the land of Abyssinia from the "Solomonic Dynasty" he had helped to restore. The archbishop immediately founded monasteries to administer the property and to supervise the "gabbar on it. Priests and monks since then have served in functions similar to chaplains, and have carried the "tabot" representing the sacred ark, into battles, much like the priests of the ancient Israelites. Endowments have continued to add land to the church, "mäsqäl märet" (lit. lands of the cross), and a priest is usually sent to act as local administrator, "alaqa" (lit, chief). He also supervises the functioning of a church built on land not given to the church, and often acts as if the surrounding land were "gult" land belonging to the church.

The moral power of the church in many localities is so strong that the borderlines between "rest" and "gult" may become hazy. Aging persons often try to

423 donate some plots to the church as "sämonanya", to have
794 masses read for their souls after their deaths. Widows, who often take vows as nuns, try to endow the church if they can. Sometimes, "gultännas" threatened with expropriation, sought the protection of the church, so that they could remain on their lands. Sometimes parish priests
423 practice nepotism by inviting their nephews or other kins-
793 men to settle on endowed land surrounding the parish church, without paying rent or performing heavy labors. In return, this arrangement serves the local priests as life insurance and income-insurance, for they will always be certain of supplies of produce, beer, meat, incense, clothing, etc., from their grateful kinfolk, for themselves and their offspring.

The local priest then also acts as patron of his kinfolk against the regional administration, interceding for them when they become involved in litigation, acts as their "guarantor" ("was") when they apply for jobs or seek more land from the governor or neighboring landlord. This nepotism actually seems on the increase, since the present emperor abrogated the feudal rights of all church lands in 1942 (though reinstituting some in exchange for services such as education, a few years later). Now that the church has lost the right to charge feudal rent, parish priests are more eager than ever to have kinfolk settle around them, to avoid dependence on payment from parents whose boys are enrolled in the church school.

b) Parish Organization.

423
795 In many districts of the oldAmhara provinces, the church has owned much feudal land (it was given 1/3 of the land in the 13th century). Endowments from the wills of picus persons have been adding to this.

This land, which is regarded as "rest", freehold real estate, in the traditional land tenure, is administered in divisions,called "dabber", that somewhat resemble medieaval European parishes. The population of such an area, which directly or indirectly supports the local church, through tithes, rents, services, periodic supplies, memorial gifts, etc., refers to "and dabber agar" (lit. one particular countryside) as its home district; much as an Italian refers to "mi paese".

793 The priests attached to this church (often for long periods) usually attempt to create a residential kinship unit for themselves, similar to the residential hamlets of freehold families, inviting their nephews and other young-married kin, both patrilineal and matrilineal, to settle near the church. A priest thus closely surrounded by kin becomes the local patriarch, and his personal economic future, as well as his leadership are assured. The priest locally appointed by higher church authorities ato act as administrator is the sacristan, "gabaz", or "ges"(priest) gobaz", who is respectfully addressed and referred to as "alaca" (lit. chief).

793
795 The number of clergy attached to an old-established, local church, often includes, besides the "gobaz"

793 priest, seven other priests of varying seniority, 12
795 deacons, a head deacon, a chamberlain, at least a dozen "dabtara" chorister-scribes, several aged monks, and elderly widows who have taken vows as nuns. The latter do much of the baking and beer-brewing for the local church. But if a poor church, "gatar" is founded by and dependent on a landholding kin group not on church land, it may have merely two priests and 3 deacons, so that on its special saint's day dabtara have to be invited from other churches, to perform the proper chants, dances, and chorus of chanting.

c) Personnel of the Church Institution, and Church Education.

793 The ordinary parish priest, "qes" does not need to be verylearned or even very ascetic, but he is expected to live a holy life in accordance with all the rules of the church, observe even minor fasts, and to be married in the eucharistic, "qurban" marriage. He is identified by the headcovering which he wears even in church, consisting of thin muslin wrapped around a cylindrical white cap. If his wife dies, he cannot marry again, and in order to continue functioning as a priest, he is expected to take monastic vows, putting on the "qob"(white cap) of the monk, without muslin turban.

One of the duties of the priest is to perform the eucharist on Sunday for persons considered living a Christian life, i.e. married in church (a minority).He

•793 also performs masses on specific occasions, including memorials and holy days, chants part of the liturgy, reads (but usually does not know how to translate) biblical portions from both New and Old Testament in the Geez language. Before performing the eucharist, the officiating priest is expected to abstain from sexual intercourse for 1 to 3 days, for this is regarded as polluting him (an Old Testament survival). Before such occasions he takes care to sleep on the mudbench of his hut, rather than on his "alga" bed. This procedure is followed Saturday night, before a baby's babtism, before giving ritual ablution to the dying, etc. He is also expected to wash his body before giving the eucharist (but in the dry season this is often overlooked).

[783]

A learned priest, more scholarly than the parish administrator or guardian of his flock, is given the special title "mämhär" (roughly, "professor"). He is usually an expert on the hymn book "degwa", and is employed in teaching it to upper grades in church school. When he becomes a monk, he is oftenappointed to "abbatachen" (lit. our father), abbot of a monastery, where his mild disposition enables him to keep the peace among hotheaded, ambitious monks, some of whom regard monasticism as a career. If the "mamher" continues to advance his knowledge of church literature and history and legends (e.g. the life of the saints), he receives the title "liq". He is usually one of the few Amhara who really know and understand Geez well, including the subtle shades of meaning of the many diverse grammatical forms;

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793 198 and he may also know grammatical Amharic, which has been mastered by only a few hundred contemporary Amhara (including the present emperor). This grammar is called "sowasso", and contains subtle factitives, frequentatives, etc.

793 In the higher clergy of church administration, a combination of some scholarly accomplishment and political astuteness is necessary. This next higher title is "liqä kähänät" (lit. head ecclesiastic). Given a temporal bishop's territory, he is named "päpäs" (evidently a Greek derivation); or, if his new post is within the spiritual, monastic system, "qomos", who "blesses the cap of the monk" (i.e. can accept and supervise monastic vows of lower-status ecclesiasts). This high clergy is usually found at provincial capitals or nearby monasteries.

Above this level is the very highest leadership of the church, several "liqä päpäs", archbishops, of noble ancestry, who are in line for the position of head of monasteries and temporal church lands and properties, the "echäge". This was traditionally the highest Abyssinian church officer (Amhara or Tigre). Until 1948, his only superior, the "Abuna" (Patriarch), was a foreigner, usually an Egyptian Copt sent from Alexandria. In 1948, when this tie was severed, Echäge Basilios became almost automatically the first native Abuna of Ethiopia. A younger, somewhat more modern-minded element in the high clergy is headed at present by Bishop (Papas) Theophilos, who may be next in line for the highest office.

794 Local personnel in the parish church included boys from 10 to 15, who are usually more reliable church students, dressed in fine church garments, with good voices and the ability to memorize liturgy. They carry the cross and other utensils in parade, and act as ritual aides in many capacities. They are called "diyakon" (deacon). When they reach puberty, indicated as soon as their voices break and they become awkward adolescents, the possibility of sexual involvement automatically cancels their position (and the gifts from the priests).

Because of the sacerdotal emphasis, worship is performed in a temple atmosphere, churches are open only during services, and there is no preaching. Thus church officials are absent from the building most of the time, leaving the key to the heavy wooden door in charge of a semi-lay caretaker.

793 He is often a dəbtəra, who can be regarded as semi-clergy, though he has neither ecclesiastical recognition nor tenure of office. Yet his function in the church, as scribe, translator of Geez to Amharic, chorister of devotional poetry ("qəne"), religious poet, herbologist and physician of sorts, writer of amulets, etc., renders his participation as essential to the formal clergy as to the common people.

He must have a good voice capable of endurance, ecstatic pitch, rythm and melody. He must be more intelligent and learned than the priest, so that he can understand and explain and translate what he reads in Geez and Amharic. He has no salary and no right to the tithe, but the priest may allocate a portion to him. Often

Often
•793 most of his income is derived from writing "ketäb", amu-
[789] lets on goatskin parchment, worn by ailing persons on their neck-cord, or by women, in leather containers fastened to belt straps around the waist. The priest do forbid this amulet-writing activity, which is sometimes (not without reason) suspect not only of "white" magic, but also black magic. Yet the priests ignore and overlook this, as they have done for centuries, perhaps because in this way they obtain the "dabtara's" other services free of cost.

The däbtära is often feared by the common people because of his power, both medical and supernatural. In recent years, with the suppression of the "tänkway" witch-doctor, the clientele of the debtara has actually increased, for now there is no one but the dabtara to exorcise "buda" (magic hyena, werewolf) possession, to protect from the evil eye, or to curse and capture thieves, Moreover, it is respectable to go to the däbtära, who operates in the shadow of the church, who associates with holy priests and even drinks beer with them at feasts. No gossip can attach to a man seen entering the hut of the dabtara, for his errand may be decent and even sacred.

[66] Most däbtära reap full benefits from the awe in which they are held. They even transgress etiquette when it suits their purposes. If uninvited at a wedding or other festivity, they often "crash" the party, and expect to be and are given seats of honor and the choicest food and mead.

793 Parish priests,(unlike mämhär scholars) are also
[66] not bashful about demanding their due (produce tithe, sheep, honey, even cash) from their tenants of church land. Sardonic peasant humor expresses this in the proverb:

[539] "The bashful priest,
the blind donkey,
(are one)" . (i.e. both would be helpless and starve to death).

532 Among artisans who do specialist work for the
346 church is the artist of church paintings, usually highly colorful and realistic scenes from the suffering of the saints, in morbid and gory detail; the beauties of heaven and the trinity; the horrors of hell ruled by a chained, soul-munching Satan; etc. These religious and semi-religious story illustrations and legends are painted on canvas and then attached to the inside of church walls.

874 Church students are usually boys 10 years or over (never girls), who at first learn the Geez-Amharid alphabet, reading Geez without translating, beginning with the Epistle of the Apostle John. They are taught by rote, memorizing by chanting the portions out loud. There is very little writing in the early grades, and experimentation is traditionally discouraged, for fear that the boys might use their new-won learning to write magic amulets. Before examinations, church studetns stimulate
874 their mental processes by eating the leaf of a Datura
276 weed resembling a Jimson weed called "astänager" (lit. to stimulate talk) which is also used by dabtära in exor-

792 believers, but as quick in anger when a human face disturbs their solitude. Legends tell of hermits who, receiving a "call", returned to the temporal world as prophets and leaders of men. But this is regarded as rare. During their lifetime the hermits are held in awe, and even after their death they are believed to haunt their earthy cave-ledges, so that passers-by talk in whispers only, and fear to come too close.

(d) Utensils of the Church.

793 The headgear of the priests, "mätämtämiya", is a
292 turban-like affair, basically a white muslin wrapped around the head or the cylindrical cap ("qob"). Monks wear the "qob" without the muslin, and, in many monasteries, used to dye their"qob" as well as their robes
[827] yellow. In recent years the yellow color is falling into disuse, and white--believed to be the color of mourning for the passing of Christ, is worn alternately with black caps and capes. Black is evidently due to acculturation. It first entered in the form of imported chintz capes for the bishops and upper clergy in the time of Menelik II, and has spread, due to the Italian occupation.

Like noblemen, middle and higher clergy wear the kaba, the heavy , woolen, sleeveless cape, and carry an especially good "chera" (flyswitch) of guresa-monkey hair. Priests wear the narrow white jodphurs at all times,

● 773 beneath kneelength shirt ("qämis") and shamma; often
292 they wear sandals. They usually let a full beard grow
[293] as richly as it will. Another private symbol of priestly nobility is an abbreviated "maqomya" leaning staff, shorter, without crutch, topped by an ivory knob and equipped as a walking stick, called "sände kahanat", with an iron point at the bottom.

In church parades, priests and deacons add colorfully embroidered garments of imported and embroidered velvet, rayon, silk, brocade, etc., often cut like the ancient leopard-skin in sleeveless capes which hang from the shoulders over front and back. If of domestic origin, the holy day garments are dyed black or red. Embroidery is of gold or silver thread, and sometimes includes gold or silver filigree plates in geometric patterns (e.g.the
[293] sun). On such occasions the ordinary sun umbrella ("jantela") of reeds gives way to a colorful umbrella of imported cloth, in which red and gold predominate. It is now often attached to the ribs of a modern umbrella. The black cape ("kaba") is held across the chest with a metal (often silver) clasp or chain.

293 On such holy day parades, clergy and upper-class
778 persons married in a eucharistic ceremony ("qurban"), wear the metal crown, "akliil". This is one of the most valuable of each church's possessions, always locked in the church when not in use, usually donated by noble sponsors. They are usually made of silver, or at least of brass, and the older more traditiona ones are shaped in tiered stories of circles narrowing toward the top

796 ship, perform the "segdat" (prostration) many times. This signifies the climax of lenten suffering. Toward evening, when Christ is presumed to have died on the cross, the pious are of good cheer, for He has descended to purgatory, has tied the devil hand and foot, and has liberated all the souls to paradise.

796 At earliest dawn Saturday morning, about 5:30,
793 priests and deacons put on their best garments, including "kapa" (cape) and "lämd", carry their colorful sun umbrellas as if in procession, and pass through the streets with parade cross, bell, incense burners, and armsful of yellow-green palm strips called "qetäma". They stop before every house or hut, ringing the bell. The sleepy owner answering the call is given the reed to wind flat around his forehead, and he will wear it all day. The priest sings out: "Oh, master, Jesus Christ has been found! The devil is chained!". In appreciation of the good news, the head of the house gives the priest some money, and receives a blessing in return. This ceremonial interchange is called "Gebra salam" (serving the greeting).

796 Sometime before midnight, the church services begin, with alternately mournful and hopeful liturgy. When the night is about to end, at cockcrow Sunday morning (about 4 A.M.) the resurrection, ("tensaä") is loudly declared amidst shouting and ringing of bells.
[263] The pious now break fast with crushed linseed ("talba") mixed with honey, and pronounce the blessing of having been permitted to reach this day. All rush out of the

831 run to women, carrying ferns (symbolic of the vulva), and tease them with shouts of "ems anqetqet" (quivering vulva).

Polite references to sexual matters usually employ biblical terminology, requiring at least some formal, traditional education. They include such terms, wholly or partly from the old Geez language still used in liturgy, as "abalä zär" (lit. master of the seed) for male genital organs in a generic sense; "bellet" (lit. divisions) for differences between male and female sex; "akalat" (lit. part of body) for male and female, or "affärät sega" (lit. flesh of modesty).

[793 832] Coptic priests are not supposed to indulge in sexual intercourse even with their wives the night before they are to officiate in church, and they therefore avoid sleeping on the same "alga" (bedstead) that night.

834 Modesty of body exposure, particularly of women, is the general pattern, though children may be barely clothed in ragged shifts leaving much skin bare (see life cycle, etc.). In fact, deliberate exposure of the body is regarded as a sign of madness, and this is the popular reaction to Western pictures of "bathing beauties" in swim suits. When bathing, persons will join members of their own sex and go to secluded places in the river. On the feast day of Ṭemqät, (Epiphany), some rustic men strip and swim in the pool blessed by the priests, but women do not. Breasts may be visible during nursing, but if there are strangers around, they will be covered to prevent any possible evil eye from drying them up.

832 Love magic is widely and strongly believed in, particularly since it is supplied by the quasi-church functionary, the dabtära scribe. He is first called upon to write amulets, which are still respectable and, can be worn in outwardly visible containers, by women, for no one can know that the amulet is not directed against the devil. But the magic activities of the dabtära, secretly, go far beyond that.

578 In the new courts established by the central government in
689 the provincial towns, the term "kayla" is regarded as an insult and can be prosecuted legally. The proper, legal term is "seratanna" (lit. workman).

326 How can one explain this strong syndrome: ironsmith - buda -
754 Falasha, which still dominates the Amhara mind? It is interesting
563 that silversmiths are less feared than ironsmiths, are more respected and (perhaps in psychological consequence) are regarded as less hateful and vengeful; (they are also less feared for they work indoors, where they can "see" less). Furthermore, although Falashas in their own society are not ashamed of their ironsmith trade, the Amhara project their own despizing of this manual craft onto the Falashas and believe that Falasha ironsmiths, ashamed to be seen working at such lowly work, "fasten" on passersby with their buda eyes.

Perhaps at the basis of this syndrome lies the idea that a skilled craft, existing within the technologically primitive Amhara society, must be the result of association with evil forces
[71] of the supernatural. This has been the pattern regarding ironsmiths in parts of the Middle East, Africa and ancient Europe. Among the Amhara Copts of Abyssinia, the idea that these ironsmiths are also "deniers of Jesus Christ", yet have an "education" of their own, above the "pagans" makes them doubly dangerous. Added to this is a projection of their own pattern of fears and hates.

e. "Buda" doctors past and present

756 While the aforementioned dabtara is the most commonly
793 called doctor of buda disease, sometimes, especially in urban areas, the Coptic priest himself is called in.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Church at Abo, Baressa gorge

291
778
793

Monk and deacon receiving offerings [Facing p. 170]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a 782
machine for pressing. In this same house the blessed 796
bread is made which is given away on Saturdays and Sundays and feast days; and on great feasts, such as Christmas, Easter, Our Lady of August, etc., they carry this bread of the sacrament with a pallium,[1] bell, and cross devoutly. Before they enter the church with it they go round the church by the circuit like a cloister; when it is not a feast they enter the church at once and without the pallium. On a Saturday before Ascension these friars made a procession; and from being in a new country it seemed to us very good, and they did it in this way. They took crosses, and the altar stone covered with a silk cloth, a friar carried it on his head, which was also covered with the said cloths; and they carried books and bells, and thuribles, and holy water; and all went chaunting to some millet fields: there they made their devotions and cries after the fashion of litanies, and with this procession they returned to the monastery. We asked why they did that, and they said that the animals ate their millet, and so they went to pour out holy water and pray God to drive them out. In this country he that says 793
the mass has no other difference from the deacon and sub- 292
deacon in his vestments than a long stole with an opening 796
in the middle to allow the head to pass through; before and behind it reaches to the ground. The friars say mass [302]
with hair on their heads; the priests do not wear hair, and are shaven and so say mass. Also, both friars and priests say mass barefooted, nobody enters the church with his feet shod, and they allege for this what God said to Moses: "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for thou art on holy ground."

[1] Under a canopy.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

monastery, most of them old men of great age, and as dry 792
as wood; very few young men. This monastery is entirely
surrounded by a wall, and this wall is closed with two [346]
gates, which are always locked.

CAP. XIV.—*How the monastery of Bisan is the head of six monasteries, of the number of the brothers, and ornaments, of the "castar"*[1] *which they do to Philip, whom they call a Saint.*

This monastery is the head of six monasteries, which are 792
around it in these mountains; the furthest off is at a 793
distance of three leagues from it, and all are subject to it, and are governed and ruled by it. In each of them is a David, that is a guardian appointed by the Abbot or provincial of this monastery, who is also David under the Abba. I always heard say that there were in this monastery
three thousand friars, and because I doubted it much I 792
came here to keep the feast of our Lady of August, in order to see if they would come together. Certainly I rejoiced to see the riches of this monastery, and the procession which they made: in my judgment the friars did not exceed three hundred, and most of them were very old. There is a circuit to this monastery which surrounds the two
which are like cloisters covered in, and this one which is not [346]
covered in was on that occasion all covered in with brocades and inferior brocades, and velvets of Mekkah, all long pieces, sewn one to another in order that they might shelter the whole circuit. They made a very beautiful procession through this canopied circuit; all wore cloaks of
the same stuffs, brocades, and velvets of Mekkah, badly [292]
made as I mentioned above. They carried fifty small crosses of silver, of bad workmanship, and as many

[1] Should be *teskar*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Ambhara MP5

000 574 middle upwards hairy like lions. We passed the mountain, and went to sleep at the foot of a village called Zalote. There will be about four or five leagues from this place to the monastery from which we set out. We halted by a running river of very good water, and when our baggage had been unloaded we went to the said village to see a very honourable gentleman, the headman of it—a very old man, who was lodged here very honourably. He gave us a very [262] hospitable reception, giving us many fowls cooked in butter, and much mead, and he sent us a very large fat cow to the place of our halt. On the following day, which was Sunday, we went to say our mass at the church of the village, which is called St. Michael, a poor church, both the fabric and the ornaments. There are in this church three 793 married priests and three others, deacons,[1] that is to say, of 796 the gospel, and all are necessary, for no less can say mass. This honourable captain I met with later as a friar in the monastery of Bisan, and he left his condition and revenues to his sons, who were honourable persons; and I saw him stand at the gate outside, and he did not enter within the monastery, and there he received the communion with the novices, and when the offices of the church were ended he remained in honour with the provincial. On this Sunday we set out again in the afternoon, because the country 133 people who conducted us wished it so. Here we began to travel through flat country fallows and tillage, in the fashion of Portugal, and the bushes which are between the tilled lands are all wild olives, without other trees. We slept by some running streams, between many good villages.

[1] *Zagonaes.* Ethiopian corruption of *diakonos.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 other women do in the church of the apostles, who take it
562 in its place. I always saw the women of the Barnagais go
[644] to the women's church to take the communion with the other women, and I did not see them use the privilege which they say they have, of taking the communion, with one damsel, in the church of the men. The circuits of the churchyards join to one another; they are of very high
796 walls. They make the sacramental bread for both churches in one building, and they say the masses in both churches at the same time, and the priests who serve in one church serve also in the other; that is two thirds of the priests in the men's church, and one third in the women's church, and so they are distributed. These churches have not got tithes, but they have got much land belonging to the priests, and they put it out to profit and divide the revenues of the lands among themselves: the Barnagais gives what is necessary to the churches, such as ornaments, wax, butter, incense in sufficient quantity, and he supplies them with
[792] everything. There may be in these churches twenty priests and always twenty-two friars. I never saw a church of priests which had not got friars, nor a monastery of friars which had got priests; because the friars are so numerous that they cover the world, both in the monasteries as also in the churches, roads, and markets: they are in every place.

CAP. XXVI.—*How the priests are, and how they are ordained, and of the reverence which they pay to the churches and*
793 *their churchyards.*

684 The priests are married to one wife, and they observe the
587 law of matrimony better than the laity: they live in their houses with their wives and children. If their wife should die they do not marry again; neither can the wife, but she

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

may become a nun or remain a widow as she pleases. If a 793
priest sleeps with another woman whilst his wife is alive he 684
does not enter the church any more, nor does he enjoy its 587
goods, and remains as a layman. And this I know from having seen a priest accused before the patriarch of having slept with a woman, and I saw that the priest confessed the offence, and the patriarch commanded him not to carry a cross in his hand, nor to enter a church, nor to enjoy the liberties of the church, and to become a layman. If any priests after becoming widowers marry, they remain laymen. As it happened to Abuquer, who married Romana Orque, sister of Prester John, who I have already said was a priest, chief chaplain of Prester John, and he was disordained[1] and made a layman. He no longer enters the church, and receives the communion at the door of the church as a layman, and among the women. The sons of the priests 793
are for the most part priests, because in this country there [871]
are no schools, nor studies, nor masters to teach, and the clergy teach that little that they know to their sons: and so they make them priests without more legitimisation, neither does it seem to me that they require it, since they are legitimate sons. All are ordained by the Abima Markos, for in all the kingdoms of Ethiopia there is no other bishop or person who ordains. The orders are given in two stages, as I will relate further on. I with my own eyes saw them given many times. In all this country the churchyards are [764]
inclosed by very strong walls, that the wild beasts may not disinter the dead bodies. They show them great reverence, [576]
no man riding on a mule passes before a church, even though he is going in a great hurry, without dismounting, until he has passed the church and churchyard a good bit.

[1] *Foy desordenado e feito leigo*; not a correct expression.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

443 places which are chief towns of districts, every week. The fairs consist of bartering one thing for another, as for instance, an ass for a cow, and that which is of least value gives to the other two or three measures of bread. By means of bread they buy stuffs, and with stuffs they buy mules and cows, and whatever they want, for salt, incense, pepper, myrrh, camphor, and other small articles.[1] They buy fowls and capons, and whatever they need or want to buy is all to be found at these fairs in exchange for others, for there is no current money. The principal merchants 792 292 at these fairs are priests, friars, and nuns. The friars are decent in their habits, which are full, and reaching to the ground. Some wear yellow habits of coarse cotton stuff, others habits of tanned goat skins like wide breeches,[2] also yellow. The nuns also wear the same habits; the friars wear, besides, capes of the fashion of Dominican friars, of the same yellow skins or stuffs, they wear hats; and the nuns wear neither capes nor hats, but [302] only the habit, and are shaven with a razor; and they wear a leather strap wound or fastened round the head. When they are old women they wear fillets[3] round their heads over their tonsures. These nuns are not cloistered, nor do they live together in convents, but in villages, and in the monasteries of the friars, on account of belonging to those houses and order. The order is all one, and the nuns give obedience where they receive their habits. With regard to entering churches and monasteries, the nuns do not enter except as other women do. There is a great multitude of nuns, as well as of friars; they say that some of them are 793 very holy women, and others are not so. The priests show very 302 little difference from the laity in their dress, because all [292] wear a good cloth wrapped round, like smart men, and their difference is that they carry a cross in their hand, and are shaven, and the laity wear long hair. The priests also have

[1] *Bechugarias.* [2] *Zafoens* or *Safoens.* [3] *Tufas.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

this, that they do not cut their beard, and the laity shave 793
below the chin and the throat. There are other priests, [302]
whom they call Debeteraas, which means canons; these
belong to great churches, which are like their cathedrals or
collegiate churches, and are not monasteries. These are
very well dressed, and at once appear as what they are:
these do not go to the fairs and markets.

CAP. XXX.—*Of the state of the Barnagais and manner of his house, and how he ordered a proclamation to be made to go against the Nobiis,*[1] *and the method of his justice.*

The service of this Barnagais is very poor in state, although he is a great lord and has the title of king. As many times as we spoke to him we always found him seated on a bedstead beneath a coverlid, and himself covered with hairy cotton cloths which they name *basutos*; they are good for the country, and there are some here of a high price. Behind the sides of the bedstead, walls, without anything except four swords hung each on a pole, and two great books, also suspended on poles. In front of the bedstead, mats on the floor, upon which sit those who come; the houses rarely swept, his wife always seated on a mat near the head of the bedstead, many people always before him, the great people seated on mats. In sight of his
bedstead stand four horses, one always saddled, and the [231]
others covered, not caparisoned for war, but as horses are in the stables. In these houses of his are two inclosures, and each one has its gate, and in it porters with whips in their hands, and in the one nearest to him are smarter porters. Between these gates, the inner one and the outer 693
one, is always his Alicaxi, which means his judge, hearing causes and administering justice. If the cause is important,

[1] Nubians.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means emperor, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thousand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and courtyards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor.

[2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and so receive absolution. They pray in the churches of 796
the canons as in those of the friars. Friars do not marry, [782]
canons and priests do so. When the canons live together 793
in the circuit they eat in their houses, and the friars eat in community. The chiefs of these churches are called Licacanate. The wives of the canons have houses outside of the circuit, where they go to live with them: the son of a canon remains a canon, and the son of a priest not, except he chooses later to become one. No tithes are paid to any church, they live on the large properties which the churches and monasteries possess. Complaints against the clergy [694]
are dealt with before the secular justice.

The vestment is made like a shirt, and the stole with a 292
hole in the middle, and put over the head; they have no maniple, nor amice, nor girdle; priests and friars all have [302]
their heads shaved, and the beards not. The friars say mass with their hats on their heads, and the priests with their heads bare.

In no church is more than one mass said, and no mass is 794
said for alms, not even for the dead. When any person dies, the priests come with cross and holy water and incense, and recite certain prayers for him, and carry him off to burial very hurriedly: next day they bring offerings: the churchyards are all closed, so that nothing can enter them.

Prester John has no determined place of abode, he 643
always goes about the country in tents, and he will always have in his camp five or six tents among good and common ones: and there will always be at Court of people for the 644
horses and mules from fifty thousand upwards.

The kitchen of Prester John is a good crossbow shot behind his quarters, and they bring his food in this manner: all that he has to eat comes in porringers and dishes of very black earthenware on wooden trays, and pages bring them, and above the pages come a pallium of silk, which covers them so that these viands come with reverence.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 their own. They are placed like a frize, and hung in
532 the upper part of the wall. St George is generally there with his dragon, and Demetrius fighting a lion. There is no choice in their saints; they are both of the Old and New Testament, and some that might be dispensed with from both. There is St Pontius Pilate and his wife; there is St Balaam and his ass; Samson and his jaw-bone; and so of the rest. But the thing that surprised me most was a kind of square-miniature upon the front of the head-piece, or mitre, of the priest, administering the sacrament at Adowa, representing Pharaoh on a white horse, plunging in the Red Sea, with many guns and pistols swimming upon the surface of it around him.

Nothing embossed, nor in relief, ever appears in any of the churches; all this would be reckoned idolatry, so much that they do not wear a cross, as has been represented, on the top of the ball of the sendick, or standard, because it casts a shade; but there is no doubt that pictures have been used in their churches from the very earliest age of Christianity.

● 793 The Abuna is looked upon as the patriarch of the Abyssinian church, for they have little knowledge of the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria. We are perfectly ignorant of the history of these prelates for many years after their appointment. The first of these mentioned is Abuna Tecla Haimanout, who distinguished himself by the restoration of the royal family, and the regulations he made both in the church and state, as we have seen in the history of those times. A very remarkable, but wise regulation was then made, that the Abyssinians should not have it in their power to choose one of their own countrymen as Abuna.

Wise men saw the fallen state of literature among them; and unless opportunity was given, from time to time, for their priests to go abroad to Jerusalem for their instruction, and for the purpose of bringing the

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

Abuna, Tecla Haimanout knew that very soon no set of people would be more shamefully ignorant than those priests, even in the most common dogmas of their profession. He hoped, therefore, by a considerable stipend, to tempt some men of learning to accept of this place, to give his countenance to learning and religion among them. 793

The Arabic canon*, which is preserved by the Abyssinian church, and said to be of the council of Nice, should certainly be attributed to this Abuna, and is a forgery in, or very soon after, his time; for, it is plain this canon took place about the year 1300, that it was lawful to elect an Abuna, who was a native of Abyssinia before this prohibition, otherwise it would not have been applied. Abuna Tecla Haimanout was an Abyssinian by birth, and he was Abuna; the prohibition, therefore, had not then taken place: but, as no Abyssinian was afterwards chosen, it must certainly be a work of his time; for it is impossible a canon should be made by the council of Nice, settling the rank of a bishop in a nation, which, for above 200 years after that general council, were not Christians. 793 175 779

As the Abuna very seldom understands the language, he has no share of the government, but goes to the palace on days of ceremony, or when he has any favour to ask, or complaint to make. He is much fallen in esteem from what he was formerly, chiefly from his own little intrigues, his ignorance, avarice, and want of firmness. His greatest employment is in ordinations. A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand, from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who these are? and they tell him that they want to be deacons. On this, with a small iron cross in his hand, 793

* See Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 2. No. 17.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

●793 after making two or three signs, he blows with his mouth twice or thrice upon them, saying, "Let them be deacons." I saw once all the army of Begemder made deacons, just returned from shedding the blood of 10,000 men, thus drawn up in Aylo Meidan, and the Abuna standing at the church of St Raphael, about a quarter of a mile distant from them. With these were mingled about 1000 women, who, consequently, having part of the same blast and brandishment of the cross, were as good deacons as the rest.

The same is performed with regard to monks. A crowd of people, when he is riding, will assemble within 500 yards of him, and there begin a melancholy song. He asks, who these men with beards are? they tell him they want to be ordained monks. After the same sign of the cross, and three blasts with his mouth, he orders them to be monks. But, in ordaining priests, they must be able to read a chapter of St Mark, which they do in a language he does not understand a word of. They then give the Abuna a brick of salt, to the value of perhaps sixpence, for their ordination; which, from their present given, the Jesuits maintained to be simoniacal.

The Itchegue is the chief of the monks in general, especially those of Debra Libanos. The head of the other monks, called those of St Eustathius, is the superior of the convent of Mahebar Selasse, on the N. W. corner of Abyssinia, near Kuara, and the Shangalla, towards Sennaar and the river Dender. All this tribe is grossly ignorant, and through time, I believe, will lose the use of letters entirely.

The Itchegue is ordained by two chief priests holding a white cloth, or veil, over him, while another says a prayer; and then they lay all their hands on his head, and join in psalms together. He is a man, in troublesome times, of much greater consequence

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

than the Abuna. There are, after these, chief priests 793
and scribes, as in the Jewish church: the last of these, the ignorant, careless copiers of the holy scriptures.

The monks here do not live in convents, as in Europe, but in separate houses round their church, and 793 794
each cultivates a part of the property they have in land. The priests have their maintenance assigned to them in kind, and do not labour. A steward, being a layman, is placed among them by the king, who receives all the rents belonging to the churches, and gives to the priests the portion that is their due; but neither the Abuna, nor any other churchman, has any business with the revenues of churches, nor can touch them.

The articles of the faith of the Abyssinians have 175
been inquired into and discussed with so much keen- 779
ness in the beginning of this century, that I fear I should disoblige some of my readers were I to pass this subject without notice.

Their first bishop, Frumentius, being ordained about the year 333, and instructed in the religion of the Greeks of the church of Alexandria by St Athanasius, then sitting in the chair of St Mark, it follows, that the true religion of the Abyssinians, which they received on their conversion to Christianity, is that of the Greek church; and every rite, or ceremony, in the Abyssinian church may be found and traced up to its origin in the Greek church, while both of them were orthodox.

Frumentius preserved Abyssinia untainted with heresy till the day of his death. We find, from a letter preserved in the works of St Athanasius, that Constantius, the heretical Greek emperor, wished St Athanasius to deliver him up, which that patriarch refused to do: indeed, at that time, it was not in his power.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

317 one ounce to ten of gold, which gives it a very pale colour.

N. B. This observation is sufficiently confirmed by the
703 colour of those links that still remain of the honorary gold chain conferred on Mr Bruce by the king of Abyssinia. These links are of a paler hue than a common guinea, rather coarsely made, and unpolished. Gold chains, called in Habbesh sunsulé, are a mark of dignity bestowed by the sovereign on the most meritorious persons in his army. It is usual to give a splendid suit of clothes at the same time, an Egyptian and Persian custom; vide Genesis, xli. 42. and Esther, viii. 15.

Wechne, in Belessen, is about 34 or 35 miles, a long
651 day's journey from Emfras. There is paid, to maintain the royal family on the mountain, 250 ounces gold, and 730 cloths (this means webs of cotton cloth, called shuma). This is an old establishment. None are permitted to go up but the women carrying water. There was formerly a cistern, but it is now in ruins, and useless. There are near 300 persons there; and all the exiles are allowed to marry. Bacuffa escaped by help of his sister.

● 793 Extreme unction is unknown in Abyssinia; that is, the
anointing with oil. However, when a person is attacked
792 with sickness, which threatens death, he often puts on a monk's hood, as a token that in case of recovery, he will abandon the world, and then receives the last sacrament, or rather he does so before putting it on; and it is generally the custom to distribute all his moveables to the churches, which the priests appropriate. These are traces of extreme unction. The great men ofen renounce the hood, and return to their former life.

792 N. B. The Abyssinian MS. histories are full of these instances, in which the great men, when disappointed in politics, retire to Waldubba, or other deserts, to live as monks. The distribution of goods and money made by the kings, when sick, to the churches, occurs in almost every reign. Before Yasous II. died, the Chronicle says, that he had given away every thing he had, in this way, except the crown on his head. When Joas was proclaimed, the Iteghe his grandmother wished to give a present to the poor, as usual at the begin-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

gre, drinks out of a golden cup, as keeper of the law at Axum. There are 12 nagareets in Tigre, and forty-four persons are invested with the Ras-werk. 644

Church affairs. The Abuna is appointed by proclamation of the king, and is deposed at his pleasure. He holds of no other person. He ordains priests and deacons within the kingdom, consecrates churches, altars (tabot), &c. His revevenue was once very considerable, esteemed one-third of the revenues of the kingdom; but as those princes, who made the grants, resided in Shoa, or in the south of Tigre, the principal lands are in those provinces, adjoining to the royal residence. Now, the southern provinces are all in the hands of the Galla, as well as part of Tigre, and the governor, or Ras, has assumed the rest; so that of 400 oz. of gold once paid by Tigre, the Abuna, in my time, got only twenty-five, one-third of which went to the king's wakeel in his house. The Abuna appoints no officer, civil, or ecclesiastical; the king, or governor, does all. The king appoints officers, called Alaka, who administer in all cases the revenue of churches and convents; and this person is the judge of differences and suits among the priests and monks of his church, or fraternity, from whom lies no appeal but to the King, or to the Ras, who is understood to represent him. This Alaka is, or is not, a monk, or priest, at the king's pleasure. Of those who are called monks, are the communities of Debra Libanos, or Azazo, as it is now called, Waldubba, Werkleva, Damo, Mahabar Selasse, &c. These live in villages in these places, and reside or not as they please. The rest of that name are those who are ordained on any illness, disappointment, or advanced in life. The monks are ordained by the Itchegue, the others by any ordinary priest. Neither take any vow. The women of Waldubba are of the first kind, and all women past pleasure compose the second. There are many instances of both orders renouncing and marrying. 793 794

All persons, as well ecclesiastical as civil, are subject to the same laws, judgment, and tribunal, without exception, be the cause of whatever nature it may be. The Abuna, or Itchegue, have none of them a tribunal, nor can they take cognizance of any cause; especially the Abuna, who has, as I have said, an officer in his house appointed by the king, who pu- 692

[p. 55]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

692 nishes all persons by that authority, even those of the Abuna's family, without any sort of deference paid to him; and this, as appears by the judges, or king's records, is of very ancient standing. The king calls an assembly of the clergy when he pleases, generally with the advice of the Abuna, and there is none considered legal if he is not present, if in the kingdom.

[682] Welled Hayrat (Ras Michael's son) was excommunicated for killing a refugee at the Abuna's feet, in consequence of which he confiscated the Abuna's villages in Tigre, nor was the curse ever taken off *. The Itchegue, or prior of the 693 monks, if he be chosen a lay-man, must be ordained by the 793 Abuna. He is named by the king, who nominates all superiors of monasteries. The Lika-cahanat, or chief of the priests, is ordained by the Abuna and Itchegue, who both hold a corner of a scarf put upon him. He is an inquisitor of morals among the priests, and has so much salt and cloth from each district. A priest at his ordination pays three salts to the Abuna. He comes to the house of the latter, enters, and kisses the threshold. The Abuna, sitting on a sofa at one end of the room, reads the Scriptures to himself. Then having paid his salt, the person retires and kisses the threshhold, returning without imposition of hands, or any ceremony. Old men are made priests, and young men deacons by a simple jussit. More probable accounts say, that there is only one salt paid, that the person stands at the door, while the Abuna, having made the sign of the cross, holding it in his hand, says, "I have ordained you a priest." The person then enters the room, kisses the cushion of the sofa, and retires. Many are ordained that can neither read nor write.

[764] The Abyssinians have an office for the dead; and worship 778 pictures of saints, even such as are not consecrated. This we had an opportunity of seeing, every time we were obliged to draw some Madonna. All those that saw it, kissed the 000 ground before it, with their foreheads on the earth. The

* The Abuna's house is a kind of sanctuary, in which criminals are protected from massacre, not from trial. They are sometimes tried there by the royal judges, or dragged from it to the tribunal.

[p. 56]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

175 worse should befall them, and the process was rapid and
771 simple—immersion in the nearest stream, circumcision, and generally the tying of a piece of blue silk cord round the neck.

779 The form of Christianity professed by Abyssinia is the monophysite, which was condemned as a "heresy" by the Council of Chalcedon in 450. This doctrine recognizes only one nature in Christ, against the view which has maintained itself as orthodox that the divine and human natures co-existed in him. But in spite of the thunders of Chalcedon the Abyssinians have held to their doctrine, although controversies as to a single, dual, and even threefold nature have raged in the country right up to the time of Theodore, who possessed decided views on the subject, and exercised drastic methods in giving effect to them.

793 The Church is to all intents and purposes an independent one, its only link with the Coptic Church in Egypt, on which it is nominally dependent, being the appointment by Alexandria of the Archbishop, or Abouna: he is an Egyptian, and once appointed he is supposed never to leave the country.

Tradition relates that the appointment of a foreign Abouna was laid down as a cardinal principle by the great Abyssinian ecclesiastic and national saint, Tekla Haimanot, in the thirteenth century in order to maintain connection between Abyssinia and the outside world, and to avoid internal rivalry in the nomination to the headship of the Church. Be that as it may, the Abyssinians attach considerable importance to their connection with the Alexandrian Church through their Abouna; this may be gauged from the fact that the Treaty between England, Egypt, and Abyssinia, made

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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by Admiral Sir William Hewett with King John in 1884, expressly provides that "H.H. the Khedive engages to grant all the facilities which H.M. the Negusa Negus may require in the matter of appointing Abounas for Ethiopia". 793

His is the power to crown kings, and no priest can be ordained without him. He officiates at all the big religious festivals, and his influence in the councils of state is reported to be considerable.

Mr Winwood Reade, in his book *The Martyrdom of Man*, states that "by way of blessing he (the Abouna) spits upon his congregation, who believe that the episcopal virtue resides in the saliva and not as we think in the finger-ends". I am bound to say we never saw or heard of this particular form of benediction while we were there, but even if it were so, it would not be so very surprising in view of the fact that, as everyone knows, at the baptism of children Roman Catholic priests to this day moisten their thumbs with their saliva and touch the child's nostrils therewith when they are baptizing it. 788

Up to the time of King Abreha, when the conversion of the country to Christianity took place, the head of the then existing religion was in accordance with Mosaic practice the High Priest. The nomination of a Bishop or Abouna followed, and functions were divided between the two, the Abouna being regarded as the chief in matters of religion proper, settling all questions of dogma and theology, whilst the High Priest controlled the Church staff and property. A further functionary known as the *Itcheque* was created in the thirteenth century, and duties were divided amongst these three up to the time of the Emperor 793

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

Menelik, who made the Abouna supreme head of all matters; the *Itcheque* second with residence at the great national monastery of Debra Libanos; and the High Priest third in the hierarchy.

The wealth and influence of the Church are enormous, a state of affairs due to the prescience of Tekla Haimanot, to whom reference has already been made. This remarkable man is supposed to have negotiated the restoration of the Solomonean line after three hundred years of deposition, and his modest price seems to have been a perpetual grant to the Church of one-third of the country. As a result the extent of the Church lands is tremendous: not only do monasteries, convents, and churches cover the country but great areas belong to them, and the revenues accruing therefrom are utilized to maintain an almost unbelievable number of monks, priests, and *debtera*. The numbers of these people were given to me by Abyssinians as over a million—this is of course absurd—but I was assured on good authority that over a quarter of the male population are included in these categories of parasites. And parasites they are, for they serve no useful purpose and exist on the taxes raised from the people working on the land: they do no work themselves and are even exempted from military service. They are on the whole ignorant and illiterate, for while some of them can read, very few indeed can write.

Monks are not supposed to marry: priests are allowed to marry once, and in fact do so: *debtera* are free as laymen; but I do not think that the lives of many of them could profitably be held up as examples for the people to follow.

No examination and little or no preparation seem

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

to be necessary for ordination: payment of moderate fees ranging up to $5 (about 10s. to-day) appears to be all that is required. In this direction matters do not seem to have progressed much since Bruce wrote in 1790 giving the following description of an ordination: 793

"A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who they are, and they tell him they want to be deacons (*debtera*). On this with a small iron cross on his hands after making two or three signs, he blows with his mouth twice or thrice upon them, saying, 'Let them be deacons'. I saw once all the army of Begemder made deacons, just returned from shedding the blood of 10,000 men, thus drawn up in Aylo Meidan, and the Abouna standing at the Church of St. Raphael, about a quarter of a mile distant from them. With these mingled about 1000 women, who consequently, having part of the same blast and brandishment of the Cross, were as good deacons as the rest."

It is highly regrettable in the interests of Abyssinia that the priesthood, being what they are, should exercise so much power and influence. This is no doubt attributable to a variety of causes, to tradition, wealth, land ownership, and also to the fact that they (or some of them) are the only persons in the country who understand the ancient Geze language in which the Code of Law (the *Fetha Nagast*) and other similar works are written. This gives them a great "pull", and one result is that they are an indispensable adjunct to all the judges, who are very much in their hands. 793 693 [671]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920) 1935.
MP5 Amhara MP5

793 They have always been bitterly opposed to pro-
176 gress and to innovations, more so as regards changes in their own Church than as regards the introduction into the land of alien religions, strange to say. Thus for example a learned individual, a very religious layman whom I knew, had been accused by the priests of expounding the Gospels in a manner somewhat different to that generally accepted, and as a result he was imprisoned for three years. His views on the subject of his own Church were instructive!

On the other hand they are by no means so in-
793 tolerant to other religious beliefs and efforts in the
609 country; they are not fanatical, and if left alone and not interfered with are not markedly anti-foreign. Individually I have always found them quite pleasant and friendly, and I am bound to say that Mr Wylde, who met a great many of them in various parts of the country, seemed vastly to prefer them to European missionaries. But as a body I think they are—to put it mildly—an unfortunate institution, and so far as their possessions are concerned, treatment on the lines adopted by our Henry VIII would seem to be overdue.

609 Moslems, Jews, and others practise their religion
795 in peace. I have seen religious processions of the followers of Islam on their feast days pass through the streets shouting and singing completely free from molestation, and on the occasion of my last visit I saw a mosque which was on the verge of completion being constructed in one of the principal streets of Addis Ababa.

It is rather remarkable that in spite of the bitter religious warfare in which they have been engaged for centuries Abyssinians should be so tolerant of their

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[GONDAR]

sponsored the translation of works from Arabic. Among these were *Laws of the Kings,* a collection of civil and canon laws which became the official basis for judication, and a penitential manual, *Spiritual Medicine,* the last major production in Ge'ez literature. 175* 643 517 [633]

Yohānnes also continued Fāsil's work of "purifying" the church. He decreed that descendants of the Portuguese must leave Ethiopia unless they joined the Orthodox Church and that Mualims must reside apart, either in their own villages or in ghettos. Ordained as a priest before becoming emperor, Yohānnes followed keenly the theological disputes of his day. Toward the end of his reign he convoked a synod in Gondar to discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit in Christ, the chief theological question in Ethiopian history. [798] [793] [779]

Iyāsu I, like many of Ethiopia's rulers, appears to have been moved by deep religious feeling. Describing Iyāsu's religiosity, one of the priests of Gondar wrote an eulogy a few years after his death: 175* 643 781

> The king used to stand at the window of his palace . . . and listen from his tower on high to the singing of the priests and learned men, to their gentle hymns which moistened the bones by their exceeding tenderness. When their offerings pleased him greatly he was pierced with affection for them and drawn by the harmony of their heavenly peace. For this reason . . . he would prepare for them dinners filled with delights, and bid them eat with him in his royal chambers, ornamented all about with the beauty of pure gold and wrought silver. He would take off his gold necklace and present it to them. He adorned them with garments of purple and of staffs interwoven with gold from the treasury of his kingdom. . . . None of the kings before him had done such as he, and none of the clergy of yore had been treated as were his priests and learned men. After the dinners, the king and his priests together sang hymns of joy and jubilation all night long in the palace—in their time of pleasure, in the sweetness of divine ministry.[8]

Iyāsu the Great did much to establish Gondar as the most important center of religious culture in Ethiopia. To this end he brought outstanding priests and learned men from all over the country to his capital. From Gojjam, for example, he brought the great master of religious verse, Kīflē Yohānnes, whose lines are remembered even today. The number of teachers in Gondar in his time exceeded five hundred; there were one hundred and fifty at his church Dabra Berhān Selassie alone.* It was under Iyāsu I that the classic subject matter of the higher religious studies in Abyssinia—*zēmā* ("religious 175* 643 633 517

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* Dabra Berhān Selassie, one of the two churches built by Iyāsu I, is the only one of the original churches of Gondar which survived later conflagrations of the city. The original paintings which covered its walls have been preserved, as well as the remarkable ceiling from which rows of wide-eyed angels look down from between wooden beams. The church provides separate places for nobility and commoners, and a balcony for the emperor. [346]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

kindles artistic expression, so the poet could wax eloquent over Gondar's decadence at the close of the eighteenth century: 175* 633 517 538 [539]

> Beautiful from its beginnings, Gondar, hope of the wretched!
> And hope of the great, Gondar, without measure or bounds!
> O dove of John, Gondar, generous-hearted, mother!
> Gondar, never bowed by affliction!
> Gondar, with its merry name!
> Gondar, seat of prosperity and of savoury food!
> Gondar, dwelling of King Iyāsu and of mighty Bakāffā!
> Gondar, which emulated the city of David, the land of Salem!
> She will be a myth unto eternity.
> How is it she has been destroyed like Sodom, and without any guilt?[9]

So, while the reputation of the Gondar monarchy grew dim, that of the town as a center for religious studies continued unabated. Gondar was the most famous place in the country for instruction in art, music, dance, poetry, and the great books of the Ethiopian Church, and young men continued to travel great distances to drink at such sources. The descendants of royalty somehow made their adjustment. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Arnauld d'Abbadie finds them making paintings and illuminating manuscripts. 175* 633 517 53

At this late date, one more personality of stature emerges from Gondar. This time it is not a king but a *dabtarā*, or man of religious learning—Alaqā Gabra Hānnā. Gabra Hānnā was born in the district of Foggarā on the east coast of Lake Ṭānā. His pursuit of religious studies as a youth took him to Gondar, where he did well and before long became a teacher in the church of Ba'ātā Māryām. Subsequently he was made head of the church, receiving the customary title of *alaqā*. 175* 159 793 633

While at Ba'ātā, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā invented a new style of dance for the clergy. In the traditional style of *aquāquām*, the bodies and sticks of the dancers move up and down, punctuating the flow of chant with alternately gradual and abrupt vertical movements. Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, inspired by the lateral movement of the waves at Lake Ṭānā and of the bamboo reeds in the breeze at its shore, taught that bodies and sticks should sway from side to side. This innovation was rejected by the conservative clergy at Gondar, but it was carried by his son Taklē to Dabra Tābor and from there spread elsewhere. [535] [178]

Alaqā Gabra Hānnā became most famous, however, for his quick and biting wit. So prolific and beloved were his witticisms that in a collection of some three hundred old parables and anecdotes published in Addis Ababa in 1955, no fewer than 25 per cent are devoted to stories about him.[10] After reaching prominence through his teachings and sayings, Alaqā Gabra Hānnā [214] [538]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 633 left Gondar for Shoa, where he became a favorite at the court of Emperor Menelik.

[159] [193] Alaqā Gabra Hānnā was not the only one to leave Gondar in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Conditions there had become increasingly miserable. In 1866 Tēwodros, angered by the opposition of the Gondarē clergy to his plans for unifying the country through a standing national army, turned his wrath against them into a fearful pillage of the churches of Gondar.* The next emperor, Takla Giyorgis, worked feverishly to rebuild Gondar during his few years in power (1869–72). It was to no avail. In 1887 a large army of dervishes invaded Ethiopia from the Sudan and sacked Gondar, destroying it more completely than had Tēwodros.

*175 633 643 648

The priests and monks who survived carried on. Gondar remained an important center for instruction in *aquāquām* and *tergum*, though Gojjam became more important for the study of *qenē* and other schools in Bagemder and Tigre for the study of *zēmā*. The civil order, however, was thoroughly demoralized. Gondarēs left in large numbers for the countryside or made their way to Lāstā and more distant provinces.

*175 633 643 648

At the time of the dervish invasion, the churchmen of Gondar appealed to Emperor Yohānnes for succor. The text of their message—the last utterance from the old capital—began as follows:

> O master! The heathen have come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Gondar in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Dambiyā; and there was none to bury them.[11]

Yohānnes responded at once. It was to revenge defenseless Gondar that he led the expedition against the dervishes which cost him his life, thereby leaving the way open for the accession of the House of Manz.

The Role of Manz

131 133

Manz is a rugged rural area of about 850 square miles located in the northeast horn of Shoa Province.[12] It lies on a broad plateau at a height of ten thousand feet above sea level. This plateau is crosscut by a number of rivers which flow westerly to become part of the great Blue Nile Basin. The valleys of the rivers are flanked by fairly abrupt cliffs, which make travel from one part of Manz to another slow going. These rivers form boundaries between the geographical divisions within Manz, which is divided into three major parts: Māmā Meder in the south, Lālo Meder in the center, and Gērā Meder in the north. The entire area of Manz is itself bounded by steep mountains.[13]

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* Fortunately he preserved hundreds of manuscripts from Gondar's churches which eventually found their way to the British Museum after the Napier Expedition against Tēwodros in 1868.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax
18 and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

633 *Gondar Today*

177 A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was
648 made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

633 After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953
[874] with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college.
[648] The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utilities as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty
[162] thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

633 With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a
871 modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aquāquām*
178 and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

633 Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine
971 church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen.
793 The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tical character of Gondar has been implanted deeply enough so that one young Gondarē, commenting on the absence of dance halls such as are found in other Ethiopian cities, remarked: "This place is one big monastery."

In accord with Haile Selassie's program of centralization, the chief provincial administrators in Gondar are not local men. This has created a subtle problem for the national government. The Gondarēs cannot forget that their city was the capital of Ethiopia for more than two hundred years. They view the Shoans as political upstarts and love to refer to the Shoan Amhara as "Galla." As a result, Shoans in high offices at Gondar have found themselves boycotted by the natives. Their wishes have frequently been ignored by local subordinates or the local populace. They have not been invited to take part in the social life of the Gondarēs. All this has made the lot of Shoan emissaries in Gondar frustrating and lonely.

In order to increase the Gondarē's identification with the national government, its representatives in Gondar have tried in various ways to assert the symbolic supremacy of Addis Ababa. The traditional site for celebrating the festival of Masqal—the great sycamore near Fāsil's castle—has been shifted to the modern Haile Selassie I Square. An imposing sculpture is to be placed over the tomb of Nagāssi, and a principal street in Gondar has been named after him. Plans are afoot to outshine the traditional marketplace with one enhanced by modern facilities, to be named Haile Selassie I Market.

Despite the evident satisfaction with which one Shoan administrator noted that "the Gondarēs are not so proud any more," even for Shoa's purposes the traditional prestige of Gondar cannot be completely eradicated. The government gains much profit by extolling Ethiopia's long history. The flight to Gondar has become a standard part of the itinerary for foreign dignitaries. Gondar remains, after the stelae of Aksum and the monoliths of Lalibela, the most impressive visible reminder of the Ethiopian past.

Manz Today

The accession of the House of Manz to the throne of Ethiopia has given Manz much prestige in the national capital. Because Menelik and his successors filled the government with people from their home area, numerous higher officials of the imperial Ethiopian government are also of Manzē origin. Partly for these reasons, partly because of their scanty knowledge of Ethiopian geography, many Ethiopians born and raised in Addis Ababa claim to be of Manzē ancestry, even though their families may in fact have come from Merhābētē or Bulgā or other parts of Shoa.

Due to the close tie between the present imperial family and the homeland of Manz, a special affection persists between Haile Selassie and the Manzēs. The latter are said to have a standing invitation at the palace, including the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

drastic changes on the familiar natural order. Insofar as there is a special affect regarding nature, it takes the form of a sentimentalization of the useful—as in the great respect felt for young cattle, the thrill aroused by the sight of newly sprouted grain, and the deep nostalgia about one's land. 565* 82

The Supernatural

The peasant's conception of God is closer to that of the learned clergy than is his cosmology, since the Abyssinian clergy have tended to avoid systematic theology, believing that to probe too deeply into the nature of God verges on blasphemy. Abyssinians view God above all as *mystery*. 565* 776 [793] [779]

Nevertheless, they do have a sense of the various attributes of their God. God is the creator of the world. He is, as the name *Egziābhēr* signifies, Lord of the earth; and He is Lord of the seas, Lord of the King of Kings, and Lord of the angels. He is eternal and possesses knowledge without limit.

The Amhara peasant has a keen awareness that wherever one goes, God is there. "If you say no one is looking," goes an Amharic saying, "still God will see you." This consciousness of God's presence is reflected in the habit of referring to God scores of times every day. A number of common expressions contain references to God:

For greeting and farewell	"May He give you health for me."
For showing gratitude	"May God give you for me."
For responding to queries about one's health	"God be praised!"
For thanksgiving after meals	"Be praised, my Lord!"
For swearing by a statement that has been challenged	"By God! By the Savior!"

Prayers to God are spoken on numerous occasions. God's blessing is sought when an animal is slaughtered, when a group of people sits to eat, when a new house is begun, and when it is completed. Each day begins with a prayer something like this: "May He cause me to spend the day in peace. May He keep trouble from me. May He pardon my sins." When the peasant begins planting, he also prays: "God bless the seed; feed me, keeping birds away from it; bless it for the mouth of man." 565* 782 776

It is probably the attribute of God's omnipotence, however, that appears most vivid to the Amhara mind. Everything that happens reflects His active will. The thunder expresses His anger, a flood the visitation of His wrath upon the sinful. He is ever active, bringing births and deaths, prosperity and hunger, leading one traveler to safety and another to disaster. He controls the homeliest details of everyday life. One boy, troubled that he was not selling his goods in the market, confessed that God must be angry with him about something. Another, asked what he wanted to do the following year, replied: 565* 776

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have resulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a complete adult, a *mulu sēt* or *mulu saw*.

885 [851] [586] [587]

From Generation to Generation

867 Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profession of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

[577] [779]

867 779 785 262 577 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout maturation. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

867 779 793 577 At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

[785] [688]

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tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than
he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bālagē* ("rude"), a trait which [861]
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [155] [571]

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a different identity. Religion and warfare were the two spheres most likely to 156
attract him. Although trade and manual arts were possibilities for those whose 554
industry exceeded their status-consciousness, they were considered the busi- 463
ness of other ethnic groups and normally rejected by a self-respecting Am- [461]
hara. When the Amhara youth left home for a new life, he was usually heading either for the school of some church teacher or the quarters of some chieftain.

Today, as in former times, the role of priest is known from childhood as 793 •
a possible model for the peasant boy. He and his companions often imitate 554
the clergy and their ceremonies in their play. The wish to become a priest 156
is kindled by a number of interests—desire for the material benefits accorded [178]
the clergy; curiosity about the mysteries of the church; envy of the great prestige of the clergy; hope for a better chance of going to heaven after death. During adolescence the outlook of the boy who seeks to become a priest [883]*
deviates from that of the *goramsä* described above. Instead of the shrill, blood-heating *shillala* war chants he prefers the gentle hymns of the church; instead of the frenzied dancing and singing of the young braves he prefers the schooled dance of the clergy; instead of pursuing women, he is inclined to turn his head the other way when a girl appears.

The military alternative does not seem to be an ideal of Amhara children. 701
They rarely see soldiers; and when they did in former times, it was usually 156
in the unhappy circumstance of seeing the family's reserves plundered. It is 554
not until the time of puberty and after that the great upsurge of aggressive instinct has turned the thoughts of many an Amhara youth to fighting. Chafing under parental domination or bristling with resentment because of being an illegitimate offspring or a stepchild, he may be anxious to turn his hostility against some enemy. He may imagine the free life of a soldier more attractive than the drudgery of the peasant's lot. In the days of feudal armies, he may have heard news about some warlord on the rise and thus have hopes, by attaching himself as a follower, of winning booty and the laurels of a hero, perhaps eventually the powers of a chieftain.

Whether the peasant boy chooses church school or the warpath, his move 565
has frequently been an all-or-none move. The peasant boy can do nothing 593
without the consent of his father, and normally his father will not permit him 463
to do anything except carry on the farmwork and prepare himself to care for 156
his parents in their old age and to inherit the family land. If there should be some sign that the son does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, the latter will do everything he can short of disinheritance—and ofttimes that—to persuade him otherwise.

And so, some restless day, eyes fixed on some alluring goal, the Amhara youth might run away and not be seen again. If he should return, it would

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It was at this time that the *maḳuānnent* came into their own. More unabashedly than ever they constituted, not a hereditary aristocracy in corporate opposition to the king, but a plurality of proud centers of rank—partly inherited, partly achieved—enjoying virtual autonomy. To move toward a modern nation it would be necessary to brake their centrifugal force. 175 565 642

The Clergy

Like the nobility, the clergy may be divided into those who are significant at the national level and those who are primarily local dignitaries. The former reside close to the imperial court, while the latter are thickly distributed around monasteries, churches, and wildernesses all over the country. 793 792

The highest ecclesiastical authority in Abyssinia was the *abuna* who, from the time of Frumentius in the fourth century until the death of Abuna Qerlos in 1949, was with few exceptions an appointee of the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria. Chosen from the Egyptian monks of the convent of St. Anthony near the Red Sea, the *abuna* was brought, at great expense to the emperors, to live out his life in an alien land. Ignorant of the language and customs of the country, he played little part in the conduct of church affairs or in affairs of court; and when he did try to do so, his efforts were usually abruptly checked by jealous clerics and suspicious kings. His functions were purely ritual, but indispensable: he alone had authority to anoint and crown the emperor, to confer orders, and to absolve vows. From numerous revenues, rents, and fees, the *abuna* enjoyed a considerable income. Like the emperor, he was regarded as sacred because of the charisma of his office, and spent most of his time secluded from the public.[89]

Second in rank was the *eçhagē*, an appointment made by the emperor. This was the traditional title of the abbot of the convent of Dabra Libānos in Shoa, which in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gained hegemony over Abyssinian monasticism. The *eçhagē* served as administrative head of the church and had jurisdiction over all monks and monasteries. The most esteemed of the Ethiopian clergy, he tended to wield more actual power than the *abuna*. His provincial deputies, called *liqa ḳāhenāt*, controlled the secular clergy. This office was also bestowed by the emperor, and its functions included presenting candidates for ordination and deciding questions of protocol in connection with religious ceremonies.

In addition to these supreme dignitaries of the church, a small number of churchmen enjoyed pre-eminent status by virtue of their activities at the imperial court. These included the *aqābē sa'āt* ("guardian of the [canonical] hours"), the chief ecclesiastic at court, and during part of the reign of Zar'a Yā'qob the only official with unrestricted access to the king; the *qēs hāṭsē* ("king's chaplain"); the *liqa dabtarā* ("chief of the *dabtarā*"); and *liqa mammerān* ("chief of the learned men"). These four served as the four su- 793 644 [693]

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• 793 preme judges at the royal court, and the *aqābē sa'āt* ranked third—in some
644 lists, first—in the official order of precedence of all court dignitaries.[40]
[693] One other church dignitary, finally, was the *nebra ed*, chief of the sacred district of Aksum, who always enjoyed a high position at the royal court. When appointed by the emperor (instead of by the provincial governor who sometimes possessed that authority), the *nebra ed* enjoyed the rare privilege of being permitted to sit while speaking in the event of his involvement in litigation.

793 The status of the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries was based on approxi-
554 mately the same factors as those which determined the status of secular nobility: royal favor; family background, in the case of those whose fathers were important nobles or noted churchmen; and the possession of wealth, political power, and imposing titles.[41] The same was true of their regional counterparts, the *alaqā*, "chiefs" of large churches and monasteries, whose wealth, power, and leisurely mode of life gave them, in Plowden's opinion, "perhaps the most enviable position in Abyssinia."[42]

793 The status of the clergy as a whole, however, rested on three other prin-
792 ciples which are not affected by royal favor, birth, or worldly possessions.
554 These were: contact with the most sacred symbols of religious authority; ascetic piety; and religious learning. Broadly speaking, in Abyssinia these three principles have been embodied primarily in three distinct roles, namely, those of priest, monk, and *dabtārā*.

793 A normal preparation for these roles—necessarily so, in the case of the
794 priesthood—is service as a deacon. Ability to read is, now as before, a requisite qualification for the diaconate, but that requirement has in the past often been overlooked. More important has been the requirement of ordination by the *abuna*. Ordination formerly took place in the company of hundreds of other aspirants and, when there was uncertainty about the future availability of an *abuna*, even babes in arms were admitted.[43]

794 The traditional garb of the deacon is a yellowish cape made of sheepskins,
292 though on holidays the officiating deacons may be dressed in richly colored silk robes like the priests. The duties of the deacon—and they are accounted great and secret privileges—are to prepare the sacramental bread, fetch the holy water, and assist at the Mass (the performance of which normally requires two priests and three deacons).

793 On reaching puberty a deacon is no longer supposed to serve in the church,
794 for fear that he will become "impure." At that time he may decide to prepare for the priesthood. For this two qualifications must be met. He must have completed his study of reading and, ideally, of *zēmā*, the chants that are intoned in the liturgy of the Mass. These matters he may learn from the older clergy during his service as a deacon, or from his father, who, in many cases, is a priest himself. Otherwise, he goes off in search of a master. He

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builds a tiny thatch hut near the home of his tutor, wears ragged, unsheared 793
sheepskins, and gets his meals by begging. He lives thus for a year or two, 794
until he has mastered the fourteen varieties of chants used in the various masses, and perhaps special chants like the *Praise of Mary* (*Weddässē Māryām*) which are sung on holidays.

The other, and more important, qualification for the priesthood is marriage according to the law of the church. After a deacon has been married in the customary manner and lived with his wife for at least forty days, their marriage must be solemnized by the celebration of the Eucharist. Thereafter he may not divorce her or remarry if she dies.

With these conditions satisfied, the candidate for priesthood may travel to 793
the *abuna* and be ordained. He acquires thereby the power to bind and to absolve, and is granted full knowledge of the mysteries of the *tābot*. The new priest attaches himself to a church, and is given his share of the monthly assignments for conducting the Mass. This is his main responsibility, though as he grows older he will also acquire confessants to whom he will give advice and assign penances.

Apart from these duties, the life of an Abyssinian priest in many ways resembles that of his lay neighbors. He plows his fields and harvests his crops. He may do business at the markets, or add to his income by weaving. Perhaps the chief difference in his manner of life is the habit of spending time in the "gate of peace," a little building near the church where the clergy assemble after services for hours of drinking *ṭallā* and idle conversation.

In reward for his services—and this is normally the chief inducement to become a priest—the priest is given a share of the revenues in kind brought in from lands owned and managed by the church. He may also be given some land owned by the church to cultivate for himself. In addition, he [431]
receives gifts in kind from his confessants periodically, is entitled to take part in the various feasts to which priests are regularly invited, and is likely to receive some bequest from time to time.*

The insignia of the priest are modest, but they suffice to inform the stranger 793
that here is a man to be shown special respect: a white turban wrapped 292
around the head and a cross carried in the hand, to be kissed by all comers. 293
Older priests often carry a fly-whisk made of horsehair, and a wicker sun 778
umbrella.

Though there are devout and kindly men among them, the Ethiopian 793
priests have never been particularly noted for their moral qualities. Often they are ungenerous and scheming, and ready to exploit their position at the expense of the laity. They are poorly educated in their own tradition, stuttering

* A sheep, or at least a sheepskin—insurance that the Memorial Mass will be properly performed on the fortieth day after the donor's death.

793 and misreading sacred texts in a language they have never understood. They
[293] are notorious drinkers, so much so that a modern Ethiopian novelist has one of his characters, a priest, ask: "If one stops drinking, what else is left in this world?"[44]

Nevertheless, the prestige of the priests was unassailable in Ambara culture. Whatever their personal life, they represented the value of ritual sanctity, which made it possible for the Mass to be performed in the local churches. So long as they had been duly ordained and did not break their lawful marriage bond, they were part of a sacred class. Combes and Tamisier remarked upon this in the 1830's:

> Despite all their vices, these priests manage to make themselves respected; when they pass along the roads, the faithful bow deeply to them, and in no matter what gathering they appear, everyone rises and hurries to kiss their hands.[45]

793 Privileged contact with the sacred symbols of the church—ordination by the
798 sacrosanct *abuna*, exclusive access to the *tābot*, and officiation at the Eucharist —gave the priests an authority that was independent both of political dispensation and of personal accomplishment.

793 Other groups within the clergy have been highly esteemed for quite differ-
792 ent reasons. Those who become monks carry great weight because they embody the virtue of ascetic piety. The *dabtarā*, on the other hand, are respected for their erudition.

792 Monks usually come from two kinds of background: unwed deacons desiring to spend their lives as monks, and priests whose wives have died. But previous ecclesiastical connection is not necessary for the monastic calling, nor is the ability to read required. The essential qualification is the willingness to renounce the world. The word for becoming a monk (*manakwasa*) means to renounce earthly things. A prospective monk may be of the sort described by one of Walker's informants:

> An old man who has married many wives and divorced them one by one, may say, "Henceforth it suffices me! Let the world remain lost to me! I am to turn my face to God!"[46]

In earlier times the monastic life was sought by men from all walks of life, including lords, soldiers, even emperors, in consequence of some grievous affliction, or perhaps a vow made in time of trouble, or excessive *Weltschmerz*.

Heads of monasteries have the jurisdiction to confer the monastic status. One who desires this status bequeathes his worldly possessions and goes
[292] through a ceremony in the church in which his body is declared dead. The symbol of the monastic state is a little cloth skullcap (*askēma*). Once he has become a monk, an Ethiopian is a legal nonentity. This frees him from all

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tax obligations and any debts he may have incurred, for which advantage many have become monks for other than spiritual motives.[47]

No specific duties or obligations are required of a monk. Abyssinian monks have spent their years in a variety of ways. One extreme is anchoritism. Many have become hermits, feeding only on roots and herbs, and have sought even greater self-mortification by such practices as standing for long periods in icy water or wearing iron girdles lined with points. Others have lived somewhat closer to human society, wandering about the country as mendicants or making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Others have attached themselves, for shorter or longer periods, to monasteries, spending long periods in prayer and fasting and doing some humble work like collecting wood or, if formerly a priest, assisting at the Mass with the other priests. A few have proselytized in non-Christian areas. Some monks, on the other hand, have left the world only to rejoin it at a higher level. These become advisers to grandees or themselves serve as governors of districts.

Whatever the shortcomings of individual monks, the monastic calling as a whole has enjoyed the highest esteem in Ethiopia. Monks have exerted a great influence on the thinking and behavior of the people. Itinerant hermits have harangued the people to live more pious lives. The counsel of monks has been of help to rulers in time of trouble. The prophecies of monks have been influential in setting the pattern of hopes and fears about the future.

The role of the *dabtarā* is quite different. The *dabtarā*'s combination of functions is unusual—he is at once chorister, poet, dancer, herbologist, scribe, and wizard. It is also remarkable that so indispensable a functionary in the Ethiopian Church has no formal position in the church hierarchy.

With its characteristic forbearance toward human frailty, Amhara culture has established in the *dabtarā* a religious vocation in which special knowledge is required but holiness is not expected. The vocation is thus sought by those who do not care to be bound by the strict conditions of the priesthood, or by priests who have found these conditions too much to live with, so have been divorced or remarried. Recruitment into the role is informal: there are no rites of ordination, nor is there any particular point at which a man becomes or ceases to be a *dabtarā*.

Becoming a *dabtarā* mainly entails a course of study beyond that minimal level required for the priests. The full course of traditional studies includes the vast corpus of religious chants; *āquāquām* ("religious dance"); Ge'ez grammar and *qenē;* and study of some two dozen religious books. Mastery of the entire curriculum, which takes at least twenty to thirty years according to traditional methods of pedagogy, is rarely accomplished. In addition the student acquires other knowledge sub rosa from private tutors: knowledge of writing, preparation of magic formulae, and the use of herbs.

• 793 The *dabtarā*'s way of life is more variable than that of the monk, his possibilities for income more diverse than those of the priest. He may be attached to a church as a chorister and receive a share of the church's revenues, as do the priests. Or he may donate his services to the church and earn his living [212] by secular employment. He may work as a scribe at the court of a king or nobleman. He may spend most of his time teaching, gaining support from some large church or monastery. Like many priests he may cultivate land. [434] In any case, he is likely to derive some income from the sale of amulets and from medical therapies. Some *dabtarā* are even said to have wandered about the country as hunters, performing magical services for clients as they go.

Dabtarā are not set off from the populace by special insignia. Some wind [292] a turban around their heads, as do many priests; but others may dress like ordinary peasants. If holding more prestigious posts they may be seen with fly-whisks or wearing a *burnoz*. But they are known by the people, who fear and respect them. They are feared because of their magical powers, which [789] are believed capable of rendering bullets harmless and turning *ïnjarā* to dust. [554] They are respected because of their learning, for they are the only educated status group in traditional Amhara society. If the commoner's relatively [195] impulsive *manner* of speaking is contrasted with the quiet reserve of the nobility, his relatively simple *language* is contrasted with that of the *dabtarā*, who is noted for a studied and circumspect use of language (*qāla-dabtarā*) and for larding his Amharic with literary (i.e., Ge'ez) expressions (*ya-dabtarā amärïññā*).

793 554 183 In the case of the religious elite, then, status is in all cases achieved. While there is a natural tendency for sons of priests and *dabtarā* to follow their fathers' example, they arrive at the status in question only by fulfilling the same norms that are applied to the sons of laymen. These norms, however, differ among the different groups within the clergy. Investiture by an authority emanating from the seat of religious charisma, the Alexandrine Patriarchate, and the related ritual requirement of marriage with Communion, were the basis of priestly status, almost irrespective of the personal attainments of the candidate. Personal attainments were *all* that mattered, on the other [792] hand, in the case of monk and *dabtarā*, but they differed radically for the two statuses.

793 792 554 The qualifications and characters of monks and *dabtarā* are almost diametrically opposed. The monastic state is entered only by means of a sacred rite; the *dabtarā* is in no way ordained, and might even be a "defrocked" priest. The monk's life is normally given to sensual renunciation; the *dabtarā* is normally an acknowledged sensualist (as appears, for example, in the proverb *ḳo-mesā ya-taläya dabtarā / yädärgäl serā* ["a *dabtarā* who is kept from lunch / will work intrigues"][48] and in stories which celebrate the *dabtarā*'s use of his knowledge for private erotic ends). In the monk the virtue

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of ascetic piety is stressed at the expense of knowledge. The monk need not even know how to read, though if a lifelong monk he is likely to have devoted much time to traditional studies. The *dabtarā*, by contrast, lives by his lore and his learning. At his best, the Abyssinian monk conveys a real sense of spiritual purity, of profound mystical bearing, of an utterly mild manner. The *dabtarā*, at his best, is a subtle conversationalist and an operator of wondrous effects.*

Thus, while the status of members of the old nobility was a compound resultant of simultaneously operating criteria—family and region, royal favor and accumulated power—the several criteria relevant to the status of the clergy operated more or less independently. This made the religious elite a more differentiated stratum.

This statement need be qualified only by the fact that, in addition to the considerations of ritual purity, ascetic piety, and traditional learning, a fourth factor influenced the status of the clergy, namely, royal favor as expressed in appointments to the high ecclesiastical offices. This factor crosscut the others, for such favor was dispensed to members of all three status groups. The *eçhagē* was always a monk; the *aqābē sa'āt* would seem to have been a *dabtarā;* the post of *alaqā* could be given to members of all three groups.

Just how these types of local clergy were related to the clergy at the national level in the traditional order is a question that is difficult to answer. In any case, it is likely that there were conflicts among their representatives in the competition for royal favor. In the fourteenth century, the ecclesiastics of the royal entourage included only secular clergy, and their deportment was sharply criticized by Eçhagē Fileppos, who charged that "those who live in the dwelling of the Sovereign, go about proudly in subtle raiment and with ornaments of gold and silver—perishables—and are very arrogant."[49] However, once Zar'a Yā'qob had established the custom of bringing members of the convent of Dabra Libānos to the court, the monastic order was always well represented in the royal entourage as well. In the present period one sometimes hears of competition among the different groups for influence in

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* The association of impious properties with the main representative of traditional religious learning may be seen as an expression of the Abyssinian's ambivalence toward knowledge as such. The whole tenor of Ethiopian Orthodox religion runs counter to ratiocination and inquiry. It stresses mystery and discourages curiosity with tales like that of the man who tried to probe the mystery of the Trinity and was swallowed up by the earth—a tale commonly told to students who are learning to read. For this reason Orthodox students have frequently been quite upset by the rational theodicy taught by the Jesuit fathers at the University College.

As observed in the previous chapter, moreover, it was traditionally believed that too much learning results in madness, a belief no doubt based on the fact that older church students often drink a certain medicine to quicken their mental faculties, which sometimes deranges them (as the author has witnessed). The *dabtarā*, for their part, would seem to have thrived on this belief, benefiting from the exclusive powers and privileges gained from their esoteric knowledge.

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the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis*, a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478-94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

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FIG. 27.—A dasera

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FIG. 28.—Group of Jabarti

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FIG. 29.—An old priest

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innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amda Ṭseyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum.

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[61] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas.

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest.

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

792 did erupt between the secular and religious powers. In that event both groups
• 793 had recourse to powerful weapons: the former, violence; the latter, excom-
643 munication. The history of Ethiopia records numerous instances of the flog-
578 ging or execution of clergy by secular authorities. The action of Fāsiladas
[795] (1632-67), who reportedly "caused seven thousand priests to be thrown head-
long from the top of the mountain Balbau for having revolted against him,"[62] would represent but one of the more extreme instances of such violent retribution. Short of violence, the kings at least had other means at their disposal for controlling the clergy: the power to withhold benefices, the right to imprison church officials, the final authority on doctrinal questions, and the ability to block a united front on the part of the clergy by pitting high church officials against each other.

792 On the other hand, infringement on the rights of churches and monasteries,
793 gross civil injustice, or radical departure from religious tradition could on
578 occasion evoke surprisingly effective retaliation by the clergy. D'Abbadie provides some extremely illuminating passages on this matter, from which the following have been extracted:

> More than once have I been present at debates of this nature; I have seen these men of the church, weak and without arms amidst men of war, pleading in the name of the law, indicting the menacing covetousness of the surrounding soldiery, invoking eloquently reprobation against their powerful adversaries, and leading them to disavow themselves that force which constituted their pride. . . .
>
> In the case of an open violation of an asylum, the regular clergy got aroused; the most venerable monks abandoned their solitude, assembled the pariah clergy, went into the camps, and generally they obtained justice. When the real culprit was the Dajāzmītch, they brought him to repentance, or else excommunicated him, threatened his servants with anathema if they continued to serve him, put the province under interdict and, aided by the monks of the neighboring provinces, stirred up national reprobation against him.[63]

792 The clergy had other resources which it could employ against the emperor
793 himself. It could influence royal policy through highly placed advisers.
578 Through the *abuna* it could exact certain promises from a prospective em-
643 peror as a condition of coronation. Perhaps most important, the clergy could, through its hold over public opinion, turn the populace against the sovereign. As we have seen, this power proved decisive in the encounters between church and monarch in the reigns of Za Dengel and Susneyos, and contributed significantly to the downfall of Tēwodros and Lījj Iyāsu.

643 While therefore the emperor may well have been "supreme in all causes,
792 ecclesiastical and civil," he was far from being the sole, or even the decisive,
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

source of the influence enjoyed by the clergy. The latter constituted a largely autonomous status group which no emperor could afford to antagonize indefinitely. The attempt to build a more powerful central government and introduce cultural reforms thus required some alteration of their independent status as well as that of the old nobility.

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THE FEUDAL ORDER IN TRANSITION

The Decline of the Old Nobility

It must always have been the policy of the Ethiopian emperors, except for those few who did not relish the political side of their office, to seek to maximize their control over the regional nobility. They did this, we have seen, either by granting land, power, and rank to men who were completely dependent on them, or else by controlling, through military and diplomatic means, those lords whose birthright and regional strength gave them strong claims to their positions.

175 631 565 643 642

During the past century, however, the idea of subordinating regional nobles to imperial control has come to be conceived more radically and has become the core of a slowly emerging ideal of a modern nation-state. Some such vision was certainly behind the tortuous career of Tēwodros II, whose policy was a reaction against the desperate disunity which the Age of the Princes brought to Abyssinia and to the growing threat from foreign powers. In Plowden's official report to the British government in 1855, he described Tēwodros' work as follows:

> The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated. He has placed soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish: thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains, more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility—a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.[84]

The task of displacing the great feudal chiefs proved to be scarcely less arduous in Ethiopia than in Europe, however. Tēwodros' high hopes were shattered against the opposing forces of regional ambitions and clerical disaffection. The national unity he won through conquest and reform did not survive to the end of his reign.

Yohānnes IV (1871–89) likewise aimed at uniting the nation, but was distracted from serious internal reform by the need to fight off the encroach-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

directed peasantry, and suffer the consequences, no dynamic program of agricultural and social development can take place in Abyssinian areas that does not enlist the active cooperation of the local *bälābbät* and *shum*.* 178 565 554

The Decline of the Clergy

Although the church was instrumental in bringing Rās Tafari to power—by relieving the nobles of their oath of allegiance to Lïjj Iyāsu—it was as a whole not sympathetic to his policy once he began to rule. Foremost champions of tradition, the clergy viewed with suspicion Rās Tafari's interest in modern education and other reforms. So pronounced was their conservatism that his weekly *Berhānennā Salām* found it newsworthy to report the fact that the clergy of one important provincial church were actually reading the Addis Ababa newspaper each week.[67] He was wise to act gingerly at first, limiting ecclesiastical reform to such matters as publishing religious texts in Ge'ez and Amharic, and encouraging the work of foreign missionaries. 178 643 795 793 [797]

In the past three decades, however, changes of many sorts have had the effect of reducing the degree of independent authority which the clergy traditionally enjoyed. These changes included the achievement of independence from the Alexandrian Patriarchate; the weakening of the church under the Italian occupation; subjection of church administration to the central government; and competition from the secular government schools.

Rās Tafari initiated the policy of seeking independence from Alexandria in 1929, when he secured the investiture of five Ethiopian bishops. This gave indigenous clergy, for the first time, the right to ordain priests and deacons, although they remained subordinate to the Egyptian archbishop. In 1950 an Ethiopian bishop, the *eçhagē*, was consecrated as archbishop; and in 1958, culminating Haile Selassie's patient and skillful negotiations, complete autonomy from Alexandria was achieved.

The attainment of ecclesiastical independence has heightened the prestige of national church officials in Ethiopia. It has brought about a re-organization of the national church hierarchy, in which fifteen bishops now hold office, one for each of the fourteen provinces, and one in Jerusalem. At the same time it has reduced the effective freedom of the clergy as a separate status group. Deprived of the external source of legitimacy which the Egyptian *abuna* formerly provided, the clergy are now entirely subordinated to the power of the Emperor. This condition was formally articulated in the Constitution of 1955, which made the election and appointment of archbishops and bishops 178 795 793 [643] [642]

* A potentially significant medium of communication between them and the central government is the Chamber of Deputies, which since 1957 has brought popularly elected notables from the provinces to Addis Ababa.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Ambara MP5

178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

648 795 793 [792] The general position of the church had already been weakened by the events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 795 793 [643] [651] Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 871 658 793 The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever government schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full-[965] time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 178 [554] [871] [658] Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite

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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Ye-dam Demṭṭ*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuānnent*, Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 30.—*A widower who has become a monk*

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FIG. 31.—*A group of clergy*

[P. 206-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 live near the same master, they divide up the neighboring countryside to
571 avoid duplication in their begging.
181 The ordained clergy are themselves given to begging, for items ranging
735 from contributions to the local church to petty personal effects. High-ranking
• [193] visitors to their locale are customarily made the objects of such solicitations.
[533] Another type of begging is practiced by the minstrels who wander about the country with their one-stringed fiddles and fecund wit, coaxing contributions from any audience they can capture. In addition to these there are numerous professional beggars—the maimed, the diseased, and the poverty-stricken—who attach themselves to a well-attended church or monastery if they are unable to travel. The *lālibalā* is a notable type within this category of mendicants.[28]

[527] In addition to honoring the periodic appeals of beggars, "big men" are supposed to provide yearly feasts (*gēber*) at which beggars of all the above descriptions are fed. In all these instances, the solicitation and bestowal of charity contributes a solidaristic element to the network of personal relations among the Amhara.

*121 The foregoing analysis of forms of interaction among the Amhara has
181 been undertaken in order to gain material for generalizing about a psycho-
156 logical disposition. Our unspoken, tautological assumption has been that the
571 ways in which individuals typically relate to social objects (i.e., other persons and collectivities) represent the sociologically relevant aspects of their psychology. Egoism and solidarism have been used here as concepts for depicting one dimension of "social character," using this term in the specific sense of comprising those aspects of personality which are both socially shared and constitutive of those actions that are oriented to social objects. We may now attempt to summarize the preceding discussion with the following definition of Amhara social character as it relates to the concept of individualism: The Amhara is primarily disposed to structure interaction in terms of self-assertion, dissension, and distrust, and to be indifferent to the concept of civil community. At the same time this egoistic orientation is blended with a warm and kindly sense of sociability, an occasional mood of generosity, and a refined sensibility regarding differences in status and the readiness to pay deference accordingly.

INDEPENDENCE VERSUS CONSTRAINT

*121 In the previous section we considered the nature of the individual's orientation toward others and toward collectivities in Amhara society. Our question now is the converse: what order of demands is made upon individuals by the institutions of that society? Specifically, we shall be concerned primarily with the degree to which the norms which govern institutional roles are

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

are balanced by a fairly permissive mode of organization. For the clergy, the constraints are heavier; the fasting requirements are increased, and the priesthood involves, as we have seen, strict marital fidelity. On the other hand, the individualistic organization of the clergy is most striking. 121*

This individualism is conspicuous already in the church schools, which are organized not on a class basis but in a series of master-pupil relations. Students begin their courses of study whenever they arrive at the residence of the master, and proceed each at his own pace. The master spends the bulk of his time with more advanced students, who in turn are used to instruct the less advanced. The pupils are very much on their own, uncontrolled either by their families, with whom they no longer reside, nor by any formal institution. The same is true of the masters, who are not subjected to any sort of outside controls. Indeed, each teacher tends to develop his own unique method of teaching, regarding it as something of a personal monopoly.[24] 121* 795 87

The ministrating clergy are likewise free from controls emanating from a broad ecclesiastical organization. Each parish church functions autonomously under the direction of a head (*alaqā*) chosen by the local clergy. (Heads of the most important churches have traditionally been appointed by the emperor.) The obligations of the priesthood are not very great. The chief duty of the priest is to take his turn in performing the Mass. His pastoral services are limited to occasional visits with his particular confessants, from whom he expects to receive regular rewards of food and drink. Otherwise, his life is much the same as that of his lay neighbors. 121* 793 795

The role of the *dabtarā*, as we have seen, is still more flexible. *Dabtarā* who are associated with a parish church are expected to take their turns singing hymns and composing *qenē* in the outer ring of the church; but otherwise they exist as free entrepreneurs, and they need not be so attached unless they so desire.

The individualistic organization of the Ethiopian Church is most striking, perhaps, in the case of the monks, especially when compared with Christian monastic orders in the Western world. Ethiopian monks are bound by nothing other than the original conditions for assuming the role, namely, renouncing family ties and worldly possessions. The monk need not enter a monastery; he may continue to live in his old home or may take to the woods as a hermit. If he does go to live at a monastery, his life is not radically changed. The Ethiopian monastery is not an organized community, but a sacred place—the site of a large and important church, in the vicinity of which live numbers of individual monks. The monk comes and goes as he wishes, prays whenever he wants, and may live free of any obligations toward his fellow monastics and toward the rest of the society.* 121* 792 795

* There are, however, some monasteries where a more organized and disciplined regime may be found.

12: Young MP5 Amhara MP5

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[For information on priests as medical practitioners, see category 116, pp. xvii-xix, 11, 29, 70, 73, 84, 87-96, 107-108, 112-113, 139-159, 166-181, 185-195, and 198-236.]

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621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen.
[241] Until liberation, it was occupied by risteñas and cul-
[423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the
[198] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly,
[795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields,
[342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in
[463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten
[161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born
632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it-
621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from
592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Ṩankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen
[241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house-
[793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and
[463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with
[463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibañas, eight as wood cutters,

566 [423] At the bottom of the social pyramid of land tenure was the "gabbar", the peasant, whose status resembled that of the medieval European serf. In the final step of passing tasks along, he was responsible for carrying them out, though he could shift some manual labor to the slaves under his constant supervision. The gabbar owed regular statute-labor (called "kudād" or "hudād", literally painful labor), resembling the medieval European corvee, and could also be called out for any special labor. At any moment, authority could decree that a bridge was to be built, a church to be constructed or repaired, at an appointed time and place. Thereupon every gabbar would have to appear, carrying his own tools, to work under the direction os the feudal officer, governor, or his lieutenants ("mislanē"). Heavy fines punished failure to appear for this labor.

It is peculiar, perhaps, how this system was internalized by the gabbar. If he was not on good enough terms with his neighbors to call on them for mutual aid, e.g. in housebuilding or harvesting, perhaps due to a quarrel between kin units, he could demand such aid by appealing to the "cheqa shum" (village headman) or governor's lieutenants, who would then proclaim the work as an official [689] task. The penalty for failure to appear, however, was milder; the offender was sentenced to donate a great feast to all the other participants.

566 794 Another noteworthy traditional task emphasized the feudal structure of tha church. A priest in charge of periodic services, the "master of the chant", could de-

566 mand of the feudal lord that deacons, choir-boys with
794 good voices, be supplied to him. The "gultänna" could be made responsible for this, and would search the countryside for likely peasant boys. For his service in acting as music critic in examining the boys, and as their trainer, the "master of the chant" would receive a specified number of baskets of grain from the feudal lord, who, of course, passed this extra expense on down the line until the bill was finally footed by the peasant gabbar.

566 The term "gabbar" itself is closely related (perhaps derived from) "gebber", feast (especially feasting of guest by noblemen, or soldiers after victory). Indeed, it is the gabbar who supplies the materials for the feasts.

[242] In view of this regular as well as irregular exploitation, it is not surprising that the gabbar did not try to improve the land he worked, and to this day leaves more fields fallow than he works in any given year. A rank above him, the "gultanna" suffered from insecure tenure. Above him loomed the authority of the feudal warlord ("farasänya") and the shadow of landowning monasteries and parish churches. Their power, in turn, varied inversely with the power, or weakness, of the "king of kings".

423 Such types of land tenure arose in the past when a king awarded land for personal service, or in gratitude, as "gult" land, without specifying the conditions under which such land might pass to the heirs of the recipient.

423 794 Land donated to the church, in areas far from a monastery or parish that could easily administer it, sometimes belong in this category. In gratitude for victory, a king would sometimes establish ecclesiastical fiefs, "rim", for the support of officiating priests and boy deacons. The most famous endowment of this kind occurred in 1270 A.D., when archbishop Täklä Haymanot received 1/3 of the land of Abyssinia from the "Solomonic Dynasty" he had helped to restore. The archbishop immediately founded monasteries to administer the property and to supervise the "gabbar on it. Priests and monks since [713] then have served in functions similar to chaplains, and have carried the "tabot" representing the sacred ark, into battles, much like the priests of the ancient Israelites. Endowments have continued to add land to the church, "mäsqäl märet" (lit. lands of the cross), and a priest is usually sent to act as local administrator, "alaqa" (lit, chief). He also supervises the functioning of a church built on land not given to the church, and often acts as if the surrounding land were "gult" land belonging to the church.

The moral power of the church in many localities is so strong that the borderlines between "rest" and "gult" may become hazy. Aging persons often try to

423 794 donate some plots to the church as "sämonanya", to have masses fead for their souls after their deaths. Widows, who often take vows as nuns, try to endow the church if they can. Sometimes, "gultännas" threatened with expropriation, sought the protection of the church, so that they could remain on their lands. Sometimes parish priests 423 793 practice nepotism by inviting their nephews or other kinsmen to settle on endowed land surrounding the parish church, without paying rent or performing heavy labors. In return, this arrangement serves the local priests as life insurance and income-insurance, for they will always be certain of supplies of produce, beer, meat, incense, clothing, etc., from their grateful kinfolk, for themselves and their offspring.

The local priest then also acts as patron of his kinfolk against the regional administration, interceding for them when they become involved in litigation, acts as their "guarantor" ("was") when they apply for jobs or seek more land from the governor or neighboring landlord. This nepotism actually seems on the increase, since the present emperor abrogated the feudal rights of all church lands in 1942 (though reinstituting some in exchange for services such as education, a few years later). Now that the church has lost the right to charge feudal rent, parish priests are more eager than ever to have kinfolk settle around them, to avoid dependence on payment from parents whose boys are enrolled in the church school.

794 Local personnel in the parish church included boys from 10 to 15, who are usually more reliable church students, dressed in fine church garments, with good voices and the ability to memorize liturgy. They carry the cross and other utensils in parade, and act as ritual aides in many capacities. They are called "diyakon" (deacon). When they reach puberty, indicated as soon as their voices break and they become awkward adolescents, the possibility of sexual involvement automatically cancels their position (and the gifts from the priests).

Because of the sacerdotal emphasis, worship is performed in a temple atmosphere, churches are open only during services, and there is no preaching. Thus church officials are absent from the building most of the time, leaving the key to the heavy wooden door in charge of a semi-lay caretaker.

793 He is often a däbtära, who can be regarded as semi-clergy, though he has neither ecclesiastical recognition nor tenure of office. Yet his function in the church, as scribe, translator of Geez to Amharic, chorister of devotional poetry ("qëne"), religious poet, herbologist and physician of sorts, writer of amulets, etc., renders his participation as essential to the formal clergy as to the common people.

He must have a good voice capable of endurance, ecstatic pitch, rythm and melody. He must be more intelligent and learned than the priest, so that he can understand and explain and translate what he reads in Geez and Amharic. He has no salary and no right to the tithe, but the priest may allocate a portion to him. Often

788 the chest. The church is then "saluted" by kissing the wall, a ceremony called "sälam" in Geez. If the person wears sandals, he must remove them before entering the church itself.

[211] On the path near the church, or leading to it, there is often a conical pile of small rocks. This may indicate a church on a nearby hilltop, and this pile, "mäsalämiya", functions then as a poster of salutation. If the passerby is in a hurry on another errand, he may simply bow deeply in the direction of the church instead of going there to kiss the wall. In modern times truck-drivers will bow in that direction without stopping.

794 The individual layman usually belongs to a private sodality that holds private communion together. But he may, more informally, invite some personal friends on his personal Saint's day, especially his namesake's. Since this informal private communion is cheaper, costing only the price of a jar of beer and some roasted grain, it is more popular among the poor than the formal "mähabber" sodality. The informal private communion, called "zekert", is shared only by men, uses no drummer, no expensive wheat bread, no collection for a common purse, and usually only the personal confessor is invited from among the priesthood. But the zekert cannot be used as a means of gaining social prestige. [554]

795 e) Religious Syncretism.

Surrounded by Muslim and "pagan" religions, and

[533] usually a Coptic Amhara, of more talent than skill.
286 The weaver, "shamani", though usually a Ethiopian Muslim (or Falasha), carries on his work in theopen, and anyone may learn it. It is only because it requires consistent manual labor that most Amhara shun,it.

d) Religious Minority.

794 The foremost religious minority in Amhara provinces is that of the Ethiopian Muslims. Most of them live in towns, and in the past were residentially segregated to the older parts of town, near caravan trails andbig markets. Even today, their social associations are almost exclusively with other Muslims, e.g. traders from the Sudan. Both are regarded as low-class not only by the Amhara but also by the handful of Arab wholesale traders from Yemen. As a result, negroid and semi-negroid ex-
[M] slaves (Shanqalla), especially women, often become converted to Islam in order to marry Ethiopian Muslims or Sudanese, who, as retail traders, are economically better off. The Muslim veneer of these women is very thin, and they are among the most ardent followers of the "Zar" cult.

e) Racial Min ority

563 Shanqalla slaves were, [redacted], entirely below
567 the social scale, and treated as a separate caste. They were brought or purchased from the Shanqalla, negroid, people on the southwest escarpment, or from Nilotic

776 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often
174 wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the
797 pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, denoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyēn"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holiday is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits.[127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised tänqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only
[182] exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who hold the people in terror and exercise political power.[128]

[794 While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of
562] members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria.[129]

171 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and
754 other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: "Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

346 north-west of Zanjira near the upper margin of the sheet. The church clings to the side of a steep little hill which stands almost isolated among vast gorges and commands the grandest panorama imaginable of this tormented country. The hill is joined to Zanjira by a narrow causeway little lower than the general plateau, flat on top and dropping away in cliffs on either side, so regular that it almost seems artificial. Harris records a saying which evidently refers to this place: "from Iteghe you can see the Echeghe" (*i.e.* the chief of the monks, who then lived in Gondar). To be sure, one does seem to overlook a great part of the world from this point of vantage.

[787] Every church is the centre of a radiating system of small paths (not shown on the map) chiefly used by people coming to service. There are of course 796 regular Sunday services, but these are not very well attended. More important are the special festivals observed on certain dates of the Ethiopian month, which may fall on any day of the week. In this area the monthly festivals universally observed, on which no work could be done, were those of St. Michael, St. Mary, and St. George, on the 12th, 21st, and 23rd respectively, as well as "Bal Wold," a commemoration of the Birth of Christ, on the 29th of each month. Of still greater significance in the life of the people are the annual festivals, falling on the same day of the month as the monthly ones but in certain months only. On these annual festivals nearly the whole population makes its way to the churches dedicated to the particular saint [783] commemorated. Often they will visit the local *tebel* or Holy Water and bathe there early in the morning before service. Going on to the church, all remain outside, for there would be no room for such a crowd within the cramped passages of the church itself. In the middle of the morning the *tabot* or ark is brought out and ceremonial dances held before it. Finally, before the service ends, it will be carried three times round the church in procession, attended by magnificent crosses and gaudy umbrellas. These are occasions of great popular excitement and rejoicing, and the congregations are often enormous. The long service over, they break up into gossiping groups, and go back to social lunches in each other's huts.

771 Enough has been said to show how large a part is played among these people by the Church and its priesthood. The country has indeed been described as priest-ridden, the people as over-dominated or even enslaved by the Church. If so, this servitude, at least in the country, is still a willing and unquestioned one. It is also true to say that without the Church the social structure of this countryside would fall to pieces, and life would lose not only its coherence but nearly all its variety and colour.

346 It was mentioned above that, to meet the needs of an increasing plateau 794 population, several new churches had been founded in recent times in the area covered by the map. Two of these were established by "division" of a 578 church which already existed in the gorge. Each original church had two *tabots* one of which was removed for the new foundation, for no church can exist without a *tabot* or altar-slab, this being the only part of the church which is consecrated. Thus the Mariam of the Tallak Amba plateau was derived from the Mariam half-way down the cliff about a mile to the north-east; and similarly a new Ghiorghis of the plateau, just east of Daloti, from the Ghiorghis in the gorge below. Of these "divisions," both of which took place

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

shortly before the Italian invasion of 1935, the first was accomplished peacefully; but not the second. According to the story told me, the *tabot* of the lower Ghiorghis had been borrowed and carried in solemn procession on the plateau in order to ward off a swarm of locusts which were damaging the crops there. This measure was successful, and the plateau people determined to keep the *tabot* which had proved itself so powerful. The people of the gorge would not agree, and tried to recapture their *tabot*. The plateau party however successfully defended it by force of arms, and later built a little church to house it. It was not unusual to attribute specific powers to *tabots*: for instance, that of Dimbaro Mariam (a little east of the north-east corner of the sheet) used to be carried to war by the emperors, attended by a retinue of priests and scribes, to bring success in battle.

The last church to be founded in these parts was the new St. Gabriel, on a prominent hill-top in the district of Dilila near the south-east corner of the sheet. I came upon it when first following the upper course of the Beressa in December 1946. As I approached the foot of the hill I learnt from passers-by that a new church had been built upon it, and that the foundress herself, a certain great lady from Addis Ababa, was at that moment on the hill. Climbing a rocky track to the top, I saw a cluster of new huts and the still unfinished building of the church. Nearby was a large canvas awning stretched rather clumsily between rough stone walls. Under the awning I found the lady herself, short and stout and genial, sitting on a camp chair; around her, squatting on the ground, was a deferential assembly of local dignitaries, personal retainers and priests. After the fluster caused by my unexpected arrival had died down, I had a talk with the worthy lady who, having just presided at a mid-day meal, now plied me with very welcome refreshment. She had been born and bred in this very place. Having spent most of her life elsewhere, and somehow acquired a certain amount of wealth, she had returned in later life to her place of birth and founded this church only the year before my visit. It met a need, she said, for the area lacked a church, and no other St. Gabriel existed anywhere in the neighbourhood. As it chanced, I had come on the day after St. Gabriel's annual festival (which is the 19th of Tahissas, or, in European style, the 28th of December). She expressed great regret that I had not been present at the festival itself, when big crowds had come from Debra Berhan and from all the surrounding country.

This incident seemed to me interesting as demonstrating the tenacity of the local religious tradition in Ethiopia. After all the upheaval and disruption of Italian occupation and the Second World War, the hold of the ancient Church over the Amhara people seemed unweakened. The Church was able to extend its influence in an area not yet well served as readily as ever. It was still an appropriate act for a pious person to found a new church in a lonely place. Perhaps these things are not surprising, for the Church has been the main support and inspiration of Ethiopian unity since the earliest Christian times. It has always been the focal centre of the national sentiment, the fount of renewed resistance to aggression, the main force, in fact, which has maintained Ethiopia's independence and made of it, as Menelik himself once said, an island of Christianity in the great Islamic sea.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

and so receive absolution. They pray in the churches of 796
the canons as in those of the friars. Friars do not marry, [782]
canons and priests do so. When the canons live together 793
in the circuit they eat in their houses, and the friars eat in community. The chiefs of these churches are called Licacanate. The wives of the canons have houses outside of the circuit, where they go to live with them: the son of a canon remains a canon, and the son of a priest not, except he chooses later to become one. No tithes are paid to any church, they live on the large properties which the churches and monasteries possess. Complaints against the clergy [694]
are dealt with before the secular justice.

The vestment is made like a shirt, and the stole with a 292
hole in the middle, and put over the head; they have no maniple, nor amice, nor girdle; priests and friars all have [302]
their heads shaved, and the beards not. The friars say mass with their hats on their heads, and the priests with their heads bare.

In no church is more than one mass said, and no mass is 794 ●
said for alms, not even for the dead. When any person dies, the priests come with cross and holy water and incense, and recite certain prayers for him, and carry him off to burial very hurriedly: next day they bring offerings: the churchyards are all closed, so that nothing can enter them.

Prester John has no determined place of abode, he 643
always goes about the country in tents, and he will always have in his camp five or six tents among good and common ones: and there will always be at Court of people for the 644
horses and mules from fifty thousand upwards.

The kitchen of Prester John is a good crossbow shot behind his quarters, and they bring his food in this manner: all that he has to eat comes in porringers and dishes of very black earthenware on wooden trays, and pages bring them, and above the pages come a pallium of silk, which covers them so that these viands come with reverence.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

than the Abuna. There are, after these, chief priests 793
and scribes, as in the Jewish church: the last of these, the ignorant, careless copiers of the holy scriptures.

The monks here do not live in convents, as in Eu- 793
rope, but in separate houses round their church, and 794
each cultivates a part of the property they have in land. The priests have their maintenance assigned to them in kind, and do not labour. A steward, being a layman, is placed among them by the king, who receives all the rents belonging to the churches, and gives to the priests the portion that is their due; but neither the Abuna, nor any other churchman, has any business with the revenues of churches, nor can touch them.

The articles of the faith of the Abyssinians have 175
been inquired into and discussed with so much keen- 779
ness in the beginning of this century, that I fear I should disoblige some of my readers were I to pass this subject without notice.

Their first bishop, Frumentius, being ordained about the year 333, and instructed in the religion of the Greeks of the church of Alexandria by St Athanasius, then sitting in the chair of St Mark, it follows, that the true religion of the Abyssinians, which they received on their conversion to Christianity, is that of the Greek church; and every rite, or ceremony, in the Abyssinian church may be found and traced up to its origin in the Greek church, while both of them were orthodox.

Frumentius preserved Abyssinia untainted with heresy till the day of his death. We find, from a letter preserved in the works of St Athanasius, that Constantius, the heretical Greek emperor, wished St Athanasius to deliver him up, which that patriarch refused to do: indeed, at that time, it was not in his power.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

gre, drinks out of a golden cup, as keeper of the law at Axum. There are 12 nagareets in Tigre, and forty-four persons are invested with the Ras-werk. 644

Church affairs. The Abuna is appointed by proclamation of the king, and is deposed at his pleasure. He holds of no other person. He ordains priests and deacons within the kingdom, consecrates churches, altars (tabot), &c. His revenue was once very considerable, esteemed one-third of the revenues of the kingdom; but as those princes, who made the grants, resided in Shoa, or in the south of Tigre, the principal lands are in those provinces, adjoining to the royal residence. Now, the southern provinces are all in the hands of the Galla, as well as part of Tigre, and the governor, or Ras, has assumed the rest; so that of 400 oz. of gold once paid by Tigre, the Abuna, in my time, got only twenty-five, one-third of which went to the king's wakeel in his house. The Abuna appoints no officer, civil, or ecclesiastical; the king, or governor, does all. The king appoints officers, called Alaka, who administer in all cases the revenue of churches and convents; and this person is the judge of differences and suits among the priests and monks of his church, or fraternity, from whom lies no appeal but to the King, or to the Ras, who is understood to represent him. This Alaka is, or is not, a monk, or priest, at the king's pleasure. Of those who are called monks, are the communities of Debra Libanos, or Azazo, as it is now called, Waldubba, Werkleva, Damo, Mahabar Selasse, &c. These live in villages in these places, and reside or not as they please. The rest of that name are those who are ordained on any illness, disappointment, or advanced in life. The monks are ordained by the Itchegue, the others by any ordinary priest. Neither take any vow. The women of Waldubba are of the first kind, and all women past pleasure compose the second. There are many instances of both orders renouncing and marrying. 793 794

All persons, as well ecclesiastical as civil, are subject to the same laws, judgment, and tribunal, without exception, be the cause of whatever nature it may be. The Abuna, or Itchegue, have none of them a tribunal, nor can they take cognizance of any cause; especially the Abuna, who has, as I have said, an officer in his house appointed by the king, who pu- 692

[p. 55]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by 794 ●
those who are sick, or dying.

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a 292
white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar.

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the 796
church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married 784
are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Persons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the [841]
church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first [304]
day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occasions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the [852]
walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment.

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure 131
in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It 361
may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla 101
who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wetchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma;

[p. 57]

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948

MP5 Amhara MP5

soldiers. He would also have, like the Emperor, official estates set aside 635
for the upkeep of his large household and it would be these he would 651
be most anxious to retain if he lost his governorship. For these estates 661
he could call up the labour of soldiers and *gabars*.[1] Parkyns recorded 423
in the mid-nineteenth century that for his estates the governor could
exact one day's work for clearing, one for sowing, two for cleaning,
and two for harvesting, and this was still the custom in this century.[2]
Instead of cultivating his estates directly by using labour in this way, [427]
the governor might lease his land to tenants who would pay him a stated
proportion of the crop as rent. According to one authority in the north,
governors claimed that one tenth of all privately owned land should also
be cultivated for him and he would himself choose the lands. Where,
as in Tigré, the governorship tended to remain for a period in the same
family this was not so grave an injury to the province, but if a governor
from outside were sent in the people might not dare to demand back
the lands from the .. al family and were obliged to set aside new lands
for their new governor.[3] Besides the governor's estates there would be
others attached to the various offices of his assistants.

In addition to their more regular dues from the people it was customary for governors and their assistants to demand special gifts from time to time, such as a sheep from each village at Easter and at the festival of the true cross.

THE CHURCH AND THE ARMY

The Emperors were always extremely generous to the church, even if 794 ●
they had not gone so far as to allocate that third of the original legend 423
which the famous cleric Takla Haimanot claimed in 1270. Every priest, 651
monk, *debtera*, and deacon, in so far as he was excused from the work
of the fields, required that land furnished with slaves or *gabars* should
be set aside for his support. A vast total of land was burdened with
this service. The piety of Emperors warred here with their political
interests—at one moment they were moved to give, at another to resume
their gifts. But it was not easy to assert the royal claim against monasteries which were undying corporations or against churches which
needed permanent endowment and were, moreover, served by priests
determined to pass on their lands with their offices to their sons.
Moreover, the very character of the grants protected them. Their most

[1] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–91.

[2] Parkyns, M., *Life in Abyssinia*, 1853, vol. 2, p. 230. Also Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

[3] Rossini, pp. 107–8.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

784 423 651

frequent form was that of *samonanya*, lands given to support the service of the mass. The Emperors had granted much *gult* to the churches and thus gave them the power to keep all the royal tribute from it and even to administer justice and to retain its proceeds. Even where this grant had not been made as *rest-gult* it was not easy to regain control of it and the convention was that, when such land was taken back by the Emperor, an equivalent estate should be granted.[1]

It should be remembered that land was not held collectively by the church but, as in England, by the individual 'parish' churches or monasteries or by the Abuna and the *Ichegé*, who between them held very large estates, and by other ecclesiastics.

701 423

Military service, regarded in this chapter from the aspect of land tenure, was a universal obligation upon land unless the land was held by the church and specially exempted. The obligation was on the land rather than on the person, so that if a woman held a piece of land which had to supply soldiers it was her duty to raise and equip them. There were many different kinds of military tenure because each type of service was attached to special pieces of land and called by different names which need not be listed here. There was, for example, land which supplied the following services—the fusilier, the artilleryman, the muleteer, the porter transporting baggage, the bearer of the red tent or the Emperor's tent poles, the makers of gunpowder, the quartermaster, the forager, and many other military needs. It was even specially laid down for each piece of land whether its soldiers should fight in the centre or the left or right wings of the army.[2]

Estates would have to give the service of soldiers in varying numbers from the single man to a thousand or more. Those who owed these large numbers were, of course, very important people, and in Shoa at least it was probable that the man liable for a thousand would be a holder of *gult* over a considerable area.[3] Parcels of land might be allotted to 'regular' soldiers to support them while on service, or given as a reward for service, generally with a continuing obligation to provide a soldier of some special type.

It will be seen that there was no uniform system for the raising or support of the soldiers, especially as these were serving different masters. Thus in one province there might be part of the Emperor's army as well as the governor's provincial army, while both the latter and his district governors would have their personal bodyguards. Though in the north the serving soldiers were generally supported out of the tithes, they might be quartered directly upon the people or given lands of their

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, pp. 611–13. [2] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–90.
[3] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 612; also de Castro, pp. 281 ff.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

793 Menelik, who made the Abouna supreme head of all matters; the *Itcheque* second with residence at the great national monastery of Debra Libanos; and the High Priest third in the hierarchy.

794 The wealth and influence of the Church are enormous, a state of affairs due to the prescience of Tekla Haimanot, to whom reference has already been made. This remarkable man is supposed to have negotiated the restoration of the Solomonean line after three hundred years of deposition, and his modest price seems to have been a perpetual grant to the Church of one-third of the country. As a result the extent of the Church lands is tremendous: not only do monasteries, convents, and churches cover the country but great areas belong to them, and the revenues accruing therefrom are utilized to maintain an almost unbelievable number of monks, priests, and *debtera*. The numbers of these people were given to me by Abyssinians as over a million—this is of course absurd—but I was assured on good authority that over a quarter of the male population are included in these categories of parasites. And parasites they are, for they serve no useful purpose and exist on the taxes raised from the people working on the land: they do no work themselves and are even exempted from military service. They are on the whole ignorant and illiterate, for while some of them can read, very few indeed can write.

Monks are not supposed to marry: priests are allowed to marry once, and in fact do so: *debtera* are free as laymen; but I do not think that the lives of many of them could profitably be held up as examples for the people to follow.

No examination and little or no preparation seem

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

age-long enemies and should allow them to profess their faith openly as they do, when one considers the havoc wrought by Moslem invasions and Galla inroads.

Even the Falasha Jewish ironworkers in the north, who are doubly regarded with dislike and suspicion as being Jews and as being possessed of supernatural powers, are treated with tolerance, though avoided.

No doubt this happy result is contributed to so far as Moslems are concerned by the fact that in Abyssinia they do not appear to be strict or fanatical—in pleasing contrast to their behaviour elsewhere. Mr Wyman Bury tells a delightful story in exemplification of this latter frame of mind. A pilgrim to Mecca, a plump and prosperous Moslem merchant at Aden in ordinary life, was gazing from the deck of the ship in rapt enthusiasm at Jeddah, which against the sun-scorched country beyond looked like a stale bridecake on a dust-heap. "Oh, the sacred land," he crooned "the blessed land, where pigs and Christians cannot live."

The Abyssinians still have a church in Rome, a monastery in Jerusalem, and monasteries and Ethiopic texts were discovered in the Libyan desert by the German explorer Falls.

The Abyssinian Church endeavours to maintain friendly relations with the other Christian communities: interesting examples of this are the missions sent to the Pope by the Emperor Menelik in 1906 and by the late Empress in 1921. A mission was also in Jerusalem at the close of 1922 in connection with some ancient rights of the Abyssinian Church regarding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other holy places; under the Turkish régime these rights had been transferred to the

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

Coptic community. The present Emperor himself visited Jerusalem recently.

Possibly owing to ignorance and lack of education, the Church does not make any missionary efforts of its own amongst its subject races of Moslems and pagans, and up to recent years it did not tolerate, or at all events welcome, such efforts on the part of others. This is perhaps hardly surprising, for much of the missionary enterprise known to the Abyssinians had mingled politics with religious efforts, and had interfered in matters which had better have been left alone.

The Jesuits were expelled in 1633, and some who would not go were killed. The Protestant missionaries were expelled in 1838. Theodore can hardly have been said to have welcomed missionaries, though so far from expelling them he chained them up and would not let them go. King John expelled them again in 1886, and Menelik barely tolerated them, although a French mission has been established continuously in Tigré for a good many years.

But quite recently more missionaries have been allowed to start operations, especially in the Galla districts, and the Americans are particularly to the fore in this work in Addis Ababa and elsewhere. In addition, there is a French mission at Harrar and a convent at Addis Ababa, mainly educational and non-proselytizing, and a Swedish mission at the latter town of a similar character.

So far I do not think there is much trace of success by any of these institutions, but on the other hand there is evidence to shew (and my impressions are confirmed by American, Swedish, and French writers) that Islam, as in other parts of Africa, is making progress among

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

impressions conveyed by much of the literature on Ethiopia, is not a normal ecological unit in Amhara society. 621 602

Each homestead gives the appearance of self-sufficiency and autonomy, but it is bound to a wider social context in a number of ways. While satisfying most of its consumption needs by its own efforts, every household depends on the market for certain items. The highland peasants must go to market for their chili, onions, peppers, hops, and cotton; while lowland peasants must barter for barley and sheep there. Salt and foreign fabrics must be imported from afar, and iron and clay products must be bought from specialists who bring their wares. Limited needs for currency—chiefly for rifles and, since 1942, taxes—are also met at the market. 565* 592 438 443 [436]

The markets normally are held once a week. Every homestead is within walking distance of at least one market; though often the trip may take several hours, at times the greater part of a day. Markets in the same region are often scheduled on different days, so that, for example, the family which misses the one five hours to the north on Saturday can catch another four hours to the south on Tuesday. The virtual absence of roads throughout the countryside makes travel to market slow and tedious, but wealthier peasants nonetheless manage to transport quantities of grain and livestock to the provincial capitals for better prices and a wider selection of consumers' goods. 565* 443 484 [491]

The household is linked to a wider world politically as well as economically. By providing tithes, revenues, military service, and corvée labor, the peasant has traditionally been obliged to support an extensive political hierarchy. In return for this he has received an organization for defending the country against enemies, and a structure of legitimate authority sufficient to maintain order and settle disputes. 565* 641

The peasant's relations with this political hierarchy have been mediated by the office of *chīqā shum*, a district headman. This office is circulated, usually annually, among a small number of men whose eligibility is based on their ownership of certain pieces of land. As the land passes from father to son, so does the eligibility for being *chīqā shum*. 565* 622

Traditionally the *chīqā shum* was a role of considerable importance. It carried the duties of tax collection, adjudication, promulgation of official decrees, supervision of occasional work projects, levying of men for military service, and officiating at civil marriages and divorces. Through his work the *chīqā shum* received a variety of fees and bribes. In cases of flagrant misbehavior the local people were able to dismiss him from office. The reorganization of provincial administration since 1942 has deprived the *chīqā shum* of many of his former powers, but the office still exists and plays a modest role in peasant life. [661] [178]

The district over which a *chīqā shum* has authority is the closest thing to a village unit among the Amhara. It is usually coterminous with the area sur- 622 621 194

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate
621 term for it than village. The *chīqā shum* and the local church authorities
794 work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and
79 the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to
182 mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chīqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 *The Daily Round*
512

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-
[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels
[252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tēff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock
[782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education,
[231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes
[462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room
[262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm
[252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay
[352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash
[515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-
[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

5

The Old and New Elites

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that character-
170 izes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary
178 Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

[433] In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels: coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal [671] realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The govern- [64] mental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial [795] system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious [794] institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

121 This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratifi-
56 cation.
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

793 preme judges at the royal court, and the *aqābē sa'āt* ranked third—in some
644 lists, first—in the official order of precedence of all court dignitaries.[40]
[693] One other church dignitary, finally, was the *nebra ed*, chief of the sacred district of Aksum, who always enjoyed a high position at the royal court. When appointed by the emperor (instead of by the provincial governor who sometimes possessed that authority), the *nebra ed* enjoyed the rare privilege of being permitted to sit while speaking in the event of his involvement in litigation.

793 The status of the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries was based on approxi-
554 mately the same factors as those which determined the status of secular nobility: royal favor; family background, in the case of those whose fathers were important nobles or noted churchmen; and the possession of wealth, political power, and imposing titles.[41] The same was true of their regional counterparts, the *alaqā*, "chiefs" of large churches and monasteries, whose wealth, power, and leisurely mode of life gave them, in Plowden's opinion, "perhaps the most enviable position in Abyssinia."[42]

793 The status of the clergy as a whole, however, rested on three other prin-
792 ciples which are not affected by royal favor, birth, or worldly possessions.
554 These were: contact with the most sacred symbols of religious authority; ascetic piety; and religious learning. Broadly speaking, in Abyssinia these three principles have been embodied primarily in three distinct roles, namely, those of priest, monk, and *dabtārā*.

793 A normal preparation for these roles—necessarily so, in the case of the
794 priesthood—is service as a deacon. Ability to read is, now as before, a requisite qualification for the diaconate, but that requirement has in the past often been overlooked. More important has been the requirement of ordination by the *abuna*. Ordination formerly took place in the company of hundreds of other aspirants and, when there was uncertainty about the future availability of an *abuna*, even babes in arms were admitted.[43]

794 The traditional garb of the deacon is a yellowish cape made of sheepskins,
792 though on holidays the officiating deacons may be dressed in richly colored silk robes like the priests. The duties of the deacon—and they are accounted great and secret privileges—are to prepare the sacramental bread, fetch the holy water, and assist at the Mass (the performance of which normally requires two priests and three deacons).

793 On reaching puberty a deacon is no longer supposed to serve in the church,
794 for fear that he will become "impure." At that time he may decide to prepare for the priesthood. For this two qualifications must be met. He must have completed his study of reading and, ideally, of *zēmā*, the chants that are intoned in the liturgy of the Mass. These matters he may learn from the older clergy during his service as a deacon, or from his father, who, in many cases, is a priest himself. Otherwise, he goes off in search of a master. He

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builds a tiny thatch hut near the home of his tutor, wears ragged, unsheared sheepskins, and gets his meals by begging. He lives thus for a year or two, until he has mastered the fourteen varieties of chants used in the various masses, and perhaps special chants like the *Praise of Mary* (*Weddässē Māryām*) which are sung on holidays.

The other, and more important, qualification for the priesthood is marriage according to the law of the church. After a deacon has been married in the customary manner and lived with his wife for at least forty days, their marriage must be solemnized by the celebration of the Eucharist. Thereafter he may not divorce her or remarry if she dies.

With these conditions satisfied, the candidate for priesthood may travel to the *abuna* and be ordained. He acquires thereby the power to bind and to absolve, and is granted full knowledge of the mysteries of the *tābot*. The new priest attaches himself to a church, and is given his share of the monthly assignments for conducting the Mass. This is his main responsibility, though as he grows older he will also acquire confessants to whom he will give advice and assign penances.

Apart from these duties, the life of an Abyssinian priest in many ways resembles that of his lay neighbors. He plows his fields and harvests his crops. He may do business at the markets, or add to his income by weaving. Perhaps the chief difference in his manner of life is the habit of spending time in the "gate of peace," a little building near the church where the clergy assemble after services for hours of drinking *ṭallā* and idle conversation.

In reward for his services—and this is normally the chief inducement to become a priest—the priest is given a share of the revenues in kind brought in from lands owned and managed by the church. He may also be given some land owned by the church to cultivate for himself. In addition, he receives gifts in kind from his confessants periodically, is entitled to take part in the various feasts to which priests are regularly invited, and is likely to receive some bequest from time to time.*

The insignia of the priest are modest, but they suffice to inform the stranger that here is a man to be shown special respect: a white turban wrapped around the head and a cross carried in the hand, to be kissed by all comers. Older priests often carry a fly-whisk made of horsehair, and a wicker sun umbrella.

Though there are devout and kindly men among them, the Ethiopian priests have never been particularly noted for their moral qualities. Often they are ungenerous and scheming, and ready to exploit their position at the expense of the laity. They are poorly educated in their own tradition, stuttering

* A sheep, or at least a sheepskin—insurance that the Memorial Mass will be properly performed on the fortieth day after the donor's death.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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• 994
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[P.194-B]

FIG. 27.—*A deacon*

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FIG. 28.—*Group of debtarā*

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FIG. 29.—*An old priest*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the Amharic phrase *ya-kantu weddāsē zaman*—"the era of futile flattery."

For, whatever other aspects of modern culture they have identified with, the locals and returnees are seized with the promise of its first principle: dynamism.[62] Should they join forces, among themselves and with each other, they might create the effective intelligentsia which is indispensable for realizing this dynamism in action. They would play complementary, and equally necessary, parts; the locals contributing their greater drive and closeness to traditional society, the returnees their broader perspective and skepticism toward simplistic answers and total reforms.

There are numerous obstacles to such a progressive development. Some of them represent the persistence among the intellectuals of a number of traditional pan-Abyssinian characteristics which inhibit both the exercise of creative leadership and the capacity for solidary action. The traditional context of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters which follow. The most conspicuous obstacle, however, has been the manner in which the Ethiopian government has sought to integrate the intellectuals in the social system. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Role of the Government

In the hierarchy of values which sustained the traditional Abyssinian social order, that of the transcendental religious orientation represented by the Orthodox Church may be said to have held the paramount position. This is the sense in which, as has so often been remarked, religion has been Abyssinia's only truly unifying factor throughout the centuries. Religious charisma transferred from foreign sanctuaries—the mythical Ark of the Covenant brought from Jerusalem and the archbishop periodically imported from Egypt—provided the ultimate source of legitimacy in the society, upholding the authority of a sacred Christian monarch, church-defending warlords, and a numerous and functionally differentiated clergy. It so penetrated the social system that the basic unit of Abyssinian civil life was in fact a religious one, the parish.

In retrospect it would seem that the most profound aspect of Haile Selassie's accomplishment has been to dislodge the transcendental religious value from highest place and to replace it with the system-integrative value of loyalty to the emperor.[63] His mission has been above all a secularizing one. To accomplish it he has had greatly to increase his political and economic resources; but insofar as his regime has been accepted, and not based exclusively on sheer power—which to some extent is certainly the case—the paramount value in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie has become loyalty to the emperor as a symbol of the whole society. The autonomous significance of the church has been reduced; its extra-Ethiopian source of charisma has been cut off, and its func-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfata*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which [589] could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 574 527 Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of [575] the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious [794] fraternal association known as the *māhebar,* is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māhebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā,*" literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

proverb which stresses the rights of women in this regard gives the following advice: 121* 593 586

Balāgar siṭagub yemaṭāl ba-degger;
Tayawennā nay qitāwen yegāgger. [539]

When a peasant gets sated he beats you with wood;
Leave and come home, let him bake his own bread!

A couple who have firmly decided upon divorce need simply call in their relatives or go before the *çhīqā shum* in order to have their property properly divided. The only recourse to judicial process is when, as often happens, disputes break out concerning the division of property. In the *damoz* form of marriage, in which there is no civil oath, divorce is yet simpler. The wife is given certain presents and a monthly salary for the duration of the marriage. When the husband has to leave for another part of the country, or if the couple quarrel, they simply separate without further ado.

Despite its heavy claim on the energies of its members, then, the Amhara kinship system is such as to make members of the nuclear family relatively independent of extended relationships, and to give the individual marriage partners important areas of independence from each other. 121* 593 594

Religious Organization

Membership in the Monophysite Church is automatic for all Amhara except a small percentage who are Muslim. This membership is symbolized by the ceremony of baptism, performed for male infants on the fortieth day and for females on the eightieth. At that time the child receives a special Christian name in addition to his regular family name. 121* 795 794* [851] [553]

Certain obligations are incumbent upon every member of the church. Foremost among these is the requirement of fasting, which begins for children of both sexes at about the age of seven and introduces a considerable element of constraint into the lives of the Amhara. Second, there is the obligation to observe the Sabbaths and the main holidays by refraining from arduous physical labor on those days. In addition, each household is obliged to contribute a certain quantity of grain to the local church every year.* [785] [796]

Apart from the rigorous fasting requirements, and the injunction not to work on holy days—a dubious hardship—the individual is relatively free of ritual obligations. The rituals demanded by the church are so manifold, and so sacred, that responsibility for them is given to the clergy, and the laymen

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* In some areas this is a fixed amount per household (e.g., one or two *quana*); in others it is proportionate to the wealth of the family. It is collected by a lay official of the church, the *gend alaqā*, though sometimes by the *gabaz*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 794 795 are left free to a large extent. Since every day of the month except the thirtieth is sanctified by dedication to some saint, Mass must be performed virtually *121 79 every day, a norm which is actually fulfilled by churches which have a numerous clergy. The burden for individual clergymen is kept small by a system of rotation. The average parish church will have services perhaps ten to fifteen times a month, which is still too often for heavy popular attendance. Even on Sundays and the most important holidays, when the laity are expected to attend, their participation is excused by other considerations. Those who have eaten earlier in the day, who have had sexual relations the night before, or who are harboring a grudge in their "stomach" are not even supposed to come to church. If they do come, they sit outside the wall chatting with one another while the Mass is performed inside.

*121 794 795 783 Customs concerning Communion and Confession likewise give the individual a wide range of freedom. Partaking of the Communion is not required of anyone; the experience simply is available to those who are ritually pure (children, and those who have married by the *querbān*), if they are so inclined. Confession is not mandatory, but according to personal inclination. Every man has the right to choose his own personal confessor or "soul-father," though if satisfied with the one of his father, he may retain him. (A woman adopts the confessor of her husband.) The soul-father's advice may be sought when a problem arises. If a man sins—breaks the fast, works on a holiday, commits theft or murder—he is supposed to confess. If he chooses to do so, the soul-father will prescribe a certain penance—fasting an extra amount, sleeping on the floor for a period, giving something to the poor or to the church. But the initiative is entirely up to the sinner and probably more often than not he keeps the offense to himself. The proportion of Amhara who keep every fast strictly, go to church a few times a month, and confess their transgressions to the soul-father is small; in the estimate of one Amhara informant, less than five per cent.

*121 794 575 Still greater permissiveness may be observed in connection with the religious fraternal associations known as the *māhebar*. The *māhebar* consists of a group of people from the same general area, usually of the same sex, who meet once a month on the day devoted to the saint for whom the association is named. The place of meeting rotates among the homes of the members, and the soul-father of the host is always present to bless the occasion. The meetings consist of much eating, drinking, and conviviality. Membership in a *māhebar* is purely voluntary, and the individual who wishes to join one usually has a choice among several in a given area.*

For the Amhara laity, then, a few burdensome ritual and fiscal constraints

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[735] * There is a variant of the *māhebar* known as the *senbetī*, whose members take turns in providing food for the clergy and poor folk on Sundays.

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are balanced by a fairly permissive mode of organization. For the clergy, the constraints are heavier; the fasting requirements are increased, and the priesthood involves, as we have seen, strict marital fidelity. On the other hand, the individualistic organization of the clergy is most striking. 121* [794] [795] [793]

This individualism is conspicuous already in the church schools, which are organized not on a class basis but in a series of master-pupil relations. Students begin their courses of study whenever they arrive at the residence of the master, and proceed each at his own pace. The master spends the bulk of his time with more advanced students, who in turn are used to instruct the less advanced. The pupils are very much on their own, uncontrolled either by their families, with whom they no longer reside, nor by any formal institution. The same is true of the masters, who are not subjected to any sort of outside controls. Indeed, each teacher tends to develop his own unique method of teaching, regarding it as something of a personal monopoly.[34] 121* 795 87

The ministrating clergy are likewise free from controls emanating from a broad ecclesiastical organization. Each parish church functions autonomously under the direction of a head (*alaqā*) chosen by the local clergy. (Heads of the most important churches have traditionally been appointed by the emperor.) The obligations of the priesthood are not very great. The chief duty of the priest is to take his turn in performing the Mass. His pastoral services are limited to occasional visits with his particular confessants, from whom he expects to receive regular rewards of food and drink. Otherwise, his life is much the same as that of his lay neighbors. 121* 793 795

The role of the *dabtarā*, as we have seen, is still more flexible. *Dabtarā* who are associated with a parish church are expected to take their turns singing hymns and composing *qenē* in the outer ring of the church; but otherwise they exist as free entrepreneurs, and they need not be so attached unless they so desire.

The individualistic organization of the Ethiopian Church is most striking, perhaps, in the case of the monks, especially when compared with Christian monastic orders in the Western world. Ethiopian monks are bound by nothing other than the original conditions for assuming the role, namely, renouncing family ties and worldly possessions. The monk need not enter a monastery; he may continue to live in his old home or may take to the woods as a hermit. If he does go to live at a monastery, his life is not radically changed. The Ethiopian monastery is not an organized community, but a sacred place—the site of a large and important church, in the vicinity of which live numbers of individual monks. The monk comes and goes as he wishes, prays whenever he wants, and may live free of any obligations toward his fellow monastics and toward the rest of the society.* 121* 792 795

* There are, however, some monasteries where a more organized and disciplined regime may be found.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

omy during the past two decades, represents a significant growth of the capacity for voluntary formal organization in the modernizing sector.[41] 454 178

Māhebar (*Regional Associations*).—A type of formal association which has sprung up in Addis Ababa in recent years, becoming popular for the first time around 1960, is known as the *māhebar*. While its name is taken from the traditional Orthodox fraternal association, in aims and organization it is different from the religious *māhebar*. While the latter is devoted to honoring one of the saints and is convened primarily for feasting and sociability, the modern *māhebar* is organized on the basis of territorial or tribal bonds and is concerned with problems of social betterment. The first *māhebar* of this kind was established by the Gurage in the fifties.* Thereafter, the idea spread to members of other groups, and Addis Ababa residents originating in Gondar, Tigre, Harar, Manz, Tagulat, Fitche and elsewhere began to form *māhebar* of their own. The basic idea behind all these *māhebar* is to make some contribution to the welfare of the provinces through projects voluntarily financed and organized by fellow-countrymen living in the metropolis. These projects have included construction of roads, schools, and hospitals; supplying books for schools; and provision of facilities for assisting inhabitants of the provinces who come to the city. Members of the various *māhebar* convene weekly or biweekly, usually on Sunday in the vicinity of one or another of the Addis Ababa churches, to discuss their projects and make their financial contributions. 575 185 178 [794] [177]

Formal Associations of Foreign Inspiration

Student Associations.—The Orthodox Students Association was founded in 1958 by a convention representing all the colleges and some of the secondary schools. Its successful establishment was due in large part to the efforts of an Indian Orthodox minister who at the time was one of the Emperor's private secretaries. There is some evidence that an earlier spontaneous effort to form such a group in the early fifties was checked by the government. Members of this association have been concerned with adapting the activities of the church to contemporary needs. They criticize the established church for its use of a dead language, excessive ritualism, and lack of teaching; and have proposed that the Orthodox Church should institute Sunday schools and 575 794 178

* The Gurage *māhebar* remains in a class of its own, with respect to size, wealth, and ambitiousness of program. The Gurage have also pointed the way to using the *māhebar* form in a way that transcends the narrow tribal or territorial passions which it has thus far tended to canalize. This has been done through the establishment of another, project-oriented *māhebar* concerned solely with building a road from Alem Gana to Wollamo Sodda, whose membership includes Galla and Wollamo as well as Gurage. This association has already collected well over a million dollars, and has completed the construction of a bridge. It is headed by a capable Gurage army general and its activities and collections are reported regularly in the Addis Ababa press. [171]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

575 cultivate a missionary spirit in order to reach the non-Christian peoples of
794 Ethiopia. The association sponsors weekly religious services, featuring hymns
178 in Amharic and talks in Amharic on religious and moral questions, and publishes a monthly journal. The Orthodox Students Association stands out as the first nationwide voluntary association in Ethiopia. It holds an annual convention which draws some three hundred students from all parts of the country.

The Ethiopian College Students Association was established in 1960 after some years of patient maneuvering by officers of the various college student governments. It attempts to represent the interests and needs of students vis-à-vis the government and to handle relations with international student organizations.

A number of student clubs have appeared from time to time within the framework of the colleges. One of the most popular and productive of these has been the Ethnological Society of the University College, founded in the early fifties by a Polish member of the college staff. Over the years it has produced several issues of an ethnological bulletin. More recently, under the framework of the new university, dramatic and choral groups have been established as well as groups like the Education Students Association and the Economics Students Association. Graduates of some of the secondary schools and colleges, moreover, have formed a small number of alumni associations.

467 *Labor Unions.*—Although Ethiopia has for some time been a paying mem-
178 ber of the ILO, the government has until recently strongly opposed the estab-
[177] lishment of unions in the country. Nevertheless, due to the encouragement of labor representatives from Western and other African countries, as well as to the courageous efforts of a number of Ethiopians, several unions have at last been established and have won some degree of recognition from the government.* Trade unions were first attempted among employees of the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad and in Eritrea.[42] They now include employees of a num-
[357] ber of factories. Even household servants have formed associations that establish minimal conditions which members are obliged to demand from their employers.

814 *Professional Associations.*—The Ethiopian Teachers Association, with a
815 large paper membership but scarcely any activity, was the only professional
875 association in Ethiopia prior to the 1960 rebellion. If one may generalize from
178 the frustrated attempts of Ethiopian doctors to establish a medical association, it would seem that the government was attempting to discourage groups of this sort as well as trade unions. Since 1961, however, the picture has changed.
[759] There now exists not only a medical association, which publishes its own

* A law establishing a legal basis for labor unions was enacted by the Ethiopian parliament in 1962.

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The labor movement, limited as it is, has been in the hands of Eritreans on the one hand, and primarily non-Amhara workers in the south. Student associations have been formed chiefly at the instigation and under the aegis of foreign staff members; though here, as with the professional associations, modernized Amhara have sometimes played a leading role.

Once the new associations had been introduced, the Amhara like other Ethiopians were quick to adopt and expand them. Their participation in these new associations, however, has been affected, as might be expected, by the intrusion of traditional behavior patterns. Three examples of such behavior patterns come readily to mind.

(1) While the *equb* is conceived as a kind of credit union and as a focus for communal sociability, the *co-operative* sentiment tends to be lacking among members of Amhara *equb*, at least those of which the author has any knowledge. For example, in case of dire need, an *equb* member who desires the lump sum out of turn may be forced to *buy* the amount from the weekly winner, sometimes by forfeiting as much as ten or twenty per cent of the amount. By capitalizing on the crises of others, some enterprising *equb* members are able to sell their successful claims several times. Furthermore, in the early years of their existence, *equb* were frequently faced with the problem created by members who won the money early in the cycle, left town with the money, and did not return to pay their later installments. This difficulty has been met to some extent by the requirement of securing one or two guarantors for each person who enters an *equb*, but problems of this nature have led to altercations that have brought many *equb* members into court.

(2) The behavior of members of Amhara territorial *māhebar* is essentially that of a traditional social or civil gathering. The big men are seated in places of honor; the rest of the people stand quietly by. After a protracted period of exchanging greetings and milling about, the crowd listens respectfully while one or more of the big men makes a statement, and perhaps exchanges a few words with the group's secretary; and then the gathering disbands. Although the *māhebar* is organized with respect to the attainment of specific goals, the substance of the meetings is instumental to a very slight degree. The assembly rarely involves a meeting of minds to discuss an issue or a common problem, or to work out a program of action; but exists primarily as an occasion for the resonance of primordial sentiments by virtue of shared territorial attachments.

(3) In all associations, finally, certain traditional characteristics which are incongruent with the optimum conduct of groups come to the fore. This is no less true of the modern-educated than of the traditionals. Members fail to come on time to arranged meetings or neglect to come altogether.* They

* The *equb* has attempted to check this pattern by imposing fines on members who come late.

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692 ment, who approves appointment to Sharia and Qadi positions.

5. Structure and Function of the Coptic Church among the Amhara.

795 The importance of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia on the life of every Amhara, of all classes, rural or urban, can hardly be exaggerated. To the Amhara, "Amhara" is synonymous with Abyssinian Christian; and the [198] liturgical language used in the church, "Geez", with "language of the free". The term used for their religion is "tewahedo", often shortened to "towado", meaning "orthodox".

To the Amhara, his church is so closely connected with his attitudes to his country, his nation, his ethnocentrism, that the severance of ties with the mother Coptic Church of Alexandria, in 1948, passed almost [779] unnoticed. Only church scholars are aware that, as part of the larger Coptic church, the break with the Western church occurred after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., ostensibly because the Copts insisted on complete fusion of the person of Christ, refusing to accept the "union, but not fusion of Deity and human spirit" of the non-Monophysite faith in the formula he pronounces when [788] slaughtering a sheep or ox: "In the name of the father, [224] the son, and the holy ghost, one divinity." The pious hunter will hasten to the wounded gazelle to pronounce the formula before the animal expires, then finish it off by cutting its throat

795 off by cutting its throat.

It may be that the use of the formula became emphatic centuries ago, as an equivalent-though-distinctive counterpart to the Muslim formula "In the name of Allah the all-merciful, and Muhammad hid his prophet". Another such distinction is almost certainly the blue neck-cord, "mätäb" which both male and female Abyssinian Copts wear to distinguish them from Muslims. But their other religious laws and taboos seem to date back to the Old Testament observances of Judaism, notable the taboo on the pig, which is not even raised outside European Addis Ababa.

[17] [293] [784]

795 779 As a consequence of the religiosity of the people, the rules of the church have the force of law, unchallenged especially in the rural areas. Even the more modernized administration and new legislation has made little change in the close inter-relation of church and state functions, at the grassroots level. This inter-relation is even closer in the form of social pressure. Foreign observers have remarked that without this church organization the social structure of the country would fall to pieces and lose its coherence.

795 Another significant factor is the large number of persons consecrated, or partly consecrated to the church service. Besides priests, monks and nuns there are boy deacons and church students, chorister-scribes, and other semi-laymen attached to the church, whose total number has been estimated at from 10% to 20% of the population, particularly the male population.

b) Parish Organization.

423
795 In many districts of the oldAmhara provinces, the church has owned much feudal land (it was given 1/3 of the land in the 13th century). Endowments from the wills of pious persons have been adding to this.

This land, which is regarded as "rest", freehold real estate, in the traditional land tenure, is administered in divisions,called "dabber", that somewhat resemble medieaval European parishes. The population of such an area, which directly or indirectly supports the local church, through tithes, rents, services, periodic supplies, memorial gifts, etc., refers to "and dabber agär" (lit. one particular countryside) as its home district; much as an Italian refers to "mi paese".

793 The priests attached to this church (often for long periods) usually attempt to create a residential kinship unit for themselves, similar to the residential hamlets of freehold families, inviting their nephews and other young-married kin, both patrilineal and matrilineal, to settle near the church. A priest thus closely surrounded by kin becomes the local patriarch, and his personal economic future, as well as his leadership are assured. The priest locally appointed by higher church authorities ato act as administrator is the sacristan, "gabäz", or "gäs"(priest) gobäz", who is respectfully addressed and referred to as "aläqa" (lit. chief).

793
795 The number of clergy attached to an old-established, local church, often includes, besides the "gobäz"

793 priest, seven other priests of varying seniority, 12
795 deacons, a head deacon, a chamberlain, at least a dozen "dabtara" chorister-scribes, several aged monks, and elderly widows who have taken vows as nuns. The latter do much of the baking and beer-brewing for the local church. But if a poor church, "gätär" is founded by and dependent on a landholding kin group not on church land, it may have merely two priests and 3 deacons, so that on its special saint's day dabtara have to be invited from other churches, to perform the proper chants, dances, and chorus of chanting.

c) Personnel of the Church Institution, and Church Education.

793 The ordinary parish priest, "qes" does not need to be verylearned or even very ascetic, but he is expected to live a holy life in accordance with all the rules of the church, observe even minor fasts, and to be married in the eucharistic, "qurban" marriage. He is identified by the headcovering which he wears even in church, consisting of thin muslin wrapped around a cylindrical white cap. If his wife dies, he cannot marry again, and in order to continue functioning as a priest, he is expected to take monastic vows, putting on the "qob"(white cap) of the monk, without muslin turban.

One of the duties of the priest is to perform the eucharist on Sunday for persons considered living a Christian life, i.e. married in church (a minority).He

533 same name. "Saatat", the midnight chant, has a special
796 mode. "Dawit", the Psalms of David, are chanted in their characteristic mode, as is the "Addis Kidan" (New Testament).

On other occasions, not only does the musical composer have the opportunity to improvise, but the lyrical poetry, "qené", can be varied. In rural districts, priests who can only recite Geez but not compose in it, because they don't understand it, even compose "qené" in Amharic. For example:

[559] "How are you, earth? How are you, world?
Even though I love you (my home soil), I wish not to come.
Even if I hated you--how shall I stay away?"

This poem, chanted as part of a church service, is not strictly liturgical, varies from district to district, and can express a wide variety of philosophical emotions, including the Weltschmerz motive illustrated here. The peasants appreciate this unofficial, Amharic addition to Geez liturgy, and often mutter under their breath "Aiyye! what good words!".

(f) Heretical Movements.

795 Like any old church, the Abyssinian Coptic church has had heretical movements within it, but none of them have ever been able to split the church into sharply divided sects. Instead, heretical sects seem to follow

715 the usual Amhara (and Tigre) pattern of regional divergence.

Thus, in the Amhara province of Godjam, where separatist regionalism is strong, there survives traces of an heretical movement from centuries ago when waves of theological debates followed the split of the Monophysites, and whenever contact with European Christians awakened the old debates. Now dormant, though not forgotten, and still quietly followed by some is the movement referred to as "tsega", or, "tsēga lej". Their enemies in the leadership of the Abyssinian "towado" (orthodox) church say that this movement dates to the influence of the Portuguese Jesuits in the 17th century. It is passed on in some regional church schools. To counteract this and brand it as heretical, the orthodox church requires every priest to take an oath, before ordination, that he does not hold with this or any other heretical sect.

In the Amhara province of Behemdir (Gondar) there survive traces of a sectarian movement which is regarded as diametrically opposed in dogma to the aforementioned, leaving the orthodox view somewhere in the middle. This movement was the "qebat". It held the most absolute of the Coptic doctrine of Monophysitism, emphasized the person of Jesus, and deplored the widespread worship of saints. It is somewhat more respectable in the orthodox church than the other sect, but appeal to saints is too popular to give this sectarian view much future.

788 the chest. The church is then "saluted" by kissing the wall, a ceremony called "säläm" in Geez. If the person wears sandals, he must remove them before entering the church itself.

[211] On the path near the church, or leading to it, there is often a conical pile of small rocks. This may indicate a church on a nearby hilltop, and this pile, "mäsaläämiya", functions then as a poster of salutation. If the passerby is in a hurry on another errand, he may simply bow deeply in the direction of the church instead of going there to kiss the wall. In modern times truck-drivers will bow in that direction without stopping.

794 The individual layman usually belongs to a private sodality that holds private communion together. But he may, more informally, invite some personal friends on his personal Saint's day, especially his namesake's. Since this informal private communion is cheaper, costing only the price of a jar of beer and some roasted grain, it is more popular among the poor than the formal "mähabber" sodality. The informal private communion, called "zekert", is shared only by men, uses no drummer, no expensive wheat bread, no collection for a common purse, and usually only the personal confessor is invited from among the priesthood. But the zekert cannot be used as a means of gaining social prestige.

[554]

795 e) Religious Syncretism.

Surrounded by Muslim and "pagan" religions, and

795 led by a comparatively tolerant and rarely learned clergy, even loyal and observant Abyssinian Christians frequently follow practices of other religions without being ostracized or even criticized.

755 In the middle of the preparations for "Mäsqäl", the Feast of the Cross, emotionally ill or despondent patients believed to be possessed by an "evil" Zar or "Buda" spirit, are taken by their relatives into the incipient sunshine and deposited at a spot where trails form a crossroad. A doctor of the "Zar" religious cult (see later description) performs incantations, using incense to lure the Zar. Then a chicken is slaughtered, with the Christian formula pronounced over it. This cure is believed to be particularly effective if the Zar spirit is a Coptic Christian himself, who will then feed on the properly slaughtered chicken and leave the patient alone.

796 795 On Fassika, the Coptic Easter, Ethiopian Muslims living in Coptic provinces have an equivalent feast, in which many Coptic Christian women andd small children passively participate only a few hours after they have returned home from all-night prayers at the church. Even more curious is the fact that this particular Ethiopian-Muslim holy day celebrated near Gonder the day of a Muslim saint called "Sheykh Abäder", is celebrated according to the Coptic, not the Muslim, calendar. (There is a parallel to such calendar syncretism in Egypt, where the founder of a dervish order, Ahmed il-Badawi, is celebrated at his tomb according to the Coptic calendar.[78]

78. Littmann, E.: Ahmed il-Badawi; ein Lied auf den ägyptischen Nationalheiligen. Akad. Wiss. u. Lit., Mainz, 1950, No. 3.

796
796 On Easter, the Muslim worshippers of Saint Sheykh Abader leave Gondar town beginning at dawn, for a hill about half an hour's walking distance to the east, bringing with them about 100 live sheep, each donated by a faily. This is the hour when the Christians still feast on meat and beer. The hill is far enough away so that the rival religions do not annoy each other, but in the belief of the worshippers, the miracle of a water spring [312] will recur on this particular hill on this saint's day, despite the seasonal dryness which is then at its height making water a valuable and much desired commodity.

The Muslim men seat themselves on one side of the hill, the Muslim women, their hair covered with colorful red kerchiefs, on the other. Some erect shelters against the mounting sun. The men proceed to slaughter the sheep, away from the groups, with the formula "Iin the name of Allah the all-merciful and Muhammad his prophet". The meat is well roasted, then passed around in baskets, the pieces already cut to individual portions. There is plenty for everyone. There is also wheat bread ("qitta").

The Muslim leader meanwhile has proceeded half way up the hill, at a spot midway between the men and the women, and has begun to dig a hole about three feet deep. The water table is sufficiently high here so that muddy water begins to accumulate in the hole gradually. He digs another few inches, and more water accumulate. A half-gourd, sliced lengthwise, is brought and he reaches into the hole and begins to pass up the water. When the silt has settled in the bottom of the gourd, it is

776 held high, and everyone acclaims the miracle. Every-
775 one tries to obtainssome of the water to drink; the bottom of the hole keeps filling up for some time. Later, mud from the hole is passed around on green leaves, [751] and many, especially women, smear it on their foreheads, against sickness, demons, and barrenness which afflicts many of the townswomen. Some older Muslims recite prayers. The mood is generally gay, and the women banter happily from an hour after sunrise to high noon, when the feast is over, Then all begin to return to Gondar town, after pledging gifts for the next celebration of the saint's day, provided he has fulfilled their prayers.

Meanwhile, Copts, mostly women, including many barren ones, have joined the Muslim women on the hill. No special notice is taken of them; they are tolerated, and not insulted as they would be on other occasions. The Copts bring their own live sheep and the few Coptic men present slaughter them apart from the Muslims, so that their formula "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, One Divinity", is not heard. The Christian women and children also smear some of the saint's mud on their foreheads, and also vow donations to the next Sheykh Abader feast if their prayers are fulfilled. They bear the tell-tale marks until they reach their [783] own homes in Gondar, and are not punished for what otherwise might at least require re-baptism. Like Muslims, they even bring mud, rocks, and water from the saint's hill to their ill kinfolk. Coptic men do not flaunt their participation so freely. The Coptic priests, who of

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

776 course know what is going on, ignore the whole matter,
795 just as they ignore the Zar worship.

795 Parallels to such religious syncretism are found
788 not only in Egypt, but also in Syria, where Christian women go on short-range pilgrimage to the tomb of "weli" saints and smear mud from holy springs on their faces on a certain day of the Christian religious calendar.[79] This takes place in rural areas of Homs, but even near Damascus Muslims take part in celebrating the day of the Feast of the Cross in September.[80] Just as in visits to the tomb of water saints in Muslim Algeria,[81] the pilgrimage to Sheykh Abader is believed to bring on the light rains, which usually begin about that time, making early plowing and a good harvest possible. This is equally desired by both Muslims and Copts, just as individual good health is desired by both. Perhaps this unexpressed recognition explains the paradox of this religious syncretism.

f) The Church and the Present National State.

TA 659 Three phases can be distinguished in the recent relations of the Abyssinian church and the Amharic "Solomonic Dynasty" which the church returned to power in the 13th century but which now attempts to modernize

79. Gaulmier, J.: Pélérinages Populaires à Hama. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, 1931, Vol.1, pp.137-152.
80. Tresse, R.: Usages Saisonnières. Revue d'Etudes Orientales 1937, pp. 1-4; Lecerf & Tresse: Les Arada de Damas. BEO, 7-8, pp.236-264.
81. Probst-Biraben, J.H.: Pour La Pluie de Printemps en Algerie. En Terre d'Islam, 22, 1942, pp. 264-272.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

756 will trace the thief or the stolen goods. Also, the active intercession for a better future, which the dabtara can achieve to some extent by appealing to saints and angels whose secret names he knows from his books in Geez, is considered far superior to the mere fortune-telling of the ṭänqway.

D. The Scribe (dabtäre) as Healer

795 756

a. Summing up the position of the dabtäre

In many ways the social position and activities of the dabtara symbolize the syncretic character of Amhara culture. His official function is that of semi-lay staff of the Coptic Abyssinian church. He serves as scribe, chorister, translator from Geez to Amharic; the church could not do without him. His official rewards are meager, mostly a parceling out of what the priests receive. Thus his major income comes from his unofficial, extracurricular activities as healer. The copyist of church works logically becomes the writer of amulets. This brings him in touch with the cosmology of supernatural spirits, some of which are considered in the realm of zar, buda, ganyän and with doctors ranging from the empiricist woggesha to the exorciser-sorcerer ṭänqway. It may seem surprising that there is not more competition between these specialist. The fact is that the dabtäre, enjoying the greatest respectability among healers because of his association with the church, can afford to be and is generous to all except the ṭänqway, and in fact enjoys his position as uncrowned king of healers. He is the only healer, apart from the empiricist-surgeon "woggesha", to whose house men clients and patients walk publicly in broad daylight without fearing loss of prestige.

795 His social status compares to that of a "great man" (telleq säw),
756 but much of this is due to the fear in which he is held, because of his power over the supernatural world, in Amhara belief. There is fear that if someone were to offend him, he might use his powers to do evil - though black magic is not his usual metier. (The "love magic" of the däbtära has been described in relation to sex).

[539] "of insects, the worst is the scorpion;
of men, the worst is the däbtära".

[574] For the dabtara are unabashed in inviting themselves to feasts, weddings and any distribution of goods (e.g. parceling out of meat as soon as an ox has been slaughtered). In fact, they often act as if the host owed them an apology for not having sent an official invitation. Therefore, dabtara are usually invited to family feasts even if they are not kin.

795 The däbtära learns his craft through apprenticeship, beginning
756 when in the upper grades of church school. To achieve this, he
874 must be "attäntäm" (of unmixed Amhara or Tigre stock), have a good chanting voice and musical ear, be good in school, and find a däbtära-teacher willing to impart his knowledge to him. At this stage in church school he begins to be permitted to learn to write; and is not punished for doodling - forbidden at lower grades for fear a student might stumble on a formula and misuse a powerful spell.

795 There is even one priestly function which the däbtära occasionally
756 carries out. That is "re-baptism". He may re-baptize a patient vic-
[183] timized by ganyän, sometimes also cases of buda, as part of exorcism.

795 Some dabtärä have grown wealthy through mass-production of
756 amulets, in which they leave the name of the client free, to be
556 filled in on the market when sold. But this "waters down" his reputation.

b. The cosmology of demons treated by amulets

789 The amulets written by the dabtara are worn, usually on the "matab" neckcord, or around the waist especially of women. They are not read. To be effective they must bear the inscribed name of the wearer, though it is possible to have a dabtara erase the name and substitute another. Usually the amulet is written on varying qualities of parchment (from very thick to very fine), rolled tightly into a small leather case. The ink used is usually [386] made of soot, charcoal, iron powder and gallus. To emphasize an important name or matter, imported red ink is used.

Amulets also may contain drawn pictures, symbols and geometric design, some of a type that has been called "cabalistic". A fre- [716] quent picture is the scene depicting the killing of the female demon of miscarriage, "Werzelya", by Saint Susneos, seated on a horse using a lance (much like European scenes of St. George killing the dragon). This demon is sometimes depicted as a female [561] of the negroid (Barya) tribe, from which the Amhara used to capture slaves. The legend that accompanies this scene is as follows:

773 A Christian martyr, named Susneyos, had married and his child
789 had been killed by the female demon Werzelya. Thereupon he prayed to Jesus and received special power to slay themurderess. St. Susneyos mounted his horse, took his spear and rode away to the desert (evidently the Nilotic lowland below the northwestern escarpment), where the demon was hiding with others of her kind.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

136 is no fish there except very little from the rivers; There from the sea none.

795 There are no monasteries except of St. Anthony, and
792 not of any other order, as some friars say who come from there.

291 The gentlemen, monks, canons, and priests are clothed; most of the other people are bare from the waist upwards, and a sheepskin on the shoulders, with the front and hind feet tied together.

792 Most of the monasteries are situated on high mountains,
346 or in great ravines; they have large revenues and juris-
[262] diction. In many monasteries they do not eat meat all the year, and fish very few times, as they have not go it in the country. The services of these monasteries are psalms and prose, and so it is done in the churches of the canons.

796 Every church has two curtains, one on this side of the altar with little bells, and no one but priests enter inside this curtain; and another curtain in the middle of the church. And no one but persons in orders enter the church, and many gentlemen and honourable persons are ordained in order to enter the church. They go to the door of all the churches and monasteries to read the epistles and gospels, and they say them rapidly, and there they give the communion to the people.

The priests consecrate at the altar, and do not show the sacrament. When the priest who says mass comes to take the communion, he takes a particle from the top, and the other two large parts he leaves for the communion of the people. All the people who come to the church have to receive the communion every day, or else not come to church. When the communion is ended, they give them a little blessed water with which they wash their mouths.

Nobody sits down in the church, nor do they enter it shod; they do not hem or spit, nor do they let any dog or other animal come into the church. They confess standing,

784 Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by
795 one of themselves, nor will Moslems eat any which has been killed by a Christian. We had one Moslem with us when we were on trek, and as he would not eat the ox which my other men had killed he bought a whole sheep for himself, and killed and ate it himself; none of the other men would touch an atom of it, even when their own supply ran out and they had no meat at all.

262 Of course the comparatively high price of meat (for
262 an Abyssinian) prevents the too frequent consumption of *broundo* amongst the people, and their tastes in everyday food are simple. Bread is their mainstay. This is found in many varieties; some of it soft, slightly sour in taste, and pale brown in colour; the most popular is of flour made from *teff* or millet seed, mixed to a thick paste with water and then poured into a large rough slightly concave iron receptacle and cooked over an open fire, without grease or fat of any kind. When finished this bread takes the form and aspect of large pancakes, twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, and is very good, especially when eaten with jam or butter; we always ate it ourselves when on trek. The native eats with it a kind of mash of lentils or dried peas, ground and cooked, and mixed with butter and a very hot red sauce which is produced from the chilli; this latter is very widely cultivated in several varieties all over the country.

263 The amount of pepper that is put into their cooked dishes is as a rule disastrous to the European palate at the first time of trying, and how they can swallow the fiery compounds that they do passes my comprehension —their tongues and palates must be made of leather.

264 All food, including meat, is eaten with the fingers amongst all classes, a piece of bread being broken off,

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935.
MP5 Amhara MP5

793 They have always been bitterly opposed to pro-
176 gress and to innovations, more so as regards changes in their own Church than as regards the introduction into the land of alien religions, strange to say. Thus for example a learned individual, a very religious layman whom I knew, had been accused by the priests of expounding the Gospels in a manner somewhat different to that generally accepted, and as a result he was imprisoned for three years. His views on the subject of his own Church were instructive!

On the other hand they are by no means so in-
793 tolerant to other religious beliefs and efforts in the
609 country; they are not fanatical, and if left alone and not interfered with are not markedly anti-foreign. Individually I have always found them quite pleasant and friendly, and I am bound to say that Mr Wylde, who met a great many of them in various parts of the country, seemed vastly to prefer them to European missionaries. But as a body I think they are—to put it mildly—an unfortunate institution, and so far as their possessions are concerned, treatment on the lines adopted by our Henry VIII would seem to be overdue.

609 Moslems, Jews, and others practise their religion
in peace. I have seen religious processions of the
• 795 followers of Islam on their feast days pass through the streets shouting and singing completely free from molestation, and on the occasion of my last visit I saw a mosque which was on the verge of completion being constructed in one of the principal streets of Addis Ababa.

It is rather remarkable that in spite of the bitter religious warfare in which they have been engaged for centuries Abyssinians should be so tolerant of their

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

[illegible]ng enemies and should allow them to profess [illegible] faith openly as they do, when one considers the ha[illegible]rought by Moslem invasions and Galla inroads. 609 795

Even the Falasha Jewish ironworkers in the north, who are doubly regarded with dislike and suspicion as being Jews and as being possessed of supernatural powers, are treated with tolerance, though avoided.

No doubt this happy result is contributed to so far as Moslems are concerned by the fact that in Abyssinia they do not appear to be strict or fanatical—in pleasing contrast to their behaviour elsewhere. Mr Wyman Bury tells a delightful story in exemplification of this latter frame of mind. A pilgrim to Mecca, a plump and prosperous Moslem merchant at Aden in ordinary life, was gazing from the deck of the ship in rapt enthusiasm at Jeddah, which against the sun-scorched country beyond looked like a stale bridecake on a dust-heap. "Oh, the sacred land," he crooned "the blessed land, where pigs and Christians cannot live."

The Abyssinians still have a church in Rome, a monastery in Jerusalem, and monasteries and Ethiopic texts were discovered in the Libyan desert by the German explorer Falls. 794

The Abyssinian Church endeavours to maintain friendly relations with the other Christian communities: interesting examples of this are the missions sent to the Pope by the Emperor Menelik in 1906 and by the late Empress in 1921. A mission was also in Jerusalem at the close of 1922 in connection with some ancient rights of the Abyssinian Church regarding the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and other holy places; under the Turkish régime these rights had been transferred to the 794 648

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

+175 633 streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] [361] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segre- [563] gated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter.

[186] [576] Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien [829] custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

+175 633 181 The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat*, or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which contrast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the [551] Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen*, meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, [691] litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā*, land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rist*.

[795] [517] The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[48]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[49] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

TABLE 2 [P. 114]

E 563 873 795 A 873 795

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF ETHIOPIAN SECONDARY AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ethnic Group	Percentage	Religious Group	Percentage
Amhara	55	"Orthodox"	67
Tigre	22	"Protestant"	6
Galla	15	"Catholic"	5
Gurage	4	"Christian"	15
Others*	4		
		Total Christian	93
		Muslim	4
		Others†	3

* Adari, Somali, Danakil, Wollamo, Kambata, Menza, etc.

† Baha'i; agnostic; "no religion"; etc.

COMMENTS:

E A [125] [128]

1. The ethnic figures must be regarded with some caution, since as many as 17 per cent of the 700 respondents failed to answer the question. It is difficult to know whether this is due primarily to the reluctance of non-Amhara students so to identify themselves, even anonymously; to the general sensitivity about mentioning anything directly related to the "tribal question"; or simply to misunderstanding of the question. I suspect that the first-named factor may not be the most important. At any rate, if one compares the secondary school replies, in which 20 per cent failed to indicate their ethnic identification, with the college replies, in which only 10 per cent failed to do so, the greater percentage of response among the latter is accompanied by a slight *increase* (53.3 to 56.7 per cent) in the Amhara category.

   The figures on religious affiliation are more reliable, since only 3 per cent of the entire sample failed to answer that question.

2. Fifteen per cent of the students who indicated their ethnic affiliations are the offspring of mixed marriages, nearly two-thirds of which were between Amhara and Galla. These students were entered in the above classification according to the ethnic group of the father.

3. The students were also asked to indicate whether their own religion differed from that of their parents. *Ten per cent indicated such a change.* Of these, 28 per cent became agnostic or indicated "no religion"; 25 per cent converted to Protestantism; 17 per cent to Catholicism; 18 per cent went from "Orthodox" to "Christian" (which probably means to Protestantism in most cases); and 7 per cent changed to Baha'i.

E 563 873 872 162 A 872 873 162 E A 162 795

4. *A comparison with the ethnic and religious composition of the country* as a whole naturally suggests itself. Unfortunately, national figures have not yet been calculated to any comparable degree of reliability. If one refers to the crude estimates in common currency, certain disproportions are readily apparent.

   Thus, the Amhara proportion of the national population has been estimated at 25 to 30 per cent. It is clear that they are disproportionately represented in the school system; but not so greatly as has been at times alleged. In view of the statistics and considerations presented above, it would seem that 50 per cent is the upper limit of enrolment by "pure Amhara" in the post-elementary schools.

   The disproportions with regard to religious affiliation speak for themselves. The most recent published estimates are: Ethiopian Orthodox, 35 per cent; Muslim, 35 per cent; pagan, 25 per cent; other, 5 per cent. (Lipsky, *Ethiopia* [New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962], p. 101.)

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indication of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

Religion.—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "religion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether. Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer dependent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of the various missions in Ethiopia.* In recent years a third alternative has fired

* In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the imagination of some other students: attempting to reform the Orthodox Church from within. This has been done within the framework of the Orthodox Students Association, which will be discussed further in chapter vii.

Science.—Of all the aspects of Western culture to which they have been exposed, Ethiopia's students have been most receptive to the teachings of natural science. They tend to regard it as the most important single benefit which Ethiopia can gain from Western civilization. After religion, morals, and manners, "science" is the response students give most often to the question: "What specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

TABLE 8

EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS OBSERVE TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Practice	Secondary School (per cent)	College (per cent)
Follow the fasts:		
All the time	38	16
Most of the time	26	23
Sometimes	27	24
Not at all	9	37
Go to church (mosque):		
More than once a week	9	2
Once a week	59	40
Less than once a week	25	36
Not at all	7	22
Bow to church (mosque):		
Always	28	9
Some/most of the time	50	38
Not at all	22	53
Pray:		
Twice or more daily	64	40
Once a day	22	23
Once or twice a week	6	14
Once or twice a month	5	10
Not at all	3	13
Number	(485)	(195)

Disagreement on such questions as the nature of solar eclipses, the descent of man, and the etiology of disease is common between the modern adolescents and their own parents. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the scientific imagination has yet displaced traditional thought patterns in the minds of Ethiopian students, or that scientific beliefs have fully replaced

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

5

THE OLD AND NEW ELITES

121 The disjunction between traditional and modernizing sectors that character-
177 izes the socialization of adolescents informs most aspects of contemporary
178 Ethiopian society. A modern institution of Western inspiration has nearly everywhere been superimposed upon traditional forms, and as yet there has been relatively little interaction between the two.

[435] In the economy, subsistence production according to traditional techniques prevails throughout all Amhara areas. Production for national and international markets is funneled through separate channels: coffee lands and a few tobacco farms in the southern provinces, specialized commerce in a dozen or so provincial centers, and a small number of factories dependent mainly on non-Ethiopian management and, frequently, capital. In the legal [671] realm varied forms of customary law remain authoritative for much provincial litigation, while civil, criminal, and maritime codes based on French and Swiss ideals have been enacted as the law of the nation. The govern- [64] mental structure is similarly bifurcated, between local authorities who govern in the traditional manner, albeit with reduced powers, and a ministerial system and parliament based on European models. In the case of religious [795] [794] institutions there remains a wide gulf between the orientation of the Orthodox churches and that of such Western-inspired formations as the Theological College and the Orthodox Students Association.

121 This sociological dualism comes to a head in the system of social stratifi-
56 cation.
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amdä Ṭseyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum.

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[51] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas.

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest.

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

directed peasantry, and suffer the consequences, no dynamic program of agricultural and social development can take place in Abyssinian areas that does not enlist the active cooperation of the local *bālābbāt* and *shum*.*

The Decline of the Clergy

Although the church was instrumental in bringing Rās Tafari to power—by relieving the nobles of their oath of allegiance to Lījj Iyāsu—it was as a whole not sympathetic to his policy once he began to rule. Foremost champions of tradition, the clergy viewed with suspicion Rās Tafari's interest in modern education and other reforms. So pronounced was their conservatism that his weekly *Berhānennā Salām* found it newsworthy to report the fact that the clergy of one important provincial church were actually reading the Addis Ababa newspaper each week.[37] He was wise to act gingerly at first, limiting ecclesiastical reform to such matters as publishing religious texts in Ge'ez and Amharic, and encouraging the work of foreign missionaries.

In the past three decades, however, changes of many sorts have had the effect of reducing the degree of independent authority which the clergy traditionally enjoyed. These changes included the achievement of independence from the Alexandrian Patriarchate; the weakening of the church under the Italian occupation; subjection of church administration to the central government; and competition from the secular government schools.

Rās Tafari initiated the policy of seeking independence from Alexandria in 1929, when he secured the investiture of five Ethiopian bishops. This gave indigenous clergy, for the first time, the right to ordain priests and deacons, although they remained subordinate to the Egyptian archbishop. In 1950 an Ethiopian bishop, the *eçhagē*, was consecrated as archbishop; and in 1958, culminating Haile Selassie's patient and skillful negotiations, complete autonomy from Alexandria was achieved.

The attainment of ecclesiastical independence has heightened the prestige of national church officials in Ethiopia. It has brought about a re-organization of the national church hierarchy, in which fifteen bishops now hold office, one for each of the fourteen provinces, and one in Jerusalem. At the same time it has reduced the effective freedom of the clergy as a separate status group. Deprived of the external source of legitimacy which the Egyptian *abuna* formerly provided, the clergy are now entirely subordinated to the power of the Emperor. This condition was formally articulated in the Constitution of 1955, which made the election and appointment of archbishops and bishops

* A potentially significant medium of communication between them and the central government is the Chamber of Deputies, which since 1957 has brought popularly elected notables from the provinces to Addis Ababa.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

The general position of the church had already been weakened by the 648 events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of 795 many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those 793 of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the [792] Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the 795 clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree 793 which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed [643] properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes [651] at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, 871 has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever govern- 658 ment schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to 793 be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full- [465] time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as 178 ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and [554] has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas [871] like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite [658]

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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Ye-dam Demṭ*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuānnent,* Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

proverb which stresses the rights of women in this regard gives the following advice: 121* 593 586

Balāgar siṭagab yemaṭāl be-degger;
Tayawennā nay qitāwen yegāgger. [539]

When a peasant gets sated he beats you with wood;
Leave and come home, let him bake his own bread!

A couple who have firmly decided upon divorce need simply call in their relatives or go before the *çhīqā shum* in order to have their property properly divided. The only recourse to judicial process is when, as often happens, disputes break out concerning the division of property. In the *damoz* form of marriage, in which there is no civil oath, divorce is yet simpler. The wife is given certain presents and a monthly salary for the duration of the marriage. When the husband has to leave for another part of the country, or if the couple quarrel, they simply separate without further ado.

Despite its heavy claim on the energies of its members, then, the Amhara kinship system is such as to make members of the nuclear family relatively independent of extended relationships, and to give the individual marriage partners important areas of independence from each other. 121* 593 594

Religious Organization

Membership in the Monophysite Church is automatic for all Amhara except a small percentage who are Muslim. This membership is symbolized by the ceremony of baptism, performed for male infants on the fortieth day and for females on the eightieth. At that time the child receives a special Christian name in addition to his regular family name. 121* 795 • 794 [851] [553]

Certain obligations are incumbent upon every member of the church. Foremost among these is the requirement of fasting, which begins for children of both sexes at about the age of seven and introduces a considerable element of constraint into the lives of the Amhara. Second, there is the obligation to observe the Sabbaths and the main holidays by refraining from arduous physical labor on those days. In addition, each household is obliged to contribute a certain quantity of grain to the local church every year.* [785] [796]

Apart from the rigorous fasting requirements, and the injunction not to work on holy days—a dubious hardship—the individual is relatively free of ritual obligations. The rituals demanded by the church are so manifold, and so sacred, that responsibility for them is given to the clergy, and the laymen

* In some areas this is a fixed amount per household (*e.g.*, one or two *quana*); in others it is proportionate to the wealth of the family. It is collected by a lay official of the church, the *gnad alaqā*, though sometimes by the *gabaz*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 794 795 *121 79 are left free to a large extent. Since every day of the month except the thirtieth is sanctified by dedication to some saint, Mass must be performed virtually every day, a norm which is actually fulfilled by churches which have a numerous clergy. The burden for individual clergymen is kept small by a system of rotation. The average parish church will have services perhaps ten to fifteen times a month, which is still too often for heavy popular attendance. Even on Sundays and the most important holidays, when the laity are expected to attend, their participation is excused by other considerations. Those who have eaten earlier in the day, who have had sexual relations the night before, or who are harboring a grudge in their "stomach" are not even supposed to come to church. If they do come, they sit outside the wall chatting with one another while the Mass is performed inside.

*121 794 795 783 Customs concerning Communion and Confession likewise give the individual a wide range of freedom. Partaking of the Communion is not required of anyone; the experience simply is available to those who are ritually pure (children, and those who have married by the *querbān*), if they are so inclined. Confession is not mandatory, but according to personal inclination. Every man has the right to choose his own personal confessor or "soul-father," though if satisfied with the one of his father, he may retain him. (A woman adopts the confessor of her husband.) The soul-father's advice may be sought when a problem arises. If a man sins—breaks the fast, works on a holiday, commits theft or murder—he is supposed to confess. If he chooses to do so, the soul-father will prescribe a certain penance—fasting an extra amount, sleeping on the floor for a period, giving something to the poor or to the church. But the initiative is entirely up to the sinner and probably more often than not he keeps the offense to himself. The proportion of Amhara who keep every fast strictly, go to church a few times a month, and confess their transgressions to the soul-father is small; in the estimate of one Amhara informant, less than five per cent.

*121 794 575 Still greater permissiveness may be observed in connection with the religious fraternal associations known as the *māhebar*. The *māhebar* consists of a group of people from the same general area, usually of the same sex, who meet once a month on the day devoted to the saint for whom the association is named. The place of meeting rotates among the homes of the members, and the soul-father of the host is always present to bless the occasion. The meetings consist of much eating, drinking, and conviviality. Membership in a *māhebar* is purely voluntary, and the individual who wishes to join one usually has a choice among several in a given area.*

For the Amhara laity, then, a few burdensome ritual and fiscal constraints

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[735] * There is a variant of the *māhebar* known as the *senbatī*, whose members take turns in providing food for the clergy and poor folk on Sundays.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

are balanced by a fairly permissive mode of organization. For the clergy, the constraints are heavier; the fasting requirements are increased, and the priesthood involves, as we have seen, strict marital fidelity. On the other hand, the individualistic organization of the clergy is most striking.

This individualism is conspicuous already in the church schools, which are organized not on a class basis but in a series of master-pupil relations. Students begin their courses of study whenever they arrive at the residence of the master, and proceed each at his own pace. The master spends the bulk of his time with more advanced students, who in turn are used to instruct the less advanced. The pupils are very much on their own, uncontrolled either by their families, with whom they no longer reside, nor by any formal institution. The same is true of the masters, who are not subjected to any sort of outside controls. Indeed, each teacher tends to develop his own unique method of teaching, regarding it as something of a personal monopoly.[24]

The ministrating clergy are likewise free from controls emanating from a broad ecclesiastical organization. Each parish church functions autonomously under the direction of a head (*alaqā*) chosen by the local clergy. (Heads of the most important churches have traditionally been appointed by the emperor.) The obligations of the priesthood are not very great. The chief duty of the priest is to take his turn in performing the Mass. His pastoral services are limited to occasional visits with his particular confessants, from whom he expects to receive regular rewards of food and drink. Otherwise, his life is much the same as that of his lay neighbors.

The role of the *dabtarā*, as we have seen, is still more flexible. *Dabtarā* who are associated with a parish church are expected to take their turns singing hymns and composing *qenē* in the outer ring of the church; but otherwise they exist as free entrepreneurs, and they need not be so attached unless they so desire.

The individualistic organization of the Ethiopian Church is most striking, perhaps, in the case of the monks, especially when compared with Christian monastic orders in the Western world. Ethiopian monks are bound by nothing other than the original conditions for assuming the role, namely, renouncing family ties and worldly possessions. The monk need not enter a monastery; he may continue to live in his old home or may take to the woods as a hermit. If he does go to live at a monastery, ~~his~~ life is not radically changed. The Ethiopian monastery is not an organized community, but a sacred place—the site of a large and important church, in the vicinity of which live numbers of individual monks. The monk comes and goes as he wishes, prays whenever he wants, and may live free of any obligations toward his fellow monastics and toward the rest of the society.*

* There are, however, some monasteries where a more organized and disciplined regime may be found.

*793 capital) and the parishes. The social identity of the
*793 parish tends to be defined in terms of the ties linking
• 794 its residents to the parish church. The church must be provided with sufficient clergy for the performance of the weekly Mass, as well as Masses on feast days and on occasions which mark a sacrament of the Church. This amounts to perhaps three Masses every week, each of which must be conducted by at least two priests (keys) and three deacons (diyakon). Ideally, these ecclesiastics are recruited from among the parish's risteñas, in return for the use of fields belonging to the parish church.
[776] The tie between residents of a parish and its eponymous church is further strengthened by the tendency of these people to confine their public ritual performances to the church, to favor the church's saint (reified in the arc, tabot) with private appeals for protection against illness and other misfortunes, to donate gifts to it when such appeals have been answered, to bury their dead in its churchyard, to pay towards the salary of a church teacher (astemariy) of the syllabary, and perhaps for a teacher (memher) of advanced Church subjects as well, and, lastly, to contribute in tithes (generally cereals and other foodstuffs) and labor towards the proper maintenance of the church.

443 Parish and Town. The highland zones can be concep-
632 tualized as a series of overlapping market spheres, each

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[162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage III	4	
Ambilineage IV	3	
Ambilineage V		5
Ambilineage VI		3
Ambilineage VII		2
Total risteñas households	31	21

[423] In each of the hamlets, there are two households be-
*[192] longing to Amhara tenant farmers (timeneña), individuals unable to claim membership in any local ambilineage. These tenants, who provide their own seed and draught animals, return a quarter of their crops to the risteñas
[779] whose fields they use. There in Tikurmidir two addition-
[433] al timeneña households, whose members are Muslims. These
[286] households are headed by brothers who supplement their
*[192] agricultural activities by weaving the šama (toga) for local Christians.

*793 Primary rights to a third of a parish's fields are
361 believed to reside with the parish church. Ideally, the
423 use of such fields, known as yikeys mariet ("priest's
* 795 land"), is given to local priests in return for parti-
*[192]
[613] cipating in the Masses of the parish church. In practice, rist-holding ambilineages become associated with specific tracts of yikeys mariet by providing such priests over generations. Occasionally, ambilineage

361 members are unable to retain their claims to these
423 church lands (which are intimately linked to the ac-
613 quisition of leadership positions and prestige within
795 the parish) by providing priests from their own ranks. Consequently, substitutes from outside the parish must be obtained. Such is the case with ambilineage I today. According to current allocation of yikeys mariet in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, ambilineages I and V are each expected to provide three priests for the Mass. Ambilineage V currently provides its three from three ambilineage households of Lemmariet. Ambilineage I, however, currently provides only one risteña priest (a resident of Tikurmidir). Thus, members of ambilineage I using these fields have been obliged to invite two non-risteña priests to take up residence on a portion of these lands, in return for participation in the Mass.

361 Finally, these hamlets contain three female ser-
562 vants, unrelated to other residents of the parish. In
592 Tikurmidir, there is a single Amhara attached to a household of ambilineage I; in Lemmariet there is a "bariya" in a household of ambilineage I, and another in a household of ambilineage V.

*278 Herbalist Medicine in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet.
*757 The herbalist therapies of these two hamlets are descri-
*759 bed in Table 7. With the use of this information, the
613 following paragraphs will indicate that the professional

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621 A Gondar Ward. Gabrael sebeka lies on Gondar's eastern flank, and is typical of those wards which are not given over entirely to talla sellers or tradesmen. [241] Until liberation, it was occupied by ristenas and cul- [423] tivators of timene and church lands (riym). During the [198] last three decades, the ward's character changed greatly, [795] as domiciles for out-landers were built on its fields, [342] and many of its erstwhile peasants took up employment in [463] the town. Today, the ward contains 198 residents. Ten [161] of its forty-four households are headed by Gondar-born 632 people; of these, five were born in Gabrael sebeka it- 621 self. The remaining household heads are a) Amhara from 592 other parts of Begemder (sixteen households), from Gojam (five households), and from Wollo (five households); b) Tigreans (three households); c) local Agaw (two households); d) Shoans (four households); and e) Sankella (one household). On the average, the ward's adult residents who were not born in Gondar have lived fifteen [241] years in this sebeka. With the exception of three house- [793] holds which still depend exclusively on farming, and [463] two local priests (sharing the Mass with priests residing in an adjacent ward), the ward's residents are supported by occupations which depend upon daily contact with [463] people of many other sebekas. In brief, seven household heads are policemen, thirteen hold other government employment, five work as zibanas, eight as wood cutters,

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Table 15: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Amhara

Month: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Month: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau	Annual Cycle of Amhara Ecological Activities (Economics, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Coptic-Abyssinian Amhara.	Cycle of Amhara Social Events	Syncretism	New, Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1 to Mäskäräm 30	Sept. 11 to Oct. 10	receding flood after rainy season; yellow "Mäsqäl" daisy carpets land; spring ("tsädäye").	place beehive basket-work in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ("gal").	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ("yäMäsqäl Bäal")- public rejoicing around bonfire (dämära). Minor: 1st Mäskäräm is St. John's Day. 11th: "krafa" - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	Kin visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ("enqutätäsh") on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive promise of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		"Mäsqäl" is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
Ṭäqemt 1 to Ṭäqemt 30	Oct. 11 to Nov. 9	sunny growing & ripening season (äkäwänäl sega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ("gebs"), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ("tällä"); sell honey to make mead ("täj"); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Ṭäqemt: St. Michael's Feast "Mikaal"; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 5th: pilgrimage to "tebal" holy wells and waterfalls of Äbärä Mänfäs Qeddus (Abo).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ("gurmeneah") to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving "from Jerusalem".		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Ṭäqemt 23rd).

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Hedar 1 to Hedar 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "yeff" for bread; "ang" and "talbo" oilseeds. Tenancy in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Hedar: "Eliesal" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Qwaqwa"-clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Mem" Festival at Axum; Bane' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Eliesal": fresh hairs, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). Slot: Church standard holiday.		
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 9	Summer ("belg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants; dramatic scrubbed landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "yeff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus' coming), esp. at Gulshi near Dire Dawa. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Lodit", or "Ghena"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Ghena") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).	19th: Emp. Haile Selassi travels to Gulshi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional toga and Judgment.	
Ter 1 to Ter 30	Jan. 9 to Feb. 7	Height of dry summer [illegible] English rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shembera), plant (gomba) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ter is "Tenqit"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially created pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Genzit"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Gyorgis" (St. George) Slot: "Kelkeye Maryam" (Mary)	Tenqiberers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("gugs") women are coiffured, beans-roasted palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary:St Epiphany, Jan. 19th Pentecost (11th Ter), ("mayrik") among Falashas as harvest festival. 12th traditional morning	Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in traditional costume.	

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Tikemit 1 to Tikemit 30	Feb. 8 to Mar. 9	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adje gebe") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before Lenten season) 11th-20th ("abed amsa").	Lenten Fast "ruhada" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tam" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day fast of Niniweh ("Tsomé Niniwe"). 16th is feast "Kedana Mehrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and spices, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 16th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
Magabit 1 to Magabit 30	Mar. 10 to April 8	dry; burning of bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, but part of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gabre Menfés Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 19th "Debré Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Alem" =(Savior)	Youngsters pastoring cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
Miyazya 1 to Miyazya 30	April 9 to May 8	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bega"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron ploughshare and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("qemamat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent, "seqlit" Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services; eve of the 17th, Fasika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qetema") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tekesat") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season, from Easter to heavy rains, so unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palms, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("qenphata") games.	17th: Fasika (on Easter) celebrate "Sheykh Abader" water saint.	27th:(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("amlaq Wal") entry into Addis Ababa

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Genbot 1 to Genbot 30	May 9 to June 7	light rains; spots of fresh, green grass (for pasturage nearer home). Storks fly northward.	Women prepare fuel for rainy season: dead-wood; piles of sun-dried cowdung, coated with layer of mud. Caravans hurry home from Sudan, etc. Fish "senre" caught in rivers.	1st: Ledata (Birthday of Virgin Mary): After service, last, large, out-door picnic, under "dass" shelter 24th: "Tikli Haymanot" day, pilgrimage to his holy well at Nabra Libanos. Children sing of country's well-being to storks.	1st: Men and women celebrate outdoor picnic separately, but young folk meet while older ones feast on meat and barley beer.	
Sane 1 to Sane 30	June 8 to July 7	Heavy rains, winter "Kerem" begin: fogs, storms, cold rain. Fishing season. Children are taught to swim before rivers are dangerous.	Intensive plowing of softened soil, seeding by broadcasting: barley, then tyaff, wheat. Beans and other garden crops are seeded and fenced. Fish is plentiful and cheap.	9th: Resumption of Wednesday and Friday "Fast of the Salvation" recessed since Easter. Clergy: "Farqlitos" 6th-feast; 7th "Lesem hawaryat" - 1 month Fast of Apostles.	Master gives feast to retainers for plowing, "arf sisay", with fried fish, beer, "asmari" music, and "hotu" dance. Mutual aid in hut repair.	
Hamle 1 to Hamle 30	July 8 to August 6	Heavy monsoon rains, sometimes tornadoes. sheets of rain almost daily. Cold	Indoor work; some minor hut repairs.	Intensive church school for boys, who are not needed at this season for any other work. Clergy: 5th: Fast of Peter and Paul ends month Fast of Apostles.	Standstill (e.g. of visiting) due to swollen brooks and washed-out paths.	16th(July 23) Birthday ("Ledit") of Emp. Haile Selassie; praise hymns changed in churches.

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Mäskäräm 1 to Mäskäräm 30	August 7 to Sept. 5	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some ape a bit of ṭyäff and "idja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Belasaye"); parade, despite rain, with "tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Buhe", "Debre Tabor") feast, with torch-light parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeraf") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger children badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his name-sake; flags, etc.
Pagumeni 2 3 4 5	Sept. 6 7 8 9 10	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Wäqadras" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "lefafa sedeq", scroll; bathe.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	

283 thread onto a warping reel in rough basket shape and size,
462 called "mäzäwär". It is a kneehigh frame of branches set on the ground, with a somewhat narrower waist. Several s skeins of cotton thread are thus connected and rolled into long, firm strands to serve as warp.

Sometimes it takes several months for a housewife to prepare enough cotton thread for the warp and woof of a single toga ("shamma"). But a diligent woman, if she has little else to do, can prepare enough for half a dozen or more togas a year. The cotton thread is now given to
[286] the male weaver "shamani" who is to weave the toga. He may set up his loom in the back yard of the customer, or work near his own hut.

462 Skilled occupations for single women, e.g. "women between marriages" who often go to urban centers, are few. The brewer of mead and owner of the "tej byet", described under entertainment, usually employs several women as waitress-prostitutes.

462 There is another occupation, the woman beautician.
305 She may be specialized as a tatooer of women, "täqwari",
304 usually a Coptic Amhara woman, who is kept busy especially
[796] before great church holy days such as the Feast of the True Cross ("Mäsqäl"), Christmas ("Gänna") and Epiphany ("Temqät"). Hercustomers are more often divorcees "between marriages "(who can afford it because of earnings as restaurateur-prostitutes or beer and mead brewers), than young girls or married women, who have no cash. As the name indicates ("tequrat" means blackening), one of her jobs is to darken the gums between the teeth, to heighten

A. The Structure of Church Organization.

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778 a) The Church buildings and design.

The traditional church building is round, designed on a pattern of three concentric circles. This combines the round pattern of the African hut, though much larger in this case, with the functional design of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem. Like the latter, each church has a Holy of Holies ("qeddesta qeddusan"), a closed inner sanctum, which may be entered only by upper priesthood
[782] or the day's officiating priest. He carries burning and smoking incense in a metal or clay canser, while he marches around the sacred wooden tablet, the "tabot", located there. On the tabot, which may not be seen by layman's eyes, are inscribed, in Geez, the name of the saint to whom the particular (parish) church is dedicated, plus magical names of angels and geometric symbolism and phrases from both the Old and New Testament. The "tabot" represents symbolically the Ark of Moses kept by the ancient Isreelites in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem

346 The second circumference, the "mäqdäs", can be
[788] seen from the outside through several doorless openings. Here the priests perform the eucharist, hidden from the public gaze by portable white linen screens. The "maqdas" is restricted only during services.

•796 Within the third, walled-in circumference, the
346 "tazä", called also "gene mahlet" (lit. reciting-place of devotional poetry), the chorister-scribes ("dabtäre") congregate while they chant devotional poetry and other

796 liturgy, swaying and dancing to the rythm of their raised
346 voices, the beat of huge drums, and the tinkling of sistra.

Laymen may also occupy sections within this third enclosure, mostly near the northern end. There is no seating. Standing is required during the long services
[481] that begin just before dawn and last many hours. Therefore, priests and chanters lean on "maqomya", strong bamboo crutches equipped with iron or even silver concave tops. These are also used as they sway with the rythm when the dancing is in progress. These crutches may be privately owned; but many churches own simpler ones as church utensils. When important visitors, "great men" and their guests attend, without maqomyas of their own, the chief priest usually takes those owned or used by the lesser priests to supply the Very Important Persons, to the barely disguised displeasure of the regular users.

346 Women are not admitted even into this third out-
562 er enclosure. They must remain outside the church building, in the yard, or leaning against the hard-mud wall, or, at a more pretentious church, under the outer collonade of wooden posts which support the overhanging edge of the roof. The roof, usually thatched, but of imported corrugated iron in better urban churches, is usually ornamented with an iron cross adorned with wooden or metal ostrich eggs.(This custom may be of older, African, origin.)

778 Geez). Here the bread and wine used in the eucharist are
346 prepared and stored with great secrecy. The utensils of
251 the nearby cooking hut, the baking pan "metad" and large clay jars for barley beer, are also stored here. Supplies of tyëff, barley, wheat, beans, peas, may also be stored.

779 In recent years, church parades feature prominent-
186 ly the flag of the nation, the red-green-yellow of the central government, emphasizing in modern ways the close union of church and state that has long been traditional in Abyssinia.

(e) Worship and Devotional Poetry.

593 The musical chants and notations studies formally
796 have already been outlined in connection with church education.

Church hymns, including devotional poetry, are called "gënë" in a generic rather than specifically accurate sense. A collection of them is contained in the book "gubaë qana", and they are sung in a special mode. The chief mode is called "selt". It has three variations:

(1) "geez" - short tones, dedicated to the "Father";

(2) "ezel" - mournful tones in minor key, dedicated to the "Son" 's passion;

(3) "araray" - long, drawn-out tones, dedicated to the "Holy Ghost".

These variations are interlaced, for special results, and for specific occasions. The mass, "qeddase" (lit. sanctification) is chanted in a mode bearing the

533 same name. "Sätat", the midnight chant, has a special
796 mode. "Dawit", the Psalms of David, are chanted in their characteristic mode, as is the "Addis Kidan" (New Testament).

On other occasions, not only does the musical composer have the opportunity to improvise, but the lyrical poetry, "qené", can be varied. In rural districts, priests who can only recite Geez but not compose in it, because they don't understand it, even compose "qené" in Amharic. For example:

[539] "How are you, earth? How are you, world?
Even though I love you (my home soil), I wish not to come.
Even if I hated you--how shall I stay away?"

This poem, chanted as part of a church service, is not strictly liturgical, varies from district to district, and can express a wide variety of philosophical emotions, including the Weltschmerz motive illustrated here. The peasants appreciate this unofficial, Amharic addition to Geez liturgy, and often mutter under their breath "Aiyye! what good words!".

(f) Heretical Movements.

795 Like any old church, the Abyssinian Coptic church has had heretical movements within it, but none of them have ever been able to split the church into sharply divided sects. Instead, heretical sects seem to follow

805 Gregorian, so that, prior to September 11th, the Western 1956 A.D. corresponds to the Abyssinian 1948 A.M., "amätä mehrät" (year of grace). The same year is regarded by the Abyssinian church as 7448 "amäta aläm" (year of Creation); and 1672 "semaëtat amät" (era of martyrs). There is a 4-year cycle of apostles, so that 1954 A.D. (1946 A.M.) was the year of Mark, "zämmänä marqos wängelawi".

796 805 In the annual cycle of religious events, the dates of each holy day are further commemorated by monthly repetition of a shadow-like minor holyday. Christmas is commemorated every month on the 29th, because it falls on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This reminder is utilized also in everyday layman's temporal affairs, and the agreement to meeti is expressed by individuals as "I shall meet you on Täklä Haymanot", since everyone knows this means the 24th day of the month. The following religious dates are commonly utilized by the laymen for secular purposes:

Table 8: Dates of the Religious Calendar Utilized for Secular Purposes.

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1st day of the month	- "Ledäta", birthday of the Virgin Mary.
5th	- "Abbo", or "Gabra Manfas Qeddus". Both important saints, whose actual anniversaries fall in the rainy season.
12th	- "Mikaël", as a reminder of the miracles ascribed to this arch-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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angel. On his actual day, a popular public picnic is held--a major social event.

16th - "Kidanä Mehrät" (Covenant of Mercy). This is a preferred monthly day on which mahabber sodalities like to gather for private group communion.

19th day of the month- "Tahsas Gabriël". Reminder of the miracles ascribed to this archangel.

21st - "Sionä Maryam". Reminder of the annual event of the revelation of Mary after her death.

23rd - "Giyorgis". St. George's day.

24th - "Täklä Haymanot". Abyssinian head of church, now sainted, who re-established the "Solomon Dynasty."

27th - "Medhane Aläm" (Redeemer of the World), i.e. Jesus.

28th - "Emmanuel". Another reference to Jesus.

29th - "Bäala Egziabhär" (Festival of God), or, "Balä Wold", festival of the birth of Jesus, monthly reminder of Christmas.

796 When the floods of the rainy season recede in early September, the yellow daisy carpets the pasture and the tall green grain begins to mature, the new year begins, with the month Mäskäräm. This heralds the first

796 holy day of the year, "Mäsqäl", Feast of the Cross, on the 17th, and all who can prepare new garments. The countryside is freshly washed from 3 months of rains, and the sun is welcomed. It seems as if nature herself is beginning a new year, another annual cycle.

From St. John's Day, the first day of the year, children begin to gather the plentiful wildflowers, and to bring them to kinfolk across brooks which are again [B24] passable. These bouquets of daisies, "Mäsqäl abäba" i.e. Mäsqäl flower, are considered "enqutatash" (lit. take this tribute). This symbolism is linked to the first plant brought by the dove to the ark ofNoah after the floods, which plant is said to have been the flower "engeçha"; others say it is because King Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba a pearl of the type "enqwe".

In return, the children expect promises of gifts of new clothing for the Masqal feast. Even adults give "gursha" gifts to each other, of food or other items, and the increasingly generous sunshine and raised level of emotion inclines to generosity. Elders and old women who have turned nun bless every visiting kinsman withthe [788] formula:

"Blessed be He, (who) from time to time (one year to the next) has let you pass (in good fortune)."

796 The "Mäsqäl" Feast of the Cross, in Abyssinian 776 church tradition, dated back to an early Christian Queen "Eleni" (Helena) who sponsored an expeditinn to Palestine to seek the true cross of the curcifixion. When she found it, she decided to announce the joyous news to her

●796 own people and to the Christians of Constantinople.
[779] Therefore, she ordered that a tall pole be erected, crowned with a burning torch, called "dämmärä". The present procedure re-enacts this traditional tale, for on the afternoon preceding the 17th huge poles are stacked up, parades circle them, and in the evening the stacks are set afire, lighting up the landscape.

In preparation, some days before Masqal, peasants and townsmen go to the bush to cut long sticks, so that they will be dry in time. Pious persons touch them to the hearthstone and pray that the harvest will be good,
[292] so that they will not have to subsist on cabbage (the food of poverty). Even the poorest can bring the plentiful yellow "masqal" daisies, tied to the top of the poles. The stacks are formed on public areas, such as a marketplace, in front of the church, etc. Adults and children parade around them at least 3 times, wearing their best new garments and trinkets, This is an occasion for girls to be seen at their prettiest, and for young braves to boast.

Some of the young men form into groups and dance
[535] the "hoya-hoya", refrains of past or future brave deeds. Warriors perform the loyalty jumping-dance shouting "Addis Ababa". Sometimes, when the resinous torches are lit, mock battles develop. Little girls dance rings-around-the-rosy, while little boys may take the occasion to burn scars on their forearms as proof of courage and to be "strong". Pious elders take a brand from the lit bonfire and rekindle their home hearths, in the hope of

796 transferring the blessing of the true cross to their homes.

[184 565] All classes participate in the parade, the bonfire and the worship. There is complete cultural continuum. Even Emperor Haile Selassie parades around the stake three times, accompanied by highest dignitaries of church and state. In the village, the ceremony awaits the arrival of the local cheqa shum and "great men". Old warriors come dressed in their lion-manes and carry the rhinoceros shields of their youth; they boast heroic deeds in the "fukkara". Priests bless the scene and the people, waving cross and incense burners, "blessing the land", so that the harvest will be rich (much as the water is blessed on Epiphany).

Women, as usual, form their own groups, in impromptu singing and rythmic handclapping. The men do not overlook them, bringing them ashes and charcoal from the blessed bonfire, from which the women make a paste with butter and smear the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

Children rise early on the day of "dämmära" to collect their promised gifts. In groups they go from house to house, chanting:

"Let husband and wife consult with each other,
and give us gifts".

Feudal nobles used to take this occasion to acknowledge the knighthood name, the "färäs sem" of young nobles. They also gave a raw beef, "brundo" feast, to their retainers, and a big "gebber"(feast) consuming huge jars full of barley beer, pitchers of mead, and bottles of "araqi" (distilled).

796 While some of this feasting is now less orgiastic than in the past, "azmari" musicians still pass among the feasters, singing praises to the host and noble guests, [534] to the accompaniment of the single-string "masenqo" of male singers, and the banjo-like "qrar" fingered by women azmari. Torchlight parades, both of men and of women, leave the bonfire later, wind toward the nearest river or brook (still full though no longer raging) to enjoy the pleasure of bathing at its best, before the brooks dry to a trickle.

796 182 Thus the first church function of the year is an important factor in unifying this society: significant for all ages, both sexes, all classes; sets a time and place for rites of passage in the life cycle; renders visible paternalistic feudal patterns of human relationships; reopens the annual cycle of economic endeavors (caravans, weaving, etc.); reopens the pattern of kin visiting after the hibernation of 3 months; and reinforces the traditional religious as well as national values and attitudes.

796 In the months that follow there are several religious festivals, which also have social significance. Named after special saint's days, they vary from region to region.

The next widely observed holy day is Christmas, on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This does not nearly approach the significance it has in the Western 796 world, nor the Masqal feast just described. In fact, 526 Christmas, "Ledat" (lit. birthday) is more often refer-

796 [529] red to as "gänna", the name of the hockey-like game played by the young men on this day, and for the next two weeks. It is a sacerdotal holy day with little social significance. The priests congregate in the church of the district that bears the name "Iyasus" (Jesus). Services begin at midnight the eve before and end with chanting and dancing inthe sunshine at 9 A.M. when the clergy parades in the churchyard.

Old Testament survivals are indicated by one of the many minor church celebrations, the feast of "gezrat" (circumcision), celebrating the circumsision of Jesus Christ a week after birth, on the 6th day of the month of Ter. It is held entirely within the church, especially monasteries.[77]

More important than Christmas is Epiphany, "Tamät", on the 11th of Ter. In the late afternoon preceding this day, the "tabot" are carried out of all churches, swathed in imported silks and borne on the heads of priests, in vast ceremonial parades that stop frequently for chanting and ceremonial dancing, until the procession, which includes national vlags, arrives at the water. There a solid, large tent hasbeen erected to house these sacred objects.

Evening chants and dances are continued to the beat of drums and tinkle of sistra, until the last light fades. The faithful surround the tent all night long as guard of honor, while feasting and drinking onntinues.

77. The circumcision of Jesus is also celebrated by the Christian Alaowites, in Syria. See-Janot, E.: La Famille Alaowite. Les Missions Catholiques, 65, Paris, Aout 1933, pp. 381-384.

796 After dawn, the priests are again ready, awaiting only the arrival of the bishop, the governor and other officials, before resuming the services which this time include the re-baptism of the populace. Lighted candles are set afloat on the pond, and the bishop, after reciting blessings over the water and the future light and heavy rains, dips the cross in the water and sprinkles it over the governor and other "great men"; then lesser priests take over until every man is sprinkled. Very pious and rustic peasants jump into the water, younger boys strip and swim in the pond usually filled for this occasion. Amidst further chants and dancing, the procession slowly winds its way back, stopping at crossroads to take leave of the various "tabot" returning to their own churches. Only the "tabot" of "Mikael" remains at the water, for the following day belongs to that archangel.

The same ceremony as in villages, is followed in the capital. In national sports, the "gänna" season (hockey) ends that day, and the "guks" season of horsemanship and lance-throwing in mock pursuit, begins. The latter name is therefore closely connected with Temqät.

[262] Among the many minor feasts and fasts that follow, another Old Testament survival stands out. It stands out as a 3-day fast--no animal products, and no food before noon), from the 8th to the 10th of Yäkatit, called "tsomä Nänäwe", reminiscent of the Fast of Nineveh mentioned in the Bible. It is observed only by church students and clergy, but is more widely known than "gezrat".

796 262 As soon as this is over, a period of intensive meat-eating begins, similar to European carne-vale (carnival), for the same reason: the long lenten period is approaching, and in Abyssinia this means also abstention from eggs, cheese, milk, and other animal products (some even avoid fish), just as on any Wednesday and Friday; and no food before noon, for the strictly observant. The fast is obeyed by nearly everyone, in all classes. This fast begins on the 22nd day of Yäkatit, and is called "kudade" (lit. suffering) to indicate both the suffering of Jesus and of the faster. It is also referred to as "arba tom"(lit. 40-fast) though in fact the fast lasts 55 days. Women prepare a variety of vegetable and grain dishes, to substitute for the absence of more solid food.

796 [71] Finally, on the 17th day of the month of Miyazya, the long-awaited Easter, "Fassika" (related to the Hebrew Passover, "Pessah" etymologically), occurs.

It is the climax of a week of preparations during which the lenten "hudadey" sharpens. This week is called "hemamat" (passion, extreme suffering), and no work is done, symbolizing the sympathy withthe weakness and suffering of Jesus. Even the Saturday market is cancelled--the only time this happens.

[143] Purchasers of meat and supplies for Easter must do their shopping on Thursday, when a special big market is held. The price of sheep, etc., goes up sharply, even doubles, in anticipation of the feast. Even tyäff and pepper (bärbärä) become more expensive. Ethnic craftsmen take this opportunity to bring their products,

796 selling plowpoints for the plowing that will soon begin when the light rains have softened the ground.

[262] On this Thursday, the pious begin a 3-day fast, taking only dry peas and water after the noon hour. Good Friday, called "seqlät", is on the 15th of Miyazya. Chil-
796 857 dren, too young to fast, are given special privileges of impertinence that day. (For are not all rules suspended now that the Savior himself is dying?). From sunrise on, boys and girls knock at doors of huts and houses, chanting:

[539] "Musha-musho, (nonsense rhyme, meaning lamentation, funeral chant)
we come for your crucifixion (Oh Christ);
Fill (our hands) with flour (ye women),
we are many as fleas".
Musho-musha,
May He (God) give ye fat cattle,
children in your womb;
give us gifts!"

They are given freshly-baked bread being prepared for the Easter feast, but they keep on demanding, making the most of this rare freedom, insulting and mocking the stingy hosts. They may carry an effigy corpse of the latter, as if to his funeral, weeping and lamenting his "lekso" (funeral eulogy). Some boys dress as priests, the girls imitating hysterical women relatives, until they bury him with full ceremonials on the market place, to the great amusement of the adult audience.

796 Adults on this Friday rise early for morning wor-

796 ship, perform the "segdat" (prostration) many times. This signifies the climax of lenten suffering. Toward evening, when Christ is presumed to have died on the cross, the pious are of good cheer, for He has descended to purgatory, has tied the devil hand and foot, and has liberated all the souls to paradise.

796 At earliest dawn Saturday morning, about 5:30,
793 priests and deacons put on their best garments, including "kapa" (cape) and "lämd", carry their colorful sun umbrellas as if in procession, and pass through the streets with parade cross, bell, incense burners, and armsful of yellow-green palm strips called "qetäma". They stop before every house or hut, ringing the bell. The sleepy owner answering the call is given the reed to wind flat around his forehead, and he will wear it all day. The priest sings out: "Oh, master, Jesus Christ has been found! The devil is chained!". In appreciation of the good news, the head of the house gives the priest some money, and receives a blessing in return. This ceremonial interchange is called "Gebra salam" (serving the greeting).

796 Sometime before midnight, the church services begin, with alternately mournful and hopeful liturgy. When the night is about to end, at cockcrow Sunday morning (about 4 A.M.) the resurrection, ("tensaä") is loudly declared amidst shouting and ringing of bells.
[263] The pious now break fast with crushed linseed ("talba") mixed with honey, and pronounce the blessing of having been permitted to reach this day. All rush out of the

796 smoky, incense-filled church, to reach home and begin the feasting on meat. Sheep are rapidly slaughtered all over the area, fires are lit, pepper stew is boiling everywhere, and the vast jars of barley beer, injera, coffee, and milk and butter are consumed. This feasting, often ruinous to the digestion, continues for some time, for the Wednesday and Friday fasts are abrogated for the next 50 days.

With regained strength, fired by good food and [526] beer, the young men begin games of javelin throwing. Ball games ("qenchebtE") continue the entire following week, when the heavy feasting still keeps work to a minimum.

The last outdoor picnic before the rains takes place occurs on the 1st day of the month of "Genbot", when the "Ledäta" (birthday) of the Virgin Mary is celebrated. The leafy outdoor shelter, "dass", is erected for this occasion. Both women and men take part, though [789] in separate groups. At the end of the day, some women "clean house" of evil spirits, to keep them away while shut in during the rainy season. This is done by casting boiled "nefro" porridge into the bush, telling the personified sickness to go after it.

[262] During the next church holydays, fish, particularly the "senro", become staples of the menu of priests and others, since rivers begin to fill with water and fish are more plentiful. There is a church festival "räbbä kahnat" (lit. inventory of the priests), a purely internal affair,

796 The holy day which now symbolizes most strongly the union of church and state occurs just after the climax of the rainy season. On the 7th day of the monthe of Nahase occurs the feast of the Trinity, "Selassyē", which the present emperor adopted as his imperial name at coronation. On this day, the "tabot" from the local "Selassyē" church is taken on a colorful, though usually rain-drenched parade. In some regions this feast is called "Abba Abraham", because it is believed that the day also commemorates the Old Testament event when 3 angels [188] visited Rather Abraham. The parade includes also many national flags of the (secular) state, and photographs of the bearded emperor, carried by deacons. Loyalty shouts of "Addis Ababa" are frequently heard.

The last important socio-religious holy day is "Buhē", the Transfiguration of Jesus, on the 13th of the same month. It is also called "Dabra Tabor", because it is believed to have taken place on Mt. Tabor in ancient Palestine. Again a church bearing that name is chosen as center of the celebration. Buhe is also a feast of lights, perhaps to symbolize the hope that the rainclouds will soon part and let the sun be seen [373] once again. There are torchlight parades, the torches made from braided, resinous barks, carried on the way to the church just before sunrise. All shout "Buhe, buhe" on many occasions on this day. It is a family holiday remembered all through life by the children. On this day the hearths are brightly lit, and mothers bake a special wheaten bread for the children. Even

796 the youngest are lifted to see the parade. Boys and
[857] girls age 7 to 15 go from hut to hut starting in the early morning, chanting "Buhe, Buhe", "hoyyo, hoyyo, ho", and verses:

[539] "All shout 'Buhe!, children all!
Give us what (you have) prepared; Do not change (your mind)! "

"When the rooster has crowed, night is gone;
After Buhe, the winter(rainy season) is gone".

796 Long whips, mostly of finely braided fibre, of
526 tree bark or "tucha" grass, are made before Buhe, and
[411] young men practice with them until they can hit even small targets easily. On Buhe afternoon, two groups of contestants face each other, often across a swollen brook, and line up so that each individual faces an opponent of equal skill and strength. They come armed with the whips, and begin to warm up by hurling insults at each other, addressing each other in the female gender. Soon the game of aiming at the face and ducking the adversary's whip begins. The whip has a short wooden handle, but the strap may be as long as 15 feet. Sometimes this opportunity is taken to work out grudge fights. For, traditionally, any wounds incurred, even the loss of an eye, cannot be taken to court or cause a feud, as the result of this ritual battle. No other weapons may be used. The losers flee, are pursued to their huts, and the victors are entitled to all the

796 food of the feast prepared by the losing side.
526 In the evening "fires of joy" are lit, where the rain-drenched, weary and sore contestants and others can dry out, drink barley beer, and are supposed to forget and forgive the hostilities. Some may still boast of individual feats of heroism, in Amhara warrior style; others will sulk. But generally the day ends in harmony, after the excitement which itself was a welcome break in the monotonous hibernation of the rainy season.

796 The end of the annual cycle coincides with the end of the rainy season. The last 5 days (in leap years 6 days) are added after the end of the last month, and are called "Pagumēn" or "Qwagmē". On the 3rd day the [776] annual festival of St. Raphael, called "qeddus Rufaēl", the water saint, takes place. The rain, which still falls [821] heavily that day, is considered "ṭebel" (holy water) and to have the power to dull the poison of snakes so [787] that their bites will not be fatal. Much rain during Pagumēn is taken as an omen that the crops will be good.

796 This day is final examination day for the boys 874 who have attended church school long enough to be promoted to "deacon". They are examined in correct chanting of liturgy and prayers. To be mentally wide awake they often go to the dabtara beforehand, and, for a small gift, obtain the stimulating herb "esa fars" (lit. Persian wood) or drink boiled "astänagär" (lit. the plant that makes to talk), which also helps to overcome stage-fright.

796 The younger children go from hut to hut, chanting:
857 "In the name of Rufael,
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796 857 [539] from the bin of peas
fill me up."

Thereupon the householder gives them a handful of shembera peas, which they roast to "qolo", and this symbol, too, is considered to invite a good crop.

796 805 The 5th or last day of Pagumēn is the annual feast day of St. John. The "tabot" from his church is carried to water very early in the morning, and the men bathe in the river. The old year is symbolically buried, in some regions, by ceremonial burial of the book "Lefafa Tsedeq" (Scroll of Righteousness) which resembles in part the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. The day is traditionally also the end of the fiscal budget year, on which the nagadras, the appointee over commerce, had to pay the feudal tribute to his lord (at least a large jar of beer and 20 enjara breads) in addition to squaring his accounts. [651]

That evening torches are lit, for this is the beginning of a new year.

c) The Religious Life Cycle of the Lay Individual.

852 Baptism usually occurs after 40 days for boys, still later for girl babies, sometimes as long as 80 days. This practice is based on Old Testament patterns, and more directly, on the period of 40 days that the Virgin Mary herself had to segregate herself from the Temple after the birth of Jesus. (The Falasha Jews of Abyssinia is concerned less that a baby might die

795led by a comparatively tolerant and rarely learned clergy, even loyal and observant Abyssinian Christians frequently follow practices of other religions without being ostracized or even criticized.

755 In the middle of the preparations for "Käsqäl", the Feast of the Cross, emotionally ill or despondent patients believed to be possessed by an "evil" Zar or "Buda" spirit, are taken by their relatives into the incipient sunshine and deposited at a spot where trails form a crossroad. A doctor of the "Zar" religious cult (see later description) performs incantations, using incense to lure the Zar. Then a chicken is slaughtered, with the Christian formula pronounced over it. This cure is believed to be particularly effective if the Zar spirit is a Coptic Christian himself, who will then feed on the properly slaughtered chicken and leave the patient alone.

796 On Fassika, the Coptic Easter, Ethiopian Muslims
795 living in Coptic provinces have an equivalent feast, in which many Coptic Christian women andd small children passively participate only a few hours after they have returned home from all-night prayers at the church. Even more curious is the fact that this particular Ethiopian-Muslim holy day celebrated near Gonder the day of a Muslim saint called "Sheykh Abäder", is celebrated according to the Coptic, not the Muslim, calendar. (There is a parallel to such calendar syncretism in Egypt, where the founder of a dervish order, Ahmed il-Badawi, is celebrated at his tomb according to the Coptic calendar.[78]

78. Littmann, E.: Ahmed il-Badaw., ein Lied auf den ägyptischen Nationalheiligen. Akad. Wiss. u. Lit., Mainz, 1950, No. 3.

796 795 On Easter, the Muslim worshippers of Saint Sheykh Abader leave Gondar town beginning at dawn, for a hill about half an hour's walking distance to the east, bringing with them about 100 live sheep, each donated by a faily. This is the hour when the Christians still feast on meat and beer. The hill is far enough away so that the rival religions do not annoy each other, but in the belief of the worshippers, the miracle of a water spring [312] will recur on this particular hill on this saint's day, despite the seasonal dryness which is then at its height making water a valuable and much desired commodity.

The Muslim men seat themselves on one side of the hill, the Muslim women, their hair covered with colorful red kerchiefs, on the other. Some erect shelters against the mounting sun. The men proceed to slaughter the sheep, away from the groups, with the formula "In the name of Allah the all-merciful and Muhammad his prophet". The meat is well roasted, then passed around in baskets, the pieces already cut to individual portions. There is plenty for everyone. There is also wheat bread ("qitta").

The Muslim leader meanwhile has proceeded half way up the hill, at a spot midway between the men and the women, and has begun to dig a hole about three feet deep. The water table is sufficiently high here so that muddy water begins to accumulate in the hole gradually. He digs another few inches, and more water accumulate. A half-gourd, sliced lengthwise, is brought and he reaches into the hole and begins to pass up the water. When the silt has settled in the bottom of the gourd, it is

[TA TA5] held high, and everyone acclaims the miracle. Everyone tries to obtainssome of the water to drink; the bottom of the hole keeps filling up for some time. Later, mud from the hole is passed around on green leaves, [751] and many, especially women, smear it on their foreheads, against sickness, demons, and barrenness which afflicts many of the townswomen. Some older Muslims recite prayers. The mood is generally gay, and the women banter happily from an hour after sunrise to high noon, when the feast is over, Then all begin to return to Gondar town, after pledging gifts for the next celebration of the saint's day, provided he has fulfilled their prayers.

Meanwhile, Copts, mostly women, including many barren ones, have joined the Muslim women on the hill. No special notice is taken of them; they are tolerated, and not insulted as they would be on other occasions. The Copts bring their own live sheep and the few Coptic men present slaughter them apart from the Muslims, so that their formula "In the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, One Divinity", is not heard. The Christian women and children also smear some of the saint's mud on their foreheads, and also vow donations to the next Sheykh Abader feast if their prayers are fulfilled. They bear the tell-tale marks until they reach their [783] own homes in Gondar, and are not punished for what otherwise might at least require re-baptism. Like Muslims, they even bring mud, rocks, and water from the saint's hill to their ill kinfolk. Coptic men do not flaunt their participation so freely. The Coptic priests, who of

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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course know what is going on, ignore the whole matter, just as they ignore the Zar worship.

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Parallels to such religious syncretism are found not only in Egypt, but also in Syria, where Christian women go on short-range pilgrimage to the tomb of "weli" saints and smear mud from holy springs on their faces on a certain day of the Christian religious calendar.[79] This takes place in rural areas of Homs, but even near Damascus Muslims take part in celebrating the day of the Feast of the Cross in September.[80] Just as in visits to the tomb of water saints in Muslim Algeria,[81] the pilgrimage to Sheykh Abader is believed to bring on the light rains, which usually begin about that time, making early plowing and a good harvest possible. This is equally desired by both Muslims and Copts, just as individual good health is desired by both. Perhaps this unexpressed recognition explains the paradox of this religious syncretism.

f) The Church and the Present National State.

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Three phases can be distinguished in the recent relations of the Abyssinian church and the Amharic "Solomonic Dynasty" which the church returned to power in the 13th century but which now attempts to modernize

79. Gaulmier, J.: Pélérinages Populaires à Hama. Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales, 1931, Vol.1, pp.137-152.
80. Tresse, R.: Usages Saisonnières. Revue d'Etudes Orientales 1937, pp. 1-4; Lecerf & Tresse: Les Arada de Damas. BEO, 7-8, pp.236-264.
81. Probst-Biraben, J.H.: Pour La Pluie de Printemps en Algerie. En Terre d'Islam, 22, 1942, pp. 264-272.

575 church, fills several voids in Amhara social organization, and establishes links of human relationships which otherwise leave little choice to the individual of any age and sex beyond his assigned roles in the feudal system, church, and family.

Perhaps this is why there are so many facets to the "mähabbär" association, and why it is called upon by its members to fulfill so many functions that in many other human societies take separate forms. To a considerable extent the mahabbar maintains an elastic equibrium between the individual and the society. For in this association he can exercise a personal choice; he can cross boundary lines of age and sex, and occasionally even of class; here he has the rare opportunity of new experience in interpersonal relations; here he finds economic as well as emotional security; recognition of his status in a highly respectable association; the response of life-long personal friends.

575 796 The mähabbär in Abyssinia may be as old as Coptic Christianity itself in that country. It is based on the "private communion", one of the few instances in which the sacerdotal church concerns itself with the layman, probably because the time and place of mahabbar meeting leave them remote from the ritually sacred precincts of the church buildings. By the same token the mahabbar enables the church to extend a broad control over its lay members .

The religious basis of this private communion rests on the monthly meeting of its members for worship, in the hut of one of them (they take turns as hosts).

575 796 The preferred number of charter members is 12. The reason is not certain, but some ascribe it to the 12 apostles, some so that each member has the duty and privigele of acting as host once a year. The evening itself, within each month, is preferably the host's. The host asks his confessor-priest to officiate furing the religious part of the meeting. Part of the worship always includes ceremonial drinking from a special clay cup called "ṭuwa", or "ṣuwa", which is dedicated to a saint or archangel, and from which the particular mähabbär takes its name (e.g. the "ṭuwa-ef-Gabriel mähabbär). The host has prepared a large "gan" (largest clay jar) of barley beer, which is blessed by the officiating priest. There is also ceremonial breaking of bread, the well-baked kind usually called "dabye", preferably of wheat, and half an inch thick, which, on this occasion, is referred to as "ṭadiq" (lit. offering of righteousness), or as "shellemlämi" (a reference to the cross). This bread is sometimes adorned with incised geometric designs. A poor host may substitute the common limp enjära bread, but that would lower his prestige. A rich host or one trying to gain prestige will have carpets spread on theddirt floor, and even the poorest can spread odoriferous grasses and leaves, to give the hut a clean and festive atmosphere.

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The members congregate at dusk, some a bit earlier because of the Amhara aversion to travel after sundown. When the confessor-priest is seen to approach, the members rise and redrape their shammas in the symbol

575 of going to church. The priest brings the holy water,
796 sprinkles the inside of the hut, and intones prayers. At the proper moments, the members prostrate themselves before the "ṭuwa" cup containing specially blessed barley beer. The "ṭadiq" bread is placed on the wicker worktable ("mäsob"), and is then divided by the confessor-priest among the members; the leftovers go to the host's wife who had baked it but who remains modestly in the background. Some of this blessed delicacy is given to the poor. The confessor absolves all present from sins, then passes the "tuwa" around so that everyone can drink from it. Then lots are drawn by means of sticks to see who the next host will be for the "ṭuwa" and "ṭadiq". The ceremonial phase is now over.

[554] Roasted barley ("qolo") and peppery stew ("woṭ") are served in as many varieties and quantities as the host can afford, and many go beyond their means to gain prestige. Drummers and chanters ("azmari") are often hired, and the noisy entertainment is heard in s a wide area, attracting many uninvited guests who sit outside the hut and hope to share in some way in the food or entertainment.

575 Women usually have their own mahabbar sodalities, and usually name them in dedication to some event in the life of the Virgin Mary ("Maryam"). But sometimes women attach themselves to a male mahabbar as a kind of auxiliary, sitting on a mat by themselves in a corner, and tolerated because of their services in preparing beer, bread and stew, or even honored if they are heir-

883 The random play activity of younger girls gives play to more structured activities. Girls still work and play in groups but seek to meet groups of young men somewhat older than themselves. Flirting becomes patterned and self-conscious, and behavior in the presence of elders more subdued. Aggressive playfulness, disregarded often before puberty, is severely criticized henceforth.

883 584 Saturday afternoons are preferred times for the gathering of "qonje" girls, for they then go greater distances into the bush to fetch firewood for Sunday. Usually the girls, age 13 to 16, sing loudly so as to attract the group of young men, age 15 to 20, who thereupon follow them at a certain distance. From time to time, the girls, leading the boys on, stop, and dance around like playful little girls, alternately holding each other by the hand, or spinning like a top. This is a signal to the boys to approach, as if by accident, and couples begin to break off from the group to go for a "shershsher", a promenade, while still gathering deadwood. Since the boys are from nearby hamlets, the youngsters and their parents know each other.

584 796 In the annual cycle of events, three occasions are utilized as landmarks of opportunity in serious flirting, informal courtship, leading to the rapidly ensuing first marriage of the adolescent girl.

The first occurs on "Mikaël", St. Michael's day, on the 12th day of the month of Hedar, which is celebrated as a kind of Thanksgiving day, for it falls just after the major harvest is completed, in late November. For all ages it is a day of picnics, out in the open, under a bright sunny sky in the first part of the dry season, before the green grass is entirely scorched yellow. Togas have been

584 796 freshly washed. The day begins with chanting in the church at dawn, parading of the local "tabot" of Mikaël, accompanied by the "ellel" joyshout of the women. Large shelters ("dass") are set up in the open, about noontime, and feasting and beer drinking continues until the late evening.

This day is awaited and prepared for by the adolescent girls who have just concluded their task of watching the harvest from elevated platforms guarding the maturing crop. On this day they use the platforms as shelters, under which they invite their boy friends. The girls bring live chickens, the boys kill them, pronouncing the religious formula over the chickens. The girls then cook them in earthenware pots with appropriate spices and pepper, thus advertising their abilities in cooking and housewifely arts. The girls wear a fresh hairdo, often pomaded (sometimes for the first time) with "ades" - boiled and perfumed butter; their palms reddened with "ensosela" like a grown woman, and lemons and "ades" oderific branches in the folds of their freshly washed heavy cotton frocks. Prepared in this fashion, they begin to attract the boys even while the elders are still in church during morning services. A group of girls will gather within sight of the churchyard, shouting "ellel" at the proper times, dancing their girlish rounds. As soon as they can, the young men thereupon detach themselves from the churchyard or outer enclosure, surround the girls, and feel out their individual popularity by teasing and tickling their chosen girls with olive branches. If a girl agrees to consider a boy, she gives him a lemon or an "ades" branch, which invites him to a "ahershsher" at her platform-shelter.

The second annual occasion presents itself on the biggest out-

584 door event of the year, the church parades on Epiphany ("Temqat"),
796 in connection with the "guks" tournament of the young men. Dressed up in holiday fashion, the "qonje" girls eagerly follow the fortunes of their preferred boy friends. When no elders are within hearing, some girls direct teasing shouts of encouragement at the young men, even occasionally "ellel" (reserved for church ritual earlier that day). This day is the climax of the informal courtship - serious flirting season, in mid-January.

The third and final occasion occurs on Easter, "Fassika", at the very end of the dry season, just before social activities move indoors. For this holy day, the girls have once more washed their
[302] garments despite the shortage of water, reddened their palms, prepared the hairdo. Everyone is in a happy mood, for the long lenten season is over, and meat is consumed in greater quantities than at any other time. There is an element of urgency in social relations, for this is the second and final marriage season, and soon all social life and kin visiting comes to an end for four long,dreary, rainy, chilly months.

It is on the basis of such informal courtship, climaxed on these three annual occasions but continuing in-between, that a young man requests his father to initiate negotiations for marriage by sending an intermediary to the girl's family. If the match seems suitable to the elders, negotiations begin.

4. Adulthood and Marriage: Dominance of the Kin.

582 A girl's first marriage nearly always takes place before she is fully adult, physically as well as in maturity of character; while the bridegroom, though also young, is physically adult and in

X794 TT6 From this complex array of the plaguing - but often also protective- spirit world, it becomes clear that there is a great deal of significance in the zar cult beyond mere healing of mental ailments; even beyond the organizing of patients into groups of devotees - a kind of group therapy with religious overtones. There is an extension of the acquired "protection" so that some zars become not only protective spirits of individuals, but patron saints of certain social groups in Amhara society, e.g. some specialize in the rich and noble, some in the poor or low-class; some in hunters and warriors; etc. But although religious affiliations are usually identified sharply, there is considerable crossing of the lines in the spirit world so that Coptic Christian spirits may have Muslim names, and even practice [812] religious intermarriage. Another important contribution made by the zar cult is that it orders nature, explains nature to the Amhara mind, yet allows enough flexibility (e.g. in regional variations, and the continuously increasing and decreasing power of individual zars) to admit new information, new revelations, to be fitted into the traditional construct. For example, in the 1930's the dominant zar spirit in Gondar was Ṣayfu Ṭhängär (ascertained by a French expedition); in 1953/1954 it was Aweliya. Since zar spirits can have successful and unsuccessful careers, so can humans; hence, new ideas, even modern ones, can be fitted into the spiritual world.

But the major character of the "zar" complex is that of a healing cult.

X794 T56 T96 c. <u>The Annual Convention ("amat bal") of the "Zar" Doctors; Voluntary Possession in the "Zar" Cult.</u>

On the 23rd night of the month of Yäkatit, the day before the beginning of the Coptic Christian lent, the "zar" doctors of Gondar hold

x794 their annual convention,("amat bal", lit. the annual event). This is
756 about the time when the rest of the Christian world celebrates its
796 mardi Gras, Carnevale, Fasching. The timing of the convention is probably no accident, for there be, as, the day after the noisy Convention, the period of "kudadē" (lit. suffering) in the life of Christ, priests would hardly permit the noisy and gay celebration during lent.

The convention takes place in Addis Alām (lit. new world), the oldest section of Gondar town, once restricted to Muslims and other non-Copts.

Unlike Western Conventions of doctors and scientists, the zar Convention does not consist of calm, objective, sometimes mononotous and even icy presentations. Instead, in the convention of "zar" doctors new techniques are subjectively demonstrated on participant zar devotees who are chronically possessed; diagnostic aids are utilized in actual treatment of actual patients; new poetry to cajole specific spirits is recited in ecstatic chants to the best of the drum, while the audience joins in with refrain-chanting and rythmic handclapping. It is a super - "wādāja" (lit. love-feast) of the zar cult, bigger and better than ordinary zar cult activities, and introducing new experience, but in principle follows the same basic procedures of luring protective zars into public "possession" of the afflected, and enlisting them in the diagnosis and treatment of ailments caused by evil or mischievous zar spirits.

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In view of the esoteric elements in the zar cult, it is little wonder that the "amat bal" is restricted to zar doctors and permanent devotees. Therefore it was not easy for a "European" observer like the

X794 present author to be permitted to attend this all-night session.
756 Careful negotiations through a trusted intermediary person had to be
123 arranged ahead of time. For at any time the chief of the zar doctors
796 could end the negotiations on the ground that some of the "zar" spirits would be offended or repelled, and refuse to come into full possession of their "horses" in the presence of a stranger. An additional antagonistic element was fear of the local police detectives, who, though they do not interfere with the zar cult, have orders from the self-concious central government not to let foreigners witness it.

X794 The chief zar doctor of Gondar in the present generation is the
756 Lady (woyzaro?) Salamtew, She is renowned even outside the entire province (Begemdir-Semyen), as far as Tigre province and even in Addis Ababa. This is perhaps more due to her position than her own initiative, for Gondar has long been considered the city of powerful spirits and traditions. She leaves most healing activities to her disciple "bala zar", except for very stubborn cases. More often she is busy as "consultant", for many clients, even non-devotees of the zar cult, bring their family or business or litigation problems to her. She herself is possessed by several powerful, protective male zars, to whom she ascribes her various powers, from whom she receives inspiration, the spirit of enterprise, courage to experiment in perfect comfort and security without the fear of the evil eye which hampers other individuals engaging in anything new.

She is not afraid of the pinpricks of medium and minor "zar" spirits, for her whole like is devoted to the service of the most powerful ones. One of the latter has strong Coptic Christian affiliations and learning, and guides her in her cautious and unofficial

X794 not to cross the boundary in front of the stage again. He is not to
756 approach the house until well after nightfall, and is to come by a
123 back trail, so as not to be seen by passersby.

X794 Thus, after nightfall on the 23rd of the month of Yäkatit, he
796 climbed over eroded back trails down to the "Kokit" section of Addis
123 Aläm and approached the house of Lady Sälämtu where her devotees were assembled. It was 7:30 P.M. More oil lamps had been lit. There were about 20 women, but a male zar doctor with talents in poetry and chanting sat near the stage, wearing a white turban much like a Coptic Abyssinian priest. A powerful male drummer had been hired for the occasion.

X794 Lady Sälämtew still took no official notice of the foreigner, for
796 her zar had not yet "descended", and without that she was just a hollow
[123] shell, a mute "horse". One of her brothers motioned the foreigner politely to a seat on the mudbench that ringed the wall. There was much subdued whispering, as if a momentous event was about to take place. The hairdo of several of the women devotees and doctors had
[302] been specially arranged to honor their individual zars: those not permitted to cut their hair had plaited it into a braid ("surosh") surrounding the skull; others had shaved a circle in the middle (called "gucho"), like a little girl.

X794 Other preparations and paraphenalia included the ritual coffee
796 trays ("gända"), which symbolized the wooden "tabot" (sacred tablet)
778 of the holy Coptic city of Aksum, and which were dedicated to several zars including Säyfu Čhängär and Rahölo. The ancient mother of many zars, named "Werär" was believed to have stolen the original "tabot"

x 794 from Aksum (just as Menelik I is regarded by the Coptic Abyssinians to
796 have brought it to Aksum from Solomon's Holy of Holies at the temple
778 in Jerusalem). But the tabot of the zars also symbolized the outdoor tree stump which serves the invisible zar spirits as a table. Thus, partaking of refreshments from the coffee trays constituted a kind of communion with the zar spirit to whom the tray was dedicated, although this was done only during intermissions of the cult services. On one tablet, the "araqi" supplied by the foreigner stood ready.

x 794 In the corners, more types of incense were burning than before.
796 In addition to "etan" (frankincense), the domestic Ethiopian "bukbuka"
782 was sending up clouds of perfumed smoke. Leaves of "wogart", believed pleasing to the zar that causes headaches and neuralgic pains, were occasionally placed on the clay incense burners. From time to time, some imported pebbles of yellow sulphur ("kabrē" or "din") sent up acrid smoke. But the sweet odor of most types of incense predominated most of the time.

x 794 About 8:30, the drummer brought his heavy drum down from beneath the
796 solidly built roof, and began to drum slowly, rythmically, still subdued.
756 The curtain was lowered, but the shadow of Lady Salamtew behind it could
781 still be vaguely seen. Suddenly raucous grunts began to be heard from
533 behind the curtain, emanating from Woyzärö Salämtew. This meant that her first major zar had arrived, and was beginning to descend into her, performing the magical coitus. Her joyshouts became louder, higher-pitched, turning to shrieks, quicker and quicker. She was beginning to perform the "gurri" victory dance of the zar who had conquered her.

Immediately the women devotees began to handclap rythmically, gradually quickening their tempo, in time to the twisting and turning

X 794 of Lady Salamtew's body. The twisting began like an embrace, with her
● 796 head thrown back, rotating movements of the chest, followed by a
756 rythmic forward bump of belly and hips. Her ecstatic shrieks varied
781 from pain to exultation (like the "ellel" of women in the Coptic church service). Encouraging shouts came from individual women in the audience, and some raised their holiday - reddened palms in prayerful joy. As the climax approached, the jerky twisting of Lady Salamtew's body gradually changed to smoother movements of the limbs. She was now well in tune with her zar, and he was comfortable within her. The excitement in the audience changed to warm and glowing emotion at the same time. Then Lady Salamtew emitted a loud scream, and dropped in a heap. The drum stopped abruptly. There was a sudden hush in the audience. The strong sweet odor of generously burned incense pervaded the consciousness and its smoke leisurely curled upward.

X 794 It was only a matter of minutes before Lady Salamtew recovered.
756 Her brother pulled the curtain to one side. Her eyes were bright with
796 curiosity as she glanced about the house as if she had just arrived. She had lost her absent-minded appearance, for now the zar acted and spoke through her. Suddenly she appeared to notice the foreigner for the first time, smiled and waved a friendly greeting. Her voice was still husky, but warm, as she called out "how are you" in understandable Amharic, rather than her esoteric "zar language"; this was a courtesy, though
[195] she used the female familiar gender (the zar often uses the inverted
[123] genders in address). She further inquired whether the foreigner was sitting in comfort, and how his health was today (hinting at the "ailments" he had used as a pretext). Then she ordered the handmaidens to offer the foreigner tälla (barley beer), and coffee, on one of the zar coffee trays.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X 794 She then proceeded to greet the individual zar doctors and devotees
786 as if she had been absent a long time. Each rose and bowed deeply to
796 her. Barley beer was now passed around freely, while coffee beans were being roasted and crushed, in preparation for the next intermission.

X 794 Refreshed and heartened, the male zar doctor serving as poet now
782 began to chant the hymns he had composed in honor of "aweliya" the
796 chief male zar of Lady Salamtew. The rythm was as formal as the hymns
[533] chanted by the dabtara in the Coptic Abyssinian church, but contained Arabic loanwords borrowed from the traders' vernacular. The midience quickly leaned the response and accompanied the responsive chant with rythmic handclapping:

Poet: "Salaam" (lit. "Peace", greeting; similar in Geez and Arabic languages).

Crowd: "Salaam Alēkum" (lit."Peace be with you", in Arabic).

Poet (continuing in Amharic): "Enter, warrior; enter warrior! "

Crowd: (repeats the same words).

Poet: "Lord Aweliya, what have I given to him (polite address) that he may be merciful to me?"

Crowd: (repeats same chant in more wailing pitch).

Poet: "Flower (synonym for youth), oh zar, flower!"

Crowd: (repeats)

Poet: He is Lord of Sera, Lord of Mora is he". (Polite address).

Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "He, bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Crowd: "Bridegroom Zar! Bridegroom Zar!"

Poet: "Like a lion, like a leopard, when he roars!"

Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "My witness (also can mean "faith"), Aweliya; my witness!"

Crowd: (repeats).

Poet: "May it be, to be healed, let me be!"

Crowd: (repeats)

Poet: "My prophet, my prophet, peace be with you".

Crowd: (repeats).

Now that Aweliya has been greeted and his protection invoked, individual "balä zar" (zar doctors as well as chronically possessed patient-devotees) can invite and lure their individual zars to take public "possession" of the devotee, who then dances the individual "gurri" victory dance of the particular zar. In luring the zar, they invite him with incense that he likes and with poetry composed by the zar doctor who serves as the poet of the convention.

It is now 9:30 P.M. Now that Aweliya, a Coptic zar is present, the poet invites Galla zar spirits from the Raya and Azabo territory of eastern Ethiopia:

Poet (chanting): "Aweliya, you are merciful, merciful you are;
my Lord, you are merciful".

Crowd: "Yehun" (lit. "May he be", polite address; this is a frequent refrain).

Poet: "If we believe in you, if we have faith, Aweliya, you will be merciful!"

Crowd: "Amen".

Poet: "Hear, oh prophet, we greet you; hear, oh prophet, we greet you!"

Crowd: "May you be" (created).

Poet: "The coffee has boiled,
the pilgrimage has been fulfilled;
hear, oh prophet, we greet you".

Crowd: "Amēn".

Poet: "Raya, Raya, we are calling;

Azābo, Azābo, we are calling!"

Crowd: "May you be".

Poet: "This will bring him to me;

now it will entice him!"

Crowd: "Amēn".

Poet: "Azābo ! Raya ! I am calling!"

When he stops there is an expectant hush. A woman zar doctor seated on a mat amid the crowd begins to sway backward and forward, still in a sitting position. All eyes turn to her, for this is the beginning of the "gurri" of her zar, and the spirit is beginning to move her. She begins to rise, still swaying. Her neighbors hold her lightly for a moment and remove her long necklaces which have metal objects attached that might hurt her or someone else in the spinning movements that are to follow. Now fully on her feet, the possessed begins to twirl, emitting hoarse shrieks. She spins faster and faster, like a top. Several times she slows a little, raises her arms rythmically, and contorts head, then chest, belly and hips, while her zar descends into magic coitus with her. Each time she spins again, to the ever faster tythm of the drum and the rythmic handclapping. The other women encourage her on to the orgiastic climax with shouts of "ahun" (now) and "yehun" (let it be). Her shrieks turn to long whines. After about 15 minutes of this "gurri", she falls in a heap, suddenly, exhausted, shouting "ahun" (now) herself with her last effort, then lies silent and motionless.

x 774 782 796 The poet now lures the "pagan" zar Gamyu, whose home is in a bamboo forest in the Metemma lowland of the eastern escarpment of Ethiopia.

Poet: "Tall bamboo you (lit. he) will eat; bamboo you will devour;
Lord, named "Dämäna" (lit. cloud), from where you devour bamboo;
Gamyu, Gamyu, Gamyu, pure honey (flattering synonym for healer) I
dance eyaho, eyaho dance, Oh Gamyu!"

Thereupon one of the women devotees who has shaved a tonsure in the center of her skull ("Gamyu" comes from "gamye", meaning tonsure), which is the visible requirement he makes of those whom he "possesses", begins to rise. The "gurri" she dances differs only in details from the one performed for the Galla zar spirits.

It is now 11:00 P.M. The various male zars expected on the program for the evening have now "descended". It is time for the female zars to begin making their descent, which is safe, now that many protective male zars are about.

x 794 796 781 Word is whispered around that a male and a female zar who "will bite" are about to attack some of the possessed. Everyone rises and crowds close to the wall, leaving the hearth and the center of the room free. Only Lady Salämtew seems unafraid. She calls out a warning to the [124] foreigner, in her husky voice but in friendly tone, advising him to stand on the bench so as not to be bitten. "Ayzäw" (be well, be of good courage, be of good cheer) she calls out to the foreigner, using the [125] polite address, and forgetting to use the familiar 2nd person singular feminine, which is her privilege.

This time the possession begins differently. Two women detach themselves from the frightened crowd almost simultaneously. Both

X 794 women cower on all fours, snarl at each other, snort like angry
● 796 leopards, showing their teeth. They crouch like wildcats about to spring
781 at each other, their faces turned to the ground, and eying each other only intermittently. A shallow, large clay dish filled with barley beer is set on the floor for them, and the two antagonists compete with each other in lapping up the drink like cats.

One of the women is possessed by an evil female zar, the other by a mean male zar. The male zar snaps at the female zar, who is of equal power and status. Appearing stimulated by the drink, they chase each other about the room, still cowering, snorting, attacking, retreating, finally grasping each other in a battle clinch, and actually nipping at each other. When this happens, the Lady Salamtu rises quickly, and descends into the arena wielding a thick leather strap. The contestants roll on and off one another and begin to bite seriously, but before damage is done, Lady Salamtu swishes her strap, pulls them apart or separates them with light blows.

This battle is accompanied with drumbeat and rythmic handclapping by the crowd. The contestants do not rejoin battle but roam very rapidly as if blind and lost, sniffing the ground as if they depended on the sense of smell, until they fall exhausted in a heap. But a few moments later they run to Lady Salamtew, kiss her hand, and prostrate themselves before her on the dirt floor in front of the platform. Thus the female and minor zars pay homage to the powerful male zars that possess Lady Salamtew, and acknowledge that they have learned to keep within bounds and not do very severe damage.

X 794 It is now 11:30 P.M. and a brief recess is announced. A young,
796 part-Sudanese servant woman, and ex-slave, serves coffee, barley beer,
262

x794 796 262 areqi, and also round, solid wheat discs (Qitta")- the unleavened bread of travelers, expensive when made of wheat.

About midight, the convention proceeds, with the poet intoning the call for the female zar "Shazqit (see table for her characteristics):

x794 781 [782] Poet: "Dance, round and round, brave one;

Shanqit, we are calling; brave one".

Both men and women clap more fiercely than over, in quick rythm Suddenly the servant woman who had served the latest refreshments stiffens with a jerk, screams, and lets the tray slide from her hand. She is about to be possessed by the female zar of her class and occupation. This "gurri" is infantile in character. The young woman begins to skip about the room like a young goat or an overly gay little girl. She teasingly pokes at the men, again and again, until a few copper coins are given her. When this happens, she jumps high with glee. But a moment later she is back, pouting, demanding some sweets, asking for honey. Given some, she devours it, and dances a victory dance, flipping about on tiptoe. The drumbeat quickens. Finally she falls exhausted, her zar now in full possession of her.

x794 796 688 There is another hush, awaiting further demonstrations. But there is an unscheduled interlude which reinforces discipline. The woman who had danced the "pagan" gurri had left shortly afterward, ostensibly for a call of nature, but had not returned until now, far too long an absence without permission. Seeing her enter, Lady Salamtew rises, shouting angrily, walkes toward her and beats her on the upper back with the heavy strap, several times, rather hard. The victim stands with bowed head, not stirring under the punishment, evidently

X 794 realizing that her "zar" had insulted the powerful one of Salamtew.
796 Back on her throne, Lady Salämtew harshly admonishes the audience for
[689] dozing, for whispering, for laughing, and some for having taken food and drink during the previous "gurri". This inattentiveness is an insult to her zar, and she threatens to recess the convention if it continues. But then she sugarcoats the threat by calling for another round of refreshments.

[853] Some of the babies in the rear had cried, and were nursed by their mothers. This had also been done by some of the possessed women previously, sometimes within half an hour after the exhausting "gurri". Motherhood and zar devotion evidently did not conflict.

[123] Lady Salämtu used this intermission to send the foreigner word promising "I shall appoint you a zar as your weqabi (protective spirit)". When she saw that he had drunk some of the barley beer which she had ordered to be served on the tablet of her zar. This time she addressed him in the female gender again, just as she had used a male gender in addressing her female devotees. The zars are believed to enjoy playing their game of turning nature upside down.

X 794 About 11.M., everyone rose, except the poet and the drummer.
535 Fresh incense was heaped on the burners. Tired and partly intoxi-
796 cated members of the audience were shaken awake. For now they were to witness the "fukkara", the individualistic "boasting dance" of Lady Salämtew's zar. It was a spastic bobbing up-and-down dance, similar to the "hotu" dance of warriors. The drum beat faster and
[293] faster, Lady Salämtew seemed to forget her dignity, but still waved her strap, the symbol of her seniority, while the devotees shouted

X794 535 796 "ellel" as shrilly as they do outside church during Coptic services. Exhausted, the powerful woman finally collapsed, and the curtain was quickly drawn to hide her during her recovery.

X794 796 Several other zar doctors demonstrated their individual "fukkara" activities. But more and more participants grew inattentive, and some began to doze. Lady Salämtew declared the session ended at about 3 A.M. [513] The women bedded down right on the floor or the mud bench, while the men who lived nearby went home, and others rolled up in blankets and skins just outside the house, under the overhanging roof. It was a cold night, usual during cloudless month of Yäkatit.

The season of the roaming zar spirits had once again been concluded, not to revive in full vigor until after the rainy season half a year later. At the convention much protection had been gained, and old protection reinforced against the many mischievous zars that might plague people in the meantime.

d) Social Aspects of the Zar Cult.

X794 608 The groups of chronically possessed persons who meet regularly as devotees of the zars, in the "wädaja" (lit. love feast), constitute what are called "aqwädash" (sometimes "aqtacha"), face-to-face societies. Their interpersonal relationships soon become social, much like the mähabbär communal worship society of the church. Both establish bonds which, to the Amhara mind, become "artificial kinship". Not infrequently this leads to the establishment of bonds of actual affinal kinship (as described earlier).

X794 772 The parallel can also be applied to an understanding of the leadership involved. Much like the mähabbär is led and blessed by the priest-confessor, so the zar society is led and blessed by the

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

346 north-west of Zanjira near the upper margin of the sheet. The church clings to the side of a steep little hill which stands almost isolated among vast gorges and commands the grandest panorama imaginable of this tormented country. The hill is joined to Zanjira by a narrow causeway little lower than the general plateau, flat on top and dropping away in cliffs on either side, so regular that it almost seems artificial. Harris records a saying which evidently refers to this place: "from Iteghe you can see the Echeghe" (*i.e.* the chief of the monks, who then lived in Gondar). To be sure, one does seem to overlook a great part of the world from this point of vantage.

[787] Every church is the centre of a radiating system of small paths (not shown on the map) chiefly used by people coming to service. There are of course 796 regular Sunday services, but these are not very well attended. More important are the special festivals observed on certain dates of the Ethiopian month, which may fall on any day of the week. In this area the monthly festivals universally observed, on which no work could be done, were those of St. Michael, St. Mary, and St. George, on the 12th, 21st, and 23rd respectively, as well as "Bal Wold," a commemoration of the Birth of Christ, on the 29th of each month. Of still greater significance in the life of the people are the annual festivals, falling on the same day of the month as the monthly ones but in certain months only. On these annual festivals nearly the whole population makes its way to the churches dedicated to the particular saint [783] commemorated. Often they will visit the local *tebel* or Holy Water and bathe there early in the morning before service. Going on to the church, all remain outside, for there would be no room for such a crowd within the cramped passages of the church itself. In the middle of the morning the *tabot* or ark is brought out and ceremonial dances held before it. Finally, before the service ends, it will be carried three times round the church in procession, attended by magnificent crosses and gaudy umbrellas. These are occasions of great popular excitement and rejoicing, and the congregations are often enormous. The long service over, they break up into gossiping groups, and go back to social lunches in each other's huts.

771 Enough has been said to show how large a part is played among these people by the Church and its priesthood. The country has indeed been described as priest-ridden, the people as over-dominated or even enslaved by the Church. If so, this servitude, at least in the country, is still a willing and unquestioned one. It is also true to say that without the Church the social structure of this countryside would fall to pieces, and life would lose not only its coherence but nearly all its variety and colour.

346 It was mentioned above that, to meet the needs of an increasing plateau 794 population, several new churches had been founded in recent times in the area covered by the map. Two of these were established by "division" of a 578 church which already existed in the gorge. Each original church had two *tabots* one of which was removed for the new foundation, for no church can exist without a *tabot* or altar-slab, this being the only part of the church which is consecrated. Thus the Mariam of the Tallak Amba plateau was derived from the Mariam half-way down the cliff about a mile to the north-east; and similarly a new Ghiorghis of the plateau, just east of Daloti, from the Ghiorghis in the gorge below. Of these "divisions," both of which took place

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Irrigated land, Atakilt

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The ceremony of Timkat (Epiphany), near Debra Berhan

[Facing p. 171]

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

shortly before the Italian invasion of 1935, the first was accomplished peacefully; but not the second. According to the story told me, the *tabot* of the lower Ghiorghis had been borrowed and carried in solemn procession on the plateau in order to ward off a swarm of locusts which were damaging the crops there. This measure was successful, and the plateau people determined to keep the *tabot* which had proved itself so powerful. The people of the gorge would not agree, and tried to recapture their *tabot*. The plateau party however successfully defended it by force of arms, and later built a little church to house it. It was not unusual to attribute specific powers to *tabots*: for instance, that of Dimbaro Mariam (a little east of the north-east corner of the sheet) used to be carried to war by the emperors, attended by a retinue of priests and scribes, to bring success in battle.

The last church to be founded in these parts was the new St. Gabriel, on a prominent hill-top in the district of Dilila near the south-east corner of the sheet. I came upon it when first following the upper course of the Beressa in December 1946. As I approached the foot of the hill I learnt from passers-by that a new church had been built upon it, and that the foundress herself, a certain great lady from Addis Ababa, was at that moment on the hill. Climbing a rocky track to the top, I saw a cluster of new huts and the still unfinished building of the church. Nearby was a large canvas awning stretched rather clumsily between rough stone walls. Under the awning I found the lady herself, short and stout and genial, sitting on a camp chair; around her, squatting on the ground, was a deferential assembly of local dignitaries, personal retainers and priests. After the fluster caused by my unexpected arrival had died down, I had a talk with the worthy lady who, having just presided at a mid-day meal, now plied me with very welcome refreshment. She had been born and bred in this very place. Having spent most of her life elsewhere, and somehow acquired a certain amount of wealth, she had returned in later life to her place of birth and founded this church only the year before my visit. It met a need, she said, for the area lacked a church, and no other St. Gabriel existed anywhere in the neighbourhood. As it chanced, I had come on the day after St. Gabriel's annual festival (which is the 19th of Tahisas, or, in European style, the 28th of December). She expressed great regret that I had not been present at the festival itself, when big crowds had come from Debra Berhan and from all the surrounding country.

This incident seemed to me interesting as demonstrating the tenacity of the local religious tradition in Ethiopia. After all the upheaval and disruption of Italian occupation and the Second World War, the hold of the ancient Church over the Amhara people seemed unweakened. The Church was able to extend its influence in an area not yet well served as readily as ever. It was still an appropriate act for a pious person to found a new church in a lonely place. Perhaps these things are not surprising, for the Church has been the main support and inspiration of Ethiopian unity since the earliest Christian times. It has always been the focal centre of the national sentiment, the fount of renewed resistance to aggression, the main force, in fact, which has maintained Ethiopia's independence and made of it, as Menelik himself once said, an island of Christianity in the great Islamic sea.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 very well closed; all appears to be vaulted. The church has a chancel and a transept, in the centre transept are curtains from end to end; and there are other curtains before the side doors, from wall to wall. They are curtains of silk: the entrance through these curtains is in three places, they are open in the middle, and they reach one to another, also they can be entered close to the walls. In the said three entrances there are little bells suspended to the curtains themselves, and nobody can enter by any part without these bells ringing. Here there is not more than one altar, which is in the chancel: this has a stand on four props, and the altar reaches to these four props. This stand is covered over above as though with a vault, and there is an altar stone which they call *tabuto*. Upon this altar stone there is a basin of copper, very large and flat below, and with low sides. This basin also reaches to the supports of the stand, which are disposed in a square. Within this large basin there is another smaller one. This stand has curtains hanging down from it to the ground, that is, at the back and sides, which screen the altar, except that in front it is open. One can go all round the altar. The bells are of 534 stone, and in this manner: long thin stones, suspended by cords passed through them, and they strike them with sticks made for the purpose, and they make a sound as of cracked bells heard at a distance. Also at festivals they take the basins from the altar and strike them with sticks, and they help to make a sound. They have also other iron bells, not round, but with two sides, they have a clapper which strikes first on one side and then on the other, and it makes a noise as of helving a mattock. They also have other small ill-made bells, which they carry in their hands at processions, and they ring the whole of them at the festivals. On other days the bells of stones and iron are 782 used. In all churches and monasteries they ring for matins 796 two hours before dawn. They say the prayers by heart and

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

They say the prayers by heart and
without light, except in the lamps or chandeliers, for they 796 781
have not got lamps. They burn butter in these chandeliers, [373]
for they have not got oil. They pray or chaunt very loud, [354]
without art of singing, and they do not recite (alternate) [257]
verses, but all sing straight on. Their prayers are psalms, and
on feast days besides psalms they recite prose, according as [533]
the feast is so is the prose. They always stand in the
churches; at matins they only say one single lesson: this
is said by a priest or a friar, rather shouted than intoned,
and he reads this lesson before the principal entrance.
When this lesson is finished, on Saturdays, Sundays, and 792
feast days, they make a procession with four or five crosses 796
on their poles, and a cross not so much raised as carried
like a stick in the left hand, because they carry a thurible
in the right hand, since as many as carry a cross carry a
thurible, there are always as many thuribles as crosses.
They wear some silk cloaks, not well made, because they [292]
are not wider than the width of a piece of damask, or other
silk from top to bottom. Before the breast, a cross piece to
the flanks on each side, of any other stuff and of any colour,
even though it should not match the principal part, and of
this principal part a good ell hangs behind dragging on the
ground. They make this procession through the circuit,
which is like a cloister. This being ended, on the said
Saturdays, Sundays, and feasts, he who has to say mass
enters with two others into the chancel; they bring out an [778]
effigy of Our Lady, which they have in ancient pictures in all
churches and monasteries. He who has to say mass places
himself in the centre of the transept with his face towards
the principal entrance, and the image in his hands held
before his breast: and those who stand by his sides hold
lighted candles in their hands, and all the others commence
a chaunt like prose, and all walk, shouting and leaping as if
dancing[1], they hold hands and go round, before the

[1] *Como em chacota*, dancing and singing, *i.e.*, not reverentially.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

● 796 image,[1] and at the sound of that chaunt or prose which they sing, they also ring the little bells and sound the cymbals to the same tune. Each time that they pass before the image they make a great reverence to it. Certainly it has a good appearance and causes devotion, from being a thing done for the praise of the Lord God. There also proceed crosses and thuribles in this feast as in the procession. When this is ended, 796 which lasts a good while, they put by the picture and go to 782 a small building which is on the North side, and of the gospel according to our mass; and outside the covered circuit, where they make the bread which they call *corbom*, and we *hostia*. They carry cross, thurible, and bell, and bring thence the bread of wheat, flour, and without leaven, made at that moment, very white and nice, of the size and roundness of a patena, in this monastery in which are few people. In other monasteries and churches, where there are many people, they make large loaves, and many of them according to the people, because all are communicants who go to the church. According to the width of the bread they make its thickness, from half a finger's breadth to an inch, or larger. They bring this loaf in a small vase, which is one of those of the altar, covered with a cloth, and with the cross and thurible, sounding a bell. Behind the church, that is, behind the chancel,[2] in that circuit which is like a cloister, nobody must remain unless he were in holy orders, and all the others must be before the principal entrance in another large circuit, which all the churches have; for near this, which is like a cloister, anybody who likes may stand. Whilst bringing the bread, as many as are in the church or in its circuit, when they hear the bell, bow their heads until the bell is silent, which is when they place the wafer on the altar with the small vase in which they brought

[1] *Como quem anda per mãos diante da imagem.* According to the Spanish translation of Miguel de Salves. Saragossa, 1561.

[2] *Ouxia.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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it. They place this vase in the other larger one, and cover the bread with a dark cloth, after the fashion of a *corporale*. They have a silver chalice in this monastery, and so in all honourable churches and monasteries there are silver chalices, some have them of gold: in poor churches, which they call churches of *Balgues*, that is, of rustics, there are copper chalices. The vases are very wide and ill made, and they have not got patenas. They put into the chalice wine of raisins, in large quantities, because as many as partake of the communion of the body also partake of the blood. He who has to say mass begins it with Hallelujah in a loud voice, rather shouted than sung; all respond and continue the chaunt. He of the mass is silent and continues his benedictions, which he does with his small cross, which he holds in his hand. Those who are outside sing as well as those who are inside the church and cloister, up to a certain distance. Here one of those who is at the altar, takes a book and goes to read the epistle at the principal door of the church. When it is ended, he who read it at once begins a chaunt as a response; those who are at the altar, or in the church, follow him. This ended, he who says the mass takes a book from the altar, and gives it to him who has to read the gospel, and he bows his head and begs a blessing. After he has received it he goes to the place where the epistle was read, and with him two others, one with a cross and thurible, the other with a bell. They read the gospel, and likewise the epistle, fast and loud, as much so as the tongue can speak and the voice be raised. Returning to the altar, on the way another chaunt commences, and those that accompany them join in it. On reaching the altar they give the book to kiss to him who says the mass, and they deposit the book in its place; because at the altar they say nothing from a book. Then he who says mass takes the thurible, or they give it into his hand, and he incenses the altar above it, and then takes

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796 several turns round it, giving incense. When these circuits
782 and incensing are ended, he turns to the altar and gives many blessings with the cross, and then uncovers the bread which was covered up, and which is for the sacrament: they take it with both hands, and let go the right hand and it remains in the left hand: with the thumb of the right hand he makes five marks like little hollows, that is to say, one in the upper part, one in the middle, another at the lower part, another on the left, and another on the right hand, and then he consecrates in his language, and with our own very words, and does not elevate it. He does as much with the chalice, and says over it our own very words, in his language: and again covers it, and takes the sacrament of the bread in his hands and divides it in the middle, and of the part which remains in his left hand, from the top of it he takes a very small portion, and places the other pieces one upon another. The priest takes this small portion for himself, and also takes a portion of the sacrament of the blood. After that he takes the vase with the sacrament covered up and gives it to him who read the gospel, and likewise takes the chalice with the sacrament and gives it to him who read the epistle. He then administers the communion to the priests who are near the altar, taking the sacrament in very small portions from the vase which the deacon holds in his right hand, and as often as he administers it the sub-deacon takes of the blood with a spoon of gold, or silver, or copper, according to the church, and gives a very small quantity to the person who has received the body. There is also on one side another priest with a ewer of holy water, and the person who has received the communion puts out the palm of his hand and he pours some of that holy water, and with it he washes his mouth and swallows it. This being done all go to the altar with this sacrament before the first curtain, and in this manner they give the communion to those that are there, and thence to

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those who are at the other curtain, and thence to the 796
secular people who are at the principal door, both men and 782
women, if it is a church to which women come. At the giving of the communion, and likewise at all the offices of the church, all are standing up. When they come to receive the communion, all come with their hands raised before their shoulders, and the palms forward. As soon as each one receives the sacrament of the blood he takes the said water as has been said, and so generally as many as are communicants. Before mass they wash their hands with the water which is in all the churches and monasteries. The priest who said the mass, and those who stood with him at the altar, when the communion is ended, return to the altar, and wash the vase in which the sacrament was, with the water which remains in the ewer, which they say is blessed, this water they pour into the chalice, and the priest who said mass takes it all. This done, one of these ministers of the altar takes a cross and a bell, and beginning a low chaunt goes to the principal entrance, where the epistle and gospel were read, and the administering the communion ended, and as many as are in the church, and outside of it, bow their heads, and go away in peace. They say this is the blessing, without this no one goes away. On Saturdays and Sundays, and feast days, in all the churches and monasteries, blessed bread is distributed. The method which they have in this small monastery, which will not [792]
have more than 20 or 25 friars, is that which is followed in all the monasteries and churches, great and small. The office of the mass, exclusive of the processions, is short; and the mass on week days is quickly finished.

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house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a machine for pressing. In this same house the blessed bread is made which is given away on Saturdays and Sundays and feast days; and on great feasts, such as Christmas, Easter, Our Lady of August, etc., they carry this bread of the sacrament with a pallium,[1] bell, and cross devoutly. Before they enter the church with it they go round the church by the circuit like a cloister; when it is not a feast they enter the church at once and without the pallium. On a Saturday before Ascension these friars made a procession; and from being in a new country it seemed to us very good, and they did it in this way. They took crosses, and the altar stone covered with a silk cloth, a friar carried it on his head, which was also covered with the said cloths; and they carried books and bells, and thuribles, and holy water; and all went chaunting to some millet fields: there they made their devotions and cries after the fashion of litanies, and with this procession they returned to the monastery. We asked why they did that, and they said that the animals ate their millet, and so they went to pour out holy water and pray God to drive them out. In this country he that says the mass has no other difference from the deacon and sub-deacon in his vestments than a long stole with an opening in the middle to allow the head to pass through; before and behind it reaches to the ground. The friars say mass with hair on their heads; the priests do not wear hair, and are shaven and so say mass. Also, both friars and priests say mass barefooted, nobody enters the church with his feet shod, and they allege for this what God said to Moses: "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for thou art on holy ground."

782 796 793 292 796 [302]

[1] Under a canopy.

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CAP. XIII.—*How in all the churches and monasteries in the country of Prester John only one mass is said each day; and of the situation of the monastery of Bisam where we buried Mattheus; and of the fast of Lent.*

796 In the monastery of St. Michael, where we were staying, we said mass each day, not in the monastery, but in the circuit which is like a cloister. In this country they do not say more than one mass in each church or monastery. The friars came to our mass with great devotion, as it appeared; and they supplied a thurible and incense, because we had not brought any with us, and they do not think mass is properly said without incense; and they said that they approved of all, except that we had only one priest to say mass; because among them not less than three, five, or or seven stand at the altar to say mass. They also were surprised at our coming into the church with our shoes on, and still more at our spitting in it. In this manner we said
796 mass every day up to Trinity Sunday, and when we in-
784 tended to say mass on the following Monday they did not allow us to say it, at which we were much scandalised and aggrieved, and it seemed to us that they had some evil suspicion of us, not knowing why they so acted. Later we learned how they preserved some things of the Old Law together with the New; such as that of the fast of Lent, which they began on Monday after Sexagesima Sunday, that is, ten days before the beginning of our Lent; and so they make fifty days of Lent. They say they take these days in anticipation for the Saturdays when they do not keep the fast. When they fast they eat at night, and because all fast they say mass at night, because all have to take the communion. Likewise, as they take fifty days' fast in Lent, so they take as many days after Easter which are not fast days. Then, when there is no fast, they say mass in the morning. This secret we did not know, and

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we had no one to explain it to us: as soon as their liberty not 796
to fast had ended, their mass could not be said, except at 784
night, and so they did not consent to our saying it; thus we felt aggrieved without cause. This time having ended and Trinity passed by, all priests and friars are obliged to fast every day except Saturdays and Sundays. They keep this fast up to Christmas Day, and as all fast they say mass at night. They allege for this the supper of Christ, when He consecrated His true Body, having been a fast time, and almost night. The general people, that is secular men and women, are obliged to fast from Trinity to Advent, Wednesdays and Fridays of each week, and from Christmas day to the Purification of Our Lady, which they call the feast of Simeon,[1] they have no fast. The first three days after the Purification, not being Saturday or Sunday, are great fast days for priests, friars, and laymen. They say that in these three days they do not eat more than once: it is called the penitence of Niniveh. At the end of these three days, up to the beginning of Lent, they again fast as from after Trinity. During Advent and the whole of Lent, priests, friars, lay friars, men and women, small and great, sound and sick, all fast. Thus from Easter to Trinity, and from Christmas to the Purification, they say mass in the morning, because there is no fast, and all the other time at night, because they are fasting. Where we buried Matthens is a 346
great and honourable monastery, which is named Bisam, and its patron, Jesus. From the monastery where we stayed to this is a league of very precipitous country. It is on a very high rock, and looking round all sides of it there appear like the depths of hell. The monastery house is very large in bulk, and larger in revenues, and this monastery is very well fitted. The fashion of this house is of three large and beautiful naves, with their arches and vaulted roofs. They appear to be of wood, and because all

[1] *Symam.*

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792 thuribles of copper. When mass was said, I saw a great gold chalice and gold spoon, with which they administered the communion. Of the three hundred friars who came to this monastery, very few were those that I knew as belonging to it: and I asked some of my friends how it was, that with so large a number of friars in the monastery as they said, they were not present at such a feast. They told me that even though there were more than they had said, that they were scattered about in these monasteries and churches, and markets, to seek for their living, because that could not be in the monastery whilst they were young men; and when they were old men, and could not walk, they came to die in the monastery. On that day I saw the habit put on seventeen young men. There is a tomb in this
778 monastery which they say is of an Abba or provincial of
776 this monastery who is named Philip, and they give him the merits of a Saint, saying that there was a King Prester John who commanded that Saturday should not be observed in his kingdoms and lordships, and this Abba Philip went to that King Prester with his friars, and undertook to show how God had commanded that Saturday should be kept, and that whoever did not keep it should die by stoning, and that he would maintain this before all the fathers of Ethiopia: and he made it good before the King. Therefore
● 796 they say that he was a Saint for making Saturday to be
782 kept, and they treat him as a Saint, and they hold a feast for him every year, in the month of July, which they call *Castar* Philip, which means funeral or memorial of Philip.[1] On this account the people of this monastery are the most Judaizing of all the kingdoms of Prester John. I came twice to this Castar of Philip, at which they did me much honour, and they kill many cows at this feast. In one year they killed thirty, and in another year twenty-eight, and in

[1] *Castar* should be *Teskar*; Mansfield Parkyns calls it a sort of funereal feast, where charities are bestowed on the poor and the priests.

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each of the years that I came there they gave me two 796
quarters of the fattest cow that was killed. This flesh is 782
distributed amongst the people who come to the Castar, and
the friars have none because they do not eat meat. And [184]
these cows are all brought as offerings by their breeders in
the district, who vow them to Philip. This monastery, and
the others that are subject to it, have this rule in addition,
that no females enter them, that is to say, neither women,
nor she-mules, nor cows, nor hens, nor anything else that is
female. And these cows which they kill are killed a long
way from the wall, and when I came there they came to the
distance of a cross-bow shot to take my mule, and they
took her away to their farm of Jamgargara, where Mattheus
died.

CAP. XV.—*Of the agriculture of this country, and how they preserve themselves from the wild beasts, and of the revenues of the monastery.*

The friars of this monastery, and of the other monasteries 241
subject to it, might do good works by planting trees and [192]
vines, and making gardens and orchards for their exercise;
and they do nothing. The country is ready to produce
everything, as is seen from that which is uncultivated: they
do not plant or grow anything except millet and bee-hives. [231]
When it is night, neither they nor anybody else go out from
their houses from fear of the wild beasts that are in the
country, and those who watch the millet have very high
resting places upon the trees, in which they sleep at night.
In the district of this monastery there are, in the valleys 231
between the mountains, very large herds of cows, kept by 563
Arab Moors, and there go with each herd forty or fifty
Moors, with their wives and children: and their headman is

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000 574 middle upwards hairy like lions. We passed the mountain, and went to sleep at the foot of a village called Zalote. There will be about four or five leagues from this place to the monastery from which we set out. We halted by a running river of very good water, and when our baggage had been unloaded we went to the said village to see a very honourable gentleman, the headman of it—a very old man, who was lodged here very honourably. He gave us a very [262] hospitable reception, giving us many fowls cooked in butter, and much mead, and he sent us a very large fat cow to the place of our halt. On the following day, which was Sunday, we went to say our mass at the church of the village, which is called St. Michael, a poor church, both the fabric and the ornaments. There are in this church three 793 married priests and three others, deacons,[1] that is to say, of ● 796 the gospel, and all are necessary, for no less can say mass. This honourable captain I met with later as a friar in the monastery of Bisan, and he left his condition and revenues to his sons, who were honourable persons; and I saw him stand at the gate outside, and he did not enter within the monastery, and there he received the communion with the novices, and when the offices of the church were ended he remained in honour with the provincial. On this Sunday we set out again in the afternoon, because the country 133 people who conducted us wished it so. Here we began to travel through flat country fallows and tillage, in the fashion of Portugal, and the bushes which are between the tilled lands are all wild olives, without other trees. We slept by some running streams, between many good villages.

[1] *Zagonaes.* Ethiopian corruption of *diakonos.*

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346 other women do in the church of the apostles, who take it
562 in its place. I always saw the women of the Barnagais go
[644] to the women's church to take the communion with the other women, and I did not see them use the privilege which they say they have, of taking the communion, with one damsel, in the church of the men. The circuits of the churchyards join to one another; they are of very high walls. They make the sacramental bread for both churches
796 in one building, and they say the masses in both churches at the same time, and the priests who serve in one church serve also in the other; that is two thirds of the priests in the men's church, and one third in the women's church, and so they are distributed. These churches have not got tithes, but they have got much land belonging to the priests, and they put it out to profit and divide the revenues of the lands among themselves: the Barnagais gives what is necessary to the churches, such as ornaments, wax, butter, incense in sufficient quantity, and he supplies them with
[792] everything. There may be in these churches twenty priests and always twenty-two friars. I never saw a church of priests which had not got friars, nor a monastery of friars which had got priests; because the friars are so numerous that they cover the world, both in the monasteries as also in the churches, roads, and markets: they are in every place.

CAP. XXVI.—*How the priests are, and how they are ordained, and of the reverence which they pay to the churches and*
793 *their churchyards.*

684 The priests are married to one wife, and they observe the
587 law of matrimony better than the laity: they live in their houses with their wives and children. If their wife should die they do not marry again; neither can the wife, but she

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an ouquia. This Barnagais forbade the people in his 436
country having any other weights except his own, and they had to ask the Barnagais or his factors for the weights whenever they had to sell or receive gold, so that he had knowledge of what was in the country, and he takes it when he pleases, according to what his country people say, who must know it well.

CAP. XXIX.—*Of the church of the town of Barrā, and its ornaments, and of the fair there, and of the merchandise, and costumes of the friars, nuns, and priests.*

In this town of Barra there is a church of Our Lady, 346
large, new, very well painted and well built, and handsomely ornamented with many brocades, crimson silks, and Mekkah velvets, and red camlets. The church in this town is served 796
like that at Barua, only that the offices are more solemnized because the Barnagais resides here, and because here there are more clergy and an infinite number of friars. The church is managed by priests. I saw them make a procession round the church in the greater circuit, which is of the churchyard. In it there were many priests, friars, and men and women, because in this church the women receive the communion in the place where the laity do so. In that procession I saw the ornaments which I have mentioned: they must have taken quite thirty turns round the church chaunting like a litany, and sounding many drums and cymbals, as they sound them when they make a procession before the effigy of Our Lady on Sundays and feast days; and they sing and celebrate a feast; and likewise when they give the communion on feast days. They said that this procession was made in supplication to God for rain for their sowing. The bells are of stone, like those of other churches, and the bells badly made. In this town there is 443
a great fair like that of Barua, and so likewise in all the

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136 is no fish there except very little from the rivers; There from the sea none.

795 There are no monasteries except of St. Anthony, and
792 not of any other order, as some friars say who come from there.

291 The gentlemen, monks, canons, and priests are clothed; most of the other people are bare from the waist upwards, and a sheepskin on the shoulders, with the front and hind feet tied together.

792 Most of the monasteries are situated on high mountains,
346 or in great ravines; they have large revenues and juris-
[262] diction. In many monasteries they do not eat meat all the year, and fish very few times, as they have not go it in the country. The services of these monasteries are psalms and prose, and so it is done in the churches of the canons.

● 796 Every church has two curtains, one on this side of the altar with little bells, and no one but priests enter inside this curtain; and another curtain in the middle of the church. And no one but persons in orders enter the church, and many gentlemen and honourable persons are ordained in order to enter the church. They go to the door of all the churches and monasteries to read the epistles and gospels, and they say them rapidly, and there they give the communion to the people.

The priests consecrate at the altar, and do not show the sacrament. When the priest who says mass comes to take the communion, he takes a particle from the top, and the other two large parts he leaves for the communion of the people. All the people who come to the church have to receive the communion every day, or else not come to church. When the communion is ended, they give them a little blessed water with which they wash their mouths.

Nobody sits down in the church, nor do they enter it shod; they do not hem or spit, nor do they let any dog or other animal come into the church. They confess standing,

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and so receive absolution. They pray in the churches of 796 ●
the canons as in those of the friars. Friars do not marry, [782]
canons and priests do so. When the canons live together 793
in the circuit they eat in their houses, and the friars eat in community. The chiefs of these churches are called Licacanate. The wives of the canons have houses outside of the circuit, where they go to live with them: the son of a canon remains a canon, and the son of a priest not, except he chooses later to become one. No tithes are paid to any church, they live on the large properties which the churches and monasteries possess. Complaints against the clergy [694]
are dealt with before the secular justice.

The vestment is made like a shirt, and the stole with a 292
hole in the middle, and put over the head; they have no maniple, nor amice, nor girdle; priests and friars all have [302]
their heads shaved, and the beards not. The friars say mass with their hats on their heads, and the priests with their heads bare.

In no church is more than one mass said, and no mass is 794
said for alms, not even for the dead. When any person dies, the priests come with cross and holy water and incense, and recite certain prayers for him, and carry him off to burial very hurriedly: next day they bring offerings: the churchyards are all closed, so that nothing can enter them.

Prester John has no determined place of abode, he 643
always goes about the country in tents, and he will always have in his camp five or six tents among good and common ones: and there will always be at Court of people for the 644
horses and mules from fifty thousand upwards.

The kitchen of Prester John is a good crossbow shot behind his quarters, and they bring his food in this manner: all that he has to eat comes in porringers and dishes of very black earthenware on wooden trays, and pages bring them, and above the pages come a pallium of silk, which covers them so that these viands come with reverence.

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they take what they have, and they do not choose to pro- 554
vide more than what they require and is necessary for them.

In no part that he went about in were there butchers' 253
shops, except at the Court, and no person of the common people may kill a cow (even though it is his own) without leave from the lord of the country.

The people speak the truth little, even when they make 695
oath, unless they swear by the head of the King. They much fear excommunication, and if they are ordered to do [688]
something, and that it be to their prejudice, they do it from fear of excommunication.

The oath is administered in this manner. They go to the door of the church with two priests, and they have there incense and embers, and he who has to swear puts his hands upon the church door, and one the priests tells him of the oath to speak the truth, and that if he speaks falsely, that as the lion swallows his prey in the woods, so may his soul be swallowed by the devil; and as the wheat is broken between the stones, so may his bones be ground by the devils; and he who swears, at each thing answers Amen; and as the fire burns wood, so may your soul be burned in the fire of hell and made dust. He says Amen. And this if you do not speak truth; he says Amen. And if you speak truth, may your life be prolonged with honour, and your soul in paradise with the blest. He says Amen. And this ended, he gives his testimony.

He says that the movable feasts, Easter, Ascension, Pen- 796
tecost, are celebrated on the same days and seasons that we 805
celebrate them. The birth of Christ, Circumcision, Epiphany, and other feasts of saints also agree with us, and others not. The year and months begin on the 29th day of August, on which was the beheading of St. John, and the year is of twelve months, and the month of thirty days. When the year is ended, there are five days over, which they call pagomen, which means fulfilment of the year, and in the bissextile year there are six days over; so they keep with us.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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I shall take notice of only one instance in many, because it has been insisted upon by both parties with unusual vehemence, and very little candour. 779

It was settled by the first general council, that one baptism only was necessary for the regeneration of man, for freeing him from the sin of our first parents, and listing him under the banner of Christ; "I confess one baptism for the remissions of sins," says the Symbol. Now, it was maintained by the Jesuits, that in Abyssinia, once every year, they baptized all grown people, or adults. I shall, as briefly as possible, set down what I myself saw while on the spot. 783 796

The small river, running between the town of Adowa and the church, had been dammed up for several days; the stream was scanty, so that it scarcely overflowed. It was in some places three feet deep, in some, perhaps, four, or little more. Three large tents were pitched the morning before the feast of the Epiphany; one, on the north, for the priests to repose in during intervals of the service, and, besides this, one to communicate in: on the south there was a third tent for the monks and priests of another church to rest themselves in their turn. About twelve clock at night the monks and priests met together, and began their prayers and psalms at the water-side, one party relieving each other. At dawn of day the governor, Welleta Michael, came hither with some soldiers to raise men for Ras Michael, then on his march against Waragna Fasil, and sat down on a small hill by the water-side, the troops all skirmishing on foot and on horseback around them.

As soon as the sun began to appear, three large crosses of wood were carried by three priests dressed in their sacerdotal vestments, and who, coming to the side of the river, dipt the cross into the water, and all this time the firing, skirmishing, and praying went on to-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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783 gether. The priests with the crosses returned, one
796 of their number before them carrying something less than an English quart of water in a silver cup, or chalice; when they were about fifty yards from Welleta Michael, that general stood up, and the priest took as much water as he could hold in his hand, and sprinkled it upon his head, holding the cup at the same time to Welleta Michael's mouth to taste; after which the priest received it back again, saying, at the same time, "Gzier ybarak," which is simply, "May God bless you." Each of the three crosses was then brought forward to Welleta Michael, and he kissed them. The ceremony of sprinkling the water was then repeated to all the great men in the tent, all cleanly dressed as in gala. Some of them, not contented with aspersion, received the water in the palms of their hands joined, and drank it there; more water was brought for those that had not partaken of the first; and, after the whole of the governor's company was sprinkled, the crosses returned to the river, their bearers singing hallelujahs, and the skirmishing and firing continuing.

Janni, my Greek friend, had recommended me to the priest of Adowa; and, as the governor had placed me by him, I had an opportunity, for both these reasons, of being served among the first. My friend, the priest, sprinkled water upon my head, and gave me his blessing in the same words he had used to the others; but, as I saw it was not necessary to drink, I declined putting the cup to my lips, for two reasons; one, because I knew the Abyssinians have a scruple to eat or drink after strangers; the other, because I apprehended the water was not perfectly clean; for no sooner had the crosses first touched the pool, and the cup filled from the clean part for the governor, than two or three hundred boys, calling themselves *deacons*,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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plunged in with only a white cloth, or rag, tied round their middle; in all other respects they were perfectly naked. All their friends and relations (indeed everybody) went close down to the edge of the pool, where water was thrown upon them, at first decently enough, by boys of the town, and those brought on purpose as deacons; but, after the better sort of people had received the aspersion, the whole was turned into a riot, the boys, muddying the water, threw it round them upon every one they saw well-dressed or clean. The governor retreated first, then the monks, and then the crosses, and left the brook in possession of the boys and blackguards, who rioted there till two o'clock in the afternoon. 783 796

I must, however, observe, that, a very little time after the governor had been sprinkled, two horses and two mules, belonging to Ras Michael and Ozoro Esther, came and were washed. Afterwards the soldiers went in and bathed their horses and guns; those who had wounds bathed them also. I saw no women in the bath uncovered, even to the knee; nor did I see any person of the rank of decent servants go into the water at all, except with the horses. Heaps of platters and pots, that had been used by Mahometans or Jews, were brought thither likewise to be purified; and thus the whole ended.

I saw this ceremony performed afterwards at Kahha, near Gondar, in presence of the king, who drank some of the water, and was sprinkled by the priests; then took the cup in his hand, and threw the rest that was left upon Amha Yasous *, saying, "I will be your deacon;" and this was thought a high compli-

* Prince of Shoa, often spoken of in the sequel.

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783 ment, the priest giving him his blessing at the same
796 time, but offering him no more water.

I shall now state, in his own words, the account given of this by Alvarez, chaplain to the Portuguese embassy, under Don Roderigo de Lima.

The king had invited Don Roderigo de Lima, the Portuguese ambassador, to be present at the celebration of the festival of the Epiphany. They went about a mile and a half from their former station, and encamped upon the side of a pond, which had been prepared for the occasion. Alvarez says, that, in their way, they were often asked by those they met or overtook, "Whether or not they were going to be baptized?" to which the chaplain and his company answered in the negative, as having been already once baptized in their childhood.

"In the night," says he, "a great number of priests assembled about the pond, roaring and singing with a view of blessing the water. After midnight the baptism began. The Abuna Mark, the king and queen, were the first that went into the lake; they had each a piece of cotton cloth about their middle, which was just so much more than the rest of the people had. At the sun-rising the baptism was most thronged; after which, when Alvarez * came, the lake was full of holy water, into which they had poured oil."

It should seem, from this outset of his narrative, that he was not at the lake till the ceremony was half over, and did not see the benediction of the water at all, nor the curious exhibition of the King, Queen, and Abuna, and their cotton cloths. As for the circumstance of the oil being poured into the water, I

* Vide Alvarez's narrative in his account of the embassy of Don Roderigo de Lima, page 155.

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will not positively contradict it; for, though I was 783
early there, it might have escaped me if it was done 796
in the dark. However, I never heard it mentioned as part of the ceremony; and it is probable I should, if any such thing was really practised; neither was I in time to have seen it at Kahha.

"Before the pond a scaffold was built, covered round with planks, within which sat the king, looking towards the pond, his face covered with blue taffeta, while an old man, who was the king's tutor, was standing in the water up to the shoulders, naked as he was born, and half dead with cold, for it had frozen violently in the night. All those that came near him he took by the head and plunged them in the water, whether men or women, saying, in his own language, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Now Shoa, where the king was then, is in lat. 8° N. and the sun was in 22° south declination, advancing northward, so the sun was, on the day of the Epiphany, within 30° of the zenith of the bathing-place. The thermometer of Fahrenheit rises at Gondar about that time to 68°, so in Shoa it cannot rise to less than [132] 70°, for Gondar is in lat. 12° N. that is 4° farther northward, so it is not possible water should freeze, nor did I ever see ice in Abyssinia, not even on the highest or coldest mountains. January is one of the hottest months in the year, day and night the sky is perfectly serene, nor is there a long disproportioned winter night. At Shoa the days are equal to the nights, at least as to sense, even in the month of January.

The baptism, Alvarez says, began at midnight, and the old tutor dipt every person under water, taking him by the head, saying, "I baptize thee in the name

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783 of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
796 It was most thronged at sun-rise, and ended about nine o'clock; a long time for an old man to stand in frozen water.

The number (as women were promiscuously admitted) could not be less than 40,000; so that even the nine hours this baptist-general officiated, he must have had exercise enough to keep him warm, if 40,000 (many of them naked beauties) passed through his hands.

The women were stark naked before the men, not even the rag about them. Without such a proper medium as frozen water, I fear it would not have contributed much to the interests of religion to have trusted a priest (even an old one) among so many bold and naked beauties, especially as he had the first six hours of them in the dark.

783 The Abuna, the king, and queen, were the three
796 first baptized, all three being absolutely naked, having
291 only a cotton cloth round their middle. I am sure
831 there never could be a greater deviation from the manners of any kingdom, than this is from those of Abyssinia. The king is always covered; you seldom see any part of him but his eyes. The queen and every woman in Abyssinia, in public and private, (I mean where nothing is intended but conversation) are covered to the chin. It is a disgrace to them to have even their feet seen by strangers; and their arms and hands are concealed even to their nails. A curious circumstance, therefore, it would have been for the king to be so liberal of his queen's charms, while he covers his own face with blue taffeta; but to imagine that the Abuna, a Coptish monk, bred in the desert of St Macarius, would expose himself naked among naked women, contrary to the usual custom of the celebration he observes in his own church, is monstrous, and

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must exceed all belief whatever. As the Abuna Mark too was of the reasonable age of 110 years, he might, I think, have dispensed at that time of life with a bathing gown, especially as it was frost.

The old man in the pond repeated the formula, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in his own language; and Alvarez, it is plain, understood not one word of Abyssinian. Yet, on the other hand, he speaks Latin to the king, who wonderfully understands him, and answers as decisively on the merits of the dispute as if he had been educated in the Sorbonne. "Confiteor unum baptizma," says Alvarez *, was a constitution of the Nicene council under Pope Leo. Right, says the king, whose church, however, anathematized Leo and the council he presided at; which both the king and Alvarez should have known was not the Nicene council, though the words of the symbol quoted are thought to be part of a confession framed by that assembly.

"Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit salvus erit," says Alvarez. "You say right," answers the king, "as to baptism; these are the words of our Saviour; but this present ceremony was lately invented by a grandfather of mine, in favour of such as have turned Moors, and are desirous again of becoming Christians."

I should think, in the first place, this answer of the king should have let Alvarez see no baptism was intended there; or, if it was a re-baptism, it only took place in favour of those who had turned Moors, and must therefore have been but partial. If this was really the case, what had the king, queen, and Abuna,

* Vid. Alvarez, hoc loco. Ramusio. Viaggi. p. 254.

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783 to do in it? Sure they had neither apostatized, nor
796 was the company of apostates a very creditable society for them.

Alvarez, to persuade us this is real baptism, says that oil was thrown into the pond before he came. He will not charge himself with having seen this, and it is probably a falsehood. But he knew it was an essential in baptism in all the churches in the East; so indeed is salt, which he should have said was here used likewise: then he would have had all the materials of Greek baptism; and this salt might have contributed to cooling the water, that had frozen under the rays of a burning sun.

Alvarez must have seen, that not only men and women go to be washed in the pool, but horses, cows, mules, and a prodigious number of asses. Are these baptised? I would wish to know the formula the reverend baptist-general used on their occasion.

There is but one church where I ever saw sacred rites, or something like baptism, conferred upon asses; it is, I think, at Rome, on St Andrew's or St Patrick's day. It should be St Balaam's, if he was in the Roman kalender as high as he is in the Abyssinian. In that church (it is, I think, on Monte Cavallo) all sorts of asses, about and within Rome, are gathered together, and showers of holy water and blessings rained by a priest upon them. What is the formula I do not know; although it is a joke put upon strangers, especially of one nation, to assemble them there; or whether the two churches of Rome and Abyssinia differ so much in this as in other points of discipline, I am not informed; but the rationality and decency of such a ceremony being the same in all churches, the service performed at the time should be the same likewise.

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I will not then have any scruple to say, that this whole account of Alvarez is a gross fiction; that no baptism, or any thing like baptism, is meant by the ceremony; that a man is no more baptised by keeping the anniversary of our Saviour's baptism, than he is crucified by keeping his crucifixion. The commemoration of our Saviour's baptism on the epiphany, and the blessing the waters that day, is an old observance of the eastern church, formerly performed in public in Egypt, as now in Ethiopia. Since that of Alexandria fell into the hands of Mahometans, the fear of insult and profanation has obliged them to confine this ceremony, and all other processions, within the walls of their churches, in each of which there is constantly a place devoted to this use. Those that cannot attend the ceremony of aspersion in the church, especially sick or infirm people, have the water sent to them, and a large contribution is made for the patriarch, or bishop; yet nobody ever took it into their heads to tax either Greek or Armenian with a repetition of baptism.

796 783

Monsieur de Tournefort *, in his travels through the Levant, gives you a figure of the Greek priest, who blesses the water in a peculiar habit, with a pastoral staff in his hand.

But, besides this, various falsehoods have likewise been propagated about the manner of baptism practised in Abyssinia; all in order to impugn the validity of it, and to excuse the rash conduct of the Jesuits for re-baptising all the Abyssinians, as if they had been a Jewish and Pagan people that never had been baptised at all. The violation of this article of the creed, or confession of Nice, was a cause of great offence to the

* Tournef. tom. i. p. 111.

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783 Abyssinians, and of the misfortunes that happened
•796 afterwards. The whole of the Abyssinian service of baptism is in their liturgy. The Jesuits had plenty of copies in their hands, and could have pointed out the part of the service that was heretical, if they had pleased; they did not pretend, however, to do this, and their silence condemns them.

As for the idle stories that are told of the words pronounced, such as,—" I baptise you in the name of the Holy Trinity,"—" In the name of Peter and Paul,"—" I baptise you in the water of Jordan," —" May God baptise you,"—" May God wash you," and many others, they are all invented by the Jesuits, to excuse the repetition of baptism in Abyssinia, which there was no sort of occasion for, as they might have examined the words and form in the liturgies, which are in every church; and I must here only observe, that if, as the chaplain Alvarez says, the priest in the pool, on the festival of the Epiphany, was so fond of the proper words, as even at that time, to say " I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," the words he quotes to shew that this immersion in water on the Epiphany is a real baptism, I cannot comprehend why they should vary them to other words, when nothing but baptism is meant. But this I can bear evidence of, that, in no time when I was present, as I have above a hundred times been, at the baptism both of adults and infants, aye, and of apostates too, I never heard other words pronounced than the orthodox baptismal ones, " I baptise thee in the name of " the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," immerging the child in pure water, into which they first pour a small quantity of oil of olives, in the form of a cross.

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The Abyssinians receive the holy sacrament in both kinds, in unleavened bread, and in the grape bruised with the husk together as it grows, so that it is a kind of marmalade, and is given in a flat spoon. Whatever they may pretend, some mixture seems necessary to keep it from fermentation in the state that it is in, unless the dried cluster is fresh bruised just before it is used; for it is little more fluid than the common marmalade of confectioners; but it is perfectly the grape as it grew, bruised stones and skin together. Some means, however, have been used, as I suppose, to prevent fermentation, and make it keep; and though this is constantly denied, I have often thought I tasted with a flavour that was not natural to the grape itself. 796 782

It is a mistake that there is no wine in Abyssinia; for a quantity of excellent strong wine is made at Dreeda, south-west from Gondar about thirty miles, which would more than supply the quantity necessary for the celebration of the eucharist in all Abyssinia twenty times over. The people themselves are not fond of wine, and plant the vine in one place only; and in this they have been imitated by the Egyptians, their colony; but a small black grape, of an excellent flavour, grows plentifully wild in every wood in Tigre. 273

Large pieces of bread are given to the communicants, in proportion to their quality; and I have seen great men, who, though they open their mouths as wide as conveniently a man can do, yet from the respect the priest bore him, such a portion of the loaf was put into his mouth, that water ran from his eyes, from the incapacity of chewing it; which, however, he does as indecently, and with full as much noise, as he eats at table. 796 782

After receiving the sacrament of the eucharist in

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782 both kinds, a pitcher of water is brought, of which
796 the communicant drinks a large draught; and well he needs it to wash down the quantity of bread he has just swallowed. He then retires from the steps of the inner division, upon which the administering priest stands, and, turning his face to the wall of the church, in private, says some prayer with seeming decency and attention.

The Romanists doubt of the validity of the Abyssinian consecration of the elements; because in their liturgy it is plainly said, "Lord, put thy hand upon this cup, and bless it, and sanctify it, and purify it, that in it may be made thy holy blood;" and of the bread they say, "Bless this saucer, or plate, that in it may be made thy holy body." And in their prayer they say, "Change this bread, that it may be made thy pure body which is joined with this cup of thy precious blood." The Jesuits doubt of the validity of this consecration, because it is said, "this *bread* is my body;" and over the wine, "this *cup* is my blood;" whereas, to operate a true transubstantiation, they should say over the bread, "this is my body."

For my own part, I leave it to the reverend fathers, who are the best judges, what is necessary to operate this miracle of transubstantiation. The reality of the thing itself is denied by all Protestant churches, has been often doubted by others, has been ridiculed by lay-writers, and can never be a matter, I believe, of thorough conviction, much less of proof, to any. The dignity of the subject, on which it touches nearly, as well as tenderness for our brethren on the continent, an article of whose faith it is, should always screen it from being treated with pleasantry, whatever we believe, or whether we believe it or not.

M. Ludolf thinks, that the words I have set down are a proof the Abyssinians do not believe in transub-

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stantiation. For my part, from those very words, I cannot think any thing is clearer than that they do; the bread is upon the plate; they pray that the plate may be blessed, "That in it the bread may be made God's holy body*;" and of the wine they say, "That it may be made thy holy blood:" and in their prayer they say, "Change this bread, that it may be made thy body;" and again, "May the Holy Ghost shine upon this bread, that it may be made the body of Christ our God, and that this cup may be changed and become the blood, not the *symbol*, of the blood of Christ our God." With all respect to Mr Ludolf's opinion, I must think that, though the benediction prayed upon the patine, spoon, and chalice, is but an aukward expression, yet, if I understand the language, *converte* and *immutetur* are literal translations of the Ethiopic, and seem to pray for a transubstantiation as directly as words will admit, whether they believe in it or not; nor, as far as I know, can any stronger or more expressive be found to substitute in their place.

I shall finish this subject (which is not in my province, and which I have mentioned, because I know it is a matter which some of my readers desire information upon) by an anecdote that happened a few months before my coming into Abyssinia, as it was accidentally told me by the priest of Adowa the very day of the Epiphany, and which Janni vouched to be true, and to have seen.

The Sunday before Ras Michael's departure for Gondar from Adowa, he went to church in great pomp, and there received the sacrament. There happened to be such a crowd to see him, that the wine, part of the consecrated elements, was thrown down

* See the Ethiopic liturgies passim. Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 5.

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796 782 and spilt upon the steps whereon the communicants stood at receiving. Some straw or hay was instantly gathered and sprinkled upon it to cover it, and the communicants continued the service till the end, treading that grass under foot.

This giving great offence to Janni, and some few priests that lived with him, it was told Michael, who, without explaining himself, said only, "As to the fact of throwing the hay, they are a parcel of hogs, and know no better." These few words had stuck in the stomach of the priest of Adowa, who, with great secrecy, and as a mark of friendship, begged I would give him my opinion what he should have done, or rather, what would have been done in my country? I told him, "That the answer to his question depended upon two things, which, being known, his difficulties would very easily be solved. If you do believe that the wine spilt by the mob upon the steps, and trod under foot afterwards, was really the blood of Jesus Christ, then you was guilty of a most horrid crime, and you should cry upon the mountains to cover you, and ages of atonement are not sufficient to expiate it. You should, in the mean time, have railed the place round with iron, or built it round with stone, that no foot, or any thing else but the dew of heaven, could have fallen upon it, or you should have brought in the river upon the place that would have washed it all to the sea, and covered it ever after from sacrilegious profanation. But if, on the contrary, you believe (as many Christian churches do), that the wine (notwithstanding consecration) remained in the cup nothing more than wine, but was only the symbol, or type, of Christ's blood of the New Testament, then the spilling it upon the steps, and the treading upon it afterwards, having been merely accidental, and out of your power to prevent, being so far from your wish

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that you are heartily sorry that it happened, I do not 796
reckon that you are further liable in the crime of sa- 782
crilege, than if the wine had not been consecrated at all. You are to humble yourself, and sincerely regret that so irreverent an accident happened in your hands, and in your time; but as you did not intend it, and could not prevent it, the consequence of an accident, where inattention is exceedingly culpable, will be imputed to you, and nothing further."

The priest declared to me, with great earnestness, that he never did believe that the elements in the eucharist were converted by consecration into the real body and blood of Christ. He said, however, that he believed this to be the Roman Catholic faith, but it never was his; and that he conceived the bread was bread, and the wine was wine, even after consecration. From this example, which occurred merely accidentally, and was not the fruit of interrogation or curiosity, it appears to me, whatever the Jesuits say, some at least among the Abyssinians do not believe the real presence in the eucharist; but further I am not enough informed to give a positive opinion. To follow this investigation more curiously would have been attended with a considerable degree of danger; and therefore I have stated my only means of knowledge, and leave my readers entirely to the freedom of their own opinion, and to after inquiry and information.

The Abyssinians are not all agreed about the state 764
of souls before the resurrection of the body. The 775
opinion which generally prevails is, that there is no third state: but that, after the example of the thief, the souls of good men enjoy the beatific vision immediately upon the separation from the body. But I must here observe, that their practice and books do both contradict this; for, as often as any person dies, alms are given, and prayers are offered for the souls

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principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by The 794
those who are sick, or dying.

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a 292
white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar.

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the 796
church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married 784
are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Persons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the [846] church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first [841] day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occasions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment. [304] [852]

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure 131
in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It 361
may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla 101
who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma;

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the eye. Its beauty was not increased by the addition of a corrugated iron annexe for the purpose of seating some of the foreign guests at the Emperor's coronation. 346

The Abouna was good enough to arrange for us to visit the church, and we were received with ceremony by a number of priests, who were exceedingly kind and enabled us to make a thorough inspection, and even allowed us to take some photographs (which unfortunately, owing to the bad light, did not come out). They showed us everything with great enthusiasm and begged us to return "when a great feast was in progress". The building consists of three portions, a sort of outer gallery, an inner court, and finally the Holy Place or Holy of Holies, an inner chamber in the centre of the building in which rests the *Tabot* or representative of the Ark of the Covenant to which only the priests are allowed access. 346 778

The priests threw open the doors of the Holy Place for us to see in; it contained a kind of altar where the Sacraments are kept, and was surrounded by priests in very gorgeous vestments, burning incense and holding big crosses and crucifixes. 778 788

In one of the galleries a service was proceeding. Two priests were beating with their hands very big drums made of wood and hide; many others were shaking their curious little brass cymbals; and all were chanting, swaying their bodies, and slowly waving their praying-sticks. The time was really good, and the chant was rhythmic and tuneful, and not at all unmelodious. 796 534

The galleries were profusely decorated with huge life-size paintings depicting mainly scenes from the Scriptures, scenes from the life of Christ, the miracles, etc.; one dreadfully realistic picture of the Massacre 353 532

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353 532 of the Innocents was very striking. There was also a portrait of the Emperor Menelik, and of other noted characters in Abyssinian history; the likenesses of royal and other famous persons are frequently to be found on the walls or among the possessions of the principal churches.

778 In this connection an amusing incident is told by Stern. King Sehala Selassie had been given by Captain Harris' mission to the Court of Shoa, a portrait of Queen Victoria. This had been carefully guarded for many years amongst his treasures until his death, some time after which his successor, King Haile Malekot, presented it to the principal church at Ankober where the people used to flock on grand festivities to worship it as the representation of the Virgin Mary!

The *Tabot*, to which reference has been made, is the object of much veneration and has to be blessed or consecrated prior to being used in the particular church to which it is allocated. In one case the priest in charge of the church had committed a murder, and the *Tabot* had to be sent up to Addis to be reconsecrated before it could be used again.

• 796 785 The most prominent features of the practice of their religion are the fasts, feasts, and pageants; and each of these is sufficiently remarkable. A very large part of the year—about 150 days—falls under the category of fast or feast, and both are strictly observed. During their fasts they are forbidden not only meat, but also butter and milk and eggs, and it is really surprising to see to what an extent this rigid abstinence is followed, especially as the fasting periods are lengthy, that prior to Easter lasting forty days.

For a day or so immediately prior to the main feast,

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that is, at the end of a long period of fasting, they eat nothing at all, and so far do they carry this rule that sometimes one or two of our older servants have become so weak that they have had to go home and remain in bed, so exhausted were they. 796 785

On Wednesdays and Fridays they eat no meat, and wherever they are or whatever they are doing they adhere firmly to this rule. I was immensely struck by this when on trek; for example, one day we had bought an ox for our men and on Thursday they had had a great raw meat banquet. The next day being Friday they would not touch an atom of the quantities of raw meat hung round the camp, though they had had a long and tiring march and had nothing else to eat. One of the men, who was really ill, would not drink a drop of the fresh milk we had prescribed for him, though he was excessively weak and could not retain anything else.

Their feasts are observed just as whole-heartedly, and obviously with more enthusiasm, inasmuch as much eating and drinking and no work are the order of the day. Their main feasts are New Year, the Feast of the Cross or *Maskal*, *Temkat* (Epiphany), and Easter. 796 527

Their New Year's Day, the 1st Maskaram, falls on the 11th September (or the 12th in the European year preceding our Leap year) and is a great feast, and of course a general holiday, the religious side of which is strongly marked, the Empress and the Court attending the Church of St. George in state.

No work is done, and there is much eating, an oasis of plenty in the desert of fasting which starts again on the day after New Year's Day, and continues until the end of the month. Bands of grown-up people and groups of children wander round serenading the differ-

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ent houses, and although their intentions are doubtless of the best, the sounds they produce leave much to be desired from the point of view of harmony.

At the end of September is held the Feast of *Maskal*. There are three separate functions during the week in this connection, firstly the Dance of the Priests, 21st September, then the Dance of the Cross, 27th September, which includes a fantasia in which thousands of mounted troops take part, and finally the great *Gebbar* at which 17,000 to 18,000 men are fed (28th September).

On the day of the Dance of the Cross, after dinner we could see from our verandah the whole country for miles in every direction dotted with bonfires—a wonderful sight. Every Abyssinian must light something on this night, and they seemed to have done it pretty thoroughly; even high up in the mountains far away one could see the little points of light everywhere.

The Feast of the *Maskal* itself, which took place on the next day, is mainly remarkable for the great banquet; this I have described elsewhere, and though it is held on a religious festival the religious nature of it is less apparent.

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Temkat (18th, 19th, and 20th January) is perhaps the most beautiful and remarkable of their various pageants, and I will accordingly endeavour to give some idea of this ceremony, unique as it probably is.

It is difficult in mere words to do justice to the really wonderful pageantry attendant on these religious festivals. Their historical significance alone is worthy of the pen of a Gibbon, for they are probably some 3000 years old in some of their features, and half-

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closing one's eyes it is possible to imagine the picture before one to be that of David, his priests, and his courtiers dancing before the ark, as the priests in their centuries-old vestments sway and swing before the modern representation of the Ark of the Covenant. And the colouring—the gorgeous medley of crimson and purple and yellow and green cloaks of the priests, their gold and silver croziers, crowns, and censers, the soft thrumming of the huge old drums, the feathery spirals of sweet-smelling incense curling lazily up into the air—all framed in a grand setting of green trees and running water, while above out of a brilliant blue sky the blazing African sun sparkles and glitters on all the medley of gold and silver and colour below, and—strange contrast—farther off, on the rifles of the thousand watching troops and their loose white toga-like *chammas*.

Especially do these considerations apply to the second day of *Temkat*, the blessing of the waters. On the first day the *Tabot* is borne from the Church of St. George in the midst of an immense procession of chiefs, priests, soldiers, banner-bearers, and musicians, through the town to the spot by the river which has been selected for the ensuing day's ceremony. The procession itself is sufficiently remarkable, and the inhabitants of the city crowd the roads to watch the brilliant stream of colour flow past, their shrill, tremulous "*el-el-to*" sounding to our ears a strange substitute for the cheers of a crowd in our own countries.

The procession winds its way through the town and beyond it to the river, and there tents are pitched, the *Tabot* is deposited within one of them, priests take up their quarters in others, soldiery in yet others, and with

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•796 thousands of Abyssinians spend the night on the spot in readiness for the morning's function, which, commencing soon after daybreak (between 6 and 6.30), lasts well on to noon.

The spot seemed to have been chosen so as to lend additional enchantment to the ceremony. The river shrunken to a stream now in the middle of the dry season flowed smoothly over huge rocks and boulders round a curve, on between high banks sloping for several hundreds of yards upwards and away. Part of the stream had been dammed so as to form a pool just by a natural platform of grass and trees on the very edge of the waters, and here the principal actors were grouped, whilst above and around them thousands and thousands of spectators in rank after rank seemed but to act as a conductor to focus the eye on to the scene being enacted below. Here was Ras Tafari in his robes of state under a magnificent gold-fringed umbrella; here were the great officers of State with their velvet and silk cloaks, their silken shirts, and their great curved gold-scabbarded swords. And here were the priests dazzling one's eyes by the brilliance of their apparel and their accessories.

Standing a little way up the river-bank amid a small knot of Europeans lost in the sea of Abyssinians, it was almost hypnotizing to watch the scene. The drums beaten softly with the palms of the hands accompanied the low chanting of the priests and the rhythmical waving of their praying-sticks, while the fumes from the incense burners crept upwards to mingle with the almost mysterious mistiness of the early morning sunlight.

The water was eventually blessed, and some of it

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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in a great gold dish carried to the Ras, who was sprinkled with it—rebaptized in fact—with many rites and much ceremony. Other notables were similarly honoured, and then water was thrown over the nearest of the waiting thousands. Those beyond surged forward to receive their share, and the pressure of the immense multitude must have been enormous, but their orderliness was no less remarkable, and no untoward incidents occurred.

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With some further chanting the first portion of the ceremony came to an end, and the scene was changed to the great open plain between the town and the Foreign Legations, which is used as review ground, polo field, and racecourse. In solemn procession, ruler, courtiers, priests, and soldiers wended their way up from the banks of the little stream, up through rocky paths and grassy slopes towards the centre of the plain, whilst thousands and thousands of the people poured in a great stream all round them to take their share in the further pageantry. On our sure-footed little ponies we were swept along in the moving masses, all cheery and good tempered, dressed in their clean white *chammas*, which had been washed for the occasion in the river the day before. With the help of a *balderabba* we were able to take a short cut to the scene of the next step in the proceedings, and seated on chairs round beautifully coloured Persian and Indian rugs in front of a silk-lined tent which sheltered the throne from the fast warming rays of the sun, we watched amid the waiting multitudes the arrival of the royal procession and of fresh throngs, not the least remarkable members of which were a mounted band of wild-looking men clothed in scarlet robes and playing strange instru-

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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ments, whilst their shaggy little ponies curveted and plunged like mad things.

Dressed in his magnificent Abyssinian robes, carrying a modern rifle, and mounted on a wonderfully caparisoned black mule, Ras Tafari rode slowly up to the tent and took his seat on the throne surrounded by hundreds of gorgeously clad notables, and facing what was perhaps the most striking contingent of all, the priests, ranged on three sides of a square in front of the throne. Those on the opposite side of the square were all in white; those on the right and left wore robes of such dazzling colouring that in the sun's bright rays it almost hurt one's eyes to look at them. Red, blue, green, orange, purple, every imaginable colour, thickly covered with heavy gold and silver embroideries, and gold ornaments and head-dresses. And as if this orgy of colour were not enough, servants held scores of gaudy coloured gold-embroidered and much befringed and tasselled umbrellas over them.

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Many of the priests carried magnificent crosses of gold and silver, others their long silver or ivory-handled praying-sticks, whilst some held various musical bell-like instruments, and about half a dozen managed large drums—things about three feet high made of silver with copper bands. Particularly striking were the dresses of ten young boys bearing golden crowns, symbolical of the ten commandments; while the *Tabots* brought from the neighbouring churches were very gorgeously bedecked. It was a wonderful and barbaric sight.

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And then the Dance of the Priests began. Low chanting without music at first, followed by slow graceful movements of all their hundreds of arms in fine

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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time to the rhythm, then the little bell cymbals joined in, and finally the big drums. 796 535

All this time the long lines of priests were advancing and retiring, turning this way and that, their bodies swaying to the music. The time got quicker and quicker, others joined in, their movements became accentuated and their voices rose to a climax; then quite suddenly sound and movement ceased and the long lines were quite still.

After this, passages were read from enormous silver-covered Bibles, and with a final boom of the drums it was all over—a morning's journey back through the centuries, probably unique in the world in its character. 796

The Abyssinian Easter falls a week later than our own and is the occasion of great feasting; much rifle firing takes place the night before (or used to two years ago when ammunition was more plentiful), and much eating and drinking, on the day itself. And I am bound to say they must need it, for they have been fasting for forty days, and for the two previous days have eaten nothing at all. 796 527

Bands of priests visit the principal houses, soliciting alms, and I find the following description of one of these visits in my diary:

"Soon after breakfast a party of about five priests accompanied by attendants came up the drive, stationed themselves in front of the house, and began to sing and ring bells to wish us a prosperous Easter. Some of the priests wore their gorgeous vestments, and all had brilliant green or red silk parasols fringed with gold braid. We sent them out a small offering, which appeared to please them very much.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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196 "Then they blessed a lot of long grass they had, and
527 gave it to us and we distributed it amongst the staff. Every servant there tied his piece of grass tightly round his head and wore it all day—they all seemed highly delighted."

111 But in spite of their strict observance of feasts and their pride in the fact of their being Christians, I cannot really think that they could in any sense of the word be described as a really religious people, their lives being in no way a reflection of their theoretical beliefs. Their religion is overlaid with a thick layer of superstition, some of which is merely curious, but some apt to have dangerous results. Thus they wear their charms and amulets suspended round their necks by a silken cord (never leather, which is used by Mohammedans for this purpose); they have a strong belief in the power of the "evil eye"; they will not look at a person eating, they will not start on journeys on certain days, and they believe that certain houses are inhabited by evil spirits and will not live in them.

181 We came across some curious examples of this latter superstition. Two important Abyssinian nobles had built in their grounds quite nice stone and mortar houses in the European style. These houses were lying empty, and their owners were living in native built *tukuls*, for the reason that their tame priests had told them that evil would befall them if they moved into their new residences.

Another and more serious example was that of a chief who was very ill with pneumonia. He was just getting over it when in the middle of one night his priest told him that he had had a vision to the effect that if he

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

games with sticks and cloth, or wooden, balls. The adult males may do odd jobs around home, such as loading and moving bags of grain, or repairing farm equipment. But they are likely to gather at some convenient spot, perhaps at a boundary between fields, and discuss land disputes, arrange marriages, reconcile quarrels, or tell stories. 565* 512 527 462 [517] [521]

The daily activity of the Amhara peasant is somber and severe. It is guided by the constant awareness that one must provide for oneself everything he needs in this world. His is a life of deadening exertion, devoid of casual gaiety. Even in his diversions the mood is generally serious and tense. 565* 512 181

One of the Amhara peasant's principal diversions is litigation. On days when heavy labor is forbidden the judge's yard is filled; nor is it ever empty on work days. Some peasants spend as much as twenty to twenty-five per cent of their waking days at court. (Because of its importance in Amhara culture, litigation will be discussed at greater length in later chapters.) 565* 517 691

Going to market is another diversion. The trip is made by the peasant or his wife, or both, according to the needs of the household. The wife usually is responsible for transactions dealing with cooking equipment and spices, the husband for animals and farm equipment, while either is competent to negotiate about the great common denominator of Amhara life—grain. Exchanges are made either by barter or currency, which in olden times consisted of salt bars, pepper, and iron, as well as silver. 565* 517 443 [462] [437] [436] [178]

The market provides an occasion for seeing distant relatives and friends, catching up on the latest news of the area, and generally countering the normal isolation of the peasant's life. It is especially stimulating for children, who may be treated to a piece of sugar cane if they are lucky. But the marketgoers are less absorbed with being sociable than they are with the serious business of locating the items they lack, haggling over the terms of exchange, and getting on the trail in time to arrive home before dark.

Finally, the peasant's day may be devoted to one of the many celebrations that constitute the brightest moments in his life. Huge feasts are held on the occasion of weddings, christenings, and memorial anniversaries. Feasts and special festive activities mark the various religious holidays. Indeed, apart from the alternation of the rainy season (June-September) and the long dry season, and the related alternation of planting and harvesting the different crops, it is the cycle of holidays and weddings that defines the pattern of the Abyssinian year. Yet even these holidays have a fundamentally serious tone. Apart from the feasting, they are chiefly times for the veneration of sacred symbols and the real or symbolic letting out of aggression. 565* 527 796 [132]

The Yearly Cycle

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The new year falls on St. John's Day in September. For this occasion the floor of the peasant's home is strewn with freshly cut grass, tall and green after

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*565 the long rains. Children go singing from house to house in small bands, or
• 796 take bunches of wild flowers to relatives, in hopes of getting a bit of *dābo*. In most homes an animal is slaughtered—in some areas superstition decrees that it be a white-headed lamb or a red chicken—and there is much eating and drinking, the basic activity of every holiday.

A little more than two weeks later the much more important festival of Masqal is observed, celebrating the discovery of the true Cross by Empress Helena. By this time the heavy rains have subsided, and the air is filled with
[132] something of the spirit of spring. (Although Ethiopia lies north of the equator the summer rainy season is known as "winter" because of its coldness.) The landscape is colored by acres of yellow wildflowers, which are cut and fastened to the poles each family brings to a central clearing where a huge bonfire is built. In late afternoon, after the tepee of poles has been con-
[554] structed, the priests begin the ceremony by intoning appropriate chants. Then each status group circles the poles three times, in honor of the Trinity—first the local lord, then the clergy, the lesser nobility, the peasant men, women, and finally the children. In the evening the festival takes a more secular turn. The bonfire is lit, and the young braves dance around it shouting their war chants. As the fire blazes on, these fellows seize burning brands and playfully hurl them at one another.

In November the monthly St. Michael's Day is honored with special cele-
[178] brations. The peasants travel distances to attend the ceremonies at any church consecrated to "Mikā'ēl." Holy water and hot springs sanctified by Mikā'ēl's name are drunk and bathed in by those with many kinds of disease. The rituals involve carrying the Mikā'ēl *tābot* ("holy ark") out of the church and elaborate chanting and dancing by the clergy. After the *tābot* has been returned, in a procession in which the laymen follow shouldering their rifles (undoubtedly spears in older times), folk dancing and singing go on until late
[584] afternoon. This provides an occasion for the more enterprising adolescent male to spot a potential bride, about whom he may diffidently ask his father to make inquiries.

*565 Christmas, celebrated in early January, is marked chiefly by the playing of
796 secular games. The common word for Christmas, *gannā*, is actually the name
526 of an outdoors game played with sticks and a wooden puck. Played by boys, young men, and occasionally elders on the afternoon of Christmas Day, *gannā* is marked by a spirit of aggressive license. Accustomed norms of deference are held in abeyance. The game is played in so rough and disorderly a manner that it often results in broken limbs and scarred faces. Staged by two teams made up on the spot, *gannā* is concluded at dusk by volleys of abusive limericks with which the victors revile their adversaries.[4]

*565 This is the season for special festivities on saints' days. St. Gabriel is particu-
796 larly honored in December, as are St. Mary, St. George, and again St. Michael

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in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭimqat,* means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭimqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā,* grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household.

The program for Ṭimqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn (or sooner) after the clergy bless the water, and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized.

By noon on Ṭimqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭimqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter.

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings.

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and

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*565 hazardous. Moisture and chill lower the resistance of man and beast to re-
• 796 spiratory infections. The weekly fasting schedule is resumed, and the more
[164] devout observe the thirty-day fast of the Disciples. In August, finally, the
[785] sixteen-day fast in honor of the Assumption of Mary is observed by everyone older than six or seven years.

*565 On the thirteenth day of that fast occurs the strange holiday of Buhē.
796 Before and during this day, which is marked by the baking of special *dābo* for
526 the shepherds, the countryside crackles with the reports of shepherds' whips. In this season when the humid air lends an explosive sound, the shepherds crack their whips for fun; but older boys and men join in great whipping battles on Buhē,* in which two teams lash each other until the members of one can stand it no more. On the evenings of Buhē, small bonfires are lit all over the countryside, and more *dābo* is eaten and whips cracked.[8] A few days later the fast of the Assumption is over. Young and old look forward to the end of the rains and the festivities that commence with the new year.

*565 These are the days and years of the Amhara peasant. Some other aspects of his life that come to the fore when more analytic perspectives are applied will be discussed in later chapters. But this calendar of activities forms the immediately observable setting for the "inner world" of the Amhara peasantry: those ideas, sentiments, and values which constitute its outlook on life.

THE WORLD OF MEANING

The Natural Universe

*565 The Amhara peasant is not familiar with most of the cosmological notions
772 found in the Great Tradition of Abyssinian culture, as transmitted through
[538] books like *Qalamsis* and *Aksimareos* and the oral traditions of learned churchmen. It is unusual for him to have a precise image of the layers of water, fire, and air beneath the earth, and it is still less likely for him to be familiar with the complicated hierarchy of invisible worlds, watery skies, and seven "real" heavens which are enumerated in the Abyssinian cosmology. He
[821] believes that stars influence human affairs, but leaves the possession of astro-
[756] logical knowledge to the *dabtarā*. The presence of cultural specialists who know about such matters has relieved him of the burden of dealing with ideas about the cosmos, ideas which are more widely diffused in more homogeneous societies.

The peasant's working conception of the cosmos is thus a very simplified version of that of his Great Tradition, together with certain pagan notions. Like his more learned countrymen, he divides the universe into two main parts: the world, *alam*, consisting of the earth, sun, moon, and stars; and

[178] * This custom is now extinct in many Amhara areas.

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Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci for the organization of time and space.

In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes. Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *hābashā qaṭaro* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amhara peasant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Amhara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year. A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*) representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

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"May He bring you safely from the year of Mark to the year of Luke!" 565* Nearly every day of the month, moreover, is dedicated to some holy figure, 805 the main ones being: 796 [576]

Day of Month	Name	Meaning
1st	*Ledatā*	Birth of Mary
5th	*Abbo*	St. Gabra Manfas Qeddus
7th	*Selassie*	Trinity
12th	*Mikā'ēl*	St. Michael
16th	*Kidāna Maherat*	Covenant of Mercy (for Mary)
19th	*Gabre'ēl*	St. Gabriel
21st	*Māryām*	St. Mary
23rd	*Giyorgis*	St. George
24th	*Takla Hāymānot*	St. Takla Hāymānot
27th	*Madhānā Alam*	Savior of the World
29th	*Bāla Wald*	Festival of the Son

This schedule is well implanted in the peasant's mind, so much so that the names of these holy days come to take the place of calendar dates. Thus, instead of saying "He fell sick on the fifth" or "He is due to come on the twelfth," the Amhara normally says "He fell sick on Abbo" or "He is due to come on Mikā'ēl."

Time for the Amhara is thus not a morally indifferent and qualitatively [822] undifferentiated continuum. It is a series of occasions with more or less sacred significance. These occasions are arranged in the form of cycles. In contrast to the Catholic calendar with its different saint for each day of the year, every month in Abyssinia repeats the same set of saints' days. Each year, of course, repeats the same cycle of annual holidays. The years themselves do not run on continuously, but follow the cycle—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—again and again. For the more learned, finally, there is a twenty-eight-year cycle which must elapse before the same year begins on the same day of the week again.

The Amhara's experience of time is thus essentially cyclical. The religious 565* calendar, the most important dimension of time for him, consists of a series 805 of epicycles, in which the monthly rounds play themselves out within the 822 larger circles of annual and quadrennial rounds. Historical events are at best 796 secondary: the seasons come and go, generations come and go, but there is not much new under the sun. The better-known prophecies foretell the return of some state of things that obtained in the past. Kassa chose the [787] throne name of Tēwodros II because of the prophecy that a king with that name would arise to repeat the mythically fortunate reign of Tēwodros I of the fifteenth century. In this century has arisen the prophecy of another Tēwodros to come. Still another prophecy—of a short-lived invasion of Ethio-

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*565 805 796 822 787 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [181] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 181 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 346 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

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holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services. 565* 346 341 181 796 822 [778]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery. 565* 822 18 36 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order. 565* 822 18 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities. 565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable 565* 156 157 [577]

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FIG. 16.—*The procession on Timqat Day*

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FIG. 17.—*Timqat procession: detail*

[P. 110-A]

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proverb which stresses the rights of women in this regard gives the following advice: 121* 593 586

Balāgar siṭagab yematāl ba-degger;
Tayawennā nay qitāwen yegāgger. [539]

When a peasant gets sated he beats you with wood;
Leave and come home, let him bake his own bread!

A couple who have firmly decided upon divorce need simply call in their relatives or go before the *çhīqā shum* in order to have their property properly divided. The only recourse to judicial process is when, as often happens, disputes break out concerning the division of property. In the *damoz* form of marriage, in which there is no civil oath, divorce is yet simpler. The wife is given certain presents and a monthly salary for the duration of the marriage. When the husband has to leave for another part of the country, or if the couple quarrel, they simply separate without further ado.

Despite its heavy claim on the energies of its members, then, the Amhara kinship system is such as to make members of the nuclear family relatively independent of extended relationships, and to give the individual marriage partners important areas of independence from each other. 121* 593 594

Religious Organization

Membership in the Monophysite Church is automatic for all Amhara except a small percentage who are Muslim. This membership is symbolized by the ceremony of baptism, performed for male infants on the fortieth day and for females on the eightieth. At that time the child receives a special Christian name in addition to his regular family name. 121* 795 794 [851] [553]

Certain obligations are incumbent upon every member of the church. Foremost among these is the requirement of fasting, which begins for children of both sexes at about the age of seven and introduces a considerable element of constraint into the lives of the Amhara. Second, there is the obligation to observe the Sabbaths and the main holidays by refraining from arduous physical labor on those days. In addition, each household is obliged to contribute a certain quantity of grain to the local church every year.* [785] [796] •

Apart from the rigorous fasting requirements, and the injunction not to work on holy days—a dubious hardship—the individual is relatively free of ritual obligations. The rituals demanded by the church are so manifold, and so sacred, that responsibility for them is given to the clergy, and the laymen

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*In some areas this is a fixed amount per household (*e.g.*, one or two *quana*); in others it is proportionate to the wealth of the family. It is collected by a lay official of the church, the *gend alaqā*, though sometimes by the *gabaz*.

443
632 centered in a town and extending outwa to include those areas from which peasants come to buy and sell.

[132] The size of the town's sphere contracts and expands sea-
[484] sonally, reaching its nadir furing the rainy season, when overland travel becomes difficult owning to deep mud and raging torrents. Then, travelling is infrequent and confined to the market town closest to a peasant's home parish. Although market trips are more frequent during the remainder of the year, most terminate at the closest market. These relatively short trips are favored when grain is brought to the mills located on the periphery
[796] of most market sites. The spheres of the larger towns (Gondar, Debre Tabor, Dabat) reach maximum size on the market days which preceed the great celebrations of the Coptic Church---Meskal (which celebrates the discovery of the True Cross, and follows the end of the rains), Michaelmas (November), Timkat (feast of the Epiphany, and preceeding the Lenten fast), and Easter. Map 3 indicates the extreme limits for market spheres of the towns of the Begemder highlands.

[491] The highland market towns are strung along the province's only all-weather motor road.[14] Each offers a

[648] [14] This road, built during the Italian occupation (1936-1941), runs north to Asmara (capital of Eritrea) and (since the 1960's) south to Addis Ababa (the national capital). A dry season road links the highland towns to Metemma on the Sudan border.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

443
632 once-weekly market, staggered, so that the market days of over-lapping spheres do not coincide. Peasant exchange at these markets tend to be "sectional" in character; that is to say, producer-sellers bring regional specialties (such as cotton and high quality cayenne from kola lands; cereals, fresh vegetables, and livestock from highland farms), or occupational specialties (such as Falasha iron mongery and pots; the leather goods of the Fakiy, a largely endogamous artisan group). In addition to local products, peasants come to purchase imported goods (especially clothing) and the produce of distant parts of the Empire (such as salt bars from the Danakil Depression). The market is also the peasant's tie to the world market, to which he sends cattle and cattle hides.

The large market towns, with their numerous consumer crowds, offer important economic inducements to
[275] the peasant marketeer. Beyond these economic functions,
[548] the large town offers diversions and attractions unavailable in the peasant's home parish---exotic surroundings, the temporary fellowship and entertainment of beer houses and mead halls, and the sexual companionship of the town's numerous prostitutes.

632 The town also attracts peasant visitors on matters
796 unrelated to the market place. The monthly feast days of various saints of the Coptic Church are occasions for special celebrations, and these attract peasants, out of

632 [796] [346] motives of piety and supplication, to the saints' eponymic churches. Within the environs of Gondar, for example, there are forty-two churches, and perhaps half are of sufficient antiquity and fame to mark them for special visits on the saints' days. Each of the market towns contains at least one famous church. The larger towns are, moreover, the seats of their sub-provinces, and are the objects of visits by peasants on "government" (mongist) business. Most frequently, this means [691] [423] litigation involving the disposition of land rights.

361 Two Rural Hamlets. Tikurmidir and Lemmariet are neighboring hamlets, situated on fertile dega lands. Together they occupy the southwest quadrant of Kidus Yowhannis parish (hamlet and parish names are pseudonyms), a three hour walk from the awraja seat, Dabat town, in the Woggera region. Of the two, Tikurmidir is larger:

[161] [592]	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Total population	151	95
Total households	36	24

In both hamlets, a majority of households are headed by [613] risteñas. These households are distributed among the [592] hamlets' ambilineages as follows: [162]

	Tikurmidir	Lemmariet
Ambilineage I	18	10
Ambilineage II	6	1

AE 563

other southern provinces, who are considered more "primitive" in their material culture, and many of whom are "pagan".

AE 771 563

Emperor Haile Selassie has urged the Coptic clergy to "raise to Christianity" even peoples despised as "unworthy" in the old pattern. As a result, peoples like the Agau (incl. the Qemant) who have long been neighbors to the western Amhara, and the laboring Gurage near Addis Ababa, have been converted and occupy status somewhere between level 1. and 2., depending on the wealth they have been able to accumulate by past labors. The Qemants have become favorites of the clergy at Gondar because of their generous donations to the local Coptic churches.

AE 563 [826]

The people of coffee-rich Jimma, in Kaffa province, enjoy respect within level 2. because they had been left with internal autonomy during the rule of Menelik II; and because they are believed to be a slightly higher physical type than other infidels (they are considered "wammate", people with wrinkles at the corner of the mouth). Perhaps due to their old wealth based on coffee, slave and gold trade, they are envied; but they are regarded as "people of dissolute moral habits" by the Amharas.

AE 463 563

3. Laboring peoples and classes; non-Coptic; despised, in the old patterns of behavior.

This includes all occupational groups that did or do the ironsmithing, leather tanning, skilled or non-skilled manual labor. Among them are the lower classes of the Galla (mentioned before); the non-Coptic Guragē; the Falasha who live in small rural communities in Begemdir province, who do most of the ironsmithing and pottery-making there, and who practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

322 saddlemaker is usually an expert at lumbering. A well-made "korecha", wooden, skin-covered saddle, with adornements, made to order, may cost a total of Eth$25.-

D. Tanning

281 The consumption of leather articles among the Amhara is tremendous for a settled agricultural people. It is reminiscent of Hamitic-speaking tribes whose ecology is based on animal husbandry, and the technology of tanning and manufacture of leather articles is linked with that of North Africa. The ethnic group that does this specialized work in Amhara territory, the Faqi, were Cushitic (Hamitic) - speaking, and probably constitute an early group in residence in Ethiopia. Products consumed include cooking utensils especially for travelling, riding equipment, scabbards, shields, and formerly skin clothing (now worn only by itinerant monks).

281 563 797 The Faqi live in scattered hamlets of their own, the size of which is usually like the smaller Amhara ones: patrilocal residence, 5 to 6 huts at most, each occupied by a biological family. Until very recently, none of them were Coptic Christians since the Coptic priesthood considered these "pagana" on the same level as occupational hunters, too low to be "raised to Christianity". They spoke old-Cushitic languages such as Qemant and other Agau tongues, and gathered in remote tree-groves on top of hills for occasional religous worship similar to that of the "pagan" Galla. Now most of them speak or at least understand Amharic, and since 1942 some have become con-

281 verted to Christianity due to the influence of the Emperor's
563 wishes. Socially they are now considered on a level above
[797] the hunters, and, after adopting Christianity almost on
a level with other non-ethnic craftsmen. Though largely
endogamous within their own Faqi class, they used to take
half-Shanqalla wives, or "woyto" (hippopotamus hunters),
but near urban places such as Gondar they now marry poor
Amhara of doubtful ancestry, after having become Christians.
They are still considered "rustic" by the Amhara towns-
men, since the Faqi, like the Falasha, do not like to live
in town, to avoid negative human relations and insults
based on their occupation ("You Faqi").

The Faqi do not like to be called by that name and
prefer the term "arabannya", which has a connotation of
someone skilled in something imported, of prestigeful
origin. This is perhaps well-founded for some of their
finer products resemble morocco leather.

The Faqi farm little, less than the Falasha, but
keep kitchen gardens. They usually do not own land- un-
less a family acquired some as a reward for ordnance ser-
vices rendered accompanying the troops of Menelik II. The
cash obtained from their products goes largely to pay rent
[231] for the land, similar to the Falasha. The Faqi try to
keep as much cattle as they can afford, for the skins
are valuable to them, and cow's urine is used in the pro-
cess of tanning.

The basic team need not exceed three ablebodied, ex-
perienced tanners, but there are numerous little jobs for
boys and older men.

464 real problem, and for modern tasks has to be brought from southern provinces, or Eritrea (as the Italians, as well as Point IV have found out).

526 466 701 The pattern in the former feudal military service was one of greater pride and prestige even for the poorest Amhara. The feudal-military chief had to clothe, house and feed his men, and could never use them for hard labor, such as agriculture--especially plowing--even when he had no temporary work for them. They were quartered with peasants whom they exploited like serfs, and since the chief paid no wages, he assigned his soldiers "gult" land, often on a temporary basis, which included the peasants who usually were non-Copts and did not have the protection of either church or cheqa shum.

567 797 Though actual slavery has now been abolished, its recent existence still affects the pattern of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and introduces an important element which differs from the otherwise similar picture of early post-feudal Europe. Most of the slaves were Shanqalla (negroid) or Barya (Nilotic); plus some Galla and other south Ethiopian, more-African groups. Since they could not be sold if baptized Christian, the master was not interested in their conversion; the church despised these different lowlanders as unfit to be "raised to Christianity", in the Amhara phrase. If a master desired to free a loyal slave, the method was to have him baptized, on which occasion he would acquire a Christian godfather who would henceforth protect him from sale

567 and insist that he be declared and remain free. Until

563 326 754 able to turn themselves into "buda" hyenas, and of having learned their craft from the "buda" evil spirit. Since the smiths in the old-Amhara areas are mostly Falashas, whose formal religious worship is never observed by Coptic Amhara, the Falasha smith is feared and suspected of black magic. At the same time, the iron tools produced by the Falasha are much prized, not only on account of their material utility but on account of their supposed supernatural strength, endurance and "secretly revealed" workmanship. Even today, the provincial peasant will insist on obtaining his plowpoint or adze from a "real" Falasha.

563 326 The Falashas practice endogamy, as do the Coptic Amhara. But in the towns where increased contact occasionally begins to attenuate the old rules, individuals of low prestige in both groups do sometimes marry, which usually results in the conversion of the Falasha partner to the majority religion. Also due to modern contact, it is beginning to happen that a Falasha teaches his craft to a non-Falasha, but the peasants often reject the output of the latter on the grounds that it isn't a "really strong, genuine Falasha article".

563 281 Somewhat similar untouchability attaches to the tanners, who are usually of local pre-Amharic, (Cushitic, e.g. Agau) descent, often still speak their ancient tongues, and until recently were never converted to Coptic Christianity. As traditionally "conquered" peoples, they are not "attentam", and Amhara endogamous rules prevail against them. The stigma against them seems to

533 rest not on any supposed supernatural powers of their
281 craft, but on theoccupation which requires them to deal with carcasses regularly, and places them in a class with the "Woyto" hippopotamus hunters of Lake Tana. However, the tanned skins produced by these "Faqi" tanners, prepared through a primitve version of making "morocco" leather, ismuch appreciated as "best workmanship" by the rural as well as town Amhara.

Like the Falasha, the "Faqi" live in hamlets of their own, usually within half a day's waling distance of a big market. They are regarded by Amhara as pagans; they gather under large trees in remote areas for their nature worship on several occasions each year. In very recent years, the urgings from the emperor and the example of Protestant missionaries have stimulated the Coptic clergy to admit them to Christianity, but, as
[97] in the case of converted Falasha, the social stigma remains attached to the convert, even if he changes his occupation. Socially he is then worse off than before, for as an outcast from his own group he feels the barbs of social discrimination more than ever. In the past, the "Faqi", like the "Falasha" did not concern themselves much about this stigma, but now the "Faqi" insist on the polite address "arabenna" --which refers to the tanner workmanship (lit. the one who creates Arab-like, i.e. imported luxury, articles.).

[146] Occupations that can be readily learned by anyone, or that require talent rather than skill, do not connote
533 low class. A musician, "azmari", male or female, who may or may not play an instrument for accompaniment, is

[533] usually a Coptic Amhara, of more talent than skill.
286 The weaver, "shamani", though usually a Ethiopian Muslim (or Falasha), carries on his work in theopen, and anyone may learn it. It is only because it requires consistent manual labor that most Amhara shun,it.

d) Religious Minority.

794 The foremost religious minority in Amhara provinces is that of the Ethiopian Muslims. Most of them live in towns, and in the past were residentially segregated to the older parts of town, near caravan trails andbig markets. Even today, their social associations are almost exclusively with other Muslims, e.g. traders from the Sudan. Both are regarded as low-class not only by the Amhara but also by the handful of Arab wholesale traders from Yemen. As a result, negroid and amei-negroid ex-
[77] slaves (Shanqalla), especially women, often become converted to Islam in order to marry Ethiopian Muslims or Sudanese, who, as retail traders, are economically better off. The Muslim veneer of these women is very thin, and they are among the most ardent followers of the "Zar" cult.

e) Racial Min ority

563 Shanqalla slaves were, [redacted], entirely below
567 the social scale, and treated as a separate caste. They were brought or purchased from the Shanqalla, negroid, people on the southwest escappment, or from Nilotic

563 "Barya" people below the northwest escarpment, so that
567 both terms became synonymous with "slave". because of the negroid features of the former, and the very black skin of both, they had high visibility, and did not have to be guarded closely as they could hardly escape. In view of the widespread illiteracy, manumission was almost never practiced, and such a document would be ignored by a slave trader or any Amhara who wanted to re-enslave a manumitted Shanqalla or Barya. Until slave-trading was prohibited by the present emperor, negroid slaves were still brought from the Gumuz tribe of Quara sub-province, just below the western, old-
[588] Amhara escarpment. But concubinage was so widespread that today there are more half-Shanqalla than full-blooded ex-slaves. Freed only since 1942, little change has so far taken place in their social status. In rural areas most remain with their old masters as
[464] servants or sharecroppers. In towns, they form a pool ofunskilled labor, employed only briefly from time to time, subsisting on very little, residing in the oldest parts of theold Muslim ghetto. Some of their women have
[357] managed to raise their economic status by becoming house-maids, espceially serving the women on the "street of unattached girls", or by mar ying ploygynous Muslims.

563 The Coptic church had not interested itself in
567 the status of slaves, for according to its rules a
797 Christian could not be kept in slavery, and therefore no attempt was made to convert Shanqalla or Barya slaves.

563 The racial objection to "raising them to Christinaity"
567 (as it was called) was expressed on the principal of
797 "atteätam" (of good, i.e. Amhara or Tigre physical stock). These objections still hold, but ex-slaves attached as servants to a Coptic Amhara household are now more often "raised to Christianity" if they desire it, and can then legally marry other Coptic Christians, which, however, is rare, in practice.

567 Plantation slavery was never widespread, except in the lowland, "Äzäga" district of Wolqait sub-province, where cotton and vegetables were raised on a relatively larger scale and most plateau landowners, especially feudal ones, preferred the plentiful "gabbar" services and well-established arrangements. The "gabbar" were rooted to the soil and had more to lose by leaving their birthplace than slaves would have.

The legal position of slaves, who were almost always non-Christianized gave them no protection. They were legal persons, and could not, in theory, own property, nor contract debts. In practice, some occasionally did manage to accumulate some small cattle and raise their local economic level through interpersonal contact. Slave concubines and the children they bore were usually kept in the household like family retainers, or at most given to another kinsman or to a newlywed couple, within the kin group.

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565 f) <u>The Servent Class and Economic Considerations</u>

The servant class, "ashkär", is employed in the

x 194 198 a.) The "Zar Language": Origin and Diffusion of the Zar Cult.

The "zar language" is used by professional zar doctors not only during the cult services themselves, but also in daily life, e.g. in response to a greeting; whenever they wish to establish a situation of separateness. Lay Amhara believe that the "zar language" is a completely different, esoteric language. They do not recognize that [197] it is mainly deformed Amharic, plus paraphrases, and loanwords, often similarly deformed, from Arabic, Galla and other geographically neighboring languages. The zar doctors pretend that even they themselves, (mere "horses"), do not understand the zar language, but that it is the zar possessing them who speaks through them in this case, not wanting to be understood by mere humans. Some zars make more frequent use of their esoteric language, notably the "wereza", a group of minor zars.

x 194 198 114 Among foreign scholars who have examined the "zar language" the most notable is Dr. Leslau [103], who calls it an "argot":

"Abstract ideas are expressed by concrete words.....

Deformation of the root, either by replacing a consonant or by lengthening of the whole root, is used.....

Some words are taboo, such as salt, the tray on which cups of coffee are served, the plant chat, the horse, etc.....

The morphology of the argot is Amharic throughout....

"addam" (man or woman possessed by a spirit) becomes "addamit"; rain is referred to as "urine of the clouds"; "tänqway", sorcerer, becomes "manqway".....

103. Leslau: An Ethiopian Argot of a People possessed by a Spirit. Africa, Vol. 19, pp. 204-212. London, July 1949.

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What happens when a Falasha gives up his Judaic religion and converts to Christianity? Does that free him from being suspected of buda? Only to a slight degree, for his Amhara neighbors refuse to forget his ancestry. In case of conversion, the Falasha becomes an outcast from his own people and usually moves to town. Only an ex-slave or a very poor Coptic woman will marry him. In the latter case, his in-laws believe that his kinship ties are still stronger than his new religion. Thus, if they have him teach them his ironsmithing trade, they believe he will not teach it properly to his affinal relatives. He can never become deacon or priest.

The buda-ironsmithing syndrome of the kayla seems based, in the Amhara mind, on the idea that a very strong power, namely the evil eye spirit, is necessary to accomplish sound work in ironsmithing. To remain powerful, the buda-ironsmith is regarded by the Amhara as requiring blood from time to time, otherwise his product, the iron plowpoint, will not stand wear and tear and the spear will break.

What happens to a Falasha who gives up his kayla trade? The stigma will remain on him, where his family is known. Therefore, some Falashas have migrated and tried to change their trade. This avoidance has not helped at all as long as they remain Falasha in religion. Those who have taken the step of conversion (e.g. as result of Protestant missionary activity in the lat 19th century) are still whispered about as Falashas by their Amhara neighbors and their social and marital associations are largely limited to other ex-Falasha, ex-ironsmith people. Assimilation has not solved the problem of ridding themselves of buda suspicion by the Coptic Amhara, though it has reduced direct, individual accusations of sorcery.

776 Foreign observers, citing early European parallels, have often
174 wondered whether the Christian Church of Abyssinia has replaced the
797 pre-Christian spirits with angels and saints, demoting the pre-Christian spirits to demons. Except for the "ganyen"- where this attempt is still far from successful - only one foreign scholar has traced such a replacement, in Abyssinia. While studying the celebrations of the Birth of the Holy Virgin in Abyssinia, he noticed certain features which led him to think that his holidgy is used to obliterate an old "pagan" cult of outdoor spirits.[127]

Thus the predominant factor is still one of syncretism.

756 E. The Characteristic Significance of Amhara Healing of the Spirit.

The Abyssinian practitioner of magic is first and predominantly a healer (with the minor exception of the despised tänqway sorcerer). He is a healer of individual patients, rather than of society.

171 Thus the social significance is at most secondary. The only
[182] exception, the "zar society", is primarily "group therapy". There is only tangential contact with political, legal, administrative institutions and their function. This is very different from the "society of sorcerers" among the Bemba of Northeast Rhodesia, who hold the people in terror and exercise political power.[128]

[794 While the "zar societies" are female-dominated in quantity of
562] members and in leadership, males are by no means excluded. They therefore differ considerably from the "female witches society" among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria.[129]

171 The only close parallel between Amhara concepts of magic and
754 other African concepts of magic is between the "buda" complex of the

127. Tubiana, J: Un Culte des Génies Agreste en Ethiopia". Rassegna di Studi Etiopici, Vol. XIII, pp. 76-90. December 1954
128. Richards, A.I.: A Modern Movement of Witchfinders. Africa, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1935
129. Nadel, S.F.: Witchcraft and Anti-Witchcraft in Nupe Society. ibid

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

563 178 [643 ● 79] Wherever Emperor Menelik II conquered new areas, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he ordered the local people to build Abyssinian Coptic churches, and the Coptic priests who accompanied the troops with the sacred "tabot", consecrated the new local church and parish. These became centers of political and educational Amhara activities. Amharization was advanced not through large scale direct conversion of what was considered by the Amhara clergy a "lower" ethnic group, but through the establishment of a local, administrative, Amhara hierarchy, which the other ethnic peoples found it in their interest to emulate. They soon learned (particularly the old Galla nobility) that they could advance in the Amhara feudal-army system and regain feudal-land-tenure through loyal military service.

[554] By assimilating to this Amhara pattern, young Galla of the old nobility or of the modern-educated élite have found that they can rise in the hierarchy, and, after conversion to the Coptic Abyssinian faith, even intermarry with the ruling class.

At the same time, ethnic particularism and tribal expression of the subject ethnic groups, including the large Galla population, have been consistently discouraged by the ruling Amhara. Even [79] foreign missionaries, who are still forbidden to convert Abyssinian Copts, but may work on Muslims, "pagans", etc, have been pressed into the work of Amharizing Ethiopia. For they must preach in the Amharic language, and can distribute Bibles only in the Amharic language, even in provinces where the vast majority still understands very little or no Amharic. If they break this law, missionairies can be promptly deported.

000 The present emperor, since his ascendency in 1917 and particu-

643 Addis Ababa. He has repeatedly urged the Abyssinian clergy to
178 take up the practice of preaching in church, on such subjects as
779 reduction of the violent mourning for the dead and the ruinous "tazkar" memorial feasts; and admission of women into the church building. In Addis Ababa, a few modern-style churches have agreed to do this out of respect for his presence. But the provincial churches have retained their sacerdotal character and have not, except on occasions of brief imperial visits, adopted these innovations. The clergy has also resisted (by means of the "inertia" previously described) the urgings of the emperor to convert masses
[797] of the "lower" ethnic groups to Coptic Abyssinian Christianity. Only sporadically have small-scale conversions taken place. The emperor seems to recognize the value of expanding the nominal State Religion, Coptic Abyssinian Christianity, to a real national church, as a pillar of national solidarity and national loyalty.

178 The new élite, small in number, but actively supporting the
212 emperor's policies, and even occasionally beginning to become impatient with the circumspection and quiet, indirect, subtlety of Emperor Haile Selassie, has for some years raised the issue of the simplification of the Amhara alphabet. They had assumed that there would be much less opposition to such a worthwhile change than to big issues like abolition of the "gabbar" and changes in land tenure. The present alphabet, which consists of 259 syllables composed of 37 consonants and a minimum of 7 vowels, makes it difficult to teach writing to illiterate adults, children, and non-Amharic speakers, or to design typewriters. But the new, young, modern elite could not have been more mistaken in their optimism. The matter became a cause celebre, despite the fact that the proposal, published in 1948 in an Amharic booklet "Reform of the Alphabet",

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

grade from the Eritrean plateau. All civilization in Ethiopia has penetrated from north to south along the great dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment, where the so-called Strada Imperiale now runs from Asmara to Addis Ababa. 133 177 [191]

Along this line have been concentrated the successive Ethiopian capitals with the exception of Gondar, which was chosen far to the north-west as a refuge from the ruinous wars with the Moslems and the Gallas. And along this line, due south from Aksum and Aduwa, were the great centres of the Copto-Ethiopian culture of the Middle Ages, places like Lalibala and the monasteries on lake Haik and the traditional centre of the Coptic Church at Debra Libanos. 361

From this dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment Ethiopian culture, and it was a very real culture in its heyday, spread westward into Gojjam and southward to the region of the lakes. Luca di Sabelli in his recent 'Storia di Abissinia' has shown that Coptic-Ethiopian missionaries were active as far south as Madagascar and the Mozambique coast. 177 [797]

Ethiopian Coptic culture drew its nurture from the powerful Coptic Church in Cairo, from the Crusading civilization in Palestine, and from the Byzantine Empire. Just as the establishment of the Turks at the exit from the Black Sea brought about the decline of the East Christian cultures in the Caucasus and the Balkans, so the Turkish control of the Nile valley and the Red Sea slowly strangled the Coptic Ethiopian culture of East Africa. The Ethiopian rulers, pressed by the invasions of Muhammad Gran, were well aware of their mortal danger and it is a curious fact that kings in Georgia and Ethiopia appealed to the rising power of Spain in the Western Mediterranean at about the same time. The Portuguese episode in Ethiopia was a delayed response to the appeal made to the Catholic powers. 175

The extraordinary tenacity of the Ethiopians to the western tradition is a remarkable characteristic of their historical development. The Aksumite kingdom, for all its Semitic appearance, was essentially a projection of Hellenism, and the Aksumite kings remained the traditional allies of the Byzantine Emperors in their struggle with the Persian Sasanids for the control of the Red Sea—an episode which was parallel in time with the conflict between these same two "world powers" for mastery of the Black Sea. The Coptic Church and Christian civilization in East Africa proved more enduring than the once powerful Nestorian Church in Asia, with which it may in some ways be compared. The later Ethiopian Kingdom played the same role in the struggle between Turks and Portuguese for control of the Red Sea and for the trade of the Indian Ocean as the Aksumites had a thousand years earlier in the rivalry between Byzantines and Persians. But they showed the same persistent antagonism to the Roman Church as the East Christians had displayed towards the Crusaders and the Papacy. In the end the Ethiopians expelled the Portuguese from Abyssinia and managed to maintain their own independence against their Moslem neighbours, until in the last decade it was suppressed by a professedly Christian power.

The Ethiopians are a remarkable phenomenon in the East African world and with their tenacity and their undoubted natural intelligence they are destined to have no little influence on the future course of history in that area.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

Coptic community. The present Emperor himself visited Jerusalem recently.

Possibly owing to ignorance and lack of education, the Church does not make any missionary efforts of its own amongst its subject races of Moslems and pagans, and up to recent years it did not tolerate, or at all events welcome, such efforts on the part of others. This is perhaps hardly surprising, for much of the missionary enterprise known to the Abyssinians had mingled politics with religious efforts, and had interfered in matters which had better have been left alone.

The Jesuits were expelled in 1633, and some who would not go were killed. The Protestant missionaries were expelled in 1838. Theodore can hardly have been said to have welcomed missionaries, though so far from expelling them he chained them up and would not let them go. King John expelled them again in 1886, and Menelik barely tolerated them, although a French mission has been established continuously in Tigré for a good many years.

But quite recently more missionaries have been allowed to start operations, especially in the Galla districts, and the Americans are particularly to the fore in this work in Addis Ababa and elsewhere. In addition, there is a French mission at Harrar and a convent at Addis Ababa, mainly educational and non-proselytizing, and a Swedish mission at the latter town of a similar character.

So far I do not think there is much trace of success by any of these institutions, but on the other hand there is evidence to shew (and my impressions are confirmed by American, Swedish, and French writers) that Islam, as in other parts of Africa, is making progress among

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

the subject races in the country, both pagan and christianized Gallas reverting to the faith of Mahomet in appreciable numbers. As is well known, practically every Moslem immigrant is a missioner, and I think this is a real danger to the peace and stability of the country.

It would be a remarkable happening if the ancient Abyssinian Church that has resisted attacks on its faith of so violent a character for so many years should succumb to the "peaceful penetration" of Moslem teaching at this stage of its history.

Such an event is not however likely to occur in the immediate future, for their religion seems sufficiently strongly implanted to hold its own among the Abyssinians, and even to sway the national policy. For example, it was the late Emperor Lej Yasu's leanings to Islam, rather than his other manifold failings, that caused his downfall in 1916. He was undoubtedly popular with the rank and file of the army and with a certain section of the people, but when the national institution was in danger concerted action drove him from power.

But in all essentials, in constitution and in doctrines, the National Church of Abyssinia remains to-day as it has so often been described in the past—unchanged, unprogressive, reactionary; such a position cannot be retained for ever in a modern world, and sooner or later, if it persists in its present attitude, it must fall—with what results none can foretell.

175 Ucciali. A wave of patriotism swept the country and armies were gathered to meet the Italian invasion. On March 1, the Italians were practically annihilated by a vastly superior Ethiopian Army.

Ethiopia had been put on the map.
177 Menelik was interested in getting foreign help in a number of technical fields, and among the many technical experts traveling in the country during the next twenty years there were also a goodly number of physicians. The different diplomatic missions in the new capital, Addis Ababa, often had their own physicians and with Russian assistance the Emperor founded the first small hospital in the capital. Among the medical writers of this period were Chabaneix (1901), the well-known British medical historian, Charles Singer (1905), who traveled through southwestern Ethiopia to Addis Ababa in 1904, and the French Railway physician, Doreau (1909).

Mission societies sent medical mission-
797 aries to Ethiopia during the following years,
743 and French and Greek physicians, particularly, settled more and more in the capital and in Dire-Dawa, the French railroad town on the Addis-Ababa-Jibuti line. The French Government opened a hospital in Harar and the Italian Government at first kept a clinic in Addis Ababa which, in the early thirties, was enlarged to "The Italian Hospital." Ras Tafari, who had governed as a regent, with Menelik's widow, Zauditu, as Empress, was crowned Emperor in 1930, under the name Haile Selassie I. During his reign Ethiopia slowly has been emerging as a modern state. He early realized that the health of his people was of vital importance for the future of the country. In 1924, he founded the Beit Saida Hospital, which he entrusted to the Swed-

[p. 710B]

797 ish surgeon, Kurt Hanner. In 1927, the American Presbyterian Mission opened a
743 100-bed hospital at Gullale on the outskirts of the capital. This hospital was staffed with American Mission doctors. In 1934 the "Zauditu Memorial Hospital" was founded by the Government. This hospital was run by the Seventh-Day Adventists chiefly as a maternity hospital. Helped by the American Society for Lepers, the Sudan Interior Mission and the Ethiopian Government, in 1934, founded a leprosarium at Akaki, near Addis Ababa. In
[874] 1935, the beginning of a school for "Medical Assistants" was set up in the Menelik Lycee, but this work was interrupted by the war. In the interior of Ethiopia medicine had also progressed. There were a number of mission hospitals, of which the most important were the Swedish Mission Hospital (Tafari Makonnen) in Harar and another Swedish Mission Hospital in Lekemti. The French Railroad had its own hospital in Diredawa.

744 Public health work was still very primitive. A public health committee, consisting of three physicians and a pharmacist, had been set up in Addis Ababa as the "Commission de l'Hygiène Publique." This com-

[p. 711a]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 643 versary, so that his people might be roused from their peacetime habits and the nation could have a chance to prove its might. Ethiopia never fully recovered from the shock that came in the middle of his reign.

*175 648 *Shock*

Amhara-Tigre society was convulsed by one disaster after another during the succeeding century. In 1527 began a series of conflicts with the Muslim kingdom of Adal led by a fearful warrior, Imam Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi, surnamed Grāñ. Equipped with firearms from the Ottoman Turks and hordes of Somali soldiers, Ahmad Grāñ proceeded to overrun Ethiopia, causing destruction and massacre wherever he tread. Only after most of the country had been laid waste, its inhabitants forced to embrace Islam, its churches looted and burned, was Ahmad Grāñ at last killed. His troops were routed by an Ethiopian force that had been revived by the expedition of Portuguese match-lockmen under Christopher da Gama.

The wars with Ahmad Grāñ left the country impoverished and disorganized. In this state it lay vulnerable to another shock: the massive tribal movements of the Galla from the south. The Galla advanced through periodic invasions of their warrior age groups. Coming first in furtive raids, then concerted warfare, finally by slow migration, these hardy nomads managed to penetrate deeply into Amhara lands. By 1563 the Galla had invaded over a third of the empire.

Ethiopia was further shaken in 1557 when the Ottoman Turks occupied the port of Massawa. This action introduced a problem that was to harass Ethiopia intermittently until the present: the danger of occupation by European powers. The Ethiopians were able to repulse the Turkish invader as he pushed farther inland, but Massawa remained in foreign hands until 1941.

*175 648 • 797 643 In seeking to recover from the destruction wrought by Grāñ's holy war, a number of emperors turned to European Christian powers for religious support as well as for political and technical assistance. Some of them became converts to Catholicism and, encouraged by Portuguese Jesuit missionaries, attempted to promote the new faith among their subjects. The outcome was only further bloodshed. Emperor Za Dengel's conversion in 1603 aroused civil strife and led to his downfall at the hands of nobles who did not share his Catholic sympathies. More serious trouble appeared during the reign of Susneyos (1607–32). He, too, adopted the Roman faith, and allowed one of the more impetuous Jesuits, Alphonzo Mendez, to direct a number of reforms in the Ethiopian Church. Mendez insisted that all priests be reordained by himself, that the population be rebaptized, and that the liturgy be rewritten. He forbade circumcision, and defined the previously unknown crime of witchcraft. Such measures antagonized the populace and provoked "horrid uproars, bloody wars, and the slaughter of many great Personages," as Lu-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

dolphus put it.[4] At length, unable to witness the further decimation of his people because of religious controversies, Susneyos abdicated in favor of his son Fāsil. Fāsil lost little time in deporting the Jesuits and restoring the Orthodox status quo. 175* 648 797 643

Recovery

In the wake of all these collisions, Ethiopia made two valiant attempts to regain equilibrium and glory: through the splendor of Gondar in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and through the force of three emperors of the nineteenth century—Tēwodros II, Yohānnes IV of Tigre, and Menelik II of Shoa. 175* 648 643

Gondar was founded as a new and stationary capital by Fāsil. It served as imperial headquarters for many generations. Later, the kingdom of Tigre knew a resurgence of power that led to control of the empire under Yohānnes (1872–89). His castle at Makalle symbolized one last rally for the north—after an interregnum of a thousand years—before being eclipsed by the Shoan throne.

The shock which began with the invasions of Ahmad Grañ shattered Ethiopia's medieval synthesis once and for all. The political consequence of those disruptions was an increase in provincialism, reaching its climax in the famous "Age of the Princes" (1755–1855) when each province had its own sovereign and for all practical purposes was a polity unto itself. The Solomonic line, the matrix of Ethiopian political unity, was splintered in several directions, leaving contenders in each of the provinces. Though the official imperial line remained at Gondar, Tigre was able to reassert its ancient claims and Gojjam recurrently voiced its separatism, and what may be called the "House of Manz" came to compete with Gondar as a center of national consciousness. 175* 178 635

This political division was accompanied by a peculiar cultural bifurcation. Elements of the national culture that had been rather evenly distributed before Ahmad Grāñ now became relatively specialized in Gondar and Manz. The recovery of Ethiopia produced a geographical division of manners and morals as well as several lines of Solomonic royalty. 175* 184

HISTORICAL PROFILES

The Role of Gondar

Gondar is the only city in Ethiopia with charm and character expressive of Amhara culture. Even today, despite modern accretions, the remnants of its castles, walls, bridges, and sanctuaries transmit a stately calm, redolent of past nobility and African grandeur. 175* 633

The town is situated on a flat volcanic ridge at seven thousand feet above 175* 361

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely preparing himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adolescence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

The Welfare School

Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in government provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indication of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

Religion.—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "religion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether. Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer dependent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of the various missions in Ethiopia.* In recent years a third alternative has fired

* In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

directed peasantry, and suffer the consequences, no dynamic program of agricultural and social development can take place in Abyssinian areas that does not enlist the active cooperation of the local *bālābbāt* and *shum*.*

The Decline of the Clergy

Although the church was instrumental in bringing Rās Tafari to power—by relieving the nobles of their oath of allegiance to Lījj Iyāsu—it was as a whole not sympathetic to his policy once he began to rule. Foremost champions of tradition, the clergy viewed with suspicion Rās Tafari's interest in modern education and other reforms. So pronounced was their conservatism that his weekly *Berhānennā Salām* found it newsworthy to report the fact that the clergy of one important provincial church were actually reading the Addis Ababa newspaper each week.[87] He was wise to act gingerly at first, limiting ecclesiastical reform to such matters as publishing religious texts in Ge'ez and Amharic, and encouraging the work of foreign missionaries.

In the past three decades, however, changes of many sorts have had the effect of reducing the degree of independent authority which the clergy traditionally enjoyed. These changes included the achievement of independence from the Alexandrian Patriarchate; the weakening of the church under the Italian occupation; subjection of church administration to the central government; and competition from the secular government schools.

Rās Tafari initiated the policy of seeking independence from Alexandria in 1929, when he secured the investiture of five Ethiopian bishops. This gave indigenous clergy, for the first time, the right to ordain priests and deacons, although they remained subordinate to the Egyptian archbishop. In 1950 an Ethiopian bishop, the *eçhagē*, was consecrated as archbishop; and in 1958, culminating Haile Selassie's patient and skillful negotiations, complete autonomy from Alexandria was achieved.

The attainment of ecclesiastical independence has heightened the prestige of national church officials in Ethiopia. It has brought about a re-organization of the national church hierarchy, in which fifteen bishops now hold office, one for each of the fourteen provinces, and one in Jerusalem. At the same time it has reduced the effective freedom of the clergy as a separate status group. Deprived of the external source of legitimacy which the Egyptian *abuna* formerly provided, the clergy are now entirely subordinated to the power of the Emperor. This condition was formally articulated in the Constitution of 1955, which made the election and appointment of archbishops and bishops

* A potentially significant medium of communication between them and the central government is the Chamber of Deputies, which since 1957 has brought popularly elected notables from the provinces to Addis Ababa.

633 such modern problems as : increase in the number of hours of daily electricity; extension of city boundaries to include many scattered hamlets (e.g. of ethnic artisans) so as to be given to the rural "näch lebash" (thiefcatchers in white) with regard to the latest reawakening of an old family feud (däm mällässä) that threatens bloodshed; to increase municipal tax revenues; what to do about accompanying official visitors, nosy foreigners, visiting dignitaries, etc.; whether to abandon the insect-infested olf prison or try to rebuild it; etc.

[643] Once or twice a year the emperor himself can be expected, with his retinue, requiring careful preparations and bringing much tension in advance to the urban officials. Sometimes he may address the people at large on the old "yähezb addäbabay", which must be marked out and cleared. If the town is also the provincial capital, the emperor can be expected to examine not only that office, but the heads of the sub-provinces, judges, elementary school, the provincial hospital; etc.

633 Religious tolerance, decreed by the emperor, now
● 798 permits such ethnoreligious minorities as the Muslims to reside wherever they please. In the past they were restricted to a section of the town, usually the part between the floodplain and the big market. For example, in the old city of Gondar, this section, locally called
633 "Addis Aläm" (lit. New world) was assigned them. Despite its name, this is the oldest section, and was probably named so over a century ago because it was newer than

X794 563 593 E489

Some women, particularly those possessed by the female zar Shanqit, learn to solicit money from strangers (as described during the convention). Some women thus gradually enter the path to prostitution, while others become independent businesswomen.

The atiitude of husbands of zar-possessed wives varies and often is ambivalent. A rustic balagär often fears that if he refuses the time and money and sacrifices demanded by his wife for her zar, the neglected zar will take worse revenge (e.g. on his cattle) or will send locusts to eat his grain, or so distract his wife that she will set fire to the hut. He knows also that if he divorces her, half his cattle and other movable property will be taken by the wife. Thus it is cheaper to let her take an occasional chicken or, more rarely, a ylung goat to the zar. Some men, especially in town, are ashamed to admit that their wives frequent the house of the zar. Semi-educated men, who might themselves consult the zar doctor on some matter of business, forbid their wives to go there. This is more to protest a blow to their prestige than out of modernism, but they will divorce her if she persists.

X794 586 798

A chronically unhappy marriage not infrequently ends in divorce by way of the zar cult. The "mänfäs gubaä" is placed in an awkward position when the husband or the wife sue for divorce from their "semanya" marriage on the grounds of zar possession. For while as priest of the Coptic church he cannot admit the reality of the zar world, there is sufficient overlap between that and the world of evil spirits in which the priest does (unofficially) believe and against which he may himself, as däbtärä, have written amulets. This explains at least in part why the Coptic church ignores the zar cult, and thus

X794 798

X 794 [798] tolerates it, as long as the residential location of the zar house is sufficiently beyond hearing distance of the church.

[562] Men are often ashamed to admit that they themselves are zar-possessed devotees. If possessed by a feminine zar, considered more stupid and ignorant than a male zar, in most cases, it is considered [782] possible to "outwit" her. A clever zar doctor may negotiate with a female zar to accept a consecrated hen, never to be slaughtered for her, merely to be looked at. The owner of the hen can then sell the eggs, and has a (totemically?) protected hen!

[787] More often, men consult zar doctors on business - though by stealth. In the town of Gondar, e.g., a man wishing to find a job for his nephew might present the problem to Lady Salamtew, who would listen quietly, accept his "frankincense money", and tell him to return on a certain day for her advice.

X 794 782 443 The economic significance of the zar cult varies, but can be considerable especially in the provincial towns. Most zar spirits, especially the powerful and clever ones, like "generosity" in sacrifices, are pleased by voluptuousness, insist on healthy animals for sacrifice, neat gifts and attire of their "horses" (a woman who is a clotheshorse would certainly be regarded as possessed), incense that has been imported from Yemen, aromatic herbs, imported perfumes, European utensils and alcoholic beverages (distilled arrak). Retail traders know this and encourage women to buy "nice things for the zar". It is well known that many women are "struck" by the spirit for the first time just after having visited ("window shopped" in the modern equivalent) a big market. No wonder zar doctors are popular with the Muslim Ethiopian retail traders, who not infrequently let them take some fancied item without payment, as a sort of silent commission!

x794 776 781 177 771 Yet despite this hierarchy of spirits, in the static construct of the zar cosmology, the factor of syncretism dominates the dynamic functions. As a result, a Coptic woman possessed by a Muslim zar may wear the colorful print head shawl of the Muslim woman; and even a Falasha woman, living in a semi-isolated Falasha hamlet, may suddenly refuse to shave her head (which is required of wives by Falasha religious law) and will braid it in the fashion of a Coptic Amhara woman without serious ostracism by her kinfolk which would be her punishment otherwise. At the wadaja ceremony, like the one at the convention, Coptic women and doctors chant hymns modelled after Muslim worship, refer to the zar as "prophet", and use Arabic loanwords, to flatter and cajole a Christian zar !

x794 776 771 Finally, religious syncretism in the zar cult is often intertwined with Christian cosmology and hagiology. Thus, Zar Sayd-Qadr, of Muslim origin, has become synonymous with Jesus Christ; The legendary Amhara Christian saint Gäbrä Mänfäs Qeddus is believed to have been an ally and advisor of the powerful Zar Säyfu Ṭängär. The archangels Mikäel and Gabriël, who are given feasts on taskar memorials for Coptic Christian departed souls, are regarded in the zar cult as "commander of the right house" and "commander of the left house" of zars (patterned on the human, tradional Abyssinian army). The Christian zar Abba Yosef if believed to join other Copts in bathing in the river to celebrate Ṭemqät (Epiphany). Christian zar spirits remain dormant during the lenten season.

[798] In view of this, it is perhaps not too surprising that the Coptic Church of Abyssinia remains passive, in effect tolerant by default, toward the zar cult and its social institution.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

Coptic community. The present Emperor himself visited Jerusalem recently.

Possibly owing to ignorance and lack of education, the Church does not make any missionary efforts of its own amongst its subject races of Moslems and pagans, and up to recent years it did not tolerate, or at all events welcome, such efforts on the part of others. This is perhaps hardly surprising, for much of the missionary enterprise known to the Abyssinians had mingled politics with religious efforts, and had interfered in matters which had better have been left alone.

The Jesuits were expelled in 1633, and some who would not go were killed. The Protestant missionaries were expelled in 1838. Theodore can hardly have been said to have welcomed missionaries, though so far from expelling them he chained them up and would not let them go. King John expelled them again in 1886, and Menelik barely tolerated them, although a French mission has been established continuously in Tigré for a good many years.

But quite recently more missionaries have been allowed to start operations, especially in the Galla districts, and the Americans are particularly to the fore in this work in Addis Ababa and elsewhere. In addition, there is a French mission at Harrar and a convent at Addis Ababa, mainly educational and non-proselytizing, and a Swedish mission at the latter town of a similar character.

So far I do not think there is much trace of success by any of these institutions, but on the other hand there is evidence to shew (and my impressions are confirmed by American, Swedish, and French writers) that Islam, as in other parts of Africa, is making progress among

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

sponsored the translation of works from Arabic. Among these were *Laws of the Kings*, a collection of civil and canon laws which became the official basis for judication, and a penitential manual, *Spiritual Medicine*, the last major production in Ge'ez literature. 175* 643 517 [633]

Yohānnes also continued Fāsil's work of "purifying" the church. He decreed that descendants of the Portuguese must leave Ethiopia unless they joined the Orthodox Church and that Muslims must reside apart, either in their own villages or in ghettos. Ordained as a priest before becoming emperor, Yohānnes followed keenly the theological disputes of his day. Toward the end of his reign he convoked a synod in Gondar to discuss the nature of the Holy Spirit in Christ, the chief theological question in Ethiopian history. [798] • [793] [779]

Iyāsu I, like many of Ethiopia's rulers, appears to have been moved by deep religious feeling. Describing Iyāsu's religiosity, one of the priests of Gondar wrote an eulogy a few years after his death: 175* 643 781

> The king used to stand at the window of his palace . . . and listen from his tower on high to the singing of the priests and learned men, to their gentle hymns which moistened the bones by their exceeding tenderness. When their offerings pleased him greatly he was pierced with affection for them and drawn by the harmony of their heavenly peace. For this reason . . . he would prepare for them dinners filled with delights, and bid them eat with him in his royal chambers, ornamented all about with the beauty of pure gold and wrought silver. He would take off his gold necklace and present it to them. He adorned them with garments of purple and of staffs interwoven with gold from the treasury of his kingdom. . . . None of the kings before him had done such as he, and none of the clergy of yore had been treated as were his priests and learned men. After the dinners, the king and his priests together sang hymns of joy and jubilation all night long in the palace—in their time of pleasure, in the sweetness of divine ministry.*

Iyāsu the Great did much to establish Gondar as the most important center of religious culture in Ethiopia. To this end he brought numerous priests and learned men from all over the country to his capital. From Gojjam, for example, he brought the great master of religious verse, Kīflē Yohānnes, whose lines are remembered even today. The number of teachers in Gondar in his time exceeded five hundred; there were one hundred and fifty at his church Dabra Berhān Selassie alone.* It was under Iyāsu I that the classic subject matter of the higher religious studies in Abyssinia—*zēmā* ("religious 175* 643 633 517

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* Dabra Berhān Selassie, one of the two churches built by Iyāsu I, is the only one of the original churches of Gondar which survived later conflagrations of the city. The original paintings which covered its walls have been preserved, as well as the remarkable ceiling from which rows of wide-eyed angels look down from between wooden beams. The church provides separate places for nobility and commoners, and a balcony for the emperor. [346]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 chant"), *qenē*, and *tergum* ("interpretation")—is said to have received its
643 definitive organization.
633
517 Dāwit III appears to have had a pronounced interest in Amharic folk song, for the more perfect enjoyment of which he built a special hall in the imperial compound. Because of this he has been called "Dāwit the Singer"—no term of praise in a land where minstrelsy is looked down on and where serious deportment is expected of royalty. Actually, this epithet, with its connotation of "playboy," was not deserved. Dāwit was a religious man, and in his brief reign built two churches. Knowledgeable Gondarēs today insist that, at first, even the priests were happy to join him in the amusement hall to listen to the one-stringed fiddles and the witty songs. Only after Dāwit's partiality to the
• [798] Unctionist doctrine (that the humanity of Christ was made divine through the unction of the Holy Spirit) led him to persecute the Unionist clergy (who hold that humanity and divinity are blended in the single nature of Christ) did they abuse his music hall and tarnish his name.[7]

[341] Interest in architecture was revived by Bakāffā. He constructed a long U-shaped castle which, together with the new castle of his Empress Mantuāb, completed the major complex of buildings in Gondar. Mantuāb's castle is
[532] noted for bas-reliefs of the Ethiopian Cross, while her other castle at nearby Qusquam is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting saints and animals as well.

The tastes of Iyāsu II were especially refined. He cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He built a large and handsome church. He began to construct a palace, in the lavish
[344] decoration of which he took a personal interest. Budge writes of this:

> A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the walls of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts . . . with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. . . . Iyāsu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen.[8]

*175 The decline of imperial power at Gondar after Iyāsu II did not produce a
633 slackening of the cultural activities that had been concentrated there. During
517 the reign of Takla Hāymānot II (1769-77), for example, when the actual
[643] power at Gondar was in the hands of a lord from Tigre, seven more churches were built. One of these, Ba'ātā Māryām, eventually became one of the most
[874] famous schools for the teaching of *aquāqūām* ("religious dance"), and in its heyday boasted 276 masters. Another, Abi Egzi, became noted for instruction in *tergum*, and is still a leading school for such studies.

[538] The composition of verse, in forms which had become canonized during the early Gondar period, continued to flourish. As political turmoil often

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 referents are relative: a man living at 7,500 feet may be considered *qolaññā*
157 by one living at 10,000 and *dēgaññā* by one living at 6,000 feet.
823 The broadest membership circle that the Amhara peasant normally thinks
*565 in terms of is that of the ethnic group consisting of all Amhara.[10] The ethnic
186 self-conception of the Amhara is one which stresses certain physical and cul-
619 tural characteristics, thanks to which he regards himself as superior to all non-Abyssinian groups in Ethiopia as well as to all non-Ethiopian nationals. With regard to race, the Amhara consider themselves distinctly more handsome than both the white man and the Negro man, to both of whom they apply derisive epithets. Their cultural identity is defined chiefly with respect to religion and language.

186 To all Amhara except a small minority who are Muslim, the name of their
771 ethnic group is synonymous with "Christian." The term signifies Ethiopian Orthodox Christian; for the Amhara peasant, "Catholic" and "Protestant" are equivalent to "Muslim" and "pagan" as terms designating so many kinds of heathens. And being an Ethiopian Christian is to the Amhara a mark of superiority in at least two respects: it means belonging to a chosen people, heirs to the Jews and sole bearers of authentic Christianity; and it means being an adept in praying and fasting, which to the Amhara are peculiarly Abyssinian arts. This orientation has motivated a certain amount of exclusion-
[798] ism vis-à-vis non-Christian Ethiopians. The latter are disdained because they are not Christian, while at the same time the particularistic cast of Abyssinian Christianity has made the Amhara somewhat reluctant to proselytize and
186 admit non-Abyssinians to the fold. A similar exclusiveness colors the Amhara's sentiments about his language. Knowledge of Amharic is considered another index of superiority, and the Amhara look down on Ethiopians who do not speak Amharic or who speak it with an accent.

The Amhara claim superiority over other Ethiopian peoples in connection with certain other aspects of culture besides religion and language, although most Amhara peasants have very little knowledge about the other ethnic groups in the country.[11] Occupational hunters and pastoral nomads are ridiculed, for example, because of their ignorance of the arts of farming and of eating *Injerā*. Vis-à-vis Europeans, on the other hand, the Amhara's self-image tends to stress qualities of bravery and toughness. Insofar as he has had contact with foreigners, the Amhara has become self-conscious about his rugged way of life—his hot foods, endurance on trips, courage in revenge, and virile longevity—and looks down on the softness of the European.

Being an Amhara is thus belonging to a superior category of human beings. This is not simple ethnocentrism; it reflects rather a basically aristocratic orientation that is repeated within the Amhara fold. It is not only members of other ethnic and religious groups who are considered inferior,

*278 222 iron, or in the "Arab" style, or the product of Falasha smiths, that it be double-edged, or have a handle of horn or some exotic wood. Similarly, recipes requiring roots may state that they be dug with a spade of specified characteristics, or with a digging stick of special wood. As for the gatherer, in some recipes, he is a vir-
• [801] gin boy, in others naked or facing east. Circumstantially, recipes established the day of the week on which the herbal may be obtained, and numerological details, such as the number of locations from which a particular herbal is to be gathered, and the number of samples to be taken from
[788] each place. Finally, the gatherer may be required to recite, and perhaps repeat, a designated common prayer before cutting or digging the botanical.

*278 824 Once gathered, medicaments must be processed using the equipment and following the procedures specified by the recipe as being necessary for releasing the healing powers from their botanical confinement and for guarding them from dilution or loss. Botanicals may be required fresh or dried, crushed or ground or whole, soaked or decocted or simply mixed with other medicaments, strained through cloth or not further refined. Occasionally, recipes direct that medicaments be cooked with mead or distilled spirits, but it is the liquid (or tincture) which is discarded. In other recipes, botanicals, particularly leaves, require no processing other than being chewed or

*278 824 rubbed across the palm (releasing the juices to be licked up). Other herbals must be burned or boiled before becoming therapeutically active, in smoke or vapor.

*278 801 804 Both absolute and relative measurements are used. Among the former are mentioned handfuls, finger-joint lengths, and weights equivalent to a small egg. Relative measurements are most common during decocting. Required ratios suggest a numerological component here, reduction from seven volumes to one being the most frequently used ratio. Numerological elements appear elsewhere during processing, as when a recipe required, as a final step in processing, that the preparation be rolled into seven portions, or that the materia medica be steeped for seven days.

*278 415 Equipment used for processing medicaments is of common domestic origin, sometimes specified unused (e.g., pots for decocting, cloth for straining), sometimes worn (e.g., pitted mortars for grinding). Generally, the containers used cannot be allowed to rest directly upon the ground, but must sit upon stones, whose number and provenience (usually riverine) are likewise specified by the recipe.

*278 In addition to preparations consumed orally, herbalists provide fumitories, inhalents, instillations, gargles, lotions, poultices, and therapeutic amulets.

*278 *757 Herbal therapies further indicate the appropriate

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* 759 cological specifics are kept secret, herbalists are not always adverse to commenting in public on the type of specialized equipment or esoteric knowledge that they possess (that, for example, he obtains medicinal roots with a digging stick of a "certain" exotic wood). By these means, the categories of pharmacological elaboration enter into common knowledge, while the specifics are retained by their owners.

* 757 There is a third and final category of associations,
* 801 numerological ones. Certain numbers (particularly three and seven) appear in therapies with greater frequency than do others. But this again represents only a statistical abstraction, largely unappreciated by the herbalist because of his familiarity with a very limited number of therapies. Here as in the other categories of pharmacological associations, the symbolism expressed by specific links is obscure and, so, unavailable to the herbalist for generating new associations. Thus, the combination of riverine stones, the number three, pitted mortars, and specific medicaments within a single therapy can only be "conventionally" explained by the herbalist.

* 759 The herbalist who would "elaborate" his therapy is
754 confronted by more than technical obstacles, however. A secular healer who betrays a speculative interest in the regularities of Amhara pharmacology can only excite his fellows to compare him with the debtera, and inevitably

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been mixed together with other ingredients (such as sacramental oil, juice or sap, animal blood or urine). The recipe further states which segments of the text (e.g., asmat) are to be represented in a contrasting
[824] color (usually red). Finally, the botanical variety of reed with which the text is written may be determined also.

Beyond the effects gained from the manufacture of the digam itself, the text's goals are further augmented by materials which are included in the kitab, together
[237] with the digam. These include, as indicated by the debtera's recipe, botanicals, often together with such exotic ingredients as a designated number of hairs from a lion's mane. The outer cover of the kitab is made of leather, but a debtera must determine if it should come from a wild or domestic animal, and, if the latter, what its sex and color should be. The digam is sewn into this, but whether the stitch should be to the right or to the left, whether the thread should be cotton or silk, and what its color should be, must also be con-
[801] sidered first. The number of stitches to be made is likewise relevant, for numerological considerations suffuse the entire process of making the kitab. Nor are the makers of the kitab neglected; whether the debtera should be sexually continent before writing the digam, whether the cord by which the kitab is worn should be

854 is carried about on its mother's back, riding spread-legged in a half-sack. Other women and older sisters are about, eager to cuddle and handle the baby ("dällälä") to console, comfort, caress). In doing this they bend down to the baby, or pick it up, but rarely grasp it to kiss it. Fathers rarely fondle the baby until it is weaned. They often have to take a special count when asked how many teeth the baby has.

The term for nursling, "gelgäl", may be extended to animal nuralings as a compliment, but not vice versa, for this would be an insult. When the baby can sit or stand, mothers hold it by the hands and coo babytalk to it, e.g. "tatu segra" (lit. - footsie), encouraging it to take first steps, or warning it not to touch a dangerous thing, such as fire, by designating it as "kaka". The 853 baby learns to walk during the second year, long before it is weaned. Thus a baby with a nearly full set of teeth can be seen walking up to its mother, groping for the breast inside the dress or toga, pulling it out, and beginning to take nourishment while squeezing a side of the breast with the full hand. The mother will rarely push it away, until it has had its fill and lingers dreamily, and she has other work to do. In this case the mother may push the baby away gently, without sign of annoyance. Inside the hut, women are not bashful about their breasts being partly exposed during feeding, but in sight of a stranger they may cover [854] the process of the baby's taking nourishment for fear of evil-eye spirits to which every eater is vulnerable and which might dry up the milk (out of envy and meanness).

● 803 Toilet training begins gradually after weaning, i.e. after the age of two, when the mother has resumed full wifely duties and

803 does not wish to be dirtied all the time. Misbehaving, relapsing infants are punished by pinching.

2. The Age of Experimentation: Infancy and Childhood.

855 The years after weaning, until about the age of seven can be described as years in which the attitude of Amhara parents and society toward the small children is "laisses-faire". This is partly due to the attitude that views childhood as a state of imperfection, letting the children grow with little supervision until they are old enough to perform economic tasks, but later training them in an authoritarian fashion, to make them grow into adults as quickly as possible, without an intervening playful adolescence.

A. The Stage of Infancy.

854 Once the mother has resumed wifely duties, infants are often cared for by their older sisters, who attend to their food, carry them, fondle them, but leave them considerable freedom to roam around the outside of the huts and nearby brooks, hills, fields, etc. They are permitted to get as dirty as they like, and are dressed in a single shift of threadbare rags which conceal nothing. They are not scolded for experimentation with objects, be they animate, inanimate, or their own bodies; unless they get in the way of adults and annoy them, whereupon they are simply pushed away. They are rarely punished, for they are regarded as not having attained the "age of reason", as "not yet trainable", as "urchins" ("kutara"), lighthearted infants.

Parents do fondle them, but not as regularly as before. It

243 crops, and the only one grown all year, thus the most often irrigated. It grows well even on semi-eroded soil, unlike wheat. It is consumed in emergencies, and more usually used in making beer, despite its comparatively poor malting qualities. It is provided as fodder for the mule, the most [231] important animal for human transportation, to give it "strength". Barley becomes more important for human consumption when the rainy season has been shorter than usual. In that case, the grain is soaked in water and then crushed with wooden mortar and pestle to remove the husks without reducing the grain to flour. After drying in the sun, the broken grain called "gebs qolo" is roasted and eaten Some is always in the hut, in case guests should come. The same crushing procedure is followed for preparing malt for barley beer. Late, irrigated barley called "aja", is considered tough but "giving strength", though dishonorable for a guest, and also causing complaint from women that it is "hard to pound" and "good only for mules".

Oats and rice as special crops are almost unknown to the Amhara. Oats ("gēnçha", "arāmamo", "qwa"), considered wild, are gathered with barley and used in beer.

In view of the importance of cereal crops, it is not surprising that the farmer refers to them collectively as "teru", which means "good", while garden crops ("debāla") which enjoy a lesser appreciation, are not included in this concept.

[427 Rent, tribute and taxes were paid per "madiga", the 804] clay water pot used to measure it. Although this procedure is no longer followed, rent is still quoted in terms of "madiga".

423 658 supporters of the central government.

The descendants of these balbats, now educated in 423 the high schools of Addis Ababa, are being sent into even 447 the old-Amhara provinces at present, by Emperor Haile 651 Selassie, to act as salaried collectors for the central treasury ("Gemja-Bet") (so that the function of the former malkana has again come full circle, though the term is no longer used for the office). In fact, the new centralized tax-gathering has ended the office of the old, provincial "mälkäña", and they, much like the "gultäñña", can only hope to have their lands affirmed as "rest". This they can hope to achieve only if they work the lands themselves and pay tithe on produce, otherwise it may be lost to squatters. Their final security of tenure, by contract instead of vague status (they have lost the latter), will come only when the lands are measured and modern titles issued, which has not yet happened in the old-Amhara areas that resist this. The non-resistant Galla balbats of Shoa province are thus more secure in tenure, and will remain so as long as the central government is strong.

423 Measurement of land is called, traditionally, "throw- 804 ing the rope" ("yaṣe gäzäd"). This rope may be made of cordage, plant fibers, traditionally 40 elbow lengths long. In northern districts it is sometimes made of plaited oxhide, and called "qäläd".

423 The "rope was thrown" widely in Galla lands conquered by Menelik II, Three-quarters of these lands were then divided into gashas of 80-100 acres each, and

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XIX.—*How they gave us to eat in the house of the Barnagais, and how in this country the journeys are not reckoned by leagues.* 648

When we were out of the house where the Barnagais was, they made us sit down in the receiving room of another house on mats on the ground, and they brought here a large trencher of barley meal, but little kneaded, and a horn of mead. And, since we had not seen such food, we would not eat it; but when we were more accustomed to the country we ate it readily. Without eating of this, we arose and came to our resting-place and then set out. This might be at two hours before midday. Having gone on our road half a league or more there came to us a man running and telling us to wait; that the mother of the Barnagais was sending us food, and took it as a misfortune our coming away without eating and not accepting the food they gave us, which was that customary in the country. We waited, and the food came to us, that is to say, five large rolls of wheat bread and a horn of mead. Let not anyone be amazed who hears of a horn of wine, because for the great lords and Prester John cows' horns are their cups for wine, and there are horns holding five or six canadas.[1] Besides this, the mother of the Barnagais sent us some of the same kneaded flour, and now we ate some of it. This meal is of parched barley, made into flour, and they mix it up with very little water, and so eat it. After this banquet we made our way to the town of Barua, where our goods and companions had remained. In this country, and in all the kingdoms of Prester John, there are no leagues, and if you ask how far it is from this place to such a place, they say: If you depart in the morning at sunrise, you will arrive when the sun is in such a place; and if you travel slowly you will arrive there when they shut up the cows, that is at

[264] [262] [415] [262] 804

[1] A Portuguese measure equal to about three pints.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

804 night. And if it is distant they say, you will arrive in a *sambete*, that is a week, and so they define it according to the distances. When I said that from Barua to Barra there 484 were from three and a half up to four leagues, that was according to our opinion, and it would not be more. We afterwards travelled there many times, and we started from one town and dined at the other, and did our business and returned to the town we had started from by daylight. The people of the country reckon this as a day's journey, because they travel very slowly. Between these two towns [241] there is very remarkable country, tilled fields of wheat, barley, millet, pulse, lentils, and all other sorts of vegetables which the country possesses unknown to us. From the [361] road from one place to the other more than fifty towns are to be seen: I say large towns and very good ones, all on heights. In these plains and fields there are herds of wild 224 cattle, forty or fifty in a herd. It is a chase that is very pleasant for the Portuguese, but the country people are able to do them little hurt, although they receive from them much injury to their crops.

CAP. XX.—*Of the town of Barua, and of the women and their traffic, and of the marriages which are made outside of the churches.*

621 This town of Barua in which we were staying, and where later we passed more time, may have three hundred hearths and more, a great part of them belonging to women, because this is like a court in many respects. One is that people of the Prester's court never go from here, and as many as come are not without wives. The other is because this is the residence and seat of the Barnagais, and there are continually in his house three hundred mounted men and upwards, and as many more who come every day for

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

492 second toes. Even the king rides bare-footed; and being used chiefly to mules, they are far inferior horsemen to the Arabs.

Price of Gold. Gold, at a medium, sells for 10 pataka
436 each wakea; or 10 derims, salt, at a medium 8 per pataka.
435 The piece (of salt), speaking of it identically, is called Kourman, but in estimation, or such a thing costs so many salts, they are called Amooli. These are the ordinary currency for the necessaries of life. For considerable purchases, gold is used; and there is great loss in cutting the wakea into derims, at least one in ten. The gold is got by
[316] washing the earth in water, in wooden dishes. The grains, that remain behind are put into a quill, melted down, and
[325] alloyed, probably by the Shangalla; for it is pale, and is never brought to market in its first form, but melted down into small rods, or ingots. In Joas's time a wakea was valued only at 8 patakas. Yasous Tanush, or the II. turned round, and reduced the Sennaar Shangalla; but they are now quite independant of Habbesh. Their fair is held at Buré in Damot.

●804 *Weights and Measures.* The wakea (or ounce), in Abys-
436 sinia, is considered as 10 derims, or drams, and 12 ounces make a litir, or rotol (pound). At Gondar, the capital of all Abyssinia, the wakea is 6 drams, 40 grains, Troy weight English, and divided into 10 drams of 40 grains. The small money is salt bricks, dug out of the mines at Dancali, near the myrrh country. Every wakea, in ordinary times, gives from 72 to 76 salts. In 1769, the wakea was 80 salts, and June 15th, 1771, the wakea sold at 34, but there was a great difference in the size of the bricks. These are little or not at all liable to waste, as M. Montesquieu supposes. Abyssinian gold at Mocha is 15 or 16 patakas when the Sennaar gold is 22, because the Agows, &c. alloy it with silver.

At Masuah, the current money is the Venetian sequin, the pataka, or queen's dollar, and half-dollars. For small money are used grains of glass, called borjook, three of which make a chebir (Vid. Book V. Chap. ii.)

Corn sold at Masuah for four patakas the ardep, which
436 contains about 24 measures of the country. Coffee, six ro-
804 tol per pataka, sometimes ten, or even 15 rotol. Honey,

[p. 46]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

four cuba for a pataka, each cuba about two rotol, or somewhat less. Butter, 20 rotol, for 1½ pataka, and 3½ harf. Civet, 1¾ pataka the wakea. Wax, 4 patt. the faranzola. Elephants teeth, 35 rotol for 18 patt. Water, 1½ paras the smallest jar, and 3 paras the largest. Abyssinian gold dust, 15 patt. per wakea, at Mocha. Dora, 12 measures for a pataka. The Venetian sequin goes for 2¼ patakas. 435 804

The Abyssinian grain measure is the ardeb, which, at Gondar, contains 10 measures, called Madega, each equal to 12 ounces, Cairo weight. An ardeb of grain costs 2 derims, or 2 patakas; an ardeb of teff, the same; 6 or 8 ardeb of tocusso pay an ounce (wakea) of gold, or 10 derims.

Servants Wages at Gondar *. At Gondar a maid-servant receives 15 salts per annum, and is fed in the house. A man-servant is paid 4 pataka yearly, which correspond to four wakea, or ounces of gold, Abyssinian weight, and receives besides two loaves, or cakes of teff, for his support daily. If his master is good, he sometimes gives him a little flesh, lentils, or vetches. He is not obliged to clothe him, but he sometimes gives him a pair of trowsers, which consist of about one-fourth of a yard of white cloth. 465 357

With respect to carriage, &c. three bundles of wood, which are brought from Tchagassa, three hours walking, cost a salt. The carriage of a jar, or manteca, full of wine, or honey, from Emfras, eight hours journey, pays a salt, of the weight of 3 faranzala, or so. 435 482

Thirty-three teff bread cost a salt; the loaves are about 3 lines thick, and 18 inches diameter. A pair of shoes (pantufle) cost a salt. 8¼ peeks of cloth is the least gift that can be offered in the country. 435

Bouza. Manner in which the Abyssinians make a kind of beer, that, in their language, is called bouza. 273

To make this, they use tocusso simply; but sometimes they mix it with grain (wheat), or dora, or all three together; but in ordinary tocusso is best. A jar of tocusso, or of the three sorts of grain, contains as much as is sufficient to make two loaves, that are a tenth part of the whole jar; besides which, they use about half a rotol of Ghesh leaves.

* From this, to the 29th line of page 68, is a translation from the Italian of L. Balugani.

[p. 47]

down the resistance of the undisturbed customary societies in favour of his own centralized control. Thus in Wallo, an ancient Galla region, the people had been organized into seven districts under the rule of seven of the original families. When Menelik first wrested its allegiance from John he had to conciliate these local leaders, but later, when he became stronger, he weakened them and had the land measured and more evenly distributed. In 1916 when the *Negus* Mikael was defeated after an attempt to rebel, Wallo was parcelled out under generals, and soldiers were put in by the central government. 423

MEASUREMENT AND INHERITANCE

Before concluding this general account some answer must be given to the questions as to whether there was any survey and registration and what were the rules of inheritance? 423

There was, of course, no survey as the term is understood in England. There was a measurement, a *gasha*, which was the equivalent of 80 to 100 acres, and in some parts of the country and notably, as we shall see, in parts of the conquered south the land had been measured. In Ethiopian terms, 'the cord had been thrown', sometimes once and sometimes a second time, with more accuracy, after the land had been cleared and farmed. Measurement of the land gave the Emperor and his officers greater control over it and its resources and the prime mover in this process had been Menelik. [804]

In the north, measurement has been by no means universal. In Gojjam, most stubborn and independent of provinces, and in Bagemdir there was no general measurement of land. In other northern provinces it appears that when estates were granted in recent times by the Emperor, especially those in *rest-gult* tenure, they were measured and registered. Small estates and the lands held by groups of *restenyas*, divided and at times redivided, were distinguished by natural landmarks and registered in men's minds or they might be entered into parish registers. The new land-tax of 1944 was based upon the unit of the *gasha*, but it is very doubtful whether measurement had been sufficiently carried through by this date to make it possible to execute the law upon this basis. [651]

With regard to inheritance, we have seen that this was only held to be permissible for *rest* land though in fact it was far more widely applied. It was not permissible to leave land away from the family or the group, or equally to give or sell it, without the permission of those chiefly interested. In leaving land the owner could allocate as much as two thirds to his favourite child—and in some parts this could be a daughter—while the rest was divided equally between the other children. 423 428

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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FIG. 9.—*The weekly market*

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FIG. 10.—*The market: weighing cotton*

[P.46-B]

*278 824 rubbed across the palm (releasing the juices to be licked up). Other herbals must be burned or boiled before becoming therapeutically active, in smoke or vapor.

*278 801 • 804 Both absolute and relative measurements are used. Among the former are mentioned handfuls, finger-joint lengths, and weights equivalent to a small egg. Relative measurements are most common during decocting. Required ratios suggest a numerological component here, reduction from seven volumes to one being the most frequently used ratio. Numerological elmments appear elsewhere during processing, as when a recipe required, as a final step in processing, that the preparation be rolled into seven portions, or that the materia medica be steeped for seven days.

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*278 *757 Herbal therapies further indicate the appropriate

1: Meeting E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MPS Ambara MPS

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Table 11: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Ambara

Months: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Months: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau:	Annual Cycle of Ambara Ecological Activities (Economics, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Copto-Abyssinian Ambara.	Cycle of Ambara Social Events	Syncretism	New, Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1	Sept. 11	receding flood after rainy season; yellow "mäsqäl" daisy carpets land; spring ("tämäyä").	place beehive basket-work in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ("gat").	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ("Mäsqäl Mäl")- public rejoicing around bonfire (demäkre). Minor: 1st Mäskäräm is St. John's Day. 11th: "Arafa" - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	Kin visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ("enqutätäsh") on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive promise of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		"Mäsqäl" is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
to	to						
Mäskäräm 30	Oct. 10						
Tequemt 1	Oct. 11	sunny growing & ripening season (mäwäl ega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ("gebs"), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ("t'ella"); sell honey to make mead ("täj"); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Tequemt: St. Michael's Feast "Mikael"; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 9th: pilgrimage to "tabal" holy wells and waterfalls of Ätbäri Märiäm Geldes (Abe).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ("gurmeresh") to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving "from Jerusalem".		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Tequemt 23rd).
to	to						
Tequemt 30	Nov. 9						

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Meder 1 to Meder 30	Nov. 10 to Dec. 9	ripening of later cereal grains; sunny, occasional hazy mists.	harvest of cereal grains, esp. early "yeff" for bread; "mug" and "talbo" oilseeds. Teamwork in harvest and hut construction; boys take cattle from sun-scorched upland to green valleys.	12th Meder: "Mikael" Feast, with picnics, in other localities. Minor: 6th "Qwasqwam"-clergy ends 40-day fast. Local: 21st "Hima" Festival at Axum; Sunn' holiday.	Flirting season (esp. of adolescents) begins on "Mikael": fresh togas, beautification; tattooing (esp. adult divorced women). 21st: Church student holiday.		
Tahsas 1 to Tahsas 30	Dec. 10 to Jan. 8	Summer ("belg"), hot, sunny, occasional light rains. Red aloes on rocks and thorny plants dominate scrubbed landscape. Rivers become brooks, brooks go dry.	Finish main harvests. Peasants take "yeff" etc. to market in towns. Seeding of "summer barley" on irrigated fields. Traders organize caravans: produce and hides for salt and imports, coffee etc., cattle pastured in valleys.	19th Tahsas: "Gabriel" Feast-(because he came to Mary announcing Jesus' coming), esp. at Gulubi near Mire Dawa. 29th Tahsas: Christmas ("Lidet", or "Ilsma"), with all-night church services and special chants.	19th-29 is traditional hockey ("Ilsma") season, with climax on Christmas. Judges begin riding their circuit to hear litigation (land tenure, damages, etc.).	19th: Emp. Haile Selassi travels to Gulubi(for "Gabriel"). 29th: Emperor receives students, in traditional togs and Jodphurs.	
Ter 1 to Ter 30	Jan. 9 to Feb. 7	Height of dry summer ("belg"). Some diagish rivers considered poisonous for cattle.	Harvest irrigated garden crops: peas (shambora), plant (gomba) (cabbage). Sell produce for taxes, and to buy salt, hot peppers, coffee.	Holy month: 11th Ter is "Tenqit"(Epiphany), holiest day of year: processions to specially erected pool, with sacred "tabot"(tablet), blessing of water for the coming light rains. 6th: "Gerra"(Circumcision of Jesus). 19th: "Giyorgis" (St. George) 21st: "Lelkeye Maryam" (Mary)	Tax-gatherers collect for govt. for landlords, rent and gifts for the church. On the 11th (Epiphany), young men perform horse tournament("gugs") women are coiffured, henna-reddened palms. Climax of flirting.	secondary: On Epiphany, Jan. 19th Pentecost (11th Ter), ("mayrik") among Falashas as harvest feast. 12th Monday	Emperor H.S. receives foreign diplomats in traditional costume.	

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Yäkatit 1 to Yäkatit 30	Feb. 8 to Mar. 9	dry; east wind brings puffy clouds (and hungry locusts) some ripening of wild fruits.	late barley("adja gebs") matures on irrigated fields and is harvested; price of sheep and other meat doubles (due to heavy meat-eating just before lenten season) 11th-20th ("sted amus").	Lenten Fast "kudade" (lit. suffering) begins after the 22nd, for 55 days though called "arba tom" (Fast of 40). 8th-10th is 3-day fast of Niniwah ("Tsome Nänïwe"). 16th is feast "Kedame Mehrat".	Housewives during the long Lent must show skill with vegetable dishes and sauces, (even butter and milk are not allowed). Happy dancing on 14th: Jesus promised to save.	eve of 22nd: annual convention of "zar" spirit doctors.	On 12th(Feb. 19th) memorial services for Graziani massacre 1937 On 23rd(Mar. 2nd) Adua Victory(1896) celebrated.
Mägabit 1 to Mägabit 30	Mar. 10 to April 8	dry; burning of Bush to keep locusts away, and new fields (slash-and-burn).	cultivated fruit(peach) ripens; garden crops are harvested for Lent food; commercial caravans hurry to complete tours before rains; cattle is pastured far into bush.	Minor, because of Lent: 5th "Abo-Gäbre Mänfäs Qeddus" worship and dance on Mt. Zuqwala. 19th "Debrä Zayt" commemorating Mount of Olives feast in Jerusalem 27th "Medhane Aläm" =(Savior)	Youngsters pasturing cattle in far bush have liberty for games and hazing, hut-building, etc. No weddings in Lent.		
Miyazya 1 to Miyazya 30	April 9 to May 8	Light rains begin, Autumn ("bäga"). As soon as soil softens, plowings begin.	refreshed by drizzles, peasants trade for new iron plowpoints and prepare soil, esp. after Lent. Prices of meat, even grain and pepper double for Easter feasting, so buyers travel far from towns. No work during Passion week("pesemat") before Easter.	Severe fast during last 3 days of Lent,"seqlät" Good Friday on the 15th. All-night services eve of the 17th, Fasika(Easter) wearing green reeds on forehead("qetäma") given by priests Sat. morning. Resurrection("tenset") announced 4 A.M. Sunday, meat-feast begins.	Second big wedding season from Easter to heavy rains, so unmarried girls wash clothes, redden palms, watch young men at javelin throwing and ball ("qenchebt") games.	17th: Muslims (on Easter) celebrate "Sheykh Abader" water saint.	27th:(May 5th): Annual commemoration return & restoration of Haile Selassie in May 1941, ("Ämäläs Bäal") entry into Addis Ababa

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Ambara MP5

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Genbot 1 to Genbot 30	May 9 to June 7	light rains; spots of fresh, green grass (for pasturage nearer home). Storks fly northward.	Women prepare fuel for rainy season: dead-wood; piles of sun-dried cowdung, coated with layer of mud. Caravans hurry home from Sudan, etc. Fish "sanro" caught in rivers.	1st: Ledata (Birthday of Virgin Mary): After services, last, large, out-door picnic, under "dase" shelter 24th: "Tekla Haymanot" day, pilgrimage to his holy well at Debre Libanos. Children sing of country's well-being to storks.	1st: Men and women celebrate outdoor picnic separately, but young folk meet while elder once feast on meat and barley beer.	
Sane 1 to Sane 30	June 8 to July 7	Heavy rains, winter "Kerem" begin: fogs, storms, cold rain. Fishing season. Children are taught to swim before rivers are dangerous.	Intensive plowing of softened soil, seeding by broadcasting: barley, then teff, wheat. Beans and other garden crops are seeded and fenced. Fish is plentiful and cheap.	9th: Resumption of Wednesday and Friday "Fast of the Salvation" ceased since Easter. Clergy: "Parqlitos" 6th-feast; 7th "tsom hawaryat" - 1 month Fast of Apostles.	Master gives feast to retainers for plowing, "arf mäsay", with fried fish, beer, "amazi" music, and "hotu" dance. Mutual aid in hut repair.	
Hamle 1 to Hamle 30	July 8 to August 6	Heavy monsoon rains, sometimes tornadoes. sheets of rain almost daily. Cold	Indoor work; some minor hut repairs.	Intensive church school for boys, who are not needed at this season for any other work. Clergy: 5th: Fast of Peter and Paul ends month Fast of Apostles.	Standstill (e.g. of visiting) due to swollen brooks and washed-out paths.	16th(July 23) Birthday ("Ledit") of Rep. Haile Selassie; praise hymns changed in churches.

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Mäskäräm 1 to Mäskäräm 30	August 7 to Sept. 5	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some sow a bit of ḥäff and "idja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Selassye"); parade, despite rain, with "tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Buhe", "Debre Tabor") feast, with torch-light parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeref") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger children badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his name-sake; flags, etc.
Pagumen 2 3 4 5	Sept. 6 7 8 9 10	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Wägadras" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "lefafa sedeq", scroll; bathe.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	

Ethiopia. The uplands, even though they lie close to the 7 132
equator, are pleasantly cool at night during the long dry season, and abundant monsoon rains from the Indian Ocean pour down between June and September.

Rainfall averages approximately 47 inches annually at Addis Ababa[1] and considerably more in the area around Lake Tana. An average of 81% of the rain falls during the three-month rainy season, and about 13% during the irregular light [312]
rains in April and May.[2] The water-table remains high during most of the dry season, even when most rivers have dried up, so that irrigation and terrace farming are possible. Both have been practiced, though neither extensively nor intensively, since ancient times.

The Amhara divides the climatic year into the long dry 184
season, Bälg, which lasts until the beginning of the "little 805
rains", and the 3 to 4 month rainy season, kerämt, which the modern-educated Amhara translates as "winter". Terms subdividing these seasons differ locally, which is not surprising considering the extent to which climate is dominated by local topography.

While the long dry season is climatically monotonous, 132
the rainy season is in daily, dramatic flux. It is the season of tornadoes, often dangerous. On a relatively dry day during the rainy season, usually in the early afternoon, a whirlwind (called Täro) may occur which can even

1. US Dept. of Commerce: "Ethiopia", OIT Vol.2, No.12, May 1947, 4 pp.
2. Hann, Julius: Handbuch der Klimatologie, 1908-1911, Vol.2, p. 181.

779 The sacerdotal emphasis is so strong that efforts of the emperor to introduce preaching(of ethics, restraint in mourning, etc.) have been quietly ignored by the church, except for some polite and occasional attempts to please the emperor in Addis Ababa by fulfilling his wish in his own church.

b) The Annual Cycle of the Church Calendar, and its function.

805 The calend ar of Abyssinia is based on the Julian calendar of Rome, but the year begins September 11th, following the ancient Egyptian usage. The year has 12 months of 20 days each, plus 5 or 6 intercalar days at the end (the extra day once every 4 years). Historically this calendar probably came to Abyssinia from Alexandria, early in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. However, Syrian usage was followed by the Abyssinian church in the practice of establishing feast and fast days in commemoration of martyrs under Diocletian and Syrian bishops of that period.

After Islam conquered Egypt, ecclesiastical computations continued to arrive, though often interrupted, through the Coptic Abuna sent from Alexandria, These computations arrived in the Arabic language, were translated into Geez, and collectively called "Abushaker" (Father of the Moon), after the book originally compiled by the author Demetros, who claimed to have received them by revelation from the Holy Ghost.

This calendar is about 7 to 8 years behind the

805 Gregorian, so that, prior to September 11th, the Western 1956 A.D. corresponds to the Abyssinian 1948 A.M., "amätä mehrät" (year of grace). The same year is regarded by the Abyssinian church as 7448 "amäta aläm" (year of Creation); and 1672 "semaëtat amät" (era of martyrs). There is a 4-year cycle of apostles, so that 1954 A.D. (1946 A.M.) was the year of Mark, "zämmänä marqos wängelawi".

796 805 In the annual cycle of religious events, the dates of each holy day are further commemorated by monthly repetition of a shadow-like minor holyday. Christmas is commemorated every month on the 29th, because it falls on the 29th day of the month of Tahsas. This reminder is utilized also in everyday layman's temporal affairs, and the agreement to meeti is expressed by individuals as "I shall meet you on Täklä Haymanot", since everyone knows this means the 24th day of the month. The following religious dates are commonly utilized by the laymen for secular purposes:

Table 8: Dates of the Religious Calendar Utilized for Secular Purposes.

796 805 776

1st day of the month	- "Ledäta", birthday of the Virgin Mary.
5th	- "Abbo", or "Gabra Manfas Qeddus". Both important saints, whose actual anniversaries fall in the rainy season.
12th	- "Mikaël", as a reminder of the miracles ascribed to this arch-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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angel. On his actual day, a popular public picnic is held--a major social event.

16th - "Kidanä Mehrät" (Covenant of Mercy). This is a preferred monthly day on which mahabber sodalities like to gather for private group communion.

19th day of the month- "Tahsas Gabriël". Reminder of the miracles ascribed to this archangel.

21st - "Sionä Maryam". Reminder of the annual event of the revelation of Mary after her death.

23rd - "Giyorgis". St. George's day.

24th - "Täklä haymanot". Abyssinian head of church, now sainted, who re-established the "Solomon Dynasty."

27th - "Medhane Aläm" (Redeemer of the World), i.e. Jesus.

28th - "Emmanuel". Another reference to Jesus.

29th - "Bäala Egziabhär" (Festival of God), or, "Balä Wold", festival of the birth of Jesus, monthly reminder of Christmas.

796 When the floods of the rainy season recede in early September, the yellow daisy carpets the pasture and the tall green grain begins to mature, the new year begins, with the month Mäskäram. This heralds the first

796 857 [539] from the bin of peas
fill me up."

Thereupon the householder gives them a handful of shembera peas, which they roast to "qolo", and this symbol, too, is considered to invite a good crop.

796 805 The 5th or last day of Pagumēn is the annual feast day of St. John. The "tabot" from his church is carried to water very early in the morning, and the men bathe in the river. The old year is symbolically buried, in some regions, by ceremonial burial of the book "Lefafa Tsedeq" (Scroll of Righteousness) which resembles in part the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. The day is traditionally also the end of the fiscal budget year, on which the nagadras, the appointee over commerce, had to pay the feudal tribute to his lord (at least a large jar of beer and 20 enjara breads) in addition to squaring his accounts. [651]

That evening torches are lit, for this is the beginning of a new year.

c) The Religious Life Cycle of the Lay Individual.

852 Baptism usually occurs after 40 days for boys, still later for girl babies, sometimes as long as 80 days. This practice is based on Old Testament patterns, and more directly, on the period of 40 days that the Virgin Mary herself had to segregate herself from the Temple after the birth of Jesus. (The Falasha Jews of Abyssinia is concerned less that a baby might die

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
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they take what they have, and they do not choose to provide more than what they require and is necessary for them. 554

In no part that he went about in were there butchers' shops, except at the Court, and no person of the common people may kill a cow (even though it is his own) without leave from the lord of the country. 253

The people speak the truth little, even when they make oath, unless they swear by the head of the King. They much fear excommunication, and if they are ordered to do something, and that it be to their prejudice, they do it from fear of excommunication. 695 [688]

The oath is administered in this manner. They go to the door of the church with two priests, and they have there incense and embers, and he who has to swear puts his hands upon the church door, and one the priests tells him of the oath to speak the truth, and that if he speaks falsely, that as the lion swallows his prey in the woods, so may his soul be swallowed by the devil; and as the wheat is broken between the stones, so may his bones be ground by the devils; and he who swears, at each thing answers Amen; and as the fire burns wood, so may your soul be burned in the fire of hell and made dust. He says Amen. And this if you do not speak truth; he says Amen. And if you speak truth, may your life be prolonged with honour, and your soul in paradise with the blest. He says Amen. And this ended, he gives his testimony.

He says that the movable feasts, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, are celebrated on the same days and seasons that we celebrate them. The birth of Christ, Circumcision, Epiphany, and other feasts of saints also agree with us, and others not. The year and months begin on the 29th day of August, on which was the beheading of St. John, and the year is of twelve months, and the month of thirty days. When the year is ended, there are five days over, which they call pagomen, which means fulfilment of the year, and in the bissextile year there are six days over; so they keep with us. 796 805

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the imperfection was, by all manner of means, to be removed; so that the Catholics, as well as the Cophts, in Egypt, undergo excision ever since. This is done with a knife, or razor, by women, generally when the child is about eight years old *. 304

There is another ceremony, with which I shall close, and this regards the women also, and I shall call it *incision*. This is an usage frequent, and still retained among the Jews, though positively prohibited by the law: "Thou shalt not cut thy face for the sake of, or on account of, the dead †." As soon as a near relation dies in Abyssinia, a brother or parent, cousin-german or lover, every woman in that relation, with the nail of her little finger, which she leaves long on purpose, cuts the skin of both her temples, about the size of a sixpence; and therefore you see either a wound or a scar in every fair face in Abyssinia; and in the dry season, when the camp is out, from the loss of friends, they seldom have liberty to heal, till peace and the army return, with the rains. 304 765

The Abyssinians, like the ancient Egyptians, their first colony, in computing their time, have continued the use of the solar year. Diodorus Siculus says, "They do not reckon their time by the moon, but according to the sun; that thirty days constitute their month, to which they add five days and the fourth part of a day, and this completes their year. 805

These five days were, by the Egyptians, called Nici, and by the Greeks, Epagomeni, which signifies, days

* The reader will observe, by the obscurity of this passage, that it is with reluctance I have been determined to mention it at all; but as it is an historical fact, which has had material consequences, I have thought it not allowable to omit it altogether. Any naturalist, wishing for more particular information, may consult the French copy.

† Deut. chap. xiv. ver. 1.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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● 805 added, or superinduced, to complete a sum. The Abyssinians add five days, which they call Quagomi, a corruption from the Greek Epagomeni, to the month of August, which is their Nahaasse. Every fourth year they add a sixth day. They begin the year, like all the eastern nations, on the 29th or 30th day of August, that is, the kalends of September, the 29th of August being the first of their month Mascaram.

It is uncertain whence they derived the names of their months; they have no signification in any of the languages of Abyssinia. The name of the first month, among the old Egyptians, has continued to this day. It is Tot; probably so called from the first division of time among the Egyptians, from observation of the heliacal rising of the dog-star. The names of the months retained in Abyssinia are possibly in antiquity prior to this; they are probably those given them by the Cushite, before the kalendars at Thebes and Meroe, their colony, were formed.

The common epoch which the Abyssinians make use of, is from the creation of the world; but in the quantity of this period they do not agree with the Greeks, nor with other eastern nations, who reckon 5508 years from the creation to the birth of Christ. The Abyssinians adopt the even number of 5500 years, casting away the odd eight years; but whether this was first done for ease of calculation, or some better reason, there is neither book nor tradition that now can teach us. They have, besides this, many other epochs, such as from the councils of Nice and Ephesus. There is likewise to be met with in their books a portion of time, which is certainly a cycle; the Ethiopic word is kamar, which, literally interpreted, is an arch, or circle. It is not now in use in civil life among the Abyssinians, and therefore was mentioned as containing various quantities, from 100 years to 19;

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

and there are places in their history where neither of these will apply, nor any even number whatever. 805

They constantly make use of the golden number and epact in all their ecclesiastic computations: the first they call Matque, the other Abacte. Scaliger, who has taken great pains upon this confused subject, the computation of time in the church of Abyssinia, without having succeeded in making it much clearer, tells us, that the first use or invention of epacts was not earlier than the time of Dioclesian; but this is contrary to the positive evidence of Abyssinian history, which says expressly, that the epact was invented by Demetrius *, patriarch of Alexandria. "Unless," says the poet in their liturgy, "Demetrius had made this revelation by the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, how, I pray you, was it possible that the computation of time, called Epacts, could ever have been known?" And, again, "When you meet," says he, "you shall learn the computation by epacts, which was taught by the Holy Ghost to father Demetrius, and by him revealed to you." Now Demetrius was the twelfth patriarch of Alexandria, who was elected about the 190th year of Christ, or in the reign of the emperor Severus; consequently long before the time of Dioclesian.

It seems the reputation of the Egyptians had, from very old time, for their skill in computation and the division of time, remained with them late in the days of Christianity. Pope Leo the Great, writing to the emperor Marcian, confesses that the fixing the time of the moveable feasts was always an exclusive privilege of the church of Alexandria; and, therefore,

* Encom. 12th October, Od. 3. tom. 1. Ann. Alexan. p. m. 363.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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805 says he, in his letter about reforming the kalendar, the holy fathers endeavoured to take away the occasion of this error, by delegating the whole care of this to the bishop of Alexandria; because the Egyptians, from old times, seem to have had this gift of computation given them; and when these had signified to the apostolic See the days upon which the moveable feasts were to happen, the church of Rome then notified this by writing to churches at a greater distance.

We are not to doubt that this privilege, which the church of Alexandria had been so long in possession of, contributed much to inflame the minds of the Abyssinians against the Roman Catholic priests, for altering the time of keeping Easter, by appointing days of their own; for we see violent commotions to have arisen every year upon the celebration of this festival.

The Abyssinians have another way of describing time peculiar to themselves; they read the whole of the four evangelists every year in their churches. They begin with Matthew, then proceed to Mark, Luke, and John, in order; and when they speak of an event, they write and say it happened in the days of Matthew, that is, in the first quarter of the year while the gospel of St Matthew was yet reading in the churches *.

They compute the time of the day in a very arbitrary, irregular manner. The twilight, as I have before observed, is very short, almost imperceptible, and was

* This is not correct, at least with regard to written history; for whatever books they read in the quarters, it is uniformly the practice to denote the whole year by the name of an evangelist. The days of Matthew make one year, the days of Mark a second, of Luke and John a third and fourth, and so on in rotation. The four evangelists make a period of four complete years. E.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

still more so when the court was removed farther to the southward in Shoa. As soon as the sun falls below the horizon, night comes on, and all the stars appear. This term, then, the twilight, they choose for the beginning of their day, and call it Nagge, which is the very time the twilight of the morning lasts. The same is observed at night; and Meset is meant to signify the instant of beginning the twilight, between the sun's falling below the horizon and the stars appearing. Mid-day is by them called Kater, a very old word, which signifies culmination, or a thing's being arrived or placed at the middle or highest part of an arch. All the rest of times, in conversation, they describe by pointing at the place in the heavens where the sun then was, when what they are describing happened. 805

I shall conclude what further I have to say on this subject, by observing, that nothing can be more inaccurate than all Abyssinian calculations. Besides their absolute ignorance in arithmetic, their excessive idleness and aversion to study, and a number of fanciful, whimsical combinations, by which every particular scribe or monk distinguishes himself, there are obvious reasons why there should be a variation between their chronology and ours. I have already observed, that the beginning of our years are different; ours begin on the 1st of January, and theirs on the 1st day of September, so that there are 8 months difference between us. The last day of August may be the year 1780 with us, and 1779 only with the Abyssinians. And in the reign of their kings they very seldom mention either month or day beyond an even number of years. Supposing, then, it is known that the reign of ten kings extended from such to such a period, where all the months and days are comprehended, when we come to assign to each of these an

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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equal number of years, without the correspondent months and days, it is plain that, when all these separate reigns come to be added together, the one sum-total will not agree with the other, but will be more or less than the just time which that prince reigned. This, indeed, as errors compensate full as frequently as they accumulate, will seldom amount to a difference above three years; a space of time too trivial to be of any consequence in the history of barbarous nations.

However, it will occur, that even this agreement is no positive evidence of the exactness of the time; for it may so happen that the sum-totals may agree, and yet every particular sum constituting the whole may be false; that is, if the quantity of errors which are too much exactly correspond with the quantity of errors that are too little. To obviate this as much as possible, I have considered three eclipses of the sun, as recorded in the Abyssinian annals. The first was in the reign of David III. the year before the king marched out to his first campaign against Maffudi the Moor, in the unfortunate war with Adel. The year that the king marched into Dawaro was 1526, after having dispatched the Portuguese ambassador, Don Roderigo de Lima, who embarked at Masuah on the 26th of April on board the fleet commanded by Don Hector de Silveyra; and the Abyssinian annals say, that, the year before the king marched, a remarkable eclipse of the sun had happened in the Ethiopic month Ter. Now, in consulting our European accounts, we find that, on the second of January, answering to the 18th day of Ter, there did happen an eclipse of the sun, which, as it was in the time of the year when the sky is cloudless both night and day, must have been visible all the time of its duration. So here our accounts do agree precisely.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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The second happened on the 13th year of the reign of Claudius, as the Abyssinian account states it. Claudius succeeded to the crown in 1540, and the 13th year of his reign will fall to be in 1553. Now we find this eclipse did happen in the same clear season of the year, that is, on the 24th of January 1553; so, in this second instance, our chronology is perfectly correct. 805

The third eclipse of the sun happened in the 7th year of the reign of Yasous II., in Magabit, the seventh month of the Abyssinians. Now Yasous came to the crown in 1729, so that the 7th year of his reign will be in 1736, and on the 4th day of October, answering to the 8th day of the month Tekemt, N .S. In that year, we see this eclipse observed in Europe.

As a further confirmation of this, we have stated the particulars of a comet which, the Abyssinian annals say, appeared at Gondar in the month of November, in the 9th year of the reign of Yasous I.; and as this comet was observed in Europe to have come to its perihelion in December 1689, and as that year, according to our account, was really the 9th of that king's reign, no further proof of the exactness of our chronology can possibly be required. By means of these observations, counting backward to the time of Icon Amlac, and again forward to the death of Joas, which happened in 1768, and assigning to each prince the number of years that his own historians say he reigned, I have, in the most unexceptionable manner that I can devise, settled the chronology of this country; and the exact agreement it has with all the remarkable events, regularly and sufficiently vouched, plainly shews the accuracy of this method. If, therefore, in a few cases, I differ two or three years from the Jesuits in their first account of this country, I do not in any shape believe the fault to be mine; be-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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805 cause there are, at all these periods, errors in point of fact, both in Alvarez and Tellez, much more material and unaccountable than the mistake of a few years; and these errors have been adopted with great confidence in the Hispania Illustrata, and some of the best books of Portuguese history which have made mention of this country.

[pp. 43-end not processed for the files.- (vol.5) Analyst]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
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the Angrab and Kahha, is the Mahometan town. These rivers inclose the town on its N. and S. sides, and join on the W. On the S. E. part of it is the church of Debra-berhan. On the N. E. is Kedus Gabriel. Two suburbs above Kedus Gabriel, is Anta Naggar, the hill, where, till Yasous's time, the Tigre, in consequence of a proclamation, were obliged to halt, and not allowed to enter Gondar. 361

In Abyssinia there remains not a shadow of the hospitality, which is said to be a trait in the character of barbarous nations. 574

They divide the day into five parts (humisi). From the twilight, which is here short, it is nagga; about nine it is called selest, or the third hour; mid-day is kutter; three o'clock, tessaat; and sun-set, serk. They judge by the height of the sun, having neither clocks nor watches. The other hours mentioned in their books are counted 1, 2, 3, &c. after dawn, sun-rise, or sun-set. 805

There are two kinds of monarchy; one is absolute, where there are no written laws, but the will of the prince carried into effect by his command and force; another is, where there are laws and restraints, but these occasionally broken through. The Abyssinian government is neither of those. There are no laws: the lives of the king's subjects and their lands are *de jure* his; he is absolute and sole master of their lives and property: Yet he has no military force; this is all in the hands of the governors of provinces, whose safety lies in keeping the prince in want of every thing. It is a monstrous kind of monarchy, and to this are owing the continual wars and rebellions. While the districts were small, these were prevented; but minorities, weak reigns, &c. have united them into great ones, each of which are more than a match for the sovereign; indeed, the forty-four nagareets of Tigre united are more than a match for all Abyssinia. Damot and Agow-midre, joined to Maitsha, when they please, starve the capital, and leave the king not only without army and provisions, but even meat and clothes for himself. The Turkish and Galla wars have accelerated this state of affairs. Each of the governments have become a kind of fiefs, very rarely not granted to the family of the deceased, and that one of it most likely to be serviceable. 642 631

[p. 53]

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-57 have been omitted from the files,- Analyst]

CHAPTER IV

SOME OF THEIR HABITS AND CUSTOMS

197 REFERENCE has already been made to the number of languages spoken in the country. Of these, the principal is Amharic, and of the Semitic languages of the world it is, according to Mr Armbruster, spoken by a greater number of people than any other, with the 212 exception of Arabic. Its difficulty may be gauged by the fact that there are over two hundred letters in the alphabet, and consequently the number of guides to the language guaranteed to teach it in half a dozen lessons by correspondence is limited.

I am bound to say, however, in mitigation of this apparently insurmountable barrier to learning Amharic, that these characters represent syllables and not letters, and are variations of about thirty-seven root characters.

197 The next most important language is Galla, a Hamitic tongue which is spoken and understood by all the different branches of Galla throughout the various districts inhabited by them; in addition Tigré is spoken in Eritrea, and Tigréin in the province of Tigré; both of these are Semitic languages, as is also the ancient Geze or Geuze tongue, which is to the Abyssinians much as Latin was to the English people in the Middle Ages.

805 But if their language is difficult their calendar is simpler than ours, for instead of having months of differing lengths, they divide the year into twelve

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
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months of thirty days each and a thirteenth month of five days, called Quagme, (or Pagme), adding a sixth day to Quagme in leap year. 805

Their year starts on the 1st day of Maskaram, which normally corresponds to our 11th September; it is on and from that day up to the end of our year seven years behind the European date; on and after the 1st January, until the 5th Quagme (our 10th September), it is eight years behind.

But in endeavouring to translate dates from Abyssinian to European computation bad snags await the unwary. In the first place the introduction of the 6th Quagme in their leap year throws all the dates between September and the following February back a day. The Abyssinian year following their leap year (which incidentally precedes ours!) begins on our 12th September instead of 11th September and continues a day behind time until our 29th February, when it is automatically readjusted. And if the translator wishes to compare dates prior to the present century he will find further joys in store for him. For the Abyssinians have counted as leap years the three years we do not (though they are properly leap years), viz.: 1700, 1800, and 1900. Nor do they take account of the additional day we dropped in 1800, nor, I think, of the ten days omitted from our calendar in 1582. So they gradually picked up fourteen days out of the seven (or eight) years that they were (and are) behind. This probably explains why their year starts on 11th September instead of 29th August, as in the case of most Eastern nations.

The difference in the number of years between their computation and ours is possibly due (i) to their

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adoption of the Alexandrian era recognizing 5500 years from the creation to the birth of Christ, which was placed three years *before* that given by the Dionysian era (*i.e.* 5502 B.C. 29th August); and (ii) to their adoption of the Diocletian era, which dropped ten years out of the calendar in A.D. 284. Thus they lost ten years and gained three or two according to the date to be computed.

A similar result would have been attained had they adopted, in lieu of the above, the calculation made by the Egyptian monk Ponodorus who (*circa* A.D. 400) struck ten years off the age of the world and placed the Incarnation three years after the then accepted date, thus forming the "mundane era of Antioch" which was adopted by the Christians of Syria. It is possible that this was the era adopted by the Abyssinians; it is so stated to be in some of their old manuscripts.

Abyssinian				European	
A.M.	A.D.	Month	Days	Months and Days	A.D.
7427	1927	Maskaram	1st to 30th	11 Sept. to 10 Oct.	1934
"	"	Tekemt	"	11 Oct. " 9 Nov.	"
"	"	Hidar	"	10 Nov. " 9 Dec.	"
"	"	Tasas	"	10 Dec. " 8 Jan.	1935
"	"	Tirr	"	9 Jan. " 7 Feb.	"
"	"	Yakatit	"	8 Feb. " 9 March	"
"	"	Magabit	"	10 March " 8 April	"
"	"	Mazya	"	9 April " 8 May	"
"	"	Gimbot	"	9 May " 7 June	"
"	"	Sane	"	8 June " 7 July	"
"	"	Hamle	"	8 July " 6 Aug.	"
"	"	Nahasse	"	7 Aug. " 5 Sept.	"
"	"	Quagme	1st to 6th	6 Sept. " 11 Sept.	"
7428	1928	Maskaram	1st to 30th	12 Sept. " 11 Oct.	"
"	"	Tekemt	"	12 Oct. " 10 Nov.	"
"	"	Hidar	"	11 Nov. " 10 Dec.	"
"	"	Tasas	"	11 Dec. " 9 Jan.	1936
"	"	Tirr	"	10 Jan. " 8 Feb.	"
"	"	Yakatit	"	9 Feb. " 9 March	"

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The Abyssinian calendar for *their* current year (leap year for them) accordingly compares with ours as shewn on the previous page; and in the last month given, the calendar resumes its normal correspondence with ours as, owing to the occurrence of our leap year, February has an extra day in 1936. 805

Apart from their language, there are many customs and practices amongst the Abyssinians which differentiate them sharply from most of the other peoples of Africa, and not the least interesting of these are clearly traceable to their ancient connection with Israel, of which they speak with pride in their old records. 177

For example, much of their religious pageantry, which is described in detail elsewhere, is undoubtedly a remarkable survival of rites which must have been introduced by the earliest Jewish arrivals, such as the Dance of the Priests, their ceremonies connected with the Tabot, and many others. Similarly, their method of slaughtering cattle for food, the division of animals into clean and unclean, etc., are all indications pointing in the same direction.

Their dislike of Jews to-day is accordingly the more remarkable, and must be due to the sanguinary wars which took place from the fourth to the tenth centuries between the newly-converted Christians and those who remained Jews. 609

Among other customs which are peculiar and interesting, pride of place must surely be given to their fondness for raw meat or *broundo*. This form of diet is preferred to any other by the mass of the population, and indeed by practically all sections thereof, beef being liked better than mutton. 262

When we were on trek our men could be given no

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci for the organization of time and space.

In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes. Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *hābashā qaṭaro* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amhara peasant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Amhara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year. A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*) representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

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"May He bring you safely from the year of Mark to the year of Luke!" 565* 805 796 [576]
Nearly every day of the month, moreover, is dedicated to some holy figure, the main ones being:

Day of Month	Name	Meaning
1st	*Ledatā*	Birth of Mary
5th	*Abbo*	St. Gabra Manfas Qeddus
7th	*Selassie*	Trinity
12th	*Mikā'ēl*	St. Michael
16th	*Kidāna Maherat*	Covenant of Mercy (for Mary)
19th	*Gabre'ēl*	St. Gabriel
21st	*Māryām*	St. Mary
23rd	*Giyorgis*	St. George
24th	*Takla Hāymānot*	St. Takla Hāymānot
27th	*Madhānē Alam*	Savior of the World
29th	*Bāla Wald*	Festival of the Son

This schedule is well implanted in the peasant's mind, so much so that the names of these holy days come to take the place of calendar dates. Thus, instead of saying "He fell sick on the fifth" or "He is due to come on the twelfth," the Amhara normally says "He fell sick on Abbo" or "He is due to come on Mikā'ēl."

Time for the Amhara is thus not a morally indifferent and qualitatively [822] undifferentiated continuum. It is a series of occasions with more or less sacred significance. These occasions are arranged in the form of cycles. In contrast to the Catholic calendar with its different saint for each day of the year, every month in Abyssinia repeats the same set of saints' days. Each year, of course, repeats the same cycle of annual holidays. The years themselves do not run on continuously, but follow the cycle—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—again and again. For the more learned, finally, there is a twenty-eight-year cycle which must elapse before the same year begins on the same day of the week again.

The Amhara's experience of time is thus essentially cyclical. The religious 565* calendar, the most important dimension of time for him, consists of a series 805 of epicycles, in which the monthly rounds play themselves out within the 822 larger circles of annual and quadrennial rounds. Historical events are at best 796 secondary: the seasons come and go, generations come and go, but there is not much new under the sun. The better-known prophecies foretell the return of some state of things that obtained in the past. Kassa chose the [787] throne name of Tēwodros II because of the prophecy that a king with that name would arise to repeat the mythically fortunate reign of Tēwodros I of the fifteenth century. In this century has arisen the prophecy of another Tēwodros to come. Still another prophecy—of a short-lived invasion of Ethio-

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*565 805 796 822 787 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [181] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 [8] 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 346 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

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familiar with in more industrialized societies. Nor is there any disposition to improvise improvements with what facilities are available. Little attention is paid to the condition of offices, for example, which are normally located in dark, drab, depressing rooms. Furthermore, the operating procedures of Ethiopian administration are bound to frustrate those who have been conditioned to more rationalized systems of organization. Departments frequently operate with ex post facto budgets. Filing systems are hopelessly archaic. There is virtually no public consciousness of the importance of work *time*. 571 466 [47] 571 466 805

> Ethiopian persons are not geared to a timetable. I have to keep telling myself: "This is how we do it here." Seeing a ten-story building go up in a month, grass and all—that is not for here. . . . I get most annoyed when I cannot finish some matter as promised. Not wanting to reveal the name of my colleague or superior who is holding up the action, I have to make up excuses. Eventually I run out of excuses and this bothers me. . . . Sometimes I get angry and say: "I have given my word to someone, and must have the matter ready today; please sign it." And am told: "Oh, well, don't rush things so."

Work relationships have frequently exasperated the returnees. There has been little inclination to give technically competent employees proper jurisdiction over the personnel in their departments. Technically uneducated superiors have tended to make unrealistic demands—for example, requesting an immediate report on a complicated question that requires weeks to prepare. On the other hand, they have tended to assume that their age and experience are equivalent to the technical knowledge of the foreign-trained, so that technically warranted projects have been casually dismissed because they do not strike the fancy of the superior. 571 466

The returnees have not been so despondent about these conditions which, after all, could be changed—than they are about the apparent futility of trying to change them. Older employees are quick to resent alterations in the accustomed order. 571 466 178 829

> My efforts to reform are opposed by most of the men who run the [postal] system now. Some of them have been working there for forty years or so, and they want to keep things just the way they were when mail came in on camels, because they have always done it that way.

Such resistance to change at the workaday level is tacitly supported by those in the upper echelons of authority—the new nobility. In them the returnees have found their main antagonists and from them have received their most painful lacerations. [565]

The *shamäggelotch*, or "elders," as they are termed by the intelligentsia, have by no means presented a solidary front in opposition to the young modernizers. On the contrary, the attitude of the new nobility toward the 571 565 178 829

*787 *793 539 [551] quently required. Depending upon the contingency being investigated, the names of other individuals may also be included; for example, in divination concerning litigation, the judge's name is asked.

• [805] *[192] Dates. The Amhara group years into cycles of four, naming each year after one of the four evangelists. Thus, 1956 is the year (zemene), of Yowhanis, 1957 of Matiyows, 1958 of Markows, 1959 of Luwkows, 1960 of Yowhanis, and so on. Each year is assigned a numerical value (for example, zemene Yowhanis is two). Months, days, and diurnal count (day is six, night is fourteen) each are numbered.

[823] Directions. Each of the eight cardinal and intermediary points is numbered.

The numerical values of all required input information are totled, and this total is then divided by a factor indicated in the text. The debtera's goal is the numerical remainder of this division; it is this figure that indicates which of the text's numbered entires is relevant to the subject (that is, the person about whom the debtera is divining).

*787 539 *[192] Broadly speaking, there are two categories of awdunigist texts. The first consists of largely redundant "astrological" (kokob) texts. These texts are based on the assumption that the course of any person's life on earth can be revealed by learning with which of twelve

532 of the evil eye. Another possible explanation is that centuries ago this symbolism was adopted from Armenian paintings; which is not surprising in view of early, though interrupted contacts between Byzantine and Coptic church art, and later on even Persian and Indian contacts (footnote 101). The amazing realism of natural objects may possibly be of ancient origin, and has survived the emphasis on highly formalized composition enforced by the church.

Scenes depicting everyday life ("abore"), or the famous motif showing the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon (mentioned in the Bible), are also painted on gourds, the useful utensil with the smooth surface. But only the well-to-do or noble families can afford this; (also the tourist). Sometimes the secular motifs show figures of famous military warlords and provincial dynastic heads of the past; and simple, incised geometric figures pleasing to the traditional feudal lord whose appreciation of art wanted direct, simple, and realistic portrayal.

4. Amhara Ideas about Nature and Mankind.

887 While his material culture is limited, speculation about the
812 structure, function, and most of all meaning, of the non-material world ranges unfettered in the Amhara culture pattern. Moreover, it is freely expressed, evidencing deep thought, but primarily a wonderment. Often there is a sensitivity that resembles Weltschmerz. This wondering out loud affects most Amhara men when they reach the "shemagalye" (elder) stage, and is one of the most frequently and intensely expressed subjects of their conversation; while at younger ages they are too

Footnote 101 - Nollet, G.: Note (in) Aethiopica, Vol. 3 pp. 191-2 New York, 1935.

887 812 preoccupied with the immediate demands of life. The culture pattern encourages the shemagalye to give much time and effort to this wonderment, for it belongs to his prime role and social duty at this stage: the accumulation of wisdom. The church does not interfere with this wonderment and its expression, partly because it has not bothered to establish dogma on many subjects.

A. The Natural Universe.

821 [71] In many ways the Amhara concept of the universe resembles that of early medieval Europe, plus understandable similarities to the Middle East and Africa. Some conceptualizations are elaborations from the Biblical universe, readily recognizable because almost always the Geez language is used to express them. Other conceptualizations are animistic, and usually employ Cushitic terminology.

The universe is regarded as a Ptolemaic system, with the earth as the fixed center around which the sun turns. A distinction is made between the physical world, called simply "arät mäzän" (lit. the 4 corners); and the world populated by all creatures, "aläm" (lit. world, in the Geez language). The persistence of this traditional view of a flat earth is so great that even Amhara schoolteachers in the modern elementary schools in the provinces, who are required to teach a spherical earth, privately admit that they don't believe it themselves!

Heavenly bodies and metereological phenomena are interpreted as directly related to human events. Venus is called "astärboshäsh" or "astäryo", (lit. the one who gives hunger and then flees), because the planet appears in the very brief dusk, when the heat of the day is over and one gets hungry. Because Venus is "fleeing and inconstant like a woman", she is given the feminine gender.

821 243 Considerable attention is given to the moon ("chäräqa"), for it is believed to cause the ripening of the grain after the sun has

828
157

"galeb" - one who shines with intelligence;

"galbam" - Person full of reason, discretion, intellectual beauty.

812 It is clear from the last two personalities that a distinction is made between the merely clever (e.g. in material things) and the wise person. Wisdom is stressed in numerous proverbs:

[539]

"A king who has no wise councillor,
not one year will he reign".

Many Amhara desirous of reputation, emulate the Biblical wisdom of King Solomon, a wise judge whom "no one could fool". Anecdotes of this type of wisdom are told far and wide, of kings and of rulers of provinces. Even at present, some of these anecdotes are told of rulers still living, including of Emperor Haile Selassie. The following two anecdotes, which may well be factual, are told in Gondar about Ras Imru, who ruled as governor-general of Begemdir province just after the liberation from Italian occupation, when banditry was a major problem:

539 812 1. Two bandits accused of robbery-murder were placed in separate confinement. They had refused to confess, and the time of the murder could not be ascertained. One bandit was taken to the place of the crime, on orders of Ras Imru, and told that his partner had confessed; then, that the time of the crime had been such-and-such. Eager to argue against such an error, the bandit momentarily overlooked the fact that by correcting the time element he was giving himself away. Whereupon both were convicted and hanged.

2. One day, while riding through the market, Ras Imru was halted when a woman threw herself before his horse, shouting "abyet", the traditional appeal of the oppressed. She accused one of Ras Imru's soldiers of having consumed a large pitcher of milk she had for sale, without payment. The soldier denied it, and there were no witnesses

812 willing to testify against him. Ras Imru ordered that he be made to
[539] vomit, and on the basis of this evidence convicted him on the spot.

While the clever arguer in court, who is acclaimed, may be merely "clever", the truly wise man is conceived as one whose words are few but weighty:

[539] "Man, by what can he be valued?
by his speech can he be valued".

Hence, in the games of growing children, the hazing pattern is gradually replaced by verbal contests, and the winner or "better man" is not necessarily the physically stronger but he who can out-insult and out-argue the other.

However, individualistic non-conformity in ordinary persons is criticized, and regarded as rendering such persons shiftless, unstable and impermanent.

Finally, different regions of Amhara-populated areas are believed to be specialized in specific types of personalities; e.g. the dabtara scribes of Entoto, where the capital of Addis Ababa is located now, have long had the reputation of special cleverness, speaking in riddles which make understanding painful, when they deign to converse at all with ordinary Amhara commoners:

[539] "The wise men of Entoto,
talk just once a year,
(and then) always (bitingly) bitter".

[770] Special skill of hand or mind is generally believed, for good or ill, to come from the world and functions of the spirits.

X794 T76 From this complex array of the plaguing - but often also protective-spirit world, it becomes clear that there is a great deal of significance in the zar cult beyond mere healing of mental ailments; even beyond the organizing of patients into groups of devotees - a kind of group therapy with religious overtones. There is an extension of the acquired "protection" so that some zars become not only protective spirits of individuals, but patron saints of certain social groups in Amhara society, e.g. some specialize in the rich and noble, some in the poor or low-class; some in hunters and warriors; etc. But although religious affiliations are usually identified sharply, there is considerable crossing of the lines in the spirit world so that Coptic Christian spirits may have Muslim names, and even practice religious intermarriage. [812] Another important contribution made by the zar cult is that it orders nature, explains nature to the Amhara mind, yet allows enough flexibility (e.g. in regional variations, and the continuously increasing and decreasing power of individual zars) to admit new information, new revelations, to be fitted into the traditional construct. For example, in the 1930's the dominant zar spirit in Gondar was Ṣayfu Čhängär (ascertained by a French expedition); in 1953/1954 it was Aweliya. Since zar spirits can have successful and unsuccessful careers, so can humans; hence, new ideas, even modern ones, can be fitted into the spiritual world.

But the major character of the "zar" complex is that of a healing cult.

X794 T56 T96 c. <u>The Annual Convention ("amat Ḃal") of the "Zar" Doctors; Voluntary Possession in the "Zar" Cult.</u>

On the 23rd night of the month of Yäkatit, the day before the beginning of the Coptic Christian lent, the "zar" doctors of Gondar hold

829 pattern continues in full force even at present. As a result, the high official is as hesitant about delegating authority downward (which might build up a potential rival), as the inferior in the hierarchy fears to accept delegated authority (lest the superior repent of his grant and suspect rebellion). In consequence, daily problems, even routine ones, are regularly referred for decision to the superior in the hierarchy of government.

812 The authoritarian "literalness" which characterizes so many Amhara attitudes may at least in part be the effect of religious fundamentalism. Until recently, the "Fetha Nägäst" criminal and [681] civil code was literally enforced, including the cutting off of hands for theft and of feet for rebellion. Biblical passages are interpreted literally, by the priests. In monasteries, the monks exclude the presence of even female animals such as cows.

[779] The church, sacerdotal in its concepts and rituals, does not feel that it owes an explanation to anyone; and "literalness" has remained unchallenged (except during the relatively brief Portuguese episode). In the Amhara view, there is a direct and unilateral connection between cause and effect, and paradoxes that result from such oversimplifications are ignored: e.g. the tallest obelisk at Aksum, which has fallen and broken into several large pieces, is claimed to have been "pushed" over by the Falasha Queen Judith, despite the fact that another, almost as tall, still stands nearby. [682] Homicide, especially if accidental, is blamed on the "zenyen" spirits who pushed the murderer's hand.

647 Literal obedience dominates the governmental administration, for no subordinate would arrogate to himself the privilege of "interpret" the spirit of the law handed down by the official of superior status.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Selassie I theater, and the secondary level art school.* Library facilities included the National Library, with some fifty thousand volumes; the University College Library, with about forty-five; and the reading rooms of the United States Information Service, the British Center, and the Soviet Information Service. The national library also contains a historical museum, and there is a handsome and well appointed archeological museum nearby, neither of which has so far been operated with a view to encouraging public attendance.

Except for occasional lectures sponsored by the national library and the University College extension program, none of the above institutions serves as a center for intellectual communication among adult Ethiopians. It was hoped by some that with the inauguration of the Haile Selassie I University, in December, 1961, a major new center of intellectual life would be created; but the government found it difficult to push ahead with its announced concept of an integrated institution which would operate autonomously and at a high standard.

Outside these institutions, moreover, there have been few channels of communication through which Ethiopian intellectuals can develop their minds and stimulate their imaginations. There are no periodicals to serve as a medium for such communication. One possibility, the *Ethiopian Observer,* is not quite an exception. Limited resources have kept it from operating at as high a level as available talent might permit, and its basically apologetic orientation renders implausible its claims to be "A Journal of Independent Opinion." The daily newspapers which feature contributed articles—the *Ethiopian Herald,* the *Addis Zaman,* and the Amharic sections of the *Voice of Ethiopia*—have tended to exclude pieces that have anything to do with highly controversial matters. Nor are there many social occasions for the serious discussion of intellectual matters. Professional associations, clubs devoted to intellectual matters, and even informal discussion groups exist not at all or else in a very haphazard form.

Contact with the intellectual world outside Ethiopia is almost as meager. Foreign-educated Ethiopians tend to become intellectually demoralized on returning home. The loss of a taste for reading has frequently been one of the first casualties experienced by Western-educated Ethiopians on return from abroad. Only a few hardy souls attempt to maintain some sort of link with the outside world, through subscribing to such magazines as the *New Statesman, Paris Soir,* or *New Republic.* For most of them, coming home means a cessation of the most elementary intellectual functions, other

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Informal Associations

Another significant sociological development since the 1960 rebellion has been the blossoming of what might be called "mutual confidence groups." Although the public climate remains somewhat tense and generalized suspicion still prevails, a step has been taken away from the complete atomism of the pre-rebellion era. These groups consist of numbers of friends, bound by such factors as kinship, common ethnic background, relationships formed during study abroad, and occupational ties. Perhaps the most important single bond underlying these groups derives from friendships formed during the crucial experience of attending secondary school together. While for the most part these groups carry out no organized activities or structured discussions, they do provide a context in which any of the issues of the day can be discussed with fairly complete frankness and without fear of reprisal.

There are some progressive Ethiopians who would like to see these groups become the nuclei of action groups and political parties, even on an overt basis. The prevailing view among them, however, seems to be that this is as far as they can go under the present regime.

The efflorescence of voluntary associations in Ethiopia during the past half dozen years constitutes a remarkable thickening of the fabric of Ethiopian society. It may be seen as a vast, unconscious process of arousing and co-ordinating energies to meet the novel realities of Ethiopia's current historical situation. What relationship to this collective process have the individualistic features of Amhara character and society which were discussed above?

It may be observed that in virtually none of the cases cited above were the Amhara the initiators of the associational forms in question. The territorial and "project" *māhebar* were introduced into Ethiopian life by the Gurage; so, as far as present evidence indicates, were the *edāir* and the *equb*. The labor

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the imagination of some other students: attempting to reform the Orthodox Church from within. This has been done within the framework of the Orthodox Students Association, which will be discussed further in chapter vii.

Science.—Of all the aspects of Western culture to which they have been exposed, Ethiopia's students have been most receptive to the teachings of natural science. They tend to regard it as the most important single benefit which Ethiopia can gain from Western civilization. After religion, morals, and manners, "science" is the response students give most often to the question: "What specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

TABLE 8

EXTENT TO WHICH STUDENTS OBSERVE TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Practice	Secondary School (per cent)	College (per cent)
Follow the fasts:		
All the time	38	16
Most of the time	26	23
Sometimes	27	24
Not at all	9	37
Go to church (mosque):		
More than once a week	9	2
Once a week	59	40
Less than once a week	25	36
Not at all	7	22
Bow to church (mosque):		
Always	28	9
Some/most of the time	50	38
Not at all	22	53
Pray:		
Twice or more daily	64	40
Once a day	22	23
Once or twice a week	6	14
Once or twice a month	5	10
Not at all	3	13
Number	(485)	(195)

Disagreement on such questions as the nature of solar eclipses, the descent of man, and the etiology of disease is common between the modern adolescents and their own parents. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that the scientific imagination has yet displaced traditional thought patterns in the minds of Ethiopian students, or that scientific beliefs have fully replaced

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*883 "superstitious" beliefs about the world. Concerning this latter issue we are
815 fortunate to have a substantial study carried out by Dr. Edith Lord during
178 1956–57—a study of the beliefs of some 1,250 Ethiopian students and
177 teachers.[22]

[125] The subjects of this study were asked to mark as true or false a list of 132 unscientific beliefs commonly held by Ethiopians. These beliefs dealt with nature and devils, health and disease, danger and death. In spite of a measurable trend toward increased disbelief in the unscientific statements as the level of schooling increased, it was found that a significant number of these statements were accepted by a majority both of the post-elementary students and of the Ethiopian teachers. Thus, 56 items were believed by half or more of the 451 secondary students in the sample; 34 items by half or more of the 96 teachers; 9 items by half or more of the 61 student nurses and first-aid workers; and 6 of the items by half or more of the 29 college freshmen. Table 9 shows some of those unscientific beliefs most commonly subscribed to by secondary school students. These particular items are of interest for two additional reasons. The first five of them were among the beliefs held by *a majority of the twenty-nine college freshmen*. The first and the last, moreover, are among those items which showed an *increasing* frequency of belief with an increase in education, from the first four primary grades, through the second four grades, to the secondary level.

TABLE 9

UNSCIENTIFIC BELIEFS ACCEPTED BY SECONDARY STUDENTS

Item No.	Belief	Percentage of Secondary Students Holding the Belief
53	Certain mineral waters can cure stomach trouble by causing a person to vomit worms, sometimes frogs or toads	88
35	There are some skillful persons who can summon the devil at will	87
102	Too much charity leads to madness	74
58	A child will grow better if the nerves are removed from under his back teeth	68
84	If you go into a room which has been closed for a long time, you will be attacked by Satan	57
78	A man who has skill in stopping rains must not eat or drink while he is performing the ceremony to stop rain, or he will be unsuccessful	64
	Number	(451)

[125] In my own questionnaire, administered three years after Dr. Lord's re-

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search and only to the highest grades of secondary school and college, three 883*
questions regarding unscientific beliefs were included. In a pilot study of 815 •
sixty secondary school seniors and juniors, 42 per cent held the belief that "a 178
person can be made sick by the evil eye of a *budā*," and 33 per cent believed 177
that "too much learning results in madness." To the one question asked of 125
my entire sample: "Do you believe that some learned *dabtarā* can cause rain to fall or stop?," 16 per cent of 500 secondary and 7 per cent of 200 college seniors and juniors said "Yes."

This persistence among the educated youth of traditional beliefs which run 883*
counter to the consensus of modern scientists has been attributed by Lord to 815
the inadequacies of the Ethiopian school system. This is as might be expected, 871
inasmuch as most Ethiopian teachers have had relatively little education 178
themselves and the curriculum has necessarily been somewhat improvised and 177
incomplete. Officials of the Ministry of Education have labored to overcome these deficiencies, and certain changes were in fact made in consequence of Lord's study which aim at combating the more dysfunctional of the prevailing superstitions.

It seems likely, however, that certain irrational dispositions are also in- 121
volved here, dispositions to maintain the unscientific beliefs in spite of im- 815
provements in teaching methods and materials. One would predict this on the 178
basis of general sociological understanding of the consequences of rapid social 177
change. The disruption of the traditional belief systems brought about by the sudden dissemination of scientific beliefs inevitably creates insecurity, and a common reaction to such insecurity is to cling with increased tenacity to some of the old-fashioned beliefs which are closely identified with the traditional culture.[23]

One area in which this defensive "revivalism" can be observed in Ethiopia 178
is that of medicine. Many Ethiopians who have received modern secondary 75
education maintain that Western medicine, while useful in many cases, repre- 815
sents only one possible approach to the problem of sickness and health.[24] 177
Thus, fifty-seven per cent of the secondary students questioned asserted that traditional Ethiopian medicines are effective all or most of the time, although such therapies include the eating of rancid butter to cure malaria or drinking holy water to cure serious functional disorders. Dr. Lord herself has reported an episode which throws much light on the psychology of this reaction:

> An Ethiopian colleague, a former teacher, warned me against drinking water in a certain provincial town on penalty of my catching malaria. He was challenged thus: "You are one of the better educated persons in Ethiopia; don't you know the cause of malaria?" He quickly, and eruditely, gave all the known scientific facts about malaria. Then he added, "You people from the United States (and the United Nations) think that this (the scientif-

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ically established cycle) is the only way to catch malaria. We Ethiopians know better. We know that one can *also* catch malaria from drinking the water in places where the Anopheles breed."[25]

The ambivalence toward Western science represented by this statement and by the persistence of analogous attitudes among many educated Ethiopians undoubtedly brings the individuals in question a degree of security that would be lost were they to abandon the traditional, unscientific belief system *in toto*. Perhaps a more solid sort of security could be derived from a program of education which not only imparts scientific information and attitudes, but also educates people to adapt themselves to the changes which the introduction of science involves.

Taste.—In matters of taste, Ethiopia's modern adolescents range from extreme traditionalism to extreme Westernism, with most of them preferring both traditional and European or American patterns in varying proportions. Of food the students tend to prefer the traditional varieties, most popular of which are *doro wat* and *ĭnjarā*. Among Western foods they are fondest of pastries and Italian *pasta*. On the other hand, they are more inclined toward Western beverages than Ethiopian ones. The most popular Western beverages are, for the secondary students, soft drinks, and for the college students, beer; among Ethiopian drinks they prefer *ṭallā* first and milk second.

With regard to their manner of eating, the students' taste is traditional in that most prefer to eat nowhere but within the home, and to eat with their hands rather than use silverware; but it is Westernized in that most prefer eating at their own individual places rather than all together with others out of a common *ĭnjarā* basket. Opinion is most divided on the matter of exchanging *gurshā*, a morsel of food which one places in another's mouth. The slight majority who reject this old custom do so because they find it "noisy," "childish," "unsanitary," or simply "out of fashion"; while those who still enjoy it do so chiefly because it "expresses affection."

On questions of dress it should be noted that traditionally the Amhara have sentimentalized their going barefoot as well as their national costume. But because of the practical advantages of wearing tailored clothes at work and using shoes, and perhaps still more because of their high prestige in the modernizing sector, virtually all of the students prefer the European fashion in these matters. On the other hand, with respect to women's wear and the sort of dress to be worn on holidays, the great majority opt the Ethiopian *shammā*.

In their aesthetic interests the students' taste varies considerably according to the medium. With regard to poetry and music, Ethiopian forms are preferred to Western ones, while Western forms of painting and dance are more popular with them than Ethiopian. Poetry stands as the most appreciated of

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772 As for the beginning and end of the world, all Amhara believe that the [184] world was created at one time by the will of God. When the eighth millennium [773] arrives, moreover (A.D. 2508), God will bring about a major upheaval, either destroying the world completely or, as others believe, turning it upside [775] down. According to the latter view, all those who live at that time will perish, while those who died first in the world's history will return to life, to a time of renewal, when a little grain will go a long way and the milk of one cow will nourish a multitude.

565 The Amhara peasant's view of nature is matter-of-fact. There are a few • 82 traces of animism, such as the association of certain kinds of trees with holy [778] places and the belief that whatever is planted on the monthly commemoration [241] of Christ's birth will dry up and die. There are a few touches of aesthetic appreciation, such as the peasant's wonderment over a remarkable view when it is thrust upon him and his desire, when feasible, to locate his home in an attractive locale. But there is certainly no idealization, religious or secular, of the great outdoors. The peasant much prefers to get out of the bright sunshine and rest in the dark, smoky interior of his hut. When he sits gazing over the hills and slopes of his gorgeous country, he is probably counting his livestock or noticing how the grain is growing.

[192] The Amhara peasant's life is so much a part of nature that he does not view it as a separate category of experience; there is no word for "nature" in his vocabulary. Nor is there a sense that the things of nature have minds or laws [784] of their own. Nature is simply the passive agent of God's rewards and punishments; for example, the man who fails to keep the Orthodox fasts will find that his crops are ruined.

For his part, the peasant's adjustment to nature is a straightforward practical one. He has no drive to conquer or to be master over nature; he has no inclination to fuse or lose himself in nature; he has no need to keep nature in equilibrium through a system of rituals. His perception of natural objects is in terms of what will assist or hinder eking out a subsistence. The farm animals are his friends, and must be taken care of properly or else they will die and he will be without their help. The wild beasts are his enemies, and [241] they must be guarded against or else they will eat his crops, his livestock, or himself. The fields must be plowed at the right time each year or the bins will become empty, and knowing the right time depends upon a sufficient knowledge of weather to judge the coming of the various kinds of rain.

Thus, the motif in the Amhara peasant's orientation toward nature is to get what one can out of what nature readily provides, neither neglecting one's responsibilities to keep things running as nature requires, nor inflicting any

[125] [157] * All the TAT respondents interpreted card No. 4, showing two men sitting on a ridge overlooking a natural panorama, in terms of taking care of the grazing animals and becoming wealthy.

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drastic changes on the familiar natural order. Insofar as there is a special affect regarding nature, it takes the form of a sentimentalization of the useful—as in the great respect felt for young cattle, the thrill aroused by the sight of newly sprouted grain, and the deep nostalgia about one's land. 565* 82

The Supernatural

The peasant's conception of God is closer to that of the learned clergy than is his cosmology, since the Abyssinian clergy have tended to avoid systematic theology, believing that to probe too deeply into the nature of God verges on blasphemy. Abyssinians view God above all as *mystery*. 565* 776 [793] [779]

Nevertheless, they do have a sense of the various attributes of their God. God is the creator of the world. He is, as the name *Egziābhēr* signifies, Lord of the earth; and He is Lord of the seas, Lord of the King of Kings, and Lord of the angels. He is eternal and possesses knowledge without limit.

The Amhara peasant has a keen awareness that wherever one goes, God is there. "If you say no one is looking," goes an Amharic saying, "still God will see you." This consciousness of God's presence is reflected in the habit of referring to God scores of times every day. A number of common expressions contain references to God:

For greeting and farewell	"May He give you health for me."
For showing gratitude	"May God give you for me."
For responding to queries about one's health	"God be praised!"
For thanksgiving after meals	"Be praised, my Lord!"
For swearing by a statement that has been challenged	"By God! By the Savior!"

Prayers to God are spoken on numerous occasions. God's blessing is sought when an animal is slaughtered, when a group of people sits to eat, when a new house is begun, and when it is completed. Each day begins with a prayer something like this: "May He cause me to spend the day in peace. May He keep trouble from me. May He pardon my sins." When the peasant begins planting, he also prays: "God bless the seed; feed me, keeping birds away from it; bless it for the mouth of man." 565* 782 776

It is probably the attribute of God's omnipotence, however, that appears most vivid to the Amhara mind. Everything that happens reflects His active will. The thunder expresses His anger, a flood the visitation of His wrath upon the sinful. He is ever active, bringing births and deaths, prosperity and hunger, leading one traveler to safety and another to disaster. He controls the homeliest details of everyday life. One boy, troubled that he was not selling his goods in the market, confessed that God must be angry with him about something. Another, asked what he wanted to do the following year, replied: 565* 776

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565* 602 571 181 183 [561]

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

565* 593 577 181 183

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his heredtitary farmland and the borders of his country.

565* 577 779 183 181 581 586 637

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

565* 779 577 183 181

Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

565* 121 82 771

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

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*565 121 • 82 771

ment on the subject, by following some of the suggestions advanced by Robert Redfield for the comparison of world views.[15]

"What does a people confront as it looks out on the world?" Redfield asks. After proposing a triangle of general objects confronted by all peoples—man, nature, and God—he goes on to suggest two specific questions: (1) Are these objects viewed as parts of a common matrix, each infusing the other, or are they viewed as separate and distinct entities? (2) Are they viewed as equally significant, or is special attention paid to one at the expense of the others?

As a point of departure for discussing the world view of the Amhara peasant as a whole, we may consider Redfield's characterization of the "primitive world view." In his account of a generalized primitive world view, Redfield posits that man, nature, and God are perceived as parts of an indissoluble unity, lacking really distinct identities. In the primitive outlook nature is personalized; the supernatural infuses the natural; and man's actions and traits resemble those of the deities. If this is so, then one may say that the Amhara peasant has passed beyond this primitive conception in the direction of differentiating man, nature, and God; but he has not proceeded very far. His God is conceived as a transcendental, self-sufficient Being, abstracted from particular earthly manifestations, and dwelling only at the crown of heaven. He sees nature as having a character and imposing demands of its own, not as a bearer of divine and human properties. He sees man as lacking the powers and virtues of divine beings and at the same time different in kind and higher in status than anything which exists in nature. Yet while these three objects are endowed with distinct identities and autonomous natures, they are conceived as closely and continuously interdependent. Much of what takes place in nature, such as a flood or a bad harvest, is attributed to divine agency, and the character of certain natural objects, like groves of trees and pools of water, is colored by associations with the supernatural. In human affairs, supernatural beings of various sorts are constantly active, and in the case of the *tābot*, the holy ark, a divine object has been thoroughly personalized. Man's life, moreover, is seen as intimately bound up with the vicissitudes of nature, and a personal relationship subsists between man and his friends and enemies in the animal world. In short, the Amhara looks on man, nature, and God as *separate but closely interconnected entities.*

[181] While each of these three entities is an object of great significance to the Amhara peasant, moreover, it may be said that man is regarded as the most significant of the three; and in particular, the problem of *human aggression* may be identified as the dominant theme in the Amhara peasant's outlook on life.

Nature, to the Amhara peasant, presents no outstanding challenge, no perplexing problem, no compelling attraction. Nature is to be adjusted to carefully and quietly. God and other supernatural beings become crucial objects

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life.

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones.

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels.

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shĪllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor.

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience.

*753 827 828 exercise the heart severely and, if prolonged, portend serious consequences. Deep sorrow, fear, and anger---particularly in response to personal insult---stoke the cardiac fires, whose heat radiates to the lungs where it produces coughing and difficulty in breathing, to the stomach whose aroused wosfat cause pain and vomiting, and to the blood whose smoldering darkens the complexion. Under these circumstances, the heart cannot function effectively for long; clear thinking becomes difficult and, as the heart dissipates its energies, the body trembles. If these effects continue unabated, cardiac deterioration leads to madness and, eventually, death.

*753 • 82 *[192] Two illnesses are explainable only epidemiologically: The hot, Sudanic borderlands are associated with malaria, and the damp, cold Semyen heights are linked to a "wind disease" (yinifas baṽiyta), characterized by shortness of breath, chest pains, excessive saliva, fatigue, and joint pain.

*753 Lastly, the appearance of certain ailments is related to prodromal complaints: Epilepsy preceeds madness; poxes before blindness; catarrh leads to diptheria; syphilis results in blindness, rheumatism, miscarriage, chronic back pain, weak heart (chronic fatigue), and scrofula; measles brings deafness. Although it is frequently assumed that the prodromal essence (baṽiyta)

132 take the corrugated iron roofs off urban houses. Most tornadoes do not hit the ground, but if they do there is destruction. Usually such a cyclone precedes a heavy rainstorm.

The fog in the rainy season, called "gum", is cold and thick and covers the countryside. On the other hand, the fog that precedes the light rains of April and May, called gag or tegag, is milky, light, and causes very humid heat. Meterecologists believe that it is the result of the sand raised by the hot "simoun" wind blowing from Arabia and the eastern lowlands of Ethiopia.

•821 The importance of "rain in season" is of course an urgent concern of people living in a primarily agricultural economy. An unseasonal fall, which occasionally arrives after the end of the rainy season, when the grown grain begins to ripen, is called sabbiya, and is highly unpopular. The proverb, to indicate "all things in their proper time", refers to seasonal rains:

"In (the month of) Hamlē, beating-down rain;
in (the month of) Sänyē, fine drizzle."

At the beginning of the rainy season, in Sanye, the farmer wishes for constant drizzle, wetting the ground just enough to enable him to make headway with his scratch-plow and to seed in the previously sunbaked soil; in Hamlē, he wishes for plentiful rain so that the sprouting grain will grow fast and tall.

132 The Abyssinians themselves long ago recognized three dis-
137 tinct climatic zones in their country:
24

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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823

alluvial soil - "borbwara märet", rich silt carried by rivers and brooks.

infertile soils - "qoda märet" dries too quickly after rains;
"arbacha märet", reddish, after erosion, infertile mounds;
"gebgaba märet", harvest withers at stalk before maturity;
"gergera märet", useless to plow, better leave for wild fruit.
"fech märet", abandoned land, leave for pasturage.

hard-to-penetrate - "gewchacha märet", plow cannot penetrate readily,
"gombore märet", sandy but very rocky, hard to plow,
"chencha märet" rocky terrain, where rain does not penetrate well.

[132
82] The preferred early rain is the light, intermittent but penetrating "zeg yalä zenäb", not the heavy continuous downpour that occurs later. Fast-growing barley, called
243
251 "bällega" after the "bälg" season, is sown first, during the light rains of March, for it can be harvested 3 months later, just before the heavy rains, to help tide the people over until the main harvests. This is very important because of the traditional hesitancy of the farmer to store crops. Historically, he would rather have it almost ready on the stalk, and would rather risk a crop failure than

796 food of the feast prepared by the losing side.
526 In the evening "fires of joy" are lit, where the rain-drenched, weary and sore contestants and others can dry out, drink barley beer, and are supposed to forget and forgive the hostilities. Some may still boast of individual feats of heroism, in Amhara warrior style; others will sulk. But generally the day ends in harmony, after the excitement which itself was a welcome break in the monotonous hibernation of the rainy season.

796 The end of the annual cycle coincides with the end of the rainy season. The last 5 days (in leap years 6 days) are added after the end of the last month, and are called "Pagumēn" or "Qwagmē". On the 3rd day the [77] annual festival of St. Raphael, called "geddus Rufāēl", the water saint, takes place. The rain, which still falls •[82] heavily that day, is considered "ṭebel" (holy water) and to have the power to dull the poison of snakes so [78] that their bites will not be fatal. Much rain during Pagumēn is taken as an omen that the crops will be good.

796 This day is final examination day for the boys 874 who have attended church school long enough to be promoted to "deacon". They are examined in correct chanting of liturgy and prayers. To be mentally wide awake they often go to the dabtara beforehand, and, for a small gift, obtain the stimulating herb "esa fars" (lit. Persian wood) or drink boiled "astänagär" (lit. the plant that makes to talk), which also helps to overcome stage-fright.

796 The younger children go from hut to hut, chanting:
857 "In the name of Rufael,
539

887 preoccupied with the immediate demands of life. The culture pattern
812 encourages the shemagalye to give much time and effort to this wonderment, for it belongs to his prime role and social duty at this stage: the accumulation of wisdom. The church does not interfere with this wonderment and its expression, partly because it has not bothered to establish dogma on many subjects.

A. The Natural Universe.

821 In many ways the Amhara concept of the universe resembles that of
[[71]] early medieval Europe, plus understandable similarities to the Middle East and Africa. Some conceptualizations are elaborations from the Biblical universe, readily recognizable because almost always the Geez language is used to express them. Other conceptualizations are animistic, and usually employ Cushitic terminology.

The universe is regarded as a Ptolemaic system, with the earth as the fixed center around which the sun turns. A distinction is made between the physical world, called simply "arät mäzän" (lit. the 4 corners); and the world populated by all creatures, "aläm" (lit. world, in the Geez language). The persistence of this traditional view of a flat earth is so great that even Amhara schoolteachers in the modern elementary schools in the provinces, who are required to teach a spherical earth, privately admit that they don't believe it themselves!

Heavenly bodies and metereological phenomena are interpreted as directly related to human events. Venus is called "astärboshäsh" or "astäryo", (lit. the one who gives hunger and then flees), because the planet appears in the very brief dusk, when the heat of the day is over and one gets hungry. Because Venus is "fleeing and inconstant like a woman", she is given the feminine gender.

821 Considerable attention is given to the moon ("chäräqa"), for it
243 is believed to cause the ripening of the grain after the sun has

821 caused the tender plant to sprout; therefore, cereal grains just
[243] beginning to sprout are called "charäqwa". Full moon is a good time
[484] to travel, avoiding the heat of the day especially in the hot lowlands where travel in daytime is almost impossible; also it is safer since approaching or ambushing bandits can be more readily seen than earlier or later in the lunar cycle.

Dawn is personified, regarded as a young day being suckled ("täbba") by the warm and expansive sun, after chill of the night on the plateau.

787 However, the working out of astrological systems is left to the däbtära, who collects his knowledge from "secret" books (in Gees), more often actually from apprenticeship and extracurricular activities while in church school, and uses it in writing especially powerful and expensive amulets.

821 The various kinds of rain are almost as important to the Amhara as snows to the Eskimo and sands to the desert Arab. For the Amhara with his primitive plowing, has to wait until the right kind of light rain loosens the sunbaked soil; and his simple hut is little protection from the heavy rains. He therefore studies clouds and wind direction in relation to topography. The fine and penetrating rain ("zeg yalä zemab") permits the use of the common scratch-plow, and seeding. The heavy rainy season brings downpours, and is also accompanied by strong gusts of wind ("wächafo") and tornadoes. When the thunderstorm ends and a rainbow appears, it seems as if the earth had been reprieved, so that the rainbow is called "maryam mäqänät" (lit. the jealousy of Mary; i.e. her intercession, in the Gees language). However, when a rainbow occurs while it is still raining, the interpretation is more animistic, for it is regarded as an unnatural event, heralding the moment at which wild

821 animals and evil spirits give birth. It is called "näber wäldaläch" (lit. the leopard has given birth), or "jeb wäldach", (lit. the hyena has had a litter).

823 Volcanic activity, which occurs not infrequently in these mountains that are of young geological age, is interpreted as a threatened repetition of the Biblical event that swallowed Sodom, and is indeed called "Sodom" (another connotation is "greedy").

Geographical directions are taken either from the Gees, e.g. "me'erab" for west (lit. where the sun sets), and "mesrag" for east; or the location of Abyssinian provinces is used: "Semyen" for north, "Azeb" for wouthwest. South is "däbub" (probably Cushitic).

821 Daytime and nighttime are regarded as two very different phases of the universe, altering radically behavior of natural phenomena, [825] animals, plants, even human behavior. The phrase "the night belongs to the hyena" refers not only to the nightly roaming of that animal, but also to the roaming of evil spirits at night, as well as dangerous strangers and actual bandits. As a consequence, even the hospitable, outgoing householder of the daytime changes to sullen and suspicious behavior if strangers suddenly arrive after dark. When he must leave the hut, he carries a weapon, in the rural areas. Even in Addis Ababa, the official curfew at midnight is little resented by the average Amhara, because of this traditional pattern.

574 576 The period of a week is regarded as a time unit with regard to the primary group and kin visiting. When two members of these groups have not seen each other for more than a week, they greet each other with "endemen sänebätu" (lit. how did you spend the week away).

776 825 The world of the spirits, who also inhabit the universe in large numbers, is believed to be in close relationship with the animal

X794 776 755 (actually directed at the patient), and "train" the minor zars to do their individual "gurri" somewhat differently, more "correctly". This "training" may include occasional beating of the "horse" of the zar (the patient).

Another advanced and complicated technique used by highly experienced zar doctors, in certain stubborn cases, is to transfer a stubborn zar from one patient of the zar congregation to a "stronger" member, so that the effect will be more controllable. This transfer is made on the principle of contagion. But a zar doctor is not supposed to inoculate a person with a really evil zar, for that would make him a sorcerer and set both the chief zar doctors and mankind in general against him.

Only in case of such a completely evil zar does the zar doctor attempt complete exorcism, considered a very dangerous form of spiritual surgery. During a somber ceremony, which lacks the gaiety of the usual [782] zar society, a black hen is killed, the evil zar is lured to feed on the body of the bloody animal, and the cadaver is quickly thrown in the bush, a thicket, or the river. This transfer is called "danqara", is tangential to the zar cult, and more related to "buda" and "tänqway" complexes (described later).

[787] Occasionally an old and experienced zar doctor, especially if a man, is asked to perform divination. If his personal zar happens to be "adept at prophecy", especially if he has been "educated at Jerusalem", the zar doctor may agree to put the question before him.

X794 776 821 Seasonal variations are considered very important in treatment procedures, for the zar spirits are regarded to be as much dominated by the climate as are humans. They are dormant or inactive during the 3-month

X794 rainy season, when they hover in the confinement of their grottoes just
776 as Abyssinians in their huts. Like humans, zar spirits become active
821 soon after the rains, when the "Mäsqäl" feasts approach, the yellow flowers carpet the landscape and the green grain begins to mature. The favorite time for zar spirits to strike is between midnight and about 3 A.M.; but some individualistic spirits specialize in the hour of sunset, and some even midday.

X794 Belief in the curative powers of the zar doctors is still widespread and strong among the Amhara. Only in the city of Addis Ababa has the present government tried to subdue it, so that devotees have to travel away from the city, for their major reunions. Many men do not like
X794 to admit their belief in the zar spirits or that they themselves consult
552 zar doctors. This is because of the feminine emphasis of the zar cult. Women are more often possessed, and do not hesitate to admit it; they often seem to look forward to cult membership. Grown men, however, unless afflicted with an ailment as obvious as epilepsy, are ashamed to be seen in a cult group, especially when the cult doctor is a woman. The major exceptions are the brothers of the woman zar doctor, who are often almost as pixilated by inheritance and contact with their mother as the doctor herself; the zar poet and hymn-composer who is usually a man; and the hired drummer.

b. Characteristics and Attributes of Male and Female "Zar" Spirits.

X794 The organization of the male zar spirits is more complex than that
776 of the female ones. Moreover, several male zar spirits arrogate names
552 to themselves that otherwise are generic: e.g. "Gurəza" - usually generic for all male zars; "Wəqabə"- usually generic for all protective spirits;

754 776 and are permitted to be dirty most of the time. As for males, the buda also likes to feast on healthy-looking, fat, handsome warriors [32] and chiefs. "Buda" is the general diagnosis when a person always known as healthy suddenly sickens and dies. Therefore it is feared even by the bravest warriors.

754 776 178 Even at present, when "modernization" is proceeding from the central government, "buda" belief has not shrunk. It has simply expanded to take in modern attractions. Thus, police officers in the provincial towns are believed to have attracted "buda", who has developed a taste for officers in nice, new uniforms; and is believed to be "greedy" for healthy-looking boys doing modern gymnastics in their new elementary schools, eager to consume their physical prowess and grace. Even rich, strong, fat, gay, well dressed Europeans are regarded as vulnerable, but less so because "they do not fear him". Fear attracts him too.

"Buda" is most active in August, at the height of the rainy season. [82] His favorite time to strike is just after a heavy thunderstorm, when tornado-like gusts of wind seem to pull up the hut and try to pull the roof off. This would enable "buda" to "see" his victims better, and cannibalize them.

751 754 776 Many ways of trying to prevent victimization by "buda", or at least of reducing one's vulnerability, have been devised over the centuries. To reduce vulnerability, one should not appear too happy, too gay. One should not become an object of open admiration, or of envy and jealousy. One should further paraphrase the tabooed word "buda", by saying "watch your eyes". Newlyweds, who are very vulnerable, should cover their glowing faces for ten days, to keep

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭimqat,* means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭimqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā,* grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household. 565* 796 [296]

The program for Ṭimqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized. [178] [851]

By noon on Ṭimqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭimqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter. [585] [785] [461] [782] [785]

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings. [261] [785] [241] [585]

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and [821] [164]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 796 [164] [785] hazardous. Moisture and chill lower the resistance of man and beast to respiratory infections. The weekly fasting schedule is resumed, and the more devout observe the thirty-day fast of the Disciples. In August, finally, the sixteen-day fast in honor of the Assumption of Mary is observed by everyone older than six or seven years.

*565 796 526 On the thirteenth day of that fast occurs the strange holiday of Buhē. Before and during this day, which is marked by the baking of special *dābo* for the shepherds, the countryside crackles with the reports of shepherds' whips. In this season when the humid air lends an explosive sound, the shepherds crack their whips for fun; but older boys and men join in great whipping battles on Buhē,* in which two teams lash each other until the members of one can stand it no more. On the evenings of Buhē, small bonfires are lit all over the countryside, and more *dābo* is eaten and whips cracked.[5] A few days later the fast of the Assumption is over. Young and old look forward to the end of the rains and the festivities that commence with the new year.

*565 These are the days and years of the Amhara peasant. Some other aspects of his life that come to the fore when more analytic perspectives are applied will be discussed in later chapters. But this calendar of activities forms the immediately observable setting for the "inner world" of the Amhara peasantry: those ideas, sentiments, and values which constitute its outlook on life.

THE WORLD OF MEANING

The Natural Universe

*565 772 [538] The Amhara peasant is not familiar with most of the cosmological notions found in the Great Tradition of Abyssinian culture, as transmitted through books like *Qalamsis* and *Aksimareos* and the oral traditions of learned churchmen. It is unusual for him to have a precise image of the layers of water, fire, and air beneath the earth, and it is still less likely for him to be familiar with the complicated hierarchy of invisible worlds, watery skies, and seven "real" heavens which are enumerated in the Abyssinian cosmology. He [821] [756] believes that stars influence human affairs, but leaves the possession of astrological knowledge to the *dabtarā*. The presence of cultural specialists who know about such matters has relieved him of the burden of dealing with ideas about the cosmos, ideas which are more widely diffused in more homogeneous societies.

The peasant's working conception of the cosmos is thus a very simplified version of that of his Great Tradition, together with certain pagan notions. Like his more learned countrymen, he divides the universe into two main parts: the world, *alam*, consisting of the earth, sun, moon, and stars; and

[178] * This custom is now extinct in many Amhara areas.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

heaven, *samāy*, the abode of supernatural beings and the souls of the dead. 565* The earth is seen as flat, though some believe its shape to be square, others 772 think it is round like a disc, and still others imagine it to extend without limit. [823] That the terrain of Ethiopia is so obviously not flat is explained by reference to the great flood, after which the parts which dried quickly became high- [773] lands (*dēgā*), the parts slow to dry becoming lowlands (*qolā*). The peasant [821] explains the greater heat of the lowlands by saying that they receive less wind than the highlands.

Beneath the earth's surface is an obscure area called *maq*, a depth to which [775] the bodies of evildoers drop after burial. There is also a large subterranean [823] ocean, *weqniyānos*, into which all the rivers and lakes on earth descend. The earth itself is held up, according to some, by a Y-shaped piece of wood; accord- [539] ing to others, by two serpents; still another view is that no support is needed other than the will of God, as the saying indicates:

> Ay, My God! Lord who stretched forth the heavens without a pillar, and the earth without tent-pegs.

The rotation of the sun *above* the earth causes the alternation of night and 565* day. The imagery of this rotation is that of someone going home at night and 821 coming out in the morning. Attitudes toward the sun are quite ambivalent. The sun is appreciated for dispersing the morning chill and for causing seed to germinate, but it is feared as a source of sickness and death.*

The moon is highly regarded, which is probably a vestige of pre-Christian [174] moon worship. At the Ethiopian latitude the moon is functional, for its bright [484] illumination facilitates night travel, especially desirable in the hotter regions. Beyond this, the moon is considered a powerful agent. It is chief of the sky, commander of an army of stars and it is the force which causes crops to grow after the sun has brought forth seedlings.

In the heavenly realm there are two regions located on either side of God's 565* dwelling-place. To the right is an area where good souls repair for an eternity 772 of ease after being judged shortly after the death of their bodies. Known both 775 as the "kingdom of heaven" and "paradise"—terms which refer to quite different spheres in the Orthodox cosmology but are fused in the vulgar mind —it is regarded as a home where food and clothes are plentiful and freely distributed. To the left is the place where wicked souls are taken by the devil to be scorched eternally in the fire of Gehenna, also called *Si'ol* (again a fusion of concepts which are distinct for the learned). This treatment of the damned is made worse by alternate dippings in icy water, though some believe that the wicked souls get a respite from their tortures on weekends.

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* The TAT's revealed a great dread of the sun; nearly every respondent interpreted one or another [125] of the cards in terms of the sun's dangerousness.

*753 776 rosy.

*753 825 Likift-powers are also associated with crawling insects, spiders, lizards, and the infrequent highland snake. As with the ganel, these creepers are innately contaminating, either through direct contact with their persons, or indirectly through media which they have touched---such as clothing and water---or which they have *[192] expelled---such as uring and saliva. This likift results in ringworm, varioloid and exzemoid skin diseases; because of their inherent toxicity, these creatures are also frequent ingredients in poisonous infusions (yijeseb).

*753 776 825 Sometimes, it is problematic whether the conditions which attract the attentions of ganel and creeper are not themselves sufficient to produce certain syndromes. For example, serious stomach pain, bloat, and feverish coughing are linked to the consumption of stale food or soured talla beer; these substances are, in turn, favorites of ganels. Similarly, the stench of bodily filth appeals to ganel and creeper, and is a common precursor to scabies and various rashes. However, both spoiled foodstuffs and filth are believed noxious enough to produce these ailments, without requiring the assistance of ganels or creepers.

*753 • 821 The notion of contact-pathogenicity which characterizes likift is also associated with a sun-borne agency known as gerifta. There is an important difference be-

tween the two agencies, however. With likift, the pathogenic source is known to be the inherently contaminating persons of various corporeal beings. With gerifta, disease-causing powers are only circumstantially associated with the sun, and emphasis is focused on the conditions under which contact with direct sunlight is potentially dangerous.

The sun is regarded with no awe, nor is it personalized in any way. Moderate exposure to its rays threatens no special danger; choice of daily dress, for example, is determined by considerations of comfort and propriety, rather than prophylaxis. When, however, sunlight falls upon an unclean body part---a perspiring torso, a diner's unclean mouth, a nursing breast---or upon a body emerging naked from a toga's cool confines, gerifta threatens. Although symptoms vary according to the area of the body which is affected, such gerifta ailments begin with a surface irritation. If untreated, the symptoms intensify producing scabies, furuncles, mastitis, and bothersome rashes.

Even in the absence of special conditions, prolonged exposure to the sun of certain body areas can produce painful body compalints, such as headache, and conjunctivitis, blindness, earache, tonsillitis, and toothache. Lastly, gerifta-mists are created when sunlight falls on soil recently moistened by showers or urine.

844 woman's kinswomen who hold her down, the midwife repeatedly massages the woman's abdomen until the baby has emerged. The umbilical cord is knotted close to the baby and again near the mother, and then severed in the middle. The midwife then squeezes the woman's abdomen to eject the afterbirth, inserts her hand up the vagina to extract any remaining portion, and then passes the organ to an assistant who takes it outside
846 for burial. The midwife then turns to the infant, washes it and carefully "shapes" its eyes, nose, and head into desireable conformations. Finally, the mother's body is washed.

*759 The midwife's therapy is conspicuously lacking
844 in the secret and magical elements characteristic of herbalist therapies. It is, in addition, the only Amhara medical specialty which can be acquired without formal tuteledge, by observing and assisting established midwives in delivering infants.

843 Pregnancy and childbirth are considered dangerous
844 experiences. Gerifta is a special threat: Nakedness
• [821] under the sun may cause the fetus to turn in the womb and threaten breach birth, and urinating in the sun can
[845] induce premature labor. Childbirth is sometimes the setting for divine punishment by means of breach birth.
[776] The pregnant woman is also a favorite victim of ganela, typically, she experiences great hemorrhaging, severe

*753 grazing. Both highland zones are considered ideal for
131 human habitation. While residents of the dega zone oc-
133
• 821 casionally comment on what they regard as the uncomfor-
table summer heat of the weyna dega, at the same time
it is acknowledged that the rainy season (kiramt) is more
burdensome in the dega. The rains last from May to
September and are marked by temperatures in the mid-
thirties in dega lands and perhaps ten to fifteen degrees
warmer in the weyna dega. This season is regarded as a
particularly bad time for kurtimat (rheumatoid complaints)
whose severity is considered greatest in the dega zone.
Epidemiologically, the dega is also associated with a
relatively high incidence of yinifas basiyta ("the wind
disease"), an ailment described in Chapter One.

131 Although reliable population estimates are lacking,
101 the weyna dega and dega zones contain perhaps 85% of
161 Begemder's people. These rural highlands are occupied
197 by five ethnic groups, racially indistinguishable from
144 one another and, with an exception, now speaking a com-
mon Semetic languase, Amharic. The Amhara are the most
numerous of Begemder's highland peoples, and extend into
the provinces of Gojam and Shoa, to the south. Within
the Begemder highlands, they occupy the area south of
latitude 13°30'. North of this line live the Tigre, a
related people who speak a cognate language, Tigrinya.
101 Both Amhara and Tigre are Coptic Christians, and from
131
779

792 believers, but as quick in anger when a human face disturbs their solitude. Legends tell of hermits who, receiving a "call", returned to the temporal world as prophets and leaders of men. But this is regarded as rare. During their lifetime the hermits are held in awe, and even after their death they are believed to haunt their earthy cave-ledges, so that passers-by talk in whispers only, and fear to come too close.

(d) Utensils of the Church.

793 The headgear of the priests, "mätämtämiya", is a
292 turban-like affair, basically a white muslin wrapped around the head or the cylindrical cap ("qob"). Monks wear the "qob" without the muslin, and, in many monasteries, used to dye their"qob" as well as their robes yellow. In recent years the yellow color is falling into disuse, and white--believed to be the color of mourning for the passing of Christ, is worn alternately with black caps and capes. Black is evidently due to acculturation. It first entered in the form of imported chintz capes for the bishops and upper clergy in the time of Menelik II, and has spread, due to the Italian occupation.

Like noblemen, middle and higher clergy wear the kaba, the heavy , woolen, sleeveless cape, and carry an especially good "chera" (flyswitch) of guresa-monkey hair. Priests wear the narrow white jodphurs at all times,

186 ethnocentrism: "Ze" includes the brunette racial features of the
829 Mediterranean world, particularly if accompanied by Abyssinian-Coptic religion, for to the Amhara the name "Amhara" is synonymous with Christianity of their own denomination. "They", in their mind, refers to the black peoples of Africa whom they enslaved; but also to "infidel", particularly the Muslims with whom they have been at war so often. They draw many lines within these major ethnocentric divisions, racial, religious, ethnic-occupational and linguistic.. But, in the Amhara attitude, racial differences are among the most fundamental.

829 The skin color of most Amhara is regarded by them as brown
822 ("ṭäym"), considered better looking than the black of negroid peoples, and reflecting "better character". Black color is regarded as symbolic of anything unpleasant, spiritually impure, ("ṭäqqorä" connotes "he became shadowed, sad, depressed"). It is a (mild) insult to call a very dark person "ṭäqqwara" (lit. "darkie"). European skin color is regarded as "red" ("käy") - a common African attitude. The concept of "white" coloring connotes paleness ("nätta" (lit. he became pale), undernourishment, sickness, insipid weakness.

822 Color symbolism is followed in dress: The Amhara wear white
291 togas, without coloring more than the border, because the concept white also connotes spiritual purity (by extension of the concept of the absence of physical strength). Yellow ("wäyba") is the traditional color of special mourning, worn only by monastic monks who regard themselves as in a state of perpetual mourning for the passing of Christ from the earth (the dye is made from the bark of the "wayba" tree, hence the name). Green and blue are collectively called "arängwadä", and are not sharply differentiated.

826 Racial ideas also dominate the Amhara concepts of physical

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

"May He bring you safely from the year of Mark to the year of Luke!" 565* Nearly every day of the month, moreover, is dedicated to some holy figure, 805 796 the main ones being: [576]

Day of Month	Name	Meaning
1st	*Ledatā*	Birth of Mary
5th	*Abbo*	St. Gabra Manfas Qeddus
7th	*Selassie*	Trinity
12th	*Mikā'ēl*	St. Michael
16th	*Kidāna Maherat*	Covenant of Mercy (for Mary)
19th	*Gabre'ēl*	St. Gabriel
21st	*Māryām*	St. Mary
23rd	*Giyorgis*	St. George
24th	*Takla Hāymānot*	St. Takla Hāymānot
27th	*Madhānē Alam*	Savior of the World
29th	*Bāla Wald*	Festival of the Son

This schedule is well implanted in the peasant's mind, so much so that the names of these holy days come to take the place of calendar dates. Thus, instead of saying "He fell sick on the fifth" or "He is due to come on the twelfth," the Amhara normally says "He fell sick on Abbo" or "He is due to come on Mikā'ēl."

Time for the Amhara is thus not a morally indifferent and qualitatively [822] undifferentiated continuum. It is a series of occasions with more or less sacred significance. These occasions are arranged in the form of cycles. In contrast to the Catholic calendar with its different saint for each day of the year, every month in Abyssinia repeats the same set of saints' days. Each year, of course, repeats the same cycle of annual holidays. The years themselves do not run on continuously, but follow the cycle—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—again and again. For the more learned, finally, there is a twenty-eight-year cycle which must elapse before the same year begins on the same day of the week again.

The Amhara's experience of time is thus essentially cyclical. The religious 565* calendar, the most important dimension of time for him, consists of a series 805 of epicycles, in which the monthly rounds play themselves out within the 822 larger circles of annual and quadrennial rounds. Historical events are at best 796 secondary: the seasons come and go, generations come and go, but there is not much new under the sun. The better-known prophecies foretell the return of some state of things that obtained in the past. Kassa chose the [787] throne name of Tēwodros II because of the prophecy that a king with that name would arise to repeat the mythically fortunate reign of Tēwodros I of the fifteenth century. In this century has arisen the prophecy of another Tēwodros to come. Still another prophecy—of a short-lived invasion of Ethio-

*565 805 796 822 787 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history will begin again.

822 [423] Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 822 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with difficulty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 822 346 [823] Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 346 778 796 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 822 [191] The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 342 341 181 822 [417] [351] It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and getting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 181 796 346 341 822 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services. 565* 346 841 181 796 822 [778]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery. 565* 822 181 361 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order. 565* 822 181 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities. 565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable 565* 156 157 [577]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of
[644] course, the imperial court. The *makuännent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discretion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but
[492] on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shouldering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-
[231] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *tajj* pre-
[273] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos,* the dark wool cloak of the
[292] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-
[322] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abys-
[293] sinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for
554 instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mäʿerg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The
554 *makuännent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary
701 Amharic the term *makuännent* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

rās	"head" (of an army)
dajāzmātch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitäwrāri**	"general of the vanguard"
qañňāzmātch	"general of the right wing"
gerāzmātch	"general of the left wing"
bālāmbārās	"commander of a fort"
bāshā†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shālaqā	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitäwrāri* ranked below the *gerāzmātch.*

[192] † *Bāshā* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Northeastern Buffalo ("gosha"), fairly small in size, in wet lowlands.

Hartebeest ("tora"), a tall, slimmer antelope with inward-turned horns which the Amhara describes as being big as a zebra, dangerous, but becoming rare.

Wildcats ("demmat"), including the serval cat ("dō-ro"), hunted for their skins.

Civet cat ("terīñ"), of the mongoose family, trapped for its musk gland.

Leopard ("näbber"), whose beautifully spotted skin is an export item.

Colobus monkey ("gurēza"), now one of the protected animals, but still hunted freely in remote jungle areas for its black-and-white coat, sold freely even in the streets of Addis Ababa. From its tail hair the famous "ḉhera" flyswitch is made for the nobles who can afford to pay for it, instead of the horsetail substitute. This coat is also exported.

● 823 The jungle is regarded by the Amhara as the place of refuge of dangerous bandits, outcasts, and rebels against noble chieftains and kings; also, as the place inhabited by socially inferior ethnic groups; and, spiritually, as the [792] place inhabited by many powerful "zar" spirits (see Part VI, Section 2.). who "ride" leopards and lions and "milk" female elephants.

241

very few need to be removed by hand; "fär" is the first furrow in a field.

deep plowing - "shärakkätä", in order to raise good soil.

final plowing - "zärrä", just before or after seeding.

134 Numerous distinctions are made between types of soil,
●823 so that every member of the extended family receives his share of both good or poor soil. Fertility is basically categorized into the aforementioned "lam tyäff" and "tyäff" types. Finer distinctions show awareness of conservation needs:

male soil ("wändä märät") - any heavy, humus-rich, fertile soil.

female soil ("tyätä märät") - any light, especially sandy soil. Less fertile.

dark soil - "walka", used for luxury grain such as wheat.

sandy soil - "mwachchärä", must be lightly plowed so as not to blow away.

mobile soil - "lel märät", easily eroded, often left fallow for that reason.

poorly draining soil - "rankwa märät", or "ambaza", gets muddy easily and then becomes difficult to plow.

eroded land - "borbor märät", with many crevasses, "eaten by water" during the rainy season.

134
●823

alluvial soil -	"borbwara märet", rich silt carried by rivers and brooks.
infertile soils -	"qoda märet" dries too quickly after rains;
	"arbacha märet", reddish, after erosion, infertile mounds;
	"gebgaba märet", harvest withers at stalk before maturity;
	"gergera märet", useless to plow, better leave for wild fruit.
	"fech märet", abandoned land, leave for pasturage.
hard-to-penetrate -	"gewchacha märet", plow cannot penetrate readily,
	"gombore märet", sandy but very rocky, hard to plow,
	"chancha märet" rocky terrain, where rain does not penetrate well.

[132
82] The preferred early rain is the light, intermittent but penetrating "zeg yalä zenäb", not the heavy continuous downpour that occurs later. Fast-growing barley, called
243
251 "bällega" after the "bälg" season, is sown first, during the light rains of March, for it can be harvested 3 months later, just before the heavy rains, to help tide the people over until the main harvests. This is very important because of the traditional hesitancy of the farmer to store crops. Historically, he would rather have it almost ready on the stalk, and would rather risk a crop failure than

821 animals and evil spirits give birth. It is called "näber wäldaläch" (lit. the leopard has given birth), or "jeb wäldach", (lit. the hyena has had a litter).

823 Volcanic activity, which occurs not infrequently in these mountains that are of young geological age, is interpreted as a threatened repetition of the Biblical event that swallowed Sodom, and is indeed called "Sodom" (another connotation is "greedy").

Geographical directions are taken either from the Geez, e.g. "me'erab" for west (lit. where the sun sets), and "mesraq" for east; or the location of Abyssinian provinces is used: "Semyen" for north, "Azeb" for wouthwest. South is "däbub" (probably Cushitic).

821 Daytime and nighttime are regarded as two very different phases of the universe, altering radically behavior of natural phenomena, [825] animals, plants, even human behavior. The phrase "the night belongs to the hyena" refers not only to the nightly roaming of that animal, but also to the roaming of evil spirits at night, as well as dangerous strangers and actual bandits. As a consequence, even the hospitable, outgoing householder of the daytime changes to sullen and suspicious behavior if strangers suddenly arrive after dark. When he must leave the hut, he carries a weapon, in the rural areas. Even in Addis Ababa, the official curfew at midnight is little resented by the average Amhara, because of this traditional pattern.

574 576 The period of a week is regarded as a time unit with regard to the primary group and kin visiting. When two members of these groups have not seen each other for more than a week, they greet each other with "endemen säneätu" (lit. how did you spend the week away).

776 825 The world of the spirits, who also inhabit the universe in large numbers, is believed to be in close relationship with the animal

X 794
T76
T63

There are male "zars" and female ones. The latter are considered more dangerous and more difficult to placate. Usually a "zar" spirit prefers to "possess" a human of the opposite sex, which results in a magical coitus, and cuases epilectic seizures or catatonic states. In the latter case, usually a woman being "slept with" by a jealous make "zar", she seems drowsy and "turned within herself", disinterested in the environment, forgetting to eat. In the former case, the magical coitus sends her into orgasms of twisted arms and legs; or sometimes, twirling frenziedly; sometimes moving on all fours, emitting raucous sounds, biting the unwary, while being "ridden like a horse" by the "zar".

X 794
T76
B23

The "zars" of today are regarded as having geographical homelands. In abyssinia their central location is believed to be in the province of Tigre, where they prefer woodland grottoes on the highland plateau, and where, if taken off guard under certain circumstances, they can become temporarily visible. Some zar doctors even narrow this central headquarters to a locality known as "Halawel" near the existing town of Makalle. On occasion the "zar" spirits there are believed to hold dances, even orgies. But most often they live in families, much like human Abyssinians, though on a superhuman level. They can ride elephants, lions, etc, to whom they refer as "farasey" (lit. my horse), the same term they use to humans whom they "ride" during possession. But they despise the hyena, which is the "horse" of the evil "buda" spirit. The "cattle" of the zar spirits consists of wild gazelles, antelopes - the wild relatives of cattle domesticated by humans. Zar spirits are fond of peppery sauce ("wot") and "enjara" bread much like Abyssinians. Tree stumps serve them as tables. They like the flowers and green

B25

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

x 794
776
[823]

woods of the Abyssinian highlands very much, being of lowland desert origin themselves.

They can fly, dive, have hands that are strong as iron, and are wiser than humans. But their social institutions are not much better than man's. Their children must go to school to learn, just like human children. Their social hierachy is much like that of Abyssinia, with kings, chiefs, chamberlains, and a servant class. They have wars among themselves in which they can be killed by other, stronger and shrewder zars. Even their individual personalities may have serious shortcomings: generally a distinction is made between small-statured, evil, ignorant, very dark-skinned zars, and tall, noble, educated, light-skinned zars. The latter resemble their ancestors, while the others have degenerated. The zars are divided into ethnic groups and religions, so that there are Christian, Muslim, Falasha and pagan zars. They are curious about humans of other religions, e.g. a Christian zar may "possess" a human who is Muslim and make him act and dress like a Christian (and vice versa). Diseases, especially functional and mental ailments, emanate from the zars, but so do the remedies.

The superhuman attributes of the "zar" spirits are largely in achievements of material culture, in which the human Amhara is so little developed; in non-material aspects of culture, such as governing society, and in personality, no greatly superior level is visualized.

[164] No human being is considered entirely invulnerable to "zar" possession, not even foreigners. Moreover, "mild poszessions" hit every human some time during a lifetime, though this may pass with relatively little notice.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

[MANZ]

estates" make up the most common subjects of litigation in Manz, and hardly a day passes in the courts there without a hearing on some case about *rĭst*.

The Manzēs are as stubbornly loyal to their fathers' faith as they are to their land. They take much pride in the strictness with which the Orthodox fasts are observed in Manz, and in the fact that non-Christians are not to be found there. A number of legends told locally represent Manz as an especially hallowed Christian territory. One legend says that after the Crucifixion the angel Uriel gathered some of Jesus' blood on his wings and flew to Manz. Standing on the hill of Dabra Qopros in Māmā Meder, he shook his wings and thereby sprinkled the holy blood over the entire area. Another story dates the sanctification of Manz by the blood of Jesus to the time when a portion of the true Cross was brought to Ethiopia and tells of how on the way to its repository at Gishēn Māryām, in Wallo, some drops spilled from the relic onto Manz soil.[37] Still another legend relates that the Virgin Mary sojourned in Manz when Jesus was a young boy. Lake Alo Bāhr in western Gērā Meder is said to be the product of Mary's wrath—her punishment of the people who lived on what was dry land at the time for judging against her in a dispute with a local woman.

To defend his land, church, or honor, the typical Manzē is ready at short notice to fight to the death. In their own eyes, as in the eyes of others, the men of Manz are reputed for hardiness and combativeness. *Mot ged yallam* ("Never mind about death!") is the motto one governor from Manz volunteered as the key to the ethos of his people. The Manzē wants his son to be *guabaz* ("brave") and uses this term, like that of *waṭādar* ("soldier"), as a favorite compliment. The names which are characteristically given to children in Manz express this determination:

Ahidē	"Thrasher"	*Goshemē*	"Shover"
Asdangaṭ	"Frighten"	*Laṭybalu*	"Let Them Bow"
Atāmantā	"Don't Hesitate"	*Mān Yāzhāl*	"Who Orders You?"
Balātchaw	"Give It To Them"	*Nādaw*	"Wipe Him Out"
Balāy-metā	"Hit On The Top"	*Ṭālārgē*	"Powerful"
Chabudē	"Squeezer"	*Tāsaw*	"Smash Him"
Ḉhaſcheſē	"Hacker"	*Weqātchaw*	"Thrash Them"

Female names in Manz sometimes reflect this virile emphasis; for example, *Hijibātchaw* ("Go Against Them") or *Asagadatch* ("She Makes Them Bow").

A common symbol of physical bravery is the *dulā*, a hardwood staff about three feet long. The Manzē is rarely seen without his *dulā*. It has many purposes—to brace his shoulders on long treks, to carry loads, to ward off dogs when he goes visiting, to support his body while listening to litigation or standing at the long church services.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in such numbers that "Manzē" virtually became a synonym for "underground patriot." 829 648

After the liberation, as after the routing of Ahmad Grāñ's forces, the Manzē once again returned to redeem a ravished land. Slowly, the houses were rebuilt, the land was plowed once more. Churches which had been rebuilt after Grāñ's destruction only to be razed by the Italians were again put into place. Tough in his spiritual as in his physical life, the Manzē doggedly re-established the culture of his own. Now as before the occupation, a man of Manz sits on the throne, promising to let no foreigner take his country's land,* while the young braves celebrate the royal line in their festive boasting: 186 [539]

Ya-Manz ababā, ya-Manz ababāl Yābbabāl genāl
The flower of Manz, the flower of Manz! It will bloom yet again!

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

Thus far the significance of Manz and Gondar has been discussed from the point of view of an outsider. We have attempted to assess, on the basis of the best available evidence, the respective historical and cultural roles of these two noted Amhara regions. We turn now to a different though related question, namely, the significance of these two places in the minds and feelings of Ethiopians themselves. 121

Two kinds of reaction are conspicuous. To the Ethiopian Modernist, Manz and Gondar are seen primarily as outlying pockets of conservatism. Their commitments to the past move them to resist certain changes promoted by the national government, with Manz protesting modern education and Gondar defending itself against nationalist centralization. They are regarded as backward areas, representative of the many forces that are "holding Ethiopia back," and to a certain extent are disdained.

To their inhabitants, on the other hand, these places are objects of intense loyalty. For differences of identity among the Amhara are defined chiefly in terms of their *agar*, or "home country." The size of one's *agar* is relative; it depends on the context in which the symbol is used, and may be as small as a district or as large as a province. Whatever the referent, one's *agar* signifies more than a place of residence or provenience. It means "home," and all those whose families live there are regarded with special affection, while those out- 121 186 823

* On certain festive occasions the following antiphonal chant is declaimed in praise of "Ṭaqel" (the affectionate, "horse" name of Haile Selassie): [533]

[Leader:] *Mīn āla ṭaqel mīn āla?* [539]
[Chorus:] *Agarē la-saw agarē la-saw alsaṭem ala!* [551]
[Leader:] What did Ṭaqel say, what did he say?
[Chorus:] "My country to outsiders, my country to outsiders, I will not give!" said he.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

121 side are regarded with reserve and suspicion, if not hostility. For this reason
186 the word of native local authorities has always carried more weight than that
• 823 of imported or distant authorities. For this reason the names of bars and cafés around Addis Ababa today are to a large extent place names. For this reason
[575] the type of voluntary association which has aroused the most enthusiastic interest in Addis Ababa in recent years is the association based on a membership drawn from the same *agar*.[50] Regionalist sentiments are so intense in connection with these groups that some members of the Manz association, for example, have asserted that they would not admit to membership a person whose family originated in a district only a few kilometers outside the boundaries of Manz.

121 This type of orientation to Manz, Gondar, and the many other regions in Amhara country may be regarded as an instance of the more general phenomenon referred to above as "primordial sentiments." These are sentiments which are based on the awareness of certain given qualities shared by the members of a group, qualities such as race, language, religious affiliation, tribal affiliation, as well as region of origin. The primordial sentiments account for much of the cohesion and much of the vitality among the members of any traditional society. How these allegiances are affected in the course of modernization has considerable bearing on the future shape of the rapidly developing nations.

A number of factors inherent in modernization work to erode the primordial sentiments. Increased physical and social mobility tend to uproot the individual from the settings of family and home community in which these sentiments are produced and reinforced. Occupational position comes to replace membership in primordial groups as a primary determinant of status and identity. Secondary education, military training, and the development of national institutions and symbols promote the sentiment of nationalism to which these narrower allegiances are subordinated.

Other aspects of modernization, however, work in the opposite direction to intensify primordial sentiments. The education of members of minority groups gives them both a heightened sense of grievance and a voice with which to protest. The creation of new forms of wealth and power provides new bases for competition and conflict, processes which tend to be structured along lines already laid out by cleavages based on primordial differences. The insecurity aroused by the threat to tradition inherent in modernization also produces defensive reactions which often take the form of heightened allegiance to such groups.

This intensification of primordial loyalties during modernization presents a problem which, for all their differences, nearly all the nations of Africa and Asia have in common. Whether the critical differences revolve about language, as in India; religion, as in Lebanon; geography, as in Indonesia; or

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

liefs and values, (2) retention of the basic emotional tie and identification with the group in question, and (3) elaboration of the virtues of the group in terms of universalistic criteria. 121

This is a type of orientation to the primordial sentiments which has the effect of maximizing both traditional and modern values, for it retains the sources of security and identity provided by tradition yet defines them in ways that promote national solidarity and the creative resources of the national culture. It is an approach which may be illustrated, in concluding this chapter, by the cases of two modern-educated Amhara who identify themselves, in part, as a Manzē and a Gondarē.

"Balātchaw" is an American-educated official of the Ethiopian government. Born and raised in Addis Ababa, his family originated in Manz, and he still has relatives who reside there. He is an ardent modernizer, anxious to see progressive leadership and the expansion of educational facilities provided in the provinces; yet he is also very sentimental about Amhara traditions and, in particular, his *agar* Manz. 121 159 829 [823]

To Balātchaw, Manz symbolizes hard-core loyalty to blood and to land. It also symbolizes the will to fight stubbornly for one's rights and for what one thinks right. He sees the government's keen concern for its territorial boundaries as a direct reflection of the Manzē's determination to retain and acquire land. Balātchaw gets much pleasure out of telling stories about the Manzē's almost foolhardy bravery in combatting the Italian invader. He reveals a "clear consciousness of an inner identity" with the Manzē in this regard, and says of himself: "You know, even as a child, and ever since, I have not been afraid of anybody."

"Makonnen" is a government official who was trained in western Europe. His family lives in Gondar, though he spent little time there after leaving for secondary school in Addis Ababa. In the course of his studies abroad, he had become estranged from the traditional ties and symbols of his Gondar-Amhara background. And yet now he speaks with great respect of the virtues of Gondarēs, their cultivated manner in personal relations, and their pride and wit in the use of language. The meaning of Gondar came to him almost in the manner of a revelation:

> In the midst of my studies in Western Europe I had the chance one summer to visit a number of West African countries and then to return home and spend some time in Gondar. I had not thought very highly of my people before that trip, and what I experienced was a great surprise. What I found—what we have, that I did not find in the African countries I visited—is a special sort of dignity of manner. When I talked with the elders at Gondar I was moved to tears. That is something priceless; that is a great and irreplaceable national resource.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

heaven, *samāy*, the abode of supernatural beings and the souls of the dead. 565* The earth is seen as flat, though some believe its shape to be square, others 772 think it is round like a disc, and still others imagine it to extend without limit. [823] That the terrain of Ethiopia is so obviously not flat is explained by reference to the great flood, after which the parts which dried quickly became high- [773] lands (*dēgā*), the parts slow to dry becoming lowlands (*qolā*). The peasant [821] explains the greater heat of the lowlands by saying that they receive less wind than the highlands.

Beneath the earth's surface is an obscure area called *maq*, a depth to which [775] the bodies of evildoers drop after burial. There is also a large subterranean [823] ocean, *weqniyānos*, into which all the rivers and lakes on earth descend. The earth itself is held up, according to some, by a Y-shaped piece of wood; accord- [539] ing to others, by two serpents; still another view is that no support is needed other than the will of God, as the saying indicates:

> Ay, My God! Lord who stretched forth the heavens without a pillar, and the earth without tent-pegs.

The rotation of the sun *above* the earth causes the alternation of night and 565* day. The imagery of this rotation is that of someone going home at night and 821 coming out in the morning. Attitudes toward the sun are quite ambivalent. The sun is appreciated for dispersing the morning chill and for causing seed to germinate, but it is feared as a source of sickness and death.*

The moon is highly regarded, which is probably a vestige of pre-Christian [174] moon worship. At the Ethiopian latitude the moon is functional, for its bright [484] illumination facilitates night travel, especially desirable in the hotter regions. Beyond this, the moon is considered a powerful agent. It is chief of the sky, commander of an army of stars and it is the force which causes crops to grow after the sun has brought forth seedlings.

In the heavenly realm there are two regions located on either side of God's 565* dwelling-place. To the right is an area where good souls repair for an eternity 772 of ease after being judged shortly after the death of their bodies. Known both 775 as the "kingdom of heaven" and "paradise"—terms which refer to quite different spheres in the Orthodox cosmology but are fused in the vulgar mind —it is regarded as a home where food and clothes are plentiful and freely distributed. To the left is the place where wicked souls are taken by the devil to be scorched eternally in the fire of Gehenna, also called *Si'ol* (again a fusion of concepts which are distinct for the learned). This treatment of the damned is made worse by alternate dippings in icy water, though some believe that the wicked souls get a respite from their tortures on weekends.

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* The TAT's revealed a great dread of the sun; nearly every respondent interpreted one or another [125] of the cards in terms of the sun's dangerousness.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

with the saint for whom it has been named, and personalized. The extent to which the ark is regarded as human is shown by the following remark of a peasant who looked at the picture of a church on a TAT card and explained: "When the ark has been given incense, it will be happy. . . . If this church is given a new roof, the ark will be very happy and give *ïnjarä* to the people." 565* 778

The saints and the *tābot* which represent them are the objects of much veneration and prayer. They figure so prominently in the Amhara's outlook that at times they appear to be on a par with *Egziābhēr* himself. Two differences may be noted, however. The saints do not take the initiative in interfering in human affairs, as does *Egziābhēr,* but intervene only when appealed to. Their function, moreover, is that of protecting and healing spirits; it is not their portion to administer the punishments which *Egziābhēr* inflicts on those who disobey the religious laws, though they may mete out punishment to someone who breaks a vow he has made to them. 565* 776 778 782

Malevolent spirits, on the other hand, do intervene in human affairs without being invited. Of the evil spirits, the devil—known as *Diabolos, Sayṭān,* or *Agannent,* which are names of different spirits to the learned but counted the same in the peasant's mind—is the most powerful. He is imagined as a dark, Negroid type, the least favored sort of racial stock in Ethiopia. He dwells in deep waters, woods, and caves, and likes to roam about at noon and at midnight, especially near dirty places. Amhara avoid going near a lake or pool known to harbor the devil, for fear of being pulled in and drowned. They likewise stay away from dirty places at noon, for fear that he will make them sick. The devil brings epileptic fits. He tries to push people into fire. He also tries to harm human beings by tempting them to some misdeed—stealing, murder, getting drunk—and then have them suffer the consequences. Finally, when the human soul appears for judgment after death, he strives to gain possession of the soul and put it into the fire. Sometimes he is pictured as chewing the souls he manages to obtain. 565* 776 [829] [823] [828] [775]

Despite his inimical gestures toward the human race, the devil is respected as well as feared, for he has much power. Many peasants pray to him for this reason. In time of sickness some choose *Sayṭān,* rather than (or in addition to] *Giyorgis* or *Māryām,* as the one to whom they pray and make promises. On New Year's Day, Christmas, and Easter, prayers to *Sayṭān* are surreptitiously repeated in many quarters. One of these prayers runs: "My lord, bring me through the year. Guard me. If you keep me this year in peace and bring me through the year, I will give you more." Certain individuals are on especially good terms with the devil. They pray to him often, and he visits them from time to time and does favors for them; they are his "friends." When such a person dies, his son often continues the relationship. 565* 776 782

Another kind of spirit producing ill effects is the *zār. Zār* spirits are of 565* 776

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*565 805 pia by a Muslim from the East—suggests a repetition of the Grāñ episode. 796 Finally, there is the previously mentioned conception of the end of the world 822 as a time of renewal, when those who died first will return to life and history 787 will begin again.

822 Space, like time, is not regarded as an amoral and homogeneous continuum to be submitted to systematic measurement. Land is not something to be [423] bought or sold at will, but belongs by right to a family, a church, or a ruling line. Land titles are defined loosely, by convention and approximation, and the Amhara peasantry have objected to attempts by the government to make exact measurements of their land. The reluctance to rationalize space is conspicuous even in the capital of Ethiopia, where to this day there are no street numbers, so that places can only be identified roughly as near a certain 823 police station or past a certain hospital. Directions are indicated with diffi- 822 culty. The points of the compass are almost never used, though there are words for the four directions. Instead, the vague terms for "up" and "down" serve to answer almost every question about location.

*565 Though the peasants are often unclear about the precise boundaries of 822 various place names in the countryside, they do know just where the several 346 churches are located over a wide area. It is customary for them to locate a [823] given place by reference to the nearest church. Thus they will say: "He lives below Abbo" or "We must travel above Mikā'ēl." As a result, locations in space are identified by the same set of co-ordinates as are events in time, *565 namely, the names of the saints. Moreover, just as certain months each year 346 are occasions for special celebrations in behalf of each sacred figure, so in the 778 countryside certain churches are considered especially holy shrines. Thus, there 796 is special veneration for *Ṭerr Māryām* ("St. Mary's Day in the month of Ṭerr") and Gishēn Māryām ("St. Mary's Church in the district of Gishēn").

*565 The dominant configuration in the Amhara's experience of space is that 822 of concentric circles. Whether or not we try to relate this to the cyclical [181] organization of time, the fact remains that the pattern of a charged center surrounded by circles of decreasing significance recurs in the main areas of Amhara life.

*565 It appears, first, in his architecture. The traditional peasant home is round, 342 with a conical roof supported by a pole that rises in the center of the circle. 341 This is the domestic inner sanctum, a room for eating and talking and get- 181 ting warm by the fire. It is often separated by a circular partitition from 822 sections that serve for storage, cooking, and animals. The compound in which [417] the home stands is surrounded in some regions by a stone or brush fence, a [351] boundary that separates the residential kin group from the whole outside world.

*565 This pattern is more fully developed in the churches, which are round like 181 the huts but larger and contain two concentric circular partitions inside. The 796 346 341 822

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

zamad is highly subjective, and all constellations of *zamad* reflect the interests 565*
and affections of ego. For the quality of kinship can be attributed to persons 156
who are not consanguineal relatives, and this is done without resorting to 602
fictions of affiliation. The term *wandam*, for example, meaning "brother," 565*
is simply applied to any male person of about the same age to whom one feels 156
closely attached. The term *zamad* itself is applied to anyone to whom one 602
feels a close personal tie—even to a mere fellow-countryman whom one 572
happens to meet in a distant region. It is thus not taking too great a liberty to translate the term *zamad* as "close ones."

The primarily subjective nature of the circle of *zamad* derives not only 565*
from the fact that it includes friends as readily as actual blood relatives. With- 602
in the bounds of consanguinity, the composition of the kin group with which 572
a person identifies fluctuates according to his current needs, particularly with 423
respect to land use rights. As Allan Hoben has demonstrated, corporate 565*
descent groups are important among the Amhara in that rights to land use 602
are allocated on the basis of hereditary claims possessed by such groups; but 423
the fact that in this ambilineal descent system each individual may claim 611
multiple active affiliations, and enjoys a relatively wide range of choice, means that the particular corporate descent group with which an individual affiliates in order to claim his rights varies according to what land is subject to disputation. He may claim land via his father, his mother, or his children (through their mothers' rights), and in each case may trace descent back to a variety of apical ancestors.*

The next most inclusive sociological concept beyond the ego-oriented circle 565*
of *zamad* is that of *agar*, or "homeland."* The co-residents of one's *agar*, like 571
those who comprise one's circle of *zamad*, are regarded as forming an im- 823
portant "in-group," outside of which all other persons are a priori rejected. Yet the Amharic concept of homeland, like that of kin, does not refer to a fixed social entity; its referent varies according to the context in which the individual chooses to use it. Thus, as we have seen, the concept of *agar* may be used to refer to one's parish, district, province, or even nation.

A more specialized dichotomy of some prominence in the outlook of the 565*
Amhara peasant hinges on variation in the altitude of homelands. Inhabit- 157
ants of lowlands (*qolaññā*) and dwellers of higher regions (*dēgaññā*) tend 823
to be conceived as polar cultural types. Different sets of habits and traits are attributed to them. Thus, according to one set of stereotypes, the *qolaññā* is viewed as a heavy drinker and hot tempered, while the *dēgaññā* is viewed as a heavy eater and inclined more to litigation than to violence. Again, the

* The less prominent category of *wagan* is intermediate between these two. *Wagan* has a pri- [602]
marily political connotation; it consists of one's consanguineal and affinal kin, friends and close [572]
retainers, all who may be mobilized in the event of political or military competition.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 referents are relative: a man living at 7,500 feet may be considered *qolaññā*
157 by one living at 10,000 and *dēgaññā* by one living at 6,000 feet.
*823 The broadest membership circle that the Amhara peasant normally thinks
*565 in terms of is that of the ethnic group consisting of all Amhara.[10] The ethnic
186 self-conception of the Amhara is one which stresses certain physical and cul-
619 tural characteristics, thanks to which he regards himself as superior to all non-Abyssinian groups in Ethiopia as well as to all non-Ethiopian nationals. With regard to race, the Amhara consider themselves distinctly more handsome than both the white man and the Negro man, to both of whom they apply derisive epithets. Their cultural identity is defined chiefly with respect to religion and language.

186 To all Amhara except a small minority who are Muslim, the name of their
771 ethnic group is synonymous with "Christian." The term signifies Ethiopian Orthodox Christian; for the Amhara peasant, "Catholic" and "Protestant" are equivalent to "Muslim" and "pagan" as terms designating so many kinds of heathens. And being an Ethiopian Christian is to the Amhara a mark of superiority in at least two respects: it means belonging to a chosen people, heirs to the Jews and sole bearers of authentic Christianity; and it means being an adept in praying and fasting, which to the Amhara are peculiarly Abyssinian arts. This orientation has motivated a certain amount of exclusion-
[798] ism vis-à-vis non-Christian Ethiopians. The latter are disdained because they are not Christian, while at the same time the particularistic cast of Abyssinian Christianity has made the Amhara somewhat reluctant to proselytize and
186 admit non-Abyssinians to the fold. A similar exclusiveness colors the Amhara's sentiments about his language. Knowledge of Amharic is considered another index of superiority, and the Amhara look down on Ethiopians who do not speak Amharic or who speak it with an accent.

The Amhara claim superiority over other Ethiopian peoples in connection with certain other aspects of culture besides religion and language, although most Amhara peasants have very little knowledge about the other ethnic groups in the country.[11] Occupational hunters and pastoral nomads are ridiculed, for example, because of their ignorance of the arts of farming and of eating *ĭnjarā*. Vis-à-vis Europeans, on the other hand, the Amhara's self-image tends to stress qualities of bravery and toughness. Insofar as he has had contact with foreigners, the Amhara has become self-conscious about his rugged way of life—his hot foods, endurance on trips, courage in revenge, and virile longevity—and looks down on the softness of the European.

Being an Amhara is thus belonging to a superior category of human beings. This is not simple ethnocentrism; it reflects rather a basically aristocratic orientation that is repeated within the Amhara fold. It is not only members of other ethnic and religious groups who are considered inferior,

*787 *quently required. Depending upon the contingency being
*783 539 investigated, the names of other individuals may also be
[55] included; for example, in divination concerning litiga-
tion, the judge's name is asked.

[805] Dates. The Amhara group years into cycles of four,
*[192] naming each year after one of the four evangelists. Thus,
1956 is the year (zemene), of Yowhanis, 1957 of Matiyows,
1958 of Markows, 1959 of Lukows, 1960 of Yowhanis, and
so on. Each year is assigned a numerical value (for ex-
ample, zemene Yowhanis is two). Months, days, and di-
urnal count (day is six, night is fourteen) each are
numbered.

• [823] Directions. Each of the eight cardinal and inter-
mediary points is numbered.

The numerical values of all required input informa-
tion are totled, and this total is then divided by a fac-
tor indicated in the text. The debtera's goal is the
numerical remainder of this division; it is this figure
that indicates which of the text's numbered entires is
relevant to the subject (that is, the person about whom
the debtera is divining).

*787 Broadly speaking, there are two categories of
539 awdunigist texts. The first consists of largely redun-
*[192] dant "astrological" (kokob) texts. These texts are based
on the assumption that the course of any person's life
on earth can be revealed by learning with which of twelve

*756 *787 *793 from the debtera's perspective. Beginning with simple herbal remedies and ending with ganel pulling, the awakiy debtera's moral compromises are gradual and continuous. Although ganel pulling represents his only direct contact with demon helpers, his previous and continuing kifat performances make the debtera no stranger to the casuistry of ganel complicity. Beyond this, however, there is an important moral unity to the debtera's abinet works, whether they are produced by the power of divine beings or ganels. An abinet career is founded on a debtera's readiness to conceive of supernaturally derived power as a morally neutral commodity. As he exploits such power, he is constrained less by its intrinsic moral character than by its instrumental limitations. The debtera's accomplishment is to transmute the moral nature of the power he depends upon for his works. This he does by exerting his will over it, and directing it onto the objects and contingencies that he has selected.

*755 *793 778 792 * 823 *[192] Inviolability of Divine Power: The Atmakiy. The goodness (moges) of divine power is unblemished and its enjoyment is determined by divine will (yi'Igziyabiher yimozgin). The attitude of the pious man towards this will is supplicatory; towards this power, he is a passive recipient and a disinterested custodian. In a medical context, the atmakiy is exemplary. The atmakiy

*755 778 823 *[793] [792] ("baptizer") is a priest or monk who provides sanctified healing waters for sickmen. By reading from appropriate liturgical texts, any literate ecclesiastic can sanctify ordinary water drawn from a river, or the water of a spring (tebel) known to have divine curing powers. Sanctified common water is generally dispensed in the courtyard of a church, by a resident cleric serving as atmakiy for the occasion. No atmakiy has exclusive rights to the tebel at which he works, since he is only the representative of the church or monastery in whose parish the tebel is located. An atmakiy provides no medical services beyond dispensing sanctified water or overseeing the tebel. According to the atmakiy, as the sickman bathes, the divine fires of the water repel the ganels responsible for his ailment. *[192] The layman, however, does not conceive the effectiveness of these waters so narrowly, but sees them as the medium for a divine grace (moges) unbounded by specific etiological notions. Consequently, although sanctified waters are used most commonly against madness (ibidet) and epilepsy (ganel yazow), both caused by ganels, they are also applied against serious, chronic ailments with which ganels are not generally associated (e.g., leprosy). Usually the sickman turns to sanctified waters as a last resort, after he has exhausted all other therapies he can afford. A sickman continues to bathe with the waters of a single church or tebel, until he has

*755 obtained a remission of his symptoms, or concedes that
778
• 823 these particular waters are inadequate to his special needs. Tebel waters are much stronger than ordinary water, therapeutic failure with common water is generally followed with baths at a nearby tebel. Should the sickman likewise fail to obtain a cure here, often he journeys out to test the famous tebel springs about which he learns along the way. Some springs are known to be particularly effective against specific ailments, but, laymen are generally uncertain whether the effects of sanctified waters are cumulative or whether it is the divine grace of a single tebel that a sickman must seek.[39]

*756 Manipulation of Divine Power: The Debtera. In con-
*793 trast, the debtera's attitude towards divine power and divine will is largely manipulative, in spite of his supplicatory recitations. He works to abstract this power (through the mechanical application of verbal formulae, augmented by asmat), concentrate it (though the non-verbal elaborations of his abinet), and direct it (according to the demands of commerce and the indica-

[39] Occasionally, the sickman responds to a tebel with convulsive behavior, as the ganel afflicting him agonizes about.

734 his hamlet to become a mendicant, begging from alms-
[735] givers at the gates of large and famous churches. Even
[823] the sickman whose economic circumstances enable him to
[778] remain at home may depart, to seek an efficacious tebel spring, once locally available therapies prove ineffective.

*753 Among the ailments of this category, leprosy is
734 considered particularly loathsome. In the abstract, it is associated with a hereditary vector; in practice, the leper's neighbors fear contact with him, and the sickman who remains at home is physically segregated in a hut of
[582] his own, away from other residents of the hamlet. Be-
[166] cause marriages are difficult to arrange for the primary relatives of lepers, the son of a leper frequently chooses to move away from the paternal hamlet to some place where his family's affliction is unknown.

*753 The absence of more profound moral consequences for either category of ailment can be explained, first, by the fact that associations existing between the sickman and sanction-wielding supernaturals are unaffected by either illness or cure, since these maladies are linked to non-purposive pathogenic agencies, such as gerifta
* [755] and likift. Further, effective cures are either secular,
* [757] and thus require the therapeutic assistance of no
[778] sanction-wielding supernaturals, or, in the case of tebel therapies, rely on only the socially sanctioned supernaturals of the Church.

137 areas, the wild olive, wäyra, is preferred, because it is
313 available, a hardwood, yet not difficult to split. Ease of splitting is always a most important consideration because of the population's simple tools and disinclination to expend effort to change what nature provides. Another olive, the wanza (Cordia abyssinica, a coarsely porous light wood), is popular for smoking out beer jars and other pottery before and after use. The yellow, cherry-like olive is one of the available wild fruit trees.

On lower levels of plateau elevation, the acacia known as grar is found in many varieties, often as the "umbrella tree". Generally the wood is hard, used in construction, and even more popular as fuel, especially as charcoal for firing pottery. Lowland trees include the termite-resistant Natal yellow pine, the giant sycamore, mimosa(also called grar), gum trees, lemon, and a small size banana.

137 One of the most popular trees, especially in the larger
● 824 centers of population on the plateau, was imported by Em-
177 peror Menelik II about half a century ago: the odoriferous, water-holding eucalyptus, called bahēr zaf (lit. the tree from overseas). Although there are no real forests of it, it is the most noticeable tree in Ethiopia, planted around houses, in wooded clumps between urban sections, towering above the native plateau trees. It grows so fast that in some areas it can be "harvested", primarily for construction purposes, after only five years.

137 A common sight on lower slopes is the euphorbia, qul-
278 qual, which resembles an immense, spiny chandelier with
824 multiple branches. Its milky sap is used in some native

137 remedies. The nutmeg tree, tosiya, is also medicinal, and
● 824 the Kosso tree is widely used against tapeworm. Common sights include the reddish ret, a cactus; and just as soon as the rainy season ends, the yellow daisy, adäy abäba carpets the landscape, heralding the masqal holiday. Hence it
136 is also called mäsqäl abäba. A study of the FAUNA connections between Ethiopia and surrounding areas contributes significantly to the understanding of Ethiopia's cultures from ancient times to the present.

The last remnant of the prehistoric belt of tropical forest that once stretched from Africa to India, is found today in Dhofar, Southern Arabia. There, in the Gara mountains, Bertram Thomas collected fossil fauna which is definitely Ethiopic and which also evidences links to southern India.[8] Animal husbandry in Yemen in prehistoric times was apparently based on hump-necked cattle of Indian origin. This cattle complex reached Africa late, probably as late
[231] as 1000 B.C.[9] To this day, the cattle of Ethiopia is hump-necked, though cave paintings clearly show domestic cattle without humps.

171 Social and religious regulations associated with the
231 cattle complex among the Cushitic-speaking tribesmen of southern Ethiopia, are very similar to sets of the same regulations among the Gara tribesmen of Dhofar. Both despise hunters and artisans, but also consider agriculture a most ignoble occupation.

8. Coon: Southern Arabia. Papers of the Peabody Museum, Vol. 20., 1943, p. 209.
9. Ibid.

342 sega byet - where meat is stored after sundrying in strips;

wäṭ byet - the kitchen hut;

gemja byet - the "treasury" house, general storehouse of tools and weapons, drums, decorations.

ṭej byet - honeymead brewery; talla byet - beer brewery, worked by women.

engeda byet- guest hut;

adarash - reception hut, larger, less solid, used for banqueting;

mänyeta byet - (lit. bedroom house), the master's bedroom hut;

"mad byet" - dining hut for daily dining.

565 The noble also has carpets ("sägaja") to sit on or,
352 in feudal tents, to use as tapestry. These are carried from long distances, where specialists live, or are imported. He also has hardwood stools ("dekkwa") to sit on, cut out of solid tree trunks. In a wooden storage box he has one or several burnos, and one or several "kaba" (a dark, woolen mantle). Guests receive their coffee in small imported glazed china cups instead of clay ones, and the reed table is a "massob worq", with dyed braids of imported dyes, in geometric designs.

824 C. What Nature Provides: Lumbering, Hunting, Fishing,
461 Collecting

Much of what little ingenuity goes into Amhara material culture is applied to the direct exploitation of natural resources. He would rather spend days and weeks

824 461 searching for suitably shaped hard or soft saplings and other woods and certain herbs, than perform carpentry or much transplanting. Apart from saddle-making, the alga-bed, and simple musical instruments, one can hardly speak of any carpentry.

824 313 In preparation for housebuilding and other activities connected with lumbering, the timber provided by nature is divided, in the Amhara view, into two major categories: Male, i.e. hard wood or strong wood; Female or soft, less consistent, or easily pliable woods. Heaviness or lightness are not major categories (as in Western countries).

Male woods ("wandē enchāt") and their uses include the following:

Wild Olive Tree ("wāyra") (olea chrysophylla), one of the hardest; often heavy and massive, found on the edge of forests, brown-black in color, quite oily. Used for construction on plateau, e.g. as saplings for walls, rafters, etc. The small twigs are in common use as "toothbrushes". They are chewed and used to clean teeth and polish gums, as a leisure-time activity after meals.

[515]

"Wanza" (Cordia abyssinica), a light but hard wood which is found very commonly and is therefore popular; used to make the yokes of oxen, saddles, low, round chairs and other equipment that takes much punishment in use, such as riflestocks when the original has broken.

"Wulkeffa" (Dombeya Bruceana), very hard, used for clubs, e.g. as pestle in the women's crushing of barley.

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313

"Balla", after weeks of searching, a strong tree trunk is selected, after weeks of searching, to serve as center port for the new tuqul.

"Tequr enchät" (Pygeum Africanum), actually light red (lit. black wood), a porous hardwood, commonly available, which seasons well.

[278
589]

Rosewood, "Kosso" (Brayera anthelmintica) the search for which is a major occupation and livelihood of poor widows, since the bark and twigs are consumed against tapeworm. It is a heavy wood which can take a fine polish, thus more commonly used in noble homes. It is commonly available, at edge of "dega" upland forest.

"qarqaha", a bamboo of river valleys, can grow up to 5" in diameter, commonly used as major posts in tents of feudal lords during their military campaigns.

"yäbäraha shemäl" (bambusa abyssinica), lit. "bamboo of the jungle", a strong bamboo from the qolla lowland, traded from there in former times to serve as a staff for the spear; now used by shepherds as staff, and to fend off dogs, also for some simple furniture.

Male wood is also called "täbot enchät" because hardwood is used to make the tabot, the sacred tablet inscribed with the name of a church, placed in the inner sanctum, symbolizing the Ark of Moses in the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem.

[778]

824 313 Female woods ("enest enchat") are preferred and much more used than hardwoods, if the purposes permit, because they are more easily worked:

"Ted" (Juniperus Procera), or (Juniperus Phoenicoea) pencil cedar, is popular as a tall conifer, easy to split, moisture-resistent in rainy season, termite-resistent. It is one of the most important woods, and the only one of the traditional woods that is actually planted and protected by cut thornbushes against goats (which like to feed on the nursling). The grown tree resembles the cypress, and is the landmark of churches, churchyards and church schools. Thus the tree assumes a kind of sacredness, perhaps since pre-Christian times. In the tuqul it is often used as the horizontal, transversal beam. [778]

"Zigba" (Podocarpus elongata, or, Podocarpus gracilor) is a tall conifer of similar properties, with stringy, tough wood, used to make the alga bedsteads and other furniture.

"Ketketta" (Dodonea viscosa) is used for small carpentry, walking sticks; due to its slightly resinous but long-lasting qualities for torch parade at Masqal or wedding festivities. The leaves have household uses. [313]

"Qwara" (Erytrina tomentosa), used for slats in simple carpentry.

824 313 417 "Qenchub" bush, which resembles the euphorbia but grows at higher altitudes and is tougher, is cut and

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placed on the outside of garden or hamlet-fences, to discourage hyenas, to keep livestock inside -- a natural barbed wire.

Eucalyptus tree ("bahēr zaf") has become thoroughly rooted in Ethiopia. It is used in construction, especially of the more urban dwellings, as urban fuel, and its blue smoke and aroma is an early morning and evening feature of every town and market-town, where it is a major trade item. During the rainy season it grows so fast that a mature tree can be "harvested" 5 years after the nursling stage. Since it sells for $3-5 Ethiopian, (US $1-2) it is the most planted tree in Ethiopia today. The peasant also likes to use the odoriferous branches and leaves to cover the "dass" the festivity-shelter on marriages, etc., and the leafy branch as chera, flyswitch. Entire hillsides may be seen planted with this tree.

Female woods are also used for other indispensable products:

[386]

Ink - is made from the fruit of the "tämbälal" (Jasminum floribundum) tree, and its timer is used for the stock of the single-string violin, the masenqo. (But imported blue ink called "nil" is preferred by däbtära scribes.)

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Fibre - for basketry, roof-hoops, etc. is obtained from the "wärqē" (musa ensete) (also called "enset") at lower altitudes, used especially for cords. Rope "gämäd" is made from the bark cut

824 [283] from a living, corky, African Baobab (Adansonia digitata), called "demma". Rope is also made from a tropical creeper of lower altitudes, called [324] "aräg", or of reed fibers. Thatching grass of excellent quality is obtained from a strong, tall reed called "fäla" which resembles papyrus and [293] grows on the shore of lakes. The "gecha" reed grows on the shore of rivers and is used to make the famous sun-umbrellas owned by every rural housewife, though once the privilege of kings and nobles.

[372] Fuel - Charcoal for firing pottery and smithing is made from the big "amfar" tree. Now also from the eucalyptus tree, but in rural areas the umbrella tree; "grar" is preferred because it does not have to be paid for.

[384] Dyestuff - the bark of the "wäyba" tree was used to make the yellow dye for the togas of monks, now only in the more remote, change-resisting monasteries (most others wear white).

[222] Many other basic necessities for life and comfort are also obtained by <u>collecting</u>, by remembering where in the bush one has encountered the right kind or shape of plant, rather than planting and caring for it in gardens.

[388] Soap - is obtained in rural areas from the crushed fruit of the "endod" bush (Phytolacca Abyssinica).

824 281 Tannin for tanning and curing hides - is obtained from the bark of the "beshesha" bush; from the

824 [281] yellow fruit of an "embway" bush an astringent is made for depilation of hides.

[261] Butter is preserved and "perfumed" by boiling it with the leaves of the "ades" (myrtle) bush.

[263] Wild spice - used to flavor the flat taste of porridge during the long lenten fasting season, is obtained from a daisy-like flower "komär" with strongly scented foliage resembling camomile. But because it is "wild" it is despised at other times.

[262] Wild oil - in case of crop failure, "suf", sunflower seed (Carthamus tinctorus) is crushed for edible oil.

222 554 The element of shame at collecting rather than planting thus affects only those items directly connected with food consumption. The reason is that this would class the consumer with one who "hunts for subsistence", and such hunters are considered at the lowest social stratum.

Therefore, very little fruit is consumed by the Amhara, in view of the absence of any pattern of planting orchards. Even the wiesspread fig tree, planted for ages past for its broad shade, and used by ancient kings and judges when judging legal cases, is largely used for food only by children, ex-slaves and birds. Among the wild fruit consumed by these groups, are:

wild cherry - "gaba", a spiny tree with small fruit.

wild orange - "koshäm" (rumex abissinica), with sour fruit.

wild mulberry - "enjoriya", resembled blackberry, grows along rivers.

"gämärro" - (Capparis tomentosa), with edible red fruit.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

291 are only of the last items to increase in prestige in very recent years, due to growing imitation of living patters of Addis Ababa. Coptic churches still require removal of footgear.

G. Sanitation.

515 Two traditional traits of health care and sanitation have already been mentioned in connection with the direct use of natural products: polishing teeth, and washing clothes.

[824] Hardwood twigs such as wild olive (Olea chrysophylla) called "wäyra", or of the "ahya" or "ächeme" bush (also softer ones of the type that Somali use in lower elevations) are held between the lips, by men or women, after meals. Even old men (in rural Ethiopia this means men over fifty) have most of their teeth as a result, with little sign of wear or decay. Much of this is due to this habit of polishing teeth and gums at odd moments, much as an American might chew gum. Before this polishing, the end of the twig to be used is masticated thoroughly, and the fibrous ends are then used. The Amhara belief is that this keeps the teeth in sharp condition--they do not do it with the idea of cleaning food remnants out of the mouth. The mental association is than of a bird sharpening its beak.

[296] Already noted also is the use of the potash content
[824] of the seed of the "endod" bush (Hircunia abyssinica, or, Phytolacca abyssinica), for laundering and washing.

Little more positive statements can be made about sanitation. When water is short in the dry season, which

281 Egypt since ancient times. Dyeing usually red, by means of native plants, accompanies the tanning process, for any good skin that is to be further manufactured.

Depilation is achieved by exposing the skin to a carefully controlled "sweating" process of natural putrefaction. A cowskin is soaked in water for 3 days, then dried and soaked in cow's urine for 3 days. The hair is thus loosened, the skin softened, so that it responds to easy depilation by rubbing with astringent plants:

[824] "embwaçho" - (Solanum margitanum)

"embway" - (Rumex alismafolius), a thistle, the crushed yellow fruit of which also acts as a preservative for the skin, since it contains tannin.

Then the skin is stretched tight on wooden pegs, to dry in the sun for one day. It is then rubbed with a stone for one day, which removes the last remaining hair except for a hairline or raised skin which is purposely left to indicate the pattern for the cutting that will take place later. The skin is then rubbed for one day with lemon (which is commonly available) for a pickling effect.

It is now ready for dyeing. Sometimes, especially in the case of smaller (e.g. goat) skins, the dye is first prepared by boiling the plants in clay pots (the bark of the "qerate" or other bush, or "enqoy" seed mixed with lemon juice), and then soaking and drying the skin several times after the dye has cooled. Cowskins are more often dyed by leaving them stretched and rubbing with the bark of the "beshesha" tree or leaves of the"qärät" (or "qerate") bush, for one day.

796 holy day of the year, "Mäsqäl", Feast of the Cross, on the 17th, and all who can prepare new garments. The countryside is freshly washed from 3 months of rains, and the sun is welcomed. It seems as if nature herself is beginning a new year, another annual cycle.

From St. John's Day, the first day of the year, children begin to gather the plentiful wildflowers, and to bring them to kinfolk across brooks which are again [87] passable. These bouquets of daisies, "Mäsqäl abäba" i.e. Mäsqäl flower, are considered "enqutatash" (lit. take this tribute). This symbolism is linked to the first plant brought by the dove to the ark of Noah after the floods, which plant is said to have been the flower "engecha"; others say it is because King Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba a pearl of the type "enqwe".

In return, the children expect promises of gifts of new clothing for the Masqal feast. Even adults give "gursha" gifts to each other, of food or other items, and the increasingly generous sunshine and raised level of emotion inclines to generosity. Elders and old women who have turned nun bless every visiting kinsman with the [88] formula:

"Blessed be He, (who) from time to time (one year to the next) has let you pass (in good fortune)."

796 The "Mäsqäl" Feast of the Cross, in Abyssinian 776 church tradition, dated back to an early Christian Queen "Eleni" (Helena) who sponsored an expedition to Palestine to seek the true cross of the curcifixion. When she found it, she decided to announce the joyous news to her

759 upland, he notices and remembers the location of plants and roots, which supply him with much of his pharmacopeia. His sense of direction is trained and therefore seems uncanny to the layman. Moreover, not infrequently he actually transplants certain wild plants, so that he can always find them; sufficiently far from residential habitations so that they are not easily found or consumed by cattle or playful boys. A good rule for distance is how far the crowing of a rooster can be heard - for some plants are believed to lose their magical power if disturbed by this sound.

[825 824]

The "woggesha" usually learns his craft from his father, while serving him as apprentice. But at present the most popular "woggesha" in the town of Gondar is a well-known former bandit, who has gained an enviable reputation as a skilled surgeon. The "woggesha" is usually a diplomat in his human relations, much like the old-time Western family doctor. He usually tries to remain on good terms with the local church, and often invites the local dabtara to dinner at his house, especially on saints' days, to avoid their competitive hostility and to discuss some cases on a "professional" level.

In his capacity as surgeon, the "woggesha" sets fractures, cuts abscesses, pulls teeth (now with European pliers). But some of his practices are severely condemned by European doctors who object particularly to the woggesha's frequent ripping out of part of the soft palate to cure tonsilitis and chronic sore throat, often causing blood poisoning. Nevertheless, the present government still permits the woggesha to function "in his own district", for otherwise most people would be left without any medical empiricist.

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751 their happiness from showing. Eating and drinking in the open makes one
754 extremely vulnerable, because this arouses buda's greed, and at the
776 same time makes it easier to penetrate the victim's body, through the wide open mouth and unguarded nose. Therefore, old-time Amhara cover their faces when eating in front of strangers.

751 This attempt to reduce vulnerability is closely related to some
754 of the "language of the shamma" (toga). In the presence of strangers,
291 this can be draped in the fashion that indicates "reserve" - covering the mouth, or even nose and mouth, with the front section of the toga, which has been draped in a turtleneck. When travelling in strange districts, which are doubly dangerous because of cast-out buda spirits hidden by exorcisers along trails, a strong-smelling
[824] herb pushed in the nostril, is often used as a prophylactic. The most commonly used of these herbs is "tena adam" (lit. health of Adam, i.e. mankind). The mouth should be kept closed, or covered. In a fearful situation, he may say "shadow, may it not fall on me". Touching iron, considered specially "strong", also helps. Children are warned to stay away from strangers, and never to leave a baby unattended, lest "buda will eat you". The term "eat" is regularly used for buda possession (not for zar possession), for it indicates consumption.

751 Typhus ("talalafi basheta") and severe epilepsy ("yabuda basheta")
754 the latter literally ascribed to buda (lit. buda disease) are the most
174 common ailments promptly diagnosed as "buda" "eating". Evidently
[164] Amhara doctors long ago observed that covering the mouth and nose and staying away from possibly infected strangers reduced the exposure to certain contagious diseases; they then proceeded to envelop this observation in the culture pattern, including the draping of the toga and stopping up the nose, and not eating uncovered in the presence of strangers. But they also fitted this pattern into their cosmology.

754 158 of her blood, her health, life itself. The eyes of the victim are glazed, the nostrils distended, the face may wear a ghastly smile, and the body may be inflexible, or else in a nervous tremor. Relatives and "bread-companions" become terrified and run to the exorciser, often a dabtara, bringing him a gift called "ageba" (lit. entrance, i.e. visiting fee). By the time he arrives, the victim may be in contortions on the ground - being eaten by the buda. Some patients may try to hurt themselves, though others do not. When restrained, the patient may fight against the restraint, and women patients bite and scratch the restrainers.

Another classic case is total apathy, refusal to eat, and resistance even to the zar doctor, followed by sudden revival at night and the urge to run out and roam with the hyenas. Zar doctors explain this as a "zar being attached by a buda". An exorciser is then called in.

A common symptom of less violent character is nosebleed, which is very common. Persons vulnerable to this take care to stuff smelly plants into the nose when on the trail. Such protective plants are collectively called "yäbuda reyan" (smells against the buda). [824]

[851] Boys, when hazing the children of an ironsmith or suspected sorcerer sometimes force garlic ("chequn") into the nose of the child with such force as to cause nosebleed, saying "now give up the blood you have stolen". Garlic is believed to have the power 754 824 to stop a buda and is therefore buried under the door of a suspected sorcerer, e.g. an itinerant smith travelling his circuit of customers; this is believed toprevent the buda from going out at night "to feed".

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

241 variety) and linseed is grown in most parts of it. Where more shelter exists lentils and chick-pea are also planted, and another low-growing leguminous crop called *gwayo*, which is used only as a cattle fodder as it is believed to [824] cause softening of the bones in man! The barley is planted early and the other crops late in the main rainy season (June–September). Barley is sometimes also planted in the early rains, which are very uncertain here but usually begin in February or March. In this area however the early crop rarely gives a good return and sometimes fails completely. The plateau land, after being cultivated for a few years (often until it shows obvious signs of exhaustion), is fallowed for a period which varies widely according to the type of soil, but may be as long as five or seven years.

Down in the gorges, where the climate is appreciably milder, and where a primitive sort of irrigation can be practised on the level shelves, both chick-pea and lentils flourish. Some *teff* (a grass-like cereal greatly favoured for making the local bread) can be grown, as well as wheat and barley. Shelf cultivation seems as a rule to be continuous, perhaps because of the fresh sediment spread annually over the fields by rain and irrigation. In the lower parts of the gorges some maize and millet (*Sorghum*) can be found, but almost the whole of the area included on the map is too high for these crops. Other gorge products, unknown on the plateau, are tomatoes, chillies, coffee and *gesho*—a shrub whose leaves are used for fermenting the local beer (*talla*) and honey-wine (*tej*). Bananas, for no obvious reason, are not grown, but are brought to Debra Berhan market from the low country beyond the eastern escarpment.

The agricultural methods of the Ethiopians are far more advanced than those of any surrounding territory and do not belong to Africa. They can be paralleled among the west-Asian peasantry, and a close comparison with the methods of the Yemen mountain people might be especially fruitful. It was from this latter region that the Ethiopians' ancestors emigrated, before the [177] Christian era, and it is extremely probable that they brought with them both implements and a knowledge of techniques. Hence perhaps the use of the plough, universal among highland Ethiopians, and their skill in irrigation and terracing.

[462] Farming in Ethiopia is primarily the man's and not the woman's work, the standard female occupation, apart from household cares, being spinning. [283] (Cotton is widely grown in the lowlands.) The farmers spend most of their lives at the plough, a one-handled variety drawn by a yoke of oxen. In their [231] right hand they carry a whip with a short handle and long, heavy thong which they continually whirl and crack above the heads of the oxen, to whom, at the same time, they address an endless succession of strange howls and shouts, curses and imprecations. New or long-fallowed grassland is broken in with the plough in the dry season. This complicated process (known as *gei*) involves first scratching the ground in several directions to dislodge the turf, next gathering the sods into numerous heaps, then setting fire to these so that grass and weeds are gradually burnt out, and finally spreading out the soil again. But the great time for ploughing comes after the main rains have reduced the countryside to a sea of soft, dark mud. At this season the fields are peppered with ploughmen. Each successive sowing must be prepared

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

*278 222 iron, or in the "Arab" style, or the product of Falasha smiths, that it be double-edged, or have a handle of horn or some exotic wood. Similarly, recipes requiring roots may state that they be dug with a spade of specified characteristics, or with a digging stick of special wood. As for the gatherer, in some recipes, he is a vir-
[BD] gin boy, in others naked or facing east. Circumstantially, recipes established the day of the week on which the herbal may be obtained, and numerological details, such as the number of locations from which a particular herbal is to be gathered, and the number of samples to be taken from
[788] each place. Finally, the gatherer may be required to recite, and perhaps repeat, a designated common prayer before cutting or digging the botanical.

*278 824 Once gathered, medicaments must be processed using the equipment and following the procedures specified by the recipe as being necessary for releasing the healing powers from their botanical confinement and for guarding them from dilution or loss. Botanicals may be required fresh or dried, crushed or ground or whole, soaked or decocted or simply mixed with other medicaments, strained through cloth or not further refined. Occasionally, recipes direct that medicaments be cooked with mead or distilled spirits, but it is the liquid (or tincture) which is discarded. In other recipes, botanicals, particularly leaves, require no processing other than being chewed or

*278 rubbed across the palm (releasing the juices to be licked
824 up). Other herbals must be burned or boiled before becoming therapeutically active, in smoke or vapor.

*278 Both absolute and relative measurements are used.
801 Among the former are mentioned handfuls, finger-joint
804 lengths, and weights equivalent to a small egg. Relative measurements are most common during decocting. Required ratios suggest a numerological component here, reduction from seven volumes to one being the most frequently used ratio. Numerological elements appear elsewhere during processing, as when a recipe required, as a final step in processing, that the preparation be rolled into seven portions, or that the materia medica be steeped for seven days.

*278 Equipment used for processing medicaments is of
415 common domestic origin, sometimes specified unused (e.g., pots for decocting, cloth for straining), sometimes worn (e.g., pitted mortars for grinding). Generally, the containers used cannot be allowed to rest directly upon the ground, but must sit upon stones, whose number and provenience (usually riverine) are likewise specified by the recipe.

*278 In addition to preparations consumed orally, herbalists provide fumitories, inhalents, instillations, gargles, lotions, poultices, and therapeutic amulets.

*278 Herbal therapies further indicate the appropriate
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through the chirurgeon's massage.

Bleeding is regarded as a fatiguing experience for the client, and must be followed by a rest of two or three days. Bleeding for ras mitat is considered an exception, and no rest is required. However, the sickman is particularly vulnerable to gerifta during recuperation and, so, cannot leave his hut for fear of a relapse.

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The cupper is unique among lay practitioners in several respects. First, he occasionally works under the direction of another category of practitioner, the tagan (wogeyša). Second, there are special physical requirements; the agamiy must have all of his incisors, and the upper and lower teeth must meet in an unbroken plane. Third, the agamiy exposes himself to certain dangers in the performance of this therapy. Because he must remove a pathogenic substance through the medium of the sickman's blood, there is the danger that, should any of the blood enter his own mouth, the agamiy may himself fall ill with the ailment he is treating. In addition, contact with this blood threatens those chronic ailments from which the sickman suffers (such as the rheumatoid pains associated with kitin, syphilis).

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The agamiy's cup is a short, hollow bovine horn, whose tip has been removed. Selected leaves, which have been dried and then steeped to make them pliable, are

[824]

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Ambara MP5
Begemder

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been mixed together with other ingredients (such as sacramental oil, juice or sap, animal blood or urine). The recipe further states which segments of the text (e.g., asmat) are to be represented in a contrasting [824] color (usually red). Finally, the botanical variety of reed with which the text is written may be determined also.

Beyond the effects gained from the manufacture of the digam itself, the text's goals are further augmented by materials which are included in the kitab, together [237] with the digam. These include, as indicated by the debtera's recipe, botanicals, often together with such exotic ingredients as a designated number of hairs from a lion's mane. The outer cover of the kitab is made of leather, but a debtera must determine if it should come from a wild or domestic animal, and, if the latter, what its sex and color should be. The digam is sewn into this, but whether the stitch should be to the right or to the left, whether the thread should be cotton or silk, and what its color should be, must also be con- [801] sidered first. The number of stitches to be made is likewise relevant, for numerological considerations suffuse the entire process of making the kitab. Nor are the makers of the kitab neglected; whether the debtera should be sexually continent before writing the digam, whether the cord by which the kitab is worn should be

136 The lowland is also the habitat of poisonous snakes, rare on the upland. They are usually lumped under the name "yäqolla ebäb" (lowland snake), and include the very poisonous cobra ("funjit"). This species is avoided, but the large, non-poisonous python ("zändo") is prized for its skin and is an export item sought out by some hunters.

136 364 A second category of fauna are the animals sometimes referred to by foreigners as the "sanitation squad". They protect the health of the population by cleaning up carcasses of donkeys left dead in their tracks; leftovers from butchering, etc. No one ever hunts these animals, though everyone is familiar with them, as they or their traces are common sights in urban as well as rural areas. It is only since the increase in motor traffic that hyenas no longer penetrate at night into the heart of Addis Ababa itself. These animals include:

136 [825] Hyena ("djebb"), spotted, often quite large, feeds mainly on carrion but on occasion attacks domestic animals, small children, and even shepherds [754] sleeping in the open. In black magic, the hyena is "ridden" by the buda spirit, and many Amhara believe that they can distinguish the call of a real hyena from one into which a blacksmith has turned himself. This is why no one will open his hut at night to a strange. Hyena holes are also found in potter's fields, where the poor and strangers are buried outside churchyards, for hyenas smell out and eat recently buried corpses. Passers-by piously try to fill the holes with stones to prevent the hyenas from returning.

136 Jackal ("qäbbäro"), common north of Lake Tana, near Gondar and in most other parts of Ethiopia. Its nocturnal habits are similar to those of the hyena, and it also burrows into graves.

Vultures ("amora"), This term includes all carrion-eating birds, and other birds of prey. Among Carrion-eaters are: the ever-present, sharp-eyed fork-tailed hawk ("ṭenb amora") which will swoop down and steal meat away from a man in the middle of the town if he is not quick to protect it; a white-bodied water-bird (näch amora) (including the "shemäla", a kind of heron) who competes with fishermen in the rainy season; "warda", the blackbird (merlo) that cleans up after human feasts.

Crow ("qura"), named after its cry. This bird is most often seen in back yards or cleaning up the market area after a market day. Thus, a day when no market takes place, is called "Day of the Crow's market" ("yäqura gäbäya"). Pious individuals remember the crow as one of Noah's pets and call a variety that has a white spot on its head, "Noah's crow" (yänoa qura). [825]

136 241 A third category of wild animals includes those that endanger the crops. The farmer sends his children to watch for these from the tops of umbrella trees, and the boys use their fiber-and-pebble slingshots against them. These include:

Baboon ("zendjäro"), very unpopular because a troop can

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destroy the crops of a village in a week. Shouting is not sufficient to scare them off when there are many. When the small baboon families held off by the boys threaten to grow into a troop, farmers use their rifles.

Hare ("ṭenchäl") is also called the "enemy of ṭiff" because it likes to feed on that main crop of the farmer. It is a nocturnal animal, perhaps because of its natural enemies, the ever-present birds of prey.

Yellow Sparrow ("mänäkusit"), lit. "little monk", because its yellow coloring resembles the saffron toga formerly worn by monks.

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Flax snake ("yätalba ebäb") is of the light-brown color of flax-seed, on which it likes to feed. It is also called "kurfafeya", because when disturbed, it makes a sound like "fuff". Its bite is considered mildly poisonous by the Amhara but requiring the services of a native "wogäsha" (surgeon), who thus acquires a reputation for his "cure" against this actually non-poisonous snake.

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Locust (anbäṭa), occurs less often than the other dangers, but when it comes, in huge swarms of a 3-inch species, the results are devastating, causing major famines. (The usual route of the locust is arrival from the lowland eastern border, through the Great Rift valley (Awash), up the plateau, in January, just after the main harvest. It withdraws to the dry lowlands for egg-

224 Before
535 going on an elephant hunt, for example, he performed the "boasting dance", "fukkara", largely with his shoulders and upper arms, predicting his feats; and his retainers honored him by declaring their confidence in his prowess, jumping up and down in the "hota" dance, chanting repeatedly:

[539] "Elephant-killer, (to) your home-
elephant-killer, take him home".
(Hunter:) Elephant-killer (I am), to home (I'll take him)."
(Retainers:)" When it (the elephant) will be moving,
he will kill it!"

224 The elephant-killer, considered braver than the lion-
554 killer, was called "addo" and given a special decoration to wear on forehead and upper arm by the king or feudal lord. A warrior who had killed a human enemy was called "geday" (lit. killer) and held prestige equal to the elephant-killer. Now that rifles are used in place of spears, such heroes have become more common and decorations among the Amhara have fallen into disuse.

224 Besides the big-game, edible jungle animals mentioned
825 before under "fauna", there are numerous wild game, mainly gazelles and partridges, hunted near human habitations to increase the food supply and for occasional sport:

Ethiopian duiker - "midaqwa", very common near habitations on the woyna dega, an antelope the size of a small goat, often approaching hamlets at dusk. It is considered the "cattle" of the zar spirits, and sacrifice to them is thus called "midaqwa".

[782]

Bushbuck - "dekula", similar but medium-sized ante-

224 lope, reddish, more shy.

825 Ethiopian klipspringer - "sässo", a little mountain antelope resembling the European chamois, with soft, smooth skin. The Amhara is amused by the curious habit of this sociable animal of mixing with herds of tame goats and grazing in their midst, when goats are taken to upper hillsides for pasturage in the rainy season.

[233]

Waterbuck - "defassa", large antelope resembling European red deer in build. Brown color; hers of 5 to 10 usually contain only one old bull. Common near Lake Tana.

Reedbuck - "behor", golden-colored antelope, in bush near water. They like to inhabit a specific small territory, in herds of 5 to 10.

Ethiopian ibex - "walya", very wild, red-speckled, on the dega steep mountains of Semyen subprovince. Not common elsewhere.

825 223 Francolins - "qoq" is the generic name for this family of common wild fowl of the woyna dega; resemble the partridge. Boys are adept at hunting them with slingshot and pebble and run after them until both are exhausted.

[411 867]

Guinea fowl - "zegra" or "jegra", black, lean, fast runner, found near water.

Partridge - "sèrän", common on woyna dega. Wild

825 223 goose "yebra" (anas aegyptiaca).

Quail - "derchet" Perhaps the most common wild fowl very near habitations, but rarely hunted because very small. It is considered a nuisance and a danger because of its habit of hiding in flocks in the tall grass and starting up suddenly, scaring horses and even mules, which is dangerous especially on steep hills. [59]

411 184 Spears, slingshot, and now rifles are used in part-time or sport hunting. Traps ("atmad") and snares are used only by occupational hunting populations living in jungles such as Wolqait and whose pattern of living differs from that of typical Amhara.

222 [412] A noteworthy Amhara exploitative activity is the collecting of pumice rock in riverbeds during the dry season, and thus called "yabaher dengay" (river rock). It is used 135 in grinding and husking. Gold comes mostly from south of old-Amhara territory, where it is found in sand gravels and has been sold in nuggets since ancient times.

241 D. Food Production and Consumption

a.) Agricultural production

In agriculture in general, there are two major variables: environment, and degree of sophistication - i.e. power and its application.

The ecology of Ethiopia's highland plateau, where

59. The English equivalent terms have been taken from Van Rosen, Björn: Game Animals of Ethiopia. 1953.

515 may last 9 months, there is very little bathing, and only hands are washed, in muddy water brought from the river or
514 brook, before and after meals. There are no latrine ditches. Feces are deposited behind thorny bushes 1/4 mile from the hamlet at most, while urination at night proceeds within the hamlet. This practice is followed even in towns and in Addis Ababa. Fortunately the strong sun carbonizes the feces in the dry season, and the strong rain in that season sweeps it away. There is no caste of sweepers, and no attention is paid to human or animal feces, except for the manure of oxen and cows. The latter is hand-pressed into cakes and used as fuel.

364 Hyenas, jackals and vultures are not interfered
825 with, as their services in removing carcasses of animal origin are well appreciated.

165 Abundant sunlight during 9 months of the year, coupled with the scanty clothing of small children, probably gives them their best chance of survival in addition to the long breast-feeding. Nevertheless infant mortality is very high, and in an average family half the babies born die before reaching the age of 5.

164 Flea infestation of humans can be described as
136 complete. This opens the way to flea-born typhus, especially on the highland plateau. Lice are somewhat less general, since they are not regarded by the Amhara as inevitable as fleas. Thus, an Amhara whose hair is infected
136 with lice (e.g. during a stay in prisons which are always
164 lice-infected), he may shave his hair. But louse-born re-
744 lapsing fever epidemics recur from time to time, and the

857 grumble, growl, snarl). It consists of a stick of wood, a foot
524 long, 1/2 inch thick, notched at the thinner end, to which a cord of twisted fibre is attached. This is swung horizontally, above the head, to produce what is regarded as a terrifying sound. It is even used in shepherding, since boys believe it frightens away hyenas and the occasional leopard. During the rainy season, boys play it indoors to amuse each other and haze-tease younger siblings, who are frightened by it.

At the beginning of the light rainy season, when the storks and other birds fly north, children especially girls, form circles and dance rounds, chanting to the flocks of birds:

[539]

> "Stork, our country is well;
> the woman who baked gitta (luxurious wheat bread)
> has died swallowing gitta (i.e. luxury is plentiful).

[825] At harvest time, in November, similar greetings are sung to the birds when they return from the north, from "Jerusalem" in popular belief. The Falashas children express this by singing to departing storks:

[539]

> "How are you?
> The people of Jerusalem (Falashas) are well)."

The Coptic Amhara hold the same belief as to the destination of the birds.

Winter games, i.e. in the rainy season, when children are restricted to the hamlet, include building of makeshift huts, in which they play "man and wife". The girls gather leaves, roll red mud inside, and "bake" cakes. Boys mimic the farmer, weave a hood of reeds, and just as he walks in the rain broadcasting his seeds, so boys broadcast pebbles.

Swimming is a favorite sport of children in the rainy season,

821 animals and evil spirits give birth. It is called "näber wäldalläch" (lit. the leopard has given birth), or "jeb wäldach", (lit. the hyena has had a litter).

823 Volcanic activity, which occurs not infrequently in these mountains that are of young geological age, is interpreted as a threatened repetition of the Biblical event that swallowed Sodom, and is indeed called "Sodom" (another connotation is "greedy").

Geographical directions are taken either from the Geez, e.g. "me'erab" for west (lit. where the sun sets), and "mesraq" for east; or the location of Abyssinian provinces is used: "Semyen" for north, "Azeb" for southwest. South is "däbub" (probably Cushitic).

821 Daytime and nighttime are regarded as two very different phases of the universe, altering radically behavior of natural phenomena, 829 animals, plants, even human behavior. The phrase "the night belongs to the hyena" refers not only to the nightly roaming of that animal, but also to the roaming of evil spirits at night, as well as dangerous strangers and actual bandits. As a consequence, even the hospitable, outgoing householder of the daytime changes to sullen and suspicious behavior if strangers suddenly arrive after dark. When he must leave the hut, he carries a weapon, in the rural areas. Even in Addis Ababa, the official curfew at midnight is little resented by the average Amhara, because of this traditional pattern.

574 576 The period of a week is regarded as a time unit with regard to the primary group and kin visiting. When two members of these groups have not seen each other for more than a week, they greet each other with "endemen sänebätu" (lit. how did you spend the week away).

776 825 The world of the spirits, who also inhabit the universe in large numbers, is believed to be in close relationship with the animal

776 kingdom. The hyena ("jeb") is regarded as acting sometimes as the
825 "horse" of the evil spirit or human sorcerer, sometimes as a werewolf-
like creature, when the evil spirit or human sorcerer assumes its form
at night, or makes use of its powerful, hypnotic eyes to "draw the
[153] blood" magically from the living victim. The concept of the magical
hyena is much used in diagnosis and treatment of mental ailments. It
is the most common wild animal, seen and heard at night, and the holes
it burrows under fresh human graves are regarded as visible evidence
of the character of the hyena. The fear in which the spiritual world
is held is symbolized in the hyena; it is whispered about in connection
with suspected ethnic craft groups such as the smiths; or shouted out
loud in military unison ("yabahalal jebo") in challenge.

825 Aspects of the animal world which cause great "wonderment" among
homespun Amhara "shemagalye" philosophers are types of animal behavior
that seem so human. "Bird language" is given a variety of popular
interpretations (footnote 102). Baboons, which are a constant
annoyance and therefore familiar, are wondered about in part because
of their human-like social organization headed by "great man" chiefs
("ganare").

But it is a great insult to call a person a "creature of Thursday"
(when animals were created, according to the Bible).

186 B. Amhara Ideas about Human Races and Amhara Ethnocentrism.

829 The dualism of the Amhara culture pattern rules also their view
of the human races with which they are familiar, and their own

Footnote 102 - Leslau: Popular Interpretations of Bird Sounds in Ethiopia.
Journal of American Folklore, 1952, Vol. 65,
pp. 361-4.

759 upland, he notices and remembers the location of plants and roots, which supply him with much of his pharmacopeia. His sense of direction is trained and therefore seems uncanny to the layman. Moreover, not infrequently he actually transplants certain wild plants, so that he can always find them; sufficiently far from residential habitations so that they are not easily found or consumed by cattle or playful boys. A good rule for distance is how far the crowing of a rooster can be heard - for some plants are believed to lose their magical power if disturbed by this sound.

[825 824]

The "woggesha" usually learns his craft from his father, while serving him as apprentice. But at present the most popular "woggesha" in the town of Gondar is a well-known former bandit, who has gained an enviable reputation as a skilled surgeon. The "woggesha" is usually a diplomat in his human relations, much like the old-time Western family doctor. He usually tries to remain on good terms with the local church, and often invites the local dabtars to dinner at his house, especially on saints' days, to avoid their competitive hostility and to discuss some cases on a "professional" level.

In his capacity as surgeon, the "woggesha" sets fractures, cuts abscesses, pulls teeth (now with European pliers). But some of his practices are severely condemned by European doctors who object particularly to the woggesha's frequent ripping out of part of the soft palate to cure tonsilitis and chronic sore throat, often causing blood poisoning. Nevertheless, the present government still permits the woggesha to function "in his own district", for otherwise most people would be left without any medical empiricist.

[757]

X-794
T76
753

There are male "zars" and female ones. The latter are considered more dangerous and more difficult to placate. Usually a "zar" spirit prefers to "possess" a human of the opposite sex, which results in a magical coitus, and causes epilectic seizures or catatonic states. In the latter case, usually a woman being "slept with" by a jealous male "zar", she seems drowsy and "turned within herself", disinterested in the environment, forgetting to eat. In the former case, the magical coitus sends her into orgasms of twisted arms and legs; or sometimes, twirling frenziedly; sometimes moving on all fours, emitting raucous sounds, biting the unwary, while being "ridden like a horse" by the "zar".

X-794
T76
825

The "zars" of today are regarded as having geographical homelands. In abyssinia their central location is believed to be in the province of Tigre, where they prefer woodland grottoes on the highland plateau, and where, if taken off guard under certain circumstances, they can become temporarily visible. Some zar doctors even narrow this central headquarters to a locality known as "Halawel" near the existing town of Makalle. On occasion the "zar" spirits there are believed to hold dances, even orgies. But most often they live in families, much like human Abyssinians, though on a superhuman level. They can ride elephants, lions, etc, to whom they refer as "farāsey" (lit. my horse), the same term they use to humans whom they "ride" during possession. But they despise the hyena, which is the "horse" of the evil "buda" spirit. The "cattle" of the zar spirits consists of wild gazelles, antelopes - the wild relatives of cattle domesticated by humans. Zar spirits are fond of peppery sauce ("wot") and "enjāra" bread much like Abyssinians. Tree stumps serve them as tables. They like the flowers and green

[825]

X794 assessed membership fees in the zar congregation headed by that parti-
755 cular zar doctor. The patient thus becomes a devotee of the zar ("yäzar
walaj").

X794 Demands of the individual zars range from very simple to very com-
782 plex. If he is a light-colored zar, he may demand the annual sacrifice
755 of a light-colored goat; if dark, of a black goat. Frequently the
776 demand includes personal attire for the possessed, such as certain trinkets, glass bead necklaces, metal hairpins, specific hairstyles - all of them attention-getters. The zar warns that he will come and check on the observance of these demands from time to time, and punish any shortcomings with severe suffering.

Sacrifices, "derka", in which a goat or a chicken is slaughtered, are at least partly consumed by the patient (through whom the zar consumes the donation). Sometimes several sacrifices have to be observed as part of one "äqwädäsha", to appease weaker zar spirits that linger about the more powerful ones, awaiting a vulnerable moment in which to pounce upon the patient, unless pacified.

Some zars are vegetarian, require ablutions in vegetable water, in which mashed vegetables and chewed "chat" ("qat", a drugplant) have been mixed; others perversely like the bitter vermifuge plant kosso and insist that it be placed in the coffee consumed by the possessed patient; still others have made the lemon or the sycamore their symbol.

More zars are carnivorous. One whose symbol (resembling a totem) is a lion, will demand the sacrifice of a tawny-colored goat, or demand
X794 that one of that color be kept in sight at all times so that he can
776 "look" at it. For zars are very fond of using their sight. The wild
755 animals of the bush are considered the "cattle" of the zar, and some
825

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

~~794~~ 776 755 [325] specialize in "drinking" magically the milk of the lioness or female elephant, etc. When zars appear in dreams, cats and jackals often represent female zars, snakes male zars. But the animals are merely forms which the zars assume temporarily, while the zar spirits themselves retain their demanding-protective identity permanently.

[756] Some zar doctors are considered far more experienced, clever, or specialized than others, so that stubborn cases are referred to them. One of the most stubborn is the zar of epilepsie, called "barya" (lit. Barya tribesman, hence, slave). This zar is believed to have his home in the Nilotic lowlands below the northwest escarpment, a desert and near-desert area inhabited by the Barya people. There this zar is believed in contact with "ganyen" (djinn), from whom he has acquired his evil character. Prognosis in this case is more limited, and all the zar doctor can do is to negotiate an agreement with "barya" to afflict the patient less frequently. Even the diagnosis is difficult, for the patient often has to be restrained, even tied up, and special herbs and procedures are required.

Another difficult case is the patient possessed by several different zars at the same time, which confuses the diagnosis. In this case, the cleverness, experience and diplomacy of the diagnostician are severly taxed, to unravel the tangle, and treat each zar without insulting and neglecting any of the others. The usual procedure is to appease the most powerful one, e.g. "awolye", first, and enlist him as guardian spirit against the others. A really powerful and arrogant zar doctor can go so far as to attempt to treat the personalities of the minor zars themselves. Thus he may give them a severe talking to

[illegible]itting or coughing blood (which may be tuberculosis) is [illegible]rded as another sure symptom of buda, especially the demon "[illegible]". [illegible]uda is believed to cause widespread epidemics, if he is powerful and many vulnerable victims are in the area.

Certain buda are believed to have very specialized "educated" tastes. One likes to rob the voice of dabtara choristers who chants harmoniously in church (perhaps in revenge for the same dabtara's part-time, extracurricular activity as exorciser), whereupon the voice will begin to croak and steadily grow worse, until the singer cannot even carry a tune. When a cow gradually stops giving milk, despite a big udder, this is ascribed to the special taste of an "educated" buda.

c. Diagnosis, Treatment and Prognosis

Sometimes the victim declares that he has had a dream in which a certain suspected person, e.g. an ironsmith, has been "eating" him. This can become very dangerous for the accused.

The question which diagnosis has to solve is not "what's eating you?", but "who is eating you?"; for the buda spirit and sorcerer are one person.

When the exorciser appears, the "buda" reacts violently. Even apathetic patients suddenly break out in violent peals of laughter, howl like a hyena, crawl about on all fours. The exorciser begins to question the "buda" to find out his personal identity. The "buda" replies through the mouth of the victim, in a hoarse voice, which is attested by all Amhara onlookers as "not the normal voice of the victim". The diagnostic procedure is a battle of wits between the exorciser and the "buda". The

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

world. Some are purely descriptive, like the notion that *budā* turn into hyenas after dark or ride hyenas like horses, or the belief that when red spots appear on the side of a clay pot when it is heated over a fire it means that the *ṭayb* who made the pot are fighting each other. Others guide him in warding off the evil ones, such as the idea that evil spirits can be kept away when a female child has been born by placing something of iron at the head of the mother's bed. But for serious trouble—when someone has been afflicted by a *zār* or infected by a *budā*—the folk wisdom does not suffice, and a specialist is sought.

The *ṭanquāy*, or "sorcerer," is consulted for exorcising demons as well as for physical ailments. In treating a *zār* patient his task is to discern, by clever interrogation, what manner of *zār* is riding the patient and then to determine what sort of gift is required to propitiate this *zār*. For a patient who has been "eaten" by the evil eye, he may succeed in summoning the guilty *budā*—identified when the patient calls out his name during a trance—and inducing him to spit on his victim; or he may resort to such techniques as transferring the demon from the victim to the body of a chicken and then killing the chicken. The *ṭanquāy* has other supernatural powers. He can summon the devil to liquidate the enemy of a client. He can interpret dreams and predict the future. For this he boils coffee, burns incense, and, sitting on a white sheepskin with freshly cut grass spread about the room, speaks out whatever comes to him.

The *dabtarā*, thanks to his knowledge of books and the lore acquired sub rosa while attending the church schools, wields many more powers than does the *ṭanquāy*. He can write amulets to keep away sickness and evil spirits. He knows formulas that can protect one from bullets and instill insatiable passion in the breast of one's beloved. He has the power to bring rain or make it stop, and to plague the householder by turning all of his possessions against him. Like the *ṭanquāy*, his expert knowledge of plants and herbs can heal the sick or poison the client's enemy. His superiority over the *ṭanquāy* is shown by the different manner in which he arranges a divination: he consults his heavy books, brews and interprets leaves, and then writes out his predictions on paper. For all this the *dabtarā*'s fees are usually higher, but his status is perhaps more precarious, for he is after all a man of the church. The peasant feels none too easy in dealing with one who both serves the church and deals with devils.

Time and Space[7]

Devils, *zār*, evil eye, and sorcery are hidden in the crevices of Amhara mentality. They are spoken of, if at all, somewhat fearfully, and some Amhara pretend that such things no longer exist or are of little account in their culture. The sacred spirits, on the other hand, loom large in the public mind.

827 [841] quired amounts of blood are continually renewed in fertile women, menstrual effluence is necessary to shed
* [192] blood not needed between pregnancies. Hence, the cessation of menstrual bleeding at menopause (arowgey) indi-
[842] cates the loss of fertility. Arowgey is only one form
* [192] of infertility, however, since a woman may be infertile through magical causes even though she continues to menstruate (makan).

• [825] The stomach is described as an inert organ housing a colony of wosfat worms. These are usually identified with ascariasis and are believed to transform food and drink into waste. For the host's well-being, their numbers must be sufficient to consume all ingested food; should they become over-abundant, however, hunger and a quarrelsome disposition will drive them to viciously attack accessible body organs.

*[192] Beyond these few naturalistic descriptions of organ functioning, the Amhara invokes Divine Providence (yi-Igziyabiher ara) to explain physiological processes, such as the renewal of menstrual blood and the source of vital heat. God further provides that, in the absence of intrusive influences, the parts of the body will function together to maintain a state of harmonious well-being (tena), devoid of pain and characterized by the vigor and physical control commensurate with the individual's age.

000 Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal,

*753 776 rosy.

*753 825 Likift-powers are also associated with crawling insects, spiders, lizards, and the infrequent highland snake. As with the ganel, these creepers are innately contaminating, either through direct contact with their persons, or indirectly through media which they have touched---such as clothing and water---or which they have *[192] expelled---such as uring and saliva. This likift results in ringworm, varioloid and exzemoid skin diseases; because of their inherent toxicity, these creatures are also frequent ingredients in poisonous infusions (yijeseb).

*753 776 825 Sometimes, it is problematic whether the conditions which attract the attentions of ganel and creeper are not themselves sufficient to produce certain syndromes. For example, serious stomach pain, bloat, and feverish coughing are linked to the consumption of stale food or soured talla beer; these substances are, in turn, favorites of ganels. Similarly, the stench of bodily filth appeals to ganel and creeper, and is a common precursor to scabies and various rashes. However, both spoiled foodstuffs and filth are believed noxious enough to produce these ailments, without requiring the assistance of ganels or creepers.

*753 821 The notion of contact-pathogenicity which characterizes likift is also associated with a sun-borne agency known as gerifta. There is an important difference be-

*753 measles, and smallpox), whooping cough, and occasionally
[843] mumps. Pre-natal contagion, in which a homonculus receives a paternal baŠiyta or a fetus contracts a maternal baŠiyta via the blood nutriment, is responsible for childhood syphilis and syni tila. Rabies is the only example of animal-human contagion, the baŠiyta being carried by the dog's saliva. Neither likift nor the causation of jaundice through contact with bat urine are examples of telalafiy, since in neither case is the disease agent itself a victim of the ailment.

*753 The body's normal functioning is also disrupted by
• 825 deviations from acceptable limits of diet, physical acti-
827 vity, and emotion. Digestive wosfat, for example, are
*(192) angered by insufficient food, or food which is stale (injera bread), spoiled (soured talla beer), or improperly prepared (wot stew lacking the customary cayenne). In return, the wosfat rise up to bite the stomach itself, causing pain, bloat, and diarrhea; if these conditions persist, the wosfat will chew their way to the heart, pro-
*753 ducing great local pain, fever, and lassitude. Exces-
827 sive physical exertion is associated with local com-
[828] plaints: Extended walking may dislocate a jimat from its assigned channel (sprain); prolonged weeping can cloud the eye (trachoma and cataracts); extended and arduous thinking produces confusion; much hard labor results in arthritic and rheumatoid complaints. Intense emotions

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

APPENDIX B

HERBALIST THERAPY FOR YIBUDA BAŠIYTA (BUDA POSSESSION)

754 [825] The buda is a human, male or female, who shares a kinship of sorts with the hyena. When at night he hears their calls, he is irresistably attracted to run about with them. Like the hyena, he strongly desires to eat of human flesh and blood, but his cravings are not malevolent, and he often regrets this compulsion. The buda trait is most often passed down within families; in Begemder Province, it is limited to Falasha families.[52] [856] The buda trait is present at birth, but like an individual's other capacities, reaches full potency at its bearer's physical maturity.

In his nocturnal guise, the buda bears his human [302] face upon a hyena's body. The first time an individual runs with the hyenas, he (or she) is obliged to cut his hair short, in the fashion of Falasha women; the subsequent transition from wer-hyena form to human appearance is accomplished on the following morning with the aid of a secret medicine. The buda is, however, most dangerous, when in his prosaic human form, he produces the buda syn-

[52] Elsewhere in Ethiopia, buda accusations are directed against local endogamous iron working peoples.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

AE 563

other southern provinces, who are considered more "primitive" in their material culture, and many of whom are "pagan".

AE 711 563

Emperor Haile Selassie has urged the Coptic clergy to "raise to Christianity" even peoples despised as "unworthy" in the old pattern. As a result, peoples like the Agau (incl. the Qemant) who have long been neighbors to the western Amhara, and the laboring Gurage near Addis Ababa, have been converted and occupy status somewhere between level 1. and 2., depending on the wealth they have been able to accumulate by past labors. The Qemants have become favorites of the clergy at Gondar because of their generous donations to the local Coptic churches.

AE 563 [826]

The people of coffee-rich Jimma, in Kaffa province, enjoy respect within level 2. because they had been left with internal autonomy during the rule of Menelik II; and because they are believed to be a slightly higher physical type than other infidels (they are considered "wammate", people with wrinkles at the corner of the mouth). Perhaps due to their old wealth based on coffee, slave and gold trade, they are envied; but they are regarded as "people of dissolute moral habits" by the Amharas.

AE 463 563

3. Laboring peoples and classes; non-Coptic; despised, in the old patterns of behavior.

This includes all occupational groups that did or do the ironsmithing, leather tanning, skilled or non-skilled manual labor. Among them are the lower classes of the Galla (mentioned before); the non-Coptic Gurage; the Falasha who live in small rural communities in Begemdir province, who do most of the ironsmithing and pottery-making there, and who practice a Mosaic form of Judaism.

585 made, blue-bordered "kuta" (double toga). His hair has been trimmed short, so that he will not appear like a rustic woodsman. His mize flank him, and henceforth never part from his side during the wedding proceedings. All three approach the groom's father, bow from the hip in greeting. A patrilineal elder addresses the groom in serious tones, reminding him that his obligations to his father continue although he will now be founding a house of his own. Then the father addresses his blessing to him, more briefly. In reply, the son makes the motion of kissing the father's feet, which the latter deftly prevents by tucking him under the chin so that the kiss lands on the knee. He also kisses the knee of the elder (the knee is regarded as the seat of strength). Then the [826] groom and mize sit down about a minute, to symbolize having taken part in the initial festivities.

492 585 Meanwhile the escort saddle the biggest mule, preferable a strong, huge, "Senaar" mule. The groom bids farewell to the father and elder kinsman, most of whom remain behind, though at least one elder kinsman rides along to act as spokesman, usually the "naggar abbat" who can best recapitulate the negotiations. The young "gobäz" escort run along on foot, brandishing their long sticks (formerly spears), shouting war shouts. A Senaar mule can go at a fast trot, so that the men on foot must keep on a run. The elder kinsman rides a smaller, Ethiopian mule.

585 Like a fast-moving army on the attack, the group crosses fields, trails, hills, valleys, finally stops in the valley below the hill on which the bride's hamlet is located. Here they catch their breath, shake off the dust, arrange their togas in "outgoing" fashion, go behind a bush to satisfy the call of nature after so much beer-

302 golden red stain obtained from the root of this bulbuous plant which grows wild. This is done by young girls and respectable married women, as well as "unattached women".

Shadowing of eyelids, however, is the specialty of divorcees and "unattached women". It is done by means of antimony ("kull"), mixed in powdered form with vegetable oil, and applied with a simple grass brush (much as in ancient Egypt).

304 Tattooing ("negsat") is also a special attraction made use of almost exclusively by divorcees who want to attract another husband; [826] as they themselves say "for beauty's sake". Since it is a mark of beauty to have a long neck, tattooing aims at emphasizing this feature, and a concentric series of necklaces is carefully tattooed on the neck from ear to ear and from the collarbone until part of the way up the cheek. Seven hatched lines of this tattoo can cost as much as Eth$3-4, even in the less expensive provincial towns. The work is done by a professional woman tattooer, and takes several hours. There is pain for about a week thereafter, so that a divorcee usually has it done about two weeks before one of the major holy days in the year which also serve as climaxes of the flirting season, notably Epiphany (Ṭemqät) and Mikael. The freshly applied tattooing will then be noticed as an innovation by men looking over the eligible women, and as conversation piece invite the approach of the male. Tattooing fades, especially on dark skin.

Tattooing of the gums is also popular among divorcees, to heighten the whiteness of the teeth, and is curiously called "ṭers ṭequrat" (lit. blackening of the teeth), (also "guramayle"). Unlike neck tattooing, in which the dye used is usually blue, blackening of the gums, between and just above the teeth, done with soot, achieves a much darker effect,

186 ethnocentrism; "We" includes the brunette racial features of the
829 Mediterranean world, particularly if accompanied by Abyssinian-Coptic religion, for to the Amhara the name "Amhara" is synonymous with Christianity of their own denomination. "They", in their mind, refers to the black peoples of Africa whom they enslaved; but also to "infidel", particularly the Muslims with whom they have been at war so often. They draw many lines within these major ethnocentric divisions, racial, religious, ethnic-occupational and linguistic.. But, in the Amhara attitude, racial differences are among the most fundamental.

829 The skin color of most Amhara is regarded by them as brown
822 ("t̄aym"), considered better looking than the black of negroid peoples, and reflecting "better character". Black color is regarded as symbolic of anything unpleasant, spiritually impure, ("t̄äqqorä" connotes "he became shadowed, sad, depressed"). It is a (mild) insult to call a very dark person "t̄äqqwara" (lit. "darkie"). European skin color is regarded as "red" ("ōky") - a common African attitude. The concept of "white" coloring connotes paleness ("n̄äṭṭa" (lit. he became pale), undernourishment, sickness, insipid weakness.

822 Color symbolism is followed in dress: The Amhara wear white
291 togas, without coloring more than the border, because the concept white also connotes spiritual purity (by extension of the concept of the absence of physical strength). Yellow ("w̄ayba") is the traditional color of special mourning, worn only by monastic monks who regard themselves as in a state of perpetual mourning for the passing of Christ from the earth (the dye is made from the bark of the "wayba" tree, hence the name). Green and blue are collectively called "ārānwadē", and are not sharply differentiated.

826 Racial ideas also dominate the Amhara concepts of physical

826 beauty: The comparative gerontomorphy of Amhara facial features, even in the case of females, is regarded by them as a mark of beauty, e.g. a long, high bridged nose, which denotes "nobility" and absence of strong negroid strains. In contrast, a flat nose with depressed root and broad nostril is called "kurfad", which is also used as an insult. The thick lips of the negroid Shanqalla ex-slaves ("kanfaram", lit. full lower lip), especially if at the same time everted ("ahaya lanboch" lit. donkey lip; or "lambocham") are considered marks of ugliness in both men and women. The rare light eyes that crop up among the Amhara are not regarded as special marks of beauty, but as [186] outlandish ("baher ayn", lit. eyes from overseas), for Amhara ethnocentrism is directed also at foreignisms other than negroid traits. [171] The bulging almond eyes popular in other parts of the Middle East are regarded as marks of feminine beauty and feminine "nobility" by the Amhara also.

The spiral peppercorn hair ("barya tagur", lit. slave hair; or "kordada"), of the subjected negroid races is regarded as ugly by the Amhara. Conversely, their own helical hair ("zoma tagur", i.e. hair that stands up thick and rich in a bushy halo, or thick curls) is considered beautiful and indicative of "good racial stock ("attentam"). Outcrops of soft, wavy hair ("lahucha", light hair that falls down), which is more frequent than light eyes, is regarded as outlandish, but accepted with a smile, as of no great significance.

Similar attitude rules the beauty of the ear. The medium-sized ear of most Amhara is preferred. The round, curved, small negroid ear ("goraf joro") is considered ugly; but the other extreme, the big elongated ear that stands out like a donkey's ("garbaba joro"), found

[826] in many Europeans, is not considered a mark of beauty either.

186 Amhara ethnocentrism rules over their attitudes to the other two
828 major ethnic groups that inhabit Abyssinia: The Coptic Tigrē peoples who are accepted as "ethnic cousins"; and the Muslim and "pagan" Galla, somewhat more African but not negroid, who occupy a middle social position above that of the Shanqalla. The Amhara stereotype as to the personality of these different groups is:

Amhara - "noble", slow of speech, subtle, patient, slow to anger.
Tigrē - shrewd, fast in thought and action, "light" in temper, impatient.
Galla - coarse, shameless (e.g. willing to do manual labor), dull-witted.

An interesting application of this stereotype has arisen in recent years in the discussions about these "national temperaments" by Amhara officers of the modern Ethiopian army, who are concerned with the performance to be expected of the diverse ethnics in battle; important considerations in a country where emotional differences along tribal lines are still strong:

Amhara soldier:

Proud of individual feats; good fighter when his individual pride has been challenged and aroused.
Hates to take orders; difficult to discipline.
Loves to give orders, to act as "great man"; objects to being hurried.
Explosive in temperament, when startled.
Rarely tenaciously energetic; but if he possesses this quality, he is excellent potential leadership material.
"If you treat him as a friend, he thinks he can be your master."

Galla soldier:

Easy to discipline; will take orders and carry them out, without tricks.

186 quoted to praise farming as the best and most typical Amhara occupation, casually refer to the Muslim as a person not bound by social ethics:

[539] "He traded - (then he) cheated;
he was appointed (official) - he began (to act) like a Muslim;
(but) he (who) was a farmer - and became a king!"

[177] Nevertheless, the influence of Islam, probably by slow diffusion, has been considerable on Abyssinian Christianity through the centuries. Their avoidance of "unclean, forbidden things" ("erm"), such as pork, though officially based on the Old Testament prohibitions, was probably reawakened or reintroduced and emphasized through the pressure of Muslim ideas, geographically so close.

[532] The Amhara paint an infidel, like any evil person, with one eye, in profile, for "he has only half a soul, is only half-born, sees only half the truth." The outsider is regarded as automatically of evil personality.

C. Amhara Ideas about Body and Personality.

826 Not all Amhara ideas about human beauty are dominated by racial criteria. A long, lean face ("fit sälkakka") is considered handsome in a man, while a broad face ("fit mäda") is considered ugly; this may bear some relation to the gerontomorphic preference over the pedamorphic.

[304] A long neck ("angät") is a mark of beauty, in both sexes, but noted especially in the woman who therefore may have a series of necklaces tattooed on to her neck. The beauty of the long neck is referred to in the following proverb:

[539] "The neck of the dead child
is longer (than ever);
(meaning, "a good thing that came when of no use).

The forehead is considered the location of good fortune, and a large forehead is considered a mark of beauty in men.

●826 Projecting teeth, especially incisors ("gätätä") are considered ugly, wild animal-like, and it is an insult to call such a person [302] "tersam" (lit. toothy). Hair is grown long and standing up stiff by warriors who wish to appear ferocious. The hairdoes of women are diverse. Baldness ("tämällätä") is relatively rare, and if at all, comes very late. Big hips, though covered, are considered an important mark of beauty in a woman, while little attention is paid to the breasts which lose their youthful shape early in life due to prolonged breastfeeding. The ideal feminine body is a fairly short, hippy woman ("täfär wäg̈äb") with high-bridged nose and bulging eyes. On the other hand, a woman with small or lean hips, called "dog hips" ("wesha wäg̈äb"), whose hips are sharply outlined ("wäg̈äb araqi"), is considered deficient in feminine allure. The proverb says:

[539] "(strong) child from hippy woman;
(good) grain from lower terrain (more fertile)."
"A short man is like a monkey,
(but) a short woman like a noblewoman."

The seat of strength in a man is not considered to be in the biceps, but is believed located in the knee ("gulet"). This is examined when hiring a laborer (formerly also in a soldier), perhaps because t he physical type of most Amhara is slender, and their legs have little visible musculature - though much endurance. It is still consider... praise to call a young man "gulnasa" (powerfully kneed), and the Amhara take great pride in being able to walk long distances without a rest; flexing the tendon behind the knee ("gwanja"). The elbow is the next place ("kendam" man with powerful elbow) of strength. Bowlegs ("waraha") are considered the result of riding too much, and are not regarded as a special mark of ugliness.

826 A very thin person ("jemmatam") is regarded as being full of tendons, nerves and veins, all of which are generically called "jemmat"; they are conceived as running through the body like the fibers of a tree.

The beard comes late, and since a good chin whisker is rare before the age of 30, it is regarded as a sign of maturity. The proverb says:

[539] "Beard, lacking to the teacher;
cypress, lacking to the church; (i.e. symbol of the churchyard) (are one)." (i.e. neither will be fully respected.)

[779] The dichotomy of the human body, in the religion, considers the upper part holy; and the lower part, which serves sex and defecation, as profane. To illustrate one who serves two masters, the proverb says:

[539] "Above the hips - the tabot (sacred tablet of the church),
below the hips - idols."

No distinction is made in body hair, whether it is usually scanty under-arm hair ("cheggum") or pubic hair, except that the latter was supposed to be plucked out by women. Despite the distinction of sacred and profane body parts, this distinction does not apply to archangels and saints, every part of whose body is lauded in some of the liturgy, e.g. in the book "Malek Mikael" which eulogizes also the body of this archangel.

Abnormalities of the human body are attributed to the effect of the supernatural. In the case of a new-born child, abnormality of body is attributed to an evil spirit, especially a male "zar" who has magically possessed the mother and who is jealous of the human husband whom he regards as his rival. In case of transvestites, who are always believed to be hermaphrodites ("fenafel"), the abnormality is actually referred to as a "mistake of God".

x 744 562 Some women with hysterical tendencies revert to infantile behavior. In the zar society they can act this out, while protected and disciplined by the matriarchal zar doctor. Others, with a father-complex, join zar societies headed by male zar doctors. In either case they enjoy recreation and amusement with the "sibling"devotees, with whom they can gossip and enact sibbling roles, such as playfully accusing each other of minor oversights in the service of the zar; (it often takes this form).

Even her life outside the zar society becomes changed. For she is now considered as guided by a protective zar who can extend his protection to other members of the family. Her husband, even if he objects to the zar, often will admit the radiant beauty of her face and her bearing, due to the "weqabi" (protective zar). As a result of her exposure to businesswomen, the menfolk in her family will not shunt her aside when talking business, or legal or kin matters. Some women devotees whose bent is more feminine, become midwives, "experts" in domestic obstetrics and primitive gynecology. There are many ways in which the woman's social status improves. No longer is she a mere hauler of water and hewer of wood. This change usually relieves her mental ailment - and this cure is ascribed to the zar doctor and the zar complex.

x 744 562 776 As a result, a good, protective zar is valuable, and a mother will try to pass it on to her daughter, or her own sibling, or other members of the family. To do this, the zar doctor must be consulted and a special gift given "to the zar". But a person having a protective zar is regarded as having an optional right to pass the zar on through biological inheritance and transfer for seven generations. The "zar"-

9: Coon D-5 (1933-1934) 1939 MP5 Amhara MP5
Somali MO4

ever a rosy-white shade in the non-negroid element, it has long since disappeared. Among the Somalis, however, an entirely different situation is found, for the majority are lumped around the von Luschan #29. Numbers 27 and 30 account for most of the others; hence there is a single and characteristic Somali color, which is a rich, glossy, chocolate-brown, which accounts for seven-eights of the entire Somali group. A very few are darker, and individuals are as light as light brown, in a very few cases as light as Arabs. The contrast between highland Ethiopians and Somalis in skin color is so great that one must postulate that the original non-negroid narrow-bodied and narrow-faced strain which the living Somalis represent was not white skinned in any sense of the word, for the Somalis are the least negroid people in East Africa. S A 142

The Ethiopians themselves are extremely conscious of differences in skin color, and divide themselves into four groups: "Yellow," "Yellow-Red," "Red," and "Black." These groups do not correspond very well with the von Luschan scale, but represent the product of centuries of local experience, and are perhaps more significant from the genetic standpoint. A jury of Amharas and Gallas called 20 per cent of the former "Yellow," as against 8 per cent of the latter; only 2 per cent of either was "Black." In both, the "Red" class was the most numerous; with 47 per cent of Amharas, and 70 per cent of Gallas. Most of the few Sidamos studied are evenly divided between "Red" and "Black." This system could not be applied to the Somalis, whose characteristic hue defied classification. A 142 826

In hair form the Ethiopians also have their own system, which hardly agrees with ours. It has three divisions; *lüchai*, meaning "straight," *gofari*, meaning "curly," and another term which signifies extremely negroid, or peppercorn. Actually, no single highland Ethiopian with straight hair was measured in the author's series, although one apparently straight-haired Agau was seen. Among the Amharas, 80 per cent were called "curly," and the rest "straight," according to native terminology; among the Gallas the same 20 per cent of "straight" were found, while among the Sidamos this rose to 30 per cent. Actually, the *gofari* class included both curly hair in a Hadhramaut sense, and frizzly hair of a negroid character. Hair which the Ethiopians themselves considered negroid was confined to a few individuals who were to all purposes pure negroes, and undoubtedly slaves.

According to our own classification, 40 per cent of the Amharas have non-negroid, wavy or curly hair,[66] and the rest frizzly; the non-negroid A S 142

[66] According to Fischer's findings, our "curly" could be called a negroid-white mixed form.

Fischer, E., *Die Rehobother Bastards.*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE PHENOMENA OF AMHARA ORALITY

155 Shortly after an Amhara child is born some butter is placed in his mouth. This
826 is done in the belief that it will keep his voice from becoming harsh. From
[856] that moment on, the mouth never ceases to be an organ of extraordinary
[192] importance in his life. Its cultural importance is reflected in the attention given to it in the Amharic vocabulary: Baeteman's *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* lists some sixty idioms built with the Amharic word for mouth, *af*, more than are listed for any other words in the language except "eye,"
[539] "heart," and "earth."[4] The organ is publicly celebrated in such proverbs as: "Cleverness of mouth, to the master; cleverness of hand, to the slave."

155 The oral zone is of course of universal significance. Some items of oral
826 imagery probably appear in most languages, and manifestations of oral libido
171 appear in many forms familiar to Westerners: the French love for gourmandism, the German passion for beer-drinking and singing, the American addiction to cigarettes, chewing gum, and "life-savers." Many of the less familiar phenomena to be related below in describing Amhara orality, moreover, are found in most of the cultures of Africa and the Middle East. But such phenomena often appear inconspicuously alongside other culturally patterned impulses and sublimations stemming from other phases of psychosexual development. What may distinguish the Amhara—and doubtless some other cultures—is the extent to which the oral zone is an object of attention and a source of behavioral modes and expressive symbolism. The Amhara, it appears, have a preoccupation with orality.

121 This preoccupation is manifest in three different kinds of phenomena.
155 There are, first of all, aspects of Amhara culture which express a strong positive attachment to the infantile experience of sucking, in pure and in numerous sublimated forms. These we shall designate as the phenomena of *oral erotism*. Second, there are the aspects of Amhara culture which express a
[152] strong positive attachment to the oral zone as a center for various aggressive activities—the modes which Erikson calls "incorporation by biting," "oral retention," and "oral intrusion." These we shall collectively designate as the phenomena of *oral sadism*. Finally, there are phenomena which express a conflict about the gratification of many of these oral desires; and these we shall refer to as the phenomena of *oral ambivalence*.

155 *Oral Erotism*

853 Feeding at the breast is a prominent and beloved experience in Amhara life. The Amhara infant is suckled whenever he wishes, at the slightest show of desire. Since he is rarely separated from his mother it is easy for him to satisfy himself at any time of day or night. Popular beliefs about breast-feed-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfata*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor [539] Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 574 527 Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, [575] as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious [794] fraternal association known as the *māhebar,* is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māhebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā,*" literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cal animosities which have weakened the nobility as a status group both in relation to the emperor and in relation to foreign countries. Another respect in which Amhara parochialism has been expressed is the addiction to regional stereotypes, according to which the Tigrean has been depicted as flighty, irresponsible, and "dry"; the Gondarē as intolerably proud; the Gojjami as sly and treacherous; and the Shoan as calculating and untrustworthy. Despite its long history as a nation, Ethiopia probably never experienced more than the dimmest stirrings of a truly national sentiment among its people; and more than once in the past century have regional lords strengthened the hand of European powers in Ethiopia by seeking their help in the combat against other local rulers.

Self and Others

In addition to considering the extent to which the members of a society identify with the needs and symbols of their more inclusive collectivities, one may also define the individualistic disposition on the dimension of personal interaction. Egoism contrasts, in other words, not only with the disposition to perceive collective purposes as one's own, but also with the disposition to seek solidarity and mutuality in face-to-face relations.

This aspect of egoism/solidarism is studied by surveying the more important forms of interaction that appear in a given society. In the survey of elementary social behavior among the Amhara now to be reported, two criteria were used to establish the importance of any given form: (1) the frequency with which it was observed, and (2) the extent to which it was stylized or "institutionalized." These criteria were not embodied in any systematic observational procedures; the only control over the observer's bias here is my own deliberate effort to present a balanced and accurate picture.

We may begin by considering the more solidaristic forms. Interaction among the Amhara is characterized, first of all, by a sort of *sensuous camaraderie*. The Amhara enjoy bodily contact. Members of the same sex customarily hold one another's hands for long periods while conversing, or embrace one another in casual fellowship. Crowds of commoners cheerfully huddle close to one another on the floor through the night when they have assembled for some social function and cannot return home the same day. Relatives and companions of the same sex incline to sleep in one another's arms, at least in the chillier altitudes.

Both their style of dress and their manner of eating give the Amhara a ready way to express this comradely feeling. Their untailored cotton or wool cloth easily adapts itself to being shared. Except perhaps for individuals of high social status, the typical Amhara is ready to use his toga as a blanket-wrap for both himself and another whom he may scarcely know.

*755 *753 ensorcelling spells and rituals is mainly limited to certain debteras, the Coptic scholars among whom the *755 539 [212] gansl's human intimates are also found. Since laymen are generally illiterate and unfamiliar with the liturgical language (Ge'ez) in which spells are composed, they are unable to master the long lists of magical names and injunctions which are associated with powerful spells. Consequently, although laymen occasionally own ensorcelling spells and rituals, these spells are generally abbreviated and invariably weak. In addition, lay-owned spells and rituals are usually obtained from questionable sources, since the layman is unlikely to possess a medium appropriate for "purchasing" such knowledge.

*753 754 Human illness-causing powers may be inherited or congenital, as well as learned. In Begemder Province, inherited powers are limited to budas, Falasha wer-hyenas. The buda's dangerous abilities reach full potency after pubescence, when the hyenas' nocturnal cries compel him to spend the night with them feasting upon disinterred human cadavers. At dawn, the buda returns home, assuming a benign demeanor until his morbid attentions are * [826] + [192] fixed upon a living victim. Many of these are persons of "good blood" (tiruw dem gew), individuals who have inherited the light and unblemished complexion favored by Amhara, although other attractive physical features

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*763 754 [824] [264]

also excite the buda's interests. The buda's remaining victims are people he sees eating ordrinking in public, particularly while the buda himself is hungry or thirsty. In all cases, the buda concentrates upon the part of his victim's anatomy that initially attracted him, and through it introjects his invisible buda aspect into the victim's abdomen. Unknown by the victim, the buda sets about dining on the latter's viscera; only later that day do the initial symptoms---nausea, vomiting, torpor---become evident. By nightfall, the unique symptoms of buda possession begin. The victim no longer complains of nausea, and vomiting ceases; now oblivious of his surroundings, he alternates periods of vacant staring with violent frenzies, during which he attempts to tear off his clothes and seeks reunion with the roaming hyenas. If forcibly restrained, he grits his teeth edge-to-edge, rigidly holds his flexed limbs close to his body, and compresses fingers against palms, thumbs inward; to onlookers, he appears as a human hyena. At dawn, the victim's frenzy dissipates, and he lies abed, greatly fatigued by the nocturnal exertions and severly weakened by the buda's feasting. At nightfall, the frenetic drama is repeated, and, unless the buda is exorcised soon, the victim's death becomes certain.

*[192] Yiesw ayn ("the person's eye") shares important similarities with buda powers. It is exercised involun-

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through the chirurgeon's massage.

Bleeding is regarded as a fatiguing experience for the client, and must be followed by a rest of two or three days. Bleeding for ras mitat is considered an exception, and no rest is required. However, the sickman is particularly vulnerable to gerifta during recuperation and, so, cannot leave his but for fear of a relapse.

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The cupper is unique among lay practitioners in several respects. First, he occasionally works under the direction of another category of practitioner, the tegen (wogeyäa). Second, there are special physical requirements; the agamiy must have all of his incisors, and the upper and lower teeth must meet in an unbroken plane. Third, the agamiy exposes himself to certain dangers in the performance of this therapy. Because he must remove a pathogenic substance through the medium of the sickman's blood, there is the danger that, should any of the blood enter his own mouth, the agamiy may himself fall ill with the ailment he is treating. In addition, contact with this blood threatens those chronic ailments from which the sickman suffers (such as the rheumatoid pains associated with kitin, syphilis).

*[192]

[824]

The agamiy's cup is a short, hollow bovine horn, whose tip has been removed. Selected leaves, which have been dried and then steeped to make them pliable, are

754 drome in a victim.

[826] The buda is attracted to 1) persons of "good blood" [192] (tiruw dem sew: someone with a light, clear and unblemished complexion, or, by extension, with another particularly attractive, konjow, aspect of his body) and [264] 2) persons observed eating or drinking, particularly when the buda is hungry or thirsty. While concentrating on that aspect of the victim which attracted him (e.g., the face of the child of good blood, or the diner's mouth), the buda introjects his invisible self into the victim's body. Once inside, he sets to eating the viscera, simultaneously laying eggs from which prodigious numbers of wosfat hatch out. About two-thirds of his victims are children of ten years or less.

753 754 His victim is never aware of the disease act taking place, and symptoms of the ailment appear only later in the day, as the wosfat hatched by the buda vent their rapacity on the sickman's stomach and heart. Thus, he experiences nausea, vomiting and fatigue. At nightfall the first of the ailment's dramatic symptoms appear, as the buda acknowledges his presence.[53] Complaints of nausea and stomach pain stop, as the sickman grows oblivious to

[53] Bibuda tabalac, "seized by the buda", is also a common nomer for this ailment.

827 Seven senses are distinguished by the Amhara, each centered in an organ:

1. Seeing - "ayn" (lit. eye)
2. Hearing - "jor" (ear)
3. Smelling - "afencha" (nose)
4. Tasting - "af" (mouth)
5. Feeling - "ej" (hand)
6. Walking - "erer" (leg, foot)
7. Sex sense - "abalä ïar" (lit. male genital organs; polite term).

[151] The sense of taste is noteworthy because the Amhara often does not distinguish bitter ("mïarara") from sour taste ("hïwtata"), which the Westerner does quite readily; the Amhara regards both as "mïarara" (bitter). However, the Amhara distinguishes a "soft taste" ("tïefet"), typified by "bers" (honeywater).

828 While these seven senses are located physiologically in corresponding organs, psychological states are regarded as located in the belly or the heart, but in different ways than the Westerner might expect.

The belly ("hod") is considered the seat of emotions:

magnanimous emotions - "hod chïaraça" (lit. belly lit up like the moon);

fear - "hod babba" (lit. trembling of the belly);

forgetfulness - "hod gïabba" (lit. the belly swallowed it, i.e. lost the thought).

The heart ("leb") is considered the seat of the presence or absence of wisdom:

good judgement - "leb ber" (lit. with a silver heart);

inventive - "leb wïalad" (lit. child of the heart; invention);

inactive - "leb mut" (lit. whose heart is dead);

828 imbecility - "leb defen" (lit. whose heart is stopped up).

828 201 Certain emotions are expressed by certain patterned physiological signals, often unconsciously:

Anger may be expressed unconsciously by biting the lower lip, or one's finger. Also by knitting the brow ("fir kosättälä"), from the painful expression that results from drinking the purgative drug kosso, so that a person who perpetually goes about with a frown is said to have a face "as if he had eaten kosso", a "kosso face" ("kosso fit"). Melancholy is expressed in a wrinkled facial expression ("fit chändädda").

The symbolic significance of the eye has been referred to in a number of connections. Timidity, and respect in the young, is expressed by "turning the eyes to the dust" ("syn afar"). Impatience, by shifting the glance rapidly ("garammätä"), without making impatient body movements which would be "lower class". Directional signals may be consciously given ("syn ataqqäsä") by eye movements already described; and observation out of the corner of one's eye ("syn tägäraämätä") is [754] a finely developed Amhara subtlety. The sorcerer's eye ("yäsäw syn" lit. "the man's eye," to avoid the sinister name of the "buda" evil spirit) is greatly feared; particularly when it stares and seems to pop ("syn tägolaggälä").

The "left" position is considered the embarassing side ("gera aräbba") (perhaps because the right side is always the honorable, or because it would be embarrassing to place someone so that he would have to take food with the left hand which is used in the toilet). Left-handedness is extremely rare. When some undertaking turns out badly, the saying is "The matter has turned left" ("nägär gera honä").

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Unpolished, impolite, vulgar.

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128 diagnostic, and therapeutic practices. The final step of the chapter compares these etiology types with the strategies used by healers for countering the effects of pathogenic agencies.

76 827 Amhara healer and layman use common sets of physiological and pathological notions; neither physiology nor pathology is conceived as a coherent body of knowledge in its own right, however. The Amhara does not often verbalize these notions, and, when he does, it is in ad hoc contexts, generally intrinsic to the selection of pmphylaxis or the administration of therapy. Thus, set down on the following pages as discrete subjects, Amhara physiology and pathology appear as collections of relatively simple notions, and of limited explanatory power when compared with the medical systems of other historical civilizations. Unlike those systems, the organization of Amhara medical beliefs and practices is dominated by concepts of practitioner power, its sources [128] and its therapeutic and prophylactic expressions. Those subjects are dealt with in the remaining chapters of this dissertation

AMHARA PHYSIOLOGY AND PATHOGENIC AGENCIES

827 Although most Amhara can identify the grosser body organs by name, even the knowledgeable anatomist can as-

• 827 sign functions to only a few of these. Among these organs, the heart is considered primary. First, it inspirits and regulates all other organ activity by means of the vital heat which it pulsates and radiates through-
*753 out the body. While pulsing within normal frequencies,
827 sufficient heat is generated to sustain good health
*[192] (tena); more rapid pulsing produces excessive heat which is perceived externally as fever (tukusat). When cardiac hyper-activity is of great intensity and persistence, the heart's ability to exert its authority over the subordinate organs is progressively reduced; this is expressed
827 symptomatically as chronic fatigue and lassitude. In ad-
*[192] dition to this vitalizing function, the heart controls body movement through the jimat cords, a term including veins, arteries, tendons, and ligaments. The heart is also capable of limited movement downward, backward, and
[753] can spin in place. These movements have no febrile effect but since the heart is the seat of the intellect, these motions often lead to mental disorientation and confusion.

Heart and blood share no special tie, nor is the
*[192] latter's vascular confinement appreciated. Anatomically, the blood is instead associated with a reservoir organ (yidem sir, "blood's root") located at the base of the
[841] skull. Functionally, the blood's most specific association is with procreation, for maternal blood is necessary to nourish the homonculus to infancy. Because the re-

827 [841] quired amounts of blood are continually renewed in fertile women, menstrual effluence is necessary to shed
* [192] blood not needed between pregnancies. Hence, the cessation of menstrual bleeding at menopause (arowgey) indi-
[842] cates the loss of fertility. Arowgey is only one form
* [192] of infertility, however, since a woman may be infertile through magical causes even though she continues to menstruate (makan).

[825] The stomach is described as an inert organ housing a colony of wosfat worms. These are usually identified with ascariasis and are believed to transform food and drink into waste. For the host's well-being, their numbers must be sufficient to consume all ingested food; should they become over-abundant, however, hunger and a quarrelsome disposition will drive them to viciously attack accessible body organs.

*[192] Beyond these few naturalistic descriptions of organ functioning, the Amhara invokes Divine Providence (yi-Igziyabiher ara) to explain physiological processes, such as the renewal of menstrual blood and the source of vital heat. God further provides that, in the absence of intrusive influences, the parts of the body will function together to maintain a state of harmonious well-being (tena), devoid of pain and characterized by the vigor and physical control commensurate with the individual's age.

000 Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal,

*753 measles, and smallpox), whooping cough, and occasionally
[843] mumps. Pre-natal contagion, in which a homonculus receives a paternal baŠiyta or a fetus contracts a maternal baŠiyta via the blood nutriment, is responsible for childhood syphilis and ayni tila. Rabies is the only example of animal-human contagion, the baŠiyta being carried by the dog's saliva. Neither likift nor the causation of jaundice through contact with bat urine are examples of telalafiy, since in neither case is the disease agent itself a victim of the ailment.

*753 The body's normal functioning is also disrupted by
825 deviations from acceptable limits of diet, physical acti-
*827 vity, and emotion. Digestive wosfat, for example, are
(192) angered by insufficient food, or food which is stale (injera bread), spoiled (soured talla beer), or improperly prepared (wot stew lacking the customary cayenne). In return, the wosfat rise up to bite the stomach itself, causing pain, bloat, and diarrhea; if these conditions persist, the wosfat will chew their way to the heart, pro-
*753 ducing great local pain, fever, and lassitude. Exces-
827 sive physical exertion is associated with local com-
[828] plaints: Extended walking may dislocate a jimat from its assigned channel (sprain); prolonged weeping can cloud the eye (trachoma and cataracts); extended and arduous thinking produces confusion; much hard labor results in arthritic and rheumatoid complaints. Intense emotions

*753 • 827 828 exercise the heart severely and, if prolonged, portend serious consequences. Deep sorrow, fear, and anger---particularly in response to personal insult---stoke the cardiac fires, whose heat radiates to the lungs where it produces coughing and difficulty in breathing, to the stomach whose aroused wesfat cause pain and vomiting, and to the blood whose smoldering darkens the complexion. Under these circumstances, the heart cannot function effectively for long; clear thinking becomes difficult and, as the heart dissipates its energies, the body trembles. If these effects continue unabated, cardiac deterioration leads to madness and, eventually, death.

*753 82 *[192] Two illnesses are explainable only epidemiologically: The hot, Sudanic borderlands are associated with malaria, and the damp, cold Semyen heights are linked to a "wind disease" (yinifas basiyta), characterized by shortness of breath, chest pains, excessive saliva, fatigue, and joint pain.

*753 Lastly, the appearance of certain ailments is related to prodromal complaints: Epilepsy preceeds madness; poxes before blindness; catarrh leads to diptheria; syphilis results in blindness, rheumatism, miscarriage, chronic back pain, weak heart (chronic fatigue), and scrofula; measles brings deafness. Although it is frequently assumed that the prodromal essence (basiyta)

832 to be ends of the twig, actually magic paste, "accidentally" hitting her. They pay for their beer, and leave. The next day, the dabtara takes his skeptical client past the same beer-hut, and lo and behold, the woman calls out an invitation to them, and refuses payment for the beer consumed. The client is now convinced.

This love magic is done secretly because it is considered highly unethical. At least the dabtara is expected to "release" the person "helplessly bewitched" after a while, and not leave the victim in this condition forever.

The dabtara is believed to know, from books on magic, not only the efficacy of barns and plants, but also of animals. His favorite animal is believed to be the chameleon ("zalabada"), particularly in love magic, ordered by women. The animal is dried, crushed to powder, and the woman then mixes this with her urine. She must read the formula out loud, containing her name and the name of her husband or the man she wishes to hold against all rivals, then throw the mixture in the air - to be carried by the winds and spirits.

751 The dabtara is believed also to have medicinal magic. Some "careful" men, before going to the adventures of the mead-house ("taj-bet"), go to his house to drink a magic potion to protect them from venereal disease that night.

828 When a woman consistently acts like a man, or a man like a woman,
838 it is believed that there is some biological "mistake of God". In the case of a woman, she is likely to be blamed and even insulted, called "mannish" ("wandawande"). This term is used if she acts independent, takes interest only in masculine weapons and activities, and speaks in hard, insubordinate ways. If she is physically a tall, powerful virago, she is called "wandawarad" (lit. male-female), a female with too much

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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masculinity.

Male transvestites are more often pitied than blamed, for the populace feels even more certain that this is a biological "mistake of God". For, they argue, a woman might try to fool people and assume male prerogatives, but what male would want to surrender the privileges of being a man? He is called "fenafent" (lit. hermaphrodite) and his male organs are believed to be sadly deficient in structure, despite visible male secondary sex characteristics.

This transvestite usually dresses in a woman's embroidered cotton dress or skirt, drapes his toga (shamma) like a woman, likes to work at embroiding the green adornment of a woman's dress, does women's chores, following them at their daily occupations and social gatherings. He dislikes the company of men. Transvestites are relatively rare, and they live as individuals, not forming a society of their own, for they are tolerated. Only their kinfolk are ashamed of them, so they leave them and go to live in another province, (like a tailor unwilling to shame his kin by doing manual labor). Women tolerate a transvestite "like a brother"; men are not jealous of him even though he spends all his time with the womenfolk. Often the transvestite is an unusually sensitive person, quick to anger but intense in his personal likings, sensitive to cultural diffusion from the outside world, expecially those carried by Arab traders; and Muslim Arab traders are often the only male social contacts he tolerates.

[826] in many Europeans, is not considered a mark of beauty either.

186 828 Amhara ethnocentrism rules over their attitudes to the other two major ethnic groups that inhabit Abyssinia: The Coptic Tigrē peoples who are accepted as "ethnic cousins"; and the Muslim and "pagan" Galla, somewhat more African but not negroid, who occupy a middle social position above that of the Shanqalla. The Amhara stereotype as to the personality of these different groups is:

Amhara - "noble", slow of speech, subtle, patient, slow to anger.
Tigrē - shrewd, fast in thought and action, "light" in temper, impatient.
Galla - coarse, shameless (e.g. willing to do manual labor), dull-witted.

An interesting application of this stereotype has arisen in recent years in the discussions about these "national temperaments" by Amhara officers of the modern Ethiopian army, who are concerned with the performance to be expected of the diverse ethnics in battle; important considerations in a country where emotional differences along tribal lines are still strong:

Amhara soldier:

Proud of individual feats; good fighter when his individual pride has been challenged and aroused.
Hates to take orders; difficult to discipline.
Loves to give orders, to act as "great man"; objects to being hurried.
Explosive in temperament, when startled.
Rarely tenaciously energetic; but if he possesses this quality, he is excellent potential leadership material.
"If you treat him as a friend, he thinks he can be your master."

Galla soldier:

Easy to discipline; will take orders and carry them out, without tricks.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

186 828 Pride in group, military unit; less emphasis on individual heroism.

Steadier temperament; endurance rather than burst of energy.

"If you treat him as a friend, he will serve you faithfully."

186 779 The religious ethnocentrism of the Amhara is based on their belief that their nation, ruled by the "Solomonic Dynasty", became heir to the "Chosen People" ruled by the House of David, when the latter refused to accept Christ. This is not always clear to the illiterate Amhara, but even he emphasizes this intertwined ethnic and religious principle of his ethnocentrism when he regards the name "Amhara" as signifying both, as he always does.

[304] While the Amhara no longer regards circumcision ("gezrat") as the symbol of entering the Covenant of the Faith, as does the Old Testament and the Jewish religion, he does follow this procedure a week after birth; and an uncircumcised man ("lembut") is called several insulting names and regarded as almost on a level with African Shangalla slaves who are also uncircumcised. Circumcision therefore has an intertwined ethnic and religious significance.

671 Amhara legal philosophy, guarded by the church, and expressed therefore in the Geez terminology, analyses the universe as follows:

Natural Law - "tabayawi heg"

Man-made Law - (similar to common law) - "sabawi heg"

Moral Law (particularly Coptic law) - "rabaherya heg" (lit. Law from overseas).

186 Ethnocentrism of the Amhara has for several centuries been consciously directed particularly against the attacking Muslims. The "matab" neckcord is believed directly the result of one such purposeful development. Numerous proverbs emphasize the stereotype of the Muslim as the breaker of Amhara religious order as well as social order, and the promoter of lawlessness. Even proverbs such as the following,

827 Seven senses are distinguished by the Amhara, each centered in an organ:

1. Seeing - "ayn" (lit. eye)
2. Hearing - "jor" (ear)
3. Smelling - "afencha" (nose)
4. Tasting - "af" (mouth)
5. Feeling - "ej" (hand)
6. Walking - "erer" (leg, foot)
7. Sex sense - "abalä zar" (lit. male genital organs; polite term).

[51] The sense of taste is noteworthy because the Amhara often does not distinguish bitter ("märara") from sour taste ("hontata"), which the Westerner does quite readily; the Amhara regards both as "märara" (bitter). However, the Amhara distinguishes a "soft taste" ("tefet"), typified by "bera" (honeywater).

828 While these seven senses are located physiologically in corresponding organs, psychological states are regarded as located in the belly or the heart, but in different ways than the Westerner might expect.

The belly ("hod") is considered the seat of emotions:

magnanimous emotions - "hod chäräca" (lit. belly lit up like the moon);

fear - "hod babba" (lit. trembling of the belly);

forgetfulness - "hod gäbba" (lit. the belly swallowed it, i.e. lost the thought).

The heart ("leb") is considered the seat of the presence or absence of wisdom:

good judgement - "leb ber" (lit. with a silver heart);

inventive - "leb wäläd" (lit. child of the heart; invention);

inactive - "leb mut" (lit. whose heart is dead);

828 imbecility - "leb defen" (lit. whose heart is stopped up).

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"ärrsässa" - proud person, e.g. who does not reply though called twice.

"afä adatär" (who let slip from the mouth) what he didn't mean to reveal. Also "sat alä" (let slip) like ax, when working.

The Immature Personality: "gäbrä hasanat" (lit. Slave of the nursling stage).

The Effeminate Male: "gärtalla" - a delicate man, who cannot argue aggressively even if there is good reason for it.

"bukkän" - a fat, short male, who cannot walk long distances or march into battle; hence, a coward.

The Insane: "enäf" - idiot, (also insult for a fool).

"wäfäftana" - violently insane person (insult for a quarrelsome person).

"wedegät" - epileptic, who falls down.

"ebd" - person who runs amok (believed possessed by "zayän" evil spirit).

The Clever Person: "balä ej" - who is skillful with his hands, e.g. a surgeon ("wogasha").

"däleddel säw" - poised person, who can face and solve some direct, physical problem.

"tebäb" or "täbib" - skilled craftsman, trained artisan (includes the respectable dabtara scribe as well as ethnic smiths and sorcerers).

The Wise Person: "Balä zeker" - Man of counsel, prudent, judicious.

"Awaqi" (lit. knower) - one whohas accumulated knowledge with or without books.

"chemmet" - calm, softspoken, modest, tranquil, sedate, serious.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954) 1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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"galeb" - one who shines with intelligence;

"galbam" - Person full of reason, discretion, intellectual beauty.

812 It is clear from the last two personalities that a distinction is made between the merely clever (e.g. in material things) and the wise person. Wisdom is stressed in numerous proverbs;

[539]

"A king who has no wise counsellor,
not one year will he reign".

Many Amhara desirous of reputation, emulate the Biblical wisdom of King Solomon, a wise judge whom "no one could fool". Anecdotes of this type of wisdom are told far and wide, of kings and of rulers of provinces. Even at present, some of these anecdotes are told of rulers still living, including of Emperor Haile Selassie. The following two anecdotes, which may well be factual, are told in Gondar about Ras Imru, who ruled as governor-general of Begemdir province just after the liberation from Italian occupation, when banditry was a major problem:

539 812 1. Two bandits accused of robbery-murder were placed in separate confinement. They had refused to confess, and the time of the murder could not be ascertained. One bandit was taken to the place of the crime, on orders of Ras Imru, and told that his partner had confessed; then, that the time of the crime had been such-and-such. Eager to argue against such an error, the bandit momentarily overlooked the fact that by correcting the time element he was giving himself away. Whereupon both were convicted and hanged.

2. One day, while riding through the market, Ras Imru was halted when a woman threw herself before his horse, shouting "abyet", the traditional appeal of the oppressed. She accused one of Ras Imru's soldiers of having consumed a large pitcher of milk she had for sale, without payment. The soldier denied it, and there were no witnesses

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

with the saint for whom it has been named, and personalized. The extent to which the ark is regarded as human is shown by the following remark of a peasant who looked at the picture of a church on a TAT card and explained: "When the ark has been given incense, it will be happy. . . . If this church is given a new roof, the ark will be very happy and give *ïnjarä* to the people." 565* 778

The saints and the *tābot* which represent them are the objects of much veneration and prayer. They figure so prominently in the Amhara's outlook that at times they appear to be on a par with *Egziābhēr* himself. Two differences may be noted, however. The saints do not take the initiative in interfering in human affairs, as does *Egziābhēr*, but intervene only when appealed to. Their function, moreover, is that of protecting and healing spirits; it is not their portion to administer the punishments which *Egziābhēr* inflicts on those who disobey the religious laws, though they may mete out punishment to someone who breaks a vow he has made to them. 565* 776 778 782

Malevolent spirits, on the other hand, do intervene in human affairs without being invited. Of the evil spirits, the devil—known as *Diabolos, Sayṭān*, or *Agannent*, which are names of different spirits to the learned but counted the same in the peasant's mind—is the most powerful. He is imagined as a dark, Negroid type, the least favored sort of racial stock in Ethiopia. He dwells in deep waters, woods, and caves, and likes to roam about at noon and at midnight, especially near dirty places. Amhara avoid going near a lake or pool known to harbor the devil, for fear of being pulled in and drowned. They likewise stay away from dirty places at noon, for fear that he will make them sick. The devil brings epileptic fits. He tries to push people into fire. He also tries to harm human beings by tempting them to some misdeed—stealing, murder, getting drunk—and then have them suffer the consequences. Finally, when the human soul appears for judgment after death, he strives to gain possession of the soul and put it into the fire. Sometimes he is pictured as chewing the souls he manages to obtain. 565* 776 [829] [823] [828] [775]

Despite his inimical gestures toward the human race, the devil is respected as well as feared, for he has much power. Many peasants pray to him for this reason. In time of sickness some choose *Sayṭān*, rather than (or in addition to] *Giyorgis* or *Māryām*, as the one to whom they pray and make promises. On New Year's Day, Christmas, and Easter, prayers to *Sayṭān* are surreptitiously repeated in many quarters. One of these prayers runs: "My lord, bring me through the year. Guard me. If you keep me this year in peace and bring me through the year, I will give you more." Certain individuals are on especially good terms with the devil. They pray to him often, and he visits them from time to time and does favors for them; they are his "friends." When such a person dies, his son often continues the relationship. 565* 776 782

Another kind of spirit producing ill effects is the *zār*. *Zār* spirits are of 565* 776

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 776 many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

*565 776 753 [828] [845]

Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[8]

*565 776 [562]

Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

*565 754 787

The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

*565 754 [262] [789] [323] [326] [554]

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 571 Still another invidious distinction of considerable importance in the Amhara outlook is that between the "big man" (*ṭillāq saw*) and the commoner (*terā saw*). "Bigness" may be measured in terms of political power, economic wealth, ecclesiastical status, or any combination thereof. Though the peasant frequently has little affection for the big man, he customarily treats him with the greatest show of deference. No matter how unfamiliar a big man may be or from what part of the country he comes, the Amhara peasant sees him as entitled to unquestioning courtesy and obeisance. Analogous distinctions discriminate between the wealthy (*hābtām*) and the poor (*dehā*), and between the genteel (*çhawā*) and the rude (*bālagē*).

192 828 Yet if the Amhara takes a dim view of women, youth, and poor folk, as well as non-Amhara and non-Christians, he suffers from no illusions about homo sapiens at his best—unless they are dark illusions. The generic word for "man" in Amharic, *saw*, is the subject of a number of negative associations and idiomatic uses.[12] At its worst, the word is found in an idiom that signifies the evil eye (*ya-saw ayn*), literally: the "eye of man" (or, more idiomatically, "the eye of others"). At its best, when used to signify a fully formed human being, the word *saw* characteristically appears in the plaintive saying, *Saw ṭallam* ("there is no human being"); in other words, an individual who fully embodies the concept of humanity does not exist. In general, one may say that the Amhara's view of human nature is dominated by his perception of man's inherent aggressiveness and untrustworthiness.

828 [861] The Amhara believes that unformed human nature is poor raw material, and that without strict punishment throughout childhood a person will grow up to be rude and offensive toward others. As an adult, moreover, he must constantly be kept in check. The rationale commonly given for the extensive [785] schedule of fasting is that man's nature is wicked, and only by weakening himself in this manner will he be turned away from some act of aggression against others.

828 261 273 The Amharic concept of *ṭegābaññā* illustrates this view. *Ṭegābaññā* literally carries the meaning of one who has been sated with food and drink, but is normally taken to mean someone who begins to insult and pick fights with others. In their use of this and related words the Amhara express the belief that aggression is the usual consequence of being sated. Insubordinate behavior on the part of a servant or political appointee is usually explained as a result of his having been too well fed. "When a peasant gets sated he hits with his stick. . . " is the first line of a number of couplets I collected among rural Amhara. The specific effect of drinking alcoholic beverages is believed to release, not Eros, but the aggressive instincts. An Amharic proverb about [539] *ṭallā* states this directly: "One [glass] whets the appetite; two quenches it; three heats one up; four makes one quarrel; five brings fighting; six causes killing." Contrary to the view that world peace depends chiefly on filling

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people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war.

828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance.

565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā*, or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin."

565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz*, a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days.

565* 461 [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[18] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

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in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [791]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *zaw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shĭllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 [183]

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garded as more important than human effort in attaining one's goals. "If a man works hard, he may remain poor. If he does not work hard, he may become wealthy. The outcome is due to fate." The peasant is discouraged from determined efforts to make changes in his environment because of the feeling that no matter what he does, God's disposition is what really counts.

In addition to feeling that innovation is ineffectual, the Amhara peasant tends to feel that it is immoral. Reverence for fathers and forefathers is, we observed, a key element of the Amhara ethos. This patriarchal sentiment informs the Amhara's defense not only of his land and his religion, but of the procedures of daily living as well. It is not good to deviate from the familiar ways of doing things because they, too, have been handed down by "our fathers"; this is a phrase which interlards Amharic conversation.

A number of other, more specific, norms have had the effect of discouraging inventiveness among the Amhara. Experimentation with matter was inhibited by the disdain for puttering about with one's hands—doing anything, that is, similar to the activities of the socially dejected artisans and slaves. Hence the peasant retains the same rudimentary tools for wresting a subsistence from nature that he has used for millennia, and searches about the woods for a properly shaped piece of wood rather than improve his art of carpentry.[16] Experimentation with ideas was inhibited by the anti-intellectual cast of Amhara culture, which discredits the pursuit of ideas for their own sake. Ideas pertain either to the unchangeable mysteries, as expressed in the religious literature, or to the unchanging verities of human experience, as expressed in folk proverbs. Ideas are not entertained as "adventure," to use Whitehead's term—as a source of novel possibilities in life, a guide rather than a justification of custom.

Two factors are especially significant in accounting for the Amhara peasant's reluctance to use ideas drawn from experience and insight for the purpose of reshaping custom. One is the fact that the primary medium for the elaboration and dissemination of such ideas—the written word—was affected by a number of restrictions in Amhara culture.[17]* As a consequence, although writing has been known in Abyssinia for two millennia, it had almost never

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* The act of writing was considered to be inherently shameful: like any manual activity other than farming and fighting, writing was regarded as degrading work, the business of scribes, whose status was thereby not much higher than that of potters and metalsmiths. Only a small percentage of the clergy learned to write, and those who did were rarely adept at it. The products of writing, moreover, were deemed either too sacred or too nefarious to warrant giving laymen easy access to their medium. Script belonged above all else to the realm of scripture. The awe felt for holy writs was a deterrent against using that medium for other than devotional purposes. The chief private use of writing was for the magic formulas of the *dabtarā*, another connection with the supernatural that discouraged its lay practice. The *dabtarā*'s art served injurious as well as beneficent purposes, and the fear that those who learned to write might stumble onto potent phrases was reason for restricting that skill to a small group of the initiated.

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ment. Of particular interest here is the fact that these officials have frequently been condemned in total terms for their alleged "selfishness" and "hypocrisy." Indeed, one of the outstanding characteristics of the modern-educated is a highly moralistic disposition which leads to a constant evaluation, and unmasking, of everyone within the broad orbit of Ethiopian political life in morally uncompromising terms. 565* 121

The sources of this disposition are complex and not fully to be explained here. One factor would seem to be the ascendance of a concern for rationality and its related insistence on integrity, in opposition to the traditional patterns of deviousness and equivocation symbolized by wax and gold. Another would seem to be a growing Rousseauan concern for the "natural rights" of the people, and the related view of the powers supporting the *ancien régime* as selfishly and hypocritically depriving the people of these rights. What the consequences of this disposition may be is a question of greater urgency. For it leads to the insistence on purity of heart as the essential political virtue, a demand which necessarily results in demoralization of public life and political fanaticism.[21]

While this sort of disposition is natural to the situation of the modern-educated, hence not simply to be wished away, it is clearly out of touch with the traditional Amhara mentality. Insofar as the modern-educated may seek alternatives to a purist, sentimental, and somewhat hysterical approach to politics, they may find themselves nourished by contact, through personal communication or through the medium of literature, with the "cooler" approach of the Amhara peasant. 565* 121 181 571 828

A feature of Amhara peasant culture discussed earlier in this chapter is the centrality of its orientation to man and to the phenomenon of human aggression in particular. To know the Amhara peasant at all closely is to appreciate how cautious he is about the intentions of others. He does not assume that he can count on others, though they may make promises. Before engaging in any secular transaction, such as lending money to a neighbor, entering into litigation, or taking on a servant, he insists on securing a guarantor (*wäss*) who agrees to make good for damages caused by the man he is backing. He does not assume that others may be benevolently disposed toward him; he suspects that behind every protestation of admiration and fealty lurks some quest for personal advantage. He does not assume that superior social status entails superior moral worth. Wryly commenting on his ambivalence toward superiors toward whom he shows such deference, he describes his posture as one of "bowing in front, and passing gas in the rear." In short, he is on guard at all times, coping with the presumed selfishness and hypocrisy of others and pursuing his own interests in a very sober and manipulative way.

At the same time the Amhara peasant's low estimate of man's potential does 565* 121 181 828

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*883 871 178 men and outstanding commoners in the vicinity of the royal court. But with the importation of hundreds of foreign teachers, the establishment of an extensive system of secondary schools and colleges, and the provision of economic support for thousands of post-elementary students, a real structural change came about. Although the school system remained completely subordinate to the throne, it introduced a number of processes that had a dynamic of their own.

*883 121 178 As we have seen, these new socialization processes have subjected the modern adolescents to many sorts of conflict and strain. They have been placed in conflict with their parents, and hence within themselves, on the basic issues of work and, particularly, marriage. They have been subjected to the simultaneous appeal of traditional and modern patterns in virtually all aspects of culture. They have been forced to make choices in numerous areas, while their traditional counterparts have customarily been prevented from making any kind of choice at all.

It might seem that such a situation would breed a troubled generation, distraught and disoriented, knowing what we do about the psychological hazards of rapid culture change. And indeed, among the modern adolescents of the fifties, one might find classical cases of anomie and identity diffusion, boys who confess, "Nothing seems worthwhile to me . . . I am confused, being brought up as I was on the traditional beliefs without questioning and then suddenly being forced to ask questions," or, "The problem of choosing the work I should go into is my only real problem right now, but because of it I find it hard to make decisions about anything. If this suffering is the price of freedom, I am not sure it is worth the price."

Such cases, however, were the exception, not the rule. Most of the students were working hard to get ahead in the world or enjoying their newly acquired freedom and camaraderie. Almost all our respondents had ready answers concerning the sort of work they want to go into, and what they [828] would do if they could have any wish granted. Comparing themselves with their elders, they presented a positive self-image. They regarded themselves as more "civilized," "well built," and "generous" than their parents' generation, albeit somewhat lazier and less polite; and in comparison with Ethiopians a decade older, saw themselves as "better educated," "more clever," "more adventurous," and better able to "enjoy life." Nearly all of them (92 per cent) said that they felt either "enthusiastic" or "hopeful" about their [181] personal future. So one could characterize the Ethiopian post-elementary students of the fifties as relatively buoyant, clear-headed, self-confident, and enjoying their situation of culture contact and change far more than suffering it. How may this be explained?

[643] One great source of their strength was a sense of dependence on the Emperor. As founder of the Ethiopian school system, Haile Selassie has

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191 155 rhythm and rhyme of words as an epicure with a palatable viand or intoxicating old wine. . . . Like the infant, his affective state can only be pacified through a rhythmical expression of pleasurable sounds.[8]

The Amharic language itself registers a certain sensibility to the nature of poetry as an oral outlet. Agreeable and pleasing language is characterized in Amharic by the same word which is used to characterize particularly pleasing food: "*tāfata*" ("it is sweet"). The introduction to the *Chronicles* of Emperor [589] Galawdewos is but the literary embellishment of a type of statement which could be made by any Amhara:

> We commence here this beautiful narrative, of more pleasing taste to the mouth . . . than honey and sugar, which will bring pleasure to those who hear it and will give, to those who understand it, a joy like that given by song and wine.[9]

155 828 [826] The incorporation of knowledge no less than the enjoyment of words is conceived in explicitly oral terms in Amharic. The stomach is regarded as the seat of wisdom, and in the language of schoolboys the diligent student is one who has thoroughly "drunk his lesson." The experiencing of one's school as an Alma Mater is probably quite intense; as one tenth-grade student wrote in a contribution to his school newspaper, "Oh! Mother School! There is nothing like school! As a mother feeds her children with milk and bread, so does a school feed her children, the pupils, with education."[10]

155 261 574 527 [575] [794] Eating and drinking for their own sake, beyond what is required for nutrition, form perhaps the most obvious medium for oral erotism, and one that is cultivated to a notable degree among the Amhara. Feasting is called for on every possible occasion—christenings, funerals, and memorial services, as well as engagements, weddings, and annual holidays. The chief purpose of the only voluntary association in traditional Amhara society, the religious fraternal association known as the *māhebar,* is to eat and drink in honor of a certain saint on his day every month. The duration of any large celebration is said to depend on how long the food and drink last; successful ones go on for three days. Linguistic usage stresses the oral function on such occasions. One "eats at," rather than attends, a christening party; one "drinks in," rather than belongs to, a *māhebar;* one expects to "eat at," rather than dance at, somebody's wedding. The very word for Easter, "*Fāsiqā,*" literally means "great feast."

155 261 264 The activity of eating is colored by a number of conventions which express its great emotional significance. The mood at mealtime is supposed to be deeply serious. Food is to be masticated aloud, indicating a total involvement with the task at hand. Not to let others hear one chewing, like eating by oneself, also is taken to imply greed. The usual obligation to stand when somebody enters the room is waived when one is eating. "Grain is king," says an

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phenomena, traits inherited from earlier traditions and retained through 121
inertia, and that no psychological processes need be invoked in describing 784
them. But this argument fails to explain why, in view of the harmful phys- 785
ical and political consequences of their excessive fasting, the Amhara should 155
have developed in the direction of increasing rather than alleviating their fasting burden. For Abyssinia's commitment to fasting was well known by her enemies, and used to her disadvantage: Ahmad Grāñ took advantage of the country's weakness during Lent to launch his attacks at that time year after year, and the Galla hordes who succeeded him did likewise. The argu- 121
ment also fails to explain why the taboos on pork and tobacco, and the fast- 785
ing prescriptions, should have been pushed to the forefront of Amhara 784
Christian consciousness. For observance of these mores is considered the very 155
crux of Christianity by traditional Amhara. Amhara often refer to fasting 779
as the most important part of their religion. If a person fails to fast, his [262]
relatives are technically absolved from the duty of providing memorial feasts [626]
for him when he dies; let his soul wander in darkness! Fasting more than anything else protects them from the devil and enhances the likelihood of their entering paradise.

Apart from their adherence to these cultural norms, moreover, the Amhara 152
also manifest anxiety regarding oral gratification at the purely psychological 155
level. There is, on the one hand, a constant undertone of concern among 261
Amhara about getting enough to eat, even under favorable agricultural conditions. On the other hand, there is a good deal of concern about the consequences of eating too much. There is much worry among the Amhara about the dangers of excessive eating at the conclusion of periods of fasting. There [828]
is also the fear that if one indulges in eating and drinking he may become uncontrollably hostile, a fear expressed in the previously mentioned notion of *ṭegābaññā*. These and other forms of anxiety about oral gratification are ex- 152
pressed in a number of folk tales, in which eating, drinking, singing, talking, 155
or simply opening one's mouth result in such misfortunes as sickness, loss of 538
property, and death.[20] A similar theme appears in the epic *Glory of Kings:* the Queen of Sheba, in satisfying her thirst by drinking from a goblet which King Solomon had placed in her bedroom, thereby forfeited her right to immunity from his amorous desires and was obliged to yield to his embrace.

Ambivalence regarding oral aggressiveness, finally, may be discerned in the 155
Amhara's anxiety about being eaten, an anxiety which should probably be 152
interpreted as an externalization of unacceptable oral-sadistic impulses. Tradi- [754]
tional Amhara have a morbid fear of being "eaten" by those with the evil eye, *budā* and *ṭayb*, men who are believed to destroy their victim by invisibly suck- [609]
ing his blood. It is largely because of this fear that children are kept away from strangers. Similar projections appear in connection with other well- [776]
known figures in Amhara culture. Another fearful object is the *çhirāq*, a giant

*753 measles, and smallpox), whooping cough, and occasionally
[843] mumps. Pre-natal contagion, in which a homonculus receives a paternal baŠiyta or a fetus contracts a maternal baŠiyta via the blood nutriment, is responsible for childhood syphilis and ayni tila. Rabies is the only example of animal-human contagion, the baŠiyta being carried by the dog's saliva. Neither likift nor the causation of jaundice through contact with bat urine are examples of telalafiy, since in neither case is the disease agent itself a victim of the ailment.

*753 The body's normal functioning is also disrupted by
825 deviations from acceptable limits of diet, physical acti-
827 vity, and emotion. Digestive wosfat, for example, are
*[192] angered by insufficient food, or food which is stale (injera bread), spoiled (soured talla beer), or improperly prepared (wot stew lacking the customary cayenne). In return, the wosfat rise up to bite the stomach itself, causing pain, bloat, and diarrhea; if these conditions persist, the wosfat will chew their way to the heart, pro-
*753 ducing great local pain, fever, and lassitude. Exces-
827 sive physical exertion is associated with local com-
[828] plaints: Extended walking may dislocate a jimat from its assigned channel (sprain); prolonged weeping can cloud the eye (trachoma and cataracts); extended and arduous thinking produces confusion; much hard labor results in arthritic and rheumatoid complaints. Intense emotions

*753 827 • 828 exercise the heart severely and, if prolonged, portend serious consequences. Deep sorrow, fear, and anger---particularly in response to personal insult---stoke the cardiac fires, whose heat radiates to the lungs where it produces coughing and difficulty in breathing, to the stomach whose aroused wosfat cause pain and vomiting, and to the blood whose smoldering darkens the complexion. Under these circumstances, the heart cannot function effectively for long; clear thinking becomes difficult and, as the heart dissipates its energies, the body trembles. If these effects continue unabated, cardiac deterioration leads to madness and, eventually, death.

*753 82 *[192] Two illnesses are explainable only epidemiologically: The hot, Sudanic borderlands are associated with malaria, and the damp, cold Semyen heights are linked to a "wind disease" (yinifas baṽiyta), characterized by shortness of breath, chest pains, excessive saliva, fatigue, and joint pain.

*753 Lastly, the appearance of certain ailments is related to prodromal complaints: Epilepsy proceeds madness; poxes before blindness; catarrh leads to diptheria; syphilis results in blindness, rheumatism, miscarriage, chronic back pain, weak heart (chronic fatigue), and scrofula; measles brings deafness. Although it is frequently assumed that the prodromal essence (baṽiyta)

776 kingdom. The hyena ("jeb") is regarded as acting sometimes as the
825 "horse" of the evil spirit or human sorcerer, sometimes as a werewolf-
like creature, when the evil spirit or human sorcerer assumes its form
at night, or makes use of its powerful, hypnotic eyes to "draw the
[755] blood" magically from the living victim. The concept of the magical
hyena is much used in diagnosis and treatment of mental ailments. It
is the most common wild animal, seen and heard at night, and the holes
it burrows under fresh human graves are regarded as visible evidence
of the character of the hyena. The fear in which the spiritual world
is held is symbolized in the hyena; it is whispered about in connection
with suspected ethnic craft groups such as the smiths; or shouted out
loud in military unison ("yabahalal jebo") in challenge.

825 Aspects of the animal world which cause great "wonderment" among
homespun Amhara "shemagalye" philosophers are types of animal behavior
that seem so human. "Bird language" is given a variety of popular
interpretations (footnote 102). Baboons, which are a constant
annoyance and therefore familiar, are wondered about in part because
of their human-like social organization headed by "great man" chiefs
("ramare").

But it is a great insult to call a person a "creature of Thursday"
(when animals were created, according to the Bible).

186 B. Amhara Ideas about Human Races and Amhara Ethnocentrism.

829 The dualism of the Amhara culture pattern rules also their view
of the human races with which they are familiar, and their own

Footnote 102 - Leslau: Popular Interpretations of Bird Sounds in Ethiopia.
Journal of American Folklore, 1952, Vol. 65,
pp. 361-4.

186 ethnocentrism: "We" includes the brunette racial features of the
829 Mediterranean world, particularly if accompanied by Abyssinian-Coptic religion, for to the Amhara the name "Amhara" is synonymous with Christianity of their own denomination. "They", in their mind, refers to the black peoples of Africa whom they enslaved; but also to "infidel", particularly the Muslims with whom they have been at war so often. They draw many lines within these major ethnocentric divisions, racial, religious, ethnic-occupational and linguistic.. But, in the Amhara attitude, racial differences are among the most fundamental.

829 The skin color of most Amhara is regarded by them as brown
822 ("ṭäym"), considered better looking than the black of negroid peoples, and reflecting "better character". Black color is regarded as symbolic of anything unpleasant, spiritually impure, ("ṭäqoorä" connotes "he became shadowed, sad, depressed"). It is a (mild) insult to call a very dark person "ṭäqowara" (lit. "darkie"). European skin color is regarded as "red" ("ḳäy") - a common African attitude. The concept of "white" coloring connotes paleness ("näṭṭa" (lit. he became pale), undernourishment, sickness, insipid weakness.

822 Color symbolism is followed in dress: The Amhara wear white
291 togas, without coloring more than the border, because the concept white also connotes spiritual purity (by extension of the concept of the absence of physical strength). Yellow ("wäyba") is the traditional color of special mourning, worn only by monastic monks who regard themselves as in a state of perpetual mourning for the passing of Christ from the earth (the dye is made from the bark of the "wäyba" tree, hence the name). Green and blue are collectively called "arängwadä", and are not sharply differentiated.

826 Racial ideas also dominate the Amhara concepts of physical

152 on the ground, Amhara noblewomen weep silently or go into states
554 of apathy. This is a more common mental ailment among nobles than
158 hysteria, and may lead to chronic depression and even catalepsy (see Part VI).

157 However, both the peasant and the noble share certain common
554 Amhara personality characteristics. Both take great pride in being
186 able to "speak well in court". Homesickness is strong among both, and is very widespread. Kings and emperors, until very recently, had great difficulty in sending and keeping ambassadors abroad, for the diplomat regarded his foreign assignment as "exile". Both classes share great pride in their highland plateau, defended for many centuries against all comers. This national vanity is at least in part due to long ignorance of the world beyond (sometimes hardened into xenophobia); pride in their ancient religion and in the national epics like the Solomon-Sheba-Menelik. These are shared by Amhara of all classes.

829 Amhara concepts of government administration are aristocratic: ruled by the noble "great man", who is usually descended from a feudal warlord of past centuries. The military camp and its direct significance for traditional Amhara social structure and government has been described in Part III. At the top of the hierarchy is the king or emperor (King of Kings). At the Amhara grassroots is the peasant, who seeks justice by attaching himself to a "great man" as retainer, so that he too will be treated "with honor" by reflection. From the bottom to the top of the hierarchy of government, persons on every level perform the ceremony of "dej tenat" (lit. waiting by the gate) to obtain jobs, maintain positions, or merely to prevent doubts about personal loyalty from arising through absence. This

829 pattern continues in full force even at present. As a result, the high official is as hesitant about delegating authority downward (which might build up a potential rival), as the inferior in the hierarchy fears to accept delegated authority (lest the superior repent of his grant and suspect rebellion). In consequence, daily problems, even routine ones, are regularly referred for decision to the superior in the hierarchy of government.

812 The authoritarian "literalness" which characterizes so many Amhara attitudes may at least in part be the effect of religious fundamentalism. Until recently, the "Fetha Nägäst" criminal and [681] civil code was literally enforced, including the cutting off of hands for theft and of feet for rebellion. Biblical passages are interpreted literally, by the priests. In monasteries, the monks exclude the presence of even female animals such as cows.

[579] The church, sacerdotal in its concepts and rituals, does not feel that it owes an explanation to anyone; and "literalness" has remained unchallenged (except during the relatively brief Portuguese episode). In the Amhara view, there is a direct and unilateral connection between cause and effect, and paradoxes that result from such oversimplifications are ignored: e.g. the tallest obelisk at Aksum, which has fallen and broken into several large pieces, is claimed to have been "pushed" over by the Falasha Queen Judith, despite the fact that another, almost as tall, still stands nearby. [682] Homicide, especially if accidental, is blamed on the "zänyän" spirits who pushed the murderer's hand.

647 Literal obedience dominates the governmental administration, for no subordinate would arrogate to himself the privilege of "interpret" the spirit of the law handed down by the official of superior status.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[175] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).* Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[173] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in
[874] Gojjam in the fourteenth century.[7] The important schools of *qenē* have al-
ways been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
538 delā, Wāsharā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre
19 have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use
[171] of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than
in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some
Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is
well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre
are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be
ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in
the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara
discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation
of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethio-
pia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only
in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.[8] They further maintain that
Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in
this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propae-
deutic to the study of religious texts.* Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar,
which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught
only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is
that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and there-
by enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method
of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized
by the formula *sam-ennā warq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara
life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

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538 * The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by
running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by
example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of
the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student
goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him
all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

+175 633 streets, "he salutes him with his left hand, which is a mark of contempt."[41] [36] [323] The Falasha, potters and metalsmiths of Judaic faith, were similarly segregated, and plied their arts and crafts in another quarter. [186] [576]

Though many different peoples came together in Gondar, and though it was a meeting-point of trade routes from the Sudan, the Red Sea ports, and the African interior, Gondar's cultural role was not primarily that of a melting pot of diverse traditions. It served rather as an agent for the quickened development of the Amhara's own culture.[42] And thus it became a focus of national pride. The countryfolk looked on Gondar not as a hotbed of alien [829] custom and immorality, as they often regard Addis Ababa today, but as the most perfect and advanced embodiment of their own traditional values.

+175 633 181 The Gondarē himself, as denizen of this second Jerusalem, was prouder still. A snobbish pride became one of the conspicuous marks of Gondarē character. This pride is manifest in many ways. On the one hand, it appears as incorrigible vanity. Hence arise the many caricatures of the Gondarē—as one who goes hungry in order to purchase fine clothes in which to strut about, or as one who satisfied his hunger at home before going out in order not to appear needy at his host's table. (Perhaps the most famous of the stories about the Gondarē is the one about the man who spent the night naked and shivering because, for form's sake, he hung up his only garment as a curtain about himself.) On the other hand, Gondarē pride appears as the immense dignity with which the Gondarē carries himself, his sensitivity to the nuances of personal relations, his choice use of the Amharic language, his noble bearing. If there is a polarity in Gondarē life comparable to the Manzē polarity of bravery versus aggression, it is pride versus vanity.

Gondar's role as political and cultural capital of the nation for so long produced two other distinctive aspects of the Gondarē ethos. One is the love of *shumat*, or political appointments. Despite the unfortunate denouement of the Gondar monarchy, Gondar's importance as chief administrative center for such a long period had a deep influence on the ways of the people. "Give the Gondarē any office whatsoever," it is said, "and no matter what the salary, he will be happy."

The Gondarē's love of *shumat* is expressed in two phenomena which contrast strikingly with their Manzē counterparts. In the naming of children, the [551] Gondarē prefers names which express an ambition for political honors, such as *Makonnen*, meaning "nobleman," and *Negusē* ("my king"). Furthermore, [691] litigation in Gondar is characteristically concerned with disputes regarding *mādariyā*, land which has been given as an award for service to the government, as well as with disputes over *rīst*.

[795] The other prominent aspect of Gondar's ethos relates to its position as the [517] center of Ethiopia's Christian literati. The fact that it was the ecclesiastical capital of the country is not the most important consideration here. Of course,

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*175 flux of many Muslims and Galla, a migration favored by its urban situation.
633 Manz, surrounded by hostile Galla, was forced for survival to cultivate its
067 fighting powers, and for ultimate security to reconquer the surrounding areas.
*175 It was aided in this by whatever special geographical and cultural factors
181 helped to produce the peculiarly militant and defiant character of the Manzē. But because of the annihilation of most of Shoa's churches and monasteries in the sixteenth century, and the isolation of Manz from the renascence of Amhara culture at Gondar, it was left illiterate and culturally impoverished. Its religious life remained limited to a narrow adherence to the ritual requirements of Ethiopian Christianity.

*175 The dispersion of the Solomonic line over the several provinces was thus
181 accompanied by the formation of distinct mores for Manz and Gondar. There
184 is evidence that the differences were quite pronounced by the early nineteenth century. Just a few years before the fierce inhabitants of Manz sped to the rescue of Sāhla Selassie against the rebel Matako, Gondar was similarly threatened by a rebel band under a man named Mersu. Compare Rüppell's account of the behavior of the Gondarēs:

> In this general alarm the pitifulness of the local inhabitants was all too conspicuous. Far from uniting to defend their property with arms against the dreaded plunder—which would have been easy, in as much as there were at least four hundred rifles in Gondar, while not a single one of Mersu's men possessed a firearm—instead they carried the rifles into the churches, in order to keep them from being plundered along with the other booty.[48]

The distinction between Manz and Gondar suggested here is drawn in terms of "ideal types"—generalized dispositions which will, of course, not be true in every case and which will be found elsewhere in Ethiopia to a greater
*175 or lesser degree. It is interesting to note that in their own stereotypes, Ethiopians
• 829 tend to view the Manzēs as fighters, the Gondarēs as literati, but not vice
181 versa. Thus, an officer of the Imperial Bodyguard who commanded Ethiopian
184 troops in the Korean War has said:

> The Manzēs were excellent soldiers. They were independent, not so ready to obey commands as the Galla, but they had good ideas about fighting and were very brave in the battlefield. The soldiers from Gondar tended to be independent and insubordinate, too, but they were not very good soldiers, either.*

On the other hand, Ethiopians commonly consider Manz as much a land of the backward as they regard Gondar the home of the learned. Krapf observed

* This stereotype of the Gondarē is combatted by Garimā Tāfara's book, *The Gondarē with His Shield* (*Gondarē Ba-Gāshāw* [Addis Ababa: Tasfā Gabra Selassie Press, 1957]), which records in great detail the contributions of individual Gondarēs to the fight against the enemy during the Italian occupation.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

over a century ago that the people of Manz had the reputation of being "brave, daring, and ignorant."[46] The caricatures of the typical Manzē usually have to do with his *qilnat* ("stupidity"), such as the old story about the Manzēs at the bottom of a hill who were warned about some rolling boulders and replied: "That's all right, we'll just put our heads under the blanket and then we won't see the stones." As one Manzē himself put it: "We look to Gondar as our older brother. We know we are ignorant and illiterate." 175* 829 181 184

Although in each other's eyes the Gondarē may be arraigned as haughty and cowardly and the Manzē berated as ignorant and hostile, a comparative view enables one to see the differences between Manz and Gondar as complementary, representing a specialization of interest and function within a common culture. An Amhara priest expressed this idea to me by saying: "The people of Gondar and Manz are really the same. Only Gondar is the head, and Manz the foot." (In Amharic thought the leg symbolizes force.) The pursuit of different interests and the perfection of different functions led to the cultivation of different virtues and, by the same token, the indulgence of different faults. The result was what might be called a moral division of labor along a geographical axis. 175* 181 184

The primary axis of this division of labor in Amhara culture was vocational. The separate virtues of soldier and cleric were cultivated through distinct roles, pursued part or full time by two different sets of individuals. This permitted both sets of values to be realized without arousing the cultural and psychic conflicts that would inhere in their joint cultivation by the same persons. [463]

It was by historical accident that Manz and Gondar came to provide an additional axis for this division of labor. At Gondar, through the political circumstances described above, the military function withered away, while the religio-literary culture was enabled to flourish. In Manz, the latter was destroyed and never recovered, while the energies of her people were consumed in fighting.

The historical advantage of this was that the Amhara thereby found the occasion for a massive revitalization of their religious culture through the facilities at Gondar, yet were able to accumulate a military momentum, through the years of incubation in Manz, that favored a political comeback which put them in a position to assert their might over an area larger than ever before in Ethiopian history. The moral consequence was that the Gondarē and the Manzē developed in pronounced form the virtues of the literatus and the soldier, respectively. The total culture was perhaps thereby enriched. Alaçā Gabra Hānnā, cultivated literatus, was in a sense the epitome of the Gondarē ethos, just as Menelik II, determined fighter as well as shrewd politician and tactful diplomat, was morally as well as genealogically akin to the men of Manz. The imperial court at the end of the nineteenth century, 175* 18

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 right to a direct audience at any time. The Emperor is known to glow with
571 pleasure when a subject with whom he is speaking reveals that he comes from Manz. The Manzēs, for their part, proudly refer to their area as *ya-negus agar* ("king's country"). They are perhaps the most devoted of all Ethiopians to the present Crown. However, many stories are told to show that this loyalty has not dissolved their intractable spirit. For example, when asked to select a representative for Ethiopia's first elected parliament in 1957, some of them were indignant: "We already have *our* representative in the capital, and if he isn't able to do the job himself, let him step down and hand it to somebody else."

871 Despite their expressed loyalty to Haile Selassie, the Manzēs stubbornly
658 oppose the program with which he is publicly most associated and whose portfolio he has retained, as Minister of Education, from 1943 to the present day. The adults of Manz object to having their children attend the government schools. In many cases where a child has elected to attend school on his own, his parents have cut off all support. The four schools in Manz thus have
[162] an enrolment far below capacity, totaling (as of 1960) less than four hundred in this area of perhaps fifty to sixty thousand families.[49] Those hardy youngsters who do attend school often do so in rags and with an empty stomach.

[857] One reason for this determined opposition to the government schools is the obvious economic one: children must stay at home to tend the herds. This is a problem all over rural Ethiopia, but still the schools in many other areas are overcrowded. Another reason is that, as we have seen, Manz was not interested in education in the old days. Few Manzēs learned to read in the church schools. When a boy showed unusual talent and interest in traditional studies he had to travel to Gondar, which often meant running away from Manz.

871 The crux of Manzē defiance of the new educational system, however, is
658 cultural fundamentalism. The Manzēs keep their children away from the
186 government schools because they fear that the students there are learning
829 something that threatens the old ways. In particular, they do not like their children to learn the language of the *faranj* ("European") or to be exposed to Ethiopians who have been taught by *faranj* and thereby infected by alien ideas. Tending the farm, keeping the fasts, defending land and self—that is the sum and substance of Manzē education, beyond which there is nothing a boy needs to learn.

829 Undoubtedly part of this dread of *faranj* learning is based on the Manzēs'
648 one experience with the white man: the Fascist occupation. As one of the
186 strongholds of patriotic resistance to the occupation, Manz and the Manzēs became the object of the invader's unyielding fury. Over miles and miles of Manz not a home or church was spared. The inhabitants were either killed, or fled to safer areas in Galla country, or joined the underground opposition—

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in such numbers that "Manzē" virtually became a synonym for "underground patriot." 829 648 186

After the liberation, as after the routing of Ahmad Grāñ's forces, the Manzē once again returned to redeem a ravished land. Slowly, the houses were rebuilt, the land was plowed once more. Churches which had been rebuilt after Grāñ's destruction only to be razed by the Italians were again put into place. Tough in his spiritual as in his physical life, the Manzē doggedly re-established the culture of his own. Now as before the occupation, a man of Manz sits on the throne, promising to let no foreigner take his country's land,* while the young braves celebrate the royal line in their festive boasting: [539]

Ya-Manz ababā, ya-Manz ababā! Yābbabā! genā!
The flower of Manz, the flower of Manz! It will bloom yet again!

The Legacy of Manz and Gondar

Thus far the significance of Manz and Gondar has been discussed from the point of view of an outsider. We have attempted to assess, on the basis of the best available evidence, the respective historical and cultural roles of these two noted Amhara regions. We turn now to a different though related question, namely, the significance of these two places in the minds and feelings of Ethiopians themselves. 121

Two kinds of reaction are conspicuous. To the Ethiopian Modernist, Manz and Gondar are seen primarily as outlying pockets of conservatism. Their commitments to the past move them to resist certain changes promoted by the national government, with Manz protesting modern education and Gondar defending itself against nationalist centralization. They are regarded as backward areas, representative of the many forces that are "holding Ethiopia back," and to a certain extent are disdained.

To their inhabitants, on the other hand, these places are objects of intense loyalty. For differences of identity among the Amhara are defined chiefly in terms of their *agar*, or "home country." The size of one's *agar* is relative; it depends on the context in which the symbol is used, and may be as small as a district or as large as a province. Whatever the referent, one's *agar* signifies more than a place of residence or provenience. It means "home," and all those whose families live there are regarded with special affection, while those out- 121 186 823

* On certain festive occasions the following antiphonal chant is declaimed in praise of "Ṭaqel" (the affectionate, "horse" name of Haile Selassie): [533]

[Leader:] *Min āla ṭaqel min āla?* [539]
[Chorus:] *Agarē la-saw agarē la-saw alsaṭem ala!* [551]
[Leader:] What did Ṭaqel say, what did he say?
[Chorus:] "My country to outsiders, my country to outsiders, I will not give!" said he.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

liefs and values, (2) retention of the basic emotional tie and identification with the group in question, and (3) elaboration of the virtues of the group in terms of universalistic criteria.

This is a type of orientation to the primordial sentiments which has the effect of maximizing both traditional and modern values, for it retains the sources of security and identity provided by tradition yet defines them in ways that promote national solidarity and the creative resources of the national culture. It is an approach which may be illustrated, in concluding this chapter, by the cases of two modern-educated Amhara who identify themselves, in part, as a Manzē and a Gondarē.

"Balātchaw" is an American-educated official of the Ethiopian government. Born and raised in Addis Ababa, his family originated in Manz, and he still has relatives who reside there. He is an ardent modernizer, anxious to see progressive leadership and the expansion of educational facilities provided in the provinces; yet he is also very sentimental about Amhara traditions and, in particular, his *agar* Manz.

To Balātchaw, Manz symbolizes hard-core loyalty to blood and to land. It also symbolizes the will to fight stubbornly for one's rights and for what one thinks right. He sees the government's keen concern for its territorial boundaries as a direct reflection of the Manzē's determination to retain and acquire land. Balātchaw gets much pleasure out of telling stories about the Manzē's almost foolhardy bravery in combatting the Italian invader. He reveals a "clear consciousness of an inner identity" with the Manzē in this regard, and says of himself: "You know, even as a child, and ever since, I have not been afraid of anybody."

"Makonnen" is a government official who was trained in western Europe. His family lives in Gondar, though he spent little time there after leaving for secondary school in Addis Ababa. In the course of his studies abroad, he had become estranged from the traditional ties and symbols of his Gondar-Amhara background. And yet now he speaks with great respect of the virtues of Gondarēs, their cultivated manner in personal relations, and their pride and wit in the use of language. The meaning of Gondar came to him almost in the manner of a revelation:

> In the midst of my studies in Western Europe I had the chance one summer to visit a number of West African countries and then to return home and spend some time in Gondar. I had not thought very highly of my people before that trip, and what I experienced was a great surprise. What I found—what we have, that I did not find in the African countries I visited—is a special sort of dignity of manner. When I talked with the elders at Gondar I was moved to tears. That is something priceless; that is a great and irreplaceable national resource.

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with the saint for whom it has been named, and personalized. The extent to which the ark is regarded as human is shown by the following remark of a peasant who looked at the picture of a church on a TAT card and explained: "When the ark has been given incense, it will be happy. . . . If this church is given a new roof, the ark will be very happy and give *ĭnjarā* to the people." 565* 778

The saints and the *tābot* which represent them are the objects of much veneration and prayer. They figure so prominently in the Amhara's outlook that at times they appear to be on a par with *Egziābhēr* himself. Two differences may be noted, however. The saints do not take the initiative in interfering in human affairs, as does *Egziābhēr*, but intervene only when appealed to. Their function, moreover, is that of protecting and healing spirits; it is not their portion to administer the punishments which *Egziābhēr* inflicts on those who disobey the religious laws, though they may mete out punishment to someone who breaks a vow he has made to them. 565* 776 778 782

Malevolent spirits, on the other hand, do intervene in human affairs without being invited. Of the evil spirits, the devil—known as *Diabolos*, *Sayṭān*, or *Agannent*, which are names of different spirits to the learned but counted the same in the peasant's mind—is the most powerful. He is imagined as a dark, Negroid type, the least favored sort of racial stock in Ethiopia. He dwells in deep waters, woods, and caves, and likes to roam about at noon and at midnight, especially near dirty places. Amhara avoid going near a lake or pool known to harbor the devil, for fear of being pulled in and drowned. They likewise stay away from dirty places at noon, for fear that he will make them sick. The devil brings epileptic fits. He tries to push people into fire. He also tries to harm human beings by tempting them to some misdeed—stealing, murder, getting drunk—and then have them suffer the consequences. Finally, when the human soul appears for judgment after death, he strives to gain possession of the soul and put it into the fire. Sometimes he is pictured as chewing the souls he manages to obtain. 565* 776 [829] [823] [828] [775]

Despite his inimical gestures toward the human race, the devil is respected as well as feared, for he has much power. Many peasants pray to him for this reason. In time of sickness some choose *Sayṭān*, rather than (or in addition to] *Giyorgis* or *Māryām*, as the one to whom they pray and make promises. On New Year's Day, Christmas, and Easter, prayers to *Sayṭān* are surreptitiously repeated in many quarters. One of these prayers runs: "My lord, bring me through the year. Guard me. If you keep me this year in peace and bring me through the year, I will give you more." Certain individuals are on especially good terms with the devil. They pray to him often, and he visits them from time to time and does favors for them; they are his "friends." When such a person dies, his son often continues the relationship. 565* 776 782

Another kind of spirit producing ill effects is the *zār*. *Zār* spirits are of 565* 776

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771 776 805 Besides dominating Abyssinian ritual activity, they constitute the major foci for the organization of time and space.

*565 805 In the Abyssinian world view, time is not rationalized for secular purposes. Some peasants calculate the hour by the shadows on mountains, but the effort is not taken very seriously. Units of time are of little concern in the workaday world. When a man says he is going on a trip "tomorrow," everyone assumes that he means he *may* be leaving a few days later. Many appointments are made, but few are kept literally; so that the phrase *hābashā qaṭaro* ("Abyssinian appointment") has come to signify an appointment to which one comes quite late or not at all. There is little sense of time in the abstract. When an Amhara peasant is asked how long a certain trip takes, he does not reply "ten hours," but rather: "If you leave here at dawn you will arrive there before it turns dark"; and his estimate of the arrival time tends to vary according to whether or not he wants the questioner to make the trip.

*565 805 829 Historical time is still more vaguely conceived than local time. The Amhara peasant has little sense or knowledge of history. He considers all that happened before Menelik's day as "ancient times," and more or less as an undifferentiated period. He knows very few of the earlier emperors, no historical dates, and often not even the exact year, let alone date, of his own birth. He has no idea when the church in his area was built and no interest in preserving such historical monuments or mementos as may exist in his country.

*565 538 829 When, as often happens, anecdotes about historical figures are retold around the fireplace, the interest is not in the historical context or significance of the story but in the cleverness or heroism of the characters. Much attention is paid to genealogical lines insofar as they are relevant to potential litigation regarding rights to the use of land, but not with any concern for an objective account of historical connections. In fact, the same man may give differing accounts of the way in which he is related to a given ancestor, depending on the practical interest which underlies his recitation.[8]

*565 805 796 With regard to his religious calendar, however, the Amhara peasant is acutely conscious of the passage of time. This concern is symbolized by a ceremony held in the churches after Mass at the beginning of each new year. [787] A *dabtarā* stands before the people and calculates the dates for the important holidays and fasts during the coming year. Sometimes this exercise is preceded by relating the story of Demetrios, the man who after long struggles succeeded in discovering the formula by which the Orthodox calendar can be computed—so that, for example, the short fast before Lent will begin on a Monday.

The symbols of this calendar are the names of the saints. Each group of four years is named after the Four Gospels, with that of St. John (*Yohānnes*) [576] representing leap year. The customary greeting at New Year's is of the form:

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holy ark stands in the center of the church, an area restricted to priests and deacons and consecrated to the performance of the Mass. The second circle is reserved for those few who are privileged to partake of Communion—young children and rare adults who have been married according to the church laws. The third circle is where ordinary people stand during the Mass and where the clergy sing and dance on special holidays. The church itself stands in a compound ringed by an outer wall, representing still another grade of ritual impurity. Those who have eaten before the Mass or have had sexual relations the night before are not supposed to enter the church at all, and must stand outside the outer wall during services. 565* 346 341 181 796 822 [718]

This spatial pattern is likewise found in the arrangement of people out of doors. The outstanding instance of this is the traditional organization of the military camp of a *negus* or *rās*. In the center of the camp is the large, round tent of the chief, together with tents for the holy ark, high-ranking visitors, and supplies. Around this central area the commanding officers are stationed. They in turn are encircled by the tents of the cavalry. Beyond this ring, finally, is an outer circle composed of the huts of the common soldiery. 565* 822 181 361 712

Spontaneous arrangements along this line appear during festivals. The person or persons who sing or dance are placed in the center and the spectators form a circle around them. During religious celebrations this circle consists of priests and *dabtarā*. At some distance the laymen watch from an outer circle. Here, as in the home, church, and military camp, concentric circles serve to segregate people according to their place in some hierarchical order. 565* 822 181 [796]

Society and Human Nature

The Amhara's conceptualization of the human order lends itself as a whole to being articulated in terms of patterns of concentricity and hierarchy. The sociological component of the Amhara peasant world view consists, on the one hand, of a series of notions centered on the individual self and his progressively wider groupings; and, on the other hand, of a series of distinctions which rank persons in accord with criteria of superior and inferior qualities. 565* 181 829

The Amhara peasant tends to have a pronounced awareness of his personal ego. The boundaries of his person and property appear firmly marked in his mind and are more important to him than the boundaries of any of his social egos. He likes to live on his own land, at a good distance from neighbors. If he lives in a homestead with other relatives, he prefers to dwell in his own separate building. The Amhara's proverbial comment on the subject is that "Home and the grave are by oneself." He is sensitive about his personal belongings, quick to defend his rights, reluctant to accept suggestions, and inflammable over insults. His conception of the admirable 565* 156 157 [577]

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*565 156 157 man, as we shall see in more detail below, includes the quality of leaving others alone.

[577] This strong sense of self is confirmed and symbolized by two conspicuous *565 156 411 Amhara customs: carrying staves and going on trips. A staff, like a pipe, affirms the ego in two ways. As a piece of personal property right at hand, it stimulates a sense of pride of ownership; as something external yet confronting the person, it makes the ego more conscious of its bounded reality. Such sensations are daily experiences for the Amhara peasant, who is rarely separated from the staff in one form or other. When he leaves his homestead he normally carries the hard *dulā*, a potential weapon of defense that likewise affirms his ego by bolstering self-confidence in a dangerous world. He braces the *dulā* against his back as he treks along, or holds it against the [481] front of his shoulder like a rifle. Older men walk using it as a cane. A special kind of staff made of softer wood (*zang*) is carried by pious and elderly [481] men. Participants in devotional services lean on still another type of staff (*maquāmiyā*) which is distributed in the church for that purpose.

*565 156 484 Traveling is another custom which affirms the ego, at least when one travels spontaneously and not in organized company. As the individual moves past various stimuli, his self-consciousness is heightened by the contrast between a persisting ego and a constantly changing environment. As a traveler par excellence—and a lone traveler, unless social rank requires the presence of retainers—the Amhara peasant frequently removes himself from familiar home settings and confronts an outside world. He loves to go on the road and will travel at the slightest provocation. For him a distance of two or three hours by foot is like the American's trip to the corner drugstore. Whether to visit relatives or pay respects after death, to go to market or to court, to get holy water at a distant church, or to look after land in a far away district, the Amhara peasant is on the move dozens of times each year, often for trips involving two or three days of travel.

*565 156 • 829 602 609 Because of the great emphasis on the self in Amhara experience and culture, one may for the moment say that the personal ego is the central object in the Amhara peasant's view of society. Exactly what might be meant by this statement and in what respects it needs qualification are questions that will be taken up in the concluding chapter. If it is so, certainly the next most prominent social object in his world is the circle of close ones, or *zamad*. *Zamad* refers in the first instance to consanguineal kin, and is distinguished from the category of those who are strangers, or *bā'ed*. This is perhaps the most important of all the sociological distinctions made by the Amhara: the former, *zamad*, are seen as entitled to the warmest hospitality, while toward *bā'ed* indifference and suspicion are appropriate responses.

*565 156 602 This does not mean that the kin group is a corporate entity whose interests and identity transcend that of the individual. On the contrary, the notion of

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*565 motivated to live as long as possible: the monk wants to live longer in order
121 to get closer to God by prayer, and the worldly man wants to live long enough
177 to atone for his sins so that he may enter paradise. Health thus rates as one of
178 the most important values. The expressions for greeting and farewell stress
75 health. Most of the prayers and vows offered have to do with achieving health.
761 Long, painful pilgrimages are made for cures, and much money is spent for the remedies of native practitioners and for amulets to ward off illness. This powerful desire for health and life operates as a lever to overcome the resistance to change.

*565 Toward the bearers of new ideas designed to satisfy this desire for reduced
121 morbidity and mortality, however, the peasant's stance is suspicious and un-
177 sympathetic at the outset. He regards Ethiopians who have been educated by
829 Westerners as contaminated by alien norms and beliefs. They appear to him as Ethiopians, but also as strangers—as "black *faranj*"—with their European clothes and their unorthodox eating and smoking habits. He tends to distrust their motives, to suspect them of being out to take advantage of him in some way. And he resents their overt or implicit disparagement of his way of life, particularly his practices in so sensitive an area as sanitation.

*565 Against such obstacles one cultural factor that serves to present the health
121 worker as an acceptable agent of change is the Amhara peasant's deference to
177 the man of learning. The public health worker is in a position to inherit some
744 of the awe felt for the learned *dabtarā*, especially since the health teams
[554] operate out of centers which provide therapy as well as instruction, which gives them the benefit of association with the quasi-magical powers attributed to one who performs successful treatment. In addition, he can be aided by the Amhara peasant's personal devotion to someone who has helped him and won his confidence. Whether this devotion can be stimulated depends, in the last analysis, on the character and resourcefulness of the public health workers themselves. Those who are able to communicate in a dignified manner with the peasants, who avoid dealing with them as an inferior and backward people, who refrain from flaunting the most important local norms, and who are on good terms with local authorities and respected men, have a substantial chance of being accepted after an initial period of suspicion and alienation. Thus it was that a Gojjami peasant, asked why some of the local people were hearkening to the advice of the public health team at Dabra Marqos, explained: "We have come to realize that what you tell us to do is for our own advantage, not yours." Elsewhere in Gojjam, a similar response was the eventual issue of a more pronounced initial rejection of public health workers. In the village of Dajan doors were closed against a venereal disease team which was taking blood samples of the entire population for Kahn test analysis. Popular suspicion was voiced in a number of ways; the health workers were accused of selling blood, of being missionaries, and of otherwise trying

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*565 121 181 829 not bring him to a position of rejecting man. On the contrary, man is accepted, with all his frailties, for what he is. The Amhara's patterns of life are shaped, neither to overwhelm man with guilt for his shortcomings, nor to pressure him into personal or social reform, nor to deprive his worldly existence of all enjoyment and significance; but rather to accommodate human realities and transcendent values to one another in such a way that neither is seriously compromised. He honors the value of non-violence, but indirectly, by relegating its observance to a morally differentiated role, the priest. He honors the value of marital fidelity, embodied again by the priest; but he lives comfortably, following the inclinations of the old Adam, in a status defined as technically excommunicate. He accepts the reality of hostility in human relations and adjusts to this reality by encouraging it where socially useful, curbing its socially disruptive aspects through fasting, and by channeling its expression where possible through litigation before judges, argumentation before elders, and games on festive occasions.

The Amhara peasant's outlook is both realistic and humanitarian. He does not expect political leaders to be morally pure, for he understands that all men are imperfect; *saw yallam*. He is not upset by the "selfishness" and "insincerity" of *Realpolitik*—awareness of which has sometimes been a demoralizing factor among the masses in Western countries—because *Realpolitik* is the stuff of his daily life. At the same time he seeks practical arrangements whereby human interests can be furthered and human conflicts can be contained. Insofar as this characteristic orientation of Amhara peasant culture comes to permeate the outlook of Ethiopia's modernizers—and it has never been wholly absent—it may help to reduce the intensity of those unrealistic demands and inhumanitarian impulses which are endemic in a society in transition to modernity.

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New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— 86
parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, 178
by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their role as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part [87]
by teachers and peers in the government schools.

Schools at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly 875
by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, 177
England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing 873
number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization.

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on 177
the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has 178
occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative 557
of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to- 555
day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied with- 829 •
out regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affilia- 883*
tions.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of uni- 87
versal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead.

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian 873
nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to 177
associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post- 178
elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with mem- 186
bers of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of 883*
the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic [872]
pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115]

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

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Rome and the life of Abraham Lincoln than with the geography of their immediate community or the history of their own native country."[16] While a certain amount of concentration on remote matters may be essential for introducing modern adolescents to the substance and background of modern culture, it is doubtful whether they are being prepared to relate meaningfully to the society of their adulthood if that society is not made a subject for careful consideration during their schooldays.

Still another limitation on the effectiveness of the teachers stems from a quite different problem, the Ethiopian's ambivalence toward foreigners. This will be overcome with the gradual Ethiopianization of the teaching force, but that cannot be achieved for at least another generation. One area in which this problem manifests itself is linguistic nationalism. English, the official language of all post-elementary instruction, is still regarded as an outsider's tongue in Ethiopia, unlike other African countries where the European language in question serves the native peoples as a *lingua franca;* and many Ethiopians hope that the day will come when it will be replaced by Amharic as the medium of instruction.[17] Due to their ignorance of Amharic or other Ethiopian languages, foreign teachers are rarely able to gain the sort of closeness to their students that promotes the more profoundly beneficial sort of relationship. Because of this and a tradition of suspiciousness regarding foreigners, all but the radically Westernized students maintain a lingering mistrust of the teacher *qua* foreigner.

The gaps in the socialization of the modern adolescent left by the nature of his teachers and their teaching are filled to some extent by his peers. In this respect, too, modern adolescence contrasts with the traditional pattern: not only has the role of mentor and model been taken over by foreign teachers in place of the parents, but also the modern adolescent has become dependent on his peers to a degree unthinkable in traditional Amhara society.

It has been natural that the modern adolescent turn to those his own age for moral support. However much they may support the idea of his going to school as a means to a higher salary, his parents have little understanding of the new directions inherent in modern education. His foreign teachers are, at worst, preoccupied with their own narrow interests or else, at best, out of tune with the Ethiopian ethos and mentality. Older modernized Ethiopians, who should be the most sympathetic, are usually too preoccupied with their own adjustment problems to pay much attention. His schoolmates thus become his only reliable allies in the battle of growing up.

Association with age-mates is informal for the most part. There have been almost no formal youth associations or clubs in Ethiopia. The teen-age gang, with its sharp boundaries and tight controls, has scarcely come into being. Relations with peers thus takes the form of small groups of friends. More

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society: to create engineers and mechanics, doctors and nurses, economists and educators. With regard to the familiar occupations of the old order, the schools' task is to engender a new breed of practitioner—farmers versed in modern methods of agriculture, soldiers disciplined and geared to modern techniques, clergy cognizant of ecumenical Christianity, clerks who can type and take shorthand, and government officials with some modern education.

What is most revolutionary is that the schools introduce not only new subject matters for careers, but the very notion of vocation itself—of life work as

TABLE 4

SOURCES OF FUTURE SATISFACTION CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS*

Source from Which Students Expect Most Satisfaction in Life	Secondary School				College Males (per cent)	
	Males (per cent)		Females (per cent)			
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Career or occupation	34	12	30	9	44	17
Improvement of local community	30	27	16	36	22	28
Religious beliefs and activities	13	20	16	21	5	7
Participation in national and international affairs	10	24	13	20	8	26
Family relationships	8	10	20	9	17	14
Leisure-time, recreational activities	5	7	5	5	3	8
Number	(394)		(40)		(195)	

* Based on question 27 in the Gillespie-Allport questionnaire.

something which one *chooses,* trains for in a specific manner, and derives satisfaction from pursuing.* This orientation departs radically from the traditional expectation of inheriting the work of one's father as a matter of course. Whereas, as we have noted, the Amhara son traditionally carried on his father's work, except in rare cases where there were special reasons for not doing so, only *seven per cent* of the boys in my sample indicated that

* When asked what they expected to give most satisfaction in their lives, the students most frequently named "career or occupation" (out of six alternatives). When asked what they considered most desirable in choosing an occupation, they named "work that is really interesting" most frequently (out of six alternatives). See Tables 4 and 5.

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463 they expected to enter the same occupation as their fathers. This figure is
178 much smaller than that obtained from a cross-cultural study of youth by
593 James Gillespie and Gordon Allport, who found that "approximately a third of the male students in all our samples [a total of 1,168, drawn from the United States, New Zealand, South Africa, Egypt, Mexico, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, and Israel] expect to enter the same occupations as their fathers, or ones closely related."[18] In part, the Ethiopian figure simply reflects the preparation for types of work which did not exist for previous generations.

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TABLE 5

OCCUPATIONAL CONDITIONS MOST DESIRED BY STUDENTS

Conditions Which Students Consider Most Desirable in Choosing Future Occupations	Secondary School				College Males (per cent)	
	Males (per cent)		Females (per cent)			
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Interesting work	56	24	63	17	63	18
Job security	19	26	23	11	14	31
Chance to acquire much money	12	11	3	11	10	16
Prestige	7	9	8	17	7	5
Pleasant work companions	4	26	3	30	3	27
Good boss	2	4	0	14	3	3
Number	(325)		(40)		(113)	

463 But since it also represents numerous cases where the boy's occupational
178 interest is a traditional one—where, in other words, one finds sons of soldiers
593 and government officials planning to become farmers, sons of farmers planning to be teachers, and sons of priests and teachers planning to be soldiers and administrators—this figure may be interpreted as indicative of a very general rejection of parental influence with respect to occupational choice.

Parents of the modern adolescents are unhappy about this diminution of their traditional authority, especially so when their children opt for some of the more "outlandish" modern occupations. Their disapproval sometimes takes the form of urging their children to quit school and get married. Often it is expressed in the form of direct criticism of the occupation in question. Nearly two-fifths of the secondary school males questioned about this indicated that their parents did not approve of the occupation they wished to enter. As

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*883 ical wit and activism displayed by students from other countries has em-
66 barrassed their cautious dispositions.

There are three reasons for this relative lack of politicization of the Ethiopian students. One is that, having maintained her ancient independence
[648] throughout the "scramble for Africa," Ethiopia entered the twentieth century as an independent nation; and five years of Italian rule were not sufficient to shake her spirit. Ethiopian students have thus not had to participate in the anti-imperialist movement, the great school for political activism in the colonial areas.

[571] A second factor is the deeply rooted habit of total subordination to any
[157] legitimate authority. Because of this orientation there is a persisting disposition to relegate concern for all political questions to the highest authorities.
[570] Nearly two-thirds of the secondary students and a third of the college stu-
[829] dents maintain that one should always obey the order of a superior, arguing that "obedience is a virtue," "things would not go right otherwise," and "the Bible says so."

*883 The third reason for the almost apolitical posture of Ethiopian students
66 has been the absence of opportunities for political expression in their country.
641 African students from British colonies have in the past been surprised to find that their colonial situation admitted far more freedom of speech and press than Ethiopia. Teachers are expected to keep anything remotely connected with Ethiopian politics out of the classroom, and the editors are expected to keep them out of the newspapers. Nor have the students been permitted to form any kind of politically relevant associations. Even casual discussion of domestic political problems among friends has been curtailed because of the all-pervading fear of government informers.

*883 All this has not prevented Ethiopian students from being affected to a
66 moderate degree by the libertarian and egalitarian ideals of the West. The
177 teaching of European history in secondary school, evaluation of students' performance without respect to class or tribal affiliation, and the exercise of electing student officers in the colleges have acted to leaven the political imagination of the students. Many of them thus ventured a degree of political
*883 criticism in their anonymous questionnaires. Forty-three per cent indicated
66 disapproval of the existing differences between "big men" and the common
829 people. Thirty-nine per cent were critical of the degree of control exerted by the government, of which group two-thirds felt that governmental controls are too strict (e.g., not permitting free expression), and one-third felt they were not strict enough (e.g., with respect to corruption and provincial administration).

*883 The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, jarred the Addis Ababa col-
668 lege students into an unprecedented state of political activity.[27] In response
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to the rebel leaders' appeal for a show of public support, hundreds of students 883*
staged a demonstration on behalf of the coup. Except for occasional school 668
strikes in the past, this was the first time that Ethiopian students had ever 669
taken part in any sort of organized political process. The novelty of the experience was reflected in the confusion on many faces as they marched through the streets of the capital, chanting a militant refrain and carrying placards that celebrated "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" and "Our Country's Peaceful Change." For some, the experience was quite unreal; it was as though they were behaving thus because that is how one is supposed to behave at a time of revolution. Not a few of the participants actually regretted the coup but went along because, as one put it: "The coup has taken place; my friends are for it; so what is one to do?"

Even so, there was a moment of genuine political engagement for all when the student demonstrators proceeded to the army headquarters with the vain plea to forestall civil violence and join the new regime installed by the Imperial Bodyguard. Though they were turned away by bayonets, that moment gave the students the intoxicating taste of direct political expression. Subsequently, the army's abrupt suppression of the rebels left these students in an awkward position. All who took part in the demonstration were required to write letters of apology to the Emperor as a condition of being readmitted to study. They did so, and returned to school; but they have never been the same again. Though on the surface they appear to have reverted to the apolitical, passive orientation of the pre-coup days, occasional oratorical contests and poetry readings have given expression to a sharpened criticism of the government and greater restlessness in the student body.

Because of the relative absence of information and discussion pertaining to 883*
domestic political questions heretofore, Ethiopian students have tended to 829
have slightly more knowledge and interest regarding international politics. 721
On the general question of war and peace they seem to be influenced by the high value given to warfare in traditional Ethiopia. As many as forty per cent of all the students consider war "sometimes a good thing." This sentiment is somewhat stronger among the secondary school students than among the college students, but even the latter show a higher percentage of choice for this response than any of the national groups in the Gillespie-Allport study—except perhaps Egypt. (See Table 12.)

In their attitudes toward the "big three" world powers, the Ethiopian stu- 883*
dents seem to be most favorably disposed toward the United States, secondly 829
toward the Soviet Union, and thirdly toward Great Britain. (See Table 13.) The United States is liked because it "helps other countries," has a high standard of living, and is "advanced in civilization"; while it is disliked because of its color discrimination and its being "aggressive," "rude," "boast-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 ful," and "loud-mouthed." England is liked because it is "highly civilized" and
829 has a "good form of government"; but it is disesteemed because of its waning power, on the one hand, and its "cunning" and "treachery," and being imperialist, on the other. Russia is admired because of its power, its achievements in science, and its rapid attainment of "civilization." It is disliked, on the other hand, for being "aggressive" and "fostering war," and because of its "bad form of government" and its "atheism."

*883 TABLE 12
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ATTITUDES OF STUDENTS FROM ETHIOPIA AND SEVEN OTHER COUNTRIES TOWARD WAR*

Country	Institution	Sex	War Is			Number
			Needless and Preventable (per cent)	A Necessary Evil (per cent)	Sometimes a Good Thing (per cent)	
Ethiopia	Secondary schools	M	46	11	43	(302)
	Secondary schools	F	46	18	36	(39)
	Colleges	M	45	20	35	(199)
Egypt	Higher Training College	M	31	34	34	(29)
	Women Teachers' Institute	F	39	35	26	(51)
France	University of Bordeaux	M	65	26	9	(205)
		F	74	26	0	(23)
Italy	Catholic University of the Sacred Heart	M	61	26	13	(39)
		F	46	44	10	(37)
Japan	Secondary school and colleges, Kyoto	M	72	16	8	(95)
		F	58	37	4	(119)
Mexico	National University of Mexico	M	51	23	26	(106)
		F	58	24	18	(103)
New Zealand	Victoria University College	M	72	16	12	(74)
		F	72	12	16	(51)
United States	Miami University	M	69	22	9	(112)
		F	64	33	3	(91)

* The Japanese data appear in Stoetzel, *op. cit.*, p. 306.
For the data on the other countries I am greatly indebted to a personal communication from Professor James Gillespie.

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In these attitudes one may note the persistence of such traditional valuations as the esteem for power, the stress on religion, and the concern about polite and dignified behavior, alongside such modernist valuations as the esteem for civilization (*seltänē*) and science. With regard to the emerging world power of Africa, however, the students have been rapidly coming to reject the traditional Abyssinian viewpoint, which looks with disdain upon the Negroid peoples of Africa as racially and culturally inferior.

As recently as a decade ago, a group of Ethiopian college students responded with ridicule and evident disdain to an illustrated ethnographic account of some East African tribes. But in the late 1950's, due to the growing

TABLE 13

ATTITUDES OF ETHIOPIAN STUDENTS TOWARD THE "BIG THREE" POWERS

Classification of Comments	England (per cent)	U.S.A. (per cent)	U.S.S.R. (per cent)
Positive.....	32	59	47
Negative.....	37	19	26
Neutral.....	11	5	6
No answer....	20	17	21
Number..	(640)	(700)	(662)

prominence of the African independence movement and the decision of the Ethiopian government to take more interest in African affairs, the pan-African sentiment began to invade the heretofore aloof highland plateau of Ethiopia. The attendance in Ethiopian colleges of students from other African countries and the growing number of pan-African meetings in Addis Ababa have promoted this trend. Consequently a number of Ethiopian students now follow with growing interest the developments in other African countries, and not a few indicated that their identification with Africa as a whole was stronger than their identification with Ethiopia. All but 8 per cent of the 700 students questioned: "What do you think about Africa?" had some response that showed concern, whether sympathy for African independence and getting rid of the Europeans (28 per cent), or sensitivity about Africa's "undeveloped" and "uncivilized" state and its need to work hard (33 per cent), or pride and confidence in Africa's resources and future (24 per cent).

So deeply rooted a sentiment as prejudice against Negroid Africans cannot quickly be willed away. It does seem, however, that the emergence of the

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*883 829 186 178 new African nations is proving to be an effective agency for reducing such prejudices among the students. The broader political identity afforded by pan-Africanism may in turn be promoting a more genuine national feeling among the younger educated Ethiopians, a feeling of solidarity that begins to encompass all the ethnic groups in their land.

*883 829 Still another sphere in which the Ethiopian students have had some room for the development of political values has been the study of history. The students were therefore asked to name the persons in Ethiopian and in world history whom they most liked and disliked, and to explain why.

The three most liked figures in Ethiopian history were Haile Selassie, mentioned by 36 per cent of the respondents; Tēwodros (30 per cent); and Menelik (16 per cent). Named much less frequently were Yohānnes (mostly by Tigre students); military heroes of Menelik's day, and of the resistance during the Italian occupation; and church figures, especially Abuna Petros (the great Orthodox martyr of the occupation).

*883 829 643 The reasons given for naming Haile Selassie include the wide variety of respects for which his reign has been praised. He is liked for uniting Ethiopia, supporting education, fighting for the country's freedom, introducing modern civilization, and generally "helping the country." The reasons given extend to expressions of very personal attachment, such as "he gives me education," "he supplies everything," and "he is my guardian."

The reasons given for liking Tēwodros or Menelik best are more circumscribed, and they are balanced by a number of other responses in which these two emperors are named as the most *disliked* persons in Ethiopian history (Tēwodros, 7 per cent; Menelik, 4 per cent). Tēwodros is liked chiefly because of his bravery and his attempt to unite the nation, while he is disliked because of his cruelty. Menelik is liked chiefly because of his defense of the country at Adowa and his efforts to modernize Ethiopia and introduce education; and he is disliked for having sold parts of the country to Europeans. Yohānnes is mentioned about the same number of times in both categories (2 per cent): positively, for his courage in battle and his Christian zeal and, negatively, for his intolerance in persecuting non-Christians.

*883 829 Lījj Iyāsu (11 per cent) and Ahmad Grāñ (8 per cent) are the most disliked figures in Ethiopian history. They are associated with specific offenses: Iyāsu with being an "incompetent ruler," "encouraging Islam," and "chasing after women," and Grāñ with burning churches and massacring Christians. Three other persons in this category are Sultan Ibrahim (5 per cent), for selling the port of Assab; Dajāzmātch Haile Selassie Gugsa (4 per cent), for fighting on the side of the Italians in 1935; and Yodit (2 per cent), the legendary queen who is said to have sacked Aksum in the tenth century.

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As many as 44 per cent of the students failed to name anyone they disliked in Ethiopian history. This may be attributed in part to their meager knowledge of Ethiopian history, perhaps still more to their fear of expressing themselves honestly on such a point even in an anonymous questionnaire. But doubtless another reason was that presented by the 2 per cent of the students who wrote: "[I dislike] none; all did good." 883* 829

If the responses on Ethiopian history are analyzed with respect to the qualities or achievements of the men concerned, we find that military virtue —expressed as "brave," "defeated many enemies," or "fought for Ethiopia"— is mentioned far more often than any other (27 per cent). In second place are actions related to the modernization of Ethiopia, and the third most frequent category is that of unifying the nation. The most frequently mentioned negative categories were anti-Christian actions (burning churches, converting to Islam), cruelty, treason, and selling Ethiopian territory.

A different pattern of response is apparent in the comments on world historical personages. The interest in military prowess is still there, but not as prominent (19 per cent). It appears chiefly in the preference for Napoleon and, occasionally, for Alexander the Great. Themes of national unification and modernization occur very rarely. It is the general category of humanitarian qualities and achievements that dominates these responses (40 per cent), expressed variously as "freeing the slaves," "promoting equality," "working for peace," showing kindness or generosity, possessing wisdom or creative genius. Thus it is that Abraham Lincoln stands out as the most admired figure in world history for the Ethiopian students (22 per cent), and that following him, Napoleon, and Peter the Great, Mahatma Gandhi stands in fourth place.

Responses concerning the most disliked figure in world history are consistent with this tendency to transcend the sentiment of militant nationalism. The main charges against the villains of world history have to do with cruelty, slaughter, provocation of war (including, of course, the attack on Ethiopia), and despotism, while vices related to betraying one's nation are scarcely mentioned. The names which dominate these replies are Hitler (22 per cent), Mussolini (21 per cent), Nero (8 per cent), and Stalin (2 per cent). It appears, then, that the study of world history may have the effect of strengthening the humanitarian side of the students' political orientation by exposing them to a different set of ideals and models.

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF MODERN ADOLESCENCE

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The pattern of adolescence described in this section came quickly into being and has already undergone some substantial changes. It is, in effect, the pattern of the 1950's. The educational system before and just after the occupation was, structurally, an extension of the old pattern of schooling sons of noble-

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who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.*

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services.

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagārit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area.

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[29]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement.

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagārit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gabbār*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dēgā* (high) land, while in certain *qolā* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

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178 program not supervised by the Emperor, since any official's budding projects
631 tend to be undone by his successor, whether because of personal vendetta,
64 orders from the Emperor himself, or simply difference of approach. Thus has
565 Haile Selassie been able to make sure that no one besides himself demonstrates any sort of leadership that might be attractive to the public.

At the same time his appointments have been made in such a way as to insure a balance of power—or impotence—favorable to his absolute control. By consistently appointing enemies to adjacent positions he has built in checks upon the behavior and sentiments of his higher officials. He has relied on mutual jealousies and conflicting ambitions to cause each to report anything incriminating he can find on the other. When appointees in the same branch of government have shown undue co-operation and friendliness, he has at times provoked friction between them.

In addition to the checks and balances of the *shum-shir* system, the Emperor has made use of an extensive intelligence system to keep watch over those in office and out. Not only the operations of the regular security depart-
[625] ments of the Ministry of Interior and the police, but also some of his closer advisers have had their own personal networks, financed by moneys diverted from various government departments.

178 Other measures have been used to check the independence of businessmen.
565 Money has been arbitrarily taken from them by the imposition of fines, con-
656 fiscation of property, and through requests for contributions for charitable
472 causes. A few private entrepreneurs who have been too successful have been forced into government service. Licenses have been revoked, in some cases given to foreigners rather than to prosperous Ethiopians. Dividends from commercial enterprises have been withheld, or given to others whom the Emperor favored. (Rather than appear unduly wealthy, some Ethiopian investors have preferred to use Greeks, Armenians, and Arabs as the nominal heads of their enterprises.)

178 Due to their relative proximity to the Emperor, their patronage powers,
565 their wealth, and in some cases their family background, the members of the
554 new nobility command considerable deference, particularly in Addis Ababa.
[177] Their Westernized style of life (itself modeled to a great extent on the Emperor's habits) has set new standards for modernizing Ethiopia. At the same
[829] time they are the objects of much stereotyped hostility. The people in the country, and the commoners of the towns, regard them as oppressive and unsympathetic. Their logic often runs: "The big men around the court are no good; only the Emperor is for us." The intellectuals see them as reactionary, selfish, and corrupt. The massacre of some fifteen members of the new nobility as the final act of the abortive coup d'état in 1960 was an expression of this latter judgment.

178 The chief advantage of the new nobility—their relative enjoyment of im-
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571 871 177 [648] India (10 per cent); and by international organizations, chiefly WHO and ICAO (8 per cent). The others were financed privately, either by their families (8 per cent), or, in a few cases (3 per cent), by religious groups or business firms.

571 829 177 Given this variety of educational background, it is not surprising that the experience of study abroad has had a variable effect on the returnees. Their images of modernity are differently colored according to the country where they have received their higher education. Their archetypes for the modern component of language vary according to the language in which they have received their technical training.

Despite such variety—which may ultimately serve to enrich their cultural life more than to fragment it—several effects of the experience abroad appear common to nearly all the returnees. These include a radical broadening of perspective; the taste for a high standard of living; greater appreciation of political freedom; a heightened sense of Ethiopian identity; and an increase in nationalistic sentiment.

571 829 177 186 Because Ethiopian students are highly motivated to learn what goes on about them in foreign countries, their travel abroad has tended to broaden their outlooks rather than to confirm their prejudices. This expansion of perspective alters their attitude toward Ethiopia in two different ways. On the one hand, by enabling them to evaluate aspects of Ethiopian life they had previously taken for granted, it has made them more aggressively critical about conditions at home. On the other hand, it has given them a greater sense of pride about Ethiopia. They have noticed that, however advanced their host country, it had certain shortcomings of its own, a sort of observation which has tended to ease the sting of cultural inferiority inevitably felt during the stay in a more modernized society.

> Before going to the United States, I pictured it as the most perfect country on earth. We students in Ethiopia believed that everything good and beautiful comes from America. After studying there, I was disappointed in many ways. For example, I found the Americans to be hypocritical—they go to church, and don't care about religion; they talk about tolerance, and are still quite prejudiced. This was a great lesson for me. I can never be so romantic about a foreign country again, and can appreciate Ethiopia's strengths as well as its weaknesses better now.

Short travel tours sometimes had a similar effect:

> I spent several weeks in Yugoslavia. . . . And I must say—despite how backward we are here, we live much more happily than the Yugoslavs. The people themselves are wonderful—warm and generous; but their lives are miserable. That experience was really quite a surprise for me.

571 829 177 No matter what its shortcomings, the host country inevitably accustomed Ethiopians abroad to a higher standard of living than they had known at

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home—except for the difficulty of having to do without servants. Those students whose rural background and limited intellectual experience had led them to consider Addis Ababa as one of the most advanced cities in the world were often shocked by the comparison. No less shocking was the moral climate, which permitted one to express oneself freely and honestly. The taste for intellectual freedom was added to that of political freedom, as students whose horizons were limited by the meager intellectual fare at home came into hungry contact with authors like Marx and Freud, Dewey and Russell. 571 829 177

However much the Ethiopian students abroad might seek to lose themselves in the host culture, they were not permitted to do so. In the mirror of foreigners' regards, their identity as Ethiopians took clearer shape, transcending narrower tribal identifications. Questions about Ethiopia by foreigners aroused greater interest in Ethiopia's history and contemporary problems. A number of students were thus moved to dip into the literature on their country produced by travelers and scholars in the past, and some of them came to write theses and dissertations on problems related to Ethiopia's development. 571 177 186

All of these factors—broadening of perspective, acquaintance with a higher economic standard, less inhibited discussions, and greater self-consciousness as Ethiopians—contributed to a spirit of nationalist dedication. This spirit was confirmed or aroused in all but two groups of the returnees. One, consisting of children of some wealthy members of the new nobility, went abroad chiefly for the prestige and pleasure involved. For them the experience was an extended holiday; they were playboys more than students. The other group consists of those who were abroad for too short a time to have a complete educational experience—in some cases, for as little as three months. These students have tended to use the tour abroad chiefly as a weapon with which to lord it over their peers on return and otherwise to serve narrow personal ambitions. Those students, however, for whom study abroad entailed a more or less serious encounter with higher education and a more modernized culture normally experienced a swelling aspiration to serve their country. They returned home deeply critical of the status quo and determined to contribute substantially to the modernization of their society. 571 177 186 829

Ostensibly, the returnees have been well situated for making such a contribution. Thanks to prudent government policy since the early fifties, they have been enabled to enjoy a minimally comfortable standard of living. Given a monthly allowance from the moment they step off the plane, they have been automatically salaried at a scale based largely on the academic degree attained, with A.B.'s starting at Eth$450 a month and Ph.D.'s at Eth$700. In addition, provisions have been made for them to borrow money from the government in order to finance heavy investments like furniture or, more usually, an automobile. 571 511 465 426

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571 automobile. All this permits returnees to live at a standard which, while clear-
-511 ly inferior to what they enjoyed abroad, is well above that of all their countrymen except the higher nobility. Their income compares favorably
[465] with the prevailing monthly wages for policemen (Eth$25–$30) and district (*waradā*) governors (Eth$100), and not unfavorably with the salary earned by vice-ministers (Eth$1,000). Compared with the more sumptuous residences of the new nobility, their housing is threadbare, their staff of servants small; but usually their homes contain one or two modern appliances—a radio or phonograph, perhaps a refrigerator.

571 The returnees have, moreover, been shown deference from many quarters:
554 from the modernizing sector of the public which, in its growing esteem for education, has adulated them as the most educated Ethiopians and, in the early fifties, regarded them as something of national heroes; from resident Europeans and Americans, whose perception of shared understandings with the returnees has flattered them; and from the government, which at the least has shown consistent concern for their economic security and at best has given them responsibilities and status that they would not be granted in a more modernized society without considerably more experience.

Despite such apparent advantages, however, it must be said that the returnees as a whole have so far done little either to modernize their country or even to establish themselves as a self-respecting status group. Their failure to do so has become one of the most widely discussed questions in Ethiopia in recent years, both among the more self-critical of the returnees and among critical Ethiopian and non-Ethiopian observers. Instead of being leaders of the new era, they have been little more than misfits in the old. If the central quality of the life of the new nobility has been anxiety, that of the intellectuals has been frustration. In the passionate words of one of them: "There is a wound, a boiling within each and every one of the returnees." Theirs is the frustration of modernized individuals attempting to live meaningful lives in a society that has remained essentially traditional.

571 The ideological aspect of this dilemma is that no synthesis of traditional
829 and modern perspectives has yet been effected which has won the adherence of a sizable number of intellectuals and which could serve to energize their transformation of the status quo. Consensus exists only with regard to a vague sense of the inadequacy of the traditional system. There is no sense of direction. Partly this reflects deprivation due to maladjustment in personal areas, but it also represents a genuine cultural problem.

Foreign-educated Ethiopians return intellectually aware of the traditional nature of their society, but emotionally unprepared to cope with the tenacity of tradition or with the paucity of modern institutions and culture. The experience of culture shock seems greater when they return to Ethiopia than

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when they first went abroad. Then, they were taut with anticipation, eager to learn all they could and to enjoy life in a more modern society. On return, they were dismayed to find things so "backward": "I was struck at the airport by what I saw . . . the sadness in the people's faces, their undernourishment, their despair"—and plunged into a situation where their roles are ambiguous and their convictions are assaulted daily.

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The perspective acquired in the course of prolonged study and residence abroad usually generates a sharp critique of Ethiopian culture on the occasion of return. In some extreme cases, Ethiopian tradition appears devoid of any value.

> Everything in our past has been based on the oppression of the masses by the feudal lords. We must overthrow it all and start from scratch.
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> There is nothing in Ethiopian traditions that I find worth while. There has been no dynamic, no development, unless prodded from the outside or above. The music and poetry are repetitive; the social order is stagnant.

Most returnees, however, stop far short of wholesale condemnation of their traditions. They become aggravated by particular customs, such as *ïshi naga* —Amharic for *mañana*—or certain requirements of etiquette. Nonetheless they have retained a basic attachment to their traditions which is re-awakened in the course of a somewhat painful re-adjustment.

> The main change since returning has been my education to be Ethiopian, to view things with the eyes of an Ethiopian. At first I expected things to be as we saw them in the United States; then I came to see the real concrete problems here, to be more understanding.
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> The ideas I acquired abroad have not changed, only my vim and vigor. One comes to see the setbacks, the need to take two steps back in order to achieve one forward. . . . In the major areas, I identify with the old culture—in such matters as politeness, reserve, hospitality, and being concerned about one's relatives and close friends. In the minor respects, no. The elders carry some of these things to extremes. If someone dies, they go and sit for three days; we go to pay our respects for half an hour. There are a hundred and one customs that fall into this category.

A few returnees even come to acquire a nostalgic interest in the things of the old culture. They become eager to have Ethiopian history and culture studied by scholars. Some have expressed a desire to take up the study of Ge'ez and *qenē*.

All such resolutions of the cultural problem are highly personal syntheses. They remain stable only so long as the individual's life is satisfactory in other

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571 respects. They are not anchored in a *conscience collective*. They are islands
• 829 of clarity in a sea of confusion that becomes evident in remarks like the following:

> While we were in high school here, we still followed the old beliefs. We went abroad and lost them all. Nothing has yet replaced them. We have no beliefs—in any sphere—religion, social, politics.
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> We are all of us confused today. Perhaps it is that the change has come too fast. At any rate, we have lost our values. We don't know what is best for us to do.
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> I don't believe there is anyone in the entire country who knows where we are heading or where we should be heading.

This confusion is the confusion of all Ethiopia today, but because the returnees became so deeply involved in Western culture while abroad they alone have experienced it so acutely. Were they engaged in satisfying work and enmeshed in family obligations, moreover, such malaise would be reduced. Precisely in these fundamental areas, however, the returnees are typically frustrated.

571 The burden of the returnees' frustration in work has not been to locate
464 employment, but to find meaningful employment. It is true that several of the foreign-educated have had to wait for months, in some cases for over a year, after returning to Ethiopia before they were actually given employment. With the establishment of a placement board for returned students in the Ministry of Education about 1955, this difficulty has been minimized. The more fundamental problem has been that the institutional system has been insufficiently modernized to make proper use of individuals who had acquired specialized training abroad. There has been great variability of experience in this regard. Many of the technical intelligentsia have found suitable positions, especially those in the fields of medicine and engineering, and have led quite productive and satisfying work lives since shortly after their return. Many others, however, have been demoralized by the experience of having to occupy simple administrative positions which anyone with a little common sense could handle, or by being saddled with purely administrative responsibilities even when initially placed in a technical job. In such circumstances they have found themselves forgetting most of what they learned while abroad and felt themselves not being used.

571 Even when located in work broadly commensurate with their training
466 received abroad, the returnees have been frustrated by numerous hardships in the work situation and by the difficulties of reform. As might be expected, work facilities are generally inferior to those which the returnees became

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familiar with in more industrialized societies. Nor is there any disposition to improvise improvements with what facilities are available. Little attention is paid to the condition of offices, for example, which are normally located in dark, drab, depressing rooms. Furthermore, the operating procedures of Ethiopian administration are bound to frustrate those who have been conditioned to more rationalized systems of organization. Departments frequently operate with ex post facto budgets. Filing systems are hopelessly archaic. There is virtually no public consciousness of the importance of work *time*. 571 466 [447] 571 466 805

> Ethiopian persons are not geared to a timetable. I have to keep telling myself: "This is how we do it here." Seeing a ten-story building go up in a month, grass and all—that is not for here. . . . I get most annoyed when I cannot finish some matter as promised. Not wanting to reveal the name of my colleague or superior who is holding up the action, I have to make up excuses. Eventually I run out of excuses and this bothers me. . . . Sometimes I get angry and say: "I have given my word to someone, and must have the matter ready today; please sign it." And am told: "Oh, well, don't rush things so."

Work relationships have frequently exasperated the returnees. There has been little inclination to give technically competent employees proper jurisdiction over the personnel in their departments. Technically uneducated superiors have tended to make unrealistic demands—for example, requesting an immediate report on a complicated question that requires weeks to prepare. On the other hand, they have tended to assume that their age and experience are equivalent to the technical knowledge of the foreign-trained, so that technically warranted projects have been casually dismissed because they do not strike the fancy of the superior. 571 466

The returnees have not been so despondent about these conditions which, after all, could be changed—than they are about the apparent futility of trying to change them. Older employees are quick to resent alterations in the accustomed order. 571 466 178 829

> My efforts to reform are opposed by most of the men who run the [postal] system now. Some of them have been working there for forty years or so, and they want to keep things just the way they were when mail came in on camels, because they have always done it that way.

Such resistance to change at the workaday level is tacitly supported by those in the upper echelons of authority—the new nobility. In them the returnees have found their main antagonists and from them have received their most painful lacerations. [565]

The *shamäggelotch*, or "elders," as they are termed by the intelligentsia, have by no means presented a solidary front in opposition to the young modernizers. On the contrary, the attitude of the new nobility toward the 571 565 178 829

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571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

571 Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
584 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
834 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
178 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The tradition-
al mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

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work, has further blurred the cleavage between returnees and locals. Finally, the returnees' growing awareness of their own "failure" has in many cases given them added sympathy toward the locals.

> The locals have as much right to live in the land as the returnees and as much duty to help the country. They should be given responsibility commensurate with what they are able to do. Doing serious work and being a leader do not require going abroad. We may find a leader in one of these kids. . . . In private life, I may not have much to do with them: I associate with a small group of friends, as does everyone; and you can't know everybody. But I have no contempt for the locals, and some of them are my best friends.
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> The locals are the real patriots around here and the ones from whom real action will come.

The locals, in turn, seem to have become less suspicious that the returnees are looking down on them. Yet, in more recent years, they have found different grounds on which to be critical of the returnees. They see the returnees as alienated from Ethiopian life, withdrawn from public action, and consumed with private concerns, instead of living up to expectations and exercising dynamic leadership in the transformation of Ethiopian society.

> The returnees know nothing about Ethiopia when they leave, and when they come back they are just like the *faranj*. We, who have not studied much, cannot see far. We know little more than to do our daily routine. But they, who have the vision, don't do anything. They borrow thousands of dollars when they return, to buy furniture, rent a home, get a car, and so on; and that is all they think about.

The dissatisfaction of many locals with the returnees has in fact increased their own self-esteem and ambition to exert leadership themselves.

In terms of the total pattern of stratification in Ethiopia, however, the factors uniting locals and returnees outweigh those separating them. Despite differences of emphasis, they share a basic estrangement from the traditional masses and elites and a deep antagonism toward the government and most of the new nobility. They are unanimous in feeling that something is dreadfully wrong in the state of Ethiopia. Frequently they cannot articulate just what they object to, or else they seize upon some flagrant social evil as the bête noire: with the locals tending to be most outspoken against the widespread prostitution, or alcoholism, or the abuses of the courts, or the inequalities of wealth; and the returnees tending to single out inefficient practices in administration, or nepotism, or corruption in high places. Above all, perhaps, they share an increasing sense of *impatience*, a sense of being smothered in an archaic and stagnant social order, which they designate so expressively with

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the Amharic phrase *ya-ḳantu weddāsē zaman*—"the era of futile flattery."

For, whatever other aspects of modern culture they have identified with, the locals and returnees are seized with the promise of its first principle: dynamism.[62] Should they join forces, among themselves and with each other, they might create the effective intelligentsia which is indispensable for realizing this dynamism in action. They would play complementary, and equally necessary, parts; the locals contributing their greater drive and closeness to traditional society, the returnees their broader perspective and skepticism toward simplistic answers and total reforms.

There are numerous obstacles to such a progressive development. Some of them represent the persistence among the intellectuals of a number of traditional pan-Abyssinian characteristics which inhibit both the exercise of creative leadership and the capacity for solidary action. The traditional context of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters which follow. The most conspicuous obstacle, however, has been the manner in which the Ethiopian government has sought to integrate the intellectuals in the social system. This is the subject to which we now turn.

The Role of the Government

In the hierarchy of values which sustained the traditional Abyssinian social order, that of the transcendental religious orientation represented by the Orthodox Church may be said to have held the paramount position. This is the sense in which, as has so often been remarked, religion has been Abyssinia's only truly unifying factor throughout the centuries. Religious charisma transferred from foreign sanctuaries—the mythical Ark of the Covenant brought from Jerusalem and the archbishop periodically imported from Egypt—provided the ultimate source of legitimacy in the society, upholding the authority of a sacred Christian monarch, church-defending warlords, and a numerous and functionally differentiated clergy. It so penetrated the social system that the basic unit of Abyssinian civil life was in fact a religious one, the parish.

In retrospect it would seem that the most profound aspect of Haile Selassie's accomplishment has been to dislodge the transcendental religious value from highest place and to replace it with the system-integrative value of loyalty to the emperor.[63] His mission has been above all a secularizing one. To accomplish it he has had greatly to increase his political and economic resources; but insofar as his regime has been accepted, and not based exclusively on sheer power—which to some extent is certainly the case—the paramount value in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie has become loyalty to the emperor as a symbol of the whole society. The autonomous significance of the church has been reduced; its extra-Ethiopian source of charisma has been cut off, and its func-

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symbolize communal solidarities by the forthright assertion of individual claims and grievances. 121* 181

In virtually every instance of a consideration of communal projects or needs that the author observed or heard of, the dominant characteristic of the discussion was a vigorous and uncompromising assertion of individual claims. If it was a question of allotting spaces in a new marketplace, each discussant was vociferating that the portion allotted to him was insufficient. If it was a question of securing more land for various communal purposes, the various property owners involved orated against contributing a square foot unless reimbursed at some preposterous figure. If it was a scene in court or a police station, everyone with any personal grievance, real or imagined, felt it perfectly proper to interrupt at any point and give vent to his opinion. If it was a question of rebuilding a ravaged church or constructing a road, personal disputations undermined all efforts toward communal action. If it was simply a ceremonial occasion, the peaceful setting one might have expected was shattered by the airing of private disputes. 156 157

> Today a new church building was dedicated. It was built to replace one that had been destroyed more than two decades ago by the Italians. People from all over the area made the journey to attend this celebration. All night long and well into the morning the priests and *dabtarā* sang and danced, accompanied as usual by sistrums and drums. Later in the morning, after the church had been officially sanctified, everyone was assembled in the open space in the church compound to listen to some verses composed in honor of the event by one of the local *bālābbāt*, a man who had been a key figure in getting the church rebuilt. He had scarcely finished reciting his poem when a woman in the audience spoke up in anger, arguing that the new church would involve more taxes and in some way would affect her property rights adversely. While he was trying to pacify her, others interrupted and began airing grievances of their own. What was to have been the climax of an occasion for the expression of communal solidarity ended as a bedlam of argument.[10]

The one area in which communal sentiments have seemed fairly strong among the Amhara has been in connection with the pursuit of outlaws. It is customary—in some Amhara districts, at least—for the local inhabitants to band together in informal posses when threatened by the presence of one or more *shīftā*, or "outlaws." Yet even here, in his attitudes toward the *shīftā*, the Amhara reveals an ambivalence regarding the maintenance of civil order and security. 121* 181 156 157 674 627 [829]

The term *shīftā* had, in former times, primarily a political connotation. It referred to someone who rebelled against his feudal superior and was applied only to persons of relatively high status.[11] More recently the term has been vulgarized and broadened to include any sort of outlaw in the rural areas. In 121* 674 [178]

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*121 674 any case the *shĭftā* is a man apart, who makes his home in uninhabited mountainous country or lowlands and lives by stealing cattle and robbing travelers. Some Amhara become *shĭftā* because of a passion for this way of life; this is particularly true of soldiers who, after a long campaign, prefer the continuation of a predatory and free existence to a return to the hard work of the fields. Others do so involuntarily, in order to escape punishment after committing some violence in the course of a personal dispute.

*121 674 829 954 The attitudes of civilian Amhara toward the *shĭftā* combine fear and dislike with a strong tendency toward idealization. The *shĭftā* is feared because he is a killer; if a person happens to witness him performing some act of theft or murder, he will usually keep quiet about it for fear of reprisal. He is disliked because he lives parasitically off the productive activities of others. But the *shĭftā* is widely admired, on the other hand, because he possesses a number of qualities that are dear to the Amhara. He is reputed to be an expert singer of *shĭllalā*. He is credited with unusually handsome features because, living at the expense of others as he does, he has plenty to eat and no [577] arduous work to wear him down. Above all he is *guabaz*, the great Amhara virtue that embodies bravery, fierceness, hardihood, and general male compe- [302] tence. This is symbolized by the *shĭftā*'s letting his hair grow to the proportions of a *gofarē*, the wildly thick hair style of the warrior.

*121 674 829 The Amhara's admiration for the *shĭftā* is reminiscent of American attitudes toward the outlaw in "western" films. In the Amhara case, however, this is not balanced by a corresponding idealization of a sheriff-figure as the representative of civil order. Although a feudal lord or governor who captures some *shĭftā* in his area may be admired, this admiration will be directed to his personal qualities of bravery or cunning far more than to his capacity as an agent of "law and order." There is no feeling among the Amhara that the *shĭftā* must be captured simply because he is an outlaw. Instead, a more pragmatic approach is taken: the *shĭftā* is acknowledged as a legitimate social type and is tolerated at a distance so long as his killing does not become [181] wanton or excessive. This approach, and what, in the idealization of the *shĭftā*, appears to be a tendency to identify with someone who openly flaunts the norms of civil society, bespeaks a relatively weak commitment to the value of civil order.

*121 181 186 619 The weakness of the Amhara's attachment to symbols of local community is paralleled by his parochialism with respect to more inclusive levels of community. This parochialism is manifest in diverse ways in the different social strata. Among the peasantry it appears, for example, as an aversion to arranging marriages and permitting land to pass to an Amhara from a different province. Among the clergy it has been expressed in terms of those regionally based doctrinal differences which have disrupted the church for many centuries. Among the nobility it has taken the form of incessant politi-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cal animosities which have weakened the nobility as a status group both in relation to the emperor and in relation to foreign countries. Another respect in which Amhara parochialism has been expressed is the addiction to regional stereotypes, according to which the Tigrean has been depicted as flighty, irresponsible, and "dry"; the Gondarē as intolerably proud; the Gojjami as sly and treacherous; and the Shoan as calculating and untrustworthy. Despite its long history as a nation, Ethiopia probably never experienced more than the dimmest stirrings of a truly national sentiment among its people; and more than once in the past century have regional lords strengthened the hand of European powers in Ethiopia by seeking their help in the combat against other local rulers.

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Self and Others

In addition to considering the extent to which the members of a society identify with the needs and symbols of their more inclusive collectivities, one may also define the individualistic disposition on the dimension of personal interaction. Egoism contrasts, in other words, not only with the disposition to perceive collective purposes as one's own, but also with the disposition to seek solidarity and mutuality in face-to-face relations.

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This aspect of egoism/solidarism is studied by surveying the more important forms of interaction that appear in a given society. In the survey of elementary social behavior among the Amhara now to be reported, two criteria were used to establish the importance of any given form: (1) the frequency with which it was observed, and (2) the extent to which it was stylized or "institutionalized." These criteria were not embodied in any systematic observational procedures; the only control over the observer's bias here is my own deliberate effort to present a balanced and accurate picture.

We may begin by considering the more solidaristic forms. Interaction among the Amhara is characterized, first of all, by a sort of *sensuous camaraderie*. The Amhara enjoy bodily contact. Members of the same sex customarily hold one another's hands for long periods while conversing, or embrace one another in casual fellowship. Crowds of commoners cheerfully huddle close to one another on the floor through the night when they have assembled for some social function and cannot return home the same day. Relatives and companions of the same sex incline to sleep in one another's arms, at least in the chillier altitudes.

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Both their style of dress and their manner of eating give the Amhara a ready way to express this comradely feeling. Their untailored cotton or wool cloth easily adapts itself to being shared. Except perhaps for individuals of high social status, the typical Amhara is ready to use his toga as a blanket-wrap for both himself and another whom he may scarcely know.

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 A similar spirit is observed in Amhara commensality. Meals are customarily
571 eaten from a common *ĭnjarā* basket. The sauce is ladled onto the center
264 of the *ĭnjarā*, and is consumed ensemble by those sitting around the basket as
181 they dip into it with pieces of *ĭnjarā* broken off from the edges. Traditional
• [829] Amhara scoff at what they regard as the excessively individualistic Western custom of sitting each person down to a separate place at the table and thus depriving the meal hour of what they feel should be its basically communal tone.

*121 At a more formal level of interaction this disposition is expressed in the
574 form of *hospitality*. Amhara hospitality is luxuriously attentive and thought-
571 ful. For example, if there is foreknowledge of a guest's arrival, he is awaited
181 at some distance from his destination and escorted with much to-do into the home. His mule is at once unsaddled and given to feed. The guest is given a place of honor in the home, and a glass of *ṭallā* is immediately brought for him. Amhara etiquette prescribes, moreover, that a glass is not properly filled unless it overflows; and it is repeatedly filled to overflowing whenever the guest has drunk some portion of the beverage. As a gratuitous gesture of good faith, the host—or his wife, or servant—tastes some of the beverage first, a sign that no "medicine" has been added. Before long the wicker table is produced, and the guest and his party are served copiously—no matter what time of day they arrive (unless, of course, it is a fasting day). When the guest has eaten to satisfaction, the host will insist that he eat some more, by repeatedly issuing injunctions like *tegābazu* ("Help yourselves!"), *moḳar* ("Try!"), or *āfar sehon* ("If I become dust!"—i.e., "If you do not eat you will be condemning me to death"). The Amhara host is also likely to insist that his guest spend the night. The guest's feet will be washed, and the host's bed will be given to him, or long grass will be cut for bedding on the floor. At the time of farewell, the host and his attendants follow the guest and his party a good distance along the road. The guest continually cries, "Return! Return!" and the host agrees but continues to serve as escort.

Such hospitality is not wantonly bestowed upon the casual wayfarer. Normally it is reserved for those who qualify as worthy guests: relatives, friends,
[609] or persons of high rank. Nonetheless, there does exist among the Amhara some feeling that even the unknown stranger should be shown hospitality, for he is *ya-egziābhēr engedā* ("a guest of God"). Travelers are generally assured
[485] that somebody somewhere will show them hospitality; there are no inns in traditional Ethiopia, for it is considered wrong to exchange food and lodging for money.

*121 Related to this pattern of hospitality is a delicate sense of *respect* that the
576 Amhara displays toward all comers; often, even toward his enemies. When
571 two Amhara pass each other anywhere, they are expected to bow slightly and
181 say: "How did you pass the night?" or "How did you spend the day?" If they

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

19. Thus, an eighth-grade student in Manz explained the popularity of the Jimma Agricultural School by saying, "The boys all want to go there because it is run by the Americans, and a school run by Americans means that everything is done right—food and clothes are properly distributed, and so on."
20. Shack, *op. cit.*, p. 417.
21. In response to a question on their attitudes toward the priests, sixty juniors and seniors of Tafari Makonnen Secondary School replied as follows (1959): 40 per cent were unequivocally proclerical; 22 per cent were ambivalent, expressing awareness of both good and bad elements in the clergy; and 18 per cent were primarily anticlerical, calling the priests "incompetent," "opposed to modernization," and "not supported by the people." (The rest were no answers or noncommittal.)
22. Edith Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-scientific Beliefs in Ethiopia," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XLVII, Second-Half (May, 1958), 339–54.
23. Cf. Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (rev. ed.; Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954), chaps. vii and xiv.
24. Cf. chap. iii, p. 89, and note 19.
25. Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-Scientific Beliefs," typescript version, pp. 6–7.
26. A sophisticated expression of this approach to Ethiopian painting has been published by an Ethiopian student in France. Cf. Berhanu Abbaba, "La peinture éthiopienne: point de vue d'un Éthiopien," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, II, No. 1 (1961), 160–65.
27. For a brief account of this historic event cf. Lipsky *et al.*, *Ethiopia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962), pp. 210–12.
28. Edgar Z. Friedenberg, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).
29. *Diagnosis of Our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), chap. iii.

CHAPTER 5: *The Old and New Elites*

1. C. Conti Rossini, "La regalità sacra in Abissinia," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, XXI (1948), 12–31.
2. A. Vasiliev, "Justin I (518–527) and Abyssinia," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXXIII (1933), 67–77; *Justin the First* (Harvard, 1950), pp. 299–302.
3. A. Caquot, "La royauté sacrale en Éthiopie," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 205–19.
4. F. Alvares, *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford (2 vols.; Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961), I, 122.
5. "The Chronicle of the Emperor Zara Yaqob," *Ethiopia Observer*, V, No. 2 (1961), 153.
6. J. Varenbergh, *Studien zur äthiopischen Reichsordnung* (Strassburg, 1916), p. 3.
7. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; Edinburgh, 1790), III, 237.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

113 Conceptions of Time and Space in the Amhara World View," *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi etiopici* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1960), pp. 223–28.

8. Cf. Allan Hoben, "The Role of Ambilineal Descent Groups in Gojjam Amhara Social Organization" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1963), pp. 140 ff.
9. *Ibid.*, chaps. ii and v.
10. On Amhara attitudes toward nationhood cf. D. Levine, "Ethiopia: Identity, Authority, and Realism," *Political Culture and Political Development*, ed. L. Pye and S. Verba (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).
11. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," pp. 63–67, presents a detailed analysis of the ethnic hierarchy in Ethiopia "as it exists in the minds of most Amhara." Briefly summarized, this hierarchy consists, in order of descending status, of the (Christian) Tigre; Christianized Galla; Muslim and pagan Galla, and other sedentary Cushitic-speaking peoples who were self-governing prior to Menelik's conquests (Kaffa, Wollamo, etc.); peoples identified chiefly as manual laborers (Falasha, Gurage); and occupational hunters, pastoral nomads, and Negroid ex-slaves.

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113 12. This subject is discussed in greater detail in D. Levine, "Ethiopia: Identity, Authority, and Realism," *op. cit.*
13. Marcel Griaule, "Le travail en Abyssinie," *Revue internationale du travail*, XXIII (February, 1931), p. 8.
14. This ideal is discussed at greater length in D. Levine, "The Concept of Masculinity in Ethiopian Culture" (paper presented at the Fourteenth Annual Symposium of the Committee on Human Development, The University of Chicago, May 11, 1963: to be published in the *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*).
15. *The Primitive World and Its Transformations* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1954), chap. iv; and *The Little Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), chap. vi.
16. Cf. Messing, "The Highland-Plateau Amhara," p. 540.

000 17. Harris observed that "the Abyssinian scribe does not hold the pen of a ready writer; and the dilatory management of his awkward implement is attended with gestures and attitudes the most ridiculous." Also, "Few of the priesthood understand the art of writing, and all regard the exercise of the pen as shameful and derogatory." *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; London, 1844), III, 15, 182.

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18. Cf. Benjamin Paul, ed. *Health, Culture, and Community* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1955).
19. See a series of articles beginning in the *Ethiopian Herald*, Addis Ababa, June 27, 1960: "Let the Victim Speak of the Magnitude of Ethiopian Medicine."

000 20. A long-term study of this and related problems is currently being carried out under the supervision of the US/AID Public Health Section in Ethiopia.

113 21. For general analyses of the nature of political life which support this assertion, cf. Edward Shils, *The Torment of Secrecy* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956);

291 among peasant's weekday wear, and on the occasion of a peasant woman riding a mule (e.g. the bride being carried to the groom's hamlet). In the latter, somewhat tighter variety, it is called "lebaleba". Very recently, Sudanese-imported khaki shorts, British-type, have become popular [294] among peasants for workaday wear, and are mass-produced by foot-operated Singer sewing machines at "big markets" of provincial town, This has changed the status of the male tailor to a full-time, urban occupation, carried on by a poor Amhara and only when he is far from the district of his own kinfolk, to avoid shaming them.

[292] The wearing of the kneelength cotton shirt, formerly also of imported silk, the "qämīs", was a special privilege granted by the King to his chief courtiers and feudal governors and lords. This meant that they did not have to bare the upper body even to their superiors, and could, when travelling, demand food supplied from any peasant for themselves and their troops. Now called "ej ṭäbab" (narrow-sleeve) it is urban wear for the commoner, and even the peasant wears it when he is not at work as well as on festive occasions; It is always of cotton. The term "qämīs" is now used only for the full-length, wider-sleeved gown of women, who like to have it emboroidered with green, flowery designs on chest and back ("telf qämīs"). Unlike the male shirt, it is worn all the way to the feet, and is tied around the waist with a thin strip of cloth,

[83] The "qämīs" of women is almost untailored, for emphasizing body contours would be "shameful". It is full-

304 852 Although Amhara often deny the religious aspect of their circumcision, it is recalled by the more learned that Jesus Christ was circumcised on the 6th day of the month Ṭer. Also, the confessor is invited to circumcisions, and blesses the baby, sprinkles the hut with blessed water, waves the cross about to exorcise lingering demons who have waited for the kill like vultures. He blesses the entire family; May God rear up the baby for you, that he be your support in old age, and carry you to your burial". He is rewarded with a small feast and as much barley beer as he can drink.

In some regions of Begemdir province girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed without ceremony by the midwife, without any religious connotation. Usually the operation is a simple cut, a "clitoretomy". The purpose is to prepare the girl baby for future marital happiness by reducing the egotistical part of her sensuality. It is believed that Amhara women of the province [831] of Gojjam, where clitorectomy is not practiced, are very difficult to satisfy sexually, that they are more concerned with their own sexual gratification than with that of their husbands', and even become unfaithful because of this. At least this is the belief of Amhara of Begemdir province. The term "wäshäla" is also used for an "uncircumcised" woman.

845 It is considered a great calamity when twins are born. They are referred to as "mänta" (from "ammänätä", undecided, not knowing which to accept). Everyone wonders "who will feed and carry the twin"? The proverb says: 845 539

"The mother of twins,

883 pasturing, housebuilding, packing and unpacking of mules on trips to the market and caravans. Able-bodied and semi-skilled, he is at the beck and call of any male kinsman, whenever the call "antä gobäz" (thou, warrior) resounds.

882 But he is still considered "half-baked", not fully skilled, strong but not wise, capable of carrying out orders but not of giving them because impatient and unable to foresee all consequences. The proverbs say:

[539] "The heart of the gobäz is in his chest" (meaning he is brave but does not reflect, in his head, the consequences of his deeds).

"A village full of young men
in one year it will become a desert".

"A young chief;
fog in (the month of) Hedar; (harvest month in dry season) (both) ruin the country".

[583] In return for his services, the young man hopes that his father will be generous in allocating a large and fertile plot of land to him upon marriage; also many cows, so he can ask an equal number from the bride's family.

883 In these services, particularly in transportation of goods and in housebuilding, he may be working in a team with other young men, his former playmates. But hazing is rare at this stage and considered childish, as is unrestrained shouting and pushing, especially within sight and hearing of full adults.

882 Sexual activities after puberty are much more secretive than
831 before, go on at night rather than in daytime, and are discussed only in whispers. Puberty is called" akalä zätän därräsä (lit. he

882 has arrived at the age of making full use of the sexual organ), an
831 expression not considered polite. So is the term "gorämsa", (lit. neighbor) when used to refer to a young buck at the peak age for continuous sex desire, for it signifies the male sexual organ next to its female "mate".

883 [561] At the end of adolescence, the honorific address is "kobäle" (powerful warrior), in some regions. In the old feudal tradition, this was the age when the young man could be called to war, at about 18 to 20 and beyond, for as long as he retained his physical strength as well as skill of hand and eye. Even today, at church festivals, the "gobäz" - "kobälo" category of men perform the "hotu" and "fukkara" jump-dance and military boast, shouting "Addis Ababa" to signify loyalty, and "yebalahal jebo" ("The hyena will swallow him", i.e. any enemy), (or "wardaw shebo" crow's beak) symbolizing
883 526 their readiness to defend the sacred "tabot" of the church. On the "Temqät" festival, the young "gobäz" assemble in teams of individuals on the public plain and the church parades stop to watch their game of "guks" (or gugs), a kind of tournament fought on horseback with blunt, wooden, straight lances. They race at each other at full speed, throwing the spearlike missiles at each other at close range, and ducking at the last moment. Sometimes rhinoceros shields were used for protection, but it is considered more clever to duck. Occasionally serious wounds result, and an overeager young warrior having repeatedly caused them is prevented from taking part in the future (losing his license for recklessness, so to speak).

Usually each participant has singled out a personal opponent. They are conscious that not only the eyes of the elders, priests and feudal lords are on them, but also those of the girls who follow

585 by her spindle" ("bärashay bäenzert"), with their pooled property and strength. In front of the confessor-priest, the groom extinguishes a light, saying: "May God extinguish me like this flame, if I break my oath to her". He gives the mize, if he can afford it, a neck-cord with a silver cross or ring on it, which the latter places around the bride's neck. For the groom does not touch the bride at her parental shelter.

Permission is finally given by the bride's elders to leave, and her spokesman proclaims: "Our daughter we herewith give to your son. Haile Selassye yemut".

The Senaar mule is quickly saddled, and after the groom has mounted, the heavily veiled bride is lifted behind him by the mize, so that she clasps the groom's waist. She is wearing jodphurs as noblewomen do when riding. Waving sticks and shouting war cries, the escort runs before and on both sides of the couple, lighting the way with resinous torches.

Arrived at the "dass" of the groom, the bride sits with him in a corner, flanked by the everpresent "mizä", while loud boasting, "hotu" jumping, "fukkara" boasting, beer-drinking and feasting continue until about 3A.M. About an hour before that, the section in which the bride and groom are sitting is curtained off by means of togas, so that they can sleep together in privacy. Gradually the other celebrants drop off to sleep, heavy with beer, around the fire, all over the "dass", like a guard of honor for the bridal couple. Some of the young men, "gobaz" amuse themselves with
585 teasing games, such as "mock-court" in which the loser is fined
831 beer or honey or a goat (footnote 84); or with sexual buffoonery

Footnote 84: In Harar, southwest Ethiopia, a mock-lawsuit is held in which the loser must provide the drinks for a week after the wedding. See- Leslau: A Wedding Lawsuit in Harar. (Bibø)

585 [33] such as imitating the coitus of a donkey by holding a stick between the legs like a donkey's penis, and two other sticks held vertically to symbolize the vulva, teasing the bridegroom with enacted awkwardness until the actors find the "entrance". But finally the young men follow their elders in deep sleep.

The bride is expected to be, in fact contracted for, a virgin, "dengel". If she is not, there are several possibilities. The groom may lover her so much, or may be so ashamed, that he will keep silent. If he complains, the marriage can be forthwith annulled, in front of witnesses. In this case the shame is great for the bride, and she might be severely beaten. The "signs of virginity" are called "kebber" (lit. honor). The groom or the mize have the right to examine the clothing for blood, and the mize sometimes wave the trophy with glad shouting "The fortress is broken", even take the trophy with them 3 days later on their visit to the bride's family to bring the glad tidings, which honor the bride's kin, and collect their reward.

Since the bride is usually very young at her first marriage, she often suffers considerable pain. Usually she sits up quietly the next morning, in the corner of the "dass", with a serious face, while husband appears gay as the "victor". She is usually ashamed to cry out at night, among these strangers. When the sun rises, the groom and his friends walk some distance away to fulfill calls of nature, and discuss the "victory". When they return, the bride goes with some of the girls, but quietly and without boasting.

The following two or three nights, the bride and groom will have more privacy in a newly-built hut of their own, the "chagola" of "musherra" (honeymoon hut), because, as the saying goes, "the

524 girls, or two girls holding each other by the hand and spinning like a top. Sometimes somewhat older girls meet boys with whom they have established an experimental "joking relationship" ("tawaza"), and play house, building little huts out in the fields during the dry season, within the hamlet in the rainy season. This free experimentation comes to an end just before adolescence, when their relationships become more formal and more supervised.

Imitations of parental activities fill much of children's playtime. Little boys play "farmer", weave rainhoods of reeds and "broadcast" seeds (actually pebbles). Little boys begin to practice the "art of insult" (brain, not only brawn) e.g. such ethnocentric insults as the following:

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578]

	Question: "Where are you from?"
Reply: "Begemdir",	Response: "Land of shysters and quibblers."
"Shoa",	"Land of liars and traitors."
"Gojjam",	"Land of sorcerers (buda)."
"Gondar",	"Gossipers and blabbermouths."
"Gurage",	"Land of tricksters."
"Tigre",	"Land of hotheads."

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754 The culture's fear of black magic, especially "buda", is reflected in children's games, such as:

A: "Buda, buda, what do you eat?"

B: "Meat" (or, imitating the sorcerer's hidden language, "cakes").

A: "What do you drink?"

B: "Blood" (or, paraphrased, "pure water"). Whereupon boy B howls like a hyena (the "horse" of buda), sprints toward boy A, who flees.

524
831 When no adults are present, boys play games imitating the sex life of animals, sometimes highly imaginary, e.g. the "coitus of baboons" ("yatota beddosh"):

Seated and facing each other, two boys lift each other with their feet,

524 and rock back and forth. This is largely a projection of human
831 activities, in their minds, for they have all seen actual sexual intercourse among domestic animals.

The puzzle of human sexual activities is reflected in boys' riddles:

Question: "On a precipice, two large gourds hang down, What are they?"

Reply: "Woman's breasts."

Question: "A little goatskin bottle, with mouth and fur.(What is it?)"

Reply: "Vulva ("ens").

Question: "In a porridge of sorghum, a potato expands?"

Reply: "Vulva and penis."

Question: "Hardwood that does not break, skin bottle that is not worn out?"

Reply: "Penis and vulva."

524 Since toys are almost never made for children, they must rely on
533 older children for any that they cannot make themselves, e.g. slingshots.
534 The aforementioned flute, "washint", is made by boys age 11 to 12, of a hollow light bamboo into which four holes are bored. The flute is blown into from the right corner of the mouth. The following sounds are distinguished:

a) to keep the cows calmly grazing: extended high-pitched sound (dadada dididi).

b) to keep away the leopard: lower-pitched sounds. (A variation is believed useful to attract the leopard to lure him into a covered pit, onto which the flute is then thrown).

c) to accompany the azmari singer, e.g. at a wedding: high-pitched sound in somewhat minor key, as in wooing chants, to suggest emotion.

d) to accompany the "hotu" jump-dance, eg. on holy days as Temqat: a hacked, staccato sound is produced (dada dodo dada).

548 588 by them in the towns. Divorcees who are young and still attractive often do not want to return to their kinfolk, especially if they have seen town life and the kin life in remote rural hamlets. Like men doing manual labor, she may go to another district or even province to avoid shaming them. On this street she will usually begin by brewing daily barley beer, or even expand this to a small restaurant-inn performing the housekeeping tasks which she has been taught since early childhood and which are the only trade she knows. Occasionally she will then take in a travelling trader for 3 days or more, cook and bake and brew beer for him, also sleep with him if he desires. She hopes, not rarely with success, that one or the other will make the relationship permanent.

● 831 Men take great pride in virility, but also in sexual technique. They liken the activity to expertly "riding a horse" ("afärräsä" lit. [842] he rode her like a horse, is used for "defloration"). Men believe that it is frequency of intercourse, each night or several times each night, that brings conception. The popular, vulgar name for coitus is "bädda" (related to "bädäbbädä", he beat, whipped; shook with fever). Variations in sexual technique are referred to as "mett" (lit. hits). An impotent male is mocked as "alecha" (lit. sauce without pepper).

There is a sharp distinction between references that are "rude", consisting of direct references to sexual organs and activities; and veiled language used to refer to such matters, if at all, before an elder, priest, or upper-class person. The former is referred to as "yäafär qal" (lit. light matters), connoting "shameful matters". This includes such direct names as "qola" for penis ("jälla" is even more vulgar), "yäqola ferey" (lit. fruit of the penis) for testicles, "ems" for vulva. Curiously enough, overt loud expression of these terms are heard only from little boys, e.g. when, during the rainy season, they

831 run to women, carrying ferns (symbolic of the vulva), and tease them with shouts of "ems anqetqet" (quivering vulva).

Polite references to sexual matters usually employ biblical terminology, requiring at least some formal, traditional education. They include such terms, wholly or partly from the old Geez language still used in liturgy, as "abalä zär" (lit. master of the seed) for male genital organs in a generic sense; "bellet" (lit. divisions) for differences between male and female sex; "akalat" (lit. part of body) for male and female, or "affärät sega" (lit. flesh of modesty).

[793 831] Coptic priests are not supposed to indulge in sexual intercourse even with their wives the night before they are to officiate in church, and they therefore avoid sleeping on the same "alga" (bedstead) that night.

834 Modesty of body exposure, particularly of women, is the general pattern, though children may be barely clothed in ragged shifts leaving much skin bare (see life cycle, etc.). In fact, deliberate exposure of the body is regarded as a sign of madness, and this is the popular reaction to Western pictures of "bathing beauties" in swim suits. When bathing, persons will join members of their own sex and go to secluded places in the river. On the feast day of Temqät, (Epiphany), some rustic men strip and swim in the pool blessed by the priests, but women do not. Breasts may be visible during nursing, but if there are strangers around, they will be covered to prevent any possible evil eye from drying them up.

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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794
T16
[83]
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Possession of a man by a female zar occurs less often but is much more difficult to treat. Magical coitus in this case may render him impotent with human females. In some cases it manifests itself in nocturnal emissions of semen (wet dreams). It is believed that if a zar doctor (or a male patient) is possessed by a female zar at a young enough age, prior to puberty (which is very rare), he will develop female secondary sex characteristics, such as incipient breasts; some even say menstruation. Only zar doctors feel they have sufficient control over the situation to invite female zars to possess them, for the value of a few protective female zars as revealers of occult secrets is great.

Female zars are regarded as "uneducated" and "undisciplined"; none of them are believed to have "studied in Jerusalem" where many wise male zars are believed to have gone to school. Many female zars therefore never can become protective spirits. At most they can be flattered by special chants, and bribed to remain inactive, i.e. seated on the back of the "horse". More female than male zars are downright evil.

[753]
[843]

This is especially true when a female zar possesses a human female. This is most often due to jealousy, and is so diagnosed if a woman suffers a series of miscarriages. For, while male zars are regarded as "striking the shoulder", female zars immediately" strike at the genitals".

One of the basic relationships with a zar spirit of the opposite sex, the "magical coitus", is solemnized by the zar doctor in a "marriage communion". The possessed is then referred to as "musharra" (newlywed), and is attended by two "mizē" (best men, like in a human wedding) from among the circle of the society of the possessed, who ever thereafter are in attendance every time another possession occurs,

794 of Amhara dancing), while the performer is yet seated, and continues
755 while she rises. Head and shoulders move forward and backward, sometimes
535 in horizontal direction, sometimes rotating clockwise, sometimes counterclockwise. Nearing the orgiastic climax, the possessed proceeds to twirl like a top, faster and faster, until she drops in a heap. Habitues can go on for 20 minutes, and be ready for another movement an hour later.

While watching this over and over again, the patient may herself in time be moved to do likewise, though at first clumsily. This is a good sign, for it means that her zar has consented to dismount from his "riding" position, and is beginning to "descend" into the possessed person itself. The "gurri" is regarded as the "victory dance" of the zar, much like a hunter who has wounded and felled his deer. There is a strong element of struggle in the "gurri" dance, like the frantic death-throes of an animal about to surrender its individual existence. It
[831] is also the climax of the magical coitus (much like the bride who is "conquered" on her wedding night).

794 The patient is now in a trancelike state, considered in communica-
755 tion and partly identified with the zar, but yet open to urgings by the doctor. More incense is burned, close by, to make the new and as-yet unidentified zar feel cozy and put him in a benevolent, cooperative mood. Great care must be taken prior to the diagnosis. For this reason no poetry is sung to him and no gift given as yet, for the wrong king might insult him - he insists on his own, individual cult. When the patient dances subsequent "gurri", the zar doctor becomes increasingly certain whether the zar is male, or female, evil or mischievous, "neglected" or offended.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

783 of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
796 It was most thronged at sun-rise, and ended about nine o'clock; a long time for an old man to stand in frozen water.

The number (as women were promiscuously admitted) could not be less than 40,000; so that even the nine hours this baptist-general officiated, he must have had exercise enough to keep him warm, if 40,000 (many of them naked beauties) passed through his hands.

The women were stark naked before the men, not even the rag about them. Without such a proper medium as frozen water, I fear it would not have contributed much to the interests of religion to have trusted a priest (even an old one) among so many bold and naked beauties, especially as he had the first six hours of them in the dark.

783 The Abuna, the king, and queen, were the three
796 first baptized, all three being absolutely naked, having
291 only a cotton cloth round their middle. I am sure
● 831 there never could be a greater deviation from the manners of any kingdom, than this is from those of Abyssinia. The king is always covered; you seldom see any part of him but his eyes. The queen and every woman in Abyssinia, in public and private, (I mean where nothing is intended but conversation) are covered to the chin. It is a disgrace to them to have even their feet seen by strangers; and their arms and hands are concealed even to their nails. A curious circumstance, therefore, it would have been for the king to be so liberal of his queen's charms, while he covers his own face with blue taffeta; but to imagine that the Abuna, a Coptish monk, bred in the desert of St Macarius, would expose himself naked among naked women, contrary to the usual custom of the celebration he observes in his own church, is monstrous, and

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

must exceed all belief whatever. As the Abuna Mark too was of the reasonable age of 110 years, he might, I think, have dispensed at that time of life with a bathing gown, especially as it was frost.

The old man in the pond repeated the formula, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in his own language; and Alvarez, it is plain, understood not one word of Abyssinian. Yet, on the other hand, he speaks Latin to the king, who wonderfully understands him, and answers as decisively on the merits of the dispute as if he had been educated in the Sorbonne. "Confiteor unum baptizma," says Alvarez *, was a constitution of the Nicene council under Pope Leo. Right, says the king, whose church, however, anathematized Leo and the council he presided at; which both the king and Alvarez should have known was not the Nicene council, though the words of the symbol quoted are thought to be part of a confession framed by that assembly.

"Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit salvus erit," says Alvarez. "You say right," answers the king, "as to baptism; these are the words of our Saviour; but this present ceremony was lately invented by a grandfather of mine, in favour of such as have turned Moors, and are desirous again of becoming Christians."

I should think, in the first place, this answer of the king should have let Alvarez see no baptism was intended there; or, if it was a re-baptism, it only took place in favour of those who had turned Moors, and must therefore have been but partial. If this was really the case, what had the king, queen, and Abuna,

* Vid. Alvarez, hoc loco. Ramusio. Viaggi. p. 254.

in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [771]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shillalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 183

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 a certain amount of ritualized delay, the groom and his party are admitted. The groom is not supposed to have seen his bride previously, and is at first shown only a number of similarly dressed maids, among whom sits his fiancée. The maids are then concealed by a curtain or in another room while one of the best men, called *mizē*, determines through various ruses which of the girls is the bride. She is revealed to the groom by being carried out on the back of the *mizē*.

The civil service itself is quite simple, consisting of an oath in the name of the emperor or of some deity that "she is my wife" and "he is my husband," the latter often uttered in so faint a voice that it must be interpreted by one of the bride's relatives. After the oaths and a certain amount of feasting, the couple and the groom's party depart for the home of the groom's parents, where another celebration is under way.

After the festivities the bride and groom retire to a hut which has been set aside for them for the first week or so of their marriage. The experience of the wedding night cannot be very pleasant for the bride. For the first time in her life she is far from the familiar setting of her parental home. She [864] has had little or no sexual instruction, other than the knowledge that sexual [831] matters are "rude" and that she is supposed to resist her husband's advances as fiercely as possible. The groom, on the other hand, has been taught to regard the nuptial night as a battle in which the bride must be forcibly overcome. If somewhat anxious himself, he at least has the moral, and sometimes the physical, support of his two or three *mizē*. If he is unable to accomplish the defloration, he may call in the first *mizē*—usually a married relative or friend with some experience—who will perform the task. When at last the bride has been conquered, the *mizē* take the bloodstained cloth as proof of the girl's virginity. Their triumphant chant—*ber ambär sabara-lewo*, "he has broken the silver bracelet for you" (for the bride's parents)—is the signal for further rejoicing and revelry among the wedding guests. On the morrow groom and friends discuss the conquest with masculine glee, and the bride remains embarrassed and cowed.

[831] The trauma of the wedding night does not appear to do irreparable damage to the girl, however, for Amhara women have the reputation for enjoying sexuality as fully as the men. Indeed, some Amhara maintain that the girl will respect neither her groom nor herself if she does not put up a fight 585 until subdued. With the consummation of her marriage, moreover, the 885 Amhara girl has become a woman, a *sēt*. This represents a considerable elevation of her status and permits her to acquire certain distinctively adult possessions, usually presented to her by the groom. Traditionally these have included a dress, a double-layered toga (*kutā*), a headband, a mirror, a leg bracelet, a ring, an umbrella, and, in wealthier families, a colored silk robe.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
• 831 particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the
(834) sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical
(577) courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat*, is synonymous with *guabaznat*, or "bravery.")

* 883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsä* often
(141) carries a special kind of *dulä* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
463

ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes 155
to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the 853
negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for 853
a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. 862
Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If 155
another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-suck- 853
ing is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may 854
be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara 155
are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no mat- [856]
ter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting [125] the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on [753] the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who [776] may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional 155
atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and 855
punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his 853
earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional 853
security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary 152
symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." 155
The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly repli- 831
cate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

853 155 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning 152 adoption.

• 831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended 853 foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbät*, or breast- 155 father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbät*. Used 152 metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the 155 oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. 201 The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or [832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long 155 separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati- [431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout 155 Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the 538 Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant 832 intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

587 The proverb says:

[539] "He who knows not how to kiss,
his nose he will blow on you."

The divorcée often develops strategy and techniques to win a man of her choice: She may give him a ring to remind him of her when he is away from her; when he visits her, she feeds him "ergo" (thick buttermilk), so he will be sleepy and remain at her house, rather than go to his men friends to gamble. Women have a proverb about men:

[539] "Like a child, (he is attracted) by the ring,
like a cat, (he is attracted) by milk."

If she has a mother who is a good cook, the divorcee will employ this attraction, saying:

[539] "More than the flesh of the daughter,
(he is attracted by)
the butter (i.e. cooking) of the mother."

[832] When this fails, she may enlist the supernatural aid of love amulets, "mistäfaqer", purchased from the dabtara scribe with the man's name inscribed, to inspire love for her in him; and in addition to the fee, may treat the dabtara to beer and sweets to enlist his greatest power on her behalf.

588 If her lover is already married, she may nevertheless establish a "sweetheart" ("rushemma") relationship with him, though she has no claim on "danoz" wages or recognition of this temporary wifehood. This is also one of the few cases in which a woman will try not to have children.

548 588 However, a divorcee who was divorced largely on account of her barrenness - and about 25% of the townswomen are barren at least for some years - will try to have a child, even out of wedlock. She will then very likely join the "unattached women" in the streets inhabited

831 run to women, carrying ferns (symbolic of the vulva), and tease them with shouts of "ems anqetqet" (quivering vulva).

Polite references to sexual matters usually employ biblical terminology, requiring at least some formal, traditional education. They include such terms, wholly or partly from the old Geez language still used in liturgy, as "abalä zär" (lit. master of the seed) for male genital organs in a generic sense; "beilet" (lit. divisions) for differences between male and female sex; "akalat" (lit. part of body) for male and female, or "affärat sega" (lit. flesh of modesty).

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832 Men, particularly young men, are also among his loyal customers.

The dabtara may be called upon to embark upon a magic strategy designed to bewitch a person of the opposite sex so as to fall in love with the client, and also to render the beloved impotent or frigid to all rivals. On a moonlit night, or when unobserved, the dabtara will go to bush or field to seek a certain root, then write the magic bann on a piece of linen, including the names of the persons to be joined in the love bewitchment. This bann is then read over the root as many as 49 times. The root is then chewed, and the masticated paste is carefully preserved for application as soon as possible, to the skin and clothing of the beloved. To do this, tactics such as feigning anger at the beloved and spitting the paste at her so she will not suspect, may be resorted to.

To render a beloved faithful and thoroughly frigid to all rivals may require an even more difficult strategy. The ideal method is to wipe her vulva, preferably the vagina, with the cloth that contains the magic bann, on the pretext of cleaning her after coitus. Conversely, a woman employing this magic may use the cloth to wipe his genitals after coitus, to render him impotent with other women. If the bewitched finds the cloth, he or she can break the spell by washing it in a running river that contains fish. Even if not all of the ink or dye comes off, if fish can nibble at it, it is believed that the spell is broken and carried off.

There are many variations of this basic procedure. Some dabtara "prove" their power to sceptical clients by "testing" the efficacy of the bann and the paste. They may agree to try it out on one of the "unattached women" that earn a living by brewing daily barley beer. They enter her "talla byet", order beer, and the dabtara, apparently 85 chewing on an olive twig preparatory to polishing his teeth with it, which is general common procedure, spits out what the woman believes

832 to be ends of the twig, actually magic paste, "accidentally" hitting her. They pay for their beer, and leave. The next day, the dabtara takes his skeptical client past the same beer-hut, and lo and behold, the woman calls out an invitation to them, and refuses payment for the beer consumed. The client is now convinced.

This love magic is done secretly because it is considered highly unethical. At least the dabtara is expected to "release" the person "helplessly bewitched" after a while, and not leave the victim in this condition forever.

The dabtara is believed to know, from books on magic, not only the efficacy of barns and plants, but also of animals. His favorite animal is believed to be the chameleon ("zalabada"), particularly in love magic, ordered by women. The animal is dried, crushed to powder, and the woman then mixes this with her urine. She must read the formula out loud, containing her name and the name of her husband or the man she wishes to hold against all rivals, then throw the mixture in the air - to be carried by the winds and spirits.

751 The dabtara is believed also to have medicinal magic. Some "careful" men, before going to the adventures of the mead-house ("taj-byet"), go to his house to drink a magic potion to protect them from venereal disease that night.

828 When a woman consistently acts like a man, or a man like a woman,
838 it is believed that there is some biological "mistake of God". In the case of a woman, she is likely to be blamed and even insulted, called "manmish" ("wandawande"). This term is used if she acts independent, takes interest only in masculine weapons and activities, and speaks in hard, insubordinate ways. If she is physically a tall, powerful virago, she is called "wandarad" (lit. male-female), a female with too much

X794 756 more tricky but less powerful than bars. This enables her to relieve the sufferings of her clients; without, however, curing them. For a possessive spirit can be turned into an asset - into a protective spirit once the spirit's demands are known and regularly fulfilled. Why should anyone wish to reject such a protective spirit who helps solve the problems of life and even "beautifies the face" with an inner glow? Only a few hopelessly evil demons, mostly female, need to be exorcised.

X794 562 Women, otherwise limited in cultural participation among the Amhara, particularly in the church institution where their expressive behavior and opportunity for service are almost entirely rejected, constitute a considerable majority in the zar societies, even in the top leadership; so that many men think of the zar cult as predominantly feminine, and consult zar doctors by stealth only, at night. Men have ambivalent feelings about their wives attendance: they are often jealous of the "possessive" spirit; object to the financial outlays demanded by the "zar" spirit on pain of "relapse" into the patient's catatonic, schizoid or hysterical state; object to their wives being at the doctor's hut all night during worship-sessions; but admit that their wives are thereafter easier to live with, indeed more beautiful when the "wəqābi" (inspiration) "is on their face".

[182] Thus the "zar" institution affects many other Amhara institutions: Marriage and the Family; Religion; Economics; Ethnic Relations; and even linguistics.

X794 755 [832] The psychological attitude in Amhara culture which emphasizes the aspect of possession in love, and in other intense human relations, has already been pointed out in connection with "love magic", which attempts, instead of arousing love in the partner, to render him or her submissive.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 TTC 753 cultivating the spirit. If she is already pregnant, the zar may cause a miscarriage; either because he wants his human mate "pure", or to take revenge on the husband for miserly refusal of a chicken or young goat requested by the wife for the "zar" sacrifice - which may cause the zar to take the fetus as his "maqwadasha" (lit. love gift).

When a male zar appears to a human female in a dream, he takes the form of a husband visiting his wife, if he is in a benevolent mood; if [231] angry, he takes the form of a black dog (though Ethiopian dogs are reddish) or of a snake. The actual possession, in this relationship is a magical coitus, expressed in the violently sensuous "gurri" dance. Some women possessed by a male zar drape their shamma (toga) in male fashion; some even put on ornaments of oldtime male warriors (lion mane, leopard skin), male jodphurs - all at the request of her male "zar", in which case she is actually "dressing" him.

X794 TTC A woman who sleeps alone risks being struck by a male zar, and even neighbors sometimes admit having heard a "spirit visitor" at [845] night. When a baby is born deformed, it is regarded as the result [841] of a magical coitus. Male zar spirits avoid menstruating women, and during this period they may not sit on the skin of an animal that has been sacrificed to the zar. Male zar prefer to possess beautiful human females, and add to their beauty; so that some male [832] connoisseurs of female beauty claim that a woman's glowing charms leave her when her protective zar ("weqabi") leaves her. Therefore, there is some ambivalence in the hostility of human husbands to the possession of their wives by male zars; which may contribute to the frequency of such possession. For, at least, the neglected wife is then no longer ignored and may even become the center of attraction.

836 peers with the insulting term *sīlb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that
183 comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsā*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain
572 in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *goramsā* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to
[837] aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsā* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the husband or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with
836 a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets
572 difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible
578 females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsā* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulā* fights.

836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquering" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding
[585] night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time
582 to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On the latter occasions, especially Masqāl and Ṭimqat, the girl may make some
• [832] effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair, and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a
[584] chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

853 155 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning 152 adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended 853 foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbāt*, or breast- 155 father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbāt*. Used 152 metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the 155 oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. 201 The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or [832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long 155 separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati- [431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout 155 Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the 538 Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant 832 intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

The boundaries of your lips are like the sugar cane; 155
No matter how much one sucks them, one is never satisfied. 538 832

And in one of the few lyric passages in the first novel ever written in Amharic, the author resorts to the imagery of kissing in describing the beauty of an army camp at sunset: [539]

> The plain on which they had encamped was vaster than the mind's eye could measure. Except for that hill on which he stood, there were no elevations or declivities; no roots to trip or confound the foot; not a stone to discomfit the eye. It looked like a calm sea that every breeze had spared. The boundaries of heaven and earth were united by lips of love; lip to lip they were joined like the parts of fitted basketry. It appeared as though it would hurt them to separate, that they had entered a vow not to part.[5] [539]

Talking for the sake of talking is another oral outlet of which the Amhara is generally fond. "In every country," remarked Arnauld d'Abbadie, "the plowman is miserly and sly; but the Ethiopian is, in addition, particularly loquacious."[6] The simple greeting of acquaintances evokes a barrage of ritualistic conversation, a phenomenon which stunned the Englishman Harris: 155 521

> Even two old crones, who are obviously tottering on the very brink of the grave, and who are afflicted with every pain and with every sorrow entailed by the fall of our first parents, never meet in the street without indulging in a string of good wishes which are reiterated so long as their breath will permit. "How are you? How do ye do? How have you passed your time? Are you well? Are you very well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well? Are you not well?"—are questions which serve as the prelude to a thousand other interrogatories; and at each response the Deity must be invoked as to the unadulterated happiness and perfect felicity that has been unremittingly experienced since the last meeting.[7] [596]

A number of other conventions provide further opportunities for this pleasure in talking. Anecdotes and gossip are not merely reported, but are expounded at length with the aid of colorful expressions and gestures. Riddle games are enjoyed by adults as well as young people. Men vie with one another at length in a semiformalized kind of playful boasting. In the church schools all reading is done aloud, a habit which persists among many students of secondary schools when they study outside of class. [524] [876]

A related pleasure in making sounds for their own sake appears in the Amhara's delight in repeating the words or nonsense syllables of his folk songs. On a more refined level, there is his evident pleasure in lulling over and savoring the lines of a choice couplet. We have here for a whole culture an instance of what Brill has ascribed to the poets: 191 155

> Poetry is a sensuous or mystic outlet through words, or, as it were, through a chewing and sucking of nice words and phrases. The poet plays with the

*278 *757 time of day during which the sickman is expected to consume the medicaments (often on rising, or before going to bed), the relevant numerological details (e.g., the medicaments are to be eaten seven times daily for seven *[192] days), and the manner of application. Therapies may establish that medicaments be consumed in a unitary form (e.g., eaten together with injera bread), in multiple forms (e.g., eaten with bread, drunk with talla beer, and washed with as with a lotion) and, if in multiple forms, whether applied at the same or different therapeutic sessions.[5]

758 Therapies also designate regimens to be followed once the pathogenic substance has been successfully removed a [833] from the sickman. Frequently, regimens for convalescence *[192] following serious (kobode) ailments direct the recuperant to rest in some isolated place, away from any populated area, where he will be safe from the shadows of humans, particularly those fresh from coitus. Some regimens require him to sit in a darkened hut, others place him beside the hearth fire, while still others have him rest in

[5]Only therapy for buda possession (see below), requires the application of different, discrete medical preparations at the same therapeutic sessions.

*753 754 owning debteras (as well as occasional laymen) possess recipes. The third variety of pathogenic kifat works [842] sends sexual maladies. Sterility, considered a very [833] serious ailment, is sent to women only. Impotency affects both sexes; it is experienced by women as uncontrollable crying when approached or touched by any man, and is often confused with aynitila.

754 The most commonly owned non-pathogenic kifat works belong to a category known as "amderab". These works enable the operator to send onto his victim's house and fields misfortunes of fire, water (as destructive hail and rain storms), earth (as rains of stones and clods), air (as destructive winds), and putrification (as noxious odors). Other non-pathogenic kifat works have a domestic aspect (e.g., prepared foods are continually spoiled, food stores are consumed at an unnatural rate, servants grow discontent with the master's household, and domestic animals wander away); a mercantile aspect (e.g., trading rivals find it difficult to sell their goods, rival talla sellers find their newly prepared beer turning to a pitch-like consistency); or bring misfortunes at the hands of other human agents (e.g., the victim's son is made a wastrel, kenezereña, the victim repeatedly and unintentionally incurs the enmity of people, the victim exposes himself to ambush by enemies).

At its simplest, a kifat work requires a recitation,

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*787 ganel out of doors, by the side of the lake or river in
*793 which he lives. When clients attend, however, the ganel is pulled in the debtera's room, since preparations for controlling the demon are easier to arrange, and a tedi-
[833] ous journey is avoided. The ganel puller is often required to observe a period of chastity prior to contacting the ganel, and if the ganel is called into a room, it must be a place where sexual relations are never had.

A ganel-calling session begins with the recitation of texts, composed mainly or exclusively of asmat words. Unlike abinet recitations in other contexts, the debtera's text is repeated until the desired effect is ob-
[782] tained (i.e., the ganel has been pulled). In addition to the recitation, an animal (most commonly a chicken) favored by the ganel is sacrificed. A debtera's initial attempt to pull a ganel often requires recitations over a week or more, until success is obtained. Once the ganel has been called successfully, subsequent sessions take less time. An experienced debtera can call a ganel familiar in less than an hour, although even he must expect lengthy recitations when attempting to reach a ganel with whom he has not yet conversed.

The debtera perceives these activities as a mixture of compulsion (through asmat) and blandishments (by the sacrifice), that oblige the ganel to assume a cooperative attitude. Once a ganel has responded positively to a

B. Sex in Amhara Culture.

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548 The extension of the concept of "temporary wife" to prostitution has already been touched upon in connection with the entertainment aspect of sex. It is this extension which imposes on this activity a characteristic culture pattern, involving the "unattached woman's" hoping to find another husband, and meanwhile serving transient travellers with food, shelter, and even some wifely affect. In return for this partial constraint, the culture pattern rewards the "unattached woman" prostitute with certain minimal respectability. She may actually break the curse of barrenness of a first marriage by bearing a child, and thus finding it easier to find another husband. She also has the chance to experiment in sex, learning from travellers, and teaching the local townsmen and peasants. Most terms meaning prostitute are therefore matter-of-fact, and not insulting ("shärmuta" - the most polite reference, regarded as an Arabic loanword; "galänota"; "anänzera" (lit. recipient of the seed); "lagärbaqa" (lit. "to the whole country", public woman). However, references to "loose personality, e.g. "mäsessenya syät" are insulting.

834 A strong constraint placed on the temporary wife - prostitute, as on any other Amhara, is against her sexual intercourse with a Muslim. Infraction of this rule would bring immediate and severe ostracism. Since many of her potential clients are travelling traders, many of whom are Muslims, the temptation is strong to ignore that rule. But if she does, she can seek reinstatement in Amhara-Coptic society, which she is considered to have renounced in consummating a union with a Muslim, by appealing penitently to her confessor, who may then agree to re-baptize her, which is considered necessary.. This will lift the ban of ostracism against her, on her social level.

This religious ban against sexual intercourse with a non-Copt

834 occasionally affects non-prostitutes also. Arab traders, particularly, like to joke with Coptic Amhara women when the latter come to their stores: such as teasingly to refuse to hand over goods after purchase has been made, or, if the customer finds the price on a desired item too high, suggesting that payment might be made "another way". These fixed stores, located near the daily or Saturday markets, feature luxuries rather than what are considered necessities; e.g. sandals, tea, sugar, raisins, necklaces, imported chocolate, etc. A woman deserted by her husband, or divorced, might succumb. On the other hand, Muslim women are much more segregated from menfolk, so that there is little opportunity for an Amhara male to break the rule with a Muslim female.

836 Virginity ("dengel") is expected of girls at first marriage, which occurs about the age of 14 or 15. If she is found by the husband not to be a virgin, and he feels sure of it and insists on his rights, he can divorce her, or go to court against her kinfolk claiming damages as high as Eth$200 - 300. This is rare, however, for at that age most girls are too young to have had much opportunity for complete sexual

584 intercourse. The courtship, apart from the above-described occasions during watch in the fields and on festives - when they are very formal -, consists of what adults condescendingly and smilingly refer to as "Middarrat", love-whisperings, considered adolescent, during which the boy and girl alternate between childish whisperings and playful hitting at each other. The term is not used for love-making of adults or married couples.

587 Very different is the courtship of the girl after her first divorce, which frequently occurs when her personality matures, often while she is still in her twenties. She prefers an experienced lover.

831 run to women, carrying ferns (symbolic of the vulva), and tease them with shouts of "ems anqetqet" (quivering vulva).

Polite references to sexual matters usually employ biblical terminology, requiring at least some formal, traditional education. They include such terms, wholly or partly from the old Geez language still used in liturgy, as "abalä zär" (lit. master of the seed) for male genital organs in a generic sense; "bellet" (lit. divisions) for differences between male and female sex; "akalat" (lit. part of body) for male and female, or "affärät sega" (lit. flesh of modesty).

[793 834] Coptic priests are not supposed to indulge in sexual intercourse even with their wives the night before they are to officiate in church, and they therefore avoid sleeping on the same "alga" (bedstead) that night.

834 Modesty of body exposure, particularly of women, is the general pattern, though children may be barely clothed in ragged shifts leaving much skin bare (see life cycle, etc.). In fact, deliberate exposure of the body is regarded as a sign of madness, and this is the popular reaction to Western pictures of "bathing beauties" in swim suits. When bathing, persons will join members of their own sex and go to secluded places in the river. On the feast day of Ṭemqät, (Epiphany), some rustic men strip and swim in the pool blessed by the priests, but women do not. Breasts may be visible during nursing, but if there are strangers around, they will be covered to prevent any possible evil eye from drying them up.

832 Love magic is widely and strongly believed in, particularly since it is supplied by the quasi-church functionary, the däbtära scribe. He is first called upon to write amulets, which are still respectable and, can be worn in outwardly visible containers, by women, for no one can know that the amulet is not directed against the devil. But the magic activities of the däbtära, secretly, go far beyond that.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having
831 their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
(834) particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters
(571) are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat,* is synonymous with *guabaznat,* or "bravery.")

*883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsä* often
(141) carries a special kind of *dulä* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 brides be virgin. Related norms greatly restrict their quest for romantic love.
178 Since Ethiopian society still expects its maidens to be shy and retiring, and to
581 avoid social relations with boys outside their families, the boys find few
*883 opportunities for getting to know members of the opposite sex. Even in those
• 834 few situations where sociability between the sexes is publicly permitted, in-
178 grained tendencies to segregate the sexes persist. The most liberal context for such sociability, the University College campus, has witnessed relatively little interaction between male and female students. In spite of their occasional resolutions to act more boldly, the college boys have in the past tended to shy away from the co-eds except during such rare formal events as a college dance or off-campus parties.

*883 This is not to say that modern adolescent males have no opportunity for
836 premarital sexuality. On the contrary, their opportunities in this regard are
178 perhaps better than ever. The proliferation of brothels in Ethiopia's urban
548 centers makes sexual initiation easy, almost a routine event.* Students also
834 frequent these houses for social entertainment, dancing to swing and Latin rhythms, and sipping beer or soft drinks. Thus the continued sanctions against social intercourse in more respectable forms work to sharpen the Amhara dichotomy between decency and sexuality, and leave modern boys with a double standard that separates the marriageable girls from the enjoyable ones.

*883 The idea that marriage should be founded on romantic love has brought
178 greater anxiety as well as hope into the lives of Ethiopian adolescents. This
581 anxiety is due in part to the above-mentioned inhibitions against that easy
584 commerce of the sexes which so facilitates the discovery of a suitable love
[152] object. It also reflects a certain ambivalence toward the new ideal, based on a lingering attachment to the authority of the old system. This was manifest, for example, in the response to a college debate on the topic, "Resolved: that the custom of letting the parents choose a spouse for the children should be maintained," that took place in 1959. Although on anonymous questionnaires *90 per cent* of the college students said they will probably decide whom to marry themselves, and only 3 per cent said the decision would be made by parents or other relatives, in voting on the matter after the debate the students (in contrast to the judges who awarded the negative debaters) publicly declared themselves 42 per cent affirmative, 41 per cent negative, with 17 per cent abstaining.

*883 Anxiety regarding the new conception of marriage, finally, is also con-
178 nected with a new-fashioned fear of divorce. The mind of the modern adoles-
581 cent vacillates between the ideal of an abiding marital relationship based on
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152 * Due perhaps to the greater importance of their peers, sexual accomplishments have now become a frequent topic of conversation and a matter for boasting among modern adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 returnees has generally been sympathetic, and some of them have been quite
565 helpful to individuals or groups of students during their hard pressed days
178 as students abroad. The situation of action, however, has kept their degree
[829] of support of the returnees to a minimum. Three patterns of elder-returnee relations can be discerned: (1) The elder is concerned above all to maintain his position and, hence, to defend himself against any encroachment on his power on the part of younger people. This type has resorted to the various techniques of court politics—false rumors, libelous accusations, etc.—in order to check the influence of the returnees and have the more reformist among them transferred to less favorable positions. (2) The elder believes that if anything is to be accomplished in Ethiopia, it must be done by the educated young people, but he must be cautious in supporting the latter, for fear of getting into trouble at the palace himself if he offends any entrenched interests. Even when a returnee has been able to get the support of such a man for some reform, he may find when the time for implementation comes that his supporter has been transferred and left no commitment in writing for his successor. (3) While generally sympathetic to the returnees, this type fears the rashness and inexperience of youth and feels itself threatened by the prospect of being displaced. His apprehension is not aggressively expressed, but tends to take the form of discrediting the returnees by blaming them for every possible mistake. Whether due to the antagonism, caution, or ambivalence of the new nobility, the returnees have found relatively little effective support for their projected reforms. The ministers typically have shown them a progressive face and just as often have pursued a stagnant policy.

571 Vocational malaise and ideological uncertainty thus reinforce each other.
581 The cycle of frustration is complete when we consider the marital problems
584 of the returnee, which revolve about the difficulty of getting to know poten-
178 tial spouses, financial handicaps, the changing definition of marriage, and
[562] latent warfare between the sexes in the modernizing sector.

571 Except for a small number of returnees whose marriages have had to be
584 arranged ones because of political considerations, the foreign-educated men,
• 834 and a few of the women, are determined to choose their own spouses. Getting
178 to know a potential spouse, however, remains a difficult matter. The traditional mores prevail with regard to social relationships between the sexes. A girl who goes out with boys is *ipso facto* presumed to have a bad character, and many of the girls in whom a returnee might be interested are not permitted to go out by their parents. There are few places where a young man and woman can go together and have privacy. Those who attempt to follow the Western custom of dating have been embarrassed.

585 The cost of marriage presents another obstacle. The quality of housing that
511 a returnee aspires to for his potential family is far beyond his means in the
571 present-day economy. Other assumed necessities—an automobile, expensive

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751 the sunlight.[6] After the disease symptoms have disap-
758 peared, and the convalescent has regained his former vi-
tality, some precautions may still be followed to pre-
vent the return of the original syndrome, to which he
[262] may have developed a vulnerability. For example, the
former sickman may be forbidden to eat one or more of
the foodstuffs which were included among the materia
[978] medica of his cure. Often, an amulet containing dried
materia medica of the primary medicine is also worn.

*278 Pharmacological Combinations. In the abstract,
Amhara pharmacology can be considered as a corpus of dis-
crete and varied instructions for a) conserving the latent
healing power of botanicals, and b) converting this po-
wer into therapeutically effective agents. Seen from
this perspective, Amhara pharmacolog y has the potential
for a large number of logically possible combinations of
instructions, ranging from those with few directions of
any kind, to combinations with elaborate instructions in
each pharmacological category. Although, empirically,
Amhara herbal therapies probably fall short of the po-
tential number of combinations, the combinations charac-

[757] [6]Primary syphilis, in particular, sets elaborate
[834] requirements---the removal of all hair from the body,
head, and face; in addition, there is a period of ab-
stinence from coitus.

834 occasionally affects non-prostitutes also. Arab traders, particularly, like to joke with Coptic Amhara women when the latter come to their stores; such as teasingly to refuse to hand over goods after purchase has been made, or, if the customer finds the price on a desired item too high, suggesting that payment might be made "another way". These fixed stores, located near the daily or Saturday markets, feature luxuries rather than what are considered necessities; e.g. sandals, tea, sugar, raisins, necklaces, imported chocolate, etc. A woman deserted by her husband, or divorced, might succumb. On the other hand, Muslim women are much more segregated from menfolk, so that there is little opportunity for an Amhara male to break the rule with a Muslim female.

836 Virginity ("dengel") is expected of girls at first marriage, which occurs about the age of 14 or 15. If she is found by the husband not to be a virgin, and he feels sure of it and insists on his rights, he can divorce her, or go to court against her kinfolk claiming damages as high as Eth$200 - 300. This is rare, however, for at that age most girls are too young to have had much opportunity for complete sexual intercourse. The courtship, apart from the above-described occasions during watch in the fields and on festives - when they are very formal -, consists of what adults condescendingly and smilingly refer to as "ddiarrat", love-whisperings, considered adolescent, during which the boy and girl alternate between childish whisperings and playful hitting at each other. The term is not used for love-making of adults or married couples.

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587 Very different is the courtship of the girl after her first divorce, which frequently occurs when her personality matures, often while she is still in her twenties. She prefers an experienced lover.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and 859
for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly 868
useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *injera*. [252]
Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make [262]
good *doro wat*, a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of
an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to 883*
manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is 866
often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside [582]
her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the 885
assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous 883*
throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter 857
of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through 867
virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, 836 •
a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin 183
at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

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* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to [357]
provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

836 183 peers with the insulting term *ālb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *gorəmsā*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 572 [837] The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *gorəmsā* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to aid him in his affairs. When one *gorəmsā* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the husband or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *gorəmsā* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulā* fights.

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836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquering" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating. [585]

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 582 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 [832] [584] This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On the latter occasions, especially Masqāl and Ṭimqat, the girl may make some effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair, and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 brides be virgin. Related norms greatly restrict their quest for romantic love.
178 Since Ethiopian society still expects its maidens to be shy and retiring, and to
581 avoid social relations with boys outside their families, the boys find few
*883 opportunities for getting to know members of the opposite sex. Even in those
834 few situations where sociability between the sexes is publicly permitted, in-
178 grained tendencies to segregate the sexes persist. The most liberal context for such sociability, the University College campus, has witnessed relatively little interaction between male and female students. In spite of their occasional resolutions to act more boldly, the college boys have in the past tended to shy away from the co-eds except during such rare formal events as a college dance or off-campus parties.

*883 This is not to say that modern adolescent males have no opportunity for
• 836 premarital sexuality. On the contrary, their opportunities in this regard are
178 perhaps better than ever. The proliferation of brothels in Ethiopia's urban
548 centers makes sexual initiation easy, almost a routine event.* Students also
834 frequent these houses for social entertainment, dancing to swing and Latin rhythms, and sipping beer or soft drinks. Thus the continued sanctions against social intercourse in more respectable forms work to sharpen the Amhara dichotomy between decency and sexuality, and leave modern boys with a double standard that separates the marriageable girls from the enjoyable ones.

*883 The idea that marriage should be founded on romantic love has brought
178 greater anxiety as well as hope into the lives of Ethiopian adolescents. This
581 anxiety is due in part to the above-mentioned inhibitions against that easy
584 commerce of the sexes which so facilitates the discovery of a suitable love
[152] object. It also reflects a certain ambivalence toward the new ideal, based on a lingering attachment to the authority of the old system. This was manifest, for example, in the response to a college debate on the topic, "Resolved: that the custom of letting the parents choose a spouse for the children should be maintained," that took place in 1959. Although on anonymous questionnaires *90 per cent* of the college students said they will probably decide whom to marry themselves, and only 3 per cent said the decision would be made by parents or other relatives, in voting on the matter after the debate the students (in contrast to the judges who awarded the negative debaters) publicly declared themselves 42 per cent affirmative, 41 per cent negative, with 17 per cent abstaining.

*883 Anxiety regarding the new conception of marriage, finally, is also con-
178 nected with a new-fashioned fear of divorce. The mind of the modern adoles-
581 cent vacillates between the ideal of an abiding marital relationship based on
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152 * Due perhaps to the greater importance of their peers, sexual accomplishments have now become a frequent topic of conversation and a matter for boasting among modern adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565* 602 571 181 183 [560]

Loyalty is proclaimed all around. Conviviality is the norm among peers, though the authoritarian character of the Amhara family inhibits camaraderie between those of greatly differing ages. Unlimited succor in time of sickness and death and profuse commensality in happier hours are important values to the Amhara peasant and ones about which he is self-conscious and articulate.

565* 593 577 181 183

Reverence for one's fathers is perhaps the key legitimating principle in the structure of Amhara morality. This is the outgrowth and foundation of a social system which makes children devoted servants of their fathers and keeps men under their fathers' control until they are fully adult. The fierce loyalty to the symbols and practices of the church is experienced as being true to "the faith of our fathers," and it is an analogous devotion to "the land of our fathers" that moves the Amhara to a steadfast defense of his hereditary farmland and the borders of his country.

565* 577 779 183 181 581 586 639

The chief areas of conflict within the Amhara peasant's conception of the good life are those of sex and aggression. These conflicts appear to reflect the mixture of Christian and pagan cultures in Abyssinian history. From Christianity come beliefs that marriage is sacred, divorce is not legitimate, and adultery is taboo. The Amhara peasant, while respecting the embodiment of these norms in the lives of priests, feels justified in having sexual relations outside marriage and in getting a divorce whenever the need arises. Perhaps it can be argued that this represents a conflict between norms and practice, but the legitimate tone of the non-Christian behavior suggests that it might well be considered an alternative norm, a carry-over from the ancient culture which legitimized polygamy.

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Attitudes concerning the use of violence represent a clear instance of conflict of norms. The precepts "Do not kill" and "Love thy neighbor," though not regarded as constituting the crux of Christian ethics, are known and acknowledged in Abyssinia. The rare priest or elder who embodies the classic ideal of Christian love is appreciated as a man of the highest virtue. The fearless killer, on the other hand, embodies another ideal of no less importance—that of being *guabaz*, brave and manly. The peasant who assaults his neighbor because the latter has usurped his land, committed adultery with his wife, injured his *zamad*, or insulted him grievously is following an ethic of cardinal importance in Amhara culture.[14]

The Central Confrontation

565* 121 182 771

The foregoing has indicated some of the main concepts through which the Amhara peasant perceives the common objects of human experience, and what meaning they have for him. Since it is an exploratory account, it lacks the unity that would come from the consistent application of a rigorous observational procedure or of a coherent, analytic conceptual scheme. Yet even at the present stage of inquiry it is possible to move toward a more unified state-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[584] chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

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holds priest land because he is a ristena of a founding ambilineage of the parish, his son's ordination means that the lands or payments until now turned over to a stranger priest (in lieu of a ristena priest) can be kept within the family.

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The durability of the ties which bind a priest to his natal parish are reinforced by his marriage. Most peasants are married in a "secular union" (yaluwkurban migabat), which excludes neither divorce not extra-marital sexual adventures.[21] The priest, on the other hand, must be married, and it can be only as a "communion marriage" (bikurban migabat), an indissoluble sacrament of the Church which commits the spouses to sexual fidel-

[572]

ity and forbids even remarriage. Thus, the priest is cut off from carousing in the talla houses of the town. He must instead confine his comraderie to the courtyard of the parish church, separated from the persons and experiences which might otherwise lead him away from his parish fields.

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Thus enrollment in the parish school is conceived

[21] Two other forms of marriage, associated with a man on travels or living in town, are yidomoz migabat (which lasts for a contractual period) and yilijinat (providing only exclusive sexual rights to the woman).

832 to be ends of the twig, actually magic paste, "accidentally" hitting her. They pay for their beer, and leave. The next day, the dabtara takes his skeptical client past the same beer-hut, and lo and behold, the woman calls out an invitation to them, and refuses payment for the beer consumed. The client is now convinced.

This love magic is done secretly because it is considered highly unethical. At least the dabtara is expected to "release" the person "helplessly bewitched" after a while, and not leave the victim in this condition forever.

The dabtara is believed to know, from books on magic, not only the efficacy of barns and plants, but also of animals. His favorite animal is believed to be the chameleon ("zälläbäda"), particularly in love magic, ordered by women. The animal is dried, crushed to powder, and the woman then mixes this with her urine. She must read the formula out loud, containing her name and the name of her husband or the man she wishes to hold against all rivals, then throw the mixture in the air - to be carried by the winds and spirits.

751 The dabtara is believed also to have medicinal magic. Some "careful" men, before going to the adventures of the mead-house ("täj-bet"), go to his house to drink a magic potion to protect them from venereal disease that night.

828 When a woman consistently acts like a man, or a man like a woman,
838 it is believed that there is some biological "mistake of God". In the case of a woman, she is likely to be blamed and even insulted, called "mannish" ("wändawände"). This term is used if she acts independent, takes interest only in masculine weapons and activities, and speaks in hard, insubordinate ways. If she is physically a tall, powerful virago, she is called "wändawäräd" (lit. male-female), a female with too much

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

828 masculinity.

838 Male transvestites are more often pitied than blamed, for the populace feels even more certain that this is a biological "mistake of God". For, they argue, a woman might try to fool people and assume male prerogatives, but what male would want to surrender the privileges of being a man? He is called "fenafent" (lit. hermaphrodite) and his male organs are believed to be sadly deficient in structure, despite visible male secondary sex characteristics.

This transvestite usually dresses in a woman's embroidered cotton dress or skirt, drapes his toga (shamma) like a woman, likes to work at embroiding the green adornment of a woman's dress, does women's chores, following them at their daily occupations and social gatherings. He dislikes the company of men. Transvestites are relatively rare, and they live as individuals, not forming a society of their own, for they are tolerated. Only their kinfolk are ashamed of them, so they leave them and go to live in another province, (like a tailor unwilling to shame his kin by doing manual labor). Women tolerate a transvestite "like a brother"; men are not jealous of him even though he spends all his time with the womenfolk. Often the transvestite is an unusually sensitive person, quick to anger but intense in his personal likings, sensitive to cultural diffusion from the outside world, expecially those carried by Arab traders; and Muslim Arab traders are often the only male social contacts he tolerates.

X 794 K64 753

Psychotic cases among women usually assume a domineering male personality, such as believing themselves to be the ruthless Emperor Theodore, or the bloody Ras Mikael of Tigre. The zar doctor, however, elicits the confession of a "zar", so that he can treat the case.

Hysteria is believed mostly due to possession by female zars, who are more mischievous, silly and irresponsible than evil. If such a female zar possesses a male patient, he will manifest characteristics regarded as feminine, such as silly gaiety, and teasing behavior. If [838] not "awakened" quickly, such a state may become chronic and gradually destroy his masculinity. More common is hysteria among women, in which case the possession manifests itself as reversion to infantile behavior: the patient talks babytalk, skips about like a young goat and shamelessly demands little gifts even from strangers and passers-by. The patient must be humored, given gifts or at least promises, for the zar, speaking through the patient, may say: "If you don't give me this, I will kill my horse" (the patient).

Violent forms of possession may manifest themselves by aggression directed against the patient himself, such as beating himself, hitting the head against the wall, eating dirt, trying to climb the wall, wanting to run out at night to roam with hyenas. In some cases, if accompanied by nosebleed, or "weeping blood", this is diagnosed as "buda" and becomes a case for the dabtara practitioner. In cases of running amok, with aggression directed against others, it may be diagnosed as "ganyen" (djinn) and be treated either by the dabtara, zar doctor, or tanqway sorcerer.

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The most common form of possession, particularly in women, begins with a kind of incubation. The male zar possessing her is jealous of her human husband, wants her to obtain a divorce and join a zar society

tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bālagē* ("rude"), a trait which [861]
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838 •
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [155] [671]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
831 particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the
[834] sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical
[571] courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat*, is synonymous with *guabaznat*, or "bravery.")

* 883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often
[41] carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
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842 birth, or later by causing its joints to swell.

843 It is considered impossible for a woman to conceive while still breastfeeding a baby. This belief is so strong that no precautions are taken, coitus proceeds as usual after the first few months, and when a pregnancy does occur it is regarded as a freak of nature and misfortune.

841 These physical matters are more discussed by women than by men. Menstruation is differentiated in several ways: "tärakäsä" - she has become impure; "räggämä" - the (monthly) curse is on her; "edef" - the discharge of menstruation; "bädäm nat" (lit. she is in blood). Husbands are expected to shun "the dirt" and avoid sex relations during that time.

843 As a pregnancy advances, women wrap a long cotton girdle around the belly and waist, "näcänät", for support, and continue this some time after childbirth.

843 574 844 About two months before a woman is about to give birth, ("ergus" - woman in advanced pregnancy), she often leaves her husband and goes to the hamlet of her parents'. There she knows she will be taken care of, fed, constantly attended, treated by the local experienced woman who acts as midwife, and not be expected to follow any of her housewifely duties such as fetching water, cooking, brewing beer, gathering fuel, etc. After birth she will usually remain at her parents' for some months, until her childbed, "eras" period (usually 80 days) is over. During [304] this time, circumcision and clitorectomy are performed. For even good husbands are regarded as so habituated to the wifely services that they become impatient with the wife at this time.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

X794 TK 153

cultivating the spirit. If she is already pregnant, the zar may cause a miscarriage; either because he wants his human mate "pure", or to take revenge on the husband for miserly refusal of a chicken or young goat requested by the wife for the "zar" sacrifice - which may cause the zar to take the fetus as his "mäqwädäsha" (lit. love gift).

When a male zar appears to a human female in a dream, he takes the form of a husband visiting his wife, if he is in a benevolent mood; if angry, he takes the form of a black dog (though Ethiopian dogs are reddish) or of a snake. The actual possession, in this relationship is a magical coitus, expressed in the violently sensuous "gurri" dance. Some women possessed by a male zar drape their shamma (toga) in male fashion; some even put on ornaments of oldtime male warriors (lion mane, leopard skin), male jodphurs - all at the request of her male "zar", in which case she is actually "dressing" him.

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A woman who sleeps alone risks being struck by a male zar, and even neighbors sometimes admit having heard a "spirit visitor" at night. When a baby is born deformed, it is regarded as the result of a magical coitus. Male zar spirits avoid menstruating women, and during this period they may not sit on the skin of an animal that has been sacrificed to the zar. Male zar prefer to possess beautiful human females, and add to their beauty; so that some male connoisseurs of female beauty claim that a woman's glowing charms leave her when her protective zar ("weqabi") leaves her. Therefore, there is some ambivalence in the hostility of human husbands to the possession of their wives by male zars; which may contribute to the frequency of such possession. For, at least, the neglected wife is then no longer ignored and may even become the center of attraction.

[845] [844] [832]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by 794 The
those who are sick, or dying.

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a 292
white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar.

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the 796
church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married 784
are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Per- [846]
sons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the [841]
church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first [304]
day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occa- [852]
sions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment.

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure 131
in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It 361
may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla 101
who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma;

[p. 57]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, 186
and social position.

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance 562
rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly
held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the [565]*
wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must
still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course
for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the [539]
proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is
referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar
and trivial talk.

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time
is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of
trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells [539]
us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including
those connected with the saintly figures of Eçhē Yohānnes and Takla
Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues
and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by [841]
womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden.

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance 858
and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and [864]
cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably.
After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged
copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He
comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first
"age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges
of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders.

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each
of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. 882
The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing
after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches 885
forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This
is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is
not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age
of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and
wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. 888
Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults,
pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon [867]
learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson
was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become
when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder."

827 sign functions to only a few of these. Among these organs, the heart is considered primary. First, it inspirits and regulates all other organ activity by means of the vital heat which it pulsates and radiates throughout the body. While pulsing within normal frequencies, *753 827 sufficient heat is generated to sustain good health *[192] (tena); more rapid pulsing produces excessive heat which is perceived externally as fever (tukusat). When cardiac hyper-activity is of great intensity and persistence, the heart's ability to exert its authority over the subordinate organs is progressively reduced; this is expressed 827 symptomatically as chronic fatigue and lassitude. In ad- *[192] dition to this vitalizing function, the heart controls body movement through the jimat cords, a term including veins, arteries, tendons, and ligaments. The heart is also capable of limited movement downward, backward, and [763] can spin in place. These movements have no febrile effect but since the heart is the seat of the intellect, these motions often lead to mental disorientation and confusion.

Heart and blood share no special tie, nor is the *[192] latter's vascular confinement appreciated. Anatomically, the blood is instead associated with a reservoir organ (yidem sir, "blood's root") located at the base of the [841] skull. Functionally, the blood's most specific association is with procreation, for maternal blood is necessary to nourish the homonculus to infancy. Because the re-

[827] [841] [192] [892] [192] [192] [825] [192] 000

[illegible] amounts of blood are continually renewed in fertile women, menstrual effluence is necessary to shed blood not needed between pregnancies. Hence, the cessation of menstrual bleeding at menopause (arowgey) indicates the loss of fertility. Arowgey is only one form of infertility, however, since a woman may be infertile through magical causes even though she continues to menstruate (makan).

The stomach is described as an inert organ housing a colony of wosfat worms. These are usually identified with ascariasis and are believed to transform food and drink into waste. For the host's well-being, their numbers must be sufficient to consume all ingested food; should they become over-abundant, however, hunger and a quarrelsome disposition will drive them to viciously attack accessible body organs.

Beyond these few naturalistic descriptions of organ functioning, the Amhara invokes Divine Providence (yi-Igziyabiher ara) to explain physiological processes, such as the renewal of menstrual blood and the source of vital heat. God further provides that, in the absence of intrusive influences, the parts of the body will function together to maintain a state of harmonious well-being (tena), devoid of pain and characterized by the vigor and physical control commensurate with the individual's age.

Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal,

1. The Beginning of Life.

842 A. The Desire for Children: adoption.

Children are greatly desired by the Amhara, and a childless home is regarded as under a heavenly curse. Children are regarded as continuing the "byet", the residential extended family; as a source of riches from childhood on when they begin economic tasks; as a source of comfort and security in old age; as defenders in feuds and wars; even after the death of parents, children help them into heaven by means of "täzkar".

[588] When a woman is barren, and amulets have proven no cure for her, she may give her husband a concubine, "zäräd" (lit. servant maid), so that he will not feel deprived of fatherhood and begin

597 to hate her. Or she may adopt a child, preferably an orphan of kinfolk or a well-known family, by taking the child to the confessor-priest and swearing the oath of ecclesiastical adoption, whereupon the child becomes "yäqal kidan lej" (lit. contract-child). This may include the ceremony of "breast-mother", "yätut emmat", previously described. Less fortunate is the foster child, not formally adopted, who lives with the foster parents, guards the crops and herds the cows, but is more completely dependent on the good will of the "bread mother", "enära emmat".

593 Fathers, whether natural or adopted, expect complete obedience from their children, particularly after they have arrived at the "age of reason". Fathers feel defensively obliged to maintain their authority; as the proverbs say of a father addressing the

593 son:

539 "Sheep! If I do not eat you, you would devour me", said the hyena". (meaning: perhaps you'd

593
[539]

like to order me about?).

"He who talks before his father does,

his mouth will become like that of a leper".

Older brothers may discipline younger siblings, but there is less emphasis on the privileges of the first-born than in Arab countries. The Amhara is aware that younger brothers may often become more honored, richer and wiser later in life:

[539]

"Formerly, he (the older) pulled his (the younger's) ear, later on, the horn of the other (the younger) became bigger".

586 In case of divorce, which is frequent, children not staying with one of the parents are quickly taken by kinfolk. Thus, children are often raised by their grandparents, paternal or maternal, who often are young enough to have small children of their own. It is not even rare to see children of a divorcee by her first marriage may be raised by the family of her second husband even after she has divorced and left him also. This is more likely to happen in a town, where the consanguinal kin ties are weakened due to absence of the factor of kin residence, than in the residential kin hamlet. (Foreign observers have paraphrased an old English saying and adapted it to this situation in Abyssinia:

B. Pregnancy, Birth, Circumcision.

842
843

According to popular observation, 25% of all women, especially in the towns, are barren, and another 25% have frequent miscarriages. There are many precautions taken against these mishaps. A pregnant woman may wear extra cowrie shells, "gacol"; in addition to amulets written against the evil spirit "tela" (lit. shadow, an envious female spirit) which brings miscarriages, kills babies at

842 birth, or later by causing its joints to swell.

843 It is considered impossible for a woman to conceive while still breastfeeding a baby. This belief is so strong that no precautions are taken, coitus proceeds as usual after the first few months, and when a pregnancy does occur it is regarded as a freak of nature and misfortune.

841 These physical matters are more discussed by women than by men. Menstruation is differentiated in several ways: "tärekkäsä" - she has become impure; "räggämä" - the (monthly) curse is on her; "edef" - the discharge of menstruation; "bädäm nat" (lit. she is in blood). Husbands are expected to shun "the dirt" and avoid sex relations during that time.

843 As a pregnancy advances, women wrap a long cotton girdle around the belly and waist, "näcänät", for support, and continue this some time after childbirth.

843 574 844 About two months before a woman is about to give birth, ("arkuz" - woman in advanced pregnancy), she often leaves her husband and goes to the hamlet of her parents'. There she knows she will be taken care of, fed, constantly attended, treated by the local experienced woman who acts as midwife, and not be expected to follow any of her housewifely duties such as fetching water, cooking, brewing beer, gathering fuel, etc. After birth she will usually remain at her parents' for some months, until her childbed, "arräz" period (usually 80 days) is over. During this time, circumcision and clitorectomy are performed. For even good husbands are regarded as so habituated to the wifely services that they become impatient with the wife at this time.

[304]

847 During parturition, the midwife usually sits on the ground in such a position that the baby will drop into her lap. The mother usually kneels. Sometimes incense is lit to lure the baby out, and to attract protective "zar" spirits. It is believed that both embryo and placenta consist of menstrual blood that has not come out and become coagulated like buttermilk; fermented with the male semen, like yeast. The placenta, "adäf" (discharged dirty part), also called "yäengedä lej" (lit. host of the child), is buried out of sight. The baby is immediately fed butter, anointed with butter, and wrapped loosely in a warm toga. Meanwhile the mother is tightly bound in the long cotton [789] girdle, "lest her back hurt". In some areas, iron tools or weapons are placed close to her, to frighten off demons which fear iron.

[842] If the baby is a boy, women emerge from the huts shouting "ellel". The father, usually waiting nearby, is summoned. There is merriment and drinking and "fukkara" dancing among men in the evening.

304 852 Circumcision ("gezrat") of boys takes place a week after birth, and is of less religious significance than the baptism which follows some weeks later. It is a simple operation of removal of the foreskin, usually carried out by a "wozäsha" (native herbologist-surgeon) or other skilled man. Uncircumcised persons, e.g. Shanqalla from the lowlands, are insulted as "arotem" (sheathed); even the Italians were referred to as "wäshälg", a reference to having foreskins; less insulting is the factual ter "qurzam" (uncircumcised).

587 knowing both, has preferred her!

[588] A deserted wife, angry that her husband has found another, will often take a lover to buy her "a sheep for Epiphany", butter for her hair, and cotton for her distaff.

578 The following relationships are called "gobban", rivals, to
587 each other:

"Semanya" versus "damoz" wife;

Man A, whose divorced wife lives with man B. The men are "gobban".

Woman X, whose divorced husband lives with, or married, woman Y.

"Semanya" and "damoz" wives, versus new concubine, "gärad", fearing permanency.

One "gärad" against another, (also called "wushemma").

But only "semanya" wives are regarded as legal rivals.

842 When a woman is barren, she may follow the biblical example
586 and ask her husband to take a servant girl, "gärad" to have children with her. A "semanya" wife may be divorced on grounds of barrenness, but "with honor", taking half of their communal property with her. Amhara peasants believe that women become barren in the towns be-
[588] cause of "loose living". A woman divorced on grounds of barrenness will often have sexual intercourse with many men, hoping that she will conceive and thus have the blame of barrenness taken from her.

848 A bastard, "diosla" has full inheritance rights if his father acknowledges him. Bastards are believed to be of violent tempers, like "Muhammad Gran" (the Galla Muslim chief who devastated much of Ethiopia in the 16th century, reputedly a bastard).

586 When suing for divorce, either partner appeals to the "mänfäs gubäe" (colloquially "mänfäs ammy"), the "soul-counseler" priest, who has jurisdiction even over "semanya" marriages. Only he can

548 588 by them in the towns. Divorcees who are young and still attractive often do not want to return to their kinfolk, especially if they have seen town life and the kin life in remote rural hamlets. Like men doing manual labor, she may go to another district or even province to avoid shaming them. On this street she will usually begin by brewing daily barley beer, or even expand this to a small restaurant-inn performing the housekeeping tasks which she has been taught since early childhood and which are the only trade she knows. Occasionally she will then take in a travelling trader for 3 days or more, cook and bake and brew beer for him, also sleep with him if he desires. She hopes, not rarely with success, that one or the other will make the relationship permanent.

831 Men take great pride in virility, but also in sexual technique. They liken the activity to expertly "riding a horse" ("afärräsä" lit. [842] he rode her like a horse, is used for "defloration"). Men believe that it is frequency of intercourse, each night or several times each night, that brings conception. The popular, vulgar name for coitus is "bädda" (related to "bädäbbädä", he beat, whipped; shock with fever). Variations in sexual technique are referred to as "mett" (lit. hits). An impotent male is mocked as "alecha" (lit. sauce without pepper).

There is a sharp distinction between references that are "rude", consisting of direct references to sexual organs and activities; and veiled language used to refer to such matters, if at all, before an elder, priest, or upper-class person. The former is referred to as "yäafär cal" (lit. light matters), connoting "shameful matters". This includes such direct names as "ocla" for penis ("jälla" is even more vulgar), "yäqola ferey" (lit. fruit of the penis) for testicles, "ens" for vulva. Curiously enough, overt loud expression of these terms are heard only from little boys, e.g. when, during the rainy season, they

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

These changes in the definition of marriage have produced tremendous tensions and heartache in the relations between generations. Deprived of authority in the occupational sphere, parents of modern adolescents cling with all the more pride to their traditional rights and obligations in the sphere of getting their children properly married. They often nag their children to leave school and get married while young. They stand determined to select their children's mates. If they do admit some consideration for their children's desires on the matter, they insist that any prospective spouse measure up to traditional criteria. As a result, disagreements between students and their parents revolve around the subject of marriage more frequently than anything else.

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TABLE 7

883* 582

DISPOSITION OF STUDENTS TOWARD TRIBAL AND RELIGIOUS EXOGAMY

		Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
		Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Willingness to marry a person of a different religion.	Yes	29	33	60
	No	71	67	40
Willingness to marry a person of a different tribe....	Yes	64	73	84
	No	36	27	16
Number.....	.....	(392)	(40)	(194)

Modern adolescents, however, have by no means wholly rejected traditional attitudes and sentiments concerning marriage and courtship. Although a number of students say they want to marry for the modern reason of finding personal happiness through a satisfying love relation, many more indicate that they are chiefly inspired by the traditional motives of wanting to beget children. Most of them wish to continue the custom of having large families, the most frequently mentioned numbers of children desired being "four" and "more than six."*

883* 178 581 842 •

The modern boys still widely share the traditional expectation that their

883* 178 581

* The mean number of children desired by the college students in my sample is 4.23. This figure exceeds those of all the national college groups reported by Gillespie and Allport except Egypt and South African Bantu.

827 [841] quired amounts of blood are continually renewed in fertile women, menstrual effluence is necessary to shed * [192] blood not needed between pregnancies. Hence, the cessation of menstrual bleeding at menopause (arowgey) indi- • [842] cates the loss of fertility. Arowgey is only one form * [192] of infertility, however, since a woman may be infertile through magical causes even though she continues to menstruate (makan).

[825] The stomach is described as an inert organ housing a colony of wosfat worms. These are usually identified with ascariasis and are believed to transform food and drink into waste. For the host's well-being, their numbers must be sufficient to consume all ingested food; should they become over-abundant, however, hunger and a quarrelsome disposition will drive them to viciously attack accessible body organs.

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000 Malign agencies, both corporeal and incorporeal,

*753 owning debteras (as well as occasional laymen) possess
754 recipes. The third variety of pathogenic kifat works
[842] sends sexual maladies. Sterility, considered a very
[833] serious ailment, is sent to women only. Impotency affects both sexes; it is experienced by women as uncontrollable crying when approached or touched by any man, and is often confused with aynitila.

754 The most commonly owned non-pathogenic kifat works belong to a category known as "amderab". These works enable the operator to send onto his victim's house and fields misfortunes of fire, water (as destructive hail and rain storms), earth (as rains of stones and clods), air (as destructive winds), and putrification (as noxious odors). Other non-pathogenic kifat works have a domestic aspect (e.g., prepared foods are continually spoiled, food stores are consumed at an unnatural rate, servants grow discontent with the master's household, and domestic animals wander away); a mercantile aspect (e.g., trading rivals find it difficult to sell their goods, rival talla sellers find their newly prepared beer turning to a pitch-like consistency); or bring misfortunes at the hands of other human agents (e.g., the victim's son is made a wastrel, kenezereña, the victim repeatedly and unintentionally incurs the enmity of people, the victim exposes himself to ambush by enemies).

At its simplest, a kifat work requires a recitation,

291 skirted, one-piece, and in rural areas of coarse, heavy cotton cloth made by the weaver (shammani); while the "ejtebab" of men is of imported cotton sheeting (abujedid) of fine quality. Jodphurs (surri) are of heavier, but also imported cotton. The Coptic priests in rural areas also wear a type of "qämīs" resembling that of women, but without embroidery, and much more wide-sleeved, thus called "ejsäri".

291 In very recent times city women of the younger gen-
177 eration in Addis Ababa have compromised with modernity by wearing a "qämīs" of light, imported, white rayon, thus bringing the development full circle. It is, however, still ankle-length, and the upper part of the body still covered in addition by a light version of the traditional shamma. Even modern-educated husbands who, as clerks or teachers wear European suits themselves, insist on their wives wearing some type of "qämīs" plus shamma. Male wearing of the wide-cuffed European trousers ("bolalē") has taken hold only in Addis Ababa and among modern-educated clerks and teachers. The nobility takes pride in resisting and in wearing jodphurs; and rural teachers still imitate them rather than modernity (much as they teach that the world is round without believing it themselves.).

291 The jodphurs, wide at the waist, are held by a cloth belt, "tebtib". This narrow belt of heavy cotton is used also for other trousers, and for the belt around the "qämīs" [843] of women. Pregnant women wear a long cotton girdle, 6 inches wide, beneath the qämīs, ("mäqännät"), for support, and use it also at night or during the rainy season, for warmth.

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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[83]
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Possession of a man by a female zar occurs less often but is much more difficult to treat. Magical coitus in this case may render him impotent with human females. In some cases it manifests itself in nocturnal emissions of semen (wet dreams). It is believed that if a zar doctor (or a male patient) is possessed by a female zar at a young enough age, prior to puberty (which is very rare), he will develop female secondary sex characteristics, such as incipient breasts; some even say menstruation. Only zar doctors feel they have sufficient control over the situation to invite female zars to possess them, for the value of a few protective female zars as revealers of occult secrets is great.

Female zars are regarded as "uneducated" and "undisciplined"; none of them are believed to have "studied in Jerusalem" where many wise male zars are believed to have gone to school. Many female zars therefore never can become protective spirits. At most they can be flattered by special chants, and bribed to remain inactive, i.e. seated on the back of the "horse". More female than male zars are downright evil.

[753]

This is especially true when a female zar possesses a human female. This is most often due to jealousy, and is so diagnosed if a woman suffers a series of miscarriages. For, while male zars are regarded as "striking the shoulder", female zars immediately" strike at the genitals".

[943]

One of the basic relationships with a zar spirit of the opposite sex, the "magical coitus", is solemnized by the zar doctor in a "marriage communion". The possessed is then referred to as "mushärra" (newlywed), and is attended by two "mizä" (best men, like in a human wedding) from among the circle of the society of the possessed, who ever thereafter are in attendance every time another possession occurs,

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

585 stead, and seated upon it the bridegroom and the bride, and there came thither three priests, and they began a chaunt with Hallelujah, and then continued the chaunt, the three priests walking three times round the bedstead on which the couple were seated. Then they cut a lock of hair from the head of the bridegroom, and another from the head of the bride. They wetted these locks with mead, and placed the hair of the bridegroom on the head of the bride, and that of the bride on the head of the bridegroom, on the place from which they had cut them, and then sprinkled them with holy water: after that they kept their festivities and wedding feasts. At night they put them in a house, and for a month from that time no one saw the bride, except one man only whom they call the best man,[1] who remains all this month with the married couple, and when this month is ended the man or best friend goes away. If she is an honourable woman she does not go out of the house for [784] five or six months, nor remove a black veil from her face: [843] and if before that she becomes pregnant she removes the veil. When these months are ended, even though she is not pregnant, she removes the veil.

CAP. XXI.—*Of their marriages and benedictions, and of their contracts, and how they separate from their wives, and the wives from them, and it is not thought strange.*

I saw the Abima Marcos, whom they call Pope, giving blessings in the church, that is to say, before the principal door; the bride and bridegroom were also seated on a bedstead, and the Abima walked round them with incense and cross, and laid his hands on their heads, telling them to observe that which God had commanded in the gospel; and that they were no longer two

[1] *Padrinho.*

*753 measles, and smallpox), whooping cough, and occasionally
[843] mumps. Pre-natal contagion, in which a homonculus receives a paternal baǰiyta or a fetus contracts a maternal baǰiyta via the blood nutriment, is responsible for childhood syphilis and syni tila. Rabies is the only example of animal-human contagion, the baǰiyta being carried by the dog's saliva. Neither likift nor the causation of jaundice through contact with bat urine are examples of telalafiy, since in neither case is the disease agent itself a victim of the ailment.

*753 The body's normal functioning is also disrupted by
825 deviations from acceptable limits of diet, physical acti-
827 vity, and emotion. Digestive wosfat, for example, are
*(192) angered by insufficient food, or food which is stale (injera bread), spoiled (soured talla beer), or improperly prepared (wot stew lacking the customary cayenne). In return, the wosfat rise up to bite the stomach itself, causing pain, bloat, and diarrhea; if these conditions persist, the wosfat will chew their way to the heart, pro-
*753 ducing great local pain, fever, and lassitude. Exces-
827 sive physical exertion is associated with local com-
[828] plaints: Extended walking may dislocate a jimat from its assigned channel (sprain); prolonged weeping can cloud the eye (trachoma and cataracts); extended and arduous thinking produces confusion; much hard labor results in arthritic and rheumatoid complaints. Intense emotions

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needs.[1]

*759 The wogeysa's remaining therapies---excision of
*753 tonsils (ankar) and teeth---are characterized by simpler
752 diagnosis and treatment than are the tagañ's works.
• [843] Swollen and inflamed tonsils (komahaw) may be caused by
* [192] gerifta; in infants, however, the condition may be congenital, brought on by the over-exertions of the child's mother during pregnancy. It is considered a potentially mortal affliction, since the sickman is unable to swallow and loses weight rapidly; eventually the organ bursts and death follows. Tonsils are excised with the assistance of a reed through which a loop of horse
[413] hair has been slipped. With this, the offending organ
[197] is held fast, and excised by whatever type of blade the therapist regards as most efficacious (e.g., a razor, imported 'Arab' knife, or fragment of glass).[2] Kusil

[1]During 1966, the foremost tagañ of Begemder had the following sickmen living simultaneously in three huts which he had erected on his fields; 1) a woman from Woggera (see map 1), with a fractured clavicle, assisted by her daughter; 2) a four year old boy, with a shoulder injury, accompanied by both parents; 3) a woman with a broken fore-arm, from Belsea, assisted by a locally acquired servant; 4) a woman from Tigre, with an immobile right arm, assisted by a locally acquired servant.

[2]In the Gondar area, both tonsils and uvula are classified as 'ankar'. Elsewhere in Begemder, they are often distinguished as 'ankar' and 'intil'. Therapeutically, diseased tonsils and uvula are treated the same, and a wogeysa capable of treating one invariably treats the other.

*757 by spontaneously shouting out the agent's name ("yi-
*[192] liliyt waf").

Narratives describing supplementary household therapies are included in Appendix A.

OTHER LAY THERAPISTS

*759 The Midwife. The midwife (awalaj) is always a woman, since it is forbidden for a man to look on, let alone
*759 handle, a woman's genitals. Towards the end of the
* 843 eighth month of pregnancy, counted from the cessation of menses, the parturient woman consults a midwife. The awalaj examines the abdomen from the perspective of size and shape, and listens to the abdomenal wall for sounds of life and other signs of fetal movement.[8] During the latter half of the ninth month, the midwife reckons the position of the fetus, and if this is found inappropriate she reaches into the vagina and attempts to manipulate the fetus into a desireable attitude. The session concludes with directions that the expectant mother must
844 henceforth sleep only on her back. Once labor pains begin, the midwife is called. With the assistance of the

[8] Failure to perceive signs of fetal life suggests the possibility of a zar-caused ailment.

844 woman's kinswomen who hold her down, the midwife repeatedly massages the woman's abdomen until the baby has emerged. The umbilical cord is knotted close to the baby and again near the mother, and then severed in the middle. The midwife then squeezes the woman's abdomen to eject the afterbirth, inserts her hand up the vagina to extract any remaining portion, and then passes the organ to an assistant who takes it outside
846 for burial. The midwife then turns to the infant, washes it and carefully "shapes" its eyes, nose, and head into desireable conformations. Finally, the mother's body is washed.

*759 The midwife's therapy is conspicuously lacking
844 in the secret and magical elements characteristic of herbalist therapies. It is, in addition, the only Amhara medical specialty which can be acquired without formal tuteledge, by observing and assisting established midwives in delivering infants.

• 843 Pregnancy and childbirth are considered dangerous
844 experiences. Gerifta is a special threat: Nakedness
[821] under the sun may cause the fetus to turn in the womb and threaten breach birth, and urinating in the sun can
[845] induce premature labor. Childbirth is sometimes the setting for divine punishment by means of breach birth.
[776] The pregnant woman is also a favorite victim of ganela, typically, she experiences great hemorrhaging, severe

pain, loss of her senses, inability to move her limbs in an often fatal ailment known as sarakian. The midwife is powerless in these contingencies; instead, it is the herbalist or debtera who must be consulted. Thus, the sinj medhaniyt awakiy provides an infusion which the post-partuitive mother drinks to eject a recalcitrant afterbirth (sinj), and the yidemaketir kitabiy provides an herbal amulet to be tied around the waist of the female suffering from post-partum hemorrhaging (demaketir).

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842 birth, or later by causing its joints to swell.

843 It is considered impossible for a woman to conceive while still breastfeeding a baby. This belief is so strong that no precautions are taken, coitus proceeds as usual after the first few months, and when a pregnancy does occur it is regarded as a freak of nature and misfortune.

841 These physical matters are more discussed by women than by men. Menstruation is differentiated in several ways: "kärakkäs" - she has become impure; "räggäna" - the (monthly) curse is on her; "edef" - the discharge of menstruation; "bädäm nat" (lit. she is in blood). Husbands are expected to shun "the dirt" and avoid sex relations during that time.

843 As a pregnancy advances, women wrap a long cotton girdle around the belly and waist, "näganät", for support, and continue this some time after childbirth.

843 574 844 About two months before a woman is about to give birth, ("arkäk" - woman in advanced pregnancy), she often leaves her husband and goes to the hamlet of her parents'. There she knows she will be taken care of, fed, constantly attended, treated by the local experienced woman who acts as midwife, and not be expected to follow any of her housewifely duties such as fetching water, cooking, brewing beer, gathering fuel, etc. After birth she will usually remain at her parents' for some months, until her childbed, "arag" period (usually 80 days) is over. During [304] this time, circumcision and clitorectomy are performed. For even good husbands are regarded as so habituated to the wifely services that they become impatient with the wife at this time.

[847] During parturition, the midwife usually sits on the ground in such a position that the baby will drop into her lap. The mother usually kneels. Sometimes incense is lit to lure the baby out, and to attract protective "zar" spirits. It is believed that both embryo and placenta consist of menstrual blood that has not come out and become coagulated like buttermilk; fermented with the male semen, like yeast. The placenta, "adär" (discharged dirty part), also called "yäengedä lej" (lit. host of the child), is buried out of sight. The baby is immediately fed butter, anointed with butter, and wrapped loosely in a warm toga. Meanwhile the mother is tightly bound in the long cotton [789] girdle, "lest her back hurt". In some areas, iron tools or weapons are placed close to her, to frighten off demons which fear iron.

[842] If the baby is a boy, women emerge from the huts shouting "ellel". The father, usually waiting nearby, is summoned. There is merriment and drinking and "fukkara" dancing among men in the evening.

304 852 Circumcision ("gezrat") of boys takes place a week after birth, and is of less religious significance than the baptism which follows some weeks later. It is a simple operation of removal of the foreskin, usually carried out by a "wogäsha" (native herbologist-surgeon) or other skilled man. Uncircumcised persons, e.g. Shanqalla from the lowlands, are insulted as "arotam" (sheathed); even the Italians were referred to as "wäshäla", a reference to having foreskins; less insulting is the factual ter "gurzam" (uncircumcised).

000 The patient would recover anyway in due course.

758 The therapeutic value of convalescence ("zäzäm alä") is recognized, and patients are told to bask in the sunshine.

562 756 757 Men are more likely to let themselves be treated by the "woggesha"; women, who suffer more frequently from functional ailments, approach the "dabtarä" or "zar" doctor more often and request magical aid.

844 When birth approaches, the midwife is called, almost never the woggesha. If he is, he may not touch the genital parts of the woman, and merely advises the midwife. When labor pains begin, the patient is given a drink of mashed linseed to "relax the birth tract" and to "lessen the pain". The newborn baby is annointed with butter (often rancid), and fed some of it.

759 Other medical helpers, apprentices, or modern "dressers" may be referred to as "healers" ("fäwash"), "balä mädanit" (lit. medicine man, who knows empirical drugs and cures), "caretaker" ("astabaqi"), male nurse ("mogsit"), modern "dresser" ("astamami"). None of these are respected professions, for they are regarded as too close to manual labor, and such practitioners usually go to other provinces where their work will not shame the family. In recent years, the more skilled ones have been coming from Eritrea.

178 757 Modern change has been largely indirect and partial. The new laws still permit the "woggesha" to function. Penicillin and other antibiotics can be purchased without a prescription at the big "Saturday markets", for as little as ETh$2.50 (US$1.-), and the patient simply buys it, takes it to a "dresser" in the nearest town, whom he pays 1/2 dollar Ethiopian (US 20 cents), to give the injection. When symptoms disappear, e.g. in syphilis, he believes himself cured.

757 by spontaneously shouting out the agent's name ("[192] *yi-lilyt waf*").

Narratives describing supplementary household therapies are included in Appendix A.

OTHER LAY THERAPISTS

*759 *The Midwife*. The midwife (*awalaj*) is always a woman, since it is forbidden for a man to look on, let alone *759 handle, a woman's genitals. Towards the end of the 843 eighth month of pregnancy, counted from the cessation of menses, the parturient woman consults a midwife. The *awalaj* examines the abdomen from the perspective of size and shape, and listens to the abdomenal wall for sounds of life and other signs of fetal movement.[8] During the latter half of the ninth month, the midwife reckons the position of the fetus, and if this is found inappropriate she reaches into the vagina and attempts to manipulate the fetus into a desireable attitude. The session concludes with directions that the expectant mother must • 844 henceforth sleep only on her back. Once labor pains begin, the midwife is called. With the assistance of the

[8] Failure to perceive signs of fetal life suggests the possibility of a *zar*-caused ailment.

844 woman's kinswomen who hold her down, the midwife repeatedly massages the woman's abdomen until the baby has emerged. The umbilical cord is knotted close to the baby and again near the mother, and then severed in the middle. The midwife then squeezes the woman's abdomen to eject the afterbirth, inserts her hand up the vagina to extract any remaining portion, and then passes the organ to an assistant who takes it outside
846 for burial. The midwife then turns to the infant, washes it and carefully "shapes" its eyes, nose, and head into desireable conformations. Finally, the mother's body is washed.

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304 852 Although Amhara often deny the religious aspect of their circumcision, it is recalled by the more learned that Jesus Christ was circumcised on the 6th day of the month Ṭer. Also, the confessor is invited to circumcisions, and blesses the baby, sprinkles the hut with blessed water, waves the cross about to exorcise lingering demons who have waited for the kill like vultures. He blesses the entire family; May God rear up the baby for you, that he be your support in old age, and carry you to your burial". He is rewarded with a small feast and as much barley beer as he can drink.

In some regions of Begemdir province girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed without ceremony by the midwife, without any religious connotation. Usually the operation is a simple cut, a "clitorotomy". The purpose is to prepare the girl baby for future marital happiness by reducing the egotistical part of her sensuality. It is believed that Amhara women of the province [831] of Gojjam, where clitorectomy is not practiced, are very difficult to satisfy sexually, that they are more concerned with their own sexual gratification than with that of their husbands', and even become unfaithful because of this. At least this is the belief of Amhara of Begemdir province. The term "wäshäla" is also used for an "uncircumcised" woman.

845 It is considered a great calamity when twins are born. They are referred to as "mänta" (from "ammänätä", undecided, not knowing which to accept). Everyone wonders "who will feed and carry the twin"? The proverb says: 845 539

"The mother of twins,

845 [539] (because of what she carries) on her back, she dies."

It would indeed be difficult for her to suckle two babies for two years, and to carry them on her back while fetching water and deadwood and doing all her other chores. Very likely, the weaker of twins is neglected, which greatly increases the higher natural mortality of twins. The observable fact is that one never seems to encounter adult Amhara twins.

C. Naming the Baby.

553 Since Amhara fathers pay little attention to details concerning the unweaned baby, the task of naming the baby, giving it the "world name", usually falls to the mother. She does not usually prepare a name during pregnancy. Instead, she awaits the momentuous event of birth, then decides on a name based on her predominant emotion at that time, or on a significant event occurring at the same time, or on the special wish she has for the personality or the future of her baby. All classes follow this practice, but among nobles there is an additional pattern of naming the baby after a deceased ancestor, particularly in the direct patrilineal line.

551 Common "world names" given by mothers include:

Boys

"Tasmrat" - (lit. miracle), e.g. if the mother barely survived the parturition, or some other miraculous deliverance took place.

"Mällässä"- (lit. he returned), e.g. if the baby's father had been away, and the mother was overjoyed to see him return just at the time the baby was born.

X794 TK 153 cultivating the spirit. If she is already pregnant, the zar may cause a miscarriage; either because he wants his human mate "pure", or to take revenge on the husband for miserly refusal of a chicken or young goat requested by the wife for the "zar" sacrifice - which may cause the zar to take the fetus as his "äqwädäsha" (lit. love gift).

When a male zar appears to a human female in a dream, he takes the form of a husband visiting his wife, if he is in a benevolent mood; if angry, he takes the form of a black dog (though Ethiopian dogs are [231] reddish) or of a snake. The actual possession, in this relationship is a magical coitus, expressed in the violently sensuous "gurri" dance. Some women possessed by a male zar drape their shamma (toga) in male fashion; some even put on ornaments of oldtime male warriors (lion mane, leopard skin), male jodphurs - all at the request of her male "zar", in which case she is actually "dressing" him.

X794 TK A woman who sleeps alone risks being struck by a male zar, and even neighbors sometimes admit having heard a "spirit visitor" at night. When a baby is born deformed, it is regarded as the result [845] of a magical coitus. Male zar spirits avoid menstruating women, [841] and during this period they may not sit on the skin of an animal that has been sacrificed to the zar. Male zar prefer to possess beautiful human females, and add to their beauty; so that some male [832] connoisseurs of female beauty claim that a woman's glowing charms leave her when her protective zar ("weqabi") leaves her. Therefore, there is some ambivalence in the hostility of human husbands to the possession of their wives by male zars; which may contribute to the frequency of such possession. For, at least, the neglected wife is then no longer ignored and may even become the center of attraction.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

many kinds: they may be male or female, Christian or Muslim, educated or unschooled, mischievous or somber. *Zār* are depicted as resembling the handsome, light-complexioned Abyssinians. They are not necessarily evil: sometimes a person is inspired by the sound of *zār* singing far off in the woods to add a new song to the local lore. But they are the great carriers of physical and mental illness. Many of the contagious diseases in Abyssinia, like typhus and smallpox, are referred to as "*zār* sicknesses." Above all, the *zār* is the bringer of seizures. When a *zār* lands on somebody's back the victim may go into a trance, succumb to melancholia, or break out in hysteria. Women are most often subjected to fits caused by *zār*—usually by male *zār*, who perform some kind of magical coitus with them and try to compete with their husbands. When a freak is born to a woman, it is often attributed to the malicious effect of a *zār* jealous of her husband.

Though some kinds of *zār* only desist from molesting their victims through constant propitiations, others can be won over to serve as powerful protecting spirits. Thus an initial discomfort can be turned into a permanent advantage, offering the erstwhile victim magical protection and, as one student has suggested, affording women a temporary escape from their depressed social status through the companionship and opportunities for self-expression found in associations of *zār* "patients."[8]

Human beings with supernatural powers are of two kinds: those who manipulate the spirits and practice magic, and those who are themselves possessed. The possessed are called *ṭayb* or *budā*. *Ṭayb* (or *ṭabib*) in its original sense means "manual worker," but it has acquired the connotation of "one with the evil eye," the primary meaning of *budā*. By looking at someone the *budā* or *ṭayb* "drinks his blood" through the magic power of his evil eye. The victim will first feel a severe headache and fatigue, then show hysterical frenzy, and finally intestinal cramps. His fingers will be clenched around his thumbs, a sign that the *budā* has grasped the thumbs and does not want anyone to see him taking his "food" from the victim. If the victim is not cured he will eventually waste away and die.

The *budā* is helpless to check his malevolent power, and if he enters the home of a friend who is not a *budā* he will shout ahead to get the children out of the way for fear he might unwittingly infect them. People who eat pork are thought invulnerable against the evil eye, the pork in their systems serving as a kind of antibody against the infection. Potters and metalsmiths have been kept in a low caste position in Abyssinia partly because of the belief that such artisans inherit this evil power along with their craft from their parents. It is important in selecting a spouse for one's child to make sure that there is no *budā* blood in the family, and to be called a *budā* or *ṭayb* is one of the more serious insults.

The Amhara peasant has many beliefs about the malevolent beings in his

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5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by The those who are sick, or dying. 794

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. 292 The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar.

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. 796 The really married are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. 784 Persons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. [846] If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the church till seven days afterwards. [841] Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first day of the child's age. [304] On all the fore-mentioned occasions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. [852] The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment.

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. 131 361 From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. 101 Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma;

[p. 57]

*753 *759 *278 752 *(192] use local applications of commonly known palliatives, until subsequent discomfort obliges them to consult a tooth extractor.[3] In addition to simple toothache (yiters himem), gerifta may result in rheumatoid pain (kurtimat) in the cheek teeth and adjacent jaw, accompanied by swollen, itching gums. Although herbal poultices are available for this syndrome, only tooth ex-
*759 752 • 846 traction promises permanent relief. The yiters medhaniyt awlakiy also treats the newly irrupted teeth of year-old infants. The upper lateral incisors are believed to often cause infants severe pain, resulting in incessant
[413] crying, diarrhea and failure to suckle properly. To remedy this dangerous situation, the practitioner removes the offending teeth using an awl-like implement. In each of these dental operations, kusil is considered no real danger, and prophylaxis is not given.

*759 752 *[278] Toothache is perhaps the only ailment for which wogeyza and herbalist (see below) both offer therapies. The differences here are illuminating: The dental wogeyza's therapy is only incidentally concerned with causes,

[3]In the abstract, these palliatives (distilled spirits known as arakiy and ginger root) are only effective against the intrusive worm, but in reality they are used even when evidence of the worm agent (til), i.e., caries, are not apparent.

*278 *759 778 - [846] *[192]

question. Finally, herbal amulets are used in at least one context, to end excessive post-partuitive hemhorrhaging (dem iketir), as the sole therapy. In the abstract, at least, a yidemiketir kitabiy whose therapy had proven efficacious could also be referred to as a yidemiketir medhaniyt awakiy.

*278 *759

Herbalists are also grouped by means of a second series of descriptive nomers. These names ostensibly distinguish herbalists according to the botanical ingredients of their primary medicines. Thus, the ise korac is a "green stem cutter", and the medhaniyt (or sir) kofariy is a "medicine (or root) digger". The final label is yi (disease name) medhaniyt korac, "the medicine cutter for the (designated) ailment", and refers to herbalists whose recipes incorporate a variety of medicaments, including non-botanical ingredients. Any one of these three types of herbalists may also be described as either a medhaniyt seci or medhaniyt ateci, according to criteria already discussed. Only the yi (disease name) medhaniyt korac, however, can---if he practices an appropriate therapy---be referred to as a medhaniyt awakiy. The practice of medhaniyt (or sir) kowfariy and ise korac therapies, is characterized by weak medicines; strong primary medicines, when used, are directed against non-serious ailments for which effective therapies are relatively common. In both cases, the

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423 have been her portion in case of divorce. If the deceased
428 left an infant, the widow is expected to remain with the kin
614 group of the deceased until the child is reared to adulthood. Then she may leave, taking movable belongings that are her share, but, of course, foregoing any claims on real estate. The same procedure is followed in case of her marriage again.

[848] Illegitimate sons, including children of ex-slave concubines, also have the right to inheri their share of "rest", unless the presumed father has publicly rejected them as offspring. Girls who leave the kin group upon marriage, have claims only on movable property, not land. However, if the bridegroom settles on land belonging to the bride's kin, as happens in a minority of cases, the elders will allocate him land, and the male offspring will share in the inheritace.

[852] Allocations of land by the elders to the various biological families used to be made into great events and festivities particularly for the children. This was the only time children were singled out for attention, in this adult-cantered culture. Thus the purpose of firmly impressing the event on their minds, to be always remembered and defended in the future, was achieved. In the absence of written legal titles, this procedure was necessary, and is still followed in some rural districts.

C. Semi-private Real Estate--"gult".

423
566 For many centuries past, land, with the peasants occupying it, has been assigned to feudal officers and soldiers, similar to fiefs of medieval Europe. These "gult" lands also resemble in principle the "miri" state lands of

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

588 The "damoz" temporary wife is usually recruited from a lower class than that of the man, of landless family. But often she is merely a divorcee, who "lives alone" in a street inhabited by women of similar status in the town, who are in-between marriages, and make a living serving transients with bed and board, giving them the comforts of home, cooking, baking, cleaning. They are not considered good-time prostitutes of the mead-houses ("tej-bet"), and are therefore much more respected.

588 487 178 Respectably-married ("semanya") man would, in the past, take on a "damoz" wife to accompany them on caravan trips, to spare the "semanya" wife the discomforts and perils of the journey. Now that trucks travel comparatively fast from province to province, the travelling "damoz" wife has become rare, but the residential "damoz" wife continues in the towns much as before, and "semanya" wives are therefore not as tolerant of them as they once were when they appreciated their husbands' efforts to spare them discomfort. For, they reasoned, "who else will cook for him, how will he eat?".

588 848 The "damoz" wife's children are fully legitimate. She is far higher in status than the simple concubine ("yechen gered"), lit. the servant-maid of the thigh), who was and is often a permanent member of the household, often of doubtful or half-Shanqalla ancestry, who has no damoz rights, and whose children have no rights of recognition beyond what the master cares to give them. (The concubine is also called "tara" or "tarata" in some districts).

588 171 The respectability or semi-respectability of the "damoz" wife compares to the Persian "ssighe", and the Arab Muslim temporary wife permitted in the Quran (IV:28 - "And in so far as you have derived pleasure from these women for a stipulated time, give them their

587 knowing both, has preferred her!

[588] A deserted wife, angry that her husband has found another, will often take a lover to buy her "a sheep for Epiphany", butter for her hair, and cotton for her distaff.

578 The following relationships are called "gobban", rivals, to
587 each other:

"Semanya" versus "damos" wife;

Man A, whose divorced wife lives with man B. The men are "gobban".

Woman X, whose divorced husband lives with, or married, woman Y.

"Semanya" and "damos" wives, versus new concubine, "gärad", fearing permanency.

One "gärad" against another, (also called "wushemma").

But only "semanya" wives are regarded as legal rivals.

842 When a woman is barren, she may follow the biblical example
586 and ask her husband to take a servant girl, "gärad" to have children with her. A "semanya" wife may be divorced on grounds of barrenness, but "with honor", taking half of their communal property with her. Amhara peasants believe that women become barren in the towns be-
[588] cause of "loose living". A woman divorced on grounds of barrenness will often have sexual intercourse with many men, hoping that she will conceive and thus have the blame of barrenness taken from her.

● 848 A bastard, "diosla" has full inheritance rights if his father acknowledges him. Bastards are believed to be of violent tempers, like "Muhammad Gran" (the Galla Muslim chief who devastated much of Ethiopia in the 16th century, reputedly a bastard).

586 When suing for divorce, either partner appeals to the "mänfäs
qubä" (colloquially "mänfäs amyar"), the "soul-counselor" priest, who has jurisdiction even over "semanya" marriages. Only he can

1J:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Egyptian mosques; youth dormitories and community houses in certain tribes in India; the academic and athletic youth organizations of ancient Athens and Sparta; not to mention the numerous teen-age associations of modern Western society.[3] 883* 561

Here again, the adolescent Amhara is not involved in any such social forms. The advent of puberty is associated with the growing up and out of childhood groups, the gangs of shepherds who spend their days together in work and play. The girl of eleven or twelve is expected to spend all her time at home, under careful supervision. The boy of thirteen or fourteen has abandoned the shepherd's life for farming, in the company of older relatives, and soon becomes increasingly preoccupied with his private economic and erotic interests. His family elders are likely to warn him not to make friends with other youths outside the family.[4] For a number of adolescent boys to get together outside of festive occasions is, to the traditional Amhara mind, a sign that something wrong is afoot.

The absence of adolescent rites and age groups reflects the individualistic character of Amhara social organization, a subject to which we shall turn in chapter vii. Nevertheless, Amhara society catches young people in its grasp and guides them to adulthood just as firmly and surely as does a society which has many collective arrangements for its adolescents. It does this by means of a well-ordered program for growing up. The road from childhood to adulthood is one series of informal, unproblematic stages through which the growing person adjusts to progressively increased responsibilities and progressively detailed norms. After infancy, there is normally no break in continuity in the whole process. 121 88 182 85 • [561] [181]

Toward Adult Work Roles

Following a long and indulged infancy, the Amhara child is early taught the rudiments of work responsibility. At the age of three or four, children are given simple chores, such as shooing chickens from grain drying in the sun or collecting bits of firewood. Somewhat older children are expected to protect the crops against birds, farm animals, and baboons. The Amhara becomes apprenticed in the main vocation of his childhood—tending the herds—almost as soon as he can run about, and six-year-old shepherds play a crucial part in the Amhara economy. 857 868 [855] [867]

Boys retain the responsibility for tending the herds at least until the age of twelve, but by then they have already been initiated into a number of adult work activities. At about eight or nine years the Amhara boy begins to do his share of the harvesting, sickling the wheat, barley, *tef*, or beans and loading the crops in piles he will help transport to the threshing place. He becomes adept at directing the cattle round and round the threshing floor and at winnowing the grain from the chaff. At times he helps with the weeding.

754 158 of her blood, her health, life itself. The eyes of the victim are glazed, the nostrils distended, the face may wear a ghastly smile, and the body may be inflexible, or else in a nervous tremor. Relatives and "bread-companions" become terrified and run to the exorciser, often a dabtara, bringing him a gift called "ageba" (lit. entrance, i.e. visiting fee). By the time he arrives, the victim may be in contortions on the ground - being eaten by the buda. Some patients may try to hurt themselves, though others do not. When restrained, the patient may fight against the restraint, and women patients bite and scratch the restrainers.

Another classic case is total apathy, refusal to eat, and resistance even to the zar doctor, followed by sudden revival at night and the urge to run out and roam with the hyenas. Zar doctors explain this as a "zar being attached by a buda". An exorciser is then called in.

A common symptom of less violent character is nosebleed, which is very common. Persons vulnerable to this take care to [824] stuff smelly plants into the nose when on the trail. Such protective plants are collectively called "yäbuda reyan" (smells against the buda).

[851] Boys, when hazing the children of an ironsmith or suspected sorcerer sometimes force garlic ("chequn") into the nose of the child with such force as to cause nosebleed, saying "now give up the blood you have stolen". Garlic is believed to have the power 754 824 to stop a buda and is therefore buried under the door of a suspected sorcerer, e.g. an itinerant smith travelling his circuit of customers; this is believed toprevent the buda from going out at night "to feed".

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

586 separated from this husband and married a man more than forty years of age, who is one of the great lords of the court; the title of this one whom she married is Abuquer, and his father Cabeata. This is the greatest lord there is in the court. Thus I saw and knew many of these separations; I have named these because they are of great personages. [587] And because I said that Aaron married the wife of his brother, let not him that reads it be amazed, because it is the usage of the country. They do not think it strange for [607] a brother to sleep with the wife of his brother. This Aaron moreover had sons of her who had been the wife of his brother, and he left her and married another to whom he is now married.

CAP. XXII.—*Of the manner of baptism and circumcision, and how they carry the dead to their burial.*

304 Circumcision is done by anybody without any ceremony, only they say that so they find it written in the books, that God commanded circumcision. And let not the reader of this be amazed—they also circumcise the females as well as the males, which was not in the Old Law. Baptism they do 851 in this manner: they baptize males at forty days, and females at sixty days after their birth, and if they die before they go without baptism. I, many times and in many places, used to tell them that they committed a great error, and went against what the Gospel says: Quod natum est ex carne caro est; et quod natum est ex spiritu spiritus est. They answered me many times that the faith of their mother sufficed for them, and the communion which she received whilst in a state of pregnancy.[1] They perform this baptism

[1] This opinion of the Abyssinians appears to have anticipated the Sorbonne judgment of 1733, given in the 20th chapter of *Tristram Shandy*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

in the church, with water which they keep in a vase, and 851
which they bless, and they put oil on the forehead and on the breasts and shoulder-blades. They do not put ointment,[1] nor do they have it, nor the oil of extreme unction. This office of catechism which they celebrate seems to me to be much the same form as the Roman, and at the time of pouring the water on the child they do it in this way. One who is the godfather takes the child from the hands of the woman that has it and raises it, holding it under the arms, and holds it suspended; and the priest who baptizes, with one hand holds the vase and pours the water over the child, and with the other washes it all over, saying in his language the words which we say, that is: I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. They always perform this office on a Saturday or a Sunday, and it is done in the morning at mass, because every child that receives baptism receives the communion, and they give it in very small quantities, and cause it to be swallowed by means of water. With regard to this, also, I used to tell them that this communion was very dangerous, and in no wise necessary. As I said that they put oil on the forehead, 851
you should know that every child comes to baptism shaved 304
with a razor, and the scars or marks which they bear on the nose, between the eyes, and at the corners of the eyes, are not made by fire nor for anything of Christianity, but with cold iron for ornament, and because they say that it is good for the sight. There are here women who are very skilful at making these marks. They make them in this manner: they take a clove of garlic, large and moist, and place it on the corner of the eye; with a sharp knife they cut round the garlic, and then with the fingers widen the cut, and put upon it a little paste of wax, and over the wax another paste of dough, and press it down for one night with a cloth, and there remains for ever a mark which appears like a burn, because their color is dark.

[1] *Crisma.*

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in January. But the giant of holidays in this season is Epiphany, about a fortnight after Christmas. The holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus; the name of the holiday, *Ṭimqat,* means "baptism." In preparation for Ṭimqat new clothes are given to children and the adults' *shammā,* grown very gray over the months, are washed in every household. 565* 796 [296]

The program for Ṭimqat is long and complicated. At sunset on the eve of the holiday, the people don their white clothes and repair to the local church, from whence they escort the *tābot* to a place where it will spend the night—near some stream or pool. They go home for supper, and return to that site for singing and dancing until late at night. About two o'clock in the morning Mass is performed, after which quantities of *dābo* and *ṭallā* are consumed. Toward dawn, or shortly after, the clergy bless the water and sprinkle it on those assembled. Many like to bathe in the sanctified water at this time. It is the occasion for baptizing the children of syphilitic mothers and those who want to be rebaptized. [178] [851]

By noon on Ṭimqat Day a large crowd has assembled at the ritual site, those who went home for a little sleep having returned, and the holy ark is escorted back to its church in colorful procession. The clergy, bearing robes and umbrellas of many hues, perform rollicking dances and songs; the elders march solemnly with their weapons, attended by middle-aged men singing a long-drawn, low-pitched *haaa hooo;* and the children run about with sticks and games. Dressed up in their finest, the women chatter excitedly on their one real day of freedom in the year. The young braves leap up and down in spirited dances, tirelessly repeating rhythmic songs. When the holy ark has been safely restored to its dwelling-place, everyone goes home for feasting. In the meantime, the eyes of gamesome men and women have met and secret rendezvous have been arranged.

Ṭimqat ushers in a season of weddings, which comes to an abrupt end with the onset of the great fast before Easter. For eight long weeks, body and spirit are depressed by the heavy fasting requirements. The mood reaches a climax in the final week of Lent. Then no heavy work is allowed, and the more devout peasants go to church many times and intensify their daily schedule of prayers. Total abstinence is practiced for the forty-eight hours preceding the final Mass, performed in the middle of the night before Easter. [585] [785] [461] [782] [785]

Gluttony follows this long deprivation. It is a season of the highest spirits. For eight weeks the inexorable requirement to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays is waived. The bins are full with the harvest of wheat, barley, and chickpeas. New crops of pulse start to appear in the fields. It is the most favored time of all for weddings. [261] [785] [241] [585]

And then, as the Amhara themselves view it, June brings another time of sadness. With the onset of the heavy rains come attacks of malaria in the lowlands, typhus in the highlands. Swollen streams make travel difficult and [821] [164]

586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought 885 into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have re- [851] sulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or [586] else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a com- [587] plete adult, a *mulu sēt* or *mulu saw*.

From Generation to Generation

867 Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

[577] The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profes- [779] sion of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

867 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central 779 symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern 785 a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout matura- 262 tion. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early 577 age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

867 At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction 779 of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or 793 confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may 577 either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her [785] husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing [688] penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

proverb which stresses the rights of women in this regard gives the following advice: 121* 593 586

Balāgar siṭagab yemaṭāl ba-degger;
Tayawennā nay qiṭāwen yegāgger. [539]

When a peasant gets irated he beats you with wood;
Leave and come home, let him bake his own bread!

A couple who have firmly decided upon divorce need simply call in their relatives or go before the *çhīqā shum* in order to have their property properly divided. The only recourse to judicial process is when, as often happens, disputes break out concerning the division of property. In the *damos* form of marriage, in which there is no civil oath, divorce is yet simpler. The wife is given certain presents and a monthly salary for the duration of the marriage. When the husband has to leave for another part of the country, or if the couple quarrel, they simply separate without further ado.

Despite its heavy claim on the energies of its members, then, the Amhara kinship system is such as to make members of the nuclear family relatively independent of extended relationships, and to give the individual marriage partners important areas of independence from each other. 121* 593 594

Religious Organization

Membership in the Monophysite Church is automatic for all Amhara except a small percentage who are Muslim. This membership is symbolized by the ceremony of baptism, performed for male infants on the fortieth day and for females on the eightieth. At that time the child receives a special Christian name in addition to his regular family name. 121* 795 794 [851] • [553]

Certain obligations are incumbent upon every member of the church. Foremost among these is the requirement of fasting, which begins for children of both sexes at about the age of seven and introduces a considerable element of constraint into the lives of the Amhara. Second, there is the obligation to observe the Sabbaths and the main holidays by refraining from arduous physical labor on those days. In addition, each household is obliged to contribute a certain quantity of grain to the local church every year.* [785] [796]

Apart from the rigorous fasting requirements, and the injunction not to work on holy days—a dubious hardship—the individual is relatively free of ritual obligations. The rituals demanded by the church are so manifold, and so sacred, that responsibility for them is given to the clergy, and the laymen

* In some areas this is a fixed amount per household (e.g., one or two *quans*); in others it is proportionate to the wealth of the family. It is collected by a lay official of the church, the *gend alaqā*, though sometimes by the *gabaz*.

423 have been her portion in case of divorce. If the deceased
428 left an infant, the widow is expected to remain with the kin
614 group of the deceased until the child is reared to adulthood. Then she may leave, taking movable belongings that are her share, but, of course, foregoing any claims on real estate. The same procedure is followed in case of her marriage again.

[848] Illegitimate sons, including children of ex-slave concubines, also have the right to inheri their share of "rest", unless the presumed father has publicly rejected them as offspring. Girls who leave the kin group upon marriage, have claims only on movable property, not land. However, if the bridegroom settles on land belonging to the bride's kin, as happens in a minority of cases, the elders will allocate him land, and the male offspring will share in the inheritace.

[852] Allocations of land by the elders to the various biological families used to be made into great events and festivities particularly for the children. This was the only time children were singled out for attention, in this adult-cantered culture. Thus the purpose of firmly impressing the event on their minds, to be always remembered and defended in the future, was achieved. In the absence of written legal titles, this procedure was necessary, and is still followed in some rural districts.

C. Semi-private Real Estate--"gult".

423
566 For many centuries past, land, with the peasants occupying it, has been assigned to feudal officers and soldiers, similar to fiefs of medieval Europe. These "gult" lands also resemble in principle the "miri" state lands of

796 857 [539] from the bin of peas
fill me up."

Thereupon the householder gives them a handful of shembera peas, which they roast to "qolo", and this symbol, too, is considered to invite a good crop.

796 805 The 5th or last day of Pagumēn is the annual feast day of St. John. The "tabot" from his church is carried to water very early in the morning, and the men bathe in the river. The old year is symbolically buried, in some regions, by ceremonial burial of the book "Lefafa Ṭsedeq" (Scroll of Righteousness) which resembles in part the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. The day is traditionally also the end of the fiscal budget year, on which the nagadras, the appointee over commerce, had to pay the feudal tribute to his lord (at least a large jar of beer and 20 enjara breads) in addition to squaring his accounts. [651]

That evening torches are lit, for this is the beginning of a new year.

c) The Religious Life Cycle of the Lay Individual.

852 Baptism usually occurs after 40 days for boys, still later for girl babies, sometimes as long as 80 days. This practice is based on Old Testament patterns, and more directly, on the period of 40 days that the Virgin Mary herself had to segregate herself from the Temple after the birth of Jesus. (The Falasha Jews of Abyssinia is concerned less that a baby might die

852 unbaptized during this period of ritual impurity.

852 304 Another Old Testament survival, which is considered more customary than religious, is circumsision. Boys are circumcised about a week after birth, but not usually on Wednesday or Friday fast days. In some regions, notably Gojjam, girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed by a woman in a strictly female gathering, so that the girl will not become a "selfish" wife, and will be happy in marriage. After these operations, the babies may be blessed by a priest. However, when an adult person becomes Christian, circumcision or clitoredtomy are not performed, since they are not required.

293 At baptism, the baby receives the blue neck-cord, 852 553 the "mätäb", which forever after distinguishes him from a Muslim. The priest gives or confirms the Christian name of the child, usually one that places the child under the protection and guidance of a saint or archangel, such as "Gäbre-Mikaël" (Servant of Michael). However, in later life, most children will use and be called by the "world name" given them by their mothers at time of birth, such as "Taamrat" (miracle, e.g if the husband suddenly returned from a distant and dangerous trip at the time) for a boy, or "almaz" (diamond) or other sparkling name for a girl. The Christian name may be used later in life if the person becomes a priest or monk or nun, or participates in "qurban" (eucharistic marriage in church).

608 852 Every baby baptized, also every new adult convert, is given godparents. When a slave was baptised (prior

608 to the abolition of 1942), the godparents usually ob-
852 tained his freedom. The relationship is one of artificial kinship. To symbolize this literally, the godfather and godmother clasp the right thumb of the baby and swear by the Trinity that they will not distinguish between their own children and the godchild.

783 At first baptism, baby or adult, the entire body is immersed or bathed in holy water. Every year, on the festival of "Ṭenqät" (Epiphany), the sprinkling of the crowd with baptismal water is considered re-baptism, to wash away any breach with Christianity during the year. A woman who has had sexual intercourse with a Muslim must undergo complete baptism, otherwise the neighbors and the church will ostracize her. A person severely ill and considered possessed by demons is rebaptized.

872 At five, boys and girls begin useful functions in the family economy, and therefore boys are often 10 years old before they begin to go to church school. This schooling takes place under the shady cypress trees in the churchyard, under the direction of a young priest or däbtära. The method is rote learning of Geez and Amharic reading, and liturgy, beginning with the Gospel of St. John: "mäläktä yohanesä hawareya". Usually neither translation from the Geez liturgical language nor writing are taught. Graduates of this 3-year school qualify to serve as deacons. In recent years, they may then enter the 3rd grade of a government elementary school. Even church students now use the one-page printed "fidäl" (alphabet) in Geez-Amharic script, which, in addition,

844 During parturition, the midwife usually sits on the ground in such a position that the baby will drop into her lap. The mother usually kneels. Sometimes incense is lit to lure the baby out, and to attract protective "zar" spirits. It is believed that both embryo and placenta consist of menstrual blood that has not come out and become coagulated like buttermilk; fermented with the male semen, like yeast. The placenta, "adäf" (discharged dirty part), also called "yäengedä lej" (lit. host of the child), is buried out of sight. The baby is immediately fed butter, anointed with butter, and wrapped loosely in a warm toga. Meanwhile the mother is tightly bound in the long cotton [789] girdle, "lest her back hurt". In some areas, iron tools or weapons are placed close to her, to frighten off demons which fear iron.

[842] If the baby is a boy, women emerge from the huts shouting "ellel". The father, usually waiting nearby, is summoned. There is merriment and drinking and "fukkara" dancing among men in the evening.

304 852 Circumcision ("gezrat") of boys takes place a week after birth, and is of less religious significance than the baptism which follows some weeks later. It is a simple operation of removal of the foreskin, usually carried out by a "wogäsha" (native herbologist-surgeon) or other skilled man. Uncircumcised persons, e.g. Shanqalla from the lowlands, are insulted as "arotam" (sheathed); even the Italians were referred to as "wäshäla", a reference to having foreskins; less insulting is the factual ter "qurzam" (uncircumcised).

304 Although Amhara often deny the religious aspect of their
852 circumcision, it is recalled by the more learned that Jesus Christ was circumcised on the 6th day of the month Ṭer. Also, the confessor is invited to circumcisions, and blesses the baby, sprinkles the hut with blessed water, waves the cross about to exorcise lingering demons who have waited for the kill like vultures. He blesses the entire family; May God rear up the baby for you, that he be your support in old age, and carry you to your burial". He is rewarded with a small feast and as much barley beer as he can drink.

In some regions of Begemdir province girl babies undergo clitorectomy, performed without ceremony by the midwife, without any religious connotation. Usually the operation is a simple cut, a "clitorotomy". The purpose is to prepare the girl baby for future marital happiness by reducing the egotistical part of
[831] her sensuality. It is believed that Amhara women of the province of Gojjam, where clitorectomy is not practiced, are very difficult to satisfy sexually, that they are more concerned with their own sexual gratification than with that of their husbands', and even become unfaithful because of this. At least this is the belief of Amhara of Begemdir province. The term "wäshäla" is also used for an "uncircumcised" woman.

845 It is considered a great calamity when twins are born. They are referred to as "mänta" (from "amänätä", undecided, not knowing which to accept). Everyone wonders "who will feed and carry the
845 539 twin"? The proverb says:

"The mother of twins,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by 794
those who are sick, or dying.

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a 292
white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar.

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephtac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the 796
church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married 784
are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Persons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the [841]
church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first [304]
day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occasions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment.

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure 131
in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It 361
may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla 101
who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma;

[p. 57]

296 and crushed, potash--containing saponaria seed called "endod" (Phytolacca abyssinica) which grows wild, but the locations of which are carefully remembered for "harvest". The crushed seed is mixed with cold water on the slightly concave top of a rock, or in a cowskin. The cloth is kneaded, stamped on with feet, until a good foam develops. This is done several times; then the garment is rinsed, and bleached by the sun. In time the cloth does become grayish, particularly the peasant trousers which are used more than the festive shirt and jodphurs, but the native soap-plant is kinder to the material than the coarse European laundry soap now available at big markets.

291 There is little basic difference between the garments worn by the sexes. Jodphurs may be worn by travelling ladies of feudal lords, since there is no side-saddle, but the peasant woman never wears trousers. Also, instead of the shirt, women generally wear a long loose heavy cotton gown from shoulder to feet, though formerly the peasant women used to leave the upper body bare, as a symbol of "respect" (as peasant males used to do on most occasions), and for comfort. Above the tied waist, this garment is [853] still loose, and two-year old infants not yet weaned can walk up to their seated mothers and help themselves to nourishment and comfort by simply pulling the unobstructed breast out. Women wear the toga just as men do, but drape it differently on certain occasions.

The old type of trousers, wide at the hips and tapering to leg size just below the knee ("bat tähulät") has survived the introduction of white jodphurs ("surri") only

551 "Metekēy" - (lit. my substitute), e. g. if the mother had lost a previous baby, especially of the same (male) sex.

"Seyum" - (lit. the one appointed to dignity), e.g. if the mother has ambitions for the boy. Common among nobles.

"Dāsta" - (lit. joy).

Girls

"Almaz" - (lit. diamond)

"Mānān" - (lit. excellent, exquisite, magnificent). Common to nobles.

"Tsādal" - (lit. splendor, luster). From the Geez language.

Baptismal names, described earlier, are given by the confessor, sometimes based on the name of a deceased ancestor - especially among nobility - but are not usually used in later life unless or until the person marries by "qurban" ecclesiastical marriage, or becomes a monk or nun. Typical baptismal names are (for boys):

"Gābrā-Māsqal" - (lit. Servant of the Cross)

"Gābrā-Egziabhēr"- (lit. Servant of God).

D. The long, happy nursling stage.

854 Despite the many physical ailments that endanger the life of a baby in this materially undeveloped country, the nursling stage is one in which it receives more care than at any later period.

[853] The long, 2-year breastfeeding, for both boys and girls, gives them some resistance to the effects of malnutrition, vitamin shortage, diarrhea, and infections of all kinds from which older children suffer. The nursling is never out of touch with the body of the mother, or other woman or older sister. Most of the time the baby

854 is carried about on its mother's back, riding spread-legged in a half-sack. Other women and older sisters are about, eager to cuddle and handle the baby ("dällälä") to console, comfort, caress). In doing this they bend down to the baby, or pick it up, but rarely grasp it to kiss it. Fathers rarely fondle the baby until it is weaned. They often have to take a special count when asked how many teeth the baby has.

The term for nursling, "gelgal", may be extended to animal nuralings as a compliment, but not vice versa, for this would be an insult. When the baby can sit or stand, mothers hold it by the hands and coo babytalk to it, e.g. "tatu segra" (lit. - footsie), encouraging it to take first steps, or warning it not to touch a dangerous thing, such as fire, by designating it as "kaka". The 853 baby learns to walk during the second year, long before it is weaned. Thus a baby with a nearly full set of teeth can be seen walking up to its mother, groping for the breast inside the dress or toga, pulling it out, and beginning to take nourishment while squeezing a side of the breast with the full hand. The mother will rarely push it away, until it has had its fill and lingers dreamily, and she has other work to do. In this case the mother may push the baby away gently, without sign of annoyance. Inside the hut, women are not bashful about their breasts being partly exposed during feeding, but in sight of a stranger they may cover [854] the process of the baby's taking nourishment for fear of evil-eye spirits to which every eater is vulnerable and which might dry up the milk (out of envy and meanness).

803 Toilet training begins gradually after weaning, i.e. after the age of two, when the mother has resumed full wifely duties and

X 794 796 [688] realizing that her "zar" had insulted the powerful one of Salamtew. Back on her throne, Lady Säläämtew harshly admonishes the audience for dozing, for whispering, for laughing, and some for having taken food and drink during the previous "gurri". This inattentiveness is an insult to her zar, and she threatens to recess the convention if it continues. But then she sugarcoats the threat by calling for another round of refreshments.

[853] Some of the babies in the rear had cried, and were nursed by their mothers. This had also been done by some of the possessed women previously, sometimes within half an hour after the exhausting "gurri". Motherhood and zar devotion evidently did not conflict.

[123] Lady Säläämtu used this intermission to send the foreigner word promising "I shall appoint you a zar as your weqabi (protective spirit)". When she saw that he had drunk some of the barley beer which she had ordered to be served on the tablet of her zar. This time she addressed him in the female gender again, just as she had used a male gender in addressing her female devotees. The zars are believed to enjoy playing their game of turning nature upside down.

X 794 535 796 About 1A.M., everyone rose, except the poet and the drummer. Fresh incense was heaped on the burners. Tired and partly intoxicated members of the audience were shaken awake. For now they were to witness the "fukkara", the individualistic "boasting dance" of Lady Säläämtew's zar. It was a spastic bobbing up-and-down dance, similar to the "hotu" dance of warriors. The drum beat faster and [293] faster, Lady Säläämtew seemed to forget her dignity, but still waved her strap, the symbol of her seniority, while the devotees shouted

854 Until weaning, at the
[853] age of two, the child is never removed from contact with the body
of the mother or other female relative caring for him. After
857 weaning, childhood is an age of roaming over the countryside during
the long dry season and of performing such useful tasks as pro-
tecting the harvest by shooting pebbles from slingshots at birds
and baboons.

855 The pattern of punishment is dominated by spontaneity, during
childhood as well as adolescence. A suddenly enraged parent
(father or male elder) may hurl a firebrand at a child, or cuff him
roughly about the head and shoulders for as long as the rage lasts.
Sometimes real injury results, but there is no planned, coldly cal-
culated punishment, and the anger is usually quickly forgotten. The
youngster is never left in doubt when he has transgressed. Retrib-
ution comes within a split second. Parents do not hesitate to
exercise their authority and to impose their wills, when angered.
The youngster soon has a clear conception of what kind of behavior
it would be wise to avoid. Thus the youngster is presented, gradually,
with a set of values which early become rooted in his personality,
and help him to remain, later in life, in tune with his social group
and culture pattern.

554 Individuals who chafe at the status quo, notably women and/or
562 individuals of either sex who have a talent and urge for individual
enterprise, often find their way into the "zar" cult. Cultural
participation of the female is so restricted during her life cycle,
that many emotional outlets are denied her. Monotonous daily routines
of manual labor; two years of breastfeeding after every birth; denial
of active participation in the church; derogatory views of female
intelligence on the part of the males; etc., limit the Amhara women

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*565 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [853] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or [182] children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening [513] prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children [352] settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE PHENOMENA OF AMHARA ORALITY

155 826 [856] [192] Shortly after an Amhara child is born some butter is placed in his mouth. This is done in the belief that it will keep his voice from becoming harsh. From that moment on, the mouth never ceases to be an organ of extraordinary importance in his life. Its cultural importance is reflected in the attention given to it in the Amharic vocabulary: Baeteman's *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* lists some sixty idioms built with the Amharic word for mouth, *af*, more than are listed for any other words in the language except "eye," [539] "heart," and "earth."[4] The organ is publicly celebrated in such proverbs as: "Cleverness of mouth, to the master; cleverness of hand, to the slave."

155 826 171 The oral zone is of course of universal significance. Some items of oral imagery probably appear in most languages, and manifestations of oral libido appear in many forms familiar to Westerners: the French love for gourmandism, the German passion for beer-drinking and singing, the American addiction to cigarettes, chewing gum, and "life-savers." Many of the less familiar phenomena to be related below in describing Amhara orality, moreover, are found in most of the cultures of Africa and the Middle East. But such phenomena often appear inconspicuously alongside other culturally patterned impulses and sublimations stemming from other phases of psychosexual development. What may distinguish the Amhara—and doubtless some other cultures—is the extent to which the oral zone is an object of attention and a source of behavioral modes and expressive symbolism. The Amhara, it appears, have a preoccupation with orality.

121 155 This preoccupation is manifest in three different kinds of phenomena. There are, first of all, aspects of Amhara culture which express a strong positive attachment to the infantile experience of sucking, in pure and in numerous sublimated forms. These we shall designate as the phenomena of *oral erotism*. Second, there are the aspects of Amhara culture which express a [152] strong positive attachment to the oral zone as a center for various aggressive activities—the modes which Erikson calls "incorporation by biting," "oral retention," and "oral intrusion." These we shall collectively designate as the phenomena of *oral sadism*. Finally, there are phenomena which express a conflict about the gratification of many of these oral desires; and these we shall refer to as the phenomena of *oral ambivalence*.

155 *Oral Erotism*

853 Feeding at the breast is a prominent and beloved experience in Amhara life. The Amhara infant is suckled whenever he wishes, at the slightest show of desire. Since he is rarely separated from his mother it is easy for him to satisfy himself at any time of day or night. Popular beliefs about breast-feed-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-sucking is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no matter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly replicate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning
152 adoption.

831 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through
597 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended
853 foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbät*, or breast-
155 father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbät*. Used
152 metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the
155 oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their
[855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes.
201 The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or
[832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions.
576 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long
155 separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati-
[431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout
155 Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the
538 Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant
832 intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *çhirāq* is some-
152 times evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still an-
[116] other figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away
[189] a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

121 Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions
155 of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted
[853] earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara
121 practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new
155 baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a
862 bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

121 Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of suck-
155 ing and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian
146 children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

121 The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible
155 area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discon-
858 tinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible

281 Fats, usually of plant origin, either wild or domestic, are then used to lubricate and soften the skin. This is hard manual work, lasting sometimes several days. Most commonly preferred is the castor oil bean, called "qaçhma" or "gulqwas". The skin may now be kneaded or stamped by feet, to work the fats in and render the skin soft for the cutting and fashioning of objects, which now follows.

282 411 The shield was formerly one of the major products of the Faqi, but now is made rarely and only for ornamental use. The rhinoceros or buffalo skin is cut circular, placed over a wooden stake in the ground, the rim pegged down, to prepare the cupola shape. The skin is then depilated, dried, smeared with oils, to expand again. It is beaten to increase its resistance. Incised decorations and the pulling through of the leather handle, are done before the shield is entirely hard and dry. Metal decor is added later, by the smith, after the Faqi has delivered his product.

282 More common products, still made today, are: half-sack, "ënqalba", for carrying the baby on the mother's [854] back, with straps and a bottom tied to the mother's shoul- [415] ders, chest and waist; full sacks, "aqomada", for transporting grain to market, tied with strips (these are also used for various storage in the better Amhara huts); [283] straps out of poor skins in all kinds and sizes, "qeralla", some for tying loads onto donkeys, some to serve as more springy diagonal straps of the better "alga" bed; a fine, tanned cowskin used as blanket; "jëndi", cover

565 In the past, the traditional desire for personal independence of the Amhara, particularly the Amhara noble, led him to prefer residence in his own province or district, where he could rule from the apex of local hierarchy. There he imitated the emperor as much as his means permitted.

565 854 Children of nobles imbibed the tremendous pride of Amhara nobility from the time servants carried them about so that their noble feet would not be dirtied by walking, or else had their hands and feet washed by servants regularly. Boys, at about 7, would be given a private tutor, usually a young priest. At 10, when other boys are still in rags or at most wear tattered shorts, the young "balaw" (aristocrat) already was wearing full, white jodphurs.

565 178 In the provinces this pattern is still largely unchanged. But with the increase in central government power, feudal nobles find it advisable to spend the greater part of the year in Addis Ababa--more than the emperor himself desires. Young nobles who graduate from the provincial elementary schools, where their Indian teachers deferred to them as much as their Amhara teachers, have a considerable adjustment to make when they enter High School in Addis Ababa, where the European instructors grade them on individual merit alone.

b) The Peasant Class.

565 In the peasant class there is a wide distinction between the landowning ("rest") peasants who are feemen

562 565 which happens among middle and upper feudal nobility--
may herself become the founder ansponsor of a church.
In this case she usually appoints a male administrator
from among her kinsmen, or a local cheqa shum headman,
to supervise the sharecropper gabbar supplying her
church. She then would also exercise direct or indirect
control over the qēs gobäz, the administrating priest.

A commoner or peasant woman is much more exposed
585 to the inferior legal status of womwn. According to
traditional law, the "semanya" bond with the formula
of the oath "May the Emperor die" (e.g. Hayle Selassye
675 yemut"), is not legally valid, and her contractual
function has to be performed through a male kinsman.
Nevertheless, her legal position is by no means as
586 weak as that of the Muslim woman. The Amhara woman
may take half of her husband's movable possessions
upon divorce, i.e. thecows she brought into her marriage
and half theincreade of any pooled property. To pro-
tect her somewhat from wilful mistreatment at the hands
of her husband, a bride is given two male protective
"best men", the "mizēn- but they are kinsmen of the
bridegroom's!

Social inferiority of a commoner woman is also
associated with her manual and menial labor, as hauler
of water and hewer of wood or collector of cowdung.for
fuel, and similar servant-like chores inside and out-
854 side the hut. The baby which she carries on her back
and breast-feeds for two years renders her physically
dirty and often smelly. The commoner woman may not

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PART IV : The Life Cycle of the Individual

Like many other societies with a tradition-directed culture, the individual passing through the age-grades of life is taught well in advance what his duties and privileges are at each stage.

The age-grades, though strongly emphasized in Amhara human relationships, are not as detailed nor as sharply divided from each other as in the case of the Galla of Southern Ethiopia (the "gada" age grades).

[554] The two-year breast-feeding period is the happiest of the stages for the baby. Infancy and childhood, for both sexes, are carefree periods of experimentation, which is sharply abrogated as adolescence, a period of authoritarian obedience, approaches.

[582] Even the first marriage of an individual, taking place at the very beginning of adulthood (even earlier for girls), permits only a minimum of individual choice. Unhappy first marriages are common,

[586 587] and so is divorce. But after this, the fully adult man or woman can assume a freedom of choice not known since childhood. They may seek second mates, change residence, join a different "mähabär", etc., and the grip of extended family on the individual is somewhat

[585] relaxed by the short life-span of the "elder" grade. This in turn permits the middle-aged adult to be regarded and respected as an elder himself, who not only is permitted a maximum of own choice, but who can and does rule the younger grades.

557 "Metekēr" - (lit. my substitute), e. g. if the mother had lost a previous baby, especially of the same (male) sex.

"Seyum" - (lit. the one appointed to dignity), e.g. if the mother has ambitions for the boy. Common among nobles.

"Dästa" - (lit. joy).

Girls

"Almaz" - (lit. diamond)

"Mänän" - (lit. excellent, exquisite, magnificent). Common to nobles.

"Tsädal" - (lit. splendor, luster). From the Geez language.

Baptismal names, described earlier, are given by the confessor, sometimes based on the name of a deceased ancestor - especially among nobility - but are not usually used in later life unless or until the person marries by "qurban" ecclesiastical marriage, or becomes a monk or nun. Typical baptismal names are (for boys):

"Gäbrä-Mäsqäl" - (lit. Servant of the Cross)

"Gäbrä-Egziabhēr"- (lit. Servant of God).

D. The long, happy nursling stage.

854 Despite the many physical ailments that endanger the life of a baby in this materially undeveloped country, the nursling stage is one in which it receives more care than at any later period. [853] The long, 2-year breastfeeding, for both boys and girls, gives them some resistance to the effects of malnutrition, vitamin shortage, diarrhea, and infections of all kinds from which older children suffer. The nursling is never out of touch with the body of the mother, or other woman or older sister. Most of the time the baby

854 is carried about on its mother's back, riding spread-legged in a half-sack. Other women and older sisters are about, eager to cuddle and handle the baby ("dällälä") to console, comfort, caress). In doing this they bend down to the baby, or pick it up, but rarely grasp it to kiss it. Fathers rarely fondle the baby until it is weaned. They often have to take a special count when asked how many teeth the baby has.

The term for nursling, "gelgäl", may be extended to animal nuralings as a compliment, but not vice versa, for this would be an insult. When the baby can sit or stand, mothers hold it by the hands and coo babytalk to it, e.g. "tatu segra" (lit. - footsie), encouraging it to take first steps, or warning it not to touch a
853 dangerous thing, such as fire, by designating it as "kaka". The baby learns to walk during the second year, long before it is weaned. Thus a baby with a nearly full set of teeth can be seen walking up to its mother, groping for the breast inside the dress or toga, pulling it out, and beginning to take nourishment while squeezing a side of the breast with the full hand. The mother will rarely push it away, until it has had its fill and lingers dreamily, and she has other work to do. In this case the mother may push the baby away gently, without sign of annoyance. Inside the hut, women are not bashful about their breasts being partly ex-
[854] posed during feeding, but in sight of a stranger they may cover the process of the baby's taking nourishment for fear of evil-eye spirits to which every eater is vulnerable and which might dry up the milk (out of envy and meanness).

803 Toilet training begins gradually after weaning, i.e. after the age of two, when the mother has resumed full wifely duties and

803 does not wish to be dirtied all the time. Misbehaving, relapsing infants are punished by pinching.

2. The Age of Experimentation: Infancy and Childhood.

855 The years after weaning, until about the age of seven can be described as years in which the attitude of Amhara parents and society toward the small children is "laisses-faire". This is partly due to the attitude that views childhood as a state of imperfection, letting the children grow with little supervision until they are old enough to perform economic tasks, but later training them in an authoritarian fashion, to make them grow into adults as quickly as possible, without an intervebing playful adolescence.

A. The Stage of Infancy.

854 Once the mother has resumed wifely duties, infants are often cared for by their older sisters, who attend to their food, carry them, fondle them, but leave them considerable freedom to roam around the outside of the huts and nearby brooks, hills, fields, etc. They are permitted to get as dirty as they like, and are dressed in a single shift of threadbare rags which conceal nothing. They are not scolded for experimentation with objects, be they animate, inanimate, or their own bodies; unless they get in the way of adults and annoy them, whereupon they are simply pushed away. They are rarely punished, for they are regarded as not having attained the "age of reason", as "not yet trainable", as "urchins" ("kutara"), lighthearted infants.

Parents do fondle them, but not as regularly as before. It

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

854 is a special occasion when father lets the infant ride on his shoulders ("ashkokke alä", lit. rode like a marmoset monkey) while going to visit another hamlet. Men do not carry children on their [165] backs, women's fashion. But parents, particularly fathers, do not take infants too seriously for an additional reason, that of infant mortality which is still high at this stage.

857 Socialization and enculturation begin through the peer-group of playmates, with whom infants have the most frequent, lengthy, and intensive contacts. They tease each other and scold each other into what they, in their playful, experimenting fashion, regard as "proper" behavior; and penalize, haze and discipline each other in the same way. From the adults they take both ideas and hand-me-down objects that have been used, worn-out and discarded, for their play activities, organize them experimentally into child-culture version of their own; for adults rarely produce a toy for children nor give them any new, unused object.

854 There is a cooperative side to this apparently random play
857 activity, leading to the beginning of useful economic activities.
861 Older children teach the younger ones, e.g., to make little whisk-brooms ("wof ger", lit. bird's foot) out of reeds, for which they are rewarded by their mothers with a thick, cake-like bread(similar to "dabye" of monks), which carries the same name, "wof ger". On certain church holidays, particularly "Puhe", younger children accompany older ones on their gift-begging tours.

857 Their powers of observation, active, free and relatively un-
867 structured prior to later discipline, imitate, in their play activities, the social relations, including the family and sexual-social relationships of their elders. When about five years old,

754 The actual name, "buda", is considered taboo, for it is dangerous
776 and might attract him, when uttered aloud. Since this spirit is
[709] always male, his name is paraphrased as "the man's eye" ("yäsäw ayn"), "shadow eye" (aynä ṭela); and a victim is paraphrased "the man's victim" ("yäsäw gällaḥ").

754 Even the term "smith" is used, sometimes indirectly, for further security. Thus, to accuse someone of sorcery, a security-minded Amhara says pointedly, in his presence: "As for me, I am not the son of a smith".

754 The first attitude toward strangers is therefore one of caution,
609 lest he be a carrier of "buda". The suspicion is confirmed if the stranger has intelligent eyes, darting eyes, shining eyes, or if he stares curiously without saying much. It is confirmed if he seems skilled manually, for then he may be a "ṭabib" (lit. trained person, technologically wise), hiding the fact that he was born into the ironsmith caste. It is less disturbing if he openly reveals himself as an ironsmith, for then he lives segregated in a hamlet of his own ethnic group, and when contact must be established for trade (purchase of iron tools and pottery), certain "precautions" against being struck by the evil eye can be taken; extra-vulnerable persons such as pregnant women can be kept from contact; and all transactions will be carried on in full daylight.

754 The "buda" is regarded as preferring to strike and feast on
776 women, especially beautiful ones, and to feed, cannibal-style, on
[609] fat, beautiful children. The stranger therefore should never praise the health or beauty of children, or of women, out loud. Mothers
[854] hide their children at the approach of a stranger. Nice new garments
[164] on a child also attract the buda, and this is one reason why children under 5, when infant mortality is highest, are given only rags to wear, and are permitted to be dirty most of the time.

854 until weaning, at the
[853] age of two, the child is never removed from contact with the body of the mother or other female relative caring for him. After
857 weaning, childhood is an age of roaming over the countryside during the long dry season and of performing such useful tasks as protecting the harvest by shooting pebbles from slingshots at birds and baboons.

855 The pattern of punishment is dominated by spontaneity, during childhood as well as adolescence. A suddently enraged parent (father or male elder) may hurl a firebrand at a child, or cuff him roughly about the head and shoulders for as long as the rage lasts. Sometimes real injury results, but there is no planned, coldly calculated punishment, and the anger is usually quickly forgotten. The youngster is never left in doubt when he has transgressed. Retribution comes within a split second. Parents do not hesitate to exercise their authority and to impose their wills, when angered. The youngster soon has a clear conception of what kind of behavior it would be wise to avoid. Thus the youngster is presented, gradually, with a set of values which early become rooted in his personality, and help him to remain, later in life, in tune with his social group and culture pattern.

554 Individuals who chafe at the status quo, notably women and/or
562 individuals of either sex who have a talent and urge for individual enterprise, often find their way into the "zar" cult. Cultural participation of the female is so restricted during her life cycle, that many emotional outlets are denied her. Monotonous daily routines of manual labor; two years of breastfeeding after every birth; denial of active participation in the church; derogatory views of female intelligence on the part of the males; etc., limit the Amhara women

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*665 512 462 the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they [854] attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the [858] breast whenever it cries.

*565 512 233 857 [262] The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin [291] covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

*565 512 When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, sup- [264] per is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

[515] [182] [513] [352] After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

*565 512 527 This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

*565 512 527 462 [524] The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

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but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, 186
and social position.

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance 562
rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly
held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the [565]*
wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must
still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course
for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the [539]
proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is
referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar
and trivial talk.

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time
is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of
trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells [539]
us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including
those connected with the saintly figures of Eçhē Yohānnes and Takla
Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues
and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by [841]
womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden.

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance 858
and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and [864]
cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably.
After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged
copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He
comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first
"age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges
of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders.

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each
of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. 882
The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing
after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches 885
forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This
is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is
not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age
of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and
wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. 888
Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults,
pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon [867]
learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson
was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become
when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes 155
to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the 853
negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for 853
a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. 862
Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If 155
another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-suck- 853
ing is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may 854
be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara 155
are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no mat- [856]
ter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting [125] the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is [753] he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on [176] the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional 155
atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and 855
punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his 853
earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional 853
security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary 152
symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." 155
The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly repli- 831
cate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 Amhara society as marked by a moderately high degree of independence.
181 This is to say that Amhara society gives relatively wide rein to individual impulse in action. It is not to say that Amhara culture places a high value on the moral worth of the individual personality. That is a separate question, which we shall now proceed to explore.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS CONFORMITY AND ANONYMITY

*121 The extent to which individual personality is valued in a society is reflected
181 primarily in two aspects of its culture. One of these comprises its processes
156 of education, in the broadest sense of the term; the other, its forms of art. The character of these aspects of culture reveal, respectively, the degree of concern for the *development* of an individualized self and the degree of concern for the *expression* of an individualized self.

Education and Socialization

*121 Obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in bringing up children
155 among the Amhara. After a prolonged and indulged infancy, the Amhara
861 child from about three years on is subjected to a regime of discipline and
867 repression. He is taught to fulfill without question any request made by any
[854] older person. He is conditioned to stand quietly whenever guests are present and to stand facing the wall while his parents or guests eat their dinner. If addressed by elders, especially those outside his immediate family, he is expected to reply in a barely audible whisper—a norm that is sometimes adhered to with such pathetic faithfulness that it has become the object of gentle satire in a short story by the young Ethiopian writer, Tadesse Liban.[26] Children who are noisy and disrespectful are referred to contemptuously by the term *bälagē*, meaning "rude."

*121 The desires and interests of an Amhara child are not taken into account
155 by those who raise him. He is provided with a bare minimum of clothes,
855 and little effort is expended in procuring him playthings,[27] although in some
524 families little dolls made of rags (*ashängulit*) are produced. Children have
*121 a rich play-life with their peers, but this consists mostly in imitating various
155 adult activities. Organized games occur very rarely, the chief one—*gannä*—
857 being played as a rule but once a year, on Christmas Day.[28] The traditional songs and dances are learned from other children while tending the herds, but children are not encouraged to perform them in front of adults. The
*121 opinions of children are never expressed, let alone consulted. Indeed, in some
155 commoners' families the children are treated little better than the farm ani-
855 mals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing
858 her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

803 does not wish to be dirtied all the time. Misbehaving, relapsing infants are punished by pinching.

2. The Age of Experimentation: Infancy and Childhood.

855 The years after weaning, until about the age of seven can be described as years in which the attitude of Amhara parents and society toward the small children is "laissez-faire". This is partly due to the attitude that views childhood as a state of imperfection, letting the children grow with little supervision until they are old enough to perform economic tasks, but later training them in an authoritarian fashion, to make them grow into adults as quickly as possible, without an intervebing playful adolescence.

A. The Stage of Infancy.

854 Once the mother has resumed wifely duties, infants are often cared for by their older sisters, who attend to their food, carry them, fondle them, but leave them considerable freedom to roam around the outside of the huts and nearby brooks, hills, fields, etc. They are permitted to get as dirty as they like, and are dressed in a single shift of threadbare rags which conceal nothing. They are not scolded for experimentation with objects, be they animate, inanimate, or their own bodies; unless they get in the way of adults and annoy them, whereupon they are simply pushed away. They are rarely punished, for they are regarded as not having attained the "age of reason", as "not yet trainable", as "urchins" ("kutara"), lighthearted infants.

Parents do fondle them, but not as regularly as before. It

857 boys and girls - for the sexes are not yet separated up to that
867 time - play "house" with considerable sophistication. For example, when they play "marriage", the "father" of the "bride" goes to the "elders" to inquire about the character of the "groom", after the groom's father has initiated the negotiations on the groom's request. They build a "marriage hut", and play at heavy drinking of barley-beer and honey-mead. The "bride" demands a gift from her new "husband", and enters into his "residence". After they have been in there a while, the two best-men, the "mizē", who had been duly sworn to protect her even against her husband, go off to the bride's parents to announce loudly and joyfully that the girl had proven a virgin! Whereupon the "mizē" are feted.

B. The Stage of Childhood, "Reason" Incipient Discipline.

857
868
855 There is no special rite of passage that marks entry into the next stage, at about 5 for girls, about 7 for boys. But there is recognition, at this point, that the girls mature faster and are economically useful at a younger age than boys. Henceforth, girls
[291] play with girls, follow their mothers in their duties, (watch babies, fetch wood) and wear a more complete shift that covers them better; while boys play in boys' groups, follow their fathers, have regular duties assigned them such as taking cattle to and from pasture, and guarding the harvest against birds and baboons. Girl-children are addressed and referred to as "leja-gārād" (servant maid) for their duties are even more regular than those of
[858] the boys. Both sexes can now be asked in court to choose sides when their parents are being divorced and the guardianship is in question. For they have entered the "age of reason".

855 Neglect of duty is therefore punished, and a father may fly into a sudden rage, beat the child without waiting for an excuse, even hurl a firebrand at the offending boy, so that considerable injuries sometimes occur. Mothers discipline the girls in similar temperamental fashion. But the rage, in either case, is quickly forgotten. There is no pattern of cold discipline, no "woodshed" punishment, rather hot-tempered, quick retribution.

857 Play activity and imitation of adults continues, but it takes on more seasonal and constructive characteristics. This is partly due to the seasonal pattern of the economic activities of boys age 7 to 11 and girls 5 to 14. Formal education in church school rarely begins before 11 in the rural areas, whereupon their play activities become more "extra-curricular".

[526] The seasonal games include the ball game after the harvest is completed, known as "gencheb" or "kwas", and seasonal construction and repair activities. On the church feast of Mikael, little boys have their own outdoor party, eating barley roasted on the stalk, and watching the flirtatious play of adolescent boys and girls.

291 Boys 7 to 11 still wear the tattered, knee length cotton shift, as their basic garment in rural areas, but beg a new one from relatives once a year, for the holy day of "Masqal", or "Timqat". But they are increasingly self-conscious about nudity, and if the tattered shift reveals the pubic area, other boys will hase and playfully beat the offender, saying:

[539] "My father told me not to let a snake warm itself in the sun".

865 In summary, parental discipline in this age group is specific,
867 work-oriented and intermittent; while experimentation with, and

855 socialization by the peer group continues more regularly and fre-
867 quently and on a broader range of activities.

C. Training through the Peer-group: Patterns of Hazing.

867 Parental training during childhood is minimal, and much of enculturation is left to the peer-group which proceeds to function in little-structured fashion, largely through hazing.

Differential behavior of the sexes is largely taught this way. Little boys haze any boy who cries, or seems soft, "geltan", by darkly hinting that he "lacks something" ("täqämättälä"); and, if he is shy in talking and defending himself with his sharp tongue, "qämtalla", effeminate. To prove their physical bravery, boys burn scars ("tässasa") in their own forearms, saying that this will make them "strong", and believing that this will immunise them from showing pain or softness in public. An aggressive, clever
[562] tongue, capable of a wide repertoire of insults that will shatter the adversary's composure, and also include appropriate milder and semi-strong insults, is regarded as male behavior, as "strong" or stronger than brawn. This makes a "known man" ("rätäwäqa säw"). The proverb says:

[539]

> "The son of man, by what is he respected?
> by his seat (position)?
> Not by his seat -
> by his lip. (i.e. cleverness in argument)".

Boys are hazed by other boys for picking on little girls. Hazing is sometimes physical, sometimes by mockery, often both. If physical, it consists of shoving, wrestling, in spontaneous manner, almost never with cold formality. A boy who wants to grow up too fast beyond his peers, i.e. by showing too much preference for the company of elders, is criticized with the proverb:

874 studies to places in Begemdir province (Gondar), for "genye" to Gojjam province. He stays there until he receives his certificate, to work as a "dabtara" scribe; if a persistent student he may try to obtain ordination into the priesthood, or, if lackadasical, make it a life-long occupation to go from school to school, begging his way, learning how to pursuade village women to give him food for a "blessing", and how to fend off dogs with a stout staff. Sometimes, when free food is scarce, he works at semi-skilled occupations such as basket-weaving and weaving sun-umbrellas, selling them at the market. Parents, fearing that this might be the outcome of his "education", discourage boys from leaving home and field.

872 874 The 3-year attendance at the local church school is regarded as highly desirable by both parents and the church, and most boys - but no girls - attend it. When the boy enrolled there has learned to read portions of liturgy or the Bible in the Geez language, chanting psalms and gospels out loud, the father rewards the priest-teacher by sending him a sheep or a goat, sometimes even an aged cow or old ox. The priests often charge their older students with teaching the younger ones, in exchange for special privileges.

855 Boys misbehaving, such as making errors or not fully participating in the chanting in unison, or asking questions considered impious, are punished immediately by twisting of the ear or slaps on the head.

The methods of teaching are frequent repetition of lessons, learning by rote, chanting of memorized lessons. Translation into Amharic is rarely taught at this level, and writing almost never (until very recently in some locations under central government influence). The priest-teacher usually exerts greater efforts toward

000 status.

181 776 The Amhara concern with spirits seems motivated not by the negative emotion of fear, but toward an understanding of the universe; toward healing; toward patterns of individual free enterprise under the guidance of protective spirits (regarded by the "zar" doctors and "zar" societies somewhat as patron saints).

181 Inventive intelligence, constrained in Amhara culture from developing material objects, applies itself to nonmaterial culture goals: to etiquette and other fine points of human relations; to speaking well in court; witticisms and proverbs; to entertaining with homiletic and riddles ranging from the ribald to the philosophic; to the development of special argots for the professions [871] of minstrelsy, medicine and commerce. Education is regarded by they Amhara as a highly desirable means to (non-material) achievement. The desire to be regarded as intelligent is even greater than the profit motive, in Amhara culture; so that there is greater fear of being mocked at than being bested in a trade exchange. Producers would rather undersupply a market than risk having to carry any goods back home. The worst mockery and insult is to be regarded as intellectually inferior.

855 C. Some Psychological Consideration; arising from the Life Cycle.

Infancy and childhood, until adolescence, are years of free experimentation for the young Amhara, years with a minimum of supervision by adults, and maximum exposure to training by the peer-group and slightly older youngsters. The child does not live in a world of giants, but learns to handle his (not very complex) universe 000 through the give-and-take of his age-mates. Until weaning, at the

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[853] age of two, the child is never removed from contact with the body of the mother or other female relative caring for him. After
857 weaning, childhood is an age of roaming over the countryside during the long dry season and of performing such useful tasks as protecting the harvest by shooting pebbles from slingshots at birds and baboons.

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Egyptian mosques; youth dormitories and community houses in certain tribes in India; the academic and athletic youth organizations of ancient Athens and Sparta; not to mention the numerous teen-age associations of modern Western society.[3]

Here again, the adolescent Amhara is not involved in any such social forms. The advent of puberty is associated with the growing up and out of childhood groups, the gangs of shepherds who spend their days together in work and play. The girl of eleven or twelve is expected to spend all her time at home, under careful supervision. The boy of thirteen or fourteen has abandoned the shepherd's life for farming, in the company of older relatives, and soon becomes increasingly preoccupied with his private economic and erotic interests. His family elders are likely to warn him not to make friends with other youths outside the family.[4] For a number of adolescent boys to get together outside of festive occasions is, to the traditional Amhara mind, a sign that something wrong is afoot.

The absence of adolescent rites and age groups reflects the individualistic character of Amhara social organization, a subject to which we shall turn in chapter vii. Nevertheless, Amhara society catches young people in its grasp and guides them to adulthood just as firmly and surely as does a society which has many collective arrangements for its adolescents. It does this by means of a well-ordered program for growing up. The road from childhood to adulthood is one series of informal, unproblematic stages through which the growing person adjusts to progressively increased responsibilities and progressively detailed norms. After infancy, there is normally no break in continuity in the whole process.

Toward Adult Work Roles

Following a long and indulged infancy, the Amhara child is early taught the rudiments of work responsibility. At the age of three or four, children are given simple chores, such as shooing chickens from grain drying in the sun or collecting bits of firewood. Somewhat older children are expected to protect the crops against birds, farm animals, and baboons. The Amhara becomes apprenticed in the main vocation of his childhood—tending the herds—almost as soon as he can run about, and six-year-old shepherds play a crucial part in the Amhara economy.

Boys retain the responsibility for tending the herds at least until the age of twelve, but by then they have already been initiated into a number of adult work activities. At about eight or nine years the Amhara boy begins to do his share of the harvesting, sickling the wheat, barley, *tēff*, or beans and loading the crops in piles he will help transport to the threshing place. He becomes adept at directing the cattle round and round the threshing floor and at winnowing the grain from the chaff. At times he helps with the weeding.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shir*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

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ter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a [125] very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is [753] he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on [776] the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional 155
atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and 855
punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his 853
earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional 853
security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary 152
symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." 155
The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly repli- 831
cate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

853 155 covers the Amhara home.* The latter is related to customs concerning 152 adoption.

881 The adoption of children among traditional Amhara takes place through 597 a ritual in which the child sucks the honey-dipped thumb of his intended 853 foster parent. The latter thereby becomes the child's *ṭuṭ abbät*, or breast- 155 father. In some cases the child actually sucks the nipples of the *ṭuṭ abbät*. Used 152 metaphorically, the image of sucking someone's breast is employed to indicate becoming close to, or ingratiating oneself with, a superior; breast-feeding is so explicitly connected with emotional security that people are inclined to allude to it when finding a new source of security.

157 The Amhara's attachment to passive, pleasurable activities centering on the 155 oral zone appears in a wide variety of forms. Manipulation of the lips is one of these. Amhara often stand about fingering their lips or rubbing them against some object, much as people in another culture might scratch their [855] heads or stroke their chins. Children may be humored by having their lips played with by a relative. The frequent covering and uncovering of the mouth with a part of the toga, that is so characteristic of the Amhara, may be a sublimated form of this.

155 The lips are used in Amhara culture for a variety of expressive purposes. 201 The Amhara identify persons and places, not by pointing with the finger or [832] hand, but by distending the lips in a certain direction. Kissing, while seldom used for romantic purposes, serves a number of other expressive functions. 576 Relatives or friends of either sex kiss each other on both cheeks after a long 155 separation, the older or superior in status kissing first. Children and servants greet their superiors by kissing their feet, which they also do to show grati- [431] tude for some favor. One kisses one's own hands before extending them to receive a gift. Kissing one's fingers is done to signify an oath or a special appreciation of something, the meaning being "I swear by it."

782 Religious sentiment is typically expressed through kissing. The devout 155 Amhara kisses his fingers and touches the table to show thanksgiving after a meal. The church is greeted by kissing a part of the building, and going to church is referred to as "kissing the church." Following devotional services the priest's cross is kissed by all present, and often the Holy Book is kissed as well. When the ark is brought outside on holidays, reverence is shown by falling to the ground and kissing the earth.

155 While, moreover, romantic kissing is an uncommon activity among the 538 Amhara, Amharic literature at times represents this activity with poignant 832 intensity. Thus, in an unwritten Amharic couplet one hears:

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[184] * The Gurage, by contrast, place a straight stick atop their homes. So do the Amhara of Gojjam Province.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 Amhara society as marked by a moderately high degree of independence.
181 This is to say that Amhara society gives relatively wide rein to individual impulse in action. It is not to say that Amhara culture places a high value on the moral worth of the individual personality. That is a separate question, which we shall now proceed to explore.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS CONFORMITY AND ANONYMITY

*121 The extent to which individual personality is valued in a society is reflected
181 primarily in two aspects of its culture. One of these comprises its processes
156 of education, in the broadest sense of the term; the other, its forms of art. The character of these aspects of culture reveal, respectively, the degree of concern for the *development* of an individualized self and the degree of concern for the *expression* of an individualized self.

Education and Socialization

*121 Obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in bringing up children
155 among the Amhara. After a prolonged and indulged infancy, the Amhara
861 child from about three years on is subjected to a regime of discipline and
867 repression. He is taught to fulfill without question any request made by any
[854] older person. He is conditioned to stand quietly whenever guests are present and to stand facing the wall while his parents or guests eat their dinner. If addressed by elders, especially those outside his immediate family, he is expected to reply in a barely audible whisper—a norm that is sometimes adhered to with such pathetic faithfulness that it has become the object of gentle satire in a short story by the young Ethiopian writer, Tadesse Liban.[26] Children who are noisy and disrespectful are referred to contemptuously by the term *bālagē*, meaning "rude."

*121 The desires and interests of an Amhara child are not taken into account
155 by those who raise him. He is provided with a bare minimum of clothes,
855 and little effort is expended in procuring him playthings,[27] although in some
524 families little dolls made of rags (*ashāngulit*) are produced. Children have
*121 a rich play-life with their peers, but this consists mostly in imitating various
155 adult activities. Organized games occur very rarely, the chief one—*gannā*—
857 being played as a rule but once a year, on Christmas Day.[28] The traditional songs and dances are learned from other children while tending the herds, but children are not encouraged to perform them in front of adults. The
*121 opinions of children are never expressed, let alone consulted. Indeed, in some
155 commoners' families the children are treated little better than the farm ani-
855 mals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing
858 her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

*753 39
*769 is considered a potential, but not immediate danger
752 following excision. If an ankar korac ("tonsil cut-
*[278] ter") is also a kusil herbalist, he may smear a pro-
phylactic unguent over the face of the excision, but
*(192] prophylaxis is not generally given. Even when kusil
does occur (the syndrome known as yienkar mokusil),
it is expected to regress either without any treat-
[865] ment, or by benefit of a commonly known herbal infu-
sion. A young child is considered too small and
frail to endure this operation and the subsequent
period of increased vulnerability to gerifta and kusil.
*[278] In such cases, the child is given a palliative to drink;
in addition, a portion of the ingredients used in the
drink is prepared as an unguent, and rubbed onto the
affected area, against that time when the child will
be old enough to withstand the operation.
*[192] The dental wogeyša is known as a "yiters medhaniyt
awlakiy". As with other wogeyša-treated ailments, tooth-
ache can be traced to multiple causes, whose identifica-
tion is only marginally important to the practitioner.
Toothache is caused either by sun-borne gerifta or by
an intrusive worm whose presence is made apparent by
[413] the caries it bores out. The ultimate and most success-
[177] ful therapy of the yiters medhaniyt awlakiy is extrac-
*[278] tion, with the use of European dental pliers. Because
of the pain associated with this operation, laymen often

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

THE PHENOMENA OF AMHARA ORALITY

155 Shortly after an Amhara child is born some butter is placed in his mouth. This
826 is done in the belief that it will keep his voice from becoming harsh. From
[856] that moment on, the mouth never ceases to be an organ of extraordinary
[192] importance in his life. Its cultural importance is reflected in the attention given to it in the Amharic vocabulary: Baeteman's *Dictionnaire Amarigna-Français* lists some sixty idioms built with the Amharic word for mouth, *af*, more than are listed for any other words in the language except "eye,"
[539] "heart," and "earth."[4] The organ is publicly celebrated in such proverbs as: "Cleverness of mouth, to the master; cleverness of hand, to the slave."

155 The oral zone is of course of universal significance. Some items of oral
826 imagery probably appear in most languages, and manifestations of oral libido
171 appear in many forms familiar to Westerners: the French love for gourmandism, the German passion for beer-drinking and singing, the American addiction to cigarettes, chewing gum, and "life-savers." Many of the less familiar phenomena to be related below in describing Amhara orality, moreover, are found in most of the cultures of Africa and the Middle East. But such phenomena often appear inconspicuously alongside other culturally patterned impulses and sublimations stemming from other phases of psychosexual development. What may distinguish the Amhara—and doubtless some other cultures—is the extent to which the oral zone is an object of attention and a source of behavioral modes and expressive symbolism. The Amhara, it appears, have a preoccupation with orality.

121 This preoccupation is manifest in three different kinds of phenomena.
155 There are, first of all, aspects of Amhara culture which express a strong positive attachment to the infantile experience of sucking, in pure and in numerous sublimated forms. These we shall designate as the phenomena of *oral erotism*. Second, there are the aspects of Amhara culture which express a
[152] strong positive attachment to the oral zone as a center for various aggressive activities—the modes which Erikson calls "incorporation by biting," "oral retention," and "oral intrusion." These we shall collectively designate as the phenomena of *oral sadism*. Finally, there are phenomena which express a conflict about the gratification of many of these oral desires; and these we shall refer to as the phenomena of *oral ambivalence*.

155 *Oral Erotism*

853 Feeding at the breast is a prominent and beloved experience in Amhara life. The Amhara infant is suckled whenever he wishes, at the slightest show of desire. Since he is rarely separated from his mother it is easy for him to satisfy himself at any time of day or night. Popular beliefs about breast-feed-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes 155
to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the 853
negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for 853
a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. 862
Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If 155
another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-suck- 853
ing is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may 854
be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara 155
are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no mat- [856]
ter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting [125] the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is [753]
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atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and 855
punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his 853
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security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary 152
symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." 155
The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly repli- 831
cate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

*278 *761 304 chases more exotic ingredients from an herbalist (in this transaction, acting as medhaniyt korac) who is known to treat the relevant ailment. Medicaments are mixed with the tokwariy's ink for all instances of therapeutic tat-
*755 *757 304 tooing. The decision to include medicaments in prophylactic tattooing reflects the tokwariy's alternative strategies. In the first of these, the tattooing aims to drive away the pathogenic agent, by a combination of de-
* [278] signs. These designs are associated with the pathogen in "conventional" or pragmatic terms only; the medicaments used in tattooing are derived from herbalist therapies in which the medicament assisted in expelling the pathogen from the sickman. The second strategy is directed against purposive agents, those responsible for yisow ayn and yibuda basiyta (discussed in chapter one). Here no medicaments are used, and the designs aim to distract the agent's attention and his disease-causing eye from vulnerable areas of the potential victim's body, particu-
304 larly away from his mouth. Children under ten are
302 rarely tattooed, but are protected from these agents by
751 bizarre haircuts (for example, three asymmetrically ar-
• 856 ranged patches of hair on an otherwise shaven skull, or a single patch on the brow), likewise intended to draw attention to less vulnerable body areas.

304 A variety of motifs are utilized by the tokwariy, necklaces of "beads", geometric decorations, crosses, and

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

APPENDIX B

HERBALIST THERAPY FOR YIBUDA BAŠIYTA (BUDA POSSESSION)

754 [825] The buda is a human, male or female, who shares a kinship of sorts with the hyena. When at night he hears their calls, he is irresistably attracted to run about with them. Like the hyena, he strongly desires to eat of human flesh and blood, but his cravings are not malevolent, and he often regrets this compulsion. The buda trait is most often passed down within families; in Begemder Province, it is limited to Falasha families.[52] [856] The buda trait is present at birth, but like an individual's other capacities, reaches full potency at its bearer's physical maturity.

In his nocturnal guise, the buda bears his human [302] face upon a hyena's body. The first time an individual runs with the hyenas, he (or she) is obliged to cut his hair short, in the fashion of Falasha women; the subsequent transition from wer-hyena form to human appearance is accomplished on the following morning with the aid of a secret medicine. The buda is, however, most dangerous, when in his prosaic human form, he produces the buda syn-

[52] Elsewhere in Ethiopia, buda accusations are directed against local endogamous iron working peoples.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Table 15: (APPENDIX III)

Functional Calendar of Seasons and Human Activities among the Highland-Plateau Amhara

Month: Abyssinian Calendar (Julian) in Amharic	Month: Equivalent in Western (Gregorian) Calendar	Climatic Seasons on Abyssinian High-Plateau	Annual Cycle of Amhara Ecological Activities (Economics, Agriculture, etc.)	Annual Cycle of Religious Seasons and Activities among Coptic-Abyssinian Amhara.	Cycle of Amhara Social Events	Syncretism	New, Ethiopian Civic Events on National Calendar
Mäskäräm 1	Sept. 11	receding flood after rainy season; yellow "mäsqäl" daisy carpets land; spring ("teddaye").	place beehive basket-work in trees (swarming season); pasture is in flower; plowing new or fallow field for later cultivation, while soil is still fairly soft ("gäi").	17th Mäskäräm: Feast of the (true) Cross ("yäMäsqäl Mäl")- public rejoicing around bonfire (dämmira). Minor: 1st Mäskäräm is St. John's Day. 11th: "Arafa" - (Reunion of Adam and Eve)	Kin visiting when paths passable; children bring New Year flower bouquets ("soqutatash") on and after 1st (St. John's Day); and receive promise of new clothes for Mäsqäl.		"Mäsqäl" is now also a national holiday: Emperor appears at bonfire (Sept. 27th).
to	to						
Mäskäräm 30	Oct. 10						
Teqemt 1	Oct. 11	sunny growing & ripening season (amänä sega).	Remove honey from hive. Harvest first barley ("gebs"), thresh and winnow it for roasting or beer-making ("tälla"); sell honey to make mead ("täj"); children guard harvest against birds and baboons.	12th Teqemt: St. Michael's Feast "Mikael"; services followed by picnics in countryside. Local: 5th: pilgrimage to "tebel" holy wells and waterfalls of Zäbre Mänfäs Qeddus (Abe).	outdoor games of children: boys make bullroarers ("gurmeseosh") to frighten birds away, shoot pebbles at baboons from slingshots. Girls dance rounds and greet storks arriving "from Jarusalem".		Annual commemoration of Coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie, Nov 2nd. (Teqemt 23rd).
to	to						
Teqemt 30	Nov. 9						

224
825 lope, reddish, more shy.

Ethiopian klipspringer - "sässo", a little mountain antelope resembling the European chamois, with soft, smooth skin. The Ambara is amused by the curious habit of this sociable animal of mixing with herds of tame goats and grazing in their midst, when goats are taken to upper hillsides for pasturage in the rainy season.

[233]

Waterbuck - "defassa", large antelope resembling European red deer in build. Brown color; hers of 5 to 10 usually contain only one old bull. Common near Lake Tana.

Reedbuck - "behor", golden-colored antelope, in bush near water. They like to inhabit a specific small territory, in herds of 5 to 10.

Ethiopian ibex - "walya", very wild, red-speckled, on the dega steep mountains of Semyen subprovince. Not common elsewhere.

825 Francolins - "qoq" is the generic name for this family of common wild fowl of the woyna dega; resemble the partridge. Boys are adept at hunting them with slingshot and pebble and run after them until both are exhausted.

223

[411
● 867]

Guinea fowl - "zegra" or "jegra", black, lean, fast runner, found near water.

Partridge - "sèrän", common on woyna dega. Wild

243 as a cereal grain in Abyssinia since ancient times. It is known in the USA as "teff lovegrass" and is sometimes grown for hay or pasture. In Abyssinia it is the most important cereal.

Tyēff seeding takes place, by broadcasting, at the beginning of the rainy season in June; it is ready for harvest in October-November. Sheep are driven over after the seeding to cover the seeds and thus insure maximum germination. Harvesting is done by hand cutting. The grain is made into sheaves about 6 inches thick. Sickles [412] made by the Falasha ironsmiths are simple affairs, a quarter-circle of toothed iron blade fitted into a wooden handle. Tyēff flour is made by the housewives, who grind it on a stone mill (wofcho) by hand on the mano-matate principle.

There are tow major kinds of sorghums (durra) grown as staple cereals, "mashella" and "zengada"; a third, "dagussā" is used more for making beer and in poor times. Many of these are sown when the early light rains come in March-April. The stalks of mashella are used to build simple temporary huts; other stalks become fodder. As [857] soon as the heavy rains are over, boys with slingshots and whips are stationed in the fields and on lookout posts atop the "umbrella tree" to fight off the birds who are very fond of sorghum, especially the "mashella".

Mashella (Andropogon sorghum) is of yellowish-white color, and the most desired of this family. The seed is much bigger than tyēff. It is often ground and mixed with it for injāra-baking. Known in other parts of Africa as

285 415 Other fiberwork and basketry include: a large basket of withes, "qerchat", used to measure 25 kilos of pinhead-grained tyeff; a table made of split bamboo ("qerqaha"), or of a variety of reeds ("säbäz", "geramta", "akärma"); baskets to carry dry food)"akofada") made by shepherding boys and girls; baskets to carry soggy stew, covered by morocco-type tanned leather by the faqi specialists, with straps holding the lid tight ("agälgel"); little grain baskets ("qulbit"); and the even smaller dowry basket ("muday") in which the bride carries her personal spinning equipment and little materials for adornment and ornament, often itself ornamented with dyed reeds; plaited straw baskets, very tightly woved and used as milking pots("qwacha")

285 [531] There is also a purely ornamental fiber plate, entirely flat, with interwoven ornamentally dyed reeds, mostly in ring patterns and star designs. These are hung on the inner wall of the tuqul, probably in imitation of the interior decoration of the feudal "great man" 's house.

285 411 ●857 Young boys learn to make a slingshot ("wänchäf") of a strong fiber ("nacha"). When completed, it has a loop on one end to hook over a finger. A pebble is placed in the protruding and flat center; then the slingshot is swung several times around the head and the loose end [244] released at just the right speed and direction. It can stun a baboon and thus chase the band threatening the crops, or frighten off birds.

439 412 Some imported tools and utensils, have reached the Amhara, but remained trade good. One was the straight razor, "arab melach", bought from Arabs as the name indicated,

796 selling plowpoints for the plowing that will soon begin when the light rains have softened the ground.

[263] On this Thursday, the pious begin a 3-day fast, taking only dry peas and water after the noon hour. Good Friday, called "seqlät", is on the 15th of Miyazya. Chil-
796 857 dren, too young to fast, are given special privileges of impertinence that day. (For are not all rules suspended now that the Savior himself is dying?). From sunrise on, boys and girls knock at doors of huts and houses, chanting:

[539] "Musha-musho, (nonsense rhyme, meaning lamentation, funeral chant)
we come for your crucifixion (Oh Christ);
Fill (our hands) with flour (ye women),
we are many as fleas".
Musho-musha,
May He (God) give ye fat cattle,
children in your womb;
give us gifts!"

They are given freshly-baked bread being prepared for the Easter feast, but they keep on demanding, making the most of this rare freedom, insulting and mocking the stingy hosts. They may carry an effigy corpse of the latter, as if to his funeral, weeping and lamenting his "lekso" (funeral eulogy). Some boys dress as priests, the girls imitating hysterical women relatives, until they bury him with full ceremonials on the market place, to the great amusement of the adult audience.

796 Adults on this Friday rise early for morning wor-

796 the youngest are lifted to see the parade. Boys and
[857] girls age 7 to 15 go from hut to hut starting inthe early morning, chanting "Buhe, Buhe", "hoyya, hoyyo, ho", and verses:

[539] "All shout 'Buhe!, children all!
Give us what (you have) prepared; Do not change (your mind)! "

"When the rooster has crowed, night is gone;
After Buhe, the winter(rainy season) is gone".

796 Long whips, mostly of finely braided fibre, of
526 tree bark or "tucha" grass, are made before Buhe, and
[41] young men practice with them until they can hit even small targets easily. On Buhe afternoon, two groups of contestants face each other, often across a swollen brook, and line up so that each individual faces an opponent of equal skill and strength. They come armed with the whips, and begin to warm up by hurling insults at each other, addressing each other in the female gender. Soon the game of aiming at the face and ducking the adversary's whip begins. The whip has a short wooden handle, but the strap may be as long as 15 feet. Sometimes this opportunity is taken to work out grudge fights. For, traditionally, any wounds incurred, even the loss of an eye, cannot be taken to court or cause a feud, as the result of this ritual battle. No other weapons may be used. The losers flee, are pursued to their huts, and the victors are entitled to all the

796 food of the feast prepared by the losing side.
526 In the evening "fires of joy" are lit, where the rain-drenched, weary and sore contestants and others can dry out, drink barley beer, and are supposed to forget and forgive the hostilities. Some may still boast of individual feats of heroism, in Amhara warrior style; others will sulk. But generally the day ends in harmony, after the excitement which itself was a welcome break in the monotonous hibernation of the rainy season.

796 The end of the annual cycle coincides with the end of the rainy season. The last 5 days (in leap years 6 days) are added after the end of the last month, and are called "Pagumēn" or "Qwagmē". On the 3rd day the [776] annual festival of St. Raphael, called "geddus Rufaēl", the water saint, takes place. The rain, which still falls [821] heavily that day, is considered "ṭebel" (holy water) and to have the power to dull the poison of snakes so [787] that their bites will not be fatal. Much rain during Pagumēn is taken as an omen that the crops will be good.

796 This day is final examination day for the boys
874 who have attended church school long enough to be promoted to "deacon". They are examined in correct chanting of liturgy and prayers. To be mentally wide awake they often go to the dabbara beforehand, and, for a small gift, obtain the stimulating herb "esa fars" (lit. Persian wood) or drink boiled "astänagär" (lit. the plant that makes to talk), which also helps to overcome stage-fright.

796 The younger children go from hut to hut, chanting:
857 "In the name of Rufael,
539

796 857 [539] from the bin of peas
fill me up."

Thereupon the householder gives them a handful of shembera peas, which they roast to "qolo", and this symbol, too, is considered to invite a good crop.

796 805 The 5th or last day of Pagumēn is the annual feast day of St. John. The "tabot" from his church is carried to water very early in the morning, and the men bathe in the river. The old year is symbolically buried, in some regions, by ceremonial burial of the book "Lefafa Ṭsedeq" (Scroll of Righteousness) which resembles in part the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead. The day is traditionally also the end of the fiscal budget year, on which the nagadras, the appointee over commerce, had to pay the feudal tribute to his lord (at least a large jar of beer and 20 enjara breads) in addition to squaring his accounts. [651]

That evening torches are lit, for this is the beginning of a new year.

c) The Religious Life Cycle of the Lay Individual.

852 Baptism usually occurs after 40 days for boys, still later for girl babies, sometimes as long as 80 days. This practice is based on Old Testament patterns, and more directly, on the period of 40 days that the Virgin Mary herself had to segregate herself from the Temple after the birth of Jesus. (The Falasha Jews of Abyssinia is concerned less that a baby might die

854 is a special occasion when father lets the infant ride on his shoulders ("ashkokke alä", lit. rode like a marmoset monkey) while going to visit another hamlet. Men do not carry children on their [165] backs, women's fashion. But parents, particularly fathers, do not take infants too seriously for an additional reason, that of infant mortality which is still high at this stage.

857 Socialization and enculturation begin through the peer-group of playmates, with whom infants have the most frequent, lengthy, and intensive contacts. They tease each other and scold each other into what they, in their playful, experimenting fashion, regard as "proper" behavior; and penalize, haze and discipline each other in the same way. From the adults they take both ideas and hand-me-down objects that have been used, worn-out and discarded, for their play activities, organize them experimentally into child-culture version of their own; for adults rarely produce a toy for children nor give them any new, unused object.

854 There is a cooperative side to this apparently random play
857 activity, leading to the beginning of useful economic activities.
861 Older children teach the younger ones, e.g., to make little whisk-brooms ("wof ger", lit. bird's foot) out of reeds, for which they are rewarded by their mothers with a thick, cake-like bread(similar to "dabye" of monks), which carries the same name, "wof ger". On certain church holidays, particularly "Buhe", younger children accompany older ones on their gift-begging tours.

857 Their powers of observation, active, free and relatively un-
867 structured prior to later discipline, imitate, in their play activities, the social relations, including the family and sexual-social relationships of their elders. When about five years old,

857 boys and girls - for the sexes are not yet separated up to that
867 time - play "house" with considerable sophistication. For example, when they play "marriage", the "father" of the "bride" goes to the "elders" to inquire about the character of the "groom", after the groom's father has initiated the negotiations on the groom's request. They build a "marriage hut", and play at heavy drinking of barley-beer and honey-mead. The "bride" demands a gift from her new "husband", and enters into his "residence". After they have been in there a while, the two best-men, the "mizē", who had been duly sworn to protect her even against her husband, go off to the bride's parents to announce loudly and joyfully that the girl had proven a virgin! Whereupon the "mizē" are feted.

B. The Stage of Childhood, "Reason" Incipient Discipline.

857 There is no special rite of passage that marks entry into the
868 next stage, at about 5 for girls, about 7 for boys. But there is
855 recognition, at this point, that the girls mature faster and are economically useful at a younger age than boys. Henceforth, girls
[291] play with girls, follow their mothers in their duties, (watch babies, fetch wood) and wear a more complete shift that covers them better; while boys play in boys' groups, follow their fathers, have regular duties assigned them such as taking cattle to and from pasture, and guarding the harvest against birds and baboons. Girl-children are addressed and referred to as "lelja-gärad" (servant maid) for their duties are even more regular than those of
[858] the boys. Both sexes can now be asked in court to choose sides when their parents are being divorced and the guardianship is in question. For they have entered the "age of reason".

855 Neglect of duty is therefore punished, and a father may fly into a sudden rage, beat the child without waiting for an excuse, even hurl a firebrand at the offending boy, so that considerable injuries sometimes occur. Mothers discipline the girls in similar temperamental fashion. But the rage, in either case, is quickly forgotten. There is no pattern of cold discipline, no "woodshed" punishment, rather hot-tempered, quick retribution.

857 Play activity and imitation of adults continues, but it takes on more seasonal and constructive characteristics. This is partly due to the seasonal pattern of the economic activities of boys age 7 to 11 and girls 5 to 14. Formal education in church school rarely begins before 11 in the rural areas, whereupon their play activities become more "extra-curricular".

[526] The seasonal games include the ball game after the harvest is completed, known as "gencheb" or "kwas", and seasonal construction and repair activities. On the church feast of Mikael, little boys have their own outdoor party, eating barley roasted on the stalk, and watching the flirtatious play of adolescent boys and girls.

291 Boys 7 to 11 still wear the tattered, knee length cotton shift, as their basic garment in rural areas, but beg a new one from relatives once a year, for the holy day of "Masqal", or "Timqat". But they are increasingly self-conscious about nudity, and if the tattered shift reveals the pubic area, other boys will haze and playfully beat the offender, saying:

[539] "My father told me not to let a snake warm itself in the sun".

865 In summary, parental discipline in this age group is specific,
867 work-oriented and intermittent; while experimentation with, and

867 [300] lock in addition. But boys never wear the ring of hair, which would be insulting to them.

864 When sex differentiation becomes more emphasized in the culture, at about seven, sex talk and sex play goes on primarily within the peer group of the same sex. The invitation to do this is "enkä säläntiyä", (lit. let us play at guessing impolite matters). They play hide and seek, whisper, re-enact what they have observed their parents do at night in the hut, and phantasy experimenting with sexual possibilities. Children observe a lot in the quiet of the night in the hut, but are careful not to be seen watching. They misunderstand and are greatly puzzled, since no elder will explain "impolite matters" to them. It is impolite even to mention the names of genitals and reproductive organs, such as "kola" for penis, and "ems" for vulva, so they are merely whispered about. In church school, boys are puzzled by overt references to "Mary's womb" and "God's seed", but questions are rejected as "rudeness". Youngsters in town have broader information, because there they hear "rude" talk more often among adults.

D. Toys and Games.

857 524 The economic activities of children in the fields, where they spend much time in guarding but do little intensive labor, is regarded by them more in the nature of play. It is fun to throw rocks at thieving baboons and shoot pebbles at birds, with slingshots made of "nacha" fiber.

The boys also make a bullrearer, "mät", to scare birds away from seeds and mature crops. This instrument is also called, onomatopoetically, "guremremosh" (from "tägwerämärränä", to

857 524 grumble, growl, snarl). It consists of a stick of wood, a foot long, 1/2 inch thick, notched at the thinner end, to which a cord of twisted fibre is attached. This is swung horizontally, above the head, to produce what is regarded as a terrifying sound. It is even used in shepherding, since boys believe it frightens away hyenas and the occasional leopard. During the rainy season, boys play it indoors to amuse each other and haze-tease younger siblings, who are frightened by it.

At the beginning of the light rainy season, when the storks and other birds fly north, children especially girls, form circles and dance rounds, chanting to the flocks of birds:

[539]

"Stork, our country is well;
the woman who baked gitta (luxurious wheat bread)
has died swallowing gitta (i.e. luxury is plentiful).

[825] At harvest time, in November, similar greetings are sung to the birds when they return from the north, from "Jerusalem" in popular belief. The Falashas children express this by singing to departing storks:

[539]

"How are you?
The people of Jerusalem (Falashas) are well)."

The Coptic Amhara hold the same belief as to the destination of the birds.

Winter games, i.e. in the rainy season, when children are restricted to the hamlet, include building of makeshift huts, in which they play "man and wife". The girls gather leaves, roll red mud inside, and "bake" cakes. Boys mimic the farmer, weave a hood of reeds, and just as he walks in the rain broadcasting his seeds, so boys broadcast pebbles.

Swimming is a favorite sport of children in the rainy season,

857 when even brooks are swollen, but rivers soon become too dangerous.
524 During the first season, when they learn to swim, a rope is tied
868 around the child's waist and held by an adolescent or young adult. At this time boys make waterpistols, "tiggosh" with a bamboo syringe; also peashooters shooting small pebbles with a bamboo strip acting as spring. Boys also make panpipe flutes from stout reeds, in preparation for "spring".

E. Formal Education and Extra-curricular Activities.

872 Basic education, already described in connection with the church, now falls into two types: the traditional church school; and the modern-style elementary school. Overlaps are beginning to appear.

Until a generation ago, the traditional church school had a complete monopoly on education, and for the vast majority of all children this is still true at this writing. It resembles in structure and function the "kuttab" school of the Muslims. Boys of peasant parents usually do not enroll before the age of 11, for until then their economic services are utilized fully, and only when they approach adolescence are the needs for their education felt by parents.

874 Most of the boys attend church school for only three years, for if they wish to study beyond what the village priest can teach them they must leave home for another district or province, e.g. a monastery school. Since the peasant family usually cannot or does not wish to sponsor this, the boy who insists becomes a "wandering" student, begging his way. Usually he goes for "zema"

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

000 prevail.

871 Most elementary school graduates from the provincial capitals
465 do not continue to Addis Ababa for a high school education, for they can obtain good and honorable positions, paying ETH$125.- (US $50.-) per month in the same town, as teachers, municipal clerks, with a good chance to be appointed to judgeship soon if they cultivate the right persons in power with "daj temut". Even Students who "flunk out" in the 7th or 8th grade can earn ETH$100.- as teachers of lower grades, or as low-grade clerks.

872 One old tradition which has broken down in the modern elemen-
212 tary schools but not in most church schools, is the prohibition of
178 extra-curricular writing. In the higher church grades, in which students' piety was already confirmed, especially in the monastery schools, copying psalms, gospels, (and by extension, government documents), was permitted, practiced, even regarded as praiseworthy. But there was, and in rural areas still is, fear that less pious students would use their knowledge of writing to experiment with magical formulae, doodlings, etc., creating dangerous mischief.

Therefore, parchment goatskins and writing equipment were carefully kept away from students of village church schools, and they were not taught to write. Thus, achievement of the skill of a scribe, "dabtara", required considerable individual initiative and study away from home.

212 However, boys at the "experimental" age of childhood, would
●857 amuse themselves with the forbidden game of writing and doodling in secret, and they still do. Their work can be seen scribbled even on the outside walls and posts of some churches, a daring prank, sometimes in imitation of the church painter. More often

212 boys playing in the bush write on broad leaves; or on the sun-
857 bleached shoulder blades of dead oxen or donkeys cleaned up by hyenas, vultures and ants; or even scratch letters on their own dark skins with a thorn, preferably on the underside of the arm where it can be hidden more effectively. Sometimes rocks, charcoal and iron scrap provided tools or background for writing experiments.

Boys are very proud of this achievement, and tease illiterates, particularly shepherds who have not attended school, by writing or [524] speaking phrases of Geez. Sometimes schoolboys use riddles, which they have memorized in school to memorize arithmetic, such as:

"(Question) What is two?
(Reply) Udder of female donkey;
(Question) What is four?
(Reply) Udder of cow."

[98] In reply to this teasing, illiterate shepherd boys make up "secret languages" of their own, by interlacing letters between syllables and speaking rapidly (much as zar doctors in the zar cult).

3. The Age of Obedience: Adolescence.

882 The age of experimentation, in which liberties taken by youngsters are often condoned, comes to an end as soon as puberty is reached. Parental authority, particularly that of the father, is more frequent and intense over the activities of the adolescent than over the peer-group child. The sexes are more sharply divided, no longer engage in experimental play activities in groups, and the patterns of flirting become more culturally structured, less random, and more personal. The adolescents are made to feel more "rule" conscious. With the awkwardness of adolescence comes a sudden shyness,

854 until weaning, at the
[853] age of two, the child is never removed from contact with the body of the mother or other female relative caring for him. After
857 weaning, childhood is an age of roaming over the countryside during the long dry season and of performing such useful tasks as protecting the harvest by shooting pebbles from slingshots at birds and baboons.

855 The pattern of punishment is dominated by spontaneity, during childhood as well as adolescence. A suddently enraged parent (father or male elder) may hurl a firebrand at a child, or cuff him roughly about the head and shoulders for as long as the rage lasts. Sometimes real injury results, but there is no planned, coldly calculated punishment, and the anger is usually quickly forgotten. The youngster is never left in doubt when he has transgressed. Retribution comes within a split second. Parents do not hesitate to exercise their authority and to impose their wills, when angered. The youngster soon has a clear conception of what kind of behavior it would be wise to avoid. Thus the youngster is presented, gradually, with a set of values which early become rooted in his personality, and help him to remain, later in life, in tune with his social group and culture pattern.

554 Individuals who chafe at the status quo, notably women and/or
562 individuals of either sex who have a talent and urge for individual enterprise, often find their way into the "zar" cult. Cultural participation of the female is so restricted during her life cycle, that many emotional outlets are denied her. Monotonous daily routines of manual labor; two years of breastfeeding after every birth; denial of active participation in the church; derogatory views of female intelligence on the part of the males; etc., limit the Amhara women

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 right to a direct audience at any time. The Emperor is known to glow with
571 pleasure when a subject with whom he is speaking reveals that he comes from Manz. The Manzēs, for their part, proudly refer to their area as *ya-negus agar* ("king's country"). They are perhaps the most devoted of all Ethiopians to the present Crown. However, many stories are told to show that this loyalty has not dissolved their intractable spirit. For example, when asked to select a representative for Ethiopia's first elected parliament in 1957, some of them were indignant: "We already have *our* representative in the capital, and if he isn't able to do the job himself, let him step down and hand it to somebody else."

871 Despite their expressed loyalty to Haile Selassie, the Manzēs stubbornly
658 oppose the program with which he is publicly most associated and whose portfolio he has retained, as Minister of Education, from 1943 to the present day. The adults of Manz object to having their children attend the government schools. In many cases where a child has elected to attend school on his own, his parents have cut off all support. The four schools in Manz thus have
[162] an enrolment far below capacity, totaling (as of 1960) less than four hundred in this area of perhaps fifty to sixty thousand families.[49] Those hardy youngsters who do attend school often do so in rags and with an empty stomach.

[857] One reason for this determined opposition to the government schools is the obvious economic one: children must stay at home to tend the herds. This is a problem all over rural Ethiopia, but still the schools in many other areas are overcrowded. Another reason is that, as we have seen, Manz was not interested in education in the old days. Few Manzēs learned to read in the church schools. When a boy showed unusual talent and interest in traditional studies he had to travel to Gondar, which often meant running away from Manz.

871 The crux of Manzē defiance of the new educational system, however, is
658 cultural fundamentalism. The Manzēs keep their children away from the
186 government schools because they fear that the students there are learning
829 something that threatens the old ways. In particular, they do not like their children to learn the language of the *faranj* ("European") or to be exposed to Ethiopians who have been taught by *faranj* and thereby infected by alien ideas. Tending the farm, keeping the fasts, defending land and self—that is the sum and substance of Manzē education, beyond which there is nothing a boy needs to learn.

829 Undoubtedly part of this dread of *faranj* learning is based on the Manzēs'
648 one experience with the white man: the Fascist occupation. As one of the
186 strongholds of patriotic resistance to the occupation, Manz and the Manzēs became the object of the invader's unyielding fury. Over miles and miles of Manz not a home or church was spared. The inhabitants were either killed, or fled to safer areas in Galla country, or joined the underground opposition—

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When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff. 565* 512 [264] [231] [857] [233]

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭēff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ĭrshā*, literally means "plowing." 565* 512 241 [462] [785]

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow. [407] [492] [576]

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ĭnjarā*, preparing *ṭallā*, spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun. 565* 512 462 [264]

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in [264]

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the morning and what remains to be done. The peasant may retire for a nap, and perhaps to lie with his wife, before taking up the afternoon's work. He returns for about three more hours of plowing after his noon rest. The afternoon sun burns down on him; the plow is harder to wield; he plods on. At home the women continue their work, no sooner finishing one task than they attend to another. The mother puts the child who rides on her back to the breast whenever it cries.

The shepherds do not come home for lunch. They have taken some *ĭnjarā* or *dābo* ("whole wheat bread") along with them. In harvest months they enjoy a special treat, roasting grains or pulse which they have snatched from somebody's field. Though their responsibility is great—a boy will be whipped if an animal in his charge gets hurt or lost or if it gets into fields of grain—their work is light. They spend the day running idly, practicing war chants, playing at various adult activities. Their mood is as free as the great spaces about them. As the day grows hotter they are likely to discard their sheepskin covering and move about naked. Toward dusk, the shepherds' spirits quicken. Their songs become more excited; lively melodies are heard from their wooden flutes. It is time to go home to family, supper, and fire.

When father and sons enter after the day's work, they start munching on roasted grains, *ĭnjarā*, or *dābo*. They may drink some *ṭallā* and relax. It begins to get chilly. The room is dark and smoky, the fleas bite them—but it is the easiest time of the day. The family is together, and everyone enjoys talking and hearing about the homely events of the day. A few hours after dark, supper is served. Parents and older children eat together out of a common basket. Younger children and servants stand respectfully, awaiting their turn, grateful if someone places a large bite of food in their mouths.

After dinner there is a great washing of feet—the father's by his wife or children, the others' by themselves. The peasant recites or reads his evening prayers and lies down on his bed made of strips of cowhide. The children settle for the night on the clay benches. Last of all, the mother covers the embers with ashes, sets out the grain she must grind before dawn, and places her weary body next to that of her husband's.

This grueling schedule is not repeated every day. On nearly half the days in each month heavy labor is not permitted—men may not plow or harvest, women may not grind or spin. These are holy days: Saturdays and Sundays (both of which are honored as the Sabbath in Abyssinia) and the monthly and annual commemorations of the saints.

The woman's schedule on such days is only lightened, not radically altered. Food and drink must still be prepared and served. Except for a possible trip to church with her husband Sunday morning before breakfast, a woman's hours are still confined to the home compound and its obligations. The shepherds must still take care of their herds, though some boys may get together for

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Egyptian mosques; youth dormitories and community houses in certain tribes in India; the academic and athletic youth organizations of ancient Athens and Sparta; not to mention the numerous teen-age associations of modern Western society.[3]

Here again, the adolescent Amhara is not involved in any such social forms. The advent of puberty is associated with the growing up and out of childhood groups, the gangs of shepherds who spend their days together in work and play. The girl of eleven or twelve is expected to spend all her time at home, under careful supervision. The boy of thirteen or fourteen has abandoned the shepherd's life for farming, in the company of older relatives, and soon becomes increasingly preoccupied with his private economic and erotic interests. His family elders are likely to warn him not to make friends with other youths outside the family.[4] For a number of adolescent boys to get together outside of festive occasions is, to the traditional Amhara mind, a sign that something wrong is afoot.

The absence of adolescent rites and age groups reflects the individualistic character of Amhara social organization, a subject to which we shall turn in chapter vii. Nevertheless, Amhara society catches young people in its grasp and guides them to adulthood just as firmly and surely as does a society which has many collective arrangements for its adolescents. It does this by means of a well-ordered program for growing up. The road from childhood to adulthood is one series of informal, unproblematic stages through which the growing person adjusts to progressively increased responsibilities and progressively detailed norms. After infancy, there is normally no break in continuity in the whole process.

Toward Adult Work Roles

Following a long and indulged infancy, the Amhara child is early taught the rudiments of work responsibility. At the age of three or four, children are given simple chores, such as shooing chickens from grain drying in the sun or collecting bits of firewood. Somewhat older children are expected to protect the crops against birds, farm animals, and baboons. The Amhara becomes apprenticed in the main vocation of his childhood—tending the herds—almost as soon as he can run about, and six-year-old shepherds play a crucial part in the Amhara economy.

Boys retain the responsibility for tending the herds at least until the age of twelve, but by then they have already been initiated into a number of adult work activities. At about eight or nine years the Amhara boy begins to do his share of the harvesting, sickling the wheat, barley, *teff*, or beans and loading the crops in piles he will help transport to the threshing place. He becomes adept at directing the cattle round and round the threshing floor and at winnowing the grain from the chaff. At times he helps with the weeding.

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*883 • 857 868 Somewhat later, when he reaches ten or eleven, the Amhara boy begins to accustom himself to the plow, perhaps trying his hand at it from time to time while his father rests for lunch. Intermittently his ability increases, and by the age of fourteen or so—earlier if the family is short of help—he is given a regular share of the plowing. This may be limited to one or two hours a day at first, but before many seasons elapse he is ready to undertake a full day's work, along with his older relatives.

*883 868 In his mid-teens the Amhara boy is normally given a small part of his father's land to use for himself. The boy has full charge of plowing and harvesting this land and selling the crops at market. The crops or money he [434] earns thereby is referred to as *gulammā* ("private possession") and is set aside for helping him to get started on his own later on. Eventually the *gulammā* will be used to purchase new clothes, an ox, and presents for his bride. Year by year the father may add a bit more land for the boy's private management, though all together it does not often amount to a very large quantity; he may produce, say, 150 to 200 liters of grain for his *gulammā* in a year (in the Amhara system of measures, about 2 *dāwlā*). When he has saved enough [582] grain to fill a *riq*, a large wicker storage bin plastered inside with cow dung, he is considered ready to get married and strike out on his own.

By the time a boy begins to accumulate his *gulammā* he has learned nearly everything he needs to know for performing the work which will be expected of him as an adult. In his late teens the e[illegible]tion is completed, through the mastery of such special techniques as fashioning the yoke and wooden attachments for the plow, and constructing the walls and roof for a house.

The work life of the Amhara peasant is thus a simple continuation of activities with which he has long been familiar. The same is true, *mutatis* [463] *mutandis*, for those who, following their fathers' footsteps, become priests or sorcerers, governors or warriors, artisans or traders. In these cases, moreover, the foregoing pattern applies to a great extent, since the latter roles are often combined with an agricultural economic base and way of life. (Special aspects of some of these variant patterns will be discussed below.)

857 868 This pattern of gradually increased work responsibility is conspicuous in the case of girls. While shepherding and other childhood tasks are shared by both sexes, the Amhara girl begins to do distinctively female work at about six or seven. First she learns to clear seeds from cotton, and to spin, by hand. Later on she is introduced to the more taxing female chores, like fetching water and grinding grain. The progressive increase of the girl's work load is visibly illustrated by the graduated sizes of clay jugs used for carrying [415] water. When she begins to fetch water, the young girl carries a tiny jug, called a *gambo*. As she becomes older and stronger she is given a larger size, a small *enserā*. Finally, the mature female carries the large *enserā*, a jug that holds as much as twenty liters.

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *injarā*. Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make good *doro wat*, a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

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* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys.

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tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
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Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
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problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [155] [671]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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241
857

FIG. 18.—*Ten-year-old boy plowing*

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FIG. 19.—*Mother and daughter carrying water pots*

[P. 110-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkär*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [764] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [601]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 Amhara society as marked by a moderately high degree of independence.
181 This is to say that Amhara society gives relatively wide rein to individual impulse in action. It is not to say that Amhara culture places a high value on the moral worth of the individual personality. That is a separate question, which we shall now proceed to explore.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS CONFORMITY AND ANONYMITY

*121 The extent to which individual personality is valued in a society is reflected
181 primarily in two aspects of its culture. One of these comprises its processes
156 of education, in the broadest sense of the term; the other, its forms of art. The character of these aspects of culture reveal, respectively, the degree of concern for the *development* of an individualized self and the degree of concern for the *expression* of an individualized self.

Education and Socialization

*121 Obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in bringing up children
155 among the Amhara. After a prolonged and indulged infancy, the Amhara
861 child from about three years on is subjected to a regime of discipline and
867 repression. He is taught to fulfill without question any request made by any
[854] older person. He is conditioned to stand quietly whenever guests are present and to stand facing the wall while his parents or guests eat their dinner. If addressed by elders, especially those outside his immediate family, he is expected to reply in a barely audible whisper—a norm that is sometimes adhered to with such pathetic faithfulness that it has become the object of gentle satire in a short story by the young Ethiopian writer, Tadesse Liban.[26] Children who are noisy and disrespectful are referred to contemptuously by the term *bälagë*, meaning "rude."

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155 adult activities. Organized games occur very rarely, the chief one—*gännä*—
857 being played as a rule but once a year, on Christmas Day.[28] The traditional songs and dances are learned from other children while tending the herds, but children are not encouraged to perform them in front of adults. The
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155 commoners' families the children are treated little better than the farm ani-
855 mals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing
858 her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him

857 boys and girls - for the sexes are not yet separated up to that
867 time - play "house" with considerable sophistication. For example, when they play "marriage", the "father" of the "bride" goes to the "elders" to inquire about the character of the "groom", after the groom's father has initiated the negotiations on the groom's request. They build a "marriage hut", and play at heavy drinking of barley-beer and honey-mead. The "bride" demands a gift from her new "husband", and enters into his "residence". After they have been in there a while, the two best-men, the "mizē", who had been duly sworn to protect her even against her husband, go off to the bride's parents to announce loudly and joyfully that the girl had proven a virgin! Whereupon the "mizē" are feted.

B. The Stage of Childhood, "Reason" Incipient Discipline.

857
868
855 There is no special rite of passage that marks entry into the next stage, at about 5 for girls, about 7 for boys. But there is recognition, at this point, that the girls mature faster and are economically useful at a younger age than boys. Henceforth, girls
[291] play with girls, follow their mothers in their duties, (watch babies, fetch wood) and wear a more complete shift that covers them better; while boys play in boys' groups, follow their fathers, have regular duties assigned them such as taking cattle to and from pasture, and guarding the harvest against birds and baboons. Girl-children are addressed and referred to as "leja-zärädä" (servant maid) for their duties are even more regular than those of
[858] the boys. Both sexes can now be asked in court to choose sides when their parents are being divorced and the guardianship is in question. For they have entered the "age of reason".

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, 186
and social position.

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance 562
rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the [565]*
wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the [539]
proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar and trivial talk.

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells [539]
us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including those connected with the saintly figures of Eçhē Yohānnes and Takla Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by [841]
womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden.

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance 858 •
and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and [864]
cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably. After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first "age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders.

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each
of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. 882
The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing
after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches 885
forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and
wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. 888
Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults,
pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon [867]
learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *çhirāq* is some-
158 times evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still an-
[716] other figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away
[789] a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions
121 of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes
155 into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted
[853] earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara
121 practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new
155 baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a
862 bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of suck-
121 ing and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects
155 as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian
146 children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible
121 area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discon-
155 tinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are
• 858 nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

consequence of substantial loss of accustomed mother love at the time of 121
weaning—a mild but chronic state of mourning which gives a depressive un- 155
dertone to the rest of life—is certainly one of the more evident characteristics 858
of most Amhara.[23] At the same time the Amhara child is made anxious about
his actual oral gratifications. He no longer eats whenever he wants to, but [264]
only after he has waited for the adults to finish their meal. He is no longer
entitled to the choicest food, mother's milk, but to poorer food and leftovers.
And he is made increasingly aware of the adult anxieties about eating con-
nected with the fasting requirements, and with the food shortages of the rainy
season.

Applying the Whiting-Child hypotheses in the light of these observations 121
one may characterize the development of an ambivalent preoccupation with 155
the oral zone by Amhara as follows: an initially very high level of oral satis-
faction enjoyed during the nursing period makes oral gratification a particu-
larly attractive source of pleasure as well as a desired refuge for the psyche
under the pressure of later deprivations; while the emotional and nutritional
deprivations which the Amhara child experiences toward the end of the
nursing period and thereafter undermine the sense of security acquired dur-
ing his indulged infancy and make him anxious about the fount of that
security, oral gratification.*

Whatever the precise ontogenetic basis of this phenomenon may prove to 121
be, the Amhara's ambivalent preoccupation with orality is projected at the 155
cultural level in the form of two contrasting human ideals. The secular 577
masculine ideal in Amhara culture is a hero of oral gratification and prowess.
He is a man who eats much and drinks much, and who excels in litigation,
in declaiming the martial chants, and in composing veiled insults. The reli-
gious ideal, on the other hand, is a hero of oral renunciation. The most de-
vout Amhara are considered those who keep all of the fasts, even the esoteric
ones; or even, as monks and ascetics, live on a fasting diet the year round—
in the extreme case, feed on leaves as hermits. The association of religious [173]
virtuosity with oral renunciation reaches its logical climax in legends about
Gabra Manfas Qeddus ("Servant of the Holy Spirit"), the most hallowed
Amhara saint. In contrast with the normal Amhara boy who nurses for close
to three years, Gabra Manfas Qeddus is said to have been at his mother's
breast for only three months, when a bird swept down one day and carried
him away.

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* While this formulation may leave more questions unanswered than it solves—a purely behaviorist formula inevitably neglects the dynamics of defensive operations and the significance of ambivalence—it carries us as far as our data permit and may provide a useful point of departure for further discussion and investigation of Amhara psychology.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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855 mals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing
858 her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qeneʾ*—will be discussed below.

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Ethiopia MP1

[For information on Ethiopia, particularly in the fields of history, socialization and politics, see 11:Levine, MP5 Amhara, category 116.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

4

The Emerging Adolescent

While it is clear, as we have argued thus far, that a modernizing society stands to benefit from retaining or redefining many aspects of its traditional culture, it is also clear that in certain areas discontinuity is indispensable if significant change is to be brought about. Just what these areas are is something which presumably varies from nation to nation, though cross-cultural regularities may perhaps be uncovered in the course of further research. In the case of Ethiopia's incipient modernization, at least two subsystems of the traditional social system of the ruling Amhara have already undergone some sort of structural change: that of "secondary socialization," the complex of processes whereby skills and values necessary for adult life are imparted to adolescents; and that of the stratification system—the complex of arrangements whereby status is allocated to members of a society in accord with the various values upheld by the society.

An important precondition for the changes which have taken place in both of these areas was the establishment of a permanent capital: Addis Ababa, founded by Menelik in 1887[1] and now home for nearly half a million Ethiopians. Menelik's institution of the first government school in Addis Ababa in 1908 marked the beginning of a slow but steady process of introducing some of Ethiopia's youth to the novel skills and norms of modern Western culture. The concentration of power in Addis Ababa through the reign of Haile Selassie has diminished the status of the traditional Amhara elites and brought

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
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New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— 86 •
parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, 178
by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their role as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part [87]
by teachers and peers in the government schools.

Schools at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly 875
by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, 177
England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing 873
number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization.

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on 177
the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has 178
occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative 557
of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to- 555
day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied with- 829
out regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affilia- 883*
tions.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of uni- 87
versal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead.

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian 873
nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to 177
associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post- 178
elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with mem- 186
bers of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of 883*
the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic [872]
pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115)

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 The local nobility, on the other hand, were eminences whose lives and reputations were bound to a more circumscribed locale. While the non-royal nobility, or *makuānnent* in the stricter sense, performed as high dignitaries at the imperial court and governors of large provinces, the local nobility were district chiefs and judges, or even simply wealthy landowners, who enjoyed considerable deference. Though they might not be known outside of their home regions, these men were, for the mass of the population, the lords of existence. *Ka-Gondar negus / yāgar āmbārās,* "the petty district chief [is obeyed] more than the Gondar king"[19] expresses folk wisdom on the subject. The Amharic terms which designate this class of men are *bālābbāt* and *shum,* terms we shall want to consider more closely below.

565 184 Despite these distinctions among members of the upper stratum of Abyssinian society, with respect to their general orientation and style of life they differed only in degree. They created and shared what might be called a "gentry subculture," even though it was not so differentiated from the general culture as was the case in Europe and China. In the present context, it will be meaningful to treat them as a single status group.

565 184 86 [576] Special manners and skills were self-consciously taught to children of the *makuānnent,* most of which remain part of the gentry subculture today. An etiquette of instinctual inhibition is taught. Some attention is given, for example, to toilet training, which is spontaneous among peasant children. Spitting in public is proscribed. Physical aggression is discouraged in favor of the more subtle forms of satire and patient manipulation of others. A quiet, reserved manner of speaking is stressed, in contrast with the less inhibited and cruder self-expression of the peasantry. Dignity of comportment is expected at all times; a noble should not, for example, express great enthusiasm or surprise over anything. Sobriety is inculcated as a virtue; alcohol is *la-çhawā lijj* [293] *mādasetchā / la-bālagē māzabābatchā* ("for the nobleman's son a stimulant, for the commoner an intoxicant"). In short, the gentry subculture stresses the general ideal of bringing a child up to be conspicuously genteel, or *çhawā.*

565 184 868 [871] [534] [883] Sons of the nobility have traditionally followed a privileged curriculum.[20] They were given lessons in horseback riding and weaponry at an early age. They were also taught how to swim, an uncommon skill among the Abyssinians. Reading would often be taught, for which schooling a man of the church might be brought in as a tutor, or the boy might be sent for a while to a monastery. He might also learn how to play the *baganā,* the ten-stringed lyre used to accompany certain forms of religious and plaintive secular songs. Instead of spending his teen-age years at the plow, which was regarded as beneath his dignity, the noble boy would follow his father to court and observe the ways of litigation and the manner of passing judgments; or he might be sent as a page to the court of the king or some great lord.

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 121*

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by 155
throwing stones. 855
858

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimu- 121*
late the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara 155
child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood 156
and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose. 86

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the 121*
personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is 876
taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based 155
on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, 121*
but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform 155
the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The in- 871
struction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, 121*
and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners 868
and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for 565
personal development. 554

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention 121*
is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their perform- 533
ance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except 535
for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, con- 156
sists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, [176]
particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free 121*
play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique orna- 531
mentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of 156
Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again in- 121*
dividuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited 532
by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to 156
the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

854 is a special occasion when father lets the infant ride on his shoulders ("ashkokko alä", lit. rode like a marmoset monkey) while going to visit another hamlet. Men do not carry children on their [165] backs, women's fashion. But parents, particularly fathers, do not take infants too seriously for an additional reason, that of infant mortality which is still high at this stage.

857 Socialization and enculturation begin through the peer-group of playmates, with whom infants have the most frequent, lengthy, and intensive contacts. They tease each other and scold each other into what they, in their playful, experimenting fashion, regard as "proper" behavior; and penalize, haze and discipline each other in the same way. From the adults they take both ideas and hand-me-down objects that have been used, worn-out and discarded, for their play activities, organize them experimentally into child-culture version of their own; for adults rarely produce a toy for children nor give them any new, unused object.

854 There is a cooperative side to this apparently random play
857 activity, leading to the beginning of useful economic activities.
861 Older children teach the younger ones, e.g., to make little whisk-brooms ("wof ger", lit. bird's foot) out of reeds, for which they are rewarded by their mothers with a thick, cake-like bread(similar to "dabye" of monks), which carries the same name, "wof ger". On certain church holidays, particularly "Buhe", younger children accompany older ones on their gift-begging tours.

857 Their powers of observation, active, free and relatively un-
867 structured prior to later discipline, imitate, in their play activities, the social relations, including the family and sexual-social relationships of their elders. When about five years old,

576 Very Polite: "shango watta" - (lit. he went to a meeting).
514 Extremely Polite: "ruaro zorä" - (lit. he left home).
192 Extremely Polite: "shershar watta" - (lit. he went for a walk).

522 Wit, used in court or by homespun philosophers to entertain their friends, compensates for the many formalities in this culture and society. The famous wit, Alaqa Gabre-Hanna has already been cited.
538 Proverbs, "tarat" and riddles may be used to make a comment of esoteric meanings, understandable only to one's initiates. Proverbs fulfill a social function, beyond mere entertainment, for even philosophy, being utilized to begin any negotiation, such as for marriage. This is emphasized in proverbs on proverbs:

[539]

"Like Halleluyah before the chanting (in church),
(begin with) a proverb before the discussion".
"(to drink) mead, (first get) a container,
to talk, (begin with) a proverb".

538 Proverbs and riddles used by parents, teachers and leaders of
593 society have a pedagogic function, and can be used to reprimand and
[86] instruct. Conflict between father and son, the complexities involved, and the possibility that contrary to the major cultural assumption of parental superiority, the son may sometimes have logic on his side, is indicated by the following:

[539]

"(Says the father):

"Your Father you cannot accuse (e.g. in court, shaming yourself)
nor plow the sky,
nor roast water".

"(Replies the son):

"The father, by his own shame he will stand accused;
the sky, by lighting it is plowed;
water, in a pot it is steamed".

*565 571 Still another invidious distinction of considerable importance in the Amhara outlook is that between the "big man" (*ṭillīq saw*) and the commoner (*terā saw*). "Bigness" may be measured in terms of political power, economic wealth, ecclesiastical status, or any combination thereof. Though the peasant frequently has little affection for the big man, he customarily treats him with the greatest show of deference. No matter how unfamiliar a big man may be or from what part of the country he comes, the Amhara peasant sees him as entitled to unquestioning courtesy and obeisance. Analogous distinctions discriminate between the wealthy (*hābtām*) and the poor (*dehā*), and between the genteel (*çhawā*) and the rude (*bālagē*).

192 828 Yet if the Amhara takes a dim view of women, youth, and poor folk, as well as non-Amhara and non-Christians, he suffers from no illusions about homo sapiens at his best—unless they are dark illusions. The generic word for "man" in Amharic, *saw*, is the subject of a number of negative associations and idiomatic uses.[19] At its worst, the word is found in an idiom that signifies the evil eye (*ya-saw ayn*), literally: the "eye of man" (or, more idiomatically, "the eye of others"). At its best, when used to signify a fully formed human being, the word *saw* characteristically appears in the plaintive saying, *Saw yallam* ("there is no human being"); in other words, an individual who fully embodies the concept of humanity does not exist. In general, one may say that the Amhara's view of human nature is dominated by his perception of man's inherent aggressiveness and untrustworthiness.

828 [861] [785] The Amhara believes that unformed human nature is poor raw material, and that without strict punishment throughout childhood a person will grow up to be rude and offensive toward others. As an adult, moreover, he must constantly be kept in check. The rationale commonly given for the extensive schedule of fasting is that man's nature is wicked, and only by weakening himself in this manner will he be turned away from some act of aggression against others.

828 261 273 The Amharic concept of *ṭegābaññā* illustrates this view. *Ṭegābaññā* literally carries the meaning of one who has been sated with food and drink, but is normally taken to mean someone who begins to insult and pick fights with others. In their use of this and related words the Amhara express the belief that aggression is the usual consequence of being sated. Insubordinate behavior on the part of a servant or political appointee is usually explained as a result of his having been too well fed. "When a peasant gets sated he hits with his stick. . . " is the first line of a number of couplets I collected among rural Amhara. The specific effect of drinking alcoholic beverages is believed to release, not Eros, but the aggressive instincts. An Amharic proverb about [539] *tallā* states this directly: "One [glass] whets the appetite; two quenches it; three heats one up; four makes one quarrel; five brings fighting; six causes killing." Contrary to the view that world peace depends chiefly on filling

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in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life.

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones.

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels.

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shillalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor.

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience.

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tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bālagē* ("rude"), a trait which [861] •
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [55] [571]

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*121 Amhara society as marked by a moderately high degree of independence.
181 This is to say that Amhara society gives relatively wide rein to individual impulse in action. It is not to say that Amhara culture places a high value on the moral worth of the individual personality. That is a separate question, which we shall now proceed to explore.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS CONFORMITY AND ANONYMITY

*121 The extent to which individual personality is valued in a society is reflected
181 primarily in two aspects of its culture. One of these comprises its processes
156 of education, in the broadest sense of the term; the other, its forms of art. The character of these aspects of culture reveal, respectively, the degree of concern for the *development* of an individualized self and the degree of concern for the *expression* of an individualized self.

*121 *Education and Socialization*

155 Obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in bringing up children
• 861 among the Amhara. After a prolonged and indulged infancy, the Amhara
867 child from about three years on is subjected to a regime of discipline and
[854] repression. He is taught to fulfill without question any request made by any older person. He is conditioned to stand quietly whenever guests are present and to stand facing the wall while his parents or guests eat their dinner. If addressed by elders, especially those outside his immediate family, he is expected to reply in a barely audible whisper—a norm that is sometimes adhered to with such pathetic faithfulness that it has become the object of gentle satire in a short story by the young Ethiopian writer, Tadesse Liban.[26] Children who are noisy and disrespectful are referred to contemptuously by the term *bālagē*, meaning "rude."

*121 The desires and interests of an Amhara child are not taken into account
155 by those who raise him. He is provided with a bare minimum of clothes,
855 and little effort is expended in procuring him playthings,[27] although in some
524 families little dolls made of rags (*ashāngulit*) are produced. Children have
*121 a rich play-life with their peers, but this consists mostly in imitating various
155 adult activities. Organized games occur very rarely, the chief one—*gannā*—
857 being played as a rule but once a year, on Christmas Day.[28] The traditional songs and dances are learned from other children while tending the herds, but children are not encouraged to perform them in front of adults. The
*121 opinions of children are never expressed, let alone consulted. Indeed, in some
155 commoners' families the children are treated little better than the farm ani-
855 mals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing
858 her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him

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ing support this permissiveness. If a baby is not suckled whenever he wishes 155
to be, it is believed that he will become sick or will not grow strong, and the 853
negligent mother is looked on as one of evil character.

Not only is the infant's desire to suck freely indulged, but it is indulged for 853
a fairly long time. The normal period for breast-feeding is two to three years. 862
Only if a new sibling happens on the scene is weaning deliberately effected. If 155
another child is not forthcoming, and the mother is not ill, there is no inclination at any time to deny the child the breast. In many cases nursing continues until the child is four or five, when his work obligations begin to interfere.

The attitude of oral permissiveness is manifest in other ways. Thumb-suck- 853
ing is accepted with good humor, and when a baby is in a bad mood he may 854
be given his father's or mother's thumb to use as a pacifier. Though Amhara 155
are otherwise very modest, mothers do not hesitate to offer the breast no mat- [856]
ter where they happen to be. When referring to the process of breast-feeding, Amhara males invariably cup one hand under an imaginary breast to depict this common and natural event. When speaking to persuade a guest to accept a second glass of beer, the Amhara host has recourse to the formula: "But your mother's breasts are two!" Another indication that breast-feeding is a [125]
very familiar part of the Amhara's social environment is that in interpreting the TAT cards, a number of respondents interpreted some scene with children as a situation of breast-feeding, although this was not depicted on any of the cards.

The emotional context of breast-feeding is more significant than the physical pleasures involved. Until he leaves the breast the Amhara child inhabits an emotional paradise. He receives much attention and is fondled by both parents and by other relatives. He remains close to his mother at all times, sleeping alongside her at night and spending the day near her when not tied in a bundle on her back. He accompanies her thus to visit relatives, attend market, or go to church. Only when the mother goes to fetch water is [753]
he separated from her, for there is not room for both baby and water jug on [776]
the mother's back, and besides, water holes are the abodes of evil spirits who may try to make the child sick.

After he is weaned, the Amhara child enters a much harsher emotional 155
atmosphere. He must adjust to a regime of commands, responsibilities, and 855
punishments. He is nostalgic forever after for the warmth and security of his 853
earliest years, a condition vividly associated with the experience of sucking at the breast. The prominence in Amhara culture of this association of emotional 853
security with breast-feeding is shown by such phenomena as the mammary 152
symbolism of the rooftop and the institution known as the "breast-father." 155
The former consists of a clay ornament, whose color and shape clearly repli- 831
cate the female nipple, which is placed atop the breast-like conical roof which

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155 cannibal with eyes in the back of his head. (The specter of the *çhirāq* is some-
152 times evoked in order to frighten children into behaving properly.) Still an-
[116] other figure is the *salābi*, a person who is imagined capable of spiriting away
[189] a man's harvested grain by means of magic incantations.

Without delving into questions on the cultural origins and social functions
121 of oral ambivalence among the Amhara, one can understand how it comes
155 into being in the individual by looking at what happens during childhood in Amhara society. It is true that, if one abides by the hypothesis on this subject supported by Whiting and Child's cross-cultural study, the phenomenon remains puzzling. Their theory attributes a high degree of anxiety about oral gratification to a low level of indulgence of oral gratification in early childhood and a high level of frustration during weaning. This particular hypothesis is not consistent with the data on the Amhara. As we noted
[853] earlier in this chapter, oral gratification is indulged among infants to a very high degree by Amhara mothers. There is considerable variation in Amhara
121 practice with regard to weaning, moreover. At times the advent of a new
155 baby or a mother's sickness may require abrupt weaning, in which case a
• 862 bitter substance is put on the mother's nipple to discourage the infant. In many cases, on the other hand, weaning occurs so gently and spontaneously that little or no frustration is involved for the infant. The relative frequency of these two procedures is a question for which adequate data have not been assembled, but the norm seems to be a gradual departure from the breast, after the child has been happily adjusted to eating other food for more than a year.

Even if the Amhara child is not frustrated by too little indulgence of suck-
121 ing and too severe weaning, he is nonetheless deprived in two other respects
155 as he emerges from infancy. One is nutritional. Medical studies of Abyssinian
146 children suggest a dietary deficiency beginning in the second half of the first year, and persisting throughout early childhood.[21] It is possible that this relative decline in biological well-being contributes to a sense of deprivation toward the end of the breast-feeding period.

The emotional situation of the child after weaning presents a more visible
121 area of frustration. Amhara childhood is marked by a fairly sharp discon-
155 tinuity. This may be illustrated by the fact that many Amhara boys are
858 nurslings at the age of three and shepherds at five. The narcissism which has flowered during the nursing stage is dealt a series of blows as the young child becomes subject to the responsibilities, punishments, and suppressed status which are the lot of Amhara children. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, this sort of change in emotional support has far more significance for the development of behavioral tendencies than the mechanics of the weaning process; and what psychoanalysts have posited as a possible

534 a cross-country church procession on a saint's day. But modern (leftover Italian) brass trumpets are replacing it for the latter use.

2. Play and Entertainment.

A. Games and Leisure-time Activities.

524 Games are differentiated largely on the basis of age: little boys' games are largely of a hazing type or of imitation of adult behavior; adolescents' games are predominantly competitive; adult games are largely leisure pastimes. In this adult-centered culture, children's games are at the same time freely experimental and directed toward growing up as fast as possible; while an adult would be ashamed to continue playing childish games or to compete with adolescents.

Small children, especially boys, are involved in hazing activities, [865] "bedder", early in life. If they suffer a relapse into "Bedwetting", they are publicly shamed by the older children, and made to urinate publicly into a little trench. Small children are sometimes frightened by older ones with the bullroarer, ("zezzeta" - onomatopoetic), or by imitation of the sound of the hyena at night. Frequency of contact between older and younger children is especially prevalent during the "shut-in" rainy season. At this time, boys age 5 to 12 fight battles, sometimes using waterpistols ("tiggosh") made of bamboo, with a wooden syringe. When the game gets rough ("entush") they knock each other down with knees (the seat of strength in Amhara opinion) and feet.

Boys of 8 or 9, who aspire to deaconhood at the next New Year holy days, are mock-examined by older boys who have achieved that status. The candidate must carry each of them several times around the churchyard, and must recite and chant liturgical prayers for them for hours. The candidate is punished for any disobedience by being pinched, tied up and otherwise abused.

Little girls play milder games, such as dancing rounds with other

867 [300] lock in addition. But boys never wear the ring of hair, which would be insulting to them.

864 When sex differentiation becomes more emphasized in the culture, at about seven, sex talk and sex play goes on primarily within the peer group of the same sex. The invitation to do this is "enkä sälantiya", (lit. let us play at guessing impolite matters). They play hide and seek, whisper, re-enact what they have observed their parents do at night in the hut, and phantasy experimenting with sexual possibilities. Children observe a lot in the quiet of the night in the hut, but are careful not to be seen watching. They misunderstand and are greatly puzzled, since no elder will explain "impolite matters" to them. It is impolite even to mention the names of genitals and reproductive organs, such as "kula" for penis, and "ems" for vulva, so they are merely whispered about. In church school, boys are puzzled by overt references to "Mary's womb" and "God's seed", but questions are rejected as "rudeness". Youngsters in town have broader information, because there they hear "rude" talk more often among adults.

D. Toys and Games.

857 524 The economic activities of children in the fields, where they spend much time in guarding but do little intensive labor, is regarded by them more in the nature of play. It is fun to throw rocks at thieving baboons and shoot pebbles at birds, with slingshots made of "nacha" fiber.

The boys also make a bullrearer, "mät", to scare birds away from seeds and mature crops. This instrument is also called, onomatopoetically, "rururumosh" (from "tägurämirrana", to

585 bride. Each guest brings a number of "enjärä" breads, perhaps a dozen, and they leave cash contributions with the host, at least ETH$1-3. The afternoon is largely spent consuming barley-beer ("talla") of which the women have previously brewed huge jarsful. Particularly the "mizä" and the young men who will soon race across the countryside to fetch the bride, drink their fill to "be strong" and light and gay on their feet later on. The groom has been fed on meat and butter, to be strong; while the bride fasts to be "weak". The more old-fashioned elders, especially those not kinsmen, sit in a corner, and eat and drink there, draped off by spread-out tofas.

585 864 Sex information for the groom is one of the duties of the "mizä", who are usually older than he and married, but not of his parental generation, (particularly the older chief mize of the two, the "ser mizä", though sometimes the second "mize", called "qelqel mizä"). If necessary, they are even expected to assist in the deflowering of a recalcitrant bride who suffers last-minute fright, by holding her down so that the groom can consumate the marriage that night. The bride is given no such outright information, and can only guess what will happen to her from whisperings of other girls and from what she has observed in the hut at night of intimacies of the parents on the raised "alga" bed. She may well be confused and frightened, but this is regarded as praiseworthy, as virtuous. Her nails are trimmed down to the skin just before the wedding, so that she cannot scratch, then placed in hot butter to heal and be smooth.

585 About three hours before nightfall, about 4PM (unless the bride's hamlet is too far away, in which case earlier), the groom appears before the "dase" of his patrilineal kin, dressed in a new, well-

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585 a certain amount of ritualized delay, the groom and his party are admitted. The groom is not supposed to have seen his bride previously, and is at first shown only a number of similarly dressed maids, among whom sits his fiancée. The maids are then concealed by a curtain or in another room while one of the best men, called *mizē*, determines through various ruses which of the girls is the bride. She is revealed to the groom by being carried out on the back of the *mizē*.

The civil service itself is quite simple, consisting of an oath in the name of the emperor or of some deity that "she is my wife" and "he is my husband," the latter often uttered in so faint a voice that it must be interpreted by one of the bride's relatives. After the oaths and a certain amount of feasting, the couple and the groom's party depart for the home of the groom's parents, where another celebration is under way.

After the festivities the bride and groom retire to a hut which has been set aside for them for the first week or so of their marriage. The experience of the wedding night cannot be very pleasant for the bride. For the first time in her life she is far from the familiar setting of her parental home. She [864] has had little or no sexual instruction, other than the knowledge that sexual [831] matters are "rude" and that she is supposed to resist her husband's advances as fiercely as possible. The groom, on the other hand, has been taught to regard the nuptial night as a battle in which the bride must be forcibly overcome. If somewhat anxious himself, he at least has the moral, and sometimes the physical, support of his two or three *mizē*. If he is unable to accomplish the defloration, he may call in the first *mizē*—usually a married relative or friend with some experience—who will perform the task. When at last the bride has been conquered, the *mizē* take the bloodstained cloth as proof of the girl's virginity. Their triumphant chant—*ber ambār sabara-lewo*, "he has broken the silver bracelet for you" (for the bride's parents)—is the signal for further rejoicing and revelry among the wedding guests. On the morrow groom and friends discuss the conquest with masculine glee, and the bride remains embarrassed and cowed.

[831] The trauma of the wedding night does not appear to do irreparable damage to the girl, however, for Amhara women have the reputation for enjoying sexuality as fully as the men. Indeed, some Amhara maintain that the girl will respect neither her groom nor herself if she does not put up a fight 585 until subdued. With the consummation of her marriage, moreover, the 885 Amhara girl has become a woman, a *sēt*. This represents a considerable elevation of her status and permits her to acquire certain distinctively adult possessions, usually presented to her by the groom. Traditionally these have included a dress, a double-layered toga (*kutā*), a headband, a mirror, a leg bracelet, a ring, an umbrella, and, in wealthier families, a colored silk robe.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

411 standing at the long church services. Above all it is a weapon of offense and
181 defense, and every Amhara male is supposed to be skilled in its use. When the *dulā* is so employed in Manz, the *bānnā* blanket is usually wrapped around the left arm to form a quick shield, the *dulā* raised high with the right to bring down on the adversary's cranium. The blows are sometimes fatal. The Manzēs are proud of their facility with the lethal stick, and nearly every district in Manz boasts that it is real "*dulā* country."

726 The Manzēs also excel at *shillalā*, the Abyssinian war chant. This is a
533 form of boastful verse—partly intoned, partly shouted—which is declaimed by
181 warriors to "heat their blood" before hitting the warpath. Children in Manz start practicing *shillalā* almost as soon as they leave the breast. The following
[539] is a good specimen of Manz *shillalā:*

> *Agarātchn Māmā agarātchn Lālo wanzātchn Dangazē;*
> *Mān abātu yāzzāl imbi senīl gizē.*
>
> Our land is Māmā, our land is Lālo, our stream the Dangazē;
> What father will order us when *imbi* we say!

Imbi is an interjection used by children to express "No!" There is a double pun in this couplet. *Mān abātu* ("Who is the father?") is a profane idiom meaning "bastard." "To say *imbi*" is another idiom, meaning "to refuse." The second line may thus be also rendered as:

> What bastard dare shove us around when we tell him to keep off our lands!

181 The Manzē code asks that a man be ready to defend his land and church
865 by force. It does not approve wanton aggression. But the Manzē's disposition
152 is notoriously aggressive, for his emotional life is relatively devoid of warmth
[577] and, on the other hand, fighting is so highly rewarded. Children are urged to be adept with the *dulā*. Their temper tantrums are welcomed as signs that they are brave. As a result the men of Manz are often overcome by the impulse toward physical aggression; assault and murder are recurrent events on their fields and trails and at their marketplaces. The discrepancy between the *norm* of physical bravery, which is operative *in certain specified circumstances*, and the *general character trait* of aggressiveness comprises a major theme in their emotional life: they feel obliged to look for justification for the aggressive actions which they have been conditioned to want to carry out. This disposition is illustrated in the words of the Manzē youth who said:

> I want very much to kill somebody. The only problem is I'm not strong enough. Perhaps one day I will be. Why is it all right to kill? People kill sheep, don't they? And sheep are innocent, they don't know anything, don't do any wrong. But man knows, he knows much, and still he does wrong: every man is bad. I wouldn't kill everybody, only the bad ones. If I had an enemy, I would kill him. Maybe I will become a soldier, and kill my country's enemies.

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in time of crisis, but otherwise occupy an inconspicuous place in the Amhara's world. His prayers and oaths, his calendar, and his simple precautions against evil spirits are matters of habit. He has no driving concern with the supernatural in his daily life. 565 121 82 [791]

In the human realm, collective symbols and endeavors are not a major focus of attention. The demands of family, church, and state are, like the seasons, familiar and unproblematic; like nature, these institutions call for simple adjustment. On the personal side, sexuality plays a modest part in the Amhara's outlook. Sex as such is not talked about much. It is enjoyed, beneath the surface of social life, with little fuss or problems other than the usual practical ones. [831]

By contrast, the phenomenon of man's aggression is seen, discussed, pondered, and worried about to a considerable extent. The Amhara sees himself and his fellows as prone to aggression as soon as hunger no longer checks them or festivity has raised their spirits. He is wary of the stranger, forever fearful that the unfamiliar *saw* may attack with the evil eye. He sees the outsider as bent on aggrandizement, constantly plotting to seize his patch of earth. How to keep man's potential for aggression under control is a recurrent question in Amhara experience. The Amhara considers a pitiless regime of fasting to be the only way he can keep his hostile impulses subdued, and believes that children must not be spared the rod lest they be rude and aggressive. He withholds esteem from young men on the grounds that they are prone to throw insults and pick fights. On the other hand, he sets up occasions, like the whipping battles on Buhē and the rough play and insulting at Christmas, when the acting out of aggressive impulses is controlled through being carried on in a legitimate context. He idealizes the men of peace, the priest and the elder, for their work in putting moral pressure on people to observe the fasts and to reconcile quarrels. 565* 121 828 152 183 [609] [785] [861] [578]

At the same time, the Amhara peasant is greatly concerned about ways and means of improving his capacity for aggression, both through the technique of litigation and through violent means. He trains his sons to be brave and to fight well, and chants with enthusiasm the inflaming martial verses of *shīllalā*. He idealizes the fighter as much if not more than the man of peace. Litigants, hunters, and warriors keep vital the Amhara ideal of masculinity, which every peasant must cultivate in order to protect his land and his honor. 565* 121 152 865 183 [577]

The Amhara peasant is simultaneously preoccupied with the stimulation and the control of aggressive behavior. The previously mentioned conflict of norms regarding violence is perhaps the chief area of moral conflict in his thinking about the good life. Though nature, God, and other aspects of man's life occupy much of his attention from time to time, it appears that the phenomenon of human aggression dominates the confrontation between the Amhara peasant and the objects of his experience. 565* 121 152 577 183

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*121	*arām*	"indolent" (literally, "full of feces")
181	*ya-dehā lij*	"son of a poor man"
571	*ya-lēbā lij*	"son of a thief"
578	*yat abāt*	"bastard" (literally, "where is your father?")
[673]	*waslātā*	"lazy no-good"

Other, less direct forms of insult are also widely employed. As was already mentioned, a major use of the wax-and-gold formula is to express insults in so veiled a manner that direct reprisal is unlikely. Another tactic is that of not showing someone the proper respect or in some way manipulating the forms of etiquette to his disadvantage. A favorite anecdote concerning Alaqā Gabra Hānnā illustrates the simultaneous use of both methods: the Alaqā once flattered a donkey driver by bowing quite low to greet him and calling, *Endēt adarātchu?* ("How did you spend the night?"). Only when the man proudly related the episode to his friends, so the story goes, was he made to realize that the greeting was expressed in the plural form (*-atchu*), implying that he and his donkey were being placed in the same category.[18] Still another mode of indirect insult is that known as *ashmur,* in which two friends insult each other vigorously at the top of their voices, the real object of their abuse being a third party who is within earshot.

If the Amhara is by disposition inclined to bestow insults, he is still readier
• [865] to take offense at the slightest hint of one directed at him. One of the tasks of socialization among the Amhara is to sensitize the young person to the various types of insults and to motivate him to strike back when he is so offended. Insults are frequently part of a vicious circle which moves from petty disagreement to serious argument to litigation at court, *dulā* fights,
[576] and even premeditated murder. Breach of etiquette may lead to no less serious consequences. In one court case which the author observed, a man was accused and convicted for addressing his father-in-law, whom he normally addressed by the polite form *ersewo,* with the familiar form *anta* in a moment of anger.

Argumentation, litigation, insulting, and revenge comprise the hard core of social interaction among Amhara. While it is possible to exaggerate the significance of these forms in the total pattern of Amhara social life, there can be little doubt of a strongly dissentious disposition just below the surface, and often at the surface, of Amhara interpersonal relations. Still another axis along which this individualistic disposition tends to be manifest is that of deception and suspicion.

*121 The Amhara is a master at *deception.* With straight face and convincing
181 manner he will relate the most preposterous fictions. The Amhara themselves
571 tend to be aware that this is one of their characteristic activities. When, for
577 example, I replied to the query of an Amhara gentleman that some horn
[123]

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people everywhere with plenty of food and drink, the Amhara outlook would see in such a condition the prelude to mass civil war. 828 261 273

The Good Life

When asked what is their chief goal in life, Amhara peasants frequently respond with the expression *sarto mablāt* ("having worked, to eat"). This response says many things. It reflects their constant preoccupation with the need to eat. It suggests that having enough to feed oneself, one's family, and one's guests is the farthest horizon toward which the peasants normally aspire. It also implies that in order to eat one should work by the sweat of his brow; it praises independence and self-reliance. 565* 261 181 [577]

In raising their children Amhara peasants consciously strive to prepare them for making a living on their own. It is shameful to be dependent on others. It is worse yet to steal. Parents instill in their children a dread of becoming a thief. To be called *lēbā*, or "thief," is—except when in fun—a terrible insult. Stealing is felt to be somewhat worse than murder. In a survey of forty rural Amhara youths asked to name the six worst actions in the eyes of the local populace, eighty-five per cent mentioned stealing, and often under two or three different names; while only sixty per cent mentioned killing, and this answer was sometimes qualified as "killing without justification" or "killing by means of poison." One peasant commented on this question by observing, "You never kill a man unless he has done something wrong; but stealing, that is the sin." 565* 866 867 673 685 682 577

The concept of *sarto mablāt* further implies that work is good. It expresses admiration for the industrious farmer. A majority of our TAT respondents preferred that one among twenty-five cards which showed a peasant hard at work in the fields. Agricultural work is idealized in Abyssinia because it promotes the virtues of independence and honesty. If fate concurs, it may even lead to wealth. And in any case it trains and shows one to be *guabaz*, a hero in man's work, for it is no small feat to toil from dawn till moonlight in the busy seasons or half a day on an empty stomach on fasting days. 565* 461 [125] [577]

Nevertheless, those observers are not wholly wrong who speak, like Griaule, of "the little penchant for work among the people."[18] Status considerations keep the Amhara from making a fetish of work as such. He looks down on the work of artisans because of their association with the evil eye. He avoids when possible unskilled manual labor, for traditionally that has been relegated to slaves or servants from "inferior" tribes. Work for wages is likewise deemed undignified. If one must work for someone else, it should be in the context of a more personal relationship—as a retainer, for example. Women are especially sensitive about this and much prefer to serve a man as his temporary wife than as a salaried housekeeper. Finally, although the peasant aspires "to eat, having worked," he is not wholly impervious to the appeal of the more

854 is a special occasion when father lets the infant ride on his shoulders ("ashkokke alä", lit. rode like a marmoset monkey) while going to visit another hamlet. Men do not carry children on their [165] backs, women's fashion. But parents, particularly fathers, do not take infants too seriously for an additional reason, that of infant mortality which is still high at this stage.

857 Socialization and enculturation begin through the peer-group of playmates, with whom infants have the most frequent, lengthy, and intensive contacts. They tease each other and scold each other into what they, in their playful, experimenting fashion, regard as "proper" behavior; and penalize, haze and discipline each other in the same way. From the adults they take both ideas and hand-me-down objects that have been used, worn-out and discarded, for their play activities, organize them experimentally into child-culture version of their own; for adults rarely produce a toy for children nor give them any new, unused object.

854 There is a cooperative side to this apparently random play
857 activity, leading to the beginning of useful economic activities.
861 Older children teach the younger ones, e.g., to make little whisk-brooms ("wof ger", lit. bird's foot) out of reeds, for which they are rewarded by their mothers with a thick, cake-like bread(similar to "dabye" of monks), which carries the same name, "wof ger". On certain church holidays, particularly "Buhe", younger children accompany older ones on their gift-begging tours.

857 Their powers of observation, active, free and relatively un-
867 structured prior to later discipline, imitate, in their play activities, the social relations, including the family and sexual-social relationships of their elders. When about five years old,

857 boys and girls - for the sexes are not yet separated up to that
867 time - play "house" with considerable sophistication. For example, when they play "marriage", the "father" of the "bride" goes to the "elders" to inquire about the character of the "groom", after the groom's father has initiated the negotiations on the groom's request. They build a "marriage hut", and play at heavy drinking of barley-beer and honey-mead. The "bride" demands a gift from her new "husband", and enters into his "residence". After they have been in there a while, the two best-men, the "mizē", who had been duly sworn to protect her even against her husband, go off to the bride's parents to announce loudly and joyfully that the girl had proven a virgin! Whereupon the "mizē" are feted.

B. The Stage of Childhood, "Reason" Incipient Discipline.

857
868
855 There is no special rite of passage that marks entry into the next stage, at about 5 for girls, about 7 for boys. But there is recognition, at this point, that the girls mature faster and are economically useful at a younger age than boys. Henceforth, girls
[291] play with girls, follow their mothers in their duties, (watch babies, fetch wood) and wear a more complete shift that covers them better; while boys play in boys' groups, follow their fathers, have regular duties assigned them such as taking cattle to and from pasture, and guarding the harvest against birds and baboons. Girl-children are addressed and referred to as "lejja-zārād" (servant maid) for their duties are even more regular than those of
[858] the boys. Both sexes can now be asked in court to choose sides when their parents are being divorced and the guardianship is in question. For they have entered the "age of reason".

855 Neglect of duty is therefore punished, and a father may fly into a sudden rage, beat the child without waiting for an exruse, even hurl a firebrand at the offending boy, so that considerable injuries sometimes occur. Mothers discipline the girls in similar temperamental fashion. But the rage, in either case, is quickly forgotten. There is no pattern of cold discipline, no "woodshed" punishment, rather hot-tempered, quick retribution.

857 Play activity and imitation of adults continues, but it takes on more seasonal and constructive characteristics. This is partly due to the seasonal pattern of the economic activities of boys age 7 to 11 and girls 5 to 14. Formal education in church school rarely begins before 11 in the rural areas, whereupon their play activities become more "extra-curricular".

[526] The seasonal games include the ball game after the harvest is completed, known as "gencheb" or "kwas", and seasonal construction and repair activities. On the church feast of Mikael, little boys have their own outdoor party, eating barley roasted on the stalk, and watching the flirtatious play of adolescent boys and girls.

291 Boys 7 to 11 still wear the tattered, knee length cotton shift, as their basic garment in rural areas, but beg a new one from relatives once a year, for the holy day of "Masgal", or "Timqat". But they are increasingly self-conscious about nudity, and if the tattered shift reveals the pubic area, other boys will haze and playfully beat the offender, saying:

[539] "My father told me not to let a snake warm itself in the sun".

865 In summary, parental discipline in this age group is specific,
867 work-oriented and intermittent; while experimentation with, and

855 socialization by the peer group continues more regularly and fre-
867 quently and on a broader range of activities.

C. Training through the Peer-group; Patterns of Hazing.

867 Parental training during childhood is minimal, and much of enculturation is left to the peer-group which proceeds to function in little-structured fashion, largely through hazing.

Differential behavior of the sexes is largely taught this way. Little boys haze any boy who cries, or seems soft, "geltan", by darkly hinting that he "lacks something" ("täqämättälä"); and, if he is shy in talking and defending himself with his sharp tongue, "qämtalla", effeminate. To prove their physical bravery, boys burn scars ("tässasa") in their own forearms, saying that this will make them "strong", and believing that this will immunize them from showing pain or softness in public. An aggressive, clever
[562] tongue, capable of a wide repertoire of insults that will shatter the adversary's composure, and also include appropriate milder and semi-strong insults, is regarded as male behavior, as "strong" or stronger than brawn. This makes a "known man" ("yätäwäqa säw"). The proverb says:

[539]

> "The son of man, by what is he respected?
> by his seat (position)?
> Not by his seat -
> by his lip. (i.e. cleverness in argument)".

Boys are hazed by other boys for picking on little girls. Hazing is sometimes physical, sometimes by mockery, often both. If physical, it consists of shoving, wrestling, in spontaneous manner, almost never with cold formality. A boy who wants to grow up too fast beyond his peers, i.e. by showing too much preference for the company of elders, is criticized with the proverb:

867 "He, before becoming old,
[539] wants to be serious".

(This is also said of a young man who saves gifts for a bride before he has chosen a girl).

When the adolescent boys take part in the aforementioned ritual mock-battles, younger boys imitate them by staging similar hazing-battles among their age peers.

Little girls are encultured in somewhat similar fashion by peers of their own sex, but more often including some older girls who patronize the younger. Girls are not taught any social graces among commoner Amharas, so that they sit shyly and wordless when in the company of men. Any girl who shows signs of daring is mocked and hazed as "gobba" (daring, enterprising female). Generally the activities of girls are less vident,. At times when boys fight their ritual mock-battles, girls dance rounds and sing in unison.

Both boys and girls are taught to be right-handed, and a "lefty" is extremely rare. They are taught to eat with the right
[264 hand, shake hands with the right, and use the left for wiping
576 themselves with leaves after defecating. But the prohibition
514 against use of the left hand on other occasions is not as severe as among Arabs.

[754] Both sexes fear the supernatural "buda" spirit, also in the shape of human sorcerer and magical hyena. Older boys claim they can distinguish the cry of a real hyena from that of a magical one, and sometimes scare younger children by imitating the howl.

867 Sex differentiation among children is expressed in the hair
302 style. Boys wear a single cockcomb hairlock, girls a ring of hair around the shaven skull which sometimes may contain a center hair-

867 [309] lock in addition. But boys never wear the ring of hair, which would be insulting to them.

864 When sex differentiation becomes more emphasized in the culture, at about seven, sex talk and sex play goes on primarily within the peer group of the same sex. The invitation to do this is "enkä sälantiya", (lit. let us play at guessing impolite matters). They play hide and seek, whisper, re-enact what they have observed their parents do at night in the hut, and phantasy experimenting with sexual possibilities. Children observe a lot in the quiet of the night in the hut, but are careful not to be seen watching. They misunderstand and are greatly puzzled, since no elder will explain "impolite matters" to them. It is impolite even to mention the names of genitals and reproductive organs, such as "knla" for penis, and "ems" for vulva, so they are merely whispered about. In church school, boys are puzzled by overt references to "Mary's womb" and "God's seed", but questions are rejected as "rudeness". Youngsters in town have broader information, because there they hear "rude" talk more often among adults.

D. Toys and Games.

857 524 The economic activities of children in the fields, where they spend much time in guarding but do little intensive labor, is regarded by them more in the nature of play. It is fun to throw rocks at thieving baboons and shoot pebbles at birds, with slingshots made of "nacha" fiber.

The boys also make a bullrearer, "mät", to scare birds away from seeds and mature crops. This instrument is also called, onomatopoetically, "mureemremosh" (from "tägwerämärränä", to

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but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, 186
and social position.

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance 562
rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly
held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the [565]+
wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must
still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course
for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the [539]
proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is
referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar
and trivial talk.

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time
is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of
trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells [539]
us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including
those connected with the saintly figures of Eṭhē Yohānnes and Takla
Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues
and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by [841]
womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden.

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance 858
and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and [864]
cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably.
After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged
copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He
comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first
"age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges
of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders.

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each
of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. 882
The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing
after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches 885
forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This
is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is
not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age
of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and
wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. 888
Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults,
pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon [867]
learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson
was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become
when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder."

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The Good Life

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Egyptian mosques; youth dormitories and community houses in certain tribes in India; the academic and athletic youth organizations of ancient Athens and Sparta; not to mention the numerous teen-age associations of modern Western society.[3]

Here again, the adolescent Amhara is not involved in any such social forms. The advent of puberty is associated with the growing up and out of childhood groups, the gangs of shepherds who spend their days together in work and play. The girl of eleven or twelve is expected to spend all her time at home, under careful supervision. The boy of thirteen or fourteen has abandoned the shepherd's life for farming, in the company of older relatives, and soon becomes increasingly preoccupied with his private economic and erotic interests. His family elders are likely to warn him not to make friends with other youths outside the family.[4] For a number of adolescent boys to get together outside of festive occasions is, to the traditional Amhara mind, a sign that something wrong is afoot.

The absence of adolescent rites and age groups reflects the individualistic character of Amhara social organization, a subject to which we shall turn in chapter vii. Nevertheless, Amhara society catches young people in its grasp and guides them to adulthood just as firmly and surely as does a society which has many collective arrangements for its adolescents. It does this by means of a well-ordered program for growing up. The road from childhood to adulthood is one series of informal, unproblematic stages through which the growing person adjusts to progressively increased responsibilities and progressively detailed norms. After infancy, there is normally no break in continuity in the whole process.

Toward Adult Work Roles

Following a long and indulged infancy, the Amhara child is early taught the rudiments of work responsibility. At the age of three or four, children are given simple chores, such as shooing chickens from grain drying in the sun or collecting bits of firewood. Somewhat older children are expected to protect the crops against birds, farm animals, and baboons. The Amhara becomes apprenticed in the main vocation of his childhood—tending the herds—almost as soon as he can run about, and six-year-old shepherds play a crucial part in the Amhara economy.

Boys retain the responsibility for tending the herds at least until the age of twelve, but by then they have already been initiated into a number of adult work activities. At about eight or nine years the Amhara boy begins to do his share of the harvesting, sickling the wheat, barley, *teff*, or beans and loading the crops in piles he will help transport to the threshing place. He becomes adept at directing the cattle round and round the threshing floor and at winnowing the grain from the chaff. At times he helps with the weeding.

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and 857
for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly 868
useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *ĭnjarā.* [252]
Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make [262]
good *doro wat,* a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of
an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to 883*
manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is 868
often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside [582]
her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the 885
assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous 883*
throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter 857
of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through 867
virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, 836
a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin 183
at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys. [357]

586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have re-
885 sulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or
[851] else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a com-
[586] plete adult, a *mulu sèt* or *mulu saw*.
[581]

From Generation to Generation

867 Through the agency of his [redacted] of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

[577] The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profes-
[779] sion of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

867 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central
779 symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern
785 a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout matura-
262 tion. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early
577 age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatá*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

867 At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction
779 of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbát* ("soul-father" or
793 confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may
577 either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her
[785] husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing
[688] penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

tian rules as breaking the fasts. By adjusting to the adult fasting schedule 867 •
and submitting to the moral authority of the soul-father the young person's 779
membership in the Amhara religious community is being solidly established. 793
With the advent of full adulthood, around the age of thirty, the Amhara 577
is ready to observe the most severe fast of all, the forty-eight-hour period 785
of total abstinence before Easter.

Forms of obedience and respect comprise the principal fiber of the Amhara 867
social fabric, as we shall see more clearly in chapter vii. They are perhaps 577
the most fundamental lessons of Amhara socialization. As soon as the child 181
is capable of understanding he is made aware that all individuals older than
he is, and all those in higher social positions, must be shown the most fastidious deference. Not to do so is a sign of being *bälagē* ("rude"), a trait which [861]
is corrected by harsh physical punishment. The readiness to respect superiors [857]
appears as early as in children's play groups, where the oldest boy spontaneously dictates the activities of the group and receives unquestioning obedience from the others.

For girls after ten and boys after twelve the training for obedience and 867
respect is stepped up as they come under a more constant regimen of control by their parents and other elders. They are ordered to do a considerable amount of work for the household and are expected to be at the beck and call of any individual of higher status who tells them to do something. Thus they become conditioned to show automatic subservience to any figure of authority in later life, be it the family patriarch, community elder, priest, or political official.

His family of orientation is thus the primary agent for transmitting to the 86
Amhara adolescent the more general societal norms as well as for readying 593
him for his adult roles. In order to secure continuity of the Abyssinian social system from generation to generation, specific mechanisms outside the family, such as puberty rites or adolescent age groups, have not been required to mediate the transition to adulthood.

Personal Identity and Variant Patterns[8]

The most important single determinant of the personality of an Amhara 155
appears to be his identification with the parent or parent-figure of the same sex. "Like father, like son" is both ideology and reality in Abyssinia. The attainment of ego identity is therefore normally a matter of imitation rather than discovery or invention. It represents an unfolding of dispositions that have been long internalized and steadily nursed by the consistent regards of an approving milieu.

Assuming the appropriate psychosexual identity is, it appears, hardly ever 838
problematic. Although members of the same sex typically kiss upon greeting, [55] [671]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan.

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners.

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations.

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"?

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shir*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 Amhara society as marked by a moderately high degree of independence.
181 This is to say that Amhara society gives relatively wide rein to individual impulse in action. It is not to say that Amhara culture places a high value on the moral worth of the individual personality. That is a separate question, which we shall now proceed to explore.

INDIVIDUALITY VERSUS CONFORMITY AND ANONYMITY

*121 The extent to which individual personality is valued in a society is reflected
181 primarily in two aspects of its culture. One of these comprises its processes
156 of education, in the broadest sense of the term; the other, its forms of art. The character of these aspects of culture reveal, respectively, the degree of concern for the *development* of an individualized self and the degree of concern for the *expression* of an individualized self.

Education and Socialisation

*121 Obedience and politeness are the overriding goals in bringing up children
155 among the Amhara. After a prolonged and indulged infancy, the Amhara
861 child from about three years on is subjected to a regime of discipline and
867 repression. He is taught to fulfill without question any request made by any
[854] older person. He is conditioned to stand quietly whenever guests are present and to stand facing the wall while his parents or guests eat their dinner. If addressed by elders, especially those outside his immediate family, he is expected to reply in a barely audible whisper—a norm that is sometimes adhered to with such pathetic faithfulness that it has become the object of gentle satire in a short story by the young Ethiopian writer, Tadesse Liban.[26] Children who are noisy and disrespectful are referred to contemptuously by the term *bälagë*, meaning "rude."

*121 The desires and interests of an Amhara child are not taken into account
155 by those who raise him. He is provided with a bare minimum of clothes,
855 and little effort is expended in procuring him playthings,[27] although in some
524 families little dolls made of rags (*ashängulit*) are produced. Children have
*121 a rich play-life with their peers, but this consists mostly in imitating various
155 adult activities. Organized games occur very rarely, the chief one—*gannä*—
857 being played as a rule but once a year, on Christmas Day.[28] The traditional songs and dances are learned from other children while tending the herds, but children are not encouraged to perform them in front of adults. The
*121 opinions of children are never expressed, let alone consulted. Indeed, in some
155 commoners' families the children are treated little better than the farm ani-
855 mals, if that well. One occasionally sees a peasant woman or servant directing
858 her child to perform some chore by throwing clods of dirt or manure at him

857 boys and girls - for the sexes are not yet separated up to that
867 time - play "house" with considerable sophistication. For example, when they play "marriage", the "father" of the "bride" goes to the "elders" to inquire about the character of the "groom", after the groom's father has initiated the negotiations on the groom's request. They build a "marriage hut", and play at heavy drinking of barley-beer and honey-mead. The "bride" demands a gift from her new "husband", and enters into his "residence". After they have been in there a while, the two best-men, the "mizā", who had been duly sworn to protect her even against her husband, go off to the bride's parents to announce loudly and joyfully that the girl had proven a virgin! Whereupon the "mizā" are feted.

B. The Stage of Childhood, "Reason" Incipient Discipline.

857
868 There is no special rite of passage that marks entry into the
855 next stage, at about 5 for girls, about 7 for boys. But there is recognition, at this point, that the girls mature faster and are economically useful at a younger age than boys. Henceforth, girls
[291] play with girls, follow their mothers in their duties, (watch babies, fetch wood) and wear a more complete shift that covers them better; while boys play in boys' groups, follow their fathers, have regular duties assigned them such as taking cattle to and from pasture, and guarding the harvest against birds and baboons. Girl-children are addressed and referred to as "lejja-zarād" (servant maid) for their duties are even more regular than those of
[858] the boys. Both sexes can now be asked in court to choose sides when their parents are being divorced and the guardianship is in question. For they have entered the "age of reason".

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

857 when even brooks are swollen, but rivers soon become too dangerous.
524 During the first season, when they learn to swim, a rope is tied
868 around the child's waist and held by an adolescent or young adult. At this time boys make waterpistols, "tiqqosh" with a bamboo syringe; also peashooters shooting small pebbles with a bamboo strip acting as spring. Boys also make panpipe flutes from stout reeds, in preparation for "spring".

E. Formal Education and Extra-curricular Activities.

872 Basic education, already described in connection with the church, now falls into two types: the traditional church school; and the modern-style elementary school. Overlaps are beginning to appear.

Until a generation ago, the traditional church school had a complete monopoly on education, and for the vast majority of all children this is still true at this writing. It resembles in structure and function the "kuttab" school of the Muslims. Boys of peasant parents usually do not enroll before the age of 11, for until then their economic services are utilized fully, and only when they approach adolescence are the needs for their education felt by parents.

874 Most of the boys attend church school for only three years, for if they wish to study beyond what the village priest can teach them they must leave home for another district or province, e.g. a monastery school. Since the peasant family usually cannot or does not wish to sponsor this, the boy who insists becomes a "wandering" student, begging his way. Usually he goes for "zema"

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Egyptian mosques; youth dormitories and community houses in certain tribes in India; the academic and athletic youth organizations of ancient Athens and Sparta; not to mention the numerous teen-age associations of modern Western society.[8]

Here again, the adolescent Amhara is not involved in any such social forms. The advent of puberty is associated with the growing up and out of childhood groups, the gangs of shepherds who spend their days together in work and play. The girl of eleven or twelve is expected to spend all her time at home, under careful supervision. The boy of thirteen or fourteen has abandoned the shepherd's life for farming, in the company of older relatives, and soon becomes increasingly preoccupied with his private economic and erotic interests. His family elders are likely to warn him not to make friends with other youths outside the family.[4] For a number of adolescent boys to get together outside of festive occasions is, to the traditional Amhara mind, a sign that something wrong is afoot.

The absence of adolescent rites and age groups reflects the individualistic character of Amhara social organization, a subject to which we shall turn in chapter vii. Nevertheless, Amhara society catches young people in its grasp and guides them to adulthood just as firmly and surely as does a society which has many collective arrangements for its adolescents. It does this by means of a well-ordered program for growing up. The road from childhood to adulthood is one series of informal, unproblematic stages through which the growing person adjusts to progressively increased responsibilities and progressively detailed norms. After infancy, there is normally no break in continuity in the whole process.

Toward Adult Work Roles

Following a long and indulged infancy, the Amhara child is early taught the rudiments of work responsibility. At the age of three or four, children are given simple chores, such as shooing chickens from grain drying in the sun or collecting bits of firewood. Somewhat older children are expected to protect the crops against birds, farm animals, and baboons. The Amhara becomes apprenticed in the main vocation of his childhood—tending the herds—almost as soon as he can run about, and six-year-old shepherds play a crucial part in the Amhara economy.

Boys retain the responsibility for tending the herds at least until the age of twelve, but by then they have already been initiated into a number of adult work activities. At about eight or nine years the Amhara boy begins to do his share of the harvesting, sickling the wheat, barley, *teff*, or beans and loading the crops in piles he will help transport to the threshing place. He becomes adept at directing the cattle round and round the threshing floor and at winnowing the grain from the chaff. At times he helps with the weeding.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 857 868 Somewhat later, when he reaches ten or eleven, the Amhara boy begins to accustom himself to the plow, perhaps trying his hand at it from time to time while his father rests for lunch. Intermittently his ability increases, and by the age of fourteen or so—earlier if the family is short of help—he is given a regular share of the plowing. This may be limited to one or two hours a day at first, but before many seasons elapse he is ready to undertake a full day's work, along with his older relatives.

*883 868 In his mid-teens the Amhara boy is normally given a small part of his father's land to use for himself. The boy has full charge of plowing and harvesting this land and selling the crops at market. The crops or money he [434] earns thereby is referred to as *gulammā* ("private possession") and is set aside for helping him to get started on his own later on. Eventually the *gulammā* will be used to purchase new clothes, an ox, and presents for his bride. Year by year the father may add a bit more land for the boy's private management, though all together it does not often amount to a very large quantity; he may produce, say, 150 to 200 liters of grain for his *gulammā* in a year (in the Amhara system of measures, about 2 *dāwlā*). When he has saved enough [582] grain to fill a *riq*, a large wicker storage bin plastered inside with cow dung, he is considered ready to get married and strike out on his own.

By the time a boy begins to accumulate his *gulammā* he has learned nearly everything he needs to know for performing the work which will be expected of him as an adult. In his late teens the education is completed, through the mastery of such special techniques as fashioning the yoke and wooden attachments for the plow, and constructing the walls and roof for a house.

The work life of the Amhara peasant is thus a simple continuation of activities with which he has long been familiar. The same is true, *mutatis* [463] *mutandis*, for those who, following their fathers' footsteps, become priests or sorcerers, governors or warriors, artisans or traders. In these cases, moreover, the foregoing pattern applies to a great extent, since the latter roles are often combined with an agricultural economic base and way of life. (Special aspects of some of these variant patterns will be discussed below.)

857 868 This pattern of gradually increased work responsibility is conspicuous in the case of girls. While shepherding and other childhood tasks are shared by both sexes, the Amhara girl begins to do distinctively female work at about six or seven. First she learns to clear seeds from cotton, and to spin, by hand. Later on she is introduced to the more taxing female chores, like fetching water and grinding grain. The progressive increase of the girl's work load is visibly illustrated by the graduated sizes of clay jugs used for carrying [415] water. When she begins to fetch water, the young girl carries a tiny jug, called a *gambo*. As she becomes older and stronger she is given a larger size, a small *enserā*. Finally, the mature female carries the large *enserā*, a jug that holds as much as twenty liters.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *Injarā*. Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make good *doro wat*, a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 The local nobility, on the other hand, were eminences whose lives and reputations were bound to a more circumscribed locale. While the non-royal nobility, or *makuānnent* in the stricter sense, performed as high dignitaries at the imperial court and governors of large provinces, the local nobility were district chiefs and judges, or even simply wealthy landowners, who enjoyed considerable deference. Though they might not be known outside of their home regions, these men were, for the mass of the population, the lords of existence. *Ka-Gondar negus / yāgar āmbārās,* "the petty district chief [is obeyed] more than the Gondar king"[19] expresses folk wisdom on the subject. The Amharic terms which designate this class of men are *bālābbāt* and *shum,* terms we shall want to consider more closely below.

565 184 Despite these distinctions among members of the upper stratum of Abyssinian society, with respect to their general orientation and style of life they differed only in degree. They created and shared what might be called a "gentry subculture," even though it was not so differentiated from the general culture as was the case in Europe and China. In the present context, it will be meaningful to treat them as a single status group.

565 184 86 [576] Special manners and skills were self-consciously taught to children of the *makuānnent,* most of which remain part of the gentry subculture today. An etiquette of instinctual inhibition is taught. Some attention is given, for example, to toilet training, which is spontaneous among peasant children. Spitting in public is proscribed. Physical aggression is discouraged in favor of the more subtle forms of satire and patient manipulation of others. A quiet, reserved manner of speaking is stressed, in contrast with the less inhibited and cruder self-expression of the peasantry. Dignity of comportment is expected at all times; a noble should not, for example, express great enthusiasm or surprise over anything. Sobriety is inculcated as a virtue; alcohol is *la-çhawā lijj* [293] *mādasetchā / la-bālagē māzabābatchā* ("for the nobleman's son a stimulant, for the commoner an intoxicant"). In short, the gentry subculture stresses the general ideal of bringing a child up to be conspicuously genteel, or *çhawā.*

565 184 868 [871] [534] [883] Sons of the nobility have traditionally followed a privileged curriculum.[20] They were given lessons in horseback riding and weaponry at an early age. They were also taught how to swim, an uncommon skill among the Abyssinians. Reading would often be taught, for which schooling a man of the church might be brought in as a tutor, or the boy might be sent for a while to a monastery. He might also learn how to play the *baganā,* the ten-stringed lyre used to accompany certain forms of religious and plaintive secular songs. Instead of spending his teen-age years at the plow, which was regarded as beneath his dignity, the noble boy would follow his father to court and observe the ways of litigation and the manner of passing judgments; or he might be sent as a page to the court of the king or some great lord.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

The instruction of girls in noble families was not so different from that of peasant girls, though they were spared some of the menial drudgery. The *çhawā* girl would be taught all the household arts, but it was understood that she would be provided with numerous slaves to do the work after marriage. Her own adult chores would be limited to the preparation of *ṭajj*, the beverage of the nobility, and special dishes for her husband; while the preparation of *ṭallā* and food for guests would be the work of domestics. 565 184 868 [567] [273]

The style of life of the nobility is colored above all by a seemingly unlimited command of deference. They are addressed as "my lord" by all comers, and waited on in a hundred ways wherever they go. Every "big man" is attended by a flock of servants and retainers, who accompany him on trips and spare him the slightest exertion. This is so elemental a feature of Amhara culture that big men are commonly referred to with the associative prefix *enna-*; for example, *enna-Dajāzmātch Hailu*, meaning "Dajāzmātch Hailu and his men." 565 576

The social space of a nobleman is crowded with the issuing of commands. When he visits the home of another, he orders the servants and young people there just as imperiously as if he were in his own home. The wives of the nobility develop much the same manner, though from a more passive position. They spend a good deal of their time sitting on their beds and issuing orders. This sort of indolent, vegetative existence has produced the obese figure and morose countenance for which some Abyssinian ladies have been noted. On the other hand, from her particular vantage point the noble lady has often played an influential and enlightened part in court and regional politics. 565 [142]

Conspicuous consumption among the *makuānnent* thus takes the form of a surfeit of servants. The household of a nobleman of modest rank might boast, in addition to numerous maidservants who procure and prepare food and drink for the establishment, as many as ten to fifteen male servants. Plowden has left us a description of some of their functions: 565 592 357 556

> One carries your shield, and whenever you go out he saddles your mule and accompanies you, and in the house he makes himself generally useful about your person; another makes your mead, arranges it, and is also perhaps a gunner, and supplies you with game; another is doorkeeper and order-keeper generally. One or two, older and wiser, are counsellors, and their knowledge of the country, and of customs and tricks, is of the greatest service; another has charge of the corn, watching that the maidservants do not steal, and arranging the allowance of all the rest; others are grass-cutters only, according to the number of your beasts; another is a wood-cutter for firewood, very necessary in a country where they have no coal, and the wilderness is free to all.[21]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qeṣel*—will be discussed below.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

121 nally, data were gathered relating to the modes of acquiring, exercising, validating, and conserving powers of prophylaxis, diagnosis, and therapy. Here, as in the other areas of data gathering, a necessary distinction was made between the perceptions of practitioners and those of their clients.

*793 • 869 75 197 539 While the secular medical traditions of Ethiopia are exclusively oral, powerful cleric healers known as debteras have traditionally employed diagnositc, prophylactic, and therapeutic texts written in Ge'ez, the language of the Church, and in the vernacular. Numerous *793 114 127 debtera texts gave been collected in the libraries of Europe and the United States, and valuable translations, most notably by Marcel Griaule, Deborah Lifchitz, and Stefan Strelcyn, have been published. These published translations, together with translations made in the field with the assistance of clerics, have been utilized in the writing of those sections of Chapter Four dealing with the debtera's medical texts.

121 171 Although the focus of this dissertation is limited to the region in which field research was conducted, it should not be overlooked that the Amhara share important cultural affinities with peoples, now largely Islamic, occupying lands extending from the eastern Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.

000 The highlands of Begemder, Tigre, and Eritrea form

*278
*757 which is mainly responsible for the junior wosfat
*759 therapist to limit his therapy to simply providing the unprocessed medicaments.

*278 One of the remaining redundant pairs,
757 (Ikek:Kabiy:k:I) with (Ikek:Kabiy:k*:I) links two
• 869 brothers of Lemmariet, who obtained the therapy from a
[602] member of their mother's natal ambilineage core. The remaining redundant therapies are all traced to a single individual, Asfow (now deceased):

Therapy notation	Asfow's link to herbalist
(Koruba:Seci/Ateci:i:I+)	FaFa, via Asfow's first Wi
(Koruba:Seci/Ateci:i:I)	MoFa, via Asfow's second Wi
(Koruba:Seci:i:I+)	SiHu, Si is Asfow's second Wi
(Koruba:Seci:i:I)	FaSiHu, Fa is preceeding entry

Only in a minority of cases is a professional therapy transmitted to two or more residents of a parish who may practice it in comeptition with one another. Asfow did this by transmitting his therapy to three individuals whose geneaological ties to one another proved remote enough to preclude the tacit agreement which might enable closer kinsmen to vest exclusive professional rights in a single individual. Asfow's actions can be traced to two considerations. First, this therapy has low commercial value; it has a poor reputation for effectiveness, and it addresses an acute ailment, koruba (a fatal pox). Because a kuruba episode is character-

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ized by a duration of only twenty-four hours from first prodromes to its termination, clients can be expected only from the parish and its immediate environs. Since clients of the herbalist's own parish are rarely expected to pay for any but the cure of a Medhaniyt Awakiy, the practice of this koruba therapy is likely to amount to little more than a modest presentation given by the herbalist.

In contrast, Nikersa:Kitabiy:A:I is a valuable therapy directed against a serious but not acute ailment. [778] This therapy consists of an amulet containing a variety of exotic materials, and of instructions for washing the affected area. The therapy was brought to Tikurmidir by Berey, the second wife of Asfow. Once Berey's eldest son, Gitahun, reached adolescence, his mother used him as her medhaniyt korac for gathering the amulet materials and as her apprentice in the manufacutre of the "pharmacologically" elaborate amulet container. Later, when Gitahun's own eldest son, Ayialuw, reached adolescence, he replaced his father as Berey's medhaniyt korac. After Berey's death, Gitahun, then in his fifties, began his practice of the nikersa therapy, retaining Ayialuw as medhaniyt korac and apprentice. Had the therapy addressed a more common ailment, it is likely that Gitahun would have begun practicing it prior to his mother's death, initially serving neighbors and kinsmen, while

*757 his mentor restricted her professional services to
• [869] clients from outside the parish.

Among the herbalist therapies practiced in Tikurmidir and Lemmariet, there are, predictably, those which provide successful cures or satisfactory palliatives for certain non-serious ailments (particularly, wosfat, kosow, kurtimat, and wuwgat). Since this repertoire of disease-name specialties is found in most Amhara hamlets, a client generally need go no farther than a hamlet herbalist for treatment. Beyond these, the assortment of therapies
*[192] practiced in any hamlet is adventitious; for example, epidemiologically, pharmacologically, and prognostically it is no more explicable for kuntina (leprosy) and koruba (fatal pox) therapies to be practiced in Tikurmidir than for timan anise (elephantiasis) or weresiyn (typhus) to be found in their stead. The character of a particular assortment oftherapies within a region has important professional consequences for the herbalists of this area.
[628] Where an herbalist practices a therapy in the absence of redundant therapies, he can expect to attract clients from the entire area of his exclusive practice, even though his therapy may be a weak one. Thus, the contrast between a therapy serving only clients of the herbalist's hamlet and a therapy serving a wider population cannot always be explained on the basis of differences of healing power, but in many cases may also depend upon whether

and, second, the exercise of political prerogative, [642] delegated by the state, with which to bestow favors and to direct sanctions. The debtera seeks power elsewhere, for he is a man without fields, kinfolk, or politically significant ties. It is in this quest, that he travels the path of apparent contradiction and real compromise, a path which ends in an attempt to wrest power from satanic sources, unmediated by any moral authority, and to legitimize it sui generis.

This chapter describes the debtera's life history, in terms of the sequence of recruitment criteria which an individual must meet before becoming a debtera, the decisions which he must make between alternative career paths, the knowledge, skills, and power which are acquired by the man who follows the path to debtera-hood.

Deferred to the concluding chapter is a comparison between the debtera-healer and the secular practitioner, and a description of the culmination of the debtera's quest for power, the satanic contract.

LEAVING THE PARISH

• [869] Among the services provided at the parish church is
* [192] instruction in the Amhara syllabary (fidal), and the ecclesiastical subjects required for ordination as a deacon (diyakon) and, subsequently, as a priest (keys).

* 756
* 793 Literacy, per se, is not the goal of enrollment, but is
* 869 percieved rather as a pre-requisite for studying the
* [192] Gospels (wangél), the psalter (dawiyt), and a variety of prayers, pursuant to participating in the Mass (kidasiy) as an ecclesiastic of the parish.

621 Within a parish, only a minority of households send
869 boys to the church school; these are generally ristemma
* 793 households, each sending a single priest-candidate in
233 any one generation. Because attendance at the school
[602] precludes shepherding, the common lot of young boys, the student's family must find a substitute shepherd for him; a younger sibling is usually available for this task, but, if not, a collateral or even non-kinsman may be obtained. Indeed, the age at which a boy begins his studies (generally, between seven and thirteen years) is often determined by when this substitute can be found. The parish school is suspended, however, during periods of intensive agricultural activities, of harvesting, threshing, and winnowing.

* 793 Although considerations of piety influence a man to
423 seek ordination for his son, self-interest generally do-
593 minates. The achievement of priesthood validates a
621 family's claims to church lands (yimeskol mariet). If
554 the neophyte's father is himself a priest, his son's or-
* [192] dination means freedom from bothersome performances in the Mass. If the father is not a priest, but anyway

*793 423 593 621 554 holds priest land because he is a ristena of a founding ambilineage of the parish, his son's ordination means that the lands or payments until now turned over to a stranger priest (in lieu of a ristena priest) can be kept within the family.

*793 621 581 [839] *[192] [586] The durability of the ties which bind a priest to his natal parish are reinforced by his marriage. Most peasants are married in a "secular union" (yaluwkurban migabat), which excludes neither divorce not extramarital sexual adventures.[21] The priest, on the other hand, must be married, and it can be only as a "communion marriage" (bikurban migabat), an indissoluble sacrament of the Church which commits the spouses to sexual fidelity and forbids even remarriage. [572] Thus, the priest is cut off from carousing in the talla houses of the town. He must instead confine his comraderie to the courtyard of the parish church, separated from the persons and experiences which might otherwise lead him away from his parish fields.

*793 621 • 869 Thus enrollment in the parish school is conceived

[21] Two other forms of marriage, associated with a man on travels or living in town, are yidomoz migabat (which lasts for a contractual period) and yilijinat (providing only exclusive sexual rights to the woman).

*793 621 869 241 [732] as a means for diesing and strengthening a risteña family's economic and social interests within the parish. There are two conspicuous exceptions. Should a boy bear a physical disability so severe that he will be unable to perform the basic subsistence activities of Amhara men, particularly plowing, he may be enrolled in the parish school as a prelude to a non-agricultural career beyond his natal parish. The alternatives are few. [463] [441] [563] work as an artisan is appropriate for Muslim and Falasha, but shameful for an Amhara; while employment as a merchant is less objectionable, the peasant is generally without the necessary skills, contacts, and capital; military service is beyond his abilities; thus, only the Church and government remain. Regarding the Church, the priesthood is closed to him, since a priest must be physically whole, and capable of standing unassisted during [647] the performance of the Mass. The remaining ecclesiastical and government career choices assume that a boy will achieve literacy at the parish school and subsequently *793 621 869 593 depart from his natal community. The second exception to the local focus of the parish school, is the small number of boys who are offspring of debtera-teachers serving in parish churches. The ties of these men to their parishes-of-residence are usually only professional, and they are rarely risteñas, it is moreover their professional ethos which influences them to seek an extensive

ecclesiastical education for their sons.

However, it is not only the cripple and blind, or the landless sons of full-time ecclesiastics who find in the parish school the means to leave the agricultural community. In reality, they constitute only a minority of the boys who leave the parish. For among those who are the physically-whole offspring of ristemas, there are some who find objectionable the prospect of a life-time as a farmer, subordinated to a father's wishes and interests, and bound to a single woman. Where such inchoate dissatisfaction exists, it may be further stimulated by the parish teacher, particularly if he is a debtera.

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The teaching at the parish school is performed by a local priest or monk[22] who is competent in the required subjects. In the absence of a suitable local man, a stranger monk or debtera is employed. The debtera is a Church scholar of sorts, who also leads the chanting of the liturgy during the performance of the Mass. He is an important model for the restive student, for his life provides an alternative and challenge to the social

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[22] A "monk" (manakwosa) is a mature unmarried deacon, a widowed priest, or a layman who has renounced material acquisitions and has vowed celibacy. Only the first two are literate and, therefore, potential teachers. There are, in addition, anchorites (bahatahwy).

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

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expectations that have gone unquestioned by other members of the boy's community. Significantly, the debtera is observed to enjoy a wide range of acquaintances beyond the peasants of the parish; he is a man known to have travelled throughout the northern highlands, to study at famous churches and monasteries, to visit great towns and markets. Beyond this, he is a man who has acquired power and prestige while free from the constraints of parental authority, as a member of an association of equals living beyond the bounds of the rigid status hierarchy of traditional Ethiopia.

For many students, it is the prospect of ending their studies rather than their wanderlust which they find discomforting. As a priest, a man is unlikely to progress in his knowledge of the liturgy and the scriptures, for he is neither likely to find a suitable teacher in his home region, nor are his agricultural, ecclesiastical and familial responsibilities likely to allow him the leisure to participate in such studies. What is more, the debtera-teacher, in casual remarks, paints the priesthood as a poor choice for the bright student; he is neither loath to comment upon what he considers priestly ignorance, nor is he reluctant to encourage his better students in the fulfillment of what he regards as their superior abilities.

The debtera provides a second service for the dis-

• 869 sident student by familiarizing him with the network of churches, monasteries, and academies which constitute the stations along which the student will progress once he leaves his natal parish.

*[192] The completion of psalter (dawiyd) is frequently considered a sign of the student's readiness to be tested by the local bishop (abuna) for certification as a deacon. The boy is fifteen or sixteen by this time, and the recipient of church fields in return for his performance in the Mass; with his marriage a few years later, he becomes a priest. The boy bent on a debtera career generally waits until he has been certified a deacon, since this is considered a prerequisite for enrollment in his first debtera school.

*793 With the exceptions already cited, a man is certain
869 to oppose his son's departure, since, sentiment aside,
621 the boy's move usually represents a significant economic
593 loss. When he leaves his natal parish, he does so sec-
166 retly, journeying to a distant debtera, in order to conceal his new residence from his father. Thus, he begins his debtera career without kinfolk or friends to protect him, without resources to meet his subsistence needs.[23]

[871] [23]Since liberation, government (secular) schools
[178] have offered an alternative to an ecclesiastical education pursuant to government employment. The effects of this
[369] have been limited, however, since only an estimated 3% pass beyond the eighth grade (ESA 1965:198). In addition children of townsmen and non-Amhara are disproportionately represented in these classes.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

THE STUDENT LIFE

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The debtera's ecclesiastical studies are divided into three broad categories: 1) Kiyne, versifications in the form of conundrums; 2) subjects relevant to the celebration of the Mass, such as zeyma (liturgical music), akwawkum (liturgical dance), and a variety of liturgical chants (e.g., soma digum, songs and hymns of Lent); and 3) tergum, scriptural interpretation. Ideally, a student spends sufficient time under a master (memher) in each area to attain proficiency according to the standards of his mentor. In addition, a debtera is expected to acquire mastery of one subject so that he may, in turn, offer instruction in it.

The Kiyne Curriculum. Most often, these studies begin with kiyne. In the kiyne-drills, the student acquires the knowledge of Ge'ez, the language of the Church, and the parent tongue of Amharic and Tigrinya. In his ecclesiastical studies at the parish school, the student had learned a bit of Ge'ez vocabulary, but nothing of its grammar (irabata). Attendance at the kiyne school is believed to further instill habits of diligence and concentration, and the acuity of mind necessary for his later studies; further, kiyne studies are a prerequisite for versifications which the debtera performs during Church services.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
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The routine of the kiyne school varies little from day to day. After the sun has set, the kiyne master comes before his students, who number between fifteen and forty; he extemporizes a kiyne, perhaps one praising the Almighty, or demeaning a ganel. This the student memorizes, and over the next twenty-four hours, he composes an original kiyne to match the intent and subtleties incorporated in the master's own. The next night, the master again engages his students, who offer up their kiyne for a critique by the master. Once more, the master provides a kiyne for emulation on the following night. Although kiyne can be composed in Amharic as well as Ge'ez, masters usually versify only in the liturgical language, which the student learns concomitant to the exploration of kiyne.

Anxieties and Dangers at the Kiyne School. During his stay at the kiyne academy, the student is faced with serious challenges to achieving professional goals and maintaining physical well-being. Students consider the kiyne curriculum to be very difficult, and even the most gifted student cannot attain acceptable proficiency in less than two or three years of continuous and conscientious application. The more ordinary student can look forward to five or more years at this particularly dif-

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• 869 ficult task.[24] In addition to the problem of mastering the subtleties of kiyne (a problem often exacerbated by a master's indirection), the student is confronted with the prospect of memorizing the great amounts of scriptural and liturgical information.

Initially, the novice student is warmly received by his peers, who refer to him as "younger brother", and offer him assistance in establishing himself, and learning the curriculum. The atmosphere of helpfulness soon gives way to one of competition, as the established students come to regard the new boy as a rival for the master's personal instruction and encouragement. Although overt friendliness persists, the relations between a youth and most of his fellow students are underwritten by intense suspicion and rivalry.

[877] The master does not distribute his assistance
[875] equitably, but plays favorites, according to differences in students' abilities as well as personally conceived

[24] Kiyne students are, in general, drawn from among the most promising students of the parish school. Even so, the curriculum sometimes proves too difficult, and the students may seek out a kiyne master practicing an easier "school" of kiyne. Among kiyne students studying in Gondar, the gonj kiyne was reputed to be appreciably more difficult than wosera kiyne (both named after Ethiopian monasteries).

*793 *869 876 criteria. His personal interest means to the student rapid advancement through the curriculum, dining at the master's table, and enjoying privileged information of a non-ecclesiastical nature. Without his patronship, a student is committed to years of uncertainty and physical misery, scraping to meet his subsistence needs, paying his "tuition" in demeaning services, such as gathering the master's wood and tilling his garden, and in deferential performances, particularly washing the master's feet and those of his visitors.

*793 869 The kiyne student is further troubled by the many ailments which are his lot. He lives, with one or two [342] of his mates, in a wretched lean-to of twigs and wild grasses, which proves to be poor protection against the [291] cold winter rains. Often he owns only the toga on his [515] back, and it, like him, remains unwashed for the dura- [164] tion of the long dry season. Thus, ikek (scrofula) becomes his badge, and kurtimat (joint pains) and weba [262] (fever) his recurrent companions. The student's diet *[192] is his special concern, since it conspicuously lacks the combination of wholesome wot (stew) and injera (pancake- [735] like bread) necessary to sustain good health. He ob- [164] tains most of his food by begging in the town and local hamlets, where he generally receives scraps of stale injera bread, always inadequate and potentially pathogenic (i.e., likift bearing, threatening fever and

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[262] severe abdominal pain). The wot he eats is invariably
[164] the humblest type, aliyca, lacking the cayenne-based in-
[735] gredient (berberiy) necessary to man and digestive wosfat.
+[192] His injera is made of pulses instead of proper cereals,
and often he has nothing but a handful of parched grain
(kolow) with which to satisfy his hunger and truculent
[164] wosfat. In addition to persistent abdominal complaints
+[192] (yihod himem), students are often afflicted with dafint
(night-blindness) which is particularly stressful in the
context of the student's nocturnal activities.

[231] There is also danger from animals, the vicious and
[735] often rabid hamlet dogs, which plague him as he begs;
[776] from ganels which gather outside the church yard waiting
[514] to suffocate him in his sleep, to tempt him to sacrilege
with their calls just as they tempted Saint Basil, to
waylay him when he goes beyond the church yard for noc-
turnal urination.

The Growth of Mercantile Interests. With the excep-
tion of those few students who enjoy the kiyne master's
patronage, or who receive parental support, the young
scholars must periodically interrupt the course of study
for excursions into the lowlands in order to meet their
[221] subsistence needs. In early September, after the rains
[222] have ended and the countryside is covered with verdure,
*[192] kiyne students journey to the kola lands to gather the
wild gramta grass. The gramta must be sun dried for

• 869 five weeks before it is ready to be woven into a tsifit,
222 a food hamper and table around which the Amhara meal is eaten. Because the students cannot afford so long a hiatus from their studies, the grasses are dried only a week or so, in order to lighten them for the trip back
[735] to the highlands. During their stay in the lowlands, the students support themselves by begging food from local farmers. Enterprising students often gather twice the amount of gramta they can carry, leaving the surplus to be taken up to the highlands in January.

+793 The gramta is brought to the student's hut at the
869 kiyne school for storage and drying. Although the stu-
[442] dents are anxious to sell immediately upon drying, both price and demand are low then, since the weavers, peasant
[286] women, have no leisure for tsifit making until March. In
*[192] the meanwhile, the student makes either traditional umbrellas of gramta for sale at the regional market, or seleyen, shrouds which he sells in the churchyard to mourners.

[434] Students also beg crops, a portion of which they consume and the remainder of which is sold at market. For a four week period, during October and November, the student begs a traditional double handful of pulses from farmers. During a two to three month period from February to April, students beg cereals and other crops (especially, cayenne). Because the amounts of produce

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obtained are often considerable (100 kilos and more), arrangements must be made for obtaining a donkey.

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However great his needs may be, a student cannot expect to participate in all of these activities, since this would leave insufficient time for his kiyne studies. However, gramta gathering and pulse begging are sometimes both engaged in during a single year.

Thus, the young debtera student finds himself transported from the benign enviornment of his natal parish to one in which only self-reliance and resourcefulness can secure his chosen goals and maintain his physical well-being. Ultimately, he must make a bitter choice

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between professional and material satisfaction. The profits from gramta sales, and the foodstuffs he has begged would much ameliorate his misery. Yet, in spite of his pressing subsistence requirements, the student sets aside only a minor portion of his profits for these needs. He exchanges most of these goods for money, which he retains as a fluid and durable capital with which to purchase necessary professional articles (mainly books) and to support his future commercial ventures. During the years of his kiyne studies, his assets accumulate at the rate of perhaps E$25. per annum.[25]

[25] A significant sum where per capita gross national product is E$116. (EAS:134); E$1.=U.S.$0.40.

441 The Alternative Career Paths. In choosing between
• [869] material and professional interests, some men forsake
*[793] their erstwhile ecclesiastical goals altogether, to ap-
ply in secular occupations (particularly as scribes and
merchants) the skills that they have acquired or perfec-
*[192] ted during their student days. Exemplary among these is
the kibe (butter) merchant. Occasionally, profits ac-
cumulated by gathering and begging are invested in the
purchase of lowland butter and the means for transporting
it to highland markets. Profits earned from kibe trading
are sometimes sufficient to promise a standard of living
which exceeds that of the peasants with whom the student
trades. The student who yields to the temptations of a
full-time trading career generally establishes an annual
cycle in which a portion of his kibe profits are reinves-
ted in livestock for subsequent sale at regional markets.

*793 A second category of students reverses these priori-
869 ties, and disregards non-ecclesiastical goals altogether.
433 Such students believe that, for themselves, it is faith
in the Almighty which must sustain them in their tra-
vail. Thus, even excursions into the lowlands are re-
*[192] placed by exclusively ecclesiastical activities. Sub-
sistence needs are met by copying Church books for re-
sale, participating in the Mass in return for a por-
tion of the grain tithes given to the church, and dining
at baptisms and annual memorial feasts (fehitat). In

*793 addition, he blesses houses against ganels with readings
869 from appropriate books of the Church, and sprinkles the
433 house with water he has sanctified with his reading and spittle.

*793 Finally, there is the largest category of students,
*756 those who choose the path of compromise and abinet. It
869 is from their ranks that the debtera-healer emerges.

THE ABINET WORKS: PROPHYLAXIS AND THERAPY

*787 Abinet are a class of recondite works directed at the satisfaction of some personal desire; their efficacy is obtained wholly or in large measure by invoking the assistance of super-humans (most often of the Church, but sometimes ganels), usually in contexts beyond those
*[755] permitted by the Church. Abinet subjects include thera-
[778] peutic performances (medhaniyt ina digam), and proph-
*[192] lactic amulets (kitab), divinatory texts (awdunigist), academic (timhirt) abinet, other inoffensive commercial works destructive works sending sickness and other misfortunes (kifat), and techniques for forcing the appearance and cooperation of ganels (ganel gelac).

Table eight indicates the constituent techniques of each category of abinet. The remaining paragraphs of this section consider those abinet works which address the therapeutic and prophylactic interests of the deb-

tera. They are described, in terms of their constituent elements and operational goals.

*193 "Herbal" therapies. Pharmacologically, the debtera's
*165 therapies are, with an exception, indistinguishable from
*278 those of the secular herbalists. Indeed, where possible,
• [869] the debtera obtains new therapies from obliging secular
[539] therapists, setting them down in a book he keeps for this purpose (yisowat bimem medhaniyt meshav, or hivri'i isowat). In contrast to the therapies practiced by secular herbalists, however, the debtera often supplements otherwise prosaic therapies with exotic, non-botanical ingredients (for example, owl's wing, hair from a lion's mane, blood of sheep's spleen), often employed in fumitories and libations.

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*755 Digam and Kitab. The digam is a syncretic invoca-
539 tion constructed from passages extracted from the Old
*[192] Testament (particularly Psalms), the New Testament (particularly the Gospels), zeyma (the litanies of the Mass), and devotional books dedicated to the saints (the lives of the Saints, the Images of the Saints); asmat, magical power derived from the secret names of Jesus and the Almighty; and requests for specific assistance.

From an operational point of view, each digam communicates five messages. 1) The digam indicates the supernaturals to whom the appeal is directed. An address

782 supplicant's parish. Prayers to the saints ask intervention with the Almighty on the supplicant's behalf, and thank the saints for fulfilling previous requests. Although prayers are not formalized, a specific request often takes the form of a three-fold appeal during a single session, first addressing the appropriate saint, then Jesus, and finally the Almighty.

ACQUIRING ABINET

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A boy rarely begins his debtera career with the conscious intention of learning abinet. His first studies are acquired almost inadvertently, and subsequent abinet are obtained only gradually. Yet, the types of abinet which he eventually acquires are never adventitiously determined. As he collects abinet throughout his professional career, the debtera is continually guided by the ways in which he perceives and weighs his instrumental and moral interests in these studies, and by the degree to which he is constrained by the character of his professional capital. Instrumentally, a distinction is made between abinet which directly satisfy some immediate personal needs of the debtera, and those works which enable the debtera to provide a service for others without transmitting technical knowledge of the abinet at the same time. Morally, abinet are

*787 judged directly according to their offensiveness to the
*793 Church, and indirectly according to the availability of
869 morally more acceptable alternatives. Professionally, the acquisition of abinet is guided by the quality and size of the debtera's capital, and of his ability to utilize abinet which are available to him.

*755 The First Abinet. With few exceptions, a student's
*787 first abinet acquisitions are herbalist therapies and com-
*793 plementary digams. These early therapies address the
869 most persistent threats of his environment, ikek (scabies), seal (cough), and kurtimat (joint pains). In addition, the student frequently obtains the recipe for a stimulant which ostensibly increases his acuity for learning kiyne.

*787 These first abinet studies are generally gifts,
*793 since a student rarely possesses anything beyond defer-
572 ence and abjectness with which he can appeal to a poten-
431 tial donor. He has two sources from which he can obtain
869 this knowledge. The first is a gwadeña or sympathetic balinjera. Among a student's fellows, he has a single special friend, whom he calls gwadeña. The gwadeña is his constant companion, who begs for ego when the latter is too sick to get his own food; he is completely trustworthy, and, with the exception of his money reserves gained from gramta sales and the like, whatever he possesses is at ego's disposal. The relationship is sym-

*787 *793 431 572 *869 *[192]

metrical; it is also characteristically brittle, and rarely lasts beyond attendance at the kiyne school. A student's balinjeras are, literally, his mess-mates. They form an exclusive group of peers, reliable confidants pledged to cooperation. Beyond the circle of balinjeras, all students are implicitly towdaderiys (rivals). Between both gwadeñas and balinjeras favors are expected to be freely given and no formal accounting kept, although the latter are less committed to sharing than are the former. Because the new boy's gwadeña and balinjera are, like himself, in the first two years of the kiyne curriculum, the abinet repertoire of either consists of few studies, and these with little or no magical content. Ego's second source of abinet is an older, more knowledgeable student, who has been made aware of the novice's

*[192]

difficulties, and is willing to help. The relationship between the donor and recipient here is perceived as an exchange between radat (benefactor) and taraj (beneficiary). The new boy is abject, he is without power, and faces immediate dangers and difficulties. By his gift, the donor dramatizes a status difference between himself and novices in general, differences based on the culturally significant contrast between power and dependency. The recipient, by his deferential behavior, validates the donor's self-image.

*787 *793 • 869 Students who are more advanced in abinet studies consider the novice's acquisitions to be trivial and inocuous, because their goals are modest and they lack significant asmat. The young kiyne student, however, puzzles over whether these studies involve the coercion of supernaturals of the Church, instead of the humble and supplicatory attitude he wishes to express. Thus, the student often grows uneasy concerning these first acquisitions, and many, unable to reconcile their material and moral interests, go no further in their abinet studies. For the others, however, the pragmatic advantages of the abinet continue to stimulate their acquisitive interests. Once more, the student regards his powerlessness, his lack of mundane protectors and less controversial alternatives, to be particularly important; here, he considers it to legitimize the use of minor abinet. The student supports this perspective by emphasizing that the abinet are confined to his own immediate needs, and never used as a commercial service for others. Finally, by participating in the Mass and ecclesiastical scholarship, he expects to mitigate any taint acquired through these abinet activities.

*787 *793 *755 539 After one or two excursions into the lowlands, the young student who has already accomodated himself to the use of personal abinet comes to intensify his interest in prophylactic works, particularly digams. He seeks pro-

*755 *783 437 484 539 a blank space is left on each kitab, to be filled in later with the client's name. In general, the student initially sells kitabs to the lowlands to assist him in gathering agricultural products. The kitabs are purchased with either crops or services, and only infrequently with money. The peasant's services include recommending the student's kitabs to his neighbors, safe storage of the goods which the student has collected, and lending draught animals to bring the student's sacks up to the highlands. Sometimes, enterprising students arrange their visits in order to obtain payment in cotton, a relatively valuable product which debtera students are unable to obtain otherwise.

*793 *787 - 819 [437] The student's experience selling kitabs in the lowlands has a significant effect on the course of his subsequent abinet career. First, his abinet interests are redirected. His previous acquisitions were abinet which served an immediate personal interest, and whose commercial value was adventitious. These commercial successes, however small-scale, frequently stimulate the student to obtain abinet which have an exclusively commercial value. Interest in personally useful abinet by no means ends during this period, however; often it is accelerated by the student's changing attitudes to the practice of abinet. There is a tendency to now perceive his moral interests as less opposed to these works than he had pre-

*787 *793 viously conjectured. Concomitantly, he renders these
• 869 works morally acceptable by emphasizing their inoffensive goals and the divine and untainted sources of their abinet powers. Thus, he seeks more specialized academic abinet, from among those studies which enable him to learn quickly, or retain what he has learned, or extemporize well, or master any one of the ecclesiastical subjects of the debtera's curriculum.

*787 Second, the student's commercial success often con-
*793 vinces him to give up entirely his earlier economic ac-
869 tivities. In part, he is persuaded by the economic re-
437 wards of writing kitabs, since the profits can equal those obtained from selling kibe, while requiring neither the great capital outlay nor capital risk which characterizes kibe trading. Equally significant is the young man's pride in his publicly acknowledged abinet powers. He begins now to consciously assume a new identity as a self-sufficient manipulator of human and supernatural forces, a self-image which contrasts so obviously with the mendicant and passive character of his earlier years.

Third, he is able to accelerate the accumulation of a modest reserve of money. With this, he can purchase relatively specialized abinet, generally from fellow stu-
*787 dents who already own important studies. Before this
*793 time, the student could obtain relatively valuable abinet
869 only from a knowledgeable debtera who was prepared to act

+787 +793 • 869 +[192] as his radat. In practice, this debtera is usually the student's memher (ecclesiastical teacher), since the student cannot simultaneously serve two debteras, the memher and an abinet teacher, without offending the pride of both. Occasionally an enthusiastic collector of abinet may serve under a debtera in order to learn only abinet. Under these circumstances, both student and teacher maintain the pretext that the abinet collector is but another of the debtera's ecclesiastical scholars. In both situations, the abinet subject is learned only gradually, as the radat releases it, secret by secret, over a period of weeks or even months. The student, for his part, may be expected to provide confidential assistance in support of the debtera's abinet activities (sometimes involving kifat, offensive abinet), to act as his mentor's medhaniyt korac, or, less often, to provide substantial agricultural services, such as ploughing.

As a debtera student grows older and advances in his ecclesiastical studies, he finds it progressively [184] easier to acquire new abinet studies. By then, he has travelled extensively over the network of monasteries and famous churches which are scattered over the northern plateau. In the course of these travels, he has made the acquaintance of many abinet-practicing debteras, and consequently a great variety of abinet studies have become potentially available to him. At the same time, he

*787 *793 is better able to obtain new abinet, since his own grow-
* 869 ing repertoire increases the possibility of arranging
*[278] abinet exchanges with other debteras. Moreover he is better equiped to utilize them; he has learned much of the Ethiopian herbal pharmacopeia, and is able to identify botanicals by the Ge'ez nomers with which they are frequently designated in the recipes of abinet therapies
[198] and kitabs. Similarly, his mastery of Ge'ez makes possible the acquisition of complex digams.

75 In addition to acquiring individual recipes, deb-
639 tera-healers also seek out encyclopaedic treatices.
*[192] These are inventories of recipes, bearing Ge'ez titles such as "book of medicine for diseases for all parts of the body" (metshafe medhaniyt lekwiylown deweyate akalat). In these books, recipes are grouped according to diseases; the diseases are, in turn, classified according to the part of the body that they affect, ar-
[177] ranged from head to feet. Stefan Strelcyn (1965), after close examination of four such manuscripts, has commented on the substantial uniformity of their contents and the remarkable similarities which they share with the third and fourth books of Avicenna's Canon of Medicine.

*793 While such treatises contain hundreds of recipes,
*755 their significance for the practice of Abyssinian medi-
*756 cine is limited by the character of their pathogenic interests. As seen by his clients, the debtera's thera-

*756 *787 those he gives. The relative value of an abinet study *793 is weighed against criteria recognized by both princi- 437 pals, although verbalized by neither during their nego- tiations. These criteria refer to the study's goals, its constituent elements, and its efficacy. 1) Criteria regarding goals enable ego to assess the commercial *[192] value of alter's study, if it is effective. Studies whose goals involve issues of life and death, or serious physical impairment, and studies with offensive intent (kifat), are valued above those characterized by inessen- tial or benign goals. A study whose goals are not or- dinarily addressed by abinet or secular works is valued over those made redundant by widely disseminated works. A study which deals with a common interest of the deb- tera's public is valued greater than one which addresses an unusual concern. 2) Regarding constituent elements, an abinet study is valued if its digam contains magical names (asmat), but it is derogated if the digam simply replicates materials available in ecclesiastical texts. A study which calls for ingredients which are reasonably accessible is valued more than one calling for rare items. 3) Finally, a study which works by true magic, asmat, is valued over one which relies on mithat, a trick or illu- *759 sion simulating the effects of asmat.

*756 Comparison with Secular Medical Capital. Rarely • 869 does a layman acquire any disease name specialty beyond

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*759
*756

• 869 those few he inherits. Additional acquisitions are discouraged for several reasons. First, the exchange of medical knowledge with other healers is difficult to arrange. A layman is unlikely to find another secular healer whose medical specialty he desires and who desires [437] one of the few disease name specialties he owns. Thus, it is generally cattle or money which must be exchanged for medical knowledge. Such purchases are relatively expensive, since the gain is only a minor increment in prestige and the tenuous possibility of earning modest material rewards after an extended period of professional obscurity. Further, the layman has available to him alternative forms of investment (mainly land, labor, and livestock), whose utilization is more consistent with the ethos of the Amhara peasant, and more remunerative (in prestige and material rewards) than the practice of new therapies.

The secular healer (particularly the medhaniyt awakiy) is reluctant to part with professional knowledge, even when a reasonable price is offered. Unlike the abinet capital of debteras, medical capital dissipates *756 as it is "spent". When debteras exchange subjects, *793 neither considers the other a rival in the specialties 869 which they exchange. Eventually, their paths are bound to part, as one or the other continues his travels over the Coptic highlands. Moreover, a debtera is not known

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*756
*793 for specific works, since his public reputation rests
• 869 upon his access to generic powers. Instead, he is recognized by his public as being either "strong" or "weak"; if he is reputed to be "strong", a potential client assumes that he is competent in a broad range of maladies. In contrast, the professional reputation of the lay healer is tied to a specific ailment, just as he himself is tied to a specific locality, as the sedentary cultivator of ambilineage fields. Since a layman's medical reputation is fixed in space, potential purchasers of his medical knowledge are drawn from among his potential clients. Thus, by sharing his medical knowledge with another secular healer, the lay practitioner establishes a potential rival and dilutes the economic and social advantages of his practice.

Communicating the Debtera's Power. When the secular healer inherits a therapy, he inherits a professional reputation along with it, as his public grows aware of the transmission of the disease name specialty and herbalist grade. For the debtera, the situation is very different; his abinet acquisitions are "anonymous". Without the kinship and parish networks that his secular counterpart enjoys, the debtera must establish his healing abilities for his public de novo. The first two or three decades of his professional life are characterized by continual changes of residence, as he pursues his studies

*756
*793 and moves from one unremunerative and confining eccle-
[869] siastical position to another. Only later does he settle down, after he has acquired a commercially adequate abinet repertoire, and has realized his ecclesiastical goals, as a monher with a following of students. It is, however, in the relative anonymity of a town that he inevitably establishes himself.[43] In the town, the debtera can maintain, with temerity, his identity as a ganel-puller, and can receive his clients in confidence, free from the conventional morality and inquisitive eyes of parish folk. Placed in the town, the debtera maximizes his public. First, he serves the relatively affluent townsfolk with important commercial services, enabling them to best rival tradesmen and talla houses or mead hall proprietors, to magically attract customers, and to beguile superiors. Second, he makes his services available to the thousands of peasants drawn to the town's weekly markets, its ecclesiastical institutions, and its fleshpots.

In the task of communicating his professional exis-

[43] In 1966, of the approximately forty-five debtera-healers residing in Gondar, four were awakiy debteras (two others had died during the preceeding four years). Beyond the Gondar enviorns, the closest awakiy debtera lived in Amba Giyorgis town.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— 86
parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, 178
by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their role as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part [87] •
by teachers and peers in the government schools.

Schools at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly 875
by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, 177
England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing 873
number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization.

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on 177
the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has 178
occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative 557
of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to- 555
day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied with- 829
out regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affilia- 883*
tions.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of uni- 87
versal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead.

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian 873
nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to 177
associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post- 178
elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with mem- 186
bers of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of 883*
the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic [872]
pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115]

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

might be expected, the incidence of disapproval was highest among the students of the Gondar secondary school (fifty-eight per cent), whose parents are presumably more traditionalist than those of the Addis Ababa boys, and the students of the technical school (fifty-six per cent), whose occupational interests, involving manual labor and technical skills, are felt to resemble those artisan pursuits traditionally disesteemed by the Amhara.

Time is on the side of the students. As Ethiopia develops and education spreads, the advantages of prolonged training and modern occupations will become increasingly apparent to the parents. For some time to come, however, their resentment of the dependence of youth on foreigners and Western-educated Ethiopians for occupational guidance will continue to generate social tensions and impede the socialization process.

The harmonious pattern of preparation for adult work roles found in traditional Amhara society has been further disrupted under the new school system at at least two points: the point at which occupational commitments are made, and the point of entry into the work force.

The modern adolescent is supposed to choose which of several kinds of schools, representing a variety of vocational commitments, he wishes to enter upon successful completion of the eighth-grade exam. Quite often his choice is dictated by wholly irrelevant factors. For example, it may be made on the basis of which of the available schools promises the best standard of living.[19] Or it may be made for him by the school system, for one finds cases where the student's preferences are disregarded and he is placed in whatever school and vocational program happens to be able to accommodate him.

Even when the student's choice is relatively free from such extraneous determinants, however, it is usually difficult for him to make a meaningful decision. Eight grades of a rudimentary curriculum is hardly an adequate basis for choosing from a variety of unfamiliar vocations. So it is "fate" that guides most youngsters into one or another of the secondary school programs. The problem of choice recurs, for a much smaller number, when commitments are again required for entrance into the colleges. At this point meaningful decisions are often made, but perhaps more often they are spun from a skein of bewilderment. One secondary school graduate summed up the situation by saying, "Foreigners frequently ask young educated Ethiopians, 'What do you want to become?' How do we know? This whole business of *choosing* is entirely new to us, and we know very little about the alternatives that we have now. It is all very confusing."

So far the modernizing sector has provided little, beyond vocational pamphlets in the school libraries and an occasional school debate on the respective values of different occupations, to help orient the students on these matters.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

883 463 873 Programs of vocational guidance and counseling have not yet been instituted. Students who manage to form clear and definite ambitions also suffer for want of help, if for some reason they have been shunted away from the appropriate training program, or have been deprived of opportunities to prepare adequately for the vocations to which they aspire. Two research findings bear on this. In one study it was found that "few secondary school administrators when questioned are aware of the ambitions and desires of their students," and that less than twenty per cent of the group of secondary school students surveyed felt they had received training "suitable to their ambitions."[20] In my own survey it appeared that fewer than twenty per cent of the secondary school students expect to enter the occupation they actually want to.

*883 178 464 In addition to this discontinuity between childhood experience and the hitherto unknown necessity of making some sort of vocational choice, modern adolescence also involves a sharp break between the experience of post-elementary school and the process of getting on a payroll. Here the Ethiopian youth faces the problems of students everywhere as they leave school for the "real world." In at least two respects, however, his dilemma is more acute than that of his counterpart in Western societies. Because virtually all jobs are controlled (557) by the government, and because the government is still organized along traditional lines, the Ethiopian graduate must suddenly forget the universalistic criteria of school and acclimate himself to the traditional pattern of ingratiating oneself with those in positions of power—a pattern referred to as *daj ţenät* —if he is to gain and retain a decent job. For many graduates there is no machinery that might assist them in locating a job: no job advertisements, employment bureaus, not even effective personnel departments in most quarters.

* 87 464 The school system itself, however, does manage in certain cases to find jobs for its graduates. For the foreign-educated returnees a special placement board was set up within the Ministry of Education. The locally educated are placed, if at all, by their individual schools, depending on the policy of the school, the resourcefulness of its director, the demands of the market, and current political emphases.

The outlook for graduates of the various specialized vocational programs has been in recent years as follows. A consistently high demand for teachers has assured jobs for graduates of the various teachers training programs. Graduates of the commercial school have been in great demand because of the increasing bureaucratization of government and the slight expansion of commerce. The public health college had great difficulty in the placement of its

* Since this was written the University's Department of Education has begun to produce a series of career pamphlets for secondary school students.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara ~~MP5~~

graduates in the late fifties, but the government's implementation of a program of public health centers has opened up increasing opportunities for their employment. Graduates of the school of social work have been placed in positions with little difficulty. 87 464

On the other hand, in those areas in which the government has shown little or no interest the school authorities have been hard put to find employment for their graduates. This was shown most dramatically in the case of the now defunct community development training project at Majete, whose graduates were allowed to drift into oblivion due to the absence of an effective community development program in the country. Those who have completed courses of study in agriculture have not been extensively employed by the government because of chronic disorganization and neglect in the Ministry of Agriculture, while lack of capital and know-how has tended to keep them from private agricultural enterprise. Graduates of the technical and engineering schools have been having some difficulty in entering the work force due to the slow pace of Ethiopia's industrial development. Graduates of general academic programs, finally, and those who drop out before completing some course of study, tend to be left to their own devices.

While the modernizing sector, then, has introduced the revolutionary notion of vocation and has institutionalized means of training young Ethiopians for modern work roles, it has not yet provided adequate mechanisms either for guiding them into and through the training programs or for employing them properly once they are trained. 178 463 464

Preparation for Marriage

Conditions of growing up in the modernizing sector have disrupted the harmonious pattern of Amhara adolescence also with respect to entrance into adult family roles. Conflicts arise both from postponement of the normal age for marriage and from radically new ideas about the nature of marriage. 883* 178 [582] [581]

The modern adolescent typically expects to marry at an age that is at least eight to ten years older than his traditional counterpart. While Amhara girls have traditionally married in their early teens, girls in the senior class of secondary school now say they expect to marry in their early twenties. Amhara boys have traditionally married around the age of twenty, but those in post-elementary schools now expect to marry in their late twenties or early thirties. 883* 178 582

This shift is due to a desire to attain as much education as possible, and above all, for the boys, to the precarious economic position of modern adolescents. While living on his father's farm an Amhara boy could marry early with the assurance of having enough land to work to support his family at least at subsistence level. The modern boy who finishes secondary school or [871]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

are balanced by a fairly permissive mode of organization. For the clergy, the constraints are heavier; the fasting requirements are increased, and the priesthood involves, as we have seen, strict marital fidelity. On the other hand, the individualistic organization of the clergy is most striking.

This individualism is conspicuous already in the church schools, which are organized not on a class basis but in a series of master-pupil relations. Students begin their courses of study whenever they arrive at the residence of the master, and proceed each at his own pace. The master spends the bulk of his time with more advanced students, who in turn are used to instruct the less advanced. The pupils are very much on their own, uncontrolled either by their families, with whom they no longer reside, nor by any formal institution. The same is true of the masters, who are not subjected to any sort of outside controls. Indeed, each teacher tends to develop his own unique method of teaching, regarding it as something of a personal monopoly.[24]

The ministrating clergy are likewise free from controls emanating from a broad ecclesiastical organization. Each parish church functions autonomously under the direction of a head (*alaqā*) chosen by the local clergy. (Heads of the most important churches have traditionally been appointed by the emperor.) The obligations of the priesthood are not very great. The chief duty of the priest is to take his turn in performing the Mass. His pastoral services are limited to occasional visits with his particular confessants, from whom he expects to receive regular rewards of food and drink. Otherwise, his life is much the same as that of his lay neighbors.

The role of the *dabtarā*, as we have seen, is still more flexible. *Dabtarā* who are associated with a parish church are expected to take their turns singing hymns and composing *qenē* in the outer ring of the church; but otherwise they exist as free entrepreneurs, and they need not be so attached unless they so desire.

The individualistic organization of the Ethiopian Church is most striking, perhaps, in the case of the monks, especially when compared with Christian monastic orders in the Western world. Ethiopian monks are bound by nothing other than the original conditions for assuming the role, namely, renouncing family ties and worldly possessions. The monk need not enter a monastery; he may continue to live in his old home or may take to the woods as a hermit. If he does go to live at a monastery, his life is not radically changed. The Ethiopian monastery is not an organized community, but a sacred place—the site of a large and important church, in the vicinity of which live numbers of individual monks. The monk comes and goes as he wishes, prays whenever he wants, and may live free of any obligations toward his fellow monastics and toward the rest of the society.*

* There are, however, some monasteries where a more organized and disciplined regime may be found.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

19. Thus, an eighth-grade student in Manz explained the popularity of the Jimma Agricultural School by saying, "The boys all want to go there because it is run by the Americans, and a school run by Americans means that everything is done right—food and clothes are properly distributed, and so on."
20. Shack, *op. cit.*, p. 417.
21. In response to a question on their attitudes toward the priests, sixty juniors and seniors of Tafari Makonnen Secondary School replied as follows (1959): 40 per cent were unequivocally proclerical; 22 per cent were ambivalent, expressing awareness of both good and bad elements in the clergy; and 18 per cent were primarily anticlerical, calling the priests "incompetent," "opposed to modernization," and "not supported by the people." (The rest were no answers or noncommittal.)
22. Edith Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-scientific Beliefs in Ethiopia," *Journal of Social Psychology*, XLVII, Second-Half (May, 1958), 339–54.
23. Cf. Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory* (rev. ed.; Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1954), chaps. vii and xiv.
24. Cf. chap. iii, p. 89, and note 19.
25. Lord, "The Impact of Education on Non-Scientific Beliefs," typescript version, pp. 6–7.
26. A sophisticated expression of this approach to Ethiopian painting has been published by an Ethiopian student in France. Cf. Berhanu Abbaba, "La peinture éthiopienne: point de vue d'un Éthiopien," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, II, No. 1 (1961), 160–65.
27. For a brief account of this historic event cf. Lipsky *et al.*, *Ethiopia* (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962), pp. 210–12.
28. Edgar Z. Friedenberg, *The Vanishing Adolescent* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959).
29. *Diagnosis of Our Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), chap. iii.

CHAPTER 5: *The Old and New Elites*

1. C. Conti Rossini, "La regalità sacra in Abissinia," *Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni*, XXI (1948), 12–31.
2. A. Vasiliev, "Justin I (518–527) and Abyssinia," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, XXXIII (1933), 67–77; *Justin the First* (Harvard, 1950), pp. 299–302.
3. A. Caquot, "La royauté sacrale en Éthiopie," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 205–19.
4. F. Alvares, *The Prester John of the Indies*, ed. C. F. Beckingham and G. Huntingford (2 vols.; Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1961), I, 122.
5. "The Chronicle of the Emperor Zara Yaqob," *Ethiopia Observer*, V, No. 2 (1961), 153.
6. J. Varenbergh, *Studien zur äthiopischen Reichsordnung* (Strassburg, 1916), p. 3.
7. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; Edinburgh, 1790), III, 237.

357 his task is fixed in advance and if an Amhara he will
466 usually refuse to carry out any work for which he was
[E2] not engaged. Women servants usually receive half the salary of a male servant. Thus only officials and relatively high-income urbanites can afford Amhara servants; servants of socially lower groups can be hired for considerably less, if themaster is willing to forego the prestige of having Amhara servants.

The urban householder, who is not surrounded by kinfolk in his residence, usually must hire a night watchman, "zebanya", who sleeps huddled in coarse shammas in front of the house or behind the outer gate. They receive the wage of day laborers. Often they are old veterans of former feudal soldiery, too decrepit for any other work, yet still fierce-looking and fierce-tongued enough to discourage thieves.

265 Urban teahouses, coffeehouses and mead-houses
466 employ waiters, "asalafi", who do not have the specialization of the more prestigeful "agafari", but who have steadier jobs. Their pay is not above that of the day laborer, but they can accumulate cash more readily.

[463] During the present generation a new element of
875 modern-educated clerks, teachers, hospital "dressers" and
871 government officials is gradually entering the occupational pattern of the town, though still in very small percentages. A graduate of the traditional church school of the rural areas is considered to have only the equivalent of 2 grades of elementary school. All towns now have at least one modern elementary school with 8

875 grades, in the Amhara areas, sometimes also in the south.
871 Most elementary school teachers in the provincial capitals are East Indians, except that Amharic and Coptic religion are taught by Amhara. A graduate of an elementary school can take a job as a teacher himself and begin with a wage of Eth$125.-a month; or as a municipal clerk with about equal income, which places them in the upper income group. Even a graduate of the 5th grade can earn Eth$50.- as a clerk on the bottom rung of the "educated". Or he may secure a teaching job in a church school near his home, and then go to the court of the bishop and wait about ("daj tena") until the great man notices him and confirms him in his job.

871 In view of the high cash value of modern education, almost everyone wishes to enter, though fathers are still reluctant to part with the services of their sons, in cattle herding and harvest-watching, until the boys are 11 years old, so that graduates of elementary schools are frequently 19 years old. The elementary schools are still so few (though increasing) that only the sons of influential "great men" usually manage to be admitted. Secondary schools are available primarily in Addis Ababa, not in provincial Amhara capitals, and there nearly all the teachers are Europeans. Graduates of secondary schools become upper-level government officials.

464 The preference of Amhara individuals to hire on
632 only for temporary labor, if at all, finds its expression and variation in the market town. Here many events that bring variety into his fairly monotonous rural life,

423 651 663 by claiming that the ethnics have unstated income from their handicrafts. Among the methods of this extortion is the "initiation fee" of as much as Eth$3.- per qada, when freshly cleared from the bush. Another impressment consists of "voluntary" supplies regularly paid to the Coptic parish church in the locality, by non-Coptic ethnics. Also, the feudal landlord usually asks them for a special "pasturage fee"--as much as Eth$2.- per qada of fallow land--with the further condition that no more than two oxen (or cows) graze on each qada. Where a Coptic farmer may pay perhaps Eth$10.- tithe on his semi-fertile 50 qada, the non-Coptic farmer may be made to pay double to four times that for similar produce on an equivalent plot of land. While [871] the new education tax is the same, the non-Coptic artisan finds it very difficult to enroll his boy in the overcrowded elementary school in the provincial capital.

423 651 511 The average "rest"-owning farmer working 10 qada every year, may harvest about 50 madiga of tyeff grain, selling it for Eth$150.-(In the rainy season it would bring twice that); plus 30 madiga barley, Eth$60.- plus some honey, if he has it.

If the tax-collector is his friend, his tithe may amount to as little as Eth$5 to 10, his education tax Eth$2 to 4. His land tax based on the rate of 1927 will be very low, and his pasturage, as Coptic non-artisan, free.

511 Thus he has enough for his basic needs including the purchase of a new toga (shamma) per year, and perhaps a new donkey. However, he cannot normally afford

872 easier, in practice, to gain admittance. The efforts of the em-
565 peror to give opportunities to the rural sons of poor orphans of soldiers who died fighting for their country, by opening boarding houses for them, attached to elementary schools, were defeated by the provincial feudal lords and townspeople, who managed to have their sons quartered in them instead.

Thus, traditional social stratification, both class and ethnic, affects even the modern elementary schools. In 1952 about 60,000 children, 10% girls, attended modern elementary schools in Ethiopia, and far more than half this number was Amhara. Ethnic minority [563] groups find it very hard to have their children admitted, because the school administrators are usually Amhara. Thus, the Qemants of Gondar, for example, have found it easier to enroll their sons in the Catholic mission school operated there by Tigrean(Eritrean) priests. Other ethnic minorities have enrolled children in 7th Day Adventist and other mission schools.

871 In Addis Ababa itself the situation is quite different, however,
184 Here, traditional social stratification has far less effect, partly
565 because of the closer supervision by more modern officials of the central government, partly because the teachers in the high schools, and even in part in the elementary schools, are Europeans or Americans who emphasise social equality among students, pay no attention to family nobility, and reward only merit. Here, the son of the illiterate peasant, or occasionally even ex-slave negroid Shanqalla, may sit next to the son of an Amhara duke or a Galla "balbat". After graduation, they may be sent abroad for college or post-graduate training, based on merit, regardless of parental rank; though in social and family life the traditional social cleavages prevail.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

000 prevail.

871 465 Most elementary school graduates from the provincial capitals do not continue to Addis Ababa for a high school education, for they can obtain good and honorable positions, paying ETH$125.- (US $50.-) per month in the same town, as teachers, municipal clerks, with a good chance to be appointed to judgeship soon if they cultivate the right persons in power with "daj temut". Even Students who "flunk out" in the 7th or 8th grade can earn ETH$100.- as teachers of lower grades, or as low-grade clerks.

872 212 178 One old tradition which has broken down in the modern elementary schools but not in most church schools, is the prohibition of extra-curricular writing. In the higher church grades, in which students' piety was already confirmed, especially in the monastery schools, copying psalms, gospels, (and by extension, government documents), was permitted, practiced, even regarded as praiseworthy. But there was, and in rural areas still is, fear that less pious students would use their knowledge of writing to experiment with magical formulae, doodlings, etc., creating dangerous mischief.

Therefore, parchment goatskins and writing equipment were carefully kept away from students of village church schools, and they were not taught to write. Thus, achievement of the skill of a scribe, "<u>dabtara</u>", required considerable individual initiative and study away from home.

212 857 However, boys at the "experimental" age of childhood, would amuse themselves with the forbidden game of writing and doodling in secret, and they still do. Their work can be seen scribbled even on the outside walls and posts of some churches, a daring prank, sometimes in imitation of the church painter. More often

583 pecting this, screams loudly, making the "capture" official.
184 After some days or weeks, the husband officially informs the bride's parents that he has consummated the marriage and intends to keep the bride as his wife; whereupon the bride's kin can pretend to "give in" and make the best out of the "damage done" without much loss of face, by agreeing to an official "semanya", without a big feast or cows, or "boasting" the "fukkara". But otherwise the legal procedure is that of "semanya", with the chega shum present.

[589] A spinster is so rare that she seems non-existant, unless sick and handicapped so that she cannot function as a wife. Therefore, a spinster would be mocked and suspected of hidden ailments. To prevent this, a poor or unpopular girl might ask her kin or spokesman to seek a poor man and ask him "to abduct" her.

582 The new, modern laws have made little attempt to change these
656 traditional forms of marriage, beyond trying to acknowledge and "normalize" them. The new minimum age of marriage is legal at 15 for girls, 18 for boys, but this is generally ignored and evaded in
[584] the rural areas where girls still marry at 13 and 14. Through indirect means, the Emperor Haile Selassie has also urged that boys and girls should see more of each other before marriage, have a longer and formal courtship.

178 Very recently, two differing attitudes have developed among
●871 young men educated in the modern school system, toward marriage
581 with educated girls. In the provincial towns, the (semi-educated) young men, who have finished elementary school or 7 grades, say that girls who have finished as little as 4 or 5 grades of elementary school consider themselves "educated", are proud, and tell their

178 581 871 husbands "who are you to give me orders - I can read as well as you". Therefore such girls are avoided as brides.

But fully educated young men, in Addis Ababa, especially those who have returned from abroad with graduate degrees, complain that there are not enough educated girls for them to marry. There is now a girl's high school in Addis Ababa, but the supply of educated girls is still far below the demand by educated men who do not wish their wives to sit shy and wordless in modern-urban, international social gatherings.

Another modern difficulty arises in cases where the modern-educated young man is the son of an illiterate peasant, or a "rustic" one, and is ashamed to ask his father and similar kinfolk to negotiate the marriage. For even in the city the traditional "semanya" is the basic and most common form of marriage.

584 a) "Semanya" Marriage Negotiations.

Sometimes the young man decides on a girl and asks his father to begin negotiations. Or the parents, feeling that the time has come, begin to send out feelers. In either case, it is the young man's father who initiates formal negotiations with the father and kinfolk of the bride; though not, at first, directly.

The father of the young man may gather his "enjärä"-friends, "who dine at each other's table", or kinsmen, or both, and appoint a "näggär abbat" (lit. father of the affair) as intermediary.

Before matters go further, the kin group tries to find out and examine three factors of the prospective match:
1) Health of the family, such as absence of leprosy, venereal disease and other diseases belived to be inherited; 2) Land property -

000 status.

181 776 The Amhara concern with spirits seems motivated not by the negative emotion of fear, but toward an understanding of the universe; toward healing; toward patterns of individual free enterprise under the guidance of protective spirits (regarded by the "zar" doctors and "zar" societies somewhat as patron saints).

181 Inventive intelligence, constrained in Amhara culture from developing material objects, applies itself to nonmaterial culture goals: to etiquette and other fine points of human relations; to speaking well in court; witticisms and proverbs; to entertaining with homiletic and riddles ranging from the ribald to the philosophic; to the development of special argots for the professions of minstrelsy, medicine and commerce. Education is regarded by [871] they Amhara as a highly desirable means to (non-material) achievement. The desire to be regarded as intelligent is even greater than the profit motive, in Amhara culture; so that there is greater fear of being mocked at than being bested in a trade exchange. Producers would rather undersupply a market than risk having to carry any goods back home. The worst mockery and insult is to be regarded as intellectually inferior.

855 C. Some Psychological Considerations arising from the Life Cycle.

Infancy and childhood, until adolescence, are years of free experimentation for the young Amhara, years with a minimum of supervision by adults, and maximum exposure to training by the peer-group and slightly older youngsters. The child does not live in a world of giants, but learns to handle his (not very complex) universe 000 through the give-and-take of his age-mates. Until weaning, at the

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

may become a nun or remain a widow as she pleases. If a 793
priest sleeps with another woman whilst his wife is alive he 684
does not enter the church any more, nor does he enjoy its 587
goods, and remains as a layman. And this I know from having seen a priest accused before the patriarch of having slept with a woman, and I saw that the priest confessed the offence, and the patriarch commanded him not to carry a cross in his hand, nor to enter a church, nor to enjoy the liberties of the church, and to become a layman. If any priests after becoming widowers marry, they remain laymen, As it happened to Abuquer, who married Romana Orque, sister of Prester John, who I have already said was a priest, chief chaplain of Prester John, and he was disordained[1] and made a layman. He no longer enters the church, and receives the communion at the door of the church as a layman, and among the women. The sons of the priests 793
are for the most part priests, because in this country there [871]
are no schools, nor studies, nor masters to teach, and the clergy teach that little that they know to their sons: and so they make them priests without more legitimisation, neither does it seem to me that they require it, since they are legitimate sons. All are ordained by the Abima Markos, for in all the kingdoms of Ethiopia there is no other bishop or person who ordains. The orders are given in two stages, as I will relate further on. I with my own eyes saw them given many times. In all this country the churchyards are [764]
inclosed by very strong walls, that the wild beasts may not disinter the dead bodies. They show them great reverence, [576]
no man riding on a mule passes before a church, even though he is going in a great hurry, without dismounting, until he has passed the church and churchyard a good bit.

[1] *Foy desordenado e feito leigo*; not a correct expression.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[43]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 18 flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

633 177 648 *Gondar Today*

A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

633 After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953 [874] with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college. [648] The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utilities as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty [162] thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

633 871 178 With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aquāquām* and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

633 771 793 Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 right to a direct audience at any time. The Emperor is known to glow with
571 pleasure when a subject with whom he is speaking reveals that he comes from Manz. The Manzēs, for their part, proudly refer to their area as *ya-negus agar* ("king's country"). They are perhaps the most devoted of all Ethiopians to the present Crown. However, many stories are told to show that this loyalty has not dissolved their intractable spirit. For example, when asked to select a representative for Ethiopia's first elected parliament in 1957, some of them were indignant: "We already have *our* representative in the capital, and if he isn't able to do the job himself, let him step down and hand it to somebody else."

871 Despite their expressed loyalty to Haile Selassie, the Manzēs stubbornly
658 oppose the program with which he is publicly most associated and whose portfolio he has retained, as Minister of Education, from 1943 to the present day. The adults of Manz object to having their children attend the government schools. In many cases where a child has elected to attend school on his own, his parents have cut off all support. The four schools in Manz thus have
[162] an enrolment far below capacity, totaling (as of 1960) less than four hundred in this area of perhaps fifty to sixty thousand families.[40] Those hardy youngsters who do attend school often do so in rags and with an empty stomach.

[857] One reason for this determined opposition to the government schools is the obvious economic one: children must stay at home to tend the herds. This is a problem all over rural Ethiopia, but still the schools in many other areas are overcrowded. Another reason is that, as we have seen, Manz was not interested in education in the old days. Few Manzēs learned to read in the church schools. When a boy showed unusual talent and interest in traditional studies he had to travel to Gondar, which often meant running away from Manz.

871 The crux of Manzē defiance of the new educational system, however, is
658 cultural fundamentalism. The Manzēs keep their children away from the
186 government schools because they fear that the students there are learning
829 something that threatens the old ways. In particular, they do not like their children to learn the language of the *faranj* ("European") or to be exposed to Ethiopians who have been taught by *faranj* and thereby infected by alien ideas. Tending the farm, keeping the fasts, defending land and self—that is the sum and substance of Manzē education, beyond which there is nothing a boy needs to learn.

829 Undoubtedly part of this dread of *faranj* learning is based on the Manzēs'
648 one experience with the white man: the Fascist occupation. As one of the
186 strongholds of patriotic resistance to the occupation, Manz and the Manzēs became the object of the invader's unyielding fury. Over miles and miles of Manz not a home or church was spared. The inhabitants were either killed, or fled to safer areas in Galla country, or joined the underground opposition—

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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THE EMERGING ADOLESCENT

While it is clear, as we have argued thus far, that a modernizing society 121
stands to benefit from retaining or redefining many aspects of its traditional culture, it is also clear that in certain areas discontinuity is indispensable if significant change is to be brought about. Just what these areas are is something which presumably varies from nation to nation, though cross-cultural regularities may perhaps be uncovered in the course of further research. In the 121
case of Ethiopia's incipient modernization, at least two subsystems of the 178
traditional social system of the ruling Amhara have already undergone some 86
sort of structural change: that of "secondary socialization," the complex of 554
processes whereby skills and values necessary for adult life are imparted to adolescents; and that of the stratification system—the complex of arrangements whereby status is allocated to members of a society in accord with the various values upheld by the society.

An important precondition for the changes which have taken place in both 121
of these areas was the establishment of a permanent capital: Addis Ababa, 178
founded by Menelik in 1887[1] and now home for nearly half a million Ethio- 179
pians. Menelik's institution of the first government school in Addis Ababa in 633
1908 marked the beginning of a slow but steady process of introducing some [871]
of Ethiopia's youth to the novel skills and norms of modern Western culture. The concentration of power in Addis Ababa through the reign of Haile 121
Selassie has diminished the status of the traditional Amhara elites and brought 178
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or
593 official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In
463 either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely pre-
156 paring himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which
[181] the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

882 The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of
184 Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing
871 up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adoles-
178 cence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

871 *The Welfare School*

175 Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in govern-
[199] ment provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

[348] During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

872 The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the students. Rivalries and hostilities tend to get channeled along these lines, particularly along the Amhara-Tigre axis, and petty fights have erupted from time to time among groups of students so divided. The Amhara students, moreover, tend to interpret their numerical majority in school as self-evident justification of their political superiority in the country, an interpretation sullenly rejected by non-Amhara students who tend to be more aware of the Amhara's much smaller percentage of the national population. However, the students are regarded by their teachers, not as members of tribes, but as Ethiopians. The school authorities thus act as a countervailing force in behalf of national symbols, and their effect is considerable.[14] While entering students naturally tend to identify in the first instance with their tribes, sixty per cent of the secondary school seniors and seventy-five per cent of the college students questioned about political identifications indicated that they considered themselves Ethiopians before they considered themselves members of tribes. 883* 873 177 178 186

The teachers also provide practical information of various sorts to assist the acculturation of their charges. They teach the etiquette of modernity, including the importance of punctuality and the keeping of promises. The objects and events in their own lives quietly demonstrate to the students much about modern Western culture, while their use of English in and out of class accustoms the students to the use of their country's official European language. Thus, besides promoting respect for impersonal standards and the sense of Ethiopian nationalism, the teachers fulfill a third extracurricular function of some importance: that of making the schools a vehicle for social mobility, a place to acquire that minimum of European habits which is essential for attaining high status in a modernizing society. 883* 875 177 178 [576] [554] [871]

The total accomplishment of the teachers, however, falls short of giving the modern adolescents a coherent orientation to life. The cultural lessons they transmit are neither consistent among the various schools nor closely related to the situation of changing Ethiopia. The organization of education, as of everything else in Ethiopia, reflects the abiding anxiety of the government about permitting any one foreign nation to gain a monopoly in any sphere of activity. Each secondary school and college has heretofore been virtually autonomous, pursuing those policies and teaching those lessons which best fit its point of view, a point of view now guided by British culture, now by American, now by Swedish, now by French, now by Jesuit. As Margery Perham long since observed, this created a situation in which Ethiopian students have gotten "fragments from the experience and ideals of each [nation] without getting the fullest and best influence from any one national tradition."[15] 883* 871 177

Another shortcoming of the educational program has been the relative paucity of materials relating to Ethiopian realities. As one Ethiopian educator has written: "School children are at times more familiar with the history of 871

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

• 871 Rome and the life of Abraham Lincoln than with the geography of their immediate community or the history of their own native country."[16] While a certain amount of concentration on remote matters may be essential for introducing modern adolescents to the substance and background of modern culture, it is doubtful whether they are being prepared to relate meaningfully to the society of their adulthood if that society is not made a subject for careful consideration during their schooldays.

875 829 191 Still another limitation on the effectiveness of the teachers stems from a quite different problem, the Ethiopian's ambivalence toward foreigners. This will be overcome with the gradual Ethiopianization of the teaching force, but that cannot be achieved for at least another generation. One area in which this problem manifests itself is linguistic nationalism. English, the official language [873] of all post-elementary instruction, is still regarded as an outsider's tongue in Ethiopia, unlike other African countries where the European language in question serves the native peoples as a *lingua franca;* and many Ethiopians hope that the day will come when it will be replaced by Amharic as the medium of instruction.[17] Due to their ignorance of Amharic or other Ethiopian languages, foreign teachers are rarely able to gain the sort of closeness to their students that promotes the more profoundly beneficial sort of relationship. Because of this and a tradition of suspiciousness regarding foreigners, all but the radically Westernized students maintain a lingering mistrust of the teacher *qua* foreigner.

* 883 178 The gaps in the socialization of the modern adolescent left by the nature of his teachers and their teaching are filled to some extent by his peers. In this respect, too, modern adolescence contrasts with the traditional pattern: not only has the role of mentor and model been taken over by foreign teachers in place of the parents, but also the modern adolescent has become dependent on his peers to a degree unthinkable in traditional Amhara society.

It has been natural that the modern adolescent turn to those his own age for moral support. However much they may support the idea of his going to school as a means to a higher salary, his parents have little understanding of the new directions inherent in modern education. His foreign teachers are, at worst, preoccupied with their own narrow interests or else, at best, out of tune with the Ethiopian ethos and mentality. Older modernized Ethiopians, who should be the most sympathetic, are usually too preoccupied with their own adjustment problems to pay much attention. His schoolmates thus become his only reliable allies in the battle of growing up.

[561] Association with age-mates is informal for the most part. There have been [573] almost no formal youth associations or clubs in Ethiopia. The teen-age gang, with its sharp boundaries and tight controls, has scarcely come into being. [572] Relations with peers thus takes the form of small groups of friends. More

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

might be expected, the incidence of disapproval was highest among the students of the Gondar secondary school (fifty-eight per cent), whose parents are presumably more traditionalist than those of the Addis Ababa boys, and the students of the technical school (fifty-six per cent), whose occupational interests, involving manual labor and technical skills, are felt to resemble those artisan pursuits traditionally disesteemed by the Amhara.

Time is on the side of the students. As Ethiopia develops and education spreads, the advantages of prolonged training and modern occupations will become increasingly apparent to the parents. For some time to come, however, their resentment of the dependence of youth on foreigners and Western-educated Ethiopians for occupational guidance will continue to generate social tensions and impede the socialization process.

The harmonious pattern of preparation for adult work roles found in traditional Amhara society has been further disrupted under the new school system at at least two points: the point at which occupational commitments are made, and the point of entry into the work force.

The modern adolescent is supposed to choose which of several kinds of schools, representing a variety of vocational commitments, he wishes to enter upon successful completion of the eighth-grade exam. Quite often his choice is dictated by wholly irrelevant factors. For example, it may be made on the basis of which of the available schools promises the best standard of living.[19] Or it may be made for him by the school system, for one finds cases where the student's preferences are disregarded and he is placed in whatever school and vocational program happens to be able to accommodate him.

Even when the student's choice is relatively free from such extraneous determinants, however, it is usually difficult for him to make a meaningful decision. Eight grades of a rudimentary curriculum is hardly an adequate basis for choosing from a variety of unfamiliar vocations. So it is "fate" that guides most youngsters into one or another of the secondary school programs. The problem of choice recurs, for a much smaller number, when commitments are again required for entrance into the colleges. At this point meaningful decisions are often made, but perhaps more often they are spun from a skein of bewilderment. One secondary school graduate summed up the situation by saying, "Foreigners frequently ask young educated Ethiopians, 'What do you want to become?' How do we know? This whole business of *choosing* is entirely new to us, and we know very little about the alternatives that we have now. It is all very confusing."

So far the modernizing sector has provided little, beyond vocational pamphlets in the school libraries and an occasional school debate on the respective values of different occupations, to help orient the students on these matters.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

graduates in the late fifties, but the government's implementation of a program of public health centers has opened up increasing opportunities for their employment. Graduates of the school of social work have been placed in positions with little difficulty. 87 464

On the other hand, in those areas in which the government has shown little or no interest the school authorities have been hard put to find employment for their graduates. This was shown most dramatically in the case of the now defunct community development training project at Majete, whose graduates were allowed to drift into oblivion due to the absence of an effective community development program in the country. Those who have completed courses of study in agriculture have not been extensively employed by the government because of chronic disorganization and neglect in the Ministry of Agriculture, while lack of capital and know-how has tended to keep them from private agricultural enterprise. Graduates of the technical and engineering schools have been having some difficulty in entering the work force due to the slow pace of Ethiopia's industrial development. Graduates of general academic programs, finally, and those who drop out before completing some course of study, tend to be left to their own devices.

While the modernizing sector, then, has introduced the revolutionary notion of vocation and has institutionalized means of training young Ethiopians for modern work roles, it has not yet provided adequate mechanisms either for guiding them into and through the training programs or for employing them properly once they are trained. 178 463 464

Preparation for Marriage 883* 178

Conditions of growing up in the modernizing sector have disrupted the harmonious pattern of Amhara adolescence also with respect to entrance into adult family roles. Conflicts arise both from postponement of the normal age for marriage and from radically new ideas about the nature of marriage. [582] [581]

The modern adolescent typically expects to marry at an age that is at least eight to ten years older than his traditional counterpart. While Amhara girls have traditionally married in their early teens, girls in the senior class of secondary school now say they expect to marry in their early twenties. Amhara boys have traditionally married around the age of twenty, but those in post-elementary schools now expect to marry in their late twenties or early thirties. 883* 178 582

This shift is due to a desire to attain as much education as possible, and above all, for the boys, to the precarious economic position of modern adolescents. While living on his father's farm an Amhara boy could marry early with the assurance of having enough land to work to support his family at least at subsistence level. The modern boy who finishes secondary school or [871]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

search and only to the highest grades of secondary school and college, three 883*
questions regarding unscientific beliefs were included. In a pilot study of 815
sixty secondary school seniors and juniors, 42 per cent held the belief that "a 178
person can be made sick by the evil eye of a *budā*," and 33 per cent believed 177
that "too much learning results in madness." To the one question asked of 125
my entire sample: "Do you believe that some learned *dabtarā* can cause rain to fall or stop?," 16 per cent of 500 secondary and 7 per cent of 200 college seniors and juniors said "Yes."

This persistence among the educated youth of traditional beliefs which run 883*
counter to the consensus of modern scientists has been attributed by Lord to 815
the inadequacies of the Ethiopian school system. This is as might be expected, 871
inasmuch as most Ethiopian teachers have had relatively little education 178
themselves and the curriculum has necessarily been somewhat improvised and 177
incomplete. Officials of the Ministry of Education have labored to overcome these deficiencies, and certain changes were in fact made in consequence of Lord's study which aim at combating the more dysfunctional of the prevailing superstitions.

It seems likely, however, that certain irrational dispositions are also in- 121
volved here, dispositions to maintain the unscientific beliefs in spite of im- 815
provements in teaching methods and materials. One would predict this on the 178
basis of general sociological understanding of the consequences of rapid social 177
change. The disruption of the traditional belief systems brought about by the sudden dissemination of scientific beliefs inevitably creates insecurity, and a common reaction to such insecurity is to cling with increased tenacity to some of the old-fashioned beliefs which are closely identified with the traditional culture.[23]

One area in which this defensive "revivalism" can be observed in Ethiopia 178
is that of medicine. Many Ethiopians who have received modern secondary 75
education maintain that Western medicine, while useful in many cases, repre- 815
sents only one possible approach to the problem of sickness and health.[24] 177
Thus, fifty-seven per cent of the secondary students questioned asserted that traditional Ethiopian medicines are effective all or most of the time, although such therapies include the eating of rancid butter to cure malaria or drinking holy water to cure serious functional disorders. Dr. Lord herself has reported an episode which throws much light on the psychology of this reaction:

> An Ethiopian colleague, a former teacher, warned me against drinking water in a certain provincial town on penalty of my catching malaria. He was challenged thus: "You are one of the better educated persons in Ethiopia; don't you know the cause of malaria?" He quickly, and eruditely, gave all the known scientific facts about malaria. Then he added, "You people from the United States (and the United Nations) think that this (the scientif-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the government schools. The weakening of family controls by the new school environment has slightly reduced the importance of loyalty to kin in the students' scheme of things, and has significantly reduced the moral authority of religious customs. A third sphere of norms—respect and obedience toward elders and persons of authority—is maintained by the hierarchical school system, officially headed by the Emperor himself. However, the ambiguous status of foreign teachers and their frequent inability or unwillingness to play the traditional authoritarian role tends to weaken this, for the possibility of informal, even joking, relations with foreign teachers gives Amhara students their first taste of a more relaxed relation to authority figures. (Unprepared by any other experience for such a relationship, their reaction tends to be one of exploiting the permissive teacher as much as possible while at the same time losing respect for him.)

Finally, the expectation of physical stamina and aggressiveness in the Amhara *goramsä* is carried over into the school setting but with definite modification. It prevails in the feeling that one must not tolerate insults or be cowardly. It also persists in altered form in the new pattern of athletic activities instituted by the schools. On the other hand, the greater camaraderie expected among schoolmates means that aggression must also be carefully controlled. An indication of the psychological difficulties to which the crowded yet sociable conditions of school life have given rise appears in response to the question: "What is the worst thing that could justifiably be said against you?" The most frequent sort of answer to this question relates to unchecked aggression: "Quick to anger," "quarrelsome," "ill tempered."

Of the new moral values inculcated by the school system, some of the main ones appear to be self-development via education; honesty; sportsmanship; and social responsibility.

Ethiopians often speak of the "value" (*ïqem*) of education, meaning thereby the path to a well-paying job and a higher standard of living. But one would be mistaken to suppose that this explanation exhausts the meaning that education has for the modern adolescents. The freeing of their imagination and the exercise of previously unknown intellectual capacities prove themselves thrilling experiences for each new class of students. And their most preferred pastime is "reading," their most popular films are educational ones. A number of students spontaneously declared, when asked about the real reason they go to school, "to learn about the world" and "to learn about humanity."

In the traditional culture of Abyssinia, learning was highly valued, to be sure. But its task was to produce a class of literati capable of transmitting the hallowed beliefs and symbols. Education for the sake of inquiry as such or for personal development was never permitted in its program. If the value of

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*883 this new sort of education exists but dimly in the minds of the older students,
• 871 that is largely because the school system has made grades and diplomas the
178 end of scholastic activity.

*883 The fact that the value of truth is to some extent institutionalized in the
577 schools—at least in the demand for correct answers to examination questions
178 —gives honesty a novel importance for the modern adolescents. It does in fact
871 appear that "honesty" is the most highly valued of the six character traits presented in the questionnaire. (See Table 11.) Numerous teachers, however,

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TABLE 11

QUALITIES PREFERRED BY STUDENTS AS REPRESENTING THE BEST KINDS OF CHARACTER

Quality	Per Cent Checking Quality as Either First or Second Choice		
	Secondary School		College Males
	Males	Females	
Honest	65	73	86
Polite	27	30	18
Smiling, sociable	26	43	28
Patriotic	22	10	19
Kind, generous	21	10	12
Humble, modest	10	15	21
Number	(390)	(38)	(190)

*883 report that the students tend to prevaricate on every convenient occasion.
577 This tendency is the product of a tradition in which the culture hero is not
178 George Washington, who "could not tell a lie," but Alaqā Gabra Hānnā,
871 master of deceit, and of a life outside the classroom in which equivocation and deception are the rule. The effort of Ethiopian students to shake the legacy of wax and gold and incorporate the more austere ideal of truth for truth's sake is fraught with pathos. Some of them have frankly conceded that the task belongs to another generation, by naming "honesty" as the thing they want their children most to have that they did not have.

Another ideal which the Ethiopian students have adopted—slowly, but with growing success—is that of sportsmanship or fair play. In Amhara culture the goal, not the manner of fighting, is what is important. The government school system, however, has taught students to play fairly in accord with

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fixed rules and to respect their opponents. Until a few years ago, the imperfect acceptance of these norms was shown by the frequent fights between opposing school teams following soccer and basketball games. But gradually a new tradition of athletic activity has been building up in the schools, and with it the related norms have started to gain greater acceptance. 883* 577 178 871

Still another value that the school experience has promoted is that of social responsibility. Most students are very grateful to the government for having provided them with schooling and related benefits, and they feel a keen obligation to show their gratitude by serving their country. They have also become conscious of the great needs of their people for economic and social development. In Amhara society, service was expected in behalf of the family and, except for mass levies in time of warfare, usually stopped there. The modern adolescents are still mindful of their obligations to their parents and siblings, but have now included broader ideals of social service in their moral orientation. When asked what they expect to bring most satisfaction in their lives, the students named "improvement of local community" more often than any other category except "career or occupation." (See Table 4.) When asked what they would do with a million dollars, more than a third answered in terms of purely social enterprises, such as building schools and hospitals, helping the poor and orphaned; and many others indicated private enterprises with specifically social purposes, such as improving agriculture and building factories to provide employment. 883* 641 577 185 (593)

It is difficult to determine how deeply the value of social responsibility has been internalized. In their public declarations, at any rate, the students wax eloquent in propounding ideals of good citizenship. They urge themselves to prepare for introducing modern ways to the uneducated; to return to the villages, integrate themselves with the old society, and lead them gently to better ways; to fight discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and social class; to solve the problem of corruption and bribery in the government; and to promote national solidarity.

Politics.—The Amhara adolescent has little occasion to develop specifically political attitudes, since his customary political world has been coterminous with subordination to legitimate local and national authorities, and defense of his country against invaders. Unless he was the son of a nobleman involved in struggles for power, there have rarely been any political issues to engage his attention. 883* 66

A host of issues, domestic and international, have by contrast been thrust upon the modern adolescent. Yet in comparison with students from the other countries of Africa and the Middle East, his political orientation is relatively undeveloped. Ethiopian students at regional or international gatherings of students have in the past tended to feel somewhat out of place, for the polit-

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FIG. 20.—*Traditional (church) school: student huts*

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FIG. 21.—*Traditional school: learning to read*

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FIG. 22.—*Traditional school: learning zēmā from master*

[P. 142-A]

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As many as 44 per cent of the students failed to name anyone they disliked in Ethiopian history. This may be attributed in part to their meager knowledge of Ethiopian history, perhaps still more to their fear of expressing themselves honestly on such a point even in an anonymous questionnaire. But doubtless another reason was that presented by the 2 per cent of the students who wrote: "[I dislike] none; all did good." 883* 829

If the responses on Ethiopian history are analyzed with respect to the qualities or achievements of the men concerned, we find that military virtue —expressed as "brave," "defeated many enemies," or "fought for Ethiopia"— is mentioned far more often than any other (27 per cent). In second place are actions related to the modernization of Ethiopia, and the third most frequent category is that of unifying the nation. The most frequently mentioned negative categories were anti-Christian actions (burning churches, converting to Islam), cruelty, treason, and selling Ethiopian territory.

A different pattern of response is apparent in the comments on world historical personages. The interest in military prowess is still there, but not as prominent (19 per cent). It appears chiefly in the preference for Napoleon and, occasionally, for Alexander the Great. Themes of national unification and modernization occur very rarely. It is the general category of humanitarian qualities and achievements that dominates these responses (40 per cent), expressed variously as "freeing the slaves," "promoting equality," "working for peace," showing kindness or generosity, possessing wisdom or creative genius. Thus it is that Abraham Lincoln stands out as the most admired figure in world history for the Ethiopian students (22 per cent), and that following him, Napoleon, and Peter the Great, Mahatma Gandhi stands in fourth place.

Responses concerning the most disliked figure in world history are consistent with this tendency to transcend the sentiment of militant nationalism. The main charges against the villains of world history have to do with cruelty, slaughter, provocation of war (including, of course, the attack on Ethiopia), and despotism, while vices related to betraying one's nation are scarcely mentioned. The names which dominate these replies are Hitler (22 per cent), Mussolini (21 per cent), Nero (8 per cent), and Stalin (2 per cent). It appears, then, that the study of world history may have the effect of strengthening the humanitarian side of the students' political orientation by exposing them to a different set of ideals and models.

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF MODERN ADOLESCENCE

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The pattern of adolescence described in this section came quickly into being and has already undergone some substantial changes. It is, in effect, the pattern of the 1950's. The educational system before and just after the occupation was, structurally, an extension of the old pattern of schooling sons of noble-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 men and outstanding commoners in the vicinity of the royal court. But with
• 871 the importation of hundreds of foreign teachers, the establishment of an ex-
178 tensive system of secondary schools and colleges, and the provision of economic support for thousands of post-elementary students, a real structural change came about. Although the school system remained completely subordinate to the throne, it introduced a number of processes that had a dynamic of their own.

*883 As we have seen, these new socialization processes have subjected the
121 modern adolescents to many sorts of conflict and strain. They have been
178 placed in conflict with their parents, and hence within themselves, on the basic issues of work and, particularly, marriage. They have been subjected to the simultaneous appeal of traditional and modern patterns in virtually all aspects of culture. They have been forced to make choices in numerous areas, while their traditional counterparts have customarily been prevented from making any kind of choice at all.

It might seem that such a situation would breed a troubled generation, distraught and disoriented, knowing what we do about the psychological hazards of rapid culture change. And indeed, among the modern adolescents of the fifties, one might find classical cases of anomie and identity diffusion, boys who confess, "Nothing seems worthwhile to me . . . I am confused, being brought up as I was on the traditional beliefs without questioning and then suddenly being forced to ask questions," or, "The problem of choosing the work I should go into is my only real problem right now, but because of it I find it hard to make decisions about anything. If this suffering is the price of freedom, I am not sure it is worth the price."

Such cases, however, were the exception, not the rule. Most of the students were working hard to get ahead in the world or enjoying their newly acquired freedom and camaraderie. Almost all our respondents had ready answers concerning the sort of work they want to go into, and what they
[828] would do if they could have any wish granted. Comparing themselves with their elders, they presented a positive self-image. They regarded themselves as more "civilized," "well built," and "generous" than their parents' generation, albeit somewhat lazier and less polite; and in comparison with Ethiopians a decade older, saw themselves as "better educated," "more clever," "more adventurous," and better able to "enjoy life." Nearly all of them (92 per cent) said that they felt either "enthusiastic" or "hopeful" about their
[181] personal future. So one could characterize the Ethiopian post-elementary students of the fifties as relatively buoyant, clear-headed, self-confident, and enjoying their situation of culture contact and change far more than suffering it. How may this be explained?

[643] One great source of their strength was a sense of dependence on the Emperor. As founder of the Ethiopian school system, Haile Selassie has

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appeared to the students as the source of their new goods; of their learning, 883*
health, and well-being. Because of a feeling that "he supplies everything" 121
and "he is my guardian," students of all grades have been among the most 178
sincere and enthusiastic supporters of Haile Selassie. So their adoption of 643
Western patterns has from the outset been legitimated by the highest tradi- [197]
tional authority, and the harshness of the culture clash has been softened
by the symbolization of both tradition and modernity in the Imperial Person.
Here the traditional pattern of "functional deviance" re-asserts itself. The 883*
adolescent rebels against the traditional demands of his parents, but expends 121
that deviant energy on behalf of legitimate symbols of the national society. 178

Related to this was a strong sense of national purposiveness. *Agārēnenna* 883*
negusēn tammrē iredālhu ("Having studied, I will serve my country and 121
my king")—this was the motto of most Ethiopian students in the forties and 641
fifties. The conspicuous needs of their country provided clear goals in terms 178
of which students felt they were preparing themselves.

Still another motive force was the need for personal justification. The many 883*
students who in a sense deserted their home villages or families in order to 121
spend years in school carried with them an ambition eventually to show the 178
folks back home that they were right after all. This involved the conviction 871.
that going to school was the right, at times the righteous, thing: a blind
faith that simply by continuing along the road of education they would
make good in the world and return home some day as a sort of hero. Here,
too, is an echo of the old deviant pattern: the renegade returning home, after
many years, as a successful churchman or warlord.

The economic situation, finally, was encouraging for students. It seemed [464]
for many years that advanced training, including study abroad, would be
available for whoever qualified, and that the demand for educated personnel
was so great that the job opportunities for students would be endless.

By 1961, however, all these sources of adolescent morale—royal legitima- 883*
tion, national purpose, personal justification, and economic opportunity—had 121
been to some extent undercut. Some of the changing circumstances have al- 178
ready been referred to. The effect of the rebellion of December, 1960, and its 871
aftermath was to weaken the tie between Haile Selassie and the post-elemen- 643
tary students. With his moral authority somewhat undermined, the students
could no longer use him to symbolize a conflict-free transition to modernity.
Nor could they any longer count on him to "supply everything" indefinitely:
in the summer of 1962 the Emperor announced the immediate suspension of
room and board benefits for the students of the University College.

The students' outlook has further been rendered less sanguine by the con- 883*
fusion attending the political crisis of the sixties. They no longer feel the 121
keen sense of national purpose, to serve "country and king." Their ideals in 178
this regard were already weakening before the rebellion by virtue of increased [641]

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*883 121 178 awareness of the political realities in the Ethiopian government. They had also begun to doubt the transcendent efficacy of the educational process itself after observing the behavior of those educated Ethiopians who went before [871 883] them and inevitably became their ideals. The violation of various traditional and modern norms by the latter, and their evident demoralization, raised many questions in the minds of the students.

*883 121 178 871 464 Finally, the students were made more anxious by a general constricting of opportunity. Increased numbers in the school system meant a steady intensification of the competition to gain and hold on to a place in secondary school and college, particularly since 1959. The rapid filling of jobs by the educated youth and steadily growing numbers of unemployed youth began to create anxieties about finding work in the future.

*883 121 178 From the viewpoint of the modern adolescents, then, a very supportive and stimulating environment in the fifties has changed to a somewhat threatening and confused environment in the sixties. It is in this decade that Ethiopia's leaders of the future, that tiny fraction of one per cent of the population who [873 162] reach secondary school, are coming to experience adolescence as a real normative crisis. At a time when, in the highly modernized society of the United States, observers like Friedenberg charge that the adolescent condition is becoming obsolete—that scope is no longer afforded the young person for exploration and discovery of an authentic self[28]—in the transitional state of Ethiopia this condition is being thrust on the youth. The decisions they make now, the identities they forge, will largely determine the extent to which reason and creativity will have a place in Ethiopia's future.

*883 871 121 178 The effort of the Ethiopian government to provide a modern education for some of Ethiopia's adolescents illustrates a principle discussed in another context by Karl Mannheim, namely, the characterization of youth as a latent sociological resource which must be mobilized when any social system seeks to change itself. It is a resource analogous to the latent energy reserves which are available to biological organisms when they must make a fresh adjustment to their environment.[29] Thus far the effort to mobilize the resources of Ethiopia's youth in behalf of modernization has proceeded chiefly through a pattern of increased *differentiation:* establishing a structure of secondary socialization separate from that of the traditional structures and thereby transmitting new beliefs, skills, and values to the youth. As yet, relatively little has been done with respect to the problems of devising modes of *integration* commensurate with these new differentiated patterns. The analyses of this chapter suggest the presence of what might be called "integration gaps" on at least three levels. On the level of the individual personality, there is the problem of synthesizing the various aspects of traditional and modern culture which have been transmitted to Ethiopian adolescents through diverse sources. Inasmuch as the external supports which cushioned these conflicts in the fifties are no

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longer so secure, the adolescent individual has been thrown more on his own. 883*
He can only be helped to work through these conflicts by a transformed edu- 121
cational program, one which educates for self-education and seeks to en- 178
lighten students concerning the complex realities of economic development 891
and culture change. On the level of relating youth to a modernizing occupational system, there is the problem of guiding young people into and through the relevant educational programs and helping them to find appropriate work roles once trained. On the level of planning for the whole society there is the additional problem of relating the number of individuals being trained in various fields at any period to the priority requirements of a national development program.

This last issue raises questions which for the most part lie outside the scope of this book. Yet there is one point concerning the orientation of Ethiopian students which is of immediate relevance: the disjunction between the aspiration of modern-educated Ethiopians to live in Addis Ababa and work in a government office, and the nation's needs for trained workers in more directly productive fields and for those who will work in the provinces. For at the same time that Ethiopia's youth are being trained in modern skills, they are being exposed to modern pleasures; and these—the enjoyment of modern amusements, the company of other educated people, and the excitement of proximity to centers of national power and international commerce—are concentrated in Addis Ababa. At the same time that they are being educated with modern beliefs, they are being primed for a new kind of social mobility; and this channel is concentrated in the governmental bureaucracy—the nesting ground of Ethiopia's new elites. Conflict between these new interests and the nation's deepest needs, endemic in all transitional societies, poses an integrative challenge of the highest order.

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565 554 The local nobility, on the other hand, were eminences whose lives and reputations were bound to a more circumscribed locale. While the non-royal nobility, or *makuānnent* in the stricter sense, performed as high dignitaries at the imperial court and governors of large provinces, the local nobility were district chiefs and judges, or even simply wealthy landowners, who enjoyed considerable deference. Though they might not be known outside of their home regions, these men were, for the mass of the population, the lords of existence. *Ka-Gondar negus / yāgar āmbārās,* "the petty district chief [is obeyed] more than the Gondar king"[19] expresses folk wisdom on the subject. The Amharic terms which designate this class of men are *bālābbās* and *shum,* terms we shall want to consider more closely below.

565 184 Despite these distinctions among members of the upper stratum of Abyssinian society, with respect to their general orientation and style of life they differed only in degree. They created and shared what might be called a "gentry subculture," even though it was not so differentiated from the general culture as was the case in Europe and China. In the present context, it will be meaningful to treat them as a single status group.

565 184 86 [576] Special manners and skills were self-consciously taught to children of the *makuānnent,* most of which remain part of the gentry subculture today. An etiquette of instinctual inhibition is taught. Some attention is given, for example, to toilet training, which is spontaneous among peasant children. Spitting in public is proscribed. Physical aggression is discouraged in favor of the more subtle forms of satire and patient manipulation of others. A quiet, reserved manner of speaking is stressed, in contrast with the less inhibited and cruder self-expression of the peasantry. Dignity of comportment is expected at all times; a noble should not, for example, express great enthusiasm or surprise over anything. Sobriety is inculcated as a virtue; alcohol is *la-çhawā lijj* [293] *mādasetchā / la-bālagē māzabābatchā* ("for the nobleman's son a stimulant, for the commoner an intoxicant"). In short, the gentry subculture stresses the general ideal of bringing a child up to be conspicuously genteel, or *çhawā.*

565 184 868 [871] [534] [883] Sons of the nobility have traditionally followed a privileged curriculum.[20] They were given lessons in horseback riding and weaponry at an early age. They were also taught how to swim, an uncommon skill among the Abyssinians. Reading would often be taught, for which schooling a man of the church might be brought in as a tutor, or the boy might be sent for a while to a monastery. He might also learn how to play the *baganā,* the ten-stringed lyre used to accompany certain forms of religious and plaintive secular songs. Instead of spending his teen-age years at the plow, which was regarded as beneath his dignity, the noble boy would follow his father to court and observe the ways of litigation and the manner of passing judgments; or he might be sent as a page to the court of the king or some great lord.

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178 795 793 642 643 "subject to the approval of the Emperor" and gave him "the right to promulgate the decrees, edicts, and public regulations of the Church, except those concerning monastic life and other spiritual administrations."

The general position of the church had already been weakened by the 648 events of the Italian occupation. Italian policy resulted in the destruction of 795 many church buildings and the massacre of numerous monks, including those 793 of the hallowed monastery of Dabra Libānos. Of the national leaders, the [792] Egyptian *abuna* was out of the country from 1937 on; two of the bishops were put to death, including the much venerated martyr, Abuna Pēṭros;* and the remaining two compounded the demoralization by openly supporting the invaders. One of these went so far as to anathematize resistance fighters and forbade Ethiopian priests to give Christian burial to those who died as patriots. In some areas, moreover, it is said that the local clergy lost much prestige by welcoming the invader with open arms.

178 Haile Selassie thus had a much stronger hand in his dealings with the 795 clergy when he returned from exile in 1941. The next year he issued a decree 793 which sharply restricted the perquisites of the local clergy. Their landed [643] properties were no longer tax free, but now carried the obligation to pay taxes [651] at the normal rate into a central church treasury. The church was deprived of temporal jurisdiction over its ordained and lay members, including the authority to inflict fines, and was denied the right to corvée labor from peasants living on their lands. (In practice these latter restrictions of authority are frequently ignored in the provinces.)

178 The development of a nationwide system of government schools, finally, 871 has broken the clergy's monopoly of educational facilities. Wherever govern- 658 ment schools have invaded traditional Abyssinian regions, the clergy tend to 793 be defensive and resentful. The specific issues have been the decreased prestige of certain traditional religious subjects, which are not taught in these schools, and the comparatively lower income of church teachers. Thus, a full- [465] time teacher of reading attached to a monastery may receive Eth$15 a month from the central church treasury, whereas a government school teacher in the same area teaching the same subject may earn Eth$150 a month.

793 Despite all these blows, the clergy still retain much the same prestige as 178 ever in the provinces. Their influence over public opinion is considerable, and [554] has been a major factor in discouraging families in traditional Christian areas [871] like Manz from sending their children to government schools.† Despite [658]

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[538] * A statue of Abuna Pēṭros has been raised in the center of Addis Ababa. His fate has been celebrated in the verse drama by Makonnen Endālkātchaw, *Ya-dam Demṭs*, translated into English as *The Voice of Blood* by Endālkātchaw Makonnen.

† When the Ethiopian government is ready to inaugurate a major program of provincial education, it should not prove difficult to overcome this opposition. A number of provincial priests, with whom the author has discussed this matter, have signified their willingness to serve as

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recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuännent,* Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

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The households are staffed with numerous servants and retainers, who make certain, for example, that the lord does not work in the garden or carry a package into the house from his car. Expectations of this sort of attendance are carried with the new nobility wherever they go. Similarly, members of the new nobility are frequently followed about, or waited for, by young relatives and other aspiring young men, who hope to establish a sort of civil master-retainer relationship and thereby secure a position, promotion, or loan. 178 565 554 [357] [567]

The new nobility also attempts to instill in its children the refined manners and reserve of the old noble subculture. Some of the wealthiest have retained the tradition of private education, in its modern counterpart of sending their children abroad for secondary school or to private schools in Addis Ababa. They would like to control their children in the old fashion, but because of growing cultural confusion have in many cases assumed a more permissive stance. Thus their children increasingly run about freely, ignore traditions, and exhibit less fastidious manners. 178 565 [867] [871] [855]

Owing to their small numbers and the fact that they meet one another so often—at the palace and at social events like weddings—the members of the new nobility tend to be well acquainted with each other. They seem conscious of their status as a privileged stratum but do not form a solidary group. They divide into strongly competitive cliques, a division that itself tends to dissolve into the anxious struggle of each to maintain or improve his position at the expense of the others. The chief way to accomplish this has been to report something incriminating about another person—above all, something that impugns his loyalty to the Emperor. The consciousness of the new nobility has been dominated by the fear of arousing the Emperor's displeasure. The proximity of the throne—a phone call can summon anyone to report to the palace within ten minutes, reason unspecified—makes this a more formidable sanction than in previous generations. 178 565 57

How has Haile Selassie been able to prevent the new nobility from acquiring that relative autonomy of status and self-esteem which the old nobility formerly enjoyed? Why is it, despite the burgeoning of a new "power elite," that the question most earnestly asked by thoughtful Ethiopians and foreign observers for the past several years concerns a probable future "power vacuum"? 178 565 643

Sensitive to encroachment on his "absolute" authority by anyone else, Haile Selassie has kept his officials in a state of weakness through the strategy of his appointments. In this he has been inspired by the traditional methods of Abyssinian rulers who periodically assigned offices to different men through the process of *shum-shir*. Haile Selassie's policy has been to rotate officials in office every one or two years, in some cases after six months. This has prevented officials from acquiring a significant following in any one position. At the same time it has made certain that none of them will undertake any 178 631 64 565

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 more eager and impatient to modernize Ethiopia than do members of the
648 new nobility. This contrast was already apparent at the time of the Italian invasion, when Ethiopian officers were condemning the archaic practices of civilian officials who, they charged, were holding back the defense efforts. Yet the image of a progressive, solidary military elite in Ethiopia is justified no more than the image of a reactionary, solidary ministerial elite; nor should the military leaders be seen as standing in fundamental opposition to their civilian counterparts. There is much friendly intercourse between the two groups. Army officers are often related to civilian officials, by blood or by marriage. Military personnel have in a number of cases been assigned to civilian posts in the government. While the military carry on much of their social life among themselves, they also enjoy a good deal of interaction with civilians of high status at parties, dances, weddings, and funerals.

701 Like the new nobility, moreover, the military officers do not form a cohesive group with common interests and ambitions. The one group which did develop a high degree of solidarity, esprit, and common political goals—the Officers Corps of the Imperial Bodyguard—was dissolved in the wake of its defeat in the 1960 rebellion. The military men have been checked and balanced by much the same techniques as have the new nobility. As a whole, they are held together by little more than the institutionalized structure of the security forces. As such, they are in any event bound to play an important part in determining the character of the future government of Ethiopia as they are crucial now in upholding the present regime.

THE BIRTH OF AN INTELLIGENTSIA

571 The formation of a modern intellectual class in Ethiopia is still in its earliest
871 stages. Given the small number who have completed elementary school (a
162 number still under one per cent of the national population) all Ethiopians who have graduated from secondary school may for the time being be considered members of a secular educated elite, those with college and graduate degrees enjoying correspondingly higher status within this elite. The total number in this group reached an estimated six thousand in 1962, about one-fourth of whom held college degrees.

571 Equally indicative of the rudimentary condition of the Ethiopian intelligentsia is the poverty of its institutional facilities and of its means of communication, both internally and with the international intellectual commu-
571 nity. As of 1961, institutions with primarily intellectual purposes were lim-
873 ited to the small college of arts and sciences, four vocational colleges, two
874 small research centers (the Pasteur Institute and the Section d'Archéologie, both financed by France and staffed mostly by non-Ethiopians), the Haile

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, 571
and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy 178
of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession 565
of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal follow- 554
ings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Western- [642]
ized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, [177]
rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approx- [556]
imately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid [642]
growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new [647]
nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military [701]
force, and economic advance.* [433]

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile 178
Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests 571
on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within 554
the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of 871
the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been con- 178
tinuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on 565
the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited [643]
political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the 178
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* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957. [439]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

178 past. The intellectuals are the product of a secular school system which is, as
571 we have seen, a structure foreign to Abyssinian tradition. Their members are
[177] drawn from all parts of Ethiopian society, and in almost no cases consist of
[871] Western-educated members of the old group of literati, the *dabtarā*. The question of their integration into what has remained an essentially traditional social system has thus been Ethiopia's main sociological dilemma during the present decade. We shall return to this question after considering the composition and general situation of the intellectual class.

571 Whatever his line of work, the Ethiopian intellectual tends to be employed
463 by the government, since employment opportunities in the private sector are
[464] still extremely limited; and where such exist, the government has often claimed priority over the intellectual's services by virtue of its having educated him. Many of the intellectuals work as public administrators, in the middle echelons of the government bureaucracy, with the titles of "assistant," "director," and "director general"; and there has been a growing tendency
[805] to appoint them in the higher levels, especially since 1961. Hundreds of them now work as teachers in the elementary and secondary schools,* and some six dozen teach at the college level. A small but growing number are employed as physicians, medical workers, engineers, and legal advisers in various government institutions. Still another group works in the small communications field—on the staffs of the various newspapers, the patriotic monthly *Menen*, and Radio Addis Ababa. The small group holding jobs outside the government works as engineers and bureaucrats in industrial firms, as employees of the Ethiopian Air Lines, or have small commercial or agricultural enterprises of their own.

571 With respect to interaction among the intellectuals, however, the most
871 important distinction among them has been the place where they received their education. Here we may speak of two main groups: those who received part of their education abroad, the "foreign-educated" or "returnees"; and those who received all their education in Ethiopia, the "local-educated" or "locals."†

The Returnees

Close to two hundred Ethiopians studied abroad prior to the Italian occu-
[177] pation. Since French was then the official European language in Ethiopia,

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* About forty-five hundred Ethiopians, of varying levels of educational attainment, were teaching in government schools of all types in 1960–61, according to the Ministry of Education school census for that year.

† This term is used as a neutral descriptive category, free from any negative connotations it may have acquired when first coined by the returnees. More recently, the West African term "been-to" has been incorporated into Amharic for referring to the returnee.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

quite a few of these men went to school in France and Switzerland, while others studied in Egypt, England, the United States, and Italy. In general, this first group of returnees was enthusiastic and outspoken in their desire to modernize the country. They were emboldened by the feeling that Haile Selassie was their champion, though some of them, who took plans for a Young Ethiopia movement with them into exile during the occupation, felt a need for more radical reforms than the Emperor was willing to admit. 571 871 177

The pre-occupation intellectuals have no significant voice as such in Ethiopia today. Many of them were massacred by the Italians following the attempt on Graziani's life in 1937. Those who survived have been scattered, some being so thoroughly absorbed in the new nobility as to lose their identity as intellectuals, others tending to lead somewhat isolated and demoralized lives. Only the handful of older military officers, who were trained at the St. Cyr Academy in France, retain any semblance of common identity based on prewar study abroad. 571 648

In speaking of the returnees, then, we speak essentially of a group whose education abroad dates to the late forties and after. The typical postliberation returnee has studied from three to five years abroad in an English-speaking institution, under the sponsorship of the Ethiopian government; though there are many exceptions to this type. 571 871 177

As of June, 1959, the main countries in which some five hundred Ethiopians had studied since the mid-forties were: United States and Canada, 38 per cent; United Kingdom, 20 per cent; Lebanon (American University of Beirut), 17 per cent; Western Germany, 10 per cent; and India, 4 per cent. This pattern began to change somewhat at the end of the fifties as, in addition to these countries, Ethiopians in increasingly large numbers began to attend schools in Egypt, Italy, France, Israel, and Sweden. The subjects pursued by these students covered the whole academic spectrum—from dairying and forestry to languages and theology. Most of them, however, concentrated in one of four fields: social sciences, 30 per cent; engineering, 23 per cent; education, 12 per cent; and medical sciences, 12 per cent. Notably underrepresented in their studies were the fields of business and the natural sciences.

The length of time spent abroad varied considerably. Of the three hundred students who had returned by 1958 for whom complete information is available, 15 per cent studied abroad for only one year and 18 per cent for two years; 36 per cent were abroad from three to five years, 25 per cent from six to eight years, and 6 per cent for nine or more years. The education of about half of these students was paid for by the Ethiopian government itself. Others went on scholarships given by the United States government through AID (20 per cent); by other foreign governments, chiefly West Germany and 648

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

571 India (10 per cent); and by international organizations, chiefly WHO and
871 ICAO (8 per cent). The others were financed privately, either by their
177 families (8 per cent), or, in a few cases (3 per cent), by religious groups or
648 business firms.

571 Given this variety of educational background, it is not surprising that the
829 experience of study abroad has had a variable effect on the returnees. Their
177 images of modernity are differently colored according to the country where they have received their higher education. Their archetypes for the modern component of language vary according to the language in which they have received their technical training.

Despite such variety—which may ultimately serve to enrich their cultural life more than to fragment it—several effects of the experience abroad appear common to nearly all the returnees. These include a radical broadening of perspective; the taste for a high standard of living; greater appreciation of political freedom; a heightened sense of Ethiopian identity; and an increase in nationalistic sentiment.

571 Because Ethiopian students are highly motivated to learn what goes on
829 about them in foreign countries, their travel abroad has tended to broaden
177 their outlooks rather than to confirm their prejudices. This expansion of per-
186 spective alters their attitude toward Ethiopia in two different ways. On the one hand, by enabling them to evaluate aspects of Ethiopian life they had previously taken for granted, it has made them more aggressively critical about conditions at home. On the other hand, it has given them a greater sense of pride about Ethiopia. They have noticed that, however advanced their host country, it had certain shortcomings of its own, a sort of observation which has tended to ease the sting of cultural inferiority inevitably felt during the stay in a more modernized society.

> Before going to the United States, I pictured it as the most perfect country on earth. We students in Ethiopia believed that everything good and beautiful comes from America. After studying there, I was disappointed in many ways. For example, I found the Americans to be hypocritical—they go to church, and don't care about religion; they talk about tolerance, and are still quite prejudiced. This was a great lesson for me. I can never be so romantic about a foreign country again, and can appreciate Ethiopia's strengths as well as its weaknesses better now.

Short travel tours sometimes had a similar effect:

> I spent several weeks in Yugoslavia. . . . And I must say—despite how backward we are here, we live much more happily than the Yugoslavs. The people themselves are wonderful—warm and generous; but their lives are miserable. That experience was really quite a surprise for me.

571 No matter what its shortcomings, the host country inevitably accustomed
829 Ethiopians abroad to a higher standard of living than they had known at
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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

643 tion has been more closely than ever tied to the service and support of the 181 Crown. 178 771

The system-integrative value was not only subordinate to transcendental 178 religious values in the traditional order, but it was also in competition with 181 the separate instrumental orientations of the feudal lords. This introduced the 643 chief instability of the traditional system. Commitment to the separate goals 642 of the feudal lords chronically competed with that of loyalty to the emperor; 631 and after the calamities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the former decisively gained the upper hand. With the ascendance of the system-integrative value under Haile Selassie, accordingly, the semi-autonomous status of feudal nobles could no longer be tolerated, and their powers and functions were sharply reduced.

In their stead, but as arms of the emperor and living symbols of allegiance 178 to him, a new nobility was established as the focus of national power and 181 prestige. New goals were pronounced for the system as a whole, but inte- 565 grative considerations of loyalty remained decisive: no system goals were pur- [185] sued which threatened to disrupt the internal security of the regime. Finally, 178 a generation of young men was trained in skills that would provide sufficient 181 technical competence to provide amenities and façades to edify the emperor 571 and his courtiers as well as to increase the nation's military strength, standard 871 of living, and international prestige. The integrative strategy in dealing with educated Ethiopians has consistently been one of exploiting their skills without permitting the values represented by them—technical competence and national development—to be fully actualized; to make them, in effect, appendages of the court just as much as the new nobility.

Haile Selassie has sought to do this by maintaining a paternalistic relation- 178 ship with the intellectuals. Government pronouncements stress that whatever 643 advantages Ethiopians have had by way of education have resulted from his 571 personal generosity. The Emperor has sought to make visible his paternal 871 solicitation and bounty, for example, by visits to various secondary schools and colleges, and by sending them baskets of fruit on occasion. He has personally conferred the diplomas to all graduates of the University College. Similarly, Ethiopian students who have returned from study abroad have normally been expected to have an audience with the Emperor, in which their occupational plans are discussed and they are given some fatherly advice from the throne. The following excerpts from typical audiences of this nature were reported in the *Ethiopian Herald*.

[A speech by a returnee]:

Your Imperial Majesty!

I feel honoured and privileged to speak on behalf of my fellow students expressing our deep gratitude to Your Imperial Majesty. . . .

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Thanks to the untiring endeavour of Your Imperial Majesty in the field of education, we now have not only elementary and secondary schools throughout the country but also different higher educational institutions providing the youth of our country with higher education. Besides this, competent students are selected and sent abroad for specialization, as a result of which the number of Ethiopian students in foreign countries is increasing. Those of us who are now standing before Your Imperial Majesty are only a few among those who have been given such an opportunity. . . .

Your Imperial Majesty's struggle is to enable Ethiopia to benefit from the advantages of modern education in order to improve the standard of living of Your people so that Ethiopia will play adequately its part in the international community. Consequently, the public services that are rendered in the reign of Your Imperial Majesty are enormously great compared with the past. This can be seen easily by the number of ministries and other government agencies established by Your Imperial Majesty. . . .[64]

[A reply by the Emperor]:

We have been deeply touched by what you have said on behalf of the returned students. From you, We expect devotion to your country and your Emperor. . . . Endeavour to profit your country from the fruits of your education. Men are in great need today. It is not enough to be labeled as "man"—one must be worthy of the name by being of use to the community. This is the real test of education.

You must get in intimate touch with the cultural heritage of your country. Familiarise yourselves with the modes of life from which you must have been estranged naturally by your absence. You must endeavour to purge yourselves gradually of alien influence in your daily lives, and so God help you.[65]

This sort of paternal relation has served not only to promote the loyalty of his educated "children" but also to check mild cases of dissidence. Grown men with sophisticated technical training who may have voiced some critical sentiments have been called in for mild reproof: "Why have you behaved thus? Did We not always bring you fruit and other things when you were at school?"

Such a policy was no doubt viable when Ethiopians with secondary education numbered in the hundreds, but it becomes increasingly implausible as the Emperor's family of educated youth multiplies into thousands. No less relevant to its long-run futility is the fact that knowledge, unlike wealth and political position, is an inalienable possession. Their knowledge gives Western-educated Ethiopians a kind of independence of the Emperor that is lacking in most of the new nobility, and that perhaps may be compared to the private armies of the feudal lords or the power of excommunication held by the church. It was awareness of this that prompted one returnee to say: "The Emperor will have to learn that our education is not a plaything he can turn on or off as he pleases."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

But this gentle, paternal control has been backstopped by more rigorous sanctions. Censorship controls assure that anything that is published is highly flattering of the government. Intelligence networks keep intellectuals from speaking their minds and developing them through open exchange with others. Associations have in general not been permitted to form, or else have been saturated with government informers. Coupled with these repressive measures has been the policy of making appointments dependent on the extent to which one curries favor with the Emperor directly, or one of the new nobles who is high in favor at a given time. The intellectuals, no less than the new nobility, have been kept in line by *shum-shĭr* and *divide et impera*. "We have been kept from acting," said one remorseful returnee, "by fear and the sweetness of office."

In the political order sustained by the rule of Haile Selassie, the paramountcy of loyalty to the imperial government as a value has precluded the ascendance of values of national development and technical competence, values it is the peculiar burden of the intelligentsia to bear and assert. In this situation a vicious cycle of mutual mistrust has developed between the government and the intellectuals. Although the articulation of standards and the expression of criticism are important functions of intellectuals, the Emperor has tended to regard all expressions of criticism which reflect on the government, which is his personal government, as expressions of filial ingratitude at best, and at worst as signs of subversion. The intellectuals, in turn, have accepted this definition of the situation and have tended to assume—after some disheartening experiences in the course of the fifties—that is was not plausible for them to express criticism in a framework of basic loyalty to the regime. Distrust fed distrust, and antagonism mounted. The abortive coup d'état of December, 1960, was but the most outspoken and violent expression of this.

This growth of antagonism to the government has seeped down among the students. The feeling has become increasingly widespread among students at home and abroad that genuine service to the nation and the performance of technical functions are incompatible with a loyal and secure existence under the present regime. Thus, one student in a Western country said in 1961: "I am afraid to return to Ethiopia. I fear that I shall either lose all my principles, as so many of my friends seem to have done, or that I shall end up without a job or in prison."

ETHIOPIA'S DILEMMA

Haile Selassie has often proclaimed his devotion to a program of modernization. His personal achievements in this direction have been substantial: the establishment of much modern bureaucratic machinery, the institution of a parliament and electoral procedures, a mild degree of industrialization, and, above all, the provision of a modern secular education for thousands of young people.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

*793 869 sident student by familiarizing him with the network of churches, monasteries, and academies which constitute the stations along which the student will progress once he leaves his natal parish.

*[192] The completion of psalter (dawiyd) is frequently considered a sign of the student's readiness to be tested by the local bishop (abuna) for certification as a deacon. The boy is fifteen or sixteen by this time, and the recipient of church fields in return for his performance in the Mass; with his marriage a few years later, he becomes a priest. The boy bent on a debtera career generally waits until he has been certified a deacon, since this is considered a prerequisite for enrollmnt in his first debtera school.

*793 869 621 593 166 With the exceptions already cited, a man is certain to oppose his son's departure, since, sentiment aside, the boy's move usually represents a significant economic loss. When he leaves his natal parish, he does so secretly, journeying to a distant debtera, in order to conceal his new residence from his father. Thus, he begins his debtera career without kinfolk or friends to protect him, without resources to meet his subsistence needs.[23]

[871] [178] [369] [23]Since liberation, government (secular) schools have offered an alternative to an ecclesiastical education pursuant to government employment. The effects of this have been limited, however, since only an estimated 3% pass beyond the eighth grade (ESA 1965:198). In addition children of townsmen and non-Amhara are disproportionately represented in these classes.

874 utilize their learning in other capacities. The sons of former feudal nobles or of priests usually secure administrative positions or judgeships without difficulty; those of undistinguished birth could become dabtara; or locate a vacancy as teacher in a parish school--then "daj tena" the regional bishop to confirm them in the appointment.

872 538 Methods of the church school were followed, for centuries, for all those boys who attended the local school, which was in reality a lower-grade church school itself. The initial process of learning to read was called "guter" (lit. number), "counting" letters. The second stage was called "Geez", for then they learned the seven syllabic variants of each Geez consonantal letter. The third stage, "werd nebab", had the pupils read the entire syllabic alphabet up and down until completely memorized in sequence. In the fourth stage, "abugida", the order of the syllabic alphabet is mixed up and the pupil must place each syllabic letter in proper order. In the 5th stage, he reads, in a sing-song which varies from province to province, the first chapter of the Epistle of St. John, first letter by letter, then word by word, finally phrase by phrase, a repetition of the first four stages. This musical singsong "malakta yohanesa hawareya" symbolizes what ABC does in the West. Then follow readings from the New Testament, Psalms of David ("dawit"), then any text "on sight" in Geez or Amharic. Liturgical songs and poetry most often learned by heart are: "Waddase Maryam", "Anqasa Berhan", "Malka

872 Maryam", "Mälka Iyasus". All of these are basic devotion-
[538] al liturgy.

[212] It is noteworthy that there is usually no formal training in writing at all, for fear of misuse. Individual students can take the initiative of finding a private tutor for writing.

At this point the local schooling ended, usually after about three years. In the past, only church students travelling to canters of learning went beyond that level. Only they learned to understand what they were reading.

874 On this higher level, church students read Geez
538 literature such as Miracles, Lives of Saints, "Gädel", "Tamarä Maryam", "Gänzät", "Mar Yes-haq", and Ethics, "sirak". Also church homilies, "dersan", containing doctrine, "dersät", composed by a saintly author, "Därasi". Important is the book "bal abäw" a combination of homilies of Greek, Coptic, and Syrian church Fathers, probably translated from Arabic to Geez in the mid-15th century under Emperor Zara Yaqob.

874 Those proceeding still further divided into specializations (sort of electives). Some specialized in devotional poetry, including compositions, for about 3 years--"qänä". Others specialized in "zäma", for which they had to be talented with a musical ear to distinguish the musical notation of "degwa", "somä degwa", "me'raf", "mäwasat", "zenmarä qeddasä säatat". Still others specialized for a minimum of three years in religious philo-

874 sophy, "mäṣehäf" (lit. book), interpretation of Old and New Testament, and writings of Coptic Church Fathers.on the subject. Also studied are the "Käbrä Nägäst" (epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty") and the "Fetha Nägäst", law code.

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e Examinations are held orally, usually on the saint's day of the institution, which thereupon becomes graduation day. The oral degrees given are termed, "qenē", "zēma", "mäṣehaf", according to the individual's specialization, much as Western colleges grant Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, etc. degrees. Receipt of the degree is regarded only as a commencement in scholarship, for a real "mämhēr" requires 20 to 40 years of study, to complete all these branches of religious education, in view of the Amhara themselves.

872 Since little girls receive no formal education,
562 they cannot be taught nearly as much as boys, when, later in life, females aspire to become active nuns in nunneries. At most they are taught Geez prayer, with difficulty and by rote, and do nto go beyond what is taught little boys at the local parish schools.

792 Monks usually reside in landowning monasteries, except for former priest who have taken monastic vows and return to their parishes. Monasteries are headed by the "abbatachen" (lit. our father), whose official co-administrator is called "Säbate". In personality he is usually dominant andcommanding, unlike the mild, otherworldly abbatachen; though on occasion the same person can hold both positions. Each large monastery has a

608 to the abolition of 1942), the godparents usually ob-
852 tained his freedom. The relationship is one of artificial kinship. To symbolize this literally, the godfather and godmother clasp the right thumb of the baby and swear by the Trinity that they will not distinguish between their own children and the godchild.

783 At first baptism, baby or adult, the entire body is immersed or bathed in holy water. Every year, on the festival of "Ṭenqät" (Epiphany), the sprinkling of the crowd with baptismal water is considered re-baptism, to wash away any breach with Christianity during the year. A woman who has had sexual intercourse with a Muslim must undergo complete baptism, otherwise the neighbors and the church will ostracize her. A person severely ill and considered possessed by demons is rebaptized.

872 At five, boys and girls begin useful functions in the family economy, and therefore boys are often 10 years old before they begin to go to church school. This schooling takes place under the shady cypress trees in the churchyard, under the direction of a young priest or däbtära. The method is rote learning of Geez and Amharic reading, and liturgy, beginning with the Gospel of St. John: "mäläktä yohanesä hawareya". Usually neither translation from the Geez liturgical language nor writing are taught. Graduates of this 3-year school qualify to serve as deacons. In recent years, they may then enter the 3rd grade of a government elementary school. Even church students now use the one-page printed "fidäl" (alphabet) in Geez-Amharic script, which, in addition,

872 has the photograph of Emperor Haile Selassie and the traditional Gospel of St. John in Geez. Priests now often teach the beginnings of basic arithmetic, in church schools.

783 In adult life, the church affects the layman less through participation in worhhip than through his individual confessor, the "näfs abbat", (lit. soul father). Each person is supposed to see him at least once a month, and he soon becomes a personal advisor, confidante, marriage counselor, etc. Therefore, even when a person changes residence, he often maintains this relationship to his "näfs abbat". If he were to take on a new one, the penalty assigned for sins (which the confessor keeps as a sort of fee) would be higher. His regular confessor, who knows his financial condition, asks little beyond the seasonal and festival gifts considered his due. In time of trouble, the regular confessor will appear as a character witness in court, or as "wäs" (guarantor) to help him obtain employment or to keep him out of jail pending trial.

585 Most laymen, are not married by eucharistic marriage in church (the "qurban"). There is no social or religious stigma to marrying outside the church; in fact the priest comes to the secular ceremony ("semanya") to bless the couple. But it does mean technical excommunication, and the couple cannot wear the "aklil" crown at church festivals and parades.

763 As a further result, such a couple cannot receive full last rites, though the confessor-priest will come

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

857 when even brooks are swollen, but rivers soon become too dangerous.
524 During the first season, when they learn to swim, a rope is tied
[868] around the child's waist and held by an adolescent or young adult. At this time boys make waterpistols, "tiqqosh" with a bamboo syringe; also peashooters shooting small pebbles with a bamboo strip acting as spring. Boys also make panpipe flutes from stout reeds, in preparation for "spring".

E. Formal Education and Extra-curricular Activities.

872 Basic education, already described in connection with the church, now falls into two types: the traditional church school; and the modern-style elementary school. Overlaps are beginning to appear.

Until a generation ago, the traditional church school had a complete monopoly on education, and for the vast majority of all children this is still true at this writing. It resembles in structure and function the "kuttab" school of the Muslims. Boys of peasant parents usually do not enroll before the age of 11, for until then their economic services are utilized fully, and only when they approach adolescence are the needs for their education felt by parents.

874 Most of the boys attend church school for only three years, for if they wish to study beyond what the village priest can teach them they must leave home for another district or province, e.g. a monastery school. Since the peasant family usually cannot or does not wish to sponsor this, the boy who insists becomes a "wandering" student, begging his way. Usually he goes for "zema"

874 studies to places in Begemdir province (Gondar), for "qenye" to Gojjam province. He stays there until he receives his certificate, to work as a "dabtira" scribe; if a persistent student he may try to obtain ordination into the priesthood, or, if lackadasical, make it a life-long occupation to go from school to school, begging his way, learning how to pursuade village women to give him food for a "blessing", and how to fend off dogs with a stout staff. Sometimes, when free food is scarce, he works at semi-skilled occupations such as basket-weaving and weaving sun-umbrellas, selling them at the market. Parents, fearing that this might be the outcome of his "education", discourage boys from leaving home and field.

872 874 The 3-year attendance at the local church school is regarded as highly desirable by both parents and the church, and most boys - but no girls - attend it. When the boy enrolled there has learned to read portions of liturgy or the Bible in the Geez language, chanting psalms and gospels out loud, the father rewards the priest-teacher by sending him a sheep or a goat, sometimes even an aged cow or old ox. The priests often charge their older students with teaching the younger ones, in exchange for special privileges.

855 Boys misbehaving, such as making errors or not fully participating in the chanting in unison, or asking questions considered impious, are punished immediately by twisting of the ear or slaps on the head.

The methods of teaching are frequent repetition of lessons, learning by rote, chanting of memorized lessons. Translation into Amharic is rarely taught at this level, and writing almost never (until very recently in some locations under central government influence). The priest-teacher usually exerts greater efforts toward

872 children of generous parents, and punishes and quite overtly
874 neglects children of poorer parents. Probably not more than 20% of the boys attend with regularity, but absentees may be punished.

872 The modern elementary school is available only at provincial capitals, and the nation's capital (the latter contains also high schools and a college). The curriculum of the elementary schools is now patterned after the American model, with Amharic and religion taught by Amhara teachers and priests, and other subjects, including English from the 3rd grade on, taught by imported teachers from India (also Europeans in Addis Ababa itself). Equipment includes blackboard ("sälēda") and chalk, but few printed books.

During the past decade, overlaps have been developing. Some church schools now also teach elementary arithmetic and Amharic writing, which the new law requires, though most in a minimal fashion or not at all. Arithmetic uses Amharic numerals, and more recently, also Arabic numerals. The first steps in this modernization had been ordered by Menelik II, but the change is still far from complete. Conversely, the students enrolling in elementary schools of provincial capitals are usually not younger than 11, as in the old tradition. Graduates of the 3-year village church school may enter in the 3rd grade of the modern elementary school, but are usually older than their classmates, so that they are 20 years old at graduation. This is often found in provincial capitals.

Only during the past decade have several girls' elementary schools been founded in some provincial capitals.

872 Since elementary schools, though increasing in number, still
565 constitute the major bottleneck in education, demand exceeding supply, (while high schools are more nearly sufficient because of fewer applicants), sons of officeholders and feudal lords find it

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

872 565 easier, in practice, to gain admittance. The efforts of the emperor to give opportunities to the rural sons of poor orphans of soldiers who died fighting for their country, by opening boarding houses for them, attached to elementary schools, were defeated by the provincial feudal lords and townspeople, who managed to have their sons quartered in them instead.

Thus, traditional social stratification, both class and ethnic, affects even the modern elementary schools. In 1952 about 60,000 children, 10% girls, attended modern elementary schools in Ethiopia, [563] and far more than half this number was Amhara. Ethnic minority groups find it very hard to have their children admitted, because the school administrators are usually Amhara. Thus, the Qemants of Gondar, for example, have found it easier to enroll their sons in the Catholic mission school operated there by Tigrean(Eritrean) priests. Other ethnic minorities have enrolled children in 7th Day Adventist and other mission schools.

871 184 565 In Addis Ababa itself the situation is quite different, however. Here, traditional social stratification has far less effect, partly because of the closer supervision by more modern officials of the central government, partly because the teachers in the high schools, and even in part in the elementary schools, are Europeans or Americans who emphasise social equality among students, pay no attention to family nobility, and reward only merit. Here, the son of the illiterate peasant, or occasionally even ex-slave negroid Shanqalla, may sit next to the son of an Amhara duke or a Galla "balbat". After graduation, they may be sent abroad for college or post-graduate training, based on merit, regardless of parental rank; though in social and family life the traditional social cleavages prevail.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

000 prevail.

871 Most elementary school graduates from the provincial capitals
465 do not continue to Addis Ababa for a high school education, for they can obtain good and honorable positions, paying ETH$125.- (US $50.-) per month in the same town, as teachers, municipal clerks, with a good chance to be appointed to judgeship soon if they cultivate the right persons in power with "daj teamt". Even Students who "flunk out" in the 7th or 8th grade can earn ETH$100.- as teachers of lower grades, or as low-grade clerks.

872 One old tradition which has broken down in the modern elemen-
212 tary schools but not in most church schools, is the prohibition of
178 extra-curricular writing. In the higher church grades, in which students' piety was already confirmed, especially in the monastery schools, copying psalms, gospels, (and by extension, government documents), was permitted, practiced, even regarded as praiseworthy. But there was, and in rural areas still is, fear that less pious students would use their knowledge of writing to experiment with magical formulae, doodlings, etc., creating dangerous mischief.

Therefore, parchment goatskins and writing equipment were carefully kept away from students of village church schools, and they were not taught to write. Thus, achievement of the skill of a scribe, "dabtara", required considerable individual initiative and study away from home.

212 However, boys at the "experimental" age of childhood, would
857 amuse themselves with the forbidden game of writing and doodling in secret, and they still do. Their work can be seen scribbled even on the outside walls and posts of some churches, a daring prank, sometimes in imitation of the church painter. More often

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

priests and monks celebrated mass and prayed in every direction. But the ritualistic and ascetic aspects of Ethiopian Christianity did not monopolize the attention of Gondar, for they were balanced by the sensuous leisure that prevailed in the city. Gondar could be, as European travelers found it before the middle of the nineteenth century, "a town of pleasures" and of "boundless debauchery."[48]

A preoccupation with the symbols of the religious tradition, however, was quite consistent with a less than puritanical atmosphere. This—the work of teachers, students, painters, copyists—represented the genius of Gondar's cultural activity. Generation after generation traversed the mountainous highlands to reach this mecca of learning. Painters were drawn or formed there in such numbers that a special section of the city, the "picture market," was reserved for the sale of parchment and pigments. Under such circumstances the prestige of the literatus was bound to affect the common culture.

Gondarēs have traditionally been eager to send their children to the church schools. An unusually high percentage of people is said to have learned to read the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David, the final step in the traditional elementary curriculum) in and around Gondar than in any other part of Ethiopia. The Gondarēs have been notoriously proud of their literary and general cultural level. Indeed, they claim to speak the purest and most elegant Amharic in the land. The stability and number of Gondar's religious institutions permitted religious culture to flourish there. This gave the Gondarē occasion to become especially proficient in the religio-literary virtues as they were defined in Amhara culture.

Manz versus Gondar

As church and army were among the chief institutional developments of Abyssinia, so religious culture and military culture were among the chief products of the Amhara-Tigre spirit. Both aspects of its culture were important all over Abyssinia throughout its history, but in Gondar and Manz, respectively, they underwent a more specialized development.

Gondar grew as a center for religious culture because the materials necessary for such a growth were concentrated in one place over a long period of time. The abundance of churches, masters, and pupils created a dense climate in which religious dance, painting, poetry, and textual studies flourished. Such innovation as the traditions permitted was encouraged by the coming of clergy to Gondar from all parts of the country.

The city failed as a military and political center because only a mobile capital could control the distant regions of Ethiopia and because, as Trimingham observes, "a fixed capital enabled court intrigue to thrive more insidiously [so that] coups d'état and the killing or imprisoning of monarchs became the rule."[44] Gondar's political integrity was weakened, moreover, by the in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely preparing himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adolescence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

The Welfare School

Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in government provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

second four in English, although Ethiopian teachers often continue to teach 872
in Amharic in the latter years.* This standard curriculum is supposed to be followed by all schools in the country—church, mission, and private schools, as well as those staffed by the government. In practice, a scarcity of teachers and materials in the provincial schools means that the curriculum is followed less closely there than in Addis Ababa. (The exceptional case of Asmara, capital of Eritrea which federated with Ethiopia in 1952 after sixty-two years under Italian administration, will not be considered here.) This elementary program culminates with a general examination that covers the five main fields of Amharic, English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Successful completion of this exam has been required for virtually every type of training beyond the elementary level.

At the secondary level, by contrast, the Ethiopian student faces a bewilder- 873
ing array of educational programs. As listed in the flow chart of the Ministry 874
of Education, they include theological secondary, academic secondary, elementary teacher training, handicraft teacher training, commercial school, technical school, agricultural secondary school, nurses training, community nurses training, sanitarians, naval cadet training, air cadet training, civil aviation, and inservice technical training. Admission of students to these schools is the responsibility of the individual directors, who take into account the students' own preferences when feasible.

A similar procedure obtains at the college level, for which successful completion of the secondary school-leaving examination has in most cases been mandatory. During the 1950's a number of schools were opened at the post-secondary level: the Arts and Science Faculties of the University College of Addis Ababa, the Agricultural College, the Engineering College, the Public Health College, the Building College, and the National Defense Colleges. Some of these have now been combined into a single institution, the Haile Selassie I University.

For students who have gone as far as the upper grades of elementary 883*
school, the desire to get into one of the secondary level schools—no matter 872
which one—has usually become the uppermost concern in their lives. They 873
have become obsessively aware of the "value" (*ilqem*) of further schooling, namely, as the surest way to a job that pays well. Perhaps they have become fired with idealism to help advance their country and hope to gain some special competence that will enable them to do so. Until 1962, moreover, the rewards of being a secondary school student included material fringe benefits that gave many a powerful motive for prolonging their education. Above all, [198]

* In 1963–64 the system was changed to one with six years of elementary education followed by two years of junior secondary education.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

they have come too far along the road of modernity to return to what they regard as the hard and thankless lot of the traditional adolescent, and so are forced to find some place in the modernizing sector of society. Since Ethiopia's modernizing sector has so far provided only the secondary school system as a means of integrating its youth, the eighth-grade examination certificate constitutes a ticket to the future which must be obtained at all costs.

At the same time that this examination was acquiring its momentous significance in the lives of Ethiopia's youth, the proportion of students who passed it was becoming progressively smaller. By 1959, efforts by Ministry of Education officials to raise academic standards and to adjust the number of eligible students to the number of openings in secondary schools resulted in the failing of some sixty per cent of those who took the examination, a situation which provoked nearly riotous protests by students in Addis Ababa.[11]

Such conditions have laden the eighth-grade examination with more awesomeness and terror than a puberty rite. Worries about the exam preoccupy most seventh and eighth graders, and their anxiety is compounded by the attitudes of their school directors, for whom the proportion of passing students has tended to become the primary index of success. The weeks before the exam are filled with frantic cramming on the part of teachers as well as students. It is no wonder that such pressures have on occasion led students to purchase actual or alleged copies of the exam in advance from ministry employees or their go-betweens, an offense which has been sternly dealt with by the ministry.

Those students who do not pass the eighth-grade exam or who, because of family pressures, low ability, or other reasons, leave school before completing the eighth grade, move to the margin of Ethiopian society. If attendance at a secondary school or beyond may be taken as the defining characteristic of a "modern adolescent" in Ethiopia, since that signifies their participation in the one institutionalized pattern of secondary socialization in the modern sector, these young people are neither traditional adolescents nor fully modern, but fall in an interstitial category. Having caught a glimpse of some brave new world in their early schooling, they find themselves cast adrift, in the prime of their adolescence, in a no-man's region between traditional society and the promised land. In some cases they manage to make a rapid adjustment; more often, only their youthful energy saves them from total despair.

These marginal adolescents normally drift to Addis Ababa, if they are not already there, and lead the most precarious sorts of lives. They live as loiterers on the streets and byways of the capital. They go from school to school, begging for a place; or from office to office, looking for some sort of work, which they are unlikely to find if they do not have a relative in an influential position. It is so hard to find employment without at least an eighth-grade certifi-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— 86
parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, 178
by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their role as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part [87]
by teachers and peers in the government schools.

Schools at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly 875
by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, 177
England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing 873
number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization.

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on 177
the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has 178
occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative 557
of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to- 555
day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied with- 829
out regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affilia- 883*
tions.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of uni- 87
versal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead.

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian 873
nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to 177
associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post- 178
elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with mem- 186
bers of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of 883*
the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic [872]
pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115)

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

TABLE 2 [P. 114]

E 563 873 795 A 873 795

ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF ETHIOPIAN SECONDARY AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ethnic Group	Percentage	Religious Group	Percentage
Amhara	55	"Orthodox"	67
Tigre	22	"Protestant"	6
Galla	15	"Catholic"	5
Gurage	4	"Christian"	15
Others*	4	Total Christian	93
		Muslim	4
		Others†	3

* Adari, Somali, Danakil, Wollamo, Kambata, Mensa, etc.
† Baha'i; agnostic; "no religion"; etc.

COMMENTS:

E A [125] [128]

1. The ethnic figures must be regarded with some caution, since as many as 17 per cent of the 700 respondents failed to answer the question. It is difficult to know whether this is due primarily to the reluctance of non-Amhara students so to identify themselves, even anonymously; to the general sensitivity about mentioning anything directly related to the "tribal question"; or simply to misunderstanding of the question. I suspect that the first-named factor may not be the most important. At any rate, if one compares the secondary school replies, in which 20 per cent failed to indicate their ethnic identification, with the college replies, in which only 10 per cent failed to do so, the greater percentage of response among the latter is accompanied by a slight *increase* (53.3 to 56.7 per cent) in the Amhara category.

   The figures on religious affiliation are more reliable, since only 3 per cent of the entire sample failed to answer that question.

2. Fifteen per cent of the students who indicated their ethnic affiliations are the offspring of mixed marriages, nearly two-thirds of which were between Amhara and Galla. These students were entered in the above classification according to the ethnic group of the father.

3. The students were also asked to indicate whether their own religion differed from that of their parents. *Ten per cent indicated such a change.* Of these, 28 per cent became agnostic or indicated "no religion"; 25 per cent converted to Protestantism; 17 per cent to Catholicism; 18 per cent went from "Orthodox" to "Christian" (which probably means to Protestantism in most cases); and 7 per cent changed to Baha'i.

E 563 873 872 162 A 872 873 162

4. A comparison with the ethnic and religious composition of the country as a whole naturally suggests itself. Unfortunately, national figures have not yet been calculated to any comparable degree of reliability. If one refers to the crude estimates in common currency, certain disproportions are readily apparent.

   Thus, the Amhara proportion of the national population has been estimated at 25 to 30 per cent. It is clear that they are disproportionately represented in the school system; but not so greatly as has been at times alleged. In view of the statistics and considerations presented above, it would seem that 30 per cent is the upper limit of enrolment by "pure Amhara" in the post-elementary schools.

E A 162 795

   The disproportions with regard to religious affiliation speak for themselves. The most recent published estimates are: Ethiopian Orthodox, 35 per cent; Muslim, 35 per cent; pagan, 25 per cent; other, 5 per cent. (Lipsky, *Ethiopia* [New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962], p. 101.)

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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[464]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cate that boys sometimes borrow the certificates of more successful friends and enter jobs under those assumed names. Often they live for many months with no livelihood at all. Eventually, some find work as houseboys, shine shoes, or peddle merchandise on the streets; others, on an impulse, sign up for life in one of the military services. Still others are reduced to begging, or stealing, or concocting stories with which to extract help from sympathetic foreigners.

The lives of such boys, whose number is large and steadily growing, are among the chief casualties of Ethiopia's transition to date. As they increase, their misery will become more vocal, and they may constitute an element of political unrest. Whether or not they become a political problem, they are already a social problem.

The modern adolescents, by contrast, comprise a small and determinate number.* In 1958–59, the year in which my research on them began, there were all together about 3,900 students in the academic secondary schools, 3,350 in other special schools at the secondary level, and 760 students at the post-secondary level. One source of information on these students was a questionnaire which was completed by 700 students: 500 at the secondary level, including 40 female students, in a total of 15 schools, and 200 male students in five colleges.[12] Some of the findings from this survey will be woven into the following text where appropriate.

Compared to the rest of their countrymen, and certainly those of the same age, the modern adolescents have lived in luxury. Most students at the secondary level, and all those at the college level, have been boarding students. At no cost to themselves or their parents, they have received full board and room, a token allotment of clothes, and their books. Day students have received instead a monthly allowance of Eth$20,† approximately the same amount that unskilled laborers earn for full-time work. Tuition is also free for all full-time Ethiopian students at all levels.

These "welfare school" conditions were designed to make further education attractive and possible for Ethiopian students, nearly all of whose families either can not or are unwilling to support their children for many years in school. In this, the parents are following long established Amhara custom, for in the traditional society boys who went off to church schools often did so, as we have seen, without the support of their parents, and in any case were expected to gain their livelihood by begging. Nowadays, if their children are admitted to one of the government secondary schools, even tradition-minded

* And one that grows steadily. In 1958 there were twenty-eight government secondary schools in the empire. By 1964 the number had increased to forty-seven.

† One Ethiopian dollar is equal to (U.S.) forty cents.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 parents who may have objected to their children's spending so many years in
178 elementary school are not a little proud to have them in so prestigious an
• 873 institution, and are delighted to have them so well financed by the Ministry of Education.

*883 Needless to say, the students who make the grade into one of the secondary
873 schools are jubilant. The relative hardship of their elementary years gives way to an easy and stimulating life. For those who grew up in provincial schools, the move to Addis Ababa has been an especially exciting prospect—so much so that when secondary schools were newly established in some of the provincial capitals in the late 1950's, a number of students who were supposed to attend them preferred to stop their education instead.[18]

*883 The pattern of adolescence embodied in the government schools differs
882 from that in traditional Amhara society in two fundamental respects. In the
178 traditional pattern, adolescence is a time when the Amhara are subjected to the strictest controls by their parents. At the same time, they are expected to prepare for independence by assuming increasing amounts of responsibility. In the modern pattern, the welfare school has the effect of removing the student as far as possible from parental controls. At the same time, it puts him in a more passive and irresponsible role than ever. He is given virtually everything he needs and obliged to do nothing in return. He is asked only to prepare himself to serve his country well later on. This obligation is in fact firmly implanted in the minds of many students, who acquire the sense of a personal debt to the government which they want to repay in later years. Ethiopian society is not yet organized, however, in a way that will bring such motives to realistic expression. During and after his school experience, little opportunity is provided for the student to mature out of an essentially passive, receptive, dependent posture. Critical of this state of affairs, one Ethiopian college student was moved to declare in an oratorical contest: "Ethiopian students are like college students the world over, with two differences—they get everything free, and their selfishness is pushed to frightening exaggeration."

Be that as it may, modern adolescence in Ethiopia does provide the essential minimal conditions for fulfilling its function. It is a moratorium for the young, in which relative freedom from traditional controls and a relatively carefree existence facilitate the acquisition of habits, beliefs, and values which their fathers never knew.*

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[873] * The above description applies only until 1961–62, after which secondary students no longer received room and board or stipends and Addis Ababa College students were no longer housed in dormitories. Some implications of this change are considered in the concluding section of this chapter.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their role as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part by teachers and peers in the government schools.

Schools at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization.

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to-day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied without regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affiliations.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of universal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead.

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post-elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with members of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115)

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

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Ethiopia MP1

TABLE 2 [P. 114]

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ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF ETHIOPIAN SECONDARY AND COLLEGE STUDENTS

Ethnic Group	Percentage	Religious Group	Percentage
Amhara	55	"Orthodox"	67
Tigre	22	"Protestant"	6
Galla	15	"Catholic"	5
Gurage	4	"Christian"	15
Others*	4	Total Christian	93
		Muslim	4
		Others†	3

* Adari, Somali, Danakil, Wollamo, Kambata, Mensa, etc.
† Baha'i; agnostic; "no religion"; etc.

COMMENTS:

E A [125] [128]

1. The ethnic figures must be regarded with some caution, since as many as 17 per cent of the 700 respondents failed to answer the question. It is difficult to know whether this is due primarily to the reluctance of non-Amhara students so to identify themselves, even anonymously; to the general sensitivity about mentioning anything directly related to the "tribal question"; or simply to misunderstanding of the question. I suspect that the first-named factor may not be the most important. At any rate, if one compares the secondary school replies, in which 20 per cent failed to indicate their ethnic identification, with the college replies, in which only 10 per cent failed to do so, the greater percentage of response among the latter is accompanied by a slight *increase* (53.3 to 56.7 per cent) in the Amhara category.

   The figures on religious affiliation are more reliable, since only 3 per cent of the entire sample failed to answer that question.

2. Fifteen per cent of the students who indicated their ethnic affiliations are the offspring of mixed marriages, nearly two-thirds of which were between Amhara and Galla. These students were entered in the above classification according to the ethnic group of the father.

3. The students were also asked to indicate whether their own religion differed from that of their parents. *Ten per cent indicated such a change.* Of these, 28 per cent became agnostic or indicated "no religion"; 25 per cent converted to Protestantism; 17 per cent to Catholicism; 18 per cent went from "Orthodox" to "Christian" (which probably means to Protestantism in most cases); and 7 per cent changed to Baha'i.

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4. A comparison with the ethnic and religious composition of the country as a whole naturally suggests itself. Unfortunately, national figures have not yet been calculated to any comparable degree of reliability. If one refers to the crude estimates in common currency, certain disproportions are readily apparent.

   Thus, the Amhara proportion of the national population has been estimated at 25 to 30 per cent. It is clear that they are disproportionately represented in the school system; but not so greatly as has been at times alleged. In view of the statistics and considerations presented above, it would seem that 50 per cent is the upper limit of enrolment by "pure Amhara" in the post-elementary schools.

   The disproportions with regard to religious affiliation speak for themselves. The most recent published estimates are: Ethiopian Orthodox, 35 per cent; Muslim, 35 per cent; pagan, 25 per cent; other, 5 per cent. (Lipsky, *Ethiopia* [New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1962], p. 101.)

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the students. Rivalries and hostilities tend to get channeled along these lines, particularly along the Amhara-Tigre axis, and petty fights have erupted from time to time among groups of students so divided. The Amhara students, moreover, tend to interpret their numerical majority in school as self-evident justification of their political superiority in the country, an interpretation sullenly rejected by non-Amhara students who tend to be more aware of the Amhara's much smaller percentage of the national population. However, the students are regarded by their teachers, not as members of tribes, but as Ethiopians. The school authorities thus act as a countervailing force in behalf of national symbols, and their effect is considerable.[14] While entering students naturally tend to identify in the first instance with their tribes, sixty per cent of the secondary school seniors and seventy-five per cent of the college students questioned about political identifications indicated that they considered themselves Ethiopians before they considered themselves members of tribes.

The teachers also provide practical information of various sorts to assist the acculturation of their charges. They teach the etiquette of modernity, including the importance of punctuality and the keeping of promises. The objects and events in their own lives quietly demonstrate to the students much about modern Western culture, while their use of English in and out of class accustoms the students to the use of their country's official European language. Thus, besides promoting respect for impersonal standards and the sense of Ethiopian nationalism, the teachers fulfill a third extracurricular function of some importance: that of making the schools a vehicle for social mobility, a place to acquire that minimum of European habits which is essential for attaining high status in a modernizing society.

The total accomplishment of the teachers, however, falls short of giving the modern adolescents a coherent orientation to life. The cultural lessons they transmit are neither consistent among the various schools nor closely related to the situation of changing Ethiopia. The organization of education, as of everything else in Ethiopia, reflects the abiding anxiety of the government about permitting any one foreign nation to gain a monopoly in any sphere of activity. Each secondary school and college has heretofore been virtually autonomous, pursuing those policies and teaching those lessons which best fit its point of view, a point of view now guided by British culture, now by American, now by Swedish, now by French, now by Jesuit. As Margery Perham long since observed, this created a situation in which Ethiopian students have gotten "fragments from the experience and ideals of each [nation] without getting the fullest and best influence from any one national tradition."[15]

Another shortcoming of the educational program has been the relative paucity of materials relating to Ethiopian realities. As one Ethiopian educator has written: "School children are at times more familiar with the history of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Rome and the life of Abraham Lincoln than with the geography of their immediate community or the history of their own native country."[16] While a certain amount of concentration on remote matters may be essential for introducing modern adolescents to the substance and background of modern culture, it is doubtful whether they are being prepared to relate meaningfully to the society of their adulthood if that society is not made a subject for careful consideration during their schooldays.

Still another limitation on the effectiveness of the teachers stems from a quite different problem, the Ethiopian's ambivalence toward foreigners. This will be overcome with the gradual Ethiopianization of the teaching force, but that cannot be achieved for at least another generation. One area in which this problem manifests itself is linguistic nationalism. English, the official language of all post-elementary instruction, is still regarded as an outsider's tongue in Ethiopia, unlike other African countries where the European language in question serves the native peoples as a *lingua franca;* and many Ethiopians hope that the day will come when it will be replaced by Amharic as the medium of instruction.[17] Due to their ignorance of Amharic or other Ethiopian languages, foreign teachers are rarely able to gain the sort of closeness to their students that promotes the more profoundly beneficial sort of relationship. Because of this and a tradition of suspiciousness regarding foreigners, all but the radically Westernized students maintain a lingering mistrust of the teacher *qua* foreigner.

The gaps in the socialization of the modern adolescent left by the nature of his teachers and their teaching are filled to some extent by his peers. In this respect, too, modern adolescence contrasts with the traditional pattern: not only has the role of mentor and model been taken over by foreign teachers in place of the parents, but also the modern adolescent has become dependent on his peers to a degree unthinkable in traditional Amhara society.

It has been natural that the modern adolescent turn to those his own age for moral support. However much they may support the idea of his going to school as a means to a higher salary, his parents have little understanding of the new directions inherent in modern education. His foreign teachers are, at worst, preoccupied with their own narrow interests or else, at best, out of tune with the Ethiopian ethos and mentality. Older modernized Ethiopians, who should be the most sympathetic, are usually too preoccupied with their own adjustment problems to pay much attention. His schoolmates thus become his only reliable allies in the battle of growing up.

Association with age-mates is informal for the most part. There have been almost no formal youth associations or clubs in Ethiopia. The teen-age gang, with its sharp boundaries and tight controls, has scarcely come into being. Relations with peers thus takes the form of small groups of friends. More

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that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for consider-

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(366)	(40)	(197)

able strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

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society: to create engineers and mechanics, doctors and nurses, economists and educators. With regard to the familiar occupations of the old order, the schools' task is to engender a new breed of practitioner—farmers versed in modern methods of agriculture, soldiers disciplined and geared to modern techniques, clergy cognizant of ecumenical Christianity, clerks who can type and take shorthand, and government officials with some modern education.

What is most revolutionary is that the schools introduce not only new subject matters for careers, but the very notion of vocation itself—of life work as

TABLE 4

SOURCES OF FUTURE SATISFACTION CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT BY STUDENTS*

Source from Which Students Expect Most Satisfaction in Life	Secondary School				College Males (per cent)	
	Males (per cent)		Females (per cent)			
	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice	1st choice	2d choice
Career or occupation	34	12	30	9	44	17
Improvement of local community	30	27	16	36	22	28
Religious beliefs and activities	13	20	16	21	5	7
Participation in national and international affairs	10	24	13	20	8	26
Family relationships	8	10	20	9	17	14
Leisure-time, recreational activities	5	7	5	5	3	8
Number	(394)		(40)		(195)	

* Based on question 27 in the Gillespie-Allport questionnaire.

something which one *chooses,* trains for in a specific manner, and derives satisfaction from pursuing.* This orientation departs radically from the traditional expectation of inheriting the work of one's father as a matter of course. Whereas, as we have noted, the Amhara son traditionally carried on his father's work, except in rare cases where there were special reasons for not doing so, only *seven per cent* of the boys in my sample indicated that

* When asked what they expected to give most satisfaction in their lives, the students most frequently named "career or occupation" (out of six alternatives). When asked what they considered most desirable in choosing an occupation, they named "work that is really interesting" most frequently (out of six alternatives). See Tables 4 and 5.

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883 Programs of vocational guidance and counseling have not yet been instituted.
463 Students who manage to form clear and definite ambitions also suffer for
• 873 want of help, if for some reason they have been shunted away from the appropriate training program, or have been deprived of opportunities to prepare adequately for the vocations to which they aspire. Two research findings bear on this. In one study it was found that "few secondary school administrators when questioned are aware of the ambitions and desires of their students," and that less than twenty per cent of the group of secondary school students surveyed felt they had received training "suitable to their ambitions."[19] In my own survey it appeared that fewer than twenty per cent of the secondary school students expect to enter the occupation they actually want to.

*883 In addition to this discontinuity between childhood experience and the
178 hitherto unknown necessity of making some sort of vocational choice, modern
464 adolescence also involves a sharp break between the experience of post-elementary school and the process of getting on a payroll. Here the Ethiopian youth faces the problems of students everywhere as they leave school for the "real world." In at least two respects, however, his dilemma is more acute than that of his counterpart in Western societies. Because virtually all jobs are controlled
(557) by the government, and because the government is still organized along traditional lines, the Ethiopian graduate must suddenly forget the universalistic criteria of school and acclimate himself to the traditional pattern of ingratiating oneself with those in positions of power—a pattern referred to as *daj jenät*—if he is to gain and retain a decent job. For many graduates there is no machinery that might assist them in locating a job: no job advertisements, employment bureaus, not even effective personnel departments in most quarters.

87 The school system itself, however, does manage in certain cases to find
464 jobs for its graduates. For the foreign-educated returnees a special placement board was set up within the Ministry of Education. The locally educated are placed, if at all, by their individual schools, depending on the policy of the school, the resourcefulness of its director, the demands of the market, and current political emphases.

The outlook for graduates of the various specialized vocational programs has been in recent years as follows. A consistently high demand for teachers has assured jobs for graduates of the various teachers training programs. Graduates of the commercial school have been in great demand because of the increasing bureaucratization of government and the slight expansion of commerce. The public health college had great difficulty in the placement of its

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* Since this was written the University's Department of Education has begun to produce a series of career pamphlets for secondary school students.

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FIG. 23.—*Clergy and government school students observing national holiday*

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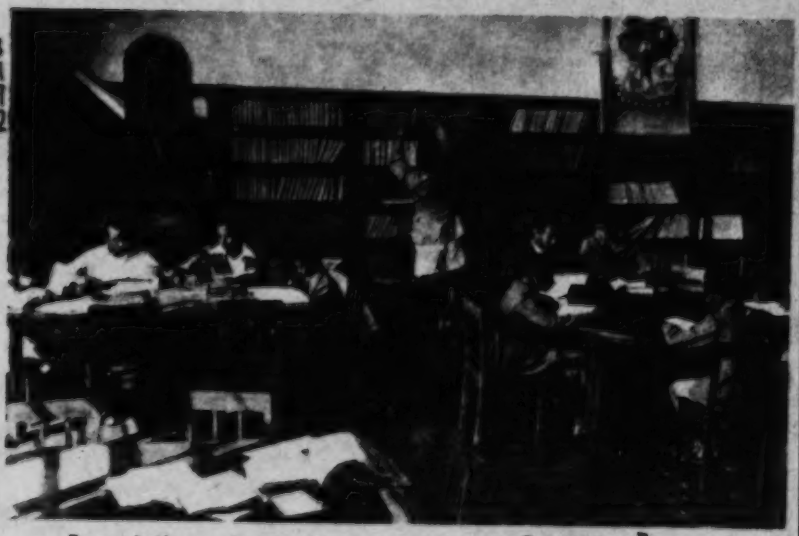

FIG. 24.—*Inside a secondary school library*

[P. 142-B]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 121 178 871 883 awareness of the political realities in the Ethiopian government. They had also begun to doubt the transcendent efficacy of the educational process itself after observing the behavior of those educated Ethiopians who went before them and inevitably became their ideals. The violation of various traditional and modern norms by the latter, and their evident demoralization, raised many questions in the minds of the students.

*883 121 178 871 464 Finally, the students were made more anxious by a general constricting of opportunity. Increased numbers in the school system meant a steady intensification of the competition to gain and hold on to a place in secondary school and college, particularly since 1959. The rapid filling of jobs by the educated youth and steadily growing numbers of unemployed youth began to create anxieties about finding work in the future.

*883 121 178 873 862 From the viewpoint of the modern adolescents, then, a very supportive and stimulating environment in the fifties has changed to a somewhat threatening and confused environment in the sixties. It is in this decade that Ethiopia's leaders of the future, that tiny fraction of one per cent of the population who reach secondary school, are coming to experience adolescence as a real normative crisis. At a time when, in the highly modernized society of the United States, observers like Friedenberg charge that the adolescent condition is becoming obsolete—that scope is no longer afforded the young person for exploration and discovery of an authentic self[28]—in the transitional state of Ethiopia this condition is being thrust on the youth. The decisions they make now, the identities they forge, will largely determine the extent to which reason and creativity will have a place in Ethiopia's future.

*883 871 121 178 The effort of the Ethiopian government to provide a modern education for some of Ethiopia's adolescents illustrates a principle discussed in another context by Karl Mannheim, namely, the characterization of youth as a latent sociological resource which must be mobilized when any social system seeks to change itself. It is a resource analogous to the latent energy reserves which are available to biological organisms when they must make a fresh adjustment to their environment.[29] Thus far the effort to mobilize the resources of Ethiopia's youth in behalf of modernization has proceeded chiefly through a pattern of increased *differentiation:* establishing a structure of secondary socialization separate from that of the traditional structures and thereby transmitting new beliefs, skills, and values to the youth. As yet, relatively little has been done with respect to the problems of devising modes of *integration* commensurate with these new differentiated patterns. The analyses of this chapter suggest the presence of what might be called "integration gaps" on at least three levels. On the level of the individual personality, there is the problem of synthesizing the various aspects of traditional and modern culture which have been transmitted to Ethiopian adolescents through diverse sources. Inasmuch as the external supports which cushioned these conflicts in the fifties are no

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701 more eager and impatient to modernize Ethiopia than do members of the
648 new nobility. This contrast was already apparent at the time of the Italian invasion, when Ethiopian officers were condemning the archaic practices of civilian officials who, they charged, were holding back the defense efforts. Yet the image of a progressive, solidary military elite in Ethiopia is justified no more than the image of a reactionary, solidary ministerial elite; nor should the military leaders be seen as standing in fundamental opposition to their civilian counterparts. There is much friendly intercourse between the two groups. Army officers are often related to civilian officials, by blood or by marriage. Military personnel have in a number of cases been assigned to civilian posts in the government. While the military carry on much of their social life among themselves, they also enjoy a good deal of interaction with civilians of high status at parties, dances, weddings, and funerals.

701 Like the new nobility, moreover, the military officers do not form a cohesive group with common interests and ambitions. The one group which did develop a high degree of solidarity, esprit, and common political goals—the Officers Corps of the Imperial Bodyguard—was dissolved in the wake of its defeat in the 1960 rebellion. The military men have been checked and balanced by much the same techniques as have the new nobility. As a whole, they are held together by little more than the institutionalized structure of the security forces. As such, they are in any event bound to play an important part in determining the character of the future government of Ethiopia as they are crucial now in upholding the present regime.

THE BIRTH OF AN INTELLIGENTSIA

571 The formation of a modern intellectual class in Ethiopia is still in its earliest
871 stages. Given the small number who have completed elementary school (a
162 number still under one per cent of the national population) all Ethiopians who have graduated from secondary school may for the time being be considered members of a secular educated elite, those with college and graduate degrees enjoying correspondingly higher status within this elite. The total number in this group reached an estimated six thousand in 1962, about one-fourth of whom held college degrees.

571 Equally indicative of the rudimentary condition of the Ethiopian intelligentsia is the poverty of its institutional facilities and of its means of communication, both internally and with the international intellectual commu-
571 nity. As of 1961, institutions with primarily intellectual purposes were lim-
• 873 ited to the small college of arts and sciences, four vocational colleges, two
874 small research centers (the Pasteur Institute and the Section d'Archéologie, both financed by France and staffed mostly by non-Ethiopians), the Haile

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Selassie I theater, and the secondary level art school.* Library facilities included the National Library, with some fifty thousand volumes; the University College Library, with about forty-five; and the reading rooms of the United States Information Service, the British Center, and the Soviet Information Service. The national library also contains a historical museum, and there is a handsome and well appointed archeological museum nearby, neither of which has so far been operated with a view to encouraging public attendance.

Except for occasional lectures sponsored by the national library and the University College extension program, none of the above institutions serves as a center for intellectual communication among adult Ethiopians. It was hoped by some that with the inauguration of the Haile Selassie I University, in December, 1961, a major new center of intellectual life would be created; but the government found it difficult to push ahead with its announced concept of an integrated institution which would operate autonomously and at a high standard.

Outside these institutions, moreover, there have been few channels of communication through which Ethiopian intellectuals can develop their minds and stimulate their imaginations. There are no periodicals to serve as a medium for such communication. One possibility, the *Ethiopian Observer*, is not quite an exception. Limited resources have kept it from operating at as high a level as available talent might permit, and its basically apologetic orientation renders implausible its claims to be "A Journal of Independent Opinion." The daily newspapers which feature contributed articles—the *Ethiopian Herald*, the *Addis Zaman*, and the Amharic sections of the *Voice of Ethiopia*—have tended to exclude pieces that have anything to do with highly controversial matters. Nor are there many social occasions for the serious discussion of intellectual matters. Professional associations, clubs devoted to intellectual matters, and even informal discussion groups exist not at all or else in a very haphazard form.

Contact with the intellectual world outside Ethiopia is almost as meager. Foreign-educated Ethiopians tend to become intellectually demoralized on returning home. The loss of a taste for reading has frequently been one of the first casualties experienced by Western-educated Ethiopians on return from abroad. Only a few hardy souls attempt to maintain some sort of link with the outside world, through subscribing to such magazines as the *New Statesman*, *Paris Soir*, or *New Republic*. For most of them, coming home means a cessation of the most elementary intellectual functions, other

* In 1963 an Institute of Ethiopian Studies was established at Haile Selassie I University, including a substantial Ethiopiana library and museum.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 of individuality—loyal criticism toward the government, one's friends, and
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15 one's self.
643 Besides the efforts of those courageous Ethiopians who, in exile abroad or living in inner exile at home, have steadfastly worked to develop their powers
*121 of integrity and their capacities of independent judgment, there is but one
• 873 force that holds any promise of increasing the scope of personal autonomy and creativity in Ethiopia, and that is education. The fate of Ethiopia one and two generations hence is linked, more closely than members of large, industrialized societies can readily appreciate, with a single small institution: the Haile Selassie I University. As pinnacle of the country's educational system, it sets the standards, prepares the teachers, and devises many of the innovations to be used throughout the nation's schools. No less important, its relative independence from the national government gives it a certain leeway to pursue policies based primarily on academic considerations. The Ministry of
[647] Education, which administers all other secular schools in the country, is necessarily more subjected to the routine pressures of domestic politics. The university, on the other hand, by virtue of its many expatriate staff members and its dependence on outside financial help, is more intimately tied to international academic standards and practices. While a growing number of qualified Ethiopians have joined its staff, for some time to come the University will necessarily be greatly dependent on assistance from academic men from other countries. In any event, it is likely to remain in continuous contact with the outside world by virtue of its participation in the international community of scholars. This condition may give it a degree of autonomy and insulation that can but further the patient development of Ethiopia's most sorely needed asset: cadres of individuals who can resist the facile slogans of the day and work to provide for Ethiopia's great transformation the benefits of enlightened aims and realistic practices.

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Name of Schools[a]	Enrolment[b]	Grades Surveyed	No.		
			Total	Male	Female
I. Tafari Makonnen School	320	11th and 12th	60	60	0
II. Haile Selassie I Secondary School	230	12th	47	47	0
III. Menelik II School	245	12th	15	15	0
IV. General Wingate Secondary School	325	12th	58	58	0
V. Madhane Alem School	160	12th	21	21	0
VI. Empress Mennen School	220	12th	19	0	19
VII. The English School[c]	.....	11th and 12th	9	7	2
VIII. Madhane Alem School (Harar)	450	12th	23	23	0
IX. Haile Selassie I School (Gondar)	135	11th	45	45	0
X. Theological Academy	100	12th	13	13	0
XI. Commercial School	335	12th	42	31	11
XII. Technical School	420	12th	57	57	0
XIII. Social Work Training Program[d]	12	12th	11	3	8
XIV. Teacher Training School (Harar)	278	12th	51	51	0
XV. Agriculture School (Ambo)	120	12th	29	29	0
Total secondary schools	3,350	.....	500	460	40
XVI. University College	420	3d and 4th	44	.....	.....
XVII. Engineering College	100	3d and 4th	31	.....	.....
XVIII. College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts (Alemaya)	172	3d and 4th	49	.....	.....
XIX. Haile Selassie I Military Academy (Harar)	138	3d[e]	38	.....	.....
XX. Public Health Officers Training Program (Gondar)	60	3d and 4th	38	.....	.....
Total colleges	890	.....	200	.....	.....

[a] These schools include all but five of the government postelementary schools which were offering full four-year programs in 1959. Schools I–IX are listed as "academic secondary schools"; X–XV as "special schools"; and XVI–XX as "institutions of higher learning." Unless otherwise indicated, they are located in Addis Ababa.

[b] The enrolment figures are for the academic year 1959–60, except for Tafari Makonnen School, where a preliminary version of the questionnaire was used during 1958–59. In schools which include elementary grades as well, the figures refer only to the secondary level enrolment. The total universe of the grades surveyed in these twenty schools was 1,150.

[c] A very small private school, attended by several Europeans as well as Ethiopians. The entire Ethiopian group of the two highest classes responded.

[d] A two-year program organized with the assistance of UNESCO. The students surveyed were the equivalent of secondary school seniors.

[e] The terminal year.

113 16. Mulugeta Wodajo, "Postwar Reform in Ethiopian Education," *Comparative Education Review*, II (February, 1959), 27.

17. Cf. William Shack, "Organization and Problems of Education in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Negro Education*, XXVIII (Fall, 1959), 405–20.

18. *Youth's Outlook on the Future: A Cross-national Study* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1955), p. 9.

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ficult task.[24] In addition to the problem of mastering the subleties of kiyne (a problem often exacerbated by a master's indirection), the student is confronted with the prospect of memorizing the great amounts of scriptural and liturgical information.

Initially, the novice student is warmly received by his peers, who refer to him as "younger brother", and offer him assistance in establishing himself, and learning the curriculum. The atmosphere of helpfulness soon gives way to one of competition, as the established students come to regard the new boy as a rival for the master's personal instruction and encouragement. Although overt friendliness persists, the relations between a youth and most of his fellow students are underwritten by intense suspicion and rivalry.

[873]
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The master does not distribute his assistance equitably, but plays favorites, according to differences in students' abilities as well as personally conceived criteria.

[24] Kiyne students are, in general, drawn from among the most promising students of the parish school. Even so, the curriculum sometimes proves too difficult, and the students may seek out a kiyne master practicing an easier "school" of kiyne. Among kiyne students studying in Gondar, the gonj kiyne was reputed to be appreciably more difficult than wosera kiyne (both named after Ethiopian monasteries).

793 Parish priests,(unlike mämhär scholars) are also
[66] not bashful about demanding their due (produce tithe, sheep, honey, even cash) from their tenants of church land. Sardonic peasant humor expresses this in the proverb:

[39] "The bashful priest,
the blind donkey,
(are one)" . (i.e. both would be helpless and starve to death).

532 Among artisans who do specialist work for the
346 church is the artist of church paintings, usually highly colorful and realistic scenes from the suffering of the saints, in morbid and gory detail; the beauties of heaven and the trinity; the horrors of hell ruled by a chained, soul-munching Satan; etc. These religious and semi-religious story illustrations and legends are painted on canvas and then attached to the inside of church walls.

874 Church students are usually boys 10 years or over (never girls), who at first learn the Geez-Amharic alphabet, reading Geez without translating, beginning with the Epistle of the Apostle John. They are taught by rote, memorizing by chanting the portions out loud. There is very little writing in the early grades, and experimentation is traditionally discouraged, for fear that the boys might use their new-won learning to write magic amulets. Before examinations, church studetns stimulate
874 their mental processes by eating the leaf of a Datura
276 weed resembling a Jimson weed called "astänager" (lit. to stimulate talk) which is also used by däbtära in exor-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

874 [276] cising the bewitched, and which seems to have an effect similar to benzedrine.

Examinations include fluency in reading Geez and in reciting by heart Gospels, Lives of Saints, and Ethics ("sirak"), the last particularly in the upper grades. In still higher grades they learn devotional poetry ("qeñe"), including composition, and "zäma", church liturgical music in correct tones and notes.

874 792 For more advanced study, the boys interested in a career in the church have to go to monastery schools. At the old and famous Amhara monastery of Dabra Libanos the number of students may reach 500 at any given time. They earn their keep by serving the monks, begging in the vicinity, and eating as much as they can when a noble family arrives to give a memorial feast, "täzkar", in honor of a departed soul. Often the students do not possess a good shamma, and therefore have adopted the ancient clothing of sheepskins over their rags, to keep themselves warm and to be identified more easily when they go begging. Begging, they carry a small basket on the left arm and, leaning on a maqomya stick with the right, chant ecstatic church melodies until the housewives fill the baskets with enjara or parched barley ("qolo").

Those who serve the monks, carrying water, washing their clothes, carrying their food, water, etc., receive part of the monk's daily ration("dergo"). The 874 students usually graduate by age 18 to 20, and then decide whether to take monastic vows or return home to

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

874 utilize their learning in other capacities. The sons of former feudal nobles or of priests usually secure administrative positions or judgeships without difficulty; those of undistinguished birth could become dabtara; or locate a vacancy as teacher in a parish school--then "daj tena" the regional bishop to confirm them in the appointment.

872 538 Methods of the church school were followed, for centuries, for all those boys who attended the local school, which was in reality a lower-grade church school itself. The initial process of learning to read was called "quter" (lit. number), "counting" letters. The second stage was called "Geez", for then they learned the seven syllabic variants of each Geez consonantal letter. The third stage, "werd nebab", had the pupils read the entire syllabic alphabet up and down until completely memorized in sequence. In the fourth stage, "abugida", the order of the syllabic alphabet is mixed up and the pupil must place each syllabic letter in proper order. In the 5th stage, he reads, in a sing-song which varies from province to province, the first chapter of the Epistle of St. John, first letter by letter, then word by word, finally phrase by phrase, a repetition of the first four stages. This musical singsong "mälakta yohanesä hawareya" symbolizes what ABC does in the West. Then follow readings from the New Testament, Psalms of David ("dawit"), then any text "on sight" in Geez or Amharic. Liturgical songs and poetry most often learned by heart are: "Waddasē Maryam", "Anqäsä Berhan", "Mälka

872 Maryam", "Mälka Iyasus". All of these are basic devotion-
[538] al liturgy.

[512] It is noteworthy that there is usually no formal training in writing at all, for fear of misuse. Individual students can take the initiative of finding a private tutor for writing.

At this point the local schooling ended, usually after about three years. In the past, only church students travelling to canters of learning went beyond that level. Only they learned to understand what they were reading.

874 On this higher level, church students read Geez
538 literature such as Miracles, Lives of Saints, "Gädel", "Tamarä Maryam", "Gänzät", "Mar Yes-haq", and Ethics, "sirak". Also church homilies, "dersan", containing doctrine, "dersät", composed by a saintly author, "Därasi". Important is the book "bal abäw" a combination of homilies of Greek, Coptic, and Syrian church Fathers, probably translated from Arabic to Geez in the mid-15th century under Emperor Zara Yaqob.

874 Those proceeding still further divided into specializations (sort of electives). Some specialized in devotional poetry, including compositions, for about 3 years--"qenē". Others specialized in "zēma", for which they had to be talented with a musical ear to distinguish the musical notation of "degwa", "somä degwa", "me'raf", "mäwasat", "zenmarē qeddasē sätatat". Still others specialized for a minimum of three years in religious philo-

874 sophy, "mäṣehäf" (lit. book), interpretation of Old and New Testament, and writings of Coptic Church Fathers.on the subject. Also studied are the "Käbrä Nägäst" (epic of the "Solomonic Dynasty") and the "Fetha Nägäst", law code.

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Examinations are held orally, usually on the saint's day of the institution, which thereupon becomes graduation day. The oral degrees given are termed, "qenē", "zēma", "mäṣehaf", according to the individual's specialization, much as Western colleges grant Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, etc. degrees. Receipt of the degree is regarded only as a commencement in scholarship, for a real "mämhēr" requires 20 to 40 years of study, to complete all these branches of religious education, in view of the Amhara themselves.

872 Since little girls receive no formal education,
562 they cannot be taught nearly as much as boys, when, later in life, females aspire to become active nuns in nunneries. At most they are taught Geez prayer, with difficulty and by rote, and do nto go beyond what is taught little boys at the local parish schools.

792 Monks usually reside in landowning monasteries, except for former priest who have taken monastic vows and return to their parishes. Monasteries are headed by the "abbatachen" (lit. our father), whose official co-administrator is called "Säbate". In personality he is usually dominant andcommanding, unlike the mild, otherworldly abbatachen; though on occasion the same person can hold both positions. Each large monastery has a

796 food of the feast prepared by the losing side.
526 In the evening "fires of joy" are lit, where the rain-drenched, weary and sore contestants and others can dry out, drink barley beer, and are supposed to forget and forgive the hostilities. Some may still boast of individual feats of heroism, in Amhara warrior style; others will sulk. But generally the day ends in harmony, after the excitement which itself was a welcome break in the monotonous hibernation of the rainy season.

796 The end of the annual cycle coincides with the end of the rainy season. The last 5 days (in leap years 6 days) are added after the end of the last month, and are called "Pagumēn" or "Qwagmē". On the 3rd day the [776] annual festival of St. Raphael, called "geddus Rufāēl", the water saint, takes place. The rain, which still falls [821] heavily that day, is considered "ṭebel" (holy water) and to have the power to dull the poison of snakes so [787] that their bites will not be fatal. Much rain during Pagumēn is taken as an omen that the crops will be good.

796 This day is final examination day for the boys ●874 who have attended church school long enough to be promoted to "deacon". They are examined in correct chanting of liturgy and prayers. To be mentally wide awake they often go to the dabbara beforehand, and, for a small gift, obtain the stimulating herb "esa fars" (lit. Persian wood) or drink boiled "astänagär" (lit. the plant that makes to talk), which also helps to overcome stage-fright.

796 The younger children go from hut to hut, chanting:
857 "In the name of Rufael,
539

659 178 spectacle of self-abandon of the mourners, who scream, roll on the ground, cut themselves bloody, etc.; and the financial burden of excessively elaborate memorial feasts which were and sometimes still are ruinous to the families involved. To teach by example--a most effective way in a country where everyone imitates the "great man"" --the emperor himself ordered that no memorial feast be given for his own daughter who died in 1933; just some money donations were made to the priests reciting prayers for her soul.

[874] More recently, the emperor founded the Theological College of Addis Ababa, headed by an Egyptian Coptic president and some faculty members from among Egyptian Copts, to modernize the curriculum of the future leaders of the church among whom he hopes, for the first time, to find allies rather than permanent foes. The probable successor to the present Abuna (archbishop) of Ethiopia, Theophilus, is believed to share the emperor's views and has already travelled abroad several times. The emperor wishes the younger clergy to become more learned and to be able to translate the Bible from [198] Geez into Amharic for the lay populace. He has promoted the printing of bibles in Amharic, rather than Geez, thus using religion to promote the official, national language of the state.

6. The Fraternal Association called "mähabbär".

575 This "voluntary" association of individuals, growing out of the "private communion" of the Abyssinian

857 when even brooks are swollen, but rivers soon become too dangerous.
524 During the first season, when they learn to swim, a rope is tied
[68] around the child's waist and held by an adolescent or young adult. At this time boys make waterpistols, "tiqqosh" with a bamboo syringe; also peashooters shooting small pebbles with a bamboo strip acting as spring. Boys also make panpipe flutes from stout reeds, in preparation for "spring".

E. Formal Education and Extra-curricular Activities.

872 Basic education, already described in connection with the church, now falls into two types: the traditional church school; and the modern-style elementary school. Overlaps are beginning to appear.

Until a generation ago, the traditional church school had a complete monopoly on education, and for the vast majority of all children this is still true at this writing. It resembles in structure and function the "kuttab" school of the Muslims. Boys of peasant parents usually do not enroll before the age of 11, for until then their economic services are utilized fully, and only when they approach adolescence are the needs for their education felt by parents.

874 Most of the boys attend church school for only three years, for if they wish to study beyond what the village priest can teach them they must leave home for another district or province, e.g. a monastery school. Since the peasant family usually cannot or does not wish to sponsor this, the boy who insists becomes a "wandering" student, begging his way. Usually he goes for "zema"

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

874 studies to places in Begemdir province (Gondar), for "genye" to Gojjam province. He stays there until he receives his certificate, to work as a "dabtara" scribe; if a persistent student he may try to obtain ordination into the priesthood, or, if lackadasical, make it a life-long occupation to go from school to school, begging his way, learning how to pursuade village women to give him food for a "blessing", and how to fend off dogs with a stout staff. Sometimes, when free food is scarce, he works at semi-skilled occupations such as basket-weaving and weaving sun-umbrellas, selling them at the market. Parents, fearing that this might be the outcome of his "education", discourage boys from leaving home and field.

872 874 The 3-year attendance at the local church school is regarded as highly desirable by both parents and the church, and most boys - but no girls - attend it. When the boy enrolled there has learned to read portions of liturgy or the Bible in the Geez language, chanting psalms and gospels out loud, the father rewards the priest-teacher by sending him a sheep or a goat, sometimes even an aged cow or old ox. The priests often charge their older students with teaching the younger ones, in exchange for special privileges.

855 Boys misbehaving, such as making errors or not fully participating in the chanting in unison, or asking questions considered impious, are punished immediately by twisting of the ear or slaps on the head.

The methods of teaching are frequent repetition of lessons, learning by rote, chanting of memorized lessons. Translation into Amharic is rarely taught at this level, and writing almost never (until very recently in some locations under central government influence). The priest-teacher usually exerts greater efforts toward

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

[illegible]dren of generous parents, and punishes and quite overtly
874 neglect[illegible]dren of poorer parents. Probably not more than 20%
of the boys attend with regularity, but absentees may be punished.

872 The modern elementary school is available only at provincial capitals, and the nation's capital (the latter contains also high schools and a college). The curriculum of the elementary schools is now patterned after the American model, with Amharic and religion taught by Amhara teachers and priests, and other subjects, including English from the 3rd grade on, taught by imported teachers from India (also Europeans in Addis Ababa itself). Equipment includes blackboard ("sälēda") and chalk, but few printed books.

During the past decade, overlaps have been developing. Some church schools now also teach elementary arithmetic and Amharic writing, which the new law requires, though most in a minimal fashion or not at all. Arithmetic uses Amharic numerals, and more recently, also Arabic numerals. The first steps in this modernization had been ordered by Menelik II, but the change is still far from complete. Conversely, the students enrolling in elementary schools of provincial capitals are usually not younger than 11, as in the old tradition. Graduates of the 3-year village church school may enter in the 3rd grade of the modern elementary school, but are usually older than their classmates, so that they are 20 years old at graduation. This is often found in provincial capitals.

Only during the past decade have several girls' elementary schools been founded in some provincial capitals.

872 565 Since elementary schools, though increasing in number, still constitute the major bottleneck in education, demand exceeding supply, (while high schools are more nearly sufficient because of fewer applicants), sons of officeholders and feudal lords find it

795 His social status compares to that of a "great man" (telleq säw),
756 but much of this is due to the fear in which he is held, because of his power over the supernatural world, in Amhara belief. There is fear that if someone were to offend him, he might use his powers to do evil - though black magic is not his usual metier. (The "love magic" of the däbtärä has been described in relation to sex).

[59] "of insects, the worst is the scorpion;
of men, the worst is the däbtärä".

[57] For the dabtara are unabashed in inviting themselves to feasts, weddings and any distribution of goods (e.g. parceling out of meat as soon as an ox has been slaughtered). In fact, they often act as if the host owed them an apology for not having sent an official invitation. Therefore, dabtara are usually invited to family feasts even if they are not kin.

795 The däbtärä learns his craft through apprenticeship, beginning
756 when in the upper grades of church school. To achieve this, he
0874 must be "ättentam" (of unmixed Amhara or Tigre stock), have a good chanting voice and musical ear, be good in school, and find a däbtärä-teacher willing to impart his knowledge to him. At this stage in church school he begins to be permitted to learn to write; *and is not punished for doodling - forbidden at lower grades for* fear a student might stumble on a formula and misuse a powerful spell.

795 There is even one priestly function which the däbtärä occasionally
756 carries out. That is "re-baptism". He may re-baptise a patient vic-
[188] timized by ganyä, sometimes also cases of buda, as part of exorcism.

797 ish surgeon, Kurt Hanner. In 1927, the American Presbyterian Mission opened a
743 100-bed hospital at Gullale on the outskirts of the capital. This hospital was staffed with American Mission doctors. In 1934 the "Zauditu Memorial Hospital" was founded by the Government. This hospital was run by the Seventh-Day Adventists chiefly as a maternity hospital. Helped by the American Society for Lepers, the Sudan Interior Mission and the Ethiopian Government, in 1934, founded a leprosarium at Akaki, near Addis Ababa. In
[874] 1935, the beginning of a school for "Medical Assistants" was set up in the Menelik Lycee, but this work was interrupted by the war. In the interior of Ethiopia medicine had also progressed. There were a number of mission hospitals, of which the most important were the Swedish Mission Hospital (Tafari Makonnen) in Harar and another Swedish Mission Hospital in Lekemti. The French Railroad had its own hospital in Diredawa.

744 Public health work was still very primitive. A public health committee, consisting of three physicians and a pharmacist, had been set up in Addis Ababa as the "Commission de l'Hygiène Publique." This com-

[p. 711a]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[195] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).* Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[193] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in
[874] Gojjam in the fourteenth century.† The important schools of *qenē* have al-
ways been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
538 delā, Wāsharā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre
19 have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use
[191] of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than
in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some
Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is
well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre
are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be
ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in
the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara
discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation
of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethio-
pia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only
in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.§ They further maintain that
Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in
this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propae-
deutic to the study of religious texts.* Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar,
which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught
only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is
that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and there-
by enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method
of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized
by the formula *sam-ennā wurq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara
life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

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538 * The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by
running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by
example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of
the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student
goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him
all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MPS Amhara MPS

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FIG. 1.—*School of qenē (Wärkwā Märyām monastery, Gojjam)*

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FIG. 2.—*Nagārit' church, Agintwā, Mous*

[P. 14-A]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

#175 chant"), *qenē*, and *tergum* ("interpretation")—is said to have received its
643 definitive organization.
633
517 Dāwit III appears to have had a pronounced interest in Amharic folk song, for the more perfect enjoyment of which he built a special hall in the imperial compound. Because of this he has been called "Dāwit the Singer"—no term of praise in a land where minstrelsy is looked down on and where serious deportment is expected of royalty. Actually, this epithet, with its connotation of "playboy," was not deserved. Dāwit was a religious man, and in his brief reign built two churches. Knowledgeable Gondarēs today insist that, at first, even the priests were happy to join him in the amusement hall to listen to the one-stringed fiddles and the witty songs. Only after Dāwit's partiality to the
[798] Unctionist doctrine (that the humanity of Christ was made divine through the unction of the Holy Spirit) led him to persecute the Unionist clergy (who hold that humanity and divinity are blended in the single nature of Christ) did they abuse his music hall and tarnish his name.[7]

[341] Interest in architecture was revived by Bakāffā. He constructed a long U-shaped castle which, together with the new castle of his Empress Mantuāb, completed the major complex of buildings in Gondar. Mantuāb's castle is
[532] noted for bas-reliefs of the Ethiopian Cross, while her other castle at nearby Qusquam is decorated with bas-reliefs depicting saints and animals as well.

The tastes of Iyāsu II were especially refined. He cultivated extensive gardens and orchards, an unusual pursuit for an Amhara monarch. He built a large and handsome church. He began to construct a palace, in the lavish
[344] decoration of which he took a personal interest. Budge writes of this:

> A number of Christians who had fled from Smyrna took refuge in Gondar, and the king employed them to decorate his palace with filigree work. The upper parts of the walls of the throne room were covered with three rows of Venetian mirrors set in gilded copper frames, and their lower parts . . . with slabs of ivory. The roof was made of painted cane mosaic, the work of the Falasha. . . . Iyāsu II spent his days with the workmen, and himself learned to do some of the work under the direction of the Greek workmen.[8]

#175 The decline of imperial power at Gondar after Iyāsu II did not produce a
633 slackening of the cultural activities that had been concentrated there. During
517 the reign of Takla Hāymānot II (1769-77), for example, when the actual
[643] power at Gondar was in the hands of a lord from Tigre, seven more churches
• [874] were built. One of these, Ba'ātā Māryām, eventually became one of the most famous schools for the teaching of *aqūāqūām* ("religious dance"), and in its heyday boasted 276 masters. Another, Abi Egzi, became noted for instruction in *tergum*, and is still a leading school for such studies.

[538] The composition of verse, in forms which had become canonized during the early Gondar period, continued to flourish. As political turmoil often

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*175 18 flushed with the reports of Menelik's conquests[47] and embellished by the wax and gold of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā, was a kind of traditional climax, a final expression of the integrity of traditional Amhara culture.

THE CONTEMPORARY SCENE

633 177 648 *Gondar Today*

A renascence of Gondar began during the Italian occupation, when it was made the capital of Amhara, one of the five large provinces into which the Italians divided Ethiopia. They equipped Gondar with modern buildings and roads, restored parts of the old castles, and made it the transportation center of northwestern Ethiopia.

633 After the liberation, Gondar retained some administrative importance by becoming the capital of Bagemder, one of the twelve provinces of postwar Ethiopia. A further impetus toward development of the town came in 1953 [874] with the selection of Gondar as site for Ethiopia's first public health college. [648] The existence of this college, with its enthusiastic staff of WHO and AID personnel, has stimulated the improvement of transportation and public utilities as well as local medical services. The population has increased to twenty [162] thousand.[48] The progress shown by the city inspired one Ethiopian journalist to write, in the *Addis Zaman* of April 19, 1960: "By virtue of its annually increasing growth, sanitation, and modern appearance, one is emboldened to say that the city of Gondar takes second place only to Addis Ababa."

633 871 178 With the turn of Ethiopia's interest from the old church curriculum to a modern educational program, the traditional importance of Gondar has necessarily declined. It remains the place to go for the study of *aqūdqūām* and for a "diploma" in textual studies, but the total number of students now pursuing these subjects is probably less than a hundred. Almost none of the young people of Gondar itself attend the higher church schools. Still in the vanguard of learning, Gondar's youth prefer the currently more advantageous government schools. The elementary schools of Gondar receive many more applicants than they can accommodate each year. Gondar's secondary school is, next to that of Harar, the oldest and largest in the provinces.

633 771 793 Nevertheless, the life of Gondar is still dominated by its clergy. Nine church schools in Gondar are supported by government funds. Unlike other cities in Ethiopia, Gondar is partly governed by a town council of clergymen. The city is divided into districts marked by the location of the churches, and the town council consists of the heads of these churches—some of whose positions are so important that they are assigned directly by the Emperor. This council is convened to handle disputes over land and other matters, and to communicate the mayor's proclamations to the people. An accusation signed for a plaintiff by a priest carries much weight in the local courts. The ecclesias-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

paid increased attention in recent years. A new phase of public health endeavor in this decade was marked by the imposition of a nationwide health tax in 1960.

Health has become a prime objective in Ethiopia's modernization program because of a growing realization that the wide prevalence of malaria, tuberculosis, typhus, intestinal parasites, syphilis, trachoma, leprosy, and other diseases continues to sap the vitality of the nation's productive forces and to visit misery on countless peasant families. The public health forces in Ethiopia (Ministry of Public Health, WHO mission, and AID Public Health Division) have long understood that Ethiopia's health needs cannot be met by piecemeal therapy. They have undertaken a program of preventive measures by preparing public health teams in the medical college at Gondar. The college trains health officers, community nurses, and sanitarians within a common framework, so that when they go into the field they will understand each other's tasks from the start. The first public health center employing such a team was opened in the late fifties; Ethiopia's Second Five-Year Plan envisions one such center for every fifty thousand people by 1967.

The objective of these public health workers is to transmit a number of instructions—concerning personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, early care for illness, and isolation of contagious diseases—which are at variance with customary beliefs and practices. Experience with comparable programs elsewhere suggests that the success of such health teams is by no means assured.[18] What are the forces working for and against the acceptance of these new instructions by the Amhara peasantry? Both negative and positive factors may be identified with respect to each of the three general categories previously referred to: the general outlook regarding change; attitudes toward the agents of change; and degree of compatibility between the new cultural items and the old.

The Amhara peasant's general resistance to change may be presumed operative here as elsewhere, particularly since health practices are often associated with religious beliefs and sentiments. Defense of indigenous therapies has in fact become a significant channel for the expression of traditionalist sentiment, a channel that has even been utilized on occasion in the Addis Ababa newspapers.[19] And a general posture of resistance to changes in the field of health is supported by the interests of traditional practitioners, *dabtarā* and *ṭanquây*, who are in danger of losing clientele if modern-trained health workers come to win their allegiance.

Counter to this conservative drag, on the other hand, is the peasant's powerful desire for one basic change in his life circumstances, namely, the reduction of morbidity and mortality. Despite his idyllic conception of paradise and his frequent contention that life on earth is something of little value, the Amhara wants to avoid death. Even from the religious point of view he is

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

second four in English, although Ethiopian teachers often continue to teach 872
in Amharic in the latter years.* This standard curriculum is supposed to be followed by all schools in the country—church, mission, and private schools, as well as those staffed by the government. In practice, a scarcity of teachers and materials in the provincial schools means that the curriculum is followed less closely there than in Addis Ababa. (The exceptional case of Asmara, capital of Eritrea which federated with Ethiopia in 1952 after sixty-two years under Italian administration, will not be considered here.) This elementary program culminates with a general examination that covers the five main fields of Amharic, English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Successful completion of this exam has been required for virtually every type of training beyond the elementary level.

At the secondary level, by contrast, the Ethiopian student faces a bewilder- 873
ing array of educational programs. As listed in the flow chart of the Ministry 874
of Education, they include theological secondary, academic secondary, elementary teacher training, handicraft teacher training, commercial school, technical school, agricultural secondary school, nurses training, community nurses training, sanitarians, naval cadet training, air cadet training, civil aviation, and inservice technical training. Admission of students to these schools is the responsibility of the individual directors, who take into account the students' own preferences when feasible.

A similar procedure obtains at the college level, for which successful completion of the secondary school-leaving examination has in most cases been mandatory. During the 1950's a number of schools were opened at the post-secondary level: the Arts and Science Faculties of the University College of Addis Ababa, the Agricultural College, the Engineering College, the Public Health College, the Building College, and the National Defense Colleges. Some of these have now been combined into a single institution, the Haile Selassie I University.

For students who have gone as far as the upper grades of elementary 883*
school, the desire to get into one of the secondary level schools—no matter 872
which one—has usually become the uppermost concern in their lives. They 873
have become obsessively aware of the "value" (*ṣiqem*) of further schooling, namely, as the surest way to a job that pays well. Perhaps they have become fired with idealism to help advance their country and hope to gain some special competence that will enable them to do so. Until 1962, moreover, the rewards of being a secondary school student included material fringe benefits that gave many a powerful motive for prolonging their education. Above all, [178]

* In 1963–64 the system was changed to one with six years of elementary education followed by two years of junior secondary education.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 more eager and impatient to modernize Ethiopia than do members of the
648 new nobility. This contrast was already apparent at the time of the Italian invasion, when Ethiopian officers were condemning the archaic practices of civilian officials who, they charged, were holding back the defense efforts. Yet the image of a progressive, solidary military elite in Ethiopia is justified no more than the image of a reactionary, solidary ministerial elite; nor should the military leaders be seen as standing in fundamental opposition to their civilian counterparts. There is much friendly intercourse between the two groups. Army officers are often related to civilian officials, by blood or by marriage. Military personnel have in a number of cases been assigned to civilian posts in the government. While the military carry on much of their social life among themselves, they also enjoy a good deal of interaction with civilians of high status at parties, dances, weddings, and funerals.

701 Like the new nobility, moreover, the military officers do not form a cohesive group with common interests and ambitions. The one group which did develop a high degree of solidarity, esprit, and common political goals—the Officers Corps of the Imperial Bodyguard—was dissolved in the wake of its defeat in the 1960 rebellion. The military men have been checked and balanced by much the same techniques as have the new nobility. As a whole, they are held together by little more than the institutionalized structure of the security forces. As such, they are in any event bound to play an important part in determining the character of the future government of Ethiopia as they are crucial now in upholding the present regime.

THE BIRTH OF AN INTELLIGENTSIA

571 The formation of a modern intellectual class in Ethiopia is still in its earliest
871 stages. Given the small number who have completed elementary school (a
162 number still under one per cent of the national population) all Ethiopians who have graduated from secondary school may for the time being be considered members of a secular educated elite, those with college and graduate degrees enjoying correspondingly higher status within this elite. The total number in this group reached an estimated six thousand in 1962, about one-fourth of whom held college degrees.

571 Equally indicative of the rudimentary condition of the Ethiopian intelli-
gentsia is the poverty of its institutional facilities and of its means of communication, both internally and with the international intellectual commu-
571 nity. As of 1961, institutions with primarily intellectual purposes were lim-
873 ited to the small college of arts and sciences, four vocational colleges, two
• 874 small research centers (the Pasteur Institute and the Section d'Archéologie, both financed by France and staffed mostly by non-Ethiopians), the Haile

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Selassie I theater, and the secondary level art school.* Library facilities included the National Library, with some fifty thousand volumes; the University College Library, with about forty-five; and the reading rooms of the United States Information Service, the British Center, and the Soviet Information Service. The national library also contains a historical museum, and there is a handsome and well appointed archeological museum nearby, neither of which has so far been operated with a view to encouraging public attendance.

Except for occasional lectures sponsored by the national library and the University College extension program, none of the above institutions serves as a center for intellectual communication among adult Ethiopians. It was hoped by some that with the inauguration of the Haile Selassie I University, in December, 1961, a major new center of intellectual life would be created; but the government found it difficult to push ahead with its announced concept of an integrated institution which would operate autonomously and at a high standard.

Outside these institutions, moreover, there have been few channels of communication through which Ethiopian intellectuals can develop their minds and stimulate their imaginations. There are no periodicals to serve as a medium for such communication. One possibility, the *Ethiopian Observer*, is not quite an exception. Limited resources have kept it from operating at as high a level as available talent might permit, and its basically apologetic orientation renders implausible its claims to be "A Journal of Independent Opinion." The daily newspapers which feature contributed articles—the *Ethiopian Herald*, the *Addis Zaman*, and the Amharic sections of the *Voice of Ethiopia*—have tended to exclude pieces that have anything to do with highly controversial matters. Nor are there many social occasions for the serious discussion of intellectual matters. Professional associations, clubs devoted to intellectual matters, and even informal discussion groups exist not at all or else in a very haphazard form.

Contact with the intellectual world outside Ethiopia is almost as meager. Foreign-educated Ethiopians tend to become intellectually demoralized on returning home. The loss of a taste for reading has frequently been one of the first casualties experienced by Western-educated Ethiopians on return from abroad. Only a few hardy souls attempt to maintain some sort of link with the outside world, through subscribing to such magazines as the *New Statesman*, *Paris Soir*, or *New Republic*. For most of them, coming home means a cessation of the most elementary intellectual functions, other

* In 1963 an Institute of Ethiopian Studies was established at Haile Selassie I University, including a substantial Ethiopiana library and museum.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

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Name of School[a]	Enrolment[b]	Grades Surveyed	No.		
			Total	Male	Female
I. Tafari Makonnen School	320	11th and 12th	60	60	0
II. Haile Selassie I Secondary School	230	12th	47	47	0
III. Menelik II School	245	12th	15	15	0
IV. General Wingate Secondary School	325	12th	58	58	0
V. Madhane Alem School	160	12th	21	21	0
VI. Empress Mennen School	220	12th	19	0	19
VII. The English School[c]	.....	11th and 12th	9	7	2
VIII. Madhane Alem School (Harar)	450	12th	23	23	0
IX. Haile Selassie I School (Gondar)	135	11th	45	45	0
X. Theological Academy	100	12th	13	13	0
XI. Commercial School	335	12th	42	31	11
XII. Technical School	420	12th	57	57	0
XIII. Social Work Training Program[d]	12	12th	11	3	8
XIV. Teacher Training School (Harar)	278	12th	51	51	0
XV. Agriculture School (Ambo)	120	12th	29	29	0
Total secondary schools	3,350	.....	500	460	40
XVI. University College	420	3d and 4th	44	.....	.....
XVII. Engineering College	100	3d and 4th	31	.....	.....
XVIII. College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts (Alemaya)	172	3d and 4th	49	.....	.....
XIX. Haile Selassie I Military Academy (Harar)	138	3d[e]	38	.....	.....
XX. Public Health Officers Training Program (Gondar)	60	3d and 4th	38	.....	.....
Total colleges	890	.....	200	.....	.....

[a] These schools include all but five of the government postelementary schools which were offering full four-year programs in 1959. Schools I–IX are listed as "academic secondary schools"; X–XV as "special schools"; and XVI–XX as "institutions of higher learning." Unless otherwise indicated, they are located in Addis Ababa.

[b] The enrolment figures are for the academic year 1959–60, except for Tafari Makonnen School, where a preliminary version of the questionnaire was used during 1958–59. In schools which include elementary grades as well, the figures refer only to the secondary level enrolment. The total universe of the grades surveyed in these twenty schools was 1,150.

[c] A very small private school, attended by several Europeans as well as Ethiopians. The entire Ethiopian group of the two highest classes responded.

[d] A two-year program organized with the assistance of UNESCO. The students surveyed were the equivalent of secondary school seniors.

[e] The terminal year.

113 16. Mulugeta Wodajo, "Postwar Reform in Ethiopian Education," *Comparative Education Review*, II (February, 1959), 27.

17. Cf. William Shack, "Organization and Problems of Education in Ethiopia," *The Journal of Negro Education*, XXVIII (Fall, 1959), 405–20.

18. *Youth's Outlook on the Future: A Cross-national Study* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1955), p. 9.

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Begemder

000 townspeople of highland Begemder.

632 Field research was concentrated in the vicintiy of
114 Gondar, the largest of the province's towns, and imperial capital during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
• [874] Today, it is the provincial capital and an important ec-
[344] clesiastical center, housing several famous churches and
*[756] reknowned ecclesiastical academies. The town is also the home of many of the province's most famous healers. Extended research was also conducted in the Woggera region north of Gondar, in the rural hamlets discussed in Chap-
121 ter Three. The division of research efforts between town and countryside reflects the important urban and rural aspects of Amhara medical practices with regard to the distribution of practitioners.

Through observation and inquiry, this field research sought, first, to elicit a description of the social and natural environments in which Amhara perceive pathogenic, prophylactic, diagnostic, and therapeutic forces to operate. A second concern was to examine how Amhara select elements from these environments, and arrange them into etiologies with which to explain particular disease episodes. On the one hand, this meant collecting abstract, conscious etiological models used by Amhara; on the other hand, it meant recognizing etiologies that are constructed pragmatically and piecemeal, in the course of prophylactic and therapeutic failures and successes. Fi-

*278 *759 • 874 [593] [604] [222] Occasionally, an herbalist, particularly a medhaniyt awakiy, will utilize an apprentice as his medhaniyt korac. This is usually a close kinsman, a son or nephew, who has been taken to gather medicinals on previous occasions, and is thus familiar with their appearance and location. As an apprentice, he relieves the herbalist of the burden of gathering botanicals, which often involves trips to the hot and malarial lowlands. At the same time, the apprentice gradually becomes acquainted with various pharmacological details of the therapy.

*278 *759 No terminological distinction is made between herbalists who rely on a medhaniyt korac and those who do not. The client, in fact, is usually unaware of the situation in specific cases.

*278 *759 778 *[192] Classed together with other herbalists is the maker of herbal amulets, the kitab kitabiy. In most cases, the herbal amulet (kitab) is part of a complex therapy which includes, as a final step, the presentation to the sickman of a leather pouch containing a sample of all or some of the ingredients of the primary medicine. The amulet is worn around the neck, on the girdle, or fastened beneath an armpit. In this context, the amulet performs a prophylactic function, for it protects the now vulnerable client against a recurrence of the ailment. Certain of these therapists also provide these prophylactic amulets to clients who have never ahd the ailment in

357 his task is fixed in advance and if an Amhara he will
466 usually refuse to carry out any work for which he was
[E62] not engaged. Women servants usually receive half the salary of a male servant. Thus only officials and relatively high-income urbanites can afford Amhara servants; servants of socially lower groups can be hired for considerably less, if themaster is willing to forego the prestige of having Amhara servants.

The urban householder, who is not surrounded by kinfolk in his residence, usually must hire a night watchman, "zebanya", who sleeps huddled in coarse shammas in front of the house or behind the outer gate. They receive the wage of day laborers. Often they are old veterans of former feudal soldiery, too decrepit for any other work, yet still fierce-looking and fierce-tongued enough to discourage thieves.

265 Urban teahouses, coffeehouses and mead-houses
466 employ waiters, "asalafi", who do not have the specialization of the more prestigeful "agafari", but who have steadier jobs. Their pay is not above that of the day laborer, but they can accumulate cash more readily.

[463] During the present generation a new wlement of
●875 modern-educated clerks, teachers, hospital "dressers" and
871 government officials is gradually entering the occupational pattern of the town, though still in very small percentages. A graduate of the traditional church school of the rural areas is considered to have only the equivalent of 2 grades of elementary school. All towns now have at least one modern elementary school with 8

875 grades, in the Amhara areas, sometimes also in the south.
871 Most elementary school teachers in the provincial capitals are East Indians, except that Amharic and Coptic religion are taught by Amhara. A graduate of an elementary school can take a job as a teacher himself and begin with a wage of Eth$125.-a month; or as a municipal clerk with about equal income, which places them in the upper income group. Even a graduate of the 5th grade can earn Eth$50.- as a clerk on the bottom rung of the "educated". Or he may secure a teaching job in a church school near his home, and then go to the court of the bishop and wait about ("daj tena") until the great man notices him and confirms him in his job.

871 In view of the high cash value of modern education, almost everyone wishes to enter, though fathers are still reluctant to part with the services of their sons, in cattle herding and harvest-watching, until the boys are 11 years old, so that graduates of elementary schools are frequently 19 years old. The elementary schools are still so few (though increasing) that only the sons of influential "great men" usually manage to be admitted. Secondary schools are available primarily in Addis Ababa, not in provincial Amhara capitals, and there nearly all the teachers are Europeans. Graduates of secondary schools become upper-level government officials.

464 The preference of Amhara individuals to hire on
632 only for temporary labor, if at all, finds its expression and variation in the market town. Here many events that bring variety into his fairly monotonous rural life,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

New Agents of Socialization

In Amhara society, as we have seen, the agents of primary socialization— parents and older relatives—likewise prepare the young person for adulthood, by teaching him work skills, arranging his marriage, and conditioning him to the mores of adult society. In changing Ethiopia, these traditional managers of adolescence are unable to impart the skills and values needed for a modern life. Their role as agents of secondary socialization is taken for the most part by teachers and peers in the government schools.

Schools at the post-elementary levels in Ethiopia have been staffed mainly by teachers brought under contract from foreign countries—chiefly Canada, England, India, Sweden, and the United States. Together with a growing number of Ethiopians who have studied abroad, and some graduates of Ethiopian colleges, these teachers have been the principal medium through which Ethiopian adolescents have been exposed to Western culture, not only by teaching subjects like science and English literature, and skills like drafting and stenography, but also by imparting attitudes and values important for Ethiopia's modernization.

High among these new values is that of rewarding an individual solely on the basis of performance. Although the long arm of "connections" has occasionally reached into the school system, to save, for example, the relative of some dignitary from dismissal despite substandard performance, the day-to-day operation of school life follows general standards which are applied without regard to family connections, class position, or tribal and religious affiliations.* The degree to which the students have accepted the sovereignty of universal norms is reflected in their response to the question: "In general, what will help you most to get ahead, ability or 'pull' (that is, personal contacts or influence, through family or friends)?" Nine-tenths of the students at both secondary and college levels expressed the belief that ability would help them more to get ahead.

Another modern value promoted by the school staffs is that of Ethiopian nationalism. In the elementary schools outside of Addis Ababa, pupils tend to associate chiefly with members of their own tribe and religion. In the post-elementary schools, they inevitably have considerable intercourse with members of other groups. On the basis of our sample, the ethnic composition of the post-elementary schools may be estimated as in Table 2. This ethnic pluralism would seem at first to intensify particularistic sentiments among

(TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 115)

* This reflects deliberate government policy. Before the occupation, sons of noblemen were segregated at Tafari Makonnen School and received preferential treatment. After the liberation, the Emperor not only discontinued this policy but took pains to eliminate favoritism in the schools to a large degree.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

the students. Rivalries and hostilities tend to get channeled along these lines, 883*
particularly along the Amhara-Tigre axis, and petty fights have erupted from 873
time to time among groups of students so divided. The Amhara students, 177
moreover, tend to interpret their numerical majority in school as self-evident 178
justification of their political superiority in the country, an interpretation sul- 186
lenly rejected by non-Amhara students who tend to be more aware of the Amhara's much smaller percentage of the national population. However, the students are regarded by their teachers, not as members of tribes, but as Ethiopians. The school authorities thus act as a countervailing force in behalf of national symbols, and their effect is considerable.[14] While entering students naturally tend to identify in the first instance with their tribes, sixty per cent of the secondary school seniors and seventy-five per cent of the college students questioned about political identifications indicated that they considered themselves Ethiopians before they considered themselves members of tribes.

The teachers also provide practical information of various sorts to assist the 883*
acculturation of their charges. They teach the etiquette of modernity, includ- 875
ing the importance of punctuality and the keeping of promises. The objects 177
and events in their own lives quietly demonstrate to the students much about 178
modern Western culture, while their use of English in and out of class accus- [576]
toms the students to the use of their country's official European language. Thus, besides promoting respect for impersonal standards and the sense of [554]
Ethiopian nationalism, the teachers fulfill a third extracurricular function of [871]
some importance: that of making the schools a vehicle for social mobility, a place to acquire that minimum of European habits which is essential for attaining high status in a modernizing society.

The total accomplishment of the teachers, however, falls short of giving the 883*
modern adolescents a coherent orientation to life. The cultural lessons they 871
transmit are neither consistent among the various schools nor closely related 177
to the situation of changing Ethiopia. The organization of education, as of everything else in Ethiopia, reflects the abiding anxiety of the government about permitting any one foreign nation to gain a monopoly in any sphere of activity. Each secondary school and college has heretofore been virtually autonomous, pursuing those policies and teaching those lessons which best fit its point of view, a point of view now guided by British culture, now by American, now by Swedish, now by French, now by Jesuit. As Margery Perham long since observed, this created a situation in which Ethiopian students have gotten "fragments from the experience and ideals of each [nation] without getting the fullest and best influence from any one national tradition."[15]

Another shortcoming of the educational program has been the relative 871
paucity of materials relating to Ethiopian realities. As one Ethiopian educator has written: "School children are at times more familiar with the history of

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

871 Rome and the life of Abraham Lincoln than with the geography of their immediate community or the history of their own native country."[16] While a certain amount of concentration on remote matters may be essential for introducing modern adolescents to the substance and background of modern culture, it is doubtful whether they are being prepared to relate meaningfully to the society of their adulthood if that society is not made a subject for careful consideration during their schooldays.

875 829 191 Still another limitation on the effectiveness of the teachers stems from a quite different problem, the Ethiopian's ambivalence toward foreigners. This will be overcome with the gradual Ethiopianization of the teaching force, but that cannot be achieved for at least another generation. One area in which this problem manifests itself is linguistic nationalism. English, the official language [893] of all post-elementary instruction, is still regarded as an outsider's tongue in Ethiopia, unlike other African countries where the European language in question serves the native peoples as a *lingua franca;* and many Ethiopians hope that the day will come when it will be replaced by Amharic as the medium of instruction.[17] Due to their ignorance of Amharic or other Ethiopian languages, foreign teachers are rarely able to gain the sort of closeness to their students that promotes the more profoundly beneficial sort of relationship. Because of this and a tradition of suspiciousness regarding foreigners, all but the radically Westernized students maintain a lingering mistrust of the teacher *qua* foreigner.

* 883 178 The gaps in the socialization of the modern adolescent left by the nature of his teachers and their teaching are filled to some extent by his peers. In this respect, too, modern adolescence contrasts with the traditional pattern: not only has the role of mentor and model been taken over by foreign teachers in place of the parents, but also the modern adolescent has become dependent on his peers to a degree unthinkable in traditional Amhara society.

It has been natural that the modern adolescent turn to those his own age for moral support. However much they may support the idea of his going to school as a means to a higher salary, his parents have little understanding of the new directions inherent in modern education. His foreign teachers are, at worst, preoccupied with their own narrow interests or else, at best, out of tune with the Ethiopian ethos and mentality. Older modernized Ethiopians, who should be the most sympathetic, are usually too preoccupied with their own adjustment problems to pay much attention. His schoolmates thus become his only reliable allies in the battle of growing up.

[561] Association with age-mates is informal for the most part. There have been [573] almost no formal youth associations or clubs in Ethiopia. The teen-age gang, with its sharp boundaries and tight controls, has scarcely come into being. [572] Relations with peers thus takes the form of small groups of friends. More

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the government schools. The weakening of family controls by the new school environment has slightly reduced the importance of loyalty to kin in the students' scheme of things, and has significantly reduced the moral authority of religious customs. A third sphere of norms—respect and obedience toward elders and persons of authority—is maintained by the hierarchical school system, officially headed by the Emperor himself. However, the ambiguous status of foreign teachers and their frequent inability or unwillingness to play the traditional authoritarian role tends to weaken this, for the possibility of informal, even joking, relations with foreign teachers gives Amhara students their first taste of a more relaxed relation to authority figures. (Unprepared by any other experience for such a relationship, their reaction tends to be one of exploiting the permissive teacher as much as possible while at the same time losing respect for him.)

Finally, the expectation of physical stamina and aggressiveness in the Amhara *goramsä* is carried over into the school setting but with definite modification. It prevails in the feeling that one must not tolerate insults or be cowardly. It also persists in altered form in the new pattern of athletic activities instituted by the schools. On the other hand, the greater camaraderie expected among schoolmates means that aggression must also be carefully controlled. An indication of the psychological difficulties to which the crowded yet sociable conditions of school life have given rise appears in response to the question: "What is the worst thing that could justifiably be said against you?" The most frequent sort of answer to this question relates to unchecked aggression: "Quick to anger," "quarrelsome," "ill tempered."

Of the new moral values inculcated by the school system, some of the main ones appear to be self-development via education; honesty; sportsmanship; and social responsibility.

Ethiopians often speak of the "value" (*ïqem*) of education, meaning thereby the path to a well-paying job and a higher standard of living. But one would be mistaken to suppose that this explanation exhausts the meaning that education has for the modern adolescents. The freeing of their imagination and the exercise of previously unknown intellectual capacities prove themselves thrilling experiences for each new class of students. And their most preferred pastime is "reading," their most popular films are educational ones. A number of students spontaneously declared, when asked about the real reason they go to school, "to learn about the world" and "to learn about humanity."

In the traditional culture of Abyssinia, learning was highly valued, to be sure. But its task was to produce a class of literati capable of transmitting the hallowed beliefs and symbols. Education for the sake of inquiry as such or for personal development was never permitted in its program. If the value of

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178 past. The intellectuals are the product of a secular school system which is, as
571 we have seen, a structure foreign to Abyssinian tradition. Their members are
[177] drawn from all parts of Ethiopian society, and in almost no cases consist of
[871] Western-educated members of the old group of literati, the *dabtara*. The question of their integration into what has remained an essentially traditional social system has thus been Ethiopia's main sociological dilemma during the present decade. We shall return to this question after considering the composition and general situation of the intellectual class.

571 Whatever his line of work, the Ethiopian intellectual tends to be employed
463 by the government, since employment opportunities in the private sector are
[464] still extremely limited. [redacted] where such exist, the government has often claimed priority over the intellectual's services by virtue of its having educated him. Many of the intellectuals work as public administrators, in the middle echelons of the government bureaucracy, with the titles of "assistant," "director," and "director general"; and there has been a growing tendency
[875] to appoint them in the higher levels, especially since 1961. Hundreds of them now work as teachers in the elementary and secondary schools,* and some six dozen teach at the college level. A small but growing number are employed as physicians, medical workers, engineers, and legal advisers in various government institutions. Still another group works in the small communications field—on the staffs of the various newspapers, the patriotic monthly *Mesen*, and Radio Addis Ababa. The small group holding jobs outside the government works as engineers and bureaucrats in industrial firms, as employees of the Ethiopian Air Lines, or have small commercial or agricultural enterprises of their own.

571 With respect to interaction among the intellectuals, however, the most
871 important distinction among them has been the place where they received their education. Here we may speak of two main groups: those who received part of their education abroad, the "foreign-educated" or "returnees"; and those who received all their education in Ethiopia, the "local-educated" or "locals."†

The Returnees

Close to two hundred Ethiopians studied abroad prior to the Italian occu-
[177] pation. Since French was then the official European language in Ethiopia,

* About forty-five hundred Ethiopians, of varying levels of educational attainment, were teaching in government schools of all types in 1960–61, according to the Ministry of Education school census for that year.

† This term is used as a neutral descriptive category, free from any negative connotations it may have acquired when first coined by the returnees. More recently, the West African term "been-to" has been incorporated into Amharic for referring to the returnee.

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brothels for dancing and more intimate relations. (Returnees normally do not have patience for the shy, traditional girls; and they are too concerned about public opinion to be seen visiting brothels. When they or the locals do visit the brothels, it is often by way of a backdoor entrance.) When they marry, the locals almost invariably choose a traditional type of wife with relatively little education and with whom they expect to have an authoritarian relationship.

In sum: the local is not so afflicted by those problems which derive from the central dilemma of the returnee—how to fulfil himself according to modern standards in an intractable, traditional environment. The local's dilemma typically lies in a different realm, that of economic and social mobility. Whereas the returnee has been given a comparatively high income and status almost as a matter of course, the local has normally started his work life with a relatively low salary and little prestige. If the returnee has felt deprived relative to the Westerners in whose society he has lived, the local has felt deprived relative to the returnee.

The local lives on a day-to-day basis at a relatively simple standard. Though he shares the returnee's passion for woolen suits and, in many cases, for a car of his own, he is not, like the returnee, preoccupied with the quest for housing that conforms to Western standards. Except for those with extraordinary talents and family connections, the locals have had difficulty locating jobs that they feel are not beneath their dignity and which pay salaries sufficient to cover their relatively modest needs. They customarily receive a starting salary in the neighborhood of Eth$150. The more ambitious and fortunate among them have, by changing jobs, manipulating superiors, and improving skills, worked their way up to salaries in the Eth$400-$500 category. Some have become provincial teachers for a while, in order to accumulate money on which to live while shopping for a position in Addis Ababa and with which to influence some higher official to grant it to them. There remains a hard core of locals who feel they are underpaid and live in constant resentment of this situation.

This resentment has produced a general sort of negativism which characterizes many of the locals, a negativism expressed in the form of backbiting and denunciation of the higher government officials and the nobility generally. They decry social injustice and the uses of nepotism. They moralize profusely against those whom fortune has shown greater favors. But not all their social criticism is born of resentment. There are also among the locals many young men who are comfortably situated but fired by patriotic fervor with a desire for social reform.

The local is as deeply concerned about asserting his status vis-à-vis the less educated as he is to advance his position in the hierarchy. Locals are extreme-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MPS Amhara MPS

595 794 178 cultivate a missionary spirit in order to reach the non-Christian peoples of Ethiopia. The association sponsors weekly religious services, featuring hymns in Amharic and talks in Amharic on religious and moral questions, and publishes a monthly journal. The Orthodox Students Association stands out as the first nationwide voluntary association in Ethiopia. It holds an annual convention which draws some three hundred students from all parts of the country.

The Ethiopian College Students Association was established in 1960 after some years of patient maneuvering by officers of the various college student governments. It attempts to represent the interests and needs of students vis-à-vis the government and to handle relations with international student organizations.

A number of student clubs have appeared from time to time within the framework of the colleges. One of the most popular and productive of these has been the Ethnological Society of the University College, founded in the early fifties by a Polish member of the college staff. Over the years it has produced several issues of an ethnological bulletin. More recently, under the framework of the new university, dramatic and choral groups have been established as well as groups like the Education Students Association and the Economics Students Association. Graduates of some of the secondary schools and colleges, moreover, have formed a small number of alumni associations.

467 178 [177] *Labor Unions.*—Although Ethiopia has for some time been a paying member of the ILO, the government has until recently strongly opposed the establishment of unions in the country. Nevertheless, due to the encouragement of labor representatives from Western and other African countries, as well as to the courageous efforts of a number of Ethiopians, several unions have at last been established and have won some degree of recognition from the government.* Trade unions were first attempted among employees of the Franco-Ethiopian Railroad and in Eritrea.[42] They now include employees of a number of factories. Even household servants have formed associations that establish minimal conditions which members are obliged to demand from their employers. [359]

814 815 • 875 178 *Professional Associations.*—The Ethiopian Teachers Association, with a large paper membership but scarcely any activity, was the only professional association in Ethiopia prior to the 1960 rebellion. If one may generalize from the frustrated attempts of Ethiopian doctors to establish a medical association, it would seem that the government was attempting to discourage groups of this sort as well as trade unions. Since 1961, however, the picture has changed. There now exists not only a medical association, which publishes its own [759]

* A law establishing a legal basis for labor unions was enacted by the Ethiopian parliament in 1962.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

journal, but also an engineers' association, a college teachers' association, and an Ethiopian writers' association. Earlier attempts to establish an organization of lawyers have not yet reached fruition.

National and International Service Organizations.—A final group of formal associations consists of those which include non-Ethiopian nationals as well as Ethiopians in their membership and which carry out welfare services of various sorts. The Ethiopian Red Cross, the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association, the YMCA, and the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa have been active for more than a decade. More recently, the International Christian Fellowship was formed with an eye to discussing ways of translating Christian principles into social action, and the Social Service Society has broken new ground in the welfare field with its ambitious program of relocating and rehabilitating Addis Ababa indigents.

Informal Associations

Another significant sociological development since the 1960 rebellion has been the blossoming of what might be called "mutual confidence groups." Although the public climate remains somewhat tense and generalized suspicion still prevails, a step has been taken away from the complete atomism of the pre-rebellion era. These groups consist of numbers of friends, bound by such factors as kinship, common ethnic background, relationships formed during study abroad, and occupational ties. Perhaps the most important single bond underlying these groups derives from friendships formed during the crucial experience of attending secondary school together. While for the most part these groups carry out no organized activities or structured discussions, they do provide a context in which any of the issues of the day can be discussed with fairly complete frankness and without fear of reprisal.

There are some progressive Ethiopians who would like to see these groups become the nuclei of action groups and political parties, even on an overt basis. The prevailing view among them, however, seems to be that this is as far as they can go under the present regime.

The efflorescence of voluntary associations in Ethiopia during the past half dozen years constitutes a remarkable thickening of the fabric of Ethiopian society. It may be seen as a vast, unconscious process of arousing and co-ordinating energies to meet the novel realities of Ethiopia's current historical situation. What relationship to this collective process have the individualistic features of Amhara character and society which were discussed above?

It may be observed that in virtually none of the cases cited above were the Amhara the initiators of the associational forms in question. The territorial and "project" *māhebar* were introduced into Ethiopian life by the Gurage; so, as far as present evidence indicates, were the *edāīr* and the *equb*. The labor

*793 869 ficult task.[24] In addition to the problem of mastering the subleties of kiyne (a problem often exacerbated by a master's indirection), the student is confronted with the prospect of memorizing the great amounts of scriptural and liturgical information.

Initially, the novice student is warmly received by his peers, who refer to him as "younger brother", and offer him assistance in establishing himself, and learning the curriculum. The atmosphere of helpfulness soon gives way to one of competition, as the established students come to regard the new boy as a rival for the master's personal instruction and encouragement. Although overt friendliness persists, the relations between a youth and most of his fellow students are underwritten by intense suspicion and rivalry.

[877] [875] The master does not distribute his assistance equitably, but plays favorites, according to differences in students' abilities as well as personally conceived

[24] Kiyne students are, in general, drawn from among the most promising students of the parish school. Even so, the curriculum sometimes proves too difficult, and the students may seek out a kiyne master practicing an easier "school" of kiyne. Among kiyne students studying in Gondar, the gonj kiyne was reputed to be appreciably more difficult than wosera kiyne (both named after Ethiopian monasteries).

*793 869 • 876 criteria. His personal interest means to the student rapid advancement through the curriculum, dining at the master's table, and enjoying privileged information of a non-ecclesiastical nature. Without his patronship, a student is committed to years of uncertainty and physical misery, scraping to meet his subsistence needs, paying his "tuition" in demeaning services, such as gathering the master's wood and tilling his garden, and in deferential performances, particularly washing the master's feet and those of his visitors.

*793 869 The kiyne student is further troubled by the many ailments which are his lot. He lives, with one or two [342] of his mates, in a wretched lean-to of twigs and wild grasses, which proves to be poor protection against the [291] [516] cold winter rains. Often he owns only the toga on his back, and it, like him, remains unwashed for the dura- [164] tion of the long dry season. Thus, ikek (scrofula) becomes his badge, and kurtimat (joint pains) and weba [262] (fever) his recurrent companions. The student's diet *[192] is his special concern, since it conspicuously lacks the combination of wholesome wot (stew) and injera (pancake- [735] like bread) necessary to sustain good health. He ob- [164] tains most of his food by begging in the town and local hamlets, where he generally receives scraps of stale injera bread, always inadequate and potentially pathogenic (i.e., likift bearing, threatening fever and

*755
*756
*793 example of ganel calling.

*756 The Ecclesiastical Identity. While the secular
*793 healer is indistinguishable from other peasants, the debtera is conspicuous by his ecclesiastical identity, with his distinctive dress, liturgical performances at the Mass, and conversational presence in the churchyard.
*756 The memher teacher of kiyne is most visible of all deb-
*793 teras, not so much by his appearance as through all the
*875 activities of his ubiquitous students. The services of these students are generally indispensible to establishing, and often maintaining, public recognition of the
[735] debtera's cliams to the "awakiy" title. These students depend on the charity of local folk for much of their sustenance. In order to avoid over-exploiting the generosity of one area, or neglecting another, the students customarily devise a circuit composed of town wards and surrounding hamlets, through which they systematically beg, in pairs of gwadenas. Their visits, weighted in favor of the more affluent folk, serve the debtera memher's abinet practice in two ways. First, they advertise the debtera's presence and communicate information about his abinet services. Laymen are generally reluctant to approach a debtera directly, until learning whether he is capable of providing desired services and is also willing to do so. By posing questions to the mendicant students, the debtera's public obtains infor-

*793 tion regarding the debtera's powers and accessibility.

• 875 Students generally feel great loyalty to their memher, and tend to be generous in describing his powers. Their reports are not much exaggerated, however, since a man does not become a memher until he has lived twenty or thirty years as a debtera, a period sufficient to acquire an effective abinet repertoire. Second, laymen regard the students as an indication of the debtera's reputability, and willingness to be held accountable for the effectiveness of his services. In this, they contrast him with the unscrupulous debteras[49] sometimes seen in talla houses, where they conspicuously display their white turbans and book satchels, perform gratuitous displays of magical works (in fact mithat), sell services which later prove ineffective, and disappear a week or so later.

CONCLUSION

*756 A debtera pursues the goal of becoming a memher
*793 because he desires to be a master of ecclesiastical studies, not because it will further his abinet interests.

*[192] [49] Known as mithanteña ("charlatan"), by other debteras.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[175] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).[6] Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[173] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in
[874] Gojjam in the fourteenth century.[7] The important schools of *qenē* have al-
ways been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
538 delā, Wāsharā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre
19 have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use
[171] of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than
in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some
Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is
well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre
are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be
ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in
the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara
discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation
of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethio-
pia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only
in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.[8] They further maintain that
Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in
this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propae-
deutic to the study of religious texts.[9] Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar,
which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught
only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is
that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and there-
by enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method
of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized
by the formula *sam-ennā warq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara
life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

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538 [9] The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by
running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by
example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of
the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student
goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him
all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

> The boundaries of your lips are like the sugar cane; 155
> No matter how much one sucks them, one is never satisfied. 538 832

And in one of the few lyric passages in the first novel ever written in Amharic, the author resorts to the imagery of kissing in describing the beauty of an army camp at sunset: [539]

> The plain on which they had encamped was vaster than the mind's eye could measure. Except for that hill on which he stood, there were no elevations or declivities; no roots to trip or confound the foot; not a stone to discomfit the eye. It looked like a calm sea that every breeze had spared. The boundaries of heaven and earth were united by lips of love; lip to lip they were joined like the parts of fitted basketry. It appeared as though it would hurt them to separate, that they had entered a vow not to part.[6] [539]

Talking for the sake of talking is another oral outlet of which the Amhara is generally fond. "In every country," remarked Arnauld d'Abbadie, "the plowman is miserly and sly; but the Ethiopian is, in addition, particularly loquacious."[6] The simple greeting of acquaintances evokes a barrage of ritualistic conversation, a phenomenon which stunned the Englishman Harris: 155 521

> Even two old crones, who are obviously tottering on the very brink of the grave, and who are afflicted with every pain and with every sorrow entailed by the fall of our first parents, never meet in the street without indulging in a string of good wishes which are reiterated so long as their breath will permit. "How are you? How do ye do? How have you passed your time? Are you well? Are you very well? Are you quite well? Are you perfectly well? Are you not well?"—are questions which serve as the prelude to a thousand other interrogatories; and at each response the Deity must be invoked as to the unadulterated happiness and perfect felicity that has been unremittingly experienced since the last meeting.[7] [596]

A number of other conventions provide further opportunities for this pleasure in talking. Anecdotes and gossip are not merely reported, but are expounded at length with the aid of colorful expressions and gestures. Riddle games are enjoyed by adults as well as young people. Men vie with one another at length in a semiformalized kind of playful boasting. In the church schools all reading is done aloud, a habit which persists among many students of secondary schools when they study outside of class. [524] [896]

A related pleasure in making sounds for their own sake appears in the Amhara's delight in repeating the words or nonsense syllables of his folk songs. On a more refined level, there is his evident pleasure in lulling over and savoring the lines of a choice couplet. We have here for a whole culture an instance of what Brill has ascribed to the poets: 191 155

> Poetry is a sensuous or mystic outlet through words, or, as it were, through a chewing and sucking of nice words and phrases. The poet plays with the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones.

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose.

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development.

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqā Gabra Hānnā's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar.

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qenē*—will be discussed below.

12:Young E-4,5 (1966) 1971 MP5 Amhara MP5
Begemder

*793 869 ficult task.[24] In addition to the problem of mastering the subtleties of kiyne (a problem often exacerbated by a master's indirection), the student is confronted with the prospect of memorizing the great amounts of scriptural and liturgical information.

Initially, the novice student is warmly received by his peers, who refer to him as "younger brother", and offer him assistance in establishing himself, and learning the curriculum. The atmosphere of helpfulness soon gives way to one of competition, as the established students come to regard the new boy as a rival for the master's personal instruction and encouragement. Although overt friendliness persists, the relations between a youth and most of his fellow students are underwritten by intense suspicion and rivalry.

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[24] Kiyne students are, in general, drawn from among the most promising students of the parish school. Even so, the curriculum sometimes proves too difficult, and the students may seek out a kiyne master practicing an easier "school" of kiyne. Among kiyne students studying in Gondar, the gonj kiyne was reputed to be appreciably more difficult than wosera kiyne (both named after Ethiopian monasteries).

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Ethiopia MP1

[For information on Ethiopia, particularly in the fields of history, socialization and politics, see 11:Levine, MP5 Amhara, category 116.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Egyptian mosques; youth dormitories and community houses in certain tribes in India; the academic and athletic youth organizations of ancient Athens and Sparta; not to mention the numerous teen-age associations of modern Western society.[3]

Here again, the adolescent Amhara is not involved in any such social forms. The advent of puberty is associated with the growing up and out of childhood groups, the gangs of shepherds who spend their days together in work and play. The girl of eleven or twelve is expected to spend all her time at home, under careful supervision. The boy of thirteen or fourteen has abandoned the shepherd's life for farming, in the company of older relatives, and soon becomes increasingly preoccupied with his private economic and erotic interests. His family elders are likely to warn him not to make friends with other youths outside the family.[4] For a number of adolescent boys to get together outside of festive occasions is, to the traditional Amhara mind, a sign that something wrong is afoot.

The absence of adolescent rites and age groups reflects the individualistic character of Amhara social organization, a subject to which we shall turn in chapter vii. Nevertheless, Amhara society catches young people in its grasp and guides them to adulthood just as firmly and surely as does a society which has many collective arrangements for its adolescents. It does this by means of a well-ordered program for growing up. The road from childhood to adulthood is one series of informal, unproblematic stages through which the growing person adjusts to progressively increased responsibilities and progressively detailed norms. After infancy, there is normally no break in continuity in the whole process.

Toward Adult Work Roles

Following a long and indulged infancy, the Amhara child is early taught the rudiments of work responsibility. At the age of three or four, children are given simple chores, such as shooing chickens from grain drying in the sun or collecting bits of firewood. Somewhat older children are expected to protect the crops against birds, farm animals, and baboons. The Amhara becomes apprenticed in the main vocation of his childhood—tending the herds—almost as soon as he can run about, and six-year-old shepherds play a crucial part in the Amhara economy.

Boys retain the responsibility for tending the herds at least until the age of twelve, but by then they have already been initiated into a number of adult work activities. At about eight or nine years the Amhara boy begins to do his share of the harvesting, sickling the wheat, barley, *teff*, or beans and loading the crops in piles he will help transport to the threshing place. He becomes adept at directing the cattle round and round the threshing floor and at winnowing the grain from the chaff. At times he helps with the weeding.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

836 peers with the insulting term *šlb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that
183 comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsä*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain
572 in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *goramsä* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to
[837] aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsä* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the hus-
836 band or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with
572 a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets
578 difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsä* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulä* fights.

836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquer-
[585] ing" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age
582 of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On
[832] the latter occasions, especially Masqäl and Ṭimqat, the girl may make some effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair,
[584] and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

294 to set up shops along the main street leading to the
555 market, or at the market itself, manufacturing khaki shorts and jackets. But this is still considered shameful manual labor by the Amhara, so that he will pursue it only in another province where it does not shame his kinfolk.

556 A rich man, whose low ancestry may be whispered behind his back, is nevertheless usually treated with honor by Amhara commoners. The proverb says:

[39] "He who falls in a shallow place"
hurt will not come to him", (i.e. a rich man, even if he falls drunk in a gutter, will not be molested by ruffians, who will instead take him to his house, expecting a reward).

[39] "The water of (the rainy month) Nähasse is good,
yet no one will drink it;
the word of the poor man may be fruitful,
but no one will listen to him" (i.e.he is not appreciated, no matter how wise).

B. Age Stratification.

561 Age stratification among the Amhara ranks in emphasis between class stratification andsex stratification.

561 The social relation of old toward the young is
882 often likened by the Amhara to that of master to servant. Indeed, a young man between puberty and marriage is addressed as "ashkär", (lit. servant). A young girl of the same age is addressed and even referred to as "lejä märäd"(lit. servant maid, handmaiden).

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

561 The functions of the young literally follow these 882 terms. Even boys attending church school do pasturing of the flock before and after their lessons, and school is recessed during plowing and harvesting seasons. Elder brothers may and do discipline their juniors, despite the superficial "joking relationship" between siblings of the same sex. As "ashkär", the young bachelor is constantly at the beck and call of his father and other elders of the extended family. At feasts, the father may show affectionate approval by feeding his son hand-to-mouth, the "gursha", also given to servants and other social inferiors.

The proverb admonishes the young man to respect age, and family patriarchs watch jealously a personal friendship developing between any young man with another outside the family:

[539] "More than a trusted companion, who is unlearned, the old teacher is better".

561 Age stratification outranks sex stratification even in matters of religion. An old woman is sometimes permitted to enter the church building, especially if she [565] has taken vows as a nun and wears the "qob". Though the church would like to promote it, social attitudes criticize as ostentatious a young couple of undistinguished, commoner ancestry, who marry by "qurban" (eucharistic marriage) and wear the bright metal crown("aklil"). But a middle-aged couple, long married by "semanya", may take this honorable step without being criticized.

212 boys playing in the bush write on broad leaves; or on the sun-
857 bleached shoulder blades of dead oxen or donkeys cleaned up by hyenas, vultures and ants; or even scratch letters on their own dark skins with a thorn, preferably on the underside of the arm where it can be hidden more effectively. Sometimes rocks, charcoal and iron scrap provided tools or background for writing experiments.

Boys are very proud of this achievement, and tease illiterates, particularly shepherds who have not attended school, by writing or
[524] speaking phrases of Geez. Sometimes schoolboys use riddles, which they have memorized in school to memorize arithmetic, such as:

"(Question) What is two?
(Reply) Udder of female donkey;
(Question) What is four?
(Reply) Udder of cow."

[98] In reply to this teasing, illiterate shepherd boys make up "secret languages" of their own, by interlacing letters between syllables and speaking rapidly (much as zar doctors in the zar cult).

3. The Age of Obedience: Adolescence.

882 The age of experimentation, in which liberties taken by youngsters are often condoned, comes to an end as soon as puberty is reached. Parental authority, particularly that of the father, is more frequent and intense over the activities of the adolescent than over the peer-group child. The sexes are more sharply divided, no longer engage in experimental play activities in groups, and the patterns of flirting become more culturally structured, less random, and more personal. The adolescents are made to feel more "rule" conscious. With the awkwardness of adolescence comes a sudden shyness,

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

882 broken by bursts of frenzied activity. This is utilized by the adults both to enculturate them and bend them to their will in "training" and "service", and to use the boundless physical energy of adolescents for considerable chores of physical labor.

The adolescents do not resent this most of the time, for they accept it as flattery and acknowledgement of their growing strength; enjoy the increased attention given them in the family as full-fledged, if subordinate members; appreciate the higher status that comes with advancing age, symbolized by the obedience they themselves can command at this stage from their younger siblings who follow them like retainers follow a feudal lord.

A. The Male Adolescent: Service and Young-Warrior.

882 561 The terms of address at this stage symbolize his position exactly, and are far more significant than in reference. Terms of address used in everyday life are: "ashkär" (lit. servant), to call a young man to duties ranging from running errands to doing most of the plowing. First used as flattery for boys of about 14, it becomes exactly descriptive and in everyday use as he matures to full stature power. When this happens, at about age 18, he may be flatteringly addressed as "gobäz", signifying "handsome young warrior". (footnote 79).

883 Duties at this stage, under supervision of the father or other male kinsman, include responsible and hard work in agriculture,

[[71]] Footnote 79: "gobäz" in Amharic has similar connotation to "bahurim" in Hebrew: the identification of the concept of young man with young warrior (Isaiah 31:8, Jeremiah 18:21, Amos 4:10). This is pointed out by Ullendorffe: The Obelisk of Matara, p. 31.

883 pasturing, housebuilding, packing and unpacking of mules on trips to the market and caravans. Able-bodied and semi-skilled, he is at the beck and call of any male kinsman, whenever the call "anta gobäz" (thou, warrior) resounds.

882 But he is still considered "half-baked", not fully skilled, strong but not wise, capable of carrying out orders but not of giving them because impatient and unable to foresee all consequences. The proverbs say:

[539] "The heart of the gobäz is in his chest" (meaning he is brave but does not reflect, in his head, the consequences of his deeds).

"A village full of young men
in one year it will become a desert".

"A young chief;
fog in (the month of) Hedar; (harvest month in dry season) (both) ruin the country".

[583] In return for his services, the young man hopes that his father will be generous in allocating a large and fertile plot of land to him upon marriage; also many cows, so he can ask an equal number from the bride's family.

883 In these services, particularly in transportation of goods and in housebuilding, he may be working in a team with other young men, his former playmates. But hazing is rare at this stage and considered childish, as is unrestrained shouting and pushing, especially within sight and hearing of full adults.

882 Sexual activities after puberty are much more secretive than
831 before, go on at night rather than in daytime, and are discussed only in whispers. Puberty is called" akalä mätän därräsä (lit. he

882 has arrived at the age of making full use of the sexual organ), an
831 expression not considered polite. So is the term "gorämsa", (lit. neighbor) when used to refer to a young buck at the peak age for continuous sex desire, for it signifies the male sexual organ next to its female "mate".

883 [561] At the end of adolescence, the honorific address is "kobäle" (powerful warrior), in some regions. In the old feudal tradition, this was the age when the young man could be called to war, at about 18 to 20 and beyond, for as long as he retained his physical strength as well as skill of hand and eye. Even today, at church festivals, the "gobäz" - "kobälo" category of men perform the "hotu" and "fukkara" jump-dance and military boast, shouting "Addis Ababa" to signify loyalty, and "yebalshal jebo" ("The hyena will swallow him", i.e. any enemy), (or "wardaw shebo" crow's beak) symbolizing
883 526 their readiness to defend the sacred "tabot" of the church. On the "Temqät" festival, the young "gobäz" assemble in teams of individuals on the public plain and the church parades stop to watch their game of "guks" (or gugs), a kind of tournament fought on horseback with blunt, wooden, straight lances. They race at each other at full speed, throwing the spearlike missiles at each other at close range, and ducking at the last moment. Sometimes rhinoceros shields were used for protection, but it is considered more clever to duck. Occasionally serious wounds result, and an overeager young warrior having repeatedly caused them is prevented from taking part in the future (losing his license for recklessness, so to speak).

Usually each participant has singled out a personal opponent. They are conscious that not only the eyes of the elders, priests and feudal lords are on them, but also those of the girls who follow

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

883 the turn of their fortunes with excited comments whispered in their
526 own groups. They know that the game will be discussed in individual terms until late into that night, for this is the month of intensive flirting and marriage.

At Christmas, the hockey-like game called "gänna" is played, where the team is emphasised over the individual, unlike "guks". In fact, Christmas derives its popular name, "Gänna", from the game, rather than the proper "Ledät" (lit. "birthday" of Jesus). The "fukkara" boasting, accompanied by chant and little jig-dance while holding a spear or rifle horozontally over the shoulders, is a major kin event, performed by respected and fully-grown "gobäz" at weddings and other formal family events, to recount the past heroic deeds of members of the extended family.

All these roles played by the male adolescent as he approaches and reaches young manhood complete his individual socialization, and reward him with the full attention and acknowledgement given him by his society.

B. The Adolescent Female: Informal Courtship in the Annual Cycle.

882 From puberty until she has settled as a housewife and mother, the female adolescent is addressed as "gonjo" (lit. beautiful), a flattering and honorific address used in everyday language, much as "gobaz" for young men. This address designates her new status, the attention given by all to her blossoming out, her increased status in the family as a young person, and her duties of responzibility rather than mere menial routine labor of the younger "leja-gärad". If the latter term is still used, it is often in opprobium, or in reference if she is not present.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, 186
and social position.

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance 562
rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the [565]*
wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the [539]
proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar and trivial talk.

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells [539]
us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including those connected with the saintly figures of Eçhē Yohānnes and Takla Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by [841]
womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden.

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance 858
and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and [864]
cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably. After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first "age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders.

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each
of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. 882 •
The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches 885
forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. 888
Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults, pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon [867]
learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

to the fore men whose prestige and influence rest to some extent on new criteria. In this chapter and the one which follows, these two areas of structural change will be examined with respect to their continuity and discontinuity with the Abyssinian past.

In Amhara culture, adolescence scarcely exists as a concept, let alone as a problem. While there are Amharic words which signify "young person," there is no word in Amharic that specifically denotes a *transitional* stage between childhood and adulthood. The goals of a stage of transition to adult status, which to us have become problematic—continuity of the social order and crystallization of personal identity—are customarily attained among the Amhara as a matter of course.

In Ethiopia's modernizing sector, however, society and the individual have been affected by numerous changes all at once. Adult standards have become confused; available roles have multiplied beyond comprehension; new agents and techniques of secondary socialization have supplemented the old. Overnight, adolescence has become both a category and a challenge.

COMING OF AGE IN ABYSSINIA

In according the individual recognition as an adult, society tends to bring some of its most powerful and explicit integrative forces to bear upon him. In many societies the transition to adulthood is accomplished in part by means of some formal ceremony in which the society corners the young person and puts its stamp upon him. Whether by way of earlobe piercing or ritual whipping, confirmation or graduation, the adolescent generally undergoes some rite which marks his coming of age and obliges him to fulfil himself as an acceptable member of adult society. In some societies, the rites are so devised that they literally represent the "death" of the child and his symbolic resurrection in a new, adult status.[2]

Such transition rites are conspicuously absent from Amhara culture. Quite the contrary: as a young Amhara approaches puberty he is unobtrusively withdrawn from participation in his culture's most solemn ritual, celebration of the Eucharist. Girls of about twelve and boys about fourteen, if they ask for Communion, are simply refused by the priests and told to go away. Thenceforth, until they marry in the church or, if they marry civilly, until their dying hour, they are not permitted to partake of the Holy Sacrament. The only exception to this rule is in the case of some deacons, who earn the right to continued participation in the Mass at the expense of remaining celibate until marriage (a price not always paid in practice).

Another way in which societies tend to mediate the transition to adulthood is through the institution of adolescent peer groups which in various ways help the young person prepare for adult status. Such groups have taken a wide variety of forms. There have been, for example, the several types of age sets in African age-graded societies; mystic orders for youths attached to

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

836 peers with the insulting term *šlb* ("castrated one"). Indeed, the word that
183 comes closest to signifying male adolescent in Amharic, *goramsä*, has the primary connotation of one who goes around with women.

836 The conditions attending premarital sexual experience for youths explain
572 in part the nature of adolescent male peer relations. A *goramsä* needs at least one fairly close friend, not only as a confidant for his "secrets," but also to
[837] aid him in his affairs. When one *goramsä* goes to the home of a married woman—the strict controls against premarital affairs for girls limit his choice to married women or divorcees—the other stands guard to see that the husband or anyone else does not intrude. When he finds himself in rivalry with
836 a competitor for the same woman, the friend assists him if the fighting gets
572 difficult. On the other hand, the existence of a limited number of accessible
578 females in any area implies that no alliance of friends can become very large; the competition is too great. The conflicts of interest among *goramsä* often provoke feuding and sometimes serious *dulä* fights.

836 The unwed girl, by contrast, must remain a virgin at all costs. It is important to the groom, not only because of the religious and social sentiments involved, but also because the Amhara male cherishes the sense of "conquering" his woman. A girl who is found not to be a virgin on her wedding
[585] night will be beaten by her husband and possibly returned to her parents. Her parents will be scandalized, and, if she is sent back, will probably give her a beating.

882 In order to protect the girl's virginity, she is kept under close watch by her parents after the age of ten or eleven. They do not allow her to go outside the home area by herself or to associate with boys who are not her relatives. She attends festive celebrations in the company of her parents. In some families she is kept from doing excessively heavy work in order to prevent the accidental rupture of her hymen.

881 The onset of menstruation is kept secret, since menstruation is seen as a shameful event for the unmarried woman. But as the girl approaches the age of puberty her mother will be advised by other female relatives that it is time
582 to be on the lookout for a husband. Twelve or thirteen is the customary marrying age for girls, as compared with the late teens or early twenties for boys; and it has not been uncommon for girls to marry still younger, especially in former times.

*883 This strict surveillance of the daughter does not wholly prevent a mild sort of flirting which occurs at the marketplace or on public holidays. On the latter occasions, especially Masqäl and Ṭimqat, the girl may make some
[832] effort to appear attractive. She may wear her best clothes, dress up her hair, and, if she can afford it, put on a bit of perfume. These occasions provide a
[584] chance for the unmarried boy to spot an interesting mate, in which case he

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

838 hold hands when talking, embrace each other when walking, and sleep in
571 each other's arms, there seems to be neither practice nor knowledge of unsublimated homosexuality among the traditional Amhara. Boys often address one another in the feminine intimate form, and girls sometimes use the masculine form among themselves or call each other "brother," without having their own sexual identities in the least confused thereby. Amhara males, in
831 particular, have a proud cult of virility, though it is not compulsive in the
(834) sense that they must boast of sexual conquests; to talk of sexual exploits in front of others in such a manner would be a great shame, and such matters are simply taken in one's stride. (The other side of masculinity, physical
[571] courage, is the subject of a great deal of boasting. The term for masculinity, *wandnat*, is synonymous with *guabaznat*, or "bravery.")

* 883 The advent of puberty therefore makes the young Amhara simply more
• 882 self-conscious about the characteristics proper to his or her sex. Girls begin to groom themselves and think of finer clothes. Boys proudly take on a "man's share" of the work; and, what is more, become somewhat unruly, tempestuous, quick to pick fights, and vaunt their new powers. The *goramsā* often
[141] carries a special kind of *dulā* that is symbolic of his youthful masculinity. Unusually short, stout, and hard, it is convenient for concealing beneath his clothes when he goes out at night on sexual adventures, and dangerous enough to convince himself that he is quite brave. As soon as conditions permit, adolescents of both sexes enter their first marriage with alacrity.

155 With respect to psychosocial identity, the situation is slightly more com-
156 plex, in that Abyssinian society does provide a variety of social roles for its males. For the most part, boys faithfully follow the examples of their fathers. This is true in the case of noblemen, priests, traders, and artisans, as well as for the great peasant majority concerning whom the following remarks are presented.

565 The pattern of peasant life is broad enough to fit the dispositions of most
554 of those who are called on to continue it. The typical Amhara adolescent boy
156 therefore seeks no more in life than to be given a pretty wife whose father has a lot of land, to work so well that his father will be generous in giving him land and cattle when he marries, to produce abundant grain so he can eat plenty, and to become renowned in the land as an outstanding litigant.

Under certain conditions, however, this pattern may not fit. The reason may be chiefly economic: too many siblings and too little land in the family may force him to seek some other livelihood. Or it may have to do primarily with resentment with his lot under an especially rigid and unkind father. Still another motive may lie in the boy's yearning for a more suitable identity.

156 Whatever the reasons for his marginality may have been, the adolescent
554 boy in traditional Abyssinia could respond to such a situation by pursuing
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565 be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or
593 official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In
463 either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely pre-
156 paring himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which
[181] the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

882 The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of
184 Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing
871 up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adoles-
178 cence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

871 *The Welfare School*

175 Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in govern-
[797] ment provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

[348] During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

872 The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

they have come too far along the road of modernity to return to what they regard as the hard and thankless lot of the traditional adolescent, and so are forced to find some place in the modernizing sector of society. Since Ethiopia's modernizing sector has so far provided only the secondary school system as a means of integrating its youth, the eighth-grade examination certificate constitutes a ticket to the future which must be obtained at all costs.

At the same time that this examination was acquiring its momentous significance in the lives of Ethiopia's youth, the proportion of students who passed it was becoming progressively smaller. By 1959, efforts by Ministry of Education officials to raise academic standards and to adjust the number of eligible students to the number of openings in secondary schools resulted in the failing of some sixty per cent of those who took the examination, a situation which provoked nearly riotous protests by students in Addis Ababa.[11]

Such conditions have laden the eighth-grade examination with more awesomeness and terror than a puberty rite. Worries about the exam preoccupy most seventh and eighth graders, and their anxiety is compounded by the attitudes of their school directors, for whom the proportion of passing students has tended to become the primary index of success. The weeks before the exam are filled with frantic cramming on the part of teachers as well as students. It is no wonder that such pressures have on occasion led students to purchase actual or alleged copies of the exam in advance from ministry employees or their go-betweens, an offense which has been sternly dealt with by the ministry.

Those students who do not pass the eighth-grade exam or who, because of family pressures, low ability, or other reasons, leave school before completing the eighth grade, move to the margin of Ethiopian society. If attendance at a secondary school or beyond may be taken as the defining characteristic of a "modern adolescent" in Ethiopia, since that signifies their participation in the one institutionalized pattern of secondary socialization in the modern sector, these young people are neither traditional adolescents nor fully modern, but fall in an interstitial category. Having caught a glimpse of some brave new world in their early schooling, they find themselves cast adrift, in the prime of their adolescence, in a no-man's region between traditional society and the promised land. In some cases they manage to make a rapid adjustment; more often, only their youthful energy saves them from total despair.

These marginal adolescents normally drift to Addis Ababa, if they are not already there, and lead the most precarious sorts of lives. They live as loiterers on the streets and byways of the capital. They go from school to school, begging for a place; or from office to office, looking for some sort of work, which they are unlikely to find if they do not have a relative in an influential position. It is so hard to find employment without at least an eighth-grade certifi-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cate that boys sometimes borrow the certificates of more successful friends 883* and enter jobs under those assumed names. Often they live for many months 882 with no livelihood at all. Eventually, some find work as houseboys, shine 178 shoes, or peddle merchandise on the streets; others, on an impulse, sign up for [464] life in one of the military services. Still others are reduced to begging, or stealing, or concocting stories with which to extract help from sympathetic foreigners.

The lives of such boys, whose number is large and steadily growing, are among the chief casualties of Ethiopia's transition to date. As they increase, their misery will become more vocal, and they may constitute an element of political unrest. Whether or not they become a political problem, they are already a social problem.

The modern adolescents, by contrast, comprise a small and determinate 883* number.* In 1958–59, the year in which my research on them began, there 178 were all together about 3,900 students in the academic secondary schools, 873 3,350 in other special schools at the secondary level, and 760 students at the post-secondary level. One source of information on these students was a [125] questionnaire which was completed by 700 students: 500 at the secondary level, including 40 female students, in a total of 15 schools, and 200 male students in five colleges.[12] Some of the findings from this survey will be woven into the following text where appropriate.

Compared to the rest of their countrymen, and certainly those of the same age, the modern adolescents have lived in luxury. Most students at the secondary level, and all those at the college level, have been boarding students. At no cost to themselves or their parents, they have received full board and room, a token allotment of clothes, and their books. Day students have re- [434] ceived instead a monthly allowance of Eth$20,† approximately the same amount that unskilled laborers earn for full-time work. Tuition is also free for all full-time Ethiopian students at all levels.

These "welfare school" conditions were designed to make further education attractive and possible for Ethiopian students, nearly all of whose families either can not or are unwilling to support their children for many years in school. In this, the parents are following long established Amhara custom, for in the traditional society boys who went off to church schools often did so, as we have seen, without the support of their parents, and in any case were expected to gain their livelihood by begging. Nowadays, if their children are admitted to one of the government secondary schools, even tradition-minded

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* And one that grows steadily. In 1958 there were twenty-eight government secondary schools in the empire. By 1964 the number had increased to forty-seven.

† One Ethiopian dollar is equal to (U.S.) forty cents. [436]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*883 178 873 parents who may have objected to their children's spending so many years in elementary school are not a little proud to have them in so prestigious an institution, and are delighted to have them so well financed by the Ministry of Education.

*883 873 Needless to say, the students who make the grade into one of the secondary schools are jubilant. The relative hardship of their elementary years gives way to an easy and stimulating life. For those who grew up in provincial schools, the move to Addis Ababa has been an especially exciting prospect—so much so that when secondary schools were newly established in some of the provincial capitals in the late 1950's, a number of students who were supposed to attend them preferred to stop their education instead.[18]

*883 • 882 178 The pattern of adolescence embodied in the government schools differs from that in traditional Amhara society in two fundamental respects. In the traditional pattern, adolescence is a time when the Amhara are subjected to the strictest controls by their parents. At the same time, they are expected to prepare for independence by assuming increasing amounts of responsibility. In the modern pattern, the welfare school has the effect of removing the student as far as possible from parental controls. At the same time, it puts him in a more passive and irresponsible role than ever. He is given virtually everything he needs and obliged to do nothing in return. He is asked only to prepare himself to serve his country well later on. This obligation is in fact firmly implanted in the minds of many students, who acquire the sense of a personal debt to the government which they want to repay in later years. Ethiopian society is not yet organized, however, in a way that will bring such motives to realistic expression. During and after his school experience, little opportunity is provided for the student to mature out of an essentially passive, receptive, dependent posture. Critical of this state of affairs, one Ethiopian college student was moved to declare in an oratorical contest: "Ethiopian students are like college students the world over, with two differences—they get everything free, and their selfishness is pushed to frightening exaggeration."

Be that as it may, modern adolescence in Ethiopia does provide the essential minimal conditions for fulfilling its function. It is a moratorium for the young, in which relative freedom from traditional controls and a relatively carefree existence facilitate the acquisition of habits, beliefs, and values which their fathers never knew.*

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873 * The above description applies only until 1961–62, after which secondary students no longer received room and board or stipends and Addis Ababa College students were no longer housed in dormitories. Some implications of this change are considered in the concluding section of this chapter.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

that parents still wield considerable moral influence over the modern adolescents, more so even than their peers, is shown by the figures in Table 3. This persistence of parental influence keeps the Ethiopian adolescent anchored in his traditional culture and accounts in part for a noticeable conservatism among Ethiopian students generally. With respect to such matters as morality, etiquette, family solidarity, and religion, students are strongly inclined to follow their parents' precepts.

While this deep-grained attachment to their parents gives the modern adolescents a sense of stability and security, it is also responsible for consider-

TABLE 3

RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PARENTS AND FRIENDS ON STUDENTS

Extent to Which Students Say They Follow Advice	Secondary School		College Males (per cent)
	Males (per cent)	Females (per cent)	
Of parents:			
Always	46	35	17
Usually	43	60	65
Not often	11	5	18
Of friends:			
Always	19	8	8
Usually	47	61	53
Not often	34	31	39
Number	(396)	(40)	(197)

able strain in their lives. For there are few families—less than three per cent of our sample—in which the students do not remark some significant area of disagreement between their parents and themselves. The modest steps toward modernity that Ethiopia has taken have already kindled a smoldering conflict between generations, perhaps for the first time in Ethiopian history. It is against that background of conflict that we now examine the condition in changing Ethiopia of the three main sociological functions of adolescence: preparation for adult work roles, preparation for marriage roles, and integration into the adult intellectual and moral order.

Preparation for Work

The most conspicuous function of the secondary schools and colleges in Ethiopia is to train young people for careers unknown in their traditional

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

So the orientation of the modern adolescents is a complex one, demanding detailed analysis. In this section we shall discuss data that give some indication of their attitudes regarding religion, science, taste, morality, and politics.

Religion.—With regard to a general commitment to religion Ethiopian students today remain in good part tradition-directed. They mention "religion" more frequently than any other matter except success in school as the question on which they are most in accord with their parents. Religious themes are mentioned more frequently than any other in response to the question, "As a parent, what specific lesson will you try hardest to teach your children?"

Table 8 describes the incidence of student adherence to some of the traditional religious practices in Ethiopia. As might be expected, there is a consistent decrease in conventional religiosity as one moves from the secondary to the college level. Perhaps more significant is the extent to which the modern adolescents do remain faithful to the old religious practices, in view of their considerable alienation from the institution of the Ethiopian Church.[21]

Despite its toleration of a few reforms instigated by Haile Selassie, such as permitting women to sit alongside men in some of the Addis Ababa churches and providing occasional sermons in the vernacular Amharic, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has not yet begun to adjust to the demands of the modern era. It remains rooted in the experience of an isolated peasant civilization, fixed on the past rather than turned toward the present and future. Thus it has neglected the substantial religious needs of the modern adolescents, who are eager for a fresh treatment of the great matters which religion has traditionally interpreted. But when youth today look for spiritual guidance, they find archaic liturgy; and when they look for spiritual inspiration and social teachings, they are told only to fast and observe the other hallowed customs.

It is this state of things, as well as the natural secularization of life in the cities, that has turned a number of students away from religion altogether. Many more, however, have sought to retain some sort of religious life by making new kinds of adjustment themselves. One alternative has been a privatization of faith, making religion a primarily personal matter no longer dependent on the institution of the church. Another alternative has been to adopt one of the Western forms of Christianity through contact with one of the various missions in Ethiopia.* In recent years a third alternative has fired

* In this they have been attracted more by Protestantism than by Catholicism, and for two reasons. The biblical purism and evangelical fervor of the Protestant missions seem best suited to meet their needs for total commitment and reorientation. Catholicism, moreover, is represented to them chiefly by the Jesuit order, whose members have managed two important schools in Ethiopia and many have earned a bad name among students because of their political style.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. 121*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Ambara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. 121* 593 462 [857]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkär*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. 121* 593 [888] [704] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is 121* 602 [593] [591] [611] [201]

882 broken by bursts of frenzied activity. This is utilized by the adults both to enculturate them and bend them to their will in "training" and "service", and to use the boundless physical energy of adolescents for considerable chores of physical labor.

The adolescents do not resent this most of the time, for they accept it as flattery and acknowledgement of their growing strength; enjoy the increased attention given them in the family as full-fledged, if subordinate members; appreciate the higher status that comes with advancing age, symbolized by the obedience they themselves can command at this stage from their younger siblings who follow them like retainers follow a feudal lord.

A. The Male Adolescent: Service and Young-Warrior.

882 561 The terms of address at this stage symbolize his position exactly, and are far more significant than in reference. Terms of address used in everyday life are: "ashkär" (lit. servant), to call a young man to duties ranging from running errands to doing most of the plowing. First used as flattery for boys of about 14, it becomes exactly descriptive and in everyday use as he matures to full stature power. When this happens, at about age 18, he may be flatteringly addressed as "gobäz", signifying "handsome young warrior". (footnote 79).

883 Duties at this stage, under supervision of the father or other male kinsman, include responsible and hard work in agriculture,

[[71]] Footnote 79: "gobäz" in Amharic has similar connotation to "bahurim" in Hebrew: the identification of the concept of young man with young warrior (Isaiah 31:8, Jeremiah 18:21, Amos 4:10). This is pointed out by Ullendorffe: The Obelisk of Matara, p. 31.

883 pasturing, housebuilding, packing and unpacking of mules on trips to the market and caravans. Able-bodied and semi-skilled, he is at the beck and call of any male kinsman, whenever the call "antä gobäz" (thou, warrior) resounds.

882 But he is still considered "half-baked", not fully skilled, strong but not wise, capable of carrying out orders but not of giving them because impatient and unable to foresee all consequences. The proverbs say:

[539] "The heart of the gobäz is in his chest" (meaning he is brave but does not reflect, in his head, the consequences of his deeds).

"A village full of young men
in one year it will become a desert".

"A young chief;
fog in (the month of) Hedar; (harvest month in dry season) (both) ruin the country".

[583] In return for his services, the young man hopes that his father will be generous in allocating a large and fertile plot of land to him upon marriage; also many cows, so he can ask an equal number from the bride's family.

883 In these services, particularly in transportation of goods and in housebuilding, he may be working in a team with other young men, his former playmates. But having is rare at this stage and considered childish, as is unrestrained shouting and pushing, especially within sight and hearing of full adults.

882 Sexual activities after puberty are much more secretive than
831 before, go on at night rather than in daytime, and are discussed only in whispers. Puberty is called" skalä mätän därräsä (lit. he

882 has arrived at the age of making full use of the sexual organ), an
831 expression not considered polite. So is the term "gorämsa", (lit. neighbor) when used to refer to a young buck at the peak age for continuous sex desire, for it signifies the male sexual organ next to its female "mate".

883 [561] At the end of adolescence, the honorific address is "kobäle" (powerful warrior), in some regions. In the old feudal tradition, this was the age when the young man could be called to war, at about 18 to 20 and beyond, for as long as he retained his physical strength as well as skill of hand and eye. Even today, at church festivals, the "gobäz" - "kobälo" category of men perform the "hotu" and "fukkara" jump-dance and military boast, shouting "Addis Ababa" to signify loyalty, and "yebalahal jebo" ("The hyena will swallow him", i.e. any enemy), (or "wardaw abebo" crow's beak) symbolizing
883 526 their readiness to defend the sacred "tabot" of the church. On the "Temqät" festival, the young "gobäz" assemble in teams of individuals on the public plain and the church parades stop to watch their game of "guks" (or gugs), a kind of tournament fought on horseback with blunt, wooden, straight lances. They race at each other at full speed, throwing the spearlike missiles at each other at close range, and ducking at the last moment. Sometimes rhinoceros shields were used for protection, but it is considered more clever to duck. Occasionally serious wounds result, and an overeager young warrior having repeatedly caused them is prevented from taking part in the future (losing his license for recklessness, so to speak).

Usually each participant has singled out a personal opponent. They are conscious that not only the eyes of the elders, priests and feudal lords are on them, but also those of the girls who follow

883 526 the turn of their fortunes with excited comments whispered in their own groups. They know that the game will be discussed in individual terms until late into that night, for this is the month of intensive flirting and marriage.

At Christmas, the hockey-like game called "gänna" is played, where the team is emphasized over the individual, unlike "guks". In fact, Christmas derives its popular name, "Gänna", from the game, rather than the proper "Ledät" (lit. "birthday" of Jesus). The "fukkara" beasting, accompanied by chant and little jig-dance while holding a spear or rifle horozontally over the shoulders, is a major kin event, performed by respected and fully-grown "gobäz" at weddings and other formal family events, to recount the past heroic deeds of members of the extended family.

All these roles played by the male adolescent as he approaches and reaches young manhood complete his individual socialization, and reward him with the full attention and acknowledgement given him by his society.

B. The Adolescent Female: Informal Courtship in the Annual Cycle.

882 From puberty until she has settled as a housewife and mother, the female adolescent is addressed as "gonjo" (lit. beautiful), a flattering and honorific address used in everyday language, much as "gobaz" for young men. This address designates her new status, the attention given by all to her blossoming out, her increased status in the family as a young person, and her duties of responsibility rather than mere menial routine labor of the younger "leja-gärad". If the latter term is still used, it is often in opprobium, or in reference if she is not present.

●883 The random play activity of younger girls gives play to more structured activities. Girls still work and play in groups but seek to meet groups of young men somewhat older than themselves. Flirting becomes patterned and self-conscious, and behavior in the presence of elders more subdued. Aggressive playfulness, disregarded often before puberty, is severely criticised henceforth.

883 584 Saturday afternoons are preferred times for the gathering of "qonje" girls, for they then go greater distances into the bush to fetch firewood for Sunday. Usually the girls, age 13 to 16, sing loudly so as to attract the group of young men, age 15 to 20, who thereupon follow them at a certain distance. From time to time, the girls, leading the boys on, stop, and dance around like playful little girls, alternately holding each other by the hand, or spinning like a top. This is a signal to the boys to approach, as if by accident, and couples begin to break off from the group to go for a "shershsher", a promenade, while still gathering deadwood. Since the boys are from nearby hamlets, the youngsters and their parents know each other.

584 796 In the annual cycle of events, three occasions are utilized as landmarks of opportunity in serious flirting, informal courtship, leading to the rapidly ensuing first marriage of the adolescent girl.

The first occurs on "Mikāēl", St. Michael's day, on the 12th day of the month of Hedar, which is celebrated as a kind of Thanksgiving day, for it falls just after the major harvest is completed, in late November. For all ages it is a day of picnics, out in the open, under a bright sunny sky in the first part of the dry season, before the green grass is entirely scorched yellow. Togas have been

11: Levine MP5 Amhara MP5

• 883

[For information on Amhara adolescents, see category 116, pp. 96-147 and 295, especially pp. 96-101, 106, and 109-147.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 554 The local nobility, on the other hand, were eminences whose lives and reputations were bound to a more circumscribed locale. While the non-royal nobility, or *makuānnent* in the stricter sense, performed as high dignitaries at the imperial court and governors of large provinces, the local nobility were district chiefs and judges, or even simply wealthy landowners, who enjoyed considerable deference. Though they might not be known outside of their home regions, these men were, for the mass of the population, the lords of existence. *Ka-Gondar negus / yāgar ambārās,* "the petty district chief [is obeyed] more than the Gondar king"[19] expresses folk wisdom on the subject. The Amharic terms which designate this class of men are *bālābbāt* and *shum,* terms we shall want to consider more closely below.

565 184 Despite these distinctions among members of the upper stratum of Abyssinian society, with respect to their general orientation and style of life they differed only in degree. They created and shared what might be called a "gentry subculture," even though it was not so differentiated from the general culture as was the case in Europe and China. In the present context, it will be meaningful to treat them as a single status group.

565 184 86 [576] Special manners and skills were self-consciously taught to children of the *makuānnent,* most of which remain part of the gentry subculture today. An etiquette of instinctual inhibition is taught. Some attention is given, for example, to toilet training, which is spontaneous among peasant children. Spitting in public is proscribed. Physical aggression is discouraged in favor of the more subtle forms of satire and patient manipulation of others. A quiet, reserved manner of speaking is stressed, in contrast with the less inhibited and cruder self-expression of the peasantry. Dignity of comportment is expected at all times; a noble should not, for example, express great enthusiasm or surprise over anything. Sobriety is inculcated as a virtue; alcohol is *la-çhawā lijj* [293] *mādasetchā / la-bālagē māzabābatchā* ("for the nobleman's son a stimulant, for the commoner an intoxicant"). In short, the gentry subculture stresses the general ideal of bringing a child up to be conspicuously genteel, or *çhawā.*

565 184 868 [871] [534] [883] Sons of the nobility have traditionally followed a privileged curriculum.[20] They were given lessons in horseback riding and weaponry at an early age. They were also taught how to swim, an uncommon skill among the Abyssinians. Reading would often be taught, for which schooling a man of the church might be brought in as a tutor, or the boy might be sent for a while to a monastery. He might also learn how to play the *baganā,* the ten-stringed lyre used to accompany certain forms of religious and plaintive secular songs. Instead of spending his teen-age years at the plow, which was regarded as beneath his dignity, the noble boy would follow his father to court and observe the ways of litigation and the manner of passing judgments; or he might be sent as a page to the court of the king or some great lord.

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561 Division of labor by age is not elaborate in Amhara culture, and will be mentioned in connection with the life cycle. Children perform useful work from the age of seven on. Boys watch cattle, and the harvest against birds and baboons. Girls help in the house and take care of younger siblings. Both do the milking. Adults exercise authority and supervise the community. Elders (anyone 50 or over) are respected and do no hard work. They may supervise harvesters from high points, warn of fire or locusts because of life-long experience, reprimand shepherds. Widows very often become nuns, more often than widowers become monks. For old nuns can still do cooking and baking in monasteries, while old men would not be economically useful there, and usually are too old and illiterate to join the clergy even as acolytes. However, priests who have become widowers very often become monks and continue their former activities.

[885] Girls are considered adults, for work and marriage, at 12-12; Boys usually 4-5 years later. Sons of priests and feudal families usually begin to attend church school at seven. Even today, in places where modern-type elementary schooling has become available, this pattern continues, and the sons of peasants, if they live near a town and have a chance to be entered at all, at least for the first 3 grades, are usually 11 years old in the first grade, and have already served their parents for 5 years in pastoral and harvest occupations.

Among the ethnic specialists, the harder physical labor is done by male adults in their prime, and lighter tasks allocated to children, elders and women. Thus (e.g., within one Falasha hamlet) one will usually see the adult

462 252 [554] pater familias, certainly not a feudal "great man" or official will buy from her, and a lazy housewife, even an urban one, would be sharply criticized, even divorced, if she bought the product of the "gagari". For it is believed that her baking is carelessly done, that sand and dirt have not been picked out carefully before and during grinding, and the product is "fit only for Shanqalla" ex-slaves. One thin, round, two-foot pancake of "enjära" costs 5 Ethiopian cents (US$0.02); dabbo bread of course costs considerably more but customers are less frequent than for the daily "enjära" bread.

283 462 Spinning is the task of the housewife and of all women attached to a household, be it a hamlet kin group, or an all-female zar society (see chapter on spiritual healing). On her wedding day, the bride brings with her a small, ornamented reed basket, called "muday", in which she carries her own personal little distaff, some cotton thread on a reed bobbin that she has made, together with personal ornaments and tattooing dyes. This symbolizes that she is [885] ready for adult womanhood and marriage, though she may be only 13 or 14 years old.

Carding of the raw cotton is also done by women. They beat it, pick out the husks, then place the cotton balls on the string of a bow called "dägan", tense the string with a stick, then agitate the string with the neck cut off a gourd (called "qel angät"). This loosens the cotton so that it can be cleaned and completely dehusked.

Every afternoon the housewife takes up her spinning, unless some special task takes her time. The distaff "enzärt" consists of a round, solid reed or thin round

PART IV: The Life Cycle of the Individual

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Like many other societies with a tradition-directed culture, the individual passing through the age-grades of life is taught well in advance what his duties and privileges are at each stage.

The age-grades, though strongly emphasized in Amhara human relationships, are not as detailed nor as sharply divided from each other as in the case of the Galla of Southern Ethiopia (the "gada" age grades).

[854] The two-year breast-feeding period is the happiest of the stages for the baby. Infancy and childhood, for both sexes, are carefree periods of experimentation, which is sharply abrogated as adolescence, a period of authoritarian obedience, approaches.

[582] Even the first marriage of an individual, taking place at the very beginning of adulthood (even earlier for girls), permits only a minimum of individual choice. Unhappy first marriages are common, and so is divorce. But after this, the fully adult man or woman can assume a freedom of choice not known since childhood. They may seek second mates, change residence, join a different "mähabär", etc., and the grip of extended family on the individual is somewhat relaxed by the short life-span of the "elder" grade. This in turn permits the middle-aged adult to be regarded and respected as an elder himself, who not only is permitted a maximum of own choice, but who can and does rule the younger grades.

[586 587]

[885]

582 his late 'teens. The difference in what is considered "suitable age" is thus five or more years, for the girl may be as young as 13 or 14 in the still prevailing (though officially now outlawed) tradition. The reason is not only the earlier maturing of the girl, but partly the emphasis of protecting her virginity until marriage, partly the attitude that the groom must "tame" his bride - and the younger the better.

597 608 Consanguinal ties continue stronger, after marriage, than conjugal ties. The "artificial kinship" created at this period of the life cycle is that of the bride's "best man" ("mizē") who is sworn to protect her even against her husband, and who is in a good position to do so as a residential kinsman of the husband. This emphasis on consanguinal ties even after marriage is similar to other parts of the Middle East (footnote 80), and also Africa.

885 A fully adult man ("säw") and woman ("syēt") are honorifically addressed, e.g. in church usage, as "acmä adam" for man (from Geez "Adam"), "acmä hawan" for woman (from Geez for "Eve"), and the connotation is that they have passed the hot-blooded "gobäz" and "qonjo" stage and have become reasonable, calm, responsible persons who know the etiquette of their culture and have become fully cognizant of proper behavior at all forseeable events in the life cycle.

583 585 A. Marriage Patterns

There are three predominant types of marriage:

Footnote 80: Patqi, Raphael: Relationship Patterns among the Arabs. Middle Eastern Affairs, Vol. 2, May 1951, pp. 180-5

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, 186
and social position.

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance 562
rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the [565]*
wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the [539]
proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar and trivial talk.

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells [539]
us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including those connected with the saintly figures of Eçhē Yohānnes and Takla Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by [841]
womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden.

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance 858
and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and [864]
cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably. After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first "age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders.

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. 882
The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches 885 •
forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. 888
Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults, pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon [867]
learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder."

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *ĭnjarĭ*. Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make good *doro wat*, a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

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* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

585 a certain amount of ritualized delay, the groom and his party are admitted. The groom is not supposed to have seen his bride previously, and is at first shown only a number of similarly dressed maids, among whom sits his fiancée. The maids are then concealed by a curtain or in another room while one of the best men, called *mizē*, determines through various ruses which of the girls is the bride. She is revealed to the groom by being carried out on the back of the *mizē*.

The civil service itself is quite simple, consisting of an oath in the name of the emperor or of some deity that "she is my wife" and "he is my husband," the latter often uttered in so faint a voice that it must be interpreted by one of the bride's relatives. After the oaths and a certain amount of feasting, the couple and the groom's party depart for the home of the groom's parents, where another celebration is under way.

After the festivities the bride and groom retire to a hut which has been set aside for them for the first week or so of their marriage. The experience of the wedding night cannot be very pleasant for the bride. For the first time in her life she is far from the familiar setting of her parental home. She [864] has had little or no sexual instruction, other than the knowledge that sexual [831] matters are "rude" and that she is supposed to resist her husband's advances as fiercely as possible. The groom, on the other hand, has been taught to regard the nuptial night as a battle in which the bride must be forcibly overcome. If somewhat anxious himself, he at least has the moral, and sometimes the physical, support of his two or three *mizē*. If he is unable to accomplish the defloration, he may call in the first *mizē*—usually a married relative or friend with some experience—who will perform the task. When at last the bride has been conquered, the *mizē* take the bloodstained cloth as proof of the girl's virginity. Their triumphant chant—*ber ambār sabara-lewo*, "he has broken the silver bracelet for you" (for the bride's parents)—is the signal for further rejoicing and revelry among the wedding guests. On the morrow groom and friends discuss the conquest with masculine glee, and the bride remains embarrassed and cowed.

[831] The trauma of the wedding night does not appear to do irreparable damage to the girl, however, for Amhara women have the reputation for enjoying sexuality as fully as the men. Indeed, some Amhara maintain that the girl will respect neither her groom nor herself if she does not put up a fight 585 until subdued. With the consummation of her marriage, moreover, the • 885 Amhara girl has become a woman, a *sēt*. This represents a considerable elevation of her status and permits her to acquire certain distinctively adult possessions, usually presented to her by the groom. Traditionally these have included a dress, a double-layered toga (*ḳusā*), a headband, a mirror, a leg bracelet, a ring, an umbrella, and, in wealthier families, a colored silk robe.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

For the groom, too, marriage means a gratifying boost toward adult status, symbolized by his receiving from the bride's parents distinctively adult male possessions—a *kutā*, perhaps a *barnos*, and a rifle if they can afford it. 585 885

Such is the basic pattern of betrothal and marriage among the Amhara, though many of the details vary from province to province.[6] There are, in addition, certain traditional alternatives to this standard procedure. One of these involves the solemnization of the marriage oath by taking Communion, a rite necessary for a marriage to be counted as legal by the Church, and followed by the ordained clergy and the most pious families. Another form requires no oath at all; the husband is simply expected to provide a salary and clothes for his wife. This procedure is followed chiefly by soldiers and traders, and by those who are marrying for the second time. 583 585 184

Still another type of marriage is that known as *qoṭ assīr* ("ten beds") in which the boy goes to live with the girl's family while both are quite young. In this case the boy has his work apprenticeship under the girl's father. After several years, when the girl reaches puberty, a second wedding ceremony will take place—this time at the home of the groom's parents—and the union will be consummated. This type of arrangement tends to be made when the boy's family is too poor to provide enough to get him started on his own, or if the girl's father has no son to help him with the work.

There is, finally, a form of marriage by abduction. If the girl's father does not grant the request of the emissaries of the boy's father, and if the boy's father is still interested, the boy may go with two or three friends to capture her when she is on the way to market or fetching water. When this happens, the couple will approach the girl's parents after they have been married for some time and seek a reconciliation. Occasionally poor families have deliberate recourse to this form of marriage, arranging in advance a bride capture so as to avoid having to prepare the expensive wedding feasts.[7]

Although marriage marks the termination of childhood for the Amhara, it does not by itself signify the full attainment of adulthood. The newly wed couple lives at first in the home of the boy's father, and to truly "arrive" they must establish their own separate household. If the boy's family is wealthy, he may have his own house ready by the time of the wedding. More often, the couple spends a certain amount of time—a few months, or in some cases as much as two or three years—living in the home of the groom's father until their own house is built. To tarry unduly in the father's house, however, is considered a mark of laziness and a great shame. 591 585 [885]

Furthermore, because of the somewhat arbitrary manner in which the spouses are chosen for each other, there is often a serious problem of poor marital adjustment, a problem not rendered any less difficult by the proximity of the girl's mother-in-law. The divorce pattern is well known among 585 606 586

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

586 the Amhara. Both partners enter the marriage with the full understanding that if they do not get along they will be able to separate without much difficulty, each partner taking half the goods that were accumulated during the marriage as well as the land and other private property each brought into the marriage. Only after several years of married life, which have re- 885 [851] sulted in children, and probably a separation followed by rapprochement or [586] else divorce and remarriage, is the Amhara defined by his culture as a com- [581] plete adult, a *mulu sēt* or *mulu saw*.

From Generation to Generation

867 Through the agency of his family of orientation, then, the Amhara adolescent automatically is prepared for adult work responsibilities and launched into married life. Continuity of the social system, however, also depends on the maintenance of a moral order that transcends the narrow commitments of kinship units. What of those sentiments that should dispose the young Amhara to conform with the more general norms of adult society?

[577] The Abyssinian moral order rests primarily upon two pillars: the profes- [779] sion of Christianity and the institution of respect. These dispositions are firmly implanted during childhood and receive steady reinforcement during the transition to adulthood.

867 Maintenance of the fasting and dietary laws appears to be the central 779 symbol of Christian identity in Amhara culture. Here again one may discern 785 a pattern of progressively increased inculcation of norms throughout matura- 262 tion. The taboos against pork and other unclean foods are taught at an early 577 age and supported by references to unclean heathens ever after. More important, the Amhara learns step by step how to chasten his stomach in the traditional way. As soon as he is old enough to observe what goes on in his home, he is aware that meat products are not served to anyone on fasting days. Around the age of seven he begins his first regular fast, which means avoiding all food before noon, by observing the sixteen-day fast of *Felsatā*. The Wednesday and Friday fasts are supposed to be observed following this, though in practice it may be a few more years before the child keeps these weekly fasts regularly. Observance of the most trying fast of all, the eight-week fast of Lent, begins at about the age of fifteen.

867 At the same time, the adolescent comes increasingly under the jurisdiction 779 of a member of the ordained clergy known as his *nafs abbāt* ("soul-father" or 793 confessor). This is particularly so after marriage, when the young man may 577 either continue to be attached to the soul-father of his own father or else may choose another one for himself. (The wife always takes the soul-father of her [785] husband.) The soul-father serves as an agent of moral control by prescribing [688] penance for his confessants when he learns of such infractions of the Christian rules as breaking the fasts.

887 nobility they have moved as high in position as their inherited potential allows.

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5. The Age of Dominance: The Elder:

888 The term "shemagelyä" signifies an elder; serious, wise, past the prime of physical strength but more energetic and persistent in determining and commanding human relations, particularly within the residential kin group, than ever before. He is treated with great respect.

887 He is one of the dominant elders who rule the kin group, parcel out land for usufruct to biological family units, make decisions in marriage negotiations and other personal affairs involving the family. In town, they act as judges on higher levels. Among the

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532 of the evil eye. Another possible explanation is that centuries ago this symbolism was adopted from Armenian paintings; which is not surprising in view of early, though interrupted contacts between Byzantine and Coptic church art, and later on even Persian and Indian contacts (footnote 101). The amazing realism of natural objects may possibly be of ancient origin, and has survived the emphasis on highly formalised composition enforced by the church.

Scenes depicting everyday life ("abore"), or the famous motif showing the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon (mentioned in the Bible), are also painted on gourds, the useful utensil with the smooth surface. But only the well-to-do or noble families can afford this; (also the tourist). Sometimes the secular motifs show figures of famous military warlords and provincial dynastic heads of the past; and simple, incised geometric figures pleasing to the traditional feudal lord whose appreciation of art wanted direct, simple, and realistic portrayal.

4. Amhara Ideas about Nature and Mankind.

887 812 While his material culture is limited, speculation about the structure, function, and most of all meaning, of the non-material world ranges unfettered in the Amhara culture pattern. Moreover, it is freely expressed, evidencing deep thought, but primarily a wonderment. Often there is a sensitivity that resembles Weltschmerz. This wondering out loud affects most Amhara men when they reach the "shemagalye" (elder) stage, and is one of the most frequently and intensely expressed subjects of their conversation; while at younger ages they are too

Footnote 101 - Mollet, G.: Note (in) Aethiopica, Vol. 3 pp. 191-2 New York, 1935.

887 preoccupied with the immediate demands of life. The culture pattern
812 encourages the shemagalye to give much time and effort to this wonderment, for it belongs to his prime role and social duty at this stage: the accumulation of wisdom. The church does not interfere with this wonderment and its expression, partly because it has not bothered to establish dogma on many subjects.

A. The Natural Universe.

821 In many ways the Amhara concept of the universe resembles that of
[[71]] early medieval Europe, plus understandable similarities to the Middle East and Africa. Some conceptualizations are elaborations from the Biblical universe, readily recognizable because almost always the Geez language is used to express them. Other conceptualizations are animistic, and usually employ Cushitic terminology.

The universe is regarded as a Ptolemaic system, with the earth as the fixed center around which the sun turns. A distinction is made between the physical world, called simply "arät mäzän" (lit. the 4 corners); and the world populated by all creatures, "aläm" (lit. world, in the Geez language). The persistence of this traditional view of a flat earth is so great that even Amhara schoolteachers in the modern elementary schools in the provinces, who are required to teach a spherical earth, privately admit that they don't believe it themselves!

Heavenly bodies and meteorological phenomena are interpreted as directly related to human events. Venus is called "astärboshäsh" or "astäryo", (lit. the one who gives hunger and then flees), because the planet appears in the very brief dusk, when the heat of the day is over and one gets hungry. Because Venus is "fleeing and inconstant like a woman", she is given the feminine gender.

821 Considerable attention is given to the moon ("ṣäräqa"), for it
243 is believed to cause the ripening of the grain after the sun has

562 The commoner woman may not
565 carry a "ḉhera" flyswitch of monkey-hair or horse-
293 hair, otherwise she will be criticized as "rudely presumptuous" and "proud". Commoner women therefore drape the shamma over their heads to be somewhat protected from flies, or cut a small branch off a eucalyptus tree. Noblewomen may carry a ḉhera, and indicate by their heavy weight that they have a houseful of servants to perform every menial task.

562 With advancing age, past menopause, the social
888 position ofthe commoner woman steadily improves. She now lords it over the younger women in the household who have taken over the menial tasks. If she has remained married to the same husband for a number of years, she is respectfully addressed as "emmā bēt" (lit. mother of the house). If she is widowed, she gains prestige by taking vows as a nun. A woman who marries a priest shares some of the social dignity of his position; she is referred to as "qesēnna" (from "qēs", priest). Women listening to the church service have the privilege of gaining merit by shouting the shrill joyshout "ellel" at the proper times in the liturgy.

562 Kinship ties remain a strong protection to
602 women even after marriage and residence away from the parental hamlet. She is often reminded not to forget her kinship ties when she marries:

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548 to traders and transients. By treating some customers well, they hope to find another husband. When no clients are available, they still earn some income by brewing beer and selling it. They wash themselves and their clothing far more often than peasant women, and pay servants to do the heavy laber and cleaning for them. They leave their children with their kinfolk, sometimes sending money. If she were to remain with her kinfolk herself, family pressure would be great for her to remarry quickly, very likely a more undesirable husband than the first.

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1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

888 792 young, "not-yet-serious" young woman, partly because there is no career involved, as there is in case of young men who become monks. Though there are usually fewer widows than widowers (due to the mortality in connection with childbirth), the lot of a widow is not a happy one. The proverb says:

[539] "Now that my fortune (husband) has died,
what will my mother-in-law give me?"

888 736 Without the kin group, an aging man, especially if sick, blind or crippled, has little protection. The church is not eager to have [792] him as a monk, for it can recruit younger men for its service, as a career, and an old man is much less useful in the churchyard than an old woman. He may, especially if landless, or in town, be reduced to beggary. There he sits at the approaches to the churches, repeating his demanding, ceaseless litany: "Selä Medhane Aläm, selä Maryam, selä Giyorgis" (For sake of the Savior, of Mary, of St. George), stretching out an open hand. Sometimes he may send out a child to beg for him, either because he is too bashful, or is using it as a technique. Little boys will thus attach themselves to a potential donor, repeating "babba, babba" (babytalk for "daddy"). [608] They have already learned the concept of artificial kinship to establish human relationships.

6. The End of Life: Eulogy; Memorial Services and Feasts.

763 When an elder is close to death, other elders from among his nearest kin come with his confessor, and say to him: "Confess yourself". When he has done so, they ask him for his last will: "What do you give to your children, and for your soul (i.e. to the church, through the confessor, to the poor)". While fields and cattle are given to the descendants, (the former only in patrilineal descent), personal belongings such as oxhide mats, shamma

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

562 [554] to an almost sub-culture. The result is at least one real sub-culture, that of the "zar society". Many women find their way to it either through introduction by a female friend, or, if the husband forbids it, through actual or simulated hysteria or catalepsy.

● 888 Psychological problems of the aged have not as yet become significant in Amhara society. The male elder, and also the old woman, are respected and cared for even in senility - a stage which only a small minority reach because of the comparatively brief life span.

3. Culture Change and Amhara Society: Inertia versus Modernization; the "Change Agent"; the Amharization of Ethiopia; the New Elite; Old Values; Outlook.

178 In view of the traditional hierarchy of government among the Amhara, any major culture changes could be effectively introduced only from the apex downward. This has been the experience during the reigns of the present Emperor Haile Selassie and of his predecessor, Emperor Menelik II; One might even include the unlucky Emperor Theodore. All three recognized the role of the emperor (King of Kings) as "change agent" in culture change. In Ethiopia it has not been the dissatisfied elements who have acted for change.

The forces resisting culture change in that society were and are powerful, not because they have consciously and purposefully banded together in opposition, but by the resistance of inertia. The silent but fierce opposition, notably from the old feudal nobility, the old and dominant heads of the Abyssinian Coptic church, and the rural elders, has long constituted an ultra-conservative immovable object: self-satisfied, fundamentalist, proud of having defended their mountain plateau for centuries, distrustful of foreign innovations.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

but also various categories of Amhara discriminated on the basis of sex, age, and social position. 186

Although Amhara women enjoy considerable property and inheritance rights, their generally depressed status reflects the low opinion commonly held of them. The peasant woman's lot is as hard as that of a slave. In the wealthier families, where domestic drudgery is relieved by servants, she must still be a passive, reserved nonentity. Women are beaten as a matter of course for mistakes in their work or apparent flirtations with other men. As the proverb says: "Women and donkeys need the stick." "Woman's work" is referred to derisively by men; "woman's language" is the epithet for vulgar and trivial talk. 562 [565]* [539]

A common justification for keeping women at home nearly all the time is that if they are allowed to go outside they will stir up all manner of trouble, for by nature they are gossipers and deceivers. Another proverb tells us: "Mules and women will betray you." In a number of legends, including those connected with the saintly figures of Eçhē Yohānnes and Takla Hāymānot, women have been turned to stone because of their vile tongues and treacherous ways. Menstruation is viewed as the punishment incurred by womankind as a result of that first great treachery in Eden. [539] [841]

Children are considered inferior because they are governed by ignorance and passion. Toward infants the Amhara is lenient. Because "infants and cattle are the same," tiny children are not expected to perform reasonably. After two or three years, during which time the child has been indulged copiously by the father as well as the mother, his status begins to drop. He comes to be looked on as a servant. By about six years he has passed the first "age of reason," but he is wise enough only to stay away from fire, the edges of cliffs, and prickly plants. For most of his actions he must be given orders. 858 [864]

As the child grows older he is supposed to be dominated in turn by each of the four elements. The adolescent is likened to air: flighty, never settled. The young man is like fire: hot in picking quarrels as he is hot chasing after women, and altogether not worth very much. Only as a man approaches forty does he begin to gain respectability. He becomes cool, like water. This is a time when he minds his own business, does his work properly, and is not so prone to go about insulting others. This is the advent of the real age of reason, when a person arrives at an understanding of what is right and wrong in life. Most esteemed of all is the elder, the man of sixty or seventy. Like earth, he is settled and stable. He is sober, wise, indifferent to insults, pious, and ready to mediate rather than take part in quarrels. Children soon learn that older folk, not themselves, are the hope of the earth. This lesson was conveyed by the little boy who, when asked what he wanted to become when he grew up, replied: "I want to become an elder." 882 885 888 [867]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities. [121]*

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Ambhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children. [121]* 593 462 [859]

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkār*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death. [121]* 593 [838] [704] [765]

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son. [882] [423] [428]

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is [121]* 602 [593] [591] [611] [201]